

From Nomads to Conquerors.

A Study of Networks, Violence, and the Social Powers of Attila and the Huns in Late Antiquity.



Master Thesis

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«Attila was lord over all the Huns and almost the sole earthly ruler of all the tribes of Scythia; a man marvellous for his glorious fame among all nations.»

(Getica, XXXIV, 178)

Sammendrag.

I denne oppgaven har jeg studert Hunerne og deres undersåtter i lys av de forskjellige nettverkene av sosial makt som oppstod da Huner-Imperiet hadde sin storhetstid i en kort, men hektisk periode i sen-antikken. Hunernes forhold til Romerne har fått mye oppmerksomhet, men få ressurser har blitt dedikert til undersåttene deres og de sosiale nettverkene som oppstod mellom de og Hunerne. Derfor er denne oppgaven en original studie av et felt om Hunerne som ikke har blitt utført før.

Jeg har brukt Max Weber sine teorier om legitime politiske styresystemer, som er inndelt i *Legal Autoritet*, *Tradisjonell Autoritet*, og *Karismatisk Autoritet*. Den siste er hovedfokuset, men det har og vist seg at Tradisjonell Autoritet var gjeldende. Teoriene om vold i nettverk og samfunn av Douglass North har fungert som en bro mellom Max Weber og Michael Mann.

I oppgaven har jeg hovedsakelig brukt de sosiale teoriene til Michael Mann, der jeg har analysert Hunerne og undersåttene gjennom IEMP-modellen hans. Dermed er oppgaven delt inn i fire kapitler, med en konklusjon for hvert av de: I *Ideologi* har jeg først og fremst sett på felles religion og oppførsel, men også dedikert ressurser til studie av gruppe-identitet og etnisitet. *Økonomi* detaljerer først nomadisk pastoralisme, og hvorfor dette legger en grunnmur for Hunernes oppførsel i forhold til undersåttene deres. Deretter har jeg brukt økonomisk antropologi for å undersøke de spesifikke økonomiske forholdene mellom de. *Militarisme*-kapittelet er relativt kort, men en etnografisk gjennomgang av nomadisk militær-struktur er viktig, da den påvirket det politiske systemet. Dette gjør seg og svært gjeldene blant Hunerne, som oppgaven vil vise. I politikken har hovedfokuset vært den personlige makten til Attila, men også hans dominante elite; også kjent som Logades. Det viste seg å være nøkkelen til Hunernes politiske overherredømme.

Jeg konkluderer med at suksessen til Huniske imperiet først og fremst kom fra Attilas politiske manipulering og bruken av hans personlige makt. Det Huniske imperiet stiller ikke sterkt i noen av de sosialene kreftene - foruten militarisme. Dette viser seg når det Huniske imperiet som en konføderasjon slutter med Attila sin død. Allikevel er de politiske og sosiale følgene av det Huniske imperiet merkbare, da de fleste av de vest-romerske herskerne som følger var forbundet med Attilas elite på en eller annen måte.

Preface.

I would like to thank Thomas Høisæther for his inspiring guidance on my bachelor about the Huns and the Xiongnu, which kindled a fire in me for further studies of the Huns and nomads in general. The decision to write about the Huns in my master thesis came after a discussion with my supervisor, Eivind Seland, whom opened for a take on theories of violence and social networks of power. Eivind has been patient and helped me chart a course: He has been critical when necessary, and motivating when i needed it; even when i could not see the “light at the end of the tunnel.” For this he has my sincere and outmost thanks. I could not ask for a better supervisor.

I would also like to thank my seminar of antique history, which has in the last year been very impressive; I am grateful for feedback and time in which my fellow students and the professors have dedicated to my paper.

Much of the text was written during the Governments restrictions on movement during the Corona-Virus. This has made it hard to separate between work and free-time. Like many others, i look upon the school as a workplace, and home as a sanctuary of my own personal free time. However, i am very proud of the work i have accomplished.

I would like to thank my parents for supporting me through all of this and everything i do, often face-timing me from their home at the other end of the country. The last few months were hectic, especially because i spontaneously took a trip to Stavanger to pick up a beautiful puppy of the breed Rough Collie. Even though Tiandi - as is his name - has often been a distraction and an exhaustion, he has also been an irreplaceable source of unconditional love and therapy. For this i thank not only him, but also my better half who has helped me raise him and been my rock through this journey. I would also like to thank coffee.

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1. Introduction.

1.1 Research Question and Presentation.

In this paper i will discuss the networking of social powers within the Hun empire. What defined the relationship between the Huns and their vassal-peoples?

To analyse this i will use studies based upon both history, sociology and social anthropology. Michael Mann's social theories will act as my method. His work is extensive, so *An Anatomy of Power: The Social Theories of Michael Mann* edited by John Hall and Ralph Schroder will suffice, because they have assembled a promising and fruitful collection of his theories. I will also use *Violence and Social Orders* by Duouglass C. North and his theories of violence in societies. Max Weber with the three types of legitimate rule he presented in his lecture "*Politics as a Vocation*" will as my theoretic foundation with his classification of ideal types of political leadership. His theories will be presented mainly through Jens Beckert and his *International Encyclopedia of Economic Sociology*. The Hun Empire, their ruler Attila, and a select number of vassal-peoples will serve as the empiric material of the analysis. I have chosen this topic because - to my knowledge - such an analysis have not yet been done.¹

In terms of structure i will first present the time period my paper is contained within. I will then explain the need for ethnographic studies. What follows is a presentation of the ancient sources, the lack of them, and how they have had implications on the image of the Huns as the quintessential barbarian. I will then present the most important scholars -in my opinion- on the Huns, and a brief discussion on historiographic evolution of the study on the Huns itself, ending with a discussion on ethnicity and ecological differences between the Huns in Europe and their possible ancestors, the Xiongnu. Then the social powers will each be dedicated their own chapter.

¹ Peter Heather has done a similar analysis. Yet his work is conformed to a portrayal of Hun society which does not include sociology or - in my view - sufficient nomadic ethnography. See the chapter *Huns on The Run* in the book "Empires and Barbarians - The Fall of Rome and the Birth of Europe." (Peter Heather, 2009)

The Three types of Legitimate Rule

Max Weber distinguishes between three types of political legitimate rulership- in his lecture, “Politics as a Vocation”. These are known as the “tripartite classification of authority.” They are as follows.

1) Legal Authority. A political leadership run administratively and judicially according to known principles. One or several individuals in charge of power are elected through procedures in accordance with these principles, and usually by the people or through legal procedures. The power of the ruling individuals are restricted by laws in place for this very purpose, and their position of power is separated from their private lives.²

2) Traditional Authority. A form of leadership which bases itself on “always having existed”. Power is inherited, along with an institution of officials dedicated to maintaining the authority. Examples are kingdoms & feudal states in medieval Europe.³

3) Charismatic Authority. The legitimate rule in which my thesis revolves around. It is based upon the Charisma of an individual, which in turn attracts followers who devote themselves to the Charismatic due to his or her supposed right to rule through prophecies, perceived magical powers, or extraordinary abilities and qualities.

Charismatic Rule.

According to Beckert, an individual endowed with charismatic rule is treated as if in possession of exceptional qualities. This is not charisma in the form in which it is used on a day-to-day basis, but:

“The essential proof of Charisma is the presence of a following. Once follower’s recognises a leaders claim as valid, they are morally obligated to submit to the leaders direction. Followers must repudiate their former lives and assume new selves, becoming devotees or converts.”⁴

² Bendix, 1977, P. 295

³ *ibid*, P. 296

⁴ *ibid*. P. 53

Charismatic Rule is essentially proven by a group of loyal followers. An individual with charisma is set apart from the ordinary people on the basis of being perceived as having extraordinary qualities, and is then treated as a leader. Attila the Hun is an example: He was at the head of a political organisation that systematically extracted revenue from others. Keeping such a political entity together requires great personal skill. He led a confederation with an aristocracy that had a distinct identity, yet was able to effectively extract and manipulate the military and political resources of those not conceived as being Hun, yet were still in his polity.

Charismatic Authority.

Charismatic Authority is a complex term. One may imagine Jesus Christ as another type of charismatic individual: Charismatic rule correlates with charismatic authority: The latter is a driving force that breaks with the existing order it emerges from.⁵ Be it Attila creating his own empire out of one already existing and subsequently modifying it as mentioned in the previous paragraph, or Jesus Christ assembling a following in reaction to-, and out of existing Judaism.⁶

“To maintain their positions as Charismatics, leaders must periodically demonstrate the “extraordinary abilities” that they are believed to have. these demonstrations may be miracles, the continued success of a particular mission, or other proofs that are proved to be valid.”⁷

Comparing Attila to Jesus may seem bizarre. Yet the differences between charismatic authority,- & - rule is a question of Ideology. While charismatic authority is perceived, charismatic rule is enforced. In the case of Jesus, he was immortalised for his ideology and views, which in this case is religion and the corresponding beliefs that led to Christianity. Jesus was not a ruler, but he was perceived as having charismatic authority. What follows (often after the death of such a charismatic) is a term called “Routinisation”:

⁵ ⁵ “Charismatic Authority breaks with the accepted “order” in which it emerges. It is a driving force that cuts through the established authority of an existing order. It is an irrational phenomena that is usually not subject to the traditions and routines out of the order in which it emerged, but rather to the pronouncements and will of the Charismatic.” (Beckert, Zafirovski, 2006, P. 53)

⁶ *ibid*, P. 53

⁷ *ibid*, p. 55

“Routinization is the process by which “Charismatic Authority” is succeeded by a bureaucracy controlled by a rationally established authority of by a combination of traditional and bureaucratic authority.”⁸

The emergence of the Catholic Church several decades after the death of Jesus is an example. What we see is a sort of *Traditional Authority* emerge in the wake of the death of Jesus, and a set of institutions laying the groundwork for a bureaucracy that can continue to exist upon the values and charismatic abilities in which Jesus was perceived to have even after his death.

In Attila’s case there is no ideology like this. He had to directly enforce his charismatic rule: Plunder and pillage is no religion nor motivation that exceeds the immediate needs of its participants: His death means the end of the political organisation and the end of the ideology, if there ever was one. However, an organisation in which the rewards merits the continuation of the organisation upon the death of the charismatic is arguably something else. We will see whether the charismatic authority of Attila led to routinisation upon his death, or if the empire of the Huns collapsed entirely.

Michael Mann and the Anatomy of Social Power: IEMP

Ideology, Economy, Military and Politics. These are the four sources of social power as presented by Michael Mann. A well functioning state needs all four in order to be optimal. Attila & his empire will be analysed through these four sources in order to attempt to establish the strength and weakness of the networking in the Empire of the Huns. The social powers can, to different degree, be placed within the following measures:

Extensive Power and Intensive Power. These two can be applied to all four of Mann’s theories of social power. Perhaps an easier way to explain this is to say that intensive power is the ability to concentrate power in a specific place and/or time. Extensive power by contrast is spread out, like

⁸ Beckert, Zafirovski, 2006, P. 53-54

butter too thinly on bread, but instead covering a large area.⁹ However, the application of one of these does not necessarily exclude the other.

Authoritative and Diffuse power. Authoritative power is typically exercised through explicit commands, while diffuse power tends to operate through similarities in habits or practices. The authoritative power is also sometimes referred to as *Despotic*.¹⁰ It stands in contrast to diffuse power which is also referred to as *Infrastructural power*.¹¹ However, it may use the latter in certain situations: It seems to me as diffuse Power relates more to cultural practices such as behaviour and norms, while infrastructural power relates to direct principles and procedures in accordance with bureaucracy and government and corresponding agreed upon institutions.

Distributive Power is sometimes referred to as “Power over” or “Personal Power”: “*detailing the (unequal) distribution of various life-goods (e.g. honour, wealth, territory, authority).*”¹² In essence it details the power to decide *how* social powers are distributed. This will be applied to the way Attila directly managed the social sowers of the Huns. It is related to authoritative power and charismatic authority. Attila had - as we will discuss *Politics* - little ability to penetrate the lower social groups and strata across the Hun-Empire societies for several reasons. However, the distributive power that followed according to “power over” society allowed him to manipulate the aristocracy and higher strata, which led to an overall distinct control of the Empire through his leading men. Therefore, his political power was for example not only authoritative, but also extensive. Yet his intensive political power was confined to his immediate elite.

Collective Power, also called “Power through”, is based on power supported through institutions and thereby diffuse power. While it may seem as an opposite to “power over”, you will actually find both in most political entities: “*It typically involves systemic or organizational capacities..(): it denotes the capacity of a particular collectivity to change or control its socio-spatial environment.*”¹³ Thus power through society is linked to diffuse and infrastructural power.

⁹ Hall, Schroeder, 2005, P. 264-265

¹⁰ “Authoritative power is typically exercised through explicit commands.” (ibid, P. 102)

¹¹ “Diffuse power tends to operate through similarities in habits or practices.” (ibid, P. 102)

¹² ibid, P. 103

¹³ ibid, P. 103

To summarise how it may be put to use, consider this excerpt by Hall & Schroder:

“The analytic and descriptive potentials of Mann’s theory of social power are enormous. By combining his distinctions between the various sources and forms of power, one can generate dozens of different types and sub-types of social power (e.g. extensive, military power or extensive, authoritative, military power). And one can use these types to characterize a wide range of highly diverse power networks”¹⁴

Here is an example regarding Economy. The Huns ability to put specifically the government of The Eastern Romans to tribute is intensive, economic power. Furthermore, because Attila demanded that it be delivered to him personally, we can build on it: intensive, authoritative, economic social power (direct control). We can expand even further, including territories of Germanic Peoples, whom the Huns extracted surplus of goods from over a vast area: It has now become intensive, extensive, and authoritative Social Power.

However, the theories of Mann are mostly applied to modern states. There are also several more complicated theories in which would take my paper away from the concept of history and into a discussion on sociology and its applicable terms. Thus, as to not lose track, keeping it less than complicated is fundamental.

Violence and Social Orders.

It was through the imminent threat of violence and military intervention that the Huns blackmailed and ensured steady supplies of gold and goods from their neighbours and subjects in return for not attacking them.¹⁵ Violence was prominent in all aspects of social powers within the Hun empire.

Michael Mann says that social power derives from four, main sources: systems, material resources, physical violence and administrative infrastructure.¹⁶

¹⁴ *ibid*, P. 103

¹⁵ Kelly, 2009, P. 88

¹⁶ Hall, Schroder, 2005, P. 102

Because of this, I have included this work by North: It correlates with the work of Mann. The social powers are always present, and so is violence. It is a challenge for any society. Both the use of it and the threat of it kept the gears running and the revenue flowing into the Hun administrative structure.

Institutions contains patterns, traditions and “rules of the game” that governs and restrains the actions and will of the individual. But as we then can deduce and have already hinted at in the context of this paper: Charismatic rule with its parting from traditions of institutions due to the idiosyncrasy of the Charismatic makes a definitive break with such an entity. What we then get is Authoritative power, with its leaders explicit commands, resulting in an Organisation.¹⁷

Organisations are, in part, tools: tools that individuals use to increase their productivity, to seek and create human contact and relationships, to coordinate the actions of many individuals and groups, and to dominate and coerce others.”¹⁸ Violence in this manner is coordinated through a group of specific individuals who pursue a common goal. The organisation coordinates the actions of its members.¹⁹

On the Topic of Societies.

None of the social powers can or does act independently within any sort of network.²⁰ They all depend on each other. Furthermore, there is need for a short - but ambitious - discussion on the concept of “society” before moving on. Take a moment to consider this excerpt:

“In pursuit of their goals, humans form relationships so as to obtain the necessities of life and to secure advantages over others in that competitive process: hence the ubiquity and centrality of questions of power. The pursuit of these diverse interests results in our participation in multiple overlapping associations, with concomitant tensions in our commitments and available courses of

¹⁷ North, Wallis, Weingast, 2009, P. 7

¹⁹ North, Wallis, Weingast, 2009, P. 15

²⁰ Hall, Schroeder, 2006, P. 102

action. As participants in many different “lifeworlds”, human beings must exercise “an active agency”, creatively balancing their multiple involvements, their divergent interests.”²¹

No small excerpt, but with quite a powerful message: The four types of social powers are not separate entities that exist on their own. They are always contained within *Networks*; and all “societies” are a combination of multiple networks across the different spheres of social powers. If there is no network, they cannot be enforced. These networks are established by humans - for humans - to pursue goals of mutual interest in all aspects of life. These goals, whatever they may be - ideological, economical, military, political - have the power to put aside differences and unite otherwise different peoples with different interpretations of them in order to extract something they all value in order to further their own life, goals and ambitions. In the case of the Huns, such intricate networks, carefully balancing the four different social powers (to different degrees), was led by Attila & his elite, which was comprised of tribal leaders of distinct tribes. But there was also Hun nobles. It was a melting pot of different peoples gathering to his reign, for different reasons, not always voluntarily. “Pursuit of these diverse interests” were to most the promise of wealth in being a part of Attila’s robber-network. But not all.

Actions & behaviour in accordance with the social powers are usually performed in order to further the aims of power holders: Be it ideological leaders (religious and philosophy), for the purpose of unity or control through a head of state or tyrant (political), for control of production or distribution of wealth (economical), or for military purposes of expansion and conquest.²²

While we can focus the majority of our attention to one social power, the aspect of the others will always affect it.²³ As an example: The first chapter, Ideology, is heavily affected by Economy. Subsequently, the Economy of the Huns was managed through militarism. Militarism is again dictated by the Economic needs, but handled through politics. And looming above these will be the ever present topic of the violence of the Huns, their subjects, and how it was managed. But this cannot speak for the entirety of a multi-ethnic empire consisting of many thousands. Hall remarks Mann’s own words:

²¹ Hall, Schroder, 2005, P. 73

²² *ibid*, p. 263-264

²³ *ibid*, P. 102

“Society, he quips, is a ‘mess’. And while it is possible to discover some order in this mess, its behaviour cannot be reduced to any general laws.”²⁴

The Huns were a combination of refugees, migrants, conquerors - or all of them - deprived of most of their social relationships upon arriving north of the Black sea.²⁵ As their power grew exponentially, peoples from different “lifeworlds” were brought into the fray, exercising whatever “active agency” most befitting their particular social situation. Under the idiosyncratic Rule of Attila they had to retain their independence while working with other peoples, “*balancing their multiple involvements, their divergent interests.*”

Limitation of Time-Period.

The paper will detail mainly the zenith of the Huns, roughly the 420s-450s. But the cultural and political institutions prior to the Huns in Europe are also important, thus examples from the time prior to empire will be included as far back as 370 when the Huns were first documented on the eastern borders of the Roman world. Some brief examples are also taken from after the dissolution of the Hun empire because depictions of internal events during the heyday of the Hun empire is very lacking.²⁶

Ethnographic Studies.

The question of whether Attila’s empire was a nomadic empire or something uniquely history-specific due to its dependent (often violent) relationship with Rome and Germanic peoples will be given due attention through the studies of other examples of nomadic empires & entities in Eurasia whom practiced similar social powers in their own geopolitical areas. An ethnographic and ecological lens will thus be applied, because the sources on the Huns are few and biased in terms of the Greco-Roman sources. Thus the ethnographic comparisons of other nomadic entities may go as far back as the 2nd century BC, and up until the eighteenth century of the modern age for sufficient

²⁴ Hall, Schroder, 2006, P. 102

²⁵ Man, 2005, P. 94-95

²⁶ the “post-hun” period of political chaos is more thoroughly documented overall.

material. For this part of the study i will mainly use the extensive work of the nomadologist A.M Khazanov, because his work is considered by most as the modern “bauta” on nomadic societies and pastoralism.

The Ancient Sources.

The majority of the ancient sources will be through the marginal amount of literary works, because the archeological evidence is even less evident.²⁷ The Huns have not left us a single literary evidence, because they were illiterate.²⁸ This goes for most nomadic societies. What we have is the Greco-Roman sources (often fragmentary) that depict certain events, most of which are not primarily regarding the Huns.²⁹ **Secular Histories** are the most important ones, and we have three in particular who have valuable information.

Ammianus Marcellinus:.

The depiction of the Huns in “*On The houses and Customs of the Huns*” in *Res Gestae* portrays the Huns as savages with little-to-no human features:³⁰

“However, the seed and origin of all the ruin and various disasters that the wrath of Mars aroused, putting in turmoil all places with unwonted fires, we have found to be this. The people of the Huns.. ()..exceed every degree of savagery.. ()..They all have compact, strong limbs and thick necks, and are so monstrously ugly and misshapen, that one might take them for two-legged beasts..”³¹

The list goes on; Ammianus most likely never met a Hun.³² Because of this, most of the information from *Res Gestae* must be taken with a “pinch of salt”, reading between the lines and - in my case -

²⁷ Yet some possible evidence will be presented throughout the paper, however lacking it is.

²⁸ At least no works which have survived or been discovered. (Kelly, 2008, P. 17)

²⁹ They can be divided into four categories, and are as follows: Ecclesiastical Histories, Letter, Chronicles and Secular histories. (Hughes, 2019, P. xv)

³⁰ Ammianus, 31, 2.

³¹ Ammianus, 31, 2, 1-2.

³² Kelly, 2008, P. 18

using ethnographical studies to see where we draw the line between what is factual and what is intended for Ammianus to entertain his contemporary audience.³³

Priscus of Panium: The Fragmentary History of Attila.

Priscus (fl. 410s) was part of a diplomatic mission to Attila's village in 448, at the height of his power. Priscus gives valuable information as to ritual and political practices he notes among the Huns, as well as showing a remarkably neutral attitude towards hun Society. Yet we only have fragmentary remains of his *History of Byzantium*. Most of the fragments have been rewritten later, however, by the Byzantine emperor Constantine VII Flavius Porphyrogenitus.³⁴ Thus my quoting of Priscus are those whom both the translators Blockley(1983) and Givens(2014) have (mostly) taken from Constantine.

Jordanes: De origins actibusque Getarum.

Usually just *Getica* (or in english: *The Origin and Deeds of the Goths*) was written by Jordanes (fl. 550s), and mainly details the history of the Goths, often biased in their favour. There are excerpt about the Huns and their intrusions and vassalage of the Ostrogoths, as well as some mythical theories of Hun descent;³⁵ yet these are more valuable for the contemporary disdain and image of the Huns rather than factual. Jordanes is the only author to depict the battle of Chalons and our information on the political build-up to it and after.³⁶ While Jordanes is usually somewhat negative towards the Huns, he does at time seem to admire their martial prowess and bravery in certain

³³ Most influential Greco-Roman writers with a sufficient literary audience comforted to a certain type of writing meant to be entertaining and grandiose rather than necessarily factual in all aspects.

³⁴ The work now called "*Constantinium Excerpts*" attempted to re-record most of the previous ancient work prior to its time on the order of emperor. Several of Priscus fragments are among them. (Givens, 2014) In the cases i use the fragments re-written under Constantine it will be referenced to him.

³⁵ There the unclean spirits, who beheld them as they wandered through the wilderness, bestowed their embraces upon them and begat this savage race..().Such was the descent of the Huns who came to the country of the Goths. (*Getica*, XXIV (121-22)

³⁶ Detailing the political situation of the Visigoths in relation to The Western Roman Empire, the Vandals, the Huns and more. (*Getica*, XXXVI-XLII)

situations.³⁷ Jordanes often refers back to “The historian Priscus”, indicating that among other Greco-Roman writers Priscus information on the Huns is unsurpassed in its importance.³⁸

The Greco-Romans’ Huns & Scythians.

Ammianus works can be compared to Herodotus’ works on the Scythians, who made a great impression on earlier Greco-Roman writers and whom Ammianus may very well have copied.³⁹ Although new nomadic peoples came and went on the peripheries of the roman borders, their similarities and the impressions that they were all very similar led to most Greco-Roman sources labelling them more or less the same.⁴⁰ The ancient writers followed a Greco-Roman tradition of equating new barbarian groups with older tribes. Goths and Huns are for example labeled as “Getae” and “Scythians”. They are adhering to the genre they are writing in, in which he are expected to copy the style of Herodotus and Thucydides.⁴¹ Even Priscus - whom holds an apparent far less of a negative attitude towards the Huns frequently calls them and their notable individuals by “Scythians and “Scythian”.⁴² Jordanes on his part frequently mentioned how the Huns envied the Scythians.⁴³

³⁷ “ Attila would not flee from the battle unless overwhelmed by a great disaster. Yet he did nothing cowardly, like one that is overcome, but with clash of arms sounded the trumpets and threatened an attack. He was like a lion pierced by hunting spears, who paces to and fro before the mouth of his den and dares not spring, but ceases not to terrify the neighborhood by his roaring.” (Getica, XL, P. 212)

³⁸ (Getica, XXXIV, P. 178) & (ibid, XLII, P. 222) and several more mentions.

³⁹ Opinions differ. Kelly points out the similarities of the two (Kelly, 2008, P. 21), while Drijvers argues Ammianus was not as affected by Herodotus style of writing as suggested. (Drijvers, 1999, P. 194)

⁴⁰ ⁴⁰ In “*Creating The Enemy: Ammianus Marcellinus' Double Digression on Huns And Alans* (RES GESTAE 31.2)” Burgersdijk rightly argues that Ammianus is applying the same literary topos to both huns and Alans, making only minor distinctions about their behaviour, using digressions to do so (Burgersdijk, 2016, P. 111-13) Similarly, Romm notes the same digressions in Herodot (Romm, 1992, P. 5)

⁴¹ Halsall, 2008, P. 48

⁴² For example: (Priscus, Fr. 11.2, Blockley.) The Translation by Givens ,however, makes use of “Huns” rather than “Scythians”, but this is arguable because he is - as he says himself - writing for a casual audience (Givens, 2014, P. 1-2).

⁴³ “Now in my opinion the evil spirits, from whom the Huns are descended, did this from envy of the Scythians.” (Getica, XXXIV, P. 124)

Ecclesiastical Histories.

The ecclesiastical histories are largely to blame for the picture of the Huns as the most notorious of all Barbarians; the inclusion of Christianity and the teachings of the end times (Eschatology) correlated neatly with the arrival of the Huns.⁴⁴ Its cultural impact on contemporary roman religious set a trend, which lasted up to modern society regarding the impressions of barbarians as uncivilised.⁴⁵ Writers such as Socrates Scholasticus, Theodorus of Cyrus and Orosius are among those attributed to these types of writings where the Huns are mentioned. It will be further covered in the chapter of Ideology.

The Impression of the Huns in modern society.

“Just as a thousand years ago the Huns under their King Attila made a name for themselves, one that even today makes them seem mighty in history and legend, may the name German be affirmed by you in such a way in China that no Chinese will ever again dare to look cross-eyed at a German.”⁴⁶

The speech of Emperor Wilhelm the 2nd to German his soldiers before they depart to quell the boxer-rebellion in China has gone down in History. His foreign office tried to omit this part of his speech, because it was politically embarrassing. Later, during World War 1, it would be used against them by their enemies. Rudyard Kipling wrote a poem which reads: “For all we have and are, for all our children’s fate, stand up and take the war, The Hun is at the gate!”⁴⁷ In both the first and second world war the Germans were continuously compared with the Huns: Pamphlets and images that depict them as monstrous and ogre-like were distributed as propaganda to incite the civil-society of both the United States and Britain against the Germans.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Maenchen-Helfen, 1983, P. 5

⁴⁵ Kim, 2016, P. 1

⁴⁶ See reference in the list of literature to the speech of Wilhelm the 2nd.

⁴⁷ Hughes, 2019, P. ix

⁴⁸ For example, In “Barbaric Anti-Modernism: Representations of the “Hun” in Britain, North-America, Australia and Beyond.”, Gullace points out that when the Germans bombed and destroyed cultural heritage throughout Europe, they were compared to the same sort of destructions by the Allied forces as the Huns were attributed for by the Greco-Romans. (Gullace, 2009, P. 67)

The depictions incited negative attitudes among the Germans for being compared to the Huns between the first and second world war. Somewhat ironically, one of the many tools used by the government of Adolf Hitler was to incite the anger of the population by reminding them of exactly this.⁴⁹

The Huns in Academia.

E. A Thompson - A History of Attila and the Huns (1948).

The first well-known work of the Huns was written by Thompson shortly after the end of World War 2, when interest for the Huns had reached a peak. For modern scholars, the work holds relatively little value aside from reflecting contemporary views of the Huns. For example, according to Thompson, the Huns could not even sustain their own population, and were “therefore compelled to have continuous intercourse with these peoples”.⁵⁰ Yet, while Thompson’s work is a product of his contemporary society, it is a work of craftsmanship and detail: He knows the ancient sources very well, making use of every single one which modern scholars have also found.⁵¹

Otto J. Maenchen-Helfen - The World of the Huns (1973)

This “Bauta” on the study of the Huns is still today regarded by scholars as the most extensive and thorough work on Hun culture yet produced. Usually quoted numerous times whenever the Huns are a topic; Maenchen-Helfen was a sinologist and a professor at the University of California, Berkeley. The book was edited and printed after his death by Max Knight.⁵² Maenchen-Helfen is extremely meticulous, detailing numerous material archaeological artifacts of possible Hun-connections.⁵³ He also compares the literary sources to their contemporary writers perspective,

⁴⁹ *ibid*, P. 76

⁵⁰ Thompson, 1948, P. 43

⁵¹ He notes this in, for example, the lack of evidence and discussion around Hun origin. (*ibid* 1948, P. 16-28)

⁵² “*The World of the Huns: Studies in their History and Culture* - (Otto, J. Maenchen-Helfen, 1973. Edited by Max Knight)

⁵³ See for example his detailed work of Hun art: the location of the finds, the comparisons to other cultures, and its possible meanings and cultural origin: (*ibid*, 1973, P. 297-397)

while it may sometimes be filled with bravado.⁵⁴ Unlike Thompson, Maenchen-Helfen incorporates ethnographical studies to a large degree, because he has realised that the Greco-Roman sources can only give us so much in terms of factual details. Thus he is highly critical of Thompson, often voicing his contempt for many of his viewpoints.⁵⁵

Peter Heather, Christopher Kelly, and John Man.

No notable work is cited in my paper before these authors apart from works on contemporary peoples and ethnography. This is because it seems to me the general approach to the study of the Huns has certainly expanded, but usually only when they are mentioned in works regarding barbarian migration and as a part of the always popular works on the history and fall of the Roman Empire. Peter Heather is one such character, publishing several works on the topic. His book *Empire and Barbarians* has a thorough study of the Huns' pattern of migration, group-identity and ethnicity. Yet it is overwhelmingly negative in its depiction, considering the Huns no more than an "involuntary confederation" of oppression that indirectly led to the wandering of peoples.⁵⁶

Kelly and Man publish their works as historical approaches from the Huns first arrival in Eastern Europe until the fall and aftermath of Attila's empire.⁵⁷ Both attribute the Huns to being more culturally and technologically adept than the previous writers. Yet they (especially Man) have many digressions on the possible thoughts and feelings of individuals. So it seems as they are writing for a casual audience as well as scholars.⁵⁸ As the titles of the books indicate, both authors are in favour of the Huns role in the supposed fall of the Western Roman Empire.

⁵⁴ For example: "Ammianus Marcellinus. He and the other writers of the fourth and fifth centuries despited the Huns as the savage monsters which we still see today." (ibid, P. Xxiv) "Jerome was inclined, for a time, to see in the Huns the companions of the apocalyptic horsemen. one can easily imagine how the superstitious masses felt." (ibid, P. 5)

⁵⁵ Examples on (ibid, xxv),(ibid, p. 38). Often sarcastically: "The Huns, maintain Thompson, could not weave because they had no time for it. How strange!" (ibid, P. 172)

⁵⁶ Heather, 2009, P. 238-239

⁵⁷ *Attila the Hun: Barbarian Terror and the Fall of the Roman Empire.* (Kelly, 2009) & "*Attila the Hun: A Barbarian king and the fall of Rome.* (Man, 2005)"

⁵⁸ For example: "Given the recent heavy losses at Toulouse, the brothers had been reluctant to cross the border while the Roman army was at full strength." (Kelly, 2009, P. 93) There is no source directly saying Attila and Bleda were having mixed feelings. Their actions simply - according to Kelly's book - implies it.

Similarly, Man digresses onto his personal journey through Mongolia, offering descriptions and Xiongnu Burial sites in between chapters. (Man, 2005, P. 61-66)

Hyun Jin Kim and Ian Hughes.

With his book *The Huns* (2016) Kim drastically altered the game; he is the first author to heavily incorporate a world-history approach to the Huns.⁵⁹ He focuses in particular on the possible central-asian Heritage of the Huns, denoting the entire first chapter of his book to their possible connection with the ancient Xiongnu-peoples of Mongolia, who formed the first nomadic empire in East-Asia.⁶⁰ With this connection, Kim argues the Huns were culturally and politically very similar to the Xiongnu, incorporating their ways of life on the Hungarian Steppe. He is in opposition to Heather.⁶¹ Kim stresses the positive influence of central-asian heritage on European culture, for example going as far as attributing the feudal-system of medieval Europe to the Hun political legacy.⁶²

Similarly, Hughes' *Attila the Hun: Arch-enemy of Rome* denotes a chapter to this origin, yet is a bit more sceptic to Kim's theories. Hughes heavily quotes the fragments of Ammianus, Jordan's and Priscus, dedicating many pages to analysing the political practices of the Huns.⁶³ Aside from This, Hughes arranges his chapters historically, just like Kelly and Man.

The Multi-Ethnic and Heterogenous Empires.

With Kim's world-history approach comes the understanding that nomadic peoples were not a homogenous "nation" of peoples. Because nomadic empires span a number of societies over a large area, they are bound to contain many different networks with specific cultural traits and institutions of political rule. Kim has rightly coined these as "Multi-ethnic and heterogenous"-societies.⁶⁴ With the Xiongnu as an example; this empire in particular probably held both Turkic,

⁵⁹ "This history of the Huns is as intriguing and complex as that of any other "great" "civilized" peoples of the ancient world, be they Romans or the Greeks. What we encounter in the Huns of Inner Asia is a civilization that has been comparatively neglected by historians, whose contribution to world history has been consistently overlooked and under-estimated." (Kim, 2016, P. 5)

⁶⁰(Kim, 2016, P. 12-34) Most books on the Huns in the 21st century will contain at least a chapter dedicated to the possible theory of Xiongnu origin. The theory was first coined in 1978 by the jesuitic priest Joseph De Guignes, but was largely dismissed until recently because the initial assumption was coloured by orientalist and assumptions. (Man, 2005, P. 46-48)

⁶¹ Heather also agrees the Huns were multicultural, but he is pinpointing it as involuntary. (Heather, 2009, P. 237)

⁶² Kim, 2016, P. 149

⁶³ For example P. 11-16 and P. 36-53 (Hughes, 2019)

⁶⁴ Kim, 2016, P. 4

Proto-Mongol, Yeniseian, Iranian and perhaps even some Eastern-European peoples within its geographical and geopolitical boundaries.⁶⁵ Thus “nomadic empires” cannot be seen as a large area of land where the entirety of the population is on the move; rather it is “agro-pastoralist”. The words agriculture and pastoralism is combined, denoting the presence of people practicing agriculture, as well as the concept of nomadic pastoralism and seasonal movement. The presence of different peoples also means that looking for genetic links to the ancestors of the Huns is unlikely to yield answers, as we should rather be looking at political heritage.⁶⁶ As i will discuss throughout the paper; it was probably very much the same for the Huns in Europe as it was for both the Xiongnu that preceded them, the later Rouran Khanate, and the Turkic Qhaganat, the Uighurs and the Mongol Empire.

Ecological Differences: The Great Hungarian Plain and the Eurasian Steppe.

On this note there is an important element to keep in mind. Many of the sources and examples which will be drawn upon are based upon peoples living in Mongolia and its corresponding areas such as the Altai Mountains, Kazakhstan, and generally east of the Carpathian Mountains and Pannonia. While some things can be analysed on a parallel scale, we will do well to remember that Hungary is not Mongolia, and the different social powers on the much larger Mongolian/Kazakh/Pontic-Caspian Steppe cannot be compared to the Great Hungarian Plain and westwards.⁶⁷ While the grand Empires of the Xiongnu and the Turks were multi-cultural, heterogenous empires like that of the Huns, they did arguably not face the same challenge of as the Huns did in Europe: There is a difference in the possibilities of social power based upon the difference in these ecological zones:

“To expect the Huns to have retained the domestic economy of the steppe once they had reached the Danube is to reject the role of ecology in history”⁶⁸

⁶⁵ *ibid*, P. 5-9

⁶⁶ *ibid*. P. 9

⁶⁷ “The political developments among nomadic societies often take on specific but different characteristics based on their region in which they develop,” (Bondarenko, 2003, P. 55)

⁶⁸ Lindner, 1981, P. 14

Once the Huns crossed the Carpathian Mountains and transitioned from their former power base in the Caucasus to Hungary, their way of life was at a crossroads.⁶⁹ There is the ongoing debate of whether the Huns could maintain the concept of pastoral nomadism to the same degree as they did on the Kazakh steppe, and perhaps rather resorted to a sedentary lifestyle.⁷⁰ This should, however, not be taken at face value to mean a discontinuation of the nomad culture: That would be environmental determinism, and it has no place in a study in which so few details are possible for examination.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Lindner, 1981, P. 15

⁷⁰ Bartosiewicz argues that the limited space of movement on the Great Hungarian Plain - both in a spacial and political sense - limited the possibilities of Pastoral nomadism. He also makes the case of a more temperate climate here, which makes sedentary living more favourable than pastoral nomadism. Is he *de facto* saying that nomadism is only preferable when the conditions of sedentary living are not more profitable? (Bartosiewicz, 2003, P. 101)

⁷¹ As an example, Kelly and Heather are in disagreement on whether the Huns practised any form of agriculture prior to their arrival in Hungary. Kelly believes they did not, While Heather argues they did. (Kelly, 2009, P. 24), (Heather, 2009, P. 210) As to my personal opinion, the heterogenous society the Huns were a part of must have had some tribes more focused on agriculture than pastoral nomadism.

Chapter One: Ideology.

On the topic of societies i explained how social powers must always be exercised within networks. Ideology is no different. There is a need for a set of networks (peoples) to share the values of the ideology; whatever shape this ideology may take, be it common religious values, or perhaps shared cultural norms.⁷² Did a specific historical-social relationship come to be born from the various networks of power in which the Hun Empire laid the foundation for in Europe? Furthermore, The notion that there was no religion or ideology within Attila's empire (among the Nomads) cannot be accepted, because Humans are born as an "incurably religious creature".⁷³ McFarland elaborates on this:

*"Religion permeates the human experience. Individuals within communities constantly interact with belief and symbolic systems which are equally as important as political, economic, and social relationships. Regardless of whether an individual believes in a particular religion, their actions will be influenced by the atmosphere created by that belief system which can be expressed in a variety of ways: architecture and house layout, iconography on everyday objects, the way specific areas of a landscape are used, and objects included in a burial, just to name a few."*⁷⁴

On Archaeology and Religious Practices.

As the excerpt from McFarland details; many actions and events practiced everyday and in ceremonial times has a religious undertone. The need to look at events specifically described as being of religious value can not - in the face of little-to-no literary sources - be taken at face value to mean the Huns had no religion. As an example, the most famous of Hun archeology (and there is very little, so the problem surfaces quite early when discussing such a topic) are the famous Hun copper cauldrons - which show a detailed evolution on the handles of the cauldrons - which both archeologists and historians are in uniform agreement *cannot* be anything else than Hunnish in

⁷² "In relation to ideological power, this means that ideology must be contained in an organisational form to have an impact." (Hall, Schroder, 2006, P. 5)

⁷³ Man, 2008, P. 82

⁷⁴ MacFarland, 2010, P. 7

origin.⁷⁵ The majority of these cauldrons and their excavations not only show a progressive evolution in the design and movement from the steppe of Mongolia to the Great Hungarian plain and its neighbouring regions in - which the Huns were active - but have also mainly been excavated in marshlands and rivers throughout.

Maenchen-Helfen believes this to be a continuation of Xiongnu religious culture through “some rites of watercourses”.⁷⁶ Thus, the presence of these cauldrons in marshlands seems to be a continuation of religious culture rather than necessarily a practical one. So in truth, I would argue that such actions as leaving the cauldrons in marshlands shows the Huns were indeed religious - but perhaps not in the literary way we perceive - for example - Christianity with its liturgy.

The feast of Attila, which is detailed by Priscus, reveals an intricate ceremony of the Huns and Attila toasting every important individual present according to rank. While this has usually been discussed as an indication of political status - and it most certainly is and will later be discussed as such - it also has a religious undertone:

“The cupbearers gave out a cup according to the local custom so that we could pray before being seated. a cupbearer came in and gave Attila wooden cup of wine. He took it and welcomed the first man in order. After Attila so honoured him, the man rose, and it was not right for him to sit until he sipped from the wooden cup or drank it down and gave it back to the cupbearer.”⁷⁷

Coherent ideology.

Was there ever was any type of coherent ideology that covered more than independent political groups within the Hun Empire? Was the organisation in which Attila created fuelled by any sort of

⁷⁵ See (Erdy, 2008, P. 16), (Maenchen-Helfen, 1973, P. 334), (Hayashi, 2014, P. 16)

⁷⁶ The cauldrons were buried in the lowlands in springtime, upon which the Xiongnu seasonally wandered to the highland pastures for summertime, and then retrieved them come winter and migrating back down to the lowlands. A most curious and revealing detail about this in the face of possible Hun religious practice is that the geographical zones of the Huns in the form of Pannonia and The Great Hungarian plains does not have the same “high” summer-pastures as the Altai Mountains & Mongolian Steppe in which the Xiongnu had access to. (Maenchen-Helfen, 1973, P. 330)

⁷⁷ Priscus, Fr. 8, 157-158, *trans*, Givens, 2014.

ideology outside the spectrum of economic gain?⁷⁸ Tribes within the Hun Empire had their own religious beliefs, “contained” within their own networks, independent of the power-sphere higher up in the Hun Empire’s political hierarchy.⁷⁹ The goal of this chapter is to see whether there was a unifying belief in “something more”, stretching “across the board” of the Hun Empire which in turn strengthened the total Ideological Social Power.

“It is always possible, in principle, to examine the shape of a network of power; Ideological power, for example, is not simply at one time in history the workings of religious belief, but has a structure of priests, monks, missionaries, people participating in religious ceremonies.”⁸⁰

We have now covered how certain Hun actions had a religious undertone. Now we will involve ourselves closer to what may be considered direct religious practices. However, the Greco-Roman texts, for example, knew nothing about Tengrism, which is a nomadic religion traced back to the Xiongnu. Ethnography will prove important for this.

Christianity in the Age of Attila.

Most of Pannonia - which included western Hungary - was before & (probably) during the reign of the Hun Empire inherently catholic. But this was of little bother to the Huns: The rich landowners had fled, and only small, poor communities remained in the ruins of greater towns pillaged and burned by the Huns:⁸¹

“ When we arrived at Naissus we found the city deserted, as though it had been sacked; only a few sick persons lay in the churches. We halted at a short distance from the river, in an open space, for all the ground adjacent to the bank was full of the bones of men slain in war.”⁸²

⁷⁸ According to Kradin, ideology was never a predominant variable in the power-system of Nomads: Rather, the ability to extract external surplus goods and redistribute it triumphed any further needs of ideology. (Kradin, 2002, P. 375)

⁷⁹ I am not attempting to analyse the different religions and cultures of the peoples within Attila’s Empire.

⁸⁰ Hall, Schroeder, 2005, P. 73

⁸¹ Maenchen-Helfen, 1973, P. 260

⁸² Priscus, fr. 11,2 *trans*, Blockley.

If religion could serve as fuel for uprising and rebellion from the local Romans & Christians towards their Hun overlords, it would certainly not be the case here. Attila had very little to fear from the Roman Christians residing within Pannonia. Thus he arguably had no incentive to harm them either:⁸³ The moves the Huns made towards their enemies was for either political or economic reasons.⁸⁴ There is no reason to suppose the sacking and burning of Naissus was for anything but loot and valuables; It was not a war against Christianity.⁸⁵

The Greco-Roman theological writers sought to paint a picture that the Huns too saw themselves as being a part of the eschatology of end times: When Orosius, in 418, wrote that the Huns were: “filling the churches of the west and the east”,⁸⁶ he was not inherently wrong, it was just for another reason than his writings were intended: They were not believers; they were burning and looting, killing the monks, raping the nuns, and carrying away any valuables. The Huns in all probability cared very little - or not at all - for catholicism.⁸⁷

When Attila turned his host around after a successful campaign down the coast of Italy, it was not - as the Greco-roman writers of its time would have it - due to the saintliness of Pope Leo from Rome and his plea for peace:⁸⁸ The Huns were struggling with disease, were under continuous attacks from the Barbarian-Roman troops of Aetius, the Eastern roman army of emperor Marcian, and already had their wagons stacked full of more loot than they could dream of.⁸⁹ The decision to turn around was a natural one - The season for war was over, the Huns has gotten what they came for, and it was time to return home. The diplomatic intervention of Pope Leo and the Romans may even have been a relief and a final excuse to turn around.

⁸³ “The need for cultural adaption to the outsize world meant that nomads had to acknowledge and/or accept its religions. However, the acceptance by the nomads in the Eurasian steppes of one or other religion and also their voice of the requisite moment at which to do so was a complex occurrence, which sometimes depended on the specific historical and economic situation in the region as a whole.” (Khazanov, 1983, P. 249)

⁸⁴ “..ideology was never a predominant variable in power among the nomads..().The power of the ruler on the steppe empires of Central Asia was mainly based their ability to extract external surplus product. (Kradin, 2002, p. 375)

⁸⁵ In fact, as we will see in a later chapter, it was due to the breaking of a treaty by the Romans.

⁸⁶ (Historiae Adversum Pagan. V11, 41, 8.) In lack of recovering this ancient source, i am quoting it from: (Maenchen-Helfen, 1973, P. 263)

⁸⁷ Maenchen-Helfen, 1973, P. 260-266

⁸⁸ Jordanes, *Getica*, XLII, 223

⁸⁹ Maenchen-helfen, 1973, P. 140-141

Playing On Fear - Embracing The End of Times.

Arguably, Attila's only relationship with God was his remark of being *Flagellum Dei* - "The Whip of God" in the face of one particular brave, but delusional bishop who ventured outside the gates of Troyes to confront the Huns during Attila's campaign in the west.⁹⁰ The fact that Attila chose to call himself this seems to give away that Attila may very well be aware of the Huns position in the eschatological teachings of the age. This by no means implies the Huns were Christian, but rather Attila playing on the fears of Christian-Roman societies.⁹¹ The invasion of the west seems to have absorbed Attila and his Huns into an entirely Christian world, in which their sacking, plundering and murder was reasoned by the Greco-Roman world as a divine intervention by God to punish the sinners of the cities of central France.⁹²

As Christopher Kelly notes: "They have always proved easy targets for Christian moralists (ancient and modern)".⁹³ The Spanish philosopher and theologian Isidore, writing in the seventh century, remarks that the entirety of the Hun invasion of the west was part of God's intervention and a needed action to reset the sinful world and correct Christianity.⁹⁴ However the Huns as punishment from above were just the culmination of something already brewing: Theodorus of Cyrus' account of Trajanus the General's failure to fight off barbarians and his complaints to Emperor Valens takes on an equally Pious character:

*"I have not been beaten, sir, it is thou who hast abandoned the victory by fighting against God and transferring His support to the barbarians. Attacked by thee He is taking their side, for victory is on God's side and comes to them whom God leads."*⁹⁵

⁹⁰ "Who are you?" asked Lupus. "I Am the whip of god", replied Attila. Lupus retorted: "And i am Lupus, the destroyer of God's flock, and i have need for the Whip of God." (Readings on the saints, 2, 27-30)

⁹¹ The Huns were not Christians like the Vandals, Ostrogoths and other germanic peoples.(Kelly, 2014, P. 207-208)

⁹² *ibid.*

⁹³ Kelly, 2014, P. 208

⁹⁴ Isidore of Seville, *History of the Goths, Vandals and the Sueves.* 29 - Of Isa: 28:15 and 18.

⁹⁵ "After Valens had crossed the Bosphorus and come into Thrace he first spent a considerable time at Constantinople, in alarm as to the issue of the war. He had sent Trajanus in command of troops against the barbarians. When the general came back beaten, the emperor reviled him sadly, and charged him with infirmity and cowardice." (Theodorus of Cyrus, Chapter XXX, "Of the bold utterance of Trajanus the General." in *The Ecclesiastical History*)

The Ostrogoths; Heruli & Suevi, among other powerful Hun vassal-peoples, had likely adopted Arian Christianity, and thus stood in an ideological difference with both of the Roman Empires.⁹⁶ While this arguably was of no concern to Attila either, it did aid him: Having your allies in an ideological war with your enemy is always beneficial. It gave a further incentive for them to despise each other, and an additional reason to join causes with the Huns.

Attila may have taken this weakness and used it for his own: His remark and attitude may have given a boost to his Charismatic Authority: These non-Hun subjects may interpret it equally as the Greco-Roman writers, but instead finding themselves on the “winning” side of the Eschatological teachings: They were then Gods chosen to *deliver* punishment rather than *receive* it.⁹⁷ “*The continued success of particular mission*” may thus also come to represent - in the eyes of the barbarians - divine punishment upon the Romans for practicing the “wrong” Christianity; Catholicism & Orthodox Christianity as opposed to Arianism,. Thus at least some of the barbarian subjects of Attila may have considered the large-scale invasion of the west as ideologically sanctified by some higher purpose, and Attila may then in turn have played on both the beliefs and fears of both ally and enemy.

If there was such a justification of Christianity among the illiterate Huns and their peoples, it has sadly not survived, along with any other literary remains. But we can certainly attest it to being used against them: Apparently, Octar, one of the two Hun kings prior to Attila (and his uncle), died because his enemies embraced god:

“they (The Burgundians) requested the bishop to grant them Christian baptism: who ordering them to fast seven days, and having meanwhile instructed them in the elementary principles of the faith, on the eighth day baptized and dismissed them. Accordingly becoming confident thenceforth, they marched against their invaders; nor were they disappointed in their hope. For the king of the Huns, Uptar (Octar*) by name, having died in the night from the effects of a surfeit, the Burgundians attacked that people then without a commander-in-chief; and although they were few in numbers and their opponents very many, they obtained a complete victory; for the Burgundians were*

⁹⁶ From the Arian faith of Emperor Valens, Arian Christianity had spread throughout most of the old regions of the western Roman Empire, leading many Germanic peoples to embrace it. (Maenchen-Helfen, 1973, P. 61)

⁹⁷ Not only in the form of themselves, but also being depicted as bringing with them diseases such as cholera and plague. Such was the nomad legacy in the eyes of the contemporary west. (Khazanov, 1984, P. 2)

altogether but three thousand men, and destroyed no less than ten thousand of the enemy. From that period this nation became zealously attached to the Christian religion."⁹⁸

Similarly, his brother, the principal Hun king Ruga, died during an invasion of Thrace: "God smote him from on high with thunderbolt and storm, burning up the invader and destroying all his host."⁹⁹ Piety, it seems, did apparently triumph over military strength, at least in the eyes of the Christian writers. even if the Burgundians had adopted arianism from their previous catholic faith:¹⁰⁰ any Christianity was better than the ungodly Huns.

Nomadic Religion & Practices

*"Like unreasoning beasts, they are utterly ignorant of the difference between right and wrong; they are deceitful and ambiguous in speech, never bound by any reverence for religion or for superstition."*¹⁰¹

When writing such a powerful statement, Ammianus falls into two traps. The first is the typical *topoi* of applying to nomads no apparent belief because he knows more or less nothing of them outside of the reports he has received, as well as a long standing tradition of labelling the *nomades* of Herodotus time (The "Scythians") and The Huns as one and the same stock.¹⁰² Secondly, denying them any religion or superstition is done so in contrast to Christianity, with its firm position as the only correct belief of the time. As Kelly remarks: "those who had not been fortunate enough to be subjected to the benefits of Roman rule were, by definition, barbarians."¹⁰³ Parallel to Roman rule would most certainly be Roman beliefs.

⁹⁸ Socrates, VII: 30

⁹⁹ Theodoret of Cyrus, XXXVI

¹⁰⁰ Maenchen-Helfen, 1983, P. 84

¹⁰¹ Ammianus, 31,1, 8.

¹⁰² Hughes, 2019, xi

¹⁰³ Kelly, 2009, P. 19

Nomadic Shamanism.

Beneath the walls of Toulouse during the war against the Visigoths in 439, the Roman general Litorious performed a heathen ritual of scapulimancy to please his Hun auxiliaries:¹⁰⁴ The reading of charred animal shoulder-bones closely resembled that of haruspicy, which was the reading of animal entrails and a favoured ritual to decide the outcome of a battle of the Romans in the Pre-Christian era. But by now the performing of such heathen acts were in the Roman Empire punishable by death. It is quite clear that Litorious, so dependent on his Hun Auxiliaries, was willing to risk his hide in performing this ritual to please the Huns, and not his own troops or himself; rather win a battle and have the overwhelming success of it overshadow his transgression rather than die to the Goths and fail.¹⁰⁵ Attila had the same ritual done before the battle of the Catalaunian fields.¹⁰⁶ There is also reason to believe the Huns had seers or shamans.¹⁰⁷ If true, this may also indicate that some of the high-ranking officials among Attila's secretary held their power due to their position as a Shaman or Seer, rather than a political position.

Or perhaps there was no clear difference between the political and the ideological-religious sphere? Genghis Khan of the Mongols was particularly careful to enlist the political backing - and thereby ideological mandate to rule - by the Shaman *Kokochu*, thus furthering his ideological claim to power. When *Kokochu* tried to politically outmanoeuvre Genghis, he had him killed.¹⁰⁸ Sadly, we have no known names of Shamans or Characters of this sort within the Hun Empire.

According to Peter Golden, Khanates on the Eurasian steppe were typically hard to bring under political unity, because the mobility and freedom of individual tribes through the economy of live stockbreeding created distances too vast to cover.¹⁰⁹ The solution would have to be ideology, and it

¹⁰⁴ Maenchen-Helfen, 1973, P. 267

¹⁰⁵ The eventual loss of the battle in favour of the Goths led to a moral justification by the contemporary greco-roman writers as to why it was lost. (Kelly, 2009, P. 87)

¹⁰⁶ “.he (Attila) decided to inquire into the future through soothsayers. So, as was their custom, they examined the entrails of cattle and certain streaks in bones that had been scraped, and foretold disaster to the Huns.” (Jordanes, *Getica*, XXXVII, P. 195)

¹⁰⁷ The incident of the prophecy of Attila's son restoring his kingdom. (See my reference to Priscus, on P. 101)

¹⁰⁸ Golden, 2001, P. 82

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*

was usually done so by the leading/elite tribe of a nomadic empire claiming that their clan was “destined to rule”, such as the Turks had done. Similarly, Genghis Khan was chosen to unite the world under the guidance of a heavenly predestined fate.¹¹⁰

The Sacred Charisma and Mandate to rule.

Whether the Huns were the descendants of Central-Asian nomads or not, it is very likely that the Central-Asian Nomadic component of the heterogenous Hun Empire claimed a heavenly mandate to rule in one way or another, or at least a version which furthered Attila’s Charismatic Authority to his nomadic elite: Peter Golden argues that the requirements a steppe-ruler must meet in order to rule was exerted control over violence, economy, and Ideology.¹¹¹ According to Kim, the Khan/King and his clan within most Central-Asian steppe-empires consolidated their rule by claiming a “Sacred Charisma”, ordained by divine consent.¹¹² What would be the challenges of invoking a mandatory “Sacred Charisma” on The Great Hungarian Plain and the far reaches of Attila’s empire?

The Sword of the War God - A Charismatic Alternative?

An alternative claim to the “Sacred Charisma” performed by Attila may have been his adoption of the *Sword Cult* from the Alans, who worshipped “A sword in the ground”. An excerpt from Jordanes’ *Getica* tells us:

“When a certain shepherd beheld one heifer of his flock limping and could find no cause for this wound, he anxiously followed the trail of blood and at length came to a sword it had unwittingly trampled while nibbling the grass. He dug it up and took it straight to Attila. He rejoiced at this gift and, being ambitious, thought he had been appointed ruler of the whole world, and that through the sword of Mars supremacy in all wars was assured to him”¹¹³

The worship of a sword could perhaps be viewed as some sort of martial ideology. A sword is a

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹¹ *ibid.*, P. 81

¹¹² Kim, 2016, P. 150

¹¹³ *Getica*, XXXV, 183

weapon, a symbol of warfare across the steppe.¹¹⁴ The Germanic-Speaking tribes within the empire could in all likelihood rally more around this than the worship of *Tenghri*. Thus perhaps the hijacking of this cult was an attempt from Attila to find a common ground of belief.

By accepting this sword from the shepherd - however unlikely the story is - Attila accepts this gift not only for himself, but as a family heirloom. According to Bondarenko, such systems of power-inheritance is the property of the entire Khan clan.¹¹⁵ I would argue that Attila was trying to strengthening his own and Royal Clan's (and thereby Sons') right to rule through a "Sacred Charisma" given to them through the possession of the *Sword of the War God*.

Perhaps we are seeing Attila attempting to transition his *Charismatic Rule* into a *Traditional Rule* through this? Attila's sons may then not necessarily have needed to be perceived as of the same Charisma as their father, but because they were a part of the Royal Clan who held the sacred sword, then they were ordained to rule by divinely sanctioned authority. In this way it can be seen as an attempt at Intensive and Extensive ideological Rule: Within the theories of Mann, there is a distinct type of Ideological power known as "immanent Morale."¹¹⁶ It is less autonomous type of power, yet intensive because it seeks to strengthen already existing social organisations.¹¹⁷ The Khan Clan of the Huns may then accordingly have attempted to use the social power of *Militarism*, which all the peoples of the Hun empire shared through direct action, as a means of Ideology.

Similarly, The Scythians of the Pontic-Caspian steppe claimed an ordained, heavenly right to rule by a set of golden objects who fell from the sky.¹¹⁸ The Scythian kings would guard these objects with outmost care, because these were also, according to Khazanov, proof of their Charisma.¹¹⁹ Genghis Khan was - according to legend - born clinging to a bloodied cloth, indicating that he was

¹¹⁴ According to Herodotus, The Scythians worshipped a sword, also to a war god. Arguably, Attila is directly copying them: "An antique iron sword is planted on the top of every such mound, and serves as the image of Mars: yearly sacrifices of cattle and of horses are made to it, and more victims are offered thus than to all the rest of their gods." (Herodotus, IV)

¹¹⁵ Bondarenko, 2003, P. 83

¹¹⁶ Hall, Schroeder, 2006, P. 106

¹¹⁷ Ibid, P. 6

¹¹⁸ "The aforementioned Scythian legend also relates that certain golden objects fell from the Heavens when Targitau's three sons ruled Scythia. Only the youngest son, Coloxais, managed to take possession of them. The other brothers took this to be a sign of a divine mandate to rule and thus ceded all sovereignty to the younger sibling" (Herodotus, IV, 5). (Khazanov, 2015, P. 47)

¹¹⁹ (Khazanov, 2015, p. 47.), (Herodotus (IV, 7)

meant to conquer the world.¹²⁰ It does sound similar to Attila perceiving himself as “appointed ruler of the whole world” through the sword of Mars.

Fletcher, through the work of Bondarenko, defined one of the reasons for the emergence of nomadic state and expansion was the predestination of nomads to see themselves as rulers of the whole world due to the presence of Tengri.¹²¹

Tengri - The Sky God.

The Central Asian Nomads have often worshipped a god as the personification of heaven above, whom embodied the sun and affected everything beneath.¹²² His name is usually more or less the same in most nomadic societies, and goes by “*Tenghri*” or “*Tenger*”. The Xiongnu practiced it in the form of what the Chinese referred to as *Cheng-Li*. During Turkic and Uighur rule the Khan had a mandate right to rule through Tengri as being his representative on Earth.¹²³ In the language of present day Mongolia, the word simply means “sky”. A day with particularly blue sky for a mongol - *Khokh Tenger* - is a pleasant greeting as well as a deity.¹²⁴ One of Genghis Khan’s ancestors was said to have a father that was not human, but a mysterious being that personified the sun.¹²⁵

There are problems with implementing this in the context of the Hun empire. First off, the worship of *Tengri* is very location-specific: Both the Xiongnu, Mongols and the Turks had certain holy places located within Mongolia, such as a particular mountain, in which they were closer to him.¹²⁶ Some scholars believe this is (partially) why the Mongols did not require the people they conquered westwards to worship Tenger: They were not from Mongolia, and they did not have the same relationship to the land. This may very well be the situation for the Huns as well. If Kim is right,

¹²⁰ McLynn, 2015, P. 34

¹²¹ Bondarenko, 2003, P. 83

¹²² Rona-tas, 1999, P. 151

¹²³ Man, 2008, P. 83

¹²⁴ Man, 2008, P. 83

¹²⁵ McLynn, 2015, P. 25

¹²⁶ “Chinggis Khan and all Mongols worshiped Tenger as their father and the earth as their mother, considering themselves to be governed by the magic forces of the Eternal Sky, which ruled over the land and people below. Chinggis Khan is known to have worshiped the Great Burkhan Khaldun Mountain..and to receive supernatural powers and orders from the Eternal Sky.” (Durighello, 2015, P. 38.)

and the Hun core/elite did indeed remember their (supposed) Xiongnu-Heritage, then probably just this core of the empire would worship him. Thus any charisma gained from this would only be applied to Attila from the view of the high-ranking Huns within his elite. Ardaric and Valamer - leaders of the Gepids and Ostrogoths respectively, and Attila's most valued vassals¹²⁷ - would be less than impressed. It goes without saying that imposing a religion that is Inner-Asian location-specific is futile to impose on Germanic and Sarmatian subjects. In general, the geographical zone of Mongolia gave birth to a very specific nomadic culture with a particular world outlook, one in which does not automatically transfer to the Great Hungarian Plain and the Huns.¹²⁸

Furthermore, Turco-Mongol shamanism had no organised clergy.¹²⁹ This, however, may arguably not have been a problem in the context of Attila and his Huns: Breaking with the existing institutions could very well include the social powers of Ideology - meaning he could also claim the role of religious leader, and thus unify the nomadic part of his empire. Golden indirectly builds on Weber's model of Charismatic Authority when he is claiming that: "Charismatic warlords were expected to possess shamanic or shaman-like powers." This would then be but one of the several qualities Attila could "prove" to have if he for example won a battle after performing scapulimancy prior to it. However, the text revolving Attila's use of Scapulimancy does indicate that he personally did not perform it.¹³⁰

Kradin argues that the Khan on the Central-Asian steppe was a sacred intermediary between society and heaven.¹³¹ He personified the centre of nomadic society, and performed rituals that were thought to induce prosperity and vitality to his empire as a whole.¹³² Looking back to the drinking-drinking ritual at the Feast detailed in Priscus, we see a resemblance. An unfortunate event such as loss of livestock, disease, or the loss of war could be blamed upon the Khan and weaken his charismatic abilities as well.

¹²⁷ Jordanes, *Getica*, XXXVIII, 199

¹²⁸ Bondarenko, 2003, P. 55

¹²⁹ Golden, P. 82

¹³⁰ "This was what the soothsayers had told to Attila in prophecy." (Jordanes, *Getica*, XL, 209)

¹³¹ Kradin, 2002, P. 375

¹³² Where any of these rituals similar to Scapulimancy or Haruspicy as done in Europe? Probably: The Chinese - main rivals of the Xiongnu - saw heat cracks and meanings in scorched turtle-shells as early as the Shang Dynasty in 1500 bc. The Mongols too performed a version of Scapulimancy in which the burned shoulder-bones of sheep were interpreted. (Man, 2008, P. 84)

This seems somehow similar to the situation of Attila, with a key difference: Loss of charisma does not seem to stem from loss of religious authority, as it did with Central Asian steppe-rulers, but from a weakening of his ability to deliver on his Economic promise. It can be argued, then, that a perceived loss of shamanic power would not overall weaken Attila's charisma much.¹³³ But the loss of, for example, a battle (and the economic gain that follows, with looting and pillaging), is much more universal and would be perceived as a weakening of Attila's charismatic abilities by both his nomadic and Germanic subjects across the board.

Ancestor Worship.

Some nomads worship their ancestors. According to Khazanov, is it the aristocracy within nomadic societies that "cultivates knowledge of genealogies and manipulates them so as to give an ideological basis to their ruling positions."¹³⁴ But this must again be divided into two distinct types: one in which is dedicated to actual ancestors, and one who is closely related to the heavenly mandate to rule: Mythical ancestors and origin. An example of the latter is the ruling clan of Genghis Khan - The Borjigid - claiming direct descent from the founding father of all Mongols: Batachikhan, the first Mongol, was the result of the mating between a male blue-grey wolf and a fallow deer.¹³⁵ One of the myths of Hun origin, according to Jordanes, was that one of their warriors traced a doe across the Kerch strait and discovered the new lands to the west.¹³⁶

Later Mongol Khans and Khanates worshipped Genghis long after his death.¹³⁷ Turkic Qaghans looked to their predecessors spirits for guidance.¹³⁸ Sadly, because we have no written sources on Hun ancestor worship, we cannot know if Attila and his clan worshipped anyone. I would theorise

¹³³ Maybe certain parts of his Hun Elite would, due to their possible Central-Asian Heritage.

¹³⁴ Khazanov, 1983, P. 142

¹³⁵ McLynn, 2015, P. 25

¹³⁶ "At one time, while hunters of their tribe were as usual seeking for game on the farthest edge of Maeotis, they saw a doe unexpectedly appear to their sight and enter the swamp, acting as guide of the way; now advancing and again standing still. (124) The hunters followed and crossed on foot the Maeotic swamp, which they had supposed was impassable as the sea. Presently the unknown land of Scythia disclosed itself and the doe disappeared." (Getica, XXIV, 123-124)

¹³⁷ Charleux, 2009, S. 3

¹³⁸ Khazanov, 1983, P. 255-56

that notable individuals who performed specific deeds that lead to the Huns supremacy in Europe were perhaps worshipped. Maybe Balamber, who is given credit for assembling enough clans to conquer the Alans and the Goths, was worshipped as a notable Hun ancestor because of this deed? Maybe Ruga and Octar were worshipped for their part in setting up the empire in which Attila continue?¹³⁹ Elaborating on this, maybe they then set a standard for Hun morals and behaviour which all Huns were expected to follow.

Nomad Group-Identity - An Ideology?

While Kradin notes that ideology was never a predominant power-variable in Central-Asian Steppe-Empires, it does then seem that it held a higher position in terms of importance.¹⁴⁰ In my opinion this is arguably because the Steppe-Empires of Central-Asia held a higher percentage of nomadic peoples whom probably worshipped Tengri and/or their ancestors. The importance of the religious aspect bestowed upon the leader did not hold the same weight upon Attila's shoulders as it did in the Central-Asian nomadic empires. Claiming to be the intermediary of Tengri on Earth did not do Attila much use in his empire, because his Huns were fewer than the sedentary peoples.¹⁴¹

There is the notion that nomadic societies lack of "contact" with other clans outside their kinship group and immediate family somehow restricted the development of anything else particularly unifying for the nomads except the cult of live stockbreeding and their form of subsistence. This is not a denial of nomadic culture and corresponding unity, but rather what actually mattered when individual clans bounded together to form smaller chiefdoms. The concept of organisation and the lack of taxation on the individual clans naturally meant independence in religion as well: No bureaucracy in place to interfere or demand with beliefs or ideology.

¹³⁹ Seeing as Ruga and Octar were also Attila's paternal uncles, the worship of them would arguably also give a boost to Attila's Charismatic right to Rule. It goes back to the strengthening of the Khan clan.

¹⁴⁰ Kradin, 2002, P. 375

¹⁴¹ See my discussion on Horses in *Militarism*.

The Great Migration of Peoples.

The Christians serving under Attila had - as discussed - mostly embraced Arian Christianity. According to Halsall, this choice of belief can be seen as the “barbarian” choice of a religion in opposition to that of the Romans.¹⁴² By the 350s, most territories under Western Roman hegemony considered themselves Roman in one way or another. There was a particular idea of Roman Identity - an absolute notion.¹⁴³ The adoption of Roman qualities allowed for political influence, even for those who were not Roman-born, in matters of the politics of the Roman empire. But the Western Roman Empire was weakening: Barbarian Groups were on the move, seizing back territories, all the while the Romans were dependent on many of these for military support.

The notion of an absolute roman identity must naturally have weakened outside of the Roman Power-centre: Aetius, for example, had Attila made a Western Roman General. How desperate must the Romans have been to give such a rank to one of their most dangerous enemies? It was probably to please Attila. But he did not seem to mind: The rank simply gave him a further prefix to meddle in Roman politics and give him an excuse to invade the west.¹⁴⁴ As the Huns gradually seized more territory north of the Danube and gradually rivalling the Romans in power, did the Huns offer a similar alternative to political and ideological influence - an absolute Hun identity in which the subjects of the Hun empire could strive for?

Heather argues that the Romans - in their labour of turning barbarians (or at least landowning elites) - into Roman citizens, dissipated the tension of war and conquest. He argues that the lack of the bureaucracy within the Hun empire was the reason that they could not do the same.¹⁴⁵ But such a statement opens up for a complicated question: Does this mean that an *Organisation* could not offer a sense of identity to those within it? Is there actually a need for the “rules of the games” in which an *Institution* offers? Perhaps then, an Ideology is not possible unless it is rooted in an *Institution* with rules and laws of behaviour, very much like Christianity had done for the Roman empires?

¹⁴² Halsall, 2009, P. 469

¹⁴³ Halsall, 2009, P. 457

¹⁴⁴ Kelly, 2009, P. 172

¹⁴⁵ Heather, 2005, P. 234

The Huns were - in accordance with what Heather has labeled the *Snowball-Theory of movement*¹⁴⁶ - rolling in through the doors of Eastern Europe not as a single people, but successive waves of war bands, picking up and including other societies as they travelled. The Huns have largely been given credit for indirectly initiating the Great Migration of peoples, which saw societies and identities intermix as barbarian groups banded together to form stronger military and political entities looking for new opportunities.

In his chapter *Huns On The Run*, Heather deals in-detail with the concept of identity through and after the Hun rule. He argues that the political entities born out of the end of the empire meant that identity was something not malleable, because groups were much the same both before and after, and only the position of power had changed. Yes, cultural traits and political institutions had been shared between the Ruling Huns and their vassals, but becoming a Hun in identity was undeniably difficult because the notion of “being a Hun” meant to occupy a position of privilege over others. If, say, the Heruli had at some point had enjoyed an evolution of their identities into that of a “Hun”, then the difference between who was in charge (The Huns) and who were vassals (The Heruli) would cease to exist, and thereby also Attila’s Authoritarian-“power-over” right to rule. Generally, Heather argues that the Hun Empire was an “unequal, involuntary confederation”. So perhaps, the crisis of identity between the Huns and their Vassals actually did more harm to the Huns than good?

*“From the subjects’ perspective holding on to a larger group identity offered the likeliest route, when opportunity arose, of throwing off Hunnic Domination.”*¹⁴⁷

This notion that there was an almost unsurpassable identity-barrier between the Huns and their subjects seems to be correct, because Ardaric, king of the Gepids, was able to effectively rally most of the Huns previous subjects upon the death of Attila and win the battle of Nedao in 453, in which the Huns were defeated, and their rule on the Great Hungarian Plain came to an end.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Imagine the Huns as a small snowball, which picks up other societies as its starts rolling, thus becoming bigger as it moves.(Heather, 2009, p. 20)This theory has come to replace the *Invasion Theory*, which we can also call the *Billiard-Ball theory of movement*. In this scenario, People X replace people Y, with no room for error or cultural exchange.(ibid, P. 29) is quite obvious that the Huns did not arrive en masse to Europe - they first sent outriders and independent war bands, before the general population of women, children, elders and their slow-moving carts followed suit. (Kelly, 2005, P. 24-28)

¹⁴⁷ Heather, 2005, P. 263

¹⁴⁸ There are however some strange coincidences around this event. it will be further discussed as the culmination of the entire chapter.

Upon visiting the encampment of Attila, Priscus is surprised to meet a “former” greek among them: He is dressed like a Hun, has a hun wife and children, and seems quite happy to be a part of Onegesius’ retinue: The man was initially a slave, but had won his freedom. The man openly states he prefers the freedom of Hun life and lack of taxation in contrast to the corruption in Roman society. The man had - arguably - adopted a Hun identity. But as Heather points out; this particular individual had been a rich merchant, and an individual of this status may rise up and become a part of Attila’s robber network if he participated with his wealth. Kim offers an alternative to this, saying that the higher strata of non-hun subjects were actually considered Hun nobles both by themselves and the Huns of Attila in order to maintain a superficial (my words) political structure.¹⁴⁹ If the latter is correct, then Hun identity seem to be something very few were able to accomplish, because it denoted a certain point of political influence and personal wealth. So whichever theory is correct, the overall the question of ideology seems inextricably linked with economy.¹⁵⁰

Conclusion of Ideology.

Maenchen-Helfen believes if the Hun empire had lasted longer, it would eventually have adopted a version of Arian Christianity.¹⁵¹ In doing so, the Huns could have laid the foundation for an empire with an ideology that was not just based on economic gain, but also a belief in an Ideology that created unity across the different political entities of their heterogenous empire. From a modern viewpoint on Mann’s sociology, the Huns could perhaps have not only utilised Arian Christianity throughout the existing networks to strengthen their hold, but perhaps create an empire that adhered to laws and regulations - I.E Infrastructural rule?¹⁵² This leads me to think that an *Institution* is arguably better suited for an Ideology than an *Organisation*.

The line of thinking regarding adopting a state-religion is tempting, but not very realistic in the case of the Hun Empire: The acceptance of Arian Christianity would have been the acceptance of several

¹⁴⁹ Kim, 2016, P. 127-128

¹⁵⁰ Heather, 2005, P. 236

¹⁵¹ “Gothic chieftains were almost the equals of Hun nobles. But two generations of slowly growing symbiosis of the upper strata of Hun and Germanic society were too short to bring the Huns over to the religion of the Goths.” (Maenchen-Helfen, 1973, P. 262)

¹⁵² Hall, Schroder, 2005, P. 5-6

institutions, and thus weaken Attila's Charismatic authority: The institution of moral values that comes with Christianity would intrude upon the ways of nomadic life - much in contrast to that of (especially) the politics and the economy of the empire of Attila. Furthermore, these values may very well end up outweighing the political aspect of the idiosyncratic rule of Attila, and thus gradually lead to a loss of Charisma once the institutional norms of the religion start to take hold across the different tribes.¹⁵³

Attila claimed Authoritative, Intensive and Extensive Ideological power when he claimed the sword of Mars as a right to rule the world.¹⁵⁴ However, the *Getica* aside, the sword and Attila's right to rule is never mentioned again. The fact that nomads did not write, and we have no written source regarding whether this Ideology was an Extensive Institution within the Hun Empire, means we can only guess.

The Hun - and perhaps non-Hun nomadic - part of the Empire may have practiced Tengrism, but the distance from the homelands of this religion makes practice hard, especially when no one in the empire had probably even been alive to visit Mongolia.¹⁵⁵ The illiteracy of nomads - and the Huns - would then make it an oral tradition as well, one in which would probably be fading into obscurity as the Huns turned into a sedentary lifestyle and were intermingling with Germanic culture.¹⁵⁶ Having one particular tribe be devoted to Tenghri - or a few more - could be considered Intensive power, yes, but in the grand scheme of things it would have very little impact on the empire as a whole.

¹⁵³ As MacFarland notes, which strengthens this assumption: "Religion is a core component of society, along with political, economic and social concerns. Religion is both about social experience and individual; it is expressed in both action and thought; it is a way to care for a person's psychological well-being and serve a communal function as an institution." (MacFarland, 2010, P. 9)

¹⁵⁴ As Man comments: "As leaders often do, Attila boosted his natural self-confidence by rewriting tradition so that it supported his rise to power." (Man, 2008, P. 174)

¹⁵⁵ A relationship to Mongolia, which runs parallel to a possible heritage with the Xiongnu, has the so-called "problem" of the two-hundred year interlude, in which the Xiongnu faded from history and the Huns erupted into Eastern Europe. (See Kim, 2016, Chapter 2: *The So-Called "Two-hundred years interlude"*, P. 37-44)

¹⁵⁶ Kim, 2016, P. 164-170

The same goes for Ancestor Worship; While similar instances have certainly been traced with the Goths, they do not share anything else in common. The Goths, the other Germanic peoples, and Sarmatians would find very little to no ideological boost in Attila claiming to be descendent from some distant individual regarded highly by the Huns. On the contrary, it might even have reminded them on the atrocities and conquests Attila's predecessors did to their peoples.

So as a conclusion, i would argue that the empire of the Huns was in no means held together by any sort of Ideology overall. The religious practices found amongst different peoples is proof of cultural exchange and evolution, but this cannot be argued as any sort of common ideology outside the smaller networks they were contained: Rather it must have been natural phenomena occurring when different peoples cooperate and exist. The Empire relied solely on Attila's Charisma - not heavenly Charisma in the form of an ideologically granted right to rule - but rather Charismatic Authority and Authoritarian ability to coordinate the Hun Empire's Economic revenue.

Chapter Two: Economy.

Much scholarly attention has been given to the Huns relationship with the Romans. Geographically speaking, Hungary was beneficial for ruling an empire that was dependent on extorting the Roman empires of the western world through campaigns, yearly revenues, and direct extortion.¹⁵⁷ While the later empire under Attila saw political relations sour, the earlier Hun leaders had lent their armies to (Particularly Western-)Roman aid as mercenaries, while smaller independent Hun retinues often entered service as *Bucelari* for high-ranking (and high-paying) Romans.¹⁵⁸ Most Important to Attila and his later predecessors, however, was the annual influx of gold in the form of tribute. With the gold came diplomatic exchange, which brought with it spices, wine, jewellery and other commodities in which the Huns were taking a liking to.¹⁵⁹ The sources for this are plentiful, and describes the Huns demands as less than modest.¹⁶⁰

But Hungary was also a very important chokepoint in terms of taking economic advantage of sedentary peoples/allies inside the empire. Because the majority of documented revenue came from the enemy, there is a tendency in history to see the economic exploitation by the Huns of sedentary societies as mainly an outside-facing economy: The target of Hun mischief seems to always be both of the Roman Empires, The Sassanids, and their respective provinces. But If we cast our net a little wider than the stereotypical impression of the Huns, we come to realise that a majority of Hun exploitation of sedentary societies were also targeted at their own allies: the Germanic-speaking peoples. But there is yet to be made a proper evaluation of the internal dynamics of Hun economy. This is arguably because we lack any literary evidence to analyse what went on inside the empire -

¹⁵⁷ “The stability of steppe-empires directly depended on the ability of the imperial confederation to extract silk, agricultural products, handicraft articles and delicate jewels from the settled territories. As these products could not be produced under conditions of a stockbreeding economy, obtaining them by use of force or extortion was the priority task of the ruler of nomadic society.” (Kradin, 2002, P. 374)

¹⁵⁸ The Employment of barbarian mercenaries as a personal retinue and/or bodyguard. (Hughes, 2019, p. 54)

¹⁵⁹ “We greeted her and exchanged as gifts three silver bowls, some red hides, pepper from India, the fruit of date-palm trees, and other fruits that were valuable to the barbarians because they did not grow locally.” (Priscus, Fr. 8. 73.)

¹⁶⁰ According to Priscus, roman noblemen had to sell their furniture and wives’ jewellery to pay the collectors of the state following the increased tax because of Attila’s heavy demands. (See this exact excerpt from Priscus at page 64.)This is probably exaggeration to paint the Huns as greedy, but the sum was still enormous.(Maenchen-Helfen, 1973, P. 114).

after all, the Huns wrote nothing themselves. The only documented bureaucracy in place was Orestes - a Roman statesman lent to the Huns who knew many languages - and Rusticus, a Roman prisoner whom kept track of certain affairs such as slaves, refugees and translations with diplomats.¹⁶¹

The Purpose of this Chapter: The Economic Network(s) of The Huns.

The social theories of Mann, and *Violence and Social orders* by North will prove applicable to this analysis because they allow us to examine social and economic relations as different parts of economic networks. In this chapter i will analyse the economic networks between the Huns and their enemies, their vassal peoples, and those dependent on them - and vice versa.

The chapter will be divided into three parts. Through the scope of Nomadologist A.M Khazanov and his work *Nomads and the Outside World*, we will first look at the general concept of Semi-Pastoral nomadism through modern ethnographical studies on nomads throughout Eurasian history. We will study the nomads relationship with the economies of sedentary societies - in which was typically troublesome and one not always of mutual dependence or interest.¹⁶² This will then be applied to the Huns. It is usable here, because most nomadic peoples, especially in Eurasia, were dependent on these different societies in which they neighboured. Even while they were clans on the Eastern Steppes, the Huns most certainly depended on the agrarian communities outside and in between the steppe-zone for subsidies in food, woodworking, tools, and likewise benefitted these societies with long-distance trading and livestock.¹⁶³ More often than not, however, desire for these resources led to instances of predatory raids and fighting, usually instigated by the nomads.¹⁶⁴ The situation on the plains of Hungary, which were much smaller, intensified and complicated the situation between nomads and sedentary peoples even more.

The second part will detail economic practices documented in the ancient sources. These will then be analysed using *Economic Anthropology*. I will analyse these economic practices and follow suit

¹⁶¹(Maenchen-Helfen, 1973, P. 376-377), (Priscus, fr. 11,2)

¹⁶² “Historically, nomadic societies has continually sought to open the door to sedentary society to gain access to the goods and products of urban and agrarian production and not the reverse. (Golden, 2001, P. 87)

¹⁶³ Kelly, 2009, P. 27

of three different types of relations: These are the concepts of *Exchange* (Trade), *Reciprocity* (Gift-exchange), and *Redistribution* (Tribute and The Gift-Economy), as presented by Seland.¹⁶⁵ As the paragraphs on pastoralism will explain, nomads are very active in trade because their economy of pastoral nomadism is non-autarkic. Taxation is a particularly lacking concept in nomad social infrastructures, and the importance of this among the Huns will be discussed. The Tribute from the Romans is by and far the most known concept of economy in which the Huns actions have been documented thoroughly (In the few instances the Huns actually *are* documented). Furthermore, we will look into The *Gift-Economy*; a nomadic practice which holds not only economic importance; the redistribution of it is as much a means to political social power and social differentiation among nomads in their empires as it is an economic social power.

Finally we will come to to the third part, analysing Hun economic practices through the theories of Mann and North, followed by a conclusion of Economic Social power and Charisma.

Part 1 - A Basic introduction to Nomadic Pastoralism - A Food-Producing Economy.

Pastoral Nomadism is first and foremost a food-producing economy.¹⁶⁶ More specifically it is a “production towards the requirement of subsistence:” Nomads produced for survival.¹⁶⁷ This means the predominant form and emergence of the concept of pastoral nomadism is based around economy rather than cultural, political or ideological powers. The extensive economic character of pastoral nomadism is connected with the maintenance of herds, the all-year free-range grazing of animals, periodic movements and mobility connected with access to specific grazing territories (not to be confused with migration), and the participation of (usually) the majority of the population society in the periodic pastoral movement and attendance to the herds of animals.¹⁶⁸ The fact that the very core of nomadic life & society is founded upon an economic social power - in which other social powers have a subservient position - means there is need for a brief explanation of the economic concept of Pastoral Nomadism and its relevant sub-variant(s) before continuing.

¹⁶⁵ Seland, P. 35

¹⁶⁶ Khazanov, 1983, P. 16

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ See (Khazanov, 1983, Chapter 1: *Nomadism as a distinct form of food-producing Economy.*)

Semi-Nomadic Pastoralism & The need for Subsistence.

The character of *Subsistence* is such that any surplus of meat or animals were not directly intended for trade, but were still expected.¹⁶⁹ A good season which yielded a favourable amount of livestock which went beyond the immediate economic need of the nomadic community would to a considerable extent be traded with the sedentary communities neighbouring the nomads for items in which they needed, and in which their economy prevented:¹⁷⁰ Pastoral Nomadism is a non-autarkic economic concept and lifestyle, which means it cannot sustain itself on its own. Essentially, all nomadic societies are depended on the outside world: Livestock and meat would be traded for secondary supplements.¹⁷¹

For the aforementioned reason, most forms of nomadism are not pure, but to a certain degree practice both agriculture and - to a lesser point - sedentary living (to produce tools, etc).¹⁷² The most common one is Semi-Nomadism. It is characterised by extensive pastoralism and seasonal movement, but with agriculture and also hunting and foraging of wild game as a secondary supplement.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹“Subsistence”, or “Subsistence-economy”, means the minimal resources that are necessary for survival.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, P. 16

¹⁷¹ “The mobile life of of pastoral nomads did not provide the opportunity to make great accumulations (livestock could be accumulated but the quantities were limited by the productivity of the pastures and this natural “bank” could at any instant go bankrupt due to drought or snowstorm.)” (Kradin, 2002, P. 380)

¹⁷² It so happens that impoverish nomads have been forced more often than others nomads to seek supplementary sources of subsistence and in the process not infrequently have become sedentary. (Khaznaov, 1973, P. 70)

¹⁷³ There are many sub-types of nomadism. Another one is *semi-sedentary pastoralism* which has agriculture as the predominant aspect, and pastoral migration as a secondary supplement. There is also *Herdsman Husbandry*, in which there are specialist pastoral individuals among the peoples who move with the animals of a society through parts of the year while the majority of the population has become sedentary. These variations are all dependent on the ecological and economical possibilities and stances of peoples, as well as their relation with the outside world. (See Khazanov, 1983, P. 19-23) On fishing and hunting. (ibid. P. 78)

This is a further testament to the non-autarkic economy of all manners of pastoral nomadism and their dependence on secondary economic activities of subsistence.¹⁷⁴ Krader builds on this, calling the agricultural aspect of Semi-Nomadism: “a supplementary form of subsistence.” Semi-nomadism is also non-autarkic, just like pastoral nomadism.¹⁷⁵ While Semi-nomadism entails the presence of agriculture to a certain extent to compensate for the economic instability of pastoral nomadism, it is still not enough to alleviate the nomads of their dependence on the sedentary societies:

“However, a specialised pastoral economy (Semi-Nomadism), in contrast to the economy of many comparable forms of agriculture, itself cannot provide even all the immediate requirements for nomads. Nomadism is practically inseparable..(.) from supplementary forms of economic activity..”¹⁷⁶

This is also why Nomadic expansion so often has led to warfare with sedentary societies; when the nomads have nothing to offer in terms of trade, the sheer need for survival means they turn to their prowess in warfare to extract what could not be acquired by trade with these societies.¹⁷⁷ The agricultural surplus the Huns were so desperately in need of, and in which they only partially

¹⁷⁴ Very few societies are in fact “Autarkic”, as Seland notes. (Seland, P. 31) I would argue that while sedentary societies are less dependent on others than Semi-Nomadic pastoral societies, their practice of a mixed economy makes it more safe. Semi-Pastoral Nomadism is inherently unstable because Nomads were typically not particularly skilled or devoted to the agricultural secondary subsistence. Neither did their way of life allow for the technological advancements needed to properly cultivate land (Khazanov, 1983, P. 17) As Khazanov notes: “in the opposition between nomadism and sedentarism..(.)..the agriculture at stake is the most important criteria.”(ibid, P. 25)

¹⁷⁵ “Because their economy is more complex, semi-nomads feel these same needs less acutely than nomads do, but they still do feel them.” (Khazanov, 1983, P. 198)

¹⁷⁶ Khazanov, 1983, P. 70

¹⁷⁷ Nomads of Eurasia have never been able to manage economically on their own. An example is the Uzbeks and Kazakhs who would raid the agricultural regions of Maverannahr in winter, when their subsistence from livestock were low. The Kazakhs would also raid for “clothing and cotton garments.” (Khazanov, 1973, P. 82)

produced themselves, may have been the instigator that caused such fissure between them and their non-nomadic subject peoples.¹⁷⁸

Huns & Semi-Nomadism - Prior to Conquest and Arrival in Europe.

“No one in their country ever plows a field or touches a plow-handle. They are all without fixed abode, without hearth, or law, or settled mode of life, and keep roaming from place to place, like fugitives, accompanied by the wagons in which they live; in wagons their wives weave for them their hideous garments, in wagons they cohabit with their husbands, bear children, and rear them to the age of puberty. None of their offspring, when asked, can tell you where he comes from, since he was conceived in one place, born far from there, and brought up still farther away.”¹⁷⁹

Ammianus is denying The Huns any knowledge of agriculture. This is - as we can deduce by ethnography of nomadic peoples - arguably wrong. Sadly, there are no literary evidence which can prove this, neither can we attest the archeological remains found throughout the steppe as proof entirely because we do not for sure know where the Huns came from, and we cannot wholly differentiate Hun remains from that of other nomads. It is like finding the needle in a haystack. However, several individual finds which are found and dated to the presence of nomads in the area, stretching from present-day Hungary across Kazakhstan, does alleviate our skepticism a little.¹⁸⁰

Also, the agricultural aspect of nomadic economy would arguably vary in intensity depending on the geographical location:¹⁸¹ Some Hun clans would inhabit more fertile regions, practicing

¹⁷⁸ I am by no means arguing that the majority of hun economic substance came from their sedentary peoples; that was still the gold and valuable items from the Romans. But the more common objects of *subsistence*; agricultural surplus etc - were most likely attained from Ostrogoths and the other sedentary peoples of the Hun Empire.

¹⁷⁹ Ammianus, 2, 10

¹⁸⁰ A sickle from a Gepid grave in Hungary, as well as corn-millet for grinding excavated around Elista, north in the Caucasus. Corn-grinder has also been found in Kazakhstan, and generally been attributed to nomads. (Maenchen, 1973, P. 174-8) However, these may also be the objects of long-distance trading. But as a counter-argument to this; i would argue that such items are typically not valuable enough for nomads to carry them for anyone; not themselves nor sedentary peoples.

¹⁸¹ “Pastoral Nomadism can be looked upon as an answer dictated by the environment..” (Khazanov, 1983, P. 69)

agriculture to an extended degree while pastoralism was still the predominant force. For other clans with less geographical preconditions for agriculture a more intensive relationship with their sedentary neighbour societies and their granaries would be important, while still producing some themselves.¹⁸² To suggest that some of the Huns did not at all have such a subsistence is not tenable: Their basic human needs demanded it. For example; the dietary systems of nomads consists of two basic elements: one is meat and milk, and the other is vegetables from agriculture as supplement.¹⁸³

Whether the Huns practiced sedentary living on the Eastern steppes is also not clear. The *Xiongnu* had over thirty fortified towns at the height of their empire.¹⁸⁴ Tut the Huns at this point are divided clans, so a comparison might no be entirely justified.

Nomadism & Subsistence: The Emergence of Nomadic empires.

The Xiongnu were noted for the presence of agriculture within many of their tribes.¹⁸⁵ The Scythians, The Khazars, the Tatars of the Golden Horde, the Turks and the Crimean Tatars were also - according to Khazanov - Semi-nomadic peoples.¹⁸⁶ What all these nomadic empires have in common, is their reliance upon agriculture as subsistence, but a lack of infrastructure in order to effectively achieve it: According to Kradin, it is the peculiar weakness of nomadic social evolution that an increase in structural differentiation, complex technologies and functional specialisation did not take place when nomads came together to form states and empires.¹⁸⁷ A total increase in the amount of peoples saw to the military strengthening of the empire as a whole (due to submission of conquered tribes). Social stratification certainly also happened to differentiate the rulers from the

¹⁸² “The entire temperate zone of Eurasia subdivides more or less neatly into areas favourable for agriculture, areas favourable for extensive pastoralism and marginal areas in which both these forms of economic activity are possible. (Khazanov, 1983, P. 44)

¹⁸³ Khazanov, 1983, P. 52

¹⁸⁴ The Xiongnu had fortified towns all across Mongolia, Xinjiang and the Gansu corridor. The town of Ivolga apparently held carpenters, masons and even farmers. (Man, 2008, P. 55)

¹⁸⁵ Khazanov, 1983, P. 45

¹⁸⁶ Even the Mongol-Empire can as a whole be considered Semi-nomadic from a point of view. However, there were implicit laws in place which forbade the Mongols of practicing agriculture themselves, rather resorting to the conquered sedentary peoples in providing them with grain and secondary supplements. (Khazanov, 1983, P. 235)

¹⁸⁷ Kradin, 2002, P. 370

ruled (an increase in hierarchical levels), but only so far as there was need for an elite to keep it all together: nomads typically lay aside their quarrels with each other when there poses a need to display a “common front”: Such as a perceived common enemy would arguably be the sedentary neighbours of nomads. Uniting to achieve a certain level of military strength was the optimal way to obtain the agricultural and material subsistence in which the food-producing economy that nomadic pastoralism otherwise denies.¹⁸⁸

We can also see that these events - thoroughly fuelled by the one-sidedness of pastoral nomadic economy - are independent of their location on the Eurasian Steppe: The Scythians and the Crimean Tatars define the extreme west, while the tribes of the Xiongnu the corresponding east.¹⁸⁹ The Huns were somewhere between all of this, both geographically speaking and in the sense of time: The Scythians and Xiongnu preceeded them, and the Turks, Khazars and Crimean Tatars followed them. There is no particular reason to suppose that the clans of the Huns were different on a general level of economic social power than these peoples prior to their move and conquests in Europe:¹⁹⁰

At the Doorstep of Europe: Nomadic Societies are not Static.

Semi-Nomadism is often considered a transitional stage between nomadism and sedentary living, or sometimes a mixed economy.¹⁹¹ Nomadic societies are not static on any level in their society: The nuclear families of nomads are bound to break up eventually due to cultural practices. The *primary*

¹⁸⁸ “Settled agricultural societies outside the steppes were often exponentially more populous, established more defensible permanent fortifications, and developed more complex subsistence economies and craft industries.” (Kradin, 2011, P. 78)

¹⁸⁹ If we follow suit of most historians, we define the western border of the Eurasian Steppe as the eastern bank of the Danube, a river which runs through Pannonia and which has typically been regarded as a “barrier” between the civilised life of the Greco-Roman world and the Barbarian North-east and Pontic steppe.

¹⁹⁰ while no economic stance is static - neither that of Nomadic pastoralism, semi-nomadism or sedentary societies - Pastoral nomadism and its sub-variants may all-together be regarded as different ways of economic adaption. Due to the low technological development and varying ecological situations of Nomads, pastoralism in all its versions will always be a very specific economic and cultural way of life. (Khazanov, 1983, P. 36), (Khazanov, 1983, P. 69)

¹⁹¹ (ibid, P.21) as examples, Kradin notes the Ottoman Empire, the Seljuk-states and Arabian Caliphates as “Mixed agricultural/pastoral empires”. (Kradin, P. 374) These empires had roots from pastoral nomadism, and due to ecological positioning, many peoples within the empire kept a semi-nomadic way of life even as the main body and aristocracy became sedentary.

kin group of nomads is a social organisation in itself.¹⁹² Khazanov notes that:

*“The mobility of nomads and the permanent instability pastoral economy give rise to a fluid social organisation, which is capable of change and which has the requisite segmentary means with which to accomplish this.”*¹⁹³

It is also not uncommon to see a transition from nomadism to sedentary living, or the other way around: The Elite of Nomadic-empires are usually the first to become sedentary in order to create a “centre” for the new government. Typically, nomadic societies who intermingle closely with sedentary societies or oppose conquest upon them sometimes become sedentary themselves. Example of this are the Kushans or the Hephthalites (sometimes known as the “White Huns”).¹⁹⁴ It all depends on the ecological and sociopolitical situation the nomads of that particular historical context face. We may even take it as far as Kim, who suggests that the Huns were no longer a “nomadic empire” under Attila, because of their tendency towards an agricultural base.¹⁹⁵

Sedentary Living.

*“we arrived at a large village, where Attila's house was said to be more splendid than his residences in other places. It was made of polished boards, and surrounded with a wooden enclosure, designed, not for protection, but for appearance. The house of Onegesius was second to the king's in splendour, and was also encircled with a wooden enclosure, but it was not adorned with towers like that of the king. Not far from the enclosure was a large bath which Onegesius—who was the second in power among the Scythians-- built, having transported the stones from Pannonia; for the barbarians in this district had no stones or trees, but used imported material.”*¹⁹⁶

The description of Attila’s village on the Great Hungarian Plain in *Priscus* most certainly does not sound like the savage Huns of Ammianus’ description seventy years earlier. Attila and his most

¹⁹² Khazanov, 1983, P. 128

¹⁹³ *ibid.* P. 139

¹⁹⁴ Xinru, 2001, P. 261-292

¹⁹⁵ Kim, 2016, P. 84

¹⁹⁶ Priscus, Fr. 11. 2

powerful subordinates now have houses. At least the aristocracy of the Huns practiced sedentary living at this point; likely for both economical and political reasons.¹⁹⁷

*“The emergence of a nomadic state was linked with a least limited sedentarization. Thus, a nomadic aristocracy could not do without towns which were the centres of political power, handicrafts and trade.”*¹⁹⁸

Khazanov notes that transition to sedentary living usually is not beneficial for all strata of nomadic societies.¹⁹⁹ Because of this I am inclined to believe that the majority of Huns transitioned to a *Mixed Economy*, or *Semi-Sedentary Pastoralism*. These two differ very little, but i have included both as they are arguably a natural evolution of semi-nomadism when it faces the ecological demands that agriculture outweighs the economic benefits of *Semi-Nomadism*.²⁰⁰

Those who lived in villages were probably like this, in which parts of the families moved with animals, while others tended to agriculture. Some would still adhere to semi-nomadism, living in symbiosis with those clans of Huns - as well as Germanic subjects -²⁰¹ whom more or less turned sedentary due to the diverse ecological zones of Hungary. Lindner makes a case in point when he notes that the Bath-house of Onegesius and the splendid towers of Attila were a sign that the “prestige” of the Hun empire was in fact more and more measured by sedentary materialism rather than nomadic culture.²⁰² However such a denotation must be carefully made: It was arguably still

¹⁹⁷ “The mobile nomads could effect the conquest of a sedentary people, but this usually resulted in the sedentarization of the ruling clan and the nomadic elite, since they needed a “capital” from which to govern their new empires. (Hughes, 2019, P. 32)

¹⁹⁸ Khazanov, 183, P. 232

¹⁹⁹ *ibid*, P. 199

²⁰⁰ Semi-sedentary Pastoralism is agriculture as the predominant food-producing economy, while seasonal pastoralism is still quite widespread among certain groups. Forde once called it “Sedentary cultivators with the auxiliary herding.”(Forde, 1963, P. 404) Barth has similarly labeled it as “mixed farming.” (Barth, 1976, P. 75) (Both authors’ quotations are taken from Khazanov, 1983, P. 21)

²⁰¹ Kelly argues that a minority of the Huns - I.E the Elite - with a distinct and recognisable culture, persisted in the old ways, but the majority followed suit of the Goths and adopted sedentary qualities. (Kelly, 2009, P. 51)

²⁰² “The prestige now sought by the Huns was defined in settled, not pastoral, terms. This prestige arose from an admiration of sedentary glory, not the glory accruing to a chief who provided and protected rich pastures for his tribesmen.” (Lindner, 1981, P. 10) We see that Lindner is in disagreement with Kelly in the previous footnote.

important for Attila to distinct the proud warriors on horseback from their Non-Hun subjects.²⁰³ This is alleviated, yet countered, by the theory of Hughes whom believe that the Elite and several of the Huns in a somehow contradictory sense remained both nomadic and sedentary at the same time: Mostly sedentary because it was economically profitable, but kept a strong nomadic element of horses to maintain their heritage and military superiority over the sedentary societies.²⁰⁴

Hun Villages?

“The Scythians of the village sprang out of their huts at the noise, and, lighting the reeds which they use for kindling fires, asked what we wanted. Our conductors replied that the storm had alarmed us; so they invited us to their huts and provided warmth for us by lighting large fires of reeds. The lady who governed the village- -she had been one of Bleda's wives.”²⁰⁵

Priscus and his company stays a night at a village under the protection of a widow of Bleda. This village may - like Priscus indicates - be another one of Attila's villages.²⁰⁶ We should assume that the majority of villages such as these were Hun in nature. But it may not necessarily be the case. Heather mentions that Attila brought most of the people he conquered with him onto the Great Hungarian Plain.²⁰⁷ This would, if true, mean that some of these villages could be both Ostrogothic, Sarmatian, or even Gepid, Heruli, Rugi or Scirian.²⁰⁸ Heather elaborates, arguing that the movement of these people from Ukraine and surrounding areas into Pannonia was done so to create a

²⁰³ Lindner's argument that the presence of siege machines meant the nomads themselves built them - and that this was indication of a total changer of warfare from horseback to infantry - cannot be taken at face value.(ibid, P. 10) The Huns had, as we have seen, plenty of Roman and Germanic slaves who likely built them. They also had germanic and nomadic infantry to do their part in sieges. More on this in Militarism.

²⁰⁴ Hughes, 2019, P. 32-33

²⁰⁵ibid. 260, 83-84

²⁰⁶ It may seem contradictory that Attila has chieftom over a village under the protection of the widow of his slain brother. But in mongol custom, a man inherits the wife of his father or brother if they die. This may have been the case among the Huns as well; A Central/East-Asian cultural practice..

²⁰⁷ (Heather, 2008, P.) Yet i am in this regard inclined to stay sceptical of such a notion. First off, Heather provides no proper sources for this, he merely states it. Secondly, such a forced migration would arguably not profit anyone, neither the nomads nor the germanic-speaking peoples or Sarmatians. Nomads need large areas of uncultivated land for their herds. Upheaving two different economic spheres - Sedentary and Nomadism - and forcing them together is a recipe for economic disaster and revolt.

²⁰⁸ The fourth-century territories of these peoples had all been east of the Carpathians. (Heather, 2008, P. 222)

protective ring around Hun core lands.²⁰⁹ The lack of literary and archaeological evidence means we can only guess.²¹⁰ If the Ostrogoths were in charge of building Attila's house - as Maenchen-Helfen suggested²¹¹ - then this is very plausible. Compliment this with the fact that the Ostrogoths under Attila shared power between three brothers, then the assumption that maybe one of them has brought his people to live close by his overlord for protection from the others may not be entirely impossible.²¹²

Huns and Vassals - Pastures versus Agriculture in Pannonia.

Once settled on the Great Hungarian Plain, the notion of whether the Huns were still Semi-nomadic or became (partially) sedentary had consequences not only for their own economy, but for their Germanic-speaking subjects too. The one-sidedness and instability of semi-nomadism not infrequently led to the cultivation of turning agricultural territories into pastures.²¹³ This can lead to an artificial extension of the ecological zone. But this is usually not of mutual benefit: The nomadic Huns would have to migrate over agricultural zones, trampling the crops and likely instigating quarrels with the sedentary societies whose economy was being destroyed.²¹⁴ As such they are usually only applicable in situations where nomads occupy the predominant position through sheer

²⁰⁹ Heather, 1996, P. 117

²¹⁰ (Heather, 2008, P. 229) Plenty is written of the Ostrogoths before and after the Huns, but for the eighty years they reigned supreme, our sources on them remain more or less quiet.

²¹¹ Maenchen-Helfen, 1973, P. 180

²¹² Heather notes that the Amal family - the most powerful ostrogothic faction, led by Valamer - moved their main body over the carpathian mountains only after the death of Attila, although they had recognised his overlordship already in the 440s. (Heather, 2009 P. 222) Valamer seized full control of the Ostrogoths - surpassing his brothers Theodemir and Vidimer - and ruling until his death in 468 at the hands of remaining Huns under the leadership of Attila's son Dengizich. (Kim, 2016, P. 125) However, smaller war bands and factions are found in the Middle Danube Region during the reign of Attila. (Heather, 2005, P. 246)

²¹³ Khazanov, 1983, P. 79

²¹⁴ (Khazanov, 1983, P. 50) "It can be assumed that the lower strata of Hun society (perhaps conquered populations) continued, as they have always done, with the tilling of the soil. "(Sinor, 1990, P. 205) Sinor probably means the sedentary societies of the Hun Empire here. But the lack of a discussion of identity of the Huns in 1990 shows how all peoples within the Hun empire - regardless of being Nomadic or Germanic in an economic sense - are perceived as being one and the same.

military strength and violence; such a forced extension of the nomad economy is also only possible when the nomads are the predominant force.²¹⁵

*“livestock cannot be hoarded or amassed to infinite amounts in a single area. Thus, despite any potentials of productivity in pastoral economies, maximum accumulation quantity of livestock in any individual locale is limited by the pasture quality of the landscape.”*²¹⁶

As Kradin notes here, another problem of nomadism arises when less area is ecologically available for the nomadic economy. Unlike products of agriculture and horticulture, livestock cannot be stored away. In the sense of over-population on the steppes, nomads define it by the size of their herds, not the amount of people; a large area of grassland is required for even just a few animals.²¹⁷

The Huns would likely take full control of the The Great Hungarian Plain steppe-zone. They had the military power to seize it, and their continued strength relied on this pastureland to supply their horses to have an advantage over their enemies.²¹⁸ From ethnographical studies we know that borders are actually very important to Nomads, contrary to what the seemingly low social differentiation of their societies may indicate.²¹⁹ The right to certain pastures and territory in this regard is dependent on it.²²⁰ To the Kazakhs it was considered of great shame to follow in another

²¹⁵ Khazanov, 1983, P. 79

²¹⁶ Kradin, 2011, P. 78

²¹⁷ *“The Kirghiz rarely roam in great numbers in one place, for then their herds are crowded; but associations consist of several families which are connect by kinship or mutual need, and they move together from one camp to another and do not separate without specific reason.”* (Khazanov, 1983, P. 132. - The original document by levshin is from 1832, and i could not uncover it.)

Khazanov comments on this, adding that Kirghiz/Kazakh primary kin groups rarely consists of more than 3-4 families. (Khazanov, 1983, P. 132) This is a good example of how “over-population” holds another meaning to nomads.

²¹⁸ See my discussion on Horses under the next chapter: Militarism. The area of land available to the Nomads in terms of grazing and the extension of pastoral economy; some 140 000 kvm².

²¹⁹ Nomads had little-to-no notion of class struggles, but were familiar with inter-ethnic struggles. (Bondarenko, 2003, P. 53)

²²⁰ Ownership in nomadic societies has always been problematic. But typically, all lands of the nomads were the property of the Khan, and the sub-societies and peoples were granted the right to use them on a seasonal basis.

clans route and migration pattern.²²¹ The royalty of the Mongols of the nineteenth century marked out certain pieces of land that could only be used by them.²²² It is not difficult to understand why when the economic social power and question of subsistence is at stake.

The Abuse of the Huns.

*“These men have no concern for agriculture, but, like wolves, attack and steal the Goths’ food supplies, with the result that the latter remain in a position of slaves and themselves suffer food shortages. As a result, the Goths occupied a position of servitude and could not provide their own sustenance, although the Gothic race had long persisted without a treaty with the Huns, even from the time of their forefathers who swore they would escape their alliance with them.”*²²³

This excerpt from Priscus is dated after the death of Attila regarding the unfair treatment a faction of Ostrogoths received by one of his Sons, Dengizich. This was probably a continuation of a long-standing tradition that Attila had enforced as well. While Semi-nomadism entails agriculture as a secondary subsistence, it is still not enough to alleviate the needs of nomads.²²⁴ Perhaps the Huns followed suit of the Xiongnu, forcing sedentary peoples and prisoners to develop and work agricultural-, and handicraft sectors within Pannonia?²²⁵ The Mongols considered agriculture to be beneath them and preferred to extract the products they needed from the sedentary populations they had conquered.²²⁶ Apparently, according to Kim, the Huns forced roman slaves to work their agricultural sectors.²²⁷ Lenski adds to this notion, arguing that much of the agricultural base of the Hun Empire in Pannonia was probably worked by roman slaves, which in turned had effects on overall Hun economy.²²⁸

²²¹ Khazanov, 1983, P. 52

²²² Khazanov, 1983, P. 124.

²²³ Priscus, fr, 49, Blockley,(1983) (356)

²²⁴ “Pastoral Nomadism is doomed to stagnation because its economy is extensive and allows no permanent solution to the problem of balance at the expense of intensification of production” (Khazanov, 1983, P. 71)

²²⁵ *ibid*, P. 254

²²⁶ *ibid*, P. 243

²²⁷ (Kim, 2016, 84) Kim’s sources are dubious: He is himself referring to second-hand literature.

²²⁸ Lenski, 2015, P. 239

The Great Hungarian Plain was not an unusual place for nomads and sedentary peoples to live side by side; but it was often accompanied by clashes and fighting. This was arguably a major reason for the end of the Hun empire: The death of Attila and subsequent dividing of the Empire by his sons led to a politically weakened and fragmented Hun leadership, in which the oppressive economy could no longer be maintained. The lack of political institutions (“Power Through” society) and a government to mediate quarrels between the nomads themselves and the sedentary peoples of the area would likely get out of hand quite easily:²²⁹

“As he (Attila) stood with Onegesios before the house, many men feuding with each other approached and received his judgement. Then he went up to the house and received barbarian ambassadors who had come to him.”²³⁰

The Authoritative Organisation of Attila arguably meant that many types of larger quarrels between nomad clans would have to be settled directly by Attila or his elite themselves, because *Authoritative* power was necessary to oversee that the sedentary peoples did not revolt or cause internal unrest.

Part Two: Economic Anthropology and Economic Practices.

Exchange - Trade.

Because Semi-Nomadism entails regular and necessary contact with sedentary-societies, it has been an understanding in academia that the Huns pushed heavily in favour of trade with their typical enemies, the Romans. Scholars like Sinor believes the Huns used the gold received from tribute to buy supplies from the romans all-year round, thus putting the gold back into roman hands.²³¹ Thompson equally believes the Romans favoured a stimulated economic relationship with the barbarians on a large scale.²³² Similarly, Barfield - on the topic of the Xiongnu on an ethnographic

²²⁹ “The nature of the stages which emerged as a result of subjugation or conquest by nomads of agriculturalists was to a great extent determined by the socioeconomic relations established between conquerors and conquered.” (Ibid, P. 231)

²³⁰ Priscus, Fr. 8, 134. *trans*, Givens. 2014.

²³¹ Sinor, 1990, P. 205

²³² Thompson, 1948, P. 176

note - suggests that their constant raids were a pressure upon Han China to open up the trading posts on the borders between the two empires.

A closer look, however, will reveal that this was probably not the case for the Huns. According to Priscus - Who is our only source mentioning trade between Romans and Huns - the Imperial government of Rome only opened for trade between the Hun Empire and the Romans once a year at a specific location.²³³ A similar treaty was formalised between the Visigoths and the Romans in 369,²³⁴ and between Persia and Rome, trade was allowed at three places only after a treaty in 409.

The Huns with their mixed economy were by now able to either produce most tools themselves or - as we have seen - seize it from their sedentary subjects:²³⁵ When Priscus and his Roman party were permitted to stay in Attila's encampment during their visit, Attila explicitly forbade them in trading with any Huns they encountered.²³⁶ Thus it may be so that the sedentary societies in which Attila and his Huns acquired their agricultural goods and the likes were from the peoples settled within his own empire rather than the enemy.²³⁷

I am in league with Maenchen-Helfen on agreeing that trade between the Huns and the Romans was negligible.²³⁸ Arguably, the Romans would not let the Huns gain their hands on items they believed the Huns could not produce themselves. The denial of trade in his own village indicates that Attila held a similar sceptic towards the Romans, and suspected foul political play from them under the guise of trade: An example is Onegesius, who resisted and was angered at such an offer, which was disguised as a privileged position of diplomacy in Constantinople.²³⁹ This would arguably have severed the ties between Attila and his right-hand man.

²³³ After the treaty of Margom, this trading-post to take place at the fort of Constantia on the left bank of the Danube in 439. In 447 the city of Naissus became the designated trading post. (Priscus, Fr. 1.1. 2-3, *trans* Givens (2014))

²³⁴ Also here, trade was now restricted to two trading posts on the left bank of the danube, twice a year. (Maenchen-Helfen, 1973, P. 186)

²³⁵ The absence of literary sources on the Ostrogoths and other documented Hun vassals in the eighty years of Hun-supremacy is a testament to the lack of information on their trade. (Heather, 2005, P. 227)

²³⁶ Priscus, Fr. 8, 54, *Trans*, Given (2014)

²³⁷ Khazanov suggests that trade between nomads and sedentary peoples typically opposed to them was troublesome. (Khazanov, 1983, P. 234)

²³⁸ Maenchen-Helfen, 1973, P. 187

²³⁹ fr. 11,2 p. 254, *trans*. Blockley (1983)

A Roman edict of 368 threatened with death to any roman who sold wine and oil to barbarians.²⁴⁰ The Huns at the feast of Attila drank wine in abundance. The Huns were, according to —, the heaviest drinkers. I would argue, then, that this was not the result of trade; rather, it was part of the fine gifts that came with the annual gold tribute, embassies, and regular diplomatic missions which the Huns and Romans both regularly sent and received to each other.

Reciprocity: “Gift Exchange” - Diplomatic Missions and Embassies.

The wife of Attila, Kreka, was busy embroidering Roman pearls and silk when Priscus encountered her; He presented her with even more fancy gifts.²⁴¹ He also gave gifts to the widow of Bleda in the form of peppers from India, dates, and other mediterranean commodities when she helped his party find shelter for the night during their embassy to Attila. These commodities were valued by the Huns, because they “did not grow it locally”.²⁴² The girls who greeted Attila upon his return to his home “moved in lines under fine white linen sheets stretched over a great distance.”²⁴³ Attila’s bed, as seen by Priscus during the feast, was “veiled in fine linen and intricate drapes, hung as adornments, just as the Greeks and Romans arrange for newlyweds.”²⁴⁴

There is a consensus that the diplomatic missions the Huns and Romans sent to each other really did not mean much, and regardless of what came of the meetings - as seen in Priscus - every encounter between officials included the exchange of gifts, usually from the Romans to the Huns.²⁴⁵ It was non-equivalent:

²⁴⁰ It would later come to also include weapons, as well as buying slaves for gold. (Maenchen-Helfen, 1973, P. 186) The law was due to the Visigoths, but there is no information or reason to believe this would not regard the Huns as well: They were, after all, regarded as far worse than any other enemy.

²⁴¹ Priscus, Fr.8, 131, 132, *trans*, Givens, 2014.

²⁴² As mentioned previously from:(Priscus, Fr. 8, 73, *Trans*, Givens, 2014) Equally, Blockley translates it to: “The gifts consisted of things which are esteemed by the barbarians as not produced in the country” (Priscus, Fr 11.2, 262, *Trans*, Blockley, 1983)

²⁴³Priscus, Fr. 8, 87, *trans*, Givens, 2014.

²⁴⁴(Priscus, Fr.8, 156, *trans*, Givens, 2014) Priscus note on the similarity to Greek and Roman style may arguably to the argument of Lindner regarding a wish/attempt from the Huns to adopt their sedentary culture previously mentioned.

²⁴⁵ Kelly, 2009, P. 111-13

“After the treaty was completed, Attila again sent ambassadors to the Eastern Romans..()..Attila again sent others; after they too transacted their business. A third embassy went and a fourth after that. The barbarian, seeing the Romans` generosity as they avoided transgressing the treaty kept sending whichever of his retainers he wanted to treat well, inventing reasons and finding empty pretenses.”²⁴⁶

but the Romans could afford to do so to maintain a shallow peace and somewhat cordial relations: As Meyer has pointed out: *Diplomacy reduces the need for violence, and it is important to the stability of foreign exchange.*²⁴⁷ But in this case, “foreign exchange” was simply peace, and the small chance that the Romans may be successful in killing and/or replacing Attila with someone more subservient through Assassination (Political Murder).²⁴⁸

Redistribution.

Redistribution is in this context divided into two spheres. The first is the tribute paid by the Romans to the Huns. By doing so, the Romans are indirectly acknowledging Hun superiority. It was one-sided economic exchange: non-equivalent in the fact that the Huns gain from this arrangement vast amounts of gold and materialistic items, while the Romans only get the political benefits in return, which were dictated by Attila and his aristocracy.

The other sphere and type of redistribution, which is the Gift-Economy of Nomads, was an internal act of economic redistribution and means to political consolidation. It was directly fuelled by the tribute from the Romans. Thus the two are inextricably linked.

²⁴⁶ Priscus, Fr. 6, 1-3, *trans*, Givens, 2014.

²⁴⁷ Meyer, 2006, P. 98

²⁴⁸ In her article: *The Ancient Imperative: I Clandestine Operations and Covert Action* Sheldon details the political assassinations the Romans often committed towards foreign leaders. She names, among other things, the literary evidence: Barbarians - because they were often illiterate (The Huns being no exception) - had very little chances of recording the assassination plots of the Romans against them. (Sheldon, 1997, P. 300) However, we have two recorded instances Huns were the targets of such plots: The successful killing of Donatus during the early period of the Huns.(Olympiodorus, Fr. 19) Then later the foiled plot against Attila.

Tribute From The Eastern Roman Empire.

With the invasion of the Balkans in 422, Ruga and Octar were able to negotiate an annual subsidy of 350 pounds of gold yearly from *The Eastern Roman Empire* as terms for peace.²⁴⁹ A trend for the Huns had been set. In 435 Ruga died, followed by yet another invasion, this time led by Attila and Bleda, now reigning together.²⁵⁰ According to Priscus, the *Treaty of Margos* saw the annual payment double to 700 pounds annually, and the additional demand by Attila and Bleda that the Romans buy back hostages taken by the Huns at 8 solidi per head.²⁵¹ The Romans were also not to “form alliances with any barbarian nation if that nation was stirring up war against the Huns.”²⁵²

After several smaller incursions, the final and most shocking invasion of the East occurred in 447.²⁵³ A massive intrusion into Thrace and Dacia, which almost reached the walls of Constantinople, was eventually halted when Attila - now reigning supreme after the murder of his brother - was paid a sum of 6100 pounds of gold directly, and the promise of an additional 2100 pounds each year.²⁵⁴ The price for the hostages in which the Romans were forced to buy back was increased to 12 solidi per head.²⁵⁵ Priscus describes this as devastating upon the economy of the

²⁴⁹ Priscus, Fr. 1.1.3, *trans*, Givens

²⁵⁰ The brothers met with the Roman ambassadors Plinthas and Epigenes at Margos. Along with gold and ransom, part of the deal was also that the Romans were not to entice the allies of the Huns to fight against them. (Priscus, Fr.1.1.2, *trans*, Givens, 2014)

²⁵¹ Given, 2014, Priscus, Fr. 1.1.3

²⁵² *ibid*.

²⁵³ I say final because there seems overall confusion among scholars today as to the date of these events, proving the difficulty of discussing sources regarding the Huns in Late antiquity. Hughes dates the invasion to 443, while Kelly, Man, Kim and Maenchen-Helfen all date it to 447. According to Hughes, Bleda was a part of these negotiations (Hughes, 2019, P. 101-104)

Maenchen-Helfen, on the other end, notes that: “Attila is the sole ruler of the Huns. *He* demands the tribute money..(..)there are no more *Kings of the Huns*. Bleda is dead. We are, at the earliest, in 445” (Maenchen-Helfen, 1973, P. 118) Most other scholars follow the suit of the letters argument: (Man, 2005, P. 191) (Kim, 2016, P. 93) (Kelly, 2005, P. 106-108)

²⁵⁴ Further confusion among contemporaries: Kim sets the direct payment to 8000 Pounds of gold, but most other historians have settled on 6000. (Kim, 2016, P. 94) The translation by Given sets it at 6000. (Priscus, Fr. 61, 10, *trans*, Givens, 2014)

²⁵⁵ Priscus, Fr. 5, *trans*: Given, 2014

Eastern Roman Empire:

“The romans were compelled to accept cheerfully ever injunction, no matter how harsh, in their eagerness for peace...Even senators contributed a fixed amount of gold...they paid only with difficulty... so that men who had once been wealthy were putting up for sale their wives’ jewellery and their furniture...and the result was that many killed themselves either by starvation or by hanging. The imperial treasuries were emptied.”

Priscus may be exaggerating. A closer look reveals that this amount - which US currency today would be about 38 Million dollars + 3.5 million more every year - estimated to about 2,2% of the annual revenue of the Eastern Roman Empire, which was about 270 000 pounds of gold annually.²⁵⁶ But it was still a huge sum for its purpose, in which it surpassed all others previously paid to an enemy of the state in this way.²⁵⁷ The annual payment would continue for three years until Emperor Theodosius died and was succeeded by Emperor Marcian, who stopped payment and adopted a military attitude towards the Huns.²⁵⁸

There was no particular tribute paid by *The Western Roman Empire*. Kelly argues that the political move of Aetius to have Attila appointed as a general of the western Roman empire (in title only) was used to conceal tribute to the Huns from the Western Roman empire as the salary of a statesman.²⁵⁹ Overall, influx of wealth from the western Roman Empire was more so the result of mutual *Exchange* between the Huns and the Western Romans, and was to continue in this matter until Attila invaded the West in 451.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁶(Mann, 2005, P. 191-192) Lenski and Hendy disagree with Mann and Kelly: The annual revenue of the Eastern Roman empire was closer to 55 000 lbs of gold, they say; thus indicating the Huns were taking up to 15% of the revenue available to the Eastern Roman Empire. (Lenski, 2014, P, 238)

²⁵⁷ Man notes that Alaric had been paid a combined sum of 9000 pounds to retreat from Rome in 409 (5000 from Rome, 4000 from Constantinople.) The Persians were paid 12 600 Pounds of gold total from 540-61. (Man, 2005, P. 192)

²⁵⁸Against contrary belief, the Eastern Romans did not altogether stop relations. They offered to give Attila gifts, but the annual subsidy would be no more. If Attila threatened war, the Eastern Romans would “lead against him arms and men not inferior to his force.” (Constantine V11 Porphyrogenetos, Fr. 15.2. *Trans*, Given: 2014.)

²⁵⁹ (Kelly, 2005, P. 172), (Priscus, fr 11.2, *trans*, Givens. 2014)

²⁶⁰ (Priscus, Fr. 15.3. *Trans*, Given: 2014.)

The Gift Economy of Nomads.

The redistributive economic structure inside nomadic empires was the *Gift Economy*. Kradin describes this as the main mechanism connecting the government of a Khanate and its pastoral tribes.²⁶¹ The ruler would distribute “gifts” to his comrades-in-arms and tribal chiefs, manipulating the socio-political and socio-economic stratifications in the society. This would strengthen his political influence and prestige, and his Charismatic Authority would be upheld. In return for the gifts from the Khan (Attila), the tribal-leaders of the empire would be bound by the “liability of the return gift.”²⁶² This is not material, but should rather be considered the service or willingness of said tribal leader to be a part of/in service to the empire of the ruler. One step down in the sociopolitical hierarchy, within the tribe itself, it would be up to the individual tribe leader to further distribute these gifts to his own warriors and further his own Charisma.²⁶³ The economy of a Central-Asian Khanate should be seen as a flow of transactions in the form of material goods and political and economic ideology from the top and down, with services and sociopolitical gestures going the opposite way in return.

“Do Ut Des”.

*“I either give to you that you may give to me, or I give to you that you may perform some act, or I perform some act that you may give to me, or I perform some act for you that you may perform another for me. In these cases it may be asked what obligation arises.”*²⁶⁴

“Do, Ut Des” is a Roman expression meaning “I give, so that you may give”, assembled from old Roman law by Justinian in *Digesta*²⁶⁵ The concept of the gift-economy is probably the most self-explanatory concept of the Hun Economy. As we see from Justinian, the giving of gifts and favors - and the return of it is not unique to the Nomads: it is human nature. The monopoly on distribution of wealth, liable to the whims of Attila (but still expected from him), can be seen as a continuation

²⁶¹ Kradin, 2002, P. 375

²⁶² *ibid*

²⁶³ *ibid.*

²⁶⁴ *ibid.*

²⁶⁵ Justinian, *Digesta*, 19.5.5

of this Central-Asian Steppe-Phenomenon. The Hun nobles at the feast in which Priscus attended clearly shows that Attila were lavishing them with gifts obtained from the Roman Empires:

“ A luxurious meal, served on silver plate, had been made ready for us and the barbarian guests, but Attila ate nothing but meat on a wooden trencher. In everything else, too, he showed himself temperate; his cup was of wood, while to the guests were given goblets of gold and silver. His dress, too, was quite simple, affecting only to be clean. The sword he carried at his side, the latchets of his Scythian shoes, the bridle of his horse were not adorned, like those of the other Scythians, with gold or gems or anything costly.”²⁶⁶

The Silver & Gold goblets the Hun nobility drank from, as well as the dresses adorned with gold and jewellery, were also foreign commodities in which we must consider as gifts Attila bestowed upon his elite. Each of these items were then - through careful calculation and shrewdness - given and redistributed by Attila to manipulate and shape the strata of Hun-, and sedentary peoples leaders, -political standpoint in order to favour him. Indeed, redistribution is intertwined with reciprocity: The gift-economy may be seen as gift-exchange too, but loyalty would be the return-gift.

Part Three: Changes in Economic Practices.

The Huns on The Great Hungarian Plain underwent a thorough development both economically and politically once over the Carpathian Mountains.²⁶⁷ To tap into the wealth of the Mediterranean world the Huns had to unite into a more complex political entity - An *Organisation*.²⁶⁸ While careful not to entirely leave nomadism behind, they had to somehow find a way of living that was

²⁶⁶ Priscus, Fr 13.1, P. 284, *trans*, Blockley

²⁶⁷ While the non-autarkic pastoral society of the Huns were seeking to tap into the wealth of the sedentary west, they were at the same time being influence by sociological qualities Nomads typically inherit once they get a feedback from these sedentary societies: Such as social differentiation and property inequality. These are typically less predominant the more different the nomadic society was from a sedentary one.(Khazanov, 1983, P. 200)

²⁶⁸ Organizations are the lifeblood of both political and economic competition. (North, Wallis, Weingast, 2009, P. 141)

uniform with consolidating and extracting the economic surplus of many different societies - both internal and external.

*“The choice of specific ways in which a nomadic society can adapt to the outside world depends on the economic needs of all its members and on the sociopolitical aspirations of individual strata and groups.”*²⁶⁹

As Khazanov is onto here; If the Huns were to pose a threat to the Romans and extract the economic surplus that exceeded simply robbing farms, a political consolidation was inevitable. I believe the transition to move to the Hungarian Plain and the ecological and sociopolitical impact of it indirectly created a more stratified hun society. Property inequality and social differentiation came as a package deal along with the benefits of moving.

The Limited Access Order & The Dominant Coalition.

The Limited Access order is, according to North, a type of state where personal relationships constitute the basis for social organisation and the arena for individual interaction; especially personal relationships among powerful individuals.²⁷⁰ Among the features that denote a Limited Access Order, North mentions:²⁷¹

1. ***Slow-growing economies vulnerable to shocks:*** Certainly true for the Huns. It was inherently unstable. Both their original nomadic lifestyle as well as their unfair extraction of wealth within and externally was a house of cards, so to speak. It all depended on Attila making just the right diplomatic moves to keep all the participants of his organisation happy. But it also played on fear: Earle points out that these kind of organisations are not only held together by mutual interest, but also the threat of coercion.²⁷² Economic extraction had to be overseen continually, because institutional structures were not there. As North says: “Members of the Coalition cannot credibly commit to rules or constitutions when the month-to-month reality of

²⁶⁹ Khazanov, 1983, P. 198

²⁷⁰ North, Wallis, Weingast, 2009, p. 2)

²⁷¹ All five features are available at (ibid, P. 12)

²⁷² Earle, 1997, P. 106

balance within the coalition is in flux.”²⁷³ Essentially, the Organisation of Attila could never turn into an Institution because the economy of the Huns held no infrastructural foundation: Robbing, looting and coercion through violence and threats of it is not a sustainable economy.

2. *Polities without generalised consent of the governed.* Through my previous arguments this hardly needs more explaining. Some contemporary sedentary empires considered the people of nomad-empires to be “independent subjects of international political relations”:²⁷⁴ Heather also argues that the empire of the Huns was something one only joined because you failed to get out of the way in time. It was an “involuntary confederation.”²⁷⁵
3. *Relatively small numbers of organizations.* There was only one Organisation: That of Attila. Whether one considers the Limited Access order to be an Organisation in itself is a puzzling question.
4. *Smaller and more centralized governments.* The splendid house of Attila in *Priscus* is located somewhere on the Great Hungarian Plain. This is more than likely where the government of Attila was: He also favoured it above other abodes. Many notable Hun nobles were present at the feast, indicating that it is the capital of the Huns, and both the diplomats from the Eastern and Western Roman empires had made their way there, unaware of the other before meeting each other at the location.
5. *A predominance of social relationships organised along personal lines, including privileges, social hierarchies, laws that are enforced unequally, insecure property rights, and a pervasive sense that not all individuals were created or are equal.*

This final feature is also known as a *Dominant Coalition*. According to North, such coalitions decide and set the rules for the organisation.²⁷⁶ It connects the powerful elite directly to the Organisation, and allows the control of economy and violence through agreed upon through

²⁷³ North, Wallis, Weingast, 2009, P. 42

²⁷⁴ Kradin, 2002, P. 373

²⁷⁵ Heather, 2009, P. 263

²⁷⁶ The dominant coalition in any natural state is an adherent organisation in itself too. (North, Wallis, Weingast, 2009, P. 20)

partially coordinated behaviour.²⁷⁷

The hunt for a steady source of revenue led Attila to attempt a monopolisation of violence through the demand that all wealth from outside of the empire was directly delivered to him. However, as North has summarised: One cannot think of violence as fuelled by one person monopolising it - it is structured by several members of a society and the relationship they have with each other.²⁷⁸ Thus while Attila is successful in assembling the Dominant Coalition due to his Charismatic Authority, there are other “rules” for the stability of the Organisation.

A Grand Protection-Scheme: Rent-Seeking.

The ultimate Economic goal of Attila and his Dominant Coalition was attempted through Rent-Seeking. North summarises:

“Most organizations seek rents, and some succeed in gaining policies that provide them with government-run cartels, subsidies, and rents.”²⁷⁹

Kelly notes that the Hun Empire was “successful in systematising the extraction of resources.”²⁸⁰ He calls it a protection-racket on a grand scale.²⁸¹ Khazanov notes that such unfair relationships usually begin with the nomads raiding sedentary peoples at will. Once the area has been conquered and taken control off, nomad empires typically insisted that sedentary populations paid them regular tributes in return for not attacking them, or protecting them against other nomads.²⁸²

The Dominant Coalition of Attila used direct and indirect threats of violence and coercion to extract goods and taxes from those they ruled: Essentially, Rent-Seeking is the ability of a society to extract wealth through its capacity for violence and threats: The threat of violence can be as effective as the

²⁷⁷ *ibid*, P. 15-30

²⁷⁸ *ibid*, P. 17-19

²⁷⁹ North, Wallis, Weingast, 2009, P. 141

²⁸⁰ Kelly, 2015, P. 194

²⁸¹ *ibid*, P. 194

²⁸² It can happen both between nomads and subjugated sedentary peoples, but also nomads and other subjugated nomads. (Khazanov, 1983, P. 222-3)

actual use of it.²⁸³ Such was the dynamic, yet fragile Economic relationship between the Huns and those they ruled.

“Systematic rent-creation ..()..is not simply a method of lining the pockets of the dominant coalition; it is the essential means of controlling violence.”²⁸⁴

This excerpt summarises what North notes: That Dominant Coalitions typically don't fight among themselves, because they know that this will reduce their capacity to extract rents from others.²⁸⁵ Thus the relationship between the high-ranking peoples below Attila such as Ostrogoths under Valamer, and the Gepids under Ardaric, knew that fighting amongst themselves would relinquish the strength of the Hun Economy, because the power balance between the Dominant Coalition of the Huns - The Logades - knew the other members were just as capable of violence as themselves, and thus had to resort to direct social relations to each other, rather than Diffuse/Infrastural Power:

Only if the cost of fighting or the benefit from not fighting is tangible and clear to both specialists will they believe that not fighting is a credible outcome..()... To be credible, the commitment requires that the violence specialists (The Huns) be able to mobilize and gather their rents, which are produced by the remainder of the population.”²⁸⁶

Hence the “rents” were taken from the lower strata in the society, especially among the Germanic Peoples - as we have seen. But It must not be forgotten, however, that the Goths were being abused: If , for example, Valamer was a part of this Dominant Coalition, he would be witness to Attila treating his people unfair in favour of Attila’s own Huns. Thus while rent-seeking may initially seem effective and sustainable for an empire with such a capacity for violence, the Hun Empire economy in this sense was flawed: The Dominant Coalition in this case is not a homogenous group controlling other groups, but the rent-seekers are - among others - from the higher political strata of

²⁸³ North, Wallis, Weingast, 2009, P. 13

²⁸⁴ ibid P. 17

²⁸⁵ ibid, p. 18

²⁸⁶ North, Wallis, Weingast, 2009, P. 19

the same groups they are extracting revenue from.²⁸⁷ Thus the Huns rent-seeking is a contradiction, and cannot function in the long run due to the political instability it caused among the different societies.

Taxation.

“With respect to internal relations the “state-like” empires of nomads were based on non-forcible (consensual and gift-exchange) relations and they existed at the expense of the external sources without establishment of taxation on the live stockbreeders. All basic economic processes in the stockbreeding society were realised within the limits of individual household.”²⁸⁸

The lack of *Institutions* - in the sense of the model by North - meant that nomads typically had no proper taxation-system in place. There was essentially no chance for a broader bureaucratic system that could keep track of the financial affairs of subjects within the Hun Empire. Even if there was, it would be politically unfavourable to tax nomads: An ethnographic parallel can be drawn to the Khan *Heli* and fall of the First Eastern Turkic Khaganate: When China started resisting him, and the external source of income stopped, Heli had to turn to taxing his own tribes. Some tribes saw the possibility of defecting, but most rose in revolt.²⁸⁹ Among the Mongols, ordinary free nomads paid no taxes.²⁹⁰

Putting this cultural infrastructure into the context of the Huns causes further problems. As we have previously discussed, the Huns were now at a much smaller area than before; livestock was probably much more valuable. Combine this with the fact that the Huns were now (at least the majority) grouped together on a much smaller area than the Turks and Mongols, and thus under a much tougher economical pressure, the possibilities of revolt are quite likely if they were to be taxed. Thus it may seem as the lack of taxation upon the Huns of Attila correspondingly impacted the Germanic-speaking peoples through stealing (or demanding) their supplies to make up for it.

²⁸⁷ We will discuss the *Logades* in detail in Politics. But probable members were Ardaric, Valamer, Onegesius, Scottas, Edecon, Berichus and many others. As this example shows, it is compromised of both Hun Nobility and Germanic Chief men - even kings.

²⁸⁸ Kradin, 2002, P. 372

²⁸⁹ Khazanov, 1983, P. 256

²⁹⁰ *ibid*, P. 236

This can be seen as taxation, but for sustenance rather than redistribution: Food and general goods for survival was extracted from the Hun empires lower strata of non-Hun subjects, while the fine commodities were attained - as we have discussed - By Attila and distributed down the hierarchical ladder of the Aristocracy.

“Tax collection was closely connected with military service, as direct taxation on nomads was replaced by tribute from the conquered tribes and peoples.”²⁹¹

The Huns may have taxed other nomadic vassals as well as the germanic subjects however. The Uighurs were noted for putting non-uighur nomadic peoples too tribute, such as the Qarluq, Khitan, Tatars and others.²⁹² The Turks similarly put many of their non-turkic nomadic vassals to equal payment. But Khazanov notes - just like among other nomads - this led to continual rebellions.²⁹³

Conclusion of Economy.

A big problem of the Charismatic Organisation is economy. While the newly established order of the Charismatic may be forceful, it is eventually required to deal with the material needs of the organisation. In order for such an organisation to last, it needs a steady, assured income. Economic routines and ways of attaining material goods and needs must become established.²⁹⁴

We can safely say that whether being a vassal of the huns was voluntary or not; once a part of it, the beneficial returns of the Economy was the only reason it held together.^{295 296}

²⁹¹ Bondarenko, 2003, P. 53

²⁹² Khazanov, 1983, P. 257

²⁹³ *ibid*, p. 255

²⁹⁴ Beckert, Zafirovski, 2006, P. 55

²⁹⁵ Because the positions, privileges, and rents of the individual elites in the dominant coalition depend on the limited entry enforced by the continued existence of the regime, all elites have incentives to support and help maintain the coalition. Failing to do so risks violence, disorder, and the loss of rents. (North, Wallis, Weingast, 2009, P. 20)

²⁹⁶ For works of different opinions, see the chapter *Huns On The Run* in *Empires and Barbarians* by Peter Heather whom argues the subjects of the Huns were just tho who failed to get out of the way in time. (Heather, 2005, P. 231) For a different opinion, Kim believes nobles of the subject-peoples were considered both by themselves and their overlords to be “Hunnish Princes” of the Empire. (Kim, 2016, P. 109-113)

The Hun empire was a multi-ethnic, heterogenous society of networks, which boiled down to” real connections among peoples whom together to achieve an economic aim.” However, while this excerpt is generally true to most societies, the sedentary peoples under Attila suffered the Huns’ repeated intrusions upon their economy over and over: Their agricultural products were forcefully taken by the Huns and claimed as the latter’s subsistence because their own pastoral economy was insufficient; Even the Dominant Coalition of Attila was treating the peoples of its own members unfairly when they were seeking a sustainable vision of rent-seeking and taxation. Thus while Attila was alive, he attempted - through Authoritative direct control to install both an Intensive and Extensive form of tribute, both internally and externally. His shrewd, direct political manoeuvres and instalment of the Gift-Economy allowed him to manipulate tribal chiefs across both sedentary and nomadic societies and halt the inevitable crisis. The Huns maintained this Economic balance through the use of violence and an imminent threat of intervention through Military Social Power.

Chapter Three: Militarism of the Huns

“They enter the battle drawn up in wedge-shaped masses, while their medley of voices makes a savage noise. And as they are lightly equipped for swift motion, and unexpected in action, they purposely divide suddenly into scattered bands and attack, rushing about in disorder here and there, dealing terrific slaughter..”²⁹⁷

Introduction.

This is the first recorded incident of the overwhelming Hun attacks, in which Ammianus was probably retold by surviving Goths or Alans who made it out with their life when the Huns subdued their peoples. There is little doubt that the success of the Huns in Europe relied heavily on the militarism of their organisation: Mounted Archery was for over two thousand years the dominant art of warfare across the Eurasian Steppe.²⁹⁸ From the east the Huns brought with them not only the powerful composite bow, but ethnographic studies show their military organisation may have been more complex than they have previously given credit for.

Mann and North: Militarism and Organised Violence

In this chapter i will discuss the military social power of the Huns and their vassals through the theories of Mann and North. Michael Mann is unique in sociology with the addition of Militarism as a fourth and separate theory of social power.²⁹⁹ Thus this is applicable to the Huns because it seems to be the most predominant out of all the four social powers that defined the strength of the Hun Empire. But Militarism shares defining traits with what Mann calls *Outside-Facing Political Power*. The most important trait of these is the concept of *Geopolitical Diplomacy*.³⁰⁰ It states that if rivalling states are more or less equal in power and those in power share similar norms and values,

²⁹⁷ Ammianus, 31, 2, 8

²⁹⁸ Man notes the Recurve bow of the steppes as game-changing for its time and purpose, comparing it to the Roman sword and Machine-Gun as weapons that changed the nature of warfare. (Man, 2019, P. 13)

²⁹⁹ Hall, Schroder, 2009, P. 1

³⁰⁰ *ibid*, P. 2

they may typically maintain cordial relations and avoid direct conflict.³⁰¹ Naturally, such relations are more applicable to modern societies because of the institutions in place and the emergence of civil society - with a correspondingly high amount of infrastructural power. But we can still apply the opposite end of *Geopolitical Diplomacy* to Late Antiquity: When militarism triumphs over cordial relations.

*“On the other hand, when militarism is autonomous and beyond the control of (civilian) political elites, and/or when society – the ‘nation’ – is mobilized for war, military power prevails over geopolitical diplomacy.”*³⁰²

I would argue that “(civilian) political elites” - in this excerpt the context is modern societies - Details Individuals and institutions imposed and selected through *Legal Authority*. They are chosen by the people. This excerpt then indirectly states that when militarism is not within *Institutions* of the laws and power of (for example) Legal Authority, then war is much more likely. Attila resided over an *Organisation*, and could therefore declare war for other reasons.

*“Beneath his great ferocity he (Attila) was a subtle man, and fought with craft before he made war.”*³⁰³

Furthermore, in liege with Mann’s theory of Geopolitical Diplomacy, we can argue that war was imposed partly because the Huns lacked the “similar norms and values” previously mentioned. Therefore militarism often trumped over diplomacy. The most obvious one is that the two empires were fundamentally different: The Romans mainly sought to conquer land to expand, The Huns sought revenue to consolidate. But there is more to it. Take, for example, the excerpt from Ammianus regarding (what is one of many excerpts) of Greco-Roman attitude towards the Huns:

“ In truces they are faithless and unreliable, strongly inclined to sway to the motion of every breeze of new hope that presents itself, and sacrificing every feeling to the mad impulse of the moment.

³⁰¹ “A balance of power allowed the shared norms of diplomats to maintain relatively pacific geopolitical competition.” (ibid, P. 2-3)

³⁰² ibid, P. 3

³⁰³ *Jordanes, Getica, XXXVI, 186*

Like unreasoning beasts, they are utterly ignorant of the difference between right and wrong; they are deceitful and ambiguous in speech, never bound by any reverence for religion or for superstition. They burn with an infinite thirst for gold, and they are so fickle and prone to anger, that they often quarrel with their allies without provocation, more than once on the same day, and make friends with them again without a mediator."³⁰⁴

If this represents the general attitude towards the Huns by Roman society, then we may deduce that they shared neither similar values nor norms. While the democracy and notion of *Infrastructural* power within the empire of the Romans and the Hellenistic world is outside the scope of this thesis, it is arguably another powerful differentiator in contrast to the *Despotic* power of Attila.³⁰⁵ As Kradin says regarding the outside-impression of most nomadic states:

*"The confederations had an autocratic and state like look from the outside. They were created to bring the surplus of products of agrarian peasants to the steppe nomads..()..the ruler of nomadic society endeavoured to control the redistribution of plunder obtained..().. This organised accumulation allowed him to maintain the existence of an empire that could not have existed on the basis of the extensive pastoral economy."*³⁰⁶

The militarism of the Huns was coordinated though what North conceptualises as *Organised Violence*: The actions of gangs and armies - wherein violence is enforced through not only the physical action itself, but also the threat of it, as we have touched upon³⁰⁷ The political *Organisation* of the Huns specialised in violence to generate revenue and increase their political and economic influence.³⁰⁸ The internal violence was - as seen - mostly through threats. But the external

³⁰⁴ Ammianus, 31,2,10

³⁰⁵ At least through the Romans own eyes. Whether Roman rule at the zenith of Attila was any less despotic is another discussion. A contemporary example from Late antiquity (although presented by a Greek) is the discussion between Priscus and the Greek-Turned-Hun merchant we encounter in the *Fragmentary History of Priscus*. Priscus values the roman laws and institutions, while the Merchant argues for the freedom of Hun society and indirectly; the lack of restraints on these. (Priscus, Fr. 11.2, *trans*, Blockley, P. 268-273)

³⁰⁶ (Kradin, 2002, P. 374)

³⁰⁷ North, Wallis, Weingast, 2009, P. 14

³⁰⁸ Within the term "Organisation" lies both the *Limited Access Order*, which is a type of organisation, and the *Dominant Coalition*, which is the elite in charge of decisions for that particular organisation.

often had to take the form of physical violence; making use of the very potent mounted horse-archers of the Nomadic military system.

An Ethnographic Overview of Nomadic Militarism.

The militarism of nomadic societies in general seem to be somewhat of a conundrum. The autonomy of individual clans and wide social participation, in contrast with the underdeveloped division of labor among nomads, meant that every man had the social standing to be a pastoralist in peacetime and a warrior when required.³⁰⁹ There was no native word for neither “warrior” or “soldier” among the Turks and Mongols: Fighting was a part of life, and nomads were literally “Peoples armed”.³¹⁰ Mongol children were taught how to ride a horse at two or three years of age, and would hunt larger game as they grew until riding a horse and shooting arrows from it became as natural as walking.³¹¹ Sima Qian of the Han Dynasty noted of the Xiongnu that:

“Infants could ride a goat and draw a bow to shoot small birds and rats. As they grew up, they would shoot foxes and hares and these are what they used to eat. Their warriors were powerful archers, and all were armoured horsemen. Their custom when at peace was to follow their flocks, and thus archery and hunting formed part of their way of life..().. they practiced battles and attacks so that they could invade or make unexpected attacks. This was part of their very nature.”³¹²

Khazanov would estimate that the ratio of warriors to the general population could go as high as 1:5, or even 1:4 in certain nomadic polities.³¹³ Because of this, the more populous armies of sedentary societies opposing the nomads could sometimes be brought to heel: The nomads had no notion of struggle regarding neither training, arming or recruiting able-bodied soldiers because their military organisation was organised loosely according to social and tribal lines, and the little social differentiation that existed in these tribes did not affect the military specialisations: This alone

³⁰⁹ “All of them, great or small, noble and base, in time of battle becoming swordsmen, archers and lancers and advancing in whatever manner the occasion requires. (Khazanov, 2013, 191)

³¹⁰ *ibid*, P. 190

³¹¹ *ibid*. P. 191

³¹² I was unable to acquire the original english translation:*Records of the Grand Historian of China*. (Watson, Burton, trans. (1961). This is taken from: *The Eurasian Steppe Nomads in World Military History*. (Khazanov, 2013)

³¹³ Khazanov, 2013, P. 190

prevented the emergence of a hereditary and closed military strata.³¹⁴ This also meant that most nomads could take on any role required by the situation: Mounted archers-, and lancers, or even swordsmen.³¹⁵ This is arguably why nomads' armies have sometimes been referred to as "hordes": They seem - compared to the rigid military specialised armies of sedentary societies - unstructured.

Warfare & Social Differentiation.

In contrast, for sedentary societies, warfare was a specialised profession, and often coloured by social differentiation: A minor part of the population could afford the sufficient armament: The Sassanids recruited and trained their *Cataphracti* (Heavy cavalry) from the aristocracy.³¹⁶ So were the *Knights* of feudal military Europe.³¹⁷ The *Janissaries* of the Ottoman Empire were slave-soldiers kept within their own social strata.³¹⁸ Sedentary States often had difficulties supporting the economic sphere of recruiting, arming, and training these soldiers.³¹⁹ It is not difficult, then, to see why nomads - due to the distinct notion of Militarism in their society - was often able to compete with the otherwise socially superior sedentary societies.

Militarism & Taxation.

In times of war societies raise their taxes.³²⁰ The early Roman empire had to allocate almost 50% of their budget to the military.³²¹ The Huns, because every free nomad was a warrior at the same time,

³¹⁴ *ibid.*

³¹⁵ The Persian Historian Ala-ad-Din Ata-Malik Juvaini, employed by the Mongol Court of Hulagu Khan, wrote of the Mongol army that: "It is also a peasantry in the guise of an army, all of them, great or small, noble and base, in time of battle becoming swordsmen, archers and lancers and advancing in whatever manner the occasion requires." (Juvaini, *The History of the World Conqueror* - Daily life in the mongol army. *trans.* Boyle.) (exact passage is not given.)

³¹⁶ Khazanov, 2013, P. 190

³¹⁷ *ibid.*

³¹⁸ Goodwin, 2013, P. 13

³¹⁹ Khazanov, 2013 P. 188

³²⁰ Beckert, Zafirovski, 2006, P. 288

³²¹ Khazanov, 2013, P. 189

allocated much less.³²² If Attila demanded no taxation in the form of livestock or otherwise from his nomadic peoples, then at least here the lack of economical and political infrastructure seems to have been beneficial rather than a hinderance.³²³ Then again, while we have covered the concept of internal tribute and what taxation meant to the vassals of Attila, we know very little of what he demanded when the season for war and campaigning was at hand, so we can make no certain claim. Likely, some demand for livestock had to be brought along, because a supply-line is always necessary.

The Huns & The Decimal Principle?

The Military Hierarchy of the Xiongnu was structured in accordance with its Political system. Regiments of mounted archers were divided into regimens of *a Hundred, a Thousand, and Ten Thousand*, correspondingly assigned to the command of chiefs, sub-kings, and the Shan-Yu.³²⁴ This was prevalent among the Manchurian Jurgen and the Mongols as well.³²⁵ Further proof that militarism was linked with politics was Genghis Khan's personal guard, numbering ten thousand *Keshig*.³²⁶ This nomadic political and military specialisation is known as the *Decimal Principle*.³²⁷ I would argue that Attila and his predecessors all saw the political consolidation - and thus armies - of the Huns at different sociopolitical stages, but may have kept their armies somewhat according to the Central-Asian military Decimal Principle: The different hundred, thousand, and tens of thousand units may during the early stages of Hun political consolidation have been led by various sub kings and members of these royal lines, with varying relation to each other. Ammianus mentions:

³²² I would argue that the only event in which taxation took place towards Huns would be in times of war. The participation of all strata of Hun society in war probably meant the nomads knew that everyone had to contribute to the war effort and maintain a steady supply of food and livestock to maintain the war-effort.

³²³ In some Khanates in Central-Asia, the Elite "owned" all the livestock within the empire, in which the tribesman simply tended to it. (Kim, 2016, P. 150) We have no proof of this happening within the Hun Empire. The Germanic-speaking peoples, whom would have no cultural institution of this custom would arguably have revolted if imposed by this regarding their livestock.

³²⁴ Kim, 2016, P. 12-18

³²⁵ The Mongol army divided their military units into ten, one hundred, a thousand, and ten thousand. (McLynn. 2015, P. 82)

³²⁶ Ten thousand guards during the day, a thousand at night, and a thousand additional "quiver-bearers". These guards also held political superiority over officers. (McLynn, 2015, P. 102-3)

³²⁷ Kradin, 2015, P. 74

“They are subject to no royal restraint, but they are content with the disorderly government of their important men, and led by them they force their way through every obstacle.”

If there was a decimal principle, it would take shape only when many clans came together for a common purpose. Ammianus says: *And when deliberation is called for about weighty matters, they all consult as a common body in that fashion*”.³²⁸ So it is quite possible that the Huns organised themselves in this way militarily prior to Europe. But what about under Attila? He would probably assign these armies to his Dominant Coalition (Logades) as he had abolished the previous political system of the Huns when he broke with these institutions and created his own Charismatic Rule and organisation.³²⁹ Loosely organised bands would certainly not work if they were to challenge the Roman military machine. Important individuals such as Onegesius probably led *Ten Thousand* according to his high rank. His younger brother Scottas, and certainly Edekon: “their best warrior, and..(). a member of the Hunnic race.”³³⁰ These would likely command a thousand each. So would Berichus -“The ruler of many villages in Scythia”.³³¹ Matching these numbers by and far for his own political safety, Attila probably had more and the overall command.

The Feigned Flight & Chase.

An indicator that the Huns fought using the decimal-principle is the *Feigned Flight*.³³² Contingents of Huns would ride in tight formations in synergy with each other, dividing and uniting to be able to unleash hails of arrows on the Roman defence-lines from a close distance. As one contingent would finish their volleys, they would ride away, only to be replaced by another with fresh arrows knocked to the string. Many arrows would miss and hit shields, but some would find their mark. The Huns

³²⁸ Ammianus, 31,2,1,7

³²⁹ This political system will be explained and analysed in detail in the next chapter of Political Social power.

³³⁰ Fragment 8, 11, *trans*, Givens. (2014)

³³¹ Priscus, fr 13, *trans* Blockley (1983), 284

³³² Faking a retreat is not unusual to any type of warfare, but to the Nomads it was particularly effective: According to Kim, the location of the battle of Chalons was dictated by Attila attempting to - successfully - lure Aetius and Theodoric the Visigoth onto open fields so that his Huns would have an advantage. (Kim, 2016, P. 98-99)

would continue this tactic until enemy-morale was low and defence-lines faltered. Enemies attempting to flee would be victims of the Huns spears, swords, and Lassos.³³³

A Discussion of Horses.

“Huns are not well adapted to battle on foot, but are almost glued to their horses, which are certainly hardy, but also ugly. From their horses by night and day they buy, sell, eat and drink. Slumped over their horses’ narrow necks they relax into a deep sleep.”³³⁴

Ammianus remark on hun dependancy on Horses has opened up for discussion of available grassland in Hungary and westwards. This led to a debate between several historians as to whether the Huns could pose a reliable threat in the form of a large mounted force once they crossed the Carpathian Mountains and settled in Hungary.

Most that favour a transition to an ecologically forced sedentary lifestyle argue that the size of the steppe of the Great Hungarian Plain could not support enough horses for the Huns. This line of argument also seems to rely on the Huns needing many horses per individual warrior, and the much less nomad-adept steppes of The Great Hungarian Plain and westwards thus - by this definition - denied the Huns their former military prowess.³³⁵ If we restrict the Huns access to pastures to the Great Hungarian plain alone, then Lindner has a point: The available grassland there equals only 4% of the total of the Mongolian Plain in comparison. If you dedicate this full area to a horse, which needs about twenty-five acres of pasture a year, you get the amount of little over 300 000 horses available to the Huns. Add in the addition of grazing sheep, goats and cattle, and you may - at least - half this estimate again. Thus Lindner would restrict the Huns to about 150 000 horses total.³³⁶

³³³ they gallop over the intervening spaces and fight hand to hand with swords, regardless of their own lives; and while the enemy are guarding against wounds from the sabre-thrusts, they throw strips of cloth plaited into nooses over their opponents and so entangle them that they fetter their limbs and take from them the power of riding or walking (Ammianus, 31, 2, 9). Theories on use and origin: (Maenchen-Helfen, 1973, P. 233-40.)

³³⁴ Ammianus, 31, 2, 6

³³⁵ Lindner, 1981, P. 19

³³⁶ Lindner, 1981, P. 14-15

While Lindner is *de facto* right in his estimates on available horses to the Huns *within Pannonia*, he is arguably too narrow in his deduction. There are two counter-arguments to this. First of, there is the question of how many horses each individual Hun warrior had to bring to battle. Lindner draws comparisons to the Mongols, in which a warrior was observed with up to eighteen horses in a string, and that as low as five horses per warrior was the bare minimum.³³⁷ He then deduces that the Huns probably required about ten horses each, and could muster a maximum of about fifteen thousand armed horsemen with plenty of fresh remounts.

This is in my opinion an insufficient argument. It is reasonable to assume that every male nomad wishing to join a campaign would take whatever horse he had at hand. A Hun with just five horses - perhaps even just three - would not deny himself the only possible income in the new land he found himself: Man mentions how the Huns that found themselves in Europe were not wealthy, and did not have much choice in the matter: They would certainly use the one particularly strong resource they still had: Military Social Power.³³⁸ The Alan of the Caucasus sometimes went to war with just two, or even one, warhorse.³³⁹ Arguably, the amount of horses a Hun would bring would be depended on how many he had at hand, and how rich or poor he was, and whether there was incentive to leave the family: A poor hun must have had at least one he could bring on campaign.

Secondly, Cameron Barnes has recently made the argument in *Rehorsing the Huns* (2015) that the Carpathian Mountains did not mean an insurmountable barrier for the clans of the Huns back east, as Lindner and his contemporaries seemed to believe.³⁴⁰ In fact, if we look at it logically, there is certainly no reason to believe that Attila decided that his empire would make its easternmost end at the place where his base of power was situated. There are also the pastures adjoined to the *Alfold* (The Great Hungarian Plain) that would add several thousand more square-kilometres to Lindner's

³³⁷ Lindner, 1981, P. 15

³³⁸ No chance of finding unoccupied land. Not much chance of trading either, because farmers were more or less autarkic. The Huns chose violence. (Man, 2008, P. 94-95)

³³⁹ Barnes, 2015, P. 5

³⁴⁰ It would be no trouble for the Nomads to cross over the Carpathians and other "natural" barriers with their clans, in which the Romans denied them due to their negligence of knowledge on the Hun horse and the possibilities of nomadic movement. (Maenchen-Helfen, 1973, P. 204)

original estimate west of the Carpathian Mountains.³⁴¹ We can safely acknowledge that Attila realised that the strength his empire had - in the face of the much more military institutionalised Roman Empire - Was his military presence of horsemen, and would thus probably go to great lengths to maintain his political grasp of the Caucasus and north & east of it, onto the Pontic-Caspian steppe, which would allow him to continue maintaining a large mounted military force.

As a matter of fact, i would argue he did just this when he instated his eldest son Ellac as the new king of the Akatziri tribes, which were located around the Crimea and Caucasus.³⁴² Furthermore: Yes, Attila did move many of his subject peoples along with his own Huns from the Caucasus and over the Carpathian Mountains,³⁴³ but it is above and beyond logical to assume he would not force an entire society and their clans to somehow move over the Carpathians and live next to their overlords on the Great Hungarian Plain.³⁴⁴ This would leave the vast open steppe north of the Caucasus open for not only political rivals, but also the Sassanian Persians and rivalling nomadic clans to claim territory.³⁴⁵ The image of the Huns as smaller warrior bands moving in waves westwards as opposed to the concept of one great migration of an “entire people”, must also mean that some clans probably never moved, and rather remained in the Eastern fringes on the empire, either due to Attila`s direct orders, or due to the nature of pastoralism of nomads.³⁴⁶

Lastly, Lindner makes a case of pointing out that although the exaggeration of the Greco-Roman writers to glue the Hun to his horse at any chance he gets, the actual presence of an enormous host

³⁴¹ “Nagy Alföld, the steppe lands of the Nyírség district, and the grasslands of the Körös River watershed, would add another 23,000 km² to Lindner`s total of 42,000 km² for the Alföld alone.” (Barnes, 2015, P. 4)

³⁴²(Priscus, Fr.8, 56, 62, *trans*, Givens, 2014.), (Kim, 2016, P. 133)

³⁴³ Heather, 2009, P. 208

³⁴⁴ The Ostrogoths i previously mentioned in Economy would have been several factions, so that is another situation.

³⁴⁵ The Rouran Khanate, also sometimes claimed as the Avars, whom were supplanted by the Turks (Gokturk-Khaganate) in the Altai sometime during the fifth century, may have been hot on the tail of the Huns (Vaissiere, 2014, P. 187-8). Similarly, the Turk emissaries demanded the return of the Avar-“slaves”: Fugitives seeking shelter in the Roman Empire. (Menander, Fr. 43, *taken from* (Whitby, 1988, P. 226)

³⁴⁶ (Heather, 2009, P. 215) This might arguably be the reason why Priscus makes no mention of either Ardaric or Valamer being present at the feast. Their tribes - the Gepids and main body of Ostrogoths - are living eastwards across the Carpathian Mountains.

of horsemen is never attested in any battle or situation.³⁴⁷ These arguments are arguably not valid: The Huns never fought alone, and thus a varied military force would always be expected when fighting a larger force of “Huns” with their vassal-forces.

Military Relationship with Germanic Subjects.

“Subordinate ethnic groups retained considerable autonomy in their own geographical areas and took part in military and political life of nomadic empires as largely independent units.”³⁴⁸

This remark of Bondarenko rings true for a specific reason: Mounted Archery is an intensely difficult form of warfare.³⁴⁹ the Huns did not attempt to force their way of fighting upon their subjects, although some tribes - like the Gepid - may have adopted it after some time.³⁵⁰ The sources on Alan warfare and culture is very contradictory,³⁵¹ There really is very little information as to how the total synergy of the Huns worked with their vassals.

“..the Goths fighting with pikes, the Gepidae raging with the sword, the Rugi breaking off the spears in their own wounds, the Suavi fighting on foot, the Huns with bows, the Alani drawing up a battle-line of heavy-armed and the Heruli of light-armed warriors.”³⁵²

Jordanes is detailing the battle of Nedao. The Huns are depicted with the bows to distinctively set

³⁴⁷ Lindner, 1981, P. 3-10

³⁴⁸ Bondarenko, 2003, P. 66

³⁴⁹ See the Chapter of Laos Kassaj, the man who re-invented the sport of Mounted Archery in Hungary. It took him years of training and hundreds of hours to learn what Hun boys would grow up to do. (Man, 2008, P. 105-133)

³⁵⁰ John Malalas says Attila was “of the race of the gepids (Chronicle, 14.10) Similarly, Kim believes Attila considered the Gepids to be his elite - almost rivalling his own Huns. (Kim, 2016, P. 87)

³⁵¹ Ammianus describes them as being in every way the same as the Huns, except less savage. (Ammianus, 31, 2, 21) Yet they are coined by some historians as fighting clad in scale-armour and conical caps, wielding long lances (Maenchen-helfen, 1983, P. 253). Then again this may arguable be because several Alan tribes had been in vassalage to the Sassanids and probably got equipment and learned from them, while others further north were mounted archers like the Akatziri and Huns. Ammianus himself says they are divided into two distinct groups, divided far apart.(Ammianus, 31, 2, 17)

³⁵² Getica, L, 261

them apart from the others, so it may be that he is also pinpointing the specialty of warfare for the other peoples. I would argue that Gepids, Rugi, Suavi and Heruli were most likely the shock-troops during sieges, and whom fought as infantry for the Huns during the zenith of Attila.

The Huns had probably realised that raiding smaller villages did not yield enough, while taking the field against greater armies did not nearly yield booty comparable to the value of the losses they suffered. They would have to start taking cities. The Huns either learned how to build and operate siege machines of different kinds, or let Roman slaves do it for them.³⁵³

Khazanov mentions that the most effective combination of horsemanship in war was light and heavy cavalry in symbiosis.³⁵⁴ The Ostrogoths had been affected by Sarmatian culture during their stay in the Caucasus. At the time of vassalage under Attila there was a substantial amount of heavily armed lancers on warhorses among them.³⁵⁵ This was the perfect combination with Hun light cavalry, with the Ostrogoths acting as shock-troops in open battle.

The Military Abuse of the Huns.

A closer look at the sources reveal that the initial conquest of the Goths by the Huns were mostly consisted of them pushing the Alans in front of them as a vanguard.³⁵⁶ Subsequently, the Goths were utilised in similar manner. According to Kim, the Scythians had done the same to the Cimmerians.³⁵⁷ Khazanov also notes that the Turks would put vassal nomadic units in the front lines because: “their loss would mean less.”³⁵⁸

³⁵³ Constructing battering rams and bringing to bear all manner of engines of war, they quickly forced their way into the city, laid it waste, divided the spoil and so cruelly devastated it as scarcely to leave a trace to be seen. (Getica, XLII, 221)

³⁵⁴ “The employment of heavy cavalry in battle was especially efficient when it operated in tactical combination with light cavalry: armoured horsemen at the centre of the army and mounted archers on the flanks.” (Khazanov, 2013, P. 197)

³⁵⁵ *ibid.*

³⁵⁶ (Ammianus 31,3,1-8) On a similar note: The Alans had on and off been in vassalage to the Greuthingi, and has thus resulted in an intermixture of culture. For example: The Goth generals Alatheus and Saphrax were - according to Kim (linguistics) - likely Alan in origin. (Kim, 2016, P. 69)

³⁵⁷ (Kim, 2010, P. 120), (Herodotus, IV, 11.)

³⁵⁸ (Khazanov, 1983, P. 255) More specifically the leading clan of the Turks: The Ashina.

Firstly, this happened because the nomads were typically fewer in number. But there is also another valuable clue here, which is related to migration and identity: The Alan were nomads too. Putting them in the front lines is then not only an abuse of sedentary peoples, but also nomads; in general everyone who was not a Hun. This aligns with the theory of Heather - discussed in Ideology - that the Huns worked effectively to distinct themselves from those they ruled, but also striving to effectively put them to military use. It seems, then, that ideological social power did not align with military social power for the Huns, because they seem unwilling to sacrifice their distinction as overlords.

Conclusion of Militarism.

The presence of Battering Rams and siege engines attests to a total fighting force that needed to re-adjust itself to take cities in order to fulfil the economic need of Attila's Organisation.

“Dispersed military power is part of the logic of the natural state (Limited Access Order). In this way, the threat of violence becomes part of the arrangement that controls the actual use of violence.”³⁵⁹

Because of this excerpt by North, we can argue it was also Extensive military social power, because Attila now commanded not only nomadic Huns - as had been the practice of his predecessors eastwards - but a myriad of different peoples of different ethnicities and cultural practices of warfare that were naturally (and necessarily) dispersed across the whole empire so as to not cause the economic problems between agricultural and pastoral economy detailed in the previous chapter.

It was also Intensive Military Social Power: The Huns were still mounted archers, but put their vassal peoples in the strategic positions in which they best could be used. The example of Attila's nomadic and germanic subject peoples fighting side by side at Chalons indicates that becoming semi-sedentary had impacted militarism.³⁶⁰ The Huns had discovered - perhaps out of necessity -

³⁵⁹ North, Wallis, Weingast, 2006, P. 20

³⁶⁰ ³⁶⁰ I am in agreeable with Barnes and Hughes regarding the Huns retaining their strength as mounted archers. The vassal-peoples foot-soldiers were probably used during sieges and as auxiliary forces in battles. Hughes notes in particular that a few Hun could heard horses away from a siege while the majority stayed as archers.(Hughes, 2019, P. 55-56)

that combining their own light cavalry with the heavy cavalry of the Goths had its own benefits.³⁶¹ In symbiosis with these peoples, the warfare of the Huns went through the same evolution as their economy, changing over time to meet the needs of the organisation, and as such is proof that nomadic societies are not static. According to Bondarenko, nomadic administrative structures were not transformed due to internal development, but due to the military organisation that formed when Nomads turned to fight sedentary peoples.³⁶² Along the same notion, Khazanov remarks that the subjugation of agricultural societies and urban societies by nomads (and thereby the Huns) determined the complexity of the sociopolitical organisation and the corresponding development.³⁶³ Therefore we can argue that the Militarism of the Huns remained very strong and potent until the end, enforcing Attila's political aspirations: It subsequently led to the emergence of the unique political structure that appeared and evolved under the Huns in Europe.

I would argue that the autonomous independent warrior bands and an overall Central-Asian practice of assigning - otherwise socially - independent nomads to military structures (Decimal Principle), arguably gave way for including subject peoples that could not be put into this military system into the army of the Hun empire. The Huns Military Social Power was in fact so strong that the Romans during the period of the Avars had adopted mounted archery.

³⁶¹ At the battle of Chalons, the Ostrogoths faced of directly against the Visigothic cavalry, taking the brunt of the heavy cavalry charge in favour of the Huns. They themselves took on the more similar nomadic adversaries of Alans under King Sangiban.(Jordanes, *Getica*, XXXV111, (197)

³⁶² Bondarenko, 2003, P.53

³⁶³ Khazanov, 1983, P. 229

Chapter Four: Politics.

Politics is the final topic not only because it is the last Social Power of Mann's IEMP model, but also because it neatly correlates to nomadic state building. As Bondarenko points out: "*the political system of nomads was created by its military organisation.*"³⁶⁴ Thus it is a natural successor to Militarism in terms of this analysis. We will discuss the political institutions that made up the empire of the Huns. The chapter will be divided into three parts: First, the problems of denoting nomadic Empires & States. Secondly, we will look at Political practices of the Huns through Mann and North. I will then look at the balance of power within the *Logades*; Attila's Dominant Coalition and aristocratic strata of the Hun Empire. They seem to me to be the key to everything; a proper analysis of this can yield fruitful answers. Finally we will discuss certain political instances and history-specific events within the empire that led to its end.

The Problem Of the Nomadic "States" and "Empires."

Historians have coined different expressions and specific requirements for what they consider to be a "state" in the context of nomads.³⁶⁵ Some make the distinction that Nomad Empires were not states, because an empire does not necessarily contain the institutions in place that denotes a state-like polity. Nomad empires have been called "Supercomplex Chiefdoms",³⁶⁶ "Involuntary Confederations"³⁶⁷, "Quasi-imperial nomadic state formations",³⁶⁸ and "Imperial Confederacies".³⁶⁹

The emergence of nomadic "States" is typically linked with successful external expansion and the conquest of sedentary peoples. The limited development of social differentiation of nomad clans and tribes did not evolve into more complicated sociopolitical structures until there was need for such a system and strata in order to separate the rulers and the ruled.³⁷⁰ Khazanov notes that the

³⁶⁴ Bondarenko, 2003, P. 53

³⁶⁵ DiCosmo, 2016, P. 35

³⁶⁶ Kradin, 2002, P. 372

³⁶⁷ Heather, *Huns on the Run*, 2005, P. 207-65,

³⁶⁸ Kradin, 2002, P. 374

³⁶⁹ Barfield, 2001, P. 47

³⁷⁰ Khazanov, 1983, p. 229

access to economic resources is not what creates social inequality among nomads, so it must be the political systems that take shape once nomads encounter sedentary peoples.³⁷¹

Requirements for Empire and State.

The reason so many historians call nomadic political entities with “Chiefdoms” in the suffix is arguably because they meant the polity of nomads never exceeded that of a chiefdom, no matter how large it got. Kradin, for example, notes that nomadic chiefdoms, when they conquer sedentary peoples, enjoy more culturally complex political system, an increase in hierarchical levels and a growth of population and its corresponding density/over-population.³⁷² But that is about it:³⁷³ According to him, the main distinction between statehood and pre-state entities is the fact that a “true” state’s ruler has only consensual power. He is restricted by an institution of government which can apply sanctions with the use of legitimated force. I.E: Subordinates within the government can band together to remove the leader through institutions put in place for this very purpose.³⁷⁴ But as we will see soon, i argue that Attila’s rule was idiosyncratic, and that his power was largely unchecked. Thus my theory is in direct opposition to that of Kradin.

He makes two requirements for an empire. The first is the presence of large territories. And secondly, the existence of a metropolis - or power centre, if you will. He says himself that “The

³⁷¹ *ibid*, P. 166

³⁷² *ibid*, P. 370

³⁷³ “upper limits of complexity reached by pastoral societies..(). nomads did not independently evolve beyond this stage of integration.” (Kradin, 2002, P. 369)

³⁷⁴ (Kradin, P. 372) By claiming that a true state is reliant on institutions to check the power of a sole ruler, Kradin is essentially denying any Organisation and its idiosyncratic rule any legitimate right to rule a “State”. He is indirectly claiming that the Theory of Legitimate Rule regarding Charismatic Authority of Max Weber cannot be applied due to its break with institutions that may have previously been in place. It also means - according to Kradin - that Nomadic states with no government to effectively sanction or remove their ruler cannot be a state.

empire is one of the forms of the state.”³⁷⁵ By his own standards then, Nomadic “Supercomplex Chiefdoms” are actual empires, and thus a form of state.³⁷⁶

Khazanov on his part notes that only when nomads reach “an appropriate political organisation”, and an “an appropriate evolutionary level”, containing separated strata of ruling and subordinate societies can it be called a state. But this is a vague explanation; What is an appropriate political organisation? Bondarenko notes that nomadic administrative structures did not evolve as a result of internal development, because creating a state out of the social system of pastoral economy only complicates an already difficult life.³⁷⁷ The low density of population and absence of a settled way of life seems to indicate it.³⁷⁸ The traditional social system of this type (a Chiefdom) was only replaced by a more complex one as a result of conflict and conquest, as previously mentioned³⁷⁹ - and subsequently political consolidation of the nomads themselves, integration, and assimilation of sedentary peoples into the submission of emerging nomadic empire.³⁸⁰

The Problem of Labels - and a Solution.

Confused? you should be. The discussion of labels like “state” is in itself problematic. If we are to coin a strict definition of the word, like Kradin does, then arguably no pre-modern society could be considered a state. By adhering to strict labels of “what is” and “what is not” a certain type of political entity we are assuming away the fundamental problem.

³⁷⁵ Kradin, 2002, P. 373-374

³⁷⁶ As the term “Supercomplex Chiefdoms” imply, it seems to me that Kradin prefers this terminology over state, because sociopolitical changes did not particularly change that much even as more and more nomadic tribes banded together and the area they controlled became extensive.

³⁷⁷ Bondarenki, 2003, P. 53

³⁷⁸(*ibid*, P. 85) However, to me this poses the question of whether Semi-nomadic and Semi-sedentary nomads have a higher tendency - as discussed in Economics - to become “states” because they are more inclined to sedentary ways of life and contact with sedentary peoples on a far higher basis than pure pastoral nomadism.

³⁷⁹ Bondarenko seems to compare the evolution of nomadic political systems to that of the decimal principle, because nomadic warfare is the predominant way nomads organise themselves socially. (*ibid*, P. 83)

³⁸⁰ Stark argues that the relationship between nomads and sedentary peoples (although he does not specify the nature of the relations) “were of primary importance for the initiation of processes that could finally result in the establishment of “nomadic states.” (Stark, 2012, P. 109)

This is where the theories of Mann and North come in use. Rather than look at what requirements for the many modern theories of requirements for a certain type of political entity is, we should study the the different social networks of power, and how violence is used and contained within the specific institutions and organisations that occur. My angle - so to speak - thus solves some of the problems within Academia that is looking for definitions, theories and the need for labels. For this purpose, i choose to refer to the political structures of nomads as “polities”, because the meaning of the word is broad, and can be used to categorise most political functions without having to put the Hun empire through the definitions and theories of modern states.

The Huns In Europe - Internal Political Affairs.

In *Violence and Social Orders* (2009, North, Wallis, Weingast), the concept of violence is embedded into either *institutions* or *organisations*.³⁸¹ While we have discussed the economic procedures of the Limited Access Order and its Dominant Coalition, but the political component remain. In this type of Organisation, the foundations of interactions and government are based upon personal relationships.³⁸² The social organisation constitutes the arena for which all decisions of state are made.³⁸³ In the case of the Huns, this is fully based on Attila’s charismatic rule with his Logades below him in the hierarchy. Attila could not - as we will soon learn - rule his empire through only his Huns: The distances and heterogenous peoples of his empire were unknown to him in all but notions of the land they inhabited and claiming control over the peoples living there. Authoritative Direct control is not enough.

³⁸¹ North, Wallis, Weingast, 2009, P. 14

³⁸² The Charismatic will of Attila being the foundation keeping the empire together. Barfield gives us a description of the concept of the “Strongman”, a character that due to his exceptional abilities is usually the trigger and driving force behind nomadic states coming together and eventually becoming an empire. (Barfield, 1981, P. 45)

³⁸³ North, Wallis, Weingast, 2009, P. 2

The Logades - A Dominant Coalition

Attila could not keep control or enforce this on his own without proper instruments of power. This brings us into the upper echelons of Hun Society: The *Dominant Coalition* of Attila's despotic organisation was his secretary of elite members.

*“A hierarchy of elite relationships exists in which small groups of powerful elite individuals know one another through direct personal contact and experience. These circles of elite relationships interlock: all elite individuals known and are associated with other elite individuals above and below them in the social hierarchy. Sometimes elite hierarchies are highly centralized, with a pyramid structure vertically descending from a central king or court”*³⁸⁴

This is how North describes the inner relations of the cabinet of a Dominant Coalition. Priscus' visit to Attila in 448 reveals a Hun society in which no longer resembles that of Olympiodorus a third of a century earlier: The system of sub-kings and royal lineage not belonging to Attila's own royal clan has been completely abolished: There is only one king now, and that is Attila.³⁸⁵

His elite were known as *Logades* - “*Picked Men*”.³⁸⁶ The phenomena has been debated much over the course of history, but it is generally agreed that these powerful individuals served as Attila's inner circle of powerful individuals and enforcers, and were his instruments of local power

³⁸⁴ North, Wallis, Weingast, 2009, P. 36

³⁸⁵ He is keeping a tight control: I would argue that no independent raiding is happening, because it would impact the political diplomacy in which Attila is maintaining with the Romans. (See Page 63.)

³⁸⁶ Man, 2005, P. 170-171

throughout the empire.³⁸⁷ They were likely local governors, policemen, tributary collectors, priests, wise men, bodyguards and tribal chiefs all at once or to some degree.³⁸⁸

These were powerful individuals, each handpicked and included into the fold by Attila himself. Now, the political stability in this organisation is most interesting, because it is filled with contradictions to how such an organisation is usually run. First of, the rule of Attila was, as we have already mentioned - idiosyncratic, which is also typical of both Charismatic rule and despotic political power: His word was law. The Logades - albeit powerful political figures in their own right - were highly unlikely to fill the political positions found in *Legal Authority: The ability to suppress the actions of the leader* (Or what Kradin requires for a state, for example). Their power thus dwelt on the goodwill of Attila. And while they were likely representative individuals of different tribes among the Huns and their subjects (as we will discuss soon) they had little-to-no power to suppress Attila's idiosyncratic rule. Any attempt to do so would lead to a swift execution.³⁸⁹ The action of suppressing a Charismatic Authority like Attila is also (in my opinion) in itself counter-intuitive, as his being was the very driving force of the organisation they belonged to and his death would mean the end of the empire (no "routinisation") and Attila's perceived charismatic authority.

The Logades - A Central-Asian Phenomenon?

If we briefly move our attention eastwards to the supposed heritage of the Huns on the steppes of Kazakhstan, or even Mongolia, the concept of the Logades/Dominant Coalition in relation to the rule of the Charismatic opens up for interesting sociopolitical parallels. The Kangju of northern

³⁸⁷ The Logades seem similar to the concept of *Comitatus* which was an Eurasian phenomena: An individual would pledge an oath of fealty and become a bodyguard or part of his overlords personal retinue. It was an oath of unwavering loyalty.(Beckwith, 2009, P. 15) The infamous *Kheshig* of Genghis Khan consisted of a *Tumen* (10 000 men) and dedicated their lives to protecting their Khan. They outranked most military officers, and the financial pay was substantial. So if this is the case, were the Logades Attila's take on an old eurasian tradition? Were the Logades bound to Attila by this type of oath, some of them perhaps even serving as bodyguards as part of their duty? Edekon is noted as part of Attila's bodyguard, ruler of the Sciri, and their best warrior all at once.

³⁸⁸ Man, 2005, P. 171

³⁸⁹ North, Wallis, Weingast, 2009, P. 42

Uzbekistan was ruled by a *Yabgu*, a sort of High-king, with five lesser kings beneath him.³⁹⁰ The Wusun tribes of the ili-basin - a powerful force to be reckoned with from the times of the Xiongnu and even up to the Huns - had a hereditary monarch: “who was assisted in his duties by a council of elders, a body of aristocrats that could function as a restraint on the powers of the sovereign.”³⁹¹ The Xiongnu themselves, with the *Shan-Yu*³⁹² on top, had several levels of hierarchy beneath him, with twenty-four sub-kings, officials, and even a body of so-called “Tu-qu Marquises” whose main job it was to conduct the written laws of the empire and keep track of political relations.³⁹³ Barfield says that the power of the Shan-Yu was restricted internally by tribal leaders of his empire.³⁹⁴

Why then would i make such a claim that Attila’s personal (distributive) power was not checked by the Logades in the same manner? To me the answer lies in the concept of institutions versus organisation: The Xiongnu existed for several hundred years, and so did the Wusun and Kangju.³⁹⁵ In order to maintain the state, the need for laws, rules & regulations (at least to a certain degree) was eventually necessary. The diffuse social-powers that had been established in terms of cultural practices in relations between Huns and non-Huns by Octar and Ruga had been swept away by Attila when he implemented his sole rule: Thus the short-lived reign of Attila was probably not old enough to really concern itself with laws of succession, rule, and any particular restrictions on the sovereign that are to be found in an Institution. The robber-state Organisation of Attila was something new, and planning for the future - apart from the soothsayings of shamans - had arguably not been given proper attention. For now, Attila’s charismatic rule was unchecked.

³⁹⁰ Kim, 2016, P. 42

³⁹¹ *ibid.*

³⁹² “Shan-Yu” was the Xiongnu title of emperor

³⁹³ Barfield, 1981, P. 49-50

³⁹⁴ *ibid.*

³⁹⁵ Kim, 2016, P. 47

The Nature of Autonomy and Independence in Steppe Empires.

In the tribal societies of nomadic empires, loyalty from the common tribesman was usually with his immediate chief, and not the overall ruler.³⁹⁶ While this goes first and foremost for the nomads, the same can in all probability be argued for in case of the Germanic peoples in Europe in liege with Attila:

First off, most had probably not joined willingly. Secondly, as mentioned in Ideology, many of these peoples had enjoyed a rich evolution in terms of socio-political, as well as economic and military practices due to being in liege with or even up against the Romans for several centuries. The swift conquest and overlordship of the Huns was likely not going to change that. Elaborating on this, Barfield makes an interesting remark on his paper on the imperial organisation of the Xiongnu: The different tribal leaders in the empire held a great deal of autonomy at the tribal level and the importance of retaining one's independence in light of the grander empire. By looking at the socio-political situation within the Hun empire, we find this to very likely be the case here as well.

Since this is a trend among steppe-nomads, there seems to be very clear notions of diffuse cultural institutions and norms among what is accepted and not.³⁹⁷ While the political rule of most steppe-peoples cannot be applied purely to any of Weber's three theories, it does seem that a form of Traditional Authority emerges, but that it is also quite unstable. As Khazanov himself says:

“Social inequality in nomadic societies emerges primarily when a distinct political power, with the corresponding specialised functions of leadership and management of society, are needed. The three sources of this power - internal organisational-managerial needs, need of interrelations with other nomadic societies and need of interrelations with sedentary agricultural-urban societies - not only encourage the emergence of a ruling stratum, but in the end they determine the social positions of its members and the conditions of its transformation into a hereditary aristocratic state.”

³⁹⁶ Barfield deduces this in the case of the Xiongnu. But looking at it logically it had to be the same in the empire of Attila, following to a large degree the same model of state. (Barfield 1981, P. 49)

³⁹⁷ Anagui calling Bumin and his peoples “slaves” is a typical example of Khazanov's example that nomadic states have a frequent presence of dependent and exploited groups and individuals who are not considered to be members of the higher social strata. The aristocracy consider themselves their protectors and masters. (Khazanov, 1983, P. 159)

We have now covered the topic of social differential and inequality. “Internal organisation-managerial needs” is the Gift-Economy internally, fuelled by the outer political and military relations of robbing and coercing both sedentary peoples and other nomads. Because Steppe-Empires also last for short durations, there are few chances for successor-states to effectively learn from their predecessors so as to create a more lasting, stabile rule. Yet that is what they attempted to do through the aristocratic stratum that appears because of these three factors. Ruling clans distinct themselves, consolidating the other subservient clans: The Shan-Yu and his immediate clans over the sub-kings and their clans, The Ashina over other Turks, The Borjigid and Tayuchid over the other mongol clans.³⁹⁸ And subsequently: Attila and his clans over the Germanic (“sedentary agricultural societies”) and Sarmatians (“other nomadic societies.”)

From Traditional to Charismatic Rule.

The upheaval of life from the vast steppes eastwards and the landing on the much smaller Great Hungarian Plain westwards had Intensified both sociopolitical, militaristic and economical demands and their corresponding social powers, consolidating the Huns into a much tighter society.³⁹⁹ The fragile political system of the Huns revealed itself quickly: The Extensive-, yet fairly weak Intensive Political Social Power saw to it that far-away tribes within the reach of what the Huns considered their empire attempted revolts when political power was transferred from one generation to another:

“After concluding the peace treaty with the Romans, Attila’s and Bleda’s forces passed through the nations in Scythia, subduing them, and contrived a war against the Sorosgi.”⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁸ There was also the distinction between “white”-, and “Black”-bone mongols, whom were situated different in the hierarchy of society. (McLynn, 2015, P. 96-97)

³⁹⁹ “A demand for consolidation of nomads arises only in case of wars for means of subsistence, organisation of robbery or farmers or expansion into their territory and when establishing a control over the trading ways. In this situation, formation of the complex political organisation of nomads in the form of nomadic empires is at the same time a product of integration and consequence of a conflict.” (Bondarenko, 2003, P. 11)

⁴⁰⁰ Priscus, Fr. 1.1,6, *trans*, Given, 2014

The Hun empire was a wholesale “power-over” society, meaning it was Despotic/Authoritative. There is in my opinion a close correspondence between this type of power, Distributive (personal) power, and Charismatic Authority. We can deduce this by acknowledging that the nature of Charismatic Rule and its dramatic break from an existing order means the lack of an infrastructure, and thus Infrastructural Political power. Attila’s murder of his elder brother, Bleda, and the usurpation of the Empire was - in my opinion - the political shattering of the Traditional Unity and both Infrastructural (“Laws”) and Diffuse (Culture and norms) Power which the Huns had so far strived to implement. It was then replaced by his Authoritative and Distributive (personal) Rule.⁴⁰¹

The Charismatic Rule of Attila & His Personal Power.

“The three types of authority singled out by Max Weber, traditional, bureaucratic and charismatic, seem somewhat abstract when applied to nomadic leaders.”⁴⁰²

Khazanov has a point. Both The Traditional-, and Charismatic Authority of dual-, and sole rule on the steppe seems - through the continued need for violent re-submission of independent tribes - to perhaps be perceived by the upper strata of Hun society itself rather than necessarily the subjected peoples overall. Khazanov notes that leadership among nomads usually come from the aristocratic stratum and a hereditary line.⁴⁰³ Thus Attila’s initial power was not Charismatic, but became so with the sociopolitical changes that occurred when he usurped the throne.

According to Mann, the power-wielder can be regarded as high or low in regard to being despotic or infrastructural: “The degree of despotic power corresponds to the latitude or lack of constraint in the range of actions available to the power-holder.”⁴⁰⁴ Attila’s despotic power was enormous and unyielding: Due to the Charismatic break with the previous Traditional Authority, there was virtually no traditional institutions in place to check his power and new rule. A clear example of this is his ruthless idiosyncrasy in his treatment of Mamas and Atakam, two of his nephews whom had fled to the Roman empire for political refuge. Here is how Priscus explains it:

⁴⁰¹ “As Kim notes: “Attila’s temporary sole kingship thus amounted to a dictatorship which ran contrary to standard steppe practice.” (Kim, 2016, P. 87)

⁴⁰² Khazanov, 1983, P. 167

⁴⁰³ Khazanov, 1983, P. 167

⁴⁰⁴ Hall, Schroder, 2005, P. 265

*“Those who had sought refuge with the Romans were given back to the barbarians. Among them were Mama and Atakam, children of royal lineage. The men who received them crucified them in the Thracian fortress Karso as punishment for their flight.”*⁴⁰⁵

Attila did this to his own royal flesh and blood to state an example. imagine then, what he would do to one of the members of his Dominant Coalition if they plotted rebellion?⁴⁰⁶ Authoritative power allows for a “general” control of the empire/state, with clear notions of hierarchy and who is in charge. But due to Attila’s reign being “power over” rather than “power through” society, he had little possibilities of actually penetrating civil society on a ground level.⁴⁰⁷ He had limited control or knowledge (and probably did not care much) about the everyday life of the subjects in his empire.⁴⁰⁸

The most definitive proof of the Hun society being a “power-over”-society is Mann’s argument that such an entity was “distributive” in nature, since it usually means there was in place a somehow (often unequal) distribution of wealth and life-goods to its members.⁴⁰⁹ This can also be seen as “Personal power” since Attila is making the calls. In the context of the Hun Empire this was the concept of wealth attained through conquest and booty from whichever close-by society was ripe for plunder and conquest.⁴¹⁰ It was then distributed down through the hierarchical ladder of the Dominant Coalition of the Hun Empire by Attila. Through his negotiations, he had ensured that the Romans gave him monopoly on the tribute.⁴¹¹ But he was expected to disperse it to his subjects according to rank and file, thus creating a pyramid-like political-economy which made the members

⁴⁰⁵ Priscus, Fr.1,1,5, *trans* Givens, 2014

⁴⁰⁶ This power-move is by some historians considered to be wholesale that of Attila, without the cooperation of Bleda. The later Assassination of Bleda by Attila may be an indication that this gruesome skewering of his nephews was both a threat and a reminder for all his vassals of whom they should side if the day for a sole ruler of the entire Hun empire ever came to be.(Man, 2009, P. 162)

⁴⁰⁷ Hall, Schroeder, 2005, P. 3

⁴⁰⁸ “..the Huns lacked the bureaucratic capacity to run their subjects directly.” (Heather, 2005, P. 34)

⁴⁰⁹ Hall, Schroeder, 2005, P. 102

⁴¹⁰ Heather, 2005, P. 214

⁴¹¹ Priscus?

of the dominant coalition dependent on him.⁴¹² This political position was created from his followers perceiving him as having charismatic qualities, but also the intricate personal relationships and incentive not to fight between themselves - because everyone had so much to lose, being in the position of power that they were.⁴¹³

Direct Authority & Distribute Power

Thus the Hun empire was generally high in political extensive power and in Intensive political power, but only in so far as his dominant coalition served his bidding. As with the economy, Attila had to take direct action: Authoritative control - in alignment with the distributive Power - meant that Attila distributed to his subjects not only wealth but political positions as well. This was, arguably, for two distinct reasons: One was to appease his Dominant Coalitions positions of power, giving them the rulership of peoples. Secondly, it was through them that Attila now gained the control of these - otherwise often - dissident tribes. If true, it was a brilliant political scheme; the aristocratic members of the Huns knew they owed their positions of power to Attila, and it could be taken away at any time.

The socio-political hierarchy & geography of his Empire saw to that: Due to the nature of agro-pastoralist nomadic empires being loose confederations of tribes inhabiting covering vast areas.⁴¹⁴ Thus, looking back at the topic of migration and size of clans in relation to the area of land needed; the population of Attila's empire did not parallel that of Rome, which held high Intensive social power in terms of its population on the same amount of land accessible.⁴¹⁵ The distances needed to get a hold of the individual chieftains or patriarchs of different clans if their exact location could not be pinpointed, makes for a tough challenge in delivering messages and establishing a stable system

⁴¹² North, Wallis, Weingast, 2006, P. 36

⁴¹³ *ibid.* P. 18-20

⁴¹⁴ By example the Pastoral nomad tribes of Attila required large grasslands to lead their horses in seasonal wanderings, as we read in "On a Discussion of Horses."

⁴¹⁵ "The difficulties among nomads of centralising power and coping with the difficulties of ethnic stratification were directly proportional to the size of the territory they controlled." (Bondarenko, 2003, P. 55)

of communication.⁴¹⁶ Thus it was a blade that cut both ways: Attila could never gain anything but “power-over” society due to the political model he imposed, but his chieftains could not effectively unite against him either.

Elite Transfer and Political Manipulation.

I would argue that Attila maybe saw the political benefits of *Elite Transfer*: In such instances, the conquerors are not in the majority - rather far from it, but it ousts and/or penetrates the sitting elite of the society and declares dominance over it.⁴¹⁷ Although the initial suppression of the Akatziri revolt was solved by violence, the instalment of Ellac as king of the Akatziri, we have no indication of further intrusion upon Akatziri culture. Huns and Akatziri were by all accounts very similar and thus Attila essentially intensified his political social power and influence among these tribes without further socio-economical changes among them.

The notable individual Edekon is a curious case. He is called a Scythian as previously mentioned. But his son - as we will eventually discuss - established the first barbarian kingdom in Italy under Sciri rule. The sources and translations are not in agreement whether Edekon was a Sciri prior to Attila, or a Hun noble.⁴¹⁸ If the former - was he then taken into the dominant coalition/Logades by Attila as a political move to bring the Sciri under Hun control? Or was he perhaps a Hun noble whom was given control of the Sciri in a similar manner to Ellac and the Akatziri?⁴¹⁹ The very fact that Attila allowed Edekon to depart to Constantinople arguably refutes the notion of him being a Scirian royal political hostage.⁴²⁰ If he was indeed a Hun it is proof that Attila’s dominant coalitions members may have been distributed out among the tribes, either from previous ties of kinship with these peoples, or through newly formed institutions that Attila imposed because his new political organisation - powered by the threat of violence - allowed him (and required him) to do so. It was,

⁴¹⁶ Bondarenko recognises “horse relay messenger service” as a vital part of organising the administrative infrastructure of Nomadic States. (Bondarenko, 2003, P. 83)

⁴¹⁷ It is noted that the Socio-economical structures that laid the foundation for the ousted elite is usually kept intact, so as to ease the transition of the new elite. (Heather, 2005, P. 23)

⁴¹⁸ in fact, they say nothing at all.

⁴¹⁹ The Assassination attempt and the faith Attila must have put in him leads me to think that Edekon was indeed a Hun, bestowed with overlordship of the conquered Sciri through *Elite Transfer*.

⁴²⁰ Priscus, Fr. 7.1, *trans*, Givens (2014)

as noted earlier, how Attila was able to perform intensive and extensive political power in a society that should otherwise have been only extensive political power.

From Charismatic Rule & Back to Traditional Authority.

If Attila died without proper preparations, this would be the fate of his empire, as it had been for almost every single other nomadic political entity in history. Attila would arguably have a hard time installing any form of institution of laws across an empire that is not only so large in terms of geographical distance, but also across such a heterogenous population.⁴²¹ Then again; the institution of rules and laws, punishing transgressions etc, would arguably diminish his power and not be in his interest. Unless they directly benefitted him, i argue it would be in contrast to the concept of Charismatic rule.

Furthermore, most members of the Hun empire were not Huns, and could not relate to other parts of the empire outside of their immediate clan, except for perhaps across other peoples within the same ecological zone in which some defining traits of culture & traditions were the same.⁴²²

Implementing a new infrastructure for a charismatic ruler is hard enough as is, but imagine how hard it would be when your empire is consisted not only of your own tribes (the clans of Huns), but a myriad of different peoples (ranging from Germanic to Sarmatian) with a different take on culture, religion, society & identity who - on top of this - may not even willingly have joined the empire.⁴²³

The Political Weaknesses of Charismatic Rule: Rule of Succession.

The eventual need for succeeded rule happens when the charismatic leader dies or must step down from his or her rule due to infirmity, illness, or loss of Charisma. Due to the lack of routinization of Attila's empire, there was no proper laws of succession.⁴²⁴ The very force for change and what held

⁴²¹ "The difficulties among nomads of centralising power and coping with the difficulties of ethnic stratification were directly proportional to the size of the territory they controlled." (Bondarenko, 2003, P. 55)

⁴²² Halsall, 2009, P. 37.

⁴²³ Heather, 2005, P. 231

⁴²⁴ At least not to our knowledge. Yet again the lack of literary evidence as to what went on internally among the Huns is a big problem.

a Charismatic organisation together was the individual and his charisma. It was also often idiosyncratic, meaning the organisation adhered to the will of the charismatic.⁴²⁵ As such, Attila's empire was wholly dependent on his will to keep it together and his political manoeuvres to keep his rivals at bay and his allies close. He likely had no intention of giving his powers away, and the only possible outcome was for his sons to inherit his powers once he was dead. But his heirs may not have the same charisma to them.

There is of course a case of argument that his sons may have retained some traditional authority, in which they - at least to some extent - enjoyed privileges of being in the royal family: During the feast which the diplomat *Priscus* attended in Attila's encampment, he noticed that the seating arrangement of important individuals indicated status among prominent Hun Nobles: To Attila's immediate right was Onegesius, his right hand man. Further right were Berichus and Laudicus, whom were likely also relatives of his. Far across the table from Onegesius were one of Attila's sons, whom Priscus could not name.⁴²⁶ The seating arrangement gives an indicator that Onegesius outranked Attila's sons while not being a part of his family, but the sons certainly were not far behind.

*“Attila, however, remained immovable and of unchanging countenance nor by word or act did he betray anything approaching to a smile of merriment except at the entry of Ernas, his youngest son, whom he pulled by the cheek, and gazed on with a calm look of satisfaction. I was surprised that he made so much of this son, and neglected his other children but a barbarian who sat beside me and knew Latin, bidding me not reveal what he told, gave me to understand that prophets had forewarned Attila that his race would fall, but would be restored by this boy.”*⁴²⁷

Attila's empire largely lacked coherence, in contrast to that of traditional authority, in which the heirs had a legitimate right to rule. But this excerpt from Priscus reveals that Attila may be attempting some form of traditional right to rule through ideological/religious means. Almost every

⁴²⁵ You may imagine this as almost a sort of dictatorship. There is not political institution in place to suppress the power of the charismatic, as the very organisation in itself is created from him.

⁴²⁶ “Onegesius sat on a chair on the right of Attila's couch, and over against Onegesius on a chair sat two of Attila's sons; his eldest son sat on his couch, not near him, but at the extreme end, with his eyes fixed on the ground, in shy respect for his father.” (Priscus, Fr. 13.1, p.284, *trans*, Blockley)

⁴²⁷ Priscus, 13.1, 286, *trans*, Blockley

nomadic empire in history begins a rapid decline after the charismatic's death. The Huns were no different: Attila's sons squabbled over the throne, dividing the empire and losing a war between themselves and their subordinates.⁴²⁸ The only individual to prepare for this was Genghis Khan, and even he had to relinquish parts of his meritocratic rule to satisfy the demands of his sons and hereditary line.⁴²⁹ The powerful Gokturk Khanate of the Ashina Clan split into western and eastern halves sometime after ousting the previous ruling Rouran Khanate. The empire of the Xiongnu lasted the longest, but the eventual fall came to be when two heirs eventually split the empire in two upon disagreement about succession, ending in a civil war.⁴³⁰

I could not actually think of a type of intensive power in which the Hun Empire particularly excelled, at least not if compared to its neighbouring empires. This goes back to the discussion of "power over" versus "power through" as previously mentioned. When looking at the empire of Attila in terms of sheer size, it is indeed quite large. But as I have pointed out, his ability to penetrate this area politically was not possible in any other way than military intervention through his immediate chieftains.

Arguably, the only notion of "support" in which Attila had "power-through"/"infrastructural power" in society was the support of his elite, which in turn - more often than not - ruled the different tribes of Attila's empire while also serving at his court. The support of this elite - the *Logades* - was a system of fragile political balance: If they were not rewarded the wealth from Attila's constant conquest and warfare, they might turn on him and stop perceiving him as a charismatic leader. Thus Attila was forced to continually wage war and keep them satisfied, in some ways creating a political economy that bit its own tail: The larger and more powerful the empire became, the more his followers expected to be rewarded.

⁴²⁸ Maenchen-Helfen, 1973, P. 165-168

⁴²⁹ McLynn, 2015, P. 162-174

⁴³⁰ Kim, 2016, P. 24

“Divide Et Impera.”

“He (Attila) turned his attention straight to Bigilas, called him a shameless beast and asked why he wanted to come to him, considering that he knew his and Anatolios’s peacetime agreements that no ambassadors should come to him until all fugitives had been surrendered to the barbarians.”⁴³¹

While Bigilas retorts that all fugitives have been handed over, this is apparently not true. Attila has his secretary read out loud a list of names of Huns and non-hun individuals previously under his rule whom are now seeking shelter with the Romans.⁴³² Attila and Bleda’s first action upon ascending to the throne was subdue dissident tribes.⁴³³ The treaty of Margum also specifically stated that the Romans were not to incite war among other barbarian tribes. There was a continuous tug-of-war between the Huns and Romans to control the tribes the Hun claimed as their vassals: The main even which we know of is the revolt of the Akatziri. The Romans actively encouraged the Akatziri to stand up to the Huns by attempting the *Divide Et Impera*-Policy:⁴³⁴ by distributing gifts to their kings. Unfortunately, they gave the gifts in the wrong manner, resulting in the principal Akatziri chief reporting the happenings to Attila because he was offended.⁴³⁵

Conclusion of Politics.

One can imagine the political system that kept Attila firmly in place as the sovereign in this way: Having the monopoly (Distributive/Personal Power) on distribution of subsistence and wealth was essentially the basis of Attila’s internal political power. He could equally restrict and disperse this wealth to please and create a system of hierarchy among his closest followers, which in turn affected his access to manpower from their corresponding tribes in which he otherwise had little

⁴³¹ Priscus, Fr. 8,43, *trans*, Givens (2014)

⁴³² *ibid*, 8,44-46, *trans*, Givens (2014)

⁴³³ It was the same for Ruga: “While Roua was king of the Huns, he chose to campaign against the Amilzouri, Itimari, Tounsoures, Boiski and other peoples who dwelled along the istros river and were seeking shelter with the Romans.” (Priscus, Fr.1.1, *trans*, Givens, 2014.)

⁴³⁴ Divide and Conquer.

⁴³⁵ A crucial mistake of the Roman officials in delivering gifts wrongfully according to rank among the Akatziri led one of their kings, Koudarichus, to inform Attila of the Roman deceit. Attila at once assembled a host to suppress the rebellion, followed by the instalment of his son as their overlord. (Priscus, Fr. 8, 57-62, *trans*, Givens (2014)

influential power over. The arguably biggest weakness and challenge of this system was due to the Hun empire being a melting-pot of heterogeneous societies: Because the loyalty of the tribes were not to Attila and a feeling of “social unity”, but rather directly to their chieftain (which was usually a part of Attila’s court), Attila had to please an inner secretary of individuals to keep his power and empire together, rather than assemble one great homogenous nation of peoples.

A system of violence and coercion was put in place due to the Charismatic nature of Attila to ruthlessly keep what is an otherwise fragile political system of personal dependence in check. Should Attila sense that a Logades and/or his tribe was dissatisfied and close to rebellion, he could use his power to either execute him (If he was a nuisance and his tribe did not cause a big threat) and make an example to the rest of his followers to keep in line, or he could regulate the influx of wealth to this individual, thus pleasing him and manipulating the socio-political hierarchy.⁴³⁶ His personal power was not restricted to economy, however: If my theory is right, then Attila systematically used Elite Transfer to put his Chiefs as Deputy-Kings over tribes to gain control over them. All in all i would argue the Hunnic Empire of Attila was held in place by his Charismatic Rule, and based upon his Authoritarian/Despotic direct control. What this also reveals is that the Hun Political system outwards was directly related and dependant on the economy, which was again dependent on economy and enforced by military supremacy. We all of the sudden see how politically unstable the Hun Empire actually was. In summary i would argue that an attempt from Attila to establish anything but an Authoritarian “power-over” society would have been futile: The political stability within the empire was too fragile.

⁴³⁶ Kradin, 2002, P. 375

Final Conclusion - The Powers that be and the Fall of an Empire.

The fact that the Huns established an empire so vast, on social powers so - apparently - limited, is attributed to Attila and his political genius. He was able to overcome the lack of a common ideology, and saw that the economy was what really mattered - Then, as now, money will always be fuel for a cause. Utilising not only the very potent military social Power of the Huns to extract it, his understanding of both the politics within and outside of the bounds of his Empire attributed to its zenith of success. Externally, direct violence and the continued threat of it allowed him to establish political-, and corresponding economic relations with the Romans. These were then put to use in a history-specific instance where the Central-Asian concept of gift-economy was utilised. The continued impression is that the treatment of non-Huns was unfair, and that the fall of the empire was largely a result of this.

In 453 Attila the Hun died in his sleep on the night of his wedding.⁴³⁷ Political chaos ensued. The sons of Attila wasted no time in claiming leadership of the subject peoples. One would expect Attila's prophesied sons to take the lead and follow suit of his father, touring the Empire and subjugating the tribes who are in common nomadic fashion - revolting. But Ardaric, king of the Gepids, would have none of it: He was able to quite effectively rally most of the Germanic Subjects of Attila under his own banner, resulting in the battle of Nedao in 454:

*“When Ardaric, king of the Gepidae, learned this, he became enraged because so many nations were being treated like slaves of the basest condition, and was the first to rise against the sons of Attila. Good fortune attended him, and he effaced the disgrace of servitude that rested upon him. For by his revolt he freed not only his own tribe, but all the others who were equally oppressed.”*⁴³⁸

Jordanes had named Ardaric and Valamer as Attila's most trusted chieftains. Yet Ardaric had Ellac

⁴³⁷ “Shortly before he died, as the historian Priscus relates, he took in marriage a very beautiful girl named Ildico, after countless other wives, as was the custom of his race. He had given himself up to excessive joy at his wedding, and as he lay on his back, heavy with wine and sleep, a rush of superfluous blood, which would ordinarily have flowed from his nose, streamed in deadly course down his throat and killed him, since it was hindered in the usual passages. Thus did drunkenness put a disgraceful end to a king renowned in war.

“(Getica, XLIX, 254)

⁴³⁸ Getica, L, 260.

killed in the battle, the son of the man he was so valued by.⁴³⁹ This is odd and somewhat contradictory, yet an indicator that the charismatic authority of Attila had not transitioned into Traditional Authority: Attila's sons did not automatically enjoy their father's prestige. The battle of Nedao is depicted by both Jordanes and modern scholars as a long overdue freedom from Hun bondage for the Germanic and Sarmatian peoples.⁴⁴⁰ They are finally free of oppressive bonds and Attila's authoritative rule:

*"The cause of Ardaric, king of the Gepidae, was fortunate for the various nations who were unwillingly subject to the rule of the Huns, for it raised their long downcast spirits to the glad hope of freedom."*⁴⁴¹

However, the Central-Asian theory of Kim opens up for a much more complex explanation: He believes that Ardaric and Valamer, enjoying such a high previous prestige within Attila's court, were considered "Hun Princes"; heirs to the Kingdom.⁴⁴² The battle of Nedao was perhaps not a war of oppression after all, but a struggle for succession. A small excerpt from the Getica does give a valuable clue:

*"But the Gepidae by their own might won for themselves the territory of the Huns and ruled as victors over the extent of all Dacia, demanding of the Roman Empire nothing more than peace and an annual gift as a pledge of their friendly alliance."*⁴⁴³

Arguably, Ardaric more or less directly replaced Attila's position of power, arguably continuing the political tradition of the Huns. Jordanes details the same practice of "demanding" a gift from a "friendly alliance". There are also tribes fighting *with* the Huns against Ardaric and those he rallied; Jordanes says so himself, although he does not name who they are.⁴⁴⁴ The poor treatment of Goths

⁴³⁹ "In this battle fell Ellac, the elder son of Attila, whom his father is said to have loved so much more than all the rest that he preferred him to any child or even to all the children of his kingdom." (ibid, 262)

⁴⁴⁰ See for Example *Huns on The Run in Barbarians and Migration*. by Peter Heather (2007)

⁴⁴¹ Getica, L, 263.

⁴⁴² As mentioned earlier by Kim.

⁴⁴³ Getica, XLIX, 264.

⁴⁴⁴ "For the sword and conspiracy of Ardaric destroyed almost thirty thousand men, Huns as well as those of the other nations who brought them aid." (Getica, L, 262.)

under the Rule of Dengizich, long after the battle of Nedao (which was discussed in Economy,) proves that one faction of Ostrogoths were fighting with the Huns still.⁴⁴⁵ In other words, the Huns were not completely gone, but had fallen back into smaller chiefdoms that - in accordance with nomadic evolution - now had a distinct strata of rulers and ruled.

The Ostrogoths, like many other peoples, were thrown into political turmoil after the Hun empire fell. Heather called it “human flotsam”, referring to the discussion of collapsing identity and the struggle for all of the subject peoples to find their footing as it had been prior to the Huns overlordship.⁴⁴⁶ Orestes, the scribe at the court of Attila and one of his logades, briefly put his son Romulus on the Roman throne. The son of Edekon - Odoacer - formed the first Western Roman Barbarian kingdom under the Sciri, overthrowing Romulus.⁴⁴⁷ Theodoric the Great soon followed, vanquishing Odoacer and establishing a Roman-Gothic kingdom in Italy.⁴⁴⁸ What all these successor-states to the Western Roman empire had in common was their families’ former political power-positions as members of Attila’s dominant coalition.

Whether the Hun Empire was a catalyst for these events or not, it is obvious that the potential for political power that rose from the ashes of the Hun Empire allowed Barbarian powers to set the new norm for Rome. While i would not go as far as Kim and attribute the Huns to the creation of the Feudal-system that set the social foundations for medieval Europe,⁴⁴⁹ the Huns have most certainly not been given proper for their impact on European History. he lack of literary sources is still very much predominant as the deciding factor to why so few scholars choose to grapple with the topic of the Huns - and why they all more or less write the same: It has led to an over-analysis of the few events that have been left to us by Jordanes and Priscus.

It is no doubt that i am in favour of the Central-Asian model of world history, but this is largely

⁴⁴⁵ “.among the race of the Amali because he had begotten three sons, Valamir, Thiudimer and Vidimer. Of these Valamir ascended the throne after his parents, though the Huns as yet held the power over the Goths in general as among other nations. “(Getica, XLVIII, 252, *trans*, Mirror)

⁴⁴⁶ Heather, 2008, P. 240

⁴⁴⁷ It cannot be taken as a coincidence that the fathers of both these individuals served together on an embassy from the Huns to Constantinople. They served the same master, they were arguably both *Logades*: Orestes and Edekon knew each other. 27 years later, Edekon’s son killed Orestes and deposed Romulus from the throne, putting an end to 500 years of emperors on the Western Roman Throne.

⁴⁴⁸ Kelly, 2009, P. 218

because the History-Specific instance that was the polity of the Huns in Europe is so riddled with contradictions and shrouded in mystery. The addition of the Sociology of Mann and North has allowed us to look away from the distinct terminology that separates the Khanates of East-, and Central-Asia and the Polities of Europe. Because of this, the option of Ethnography was open to me, something in which i argue allowed me to look at social Powers, violence, culture and traditions of the Huns that has not been done prior to my work.

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