

**CSORNAI, Katalin**

## **Where Huns' Blood Drew**

The Xiongnu

### **Abstract**

In the knowledge of the Han time sources we can conclude that the history of the Huns goes back in time as well as in territory much further than it has long been decided by mainstream scholars — their ancestors lived in Inner and Eastern Asia centuries before the Christian era, or regarding Sima Qian's records on the Xia dynasty we might tentatively say millennia. Asian Huns are termed as Xiongnu in the Han chronicles. Undoubtedly the same sources do prove that parts of the Asian Huns, who had lived near the northern borders of the Han Empire in the centuries around the beginning of the Christian era, left their homeland in two directions — the Xiongnu of Zhizhi danhu moved west towards Europe, and other peoples who must have had Xiongnu blood in their veins went southwest towards the Indian subcontinent. The latter event occurred in three waves: first by the Yuezhi in 204 B.C., after which the Kushan Empire was founded; then in 176 B.C. by the Saka, whose relation to the Xiongnu is still debated; and finally by the Yuezhi and Wusun in 174 B.C.

### **Introduction**

It is in fact a long time that our knowledge of the Huns has not been satisfactory due to the mainstream scholars using exclusively the Byzantine and European — occasionally the Arabic — sources for their researches. Accidentally one may at most find some references to Anonymus or Kézay. There have been some exceptions though, like De Groot or Béla Szász, who traced the history of the early Huns further back in time and in area, but they both have rather unduly been suppressed. They knew that substantial knowledge of the ancient Chinese chronicles was essential since the said chronicles gave thorough, detailed and genuine report on the Hun peoples. It is heartening news, however, that these conditions have begun to change. Borbála Obrusánszky or Éva Aradi, serious-minded and conscientious scholars of the field, are creditably and accurately going to the furthest possible reaches of the sources essential for the study.

We give the Early Middle Chinese (EMC) and Middle Chinese (MC) phonetics of certain Hun names in the footnotes. It is the Chinese chronicles where one can find how Hun names could have been

pronounced in ancient times under research. At this point some difficulties are to be faced. Firstly, while being transcribed into pre-Qin, Qin or Han Chinese language, Hun words suffered great distortion owing to the monosyllabic way of Chinese language, and it should be added that considerably long time, counted in millennia, is dealt with. Secondly, it is not only the difference in the present-day pronunciation but also the richness of the dialects and the writing system having undergone significant transformations in the course of ages as well as in the different princedoms that make investigations of the phonetics rather difficult. Bernhard Karlgren, the Swedish sinologist dedicated a whole life's work to the research of the ancient and classical — or in other terms EMC and MC — phonetics. His grand work of *Grammata Serica* has still remained the most minute and accurate opus with the widest range of Chinese characters. We refer to his work as GS in the footnotes.

It must be noted that the name Xiongnu 匈奴<sup>1</sup> recorded in the Chinese sources refers to Asian Hun peoples. The Han Empire is often termed as Middle Kingdom.

### I. Primary sources of the Asian Hun peoples in Qin and Han ages

The following works provide us the biggest amount of reports on the early history of the Asian Huns, or the Xiongnu as they are referred to, in the ancient Chinese chronicles:

Title and chapter	Author and author's age	Compiled	Period covered
<i>Shiji</i> 110	Sima Tan ca. 180-110 B.C. Sima Qian ca. 145-86 B.C.	104-86 B.C.	19 <sup>th</sup> century-95 B.C.
<i>Hanshu</i> 68, 94	Ban Gu A.D. 32-92	200 B.C.-A.D. 24	206 B.C.-A.D. 24
<i>Hou Hanshu</i> 89	Fan Ye 398-445	A.D. 3 <sup>rd</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> centuries	A.D. 25-220

*Xiongnu Liezhuan* (*Systematic Biography of the Xiongnu*), which is chapter 110 of *Shiji* (*Records of the Historian*) gives a complete and detailed review on the history and culture of the Asian Huns, or the Xiongnu as they are called, from as early as the period of the Xia dynasty's last ruler (18<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) up to his own time (95 B.C.). The *Biography* was completed by Sima Qian, the Grand Historian though the first steps were taken by his father, Sima Tan.

<sup>1</sup> Xiongnu: xījung/xīwong-no/nuo GS: 1183d. and 94.l.

*Xiongnu Zhuan* (Biography of the Xiongnu), which is chapter 94 of *Hanshu* (Chronicle of the [Former] Han Dynasty), up to the time of 95 B.C. is almost equivalent to the above-mentioned work of Sima Qian apart from some small and mainly stylistic differences since it is based upon the latter. Then it goes on dealing with the history of the Huns until A.D. 24.

*Nan Xiongnu Zhuan* (Biography of the Southern Xiongnu), which is chapter 89 of *Hou Hanshu* (Chronicle of the Later Han Dynasty) covers the period between the founding of the Later Han dynasty (A.D. 25) and the fall of the same dynasty (A.D. 220) with the history of the Xiongnu or rather the Southern Xiongnu as from A.D. 51 the reports are focused on the Southern State of the Hun Empire split into two countries — the Southern State now belonged to the Later Han Empire, and the Northern State, maintaining their independence, left their homeland and escaped the authority and interest of the Middle Kingdom.

*Jin Midi Zhuan* (Biography of Jin Midi), which is chapter 68 of *Hanshu*, gives a detailed description of the life of Jin Midi, who had been a Hun prince but became an honoured subject of the Han Court — it was because of his honest and noble conduct that Han Wudi had him in his confidence always keeping him by his side and in turn he proved to be a reliable, loyal support till the end of his emperor's life, which deserved him a whole chapter in *Hanshu*.

## II. The origin of the Xiongnu

Among the peoples ever lived on the territory of present-day China there used to be a dynasty called Xia 夏. It was founded by the legendary Great Yu 大禹 in 2205 B.C. and maintained its rule until 1765 B.C. according to Chinese historians. On the basis of a legend still existing in his time, Sima Qian recorded that the Xiongnu were the descendants of the Xia. The legend is as follows.

Jie 桀, the last ruler of the Xia lived a terribly nasty way of life, because of which he became dethroned and his House overthrown by Tang 湯 of the Shang 商 tribe. The Shang founded a new dynasty and banished Jie northward to Mingtiao. After three years in exile Jie died and, as was in custom then, his son, Chunwei 淳維,<sup>2</sup> married his father's wives, freeing them and the whole clan from banishment and leading them further north, where they started to pasture. Thus did he, son of the last Xia ruler, become the forefather of the Xiongnu. As organised Xiongnus they only came back from north in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, by which time they had strengthened and increased, and started to make attacks on the Middle Kingdom.

Zhang Yen writes in *Suoyin* (Guide to the Hidden Meanings), an 8<sup>th</sup> century commentary:

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<sup>2</sup> Chunwei: dǐwān/zǐuēn or tǐwān/tǐjuēn-dǐwār/jǐwī. GS: 464e. and 575o.

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“In the Qin era Chunwei fled to the northern boundaries.”

According to Le Yan, the Xiongnu mentioned in *Guadipu* (*Territory Based Lineage*, a long-lost book quoted in the above-mentioned *Suoyin*) in fact refers the Xia since the *Guadipu* passage reads as follows:

“Jie, (ruler of) the House of Xia lived an immoral life. Tang exiled him to Mingtiao, he died there three years later. His son Xunyu 獯粥<sup>3</sup> married his wives and they wandered far away to the northern wilderness in search of pasture lands, and then in the Middle Kingdom they were mentioned as Xiongnu.”

Considering the consistent historical data in the above sources, and on the grounds that in the Yin age (1401-1122 B.C.) there was a northern dialect of the word *chunwei* corresponding to *xunyu*, it is concluded that the two varieties must cover the same name.<sup>4</sup> For this reason does Ying Shao write in *Fengsutung* (*The Meaning of Popular Customs* by Ying Shao, A.D. 140-206):

“The name Xunyu of the Yin age has been transformed to Xiongnu.”

Fu Qian maintained the following view:

“In times of Yao (2356-2255 B.C.) their name was Hunyu 菴粥,<sup>5</sup> in the Zhou era (1122-255 B.C.) it was Xianyun 獫狁,<sup>6</sup> under the reign of the Qin (255-207 B.C.) it was Xiongnu.”

As Wei Zhao commented:

“During the Han (206 B.C.-A.D. 220) they were called Xiongnu 匈奴, and Hunyu 菴粥 is just another name for the same people, and similarly, Xunyu 獯粥 is just another transcription of Chunwei’s 淳維, their ancestor’s name.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Xunyu: xīwən/xīuən-tjōk/tšjuk or dīōk/īuk. GS: 461g. and 1024a

<sup>4</sup> We may even go as far as to incline to the tentative view that *chunwei*, *xunyu* and *xiongnu* should once have been the same name by different accents.

<sup>5</sup> Hunyu: xīən/xīuən-tjōk/tšjuk GS: 458h. and 1024a.

<sup>6</sup> Xianyun: glām/liām-zīwən/īuēn GS: 613k. and 468g.

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And according to the records of Sima Qian, the Xiongnu were mentioned as Shanrong 山戎<sup>8</sup>, Xianyun 獫狁 and Hunyu 菴粥 between the age of Tang and the age of Yu (2205-1766 B.C.).

To put the above sources and commentaries in brief, they state that certain tribes or ruling clans occupied the territory of the southern part of the present-day Shanxi and the western part of today's Henan as early as some hundreds or even thousands of years before Christ, and the names of these tribes or clans cover the same people, i.e. the Xiongnu, or the Asian Huns as they are called today. There are several reasons for the difference between the names. Firstly, conforming to the common custom of the ruling clans or dynasties, the names underwent significant changes in the course of the successive ages; secondly, there were too many dialects in an extremely vast territory; thirdly, it was not until the reign of the first emperor, Qin Shi Huangdi (221-206 B.C.) that the unification of the writing system was completed, so before that time every principedom used to have its own way of writing; and finally, in the monosyllabic way of Chinese language, one and the same name can be transcribed in different characters.

With all the sources expounded above, however, we are to treat these records with reservations all the more because the ages under research embrace thousands of years. During millennia a tribe or a nation must undergo a great deal of changes and it would be unwise to equate the ones about whom the records say that even as early as in the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C. they were Xiongnu people under different names explicitly with the Asian Huns of the Han age. We should rather say that they were probably relatives by origin. A good example is the above-mentioned, early recorded legend according to which the last ruler of the Xia, whose original homeland was in some area of the present-day Shanxi and Henan, was banished to the north, and when he died, his son, Xunyu, together with the whole clan, wandered farther north. That was an event when a tribe obviously branched off and developed along different lines.

### III. On the earliest known state system of the Xiongnu

#### 1. The state system of the Xiongnu

As we have learned from Sima Qian's historical work, Xunyu and his people moved into the northern wilderness in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century B.C. and it was not until they had conquered and united all the northern nomadic tribes by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. that the Middle Kingdom again met them and had to face a new threat: the enlarged, well-organised and powerful Xiongnu. This means that the state system of the Xiongnu had been organised some time between the two dates and it must have

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<sup>7</sup> LIN: 1. See also WU: 2849.

<sup>8</sup> The word *shanrong* means mountain *rong* so it can't possibly be a transcription. In any case, the EMC and MC: *sǎn-njōng/nǐjung* GS: 193.a. 1013.a.

happened closer to the former than to the latter date as by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, when they first appeared at the northern border of the Middle Kingdom, their system had already been fully developed, so the Grand Historian managed to make detailed records of it but was only able to date it back to the time of the appearance of this “new” enemy.

The first Xiongnu ruler ever made record of was Touman *danhu*<sup>9</sup> 頭曼單于, who started to reign about 215 B.C. Below the *danhu* there were twenty-four great ranks, or *da chen* 大臣, these kings were divided into two parts, left and right, so there were two of each kings. The titles are not always referred to under the same names or ranks in the Chinese chronicles. The dignitaries were responsible for ten, one hundred, one thousand or ten thousand horsemen according to their ranks but all the twenty-four kings were called by the reverent name “one-thousand-horsy”. This institution served as political system in times of peace and as military system in war times.

Below we give a list of the title names recorded in *Shiji* and *Hou Hanshu*. The title names in *Hanshu* are identical with the ones in *Shiji*, so we do not list them here.<sup>10</sup>

## SHIJI

## HOU HANSHU

## DA CHEN (GRAND OFFICERS)

*si jiao* (the four horns)

1. left and right wise king	(1–2)	1. left and right wise king	(1–2)
2. left and right <i>yuli</i> king	(3–4)	2. left and right <i>yuli</i> king	(3–4)

*liu jiao* (the six horns)

3. left and right great general	(5–6)	3. left and right <i>rizhu</i> king	(5–6)
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<sup>9</sup> 單于 *danhu*: tân/tân-giwo/jjiu GS: 147a. 97a. These two characters are usually pronounced *shanyu* but there has not been any detailed reasoning for that. *Hanshu Yinyi* writes: “*Danhu* means ‘infinitely vast’, which refers that the person whose manifestations through his conducts resemble the sky is *danhu*.” As for the transcription of the title of the Asian Huns’ supreme ruler, its origin is traced back to the word *tarqan*, *tarḡan* by PULLEYBLANK. He mentions that according to PELLIOU it must have been borrowed by the Tujue from their Ruanruan predecessors. PULLEYBLANK himself states that the ultimate source is no doubt the Xiongnu. The use of Chinese -n for foreign -r is regular in the Han period. The Chinese initial \*d- would not yet have been palatalized in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. when the transcription first appears. He adds that the title *tarqan* is found without its final -n on the coins of the Hephthalite ruler Nezak Tarḡan in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The Asian Huns had known and been using this title before they mixed with the Turks. So *tarqan*, or *danhu* used to refer the supreme ruler of the Huns. As years went by, Turks and Mongols started to apply it for lower ranks, the decline of titles in the course of centuries is indeed quite common, we may compare the fate of *khan* in the modern Middle East where it has become no more than “mister”. See PULLEYBLANK: 256-257. We must add that in the form of *tárkány* as title name and in the form of *Tarján* as tribal name it was widely used among the Hungarians of the Conquest period and it has been preserved in a great number of Hungarian place names today. See also NÉMETH: 202.

<sup>10</sup> See PRITSAK: 178-202.

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4. left and right great captain	(7–8)	4. left and right <i>wenyudi</i>	(7–8)
5. left and right great <i>danghu</i>	(9–10)	5. left and right <i>zhanjiang</i>	(9–10)

## XIAO CHEN (SMALL OFFICERS)

6. left and right <i>guduhou</i>	(11–12)	6. left and right <i>guduhou</i>	(11–12)
7. no name given	(13–24)	7. left and right <i>shizhu guduhou</i>	(13–14)

There are some other titles like:

*rizhu qieju* (15–16)

*danghu* (17–18)

no name given (19–24)

As we can see, there are two of each title, a left and a right one. It corresponds to the territorial system of the Hun Empire — the left kings governed the eastern parts, the right kings governed the western parts of the country while the *danhu* had his court in the centre. The rank of the left was always higher than the right one of each pair. The dignitaries of the four and the six horns were members of the *danhu*'s relative clans. The titles of *guduhou* 骨都候<sup>11</sup> were born by members of some different clan.

## 2. Grand officers — the four horns

The dignitaries of the four horns were sons and brothers of the actual *danhu*, and it was only they who had the possibility to become a *danhu* one day. According to common law, when the *danhu* died, the bearer of the highest rank, i.e. the left wise king, succeeded to the throne, so the title of the left wise king was always filled by the *danhu*'s eldest or wisest son. The Chinese recorded the Hun word “wise king” both phonetically and by its meaning. The former is *tuqi wang* 屠耆王 and the latter is *xian wang* 賢王. *Tuqi* is the distorted form of the contemporary Hun or Xiongnu word “wise”, which certainly used to be pronounced in a different way from today's phonetics.<sup>12</sup> The left *tuqi* or *xian wang* ruled over the greater part of the eastern lands of the country, and so did the right *tuqi* over the greater part of the western

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<sup>11</sup> Guduhou: kwət/kuət-to/tuo-g'u/γəu GS: 486a. 45e'. 113a.

<sup>12</sup> 屠耆 *tuqi*: d'o/d'uo-g'ier/g'ji GS: 45i'. 552.l. According to DE GROOT it is the equivalent of the Turkic word *toghri*, which means “wise, virtuous”. SHIRATORI thinks it is the transcription of the Turkic word *tu-si*, with the meaning of fire and which also has the meaning of “upright, true, correct”. See DE GROOT: 93-94. We add that the same word can be found in Mongolian *tysi-* as “to lean on” and *tysimel* as “minister, dignitary”. It is interesting to note that SHIRATORI's *tu-si* as “fire” both phonetically and by meaning shows remarkable similarity with the Hungarian word *tűz*, which also means “fire”. PULLEYBLANK thinks that the original form of the Turkic *tegin* must be this *tuqi*. See PULLEYBLANK: 257.

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lands of the country. The *yuli* kings also had significant authority, the left *yuli* dominated over the lesser part of the eastern lands of the country controlling the affairs of the area under his domain and so did the right *yuli* over the lesser part of the western lands. The word *yuli* is a transcription of a Xiongnu word too.<sup>13</sup> So the *danhu* entrusted his sons and brothers to govern the conquered countries.

### 3. Grand officers — the six horns

The followings are recorded in *Hou Hanshu Nan Xiongnu Zhuan*:

“The *danhu*’s clan name is Xuliandi 虛連鞬.<sup>14</sup> The four great clans: the Huyan 呼衍,<sup>15</sup> the Xubu 須卜, The Qiulin 丘林 and the Lan 蘭<sup>16</sup> are the *danhu*’s kinsfolk, who give their daughters to the *danhu* in marriage. Members of the Huyans decide in criminal cases and in litigated matters, make decisions in major or minor affairs over the right wing of the empire and then inform the *danhu* by word of mouth.”

*Shiji Xiongnu Liezhuan* and *Hou Hanshu Xiongnu Zhuan*, however, only mention three clans:

<sup>13</sup> 谷蠡 *yuli*: GS: kuk or giuk/iwok-luâ or liei. 1202a. 1241o. On the basis of the EMC phonetics (giuk-luâ) and its role in the administration we can say that this title name is in relation with the Hungarian title name *gyula*. In the hierarchy of the Hungarians of the Conquest period *gyula* filled the second rank just like *giuk-luâ* (*yuli*) in the case of the Asian Huns. See GYÖRFFY: 29.

<sup>14</sup> Xuliandi: k’io/ k’iwo or χio/χiwo-lian/liän-tieg/tiei GS: 78a. 213a. 866h. In other parts of *Hanshu* the name Xuliandi-t is also written as Luandi 攀鞬: bliwan/liwän-tieg/tiei GS: 178n. 866h. In the case of the latter one, the similarity with the Hungarian name Levente makes us think of a possible relation between the Hungarian and the Asian Hun name. GYÖRFFY, who regards Levente as stemming from Finno-Ugric, writes Arpad’s eldest son, i.e. Levente in the form of Liüntika too. See GYÖRFFY: 57. NÉMETH, who also maintains the view of Finno-Ugric origin, mentions Arpad’s son under the name of Liündik. See NÉMETH: 276.

<sup>15</sup> Huyan: χo/χuo-gian/jän GS: 55h. 197a. The EMC discloses the Hungarian name Horkan. NÉMETH writes that under *gyula* and *kende*, *horka* was the third rank dignitary among the Hungarians of the Conquest period (the same way as the first dignitary of the six horns, i.e. the great general or *rizhu* king was the third rank among the Asian Huns), and NÉMETH adds that it must have been both title name and personal name. He was in charge of coordinating the policy (the same task as the great general’s or *rizhu* king’s). According to NÉMETH, the Turkic word *horka* shows the meaning “accuse, arraign”. See NÉMETH: 247-248. It is noteworthy to mention here, that the Hungarian verb *horkan* means “accuse somebody, scold somebody”, and bearing in mind that *horka* was a dignitary among the Hungarians with the same task, we may conclude that *horka(n)* could be originated from *huyan* (EMC χo-gian).

<sup>16</sup> Lan: glân/lân GS: 185n. This *lan* must be a shortened form of a longer Xiongnu word. In Chinese sources we often come across variations like *Wulan* 烏蘭 (river name), *Hulan* 弧蘭 (family name), *zhelan* 折蘭 (according to YAN SHIGU Xiongnu title name), *Alan* 阿蘭 (folk name and country name). As for the river name *Wulan* or *Ulan*, we find the same word in Mongolian with the meaning of “red”. In Turkic language “red” is *al*, like the first syllable of *alan*. And we should add that the Chinese word *lan* means “red orchid”. This Hun clan was likely to be connected with the red colour and maybe with the Alan people.



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“Their nobility consists of three clans: The Huyan, the Lan and then the Xubu.”

So while the *danhu* and the four horns belonged to the Xuliandi or Luandi clan, the six horns were made up by the Huyan, the Xubu, the Lan and — according to *Hou Hanshu* — the Qiulin clans. As we can see, these four clans were also relatives of the *danhu*. The nobles of the four horns governed the vast area of the conquered countries while the nobles of the six horns were in charge of assisting the *danhu* in jurisdiction and foreign affairs and that was the reason why they only got smaller lands not too far from the court — their task did not allow them to stay far away from the court for a long time.

#### 4. Small officers — the *guduhou*

The sources say very little about the *guduhou*. We do not know for sure but it seems probable that the *guduhou* was not only title but a clan too. We are informed that they belonged to a different clan and supposedly this might have been the reason why they were counted as small officers. The chronicles say that the *danhu*'s clan intermarried with the *guduhous*. *Hou Hanshu Xiongnu Zhuan* reads as follows:

“In the 21<sup>st</sup> year of his reign, in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Jianguo period (58-31 B.C.) Wuzhuliu *danhu* died. The affairs of the Xiongnu Empire were managed by Xubudang, the right *guduhou*. He was the son-in-law of Wang Zhaojun's daughter whose name was Yun.”

Wang Zhaojun was Huhanye<sup>17</sup> *danhu*'s wife, so the son-in-law of Wang Zhaojun's daughter was obviously the son-in-law of Huhanye's daughter. What should be interesting in the above-quoted lines is the following. As it is stated, the said *guduhou* was the son-in-law of the *danhu*'s daughter. So whenever intermarriage took place between the *danhu*'s clan and the *guduhou*'s clan, the bride must have come from the *danhu*'s clan and the groom from the *guduhou*'s. As it is clear from the quotation under point 2 above, in the case of the six horns it happened the other way round, i.e. the groom came from the *danhu*'s clan and the bride from the Huyan's, Xubu's, Lan's or Qiulin's.

The *guduhou*-s took part in the administration and, as it is recorded in the chronicles, they were often entrusted with diplomatic matters. Interestingly enough, the root *gudu* shows considerable similarity with the Mongolian word *kuda*, which means “kinsfolk”, i.e. relationship through marriage. The same word was in use in Horezm around the 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the patriarchal community of the clan within a motte was called “ked”, whose chief was called “ked-chuda”.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Huhanye: 𐰽𐰺𐰍/𐰽𐰺𐰍-g'ân/γân-ziâ/ia or dziâ/ia GS: 55h. 140i. 47a.

<sup>18</sup> See TOLSTOV: 199.

#### IV. The main events of the Xiongnu history

##### 1. Foundation and consolidation of the first Xiongnu nomadic state

The first Asian Hun ruler recorded in the chronicles was Touman 頭曼<sup>19</sup> *danhu*, who reigned until 209 B.C. We cannot speak about an empire just yet. He ruled over the Ordos, i.e. the area within the bend of the Yellow River and further northeast as far as the Gobi Desert. There lived some tribes in the neighbourhood like the Wusun 烏孫 and the Yuezhi 月氏 in the west, the Xianbei 鮮卑 and the Wuhuan 烏桓 in the north and the northeast, the Donghu 東胡 in the south, the Loufan 樓煩 and the Linhu 林胡 in the southeast.

His son named Maodun (Bator) 冒頓<sup>20</sup> should have become his successor but he designated another son, whose mother was his favourite wife, as crown prince and sent Maodun (Bator) to the Yuezhi as a hostage. Some time later he attacked the Yuezhi and Maodun (Bator) had to escape and run for his life so he stole a Yuezhi horse and galloped homeward. There he killed his father, his stepmother and everybody of whom he thought might oppose him and in 209 B.C. he proclaimed himself *danhu*.

Then Maodun (Bator) started his campaign, conquering the tribes around his country one by one — first he subjugated the Donghu, upon which the Linhu and the Loufan joined him by themselves and marched together with him westward, where he gained a victory over the Yuezhi (around 204 B.C.), then he led his troops to the east and defeated the states Yan 燕 and Dai 代. It was at this time that the empire founded by Qin Shi Huangdi was collapsing, the rule of the Qin dynasty had just been overthrown and struggles for power were continuously going on, Liu Bang, the future Han emperor, had to fight with Xiang Yu, warfare among rivals did not stop for a minute, which made the whole country exhausted and impoverished. This certainly was to the advantage of Maodun (Bator), who became strong and powerful — his army counted over 300,000 archers. He expanded his country to become a powerful empire — its eastern ends were washed by the waves of the Pacific Ocean, to the west it reached over the valley of the Ili River, it got beyond the Great Wall through the valley of the Yellow River in the south, and to the north faded into the vast and distant Siberian wilderness.

<sup>19</sup> Touman: d'u/d'əu-mjwǎn or mwǎn/muǎn GS: 118e. 266a.

<sup>20</sup> Maodun: mōg/māu or mək-twǎn/tuǎn or d'wǎn/d'uǎn, GS: 1062b. 427j. This is a transcription of the Hun name Bagatur, then Baator and Bator. The consonents "m" and "b" go back to a common "w", so either "m" or "b" can be pronounced, and thus we can say *bōg* for *mōg*. Furthermore, for the transcription of the syllables with final -r the scholars of the Han time used to apply characters which ended in -n, so the -r in place of the final -n in the *twǎn* or *tuǎn* of EMC gives the syllable -*tur* or -*tor*. Thus have we got the word *bagatur* or *bator*, which word still exists both in Mongolian and in Hungarian language with the same meaning of "brave". We may make a tentative hint that Mongolian, Hungarian and Turkic languages could have originated from the common stem of the Xiongnu language. We must add that HIRTH had long ago equated the name Maodun with the form Bagtur; see HIRTH: 82.

## 2. Warfare for power

All the important movements of the grand-scale and dramatic warfare between the two empires would take a lot more pages than our article is meant to. Here we only refer that the wars were fought for the authority over the vast area of Eastern and Inner Asia. In the beginning the Xiongnu had significant victories, on one occasion it was even Chang'an, the Han capital, which seemed to be falling in the hands of the Xiongnu. It was partly due to the smart tricks of the Han diplomacy creating hostilities among the leaders of the Huns and some other reasons like extremely bad weather conditions making the cattle fall and thus causing poverty and epidemic on the land of the Xiongnu that with the leadership of Huhanye *danhu* one part of the Xiongnu finally surrendered to the Han in 51 B.C. The Han settled them at the northern frontier and let Huhanye rule his own country as he liked but in turn he had to defend the border for the Han. So the Hun Empire split into two parts. Feeling the pressure of being exposed to severe attacks from both the Han Empire and the subjugated part of the Huns now, and seeing that the tribes Maodun (Bator) and his successors had once conquered were now rupturing and becoming the means for the Han against them, the Xiongnus that would not surrender moved westwards under the leadership of Zhizhi 郅支<sup>21</sup> *danhu*, who, as a matter of fact, was Huhanye's brother. He settled down in the Ili Valley and subjugated the neighbouring peoples. He managed to establish another powerful empire after defeating the Wusun, the Dingling 丁零 and other peoples that researchers have not yet been able to identify, such as the Jianhun 堅昆<sup>22</sup> and Hujie 呼揭<sup>23</sup>. The country of Hesu<sup>24</sup> regularly paid him taxes. He got Kagju 康居, a country by the middle reaches of the Yaxartes, as his ally. So Zhizhi now had an empire which extended from the Turfan Basin as far as the Aral Sea and covered the area over the upper reaches of the Ob and Irtis while the small states of the Turfan Basin were his tax payers. Now we can see, relying on sources of the time, how near they got to the eastern edge of Europe in the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C.

It was, however, still not reassuring enough for the Han Empire, who wanted to have the trade route towards the West under his control, and needed the authority over the small states along the silk road,

<sup>21</sup> Zhizhi: tjet/tjed-tjĕg/tśię GS: 413. and 864a.

<sup>22</sup> Jianhun: kien-kwən/kuən GS: 368c. 417a.

<sup>23</sup> Hujie: xo/xuo-g'iat/g'jät or k'iat/k'jät or k'iat/k'jät. GS: 55h. 313p. DE GROOT identifies it with Uigur; see DE GROOT: 79. HULSEWÉ refuses this possibility, while others just say that the land of the Hujie might have been somewhere in the Altai region. See HULSEWÉ: 214-215.

<sup>24</sup> 郝宿 Hesu: -sjôk/sjuk GS: 1029a. (the character *he* is not in GS). In this form we find the name in *Hanshu* 94, *Xiongnu Zhuan*. This is probably the transcription of Aksu and may cover the area of Wensu (溫宿 wən/uən-sjôk/sjuk GS: 426c. 1029a.), southwest of Kucha. We also find this name in another transcription in the sources, e.g. *Hanshu* 70 *Chen Tang zhuan* 8, this way: 闐蘇 Hesu: g'âp/yâp-so/suo GS: 642s. 67c. But here it refers to another region, which lies much further west, and which is usually identified with Yancai or Alan. See CSORNAI: 303-304. YAN SHIGU (581-645 B.C.) writes the following: "There is a country about one thousand *li* the north of Kangju, this country is called both Yancai 奄蔡 and Hesu 闐蘇." In *Hou Hanshu* it is recorded that Yancai was a dependency of Kangju, the dress and the customs of the people, who lived in towns, were identical with those of Kangju, the climate was mild, and there were many fir-trees. It is also recorded that Yancai later adopted the name Alanliao 阿蘭聊. Some maintain the view that *liao* was added to *alan* mistakenly. With regard to Hesu, PULLEYBLANK points out that the Old Chinese reconstruction as hâp-sâh can be compared with Abzoe found in PLINY VI, 38. See HULSEWÉ: 129-130.

and none-the-less, the prestige of the Han dynasty, who did not regard Zhizhi as legitimate *danhu*, required to destroy Zhizhi's powerful and expanding empire, which was just about to mean a prevalence to the Han Empire in the west. Two skilful generals, who were in charge of governing the outer states of the Han and thus lived rather near to Zhizhi's land, recognised the urgent need of defeating him in the shortest possible time, so they did not wait for the slow administration of the imperial chancellery to decide on a campaign but attacked Zhizhi on their own authority, enlisting the soldiers of the vassal states governed by them. They also made an alliance with the people of Wusun and Kangju, who had had enough of Zhizhi's fierce conduct. Being superior in number, they gained the victory, so the whole Western Hun Empire was destroyed and Zhizhi killed. According to *Hanshu* 70, there were one thousand five hundred and eighteen Xiongnu killed, one hundred and forty-five captured and over one thousand surrendered. That is altogether less than three thousand Xiongnu and the Han chronicles do not say anything about the rest of the Huns, who avoided being killed or captured and nor did surrender. This silence must be due to the fact that Zhizhi's Huns vanished from sight so they could not be a threat any longer. In any case, this must be the point where the link between the European Huns and the Asian Huns should be sought.

### 3. Wandering peoples carrying Xiongnu blood

There are some other important events that we have not spoken about. Some time after Maodun (Bator) *danhu* had defeated the Yuezhi in 204 B.C., the greater part of the Yuezhi moved beyond the Hindukush, where they founded the Kushan Kingdom. Below is a short report from *Hou Hanshu Xiyu Zhuan* (The History of the Western Regions).

"The Xiongnu defeated the Yuezhi so the Yuezhi moved to Daxia 大夏<sup>25</sup>. They divided Daxia into five parts: Xiumi 休密<sup>26</sup>, Shuangmi 雙靡<sup>27</sup>, Guishuang 貴霜<sup>28</sup>, Xidun 狝頓<sup>29</sup>, Dumi 都密<sup>30</sup>, and there were five *jabgus*<sup>31</sup> to rule them. About one hundred years later

<sup>25</sup> Daxia: d'âd-γa GS: 317a. 36a. A name for Bactria. The EMC seems to suggest the name "daha". It is noteworthy to mention that the characters in Daxia involve the name of the ancient Xia dynasty (with whom the Xiongnu had common origins according to the records of the *Shiji*).

<sup>26</sup> Xiumi: χiôg/χiəu-miět. GS: 1070a. 405p. MARQUART locates it in the Wakhan, see HULSEWÉ: 123.

<sup>27</sup> Shuangmi: sŭng/şâng-mia/mjie. GS: 1200a. 17h. According to HULSEWÉ it is located in Chitral; see HULSEWÉ: 123. Although the area of the Magadha Empire must have lied a bit further south to Chitral, where HULSEWÉ locates Shuangmi, it is interesting to note that the EMC phonetics (sŭng-mia) shows similarity with the name Shungga, who overthrew the Maurya dynasty around 180 B.C., which date also seems consistent.

<sup>28</sup> Guishuang: kiwəd/kjwei-şiang. GS: 540b. 731g. Here we deal with the name Kushan. It is located north of Gandhara. See HULSEWÉ: 123.

<sup>29</sup> Xitun: *xi* is not in GS. After YAN SHIGU, HULSEWÉ suggests a form of χiět. *Tun*: twən/tuən. GS 427j. So the EMC for Xitun should be: χiět-twən/tuən. It is located at Parwan on the Panjshir River. See: HULSEWÉ: 123.

<sup>30</sup> Dumi: to/tuo-miět. GS: 45e. 405p. In the place of "Dumi" here, *Hanshu Xiyu Zhuan* writes "Gaofu" 高附. Gaofu: kôg/kâu-b'ju. GS: 1129a. 136k. It is identified with Kabul. See HULSEWÉ: 122-123.

Qiujiuque 丘就卻<sup>32</sup>, the *yabgu* of Guishuang attacked and conquered the other four *yabgus*, then proclaimed himself king and named the country Guishuang Kingdom. (...) But in the Han Empire they are simply called Great Yuezhi, referring to their origin.”

The Kushans are generally identified with the White Huns or Hepthalithes, though as we learn from the above source they came from the Yuezhi and not from the Xiongnu — who in other terms are called Asian Huns. We can not exclude, however, that the peoples who settled in Bactria were relatives of the Xiongnu. Firstly, we should not escape the consideration that the Yuezhi, living in the near of the Xiongnu for a long time, and defeated by Maodun (Bator) *danhu* in 204 B.C. first, could intermingle with the commons of the Xiongnu. (Intermarriages with the nobles can be excluded, as we have seen above.) Secondly, in *Hanshu Zhang Qian Zhuan* (The Biography of Zhang Qian) the followings are recorded:

“In Wusun, the king is called *hunmo* 昆莫<sup>33</sup>. The small state of the *hunmo*’s father, Nandoumi 難兜靡<sup>34</sup> and the (state of the) Yuezhi originally located between the Qilian and Dunhuang. The Great Yuezhi attacked and killed Nandoumi, occupied his land, and (Nandoumi’s) people fled to the Xiongnu. When Nandoumi’s son, the *hunmo* was born, his foster father, the *yabgu* Bujiu 布就飢侯<sup>35</sup> carried him along. He put him down in the grass as he had to go and get some food. On returning he saw a wolf milking him and some black raptor flying around him with meat in their beaks, so he regarded the child as a divine being and took him back to the Xiongnu, where the *danhu* brought him up with loving care. When the *hunmo* grew into a man, (the *danhu*) gave him his (Wusun) people to be their commander. He performed brilliant feats. It was at that time that the Xiongnu defeated the Yuezhi, and the Yuezhi moved westwards, where they beat the Saiwang 塞王<sup>36</sup> (the Saka). The Saiwang moved far to the south as the Yuezhi had occupied their land. When the *hunmo* strengthened, he asked the *danhu* to let him take revenge for his father. So he attacked the Great Yuezhi on the west and the

<sup>31</sup> 飢侯 *xihou*: χiəp-g’u/χəm GS: 675q. 113a. It is generally known to be the transcription of *yabgu*. GÉZA KÉPES derives the Hungarian word *jobbágy*, originally meaning “lord”, from the Old Turkic *yabgu*. See KÉPES:17.

<sup>32</sup> Qiujiuque: k’jüg/k’jəu-dz’iôg/dz’jəu-k’jak. GS: 994a. 1093a. 776b. Regarding the EMC phonetics and the historical data recorded in *Hanshu Xiongnu Zhuan* and *Hou Hanshu Xiyu Zhuan*, he must certainly be Kujula Kadphises, founder of the Kushan Empire. CHAVANNES maintains the same identification, he writes the name in Latin letters like Kozulokadphises; see HULSEWÉ: 122.

<sup>33</sup> Hunmo: kwən/kuən-mâg/muo GS: 417a. 802a.

<sup>34</sup> Nandoumi: nân-tu/təu-mia/mjwię GS: 152d. 117a. 17h.

<sup>35</sup> Bujiu *xihou*: pwo/puo-dz’iôg/dz’jəu GS: 102j. 1093a.

<sup>36</sup> Saiwang: sək/səg/sâi-gi-wang/ji-wang GS: 908a. 739a. This *saiwang* probably stands for the Saka. HULSEWÉ quotes DE GROOT, who is of the opinion that the character *wang* 王 is a corrupted form of the character *gui* 圭. The EMC of *gui* is kiweg/kiwei GS: 879a., and with other radicals it is kęg/kai GS: 879n. 879.o. See HULSEWÉ: 104-05.

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Great Yuezhi moved on further southwest to the land of Daxia. The *hunmo* subjugated their people and stayed there, keeping them occupied.”

So this young man was the Wusun king's son. He certainly was of clear Wusun origin, but by the time the *danhu* gave his people back to him, these people, who had once been taken in by the Xiongnu, had been mixing up with their landlords, the Xiongnu. Then the Xiongnu beat the Yuezhi in 177 B.C., and the Yuezhi moved westward into the Ili Valley, where the Saka had been living, so the Yuezhi drove the Saka away — the characters *saiwang* 塞王 in the chronicles stand for *saka*. These Sakas then wandered southwest to Daxia (Bactria). And later when the Wusun *hunmo* attacked the Yuezhi in the Ili Valley (around 174 B.C.), the Yuezhi fled southwest, making the same way as the Sakas had done before. The question is what kind of a people the name Saka refers to. The fact that the name Xiongnu is to designate the Asian Huns has already been convincingly proved and accepted. See for example the articles of Uciraltu, linguist of Mongolian and Chinese languages.<sup>37</sup> Some regard the Saka as of Iranian origin, others regard them as of Scythian origin, and some others accept that they were Scythians but regard the Scythians as of Iranian origin. There are still some others who think that the Sakas were identical with the Huns. We will not take sides in this debate now. What is essential here is the evidence of the historical records that a people by the name of Saka moved from the Ili Valley to the southwest as far as Bactria where they settled. Some time later the Wusun *hunmo*, who had been staying under the shelter of the Xiongnu and thus his Wusun people had been mixing with the Xiongnus, went to Bactria too, chasing the Yuezhi. So peoples of Xiongnu blood must have arrived in Bactria either by the Yuezhi or by the Saka or by the Wusun *hunmo*'s people or perhaps by all.

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