

TURUN YLIOPISTON JULKAISUJA
ANNALES UNIVERSITATIS TURKUENSIS

SARJA - SER. B OSA - TOM. 373
HUMANIORA

THE NATURE OF NOMADIC POWER

**Contacts between the Huns and the Romans
during the Fourth and Fifth Centuries**

by

Päivi Kuosmanen

TURUN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF TURKU
Turku 2013

From the Faculty of Humanities
Department of General History
University of Turku
Finland

Supervised by:

Professor Auvo Kostiainen
Department of General History
University of Turku
Finland

Reviewed by:

Professor Auvo Kostiainen
Department of General History
University of Turku
Finland

Dr. Docent Katariina Mustakallio
Department of History
University of Tampere
Finland

Dr. Thomas Brüggemann
Martin-Luther Universität
Halle-Wittenberg
Germany

Opponent:

Dr. Thomas Brüggemann
Martin-Luther Universität
Halle-Wittenberg
Germany

The originality of this thesis has been checked in accordance with the University of Turku quality assurance system using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service.

ISBN 978-951-29-5586-2 (PRINT)
ISBN 978-951-29-5587-9 (PDF)
ISSN 0082-6987
Painosalama Oy – Turku, Finland 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Overview to the Research	1
1.2. Previous Research	3
1.3. The Aim of the Research	5
1.4. The Methodology	7
1.5. Central Concepts of the Research	11
1.6. Primary Sources	18
1.7. Structure of the Work	21
2. ROMAN AUTHORS' WAYS OF WRITING ABOUT THE HUNS	23
2.1. Characteristics of the Huns Defined by Environment	24
2.2. Images of Nomads and Nomadic Way of Life	31
2.3. Educated Storytelling and the Accounts of the Huns	37
3. NEW NOMADIC ARRIVALS? THE FIRST DESCRIPTIONS OF THE HUNS	55
3.1. The Xiongnu, Ourougoundoi, Khounoi and Chuni: Ancestors of the Huns?	55
3.2. The Arrival of Many "Huns" and Actions with the Alans	59
3.3. The Frames of a Pastoral Nomadic Way of Life and the Actions of the Huns	62
3.4. The Huns and the Alans and Contacts with the Goths	70
4. GROUPS OF HUNS AND FIRST CONTACTS WITH THE ROMANS	74
4.1. Acts of Scattered Groups of Huns near the Danube and the Balkans	74
4.2. Primates and Phylarkhos – Military Leaders of the Huns?	78
4.3. Raiding Troops of Basich and Kursich in Contacts with Persia and the Roman Empire	86
5. AIMS TO INCREASE THE POWER OF HUN LEADERS? A HUN LEADER ULDIN	90
5.1. A Friend and an Enemy of the Eastern Roman Empire	90
5.2. Leader of All the Actions of the Huns?	94
5.3. Abandoned during a Raiding Operation: The End of Uldin	98
5.4. Scattered Groups of Huns in the Beginning of the 410s	104

6. VARIATIONS IN THE TITLES OF NOMAD LEADERS	106
6.1. The Hun Leader Charaton as “ <i>the first of the kings</i> ”	106
6.2. Images of Nomadic Kingship in Antiquity	111
6.3. The Liberty of Storytelling: The Countless Titles of Nomad Leaders	114
7. UNITING GROUPS OF HUNS AND LOCALS – RUA AND OCTAR	121
7.1. Contacts with the Romans in the 420s – The Strengthening Position of Hun Leaders?	121
7.2. Wars, Treaties and Mercenary Activity between the Groups of Huns and Romans	125
7.3. Rua Confidently Leading the Confederation during the 430s	135
8. STENGTHENING THE MIGHT OF THE CONFEDERATION – THE HUN BROTHERS BLEDA AND ATTILA IN THE 440s	142
8.1. From Uncle to Nephews - Bleda and Attila in the Footsteps of Rua	142
8.2. Creating Security and Bringing Profits	151
8.3. Friends and Foes – Hun Leaders and Contacts with the Romans	158
9. THE RISE OF A SUPERCOMPLEX CHIEFDOM AMONG THE HUNS?	170
9.1. Internal Conditions and External Influences – Towards a Supercomplex Chieftdom?	171
9.2. A Supercomplex Chieftdom Evolving among the Huns – Evidence in Support of the View	179
9.3. Elements of a Supercomplex Chieftdom that are Missing	191
10. THE FALL AND DISPERSAL OF THE HUNS	199
10.1. Attila’s Constant Need to Gain Riches	199
10.2. Desperate Acts to Please Followers: The Last Years of Attila	206
10.3. Fragmentation of Groups of Huns Again	210
10.4. A Cycle in the Nomadic Way of Life – The Existence of “The Hun Kings and Empire”?	217
11. THE HUNS AND THE NOMADIC WAY OF LIFE	220
BIBLIOGRAPHY	227

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I started to write my thesis in December 2006 and since then I have lived in fifteen different addresses in eight different cities in five different countries. Accordingly, from time to time I have felt like a nomad: a homeless wanderer accompanied by my laptop and books looking for what one wants to gain most – in my case it was not booty, prey but knowledge and academic contacts. My travels have been of grants granted to me to carry out research for my PhD thesis, and I am in debt to each one of the grantors. I am also very grateful to all who have shared their knowledge and supervised me over the years. Because of my travelling the list of persons that I would like to thank is enormous, but in order to keep the acknowledgements at reasonable length I cannot name them all. Therefore, all of you whose names should be listed here, my warmest thanks go to you.

I am extremely grateful to my professors from University of Turku, Department of General History, emeritus-Professor Kalervo Hovi and Professor Auvo Kostiaainen who have always kindly supported me in carrying on and given valuable comments to the various drafts as they evolved. In addition, I am in great debt to my mentor, teacher Risto Hämäläinen at Open University of Turku for his long-lasting and inspiring guidance not only to my work, but also me personally. Without the multi-level discussions together with him and his strong belief in my topic, the first steps in my research would have been much harder. I must admit that due to my travels, supervision has not always been easy. Therefore, my special thanks go to Docent Maijastina Kahlos from University of Helsinki, department of Classics, who invited me to write the PhD thesis as part of her research group “*Otherness in Late-Roman World*”, and the Finnish Academy who funded Kahlos’ project and my thesis during the first years and periodically later on. I do not have enough words to express my gratitude for Kahlos of her continuous interest and unfailing, high-level supervision to my work until the very end. In addition, I would like to thank Dr. Markus Mertaniemi and Dr. Marika Rauhala, the members of our research group, for their warm friendship and lively academic discussions that have been endless sources of inspiration and made science more joyful.

My topic, Huns and the nature of nomadic power, is uncommon in Finland and hence I feel privileged to have been granted grants that have given me the opportunity to write my thesis abroad. I wish to extend my deep gratitude to the Emil Aaltonen Foundation for their grant and to the Finnish Cultural Foundation for their one year grant that made it possible to write my thesis in Finland. In addition, I am grateful for the grants that allowed me to go abroad, without them I would not have been able to spend days in many excellent libraries and meet many high-level specialists in my research field. Therefore, I am in great debt to the Finnish Cultural Foundation that granted a special grant to Künstlerhaus Schloss Wiepersdorf to carry out my work. The time in

Schloss Wiepersdorf made it possible to use many comprehensive libraries and the archaeological collections related to the Huns in different museums around Germany and the neighbouring countries giving profound input to my research. Furthermore, the grant supported me in meeting with outstanding German scholars in the field of nomadic studies: Professor Jan Bemman in Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, Vor- und Frühgeschichtliche Archäologie, and Professor Charlotte Schubert in Universität Leipzig, Alte Geschichte Dr. Alexander Koch, leader of Deutschen Historischen Museums in Berlin. The discussions with all the mentioned scholars inspired me to develop my ideas further. I am also honoured by the interest of Professor Nikolay N. Kradin, Head and Professor of the Department of World History, in the Far-Eastern Federal University in Vladivostok, my work and his highly stimulating and helpful guidance in the question of the nature of nomadic power. Moreover, I am grateful to Professor Walter Pohl, Austrian Academy of Science and Director of Institute for Middle Ages Research in Wien, who strongly encouraged me to concentrate on the concept of barbarian kingship. I also warmly thank Docent Dr. Antti Ruotsala, University of Helsinki, General History, for many academic discussions that supported me to focus on nomadic nature of the Huns.

I am also in deep gratitude to the Rotary organization of Eastern Finland and the state of Israel whose funding made it possible for me to write my PhD thesis for a year at Tel Aviv University, Department of Classics under the supervision of Professor Benjamin Isaac. I am deeply honoured by the expertise that Professor Isaac gave to my work not only in styles of academic writing but also dealing with the concept of otherness. My warmest thanks also go to Dr. Avshalom Laniado, at Tel Aviv University, History Department whose fundamental knowledge of the history of Byzantium and Priscus I had the privilege of enjoying on many discussions.

The last steps and the final work in my research would not have been possible without holding the position of Research Coordinator at the Finnish Institute in the Middle East. Therefore, I thank the Institute and the foundation of the Institute from the bottom of my heart. I am also grateful to the University of Turku whose grant for the last editing of my thesis finally brought the work to the finish line.

Last but not least, my colleagues in the Department of Classics in the University of Helsinki deserve warm-hearted thanks for their support and inspiring discussions. In addition, I feel humble to have had the privilege of enjoying the encouragement and trust in my work from my family and friends over the years. I can only say that without yours supports the task would have been much harder or impossible. There are not enough words to thank you - my gratitude to you is infinite.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview to the Research

When in the 360s a fragmented groups of nomads, the Huns, arrived in the vicinity of the Dniester and Dniepr Rivers, areas occupied by nomadic Alans and sedentary Goths, stories of their expansion came to the ears of the Romans. The Roman world duly recorded these events. Greco-Roman authors structured their accounts of the Huns on the basis of the knowledge they had of earlier nomads in the area. The accounts were general and stressed images of barely human pastoral nomads whose way of life was crucially different from that of the sedentary Romans. The stories gave the impression of a clash between sedentarists and nomads, and fears about forthcoming contacts with the Huns were increased by the fact that raids were known to be part of the nomadic way of life.

When a band of Huns approached the vicinity of the Roman borders during the 370s, contacts between them and the Romans became a reality. Even though the Huns made raids on their own and with other barbarian groups in areas of the Roman Empire, contacts with the Romans were not only hostile, for trade also brought Huns and Romans together. The Romans, moreover, were interested in hiring Huns as mercenaries for their army. This was the start of friendly connections between the two. However, the Romans' contacts with certain groups of Huns did not tie other Huns, and hence fragmented groups of Huns could temporarily ally themselves with whomever they pleased. While this caused problems for the Romans in controlling the Huns on a larger scale, it also led the Romans to seek connections with the Huns. When the contacts between the Huns and the Romans increased, contemporary authors became more interested in writing about the Huns. At the same time the nature of the accounts changed. Contemporary authors preferred first to tell about the official contacts between the Huns and the Romans than create fascinating images of the Huns as wild barbarians.

The kind of relationships that existed between the Huns and the Romans, and how the contacts with the Romans affected leadership positions among the Huns and the overall unity of the groups of nomads are the main questions in my research. In addition, I discuss whether the connections with the Romans led to rise of a Hun empire along with administration, even an “inchoate early state” or a “supercomplex chiefdom” as I prefer to call the phenomenon.¹ For this reason my study is

¹ Khazanov 1984, 295, 228; cf. Bondarenko, Korotayev, Kradin 2003, 11, 13-14; Kradin 2008, 107-112. There is an ongoing debate, whether one can speak about state in the case of nomads. According to Khazanov, the use of the terms “nomadic

strongly connected not only to Roman, but also to nomadic studies, and I participate to the discussion of the social evolution among nomads.

I evaluate the situation among the groups of Huns and their contacts with the Romans mainly during the 360s to the 460s. The reason for this is that during the 360s fragmented groups of Eurasian pastoral nomads, whom Late Roman authors started to call Huns, arrived in areas occupied by nomadic groups of Alans near the Don river. After the clash between the Huns and the Alans, they made an alliance and moved further west. Some of the Huns reached the borders of the Roman Empire during the 390s, but another wave of Huns began to settle in the vicinity of the northern parts of the Black Sea and between the lower Danubian basin, the Great Hungarian plain and the Carpathians in the beginning of the 420s. This intensified contacts between the groups of Huns and both halves of the Roman Empire. During the 420s and the 430s, groups of Huns and other barbarians started to form a larger confederation in order to raid, and to benefit from the contacts with, the Roman Empire. This is regarded as the time of the rise of the Hunnic Empire. The confederation was led by the Hun brothers Rua and Octar in the 430s and after them their nephews Bleda and Attila in the 440s. After Bleda's death in 443, Attila was the sole head of the confederation of Huns and led many attacks against the Romans. The attacks and peace treaties with the Romans increased wealth among the Huns and this is claimed to have generated a transformation from the Huns' nomadic way of life to a partial adoption of sedentarism along with the leadership position becoming hereditary and autocratic in nature. It is also argued that at the same time a leading stratum evolved or strengthened among the Huns and its members started to form an active administration.² During the last years of Attila's leadership the battles against the Romans turned into defeats and this caused the confederation to fall apart after Attila's death in 453. Subsequently, the Huns fragmented once again into many independent groups,³ and connections between the Romans and the Huns became very scarce. At the same time written narratives about the Huns decreased and finally ended during the sixth century.

state" and "nomadic statehood" is vague. Bondarenko, Korotayev and Kradin, for their part, suggest that it would be better to use a term that is self-explanatory, and hence they suggest a title "supercomplex chiefdom". See Chapter 9.

² Kelly 2008, 54, 228; Heather 2006, 325-328; Thompson (1999) 2000, 67, 177, 181-183, 189; Schreiber 1976, 42; Bona 1991, 62, 71-72, 207.

³ Schmauder 2009, 161.

1.2. Previous Research

One of the most influential voices in studies on the Huns is Edward Gibbon. The reason for this is his claim in *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Volume 4, “The End of the Western Empire”, that the Huns provided the final impetus for the downfall of the Roman Empire, and since Gibbon the Huns have been studied fundamentally from this perspective and in connection with Roman history. Generally speaking, Gibbon’s idea of the Huns as the trigger for the migration of barbarians towards the Roman Empire in the 4th century has prevailed as one of the most debated questions in early historical research. Moreover, a long-lasting interest has been to study the kind of impact the Huns made on the political and military situation in the Western and the Eastern parts of the Roman Empire.

Both topics are studied by Peter Heather in *Decline of the Roman Empire* (2005) and also in relation to his studies about Goths in *The Goths* (1998). Like Heather Walter Pohl has also discussed the Huns’ impact on other barbarian groups, especially on the formation of new units and their identity in *Die Wölkewanderung – Eroberung und Integration* (2005). The topic is also discussed in many articles which concern the archaeological material connected to the Huns, such as Michael Kazanski’s “The Sedentary Elite in the ‘Empire’ of the Huns and its Impact on the Material Civilisation in Southern Russia during the Early Middle Ages” (1993). In general, archaeological material connected to the Huns is considered from the point of view of cultural connections between the Huns and other groups. This is the case e.g. with Joachim Werner’s *Beiträge zur Archäologie des Attilareiches* (1956) and in such works as *Attila und die Hunnen* (2007) edited by Bodo Anke and Alexander Koch and *Hunnen zwischen Asien und Europa* (2008) edited by Alexander Bodo Anke, Heike Externbrink, Melanie Herget, which include collections of articles related to archaeological exhibitions on the Huns.

Contemporary authors’ descriptions of the Huns form another primary source material along with archaeological finds. R. C. Blockley’s work *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire. Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus* is a collection of fragments from four Late Roman contemporary authors who have also mentioned Huns in their works. Blockley’s collection of the extant fragments is a crucial source for studying the Huns. It provides background information on the named contemporary author’s and their texts, helping us to appreciate more fully the descriptions they give of the Huns.

In general, there are many overall studies on the Huns that also touch some specific issues, e.g. Timo Stickler’s *Die Hunnen* (2007) includes an exceptionally wide study of the supposed forefathers and wanderings of the groups of Huns from the first centuries BC to the third century

AD. By contrast Gerhard Wirth has in *Attila. Das Hunnenreich und Europa* (1999) as well as Christopher Kelly in *Attila the Hun* (2008) pay particular attention to Roman policy making with the Huns, and its influence on strengthening leadership positions among the Huns. Michael Schmauder's *Die Hunnen. Ein Reitervolk in Europa* (2009) focuses on the Huns' nomadic background and its influence on the actions taken by them. Still the most profound research of the Huns in general is Otto J. Maenchen-Helfen's *The World of the Huns* (1973). It includes in-depth research on many specific topics such as the background and languages used among the groups of Huns. However, some parts of Maenchen-Helfen's work remained unfinished at the time of his death, and hence it is difficult to be sure about the author's final claims. This is especially true of his views on the position of Hun leaders. The same is also the case for Edward A. Thompson's work *The Huns* which was revised by Peter Heather (1999). Thompson died during the rewriting of this work, originally published as *A History of Attila and the Huns* (1948). The work from 1948, however, helps to follow Thompson's slightly changed views about the rise of the Hunnic Empire and the strengthening position of the Hun leaders, which are author's main interest in both of the studies.

Gyula László and János Harmatta have also concentrated on studying the possible changes in the leadership position and society of the Huns. By contrast with other studies, they consider the changes from a nomadic studies point of view. Accordingly, László in "The Significance of the Hun Golden Bow" (1951) and Harmatta in "The Golden Bow of the Huns" (1951) and "The Dissolution of the Hun Empire" (1952) conclude that Hun society evolved into feudalism at the latest during the 440s.

Especially Nikolay N. Kradin's "Early State Theory and the Evolution of Pastoral Nomads" (2008) and Anatoly Khazanov's *Nomads and the Outside World* (1984) which both include a thorough study of the possibilities of nomadic states rising are of great use when discussing the nature of the alleged 'Hun Empire' or inchoate early state or supercomplex chiefdoms. In this task studies of nomads and their ways of forming group compositions as chiefdoms and confederations of tribes are also crucial. A general overview of the issue is given by e.g. Thomas J. Barfield's *The Nomadic Alternative* (1993). The rise of nomadic empires and states is indisputably connected to nomads' contacts with sedentary societies and empires, and hence Roger Batty's *Rome and the Nomads* (2007) gives a good basis for evaluating the situation of the Huns from both the nomadic and the Roman perspective.

The Roman viewpoint on the Huns in particular, and on the nomads in general is revealed through the writings of Greco-Roman authors. In order to evaluate the authors' accounts of the Huns, Benjamin Isaac's *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (2004) is helpful here in offering

an in-depth study of Roman ways of writing about groups that were considered non-Roman, or so-called “others”. The generally created images of nomads in antiquity are carefully explained in articles in *Der imaginierte Nomade* edited by Alexander Weiss (2007), as well as in Brent D. Shaw’s useful article “Eaters of Flesh, Drinkers of Milk” (1995). A profound overview of the methodology of image research and the concept of otherness in research into antiquity is given by Erich S. Grün in *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (2010), and in Jonathan Z. Smith’s “Differential Equations on Constructing the Other” (2004) and “Close Encounters of Diverse Kinds” (2004). Also *Looking at the Other: Historical Study of images in Theory and Practice* edited by Olavi Fält, Kai Alenius, Saija Jalagin (2002) shows in many cases studies how the methodology of image research and the concept of the “other” work as methodological tools.

1.3. The Aim of the Research

The aspects that caused the rise of the so-called Hunnic Empire and how the Hun leaders strengthened their leadership position to reach a supposedly king-like status during the first half of the fifth century are the most studied topics in studies on the Huns. These topics also form the core of my research, though I challenge the exaggerated claims of Hun kings and Hunnic Empire. In addition, the aim of my research is to suggest that we should name the Hun leaders military leaders and consider the largest unity of the groups of Huns during the 440s a supercomplex chiefdom. I also stress, in contrast to the general claims, that the groups of Huns did not give up their nomadic way of life at any stage when they dwelled in regions next to the Roman lower-Danubian borders from the last decades of the fourth century to the beginning of the sixth century. My research includes five topics that support my main claims and the crux of my study, namely that the Huns’ contacts with the Roman world caused a supercomplex chiefdom to rise among the united groups of Huns which strengthened the position of Hun military leaders.

Because written material on the Huns is fundamentally based on the Late Roman authors’ descriptions of the Huns, I have first of all studied the degree to which learned ways and expectations of storytelling about nomads, barbarians, and people living at different points of the compass in antiquity influenced Late Roman authors’ stories about the Huns. This is done in order to consider whether these descriptions merely tell about the authors’ goals of showing their ability to write fluently and foster their own political goals in the accounts of the Huns rather than providing exact information about the Huns. This gives a basis to evaluate what kind of leadership position contemporary authors were referring to when they called the Hun leaders *rex* and *basileus*.

I show that literary conventions fundamentally affected Greco-Roman authors' accounts of the Huns, and that *rex* and *basileus* were only common terms used by Greco-Roman authors to name barbarian leader. Therefore, I propose that the Huns' Eurasian pastoralists' nomadic way of life is the starting point in order to evaluate the activities of the Huns. This forms the basis for the second theme of my research. My second theme is to point out that the Huns' nomadic way of life casts doubt on the claim that the Huns' dominated local barbarian groups when the Huns dwelled in the vicinity of the Carpathians and the lower Danube during the first half of the fifth century. Because nomads in general favour temporary alliances, I discuss the possibility of a confederation between the groups of Huns and local barbarians that pleased all parties. My aim is to show that archaeological material also supports this view, and suggests that Germanic groups would have been interested in joining with groups of Huns, especially when participating in raids in the Roman regions. In addition, I demonstrate that the idea of Huns' domination over local barbarian groups, e.g. the Goths near the Black Sea, is based on a misinterpretation of contemporary authors' accounts of the Huns: the stories of the contemporary authors are believed as such, although authors stress the common claims that acts of these nomads can only cause misery; I argue that the activities of the Huns support the claim that activities between sedentarists and nomads can also please both. My deduction of the co-operation between the Huns and local barbarian groups strengthens the evaluation that the arrival of the Huns contributed to the formation of smaller Germanic groups into specific and independent units. This is striking because it suggests the likelihood of Germanic groups making further alliances during the sixth century onwards.

The third theme of my research stresses that because nomads favour temporary alliances, the only leadership position that can reach acceptance on a large scale among the groups is a position of supreme military leadership for temporary military activity. In addition, my aim is to show that even if military activity increases and becomes more long-lasting, as was the case with groups of Huns during the first half of the fifth century, and the position of the supreme military leadership might become more long-lasting, this does not change the basis for the position: the crux remains others' acceptance of it according to their needs. Therefore, I challenge the view that the position of Hun leaders at the head of a large number of groups of Huns and local barbarians who formed large troops for raiding especially during the 440s would indicate that the position of Hun military leaders had changed so much that they would have had a similar power position to kings among sedentarists. I argue that we should call Hun leaders, who Roman authors refer to as *rex* and *basileus*, by the title of "supreme military leader" rather than "king", "monarch" or "autocrat", which has been commonly done so far. Calling Hun leaders "supreme military leader" emphasizes the nomadic nature of the leadership position, and does not give a misleading image of the basis of

the position and the unity of the groups that the leadership position is connected with. My claim opens a new and necessary discussion on ways of referring to nomad leaders in history which does not ignore the nomadic background of their position and the society. Rather it stresses the possibilities and nature of power which existed among nomads. My fourth goal is to challenge the common views that Huns' nomadic way of life became transformed at least partially into a sedentary way of life and the Huns formed an empire or state similar to sedentary societies, which might even be called feudal state. In my study I show that the Eurasian pastoralists' nomadic way of life provided the possibility of forming larger and mightier unity, which can be called a supercomplex chiefdom. I investigate whether this rather than an empire or state was formed among the groups of Huns during the 440s when they created their largest unity and caused the most severe threat to the Roman Empire. I also wish to challenge previous ways of seeing nomadic way of life and to investigate adoptions to a sedentary way of life and power structures. My study emphasizes that the activities of the Huns support groups of nomads might form a larger unity with a leader at the head of temporarily united groups. This provides a case study to consider the possibilities of social evolution among nomads.

Finally I study the actions of groups of Huns during the fourth and fifth centuries and the relationship between the Huns and the Romans. I consider to what extent the Romans affected the course of events and the leadership positions among the Huns. This is important in order to consider the general claim that strengthening the position of nomad leaders and the unity between groups, including the rise of hierarchical structures and the so-called nomadic state, or what I call the phenomenon of supercomplex chiefdom, are fundamentally connected to contacts with the outside world, for changes always require external input.

1.4. The Methodology

Archaeological, but no written sources were left by the Huns. The only text material that elucidates the situation between the Huns and the Romans is written by Greco-Roman authors from the last decades of the fourth century to the first decades of the sixth century. Thus the perspective is purely Greco-Roman, showing how the educated Greco-Roman elite described the nomadic newcomers and the Romans' actions with them.⁴ Given this the Greco-Roman point of view in the accounts of

⁴ By Roman authors I mean contemporary Greco-Roman authors who wrote accounts about the Roman world and about regions that belonged to the Roman Empire.

the Huns, I use two different kinds of methodology in order to understand what the Huns more fully.

First, I use the concept of “otherness” and a methodology related to imagological research in order to evaluate the Late-Roman authors’ accounts of the Huns.

The crux in imagological research is that written sources do not so much tell about the object, but rather the views of the writer of the texts. They show how the writer wants to present the object. In other words, sources merely inform us about the image of the object. As Marika Rauhala summarizes, images may be called “conceptions”, “views”, or “attitudes”; an “image can be regarded as a subjective and simplified model through which an individual perceives the surrounding world”.⁵

Thus descriptions of the Huns primarily tell about the author’s views on the Huns, or how they want to present nomads in general. Even though it is a question of individual perception, still, as Fält notes, an image also reflects the ideas of the surrounding community. If this were not the case, the author might well not be able to claim the ideas because his arguments would not be believed by the audience, or there would be no surrounding context to validate them.⁶ Images do not only tell the individual’s own views about the target, they also reflect the overall ideas of the surrounding society. Therefore, we might conclude that in the case of Greco-Roman authors’ accounts of the Huns, there is the question of a sedentary society’s way of perceiving and depicting nomads. Moreover, the leadership position among the Huns is described in terms of Roman society.⁷

The view that accounts tell more about the writer’s perceptions of the target than the target itself also holds for the methodological concept of otherness.

The basis for the concept of otherness is that when one defines him/herself, it is done via a polarization of what I am and what I am not, or what I want to be or do not want to be.⁸ In order to make the definition simple the concept of “the other” is used. The other is claimed to have different features to “I” and “us” which are often, but not explicitly, those which the storyteller considers unwanted in comparison to the features attached to him/herself or his/her own society.⁹ Especially when there is a need to speak on behalf of one’s own existence, e.g. times of crises and conflict, the concept of other is generally favoured.¹⁰ In brief, the other is claimed to have the opposite features of those common to the storyteller, hence the other is also emphasized as a threat. Stories about opponents do not then tell so much about the object, but the values that the storyteller considers

⁵ Rauhala 2012, 11-12; Fält 2002, 9-10; Oktas 2002, 199-202, passim 208, 210.

⁶ Fält 2002, 8, 10; Oktas 2002, 206, 210.

⁷ Kradin, Skrynnikova 2009, 120; Green 1985, passim. 50-51.

⁸ Smith 2004 a, 230-232, 237.

⁹ Smith 2004 a, 232, 237.

¹⁰ Smith 2004 a, 233; Fält 2002, passim 8-9; Oktas 2002, 205.

important. Greco-Roman authors for example generally claimed that non-Romans, such as barbarians, were untrustworthy. When Greco-Roman authors wrote about nomads, who were considered barbarians, the differences in the nomadic and the sedentary way of life were stressed. Moreover, because the nomadic way of life was considered a threat to the sedentarists' existence, accounts of nomads generally included images of terrible brutes or insane animals to whom everything common to Romans was unknown, or differed in a decisive manner. This is also the case in the accounts of the Huns.¹¹

For this reason if we wish to evaluate what might have been the situation among the Huns in any particular event, the overall situation should be dissected from the basis of a nomadic way of life. Therefore, the second methodological point of view which I use in my research, comes from nomadic studies and especially from the concepts of social evolution among nomads and the possible rise of an "inchoate early state of nomads" or "supercomplex chiefdom".¹²

Because there are many different kinds of forms of nomadism and nomadic ways of life,¹³ it is important to define what kinds of nomads the groups of Huns may have been. Although the Huns were not a homogeneous unit but fragmented groups who arrived in many waves to the borders of the Roman Empire and the Black Sea Region between the 370s and the 410s, still their arrival from the Eurasian steppe gives a basic knowledge of the kind of nomadic way of life they lived. It also explains what kind of society the groups could form and what kind of leadership positions were common and could evolve among them.¹⁴ While the nomads on the Eurasian steppe have herded the same areas and favoured similar ways of raising animals for centuries, still the decision and actions that the nomadic groups and units have made have varied a great deal. Therefore, straightforward comparison between the groups, e.g. how they are expected to act in certain situation must be made cautiously. The basis for understanding the actions of the Huns is that the Huns were expansive, scattered groups of horse raising pastoral nomads from the Eurasian steppe who also took part in raiding and raids.¹⁵

¹¹ Shaw 1995, 6, 8, 12-13, 24-26; Isaac 2004, *passim*. 503, 505, 506; Weiss 2007, *passim*. 7-10; Timpe 2000, 206. According to Isaac accounts of barbarians which emphasize their image as inferior to Romans can be taken as a sign of racist views and thinking. Whether one agrees with this interpretation or not is a matter of taste, but there is more general agreement on Weiss's point that the images created of barbarians, especially nomads, altered during antiquity, though some elements remained the same. In any case, the crux is that the images created of nomads or barbarians in general emphasized ideas which were important for the holders of those images.

¹² Khazanov 1984, 295. In addition I follow the view of N. N. Kradin (e.g. "Nomadism, Evolution and World-systems: Pastoral Societies in Theories of Historical Development", 2002) and S. A. Vasjutin ("Typology of Pre-states and Statehood Systems of Nomads", 2003).

¹³ Khazanov 1984, 15, 19 21, 33; Batty 2007, 141-142, 148-149.

¹⁴ Barfield 1993, *passim*. 1-15.

¹⁵ Priscus fr.2, fr. 10, *passim*. fr. 11.1., fr.14, fr. 15.4., fr. 49, fr.46 in Blockley 1983, 226-227, 240-243, 292-293, 298-299, 352-353, 356-357; Socrates Scholasticus, *Hist. ecc.*, VII, 30; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 82; Ammianus, *RG*, 31.2.17, 31.2.21; Jordanes, *Getica*, *passim* XXIV, 123-126; Procopius, *De bell.*, III, 1- 6; Matthews 1989, 321, 341, 353, 376, 380; Kradin 2005 b, 82; Kradin 2005 a, 157.

While the specific kind of nomadic background of the Huns helps one to consider what kind of leadership position would be possible among them, the views related to the nature of the leadership, and the formation of an empire and state or a complex chiefdom among nomads are much debated especially because the topic touches on the theme of social evolution.¹⁶

Even though social evolution among the pastoral nomads has not been studied in great depth, still the discussion has gone through several stages, in which where different kinds of views and methodologies have evolved. Especially in the 1930s the so-called theory of “nomadic-feudalism” became highly popular and introduced different emphases, but in the end only a simplified understanding of steppe feudalism prevailed. However, during the 1950s new interpretations of nomadic feudalism became popular, emphasizing livestock as the main means of production. The view was developed further and Bondarenko, Korotayev and Kradin explicitly list four overall points of view that became prevalent: the concept of a pre-class nomadic society;¹⁷ the concept of an early state of nomads;¹⁸ different feudal interpretations of nomadism;¹⁹ and the concept of nomadic modes of production.²⁰ However, nowadays most attention is paid to substantiating specific modes of development in nomad stock-breeder societies – this includes the study of the political system of nomadic empires, which has led to the conclusion that they cannot be considered states.²¹ Instead, it is suggested that complex nomadic societies should be called by a more descriptive name than state, e.g. an inchoate early state or a supercomplex chiefdom.²²

Using the notion of a supercomplex chiefdom and the methodology it involves, I argue that the phenomenon of a supercomplex chiefdom comes closest to what happened among the groups of

¹⁶ Articles in *Nomadic Pathways in Social Evolution* (2003) give a wide understanding of the phenomenon. For discussion on specific kinds of nomadic ways of life, see Barfield 1993, passim 131-158.

¹⁷ Bondarenko, Korotayev, Kradin mention the following authors who have especially stressed this view: Markov “The Nomads of Asia” (1976); Varnstein “The Nomads of South Siberia” (1980); Pavlenko “The Early Class Societies: the Origins and the Way of Development” (1989); Bondarenko, Korotayev, Kradin 2003, 8-9.

¹⁸ Bondarenko, Korotayev, Kradin mentions the following authors who have especially stressed this view: Khazanov “The Social History of Scythians” (1975) and “Nomads and the Outside World” (1984); Preshits “Some Peculiarities of the Formation of Class and Early Class Relations amongst Nomadic Pastoralists” (1976); Krader “The Origin of the State among the Nomads of Asia” (1978); Escedy “Nomads in History and Historical Research” (1981) and “On the Social and Economic Structure of Nomadic Societies” (1989); Kychanov “The Nomadic State from the Hsiung-nu to Manchu” (1997); Bondarenko, Korotayev, Kradin 2003, 8-9.

¹⁹ Bondarenko, Korotayev, Kradin mentions the following authors who have especially stressed this view: Tolybekov “The Nomadic Society of the Kazakhs in the 17th to the Beginning of the 20th Century. A Political-Economic Analysis” (1971); Natsadorzh “General Features of Feudalism among the Nomads Peoples” (1975); Zlatkin “Basis Regularities of the Feudalism Development among the Pastoral People” (1982); Manai-Ool “Tuva in the Feudalism Epoch” (1986); Bondarenko, Korotayev, Kradin 2003, 8-9.

²⁰ Bondarenko, Korotayev, Kradin mentions following authors who has especially stressed the view: Markov “The Nomads of Asia” (1976); Bonte “Marxist Theory and Anthropological Analysis: the Study of nomadic Pastoralist Societies” (1981) and (1990); Masanov “The Nomadic Civilization of the Kazaks” (1991). Bondarenko, Korotayev, Kradin 2003, 8-9.

²¹ Bondarenko, Korotayev, Kradin 2003, 9.

²² Bondarenko, Korotayev, Kradin 2003, 11; cf. Kradin 2002, 371-373; Kradin 2005 a, 165-166; Kradin 2008, 114, passim 120-122.

Huns when they formed a larger unity during the 440s. The features of a supercomplex chiefdom are explained in the following section.

1.5. Central Concepts of the Research

My research deals with concepts such as barbarians, nomadic groups, confederation, military leadership, supreme military leader and phenomena such as nomadic empires, nomadic states and supercomplex chiefdoms. In what follows I briefly define the most important concepts, leaving a deeper explanation to the chapters where they are discussed.

A concept of a “barbarian” is central to research on the Roman Empire. The Romans adopted the word and its meaning from the Greeks, though in the usage of the Romans the concept slightly changed. The Greeks had used the word barbarian of people who could not speak Greek properly or at all, and were thus considered inferior to them. In addition, barbarians were those who did not have the political system and culture common to the polis, and they dwelled outside the core areas of the Hellenes. When the Roman Empire strengthened during the fifth century BC onwards, the Romans adopted the word barbarian for themselves. Indeed, the Romans referred to themselves as barbarians according to the original meaning of the word in the early stage of the rise of Roman might. However, the usage and meaning of the concept changed after the Romans’ successful conquests of many different populations in wide and distant regions. First of all, the word barbarian could be attached to anyone who could not speak proper Greek and Latin, and did not live in the Italian Peninsula. On the other hand, barbarians were especially those who dwelled outside the borders of the Roman Empire. Furthermore, the word was synonymous with non-Roman, referring to those who were claimed not to appreciate the same ideals and to have dissimilar manners to the Romans. Accordingly, barbarian was a concept which was mainly used to enhance the elements important for the idea of being a Roman and to stress the image of the greatness of Romans.²³ This is the overall historical background to the concept barbarian; the way in which I use the word follows the ideas favoured by modern historical research. First, the concept of barbarian does not mean that barbarians would have been in any way inferior to Romans, or any other people. Second, the word barbarian refers mainly to people who lived outside the Roman borders.

Like the word barbarian, “Huns” is also difficult to define. The starting point is that Greco-Roman authors started to use the word “Huns” for nomadic groups, who authors considered unknown

²³ See chapter 2.

nomads on the eastern Danubian frontier during the last decades of the fourth century. However, even though the name gives an impression of a united group, there is no single entity which we could easily identify as “Huns”. Rather there were many groups of pastoral Eurasian nomads who temporarily allied themselves both with each other, and with other nomadic and sedentary groups (e.g. groups which the Greco-Roman authors named “Alans” and “Goths”) next to the north-eastern Roman borders between the 370s and the 450s.²⁴ In addition, the group composition changed during the period in many ways. First, there were many independent groups of Eurasian pastoral nomads who did not want to establish long-lasting, if any, alliances with other groups. Second, during the first decades of the fifth century there were at least four large coalitions of Eurasian pastoral nomads who were acting independently before they united on a larger scale during the 430s and 440s. Furthermore, in general the groups of Eurasian pastoral nomads had favoured joining nomad and sedentary groups who lived in the vicinity of the western and northern coastline of the Black Sea by means of alliance or as a result of conquest.²⁵ Therefore, the name Huns in contemporary accounts also refers to these groups and not only to Eurasian pastoral nomads. However, from time to time contemporary authors also mention names of other groups, and when this is the case, I also mention them, while otherwise I speak only of “Huns”.

If the definition of the overall term Huns is problematic, an evaluation of the composition of the nomads were in question is not an easy task either. In anthropology larger nomadic units are often claimed to consist of tribes and clans, which are the result of units formed by families, but this is only a theoretical model.²⁶ Accordingly, because nomads’ social structure is segmentary, breaking up into more or less inclusive units at a number of different taxonomic levels, it is problematic to claim that e.g. in the case of the Huns three tribes would have formed the unit that attacked Thrace in the beginning of the 5th century. Because of this, I prefer to call units of Huns in general “groups”²⁷ rather than “tribes” or “clans”. Before I turn to use the term group, I explain what kind of composition, e.g. how many clans or tribes there might have been in question in “the group”. In this way we might gain a better understanding of the situation; in other words, by using the term “groups of Huns” I want to emphasize that there were a vague number of units, who might not have

²⁴ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.1, 12; 31.3.1; cf. Claudian, In Ruf., I, 321-324; Stickler 2007, 82.

²⁵ Priscus fr. 11.2., fr. 49 in Blockley 1983, 258-259, 274-275, 356-357; Stickler 2007, 102-105.

²⁶ Khazanov 1984, 120-121. I fully agree with Khazanov that this theoretical model has many similarities with the way nomads refer to their own units themselves.

²⁷ Pace Khazanov 1984, 140. I am well aware that the term “group” is also used by anthropologists who define nomadic units in the way that Khazanov does; i.e. relatively small collective groups of people where kinship regulates the relations within the group. By contrast with Khazanov’s definition, I use the term “group” to also refer to larger numbers of nomads and their allies who have formed a unit so as to gain something e.g. booty or to conquer new territories. In other words, I use the term “group” to refer to a unit whose size can vary from hundreds to thousands and where the members have joined together because of a shared interest.

all been Eurasian pastoral nomads but could have been sedentarists who joined into an alliance or confederation and participated in the actions.

When we try to define what kind of Eurasian pastoral nomads the groups who Greco-Roman authors call Huns are, we need to define what kind of nomadism they had and what we mean by the term “nomadic way of life”.

Nomadism is claimed to have its purest manifestation on the Eurasian steppe. The reason for this is that agriculture activity might either be totally absent or it plays a secondary or supplementary role. Eurasian pastoralists live in societies, where the husbandry of grazing animals is viewed as an ideal way of making a living and the regular movement of all or part of the society is considered a normal and natural part of life. The main herding animals are sheep, goats, horses, cattle and camels. Of these, horses are most appreciated because they have always been considered a prestige animal. In order to guarantee enough food for the herds, there is need to exploit extensive, albeit seasonal, steppe and mountain pastures. The migratory cycle concentrates on the winter and summer season. During the migration, households and camp groups, which are the most important units for daily living, gather into larger groupings and form clans and tribes. Otherwise, large-scale political organization among steppe nomads was designed to deal with external relations, e.g. they were needed during raids and attacks.²⁸

While my study deals with the clash between sedentarists and nomads, there is also a need to define the concept of a sedentary way of life. The crucial differences between a sedentary and a nomadic way of life occur in the division of labour and in the form of the society. A striking sign of a sedentary way of life is shown by a certain way of living that is considered permanent. A concentration on land is derived from the sedentarists' strong input into agriculture, which is the basis for their living. While harvesting is a fundamental part of the sedentary way of life, animal husbandry is also important though it often plays a secondary role. Moreover, raising livestock is considered to be an individual occupational speciality and is firmly embedded in the surrounding sedentary culture. Permanency is not only shown by the sedentarists' division of labour, it is also manifested in the way their society is formed. One of the most profound features for sedentarists is that there is permanency in the leadership position and in power structures. They also give a basis for stable administration in a geographical area where inhabitants are firmly and long-lastingly connected together. Also the permanency in sedentarists' buildings and building projects makes the society follow and rely on the structures of power that have been established.²⁹

²⁸ Barfield 2003, 172; Barfield 1993, 131, 137, 141-142, 145-149; Khazanov 1984, 19; Vasjutin 2003, 54-55.

²⁹ Barfield 1993, passim 4-5; Khazanov 1984, passim 18-25; Kradin 2009, passim 31.

It has been claimed that the Huns' arrival on the borders of the Roman Empire led to the rise of the Hunnic Empire but the phenomenon of an empire often lacks an exact definition.³⁰ However, if we want to speak about such a phenomena as the Hun Empire, we should not only name it, but also study it as a "nomadic empire" because of the Huns nomadic background. On the whole, the concept of an empire is wide and a nomadic empire is only one variant. Furthermore, a nomadic empire is considered to belong under the concept of a "barbarian empire" and an "early empire". Next I will briefly explain the general feature of the concept of an empire and the special features of a nomadic empire.³¹

A crucial feature of an empire is that it consists of large territories with defined borders. Second, the formation of an empire often takes many decades or even centuries. In addition, an empire has a metropolitan centres and periphery, as well as centralized power and administration. A periphery forms a subsystem to the metropolis, but the complexity of social organisms in the periphery might differ greatly, from a local group to the state in its entirety. In addition, an empire has a well defined military organization and social structures, including multi-level economic system.³²

A crucial reason why a nomadic empire needs its own, precise definition of an overall concept of empire is the time frame for its existence. Overall, the majority of nomadic empires have not often existed more than 100-150 years, while only a few decades or even just a decade is considered a long enough period to speak about a nomadic empire as researchers do in the case of the Huns. It would in fact be more accurate to speak about a nomadic empire only when the large scale unity of nomads, and the groups united to them in a certain area, last longer than a decade or two. Keeping this in mind, I otherwise agree and follow the general definition of nomadic empire, given by researchers, when referring to the Hun empire.³³

A nomadic empire can be defined as a nomadic society that is organized on military-hierarchical principles and occupies wide regions. Second, its existence is largely based on the exploitation (e.g. robbery, extortion of gifts, non-equivalent trade) of nearby territories, especially sedentary societies and this supports the existence of the nomadic metropolis. Moreover, a nomadic empire is considered the property of the whole clan of the khan, the supreme leader, and hence the members of the clan form an institution of co-government. This also regulates ways of inheriting power. The

³⁰ Bona 1991, 61-63, 71, 207; Wirth 1999, 55-56, 66, 69-70, 90107, 113; Thompson (1999) 2000, 64, 177, 183, 225-227; Heather 2005, 329-330, *passim* 324-327; Stückler 2007, 66, 77, 102-103; Kelly 2008, 54, 72, 87, 228; Schmauder 2009, 155-155.

³¹ Bondarenko, Korotayev, Kradin 2003, 11; Kradin 2003, 73-74.

³² Kradin 2003, 73-74.

³³ Kradin 2003, 78-80, 85; *pace* Schmauder 2009, *passim* 79-81, 126-127, 154, *cf.* Khazanov 1984, *passim* 228-233. According to Kradin's own typology of three different kinds of nomadic empires and quasi-imperial xenocratic nomadic formations, Kradin places the Huns in the category of quasi-imperial nomadic statehood formations, and also consider them to be "typical nomadic empire". The reason they are labelled "typical" is that the nomadic way of life did not face crucial changes.

social and political organization of a nomadic empire has a many-layered hierarchical character, interconnected at all levels by tribal and supra tribal genealogical ties. Its administration is divided either into two or three units: the centre and its 'wings', namely the units that help to spread the rule from the centre to all the regions that belong to the empire. Urbanistic constructions are not large-scale and consist primarily of splendid burial-vaults and funeral temples for the deceased members of the steppe elite. Finally, nomadic empire could vanish in few years or decades.³⁴

Another term that needs to be defined in relation to empires is the concept of a state. The reason for this is that there is disagreement whether a nomadic empire could turn into a state.³⁵ According to Kradin the most complex societies of nomads are not states at all but represent chiefdoms.³⁶ Furthermore, Kradin emphasizes that nomads have no need for bureaucratic machinery because chiefdoms have or already include channels (e.g. the supreme military leader has follower warriors and members in the ruling clan also provide some support) which control larger regions and units without requiring the kind of state machinery found among sedentarists.³⁷ Accordingly, it could be more appropriate to name, particularly the most complex societies of nomads by using the term supercomplex chiefdom or xenocratic nomadic complex.³⁸ Nonetheless, we should not pass over the view that a nomadic empire which is identified as supercomplex chiefdoms would not already be a real model prototype of a state.³⁹ In my study, I consider whether we could call the alleged Hun empire a supercomplex chiefdom or a nomadic state and for this reason, the following definitions of concepts are needed.

The phenomena of a state among nomads is thought to have three different kinds of phases which follow each other, eventually forming a similar kind of state structure as that found among sedentarists. In the first phase nomads characteristically levy tribute especially from sedentarists who dwell in or near the vicinity of the regions that are controlled by nomads. In the second stage nomads make large-scale conquests and this leads to the creation of a complex society. This brings about the third and final phase where economic and ethnic specialization within the same ecological zone occurs.⁴⁰

³⁴ Bondarenko, Korotayev, Kradin 2003, 11; Kradin 2003, 74, passim 78-80; Kradin 2002, 374; Khazanov 2003, 37; Kradin 2001, 310.

³⁵ Khazanov 2003, 39; cf. Kradin 2008, 114, 120-121. According to Khazanov there are two types of nomadic state, while Kradin disagrees with the idea that the state could emerge among nomads. According to Kradin the most complex form should be called a supercomplex chiefdom rather than an inchoate early state or a dispositional nomadic state because the characteristics that belong to the definition of a state, e.g. a developed class society and agriculture as the basis of economy, cannot emerge in the frames of a nomadic way of life.

³⁶ Kradin 2008, 116-119; Kradin 2008, 147-150.

³⁷ Kradin 2008, 117, passim. 149-150.

³⁸ Bondarenko, Korotayev, Kradin 2003, 10-11, 14; Kradin 2005 a, 166; cf. Vasjutin 2003, 53; Khazanov 1984, 295; Claessen, Skalnik 1978, 23, 641; Kradin 2003, 80; Kradin 2008, passim 109-112, 113-117, 121.

³⁹ Kradin 2008, 114, passim. 120-122; passus Khazanov 1984, 295.

⁴⁰ Khazanov 1984, 231-233; cf. Kradin 2008, 111. See chapter 9.

By contrast to the concept of a state, a supercomplex chiefdom has a less complex structure, even though the numbers of population can be hundreds of thousands or even more. There is a high rate of centralization, social stratification and inchoate forms of urban and monumental construction. A supercomplex chiefdom is led by a supreme chief, whose position is based on military success. In addition, the supreme chief has subchiefs who support his lead and are sent as governors to different areas, especially regions farther away from the centre. However, at the same time the nomadic groups on the peripheries have their own leaders. Thus, a supercomplex chiefdom has an administrative hierarchical structure which includes several levels of leadership positions. In addition, there is a complicated system of titles for chiefs and officials. The main task of the officials in the upper level is to take care of diplomatic correspondence with neighbouring countries, and conclude dynastic marriages with rulers of agricultural states and other nomadic groups.⁴¹ Written language can also occur in a supercomplex chiefdom.

The rise of a long-lasting and large nomadic unit or society which precedes the formation of supercomplex chiefdoms is dependent on conquest and the existence of military leaders.⁴² It can therefore be argued that the position of Hun leaders at the head of a united groups of Huns is most likely to have been based on military leadership.⁴³ For this reason I suggest that it would be more fitting to name the position of Hun leaders “supreme military leader” rather than “king” as has been done so far. In addition, it is inappropriate to employ the same concepts to characterize political systems of both nomadic and settled societies.⁴⁴ I fully agree with the view that the society of steppe pastoralists differs from sedentary agrarian inhabitants to such an extent that one can say that the nomads were characterized by their specific pathways of social evolution.⁴⁵ With reference to my claim, I will next explain the basis for the position of military leadership and supreme military leadership in order to elucidate my claim.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Bondarenko, Korotayev, Kradin 2003, 12-14; Kradin 2001, 299, 309-311; Kradin 2006, 115-116.

⁴² Vasjutin 2003, 53-55. Bondarenko, Korotayev, Kradin 2003, 11. Khazanov 1984, *passim*. 158, 166-167, 230.

⁴³ Kradin 2001, 309-310. Kradin considers that the military organization of the Huns would have been similar to that of the Hsiung-nu.

⁴⁴ Khazanov 2003, 37, 39; Kradin 2008, 117, 120.

⁴⁵ Khazanov 1984, 165, 228; Kradin 2008, 117, 121, *passim*. 107-122. Khazanov admits that the term “nomadic state” is extremely vague and imprecise, hence he remarks that he uses the term in a wide sense. However, Khazanov claims that a chiefdom or stratified society precedes the emergence of a state. By contrast with Khazanov, Kradin suggests that we cannot speak about a state or even an early state because “we cannot say that the nomads had a state machinery” and “from the view point of general evolution, they [nomads] have created a supercomplex chiefdom”. Taken together, the terms “nomadic state” and “supercomplex chiefdom” primarily refers to the same phenomenon, but the term used varies. I agree with Kradin that it is better to name the phenomenon a “supercomplex” chiefdom because it underlines its specific features and nomadic nature in comparison to sedentary state.

⁴⁶ Dmitriev 2003, 148; Barfield 1993, *passim* 147-168; Khazanov 1984, 157-159, 161-169, 172-179; Kradin 2005 a, *passim* 149-166; Kradin 2001, *passim* 297-310; Morgan 1986 (1990) 37-39. See Chapter 4.

In general, every male commoner is a warrior in nomadic society but local chiefs are often, though not always, the military leaders of the troops from their districts.⁴⁷ However, the tasks and the position of military leadership exist only according to need, e.g. during a time of war and raiding operations or conquest. In addition, because the tasks are related to excellent skills in war, charismatic and talented warriors who do not have the position of chief, can also be elected as a military leader. In other words, the position of military leadership is more dependent on personal skills, followers support and personal charisma than anything else.⁴⁸ Because the position of military leadership is the only leadership position which can attain the large-scale support of nomads, it might evolve into a permanent and most powerful position among the nomads. However, a precondition for this occurring is that successful raids and conquests by nomads are a constant feature of life.⁴⁹ Defeats in wars and lack of military success could destroy the position of the supreme military leader and the whole structure of the military leaders who followed him.⁵⁰ Accordingly, I claim that this feature speaks in favour of naming the mightiest leadership position among the nomads a supreme military leader, thus emphasizing the leadership positions' nomadic nature.⁵¹

The final concept to be defined is related to the unity which the Huns and other barbarian groups formed during the first half of the 5th century. The question is should we call it "an alliance" or "a coalition" or "a confederation"?⁵² According to *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* the words are defined as follows.⁵³ An alliance is "a relationship in which two countries, political parties, or organizations work together for some purpose"; while it can also mean "a group of countries or political parties that are formally united and working together because they have similar aims". By contrast with an alliance, a coalition is defined as "a group consisting of people from different political or social groups who are co-operating to achieve a particular aim". Finally "confederation" has the meaning of "an organization or group consisting of smaller groups or states, especially one that exists for business or political purposes". I prefer to call the unity formed by groups of Huns and local barbarians especially during the 430s and the 440s a "confederation" because the concept includes the idea of united groups, who act together because of shared interests. Second, the concept

⁴⁷ Khazanov 2003, 31; Vasjutin 2003, passim 52-55; Bondarenko, Korotayev, Kradin 2003, passim. 10, 12-14; Kradin 2003, 80-81; Kradin 2005 a, 162.

⁴⁸ Dmitriev 2003, 155-156; Khazanov 1984, 166-167; cf. Morgan (1986) 1990, 36-39; Kradin 2003, passim 80-81; Bondarenko, Korotayev, Kradin 2003, passim 9-15.

⁴⁹ Vasjutin 2003, 53-55; Khazanov 1983, passim 166-167.

⁵⁰ Kradin 2003, 77, 81, 84-85; Vasjutin 2003, 55.

⁵¹ See Vasjutin 2003, 53.

⁵² The discussion on the nature of the large unity that nomadic groups might form is wide; see Khazanov 1984, 35-36; Khazanov 2003, 36; Kradin 2002, 376; Kradin 2003, passim. 84; Vasjutin 2003, 52, passim 57; cf. Di Cosmo 2005, 487..

⁵³ *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* 1993, 54, 427, 474.

“confederation” is not related to the existence of political parties, and this is also illustrative of the relationship between groups of Huns and local barbarians.

1.6. Primary sources

Greco-Roman authors' accounts of the Huns from c. the 360s to the 530s are the primary sources in my research, though I also discuss archaeological material at times when it elucidates the topic in question.

I divide contemporary authors' accounts of the Huns into different categories in order to elucidate their specific nature. The first category holds the first accounts of the Huns, a time when contemporaries heard about the arrival of the Huns and tried to find out who the new nomadic groups were, where they were coming from, and what were they doing. In other words, it is a question of a period when Greco-Roman authors lacked detailed information on the Huns. Consequently, the stories about Huns include many images common to barbarian topoi and are generally used to describe nomads. In addition, the descriptions are based on many previous stories about nomadic groups similar to Huns who had roamed in the areas of Scythia. That is to say, the accounts of the Huns in the first category are generalized in nature. The contemporary authors that I list in this category are Ammianus, Claudian and Eunapius, whose texts cover the period from the 370s to the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries.

The second category includes accounts of the Huns written by Jerome, Sozomen and Olympiodorus and Priscus. The time scale is from c. the first decade of the fifth century to the 470s. A special feature of these authors is that they had either met Huns, e.g. as members of Roman embassies sent to the Huns, or they witnessed the attacks of the Huns. In other words, their accounts include first-hand information about the Huns and are written from this perspective. In general, the stories are descriptive and imaginary stories and are less favourable to barbarians. Overall, I rely more on information about the Huns given by authors listed in the second category in my research.

The third and last category consists of such writers as Zosimus, Procopius and Jordanes, who wrote about the Huns during the last decades of the fifth century to the first decade of the sixth century. It is a time when the domination of the Huns had vanished and the Huns had once again fragmented albeit becoming partly assimilated with other barbarian groups in the vicinity of the Roman borders, or they had roamed into areas north and east of the Black Sea. The authors in the third category, like in the first, only had a few contacts with the Huns. Therefore, these accounts of the Huns are in some sense comparable to the descriptions in the first category as they were likely to be based on

earlier reports. In addition, the authors used the history of the past to contribute to their political and other goals. This means the descriptions of the Huns include many popular images of nomads and barbarians in antiquity. However, the importance of the texts in the third category is that they include some traits of earlier descriptions of the Huns. They also include some information about the actions of the Huns at the end of fifth century, though the name “the Huns” was also applied to new nomadic groups in the vicinity of the lower Danube at the turn of the fifth and sixth centuries, and hence partially blur the understanding what was going on among the groups of Huns.

I will now discuss the background of the authors whose accounts of the Huns are fundamentally based on.

Ammianus (c. 330 - 400) was Greek-speaking and is believed to be a native of the Syrian city of Antioch.⁵⁴ He served in the Roman army, was made one of the *protectores domestici* and fought many battles against the barbarians in different parts of the Roman Empire during his career. However, after 363 he dedicated himself to writing a Roman history in Latin.⁵⁵ It is supposed that Ammianus admired Tacitus and connected his narration about the Roman Empire to Tacitus’ work. Ammianus’ history *Res gestae* includes 31 parts and covers the years 96 – 378. However, only the last 18 books have survived.⁵⁶ In the last book, XXXI, Ammianus describes the arrival of groups of Huns into the vicinity of the Roman Empire and defines what kind of nomads the Huns were. Ammianus’ stories are the first known accounts of the Huns. It is supposed that Ammianus could have met some Huns during the battles against Persia in 363, but it seems that most of his knowledge is based on others reports on the Huns or similar nomadic groups.⁵⁷ Ammianus’ descriptions of the Huns can be taken as an examples of barbarian *topoi*, with generally favourable images of nomads. On the other hand, it is also argued that the stories about the Huns could be taken as an accurate depiction of their pastoral nomadic way of life.⁵⁸ In any case, the main significance of Ammianus’ accounts is that they define what kind of arrivals the groups of Huns were, where they roamed and what they did.

Claudian (c. 370 - 404) was a Greek-speaking citizen in Alexandria. He moved to Rome before 395, where he became a court poet. After a while, Claudian joined the service of Stilicho, *magister militum of praesentalis*, in the Western part of the Roman Empire. Before accompanying Stilicho Claudian had become *notarius* and *tribunus*. Claudian wrote his earliest works in Greek, but later

⁵⁴ Rolfe 1950, ix.

⁵⁵ Rolfe 1950, x-xiv.

⁵⁶ Rolfe 1950, xvi-xvii. I use J. C. Rolfe’s translation of Ammianus’ work *Res gestae*. Rolfe’s work thought to be partially inaccurate; e.g. in the descriptions of the Huns the word “barbarorum” is not translated as “barbarians” but “savages” (Ammianus, RG, 31.3.8).

⁵⁷ Matthews 1989, passim 333-334, 337, 377-380; Thompson 1966, 151-155.

⁵⁸ Matthews 1989, passim 333-334, 336-337, 339, 341, 353, 355, 376, 380.

on changed in Latin. This is supposed to have happened when he moved to Rome, where he spent the last four years of his life. Claudian's short description of the Huns is written in Latin and it is a part of a panegyric. Like Ammianus, Claudian briefly describes the overall nature of the Huns whom he most likely never met. Claudian's accounts of the Huns include generally favoured images of nomads and stress the nomadic nature of the Huns.⁵⁹

The only thing that is known about Olympiodorus' (365/380 - 432) early years is that he was born in Thebes. He calls himself a poet and seems to have been quite a skilful writer. Olympiodorus worked most of his time in the service of the court of the Western part of the Roman Empire and supposedly was sent by the court to visit some groups of Huns in 412.⁶⁰ Olympiodorus wrote 22-part work where he mainly described the situation in the court of Western Roman Empire and the relationship between the Romans and barbarians during the years 407 – 425. Olympiodorus' work is survived only partly in Photius' *Bibliotheca*, especially in part 80. In one of the fragments Olympiodorus explains that his main goal was not primarily to write a history, but to describe the situation of his time for others to use in histories. This is also seen in Olympiodorus' text. He mainly lists events and his narrative is descriptive rather than fluent storytelling. This is also the case in his short account of the Huns from c. the year 411 or 413. Olympiodorus briefly tells about the success of the Roman delegation that he led and its success with the Huns and their leaders. This is first-hand information, and though it is a short and plain account, it elucidates the position of Hun leaders and the fragmentation of their society. Olympiodorus' way of keeping only to the main features of the events also makes his accounts informative.⁶¹

Priscus (c. 410/420 – 480) was a Greek sophist and a historian who came from the city of Panion and ended up in the service of Theodosius II in the Eastern Roman Empire. Furthermore, Priscus wrote an extensive history of his time, covering the years 443-471. Even though the history became very popular, only fragments have survived. Many of them are part of *Excerpta de Legationibus*, collected by Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitos in 913 – 959.⁶² All the fragments of Priscus deal with the relationship between the Romans and the barbarians. The stories about the Huns cover primarily the years 430 – 470 and most of them are derived from his visit to the Huns in 449. Priscus was sent as a member of an Eastern Roman delegation to solve the ongoing disputes with

⁵⁹ Claudian, In Ruf., I: 311-321; Platnauer 1976, viii, xiv-xvi.

⁶⁰ Blockley 1981, 27; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 73; Heather 2005, 324; Sticker 2007, 57.

⁶¹ The fragments of Olympiodorus' lost work are collected and translated by Blockley in *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire. Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus. Text, Translation and Historical Notes*. Blockley has also written the *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire. Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus. Vol. 2.*, where he explains the background of Olympiodorus' writings.

⁶² The fragments of Priscus' history are collected and translated by Blockley in *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire. Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus. Text, Translation and Historiographical Notes*. Blockley has also written *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire. Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus. Vol. 2.*, where he explains the background of Priscus' writings.

the Huns led by Attila. During the visit Priscus could observe the situation among the Huns well at first hand, and the notions form the core of Priscus' accounts. Consequently, Priscus' stories about the Huns can be taken as a relatively reliable source of the Huns, especially in the 440s. However, Priscus also describes the actions of the Huns both before and after the 440s, and he quotes official peace agreements and accounts from other contemporary authors. This makes Priscus' work the most comprehensive "contemporary history of the Huns" we have today. Having said that, however, the reliability of Priscus' accounts on the Huns is occasionally doubtful. There are some descriptions which are clearly written to criticize the political situation in the Eastern Roman Empire rather than to tell about the Huns. Equally, from time to time Priscus refers to earlier authors' century-old stories about similar events to those at hand among the Huns. Despite this, Priscus' style is to tell about his observations and list the most crucial elements of every situation rather than to write vivid narration. This makes his stories convincing. Thus Priscus' fragments are the main sources in my work.

Jordanes (c. 490/500 – 551) was a Christian Goth who apparently worked as a high-level notaries, but during the last years of his life he became a historian. He wrote a work *De origine actibusque Gothorum*, or *Getica* for short, in Latin. Jordanes describes the history of the Goths from the imaginary past to the sixth century, though the main interest of the work is in the events of the fifth century. Consequently, the Huns and their influence over the Goths are discussed at some length in the work, although, the history is mainly a summary of Cassiodorus' lost history of the Goths. Nonetheless Jordanes also emphasizes those views he personally found important. It is very likely that because of Jordanes' Gothic origin, he was especially fond of creating an image of the Huns who came to dwell in the territory of the Goths as the most terrible people on earth. Such exaggeration makes the stories unreliable. However, Jordanes uses many earlier authors' accounts of the Huns in his narration, and hence his work offers a good opportunity to gain overall information about the lost works and accounts of the Huns.⁶³

1.7. The Structure of the Work

My work consists of five topics that together answer the main questions of my work: (1) the nature of the leadership position among the Huns; (2) the possible rise of a supercomplex chiefdom among the groups of Huns during the 440s at the latest; (3) Greco-Roman authors' ways of writing about groups who they considered non-Romans, especially barbarians and nomads; (4) the relationship

⁶³ I use the English translation of Jordanes' history by C. C. Mierow, *The Gothic History of Jordanes* (1915).

between the Huns and the Romans, and the Romans' influence on the Huns' desire to form a larger unity; and (5) the formation and nature of confederation between groups of Huns and local barbarians in the vicinity of the lower Danubian region.

In Chapter 2 I discuss the Late Roman authors' literary conventions on barbarians in general and on nomads in particular. This is done in order to explore the accuracy of the Late Roman authors' accounts of the Huns on their nomadic way of life and leadership position.

In Chapter 3 I analyse whether the Huns were really nomadic newcomers to the Roman world when they arrived in the northern parts of the Black Sea during the 370s. In addition, the chapter elucidates how fragmented the groups of Huns seem to have been and how close the contacts were with other barbarian groups (e.g. Alans and Goths) in the Dniester and lower Danubian basin during the last decades of the fourth century and at the beginning of the fifth century.

Because the groups of Huns favoured temporary alliances with other barbarian groups this gives a basis for studying the nature of leadership positions among the Huns, which is the subject of Chapter 4. In addition, I explain the kind of framework the Eurasian pastoral nomads' nomadic way of life and society had. I also discuss the nomads' prerequisites for forming confederations, and explain whether these elements occurred among the Huns. This is the main focus of Chapters 3 – 5. These Chapters also analyse the unity of the groups of Huns and their contacts to other barbarian groups, especially in the eastern and western half of the Roman Empire from the 410s to the beginning of the 430s. This leads us to a discussion of the possibilities of a supercomplex chiefdom among the Huns emerging during the 440s, which is the theme of Chapters 9 - 10.

Because the attacks of the Huns against the Romans increased from the 430s onwards, in Chapter 6 I analyse whether the titles which the Late Roman authors used for Hun leaders in their accounts of the peace treaties allude to a strengthening leadership position among the nomads. In addition, I evaluate whether the might of the Huns was based on the formation of a supercomplex chiefdom. The possible changes in the Huns' nomadic ways of life, e.g. the partial adoption of a sedentary way of life, are considered in Chapter 8.

Finally, in Chapter 10 I point out how the last years of the confederation of the Huns and their barbarian allies support the claim that the Huns never developed a supercomplex chiefdom. In addition, I emphasize that the Huns remained nomads, which is supported by the fact that after the confederation with the other barbarian groups was over, the groups of Huns again fragmented and continued their nomadic way of life.

2. ROMAN AUTHORS' WAYS OF WRITING ABOUT THE HUNS

Many of the Late Roman authors refer to the Huns as barbarians and this immediately shows that the Huns are considered to be non-Romans.⁶⁴ Generally speaking names that designate differences between groups are generally used in a time of conflict or tension between groups and the purpose is to create an image of an other, or even an enemy.⁶⁵ The view is substantiated by depictions that stress differences in customs, appearance and beliefs etc., and the accounts often end up emphasizing hegemony that which is represented as foreign.⁶⁶ Therefore, the accounts of that which is foreign merely tell more about the concepts of the creator of the accounts than the target itself.⁶⁷ This is also the case with Greco-Roman authors' descriptions of barbarians in general and the Huns in particular.

The Romans had adopted the word barbarian from the Greeks, and it was primarily addressed to peoples who were living outside the Roman borders at various points of compass.⁶⁸ Although the concept of barbarians was a generalization, there were also divergences in the image drawn from environmental conditions and the location of the dwelling areas according to the point of the compass. Also the manner in which groups gained their living were claimed to be reflected in certain characteristics.

In order to consider the extent to which contemporary Roman writers might have relied on earlier stories about nomads and barbarians in their accounts of the Huns, I first study how environmental conditions and living regions at certain points of the compass were claimed to affect human nature. After this I analyze how Roman authors described nomads and the nomadic way of life in general, and how this might have affected the descriptions of the Huns. This reveals to what degree the accounts of the Huns echo the prevailing images of nomads and are written so as to emphasize the elements which are important to the Romans. Lastly, I discuss how learned ways of writing determined the Late Roman authors' accounts of the Huns. I consider to what extent stories about the Huns are written in order to show the writer's own education and ability to write as an intellectual. Furthermore, I consider whether these authors wrote about the Huns more to comment on a topic which they found important than to tell about the nomadic newcomers.

⁶⁴ Ammianus, RG, 31.3.8; Sozomen, Hist. Ecc. V; Jordanes, Getica, XXXIV, 179; Jerome, Ep. LX, 16-17; Priscus, fr.11.2 in Blockley 1983, 268-269.

⁶⁵ Hall 1988, 105; cf. Grün 2011, 2, 352; see also Pongrazt-Leisten 2001, 197.

⁶⁶ Smith 2004 a, 236, 232; Hall (1997) 2002, passim. 235-238; Pongrazt-Leisten 2001, 195-196, 206-207.

⁶⁷ Fält 2002, 9-10; Smith 2004 a, 230, 232; Oktas 2002, 201; Green 1985, passim. 50-51.

⁶⁸ Isaac 2004, 134; Grün 2011, 345.

2.1. Characteristics of the Huns Defined by Environment

The Romans adopted the concept of the relationship between geographical location and environmental conditions and human qualities from Hellenic authors.⁶⁹ The crux of the concept was that geography and climate were claimed to define features that were common to people in certain areas, and it was stated that the conditions in Greece and on the Italian peninsula were the best and hence brought forth the best qualities of the inhabitants there.⁷⁰ As a result, the farther away from the core areas, the more savage the inhabitants and the less salubrious the living conditions became. Accordingly, these claims strengthen the Romans' self-conceived ability and right to rule other regions and people.⁷¹ By contrast to the ancient Greeks who had preferred a polarization between west and east, Roman writers concentrated on defening the differences between peoples in the north and the south because these were the points of the compass where the opponents of Rome mainly came from.⁷² Moreover, the notion that the environment affected to human nature was also used to explain visible differences between people (e.g. darker skin). This created information about distant regions and their inhabitants.

Because the Huns arrived from the north-east to threaten the Roman Empire and images of people from a certain area were general in nature, I claim that images of people from the north and east affected the accounts of the Huns. The images could also have been used because the Huns were nomadic newcomers whom no one knew anything about as Eunapius remarks: "*The first account of the Huns, written at a time when no one had anything clear to say about their place of origin and where they were living when they overran Europe and crushed the Scythian [the Goths] nation, I have collected from the ancient authors and set down according to the criterion of probability*".⁷³ Therefore, general information on people living in the north might have helped contemporary authors, such as Ammianus and Claudian, to say at least even something about the Huns. Vegetius claims that people living in the north and south of the core areas of the Roman Empire had the following characteristics for climatic reasons:⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Smith 2004 b, 308-309; Isaac 2004, 55-56, 72, 85-86, 108-109. Smith states that in classical ethnography differences were explained above all as the consequence of spatial conditions, which were pre-eminently climatic.

⁷⁰ Isaac 2004, 56, 58-59, 82; cf. Schubert 2007, 22, 24. Isaac calls this "environmental determinism".

⁷¹ Vitruvius, *De Arch.*, 6.1.3, 6.1.5, 6.1.10-11; Isaac 2004, 2, 7, 12, 45, 85-86; cf. Wiedemann 1986, 189, 193; Hall 2002, *passim*. 235-236, 259.

⁷² Isaac 2004, 85-86; Gr ien 2011, 344. However, what was common to both the Greeks and the Romans was the negative image of the East, derived largely from the threat of Persia.

⁷³ Eunapius fr. 41 in Blockley 1983, 58-59.

⁷⁴ Vegetius, *Ep. rei mil.*, 1.2; cf. Vitruvius, *De Arch.* 6.1.3; see also Aristotle, *Pol.* 1327b. Vegetius' views have many similarities to Vitruvius who quotes Aristotle.

[...] all peoples that are near the sun, being parched by great heat, are more intelligent but have less blood, and therefore lack steadiness and confidence to fight at close quarters, because those who are conscious of having less blood are afraid of wounds.

[...] peoples from the north, remote from the sun's heat are less intelligent, but having a superabundance of blood are readiest for wars.

[...] Recruits should therefore be raised from the more temperate climes. The plenteousness of their blood supplies a contempt for wounds and death.

Vegetius' argumentation concerning the effect of the sun on the blood and hence human characteristics that made people in the north fierce warriors has similarities to Vitruvius' descriptions in *De Architectura* from the first century BC.⁷⁵ According to Vitruvius, the cold climate was the reason why people in the north had an abundance of blood that made them restless, lacking intelligence, yet strong to bear wounds: "*the races that are bred in the north ... [have] a great deal of blood, owing the abundance of moisture and the coolness of the atmosphere ... their wealth of blood enables them to stand up against the sword without timidity ... northern nations, being enveloped in a dense atmosphere and chilled by the moisture from obstructing air, have but sluggish intelligence ... men born in cold countries are indeed readier to meet the shock of arms with great courage and without timidity, but their wits are so slow that they will rush to the charge inconsiderately and inexpertly, thus defeating their own devices*".⁷⁶

Because blood and climate were something that people could not change, Vitruvius' reasoning created a strong basis for claims about the characteristics of people who came from the north. This might have inspired Tertullian to write about the Scythians as fierce northern warriors: "[in their dwelling areas] *the whole year is winter ... Their [the Scythians'] climate, too, exhibits the same rude nature [as the Scythians have] ... Nothing there is hot except ferocity ... They have no fixed abode, their life is rude, their lust promiscuous. ... The fiercest nations dwell there, if indeed one can be said to dwell in a wagon*".⁷⁷ Because the Huns came to dwell in the same regions where Scythians had lived, Ammianus might have borrowed from Tertullian's description of them when describing the Huns. I would seem that Ammianus used these generalized images of northern barbarians because his account of the Huns starts with the notion that the nomadic newcomers arrived from regions in the north "*beyond the Maeotic Sea near the ice bound ocean*".⁷⁸ Therefore, it is no surprise that Ammianus claims that one would "*not hesitate to call them [the Huns] the most*

⁷⁵ Vegetius, *Ep. rei mil.* 1.2.; cf. Vitruvius, *De Arch.* 6.1.3; cf. Seneca, *De ira*, 2.15; see Isaac 2004, 95. Vegetius' argumentation reminds one also of the views presented by Seneca; *passus*. Isaac 2004, 71, 85, 87.

⁷⁶ Vitruvius, *De Arch.*, 6.1.3, 6.1.5, 6.1.10-11.

⁷⁷ Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, I. 1; Lovejoy, Boas 1973, 342-343.

⁷⁸ Ammianus, *RG*, 31.2.1.

terrible of all warriors".⁷⁹ Ammianus emphasizes that the Huns are interested in fighting "*when provoked*" and "*rushing about in disorder here and there, dealing terrific slaughter*" as one might expect people from the north to do.⁸⁰ In his depiction Ammianus creates images of the Huns as so impatient to fight that they are: "*regardless of their own lives*", and the wild nature of the Huns is emphasized by the claim that the Huns "*exceed every degree of savagery*".⁸¹ At the end of his depiction Ammianus underlines the restless nature of the Huns by writing that they "*keep roaming from place to place*" and are "*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*".⁸²

Claudian, who is the second contemporary author along with Ammianus from whom we have one of the first accounts of the Huns, also draws attention to the nomads' arrival from the north and their furious nature. Claudian describes the Huns as "*the most infamous of all the children of the north*" giving the most likely reason for their extreme nature the fact that they come from "*the extreme eastern borders of Scythia, beyond frozen Tanais*".⁸³ It is likely that Claudian emphasized the fierce nature of the Huns because Roman authors connected extreme behaviour with remote areas.⁸⁴ It was argued that in the the remotest areas people even lost their humanity - people became part animal or they behaved like animals.⁸⁵ Concerning this idea, the location of the region, north or south, was less significant; it was the extreme geographical position that caused the loss of human characteristics.⁸⁶

Such notions may well have been the reason why Ammianus writes that the Huns, who arrived from "*hidden nook of the earth*" are "*so monstrously ugly and misshapen, that one might take them for two legged beasts*", and Claudian compares the Huns to Centaurs: "*Their double nature fitted no better the twi-formed Centaurs to the horses that were parts of them*".⁸⁷ Claudian's reference to Centaurs clearly emphasizes the image of Huns as people from the utmost regions who are partly animals partly humans.

The image of an extreme climate as the cause of extreme features was also emphasized in the stories about the nature of leadership and political organization. It was claimed that laziness in the east made people slaves under the strong rule of kings, while people in the north could primarily only set up temporary councils on account of their restlessness and stupidity. Because of a lack of

⁷⁹ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.9.

⁸⁰ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.8-9.

⁸¹ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.9., 31.2.1.

⁸² Ammianus, RG, 31.2.10-11.

⁸³ Claudian, In Ruf., I 323-326.

⁸⁴ Tacitus, Ger., 46: 1-3. Good example of the view is e.g. Tacitus' story about Fennis.

⁸⁵ Vitruvius, De Arch., 6.1.10.; Tacitus, Ger., 46.4; see Isaac 2004, passim 66-67, 200, 204.

⁸⁶ Isaac 2004, 67, 71.

⁸⁷ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.2, 31.3.8; Claudian, In Ruf., I 323-326.

good rulers, injustice and societal disorganization were part of the image of northern barbarians.⁸⁸ This might be the reason why Ammianus argues that the Huns “*are subject to no royal restrain, but they are content with the disorderly government of their important men, and led by them they force their way through every obstacle*”.⁸⁹

In general, the image of people from some particular point of the compass was useful for Greco-Roman authors especially when they did not have any direct information about the target; such cases they could rely on images and write according to them. However, the location of dwelling regions at certain points of the compass was not the only aspect that Greek and Roman authors used when creating images of differences between people. There was also the influence of the stars and geographical conditions.

The stars and their connections to each other were claimed to affect one’s human qualities. The effect of the stars was based on their connection to the gods and goddesses – stars and planets were associated with gods and goddesses who had their own special features, and these in the end dictated what kind of characteristics people under their circle of influence had. Ptolemy is one of the Late Roman authors who describes in *Tetrabiblos/ Quadripartitum* how planets affect the qualities of inhabitants to the north-west and north-east of the Black Sea, areas occupied by the Huns:⁹⁰

Among the countries before named, Britain, Galatia, Germany, and Barsania have a greater share of familiarity with Ares and Mars; and their inhabitants are accordingly wilder, bolder, and more ferocious.

[...] the nations about Sauromatica, Oxianan and Sogdiana [areas from the Don to the borders of modern Afghanistan and India] are influenced by Aquarius and Saturn; and are therefore less polished in manners and more austere and uncouth.

Ptolemy’s claims concerning the human qualities caused by the effect of the stars and planets do not differ much from those that authors mention to be common for inhabitants in different points of the compass.⁹¹ However, the explanations made on the basis of planets could lead to quite different interpretations than those drawn from the condition of climate and the location of dwelling areas

⁸⁸ Tacitus, *Ger.*, 45.6, *passim*. 42.-46; Caesar, *Bella*, VI 2.23; cf. Isaac 2004, 71-72, 196. Tacitus even claims that a people called the Sithones who lived north of the Roman Empire were ruled by women, and this was considered worse than being ruled by slaves. On the other hand, Greek and Roman authors also favour an image of people having the happiest life in regions that are located at the edge of the world.

⁸⁹ Ammianus, *RG*, 31.2.7.

⁹⁰ Ptolemy, *Quadripar.*, II, 3.

⁹¹ Isaac 2004, 100.

according to the point of the compass. Hence disagreement is found; Cicero for example, in *De divinatione* speaks out strongly against the plausibility of the astrological explanations.⁹²

In fact, Roman writers rarely refer to the effect of stars and planets when they describe the human qualities of barbarians, and this is also the case with the Huns. However, when Ammianus writes that the Huns “*exceed every degree of savagery*” and that “*they are deceitful and ambiguous in speech ... fickle and prone to anger*” it follows Ptolemy’s images of people in the regions near the northern and eastern parts of the Black Sea.⁹³

Another aspect that the Roman authors used to create images of differences in human characteristics was the effect of environmental conditions on peoples’ way of gaining living.⁹⁴ The idea of the effect of the environment on human activity and due to this also on human characteristics occurs in Herodotus.⁹⁵ After Herodotus, Cicero also speaks strongly on behalf of the concept in *De Lege Agraria*.⁹⁶ However, because Cicero argues in terms of social interaction and human factors rather than mechanical, already strictly defined forces like the sun, the approach offers a number of possibilities for claiming obvious differences in human nature and behaviour.⁹⁷ In his accounts Cicero claims that because the Carthaginians had many harbours, they were often in contact with merchants and foreigners, and this encouraged Carthaginians to adopt lying.⁹⁸ As the Carthaginians were competing with the Romans in trade, this might have been the reason why Cicero emphasized their negative features. However, in the case of mountaineers, e.g. the Ligurians, Cicero mentions that their hard nature is derived from their harsh living conditions: “*hardy rustics; the land itself has taught them, since it produces nothing except by dint of intensive cultivation and much toil*”.⁹⁹ The description reminds one of Ammianus’ notions of Huns as harsh because of their hard living conditions, and hence Ammianus’ account stresses the fact that the living conditions affected the character of the Huns.¹⁰⁰

Images of the Huns include many similarities to those of mountaineers, and one reason for this might have been the fact that the Huns arrived on the borders of the Roman Empire over the Carpathians and the Caucasus.¹⁰¹ This offered an opportunity to use the images of mountaineers

⁹² Cicero, *De div.*, 2.96; cf. Isaac 2004, 99, 101.

⁹³ Ammianus, *RG*, 31.2.1, 31.2.11; Ptolemy, *Quadripar.*, II, 3.

⁹⁴ Although Roman authors used arguments deriving from the notion that social environments affect human nature, it would seem that the geographical environment created the basis for human qualities that could change under the influence of that environment.

⁹⁵ Herodotus, *Hist.*, IX: 122.

⁹⁶ Cicero, *De leg. ag.* II, XXXV: 95; see Freese (1930) 1967, 470-473; Isaac 2004, 87-88.

⁹⁷ Isaac 2004, 89.

⁹⁸ Cicero, *De leg. ag.*, II, XXXV: 95; see Freese (1930) 1967, 470-473.

⁹⁹ Cicero, *De leg. ag.*, II, XXXV: 95; see Freese (1930) 1967, 470-473.

¹⁰⁰ Ammianus, *RG*, 31.2.3.

¹⁰¹ Ammianus, *RG*, 31.3.8; Jerome, *Ep.* LX, 16.

when depicting about the Huns. On the other hand, Roman authors' view of the Huns' hard living conditions, not only in the mountains, but also on the uninhabited steppes could support the image of the Huns nature and on their activities as brutish. Ammianus uses the image of mountains to emphasize the Huns' harsh living conditions and life: "*roaming at large amid the mountains and woods, they [the Huns] learn from the cradle to endure cold, hunger and thirst*".¹⁰²

Strabo, a geographer from the time of Augustus, also favours images of people living in severe conditions as ruthless raiders who pose a constant threat low-land cultivators, though Strabo also emphasizes that "*some local characteristics of a people come by nature [location] others by custom and practice*". Such claims indicate that Strabo creates images of human qualities as caused by the social environment rather than environmental determinism.¹⁰³ It has been considered that the reason for the modification is Strabo's goal to speak on behalf of constitutional components in favour to Augustus' regime in new regions.¹⁰⁴ However, according to Strabo, without the blessing of a good regime, people in the mountains are hideous raiders like in Corsica, Sardinia, the Balkans, Lebanon and Southern Syria:¹⁰⁵

[Corsica] affords such a poor livelihood – being not only rough but in most parts absolutely impracticable for travel – that those who occupy the mountains and live from brigandage are more savage than wild animals. [...] the nature of wild beasts [...] is manifested in them.

... [in Sardinia] fruitful districts are continually ravaged by those mountaineers [...] they live in caverns [...] they pillage the lands of farmers – not only of the farmers on the island, but they actually sail against the people on the opposite coast.

... [those] who inhabit the greater part of the Haemus Mountain, are called brigands even by the brigands.

... [in Libanus] all the mountainous parts are held by Ituraeans and Arabians, all of whom are robbers, but the people in the plains are farmers; and when the latter are harassed by the robbers at different time they require different kinds of help.

Notable in the descriptions of all of the mentioned places is that for Strabo there is no difference at what point of the compass the mountain dwellers come from; that is to say, it is the destructiveness of their raids that defines their human characteristics and why they are described as the most hideous people.

A reason why I pay particular attention to the descriptions of mountain dwellers is that they are described as raiding villages and cities in a similar way to the Huns.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, it is no surprise

¹⁰² Ammianus, RG, 31.2.4; Jerome, Ep. L X, 16.

¹⁰³ Strabo, Geog., 2.5.26; see Isaac 2004, 92.

¹⁰⁴ Strabo, Geog., 2.5.26; see Isaac 2004, 91-92, 407, 410.

¹⁰⁵ Strabo, Geog., 7, 5: 7, 12.

¹⁰⁶ See chapter 2.2.

that mountain people are occasionally connected to the Huns. The mountain regions were also inhabited by the Huns, e.g. next to the Carpathians and the Caucasus, and contemporary authors' references to the mountains in their descriptions of the Huns offered a possibility to emphasize the image of the Huns as mountain dwellers who make unexpected raids and generally caused threat. Jerome, for example, compares the Huns to wolves from the mountains when he describes them crossing the Caucasus and to pillaging the regions of modern Turkey, Lebanon and Syria at the end of the fourth century: "*the wolves [the Huns] were let loose upon us from the remotest fastnesses of Caucasus and in short time overran these great provinces*".¹⁰⁷ Ammianus also mentions mountains in stories about the attacks of the Huns that create an image of a threat from afar. In addition, the image is strengthened by comparison to the powers of nature, not animals this time but a storm:¹⁰⁸

a race of men hitherto unknown [the Huns] had now arisen from a hidden nook of the earth, like a tempest of snows from high mountains, and was seizing or destroying everything in its way [...] from the fields that were already exposed to the thunderbolts of a foreign war [caused by the Huns]

[...] He [Ermenrichus, leader of some Goths in areas between the Dnepr and the Dniester] was struck with consternation at the violence of this sudden storm.

Even if raids were claimed to be common behaviour for mountain dwellers, it was said to be typical for nomads as well. Thus even though the varied environmental conditions offered a wide variety of images for Roman authors to describe the Huns' particular features, it was especially their way of life, their nomadism, that primarily influenced the way the Huns were depicted.¹⁰⁹ In short, even though the Huns arrived from the vicinity of the Caspian Sea to dwell in the lower Danubian regions at the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries, this does not seem to have changed the overall tone of the images created for them – the Huns remained fierce warriors who were not expected to respect common rules.

¹⁰⁷ Jerome, Ep. LX, 16.

¹⁰⁸ Ammianus, RG, 31.3.2, 31.3.8; cf. Livy, Ab ur. cond., 5, 38.17.9.-10; Florus, Ep. bel., 1.27.3-4; see Isaac 2004, 90-91. The image of mountains as the site of uncontrolled powers was strengthened by claiming that thunder often occurred there. It is possible that this might have influenced the connection of the image of thunder with the nomads' attacks, albeit the connection may also be derived from the writers aim to bring more liveliness to the narration by using poetical expression. Generally speaking, thunder is one of the most favoured *topoi* used by the Greeks and the Romans to describe the scene of wars and conflicts.

¹⁰⁹ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.17. E.g. Ammianus sees that especially in the case of nomads, the way in which people gain their living, i.e. their nomadic way of life, defines their characters. This is apparent in Ammianus' description of the Alans, where he states that "*but although widely separated from each other and roaming over vast tracts, as Nomads do, yet in the course of time they have united under one name, and are, for short, all called Halani because of the similarity in their customs, their savage mode of life, and their weapons*".

With reference to this, Isaac interestingly notes that Greek and Roman authors did not consider migration from one area to another to have a strong effect on human nature.¹¹⁰ However, mixed people were claimed to be the most inferior, especially because people had lost their special characteristics when mixing with others.¹¹¹ Even though the image of mixed people as less admirable derived from the interest of the Greek and the Roman elite in defending their position against newcomers, still the view also supported authors in creating an image of nomads who favoured temporary alliances with changing partners as despicable people. This might well be the reason why descriptions of the Huns often point out that they were a mixed race and that they did not know their origin.¹¹² This is the view that e.g. Ammianus stresses when he states: “*None of their [the Huns] 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 ... In truces they are faithless and unreliable ... [and] often quarrel with their allies*”.¹¹³

To summarize, the descriptions of the Huns by Late Roman authors show that they used images that reflected the notion that the environment affected human behaviour and appearance. Because one’s way of life was also claimed to cause certain type of human characteristics in general and in the case of nomads in particular, the effect of a nomadic way of life on Late Roman authors’ accounts of the Huns is the topic of the following section.

2.2. Images of Nomads and Nomadic Way of Life

In ancient literature nomads are generally described with negatives; nomads are characterized by features what they either do or do not have.¹¹⁴ The common images of nomads and a nomadic way of life during antiquity are well presented in the Sumerian poem “Marriage of Martu [nomad]” from the third millennium BC:¹¹⁵

And behold, their [nomads’] hands are destructive, (their) features are (those) [of monkeys]

¹¹⁰ Livy, *Ab urb. cond.*, 5, 38.17.9.-10; Florus, *Ep. bel.*, 1.27.3-4; cf. Isaac 2004, 90-91. In general it seems that the location of the final living area was crucial and was primarily taken into account.

¹¹¹ Livy, *Ab urb. cond.*, 37.8.4; see Isaac 2004, 90-91.

¹¹² Jerome, *Ep. LX*, 16; Jordanes, *Getica*, XXIV: 123-126, Priscus, fr.2 in Blockley 1983, 224-225; cf. Ammianus, *RG*, 31.3.1-3. The Greeks and the Romans liked to point out the origin and history of a subject. The crux was that the more remote origin, the more admirable. Accordingly, nomads wandering lifestyle and vague mixture of people gave an opportunity for writers to create an image of nomads as those who have no clear origin.

¹¹³ Ammianus, *RG*, 31.2.10-11.

¹¹⁴ Hartog 1988, 204-205; cf. Man 2005, 48; Isaac 2004, 64; Weiss 2007, 7; Schubert 2007, 34-36; Pongraz-Leisten 2001, 204, 206-207.

¹¹⁵ Pongraz-Leisten 2001, 204, 206-207.

They are those who eat the taboo [of] Nanna [human flesh] [*they have*] no reverence
 In their constantly roaming around
 [*Being*] the abomination [of] the temples of the gods,
 Their [counsel] is confused, [they cause] only dis[turbance],
 a *man* who is clothed in a leather-sack
 a tent-dweller [*buffeted*] by wind and rain, [who offers no] prayer,
 He who dwells in the mountains, [knows not] the places [*of the gods*],
 A man who digs up mushrooms at the foot of the mountain, who knows no submission,
 He eats uncooked meat,
 In his lifetime has no house
 When he dies, he will not be buried;
 My girlfriend – why would you marry Martu [nomad]?!

The poem emphasizes the image of nomads as people free from authority and religion. In addition, nomads are described as wanderers who do not have a particular place to live but roam in the natural environment whose offerings they fully count on. These features are the opposite of those of city dwellers and sedentarists, who have temples and houses, customs of preparing food, and an interest in rules to maintain society. Furthermore, because nomads are claimed to behave or even be like animals this creates and stresses an image of nomads as outsiders to human society. Thus in antiquity nomads were considered to embody all the qualities antithetical to the cultivated ideals shared by the city-centred culture of the Mediterranean.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, the descriptions of nomads were written in order to speak by contrast on behalf of elements common and important for sedentarists and their existence.¹¹⁷

A feature of nomads that Greco-Roman authors especially used to emphasize the view of nomads as outsiders to an organized sedentary world is constant wanderings. This is seen in Herodotus' account of the Scythians, where he praises the movement of the nomads as their most striking feature compared to sedentarists: "*the most important thing which they have discovered is such that none can escape again who has come to attack them, and if they do not desire to be found, it is not possible to catch them: for they who have neither cities founded nor walls built, but all carry their houses with them and are mounted archers, living not by the plough but by cattle, and whose dwellings are upon cars, these assuredly are invincible and impossible to approach*".¹¹⁸

Herodotus' emphasized mobility and lack of houses and agriculture as crucial features to the Scythians' nomadic way of life, and these descriptions do not differ from those used to represent the

¹¹⁶ Wells 1995, 27, passus Basilov 1989, 5.

¹¹⁷ Green 1985, 50-51; Berman 2000, 157.

¹¹⁸ Herodotos, Hist., IV: 46; Stöckler 2007, 19. According to Stöckler, Ariteas Prokonnesos, who lived during the seventh and sixth centuries BC, has written a similar depiction of the nomadic way of life to Herodotus in *Arimaspeia*.

Huns. In what follows I argue that Roman authors described the Huns in ways that were commonly used to write about nomads in general. In addition, I point out that the features mentioned in the accounts of the Huns are the opposite of the Romans' sedentary way of life. I thus claim that the stories about the Huns are primarily written to emphasize the connection between the Romans' sedentary way of life and the continuation of the Roman world.

Roman descriptions of the nomadic way of life stressed mobility. Constant wanderings are also one of the first features that Ammianus emphasizes in his account of the Huns: "[Huns do not have a] *settled mode of life and keep roaming from place to place like fugitives*".¹¹⁹ Even though nomads in general are known to be mobile, because Ammianus stresses the feature to be common also for fugitives, I would argue that the remark is given in order to point out the difference between the Huns and the Romans. Ammianus writes that the Huns do not share the ideals of sedentary Roman society where permanent living in houses and a concentration in certain regions was the basis of a happy life. The image of a life of perpetual movement as miserable is implied by Ammianus' remark that among the Huns "*not even a hut thatched with reed can be found among them. But roaming at large amid the mountains and woods, they learn from the cradle to endure cold, hunger, and thirst*".¹²⁰ If a mobile life was claimed to cause hardships, the image was further strengthened by claiming that it did not differ from the life of animals.

The view that a life of constant movement is comparable to that of animals was common in antiquity.¹²¹ Cicero's stories about early human society and the first humans, who are described as living like nomads, stress this notion. Cicero depicts the first humans as wandering "*at random over the fields*" and hence they lived in "*the fashion of beasts*". Furthermore, Cicero claims that the wanderings point out that the first humans did not "*do anything by means of the reasoning powers in their mind; but almost everything by bodily strength*".¹²² That is to say, Cicero creates an image of the wandering way of life gaining a living only directly from nature, as insane and bestial, and as opposed to human reason. The lack of interest in gaining living out of the soil is directly contrasted with the Greeks' and Romans' appreciation of agriculture,¹²³ which was considered to bring welfare encouraged logical behaviour.¹²⁴ Accordingly, rejecting the opportunity to till the soil was seen as

¹¹⁹ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.10.

¹²⁰ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.4.

¹²¹ Eusebios, Vita Cons., VII; cf. Jerome, Ep. LX, 16; Ammianus, RG, 31.2.2, 31.2.4, 31.3.2; see Pongrazt-Leisten 2001, 206-207, 211. Eusebios claims that the nomads' raids are like wolves' attacks from the desert.

¹²² Cicero, De Inv., 1.2.

¹²³ Isaac 2004, 196; Shaw 1995, VI: 19-20. According to Shaw, farming was compared to virtuous exertion on the field of battle. Both were ultimately a civilized art, and hence highly appreciated by the Greeks and the Romans.

¹²⁴ Shaw 1995, 17-19. As Shaw points out, according to Aristotle in *Politika* productive human labour was connected to work that concentrated on using the land; it was in the spectrum of civilized modes of subsistence because it showed that one was master of nature and its powers.

insane and stupid behaviour.¹²⁵ The view is stressed clearly by Isocrates: “*The difference between humans and animals lay, in the Greek view, not only in the obvious superiority of human reasoning but in the extent to which man had used his powers or reasoning to ameliorate his own condition and ensure his survival by growing crops*”.¹²⁶

Isocrates’ comparison of a lack of agriculture with the life and thinking of animals stresses the notion that because agriculture was uncommon for nomads one could claim that they live like animals. Ammianus states directly that among the Huns no one “*ever plows a field or touches a plow-handle*”.¹²⁷ Ammianus strengthens the connection between lack of agriculture and the animal-like nature of the Huns by stories about their diet – Ammianus states that the Huns “*eat the roots of wild plants*” and “[The Huns] *have no need of fire ... [they eat] half-raw flesh of any kind of animal whatever, which they put between their thighs and the backs of their horses, and thus warm it a little*”.¹²⁸ Particularly the reference to eating raw meat created an image of the Huns living like animals: they hunted the meat and ate it as such. The view is referred to by Claudian when he writes: “*the chase supplies their [the Huns] food, bread they will not eat*”.¹²⁹

Their lack of agriculture and their custom of eating raw food emphasized the animality of Huns,¹³⁰ along with their way of gaining a living, namely raiding and pillaging.

Roman authors not infrequently represented nomadic raids as similar to the attacks of wolves or beasts. This is stated directly by Eusebios: “*the wild nomad tribes, no better than savage beasts, assail the nations of civilized men, ravage their country, and enslave their cities, rushing on those who inhabit them like ruthless wolves of the desert, and destroying all who fall under their power*”.¹³¹ Eusebios’ image of nomads as wolves who come from uninhabited regions and cause harm for sedentarists is also presented by Priscus when he writes that “*like wolves they [the Huns] attack and steal*”.¹³² Jerome, too, emphasizes the image of the Huns acting like wolves when they pillaged the areas of modern Libanon and Turkey at the end of the 4th century: “*the wolves [the Huns] were let loose upon us*”.¹³³

¹²⁵ Shaw 1995, VI: 16, 19-20; cf. Isaac 2004, 196. Shaw remarks that if the Aristotelian system is put into a linear model, pastoralism is located at the distal end of the spectrum from agriculture, a civilized custom. The other types that precede pastoralism are banditry, fishing, hunting and gathering.

¹²⁶ Isocrates, Pan., 28.

¹²⁷ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.10, 31.2.3.

¹²⁸ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.3.

¹²⁹ Claudian, In Ruf., 323-331.

¹³⁰ Shaw 1995, 18-19; Wiedemann 1986, passim. 190-192, 196; Isaac 2004, 202, 204, 213, 310; Detienne 1977, passim. 11-14. Detienne claims that plants from nature were considered to be three times as raw as those that were cultivated. For this reason it was claimed that people became wilder the more they ate plants from nature. A similar view was expressed concerning ways of preparing food – those who ate unprepared food were considered uncivilized brutes.

¹³¹ Eusebios, Vit. Cons., VII.

¹³² Priscus, fr. 49 in Blockley 1983, 356-357.

¹³³ Jerome, Ep. LX.

If nomads' activities and their basic features of life were claimed show that they behaved like animals, the image was strengthened by claiming that their human nature was also comparable to animals. Seneca the Younger, for example, claims that the Scythians are living "*in the manner of lions and wolves, who can neither serve nor command, for they do not have the power of a human intellect but a wild and unmanageable one*".¹³⁴ Ammianus also utilizes the image of nomads as those who lack basic human reasoning when he depicts the Huns: "*like unreasoning beasts, they are utterly ignorant of the difference between right and wrong*".¹³⁵ Jerome's representation of the Huns does not differ much from Ammianus', though Jerome describes the Huns as differing from common men in their appearance and their close contact with animals. He describes Huns as "*men who cannot walk afoot and fancy themselves dead if they are unhorsed*".¹³⁶ Claudian's comparison of Huns with Centaurs is similar: "*Their [the Huns] double nature fitted not better the twi-formed Centaurs to the horses that were parts of them*".¹³⁷ Put briefly, the comparison with Centaurs stresses the image of Huns as half-humans, half-animals and thus they are clearly considered outsiders to human society.

The image of nomads acting in general like animals is also found in stories about nomads' society. The general claim was that nomads do not have laws and they are not righteous in their acts. Because laws and order were central to the Romans and the Roman world, then the nonexistence or dislike to laws clearly emphasized that the nomads were non-Romans. In addition, stories about the life of nomads being chaotic and brutish because of a lack of laws emphasized that in the Roman world laws and the lawful life were good and should be maintained, otherwise the result would be the same as among nomads. Ammianus is one of the late Roman authors whose description of the Huns is clearly written according to this view.

Ammianus claims that the Huns had no permanent leaders, and they chose them according to necessity: "*when deliberation is called for about weighty matters, they all consult as a common body in that fashion. They are subject to no royal restraint, but they are content with the disorderly government of their important men*".¹³⁸ Furthermore Ammianus points out that the lack of permanent rule caused disorder to the lives of Huns and they could not form a strong unity or society: "*[the Huns] often quarrel with their allies without provocation, more than once on the same day, and make friends with them again without a mediator*".¹³⁹ Even though temporary

¹³⁴ Seneca, De ira, 2.15.

¹³⁵ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.11; see Barnes 1998, 109. Barnes points out that Ammianus' animal comparisons usually have a highly negative connotation.

¹³⁶ Jerome, Ep. LX.

¹³⁷ Claudian, In Ruf., 323-331.

¹³⁸ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.7.

¹³⁹ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.10, 31.2.11.

alliances and leaders are common for Eurasian pastoralists to arrange their activities, still Ammianus claims that the Huns live “*without law*” and that they are so disorganized that they cannot keep promises: “*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*”.¹⁴⁰

Procopius’ description of the Huns emphasizes a similar view of the nomadic way of life as the opposite of the organized and good life of sedentarists, because the nomadic way of life is claimed to lack the most central features of civilized human society.¹⁴¹ The image is well seen in Procopius’ account of the Epthalite Huns, when he compares their sedentary society and that of their cousins, the nomad Huns:

the Epthalitae Huns ... are of the stock of the Huns in fact as well as in name; however they do not mingle with any of the Huns known to us, for they occupy a land neither adjoining nor even very near to them ... indeed their city, called Gorgo, is located over against the Persian frontier ... For they are not nomads like the other Hunnic peoples, but for a long period have been established in a goodly land. As a result of this they have never made any incursion into the Roman territory ... They are the only ones among the Huns who have white bodies and countenances which are not ugly. It is also true that their manner of living is unlike that of their kinsmen, nor do they live a savage life as they [the Huns] do; but they are ruled by one king, and since they possess a lawful constitution, they observe right and justice in their dealings both with one another and with their neighbours, in no degree less than the Romans and the Persians.¹⁴²

Procopius’ view that the sedentary way of life encourage a “good” life becomes especially clear in the claim that because the Epthalite Huns “*are ruled by one king, and since they possess a lawful constitution, they observe right and justice in their dealings both with one another and with their neighbours*”. At the same time the statement includes an image of the life of the Huns as uncivilized because it lacks all the listed features. The view is straightforwardly stated by Procopius when he concludes that the Huns’ “*live is a savage life*”.

My final remark how Roman authors generally described nomads and the nomadic way of life concerns claims of religious behaviour. Roman authors often represented nomads as lacking holy places, such as temples. The fact that they do not believe in gods leads them to be ignorant of right and wrong in life, a type of behaviour that the Romans by contrast wanted to avoid. Cicero’s

¹⁴⁰ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.10-12. The view of the Huns as outsiders to civilized men and society comes clear when Ammianus compares the Huns to “untamed men”.

¹⁴¹ Eusebius, Hist. ecc., I, 2.19; Cicero, De Inv., 1.2; see Basilov 1989, 5; Weiss 2007, 7; Lambert 2000, passim. 103-104. Roman authors’ views that the nomadic way of life lacks the most crucial elements of the sedentarists’ way of life and hence is contemptible also in apparent in the stories about the life of the first humans, e.g. from Eusebius and Cicero.

¹⁴² Procopius, De bel., I, III: 1-6.

description of the life of early human society and the first humans includes features that are generally connected to the nomadic way of life, especially a lack of trust in gods and the absence of rightful acts: “No attention was as yet paid to any considerations of the religious reverence due to the gods, or of the duties which are owed to mankind: no ... legitimate marriage, no ... equal law”.¹⁴³ Ammianus also presents the Huns as lacking in religion and in trust in faith in gods: “[the Huns] are utterly ignorant of the difference between right and wrong ... never bound by any reverence for religion or for superstition”.¹⁴⁴

In conclusion Roman authors in general depicted nomads and the nomadic way of life as having the opposite features with features opposite to the Romans’ sedentary way of life, thus representing the nomads as less admirable. Accordingly, the Late Roman authors’ goal to describe the Huns nomadic background was merely done so as to emphasize the greatness of the Romans and the elements common to their own culture, and not to provide exact information about the nomadic newcomers. This is supported by the notion that the accounts of the Huns do not include any special characteristics of their nomadic way of life, namely Eurasian pastoralism, but only echo the common images of nomads written over the centuries by sedentary authors. I also consider that the generally favoured images of nomads dictated how and what the Late Roman authors said about the Huns. These emphases were related to education, how to write as a skilled literary man, and in the following section I study the effect of the norms and expectations of fluent writing on the accounts of the Huns.

2.3. Educated Storytelling and the Accounts of the Huns

In Roman literature the way in which a story is told is as important as the story itself.¹⁴⁵ Accordingly, when the Roman authors wrote about the Huns in their history works, letters or some other pieces of texts according to their purposes, the depictions of the Huns followed the rules of style and ways of presenting favoured in their time and expected by an educated audience.¹⁴⁶ Thus, all the information we have on barbarians is accessible only through the prism of an “*interpretatio Romana*”.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Cicero, *De Inv.*, 1.2.

¹⁴⁴ Ammianus, *RG*, 31.2.11.

¹⁴⁵ Kraus, Woodman 1997, *passim*. 2.

¹⁴⁶ Clarke 1957, 64-65; Parks 1945, 96-97.

¹⁴⁷ Kulikowski 2006, 347-349.

The purpose of this chapter is to study the different elements of presentation that the contemporary Roman writers used when they wrote about history works or descriptions that are related to the recent past and include depictions of the Huns. The texts are all unofficial in nature and mainly written by writers who lived during the years 370 - 460. That is to say, they are contemporaries who wrote at the time when groups of Huns arrived on the borders of the Roman Empire and formed an alliance that threatened the Romans, until after the death of Attila when the coalition broke down. In other words, it is a question of a time when there were no former descriptions of the Huns or only a limited number which writers could utilize in their works. Given these facts, we can detect how the writers used what they had learned to represent the newcomers, nomadic Huns.

I also pay attention to some of the depictions of the Huns that are written at the end of the fifth or during the first half of the sixth century, because they contain a number of quotations from former authors' descriptions of the Huns. The most important of the writers is Jordanes and his work *History of the Goths*. Here descriptions of the Huns that were written at a time when most of the Hun groups had moved away from the vicinity of the Roman Empire and there were very few alive who could have told about the times of the nomadic threat, disclose how the authors' education affected the way Huns and their transactions were depicted. However, at the same time the descriptions of the Huns reveal the underlying goals of the authors – stories about the Huns from the past are used as camouflage to the views that are important to the author(s).

The topics of the works that include descriptions of the Huns vary from Jordanes' *The History of the Goths/ De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum [Romana] & De origine actibusque Getarum* to Sozomen's *History of the Church/ Historia ecclesiastica*. By comparison, Ammianus and Eunapius devoted themselves to writing a continuation of the former authors' history of Rome: Ammianus extending Tacitus and Eunapius continuing Dexippus.¹⁴⁸ All of these works are preserved completely or almost completely. We lack only some passages from Sozomen's ninth book and from Ammianus' *Res Gestae* we have the last 18 books of 31. This offers quite extensive material to explore studying how Sozomen's and Ammianus' educated style.¹⁴⁹ By comparison, Eunapius' *Universal History* is only preserved as fragments and this is also the case with Priscus' and Olympiodorus' works.¹⁵⁰ Because the fragments belong to a collection of passages that concentrates on a certain topic and was written centuries after the 5th century, the primary topic of the author is not known with full certainty. Neither can we analyse the style as completely as in the case of complete preserved works.¹⁵¹ However, this does not prevent us from

¹⁴⁸ Eunapius fr. 15 in Blockley 1983, 20-21; see Dorey 1966, 145; Rolfe 1982, xv; Blockley 1981, 1-2, 32.

¹⁴⁹ Rolfe 1982, xvi.

¹⁵⁰ Blockley 1981, 1-2, 27-29, 49-51.

¹⁵¹ Blockley 1981, 97.

observing the elements that were expected to be used in the presentation, with the emphasis on the goals and views of an educated writer.

The fragments of Priscus' work suggest that his interest was to tell about the connections between barbarians and the Romans in the Eastern part of the Roman Empire in the recent past and the immediate present.¹⁵² Olympiodorus had interests similar to those of Priscus, but he seems to some extent to have preferred the style of a commentary.¹⁵³ Moreover, a fragment from Olympiodorus' work includes a declaration that his purpose was only to collect information about events for others who might be interested in writing about the decades at the turn of the 5th century, and not to write history himself.¹⁵⁴

Finally, we have a few scanty depictions of the Huns that are found in poems or letters. Claudian mentions the arrival of the Huns in a panegyric poem, whereas the contemporary transactions, for example the Hun groups' raid on Syria, are Jerome's topics in a letter to a friend.¹⁵⁵ Although poems and rhetoric had mainly different demands for eloquent presentation than histories, historians utilized many of the elements used in poems and rhetoric.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, letters to friends were also seen as a piece of work that called for sophisticated presentation not only to delight the friend but also because letters could be published later on to demonstrate one's own or a friend's reputation as a talented writer.¹⁵⁷ That is to say, letters and lengthy history works both shared the need to be written as elegantly as possible because they were intended for a wide audience. Therefore, in every piece of text that includes descriptions of the Huns it is worth considering the following two points.

First, if we know what kind of presentation or style, the "form of a text",¹⁵⁸ contemporary writers in Late Antiquity were expected to follow and aimed at so as to write according to educated manners, we may discern how these customs affected the way in which information on the Huns was presented. Second, did the authors use educated manners to comment on a topic important to themselves, e.g. political issues, while describing the Huns.

¹⁵² Blockley 1981, 49-51; Platnaeur 1976, vii, xiv-xiv.

¹⁵³ Blockley 1981, 32, 47.

¹⁵⁴ Olympiodorus, *Testimonium*, in Blockley 1983, 152-153.

¹⁵⁵ Jerome, Ep. LX; Claudian, *In Ruf.*, 323-331; see Platnaeur 1976, 48-51.

¹⁵⁶ Sarasti-Wilenius 2007, 382.

¹⁵⁷ Sarasti-Wilenius 2007, 445; Harries 1994, 3-5. Harries remarks that this was true of the fifth century author Sidonius Apollinaris.

¹⁵⁸ Kraus, Woodman 1997, 2.

Literary presentation had its norms and expectations that were partly influenced by rhetorical presentation.¹⁵⁹ The traditional form of writing a historical text included a prologue, a *praefatio* that was expected to begin the work and include a declaration concerning the glorious purposes of the work. In addition, in the prologue the author praised their famous supporters and stated how difficult a task the writing had been.¹⁶⁰ This is done by Eunapius and Jordanes, for example, who stress the issues in the first passages of their work before giving some remarks on the Huns.¹⁶¹ Also the high priorities of a work of history, like telling the truth or educating the younger generations, were customarily presented in the opening passages.¹⁶² Furthermore, in a traditional declaration the author told about the greatness of the brave deeds of the Romans or an Emperor.¹⁶³ Other common topics were moral or humorous lessons.¹⁶⁴ Despite the declarations, histories were basically a mixture of topics under the main declaration. Accordingly, there were no strict rules what a history work should be about, and the works vary from panegyrics to military handbooks or biographies.¹⁶⁵ Despite the many topics that were emphasized, the barbarians were never the main interest of the authors; barbarians were only discussed about in relation to Roman political interests.¹⁶⁶ This is also seen in Eunapius' work when he refers to the Huns. Eunapius only briefly mentions the Huns as groups whom the Emperor Theodosius I hired as his mercenaries.¹⁶⁷ Because the Huns were helpful to the Romans, it is likely that this is the reason why Eunapius did not present any bitter comments on the Huns as he generally did about barbarians.¹⁶⁸

A political perspective, including moral aspects, was always central in the Roman writers' descriptions of barbarians. There were learned stylistic customs, *topoi*, how barbarians, who were mainly considered enemies of the Romans, were to be depicted.¹⁶⁹ According to these *topoi*

¹⁵⁹ Apuleius, Flo., 20; cf. Rohrbacher 2002, 150; Bowersock 1969, 9, 17-18, 20, 54, 58; Clarke 1957, 60-65; Kraus, Woodman 1997, 5-7; Sarasti-Wilenius 2007, 383; Harries 1994, 2-3, 10; Mellor 1999, 25, 127. History writing could be understood as a form of rhetoric or persuasive speech, underlining the close connection between rhetoric and writing. Authors could use rhetorical skills convince readers that the history work was worth reading and that the writer had both the ability and the integrity to write a trustworthy history. Harries emphasizes that Sidonius Apollinaris, for example, placed himself firmly in the classical tradition and favoured classical epistolary models.

¹⁶⁰ Rohrbacher 2002, 152.

¹⁶¹ Jordanes, *Getica*, I:1-2; Eunapius fr. 15 in Blockley 1983, 20-21; Jordanes in Mierow 1960, 5, 14, 36.

¹⁶² Rohrbacher 2002, 150-152, *passim*. 12-13, 3; Mellor 1999, 3, 57, 78-79

¹⁶³ Eunapius fr. 15 in Blockley 1983, 20-21; Rohrbacher 2002, 150.

¹⁶⁴ Eunapius fr. 1 in Blockley 1983, 8-9; Rohrbacher 2002, 151, *passim*. 12-13, 3; Mellor 1999, 3, 57, 78-79.

¹⁶⁵ Merrills 2005, 32; Sarasti-Wilenius 2007, *passim*. 382-383, 389, 391, 393-395, 397, 401, 404-405; Rohrbacher 2002, 150-151.

¹⁶⁶ Weiss 2007, 10; Kraus, Woodmann 1997, *passim*. 7; Harries 1994, *passim*. 12-15, 18-19. Harries' remarks on Sidonius Apollinaris' works emphasize that the Late Roman authors text in general had political perspective and goals.

¹⁶⁷ Eunapius fr. 60 in Blockley 1983, 88-89.

¹⁶⁸ Blockley 1981, 21.

¹⁶⁹ Riikonen 2007, 128; Weiss 2007, 7, *passim*. 3-10; cf. Fält 2002, *passim*. 8-11; Hall 1989, 105; Weiss 2007, 10; Smith 2004 (a), 233; Grünen 2011, *passim*. 1, 3. My definition of *topos/ topoi* is based on Riikonen. According to Riikonen, *topoi* are metaphors that are repeated; they can be literary conventions beginning or ending a text, descriptions or/and ideas that are based on former similar ones, or ideas how things are. *Topoi* were, so to speak, a cultural heritage one could rely on but they could also be varied a little if need be, and were intertextual in nature.

barbarians were despicted as having the opposite features of those esteemed by the Romans. First, barbarians were claimed to live without rightful order or laws and were considered untrustworthy. Second, their behaviour and appearance was wild or exceptional, and they were represented as being mentally weaker than the Romans. Claims how barbarians could not speak properly and that their diet differed crucially from the Romans were some of the most central elements of barbarian *topoi*. A common claim was also that barbarians are cruel and their life is hard. Jordanes' description of the Huns clearly follows these expectations:¹⁷⁰

This cruel tribe [...] were fond of hunting and had no skill in any other art. After they had grown to a nation, they disturbed the peace of neighbouring races by theft and rapine [...] As many as they captured [...] they sacrificed to Victory [...] they had, if I may call it so, a sort of shapeless lump, not a head, with pin-holes rather than eyes. Their hardihood is evident in their wild appearance, and they are beings who are cruel to their children on the very day they are born. For they cut the cheeks of the males with a sword, so that before they receive the nourishment of milk they must learn to endure wounds [...] alert horsemen, broad shouldered, ready in the use of bow and arrow, and have firm-set necks which are ever erect in pride. Though they live in a form of men, they have cruelty of wild beasts.

Because Jordanes lived almost a hundred years later, when the might of the Huns was gone, his claims are not based on his own observations, but are written according to barbarian *topoi*.

Although it was a commonplace to write disparagingly about barbarians and especially nomads, praising words are also found. However, if a writer praised the barbarians other than for their strength in battle, it was generally an implicit criticism of the Roman government. This was the case e.g. of Tacitus' *Germania*: the image of unspoilt barbarians far from the Roman borders was a *topos* itself and a favoured tactic to point to the moral corruption of the Romans.¹⁷¹ This tactic is also favoured by Priscus, a member of a delegate sent by Theodosius II in 449, in his narration of the trip to meet Attila and the Huns.

Priscus' text includes a story about a Greek who he met among the Huns and with whom he had a discussion.¹⁷² The Greek tells that he had lived among the Huns for many years and his life was now better than in the past under Roman rule because there was more freedom: “[*the Greek*] now enjoyed a better life than he had previously. He continued, saying that after a war men amongst the

¹⁷⁰ Jordanes, *Getica*, XXIV, 123, 125, 127-128 in Mierow 1960, 85-87.

¹⁷¹ Grün 2011, 354; Dorey 1966, x.

¹⁷² Blockley, 1981, 59. Blockley notes that the story presenting a discussion between a Roman and a local on the state is a common topic in histories. Thucydides, for example, tells about a dialogue between two people in which both sides present their opinions which explain the background of the political or military situation. Priscus' story about the dialogue with the Greek reminds one in some respects of Lucian's story about a Greek and a Scythian having a lively discussion about their respective cultures in *Toxaris/ Amicitia*. The *topos* of placing in the mouths of others opinions that are hostile to the authorities is also used, for example, by Ammianus and Procopius.

Scythians live at ease, each enjoying his own possessions and troubling others or being troubled not at all or very little. But amongst the Romans, since on account of their tyrants not all men carry weapons, they place their hope of safety in others".¹⁷³ The Greek points out that not even laws bring safety or guarantee a good life among the Romans because justice can be gained only by paying out money: "*In peace misfortunes [in the Roman Empire] await one even more painful than the evils of war because of the imposition of the heavy taxes and injuries done by criminals. For the laws are not applied to all. If the wrongdoer is rich, the result is that he does not pay the penalty of his crime, whereas if he is poor and does not know how to handle the matter, he suffers the prescribed punishment [...] this may be the most painful thing, to have to pay for justice*".¹⁷⁴ The Greek's claims lead Priscus to speak about the current political situation in the Eastern Roman Empire.

The crux of the Greek's claims is that a happy life is dependent on the ability of society to guarantee an individual's freedom. Priscus' counterargument is that life without rules, as he claims is the case among the Huns, guarantees no freedom at all because everything depends on fate which cannot be trusted. To stress this view Priscus contends that the Greek had only achieved his freedom among the Huns by accident.¹⁷⁵ By comparison to the nomadic way of life, Priscus argues that among the Romans laws guarantee freedom, pointing out that because the laws bring order and stability, the Romans should have a happier life than the Huns.¹⁷⁶ At the end of the dialogue the Greek agrees with Priscus that there is nothing wrong in the basis of the Roman way of life,¹⁷⁷ but he still does not give up his claims that everything is not in order at the moment in the Roman Empire as the final phrase of the dialogue indicates: "*the laws were fair and the Roman polity was good, but that the authorities were ruining it by not taking the same thought for it as those of old*".¹⁷⁸ That is to say, the Greek still emphasizes that those who govern the Roman polity at the moment are ruining the state and making everyone's life harder than it ought to be because they do not respect and act according to laws. The fact that the whole dialogue ends with these words indicates that Priscus agrees with the Greek and criticizes the present state of affairs.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷³ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 268-269.

¹⁷⁴ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 268-269, 386.

¹⁷⁵ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 272-273.

¹⁷⁶ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 272-273, 386; cf. Heather 2005, 138-139, Blockley 1981, 58. Priscus stresses emphasizes especially the meaning of laws. Laws, order and stability are features that sedentary authors in general stress when they speak on behalf of a sedentary way of life. They create an image of the nomadic way of life as poor because it is presumed to lack all the features common to sedentarists. Priscus makes no exceptions here. The conclusion that Priscus gives is that what distinguishes the life of the Romans from that of the barbarians is the Roman polity, including its laws.

¹⁷⁷ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 272-273, 386; cf. Blockley 1981, 57.

¹⁷⁸ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 272-273.

¹⁷⁹ Priscus, fr. 11.2, fr. 3, fr. 17, fr. 4 in Blockley 1983, 272-273, 226-229, 300-301, 228-229; Blockley 1981, 56-58. I fully agree with Blockley that Priscus' lack of interest in denying the Greek's complaints strongly speaks in favour of being discontented with the present situation in the Eastern Roman Empire. In addition, Priscus' claims that Theodosius II is under the influence of eunuchs stresses that those who should take good care of the Roman polity, namely the Emperor himself, are not doing a proper job.

The accusation that Roman officials no longer any more respect justice and laws is severe especially because fair laws and acting according to them were regarded as the major differentiating factor between the Romans and the barbarians.¹⁸⁰ Accordingly, Priscus' dialogue with the Greek then implies that the life of the Romans would make no difference to the life of the barbarians, who are generally represented as having miserable and chaotic lives where there is no room for sensible rules.¹⁸¹ Furthermore, the claims that the laws are no longer respected strikingly points to the incompetence of the Emperor. In Late Antiquity the Emperor was conceived of as the living law personified, the "incarnate law, or reason, or logos of God" and the one who could bring cosmic order and harmony to the Roman world.¹⁸²

Priscus' bitter evaluation of Theodosius II as an incompetent Emperor is claimed to derive from Priscus' resentment of Theodosius policy to weaken the position of the landowning elite, the single class that Priscus clearly supported and belonged to himself.¹⁸³ The reason for the weakening position of the elite was Theodosius II's decision to collect the tribute payments for the Huns from the landowning elite.¹⁸⁴ What supports this explanation of Priscus' bitterness is that Priscus praises Marcian, who decided to end the payments to the Huns. In addition, Marcian's regime is in general assessed to be a new Golden Age for the landed elite. On the other hand, Priscus' history was published during Marcian's regime, and hence this might have had an influence on Priscus' judgements on emperors.¹⁸⁵

Lastly, Priscus' stylistic nuances in the story about the dialogue between him and the Greek also suggest an indirect criticism of Theodosius II. The dialogue provided an opportunity for implicit criticism because in a dialogue one is forced to respond to a presented opinion and comment on the topic raised.¹⁸⁶ According to Blockley, Priscus especially used this method to present views about the Roman rulers and their policies, placing the commentary in the mouth of a person in the narrative.¹⁸⁷ This is precisely the case in the dialogue with the Greek – it is the Greek who claims that the Romans live in misery, and this forces Priscus to deal the topic. It may also be no coincidence that Priscus' reply to the Greek's claims about the happy life of the nomads is in *oratio obliqua*. The style offered a good way to persuade readers to accept the views that the author

¹⁸⁰ Blockley 1981, 58.

¹⁸¹ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.11.

¹⁸² Chesnut 1986, 141-144, 159, 162-164, 233, 235.

¹⁸³ Thompson (1999) 2000, 212-214, 216-217.

¹⁸⁴ Priscus, fr. 9.3, fr. 20 in Blockley 1983, 236-237, 304-307; see Thompson (1999) 2000, 209, passim 210, 217; Blockley 1981, 58.

¹⁸⁵ Priscus, fr. 20. in Blockley 1983, 304-307; see Thompson (1999) 2000, 211.

¹⁸⁶ Rohrbacher 2002, 150, 159. Priscus uses the form of a dialogue, where replies remind one of speeches, and in Roman literature speeches were used in narration when one wanted to emphasize a certain topic.

¹⁸⁷ Blockley 1981, 59.

wanted to stress; it also gave a possibility to soften and disguise criticism.¹⁸⁸ What indicates Priscus' hidden criticism is the fact that Priscus does not even try to answer the Greeks' most striking accusations but only responds to the minor ones, which gives the impression that Priscus mainly agrees with the Greek. Priscus must have done this on purpose, because a talented rhetor, as Priscus was, would have noticed the crucial weaknesses in his own counterarguments.¹⁸⁹

The ending also implies that Priscus knew that fine style at the end of a dialogue would stress his qualities as a skilful rhetor. First, the author claims that at the end the Greek accepted Priscus' opinion. Second, according to Priscus, the Greek even burst into tears at the end because he was so ashamed of his former views and so impressed by Priscus' counterarguments. Priscus finale is a perfect example how to end a speech or dialogue in Roman literature – it was common to tell about the effect of the speech on the listener: the greater the effect the better the speaker.

Finally, it is worth noting that Priscus claims to have spoken with a Greek, his countryman. The Greek's origin gives more weight and reliability to his criticism of the eastern part of the Empire, unlike the criticism made by a barbarian. In addition, Priscus' description of the Greek as a man who had proven his skills in many battles, as a decent Roman or Greek was expected to do, also reinforces the argument.¹⁹⁰ Moreover, Priscus' claims to have spoken with a contemporary who knew the situation not only among the Huns but also in the Eastern Roman Empire gives more reliability to the views presented in the dialogue.

Taken together, Priscus' dialogue with the Greek does not primarily tell us about the life among the Huns but presents his political arguments. Furthermore, the way in which Priscus constructed the story about the discussion with the Greek supports his purpose of criticizing the situation among the Romans in the eastern part of the Roman Empire under Theodosius II's rule, rather than telling about the life among the Huns. Even if Priscus had met the Greek, he would not have needed to tell about the matters they discussed, if he had not been interested in the topic himself.¹⁹¹

Another Late Roman author who favours speeches in the descriptions of the Huns is Jordanes. His work *History of the Goths* includes a speech that Attila is claimed to have given before the important Battle of the Catalaunian Plains in 451 to raise his warriors' mettle. Even though Jordanes was not even born at the time the battle took place, it did not matter because in Antiquity the audience did not expect speeches to be authentic. Second, a speech to an army given by a historical

¹⁸⁸ Blockley 1981, 55. According to Blockley it is also possible that the speech in the fragment is only a summary of the original, and it would have been written in the form of an *oratio recta*, not *oratio obliqua*.

¹⁸⁹ Priscus, fr. 11.2. in Blockley 1983, 272-273; cf. Blockley 1981, 48-49, 57; Thompson (1999) 2000, 207.

¹⁹⁰ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 268-269.

¹⁹¹ Harmatta 1952, 302-303; Thompson (1999) 2000, 206, 208, 212. Harmatta and Thompson believe that Priscus actually met the Greek. However, Harmatta argues that the dialogue includes no criticism at all and only tells about the situation of the slaves among the Huns. By contrast, Thompson states that the dialogue mainly underlines the present serious difficulties in the Roman Empire.

figure before a battle was a highly favoured element in history works to carry the story along.¹⁹² The major requirement of the speech was to reflect the situation and to describe the motives for the action. In addition, the aim of the speech was to create an image of the speaker.¹⁹³ Thus, the image of a fierce barbarian leader could be emphasized in the speech that was claimed him to have given.¹⁹⁴ This is the goal that Jordanes' narration of a speech supposedly given by Attila aims at. In order to stress Attila's eagerness to stimulate his troops to fight Jordanes has written the speech in a form of *oratio recta*, direct speech.¹⁹⁵ Moreover, this was the correct form of speech in such an occasion, and hence it is clear that Jordanes was well aware of the expectations and rules of speech in history works when he wrote Attila's speech:

[...] Now when Attila saw his army thrown into confusion by this event, he thought it best to encourage them by an extemporaneous address on this wise: "Here you stand, after conquering mighty nations and subduing the world. I therefore think it foolish for me to goad you with words, as though you were men who had not been proved in action. Let a new leader or an untried army resort to that. It is not right for me to say anything common, nor ought you to listen. For what is war but your usual custom? Or what is sweeter for a brave man than to seek revenge with his own hand? It is a right of nature to glut the soul with vengeance. [...] If any can stand at rest while Attila fights, he is a dead man". Inflamed by these words, they all [the Huns with their allied troops] dashed into battle.¹⁹⁶

Jordanes' description of Attila draws an image of a brutish barbarian and fierce enemy who loved nothing more than slaughter, though he could also inspire his troops. We may agree that it clearly follows the *topos* of a barbarian leader. At the same time Attila's words emphasize Jordanes' ability to write impressive speeches, and his rhetorical skills in creating passages that influence the crowds.¹⁹⁷ In other words, the speech does not reveal anything about Attila or the Huns themselves, only about the image that Jordanes is eager to create of their leader.

Even though the barbarians were in many cases only a secondary theme to be discussed, the Roman writers were also interested in knowing more about different barbarian groups. Ethnographical and geographical digressions were written in order to tell about the living areas and the barbarian inhabitants, who dwelled beyond Roman borders. In addition, they could bring liveliness to the

¹⁹² Rohrbacher 2002, 159-161. Rohrbacher claims that church history as a rule avoids speeches.

¹⁹³ Sarasti-Wilenius 2007, 383.

¹⁹⁴ Eunapius, fr. 18.6 in Blockley 1983, 24-25; cf. Rohrbacher 2002, 159. A element is also used by Eunapius but in a slightly different way. Eunapius' work includes a discussion with speeches by the leader of the Chamavi and Emperor Julian. According to Rohrbacher, the speech of the leader of the Chamavi reflects the nature of fatherhood and kingship. In contrast, Eunapius uses Julian's response to characterize him as noble and just. Moreover, the enthusiastic response of the barbarians to Julian's words further emphasizes the impact of his speech.

¹⁹⁵ Blockley 1981, 55.

¹⁹⁶ Jordanes, *Getica*, XXXIX, 202-204, 206 in Mierow 1960, 107-108.

¹⁹⁷ Mellor 1999, 25, 60, 90, 127; Dewing 1954, xiii.

overall storytelling and amuse their readers. Generally speaking, ethnographical digressions were a topic that was expected to be found in works of history work and may have been written only for the purpose of following the expectations of an eloquent presentation. This was also a *topos* in the genre of history writing. Moreover, digression could be used to strengthen authors' ideas and goals concerning what to foster.¹⁹⁸

Ammianus' digression on the Huns has not only been considered an impressive ethnographical study but also a moral evaluation, a summary of barbarian *topoi*.¹⁹⁹ In short, it is claimed that Ammianus clearly follows the rules of history writing and in order to fulfil the expectations of his audience he contained the centuries old stereotypes about marginal groups to his history work, e.g. the comparison with animals and the claims that their lives were the reverse of civilized societies.²⁰⁰ Equally, it is considered that Ammianus was clearly a historian whose presentation was based on classical tradition not only in the imitation of classical models in terms of language but also with respect to structure and ideas.²⁰¹ Accordingly, both Wiedemann and Stickler regard Ammianus' descriptions of barbarians, like those of the Huns, are primarily descriptive. In other words, Ammianus did not intend the statements about barbarian tribes to be descriptive ethnography but to be presentations of terrible phenomenon.²⁰² Wijma disagrees, claiming that in general ethnographical passages in classical literature contain a series of stereotypes associated with barbarians and second, ethnographical passages are at the same time not objective descriptions but illustrations of the marginality of barbarians.²⁰³

Despite the disagreements of the nature of Ammianus' description of the Huns, I conclude that the use of stereotypes and exaggeration reveals that Ammianus' goal was to write according to the rules of classical writing and eloquent presentation.²⁰⁴ He clearly favours to writing according to barbarian *topoi*. Therefore I tend to agree with the claim that Ammianus' descriptions of barbarians should be regarded as moralizing and formal. However, I also agree with Matthews that although the depictions are over-simplified and stereotypical, they also say something about the target – Ammianus is clearly interested in presenting some special features (whether imaginary or not) about the groups' sedentary or nomadic way of life.²⁰⁵ Although Ammianus makes clear distinctions between sedentary and nomads, the descriptions of nomads themselves are basically alike there are only a few differences between the descriptions of nomadic groups either living in

¹⁹⁸ Matthews 1989, 334-335.

¹⁹⁹ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.1-5, 31.2.7, 31.2.10; Wijma, 1-2; Stickler 2007, 18-19.

²⁰⁰ Stickler 2007, 18-19; Wiedemann 1986, 201.

²⁰¹ Scott 1983, 159; Sarasti-Wilenius 2007, *passim*. 401.

²⁰² Wiedemann 1986, 189, 201; Stickler 2007, 18-19.

²⁰³ Wijma, 1.

²⁰⁴ Wijma, 1, 3; Wiedemann 1986, 201; Matthews 1989, 333, 353.

²⁰⁵ Wiedemann 1986, 193; Matthews 1989, 333, 336-337, 339, 341, 353; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 13-15.

the Arabian desert or on the south Russian steppe.²⁰⁶ Because Ammianus' description of the nomadic Alans is almost identical to that of the Huns, and there is a lot of similarity between stories about the Isaurians and the Saracens and those about the Huns,²⁰⁷ I consider that this implies that Ammianus writes according to the generally favoured images of nomads that Roman writers customarily used.²⁰⁸

If ethnographical digressions were expected to be found in histories, so were also identifications of former barbarian groups by name. It has been suggested that the manner of citing earlier barbarian names derived from the belief that former authors had known all the barbarian groups.²⁰⁹ In addition, it is supposed that representations were based on psychological aspects: the use of old barbarian names emphasized the idea that all barbarians were basically the same and that the Romans would once again be victorious against them.²¹⁰ On the other hand, allusions to earlier names were also favoured in order to point to one's own education, which showed a knowledge of former authors' works and stories.²¹¹

According to Maenchen-Helfen, the Late Roman writers from the western part of the Empire primarily called the Huns by their proper name by contrast with the eastern authors who identified them as Scythians, Cimmerians and Massagetae the Latin authors shunning the circumlocutions and equivocations which the Greeks indulged in.²¹²

However, I consider the argument simplistic because there is no clear bipartition between the Latin and Greek writers in addressing the Huns by former barbarian names. Moreover, it is difficult to identify who should be regarded as a western or eastern writer because many of them were born in the east but made their career in the west or in both parts of the Empire. If we consider the language used in texts, Latin or Greek, there is no divergence in how the writers identify the Huns by former barbarian names. What affected to the quoted names more than anything else were the writers' personal style choices as well as the nature of the work.

It is not fully clear if Claudian used the term Massagetae to refer to the Huns or the Alans.²¹³ If Claudian used for on the Huns, then I suspect that Claudian's goal was to use a synonym for the word "Huns" so as to give a more eloquent tone to his writings. It is also likely that Claudian wanted to illustrate his knowledge of Herodotus' eight-hundred-year-old-story about the Massagetae, who were claimed to dwell in the vicinity of Artaxes or Volga. In any case, Procopius

²⁰⁶ Matthews 1989, 336, 339, *passim*. 341; Wijma, 3.

²⁰⁷ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.21-25, 14.2.1-17.

²⁰⁸ Matthews 1989, 334-335.

²⁰⁹ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 6-7; Bowersock 1969, 262.

²¹⁰ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 7.

²¹¹ Kraus, Woodman 1997, *passim*. 4.

²¹² Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 5-6.

²¹³ Claudian, In Ruf., 312-321; Ammianus, RG, 31.2.12; Herodotos, Hist., 1.201; see Matthews 1989, 334-335.

does not hesitate to identify the Huns with the Massagetae: “*Massagetae whom they now call Huns*”.²¹⁴ By comparison Zosimus even claims that the Huns could be identified with the royal Scythians or the snub-nosed men mentioned by Herodotus; and Philostorgius equates the Huns with the Neuroi, mythical people living at the extreme edge of Scythia as told by Herodotus centuries ago.²¹⁵

In fact, the manner in which Late Roman authors attached old barbarian names to the barbarian groups of their time suggests that making these connections was more important than giving exact information.²¹⁶ Furthermore, it is noticed that deference to literary authority could be such that the writer’s own experiences were rejected in favour of inaccurate, yet canonically ratified information from an appreciated author.²¹⁷ The old stories about barbarians seem to be so important that whenever there was even a vague similarity between barbarian newcomers and earlier groups a connection was made. This is apparent, for example, from the Late Roman authors’ identification of the Huns with the Scythes.

Even though the Roman authors may have primarily wanted to point out their knowledge of Herodotus’ stories about nomads when naming the Huns as Scythes, the writers might also have preferred the connection because the Huns like the Scythes lived according to a nomadic way of life and were known to dwell in the vicinity of the Black Sea and the Carpathians. Furthermore, since the days of Herodotus, the name of the Scythians had lost its specific meaning and it was widely applied to all northern barbarians, whether they were nomads or peasants, spoke Germanic, Iranian or any other tongue.²¹⁸ Although, the name had become rather vague it was still mainly connected to nomadic groups; e.g. Ammianus favoured using the name of Scythes as a synonym for the nomadic way of life.²¹⁹ Jerome and Priscus also addressed the name “Scythians” to the Huns, while on a few occasions Priscus addresses the name to sedentary Goths.²²⁰ Blockley considers that Priscus uses the name Scythes for the Huns in order to distinguish them from the Ostrogoths,²²¹ while in the majority of cases Priscus favours the name Scythes when he writes about the forces that

²¹⁴ Procopius, *De bel.*, III, 11:9-10; Procopius’ citation from Dewing 1953, 104-105, 474, 478.

²¹⁵ Zosimus, *Hist. nov.*, iv.20.3; Philostorgius, *Hist. ecc.*, IX, 17; Herodotus, *Hist.*, IV, 20, 23, 100, cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, 21-22; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 9.

²¹⁶ Thompson (1999) 2000, *passim*. 21-23; Brandes 2012, 479-484, 492. Brandes notices that Huns were connected with people called Gog and Magog who were mentioned in eschatological writings and hence the comparison created an image of the Huns as horseman of the apocalypse, of demons. However, the comparison of the Huns to Gog and Magog occurs primarily during sixth- and seventh- century authors’ writings.

²¹⁷ Merrills 2005, 24.

²¹⁸ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 6; cf. Pohl 2003, 583, 586-587.

²¹⁹ Ammianus, *RG*, 31.2.12, 20. In the sentence “the Persians who are Scythians by origin” Ammianus refers to Persians who live according to a nomadic way of life. Ammianus also uses the term “Nomades” when alluding to a nomadic way of life.

²²⁰ Jerome, *Op. adv. Iov.*, 2.7.; Priscus *fr.* 9.4, *fr.* 2, *fr.* 14 in Blockley 1983, 240-241, 224-227, 292-293; cf. Blockley 1981, 53; Matthews 1989, 335. Eunapius also uses the name “Scythians” when referring to sedentary Goths.

²²¹ Priscus *fr.* 49 in Blockley 1983, 356-359; cf. Blockley 1981, 53.

include both the Huns and the Goths.²²² It is also probable that the reference to the Scythes derives from Priscus' purpose to cite Herodotus' story about the "royal Scythes", nomads who had centuries earlier been a powerful group like the Huns in the regions called Scythia.²²³

The Late Roman historians' way of addressing former barbarian names to new groups without exact identification suggests that it was derived from the convention of write as an educated man. In other words, the information concerning the barbarians, the Huns, was not as important as the form of telling and writing according to expectations.²²⁴

It is considered that neither historians nor their public demanded the precise truth in the descriptions of the northern nomads, but every writer considered it his duty to display his knowledge of the classics. The reason for this is presumably that a knowledge of literature was an indication of nobility, and quotations emphasized that connection.²²⁵ Finally, what clearly shows that the writers were more interested in citing former names rather than identifying the groups precisely is that the name of the Huns also underwent a similar procedure during the sixth century, when the name of the Huns was addressed to groups that lived in the areas where the Huns had dwelled during fifth century.²²⁶

Because reference to earlier works was part of eloquent presentation, stories or depictions of similar situations were also imitated by Late Roman historians.²²⁷ However, it is also noticed that authors used references to earlier authors to point out their cultural background. In short, the historian who, for example, wished to be seen as Greek rather than Latin, or vice versa, preferred a different kind of historiography. A notion that supports this view is the idea that the classical historiographical tradition is claimed to survive between the 4th BC and the 7th AD century only on the Greek side, whereas Latin historiography had never been strong and there had been only three great names: Tacitus, Sallust and Livy who were especially favoured.²²⁸ Although the view is perhaps simplified, there may be some truth in it; e.g. Priscus' descriptions of the Huns include passages from Herodotus' and Thucydides' narratives.²²⁹ Priscus' claim that the Sword of Ares was sacred among the Huns alludes to Herodotus' tale about the worship of the Sword of Ares among the Scythians.²³⁰ In addition, Priscus' description of a storm is strikingly similar to Thucydides' account, and

²²² Priscus fr. 6.1 in Blockley 1983, 230-231; cf. Blockley 1981, 53.

²²³ Herodotos, Hist., 4.20.1; Priscus fr. 2, fr. 13.1, fr. 14, fr. 15.4 in Blockley 1983, 224-227, 286-287, 292-295, 298-299; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 6-7.

²²⁴ Wirth 1999, passim. 12, 124; Miteva 1988, passim.12-16.

²²⁵ Sidonius, Ep., I 6.2; cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, 23; see also Harries 1994, 3.

²²⁶ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 165; Miteva 1988, 12-16; Wirth 1999, 13, Pohl 2003, 587; Collins 1999, 48.

²²⁷ Sarasti-Wilenius 2007, passim. 477, 479, 481; Clarke 1957, 64-65.

²²⁸ Scott 1983, 159-171.

²²⁹ Blockley 1981, 54-55.

²³⁰ Herodotos, Hist., 4, 62; Priscus, fr. 11.2, fr. 6.2, fr. 12.1 in Blockley 1983, 260-263, 230-233, 280-281; cf. Blockley 1981, 54.

Priscus' depiction of the Hunnic siege of Naissus introduces parallels to the siege of Plataea in the *History of Peloponnesian War*.²³¹ The story about the Huns arrival in the vicinity of the Roman world in Eunapius' is merely as an adaptation of Aeschylus' tale of Io.²³² Moreover, Ammianus' attributes to the Huns are noticed to be equivalent to Pompeius Trogus' descriptions of the Scythians and Pomponius Mela's accounts about the Germans; there is also a similarity to Livy's depictions of the Africans.²³³ By contrast, Jordanes who refers at least sixteen different authors does not make fine distinction between the backgrounds of earlier authors.²³⁴ Furthermore, Jordanes adopts many of Priscus' accounts of the Huns, the most likely reason for this being that Priscus' stories were the widest source on the Huns.

In general the stories of former authors' works were more modified than copied, especially discussion on beliefs was altered to suit the views of the writer, e.g. Jerome compared the arrival of the Huns to God's wrath, whereas Ammianus writes about the wrath of Mars.²³⁵ The shift from Mars to the Christian God was one sign of the new methods of authentication in histories that were employed in response to changing ideas of political and religious authority in Late Antiquity.²³⁶ Not only were the ideas modified or redefined but historians also became more conscious of the authors' and sources' background concerning whom to cite in order to gain reliability and foster their own views among those who supported similar ideas.²³⁷ Thus, Orosius often cited non-Christian writers to support Christian contentions.²³⁸ In addition, it is noticeable that Late Roman historians were prone to mention their sources, oral or written, in order to refute or attack, and this was done to gain more reliability or weight for one's own words and view.²³⁹ As a case in point, Ammianus mentions his scepticism or approval concerning the oral reports and stories that he uses.²⁴⁰ Eunapius also pays attention to oral reports and explores their meaning in order to know more about the Huns.²⁴¹ Even though quotations from witnesses' stories belong to traditional storytelling, personal involvement as a witness or with the witnesses of the events as well as visits to the site where the action took place

²³¹ Thucydides, *Hist.*, 5, 70, 1; 2, 75-78; Priscus, fr 11.2, fr 6.2, fr 12.1 in Blockley 1983, 260-263, 230-233, 280-281; see Blockley 1981, 54.

²³² Aeschylus, *Prom.*, 681; Eunapius, fr. 41 in Blockley 1983, 58-59; see Vasiliev 1936, 29; Thompson (1999) 2000, 20-21.

²³³ Ammianus, *RG*, 31.2.11; Pompeius Trogus, *Fr. Justin II*; Pomponius Mela, *De sit. orb.*, III, 3.2; Livy, *Ab urb. cond.*, XXIX.3.13; Manechen-Helfen 1973, 13-15; Thompson (1999) 2000, 20-21.

²³⁴ Jordanes, *Getica*, XXIV, 121, 123, 125, 127-128 in Mierow 1960, 14, 19, 31-33, 36; Blockley 1981, 2, 28; Scott 1983, 159-160.

²³⁵ Jerome, *Ep.* LX; Ammianus, *RG*, 31.2.1.

²³⁶ Rohrbacher 2002, 150; cf. Grün 2011, 356-357, *passim*. 4. Grün interestingly claims that the Roman authors' ways of combining stories and features common to Romans, e.g. the influence of Roman Gods on the life of barbarians, suggest that the authors were not only interested in creating barriers but also in finding connections between them and the barbarians.

²³⁷ Rohrbacher 2002, 154-155; Merrils 2005, 21.

²³⁸ Rohrbacher 2002, 155.

²³⁹ Rohrbacher 2002, 155-157; Bowersock 1994, *passim*. 8-10, 12-13, 22.

²⁴⁰ Ammianus, *RG*, 15.1.1; 16.12.70; 28.1.30.

²⁴¹ Eunapius, fr. 41 in Blockley 1983, 58-59.

were also widely favoured by Late Roman historians.²⁴² The “seen or heard” formula is especially used by Ammianus, Olympiodorus and Priscus as well as Sozomen.²⁴³ It is considered that in general the tone of the histories became more personal in nature during Late Antiquity, and most of the historians tell us far more about themselves and their personal experiences than had been customary centuries earlier.²⁴⁴ Furthermore, it is argued that neither Ammianus, Olympiodorus, Priscus nor Procopius believed that anonymity was a virtue or that their own personal experiences were of little consequence in the course of history.²⁴⁵

Equally, it has been observed that from the fourth century onwards there is a discernible shift away from treating international relations, such as the wars between the Romans and the barbarians, mainly as a matter of violent conflicts towards approaching them more as a matter of negotiation.²⁴⁶ In other words, it is the trend of the period to prefer to tell about diplomacy rather than war in the historiography.²⁴⁷ This is also seen in the accounts of the Huns – they mainly concentrate on telling about diplomatic missions or negotiations and treaties between the Romans and barbarian groups, not about battles.²⁴⁸ Especially the preserved fragments of Priscus and Olympiodorus’ works emphasize that the authors were interested in telling about the Huns in relation to diplomatic missions and to stress their own personal involvement in the events. Olympiodorus writes that “*The historian [Olympiodorus] describes the embassy on which he went to [the Huns] [...] He tells how Donatus was deceived by an oath and wickedly killed how Charaton, the first of the kings, flared up with rage at the murder and how he was calmed down and pacified with regal gifts*”.²⁴⁹ By comparison, Priscus’ account of the embassy to the Huns also includes another new and favoured manner among historians during Late Antiquity, namely documents:

[...] Maximinus by his pleadings persuaded me [Priscus] to accompany him on this embassy. So, we went together with the barbarians and reached Serdica ... Attila summoned us through Scottas, and we came to his tent ... Maximinus advanced, greeted the barbarian, gave him the letters from the Emperor and said that the Emperor prayed that he and his followers were safe and well. He replied [...]

They [The Romans from the Eastern part of the Empire and the Huns] held a meeting outside the city mounted on horseback ... [it was agreed] that the Romans should make no alliance with a barbarian people against the Huns ... there should be safe markets with equal rights for Romans and Huns; that the treaty should be

²⁴² Rohrbacher 2002, 153-155.

²⁴³ Ammianus, RG, 15.1.1, 16.12.70, 28.1.30; Sozomen, Hist. ecc., IV 16, 13; VIII 5, 6; Priscus, fr. 11.2; Olympiodorus, fr. 27; Priscus and Olympiodorus in Blockley 1983, 258-259, 268-269, 276-279, 190-191.

²⁴⁴ Dorey 1966, 143

²⁴⁵ Rohrbacher 2002, passim. 158; Dorey 1966, 143-144.

²⁴⁶ Blockley 1992, 1-4.

²⁴⁷ Blockley 1981, 61.

²⁴⁸ Olympiodorus, fr. 19; Priscus fr.11.2, fr. 2; Priscus and Olympiodorus in Blockley 1983, 182-183, 246-247, 250-251, 254-255; 224-227.

²⁴⁹ Olympiodorus, fr. 19 in Blockley 1983, 182-183.

maintained and last as long as the Romans paid seven hundred pounds of gold each year to the Scythian kings (previously the payments had been three hundred and fifty pounds of gold). On these terms the Romans and the Huns made a treaty [...]²⁵⁰

Priscus' narration emphasizes that documents brought liveliness and reliability to the flow of storytelling and were welcomed in histories because they were primarily seen as useful information for future generations. On the other hand, it could be argued that the observations were written in order to tell more about the opponent and how the Romans could influence them.²⁵¹ On the other hand, Goffart claims that during the Late Antiquity the rules and expectations of eloquent writing still formed a barrier to seeing what was happening among the different barbarian groups, and to realizing that the barbarians acted differently and had a dissimilar power base than in the time of Tacitus or Herodotus.²⁵²

Even if the Late Roman authors wanted to describe the situation as exactly as possible and the learned norms of fluent storytelling influenced the presentation, there was still room for another way of storytelling, namely exaggeration. In general exaggeration was one of the rhetorical devices used to convince and it is widely known that rhetorical tools were used by historians during Antiquity.²⁵³ Furthermore, because history was understood as a plot – what had happened or what was said to have happened plot – different kinds of interpretations were possible, including exaggerating the situations.²⁵⁴ I would argue that Jordanes' descriptions of the Huns, especially his claims of the Huns brutish rule over the Goths, include exaggeration.²⁵⁵ This, I suggest, is done in order to rewrite the past so as to support his political purposes. However, some of Jordanes' claims in *De origine actibusque Getarum* might derive from Cassiodorus' because Jordanes is claimed to have updated Cassiodorus' narration in his work *Gothic History* in order to respond to the altered political situation.²⁵⁶

Whether the story about the Huns' violent rule over the Ostrogoths during the end of the fourth century to the mid fifth century had already been told by Cassiodorus is not known, but according to Jordanes the Ostrogoths were forced to follow the nomads in their raids and wars in Roman

²⁵⁰ Priscus, fr.11.2, fr. 2 in Blockley 1983, 246-247, 250-251, 254-255; 224-227; cf. Rohrbacher 2002, 161-162.

²⁵¹ Blockley 1992, 132-133.

²⁵² Goffart 1981, 276-277; passus Scott 1983, 170.

²⁵³ Sarasti-Wilenius 2007, 382-383, passim. 477, 497, 504; Bowersock 1994, passim. 12.

²⁵⁴ Bowersock 1994, 8, 12-13.

²⁵⁵ Jordanes, *Getica*, XXIV: 126 - XXV, XXXVIII: 198- 199, XLVII: 246- XLIX: 264.

²⁵⁶ Mierow (1916) 1960, 16; Croke 1987, 125-127; Collins 1999, 106-107, 109; Wolfram 1988, 3-4, 15; Heather (1996) 1998, 9-10; Goffart 2006, 59-61, 67-71, passim. 68. Jordanes' goals in his works of history are claimed to vary from writing political pamphlets to collecting a storehouse of authentic Gothic antiquities to affirming that the Goths belonged outside the Roman world. Whereas Cassiodorus wrote his work in order to stress that the Goths were worthy rulers of the Western Empire and that the Gothic regime was as good as those before, Jordanes' goal was to eliminate the idea of a Gothic Kingdom and Gothic rule in the Italian peninsula in accordance with the policy of Justinian.

areas.²⁵⁷ However, the first exaggeration in the narration deals with the unity of the Ostrogoths. It has been pointed out that there was no such unity as the Ostrogoths during the end of the fourth century to the middle of the fifth century plot – instead there were many separate units and groups under those names.²⁵⁸ Furthermore, the transactions of the groups show that they acted according to their own interests; at least this was the case with the so-called Ostrogothic groups who operated with the Huns.²⁵⁹ This is suggested by contemporary authors' stories about the activities of the groups during the first half of the fifth century. Moreover archaeological remains and nomadic way of life indicate that not all of the groups would have been under the submission of the Huns. Nomads may well have co-operated with each other and formed a confederation.²⁶⁰

However, the exaggeration of the Huns' rule over the Ostrogoths was important for Cassiodorus and Jordanes because their goal was to praise the Goths and show that the Goths had a glorious past as much as the Romans did. In addition, the aim was to stress that the Goths were proper heirs and continuator of the Roman Empire and Roman rule – this was especially important for the Goths who had achieved a prominent position in the Roman elite of the turn of the fifth and sixth centuries.²⁶¹ Accordingly, the stories about the mighty rule and power of the Huns who forced other barbarian groups, including the Ostrogoths, to join them in pillaging could be told to blame the Huns for destroying the Roman Empire and to hide the fact that only a while ago the Goths had been as eager as the Huns to profit from the Roman Empire in every possible way.²⁶² In general, exaggeration is an easy way to conceal as well as to glorify a state of affairs.

Lastly, I would argue that the goal to create a grand history of the Goths derived from the genre of history writing itself. Writers, like Jordanes and Cassiodorus, who had adopted the style and manner of writing a coherent history would not have written a history about many fragmented groups who were disunited and did not share the same objectives. The aim is implied by Cassiodorus' declaration that he “*turned the descent of the Goths into Roman-style history*”/ “*Originem Gothicam historiam fecit esse Romanam*”.²⁶³ Also the story about the greedy Huns who submitted the Ostrogoths to their rule was well suited to the genre of Roman authors' storytelling: nomads were described as extreme barbarians who caused destruction.

²⁵⁷ Jordanes, *Getica*, XXIV: 126 - XXV, XXXVIII: 198- 199, XLVII: 246- XLIX: 264.

²⁵⁸ Heather (1996) 1998, 52-55.

²⁵⁹ Heather (1996) 1998, 120-123, passim 52-57; see Chapter 3-10.

²⁶⁰ Priscus, passim. fr. 9.3, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 236-237, 266-267, 268-269, 288-289; Kazanski 1993, passim. 213, 225, 227, 229, 231; Goffart 2006, passim. 5, 9; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 388, 406, 411; Harmatta 1951, 144-8; Wirth 1999, passim. 138-139; Heather (1996) 1998, 52-57, 120-123. See Chapter 7 – 10.

²⁶¹ Goffart 2006, 68-70.

²⁶² Jordanes, *Getica*, XXIV:126, XXXIX - XL, L:263.

²⁶³ Cassiodorus, *Variae*; Goffart 2006, 58.

I hope to have shown that the views and representations used by the Late Roman writers in histories that include descriptions of the Huns follow the expectations and rules that were part of the genre of history writing. I conclude that the descriptions of the Huns in histories are primarily written from the perspective of the writers' own interests and are intended to show their sophistication as educated men. It is in this light that we should appraise the information they provide about the Huns.

In the following chapters I will study the kinds of descriptions of Huns that are written from the 370s to the end of the fifth century, and discuss whether they suggest that the Huns had rulers that could be considered kings. I discuss whether the activities of the groups of Huns demonstrate a transformation in their nomadic way of life, and whether there are signs that show the rise of a nomadic state, or as I prefer to call it, a supercomplex chiefdom.

3. THE NEW NOMADIC ARRIVALS? THE FIRST DESCRIPTIONS OF THE HUNS

It has been widely discussed whether the nomadic groups, the Huns, who arrived on the Roman borders at the end of fourth century were really newcomers to contemporary writers. In this chapter I study the kind of information that the first descriptions of the Huns provide us with concerning their unity and their movements west. I also explore kinds of frames that the Eurasian pastoralists' nomadic way of life gave to the activities of the Huns. Lastly, I discuss whether the groups of Huns caused other barbarian groups advance towards the Roman borders.

3.1. The Xiongnu, Ourougoundoi, Khounoi and Chuni: Ancestors of the Huns?

The origin of the many fragmented nomadic groups, known as the Huns, who arrived from the east to the vicinity of the northern shores of the Black Sea from the 370s onwards is debated.²⁶⁴ It has been argued that the Huns came from the areas of modern Mongolia and are descendants of nomadic groups called the Xiongnu, groups of nomads who formed an empire during the third and second centuries BC and threatened the Han dynasty with various attacks.²⁶⁵ Because some of the nomadic groups that had belonged to the coalition of the Xiongnu moved westwards after the might of the Xiongnu collapsed during the first century BC, it has been claimed that the Huns could be the descendants of the Xiongnu.²⁶⁶ Other reasons for connection the Huns and the Xiongnu are similar artefacts, language and genealogical background.

It has been thought that e.g. zikades (jewellery which the Xiongnu used as emblem of rank) that are found in the graves of the Huns, indicate a heritage left by the Xiongnu to the Huns.²⁶⁷ The same is claimed on the basis of huge bronze kettles because the form and decoration are very similar.²⁶⁸ However, because similar bronze kettles have been found among other nomadic groups, such as the Scythians and Sarmatians from Ukraine to Mongolia since the fourth century BC onwards until the

²⁶⁴ Heather 2005, 150-151, 204-205.

²⁶⁵ Homeyer 1951, *passim.* 1-2, 17, 20; Harmatta 1952, 283; Laszlo 1976, 38-39; Bona 1991, *passim.* 7, 196, 30, 35; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 367-368, 451-452; Thompson (1999) 2000, 1; Wirth 1999, 15; Heather 2005, 148-149; Stickler 2007, 21-24; Kelly 2008, 29-32. Scholar also call the Xiongnu by the name Hsiung-nu, Shiung nu, Hung-no and Hiung nu, but I use the name Xiongnu because it is the most recent spelling. The connection between the Xiongnu and the Huns is first stated by de Guignes in the 18th century. Since that time this view has been debated. The reason for this is that there is not enough archaeological or linguistic evidence to point out a clear connection between the Xiongnu and the Huns.

²⁶⁶ Wirth 1999, 15-18; Heather 2005, 148-149.

²⁶⁷ Bona 1991, *passim.* 196-197, 54-55.

²⁶⁸ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 306, 323, 331-333; Bona 1991, 140-14; Wirth 1999, 132-133; Stickler 2007, 11-12; Heather 2005, 149; Kelly 2008, 29-32.

arrival of the Huns, the kettles are considered to indicate only a similar nomadic culture.²⁶⁹ In my opinion this is very likely. It is also argued that because it is thought that the Huns were genealogically Mongoloid and spoken Turkic or Iranian language, the Xiongnu would be their ancestors.²⁷⁰ However, the claims have been questioned because some of the skeletons that are considered to be “Huns” also include Europid features.²⁷¹ Moreover, the traces that we have concerning the languages spoken by the Huns are mainly the names of groups and individuals mentioned by Greek and Latin authors, and they are open to various interpretations.²⁷² Furthermore, not even Priscus’ observations on the languages spoken among the Huns prove that Turkic languages would have been prominent among the Huns, Priscus writes: “*Being a mixture of peoples, in addition to their own languages they cultivate Hunnic or Gothic or (in the case of those who have dealings with the Romans) Latin. But none of them can easily speak Greek*”.²⁷³ Accordingly, it is hard to say what kind of relationship Hunnic or “their own languages” had to a Turkic language, and hence I am not convinced that Priscus’ texts would prove that a Turkic language was spoken among the nomadic arrivals.

All in all, although we may agree that although some of the Huns’ ancestors might have descended from the Xiongnu and the steppes of Mongolia, nevertheless major acculturation changes would have taken place among the nomadic groups who wandered thousands of kilometres from the borders of China to the vicinity of the Black Sea between the first century BC and the fourth century AD.²⁷⁴ After all, it is likely that some of the nomadic groups settled down and new groups joined the wanderers, changing the composition of the groups.²⁷⁵ Equally, it is plausible that contacts with traders on the Silk Route along with the mighty neighbouring areas of India and the Sassanid Empire influenced the culture of the nomadic groups during these centuries.²⁷⁶ In

²⁶⁹ Wirth 1999, 132-133; Bona 1991, 140; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 306, 323, 326, 329-337; Bell-Fialkoff 2000, 213; Kelly 2008, 31-32; Stickler 2007, 11-12. Kettles are also considered to signify trade connections from the Ural district both west and eastwards; the same can be said of zikades.

²⁷⁰ Harmatta 1952, passim. 278.

²⁷¹ Bona 1991, 29; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 363-369, 373, 375; Wirth 1999, 13-15; Stickler 2007, 21-24; Heather 2005, 147-148. Bona is the most recent modern scholar to claim that the Huns would have a Mongol background, though they would not be “pure Mongols”. In general, the connection between the Huns and the Mongols has been questioned.

²⁷² Jordanes, *Getica*, XXIV, 123-126; Priscus, fr. 2 in Blockley 1983, 224-225; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 23, 402-403. Some of the names, for example Alpizur/ Alpicur the name of a group mentioned by Jordanes to belong to the coalition of the Huns, clearly refer to a Turkic language. However, according to Jordanes who refers to Priscus, the Alpicur lived in the Pontic steppe before the Huns arrived. When the Alpicur arrived is not known, but as Maenchen-Helfen states, their name suffices to prove the existence of Turkic-speaking nomads in the vicinity of the north-eastern shores of the Black Sea before the Huns came.

²⁷³ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 266-267.

²⁷⁴ Wirth 1999, 16-17; Heather 2005, 149-150.

²⁷⁵ Harmatta 1952, passim. 278-279; Wirth 1999, 13-16. Generally speaking slaves and spouses from new regions might have brought cultural and genetic variation to the groups. Harmatta stresses especially the influence of Iranian-speaking groups when the so-called groups of Huns lived in the vicinity of the river Talas.

²⁷⁶ Stearns, Adas, Schwartz, Gilbert 2001 passim. 96-97; Wirth 1999, 17; Stickler 2007, passim 29-37; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 452-5; Heather 2005, 149-150. Stearns, Adas, Schwartz and Gilbert argue that nomadic peoples in general have been

addition, because the nomadic way of life does not support acting in larger homogeneous groups but in small units which are susceptible to transition, this might cause notable changes on a larger scale. Therefore, it is preferable to connect the nomadic groups which the Romans called the Huns with the Xiongnu.

It has also been argued that there is a connection between the Huns and the Xiongnu relating to their names. It has been suggested that some groups of Huns could have called themselves Xiongnu because the name would have evoked fear, and this would have helped the raiders to attack and conquer new regions.²⁷⁷ However, it is not certain whether there were people who called themselves “Huns”, for the name *Hun/Huni* was the invention of Roman authors to identify nomadic newcomers. Thus,, the connection between the Huns and the Xiongnu on the basis of names remains unclear.²⁷⁸

While it is better not to connect the Huns and the Xiongnu too closely, it is however suggested that the Roman authors would have known groups of Huns even to some extent before the end of the fourth century. Groups called “Khounoi” and “Ourougoundoi” refer to nomadic groups that might have belonged to the groups of Huns.²⁷⁹ If so, closer inspection of their names may possibly clarify what contemporary Roman writers could or might have known about the arrivals.

It is doubtful that groups of Huns coming from thousands of kilometres away would suddenly have appeared on the borders of the Roman Empire, especially because pastures are key elements in nomad subsistence and hence nomads do not wander around at random. By contrast, nomads move cyclically between carefully designated pastures, and shifting from one set of pastures to another is never an accident.²⁸⁰ It is therefore likely that groups of Huns would have lived in the neighbourhood of the Caucasus and such rivers as the Volga, the Ural and the Don in the beginning of the fourth century.²⁸¹ Furthermore, Maenchen-Helfen states that literary, epigraphic, archaeological, and paleoanthropological evidence indicates the presence of the Huns near the Black Sea before the 370 AD.²⁸²

key agents of contact between sedentary, farming peoples and town dwellers in centres of civilization across the globe. Furthermore, especially the Silk Road from western China across the mountains and steppes of Central Asia to Europe established connections between sedentarists and nomads as well as between different kinds of nomadic groups.

²⁷⁷ Stickler 2007, 24-25.

²⁷⁸ Jordanes, *Getica*, XXIV, 126; Priscus, fr. 2, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 224-225, 258-259, 266-267; Wirth 1999, 12-13; Stearns, Adas, Schwartz, Gilbert 2001, 88-89; see Pohl 2003, 585. Wirth suspects that the name of the Huns could have been the name of a totem animal of the most influential nomadic group and it is this that the Romans picked up on. Nomadic clans or tribes often have a totem, usually in the form of an animal figure which illustrates a mythic ancestor of the group and is venerated as the group's progenitor and protector. Stickler also considers that the Huns' name could derive from an old prestigious name among some nomadic groups.

²⁷⁹ Ptolemy, *Tetra bib.*, III, 5, 8-10; Priscus, fr. 2, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 224-225, 258-259; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 23, 402-405, 427, 449-455; Wirth 1999, 12, 17; Thompson (1999) 2000, 25-26. Stickler 2007, 25-26.

²⁸⁰ Heather 2005, 149-150; Stearns, Adas, Schwartz, Gilbert 2001, 88.

²⁸¹ Kazanski 2007, 78-79; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 444, passim. 452-455; Wirth 1999, passim. 17.

²⁸² Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 444.

It has been suggested that a group called by Mamertinus, Zosimus and Agathias the *Ourougoundoi* (Urugundi) could have been Huns.²⁸³ However the only aspect that connects the groups is that the name Urugundi is of middle Asian origin and hence it would seem to indicate their arrival from that district.²⁸⁴ Equally, the presence of Turkic-speaking mercenary troops in the Persian army in Dura-Europos in the third century speaks strongly in favour of the arrival of new Turkic-speaking nomadic groups moving towards Europe from the east. In addition, it is stated that because the name of the Huns is mentioned in an Armenian source in the third century, this provides evidence of the arrival of nomadic groups in the Roman border areas.²⁸⁵

Even though such argumentation is based on few sources, it is however certain that groups who belonged to, or were neighbours of, the coalition of the Huns in the first half of the fifth century, consisted of groups whose names (Amilzur, Tungur, Akazir) indicate Turkic origin, suggesting their arrival from the east in the 370s onwards at latest. Incidentally, Ptolemy's stories in his work *Geography* about the *Khounoi* and the *Chuni*, who lived in the areas between the Dniester and the Bug in the second century AD, have at times been combined with the Huns.²⁸⁶ However, if the *Khounoi* or *Chuni* had been the same groups as the Huns, the third- and fourth-century authors would not have considered Huns to be nomadic newcomers.

If we cannot say anything certain about the ancestors of the groups of the Huns, the same holds for the reasons for their arrival on the Roman borders.

It has been claimed that the nomadic groups called Huns by the Romans were attracted by richer grazing lands as well as the wealth in the Black Sea area and Rome. Equally, the possibility of increasing trade connections with the Mediterranean world is supposed to have stimulated movement westwards. Furthermore, it has been thought that some of the nomadic groups might have escaped the dominion of the powerful nomad confederation around the Caspian Sea. In addition, it is also believed that the steppe areas between the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea suffered a harsh drought during the fourth century: this would have caused a shortage of fodder and

²⁸³ See Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 452-453; Wirth 1999, 17. I am not totally convinced about the connection between the Ourougoundoi, the Urugundi and the Huns. First, Zosimus and Agathias are writers from the sixth century and hence they are unlikely to have used the name Urugundi for the groups Mamertinus refers to. Secondly, Mamertinus uses the name Burgundi in his *Panegyric on Emperor Maximian*. However, according to Maenchen-Helfen, Mamertinus' description of the Burgundi must mean the Urugundi because the group is said to dwell further east than the Burgundi were in the fourth century and it is common in Latin transcriptions that the initial v- in foreign names was frequently rendered by b-. Ultimately, these discussions mean that there is still doubts about the exact identity of the Urugundi.

²⁸⁴ Wirth 1999, 17.

²⁸⁵ Zosimus 1, 27, 1; 31, 1; Thompson (1999) 2000, 25-26; Wirth 1999, 17. Wirth refers to but does not discuss the Armenian source where the Huns would have been mentioned.

²⁸⁶ passus Ptolemy, *Tetra bib.*, III, 5, 8-10; Priscus, fr. 2, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 224-225, 258-259; see also Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 23, 402-405, 427, 449-455; Wirth 1999, 12; Thompson (1999) 2000, 25-26; StICKLER 2007, 25-26. According to Maenchen-Helfen, evidence is lacking that would prove the existence of Turkic-speaking groups in Eastern Europe even before the fourth century.

have increased the nomads' need to find new pastures. Drought would also have led to a shortage of food and that combined with an epidemic of plague no doubt encouraged a migration towards the Black Sea region. In addition, Wirth claims that some nomadic groups in the Caucasus had waited for the right moment to invade the Roman Empire, and when the news came that Valentinian had suddenly died (375) and the Roman troops were mainly operating in Iberia and Pannonia, nothing held them back. It is suggested that at least some of these nomadic groups would have later on been called Huns by the Romans.²⁸⁷ In any case, nomads plan their actions carefully because their living is dependent on pastures, and hence we might assume that when the groups of Huns wandered westwards, there is no question that it was a sudden impulse - it was a well planned activity of many families, kin groups and clans, even tribes. Generally speaking, it has been suggested that not only the groups of Huns but also the Alans and some Goths had felt a pressure to migrate westwards. That is to say, even if the arrival of the Huns had pushed groups of Alans and Goths further west, it was not the only reason for large scale movements of barbarian groups westwards.²⁸⁸

Contemporary authors' explanations of the movements of Huns are obscure and few. Sozomen and Jordanes tell how the Huns found a way through the impenetrable Pripet Marshes to the lands of the Goths either with the help of a heifer or a doe or of evil spirits.²⁸⁹ Another story about the arrival of the Huns is from Jerome. He gives a vivid description how Alexander the Great had restricted the Huns to the Caucasus but finally God decided to release them in order to punish humankind for their at the moment sins.²⁹⁰

The conclusion is that it was the contacts between the Huns and the barbarian groups as well as the Romans at the end of fourth century that finally increased knowledge about the new nomadic arrivals. This is the topic of the following chapters.

3.2. The Arrival of many “Huns” and actions with the Alans

The first contemporary authors' stories about the actions of the Huns and especially their contacts with the nomadic Alans, reveals what kind of group compositions the Huns formed. In addition, knowledge of the early actions of the Huns helps us to evaluate the nature of the leadership position

²⁸⁷ Wirth 1999, 19.

²⁸⁸ Wirth 1999, 18-19, 28; Heather (1996) 1998, 98; 2005, 150.

²⁸⁹ Zosomen, *Hist. Nov.*, VI: 37.3; Jordanes, *Getica*, XXIV: 123-125; Eunapius fr. 41.1 in Blockley 1983, 58-59, 140; passus Thompson (1999) 2000, 20-21.

²⁹⁰ Jerome, *Ep.*, LXXVII, 8; cf. Stickler 2007, 46.

among them during the 360s and the 370s. This gives basis to consider later on the claim of arising kingship and alleged sedentarization among the Huns during the fifth century.

The first descriptions of nomadic groups called Huns in Ammianus' and Claudian's works clearly stress that these groups of Huns were not well known to Roman contemporaries and that they appeared unexpectedly. This might partly explain why the descriptions rely on stereotypes about pastoral steppe nomads and underline the image of the Huns as a sudden threat, and concentrate only on information about their movement towards the Roman borders.²⁹¹ Ammianus and Claudian probably never met the Huns but they summarize the information which they had obtained at second hand from military officers, inhabitants and refugees from the north-eastern Roman border areas and beyond.²⁹²

Even though Ammianus' descriptions are merely descriptive, his stories about the arrival of groups of Huns and the following circumstances can be relied on to some extent,²⁹³ especially because the manner in which the Huns moved towards the Roman borders follows Ammianus' claims.

Those who first met the groups of Huns during the 360s were fragmented Iranic nomadic groups of Alans, who lived east of the River Don. What followed was a clash between the two groups and in the end some of the Alans were either subdued by the Huns or they formed an alliance.²⁹⁴ Ammianus does not say what the terms of the alliance were, but it seems obvious that it guaranteed their Iranian partners a considerable degree of independence and share in the loot because the Huns and Alans were known to act well in tandem in the following decades.²⁹⁵ In addition, there are no indications of internal struggles between them, not even during the first decade of the fifth century when most of the groups of Alans left the Huns and joined the Vandals.²⁹⁶ As the conquerors of the homelands of the Alans, it is likely that the Huns were a leading party in the forthcoming joint actions,²⁹⁷ though Maenchen-Helfen might be right when he states that the Alans, as former enemies of the Goths, could have influenced the Huns to continue their wanderings further west and to attack the Goths.²⁹⁸ This means that it would have been merely in the interest of the Alans to head towards the Don and the Dniester, to the land of the westernmost Goths, the Greuthungi.²⁹⁹

²⁹¹ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.1, 12; 31.3.1; Claudian, In Ruf., I, 321-324. See Chapter 2.

²⁹² Claudian, In Ruf., I, 321-324; see Thompson (1999) 2000, 31, passim. 9-10; Stückler 2007, passim. 18-19; Kelly 2008, 18; Heather 2005, 158, 204.

²⁹³ Kelly 2008, 22.

²⁹⁴ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.12; 31.3.1; cf. Bell-Fialkoff 2000, 210-213; Thompson (1999) 2000, 26-27; Heather 1995, 6; Heather 2005, 147, 151, 195-196.

²⁹⁵ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 22.

²⁹⁶ Liebeschutz 2003, 63-67.

²⁹⁷ Kradin 2005, passim. 150, 153-155, 165.

²⁹⁸ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 20-22. Quoting Maenchen-Helfen "*It was almost certainly the concordia with large groups of Alans which enabled the Huns to move against Ermanaric* [who headed the easternmost groups of Goths]".

²⁹⁹ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 20-21.

Even though we do not know the primary reason for the allied groups of Huns and Alans moving further west, the sixth century author Jordanes gives a plain explanation: a Hun “king” (*rex*), Balamber, prompted it.³⁰⁰ However, Jordanes is the only Late Roman author who mentions Balamber, and it is likely that Balamber never existed.³⁰¹ I suspect that Jordanes invented Balamber in order to create an image of the Huns as formidable conquerors who could subjugate the Goths. After all, the defeats against obscure nomadic arrivals would not fit into Jordanes’ story about the glorious deeds of the Goths.³⁰² What supports the claim that stories about Balamber being at the head of united Huns is fiction, are the fourth-century authors’ stories about many fragmented groups of Huns and Alans who acted and formed alliances according to their own interests. That is to say during the last decades of the fourth century the groups of Huns did not form a united front under a leader.

Although the existence of a strong Hun king is unlikely, nevertheless the groups of Huns were not without leaders and central direction. The need for leaders among nomads is especially required during movement to new areas and in attacks or raids; in other words, during the time when groups must gather together in order to have joint action. This was especially the situation of the groups of Huns heading towards the borders of the Roman Empire. While nomads might form a larger unit as the result of a common interest, this might also be generated by a charismatic leader. If so, this might lead to the centralization of power and even in the long run to a nomadic empire.

In the following section I discuss how the groups of Eurasian pastoral nomads gathered together and what happened among the groups of Huns when they came into contacts with the Alans and other barbarians in the vicinity of the Roman Empire. I also show how the kinds of frames of nomadic life common to Eurasian pastoralists made it possible for a leadership position to emerge among the Huns.

³⁰⁰ Jordanes, *Getica*, XXIV: 130.

³⁰¹ Schreiber 1976, 33, 42, 84; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 59; Wirth 1999, 28-29; Thompson (1999) 2000, 62-63; Heather 2005, 356-357. According to Schreiber Balamber might have been a powerful Hun king.

³⁰² Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 20.

3.3. The Frames of a Pastoral Nomadic Way of Life and the Actions of the Huns

The archaeological remnants that can be connected to the Huns are few, but they support the view that the Huns were pastoralists.³⁰³ According to Priscus, the Huns lived separately from each other and still in the 440s greatly valued horses and this shows that their life included features common to Eurasian pastoral nomads.³⁰⁴ This is also apparent in the Huns' interest in establishing permanent trading links with the Romans, because what all nomads aspired to are good trading contacts with sedentarists.³⁰⁵ Furthermore, the Huns' constant raids on sedentarists' areas without taking over the areas or putting the conquered groups under their control indicate the common predatory behaviour of the nomads.³⁰⁶

On the one hand, the features do not explicitly prove that the Huns would have been nomads because the characteristics could also be found among sedentary groups. Nonetheless, if we combine all the elements together and add the fact that Roman authors invariably called Huns nomads we can acknowledge that the Huns lived according to a pastoral nomadic way of life.³⁰⁷

Because the environment can be said to determine what kind of activity, herding animals and society the nomads in question can have, the onslaught of the Huns from the Eurasian steppe supports a definition of them as expansive Eurasian pastoralists.³⁰⁸ Accordingly, it is on this basis that their actions should be evaluated.

The starting points for Eurasian pastoral nomads' life are private ownership of livestock and corporative ownership of pastures.³⁰⁹ Because herds need wide areas and the pastoral areas must be easily reached, pastoralists prefer to live in small segmented units – the basic social unit is the household. Furthermore, whenever possible patrilineal relatives camp together and share common pastures.³¹⁰ In other words, families³¹¹ and primary kin groups³¹² form the small and transient camp groups which are well adapted to pastoral production.³¹³

³⁰³ Cribb 1991, passim 6-12; Anke 2007, 219; Anke, Koch 2007, passim. 19-21; Brosseder 2007, passim. 73; Kazanski 2007, passim. 77-79; Kelly 2008, passim. 23-24, 48-49, 51. In general, the archaeological material that is left by nomads is scarce.

³⁰⁴ Priscus, fr. 15.4., fr.14, fr. 10 in Blockley 1983, 298-299, 292-293, 240-243; cf. Kradin 2005, 157; Khazanov 1984, 21,33; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 174-178. Isaac and Maenchen-Helfen remark that despite the fact that some of the groups of Huns seem have had smallscale agricultural activity, this still does not prevent them from living as pastoralist because smallscale agricultural activity is often found among nomads.

³⁰⁵ Priscus fr.2, fr.46 in Blockley 1983, 226-227, 352-353; cf. Kradin 2005, passim. 152, 157.

³⁰⁶ Socrates Scholasticus, Hist. ecc., VII, 30; Priscus, passim. fr. 11.1., fr. 49 in Blockley 1983, 242-243, 356-357; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 82; Kradin 2005, 82.

³⁰⁷ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.17, 31.2.21; Jordanes, Getica, passim. XXIV, 123-126; Procopius, De bel., III: 1- 6; Priscus, passim. fr. 49 in Blockley 1983, 356-357.

³⁰⁸ Heather 2005, 202-203, 204-205.

³⁰⁹ Barfield 1993, 147; Khazanov 1984, 123-124.

³¹⁰ Barfield 1989, 24.

While the camp group forms the basis for herders' lives, they are not permanent constructions. When sons marry they might claim their own share of herd animals and move away. Equally, extended families break up, if the number of animals they own rises above the carrying capacity of the local pasture. In this case migration and disintegration of the camp group follows. That is to say, adaptability to new group compositions and flexibility of movement regulates pastoralists' life.³¹⁴ For this reason it is claimed that nomadic society concerns in general two universal institutions: the family, which means parents and children; and the community, which means e.g. camp groups, clans and tribes. If the first is more or less a permanent unit, the latter clearly not – it creates only overall frames for action. Communities can be defined to detect in three different orders, helping one to understand the multilevel structure of nomadic society.³¹⁵ In what follows I explain these levels, before evaluating their possible existence among the Huns.

The communities in the first order are composed of closely-related families, and their function is related to reciprocal help in daily life and the use of the same herding areas in the vicinity of the camp.³¹⁶ The communities in the first order provide the basis for the communities in the second order. In brief, many families constitute a clan or a tribe, and often members belong to the same kin.³¹⁷ The communities in the second order gather together especially during times of pastoral migration or if there is a need for specific forms of mutual aid. Furthermore, the right to use the same pastures and/or water resources at specific times of the year links the groups in the community in the second order together.

³¹¹ Khazanov 1984, 126-127. As a rule, nomadic families are not large and do not usually include more than two generations of adults. In the majority of nomadic societies, nuclear families, consisting of a husband, wife and their unmarried sons and daughters predominate. However, larger families usually break up every other generation. In this respect all known forms of nomadic families are closer to nuclear families than to extended families. The family is a single and autonomous, ideally self-sufficient economic unit.

³¹² Khazanov 1984, 128; Kradin 2005, 151. A primary kin group is a number of separate and independent families who are very closely connected with one another through ties of kinship, reciprocal relations, common residence, etc. The core of these families are made up of a very close micro-lineage who are descended from one closer ancestor and who in the past have frequently made up one family – brothers, cousins, uncles, nephews etc. Kin groups pasture all year round or for part of the year together and help and support each other. A kin group is considerably less stable than an individual family and all the families of a primary kin group run their own household and keep their own livestock.

³¹³ Barfield 1989, 24.

³¹⁴ Khazanov 1984, 121-122; Tapper 1979, 49; cf. Barfield 1993, 147.

³¹⁵ Khazanov 1984, 126, 120. Communities categorized into different orders is, of course, an academic concept.

³¹⁶ Khazanov 1984, 131-132, 135. Nomadic community is generally defined as a small group (c. 15-20 people) of independent households (c. 2-5) which move together throughout the year or for part of the year. Different communities may jointly pasture livestock and/or they are linked to each other by mutual aid, and sometimes even by mutual responsibilities and for reasons of defence.

³¹⁷ Kradin 2005, 162. According to Kradin, among pastoral Rouran nomads were found clan groupings and lineage based on reciprocal and other communal relations, periodical labour co-operation, joint possession of the means production and on distant, real and fictitious, genealogical relationships. However, the formation of a community fundamentally derives from its relationship to the ownership of key resources such as pastures and water resources that are shared. Rouran nomads were groups of Eurasian pastoral nomads who lived in the vicinity of the borders of China in the fourth and fifth centuries AD.

Finally, the community in the third order is the largest unit which the nomads form; it is formed by several communities in the second order. Its main function is related to the need to take care of rights to natural resources on a large scale. Furthermore the community in the third order is needed when participating in migrations or raids and conquests or to defend one's own territories.³¹⁸ However, because these actions are rare, also the community in the third order is seldom manifested. However, one exception to this might be caused by a series of constant conquests which result in rise of a nomadic empire – in this case the need for the community of the third order would prevail.³¹⁹

If we consider the situation among the Huns, it is certain that their westward migration required that communities of the second or even third order should appear. In brief, there was a need for small nomadic units to form a larger unity for at least two reasons. First, the conquests meant nomads had to form large troops under the centralized control of temporary military leaders. Second the conquests of new areas caused a need to define the rights to use certain pastoral areas. In other words, daily life contacts between groups were replaced by the demand to act as a larger political and social organization with a centralized, albeit temporary, leadership structure.

This being the case, it leads us to study and speak about the conical clan among pastoral herders, including the Huns. This is because tribal political and social organization is based on a model of nested kinship groups, known as the conical clan.³²⁰ Genealogies and descent regulate pastoralist life and customs; they are, so to speak, the smaller building blocks on which a larger unity is constructed.

Patrilineal kinship and nested kinship groups are likely to have created a strong social order among Eurasian pastoralists. Kinship makes an individual part of the “clan” (i.e. a group of blood relatives), and many clans form a conical clan. In this way tribes can take the form of a higher level political organization.³²¹

In short a conical clan is an extensive patrilineal kinship organization in which members of common descent³²² groups are ranked and segmented along genealogical³²³ lines.³²⁴ In addition, the

³¹⁸ Khazanov 1984, 134; Kradin 2005, *passim*. 151.

³¹⁹ Khazanov, 1984, 132, 136. According to Khazanov the primary or nuclear community is the “co-operative herding unit” an association of 2-5 households for the joint herding of livestock. Primary community usually emerges first and foremost from the requirements of production, even if they are not always constant ones. At the same time communities of the second and third order are functionally more varied. In some cases they (or their core) are founded on the joint possession or use of key resources, in others mainly on the fulfilment of social (and political) functions.

³²⁰ Barfield 1993, 147-149.

³²¹ Basilov 1989, 5; Barfield 1993, 16, 147-149.

³²² Khazanov 1984, 120-121, 139-140; cf. Marx 1977, 358-359; Kradin 2005, *passim*. 155. Descent is based on the construct of common mythic forefathers, and hence it largely and loosely connects pastoral groups together. Another reason for this is that in descent *kinship* is conceptualized on many levels. Briefly put, descent establishes an individual's membership in a given society as a whole and in specific subdivisions of this society. As Kradin remarks in the case of Rouran nomads who

older generations are considered superior to younger ones, and by extension lineages and clans, were hierarchically ranked on the basis of seniority. Furthermore, this genealogical charter is important because it justifies rights to pasture (the strongest tribes and clans laid claim to the best pastures at the best time of year), creates social or military obligations between kinship groups and establishes the legitimacy of local political authority.³²⁵

In general, a segmentary structure suits well to pastoralist because incorporation of outsiders to benefits the larger unity of tribal groups. However, it is noticed that among inner Asian nomads a segmentary structure was reinforced by local permanent chieftains, whose leadership position among their small groups went far beyond the needs of simple pastoralism. When a centralized political structure was formed it was still based on a kinship idiom, which was much more complex and powerful than those observed among nomads in other regions.³²⁶ That is to say, the concept of a conical clan may help to explain not only well-defined territorial groups in general but also may provide a specific explanation of the history of the Eurasian steppe.³²⁷ In addition, we should give more emphasis to political factors (and less to kinship models) because shared interests of nomad groups (e.g. for raids) played a much greater role in tribal formation than kinship.³²⁸

In any case the elements of kingship and genealogical lines given above give credence to the claim that when the groups of Huns moved as a larger front towards the west forming larger troops and conquering new areas, this was followed by a need to share the rights of new pasture areas, and suggesting that the structure of conical clans may well have affected activities at some level.³²⁹ There could even have been a powerful and appreciated, senior kinship group who decided to move westwards and this activated the initiation of conical clans and encouraged groups of Huns to join the migration on a larger scale.³³⁰ At the same time the situation required centralized, albeit temporary, leadership to emerge among the ranked groups. The groups of clans needed to choose a single primary military leader among their warriors to provide direction and unity during their wanderings and possible confrontations.³³¹

were Eurasian pastoralists and lived next to Chinese border during the fourth and the fifth centuries AD, descent may involve both corresponding rights and commitments and sometimes even social positions.

³²⁵ Barfield 1993, 147. Barfield notices that among the pastoralists in Central Asia genealogies have interconnected descent groups only loosely together, and “genealogical descent” has been similar to what we would today label “ethnic identity”.

³²⁴ Barfield 1993, 147; Khazanov 1984, 138-144, 173-174.

³²⁵ Barfield 1993, 147; Spooner 1973, 24.; Barth 1973, 18; Khazanov 1984, 140, 173-174.

³²⁶ Barfield 1989, 27.

³²⁷ Lindner 1982, 693.

³²⁸ Lindner 1982, 697-698.

³²⁹ Barfield 1993, 144.

³³⁰ Barfield 1993, *passim*.148-149.

³³¹ Lindner 1982, 700. Lindner stresses that among pastoralists common interests were expressed on the ground of action and coalition; conceptually, it was understood in kinship terms. This held for groups as well as for individuals.

However, in order to be even more precise and know what kind of ties there could have been between the groups of Huns who encroached upon the Roman borders, we need to study the formation and idea of descent and genealogy, as well as clans and tribes that are related to the existence of conical clans.³³² Moreover, their importance lies in the fact that they are noticed to be the basis for the complex and segmentary structure of nomadic society both on a concrete and mental level.³³³ In addition, they explain how and what kind of leadership positions might emerge among pastoralists' larger unity, i.e. ain tribal formation.

Descent is based on the construct of a common mythic forefather, and for this reason descent largely and loosely connects pastoral groups together. Descent groups are ranked and segmented along genealogical lines,³³⁴ and in descent *kinship* is conceptualized on many levels.³³⁵ For this reason descent at some level regulates how the groups of pastoralists might act. To put it bluntly, descent establishes an individual's membership in a given society as a whole and in specific subdivisions of society.³³⁶ Accordingly, the concept of common descent supports nomads in different genealogical lines to form larger unity (e.g. a conical clan)³³⁷ and act on a larger front if there is a common interest in doing this.³³⁸

Genealogies are flexible and ideologically enable many groups of nomads to incorporate and re-organize smoothly according to need. Due to this flexibility in genealogical order, pastoralists of Central Eurasia routinely employed genealogical descent to rank *tribal sections*, and descent was used to justify the right to lead others. As mentioned earlier, this was based on the idea of older generations being superior in rank to younger generations.³³⁹ Accordingly, placement in the genealogy defines one's position in society.³⁴⁰ On the other hand, there is also a possibility that the reverse takes place because flexibility in genealogies means that genealogical order can be manipulated. For this reason Eurasian pastoral nomads' history includes periods when powerful

³³² Khazanov 1984, 120. Although the concept of a tribe is often considered artificial, especially within the frames of the academic definition "family-lineage(s)-clan-tribe-tribal confederacy", I support Khazanov's definition. In short, the model should be understood as a loose frame that can be used to form some kind of perception of what we are dealing with.

³³³ Barfield 1993, 148; cf. Khazanov 1984, 140.

³³⁴ Barfield 1993, 147. Genealogies interconnect descent groups only loosely together. Barfield considers that genealogical descent in central Eurasia has been similar to what we call "ethnic identity" today.

³³⁵ Khazanov 1984, 120-121, 139. Social organization of nomads is fundamentally conceptualized in notions of kinship and descent.

³³⁶ Kradin 2005, 155; see also Khazanov 1984, 140; Marx 1977, 358-359. Descent may also involve both corresponding rights and commitments and sometimes even social positions. As Kradin notices in the case of Rouran Eurasian pastoral nomads, when a hereditary leadership position established itself among nomads, then power was transferred by order of succession to the direct or collateral line within the ruling clan. This means that kin also regulates the relationships in the distribution of power at the level of a community of the second and third order. In this way descent groups are ranked and segmented along genealogical lines.

³³⁷ Barfield 1993, 148-149.

³³⁸ Khazanov 1984, 140.

³³⁹ Barfield 1993, 76.

³⁴⁰ Lindner 1982, 692.

individuals have promoted their ancestors at the expense of declining, genealogically senior but politically weak lines of descent. Genealogies have been invented that justify changes in the status quo.³⁴¹ In the world of Eurasian pastoralists' steppe politics rules were often ignored or abused in the pursuit of power.³⁴²

If we think of the situation among the Huns, we cannot rule out the possibility that a new leading family or families (of junior descent) were emerging among the Huns and trying to create a totally new, or reshape the old, order between senior and junior genealogical descent groups to their own advantage when moving westwards and conquering new areas. Generally speaking, the existence of many competing families (perhaps even with a power-hungry individual as their military leader) and possible competition between different genealogical descent groups could partly explain the arrival of many fragmented groups of Huns coming in many waves to the Roman borders. However, it is also possible that these groups were not concerned with genealogical descent lines. In any case, it is clear that there were only weak, or no senior, descent lines among the Huns uniting them to act on a larger front.

Accordingly, the emergence of more united groups of Huns during the fifth century makes it clear that the changes and formation of genealogical lines of descent should be the forms of research into the history of the Huns during this period.³⁴³ In fact, the history of the Huns could even be a history of the role of the family in creating supercomplex chiefdom.

However, if we wish to know whether Eurasian pastoral nomads formed a larger unity before proceeding to supercomplex chiefdoms, the concept of a tribe and tribal confederations cannot be ignored.

It has been argued that a Eurasian nomadic tribe was a social unit and political organism which was open to all who were willing to subordinate themselves to its chief and shared the interests with its

³⁴¹ Barfield 1993, 148-149; passus Kradin 2005, 152-153.

³⁴² Barfield 1993, 148-149.

³⁴³ Priscus, fr. 2, fr.11.2, fr.15.2, fr. 9.3 in Blockley 1983, 226-227, 246-247, 258-259, 296-297, 238-239. See Chapters 8- 9. Priscus tells that Attila insisted that the Huns called Atakam and Mamas who Priscus mentions to be "children of the royal house" of the Huns (τοῦ βασιλείου γένους) and who had fled to the Romans to be sent back to the Huns in order to be punished for their alliance with the Romans. The story suggests that Attila, Atakam and Mamas all seem to have come from the same ruling genealogical descent. Otherwise, I doubt whether Priscus would have mentioned the existence of a "royal house" and Attila would not have been concerned, if some of his allies had abandoned him. In addition, Priscus' remark that Attila was "noble descent, having succeeded his father" (τὴν εὐγένειαν) could be taken as a sign of the existence and division of senior and junior (or superior and inferior) genealogies among the Huns. The existence of a hierarchy between leaders of groups of herders also comes clear when Priscus mentions how leaders among Akatziri had senior and junior positions (βρεσβύτερον ὄντα τῆ ἀρχῆ).

tribesmen. Shared concerns played a much greater role in tribal formation than kinship partly because a tribe's existence is linked to territory.³⁴⁴

Each major tribe or groups of tribes have their own region of habitation, and land is considered the property of an entire tribe or a group of clans.³⁴⁵ The tribe also forms a local military unit.³⁴⁶ In other words, behind the solitary group of a few families wandering on the steppe stood a large invisible army of fellow tribesmen ready to carry out revenge on anyone who injured one of their own or challenged the tribe's control to their established regions.³⁴⁷ On the whole, joint military activities are also needed when raids are planned, or new herding areas are to be conquered. In brief, the need to form a tribe emerged in accordance with necessity – this was particularly the case when nomads confronted the outside world or other competing nomadic groups.³⁴⁸

However, we are now talking about an ideal model which means that the reality might be somewhat different. A good reminder of this is the uncertainty of the joint activities even among extended families.³⁴⁹ In brief, although the extended family was a cultural ideal and had many economic advantages, it was not easy to maintain because large groups are inherently unstable. Herders who owned their own animals, for example, could break away from the group if dissatisfied. In brief, Eurasian pastoral nomads' activities were fundamentally based on voluntary cooperation, with the overall expectation of joint activities.³⁵⁰

When groups of Huns migrated westwards and conquered new lands they must have formed larger units, such as tribes, in order to create larger military units. The same must have taken place among groups of Alans due to the need to defend their lands against the Huns. After the fights between groups of Huns and Alans it is likely that the tribes integrated and formed a totally new ethnic group composition because in general when a tribe grows, the need to justify and express tribal unity in some symbolic form easily understandable by all the tribes' people also becomes more pressing.³⁵¹ The creation of a close relationship between groups of Alans and Huns is evident because after their confrontation the parties are known to have acted well together for the following 30 years.³⁵² What

³⁴⁴ Khazanov 1984, 151; Lindner 1982, 698-699, 701, 703; Kradin 2005, 162; Kradin 2006, *passim*. 108-110; Basilov 1989, 5-6. Basilov notices that tradition traced the origins of the clan back to a single ancestor and frequently even several tribes were considered kinsmen, since they also shared an ancestor. This belief in a common origin promoted political alliances.

³⁴⁵ Lindner 1982, 699; Khazanov 1983, 140, 149, 151; cf. Kradin 2005, 151. The need for tribal unity is crucial especially during migrations and wars, or when defence is required or key resources are sought. This unity is also needed when establishing and regularizing or controlling pastoral and trade routes.

³⁴⁶ Kradin 2005, *passim*. 151, 153; Khazanov 1984, 134, 148, 150-151.

³⁴⁷ Lindner 1982, 694, 699; Basilov 1989, 4.

³⁴⁸ Lindner 1982, 697-699, 693; Khazanov 1984, 148. Tribe formations among nomads are receptive to change. This is stressed by the fact that tribes and confederations disappear, simplify or reform when the need for them diminishes.

³⁴⁹ Barfield 1989, 25-26.

³⁵⁰ Barfield 1989, 25.

³⁵¹ Lindner 1989, *passim*. 696-700; cf. Khazanov 1984, 148, 150-151. Growth in tribal membership created the need to form a unity, particularly in order to re-allocate herding areas.

³⁵² See Chapter 3.4. - 4.

supports this is the fact that units of organization at the tribal or supratribal level are more political in nature than contacts at the family and clan level.³⁵³ This means that new groups were easy to join. Consequently, we can conclude that the contacts between the Alans and the Huns gave a basis for political organization and stronger leadership positions to form during the following decades. The possibilities and frames for strengthening leadership positions are studied further in the following chapters, while in next chapter I evaluate whether the actions and nature of the co-operation between the Huns and the Alans supported the rise of nomadic political organizations among the Huns. This is done in order to show how strong and large units the Huns seem to have formed when they arrived at the Roman borders during the last decades of the fourth century. But before that I shall now provide a short summary to clarify the means by which Eurasian nomads made alliances and the ways in which even a nomadic empire might have been formed.

The nomads' way of acting together and forming larger units should be understood as a skeleton:³⁵⁴ the number of participants, and who they are, varies from occasion to another and is related to the need of the groups. However, the nested kinship group structure (conical clan) supports groups who are of the same genealogical order to join together. In addition, even those nomadic groups which are considered distant or foreign can be adopted as part of the unity, while the leading role remains with the nomadic groups who are charged with forming the unity. They are often, but not necessarily, from older generations, e.g. senior clans. At the same time the situation stresses the importance of leaders at the head of the nomadic troops. Especially significant are contacts between so-called elite warriors who are charged with the decisions made during the time of gathering together larger units.³⁵⁵ The contacts between the leading warriors create a basis for larger scale nomadic groups to emerge, while it also strengthens the head warriors' position, which in turn supports the formation of political organization. On the whole, leading warriors might not be the ones who had the position of permanent chieftain among their smaller groups, though this is also possible. The position of military leaders at the head of larger troops of nomads is only temporary. This once again stresses the fact that shared interest and the acceptance of joint activity provided the basis for Eurasian pastoralists' activities on a larger front.

³⁵³ Barfield 1989, 27.

³⁵⁴ Khazanov 1984, 148.

³⁵⁵ See Chapter 4.

3.4. The Huns and the Alans and Contacts with the Goths

According to Ammianus, the clash between groups of Huns and Alans was followed by their attack on the dwelling areas of some of the groups of easternmost Goths, the Greuthungi, during the mid 370s.³⁵⁶ Ammianus describes the situation:

[some groups of Huns and Alans made] a sudden inroad into the extensive and rich cantons of Ermenrichus, a most warlike monarch [of Greuthungi, so-called eastern Goths] [...]

[Ermenrichus] was struck with consternation at the violence of this sudden storm [...]

[After Ermenrichus] Vithimiris was made king and resisted the Halani [Alans] for a time, relying on other Huns, whom he had paid to take his side [...]³⁵⁷

It is likely that because Ermenrichus did not do anything to help the Goths whose regions the allied groups of Huns and Alans attacked, these Goths were independent of Ermenrichus' rule. It is likely that they were connected only by trade contacts or mutual friendship to "Ermenrichus' great Ostrogothic kingdom", if such a thing existed. Ermenrichus' lack of interest to send troops to help his fellow men indicates that he was leader only to those groups of Goths who lived near the Don. This would also seem to be referred to in Ammianus' remarks on Ermenrichus considering the attacks of the groups of Huns and Alans as an impending danger, "*a sudden storm*".³⁵⁸

In addition, Ammianus' story about the arrival of the Huns in the areas of the easternmost Goths reveals the fragmentation and disunity of the groups of Huns and Alans in general. In short, Ammianus mentions that when Ermenrichus died and Vithimiris took his place as the leader of the Goths, he "*resisted the Halani for a time relying on other Huns, whom he had paid to take his side*".³⁵⁹ Ammianus' account of the event refers to groups of Alans, not Huns or allied groups of Huns and Alans, as Vithimiris' enemies. In short, the Huns are mentioned only as those whom Vithimiris paid to fight on his side.³⁶⁰ On the other hand, it is possible that the troops of Alans who fought against Vithimiris could have included some Huns, as Ammianus' phrase "*Huniis aliis*" implies, but even if this was the case, the number of Huns in Alans' troops must have been scarce – after all, Ammianus mentions only the Alans as attacking against Vithimiris. Generally speaking, I

³⁵⁶ Thompson (1999) 2000, 27. The groups of Greuthungi are claimed to live in the territory between the Don and the Dniester and from the Black Sea to the Pripet Marshes.

³⁵⁷ Ammianus, RG, 31.3.1-3.

³⁵⁸ Thompson (1999) 2000, 27; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 24-25; Heather (1996) 1998, 52-55. The existence of a coherent Ostrogothic kingdom is debated. Heather e.g. claims that half-a-dozen independent Gothic units, if not more, probably existed north of the Black Sea before the arrival of the Huns.

³⁵⁹ Ammianus, RG, 31.3.3.

³⁶⁰ Heather 1995, 6-7; cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, 26-27. Thompson speaks of the allied groups of Huns and Alans, whereas Heather considers there were only Huns.

do not see any reason why Ammianus would have deliberately refrained from mentioning the Huns being among the Alans, because Ammianus' tendency is to represent the Huns as the cause of all misery.³⁶¹ This speaks in support of the view that the Alans were the only enemy of Vithimiris, and it was independent groups of Alans and not allied troops of Huns and Alans, who had attacked the Goths before.³⁶²

There were clearly many different groups of Alans and Huns wandering according to their own plans and their own military leaders in the vicinity of the north and eastern regions near of the Black Sea during the 370s and 380s.³⁶³ Ammianus' story about the end of the confrontations between Vithimiris' Goths and the Alans would also support this view.

According to Ammianus, Vithimiris' Goths, the Greuthungi, were defeated by the Alans, and hence many of them started to retreat from their lands in the eastern parts of the Black Sea westwards. These were the dwelling regions of other Goths, the Tervingi, who were led by Athanarichus. Greuthungi's retreat led Athanarichus to prepare a defence the Dniester river, in case they like the Greuthungi would be attacked.³⁶⁴ This did in fact take place and according to Ammianus "*the Huns ... made a swift attack on Athanarichus himself*".³⁶⁵

Because Ammianus mentions only the Huns attacking Athanarichus' Goths, it is possible that there was a new unity among the groups of Huns in question. In short, the absence of the Alans implies that there was no alliance of Huns and Alans in the first known attack against the Goths in the Don – Volga area. Moreover, it is doubtful whether the Huns who attacked Athanarichus were the same ones who allied themselves with Vithimiris to fight against the Alans, because they favoured co-operation not hostilities with the Goths. The Huns who attacked Athanarichus must have been a new grouping of Huns, who acted as they pleased.³⁶⁶

Taken together, the existence of at least three different united of groups of Huns questions the common claim that it would have been the Huns, or to be more precise, an allied group of Huns and Alans, who made all the attacks against the Goths and also subdued the Greuthungi when heading westwards.³⁶⁷ However, as noticed, it was the Alans who attacked first with some Huns, and then

³⁶¹ Stickler 2007, 18.

³⁶² One explanation is that the Alans would have attained the leading position in the alliance with the Huns, but this seems unconvincing, especially because as Ammianus reports the Huns conquered the Alans and not vice versa. Another possibility is that the alliance between groups of Huns and Alans might have broken down before the attack on Vithimiris' troops, and hence the Huns might have allied themselves with Vithimiris' Goths. I see this as unlikely however.

³⁶³ Ammianus, RG, 31.3.3; see Heather 2005, passim. 153; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 19-23.

³⁶⁴ Ammianus, RG, 31.3.3-5.

³⁶⁵ Ammianus, RG, 31.3.6.

³⁶⁶ Ammianus, RG, 31.3.6-7; see Heather 2005, passim. 153-154, 202-205. I consider Ammianus' stories that Athanarichus just waited to be attacked like others before him, and that he even sent out scouts to observe who were approaching the Tervingi's regions, suggest that Athanarichus was not sure who the enemy would be – Alans or Huns or both.

³⁶⁷ Thompson (1999) 2000, 26-27.

alone against the Greuthungi, and hence it is likely, if this indeed ever took place, and it was the Alans rather than the Huns who subdued the Greuthungi.³⁶⁸ Generally speaking, this is also what Ambrose's account of the arrival of groups of Huns to the regions of the Alans and the Goths emphasizes. Ambrose writes: "*The Huns threw themselves upon the Alans, the Alans upon the Goths, and the Goths upon the Taifali and Sarmatae; the Goths, exiled from their own country*".³⁶⁹ Orosius is another fourth century author who does not mention the Huns placing the Goths under their power, but only pushing them westwards: "*The race of the Huns, long shut off by inaccessible mountains, broke out in sudden rage against the Goths and drove them in widespread confusion from their old homes. The Goths fled across the Danube*".³⁷⁰

What all this amounts to is that there were many fragmented groups of Huns, Alans and Goths on the move. They were primarily interested in moving west and to make new and profitable alliances, to acquire booty, but not to subdue groups to their power.³⁷¹ All in all, the Hun groups' eagerness first and foremost to gain riches is also implied in Ammianus' phrase that "[the Huns] *would have crushed him [Athanrichus' troops] at once on their arrival, had they not been so loaded down with booty*".³⁷² The Huns' lack of interest in vanguishing other groups is also underlined by the notion that after they had defeated Athanrichus' Tervingi, the Tervingi could wait for months for permission from Rome to cross the Danube without being disturbed by the Huns who were in the same neighbourhood.³⁷³ Therefore, it would seem that in 375/6 there was no massive horde of Huns hotly pursuing the fleeing Goths.³⁷⁴ In addition, the Huns did not aim to dominate other barbarian groups on their way towards the Roman borders as is generally claimed.

Lastly, because groups of Huns and Alans acted as mercenaries with different parties, including groups of Goths, during the last decades of the fourth century, it also suggests that the groups' fundamental reason for alliances with others was to gain more booty. There is little or no evidence to indicate that there were strong leaders or a Hun king who would have striven to rule others and strengthen his and his followers' power. There were instead many independent groups of Huns who were led by their own military leaders.³⁷⁵

Finally, I agree with the claim that many of the Huns' actions that Ammianus reports were not in fact done by all the Huns,³⁷⁶ but only those who, so to speak, formed the first wave of the Huns.

³⁶⁸ Wirth 1999, 28; Thompson (1999) 2000, 27-28; Stickler 2007, 48.

³⁶⁹ Ambrose, Ex. Luc., trans. by Maenchen-Hefen 1973, 20.

³⁷⁰ Orosius, Hist. ad. pag., VII, 33:10.

³⁷¹ Thompson (1999) 2000, 62.

³⁷² Ammianus, RG, 31.3.8.

³⁷³ Heather 2005, 153.

³⁷⁴ Thompson (1999) 2000, 65-66; cf. Schreiber 2007, 48; Heather 1995, 5-7, 16; Heather 2005, 153.

³⁷⁵ Heather 2005, 153.

³⁷⁶ Heather 2005, 202.

Heather argues that the Huns arrived in two waves on the borders of the Roman Empire: the first groups of Huns arrived in the Pontic areas and the neighbourhood of Carpathians during the 360s–380s; the second wave occurred during the first decades of the fifth century.³⁷⁷ Moreover, it was the second wave that established the Huns in the area near the Danube, on the Great Hungarian plain west of the Carpathians.³⁷⁸ The evidence that the Huns' activities increased during the 420s would seem to support Heather's claims.

In this chapter I have pointed out how the first wave of Huns arrived near Rome, and how their actions do not support the claims of united groups under a strong leader. In the next chapter I consider whether the contemporary authors' stories suggest that leadership positions would have strengthened among the Huns. Furthermore, I assess what kind of leadership position might in general exist among Eurasian pastoralists, and whether we can notice these kinds of positions among the Huns around the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries. In addition, I evaluate what the activities of many groups of Huns who arrived to raid and dwell in regions next to Roman Danubian borders tell us about their unity.

³⁷⁷ Ammianus, RG, 31.3.2.-5; see Heather 1995, 6.

³⁷⁸ Heather 1995, 10; Heather 2005, 151.

4. GROUPS OF HUNS AND FIRST CONTACTS WITH THE ROMANS

During the 360s and at the beginning of the 370s several groups of Huns journeyed towards the borders of the Roman Empire of their own initiative. Other groups were located in areas close to the northern parts of the Black Sea. In this chapter I study these actions of the groups in order to estimate the claim that during this period a powerful Hun leader or united groups of Huns emerged who might have sought to gain power over other groups. In addition, I consider what kind of relationship began to develop between the Romans and the Huns in the following years. I also point out how some groups of Huns joined with others, e.g. Goths, and how their joint activities indicate the existence of fragmented and independent groups of Huns during the last decades of the fourth century.

4.1. Acts of scattered groups of Huns near the Danube and the Balkans

After the Huns' attack against Athanarichus' troops near Dniester in 375, some other groups of Huns pillaged regions close and even south of the Danube after 376.³⁷⁹ At the same time the leaders of the Goths, Fritigern and Alatheus and Saphrax, asked a small number of Huns and Alans ("*Hunnorum et Halanorum aliquos*") to fight on their side against the Romans by promising them a cut of the spoils.³⁸⁰ When in 377 the Hun and Alan reinforcements headed from Morava valley to Naissus, to outflank the Roman troops, it caused the Romans to retreat.³⁸¹ However, in the following year troops of Goths and Romans met again near Adrionople, and according to Ammianus only Alans, and no Huns, participated in the battle, "*Halanorum manus*".³⁸² However, Huns are listed among those who gathered up booty after the battle, "*Hunni Halanisque permixti*".³⁸³ Therefore, it is suspected that the Huns did not participate in the battle at all, but waited for the end of the clash in order to join in the looting.³⁸⁴

Even though Ammianus might have mentioned the Huns only in connection with pillaging in order to create an image of ruthless nomads, it is also plausible that the Hun warriors might have been

³⁷⁹ Ammianus, RG, 31.3.5-8.; Zosimus, Hist. nov., IV, 34.6; see Heather 1995, 7, 10.

³⁸⁰ Ammianus, RG, 31.8.4; 31.16.3; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 29; Heather 1995, 10; Stickler 2007, 50.

³⁸¹ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 28.

³⁸² Ammianus, RG, 31.12.17.

³⁸³ Ammianus, RG, 31.16.3.

³⁸⁴ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 29.

charged with securing the flanks and would have been used as reinforcements, if needed.³⁸⁵ Whatever the case was, the Goths, the Alans and the Huns still seem to have been satisfied with their military co-operation because during the years 379-380 contemporary authors often mention their names in conjunction.³⁸⁶ This emphasizes the fact that groups of Huns and Alans could act according in their own interest without caring about others of their own kind. That is to say, no great sense of unity existed among the groups of the Huns.

During the last years of the 370s groups of Huns, most likely the size of some clans, are claimed to have pillaged and devastated the population of Thrace. This might have been part of the Goths' and their allies' plans to raid the neighbourhood, or just a raid done by the Huns themselves.³⁸⁷ However, because Orosius mentions the Huns and the Alans before the Goths, this suggests the Huns' and Alans' proclivities for looting.³⁸⁸ In any case, all we can be sure about is that in 379 the Goths, the Huns and the Alans plundered Valeria which caused Pacatus to write "*Whatever the Goths waste, the Huns plunder, the Alans carry off*".³⁸⁹ Pacatus' allegation stresses that the Goths, Huns and Alans were concerned with looting, not conquering new lands. The same notion is stressed by stories about some Huns who joined the Sciri and Carpo-Dacians to cross the Danube for a swift raiding expedition in 381.³⁹⁰

It is likely that both the eastern and western part of the Roman Empire knew about the Hunnic and Alanic horsemen dwelling in regions close to their borders. In 384 a group of Huns and Alan rode through Norricum and Raetia towards Gaul.³⁹¹ This time there was no question of raids; the Huns and Alans had been commissioned by Bauto, the general in the western part of the Roman Empire, to fight against the looting Juthungi in Raetia, who had been hired by the usurper Maximus.³⁹² After the Huns and the Alans had fought against the Juthungi, they did not return to their home territories but continued westwards. Bauto was keen to stop them because otherwise Maximus could have considered their arrival as a declaration of war. Ultimately the Hun and Alan troops gave up their westward march, but the nomads must have asked for substantial compensation on account of the lost loot.³⁹³ The event underlines the fact that the fragmented groups of Huns were clearly were

³⁸⁵ Barfield 1993, 156-157, 159, passim. 149; Vasjutin 2003, 52. Another option is that if the allied groups of Huns and Alans the Huns had the leading position, they could have put the Alans in to fight and wait for a time to join in the battle if needed; Hsiung-nu nomads and Mongols often put their vassal warriors to fight first and joined the battle later on themselves according to need. On the other hand, it is also possible that Ammianus did not wish to repeat the word Huns in the battle description.

³⁸⁶ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 29.

³⁸⁷ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 29.

³⁸⁸ Orosius, Hist. ad. pag., VII, 34:5; see Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 30.

³⁸⁹ Pacatus, Pan., XI, 4; see Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 35.

³⁹⁰ Zosimus, Hist. nov., IV, 34:6; see Heather 1995, 10; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 40.

³⁹¹ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 41.

³⁹² Ambrose, Ep., XXV-XXVIII; see Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 41, 43.

³⁹³ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 43.

ready for action and for alliances with any party as long as it offered benefits to them. In addition, it is likely that some groups of Huns and Alans had settled down in the vicinity of the Roman borders in the lower Danube basin, because otherwise Bauto would have had difficulties in reaching them. For nomads, the Great Hungarian plain was the best option for settling down, and it seems that already in the beginning of the 380s the Huns and their Alan allies had taken over the steppe and the regions near the Carpathians, though the Sarmatians, the Jazygian and Germanic groups and the original Illyrian population inhabited the same areas too.³⁹⁴ The number of Huns and Alans is not known, but because they could provide men as Roman mercenaries, there must have been clans and perhaps even tribes.

The Romans must have been pleased with their Hun and Alan mercenaries because those who fought against the Juthungi were most likely the ones who in 384 or 385 were sent by Valentinian II to attack the trouble-making Alamanni near the Rhine frontier.³⁹⁵ However, if there were different groups of Huns and Alans, this implies that many independent Hun and Alan groups had come close to the Roman borders. Equally, Roman emperors and generals had become aware that the Huns would provide military service if they were paid.

The interest of the Huns in pillaging did not only concern the west, for some Huns are also known to have been active around the mouth of the Danube and in Scythia in 384 or 385. During those years some groups of Huns had reached the Morava Vardar valley in modern Serbia and Macedonia and overrun Roman troops. A few years later the Huns pillaged in Pannonia Prima (387) and thereafter, before 388, Goths, Huns and Alans raided towns in Pannonia Secunda and Savia.³⁹⁶ Because contemporary authors do not mention great devastation, the troops were most likely small groups of hundreds or at the most a few thousands of warriors.

Even though the Huns looted in the areas of the Roman Empire, making the Huns feared enemies of the Romans, the Romans could still profit from their fighting prowess by employing the Huns as mercenaries. One of those occasions was in 388 when Theodosius I paid for groups of Huns to join the campaign against the usurper Maximus in the west.³⁹⁷ At the same time there was another group of Huns who were pillaging in Macedonia. However, it has been suggested that the groups of Huns who joined Theodosius I's army lived inside the Roman borders because they are suspected of allying themselves with some Goths who already lived in Roman regions.³⁹⁸ Even if this is so, still

³⁹⁴ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 46.

³⁹⁵ Heather 1995, 9; Stickler 2007, 51.

³⁹⁶ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 38-39, 45-46.

³⁹⁷ Pacatus, Pan., XXXII, 4-5; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 45; Stickler 2007, 51.

³⁹⁸ Heather 1995, 9.

the majority of groups of Huns were to be found in the vicinity of the Carpathians and the Black Sea during the 380s.

The border areas inside the Roman Empire, especially in the provinces next to the Danube in the east and near the Balkans, were frequently ravaged by groups of Huns, Goths and Alans in the 380s. Barbarian groups of mainly Visigoths who had earlier served as Roman mercenaries became robbers and are known to have attacked Macedonia during 388-392. In 391 Theodosius I gave permission for locals to fight against the brigands. Soon Roman reinforcements arrived but they could not bring victory and instead of gaining peace in the area, large hordes of trans-Danubian barbarians broke through the *limes* and poured deep into the north of the Balkans. What until then had been a punitive expedition, became a larger confrontation that remained unresolved when Theodosius returned to Constantinople in 391.³⁹⁹

Claudian lists the names of raiders: the Getae, the Sarmatae, the Daci, the Massagetae, the Alani and the Geloni, but three years later his account also includes the Huns: “*Visi, Bastarnae, Alani, Huns, Geloni, Getae, Sarmatae*”.⁴⁰⁰ Because the Huns are absent from the first list, it is not certain how many of them participated in the devastation, or even if they were involved. However, even though Claudian’s narrative leaves a doubt about the activities of the Huns in 391, at least in 392 groups of Huns crossed the Danube, and raided the Balkan provinces with groups of Goths. At the same time, Claudian’s account implies that these groups also negotiated with Rufinus, the general in the Eastern Roman Empire, with the consent of Theodosius, and made a *foederati* treaty.⁴⁰¹

As a result the groups of Huns were ready to serve in the troops of the Eastern part of the Roman Empire when asked and they were most likely even granted land for their herds and families in Thrace.⁴⁰² It seems that the Eastern Roman government calculated that it would be more profitable to incorporate the trouble-making Huns as part of their system than to constantly repel their attacks. Furthermore, the Huns could give useful support to Eastern Roman troops against the raiding Goths.⁴⁰³

The Huns of Thrace were very likely those Huns who fought in Theodosius I’s army against the usurper Eugenius (392-394) in the west in the year 394.⁴⁰⁴ Eunapius tells us that many of the Huns from Thrace with their *phyklarkhoi* took part in Theodosius I’s second battle against Eugenius in summer 394.⁴⁰⁵ It seems that in the beginning of the 390s some of the groups of Huns had

³⁹⁹ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 46.

⁴⁰⁰ Claudian, *Stil.*, I, 94-96; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 46-47, 47-48.

⁴⁰¹ Claudian, *Stil.*, I, 94-96; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 46.

⁴⁰² Claudian, *Stil.*, I, 112-115; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 48, 50-51.

⁴⁰³ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, .50-51.

⁴⁰⁴ Stickler 2007, 51.

⁴⁰⁵ Eunapius, fr. 60 in Blockley 1983, 88-89; see Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 49.

established a close relationship with the eastern part of the Empire, while some Huns looted and raided in the border areas of the Balkans in the Roman Empire.

In addition to contemporary accounts about the Huns' military activities, Ammianus' and Claudian's accounts provide some evidence about the leadership position among the scattered groups of Huns in the last decades of the fourth century. The descriptions reveal how the Huns were organized when little by little they arrived on the Roman borders in the Balkans and the lower part of the Danube. In addition, the position of leaders can also explain the basis on which the contacts between the Romans and groups of Huns evolved during the fifth century. I should next discuss the nature of the leadership position among the Huns, and the question whether a mighty Hun leader, alleged Hun king, arose who could have fostered the formation of a Hun empire and a supercomplex chiefdom.

4.2. Primates and Phylarkhos – Military Leaders of the Huns?

During the last decades of the fifth century a number of Hunnic groups were involved with a variety of allies and this suggests that the Huns operated in disparate and hence presumably, relatively small groups, under a variety of military leaders. This is also referred to in Ammianus' account of the exercise of political authority among the Huns.⁴⁰⁶

And when deliberation is called for about weighty matters, they all consult as a common body [*in commune consultant*] in that fashion. They are subject to no royal restraint [*aguntur autem nulla severitate regali*], but they are content with the disorderly government of their important men [*tumultuario primatum ductu contenti*], and led by them they force their way through every obstacle.

Although Ammianus' description of the Huns is a cursory account, we may still rely on the picture that it gives of the nomadic leadership position because the listed features are common to leadership positions that were generally found among Eurasian pastoral nomads.⁴⁰⁷

The starting point for understanding the basis of leadership positions among Eurasian pastoralists is that the combination of low population density and high mobility inhibits in general the

⁴⁰⁶ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.7; Heather 1995, 10-11.

⁴⁰⁷ Although the Huns were nomadic newcomers to the Roman borders, the Romans had for centuries dealt with nomadic groups and knew the basis of their leadership positions. Therefore, even if Ammianus had not known exactly what the situation was among the Huns, the generalization of nomadic leadership most likely reflects the actual situation at least in overall terms. See Chapter 2.

development of a strict hierarchy or of political centralization among nomads.⁴⁰⁸ This seems to be the case among the Huns as Ammianus' phrase "*they [Huns] are subject to no royal restraint*" implies. Also the arrival of the Huns as many independent groups points to the lack of a centralized and relatively permanent leadership position, which Ammianus refers to as "*regalis*" among the Huns.

That is to say, the groups of Huns were led by someone, especially during attacks, and even though these military leaders' might have formed an "elite", this does not mean that military leaders would have had a permanent position which entitled them to rule over others after the military actions.⁴⁰⁹ In brief, while an elite and an aristocracy existed from time to time among Eurasian pastoral nomads they did not necessarily possess any real power. In other words, they are respected, but they are not allowed to interfere in others' affairs.⁴¹⁰ The position of the elite differs from common nomads primarily in two aspects: they seize the best parts of pastures and they are often wealthy.⁴¹¹ Although the members of the elite do not possess power, they do, however, operate as leaders when needed. This and the right to command others always manifest themselves in a period of military danger in the form of military leadership.⁴¹² Therefore, it is clear that the wanderings of the groups of Huns towards the west, which included attacks against locals and the distribution of conquered regions for herding, produced a need for military leaders – this is supported by Ammianus' remark on *primates*.

Along with the likelihood of strengthened leadership positions, the question arises whether the wanderings of the groups of Huns, at least partly, was motivated by the need of nomad warriors to increase their power?⁴¹³ An alternative explanation is that migrations were a consequence of the need to have new pastures because of drought, for example, and this provided a setting for military leaders to lead their groups to new regions. The question remains what kind of position did the *primates/primas* which Ammianus tells about have among the Huns?

The starting point for studying leadership among nomads is that there are two kinds of leadership positions as chief and as military leaders. The positions are separate, but do not exclude each other. The precondition for a chief to take care of the duties of military leadership is the trust and support of his by fellow nomads. Furthermore, the position of military leadership is generally only

⁴⁰⁸ Berman 2000, 175; see Chapter 3.

⁴⁰⁹ Basilov 1989, 6; cf. Pohl 2003, 579; Lindner 1982, 700-701; cf. Khazanov 1984, 159

⁴¹⁰ Basilov 1989, 5; Khazanov 1984, *passim*, 152-164.

⁴¹¹ Basilov 1989, 6; Irons 2003, 67.

⁴¹² Basilov 1989, 5; Irons 2003, 67.

⁴¹³ Barfield 1989, 5; cf. Basilov 1989, 6. Barfield remarks that the growth of larger units would be an attempt by ambitious strongmen to combine ever-greater numbers of nomads under their control. This process could eventually result in the creation of a nomadic empire. Having said that the power of a steppe autocrat was purely personal, and stemmed from his skilful manipulation of power and wealth within an elaborate tribal network. Such a ruler was a usurper of power, and at his death his personal empire dissolved back into its component parts.

temporary – it occurs and lasts according to need. Generally speaking, the role of a leader is highly important in military situations, but he does not retain his position once the conflict is over.⁴¹⁴

The position of chief is an ad hoc institution which largely exists for the convenience of those ruled. A chief is needed because there is a demand for an accepted arbitrator to resolve disputes.⁴¹⁵ However, a chief wields no coercive power, although his range of potential duties could be wide. He might for example, religious activities in some scale; also arrange ceremonial feasts, give gifts to fellow tribesmen and redistribute resources, such as herding animals during unexpected periods of hardship.⁴¹⁶ In addition, when required, chiefs arranged and participated in meetings and negotiations with representatives from closely related groups. But despite this range of tasks, the chiefs did not rule over areas or people, instead their position was based on others' support and acceptance.⁴¹⁷ On the whole, the chiefs were local and were heads of local lineage-tribal structures.⁴¹⁸ In short, permanent chieftains provided internal order for lineages, clans and whole tribes.⁴¹⁹ However, although the position of chief often went according to family line and was hereditary, a chief could still lose his position if his actions did not please others. This could also happen when members of the society considered that the chief could no longer maintain good fortune and balance in the society.⁴²⁰

Despite the existence of chiefs, there was still a demand for military leaders whom the warriors had confidence during times of confrontation or raids.⁴²¹ Although the position of a chief was usually based on genealogy, this was not always the case.⁴²² Lindner remarks that a genealogical hierarchy model does not fit the history of the Eurasian steppe because fluidity of movement and allegiance has historically been the defining characteristics of nomadic steppe politics.⁴²³ Therefore, disputes related to succession were ultimately decided on the basis of who would be the fittest to act as chief. Moreover, the tribesmen supported the candidate who could best represent their interests. This has been especially the case when there has been a need to decide who would be the supreme military leader to lead the nomad troops.⁴²⁴

⁴¹⁴ Lindner 1982, 692-693; Berman 2000, 175.

⁴¹⁵ Morgan (1986) 1990, 38-39.

⁴¹⁶ Kradin 2003, *passim*. 81-82; Kradin 2008, *passim*. 149.

⁴¹⁷ Bondarenko, Korotayev, Kradin 2003, 10.

⁴¹⁸ Lindner 1982, 692-693.

⁴¹⁹ Vasjutin 2003, 59; Berman 2000, 175; Barfield 1989, *passim*. 27.

⁴²⁰ Khazanov 1984, 178-179; cf. Barfield 1993, 147-149; Kradin 2003, 81-82; Kradin 2005, 158-159.

⁴²¹ Irons 2003, 67. Irons refers to the situation among Iranian, Yomut Turkmen nomads in the 1960s and the 1970s.

⁴²² Lindner 1982, *passim*. 692.

⁴²³ Lindner 1982, 693.

⁴²⁴ Lindner 1982, 693.

The tasks of a military leader are not only related to leading troops, but also to taking care of foreign policy.⁴²⁵ Even though the position of military leadership is separate from the position of chief, nevertheless the chief could be considered the most qualified candidate as military leader.⁴²⁶ Thus the position of military leader was dependent on followers' considerations of who they thought was most capable of winning victories.⁴²⁷ Chief who, for example, had already attracted and gathered followers who had sworn exclusive loyalty to him would be considered a very promising military leader.⁴²⁸ Generally speaking, personal charisma and clear goals what to do as a leader of troops had a strong influence on the choice.⁴²⁹ Furthermore, the position of military leader was similar to the position of chief in that it was partly related to the candidate's background. Because of the strong influence of kinship, belonging to an elite was a common way of determining the legitimacy of leadership.⁴³⁰ This meant that mainly those who belonged to a respected kinship line would gain a position of political leadership and military leadership.⁴³¹ Yet this was not decisive because, as has been noted, among Eurasian pastoral nomads chiefs are made, not simply born,⁴³² and the political system of nomads was created by its military organization. Taken together, Ammianus' remark on the position of *primates* among the Huns, is consistent with the overall nature of leaders among Eurasian pastoralists. Ammianus mentions that *primates* got their position after group gatherings, where it was collectively decided what would be the best to do and to whom to give the charge. What is, however, important to notice in Ammianus' account, is that he tells only the position of military leaders, namely those who acted at the head of the Hunnic troops. If we can count on his word that *primates* got their position as a result of general choice, this strongly suggests that Hun chiefs did not try to strengthen their power by going against the decisions of the majority.

According to Thompson although *primates'* ability to lead troops would have been the main reason why they were chosen for the task of military leaders of tribes,⁴³³ the wealth of the *primates* could also have affected the choice. In short, there would have been unequal distribution of herding

⁴²⁵ Vasjutin 2003, 55; cf. Lindner 1982, 693.

⁴²⁶ Lindner 1982, 700-701.

⁴²⁷ Pohl 2003, 573-574. Pohl notices that this was the case among Avars.

⁴²⁸ Barfield 1989, 26; Barfield 1993, 160; Lindner 1982, 700.

⁴²⁹ Morgan (1986) 1990, 38-39.

⁴³⁰ Barfield 1989, 27-28; Barfield 1993, 148; cf. Morgan (1986) 1990, 38-39. Barfield notes that the idiom of kinship remained the common currency for determining the legitimacy of leadership within the ruling elite of an established nomadic empire because there was a long cultural tradition among the tribes of the central steppe of Central Asia of drawing leadership from a single dynastic lineage. Nonetheless there were also exceptions, e.g. in Manchuria pastoralist traditionally rejected hereditary succession and elected their leaders based on talent and ability. Moreover, Morgan reminds us that Temujin could still gain power even though he did not belong to the most appreciated and influential lineage.

⁴³¹ Barfield 1993, 148; Basilov 1989, 6.

⁴³² Morgan (1986) 1990, 38-39.

⁴³³ Thompson (1999) 2000, 50.

animals among the Huns and the wealthiest members in the community profited from their position to gain leadership positions. Moreover the position of *primas* was more easily gained by those whose family had successful military leaders before, or *primates* were military leaders who belonged to the upper class and this guaranteed their position.⁴³⁴

Clearly, the ability to act as a military leader must have been the main reason to be chosen as *primas*. Hun warriors who formed the troops in a tribe, or a group composition comparable to that, first choose their own military leaders and then among them the most skilful one was chosen as *primas*. The *primas* was the military leader who was in charge of all troops during a war, though after the war the position of *primas* ceased.⁴³⁵ It is likely that after victorious raids the same military leader was supported to lead the next raids as well, or the chief who inspired others to have a new raiding expedition became *primas* because those who were attracted to the idea of looting also accepted him as the military leader. Be this as it may, after the looting the need for the position of military leader at the head of troops was gone, and the leader also lost his right to rule others.

What speaks against the idea that wealthier Huns would have taken advantage of their position over others, is that reciprocity and redistribution are an indistinguishable part of the nomadic way of life – poor households, for example, are supported by others which prevents them from dropping out of nomadic societies.⁴³⁶ Moreover, among pastoralists, property differences are often only temporary. Even if property differences might encourage social mobility, high status or rank, and a certain degree of social differentiation, they are rarely capable of creating stable and hereditary social stratification;⁴³⁷ e.g. a rich stock owner does not get any more power over others because of his wealth, he is merely acknowledged as a rich man and gains respect to some extent on account of that.⁴³⁸ Furthermore, wealth may also lead to expense and loss of wealth because a rich stock owner is expected to share his wealth. Accordingly, social gains sometimes turn into property losses.⁴³⁹

⁴³⁴ Bona 1991, passim. 36-37, 71-72, 135, 29; Thompson (1999) 2000, 50-51; Harmatta 1952, 290. Bona has similar ideas to Thompson. However, Bona states that Huns had a king who also acted as the military leader of Hun and barbarian groups. In addition, a king's power to control and lead others was based on his family background, upper class position and wealth. According to Harmatta, the position of military leaders among the Huns was stable and it was connected to a person's wealth.

⁴³⁵ De Plano Carpini, Hist. Mong., XI, 1-3; Skrynnikova 2003, 138-139; Kradin 2003, 80-81. The Eurasian pastoral nomads' manner of arranging military troops according to the decimal system is known e.g. among the Mongols of the 13th century.

⁴³⁶ Khazanov 1984, 154-157; Dmitriev 2003, 151. For example, rich stockowners entrust the pasturing of their animals to the poorer members of the community when an animal is killed and meat is shared by all who belong to the community. This kind of treatment can be expected by everyone in the community. The reason for reciprocity and reallocation derives from the severe conditions of pastoralists' lives – situations can suddenly change, for example after a harsh winter there may be substantial loss of stock and former rich stockowners might end up in a situation where they need help from others. In short, reciprocity and reallocation support pastoralists to continue their way of life despite serious occurrences.

⁴³⁷ Khazanov 1984, 157.

⁴³⁸ Khazanov 1984, 157.

⁴³⁹ Khazanov 1984, 157; Barfield 1993, passim. 149. Gathering followers was a common activity, for example, for sheiks. Khazanov explains that rich stock owners might still gather a certain number of warriors around themselves, forming a bodyguard, and with their help strengthen and increase their own influence and power. Warriors were tied to their leader

What also speaks against the view of wealth guaranteeing the position of *primates* is that pastoralists have a strong sense of co-operation, mutual aid and a tendency to limit differences.⁴⁴⁰ In addition, centralized accumulation of livestock is practically impossible and when economic inequality occurs, it tends to be the result of continuous war and trade – it is not inherent in the internal functioning of the nomadic economy.⁴⁴¹ When it comes to the Huns, we do not know, whether they had trade connections with the district of the Don when they arrived in the lands of the Alans during the 360s. If they had engaged in trade to any large extent, it is likely that the Huns would have been known by the Romans. However, because the Huns were a new barbarian group to the Romans, I suspect that trade did not play a fundamental part in the Huns' daily life in the last decades of the fourth century, and it is unlikely that there was any substantial accumulation of wealth among them. Equally, the fact that the Huns arrived in many scattered groups suggests the absence of continuous wars, which means that the groups of Huns could not have gathered wealth from wars either. If the Huns had been fighting constantly, they would have formed a more formidable military force and not several scattered groups when they approached the borders of the Roman Empire.

Nonetheless, the existence of an upper class, or at least rich persons among the groups of Huns is implied by the graves found in the Volga district of the Danube, dating from the last decades of the fourth century to the fifth century.⁴⁴² Some of the graves contain precious gold jewellery and weapons, signifying the importance of the buried person. However, rich burials do not explicitly signify the existence of an elite which had power and wealth. Likewise, we cannot be sure, whether increases in wealth caused by the Huns' raids on the Roman world during the fourth and fifth centuries eventually supported or led to the existence of an upper class or social differences and inequality among the Huns. In general, wealth does not bring power among nomads, even though wealth is appreciated and related to flaunting and self-assertion in nomadic cultures.⁴⁴³

Taken together, it is hard to say, whether those who gained wealth among the Huns actually had real power over others. In short, the burials might only show the wealth of the person or that the community was eager to bury someone with wealthy offerings. Accordingly, I am sceptical of

only by expediency and personal loyalty and as a reciprocal act the leader had to take care of their welfare. Therefore, the leader would use his stock to ensure a livelihood for his supporters. In the end this could significantly reduce the wealth of the leader and lead to a loss of followers and authority.

⁴⁴⁰ Khazanov 1984, 158-162.

⁴⁴¹ Berman 2000, 175; Khazanov 1984, 161-164.

⁴⁴² Harmatta 1952, passim. 278, 290; Heather 2005, 330-332; Stickler 2007, 80-83.

⁴⁴³ Berman 2000, 165; Stearns, Adas, Schwarz, Gilbert 2001, 93, passim. 90.

speaking about a rich elite on the basis of few wealthy Hun graves. In addition, descriptions of the Huns do not provide any crucial evidence concerning the argumentation either.⁴⁴⁴

I emphasize that the position of military leaders (as *primates*) should not be understood as a hereditary or permanent position. This is stressed by the notion that leadership position among pastoralists is generally diffused and decentralized, and oscillation, not “progress”, is the rule.⁴⁴⁵ This does not only derive from the nomadic way of life, but also from the fact that the group composition changes from time to time.⁴⁴⁶ If *primas*, a leader of an individual tribe was a successful leader once, this did not guarantee that he would have been chosen for the task on a subsequent occasion because the communal composition of the tribe might have been different. The changes in group compositions or alliances are also alluded to by Ammianus in his description of the Huns.⁴⁴⁷ Even if Ammianus’ remark derives from a barbarian topos,⁴⁴⁸ nevertheless alliances with different parties on different occasions crucially belongs to the nomadic way of life. Furthermore, the accounts of many fragmented and independent groups of Huns allying themselves with whoever they pleased suggest that this was a common practice among the Huns during the 370s and 380s. Actions under many leaders and with the most lucrative partner are also emphasized by Eunapius who tells us about *phylarkhoi* (οἱ φυλαρχοί) among groups of Huns in the 390s.⁴⁴⁹

Eunapius narrative is the first contemporary description in which Hun leaders are, if not specified by individual name, at least specifically addressed as leaders of groups of the Huns: they are named *phylarkhoi*. This gives us a starting point to study whether there really were signs of stable leadership or the development of kingship among the Huns during the 390s. Eunapius writes about the contacts between the Eastern Roman Empire and some Huns:⁴⁵⁰

he [Theodosius I] also summoned many of the Huns of Thrace, who served under their tribal chieftains (*tois phylarkhois*)

The title *phylarkhos* is considered to mean a leader of a tribe,⁴⁵¹ but it is suggested to be comparable to titles such as *hegemon* (officeholder),⁴⁵² *arkhon* (a leader, chief, commander),⁴⁵³ and *basileus*

⁴⁴⁴ See Chapters 8 and 9.

⁴⁴⁵ Berman 2000, 175.

⁴⁴⁶ Berman 2000, 175.

⁴⁴⁷ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.11.

⁴⁴⁸ See chapter 2.

⁴⁴⁹ Eunapius fr. 60 in Blockley 1983, 88-89.

⁴⁵⁰ Eunapius fr. 60 in Blockley 1983, 88-89. Eunapius passus: πολλούς τε τῶν Θρακίων Οὐννων σὺν τοῖς παρεπομένοις φυλάρχοις διαναστήσας.

⁴⁵¹ Liddell, Scott, Jones (1924) 1968, 1961.

⁴⁵² Liddell, Scott, Jones (1924) 1968, 68.

⁴⁵³ Liddell, Scott (1924) 1968, 254.

(king, prince, master, ruler).⁴⁵⁴ Therefore, it is unclear what kind of position the title exactly refers to among the Huns.⁴⁵⁵ I consider that *phylarkhoi* were “leaders of large groups” or to be more precise military leaders of tribes because they as a rule could gather nomadic groups together to act under a centralized lead.⁴⁵⁶

Because Eunapius uses plural form of *phylarkhos* (ὁ φυλάρχος): *phylarkhoi/ tois phylarkhois* (οἱ φυλάρχοι/ τοῖς φυλάρχοις), it is uncertain how many military leaders there were, and how large were the troops they led.⁴⁵⁷ If each of the *phylarkhos* led many, or at least two tribes, and we suppose that there were at least three *phylarkhoi*, the number of troops that they led would have been remarkable according to the following estimations. If a Hun tribe consisted of 5 000 members, it could have provided 1 000 warriors. Accordingly, many *phylarkhoi* would then mean thousands of Hun warriors, for example 5 000, and at the same time that would mean 25 000 Huns in Thrace. It is likely that Theodosius would have thought twice before giving permission for so many Huns to enter Thrace and their arrival would no doubt have been mentioned not only by Eunapius but also by other contemporary authors. Therefore, estimations of only a few thousand Huns in total in Thrace are plausible.⁴⁵⁸

Concerning the tasks of the Hun *phylarkhoi*, they were likely to be responsible for the duties that were part of the treaty made with the eastern Roman Empire, namely acting as mercenaries whenever asked. *Phylarkhos* was in fact the title that Romans officially granted nomad leaders with whom they had made a treaty.⁴⁵⁹ Genereally speaking, it has been suggested that the title *phylarkhos* derived from a treaty that granted land from Thracia to groups of Huns while they promised to serve as Theodosius I’s mercenaries when required.⁴⁶⁰ This is not certain, but at least the plural form of *phylarkhos* in Eunapius’ account (τοῖς φυλάρχοις) fundamentally speaks against the idea that there was a single king of the Huns, *phylarkhos*, under whom Hun military

⁴⁵⁴ Liddell, Scott, Jones (1924) 1968, 309.

⁴⁵⁵ Stücker 2007, 50; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 28, 48-51; Wirth 1999, 30; Harmatta 1952, 292-294; Chrysos 1978, passim. 44-49.

⁴⁵⁶ Wirth 1999, 30; Stücker 2007, 50; Khazanov 1984, passim. 132-135, 149-151; Morgan (1986) 1990, passim. 174-175. Berman 2000. passim. 154, 157-160, 165, 173-175; cf. Pohl 2003, 573-574. According to Wirth, *phylarkhoi* were leaders of Hun troops who served in the Roman command. Stücker also regards *phylarkhoi* to be military leaders of large groups, but he does not define more profoundly how they acquired their position or what it entailed.

⁴⁵⁷ Thompson (1999) 2000, 64. Thompson suggests that *phylarkhos* was a, “tribal leader”, i.e the military leader of a confederacy of tribes.

⁴⁵⁸ Claudian, In Ruf., I, 301; Stil., I, 94; Symmachus. Ep., LXXVIII; see Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 51.

⁴⁵⁹ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 48-51; Wirth 1999, 30; Stücker 2007, 50-51; Harmatta 1952, 292-294; Chrysos 1978, passim. 44-49. The *foederati* treaty between groups of Huns and the eastern part of the Roman Empire seems to have been made by Rufinus with the consent of Theodosius I. The Huns’ connection to Rufinus was supposedly close because according to contemporary sources, Rufinus replaced his personal bodyguard troops of Goths with Huns. On the whole, I believe Maenchen-Helfen to be right when he claims that each *phylarkhos* was a leader of a group and formed together a larger composition. In addition, there was no common leader above the many *phylarkhoi*.

⁴⁶⁰ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, passim. 48-51.

leaders would have served.⁴⁶¹ Accordingly, there is evidence to argue that there was no single Hun ruler who could have prevented all the tribes of Huns from acting as they pleased in the 390s.⁴⁶² The view is supported by accounts of fragmented groups of Huns living in the lower Danubian basin to the northern shores of the Black Sea and as far as the Caucasus, and accounts of a raid by Hun troops on Persia in 395 under the leadership of Basich and Kursich.⁴⁶³

4.3. Raiding Troops of Basich and Kursich in Contacts with Persia and the Western Roman Empire

The story about Basich and Kursich is part of a fragment of Priscus. Priscus writes that during his visit as a member of a delegation sent by Theodosius II to Attila in 449 he met envoys from the Western Roman Empire among the Huns. According to Priscus, one of the envoys, Romulus, reported that the Huns knew the way to the Medes, Persia, because some of the Huns had raided the regions a long time ago (πάλαι). Furthermore, the Huns had been led by Basich and Kursich, who later came to Rome to make an alliance.⁴⁶⁴

The date of Basich's and Kursich's arrival to Media has been disputed; it has been claimed that their attack took place either in 395 or around 420.⁴⁶⁵ The general view supports the earlier date because most of contemporary sources suggest that some Huns were living in the Caucasus and causing havoc in the mountain regions during the 390s.⁴⁶⁶ To me Heather is right in noticing that if Basich and Kursich had already appeared near the Danube, they surely would not have dragged themselves and their horses thousands of kilometres around the north and eastern shores of the Black Sea and across rugged mountain range.⁴⁶⁷ Instead, it is more likely that groups of Huns had

⁴⁶¹ Bona 1991, 29, 35.

⁴⁶² Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 51. Maenchen-Helfen considers that Hun groups north of the Danube may have formed a larger unit under a leader. Furthermore, the Huns in Thrace did not wish to join with other Huns and hence made a treaty with Theodosius I.

⁴⁶³ StICKLER 2007, 51; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 51; Heather 2005, 193, 202-203. StICKLER argues that the Huns in Thrace also controlled areas in the Great Hungarian plain at the end of the fourth century. I doubt this and would argue that there were some other groups of Huns living in the Great Hungarian plain. The reason for this is that some Huns are known to have raided Pannonia at the end of the fourth century, but this is an action that the Huns in Thrace would have avoided.

⁴⁶⁴ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 276-279.

⁴⁶⁵ Altheim 1959, 15; Altheim 1962, IV, 319; Gordon 1960, 202; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 54-55; Thompson (1999) 2000, 35, 65-66; Heather 1995, 8; Wirth 1999, 30-31; StICKLER 2007, 52-53; Kelly 2008, 40.

⁴⁶⁶ Wirth 1999, 30; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 54-55.

⁴⁶⁷ Heather 1995, 8-9; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 55. StICKLER 2007, 52. Maenchen-Helfen and StICKLER believe that the Huns who followed Basich and Kursich would have lived in the lower Danubian region.

spread to regions stretching from the lower Danubian basin to the northern parts of the Black Sea and the Caucasus by the end of the fourth century.⁴⁶⁸

Priscus mentions Basich and Kursich leading a “large force” (πλήθους) in the eastern parts of the Black Sea. This is combined with the fact that only small fragmented groups of Huns are known to have acted in the vicinity of Rome’s Danubian frontier, this all suggests that the majority of groups of Huns would have still lived in the east in the late fourth century. I agree in principle, but Romulus’ estimation of the size of Basich’s and Kursich’s troops (πλήθους, “a large force”) is too vague and inadequate to show that the main body of Huns was in the northern parts of the Black Sea. I also doubt the claims that Basich and Kursich would have ruled over all the groups of Huns in the vicinity of Caucasus, because when Hun troops rode into Persia and Roman provinces to the south and southwest of Armenia in 395, there were two or three different Hun groups, each of them heading in different areas.⁴⁶⁹

One group of Huns devastated the areas south and west of the Anti-Taurus⁴⁷⁰ and when they crossed the Euphrates, the Romans attacked and destroyed them. Simultaneously, another group of Huns ravaged Asia Minor and Syria. Lastly, Hun troops under the leadership of Basich and Kursich rode as far as Ctesiphon through the valleys of the Tigris and the Euphrates, and when they turned back the Persian army marched against them. The result of the clash was, as Priscus informs us, that Basich’s and Kursich’s troops had to abandon the majority of their loot and retreat back to the areas where they had come from.⁴⁷¹

I suspect that Basich and Kursich were leaders of only one of the Hun troops, because contemporary authors tell us that Huns looted and caused terror over a wide area simultaneously. However, it would seem that Basich and Kursich led the largest band of warriors because their names were known by contemporaries.⁴⁷²

The nature of Basich’s and Kursich’s leadership position and the goal of the Hun troops’ intrusion in the east becomes clear from contemporary sources, such as Jerome’s letter to a friend.⁴⁷³

⁴⁶⁸ Heather 1995, 9-10; Kelly 2008, 40, 45.

⁴⁶⁹ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 276-279; Stickler 2007, 52; Kelly 2008, 39-41; Wirth 1999, 30, 41-42, passim. 33-34; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 51-53, passim. 69; Thompson (1999) 2000, 66; Heather 1995, 8-9; Heather 2005, 202. I consider that Priscus’ inexact estimation implies that he lacked precise knowledge on the size of the troops, or the troops were considered “large” as a result of the fear they incurred in the areas they raided. The number of nomad warriors is often exaggerated in Roman contemporary sources due to the nomads’ ability to move quickly and spread out over a wide area, which makes writers think they were more numerous than they actually were.

⁴⁷⁰ Anti-Taurus is a mountain range located in modern southern and eastern Turkey.

⁴⁷¹ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 276-279; see Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 52.

⁴⁷² Maenchen-Helfen 1973, passim. 58. Maenchen-Helfen stresses that the Huns’ invasion in the east shows what a great distance the Huns were able to cover in one campaign. However, it is not certain which campaign he means or whether he means that all the military actions were led by Basich and Kursich.

⁴⁷³ Jerome, Ep. LX, 16; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 58, passim. 52-53. Maenchen-Helfen refers to a contemporary source called *Liber Califarum*.

Contemporary accounts mention that the goal was to plunder and capture slaves, not to conquer new regions. This is also emphasized by Priscus' remark that Basich and Kursich were “*overrunning and plundering the land*”.⁴⁷⁴ In addition, these actions can be taken as an indication of Basich's and Kursich's military leadership position. In short, the Hun leaders clearly wanted to please their follower warriors and guarantee them as much booty as possible.⁴⁷⁵ Priscus also explicitly mentions Basich and Kursich as “*commanders of a large force*” (πολλοῦ πλήθους ἄρχοντας). Priscus calls them “*Scythian royalty*” (τῶν βασιλείων Σκυθῶν) which I consider to refer to their leadership position and not unambiguously to their upper class status.⁴⁷⁶ After all, the leadership title that Priscus attributes to them is *archont* (ὁ ἄρχων/ οἱ ἄρχοντες) which does not include any indication of a hereditary or upper class position but is a neutral term that means the position of “*leader, commander, chief, master, captain*”.⁴⁷⁷ All this would suggest that Basic and Kursich were military leaders chosen by their followers for a military task.

Another aspect that Basich's and Kursich's position as military leaders is that when the Hun troops withdrew from Persia and the eastern parts of the Roman Empire in 397, or at the latest in 399, they continued to lead their troops and to ensure profits for them.⁴⁷⁸ According to Priscus, Basich and Kursich made an alliance with the Western Roman Empire, which indicates that the Huns were interested in acting as Roman mercenaries.⁴⁷⁹ Because Hun troops served in the Western Roman Empire army in the years 407 and 409, Basich and Kursich are supposed to have made treaty with the Western Roman Empire in 404 or 407.⁴⁸⁰ The fact that once again Basich and Kursich were not interested in gaining land but to gain profits for their warriors and troops shows that they concentrated on military issues, as was expected from military leaders.⁴⁸¹

What happened to Basich and Kursich after their co-operation with the Western Roman Empire is not known, but in the first years of the fifth century other Hun leaders also made themselves known to the Roman Emperors. Because the leaders are said to have led the Hun troops and to have been

⁴⁷⁴ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 276-279.

⁴⁷⁵ Priscus, fr. 2, fr. 9.3, fr. 11.2, fr. 14 in Blockley 1983, 226-227, 236-237, 264-269, 292-293; cf. Stearns, Adas, Shchwartz, Gilbert 2001, 93; Khazanov 1984, 159-160; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 199-200; Thompson (1999) 2000, passim. 64. Nomads are interested in having slaves primarily for trade reasons. Only on rare occasions are slaves taken to live among nomads, and if so they often serve as warriors to strengthen the nomads' troops and to acquire booty for their masters. However, it is not uncommon for slaves to eventually be accepted as full members of the nomadic community. The reason for this is that there is little social differentiation in nomadic societies, largely because of the lack or low level of occupational specialization. Priscus mentions that the characteristic features of nomadic Huns in the 440s are still found in the middle of the fifth century.

⁴⁷⁶ See Chapter 2. It is likely that Priscus calls Basich and Kursich “*royal Scythians*” in order to indicate his knowledge of Herodotus' stories about the Scythians, nomads who also caused terror in the same regions in earlier centuries.

⁴⁷⁷ Liddell, Scott, Jones 1968, 254.

⁴⁷⁸ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 55; Heather 1995, 8; Kelly 2008, 41.

⁴⁷⁹ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 276-279. Priscus passus “[...] *who later came to Rome to make an alliance* [...]”.

⁴⁸⁰ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 55; Stickler 2007, 53.

⁴⁸¹ Thompson (1999) 2000, 188, 49; Fox 1936, 43, 47, 77, 106.

excellent warriors, this may be taken as a sign that their position was based on military leadership. Furthermore, the view is strengthened by the notion that after an unsuccessful campaign the lead was questioned by Hun troops, as happened to a Hun leader known by the name of Uldin. His role as leader of Hun troops close the Roman borders is the topic of the following chapter.

5. AIMS TO INCREASE THE POWER OF HUN LEADERS? A HUN LEADER ULDIN

Uldin is the first Hun leader who is mentioned by name in contemporary authors' stories about the Huns and their activities at the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries.⁴⁸² This speaks on behalf of the Romans' interest to know more about the Huns and to have contacts with them.

At the same time when the number of descriptions of Huns increases and these descriptions become more detailed, it gives a stronger basis to evaluate the possible changes that took place in the leadership position among the nomads.

Accordingly, the main questions are what kind of leadership position did Uldin have. Second, how united were the groups of Huns, and do their activities suggest that they kept their nomadic way of life? Finally, are there signs that Romans tried to generate a more permanent leadership position among the Huns in general in order to control the nomads more efficiently?

5.1. A Friend and an Enemy of the Eastern Roman Empire

Zosimus' description of the movements of barbarians in the lower Danubian region includes a remark on the activities of a Hun leader Uldin during the last years of the 390s or the year 400. Zosimus writes:⁴⁸³

Uldin, who was at that period chief of the Huns [Ούλδεις δὲ ὁ τὴν Οὐννων ἔχων κατ' ἐκείνους τοὺς κρόνους ἡγεμονία], considering it unsafe to permit a Barbarian [Gainas and his army] followed by his army to fix his habitation beyond the Ister ; and at the same time supposing that by expelling him from the country he should gratify the Roman emperor, provided means to oppose him. Having mustered a considerable number of troops, he drew them up in order of battle against the enemy. On the other hand, Gainas, perceiving that he could neither return to the Romans, nor in any other manner escape the attacks of Uldin, armed his followers and encountered the Huns. After several conflicts between the two armies, in some of which the party of Gainas was successful, many of his men being slain, Gainas himself was at length also killed, having fought with great bravery.

The war being terminated by the death of Gainas, Uldin, the chief of the Huns [ὁ τῶν Οὐννων ἡγούμενος], sent his head to the emperor Arcadius [Emperor in the eastern part of the Roman Empire during the years 395 – 408], and was rewarded for this achievement. He, therefore, entered into a league with the Romans. Affairs being now

⁴⁸² The reason why I consider Uldin to be the first Hun leader known by name is that the time when Basich and Kursich acted as leaders of the Huns cannot be dated in Priscus' narrative.

⁴⁸³ Zosimus, *Hist. nov.*, V, 22:1-3.

conducted without any order, through the emperor's want of prudence, Thrace was again disturbed. A band of fugitive slaves, and others who had deserted from the armies, pretending to be Huns, pillaged all the country, and took whatever they found out of the walls.

Zosimus' description of Uldin's activities emphasizes that Uldin wanted to have diplomatic relations with the Eastern Roman Empire by sending the head of Gainas, former *magister of militum* and usurper in the eastern half of the Roman Empire to Arcadius. Although Uldin could achieve good relations with the Eastern Roman Empire by fighting against Gainas, nevertheless the primary purpose for the act was most likely, as Zosimus implies, the defence of the Huns' and their allies' herding and living areas.⁴⁸⁴ Uldin seems to have been a good military strategist for his supporters: he not only eliminated an enemy but also used this action to establish relations with the Eastern Roman Empire.

Uldin offers an opportunity to study military leadership among Eurasian pastoralists. He represents a leader figure of temporarily united groups who needed to defend their pastoral territories and were interested in acquiring riches especially by raiding and by other profitable contacts with sedentarists, such as establishing relations that would at least include the exchange of gifts that would profit his own groups of nomads.⁴⁸⁵

The beginning of the relationship between Uldin and the Romans in the east seems to have been a success as Zosimus informs us: Uldin was rewarded by the Romans and good relations were formed. Uldin and Arcadius concluded an alliance and Thompson considers that the treaty would have involved payment of an annual tribute to the Huns.⁴⁸⁶ This is, however, uncertain because we do not know anything more about the situation than Zosimus tells us. Therefore, what we might only count on is that apparently Uldin and the eastern part of the Roman Empire ended in friendship.⁴⁸⁷ I see this as revealing two major developments that took place between the Romans and the nomads.

First, Uldin strengthened his image as a capable leader who could bring profits to his followers among the Huns. Second, the Eastern Roman Empire was clearly interested in establishing firm contacts with the Huns, indicating that Huns were recognized as playing an active role on the Roman frontier. Overall, the Romans' interest in seeking out contacts with Hun leaders in the East

⁴⁸⁴ Stickler 2007, 54.

⁴⁸⁵ Barfield 1993, 151, 149, 157.

⁴⁸⁶ Thompson (1999) 2000, 37.

⁴⁸⁷ Wirth 1999, 31.

implies that the Huns had arrived in increasing numbers to dwell on the Roman frontiers in the middle Danubian region during the first decade of the fifth century.⁴⁸⁸

Turning to Arcadius' view of Uldin, he seems to have wanted to establish a relationship with Uldin in order to provide a stable and Roman-minded Hun ruler on its frontiers.⁴⁸⁹ This, after all, was the policy that the Romans had favoured with barbarians on the frontier for centuries, and especially during the fourth and fifth centuries.⁴⁹⁰ It was easier for the Romans to deal with a few chieftains than large numbers of independent tribesmen.⁴⁹¹ Moreover, a Hun leader friendly to Rome could form a barrier against unexpected barbarian invasions on the Roman borders.⁴⁹² Furthermore, if Uldin could control the area, this would release Roman troops to fight elsewhere.⁴⁹³ Thus the Romans considered Uldin a barbarian leader who could bring a degree of control to the border regions of the Eastern Roman Empire.⁴⁹⁴

Whatever efforts the Romans made or planned to make to strengthen Uldin's position, still the descriptions of Uldin and his acts clearly suggest that his position was based on military leadership. First, as Zosimus reports, Uldin's tasks were fundamentally related to military actions: he led nomad troops and arranged for the defence of areas of groups he was charged with. Second, Zosimus mentions Uldin as the "present" [τῶν κρόνου] leader which might indicate that Uldin's position was temporary, a common feature of military leadership among Eurasian pastoral

⁴⁸⁸ Heather 2007, 8, 13.

⁴⁸⁹ Batty 2007, 456, 563; cf. Heather 1997, 68. According to Batty, the Danube frontier had always been problematic for the Romans. In short, the Romans had never been able to form a strong enough defence against nomadic groups in the neighbourhood, and hence the most effective solution had been to establish good relations with the barbarian leaders. Albeit a necessity, hiring mercenaries from among the friendly barbarian groups in the frontier areas of the Roman Empire also helped establish good relations there.

⁴⁹⁰ Heather 2007, 12-13, 19.

⁴⁹¹ Goldsworthy 2009, 107; Heather 2007, *passim*. 13.

⁴⁹² Batty 2007, *passim*. 428-432; StICKLER 2007, 54; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 59. Uldin is claimed to be the military leader of the Hun groups to be found in the lower Danube region, east of the Olt river and to the west and to the east of the Carpathian Mountains. Therefore he and the Huns lived in an area that part of Roman interests. Batty argues that the Romans had wanted to have friendly relations with Bosphoran monarchs for centuries to block raiding northern tribes from gaining access to Asia.

⁴⁹³ Zosimus, *Hist. nov.*, V, 22:1-3. Zosimus *passus* "A band of fugitive slaves, and others who had deserted from the armies, pretending to be Huns, pillaged all the country, and took whatever they found out of the walls" implies that undefined and scattered groups of raiders pillaged areas in the lower Danube regions at the turn of the 4th and 5th centuries. That is to say, barbarian raids and invasions of Roman territory were not the only events that caused insecurity and called for military actions in the territories in the lower Danube basin.

⁴⁹⁴ StICKLER 2007, 54; Heather 1997, *passim*. 69, 71; Millar 2006, 76-77. Millar claims that if the Empire of Theodosius was under serious threat, it would have been caused by barbarians who were crossing the Danube. Furthermore, according to Millar, an aspect that underlines the Danube frontier as "the key frontier" for the Eastern Roman Empire, were the plans to change the military structure. Two separate *Magistri Militum* were established in Illyricum and Thrace, each with an extensive field army; and four *Duces* with forces were spread out along the Danube, in the provinces of Moesia Prima, Dacia Ripensis, Moesia Secunda, and Scythia.

nomads.⁴⁹⁵ An aspect that also supports the assessment of Uldin as a military leader is the word *hegemon* (ὁ ἡγεμών), used by Zosimus to describe Uldin's influence.

The word *hegemon* is a neutral title for leadership and it usually refers to “leader, commander, chief” and “officeholder”, and hence the interpretation of “ὁ ἡγεμών” as “one who does a thing first” or “shows the way to others” is plausible.⁴⁹⁶ I would argue consider that the word *hegemon* in the case of Uldin indicates that the other Huns, especially Hun warriors, had agreed to his leadership position. In addition, because the title ὁ ἡγεμών includes the idea that the one in that position was expected to take care of certain duties, I suspect that this refers to Uldin being trusted to lead troops and make peace treaties in times of confrontation. On the whole, I agree with the claim that Uldin would have been the first Hun *phylarkhos* known by a name.⁴⁹⁷

However, the number of groups whose military lead Uldin was trusted to take charge of could not have been many, if we are to believe Zosimus' story about the many and long-lasting battles between Uldin and Gainas before Uldin was victorious.⁴⁹⁸ In short, if Uldin had been in charge of a led large troop, it would have been easy for him to destroy Gainas' weaker troops.⁴⁹⁹ It is estimated that Uldin would have lead about three to five tribes from the Romanian plains to the Great Hungarian Plain, meaning c. 20,000 nomads. I suspect that the groups who counted on Uldin as their temporary military leader could also consist of local barbarians.⁵⁰⁰

During the first years of the fifth century Uldin is claimed to have been in charge of many attacks and raids on Hun troops in Roman territories in the lower Danubian basin, but I am doubtful about this because no Late Roman author mentions the name of Uldin in connection with the raids. My next consideration is whether accounts about activities of some Hun troops, whose leader we do not know by name, can be connected to Uldin or not. This gives a stronger basis to consider, whether Uldin was in charge of only a few military actions, as seems to have been the case. If so, this implies that on the Roman borders in the lower Danubian basin there were other confederations of Huns led by military leaders other than Uldin during the first decade of the fifth century. Accordingly, the situation implies that Uldin's position was not fundamentally different to other Hun military leaders of that time, and hence challenges the claims about Uldin being a Hun king during the first decade of the fifth century.

⁴⁹⁵ This no doubt derives from the fact that Zosimus wrote about Uldin almost a hundred years later and knew how the story of Uldin ended – Uldin lost his position at the head of his troops in 409.

⁴⁹⁶ Liddell, Scott, Jones 1940, 763.

⁴⁹⁷ Stickler 2007, 53, 50.

⁴⁹⁸ Thompson (1999) 2000, 67.

⁴⁹⁹ Thompson (1999) 2000, 67.

⁵⁰⁰ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 67; See Chapter 3.

5.2. Leader of All the Actions of the Huns?

After the Gainas episode Uldin's next action is supposedly to have led a Hun raiding party to Thrace in 404/405. However it is not certain whether Uldin really was in charge because Sozomen's account of this raid does not include the name of any Hun leader. Sozomen writes:⁵⁰¹

The Huns crossed the Ister [the lower reaches of the Danube] and devastated Thrace. The robbers in Isauria, gathered in great strength, ravaged the towns and villages between Caria and Phoenicia.

Because Sozomen only refers to an invasion, Maenchen-Helfen suggests that it may have been only a quick raid, or alternatively the Huns looted the unfortunate provinces for months.⁵⁰² Although Sozomen does not mention that the invasion was led by Uldin, this was most likely the case because the invasion was launched from the regions next to Thrace, where the groups who formed the troops under Uldin's lead are supposed to have dwelt.⁵⁰³ Moreover, Maenchen-Helfen points out that Nicephorus Callistus (1256-1311) mentions Uldin in his account, indicating that Sozomen's stories might have originally contained Uldin's name.⁵⁰⁴ However, I suspect that Callistus might have summarized the actions of fragmented groups of Huns under the name of Uldin in order to write a coherent narration about the actions of many Huns. It is equally plausible that not every group of Huns in the areas where Uldin's troops were gathered would have belonged to the supporters of Uldin, but would have acted and raided on their own. That is to say, the raiding party to Thrace might have come from the areas where Uldin is known to have lived, but the troops were not led by him.

Because we do not know for sure who led the Huns' looting expedition to Thrace, it allows to suspect that there were also other groups of Huns than those under Uldin's command in the vicinity of the Roman Empire, and they were also keen to profit from and have contacts with the Romans.

What supports this idea is Sozomen's story about some Huns in Thrace before Uldin invaded the territory in 408.⁵⁰⁵ Some groups of Huns are likely to have made their way to Thrace before Uldin's invasion, Huns, who were not connected to Uldin. If Priscus' story about Basich and Kursich "*who*

⁵⁰¹ Sozomen, *Hist. ecc.*, VIII, 25, 1.

⁵⁰² Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 63.

⁵⁰³ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 59, 62-63; Wirth 1999, 32; Stickler 2007, 54. Uldin was chosen as a military leader of Hun groups to be found in the lower-Danube, east of the Olt River and to the west and east of the Carpathian Mountains.

⁵⁰⁴ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 63. Callistus' narration is a summary and he might have added the name himself. According to Maenchen-Helfen, because Callistus' source was probably a compilation written in the tenth century, based on Philostorgius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret and Evagrius, it is possible that the name of Uldin came from Philostorgius' or Sozomen's narration. Still, I think there is room to doubt whether Uldin led the invasion.

⁵⁰⁵ Sozomen, *Hist. ecc.*, IX: 5.

later came to Rome to make an alliance” is to be dated to the beginning of the fifth century, it is possible that the Huns looting in Thrace were led by Basich and Kursich.⁵⁰⁶ Another option is that the Huns in Thrace belonged to Basic’s and Kursich’s group of Huns, but when Basich and Kursich came arrived from their raiding expedition in the Middle East to the Western Roman Empire, the groups decided to live in Thrace, in the regions near the Marus River and the Diocese of Pannonia, west of Uldin’s Huns.⁵⁰⁷ Finally, the main body of Huns came from the north of the Caucasus to the Great Hungarian Plain in 395 - 425, and this suggests that the Hun raiders in Thrace could have been some of these Huns and not necessarily those who normally chose Uldin as their military leader.⁵⁰⁸

The reason why all the actions done by the Huns during the first decade of fifth century are linked to Uldin, seems to derive from the aim in modern research to create a continuous line of development among the Huns leading to the growth of kingship.⁵⁰⁹ I would argue, however, that Uldin should only be seen only as a military leader whose name we simply happen to know from the Late Roman authors’ descriptions from the first decade of the fifth century. There is not sufficient evidence to suggest that Uldin was more notable Hun leader than any others during this period.⁵¹⁰ It is likely that Uldin led the largest temporary coalition of Huns, but this does not mean that he would have been in charge of all actions of the Huns in 400-409.

If indeed it was Uldin’s troops who raided Thrace, it would appear that Uldin was more interested in gaining profits for his troops than in maintaining peaceful and friendly relations with the Eastern Roman Empire. This would imply that Uldin’s position was based on temporary military leadership, because Uldin was more interested in pleasing his troops by looting than in strengthening his own position with the Romans.⁵¹¹ Even if Uldin had wanted to strengthen his position as leader of the Huns, the help given by the Romans would not have been enough.⁵¹² The Huns still lived according to the norms of a nomadic way of life, and it is within this framework that we should evaluate the position of Hun leaders. It is far more propable that Uldin was a minor figure in Hun society, indeed the very fact that Uldin sought service in the Roman armies shows that he was not the ruler of a

⁵⁰⁶ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 276-279. See Chapter 4.

⁵⁰⁷ Basic’s and Kursich’s troops must have lived in the western part of the Roman Empire in order to make an alliance with the Romans. However, there are no contemporary narratives that tell about the event.

⁵⁰⁸ Heather 2005, 203.

⁵⁰⁹ When contemporary authors mention the name of a Hun leader all the actions of Hun groups with or without an immediate connection to the leader are linked to this name. This has led scholars to claim that leader positions among the Huns would have evolved into kingship during the first half of the fifth centuries.

⁵¹⁰ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 71.

⁵¹¹ Kradin 2005, 158. Kradin notices this in the case of Rouran nomads. The Rouran nomads were Eurasian pastoralists who lived in the vicinity of the China during the fourth and the fifth century AD.

⁵¹² Heather 1997, 71. Heather points out that the Romans were eager to give gifts and payments to friendly barbarian leaders in order to maintain peace. We may thus suppose that the Romans also sent gifts to Uldin. However, these gifts do not seem to have reduced the Huns’ appetite for raiding.

great state north of the Danube.⁵¹³ Uldin's interest in acting as a Roman mercenary is further proof that Uldin was a temporary military leader.

Military co-operation between Uldin and the Western Roman Empire took place in 405 when the Gothic leader Radagaisus invaded Venetia, Lombardy and Tuscany with a huge army (estimated to be 400,000 strong) and Stilicho, *magister militum* in the Western Roman Empire, hired Uldin's Huns to strengthen the Roman army. The situation reported by both Orosius and Zosimus:

[... Radagaisus made] a sudden invasion with an army reported more than two hundred thousand Goths. [...] Against Radagaisus, our most savage enemy, God granted that the minds of our other enemies should be disposed to help us with their forces. Uldin and Sarus, leaders of the Huns and of the Goths, came to the aid of the Romans [...]⁵¹⁴

Radagaisus, having collected four hundred thousand of the Celts, and the German tribes that dwell beyond the Danube and the Rhine, made the preparations for passing over into Italy [...] Stilicho took with him all the forces that were stationed at Ticinum in Liguria, which amounted to about thirty cohorts, and all the auxiliaries that he could procure from the Alans and Huns, and without waiting for the approach of the enemy, crossed the Danube with all his forces.⁵¹⁵

Unlike Zosimus, who only mentions Alans and Huns as Stilicho's mercenaries,⁵¹⁶ Orosius claims that there were both Goths and Huns. Moreover, Orosius even mentions the leaders of the troops by name: Uldin and Sarus.⁵¹⁷ Whether Stilicho's mercenaries included both Goths and Alans is uncertain, but we can at least count on the fact that there were Huns, and supposedly they were led by Uldin, as Zosimus informs us.⁵¹⁸ Stilicho had no time to lose in forming a defence against Radagaisus, and this supports the view that Hunnic auxiliaries could not have arrived from far away

⁵¹³ Thompson (1999) 2000, 66; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 67; Wirth 1999, 32. Thompson claims that Uldin was "the leader of a mere fraction of the Huns, and that it is quite certain that he did not lead them all". Maenchen-Helfen on the other hand estimates that Uldin would have led many tribes from the Rumanian plains to the Great Hungarian Plain. According to theoretical estimations, if Uldin had led three to five tribes, this would mean 20,000 dwellers/ 3,000 – 4,000 thousand warriors in total. Wirth considers that Uldin's troops also included groups other than Huns, and hence the estimations of the number of warriors under Uldin would have been even larger, and the theoretical estimations of his troops give only a rough approximation.

⁵¹⁴ Orosius, Hist. ad. Pag., VII: 37.

⁵¹⁵ Zosimus, Hist. nov., V, 26:2-4; see Wirth 1999, 34; Thompson (1999) 2000, 37-38.

⁵¹⁶ When Roman authors write about barbarian mercenaries it is common practice that they first mention the name of the largest group. Accordingly Zosimus' story about "Alans and Huns" implies that the mercenary troops consisted of mainly Alans but there were also some Huns. Therefore this might indicate that Huns had not subjugated the Alans, but the latter were independent groups who had made a temporary alliance with the Huns. I take this as a sign that the groups of Huns would not have subjugated barbarian groups, whose areas they arrived to dwell in the end of the 4th century.

⁵¹⁷ Thompson (1999) 2000, 37.

⁵¹⁸ Orosius lived his last years when Stilicho gathered his mercenaries, while Zosimus was not even born. Accordingly we might count more on Orosius' account than Zosimus'; after all, Zosimus could only rely on stories written or told about the situation. Nonetheless, this does not exclude the fact that Orosius may have been inexact.

but from the vicinity of the Danube, where Uldin's Huns are known to have come.⁵¹⁹ Equally, the Gainas episode and the supposed raid on Thrace might have made Uldin known also in the western part of the Roman Empire as a Hun leader who was in charge of a large band of warriors, and that inspired Stilicho to turn to Uldin.

The fact that Zosimus tells about Alan, not Goth auxiliaries in connection with the Huns might derive from the fact that Uldin's Hun troops had not arrived alone but had supposedly formed a coalition with other barbarian troops – Goths or Alans, perhaps with both.⁵²⁰ Hence it would have been difficult for contemporaries to be certain what kind of troops and allies there actually were. The notion that once again Huns, Alans and/or Goths were fighting alongside each other in Roman troops, strongly implies that Uldin's Huns, or Huns in general, had not subjugated other barbarian groups on their way west. On the contrary, there would seem to have been alliances and confederation between the Huns and other barbarian groups,⁵²¹ and it is very unlikely that Uldin's Huns had only a temporary confederation with the Alans or the Goths when joining Stilicho's army. What may well have facilitated the alliance was the expectation of payment, a satisfactory arrangement for both Uldin and his warriors.

The friendly relationship with Rome and especially mercenary activity could have strengthened the notion among the Huns that they could gain wealth from the Roman Empire not only by raiding but also through co-operation. This, along with interest on the side of the Western Roman Empire, seem to have increased contacts and strengthened friendly relations because Priscus' accounts tell that the Western Roman Empire and the Huns started to exchange hostages during the early decades of the fifth century.⁵²² However, whether it was already Uldin and "his Huns", who sent some Huns to the court of the Western Roman Empire and received some upper class Romans in return to live among them is not certain.⁵²³ For the Romans exchange of hostages was a common policy to gain control of barbarian groups through friendly relations, and actions like these during this period indicate

⁵¹⁹ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 61, 62-63; Thompson (1999) 2000, 37-38.

⁵²⁰ Because Zosimus was dependent on Orosius' account of the mercenaries who Stilicho hired, I am more inclined to rely on Orosius' report that the Hun troops were under Uldin's command and they were accompanied by other barbarian troops.

⁵²¹ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 71-72; cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, 66; Heather 2007, 8, 10, 27. The fact that the Huns did not subjugate other barbarian groups living on the borders of the Roman Empire would explain why Huns could have formed a huge coalition that operated successfully in the 440s. Maenchen-Helfen considers that groups of Huns and Alans would have allied together, though this ended when the Alans became tired of being the junior partner in the alliance, and hence joined the Vandals.

⁵²² Priscus, fr.11.2 in Blockley 1983, 256-257. The exchange of hostages between the Western Roman Empire and some Huns during the first decades of the fifth century are implied by Priscus' accounts of the Huns in the 440s.

⁵²³ Stickler 2007, 55.

Rome's increasing interest in controlling the Huns and show that the Huns had become a factor that could not be dismissed by the Romans.⁵²⁴

Even though friendly relations with the Romans clearly attracted the Huns, it would seem that it was not a lucrative enough option to restrain raiding, especially in the areas of the Eastern Roman Empire. Whereas the Western half of the Roman Empire was not raided by Uldin's troops, Thrace was not spared in 408, as Sozomen mentions. Sozomen's account of this raiding expedition is also the last report we have on Uldin.⁵²⁵ The account of how Uldin disappeared as leader of the Huns and what it can tell us about his leadership position are discussed in next section. At the same time I consider whether the actions of other fragmented Hun groups indicate the rise of a stronger, autarchic leadership among them.

5.3. Abandoned during a Raiding Operation: The End of Uldin

The last remark that we have on Uldin is from Sozomen.⁵²⁶ He tells about the situation in Thrace at the end of 408: "*the Huns, who were encamped in Thrace, retreated disgracefully and cast off many of their number although they had neither been attacked nor pursued*", and after this "*Uldin, the leader ἰὸ η̅γγεμῶν of the barbarous tribes who dwell near the Ister, crossed that river at the head of a large army, and encamped on the frontiers of Thrace*". When Uldin attacked with his troops, they were victorious because Sozomen mentions that Uldin "*took possession by treachery of a city of Mæsia, called Castra Martis, and then made incursions into the rest of Thrace, and insolently refused to enter into terms of alliance with the Romans*". Uldin seems to have counted on his power because, according to Sozomen, even though "*the prefect of the Thracian soldiers made propositions of peace to him [Uldin], but he replied by pointing to the sun, and declaring that it would be easy for him, if he desired to do so, to subjugate every region of the earth that is enlightened by that luminary*". However, Uldin's trust in his own powers seem to have been mistaken because Sozomen claims that "*while Uldin was uttering menaces of this description, and*

⁵²⁴ Heather 1997, passim. 66, 69, 74. Heather's remarks on the exchange of hostages in the relationship (*foedus and deditio*) between the Romans and the Goths, who were led by Athanaric in 432, are reminiscent of the exchange of hostages between the Huns and the Romans in the 410s – 440s. However, it is not known, whether the Huns and the Romans would also have established *foedus*. In any case, according to Heather actions varied widely though the title, *foedus*, was the same. That is to say, the Romans were willing to adapt diplomatic means to suit the needs. Therefore, it is likely that the Romans favoured a similar policy with the Huns as with the barbarian groups with whom they had established *foedus*, though the Romans and the Huns would not have established *foedus*.

⁵²⁵ Sozomen, Hist. ecc., IX, 5:2; cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, 64; Stückler 2007, 56.

⁵²⁶ Sozomen, Hist. ecc., IX, 5:2; cf. Wirth 1999, 35, 160; Thompson (1999) 2000, 38.

was ordering as large a tribute as he pleased, and that on this condition peace could be established with the Romans or the war would continue“ his followers withdrew their support for his military leadership position and, to quote to Sozomen “for shortly afterwards, the immediate attendants and the leaders of the tribes of Uldin (οἰκέιυς καὶ λοχάγους) were discussing the Roman form of government, the philanthropy of the emperor, and his promptitude and liberality in rewarding the best and good men. It was not without God that they turned to the love of the points so discussed and seceded to the Romans, to whose camp they joined themselves, together with the troops ranged under themselves”. What followed, according to Sozomen, is that “finding himself thus abandoned, Uldin escaped with difficulty to the opposite bank of the river. Many of his troops were slain; and among others the whole of the barbarous tribe called the Sciri. This tribe had been very strong in terms of numbers before falling into this misfortune. Some of them were killed; and others were taken prisoners, and conveyed in chains to Constantinople”.⁵²⁷

Before turning to what Uldin’s sudden loss of power tells about his position and the unity of the Hun groups, I first consider what Sozomen’s comment about some Huns in Thrace reveals about the fragmented Huns’ ways of life and goals.

Sozomen remarks of the Huns in Thrace without any good reason they moved away from the areas before Uldin’s invasion (“retreated disgracefully and cast off many of their number although they had neither been attacked nor pursued”). This strongly suggests that the Huns had not settled down in one place, and were moving from time to time to new pastures, as is common for herding nomads. The Hun groups’ movements in Thrace also indicate their fragmentation and the likelihood of their being a substantial number of Hun leaders besides Uldin in the border areas of Rome.

On the whole, I suspect that the Huns in Thrace in 394 were those who promised to act as Theodosius I’s mercenaries, when needed, and in return they were allowed to live in Thrace.⁵²⁸ Sozomen’s claim that the Huns retreated disgracefully might refer to the treaty between the Huns and Theodosius I, stressing that the Huns were expected to defend the territories against the invaders as agreed upon in the treaty.⁵²⁹ However, this does not seem to have happened, and it indicates that the Huns were not eager to settle down. On the other hand, it is possible that the Huns would have been those attacked Thrace in 404/405.⁵³⁰ In any case, the existence of Huns in Thrace before Uldin’s attack together with their lack of interest in joining Uldin’s invasion, indicates that there was no integrity between Hun groups, or at least connections were loose.

⁵²⁷ Sozomen, Hist. ecc., IX, 5:2; cf. Wirth 1999, 35, 160; Thompson (1999) 2000, 38.

⁵²⁸ Eunapius, fr. 60 in Blockley 1983, 88-89; see Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 49; Stücker 2007, 51.

⁵²⁹ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, passim. 51.

⁵³⁰ Sozomen, Hist. ecc., VIII, 25:1.

A feature that suggests fragmentation of Hun groups and that they were eager to form a coalition with other groups according to nomadic customs is as Sozomen mentions that both Huns and Sciri, at least, formed part of Uldin's army (*“the immediate attendants and the leaders of the tribes of Uldin”* and *“among others the whole of the barbarous tribe called the Sciri”*). Their presence and especially Sozomen's phrase that Sciri were *“among others”* indicates an alliance between parties among the barbarian groups. On the whole, for nomads the background of the allies was less important, for what mattered more was the goal that both shared.⁵³¹ The alliance with the Sciri might even go back to 381 when Zosimus informs us that the Huns joined with the Sciri and the Carpo-Dacians in crossing the Danube on a raiding expedition.⁵³² The fact that Sciri did not withdraw their support from Uldin suggests that the parties had co-operated for some time, and that there was trust between them even during hardship. It is unlikely that the Sciri's participation would have been based on submission to Uldin because, as Sozomen mentions, it was the Huns who abandoned Uldin and afterwards the Sciri remained with Uldin. In short, there were no Hun troops, at least in any large numbers, would force other barbarian groups, such as the Sciri, to still follow Uldin. Furthermore, the existence of the Sciri among Uldin's troops indicates, as Heather states, Uldin's mixed powerbase.⁵³³ All this suggests an alliance between groups rather than a stable unit. The fact that Uldin's closest Hun warriors (οἰκέιυς καὶ λοχᾶγους)⁵³⁴ or “Uldin's own people and captains”, as Maenchen-Helfen puts it,⁵³⁵ withdrew their support from him because of disagreement about decisions in battles, strongly suggests that there was an alliance between the groups – if the leader was found wanting, Hun groups were ready to act on their own. It seems that the majority of Huns went over to the Roman side in order to gain wealth. In doing so the Hun warriors acted according to nomadic custom: one alliance would be renounced in order to make a

⁵³¹ Lindner 1982, 702, 698; Vasjutin 2003, 52-54.

⁵³² Zosimus, Hist. nov., IV, 34:6; see Heather 1995, 10; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 40.

⁵³³ Heather 2007, 23.

⁵³⁴ Liddell, Scott, Jones 1968, 1062, 1202. In general οἰ οικειοι refers to a near friend, kinsman, a relative, a person from the same household, family or relatedkin. I consider that by the word οἰ οικειοι Sozomen refers to Hun warriors who belong to the same tribe or smaller group composition as Uldin came from or from among who Uldin was chosen as the main military leader. It is also possible that some of the οικειυς might have been Uldin's relatives. οἱ λοχᾶγοι generally refers to a rank or office, the position of leader in an armed band, a commander of a company, or a captain. Thus when Sozomen uses the word, he is alluding to military leaders of Hun troops.

⁵³⁵ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 65-67. Maenchen-Helfen remarks that the meaning of the word οἰ οικειοι, “Uldin's own people” is not quite clear because “the word may mean nothing more specific than the people who usually stayed with him”. Maenchen-Helfen also stresses that kinsmen may not necessarily be implied. However, Sozomen's remarks on οἱ οικειοι state that there was a close connection between οἱ οικειοι and οἱ λοχᾶγοι. Accordingly, this might mean that all οἱ οικειοι and οἱ λοχᾶγοι would have been warriors who had joined Uldin and formed his troops, but οἱ λοχᾶγοι would have been those who led minor sections of the troops under Uldin. It would seem that Sozomen by using the word οἱ οικειοι wanted to refer only to Hun and not to no other barbarian leaders.

new, more profitable alliance.⁵³⁶ Moreover, breaking an alliance suggests that Uldin's position at the head of his troops was not an unquestionable or one that would have been self-evident.

Uldin led Hun troops on different occasions during 400 – 409 but even after all these years his warrior followers were willing to bypass him if displeased by his decisions. This suggests that the coalitions between groups of Huns were temporary. In addition, the withdrawal of support for Uldin can be taken as a sign that his and other Hun warriors' positions derived from temporary military leadership. On the whole, I consider that Uldin's position and fate did not make any difference to the events that took place among the Eurasian pastoralists. This is precisely the situation that Sozomen says Uldin faced: when he could not convince his followers of his ability to lead, he lost his followers' trust and his position as their leader. At the same time the unity of the groups that Uldin had led was gone. Accordingly, I agree with the claims that during the first decade of the fifth century no single and continuously growing confederacy of Huns existed.⁵³⁷ Furthermore, Uldin was leading only a confederation that was based on a temporary union of groups interested in joining together for raiding expeditions.⁵³⁸

Sozomen's account indicates that first Uldin had the main lead and the responsibility for actions during raids and battles. Second, at the same time as Uldin's supreme military leadership position, military leaders under Uldin also maintained the lead of their own troops. Moreover, Sozomen's phrase "*the immediate attendants and the leaders of the tribes* [who discussed with the Romans Uldin's treaty because they were displeased with Uldin's decisions]"⁵³⁹ implies that temporary military leaders were chosen from among their own groups on certain occasions. Furthermore, this supports the idea that military leaders under the supreme military leader were responsible for their actions to those who had trusted the military lead to them. All this strengthens the notion that the troops were first and foremost loyal to their own military leaders and members of their own clan or kin, not to Uldin. If the troops had been loyal to Uldin, they would not have followed the other leaders who withdrew their support for Uldin. Equally, because "οἰκείους καὶ λοχάγους" ("attendants and leaders of tribes") discussed the treaty proposed by the Romans together, this emphasizes the fact that the position of military leaders in a tribe depended on their groups' support. Accordingly, Uldin could not have had ultimate command over his Hun troops, and instead it was

⁵³⁶ Lindner 1982, passim. 700-701. According to Lindner, the Huns' actions indicate that they formed tribes in similar ways to the mediaeval Eurasian nomads. First, a tribe was a political organism open to all who were willing to subordinate themselves to its chief and who shared an interest with its tribesmen. Second, a tribe's rise or fall was related to the wisdom and success of its chiefs' actions, e.g. in representing the tribal interests in negotiations.

⁵³⁷ Thompson (1999) 2000, 64-66.

⁵³⁸ Kradin 2005, 152-153.

⁵³⁹ Sozomen, Hist. ecc., IX, 5:2.

question of a coalition bestowing the upmost command of troops on Uldin for a particular purpose and a certain time.

Thus, it would appear that the leaders of the individual tribes retained their position of authority and responsibility even when serving under a “tribal leader”, Uldin.⁵⁴⁰ That is to say, Uldin was not the ultimate leader of the Huns but was instead a temporary supreme military leader. Moreover, Uldin had fellow temporary military leaders of tribes acting as subordinate commanders who, however, maintained their sovereignty to a certain extent and were ready to withdraw if they or their warrior followers were not pleased with Uldin’s lead.

Generally speaking, if Uldin’s leadership position were based on something other than temporary military leadership, it is hard to believe that the Hun warriors and their troops would, or could, have slipped out of Uldin’s rule. Moreover, Sozomen’s description of Uldin losing his followers’ suggests Uldin’s weak power over the other Hun military leaders. Accordingly, I am not convinced that Uldin would have been “*king of the Huns*” or that he would have ruled over a “*kingdom*” as well as strengthened his “*incipient royal power*” as it has been claimed.⁵⁴¹

What speaks against the view that Uldin would have strengthened his leadership among the Huns is that neither his actions nor the elements that refer to his leadership position differ in any crucial way from those of Hun leaders in previous years.⁵⁴² Moreover, a sign that implies that Uldin’s position would not have changed from previous years is shown by Sozomen (400-450) calling both Uldin and Zosimus (400-500) by the title “ὁ ἡγεμῶν”. While Zosimus might have utilized Sozomen’s description of Uldin in his narration, nevertheless the meaning of the word “ὁ ἡγεμῶν” as a leader whose position does not imply a strong political basis but an overall position of leadership defined by the community, refers to the facts that Uldin’s position is based on others’ acceptance of his lead.

Thompson argues Uldin’s position would have arisen from primitive kingship among the Huns: “the disappearance of Uldin as soon as he was unsuccessful in war is one more sign of that democratic character of primitive kingship”.⁵⁴³ However, because Thompson does not define what kind of features indicate “primitive kingship”, the claim is hard to consider. Thompson also argues that kingship seems to have become a permanent institution among at least one body of Huns by 412. I am not convinced by this claim because the descriptions of Uldin and his actions do not

⁵⁴⁰ Thompson (1999) 2000, 64, 68.

⁵⁴¹ Homeyer 1951, 31; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 61, 67, 69. Maenchen-Helfen is not the only scholar who claims that Uldin would have been king of Huns. Homeyer also refers to Uldin as “king”. However, Homeyer thinks that kingship would have already existed in Uldin’s time, and there would have happened transformation towards kingship, as sketched by Maenchen-Helfen.

⁵⁴² Thompson (1999) 2000, 64.

⁵⁴³ Thompson (1999) 2000, 64.

suggest the emergence of kingship, or any stronger leadership position than was commonly found in military leadership among nomads.

Moreover, I am not convinced by Bona's estimation that Uldin was a military leader who acted under a king, "*Grosskönig*", Charaton, a Hun leader known from 412 or 413.⁵⁴⁴ Generally speaking, there are no descriptions or any other attestations about the connection between Charaton and Uldin, not to mention signs of Charaton's position as king, "*Grosskönig*", or the existence of kings besides military leaders among the Huns in general. All this leaves Bona's argument ungrounded.⁵⁴⁵

Although, I disagree with Bona, I tend to agree with Heather that Uldin could be seen as a leader who ultimately did not have enough power to act as a conqueror.⁵⁴⁶ I consider that Uldin's main interest was not to conquer land, but to gain booty in order to please his troops who had granted him the temporary position of supreme military leader. On the whole, I suspect that Uldin arranged the raid on Thrace because the many groups of Huns and other barbarians who formed Uldin's troops were keen to have more booty. It would have been that interest that bestowed on Uldin the temporary position of a military leader who was expected to bring victory.

In the following section I point out that along with Uldin's troops there were also some other groups of Huns on the move who aimed to gain riches. Uldin and the warriors who followed him seem to have been only one of three Hun groups that made contacts with the Roman Empire and were active on its borders.⁵⁴⁷ Uldin's position seems to have based on temporary military leadership, and this was also likely to the case with the leaders of the smaller groups of Huns as well. The existence of temporary military leaders is also supported by the fact that all the actions carried out by scattered groups of Huns are related to military actions, and were primarily motivated by the wish to gain wealth by raiding.⁵⁴⁸ Accordingly, this strengthens the notion that there was no single Hun king who would have united the Huns under his leadership but many independent groups with their own military leaders and goals.

⁵⁴⁴ Bona 1992, 35.

⁵⁴⁵ The position of Charaton is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

⁵⁴⁶ Heather 2005, 202.

⁵⁴⁷ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 62, 71.

⁵⁴⁸ Zosimus, *Hist. nov.*, V, 46. Zosimus states that "*the emperor called ten thousand Huns to his assistance in the war against Alaric, in order that he might have provision ready for them on their arrival*", suggesting that the possibility of gaining wealth led to the the Huns' contacts with the Roman Empire.

5.4. Scattered Groups of Huns in the Beginning of the 410s

Zosimus' story about the Hun troops that joined Alaric's brother-in-law, Athaulf's invasion of Rome in 408, at the same time as Uldin led his troops to Thrace tells us about the existence of Hun troops that were not led by Uldin.⁵⁴⁹ Moreover, a group of Huns were hired to strengthen the Western Roman Empire army against Athaulf. According to Zosimus, 300 Huns, supposedly the Emperor's regular auxiliary, were sent from Ravenna to the battle.⁵⁵⁰ In addition, Zosimus mentions that in 409 the Emperor hired 10,000 Huns to fight against Alaric.⁵⁵¹

While 10,000 Hun warriors is very likely an exaggeration (it would have meant around 40,000 Huns in all dwelling on the Roman borders),⁵⁵² still Zosimus' account points out that there were Hun military leaders other than Uldin who took an active role with the Romans. Lastly, the existence of Hun leaders similar to Uldin is suggested by the fact that still in 395 the majority of Huns seem to have centred mainly around the Volga steppe. It was not until the early fifth century (c. 410 - 420) when more groups of Huns moved to the fringes of the Roman Empire and many of them occupied the regions of the Great Hungarian Plain.⁵⁵³ Put briefly, a large number of scattered bands of nomads, so-called Huns, were arriving in regions close to those occupied by Uldin.⁵⁵⁴

While there were many groups of Huns acting together with Uldin's coalition, I still partly agree with the assessments that the downfall of Uldin led to a power vacuum among the Huns close to the Roman borders.⁵⁵⁵ In short, there was no longer a Hun leader who commanded considerable influence among his warriors with whom the Romans could have negotiated. In the eyes of the Romans the Huns once again formed an uncontrolled threat on its borders.⁵⁵⁶ On the other hand, the situation could also be seen as advantageous for the Romans: it was easier to control tiny groups of Huns and the regions where they dwelled because these fragmented Huns could not form a strong opposition. Furthermore tiny groups were easy for the Romans to hire as mercenaries when needed. According to Stickler the Romans would have even gained control over the regions that were earlier

⁵⁴⁹ Zosimus, *Hist. nov.*, V, 37.

⁵⁵⁰ Zosimus, *Hist. nov.*, V, 45; Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 276-279. It is likely that the Roman auxiliaries would have been Basich's and Kursich's troops, if Priscus' account about Basich and Kursich "*who later came to Rome to make an alliance*" is to be dated to the turn of the 4th and 5th centuries.

⁵⁵¹ Zosimus, *Hist. nov.*, V, 50:1; see Wirth 1999, 30, 34, 159. Wirth remarks that the number of 10,000 Huns is derived from literary conventions and the actual number of Huns must have been much smaller.

⁵⁵² There are no contemporary authors' descriptions or archaeological remains that would indicate nomads living in the vicinity of the Danube in such large numbers. Accordingly Zosimus' account only implies that a large number of Huns, strengthened perhaps with allies, had joined the Roman army.

⁵⁵³ Heather 2005, 202, 204-205; Heather 2007, 24, 28; cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, 66. According to Heather, the intrusion of the Huns into Europe was a two-stage process: occupation of the land north of the Black Sea happened during the 370s, and the occupation of the Great Hungarian Plain during the first decade of the fifth century.

⁵⁵⁴ Heather 2007, 12-13,

⁵⁵⁵ Stickler 2007, 56-57.

⁵⁵⁶ Batty 2007, 563.

inhabited by the groups of Huns who had trusted in Uldin, because Honorius' weak troops did not confront opposition when passing through regions from the Alps in modern Bavaria to regions in present-day Croatia.⁵⁵⁷

For this reason I conclude that during the first decade of the fifth century Huns still seem to have acted according to their nomadic way of life: groups acted together and formed troops when it was question of raids that were intended to bring profits. Secondly, they also had allies, other than Hun groups. Thirdly, the leadership position among the Huns is clearly a military leadership. Taken together, I argue that around 410 the Huns lived and acted according to nomadic customs and their society had not become sedentary nor had a kingship emerged, a leadership position which was common for sedentarists. What the situation was from 410 onwards is discussed in the following chapter.

⁵⁵⁷ Stickler 2007, 56-57.

6. VARIATIONS IN THE TITLES OF NOMAD LEADERS

In this chapter I discuss what kind of leadership positions occurred among the fragmented groups of Huns in the 410s. In addition, I show how Roman authors defined the position of nomad leaders not only in imaginary and descriptive stories but also in official accounts. This reveals whether Greco-Roman authors considered that leadership positions common to sedentarists, addressed as *rex* and *basileus*, could emerge and exist among nomads.

6.1. The Hun leader Charaton as “*the first of the kings*”

After Uldin’s fall from power the Huns who had from time to time been eager to choose him as their military leader and join in the raiding operations seem to have lost interest in having a similar leader again because many groups of Huns acted independently in the regions between the River Drau and the middle Danube basin, east of the Alps around the year 410.⁵⁵⁸ This is also referred to in Olympiodorus’ account of his visit to certain groups of Huns in 411/412 or 413 which includes the notion of the Huns having many “ῥήξ”, leaders.⁵⁵⁹

[Olympiodorus] discusses Donatus and the Huns and the natural talent of their kings [τῶν ρηγῶν] for archery. The historian [Olympiodorus] describes the embassy on which he went to them [the Huns] and to Donatus and he waxes tragical on his wanderings over the sea and the danger he faced. He tells how Donatus was deceived by an oath and wickedly killed, how Charaton, the first of the kings [ὁ τῶν ῥηγῶν πρῶτος], flared up with rage at the murder and how he was calmed down and pacified with regal gifts. This marks the end of the first group of ten books.

There is disagreement whether Olympiodorus was sent from the Eastern or Western Roman Empire to establish good relations between the Huns and the Romans, and whether Donatus was a Hun at all. Because Olympiodorus saw some service in the West under Honorius, I consider that his diplomatic mission was carried out on behalf of the court of Ravenna. Moreover, Olympiodorus is known to have made a trip to Athens in 415 that, which suggests he was active in the Balkan regions during the first years of the 410s. In fact, the Huns seem to have lived in the areas of

⁵⁵⁸ Blockley 1981, 27; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 73; Heather 2005, 324; Stickler 2007, 57.

⁵⁵⁹ Olympiodorus, fr.19 in Blockley 1983, 182-183.

modern Hungary during this time. Furthermore, because Donatus clearly had close contact with the Huns, it indicates Donatus' prominent position amongst the Huns.⁵⁶⁰

Olympiodorus' preference for the word *reks* (ῥήξ) has led to claims that Donatus or at least Charaton would have had a position comparable to kings in sedentary societies. However the word itself does not reveal Charaton's strong leadership position among the Huns. Olympiodorus did not make careful distinctions concerning the political structure of barbarian peoples when he used words like ῥήξ or ὁ φυλαρχος, *phylarkhos*.⁵⁶¹ Equally, Maenchen-Helfen emphasizes that late Roman contemporary authors used the Latin word *rex* and the Greek *reeks*, ῥήξ with no strictly specific meaning – it was only used in order to indicate some kind of leadership within a group.⁵⁶²

In fact, Charaton's position was not much different to that of other Huns because he and others like him were called kings, *reges* (ῥηγές). The only difference in the leadership position between Charaton and the other Hun *reges* is that Charaton is mentioned as “the first” of them. The only time when nomads need a primary leader or leaders at the head of larger groupings is during wanderings and military activity.⁵⁶³ This is precisely the situation of the Huns when they arrived on the Roman borders and established relations with the Romans. Thus, I consider that *reges* were military leaders of clans and tribes, and Charaton had the position of primary military leader.

Even though the importance of military leaders among the Huns is recognized, nevertheless the title *reks* (ῥήξ) and Olympiodorus' account in general has been claimed to indicate either the strengthening position of Hun leaders or to signify the rise of kingship among the Huns. Moreover, it has been suggested that Charaton was the great king (“Grosskönig”) of the Huns under whose rule Uldin and Donatus served as military leaders.⁵⁶⁴ I however doubt these claims. First, there are no contemporary texts or any other piece of evidence that suggests that such circumstances took place among the Huns. Nor is there any evidence that supports the idea of a divided leadership position among the Huns or a connection between Charaton and Uldin.⁵⁶⁵ For these reasons Charaton's position as a great king of the Huns is very doubtful.

Charaton is a Hun leader who scholars prefer to refer to as king rather than to other possible leadership titles. In addition, the title of king is used to point out the similarity between Charaton's

⁵⁶⁰ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 74; Stickler 2007, 58; Blockley 1981, 27-28; Thompson (1999) 2000, 38-40; Heather 2005, 324-325; Blockley 1981, 27; Blockley 1983, 216, *passim*. 152-209; cf. Altheim 1951, 363; *passus*. Kelly 2008, 52.

⁵⁶¹ Blockley 1981, 38.

⁵⁶² Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 196.

⁵⁶³ Bondarenko, Korotayev, Kradin 2003, *passim*. 10-11; Kradin 2003, *passim*. 77, 80-81; Khazanov 1984, 157-158; Irons 2003, *passim*. 67; Irons 2003, 67. Barfield 1981 (1992), 32-84. Iron stresses that among the Yomut-nomads in Iran during the 1960s tribal leaders could from time to time call on skilled cavalry for military operations. Moreover, the Yomut usually elected temporary leaders during times of war.

⁵⁶⁴ Bona 1991, 24, 35.

⁵⁶⁵ Bona 1991, 35; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 73.

position and that of the Hun kings after him, such as Rua and Attila. Because Rua and Attila led a large Hun coalition, this implied that Charaton's position was mightier than other kings (ῥηγές) during the first years of the 410s. It is also argued that Charaton's position would have included, as e.g. in the case of Rua, rulership over tribes. I disagree with this view because Olympiodorus' description and the fragmentation of the groups of Huns during the earlier decades do not speak about a strong unity and leadership positions among the Huns.⁵⁶⁶

It is also suggested that the increased amount of military activity led to the rise of a permanent kingship, at least among the Huns connected to Charaton during the 410s. It is argued that when raids became more successful, the greater number of warriors was persuaded to form a confederacy that strengthened the leadership position, and hence the position of primary military leader turned into a kingship.⁵⁶⁷

I do not share this view, however because Olympiodorus' account does not tell us that the position of "the first king" would have become a permanent one among the Huns. Olympiodorus does not in fact say that Charaton would have gained the position of "first king" after Donatus. Olympiodorus says that Charaton was "flared up with rage" when he heard about the murder of Donatus. Thus, there is no reason to believe that Charaton was immediately appointed to fill Donatus' place and this would signify a permanent kingship.

It is true that military success was the basis for strengthening leadership position among the groups of Huns, but this does not suggest that it would have turned into a kingship.⁵⁶⁸ I argue that the position could strengthen in the limits of Huns' nomadic way of life, and hence we should see this position as a supreme military leadership. This is a position that could become stronger when leading a growing number of temporarily allied nomadic groups. It is doubtful if this happened among Charaton's Huns but the increasing military activity during the 420s means that it was possible in the case of the next known Hun leaders, e.g. Rua and Octar and Bleda and Attila.

The relationship between the Romans and the Huns during the 410s can be seen as twofold. The large number of small groups of Huns on the borders of the Roman Empire decreased the Romans' interest in having contacts with them because a good relationship with a particular group would not help to control the others. Therefore, the Romans preferred to follow the situation among the

⁵⁶⁶ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 73-74, 80, 85-86; StICKLER 2007, 58; Thompson (1999) 2000, passim. 66. See Chapter 7.

⁵⁶⁷ Thompson (1999) 2000, 63-68; cf. StICKLER 2007, 58. According to Thompson, while kingship made its way, the position of a military leader of a single tribe, called *reks* by Olympiodorus, still existed. Equally *primates* (the common leaders of individual tribes) would have retained a position of authority and responsibility inside the tribal confederacies like Donatus' and Charaton's.

⁵⁶⁸ Thompson (1999) 2000, 63, 66.

Huns.⁵⁶⁹ However, there is also the opposite view, namely that Olympiodorus' visit to the Huns signifies the Romans' interest in having connections with the Huns and their leaders.

It is claimed that Olympiodorus' primary task was to establish official relations between the Huns and the Romans in order to reduce the possibility of sudden raids by the Huns.⁵⁷⁰ Furthermore, the military threat caused by the Huns would explain why Olympiodorus needed to meet, "the first of the kings", Charaton. As a primary military leader Charaton would have been the one who controlled the Hun troops and many Hun military leaders, *reges* (ῥηγέζ). One aspect that speaks that suggests the interest of the Western Roman Empire in establishing an official relationship with the Huns is that Aetius, a Western Roman Empire general, was sent as a Roman hostage to the Huns during the first years of the fifth century.⁵⁷¹ There are even doubts that Aetius spent these years among the strongest coalition of Huns, which might or might not have been led by Charaton. Furthermore, it is argued that the Romans sought contacts with the Huns because good relations with them provided the opportunity to hire the nomads as Roman mercenaries and helped to keep the border areas calm in the lower-Danubian basin.⁵⁷²

Even if the Romans sought connections with Hun groups in general and tried to control them in this way, there was according to Heather, a new wave of groups of Huns arriving on the Roman borders during the first decades of the fifth century. This new wave finally established the Huns in the areas of the present-day Great Hungarian plain and in the vicinity of the Danube, the Pontic areas and in the neighbourhood of the Carpathians.⁵⁷³ It is not certain, however, whether the groups of Huns that Charaton represented were newcomers or not – if they were new arrivals, it could have prompted the Romans to seek good relations with them. Again it is as equally likely that Charaton was a spokesman of a new coalition of Hunnic groups who were already living either in the areas of modern Hungary or near the northern parts of Black Sea, and they could even have been partly known by the Romans.⁵⁷⁴

In any case, the fragmentation of the Huns helps us to evaluate the situation of the Hun leaders.⁵⁷⁵ It would seem that during the 410s the Huns lived in a loose tribal organization, tribes joining together only when it was considered a necessity. In short, there was no broad or large-scale tribal coalition

⁵⁶⁹ Wirth 1999, 37.

⁵⁷⁰ Stöckler 2007, 58; passus Batty 2007, 426; cf. Harmatta 1952, 289-291, 295. According to Harmatta there was no official treaty between the Romans and the Huns who were connected for Charaton because Olympiodorus did not use the title *phylarkhos* on Charaton – the title *phylarkhos* could be used only when the treaty was made.

⁵⁷¹ Man 2005, 151; Kelly 2008, 62-63, 249.

⁵⁷² Kelly 2008, 54.

⁵⁷³ Heather 1995, 10; Heather 2005, passim. 202-205.

⁵⁷⁴ Thompson (1999) 2000, 66; Heather 2007, 9. According to Heather "because Uldin's defeat had been crushing, this does suggest that other Huns must in the meantime have arrived within the Western Empire's orbit".

⁵⁷⁵ Harmatta 1952, 295.

that would have been led by a mighty Hun leader. I also consider that Charaton's coalition would have been the largest among the Huns, though even his position can be claimed to be particularly strong.⁵⁷⁶

The Huns' preference for acting as scattered and independent groups during the 410s is also deduced from a number of contemporary remarks. Two short accounts in *Codex Theodosianus* are claimed to refer to the Huns' activities. The first is a short notice concerning the Romans' sudden need to strengthen their fleet on the Danube in Moesia and Scythia in 412.⁵⁷⁷ This is taken as a sign of the Huns raiding these areas again. This would suggest that these groups did not consider Charaton to be their leader, or if they did, they were not bound by any of his agreements but acted as they pleased. It is also possible that there could have been totally new Hun arrivals in these areas.⁵⁷⁸

The groups who lived close to the mouth of the Danube, were unlikely to be Huns connected to Charaton, who in addition to many groups of Huns, lived in the areas between the River Drau and the Middle Danube basin and the lowland areas of modern Hungary. In addition, Olympiodorus' text includes no hints about Charaton being charged with raiding, and he Charaton seems to have operated with the Western and not the Eastern Roman Empire. Finally, the fact that the walls of Constantinople were also rebuilt and enlarged in 413 implies that the Romans were well aware of the need for constant readiness against an enemy nearby.⁵⁷⁹ Therefore, I consider that the Huns mentioned in the *Codex Theodosianus* were not acting with Charaton.⁵⁸⁰

The Eastern Roman Empire seems to have continued its struggle against the impending threat of the Huns' attacks in their neighbourhood throughout the 410s. This comes clear from Theodosius II's letter to Praetorian Prefect of Oriens in 419/420. In the letter Emperor forbids merchants from selling products related to war in the Black Sea coastal areas.⁵⁸¹ However, unlike earlier similar restrictions, this time the Emperor prohibits the use of ships in exporting forbidden goods. The regulations are related to the activities of the Huns in the immediate vicinity of the Black Sea and imply that the Huns turning had turned to pirating, though with poor success.⁵⁸² Generally speaking, I suspect that the Huns would have been involved in piracy. It is likely that the pirates were local Gothic sedentary dwellers, who were eager to have trade connections with the Huns especially

⁵⁷⁶ Harmatta 1952, 295; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 80.

⁵⁷⁷ Cod. Theodos., VII, 17, 1.

⁵⁷⁸ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 74; Heather 2005, passim 202-204.

⁵⁷⁹ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 74.

⁵⁸⁰ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 74-75.

⁵⁸¹ Cod. Theodos., VII, 16, 3.

⁵⁸² Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 74-75.

because the local groups around the Pontic Danubian region had been active pirates for centuries.⁵⁸³ This suggests that when the Huns arrived in these new areas they increased the number of trade connections and alliances with locals.

To sum up, there is nothing to suggest a strong unity between the groups of Huns, and hence a strong leadership position among them in the 410s. The situation changed through during the 420s or at the latest in the 430s when new Hun leaders, the brothers Rua and Octar, are mentioned in contemporary authors' accounts.

Because Rua and Octar could unite many groups of Huns into a larger coalition, it is claimed that the leadership position was strengthened among the Huns and even a dual-kingship could have arisen. It is further argued that their centralization of power would have caused the Huns to give up their nomadic way of life and adopt a sedentary way of life.⁵⁸⁴ I shall discuss these claims in the following chapters, but first, in the next section I shall investigate the relationship between the image of nomad leadership and actual encounters: in other words, even though the Late Roman authors created images of wild and unorganized nomadic dwellers, what were contemporaries' views when they negotiated with nomads? That is to say, do contemporaries consider nomad leaders to be kings in official meetings such as peace negotiations?

6.2. Images of Nomadic Kingship in Antiquity

The Romans adopted their views of barbarians, including the concept of nomads, from the Greeks. This was strengthened by the tradition of imitating former writers' descriptions. Therefore, we might suppose that the views which Hartog claims were included in Herodotus' image of the Scythians and the leadership position among them, also influenced the views of the Huns presented by Late Roman authors.

In Herodotus' *Historiae* the conception of nomadic kingship is considered to be impossible owing to the contradiction between being both herdsmen and subjects. Hartog writes "the minute the figure of a king appears among the Scythians in the narrative, they can no longer be nomads" and "nomad power is something inconceivable; if it is a power, it cannot be nomad".⁵⁸⁵ Or at least it is a question of a hybrid, which signifies impurity. The ground for this is that those who are claimed to

⁵⁸³ Batty 2007, passim. 267-268; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, passim. 75. Batty remarks that raiding had always been a feature of peoples lives in the Pontic Danubian region, and hence they might have been easily persuaded to join with the Huns in raiding operations to the regions of the Roman Empire.

⁵⁸⁴ Heather 2006, 325-328; Kelly 2008, 228; Wirth 1999, 40-41.

⁵⁸⁵ Herodotus, Hist., IV: 6, 10; cf. Hartog 1988, 200-202.

have no laws, no cities, no specific dwelling sites or who form no specific unit, cannot have a leadership position which includes stable power or had defined subjects. The image of kingship is impossible because there are no precise areas and no defined population to rule over among nomads.⁵⁸⁶

Despite the fact that kingship and kings are considered to be impossible among nomads, nomad leaders are nonetheless addressed as βασιλεύς (*basileus*), ῥηξ (*reeks*) and *rex* in the narratives.⁵⁸⁷

Even though the nomad “king” is sometimes depicted as a military leader, and this matches the reality of the leadership position among nomads,⁵⁸⁸ nevertheless this leader is primarily represented as a brutish despot. This derives from contemporaries’ customs of describing nomads as barbarians and their leaders in a similar fashion.⁵⁸⁹

On the whole, it was argued that barbarians who are ignorant of the rule of polis could only live in conditions of subjection or slavery to cruel masters, often called kings but also despots or tyrants.⁵⁹⁰

In other words, the difference between Greek and barbarian rule was emphasized or marked by the titles used for their leaders, and writers followed the convention of naming barbarian leaders kings.⁵⁹¹

Furthermore, the Greeks’ conception of how climate and the environment affected and determined human nature supported to a large extent the argument that barbarians lived under the unpleasant and oppressive rule of kings.⁵⁹² Especially people living south of the Greeks were claimed to be lazy because of the warm weather and richness of nature; and consequently easily fell under the suppressive rule of kings. By contrast, the cold climate in the north was explained to make inhabitants so restless that only weak social organization or rule of kings was typical for them.⁵⁹³ Indeed, the most pitiless kings, who were represented as supporting slavery, were said to rule in the utmost northern areas.⁵⁹⁴ The nature of barbarian leadership at every point of the compass was the same: the oppressive rule of kings. This went for nomad leadership too – because nomads were barbarians they could only have one kind of power, and this was royal power because that was synonymous with non-Roman leadership.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁸⁶ Herodotus, Hist., passim. IV: 46; Ammianus, RG, 31.2.1.-11.; see Hartog 1988, passim. 201, 205. Ammianus’ description of Huns includes all the listed features.

⁵⁸⁷ Herodotus, Hist., IV: 6, 10; Jordanes, Getica, XXXV; CM, I, 480, 1353; Olympiodorus fr. 19 in Blockley 1983, 182-183. Both Olympiodorus and Jordanes write about Hun leaders using the title ῥηξ (*reeks*) and *rex*.

⁵⁸⁸ Hartog 1988, 201-202.

⁵⁸⁹ Hartog 2001, passim. 84-85.

⁵⁹⁰ Hartog 2001, passim. 84-87; Kaldellis 2005, passim. 3-4, 7.

⁵⁹¹ Kaldellis 2005, passim. 1-3.

⁵⁹² Hartog 1988, passim. 339, 200; Hartog 2001, passim 92-94.

⁵⁹³ Isaac 2004, 55-56, 62-64.

⁵⁹⁴ Tacitus, Ger., 44.2-3., 46.3; Hartog 2001, 117.

⁵⁹⁵ Hartog 1988, 200.

The nature of “royal power” or the concept of kingship was connected with the definition of barbarians.⁵⁹⁶ Because barbarians were described in every way as opposite to Greeks and Romans, their leadership too could only include repellent features. Thus, barbarian kings were often said out to treat their subjects like slaves, including whipping and branding.⁵⁹⁷ Indeed, violation of the body was common among them, and they were claimed, for example, to cut or mutilate themselves. Barbarian kings were claimed to have lurid sexual behaviour and said to be so full of hubris that they did not even respect the Gods. That is to say, the terrible features of kings reflected the nature of their hideous rule over their subjects.⁵⁹⁸

The crucial connection between kings and subjects directs us towards the problem of nomad kings. As mention above before, the overall essence of a nomadic way of life did not support the idea of permanent rulers as kings; and this seems to have been in the minds of Ammianus and Claudian when they wrote about the absence of kings among the Huns.⁵⁹⁹ However, both authors connect mutilation a common feature of barbarian kings to Huns in general.⁶⁰⁰ This is an indication that even though contemporary authors started to have more contacts with Hun leaders, there was no other possibility than to emphasize the image of Hun leaders similar as barbarian kings and also to name them using the titles *rex* and ῥηγξ. In other words, if there was a leader among the nomads, such as the Huns, it was plausible to use words like *rex* and ῥηγξ (*reeks*) or οἱ βασιλῆες Σκύθων, “the Scythian kings”, as Priscus refers to the Hun leaders in the 440s.⁶⁰¹ Accordingly, I disagree with the claim that when Late Roman authors address the words *rex* and ῥηγξ to Hun leaders this implies that leadership position is similar to that of sedentary barbarian leaders, namely king who has a permanent position among the groups he leads.⁶⁰² For Roman authors *rex* and ῥηγξ are only words that are used to refer to barbarian leaders in their narrations. It is in fact the background of the barbarian group that dictates what kind of leadership position leaders called *rex* and ῥηγξ might have had in reality.

In the following section I discuss how Roman authors wrote about nomad leaders when they were telling about official contacts, as opposed to the titles given to leaders in narrative accounts. This reveals what kind of titles authors used in addressing nomad leaders in official situations.

⁵⁹⁶ Hartog 2001, 86-87.

⁵⁹⁷ Ammianus, RG, 14.5. Roman Emperors and office holders were also claimed to harm their subordinates by using corporal punishment, but in these cases the aim of the authors is to create an image of improper behaviour which is common to barbarians but not to Romans. This is apparent, e.g., in Ammianus’ story about Gallus Caesar.

⁵⁹⁸ Hartog 1988, *passim*. 331-333, 336-337; Hartog 2001, 84-86.

⁵⁹⁹ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.7; Claudian, In Ruf., 323-326.

⁶⁰⁰ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.2; Claudian, In Ruf., 323-326.

⁶⁰¹ Priscus, fr. 2 in Blockley 1983, 224-227; cf. Hartog 1988, 200.

⁶⁰² Bona 1991, 35; Thompson (1999) 2000, *passim*. 64, 67-68, 177-179, 183, 187-189, 192-193. See chapter 7. - 10.

6.3 The Liberty of Storytelling: The Countless Titles of Nomad Leaders

In written sources where Roman authors tell about actual dealings with nomad leaders the titles addressed to the leaders are not *rex* and ῥήξ but φυλαρχος (phylarkhos), στρατηγός (strategos), ἐθνάρχης (ethnarkhes), ἡγεμών (egemon) and also on a few occasions, such as when referring to Hun leaders, βασιλεύς (basileus). This points out how differently the authors considered nomad leadership position when they had to deal with it in reality than when they only referred to or wrote general accounts about nomads.

Even though the terms which Roman authors used for nomad leaders tell us about the images the Romans' had concerning nomad leadership, texts that are connected to actual contacts, such as negotiations, can best reveal how Roman authors conceived of nomad leadership.

The written sources that include titles of nomad leaders and tell about dealings between nomads and Romans form two main categories.⁶⁰³ First, there are historical accounts, e.g. descriptions of negotiations and treaties between the Romans and nomads which include current, but not necessarily official, terminology addressed to a nomad leader. Although these accounts are narrative accounts, they are written in the context of actual events.

The second category is formed by imperial documents which include official usage of titles for nomad leaders that are related to treaties and officially established relations between the Romans and the nomads. However, there are two subcategories. First, there are titles given to nomad leaders who were living within the Empire. Another subcategory is formed by titles which were given to nomad leaders who lived outside the Roman borders, e.g. the Huns. The titles that were officially granted to nomad leaders, especially when these nomads lived within the Empire, merely reflect Roman bureaucracy rather than the kind of position that the nomad leaders would have actually had. After all, the Romans wanted to secure their interests in treaties, and hence a title given to a nomad leader merely reflects the position that the Romans were ready to offer for a nomad leader, and not the position of a nomad leader among his own people.

In order to analyse whether the titles hint to kings or kingship among the nomads, I will mostly study the written sources in the first main category, rather than imperial documents. That is to say, I study accounts that are written in relation to dealings with Romans and nomads but are not imperial documents. When Roman authors told about Romans dealings with nomads without bothering with officially granted titles, they could use words they considered to be most suitable to reflect the

⁶⁰³ Chrysos 1978, 33. Chrysos stresses the view by stating that “there is a sharp distinction to be made between the literary sources, with their current but not necessarily official terminology, and the imperial documents, which preserve the official usage of titles”.

situation, and hence they are a better indication of what was going on among nomads and their leadership position.

In written accounts titles such as *φυλαρχος* (*phylarkhos*), *στρατηγός* (*strategos*), *ἔθναρχης* (*ethnarkhes*), *ἡγεμών* (*egemon*) and *βασιλεύς* (*basileus*) were especially addressed to leaders of nomads who lived within the Roman Empire in the deserts of Syria and ancient Palestine.⁶⁰⁴ They enjoyed a large amount of autonomy and according to Chrysos their chiefs had no administrative or political duties entrusted to them by the Roman Empire. Nonetheless, they were recognized as the leaders of their tribes on the battlefield and in their own autonomous affairs,⁶⁰⁵ and it reminds one of the situation between the Romans and groups of Huns during the fifth century.⁶⁰⁶ Given this context, we are able to consider how the Romans officially named the nomadic leaders who lived outside the Roman borders but with whom the Romans had established some kind of relationship, albeit not an official treaty.

Titles, such as *ἔθναρχης* (*ethnarkhes*) and *ἡγεμών* (*egemon*)⁶⁰⁷ do not explicitly tell us the basis of a leadership position. Although *ἔθναρχης* (*ethnarkhes*) refers to “a ruler of a tribe or nation”, it still does not indicate the basis for a leadership position and what it derives from.⁶⁰⁸ Since the word was generally attached to a Arab nomad leader or “*sheikh*”, the allusion is to a leader who had followers because they trusted his ability to lead, or he was the oldest, and hence was trusted among the group.⁶⁰⁹ Accordingly, we might deduce that the position of the leader was strongly based on the trust in his capabilities. The titles *φυλαρχος* (*phylarkhos*) and *στρατηγός* (*strategos*), on the other hand indicate that the leader was a military leader of groups that could be defined as a tribe.⁶¹⁰ The word *phylarkhos* is based on the term *φυλή* (*phyle*), tribe or larger group composition, and it clearly refers to the one with whom one deals concerning the whole unit. Since nomads live in scattered groups and only rarely unite as a larger unit, it both supported and encouraged the use of the word for nomad leaders in general during antiquity.⁶¹¹ It is probable therefore that all these listed titles emphasize the idea of nomad leaders having no permanent or unchallenged position

⁶⁰⁴ Chrysos 1978, 47, 47.

⁶⁰⁵ Chrysos 1978, 47, 49.

⁶⁰⁶ See chapters 7 - 10.

⁶⁰⁷ See chapter 5.

⁶⁰⁸ Liddell, Scott, Jones 1940, 480.

⁶⁰⁹ Khazanov 1984, 157, passim. 158, 179-183; Barfield 1993, 69, 82-83.

⁶¹⁰ Liddell, Sott, Jones 1940, 1961.

⁶¹¹ Chrysos 1973, 44, 47. However, as Chrysos notices, *phylarkhos* was addressed not only to Arab but also to Blemyan leaders. This emphasizes the fact that the title *phylarkhos* was especially used on the occasions when authors wanted to refer to nomad tribes and their leaders.

among their groups and hence indicate that in reality nomad kings, that is to say, leaders with a fixed position, were considered incongruous.

While titles *φυλαρχος* (*phylarkhos*), *στρατηγός* (*strategos*), *ἐθνάρχης* (*ethnarkhes*) and *ἡγεμών* (*egemon*) are favoured for nomad leaders in written accounts, the title *βασιλεύς* (*basileus*) also occurs.⁶¹² The title and *βασιλεύς* (*basileus*) implies a mighty position and is used e.g. by Procopius for the Saracen leader Arethas and the Lakhmid ruler Moundhir during the sixth century. Priscus also uses it to address Hun leaders, e.g. Rua and Attila, during the 430s and the 440s.⁶¹³ However, the title *basileus* was never officially applied to any other persons/ rulers than Persian kings.⁶¹⁴ On the one hand, the title *basileus* was unofficially used in literary sources for Roman emperors after Augustus, though its counterpart was considered the Latin *rex*, especially during the fourth to the sixth centuries, and contained the connotation of brutish (often barbarian) rule and rulers, even of tyranny.⁶¹⁵ For this reason, the title *basileus* was not as favoured as *kaisar* for Roman emperors in historical accounts.

Although the title *basileus* referred to Roman emperors and the Great king of Persia, we should not overestimate the nomad leader's position, e.g. the Hun leader Attila, when Roman authors addressed them by the title *basileus*. The context of the nomads and their nomadic way of life dictated what kind of leadership position a title referred to. The authors' goals concerning why and what to tell about a nomad leader are further starting points for understanding the meaning of a title. Thus, for example, Chrysos stresses that when Procopius called Arethas *basileus*, his purpose was to create an image of Arethas' mightier position over the other nomad leaders in the area.⁶¹⁶ Priscus' manner of calling Hun leaders like Rua and Attila, *basileus* refers to the same usage.⁶¹⁷ In

⁶¹² Chrysos 1978, 47-49.

⁶¹³ Procopius, *De bel.*, I: 18.47, I 17.30, I 18.45; Priscus fr. 2 in Blockley 1983, 224-223; see Chrysos 1978, 47-48.

⁶¹⁴ Chrysos 1978, 47, *passim*. 36-42, 49-51, 59, 70. However, Chrysos notices that the Romans allowed the kings of Bosphorus to use *basileus* as an official title in official context, e.g. on coins and in inscriptions. This was derived from the old Hellenistic tradition of naming the leaders in the Bosphoran kingdoms. A title that Roman emperors addressed to the sedentary leaders in the client kingdoms of the Empire in the east was never *basileus* but often *rex* or *ῥήξ* (*reks*). Concerning the situation in Africa, such as in Abyssinia, leaders in the area were in general addressed by titles, such as *τύραννος* (*tyrannos*).

⁶¹⁵ Chrysos 1978, *passim*. 32-33, 54-55, 57, 59, 67-68. The Romans were reluctant to use the title *rex* for their leaders because according to tradition the first stage of their constitutional development ended when the cruel tyrant *rex* Tarquinius Superbus was exiled. Accordingly in the minds of the Romans *rex* was synonymous with tyrant. While the position of leaders called *basileus* were reminiscent of the position of *rex*, the concept of tyranny was, however, seldom attached to the title *basileus*.

⁶¹⁶ Chrysos 1978, 49-50.

⁶¹⁷ Priscus, fr.2, fr.11.2, fr. 9.3 in Blockley 1983, 224-227, 250-251, 258-259, 238-239. Priscus refers to the Hun leaders Rua and Octar and their nephews Attila and Bleda by the title *βασιλεύς* (*basileus*). He also uses the title for other Hun leaders, in addition to *ἀρχόνται* (*arkhontai*) and *συμβασιλεύς* (*symbasileus*). By *basileus* Priscus refers to wealthy Huns or those who have some kind of leadership position. It is likely that because Priscus does not call Rua and Octar and their nephews by on any other title than *basileus*, because they led the largest coalition among the Huns. Priscus' accounts about Hun leaders other than Rua and Attila also supports this view. Nonetheless, Priscus' way of using the title *basileus* title for many

addition, it has been noted that Greco-Roman authors could address the title *basileus* to nomad leaders in order to criticize the Emperor.⁶¹⁸ In other words, when the Emperor is *basileus* called in the same way as a barbarian leader, it creates an image of comparable leadership positions. The practice is found, for example, in Priscus when he tells about the Hun leader Attila and is eager to point out that in Theodosius II was a weak emperor.⁶¹⁹

Thus even the title of *basileus* when used for nomad leaders cannot be taken as a sign of nomad kings or kingship, but can derive from other reasons such as the political goals of the author. In addition, contemporary authors' ways of referring to barbarian leaders varied from writer to writer. On the whole, the majority of Greek sources address the Germanic kings with the title *basileus*, whereas similarly, Malalas, for example, uses only the title ῥήξ (*reeks*) for the western kings. Alike Olympiodorus never used the title *basileus* for barbarian leaders but referred to them instead as ῥήξ (*reeks*) and φυλαρχος (*phylarkhos*).⁶²⁰

Whereas the title *basileus* was not officially used to address nomad leaders in imperial documents, the situation is reverse with the title φυλαρχος (*phylarkhos*).⁶²¹ Equally, titles, such as *praefectus gentis* and *magister militum* that derived from Roman bureaucracy were also used as officially used titles not only to for barbarian leaders but also for leaders of sedentary groups. Thus titles like *praefectus* and *magister militum* do not solve the question concerning the kind of position the leader had.

First of all, titles were part of treaties, and hence they mainly reveal what kind of duties the Romans expected the barbarians and their leaders to take care of in the context of Rome and Roman administration.⁶²² Secondly, they imply in what kind of direction the Romans wanted to point the barbarian leadership. After all, treaties and titles were formulated in a way that they would best support the power of the Romans and their control over barbarians.⁶²³ This means that the title does not so much tell what kind of position the barbarian leaders had, but what kind of position the

Hun leaders implies that all the leaders had a similar position among their followers. In short, there was no fundamental difference in the basis of Rua's and Attila's leadership position compared to that of other Hun leaders.

⁶¹⁸ Kawar 1957, 366-369; see also Chrysos 1978, 48; Christides 1970, 5-13.

⁶¹⁹ See Chapter 2.3.

⁶²⁰ Chrysos 1978, 54.

⁶²¹ Chrysos 1978, 42, 44, 49, 51.

⁶²² Wirth 1997, passim. 15; Chrysos 1978, 60-61.

⁶²³ Chrysos 1978, 63; Batty 2007, 563; Wirth 1997, passim. 15, 32. Chrysos points out that from the 4th century onwards Romans favoured abolishing the local kingship tradition in eastern client kingdoms. The old honorary titles given to the local leaders were replaced by titles such as *comes* or *dux*. At the same time, the leaders became more obviously Roman officials who had to act according to Roman bureaucracy like any other official in the empire. Also in the Trans-Danubian area the Romans made many attempts to make the locals more firmly part of Roman administration so as to strengthen Roman power and rule in the area.

Romans wanted to give to the nomad leader when dealing with him. In other words, what kind of position the Romans wanted the barbarian leader to have in the context of Roman bureaucracy.⁶²⁴

The goals of getting the nomad leaders to become part of Roman administration and to transform the leadership position to achieve this end, is especially seen in the title *praefectus gentis*.⁶²⁵

According to Schubert, Weiss and Kath the title *praefectus gentis* only occurs in North Africa, and because it is elsewhere called *praefectus civitatis*, *gens* may indicate a reference to nomadic groups. Although the duties attached to the title are not certain, it may have been given to a nomad leader who was expected as a Roman administrator to bring the nomads, who had accepted him as their leader, more firmly under Roman rule.⁶²⁶

The Romans' way of awarding the title *magister militum* supports the notion that the titles given to barbarian leaders mainly tell how they were enrolled in the imperial service, not what kind of position the barbarian leader unambiguously had among his followers.

First of all, *magister militum* was a title generally awarded to a barbarian leader after a treaty that made them Roman *foederati*. This means that barbarians were allowed to settle on Roman soil. Accordingly, the treaty was fundamentally made with barbarians who were sedentarists. When the barbarian became part of the Roman Empire, they also partly maintained their political independence. In other words, a barbarian leader was still officially recognized as the leader of autonomous political units, his barbarian followers, though the barbarians had to recognize the sovereignty of the emperor in the Roman Empire. Moreover, the barbarians had to act as imperial troops when required. This in general was the duty that the title *magister militum*, bestowed on a barbarian leader, referred to. Equally, the title demonstrated to all sides that these barbarian leaders were enrolled in the imperial service. Furthermore, the Empire often used the title as a pretext hiding annual subsidies, or "*tribute*", to the barbarian leader under the guidance of an ordinary salary for military service.⁶²⁷

Generally speaking, military service seems to have been the reason why the Romans had supposedly given the title *magister militum* to Attila, as Priscus' account implies: "*Roman general* (στρατηγὸς Ῥωμαίων) which the Emperor had granted to Attila, thus concealing the word

⁶²⁴ Wirth 1997, passim. 24, 54.

⁶²⁵ Schmauder 2009, 80.

⁶²⁶ Schubert, Weiss, Kath: http://www.nomadsed.de/projects_01-04/c3.html. According to Schubert, Weiss and Kath the same goal is implied by Marcus Aurelius' edict, called the Tabula Banasitana from the year 177, which tells of the granting of Roman citizenship to some chiefs from nomadic groups or "tribes" of Baquates in the province of Mauretania Tingitana.

⁶²⁷ Heather 1997, 58-59; Blockley 1992, 149-151; Chrysos 1978, 60-63. The relationship between Roman Emperor and the barbarian leader who was in charge of the groups that were allowed to settle within the Roman Empire, was expressed through the bestowal of imperial court titles, in the first stage military titles, such as *comes* or *magister militum*, and later political titles, such as *exconsul* and *patricius*, and in some cases through the title *adoptio per arma*.

tribute (τοῦ φόρου). As a result, the payments were sent to him disguised as provisions issued to the generals”.⁶²⁸

Because the Huns did not live within the Roman Empire, Attila’s title *magister militum* could not include obligations similar to those addressed to barbarians who were allowed to dwell on Roman soil.⁶²⁹ According to Wirth, during the third century enemies beyond the frontiers were treated in the same way as federates who immigrated to the Empire.⁶³⁰ Therefore, I assume, as the title *magister militum* implies, that the Romans required Hun troops as mercenaries according to need and in return for payment. Groups of Huns had since their arrival on the borders of the Roman Empire in the 380s served as Roman mercenaries and especially during the 420s when Aetius, the Western Roman *magister utriusque militiae*, had on a number of occasions in the help of Hun mercenaries.⁶³¹ This implies that the Hun leaders had, even before the 440s and Attila’s leadership, been eager to supply Hun troops to the army of the Western Roman Empire, and perhaps they were also honoured with the title *magister militum*, though this is not known for sure. When the Hun coalition became stronger during the 440s, it would have led to granting the title *magister militum* to Attila.

However, because Attila is not known to have sent any troops to the Western or the Eastern Roman armies, the title could have been given only so as to maintain friendly relations between the Huns and the Romans. After all, payments due on account of the honorary title were an expedient for the Romans to establish the greatest possible degree of peace and stability on its frontiers at the minimum possible cost. First, it gave the leader to whom the payments were given some reason to maintain the treaty, thus providing a reasonable return on an investment of Roman military effort. Second, the Romans expected that the leader who they gave payments would redistribute the wealth in his own society, and hence make the groups pleased with the co-operation with the

⁶²⁸ Priscus, fr.11.2, fr.20.1, fr.22.2 in Blockley 1983, 278-279, 306-307, 312-313, 387; Heather 1997, passim. 70-71. It is uncertain whether the title for Attila was awarded by the Western or the Eastern Roman Empire. However, because Priscus heard the title from Western envoys, it could have been conferred by the Western Emperor Valentinian III. But it could equally well be Priscus’ parenthetical comment about Theodosius. There is no independent evidence for this “honorary” title for Attila. I consider that Priscus’ story how Marcian replied to Attila that the Eastern Roman Empire “*would not consent to pay the tribute (τοῦ φόρου) agreed by Theodosius*” implies that the title was awarded by the Eastern Roman Empire. This is also supported by Priscus’ story how Marcian continued his reply to Attila; “*if he [Attila] kept the peace they [the court of Marcian] would give him gifts, but if he threatened war they would bring against him men and weaponry equal to his own forces*”. These excerpts indicate the practice of paying a barbarian leader on account of his honorary title and gaining in return peace on the frontiers. By contrast, Procopius, who most likely referred to Priscus, mentions that “*Attila, since no one stood in his way, ravaged the whole of Europe without difficulty, compelled both parts of the Empire to obey his commands and forced them to pay tribute (φόρου). For payments were sent to him every year by the Emperors*”. According to the claim both halves of the Roman Empire paid Attila supposedly because of his honorary title, though as Priscus’ accounts indicate, Attila did not receive the payments every year.

⁶²⁹ Pohl 1997, 6-9; Chrysos 1997, 193-195.

⁶³⁰ Wirth 1997, passim. 43.

⁶³¹ See Chapter 7.

Romans. On the one hand, the titles were used as camouflage for the fact that the Romans were not so victorious against the barbarians, on the other hand they paid for peace – the Romans bought off potential aggression.⁶³² Priscus makes the accusation that Theodosius II “*obtained peace by money, not by fighting for it*”.⁶³³ Thus, it is claimed, Attila was awarded the title not because the Romans wanted to honour his position as the head of the Huns, but temporarily to solve problem with the Huns.

On the whole, because the title *magister militum* clearly refers to the duties of a military leader of troops, I would argue this was also the case concerning Attila’s leadership position among the Huns. Furthermore, the title does not explicitly indicate that Attila’s position would have changed and that he would have had a stronger leadership position among the nomads, such as a kingship or a similar position to that which his contemporary German sedentary leaders had.⁶³⁴ Equally, the title cannot be taken as a sign of the Huns adopting sedentary way of life that would ultimately generate a more permanent leadership position than was common among nomads because Romans used the names of century-old treaties and honorary titles, and the obligations attached varied from one case to another.⁶³⁵ The same is also true of the groups and leadership positions which the Romans dealt with. One aspect that implies that the title *magister militum* referred to Attila’s position as a military leader is the fact that when the Huns formed a distinct threat to the Roman Empire, the Hun leader was awarded a title which emphasized his military duties.⁶³⁶ Therefore, I consider that in the eyes of contemporaries, a Hun or nomad king, in other words, a leadership position comparable to that found among sedentarists, was unthinkable. However, there are still claims, especially those deriving from Priscus’ manner of writing about Attila as *basileus* that Huns would have had kings. However, because the Huns seem to have not given up their nomadic way of life even during the fifth century a leadership position comparable to sedentary kings must be ruled out.⁶³⁷ Nonetheless, another question is whether there could be a more permanent leadership position than temporary military leadership in the nomadic way of life? This possibility is discussed in the following chapter.

⁶³² Heather 1997, 70-71, passim. 72-73.

⁶³³ Priscus fr.3.1 in Blockley 1983, 226-227.

⁶³⁴ Wolfram (1987) 1990, 13, passim 94-95, 144-146, 190, 194, 203-205, 212; Wolfram 2000, 66, 87.

⁶³⁵ Heather 1997, passim. 72, 74.

⁶³⁶ Chrysos 1978, passim. 58.

⁶³⁷ See Chapter 9 - 10.

7. UNITING GROUPS OF HUNS AND LOCALS – RUA AND OCTAR

In Chapter 7 I study the unity between groups of Huns during the 420s in order to consider, whether this strengthened the head leadership position among the Huns. I also ask what kind of activities did Hun leaders carry out. This is done in order to evaluate whether their position could be considered a kingship. In addition, I pay attention to the relationship between the Huns and the Romans and discuss whether the Romans tried to strengthen the leadership position among the Huns in order to gain better control over them. Furthermore, I point out that the increasing joint activities between the groups of Huns and local barbarians signify confederation, not submission of other groups. Joint activities based on joint military activity suggest the Huns' interest in military action rather than the suppression of other groups, and this underlines the position of Hun leaders as military leaders rather than permanent rulers.

7.1. Contacts with the Romans in the 420s – The Strengthening Position of Hun Leaders?

The first contemporary remark on the acts of groups of Huns in the 420s is the raid on Thrace in 422.⁶³⁸ The raiding operation is thought to have been led by the Hun leader Rua: he and his brother Octar are known by name from Olympiodorus' account of Charaton.⁶³⁹ However, I am not totally convinced that Rua was in charge of the raiding operation because the only information we have about the attack is the phrase “*The Huns devastate Thrace*”.⁶⁴⁰ Furthermore, the first time Rua is mentioned as a military leader of groups of Huns is from the first years of the 430s in a fragment from Priscus.⁶⁴¹ Even though Priscus' remark implies that Rua had led groups of Huns some years earlier, I still consider this insufficient proof that Rua led the raid on Thrace.

I also find the claims that the Eastern Roman Empire paid Rua precisely 350 pounds of gold annually to ensure peace in Thrace speculative.⁶⁴² There is, moreover, little certainty when peace was made between the Huns and the Romans; estimations date it in 422 or 423.⁶⁴³ Therefore, there

⁶³⁸ Marcellinus Comes, *Ann.*, see Maenchen-Helfen 1973, *passim*. 76-80.

⁶³⁹ Jordanes, *Getica*, XXXV: 180-181; Socrates Scholasticus, *Hist. ecc.*, VII, 30; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 82-83; Bona 1991, 47; Wirth 1999, 39-41; Stickler 2007, 57-59; cf. Kelly 2008, 67. Kelly speculates that the raid could have been led by both Rua and Octar.

⁶⁴⁰ Thompson (1999) 2000, 67, 70; *passus* Wirth 1999, 40-41; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 76, 81, 86; Stickler 2007, 57; Kelly 2008, 67, 70-71. Maenchen-Helfen refers to information given by Marcellinus Comes in *Chronicle*.

⁶⁴¹ Priscus, fr. 2. in Blockley 1983, 224-225, 379.

⁶⁴² Bona 1991, 47; Wirth 1999, 39, 41, 161; Stickler 2007, 59; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, *passim*. 91.

⁶⁴³ Bona 1991, 47; Wirth 1999, 41; Stickler 2007, 58-59; Heather 2005, 300-301, 327.

is little to support the claims that in the 420s Rua gained a leadership position mightier than “the first of the kings”, the position which Charaton had had. Accordingly, I find it unconvincing that Rua would have been able to compel others to his will and that the Romans sent the payments to ensure peace only and directly to him.⁶⁴⁴ Furthermore, it is speculative to claim that Rua considered the peace treaty a possibility to strengthen his leadership position not only among groups of Huns but also among other local Germanic groups.⁶⁴⁵

Generally speaking, whoever led the Huns against Thrace in 422, I agree with the claims that attacks and raids of Hun troops would have caused more financial loss to the Eastern Roman Empire than annual payments to ensure peace.⁶⁴⁶ Therefore, it is likely that the Eastern Roman Empire would have made a peace treaty which guaranteed annual payments to the raiding groups of Huns. The advantage of the annual payments for the Romans was that these payments could strengthen the position of a Hun leader at the head of a group and also unify the group. All this would help the Romans in negotiating with the Hun group and in gaining better control over them.⁶⁴⁷

If the annual payments brought changes to the relationship, they are also claimed to have brought about a crucial change in the history of the Huns. First, Rua is said to be the first Hun leader who received gold annually from the Roman Empire, and this made him look like an excellent military leader not only to the Huns, who already counted on his lead, but also to other groups, and hence this strengthened his position. In addition, as a result of this it is thought that the Romans might have considered Rua to be an even more productive partner with whom to co-operate in the future.⁶⁴⁸

I agree with the claims only to some extent. The Romans might have paid for peace, but because we have no accounts of Rua to receiving payments, I suggest that they were given to a Hun leader who we do not have knowledge of. I also tend to agree that the payments could have caused changes among the groups of Huns. However, I would not mainly emphasize the importance of the payments for the leader who received it and for his position, but would instead stress how the payments might have changed the nature of the Huns’ nomadic way of life.

First of all, the payments to ensure peace would at latest make the Huns notice that they were dealing with Empire from which they could profit in many ways: a peace treaty would be followed

⁶⁴⁴ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 51, 91.

⁶⁴⁵ Wirth 1999, 41; Stickler 2007, 59.

⁶⁴⁶ Stickler 2007, 59; cf. Batty 2007, 429-430.

⁶⁴⁷ Batty 2007, 430-432, *passim*. 447. Batty remarks that the payment policy worked well during Trajan’s regime.

⁶⁴⁸ Bona 1991, 46; Wirth 1999, 41-42; Stickler 2007, 58-60; cf. Lindner 1982, 700-701.

by diplomatic contacts which would result in supplies of gold and or other profitable offerings.⁶⁴⁹ Furthermore, living and herding in the border areas of the Roman Empire offered good opportunities for trading and other mercenary activities, and perhaps most importantly, for temporary raiding. All this all supports the notion that the Huns would have noticed that there were more profitable opportunities for making a living than just herding, though this does not mean they would have given up on herding entirely.⁶⁵⁰

The Huns' interest in raiding or gaining riches from the Roman world is also stressed in their contacts with the Western Roman Empire.

When John tried to usurp power in the Western part of the Roman Empire in 424 Hun troops were told to participate in the fight in northern Africa.⁶⁵¹ It is not precisely known where the Huns came from, but it is supposed that the groups formed a part of the regular Western Roman army because there was no time to turn to federates beyond the borders and ask them to help⁶⁵² I suggest that the Hun troops could possibly have been those that the Western Roman Empire recruited into their army during the first decade of the fifth century.⁶⁵³ If the Hun troops in Africa were a permanent part of the Western Roman army, this was not the case with the Huns who the Western Roman Empire hired the following year to strengthen their army. This then supports the notion that groups of Huns were still acting as scattered units and in accordance with their own interests during the first half of the 420s.

In 425 Aetius, a general in the Western Roman Empire, faced a sudden need to strengthen the troops under his command, and he is told to hire Huns as his mercenaries outside the Roman borders.⁶⁵⁴ It is not certain who the Huns were, but they seemingly lived in the vicinity of Pannonia because once again the sudden need for mercenaries did not leave time to negotiate with Hun groups who lived far away from Rome.

It is also claimed that Aetius would have already known the Hun leaders whom he made contact with, and the one in the supreme position would have been Rua.⁶⁵⁵ It is supposed that Aetius would have established friendly relations with Rua during the first decades of the fifth century when he was sent to live among some groups of Huns as a Western Roman hostage.⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁴⁹ Priscus, fr. 2, fr. 9.1, fr. 9.3, fr. 10 in Blockley 1983, 224-225, 234-237, 240-243; see Wirth 1999, passim. 54-55, 105-106.

⁶⁵⁰ Priscus, fr. 2, fr. 6 in Blockley 1983, 226-227, 230-231; see Heather 2005, 326-329.

⁶⁵¹ Pseudo-Augustine, Ep. IV; see Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 76-77.

⁶⁵² Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 77.

⁶⁵³ See Chapter 4.

⁶⁵⁴ Philostorgius, Hist. ecc., XII, 14; Socrates Scholasticus, Hist. ecc., VII, 23, 789; see Thompson 1948, 49; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 77.

⁶⁵⁵ Thompson (1999) 2000, 71; Wirth 1999, 41-42; Stickler 2007, 59-60.

⁶⁵⁶ Renatus Frigeridus *apud* Gregory of Tours, Hist. Franc., II, 8; Priscus fr.11.2. in Blockley 1983, 256-257; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 77; Bona 1991, 47, 52; Wirth 1999, 34; Thompson (1999) 2000, 38, 71; Heather 2005, 261; Stickler 2007, 60. Bona suspects that Uldin would have led the groups of Huns to whom Aetius was sent as a Roman hostage. However, it is

However, there is no certain evidence of Aetius turning to Rua or the Hun troops being led by Rua.⁶⁵⁷ Likewise, nothing proves that Aetius would have already known the leaders of the Huns from whom he recruited the troops. It is only in c. 434 when Rua's name first time appears in the sources, and that is a few years after his brother Octar is told to lead the Hun troops which attacked the Burgundians.⁶⁵⁸ Moreover, nothing suggests that Aetius turned to Octar, not Rua, for help. Generally speaking, there is a tendency in modern research to construct a continuous leadership genealogy for the Hun leaders with whom the Romans were in contact despite the lack of support from contemporary sources.

Whoever the Hun leaders were, they gathered according to Philostorgius 60,000 men for Aetius.⁶⁵⁹ Even though the troops arrived too late, Aetius seem to have rewarded them well.⁶⁶⁰ At least the troops did not get carried away and raid the heartlands of Rome in order to gain something from their journey. The number of a Hun troops is most likely highly exaggerated, but even if there were even a third of Philostorgius' estimated number, it is likely that the troops also included warriors from Germanic groups who were allied with the Huns.⁶⁶¹

Because the Huns were able to form such huge troops, more than a single nomadic tribe could raise, this suggests that Huns' tribal confederacy was well organized again.⁶⁶² The situation also indicates that during the mid 420s there was talented mediator who could gather together a large number of groups for joint military activity. However, this was only temporary, as the last piece of information that we have from the 420s about the scattered groups of Huns next to the Roman borders reveals.

According to the chronicler Marcellinus Comes, the provinces of Pannonia, which for fifty years were being held by the Huns, were retaken by the Romans.⁶⁶³ Because the Roman troops met with no serious opposition and could easily drive the Huns off from the western parts of the Danube in

only Gregory of Tours during the 6th century who mentions Aetius as a hostage among the Huns. Priscus mentions only Aetius' son, Carpilio, as having spent some time among the Huns in "his [Attila's] court" (ἐκπέμψαι παρ' αὐτόν). Because Attila led an alliance of many groups of Huns alone only during the years 443/444 - 453, Carpilio should have been among the Huns during the mid 440s. Another possibility is that Priscus' words "his court" refer to Attila's extended family's, especially his uncles', Rua's and Octar's, "court". If so, then it would mean that Carpilio could have been a hostage of Rua and Octar during some years from the 430s onwards. We might suspect that Gregory of Tours mixed up Carpilio's stay with the Huns with Aetius', and Aetius was perhaps never a hostage of the Huns.

⁶⁵⁷ Wirth 1999, 41-42; Stickler 2007, 59-60.

⁶⁵⁸ Socrates Scholasticus, *Hist. ecc.*, VII, 30; Jordanes, *Getica*, XXXV: 180-181; see Kelly 2000, 71; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 82.

⁶⁵⁹ Philostorgius, *Hist. ecc.*, XII, 114; see Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 81; Wirth 1999, 40-41.

⁶⁶⁰ Maenchen-Helden 1973, 77.

⁶⁶¹ Thompson (1999) 2000, 55; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 80.

⁶⁶² Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 80.

⁶⁶³ Marcellinus Comes, *Ann.*; see Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 78, passim. 79-81. I agree with Maenchen-Helfen that it was the Western Roman army that drove the groups of Huns off from certain parts of Pannonia because Marcellinus Comes wrote about the situation in the Western Roman Empire before turning to the history of the Eastern Roman Empire in his work *Annales, Chronicle* which covers the years 375-556. However, it is doubtful if the Western Roman army attacked the Huns in Pannonia precisely in 427 because Marcellinus Comes lived during the 6th century and hence he could only utilize former accounts in his narration of the events during the 5th century.

Pannonia, this suggests that the Huns in Pannonia did not receive help from other Huns living in the vicinity, and that there was no longer any large scale unity between the groups of Huns. Moreover, the Romans would not have attacked if they had thought that this action could spoil the good relationship with the united groups of Huns, e.g. those who had raised the supposed 60,000 warriors for Aetius in 427. The lack of unity between groups of Huns implies that strong genealogical ties had not yet formed between a large number of tribes or clans, and there was no supreme leader who was supported on a large scale.⁶⁶⁴ However, the Roman action may have led to regroupings. When the Huns from Pannonia were searching for new dwelling areas, they might have joined the Huns living in the areas between the Danube, Marus and Marisus Rivers to the Carpathians, and hence become one of the groups who later on supported Rua's lead.⁶⁶⁵

If Rua really was responsible for the Huns' successful raid on Thrace in 422 and he had created good relations with the Western Roman Empire due to his mercenary activities in 427, he could appear to many to be a potential candidate for the position of supreme military leader in the head of confederation formed by groups of Huns and local barbarians.⁶⁶⁶ If this happened during the turn of the 420s and 430s is discussed in the following section.

7.2. Wars, Treaties and Mercenary Activity between the Groups of Huns and the Romans

The information about groups of Huns and their activities is fragmentary and scarce from the 420s, but the situation during the 430s is more revealing especially because there are accounts of Hun leaders, the brothers Rua and Octar, at the turn of the two decades. The first description from the 430s is from Socrates Scholasticus and he depicts in *Church History* how certain a Hun leader, called Octar/ Uptaros,⁶⁶⁷ was responsible for the Huns' raids in the areas of the sedentary Burgundians near the Rhine.⁶⁶⁸

There is a nation of barbarians dwelling beyond the Rhine, called Burgundians [...] The Huns, by making continuous eruptions on this people, devastated their country, and often destroyed a great number of them. ... [the Burgundians] considered that the God of the Romans defended those who feared him, they all with common consent embraced the faith of Christ. ... becoming confident thenceforth, they marched against the tyrants [the

⁶⁶⁴ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 80-81.

⁶⁶⁵ Thompson (1999) 2000, passim. 67; Bona 1991, 50, 54; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, passim. 77-81, 87, 89; Wirth 1999, 44.

⁶⁶⁶ Heather 2005, passim. 365.

⁶⁶⁷ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 82. Although the difference in the spelling of the name, Uptaros is claimed to be another form of Octar and both indicate the same Hun leader.

⁶⁶⁸ Socrates Scholasticus, Hist. ecc., VII, 30, in Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 82. Socrates Scholasticus passus "[...] τοῦ γὰρ βασιλέως τῶν Οὐννων ὑπο ἀδηφαγίας ἐν σύκτι διαρραγεντως, ὃ ονόμα Οὐπταρος ἐν [...]".

Huns]; nor were they disappointed in their hope. For the King of the Huns, Uptaros [Octar] by name, having burst asunder in the night from surfeit, the Burgundians attacked that people then without a leader; and although few in numbers and their opponents many, they obtained a victory; for the Burgundians were but 3,000 men, and destroyed no less than 10,000 of the enemy.

The account of the success of the Burgundians against the Huns after turning to Christianity includes many traditional miracle motifs, which decreases the reliability of the narration. Also the fact that the Burgundians mainly lived west, and not east of the Rhine during the 430s, makes the story about a huge fight between Hun groups and Burgundians doubtful.⁶⁶⁹ Nonetheless, we might take the core of the story as a true: some Burgundians were from time to time attacked by troops of Huns, who were led by a supreme military leader called Octar. The period of the raids must have been at the turn of the 420s and 430s because Octar seems to have died in the beginning of the 430s, supposedly in either year 430 or 431. Furthermore, Socrates Scholasticus' account makes it clear that the main interest of the Hun troops was to gain booty, not to conquer new areas or lands. In addition, Socrates Scholasticus' remark that the raids were regular implies that the groups had formed more than only a temporary alliance but a fixed unit. How many clans or tribes of nomads trusted in the leadership of Octar is not known, nor is the number of groups other than Huns who joined Octar's raids known.⁶⁷⁰ One point element that speaks in favour of an alliance between some Germanic groups and Octar's Huns is the fact that Socrates Scholasticus does not mention Octar raiding or overpowering any other barbarian groups on the way to fight the Burgundians. Also archaeological finds and joint activities of groups of Huns and Germanic origin in the following years indicate an alliance or confederation.⁶⁷¹

While Socrates Scholasticus' description does not tell us much about the nature of Octar's leadership,⁶⁷² one aspect that comes clear is that his position was related to military activity as head of his troops. Accordingly, Jordanes' description of Octar and Rua having a similar position suggests that their tasks did not differ greatly, and hence both of the brothers seem to have acted as military leaders of the Huns. This is further supported by the fact that all the known activities of Rua are, like Octar's, related to military duties.⁶⁷³ Jordanes writes about the similar position of Octar and Rua:⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁶⁹ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 82-83.

⁶⁷⁰ Heather 2005, passim. 329-333, 361-365; Wirth 1999, 40-41, 52-53.

⁶⁷¹ See the later parts of Chapter 7.

⁶⁷² Wirth 1999, 44; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 81.

⁶⁷³ See Chapter 7.3. for more Rua's activities.

⁶⁷⁴ Jordanes, *Getica*, XXXV: 180; Priscus, fr. 11.3 in Blockley 1983, 280-281. Jordanes, who refers to Priscus' stories, writes: "*Is namque Attila patre genitus Mundzucio, cuius fuere germani Octar et Roas, qui ante Attilam regnum tenuisse narrantur, quamvis non omnino cunctorum quorum ipse*". Blockley's translation of "*regnum*" is "*kingship*"; however, I prefer to translate it "leadership" or

Attila's father was Mundzuc, whose own brothers were Octar and Rua, who are said to have held the kingship [*regnum*] before Attila, though by no means over all the peoples whom he [Attila] ruled.

Jordanes' account does not reveal, whether Octar and Rua were leading the Huns in the position of "regnum" at the same time or not. However, because only Octar is mentioned as leading the raids against the Burgundians, it is likely that Octar could for some time have been the only Hun leader at the head of a large number of allied groups of Huns and local Germanic groups at the turn of the 420s and 430s.⁶⁷⁵ Rua would have attained his position later during the first years of the 430s, at the latest after Octar's death in c. 432.⁶⁷⁶ On the other hand, it is generally believed that the brothers led groups of Huns simultaneously, but in different directions.⁶⁷⁷ It is probable because Aetius and Rua were in close contact during the first years of the 430s, and this suggests that Aetius and Rua knew each other earlier.⁶⁷⁸ Accordingly, the situation is seen to imply that during the turn of the 420s and the 430s Octar operated with groups who dwelled north of the Alps up to the Rhein and west to the Carpathians. By contrast, Rua was trusted with groups living in area from northern parts of the Black Sea to the Carpathians and to the Roman borders in the lower Danubian basin and Pannonia.⁶⁷⁹ The division of the areas is based on the notion that only Rua is mentioned in contemporary accounts as charged with the military activities of Huns in the areas near Pannonia and the lower Danubian basin during the first years of the 430s.⁶⁸⁰ There are also claims that the regions were divided up by the brothers in order to act more efficiently with both halves of the Roman Empire: Rua would have been responsible for contacts with the Western Roman Empire and Octar with the Eastern Empire.⁶⁸¹

When and how the brothers attained their leadership positions is not clear. Contemporary authors' accounts do not clarify whether they were elected or whether they gathered supporters of their

"primary leadership position" because these are more neutral terms. References to kingship and kings strongly suggest the idea of a state, but this is highly uncommon among nomads. There is no evidence that a kingship or state ever existed among the groups of Huns who came to live near the Roman lower Danubian borders during the fourth and fifth centuries. See Chapter 9 and 10.

⁶⁷⁵ Wirth 1999, 41, 47.

⁶⁷⁶ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 86.

⁶⁷⁷ Thompson (1999) 2000, 69-70; Wirth 1999, 52-53; Heather 2005, *passim*. 329-330; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 85-86, *passim*. 81; Stickler 2007, 63.

⁶⁷⁸ Priscus, fr. 2, fr. 11.2. in Blockley 1983, 224-225, 256-257; Wirth 1999, 41-42, 47.

⁶⁷⁹ Heather 2005, 202-203; Wirth 1999, 44; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 78-81, 85-86, *passim*. 89-91.

⁶⁸⁰ Priscus, fr. 2 in Blockley 1983, 224-225. It is also possible that Octar was already dead during these years. If so, then Rua would have been the sole leader of the allied groups of Huns.

⁶⁸¹ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 86.

own.⁶⁸² The same holds for the tasks the brothers were responsible for, either together or alone. Speculations vary, but it is generally agreed that both Rua and Octar were in charge of the troops.

It has been suspected that there could have been a division of duties between the brothers: one of them taking care of religious matters and the other military or secular tasks.⁶⁸³ Bona even suggests that Rua was the supreme leader (“GrossKönig”) of all the allied groups of Huns, while Octar was his military leader.⁶⁸⁴ I find these views doubtful, however, because both of the brothers are only mentioned in contemporary accounts as taking care of military activities and second, religious leadership among Eurasian pastoralists was solely associated with shamans, who have no administrative power.⁶⁸⁵ In addition, contemporary authors’ accounts include stories about shamans to whom the Hun leaders’ seem to have turned in order to gain the support of divine powers in their activities.

While accounts of shamans are not many, they nevertheless indicate that shamans would have taken care of religious duties or contacts with the world of spirits among the Huns. Moreover the accounts point out that Hun leaders, like Attila, a nephew of Rua and Octar, greatly respected shamans and did not attempt to gain or challenge their position. This is especially implied by Priscus’ story of how Attila would have wanted to marry a daughter of a shaman, though Attila already had at least one wife.⁶⁸⁶ Although Attila’s plan may have aimed to strengthen his position among the Huns, nevertheless marrying the daughter of a shaman can be taken as a sign of esteem for the shaman’s position. Furthermore, Attila’s respect for shamans is clear from Priscus’ account of Attila asking shamans about the fate of his rule and the future of his sons – as a result Attila favoured the son who the shamans had indicated.⁶⁸⁷ The 6th century author Jordanes tells a similar story of how the shamans’ opinions were trusted by Attila when planning future actions. According to Jordanes, Attila requested the result of a forthcoming battle from shamans or witches and acted according to their advice.⁶⁸⁸ While Jordanes’ story might be invented, it is likely that he knew how powerful shamans had been among the Huns, or were among nomads in general,⁶⁸⁹ and what kind of tasks they took care of.

⁶⁸² See chapter 8.

⁶⁸³ Schreiber 1976, passim. 85-87; cf. Wirth 1999, 40, 44, 52; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 85-86.

⁶⁸⁴ Bona 1991, 50.

⁶⁸⁵ Kradin 2003, 82; Kradin 2005, 82; Khazanov 2003, 43; see also Skrynnikova 2003, passim. 135-146; Berman 2000, passim. 166-172; Werner 1956, passim. 70-72.

⁶⁸⁶ Priscus, fr.11.2 in Blockley 1983, 260-261, 274-275; see Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 406. Priscus says that Attila planned to marry a daughter of Eskam/ Esqam, whose name is most probably of Turkish etymology, the last syllable “-kam/ -quam” meaning shaman.

⁶⁸⁷ Priscus, fr.14 in Blockley 1983, 290-291.

⁶⁸⁸ Jordanes, *Getica*, XXXVII, 195-196.

⁶⁸⁹ Kradin 2005, 154-155, 158-159; cf. Skrynnikova 2003, passim. 135-146; passus Werner 1956, passim. 70-73; Berman 2000, passim. 170-171; Wirth 1999, 128-129.

Because these are the only stories about religious activities among the Huns and we do not have any indication of Hun leaders' taking care of religious activities, this strongly suggests that religious duties alone belong to shamans. Consequently, the justification for the position of Hun leaders' such as Rua and Octar must have been for non-religious reasons. I am also opposed to the idea that the leadership position derived from an existing or evolving kingship.⁶⁹⁰

The starting point for claims concerning the rise of kingship among the Huns is based on the idea that lucrative raids on the Roman Empire, accompanied by payments from the Hun troops' mercenary activities in the Roman army, increased the wealth of the Huns to such an extent that it stimulated the scattered nomads into forming a confederation at the latest during the end of the 420s.⁶⁹¹ This would supposedly have led Hun warriors to eliminate each other so as to gain the leadership position at the head of the united groups.⁶⁹² It is assessed that this would have led to a concentration of power in the hands of the most powerful military leaders, namely Rua and Octar.⁶⁹³ Furthermore, the Hun brothers are said to have stabilized the position to such a degree that military leadership would have become more permanent and been transformed into kingship during the turn of the 420s and 430s. Simultaneously, a leading stratum would have evolved that is, the rise of a wealthy upper class from among the most trusted followers of the king. Moreover, the argument goes, they would have helped the king to rule the wide regions where groups of Hun and local barbarians had formed a confederation. Finally, the strengthening leadership position would supposedly have been accompanied by changes in their nomadic way of life. In brief, at least some of the groups of Huns would have at least partially started to adopt a sedentary way of life.⁶⁹⁴

It is certainly likely that when the Huns came to live next to Roman Empire they realized that raiding and making a profit out of the Roman Empire by mercenary activity was preferable than herding. This is affirmed by the acts of groups of Huns during the 420s. Furthermore, this clearly stimulated groups of Huns and local barbarians to join together, bringing about the demand for a supreme military leader. For these reasons it is highly probable that military duties formed the basis for, and authorized the position of, supreme leadership among the groups of Huns and their allies.⁶⁹⁵ Accordingly, I suggest that we should not call Rua and Octar "kings" but "supreme military leaders".

⁶⁹⁰ Schmauder 2009, 126; Stickler 2007, 59; Heather 2005, 325-329; Thompson (1999) 2000, 64, 67-69, 177-179; Wirth 1999, 47-48, 52-53, 83; Bona 1991, 35; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 85, 91; Harmatta 1952, 297.

⁶⁹¹ Lindner 1982, 702-703; Thompson (1999) 2000, 67-68; Heather 2005, 325, 327.

⁶⁹² Heather 2005, 325.

⁶⁹³ Wirth 1999, 41; Thompson (1999) 2000, 69-71.

⁶⁹⁴ Wirth 1999, 52; Heather 2005, 328; Harmatta 1952, 296.

⁶⁹⁵ Barfield 1993, 150; Pohl 2003, 573-574.

The term “supreme military leader” reflects and describes more accurately the basis of the position that Rua and Octar seem to have had.⁶⁹⁶ I also suggest that we should use the term “supreme military leader” for nomad leaders in general. The reason for this is that the position of nomad leaders at the head of a larger number of united groups differs from the position of a leader among sedentarists, generally named a “king”, due to a different kind of way of life: nomadism as opposed to sedentarism. Another reason for avoiding the use of the title “king” for Hun leaders is to avoid creating a misleading image of Hun leaders having a similar position to leaders of Vandals, Franks and Visigoths during the 5th century who are in general called “kings”. By contrast, the duties of the Vandal, Frank and Visigoth kings were based on keeping rule among groups who were permanently settled in certain regions, and the unity between these groups was expected to last longer than the temporary interests in raiding as found among the groups of Huns. Furthermore, the most striking difference between the leadership of the Huns and the Vandals, Visigoths and Franks is that the latter established a rule in Roman soil, and hence many, if not most of the elements of the newly built regime, generally called by researchers a kingdom, were based on the Roman tradition. This was not the case with the Huns because they consisted of fragmented groups who herded and dwelled in wide regions beyond the Roman borders. As a consequence there was no already established strong administration or society that a leader could rule over. In what follows I shall discuss some of the common elements among Vandal, Visigoth and Frankish kings and kingdoms in order to point out the different situation among the Huns.

First, a Roman lifestyle and administration continued in kingdoms, and the same is true of the imperial demesnes which became the basic possessions of new kings. That is to say, royal fiscs and the monetary system continued to exist. Also charters and codification of laws did not vanish. In addition, kings adopted imperial titles and epithets and established capitals as centres for their regimes. Furthermore, the position of king was important in creating the idea of unity among a certain people, at times a form of ethnic consciousness. Moreover, kings created and maintained unity by supporting the church and favouring Latin on official occasions. Finally one of the most important tasks of kings was to be a military leader and keep contact with leading elites whose acceptance the kings’ power depended upon.⁶⁹⁷

The only similarity that the Huns shared with these features is that the leadership position was connected to the military lead, which required others’ acceptance. Moreover, the leadership position among nomads and sedentarists is different because nomadic administrative structures are derived

⁶⁹⁶ The Hun leaders Bleda and Attila would appear to have had a similar position to Rua and Octar, and I suggest that we should not name any Hun leader a king. See Chapter 8 - 10.

⁶⁹⁷ The listed elements in barbarian kingdoms are based on Goetz’s, Jarnut’s and Pohl’s study. Goetz, Jarnut, Pohl 2003, 611-613, 617, 623-625.

from the development of their military organization in the course of military conflicts with their neighbours.⁶⁹⁸ Another striking difference is that the so-called nomadic state, that is a supercomplex chiefdom or strong unity between groups of nomads in the steppe, simultaneously contains both a tribal and state hierarchy, each with separate functions.⁶⁹⁹ It is thus clear that the different kinds of way of life and society produce a different kind of stability and power position to the leadership position and rule, and this should also be reflected in the concepts used to research this field.⁷⁰⁰

Because acceptance by groups is the basis for a leadership position among nomads,⁷⁰¹ Rua and Octar would have had to convince others that they were the best candidates for military leadership, and would then have been chosen to lead the confederation of the groups of Huns and local barbarians. Having said that the way in which Eurasian nomads generally form larger units, such as tribes and tribal coalitions, would have had an effect on their choice.

It is generally agreed that nomads' contacts with outside world, that is to say, sedentary cultures, is a crucial reason for the emergence of tribalism among nomads and activated the political functions of tribes.⁷⁰² Moreover, such contacts increased the need for a leader to head the many groups that clans and tribes contain. In the formation of nomadic tribes, the conception of an ancient common descent is particularly strong when groups combine to act together and form tribes and tribal coalitions,⁷⁰³ and the supporting concept of a conical clan becomes more significant.⁷⁰⁴ As a result of this, some of the clans and lineages are claimed to be senior and hence more justified in leading the junior ones, which helps the most skilful leaders or candidates from the senior clans and lineages to gain the position as head of the tribe and of allied tribes in joint ventures.⁷⁰⁵ Accordingly, it is likely that Rua and Octar belonged to a senior clan and lineage which helped them become supreme military leaders. Priscus' remark about Rua's and Octar's "noble descent" might thus imply that they were members of an appreciated clan or lineage.⁷⁰⁶ Furthermore, I am inclined to think that the existence of a conical clan structure – the concept of junior and senior clans would explain why it was two brothers from a particular family who gained the leadership

⁶⁹⁸ Vasjutin 2003, 53.

⁶⁹⁹ Barfield 1989, 8.

⁷⁰⁰ Kradin 2008, 117, 121, passim. 107-122; Barfield 1993, 132, passim. 15-17.

⁷⁰¹ Lindner 1982, 700-701.

⁷⁰² Khazanov 1984, 151.

⁷⁰³ Lindner 1982, 696-697, 700; Basilov 1989, 6; Barfield 1989, passim. 27.

⁷⁰⁴ Barfield 1993, 147-149. See Chapter 3.

⁷⁰⁵ Barfield 1993, 147; Spooner 1973, 24; Barth 1973, 18; Khazanov 1983, 140.

⁷⁰⁶ Priscus, fr. 11.3, fr. 15.2 in Blockley 1983, 280-281, 296-297. Priscus passus "[...] εὖ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸν φύντα καὶ τὸν πατέρα Μουνδιουχον διαδεξάμενον διαφυλάξαι τὴν εὐγένειαν [...]". If Rua and Octar were members of a junior clan and they killed leaders from other junior and weaker senior clans then their junior clan would have become "noble". However, the evidence suggests that Rua's and Octar's position was based on others' acceptance and it is more likely that they belonged to one of the senior clans among the Huns.

position among the many scattered groups of Huns over a wide area, and not on account of killing or forcing others to accept their rule.⁷⁰⁷

I also propose that it was the general interest of groups of Huns and local barbarians in forming a larger confederation that made Rua and Octar act as head of a larger number of groups. In brief, it is unlikely that many, if not all, of the local barbarian groups formed a confederation with the Huns because they considered it a good choice.⁷⁰⁸ This is also referred to in Priscus' remark concerning an alliance (ἡ ὀμοιχμία) between the Huns and some Goths.⁷⁰⁹ In my assessment because the Huns still acted as many independent and scattered groups during the 420s, they could not have forced others to follow them, and hence the unity of the groups of Huns and local sedentary groups was most likely based on alliance and co-operation. Furthermore, it has been pointed out that nomads would not have been interested in conquering agrarian territories because the rule of agrarian societies would require nomads to relinquish their nomadic lifestyle, at least to some extent, and this they are ill disposed to do.⁷¹⁰ Accordingly, it would seem that the relationship between the Huns and local barbarian groups was not based on the Huns' interest in dominating local groups, but in forming a confederation which could be summoned when needed, especially during times of military activity. Generally speaking, I agree with the claims that it was political and economic advantage which brought the groups of Huns and local barbarians together, and further booty or the possibility of increasing one's prosperity maintained these alliances.⁷¹¹

Rua and Octar operated over a huge area, from the Rhine to the Caucasus and the lower Danubian basin, and the size of the groups in these regions would have been impossible to connect together without confederation.⁷¹² These regions were inhabited not only by groups of Iranian-speaking Alans and Sarmatians but also by Germanic-speaking Gepids, Rugi, Sciri and Heruli. There were also Lombards and Thuringians and at least some subgroups of Alemanni and Franks. Finally, at least three separate clusters of Goths clearly acted with the allied groups of Huns.⁷¹³ Consequently, it has been estimated that the number of Germanic-speaking barbarians among the Huns would have been

⁷⁰⁷ Priscus, fr.2 in Blockley 1983, 224-225; Khazanov 1984, 151; Lindner 1982, *passim*. 696-700; Barfield 1989, 28.

⁷⁰⁸ Kelly 2008, 72-73, 75; cf. Schmauder 2008, 157. I agree with Kelly that some of the local barbarians would have acted with the Huns either out of fear or self-interest. But in my opinion, local barbarian groups were primarily interested in allying themselves with the Huns in order to profit from joint military activity and to gain a share of the booty and the payments Rome made to ensure peace. Moreover, despite the existence of a confederation, nothing prevents the Huns from occasionally raids or from demanding that local groups give their products to the nomads.

⁷⁰⁹ Priscus fr. 49 in Blockley 1983, 356-357; see Thompson (1999) 2000, 67. Priscus' remark cannot be dated precisely. However, because many groups of Huns and local barbarians formed their largest confederation during the 430s and 440s, it is likely that Priscus' description refers to these decades. Priscus claims that the Goths disliked their alliance with the Huns but his comment might be derived from the common Roman *topos* that co-operation with nomads cannot be anything else than disagreeable.

⁷¹⁰ Kradin 2002, 381.

⁷¹¹ Priscus, fr. 49 in Blockley 1983, 357; cf. Lindner 1982, *passim*. 702-704; Heather 2005, 366.

⁷¹² Lindner 1982, 703; Kradin 2005, *passim*. 82.

⁷¹³ Heather 2005, 330; Heather (1999) 2000, 260.

tens or even hundreds of thousands – this means that there were probably many more Germanic speakers than Huns acting together during the 430s and the 440s which formed the large troops for raids.⁷¹⁴ It would have been very difficult for the Huns to act together with so many people if there were no shared interests and the Huns had been forced to compel the others to participate in their activities.⁷¹⁵ It would thus seem likely that the Huns welcomed the leaders of the local barbarians groups as friends and companions to the confederation they had formed, and allowed these sedentary collaborators to retain control over their own affairs.⁷¹⁶

Archaeological evidence support this connection between the Huns and local barbarians. According to Heather, archaeological remains, especially graves in areas of Eastern Europe where Huns are known to be active during the fifth century, show a clear division between rich and poorly furnished graves.⁷¹⁷ Compared to earlier centuries, there is in this period a remarkable growth in graves suggesting staggering wealth.⁷¹⁸ The rich grave goods consist especially of jewellery and gold-fitted pieces, also with weapons decorated in the “Danubian” style that was highly popular among Germanic groups from the northern parts of the Black Sea to the west and south of modern Europe.⁷¹⁹ Even though the style was especially favoured by Germanic groups, it is hard to demonstrate whether those who were buried with these artefacts were actually Germanic speaking. However, it is believed that the majority of graves from the Volga steppe to the Hungarian Plain and north of the Black Sea were the graves of Germans, and only a few can be said to be those of nomads or Huns.⁷²⁰ Taken together, the significant number of rich German graves suggests that the Huns distributed quantities of the gold gathered from raids to their Germanic neighbours.⁷²¹ It is likely that local rulers accumulated considerable wealth when acting with the Huns.⁷²² Such wealth is hardly likely, if the relationship between groups of Huns and local barbarians had been based on the Huns’ strong domination over the locals rather than a confederation.

Another factor suggesting good relations between Huns and local barbarians is the fact that the Danubian style is common to the entire region where the Huns operated, but on the basis of

⁷¹⁴ Heather 2005, 330, 365.

⁷¹⁵ Lindner 1982, 703-704; Heather 2005, 366; Thompson (1999) 2000, *passim*. 188.

⁷¹⁶ Kelly 2008, 73, 75; Heather 2005, 363, *passim*. 325, 327; cf. Pohl 2003, 580, 591; *passus* Khazanov 1984, *passim*. 231. According to Pohl, the Avars also let sedentary groups who were under their influence to continue their life largely unbothered. This is common when nomads established domination.

⁷¹⁷ Heather 2005, 364, 330-332.

⁷¹⁸ Heather 2005, 364.

⁷¹⁹ Heather 2005, 364; Heather (1999) 2000, 260-261.

⁷²⁰ Heather 2005, 329-333, 361-365; Heather (1999) 2000, 261; cf. Pohl 2005, 113-114; Kazanski 1993, 213, *passim*. 211-232; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 353-354. The few indicators of Hun graves are bows which are strengthened by small plates in the middle and at the top, non-standard European modes of dress, the presence of Hunnic cauldrons and horse gears which include plates with polychrome ornament and bimetallic bits. Taken together, the graves which included rich grave goods in the Danubian style were most likely the graves of a German rather than a Hun.

⁷²¹ Heather 2005, 365.

⁷²² Kelly 2008, 73, 75; Schmauder 2008, 157.

archaeological evidence it is hard to place different local barbarian groups.⁷²³ It would seem that the Huns generated some degree of unity in the physical culture within their domain,⁷²⁴ the Danubian style showing cooperation between the Huns and Danubian Germans. Wide dispersion of the Danubian style, moreover, is thought to signify respect by other barbarians for the confederation between the groups of Huns and Danubian Germans.⁷²⁵ On the whole, the distribution of Danubian style artefacts at least tells us that trade connections worked well and connected the groups to each other in the region. Danubian style artefacts seem to have been popular merchandise and were bought over a wide area in such quantities that they even replaced the local decoration styles. The style had reference to the Huns, and if the Huns had been widely despised, the style would not have achieved the popularity it did. For these reasons I see the spread of the Danubian style as a sign of co-operation between groups of Huns and those who dwelled near the lower Danubian region and the Black Sea.

The time when groups of Huns were living next to local Germanic groups near the Danube was a period, which supported unity rather than the isolation of groups. Priscus also remarks that Huns were a mixture of people and in addition to their own languages they cultivated Hunnic and Gothic, again suggesting the Huns' interest was not to isolate but to co-operate with other groups on a more or less constant basis.⁷²⁶

My final remark in support of the argument that there was a coalition between Huns and local barbarians with Rua and Octar as overall leaders concerns the general forms of tribalism among Eurasian pastoral nomads. Put briefly, a tribe is first and foremost a political organization, never a purely territorial unit. New members are joined to the tribes whenever the overall situation permits, and nomadic societies are never closed societies.⁷²⁷ Because formation into a larger unit is needed for military activity, and groups of Huns and local barbarians were interested in continuing their joint activities as long as they were profitable,⁷²⁸ the leadership position that best answered this call was a military one. For these reasons Rua's and Octar's position must have based on supreme military leadership.

⁷²³ Heather (1999) 2000, 260; Kazanski 1993, 225. Kazanski claims that it would have been the elite who first used Danubian style objects, while the local population still followed the cultural traditions inherited from the preceding epoch, though little by little adopting the new style.

⁷²⁴ Heather (1999) 2000, 260.

⁷²⁵ Kazanski 1993, 225; Petrauskas 2007, 164-165. Petrauskas points out that the Cernjachov culture would not have declined as the result of the arrival of the Huns. This means that the Huns would not have disturbed or destroyed the daily life of the local dwellers. I would argue that this can be taken as a sign of Huns and local Germanic and Sarmatian groups living mainly peacefully side by side. In my opinion Petrauskas is right that the Huns did not want to disturb the life of the local sedentarists because they needed their products.

⁷²⁶ Priscus, fr. 11.2. in Blockley 1983, 266-267; see Heather 2005, 329, *passim*. 333.

⁷²⁷ Barfield 1989, 26-27; Khazanov 1984, 151; Lindner 1982, 698-701.

⁷²⁸ Lindner 1982, 703-705; Thompson (1999) 2000, *passim*. 189; Heather 2005, 365-366; Schmauder 2008, *passim*. 159.

In conclusion the joint interest of groups of Huns and local barbarians to make more lucrative raids in the beginning of the 430s led to the formation of a confederation that also strengthened the position of Hun leaders as supreme military leaders at the head of the confederation. The confederation needed a supreme leader who could maintain contact with leaders of their own groups and make plans for future actions. Moreover, a supreme leader was needed who would be responsible for peace negotiations and for updating other military leaders who headed smaller groups. How this all continued during the 430s is the topic of the next section.

7.3. Rua Confidently Leading the Confederation during the 430s

One of the first comments on the activities of the Huns at the beginning of the 430s is the first account of Rua. The account comes from Priscus and refers to the year 432 or 433:⁷²⁹

When Rua was king of the Huns [Ροῦα βασιλεύοντος Ούννων], the Amilzuri, Itimari, Tounsoures, Boisci and other tribes who were living near to the Danube were fleeing to fight on the side of the Romans. Rua decided to go war with these tribes and sent Esclas, a man who usually handled negotiations over differences between himself and the Romans, threatening to break the present peace if they [the Romans] did not hand over all who had fled to them. The Romans wished to send an embassy to the Huns.

Interestingly, Priscus' account does not mention anything about Octar, but implies that only Rua took care of the negotiations with the Romans and was charged with attacking against the tribes who wanted to ally themselves with the Romans. Because Octar is not mentioned in this case, or afterwards either, it is assumed that Octar would have died at the beginning of the 430s. This is likely because it is Attila and Bleda, Rua's and Octar's nephews, who are mentioned as leaders of the confederation after Rua's death.⁷³⁰ If Octar had still been alive after Rua's death, in all likelihood there would not have been a need to choose the new leaders, Attila and Bleda. This then indicates that Octar died before Rua. Because Rua could take care of the lead of the confederation alone, this suggests out that the brothers had a similar position. If this had not been the case, a leader would have been needed to take care of the duties of Octar.⁷³¹

The fact that Rua could act alone at the head of the Huns is a further proof that the leadership position among the Huns was based on military leadership. First, nomads are familiar with suddenly

⁷²⁹ Priscus, fr. 2 in Blockley 1983, 224-225; cf. Wirth 1999, 49-50; Heather 2005, 362; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 86; Stickler 2007, 63; Thompson (1999) 2000, 70-71, 79-81. Heather dates Priscus' account conquering Rua to the late 430s.

⁷³⁰ Priscus, fr. 2 in Blockley 1983, 224-225.

⁷³¹ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, *passim*. 85.

losing their military leaders, and there is no immediate need to fill the place as long as there is someone responsible for leading of troops on a large scale. This is what happened after Octar's death, when Rua alone remained head of the confederation. Second, after military activity, groups of nomads do not even need military leaders as they are not then fundamentally required. Furthermore, Priscus' notion that Rua sent Eslas to negotiate with the Romans as he had used to do, implies that Rua had also taken care of military tasks during earlier years when Octar was alive.⁷³² Moreover, Rua's interest in going to war against the tribes who fled to the Romans' side, strongly suggests that the leadership position at the head of the confederation was based on military duties and hence constituted the position of supreme military leader.

It is likely consider that Rua's demand to get the tribes fled to the Roman side back came from his interest in preventing any nomad groups from fighting on the side of the Romans because it would make military operations against the Romans in the future challenging. That is to say, as a supreme military leader of the groups of Huns and their allies, Rua was responsible for eliminating forthcoming threats to his supporters. Another possibility, which however does not totally exclude the first option, is that the fled groups had promised to be loyal to Rua or they belonged to some of the clans who should have been loyal to him according to the genealogical order among the Huns. In general, breaking an alliance, or disloyalty, is taken as a strong insult among nomads.⁷³³ Accordingly, in order to show other members of the confederation that he was a capable leader and would not accept disloyalty Rua demanded that the tribes be returned in order to punish them.⁷³⁴ In any case, the situation reveals that not every tribe or groups in the northern parts of the Black Sea and from the lower Danubian area to the Carpathians belonged or wanted to be part of the confederation led by Rua. In addition, if the Amilzuri, the Itimari and others were some of the Huns, it is obvious that the Huns were not a political unit.⁷³⁵ Therefore, the situation speaks strongly against the idea of the existence of a Hun Empire at the beginning of the 430s. However, I shall next consider whether the situation changed as a result of Rua's contacts with the Romans.

Rua's contacts with the Western Roman Empire during c. 431-433 involved Aetius, one of the leading generals in the Western Roman Empire who hired Huns as his mercenaries.⁷³⁶ According to fifth century contemporary sources, Aetius was attacked by some of the leading figures in the Western Roman Empire and in order defend himself he gathered troops and marched on Rome. Because Aetius' troops also included also Huns, who are said to be old friends of Aetius, and Aetius

⁷³² Priscus, fr. 2 in Blockley 1983, 224-227; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 85.

⁷³³ Kelly 2008, 71.

⁷³⁴ Schmauder 2008, *passim*. 159.

⁷³⁵ Thompson (1999) 2000, 80; Stickler 2007, 62.

⁷³⁶ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 86; Stickler 2007, 60, *passim*. 62-64; Wirth 1999, *passim*. 46-47.

left Rome in 433, the Huns are seen to be those led by Rua.⁷³⁷ There is disagreement on the compensation that Aetius gave to Rua – did he grant parts of Pannonia to Rua as payment of his help or not, though it is obvious that Rua’s troops were rewarded somehow.⁷³⁸ Priscus’ remark that Aetius’ son, Carpilio, might have been held hostage by the Huns during the 430s could signify an official treaty alliance between Rua and Aetius made during 433 at the latest.⁷³⁹

In any case, the co-operation between Aetius and Rua is claimed to indicate that Rua and his confederation were a powerful force that could greatly influence Roman politics. Thus, it would seem that Rua really did have the capability of increasing the might of the groups he led and they worked well in together.⁷⁴⁰

If Aetius could benefit from the co-operation with Rua, Rua might also have been pleased with it too. In short, the contacts with Aetius certainly made Rua look like a talented military leader who could bring profits to his followers and take good care of the military operations and peace negotiations with important partners, such as the Roman Empire.⁷⁴¹ Therefore, it is reasonable to think that all this pleased those who had formed the confederation, and this must have strengthened Rua’s position at its head.⁷⁴² There are also claims that Rua used the contacts with the Roman Empire to strengthen his leadership position and attract new followers.⁷⁴³ I would argue that this was also the result of Rua’s contacts with the Eastern Roman Empire.

The main issue between Rua and the Eastern Roman Empire was the dispute over tribes, namely the Amilzur, the Itimari and other groups who had fled to the side of the Romans and Rua demanded that they be handed over on pain of attack.⁷⁴⁴ I consider that Rua used his demands as a pretext for war because the Eastern Roman Empire was tied to military activities in Africa.⁷⁴⁵ Thus, I would agree with the claims that Rua demanded the tribes back with cash in mind and the plans for the new war were made so as to bring profits for the groups in the confederation and please his supporters.⁷⁴⁶ On the other hand, I disagree with the claims that Rua’s demand for the return of the

⁷³⁷ Maenchen-Helfen 1983, 86-87, 90; Thompson (1999) 2000, 71; Wirth 1999, 45. Rua is not mentioned by name in any contemporary accounts as a leader of the Huns to whom Aetius turned. Nonetheless, this was most likely the case because we do not know of any larger units of Huns dwelling near the Western Roman borders than those who seem to have supported Rua’s lead during the 430s.

⁷³⁸ Maenchen-Helfen 1983, passim. 86-90; cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, 71; Wirth 1999, 45-47; Stickler 2007, 62, 64-65. Stickler suggests that Rua and Aetius ended up to having a relationship that can be called “*amicitia*”.

⁷³⁹ Priscus, fr. 2, fr. 11.2. in Blockley 1983, 224-225, 256-257; cf. Wirth 1999, 41-42, 46-47; Thompson (1999) 2000, 71; Stickler 2007, 60. See the earlier part of Chapter 7.

⁷⁴⁰ Wirth 1999, 47-48. Wirth thinks that the support given by Rua’s troops crucially helped Aetius to come back to power in the Western Roman Empire.

⁷⁴¹ Heather 2005, 362; Stickler 2007, 64.

⁷⁴² Wirth 1999, 47-48; Stickler 2007, 63-64; Schmauder 2008, passim. 159.

⁷⁴³ Wirth 1999, 41.

⁷⁴⁴ Priscus, fr. 2 in Blockley 1983, 224-225.

⁷⁴⁵ Thompson (1999) 2000, 79- 80; cf. Wirth 1999, 46.

⁷⁴⁶ Heather 2005, 327; Schmauder 2008, 159.

tribes would signify that he had reached such a position where he could enforce other tribes to bend to his demands, and that if they did not do this, their only option was to flee.⁷⁴⁷

It is likely that the military activities of the Eastern Roman Empire in Africa were the reason why Theodosius II was ready to negotiate with Rua to keep the peace from 433 onwards.⁷⁴⁸ Furthermore, Rua's powerful help to Aetius in the Western Roman Empire might have been a clear indication that Rua was leading a large band of troops with whom a clash could be severe. On the other hand, it is also possible that the Eastern Roman Empire might have calculated that even though diplomatic relations and annual gold payments for peace required money, they would consolidate the groups of Huns and this would prevent more costly unexpected attacks of scattered nomads and other barbarian groups coming from the Danubian frontier. That is to say, the costs would be price to pay in order to support the formation of a buffer zone against unexpected attacks from regions next to the lower Danubian frontiers.⁷⁴⁹

In any case, the Eastern Roman Empire and Rua could not solve the dispute by negotiations and the parties clashed in 434 or 435 or perhaps even later.⁷⁵⁰ This was followed by peace negotiations and perhaps some kind of peace treaty in 434 or possibly later. This is implied by Priscus' claim that Rua used to send Esclas to negotiate with the Romans and the Huns.⁷⁵¹ Priscus' reference that the Eastern Roman Empire had agreed to pay 350 pounds of gold annually to Rua also implies an earlier treaty.⁷⁵² In my opinion both aspects strongly suggest that there would have been peace negotiations before the dispute concerning the handing over of the fled tribes was finally solved. According to Priscus, Rua never saw the end of the negotiations because he died suddenly during the process. Even though the year of his death is not certain, it seems to have happened during the second half of the 430s.⁷⁵³ Despite Rua's death, negotiations were continued, and Priscus mentions that the new Hun leaders (οἱ βασιλῆισι Σκύθαι) were Rua's nephews, Bleda and Attila.⁷⁵⁴

Although we cannot be certain when the peace treaty or negotiations between the Eastern Roman Empire and Rua would have been, nevertheless the most important aspect in the on going peace

⁷⁴⁷ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 91.

⁷⁴⁸ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, passim. 91-94; cf. Wirth 1999, 49-50; Thompson (1999) 2000, 79-80. The year when the negotiations started varies from 433 to 434.

⁷⁴⁹ Sticker 2007, 66-67.

⁷⁵⁰ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 91; Sticker 2007, 64.

⁷⁵¹ Priscus, fr. 2. in Blockley 1983, 224-225. See the earlier part of Chapter 7.

⁷⁵² Priscus, fr. 2. in Blockley 1983, 224-227, 379; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 91, 93-94; Sticker 2007, 59, 64; Bona 1991, 47; Wirth 1999, 39, 41, 161. Wirth assumes that the payment of 350 pounds of gold to Rua could be the result of a peace treaty made after the Huns' invasion of Thrace in 422. However, the evidence is insubstantial. In my opinion, it is more likely that the payment resulted from the invasion of the Eastern Roman Empire during the 430s, when Rua is known to have led some Hun troops. Another option is that there had been no earlier treaty at all, and the reference to 350 pounds of gold would have been part of the peace negotiations that Rua had had before he died. See Chapter 8.

⁷⁵³ Priscus fr. 2. in Blockley 1983, 224-225; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 93-94; Sticker 2007, 64; cf. Wirth 1999, 48-50; Thomson (1999) 2000, 80.

⁷⁵⁴ Priscus, fr. 2. in Blockley 1983, 224-227.

negotiations is that the Eastern Roman Empire had been ready to pay gold annually to Rua. In short, this must have emphasized the might of the confederation led by Rua, and especially Rua's position as a talented military leader.⁷⁵⁵

The riches that Rua gained from the negotiations with the Romans and the fact that he could share these riches with his followers is claimed to have both strengthened and changed the nature of Rua's leadership position.⁷⁵⁶ It has been argued that the increase in riches caused socio-economic changes and led to the rise of an elite leadership and finally to a nomadic empire or state.

It has been thought that when wealth grew as a result of victorious raids this increased the differences between rich and poor nomads and allowed differences between classes to emerge. Furthermore, the leading elite or aristocracy is said to have become even more interested in raiding so as to strengthen their social position. In addition, it is assumed that the Hun aristocracy had to create a more powerful political framework in order to maintain its privileged economic and social position within Hun society, as well as its rule over its subject peoples.⁷⁵⁷ This is claimed to have resulted in the birth of a class society and a feudal or primitive class state in the second quarter of the fifth century. In addition, the Hun ruler is no longer a mere chieftain but an absolute monarch, like the emperor of Byzantium.⁷⁵⁸ All these developments have been argued to support possible transformations in the pastoralist way of life: from scattered herders to a close-knit community in certain areas and the partial adoption of a sedentary way of life.⁷⁵⁹ In other words, the increase in riches alters former clan and tribe relations and creates a new leading stratum under the lead of a powerful autocrat.⁷⁶⁰ Moreover, the leadership position among the Huns was no longer any more connected to military prowess but to wealth, which could be inherited, and this supported the emergence of a hereditary nobility.⁷⁶¹

I would argue, however, that there is insufficient evidence to prove that increase in wealth would have led to the rise of separate classes in the steppe, not to mention a state.⁷⁶²

I am also not convinced by the theory that the growth among larger units of nomads derived from the goal of ambitious autocrats to combine ever-greater numbers of nomads into their control, and this led to the creation of a nomadic empire.⁷⁶³ However, in this case the power of a steppe autocrat is claimed by others to come not from riches but to be purely personal: power is said to be based on

⁷⁵⁵ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 91; cf. Kradin 2005, 158; Kradin 2002, 375-376; Dmitriev 2003, 151.

⁷⁵⁶ Heather 2005, 364-365.

⁷⁵⁷ Harmatta 1952, 295-297, Thompson (1999) 2000, 178-179; cf. Krader 1978, *passim*. 93-102, 106.

⁷⁵⁸ Harmatta 1952, 295-297, 304; Harmatta 1951, 134, 141; *passus* Barfield 1989, 5-6; cf. Khazanov, 1984, 297; Pohl 2003, 572.

⁷⁵⁹ Heather 2005, 326-329.

⁷⁶⁰ Barfield 1989, 5-8; Krader 1978, *passim*. 93-102, 106.

⁷⁶¹ Thompson (1999) 2000, 178, 192.

⁷⁶² Barfield 1989, 5-8. See Chapter 4.

⁷⁶³ Radloff 1884, 513-517.

a leader's skilful manipulation of force and wealth within an elaborate tribal network, and such a ruler is a usurper of power and at his death his personal empire dissolves back into its component parts.⁷⁶⁴

However, I would argue that this did not happen among the Huns when Rua was leading the confederation. First, we know that not every group living next to groups that supported Rua's lead wanted to act with Rua. Second, after Rua's death the confederation did not collapse but gained new leaders, Bleda and Attila. That is to say, Rua had not established an empire that was dependent on his leadership. I claim instead that Rua's position and the existence of a confederation that formed a unity with larger regions must have been based on the common acceptance of participants in the confederation.

Furthermore, I suggest that leadership positions are respond to need.⁷⁶⁵ A nomadic leader is the popular choice of a political movement within a nomadic society and choice is a complement to coercion in any nomadic empire because rising leaders attracted voluntary followers by their success in war and raiding.⁷⁶⁶ A general need to have a leader at the head of a confederation would explain why Oetar and Rua, and after them Bleda and Attila, obtained their positions. Confederation had proved to be successful and that raised an interest in having new leaders to continue joint activities.⁷⁶⁷ After all, the Huns were after gold and the riches that were gained and shared kept allies happy.⁷⁶⁸

I would argue that the might of the leadership position of Rua, and Bleda and Attila after him, increased naturally and as a result of contacts with the Roman Empire, which brought wealth to the confederation.⁷⁶⁹ Equally, I consider that the leadership position changed from a temporary to a more permanent position because peace negotiations with the Romans and contacts with the groups who formed the confederation over a wide area required time.⁷⁷⁰

In the following chapter I study what kind of leadership position the Hun leaders after Rua, Bleda and Attila, seem to have had and discuss whether their position was accompanied with elements that would lead to the rise of a supercomplex chiefdom rather than a state or empire. I also analyse

⁷⁶⁴ Barfield 1989, 5.

⁷⁶⁵ Barthold 1923, 11-13.

⁷⁶⁶ Kradin 2005, 152-153, 156; Barfield 1989, 5; Harmatta 1952, 296-297; cf. Lindner 1982, 700-701, 693.

⁷⁶⁷ Kradin 2002, 376.

⁷⁶⁸ Heather 2005, 364-365.

⁷⁶⁹ Kradin 2005, 152, 155. It has been noted that inner socio-political changes require successful military expansion, and its precondition is the union of tribes. Because creating a union of tribes is evidently beyond the power of any single tribal chief, this creates the need for a supreme chief and for alliances between tribes. In nomadic societies the leadership position is based on military leadership, gained by others' acceptance. Although Kradin writes about the situation among the Mongols, the need to form larger nomadic units, such as a tribe, in order to gain successful military expansion, can be taken as a rule.

⁷⁷⁰ Barfield 1989, *passim*. 7-8.

whether the increasing contacts with the Romans and the flow of riches from the Roman world transformed the Huns' nomadic way of life and led to the partial adoption of a sedentary way of life.

8. STRENGTHENING THE MIGHT OF THE CONFEDERATION – THE HUN BROTHERS BLEDA AND ATILA IN THE 440s

8.1. From Uncle to Nephews - Bleda and Attila in the Footsteps of Rua

The only contemporary account we have on the rise of Bleda and Attila to the head of the confederation is Priscus' remark that Bleda and Attila continued their uncle Rua's peace negotiations with the Eastern Roman Empire and the result is given of the negotiations in the city of Margus in the last half of the 430s.⁷⁷¹ The fragment from Priscus tells:⁷⁷²

When Rua died, the kingship of the Huns devolved upon Attila and Bleda [Τελευτήσαντος δὲ Ροῦα, καὶ περιστάσης τῆς Οὐννων βασιλείας ἐς Αττήλαν καὶ Βλήδαν] [...] [in the peace treaty between Bleda and Attila and the Eastern Roman Empire in Margus] <it was agreed> not only that for the future the Romans not receive those who fled from Scythia, but also that those who had already fled should be handed back together with the Roman prisoners-of-war who had made their way back to their own country without ransom, unless for each one of who escaped eight solidi were given to those who had captured him in war; that the Romans should not make an alliance with a barbarian people against the Huns when the latter were preparing for war against them; that there should be safe markets with equal rights for Romans and Huns; that the treaty should be maintained and last as long as the Romans paid seven hundred pounds of gold each year to the Scythian kings [τοῖς βασιλείοις Σκύθαις] (previously the payments had been three hundred and fifty pounds of gold). On these terms the Romans and the Huns made a treaty and, having sworn their native oaths, they returned each other to their own country. The fugitives amongst the Romans were handed back to the barbarians, amongst whom were Mama and Atakam, children of the royal house [παῖδες Μάμα καὶ Ατακάμ τοῦ βασιλείου γένους]. Those who received them exacted the penalty for their flight by impaling them near to Carsum, a fortress in Thrace. When they [Attila and Bleda] had made peace with the Romans, Attila, Bleda and their forces marched through Scythia subduing the tribes [ἔθνη] there and also made war on the Sorosgi.

The term *περιστάσης* informs us that Rua's leadership position was passed on or transferred to Bleda and Attila.⁷⁷³ Priscus does not stress or refer to the fact that the situation would have involved any festivities or that it would have been a remarkable turning point among the groups who formed the confederation. In Jordanes we have another account though it does not say how Bleda and Attila

⁷⁷¹ Kelly 2008, 88; Heather 2005, 362; Thompson (1999) 2000, 85; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 94.

⁷⁷² Priscus, fr. 2. in Blockley 1983, 224–227, 379.

⁷⁷³ Liddel, Scott (1843) 1968, 1379.

became leaders.⁷⁷⁴ As a 6th century author Jordanes would have relied on earlier authors, such as Priscus, for descriptions of the event. It would seem that there was not a great deal of information among the Romans how and why Bleda and Attila acquired their position, or, as seems likely, it was not regarded as a grand event.

This all makes perfect sense, if we consider that the position was only a temporary one and not a hereditary or mighty leadership position. However, because Priscus uses the term *basileus* and Jordanes addresses the Hun leaders as “*rex*”,⁷⁷⁵ it is claimed to signify a leadership position equivalent to the term “kingship”.⁷⁷⁶ According to Harmatta, *basileus* would even signify a position of an absolute monarch, like the emperor of Byzantium.⁷⁷⁷ I am not convinced by these arguments, especially because Priscus is writing narrative text and thus the title should be understood as descriptive.⁷⁷⁸ We should evaluate the meaning of the title and what it refers to in the frames of the nomadic way of life. Generally speaking, because Priscus previously used the term *basileus* for Rua,⁷⁷⁹ this implies that they all, Rua, Bleda and Attila, had a similar position. Bleda’s and Attila’s position derived from a general interest in having a military leader and they acted as supreme military leaders, as did their uncles. Furthermore, Priscus’ reference to Bleda and Attila as ἡγεμῶν and ἄρχων indicates that Bleda’s and Attila’s position was not comparable to that of a Roman emperor.⁷⁸⁰ The view is strengthened by Priscus’ way of using the title *basileus* for the leaders of some nomad tribes who did not belong to the confederation led by Attila but were living in the neighbourhood of the groups who belonged to it.⁷⁸¹ This clearly shows that Priscus’ use of the term *basileus* does not refer to a unique and mighty leadership position among the nomads and Huns. Nonetheless, we might suspect that because Bleda and Attila led a large confederation, the basis of their leadership position was more influential than the others named by the same title, though the basis of the position might have been the same.

Taken together, because Bleda and Attila took care of military activities immediately after they acquired the leadership position, this indicates that they were military leaders and their position at the head of the confederation was connected to the responsibilities and tasks of military leadership.

⁷⁷⁴ Jordanes, *Getica*, XXXIV, 182. “*Is namque Attila patre genitus Mundzucio, cuius fuere germani Octar et Roas, qui ante Attilam regnum tenuisse narrantur*”.

⁷⁷⁵ Jordanes, *Getica*, IC, 257. Jordanes passus “*Praecipuus Hunnorum rex Attila*”.

⁷⁷⁶ Schmauder 2009, 126; Stücker 2007, 59; Heather 2005, 325; Thompson (1999) 2000, 177, passim. 64, 67-68, 178-179; Wirth 1999, 47-48, 83; Bona 1991, 35; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 85, 91.

⁷⁷⁷ Harmatta 1952, 295-297.

⁷⁷⁸ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 196.

⁷⁷⁹ Socrates Scholasticus, *Hist. ecc.*, 379, 1; Priscus fr.2 in Blockley 1983, 224-225. Socrates Scholasticus uses the word *basileus* for Octar.

⁷⁸⁰ Priscus, fr. 11.2.; fr. 33.2 in Blockley 1983, 246-247, 250-253, 276-277, 336-337; see Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 196-197. Because Priscus also uses the title *basileus* for the leaders of Franks and a small group of Lazi living in Caucasus, this implies that Priscus used the title in a descriptive way and not to signify the same leadership position as Roman emperors.

⁷⁸¹ Priscus, fr. 11.2. in Blockley 1983, 258-259.

Accordingly, it implies that Bleda and Attila must have been capable and appreciated warriors, or perhaps even military leaders of smaller troops, otherwise they most likely would not have been trusted with the leadership position at the head of the confederation.⁷⁸²

Priscus' account also shows that Bleda and Attila were fully capable of the task. In brief, the terms of the treaty with the Eastern Roman Empire that the brothers negotiated immediately after the death of Rua were very profitable for the members in the confederation.

First, nomads' living depends greatly on trade, and Bleda's and Attila's demand to have safe market places with equal rights with the Romans must have been a highly welcome condition.⁷⁸³ Second, the groups in the confederation could feel more secure because they would now only expect confrontations from the Eastern Roman Empire due the Romans' promise not to ally themselves with any barbarian groups living near the areas of the Huns. In addition, warriors could earn money from the Roman captives they had acquired during a confrontation, since the Romans were obliged to pay 8 solidi for every captive. Moreover, Bleda's and Attila's achievement in raising Rua's annual peace payment from 350 pounds of gold to 700 pounds must have underlined the Hun brothers' success in the negotiations and their ability to profit the confederation. Finally, Bleda and Attila could show by impaling some of the members from the fled tribes that disloyalty to the confederation was followed by punishment.

Even if the so-called fled tribes did not belong to the confederation, but instead aimed to ally themselves with the Eastern Roman Empire, nevertheless Bleda's and Attila's actions showed that the security of the confederation was taken seriously. Bleda and Attila wanted to guarantee that the Eastern Roman troops would not be strengthened by barbarian mercenaries coming from groups who formed the confederation. In this way, Bleda and Attila could also have calculated that if the Eastern Roman Empire wanted to hire barbarian mercenaries from the lower Danubian regions, they should ask for the troops led by Bleda and Attila, as this would bring payments to the confederation. It would seem that Bleda and Attila had planned their demands for the Eastern Roman Empire well so as to gain good profits for the troops and groups they led not only then, but also in the future.

While Bleda and Attila could be pleased about the peace treaty, the brothers had no other option than to be successful in their negotiations. They were obliged to bring riches for the members in the confederation in order to show their power and also in that way try and keep the leadership position and the unity of the groups. Bleda and Attila also had to convince those who had earlier trusted in

⁷⁸² Barfield 1989, 28.

⁷⁸³ Khazanov 1984, 202-205, especially 205; Krajin 2002, 376; Basilev 1989, 5; Barfield 1993, *passim*. 18, 149-151; Batty 2007, 287.

Rua's leadership that they were as capable leaders as their uncle, and that acting together as a larger unit would still be profitable to all those in the confederation.⁷⁸⁴

Perhaps Heather is right when he suggests that Bleda's and Attila's war immediately after the treaty in Margus, against some tribes in Scythia and a group called the Sorosgi was motivated by the need to prove themselves worthy new leaders. According to Heather, the war was against those who had split up the confederation, something that Bleda and Attila could not accept.⁷⁸⁵ However, because the peace treaty in Margus was very profitable for the members in the confederation, I find the idea of deserting the confederation doubtful. A more likely reason is that the tribes had attacked the regions of the groups that belonged to the coalition, and Bleda and Attila as the leaders of the confederation needed to rush and defend both the areas and the groups which trusted in their lead. It may have been concerned a fight over pastures, because when groups of Huns started to live in the regions next to the Roman lower Danubian borders they were faced with a shortage of pasture lands.⁷⁸⁶ Groups of Huns might have faced competition and disputes over pastures or gaizing rights especially after the 420s when the second wave of Huns came to live in the regions near the Black Sea.⁷⁸⁷

While the reason for the wars against groups in Scythia remains unknown, nevertheless the situation emphasizes that at the end of the 430s not every group in the regions where Bleda and Attila led the confederation were members. I therefore consider that we should not speak about the existence of a Hun Empire at this time.⁷⁸⁸

There are also claims that the fights signified Bleda's and Attila's lust to increase their power position among the new tribes,⁷⁸⁹ or even a rivalry between genealogical lines, especially because Bleda and Attila killed some of the members of the fled tribes, namely Mama and Atakam.⁷⁹⁰

The only thing we know about background Mama's and Atakam's is Priscus' remark that they were "παῖδες ... τοῦ βασιλείου γένους" which by Blockley translates as "children of royal house".⁷⁹¹ However, we should be careful about using the term "royal" because nothing denies the

⁷⁸⁴ Stickler 2007, 67; Wirth 1999, 53; Kelly 2008, 72-73; Schmauder 2008, passim. 159.

⁷⁸⁵ Priscus, fr. 2 in Blockley 1983, 224-227, 379; cf. Heather 2005, 362.

⁷⁸⁶ Lindner 1981, 13-16, 19.

⁷⁸⁷ Kradin 2005, 151; Basilov 1989, 3-6; Khazanov 1984, 131, 148-150 passim. 123-126, 135-136, 139-140, 143. In general, nomads are known for fights over pastoral areas.

⁷⁸⁸ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 256-259; cf. Kelly 2008, 72. Priscus' writings show that even at the end of the 440s there were nomadic groups who did not belong to the confederation led by Bleda and Attila, but lived in the neighbouring areas. I therefore consider it highly likely that nomad groups could have had rivalries over herding areas at the end of the 430s and this is also why also Bleda and Attila went to war against some of them.

⁷⁸⁹ Stickler 2007, 66; cf. Kelly 2008, passim. 73, 75, 87.

⁷⁹⁰ Wirth 1999, 51; Heather 2005, 326-327; Stickler 2007, 66; Barfield 1989, passim. 26-28.

⁷⁹¹ Priscus, fr. 2. in Blockley 1983, 224-227, 379

possibility that “*basileiou*” would only refer to a leadership position.⁷⁹² Therefore, I suggest that the term *paides ... tou basileiou genous* could well refer to Mama’s and Atakam’s position as military leaders. Alternatively the term refers to some of the leading warriors among their groups who were appreciated in genealogical order, because Priscus also tells us that Basic and Kursich, who led troops of Huns over the Caucasus to the areas of the present day Middle East either during the last decades of the 4th century or at the beginning of the 420s, were men of “Scythian royalty” [ἄνδρας τῶν βασιλείων Σκυθῶν], while there is no reference to them being relatives of Octar, Rua, Bleda and Attila.⁷⁹³

But even if Mama and Atakam were relatives of Bleda and Attila, I still suggest that the primary reason why Bleda and Attila killed Mama and Atakam was the fact that they were among of those who had had a leading position among the fled tribes, and as mentioned earlier among nomads disloyalty is heavily punished.⁷⁹⁴ This was clearly the case among the Huns because Priscus informs us that the death penalty was also the punishment for those who had killed their master in war, or those who had spied on the acts of the Huns for the Romans.⁷⁹⁵ The death penalty was seemingly a common punishment in cases of disloyalty.

However, even if the tribes of Mama and Atakam had not belonged to the confederation, nevertheless killing those who had allied themselves with the Eastern Roman Empire could be taken as an act that would have threatened the safety of the confederation, and hence it would have been thought necessary to eliminate those who were guilty of this.⁷⁹⁶ Therefore, in my opinion the reason for killing Mama and Atakam derived from the fact that there seem to have been many groups who wanted to profit from the Eastern Roman Empire by trying to co-operate with it, and not all of the groups belong to the confederation led by Bleda and Attila. Accordingly, this made the leaders of those groups enemies of Bleda and Attila, because if the others had allied themselves with the Eastern Roman Empire, they would not only have strengthened the Roman army but they would also have challenged Bleda and Attila as leaders.⁷⁹⁷

⁷⁹² Stückler 2007, 67; Wirth 1999, 51. Stückler claims that Mama and Atakam belong to the “Königsippe” and according to Wirth they were members of the tribe of the leading dynasty: “die offenkundig dem Stamm der Herrschenden Dynastie angehören”.

⁷⁹³ Priscus, fr. 11.2. in Blockley 1983, 278-279; See Chapter 4.3. Priscus tells that Basic and Kursich were “ἄνδρας τῶν βασιλείων Σκυθῶν” which Blockley translates “*members of the Scythian royalty*”.

⁷⁹⁴ Vasjutin 2003, 53; Kradin 2002, passim. 375; Kelly 2008, 88-89, passim. 51-52, 54; Barfield 1989, passim. 26; Barfield 1993, 160.

⁷⁹⁵ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 264-265, 272-273, 292-293

⁷⁹⁶ Kelly 2008, 88-89. I see this as the main reason why Bleda and Attila killed Mama and Atakam, I am not convinced about the idea of rivalry between the lineages among groups of Huns concerning power positions.

⁷⁹⁷ Kelly 2008, 89; cf. Barfield 1993, 149-151; passus Kradin 2002, 375-376; Kradin 2005, 158.

Another hypothesis is that Atakam and Mama belonged to a competing lineage to Attila's and Bleda's, leading to fights between members of these lineages and their supporters. If so, then it means that the conical clan structure that commonly shapes social ties and provides unity between groups on a larger scale among Eurasian pastoralists had become active.⁷⁹⁸

I doubt, however, whether there was a rivalry between noble lineages over the leadership position among the groups of Huns at this time. I am also sceptical that belonging to an elite family could have given the leadership position to Bleda and Attila, and that it would have become hereditary. Stickler even speaks about “*dynastische Kontinuität*”, the continuation of a leadership dynasty in relation to Attila and Bleda.⁷⁹⁹ Such claims are based only on Priscus' remark that “*When Rua died, the kingship [τῆς Οὐννων βασιλείας] of the Huns devolved upon Attila and Bleda*” and Jordanes' account of the same event: “*Attila's father was Mundzuc, whose own brothers were Octar and Ruas, who are said to have held the kingship [regnum] before Attila, though by no means over all the peoples whom he [Attila] ruled*”.⁸⁰⁰ Although Bleda and Attila became leaders of the confederation after their uncles, nevertheless the claims of a hereditary dynasty position are exaggerated,⁸⁰¹ and we lack sufficient evidence to make such a claim.⁸⁰² However, Priscus' remark on Attila's *eugeneia*, [εὐγένειαν] “noble birth” in Blockley's translation, is also claimed to indicate the rise of a leading elite, with the leadership position becoming hereditary in the extended family of Rua and Octar and Bleda and Attila.⁸⁰³ Priscus writes:⁸⁰⁴

Eslas [whom Rua used to send to negotiate with the Romans] was then to say directly that Theodosius was the son of a nobly-born father, and Attila, too, was of noble descent [εὐγένειαν], having succeeded his father Mundiuch. But whereas he [Attila] had had preserved his noble lineage, Theodosius had fallen from his and was Attila's slave, bound to the payment of tribute.

I am, however, sceptical of interpreting *eugeneia* as a sign of an upper class that signifies the development of differences between the classes and a class society for the following reasons. First, I

⁷⁹⁸ Barfield 1989, 148-149.

⁷⁹⁹ Stickler 2007, 66; see also Kelly 2008, passim. 51-52

⁸⁰⁰ Jordanes, *Getica*, XXXV: 180; Priscus fr. 2., fr.11.3 in Blockley 1983, 224-225, 280-281.

⁸⁰¹ Seeck 1920, 282; Harmatta 1951, 140; Bona 1991, 29, 35, 37, 46, 54; Wirth 1999, 51. According to Seeck, Octar and Rua could have been the sons of Uldin, while Harmatta claims that leadership positions would always have belonged to the wealthiest families or groups among the Huns. Equally, Bona claims that the leadership position, “Grosskönigtum”, would not have been passed to outsiders, hence he claims that it went from the mythical Balamber to Uldin, Donatus and Charaton, ending up in the hands of Rua and finally of Bleda and Attila, and perhaps earlier in the hands of Attila' and Bledas' father Mundzuc/Mundiuch. Because the only definite family contact between the Hun leaders was between the brothers Octar and Rua and their nephews Bleda and Attila, I am not convinced that there would have been a hereditary leadership position among the groups of Huns on a large scale and for many decades or even centuries.

⁸⁰² Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 85.

⁸⁰³ Blockley 1983, 296-297; Wirth 1999, 52-53, 57,58; Stickler 2007, 66-67; Thompson (1999) 2000, 177-178.

⁸⁰⁴ Priscus, fr. 15.2. in Blockley 1983, 296-297.

because Priscus places Attila at the end of the 440s, *eugeneia* might only refer to the fact that Attila came from a family that was famous for its former appreciated military leaders.⁸⁰⁵ Furthermore, if we take it for granted that Esclas really made a comparison between the Emperor and Attila, his opinion might derive from the fact that in the eyes of nomads those who pay for peace can not have a higher position than their own leaders. Accordingly, the position of Attila and Theodosius II could not be anything else than comparable.⁸⁰⁶ Finally, it is also likely that Priscus' story about Esclas' bold comment is invented and originates from Priscus' dislike of the emperor as I have already pointed out.⁸⁰⁷ In any case, it is still true, as Basilov notes that "From ancient times the nomadic societies were divided into two major classes, the aristocracy and the common people", though it is also a fact that "the aristocracy did not necessarily possess any real power".⁸⁰⁸

Taken together, although *eugeneia* would mean aristocracy, this still does not prove that because of this Rua and Bleda and Attila received their position. Generally speaking, e.g. in the case of Genghis Khan, Temüdjin had the proper descent to compete for leadership, but in order to have it he needed to attract followers as a successful warrior chief.⁸⁰⁹ To sum up, descent is one credential for a leadership position among Eurasian pastoralists, but background alone does not guarantee it.⁸¹⁰ Therefore, it is primarily their own abilities that brought leadership positions for Rua, Bleda and Attila.⁸¹¹ As I have pointed out in earlier chapters, wealth simply cannot bring or guarantee leadership position among Eurasian pastoral nomads.⁸¹² However, the leadership position can be linked to a family or an elite or aristocracy when there is a long-term need for a leadership position

⁸⁰⁵ Kelly 2008, passim. 70; passus Barfield 1993, passim. 132; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 198-199.

⁸⁰⁶ Barfield 1989, passim. 156-157; Khazanov 1984, 160.

⁸⁰⁷ See Chapter 2.3. Priscus' account about Esclas' statement that Theodosius II had as honourable a background as a barbarian leader simply does not show respect to the emperor.

⁸⁰⁸ Basilov 1989, 6.

⁸⁰⁹ Barfield 1993, 159, 76, 83; Khazanov 1984, 236. Barfield states that among Eurasian pastoralists descent was used to justify power.

⁸¹⁰ Kradin 2005, 159; see also Barfield 1989, passim. 26-28; Khazanov 1984, passim. 236-238, 178-179. Kradin also points this out in the case of Rouran nomads from the fourth century AD next to the Empire of China – if the leader was considered incapable of his tasks, his followers did not mind changing their loyalty to another leader or replacing the present one on a new leader, although the former leader would have belong appreciated family.

⁸¹¹ Thompson (1999) 2000, 178. I disagree with Thompson's claims that one family had succeeded in making the military leadership a hereditary office held by a successive generations of brothers, and hence Romans can refer to Attila's "progeny" as ruling the Huns. Furthermore, Thompson claims that this is an innovation in Hun society and implies that hereditary nobility had arisen. The leaders differed now from the primates of Ammianus' day in that they derived their authority not from military prowess, which cannot be inherited, but from wealth, which can.

⁸¹² Khazanov 1984, passim. 145-147, 154-158, 161, 164, 154-157, passim. 167. According to Khazanov on some special occasions the relationship between power and an aristocracy based on social differentiation might emerge, but this fundamentally would derive from the nomadic units' long-term relations with the sedentary agricultural urban world. Furthermore, the existence of leadership is also in these cases fundamentally connected to a large-scale need for a leader, and this makes the claims of acquiring a leadership position on the grounds of belonging to a wealthy family who have earlier had that position erroneous.

and for contacts with sedentary societies, though even in this case need for and acceptance of the leadership position remained crucial preconditions for its existence.⁸¹³

Distinct political power might occur among nomads in the following three circumstances.⁸¹⁴ First, when groups form a larger unity. Second, when united groups need to establish contacts with other nomadic groups who do not belong to the unity. Third, when contacts between nomads and sedentary agricultural-urban societies increase. All these cases might strengthen the position of leaders among their groups, and especially strengthen the position of the supreme leader who is responsible for all actions. Moreover, certain leaders might present themselves as suitable candidate by e.g. creating an interest in new raids and by demonstrating their military prowess.⁸¹⁵

This course of events could have taken place among the Huns as a result of contacts with local barbarian groups and the Roman Empire and the needs of the groups who formed the confederation, but I doubt this would have taken place before the 440s when Bleda and Attila became the leaders of the confederation.

It was not until the 430s when the confederation under the lead of Rua seems to have taken shape and grew bigger because of increased contacts with both the Western and the Eastern Roman Empire. This persuaded local barbarians to act with the Huns and form a confederation in order to gain their share of the booty and increased wealth. In general, it has been noted that external links with sedentary agricultural societies are better able than anything else to encourage the growth and consolidation of social differentiation within a society. This might have transformed status differences to create rank, estate and even class differences, and hence there could have been people who theoretically may be referred to as a nomadic elite, nomadic nobility, or a nomadic aristocracy during this time.⁸¹⁶

The strengthening leadership position and the possible rise of an elite among the Huns and the groups who formed the confederation in the 440s leads us to study the existence of a (supercomplex) chiefdom, because these features are often, though not always, connected. As Khazanov points out nomadic societies can reach a stage of development which directly precedes the emergence of a state, that is, that stage which is now usually referred to as “a stratified society” or “chiefdom”.⁸¹⁷ However, before turning to these topics, I will first briefly evaluate why Bleda and Attila could have been elected as military leaders.

⁸¹³ Khazanov 1984, *passim*. 158-167, see especially 161-162, 164.

⁸¹⁴ Khazanov 1984, 161.

⁸¹⁵ Khazanov 1984, 161.

⁸¹⁶ Khazanov 1984, 164-165. Khazanov states that the internal development of nomadic societies does not provide sufficient opportunities for stable social differentiation and a further external factor is needed as a stabilizer.

⁸¹⁷ Khazanov 1984, 165.

The primary reason why Bleda and Attila gained the leadership position must have been their suitability for the position – in other words they must have been capable warriors, otherwise they would not have been accepted to act as head of the confederation.⁸¹⁸ Second, I consider that the sudden need to have leaders who knew the goals of the negotiations between the Eastern Roman Empire and Rua could have supported Bleda's and Attila's claim to take care of the task. Moreover, as nephews of Rua, Bleda and Attila would have known the terms and conditions of the negotiations well, and this made them fitting candidates for the task. Rua's dealings with both the Eastern and the Western Roman Empire also emphasized an acute need for leaders, and especially for two leaders, and Bleda and Attila could share the responsibility. It has been suggested that Bleda was responsible for the regions on the borders of the Eastern Roman Empire and Attila on the Western Roman Empire border.⁸¹⁹ By contrast, Wirth suggests that Attila mainly dealt with the Eastern Roman Empire and Bleda inherited from Ostar the lead of the regions in the west.⁸²⁰ However, there is no clear evidence that the regions were divided between the brothers, or whether the brothers ruled everything jointly.⁸²¹ However, because the regions where the groups of the confederation dwelled were large, it is plausible that the division would have helped the leaders keep contacts with the groups and plan joint activities. I can certainly agree that Bleda and Attila simply continued the tasks that their uncles left behind, but I am not fully convinced by the idea that their goal was to make their position even stronger.⁸²²

It is clear that Bleda and Attila must have acquired the leadership position because of their skills along with their interest in the task. Moreover Bleda and Attila must have had the charisma required for the leadership position, because without it a nomad leader would not have been able to gain his followers' support.⁸²³ Bleda's and Attila's charisma and personal skills are suggested by the fact that Rua and Ostar also had at least one brother, Oebersius, still living at the time of Bleda and Attila, and Oebersius might well have been an alternative choice for the leadership position.⁸²⁴ Other potential candidates for the leadership position of the confederation, such as brothers or their uncle's sons were also possible.⁸²⁵ However, according to Priscus, Bleda and Attila acquired their position from Rua with dispute. Accordingly, it seems that there was agreement as to which of the younger generation the leadership position of the confederation would go. Lastly, I consider that

⁸¹⁸ Barfield 1989, 28.

⁸¹⁹ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 85-86; Schreiber 1976, 87; cf. Bona 1991, 54, Wirth 1999, 52.

⁸²⁰ Wirth 1999, 52.

⁸²¹ Thompson (1999) 2000, 85, 178; Kelly 2008, 69-70; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 85.

⁸²² Wirth 1999, 53.

⁸²³ Kradin 2005, 158-159; Kradin 2002, *passim* 375.

⁸²⁴ Priscus, fr. 14. in Blockley 1983, 290-291.

⁸²⁵ Kelly 2008, 71. Kelly suspects that Bleda and Attila had rivals for the leadership position among the Huns and they killed them, though contemporary sources do not refer to this.

Bleda and Attila might have won the leadership position because they belonged to a senior clan, and in accordance with steppe politics their kinship links could have supported them to act as head of other groups.⁸²⁶

I suggest that we should not to exaggerate the power position of Bleda's and Attila's leadership at the head of the confederation and as head of military activities. The same holds for claims of an upper class and a leading elite that would signify the rise of a state and the partial adoption of a sedentary way of life or a transformation in the nomadic way of life. All this could have taken place within the frames of the nomadic way of life and the rise of a supercomplex chiefdom, which does not mean that nomads would had to give up their nomadic way of life – the rise of a stronger unity among them is also possible without adopting a sedentary way of life. In short, we should study the “nomadic alternative” and “nomadic pathways”, not “Hunnenreich”.

In the next section I turn to study the kind of activities that Bleda and Attila were in charge of and what this tells us about the nature of their leadership position. In addition, I assess what kind of contacts the Hun brothers seem to have had with the Roman Empire and whether this affected their leadership position and the unity of the confederation to such an extent that an increase in nomadic power could be observed.

8.2. Creating Security and Bringing Profits

After ending the peace negotiations arising from Rua's disputes with the Eastern Roman Empire on fled tribes, the first action we know Bleda and Attila to be responsible for is a large-scale raiding operation in the Danubian regions in the Eastern Roman Empire in 440.⁸²⁷

The reason for the attack is considered to derive from the fact that the Eastern Roman Empire had not paid the promised annual gold payments to Bleda and Attila.⁸²⁸ Consequently, the Hun leaders would not have been able to share the promised profits with the groups in the confederation and this would have been led to an increased interest among both the Hun leaders and the groups in the confederation in new attacks on the areas of the Eastern Roman Empire.⁸²⁹ Khazanov has noted that in some cases, if raiding continues for some time, it becomes a constant part of nomads' life and eventually speeds up the cycle of raiding.⁸³⁰ This might have been the case of the groups who

⁸²⁶ Kelly 2008, *passim*. 51-52; *passus* Barfield 1989, 26, 76, 83. See Chapter 7.

⁸²⁷ Kelly 2008, 88.

⁸²⁸ Priscus, fr. 9.3 in Blockley 1983, 236-237; Stickler 2007, 67.

⁸²⁹ Stickler 2007, 67.

⁸³⁰ Khazanov 1984, 157-158.

formed the coalition, and hence Bleda and Attila as head of the confederation would have led the raiding operations. The Hun leaders were no doubt aware that the time was ripe for attacking because at the turn of the 430s and 440s the Eastern Roman Empire was tied down with confrontations with the Persians and the Vandals.⁸³¹

The first target for the troops led by Bleda and Attila was the market place that had been agreed with the Romans in the peace treaty of Margus a few years earlier and the fortress of Constantia directly across the Danube.⁸³² After the attack the Romans accused the Huns of abandoning the treaty between them. However, according to Priscus the Huns answered that the raid was revenge attack on the Romans because a Roman bishop had robbed valuable items from the graves of the Huns. Bleda and Attila also threatened that if the bishop and the fugitives which the Romans had promised to send back were not handed over to them, their troops would make further invasions of the Eastern Roman Empire. While the Romans considered the demands unreasonable, the troops under the command of the Hun brothers continued their move and according to Priscus their troops “crossed the Danube and ravaged very many cities and forts along the river, amongst which they took Viminacium, a city of Moesia in Illyria”.⁸³³

After this the Romans were no doubt eager to negotiate with the Huns again, but what followed in 441 was Bleda’s and Attila’s decision to lead an attack on the city of Margus.⁸³⁴ After the fall of Margus, it seems that the troops resumed their attacks during 422, leading to the Romans suing for peace with the Huns.⁸³⁵ In short, the Romans made a tempting offer to pay 6,000 pounds of gold immediately and 1,000 pounds of gold annually to ensure peace, though this was not accepted by Bleda and Attila and they went on to sack the city of Ratiaria in Upper Moesia and Naissus in Illyria.⁸³⁶ These were heavy losses for the Eastern Roman Empire because both cities contained an imperial arms factory and were densely populated.⁸³⁷

The Eastern Roman army seems to have been too weak to prevent the attacks of the troops of Bleda and Attila because next the brothers devastated the cities of Singidunum (Belgrad) and Sirmium (Sremska Mitrovica).⁸³⁸ The destruction that the troops caused was heavy and it took decades for the cities to recover.⁸³⁹ The Huns’ attacks continued and Serdica (Sophia), Philippopolis, Adrianople, Heraclea and Arcadiopolis were also ravaged, as were many important fortifications,

⁸³¹ Stickler 2007, 68; Thompson (1999) 2000, 86-87; Kelly 2008, 90-92.

⁸³² Kelly 2008, 93; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 109-110.

⁸³³ Priscus, fr. 6 in Blockley 1983, 230-231; see Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 116-117.

⁸³⁴ Priscus, fr. 6 in Blockley 1983, 230-231; Thompson (1999) 2000, 90-91; cf. Kelly 2008, 93.

⁸³⁵ Thompson (1999) 2000, 90-91; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 116-117; cf. Kelly 2008, 94. According to Kelly there was no break between attacks.

⁸³⁶ Priscus, fr. 6.2 in Blockley 1983, 230-233; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 116.

⁸³⁷ Thompson (1999) 2000, 92.

⁸³⁸ Priscus, fr.6.2 in Blockley 1983, 230-233; see Kelly 2008, 94.

⁸³⁹ Thompson (1999) 2000, 88-90.

such as Athyras.⁸⁴⁰ It is calculated that over seventy cities and villages faced the raids of troops led by Bleda and Attila in the Balkans.⁸⁴¹ The destruction of the Huns and their warrior followers was clearly considerable, and therefore, it is no surprise that the Eastern Roman Empire was ready again for peace negotiations in 443, but before that occurred the parties clashed in Chersonesus.⁸⁴²

The battle ended in victory for the Huns, and as a result of a peace was concluded in Nomus in 443.⁸⁴³ According to Priscus the terms of the treaty were as follows: “*the fugitives should be handed over to the Huns, and six thousand pounds of gold be paid to complete the outstanding instalments of tribute (φορον); that the tribute henceforth be set at 2,100 pounds of gold per year; that for each Roman prisoner of war who escaped and reached his home territory without ransom, twelve solidi were to be the payment, and if those who received them did not pay, they were to hand over the fugitive; and that the Romans were to receive no barbarians who fled to them*”.⁸⁴⁴ Thus, once again Bleda and Attila were able to achieve favourable terms from a treaty with the Eastern Roman Empire. The Hun brothers must have been pleased because the treaty underlined their capability as military leaders to gain victorious battles and profit their followers. Furthermore, in all likelihood this also strengthened their position as head of the troops.⁸⁴⁵

On the Roman side, the best option for them to end hostilities had been to buy the Huns off. Annual payments could be delayed and war against the nomads was difficult, expensive, time consuming and not always successful.⁸⁴⁶ Accordingly, Theodosius II’s policy to pay the Huns to ensure peace seems to have been a reasonable policy.⁸⁴⁷

The Huns’ demand that the Romans pay 12 solidi in ransom for each Roman prisoner no doubt enriched the Hun warriors on a large scale and supported the view of Bleda and Attila as competent military leaders. This was also emphasized by Bleda’s and Attila’s renewed demand for members of the earlier fled tribes to be returned in order to be punished.⁸⁴⁸ In short, it clearly showed Bleda’s and Attila’s ability to act on behalf of the security of the confederation. First of all, the Eastern Roman army would not be strengthened by any barbarian troops from the vicinity of the dwelling areas of the confederation. Second, groups hostile to the confederation of Huns and local barbarians would be eliminated.

⁸⁴⁰ Thompson (1999) 2000, 92-93; Kelly 2008, 94.

⁸⁴¹ Homeyer 1951, 234.

⁸⁴² Priscus, fr. 6, fr. 9.3 in Blockley 1983, 230-233, 238-239; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 113; Thompson (1999) 2000, 93-94.

⁸⁴³ Priscus, fr. 9.3 in Blockley 1983, 236-237; see Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 117.

⁸⁴⁴ Priscus, fr. 9.3 in Blockley 1983, 236-237.

⁸⁴⁵ Kelly 2008, 98.

⁸⁴⁶ Barfield 1993, passim. 144.

⁸⁴⁷ Barfield 1993, passim. 151-152. This has been the policy that the leaders of Empires have generally decided to adopt with nomad groups, because war against the nomads has been sooner or later been found to be too difficult and costly.

⁸⁴⁸ Priscus, fr. 6, fr. 9.3 in Blockley 1983, 230-231, 236-239.

Moreover, Bleda's and Attila's demand that the Eastern Roman Empire should not receive any barbarians who fled to them from the regions of the groups who formed the confederation was most likely drawn up to secure the security of the confederation. Moreover, the goal of the demand was likewise to calm the groups who formed the confederation. However, what the demand also shows that the groups in the confederation were still fragmented and not all of them wanted to take part in the activities led by Bleda and Attila. Furthermore, as Priscus notes, among the fugitives there were still members of "Scythian royalty" (τῶν βασιλικῶν Σκυθῶν) which refers to the military leaders of some other groups.⁸⁴⁹ This would suggest that during the first years of the 440s the Hun brothers still acted only as head of a union of groups, and were not rulers of certain regions and its dwellers. In fact, the claim that a Hun Empire existed around 443 is highly implausible.

I agree with Anke and Koch that the leadership position among the Huns was based on success in military actions and that the success attracted followers who expected to profit from their promise of loyalty to the leaders.⁸⁵⁰ Consequently military leaders of the Huns needed to gain profits for their followers, whose living was no longer dependent solely on herding, but was also based on riches derived from military victories.⁸⁵¹ Anke and Koch emphasize, however, that the Huns clearly did not give up their nomadic way of life at any stage of the fourth and fifth centuries.⁸⁵² Also for this reason I fully agree with Anke and Koch that the Huns never had kings and leadership positions never allowed hereditary dynasties to emerge.⁸⁵³

Further evidence that Bleda and Attila only led as military leaders some groups to whose support the brothers' leadership position based on, comes from Priscus' remark that in the peace treaty with the Eastern Roman Empire the Hun brothers demanded "to pay tribute (φόρου) not only to the Scythians but also to the other barbarian neighbours of the Roman Empire".⁸⁵⁴ While it is not clear whether Priscus meant by "the Scythians" only Bleda and Attila, or the confederation they were in charge of,⁸⁵⁵ still there is little doubt that the Hun brothers wanted to enrich not only themselves but also others.

If "the other barbarian neighbours" refers to groups who did not belong to the confederation, then it once again makes clear that Bleda and Attila wanted to calm the regions, in which the groups who

⁸⁴⁹ Priscus, fr. 9.3, fr. 6.1 in Blockley 1983, 238-239, 230-231. In Chapter 4 I showed that Priscus' term "Scythian royalty" (τῶν βασιλικῶν Σκυθῶν) more likely refers to leaders, and military leaders of groups, rather than relatives of Bleda and Attila.

⁸⁵⁰ Anke, Koch 2007, 20. According to Anke and Koch, Hun leaders were tribal leaders, and their followers were especially warriors who belonged to the upper class.

⁸⁵¹ Anke, Koch 2007, 20.

⁸⁵² Anke, Koch 2007, 20.

⁸⁵³ Anke, Koch 2007, 20. Because Anke and Koch state that the Huns never had kings, I find it inappropriate that they name the Hun leaders "König".

⁸⁵⁴ Priscus, fr. 9.3. in Blockley 1983, 236-237.

⁸⁵⁵ See Chapter 2.3.

formed the confederation lived. In addition, it implies that Bleda and Attila were gaining friendly relationship with groups who had not previously allied with them, and perhaps they tried to achieve this end. This is likely because nomad leaders among Eurasian pastoralists generally shared profits not only with their supporters, but also with for the potentially rebellious component tribes in order to secure their position in the confederation and their leadership position over a wide area.⁸⁵⁶ On the other hand, if the term “*other barbarian neighbours*” referred to groups who belonged to the confederation led by Bleda and Attila, but were not nomads, “the Huns”, then it underlines Bleda’s and Attila’s evident goal and urge to profit their supporters. This points to two crucial aspects of the nature of the brothers’ leadership position.

First, it was dependent on enriching those who supported the Hun brothers in heading of the confederation and leading troops on a large scale. Second, Bleda and Attila did not have a highly powerful leadership position, but needed to strengthen their position in order to keep it, and this was done by providing riches to their supporters, or bands who were living in the neighbourhood of groups who belonged to the confederation. This common feature of nomadic leadership shows that leadership positions were framed by nomadic ways of life. This suggests that talk about the change in the Huns’ nomadic way of life during the 440s, or as Heather claims the “adaption away from nomadism”, is somewhat contrived.⁸⁵⁷ The claim that the increase of riches among the Huns would have led to changes in the nomadic way of life needs in my opinion further study, hence I shall evaluate the view a little here.

The Huns’ invasion of the Eastern Roman Empire in 441-443 and the peace treaty which followed in 443 benefitted both Bleda and Attila and their followers. The attacks had provided booty, prisoners of war could be sold back to Romans and mercantile exchange was ensured.⁸⁵⁸ In addition, supporters of Bleda and Attila could expect their share from the annual tribute paid by Theodosius II’s regime. Accordingly, an increase in wealth is supposed to have caused some changes especially in the leadership position and in power structures among the groups who formed the confederation.⁸⁵⁹

At least what can be agreed is that the flow of riches led to some visible changes in daily life, e.g. the number of gold objects increased in graves found in the dwelling areas of groups who had formed the confederation during the fifth century.⁸⁶⁰ While we cannot say anything certain about

⁸⁵⁶ Barfield 1993, 149.

⁸⁵⁷ Heather 2005, 328, 325, passim. 326-327. Heather claims that the position of Hun leader (Attila and Bleda) should be considered “a monarch in the literal sense of the word”.

⁸⁵⁸ Thompson (1999) 2000, 189. Thompson emphasizes the importance of trade for the Huns in particular, nomads in general.

⁸⁵⁹ See Chapter 4.

⁸⁶⁰ See Chapters 3 and 4.; Bona 1991, 185.

the connection between jewellery and actual power positions, at least we can assess what kind of power or appreciated position objects found in graves seem refer to. This is especially the case with small, c. 70 – 100 cm long composition bows which have a golden plate cover.⁸⁶¹

Generally speaking, composition bows did not exist among other groups living close to the northern borders of the Roman Empire until the arrival of groups of Huns at the end of the fourth century.⁸⁶²

Furthermore, a composition bow seems to have been the most important weapon of the Huns.⁸⁶³

Accordingly, the archaeological finds of miniature composition bows made of gold in the living areas of the confederation (especially in Jakuszowice, in modern southern Poland and in Pecsüsözög, in modern Hungary) imply that military prowess was appreciated.⁸⁶⁴ This is supported by the fact

that the bows are smaller and covered fully or partially with the golden plates that made the bows unsuitable for shooting, or at least diminishing their best shooting qualities,⁸⁶⁵ and hence it is suggested that the golden composition bows would have been made as badge.⁸⁶⁶ On the other hand,

it is also proposed that the golden bows were signs of conquest of new regions or the bows were only objects for trade because they are found in the vicinity of the Huns' trading routes.⁸⁶⁷ The third option is that the bows indicated the position of their holder, especially because bows are not generally found in nomad burials and the bows were not used for shooting.⁸⁶⁸ This has led to claims

that the golden bows signify changes in the power structure among the Huns during the fifth century, especially under the lead of Bleda and Attila in the 430s and 440s.⁸⁶⁹ In short, it is argued

that the existence of more than one golden bow can be taken as a proof that they were used as badges, and the bows would have been used by warriors who had enriched themselves in wars and gained popularity as competent leaders. Moreover, this leadership would have supported them in

⁸⁶¹ Bona 1991, 135, 170, 174, 180-182, 167, 141; Laszlo 1951, 91, 93, 96; Harmatta 1952, 281; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 221-222. Bona remarks that bows are not generally found from burials of nomads. However, for Huns composition bows are typical for Huns, though they have their own particular form. Maenchen-Helfen writes that "Hunnish bow" is a "reflexed composite bow that is 140-160 centimeters in length. Its wooden core is backed by sinews and bellied with horn. What distinguishes it from other composite bows are the seven bone plaques which stiffen the ears and the handle, a pair on each of the ear and three on the handle, two on its sides and one on its top. The string is permanently made fast to the end of the bow, which is stiffened for the greatest length; the nock is square, or almost square; in the finds it shows little evidence of rubbing. The nock in the ear of the shorter, more flexible arm is round; the string is looped into it when the bow is strung".

⁸⁶² Bona 1991, 167-170.

⁸⁶³ Bona 1991, 135, 174, 170, 167; Harmatta 1951, 133-134; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 221-222.

⁸⁶⁴ Laszlo 1951, 91, 93, 96; Harmatta 1952, 281; Bona 1991, 135, 170, 180-182, 120-121.

⁸⁶⁵ Laszlo 1951, 96, 97. While the number of golden plates in the bow from Pecsüsözög is considerably smaller than in the one from Jakuszowice, this according to Laszlo refers to the fact that the bow from Pecsüsözög could have also been used as a normal weapon. In addition, Laszlo claims that because the bow was accompanied in the grave with arrows that had iron peak, this could also imply the normal usage of the bow. Accordingly, Laszlo considers that by contrast to the Jakuszowice bow which could only be a badge and signify its holder's position, the bow from Pecsüsözög would also have been actively used for shooting.

⁸⁶⁶ Harmatta 1951, 107, 148; Laszlo 1951, 93, 96; Bona 1991, 181-182.

⁸⁶⁷ Alföldi 1932, 35; Fettich 1940, 244.

⁸⁶⁸ Bona 1991, 167; Laszlo 1951, 101.

⁸⁶⁹ Harmatta 1951, 133-134, 137, 139; cf. Bona 1991, 182. According to Bona the golden bows would have been worn by the aristocracy in the confederation led by Rua, Bleda and Attila in order to indicate their position.

becoming more powerful than the old leading aristocracy, and ultimately the richest warriors would have formed a new leading upper class among the Huns.⁸⁷⁰ I am not, however, fully convinced of these claims.

On the one hand, I agree that because a bow, a weapon, is taken as a sign of one's position, it strongly implies that being a warrior was not only a respected position but also that it had some kind of relation to power, and most likely indicated a leadership position among the Huns.⁸⁷¹ Generally speaking, this makes perfect sense because Eurasian pastoralists are known to appreciate at warriors most and only military leaders could lead others on a large scale from time to time.⁸⁷²

On the other hand, I disagree with the view that the golden bows signify changes in political and social structures, and that the richest warriors would have formed a new leading upper class among the Huns, especially during the 430s and 440s.

I consider that an artifact that more likely referred to its holder's position would be cicadas – they are also found in graves that are considered to belong to Huns.⁸⁷³ Cicadas are small golden objects, in the form of a fly or a drop that were used among nomads dwelling near the borders of the Empire of China over the centuries as a sign of rank or officialdom, and this is also seen to be the case also among the Huns.⁸⁷⁴ It is also likely, however, that cicadas could be worn without signifying any special power position.⁸⁷⁵

In conclusion, it is clear that the wealth increased among the groups in the confederation as a result of the contacts with the Roman world. However, it is another matter whether it really caused some changes in the Huns nomadic way of life and in the leadership position of Bleda and Attila, or in the relationship between the groups who belonged to the confederation. In order to consider this further, I shall next examine what kind of activities Bleda and Attila took care of at the head of the confederation and what kind of relationship they seem to have had with the Roman Empire and the groups who formed the confederation in the 440s.

⁸⁷⁰ Harmatta 1951, 133-134, 137, 139.

⁸⁷¹ Harmatta 1951, 133-134

⁸⁷² Barfield 1993, 131, *passim*. 147-151, 158-161; Kradin 2005, 158. See Chapter 3.

⁸⁷³ Bona 1991, 196-197; Thompson (1999) 2000, 180.

⁸⁷⁴ Bona 1991, 196-197, *passim*. 144-145, 170; Thompson (1999) 2000, 180.

⁸⁷⁵ Bona, 1991, 196-197, 147-149; Werner 1956, 63, 66, 68; Barbulescu 2007, 242; Schmauder 2009, 98-99. The same holds for small golden tiaras with inlaid stone and granulation. According to Werner, the golden tiaras were part of female dress, but they most likely had no reference to power positions, though they did indicate the wealth of their wearer.

8.3. Friends and Foes – Hun Leaders and Contacts with the Romans

The first year of the Hun brothers, Bleda and Attila at the head of the confederation included two successful treaties with the Eastern Roman Empire. In the eyes of the Romans the might of the Huns must have increased and the Romans tried to make the best of the situation. It seems that both the Eastern and the Western Roman Empire acknowledged Bleda and Attila as Hun leaders, with whom they could co-operate in order to control the possible flood of the Huns and groups acting with them from the lower Danubian region to the Roman regions.

The *magister militum* of the Western Roman Empire, Aetius, who had most likely already established good relations with Bleda's and Attila's uncles, especially Rua, seems to have wanted to maintain good contacts with the Huns. At least Priscus' remark how one of Attila's secretaries, Constantius, was sent by Aetius refers to this.⁸⁷⁶ This is also implied by the story that Aetius had sent his son, Carpilio, as a hostage to the Huns from the Western Roman Empire.⁸⁷⁷ Furthermore, visits to the Huns by Western Roman delegations' seem to have been common.⁸⁷⁸

Although there is no information on major disputes between the Western Roman Empire and the Huns in the 440s, it is likely that the delegations were sent so as to maintain good relations between the parties. However, all this did not differ in a crucial way from the common policy of the Romans with barbarian leaders, hence reference to an exceptionally friendly relationship between the Hun leaders and Aetius might be doubted.⁸⁷⁹

Nonetheless, compared to the apparently calm relationship between the Huns and the Western Roman Empire, the court of Theodosius II was constantly waging war with the Hun leaders. Even though the Huns and the Romans had concluded peace treaties, even after the last peace treaty of 443 Bleda and Attila sent delegations to the Eastern Roman court, claiming that everything was not in order. Priscus writes that the Hun brothers had not received everything back that the Eastern Romans had promised to send them, and hence the disputes did not cease. Priscus claims that the Hun envoys were sent to the Romans in order to gain rich presents and nothing else.⁸⁸⁰ While this might have been the case, at least partially, nevertheless Priscus' accounts reveal that both the Eastern and the Western Roman Empire wanted to keep contacts with the Hun brothers calm and

⁸⁷⁶ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 252-253, 262-263. Priscus passus "*Constantius, who was an Italian and secretary of Attila, sent to him by Aetius, the general of western Romans*" ... "*Constantius whom Aetius had sent to Attila as his secretary*" ... "*Constantius, had been sent by Aetius to Attila and Bleda as secretary*".

⁸⁷⁷ Priscus, fr.11.2 in Blockley 1983, 256-257. See Chapter 7.

⁸⁷⁸ Priscus, fr.11.2 in Blockley 1983, 262-263, 276-277.

⁸⁷⁹ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 107.

⁸⁸⁰ Priscus, fr.10, fr. 9.3 in Blockley 1983, 240-243, 237-241.

for this reason they were also ready to please them in order to improve their relationship in the future.

Taken together, it seems that the Romans were eager to see Bleda and Attila at the head of groups who formed confederation, and they might have even helped to strengthen the Hun brothers' position. It is likely that the goal of the Romans might have been to foster a strong and stable Roman-minded leadership to ascend to the head of uncertain barbarian groups. It is thus likely that the Romans supported Bleda and Attila to show their might to their followers and to keep Hun leaders at the head of a confederation with whom the Romans could co-operate because of the already established and strengthened relationship.

It would seem probable that the Late Roman authors' way of emphasizing the Hun brothers' position at the head of the confederation might derive from the fact that the authors knew that Romans supported Bleda's and Attila's leadership, though the position of the Hun brothers would not necessarily have been so strong among the group who formed the confederation after all. Generally speaking, this is supported by the fact that still in the 440s Priscus' accounts stress that the Hun brothers needed to gain support of groups who belonged to the confederation and there were also groups who preferred not to join the confederation.⁸⁸¹

Bleda's and Attila's need to please their supporters by enriching them with new raids and victories and more booty might have been the reason why the Hun brothers started to again raid the Roman regions in 444, only a year after the treaty with the Eastern Roman Empire. This time the target was the border areas of the Western Roman Empire in the Balkans.

Only a short reference from Merobaudes, who was a 5th century Latin rhetorician and poet, informs us that the Huns invaded Pannonia in 444; at least according to Maenchen-Helfen, Merobaudes' remark on "the threat that arrived from the utmost north" could only mean the Huns and the groups who formed the confederation. The Huns were in fact the only larger groupings dwelling in the vicinity of the Carpathians, the Caucasus and the Don.⁸⁸² How large the attack in question was is not known, but according to Maenchen-Helfen after a clash with the Western Roman troops at the end of 444, Bleda and Attila, "*saevi reges*" as Merobaudes calls them, started peace negotiations with Aetius.⁸⁸³ The terms of the peace negotiations are not known, but what we do learn from Cassiodorus' description of his grandfather's visit to the Huns to agree with the peace, is that in the

⁸⁸¹ Priscus, fr.9.3, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 236-237, 256-259.

⁸⁸² Merobaudes, Carm. pan. rel., V 75-76; see Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 95, 100-101.

⁸⁸³ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 95, 104.

year 445 only Attila led the confederation.⁸⁸⁴ The reason for this was, according to Cassiodorus, that Attila had murdered Bleda.⁸⁸⁵ Cassiodorus reports:

After their death [Octar and Rua] he [Attila] succeeded to the throne of the Huns, together with his brother Bleda. In order that he might first be equal to the expedition he was preparing, he sought to increase his strength by murder. Thus he proceeded from the destruction of his own kindred to the menace of all others. But though he increased his power by this shameful means, yet by the balance of justice he received the hideous consequences of his own cruelty. Now when his brother Bleda, who ruled over a great part of the Huns, had been slain by his treachery, Attila united all the people under his own rule. Gathering also a host of the other tribes which he then held under his sway, he sought to subdue the foremost nations of the world the Romans and the Visigoths.⁸⁸⁶

Bleda's death is said to have happened either at the end of 444 or at the beginning of 445.⁸⁸⁷ But whether Attila did really murder his brother might be doubted. It is likely that Cassiodorus drew for his information from earlier source, just as Jordanes did. However, the fifth-century authors who most likely supplied this account are Priscus and Prosper Tiro. A fragment from Priscus that is in Theophanes' chronicle tells us that "*Attila, the son of Mundius, a Scythian and a brave and haughty man, killed his elder brother Bleda, became sole ruler of the kingdom* [τὸ τῶν Σκυθῶν βασιλείων] *of the Scythians (Whom they also call "Huns")*".⁸⁸⁸ Prosper Tiro's account of the situation is similar: "*Attila, king of the Huns [rex Hunnorum] killed Bleda, his brother and colleague in the royal office [consortem in regno], and forced his people to obey him*".⁸⁸⁹

Because we do not know of any disputes between the brothers from the years that they led the confederation together,⁸⁹⁰ nothing prevents us from assuming that Bleda died naturally. I suspect, in fact, that the story about the murder could be a topos. In Roman literature stories of murdering ones own relatives are always condemned; e.g. the story of Romulus and Remus emphasizes Romulus' lust for power; and the stories about Roman Emperors killing their relatives create an image of brutish acts and improper behaviour. For these reasons I suspect that contemporary authors' might have invented the story of Attila killing his brother in order emphasize Attila's lust for power and the brutish behaviour found among fierce barbarian leaders – this is the image that Cassiodorus stresses: "*the madman [Attila] who fancied himself about to grasp the Empire of the world. He*

⁸⁸⁴ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 107.

⁸⁸⁵ Cassiodorus, *Varie*, I, 4, 11-13; see Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 105-106. The translation is Maenchen-Helfen's.

⁸⁸⁶ Jordanes, *Getica*, XXXV, 180-181.

⁸⁸⁷ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 103-106; Homeyer 1951, 78, 234; Schreiber 1976, 87; Bona 1991, 61; Wirth 1999, 65; Thompson (1999) 2000, 97.

⁸⁸⁸ Priscus, fr. 9.4 in Blockley 1983, 240-241.

⁸⁸⁹ Prosper Tiro, *Ep. Chron.*, I, 480: 1353, in Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 85.

⁸⁹⁰ Thompson (1999) 2000, 97; Wirth 1999, 65; cf. Kelly 2008, 98.

found the king [Attila] insolent; he left him pacified. [...] [Attila] driven by some fury, seems to strive for the domination of the world".⁸⁹¹ Priscus' account of Attila's behaviour also crates an image of a man who is greedy for power "*the unreasonableness of the barbarian [Attila] ... [Attila's] very great fortune and the power which it had given to him had made him so arrogant that he would not entertain just proposals unless he thought that they were to his advantage*".⁸⁹² In addition, Jordanes stresses Attila readiness to kill and use arms to strengthen his rule: "*[Attila] was a man born in the world for the shattering of nations, the terror of all the lands ... [Attila says] 'Or what is sweeter for a brave man than to seek revenge with his own hand? It is a right of nature to glut the soul with vengeance. [...] If any can stand at rest while Attila fights, he is a dead man'*".⁸⁹³ The image of Attila clearly underlines him to gaining strong rule and a power position not only among the Huns, but also among neighbouring powers, including the Roman Empire. Accordingly, I suspect that the purpose of late Roman authors might have been to create an image of Attila as a barbarian leader who would do anything to increase his power because this would help to explain why Attila and the Huns were victorious against the Romans.

I doubt, however, whether Attila would have been ready to risk his leadership position at the head of the confederation as well as the unity of the groups by killing his brother. The murder of his brother seemingly would not have pleased or been agreed upon by all who belonged to the confederation, especially those who had mainly been supporters of Bleda in the regions that he had primarily taken care of.⁸⁹⁴ In addition, according to Priscus, murders were punished by death among the Huns, and this makes it doubtful that Attila would have been willing to risk his already achieved position at the head of the confederation.⁸⁹⁵

While we remain uncertain about the cause of the death of Bleda, it is clear that Attila must have needed to gain the loyalty of the groups who had earlier mainly dealt with Bleda.⁸⁹⁶ This was not a new situation for the groups in the confederation because Rua had also faced something similar after the death of Octar. Despite this, it has been argued that Attila reached such a powerful leadership position that he could murder anyone without being worried that he was acting against tribal obligations and the limitations which a tribal society imposes upon the excessive growth of

⁸⁹¹ Cassiodorus, *Variae* I, 4, 11-13; see Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 105-106. The translation is from Maenchen-Helfen.

⁸⁹² Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 276-277.

⁸⁹³ Jordanes, *Getica*, XXXIV, 182; XXXIX, 202-204, 206.

⁸⁹⁴ Kradin 2008, *passim*. 149. See Chapter 7.

⁸⁹⁵ Priscus, *passim*. fr. 11.2 , fr. 14 in Blockley 1983, 272-273, 292-293. Priscus mentions that slaves who had killed their masters in war were put to death.

⁸⁹⁶ Schmauder 2008, 159.

individual's power.⁸⁹⁷ If this is the case, I see it as doubtful that Attila would have needed to strengthen his position with divine signs as Priscus' story about the sword of Ares implies.⁸⁹⁸

Priscus tells us that an ox was unpredictably wounded while herding and this led the Huns to find a sword that was buried in the ground. The discovery of the sword was claimed to signify Ares' support for the Huns and this made Attila triumphant over all his foes.⁸⁹⁹

I suspect that Priscus might have invented the story so as to explain Attila's might against the Romans. The fact that Priscus mentions the Greco-Roman god of war to support Attila's and Huns' military prowess implies that the purpose of the story was primarily to create and emphasize the image of Attila and the Huns as warlike and a threat to the Romans, and not to narrate actual events among the Huns. This is not to say that the Huns would not have had a similar story and it could have helped Attila to strengthen his power among the groups who formed the confederation, especially those who had earlier mainly operated with Bleda.⁹⁰⁰ However, I doubt this.

Be the background for the story as it may, Attila's position and tasks at the head of the confederation do not seem to have altered from the time he held the joint lead with Bleda. That is to say, Attila took care of tasks common to nomad leaders among the Eurasian pastoralists. This included extracting revenues from outsiders so as to redistribute them not only to one's own supporters but also to potentially rebellious tribes so as to keep them happy and taking exclusive control of foreign affairs in order to gain profits from surrounding regions and secure one's own regions against neighbours.⁹⁰¹ All this Attila did immediately after the death of Bleda.

Attila continued the peace negotiations with the Western Roman Empire and the negotiations seem to have ended with the Romans ceding large tracts of Pannonia to the Hun leader. In addition, Attila was granted gold payments and the honorary title of *magister militum*.⁹⁰²

While all this must have pleased Attila, especially the supply of new regions that could be used for herding, it would still seem that Attila wished to gain further profit. Briefly, according to Priscus, Attila was negotiating with the Eastern Romans and demanded that they send him the missing

⁸⁹⁷ Thompson (1999) 2000, 179; Kradin 2008, 149. According to Kradin, it is wrong to identify the strong personal power of a chief as a sign of a state or an autocrat because rulers of chiefdoms have only consensual power or authority. In other words, if people consider that the leader has abused his power this might result in a burst of popular anger and the loss of his position. That is to say, the power of the leader in simple chiefdoms greatly depends on others' support and approval of his acts.

⁸⁹⁸ Priscus, fr. 12.1, fr. 12.2 in Blockley 1983, 280-283; cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, 97.

⁸⁹⁹ Priscus, fr. 12.1, fr. 12.2 in Blockley 1983, 280-283.

⁹⁰⁰ Thompson (1999) 2000, 97.

⁹⁰¹ Barfield 1993, 149-151; Thompson (1999) 2000, passim. 189; Schmauder 2008, passim. 157-159.

⁹⁰² Priscus, fr.11.2 in Blockley 1983, 278-279, 387; see Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 89, 107; cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, 139-140. Maenchen-Helfen assesses that the gold payments for Attila could derive from both: the title and the peace.

annual gold payments and the fugitives who were still among the Romans. In addition, Attila warned that if the Romans failed to do this, war between the parties would result.⁹⁰³

I consider that Attila's marked interest in gaining new profits from the Roman Empire implies that his position was relatively weak among the groups who formed the confederation. I strongly doubt, moreover, that his position would have evolved from a military leadership dependent on others' support to a monarchy or a position of an autocratic khan or kingship as has been argued.⁹⁰⁴

To me, Attila's noticeable interest in a new war derived from his concern to strengthen his position at the head of the Hun groups, for further victories would emphasize his competence as a military leader.⁹⁰⁵ The fragmentation of groups and the lack of support from some groups for Attila's lead comes clear from Priscus' remarks – the author tells us that even though Attila continued peace negotiations with Theodosius II, some troops were already attacking the regions of the Eastern Roman Empire. Priscus writes:⁹⁰⁶

During the reign of Theodosius the Younger, Attila, the king of the Huns [ὁ τῶν Οὐννων βασιλεὺς] collected his army and sent letters to the Emperor concerning the fugitives and the payments of tribute [τῶν φόρων], commanding that all that had not been handed over under the pretext of the present state of war should be sent to him with all speed. Moreover, concerning the future tribute [φόρου], ambassadors should come to him for discussion, for, if they prevaricated or prepared for war, he would not willingly restrain his Scythian forces.

Priscus' remark about "*the present state of war*" clearly indicates that not all of the groups from the regions of the confederation supported Attila's military leadership or rule.⁹⁰⁷ It is possible that the groups who were already raiding Roman regions in 466 could have been the same groups who had never belonged to the confederation and hence they were unconcerned about Attila's plans. On the other hand, the groups of Huns could have been those who had been loyal to Bleda.⁹⁰⁸ It is also possible that they were groups who no longer wanted to support Attila as their supreme military leader, and hence began attacking on their own. However, I see this as unlikely because, as Priscus writes, Attila could deprive "*his troops*" from attacking. In other words, it is likely that the raiding groups would not have been under Attila's command. It has also been proposed that Attila might

⁹⁰³ Priscus, fr. 9.1 in Blockley 1983, 234-235.

⁹⁰⁴ Thompson (1999) 2000, 177-178; Heather 2005, 325. According to Thompson, kingship made its appearance during the 440s when Attila was leading the Huns, and Attila would have reached position of an "entirely autocratic khan". Moreover Heather claims that "the multiplicity of power-sharing kings of 411 had given way to a monarch [Attila] in the literal sense of the word".

⁹⁰⁵ Bona 1991, 71-72; Wirth 1999, 69-70; Barfield 1993, 149-151.

⁹⁰⁶ Priscus, fr.9.1 in Blockley 1983, 234-235.

⁹⁰⁷ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 118-119.

⁹⁰⁸ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 118-119.

have been reluctant, or even helpless, to prevent groups in the confederation from attacking the Eastern Roman regions because the annual gold payment from Theodosius II's regime had not arrived and the groups in the confederation were keen to enrich themselves.⁹⁰⁹ However, there still seem to have been troops who were loyal to Attila's wishes and refrained from raiding.⁹¹⁰ Therefore, Attila might have used the attacks as a trick to create more pressure on the Eastern Roman Empire to send him the missing annual gold payments and fugitives. But ultimately, the need to gain riches seems to have been the crux in the events that eventually led Attila himself to gather troops under his command and attack Thrace in 447.⁹¹¹

Before turning to the events of war, I shall briefly consider the basis of Attila's leadership position after Bleda's death in order to understand the nature of his leadership position more profoundly.

First, the fragmentation and initiative of the groups in the regions of the confederation shows that after the death of Bleda Attila's lead over the confederation was not strong. At least, the claim of Attila's leadership being supported by a rich upper class is unconvincing,⁹¹² especially because the alleged military activity of the groups who had earlier supported Bleda as their supreme military leader, indicates mistrust and disinterest in supporting Attila in the same position. Generally speaking, because the distraction among the Huns was particularly caused by troops slipping their own raiding operations, I see that this strongly implies Attila's position to derive from military leadership – it was the position where Bleda and Attila could have controlled the groups. Accordingly, I suggest that also Attila's eagerness to have a war once again against Eastern Roman Empire points out his position still to have its justification because of acting as supreme military leader. By profiting the groups in the confederation Attila could keep his position, and bringing richness was also the task he was expected to take care.⁹¹³

The disputes with the Eastern Roman Empire could not be solved, and Attila led his troops on a large-scale attack on Dacia and Thrace at the beginning of 447.⁹¹⁴ In Thrace Attila's troops destroyed some fortresses and headed towards Dacia Ripensis where also the Eastern Roman Empire had sent some troops to stop the invasion. The parties clashed in Moesia, near the River Utus (Vid), and after some battles the Romans were defeated.⁹¹⁵ Attila then led his troops towards further new cities to be conquered, and this was the fate of Marcianople, the capital of Moesia

⁹⁰⁹ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 119.

⁹¹⁰ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 119.

⁹¹¹ Priscus, fr.9.4 in Blockley 1983, 240-241; see Wirth 1999, 69; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 120, 123.

⁹¹² Harmatta 1952, 298-299. I disagree with Harmatta that riches could have guaranteed a powerful leading position over others among the nomads. See Chapter 4.

⁹¹³ Bona 1991, 71-72; Wirth 1999, 69-70; Schmauder 2008, passim. 157-159.

⁹¹⁴ Thompson (1999) 2000, 98.

⁹¹⁵ Priscus, fr. 9.4 in Blockley 1983, 240-241; Wirth 1999, 69; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 120, 123; Thompson (1999) 2000, 101.

Secunda. After this the might of his troops was felt in regions of Thrace, Illyricum and the provinces of Dacia and Scythia. According to Callinicus, who was a monk in the Bithynian countryside, the Huns conquered almost a hundred villages and cities, and this terrified the inhabitants of Constantinople.⁹¹⁶

Once again Attila's attacks came at a time when the Eastern Roman Empire was not at its strongest.⁹¹⁷ In 444 the winter had been exceptionally cold, and the harvest was poor. People and cattle died of cold. In the following year the Eastern Roman Empire faced heavy rains and once again the harvest was smaller than usual. At the same time, plague had spread among the Romans and the miseries of the inhabitants were not alleviated by earthquakes in many parts of the Eastern Roman Empire, such as in Constantinople, where the city wall was badly damaged during the first months of 447. The wall was soon renovated but its strength was tested when Attila led his troops towards Constantinople.⁹¹⁸

While Constantinople did not fall into the hands of Attila's troops, it did not diminish the troops' interest in continuing their invasion and they headed for the region in Macedonia, as far as the pass of Thermophylai.⁹¹⁹ By the end of 447 or during the first months of 448 Theodosius II was ready to negotiate a peace with Attila.⁹²⁰ When the negotiations started, Attila demanded only ambassadors came to him. As Barfield has noted, here Attila did what other talented Eurasian pastoral military leaders have done: only by influencing decision making at the very highest levels of government could nomad leader could gain the decisions they required.⁹²¹

Theodosius II accepted Attila's wish and sent an embassy to agree on the terms of peace, though there was little to negotiate as the Eastern Roman Empire was eager to conclude the peace even on heavy terms.⁹²² This suggests that the Eastern Roman army was weak and the Romans did not want to face more destruction at the hands of the Huns. For Attila the most important aspect of the treaty was clearly the annual gold payments because, according to Priscus, Attila demanded that the Romans pay 6,000 pounds of gold immediately in lieu of the unsent annual peace payments from earlier years, and 1,000 pounds of gold every following year in order to keep the peace. Furthermore, the new market place was agreed to be Naissus.⁹²³ In addition, this time Attila also forced the Romans to hand over to the Huns wide area of the lower Danubian Basin - the new

⁹¹⁶ Callinicus, *Vita S. Hyp.*, 139, 21.; Thompson (1999) 2000, 101-102; Bona 1991, 85-86; Wirth 1999, 73.

⁹¹⁷ Thompson (1999) 2000, 98-100.

⁹¹⁸ Thompson (1999) 2000, 100; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 120, 123.

⁹¹⁹ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 119, 123; Bona 1991, 85-87; Thompson (1999) 2000, 102.

⁹²⁰ Thompson (1999) 2000, 108; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 123-125.

⁹²¹ Priscus, fr. 9, fr. 11 in Blockley 1983, 234-235, 242-243, 246-247; Barfield 1993, 151. According to Priscus, Attila also demanded during the last years of the 440s that "*ambassadors come to him and not just ordinary men but the highest ranking of consulars*".

⁹²² Priscus, fr. 9.4 in Blockley 1983, 240-241; see Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 124.

⁹²³ Priscus, fr. 11 in Blockley 1983, 242-243; see Thompson (1999) 2000, 108.

border between the Huns and the Eastern Roman Empire went through the city of Naissus and the Romans lost the whole of Dacia Ripensis and wide areas from Moesia Prima and Secunda to Attila. Even though the regions along the new border line seem to have become partially abandoned because of the insecure situation, e.g. the city of Naissus, still Attila's demand that the Romans empty the areas of inhabitants proved out to be a hard task.⁹²⁴ Moreover, people still cultivating the land were an additional source of tension between Attila and the Eastern Roman Empire. It is thought that Attila's interest in emptying the regions of inhabitants was for military purposes because the uninhabited regions would provide easy access for confederation troops into the heart lands of the Eastern Roman Empire.⁹²⁵

On the other hand, I would also argue that Attila's eagerness to empty the regions could also derive from the need to have new herding areas.⁹²⁶ After all, herding and the grazing areas that support it, are crucial to nomadic life, along with trade and raiding that Attila had already taken care of in the new peace treaty.⁹²⁷ A further point that supports the view is that Attila did not want the local sedentarists to stay and benefit the regions – if locals had stayed in the regions, the Huns could have raided their products, but not even this aspect seem to have been lucrative enough for Attila. Therefore, it is likely that Attila's demand to have the regions uninhabited derives from the need to provide new herding areas for his nomad supporters. If this was the case, it suggests out that the groups of Huns who belonged to the confederation had not given up the nomadic way of life.

After the treaty with the Eastern Roman Empire Attila could clearly consider that he had been able to show others his competence as a military leader and could expect his supporters to be pleased with him. This does in fact seem to have been the case, because contemporary authors' accounts do not refer to any reference to fragmentation of groups in the confederation or independent groups gaining the Romans' attention in the vicinity of the regions of the groups who had formed the confederation. Although Attila would no doubt have been pleased with the situation, there were still some disputes with the Eastern Roman Empire that Attila needed to take care of. Attila, for example, did not give up on the old demands that Theodosius II should send him the fugitives who had fled to the Eastern Roman Empire.

Attila's persistent demands during 448-449 to have the fugitives returned does not make sense, if it was a matter of few ordinary pastoralists going over to the Romans' side especially because, as

⁹²⁴ Priscus, fr. 11, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 242-243, 248-249.

⁹²⁵ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 124-125.

⁹²⁶ Barfield 1993, 162, passim. 163; cf. Khazanov 1984, 159. Barfield notes that Genghis Khan was also not interested in having the conquered regions permanently occupied. The main idea was to keep the conquered areas within the orbit of his rule, but without establishing and having to take care of an administration. Khazanov also points out that the nomadic elite had nothing against owning land, but they despised cultivation and made sure that the regions under their control were not used for this purpose.

⁹²⁷ Basilov 1989, 5; Barfield 1993, passim. 18, 143-144.

Priscus mentions, Attila seems to have known them by name. It seems more likely that the fugitives were military leaders of smaller groups or clans who had earlier acted under the command of Bleda and Attila. Furthermore, they were most likely nomads because Priscus mentions that they were Attila's (τοῦ ἕθνους) "own race" as Blockley translates it; whether they were Attila's relatives or not can only be speculated.⁹²⁸ However, because Priscus also writes about the fugitives using the terms barbarian or Scythian race (τοῦ Σκυθικοῦ γένους), it implies that there could have also been fugitives from local e.g. Germanic groups.⁹²⁹ Priscus' description of Attila's claims reveals some crucial aspects of Attila's position and the formation of the confederation:⁹³⁰

[Attila] ordered the secretaries to read out their names ... [Attila told them] to tell the Romans to return to him all the barbarians who had fled to them from the time of Carpilio (the son of Aetius, the general of the Romans in the West), who had been a hostage at his court [supposedly during the 430's or the 440s]. He would not allow his own servants [τους σφετερους] to go to war against himself, even though they were unable to help those who entrusted to them the guarding of their own land.

First, groups who belonged to the confederation and supported Attila as supreme military leader might have reconsidered their promise to act with Attila if he could not take care of duties related to his position, such as bringing security to the areas where the groups lived. As Priscus tells, the reason why fugitives, so to speak abandoned Attila, was that "they", which in my opinion refers to Attila and troops under his command, had not secured their land. Furthermore, as Priscus' account stresses, Attila admitted that he had not been able to do what was expected.

Second, Priscus' narration points out that groups had trusted in Attila's lead to secure "their", not "Attila's" land, and this implies that what linked the groups and Attila were joint interests, not Attila's rule over the regions where the fugitives had dwelled. In other words, what comes clear is that groups could keep their own areas and their own leaders, though they supported Attila's supreme leadership for certain activities. What supports this idea is Priscus' notion that Attila was angry with the fugitives because they had planned to act on their own.⁹³¹ Priscus refers in this case to the possibility of the fugitives engaging in their own wars, and no longer requiring Attila's lead, pointing out that Attila was especially entrusted with leading wars.

⁹²⁸ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 256-257.

⁹²⁹ Priscus, fr. 9.3, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 238-241, 254-257; see Thompson (1999) 2000, 108. Translations are based on Blockley. In Chapter 2.3 I pointed out that Priscus uses the name Scythians to refer to members in the confederation in general and not just to the Huns. Generally speaking, Priscus' way of using the term "gene" (γένή) varies because he also uses it to refer to clans among the groups of Huns, e.g. when Priscus writes about the Akatziri, who were nomads.

⁹³⁰ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 256-257.

⁹³¹ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 256-257; cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, passim. 196-197.

With reference to this, the third crucial aspect that Priscus' account points out is that still in the 440s the confederation seems to have based on military activities and the military leaders' temporary support of Attila's position as their supreme military leader when needed.

Still in the 440s every group, or clan, in the confederation chose their own military leaders to lead their own troops, and when the groups formed larger unity in order to participate in activities of the confederation in time of war, smaller groups were placed under military leader(s) who were responsible for the command of troops on a larger scale. Ultimately, the groups had a supreme military leader who was responsible for all the troops, and this would have been the position of Attila.⁹³²

Another account from Priscus that shows that Attila did not to have a permanent rule over those who followed him during the military activities, but only when joint activities were agreed upon, concerns of groups who were called the Akatziri and who seem to have been Huns and nomads. Priscus tells us that Theodosius II tried to get groups of Akatziri to change their loyalty from Attila to the Romans by sending them gifts.⁹³³ Priscus' account and especially the sentence "*the Emperor Theodosius sent gifts to them [leaders of the groups of Akatziri] to the end that they might unanimously renounce their alliance [τῆ συμμοχίᾳ] with Attila and seek peace with the Romans*" indicates that the Romans knew that the groups were generally loyal to Attila concerning their shared and agreed activities, but that Attila was not regarded as their supreme leader.⁹³⁴ I argue that this was also the case with the other groups who joined Attila's temporary military activities and supported his lead during those periods.⁹³⁵ Furthermore, because Priscus refers to groups who supported Attila's lead and expected him to arrange security in their areas when needed, I suspect that Attila's task was also to defend groups when their grazing rights for certain pastures were violated.⁹³⁶

All this supports the notion that still at the end of the 440s when Attila is claimed to be at height of his power, the groups of Huns and local barbarians in the confederation acted as independent groups and were only loyal to Attila when it was a question of war or raids or forming troops. At the same time they expected to benefit from their support of Attila – Attila was expected to provide security

⁹³² Thompson (1999) 2000, passim. 182, 184.

⁹³³ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 258-259.

⁹³⁴ Thompson (1999) 2000, 106. If the Akatziri were under direct rule of Attila and not merely allied with him, Theodosius II most likely would not have tried to break the Akatziri's loyalty to Attila because this would have been a direct attack against Attila's rule. In the case of an alliance between Attila and the Akatziri Theodosius II's act was an indirect attempt to weaken Attila's position.

⁹³⁵ Barfield 1993, passim. 149-151; cf. Basilov 1989, 6; Thompson (1999) 2000, passim. 187-188.

⁹³⁶ Barfield 1993, 144-145, passim. 150-151. If Attila was unable to bring security for pastures or solve disputes between groups using these pastures, I even suspect that the groups who had expected Attila to send troops to defend their areas might have been groups who belonged to the same lineage and tribe as Attila. This is because kinship defined the rights to use pastures and the strongest tribes and clans laid claim to the best pastures at the best time of year.

for their land areas and to profit them with riches derived from joint military activity, wars or raids.⁹³⁷ All this again suggests that the Huns had not given up their nomadic way of life at the end of the 440s.

This argument is also supported by Priscus' story about a Greek who he met among the Huns when visiting Attila in 449. According to Priscus, the Greek had ended up living among the Huns in the 440s and enjoyed his life with the nomads because "*after a war men amongst the Scythians live at ease, each enjoying his own possessions and troubling others or being troubled not at all or very little*".⁹³⁸ Even though Priscus' account could be a *topos* of the nomadic way of life or a criticism of the present living conditions in the Eastern Roman Empire⁹³⁹ still the fact that the author defines the life of the Huns according to general features of nomadic way of life, very likely reflected reality.

Even though wars and peace treaties with the Romans enriched groups in the confederation, I still consider that the Huns could have continued their nomadic way of life. If the position of Attila strengthened and changes occurred in the social structure, these could have taken place within the framework of the nomadic way of life because, as has been noted, nomadic societies can reach a stage of development which directly precedes the emergence of a state – this stage is usually referred to as "a stratified society" or "chiefdom".⁹⁴⁰ Furthermore, this is the basis for the strongest form of society among nomads, namely a supercomplex chiefdom, to emerge and exist.⁹⁴¹

Generally speaking, in specific situations nomad polities can temporarily create very centralized systems of government in order to accomplish specific aims; however, when the aims are fulfilled the systems cease to exist.⁹⁴² It has also been pointed out that nomads do not need to "borrow the state model" because they are able to form their own peculiar form of nomad unity and higher level organization in order to deal effectively with their larger and more highly organized sedentary neighbours without giving up their own way of life.⁹⁴³ Therefore, I argue that the only phenomenon that we should consider to have evolved among the Huns is a supercomplex chiefdom or nomadic state, as some of the scholars prefer to name the same phenomenon.⁹⁴⁴ This is the subject of the following chapter.

⁹³⁷ Thompson (1999) 2000, 187-188.

⁹³⁸ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 268-269.

⁹³⁹ See Chapter 2.3; Thompson (1999) 2000, passim. 205-209, 217, 219.

⁹⁴⁰ Khazanov 1984, 165.

⁹⁴¹ Kradin 2008, 121. Also see my Introduction.

⁹⁴² Khazanov 1984, 166.

⁹⁴³ Barfield 1989, 7.

⁹⁴⁴ Kradin 2008, 114.

9. THE RISE OF A SUPERCOMPLEX CHIEFDOM AMONG THE HUNS?

It has been noted that sedentarists are often puzzled by the rapid rise and fall of larger and mighty nomad confederations because they fail to see the temporary nature of nomadic politics.⁹⁴⁵ Nomads are very sensitive to changes, and hence easily adapt to a new situation, such as the sudden formation of a larger unity or its collapse. This being the case, with changes in nomadic politics, especially in the case of the possible rise of a supercomplex chiefdom or nomadic state, an external influence is always required. This fundamentally occurs when nomads deal with more organized sedentary societies on a continual basis.⁹⁴⁶

There is no doubt that groups of Huns did not face this kind of situation when they arrived to settle in the lower Danubian and Black Sea regions next to the Roman Empire during the fourth and fifth century. After all, the groups of Huns were not only dealing with local sedentary groups, but also with the Romans and the Roman Empire's administrators. Therefore, we might agree that there was at least from this point of view a certain basis for a supercomplex chiefdom to evolve.

Another aspect that leads to the study of the possible rise of a supercomplex chiefdom among the Huns is the fact that the emergence of a nomadic state is directly linked to conquest, as a rule conquest of sedentary areas, while not every conquest led to the rise of a supercomplex chiefdom or nomadic state.⁹⁴⁷ It has been argued that the subjugation and conquest of sedentary agricultural and urban societies is a specific manifestation of external factors which, together with internal particularities, especially differentiation, can lead to the rise of a nomadic state among the nomads.⁹⁴⁸ That is to say, not only external, especially long lasting conquest, but also internal changes must take place among scattered but temporarily united groups of pastoralists to cause the possible rise of a supercomplex chiefdom or nomadic state.

With reference to this, an element that we need to study is the existence of limited internal social development, mainly social differentiation, among the groups of Huns. However, because strong social differentiation does not exist as such among nomads, but requires external input and influence, namely existence of agricultural sectors, I shall evaluate also, if these are to be found

⁹⁴⁵ Barfield 1993, 3; cf. Kradin 2008, *passim*. 147.

⁹⁴⁶ Kradin 2008, 120-121; Barfield 1989, 7; Khazanov 1984, 147, 164-165, 162, 168, 228-231, *passim*. 150-151. Barfield remarks that the rise of a nomadic state is never in response to internal needs but is always related to external influences.

⁹⁴⁷ Khazanov 1984, 229, 233; cf. Kradin 2008, 120.

⁹⁴⁸ Khazanov 1984, *passim*. 228-229. Khazanov remarks that the increase of social differentiation might happen in the course of expansion or as a result of successful expansion. While this may be so, it does not explicitly cause the rise of a nomadic state.

among the groups of Huns to such an extent that they could have supported possible rise of a supercomplex chiefdom.⁹⁴⁹

A supercomplex chiefdom has some similarities to an early state which is why some scholars speak about or use the term nomadic state on the same phenomenon.⁹⁵⁰ Accordingly, in the next section I discuss research, where scholars speak about nomadic states.⁹⁵¹ However, whenever I refer to these scholars' views on features which are common to the nomadic state, it should be understood that they are at the same time features agreed to be common in supercomplex chiefdoms. Moreover, because a supercomplex chiefdom has some specific features, I also list these features in order to see whether a supercomplex chiefdom evolved among the Huns, and whether Attila's position was such that it can be said that he had a leadership position commensurate with a supercomplex chiefdom. However, before discussing these issues, I shall first point out the features that precede and support the rise of a supercomplex chiefdom.⁹⁵²

9.1. Internal Conditions and External Influences – Towards a Supercomplex Chiefdom?

It is not clear, if internal social differentiation existed among the groups of Huns before they started to dwell in regions in the vicinity of the lower Danubian basin and the Black Sea during the 5th century. In addition, it is uncertain, if it ever emerged. Emergence would have been marked by a clear distinction in the positions between members in different groups: some of the members would have had a more powerful position than others. Furthermore, when we speak about internal differentiation, this also refers to differences in how to make living. Groups would have appeared who would mainly have concentrated on harvesting, while the majority would have remained as pastoralists concentrating on herding, trade and raiding.⁹⁵³

I claim that internal differentiation did not primarily exist among the groups of Huns when they arrived at the borders of the Roman Empire, and that it did not evolve among them for the following reasons. First, the fact that Huns arrived in the vicinity of the Roman borders as several independent and scattered small groups during the 380s to the 420s without hostilities towards each other implies that there was no strong class or group of warriors who would have wanted to increase their

⁹⁴⁹ Kradin 2008, 120-121, passim. 113-122; cf. Khazanov 1984, 163-165, 232-233.

⁹⁵⁰ Kradin 2008, 114; Kradin 2008, 148. A supercomplex chiefdom and an early state are primarily the same phenomenon if when ignoring the existence of specialized administrative institutions which is common to the definition of state.

⁹⁵¹ Kradin 2008, 113, passim. 107-114; Kradin 2008, 144; See my Introduction. I prefer to use the term "supercomplex chiefdom" to "early state"/ "nomadic state"/ "dispositional state" because the former term brings out more clearly the specific nature of the situation among nomads, and especially among the Huns.

⁹⁵² Kradin 2008, passim. 107-122.

⁹⁵³ Khazanov 1984, 147, 162-164, passim. 151, 157-161; Kradin 2008, 120-121.

power over others. Furthermore, internal social differentiation is generally weak in small pastoral units or groups where daily living takes place.⁹⁵⁴ But having said that it is also possible that we simply do not know about the rivalry between the groups of Huns from the end of the fourth century because of a lack of sources. Nevertheless, Ammianus' remarks about the Huns mainly favouring temporary alliances with each other points to peaceful or mutual relationships between the groups.⁹⁵⁵ In addition, the archaeological material that can be connected to the Huns does not imply that there would have been unusually strict differences between the positions of the members of nomad groups when they arrived on the Roman borders.⁹⁵⁶ Furthermore, there are no signs of large scale agricultural activity that would indicate internal differentiation in the division of labour.⁹⁵⁷

To conclude then, I claim that because internal differentiation is an unlikely explanation to Huns' expansion, it could not have caused the rise of a nomadic state or a supercomplex chiefdom during the first decades of the fifth century when the groups of Huns arrived in the vicinity of the lower Danubian regions next to the borders of the Roman Empire.

However, it is a totally different question whether internal differentiation started to evolve among the groups of Huns when their contacts increased with other groups of nomads and sedentarists (e.g. Alans and Tervingi) due to their wanderings near the Roman borders, and could this have supported the rise of a nomadic state or a supercomplex chiefdom from the 420s onwards.

First, the groups of Huns started to form a larger confederation with each other and local, mainly sedentary barbarian, groups from the end of the 420s onwards, which might have led to the rise of a leading elite and later to internal differentiation. Furthermore, from the 420s onwards, groups of Huns started to live in regions next to the Roman lower Danubian borders next to local sedentary groups of agriculturalists which might have led to the rise of internal differentiation and a supercomplex chiefdom or nomadic state. After all, it was nomads' contacts with sedentarists which played an indisputable part in the rise of the nomadic state, as Khazanov's following typology of three different types of nomadic states emphasizes.⁹⁵⁸ I shall next explain each of the three different forms and then I analyse, whether they could have taken place among the Huns. Although the following typology is evolutionary and points out how different phases follow each other, still

⁹⁵⁴ Khazanov 1984, 164, 151, 162-163; Barfield 1993, *passim*. 150.

⁹⁵⁵ See Chapter 3. The only time when a contemporary author, Ammianus, mentions groups of Huns fighting against each other is when Tervingi hired some Huns to strengthen their troops against some Huns who were attacking them. The groups of Huns allied themselves with Tervingi because they were paid for their services.

⁹⁵⁶ Schmauder 2008, 157.

⁹⁵⁷ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.8.; Sozomen, *Hist. ecc.*, IX, 5; see Wirth 1999, *passim*. 11-14, 35, 160; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 177-178; Thompson (1999) 2000, 38. See Chapter 3.

⁹⁵⁸ Khazanov 1984, *passim*. 231-233. I regard Khazanov's classification of nomadic states into three different types as plausible, because it is generalized in nature. The classification leaves enough room for smaller and specific characteristics.

according to Khazanov all the three phases can be understood as a nomadic state in their own right.⁹⁵⁹

Characteristic to the nomadic state of the first type (I) is that nomads' conquest is followed by the subjugation of sedentarists and vassal-tribute exploitation, and the single Mongol Empire and especially the Turkic qaghanat in the Middle Ages and the Golden Horde are clear examples of this.⁹⁶⁰ Even though the nomads had the leading position, sometimes a sedentary population could preserve its own state, in which case there would only be vassal dependence on the nomadic state. Sometimes nomads and sedentarists joined together within one and the same state. At any rate, it is primarily in the political sphere where limited integration takes place. Moreover, even if this happens, it does not prevent nomads from continuing their predatory activity towards sedentarists. Nomads' acts neither touched the social and economic foundations of sedentary society nor did they entail the emergence of a single socioeconomic system. Equally, the situation does not support the formation of a political system by nomads and sedentarists. However, when the vassal dependence of a sedentary state on a nomadic one is established, changes to nomadic societies are stimulated. Generally speaking, the emergence of a nomadic state is linked to limited sedentarization.⁹⁶¹ A reason for this is that nomadic aristocracy could not do without towns – they are the centres of political power, handicrafts and trade, all important aspects to maintain rule and control the new areas and its population. On the other hand, sometimes the emergence of towns looks artificial – they have been established because they provide a possibility for a nomadic aristocracy to maintain their rule, not because the towns themselves would be crucial for trade and other matters. The situation prevailed as long as nomads' external expansion continued; when the situation changed, new forms in the evolving nomadic state also emerged.

One possibility is that nomads' withdrawal from sedentary territories would have caused the decline and fall of towns. This would have occurred when the socio-political structure in nomadic society became fairly simple, leading to the disintegration and downfall of the nomadic state. On the other hand, the development could have continued as before, leading to nomadic society becoming an agricultural-urban society, or in other words, the sedentarization process entered into nomadic life. Another possibility was that a nomadic state of the first type was transformed into a state of the second type.

While the nomadic state of the first type is the starting point for speaking about the existence or rise of the nomadic state in the first place, the features would very probably have become established to

⁹⁵⁹ Khazanov 1984, *passim*. 231-233.

⁹⁶⁰ Khazanov 1984, 255, 236.

⁹⁶¹ Kradin 2008, 121.

some extent in the contacts between Hun and local sedentary groups. However, before I turn to study this, I will briefly introduce the nomadic state of the second and third types which the Huns might have reached. This is especially the case during the 440s when the coalition formed by Hun and local Germanic groups was at its strongest in the areas from the Carpathians to the lower Danube and the Crimea.

In the nomadic state of the second type (II), nomads, agriculturalists and townsmen are integrated into a single socio-political and, even partly, economic system; e.g. this kind of formation existed during the second Scythian state and among Hsiung-nu nomads bordering on the Chinese Empire in the second century BC, and also in some sense among the Mongols after the death of Jenghis Khan under the rule of Ögödey and Mögke.⁹⁶² A crucial feature is that the integration of nomads and sedentarists affected certain strata and classes in both sedentary and, more particularly, nomadic societies. In addition, the fact that nomads started to utilize the same ecological zones as sedentarists supported this integration. Equally, because the conquered sedentarists had more complex social relations than their nomadic conquerors, the latter were susceptible to adopt the system. The basis of an emerging nomadic state lay in the structures of sedentary societies that nomads became part of.

Finally, in the third type (III) of nomadic state, nomads and sedentarists have a single socioeconomic and political system, though the division of labour between pastoralists and agriculturalists is still differentiated. However, social stratification and the formation of classes were based on economic specialization and ethnic differences. In other words, both nomads and sedentarists fused into a unit, and differences between inhabitants in the state are not fundamentally based on or defined by a nomadic or sedentary background. The third Scythian state and Mongols in the Maveraunnehir region in the 14th century had elements which were characteristics of this kind of formation.⁹⁶³

With reference to the typology of nomadic states, the essential features for their rise were contacts with sedentary societies and even states. Accordingly, the alleged rise of nomadic state among the Hun groups demands that these kinds of connections would have taken place already when they arrived on the borders of the Roman Empire from the 380s onwards. However, it is known that the former dwellers of these areas had largely moved west before and during the arrival of Hun groups.⁹⁶⁴

⁹⁶² Khazanov 1984, 254-255, 241-242.

⁹⁶³ Khazanov 1984, 254, 249-250.

⁹⁶⁴ Heather 2009, 3, 10, 29.

Even if the Germanic groups had not moved westwards because of the Huns, contemporary authors' descriptions and following historical developments (e.g. Visigoths establishing a strong rule in Gallia) indicates that the areas which became dwelling sites for the Huns near the Roman borders in the lower Danube did not consist of strong sedentary states or societies with stratified classes. Accordingly, a sedentary kind of society did not exist that could have generated the rise of the nomadic state of the Huns, or to be more precise, a strong and united upper class stratum that many fragmented groups of Huns could have become part of could not have existed.

It is also true that the areas from the Carpathians to the lower Danube and the Crimea did not become completely deserted. However, the size of the Alan, Sarmatian and Germanic groups that continued to inhabit the areas, as well as the new Hun dwellers, was small.⁹⁶⁵ Moreover, because the Hun groups arrived in many waves, the fragmentation of groups and lack of strong unity between them inhibited rather than spur on the emergence of a nomadic state during the first decades of the fifth century. To summarize, no sedentary state existed to be conquered, nor was there a strong or great army of conquerors but only small nomadic groups who arrived over a period of many decades. Thus, the catalyst for crucial or potential changes that would have led to the rise of the nomadic state either did not exist or was very small.

If neither the background of the Hun or Alan and Germanic groups alone can be taken as a substantial basis for the rise of the nomadic state, another issue is, whether the contacts between the Hun and local Alan and Germanic groups gave birth to a new society which was followed by the rise of a nomadic state. On the whole, limited political integration in the political sphere is a crucial prerequisite for the development of a nomadic state.⁹⁶⁶

Another important question is whether the supposed political integration was based on an alliance or on the submission of the local groups to the Huns. This leads us to consider three different options. First, did the Huns wield unquestionable power over local groups? Another option is that the Huns subdued the local groups but their leaders formed a new leading stratum together with Hun military leaders. The third possibility is that the relationship between groups of Huns and local barbarians was based on alliances, and accordingly the Huns would not have subjugated other groups under their rule and no leading stratum emerged. In other words, in this case groups of Huns and locals would have maintained their own leaders and the groups would have acted together only according to temporary need, e.g. when there was an interest in participating in the activities of the confederation, especially for military operations like raids.

⁹⁶⁵ Heather 2009, *passim*. 5-6, 10, 13, 22-23, 25-26.

⁹⁶⁶ Khazanov 1984, *passim*. 151, 228-231.

I claim that the small size and fragmentation of the groups of Huns makes it doubtful that the Huns could ever have subdued local barbarian groups under their control. The lack of small-scale submission of groups under the rule of the groups of Huns is also emphasized by Priscus' story about Akatziri whom Theodosius II tried to persuade into co-operating with the Eastern Romans instead of continuing their alliance with Attila.⁹⁶⁷

In short, the relationship between Attila and Akataziri was such that Romans could expect Akatziri to change side without having too much trouble from Attila. In addition, Priscus' descriptions of constant disputes between the Eastern Roman Empire and Rua, Bleda and Attila in the 430s and 440s concerning some Huns who had decided to ally with the Eastern Roman Empire, emphasizes the fact that the groups knew who they wanted to link themselves to and that they had not agreed that Rua, or Bleda and Attila should have a permanent right to decide about their doings.⁹⁶⁸

All these refer to temporary joint activities between groups, and hence it is unlikely that only leaders from the groups of Huns formed a leading stratum to wield power and control others. In other words, I claim that some of the groups of Huns and their leaders had leading position in the confederation but they were joined with leaders from local barbarian groups who also belonged to the confederation.⁹⁶⁹ Laszlo takes this view by pointing out that when the Huns started to dwell in areas close to the Roman Empire in many cases the old leaders seem to have carried on ruling over their peoples as before.⁹⁷⁰ What also speaks in favour of this view is the fact that nomads commonly preferred alliances and predatory activities especially in their dealings with sedentarists rather than establishing strong and direct control over others.⁹⁷¹

Furthermore, it is likely that a shared interest in joint activities, rather than blood lines, was the basis for how nomads generally formed larger groupings, especially tribes, and hence it is possible that the relationship between groups of Huns and local barbarians was not based on the former's submission to the latter but on a shared interest in acting together.⁹⁷² Moreover, there are the considerations that it was in the interest of Germanic groups to form a larger confederation with groups of Huns because they were interested in gaining a share of the booty which raids on the Roman Empire would no doubt have involved.⁹⁷³ The fact that the Huns needed a large number of trustworthy warriors, especially during the 430s and 440s for their large-scale raiding operations in

⁹⁶⁷ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 258-259. See also Chapter 8.

⁹⁶⁸ Priscus, fr. 2., fr. 9.1, fr. 9.3., fr.11, fr.11.2 in Blockley 1983, 224-227, 234-235, 236-237, 242-243, 246-249, 256-257. See Chapter 8. The disunity between the groups could have originated from competition between kinship groups for power to rule over other groups on a large scale. Even if this was so, the fact still remains that there was no strong unity between groups, hence the existence of strong central power that would control others on a large scale should be doubted.

⁹⁶⁹ Heather 2009, 25; Lindner 1982, 702-705; Kazanski 1993, *passim*. 219, 223, 225, 227. See Chapter 7.2.

⁹⁷⁰ Laszlo 1951, 102-103.

⁹⁷¹ Khazanov 1984, *passim*. 231-232, 199, 162-163.

⁹⁷² Lindner 1982, 698, *passim*. 695.

⁹⁷³ Lindner 1982, 702-703; cf. Heather 2009, 25; Schmauder 2008, 157.

areas of the Roman Empire speaks on behalf of the claim for alliance. Also Priscus' story about the relationship between groups of Huns and Goths implies an alliance or confederation between groups of Huns and local barbarians:

[Huns] have no concern for agriculture, but, like wolves, attack and steal the Goths' food supplies, with the result that the latter remain in the position of servants and themselves suffer food shortage. Yet the Gothic people have never had a treaty [ἄσπόνδος] with the Huns and from the time of their forefathers [c. in the early fifth century] have sworn to escape from the alliance [ἑμειχμία] with them.⁹⁷⁴

Though Priscus' story might be a familiar topos concerning nomads, nevertheless his remarks might have some truth in them because the activities of groups of Huns strongly imply that they continuously acted as nomads (e.g. favouring raids in order to gain extra for living). This supports the claim that they had not adopted farming or had become sedentarists.⁹⁷⁵ In addition, Priscus' account implies that groups of Huns and local barbarians had not formed a combined society, nor was there no strong integration between them on the political level.⁹⁷⁶ Therefore, it seems clear that the Huns had not subjugated local barbarian groups but, as was common with nomads, they favoured an alliance or the formation of a confederation for temporary purposes as Priscus' words suggest.

The word ἑμειχμία, "alliance" refers to "union for battle" and "a relationship in which two countries, political parties or organizations work together for some purpose" or "a group of countries or political parties that are formally united and working together because they have similar aims".⁹⁷⁷ By contrast, Blockley's translation of ἄσπόνδος as "a treaty" has the meaning of "agreement between countries to do a particular thing or to help each other".⁹⁷⁸ That is to say, the difference between the terms is that a treaty refers to an action that both parties have agreed to take care of on a firm basis, while an alliance implies actions that the parties might both undertake together but the basis of the joint activities is uncertain.

Accordingly, I see that the difference between the words "alliance" and "treaty" concerning the Huns and local Goths implies that between the groups and their ways of life assimilation would not have taken place, at least not to any large extent. Likewise, political integration between the Huns

⁹⁷⁴ Priscus, fr. 49 in Blockley 1983, 356-357.

⁹⁷⁵ The limited sedentarization which is a prerequisite for the rise of a nomadic state does not seem to have taken place among the Huns.

⁹⁷⁶ Priscus' story is most likely to be dated to the 440s or between the 430s and the early 450s. Firstly, during those years the Huns dwelled among Gothic groups in areas from the Carpathians to the lower Danube and the Crimea. Secondly, from the 430s to the 440s many of the Alan and Germanic groups belonged to a coalition led by the Huns.

⁹⁷⁷ Liddell, Scott (1992), 1045.

⁹⁷⁸ Liddell, Scott (1992), 234.

and local groups was limited, taking place only within the parameters of the temporary need for an alliance. It is likely that Huns did not command local groups as they pleased but local leaders maintained their position at the head of their groups.⁹⁷⁹ Groups of Huns and local barbarians would have had their own leaders and they co-operated according to the need, e.g. when the Huns were eager to ally themselves with other groups for larger-scale raiding operations.⁹⁸⁰

Even though there would seem to have been at least some sort of temporary alliance between groups of Huns and locals, Priscus' words clearly shows that Huns dominated the action and would have been the leading party. Although Priscus states that the Goths disliked notion of an alliance with the Huns, I myself doubt this claim. I would propose instead that Priscus wished to suggest that activities with the nomads can never be beneficial.⁹⁸¹ After all, some of those who had the most prominent positions among the Huns during the 440s seem to have had a Germanic background.⁹⁸² In addition, the joint activities of Huns and other barbarian groups clearly seem to have profited all parties, e.g. Attila demanded that the Eastern Roman Empire paid to ensure peace, and this involved both Huns and other groups.⁹⁸³

If Priscus was right, that the idea of an alliance with the Huns was unpleasant for the Goths, it leads us to think of the possibility that there was vassal-tribute exploitation between nomads and local groups. This would also signify the rise of the so-called nomadic state.⁹⁸⁴ However, I highly doubt that this was the case, especially because at least limited sedentarization would have had to have taken place among the nomads for a vassal-tribute relationship to exist, and this does not seem to have occurred among the Huns.

However, there are some claims that sedentarization would have taken place among the Huns because during his visit to Attila Priscus mentions seeing villages and huts, as well as two palaces that were built for Attila and his close friend Onegesius.⁹⁸⁵ In addition, Priscus reports his astonishment at a bath house that Onegesius had ordered built for a Roman who was a prisoner of the Huns.⁹⁸⁶ With reference to the buildings and villages, I would argue that they more likely belonged to local Germanic groups, and hence they do not signify that the Huns had adopted a

⁹⁷⁹ Heather 2005, 363-365; Thompson (1999) 2000, 184-185.

⁹⁸⁰ Heather 2009, 25.

⁹⁸¹ Priscus, fr. 11.2. in Blockley 1983, 268-273. Priscus' dislike of nomads comes clear in his discussion with a Greek who lived among the Huns. Whether the story about their meeting is false or not, the story still represents Priscus' view.

⁹⁸² Schmauder 2008, 157.

⁹⁸³ Priscus, fr. 9.3, fr. 11.2. in Blockley 1983, 236-237, 248-249, 250-251, 266-267; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 364-367, 388, 441; Harmatta 1951, 144-145; Schönfeld 1911, 73; Schmauder 2008, 157; Lindner 1982, *passim*. 702-703. See Chapters 7 and 8.

⁹⁸⁴ Khazanov 1984, 231.

⁹⁸⁵ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 260-267, 274-277, 290-291; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 179-180; Bona 1991, 69, 71, 74; Wirth 1999, 70, 140; Heather 2005, *passim*. 327-328.

⁹⁸⁶ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 264-265.

sedentary way of life.⁹⁸⁷ I suggest that Attila's and Onegesius' palaces were built to demonstrate their wealth and prestige rather than being their permanent homes. This is supported by Priscus' many accounts of Attila living in a tent.⁹⁸⁸ Priscus' general remarks about Huns living in tents also emphasize that they still lived according to a nomadic way of life.⁹⁸⁹

As it seems highly unlikely that a state would have ever existed among the Huns, I shall next turn to the notion of a supercomplex chiefdom among the Huns. Did long lasting conquest, the formation of a confederation and continuous raids and contacts with the wealthy Roman Empire lead not to the rise of a state but to the rise of a supercomplex chiefdom, and if so, would this have supreme military leadership becoming more permanent in nature?

9.2. A Supercomplex Chiefdom Evolving among the Huns – Evidence in Support of the View

The fact that when nomads form larger and more long-lasting confederations and still no significant changes generally take place in their life is often taken as a dilemma. The responses have been either to argue that state exists and that the tribal sub-structure is just hollow shell, or that a tribal structure exists but it never forms a true state.⁹⁹⁰ Accordingly, in order to solve the problem of the inapplicability of the terminology of settled societies to the history of pastoral nomads the term “supercomplex chiefdom” was taken into use.⁹⁹¹

The term “supercomplex chiefdom” refers to a situation when many groups of nomads have united into a larger unity or confederation but some features common to a state are lacking, especially a large number of special officials in the state machinery.⁹⁹² A supercomplex chiefdom includes the following main features. First, when nomad groups form a unity or confederation, the unity of groups within the confederation is based on tribal relations. Second, in a supercomplex chiefdom the nomadic elite perform functions which link military and civil administration at the higher level, while ordinary nomads form the main body of the army. Third, the power of the supreme leader at the head of a confederation is based on his ability to organize military campaigns and to redistribute

⁹⁸⁷ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 179-180. Maenchen-Helfen argues that these buildings were made by local Gothic carpenters, not by Huns.

⁹⁸⁸ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 250-251, 254-255, 292-293.

⁹⁸⁹ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 250-251.

⁹⁹⁰ Barfield 1989, 5.

⁹⁹¹ Kradin 2005, 166, *passim*. 165; Kradin 2008, 114; Kradin 2009, 42. According to Kradin the term “supercomplex chiefdom” refers to a situation when a tribal structure exists along with some but not all of the features common to a state. Kradin also discusses the question of societies that are more complex than ordinary complex chiefdoms.

⁹⁹² Kradin 2005, 115.

wealth acquired from trade, tribute and raids on neighbouring countries.⁹⁹³ All these listed elements seem to have been in place among the Huns during the first half of the fifth century, especially during the 440s when Attila was the supreme leader of the confederation. I shall consider each of the features to decide whether a supercomplex chiefdom did actually take place among the united groups of Huns. As the listed features include some subfeatures,⁹⁹⁴ I also deal with each of them separately. In addition, I investigate characteristics common to the phenomenon called “imperial confederation” which has many similar features to a “supercomplex chiefdom”.⁹⁹⁵

“Imperial confederation” is the highest form of unity that Eurasian pastoralists might form and it consists of three levels. The uppermost level includes the imperial leadership or supreme leader who the confederation. The next level is made up of appointees of the supreme leader, usually appointed as governors to supervise the indigenous tribal leadership in each region. The appointees serve as key links between the central administration and indigenous tribal leaders. The third level of the imperial confederation consists of local tribal leaders who are members of the indigenous elites of each tribe and, although structurally inferior to imperial appointees, they retain considerable autonomy because of their close ties to their own people, who would even follow them in revolt if the imperial commanders overstepped their authority. Definition also shows that Eurasian pastoralists does not need to give up their nomadic way of life in order to have strong ties between groups, and strong unity between groups under a clear leader figure can be formed in within the framework of a nomadic way of life.⁹⁹⁶ This leads to a consideration of whether these kinds of structures rose among the Huns.

A supercomplex chiefdom consists of a number of united groups who together form a confederation amounting together to tens of thousands of people.⁹⁹⁷ It has been estimated that a confederation would have included much more than 15,000 Huns, and the many local barbarian groups would have consisted of approximately fifty thousand people.⁹⁹⁸ Groups combined together on the basis of tribal relations, and a political hierarchy existed between groups. In addition, this forms presence of centre and groups (communities, tribes etc.) dependent on it.⁹⁹⁹ It is likely that tribal relations and political hierarchies regulated how the groups of Huns and local barbarians combined together in the confederation, as the following remarks by Priscus would indicate.

⁹⁹³ Kradin 2009, 42; Kradin 2002, 383.

⁹⁹⁴ Kradin 2008, 114-116; Kradin 2008, 148.

⁹⁹⁵ Barfield 1993, 150; cf. Kradin 2008, 114-116; Kradin 2009, 42. I do not myself believe that the confederation of Hun and local barbarian groups formed a supercomplex chiefdom rather than imperial confederation, although they both include a similar leadership structure.

⁹⁹⁶ Barfield 1993, 150; Barfield 1989, 8.

⁹⁹⁷ Kradin 2008, 148.

⁹⁹⁸ Heather 2005, 328, 330; cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, *passim*. 51-56.

⁹⁹⁹ Kradin 2008, 148; Kradin 2005, *passim*. 153-154; Barfield 1993, *passim*. 148-150.

Priscus' writes that Attila sent his eldest son to rule over the Akatziri, who were seemingly nomadic groups who had become Attila's subjects only a few years earlier and this would signify a political hierarchy between groups.¹⁰⁰⁰ Furthermore, I claim that this to point out that there is centre where other groups are dependent on and connected to. In other words, if Attila and the groups close to him decided to do something then others were seemingly expected to follow. Priscus' remarks concerning the relationship between Attila and the Akatziri also imply that a political hierarchy would have existed among the tribal groups who were part of the confederation. Priscus writes:¹⁰⁰¹

The Akatziri, a Scythian people [ὁ Σκυθικὸν ἔθνος] that had submitted to Attila for the following reason. This people had many rulers [ἀρχόντων] according to their tribes [φύλα] and clans [γένη], and the Emperor Theodosius sent gifts to them to the end that they might unanimously renounce their alliance [τῆ συμμάχια] with Attila and seek peace with the Romans. The envoy who conveyed the gifts did not deliver them to each of the kings by rank [τῶν βασιλέων τοῦ ἔθνους], with the result that Kouridachos, the senior in office [τῆ ἀρχῆ], received his gifts second and being thus overlooked and deprived of his proper honours, called in Attila against his fellow kings [τῶν συμβασιλευόντων]. Attila without delay sent a large force, destroyed some and forced the rest to submit. He then summoned Kouridachos to share in the prizes of victory. But he, suspecting a plot, declared that it was hard for a man to come into the sight of a god: "for it is not possible to look directly at the sun's disc, how could one look at the greatest of the gods without harm?". In this way Kouridachos remained amongst his own folk and saved his realm, while all the rest of the Akatzirian people submitted to Attila.

In this account Priscus' remarks about "rank", "honour", and "seniority in office" between leaders of groups, strongly suggests that a tribal structure existed not only in the upper level but also on the local level of the pastoral groups who can be considered Huns.¹⁰⁰² I suspect that even among the Akatziri some groups or lineages were more appreciated than others, and hence they formed a hierarchy where some leaders were considered to be above others.¹⁰⁰³ I would also suggest that Kouridachos' refusal to share his victories with Attila could signify that he might have ended up under Attila's rule if he had accepted Attila as a partner. If so, then we might expect that a political

¹⁰⁰⁰ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 274-275, 386, 383. Priscus passus "[...] ὃν ὁ πρεβύτερος ἡρχη τῶν Ακατίρων καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἔθνων τῶν νεμομένων τὴν πρὸς τῷ Πόντῳ Σκυθικῆν[...]". In my opinion the reason why Attila's son was leading the Akatziri most likely derived from the fact that Attila had needed someone whom he trusted to keep an eye on a group with whom he had had a clash. If so, then we can consider that the position of Attila's son does not so much signify the existence of a tribal political hierarchy but the victor's rule over a vanquished party in order to keep the situation calm. Even if this is the case, nevertheless Priscus' story about the Akatziri shows that among the Akatziri there was a hierarchy between the groups or the members of the groups; in short, some of the leaders among the Akatziri had had a more appreciated position than others.

¹⁰⁰¹ Priscus, fr.11.2 in Blockley 1983, 258-259.

¹⁰⁰² Barfield 1993, 148.

¹⁰⁰³ Priscus, fr.11.2 in Blockley 1983, 266-267. At least this was the case among a clan that one of Attila's followers, Onegesius, belonged to because Priscus writes that when he visited Onegesius' wife the most important members of his clan received him.

hierarchy prevailed among the groups in the confederation, and that Attila came from a lineage that held the strongest position. Then this would imply that a supercomplex chiefdom might have evolved among the Huns during the 440s. However, there is still room for a counterargument – we cannot rule out the possibility that Kouridachos’ reference to Attila as his superior (as Kouridachos claimed the comparison of Attila to the sun implied) derived from a common lineage hierarchy and had nothing to do with the possible rise of a supercomplex chiefdom.

If the tribes seem to have formed a hierarchical structure common to Eurasian pastoralists, in order to speak about a supercomplex chiefdom there should be a supreme leader and an elite to ensure unity.¹⁰⁰⁴ A supreme military leader would have had an elite to help him in the highest levels of management, and it was formed not only by persons who were connected to the supreme military leader through clan relations but also through private contacts. In addition, a nomadic elite performed functions at the highest levels of military and civil administration, while ordinary nomads formed the main body of the army.¹⁰⁰⁵ Generally speaking, Priscus’ accounts of Attila suggest that these kinds of arrangements could have taken place among the Huns during the 440s.¹⁰⁰⁶

When Priscus visited the Huns in 449 as a member of a delegation sent by Theodosius II to sort out disputes with Attila, he participated in an evening event in which Attila’s uncle Oebersius was also present.¹⁰⁰⁷ Briefly, this means that Attila did not only surround himself with his own trusted followers (λογάδες),¹⁰⁰⁸ his relatives also supported his position. Furthermore, Priscus’ remark that in 449 Bleda’s widow ruled a village¹⁰⁰⁹ while Attila was in power, implies that Attila did not prevent members of his extended family from having good positions and gave them important duties or appreciated positions. In an “imperial confederation” of Eurasian pastoralists that is similar to the concept of supercomplex chiefdom,¹⁰¹⁰ the supreme leader has “imperial appointees” who are often members of the imperial lineage. Bleda’s widow’s position implies that this might have been the case among the Huns. However, Priscus’ accounts of the “logades” (λογάδες) do not refer in any way to the logades being relatives of Attila.¹⁰¹¹ By contrast, they seem to have been

¹⁰⁰⁴ Kradin 2008, 114-116.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Kradin 2008, 114; Kradin 2009, 42.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Schmauder 2008, 157-159.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Priscus, fr.14 in Blockley 1983, 290-291.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Priscus, fr. 11, fr.14 in Blockley 1983, 244-245, 288-293.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Priscus, fr.11.2 in Blockley 1983, 260-261.

¹⁰¹⁰ Barfield 1993, 150; cf. Kradin 2008, 114-116; Kradin 2009, 42.

¹⁰¹¹ Because it is common among Eurasian pastoralists that close relatives and loyal supporters act in partnership with the (supreme) leader, the situation at the end of the 440s does not necessarily mean that a supercomplex chiefdom would have arisen.

friends or close companions of Attila as Priscus term ἐπιτήδειος (“friends”) for the logades implies.¹⁰¹²

The existence of the logades is generally claimed to signify a crucial change among the Huns,¹⁰¹³ and they might refer to rise of similar structure as it is claimed to be common to both an imperial confederacy and a supercomplex chiefdom.¹⁰¹⁴ There are three levels at which activities and power are arranged. The upper most level consists of an imperial leader who is the supreme leader of all the united groups in the confederation. The second level is formed by imperial governors who do not necessarily need to be relatives of the supreme leader, but they are chosen by the supreme leader to act as his closest companions and to maintain contacts with allied tribes and tribal leaders.¹⁰¹⁵ Finally, the third level consists of local tribes and their leaders. While at the uppermost level the supreme leader has a strong influence over those, who make up the second level, this is not generally found among nomads. Moreover, at the third and so-called local level, the tribal structure remained intact under the ruler of chieftains, whose power was derived from their own people’s support, not from imperial appointment.¹⁰¹⁶

I am not certain, if logades imply the existence of an imperial confederation or a supercomplex chiefdom among the Huns in the 440s because some of crucial elements to leaders, logades are not known to have existed among the Huns, though some elements might have. In any case, I disagree with the general claim that the logades would signify Attila’s position as a king who had increased his power above the normal limits of a pastoral ruler and established his own court and courtiers who were fundamentally loyal to him and not to their clans.¹⁰¹⁷ In addition, it is claimed that this development signified the rise of feudalism among the Huns and that the position of a rich upper class strengthened to such an extent that belonging to it guaranteed a powerful leading position in Hun society.¹⁰¹⁸ I doubt such claims for two reasons.

¹⁰¹² Priscus, fr.11.1, fr.11.2 in Blockley 1983, 244-245, 266-267; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 193. Priscus also calls one of the logades, Onegesius, Attila’s close friend, “φιλοφρονουμένη”.

¹⁰¹³ Heather 2005, 325-326; Thompson (1999) 2000, 178-179, 181-183, 192; Heather (1999) 2000, 230-231; Kelly 2008, 113; cf. Wirth 1999, 52, 138-139; Stickler 2007, 80; Altheim 1951a, 104-105; Altheim 1962, 4, 281-286; Harmatta 1951, 139, 141; Harmatta 1952, 299-300.

¹⁰¹⁴ Barfield 1993, 150; cf. Kradin 2008, 114-116; Kradin 2009, 42.

¹⁰¹⁵ Barfield 1993, 162. Barfield’s remarks on Chinggis Khan’s way of maintaining his leadership among the the Mongols was similar to this second level organization.

¹⁰¹⁶ Barfield 1989, 8.

¹⁰¹⁷ Heather 2005, 325-326; Thompson (1999) 2000, 179, 181-183; Heather (1999) 2000, 230-231; Kelly 2008, 113; cf. Wirth 1999, 52, 138-139; Stickler 2007, 80; Altheim 1951a, 104-105; Altheim 1962, 4, 281-286; Harmatta 1951, 139, 141; Harmatta 1952, 299-300.

¹⁰¹⁸ Thompson 1999 (2000), 178-179, 181, 192; cf. Altheim 1951a, 104-105; Altheim 1962, 4, 281-286; Harmatta 1951, 139, 141; Harmatta 1952, 299-300; Khazanov 1984, 157, 161. Altheim considers that logades were responsible for military leadership at the uppermost level and in regional rule: the logades were a land-owning elite who also collected taxes and were responsible for the administrative duties in their regions. To me, such claims are highly speculative as there is little or no evidence to support them.

First, Priscus tells us that one of the logades, Onegesius, still maintained good contacts with members of his clan, hence he was seemingly not only loyal to Attila but also to the groups from which he came.¹⁰¹⁹ In addition, Priscus informs us that one of the logades, Berichus ruled over many villages.¹⁰²⁰ This refers to the fact that the logades had not become imperial appointees who would only serve a supreme leader.¹⁰²¹ Second, Priscus' short accounts of the tasks of the logades point out that the reason why they are mentioned as forming a close relation with Attila was not because of their wealth, on account of the (military) assistance they provided Attila. Furthermore, because the duties and names of the logades refer to the position of military leadership, I would argue that the logades could have been military leaders of their own groups, not imperial appointees of Attila,¹⁰²² and this would have made them companions of Attila, the supreme military leader. I thus agree with the view that the logades were a military elite consisting of military leaders of Huns and local barbarians in confederation.¹⁰²³

I see that when the tasks of the supreme military leader increased as a result of constant fights and negotiations with the Romans then they would have needed support on the local level. This, moreover, would have led need to military leaders cooperating with Attila on a more permanent basis, including sharing the duties of ongoing tasks, such as participating in negotiations on peace treaties with the Romans and maintaining contacts with groups in order to plan new raids and attacks. I suggest, therefore, that the logades could also have included military leaders who were not chosen by the Huns but by local barbarians, e.g. Goths, from among their own groups to lead them in times of war.¹⁰²⁴ I also agree with the views that argue that the position of the logades could have been similar to “*οὐκείλοι καὶ λοχᾶγοί*”/ “people and captains”, as Sozomen writes in the case of the Hun military leader Uldin in 409.¹⁰²⁵ That is to say, that the logades would have had a prominent position because they were military leaders and not just at the head of their own clans or

¹⁰¹⁹ Priscus, fr.11.2 in Blockley 1983, 266-267. Priscus mentions how Onegesius' wife invited the most important men of Onegesius' clan to meet Priscus. To me this as a sign that Onegesius still had good relation with the members of his clan and was loyal to it.

¹⁰²⁰ Priscus, fr.14 in Blockley 1983, 292-293.

¹⁰²¹ Thompson (1999) 2000, 181-182. I disagree with Thompson that as with Berichus other logades would have ruled over a village. No contemporary authors support this. In my opinion the story about Berichus being a leader of many villages in Scythia might well imply that he came from a local barbarian group. In fact, Berichus' position does not imply a change in the Huns' nomadic way of life towards sedentarism, but suggests that during the days of Attila the leaders from local barbarian groups were also part of the leadership of the confederation. Furthermore, I consider that Berichus and Onegesius acted as mediators between the uppermost leader, Attila, and the local level, consisting of their own clans or groups.

¹⁰²² Thompson (1999) 2000, 183; Heather in Thompson (1999) 2000, 231; Stickler 2007, 79-80.

¹⁰²³ Stickler 2007, 80.

¹⁰²⁴ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 250-251. In my opinion because Priscus writes about the logades as “the leading men of the Scythians” and not “the leading men of the Huns” this indicates that not only groups of Huns, but also local barbarians participated in leading the confederation.

¹⁰²⁵ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 193, 65-67; Thompson (1999) 2000, 182; Heather (1999) 2000, 231. See chapter 5.

groups, but also on a larger scale in the confederation.¹⁰²⁶ This is supported by Priscus' remark on Edeco as a famous warrior ("*Edeco, a Scythian who had performed outstanding deeds in war*") and Onegesius as a military leader of large troops like other logades ("*they were in command of very many men*").¹⁰²⁷ Because Priscus also compares other logades to Edeco it seems obvious that the logades in general would have been military leaders.¹⁰²⁸

Priscus' tells us that Edeco "*was one of Attila's intimates [ἐπιτήδειος] and that he, together with others selected from amongst the leading men [λογάσιν] was entrusted with guarding Attila (he explained that on fixed days each of them in turn guarded Attila under arms)*"; this suggests that the uppermost leadership among the Huns was in the hands of military leaders in which Attila had the supreme position.¹⁰²⁹ The fact that Priscus does not mention any differences in the tasks of the logades would also support this interpretation. The only difference that Priscus mentions among the logades is that Onegesius' "*power amongst the Scythians was second only to that of Attila*",¹⁰³⁰ though Priscus also tells us that Scottas claimed that he too had "*influence with Attila*" and would speak and act "*before Attila on an equality with his brother [Onegesius]*".¹⁰³¹ It is likely, therefore, that all the logades basically had the same position in relation to Attila, and most likely also among their own groups (they were all military leaders of their own groups), while Onegesius and Attila had the closest connection.¹⁰³²

Further support for the argument that the relationship between the logades and Attila refers to the structure of military organization is Priscus' notion that Scottas and Onegesius were strongly committed to supporting Attila and refused to betray him.¹⁰³³ This could refer to the promise of loyalty between warriors and a supreme military leader that was common among Eurasian pastoral nomads.¹⁰³⁴ The names of the logades also refer to their military skills.

In general meaning of names suggests what kinds of images and issues or even positions were appreciated, though in the end they do not reveal unequivocally the background or position of a

¹⁰²⁶ Thompson (1999) 2000, 182, cf. Pohl 2003, passim. 592, 579-580. Pohl's study on Avars points out similar situation.

¹⁰²⁷ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 250-251, 268-269.

¹⁰²⁸ Priscus, fr. 11.1 in Blockley 1983, 242-243; Thompson (1999) 2000, 181-182; Stickler 2007, 79-80. Priscus passus "*Edeco, Orestes, Scottas and others of the leading men amongst the Huns*".

¹⁰²⁹ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 244-245; cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, 181; Stickler 2007, 80.

¹⁰³⁰ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 264-265.

¹⁰³¹ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 254-255.

¹⁰³² Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 266-267. Priscus mentions that "*in order to please the wife of a close friend [Onegesius], he [Attila] ate while sitting on his horse*".

¹⁰³³ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 250-251, 274-275. Onegesius' and Scottas's strong loyalty to Attila could have derived from the fact that Onegesius and Scottas were brothers and Onegesius was said to be second in command after Attila and was his very good friend. That is to say, we cannot be sure of the level of loyalty of the other logades to Attila – if the logades formed their own group, as the term logades suggests, then I suspect that they had all promised loyalty to Attila.

¹⁰³⁴ Barfield 1989, 26.

person.¹⁰³⁵ In the case of the Huns, the etymologies of the names of the logades reveal that the persons close to Attila seem to have had names of both German and Hun origin. These etymologies indicate to what extent Attila's closest companions could have been Hun or German by origin, or the persons acting next to Attila favored names from other languages. It is generally thought assessed that Germans would have widely adopted Hunnic names, while it is thought less likely that Huns adopted German names.¹⁰³⁶ Overall, the origin of the names of the logades is largely speculative, because the names only occur in Late Roman authors' accounts in their Latin or Greek, or sometimes even German, versions. Nonetheless, I still consider that the etymologies of the names can clarify, at least to some extent, the situation between Attila and the logades – that is to say who the logades might have been and what kind of collaboration they seem to have formed. Therefore, in what follows I shall discuss the background of the names that Priscus mentions in his accounts of the Huns written in Greek.

The name Onegesius (Ὀνηγησιός) is claimed to be Turkish in origin and its correct form would be *Oniisios*, deriving from the word *on-iyiz*: “the tenth who is in the company”. It has also been proposed that the name refers to the tribal organization among the Huns: every one of the logades would have led one of the ten tribes.¹⁰³⁷ However, I consider that the reference to “the ten” could also derive from Onegesius' position as a military leader because among Eurasian pastoralists, e.g. among the Mongols under Chinggis Khan, troops in the army were divided up in multiples of ten.¹⁰³⁸ However, it has also been argued that Onegesius' name did not mean “the tenth” because the name is too modest for a notable Hun leader and the name is a Greek version of a German name.¹⁰³⁹ Instead, it is possible that Onegesius was a Gothic name “*Hunigis*”, which had been hellinized because *O-* is roughly equivalent to *Hu-*, and in old German *i~* is closest to the Greek *η*.¹⁰⁴⁰ For these reasons, Onegesius' name is claimed to be formed of two parts: *Huni* + *gis*. The first part would refer both to the word “Hun” but also to “strength”, “*huni*”, in old German. Similarly, *gis-* would derive from the old German word *ger=gaiza-*, which is similar to the old English *gar*, old Icelandic *geirr* “throwing spear”, *geisl* “skiing rod”, *geisli* “stick, stave, ray, flash”, modern German *Geisel*, “whip” and to the word *gisil* “shaft of an arrow” among Langobards.¹⁰⁴¹ Moreover, it is noticed that *-gis* is a very common ending in German names, e.g. Gunthigis, Witigis, Radigis, hence Onegesius could well have been German name *Hunigis*. Taken together, the

¹⁰³⁵ Heather 2005, 329

¹⁰³⁶ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 406, 411; Harmatta 1951, 144-148.

¹⁰³⁷ Altheim 1951, 27; 1959, I, 25.

¹⁰³⁸ De Plano Carpini, *Hist. Mong.*, VI: 2-3; Jansson, Ruotsala 2003, 69-70; Kradin 2005, 155, 162; Barfield 1993, 160.

¹⁰³⁹ Harmatta 1951, 146-147; cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 388, 441; also Heather 2005, 329.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Harmatta 1951, 147.

¹⁰⁴¹ Harmatta 1951, 147; Walde-Hoffman 1938, 576.

possible origin and meaning of the name Onegesius imply military associations or some kind of leadership position at the head of larger groups. If so, similar connotations are also possible for Onegesius' brother, Scottas.

It has been speculated that Scottas' (Σκόττας) name is of Turkish origin. Furthermore, it is suspected that Priscus would have given an old Greek version of the name to remind readers of the word "Scythian".¹⁰⁴² This is plausible because Priscus used the term "Scythian" for Huns, like in general on the groups who formed the confederation led by Rua, Octar, Bleda and Attila during the 430s and 440s. However, it is also suggested that Skottas could be of Germanic origin,¹⁰⁴³ and the name could be derived from the word *skutta*, which is similar to old Icelandic *skjötä* and *skyti*, "shooter", Old English *scoetan* or *scytta*, old Saxon *sciota* and Old German *skutjan*, "shooter" or in a more elegant form *skuzzo* or *skioissan*, "schiessen", "to shoot, rush, burst".¹⁰⁴⁴ While both of the etymologies might be correct, nevertheless the conclusion is that Scottas' name would have implied either shooting or a barbarian background.

The third logades, whose name is claimed to be a Greek version of the original German name, "Edika", is Edeco (Ἐδέκων).¹⁰⁴⁵ While Priscus mentions Edeco to be of Scythian (Σκύθης) origin,¹⁰⁴⁶ this does not help us clarify whether this points to his Hun or German origin. However, it is suggested that Edeco was of Germanic origin, and what might support this is the 6th century author Jordanes' claim that Edeco was a Scirian.¹⁰⁴⁷ In addition, it is possible that Edeco would have come from the name Edika, which that originally refers to old German *aibs*, "oath, vow, pledge, promise".¹⁰⁴⁸ From this it is deduced that the original form of Edeco would have been *aibiweihs*, "the one whose promise of loyalty is solemn" as would have been the case with the names, Edovichus among the Franks and Erduich- (*airba-weichs*, *uf-aibeis* "to swear") among the Easternmost Goths.¹⁰⁴⁹ The name is said to suggest a relationship between Attila and Edeco: Edeco would have been one of the trusted companions of Attila, and this would signify that the leaders of Germanic groups would also have had a strong position at the head of the confederation leadership.¹⁰⁵⁰ To summarize, the least we can say about the name and person of Edeco is that he

¹⁰⁴² Priscus, fr.2 in Blockley 1983, 224-227; see Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 420.

¹⁰⁴³ Heather 2005, 329.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Harmatta 1951, 148.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 388, 441; Heather 2005, 329.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Priscus, fr.11.1 in Blockley 1983, 242-243.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Jordanes, *Getica*, LIV, 277; cf. Harmatta 1951, 144-145.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Schönfeld 1911, 73.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Harmatta 1951, 145.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Harmatta 1951, 144-145.

acted in close contact with Attila, and hence I would suggest that his name could refer to a promise of loyalty and he was one of the logades because of his outstanding success in warfare.¹⁰⁵¹

Lastly, the name Berichos (Βέριχος) is considered to be either Turkish or Germanic in origin, and could have had the form Berich, “strong” which was also a name of a mythical Goth leader.¹⁰⁵² However, it is thought that the Goths would not have given their leader a Hun name, and hence the German version would have been Berg, Berigh or Berich.¹⁰⁵³ Furthermore, it is suggested that because Priscus wrote the name Valamir on a form Βαλαμῆρος, Berichos might originally have had the German name Wereka or Werika, which was favoured among Goths in the forms Wera or Vera.¹⁰⁵⁴ Wera and Werika are reminiscent of *wers*, “real, truthful” used by Goths and in old Icelandic *vǫrr*, “pleasing” and in plural *vǫrar*, “promise, vow, pledge”, also in old German the more elegant form *wār*, “real, truthful, genuine” and in old English *vār*, “loyalty, constancy, allegiance”. Therefore, it is believed that Berichos’ name is “the one who is loyal and keeps his vow”. On the other hand, it is also considered that Berichos’ name might derive from the word *warjan* used by Goths or in old Icelandic *varja* and in the more elegant form in old German *werren*, *weren*, *wehren*, “defend, fight back” or *weri*, “defence” or *wer(e)*, “defence, concession”, and hence Berichus could mean “protector, defender”.¹⁰⁵⁵ It seems likely that Berichus’ name refers to his position as one of Attila’s loyal guards and trusted companions, one of the logades who would have sworn an oath of loyalty to Attila.¹⁰⁵⁶ On the other hand, the possible meaning of “defender” or “promise, faithful, real”, could also imply Berichus’ position as a military leader because the characteristics related to his name could well reflect this.

Taken together, because the etymologies of all the names of the logades could refer to military prowess or to leadership and loyalty, I would argue that military skills would have been appreciated among the groups of Huns and local barbarians who formed the confederation. Clearly, military skills and the position of military leadership were important in the life of those who acted at the head of the confederation, namely Attila and the logades. However, it is another question whether the activities of the logades shows them to have been responsible not only for military but also for some other activities in the supercomplex chiefdom or imperial confederacy e.g. organizing levies of troops and leading troops at the uppermost level, participating in negotiations and keeping contacts with local groups on behalf of Attila.¹⁰⁵⁷ This is what I shall consider next.

¹⁰⁵¹ Thompson (1999) 2000, 179.

¹⁰⁵² Jordanes, *Getica*, IV, 26; Harmatta 1951, 144-145; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 406, 441; cf. also Heather 2005, 329.

¹⁰⁵³ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 406.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Harmatta 1951, 146.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Harmatta 1951, 146.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Harmatta 1951, 146; cf. Barfield 1989, *passim*. 26.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Barfield 1993, 150; cf. Kradin 2008, 114-116; Kradin 2009, 42. See Chapter 9.3.

The most important tasks of those who shared the uppermost tasks in the large confederation of Eurasian pastoralists were related to military duties and negotiations.¹⁰⁵⁸ With the Huns in the 440s, the main tasks of the logades seem to have been maintaining a good relationship the Roman Empire with the help of Attila. In essence this meant participating in negotiations, such as peace treaties or solving disputes.¹⁰⁵⁹

Priscus' accounts reveal that the connections between the Romans and the logades were primarily based on solving disputes and negotiating with the Romans according to the instructions given the logades by Attila.¹⁰⁶⁰ The supreme leaders among the Eurasian pastoralists have generally delegated negotiations by enlisting nearby sedentary societies as their supporters because they have not been able to do everything alone. Such negotiations usually involved the giving of gifts.¹⁰⁶¹ Accordingly, the negotiations were an easy way for a supreme leader to gain profits and revenues for their supporters and closest companions, which they in turn expected due to their support of the supreme leader. This also seems to have taken place among the Huns because Priscus claims that Attila sent repeated delegations to the court of Theodosius II to acquire rich gifts which also benefitted logades.¹⁰⁶² However, Priscus' stories about Attila's banquets to some of the most important members in the confederation also implies that Attila felt obliged to thank those who acted in close contact with him and helped him to run lead the confederation.¹⁰⁶³

Another of Priscus' remarks that refers to the logades taking care of duties that were common tasks for the closest companions of the supreme leader in a supercomplex chiefdom, is Attila's interest in sending one of the logades, Onegesius, to meet and deal with some ongoing business with one of the groups who belonged to the confederation.¹⁰⁶⁴ In short, this might refer to the fact that the logades acted as mediators between the supreme leader and local tribal leaders.¹⁰⁶⁵ Moreover, Priscus' story how he and Maximus were requested to meet some of the most important members of Onegesius' clan implies that the logades felt the need to create and keep contact between those who

¹⁰⁵⁸ Barfield 1993, 149-151; Kradin 2008, passim. 114; Kradin 2005, passim. 155-156.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Thompson (1999) 2000, 181; Stickler 2007, 80; Barfield 1989, 8.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Priscus, fr. 11.2, fr. 11.1, fr. 14 in from Blockley 1983, 250-251, 242-245, 272-273, 288-291, 254-255. Priscus passus "*Edeco, Orestes and others of the leading men amongst the Huns came and asked what we [Priscus and Maximus] hoped to achieve in making the embassy [of Theodosius II to Attila]*" and "*Edeco [...] came again as ambassador together with Orestes [...] This Edeco came to the court [of Theodosius II] and handed over the letters from Attila, in which he blamed the Romans in respect of the fugitives [...] when the letters had been read out to the Emperor, Edeco departed with Vigilas*" and "*[Edeco] should be sent off to report to Attila upon the embassy and that Vigilas should be sent with him to receive Attila's reply on the subject of the fugitives*", "*Onegesius addressed Maximus, thanking both him and the Emperor [Theodosius II] for the gifts and asking what he wished to say in sending for him*", "*[Onegesius] said that Attila was willing to send us [Priscus and Maximus] away. After a short time he deliberated with the leading men upon Attila's views and had the letters drawn up to be delivered to the Emperor*".

¹⁰⁶¹ Barfield 1989, 8; Barfield 1993, 149-151, passim. 157; Thompson (1999) 2000, 181.

¹⁰⁶² Priscus, fr. 10, fr. 11.2, fr. 14 in Blockley 1983, 240-243, 246-249, 254-257, 272-273, 292-293.

¹⁰⁶³ Priscus, fr. 13.1, fr. 14 in Blockley 1983, 282-287, 288-293.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 258-259, 266-267; Barfield 1993, 150.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Kradin 2009, 42; Barfield 1989, 8; Barfield 1993, 150.

acted not only at the uppermost levels of the confederation but also at the local level.¹⁰⁶⁶ On the other hand, Onegesius' good relationship with his clan members might also mean that a supercomplex chiefdom had not taken place among the Huns, and military leaders at the head of larger groups still owed their rank and prestige to those clans who supported them in their military leadership positions and those positions were not given them by the supreme military leader.

Finally, a similar dilemma concerns two of Priscus' accounts. First, Priscus mentions that the logades discussed the way in which to carry out one of Attila's orders concerning letters to be sent to Theodosius II: "*After a short time he [Onegesius] deliberated with the leading men upon Attila's views*".¹⁰⁶⁷ Here the logades' deliberations might refer to their administrative duties. On the other hand, if the logades' discussion refers to their slight disagreement with Attila's plan or orders, then it might signify that although the logades were military leaders under Attila's supreme military leadership, nevertheless Attila's position was not so all powerful that his closest companion could not affect his decision making.¹⁰⁶⁸ Indeed, Attila would have been dependent on others, especially on his supporters' approval to take actions.¹⁰⁶⁹ After all, leaders among Eurasian pastoral groups have in general listened to the opinions of others, especially elders, in their decision making in order to avoid overstepping their power.¹⁰⁷⁰ Accordingly, the logades' manner of discussing Attila's decision might refer to this practice of communal decision making, and reveals how a leader was expected to act in a nomadic society. This excerpt from Priscus suggests that Attila had not freed himself from all tribal obligations and that tribal societies impose limitations on any one individual's power.¹⁰⁷¹

The second account by Priscus that might either support or conflict with the idea that the logades' position and activities indicated the existence of a supercomplex chiefdom. The relevant passage from Priscus tells of Attila encouraging logades to give gifts to Roman ambassadors. On the one hand, one could argue that Attila had achieved such an influential position that he could demand what his closest companions needed to do on behalf of his interests. On the other hand, it is also likely that Attila wanted all the groups in the confederation to present gifts from their own groups to the Romans.¹⁰⁷²

¹⁰⁶⁶ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 266-267.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Priscus, fr. 14 in Blockley 1983, 288-289.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Heather in Thompson (1999) 2000, 230-231; cf. Stickler 2007, 80. Heather claims that Attila's authority was absolute and autocratic. By contrast, Stickler argues that the logades could offer advice to Attila and acted as his advisers in times of peace and war.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Priscus, fr. 14 in Blockley 1983, 288-289; cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, 179.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Krajin 2008, 149.

¹⁰⁷¹ Thompson (1999) 2000, 179.

¹⁰⁷² Priscus, fr. 14 in Blockley 1983, 292-293. Quoting Priscus "*Attila had ordered each of his leading men [λογάδας] to show friendship to Maximus [the Ambassador sent by Theodosius II] with gifts, and each of them, including Berichus, had sent him a horse*".

Taken together, many of the tasks that Priscus mentions that the logades took care of support the claim that supercomplex chiefdom could have evolved among the Huns in the 440s. That is to say that the logades were an elite who performed the functions of the highest ranks of military and civil administration while ordinary nomads made up the body of the army. In addition, they could have been related to the ruler by private contacts and from this position they would have formed an administrative staff machinery in a supercomplex chiefdom.¹⁰⁷³ However, what makes the considerations complicated is that there are also features that do not support the claim, as I shall next point out.

9.3. Elements of a Supercomplex Chiefdom that Are Missing

It is claimed that one of the crucial elements for a supercomplex chiefdom are special officials and their assistants who help the supreme leader carry out special tasks.¹⁰⁷⁴ There should in particular be officials who are juridical specialists and take care of legal questions.¹⁰⁷⁵ Because all the logades seem to have had similar position, I would argue that they did not act as officials responsible for certain tasks and there are no indications that any of them would have been responsible for laws.¹⁰⁷⁶ Priscus' only provides a brief reference to Attila's way of solving disputes: "*I [Priscus] saw a group of persons advancing and heard murmuring and shouts around the place, since Attila was coming out [...] when he had come out, he stood with Onegesius in front of the building, and many persons who had disputes with one another stepped forward and received his judgement. Then he re-entered the house and received the barbarian envoys who had come to him*".¹⁰⁷⁷ Priscus' account of Attila listening and then making his judgement also suggests that Huns did not have a written code of laws, which is a feature of a supercomplex chiefdom.¹⁰⁷⁸

Social stratification is also a feature of supercomplex chiefdom requiring research to study long genealogical lists and any tendencies to separate off an endogamic elite from commoners.¹⁰⁷⁹ However, once again Priscus' short reference to Attila's and his relatives "noble" descent (εὐγένειαν), to "Scythian royalty" (τῶν βασιλείων Σκυθῶν), "members of a royal house"

¹⁰⁷³ Kradin 2008, 114.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Kradin 2008, 114; Kradin 2009, 42; cf. Barfield 1993, 149-150.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Kradin 2008, 115.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Thompson (1999) 2000, 183; Heather in Thompson (1999) 2000, 231.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 276-277.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Kradin 2008, 115; Kradin 2008, 149; Kradin 2005, 159. Even though Eurasian nomad leaders gave sentences, this according to Kradin does not imply that the leaders had a power similar to that of an autocrat.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Kradin 2008, 148; Kradin 2008, 114.

(τοῦ βασιλείου γένους), “well-born attendants upon the queen” (γεγονότων τῆ βασιλίδι) and “nobles” (γεγονότος) hint that some kind of genealogical order and classification could have prevailed among the Huns.¹⁰⁸⁰ However, interpreting Priscus’ notions on the situation among the Huns and then translating his words, as Blockley does to is likely to introduce exaggerations and misjudgements. The truth is we lack strong and clear proof about a genealogical order and ranking among the Huns,¹⁰⁸¹ and we should avoid fabricating any.

For the same reason we cannot claim that social stratification followed from restricted access to key resources among groups who formed the confederation in the 440s. This would have signified the existence of a supercomplex chiefdom at some level.¹⁰⁸² The same holds for income acquisition by the administrative elite, and this would have been based on the exploitation of subjects and on remunerations received from the centre.¹⁰⁸³ With reference to these features, we do not have any Late Roman authors’ accounts that would suggest that these kinds of elements prevailed among the Huns.¹⁰⁸⁴

Likewise, the same can be said about the notion that an elite would have received presents from the common pastoralists,¹⁰⁸⁵ or that a system involving the collection of taxes or levying tribute or requisitioning a share of the surplus product and using forced labour existed – we simply lack contemporary authors’ descriptions of these kinds of proceedings.¹⁰⁸⁶ Generally speaking, none of the Hun leaders expected to receive wealth because of their position – acquiring riches always depended on one’s own activity.¹⁰⁸⁷ Concerning the existence of slaves among the Huns, Priscus’ accounts point out that the Huns wanted to have slaves but primarily they wished to make money out of them, e.g. by selling them or by using them as warriors to acquire booty.¹⁰⁸⁸

To summarize, the number of absent features does not support the claim that a supercomplex chiefdom would have existed among the Huns during the days of Attila. This argument is

¹⁰⁸⁰ Priscus, fr. 11.2, fr. 13, fr. 13.2, fr. 15.2 in Blockley 1983, 226-227, 278-279, 284-285, 286-287, 296-297; cf. Wirth 199, 137-140, 52, passim. 65-67; Barfield 1989, passim. 7-8. See Chapter 4.

¹⁰⁸¹ See Chapter 7.

¹⁰⁸² Kradin 2008, 148.

¹⁰⁸³ Kradin 2008, 114-115.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Thompson (1999) 2000, 182-183; Heather in Thompson (1999) 2000, 231. Thompson and Heather claim that the mentioned elements could be found among the Huns.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Kradin 2008, 114-115.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Priscus, fr.11.2, fr. 14 in Blockley 1983, 264-269, 288-289, 292-293; Kradin 2008, 114-115; Thompson (1999) 2000, 182. The only thing Priscus’ accounts tell is that the Huns used the services of slaves who came as a result of the spoils of war. However, because slaves among the Huns could earn their freedom, this suggests that Huns did not use forced labour to acquire wealth and that use of slaves was only temporary.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Priscus, fr. 11.2. in Blockley 1983, 268-269. Priscus mentions that the leaders of larger troops could choose the captives of war first because they were allowed to have those, who most likely were bought back by the Romans at a high price. This tells us that even those who held a high ranking position among the Huns needed to acquire their own wealth; it was not done for them.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Priscus, fr. 2, fr.9.3, fr. 11.2, fr. 14 in Blockley 1983, 226-227, 268-269, 292-293.

strengthened when we consider the position of the supreme leader at the head of a supercomplex chiefdom or imperial confederation. There is indeed little evidence to suggest that Attila attained such a mighty position.

The first and foremost feature of a supreme leader in this context is military leadership. The power of the supreme leader at the head of a confederation is fundamentally based on the leader's ability to organize military campaigns, to redistribute the wealth acquired from trade, tribute and raids on neighbouring countries,¹⁰⁸⁹ and to manage foreign and military affairs.¹⁰⁹⁰ Contemporary accounts of Attila stress that he took pains to gain booty and riches to his supporters,¹⁰⁹¹ and that he seems to have arranged raids and attacks on the Roman Empire for the following reasons.

First, he knew that he was expected to provide wealth because that was his main responsibility.¹⁰⁹² Second, the raids would make his supporters pleased with his lead because the raids provided booty, slaves to sell, and the possibility to gaining payments to maintain peace.¹⁰⁹³ Priscus reports that the peace treaties with the Huns always included an agreement on the ransom money that the Huns would get when selling captured Roman soldiers back to the Romans.¹⁰⁹⁴ In addition, Priscus mentions that Attila demanded that the Eastern Roman Empire made payments to maintain the peace not only for him, but also for the other groups: "*they [the Eastern Roman Empire] submitted to pay tribute not only to the Scythians but also to the other barbarian neighbours of the Roman Empire*".¹⁰⁹⁵ That is to say, Attila clearly wanted and could redistribute wealth from tribute and raids on the neighbouring countries to groups who counted on his lead. This is also the case with trade because the peace treaties with the Romans also included agreements on markets.¹⁰⁹⁶ Finally, we have Priscus' account about Attila explaining to Theodosius II that if the Eastern Roman Empire did not pay the promised and lacking payments for peace, Attila could not hold back his troops from large-scale raiding in the Eastern Roman Danubian border areas (and some were already doing this). This shows that Attila was responsible for controlling the acts of his Hun troops.¹⁰⁹⁷ Moreover, if Attila could not arrange profitable military activities, he would lose his position at the head of the groups in the confederation because the groups could arrange raiding expeditions on their own.¹⁰⁹⁸ Taken together, all the features mentioned above imply that Attila's position derived

¹⁰⁸⁹ Kradin 2009, 42; Kradin 2002, 383; Kradin 2005, 158.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Barfield 1993, 149, 151.

¹⁰⁹¹ See Chapters 7 and 8.

¹⁰⁹² Thompson (1999) 2000, 187-189; cf. Kradin 2005, 154, 158.

¹⁰⁹³ Priscus, fr. 2, fr. 9.1, fr. 9.3, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 226-227, 234-235, 236-241, 268-269; Kelly 2008, 113; Thompson (1999) 2000, 189; Heather 2005, *passim*. 327.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Priscus, fr. 2, fr. 9.3 in Blockley 1983, 226-227, 236-237.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Priscus, fr. 9.3 in Blockley 1983, 236-237.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Priscus, fr. 2, fr. 6.1, fr. 11.1 in Blockley 1983, 226-227, 230-231, 242-243.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Priscus, fr. 9.1 in Blockley 1983, 234-235.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Barfield 1989, *passim*. 7-8; Thompson (1999) 2000, 189; Kelly 2008, 113; cf. Kradin 2005, 158.

from the position of supreme military leadership. However, because tasks related to military leadership are common both to military leaders among Eurasian pastoralists in general and to the position of a supreme leader in a supercomplex chiefdom, we must still consider whether Attila's position signified the existence of a supercomplex chiefdom or whether the activities merely show that Attila was the leader of large-scale raiding bands.

An element that supports both of the evaluations is the notion that Attila clearly controlled foreign and military affairs, and these are common tasks for the supreme leader in a supercomplex chiefdom.¹⁰⁹⁹ First, Attila maintained contacts with the Romans not only because he needed to negotiate the on-going disputes and peace treaties, but also because of his personal contacts and interests. In addition, according to Priscus Attila and his brother Bleda had received as a gift an interpreter from Aetius, the *magister militum* of the Western Roman Empire.¹¹⁰⁰ Moreover, Priscus tells us that Aetius had sent his son as a Roman hostage among the Huns in order to guarantee friendly relations between the Huns and the Western Roman Empire.¹¹⁰¹ Attila also seems to have been interested in increasing contacts with the Romans via marriage because, according to Priscus, Attila required the Eastern Roman ambassadors to arrange for the marriage of a wealthy Eastern Roman lady to one of his Roman interpreters.¹¹⁰² Finally, it is also claimed that Attila would have been interested in marrying Honoria, the sister of Emperor Valentinian.¹¹⁰³

Even though these elements are the same as those we expect to find in a supercomplex chiefdom, we have a number of features common to a leadership position in a supercomplex chiefdom that are not mentioned by any Late Roman author as part of Attila's leadership position. Accordingly, this makes it doubtful whether Attila had a position that is similar to leadership position in a supercomplex chiefdom. First, we do not have any remarks from Late Roman authors that Attila would have taken on the responsibility of arranging redistribution of foodstuffs and resources.¹¹⁰⁴ Briefly, the only issue that could be interpreted as a sign of this is Priscus' comment that the Huns from time to time raided local Germanic groups.¹¹⁰⁵ However, because this does not differ in any way from the general habit of nomads periodically raiding sedentarists, Priscus' account does not imply that change would have occurred in the Huns' ways of gaining or redistributing food.¹¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁹⁹ Kradin 2009, 42; Kradin 2005, *passim*. 154-156, 158; cf. Barfield 1993, 149-151.

¹¹⁰⁰ Priscus, fr. 11.2, fr. 14 in Blockley 1983, 253-254, 262-263, 290-291.

¹¹⁰¹ Priscus, fr. 11.2 in Blockley 1983, 256-257.

¹¹⁰² Priscus, fr. 14 in Blockley 1983, 290-291; Wirth 1999, 139.

¹¹⁰³ Priscus, fr. 17, fr. 20.1, fr. 20.3 in Blockley 1983, 300-301, 304-305, 306-309.

¹¹⁰⁴ Kradin 2008, 148.

¹¹⁰⁵ Priscus, fr. 49 in Blockley 1983, 356-357.

¹¹⁰⁶ Thompson 1999 (2000), 182. I disagree with Thompson's claims that Priscus' remark shows that one of the tasks of the *logades* was to collect tribute and foodstuff from the Goths. In addition, Thompson sees that "Goths had the status of slaves and labour for the sustenance of the Huns". However, Thompson also admits that "we have no details as to the manners in which they [the Huns] extorted the grain from their subjects or as to the amount taken".

Another feature that I see as absent among the Huns, or groups who formed the confederation, is a common ideology or common cults and rituals that would have created unity among the confederation.¹¹⁰⁷ First of all, Priscus' stories about Attila's evening feasts, and the manner of raising a bowl as a greeting to every participant, together with the fixed seating, refers only to the general welcome and should not be interpreted as a ritual.¹¹⁰⁸ First, only a small number of people participated in the ritual, and second, Priscus mentions the common fashion of raising a cup as a feature of Scythian hospitality to guests.¹¹⁰⁹ Therefore, I consider that Priscus' accounts of the evening feasts only underline the view that every culture has its own way of welcoming guests. Another greeting custom is shown by Attila being welcomed by a row of girls walking under a large piece of cloth when he entered a village.¹¹¹⁰ The greeting could well have been a way of welcoming a famous and appreciated warrior. Another reason for the warm greeting might have been that Onegesius, Attila's closest friend, lived in the village, and hence because of the friendship Onegesius' wife, who also came to greet Attila, would have arranged the notable welcome. Even though Priscus' remarks might imply the existence of common cults or rituals, nevertheless we cannot say for certain that they would imply rituals common to a supercomplex chiefdom.

The same can be said on the basis of archaeological material. The only findings that possibly signify cult practices are large bronze cauldrons which were common among Eurasian pastoralists.¹¹¹¹ While cauldrons were in general claimed to be used for ritual purposes,¹¹¹² we can only guess the purpose of the rituals and who participated in them. On the other hand, some scholars argue that the cauldrons would have been cooking vessels.¹¹¹³ For these reasons, I consider it better not to say anything definite about the cauldrons, especially in relation to the existence of a supercomplex chiefdom among the groups of Huns in the 440s.

I conclude that if we consider the few features that could refer to common cults and rituals among the Huns in the 440s, they are simply too few to speak about a supercomplex chiefdom. The same can be said about the sacral character of power and the presence of a theocracy that are listed as characteristics of a supercomplex chiefdom.¹¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰⁷ Kradin 2008, 148.

¹¹⁰⁸ Priscus, fr. 13.1 in Blockley 1983, 282-287.

¹¹⁰⁹ Priscus, fr. 14 in Blockley 1983, 290-291; cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, passim. 182.

¹¹¹⁰ Priscus, fr.11.2 in Blockley 1983, 264-265, 260-263. Priscus informs us that in general female company was used as a sign of hospitality among the Huns because when Priscus and Maximus needed to stay overnight in a village that was led by Bleda's wife, they were offered women.

¹¹¹¹ Wirth 1999, 133-134; Stöckler 2007, 11, Bona 1991, 140-147; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 306-337; Werner 1956, 57-61; Koch 2007, 287-292; Schmauder 2009, 103-106.

¹¹¹² Wirth 1999, 133; Stöckler 2007, 11; Koch 2007, 288-289; cf. Werner 1956, 60; Bona 1991, 140-142; Schmauder 2009, 105-106.

¹¹¹³ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 326-327; Kelly 2008, 24; cf. Werner 1956, 60; Bona 1991, 140-142; Schmauder 2009, 105-106.

¹¹¹⁴ Kradin 2008, 148.

I have studied the characteristics of the sacral character of power and the presence of theocracy among the Huns in earlier chapters, hence I shall now only briefly deal with these supposed signs of Attila's power.¹¹¹⁵ I am doubtful whether Priscus' story about how the Huns found a sword of Ares and how this sword was taken as a sign of the god's approval of Attila's power would truly inform us about the beliefs of the Huns or signify the sacral character of Attila's power. I would also suggest that the story might have been invented by Priscus.¹¹¹⁶ Similarly I consider that stories that recount how Attila would have trusted the shamans' opinion that his youngest son would continue his father's victories have little to do with reality.¹¹¹⁷ Even if they are true, they provide slender proof of the sacral character of the leadership position among the Huns. The same holds for claims that one of the two Hun leaders at the head of the confederation, Rua or Octar and Bleda or Attila, would have had a temporal leadership position and the other a religious or sacral leadership position.¹¹¹⁸ Taken together, there are no signs of the presence of theocracy among the groups who formed the confederation under the leadership of Attila in the 440s.

Therefore, I would argue that because all the activities we know that have taken place in the confederation are related to military activity, this supports the conclusion that still during the days of Attila the confederation was based on a temporary union of groups that were interested in raiding so as to enrich themselves. Because too many, albeit not all, of the features that would signify the existence of a supercomplex chiefdom are lacking among the groups of Huns and local barbarians who formed the confederation, we should stop speaking about the phenomenon of a supercomplex chiefdom – not to mention of a state or an empire – in the case of the Huns. I consider the confederation of the groups of Huns and local barbarians to be that of a temporary unity of like-minded groups who could potentially have reached a form of society that could be called a supercomplex chiefdom, but as I shall point out in the final chapter, this never happened.

But before turning to the final years of the confederation and Attila's leadership, I shall briefly discuss how the confederation of the Huns also included some signs that would refer to imperial confederacy as Barfield defines the phenomenon.¹¹¹⁹ Potentially this kind of phenomenon could have evolved among the Huns, though in practice this never occurred.

An "imperial confederacy" adopts the principles of tribal organization and indigenous tribal leaders to rule at the local level while maintaining an imperial state structure with an exclusive monopoly that controlled foreign and military affairs. It had three basic levels of organization. At the top is the

¹¹¹⁵ See Chapter 7 and 8.

¹¹¹⁶ Priscus fr.12.1, fr. 12.2 in Blockley 1983, 280-281, 280-283. See Chapter 8.

¹¹¹⁷ Priscus fr.13.1, fr. 13.3 in Blockley 1983, 284-285, 288-289.

¹¹¹⁸ See Chapter 7.

¹¹¹⁹ Barfield 1993, 150-151.

imperial leadership of the empire that is drawn from the ruling lineage of the tribe that founded the so-called state. The second level is formed by the collateral relatives of the ruler, who are usually appointed as governors to supervise the indigenous tribal leadership in each region. These imperial appointees serve as the key links between the central administration and the indigenous tribal leaders. The local tribal leaders constitute the third organizational level.

There is no evidence that Attila would have come from a ruling lineage, even though we might suspect that this could have been the case because he and Bleda had been the next leaders after their uncles. Second, a feature that refers to imperial confederation is Attila's manner of using logades in order to have contacts with some of the local groups. Priscus recounts how Attila sent one of the logades, Onegesius, to accompany his son and visit the Akatziri, a group of nomads who had been subdued by Attila after a clash.¹¹²⁰ Priscus also writes that the most important members of Onegesius clan were also invited by Onegesius' wife to dine with Priscus and the Roman ambassador, Maximus.¹¹²¹ This would suggest that Onegesius acted as a link between Attila and the local groups, or the key links between the central administration and the indigenous tribal leaders.

Finally, the third level in the "imperial confederation" is formed by the local tribal leaders, who are members of the indigenous elites of each tribe and, although structurally inferior to imperial appointees, they retain considerable autonomy because of their close ties to their own people, who would even follow them in revolt if the imperial commanders overstepped their authority.

Priscus' stories about the primary and secondary leadership positions among the groups of Akatziri (who joined the confederation during the 440s) suggest that a local elite existed and were influential within their own groups.¹¹²² In addition, especially Priscus' story about Kouridachos, who was one of the leaders among the Akatziri and wanted to avoid being too close a companion to Attila, could indicate that Kouridachos primarily wanted to keep his autonomy and close ties to his own people rather than swear allegiance to any other, such as Attila.¹¹²³ Furthermore, Priscus' remark that Kouridachos independently raised and led troops from his own groups, who later on were asked to accompany Attila's troops, shows two aspects.

First, Kouridachus was a military leader among his own groups who had more influence over his own groups and troops than Attila. Second, Attila could not take it for granted that the local tribal leaders would follow his orders and he needed to gain their loyalty and approval to maintain his position. This leads us to the last crucial element in an imperial confederation, namely the responsibility of a supreme leader to provide economic benefits to local tribal leaders especially in

¹¹²⁰ Priscus, fr.11.2 in Blockley 1983, 258-259.

¹¹²¹ Priscus, fr.11.2 in Blockley 1983, 266-267.

¹¹²² Priscus, fr.11.2 in Blockley 1983, 258-259.

¹¹²³ Priscus, fr.11.2 in Blockley 1983, 258-259.

exchange for their military support.¹¹²⁴ Accordingly, as long as the imperial confederacies continued their financial success, the ruler could keep his position. Because this is related to relationships with the neighbouring states or empires that generated the revenues for nomads, the control of foreign affairs is central to ruler's power.¹¹²⁵

As I have pointed out, activities related to both of the above aspects were clearly were crucial to Attila's position in the 440s. Furthermore, as I study in the next chapter, the basis for the leadership position did not change during the turn of the 440s and 450s, the last years of Attila's leadership. While I also point out that Attila's unsuccessful raiding operations caused the groups in the confederation to disperse, we might consider that the history of the Huns has many similarities to an imperial confederation. Accordingly this once again challenges the claims of Hun leaders' position as an autocrat, monarch or king common to society that would have transformed away from nomadism and the nomadic way of life.

¹¹²⁴ Kradin 2009, 42; Barfield 1993, 149-151.

¹¹²⁵ Barfield 1993, 149-151.

10. THE FALL AND DISPERSAL OF THE HUNS

Priscus' accounts about his visit as a member of a delegation sent by Theodosius II to solve disputes between the Eastern Roman Empire and the Huns in 449 suggest that Attila was taking care of issues related to the war and the peace treaty that followed it. Judging from these accounts Attila's tasks seem to have derived from duties common to the position of supreme military leadership. The same can be said about the activities that Attila was occupied in until his death in 453: he once again led attacks at the head of troops formed by groups of Huns and local barbarians in the confederation. Attila was also associated with other plans that would have brought in a supply of riches. However, when his operations ceased to gain wealth the unity of the groups in the confederation faded and vanished in a few years. The only thing that lasted decades later was the stories about the fear of attacks from Huns.

10.1. Attila's Constant Need to Gain Riches

Attila's disputes with the Eastern Roman Empire continued after the visit of the embassy that Priscus participated in 449. However, there were no arguments about unpaid annual payments for peace because they seem at least to some extent to have been paid to Attila from 447 onwards.¹¹²⁶ Attila was nevertheless annoyed with the Eastern Roman Empire because of its inability to move inhabitants away from the areas next to the Danube that were promised to the Huns in the previous treaty.¹¹²⁷ Another reason for Attila's discontent was that Theodosius II had still not sent all the promised Hun fugitives to Attila.¹¹²⁸

The issues remained unsolved when Theodosius II died suddenly in July 450 and the new Emperor, Marcian, refused according to Priscus “*to pay the tribute (φόρος) agreed by Theodosius and that if he [Attila] kept the peace they would give him gifts, but if he threatened war they would bring against him men and weaponry equal to his own forces*”.¹¹²⁹

¹¹²⁶ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 182.

¹¹²⁷ Priscus, fr. 11.1 in Blockley 1983, 242-243.

¹¹²⁸ Priscus, fr. 11.1 in Blockley 1983, 242-247; cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, passim. 196-197.

¹¹²⁹ Priscus, fr. 20.1 in Blockley 1983, 304-307, cf. Kelly 2008, 186.

Here we might believe Priscus that Attila was displeased with Marcian's answer.¹¹³⁰ It would mean a lack of riches that members in the confederation had got used to in earlier years. Therefore, it is no surprise that Attila started preparations for a new war. Another reason for Attila's plans for a new raiding operation might have been that for five years the groups in the confederation had not fought any war and the members in the confederation would by this time have been eager to acquire booty and enrich themselves. After all, it is suggested that the reason why Germanic groups would have allied themselves with the Huns and Attila was the possibility of gaining booty.¹¹³¹

While Marcian's refusal to pay the annual sums for peace to the Huns may have prompted Attila to attack the Eastern Roman Empire, the Hun did not however direct his troops towards the East but to the West, Gaul. According to contemporary sources, the reason for this was Honoria's, the sister of the Emperor Valentinian, marriage arrangements with Attila during the last years of the 440s. According to Priscus the marriage proposal was warmly welcomed by the Hun because it gave Attila the possibility of claiming the right to rule in the Roman Empire.¹¹³²

[Attila] sent men of his court to Italy that Honoria might be handed over. He claimed that she had been betrothed to him and as a proof sent the ring which she had dispatched to him in order that it might have been shown. He said also that Valentinian should resign to him half of his empire, since Honoria had received the sovereignty of it from her father and had been deprived of it by her brother's greed. When the Romans maintained their earlier position and rejected all of his proposals, Attila pressed on more eagerly with his preparations for war and mustered all of his fighting force [...]

[...] the western Romans replied that Honoria could not come to him in marriage since she had been given to another and that she had no right to the scepter since the ruler of the Roman state belonged not to the females but to males [...]

I agree with the claims that Honoria never offered marriage to Attila and that the story is fully invented by the late Roman authors.¹¹³³ First, the story emphasized the image of Attila as a barbarian leader who tried by fair means or foul to seek to rule over the Roman Empire, and this

¹¹³⁰ Kelly 2008, *passim*. 210. It is likely that Marcian considered that it was useless to pay the annual payments to ensure the unity of the Hun and local barbarian groups for two reasons. First, if the payments were initially planned to support the creation of a sense of unity among the barbarians that would prevent unexpected attacks by different barbarian groups on Roman borders in the lower Danubian regions, this motive had lost its meaning – after all, it was the confederation of Attila that in the 440s became the most severe barbarian threat in the lower Danubian regions for the Romans. Therefore, I consider that Marcian did not want to support the existence of this threat with new payments but calculated that small bands of robbers would be a better option than a large united group. That is to say, Marcian seems to have adopted a new way of dealing with the Huns on the borders – he forced them, even at the risk of war, to adopt a friendly approach towards the eastern Romans. If this were to be followed by new attacks by the Huns and even by fragmented groups, the Eastern Roman Empire seems to have been ready to face it.

¹¹³¹ Lindner 1982, 702-704.

¹¹³² Priscus, fr. 17, fr. 20.1, fr. 20.3 in Blockley 1983, 300-309, 312-313; cf. Wirth 1999, 94; Kelly 2008, 177, 181.

¹¹³³ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 130.

emphasized the considerable threat that the Huns represented to the Romans of this time.¹¹³⁴ Second, the story would explain why Attila suddenly led his troops against the Western, not the Eastern Roman Empire. Furthermore, Honoria's alleged attraction to the nomad leader could be juicy gossip in the Roman court aimed at blackening Honoria's reputation and preventing her from becoming an Augusta.¹¹³⁵ It seems unconvincing that Honoria would have ever considered being one of the wives of Attila living in the steppe.¹¹³⁶

On the one hand, claims that Honoria would have proposed the marriage to Attila in order to gain the strength of the military troops of the Huns on her side and in this way rise to the throne in the Western Roman Empire are plausible.¹¹³⁷ There would have been nothing extraordinary in this because close alliances and ties with mighty barbarian leaders were part of everyday political life and was away of gaining power in the Late Roman world.¹¹³⁸ Galla Placidia, the daughter of the Emperor Theodosius I, for example, had married Ataulf, the supreme leader of the Visigoths in 414, and the marriage was related to power rivalries in the Western Roman Empire.¹¹³⁹

On the other hand, if we think of the story as true it emphasizes the fact that Attila was leading a large and strong army and the Huns had reached a powerful position in the Roman world with their confederation.¹¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, it is possible that Attila used Honoria's marriage proposal as an excuse to finally carry out the plan made in the early years of the 440s to attack the Western Roman Empire.¹¹⁴¹ On the other hand, it is also argued that the reason why Attila led his troops to Gaul was that the region had been promised as Honoria's dowry.¹¹⁴² Another probable explanation is that the leader of the Vandals, Gaeserich, would have sent gifts to Attila and encouraged him to attack Gaul because in this way the Western Roman army would have been occupied with fights in Gaul and not in Africa against the Vandals.¹¹⁴³ At the same time Attila could have considered that if he could win Gaul, then Italy would be easier to conquer and this would finally make him one of the mightiest leaders in the Roman world.¹¹⁴⁴ However, I disagree with the last claim because nomad leaders in general are typically uninterested in becoming rulers of sedentary societies because nomads' primary goal is to profit from their sedentary neighbours as much as possible and maintain

¹¹³⁴ Jordanes, *Getica*, XXXIX: 202-204, 206; Priscus, fr. 11.2, fr. 22.2 in Blockley 1983, 278-281, 312-313.

¹¹³⁵ Heather 2005, 335-336; cf. Stickler 2007, 90.

¹¹³⁶ Kelly 2008, 181, *passim*. 177-181; cf. Stickler 2007, 90-91.

¹¹³⁷ Priscus, fr. 17 in Blockley 1983, 300-303; cf. Wirth 1999, 93; Kelly 2008, 177-178.

¹¹³⁸ Wirth 1999, 95; Pohl 2005, 32; Kelly 2008, 171, 177.

¹¹³⁹ Heather 2005, 335, 238-240; Kelly 2008, 171.

¹¹⁴⁰ Wirth 1999, 94.

¹¹⁴¹ Wirth 1999, 66; Stickler 2007, 91-92.

¹¹⁴² Priscus, fr. 20.3 in Blockley 1983, 306-309; see Wirth 1999, 95; cf. Heather 2005, 335-336, Thompson (1999) 2000, 150.

¹¹⁴³ Kelly 2008, 172.

¹¹⁴⁴ Stickler 2007, 91-92; cf. Barfield 1993, *passim*. 132. I consider that the claims that Attila was interested in gaining the position of Roman Emperor are based on a misinterpretation of the Eurasian pastoralists' nomadic way of life and political and social structure.

their nomadic way of life.¹¹⁴⁵ Therefore, I suggest that Attila's decision to lead his troops to raid Gaul was not done in order to gain the title of Emperor but to acquire riches wherever he could.

First, an attack on the Western Empire would bring more rich booty than the areas near the Danube, which the troops in the confederation had already been raiding for many decades. Moreover, if Attila needed of gaining new herding or farming areas for groups in the confederation then the west would offer a new option for this as well. Furthermore, Attila's attack on the west might have been his attempt to profit from both halves of the Roman Empire. Marcian had promised to send him gifts stopped if he could keep the peace, and by attacking the west, nothing stopped Attila from benefiting from these gifts. However, it is claimed that Attila and Aetius were such good friends and allies that it stopped Attila attacking the Western Roman Empire earlier.¹¹⁴⁶ On the other hand, others have said that the level of friendship and alliance would not have been that close. In short, Aetius was no more a friend with Attila than any other barbarian leader, and Attila's main interest was to please his troops, not the Romans.¹¹⁴⁷

Another issue that might have delayed Attila's plans of attacking the Western Roman Empire until now is that he might have received a tribute, "φόρος", for keeping the peace from Ravenna.¹¹⁴⁸ However, this is uncertain because Priscus' accounts explicitly mention the Eastern Romans having sent "tribute" payments to Attila, and they only shortly refer to the fact that this could have also been the case also with the Western part of the Roman Empire.¹¹⁴⁹ However, there was never the question of tribute payments in the official meaning of the word "tribute", because that would have signified that the Roman Emperor was subject to Attila's power.¹¹⁵⁰ Accordingly, we can only guess what kinds of payments there were because Priscus clearly uses the word tribute in its official meaning. Moreover, it is also suggested that Attila was forced to attack the west in order to continue the process of building an empire on lines similar to the Romans.¹¹⁵¹ I am, however, not convinced that Attila's goal was to build an empire similar to the Roman Empire, what scholars call "hunnischen Alternative",¹¹⁵² because, as explained earlier, there are no signs that the Huns gave up their nomadic way of life. Accordingly, I see it likely that Attila's main interest in the raiding

¹¹⁴⁵ Barfield 1993, 162.

¹¹⁴⁶ Thompson (1999) 2000, 152; Kelly 2008, 173, 177.

¹¹⁴⁷ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 107.

¹¹⁴⁸ Priscus, fr. 22.2 in Blockley 1983, 312-313; Stickler 2007, 88.

¹¹⁴⁹ Priscus, fr. 11.2., fr.20.1 in Blockley 1983, 278-281, 304-307; cf. Kelly 2008, 173.

¹¹⁵⁰ Kelly 2008, 186-187.

¹¹⁵¹ Wirth 1999, 54-55, passim. 89-93.

¹¹⁵² Wirth 1999, 55; Stickler 2007, 78, 102-103; Schmauder 2009, 154-155; Wolfram 1990b, 200. The idea of Attila being eager to create a similar empire to the Roman Empire and to attract new groups to join and strengthen it, originates from Wolfram.

operation on Gaul was to bring wealth to the groups in the confederation.¹¹⁵³ After all, this was what the groups in the confederation had always expected Attila to do, and Attila had previously answered their demands.

If Attila was expected to marry Honoria,¹¹⁵⁴ the groups in the confederation must have started to prepare for the attack against the west at the latest in the second half of 450 because at the beginning of 451 Attila's troops were on the move towards Gaul along the Danube and towards the Main.¹¹⁵⁵ The Western Roman Empire seems to have known what to expect because Valentinian and Aetius were doing the same in the west as Attila in the east, namely strengthening their troops with new allies.¹¹⁵⁶ Especially Valentinian's alliance with Theoderic, the leader of the Visigoths, and Aetius' adoption of the son of Thorismund, the king of the Franks, signifies the goals of beefing up the military power of the Western Roman Empire in Gaul.¹¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, this is seen when Attila began to break relations with Aetius and continues his preparations for war.¹¹⁵⁸ Attila is claimed to have collected together many warriors as possible for his troops, while some of the cavalry remained in the regions near the lower Danubian basin.¹¹⁵⁹ This is indicated by the fact that during the summer of 451 some Hun cavalry men are known to have raided Thrace and when Marcian sent troops to attack them, they were resisted by Huns.¹¹⁶⁰

Because some Huns raided Thrace at the same time as Attila invaded Gaul, we might consider this to imply that not all groups of Huns belonged to the confederation even in 451. Or, if they did, they did not mind arranging attacks and raiding operations on their own. On the other hand, we might suspect that they could have been advised by Attila to arrange the attacks while he was in Gaul in order to prevent Marcian from sending troops to Valentinian.¹¹⁶¹ However, if this was not the case, and some groups in the confederation wanted to go on raids without Attila, then this implies considerable discontent from Attila's supporters about his leadership, and it also emphasizes Attila's apparent need to arrange new raiding operations, to bring booty to the groups who belonged to the confederation. In any case, it is clear that still in 451 groups of Huns could arrange their own raids and they trusted in the military leadership from among their own groups. In addition, interest

¹¹⁵³ Heather 2005, 336; Pohl 2003, 574. Heather considers that Attila would have invented several possible pretexts to attack the Western Roman Empire in 449 and 450. I consider that Attila faced the same situation as Pohl said to have happen among the Avars: the khagan who had been able to bring victories and wealth to his followers and supporters faced the need to satisfy the demand even further, and this lead to even more ambitious goals.

¹¹⁵⁴ Priscus, fr. 21.2 in Blockley 308-309.

¹¹⁵⁵ Wirth 1999, 96; Pohl 2005, 115; Thompson (1999) 2000, 148; Kelly 2008, 188; Heather 2005, 337.

¹¹⁵⁶ Jordanes, *Getica*, XXVI: 189-191; see Kelly 2008, 188; Thompson (1999) 2000, *passim*. 148-149.

¹¹⁵⁷ Wirth 1999, 95-96; Kelly 2008, 188-189; Thompson (1999) 2000, 152; Schmauder 2009, 143.

¹¹⁵⁸ Thompson (1999) 2000, 147.

¹¹⁵⁹ Wirth 1999, 97.

¹¹⁶⁰ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 130-131.

¹¹⁶¹ Thompson (1999) 2000, 157.

in new booty seems obvious. Therefore, we might consider that Attila's position at the head of the confederation was not especially powerful but rested on the support of others as well as Attila's ability to acquire wealth for his followers.

It is likely that Marcian would have sent his army against the Huns in order to help the troops in the Western Roman Empire in Gaul. In other words, the Eastern Roman army could at least prevent some Huns from moving off to join Attila's troops.¹¹⁶² On the one hand, it has been argued that Attila was not particularly interested in having all his cavalry men in Gaul because the size of the troops that he had been able to gather from the groups that belong to the confederation did not support the use of cavalry.¹¹⁶³ However, the result was that the Huns were prevented from using their most efficient tactic, namely sudden and rapid cavalry attacks.¹¹⁶⁴ For this reason, it is considered that Attila might even have wanted to increase the number of infantry in his troops, and hence by promising profits tried to recruit new groups for his large-scale attack and invasion of Gaul.¹¹⁶⁵ In brief, the newcomers would have consisted of groups of Franks and Alans, while the majority of other warriors came from groups of Easternmost Goths, Gepids, Rugi, Sciri and most likely from some Slavic groups who had already belonged to the confederation for years.¹¹⁶⁶ It is thought that Attila's success in recruiting new troops made the Western Roman Empire realize that the Romans also needed to gain new allies, and hence concluded an alliance with the Visigoths as late as spring 451.¹¹⁶⁷

Even though the new allies increased the number of warriors, it also caused some problems. In brief, Wirth assesses that Attila had faced problems in leading his troops towards Gaul because some of the groups would have obeyed more the wishes of their own leaders' than his, and this caused unwanted delay in advancing.¹¹⁶⁸ On the whole, the delay crucially prevented the sudden and unexpected attacks that had earlier brought the victories for the Huns, and hence it is assessed that the Huns needed to defeat their opponents as soon as possible in order to prevent them from strengthening.¹¹⁶⁹ While a mixed bunch of warriors was the problem of the Huns, the situation is claimed to have been the same among the Western Romans. Briefly, Aetius had gained allies from groups of Franks, Alans and Sarmatians but also some of the Burgundians and the Goths in Gaul, the Visigoths.¹¹⁷⁰

¹¹⁶² Wirth 1999, 97.

¹¹⁶³ Bona 1991, 94; Wirth 1999, 98.

¹¹⁶⁴ Ammianus, RG, 31.2.9; see Stearns, Adas, Schwartz, Gilbert 2001, 91; Barfield 1993, passim. 134-135.

¹¹⁶⁵ Wirth 1999, 98, 100; Kelly 2008, 193-194; Thompson (1999) 2000, 150, 153.

¹¹⁶⁶ Bona 1992, 93; Wirth 1999, 99-100, 102; Thompson (1999) 2000, 153, passim. 148-149; Heather 2005, 337.

¹¹⁶⁷ Wirth 1999, 97-98, 101; Kelly 2008, 188-189.

¹¹⁶⁸ Wirth 1999, 98.

¹¹⁶⁹ Wirth 1999, 98-100, 102.

¹¹⁷⁰ Schreiber 1976, 246; Kelly 2008, passim. 193-194; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 83.

During the spring of 451 Attila's troops started to attack cities and the first that fell into their hands was Trier. After this the troops headed towards the city of Metz and conquered it most likely at the beginning of April.¹¹⁷¹ After that the troops moved to Orleans where the troops of the Visigoths were seemingly able to prevent Attila from conquering the city in June.¹¹⁷² The city of Tongeren was also saved, though not Reims.¹¹⁷³ At the same time the Western Roman army arrived to accompany the Visigoths, and the troops of Attila retreated to the northern parts of the modern province of Champagne, to the fields of Catalaunia, near the city of Troyes. Finally, in the fields of Catalaunia the large troops of Attila and Aetius clashed at the end of June.¹¹⁷⁴

Knowledge of the battle in the Catalaunian fields is scarce because the sixth-century author, Jordanes, is the only author from whom we have a description of the event. Even though, he most likely copied the stories of the clash from fifth-century authors', it is also likely that he invented something of his own.¹¹⁷⁵ Nonetheless, in my opinion we might rely on the main features of Jordanes' description of the battle, especially its final result, which was a terrible loss for Attila.

According to Jordanes the turning point was the battle for the hill in the middle of the fields that the troops under the lead of the Western Roman Empire were able to conquer. The result was that Attila and his followers were forced to retreat.¹¹⁷⁶ However, the two forces never came to a final clash because, according to Jordanes, the king of the Visigoths, Thorismund, was killed during the battle and Aetius decided that it was vital that the Visigoths chose a new leader as soon as possible in order to prevent rivalry between groups and their leaders.¹¹⁷⁷ The disintegration of the Visigoths could have caused insecurity in the regions of the Western Roman Empire and that seemingly was a more severe threat to Aetius than the Huns.¹¹⁷⁸ Attila's defeat had ended the Huns' westward progress, and it was more important for the Romans to maintain stability in the lower Danubian frontier than to destroy Attila and his troops.¹¹⁷⁹ United groups of Huns and their allies under the leadership of Attila, whom the Romans already knew, would help to solve disputes and control the situation more than if there were many fragmented and independent groups with their own goals and leaders.

¹¹⁷¹ Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.*, II.6; cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, 153.

¹¹⁷² Thompson (1999) 2000, 153; Kelly 2008, 192-193; cf. Heather 2005, 337.

¹¹⁷³ Kelly 2008, 190-192; Heather 2005, 337.

¹¹⁷⁴ Jordanes, *Getica*, XXXVII - XLII; Priscus fr. 21.1 in Blockley 1983, 308-309; cf. Bona 1991, 94; Wirth 1999, 100-103; Thompson (1999) 2000, 154; Kelly 2008, 194.

¹¹⁷⁵ Jordanes, *Getica*, XXXIX passim. 204-207; cf. Priscus fr. 21.1 in Blockley 1983, 308-309; see Wirth 1999, 103.

¹¹⁷⁶ Jordanes, *Getica*, XXXVIII: 197, 201; XXXIX: 202-206; XL: 207-208; see Kelly 2008, 194-195; Thompson (1999) 2000, 154-155.

¹¹⁷⁷ Thompson (1999) 2000, 155.

¹¹⁷⁸ Kelly 2008, 196-197.

¹¹⁷⁹ Wirth 1999, 105; cf. Schmauder 2009, 79-82.

The clash in the Catalaunian field which ended in July 451, had been a severe setback for Attila.¹¹⁸⁰ Jordanes estimates that 165,000 warriors in total would have been killed in the battle,¹¹⁸¹ and while the amount is most likely highly exaggerated and also includes losses on the Roman side, still it is likely that Attila lost thousands of warriors. It is certain that this, like the lack of new peace treaty to enrich his followers, did not strengthen his position at the head of the confederation. In addition, the fact that some of the Hun groups had been raiding in Thrace at the same time as Attila had been in Gaul could suggest that there were other military leaders whose lead the troops were ready to follow and act in smaller units than as a part of a confederation. I suspect, therefore, that Attila would have shared as much booty as possible with his followers in order to raise their expectations because of the obvious failure of the raiding operation.¹¹⁸²

Taken together, after the serious defeat in Gaul, Attila faced an even more severe need for new lucrative and profitable raiding operations than before.¹¹⁸³ This is suggested by his next acts.

10.2. Desperate Acts to Please Followers: The Last Years of Attila

Immediately after returning from Gaul, Attila started to plan a new raiding operation, and this time the target was the heart of the Western Roman Empire, the city of Rome in summer 452. The fact that Attila was eager to make the attack during the summer, which was considered the worst time for fighting, emphasizes that he was in the need of victories.¹¹⁸⁴ Victories would have been seen as the only way for Attila to strengthen the support of his followers for his leadership position.¹¹⁸⁵

The size of Attila's troops is not known, but in May and June Attila had led his warriors over the Julian Alps and they began raiding cities near the River Po. The Huns had been successful in conquering forts in the Alpine passes, and hence it is likely that Aetius had not sent any additional troops to prevent the advancement of the Huns.¹¹⁸⁶ Moreover, the Emperor Valentinian and Aetius would have preferred to fight against Attila in the vicinity of the forts south of the Alps and in the

¹¹⁸⁰ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 130, cf. Wirth 1999, 105.

¹¹⁸¹ Jordanes, *Getica*, XXXV: 182, XXXVII 196, XXXIX: 210-212; XL: 210-213; XLI: 217; see Kelly 2008, 198; Bona 1992, 97; Heather 2005, 337.

¹¹⁸² Wirth 1999, 106; Thompson (1999) 2000, 198.

¹¹⁸³ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, *passim*. 132-139; Thompson (1999) 2000, 197-198.

¹¹⁸⁴ Wirth 1999, 105-106; cf. Barfield 1993, 144

¹¹⁸⁵ Wirth 1999, 105-106; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 132; Kelly 2008, 202; Thompson (1999) 2000, 157-158; Heather 2005, 339. Kelly believes that Attila might have marched to Rome in order to claim Honoria to himself. Moreover, these marriage plan would seem to be an invention of Jordanes, and to me Attila is most likely to have headed for Rome to gain more riches. On the whole, Kelly rightfully speculates that Attila could have considered facing weaker Roman troops in Italy than elsewhere, especially because the Visigoth troops were unlikely to have joined in the defence of Italian region.

¹¹⁸⁶ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 13-137; Burgess 1988, 361; cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, 158-159.

Italian mainland.¹¹⁸⁷ However, after the Alps Attila continued pillaging the north-eastern parts of Italy because even after the three-month siege and victory over Aquilea the Huns faced no severe opposition from the Romans.¹¹⁸⁸ Until the early autumn of 452 the Huns had ravaged and pillaged the cities of Concordia, Altinum, Vicentia, Brescia, Bergamon, Milan and Ticinum.¹¹⁸⁹

By and large, because Attila allowed his troops to gather booty and raid without hurrying further to south or turning back to their own dwelling areas, Attila's main goal seems to have been to enrich his troops.¹¹⁹⁰ On the one hand, since 451 constant wars in Gaul had decreased the interest of Attila's troops in conquering new areas and they were mainly satisfied with booty.¹¹⁹¹ On the other hand, it is likely that Attila's troops had been weakened considerably as a result of food shortages caused by the exceptionally dry summer and poor harvest. Furthermore, this led to diseases, plague and famine spreading among the troops.¹¹⁹² It is also suggested that Attila did not hurry the military operations because he would have heard that Marcian would have sent troops to help Valentinian's army, and hence Attila could expect serious conflict.¹¹⁹³ Burgess, however, notices that there are no sources hinting that any military activity in Italy or elsewhere would have been involved in driving the Huns out of Italy or would have affected their decision to go or proceed.¹¹⁹⁴ By contrast, it is also claimed that Marcian would have sent Eastern Roman troops to attack some Huns in the Hungarian plain in 452, and this would have eventually caused Attila to end the raids in Italy.¹¹⁹⁵ Finally, the Huns had lost their most efficient military tactic on account of their acquisition of heavy booty, namely unexpected and rapid attack.¹¹⁹⁶ Whatever reasons there were, in the early autumn Attila's troops came to wage siege on the city of Rome.¹¹⁹⁷

The siege did not lead to a battle for the western the western Romans decided to negotiate with Attila. The result was that Attila decided to return with his troops to their dwelling areas in the vicinity of Danube and the Black Sea, which contemporary authors depicted as a divine miracle.¹¹⁹⁸ However, it is possible that the Western Roman Empire could have promised payments to Attila, he agreed to leave Italy and return too his own areas.¹¹⁹⁹ However, no contemporary author mentions a

¹¹⁸⁷ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 136; Kelly 2008, 206.

¹¹⁸⁸ Jordanes, *Getica*, XLII: 219-224; see Kelly 2008, 205; Thompson (1999) 2000, 159-160.

¹¹⁸⁹ Jordanes, *Getica*, XLII: 219-224; see Bona 1991, 98; Wirth 1999, 107-108; Kelly 2008, 205; Heather 2005, 340.

¹¹⁹⁰ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 132.

¹¹⁹¹ Wirth 1999, 107-108.

¹¹⁹² Kelly 2008, 207; Thompson (1999) 2000, 161-163, 198; Heather 2005, 341.

¹¹⁹³ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 116, 130-140, 143; Bona 1991, 99; Wirth 1999, 108.

¹¹⁹⁴ Burges 1988, 361.

¹¹⁹⁵ Heather 2005, 341; Kelly 2008, 207.

¹¹⁹⁶ Wirth 1999, 108.

¹¹⁹⁷ Thompson (1999) 2000, 160; Kelly 2008, 206-207.

¹¹⁹⁸ Jordanes, *Getice*, XLII: 223; cf. Wirth 1999, 110-111; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 140, *passim*. 143; Bona 1991, *passim*. 98; Kelly 2008, 205-207.

¹¹⁹⁹ Wirth 1999, 111.

treaty between the parties, though an obscure passage by the sixth-century author Procopius' might imply this: "*After the death of Aetius [in 454], Attila, since no one stood in his way, ravaged the whole of Europe without difficulty, compelled both parts of the Empire to obey his commands and forced them to pay tribute. For payments were sent to him every year by the Emperor*".¹²⁰⁰ It is plausible that Attila would have wanted to avoid losses and battles on many fronts both in Rome and near the Italian Alps when returning his own dwelling areas, and hence Attila gave up his conquest of Rome.¹²⁰¹

The expedition to Italy may not have been a great success for Attila, and has even been considered to be "worse than failure".¹²⁰² First, the troops did not achieve a remarkable victory and Attila most likely did not achieve a peace treaty that guaranteed flow of payments.¹²⁰³ In addition, once again a large number of warriors were killed, which radically reduced the military might of the troops.¹²⁰⁴ However, the troops could at least have been enriched with booty as the slow movements of the troops implies. With reference to this, it seems that the troops would have been content at least on some level with Attila's lead because there are no contemporary authors' accounts of the troops splitting up or disagreements concerning their next targets.

Nonetheless, we might consider that Attila's position was not strong after returning from Italy because Priscus mentions him immediately sending new embassies to the court of Marcian and demanded that the Eastern Roman Empire pay annual payments during the reign of Theodosius II. In addition, Attila seems to have planned a new war against the Eastern Roman Empire if the annual payments were not paid to him soon.¹²⁰⁵ Because Marcian refused to send the payments,¹²⁰⁶ this is taken as a sign that the support of the groups in the confederation for Attila's position was clearly weakening. Consequently, Attila would have tried to strengthen his position with a new marriage.¹²⁰⁷

Jordanes is the first contemporary author who tells about Attila's wedding plans with a new potential bride, the alleged "German princess" called Ildico. While we do know that Attila was already married at least to Hreka, who had borne him sons who Attila favoured,¹²⁰⁸ we might doubt

¹²⁰⁰ Procopius, *De bel.*, III, 4:29-35; cf. Priscus, fr. 22 in Blockley 1983, 312-313, 391. The fact that Aetius died after Attila led his troops to Gallia in 451 and to Italy in 452, indicates that Procopius' information on the course of events is not exact. Hence we might also doubt his account that both of the Roman Emperors paid tribute to Attila.

¹²⁰¹ Jordanes, *Getica*, XLII: 219-224; Priscus fr. 22.1 in Blockley 1983, 310-311; cf. Bona 1991, 99.

¹²⁰² Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 141; Kelly 2008, 207; Heather 2005, 340.

¹²⁰³ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 141.

¹²⁰⁴ Bona 1991, 99; Thompson (1999) 2000, 161; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 141.

¹²⁰⁵ Priscus, fr. 23.1, fr. 23.2, fr. 23.3, fr. 24.2 in Blockley 1983, 314-315, 318-319.

¹²⁰⁶ Priscus, fr. 24.2 in Blockley 1983, 318-319.

¹²⁰⁷ Wirth 1999, 111; Kelly 2008, 208; Thompson (1999) 2000, 163-164.

¹²⁰⁸ Priscus, fr. 11.2, fr. 13.1, fr. 13.3 in Blockley 1983, 260-261, 274-275, 282-283, 288-289.

whether other marriage plans ever took place.¹²⁰⁹ That is to say, Attila already had sons who could continue the name and fame of his kin, and hence in this sense there was no need for new perils; however, Eurasian pastoralists in general appreciate large families and polygamy is common among them.¹²¹⁰ In any case, if Attila really married again, this implies that Attila had tried either to please already existing but weakened relationship with some of the Germanic groups who belonged to the confederation,¹²¹¹ or Attila would with the marriage have sealed an alliance with a totally new group that could strengthen his position. This suggests that the support of the groups which formed the confederation was seemingly in decline.

However, the marriage with Ildico is claimed to have lasted no longer than the first wedding night – Jordanes claims that Attila died during the night because he had drunk too much, and choked on his his own blood.¹²¹² We can only wonder, whether Attila died to drunkenness, or as the sixth-century Latin chronicler Marcellinus Comes suggests, was stabbed by his new wife.¹²¹³ The image of a drunken barbarian is a common topos in Roman literature, and it was used to deplore the shameful and bad behaviour of barbarians; in addition, drunkenness also underlined the fact that one did not know one's limits.¹²¹⁴ Therefore, Jordanes' account emphasizes the image of Attila as a constantly misbehaving and unrestrained barbarian leader whose acts never led to any good. Moreover, Marcellinus Comes' story about a stabbing could have been written in order to emphasize the image of Germanic groups as victims of the Huns. Though at least some of the Germanic groups had been interested in joining the Huns' raids on the Roman Empire, Comes' implication is that they were not in accord with the Huns. In any case, the story strengthens the image of Germanic groups as proper Romans, who had always shared an interest in maintaining the Roman Empire in order to legitimate the Germanic rule in the Roman Empire. But whether these stories are true or false, nothing changes the fact that Attila died at the beginning of 453, and the confederation went on to live through a new period.

¹²⁰⁹ Kelly 2008, *passim*. 208-209; Thompson (1999) 2000, 164.

¹²¹⁰ Barfield 1993, 155, 161-162; Stearns, Adas, Schwartz, Gilbert 2001, 91-93; Thompson (1999) 2000, *passim*. 187.

¹²¹¹ Jordanes, *Getica*, II: 254-255, 256-258; Priscus, fr. 24.1 in Blockley 1983, 316-317; cf. Wirth 1999, 111.

¹²¹² Jordanes, *Getica*, XLIX: 254; Priscus, fr. 24.1 in Blockley 1983, 316-319

¹²¹³ Marcellinus Comes, *Ann.*, VII *Aetii et Studii*, 454; Thompson (1999) 2000, 164-166. Thompson suspects the reliability of Jordanes' account of the death of Attila.

¹²¹⁴ Ammianus. *RG*, 15.12.4, 30.8.2, 30.9.2; Tacitus, *Ger.*, 22.-23., 24.2.; cf. Isaac 2004, 415-416; Humphries 2004, 78.

10.3. Fragmentation of Groups of Huns Again

After Attila's death the groups in the confederation could not expect to benefit from the unity as easily as before because the Eastern Roman Empire had clearly refused to send payments to the Huns in the future, and there had already been two unsuccessful raiding operations in the West: in Gallia and Italy. Therefore, it would seem that in order to gain riches only new and most likely challenging wars and confrontations with the Romans lay ahead. Another option was to withdraw from the confederation and to continue the former more settled life. That is to say, the local sedentary groups could concentrate once again more profoundly on farming and nomadic groups for herding. There would in addition still be the possibility for trading and small scale raiding. Though this option would not enrich the groups to the same extent as former joint activities in the confederation, it at least freed the groups from a constant and heavy military burden.

This may have been in the minds of the groups in the confederation when, according to Jordanes, Attila's sons tried to gain the leadership position at the head of the confederation and this led to Ardarich, the leader of the Gepids, disagreeing with their proceedings. This reveals some of the crucial aspects of the nature of the confederation in 453.

First, Attila's sons were not expected to continue at the head of the confederation if they were not accepted by others. In addition, other groups could revolt if decisions made by the confederation did not please them.¹²¹⁵ Third, the groups might well have kept their own leaders even though they belonged to the confederation with the Huns. In other words, the groups in the confederation seemingly did not feel that they belonged or formed a state or a large and strong, coherent unity that would continue whatever changes would happen in the leading structures. Therefore, this suggests that the state or strong class differences where the upper class is allowed to decide on proceedings had not evolved among the Huns during the days of Attila in the 440s.¹²¹⁶ Furthermore, we do not hear anything about the logades at the time when Attila's sons wanted to continue to lead the confederation. I would argue that if the logades had formed a leading or administrative elite, they would have supported Attila's sons to maintain unity, or at least carried out the tasks of rulers despite the difficult times.¹²¹⁷ However, this is not known to have happened, and hence I suspect that the logades were loyal only to Attila.¹²¹⁸ It is also likely that the logades achieve their position as Attila's closest companions because their alliance with Attila was supported by their own groups who had chosen them to take care of duties related to military leadership.

¹²¹⁵ Kelly 2008, 210.

¹²¹⁶ Thompson (1999) 2000, 177, 183, 195, 230-231; cf. Altheim 1951, 105-106 Harmatta 1952, 304, 294-297.

¹²¹⁷ Barfield 1993, 163. This is what happened among the Mongols after the death of Genghis Khan.

¹²¹⁸ Schmauder 2009, *passim*. 155.

Although the confederation collapsed once Attila's sons took over, what comes to the question of evolving supercomplex chiefdom, I see that we might speak about it in the days of Attila. After all, according to Kradin "In simple chiefdoms power could be inheritable and its stability depended on the successfulness of the political and military practices and charisma of the leader".¹²¹⁹ Attila's sons were seemingly unable to convince the groups in the confederation that they could still win profits for their followers despite their father's lack of success in his final years. For this reason they could not prevent the alleged formation of a supercomplex chiefdom from collapsing because in a supercomplex chiefdom ruler's authority was maintained by means of a gift economy, involving repeated distributions of material significant resources.¹²²⁰ That is to say, the confederation of groups of Huns and local barbarians could have taken place within the framework of a supercomplex chiefdom – that is to say, there would not have been a need to adopt the power structures or form of society common to sedentarists.

However, I am not fully convinced that a supercomplex chiefdom did evolve among the Huns because nothing rules out the possibility that the unity of groups of Huns and local barbarians could have based on the unity of groups led by their own leaders according to the temporary need and agreed alliance of the so-called confederation.¹²²¹ On the whole, the Huns might have only formed a dispositional chiefdom because the large number of groups who formed the confederation and its fluid nature are features common to the phenomenon. In addition, the interest of groups in uniting in order to gain more booty from raids is also a common feature of a dispositional chiefdom. It is noticed that the composition of a dispositional chiefdom is fairly fluid and the tribe is a chancing quantity which is very little organized and disparate. Furthermore, some sort of polity might temporarily emerge in times of wars when there are preparations to invade another group or to repulse the invasion of a rival tribe. Correspondingly, the leaders are ephemeral leaders of indefinite groups with indefinite, always disputable power.¹²²²

The aspect what I want to emphasize when I considering what kind of form of unity the Huns could have formed during the 440s before the unity collapsed in the hands of Attila's sons is, as Kradin and Khazanov have noted, that societal complexity is not always related to the formation of statehood – in specific situations nomad polities can temporarily create very centralized systems of government in order to accomplish specific aims, and sometimes, when those aims are fulfilled, the

¹²¹⁹ Kradin 2008, 149; Kradin 2009, *passim*. 42.

¹²²⁰ Kradin 2008, 150; Kradin 2009, *passim*. 42.

¹²²¹ Kradin 2008, 149-150; Kradin 2009, 42-43; Barfield 1989, 8; Barfield 1993, *passim*. 149, 152-155, 167. According to Barfield in an imperial confederation, as in a supercomplex chiefdom, the structures of power rarely last long after the death of its founder.

¹²²² Khazanov 1984, 234.

systems cease to exist among the nomads.¹²²³ Accordingly, in the case of the Huns, I see no reason to speak about the rise of a state and the adoption of a way of life or political structures common to sedentarists but to nomads because the nomadic way of life gives wide variety for this.

The temporary nature of the larger unity of nomads and the fact that the units are formed in order to fulfil certain aims, especially raids, are characteristics that occur in 452, after the death of Attila. According to Jordanes, Attila's sons and the groups in the confederation disagreed about the future leadership and the existence of the confederation. Jordanes writes: "*the sons of Attila ... sought to divide the tribes equally amongst themselves*" but this would appear to be against the general expectations because when "*Ardaric, the king of the Gepids, learned this, he became enraged that so many peoples were being treated like the lowest of slaves and began to revolt against the sons of Attila*". This led to a revolt where Ardaric is claimed to have "*freed not only his own people but also the others who were equally oppressed*".¹²²⁴

The course of events show that it was not obvious for groups and leaders in the confederation that after the death of Attila everything would continue as before. It would seem that these groups had only made an alliance with Attila and were loyal to him and no one else. For this reason Attila's sons could not expect to automatically rely on the groups that had supported their father.¹²²⁵

The evidence suggests that Attila's position was based on a supreme military leadership that was common to nomads. In the case of military leadership, the promise of loyalty is connected to a person, and not to a certain abstract and continuous leadership position in society, as in the case of kingship. The fact that the groups' acceptance of Attila's leadership affected only him¹²²⁶ indicates that the leadership position at the head of the confederation had not become hereditary or autocratic. If it had, there would have been no disagreement about new leaders and their role.¹²²⁷ That is to say, Attila's sons would have been expected to take the leadership position, and they could have acted as they pleased – however, this clearly was not possible. The basis of the confederation was still founded on acceptance provided by groups for temporary joint activities. I am therefore doubtful about Jordanes account that Attila's sons aimed to divide the groups in the confederation under their lead. Heather also suspects the reliability of Jordanes' account, and considers that the fight between Attila's sons and the Gepids would have resulted from the Gepids' refusal to pay any more tributes

¹²²³ Kradin 2009, 43; Khazanov 1984, 165, 66.

¹²²⁴ Jordanes, *Getica*, L: 260; Priscus, fr. 25 in Blockley 320-321.

¹²²⁵ Wirth 1999, 113; Schmauder 2008, 159

¹²²⁶ Schmauder 2009, *passim*. 155.

¹²²⁷ Wirth 1999, 112, cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, 167. I share Wirth's opinion that because it was not clear how the lead in the confederation would continue after Attila's death and this suggests that the leadership position had not become hereditary. In addition, the structures of power that would have supported hereditary leadership position had not evolved among the groups who formed the confederation. Thompson notes that this would have been the only occasion in Hun history, so far as we know, when a father's kingdom was shared out by his sons. Hereditary leadership never gained approval among the Huns, and leadership positions were based on other aspects than birth.

to the Huns, or answer the nomads' demands for military service.¹²²⁸ Therefore, I consider that after Attila's death the groups could themselves decide to break away from the confederation, and not just because of the acts of Attila's sons.¹²²⁹

I doubt Jordanes' account for three reasons. First, Jordanes' goal is constantly to underline the Goths' lack of interest in joint activities with the Huns, whereas archaeological remains, for example, imply that this was not the case.¹²³⁰ Second, because some groups of Huns and local groups of Goths continued to live together even after the confederation broke up, this would not have happened if the confederation had been unpopular among its members. Lastly, Jordanes' account how the Goths bravely fought against the Huns to liberate themselves from the power of the despised nomads could have been a familiar topos. At least a fight would explain why the joint activities suddenly ended, and at the same time this would hide the less heroic reasons for the act, namely that the Goths broke away from the confederation because it seemed unlikely to provide booty and riches.

However, if we take Jordanes' account as such the situation points out that members of a family, where the last supreme leader had come from, would have wanted to keep the position in the family. This might imply that a conical clan structure would have strengthened among the groups of Huns – Attila's kinship group could have considered that their position had reached such a mighty position that they could decide on forthcoming actions on other behalf.¹²³¹ If this was the case, Attila's sons plainly misjudged the situation, though such a drastic miscalculation is unlikely to have occurred.

I also doubt whether the confederation would have ended with a huge clash as Jordanes says took place near the river Nedao in Pannonia.¹²³² According to Jordanes, after Ardaric's "liberation" of the Huns "*the various peoples whom Attila held sway clashed ... the Goth fought with his pike, the Gepid raged with his sword, the Rugian broke the weapons in his own wound, the Suavian was on foot, the Hun fought with his arrows, the Alan formed his heavy-armed battle line, the Herul his light-armed one*" and after heavy fighting "*victory unexpectedly went to the Gepids. For the sword and the alliance of Ardaric destroyed almost thirty thousand of the Huns and those who were assisting them*". Jordanes underlines the loss of the Huns in the battle by telling that during the

¹²²⁸ Heather 2005, 352-354.

¹²²⁹ If we accept Jordanes' account that Attila's sons would have wanted to rule over the groups who had formed the confederation with them, still the groups' disapproval towards this proceeding shows that Attila's sons were not expected or allowed to do as they planned or wished. It seems likely that autocratic power had not established itself among the groups in the confederation.

¹²³⁰ Heather 2005, 352-353, 330-333. I have pointed out in Chapter 3 that this derived from Jordanes' goal to create an image of the Goths as defenders of the Roman Empire allowing them the right to be the leaders of the Roman Empire during the 6th century.

¹²³¹ Barfield 1993, 148-149.

¹²³² Jordanes, *Getica*, I: 260-263; Priscus fr. [25] in Blockley 1983, 320-321; cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, 174.

clash Ellac, who is claimed to have been Attila's eldest and most beloved son, was killed and this caused the rest of Ellac's brothers to flee "*near to the coast of the Black Sea, where, as we have said, the Goths earlier had their homes*".¹²³³

Even though I doubt whether the battle between the groups who had earlier formed the confederation would have actually taken place, or if it took on the magnitude that Jordanes describes, still the fact is that groups who had formed the confederation scattered at beginning of 454.¹²³⁴ At the same time the greatness of the confederation had dissolved and accounts about groups of Huns begin to vanish from the narrations of Late Roman authors. However, some of the groups of Huns still had contacts to the Roman Empire but they primarily took place in tandem with other groups who led the activities, and hence knowledge concerning the Huns becomes very scarce in the second half of the fifth century. Another reason for this is that Late Roman authors started to use the name "Huns" for some other nomadic groups, like the Bulgars, who arrived in the late fifth century and later to the areas around the Black Sea and the the borders of the Roman Empire.¹²³⁵ Therefore, even the name "Huns" at the end of fifth century does not clearly tell us about the groups of Huns who were in close contact with the Roman Empire a hundred or even fifty years earlier.¹²³⁶ Although the information that we have about Huns and their activities after 545 is scarce, we can distinguish four larger groupings of Huns and local barbarians, some clearly assimilated together near the Roman borders, who gained their living in different ways.

Because scattered groups of Huns continued to act and live with other barbarian groups, this suggests that groups of Huns and local barbarians shared an interest in acting together some decades earlier. This is also referred to in Jordanes' remark about the battle of Nedao, that some groups in the confederation would have favoured fighting on the side of the Huns against the others: "*Huns as well as those of the other nations who brought them aid*".¹²³⁷ If this is the case, the groups of Huns and local barbarians would seemingly have had an alliance that had satisfied at least some of the groups. This suggestion is also implied by Priscus' accounts of the fate of Attila's sons Dengizich and Ernach. Both of the brothers were supported in their leadership of some of the groups, and Priscus also mentions Dengizich and Ernach performing the tasks that are common to military leaders among nomads at the head of confederation, namely providing riches and opportunities for trade and raids. However, before I study more profoundly what Dengizich's and Ernach's activities tell about the situation among the Huns after 454, and also what kind of inheritance the

¹²³³ Jordanes, *Getica*, I: 260-263; Priscus fr. [25] in Blockley 1983, 320-321.

¹²³⁴ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 147, 149-150, 152, 162; Wirth 1999, 112-114; Sticker 2007, 102-103; cf. Schreiber 1976, 321-324; Kelly 2008, 210; Thompson (1999) 2000, 168.

¹²³⁵ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 165, 168; Wirth 1999, 13, 113-116; Miteva 1988, 12-16; Pohl 2003, 586-587.

¹²³⁶ Thompson (1999) 2000, *passim*. 170, 202.

¹²³⁷ Jordanes, *Getica*, I, 262-263 in Mierow 1960, 126.

confederation seems to have left for later groups, I shall briefly outline how the Huns fragmented and merged into other barbarian groups from the middle of the fifth century onwards on the borders of the Roman Empire.

Groups of Huns and local barbarians lived in the regions near the Black Sea in modern-day Ukraine where they seem to have continued to live as before. However, because the regions east to the Danube were claimed by the Gepids after the fall of the confederation, the Gepids were likely to have formed the leadership and majority in these groups. Even though contemporary sources are silent about the activities of the Huns in this region, it would seem that the groups largely concentrated on herding and combining their activities with others groups living in the same regions.¹²³⁸

The second grouping of Huns is formed by the groups that stayed in their old living areas near the River Danube and the Theiss.¹²³⁹ In addition, they gained contacts with the Roman Empire and other groups in a similar way as before, though the leading positions were now in the hands of others. It is thought that most of the Huns joined some groups of Alans and easternmost Goths in Moesia Superior, Dacia Ripensis and Dacia Mediterranea, where they temporarily acted as mercenaries of the Eastern Roman Empire to secure Thrace and the lower Danubian basin.¹²⁴⁰ Furthermore, the groups had also established some kind of mutual relationship with the Western Roman Empire because Majorian hired them to fight in the Western Roman army against the Vandals in 457, and also in 461 in Africa.¹²⁴¹ Accordingly, the Huns still seem to have acted as before, and as was common in the nomadic way of life – favoured temporary alliances and activities, e.g. raids and mercenary activities that could enrich them.¹²⁴²

The third grouping of Huns had established themselves with the Goths in Pannonia, where they lived side by side.¹²⁴³ However, their peace was disturbed by the fourth known unit of Huns who lived in the vicinity of the Danube and the Theiss.¹²⁴⁴ From these regions they temporarily seem to have attacked neighbouring areas combining in a similar way to their attacks in Pannonia in 455.¹²⁴⁵ It is suggested that the reason for the attacks would have been the groups' need for new pastures.¹²⁴⁶

¹²³⁸ Jordanes, *Getica*, I: 30-35; see Wirth 1999, 113; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 150, 162, cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, 168.

¹²³⁹ Thompson (1999) 2000, *passim*. 173, 168-170.

¹²⁴⁰ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 151-152; Wirth 1999, 114; cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, 170.

¹²⁴¹ Wirth 1999, 114; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 161; Thompson (1999) 2000, 174-175.

¹²⁴² Thompson (1999) 2000, 170.

¹²⁴³ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 160; cf. Thompson (1999) 2000, *passim*. 171-172; Kelly 2008, 210; Blockley 1983, 394.

¹²⁴⁴ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, *passim*. 152, 157-158; Thompson (1999) 2000, 171-172.

¹²⁴⁵ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 144, 150-152, 156-159, 161-162.

¹²⁴⁶ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 144, 150-152, 156-159, 161-162.

What supports this notion is the fact that after the first unsuccessful attack, a series of further attacks took place in 463 or 464 until 466.¹²⁴⁷

The attacks in Pannonia during the 460s provide us with the first contemporary authors' remarks on the fate of Attila's two sons: Dengizich and Ernach. It is claimed that Dengizich was responsible for attacking the other Huns and Goths in Pannonia, though the attacks could have been made by both of the brothers because Ernach's groups lived near the Danube and the Theiss, and Dengizich's in the Theiss valley.¹²⁴⁸ However, because the attacks were unsuccessful, Thompson claims that Dengizich led his groups to seek out new and larger dwelling areas north of the Danube.¹²⁴⁹ If so, the next we hear of the two sons, is that they sent an embassy to the Eastern Roman court in 466, as Priscus writes:

At this time an embassy came to the Emperor Leo from the sons of Attila to remove the causes of previous disputes. They also said that a peace treaty should be made and that in the old manner they should meet with the Romans at the Danube, establish a market and exchange whatever they required [...]¹²⁵⁰

Because neither Priscus nor any other contemporary author mentions disputes between the sons of Attila and the Eastern Roman Empire in the 450s or early 460s, it is likely that the old disputes would have been those between Attila and the Eastern Roman Empire.¹²⁵¹ Even if this was not the case, the result was that Leo I refused Attila's sons' requests. Because this, according to Priscus, prompted Dengizich to move his troops near the Danube and to prepare an attack on the Eastern Roman Empire, we might suspect that it was one of Attila's sons who was responsible for sending the embassy.¹²⁵² The son in question was most likely Ernach because Priscus says he opted out of the attack. Briefly, the reason was that the regions of the groups who counted on Ernach's lead had been attacked, and hence Ernach was already engaged in military activity.¹²⁵³

It certainly seems likely that Dengizich's vigorous actions against the Romans together with demands for land for larger groupings imply that he desperately needed new herding areas for his groups.¹²⁵⁴ This is also supported by the fact that even with the help of Ernach's troops Dengizich continued alone both the preparations for war and addressing demands to the eastern Romans.

¹²⁴⁷ Wirth 1999, 115-116; Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 158-159, 164; Thompson (1999) 2000, passim. 171-172.

¹²⁴⁸ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 166-167; Thompson (1999) 2000, 171, 169. Thompson even claims that Marcian would have granted the regions for Ernach. AS there are no contemporary sources which refer to this, I doubt his claim.

¹²⁴⁹ Thompson (1999) 2000, passim. 172.

¹²⁵⁰ Priscus, fr. 46 in Blockley 1983, 352-353.

¹²⁵¹ Thompson (1999) 2000, 172.

¹²⁵² Priscus, fr. 46 in Blockley 1983, 352-353.

¹²⁵³ Priscus, fr. 46 in Blockley 1983, 352-353.

¹²⁵⁴ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 166.

Priscus tells us that Dengizich stipulated that Leo I “*give land and money to himself [Dengizich] and the army that followed him*” otherwise he and his troops would attack Thrace.¹²⁵⁵

It seems that Leo I considered it easier to agree with Dengizich than suffer from his attacks, and hence, according to Priscus, he to accepted the Dengizich’s demands on the condition that Dengizich and his groups promised him obedience.¹²⁵⁶ However, despite these announcements the agreement was never concluded. Priscus reports that before the agreement was put into practice, Dengizich fell to plotting against the Eastern Roman Empire, and this plot led to Dengizich’s attack against the Eastern Roman troops.¹²⁵⁷ The clash ended in defeat for Dengizich in 476, and he seems to have died shortly afterwards.¹²⁵⁸ At the same time accounts concerning Dengizich and the groups of Huns he led end.¹²⁵⁹ It is thought that these groups split up and some of them joined the Goths living near the western parts of the Black Sea, while some others joined new nomadic raiding groups, e.g. the Avars and the Bulgars near the Danube. In addition, it is considered that some of the Huns wandered further north, to the vicinity of the Dniepr.¹²⁶⁰

Accounts concerning Ernach and the groups who trusted in his lead also dry up after 454.¹²⁶¹ Therefore, it is likely that Ernach’s Huns also became assimilated with local barbarian groups or wandered further away from the Roman borders in order to move into regions where they could live and herd without being disturbed by too many clashes.

10.4. A Cycle in the Nomadic Way of Life – The Existence of “The Hun Kings and Empire”?

Dengizich’s and Ernach’s actions, like those of other groupings that the Huns became part of, underline the fact that the Huns continued in their nomadic way of life. It was crucial for the Huns to establish dwelling areas where nomadic life could unimpeded and the absence of accounts of raiding Huns after 454 would seem to imply that the groups now primarily concentrated on herding. Another sign that suggests that herding would have remained crux in the life of the Huns are accounts about Dengizich’s and Ernach’s constant need to secure land areas large enough for their groups.¹²⁶² Moreover, because trade is a necessity for life in the steppe, I also suggest that Deigizich’s demands for a new market place from the Eastern Roman Empire imply that the Huns

¹²⁵⁵ Priscus, fr. 48.1 in Blockley 1983, 354-355.

¹²⁵⁶ Priscus, fr. 48.1 in Blockley 1983, 354-355.

¹²⁵⁷ Priscus, fr. 49 in Blockley 1983, 356-359; Thompson 1999 (2000), 172-173.

¹²⁵⁸ Thompson (1999) 2000, passim. 173.

¹²⁵⁹ Thompson (1999) 2000, 172.

¹²⁶⁰ Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 168, 158-159; Kelly 2008, 212; Thompson (1999) 2000, 172.

¹²⁶¹ Thompson (1999) 2000, 173.

¹²⁶² Maenchen-Helfen 1973, 166.

continued their life as pastoral herders. Finally, Dengizich's and Ernach's demands for new payments not only for themselves but also for their supporters from the Eastern Roman Empire imply that the brothers had military leadership positions that were common in nomadic life. I therefore see no reason to argue that the groups of Huns would have given up their nomadic way of life either during the first half of the fifth century or later in the century.

The groups of Huns did not want at any stage to conquer or become part of the Roman Empire but instead wished to dwell in its border areas where they had access to the sedentarists' riches.¹²⁶³ The fact that after 454 some of the Huns were ready once again to act as Roman mercenaries and to join raids with other barbarians also points to the Huns acting as nomads. They wanted to keep their nomadic way of life, but within the framework of the nomadic way of life they were merely interested in allying themselves temporarily with a lucrative partner in order to gain riches from their surrounding sedentary neighbours.

Because of the clear nomadic nature of the Huns' actions, I would claim that the position of the Hun leaders at the head of groups during the fifth century was constantly based on the position of supreme military leadership, which is a common leadership position among nomads. The leadership position at the head of united groups was only needed in time of raids and wars, and when an interest in acting as a united war band was gone, the leadership position vanished. This clearly happened among the Huns. When the confederation could no longer profit its members at the turn of the 440s and the 450s, both the leadership position and the power structures in the confederation faced collapse. Because this happened without leaving any structures of power behind, this too suggests the nomadic nature of the confederation. Among nomads large confederation(s) would suddenly appear and form a united and powerful entity for decades before vanishing in a few years. By contrast, social structures do not suddenly vanish among sedentarists, but continue to work even if half-heartedly over long periods of time. The confederation led by Attila disappeared a few years after his death,¹²⁶⁴ and I would claim that fixed administration never formed among the Huns.¹²⁶⁵

¹²⁶³ Barfield 1993, 152-155; Kradin 2002, 381. Barfield states that in the case of Eurasian nomads dwelling near the borders of the Chinese Empire in different periods, nomads and larger nomadic confederations never wanted to conquer this Empire, but aimed instead to take advantage of its existence by raiding and through trade, as well as through diplomatic contacts. The idea of the nomads' lack of interest in adopting sedentary ways of life or conquering sedentary empires and becoming their rulers is also discussed by Kradin.

¹²⁶⁴ Kelly 2008, 219.

¹²⁶⁵ Priscus, fr. 64, fr. 49 in Blockley 1983, 372-373, 356-357; see Stickler 2007, 80, 104; Thompson (1999) 2000, 171, *passim*. 170, 173-175. The lack of stable administrative structures is also supported by the fate of the logades. They are not known to try to have tried to hold the fragmenting groups of Huns together, but by contrast some of them, e.g. Onegesius, is said by Priscus to have become a military leader in the Eastern Roman troops after 454. Some other Huns are known to have become leaders in the Roman army, such as Chelchal. I see this to refer to the fact that the logades had acted as military leaders who were ready to give their services to the party who was likely to be victorious or would pay most. Some other Huns are also known to have ended up in the military service of the Romans. For these reasons it is unlikely that the logades can be considered Attila's administrators.

This in my opinion supports the argument that a conical clan structure, common to Eurasian pastoralists, was in place among the groups of the Huns during the late 4th and early 5th century. In short, groups shared a common idea of belonging together through loose kinship relations and common ancestors, and hence groups could easily combine. At the same time there were no hindrances to new groups to joining. Groups of Huns and other barbarians could have formed a confederation without being forced to do so, and there was no need for power structures and leadership positions common to sedentary society and sedentarists to evolve. That is to say, the Huns had their own forms and structures for forming a larger unity in response to temporary need.

I would claim that a state as it commonly found among sedentarists never evolved among the Huns.¹²⁶⁶ If unity and the power position of leaders in the confederation was strengthening, this most likely occurred within the framework of a supercomplex chiefdom. First, the unity of a confederation as well as a supercomplex chiefdom is based on the redistribution of profits gained from war, plunder and international trade. Second, seen from the outside the unity of such groups appears to be that of a militaristic collective exploiter of other nations. Lastly, although the unity of a confederation might look strong from the outside, it is fragile within, especially because the contacts between groups who form the unity rely on tribal relations that are sensitive to ephemeral changes.¹²⁶⁷

Taken together, I conclude that the history of the groups of Huns near the Roman borders during the fourth and fifth centuries suggests that the Huns had no need or interest in giving up their nomadic way of life but they could, and did, arrange all activities within the framework of a nomadic way of life.¹²⁶⁸ Looking at leader figures from a nomadic perspective, it is more appropriate to call the position of Hun leaders a “(supreme) military leadership” than a “king”, “monarch” or “autocrat”, terms which apply more to leadership positions found among sedentarists rather than nomads. In addition, the use of the title “(supreme) military leadership” is also important for avoiding the misinterpretation that the Huns would have adopted a sedentary way of life. In short, the Huns were and continued to be unquestionably nomads during the fifth century.

¹²⁶⁶ Pohl 2003, 594-595, 572. According to Pohl the Avars formed a state and adopted a sedentary way of life. Controversially, Pohl also claims that the Huns would have established a state.

¹²⁶⁷ Krađin 2002, 383; Krađin 2009, 42.

¹²⁶⁸ Krađin 2008, 150.

11. THE HUNS AND THE NOMADIC WAY OF LIFE

When groups of fragmented Eurasian pastoral nomads started to arrive on the borders of the Roman Empire in the lower Danubian region during the last decades of the fourth century, the Late Roman authors considered them newcomers and named them Huns. The first accounts of the Huns are general in by nature and stress the common images of barbarians and nomads favoured throughout antiquity. Roman authors lacked actual contacts with the groups of Huns and hence needed to rely on rumour and images of nomads or stories told by those who had been in contact with the nomadic newcomers near the Black Sea region. Accordingly, the accounts of the Huns tell us less about the nomadic arrivals than they do about the Greco-Roman view of nomads and barbarians. We also learn what kind of images the Romans used to distinguish the Huns as non-Roman, so-called “others”. Accounts of Huns as fierce half-human fighters echo earlier descriptions of similar nomadic groups who were also described as a threat to Rome. The descriptions of the Huns reveal elements that Greco-Roman authors saw as important for them and the existence of the Roman world in Late Antiquity. In addition, the stories about the Huns show the encounters of nomads, especially Huns, and sedentarists, especially Romans, in the field of images.

The Late Roman authors’ accounts of the Huns also give us an opportunity to study the activities of the Huns near to the Roman Empire during the 370s to the 460s, especially because when fragmented groups of Huns began on a large scale to dwell in and conquer regions near the Roman borders in the lower Danubian region during the first half of the fifth century, this increased contacts between the Huns and the Romans. The resulting descriptions of the Huns tell us more about the activities of these nomadic newcomers and replace more generalized images of them. Having said that Greco-Roman authors’ accounts of the Huns still primarily reflect the general situation among the Huns rather than describe it precisely. For this reason, I disagree with the methodology of placing Late Roman authors’ descriptions of the Huns in a primary position when evaluating the activities and nature of the Hun leadership. This is especially the case with the claims that the Greco-Roman authors’ way of calling Hun leaders by titles such as *rex* and *basileus* would signify the rise of leadership position comparable to sedentary leaders. I would argue instead that because the groups of Huns were expansive Eurasian pastoral nomads, the starting point for evaluating the activities and leadership position of the Huns is their nomadic way of life.

Therefore, I question the general claims that when the groups of Huns arrived on the Roman borders and raiding proved to be lucrative during the first decades of the fifth century, the general interest of Huns in gaining more riches would have meant that Hun military leadership evolved into

leadership position that scholars call “king”, “monarch”, “autocrat”. It is also argued that the Huns were led by a supreme king, Grosskönig, even before Huns arrived in the vicinity of the Roman Empire. In both of these cases, it is unlikely that the increase of riches gained by the Huns concentrating on raiding, would have led them to give up herding. This transformation in their way of life from nomadism to the partial adoption of sedentary way of life is improbable. So too is the notion that the Hun “kings” strengthened their power by supporting the rise of a rich leading elite and this created, or was done in order to create, state structures among the Huns.

These claims that I am challenging fail to see the nomadic alternative. I would claim that the sedentary way of life and the leadership positions associated with it are not the only forms for a united society led by a leader – I argue that this is also possible within the framework of a nomadic way of life, and to me this is what happened among the Huns. In this thesis the history of the Huns has been studied from a nomadic perspective and from within the framework of Eurasian pastoralists’ nomadic way of life. This is the basis for the following five main arguments found in my thesis.

First, I consider that the Late Roman authors’ accounts of the Huns primarily present the authors’ views of non-Romans and nomads, not exact information about the Huns. Accordingly, in order to evaluate the situation among the groups of Huns the information that the Roman authors stories give about the activities of the Huns must be considered from a nomadic perspective.

Second, even though the groups of Huns formed a larger unity, which I consider to be a confederation, this was possible within the framework of their nomadic way of life. Furthermore, a larger unity would have resulted from common nomadic activity; including temporary alliances between groups so as to form larger troops and gain more booty. I argue that the Huns never gave up their nomadic way of life, but the actions took place within *the cycle of the nomadic way of life*.

Third, the basis for the position of Hun leaders at the head of united groups of Huns and local barbarians did not at any stage alter from the position of temporary military leadership that is commonly found among Eurasian pastoralists. Therefore, I suggest that we should replace the way of naming Hun leaders as “kings”, “monarchs” and “autocrats” which refer to sedentary leadership positions, and use the term “supreme military leader”, which more accurately describes the position that the Hun leaders had at the head of their groups and troops. In short, I see it as misleading to name Hun leaders, by such labels as *Attila: the king of the Huns*.

Fourth, we should consider the larger unity of the groups of Huns and their leadership positions within the framework of a nomadic way of life that would have supported possible existence of a supercomplex. Increased power and a stronger unity among groups can also be found among

nomads. This emphasizes the notion of complexity of power and society structures in history. In short, I speak on behalf of noticing the *nomadic alternative*.

Fifth, the Huns were not interested in conquering either local barbarian groups or the Roman Empire, but sought to profit from both. Furthermore, contacts with local barbarian groups and the Roman Empire affected not only the unity but also the strength of the Huns. These relations directly influenced the rise and decline of the Huns' success as well as the interest of groups in continuing activities within a larger unity. This is what I mean by the phrase *temporary contacts according to need*.

The Cycle of the Nomadic Way of Life

The late Roman authors' descriptions of the arrival of many fragmented groups of Hun to the Roman borders during the last decades of the fourth century suggest that there was no permanent unity between the groups, but the groups instead formed temporary alliances of various sorts with other barbarian groups when lucrative options, such as raiding expeditions or the possibility of acting as Roman mercenaries, occurred. The manner of and interest in these kinds of activities did not change at any stage during the first decades of the fifth century, as we can see from contemporary Roman authors' descriptions.

The temporary alliances and the interest in forming larger unity with changing allies reveal that the Huns acted in ways that were characteristic of Eurasian pastoral nomads. Fragmented groups of nomads were interested in joining together and forming a larger unity only when need required or a lucrative option was offered; at the same time the composition of the united of the groups varied, depending on the individuals interests of the groups who joined. Alliances with groups other than nomads were also possible if there was a shared interest in such activities. Because united groups are needed only for temporary activities, especially forming troops, nomads were not concerned with submitting other groups to constant rule. This is the situation that I argue took place between the Huns and the so-called local barbarians who lived near the Roman borders when the Huns came to the lower Danubian regions at the end of the fourth century until the mid fifth century.

First, in accordance with the nomadic way of life, Eurasian pastoralists do not prefer the submission of other groups but alliances or confederations between groups because this answers their need to act together when required. Second, the unity of the groups of Huns and local barbarians formed such huge troops during the 440s that I doubt whether they could have been formed, if the groups of Huns had submitted other barbarians to their power and forced them to join the military activity. In

other words, joint activities were based on shared temporary interests, not on the Huns oppression of others. Another feature that suggests that the groups of Huns and local barbarians formed a temporary confederation is that the raiding operations enriched all of the participants. In a confederation this is expected, but I argue that this would not have taken place if the Huns had submitted others to their rule. Finally, the fact that the unity of Huns and local barbarians ended when the attacks proved out to be unprofitable supports the idea of a confederation and a way of life in which temporary alliances are formed between groups.

When raiding and military activities no longer enriched the groups, the interest in joint activities faded and the groups again fragmented into many independent units. If the unity of Huns and other groups had been based on something other than temporary alliances, especially on the alleged formation of state structures commonly found among sedentarists, the unity of the groups and the confederation would not have collapsed in a few years, which did in fact take place after the death of Attila in 452. Among sedentarists the structures of power and the unity between groups is more long lasting than among nomads, but because nothing emerged after the death of Attila, this would suggest that all the activities of the Huns, the local barbarians and the confederation, took place within the framework and cycles of the nomadic way of life.

Attila: The King of the Huns?

Nomadic groups of Eurasian pastoralists formed temporarily united groups when a specific military activity was required, and this provided the framework and defined the nature of leadership positions at the head of united bands. Leadership positions were military in nature and in addition to battles and raids, involved peace treaty negotiations. These positions were temporary and depended on their fellow warriors' acceptance and trust. When military activities ended, also the supreme military leader lost his position and his right to command his former followers unless further acceptance was given. The loyalty to and support of the military leader was personal and often long-lasting but because support was based on a supreme military leader's ability to profit his followers from raids and wars, failure to provide booty would cause followers to withdraw their loyalty. For these reasons, I prefer to name Hun leaders at the head of united groups engaged in large-scale military activity "supreme military leaders". This usage not only emphasizes their tasks but also indicates the basis of their position: the position was temporary and was connected to military duties.

Because the activities of united groups of Huns close to the Roman Empire from the 370s to the middle of the fifth century are all based on military activity, I would claim that the leadership positions at the head of these groups did not deviate at any stage from the position of supreme military leadership. Second, the nomadic way of life does not support the emergence of any other kind of power or leadership position. For these reasons I disagree with the claims that Hun leadership positions would have become so autocratic and so strong that they could be compared to the positions of “monarchs” or “autocrats”. This would have exceeded the limits of power common among nomads. Furthermore, I argue that the position of Hun leaders was always related to the acceptance of supporters and the need to enrich the groups who had supported the Hun leaders’ in their position as supreme military leadership. The nature of the breakup of the confederation of Huns and local barbarians also supports this point.

After the death of Attila, who had been the last leader of the confederation, and the lack of profits from the last two large-scale wars against the Romans, the groups in the confederation fragmented. This indicated a lack of interest in continuing as a larger unit or making a further promise of loyalty to a supreme military leader of the confederation. The fact that not even Attila’s sons could gain the leadership position makes it evident that the leadership position was still based on others’ approval and had not become a hereditary or self-evident position. Therefore, because the confederation and the leadership position at its head vanished in a few years after Attila’s death without leaving any structures of power to continue the rule or the unity between the groups, this strongly suggests that the basis for the Hun leadership position had not changed from the framework common to Eurasian pastoral nomads. I conclude, therefore, that calling the Hun leaders by such titles as “king” or “monarch” creates a false image of the leadership position and the structures of unity that it entailed.

The Nomadic Alternative

During the 430s and 440s groups of Huns formed a confederation with local barbarians. In doing so they did not give up their nomadic way of life, nor did the leadership position at the head of the confederation change from that commonly found among Eurasian pastoralists. There is in fact no basis to claim that the Huns would have adopted, even partially, a sedentary way of life. Thus, the nature of the leadership position and the structures required for a larger unity to be formed. This supports to consider rise of supercomplex chiefdom among the Huns because it is a formation of larger unity of groups that might occur among nomads.

A supercomplex chiefdom is a formation of a large number of nomadic groups who are joined together for military activities aimed at bringing riches acquired from their surrounding sedentary neighbours. A supercomplex chiefdom is led by a supreme leader whose main duty is to conduct wars and maintain contact with surrounding sedentary societies in order to profit his supporters and thereby the unity of the groups. Furthermore, besides the supreme military leader are other military leaders who help to maintain contacts with groups united on a larger scale. The formation of a supercomplex chiefdom is temporary and exists as long as the supreme military leader is able to bring profits to the united groups from wars, raids and contacts with sedentary neighbours. The Huns clearly benefited from their contacts with the Roman Empire and the arrangements they made with the Romans could certainly have taken place within framework of a supercomplex chiefdom. Furthermore, contemporary accounts of other military leaders aiding Attila, e.g. participating in negotiations with the Eastern Roman Empire, also indicates that a supercomplex chiefdom could have taken shape among the groups of Huns and local barbarians.

Nevertheless, I am not totally convinced that a supercomplex chiefdom did evolve among the Huns because some of the characteristic elements common for the phenomenon are lacking, e.g. redistribution of sources or the rise of a theocracy are not present. On the whole, the primary sources are too few and scarce to conclusively prove that a supercomplex chiefdom developed among the Huns. Moreover, the sources are even less convincing when suggesting that structures common to sedentary societies arose among the Huns or that Hun leaders strove to introduce them as is generally claimed.

Overall, I argue that because the activities of the confederation show that the groups of Huns did not relinquish nomadism at any stage of their activities close to the Roman borders during the fifth century, this does lend support to the rise of supercomplex chiefdom rather than the formation of a state which would be more common among sedentarists than nomads. This debate brings the multitude of social structures found throughout history into focus, and the example of the Huns provides opportunities to deepen the discussion. This thesis has analysed what kind of elements are required for us to speak of the formation of a larger unity among Eurasian pastoralists, especially when considering the phenomenon of a supercomplex chiefdom. The activities of the Huns indicate what kinds of elements are related and define the phenomenon of stronger power and unity among these groups when seen from a nomadic alternative point of view.

Temporary Contacts According to Need

The nomadic perspective on the activities of the Huns stresses that the Huns' primary goal was not to conquer the regions ruled by the Roman Empire or to dominate groups of local sedentary barbarians, but to profit from both contacts without relinquishing the nomadic way of life.

Because the military activity of the Huns with local barbarian groups profited them all, this clearly suggests that the Huns were not aiming to subdue local barbarian groups but shared an interest in forming a confederation to provide larger and more victorious troops for temporary large-scale raiding. Likewise, the notion that the Huns encouraged payments for peace arrangements with the Romans and wished to establish trade connections with the empire emphasizes that the goal was not to become new rulers of Rome but to profit from the contacts with it. That is to say, the nomadic nature of the Huns and their activities explains the fact that the disintegration of the confederation was not the result of an internal situation, namely the structures of leadership or power among these groups but was instead linked to external contacts with surrounding sedentary societies, especially the Roman Empire and the diminishing flow of riches from the Roman world. The confederation between the groups of Huns and local barbarians did not collapse because the local barbarian groups finally fought for their freedom from the Huns but because the attacks of the confederation to the Roman Empire proved to be unprofitable, and hence the groups became uninterested in continuing joint activities.

Finally, the nomadic nature of the Huns and their activities reveal that during the 5th century the Roman Empire not only faced the formation of sedentary, barbarian societies but also the nomadic, Hun alternative, a supercomplex chiefdom in its regions or in their vicinity. Looked at from this perspective there is still room for further studies to discuss how well the Romans understood the difference between the nomadic Huns and sedentary barbarian formations of power.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviations of Ancient Authors and Works Cited

Aeschylus

Prom. *Prometheus*

Ambrose

Ep. *Epistulae*

Ex. Luc. *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam*

Ammianus

RG *Res gestae*

Apuleios

Flo. *Florida*

Aristotle

Pol. *Politica*

Caesar

Bella *De bello Gallico*

Callinicus

Vita S. Hyp. *Vita S. Hypatii*

Cassiodorus

Variae *Variae*

Chronica minora

CM *Chronica minora*

Cicero

De leg. ag.	<i>De lege agraria</i>
De div.	<i>De divinatione</i>
De inv.	<i>De inventione</i>
Claudian	
In Ruf.	<i>In Rufinum</i>
Stil.	<i>De consulato Stilichonis</i>
<i>Codex Theodosianus</i>	
Cod. Theodos.	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i>
Eunapius	
Fr.	<i>Fragmenta</i>
Eusebius	
Hist. ecc.	<i>Historia ecclesiastica</i>
Vit. Cons.	<i>Vita Constantini</i>
Florus	
Ep. bel.	<i>Epitome bellorum omnium annorum</i>
Gregory of Tours	
Hist. Franc.	<i>Historia Francorum</i>
Herodotus	
Hist.	<i>Historiae</i>
Homer	
Od.	<i>Odysseia</i>
Isocrates	
Pan.	<i>Panathenaicus</i>
Jerome	

Ep.	<i>Epistulae</i>
Op. adv. Iov.	<i>Opera – Adversus Iovinianum</i>
Jordanes	
Getica	<i>De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum et de origine actibusque Getarum</i>
Lactantius	
Div. inst.	<i>Divinae institutiones</i>
Livy	
Ab urb. cond.	<i>Ab urbe condita</i>
Marcellinus Comes	
Ann.	<i>Annales</i>
Merobaudes	
Pan.	<i>Panegyrici</i>
Olympiodorus	
Fr.	<i>Fragmenta</i>
Orosius	
Hist. ad. pag.	<i>Historia adversus paganos</i>
Pacatus	
Pan.	<i>Panegyrici</i>
Philostrogius	
Hist. ecc.	<i>Historia ecclesiastica</i>
de Plano Carpini	
Hist. Mong.	<i>Historia Mongalorum</i>

Plato	
Leg.	<i>Leges</i>
Pomponius Mela	
De sit. orb.	<i>De situ orbis</i>
Pompeius Trogus	
Fr.	<i>Fragmenta</i>
Priscus	
Fr.	<i>Fragmenta</i>
Procopius	
De bel.	<i>De bellis</i>
Prosper Tiro	
Ep. chron.	<i>Epitoma chronicon</i>
Pseudo-Augustine	
Ep.	<i>Epistulae</i>
De spi. et an.	<i>De spiritu et anima</i>
Ptolemy	
Quadripart.	<i>Quadripartitum</i>
Renatus Frigeridus	
Fr.	<i>Fragments</i>
Sallust	
Bel. Jug.	<i>Bellum Jugurthinum</i>
Seneca the Older	
De ira	<i>De ira</i>

Sidonius Apollinaris	
Ep.	<i>Epistulae</i>
Socrates Scholasticus	
Hist. ecc.	<i>Historia ecclesiastica</i>
Sozomen	
Hist. ecc.	<i>Historia ecclesiastica</i>
Strabo	
Geog.	<i>Geographica</i>
Tacitus	
Ger.	<i>Germania</i>
Tertullian	
Adv. Marc.	<i>Adversus Marcionem</i>
Thucydides	
Hist.	<i>Historiae</i>
Vegetius	
Ep. rei mil.	<i>Epitoma rei militaris</i>
Vitruvius	
De arch.	<i>De architectura</i>
Zosimus	
Hist. nova	<i>Historia nova</i>

Editions of Ancient Authors' texts

Aeschylus, *Prometheus*, trans. by H. W. Smyth, *Aeschylus: in two volumes. Suppliant Maidens, Persians, Prometheus, Seven against Thebes*. 1. In *Loeb Classical Library* (London: Heinemann, 1956)

Ambrose, *Epistulae*, ed. by J.-P. Migne in *Patrologiae Cursus, Series Latina*, 16 (Turnhout: Brepols, (1844-1855) 1980)

Ambrose, *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam*, ed. by O. Faller, in *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, 73 (Wien: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 1910/ 1918)

Ammianus, *Rerum gestarum libri*, trans. by J. C. Rolfe, *Ammianus Marcellinus in three volumes*. In *Loeb Classical Library* (London: Heinemann, 1939)

Apuleius of Madauros, *Florida*, ed. by G. Augelio, *Apuleio, L'apologia o la magia, Florida* (Torino: Unione Tipografico – Editrice Torinese, 1984)

Aristotle, *Politica*, trans. by H. Rackman, *Aristotle in twenty-three volumes. 21. Politics*. In *Loeb Classical Library* (London: Heinemann, 1959)

Caesar, *De bello Gallico*, trans. by H. J. Edwards, *The Gallic War/ Caesar* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963)

Callinicus, *Vita S. Hypatii*, ed. by Seminarii Philologorum Bonnensis sodales, *De vita S. Hypatii liber/ Callinicus* (Lipsiae: Teubneriana, 1895)

Cassiodorus, *Variae I-II*, ed. by Th. Mommsen, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctorum Antiquissimorum*, 12 (1989a) (Berlin: Weidmann, 1892-1898)

Chronica minora. In *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctorum Antiquissimorum* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1877-1919)

Cicero, *De divinatione*, trans. by W. A. Falconer, *Cicero. De senectute, De amicitia, De Divinatione*. In *Loeb Classical Library* (London: Heinemann, 1964)

Cicero, *De inventione*, trans. by H. M. Hubbell, *Cicero in twenty-eight volumes, 2. De Inventione, De optimo genere oratorum; Topica*. In *Loeb Classical Library* (London: Heinemann, 1968)

Cicero, *De lege agraria I, II, III*, trans. by J. H. Freese, *Cicero. The Speeches: Pro Publio Quinctio; Pro Sexto Roscio Amerino, Pro Quinto Roscio Comoedo, De lege agrarian I, II, III. In twenty-Eight Volumes, VI*. In *Loeb Classical Library* (London: Harvard University Press, 1967)

Claudian, *De consulato Stilichonis*, trans. by M. Platnauer, *Claudian. In Two volumes, II* (London: Heinemann, 1963)

Claudian, *In Rufinum*, trans. by M. Platnauer, *Claudian. In Two volumes, I*. In *Loeb Classical Library* (London: Heinemann, 1963)

Codex Theodosianus, trans. by C. Pharr, T. S. Davidson. M. B. Pharr, introduction C. D. Williams, *The Theodosian Code and Novels and The Sirmondian Constitutions*. In *The Corpus of Roman Law*, 1. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952)

Eunapius, *Fragmenta*, trans. and ed. by R. C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire. Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus. Text, Translation and Historiographical Notes* (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1983)

Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica*, trans. by A. Cameron; G. Hall, *Life of Constantine. Eusebius*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999)

Florus, *Epitome bellorum omnium annorum*, trans. by E. S. Foster, *Epitome of Roman History*. In *Loeb Classical Library* (London: Heinemann, 1960)

Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, trans. by E. Brehaut, *History of the Franks. Gregory, Bishop of Tours* (New York: Norton, 1969)

Herodotus, *Historiae*, trans. by D. Grene, *The History of Herodotus* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987)

Homer, *Odysseia*, trans. by J. Griffin, *The Odyssey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987)

Isocrates, *Panathenaicus*, herausgegeben von M. Mühl, *Isocrates*; in *Aus dem Schatze des Altertums. A, Griechische Schriftsteller*; 36 (Bamberg: Buchner, 1972)

Jerome, *Adversus Iovinianum - Opera*, ed. by J.-P. Migne, in *Patrologiae Cursus, Series Latina*, 23 (Massachusetts: Harvard University, 1844-1855)

Jerome, *Epistulae*, ed. by I. Hilberg, in *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (Wien: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 1910/ 1918)

Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum [Romana] & De origine actibusque Getarum*, trans. by C. C. Mierow, *The Gothic History of Jordanes. In English Version with an Introduction and a Commentary* (Cambridge: Speculum Historiale, 1960)

Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones*, trans. by A. Bowen and P. Garnsey, *Lactantius. Divine Institutes. Translated with an Introduction and Notes* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003)

Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, ed. and trans. by P. G. Walsh, *Livy. Book XXXVII (191-189 B.C.). Edited with an Introduction, Translation & Commentary* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1992)

Marcellinus Comes, *Annales*, trans. by B. Croke, *The Chronicle of Marcellinus/ a Translation and Commentary (with Reproduction of Mommsen's Edition of the Text)* (Sydney: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1995)

Merobaudes, *Panegyrici* trans. by F. M. Clover, *Flavius Merobaudes: A Translation and Historical Commentary*. In *Transactions of the American Philological Society, New Series*, Vol 61. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1971)

Olympiodorus, *Fragmenta*, ed. and trans. by R. C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire. Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus. Text, Translation and Historiographical Notes* (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1983)

Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos*, trans. by A. T. Fear, *Seven Books of History against Pagans. Translated with an Introduction and Notes* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010)

Pacatus, *Panegyrici Latini*, trans. by C. E. V. Nixon, *Panegyric to the Emperor Theodosius* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1987)

Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica*, trans. and ed. by P. R. Amidon, *Church History. Translated with an Introduction and Notes* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007)

de Plano Carpini, *Historia Mongalorum*, trans. by S. Jansson, A. Ruotsala, *Mongolien historia: matka tartarien maahan vuosina 1245- 1247/ Johannes de Plano Carpini* (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2003)

Platon, *Nomoi*, trans. by E. A. Taylor, *The Laws of Plato* (London: Dent & Sons, 1934)

Pompeius Trogus, *Fragmenta*, trans. by O. Seel, *Pompeius Trogus. Fragmenta*, (Leipzig: Teubner, 1958)

Pomponius Mela, *De situ orbis*, trans. by P. Berry, *Pomponius Mela. Geography/ De Situ Orbis AD 43* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997)

Priscus, *Fragmenta*, trans. and ed. by R. C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire. Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus. Text, Translation and Historiographical Notes* (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1983)

Procopius, *De bello*, trans. by H. B. Dewing, *Procopius. In Seven Volumes, I. History of the Wars, Books I and II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979)

Procopius, *De bello*, trans. by H. B. Dewing, *Procopius. In Seven Volumes, II. History of the Wars, Books III and IV*. Reprinted 1979 (London: Heinemann, 1916)

Prosper Tiro, *Epitoma chronicon*, trans. by G. G. Walsh, *The Fathers of the Church: a New Translation, Vol. 7*. (Washington: The Catholic University of American Press, 1970)

Pseudo-Augustine, *De spiritu et anima*. Ed. by J.-P. Migne in *Patrologiae Cursus, Series Latina*, 33 (Massachusetts: Harvard University, 1844-1855)

Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, ed. and trans. by F. E. Robbins, *Ptolemy Tetrabiblos*, in *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940)

Renatus Frigeridus, *Fragments* in Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, trans. by E. Brehaut, *History of the Franks. By Gregory, Bishops of Tours. Selections, Translated with Notes* (New York: Norton, 1969)

Sallust, *Bellum Jugurthinum*, ed. by L. D. Reynolds, *C. Sallusti Crispi. Catilina, Iughurta, historiarum Fragmenta Selecta, Appendix Sallustiana*, in *Oxford Classical Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991)

Seneca, *De ira*, ed. by A. B. Poli, *L. Anneo Seneca. Dell' ira. Libri III* (Roma: Ateneo & Bizzarri, 1977)

Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae*, trans. by W. B. Anderson, *Poems and Letters: in two Volumes, 2. Letters: Books III-IX/ Sidonius. With English Translation*. In *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965)

Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, ed. and trans. by G. C. Hansen, P. Périchon, P. Maraval, *Histoire Ecclesiastique, Livre 7*. (Paris: Cerf, 2007)

Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, ed. and trans. by J. Bidez, *Histoire Ecclésiastique, Livres I-II* (Paris: Cerf, 1980)

Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, ed. and trans. by J. Bidez, *Histoire Ecclésiastique, Livres III-IV* (Paris: Cerf, 1996)

Strabo, *Geographica*, trans. by H. L. Jones, *The Geography of Strabo. With an English Translation. In Eight volumes, VI* (London: Harvard University Press, 1961)

Tacitus, *Germania*, ed. by J. G. C. Anderson, *Cornelii Taciti. De Origine et Situ Germanorum* (London: Clarendon Press, 1958)

Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, ed. and trans. by E. Evans, *Tertullian. Adversus Marcionem. Books I-III* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972)

Thucydides, *Historiae*, ed. and trans. by C. F. Smith, *History of Peloponnesian War, Books I – VIII* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1991- 1996)

Vegetius, *Epitoma rei militaris*, ed. by A. Önnarfors, *P. Flavii Vegeti Renati. Epitoma Rei Militaris* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1995)

Vitruvius, *De architectura*. Trans. by F. Granger, *Vitruvius. On Architecture. Edited from the Harleian Manuscript 2767 and Translated into English* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955)

Zosimus, *Nea Historia*. Trans. by R. T. Ridley, *Zosimus. Nea Historia. A Translation with Commentary* (Canberra: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1990)

Lexikons

Brown, L., *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles. Volume I, A-M* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993)

Liddell, H. G.; Scott, R.; Jones, H. S., *Greek-English Lexicon, Vol. I*, reprinted 1940 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1924)

Liddell, H. G.; Scott, R.; Jones, H. S., Jones, *Greek-English Lexicon, Vol. II*, reprinted 1968 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1924)

Schönfeld, M., *Wörterbuch der altgermanischen Personen- und Völkernamen* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1911)

Secondary Sources

Alföldi, A.; ‘Funde der Hunnenzeit und ihre ethnische Sondierung’, in *Acta Archaeologica Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 9 (1932)

Altheim, F.; ‘Das Auftreten der Hunnen in Europa’, in *Acta Archaeologica Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 2 (1951), pp. 269- 276.

Altheim, F.; *Geschichte der Hunnen I. Von den Anfängen bis zum Einbruch in Europa* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1959)

Altheim, F.; *Geschichte der Hunnen IV* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1960-1962)

Anke, B.; Koch, A. (ed.), *Attila und die Hunnen*. Historisches Museum der Pfalz Speyer. (Stuttgart: Theiss, 2007)

Barbulescu, M.; ‘Ein Germanisches Frauengrab aus dem Legionslager von Turda, Rumänien’, in *Attila und die Hunnen*. Historisches Museum der Pfalz Speyer. (Stuttgart: Theiss, 2007)

Barfield, T. J.; *The Perilous Frontier. Nomadic Empires and China* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1989)

Barfield, T.J.; *The Nomadic Alternative* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993)

Barfield, T. J.; ‘Conclusion’, in *Nomadic Pathways in Social Evolution*, ed. by N.N. Kradin, D. Bondarenko and T. Barfield (Moscow: Center for Civilizational Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, 2003), pp. 172- 179.

Barnes, T. D.; *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (London: Ithaca, 1998)

Barth, F.; 'Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference', in *Asie du sud-est et monde insulindien*, 4, 2. (Paris: Mouton, 1973)

Barthold, W.; *Zwölf Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Türken Mittelasiens*, ed. and tr. by Th. Menzel (Berlin: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Islamkunde, 1932)

Basilov, V. N.; 'Introduction', in *Nomads of Eurasia*, ed. by V. N. Basilov, M. F. Zirin, D. Levy, J. Sackett, (Seattle, London: Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County and University of Washington Press, 1989)

Batty, R.; *Rome and the Nomads. The Pontic-Danubian Realm in Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

Berman, M.; *Wandering God. A Study in Nomadic Spirituality* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000)

Bidez, J.; *Sozomen. Histoire Ecclésiastique, Livres I-II* (Paris: Cerf, 1980)

Bidez, J.; *Sozomen. Histoire Ecclésiastique, Livres III-IV* (Paris: Cerf, 1996)

Blockley, R. C.; *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire. Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus* (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1981)

Blockley, R. C.; *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire. Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus. Text, Translation and Historiographical Notes* (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1983)

Blockley, R. C.; *East Roman Foreign Policy* (Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1992)

Bona, I.; *Das Hunnenreich* (Stuttgart: Theiss, 1991)

Bondarenko, D.; Korotayev, A. V.; Kradin, N. N.; 'Introduction', in *Nomadic Pathways in Social Evolution*, ed. by N.N. Kradin, D. Bondarenko and T. Barfield (Moscow: Center for Civilizational Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, 2003), pp. 1- 23.

Bowersock, G. W.; *Fiction as History. Nero to Julian* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

Brandes, W.; 'Gog, Magog und die Hunnen. Anmerkungen zur eschatologischen "Ethnographie" der Völkerwanderungszeit', in *Visions of Community in Post-Roman World. The West, Byzantium and the Islamic World*. Ed. by W. Pohl, C. Gantner, R. Payne (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 477-498.

Brehaut, E.; *History of the Franks. By Gregory, Bishops of Tours. Selections, Translated with Notes* (New York: Norton, 1969)

von Brosseder, U.; 'Zur Archäologie der Xiongnu', in *Attila und die Hunnen*. Ed. by B. Anke, A. Koch, Historisches Museum der Pfalz Speyer (Stuttgart: Theiss, 2007)

Burgess, R. W.; 'A New Reading for Hydatius *Chronicle* 177 and the Defeat of the Huns in Italy', *Phoenix*, 42, 4 (1988), pp. 357- 363.

Cameron, A.; Hall, G.; *Life of Constantine. Eusebius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999)

Chesnut, G. F.; *The First Christian Histories. Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, and Evagrius* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1986)

Christides, V.; 'Saracens' *Prodosia* in Byzantine sources', in *Byzantion*, 40 (1970), pp. 5- 13.

Chrysos, E.; 'The Title of βασιλεύς in Early Byzantine International Relations', in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 32 (1978), pp. 31- 75.

Chrysos, E.; 'Conclusion: De foederatis iterum', in *Kingdoms of the Empire. The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. by W. Pohl (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 185- 206.

Claessen, H. J. M.; Skalnik, P.; 'The Early State', ed. by H. J. M. Claessen, P. Skalnik, *New Babylon: Studies in the Social Sciences*, 32 (1978), reprinted 2011.

Clarke, D. L.; *Rhetoric in Greco – Roman Education*. Reprinted 1963 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957)

Collins, R.; *Early Medieval Europe 300 - 1000* (New York: Macmillan Press Palgrave, 1999)

Di Cosmo, N.; ‘Mongols and Merchants on the Black Sea Frontier in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries: Convergences and Conflicts’, in *Mongols, Turks and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*, ed. by R. Amitai and M. Biran (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 391- 424.

Cribb, R.; *Nomads in Archaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)

Croke, B.; ‘Cassiodorus and the Getica of Jordanes’, in *Classical Philology*, 82, 2 (1982), pp. 117-134.

Daly, L. J.; ‘The Mandarin and the Barbarians: The Response of Themistius to the Gothic Challenge’, in *Historia*, 21 (1972), 351- 379.

Detienne, D.; *The Gardens of Adonis: Spices in Greek Mythology*, trans. by J. Lloyd, with an introduction by J.-P. Vernant (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1977)

Dewing, H. B.; *Procopius. With an English Translation. In Seven Volumes, II. History of the Wars, Books III and IV*. Reprinted 1979 (London: Heinemann, 1916)

Dewing, H. B.; *Procopius. With an English Translation. In Seven Volumes, I. History of the Wars, Books I and II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979)

Dmitriev, S. V.; ‘Political Culture of the Turkic-Mongolian Nomads in Historical and Ethnological Perspective’, in *Nomadic Pathways in Social Evolution*, ed. by N.N. Kradin, D. Bondarenko and T. Barfield (Moscow: Center for Civilizational Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, 2003), pp. 148-157.

Dorey, T. A.; *Latin Historians*. (London: Routledge, 1966)

Fettich, N.; *Die archäologische Hinterlassenschaft der Hunnen* (Budapest, 1940)

Fox, R.; *Genghis Khan* (London: Lane, 1936)

Freese, J. H.; *Cicero. In Twenty-Eight Volumes, VI, De Lege Agraria I, II, III. Translation* (Harvard University Press: London, 1967)

Fält, O. K.; 'Introduction', in *Looking at the Other*, ed. by K. Alenius, O. K. Fält, S. Jalagin. *Acta Universitatis Ouluensis*, B Humaniora 42 (Oulu University Press: Oulu, 2002), pp. 7- 12.

Gibbon, E. A.; *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Volume 4, The End of the Western Empire*. Ed. by B. Radice. Reprinted 1995 (London: The Folio Society, 1776-1778)

Goetz, H.-W.; Jarnut, J.; Pohl, W.; 'Conclusion', in *Regna and Gentes. The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. by H.-W. Goetz, J. Jarnut, W. Pohl (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 597- 628.

Goffart, W.; 'Rome, Constantinople and the Barbarians', in *American Historical Review*, 86 (1981), pp. 275- 306.

Goffart, W.; *Barbarian Tides. The Migration Age and the Late Roman Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2006)

Goldsworthy, A.; *The Fall of the West. The Slow Death of the Roman Superpower* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2009)

Gordon, C. D.; *The Age of Attila: Fifth-century Byzantium and Barbarians*. Foreword by A. E. R. Boak (Ann Arbor: the University of Michigan Press, 1960)

Granger, F.; *Vitruvius. On Architecture. Edited from the Harleian Manuscript 2767 and Translated into English*. Reprinted 1983 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931)

Green, W. S.; 'Otherness Within: Towards a Theory of Difference in Rabbinic Judaism', in *To See Ourselves as Others See Us: Christians, Jews, "Others" in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Jacob Neusner and Ernest Frerichs (Chicago: Scholars Press, 1985), pp. 49- 70.

Grene, D.; *The History of Herodotus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987)

Grün, E. S.; *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010)

Hall, E.; *Inventing Barbarian: Greek Self-definition through Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989)

Hall, S.; *Representation. Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. by S. Hall, reprinted 2002 (London: Sage Publications, 1997)

Harries, J.; *Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome AD 407-485* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994)

Harmatta, J.; 'The Golden Bow of the Huns', in *Acta Archaeologica Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 1 (1951), pp. 107- 149.

Harmatta, J.; 'The Dissolution of the Hun Empire. Hunnic Society of the Age of Attila', in *Acta Archaeologica Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 2 (1952), 277- 304.

Hartog, F.; *The Mirror of Herodotus. The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988)

Hartog, F.; *Memories of Odysseus: Frontier Tales from Ancient Greek* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001)

Heather, P.; 'The Huns and the End of the Roman Empire in Western Europe', in *English Historical Review*, CX. (1995), pp. 4- 41.

Heather, P.; *The Goths*, reprinted 1998 (London: Blackwell, 1996)

Heather, P.; 'Foedera and Foederati of the Fourth Century', in *Kingdoms of the Empire. The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. by W. Pohl (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 57- 74.

Heather, P.; 'Afterword', in *The Huns*, by E. A. Thompson. Reprinted 2000 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 238- 264.

Heather, P.; *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (London: Pan Books, 2005)

Homeyer, H.; *Der Hunnenkönig von seinen Zeitgenossen dargestellt* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1951)

Humphries, M.; 'The Lexicon of Abuse: Drunkenness and Political Illegitimacy in Late Roman World', in *Humor, History and Politics in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by G. Halsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 75- 88.

Irons, W.; 'Cultural Capital, Livestock Raiding, and the Military Advantage of Traditional Pastoralists', in *Nomadic Pathways in Social Evolution*, ed. by N.N. Kradin, D. Bondarenko and T. Barfield (Moscow: Center for Civilizational Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, 2003), pp. 63-72.

Isaac, B.; *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004)

Jones, H. L.; *The Geography of Strabo. With an English Translation. In Eight Volumes, VI* (London: Harvard University Press, 1961)

Kaldellis, A., 'Republican Theory and Political Dissidence in Ioannes Lydos', in *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 29 (2005), pp. 1- 16.

Kawar, I.; 'Procopius and Arethas', in *Byzantische Zeitschrift*, 50 (1957), pp. 39- 382.

Kazanski, M.; 'The Sedentary Elite in the "Empire" of the Huns and its Impact on Material Civilisation in Southern Russia During the Early Middle Ages (5th-7th Centuries AD)', in *Cultural Transformations and Interactions in Eastern Europe*, ed by J. Chapman, P. Dolukhanov (Aldershot: Avebury 1993), pp. 211- 235.

Kelly, C.; *Attila the Hun. Barbarian Terror and the Fall of the Roman Empire* (London: The Bodley Head, 2008)

Khazanov, A.; *Nomads and the Outside World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984)

Khazanov, A.; 'Nomads of the Eurasian Steppes in Historical Retrospective', in *Nomadic Pathways in Social Evolution*, ed. by N.N. Kradin, D. Bondarenko and T. Barfield (Moscow: Center for Civilizational Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, 2003), pp. 25- 49.

Krader, L.; 'The Origin of the State among Nomads of Asia', in *The Early State*, ed. by H. J. M. Claessen, P. Skalnik (Hague: Mouton, 1978), pp. 93- 107.

Kradin, N. N.; 'Imperii Hunnu [The Hsiung-nu Empire]', in *Politicheskaya antropologiya* [Political Anthropology] (2001), pp. 297- 311.

Kradin, N. N.; 'Nomadism, Evolution and World-systems: Pastoral Societies in Theories of Historical Development', in *Journal of World-System Research*, 8 (2002), pp. 368- 388.

Kradin, N. N.; 'Nomadic Empires: Origins, Rise, Decline', in *Nomadic Pathways in Social Evolution*, ed. by N.N. Kradin, D. Bondarenko and T. Barfield (Moscow: Center for Civilizational Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, 2003), pp. 73- 87.

Kradin, N. N.; 'From Tribal Confederation to Empire: The Evolution of the Rouran Society', in *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungarica*, 58/2 (2005a), pp. 149- 169.

Kradin, N. N.; 'Social and Economic Structure of the Xiongnu of the Trans-Baikal Region', in *Archaeology, Ethnology & Anthropology of Eurasia*, 1/21 (2005b), pp. 79- 86.

Kradin, N. N.; 'Cultural Complexity of Pastoral Nomads', in *World Cultures*, 15 (2006), pp. 171- 189.

Kradin, N. N.; 'Early State Theory and the Evolution of Pastoral Nomads', in *Social Evolution & History*, 7/1 (2008), pp. 107- 130.

Kradin, N. N.; 'State Origins in Anthropological Thought', in *Social Evolution & History*, 8/1 (2009), pp. 25- 51.

Kradin, N. N.; Skrynnikova, T. D.; 'Stateless Head': Notes on Revisionism in the Studies of Nomadic Societies, in *Ab Imperio*, 4 (2009), pp. 117- 128.

Kraus, C. S.; Woodman, A. J.; *Latin Historians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)

Kulikowski, M.; 'Constantine and the Northern Barbarians (347-376)', in *Age of Constantine*, ed. by N. Lenski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

Lambert, D.; 'Barbarians in Salvian's *De gubernatione Dei*', in *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Stephen Mitchell and Geoffrey Greatrex (London: Duckworth, 2000), pp. 103-115.

Laszlo, G.; 'The Significance of the Hun Golden Bow', in *Acta Archaeologica Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 1 (1951), pp. 91- 104.

Lieschutz, J. H. W. G.; 'Gens into regnum', in *Regna and Gentes. The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. by H.-W. Goetz, J. Jarnut, W. Pohl (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 55- 84.

Lindner, R. P.; 'Nomadism, Horses and Huns', in *Past and Present*, 92 (1981), pp. 3- 19.

Lindner, R. P.; 'What Was a Nomadic Tribe?', in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 24, 4 (1982), pp. 689- 711.

Lovejoy, A. O.; Boas, G.; 'Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity' with suppl. Essays by W. F. Albright and P.-E. Dumont, in *Contributions to the History of Primitivism*, 1 (1937)

Maenchen-Helfen, O. J.; *The World of the Huns* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973)

Man, J.; *Attila the Hun. A Barbarian King and the Fall of Rome* (Berkshire: A Bantam Books, 2005)

Marx, E.; 'Tribe as a Unit of Subsistence: Nomadic Pastoralism in the Middle East', in *American Anthropologist*, 79, 2 (1977), pp. 343- 363.

Matthews, J.; *The Roman Empire of Ammianus Marcellinus* (London: Duckworth, 1989)

Mellor, R.; *The Roman Historians* (London: Routledge, 1999)

Merrills, A. H.; *History and Geography in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

Mierow, C. C.; *The Gothic History of Jordanes. In English Version with an Introduction and a Commentary* (Cambridge: Speculum Historiale, 1960)

Millar, F.; *A Greek Roman Empire. Power and Belief under Theodosius II (408-450)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006)

Miteva, N.; 'Some Ethnocultural Problems in the Evidence of the Authors during the Late Antiquity about the Thracian Lands', in *Academia Litterarum Bulgarica, Serdica, Thracia*, 8. (1988)

Morgan, D.; *The Mongols*. Reprinted 1990 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986)

Moxon, I. S.; Smart, J. D.; Woodman, A. J.; *Past Perspectives. Studies in Greek and Roman Historical Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)

Mühl, M.; 'Isocrates. Panegyrikos', in *Aus dem Schatze des Altertums. A, Griechische Schriftsteller*; 36 (Bamberg: Buchner, 1972)

Oktas, B. T.; 'The Historical Image Research Method', in *Looking at the Other*, ed. by K. Alenius, O. K. Fält, S. Jalagin. *Acta Universitatis Ouluensis, B Humaniora* 42 (2002), pp. 199-220.

Parks, E. P.; *The Roman Rhetorical Schools as a Preparations for the Courts under the Empire* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1945)

Petrauskas, O.; 'Die Chernjachov-Kultur im Schwarzenmeergebiet nach dem hunnischen Einfall', in *Attila und die Hunnen*, ed. by B. Anke; A. Koch, Historisches Museum der Pfalz Speyer (Stuttgart: Theiss, 2007)

Pharr, C.; Davidson, T. S.; Pharr, M. B.; Introduction C. D. Williams, *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions*. In *The Corpus of Roman Law*, 1. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952)

Platnauer, M.; *Claudian - In Rufinum. In Two Volumes, I* (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1963)

Platnauer, M.; *Claudian - Stilicho. In Two Volumes, II* (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1963)

Pohl, W.; 'Introduction', in *Kingdoms of the Empire. The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. by W. Pohl (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 1- 12.

Pohl, W.; 'A Non-Roman Empire in Central Europe: The Avars', in *Regna and Gentes. The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. by H.-W. Goetz, J. Jarnut, W. Pohl (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 571- 596.

Pohl, W.; *Die Wölkerwanderung. Eroberung und Integration* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005)

Pongratz-Leisten, B.; 'The Other and the Enemy in Mesopotamian Conception of the World', in *Mythology and Mythologies: Methodological Approaches to Intercultural Influences*, ed. by Robert M. Whiting (Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2001), pp. 195- 231.

Radloff, W.; *Aus Siberien*, vol. 1 (Liepzig: Weigel, 1884)

Rauhala, M.; *The Great Other of Gods: The Greek Elite's Image of the Cult of Kybele before the Roman Period* (Oulu: Oulun yliopisto, 2012)

Ridley, R. T.; *Zosimus. Nea Historia. A Translation with Commentary* (Canberra: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1990)

Riikonen, H. K.; 'Tyylikaudet ja periodisaatio', in *Kirjallisuus antiikin maailmassa*, ed. by S. Kivistö, H. K. Riikonen, E. Salmenkivi, R. Sarasti-Wilenius (Helsinki: Teos, 2007), pp. 127-147.

Robbins, F. E.; *Ptolemy, Tetrabiblos*. In *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940)

Rohrbacher, D.; *The Historians of Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 2002)

Rolfe, J. C.; *Ammianus Marcellinus. Text with Translation I-III* (London: Heinemann, 1939)

Sarasti-Wilenius, S.; 'Historiankirjoitus', in *Kirjallisuus antiikin maailmassa*, ed. by S. Kivistö, H. K. Riikonen, E. Salmenkivi, R. Sarasti-Wilenius (Helsinki: Teos, 2007), pp. 382- 407.

Sarasti-Wilenius, S.; 'Kirje', in *Kirjallisuus antiikin maailmassa*, ed. by S. Kivistö, H. K. Riikonen, E. Salmenkivi, R. Sarasti-Wilenius (Helsinki: Teos, 2007), pp. 443- 456.

Sarasti-Wilenius, S.; 'Retoriikan käytäntö ja teoria', in *Kirjallisuus antiikin maailmassa*, ed. by S. Kivistö, H. K. Riikonen, E. Salmenkivi, R. Sarasti-Wilenius (Helsinki: Teos, 2007), pp. 447- 505.

Schmauder, M.; 'Die Hunnen 'Ut turbo montibus celsis – gleich dem Wirbelwind aus den hohen Bergen', in *Rom un die Barbaren. Europa zur Zeit der Völkerwanderung*, ed. by C. Vitali, J. Bemann, D. Quast (Bonn: Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 2008), pp. 157- 159.

Schmauder, M.; *Die Hunnen. Ein Reitervolk in Europa* (Darmstad: Primus, 2009)

Schreiber, H.; *Die Hunnen: Attila probt die Welt Untergang* (Wien: Econ, 1976)

Schwartz, S.; 'Rome in Greek Novel. Images and Ideas of Empire in Chariton's Persia', in *Arethusa*, 30, 3 (2003), pp. 325- 394.

Schubert, C.; 'Zum problematischen Verhältnis von *res fictae* und *res factae* im Antiken Nomadendiskurs', in *Der Imaginierte Nomade. Formel und Realitätsbezug bei Antiken*,

Mittelalterlichen and Arabischen Autoren, ed. by A. Weiss (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2007), pp. 17-41.

Schubert, C.; Weiss, A.; Kath, R.; 'Programm - Sesshaftigkeit und Nomadismus unter Römischer Herrschaft im Maghre' in *Differenz und Integration, SFB 586* -project, Universitäten Leizig und Halle-Wittenberg, <http://www.nomadsed.de/projekte/projekte-2001-2004/teilprojekt-c3/index.html>

Scott, R.; 'Epilogue: Old and New in Late Antique Historiography', in *History and Historians in Late Antiquity*, ed. by B. Croke and A. M. Emmett (Sydney: Pergamon Press, 1983)

Seeck, O.; *Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1920)

Shaw, B. D.; 'Eaters of Flesh, Drinkers of Milk', in *Rulers, Nomads and Christians in Roman North Africa*, ed. by Brent D. Shaw (Hampshire: Collected Studies Series, Variorum, 1995), pp. IV 5- 31.

Skrynnikova, T. D.; 'Power among Mongol Nomads in Chinggis Khan's Epoch', in *Nomadic Pathways in Social Evolution*, ed. by N.N. Kradin, D. Bondarenko and T. Barfield (Moscow: Center for Civilizational Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, 2003), pp. 135- 147.

Smith, J. Z.; 'Differential Equations on Constructing the Other', in Jonathan Z. Smith, *Relating Religion. Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004 a), pp. 230- 250.

Smith, J. Z.; 'Close Encounters of Diverse Kinds', in Jonathan Z. Smith, *Relating Religion. Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004 b), pp. 303- 322.

Spooner, B.; *The Cultural Ecology of Pastoral Nomads* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1973)

Stearns, P. N.; Adas, M.; Schwartz, S. B.; Gilbert, M. J.; 'Nomadic Challenges and Sedentary Responses', in *World Civilizations. The Global Experience*, Vol. I (New York: Longman, 2001)

Stickler, T.; *Die Hunnen* (München: Beck, 2007)

Tapper, R.; *Pasture and Politics. Economic, Conflict and Ritual among Shahshevan Nomads of North-western Iran* (London: Academic Press, 1979)

Timpe, D.; 'Der Barbar als Nachbar', in *Ideologie – Sport – Aussenseiter. Aktuelle Aspekte einer Beschäftigung mit der antiken Gesellschaft*, ed. by Ch. Ulf (Innsbruck: Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft, Sonderheft 108, 2000), pp. 203- 230.

Thompson, E. A.; *A Roman Reformer and Inventor: Being a New Text of Treatise De Rebus Bellicis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952)

Thompson, E. A.; 'Ammianus Marcellinus', in *Latin Historians*, ed. by T. A. Dorey (London: Routledge, 1966), pp. 143- 157.

Thompson, E. A.; *The Huns*, Reprinted 2000 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999)

Vasiliev, A. A.; *Goths in the Crimea* (Cambridge: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1936)

Vasjutin, S. A.; 'Typology of Pre-states and Statehood Systems of Nomads', in *Nomadic Pathways in Social Evolution*, ed. by N.N. Kradin, D. Bondarenko and T. Barfield (Moscow: Center for Civilizational Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, 2003), pp. 50- 62.

Wells, C. M.; 'Fear and Loathing: The Nomad Menace and Roman Africa', in *Rulers, Nomads and Christians in Roman North Africa*, ed. by Brent D. Shaw (Hampshire: Collected Studies Series, Variorum, 1995), pp. 25- 46.

Weiss, A.; 'Nomaden jenseits der Topoi – anstelle einer Einleitung', in *Der Imaginierte Nomade. Formel und Realitätsbezug bei antiken, mittelalterlichen and arabischen Autoren*, ed. by A. Weiss (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2007), pp. 3- 15.

Werner, J.; *Beiträge zur Archäologie des Attilareiches* (München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1956)

Wiedemann, T. E. J.; 'Between Men and Beasts: Barbarians in Ammianus Marcellinus', in *Past Perspectives. Studies in Greek and Roman Historical Writing*, ed. by I. S. Moxon and D. J. Smart and A. J. Woodman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 189- 201.

Wijma, S.; *Ethnographical Digressions. Barbarians in Ammianus Marcellinus' Res gestae* in *www-page* (2007)

[Http://odur.let.rug.nl~drijvers/amminus/contributions/barbarians.htm](http://odur.let.rug.nl/~drijvers/amminus/contributions/barbarians.htm)

Wirth, G.; 'Rome and its Germanic Partners in the Fourth Century', in *Kingdoms of the Empire. The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. by W. Pohl (Leiden, New York: Brill, 1997), pp. 13- 56.

Wirth, G.; *Attila. Das Hunnenreich und Europa* (Berlin: Kohlhammer, 1999)

Wolfram, H.; *History of the Goths*, trans. by T. J. Dunlap, reprinted 1990 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987)

Wolfram, H.; *Das Reich und die Germanen. Zwischen Antike und Mittelalter* (Berlin: Siedler, 1990) (1990b)

Wolfram, H.; *Die Germanen* (München: Beck, 2000)