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**The Sargatka Culture and the Huns**

The so-called Sargatka archaeological culture (Eastern Kazakhstan–Western Siberia) has been interesting for the Hungarian and Russian researchers from the middle of the last century. Some of those researchers believed that this territory was the original homeland of the ancient Magyars. The wonderful golden masterpieces of the Siberian Collection of the Russian Tsar Peter I, kept in the Ermitage (St. Petersburg) were collected from the area of the Sargatka Culture. The masterpieces of the Siberian Collection had no parallels found on archaeological sites almost up to our days. However decisive changes took place in this respect in the previous decades. Two untouched rich tumuli-graves from the 2–4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD were discovered and excavated in the centre of the former Sargatka Culture, on the right bank of the Irtysh River, in the Sidorovka and Isakovka tumuli-grave cemeteries (Omsk District, Russia). The golden and silver mounts and other jewellery found in these graves were the parallels of the objects kept in the Siberian Collection. So, it could be proved this way that the goldsmith works of the Siberian Collection were really originated from the territory of the Sargatka Culture. The determination of age and ethnical affiliation of the new Western Siberian finds and of the golden objects of the Siberian Collection was made easier by the recent discoveries of noble metal finds from the graves of Xiongnu aristocrats from Mongolia and Inner Mongolia, with the same shaping and motifs as of the previously mentioned objects. The Xiongnu or Asian Huns migrated towards the West in the 2–4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD and beside other territories they conquered the area of the Sargatka Culture too. The Ugrian population living there was partly annihilated, partly fled into the Northern areas, and partly joined the Huns and marching with them further towards the West they became one of the components of the Magyar ethnogenesis.

The Sargatka Culture, once having been flourished in Central Asia and Western Siberia can be very significant for the research of the history of the ancient Magyars. The Hungarian researchers have been interested in that culture already from the thirties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. István Zichy and later Lajos Ligeti supposed that the region of the Isim and Tobol rivers could have been the original homeland of the Magyars. Erik Molnár also presumed that the Ugrian original home was on the territory of the Sargatka Culture, though he did not mention the name of this culture, which still was unknown for Hungarian scientists, and so naturally for him too [MOLNÁR 1953].

Among the researchers of the history of the ancient Magyars, István Fodor believes that the ancient Magyars were hiding under the cover of the name of the Sargatka Culture. An excellent Udmurt linguist

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has the same opinion [VASILEV 1989]. Chernetsov suggested at the beginning of the fifties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that ancient Ugrians (Magyars) and Sabarians were living in the area of the Sargatka Culture.

It seems to be natural to presume that an Indo-European leading stratum had existed in the population of the Sargatka Culture. So we can agree with the opinion of N. P. Matejeva [MATEJEVA 1993, 1995], and V. A. Mogilnikov [MOGILNIKOV 1983] expressing this their opinpn about this possibility. (Compare with: Botalov and others). There is another interesting scientific supposition according which in the population of the Sargatka area included the predecessors of the Samoyeds [KIZLASOV 1988].

The existence of Turkish elements in the culture (M. F. Kosarjev's theory) is very unlikely [KOSARIEV 1984]. As we shall see, there are chronological proofs against this possibility.

V. A. Mogilnikov wrote an excellent résumé about the archaeological relics of the Sargatka Culture [MOGILNIKOV 1992]. It becomes clear from his description that the 100000 square miles territory including the riversides of the Irtish – Isim – Tobol Rivers was the living place of the population of the Sargatka Culture. The territory of the culture extended to taiga in the North, to the Chani Lake in the Southeast, to the Ural District in the West and to the Baraba Steppe in the East. Its archaeological relics can be found mainly on the two banks of the Tobol River and on the riversides of the Isim and Irtish Rivers. As Mogilnikov writes, 300 fortified or not fortified settlements, tumuli grave cemeteries and simple cemeteries of the Sargatka Culture were exposed by archaeological expeditions or field-surveys in the last decades. Almost all the excavated archaeological relics had been robbed, and produced rather less than more finds. But the armament, dress, handwork (ceramics), import objects, burial customs, body of believes and ceremonies, and also the economic life of the population can be analysed even by the help of the found poorish relics. Theories were published about the history of the Sargatka Culture, and about the ethnic composition of the population in the enormous specialised literature of the given question. The collected finds of the periods in succession can help to determine the chronology of the culture. As we mentioned earlier, the Russian archaeologists regard the one-time population of the culture to be Ugrians, who had Scythian-Sarmatian leading stratum. Both among the Hungarian scientists and the Russian researchers there are some ones who place the original homeland of the Magyars somewhere to the territory of the Sargatka Culture. The works of those Russian researchers are hardly known in Hungarian scientific circles, and might became even less known in the future, because of the difficulties of scientific book-supply from the territory of the CIS.

István Fodor is also among those who connect the Sargatka Culture not only with the Ugrians but with the ancient Magyars too. His suppositions give archaeological foundation to the theories of those researchers of the ancient Magyar history who place the original Magyar homeland to the territory of North-eastern Kazakhstan and Western Siberia, into the area of the Irtish-Isim-Tobol Rivers. We also find more probable that the original Magyar homeland was in the Isim-Tobol district, than in the Ural-district or some elsewhere in Central Asia, Eastern Europe. However, we find it necessary to publish some less known archaeological data and supposition met by us about this problem in the Russian scientific literature. We believe that such problem is the chronology of the Sargatka Culture, when was the end of the existence of the culture, respectively, and when left the population of the culture the given territory, having joined with one of the waves of the Great Immigration of Nomadic Peoples.

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István Fodor argues that the ancient Magyars moved from the territory of the Sargatka Culture into the Ural-Volga District in the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century because they did not want to submit themselves to the rising Turkish Empire. But, as we can understand from the Russian specialized literature, it seems that the Sargatka Culture had ceased to exist at least a century earlier than the period of the Turk expansion.

V. A. Mogilnikov sums up the chronology of the Sargatka Culture as follows:

The existence of the culture: 5<sup>th</sup> century BC – 3d – 4<sup>th</sup> century AD

Mogilnikov presumes the following periods:

1<sup>st</sup> Period: 5<sup>th</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC

2d Period: 3d – 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC

3d Period: 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC – 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD

4<sup>th</sup> Period: 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD – 4<sup>th</sup> century AD

[MOGILNIKOV 1992, 296–297]

N. P. Matejeva presumes that the culture lived on the banks of the Tobol River up to the 5<sup>th</sup> century. But even then, the population of the culture had disappeared from that territory much earlier than the Turkish appearance in Western Siberia.

The characteristic cemeteries of the Sargatka Culture are tumuli-grave cemeteries, the burials are exclusively inhumation burials. The culture also have burials without kurgans, the poorer members of the population could have been buried in these. There was no united tribal state on the territory. The main occupation of the population had been horse-breeding and sheep-breeding. Though they were not real Nomads yet, they could have taken part in the war campaigns of their southern Nomadic neighbours.

In the period between the 5<sup>th</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC Saka tribes might have intruded into the territory of the Sargatka Culture and the Sarmatians having arrived together with them, might have been assimilated by the local population.

The origin of the Sargatka Culture might be found in the southern population of the Bronze Age. More exactly, it could have developed from the Sargarin culture, coming from the direction of Omsk town of our days. Forest people could have assimilated to the Sargatka population too.

The territory of the Sargatka Culture also included the Tobol region. They had pressed the population of the so-called Gorohovo Culture out from there in the 5<sup>th</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. Later they engaged into battles with the Kulaj population in the Isim-Tobol area. The Kulaj population which was moving from the North to the more southern regions, might be even more important for the archaeological investigation of the ancient Magyars than the Sargatka Culture.

The influence of the Asian Huns (Xiongnu) can be observed on the Sargatka Culture already from the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC [MOGILNIKOV 1992, 308.].

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The population of the Sargatka and Gorohovo Culture was undoubtedly in contact with those Ugrians too who lived in the most Northern areas.

The appearance of the Asian Huns can be proved by archaeological finds in the given area, for example by the sites of Kos-Agacs and Borovoje.

The archaeologists of our days had no possibility to find untouched Western-Siberian noble graves from the discussed period almost up to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In spite of his fact, we could imagine the once-upon-a-time richness of the kurgans of Western-Siberia by the help of the material of Peter I Tsar's Siberian Collection kept in the Hermitage. These wonderful noble metal goldsmith works, created in the so-called Animal Style were all sporadic finds, the data about their place of discovery were lost, or never existed. As V. V. Radlov writes: One cannot see the traces of robbery only on one kurgan of each thousand in Siberia; and one of thousand from those without traces of robbery are really not robbed". According to L. R. Kizlasov even one untouched kurgan was not unearthed in Siberia up to 1983 [Chernetsov 1953; Kizlasov 1988, 16–19]. Sometimes an untouched grave could be found in a robbed kurgan, but the finds unearthed from them could not be compared with the golden treasure of the I. Peter Tsar's Siberian Collection.

From 1983 this situation has changed decisively, for the greatest delight of those researchers who deal with the archaeology of Western Siberia, Eastern Kazakhstan and Outer Mongolia. Untouched rich graves were excavated on the left bank of the Irtysh River, between the Om and Tara rivers, only a few miles from each other. Those graves in question contained many golden objects from the same type as those kept in I. Peter Tsar's Siberian Collection. First in 1986, V. I. Matjushenko unearthed an untouched burial of a rich warrior from the 2<sup>d</sup> grave of the 1<sup>st</sup> kurgan of the Sidorovka tumuli-grave cemetery [MATJUSHENKO–TATAUROVA 1997]. (Precious finds got to the surface from the other, robbed graves of the cemetery too). Then in 1989, I. I. Pogodin unearthed an even richer aristocratic warrior's untouched burial from the 6<sup>th</sup> grave of the 3<sup>rd</sup> kurgan in the Isakovka I. cemetery. Both burials can be dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> century AD [MATJUSHENKO–TATAUROVA 1997, 62]. These two new finds may change our views about the process of the history of the Sargatka Culture. They certainly show that some kind of centre of a tribe confederation could have existed in the triangle of the Irtysh–Om–Tara Rivers. The great majority of the finds of the Sargatka Culture are concentrated on the steppes of this triangle [compare with: MOGILNIKOV 1992, 298, map.] Up to now, only the rich find of the Sidorovka cemetery is published in details. First of all, the reader's attention is directed to the Sidorovka 1<sup>st</sup> kurgan 2<sup>nd</sup> grave, and above all, its archaeological finds are described in the publication of V. I. Matjushenko and L. V. Tataurova.<sup>1</sup>

The warrior who was buried in the Sidorovka 1<sup>st</sup> kurgan 2<sup>nd</sup> grave lay on a special couch. His dress and quiver was covered by brocade silk. There was a cauldron at his feet, with food for the other world, and there was also a silver cup. On the left side of the deceased there was an iron armour, under him and around him the noble metal mounts of the harness, among them a pair of gilded silver phalera, and a spear, a bell, and arrow-heads. The warrior was dressed into a rich suit, decorated with gold mounts. The dress was kept together by a weapon belt, with gold and silver buckles and gold mounts. A dagger

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<sup>1</sup> A part of the Sidorovka finds could be seen by the Hungarian public in Budapest, in the Hungarian National Museum, in 1993, on the exhibition of István Fodor – D. D. Vasiljev: „Our ancestors and predecessors”.

and a sword, made of quality steel was buckled to the belt, also by precious metal buckles. The hilt of the dagger was also covered by gold. The warrior wore gold necklace, and there was a gold earring in his left ear. There were two Hun-type cauldrons in the burial. (Such cauldrons were known from the robbed noble kurgans on the banks of the Tobol-river from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD).

It is interesting that there were only two burials in the 1<sup>st</sup> kurgan of the Sidorovka cemetery. The first grave lying in the centre of the kurgan was robbed. Only one or two gold mount and female bones got to the surface from it. (Maybe, these were the traces of a human sacrifice). The robbers had discovered most probably this grave and they had not continued the search on the territory of the kurgan. That's why the second – and really rich – grave of this kurgan remained untouched.

The warrior's burial from the 6<sup>th</sup> grave of the 3d kurgan of the Isakovka I. cemetery was even richer than the above described grave in the Sidorovka cemetery. However, the Isakovka grave is only partly published even today [MORDVINCEVA 2002; POGODIN 1996].

The Sidorovka cemetery is dated by the publishing archaeologists to the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> century AD., in other words, it is dated to the first centuries of the period of the Great Immigration of the Nomadic Peoples [MATJUSHENKO–TATAUROVA 1997, 103]. They brought to the surface altogether 564 objects from the unearthed grave. According to the authors the import objects found in the 1<sup>st</sup> Kurgan, namely the golden and silver objects (jewellery, mounts, decorations) of the harness) could have arrived to the territory of the Sargatka Culture from south-western or eastern–south-eastern direction, and there are objects shaped in Saka-Sarmatian, Eastern–Persian and Xiongnu style among them. This supposition seems to be at least partly correct. For example the punctual parallels of the golden belt buckles decorated by the scene of two tigers struggling with a dragon can be seen on bronze grave-finds and sporadic finds from the Orkhon-River district (Mongolia) and on the eastern side of the Baikal Lake. For example, A. V. Davidova unearthed bronze parallels of the Sidorovka golden belt-buckles in the Xiongnu cemetery of Ivolgino, East from the Baikal Lake. Davidova is convinced that the bronze belt-buckles were rank-symbols among the Xiongnus. The Russian archaeologists, among them Matjushenko and Tataurova too – conceded the theory of Davidova. They also believe, that the gold objects decorated by turquoise and other semi-precious stone of the I. Peter Tsar's Siberian Collection had been created by the Scythians, and their bronze copies were used by the Xiongnu aristocrats. They say that the Scythian art had influence on the Xiongnus, but the fashion among them was the gold decoration but the bronze one (Compare with: MATJUSHENKO–TATAUROVA 1997, 97–99.). However this theory seems to collapse in the reflection of those golden goldsmith works decorated with turquoise and other semi-precious stones which have got to the surface from the graves of the Xiongnu aristocrats in Mongolia recently. [Compare, for example: TSEVENDORJ 2013, 9, 96–98; ERDENEBAATAR 2015, 158, Fig. 5.1; 155, Fig. 2.2.]. It seems that the Russian archaeologists met only such untouched graves where the Xiongnu common people buried their deceased. The archaeologists found only bronze belt-buckles in these graves, and got to believe that the Xiongnus had no golden belt-buckles, only bronze ones. [Compare: MOGILNIKOV 1992b, 261]. However, as we have got to know from the newest data of the Mongolian archaeological literature, belt buckles and mounts made of bronze, bone, stone were worn only by the Xiongnu common people. The Xiongnu leaders, especially those ones from the highest aristocracy, wore golden, silver buckles decorated them with semi-precious stones, mainly with turquoise. The background of the scenes on these precious goldsmith works could be trees, plants, mountains and

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rivers – just like on the golden objects of Peter I Tsar’s Siberian Collection [TSEVENDORJ 2011, 130; TSEVENDORJ 2013, 99.]. The bronze buckles with the same scenes for the poorer Xiongnu warriors were only the copies of those ones which were made of noble metal for the Xiongnu aristocracy. This statement of the Mongolian archaeologist, who have the best knowledge of the Inner-Asian Xiongnu burials makes it highly probable that in contrast with the Russian theories, the origin of the gold buckles of Sidorovka and Isakovka, decorated by turquoise inlets and depicting scenes of animal struggles, can be much rather connected with the Xiongnus than with the Scythians. What is more, a punctual parallel of the scene of the Sidorovka golden buckle was found in Inner Mongolia – carved from nephrite. This object could be made only in a Chinese workshop for Xiongnu nobles. The nephrite parallels of the Sidorovka belt buckle makes it even less probable that the Xiongnu aristocracy wore bronze belt-buckles as rank-symbols, and not buckles made of noble metal or other precious material. Beside all this, abundant archaeological data show that the Central-Asian Saka and Scythian aristocrats wore other type of gold belt buckles than the Xiongnus [AKISHEV 1978, 100–101; SARIADINI 1985, 155.]

As we already mentioned earlier, the newly found Western Siberian belt-buckles from the Sidorovka and Isakovka I. graves are the same type as the paired belt buckles of the I. Peter Tsars Siberian Collection. The newly found gold masterpieces with semi-precious stone inlets and also the silver, gilded silver finds from the Xiongnu noble graves of Mongolia are also from the same type. They clearly show the Xiongnu origin of the precious objects of the Sidorovka and Isakovka I. finds and at least of a part of the Siberian Collection of the Hermitage too. [RUDENKO 1962, Figures 1,4, II, III, IX tables; MATJUSHENKO–TATAUROVA 1997, 148–9; Figures 28, 29; Compare with: ERDENEBAATAR 2015, 4, 146, Figure 3.3; 152, Figure 2.2.]. (By the way: The Siberian Collection of I. Peter tsar contains 250 golden objects. Only those 40 ones are published which are parts of the permanent exhibition of the Hermitage [RUDENKO 1962, 5.]).

And now let us return to the Hungarian theories about the Sargatka Culture and the finds of the Sidorovka cemetery.

István Fodor firmly believes that the Sidorovka finds and the goldsmith masterpieces of I. Peter Tsar’s Siberian Collection must be the heritage of those Finno-Ugrian Magyars who – according to his opinion – lived in the Sargatka Culture up to the 6<sup>th</sup> century A. D.

He writes about this theme in his latest work as follows [FODOR 2009; compare with: ERDÉLYI 2009, 156-157]:

“The question can be answered about the place if the ethnogenesis of the ancient Magyar people, even if only approximately for the time being. This process had to take place in the woody steppe zone of Western Siberia, in the area of the Irtysh-Isim-Tobol rivers, namely, on the territory of that Sargatka Culture which existed from the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD...

...The population of this archaeological culture had strong trade- and cultural connections with the Nomadic peoples of the southern steppes. The Sidorovka cemetery, in the vicinity of Omsk, can be dated to the period of Christ’s birth. Two gilded silver harness mounts (a phalera pair) with the depiction of peacock dragon got to the surface from a rich untouched grave of this cemetery. These precious objects were brought into the territory of the Sargatka Culture as import from Iran. It is also quite probable that the famous gold masterpieces of the Peter I Tsar’s Siberian Collection were created just on the territory of

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the Sargatka Culture. We must direct the readers' attention to a certain gold buckle from this collection, dated to the 4–3 centuries AD, which represent a woman, and two men, resting under a tree, beside horses, which are bound to trees. According to the observation of Géza Nagy, our outstanding archaeologist this scene can be connected with the scenes of the St. László-legend, depicted in the Middle Ages on frescoes in our churches, and they certainly refer to the ancient, Eastern variant of this legend."

We would like to make some remarks about these statements of István Fodor as follows:

Fodor dates the 2<sup>nd</sup> grave of the 1<sup>st</sup> kurgan of the Sidorovka cemetery "to the period of Christ's birth". In contrast with this statement, the Russian archaeologists who unearthed the Sidorovka cemetery, namely, V. I. Matjushenko and I. P. Tataurova date this burial for the 2<sup>nd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. [MATJUSHENKO–TATAUROVA 1997, 103]. Fodor does not expound, why dates the given burial otherwise than those archaeologists, who excavated it?

Neither gives Fodor the source of that of his data, according to which that the two gilded silver phalera-pair representing a peacock dragon would have arrived to the territory of the Sargatka Culture just from Iran. It seems that this statement of his is only a not too well founded supposition. According to the opinion of the excavators of Sidorovka the parallels of this phalera pair might be found on the territories of Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Mongolia from the same period [MATJUSHENKO-TATAUROVA 1997, 60]. Persia, in other words Iran is not mentioned by them connected with the phaleras found in the Sidorovka cemetery. It would be a more probable supposition that the inhabitants of the Sargatka Culture had obtained the given phaleras from the Saka-Scythian tribes which had lived South of the Sargatka Culture, However, the newest Saka archaeological data show clearly that neither the Persians nor the Central Asian Saka aristocrats were those people who decorated the harness of their horses with phalera-pairs. Z. Samashev Kazakh archaeologist unearthed *thirteen* skeletons of horses, which were buried together with a noble Saka warrior having laid into one of the Berel kurgans (Eastern Kazakhstan, the Alai Mountains). The harnesses of these horses were decorated abundantly with gold mounts – but there was not even one phalera among them.

In contrast with the Saka caparisons, the harnesses of the noble Xiongnu of Inner-Asia (Mongolia) were generally decorated with silver, gilded silver phalera-pairs, or in case of the richest graves with gold phalera-pairs. The depictions on these phaleras mainly show mythical animals: unicorn antelope (Gol Mod, 20. Grave); dragon (Noyon uul, 20.Grave); deer (Noyon Uul, 6. Grave); ibex (Tsaram, 7. Grave (TSEVENDORJ 2013, 62). According to the Mongolian archaeologists of the Xiongnu period the mythical animals on the phaleras of the Xiongnu noble graves symbolise the fact that the masters of the buried horses with the richly decorated harnesses had possessed very high place in the Xiongnu society [Tsevendorj 2013, the same article].

The golden phalera-pair excavated from the 1 Grave of the Gol Mod-2 Xiongnu aristocratic cemetery because of their artistic depiction have distinguished place among the phaleras unearthed from the Xiongnu graves of Mongolia. The mythical animals represented on them are unicorn peacock dragons. These very strong and powerful mythical animals are named BERS by the Mongolians [ERDENEBAATAR 2015, 221]. The eyes, ears, feathers and foot joins of the mythic animal are decorated by turquoise and nephrite inlets. Several gilded silver and bronze phalera-pairs representing unicorns got also to the surface from the Gol Mod-2 cemetery. So, it seems very probable that the close parallels of

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the Sidorovka gilded silver phaleras should be sought after not in Iran, but among the finds of the Xiongnu aristocratic cemeteries of Mongolia and Siberia.

We must also mention that the robbed 1. grave of the Gol Mod-2 cemetery, from where the gold phalera-pair with semi-precious stones inlets got to the surface, – because of the special noble metal objects having forgotten there by the most probably rushing robbers – is presumed to be the grave of the Xiongnu Great King, in other words, the Shanju by the finder Mongolian archaeologists. The only known close parallels of the gold phaleras of the Gol Mod-2 cemetery, kept in the I. Peter tsar's Siberian Collection, must have derived from the same category of graves. These goldsmith masterpieces, with semi-precious stone inlets, have 167–169 gram weigh. The depiction on them is a deer in the middle and mythic animals around it. S. I. Rudenko identified these two phaleras – incorrectly – as dress mounts [RUDENKO 1962, 15; 42-43; III. Table, 1; V. Table, 4.]. (Evidently, the great Russian archaeologist would not have made such a mistake if he had found any phaleras in the world-famous Paziryk Cemetery in the Altai Mountains, excavated by him). V. I. Matjushenko and L. V. Tataurova recognised that the large golden discs of the Siberian Collection are phaleras, but they did not express their opinion whether these objects could have been harness or dress mounts. However, they state that “the phaleras of the Siberian Collection are astoundingly near to the Sidorovka belt buckles in style” [Matjushenko–Tataurova, 1997, 73].

We also have to make some remarks about those golden buckles of the Siberian Collection which Fodor regards to be the eastern parallel of the last scene of the Saint László-legend. The previous scene, the wrestling, which is also many times represented on the medieval frescoes of the Hungarian and Transylvanian churches, can be met also on bronze belt buckles published long ago from the Ordos Region [Salmony 1933, XXI. T, 2, 3.]. These belt buckles represent two wrestling men, between two horses facing each other, in a very similar manner to the representation of King Saint László wrestling with the Cuman warrior on our medieval frescoes. What is more, not long ago a golden buckle decorated with semi-precious stone inlets just with the same scene, was published. It had been excavated from the 140<sup>th</sup> grave of the Keshenzuang aristocratic Xiongnu cemetery (China, Shaanxi Province), in 1956. [TSEVENDOR] 2013, 99]. So, it seems that the Siberian and Inner-Asian bronze and gold belt buckles representing the different scenes of the Eastern variant of the Saint László King legend most probably must be dated a few hundred years later than the 4<sup>th</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, mentioned by István Fodor. Those people who could have made and worn them could not have been the Scythians. They had been much rather those Asian Huns who had lived once on the territory of Inner-Asia, and appeared in Western Siberia – on the territory of the Sargatka Culture too – later, in the 2<sup>nd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> century AD, in the course of their immigration towards the West.

Of course, the above mentioned objects, which are widely attested from the noble Xiongnu graves of Inner Asia recently, could have got to the territory of the Sargatka Culture by trade-connection. However, we must take into account that the 2<sup>nd</sup> grave of the Sidorovka 1<sup>st</sup> Kurgan is dated to that period when the Asian Huns themselves moved towards the West: to the 2<sup>nd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD., in other words: when the Great Immigration of the Mounted Nomadic Peoples had begun. [Compare: BERNSTAM 1951, 238, a map about the Hun campaigns in the 2<sup>nd</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.). So that supposition seems to be much more logical, that the given objects were brought to the territory of the Sargatka Culture by the Huns themselves from the East and South-East in the course of their East-West migration. Those people who

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lay in the Sidorovka and Isakovka graves, had been Hun aristocrats from the highest circles. At least they had had to be tribe-leaders.

V. A. Mogilnikov sums up the events in Siberia and Central Asia after the fall of the Xiongnu Empire in Inner Asia as follows:

The Northern Xiongnus could preserve their independency in Inner Asia, even if being a bit ruffled, after the thrusts they got from the Chinese Imperial Army in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. They started towards the West sweeping along those tribes whom they met on the way in the

2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, Mogilnikov presumes that they created an enormous tribe confederation, even a state on the territories of Central Asia, Kazakhstan and South-western Siberia. This Nomadic state had got known as the Hun Empire. The significant increase in their population led to the further migration of the peoples of the given territory towards the West [MOGILNIKOV 1992, 254-55]. Connected with all this, V. A. Mogilnikov writes the followings about the extinguishment of the Sargatka Culture and the beginning of the Magyar ethnogenesis:

“The Sargatka Culture ceased to exist at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A. D. or at the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, evidently because of the events of the Great Immigration of the Nomadic Peoples. The settled part of the Sargatka population was annihilated, or run away in Northern direction into the taiga zone of the Tobol–Irtish Rivers. Those Ugrian Nomads, who moved towards the West in the multinational community of the Huns, became one of the elements of the Magyar ethnogenesis. If we direct our attention to the Ugrian language of the Magyars, we must face the fact that the Sargatka Culture, the unique one in Western Siberia which can be interpreted to be Ugrian, is connected with the ancient Magyars” [Mogilnikov 1992, 31-311]. It is worth mentioning that the great Hungarian scientist, Ármin Vámbéry came to a very similar conclusion as Mogilnikov, even if only theoretically, and without the still none existent archaeological proofs, already at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Vámbéry presumed that “there could be many Ugrians in the army of Attila” [Vámbéry 1898, 47].

Here we must mention the theory that the archaeological relics of those parts of the population of the Sargatka Culture which departed for the West could not be found among the finds of the Karajakupovo-Kushnarenkovo Culture, on the territory of the Bashkirian and Tatar Republics of our days. Mogilnikov did not state more than the Ugrian Sargatka Culture could have been connected with the Magyar ethnogenesis. He also presumed that those parts of the Sargatka Population which run away from the Huns could be the founders of the Silva and Kushnarenkovo cultures in the 7<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries [MOGILNIKOV 1992, 311.]. However there are no archaeological references which could “bridge” the gap between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, or even between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. In other words, there are no archaeological proofs of this transmigration. Telling this, we do not want to state that the ancient Magyars had never lived on the territories of the above mentioned cultures. But the archaeological data at our disposal do not prove either that the original Magyar homeland was on the territory of these cultures, or that some kind of migration which could make the valleys of the Kama-Belaja Rivers the living place of the ancient Magyars by a settlement in the 4<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The Ugrian–Turk interpretation also emerged about the ethnical composition of the Kushnarenkovo–Karajakupovo cultures [KHALIKOV 1989, 68]. The anthropological material of the cemeteries of the

Kushnarenkovo culture refers to a Southern ethnicum and not to a Western-Siberian ethnicum [AKIMOVA 1968, 64–68].

Finally we would like to draw the reader's attention to an interesting matter of detail connected with the 2d burial of the 1<sup>st</sup> kurgan of the Sidorovka cemetery.

A T-shaped brocade silk piece interlaced with golden thread was found in the above mentioned grave, by the finder archaeologists, on the left side of the skull. Its measures: 0.65x0.43 m. The scarf surrounded the environs of the buried warrior's head [MATJUSHENKO–TATAUROVA 1997, 13]. The authors of the "Sidorovka" monograph determine this object as "a kind of scarf". However, we have to direct the reader's attention to the following: The form of the given piece of brocade is very similar to that silk burial mask, which is described by the I Li Shu ritual book as a part of the Chinese clerks' grave-clothes. [DE GROOT 1892, 333.]. A similar silk burial masks got to the surface from the burial of a Chinese princess from the Han period, and also from a male burial of the 9<sup>th</sup> kurgan of the Kenkol Xiongnu cemetery Kirgizistan). [WEN WU PRESS 1972, 9–10; BERNSTAM 1940, 27–32]. The upper part of the T-shaped brocade piece could cover the forehead of the deceased, and the lower part could cover his face.<sup>1</sup> Our supposition seems to be supported by the fact that L. I. Pogodin discovered the remnants of *two* brocade mortuary cloth interlaced abundantly with golden thread on their edges in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grave of the 6<sup>th</sup> kurgan of the Isakovka I. cemetery. (By the way: The warrior unearthed in Isakovka was dressed into a silk cloth interlaced with golden thread [POGODIN 1996, 124–134]. He had a weapon belt decorated with gold mounts, and several gold and silver objects).

The earliest written information about brocade interlaced with golden thread is connected with the events of the period between the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC – 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD in the Chinese sources. They tell about Mao Tun shanju's burial: The deceased was buried into coffin, namely, into inner and outer coffin, **his body was covered with gold and brocade silk.** (*emphasised by L. I. Pogodin.*) Huan-di Chinese emperor mentions among the list of presents in his letter about the extension of the peace to the Xiongnu Shanju the following objects: "**long brocade silk caftan... belt with silver mounts and buckles (!)**" (*emphasised by the authors of this article*), 10 silk piece interlaced with golden thread. Huan Di Emperor gives the following information in another letter to the great Laosan Gijuj Shanju: "I send the usual yearly amount of white rice, **brocade**, silk, and many other things with the above mentioned clerk".<sup>2</sup>

We presume that the brocade silk piece found in the 2<sup>nd</sup> burial of the 1<sup>st</sup> kurgan of the Sidorovka Cemetery must be of one of the first silk burial masks which appeared among the Ugrian population of

<sup>1</sup> The earliest burial masks placed on silk face cover or mortuary cloth were unearthed in China, from the princely and "pre-Xiongnu" graves of the Chou period (8<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC). The different forms of these types of burial masks, with silk shroud under them, spread widely among them among the mounted Nomads of the Great Immigration Period, moving from the East to the West, so among the ancient Magyars and the Land Conquering Magyars too.

<sup>2</sup> Pogodin 1996, 136. The author had serious reasons or referring to the mentioned Chinese written sources. It seems from the second quotation that golden objects could be made in the Chinese goldsmith workshops for the orders Xiongnu aristocracy, the same way as jewellery was made for the Scythian, Sarmatian, Hun, Avar, etc. leading strata in the West, in the Greek, Byzantine towns on the Northern bank of the Black Sea. Silver and gold goldsmith work had appeared in China already in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Millennium BC, and it became highly developed for the period of the Han Dynasty. Scenes in Xiongnu style, with animal struggles appeared on Chinese goldsmith works too. [Compare: Murizio Scarpari, 2000, 207–210]. The "common roots" of the scenes of the golden buckles unearthed in Sidorovka and Isakovka should be sought after in the Chinese goldsmith workshops working for the Xiongnu aristocracy and not in the direction of the Scythian-Persian world.

the Western Siberian Sargatka Culture from eastern, south-eastern direction, by the mediation of the Huns. This silk burial mask could be regarded as an early predecessor of the burial masks of the ancient Magyars, made of silk and noble metal eye-and mouth covers.

### Drawings

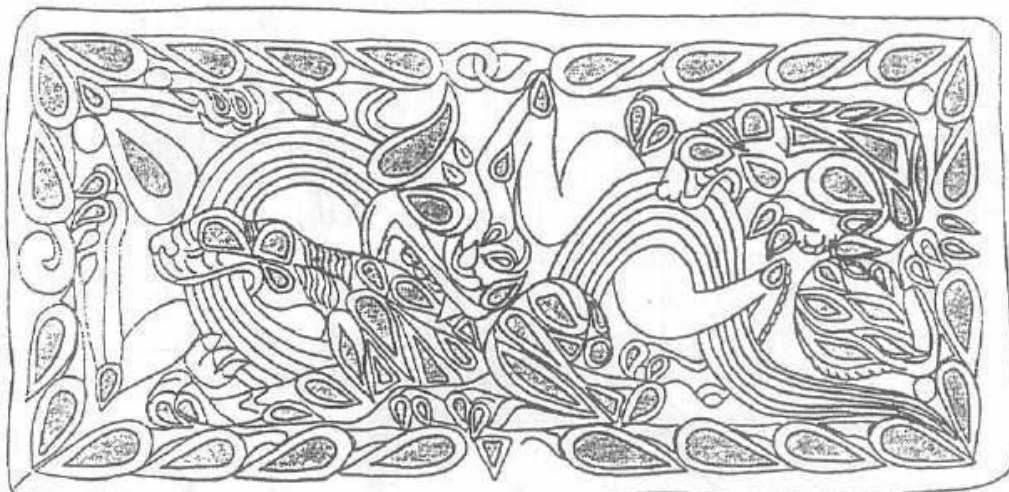


Figure 1: Gold buckle from the 1<sup>st</sup> Kurgan 2<sup>nd</sup> grave of the Sidorovka Cemetery



Figure 2: Xiongnu bronze buckle from the Ordos-district

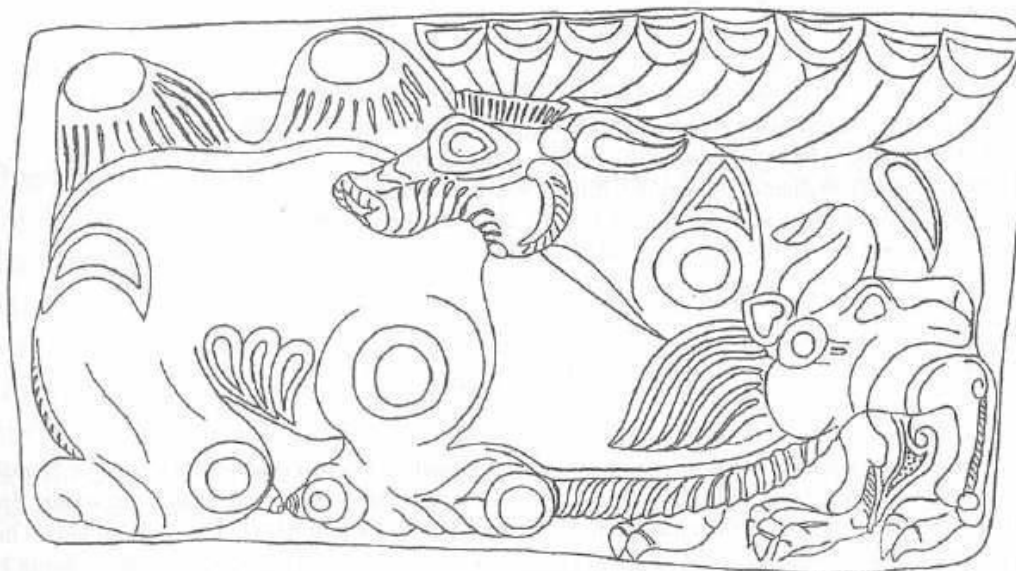


Figure 3: Gold buckle with the scene of a wolf mauling a camel from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grave of the 6<sup>th</sup> Kurgan of the Isakovka I. Cemetery.

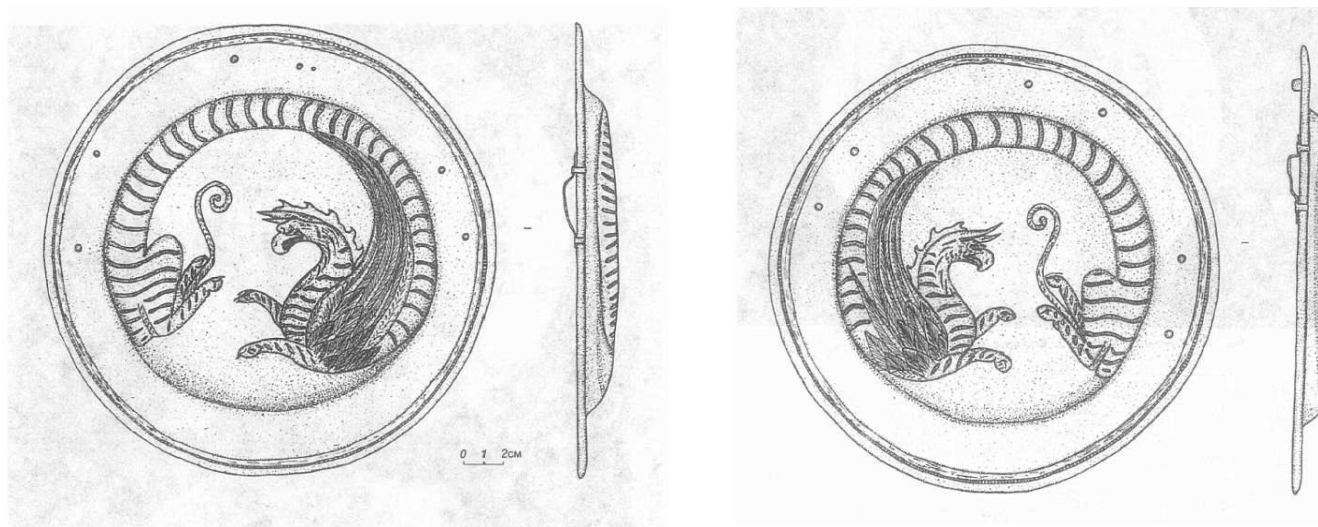


Figure 4: Gilded silver phalera-pair, with the depiction of a peacock dragon. (Sidorovka Cemetery, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grave of the 1<sup>st</sup> Kurgan.).



Figure 5: Gold phalera-pair depicting an unicorn peacock dragon from the Gol Mod-2 Xiongnu noble cemetery.

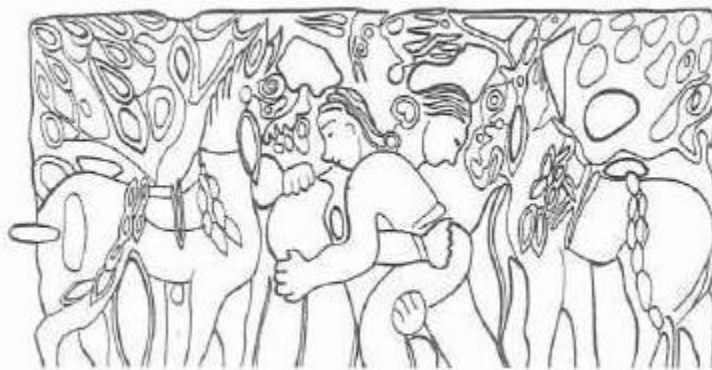


Figure 6: Gold buckle with a scene of wrestlers from the 140 grave of the Xiongnu noble cemetery of Kenchenzuang (China, Shaanxi province).

The photos were taken by the authors.

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