

# The Qavars (Qabars) and their Role in the Hungarian Tribal Federation

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The seven Hungarian (Magyar) tribes called 'Hetumoger' (Seven Hungarians) had been joined by a smaller foreign group, the so-called Qavars or Qabars before the conquest of the Carpathian Basin at the end of the ninth century. Their history and historical role will be examined in this study. I will use both names alternatively.

Only two sources preserved their name and some data concerning their history. The earlier source is the Annals of Salzburg (*Annales Iuvavenses Maximi*), which recorded at the year 881 an eclipse of the sun, then two wars (battles?) on the territory of Ostmark (today: Austria) belonging to the Eastern Frankish Empire: "The first war [was] with the Hungarians [*cum Ungris*] at Wenia. The second war [was] with the Qabars [*cum Cowaris*] at Culmite."<sup>1</sup> This source referred to a raid of the Hungarians (Magyars) and their ally, the Qabars/Qavars, who "fought on separate fronts and in separate units" during the same campaign.<sup>2</sup>

The second source contains a brief and concise history "of the nation of the Kabaroi" in chapter 39 of *De administrando imperio* (henceforth: DAI) compiled from different sources around 948–952 in the name and order of Emperor Constantine VII (944–959).<sup>3</sup> After the compulsory preliminary notes "it is worth knowing"<sup>4</sup> this chapter enumerates the following data: "The so-called Kabaroi were of the race of the Chazars. Now, it fell out that a secession was made by them to their government, and when a civil war broke out their first government prevailed, and some

<sup>1</sup> "Sol obscuratus est a tercio usque ad sextam horam. Primum bellum cum Ungaris ad Weniam, secundum bellum cum Cowaris ad Culmite." See for the *Annals of Salzburg, Continuatio Annalium Iuvavensium Maximorum*, red. H. Bresslau, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores* XXX/2. Hannoverae–Lipsiae 1934, 742.; for the discovery of this source see E. Klebel, "Eine neu aufgefundene Salzburger Geschichtsquelle," *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Salzburger Landeskunde*, 1921; for its Hungarian translation see S. L. Tóth, *A honfoglalás korának írott forrásai*. [The Written Sources of the Age of the Hungarian Conquest] Ed. Gy. Kristó. Szegedi Középkortörténeti Könyvtár 7. Szeged 1995, (henceforth: HKÍF) 209; for the English rendering of the Latin text, see Gy. Kristó, *Hungarian History in the Ninth Century*, Szeged 1996, 150.

<sup>2</sup> Kristó, *Hungarian History*, 150.

<sup>3</sup> See for the analysis of *De administrando imperio*, J. B. Bury, "The treatise *De administrando imperio*." *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 14 (1906), 517–577; Gy. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica I–II*, Berlin 1983, 2: 356–389; Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*. Vol. 2, Commentary. ed. R. J. H. Jenkins, London 1962. (henceforth: Commentary)

<sup>4</sup> Every new information is introduced by the phrases "it is worth knowing" (in Greek: *isteon oti or oti*), cf. H. Grégoire, *Le nom et l'origine de Hongrois. Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 91 (1937), 630–642.

of them were slain, but others escaped and came and settled with the Turks in the land of the Pechenegs, and they made friends with one another, and were called 'Kabaroi'. And so to these Turks they taught also the tongue of the Chazars, and to this day they have this same language, but they have also the other tongue of the Turks. And because in wars they show themselves strongest and most valorous of the eight clans, and are leaders in war, they have been promoted to be first clans. There is one prince among them, I mean, among the three clans of the Kabaroi, who survives to this day."<sup>5</sup> After this more detailed history of the Qavars, in the next, 40th chapter, entitled "of the clans of the Kabaroi and the Turks" Emperor Constantine briefly summarized the story of the Qabars, when he mentioned that "the first is the aforesaid clan of the Kabaroi which split off the Chazars". Having listed all the eight clans of the Qabars and Turks (Hungarians/Magyars) the Byzantine emperor added, that "having thus combined with one another, the Kabaroi dwelt with the Turks in the land of the Pechenegs."<sup>6</sup> Apart from these sources we have no direct data and evidence on the Qabars/Qavars, so we must base our hypotheses and conclusions on the brief remark of the Annals of Salzburg and the valuable compilation of Emperor Constantine, in whose work a whole chapter is dedicated to the Qabar story.

The first problem to be solved is the exact form of the ethnonym and/or tribal name Qabar and its origin and etymology (meaning). "The name Qabar is found in Constantine Porphyrogenitus in the form *Κάβαροι* and *Καβάρων* (gen. pl.)."<sup>7</sup> Emperor Constantine refers to these people with these phrases: 'so-called Kabaroi' (*λεγόμενοι Κάβαροι*) or 'certain Kabaroi' (*Κάβαροι τινες*).<sup>8</sup> These vague expressions may reflect uncertainty from the part of the Byzantine emperor or from the part of the possible informers as regards to the meaning of the ethnonym.<sup>9</sup> One further instance of Qabar in the form of Kabeiroi (*Καβείροι*) might appear in Byzantine sources in connection with the revolt of Thomas the Slav against the Byzantine emperor Michael II (in 821–824).<sup>10</sup> This Kabeiroi ethnonym is on the list of Thomas allies, most of these people enumerated were the inhabitants of the Caucasus region. However, it seems very probable, that 'Καβείροι' can be read 'Σάβειροι', so the real allies of the Byzantines rebels must have been the Sabirs, not the Qabars, if any people of the Caucasus played any role in this revolt at all.<sup>11</sup> It is a radical, but from

<sup>5</sup> For chapter 39 of DAI, see Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*. Greek text edited by Gy. Moravcsik, English tr. R. J. H. Jenkins. Washington DC 1967, (henceforth: DAI) 174–175; for an earlier English translation of the Greek text, see C. A. Macartney, *The Magyars in the Ninth Century*. Cambridge 1930, 231; for the summary interpretation of this chapter cf. *Commentary*, 149–150.

<sup>6</sup> For chapter 40 on the Kabaroi, see DAI 174–175.; cf. *Commentary* 150.

<sup>7</sup> P. B. Golden, *Khazar Studies. A Historico-Philological Inquiry into the Origins of the Khazars*, 2 vols. Budapest, 1980, 1: 139.

<sup>8</sup> See S. L. Tóth, "Kabarok (Kavarok) a 9. századi magyar törzsszövetségben." [Qabars (Qavars) in the ninth century Hungarian tribal federation.] *Századok* 118 (1984), 105; idem, *Levediatól a Kárpát-medencéig*. [From Levedia to the Carpathian Basin] Budapest 2011, 2 58.

<sup>9</sup> Tóth, *Levediatól*, 58.

<sup>10</sup> Theophanes Continuatus, *Historiae*. ed. I. Bekker. Bonnae 1838. 55. cf. Golden, *Khazar Studies*, 139, note 432.

<sup>11</sup> Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica* II. 262–263; Golden, *Khazar Studies*, 139–140.

linguistic and historical aspect a faulty hypothesis, which identified the Qabaroi with the three Qangar tribes, belonging to the Pecheneg confederation.<sup>12</sup> The Qabar "ethnonym also figures in the Latin source (Annals of Salzburg) in the form: Cowaris,"<sup>13</sup> which can be rendered as Qovar or rather Qavar/Kavar.<sup>14</sup> Hungarian place names, such as Kovár or Kovárc may also testify the Qovar/Kovar form of the ethnonym of this dissident Khazar group.<sup>15</sup> It is difficult to decide whether the Byzantine form, i.e. Qabar (Kábaroi) – which can reflect a Qavar ethnonym as well – or the Latin version, i.e. Qovar/Qavar would better denote the ethnic group, which joined the Hungarians. In historical research the Qabar form is more frequently used,<sup>16</sup> though both in earlier studies and mainly in Hungarian recent research the Qavar ethnonym is preferred.<sup>17</sup> According to a view, the "designation Khabar denoting the Khavars, like so many other names, is Hungarian historical convention. The Greek text reads as Khavar. Although in those days Khabar might also have been transliterated by the Greeks in the same way, we learn from the Latin written sources that the correct reading was indeed Khavar."<sup>18</sup> The Qabar form is considered the original Turkish form of the ethnonym, while the Latin Qovar ('Cowaris') version "probably came from a Hungarian source,"<sup>19</sup> as proved by Hungarian place names. It is practically impossible to state, which of these versions, Qabar-Qavar or Qobar-Qovar, is used, which can be considered the original, or rather with both the Qabar/Kabar and the Qavar/Kovar names this Khazar ethnic group were denoted.

The Qabar/Qavar name is clearly referred to an ethnic group, which includes three clans or rather tribes (γενεά), and was called by Constantine a nation (ἔθνος).<sup>20</sup> So it must have been an ethnonym, not a tribal name, though the two categories do not exclude each other. In the *Annals of Salzburg* some peoples were recorded, the Hungarians (*Ungri*) and the Qavars/Qovars. Similarly in DAI two people are mentioned, the Turks (*Tourkoi*) and the Qabars (*Kabaroi*). In both of these sources the Magyars (*Hetumoger*)<sup>21</sup> are denoted by an ethnonym (*Ungri*,

<sup>12</sup> Grégoire, *Le nom*, 637–640.

<sup>13</sup> Golden, *Khazar Studies*, 139.

<sup>14</sup> M. Gyóni, *A magyar nyelv görög feljegyzéses szórványemlékei*. [The sporadic relics of Hungarian language survived in Greek sources]. Budapest 1943, 61–62.

<sup>15</sup> Kovár in Hont and Nyitra counties, Kovárc in the Nyitra valley, see Gy. Németh, *A honfoglaló magyarság kialakulása*. [The Formation of the Landtaking Hungarians] Budapest 1930, 235–236; Golden, *Khazar Studies*, 139.

<sup>16</sup> See e.g. Kristó, *Hungarian History*, 150–152; Golden, *Khazar Studies* 139–141. etc.

<sup>17</sup> Macartney, *The Magyars*, 112–124.; Gy. Györffy, "A kabar kérdés" [The Kabar Problem]. in idem, *A magyarság keleti elemei* [The Oriental elements of the Hungarians]. Budapest 1990, 83–84; Tóth, *Levediától 53–65*; idem, *A honfoglalástól az államalapításig. A magyarság története a X. században*. [From the Conquest to the Foundation of the State. The history of the Magyars in the tenth century.] Budapest 2010, 136–140; A. Róna-Tas-Á. Berta, *West Old Turkic Loanwords in Hungarian*, 2 vols. Wiesbaden 2011, 1: 35.

<sup>18</sup> A. Róna-Tas, *Hungarians and Europe in the Early Middle Ages. An Introduction to Early Hungarian History*. Budapest 1999, 347.

<sup>19</sup> Golden, *Khazar Studies*, 139, 140.

<sup>20</sup> DAI 166–167.

<sup>21</sup> Anonymus (P. dictus magister), the author of *Gesta Ungarorum* (written around 1208) used both names of the Magyars (*Hungarii*, *Mogerii*) for the people, and wrote that "per ydionia alienigenarum Hungarii et in sua lingua propria Mogerii vocantur," and

*Tourkoi*), which is surely not their own name, but a name given by other people. So it seems highly probable, that the Qabar/Qavar name was not the collective name of the three tribes splitting off the Khazar Empire.<sup>22</sup> However, it was supposed as well, that the Qabar/Qavar ethnonym may have been their own name, reflecting the name of one of their clans/tribes.<sup>23</sup> It was assumed, that "one of the leading clans of the Khavars must have been called Khavar, a name which the new group consisting of three tribes commonly adopted."<sup>24</sup> Turkish people were rather frequently called by a combination of a numeral and an ethnonym.<sup>25</sup> The Hungarians/Magyars may have been denoted as 'Seven Magyars' (*Hetumoger*), there was a hypothesis that the joining Khazar tribes were named 'Three Qabars/Qavars' (in Hungarian: 'Háromkabar/Háromkavar').<sup>26</sup> This assumption holds true just in that case, if this ethnonym comes from a Hungarian source. The Hungarians may have used this Three Qavars/Qovars denomination in connection with the joining three tribes. The Hungarians may have called this dissident Khazar group 'Khozar' as well referring to their former confederation, the Khazar Empire.<sup>27</sup> A late Hungarian source, *Gesta Hungarorum* written by Anonymus probably at the beginning of the thirteenth century mentioned that a territory in the Carpathian Basin (between the Maros and Szamos rivers) was inhabited by people called Cozar.<sup>28</sup> Although the late Hungarian author could not be aware of the existence of a joining Khazar group, he may have preserved the memory of the Qavars, called by the Hungarians/Magyars either Qovar or Khozar.

What could be the meaning of the ethnonym of the Qabars/Qavars? Most of the researchers regarded it to be of Turkish origin.<sup>29</sup> For a long time the most accepted theory was that the original meaning of the Qabar name was 'those who revolt,' 'rebel.'<sup>30</sup> This etymology was criticized, and was emphasized, that qab- root "exists only theoretically," so "etymologies based on this root are highly speculative."<sup>31</sup> Although in spite of criticism, the 'rebels' etymology was regarded "the

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the 'Seven Magyars' for the leaders as well, "*septem principales persone, qui Hetumoger vocantur,*" cf. *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum tempore ducum regumque stirpis Arpadianae gestarum*. Ed. E. Szentpétery. (henceforth: SRH) I. Budapestini 1937, 33, 37.

<sup>22</sup> Tóth, *A kabarok*, 106.

<sup>23</sup> Tóth, *Levediától* 59.

<sup>24</sup> Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 348.

<sup>25</sup> With some examples as the Three Kharlukh (Üch Karlukh) or the Nine Oghuz (Tokhuz Oghuz), Ten Oghur (On Oghur) etc. see Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 340–341.

<sup>26</sup> See Gy. Kristó, *Magyar honfoglalás, honfoglaló magyarok*. [Hungarian Landtaking, Hungarians Settling in Homeland] Budapest 1996, 57.

<sup>27</sup> For the use of the earlier Khazar/Khozar name in case of the Qabars see Németh, *HMK* 1930, 238.

<sup>28</sup> SRH I: 49. "*a fluvio Morus usque ad fluvium Zomus...et terram illam habitarent gentes qui dicuntur Cozar.*"

<sup>29</sup> Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica* II. 144; *Commentary* 149.

<sup>30</sup> Á. Vámbéry, *A magyarság keletkezése és gyarapodása*. [The Formation and Development of the Hungarians]. Budapest 1895. 160. note 32; Németh, *HMK* 1930, 237.

<sup>31</sup> See e. g. Golden, *Khazar Studies*, 140.; accepted his criticism Gy. Németh, *A honfoglaló magyarság kialakulása*. [The Formation of Landtaking Hungarians] Second, Enlarged and Modified Edition, ed. Á. Berta. Budapest 1991, (henceforth: Németh, *HMK* 1991) 264.

most likely" solution, because "this fits the actual events of their history."<sup>32</sup> Later the theory was modified a bit, and a Turkish *qop-* root was assumed ('to rise', 'to revolt'), and the ethnonym Qovar would mean a command: 'rise, revolt.'<sup>33</sup> In my view this 'Rebel' etymology has some difficulties, and we cannot accept the pre-conception, that the meaning of the ethnonym should reflect the history of people, in this case the revolt of the Qabars/Qavars against the Khazar Empire. This explanation of the ethnonym shows the Khazar aspect, the negative judgment on the rebel tribes, who lost in the civil war and fled. From a historical perspective I do not regard this etymology a likely interpretation. The Hungarians, the seven Magyar tribes could not use this kind of ethnonym, and the joining three Khazar tribes were probably even less willing to accept such a 'nickname.'<sup>34</sup> Another theory assumes, that using a *qap-* root, Qabar "could then, conceivably be etymologized as 'those who attack, the Attackers.'<sup>35</sup> This etymology seems to me a more plausible explanation, because the Qabars were characterized by Emperor Constantine, that "in wars they show themselves strongest and most valorous of the eight clans, and are leaders in war."<sup>36</sup> This 'attackers' etymology fits their role inside the Hungarian tribal federation, and may be derived from the joining Khazar tribes as well.<sup>37</sup> However, the likelihood of this etymology was judged less likely, than the 'Rebel' explanation.<sup>38</sup> According to a hypothesis the Qabar ethnonym or its equivalent was given by the Hungarians to the newcomers and had originally the meaning of 'nose', which expressed their foremost position in the battle order and military system of the Hungarian tribes wearing similar names.<sup>39</sup> The Qavar ethnonym was also deduced from the ethnonym Chwār, Chowār, people of Ch/w/oresm, "a people of mixed stock and judaizing religion," who joined the Chazars after their expulsion from Choresm, and later revolted and joined the Hungarians, and later appeared under the name Kaliz in the twelfth century.<sup>40</sup> It was assumed as well, that the Qavar ethnonym was of Hungarian origin, meaning 'mixture' (in Hungarian: 'keverék') denoting that the dissident Qavars comprised different ethnic groups.<sup>41</sup> According to a view, "if we were to find a related Turkic word, a pos-

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<sup>32</sup> Golden, *Khazar Studies*, 142.

<sup>33</sup> Németh, *HMK* 1991, 265.

<sup>34</sup> Tóth, *Levediától*, 59.

<sup>35</sup> Golden, *Khazar Studies*, 141.

<sup>36</sup> *DAI* 174–175.

<sup>37</sup> Tóth, *A kabarok*, 106; Tóth, *Levediától* 58; Kristó, *Hungarian History*, 150.

<sup>38</sup> Golden, *Khazar Studies*, 140–141. – He preferred the criticized version ('Rebel') to his own ('Attackers').

<sup>39</sup> Á. Berta, "Magyarok a steppe országútján (Törzsek és törzsnevek)." [Hungarians on the road of the steppe. Tribes and tribal names]. In: *Árpád előtt és után*. [Before Árpád and after him] ed. Gy. Kristó–F. Makk. Szeged 1996, 37.

<sup>40</sup> H. Schönebaum, "Zur Kabarenfrage." in *Aus der byzantinischen Arbeit der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*. ed. I. Irmischer, Berlin 1957, 142–146; for the identification of Qavars with the Káliz, see M. Gyóni, *Kalizok, kazárok, kabarok, magyarok*. [Kaliz, Khazars, Kabars, Hungarians] *Magyar Nyelv* 34 (1938), 86–96, 159–168; *Commentary*, 149.

<sup>41</sup> Gy. Kristó–F. Makk–L. Szegfű, "Adatok korai helyneveink ismeretéhez," [Data to the knowledge of early place names]. *Acta Universitatis Szegediensis de Attila József nominatae. Acta Historica* 44 (1973), 12.

sibility would be *kavir*- 'to collect, assemble',<sup>42</sup> and it is probable that the leading, organizing clan's name was adopted.<sup>43</sup> It is impossible to decide, which etymology fits the best the Qabar/Qavar ethnonym.

It would be important to reveal the real cause of the Qabar revolt against the Khazar government, since it can be considered the beginning of their own short history. Our only source in this respect, Emperor Constantine just stated the facts, that "a secession was made by them to their government, and when a civil war broke out their first government prevailed, and some of them were slain, but others escaped and settled with the Turks."<sup>44</sup> Most frequently the secession and the civil war were connected with religious strife in Khazaria, the conversion to Judaism in historical research. It was supposed, that the "antagonism within the Khazar Empire [...] was largely connected by the forcible conversion of the leading Khazar strata to Judaism."<sup>45</sup> According to a debated source, the letter of Qagan Joseph, the first converted king was Bulan, but the faith was strengthened by his third descendant, Obadiah.<sup>46</sup> Although it is discussed, most scholars accepted, that directly or indirectly the conversion to Judaism or the activity of Obadiah to make Judaism a kind of state religion could cause the breaking out of a civil war.<sup>47</sup> It is a generally assumed view, that not the more strict Karaim/Karaite strand (which accepted just the five books of Moses), but the orthodox Rabbinistic Judaism (Talmudist) was adopted by the Khagan and the ruling circles of Khazaria.<sup>48</sup> The Kazars' conversion, which probably proceeded in more stages, was dated by the testimony of later Hebrew sources at about 740–760<sup>49</sup> or at 760–770,<sup>50</sup> around 800 (based on Masudi),<sup>51</sup> or at 860–861 (using the legend of Cyrill).<sup>52</sup> The Qabars were regarded either pagans or Karaites, who revolted against the orthodox Talmudist government.<sup>53</sup> Another radical theory regarded the Qabars to be of Judaistic faith, who had conflicts with the genuine pagan Khazars.<sup>54</sup> The Qavars were considered Muslims as well, or "at least under the command of Muslim military aristocracy." The civil strife was connected to religious conflicts between the ruling class professing

<sup>42</sup> Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 348.

<sup>43</sup> Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 348. – "Popular etymological explanations came later, like for example *bodun kavradi* 'brought the people together'.

<sup>44</sup> DAI 174–175.

<sup>45</sup> Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 329.

<sup>46</sup> P. K. Kokovcov, *Jevrejsko-hazarskoje perepiske v X. veke*. Leningrad 1932, 80; Golden, *Khazar Studies*, 133–134; Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 232.

<sup>47</sup> M. I. Artamonov, *Istoria Hazar*. Leningrad 1962, 324–330; D. M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*. Princeton 1954, 116–170, 203; A. P. Novoselcev, *Hazarskoe gosudarstvo i evo rol v istorii vostočnoj Evropy i Kavkaza*. Moskva 1990, 144–154.

<sup>48</sup> Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 232.

<sup>49</sup> Artamonov, *Istoria Hazar*, 324–334.

<sup>50</sup> Schönebaum, *Zur Kabarenfrage*, 143–144.

<sup>51</sup> Dunlop, *History*, 170; S. A. Pletnjowa, *Die Chasaren. Mittelalterlichen Reich an Don und Wolga*. Leipzig 1978, 128; Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 232.

<sup>52</sup> Gyóni, *Kalizok*, 161–163; Györffy, *A kabar kérdés*, 86.

<sup>53</sup> G. Vékony, "A kazár kérdés," [The Khazar problem] *Életünk* (1992:I-II), 915–938, 1034–1046.

<sup>54</sup> S. P. Tolstov, *Az ősi Khorezm* [The ancient Khorezm] Budapest 1950, 226–233; Schönebaum, *Zur Kabarenfrage*, 143–144.; for the criticism of this "somewhat fantastic theories" Golden, *Khazar Studies*, 138.

Judaism and the Muslims inside Khazaria and to the growing tension and military clashes between Khazaria and the Muslim Caliphate in the 850s.<sup>55</sup> In regards to civil war in Khazaria ethnic conflicts were referred as well in research, supposing that the Qabars were either Bulgars or Khoresmians, who revolted against the ruling Khazars.<sup>56</sup> It was assumed too, that "the actual secession of the Kavars to the Magyars seem to be the result of [...] some contest between the army and the local authorities." In this theory, Qavars were mercenary Turks in permanent service of the Khagan, who had revolted and having been defeated "fled across the frontier" to the Magyars.<sup>57</sup> According to an interesting hypothesis the civil war was brought about by the contradiction inside the Khazar double kingship, the conflicts between the sacral Khagan and the effective ruler, the Beg/Sad. It was supposed that the Qabars were the "partisans of the Khagan, whose power have been eroded by the Beg, sought to reassert himself and lost."<sup>58</sup> At last a hypothesis is to be mentioned, which seems to be the closest to the historical reality, reflected in Constantine's report. In these view "nomadic empires, such as the Khazar Empire, were composed of conglomerate forces, often centrifugal [...] The picture painted by the Emperor-Historian is that of a typical falling out of tribes within a nomadic state. The losing side removes itself from the tribal union and joins another."<sup>59</sup>

Considering these hypotheses on the causes of the civil war, and the secession of the Qabars, one should emphasize the fact, that Emperor Constantine did not mention why the secession and the civil war had broken out. It is very likely, that if "the civil war, which brought about the flight of the Qabars to the Hungarians [...] was the result of a religious conflict [...] one of our source surely mentioned it."<sup>60</sup> On the other hand "the possibility cannot ruled out" [...] that the Khavars, joining the Magyars was not wholly independent from the conversion of the leading Khazar strata to Jewish faith."<sup>61</sup> However, Ibn Rusta remarked, that the great prince (Khagan) and the *j.sad* and some viziers and leaders are willing to follow the Jewish faith, and the others' faith are similar to the Turks.<sup>62</sup> It can be assumed that only the leading strata, or rather part of it practiced a kind of Jewish faith, the Muslims

<sup>55</sup> I. Boba, *Nomads, Northmen and Slavs. Eastern Europe in the Ninth Century*. The Hague-Wisbaden 1967, 115-117.

<sup>56</sup> Bulgars, cf. I. Fodor, A magyar-bolgár-török kapcsolatok történeti háttéréről [On the historical background of the Hungarian-Bulgar-Turkish relations.] in *Bolgár tanulmányok*, ed. I. Darkó, *Hajdú-Bihar Megyei Múzeumok Közleményei* 37 (1980) 20; Khorezmians/Kwarezmians. see Tolstov, *Az ősi Khorezm*, 226-233; Schönebaum, *Zur Kabarenfrage*, 143-144.

<sup>57</sup> Macartney, *The Magyars*, 133; Cs. Bálint, *A honfoglaláskori lovastemetkezések*. [The burial with horse at the time of the Hungarian Conquest.] *A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyvei* (1971:2), 100-102.

<sup>58</sup> Originally the theory was invented by A. Krymskyi, and this unpublished theory was taken over and referred by O. Pritsak, "Yowár und Káβar Kawār," *Ural-Altische Jahrbücher* 36 (1965) 383; for the criticism of this view see Golden, *Khazar Studies*, 138.

<sup>59</sup> Golden, *Khazar Studies*, 135-136.

<sup>60</sup> Golden, *Khazar Studies*, 135.

<sup>61</sup> Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 348; to a similar view see Róna-Tas-Berta, *West Old Turkic*, I, 35.

<sup>62</sup> For Ibn Rusta, M. Kmoskó, *Mohamedán írók a steppe népeiről. Földrajzi irodalom* I/1. [Muslin writers on the peoples of the steppe. Geographical literature] ed. I. Zimonyi, Budapest 1997, 204.



and Christians constituted small minorities, while the majority of the people of Khazaria were pagans, following the ancient beliefs of the Turks.<sup>63</sup> So considering the structure of a nomadic empire the conversion of one part of the leading strata could not have so important implications as to provoke a civil war. The ethnic cause of the revolt cannot be proved, since according to Constantine "the Kabaroi were of the race (*genea*) of the Khazars."<sup>64</sup> Although Khazaria comprised a lot of people and different nations (Bulgars or Onogurs, Sabirs, Alans, Huns etc.), it is impossible to determine, whether the Qabars had been just called Khazars earlier, because they belonged to the multi-ethnic Khazar Empire, or they were really 'genuine' Khazars.<sup>65</sup> One should agree with the standpoint, that from the Byzantine account "it would appear that the Qabars were undistinguished from the rest of the Khazars up to the time of the revolt."<sup>66</sup> It is not likely at all, that the Qabars could have represented a distinct tribe within the Khazar tribal union (named Yubar/Yuwar).<sup>67</sup> It cannot be proved either, that the Qabar revolted against the effective ruler, the Beg and served the interests of the Khagan. According to the account of Emperor Constantine, the rising directed against their 'leadership' (ἀρχη) or 'first leadership' (πρωτη ἀρχη), by which phrase mainly the first dignitary of Khazaria, the Khagan was denoted, and besides him the second dignitary, the effective ruler, the Bek/Beg (*J.sad*) was meant as well, because together they represented the Khazar nomad state.<sup>68</sup> It was these leaders, by whom an envoy had been sent to the Byzantine emperor Theophilos about 838 to ask him to make the fort of Sharkel build for them.<sup>69</sup>

In my view the Qabar revolt must have had political aims, a typical revolt inside a nomadic state against the leading tribes. Three Khazar tribes – later called Qabars/Qavars – wanted to get the power from the tribes ruled by the Khagan and the Beg, which would have transformed the Khaganate and its leadership. These rebel tribes probably lived on the western parts of the Khaganate.<sup>70</sup> This revolt led to a civil war and in the ensuing battle(s) the rising tribes were defeated, the forces of the Khagan and the Beg overcame. Some of the rebels were killed, but the majority of them left Khazaria and settled with the Hungarians living between the rivers Don and Danube (called Etelköz).<sup>71</sup> The secession of the Qabars weakened Khazaria and increased the military force of the Hungarians/Magyars.<sup>72</sup>

The next problem is the date of the Khazar civil war and the joining of the Qabars to the Hungarians. The earliest date assumed is about 780 for some research-

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<sup>63</sup> Tóth, *Levediától*, 55.

<sup>64</sup> *DAI* 174–175.

<sup>65</sup> For the multi-ethnicity of Khazaria and its peoples cf. Z. V. Togan, "Völkerschaften des Chazarenreiches im Neunten Jahrhundert," in *Kőrösi Csoma Archivum*, III. Budapest 1940, 40–76; D. Ludwig, *Struktur und Gesellschaft des Chazaren Reiches im Licht des schriftlichen Quellen*. Münster 1982, 69–111.

<sup>66</sup> Golden, *Khazar Studies*, 135; similarly Kristó, *Hungarian history*, 150.

<sup>67</sup> Pritsak, *Yowar*, 381–382.

<sup>68</sup> Golden, *Khazar Studies*, 138; Tóth, *Levediától*, 56.

<sup>69</sup> *DAI* 180–181.

<sup>70</sup> Boba, *Nomads* 117.

<sup>71</sup> Kristó, *Hungarian history*, 150; Tóth, *Levediától*, 56.

<sup>72</sup> Tóth, *Levediától*, 117; Boba, *Nomads*, 115–116.



ers, who identified Chwārizmians with the Qavars.<sup>73</sup> Since the identification is uncertain, and the presence of the Hungarians in the region north of the Black Sea cannot be proved by written sources before 830s, this theory is unacceptable. Another hypothesis put the Khazar civil war at around 800. This view is based on the account of Masudi about the conversion of the Khagan at that date, and on the assumed connection between the conversion and a possible reaction from the part of the 'pagan' tribes.<sup>74</sup> However, these connections and the Hungarians' presence on the steppe at that time cannot be surely verified, so this date cannot be accepted either. The secession of the Qabars was dated at the second decade of the ninth century (810s) as well, because the old fortresses of Khazaria had been demolished at around this time according to archeological evidence.<sup>75</sup> Most scholars put the Khazar civil war at around 830, when for the request of the Khagan and Beg the fortress Sharkel was built near river Don with Byzantine help.<sup>76</sup> It was supposed, that Sharkel was built against the attacks of the Hungarians, so the Qavars could join the enemies of Khazaria.<sup>77</sup> In this case the Qabars could settle together with the Hungarians, who probably appeared or even could settle on their new homeland, Etekköz (between the river Don and the Danube) at the end of the third decade of the ninth century. However, the Qavars preserved their autonomy inside the developing Hungarian tribal confederation, so it seems to me very likely, that the joining of the three dissident Khazar tribes could have happened later or much later.<sup>78</sup> According to a theory, the secession of the Qavars happened around 850 or at 854–855, when some sources refer to movements (resettlement of Khazar families by the governor of Armenia on Arab territory) and conflicts on the Khazar–Arab frontier (between the 'Sanariyah' and the Arab governor of Armenia) which may have been in connection with the civil war in Khazaria.<sup>79</sup> A hypothesis combined this Qabar revolt with a Hungarian–Pecheneg war near the Volga, which resulted the Hungarians' leave from this assumed Khazar homeland of theirs and their settlement with their new allies, the Qavars in their new, common homeland, west of river Don (Etekköz).<sup>80</sup> In my view, these scattered and indirect references to some turmoil at the Khazar–Arab frontier cannot be related to a large civil war inside Khazaria, and cannot be connected with an assumed first Hungarian–Pecheneg war on the eastern frontiers of the Khaganate.<sup>81</sup> The Khazar civil war and the join-

<sup>73</sup> Tolstov, *Az ősi Khorezm*, 233–234; Schönebaum, *Zur Kabarenfrage*, 144.

<sup>74</sup> Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 232, 348–349; Róna-Tas–Berta, *West Old Turkic*, 1: 35.

<sup>75</sup> Mainly this theory was based on Arab dirhems, the last of them had the name of Caliph Amin (809–812) on, see, A. Bartha, *A IX–X. századi magyar társadalom*. [The Hungarian society in the ninth–tenth century] Budapest 1968, 99; J. Harmatta, "A honfoglalás mai szemmel," [The Hungarian Conquest from a recent aspect] *Magyar Nyelv* 91 (1998), 144.

<sup>76</sup> *DAI* 180–181.

<sup>77</sup> Sz. Vajay, *Der Eintritt des ungarischen Stammebundes in die europäische Geschichte (862–933)*. München 1968, 11, 87.

<sup>78</sup> Tóth, *Levediától*, 57.

<sup>79</sup> Boba, *Nomads*, 116–117; K. Czeglédy, *Magyar őstörténeti tanulmányok*. [Studies on Hungarian Prehistory]. Budapest 1985, 257.

<sup>80</sup> Gy. Kristó, *Levedi törzsszövetségétől Szent István államáig*. [From the tribal federation of Levedi to the state of St Stephen] Budapest 1980, 113–114.

<sup>81</sup> Tóth, *Levediától*, 58.

ing of the Khavars to the Hungarians were dated after 860 as well. One of the argument was that the legend of Constantine-Cyrril mentioned a religious debate at the court of the Khagan about 861, and this was connected with the conversion to the Jewish faith, leading to a revolt.<sup>82</sup> Although this relation cannot be verified either, I agree with dating the secession of the Qavars after 861/862. In my view their joining can be dated between 862 (*terminus post quem*) and 881 (*terminus ante quam*). The first date, 862 is the time when only the Hungarians (*Ungri*) were mentioned by Hincmar in *Annales Bertiniani* during a raid on the territory (probably Ostmark) of Emperor Louis (the German), and in 881 both the Hungarians (*Ungri*) and the Qavars (*Cowari*) participated on a common campaign in Ostmark. I regard it very likely that between these dates, 861/862 and 881 the Khazar civil war and the Qavars secession and joining to the Hungarians/Magyars took place.<sup>83</sup>

The organization and position of the three Khazar rebel tribes inside the Hungarian tribal confederation is quite interesting, and can be called a unique and special one. The Qabars or Qavars are referred by Constantine in chapter 39 in the title as 'nation' (*ethnos*), when he writes "Of the nation of the Kabaroi", and later he remarks, that there are "three clans of the Kabaroi."<sup>84</sup> However, in contrast of this statement, the Byzantine emperor refers to them in chapter 40 as the 'clan' (*genea*) of the Qabars, the first among the eight clans (*genea*) of the Qabars and the Turks/Hungarians.<sup>85</sup> It is also mentioned in chapter 39 that the Kabaroi "have been promoted to be the first clans" and there is "one prince among them."<sup>86</sup> So it seems that these joining Khazar tribes were regarded both as one nation (*ethnos*), consisting of three clans (*genea*) or rather tribes, and one clan (*genea*) headed by one prince (*arkhón*).<sup>87</sup> The account of Constantine is best interpreted, that "the Kabaroi were divided in three clans of their own, but in the Hungarian clan organization they formed one single clan, the first."<sup>88</sup> This strange duality was observed and explained differently. Most scholars supposed, that the Qabars were a military auxiliary nation, led by one prince, and consisting of three tribes.<sup>89</sup> It was emphasized as well, that "the Qabars were not received into the tribal confederacy system of the Hungarians" they "were not part of the Hungarian tribal confederacy called *Hetumoger*" even in the middle of the tenth century. The Hungarians

<sup>82</sup> Gy. Györfly, *Tanulmányok a magyar állam eredetéről. A nemzetségtől a vármegyéig, a törzstől az orszáig. Kurszán és Kurszán vára*. [Studies on the origin of the Hungarian state. From the clan to the county, from the tribe to the country. Kurszán and his fort.] Budapest 1959, 50–51, 79; Györfly, *A kabar kérdés*, 86.

<sup>83</sup> Tóth, *Kabarok*, 102; Tóth, *Levediától*, 58; I. Fodor questioned this hypothesis, arguing that there is no later reference to the participation of the Qavars in Hungarian raids, though they surely took part in these campaigns, see I. Fodor, "Kazárok és kabarok," [Khazars and Qabars] in *Magyarrá lett keleti népek*. [Oriental peoples, who were becoming Hungarians] Budapest 1988, 93–94.

<sup>84</sup> DAI 174–175.

<sup>85</sup> DAI 174–175.

<sup>86</sup> DAI 174–175.

<sup>87</sup> Tóth, *Kabarok*, 106; Tóth, *Levediától*, 60–61.

<sup>88</sup> *Commentary*, 150.

<sup>89</sup> Bartha, *A IX–X. századi*, 101, 116; Gy. Györfly, *Honfoglalás, megtelepedés és kalandozások*. [Conquest, settlement and raids] Budapest 1977, 135; H. Göckenjan, *Hilfsvölker und Grenzwächter im mittelalterlichen Ungarn*. Wiesbaden 1972, 35–36.

“limited themselves to appointing one leader to lead their tribes.”<sup>90</sup> According to a general view the joining Qabars constituted one tribe, the eighth tribe among the Hungarian and Qabar tribes.<sup>91</sup> A similar hypothesis assumed, that the three Khazar tribes, or the remnants of tribes were united into one tribe by the Hungarians.<sup>92</sup> A radical hypothesis maintained, that it were not the Hungarians, who reorganized the Qavars, but in fact it were the Qavars, who were sent by the Khazar ruler to lead the Hungarian tribal federation and reorganized the Hungarians.<sup>93</sup> In contradiction of this view, it was emphasized, that “the three Kabar tribes were united, were reorganized by the Hungarians, and accepted one leader who seems to have ruled over them until the source DAI Chapter 39 was written.”<sup>94</sup> In another version it was remarked that “the seven Magyar tribes were joined by three Khazar tribes that unified to form one tribe” under the leadership of a Hungarian prince, the Kharha.<sup>95</sup> The Qavar clans (*genea*) were regarded as sub-tribes as well.<sup>96</sup> I presume that this special “double structure” of the Qabars cannot be connected to their subjugation by the Hungarians, as a theory maintained, which accepted the story of Anonymus about the defeat of the seven Cuman chiefs (associated with the Qabars) by prince Álmos and their joining to the Hungarians (*Hetumoger*).<sup>97</sup> This late Hungarian source cannot be taken for granted, the Qabars would be rather considered a joining people after their unsuccessful revolt in Khazaria. It is more likely, that this special organization of the Qabars was due to the fact, that they joined a developed tribal confederation of the Hungarians consisting of seven tribes. It is very probable, that these three Khazar tribes were not sub-tribes, they had not been united into a big tribe (‘supertribe’) or had not organized them-

<sup>90</sup> Kristó, *Hungarian history*, 152–153.

<sup>91</sup> Gy. Pauler, *A magyar nemzet története Szent Istvánig*. [The history of the Hungarian nation till St Stephen]. Budapest 1900, 14; Németh, *HMK* 1930, 223, 234–235; I. Zichy, *Magyar őstörténet* [Hungarian prehistory] Budapest 1939, 15–16, 26; I. Dienes, *A honfoglaló magyarok*. [The Conquering Hungarians] Budapest 1978, 3 9; Czeglédy, *Magyar őstörténeti tanulmányok*, 118; Gy. Szabados, *Magyar államalapítások a IX–XI. században*. [Hungarian state foundations in the ninth–eleventh century] Szeged 2011, 197.

<sup>92</sup> Kristó, *Levedi törzsszövetségétől*, 65, 118, 454–457; K. Mesterházy, *A nemzeti szervezetről és az osztályviszonyok kialakulása a honfoglaló magyaroknál*. Budapest 1980, 51–52; I. Erdélyi, *A magyar honfoglalás és előzményei*. [The Hungarian Conquest and its antecedents] Budapest 1986, 44; J. Szűcs, *A magyar nemzeti tudat kialakulása*. [The Formation of the Hungarian National Conscience] Budapest 1992, 287–288; Róna-Tas-Berta, *West Old Turkic*, 2: 1175.

<sup>93</sup> For this view see J. Howard-Johnston, “Byzantine sources for Khazar history,” in *The world of the Khazars. New perspectives. Selected papers for the Jerusalem 1999 International Khazar Colloquium hosted by the Ben Zvi Institute*. ed. P. B. Golden–H. Ben-Shammai–A. Róna-Tas. Leiden–Boston 2007, 190.

<sup>94</sup> Róna-Tas-Berta, *West Old Turkic*, 2: 1175.

<sup>95</sup> Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 349, 389.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. E. Moór, *A honfoglaló magyarság megtelepedése és a székelyek eredete*. [The settlement of the conquering Hungarians and the origin of the Seklers] Szeged 1944, 7, 31; Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 351.

<sup>97</sup> For the story of Anonymus, see *SRH* 1: 46–47; for the subjugation of the Qabars by Álmos, cf. D. Dümmerth, *Az Árpádok nyomában*. Budapest 1977, 77, 97; Kristó, *Levedi törzsszövetségétől*, 115; Gy. Németh, who identified the Cumans of Anonymus with the Qabars of Constantine, maintained, that the tribes of the Qavars consisted of seven clans, Németh, *HMK* 1991, 265–266.

selves into one tribe.<sup>98</sup> First of all, there is not any example of a tribe, besides the case of the Qavars, which would consist of three tribes. In the Hungarian tribal system, only one tribe, the Kürtgyarmat contained two tribes, which were united or had been united.<sup>99</sup> I assumed "that two allied people (ethnos) lived in the ninth-century Hungarian area of settlement, the Hungarians and the Qabars. Both peoples had a tribal confederacy type of organization, and they may have been independent of one another. Therefore, we are inclined rather to speak of a Hungarian-Qabar tribal confederacy with a seven-plus-three pattern of organization. The relationship with the Qabars, who joined the Hungarians later, displayed a particular duality: fighting together in war (subordination) and retaining the internal framework of organization (autonomy)."<sup>100</sup> I also emphasized, that in outside connections the Hungarian (*Hetumoger*) and Qabar tribal federations constituted just one confederation, but in their inner relations they were aware of their different ethnicities and languages. The three Khazar-Qabar tribes constituted a smaller federation inside the Hungarian tribal federation.<sup>101</sup> My theory of a smaller tribal confederation of the Qabars were criticized and this concept "would prefer to place emphasis on the relationship between the Hungarians and the Qabars [...] not on the alliance and the Qabar autonomy, but on the system of sub/superordination and the Qabar's status as a people of military auxiliaries."<sup>102</sup> This critical view has accepted that the structure of the Qabars remained intact, just a prince was appointed to lead these tribes.<sup>103</sup> An interesting model of the Hungarian tribal confederation including the Qavars was set up based on the Turkic-type tribal federation (mainly on the East Turks).<sup>104</sup> According to this model, the Hétfagyar (*Hetumoger*) "confederation was a multiply differentiated system of tribes," described as 6 + 1 (+1) + 1 (3). "The tribal federation was headed by the Megyer tribe (Árpád's tribe)" and six other Hungarian tribes (*Nyék*, the merging of *Kürt* and *Gyarmat* into *Kürtgyarmat*, *Tarján*, *Jenő*, *Kér*, *Keszi*) joined the leading tribe and made the second circle. "The third circle within this set-up was the Khavar tribe, led by one chieftain, was divided into three subtribes."<sup>105</sup> As regards to the place of the Qavars in this model, it is remarked, that "the system of three tribes having one chieftain corresponds perfectly to the organizational samples of Turkic tribes."<sup>106</sup> In my view, the organization of the Hungarian tribal federation was quite complex. It can be com-

<sup>98</sup> Tóth, *Levediától*, 60–61.

<sup>99</sup> For these examples (Qovars, Kürtgyarmat) see, Németh, *HMK* 1991. 37; Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 348, 350.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Tóth, *Kabars*, 112; the translation is by Gy. Novák, see. Kristó, *Hungarian history*, 153.

<sup>101</sup> Tóth, *Kabars*, 107; idem, *Levediától*, 61.

<sup>102</sup> Kristó, *Hungarian history*, 153.

<sup>103</sup> Gy. Kristó, *A magyar állam megszületése* [The birth of the Hungarian state]. Szeged 1995, 125; idem, *Hungarian history*, 152.

<sup>104</sup> Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 341.

<sup>105</sup> Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 350–351; for the criticism of a Hungarian confederation of eight tribes, see F. Makk, *A korai magyar történelemről*. [On the early Hungarian history] in *A turulmadártól a kettőskeresztig. Tanulmányok a magyarság régebbi történetéről*. [From the Bird Turul to the double cross. Studies on the earlier history of Magyars] Szeged 1998, 36.

<sup>106</sup> Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 348.

pared in a way to the Nine Oghuz (*Tokhuz Oghuz*) tribal confederation. This latter federation contained nine tribes, but the last, the ninth tribe itself consisted of nine tribes.<sup>107</sup> According to Constantine's report and list of tribes, the Turks (Hungarians/Magyars) had seven tribes, which he enumerated (Nyék, Megyer, Kürtgyarmat, Tarján, Jenő, Keszi), and later with the joining of the Qabars, who became the first tribe(s), the Hungarian tribal confederation had eight tribes.<sup>108</sup> In my opinion this structure can be best described as 1(3)+7.<sup>109</sup> The Qabars/Qavars functioned as a tribe inside the Hungarian/Magyar tribal federation, which cannot be called a Hungarian-Qavar confederation, but remained *Hetumoger* in spite of the change in the number of tribes. At the same time this first tribe, the Qabar/Qavar in fact contained three Khazar tribes, which probably retained their names, identity. The position of the Qabars showed duality, they were regarded as a tribe inside a greater Magyar confederation, at the same time they retained their own organization, which was a federation of three tribes. It means, that not just two federations existed side by side, but rather inside a great confederation existed a smaller federation, as part of it.

In case of the Qabars/Qavars we know just their common name, how they were called by the Hungarians/Magyars and other people, but we do not have any information about the name of the separate tribes. Scholars try to identify the Qavars with people, who lived in the Carpathian Basin after the Hungarians/Magyars conquered the territory about 895-900, and settled there. Scholars assumed that the Seklers (in Hungarian: Székely) were either identical with the Kavars or at least with part of them, one tribe. These theories were based on the fact that the Seklers had some autonomy, seemed to be different from the Hungarians, had a special organization, and played an important role in the military system of medieval Hungary. The problem is that, the first reference to the Seklers to be credited is from 1146, when together with the Pechenegs living in Hungary they fought as an advance guard of the Hungarian army.<sup>110</sup> The people called Kaliz have been identified with Kavars as well. This people of Muslim faith lived mainly on the southern parts of the Hungarian Kingdom, had mainly military role in the twelfth century.<sup>111</sup> Although we cannot exclude the possibility of complete or partial identity of Qavars with either the Seklers or with the Káliz, or with both, it cannot be proved with sources.<sup>112</sup> Generally it was assumed by scholars, that the Qavars were a mixture of different people (Turkish and Iranian) and so they connected them with different people living at the territory of Khazaria. So

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<sup>107</sup> Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 341.

<sup>108</sup> *DAI* 174-175.

<sup>109</sup> S. Tóth, "Kabarok és fekete magyarok," *Acta Universitatis Szegediensis de Attila József nominatae. Acta Historica* 84 (1987), 25; idem, *A honfoglalástól*, 137.

<sup>110</sup> For the theories on the origin of the Seklers, see e. g. Z. Kordé, *A székely kérdés története. [The history of the Sekler problem]. Székelyudvarhely* 1991; Gy. Kristó, *A székelyek eredetéről. [On the origin of the Seklers]. Szeged* 1996; for the identification of Seklers with Kavars see e. g. Moór, *A honfoglaló magyarság*, 34-36, 72-76; Györffy, *Tanulmányok*, 45-46; the Seklers were part of the Qavars, see Kristó, *A székelyek*, 49-59.

<sup>111</sup> For the identification of Káliz people with Qavars see Gyóni, *Kalizok*, 85-96, 159-168; Schönebaum, *Zur Kabarenfrage*, 142-146; Kristó, *A székelyek*, 36-47.

<sup>112</sup> Tóth, *Kabarok*, 108; Tóth, *Levediától*, 61.

the assumed names of the Khazar tribes were connected to different people by scholars, who used later medieval Hungarian place names to find these names, which would resemble to place names presumably derived from known Hungarian tribal names. These supposed Qavar tribal names besides the mentioned Székely and Káliz were Tárkány, Ság, Ladány, Oszlár-Eszlár, Bercel, Varsány, Berény, Őrs etc.<sup>113</sup> In my opinion the Qabar tribal names cannot be reconstructed.<sup>114</sup>

The common leader of the three Khazar/Qavar tribes is called prince (*arkhón*) by Emperor Constantine. The dignity of *arkhón* denoted the prince/great prince of the Hungarians (Árpád, his son, Liuntika and grandson, Falicsi) and the chieftains of the tribes as well.<sup>115</sup> Since the Qavars were regarded as a tribe inside the Hungarian tribal federation, but at the same time they had a federation-type organization with three tribes, it is not easy to decide, whether the common leader of the Qabars should be considered a tribal chieftain or a prince of a smaller tribal federation. According to a theory, the three tribes of Qavars had one chieftain, "who was always supervised by a Magyar governor, the Kharha."<sup>116</sup> This hypothesis in fact combines the two possibilities, because it is uncertain, who can be regarded the *arkhón* in this case, the "Kavar chieftain" or the "Hungarian supervisor", the Kharha (*karkhas*), who was the third dignity in the Hungarian tribal federation.<sup>117</sup> I would rather assume, that not a chieftain, but a prince ruled over the three Qavar tribes.<sup>118</sup> It is a long disputed question, what was the title of the Qavar leader, and what clan he represented and who the Qavar *arkhón* was. As far as dignities are concerned, the Qavar *arkhón* was identified with the great prince (*kündü*) of the Hungarians (Árpád and his dynasty), the effective ruler and military commander (*gyula*), and the third prince, *karchas* (*karha*).<sup>119</sup> It was assumed as well, that the

<sup>113</sup> For possible tribal names of the Qabars see, Cf. Györffy, *Tanulmányok*, 44–76; idem, *A kabar kérdés*, 83–93; Gy. Györffy-Török Sándor, "Mi volt a neve a három kabar törzsnek?" [What were the names of the three Qabar tribes?] *Századok* 116 (1982), 986–1059; Kristó-Makk-Szegfű, "Adatok korai helyneveink ismeretéhez," 12, 39–42; L. Kiss, *A honfoglalás és a letelepedés a földrajzi nevek tükrében*. [The Conquest and the settlement in the mirror of geographical names] *Magyar Tudomány* 1996/8, 968–969.

<sup>114</sup> Tóth, *Kabars*, 108.

<sup>115</sup> S. L. Tóth, Princes and dignitaries in the ninth-tenth century Magyar tribal federation. *Chronica* 3 (2003), 27.

<sup>116</sup> Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 348, 349.

<sup>117</sup> For the *karkhas* or *karha*, see Tóth, *Princes*, 28, 36.

<sup>118</sup> Tóth, *Levediától*, 62.

<sup>119</sup> See comprehensively Tóth, *Princes*, 28–29; Kristó, *Hungarians*, 153; Árpád, the great prince (*kündü*) was considered the Qavar *arkhón*, see, J. B. Bury, *A History of the eastern Roman Empire. From the Fall of Irene to the Accession of Basil I.* (A. D. 862–867). London 1912, 426; R. Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes. A History of Central Asia*. New Brunswick 1970, 178; L. Várady, "Revision des Ungarn-Image von Konstantinos Porphyrogenetos," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 90 (1989), 34–35; the eldest son of the ruling prince governed the Qavars as their prince, e. g. Liuntika (son of Árpád), see J. Marquart, *Osteuropäische und ostasiatische Streifzüge*. Leipzig 1903, 52, 522; the *gyula* was the Qavar *arkhón*, see Macartney, *The Magyars*, 116; I. Uhrmann, "A *gyula*-dinasztia, a kabarok és Szent István intelmei," *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 116 (2003), 267–366; the *karchas* was the prince of the Qavars see, J. Deér, "Le probleme du chapitre 38 du de Administrando imperio," *Annuire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientale et*

Qavars had their own-prince, and the Aba-clan hold this dignity.<sup>120</sup> The election of Árpád is described in Chapter 38 of DAI dealing with the seven Hungarian/Magyar tribes, so the first dignity of *kündü* or great prince cannot be connected to the Qavars.<sup>121</sup> The dignity of *gyula*, the commander-in-chief and judge may be assumed as the leader of the Qavars considering their important role in wars emphasized by Emperor Constantine in Chapter 39. However, the name of the first chieftain of the seven Hungarian leaders (emirs) in 942 on a raid may be identified as *gyula*, so probably the title of *gyula* cannot be associated with the *arkhón* of the Qavars.<sup>122</sup> Similarly, the name of Bulcsú, who was third prince, *karchas* at this time, can be found on the list of Ibn Häyyän enumerating the seven Turk/Hungarian leaders. So the *karchas* belonged to the seven Hungarian tribes as well.<sup>123</sup> So one "cannot connect these dignities with specific tribes", but it is highly probable that the *kündü*, *gyula* and *karkhas* belonged to Hungarian tribes, while the "Qavar tribes had one prince of their own."<sup>124</sup> I assume that maybe this Qavar prince wore the highest Khazar title, Khagan, which is reflected in Hungarian chronicles in the name of Kean (Keanus).<sup>125</sup> So the three Qavar tribes may call their joint leader or prince Kean/Khagan.<sup>126</sup> The last Qavar prince or Khagan/Kean may have been Ajtony, defeated by King Stephen in the first decade of the eleventh century.<sup>127</sup>

The next problem concerning the Qavars is their role and position in the Hungarian confederation. One of the most characteristic feature of the Qavars is their 'warlike nature', as testified by Emperor Constantine, who remarked, that the *Kabaro* "in wars they show themselves strongest and most valorous of the eight clans, and are leaders in war, they have been promoted to be the first clans."<sup>128</sup> It is one the most debated phrase on Qavars, whose role and position is generally overrated or underestimated. According to a view, "the nomadic race of Kavars, true Turks, herdsman and fighters, the driving force and the army of the nation" led by their prince (*gyula*) undertook most campaigns and can be contrasted with the more or less pacific and sedentary Finno-Ugric Magyars.<sup>129</sup> This theory evidently exaggerates the military role of the Qavars, attributing every campaigns

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*Slave* 12 (1952), 102–110; L. Ligeti, *A magyar nyelv török kapcsolatai a honfoglalás előtt és az Árpád-korban*. [The Turkish connections of the Hungarian Language before the Land-taking and in the Arpadian Age] Budapest 1986.

<sup>120</sup> For an independent Qavar ruling dynasty see B. Hóman– Gy. Szekfű, *Magyar történet* [Hungarian history], I. Budapest 1935, 67–68; Kristó, *Levedi törzsszövetségétől*, 456–457; Kristó, Hungarian history, 154.

<sup>121</sup> Tóth, *Princes*, 29.

<sup>122</sup> Tóth, *Princes*, 29; for the identification of the first name, 'T.x.x.la' with the title *gyula* on the list of Ibn Häyyän, see Czeglédy, *Magyar őstörténeti tanulmányok*, 132, 136; recently, I. Elter, *Ibn Häyyän a kalandozó magyarokról*. [Ibn Häyyän on the raiding Hungarians] Szeged 2009, 71, 87, 91–95.

<sup>123</sup> Tóth, *Princes*, 28–29; Tóth, *A honfoglalástól*, 165.

<sup>124</sup> Tóth, *Princes*, 29.

<sup>125</sup> For the name (in fact title) Kean, see the fourteenth century chronicle composition or *Chronicon pictum*, SRH 1: 281, 315–316; Anonymus, see SRH 1: 48, 51, 86; Tóth, *A honfoglalástól*, 253.

<sup>126</sup> Tóth, *A honfoglalástól*, 237, 255.

<sup>127</sup> Tóth, *A honfoglalástól*, 237, 253–258.

<sup>128</sup> DAI 174–175.

<sup>129</sup> Macartney, *The Magyars*, 122.

to them, while excluding the Hungarian tribes from the raids and consequently from booty. However, it is a well-known fact, that only one source, the *Annals of Salzburg* mentioned the Qavars together with the Hungarians on a raid in the territory of Ostmark.<sup>130</sup> Even at this time "they fought on separate fronts," because the Hungarians skirmished or battled at Wenia (Vienna?) and the Qavars at Culmite.<sup>131</sup> Other sources referred just to the Hungarians in connection with these raids. Ibn Häyyān described the raid of 942 and noted that the Turks had seven leaders (emirs), which may be related just to the seven Hungarian tribes. So it can be concluded, that the Hungarian tribes participated in these campaigns, not just the Qavars. At the same time, the Qavars had probably relevant part in these raids; otherwise they could not show their braveness and valor. So it can be concluded, that Qavars and Hungarians fought together as the members of the same tribal federation. We know, that this joint fight was the duty of the eight tribes (including the Qavars), as testified by Emperor Constantine: "these eight clans of the Turks do not obey their particular princes, but have a joint agreement to fight together with all earnestness and zeal upon the rivers, wheresoever war breaks out."<sup>132</sup> Although sometimes it is interpreted that the "tribal confederation no longer had a military role in the middle of the 10th century,"<sup>133</sup> this passage can be rather related to wars of defense at rivers.<sup>134</sup> It was rightly emphasized, that this data "really referred to the joint military cooperation of the eight tribes (seven Magyar tribes and one Qavar tribe) agreed on the confederation level revealing relevant military functions of the tribal union."<sup>135</sup> It seems probable, that these joint wars were fought abroad as well, not only for the defense of the frontiers of the Hungarian confederation.<sup>136</sup> The participation of Qavars were supposed besides the 881 raid in most campaigns and wars of the 9th century.<sup>137</sup> It was assumed, that they took part in the regular campaigns against the eastern Slavs in the second half of the 9th century.<sup>138</sup> According to a theory Qavars invaded Moravia as the allies of King Arnulf in July 892 and might occupy the territory east of the Danube.<sup>139</sup> The Qavars were connected with the campaign of 894, when Hungarian raided the Transdanubian (Pannonia) territory as the allies of the Moravian prince, Svatoptuk. It was supposed that these Qavar troops even settled on the Upper-Tisza valley at the end of 894, before the arrival of prince Árpád in 895.<sup>140</sup> It is possible that the Qavars participated in the Bulgarian campaign of 894/894 as the allies of the Byzantine Emperor Leon VI against Prince Simeon of Bulgaria.<sup>141</sup> And at last it

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<sup>130</sup> MGH SS XXX/2, 742; HKÍF 209.

<sup>131</sup> Kristó, *Hungarians*, 150.

<sup>132</sup> DAI 178–179.

<sup>133</sup> Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 380–380.

<sup>134</sup> Tóth, *A honfoglalástól*, 168.

<sup>135</sup> Makk, *A Turulmadártól*, 40.

<sup>136</sup> Tóth, *A honfoglalástól*, 168.

<sup>137</sup> For a summary of their participation in the ninth century campaigns, see Tóth, *Qabars*, 109–111.

<sup>138</sup> Györffy, *Tanulmányok*, 68, 123; Macartney, *The Magyars*, 122.

<sup>139</sup> For this hypothesis see Kristó, Levedi törzsszövetségétől, 167–169.

<sup>140</sup> For this theory see Györffy, *Honfoglalás, megtelepedés*, 129.

<sup>141</sup> Marquart, *Osteuropäische und ostasiatische Streifzüge*, 52, 522; Macartney, *The Magyars*, 114, 122; Györffy, *Honfoglalás, megtelepedés*, 128.



was assumed, that the Qavars as guards of frontiers fought against the invading Pechenegs about 895.<sup>142</sup> Although it is highly probable, that the Qavars could fight together with the Hungarian tribes in most of these campaigns, their participation can be proved just in case of the 881 campaign, where they raided the territory of Ostmark, and fought two battles against the Eastern Franks. It seems likely that the Qavars took part mainly in the western raids. What is surprising, that we have no information at all about the participation of the Qavars in raids after the conquest of the Carpathian basin between 895–900. However, it can be assumed that they kept on fighting together with the seven Hungarian tribes.

In connection with the role of the Qavars, we must analyze the passage cited about their leading position in wars. Emperor Constantine emphasizes, that the Qavars were promoted or elevated to be the first clans (i.e. tribes). He explains this outstanding position of the Qavars with their strength and valor, and with the fact that they were in front position in war, i. e. in battle. This passage was interpreted in two ways. According to one theory, this passage can be meant in the literal sense, i.e. the Qavars had a leading role, the first rank in the hierarchy of the Hungarian tribal federation. So Árpád may have been the prince of the Qavars and at the same time the prince of the whole Hungarian confederation.<sup>143</sup> According to a similar view, the prince of the Qavars was the Gyula, the military leader of the Hungarian tribal federation.<sup>144</sup> Both of these hypotheses regarded the Qavars the first tribes inside the tribal confederation. It may be stated, that the major part of foreign scholars considered the Qabars a leading tribe or rather people, who played an important role in campaigns.<sup>145</sup> The other hypothesis represented mainly by Hungarian scholars maintains that the Qavars should be regarded as military auxiliaries, who provided the front and the rear guard, so their first position showed their place not in rank, but in the military organization.<sup>146</sup> So it was assumed by the majority of Hungarian scholars and some foreign researchers, that the Qabars being the newest tribe of a nomadic confederation became a military auxiliary, who had to fight in the front, and had to serve as a rear guard as well.<sup>147</sup> It was emphasized that "this was hardly an honorary position (though Constantine thought it so, thus added the phrase about the courage and bravery of the Qabars) especially when viewed in the context of steppe tactics. The first line in a cavalry charge must take considerable losses."<sup>148</sup> It was remarked as well, that "according to the rules of nomadic military organization, hosts were headed (and

<sup>142</sup> Györffy, *Honfoglalás, megtelepedés*, 130.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. Marquart, *Ostropäische und ostasiatische Streifzüge*, 52; Bury, *A History*, 426; Grousset, *The Empire*, 178; Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, 197–198; Várady, *Revision*, 34–35; a similar view regarded Levedi the prince of the Qabars, Pritsak, *Yowar*, 382–384.

<sup>144</sup> Macartney, *The Magyars*, 116; G. Vékony, "Egy kazár felirat a Kárpát-medencében," *Életünk* (1987:4), 383; Uhrman, *Iulus rex*, 287–342.

<sup>145</sup> For a summary of views of foreign scholars on Qabars see, Uhrman, *Iulus Rex*, 280.

<sup>146</sup> For a summary of Hungarian scholars on Qabars see, Uhrman, *Iulus Rex*, 273–278.

<sup>147</sup> Németh, *HMK* 1930. 19, 38, 134–136, 235; Németh, *HMK* 1991. 37–38, 262; Györffy, *Tanulmányok*, 46, 83; Artamonov, *Istoriija*, 345; Göckenjan, *Hilfsvölker*, 35–36; Vajay, *Der Eintritt*, 16; I. Fodor, *Verecke híres útján*. [On the famous road of Verecke]. Budapest 1975; 192–193; Fodor, *Kazárok*, 94–95; Kristó, *Levedi*, 115;

<sup>148</sup> Golden, *Khazar Studies*, 137.

the rear guard also provided), not by the leading tribe but by the associated tribes and thus the Qabars, in complete accordance with historical circumstances, should be regarded as military auxiliaries."<sup>149</sup> A similar view already quoted stated, that "the last tribe(s) to join a confederation [...] were the first to be sent against the enemy" and the "first tribe refers to military position, not to a political rank."<sup>150</sup> It is very difficult to determine the position of the rank of the Qabars in the Hungarian tribal federation. It was generally supposed, that Emperor Constantine misunderstood the informations on Qavars, did not know the Turkish military organization or had been deceived by a Qavar informant.<sup>151</sup> I am of the opinion, that we should interpret the Byzantine source according to the text. There is a logical connection between the fact, that the Qabars "show themselves strongest and most valorous" and that "they are leaders in war". The word 'proexarkhein' may be interpreted as 'to go ahead, in front', but its probable meaning is 'to lead', in the political or military sense.<sup>152</sup> I think that the sentence is clearly referring to the military leading role of the Qabars, which is testified by their promotion, or elevation to be the first tribes. This consequent and logical statement is reinforced by the tribal list in the beginning of chapter 40, where the Kabaroi are mentioned first.<sup>153</sup> The Qabars may serve as subordinate people, joining the last to the 'Seven Magyars' and forming in battle the front guard or the first line. However, it is possible to assume the Qabars as an allied people, constituting a smaller confederation inside the joint Hungarian-Qavar confederation, fought together and really led the joint troops under their prince (Khagan/Kean).<sup>154</sup> Both interpretations may be valid. It is sure, that the Qavars were constituted not by fragments of tribes, and their historical role must not be underestimated, they had important military role in the Hungarian confederation.<sup>155</sup>

The cultural role of the Qavars must be emphasized too. They represented the culture and customs of Khazaria, and had part in the formation of Hungarian language. Emperor Constantine remarked, that the Kabaroi "to these Turks taught also the tongue of the Chazars. and to this day they have this same language, but they have also the other tongue."<sup>156</sup> This passage clearly "testifies to the fact that the Hungarians, owing to their association with the Kabaroi, became bilingual."<sup>157</sup> Most scholars regarded the Qabars bilingual, but doubted, that this bilingual state may be referred to the Hungarian tribes as well. They rather attributed it to the Hungarian upper strata due to the former Khazarian contacts.<sup>158</sup> It was assu-

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<sup>149</sup> Kristó, *Hungarian history*, 153.

<sup>150</sup> Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 348, 350; similarly Róna-Tas-Berta, *West Old Turkic*, 1175.

<sup>151</sup> For the deception of the Byzantine emperor by Bulcsú, who was assumed the informant on Qavars, D. Dümmerth, *Álmos, az áldozat*. [Álmos, the victim] Budapest 1986, 28-32.

<sup>152</sup> Uhrman, *Iulus rex*. 280-281.

<sup>153</sup> DAI 174-175.

<sup>154</sup> For a similar interpretation see Tóth, *Levediától*, 64.

<sup>155</sup> Uhrman, *Iulus rex*, 285-287; - in his opinion the Gyula was the prince of the Qabars.

<sup>156</sup> DAI 174-175.

<sup>157</sup> *Commentary*, 150.

<sup>158</sup> Fodor, *Kazárok*, 95; Gy. Györffy, *Krónikáink és a magyar őstörténet. Régi kérdések-új válaszok*. Budapest 1993, 66.

med, that the "Magyar tribal federation undoubtedly spoke Hungarian, and the Magyarisation of Khavars occurred very quickly, while some groups of the Magyars were for a while bilingual, speaking Turkic as well."<sup>159</sup> In another words "the Hungarians also learnt the language of the Khazars in the late ninth century, and some of them became bilingual for a time, but the Kavars began to assimilate to the Hungarians."<sup>160</sup> At the same time, it is evident, that the Qavars had some part on the doubted bilingual state of the Hungarian tribes, and the confederation. It is not doubted, that "Khazar loan-words were adopted in the Hungarian language through contacts between the Qabars and the Hungarians."<sup>161</sup> Generally linguists has doubts concerning the importance of Qavars in their linguistic influence on Hungarians and on the Hungarian (Magyar) language. Generally it is assumed that there was a long interval of Turkish influence on the Hungarians by Turkish people, like the Bulgars of Volga and the Khazars, and the Qabars meant only the last and least influence on the Magyar language. In this concept the Qabars meant "the last contact with people that spoke a language of the Khazar Empire."<sup>162</sup> It is also supposed that "Hungarian copied the Turkic loanwords from Oguric, which was spoken by both the Khazars and the Bulgars."<sup>163</sup> According to the latest researches, the "Hungarian language contains 384 words of West old Turkic origin."<sup>164</sup> Contrary to this linguistic aspect historians contributed much more importance to the role of Qabars in this respect as well.<sup>165</sup> According to a view "since the coexistence of the Hungarians and the Qabars covered a long time, in fact one or two centuries from the joining of the Qabars to their Magyarization, the Qabars obviously must have exerted an intensive influence on the Hungarian language."<sup>166</sup> Considering the possibility, that the Hungarians had much shorter connections with the Khazars, than was assumed earlier, and maybe it was restricted to just some decades of the ninth century, while the interval of the relations of the Hungarians with the Volga Bulgars cannot be determined exactly, we may contribute more relevance with the Qabars seceded from Khazaria, who lived and fought with the Hungarians/Magyars not only in the ninth century, but in the next centuries in the Carpathian Basin as well.

The three Khazar tribes, called Qabars/Qavars had an interesting history. They appeared on the historical scene with their revolt against the Khazar government. Although this revolt failed, and the 'rebels' were defeated, with their joining to the Hungarians/Magyars they were able to continue their own history. They preserved their autonomy or part of it, they were regarded by the Hungarians as one 'tribe', although in their own tribal federation they retained the former tribes. They had their own prince, probably called Khagan ('Kean'), preserved their Khazar

<sup>159</sup> Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 389.

<sup>160</sup> Róna-Tas-Berta, *West old Turkic*, 2: 1175.

<sup>161</sup> Ligeti, *A magyar nyelv*, 533.

<sup>162</sup> Róna-Tas-Berta, *West Old Turkic*, 2: 1175.

<sup>163</sup> Róna-Tas-Berta, *West Old Turkic*, 2: 1176.

<sup>164</sup> Róna-Tas-Berta, *West Old Turkic*, 2: 1176.

<sup>165</sup> A. Bartha, "Türk-ősmagyar etnogenetikai kérdések," [Ethnogenetic problems of Turk-ancient Hungarians] in F. Tókei, ed. *Nomád társadalmak és államalakulatok (Tanulmányok)*, Budapest 1983, 67-69; Tóth, *Qabars*, 112-113; Tóth, *Levediától*, 65.

<sup>166</sup> Kristó, *Hungarian history*, 151.

identity, had an ethnonym and had important military role in the Hungarian tribal federation, participated in lot of campaigns, and proved to be brave 'allies' of the 'Seven Magyars.' Their historical importance cannot be doubted; they exerted political, military, cultural and linguistic influence in the Hungarian tribal confederation. And at the same time their language preserved in Turkic/Khazar loanwords in Hungarian language can be regarded as the relics of the culture of the Khazar Khaganate, which fell in 965.