

ԵՐԵՎԱՆԻ ՊԵՏԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՄԱԼՍԱՐԱՆ
ԱՐԵՎԵԼԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՖԱԿՈՒԼՏԵՏ

ԱՐԵՎԵԼԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՀԱՐՑԵՐ

*Նվիրվում է ԵՊՀ արևելագիտության ֆակուլտետի
հիմնադրման 50-ամյակին*

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**Հրատարակվում է Երևանի պետական համալսարանի
արևելագիտության ֆակուլտետի
գիտական խորհրդի որոշմամբ**

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*ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ РОССИЙСКО-ИРАНСКОГО
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Khorikyan Hovhannes *

ON THE LOCATION OF THE HEPHTHALITES

Key words: *Hephthalites, Chionites, “Red-Hyons”, “White Hyons”, Alkhons, Valkhons.*

The primary sources about the Hephthalites contain numerous records which are extremely contradictory and ambiguous. Procopius of Caesarea, calling Hephthalites “White Huns” writes down: “Although the Hephthalites are a Hunnish people and are so called, they do not mix and associate with those Huns whom we know, for they do not share any frontier region with them and do not live close to them... They are not nomadic like the other Hunnish peoples, but have long since settled on fertile land... They alone of the Huns are white-skinned and are not ugly. They do not have the same way of life and do not live such bestial lives as the other Huns, but are ruled by one king and possess a legal state structure, observing justice among themselves and with their neighbours in no lesser measure than the Byzantines and Persians”¹. It is clear from the record of the historian that geographically Hephthalites were located far from the so-called Western Huns and had nothing common with the latter, but at the same time were distinguished by their white complexion and not ugly appearance. Procopius of Caesarea considers Hephthalites as a settled people who were ruled by one king and had a legitimate state. Information provided by the Byzantine historian shows that Hephthalites differed from other Huns not only in appearance but also in living, and they yielded to neither Romans nor Persians with respect to the level of state governance. The detailed and well-grounded messages of the well-informed historian

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¹ Procopius. *ex recensione G. Dindorfii*, Vol. I, Bonnae, 1833, *De Bello Persico*, I, 3, pp. 15-16. Another Byzantine historian Agathias briefly writes: “The Hephthalites are a Hunnish people” (*Agathiae Myrinaei Historiarum libri quinque*, Bonnae, 1828, p. 267).

have exceptional significance. Still, despite all this the author says nothing about the origin of Hephthalites. From the description given by Ammianus Marcellinus (19, 1, 7; 19, 2, 3) and Procopius, it is obvious that the Chionites and Hephthalites presented to them different from the Huns. Giving them a common name “White Huns” brings those names together². “White Huns”, Hephthalites in Procopius’ view, inhabit the areas north of Gorgo (Gurgan), also known to Priscus of Panium as areas inhabited by Kidarites³.

Menander and Theophanes of Byzantium also give important information about the Hephthalites. Menander saved a message of the Turkish Embassy saying that the Hephthalites are an “urban tribe”. According to him, Turks who won over the Hephthalites, became “masters of their cities”⁴. Theophanes of Byzantium says, that after the victory over the Persians, the Hephthalites became masters of the cities and harbours formerly owned by the Persians. Soon after, the Turks defeated them in a battle and took those of them⁵.

But Chinese chronicles convey a different message. Ye-da-Hephthalites “do not have cities and live in places free from grass and water in the felt tents”. Traveler Song Yun writes that Ye-da-Hephthalites do not possess fortified towns, they live a nomadic life⁶. These two conflicting messages are joined in the story about Hsi-mo-ta-lo (a Sanskritized form of the ethnonym, Heptal) by Hsüan-tsang. The inhabitants of this region, that is Hephthalites, lived in tents made of

² Pigulyevskaya N., *Siriyskie istochniki po istorii narodov SSSR* [Syrian sources on the history of the nations of the USSR], M.-L., 1941, pp. 37, 47.

³ Procopius, I, 3; Müller C., *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, Vol. IV, Parisiis, 1868, pp. 105, fr. 31; 106, fr. 33.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 225-226, fr. 18.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 270-271, fr. 3. “And Ephtalan, king of Hephthalites, from whom the whole kin got the appellation, defeated Peroz and Persians”. Perhaps the word “Ephtalan” (Chinese Yen-tai-i-li-t’o) formed a sort of a throne name which was added to the proper name of the ruler, just as the Parthian kings were named Arshak (Masson V., Romodin V., *Istoria Afganistana* [The History of Afghanistan], Vol. I, M., 1964, p. 205.

⁶ Beal S., *Buddhist records of the Western World*, Vol. I, London, 1906, pp. XC-XCI; Enoki K., *On the Nationality of the Hephthalites*, “Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko”, Tokyo, 1959, № 18, p. 50.

animal skins and roamed from place to place. However, it is reported that in the past they had conquered a lot of countries where “they ruled over a great number of highly reinforced towns and settlements”⁷. Thus, it is not excluded that the Western writers perceived Hephthalites as an urban population, as they possessed cities, and at a later stage Hephthalitian nobility were apparently settled in cities⁸. In our opinion contradiction among the sources is conditioned by the fact that the messages relate to not only Hephthalites as such, but also to different tribes and peoples that were part of the huge state created by Hephthalites, who despite their ethnic origin were perceived by some ancient authors as Hephthalites, thus causing numerous contradictions. And this is true only for those nomadic and gang tribes who used to roam along the country’s borders and raid on neighbouring states. So, these tribes could have been called Hephthalites in ancient sources, meantime some sources, mainly Byzantine ones, considered Hephthalites as a sedentary people.

The Chinese sources contain a lot of theories about the origin of Hephthalites. However, they lack unanimity. Information of Chinese sources can be divided into the following groups: a) Hephthalites are descendants of Yuezhi; b) Hephthalites are a branch of the Turkic Gaoju tribes; c) Hephthalites descended from Ch’e-shih tribes (Turfan); d) they are descendants of K’ang-chü⁹. One of the ancient Chinese authors, referring to the origin of Hephthalites, states: “Information received from distant countries and [peoples speaking] foreign languages, is subject to misunderstanding and distortion, and also refer to the events of very ancient times Consequently, we do not know how exactly it was. [This way] it is impossible to resolve [the issue of] the origin of Hephthalites”¹⁰. Japanese scientist K.Enoki had to come to an absolutely analogous conclusion: the

⁷ Enoki K., *On the Nationality of the Hephthalites*, p. 35.

⁸ Gafurov B., *Tadzhiki. Drevneishaya, drevnyaya i srednevekovaya istoria* [The Tajiks: Prehistory, Ancient and Medieval history], Moscow, 1989, p. 210.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

¹⁰ Enoki K., *On the Nationality of the Hephthalites*, p. 7.

Chinese authors did not know the true origin of Hephthalites, and their theories have a “bookish and as a rule quite an arbitrary character”¹¹.

Some scholars consider Hephthalites as descendants of the Yüeh-chih, others think they descended from the Huns, belong to ancient Turks or Mongols. There is also a theory regarding their Iranian-speaking origin. According to some researchers, they are a nation very different from the Chionites, while others prove their identity or consider Hephthalites as the “ruling class” of Chionites¹².

In addition to “White Huns”, Hephthalites are called differently in different sources. In Syrian sources, they are named *Abdel* and *Eptalit*; in Greek-language sources- *Abdel* and *Hephthalites*; in Armenian-*heptal*, *Idal*, *tetal*; in Middle Persian-*eftal* and *heftal*, in Arabic-*haital* and *yaftal*, in Tajik-Persian-*hetal* and *Haital*; in Chinese -*Ye-da* (which in ancient times sounded **iep-tat*) and *I-tien* (in ancient times sounded **iep-t'ien*)¹³. In

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 1-14; Enoki K., The Origin of the White Huns or Hephthalites, “East and West”, VI, 1955, № 3, pp. 232-235.

¹² Ghirshman R., Les Chionites-Hephthalites, Le Caire, 1948, pp. 10-21, 115; Enoki K., On the Nationality of the Hephthalites, pp. 15-23; Gafurov B., The Tajiks..., p. 206. “It has been argued that the Chionites were Iranians, based on the derivation of their name in Pahlavi, *Hyon*, from Avestan *Hyaona*” (Wolfgang F., Chionites, in Ehsan Yarshater, ed., Encyclopaedia Iranica, 5. Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, p. 485 and others). “The name Hephthalites, which appears in Chinese as well as Greek sources, was the dynastic appellation, adopted towards the end of the 5th century, either of a people or-less likely-of a country called Avar or Var. The Chinese transcription of the name (modern *hua*) would allow both readings. ...the Hephthalites were not invaders but had been, for some time, part of the region’s population” (“The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia”, Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 298-299). Analyzing the sources of the 4-7th centuries, K. Trever came to the conclusion that “at the time of Hephthalites the country and the people continued to be called Kushan, and Hephthalite were the army and the king, i.e. the top of the society and some part of the troops apparently belonging to a different tribal union” (Trever K., Kushany, khionity i eftality po armyanskim istochnikam IV-VII vv. [Kushans, Chionites, Hephthalites according to Armenian sources of the IV-VII centuries], “Soviet Archaeology”, Vol. XXI, M.-L., 1954, pp. 135, 143.

¹³ Pigulevskaya N., Syrian Sources on the History of the Peoples of the USSR, p. 49; Gafurov B. Tajiks..., p. 206. Some researchers believe that the name of Hephthalites is preserved in the name of the largest group of Afghan tribes-Abdal. See Marquart J., *Ērānšahr nach der Geographie des Ps. Moses Xorenac'i*, Berlin, 1901, S. 253; Gankovskiy Y., *Narody Pakistana (Osnovnye etapy etnicheskoi istorii)* [The Peoples of Pakistan (The Main Stages of the Ethnic History)], Moscow, 1964, pp. 129-130.

Pahlavi-Zoroastrian sources, they sometimes stand out as *hyons*, in Indian-as *huna*, the Arab sources often by mistake call them Turks, and ancient Armenian sources mix them with the Kushans. F. Altheim tries to deduce this ethnonym from a Turkic root meaning “to do”, “to perform”¹⁴, but this etymology seems unlikely. Another explanation –deriving from Iranian-*hapta* (“seven”) - is also proposed¹⁵.

In the X century Balami wrote: “*Heyatele* is the plural of *Haital*, which in the language of Bukhara means “a strong man”. “Force” in the language of Bukhara is *haital*, and this word in the Arabic language has changed into “*haital*”¹⁶. Indeed, the closest word in the Eastern Iranian Khotanese Saka language means “brave, valiant”¹⁷.

From the inscriptions on the Hephthalite coins we can infer the following regarding the issue: The Hephthalites originally called themselves Hyon (OIONO on coins = Hyon¹⁸), therefore Hephthalites are one of the branches of Chionites who were Iranian-speaking tribes of the Central Asian origin¹⁹. Judging by the coins, Bactrian remained the official language of Hephthalites in their Tokharistan possessions. Self-evident Bactrian titles are read in coin legends²⁰.

One should also dwell on the division of Hephthalites into two parts. In contemporary literature this issue was most thoroughly and in details investigated by H. Bailey. The Pahlavi texts were the starting point for his

¹⁴ Altheim F., *Geschichte der Hunnen*, Bd. I, 1959, S. 44.

¹⁵ Maenchen-Helfen O., *The Ethnic Name Hun*, “*Studia Serica Bernhard Karlgren dedicate*”, Copenhagen, 1959, p. 231.

¹⁶ *Chronique de Tabari*, traduite sur la version persane Bel’ami, ed. H. Zotenberg, tom deuxième, Paris, 1869, p. 128.

¹⁷ Livshits V., *K otkrytiyu baktriyskikh nadpisey na Kara-Tepe* [On the opening of the Bactrian inscription at Kara-Tepe], “The Buddhist caves in Old Termez. The resume of the works of 1963-1964. Inscriptions, terracotta, stone”, Moscow, 1969, p. 67, note 103.

¹⁸ Frye R., *Nasledie Irana* [The Heritage of Persia], Moscow, 1972, p. 310.

¹⁹ Frye R., *The Heritage of Persia*, p. 311; Gafurov B., *Tajiks...*, p. 205. See also Ambartsumian A., *Khionity i eftality po dannym srednepersidskikh istochnikov* [The Chionites and Hephthalites according to the middle persian sources], “21th International Conference on Source Study and Historiography of Asian and African countries”, Saint Petersburg State University, April 3-5, 2001, pp. 1-2.

²⁰ Henning W., *The Bactrian inscription*, “*Bulletin of the School of Oriental (and African) Studies*”, Vol. XXIII, part 1, London, 1960, p. 51; Livshits V., *On the opening of the Bactrian inscription at Kara-Tepe*, pp. 67-71.

arguments. “Jamasp-Nameh” (96) contains information about the battle between Iran and the “White Hyons”. Then (104) a success report is given, “(ud druwandān ud dēw ud hyōnān ēdōn bē abesihēnd...) Carriers of evil, the Devils and Hyons were destroyed, just as the winter wind blows the leaves from the trees”²¹. “Bahman-Yasht” (II, 49), on the contrary, reports of the Sassanid defeats: “The kingdom and the sovereignty passed to the slaves who were not Iranians, they were like *Hyōn*, Türk, Heftal, Tibetans, Mountaineers, Chinese, Sogdians, Byzantines, *Red Hyōns and White Hyōns*. They became kings in Iran, my homeland”²². If the first of the above mentioned texts speaks of “White Hyons” only, the second mentions just Hyons (standing by the Turks), as well as “Red Hyons” (Karmir Hyon) and “White Hyons” (Spet Hyon). According to the commentator of “Bahman-Yasht”, they owe the appellation “Red Hyons” to red headgear, red armor and a red flag. Indian sources also contain records of the red (or dark) *huna* and white *huna* (in Indian sources Huna are Hephthalites). Finally, in the poem of the VII century in the Khotanese Saka language there is a reference to some nation the name of which deciphers as *Red Caps*. H. Bailey identifies it with the *red hyons*. In this connection it is also necessary to call to Western data sources (for example, Procopius of Caesarea, I, 3). At the same time, some Kermihions (Κερμιχίωνες) figure in the works of Byzantine authors. As H. Bailey showed it is the same nation that in Pahlavi sources is called *Karmir Hyon*²³. Chinese sources know the “Huni”-Chionites in the country of Sughd, over which they ruled. The Persians later passed the name Chionites to Turkuts who were subordinate to them and whom they called “Kermihion” (worms-Chionites). In 563 an

²¹ Ambartsumian A., Problema plemeni khyona po dannym drevneiranskikh i sredneiranskikh istochnikov [The Problem of the Hyaona tribe according to the old iranian and middle iranian sources], “Acta Institutionis Orientalis”, № 2 (12), Vol. 6. St. Petersburg, 2000, p. 9.

²² Bailey H., Iranian studies, “Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies (BSO(A)S)”, Vol. XI, pt. 4, 1932, pp. 945-946.

²³ Bailey H., Hārahūna, “Asiatica. Festschrift Fr. Weller”, Leipzig, 1954, pp. 13-20. Theophanous of Byzantium writing about “Kermihion” reports (Κερμιχίονάς fr. 2) that to the East of Tanais are the Turks who in ancient times were called Massagetae; on the language of Persians these Turks were called Kermihion.

embassy from Kermihions²⁴ living near the Ocean among the Avars came to Constantinople. In this case, Turkuts who lived in the land of the Avars in the Aral-Caspian steppes are meant. The Ocean stands for the Caspian Sea, which was considered to be the bay of the ocean surrounding the land and mingling with the Aral Sea²⁵.

We hardly know anything about these two groups of Hephthalites: whether they were different tribes forming part of a general confederation or they were some ethno-anthropological types within a single tribal massif²⁶. Meantime, it is significant that in mural painting recently opened in Afrasiab (in Samarkand) showing the arrival of the embassy, there are figures of two ambassadors, distinguished primarily by the skin color (“red-faced” and “white-faced”). According to V. Livshits, it is reasonable to compare these images with “Red-Hyons” and “White Hyons”²⁷. On the basis of Byzantine sources, especially those of Procopius of Caesarea, we think that the mentioned characteristics describe two different ethno-anthropological types, one of which “Red Hyons” are probably related to Huns, that is Turkic or Mongolic anthropological type, and the “white Hyons” referring to the Eastern Iranian tribes.

The Hephthalite script is a direct continuation of the Kushan (Bactrian) and it differs from the Kushan by a more developed italic type²⁸. It was about the Hephthalite written language that Hsüan-tsang wrote: “[Their] language and letters differ somewhat from those of other countries. The number of radical letters is twenty-five; by combining these they express all objects around them. Their writing is across the page, and they read left to right. Their literary records have increased gradually, and

²⁴ “The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia”, p. 302.

²⁵ Artamonov M., *Istoriya khazar [History of the Khazars]*, Leningrad, 1962, p. 107.

²⁶ Gafurov B., *Tajiks...*, p. 207.

²⁷ Livshits V., *Nadpisi na freskakh iz Afrasiaba [Inscriptions on the frescoes from Afrasiab]*, “Theses of session reports on history of painting in the Asian countries”, Leningrad, 1965, p. 6.

²⁸ Sims-Williams N., *The Sasanians in the East. A Bactrian archive from northern Afganistan, “The Sasanian Era. The Idea of Iran”*, Vol. III, ed. by V. S. Curtis and S. Stewart, London, 2008, p. 88.

exceed those of [the people of] Su-le or Sogdiana”²⁹. However, few of these “literary works” are left. Hephthalite, in particular, are fragments of manuscripts from Eastern Turkestan³⁰. Some of them are apparently dated the VII-VIII centuries, but all trials to read connected text have failed. Some linguists consider their language to be Saka, others-Bactrian³¹. Hephthalite inscriptions were found in Central Asia³².

In many ways reading of inscriptions on Hephthalite coins and gems remains controversial. The interpretation of this material is usually possible with the help of Iranian etymologies and indicates that the language was East-Iranian³³. Given this, the supporters of Hunnish-Turkic origin of Hephthalites now explain the presence of clearly Iranian words by the fact that some elements of the language of the Iranian population subordinate to them penetrated into the language of Hephthalites which was originally Turkic (or Mongolic)³⁴. There is practically no serious reason to consider Turkic³⁵ (or Mongolic) as the language of Ephtalites, it was almost

²⁹ “History of Civilizations of Central Asia”, Vol. III, Editor: B. A. Litvinsky, UNESCO Publishing, Paris, 1996, p. 136; Beal S., Buddhist records of the Western World, p. 38; Pelliot P., Tokharien ou Koutchéen, “Journal Asiatique”, t. CCXXIV, 1934, p. 50.

³⁰ Hansen O., Die Berliner Hephthaliten-Fragmente, “F. Altheim. Aus Spätantike und Christentum”, Tübingen, 1951; Gershevitch I., Bactrian inscriptions and manuscripts, “Indogermansiche Forschungen”, “Zeitschrift für Indogermanistik und allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft”, 72 Bd., ½, Hft. Berlin, 1967, pp. 27-57; Livshits V., Cusano-Indica, “Hellenistic Near East, Byzantine Empire and Iran. History and Philosophy. Collection in honour of N. Pigulevskaya”, Moscow, 1967, p. 163.

³¹ Gafurov B., Tajiks..., p. 208.

³² Ibid., p. 208.

³³ Bailey H., Thaugara, “BSO(A)S”, Vol. VIII, pt. 4, 1937, pp. 892-893 (titles of the coin legends is Iranian); Enoki K., On the Nationality of the Hephthalites, p. 39-45; Ghirshman R., Les Chionites-Hephthalites, pp. 67, 117-118; Maenchen-Helfen O., The ethnic Name Hun, pp. 227-231; Gumilev L., Eftality i ikh sosedi v IV v. [Hephthalites and their Neighbours in the IV century], “Review of Ancient History”, 1959, № 1, p. 132; Enoki K., On the Nationality of the Hephthalites, pp. 1-58.

³⁴ Altheim F., Geschichte der Hunnen, I, SS. 41-54; Pulleyblank E., The Consonantal System of Old Chinese, “Asia Major”, N. S., Vol. IX, pt. 1, 1962, pp. 259-260.

³⁵ In the illustration of Pei shih there is a direct indication that the language of Hephthalites is not Turkic. See Pelliot P., L’origine de T’ou-kiue, nom chinois des Turcs, T’oung Pao, 1915, p. 688.

undoubtedly East-Iranian³⁶. Therefore, as R. Frye thinks we may consider the Hephthalite Empire of the Eastern Iran and Northwestern India as predominantly Iranian³⁷.

It is also necessary to address the question of the place of addition of Hephthalites. A. Bernshtam, speaking of ethnogenesis and the addition of statehood of Hephthalites, pointed out two centers: the middle and lower Syr-Darya on the one hand and Amu-Darya upper basin on the other³⁸.

Japanese scientist K. Enoki not only made a critical revision of the entire set of existing material, but also brought new data from Chinese sources. K. Enoki's findings were as follows: a) The original homeland of Hephthalites was near the eastern edge of Badakhshan, and b) their culture contained some Iranian elements. Without adding new arguments to the concept of K. Enoki, L. Gumilev³⁹ develops a similar idea about the origin of Badakhshan Hephthalites. In the final analysis this hypothesis also originates in Chinese sources, exactly to the tradition that was saved by Hsüan-tsang in the story about Badakhshan country of Hsi-mo-ta-lo (the Sanskritized form of the word "Hephthalite" or any of its variants), the king of which won many countries⁴⁰. However, this tradition may date back to the tradition of Yuezhi conquests, and then, consequently, one cannot rely on it as a proof of the extension of power of Badakhshan Hephthalites⁴¹. To

³⁶ Frye R., *The Heritage of Persia*, p. 311; Gafurov V., *Tajiks...*, p. 208; Masson V., Romodin V., *History of Afghanistan*, pp. 206-207; Gankovskiy Y., *Peoples of Pakistan*, pp. 129-130; Gumilev L., *Eftality-gortsyi ili stepnyaki? [Hephthalites –mountain dwellers or steppe inhabitants?]*, "Review of Ancient History", 1967, № 3, pp. 91-99; "History of Civilizations of Central Asia", Vol. III, pp. 135, 148; A. N. Garkavets, *Velikaya step' v antichnykh i vizantiyskikh istochnikakh. Sbornik materialov [The Great Steppe in the Ancient and Byzantine Sources. Collected Materials]*, Almaty, 2005, p. 556)

³⁷ Frye R., *The Heritage of Persia*, p. 311; Frye R., *The History of Ancient Iran*, München, 1983, p. 347.

³⁸ Bernshtam A., *Ocherk istorii gunnov [Essay on the History of the Huns]*, Leningrad, 1951, p. 197.

³⁹ Gumilev L., *Hephthalites and their Neighbours in the IV Century*, pp. 129-140; Gankovskiy Y., *Peoples of Pakistan*, pp. 82-83. The toponym Yaftal in Badakhshan and probably that of Medieval Huttalyan estate in Southern Tajikistan came from the name of Hephthalites ("Osnovy iranskogoazykoznaneya. Sredneiranskiesazyki ["Fundamentals of Iranian linguistics. Middle Iranian languages"], Moscow, 1981, p. 316.

⁴⁰ Enoki K., *On the Nationality of the Hephthalites*, p. 35; "An Historical Atlas of Central Asia", by Y. Bregel, Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2003, p. 12.

⁴¹ Gafurov B., *Tajiks...*, p. 209.

confirm the Badakhshan hypothesis further facts⁴² are required. Perhaps archaeology will provide them⁴³.

R. Frye does not accept Badashkhan as a homeland of Hephthalites. In his opinion, the appellation “Hephthalite” and the name of Hephthalite king Akhshundar may be explained as Iranian, the Turkic etymology of the name Akhshundar–*axsung er* mentioned by Mahmud al-Kashgari (I, 106, 3) is hardly reliable. The name of another Hephthalite king, Varz should probably be read as Varaz, as during the Arab conquest the name was quite common in Hephthalite princes, whose possessions bordered with the Sassanid Iran in the areas of Merv and Merve-Rud. One may recall the Sassanid feudal clan of Varaz, the appellation of which the Byzantine authors often mistook as a title⁴⁴.

In pre-revolutionary Russian literature K. Inostrantsev paid attention to the similarity of the stone vaults–“mughona” with sepulchral structures, which, according to written sources, Hephthalites possessed⁴⁵. Studying “mughona” and other types of sepulchral structures, in particular barrows burial in wooden coffins (according to Chinese sources, they were also common with Hephthalites), as well as looking at some other facts B. Litvinsky came to the conclusion that the tribes of the piedmont areas of Fergana, who had exactly these kinds of burials played a significant role in the addition of Hephthalite tribes⁴⁶.

S. Tolstov believes that Hephthalites are natives of the Aral Sea region. In the last statement of this theory, he wrote: “We must assume that in the IV-V centuries deltas of Amu-Darya and Syr-Darya were the center

⁴² Gumilev L., Hephthalites –mountain dwellers or steppe inhabitants?, pp. 91-99.

⁴³ Babaev, A., Kreposti i pogrebal'nye sooruzheniya drevnego Vakhana (Ishkashimskiy rayon GBAO) [Castles and Burial Structures of the Ancient Wakhan (Ishkashim Region)], Ph.D.dissertation, Dushanbe, 1965, pp. 16-18.

⁴⁴ Frye R., The Heritage of Persia, pp. 311-312; Frye R., The History of Ancient Iran, p. 316; Christopher I. B., Empires of the Silk Road, Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2009, p. 123.

⁴⁵ Inostrantsev K., O drevneiranskikh pogrebal'nykh obychayakh i postroykakh [On the Ancient Iranian Burial Customs and Buildings], “Journal of the Ministry of Public Enlightenment”, № 3-4, St.Petersburg, 1909, pp. 116-120.

⁴⁶ Gafurov B., Tajiks..., p. 209.

of the “barbaric state” of Chionites-Hephthalites that emerged in the ancient Sako-Massagetian substrate with a strong admixture of Eastern Hunno-Turkic elements”⁴⁷. Despite S. Tolstov’s assertion, the Aral-forland has never been the center of the state of Chionites or Hephthalites⁴⁸.

L. Gumilev believed that Hephthalites were not nomads of the Central Asian steppes but mountain dwellers of the Pamirs and Hindukush⁴⁹.

In the long recension of the Armenian *Ašxarhacoyc* (Geography) after the Hephthalites the Alkhons and the Valkhons are mentioned. They lived in the cities of the same name near a great river called Dumos. It becomes clear from the source that the mentioned peoples were situated in mountaneous areas. The Hephthalites, Alkhons and Valkhons are mentioned after the Tokhars. The Hephthalites mentioned after the Tokhars are placed in Badakhshan, in the neighbourhood of Tokharstan, which is accepted by some other researchers as well. From the records of *Ašxarhacoyc* it is clearly seen that under the name of Hephthalites the author meant not the area of the state established by Hephthalites, but their narrow circle of habitation. Moreover, in *Ašxarhacoyc* Turkestan implying Northern countries is placed to the north of Sogdiana and Hephthalites⁵⁰.

In specialized literature the Valkhons are identified⁵¹ with *Uar and Huni tribes⁵² mentioned by Theophylactus Simocatus and with *Οὐαρχωνῖται* mentioned by Menander⁵³. The Avars that appeared in Europe

⁴⁷ Tolstov S., *Po drevnim del'tam Oksa i Yaksarta* [Along Ancient Deltas of Oxus and Jaxartes], Moscow, 1962, p. 244. Cf. “*Narody Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana*” [“Peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan”], I, ed. by S. Tolstov, Moscow, 1962, p. 72; Masson V., Romodin V., *History of Afghanistan*, p. 200.

⁴⁸ Gafurov B., *Tajiks...*, p. 210.

⁴⁹ Gumilev L., *Hephthalites and their Neighbours in the IV century*, pp. 135-140.

⁵⁰ *Matenagirq Hayots* [Armenian Authors], Vol. II, Antilias-Lebanon, 2003, p. 2159; “The Geography of Ananias of Shirak (*Ašxarhacoyc*)”, *The Long and the Short Recensions, Introduction, translation and commentary* by R. H. Hewsens, Wiesbaden, 1992, p. 75.

⁵¹ Marquart J., *Ērānšahr...*, S. 157.

⁵² *Theophylacti Simocatae Historiae*, ed. C. de Boor, Lipsiae, 1887, VII, 8, p. 258. By the ethno name “uar” used by Simocatus one should imply people, occupying area in the region of Kunduz city in Northern Afghanistan. The term “Huni” refers to the Hunnic tribes settled in Bactria. Haussig H., *Theophylakt's Exkurs über die skythischen Völker*, “Byzantion”, t. XXIII, 1953, SS. 304-305, 345-362, 413-429.

⁵³ Müller C., *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, Vol. IV, p. 246.

represented part of the Ogor-Ugrians fleeing from Turkuts and consisting of Uar and Huni tribes. The name of the first of them is consonant with the name Avar, thus causing inaccuracy advantageous for the fugitives⁵⁴.

There are also such opinions about Alkhons. R. Göbl has worked extensively on the coinage of the east in the immediate pre-Islamic period, and he appears to be correct in postulating a series of “waves” of Central Asian invaders, whom he calls the Iranian Huns, beginning with the Chionites and Kidara, but followed by a tribe which he calls “Alkhon” from legends in debased Greek script on coins, and from the sole mention of their name as a Central Asian people in the Armenian geography which purports to be a re-working of Ptolemy. This identification, however, was opposed by Harmatta who claimed that the legend on the coin is to be identified with *rājā lakhāna*, perhaps a king of Kashmir mentioned in the Sanskrit chronicle of the kings of Kashmir, the *Rājataranginī*, and he further-more points to the coin with a bi-lingual legend where Bactrian AΛXONO has *rājā lakhāna* in Brahmi characters. Therefore, it is difficult to follow Göbl’s reconstruction of a dynasty of tribal chiefs of the Alkhon, with a reverse wandering of them from India back to Afghanistan after the year 600. Although probably a series of invasions of different peoples from Central Asia did take place in the period from 350 to 450, and there may have been a tribe called Alkhon, there is not enough evidence to do anything with a notice in an Armenian geography⁵⁵.

In the short recension of Ašxarhacoyc Alkhons and Valkhon are not mentioned. Only Hephthalites and other nameless tribes are mentioned there⁵⁶. The River Dumos as one of the tributaries of Iaxartes-Syr Darya is mentioned under the names Dymos⁵⁷ by Ptolemy and Dymas⁵⁸ by

⁵⁴ Artamonov M., History of the Khazars, pp. 106-107.

⁵⁵ Frye R., The History of Ancient Iran, p. 348.

⁵⁶ Matenagirq Hayots (Armenian Authors), pp. 2174, 2191. See also “Ashkharhatsoits Vardanaï Vardapeti [“The Geography (Aškarhatsoyc) of Vardan Vardapet”], ed. H. Perperean, Paris, 1960, p. 70.

⁵⁷ Humbach H., Ziegler S., Ptolemy Geography, book 6, Text and English/German Translations, Wiesbaden, 1998, pp. 166-167.

Ammianus. Probably, to wide extend under the River Dymos one should understand the River Syr-Darya in the upstream known as Karadarya. Judging by the short recensions of Ašxarhacoyc Alkhons and Valkhons should be placed not in the neighbourhood of Hephthalites, but to the north of them. Reference of the River Dymos, as well as the description of Scythia in the long recension of Ašxarhacoyc to a certain extent carry the impact of Ptolemy Geography, consequently the Alkhons and the Valkhons should be searched with Ptolemy. It is interesting to mention that Hephthalites, Alkhons and Valkhons, according to the long recension, resided in cities bearing the same name. Consequently, the names of these cities should be looked for in Ptolemy Geography. The city of Alkhons may correspond to either *Χοάνα* or *Ἀλιχόρδα*⁵⁹. The city of Valkhons corresponds to the royal residence of Bactra⁶⁰, seat of kings also known as Bahl-Balkh. In case of this kind of identifications one should keep in mind that the River Dymos corresponds to not only Syr-Darya but also Amu-Darya as for example to the tributary of the latter, Zeravshan River. One should certainly bear in mind the fact that Ptolemy coordinates were formed based on the data from various guide-books and they are generally relative or simply incorrect, as the geographer has tried to adjust material of different eras. Accordingly, Ptolemy's records were not always identically reflected in the Armenian Ašxarhacoyc, thus causing numerous discrepancies. For example, instead of Ptolemy's Oxus River, the author of Ašxarhacoyc also mentions the name of the Wehrot River⁶¹ having in mind

⁵⁸ Ammianus Marcellinus, with an English translation by J. C. Rolfe, Vol. II, Cambridge, Mass.-London, 1972 (Loeb Classical Library), p. 381.

⁵⁹ Claudii Ptolemaei Geographia, ed. C. F. A. Noebbe, t. II, Lipsiae, 1845, VI, 11, 8; Humbach H., Ziegler S., Ptolemy Geography, book 6, pp. 158, 160. Ammianus mentions *Ἀλιχόρδα* by the name Alicodra (see Ammianus Marcellinus, p. 381).

⁶⁰ Humbach H., Ziegler S., Ptolemy Geography, book 6, p. 160. "Most likely in the view of Ptolemy or his source, there were two settlements called Bactra. First, the metropolis Bactra/Zariaspa identical to Balkh, and second, the royal residence of Bactra (Darapsa), identical to Baghlan and Surkh-Kotal, dynastic sanctuary of the Great Kushans (see Gumbakh G., Ptolemei I Tsentral'naya Aziya v kushanskuyu epokhu [Ptolemy and Central Asia in the Kushan Period], "Central Asia in the Kushan Period", Vol. II, Moscow, 1975, pp. 74-75).

⁶¹ The Geography of Ananias of Širak (Ašxarhacoyc), p. 74.

Amu-Darya and also knows Iaksartes⁶². In general, information relating to the Alkhons, Valkhons and the River Dymos is so obscure for the later writers of Ašxarhacoyc that this episode was not reflected in the short recension. And this happened in case when the Armenian sources could be informed in more details about these faraway lands for the only reason that the Armenian troops guarded the faraway borders of the Sassanid Empire. It so turned out as if some tribes were hid under the name of Alkhons and Valkhons. Observing the issue from this angle the following theory can be proposed. Having in view the rapid ethno-political developments taking place in Central Asia in the IV-VI centuries (and not only), one may assume that the Alkhons and Valkhons mentioned in Ašxarhacoyc is the collective name of barbarian tribes and nations of various origins in a pejorative sense, as the names of barbarian tribes Gog and Magog in Christian and Muslim traditions. For example, in the Armenian “History of the Country of Aluank” Hephthalites are mentioned in line with the tribes living in the Northern Caucasus⁶³, but the Hephthalites resided in Central Asia and the ethnonym Hephthalites is used in a pejorative sense⁶⁴.

Thus, it is not excluded that the record about the Alkhons and Valkhons in the long recension of Ašxarhacoyc was added much later, when nomadic tribes moving from East to West in different eras were collectively called Alkhons-Valkhons, consequently their identification with concrete ethnoses is unacceptable and unfounded.

⁶² Ibid., p. 45.

⁶³ “The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movses Dasxuranc‘i”, translated by C. J. F. Dowsett, London, 1961, p. 55.

⁶⁴ Hakobian A., *Albaniya-Aluank v greko-latinskikh i drevnearmyanskikh istochnikakh* [Albania-Aluank in the Greco-Latin and Ancient Armenian Sources], Yerevan, 1987, p. 73.

ՀԵՓԹԱՂՆԵՐԻ ՏԵՂԱԴՐՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՇՈՒՐՁ

Խորիկյան Հովհաննես (Ամփոփում)

Հեփթաղների կամ սպիտակ հոների մասին սկզբնաղբյուրներն ունեն բազմաթիվ տեղեկություններ, որոնք չափազանց հակասական են և ոչ միանշանակ: Հեփթաղներն էթնիկապես տարբեր են եղել արևմտյան հոներից և ունեցել են պետական կազմակերպվածության բարձր մակարդակ: Հողվածում մանրամասն քննվում են հեփթաղների տեղադրության տարբեր տեսակետները, ընդ որում՝ հայոց «Աշխարհացոյց»-ում հեփթաղներից հետո հիշատակվող Ալխոն և Վալխոն ժողովուրդների անուններն օգտագործվել են հավաքական առումով, ինչպես, օրինակ, Գոգ և Մագոգ բարբարոսական ցեղերի անունները քրիստոնեական և իսլամական ավանդություններում:

К ЛОКАЛИЗАЦИИ ЭФТАЛИТОВ

Хорикян Ованнес (Резюме)

Первоисточники об эфталитах или белых гуннах содержат много информации, которые крайне противоречивы и неоднозначны. Этнически эфталиты отличались от западных гуннов и имели высокий уровень государственной организованности. В статье подробно исследуются различные мнения о местоположении эфталитов, кроме того в армянском «Ашхарацуйц»-е («Армянская География») упомянутые после эфталитов названия народов Алхон и Валхон собирательно использовались, как, например, имена варварских племен Гог и Магог в христианских и мусульманских традициях.