

THE POLITICAL ORGANISATION OF THE NINTH AND TENTH CENTURY HUNGARIANS FROM BYZANTINE ASPECT

This study is focusing on the information given by ninth–tenth century Byzantine authors on contemporary Hungarian/Magyar political organisation and leadership. I analyse the political units and princely ranks of Hungarians observed by the Byzantine authors, and the Greek denominations used by them. I am going to answer the question, whether we can form an adequate picture with the help of Byzantine sources on the organization of the Hungarians and leadership. In other words, whether the Byzantine aspect reflected realities or it was a distorted picture, full of commonplaces about a nomadic people, an opinion formed by the settled, proud and ancient Roman/Byzantine Empire.

Just a few contemporary, ninth and tenth century Byzantine sources are at our disposal on the political organisation and leadership of the Hungarians/Magyars. These sources include the famous *Taktika* (Tactics) of the Byzantine Emperor Leon VI (Wise), the continuation of the chronicle of Georgios Monachos (Georgius Monachus Continuatus), the excellent work of Emperor Constantine VII, *De administrando imperio*, and a passage of his other work, *De cerimoniis aulae Byzantinae*. These constitute the source-basis of the present research. Besides them I will refer to some phrases of other contemporary Greek sources concerning this problem (Arethas, Nicolaos Mytikos, Vita Lucae etc.).

Our survey starts with the work entitled *Taktika* ("Tactics") of the Byzantine Emperor Leon VI (886–912), who was a contemporary of prince Árpád and the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian basin. The *Taktika* was written probably after 904. This important work consisting of twenty chapters treated the military knowledge of his age, dealing with foreign nations as well (Turks, Franks, Longobards, Slavs, and the Saracens/Arabs). Emperor Leon referred to most of the authors he had used, with the sole exception of his main source, the military treatise of Emperor Maurikios written at the end of the sixth century or at the beginning of the seventh century. However, the work of Leon VI cannot be considered a mere compilation and a copy of the treatise of Maurikios, he made a lot of modifications and added new information to it. In case of the Turks, most of his reports were based on Maurikios' work on the sixth century Turks and Avars, but he referred these pieces of information solely to the Turks of his own age who can be identified with the Hungarians/Magyars. It must be noted that in six passages he added new contemporary information on the Turks/Hungarians.¹

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¹ Moravcsik 1967, 221–244; Moravcsik 1983, I, 400–409; Moravcsik 1984, 14–15; HKÍF 101–102.

Emperor Leon consequently called the Hungarians/Magyars as Turks, though he stated, that with other people they belonged to the Scythian people.² It is evident, that he referred to contemporary Hungarians, when he described the Byzantine–Bulgarian war between 894 and 896, when his fleet transported the allied Hungarians across the Danube, who defeated the Bulgarians in three battles.³ In connection with the political organization of the Turks he used the word *ethnos*⁴ or *ethné*⁵ meaning nation or people in a general sense, denoting a large group of people. As far as smaller political units are concerned, Emperor Leon employed two ideas, the tribe (*φυλή*) and the clan (*γέννη*). More often, three times he used the phrase connotating the larger unit(s), the tribe(s) (*φύλα*) of the Turks,⁶ and just once he mentioned the smaller units, their clans (*γέννη*).⁷ Once he used the two ideas together, when he stated, that the Turks “grazed their horses separately by clans and tribes” (*κατά γέννη καί φυλάς*).⁸ However, for him the idea of tribe seems to be more characteristic for describing the basic military and political units of the Turks, than the idea of clan.⁹ We cannot state for sure, that he was able to make a difference between the tribes and the clans. It is rather a topos, a commonplace for him, and this latter passage originally referred to the Turks of the sixth century.¹⁰ So we cannot prove with the help of this passage the existence of clans and tribes at the Turks, or later at the Hungarians/Magyars. What is important, that Leon VI regarded the Hungarians as Turks, and noted that they had a lot of tribes (and/or clans). As far as their military leadership is concerned, his report is very interesting. On one hand, he maintained that these nomadic Scythian people were generally ruled by many leaders/princes (*πολύαρχα*),¹¹ and got serious punishment from their leaders/princes (*ἀρχόντων*).¹² On the other hand, he maintained, that the Bulgarians and the Turks were different from the other Scythians nations, because they cared more for the military order and they were ruled by one leader/prince.¹³ Emperor Leon twice used the phrase ‘monarchical’ (*μοναρχούμενος*)¹⁴ meaning the rule of one prince/archon, contrasting with this the regular Scythian political institution of many leaders. It is worth noting that even

2 Leon, *Taktika*, XVIII. 43; cf. Moravcsik 1984, 17; for this ethnonym see Moravcsik 2003, 30–42, 43; Moravcsik 1967, 221–244; Kristó 1980, 32–33; Kristó 1996a, 69–70.

3 Leon, *Taktika*, XVIII. 42. cf. Moravcsik 1984, 17.

4 Leon, *Taktika*, XVIII. 66. cf. Moravcsik 1984, 21.

5 Leon, *Taktika*, XVIII. 43. cf. Moravcsik 1984, 17.

6 Leon, *Taktika*, XVIII. 47, 53, 66. cf. Moravcsik 1984, 18, 19, 21

7 Leon, *Taktika*, XVIII. 53. Moravcsik 1984, 19; cf. Hóman 1923, 15; Zsoldos 1996, 177.

8 Leon, *Taktika*, XVIII. 53; Moravcsik 1984, 19; cf. Moravcsik 1983, I, 408; Kristó 1977, 222; Zichy 2009, 23; Tóth 1998, 79; Tóth 2011, 67.

9 Kristó 1995, 239; Zichy 2009, 23.

10 Zsoldos 1996, 177–178; Szabados 2011, 195–196.

11 Leon, *Taktika* XVIII. 43. cf. Moravcsik 1984, 17–18.

12 Leon, *Taktika* XVIII. 46. cf. Moravcsik 1984, 18.

13 Leon, *Taktika* XVIII. 43. cf. Moravcsik 1984, 18.

14 Leon, *Taktika* XVIII. 43, 46. cf. Moravcsik 1984, 18.

Emperor Leon wrote contradictory statements, when in the same sentence he referred to the „monarchic” rule (one *archon*) and the fact that the Turks had been punished by their leaders (*archontes*).¹⁵ In historical research it was assumed quoting Emperor Leon, that the Hungarians had a kind of monarchic leadership, a nomadic state at the time of the Conquest of 895.¹⁶ However, the picture painted by Emperor Leon is rather complex, there is a contemporary Scythian, nomadic „nation” called Turks, who are consisted of smaller units (tribes and/or clans), who have a monarchic type of institution (one prince/*archon*); at the same time there are more leaders (chieftains/*archontes*).

Our next source is the so-called *Georgius Monachus Continuatus*, which is a continuation of the chronicle of Georgios Monachos, and treats the period between 842 and 948. This continuation was probably written at the 960-s by Symeon magistros et logothetes (sometimes identified with Symeon Metaphrastes), whose chronicle contained this part. Other chronicles written by Leon Grammatikos or Theodosios Melitenos also included this continuation of the chronicle of Georgios Monachos.¹⁷ This chronicle, called in Latinized form *Georgius Monachus Continuatus* gives valuable information on the Hungarians/Magyars of the ninth century for the third decade of the ninth century (836–838) and for the age of Hungarian Conquest of the Carpathian Basin, around 894–896.¹⁸ The latter part, the Bulgarian war of the Hungarians was also included in the so-called *Theophanes Continuatus* (the continuation of the chronicle of *Theophanes*).¹⁹ The chronicle of *Georgius Monachus Continuatus* told a story about certain Byzantine (Macedonian) prisoners of war, who were settled by the Bulgarians north of the river Danube at around 811 and 813. They revolted against the Bulgarians and wanted to go back to the territory of Byzantium asking for the help of Emperor Theophilus (829–842). The Bulgarians hired a pagan people against the Macedonian prisoners of war. Finally, the attacking pagans were defeated, and the Macedonians could return to their homeland with the help of Byzantine ships. These pagan allies of Bulgarians were named by the Byzantine chronicler alternatively as Ungri, Huns and Turks.²⁰ It seems that the Byzantine chronicler was not able to decide how to call them. The chronicler once mentioned the attacking Turks as ‘nation’ (ἔθνος).²¹ It is very probable, that this episode, which can be dated to 836–838, can be connected with the appearance of the Hungarians/Magyars in the neighbourhood of Bulgaria, at the Danube.²²

15 Leon, *Taktika* XVIII. 46. cf. Moravcsik 1984, 18.

16 Recently for this interpretation of the cited passage at Emperor Leon VI, see Szabados 2011, 58, 176.

17 See comprehensively, Moravcsik 1983, I, 269–273; Moravcsik 1984, 52–53; HKÍF 141–142; Tóth 2010, 13.

18 For the text in bilingual (Greek, Hungarian) form, see Moravcsik 1984, 53–61.

19 For the text of *Theophanes Continuatus*, see Moravcsik 1984, 65–68.

20 *Georgius Monachus Continuatus*, Moravcsik 1984, 55–57; cf. Moravcsik 1983, I, 271–272; Krjstó 1980, 38; Kristó 1996a, 15, 69.

21 Moravcsik 1984, 56.

22 Kristó 1980, 38–39; Kristó 1996a. 15, 86; Tóth 1994, 71–74; Tóth 2011, 26–34.

The other important Hungarian episode preserved by Georgius Monachus Continuatus told about a Byzantine–Bulgarian war, which can be dated between 894 and 896. The troops of Emperor Leon VI were defeated by the army of the Bulgarian ruler, Simeon (893–927), so he had to look for allies. He sent his envoy to the Turks (Hungarians/Magyars) to attack Simeon in the rear. The Byzantine ships transported the Turks, who defeated the Bulgarian ruler, but at the end the Bulgarians won a great victory over the Turks.²³ In this episode Georgius Monachus Continuatus definitely called the allies of Emperor Leon as Turks.²⁴ He also mentioned, that the Byzantine envoy, Niketas Skleros “met the leaders of the Turks, Arpad [Arpadés] and Kusan [Kusanés].” He used the phrase ‘heads, leaders’ (κεφαλαῖς).²⁵ This denomination can refer to military and political leadership. It is interesting to note, that while Leon VI in his *Taktika* stated the monarchical leadership of the Hungarians, the chronicler mentioned two Hungarian leaders. Most researchers supposed, that the leading princes (küdü and gyula in the Muslim sources), called Árpád and Ku(r)szán (or Kusál/Kuszál) treated with the Byzantine envoy.²⁶ However, this word, ‘κεφαλή’ meant in the text of Georgius Monachus Continuatus ‘head’ (caput) and the ‘leader of army or navy’,²⁷ so it was supposed, that both Árpád and Kuszán were military leaders of the Hungarian tribal federation, and neither of them were sacral princes (küdü).²⁸

Our most important source is a nameless Greek treatise entitled later in Latin *De administrando imperio*, generally abbreviated as *DAI* compiled at the order of the son of Leon VI, Emperor Constantine VII (Porphyrogennate) (944–959), a manual of kingcraft dedicated to his son, Romanus. This great, excellent work was compiled between 948 and 952.²⁹ The *DAI* contains a lot of information about contemporary countries, nations (including the Hungarians/Magyars) and earlier historical events. As far as Hungarians are concerned, 38–40 chapters are devoted to the Hungarians and to the allied Chazar/Qavars, but in other chapters there are references to the Hungarians as well. The main sources of these pieces of information were Hungarian leaders (Bulcsú and Termacsu), who went to Byzantium in 948, referred to by Emperor Constantine in chapter 40.³⁰ Other possible Byzantine sources can be mentioned as well (the deputies of Niketas Skleros, and later of Cleric Gabriel etc.).³¹

23 Moravcsik 1984, 58–61; Tóth 1994, 74–76.

24 Moravcsik 1984, 59–60; Kristó 1996a, 69.

25 For the text of Georgius Monachus Continuatus, see Moravcsik 1984, 59; for its meaning as „der Kopf, das Haupt”, see Kaegi 1981, 434.

26 For Kurszán as küdü, and Árpád as Gyula, see Györffy 1977, 128, 143.

27 For these meanings see Ungváry 1998, 148–149.

28 Ungváry 1998, 149.

29 Constantine, *DAI*, 7–14. (Introduction); Moravcsik 1983, I, 356–390; Moravcsik 1984, 31–32; Biborbanszületett Konstantin 2003. XIII–XVI. (Introduction by T. Olajos).

30 For this visit of Hungarian leaders in Byzantium, see Constantine, *DAI* 178–179; also Commentary 146.

31 See Tóth 2010, 8–13; Tóth 2011, 10–11.

Emperor Constantine called the Hungarians/Magyars most times as Turks and their contemporary land Turkey, so he used for them the most commonly accepted ethnonym of Byzantine writers.³² He just made one exception, in chapter 38 he mentioned twice, that the “ancient denomination of the Turks” was ‘Sabartoi asphaloi’.³³ The Hungarians were denoted as ‘nation’ (ἔθνος) in most cases,³⁴ their eastern group (Sabartoi asphaloi) were called ‘nation’ as well,³⁵ and even for the joining Chazar group, called Qabars (Qavars) the ‘nation’ denomination was applied.³⁶ Another phrase, ‘genos’ (γένος) was only once used for the Hungarians (meaning probably ‘clan’ and not ‘tribe’).³⁷ For smaller units Emperor Constantine used consequently the idea of ‘genea’ (γενεά) or ‘clan’ in case of the Hungarians. He mentioned, that “the Turks were seven clans,”³⁸ recorded the “three clans of the Kabaroi”,³⁹ told about twice the eight clans of the Turks,⁴⁰ and enumerated the names of the eight Hungarian and Qabar ‘clans’.⁴¹ It seems, that Emperor Constantine for some reasons unknown, preferred the denomination of ‘genea’ (i.e. ‘clan’ to ‘tribe’).⁴² From his description it would seem, as if the Hungarian and Qabar nation (‘ethnos’) had consisted of only ‘clans’. However, since Emperor Constantine described the political structure of the similarly nomadic ‘nation’ of the Pechenegs, the ancient enemies of the Hungarians, a good analogy is at our disposal. The Pechenegs had eight political units, called by Emperor Constantine ‘themata’ (θέματα) or ‘provinces’.⁴³ The ‘themata’ is “the technical term which connotes a province of the Byzantine Empire” and “the word means here the territory or homeland of the various Pecheneg clans.”⁴⁴ However, Emperor Constantine denoted the eight basic units of the Pechenegs not only by the word ‘thema’ referring to provinces in the Byzantine Empire, but called

32 Kristó 1996a, 69.

33 Cf. for the Sabartoi asphaloi name, used for the eastern group of the Hungarians in Constantine’s age as well, DAI 38/9–10, and 38/28, see Constantine, DAI 170–171; Moravcsik 1983, II, 261–262; Kristó 1980, 44–45.

34 DAI 38/1, 3, – see Constantine, DAI 170–171; Moravcsik 1984, 42.

35 DAI 38/62 – see Constantine, DAI 172–173; Moravcsik 1984, 45.

36 DAI 39/1 – see Constantine, DAI 174–175; Moravcsik 1984, 46.

37 DAI 3/2 – see Constantine, DAI 50–51; ‘genos’ was translated correctly as ‘clan’ by Moravcsik 1984, 35; and it was translated as ‘tribe’ by Jenkins, Commentary, 51.

38 DAI 38/10–11 – see Constantine, DAI 170–171; however, it was translated into Hungarian as “seven tribes”, Moravcsik 1984, 43.

39 DAI 39/13 – see Constantine, DAI 174–175; however, it was translated into Hungarian as the “three tribes” of the Qabars, Moravcsik 1984, 46.

40 DAI 39/11 and DAI 40/44 – see Constantine, DAI 174–175, 178–179; however, in both cases it was translated into Hungarian as “eight tribes”.

41 DAI 40/1–6. – see Constantine, DAI 174–175; however, it was translated into Hungarian as ‘clan’, Moravcsik 1984, 174–175; cf. Kosztolnyik 2002, 3.

42 Hóman 1923, 15; Mesterházy 1980, 71; Kristó 1995, 239; Tóth 2010, 125, 127; Tóth 2011, 68, 69.

43 DAI 37/15, 32 – see Constantine, DAI 166–167. It was translated correctly into Hungarian as ‘tartomány’, ‘province’ (Moravcsik 1984, 41).

44 Commentary, 145.

these units as 'geneai' (*γεναί*) or 'clans' as well.⁴⁵ More important to note, that these "eight provinces are divided into forty districts."⁴⁶ The smaller units can be considered sub-clans. It may mean, that if we suppose a basic similarity between the political organization of the Pechenegs and Hungarians, we may regard them as larger units, probably tribes, called by Emperor Constantine 'thema' or 'genea' and smaller units, probably clans, called by him 'meros' (*μερός*), 'meré' (*μέρη*), i.e. 'part, parts' or 'district, districts'. In case of the Hungarians and the Qabars only the larger political units, the 'geneai', the 'clans' were mentioned.⁴⁷

We have to treat the political leadership of the Hungarians as well, reflected in DAI. According to the Byzantine Emperor the Hungarians "had never had over them a prince [*archon*] either native or foreign, but there were among them 'voivodes', of whom 'first voivode' was ...Lebedias [Levedi]."⁴⁸ Besides Lebedias/Levedi another 'voivode' is mentioned later by Emperor Constantine, i.e. Almutzis/Álmos.⁴⁹ The rank of 'voivode' is of Slav origin, denoting a 'leader'.⁵⁰ The 'voievodés' (*βοέβοδοι*) may be considered as chieftains of the seven clans/tribes without any special functions.⁵¹ However, Levedi, the 'first voivode' (*protos voevodos*) often was regarded in research, as the first known leader (even a sacral prince or 'kündü') of the Hungarian tribal federation.⁵² The history of Levedi recorded by Emperor Constantine may support this hypothesis. The Chagan of Chazaria gave him a noble Chazar woman for marriage to found a dynasty, and later offered him the dignity of prince (*archon*).⁵³ While Emperor Constantine emphatically stated twice, that before the election of Árpád there had been no prince (*archon*) among the Hungarians, he once called Levedi not only 'first voivode', but 'archegos' (*ἀρχηγός*) as well.⁵⁴ This title, 'archegos' may be considered practically equivalent to the title of *archon*, used by Constantine for denoting the first rank among the Hungarians, since it means 'head, chief'⁵⁵ or 'prince, chief'.⁵⁶ More important to note, that Emperor Constantine used this denomination for Arab rulers, caliphs in this work.⁵⁷ In spite of

45 DAI 37/34, 39, – see Constantine, DAI 168–169; cf. Moravcsik 1936, 189; for its criticism Szabados 2011, 197; differently see Tóth 2010, 125.

46 DAI 37/32–33 – see Constantine, DAI 166–167.

47 The existence and importance of tribes were emphasized by Bartha 1968, 147; Kristó 1995, 250–251; Tóth 2010, 125, 127; Tóth 2011, 68, 69.

48 DAI 38/11–13 – see Constantine, DAI 170–171; Moravcsik 1984, 43.

49 DAI 38/43 – see Constantine, DAI 172–173; Moravcsik 1984, 44.

50 Gyóni 1943, 33; Moravcsik 1983, I, 387.

51 Cf. Tóth 2003, 26; cf. Kristó 1980, 34–35.

52 Györffy 1959, 142, 159; Kristó 1980, 84–86; Makk 1998, 31, 215; Makk 2012, 317.

53 Cf. Constantine, DAI 170–173; Fodor 1992, 127; Tóth 2003, 26; Zimonyi 2005, 406; Tóth 2011, 92.

54 For *archégos*, see DAI 38/30 – Constantine, DAI 172–173; Moravcsik 1984, 44; Moravcsik 1983, I, 388.

55 For this meaning of 'archégos' see Sophocles 1900, 256.

56 For this meaning of 'archégos' see Liddel–Scott 1883, 228.

57 Remark of Ferenc Makk to the lecture of Gyula Kristó, cf. Kristó 1996b, 31–32; Ungváry 1998, 190; Tóth 2003, 26; Tóth 2010, 170–171.

this contradiction, Emperor Constantine – and perhaps his Hungarian sources – did not regard either Levedi or Álmos princes of the Hungarians, just chieftains of their clans, reflecting at the same time a hierarchical order. According to the oral dynastic story of the ruling Hungarian clan, which Emperor Constantine preserved in chapter 38, on the initiative of the Chazar Chagan the Hungarians elected as a prince (*archon*) the son of the second 'voivode', Árpád and following a Chazar ceremony they lifted him on a shield.⁵⁸ It is evident, that for Constantine there was only one prince among the Hungarians before their expulsion from Atelkuzu/Etelköz by the Pechenegs and their settlement in their new homeland, Turkia, which he identified with Moravia (great Moravia).⁵⁹ In this respect his report about the leadership of the Turks/Hungarians at around the time of their Conquest and settlement seems to correspond to his father's (Leon VI) remark of the monarchical institute of the Hungarians. The denomination 'archon' (*ἄρχων*) really means 'ruler, commander, captain'⁶⁰ or 'ruler, lord, prince'.⁶¹ However, it may mean the political leader of a state, a nation, or a military leader of an army. Constantine emphasized, that the "prince of Turkey is from" the family of Árpád up to his time (around 950).⁶² He called prince the son of Árpád, Liuntika at the time of the Bulgarian war (894–896) and his grandson, Falicsi.⁶³ The three Qabar clans were also led by one prince (*archon*).⁶⁴

In chapter 40 we have a complete hierarchy of Hungarian leadership, which may refer to the political conditions of the 940-s.⁶⁵ According to the hierarchical list the eight clans of the Turks "have for their first chief (*κεφαλὴν πρώτην*) the prince (*ἄρχων*) who comes by succession of Arpad's family (*γενεάς*), and two others, the gylas (*γυλάν*) and the karchas (*καρχάν*), who have the rank of judge; and each clan (*γενεά*) has a prince (*ἄρχων*)." ⁶⁶ If we compare this description with the information derived from chapter 38, there are relevant differences. First of all, the chieftains of clans are called princes (*archon*), not 'voivodes'. Secondly, while the first dignity of the tribal federation was called in chapter 38 'first voivode' and 'archegos' (Levedi), then 'prince' or *archon* (Árpád), in chapter 40 the leader of the tribal federation was called simply 'prince' or 'archon', and in case of Árpád once 'great prince' or 'megas archon'.⁶⁷ The third and perhaps the most important difference, that while in chapter 38 there is one prince or *archon*, in chapter 40 two additional dignitaries are mentioned, the 'gylas' and the 'karchas'. The latter dig-

58 Constantine, DAI 172–173; Moravcsik 1984, 45.

59 Tóth 2003, 26, 27.

60 Liddel–Scott 1883, 229.

61 Sophocles 1900, 259.

62 DAI 38/54–55 – cf. Constantine, DAI 172–173; Moravcsik 1984, 45.

63 DAI 40/12–13 and 40/58 – see Constantine, DAI 176–177, 178–179; Moravcsik 1984, 47, 49.

64 DAI 39/12–14 – see Constantine, DAI 174–175; Moravcsik 1984, 46.

65 Tóth 2003, 27.

66 DAI 40/47–50. – see Constantine, DAI 178–179; Moravcsik 1984, 49.

67 For the comparison of the two chapters, see Tóth 2003, 27.

nitaries are mentioned as having judiciary functions.⁶⁸ I think, it is possible, that each of the three princes, including the '*megas archon*' had judiciary function, besides political and military leadership.⁶⁹ From this report it seems that there were three dignitaries at around 950. It is a debated question as well, whether the three princes belonged to particular clans/tribes or not. In the latter case there were three princes and besides them the chieftains of the eight clans/tribes. According to a theory there were three types of 'princes', first it denoted the ruler (*megas archon*), then two judiciary dignitaries and at last the chieftains of the eight clans.⁷⁰ I think it is more probable, that in the hierarchy of the Hungarian tribal federation there were three ruling dignitaries, the prince or great prince (*megas archon*) from the family of Árpád,⁷¹ then the '*gyilas*' and '*karchas*', who belonged to certain clans (tribes), and after them the chieftains of the other clans (tribes), who did not have any particular function. So I interpret this passage that it reflected the duality of a nomadic state or tribal federation, the leaders represented on one hand the federation, and at the same time they were chieftains of their own clans.⁷²

In connection with the political organization and the leadership of the Hungarians there is an important passage in front of the hierarchical list of chapter 40. It says that the "eight clans of the Turks do not obey their own particular princes, but have a joint agreement to fight together with all the earnestness and zeal upon the rivers, where-soever war breaks out."⁷³ There are different interpretations concerning this passage, basically are two opposite views.⁷⁴ According to one theory, the tribes did not obey their tribal chieftains, so the tribes simply did not exist anymore after the Conquest, just the clans.⁷⁵ It was supposed too, that the tribes had operated just in the former homeland (Etelköz), and not in their new homeland, having lost their functions.⁷⁶ It was assumed, that the tribal federation had lost its military role.⁷⁷ It was concluded as well, that the tribal chieftains lost their power and the monarchical rule prevailed.⁷⁸ According to the opposite hypothesis, the Turks did not obey their leaders, the first three princes (*megas archon*, *gyula/gyilas*, *karchas*), so this passage meant the disintegration of tribal federation, the weakening of central power, and the strengthening of tribes, and the development of 'tribal states'.⁷⁹ I presume that though the latter theory may be closer to

68 Gyóni 1943, 43–45, 60–61; Moravcsik 1983, II, 115–116, 155; Zichy 2009; 23.

69 Tóth 2003, 31; Tóth 2010, 169–170.

70 Szabados 2011, 198.

71 For the interpretation of great prince or '*megas archon*' see Makk 1998, 67–80; Makk 2012, 33–50.

72 Tóth 2010, 168–170; Tóth 2011, 73, 81.

73 DAI 40/44–47. – see Constantine, DAI 178–179; Moravcsik 1984, 48.

74 Tóth 2010, 132–133; Szabados 2011, 190–192.

75 Györffy 1959, 9–10; Mesterházy 1980, 61.

76 Bóna 2000, 16.

77 Róna-Tas 1996, 297.

78 Szabados 2011, 190–191, 212, 230.

79 Kristó 1977, 223; Kristó 1980, 350–352; Kristó 1995, 254.

the truth, the situation is more complex. The disobedience of the clans may be related to the princes and the simple chieftains alike, but in the most important common matters, i. e. wars, military affairs, the clans cooperated by all means. This military cooperation could mean first of all the defense of their settlements in case of a foreign invasion, but could include raids as well.⁸⁰ One cannot interpret this passage either as the sign of tribal disintegration or the sign of the disintegration of a nomadic state into tribal states. The precise meaning of this passage, is that the clans/tribes were autonomous political and military units, and they cooperated just in the most important affairs, in wars and consequently in foreign policy.⁸¹ This kind of autonomy, we may say 'military democracy' could not be understood by a strongly centralized monarchy, like the Byzantine Empire.

One more passage of DAI should be cited in connection with the role and importance of the chieftains of clans. In chapter 8 the mission of cleric Gabriel is told, who "was dispatched by imperial mandate to the Turks" to ask them to expel the Pechenegs from their place. The offer was loudly refused and "all the chief men [πάντες οἱ ἄρχοντες] of the Turks cried out."⁸² The sincerity and the real motivations of the Hungarian leaders are sometimes disputed.⁸³ However, one thing is quite sure, that the phrase *'pantes archontes'* cannot denote the great prince alone, and even the three dignitaries of the Hungarian tribal federation, but rather the chieftains of the tribes, including the dignitaries as well. In my opinion, this passage clearly indicates, that besides such important events, like the election and elevation of prince Árpád, the chieftains still had function in important political decisions.⁸⁴

Emperor Constantine in another work called *De cerimoniis aulae Byzantinae* also referred to the letters sent to the Hungarians. He mentioned that these letters had to be sent to the "princes [archontes] of the Turks" with a golden bull worth two ducats.⁸⁵ Generally it is interpreted, that Constantine referred to the tribal chieftains, not to the leaders, the great princes of the Hungarians.⁸⁶ Similarly the letters were addressed to the princes of the Pechenegs with a golden bull worth two ducats, while the letters were addressed solely to the Chagan of Chazaria, with a golden bull worth three ducats.⁸⁷ It has been interpreted as the sign of the disintegration of the tribal federation, but recent-

80 For interpreting the passage see Szűcs 1992, 291; Tóth 2010, 132–133; Tóth 2011, 72–73.

81 Tóth 2010, 132–134.

82 DAI 8/23–33. – see Constantine, DAI 56–57; Moravcsik 1984, 37.

83 See e. g. Révész 1996, 203.

84 See Tóth 2010, 160–161; Tóth 2011, 79.

85 Reiske 1829, 691/2–4; cf. Moravcsik 1984, 34; Moravcsik 1983, I, 380–384.

86 Kristó 1980, 350–352; Moravcsik 1984, p. 34, footnote 3.

87 Kristó 1980, 350.

ly this concept has been debated.⁸⁸ In my opinion, this passage clearly shows that the chieftains had similar roles at the Hungarian tribal federation, like at the Pechenegs.⁸⁹

Other Byzantine sources treated rather briefly the Hungarians. Arethas in a speech around 902 told about them as Turks, and used the phrase 'people' (*laos*).⁹⁰ Patriarch Nicolaos Mystikos around 924-925 mentioned them under the name of 'Turks /western Turks, and named them as 'clan' (*gené*).⁹¹ In the *Vita Lucae* the Hungarians were described as a 'nation' (*ethnos*) of Turks.⁹² A tenth century chronicle fragment on the popes referred to the Hungarians as 'Ungri/Ugri' and their land as 'Ungria/Ugria'.⁹³ A monk Gregorios called the Hungarians as Ungri/Ugri in his *Vita Basilii*.⁹⁴ A tenth century Byzantine historian, Leon Diakonos mentioned them as Schythians and Huns.⁹⁵

The Byzantine Empire looked at the Hungarians, called by them generally Turks, from a centralized aspect.⁹⁶ The Byzantine authors regarded the Hungarians and the Qavars as peoples (*ethnos*). Emperor Leon called their smaller units rather as tribes (*phyla*), and his son, Constantine used the idea of clan (*genea*). The word '*genea*' could signify tribes consisting of clans, like '*thema*' used by Constantine simultaneously with the phrase '*genea*' for the tribes of the Pechenegs. Leon the Wise attributed a monarchical leadership to the Hungarians. Georgius Monachus Continuatus stated, that the envoy of Emperor Leon treated with the 'heads' of the Hungarians, Árpád and Kuszán. Emperor Constantine characterized the earlier period before the conquest, that at first the Hungarians had no princes, just '*voivodes*', Levedi being the first voivode and Álmos the second voivode. The Chagan of Chazaria offered the dignity of prince to Levedi, who refused it, and the Hungarians chose the son of Álmos, Árpád as their prince (*archon*). According to Constantine at the top of the Hungarian hierarchy stood the prince (*archon*) from the clan of Árpád, followed by the *gyula* (*gylas*) and the *karha/karchas*, who were judges. However, each clan had its own prince (tribal chieftain). According to Constantine, the tribes did not obey their princes and chiefs, but they had an agreement to fight together, a military cooperation. The Byzantine reports show, that a settled empire could not really understand the specific political organisation and leadership

88 Kristó 1980, 351–352; against this argument, see Szabados 2011, 200. Szabados contradicted this statement, trying to prove that because the golden bulls were sent by two Roman emperors, Constantine and his son, Romanos, the reference to the princes of Hungarians cannot be used as an argument against the Hungarian monarchical institute. This argument is basically false, because the usage of plural in case of the Byzantine senders cannot explain, why the letters of the Byzantine emperors were sent to the princes of the Hungarians or Pechenegs, and why just to one dignitary, the Khagan in case of Khazaria.

89 Kristó 1980, 351–352; Tóth 2010, 133–134.

90 Moravcsik 1984, 13; Szűcs 1992, 295.

91 Moravcsik 1984, 25; Szűcs 1992, 296.

92 Moravcsik 1984, 29.

93 Moravcsik 1984, 27.

94 Moravcsik 1984, 28–29.

95 Moravcsik 1984, 72.

96 For the most frequently used Turk ethnonym for the Hungarians/Magyars see Németh 1991, 161.

of the nomadic Hungarians. The independence of the separate clans and tribes was incomprehensible for the Byzantine Emperors and court, because the provinces (*thema*) did not have a similar autonomy in the strongly centralized Byzantium. Still there was a hierarchy in the Hungarian tribal federation with princes and tribal chiefs. This mobile, changing and nomadic structure was interpreted in Byzantium sometimes as monarchical (Leon the Wise, or Constantine in case of the election of Árpád) or as a federal structure having more princes/chiefs (before the election Árpád or at the middle of the tenth century). This embarrassment is reflected in the Greek names of the Hungarian dignitaries, practically meaning almost the same (*voivode*, *archegos*, *kephale*, *archon*, *megas archon*) as well. This dual, mobile political structure (tribal federation – princes, tribes – tribal chieftains) could not be completely grasped by a different and centralized empire, though the Byzantine authors tried to reflect the reality, besides the usual commonplaces for a nomadic nation.

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**A 9–10. SZÁZADI MAGYARSÁG POLITIKAI SZERVEZETE BIZÁNCI
SZEMSZÖGBŐL**

VI. (Bölcs) Leó bizánci császár (886–912) Taktika című műve és Georgius Monachus Continuatus krónikája a honfoglalás kori magyarságról adnak adatokat. Bölcs Leó császár fia, VII. (Bíborbanszületett) Konsztantinosz (944–959) De administrando imperio című műve fejezeteiben, és De Cerimoniis című munkájának egy passzusában szolgáltat fontos információkat. Más kortárs szerzők is használhatóak a bizánci szemléletre vonatkozóan. A bizánci szerzők leggyakrabban türköknek nevezték a magyarokat. A magyarokat és a csatlakozott kazár kavarokat népnek (*ethnos*) tartották, esetenként más megnevezést (*genos, laos*) is használtak. Kisebb szervezeti egységeikről is volt tudomásuk. Bölcs Leó császár inkább a törzs (*phülé*), Konsztantinosz császár pedig kizárólag a nemzetség (*genea*) szót használta. Utóbbi felsorolta a magyarok hét nemzetségét, és utalt a kavarak három nemzetségre. A magyaroknál ugyanúgy voltak törzsek és nemzetségek, mint a besenyőknél, akiknek törzseit Konsztantinosz a 'tartomány' (*thema*) és a 'nemzetség' (*genea*) fogalmakkal írta le, nemzetségeit pedig a 'rész' (*meros*) szóval említette. Bölcs Leó monarchikus vezetést tulajdonított a magyaroknak, de utalt a türkök fejedelmeire is. Georgius Monachus Continuatus szerint a bizánci követ a magyarok két vezetőjével (*kephalé*), Árpáddal és Kuszánnal tárgyalt a bulgáriai hadjárat kapcsán. Konsztantinosz szerint a magyaroknak előbb vajdáik voltak (Levedi és Álmos). A kazár kagán által felajánlott fejedelmi méltóságra (*arkhón*) Álmos fiát, Árpádot választották meg a magyarok. A saját korabeli helyzetet úgy jellemezte, hogy első vezetőjük az Árpád nemzetségbeli fejedelem (*arkhón*) vagy nagyfejedelem (*mezas arkhón*) volt, őt követte a gyula (*gülas*) és a karha (*karkhas*) bíróként, és minden *genea*-nak volt fejedelme (*arkhón*). Leírása szerint a nemzetségek nem engedelmeskedtek fejedelmeiknek, csak háború esetén harcoltak együtt a folyóknál. De Cerimoniis című munkájában utalt arra, hogy a magyarok fejedelmeihez (*arkhóntes*) küldött levelekre két aranydukát értékű bullát kell tenni, akárcsak a besenyők fejedelmei esetében. A bizánci tudósítások hűen tükrözték a nomád magyar politikai struktúrát a maga dualizmusával (nép/törzsszövetség és törzsek/nemzetségek). A megtelepült, centralizált bizánci birodalom ugyanakkor nem érthette a magyar törzsszövetségen belül a törzsek és nemzetségek relatív önállóságát, illetve a törzsszövetségi vezetés (fejedelem, illetve három fejedelem) és a törzsi vezetés (törzsfők) egymás mellett létező kettősségét. Ez a zavar tükröződik a nomád politikai hierarchia élén álló vezetők változó görög megnevezéseiben (*vojevodos, arkhégos, kephalé, arkhón*) is.