

The White and Black Hungarians

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This study tries to solve a mystery of early Hungarian (Magyar) history; namely the problem of who the White and Black Hungarians were, why they were named so, where they lived and where their territories were. This problem can be connected to the general problem of color symbols in the early Middle Ages,¹ especially in the ninth–eleventh centuries, when some sources refer to White or Black Ugrians/Hungarians. First we shall evaluate the sources, then the different hypotheses about them and, finally, formulate a new possible approach.

The few sources on White and Black Hungarians are from the eleventh–twelfth century. The earliest sources are the two reports of Bruno of Querfurt (c. 974–1009), who was a German/Saxon missionary bishop/archbishop. He spent several years in Hungary during the early reign of the first Hungarian king, Saint Stephen (997/1000–1038), and tried to convert the pagan Hungarians. His missionary activity began in 1003 and ended between 1004 and 1008. Later Bruno visited Poland, Russia (Rus), he went to the Pechenegs and the Prussians, and suffered martyrdom in March 1009.² Bruno of Querfurt may be identified with a certain monk named Boniface, who performed missionary work at the lower parts of Hungary in this period.³ He was a prolific writer. In his work about the Polish hermits (written around 1006–1008) entitled *Vita quinque fratrum eremitarum* he made a personal remark: “neglecting the Prussians, where because of the new

¹ L. de Saussure, “Le système cosmologique Sino-Iranien,” *Journal Asiatique* 202 (1923), 235–297; for the color symbols H. Ludat, “Farbenzeichnungen in Völkernamen,” *Saeculum* 4 (1953), 138–155; O. Pritsak, “Orientierung und Farbsymbolik,” *Saeculum* 5 (1954), 377–383.

² D. H. G. Voigt, *Brun von Querfurt*. Stuttgart 1907; G. Thoroczkay, in *Az államalapítás korának írott forrásai*. [The Written Sources of the Foundation of the Hungarian State] ed. Gy. Kristó, Szegedi Középkortörténeti Könyvtár 15, Szeged 1999, (henceforth: *ÁKÍF*) 78–79.

³ For the activity of Boniface, see *Legenda S. Stephani regis maior*, in E. Szentpétery (ed.), *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum* I–II. (henceforth: SRH), Budapestini 1937–1938. II. 382.; *Vita et passio Sancti Brunoni episcopi et martyris Quarfordensis*, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historiae. Scriptores*. (cited as MGH SS) I–XXXIV. Hannoverae-Lipsiae 1826–1934. (Reprint 1963–1964) XXX/2. 1363–1364; for the identification of Boniface with Bruno of Querfurt see Gy. Györffy, *István király és műve*. [King Stephen and his Activity] Budapest 1977, 172–173.

saint, the killed Adalbert, I should have gone for a right cause, I had started to preach the gospel to the Black Hungarians [*Nigris Ungris*] to whom I had boarded a ship [from Regensburg] and headed towards the Eastern parts."⁴ The second source is the letter of Bruno of Querfurt to the German king/emperor Henry II (written around the end of 1008 or beginning of 1009). Bruno wrote that he had left the Hungarians, where he had stayed for a long time in vain. He remarked at the end of his letter that "I have heard about the Black Hungarians [*Nigris Ungris*] - whom the first legateship of Saint Peter had visited, which never goes in vain, though some of them were blinded by ours with great sin - who were all converted and became Christians."⁵

The next source is the Chronicle of Ademar Cabannensis (c.988-1034), writing the history of the Franks up to 1028, which contains two important passages on White and Black Hungary. Although there has been a debate whether the C-variant containing these reports, can or cannot be considered authentic (interpolated?), it is a very interesting and important source.⁶ Ademar mentioned a certain Bruno of Augsburg, who "went to Hungary, called White Hungary [*Alba Ungria*] to be differentiated from another, Black Hungary [*Ungrie Nigre*], because people living there are dark colored, like the Ethiopians."⁷ In another passage, after remembering the martyrdom of Bruno, the chronicler remarked, that "King Stephen of Hungary attacked Black Hungary [*Ungria Nigra*], and converted the whole land to Christianity by force, fear and love."⁸

⁴ "Vita quinque fratrum eremitarum - Vita vel passio Benedicti et Johannis sociorumque suorum," in *Monumenta Poloniae historica*. Nova series. IV/3. Warszawa 1973, 51-52. (H. Karwasinska); F. A. Gombos, *Catalogus fontium historiae Hungaricae*. 3 vols. Budapestini 1937-1938. (Cited as Gombos, *Catalogus*) III: 2569. "Et dimissis Pruzis, quo propter novum sanctum, Adalbertum, occisum, iustior me causa duxisset, Nigris Ungris, quo tunc versus in partes orientis navim conscendi, sinistro opere et infirmo humero evangelium portare cepi", in Hungarian see *ÁKÍF*, 87. (translated by G. Thoroczky).

⁵ Gombos, *Catalogus* I: 430. "Audiavi enim de nigris Ungris ad quos, que nunquam frustra vadit, sancti Petri prima legatio venit, quamvis nostri - quod deus indulgeat - cum peccato magno aliquos cecarent; quod conversi omnes facti sunt christiani."; see also Gy. Györffy, ed., *Diplomata Hungariae Antiquissima*, Vol. 1, Budapest 1992, 46; in Hungarian see *ÁKÍF* 91. (translated by G. Thoroczky).

⁶ J. Gerics and E. Ladányi, "A Szent István lándzsájára és koronájára vonatkozó források értelmezése," [The Interpretation of Sources Referring to the Lance and Crown of Saint Stephen] *Levéltári Szemle* 40:2 (1990), 3.

⁷ Gombos, *Catalogus* I: 16. "abiit in provinciam Ungriam, quae dicitur Alba Ungria, ad differentiam alteri Ungrie Nigre, pro eo quo populus est colore fusco velut Etiopes"; for its recent edition see *Ademari Cabannensis Chronicon*. Cura et studio: P. Bourgain, iuvamen praestantibus R. Landes - G. Pon. Turnhout 1999. (cited as *Ademari Cabannensis Chronicon*) 152; in Hungarian see *ÁKÍF*, 165-166 (translated by F. Makk).

⁸ Gombos, *Catalogus* I. 16. "Stephanus rex Ungrie bello appetens Ungriam Nigram, tam vi quam timore et amore ad fidem veritatis totam illam terram convertere meruit"; for its recent edition see *Ademari Cabannensis Chronicon*, 155; for the Hungarian translation, *ÁKIF*, 168-169. (translated by F. Makk)

Our latest source is the Russian Primary Chronicle (*Povesty vremennih let* or *PVL*), written at the beginning of the twelfth century, which contains the earliest mention of White and Black Ugrians/Hungarians, using Byzantine sources. The PVL narrated about earlier events and rulers from the seventh century including the Bulgars, the White Ugrians, Emperor Heraclius of Byzantium (610–641) and Chosroes of Persia (596–628), and the Avars warring with emperor Heraclius. The PVL mentioned, that “afterwards came the White Ugrians, who inherited the Slavic country.”⁹ Later it is told, that “afterwards came the Pechenegs, then Black Ugrians marched beside Kiev, in the time of Oleg (879–912).”¹⁰

These six passages of three primary sources (Bruno, Ademar, PVL) constitute the rather small and controversial source-basis of hypotheses about the White and Black Hungarians. However, it should be noted, that from these six passages five mentioned the Black Hungarians/Hungary and only two referred to White Hungarians/Hungary.

The first hypothesis regarded the white and black distinction to be of ethnic origin. The White Ungarians were identified with the seven Hungarian (Magyar) tribes, while the Black Hungarians with the Qabars/Qavars of Khazar origin. According to one theory, one group of these Qabars/Black Hungarians lived on the territory of a Hungarian chieftain, Ajtony. This land of Ajtony lay east of river Tisza and north of river Danube, around the rivers of Temes and Maros. Bruno of Querfurt tried to baptize them in 1003 and later, but in vain. Ajtony was defeated by King Saint Stephen in 1008, and his Qabars/Black Hungarians were converted.¹¹ A similar argument accepted that the Black Hungarians were Qabars, and this denomination of Ademar in fact referred to their darker skin, contrasted with the lighter skin of White Hungarians. At the same time, this assumption located their territory to the southwestern parts of Hungary, west of river Danube and north of river Drava and Sava, the later bishopric of Pécs.¹² Another theory of ethnic differentiation is the so-called “double-conquest” of Hungarians. It is supposed, on the basis of *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, that the White Ugrians/Hun-

⁹ *The Russian Primary Chronicle*. Laurentian Text. tr. and ed. S. H. Cross, O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, Cambridge 1953. (cited as *Russian Primary Chronicle*) 55–56; for the Hungarian translation, see *A honfoglalás korának írott forrásai*, ed. Gy. Kristó, Szeged 1995, (henceforth: HKÍF) 170–172. (translated by I. Ferincz).

¹⁰ *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 56.

¹¹ Györffy, *István király*, 166, 172–173; idem, *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 Clans to the County. Kurszán and the Fortress of Kurszán] Budapest 1959, 76; idem, “A kabar kérdés,” [The Problem of Qabars] in idem, *A magyarság keleti elemei*. [The Eastern Elements of Hungarians] Budapest 1990, 92.

¹² Gy. Kristó, “A fekete magyarok és a pécsi püspökség alapítása,” [The Black Hungarians and the Foundation of the Bishopric of Pécs] *Acta Universitatis Szegediensis de Attila József nominatae. Acta Historica* (cited as AUSZ AH) 82 (1985), 11–16; idem, *Írások Szent Istvánról és koráról*. [Writings on Saint Stephen and his Age] Szeged 2000, 79–87; F. Makk, *Magyar külpolitika (896–1196)*. [Hungarian Foreign Policy, 896–1196] Szegedi Középkortörténeti Könyvtár 2, Szeged 1996, 56.

garians settled in the Carpathian basin around 670–680, while the Turkish people of Árpád, the Black Ugrians/Hungarians invaded this homeland two centuries later, in 895.¹³

Another type of hypothesis claims this duality of white and black to be a political, tribal or territorial division inside the seven Hungarian tribes. According to the general opinion, the white color referred to the noble, ruling group, while the black color denoted the subjected, inferior group.¹⁴ There is another general theory that colors denoted the orientation of tribes following the four directions of the compass; the white meant a Western, the black a Northern, the blue an Eastern and the red a Southern location.¹⁵ Some researchers connected the Black Hungarians with just one Hungarian tribe. One hypothesis placed the Black Hungarians on the territory of Gyula (gyula was the second rank in the Hungarian tribal system), who was defeated by King Saint Stephen in 1002.¹⁶ Others supposed that the eastern Hungarian tribes, namely that of Gyula and Ajtony, living east of the river Tisza in the Carpathian basin, can be identified with the Black Hungarians. These tribal chiefs opposed King Stephen who defeated them (in 1002 and in 1003/1008).¹⁷ I have always regarded the Black Hungarians as Hungarians, opposing the king and Christianity, and identified them with the tribe of Gyula and/or Koppány.¹⁸ I also argued that the eastern tribes (Nyék, Kürtgyarmat, Jenő, Keszi) of the Hungarian tribal federation can be identified with the Black Hungarians of Turkish origin, living east of river Dnieper in their settlement called Etelköz, and living east of the river Danube after their conquest of the Carpathian basin in about 894–900. At the same time I regarded the tribe of the prince (kündü) descending from Árpád, the first prince of the Hungarian tribes, as White Hungarians and identified them with western Hungarian tribes (Megyer, Tarján, Kér), who were possibly Finno-Ugrians.¹⁹ This duality was also

¹³ Gy. László, *A kettős honfoglalás*. [The “Double-conquest”] Budapest 1978, 137–146.

¹⁴ See, for instance, László, *A kettős honfoglalás*, 147; P. B. Golden, *Khazar Studies. An Historico-Philological Inquiry into the Origins of the Khazars*. Vol. 1, Budapest 1980, 103, 142; Pritsak, *Orientierung*, 379.

¹⁵ S. Tóth, “A fehér és fekete magyarok kérdéséhez,” *AUSz AH* 75 (1983), 7–8; Ludat, *Farbenzeichnungen*, 148.

¹⁶ J. Horváth, jr., “Székesfehérvár korai történetének néhány kérdése az írásos források alapján,” [Some Problems of the Early History of Székesfehérvár on the Basis of Written Sources], in A. Kralovánszky, ed., *Székesfehérvár évszázadai 1. Az államalapítás kora*, Székesfehérvár 1967, 107.

¹⁷ Gy. Balanyi, *Szent István* [Saint Stephen]. Budapest 1931, 14; P. Váczy, “Gyula és Ajtony,” [Gyula and Ajtony] in *Emlékkönyv Szentpétery Imre születésének 60-ik évfordulójára*. Budapest 1938, 502; idem, “A korai magyar történet néhány kérdéséről,” [Some Issues of Early Hungarian History], *Századok*, 1958, 333; B. Hóman and Gy. Szekfű, *Magyar Történet*. [Hungarian History] Budapest 1928, 182–183; Gy. Bónis, *István király*. [King Stephen] Budapest 1956, 127.

¹⁸ S. Tóth, “Kabarok és fekete magyarok.” [Qabars and Black Hungarians] *AUSz AH* 84 (1987), 27–28.

¹⁹ S. L. Tóth, “A fehér és fekete magyarok problematikájához.” [To the Problem of White and Black Hungarians], in *A honfoglalás ezer éve és a Vajdaság*, Novi Sad 1997, 81–94;

supported by the ruling tribe/people using for themselves the white color and for their opposition, the subjected tribes the black color. In this context, when the Hungarians had been subjected to the Onogurs and Khazars (White Ugrians), they had been called Black Ugrians (*Savarti*), and later, after their conquest, these denominations were used inside the Hungarians.²⁰ Also these colors and duality were interpreted as expressing a difference in military organization. The more noble right wing was defined as White Hungarians, while the less noble left wing was called Black Hungarians.²¹

Besides ethnic, political/territorial theories another hypothesis should be mentioned, namely, that colors could express religious duality. White may refer to Christians, while black to pagans.²² Our sources referred to the fact, that the Black Hungarians were pagans, Bruno tried to convert them and finally they were baptized by force. King Andrew I (1046–1060) was called by the chronicler of fourteenth-century chronicle composition “white and Catholic (*albus et catholicus*), while his younger brother Béla was described as “bald and brown-colored (*calvus et colore brunus*).²³

To interpret the sources that mention the White and Black Ugrians/Hungarians we should start with the reports of Bruno of Querfurt. He indeed went to the Black Hungarians, tried to convert them, but he was not successful, which he admitted. Later they were converted by force, which arouse ambivalent feelings in Bruno, he was happy about their conversion, but strongly disapproved the methods. It is important that in his reports he made no distinction between Black Hungarians and Hungarians. It is very probable, that the first legateship of Saint Peter, mentioned in Bruno’s letter, can be identified with the papal legate, Bishop Azo, who was present at the ordination of the bishopric of Pécs in August of 1009, and the conversion of Black Hungarians can be connected with the organization of the Catholic Church in Hungary.²⁴ It is quite evident, that the problem of White and Black Hungarians cannot be solved with the help of our first primary source, Bruno of Querfurt.

idem, *Levediától a Kárpát-medencéig*. [From Levedia to the Carpathian Basin] Szegedi Középtörténeti Könyvtár 14. Szeged 1998, 92–94.

²⁰ L. Klima, “Fehér és fekete. Duális társadalmi struktúrák a népvándorlás kori népeknél,” [White and Black. Dual Social Structures of Peoples in the Age of the Great Migration] *Hermann Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve* 30–32 (1987–1989), 115–126; idem, “Fehérvár, Fejéregyháza, Fehértemplom.” *Névtani Értesítő* 15 (1993), 185–191.

²¹ Gy. László, *A honfoglaló magyar nép élete*. [The Life of the Hungarian People in the Age of Conquest] Budapest 1944, (reprint 1988) 182–183, 202.

²² Tóth, “A fehér és fekete magyarok kérdéséhez,” 8; Z. J. Kosztoľnyik, *Hungary under the Early Árpáds, 890s to 1063*. New York 2002, 99–100.

²³ SRH I: 344.

²⁴ For the organization of Hungarian church see L. Koszta, “A kereszténység kezdetei és az egyházszerzés Magyarországon.” [The Beginnings of Christianity and the Organization of Church in Hungary] in Gy. Kristó, ed., *Az államalapító*, Budapest, 1988, 183–186; Makk, *Magyar külpolitika*, 56.

Our next source, the chronicle of Ademar, gives more clues, but it is more debatable – considering the above mentioned debate whether there is an interpolation or not, and its authenticity – and difficult to interpret. First of all, Ademar had never been to Hungary. It is possible, that he connected two pieces of information, one about the Black Hungarians and their conversion, and the attack of King Stephen against an opposing chieftain, which was considered by foreign sources as a war between two lands, countries. It can be assumed, that the war of Saint Stephen against his uncle, the *gyula*, was reflected in the chronicle of Ademar as the war between White and Black Hungary.²⁵ Ademar reinforced the information of Bruno of Querfurt, that before their forceful conversion the Black Hungarians had been pagans. Ademar provided one additional, but doubtful piece of information that the Black Hungarians got their name because of their dark skin and consequently he named the “other” Hungary of Saint Stephen as White Hungary. The explanation of the contemporary chronicle may be true, but it was more likely a medieval *topos*. One may recall that the chronicle of Simon de Keza or the fourteenth-century chronicle composition mentioned that the skin of the inhabitants of *Scitia* – from where the Hungarians came according to these late Hungarian chronicles – is “rather dark, than fair”.²⁶ The anonymous writer of the *Descriptio Europae Orientalis* remarked that the skin of the Hungarians was black.²⁷ Since the explanation of Ademar is more likely of a medieval *topos*, one should not regard the Black Hungarians as a population of darker skin, and consequently Muslims or Turkish/Qabar group.

The White and Black Ugrians of *The Russian Primary Chronicle/PVL* present a mystery as well. It is very probable, that the Ugrians and White Ugrians mentioned together with peoples and rulers of the seventh century were called Turks in the original sources, and could be Onogurs, Khazars or Bulgars. Later, in the tenth century the ethnonym of Turks denoted the Hungarians by the Byzantine chronicles, so their Slavic equivalent, the Ugrian was used in the PVL.²⁸ However, it is possible, that both of these denominations referred to the conquering Hungarian tribes.²⁹ The distinction of White and Black Ugrians can be explained as well with the construction process of *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, when several

²⁵ On the war of Saint Stephen against the regnum of Gyula (*Julus rex*) see, *Annales Altahenses* (taken from the *Annales Hildesheimenses*), Gombos, *Catalogus* I: 92; ÁKÍF, 238. (transl. by F. Makk).

²⁶ SRH I: 45, 252.

²⁷ *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis. Imperium Constantinopolitanum, Albania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Ruthenia, Ungaria, Polonia, Bohemia anno MCCCVIII. exarata*. Ed. O. Górká, Cracoviae 1916, 49.

²⁸ C. A. Macartney, *The Magyars in the ninth century*. Cambridge 1930, 175; G. Vernadsky, M. Ferdinandy, *Studien zur ungarische Frühgeschichte. I. Lebedia. II. Álmos*. München 1957, 13; Ludat, *Farbenzeichnungen*, 143.

²⁹ Tóth, „A fehér és fekete magyarok kérdéséhez,” 4–5; idem, *Levediától a Kárpát-medencéig*, 92–93; Gy. Kristó, I. H. Tóth, “Az orosz évkönyvek néhány magyar vonatkozásáról.” [About Some Hungarian References in the Russian Primary Chronicles] *AUSz AH* 103 (1996), 26–27.

chroniclers worked on the original Byzantine material.³⁰ Since it is a debated source, we cannot define exactly, who were meant by the name of White and Black Ugrians. However, it should be noted, that the White Ugrians were mentioned earlier, and the Black Ugrians later.

An excellent contemporary work, namely *De administrando Imperio* (The Administration of Empire) of Emperor Constantine VII (944–959), containing a unique and comprehensive survey about the tenth century world and its past, may provide a solution to our problem.³¹ The Byzantine emperor uses the “white” denomination in case of two Slavic peoples, the Serbs and the Croats. He mentions that the “Serbs are descended from the unbaptized Serbs, also called white (*asprón*), who live beyond Turkey (i.e., Hungary – S. L. Tóth) in a place called by them Boiki.”³² Emperor Constantine differentiated between two kinds of Croats. According to him “the Croats at that time were dwelling beyond Bavaria, where the Belocroats [*Belokrobatoí* ~ White Croatians – S. L. Tóth] are now.”³³ Then he tells their story that one group of the Croats migrated and defeated the Avars of Dalmatia. “The rest of the Croats stayed over against *Francia* [sc. the Frankish Empire – S. L. Tóth] and are now called Belocroats, that is white Croats [*asproi Khróbatoí*], and have their own prince ... and are unbaptized, and intermarry and are friendly with the Turks [sc. the Hungarians of the Carpathian Basin – S. L. Tóth].”³⁴ Emperor Constantine also mentioned that “the Croats who now live in the region of Dalmatia are descended from the unbaptized Croats, also called ‘white’, who live beyond Turkey [Hungary] and next to *Francia* [Frank Empire] and have for Slav neighbours the unbaptized Serbs.”³⁵ And finally, the Byzantine emperor stated, that “Great Croatia [*megalé Khróbatia*], also called white [*aspré*], is still unbaptized to this day, as are also the Serbs who are its neighbors ... and are more regularly plundered by the Franks and Turks [sc. Hungarians] and Pechenegs.”³⁶ This information is repeated in the next chapter, “their neighbor ... is also Great Croatia [*megalé Khróbatia*], the unbaptized, also called ‘white’ [*aspré*].”³⁷ Summarizing these reports it is clear, that two kinds of Serbs and Croats were differentiated in the middle of the tenth century. The Serbs and Croats living in the Northwest and Northeast of Hungary (the Hungarian tribes of the Carpathian Basin) were called White Serbs and White Croats, while the emigrant, southern groups were just called Serbs and Croats. In the case of the northern,

³⁰ L. Balogh, “Megjegyzések a PVL fehér és fekete magyarjaihoz.” [Some Remarks on the White and Black Hungarians of PVL] *AUSz AH* 121 (2005), 34, 36–37, 45; idem, “The Ugric Allies of Heraclius,” *Chronica* 4 (2004), 8–14.

³¹ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*. Greek text edited by Gy. Moravcsik, English translation by R. J. H. Jenkins. (henceforth: DAI), Washington DC 1967.

³² DAI 152–153 (32/2–4).

³³ DAI 142–143 (30/61–63).

³⁴ DAI 142–143 (30/71–75).

³⁵ DAI 146–147 (31/3–6).

³⁶ DAI 152–153 (31/83–87).

³⁷ DAI 152–153 (32/5–6).

white Croats, their territory is called Great Croatia as well, which referred not to the territorial extension, but to the original, earlier settlement. It is evident that the white denomination could not denote the Christian religion in this case, because both the northern Serbs and Croats were unbaptized pagans. In both cases those people were called white, who remained in their ancient homeland, also referred to as great, meaning old, original territory. At the same time Emperor Constantine did not mention another color in the cases of the emigrant, southern Serbs and Croats.³⁸ He used the "black" adjective in case of the Bulgars living in the east. It is mentioned that "the so-called Black Bulgaria [*mauré legomené Bulgaria*] can also attack the Chazars."³⁹ The emperor referred to "the Dnieper river, from which the Russians came through to Black Bulgaria and Chazaria and Syria."⁴⁰ Black Bulgars were also referred to in *The Russian Primary Chronicle*.⁴¹ The locality of these Bulgars is debatable. Some put it in the region of Kuban, others located it between the Dnieper and Don.⁴² Generally it is not accepted, that Black Bulgaria can be identified with the so-called Volga Bulgaria or Great Bulgaria.⁴³ Instead it is supposed that Volga Bulgaria was called White or Great Bulgaria.⁴⁴ Presently, we cannot say for sure, where the Black Bulgars lived, in the north or in the south. One thing is sure. It was not the original homeland of the Bulgarians, perhaps that is why their territory is called Black Bulgaria.

Our hypothesis based on DAI is that at least in the tenth century, and maybe earlier and in the next century as well, the white denomination could refer to one group of people remaining in their "great", older homeland, while the black adjective could denote the other group(s) of people migrating to a new homeland. Using this possible analogy we may suppose that White Hungary can be identified with Great or Greater Hungary (*Magna Hungaria* or *Ungaria Maior*), the ancient, original homeland of the Hungarian tribes, where clans and tribes lived next to river Volga, in the vicinity of the mentioned Volga Bulgars (Great Bulgaria). This group of Hungarians – in my assumption, the White Hungarians – may have been referred to by the Muslim geographers, Istakhri and Ibn Haukal, as well.⁴⁵ This ancient homeland, *Ungaria Maior* was visited by the Dominican Friar Julian in the thirteenth century (1236). In the Hungarian chronicle tradition it was held that from this original settlement (*Ungaria Maior*) the Hungarian tribal leaders migrated to their present homeland.⁴⁶ Julian not only found these pagan

³⁸ Ludat, *Farbenzeichnungen*, 45–46.

³⁹ DAI 64–65 (12/3).

⁴⁰ DAI 186–187 (42/77–78).

⁴¹ *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 76.

⁴² R. J. H. Jenkins, ed., *Constantine Porphyrogenitus: De administrando imperio*. Vol. 2: *Commentary*. London 1962, (henceforth: *Commentary*) 62; Ludat, *Farbenzeichnungen*, 153.

⁴³ *Commentary*, 62; Ludat, *Farbenzeichnungen*, 153.

⁴⁴ Ludat, *Farbenzeichnungen*, 153.

⁴⁵ HKÍF, 49–51.

⁴⁶ "Inventum fuit in Gestis Ungarorum Christianorum, quid esset alia Ungaria maior, de qua septem duces cum populis suis egressi fuerant, ... tandem venerunt in terram, que nunc Ungaria dicitur," see the first voyage of Julian, and on this see the report of Riccardus," in *Relatio*

Hungarians living next to river Volga (*iuxta magnum flumen Ethyl*), but also spoke with them. These Hungarians of *Ungaria Maior* – Great Hungary and very probably White Hungary – also knew that the Christian Hungarians living somewhere in the west had been descended from them.⁴⁷

As far as the Black Hungarians are concerned, one has to refer once more to the fact that Bruno of Querfurt, who went to them to convert them, made no distinction between Hungarians and Black Hungarians. Besides, he only mentioned the conversion of Black Hungarians, and never said a word about White Hungarians. It is only Ademar, who made mention of White Hungary, without giving any further information about it. However, Ademar had never been to Hungary, and even in his description the greater emphasis is on the defeated Black Hungary with its black-skinned inhabitants and their full conversion. If we take the reports of *The Russian Primary Chronicle* for granted, the earlier, seventh-century reference is to the White Ugrians/Hungarians, while the later, ninth-century reference is to the Black Ugrians/Hungarians. According to these sources the Black Hungarians surely can be identified with the Hungarian tribes migrating from *Magna Ungaria* and finally conquering the Carpathian Basin and settling there. According to Emperor Constantine these Hungarians called by him Turks or *Sabartoi Asphaltioi* (*Savartoi*), lived for a while in Lebedia/Levedia and Atelkouzou/Etelköz (territories between the rivers Don and Danube), before their conquest of their new homeland.⁴⁸ These conquering Black Hungarians were pagans, but they were converted during the first decade of the eleventh century due to the activity of Bruno and other missionaries and the struggle of the first Hungarian king, Saint Stephen, against his opponents.

It is possible that another group of Hungarians were also called Black Hungarians. Emperor Constantine reported that there was a Pecheneg attack and the Turks/Hungarians were defeated and split into two parts: "one part went eastwards and settled in the region of Persia, and to this day are called by the ancient denomination of the Turks 'Sabartoi asphaltioi'."⁴⁹ Constantine also mentioned that there was a contact between these eastern Hungarians and the Hungarians "who live toward the western region" in his time as well.⁵⁰ In another work, entitled *De Cerimoniis*, Emperor Constantine stated that the meaning of *Sevorti* (*Sabartoi*) was "black boys" (*maura paidia*).⁵¹ This name (*Sevorti/Sabartoi*) can have the meaning Black Ugrians or Black Hungarians like in our sources (Bruno of Quer-

fratris Ricardi. Praefatus est, textum recensuit, annotationibus instruxit J. Deér, in SRH II: 535–536.

⁴⁷ "Sciunt enim per relationes antiquorum, quod isti Ungari ab ipsis descenderant; sed ubi essent, ignorabant." On the first voyage of Friar Julian on the Order of King Béla IV of Hungary (1235–1270), see the report of Riccardus in SRH II: 540; further see *Julianus barát és a Napkelet felfedezése*. [Friar Julian and the Discovery of the Orient] Selected and tr. Gy. Györfly and I. Gy. Ruitz, Budapest 1986, 68.

⁴⁸ DAI 170–175 (chapter 38).

⁴⁹ DAI 170–173. (38/26–29).

⁵⁰ DAI 172–175. (38/60–65).

⁵¹ *De Cerimoniis*. ed. J. J. von Reiske, Bonn 1829, 689; see Pritsak, *Orientierung*, 378.

furt, Ademar, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*) and may refer to the same people migrating from their ancient homeland and the first group settling first in *Lebedia/Atelkouzou* and then in the Carpathian basin, and the other group settling in the east, „in the regions of Persia”, i. e., in the Caucasus, around the River Kura.⁵² So it seems very probable that at the end of the nineteenth century, the eminent historian, Henrik Marczali made a mistake, when he was of the opinion, that by the denomination of Black Ugrians Khazars and other eastern relatives were meant and the Black Ugrians/Hungarians could not live in Hungary.⁵³

In my opinion, just the Black Hungarians, the people of the seven tribes and the three tribes of joining Qabars of Khazar origin migrated to the Carpathian Basin, later called Hungary and to the Caucasus, while some other Hungarians, the White ones remained in their first, ancient homeland, *Ungaria Maior* (Great/Old Hungary) in the Volga region.

⁵² The *Savartoi asphaloi* can be identified with the Black Ugrians, see, Macartney, *The Magyars in the Ninth Century*, 174–176; *Savartoi asphaloi* was interpreted as “lower” Black Ugri as contrasted with the upper Black Ugri, i. e. the rest of the Magyar nation, see J. Marquart, *Osteuropäische und Ostasiatische Streifzüge*, Leipzig 1903, 39.

⁵³ H. Marczali, „A vezérek kora és a királyság megalapítása,” [The Age of Chieftains and the Foundation of the Monarchy] in *A magyar nemzet története*, Vol. 1, ed. S. Szilágyi, Budapest 1895, 276.