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Author(s): Robert L. Reynolds and Robert S. Lopez

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# Odoacer: German or Hun?

ROBERT L. REYNOLDS AND ROBERT S. LOPEZ\*

THE history of the migrations which marked the downfall of both the Roman Empire in the West and the Han Empire in China is still very obscure. "Nowhere, since the time of Alexander the Great, do we feel so strongly that the meagreness of the sources flouts the magnitude of the events."<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, the starting point, hence the guiding thread of all these migrations, lies in Central Asia, whose political, economic, and cultural history will in most of its details remain to us a blank page. For even such remote and belated repercussions of Central-Asiatic events as took place within the view of the classic world are but dimly shown to us in cursory, contradictory, and often unreliable sources.

To be sure, new archaeological and philological material has been piling up in the last two or three scores of years, which has been used in a number of valuable studies. But little of such evidence is specific enough to contribute to the revision of the histories of individual tribes. It is clear, nevertheless, that non-Germanic steppe peoples and cultures must have had a deep influence on many groups which were denominated German by a bygone generation of historians and philologists.<sup>2</sup>

Two chief difficulties are encountered by anyone attempting to use the Asiatic materials which throw light upon the history of the great migrations. In the first place, despite the archaeological and philological discovery of Asia, no one has yet appeared to draw together from the one hand the learning of Ural-Altai philology and archaeology and from the other the written documents and monuments, the epics, sagas, and even the modern folklore, of the West. Moreover, the affinities of the varied Asiatic peoples are still uncertain. It is still unclear whether the earliest Turks were ethnically more akin to the "Mongoloid" or to the "Caucasic" stocks (although the Turkish speech has always been Altaic), and whether the leading tribe of the Hunnic conglomerate was Turkic or Mongolic. Even the identifications of the Hunni with the

\*Dr. Reynolds is professor of history in the University of Wisconsin and Dr. Lopez is assistant professor of history in Yale University.

<sup>1</sup> J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire* (2d ed., London, 1923), preface.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Bernhard Salin, *Die altgermanische Thierornamentik* (Stockholm, 1904); Ellis H. Minns, *Scythians and Greeks* (Cambridge, 1913); M. I. Rostovtzeff, *Iranians and Greeks in South Russia* (Oxford, 1922); J. M. de Groot, *Die Westlande Chinas* (Berlin, 1926); A. A. Vasiliev, *The Goths in the Crimea* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936); Frederick J. Teggart, *Rome and China* (Berkeley, 1939), with bibliography.

Hiung-nu and of the Avars with the Yuan-yuan are not definitely proved. We do perceive that all these tribes were so thoroughly commingled by intermarriage, migration, and conquest that we can scarcely speak of clear-cut ethnic border lines. At the most, we can speak of linguistic groups, as far as the Asiatic evidence goes.

When we turn to the Western source materials, we find that a rich secondary literature has already been created from such evidence alone.<sup>3</sup> But it is a noticeable characteristic of most of it that the history of every group of invaders of the Western Empire—except for the Huns, the Avars, the Alans, and a few such tribes—is reconstructed on the assumption that each such group was Germanic. This assumption is maintained not only when the weight of philology and contemporary statement support it but when neither does, a phenomenon which is apparently a consequence of the fact that when the pioneering research in the field was undertaken—to organize and to bridge the great gaps in the surviving Western sources—it was almost exclusively promoted by Germans. The eager nationalism of the rising German Reich turned their attention to the task in the first place; the picture of the migrations which emerged from their studies quite justified the zeal of their retrospective patriotism.

Whatever may have been the state of information two generations ago to support their assumption that the solution for doubts should be sought in a "Germanic" direction, consideration of the import of the new materials from Asia suggests that a wider horizon should now surround the interpretation of even the well-picked-over Western sources. Perhaps on re-examination these sources can be better fitted into those from South Russia and Central Asia and can even provide clues to steppe history itself.

With such ideas in mind, may we try some modest "chunk of history," giving it revisionist treatment, in a sort of experiment designed to test the possibilities of a "Hunnic" rather than a "Germanic" approach? Despite our weakness in Ural-Altai and Scytho-Sarmatian materials, it does seem to us worth essaying, in connection with King Odoacer and the whirlpool of peoples in which he made his career.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The basic general works are those of Eduard Wietersheim, *Geschichte der Völkerwanderung* (2d ed., Felix Dahn, Leipzig, 1880-81) and Ludwig Schmidt, *Allgemeine Geschichte der germanischen Völker* (München-Berlin, 1909) and *Geschichte der deutschen Stämme bis zum Ausgange der Völkerwanderung* (Berlin, 1910-18); also Alfons Dopsch, *Wirtschaftliche und soziale Grundlagen der europäischen Kulturentwicklung* (2d ed., Wien, 1923-24); Torsten E. Karsten, *Les anciens Germains* (Paris, 1931); N. Aberg, *Nordische Ornamentik in vorgeschichtlicher Zeit* (Leipzig, 1931), with bibliography.

<sup>4</sup> We are particularly indebted to Professors Sidney Fish, Ernst Herzfeld, Karl Menges, and Martin Sprengling, and to Dr. Orkhan Yürmibesh for their valuable suggestions, without which this paper could not have been written. It goes without saying that they cannot be responsible for the judgments expressed in it.

For the purpose we find in the Western sources the names of a number of key persons: Odoacer; his father, Edicon; his son, Thelan or Oklan; his brother, Hunoulphus. Bits of the careers of each are revealed. With their names were associated the tribes or groups of the Torcilingi, Sciri, Heruli, and Rogians, or Rugians, concerning whose histories there are also fragments of information. For philological work there are these and some other names.<sup>5</sup>

The Torcilingi (some manuscripts carry the spelling "Turcilingi") are to us little more than a name. They appear in the extant sources only twice.<sup>6</sup> In the *Historia Miscella* of Landulphus Sagax they are listed with those nations which under Attila's command took part in the battle of Châlons. The statement is unconfirmed by other sources. While the *Historia* is itself a late and unreliable chronicle, it includes some materials from earlier and better sources which have not come down to us. In the list of Landulphus, the Torcilingi appear jointly with the Sciri.<sup>7</sup>

The Torcilingi are mentioned the other time in the account of Jordanes—once more, jointly with the Sciri—as forming the core of the tribes or mercenary bands of which Odoacer was the leader when he deposed Romulus Augustulus. Jordanes refers to the Torcilingi three times, but only and always in connection with a single event: Odoacer's seizing of power over Italy. After that, we hear no more of the Torcilingi, not even in connection with Odoacer's later career.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Jordanes is the only firsthand source calling Odoacer king of the Torcilingi; most often Odoacer is called king of the Sciri or a Scirian.<sup>9</sup> Neither Landulphus nor Jordanes supplies a scrap of information as to the race, language, mode of life, origins, or earlier whereabouts of the Torcilingi.

Nevertheless, the German scholars of the nineteenth century built up a pedigree and a *Lebensraum* for these obscure "ancestors." Since the Torcilingi were mentioned (in the fifth century) in company with the Sciri, it was deduced that the two peoples had been neighbors and kinsmen in the first cen-

<sup>5</sup> Jordanes, *M.G.H., Auct. Ant.*, V, *Get.*, 70, IX. See appendix to this essay, p. 51 below.

<sup>6</sup> Kaspar Zeuss, *Die Deutschen und die Nachbarstämme* (München, 1837), pp. 155, 189, suggested that the Πουτίλλιοι mentioned by Ptolemy, II, 11, 7, were the Torcilingi. This was accepted by Karl V. Müllenhoff, *Deutsche Altertumskunde* (Berlin, 1870-1900), III, 319, and IV, 494. But most scholars have rejected this identification, which entails an amazing number of metatheses in order to build a Germanic etymology. Even the acceptance of this dubious proposal would not affect the thesis of this paper.

<sup>7</sup> On the passage of the *Historia Miscella*, cf. Wietersheim, II, 245. See also Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carmina*, VII, 321.

<sup>8</sup> Jordanes, *Get.*, 120, XLVI; 133, LVII, and *Rom.*, 44. In Paul Diac., *M.G.H., Auct. Ant.*, II, *Hist. Rom.*, XV, 8, and elsewhere, the name of the Torcilingi appears, but the source in such later references is evidently Jordanes.

<sup>9</sup> See A. Nagl, "Odoacar," Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Enzykl.* (1888 ff.); Moritz Schoenfeld, *Wörterbuch der algermanischen Personen- und Völkernamen* (Heidelberg, 1911), s. v. One Byzantine writer, Theophanes (ed. de Boor, 1883), I, 119, 122, says that Odoacer was a Goth, but the source is late and is contradicted by all the earlier writers.

tury. Or they were supposed to have been the royal clan of the Sciri, which is not far from our own conjecture, as will be shown below. Some scholars, leaving behind the caution of those who first worked over the sources, found for the Torcilingi an early home on both sides of the Oder, with the Sciri on the east, the Vandals on the left, and the Rugians on the north.<sup>10</sup> So surrounded, the Sciri and Torcilingi then became lesser twigs of the great Gothic tree.<sup>11</sup> As a last step, historical dictionaries of Germanic names came to list *Torcilingi* among the rest, even though a question mark had to be put in place of the etymology which no efforts had been able to produce.

As far as etymologies go, however, it is not difficult at all to suggest them, if the starting assumption be that the Torcilingi were some sort of Turks. An early Turkish form *Türk-lük*, "Turkdom," might be postulated. Or the root *Türk*, designating Turks both in early and in modern times, might have been "bedeutsched" in barbarian circles, by process of analogy, through the addition of the suffix *-ing* or *-ling*, as in Karling, Merowing, Sikling, Knythling, for descendants of Karl, Merovech, Sigehere, and Knut. Or the same suffix might have been added to the Turkish personal name *Ṭoghril*, *Ṭoghrul*, or *Ṭogrul*, of which we have samples from the eleventh century on, and which was borne, *inter alios*, by the founder of the Seljuk empire.<sup>12</sup>

These have been simply offered as possibilities; there may be better. The first to suggest that the Torcilingi were Turks was Cesare Balbo. The Italian historian knew no Turkish but had no particular urge—as had the Dahns and Grimms—to aggrandize the German peoples; he wrote, "Of the Torcilingi one would say, judging from their name, that they were Turks." The French orientalist, Edouard Blochet, holds for *Türk-lük*, in remarks buried in an essay where a medievalist would hardly look for them. Besides, the essay for good reasons enjoys little credit among orientalists.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Besides Schoenfeld, *s.v.* "Thorcilingi" and p. 289, see Schmidt, *Allgem. Gesch.*, p. 135, and *id.*, *Gesch.*, I, 349–50; Gudmund Schütte, *Our Forefathers, the Gothic Nations* (Cambridge, 1929), II, 29; G. Romano, *Le dominazioni barbariche in Italia* (Milan, 1909), p. 46, etc. R. Much, *s.v.* "Turcilingi," Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Enzykl.*, and *Deutsche Stammeskunde* (Berlin-Leipzig, 1920), pp. 125–26, gets rid of all problems by assuming that the term is just another name for Sciri. Especially, *cf.* Müllenhoff, as cited in note 6 above.

<sup>11</sup> The end product of a century of scholarship with a "Germanic bent" is perhaps this quotation from Schütte, II, 29, "No ancient historian or law codex states that there existed a special (Gothic) branch embracing Rugians, Sciri, and Torcilingi. These tribes may be called supernumerary members of the East Gothic sub-group. . . . Owing to occasional co-operation at certain times, they may most conveniently be considered under a common heading." There is, however, nothing to criticize in the conscientious scientific work which goes with these assumptions.

<sup>12</sup> *Kar-luk* is probably a farfetched analogy; its etymology is not established; *Ṭogrul* seems a fairly plausible root, with a little metathesis. There is the Petcheneg princely name, *Turak*, *cf.* Gyula Németh, *Inschriften des Schatzes von Nagy-Szent-Miklós* (Budapest-Leipzig, 1932), pp. 30–31.

<sup>13</sup> C. Balbo, *Sommario della storia d'Italia*, IV, chap. v; E. Blochet, "Les noms des Turks dans le chapitre x de la Gènesé," *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*, XXVIII (1931–32), 412 ff.

The Sciri are more frequently heard of than the Torcilingi, although notices are cursory and indefinite. Pliny the Elder, in a passage which is outstandingly unspecific, even for that vague section of his dealing with the misty Baltic regions, mentions an *Aeningia*, off somewhere north or east. Perhaps giving notice of Aeningia's inhabitants, or perhaps just mentioning something else he had heard about the general region, he then writes of Sarmatians, Venedae, Sciri (or maybe the original text of Pliny carried Ciri or Cyri), and Hirri. The latter two, for all the text reveals, may have been subgroups of the Venedae, or the memory of some rhyme scheme.

After having finished this vague section, Pliny turns with manifestly increased confidence to a discussion of the Germans; he does *not* include the Sciri, nor any group with a similar name, in his catalogue of Germans. Neither Caesar nor Tacitus had heard of Sciri.

At some time after 300 B.C. (or after 200 B.C., or even a good deal later than that again, for all the certainty we have), "Galatae and Sciri" tried unsuccessfully to capture Olbia, a Greek city on the northwestern coast of the Black Sea. That is all the *Protogenes Inscription* has to say about the Sciri.<sup>14</sup> Since Greek was vague in its use of the term *Galatae*, the latter may have been true Kelts, in which case all we know is that the Olbians excluded the Sciri from that category; or the term may have covered both Germans and Kelts, in which case we conclude that some Greeks thought that the Sciri were neither.

Following the time of Pliny there is silence concerning the Sciri for three hundred years. About 381 and again in 408 A.D., they were combined with Carpi, Sarmatians, and Huns in affrays along the lower Danube. First they tried, with Carpi, to push across the river; the second time they tried with Huns. Indeed, the second time the Hunnic khagan, Uldes or Uldin, was apparently their sovereign. On each occasion they met with military disaster, and many Sciri were sold or settled as peasants in eastern Roman territory.

Those Sciri who remained north of the river apparently fell under the rule of Attila the Hun; as we have seen, they were reported to have been with him at Châlons. After the death of the Great Hun, the Sciri appear as the bitterest foes of the Ostrogoths, who had led in the coalition against the heirs of Attila. The Scirian leaders, Edica or Edicon, and his son, Hunoulphus, began an all-out war against the Ostrogoths. In the opening clashes the Ostrogothic king, Valamir, father of Theodoric the Great, lost his life; but shortly after, the Sciri met with crushing defeat near the Bolia river (468 A.D.), and Edicon

<sup>14</sup> Minns prints the text in his appendixes. Rostovtzeff holds for an early date (say, early third century, B.C.). But for other comments, with basic edition of the text: *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*, 2058.

himself apparently found death in the battle. Hunoulphus escaped with a following to Constantinople, where he rebuilt his power as a *condottiere* in the imperial service.

Soon after the Scirian disaster, Odoacer, another son of Edicon, began a career quite parallel to that of Hunoulphus, but under Ricimer, in Italy. The latter used him in the struggle against Emperor Anthemius (472). Four years later, the uprising of the barbarian mercenaries against Orestes and his son, Romulus Augustulus, gave Odoacer and his Sciri and Torcilingi and their associates, the rule of Italy. It is very likely that Odoacer set in motion his plotting in agreement with Hunoulphus, who was just at that moment at the height of his influence at the eastern court. Some years later, Hunoulphus, fallen into disgrace with Emperor Zeno, joined Odoacer in Italy, with a small bodyguard. Thus both remnants of the Scirian group, scattered after the battle of the Bolia, were joined again, about 486.

But in 488 the last days of the Sciri began: Theodoric the Great, followed by the Ostrogothic people and a train of lesser groups, and backed in the enterprise by Zeno, descended upon Italy. After long and bloody fighting, Odoacer was defeated and then treacherously murdered (March 15, 493).<sup>15</sup> The nearest relatives of Odoacer were killed at once upon Theodoric's orders; many of his followers were killed by mobs. After that, like the Torcilingi, the Sciri disappear, save a few simple peasants of the name, left in the Balkans and known to Jordanes.<sup>16</sup>

One possibility remains, though the evidence is insecure, that some sort of Sciri yet survived. Jordanes' list of the peoples who remained faithful to Attila's son, Dengesich, includes Ultzinzures, Bittugures, Bardores, and Angisciri, who—according to the writer in Pauly-Wissowa, *s.v.* "Hunni"—"evidently bear Turkish-Hunnic names."<sup>17</sup>

Now, as sketched above, the Sciri were found, *in the nineteenth century*, to be an old Gothonic group, indeed, the first of them all to have raided the classic peoples in Gothonic style (on the strength of the Olbia inscription). But there is absolutely nothing that hints that any contemporary author thought of them as Germanic.<sup>18</sup> German philologists have found significance in the name, however, by adding an *r* to the root *skj*, "to shine" or "to glow." One scholar, endorsing this etymology, wonders whether the Sciri were

<sup>15</sup> *Anon. Vales.* On the epos which pictured Odoacer as the betrayer, not the betrayed, *cf.* Schmidt, *Gesch.*, I, 163; Schütte, II, 35.

<sup>16</sup> Sources and bibliography on the Sciri are listed in Schmidt, *Gesch.*, I, 350 ff.; Schütte, II, 30 ff.; K. Kretschmer, "Sciri," Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Enzykl.*

<sup>17</sup> Jordanes, *Get.*, 128, LIII. The words in quotation marks are from Kiessling, "Hunni," Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Enzykl.*

<sup>18</sup> Save for Procopius, who once calls them Goths (*De Bello Goth.*, book I, 1). But the ethnological inaccuracy of that particular passage makes it worthless; he lumps together as Gothic the Alans (who certainly were not Germans, but Iranians), and the Sciri.

“shining” because of their illustriousness (as in the Latin *clari, splendidi*), or because of their innocence (as in *candidi, sinceri*), or because of racial purity (*reinen, unvermischten*). A Danish scholar has no doubt: the Sciri were “the pure ones.”<sup>19</sup>

By way of suggestion, it can be mentioned that a very common word in modern Persian and in Pahlavī, *shir*, might be considered. The word has two quite different meanings: “milk” and “lion.” Steppe peoples rely and have relied upon milk; but “lion” has always been an attractive name to peoples. In old Persian, *shir* in the sense of “lion” would have been *shagr*, and the fall of the *g* may have taken place quite early;<sup>20</sup> it can be conjectured that the name among the Scytho-Sarmatians was similar. But if there was any substance under Pliny’s text, his Sciri lived in lands now postulated to have been the ancestral homes of Baltic or Slavic tribes, or even of Finns. Perhaps etymologizing with those languages should be attempted.

Sciri and Torcilingi are said to have formed the main element among the mercenaries who revolted against Romulus Augustulus and hailed Odoacer as *rex gentium*. Long before Odoacer reached this position, his father and brother had been leaders of the Sciri. However, most of the sources also mention that Heruls and Rugians, or Rogians, were included in the following of Odoacer in 476. There is no need for the Heruls to have been related by blood or speech to the others; Sarmatic Alans joined up with Germanic Vandals, Germanic Lombards made common cause with Mongolic (?) Avars against Germanic (?) Gepids, and so on.

It may be granted that the Heruls apparently were Germanic despite the fact that most of the personal names of their leaders baffle German philologists.<sup>21</sup> In any case, only a fraction of the Heruli could have been included in the mixed bands which followed the fleeting fortune of Odoacer. An independent kingdom of the Heruls, back in Europe’s interior, is often mentioned long after Odoacer’s fall, and various leaders of Herul troops fought over Europe and the Near East and Africa, for their own accounts or in Byzantine

<sup>19</sup> R. Much, “Skiren,” *Real-Lexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*. Schütte, II, 29, adds, “The Sciri belong to a series of (Gothonic) tribes with names of the short type.” Incidentally—and this accounts for so unusual a classification—he works out a theory which is developed in various ways in his studies, to the effect that short names were the original Germanic type but that longer compound names spread from Ostrogothic beginnings starting about the time when the Huns came to dominate. He does not connect the two phenomena. One might suggest that the longer compound names follow polysyllabic Iranian patterns as well as resembling the “word-built” pattern of Turkic names. Cf. especially Schütte, I, 187 ff.

<sup>20</sup> Cf., for instance, E. S. D. Bharucha, *Pahlavī-Pāzend-English Glossary*, p. 245.

<sup>21</sup> We find among the Heruls an Ochus, which appears Iranian; an Aordus which appears to be based on the name of the Sarmatian Aorsi; and even a Verus, which is quite Roman. Names which “sound” perhaps Dacian were Andonnoballus, Datus, Faras, Alvith, for which neither Förstemann nor Schoenfeld offers a Germanic etymology or can offer one only on the supposition that Greek sources misspelled the name. Only Halaricus, Rodvulf, and Fulcaris yield results to Germanic etymology.

service. The Heruls are variously depicted by Greek and Roman observers as daring seamen, as excellent cavalymen, or as fierce, naked warriors fighting exclusively afoot! They remind one of the Northmen-Danes-Varangians-Rösnormans of the eighth to the twelfth centuries. They apparently migrate through other peoples, they adapt themselves and their fighting techniques to the most various circumstances, they pick up outlandish names—and maybe womenfolk and speech?—they serve bravely for pay, and they found kingdoms which vanish again.<sup>22</sup>

The Rugians, or Rogians, counted by Jordanes among the peoples of Odoacer, were probably Germanic, *if* they were the same Rugians whose king Odoacer killed and whose kingdom he destroyed. Two branches of one folk often fought; there were the bitter struggles between the Ostrogoths of Theodoric Strabo and the Ostrogoths of Theodoric the Great; there were the Frankish civil wars of the Merovingians and Carolingians; the Norse leaders fought each other, and so on. But it really is strange—and has puzzled all scholars who have touched the problem—why no source hinted that a king hailed by at least some Rugians as their leader should throughout his reign have been the Rugians' enemy.<sup>23</sup> The sources carefully mention that when Theodoric marched against Odoacer, one of the former's roles was to pose as avenger of the Rugian king Odoacer had executed. Earlier, when Odoacer destroyed the Rugian kingdom, he resettled in Italy a number of Romans from those lands above the Brenner Pass, but he was content simply to wreck the power of the Rugians, without trying to become their king. In no case, in other words, did Odoacer behave as we should expect a Rugian princeling to have behaved, nor is there contemporary comment on such conduct of his.

It is necessary to note that our source which connects Odoacer with some sort of Rugian (?) following does *not*—precisely in that passage—spell the tribal name as any other author spells it, or as he (this is Jordanes) himself spells the name when writing about the enemy Rugians whom Odoacer destroyed. In the latter case he spells with a *u*; Odoacer's enemies were Rugians. In the former case he uses an *o*; Odoacer was a Rogian or had Rogians in his train.

Jordanes had occasion in three different passages to refer to the events which brought Odoacer to power. Once he does not mention any "Rogian"

<sup>22</sup> Sources and bibliography in Schmidt, *Gesch.*, I, 333 ff; Karsten, pp. 75-76; Rappaport, "Heruli," Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Enzykl.* Several classic and postclassic writers mention the Heruls as "Scythians," but save that it implied the author thought they lived the nomad life, the term, of course, had no classificatory significance.

<sup>23</sup> Paul. Diac., *Hist. Lang.*, I, 19, tried in a curious way to explain why Odoacer, whom Jordanes had called *Rogus* or king of the *Rogians*, should have waged war against the Rugians. The Lombard historian built up the assumption that while Odoacer ruled part of the people, the rest were his enemies. Cf. Schmidt, *Gesch.*, I, 325 ff.

follower: "*Torcilingorum rex habens secum Sciros, Herulos.*" In another passage he says: "*Odoacer, genere Rogus, Thorcilingorum Scirorum Herulorum turbas munitus . . .*" In this second case, it appears that Rogus is not a tribal name, but a family name, showing descent from some real or mythic Rogus. The third passage might go to show that the name did refer to a tribe: "*sub regis Thorcilingorum Rogorumque tyrannide . . .*" Here, however, the Sciri and the Heruls are forgotten, as though they were secondary in describing Odoacer's real status. Putting these statements in at least one logical sequence, it appears that Odoacer was the Torcilingi-king, of the stock of Rogus, with Sciri and Herul followers.<sup>24</sup>

The evidence strongly hints that Odoacer's Rogian connection did not tie him with the tribe of Rugians, but that instead it linked him with the family of some Rogus. Among the Huns only do we find this name, and when we find it, it belongs to a man well worthy to give it to his line. One of the three brothers who ruled the Huns before Attila was Rogas or Ruga or Rugila (as the different sources, including Jordanes, variously call him). The other brothers were Octar or Otcар, and Mundiukh or Mundzuch—the latter Attila's father.

German tribes and families often sprang, or thought they sprang, from some noted leader, but among the Turks and Mongols the same thing was true. We have the Ottoman Turks, the Seljuk Turks, the Chagatai Mongols, and the Nogai Tatars, to mention only a few.<sup>25</sup> It is quite possible that Odoacer's Torcilingi, or at least their royal clan, were thought of as derived from Attila's uncle, Rogas the Hun-king.<sup>26</sup>

What was the nation of the leader of those Torcilingi, Sciri, and Rogians? "*Genere Rogus,*" says Jordanes, and as we have seen, a Rogas was one of Attila's uncles. Octar or Otcар are names given the other, and there is no paleographic reason to prefer either of those forms, unless further evidence should tip the balance. As a matter of fact, such evidence is available.

There is a fragment of a Greek chronicler, quoted by a later grammarian, which presents us with a Hunnic name more or less halfway between an Otcар and an Odoacer: "Odigar, the supreme ruler of the Huns, died." These are the only extant words from that source. We have no means to locate the quo-

<sup>24</sup> Jordanes, *Rom.*, 44; *Get.*, 133, LVII.

<sup>25</sup> Some of these eponymic heroes were probably legendary; the existence of a Seljuk is doubted (*cf.* E. Rossi, "Turchi," *Encicl. Ital.*, with bibliography). But Othman, Chagathai, and Nogai were historical.

<sup>26</sup> This is also the opinion of Blochet, *loc. cit.* Jordanes, *Get.*, 88, XXIII, mentions "Rogas" beside the Finns, Aestii, Slavs, and Eruli, subjugated by the Ostrogothic king, Ermanaric, about 350 A.D. Nobody has been able, so far, to explain this passage; neither can we, unless it reflects some tradition that Rogas and his kin had been forced for some time to accept some sort of overlordship by Ermanaric. This would be our only evidence for such a fact. *Cf.* *Get.*, 105, XXXV.

tation as to time or place. Whether the personage in question was Attila's uncle, or still another Hun-king, his name certainly approaches that of Odoacer.<sup>27</sup> Odoacer's own name evidently could not be pronounced by Roman mouths without some kind of alteration.<sup>28</sup>

Like *Torcilingi*, *Odoacer* is one of the names included in the onomastic dictionaries of the German tongues and like the former, it appears with a question mark in place of an etymology. But Turkish offers at least two promising choices: If we regard this name as an adaptation of *Ot-toghar*, it may mean either "grass-born" or "fire-born." And a shorter name, *Ot-ghar*, which is closer to Otcar, might be translated by "herder."<sup>29</sup> If Ratchis could become Radagaisus, why could *Ot-toghar* or *Ot-ghar* not have become Odoacer or Odovacer?<sup>30</sup>

In addition to Otcar and Odigar and Odoacer, there was still "another" of like name, who had a career as an unlucky free lance around Angers in the 450's and 460's.<sup>31</sup> In our unique source for this leader, written a century after the events by Gregory of Tours, we find this Adovacrius or Odovacrius heading a "Saxon" band. He and his men took part in a chaotic struggle for control of the Loire region, between the battle of Châlons (451) and the consolidation of Visigothic authority in the region, by Euric (466-484).

Since Gregory is the only chronicler who mentions this "Saxon" (?) it is worth while to analyze his story, unfortunately very confused.<sup>32</sup> According to the historian of the Merovingians, "Adovacrius" went to Angers "*cum Saxonibus*," sometime after the battle of Châlons.<sup>33</sup> Childeric I, king of the Salian Franks (and father of Clovis; hence Gregory's interest in this business), intervened in the same area. Paul, a Roman count who had first beaten off the Visigoths in the district with the help of the Franks, was killed in a new

<sup>27</sup> Menander Protector (*Fragm. Hist. Graec.*, IV), p. 269.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Ratchis-Radagaisus, Karl-Carolus, etc. In Latin the name Odoacer is often spelled *Odozacer*, with a *v* which is never indicated in Greek.

<sup>29</sup> al-Kāshgharī, *A Dictionary of the Turco-Tataric Languages* (Constantinople, 1915-17), s. v. There is also the Kalmuk word *oduaki* ("the present one"; Rasmstedt, *Kalmückisches Wörterbuch*, Helsinki, 1935), if the addition of an *r* could be explained in some way. The form ODOVAC is found on Odoacer's coins.

<sup>30</sup> Curiously enough, the name of Odoacer has its historical revival in non-German groups, though its use by them has been taken to indicate that they were thereby manifesting surrender to German influence. The Přemysl Ottakar, crowned king of Bohemia in 1198, may have been showing in his name the vestiges of old Avar or Magyar relations with the Czechish nobility. It is closer to *Ot-togar* than to Odoacer itself.

<sup>31</sup> While in the following section of our paper we develop the thesis that the "Adovacrius" of the Loire region in the 450's was the same as Italy's Odoacer, it should be noted that the major thesis of this study—that the latter was a royal Hun—does not depend upon this subsidiary point.

<sup>32</sup> Greg. Turon., *Hist. Franc.*, M.G.H., SS. *Rer. Merov.*, I, 83, 18, and 19.

<sup>33</sup> The phrase "*cum Saxonibus*" is reminiscent of the one Jordanes used when describing Odoacer's seizure of power: "*habens secum Sciros . . .*" In both passages the authors appear to be indicating that while the leader was of one breed, the troops were of another, as a modern historian would imply if he wrote, "Lawrence, with his desert Arabs."

affray—apparently in a joint onslaught of Childeric and “Adovacrius” against him. The winners seem to have quarreled immediately after the death of Paul. Many of the “Saxons” had been killed in the battle with Paul’s Romans; then “their islands” (whose?) were captured by the Franks. Finally, in his last sentence in this account, Gregory made an astonishing leap, certainly through space and likely through time: “Odovacrius” (no longer “Adovacrius”) came to an agreement of *foedus* with Childeric, concerning matters far off on the other side of Gaul. They jointly “subjugated those Alamans who had invaded part of Italy.” Here Odovacrius is no longer connected with a “Saxon” band.

It seems well established that Gregory of Tours took this detailed information about Angers from a municipal compilation which has not come down to us, the *Annales Angevini*.<sup>34</sup> His condensed and unclear account is apparently an extract or a direct copy of those lost *Annales*, except for the agreement of “Odovacrius” in the last sentence. This combination of Childeric and “Odovacrius” for joint business touching Italy hardly grows out of their squabbles at Angers. For his last fact Gregory could have drawn on the text or the extract of the text of some *foedus* between Childeric and the Italian Odoacer, after the latter had risen to power.

This last supposition jibes with other material we have on the basic foreign policy of the successor of Romulus Augustulus; this policy apparently aimed at securing the flanks of Italy by a chain of treaties with the barbarian rulers of Gaul and Africa, and at securing wherever possible direct control over all territories included in the Italian prefecture. We know that in this last connection, he reconquered Dalmatia from the murderers of Julius Nepos, and that he destroyed the Rugian kingdom in Noricum. When he could not retain lands above the Alps, he aided their Roman inhabitants to withdraw into Italy proper. As to his western neighbors, we have long had evidence of treaties made early in his reign with Visigoths, Burgundians, and Vandals. Gregory of Tours appears in this muddled passage to complete the chain by revealing a pact made around the same time (Childeric died about 480) by which the Franks of Childeric helped him restrain the Alamanni in the Rhaetian parts of the Italian Prefecture.<sup>35</sup> (No other source reveals evidence of Alamannic invasion of Italy proper, south of the Alps, at this time.)

Beyond the fact that Gregory apparently had reason to fuse “Adovacrius”

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Wilhelm Junghans, *Histoire critique des règnes de Childerich et de Chlodovech* (Paris, 1879), pp. 12 ff.; Godefroid Kurth, *Etudes franques* (Paris-Bruxelles, 1919), II, 214 ff.

<sup>35</sup> On the foreign policy of Odoacer, cf. especially Ferdinando Gabotto, *Storia dell' Italia occidentale* (Pinerolo, 1911), I; Ludwig M. Hartmann, *Geschichte Italiens im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart-Gotha, 1923), I; Luigi Salvatorelli, *L'Italia dalle invasioni barbariche al secolo XI* (Milano, 1939), pp. 70 ff.; G. B. Picotti, “Sulle relazioni fra re Odoacre e il Senato e la Chiesa di Roma,” *Rivista Storica Italiana*, ser. 5, IV, 363 ff., with bibliography.

with "Odoacrius" and our deduction that the latter was Italy's Odoacer, there are general reasons for identifying "Adovacrius" of Angers with the same ruler. Just before the Angers incidents began, Sciri and, probably, "Torcilingi" had been in Gaul with Attila; after the latter's withdrawal, northern and central Gaul were in confusion and there was no reason why petty leaders of all sorts should not try there to make their fortunes. If Sciri were there under Odoacer, that explains why he is not mentioned in connection with the war his father and brother waged against the Ostrogoths; it also explains why, about four years after his kinsmen had met crushing defeat in central Europe, he had sufficient followers to cause Ricimer to enlist him for Italian enterprises.

But Gregory calls Adovacrius' followers "Saxons," not Sciri.<sup>36</sup> The fact that this is the unique reference to Saxons in the region, for a long time after, bears no weight; scraps of peoples strayed far in those days and it cannot be held that Sciri wandered but denied that Saxons could. Besides, the Saxons then were great pirates and the region was open to penetration from seas they roamed. However it can be pointed out that palaeographically the confusion of *Sciri* and *Saxones*, either by Gregory in reading his own source or by a copyist working on an early text of Gregory's history, is quite reasonable. The Saxons lasted on; long before the time of Gregory himself the Scirian name had disappeared. And Gregory was not a particularly erudite man.<sup>37</sup>

Pretty good cases can be made out then, for theories that in the period of the migrations two or at most three Odoacers flourished: Otcár, uncle of Attila the Hun; Odigar, "the supreme ruler of the Huns," who was probably the same man; and Odoacer, leader of Torcilingi and Sciri, who tried first in Gaul and then succeeded in Italy.

Of Edicon, Odoacer's father, we do not hear before the death of Attila; by that time, however, he would have been at least in middle age, for his son Hunoulphus shared leadership with him (and, if the suggestions in the preceding section be accepted, his other son was a leader at the same time in Gaul).<sup>38</sup>

Only a few years before (448), we read of an Edica or Edicon who was a very high official under Attila. The Hunnic ruler sent this man to Constantinople as ambassador to Theodosius II, along with a noble Roman, Orestes, who probably acted as interpreter and liaison officer. Priscus, the Greek who tells of this legation, first calls this Edicon a "Scythian," which was the archaic name often used in that day for steppe nomads of Southeastern Europe and

<sup>36</sup> While Sciri were at Châlons, these passages in Gregory are the only notice we have of Saxons in those parts where this "Adovacrius" operated, for centuries before and after Gregory's day.

<sup>37</sup> Confusions of the *CI* letter group with an *A*, and of *R* with *X*, are far from impossible in the script of the time, while *IR* could also be confused with *IBUS*.

<sup>38</sup> Odoacer was about sixty in 493 (*cf. Nagl, loc. cit.*).

Central Asia.<sup>39</sup> However, Priscus goes on to relate that the emperor invited Edicon to a state banquet but did not extend the invitation to Orestes. When the latter complained, courtiers told him that he could not expect the same treatment as Edicon, "a Hun by race, excellent in fight." Now, though Priscus would have meant "Scythian" to be taken as a literary term, he would not have used "Hun" for anyone not a Hun; in his day "Hun" meant Hun (only later did it extend to mean peoples like Avars and Magyars, when it became in its turn an archaistic term), and Priscus, of all Greeks in his day, knew the Huns.

A bit later, Orestes seems to have persuaded his noble Hun to plot the poisoning of Attila. Edicon, however, made no move to effect that project; indeed, he revealed the plot to Attila, who forgave him. Orestes abandoned the Hunnic court.

We need scarcely recall that many years later, Orestes made his own son Emperor of the West, through a new betrayal of his new lord, Julius Nepos. Then Odoacer, son of an Edicon, put Orestes to death and sent into retirement the son of Orestes, Romulus Augustulus.

As for Edicon, the "Hun by race" who was so high in Attila's service, we do not hear of him after the return of his mission to Constantinople. But within a few years we find Edicon the "Scirian," father of Odoacer and Hunoulphus, leading a bitter attack upon the Ostrogoths who had betrayed their allegiance to the heirs of Attila. While there is no positive proof that the two Edicons are identical, nothing seems more probable. It is more or less taken for granted by all who have touched the problem. If so, Odoacer was the son of a "Hun by race, excellent in fight."<sup>40</sup>

The name Edicon is not found among early Germanic peoples; Germanic philologists have been unable to find an etymology for it. But there was a Mongolic Edgü among the chieftains of the Golden Horde, as late as the thirteenth century.<sup>41</sup> There is a "good" etymology in the Ural-Altai linguistic group; in fact, *ädgü* in Turkish means "good."<sup>42</sup>

Odoacer's son is called by two different names in our sources: Thelan and

<sup>39</sup> Priscus, fragments 7 and 8; see especially pp. 76-83 and 95.

<sup>40</sup> Approving the identification of the Edicons are, among others, Wietersheim-Dahn, Förstemann, Hodgkin, Bury, Nagl. Only A. Juris, "Über das Reich des Odovakar," *Gymnasium Program* (Kreuznach, 1883) is definitely against the identification because of Priscus' statement that Edicon was a Scythian. He gives no other reason. The French historiographer of the seventeenth century, Henri de Valois (Valesius), recognized Edicon, who was a Hun (Priscus), as Odovakar's father; and in the eighteenth century Tillemont agreed with this opinion. Le Nain de Tillemont, *Histoire des empereurs et des autres princes qui ont régné durant les six premiers siècles* (Brussels, 1740), VI, 178-79.

<sup>41</sup> Edgü-Timur was a lieutenant of Ogotai in 1239, cf. B. Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran* (Leipzig, 1939), pp. 39, 383, with sources.

<sup>42</sup> Etymology suggested by Blochet.

Oklan.<sup>43</sup> This would seem to hint that one or the other was a title or a nickname; neither has a satisfactory Germanic etymology.

Thelan resembles the name borne by the khagan of the eastern Turks, Tulan, who reigned from 587 to 600 A.D.

Oklan resembles closely the Turkish-Tatar word *oghan*, "youth," which in modern times came through into German as *uhlan*, the name for lancers of "tartar" type. If this etymology be accepted, then the young man was named Thelan and he was also called familiarly or even by title, "The Youth."

The name of Odoacer's brother, Hunoulphus, is formed of two elements which often recur in the names of early Germans: *hun* and *wulf*. The latter word is self-translating, but the meaning of *hun* has not been agreed upon by philologists. However, the best and most generally accepted of all guesses so far offered is just "Hun." The early barbarians, impressed by the might of the Huns, seem to have begun giving the name to their offspring well before Attila's glory won him the highest seat in their Valhalla.<sup>44</sup> Thus the son of the famous Vandal-Alan king, Gaiseric, was named Hunneric: "king of the Huns" or "Hun-king." And the son of the renowned Ostrogoth, Ermanaric, was named or nicknamed Hunimund: "under the *mund* (or suzerainty) of the Huns"; actually he did reign under the suzerainty of the Huns, if we may believe Jordanes respecting this period of Ostrogothic history.<sup>45</sup>

Hunoulphus, then, was the "Hunnic wolf" or "wolf of the Huns." Why wolf? With the Germans, the frequent recurrence of the suffix *wulf* in personal names is an unexplained, although a noticeable phenomenon. The wolf has no favorable place (in fact, the wolf-god, Loki, has the most despised of all) in saga and folklore, and the man-wolf or werewolf is one of the most abhorred figures invented by the folk imagination. But the animal holds a most distinguished place among the Turks and Huns. The legends of the Hiung-nu, as related by the ancient Chinese historians, made the whole people stem from a princess Hiung-nu and a wolf. Likewise, the early Turks—not unlike the Romans—maintained that their khagan was the offspring of a she-wolf. Here is what a Chinese historian writes about the T'u-kiüe (Turks), as early as 581 A.D.: "On top of the staff of their flag, they put the golden head of a she-

<sup>43</sup> On the spellings of Thelan-Oklan, cf. Schoenfeld, *s. v.* The best source, Joh. Antioch., fragment 214a, spells Ὀκλάν. One is reminded of the words *Injana* and *Junker*, grown into titles.

<sup>44</sup> Ernst Förstemann, *Altdeutsches Namenbuch* (2d ed., Bonn, 1900-16), I, *s. v.*

<sup>45</sup> According to the vague story of Jordanes, Hunimund was succeeded, after a long interregnum, by Valamir, Theodoric's father, who was to die fighting the Sciri. But Ammianus gives different names. He speaks of a king, Withimer, after whom the Ostrogoths were ruled in the name of the minor Witheric, by Alatheus and Safrac, two lieutenants of the Huns. The first name, probably Grecized by Ammianus, is difficult to etymologize; the other seems Sarmatic(?)—at any rate, non-Germanic—like Candac, Suktak, and other names of the sort which were common in the period.

wolf. The barons of their rulers call themselves *wolves*. As they descend from wolves, they do not want to forget their origin."

The Turkish equivalent for "wolf" is *büri*, *böri*, or *börü*. This word could have been an element in the name of Attila's grandfather—the father of Otcar, Rogas, and Mundzukh—whom Jordanes calls Balamber. *Hun-wulf* could have been a translation of such a name, or even the translation of a title the son of Edicon, one of the noblest Huns, could rightfully bear: "baron (*börü*) of the Huns." No satisfying etymology has been found for the feudal word *baro* or *baron*, in the sense of noble warrior.<sup>46</sup>

A recapitulation of the evidence brings out these points:

While in all the secondary literature generally followed it has simply been assumed that Odoacer and his peoples were Germans, there is no scrap of source material to support such an assumption in the case of his immediate following and some evidence which goes far to indicate that they were *not* Germans.

Next, while we have Jordanes' testimony that Goths often took Hunnic names, it would seem strange for any Gothonic family to use them exclusively. Here, however, we have leaders—Odoacer, and his father and his son—who bear names no Germanic philology has been able to explain but which appear to make sense in some sort of Ural-Altaiic speech. There is a brother with a "Germanic" name, but half of that is *Hun*.<sup>47</sup>

More than this, there are the coincidences (but a whole group of coincidences) which link the names of this group to those of Attila's own kindred and to Hunnic officials at Attila's court.

The careers of Odoacer, of his father, and of his brother—even of his ill-fated son—were entirely consistent with those which could have been achieved by noble Huns in the generation after Attila's death: "*Torcilingorum rex*,

<sup>46</sup> For *baro*, cf. Du Cange, *Glossarium Med. et Inf. Lat.*, s. v.; René Grousset, *L'empire des steppes* (Paris, 1938), p. 125; G. B. Picotti, "Unni," *Encicl. Ital.*, with bibliography. A hundred years later the sovereign of the Western T'u-kiüe (Turks) was named Istami, yet the Greeks called him by his title, *Sir-yabghu*, which they rendered as Sizabul. A Hephthalite king defeated the Sassanian ruler, Peroz, in 484; the Arabo-Persian writers took the victor's title, *khshevan*, "king," to be his name, rendering it Akhshunwaz.

<sup>47</sup> There is one exception, Odoacer's wife, whose name is given as Sunigilda by Joh. Antioch. (fragment 214a). But the wife was not necessarily of the same stock as the husband. The sagas, although they often mention the name of Odoacer under different transliterations, are unfortunately of little help, because of their unhistorical commingling of quite distinct personages and peoples; there are the many ways in which Aetius the Roman and Attila the Hun were first conceived to be German heroes and then blended into one saga personality. The connection is at best tenuous, and is here pointed out with diffidence, yet we may have a like curious echo of real history in the case of Odoacer and his family. For instance, an Ottarr is said by saga genealogy to have been the grandson of Alf and the great-grandson of Ulf: a vague recall of some Hun-wulf? In Beowulf, Ohthere (Odoacer?) is the son of Ongentheow ("servant of the Huns"?—Edicon?), and the brother of Onela (Hunoulph?). On the other hand, Onela is said by a modern philologist to be the same as Anala, mythic ancestor of the Ostrogothic royal clan.

*habens secum Sciri, Herulos . . .*”; “a king of the Turks, having with him Sciri, Heruls . . .”

If any should question why for just this one time the name Turk should appear in our sources for the period, it can be pointed out that here clearly Jordanes was drawing upon Cassiodorus, who delighted in showing off just that kind of knowledge, and who was in a position to possess it with respect to the family of Odoacer.

Having deliberately chosen a “Hunnic” rather than the traditional “Germanic” point of view, then, here is how one can reconstruct the main developments in the “chunk of history” which was picked for the experiment:

The Sciri (originally a Baltic [?] or Sarmatic [?])—but hardly a Germanic—people) were drawn into the Hunnic political constellation around the middle of the fourth century. Their ties to the master Hunnic people were drawn tighter and tighter in the reigns of Uldin, Rogas, and Attila. Under the latter, one of his relatives of the royal clan of Rogas was leader of the Sciri, supported by a band of Torcilingi, his Turkish tribesmen. The plot of this leader, Edicon, with Orestes, was forgiven; still, Attila left at home his once-tainted kinsman when marching against Aetius, the Roman who had the best connections among the Huns and who might have tried to tamper with some of the shakiest vassals of his adversary.

Young Odoacer was with the Scirian contingent at Châlons; he remained in Gaul to profit from the disorder which followed that battle. Then Attila died, and his sons and relatives divided among themselves the empire—or rather, the tribes—over which the Hun-king had held sway. Edicon retained control of that part of the Sciri which was not in Gaul with Odoacer; he carried on Attila’s drive to rule over the peoples but his forces proved inadequate. Only a handful of his Sciri survived the defeat on the Bolia and accompanied Hunoulphus to Constantinople. Odoacer, squeezed out of Gaul between the Visigoths and the Franks, accepted service with Ricimer.<sup>48</sup>

#### APPENDIX: A NOTE UPON THE ETYMOLOGIZING OF NAMES FROM OUR WESTERN SOURCES FOR THE PERIOD OF THE GREAT MIGRATIONS

In our essay we have suggested a number of Ural-Altai etymologies for names mentioned in the sources for this epoch. If there had not been accumu-

<sup>48</sup> Two other things may be mentioned, although they are not of great apparent significance. In his coins Odoacer is represented with a thick mustache, which may be a Turkish as well as a German adornment, and with heavy eyelids, which seems to be rather a Turkish than a German characteristic; Roman moneyers of the fifth century were usually skilled and realistic. Then, according to one chronicler Odoacer favored the Arians; but for an orthodox Catholic writer of that century impartiality already amounted to a bias in favor of the heretics. On top of this, there is a tradition that Theodoric had Odoacer buried in a Jewish synagogue; and since the Ostrogothic king showed on another occasion his respect for the synagogue, we have no reason to think that

lated in the last hundred years a great mass of Germanic etymologizing on all such names, we should have taken this step more lightheartedly, for two good reasons:

1. Whatever names may earlier predominate in a human group, when it falls under the religious, political, moral, social, or cultural leadership of some other group, the personal names or the naming principles of the latter will tend to be taken up by the former, though not, of course, to the exclusion of all older names. On several of these counts Hunnic dominance of the Germanic world endured throughout the period of the migrations. One should therefore expect that "German" names, especially those in leading families which had cause to mingle with the masters in campaigns, in court life, and in nuptials, should have been both adopted and adapted from Hunnic names. Names of leaders, in turn, are just the sort our sources have preserved.

2. We do not have to rely upon deduction alone to conclude that in the epoch studied the process took place exactly in the manner stated. Jordanes writes, ". . . let no one who is ignorant cavil at the fact that the tribes of men make use of many names, even as the Romans borrow from the Macedonians, the Greeks from the Romans, the Sarmatians from the Germans, *and the Goths frequently from the Huns.*" (Jordanes, *M.G.H., Auct. Antiq., Get.*, 70, IX; Mierow's trans.)

To us it would seem that these two reasons are above challenge regarding this particular field of study. However, they are not challenged—they are simply passed over—in the whole mass of dictionaries and philological studies touching the subject. In these the approach is overwhelmingly according to Germanic preconceptions. All name elements, clear or doubtful, are fed automatically into a complex apparatus of roots, analogies, hypothetical forms, similar terms known to have been later in use by some Germanic people somewhere, and the answer nearly always comes out at the other end: This is what the name meant—in German. The rest of the time, when the machine fails to work: A question mark!

We feel that in questioning this whole approach we are doing more than tilt at windmills. Of course, the Germanic predilection of the history of the period as constructed in the nineteenth century gives great support to these assumptions of Germanic philology; the reverse is quite as true. We nurse, as is apparent, deep reservations about at least some of the "history" but we face the "facts" of the philology and have no tools with which to dig into them except those furnished by the philology itself. Still, we are bothered by it.

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he meant by this decision to inflict a last outrage upon the body of his enemy. If Odoacer was a heathen, burying him in a synagogue might seem the only solution, for his body would have been out of place both in a Catholic and in an Arian church.

As an example of the sort of thing that is met with, take the name *Attila*. All we have of common sense and the witness of Jordanes demand that that man's name be considered a Hun name. Turning to the historico-philological literature, though, we find the following over-all presentation: "Since *ila* is a Gothic diminutive, the name is Gothonic, and its bestowal upon the baby Hun prince illustrates the rapid permeation of Gothonic culture to the highest ranks in Hunnic society. The first element in the name is 'not so certain,' though Gothic *ata* ('lord' or 'father') is probably involved." (Gothic use of *ata* for "lord" or "father" looks a whole lot like the universal Turkic use of *ata* to mean "lord" or "father"—and as early as Ulfilas, let alone Attila.)

Then when the suffix *ila* turns up all through the sources as a component of names, no eye takes note that man after man who bore such a name was demonstrably a Hun, probably a Hun, or of a group which had strongly felt Hunnic power. No, the *ila* just goes to show the Gothonic character of those names, "since *ila* is a commonly used Gothonic diminutive, appearing often as an element in Gothonic names, even in those of Attila and many of his closest relatives."

Maybe so.

Starting with hunches like ours about *ila* (that somewhere in it lurks a Turk term), and going through the *Namenbücher*, we feel that scholars familiar with the more ancient Ural-Altaic tongues might find much that would profit them, and help place more exactly the Huns and their language among the Ural-Altaic groups. Old-Persian and non-Persian Iranian philologists should also examine the possibilities. Important additions to our understanding of German language history might derive from such research. At least until such studies have been made, and through them the original Germanic assumptions have been sustained, the general evidence indicates that much of the current secondary material floats upon doubts which impair its usefulness.

A few Germanic words which are considered to show traces of Asiatic influence are listed in Karsten, pages 194-97 (see footnote 3 above). There is practically no bibliography upon the subject.