Re: [EXT] Review of 'The Huns'

From Hyun Jin Kim
To Nikolay Pavlov
Date Today 01:10

Summary Headers Plain text

Dear Dr. Pavlov

Thank you for your kind email and your interest in my book.

When researching the Huns I think it is pointless to dwell too much on the ethnic provenance of the Huns. The Huns in Europe were a very mixed people and were multi-lingual. What I was referring to when I stated that the Hunnic elite were Oghuric Turkic for the most part is that the main language spoken by them was most likely Oghuric Turkic. This is the opinion not just of myself, but of the most prominent scholars who have studied the Huns in Europe. The names of almost all of their princes, nobles and tribes have strong Oghuric Turkic etymologies. Some vassal kings have Iranian names (Valamer and Ardaric) but it is clear that Iranian (Sarmatian) was not a prestige language among the Huns. Priscus reports that other than Hunnic, the nobles at the Hunnic court had a passing knowledge of Latin and Gothic. No mention however of Sarmatian. The Huns did of course take over the custom of cranial deformation from the Sarmatians.

DNA evidence also shows that the Hunnic upper elite had origins in Mongolia where we know from historical linguistics that proto-Turkic and Yeniseian languages were spoken in the third century AD. As the Huns moved west Yeniseian seems to have lost its importance and Oghuric Turkic became the main language. This of course does not mean the Huns were all Turkic, many of them doubtlessly were of mixed origin (Yeniseian, Iranian, Gothic, Roman, Ugric etc.). But I think based on the evidence, it is difficult to argue that the elite of the Huns were of Indo-European extraction. Some of them did intermarry with Sarmatians and were influenced by them culturally, but for the most part they were a Oghuric Turkic speaking elite originating from Mongolia and adjacent areas.

Kind regards and best wishes,

Hyun Jin

