

A PROMINENT HEPHTHALITE: *KATULPH* AND THE FALL OF THE HEPHTHALITE EMPIRE

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The Byzantine author Menander Protector reports the story of *Κάτουλφος* (Katulph), a member of Hephthalite nobility. This prominent Hephthalite took part in the events of the defeat of the Hephthalite Empire. He was one of the most important political persons of that epoch and area, someone who was the advisor not just of the Hephthalite ruler, but later the Türk *Ištämi* and what is more the Persian Great King *Xusrō Anōšarwān I*. This treatise deals with the so far unexamined *Κάτουλφος* story and tries to define who *Κάτουλφος* actually was. Beside the thorough examination of the Byzantine source and the name *Κάτουλφος* I clarify some serious misunderstandings (such as the identification of *Κάτουλφος* with the last Hephthalite ruler), which are widespread in the secondary sources (for example in the works of Drouin, Haussig and Ghirshman).

Key words: Central Asia, Hephthalite Empire, Türk–Sāsānian relations, silk-trade, *Κάτουλφος*.

There are three Hephthalite personal names in Gyula Moravcsik's *Byzantinoturcica* (Byzturc II, p. 361). The first one is *Γολλᾶς*, the name of a Hephthalite ruler, the second one is *'Ερθάλανος*, the eponym of the Hephthalite people and the third is *Κάτουλφος*, the name of a Hephthalite noble.

The name *Γολλᾶς* comes from the work of Cosmas Indicopleustes who presumably visited the country of the Hephthalites (Cosmas Indicopleustès (1973): Livre XI, 20, line 4, ed. Wolska-Conus, p. 351; cf. Schwarz 1975, p. 472; Kazhdan 1973, pp. 223–225; Udaltssova 1977, pp. 206–212). He writes about *Γολλᾶς*, the ruler of the White Huns (i.e. the Hephthalites). *Γολλᾶς* is identified with Mihirakula who is the successor of Toramāṇa the Hephthalite king and has been identified on coins and in Indian sources (Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* I, 289–324, ed. Stein 1900, pp. 43–48; Cunningham 1894, p. 225; Stein 1905, pp. 80–89; Thakur 1967, pp. 133, 141, 153; Byzturc II, p. 114; cf. Mohay 1990, pp. 99–110).

The name *'Ερθάλανος*, the eponym king of the Hephthalite dynasty can be found in Theophanes Byzantios' historical work (Theophanes Byzantios ed. by Henry 1959, p. 78, lines 7–8; Byzturc II, p. 127). The name *Hephthalite* originally referred

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only to the ruling dynasty. It was only later that the name already meant the whole people of the Empire (Czeglédy 1980, p. 213; Czeglédy 1983, pp. 33–34, 75–76). Actually *'Εφθάλανος*, the eponym of the Hephthalite people is the Greek form of the plural Middle-Persian name *Heftalān* with the Greek ending *-ος*, according to Károly Czeglédy (Czeglédy 1954, p. 145; cf. Bailey 1932, p. 947; Wesendonk 1933, p. 343; Herrmann 1925, p. 572).

The third name has survived in Menander Protector's work called *Historia*. Although this work in its extant form is fragmentary, it is still the most important source for the decades after the reign of Iustinianus. *Historia* is exceedingly important not just to the history of the South-Russian steppe region but also in connection with the Hephthalites (Menander 1985, pp. 1–30; Macartney 1944, pp. 266–275; Szádeczky-Kardoss 1979, pp. 61–70; etc.) because the defeat of the Hephthalite Empire was first of all recorded by Menander.¹ Above all, Menander reports the story of *Kátonulφος*, a person of Hephthalite nobility.

This treatise analyses the so far unexamined *Kátonulφος*-story and tries to define who *Kátonulφος* actually was.

Kátonulφος appeared in the history of Central Asia when the Türk Empire (established in 552) had just begun to fight for control of the Silk Route. Sāsānian Persia, ruled by *Xusrō Anōšarwān I*, was in its second Golden Age and trying to regain its previous position (McGovern 1939, pp. 417–418; Cannata 1981, pp. 7, 65–67; Golden 1992, p. 128; Harmatta 1971, pp. 136–138; Harmatta 1996, pp. 367–368, etc.).

In those days the Hephthalite Empire was one of the most important powers in Central Asia, which had finally secured control of the central part of the Silk Route, and had to face two adversaries at the same time: the Turks from the East and the Persians from the West (Kuwayama 1989, p. 119). The events recorded by Menander took place during this political turmoil.

The name *Kátonulφος* first appears in the 4th fragment of Menander's work. The following conveys a negotiation between *Kátonulφος* and the Hephthalite ruler.

Menander, *Exc. de Sent. 4*; Fragment 4,3 writes:

"Katulph, in dissuading the leader of the Hephthalites from advancing further, spoke the following proverb, barbaric indeed but persuasive, that one dog on its home ground is mightier than ten strangers." (ed. and trans. Blockley 1985, p. 46–47).²

¹ Although Theophylact mentions the fall of the Hephthalite Empire, but does not give more precise details: Theophylacti Simocattae Historiae VII, 6, 7, ed. de Boor; ed. corr. Wirth 1972, p. 257.

² Dogs are very important in the Hephthalite proverb because nomad tribes greatly respected this animal. The dog played an important role in the mythology of the Altaic Peoples. Beside the wolf, the dog was one of the totemistic ancestors of many nomadic peoples. When entering a contract it was quite usual to swear on a dog, moreover the dog was the incarnation of loyalty and a symbol of the royal company members (Göckenjan 1997, pp. 338–340). Sometimes

It is a pity that the context of the sentence was lost, therefore we are not able to define exactly what Menander means by the word *advance*. According to Roman Ghirshman it is possible that the Hephthalites had attacked the Turks even before the Persians and the Turks attacked the Hephthalites together and it was this campaign that *Kátovlφος* made the Hephthalite king cancel (Ghirshman 1948, p. 94).

The name of *Kátovlφος* appears again in the 10th fragment of Menander's work, in connection with the Sogdian mission led by *Maniakh* (*Maviáχ*). This embassy was sent on behalf of the Turks to the Persians (Golden 1980, p. 38; Golden 1992, p. 128). But by this time *Kátovlφος* was the advisor of the Persian ruler *Xusrō I*, and not of the Hephthalite king.

In this fragment Menander mentions not just the name of *Kátovlφος*, but briefly his background as well. This may be because the extraordinary life of *Kátovlφος* caught the attention of the Byzantine author. The fragment also reflects that Menander was well-informed of Central Asian events (Gumilev 1967, p. 40). The Byzantine author had probably gained his knowledge of *Kátovlφος* from *Maniakh* (or from another member of his embassy), who was later at the Byzantine court, because *Maniakh* might have met *Kátovlφος* in person (Drouin 1895, p. 286).

Since the events written in the 4th fragment (i.e. the advising of the Hephthalite ruler by *Kátovlφος*) important changes happened in *Kátovlφος'* life. According to Menander the wife of the prominent Hephthalite was raped by the Hephthalite king and consequently *Kátovlφος* went over to the Turks.³

Menander, *Exc. de Leg. Gent.* 7; Fragment 10,1 writes:

“*Katulph, the Hephthalite, who, because the king had raped his wife, had betrayed his own tribe to the Turks...*” (ed. and trans. Blockley 1985, p. 112–113, lines 16–18).

It seems that these occurrences are confirmed by another fragment of Menander. This is just a fragmentary sentence in which the Byzantine author does not name his subject, but it is possible the content refers to *Kátovlφος*.⁴

Menander, *Exc. de Sent.* 2; Fragment 4,1 writes:

“*He who has been treated unjustly by the ruler feels great anger against the whole state.*” (ed. and trans. Blockley 1985, p. 44–45).

the dog was an object of religious respect but at other times one of hatred and contempt (Tryjarsky 1979, p. 297; Menges 1986, pp. 266–274; Golden 1991, pp. 45–55; Golden 1997, pp. 87–97).

³ Although Menander does not make any difference between the two wings of the Türk Empire (similar to the Chinese sources before 580 [Ecsedy 1968, pp. 163–164]), but it is quite possible that *Kátovlφος* went over to the Western Türk tribes, which were directly bordering on the Hephthalites and not to the eastern Türk tribes; therefore *Kátovlφος* appeared in *Ištämi*'s court, who was the western Türk *yabğu* [*qağan?*] (Scharlipp 1992, p. 25; Sinor–Klyashtorny 1996, p. 332).

⁴ This is Blockley's opinion too (Menander 1985, p. 252, note 13).

These events happened while the Türks (still in alliance with the Persians) launched their attack against the Hephthalite State.⁵ This means that *Kátonlφος*, according to Marquart, effectively participated (on the Türks' side) in the fall of the Hephthalite Empire (Marquart 1901, p. 308).

Because both the latter sentence and the passage preserving the Hephthalite proverb are fragmentary and out of context, it is possible that Menander mentioned the prominent Hephthalite in the lost passages of his work. It also confirms the supposition that *Kátonlφος* was one of the most important political persons of that epoch and area: someone who could attract the attention of a historian working in faraway Byzantium. Another sentence in Menander's 10th fragment refers to the important part played by *Kátonlφος* in that period. The Hephthalite did not stay with the Türks for long, he soon went over to the Persians.⁶

Menander, *Exc. de Leg. Gent.* 7; Fragment 10,1 writes:

“...and who in the meantime had left them and joined the Medes [the Persians]” (ed. and trans. Blockley 1985, p. 112–113, lines 19–20).

Perhaps it happened during the period when the alliance between the Türks and Persians had been gradually getting looser and when the two expanding powers, through the defeat of the Hephthalite Empire, had become neighbours (Nöldeke 1887, p. 117; Widengren 1952, pp. 69–94; Harmatta 1969, p. 401; Frye 1984, p. 327, etc.). An alliance had been formed only for the control of the Silk Route; once it was accomplished the alliance proved to be temporary both politically and economically (Grousset 1970, p. 83; Sinor 1990, p. 302). Menander keeps silent on the cause of *Kátonlφος* changing sides.

The fact that at the time of the first Türk embassy led by the Sogdian noble *Maniakh* we find *Kátonlφος*, in spite of being a Hephthalite, among the advisors of the Persian *Xusrō I* proves that *Kátonlφος* must have been a very important person (Pigulewskaia 1969, p. 165). *Kátonlφος* knew, not only Hephthalite, but also Türk conditions; he also had an understanding of the silk-trade. Therefore, *Kátonlφος* must have played a very significant role in Persian politics, according to Chavannes and Ghirshman (Chavannes 1903, p. 234; Ghirshman 1948, p. 151). It was he who suggested to the Great King to block the Silk Route from the Türks and their Sogdian merchants; it was also he, who advised *Xusrō* to buy and burn the silk brought by the Sogdians, as a sign.⁷

⁵ The *terminus ante quem* of *Kátonlφος*' changing sides to the Türks is the arrival of the embassy to the Persian court (before 567, cf. Grousset 1970, p. 83) led by the Sogdian *Maniakh*, because *Kátonlφος* by this time already lived there. Therefore the events recorded by Menander happened before 567.

⁶ Cahun, misunderstanding the source, thinks that *Kátonlφος* is a Türk noble who rebelled against the Türk kagan and fled to the Persians (Cahun 1896, pp. 109–110).

⁷ It means that the Persians rejected the possibility of trading with the Türks and their Sogdian merchants (Harmatta 1996, p. 368; Pigulewskaia 1969, p. 165): Menander, *Exc. de Leg. Gent.* 7; Fragment 10,1 (ed. and trans. Blockley 1985, p. 112–113, lines 20–26).

Menander, *Exc. de Leg. Gent.* 7; Fragment 10,1 writes:

“[Katulph] advised the Persian king not to return the silk, but to buy it, paying the fair price for it, and to burn it in the fire before the very eyes of the envoys...” (ed. and trans. Blockley 1985, p. 112–113, lines 20–26).

Kάτουλφος continued to participate in the further decline of Türk–Persian relations. *Ištämi* (in Menander’s work: *Sizabulos*⁸), the Western-Türk *yabğu*, sent one more mission to the Persians in the hope that he could restore friendly relations between the two countries. But the Persian king, listening to his Persian advisors, and *Kάτουλφος*, rejected the offer of the Western-Türk *yabğu* “because of the untrustworthy nature of the Scythians”.

Menander, *Exc. de Leg. Gent.* 7; Fragment 10,1 writes:

When this second Turkish embassy arrived, the king after discussion with the Persian high officials and with Katulph, decided that because of the untrustworthy nature of the Scythians it was completely against Persian interest to establish friendly relations with the Turks (ed. and trans. Blockley 1985, p. 112–113, lines 29–33).

This was the reason why the Türk–Persian relationship finally collapsed. Conflict was inevitable when war broke out in 570. The Turks, in response to the Persians, launched an attack on the Hephthalite territories previously occupied by the Sāsānians (Christensen 1944, pp. 373–374; Harmatta 1996, p. 368; Dani–Litvin-sky–Zamir Safi 1996, pp. 176–177).

This is the final record of *Kάτουλφος*. His name appears neither in Menander’s nor any other sources again, there is no further information about his life.

Perhaps the examination of the name which appears in Menander’s work could help us to define the personage of *Kάτουλφος* more clearly.

The word, in the Greek text has an *-oς* Greek ending. This means that the Greek form may go back to an original name *Kātulph* or *Katulph*.

In spite of this, Haussig, though in brackets, reconstructs the name with one more *-a*: *Katulph(a)* (Haussig 1953, p. 369). Although this version of the name is possible, it is more likely that the letter *-a* supports the name etymology of Haussig only. According to Haussig the name *Katulph(a)* consists of two parts. *Kath*, the first component of the name, is of Iranian origin, which means “town”. The second part, *qulpa* or *hulpa* is of Mongolian origin, which later appears as the name of a khan (Haussig 1953, p. 369, note 359). *Kath* is indeed of Iranian origin and we can find it (with *Kat* and *Kand*) in numerous town names throughout the Central Asian region (Tomaschek 1877, pp. 135, 171; Tomaschek 1889, p. 50). For example in Theophylact’s *Skythian Excursus* there is the name of the town of the Onogurs: *Bakath* (Theophylacti Simocattae Historiae VII, 8, 9, ed. de Boor; ed. corr. Wirth 1972,

⁸ About the name see: Markwart 1938, p. 147, note 4, p. 149; Harmatta 1962, pp. 52–53; Byzturc II, pp. 275–276, 291; Golden 1992, p. 127, note 65, etc.

p. 260, line 10; cf. Harmatta 1990a, p. 163). This name perhaps contains the above mentioned *kath* form.⁹ The trouble with Haussig's theory is that he does not consider the fact that in every word which has got the component *Kat* or *Kath* ("a town"), it always appears as the 2nd part of the word. There is no data at all where *kat* or *kath* would appear as the 1st part of the name, as Haussig assumes it in the case of *Katulph*. There are further problems with the 2nd part of Haussig's reconstruction. The word *qulpa* or *hulpa*, which is of Mongolian origin can be found in sources but only from the 14th century (Pelliot 1949, pp. 107–109). So it is highly risky to collate a 6th-century data with a 14th-century one. On the other hand we have some pieces of unambiguous information about the iranisation of the Hephthalites (Altheim–Stiehl 1954, p. 278), though it is still questionable whether there were any Mongol speaking tribes among the Hephthalites (Grousset 1970, p. 67; Ligeti 1977, p. 307; Ligeti 1986, p. 131). Besides we need a terminal *-a* to reconstruct *qulpa*, *hulpa* in case of the transcription of the Greek form, but it is possible that the original form of the name did not have a terminal *-a*. So the etymology of Haussig must be treated with great caution.¹⁰

The name *Kάτουλφος* according to Cahun is not the original form because manuscripts preserved corrupt forms so the original Greek form could have been *Kάτουλγος*. According to him it means that the original form of the name was the Turkic name *Kutluğ*¹¹ (Cahun 1896, p. 109).¹²

On the other hand, as for F. Altheim *Katulph* reflects an Old-Turkic **qatil+p*¹³ and bears the signs of a later iranisation as well (Altheim–Stiehl 1954, pp. 277–278; Czeglédy 1954, p. 151, note 1). Although, according to Wesendonk, the name cannot be of Iranian origin (Wesendonk 1933, p. 344).

It could be possible that the name came into being by way of compounding words of different languages according to Frye (Frye 1984, p. 349, note 20).

On the whole we can state that now we are not able to define the origin of *Katulph*'s name appearing in Menander's *Historia*. Consequently it could not help us to define the personage of *Katulph* and the reasons of his deeds.

It is possible that among the coins analysed and published by Ghirshman in 1948 there are several 4th-century ones on which a Hephthalite name: ΚΤΥΛΑΑΦ appears (Ghirshman 1948, p. 10). According to Ghirshman it is the 4th-century appearance of the name *Katulph* which was recorded in Menander's work.¹⁴ According

⁹ But *Kyreschata* < **Kuruš-kath* "City of Kyros" (Haussig 1992, pp. 20, 35, 104–105), and one of the capitals of Hwarezm: *Kath* (Haussig 1992, p. 171) can be mentioned.

¹⁰ Later Haussig did not repeat his opinion, cf. Haussig 1979, pp. 45–46, note 26.

¹¹ See: Clauson 1972, p. 601: "kutluğ fr. *kut*, q. v.: originally 'enjoying the favour of heaven'; hence, more generally, 'fortunate, happy, blessed'", and: Doerfer 1963–1975, III, p. 1568, 551–554: *qütlüğ*: 'glücklich, gesegnet'.

¹² Cahun's opinion is quite widespread. For example Ernst Stein – though with doubts – thinks the same as Cahun in connection with the etymology of the name (Stein 1919, p. 36).

¹³ Altheim: 'Gemischter, Mischling' (Altheim–Hansen 1951, pp. 104–116; Altheim–Stiehl 1954, p. 277); Clauson 1972, p. 601: "katil- Pass. f. of *kat-*: 'to be mixed with, or added to (something)'".

¹⁴ We must treat Ghirshman's reading carefully, because certain researchers do not accept his reading of the legend "Hephthal the king of the Chionitae" either (Czeglédy 1964, p. 124).

to the reading of Ghirshman, the legend of the coins is the following: “*Katulph Chionitae King*”.¹⁵ Herzfeld realised the name of the *Chionitae* is the 2nd word of the legend but he did not give us the reading of the 1st word though he assumed that it could express the *qağan*-rank or the name of *Grumbates*, who is a Chionite ruler noted by Ammianus Marcellinus.¹⁶ *Grumbates* is the 1st Chionite king known by name,¹⁷ who, according to the record of Ammianus Marcellinus, lost his son in 359 at the siege of the Persian *Amida* (today the Iranian city *Diarkber*) (Altheim 1960, p. 258; Sinor 1990, p. 301).

Ghirshman does not agree with Herzfeld. According to his opinion it is not *Grumbates* whose name appears on the coin but his immediate descendant, a king *Katulph* by name, who minted this coin, on which there is his portrait wearing a tiara, which is similar to the crown of the contemporary Persian ruler (*Šāhpuhr II*).¹⁸ It seems that Ghirshman considers the name as the name of one of the 1st Hephthalite kings (*Katulph I*). According to him the name is known from the 4th century among the Hephthalites (Ghirshman 1948, p. 74).

It holds good as far as it goes, yet in spite of this we are not able to connect this 4th-century king, *Katulph* by name, with the 6th-century person mentioned by Menander because of simple chronological reasons.

In the secondary literature there have already been several attempts to identify *Katulph*. Although Drouin mentions the *Katulph*-story recorded by Menander, but according to him, in the period of the fall of the Hephthalite Empire the Hephthalite noble mentioned by Menander is not simply someone called *Katulph* because he thinks that the name of the last king of the Hephthalites was also *Katulph*. Therefore the key issue of the *Katulph*-story is the name of the last Hephthalite ruler.

We can find the name of the last Hephthalite ruler in numerous primary sources but in various forms. In the *Šāhnāme* of Firdausī the name of the last independent Hephthalite king is *Ghātfer* or *Ghātfar* (Steingass 1996, p. 877; Frye 1984, p. 349, note 20). In the work of Firdausī *Ghātfer* had been defeated by the Turks and had to escape. Tabarī also mentions the name of the last Hephthalite king, *Warz*¹⁹ (Marquart 1901, p. 64, note 3). Frye indicates the name is widespread as a family- or rather a tribe-name in Eastern-Iran (Frye 1984, pp. 316, 349, note 20). Mas‘ūdī quotes the name of the Hephthalite king as *Axšunwāz*/*Axšunwār* and therefore the question becomes more complicated. Golden assumes that this name is probably not a personal

Although both Altheim, Hansen, and Haussig accept this reading of Ghirshman, they cite it as KAATOAB (Altheim–Hansen 1951, p. 114; Haussig 1953, p. 369, note 359).

¹⁵ If the reading of Ghirshman is correct then we can question Cahun’s emendation *Kátovλφος* < *Kátovλγος* and his ‘*Kutluğ*’ explanation, because the name has (unambiguously) φ, and not γ (g).

¹⁶ *Grumbates*: Ammianus Marcellinus XVIII, 6; XIX, 1, 2, ed. Seyfarth 1968, pp. 30; 44–46.

¹⁷ I do not intend to deal with the problem of the connection between the Chionites and the Hephthalites. See: Tomaschek 1899; Bailey 1943, pp. 1–2; Bailey 1954, pp. 12–21; Trever 1954, pp. 131–147; Harmatta 1969, pp. 391–394, 1990b, pp. 89–97; Enoki 1955, pp. 231–237; Enoki 1959, pp. 1–58; Gumilev 1959, pp. 129–140; Litvinsky 1996, pp. 135–138, etc.

¹⁸ For the tiaras of the Persian rulers see: Lukonin 1969, pp. 235–241; Frye 1983, p. 135.

¹⁹ *Warz* (Nöldeke 1879, p. 159); *Wrz* (Golden 1992, p. 83); *Wazr*, *Waraz* (Frye 1984, p. 349, note 20). (In the arabic script the *w* and the *z* are very similar.)

name but a name of rank, because we know of more Hephthalite rulers under this name (Golden 1992, pp. 82–83; cf. Byzturc II, p. 127; Henning 1936, p. 17, note 2; Widengren 1952, p. 75, note 1). The picture is full of contradictions and nobody has tried to answer the following question so far: why does the last Hephthalite king appear under so many names in the sources?

Returning to Drouin's idea, the name of the last Hephthalite king was not *Ghātfer*, *Warz* or *Axšunwāz* but *Katulph*. This king was the inferior to a Türk *qağan* called *Asken* (?). Drouin indicates that he has borrowed this data from Theophanes Byzantios' work (Drouin 1895, p. 285).

Ghirshman thinks that the *Katulph*-story of Menander and the *Ghātfer*-story of Firdausī are different interpretations of the same events. According to him similar events happen both in the *Ghātfer* and in the *Katulph*-story: losing the battle against the Turks – betraying the Hephthalite people to the Turks; *Ghātfer* king's escape to the Persians – *Katulph*'s flight into the Persian Court. So *Ghātfer* mentioned by Firdausī can be identified with the Hephthalite noble, who appears in Menander's work. Ghirshman – referring to Drouin – connects the information of Firdausī and Menander because the data of Theophanes Byzantios recorded by Drouin is the only source, which mentions a Hephthalite king *Katulph* by name. According to the final conclusion of Ghirshman it is *Katulph* the last king of the Hephthalites who is mentioned in the historical works of Theophanes Byzantios and Menander.²⁰ Haussig agrees with Ghirshman, he accepts the identification of *Katulph* with *Ghātfer* (Haussig 1953, p. 369; Haussig 1979, pp. 45–46, note 26).

However, the theory of Drouin, Ghirshman and Haussig has a weak point. Drouin does not refer to the exact passage of Theophanes Byzantios' work, because he indeed is not able to do it. In all the work of Theophanes Byzantios there are neither any *Katulph* Hephthalite king nor *Asken* Türk *qağan*. Neither Moravcsik (Byzturc II, 156) nor Marquart, who in 1901 already noticed the unreliability of Drouin's data, found such information (Marquart 1901, p. 64, note 3).²¹

Marquart also presumes that this data is not from Theophanes Byzantios' fragmentary work but from one of the treatises of Tomaschek (Tomaschek 1877).

The question is more complicated because the bibliographical data given by Marquart is wrong (Marquart 1901, p. 64, note 3): there is no *Katulph* on page 75 in Tomaschek's study, but only on page 139. Marquart might be right that Drouin took his faulty data from Tomaschek, because the passage is the following: "Seitdem der haitalische Fürst Kάτουλφος sich dem Türk-en-khāqān 'Ασκήν (sin. Sse-kin Mo-kan ko-han) unterworfen hatte (um 565), waren die Türk-en das herrschende Volk in Centralasien geworden..." (Tomaschek 1877, p. 139).²² But Tomaschek does not re-

²⁰ So he would be the second Hephthalite king with this name: *Katulph II* (Ghirshman 1948, pp. 10, 94–95).

²¹ Neither have I found Drouin's information in the available Theophanes edition: Theophanes Byzantios, ed. Henry 1959, pp. 76–79.

²² 'Ασκήν mentioned after Kάτουλφος is correctly 'Ασκήλ (more correctly *Askēltur* see: Szádeczky-Kardoss 1998, p. 26), who is a noble person and his mission arrived in Byzantium in 563. The identification of 'Ασκήλ is quite difficult, we can find some different opinions in the literature. Tomaschek identifies 'Ασκήλ with *Mu-han*, Eastern Türk ruler, Zeki Validi Togan with *Iştämi*

fer to Theophanes Byzantios or any other source, either. Perhaps the problem is rooted in the wrong reading of Menander's text.

Ghirshman also mentions that he did not find any such passage in Theophanes Byzantios' work, and he cites Marquart's notes as well. But in spite of these he unfortunately refers to Drouin's unconfirmed data;²³ and the fact that this faulty data appears in the new English version of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* is undoubtedly the result of Ghirshman's influence, because Bivar also writes about king *Katulph* in his Hephthalite (*Hayāṭila*) article of EI (Bivar 1971, pp. 304–305).

The conception of Drouin, Haussig and Ghirshman can hardly be deemed acceptable. We cannot accept the existence of *Katulph*, a 6th-century Hephthalite king, as long as we have no exact source to prove it. To our knowledge there is only one 6th-century *Katulph*, who cannot be identified with the last Hephthalite ruler. It is obvious from Menander's sentences. So we have to reject every theory, which is based on the identification of *Katulph* and the last Hephthalite ruler.

On the whole we can state that there is only one 6th-century *Katulph*, who is the prominent Hephthalite person recorded by Menander. But Menander does not mention anything about his function. In Menander's work *Katulph* is just "a Hephthalite" without any adjectives and dignitary name. A sentence of the Byzantine author is about *Katulph* talking the Hephthalite king out of advancing; it means that *Katulph* was one of the closest advisors of the Hephthalite ruler, who raped *Katulph*'s wife. It may be concluded that *Katulph* and his wife lived in the Hephthalite kings' court. It can be possible that this noble person recorded by Menander was the member of the Hephthalite ruling dynasty or he was close to it (a prince or a minister? cf. Grignaschi 1984, p. 245; Litvinsky 1996, p. 146). Perhaps it is the reason why *Katulph* was listened to in the Türk and the Persian court. As to his changing sides from the Turks to the Persians we can presume that *Katulph* realised the change in the balance of power in Central Asia and he wanted the Turks to legitimate his power. Because he did not achieve his purpose, he went over to the Persians.

One fact can be proved: *Katulph* was not the sufferer but the creator of the events, which led to the defeat of the Hephthalite Empire and the formation of a new political structure in Central Asia.

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(Togan 1939, p. 223) and Harmatta with the leader of the Western Türk *Nu-shi-pi* tribe (Harmatta 1962, pp. 46–47).

²³ Ghirshman writes only the following about Tomaschek's above mentioned study: "... qui nous est inaccessible". (Ghirshman 1948, p. 94, note 6).

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