The Hungarian nation throughout its known history has at least three distinct names, not counting the other six tribal names which are also traceable back into antiquity. (the other tribal names are Kari, Kasi, Kurt-Gyarmat, Tarjan/Tarxan, Jenu, Nyek) These three names whose roots are to be discussed referred more to the leading nation, which also could have had its unique independent origin. Starting with the oldest references and advancing to the newest are the following at different times and different languages;

(1) Sabar-toi Asfali, Subar, Sabir, Savar, Sawardiya

Land of 4 rivers, source of 4 great rivers, Urartu and the Caucasus.

(2) Mas-ar, Masgar, Mazar, Madjar, Magor, Magar, Magyar, Makar

Royal Apostolic rule & land of 4 rivers.

(3) Onogur, Hunugur, Ugor, Ungar, Hungar, Uhor, Venger.

The 10 arrows confederation. "Onogur"

The following condensed time line of the history of these names will illustrate their possible origins and even their interrelatednes. We cannot guarantee that in all cases the similar sounding name is in fact undeniably an ancestral root nation to Hungarians and certainly not just to Hungarians.

The bulk of the following summary is from the book by László Getz László, "Keleten Kől a Nap", Volume 1 of 4, Vienna, pg 24-27

I also added to this from various other works.

The Subar / Sabir Name

The ancient southern Mesopotamian nation of the Sumerians (4000 to 2000 B.C.) referred to their northern neighbors who lived all the way to the southern Caucasus mountains as "Subar-Ki", meaning the "Subar Land". The Sumerian main
dialect was eme-GIR and the second more archaic dialect eme-SU. Shubure was also the name of the great fertile mother goddess of the people of Subartu, associated with the agricultural lands and its life sustaining bounty.

After the fall of the Sumerian kingdom around 2000 B.C. another nation rose to the north of them which was a mixed Sumerian and Semitic nation called Akkad. Their famous founder was known as SARGON. The earliest Akkadians however also were largely Sumerians and their language therefore had many non Semitic terms also, which in time became fully adopted by the later Semitic languages. They called the nation of Subar-Ki in northern Mesopotamia by the name Subar-Tu, up until 1,000BC.

Another name of this area, or perhaps more specifically one of the kingdoms of the Subarian people was known as "Hurri, Gurri". The Hurri language is generally the accepted term today for the language of the people of Subar-Tu. Their language was also agglutinative like Sumerian and had many words in common, yet it was a distinct language from it. Hungarian also has some words in common with both Sumerian, Hurrian and Elamite. Elamite is considered a sister tongue of Dravidian who are now constricted to southern India, but were once living in the north. It is no accident that Hungarian also shares many words also with Dravidian and Turkic languages also. All of this indicates that they were at one time less isolated from one another.

The Hurrian descendants also founded the kingdom of Urartu as well as the central Asian kingdom of Khwarezmia, next to the Aral Sea. (S.P.Tolstov, Ancient Khwarezmia, Moscow, 1947) [Some Russian researchers claim that Khwarezmia and its area was the possible origin of the Finno-Ugrian and Altaic nations!] The people of Subartu (Hurrians and Subars) lived predominantly in northern Mesopotamia but in very ancient times also in southern Mesopotamia.

The Kwarezma Seal, "Land of the Sun"

The country of the Hurri are mentioned in the Sumerian legend of Gilgamesh as "hurr-uru". This northern kingdom was also called the kingdom of en-Merkar by the Sumerian legends dealing with the dealings of the goddess Inana who was from there and spoke the eme-SU dialect. The Hurrians are also mentioned in the Bible because in one period the Hurrians spread over most of the Near East and were very prominent. They introduced the horse drawn chariot.

Another name of their northern messopotamian land and country was Mada, Mata and some used this name for the people as well calling them Mitani. The term MA, MAT, MADJ means land, province or country in Sumerian, Subarian, Parthian, Medes, Finnish, Hungarian. It was also used by the Assyrians and Egyptians.

In the dialect of the Accadians and proto Medes the "dh" can sometimes be pronounced as the Hungarian "gy", (ref Sayce, Accadian Phonology,1877) therefore their word for the numeral one "id" can be "igy or egy" as in Hungarian and their country as "Magya or Megye" which in Hungarian means province. Similarly in ancient Parthian Megala meant a province. The term which later became Magyar then in this sense can simply mean "man of the country/province". The territory of the Mada or Mitani was called Magor by certain Egyptian references (Wallace Budge, An Hieroglypic Dictionary, appendix of place names) and referred to a rather large territory in northern Mesopotamia and eastern Mediterranean area. The Egyptian reference exaggerates the territory of the Mitani, but perhaps is related to the later dispersal of the Hurrians through the Middle East. Magor was also the name of the mythical ancestor of the Hungarian nation in the story of the Legend of the Stag.
Assyr references from 700 B.C. refer to the Sabirs as Sapar-da.

Persian references starting from the time of Darius, the first Persian king refer to this area as the land of the Sabarda (Sabir), their neighbors the Matiene (Mada).

The Greek historian Herodotus (ca 440 BC) refers to them as Sapir (Sabir), and their neighboors as Makr-on (Magar) and Matiene. There is still a mountain in the southern Caucasus called Magar as well as a mountain called Nimrud.

Linguists have also claimed that the Magyar name derives from Mas-gar, based on the Ugrian term for man/hero which is "mosh". This root word is found in a range of early Ugrian (mos), Tuva (madir), Dravidian (mac), Sumerian (mus) and Scythian(mas) tongues also to mean the same thing. Therefore it has a very good historic etymology, but alas where was it used exclusively to denote a nation? In several Central Asian areas, predominantly amongst Scythian nations. Massa-geta comes to mind first of all, especially since the Massageta tribal confederacy name remained the longest amongst the Bashir Hungarians on the edge of eastern Europe and since several early historians also mentioned a Magar tribe living next to Massageta areas in their early history in Central Asia.(ref Armenian Chronicles)

Even further east of the Massageta, a special branch of this Scythian people were called the "royal scythians" by the Greek historians who called their rulers also by the Makaroi title and their group "saka-uraka" which are the lords of the Saka people. These terms and titles were found on Saka-Uraka coins near India, after they were pushed out of their original territory by the eastern Huns. Even today they are recognized in Hungarian to mean lord of the Saka, just as the ancient Greek chroniclers interpreted it. The SAKA term has many Hungarian cognates which fully describe a nation, clan, ruler, territory, language etc associated with an ethnic group.

Several of these "royal scythians" served in the Greek military and were called by such Scythian names as "Modar-es" by the Greeks. All this points to a common ethnic name which today is called Magyar. To what degree they were like or unlike today's Magyars is impossible to say without more linguistic data, which in itself does not disprove that they could have found a dynastic link with the ancestors of the early Hungarian people. Language changes and evolves slowly and so does the genetic composition of nations based on their new neighbors.

Other Greek references mention the people called "Tibar and Moser" who were metal workers of the Caucasus agree with the Biblical Tubal (Tibar) and Mes'ek (Mosher). These are believed by some historians to be the distorted names of Subar (Tibar) and Machar (Moser), which can also mean varieties of smiths in the Hungarian language. Mozser meaning sword smith while Tibor meaning smith in the past, but not any more. Similarly in Sumerian tibri=smith while Turkic timur=iron. Today Tibor in Hungarian is just a masculine name.

It is an interesting fact that the Subarians of the Caucasus were great metal smiths and many early and even medieval languages called various metals by their name. Sumerian Subur=bronze (Hungarian Szobor=bronze statue/idol). Similarly in the time of the Hungarian resettlement the term referred to a special type of steel used to make swords. (sabura-kan) The Hungarian term for Saber is Sablya. The soft and lighter colored iron used in the groove of the saber was called WASY (refer to Biruni). This same term in Hungarian "was, vash" means iron, and an ancient Chinese reference also claims that the Huns used the term WAS to mean iron.

The Greek general and historian Xenophon also mentioned the Makars living in the Caucasus in 400 BC under the name Makr-on, and Machar.
The Greek historian Plinius also mentioned them as Machor-on and their Sabir neighbors as Saspeir in the Caucasus Mountains.

Ptolemy, the Greek astronomer and historian also mentioned the Magyar as Mazara and the Sabir as Siavara in the 2nd century A.D. living near the source of the Tigris River in northern Mesopotamia.

In 215BC, the Armenian Patriarch John writes of the Sievor-tik, stating that they are the descendants of the Kushites and Nimrud. That they live in the province of Udi which today is called Otene. They were the ancestors of the Sabirs. In this province there is a city called Hunora-certa (founded by Hunor). Similarly in Khwarezmia the demi-god and founder of the land is called SIEV-US. The modern Arab Encyclopedia states that these people of the Caucasus were the ancestors of the Hungarian-Magyars, who were famous weapon smiths of the Persians.

The Hungarian Chronicles don't write much about the history of the ancestors of the Magyars before the coming of the Huns. They generally lump the whole long period into two accounts, one of which is the Legend of the Stag, which unifies the 3 nations of the Magyars, Huns (Onogurs & Avars), and Alans. (this unification of course was never in their entirety only as a fragment) Yet the story of the magical hunt in early versions, taken from the captured Hungarian royal library by the Turks and republished as the Tarihi ınregistr (the History of the Hungarians)[Topkapi Museum], places the empire of Nimrod in Persia. It is from here the two heroes chasing the stag go north. It is also the Persians who saved a most similar account of the Hungarian "legend of the stag" which according to their account is of "foreign & eastern origin". A separate and detailed study needs to be shown on the meaning and relationship of Nimrod and his other names to the Scythic & Hun nations, for most had versions of this myth and most respected the great giant ancestor, who is represented in the constellation Orion as a hunter. What confuses people today the most is the Biblical name used for the giant hunter believing it to be the only source of the myth, due to Biblical influence on Medieval Hungarian society. Yet others have called him by such names as Heracles as well. Finnish Veine-MONEN (veine is like Hungarian vén=very aged, old) All of these being eastern in origin ultimately.

The other reference to the period before the Huns is very sketchy again, for there is a list of rulers & patriarchs which starts with Tana as the father of Nimrod. Possibly related to ETANA of the city of Kish of the Sumerians. The Kushan Scythians also had an ancestor called Kush-TANA. The Sumerian ETANA was the first potentate on earth who wanted to visit heaven, and did. His son in the Hungarian account is Menrot (Nimrud) and his sons Magor, Hunor, and the ancestors of the Iranians. This is much like the myths recorded by Berosus the last historian of Babilon. Even the wife of Nimrud (Bau, Anuta) is related to the Hungarian version Eneth/Boldog asszony. Assyrian accounts also include the twin sons of Nimrud, who have many titles some of which sound much like Magor/Vagur. Following the remnant of this mythical/religious ancestor cult follows a short list of patriarchs which can be associated to early Scythic patriarchs as recorded by Herodotus. This period then is followed by the better documented historic Avar-Hun rulers that terminate with the early Hungarian rulers before and after the settlement. They accentuate the strong dynastic bonds with the Huns, who in this period ruled many other nations and not just their own people.

The earliest presence of the Huns in western Asia is difficult to date and may in fact be much earlier than the breakup of the large Hun Empire next to China. At Persepolis, the capital of old Persia written on the walls are some of the subject nations. Here are listed the following: Choana, Media, Babilon, Arbela, Assyria, Gutrata, Armenia, Cappadocia, Sapardia, Hunae. The last two therefore were
probably neighbors and must have been large enough to be recorded.

With the coming of the Huns from the east new tribal confederacies were created in which the Huns often played a leading role. The Hungarian legend of origin explains the mixing of three main groups in a mythical manner, but clearly indicating that Magyars, Huns and Alans were the main element of their ethnic origins. In this mixture the proportion of the Hun ruling element was probably the smallest and most diluted. However this proportion increased with the later confederation with the Onogurs and Avars, but by then the Magyar language was able to maintain its predominance over the Turkic-Hunish languages, even though there are a very large number of shared words with them. Much of these words are of a very archaic type, many not found any longer in the later Turkic languages.

The territories of the Huns at various times stretched from Central Europe to Central Asia, including parts of northern and eastern Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and North India. To explain away their accomplishments as that of mere "nomads" is to really ignore their true history and to belittle them. Modern researchers in their old homelands (Lajos Suger, Hungarian-Mongol expedition) have found quite the opposite. Paved streets, stone buildings, agriculture, granaries, writing, metallurgy. Much less pastoralism than the later Mongols who replaced them after they left. Europeans often equated and degraded all horsemen as "nomads and barbarians" like the Huns, Avars, Hungarians, Turks and Mongols even though there were sometimes great cultural differences between them. Even when many of the non-horsemen were less developed and more primitive they were idealized. The Chinese historians however differentiate between Mongols and Huns, stating that the earlier Huns were much more advanced than the Mongols who came after them.[The World and Its People, China]

This Hun period is unique for its lack of references to the "Magyar" ethnic or national designation and the predominance of Hun tribal terms and names instead. Only in the most outer areas does it occur rarely. When it does occurs it is often also labeled as Hun.

Priskos, the Greek historian and diplomat, mentions the Sabir in the Caucasus Mountains as well as their spreading to the north Black Sea regions bounded by the Don and Volga rivers. These Caucasian people are often mistakenly grouped with the eastern Huns and Altaic nations but no conclusive proof of this is stated.

Menander the Greek historian mentions that the king of one of the "Hun" tribes living north of the Black Sea was called Mauger, which possibly means that the people the king ruled were also Mauger rather than Hun. The custom of naming the ruler after the subjects is also common and not just naming the subjects after the ruling clan. Linguists agree that the Magyar name cannot be an Altaic name, therefore it cannot be Hunish in origin, even though the nation of king MAuger living north of the Black Sea were called Huns by the Greeks. This was just another example of a people with a Hun dynasty, just as the Armenians and Persians had a Parthian Arsac dynasty which was not Armenian or Iranian in origin for 500 years or so. The Armenian accounts state that the family of the Parthian, Arsac was white hun in origin. This also enforces the idea that the Ephtalite Huns and Parthians (APAR-ni) mixed resulting in the new AVAR-HUN designation.

The Hun Royal Insignia of Attila, "the sword of the holy spirit"

Jordenedes the early German historian calls the Sabirs and Hunuguri as one people and the descendants of the "Huns" in 550 A.D. Jordenedes however was not well versed in Hun history and associated the subjects with the rulers especially since they were not Slavic or Germanic but another "eastern" nation like the Huns. Instead he filled his descriptions with ridiculous and hateful descriptions about
them, which people still love to copy to accentuate their disrespect for the memory of the Huns. The Hunugur or Onogurs obviously had a White Hun aristocracy and also mixed with the Huns for they are called Huns thereafter. They were always in close alliance with the Magyar tribes and ultimately joined with them. These were the “mixed” nations like the Khazars, Kabars and others on the borders of eastern Europe. Even the Avar-Huns or Var-kuns as they were called in Europe were probably much intermixed before they even entered Europe with the people of their earlier settlements like the Apar-ni (avar) Parthian Scythians and their neighbors. Their language therefore was probably a Scythian/Turkic/Iranian mixture!

Marquart, in 583 AD states that at the source of the Tigris there is a city of Kangavar which is the city of the Mager-an tribe. The Kangar name is mentioned also relating to the Hungarians of the east. The KANGA term was also an archaic name for Khwarezmia next to the Aral Sea as well as to the ancient land of the Sumerians (Kanga,Kiengi=wetlands) The Magyar tribe has always had a special attraction to wet lands, islands, river deltas.

The Russian chronicles call the Caucasus Mountains the mountains of the Ugors, by which they mean Hungarian Mountains, since Ugor=Hungarian in Russian. Some historians have tried to make the White Ugors be the name of the Khazars, but the Khazar name was quite well known by the Kievan-Ukrainians, whereas the Ugrian term referred clearly to another people which they knew as Hungarians. Several Hun nations also lived in the Caucasus and the Georgian and Armenian chronicles talk about their conversion to Christianity and translating the Bible to their language. Several early Hungarian explorers in the 12-th century searched for their kinsman in this area, some successfully like Otto and others unsuccessfully like Julianus, who did not go far enough south. He however found with the help of a stray Hungarian the eastern Hungarians living in Baskiria near the river Volga. It is to the Caucasus Mtn area that the Hungarian “holy” crown was traced in the most scientific and precise investigation ever conducted on its metal work, icons, decoration motifs which proved beyond doubt that it was not a Latin and Greek combination but a single piece created in one place, where identical duplicate pieces were also found. (ref the books of Csomor Lajos)

In the 9th century the Byzantine Greek emperor and historian Constantin Porpurogenitos following his meeting with the Hungarian prince Termatzu from Arpad's clan writes that the oldest name of the Hungarians, was Sabartoi Asphali, recalling their ancient Mesopotamian name Subar-tu and Sabir-ki. Asphali was the Arab name of the lower Zab river. However before the coming of the Khazars the Sabirs lived in a large area west of the Caspian Sea up to the Caucasus mountains. There were also Hungarians living there also as recorded in early Armenian documents.

In the 10th century the historian Masudi states than in Azerbaijan in the Caucasus Mtns, there is still a Mager-dan tribe. He also states that the Khazars are actually (to a large degree) Sabirs and only the Persians call them Kazars. The Sabirs also became a subject people of the Khazars, however the Sabirs were living next to the Caspian Sea well before the original Turkic Khazars came west from Central Asia. The Khazar Empire was naturally not all of one ethnic origin and had racially different constituents according to the historians of the day. Even the Khazar name supposedly meant a mixture, just as the Khabar renegade branch which joined the Magyars but who were most often called simply Khazars by the Magyars. According to the Greek Chronicles they learned each others languages and could converse in both.

The previous summary illustrates the fact that the Magyar and Sabir names have been found in Northern Mesopotamia since the dawn of history, but they may mislead
one to think this is the only place where it was found. Actually one can trace it
to the east of this area to the Turanian Lowlands and Turkestan also, where even
today there are a few place and geographic names which recall their presence. The
Persians split the Sabir people and only one branch lived in the Caucasus while
another further east. This is how the Sabirs gave their name to the northern Asia
in the name Siberia. Town names along the Amu Darya and Syr Darya in Turkestan
also still bear the name Madjar, which according to the elders of the towns is
Magyar in perfect original Hungarian pronunciation. (ref Dr Toth Tibor) Similarly
named people live there even though today they speak the language of the area,
Turkish. This name cannot be a mere coincidence or a remnant of a people taken by
Turkic or Mongol invaders from Hungary, because the references to them are even
more common in the distant past.

The Chronicle of Derbent also talks of this Magyar eastern branch, which came west
in 352 AD and founded the city of Madjar between the Black Sea and the Caspian and
split into two branches, one going to the areas inhabited later by the Baskir
Magyars near the Ural Mountains and another later to areas north of the Black Sea.
The later chroniclers who commented on the two frontiers of the Magyars one in the
east in Baskiria and the other north of the Black Sea, in the early Persian
manuscript Hudud Al'Alam only knew of the later consequence of this split.

The work of IbnRusta is the most reliable and exact references. He writes “The
country of the Magyars is between the Petchegen Turks in the east (east of the
Volga) and (on the west) next to the Eskils who are ruled by the Bulgars (Bulgaria
of eastern Europe).

From earlier references we find that the Hungarians came to this area between the
Black Sea and the Caspian known as the Kuban, (north of the Caucasus Mtns). (ref
Nemeth Gyula, "A Honfoglalo Magyarsag Kialakulasa", Budapest 1930.)

The eastern branch became known as the Baskir, a Turkic distortion of Masgar. The
Magyars were pushed out of the Kuban predominantly by the Khazars, however some
stayed and there were others living in the Caucasus also as we have shown.
Preceding the resettlement in Hungary many stayed behind, but rather than be
cought in the crossroads of other new nations they moved to more defensible
pockets of Hungarian settlements in the Caucasus and the Ural Mountain areas.

A Magyar state called Madjar Agadzor remained up until the middle ages in Armenia.
A letter from the pope John 12, in October 1329, to the Magyar king Jeretyan of
the Kuban area, living next to the Alans and Malchaites [river Melka], was also
written commending them on their Christianity and blood relationship to the
Christian kings of Hungary proper.

Initially the Khazar capital of Sarkel was built as a fortification against the
Magyars and other smaller nations of the areas which lived there earlier before
the Khazars came. IbnFadlay wrote about the Khazar language stating that it was
unlike the eastern Turkish or Persian. ..Their customs were to a large degree
unlike the muslim, jewish or christian customs. Some claim that the Khazars are
the Jad-suds (Jas?, Alans) and Mad-suds (Madjar) people. (no doubt because they
were there also as their subjects.)

The Hungarian marches between the Khazars and the western Hungarians was ruled by
Levedi (Liuente in Hungarian) who was called the earliest ruler of the Magyars by
the Greeks. The Khazars tried to come to terms with him by giving him a royal
bride. However he was not the selected ruler which united the various Hungarian
and "neighboring?" nations in the compact called "union of blood" in accordance to
ancient Scythian customs.
The previous list is by no means exhaustive, but it is a shortened summary of references which relate the history of the name of a people bearing these names. Some may argue that they were not like the modern Hungarians and in a sense they are partly right. Our distant ancestors didn't talk exactly like us and didn't include in them the many new ethnic groups that modern Hungarians have absorbed since their resettlement in Hungary. In this sense they must have been somewhat different than modern Hungarians. However this is the case with all nations and is an eternally ongoing process of assimilation and splintering. This is common throughout the world. It does not prove how much different we were in language and custom. It is a surprise how much we share in traditions however and even in language with all the nations mentioned in the previous list who spoke the unique language type to which Hungarian belongs to, the Turanian agglutinative languages which are often called Ural-Altaic. Hungarian has strong bonds to both branches of this extended language family due to its unique history.