

An Encyclopedia of Medieval Hungarian History: The Achievement of the "Szeged School" of Medieval Hungarian Historical Studies.

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Korai Magyar Történelmi Lexikon (9-14. század) [Early Hungarian Historical Lexicon (9th-14th centuries)]. Editor-in-Chief: Gyula Kristó; editors: Pál Engel and Ferenc Makk. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1994. 755 pp., 17 foldout historical maps, 31 in-text historical maps, 8 one to six pages long genealogical tables, 28 in-text genealogical lists, 22 in-text list of royal, provincial, and ecclesiastical officials.

In English-language historiography, historical dictionaries, lexicons, and encyclopedias are available in scores and even hundreds on almost every topic or sub-topic of history, and on most parts of the world. In contrast, Hungarian historical writing has never placed too much emphasis on producing historical encyclopedias and dictionaries. Thus, outside of basic multivolume encyclopedias (e.g. *A Pallas Nagy Lexikona*, *Révai Nagy Lexikona*, *Új Idők Lexikona*, *Új Magyar Lexikon*, etc.) and various biographical dictionaries (e.g. *Szinnyey's Magyar Írók*, *Gulyás's Magyar Írók*, *Irodalmi Lexikon*, *Magyar Irodalmi Lexikon*, *Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon*, *Új Magyar Irodalmi Lexikon*, etc.), historians have no encyclopedia-like works to turn to for ready reference concerning their discipline. This is all the more unusual, as during the past three decades the Hungarian Academy of Sciences has published numerous one- and multivolume lexicons and encyclopedias on such diverse subjects as philosophy, music, world literature, ethnography, art, and even on the city of Budapest. Historians, however, are forced to consult basic histories and multivolume historical syntheses in order to locate the needed pieces of information, even though finding them in such works is much more cumbersome and difficult than locating them in historical lexicons. The appearance of the volume under review has now eliminated some of these problems, especially with respect to medieval Hungarian history.

The *Early Hungarian Historical Lexicon* is indeed an impressive volume. It must have been a formidable undertaking to accomplish, even though the original intentions of the editors were not fully realized. As revealed by Editor-in-Chief, Gyula Kristó, in his preface to the volume, their original goal was

to produce a multivolume historical encyclopedia on the period stretching from the Hunnic invasions of the 4th-5th centuries to the end of the Anjous and the rise of the Luxemburgs to the Hungarian throne.

Initiated in the early 1980s, the early results of this project were incorporated into a small booklet that was published in 1987 and contained twenty-six articles. But then, having come to the conclusion that they lacked the needed manpower and the necessary funds to carry the project to its logical conclusion, the editors decided to salvage it by preparing a more limited one-volume work on the period between ca. 800 A.D. and the late 14th century. They did this by utilizing the already existing articles, complementing them with many shorter ones, and then turning the projected "encyclopedia" into a "lexikon" — even though many of the enclosed entries remained sufficiently extensive and detailed to qualify as encyclopedia articles. Thus, although called a "historical lexikon," the final product is really a kind of half-lexikon and half-encyclopedia. Yet, whatever one calls it, the *Early Hungarian Historical Lexikon* is an impressive work that is bound to make its mark upon the study and research of medieval Hungarian history.

It is a large, folio-size volume of 755 pages, with double columns, which, if reduced to the normal size, would make a book of about 1500 pages. It contains over 2,000 articles, written by 170 scholars, most of whom — but not all — are Hungarians from Hungary. Those from abroad with the exception of Juan Cabello — are all Hungarians from the surrounding states that used to be part of Historic Hungary and thus have large Hungarian minorities. It is lamentable — and this is one of the shortcomings of the volume — that the work is virtually devoid of contributions by Western scholars, even of ex-Hungarians who are working and writing in one of the many European or American institutions of higher learning and research. Thus, the list of contributors does not contain the names of such well known Hungarian medievalists abroad as those of János M. Bak, Imre Boba, Thomas von Bogyay, Leslie S. Domonkos, Astrik L. Gabriel, Denis Sinor, and Szabolcs de Vajay — not to speak of a number real American, German, French, British, and Japanese (i.e. Toru Senga) historians, who could have contributed to the volume. This is lamentable indeed, for the presence of these foreign and ex-Hungarian scholars could have added some international flavour to this unusually useful and needed work.

In conjunction with the 170 collaborators, it should also be pointed out that the list lacks not only some noted Western scholars, but also several well-known Hungarian scholars from Hungary and Transylvania, who normally should have been included. These include such well known scholars of medieval history as Antal Bartha, Károly Czeplédy, György Györffy, Zsigmond Jakó, György Székely, and perhaps a few others. We can only presume that some of them were eliminated by politics (i.e. Jakó of Transylvania), while others are absent as a result of the well-known antagonism and scholarly rivalry between Hungary's two important centres of medieval studies: Szeged and Budapest.

Although lacking an international flavour, and missing some prominent Hungarian contributors, the *Early Hungarian Historical Lexikon* is not a provincial work. It is rather a very impressive volume that sweeps through the whole region of Central and Eastern Europe, and occasionally even Western Europe, Near East, and Inner Asia. It concentrates on the Magyars and on Historic Hungary, but it also covers all of the surrounding areas, countries, provinces, and peoples who have interacted with the Magyars. Thus, in addition to extensive essays on the region's current and former nationalities and ethnic groups — such as the Alans, Arabs, Austrians, Avars, Bashkirs, Blaks [Vlachs], Bolgar-Turks, Bosnians, Bulgarians, Byzantines, Chuvats, Croats, Cumans, Czechs, East Franks, Eskils, Germans, Greeks, Ismaelites [Izmaelites], Italians, Jews, Kabars, Kangars, Karakitays, Karolingians, Karuls, Khazars, Kimeks, Kipchaks, Kirghiz, Magyars, Moldavian Changos, Mongols, Moravians, Oguz, Palóc, Pechenegs, Poles, Rumanians, Russians, Sabirs, Saxons of Transylvania and Upper Hungary, Serbs, Slavs, Slovaks, Slovenes, Székelys [Seklers], Türks, Uygurs, Ukrainians, Ungrovlachs, Vallons, Vardars, Varhuns [Varkonys], Volga Bulgars, Wangars, Yaziges [Jász] — it also supplies lengthy articles on the interrelationship between the Magyars and many of these and other nations and nationalities. The later include essays on Arab-Hungarian, Aragonian-Hungarian, Austrian-Hungarian, Bashkir-Hungarian, Bavarian-Hungarian, Bosnian-Hungarian, Byzantine-Hungarian, Carinthian-Hungarian, Croato-Hungarian, Czech-Hungarian, Dalmatian-Hungarian, Danube-Bulgar-Hungarian, English-Hungarian, French-Hungarian, German-Hungarian, Hunnic-Hungarian, Italian-Hungarian, Khazar-Hungarian, Neapolitan-Hungarian, Norman-Hungarian, Pecheneg-Hungarian, Polish-Hungarian, Romanian-Hungarian, Russian-Hungarian, Serbian-Hungarian, Styrian-Hungarian, Venetian-Hungarian, and Volga-Bulgar-Hungarian inter-relationships, as well as on Hungary's relations with the Kingdom of Jerusalem and with the Papal Court. The list of these essays does not include articles on Slovak-Hungarian, Sloven-Hungarian, Ottoman Turkish-Hungarian, and Ukrainian-Hungarian interaction. But this is undoubtedly so because some of these nations did not as yet exist as distinct ethnic entities in those centuries (e.g. Slovaks and Ukrainians), while others did not as yet play a meaningful role in Hungarian history (e.g. Ottoman Turks and Slovenes).

A number of the nationalities or ethnic groups are not included among the entries, others are not cited with their internationally known names, while still others are cited in a way that is not commonly known to the average layman in Hungary or abroad. As an example, there is no separate essay on the Huns, who are mentioned only in connection with the rejected theory of common Hunnic-Hungarian descent. The "Vlachs" cross referenced as "Blaks" are mentioned only as some pre-Romanian inhabitants of the Carpathian Basin, who may have been Franks or others, but not in conjunction with the inhabitants of 14th through 19th century Moldavia and Wallachia, who in the mid-19th century had renamed themselves Rumanians. True, the latter can be found under the term "Ungrovlachs," but that is a term, which is unfamiliar to most average users. Thus, very

few would look for them under there. Also strange is the complete absence of the term "Oláh or Oláhok" by which the Rumanians [Vlachs] have been known in Hungary until the early or mid-20th century. It should have been included at least for cross reference purposes. Its absence seems to have been dictated by political considerations. This also holds true for the term "Tót or Tótok," which in common usage at least to the average Hungarian had "always" referred to the Slovaks of former Upper Hungary. The terms included, but only in conjunction with the inhabitants of medieval Slavonia [*Tótország*], which few Hungarians know ever existed. Certainly, far less than one in a hundred educated Hungarians would know that this term is supposed to mean Slavonians, instead of Slovaks. Thus, unless this Lexicon was prepared specifically for specialists in medieval Hungarian history, this phenomenon should have been pointed out and this term should also have been discussed in conjunction with the Slovaks.

These shortcomings notwithstanding, the *Early Hungarian Historical Lexicon* is a mighty work, and one that will be of great help both to historians and to the laymen for many years to come. Moreover, its very existence will be a catalyst for further research. The reason is that even unwittingly, it points to some of the white spots that still have to be filled by future historians.

The editors have to be commended for their liberality in their treatment of the individual contributions. It is quite evident that they did not try to practice *Gleichschaltung*, but permitted each author to express his or her views concerning a specific topic. They also encouraged their contributors to present both sides of major controversies, before coming to their own conclusions. This is evident from many of the enclosed essays. Also commendable is the fact that, while using primarily Hungarian terms, they cross-referenced them to their well known Latin variants (e.g. *évkönyv* = *annales*, *kegyúri jog* = *ius patronatus*, *királyi udvar* = *curia regia*, *nádor* = *comes palatinus*, *püspök* = *episcopus*, etc.). This also holds true for geographical names. They used the Hungarian versions that were official in the Kingdom of Hungary, but the same time they also cross-referenced these terms to other variants (e.g. Brassó = Corona = Kronstadt = Brasov, Kassa = Košice, Kolozsvár = Klausenburg = Cluj-Napoca, Pozsony = Pressburg = Bratislava, Ragusa = Dubrovnik, etc.). Moreover, they also indicated their current locations, if not in Hungary. They likewise worked out an acceptable system of transliteration of Arab, Greek, and Cyrillic Slavic terms that takes this transliteration uniform and easily comprehensible.

Before closing with a general commendation and praise for the scholar ship that went into this work, I would like to point out a few common omissions, as well as some of the rejections that are evident from this lexicon. The omissions include "*hét vezér*" [seven chiefs] and "*hét törzs*" [seven tribes] that are much more commonly used terms than "*hétmagyar*" [*hetumoger*] that has been included. Thus, while the names of all of the conquering tribes and most of the tribal leaders are given separate entries, it is virtually impossible to find a listing of these tribes and their alleged leaders as preserved, rightly or wrongly, by Anonymus in his *Gesta Hungarorum*.

The "rejections" include the short shrifting of Gyula László's "theory of double conquest" [*kettős honfoglalás*]. It is given a separate entry, but only to discredit it completely. While this may well be a valid scholarly point of view, what is bothersome is that this attitude is so pervasive that it leads to the total rejection of the notion that proto-Magyars or Magyar-like peoples may in fact have settled in the Carpathian Basin perhaps in several waves much before the Árpádian conquest of the late 9th century.

The other "rejection" has to do with Great Moravia [*Moravia Magna*], a tiny 9th-century Slavic state, which 19th century Slovak Romanticism had reshaped into the "Great Moravian Empire." More recently, serious scholars have come up with the notion that this "Great Moravia" was located really on the southern Morava river in present-day Serbia. While this view may not be acceptable to most scholars, it is a sufficiently serious and well-founded scholarly theory that it should have been mentioned, along with its primary proponents: Imre Boba in the United States and Péter Püspöki Nagy in former Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

Having made my remarks, let me re-emphasize that, notwithstanding these omissions and disagreements, I regard the *Early Hungarian Historical Lexicon* a work of magnificent scholarship. It will help and influence virtually everyone who has an interest in medieval Hungarian and East-Central European history. Although its contributors come from all over Hungary, it is undoubtedly the product of the great "Szeged School" of Medieval Hungarian History which could, and perhaps should be called the "Kristó School." Gyula Kristó is a historian of tremendous scholarly capacity and proportions, who virtually single handed made the University of Szeged [JATE] into a primary centre of medieval studies in Hungary and East Central Europe. At the same time, he created a "school" that none of his financially better endowed Budapest colleagues were able to do. This is also indicated by the fact that it was Szeged, and not Budapest, that produced this extremely useful pioneer historical lexicon.

Many of the contributors of this volume, including co-editor Ferenc Makk, are Kristó's ex-students. And the scholarly productivity of the Szeged Centre of Medieval Studies can only be called stupendous. It is to be lamented that neither Kristó, nor his Centre, is as well known in Western Europe and North America as they deserve to be known. Perhaps it will be this volume that will make the difference, especially if it will also be published in English. In closing, I can only express my admiration, while at the same time encourage Gyula Kristó and his colleagues to continue this work, so as to come up ultimately with the originally proposed multivolume "Encyclopedia of the Early History of Hungary and the Hungarians" (p. 5).