

## Reviews/Besprechungen

KRISTÓ, GYULA: *Hungarian History in the Ninth Century*. Translated by GYÖRGY NOVÁK. Szeged: Szegedi Középkorász Műhely 1996, 229 pp. ISBN 963 482 113 8. Price: US\$36.00. —Reviewed by JAMES T. WILSON, Bloomington, Indiana.

While there are several works in English and other western languages on the Hungarian migration into the Danubian Basin, none is as current and comprehensive as GYULA KRISTÓ's book under review. Originally intended for publication in the United States in 1991, the translation is fluent and readable with only very rare Hungarianisms. The author is very thorough in discussing various competing theories on all issues concerning the early history of the Hungarians, making this a useful introduction not only for those interested in Hungarian history, but also historians of Eastern Europe and the Pontic Steppe, as well as those interested in archaeology, folklore, and historical linguistics. Indeed, because of the paucity and controversy of documentation concerning the Hungarians in this early period, the historian must consider not only written sources, but also archaeological, linguistic, and folkloric materials. Much of the material, therefore, does not lend itself to chronological treatment, and the majority of the work is arranged along thematic lines.

The first chapter (7-17) deals with the earliest references to the Hungarians in the written sources. The author begins with the ancient Greek and Latin sources, discussing various scholars' theories regarding possible mentions of Finno-Ugric peoples as long ago as Herodotus. The author, however, dismisses most such arguments, holding that the Hungarians appear first in Byzantine sources of the 830s. The ninth century, therefore, would cover entirely the period from the first written evidence of the Hungarians to their settlement in modern-day Hungary. Consequently, the following chapter considers primarily linguistic arguments regarding the ethnogenesis of the Hungarians as a separate group in the period before they first appear in historical sources. This second chapter (19-30), and the third chapter (31-41) on the original homeland of the Hungarians before the 830s, do rely primarily on older scholarship for their discussion, but the conclusions reached—that the Magyars as a separate ethnic unit developed in the first few centuries of the Christian era in the region of the Belaia River, east of the Volga, leaving there sometime in the late eighth or early ninth centuries—do seem to be those most widely held in the Hungarian scholarly community today. Much of the chapter, moreover, is devoted to the theory, first put forth by BERNÁT MUNKÁCSI at the turn of the century, that the Magyar spent a considerable period somewhere in the region just north of the Caucasus Mountains. While this theory has found new adherents within the past decade, the author finds the arguments on behalf of a Caucasian connection still unconvincing.

In the fourth chapter (43-55), the author examines the linguistic and archaeological controversies surrounding the Turkic element in the Magyar language and the relationship of the early Hungarians with the Turkic peoples of the Volga region. Here,