

HUNGARIAN SOCIETY IN THE NINTH AND TENTH CENTURIES. By *Antal Bartha*. Translated by *K. Balázs*. Translation revised by *I. Gombos*. *Studia Historica, Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 85. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1975. 147 pp. \$9.00.

The author of this detailed and scholarly study is a member of the Institute for Historical Sciences of the Hungarian Academy in Budapest, and is one of the most competent Marxist historians, specializing in early medieval studies. This volume is an English translation of Dr. Bartha's work, which first appeared in 1968 and which was reprinted in 1973. The book shows an impressive acquaintance with sources, ancient and modern, Eastern European and Western.

Bartha's work contains only three chapters, the first of which describes in broad terms the conditions in Eastern Europe at the time when the Hungarians resided in the regions north of the Black Sea. The author discusses the Khazar Kaganate, the Principality of Kiev, with whom the early Hungarians were in contact. The very extensive and detailed notes indicate that the author has a wide familiarity with archaeological work done in Russia and with comparative linguistics.

In the second part of the study, Bartha turns his attention to the life of the Hungarian tribes in the ninth century. He clearly shows that the Magyars practiced not only animal husbandry in this period, but agriculture as well. He also discusses social customs and the political forces which shaped the fate of the Hungarian tribes, especially their relations with the Khazar Kaganate and the Pechenegs, as well as other factors which led to their migration west.

The third and final chapter deals with the changes which followed the conquest of the Carpathian Basin and the metamorphosis from tribal federation to medieval state. Bartha makes an attempt to estimate, through analogy, not only the size of the Hungarian population at the time of the conquest, but also the number of their animals. After the middle of the tenth century, Hungary underwent an important period of reorganization. The rise of Otto I in the west and the collapse of the Khazars in the east forced the Magyars to make a number of adjustments in order to ensure their survival. Cut off from their former eastern home, and faced with a strong Holy Roman Empire in the west, the society based on clan organization gave way to a stronger tribal confederation, which in turn became the nucleus of the medieval Hungarian state.

This is an excellent book, especially in its original Hungarian version. Unfortunately, the English translation is often awkward and unclear. Some of the mistranslations are rather annoying and misleading, for example, "the ancient chronicle" [*sic*] is supposed to be the *Primary Chronicle*. It is commendable that the publishing house of the Hungarian Academy (Akadémiai Kiadó) is making more historical studies available in English. It would be doubly welcome if these translations were equal in quality to the excellence of the Hungarian originals. An index and a bibliography would also have been useful, as well as the illustrations which appeared in the Hungarian edition. But even with these shortcomings, this volume is a valuable addition to our knowledge of early medieval Hungarian history.

L. S. DOMONKOS
Youngstown State University