COMENIUS AND HUNGARY: ESSAYS. Edited by *Éva Földes* and *István Mészáros*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1973. Illus. 240 pp. $11.00.

In November 1970, as part of the world-wide celebration of the three hundredth anniversary of Comenius's death, the Pedagogical Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Hungarian National Commission of UNESCO organized a commemorative conference entitled "Comenius and Hungary." The resulting volume is the first in a Western language to deal with Comenius's work at Sárospatak, where the Czech-Moravian educator lived between 1650 and 1654 and where he first had the opportunity to put some of his pansophic ideas into practice. It represents the work of German, Czechoslovak, and Hungarian scholars.

As a volume, *Comenius and Hungary* suffers from the well-known ills of a conference format. The articles are uneven: some are excellent scholarly contributions; others are no more than polite generalities suitable for such an occasion. Moreover, the organization of the volume is somewhat confusing. The reader might find it helpful to begin with István Mészáros's "On the History of the Sárospatak School in the 15th and 16th Centuries," to continue with "Comenius's School Reforms at Sárospatak" by Lajos Orosz, to follow this with the more specialized studies, and to conclude with Erzsébet Ladányi's "The Graduates of the Sárospatak School in the Time of Comenius."

The two thoughtful, well-researched articles by the editors of this volume deserve special mention. Mészáros's study dispels the mistaken notion that prior to Comenius's arrival the school of Sárospatak was a collection of almost illiterate students—that no reform had touched the school of the Rákóczis, the princely family of Transylvania. Éva Földes's imaginative work on the possible connection between the Anabaptists of Sárospatak and Comenius's educational ideas is intriguing though speculative.

In sum, this volume, although at times in a confusing manner, will help to evaluate Sárospatak's place in Comenius's lifework: its importance in the practical application of Comenius's theoretical ideas.

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HILFSVÖLKER UND GRENZWÄCHTER IM MITTELALTERLICHEN UNGARN. By *Hansgerd Göckenjan*. Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des östlichen Europa, no. 5. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1972. x, 261 pp. DM 38, paper.

Notions such as "no man's land" or "strike force" are modern, but the strategic realities they represent are as old as the idea of ethnic self-defense, as Mr. Göckenjan's book shows in the case of the medieval Hungarian border guards. They existed before the conquest of the Danube basin; their guarding of the medieval frontiers was a survival of ancestral patterns once employed in southern Russia. In the steppes the only natural obstacle was distance. An artificially ravaged zone was therefore created between the Hungarian tribes and their hostile surroundings. Any possible entrances to the defended area were entrusted to people who belonged to immigrant tribes, which was a specific status that remained marginal to the established social system.

Steppe defense patterns having thus been transplanted to the Danube basin, a first iron curtain fell between the post-Carolingian Western world and the newly

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arrived Hungarians, bearers of different social and cultural concepts. From 1001 onward Hungary joined the community of Christian nations, but the old defense system was maintained throughout the Middle Ages, principally in the west but also in the south against Byzantium and against the ever-present Eastern menace from the steppes.

Göckenjan is the first scholar since Schünemann (in his pioneer work half a century ago) to handle this matter in a language other than Hungarian. He gives a comprehensive picture of structures and events and suggests some new hypotheses, according to which the auxiliary border guards fall into two groups: those who joined the Hungarians before the Conquest, and those who were later co-opted in the newly conquered territories. The border guard veterans were the Nyék, the Kék-Kend, and the Kavars—all belonging to more or less the same ethnic substrata as the Magyars. The later group included the Káliz of Choresmia, the Petchenegs, and the Székely. The Káliz were Moslem or Hebrew, the Petchenegs were pagan nomads, and the Székely seem to have been proto-Bulgarians, an ethnic group close to proto-Hungarians.

Under the medieval social system, all these ethnic, religious, cultural, and professional groups enjoyed a privileged but complicated status. Their border defense obligations constituted a common denominator and continued in the case of the Székely of Transylvania until the eighteenth century. However, the toponym Nyék is not limited to the frontier zones but appears also along the strategic roads between dynastic residences. Thus this group seems to have provided also a bodyguard to the prince. Such a role has been proved for the Kék-Kend, who moved out to the borders only as a consequence of political changes.

Although most of the subject matter has previously been dealt with in works in Hungarian, Göckejan is a pioneer in his treatment of the Káliz of Choresmia, and their social and economic influence on the medieval Hungarian state. Thus he gives a more comprehensive view of the social stratification and mobility of the polyethnic but culturally unified patterns of Hungary ruled by the Arpadians. It might be recalled that Árpád, the eponym founder of the dynasty, was himself the leader of the "strike force" of the Conquest.

It is regrettable that the spelling of the doubtlessly difficult Hungarian names and toponyms was not carefully checked. This is also true of some quotations in Greek. There are some geographical errors as well. For example, Kovár and Őrhalom (p. 43) are not on the Danube but on the Ipoly River; the Meszes Gate is not a pass in the Carpathians but in the Bükk Range (p. 11); the Territory of Kővár (p. 44) never belonged to Transylvania, but formed part of Eastern Hungary, administered only by the princes of Transylvania (consequently referred to as *Partium Regni Hungariae Dominus*). Illustrations 98 and 99 on plate 1 (p. 240) do not represent King Béla II (1131–41) and Stephen IV (1163–65), but Stephen IV and his *co-rex*, later Béla III (1173–96). Göckejan was here misled by an older error made by Réthy in 1899 and repeated by Probszt in 1958.

Such minor blemishes apart, we can welcome here a really outstanding work on this complex subject. The main text is followed by extensive analytical tables, some fundamental documentary evidence, illustrations, and a twenty-two-page bibliography. This basic monograph provides completely new material for foreign scholars, a considerable amount of new data, and fresh insights even for those who are familiar with the difficult language of the Magyars.

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