

Book Reviews

Johannes de Thurocz Chronica Hungarorum, vol. I, *Textus*, edited by Elisabeth Galantai and Julius Kristo, Akademia Scientiarum Hungarica, Bibliotheca scriptorum medii aevi recentisque aevorum (Budapest, 1985). Foreword pp. 9-11, text pp. 15-293, index pp. 297-332.

John of Thurocz, or, in his own language, Janos Thwroczy, (1435-88/9) was the author of one of the most important medieval Hungarian historical sources, of which we now have a carefully produced critical edition. His chronicle covers the Hungarians' history from ancient times to the beginning of the reign of Matthias I (1458-90), who was a contemporary of the author's.

As far as the ancient period is concerned, Thwroczy, who had received an excellent classical education, reproduces information from older chronicles, which had apparently been kept very much alive by popular oral tradition, at least with respect to the Hungarians' distant Central Asian origins and Attila's Huns. Thwroczy devotes a number of pages (32-57) to the latter's impressive wars and raids.

Since the closest great power to Hungary for many centuries was the Byzantine Empire, the chronicle contains quite a number of references to it. The account of the great raids the Hungarians conducted in the tenth century includes a siege of Constantinople (pp. 72-3) and various subsequent clashes between the Hungarians and the Byzantines—the latter enjoying an avowed supremacy in respect of weaponry (p. 127). Mention is made of the similarity between the silver coins minted by King Bela I (1060-3) and the Byzantine currency (p. 94), as also of the marriage of Bela IV (1235-70) to a Byzantine princess (p. 138).

By the reign of Ludovic the Great (1342-82) it was clear that Hungary had grown into a power of some note with designs on the Balkans, where it intended to take the place of the ailing Byzantine Empire. However, it was at just this period that the Ottoman Turks were expanding in the same direction, a phenomenon about which Thwroczy gives a great deal of valuable information, which also, incidentally, has a bearing upon Byzantium. He links the Turks' successful conquests with the Byzantines' civil wars (p. 213), for instance. As is only to be expected, he puts particular emphasis on King Sigismund's struggles against the Ottomans and particularly those of the voivode John Unyad (pp. 237-53) in the time of Murad II (1421-51). As Hungary exerted a certain influence upon Bosnia, Serbia, and Wallachia, Thwroczy also includes material relating to these Balkan states. Following the Fall of Constantinople (pp. 266-7), his chronicle gives a fairly lengthy account of Mohammed II's campaign against the Serbs (pp. 267-71).

Thwroczy's chronicle is an authentic source, which, apart from providing hitherto unknown data, also enables the researcher to look at events from a different viewpoint. A second, annotated, volume is to follow, which will without a doubt greatly facilitate a more thorough understanding of this valuable Hungarian chronicle.