

a certain coherence or unity, it is a very valuable contribution to an authentic understanding of the historical processes in a region with cultural and political emanations that touched our own latitudes, and will certainly play a significant role in reassessing ethnogenetic processes and aspects in the history of the East Roman Empire – *Byzantium*. Even though this monograph has a confrontational undertone in some of its positions and will certainly be the subject of more than one controversy, we expect, in agreement with its author, that it will provoke a fruitful and at the same time constructive discussion on this issue. The work is the first comprehensive survey of the formation and search for *origines* of the ethnic community in the sources called *genos* (*phylos*) that inhabited the eastern half (or what remained of it over the centuries) of the Roman Empire.

Marek Klatý
(Comenius University, Philosophical Faculty, Bratislava)

STEINHÜBEL, Ján. *THE NITRIAN PRINCIPALITY: The Beginnings of Medieval Slovakia*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2021, 670 p. ISBN 9789004437821.

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The publishing house Brill has published the monograph *The Nitrian Principality* by the Slovak medievalist Ján Steinhübel this year. It is the third publication of this book, following the Slovak editions by the publishers Veda and Rak in 2004 and 2016. Steinhübel's book is undoubtedly one of the key works of Slovak medieval studies. It covers the history of the territory now forming Slovakia from the second half of the 5th century to the beginning of the 12th century. The author understands this as the “beginnings of Medieval Slovakia”, and in this sense makes a remarkable connection between Great Moravian and Hungarian history. Let us recall here that the connection between Great Moravian and Hungarian history was one of the basic achievements of the older Slovak history and Slovak medieval studies. *The Nitrian Principality* is the heir to this tradition in the best sense of the word.

If history is the science devoted to the past of people and space, medieval studies is the investigation of space and its inhabitants during the Middle Ages. The historical space here is the territory of medieval Slovakia, but this is not exactly the same as the history of the territory within the present frontiers of Slovakia. This “medieval Slovakia” corresponds only approximately to the territory of the modern state. According to Ján Steinhübel, this spatial framework

underwent several population and ethnic changes in the course of the 6th – 12th centuries. The departure of the Germanic tribes and the coming of the Slavs, Avars and Magyars represented basic changes in the power-political situation. However, in Steinhübel's view, they did not mean basic changes in the frontiers of the political units, in spite of the fact that these units were successively ruled by different political elites with different ethnic origins. According to Steinhübel (chapter 1), Nitra was already a power centre in the time of the Quadi, that is in the period between the Markomannic wars and the end of the Germanic period in Slovakia.

The territorial background forms one of the basic frameworks of Steinhübel's Nitrian Principality. He places the historical figures who ruled in the territory of Slovakia into this framework. The reader of the older editions of the Nitrian Principality will know that the monograph is devoted to the Great Moravian as well as the Hungarian period of the history of the region. In comparison with older Slovak literature, Steinhübel defines the Nitrian Principality more generously in both territorial and chronological terms. This flows especially from the detailed study of the history of the 11th century and the more thorough interpretation of the various *duces* from the Arpad dynasty, who appear as rulers of "a third of the kingdom" (*tertia pars regni*). From the long-term point of view, we think that precisely this level of the territorial aspect will be the most discussed part of future historiography.

This field also includes the considerations of the internal divisions of the Nitrian Principality into smaller regions, namely Lesser Nitra, Váh, Hont and Borsod (p. 349–358). The author defines these units both on the basis of the detailed descriptions of boundaries in the Anonymous Chronicle, although these are attributed to fictional persons, and by comparison with various later sources. The latter include the boundaries of various ecclesiastical units and aristocratic estates, as well as the Chronicle of the Bohemians by Cosmas of Prague and the Hungarian – Polish Chronicle (p. 381–382). The author gives even more precise descriptions of the individual counties formed in the Nitrian Principality in the course of the 11th century. From analysis of later sources such as 14th century tithe registers, Steinhübel appears to set the boundaries of the Nitrian counties on the Danube, although after the dissolution of the Nitrian Principality, there were significant changes, especially in the cases of the counties of Esztergom and Komárno.

From the point of view of methodology, the extensive source base and apparently unlimited review of secondary literature must impress every reader. However, Steinhübel's Nitrian Principality is especially an attempt to fill in early medieval Slovak history. With regard to the source base, it is questionable how far the author has always succeeded in respecting the evidence value of these

sources. Some of them are mainly literary texts, which puts the information contained in them in a different light to that in the polemical writings such as the *Conversio* or the charters that result from official activity.

In spite of this, however, this “great conception” of the Nitrian Principality is one of the basic works of Slovak historiography. If the first two Slovak editions of *The Nitrian Principality* became one of the most cited works on the Middle Ages in Slovakia, the English version of this work has the possibility to penetrate into the wider international space, especially among authors for whom Slavonic languages are a natural barrier.

Miroslav Lysý
(Comenius University, Faculty of Law, Bratislava)

DÓBÉK, Ágnes – MÉSZÁROS, Gábor – VADERNA, Gábor (eds.). *MEDIA AND LITERATURE IN MULTILINGUAL HUNGARY 1770–1820*. Budapest: Reciti, 2019, 285 p. ISBN 978-615-5478-70-3.

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The volume is a result of the conference *Literary Culture in Western Hungary, 1770–1820*, held in Győr and Pannonhalma from 25 to 27 April 2018, compiled by the Institute for Literary Studies of the Research Centre for the Humanities.

One of the editors, Gábor Vaderna, considers the problematic content of the expression Western Hungary at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century, observing that it is a historical construct and its definition remains an open question. He considers it an imaginary cultural - geographical expression incorporating all the regions on the left bank of the Danube. It is also a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-confessional region. The public sphere, as Jürgen Habermas and others defined, was constituted in this region in the form specific for Central Europe. The period around 1800 is not important only for processes of structural change to the public, but also for other phenomena that were part of it or in the background. The establishment of new elites with their economic and cultural strength stimulated new forms of interaction in the media and emerging literary institutions. The development of products on the media market was associated with the acceleration of social communication and the widening base of its participants. Newspapers were published twice a week. Expert and popular scientific journals appeared, publishing more than one issue a year to fulfil the function of almanacs. The behaviour of the growing number of readers changed and new roles developed among editors and authors. Thematic specialization can be observed with some periodicals publishing mainly political and economic