

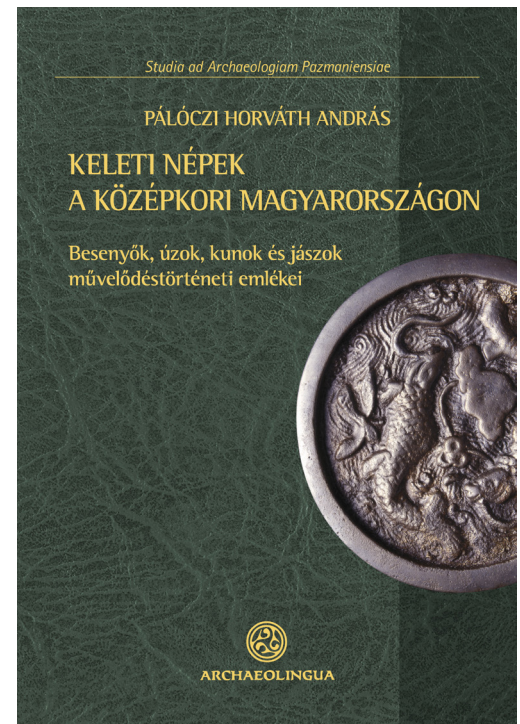
ANDRÁS PÁLÓCZI HORVÁTH:

Peoples of eastern origin in Medieval Hungary.

The cultural heritage of Pechenegs, Uzes, Cumans and the Jász

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The conquest of the Carpathian Basin by the tribes of Árpád in 895 is considered a particularly important turning point in collective Hungarian historical thought, the end of the great migrations. However, from the perspective of the events on the steppes this was just one point in a process that stretched over a long period of time, rather than the conclusion of the series of episodes as traditional national thought would have it. This is also clearly shown by the fact that even later there were tribes and confederations moving westward looking for new places to settle. These movements of peoples affected the Carpathian Basin as well, so during the Kingdom of Hungary's medieval history fragments of numerous eastern peoples took up residence in this area. András Pálóczi Horváth's volume studies these late eastern settlers and surveys the remains they left behind, outlining the phases of their cultural assimilation.



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Cumans and the Jász*

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Nothing proves the current relevance of this topic better than the extent of the professional literature that has appeared in recent decades in connection with this area of inquiry. It is enough perhaps simply to mention the monograph by István Vásáry and Nóra Berend¹ that elicited such a significant scholarly reaction, or in terms of archaeological finds the volumes related to “The European steppes in the Middle Ages” series published in Donetsk², a city that now has seen better days.

In the background of the explosive increase in interest towards this topic an important role was played by a generation of researchers that continued the work of their renowned predecessors both in Hungary and abroad. Research into the topic captivated more and more young researchers as honored professors in university posts. In any case, this field already had a significant tradition in Hungary in connection with linguistic and eastern philological analyses. Gyula Németh's work in this area was continued by István Vásáry, András Róna-Tas and István Zimonyi, and in turn their students also joined in on the research. In terms of archaeological remains, research on the area took root from the work of Gyula László and István Méri. This pioneering work was continued by the members of a new generation, István Fodor, Ferenc Horváth, András Pálóczi Horváth, László Selmeczi,

¹ Vásáry, István: *Cumans and Tatars: Oriental Military in the Pre-Ottoman Balkans, 1185–1365* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Berend, Nóra: *At the Gate of Christendom: Jews, Muslims and “Pagans” in Medieval Hungary, c. 1000 – c. 1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

² A. V. Yevglevsky (Gl. red.): *The European steppes in the Middle Ages 1–11*. (Donetsk: Donetsk National University, 2000–2012).

and then the scholarly publications of Gábor Hatházi, Szabolcs Rosta, Zsolt Petkes, István Töröcsik and Attila Katona-Kiss have shown that researchers from ever younger generations can provide worthwhile contributions to the issues that have been raised. One of the most recent books reviewing the research in Hungary celebrates the author of the book introduced here, having been created in honor of András Pálóczi Horváth who recently turned 70.³

The most recent result of András Pálóczi Horváth's work appeared at practically the same time as this, in the book series of the Pázmány Péter Catholic University's Department of Archaeology published by Archaeolingua Publishing House. The stated goal of this monograph proof-read by Gábor Hatházi, László Kovács and Szilvia Kovács is to provide comprehensive and organized information about the settlement in the Carpathian Basin of the groups that arrived from the east during the Árpád Period and how these peoples were assimilated into the Kingdom of Hungary. The precursor to the present volume was a book published in 1989 as a part of the highly successful *Hereditas* series, the popularity of which is shown by the fact that it was translated into a number of foreign languages.⁴ The book that has been published now is not an expanded edition; the author supplemented his former manuscript with significant new chapters and recent results. The book is divided into 12 chapters and discusses the individual peoples according to when the groups moved into the Carpathian Basin.

The introduction looks back briefly on the initial phases of the research. Already here the author emphasizes a few aspects that differ from the customary view, such as the effort to examine the history of these groups not only from the perspective of the people admitting them in, but also from that of the new entrants, looking into "how difficult it may have been for a group with a different language, religion and customs to adjust to and integrate into the life of the country."

The first chapter introduces the medieval Kingdom of Hungary as the complex cultural backdrop to the events. It briefly discusses the history of the groups (Kabars, Barsils and Khwaresmians) that arrived from the east during or following the Conquest Period and informs the reader about the most important data related to the written and material sources on them. It already shows here that when the author had the chance he made use of the most recent results from the research. For example, the results of Zoltán Rózsa's excavation in Orosháza bring up the possibility that the Árpád Period settlement that has been found within the territory of the present-day city had Muslim inhabitants.⁵ In a similar manner, in the next section he integrates the results from Zsolt Petkes and Gábor Hatházi in relation to the analysis of the Pechenegs' Carpathian Basin connections.⁶

The next section presents the history of the Pechenegs and their fate in Hungary. In these chapters the well thought out structural approach that the author follows throughout the volume is clearly outlined: first

³ Rosta, Szabolcs – V. Székely, György (eds): "*Carmen Miserabile*". *A tatárjárás magyarországi emlékei. Tanulmányok Pálóczi Horváth András 70. születésnapja tiszteletére* ("Carmen Miserabile"). *The Remains in Hungary of the Mongol Invasion. Essays in Honor of the 70th Birthday of András Pálóczi Horváth* (Kecskemét: Kecskeméti Katona József Múzeum, 2015).

⁴ Pálóczi Horváth, András: *Besenyők, kunok, jászok* (Budapest: Corvina Könyvkiadó, 1989); Pálóczi Horváth, András: *Pechenegs, Cumans, Isaians. Steppe Peoples in Medieval Hungary* (Budapest: Corvina Könyvkiadó, 1989); Pálóczi Horváth, András: *Petschengen, Kumanen, Jassen. Steppenvölker im mittelalterlichen Ungarn* (Budapest: Corvina Könyvkiadó, 1989); Pálóczi Horváth, András: *Pečeneghā, kumānhā wa yashā. Pechenegs, Cumans, Iasians* (Tehran, 1997).

⁵ Rózsa, Zoltán – Tugya, Beáta: Kik voltak az első Orosháza lakói? Problémafelvetés egy kutatás kezdetén (Who Were the First Inhabitants of Orosháza? Raising a Question at the Beginning of Research). *Mozaikok Orosháza és vidéke múltjából* 6 (2012), 17–31; Rózsa, Zoltán – Balázs, János – Csányi, Viktor – Tugya, Beáta: Árpád Period Muslim Settlement and Cemetery in Orosháza. [Hungarian Archaeology 2014. autumn](#)

⁶ One of the significant aspects of this research was not only the plotting of Pecheneg settlements in Fejér County, but also that they successfully proved that in the 10th century there were contacts between the two tribal alliances. This is also evidenced by the material remains. However, the insertion in the chapter on the Pechenegs of the map showing the settlement area of the Cumans on the Transylvanian Plain (Hung.: Mezőség) reconstructed by Gábor Hatházi was certainly an error. Cf. Hatházi, Gábor: *A kunok régészeti emlékei a Kelet-Dunántúlon* (Archaeological Remains of the Cumans in Eastern Transdanubia). *Opuscula Hungarica* 5 (Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, 2004). Obviously it was accidentally switched with a map appearing in another essay by Gábor Hatházi. See Hatházi, Gábor: A besenyő meglepedés régészeti nyomai Fejér megyében (Archaeological Evidence of Pecheneg Settlement in Fejér County). *Savaria* 22/3 (1992–1995), 244.

he always introduces the early history and background from the steppes of the given group, and following this he takes in turn the sources and relics of cultural history related to their settlement in Hungary. In the case of the Pechenegs, during the introduction of their background from the steppes he also touches upon Pecheneg-Hungarian relations. Again, a characteristic feature of the book can be seen here, András Pálóczi Horváth only expresses his opinion in a restrained manner in connection with issues that have sparked recent scholarly debate and have not been clearly resolved. This includes the question of the extent to which a possible attack by the Pechenegs influenced the entry of the Hungarians into the Carpathian Basin. The author does not relate every viewpoint in detail, and disregards the discussion of certain problems. This is a conscious move, since the book was also fundamentally written for the broader public. Therefore, the opinions formulated by the turkologist Zoltán Bálint Takács and the medievalist György Szabados in connection with the migration of the Hungarians in 895 and the Pechenegs' role in this is left out of the chapter on the Pechenegs.⁷ The same may also be behind the fact that the author did not take a stronger position in the debate that has arisen in connection with the immigration of the Jasz tribes, and may also explain for example why the proposed Jasz background of the Horn of Lehel does not appear. However, in cases where these ideas have appeared in the educational scientific literature, the author relates the various positions. This is how he approaches the problematic situations related to the possible Oghuz Turk origin of the Zomlin-puszta grave goods, the interpretation of the distribution of pagan Cuman graves in the Kiskun-ság region brought up by Ferenc Horváth or the role of the log building excavated next to the rich Cuman grave in Csengele.

András Pálóczi Horváth introduces the ethnogenesis of the Oghuz Turks stretching back to the Turkic Khaganate. He examines how this community formed, what later led to them losing their previous settlement area and how fragments of them may have come to the Carpathian Basin in the 11th century. In examining the latter question he places significant weight on the toponyms and makes important methodological conclusions related to the value of former place names as sources. Fortunately research on this group has also gained significant momentum in the last decade and a half, as indicated by the monographs by A. A. Bisembaev and G. N. Garustovich and V. A. Ivanov, as well as the work of E. V. Kruglov and Attila Katona-Kiss.⁸

The core of the volume is about the largest group that entered Hungary, the Cumans, who have preserved their traditions to the present day. Here also the author first introduces their formation and history on the steppes, and then details the material legacy from this period in a separate chapter. Another chapter reviews their settlement in the Carpathian Basin as well as the role they played in the later phase of the Árpád Period. The title of this chapter is “Protecting Our Country with the Help of Pagans”. The quote comes from the letter King Béla IV wrote to Pope Innocent IV on November 11, 1250, and there is no better way to allude to

⁷ Takács, Zoltán Bálint: A magyar honfoglalás előzményeiről (On the Antecedents to the Hungarian Conquest). *Savaria* 27 (2002), 201–213; Takács, Zoltán Bálint: A magyar honfoglalás besenyő háttere (Pecheneg Background to the Hungarian Conquest). *Függőfű* 1 (2003), 15–34; Szabados, György: *Magyar államalapítások a IX–XI. században* (Foundations of the Hungarian State in the 9th–11th Centuries) (Szeged: Szegedi Középkorász Műhely, 2013).

⁸ A. A. Bisembaev: *Kochevniki srednevekov'ja Zapadnogo Kazahstana* (Aktobe 2010); G. N. Garustovich – V. A. Ivanov: *Oguzy i pechenegi v evrazijskikh stepjah* (Ufa: Rossiyskaja Akademia Nauk, 2001); E. V. Kruglov: Pogrebal'nyj obrjad oguzov Severnogo Prikaspija 2-j pol. IX – 1-j pol. XI v. In: *Stepi Evropy v jepohu srednevekov'ja* 2 (2002), 395–446; E. V. Kruglov: Novoe pogrebenie oguzskogo voina-vsadnika iz rajona Ryn-peskov Zapadnogo Kazahstana. In: *Stepi Evropy v jepohu srednevekov'ja* 9 (2012), 409–428; D. V. Maryksin – E. V. Kruglov: Pogrebenie oguzskogo voina-batyra iz Ryn-peskov. *Izvestija NAN* 3 (2011), 113–120.; Katona-Kiss, Attila: Az oguz és a karluk törzsek szállásváltása a VIII. században (The Migration of the Oghuz and the Karluk Tribes in the 8th Century). In: *Hadak útján 20. Népvándorlások Fiatal Kutatóinak XX. összejövetelének konferenciakötete* (Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, Nemzeti Örökségvédelmi Központ, 2012), 187–193; Katona-Kiss, Attila: Úzok a Képes Krónikában. A nyugati oguz (úz) törzsek és a Magyar Királyság a XI. században (Oghuz Turks in the Cronicon Pictum. The Western Oghuz Tribes and the Kingdom of Hungary in the 11th Century). *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 120 (2007), 549–576; Katona-Kiss, Attila: A besenyők és az oguzok vándorlása a VIII. században (The Migration of the Pechenegs and the Oghuz Turks in the 8th Century). *Csodaszarvas* 4 (2011), 7–25; Katona-Kiss, Attila: Vázlat a Volga-Urál-vidéki oguz elit-kurgántemetkezések jellemzőihez (10–11. század) (Survey of the Characteristics of Elite Oghuz Kurgan Burials in the Volga-Ural Region [10th–11th Century]). *Acta Iuvenum. Sectio Archaeologica* 1 (2013), 78–104.

the dichotomy that typified the options for the Christian Hungarian ruler.⁹ Apparel, one of the favorite topics of the author and one that he has dealt with continuously in his scholarly essays for more than three and a half decades also received a separate chapter.¹⁰ In the section following this he introduces the issues of the division of the Cuman settlement area, the identification of the Cuman tribes, and then the development of the Cuman seats. The final chapter about the Cumans analyzes the development process of the permanent settlements. This latter area of inquiry has interested András Pálóczi Horváth for quite a while, and in connection with this he has been excavating the medieval Cuman settlement of Szentkirály since 1965. The results reported here are lessons from a long professional program lasting several decades, so they are not only pivotal in archaeological research dealing with the Cumans, but also have great significance from the aspect of the medieval settlement history of the Great Hungarian Plain.

A brief chapter reviews what is known in connection with the Jasz. The author touches upon the early history and ethnogenesis of this group with a background in the Caucasus region, and also presents the historical sources, linguistic elements and, based upon the research of László Selmeczi, their material culture as well.

The final chapter of the book deals with the Early Modern Period fate of these eastern peoples that settled in Hungary. At that time it was only the Cumans and the Jasz who had preserved their identities, although as a result of the Ottoman Turkish rule the process of assimilation of these groups had also increased in speed. However, the events following the Ottoman conquest period – the pledging of the area, and later its redemption initiated by the Jasz and Cuman people – did not weaken their group awareness, and in fact strengthened it. This process has led to the consciousness of the identity of these two groups actively surviving to the present day.

The monograph is closed by a chronological table, a glossary of abbreviations, a bibliography and detailed foreign language summaries. The importance of the latter are worthwhile to emphasize, because not only do they disclose – in a relatively broad scope – the main points of the individual chapters in English, the fundamental language of international research, but also in Russian and even in the Kazakh language, for the first time in Hungarian archaeology. It is primarily experts literate in these languages that in recent times have set about with enormous energy to chart the early history of these ethnic groups, and so these summaries can aid in their work.

In every case the chapters reflect the perspective of András Pálóczi Horváth's former mentor, Gyula László. Utilizing the variety of available sources and providing as great detail as possible, the author has striven to present the richness of the life of the past while making it intelligible to the public. In connection with the individual chapters, he presents the surviving traditions of origins (so, for example the legend of the Oghuz Khan), as well as medieval (the Jasz Glossary) or later (the Cuman Lord's Prayer) examples of their languages. He not only outlined the settlement of each eastern group from documentary data and other written sources, but also used local linguistic data and archaeological finds. Due to their character, he utilized the differing types of sources and the information that could be gained from them with scientific rigor, so nowhere did he engage in unfounded conjecture. Perhaps only in connection with the inconsistency in the manner of transcribing foreign names can criticism be made. The author in general provides these

⁹ The title characterized the situation of the time so well that previously the outstanding medieval historian of the Hungarian National Museum, László Szende also wrote an essay with a similar title but differing content about the role of the Cumans in the Kingdom of Hungary during the battle waged for the Babenberg legacy. Szende, László: "... most pogányokkal védelmeztetjük országunkat". A kunok és jászok katonai szerepe IV. Béla osztrák politikájában ("... We Are Now Protecting Our Country with the Help of Pagans". The Military Role of Cumans and the Jasz in the Austrian Policies of Béla IV). In: *Szállástól a mezővárosig* (From a Temporary Settlement to an Oppidum), ed. Langó, Péter (Jászfényszaru: Fényszaruiai Baráti Egyesülete, 2000), 111–130. András Pálóczi Horváth himself has also written an essay surveying the medieval eastern peoples with this title. Pálóczi Horváth, András: "Pogányokkal védelmeztetjük országunkat": keleti népek a középkori Magyar Királyságban a kálizoktól a kunokig ("Protecting Our Country with the Help of Pagans": Eastern Peoples in the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary, from the Khwaresmians to the Cumans). *Studia Caroliensia* 5/2 (2004), 10–30

¹⁰ Pálóczi Horváth, András: La costume Coman au Moyen Age. *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 32 (1980), 403–427.

names according to the rules of Hungarian orthography, in fitting with the book's readable style, but in places deviates from this, and so sometimes the method of transcription accepted in the scholarly literature is mixed with the Hungarian forms (at times there are some typographical errors in English language translations as well).

Alongside the logically constructed chapters, navigation through the book is facilitated by the fact that the chapters begin with single sentence summaries of the sub-sections – this format was typical in the professional literature of the 19th century. However, it is unfortunate that the author of the volume completely left out scholarly citations. While in the text he provides whose opinion or conception he is mentioning in every case, it would have made it much easier for readers less familiar with the given topic to find their way in the professional literature if this imposing summary were supplemented with a system of notation in addition to the bibliography.

The illustrations in the book are a thorough selection, which aid the reader in formulating a comprehensive image of the period's material culture and pictorial world. Maps showing the locations of events, contemporary depictions illustrating the apparel of the specific periods and archaeological drawings and reconstructions displaying the material remains are included alongside the individual topics, superbly complementing the information in the text. Also worthy of attention is that András Pálóczi Horváth himself drew a portion of the illustrations, displaying his ability in this area as well – a skill in which he follows his former mentor Gyula László. The bar scales alongside the scale drawings of individual relics and photographs reinforce the scientific character of the publication. However, in this regard the volume is not uniform, since numerous figures do not follow the general rules for sourcing illustrations in professional literature (for example the scale or the indication of north is missing). The picture captions are, however, informative and special credit goes to them also being provided in English in every case. However, too much information was placed on certain maps at the expense of their clarity, and the related legends are not uniform, with the English language keys missing in some cases.

Despite these minute faults of the work, they are dwarfed by the fact that in its entirety this is an outstandingly constructed, richly illustrated, readable book. Through the use of the most recent scientific results, the work presents everything that we presently know about the eastern groups that moved into the Carpathian Basin in the Middle Ages, and therefore much can be drawn from it in later research as well.