Anniversary Collection of the Bulgarian–Hungarian History Commission: 2006–2023. Publications of the Bulgarian–Hungarian History Commission. Volume 8. Edited by Gábor Demeter and Penka Peykovska. Budapest–Sofia: HUN–REN BTK Institute of History – BAN Insztitut za isztoricseszki izszledvanija, 2024. 611 pp.

The present review discusses the eighth volume of the Bulgarian–Hungarian History Commission (BHHC) series, which was published in 2024 and edited by Gábor Demeter and Penka Peykovska.[1] It is important to note at the outset that the reader is holding a unique volume in her hands. As one leafs through the table of contents and introductions, it becomes clear that the publication goes beyond the traditional genre of the edited volume in several respects. First, it cannot be interpreted merely as a collection of written versions of research findings, but also as a kind of contemporary document that provides insight into the life and work of a community of historians. Second, the volume also differs from the usual approach in that it does not examine Bulgarian–Hungarian academic relations solely from a historical perspective. It also adopts an interdisciplinary framework that draws on history, linguistics, literature, and even the natural sciences.

The BHHC was first established in 1974 and operated until 1989. It was then revived in 2006 through a joint effort between the Hungarian and Bulgarian Academies of Sciences. The initial section of the volume presents a series of writings concerning the history of the BHHC. Imre Ress presents the history of the BHHC in his study, in which he describes the development of cultural, scientific, and political relations between the two countries after World War II. The 1920s and 1930s were an intense period of Bulgarian–Hungarian scientific relations. However, the transformation of the political systems in Hungary and Bulgaria after 1947 also brought about changes in scientific life. Archaeologist Géza Fehér was unable to continue his research, for instance, but despite the emerging difficulties, Emil Niederhauser and József Perényi were able to continue research on Bulgarian history for a time, and József Bödey's work at the newly opened Hungarian Cultural Institute in Sofia was also important. Their work made it possible to establish personal contacts with Bulgarian historians such as

1 The present article is a result of the project STARTING 150326 "Geopolitical Tendencies and Balkan Strategy of the Austro–Hungarian Empire: Individual Sources and Foreign Policy Actors (1878–1918)." Project no. 150326, supported by the Ministry of Culture and Innovation of Hungary and the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund.

Dimitar Angelov, Jacques Natan, and Dimitar Kosev, laying the foundations for new Bulgarian–Hungarian scientific cooperation. The articles by Attila Pandula, Penka Peykovska, Gábor Demeter, and Attila Seres highlight the development of scientific cooperation between Bulgaria and Hungary in the early 2000s. These contributions to the volume recall an important milestone conference that supported Bulgarian–Hungarian partnerships.

The second section of the volume focuses on studies relating to Bulgarian–Hungarian historical research (from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century). Nevyan Mitev examines Vladislav Varnenchik's anti-Turkish campaign of 1443–1444 in relation to the southeastern European region and the Balkan peoples. The Battle of Varna was a turning point, as the defeat there dashed the hopes of the Balkan peoples for liberation from Ottoman rule. Mitev attached particular importance to the historical discourse of recent decades, primarily the Polish–Hungarian historiographical debates, which reflect differing interpretations of the roles and responsibilities of King Vladislav and János Hunyadi in the campaign. Mónika F. Molnár focuses her analysis on the Battle of Zenta (1697). The study approaches the geopolitical and military-strategic situation at the end of the seventeenth century based on contemporary Italian and Ottoman sources: Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli's work *Stato militare dell'Impero Ottomano* and an anonymous Ottoman source *(The Book of the History of Sultan Suleyman in the Years 1099–1110).*

Milena Lyubenova presents the historical memory of the princely Rákóczi family in Dobruja. Building on József Bödey's research from the 1970s, she investigates the ways in which József Rákóczi has been remembered in Chervena Voda. Rákóczi took part in the Austro–Turkish War of 1737–1738 under an agreement with the Sultan. The attempt to revive the Kuruc movement was unsuccessful, but Rákóczi's memory has remained in local folklore.

In the context of nineteenth-century studies, Ilia Todev focuses on the Austro–Hungarian Compromise of 1867, which later gave rise to a concept within the Bulgarian national movement calling for a similar solution in the relationship between the Principality of Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire. Todev analyzes the Bulgarian Secret Revolutionary Committee's plan for "Turkish–Bulgarian dualism" based on an 1867 document, which provides an excellent basis for a comparison of Hungarian and Bulgarian nation-building aspirations. Ágnes Ordasi's contribution is another thought-provoking case study. Ordasi provides valuable insights into the conflict-ridden history of the Hungarian state border police, which was established in Fiume, a seaport city in Hungary, during the

dualist era. The study shows how the issue of the border police became a symbol of the power struggle between state centralization and modernization on the one hand and local self-government on the other.

Krisztina Menyhárt examines a special segment of Hungarian–Bulgarian cultural relations in her contribution, titled "The Hungarian State and the Relationship with Bulgarian Gardeners in Hungary (1879–1960)." Menyhárt investigates the relationship between the Bulgarian gardening community in Hungary and the Hungarian state from the end of the nineteenth century until 1960, with particular emphasis on the period after World War II. In her analysis of Bulgarian–Hungarian relations, Penka Peykovska employes a similar thematic framework, but she approaches the subject from a different perspective. Peykovska presents the bilateral political and economic relations between Bulgaria and Hungary during the decades of state socialism. She examines the situation of Bulgarian gardener communities in Hungary, which deteriorated dramatically from the early 1950s. However, there were examples of cooperation between Bulgaria and Hungary even in the early years of socialism, such as the exchange of so-called youth brigades (a mobility program). This cooperation continued to improve after the difficult period of the 1940s and 1950s, reaching new heights during the Zhivkov and Kádár eras.

Valery Stoyanov's essay provides a comprehensive overview of the development of Turkology and Oriental studies more broadly from the eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth. The study highlights the institutional framework of the discipline and its most prominent Hungarian figures, such as Sámuel Gyarmathi, Ármin Vámbéry, Géza Kuun, Bernát Munkácsi, Zoltán Gombocz, and Lajos Fekete. Stoyanov also considers the contributions of important figures from the twentieth century, such as the work of Gyula Németh and Lajos Ligeti in Oriental and Altaic studies.

Csaba Zsebők explores one dimension of Bulgarian–Hungarian international relations. He examines a specific aspect of Bulgarian–Hungarian cooperation during the interwar period, focusing on the potential forms of collaboration between Hungarian diplomacy and the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO). Another study dealing with international relations is László Bíró's contribution, "Sphere of Influence: Politics in the Balkans in the Mid-20th Century in the Light of Soviet–Yugoslav Relations." Bíró analyzes the competition for influence in the Balkans, with a particular focus on Yugoslavia, from the 1930s until the end of World War II.

Gábor Demeter and László Bíró's joint study reexamines the regional and economic inequalities in Yugoslavia between the two World Wars, as well as the famous economic history discourse, the so-called Bićanić–Prica debate. Demeter and Bíró use statistical methods to paint an objective picture of the real situation at the time, add nuance to the contemporary Croatian and Serbian narratives, and highlight their methodological shortcomings. Maria Koleva's study also examines aspects of economic history. She examines Germany's strategy during the interwar period and its economic penetration into Central and Southeastern Europe, especially in Bulgaria and Hungary, through trade agreements concluded in 1931 and 1932.

The third section is dedicated to interdisciplinary studies. With regards to this section, it is important to mention the articles on linguistics by Indra Markova, Lilyana Lesnichkova, Edina Zsolcsák–Dimitrova, and Ina Vishogradska, as well as Stefka Hrusanova's analysis of Dezső Kosztolányi's novel *The Golden Kite*. Finally, Mitko Subchev, Teodora Toshova, and Miklós Tóth offer contributions on Bulgarian–Hungarian research projects in the natural sciences between 1982 and 2017.

If one were to venture a summary of the volume in two words, it would be "tradition and innovation." The BHHC builds on the decades-long tradition that forms the basis of Bulgarian–Hungarian academic relations. At the same time, however, the Commission's members explore common points in the histories of Bulgaria and Hungary in innovative ways that meet the expectations of the modern community of scholars, and this volume is a perfect example of their diverse approaches to the study of the social, economic, and political aspects of regional relations in Central and Southeastern Europe.

Katalin Schrek
University of Debrecen, Institute of History
schrek.katalin@arts.unideb.hu