

*Frontiers of Faith. Religious Exchange and the Constitution of Religious Identities 1400–1750.* Edited by Eszter Andor and Istvan Györgi Tóth, Budapest 2001, Central European University, European Science Foundation, 295 pp., il.

This volume contains, as we read in the *Introduction*, the aftermath of the conference held under the same title in Budapest at the Central European University on March 8–12, 2000, within the framework of the programme: *Cultural Exchange in Europe 1400–1700*. It was organised by the European Science Foundation and History Department of the Central European University. In fact, the book differs considerably from the conference, which can be seen if we compare its table of contents with the discussion of the conference published by K. Voelka ("Frühneuzeit Info", Jg. 11/200, Heft 1, pp. 204–206). Some papers delivered at the conference have been omitted, other works added. Nevertheless, this has not been mentioned in the *Introduction*.

The volume contains as many as 25 papers by historians from France, Britain, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Russia, Rumania, China and the USA. We do not find here any Polish historians and the study concerning the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth has been written by a French scholar (no Polish paper was delivered at the conference). The subject-matter embraces a very large geographical area — including the missions in China as well as the African and Asian provinces of the Ottoman Empire. The scope of issues raised is also very wide — side by side with strictly denominational matters there appear such topics as the witch-hunt, education, and the slave-trade. Therefore the volume does not constitute a coherent whole, and many texts contained in it are contributions very detailed and loosely connected to one another.

The book opens with an essay by a well-known French researcher R. Muchembled (*Frontières vives: La naissance du sujet en Europe, XVe–XVIIe siècles*) which shows both the origin of the notion of border in the modern era and the emergence of real and clear boundaries between states in that era. The author is interested both in the natural elements used in the delimitation of an area (rivers, forests, mountains) and ethnic-linguistic ones, as well as in the types of boundaries (borderland areas, linear boundaries). He also studies their reflections in the mentality of inhabitants, travellers, authorities. Muchembled connects in an interesting way the development and consolidation of the notion of frontier, especially the confessional one, with the rise of individualism and the sense of the personal identity of the *ego*, characteristic of the early modern era in contrast to the weakly individualized mental world of the Middle Ages.

Much less pertinent to the subject of frontiers and their perception is the otherwise very interesting article by the Hungarian researcher Katalin Peter (*The Way from the Church of the Priest to the Church of the Congregation*), a study of the religious attitudes of Hungarian Lutherans. The well-known German historian, researcher into the processes of confessionalisation, Heinz Schilling (*Confessionalisation and the Rise of Religious and Cultural Frontiers in Early Modern Europe*) presents the role of confessionalisation in the rise and consoli-

dation of religious and cultural boundaries all over Europe. Largely departing from the subject, though carrying much information on the little known area, is the study by a researcher of Chinese extraction, Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia (*Conversion and Conversation: A Dialogical History of the Catholic Missions in China from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*); the author presents the methods applied by the missionaries in China to achieve conversion. Two French researcher — Olivier Châline (*Frontières religieuses: la Bohême après la Montagne Blanche*) and Daniel Tollet (*Cohabitation, concurrence et conversion dans la Confédération Polono-Lithuanienne au tournant des XVIe et XVIIe ss.*) — present religious issues in Bohemia and Poland, of necessity on the basis of the existing literature, not always the most recent, at any rate. Thus these texts carry no revelation, or new findings.

Very numerous studies concern the territory of Hungary (Istvan György Tóth, *The Missionary and the Devil. Ways of Conversion in Catholic Missions in Hungary*, Pal Fodor, *The Ottomans and their Christians in Hungary*, Eva Kowalska, *The Social Function of Orthodoxy: the Lutherans in Hungary, 1700–1750*, Maria Cračiu, *Superstition and Religious Differences in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Transylvania*), as well as the Balkans (Zoran Velagić, *The Croatian Author at the Frontier of Catholicism and Orthodoxy in Croatia*, Geza David, *Limitations of Conversion: Muslims and Christians in the Balkans in the Sixteenth Century*), while other parts of Europe are less strongly represented, although there are some contributions concerning Italy, Britain, Portugal, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, the Ukraine and Russia (among others Giovanni Muto, Laszlo Kontler, José Pedro Paiva, Stefan Ehrenpreis, Peter Vodopives, Olga Dimitrieva, Marie-Louise Roden, Guido Marnef, Aleksandr Lavrov, Kateryna Dysa). They differ very much in their standard and the extent to which they are connected to the main subject of the volume — the phenomenon of frontiers.

All in all, we have received a publication of uneven standard, only in part focussed round the title issue. R. Muchembled's study can be acknowledged as a very apt theoretical introduction to the book, yet the whole volume lacks a clear editorial concept that would more consistently set the course for deliberations. It is regrettable there is no final recapitulation that would gather the results of particular studies into one coherent picture.

Maria Bogucka