

Zvonimir Plavec

WHO IS A SLAV ANYWAY?
PANNONIAN SLAVS WITHIN THE FRANKISH POLITICAL
FRAMEWORK

MA Thesis in Late Antique, Medieval and Early Modern Studies

Central European University Private University

Vienna

September 2024

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by

Zvonimir Plavec

(Croatia)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University Private University, Vienna, in partial fulfillment of the
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Chair, Examination Committee

Thesis Supervisor

Examiner

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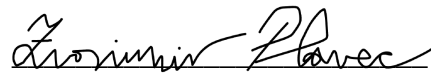
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I, the undersigned, **Zvonimir Plavec**, candidate for the MA degree in Late Antique, Medieval and Early Modern Studies, declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

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Abstract

This thesis provides a fresh perspective on the Slavic presence in the region bounded by the Danube River to the north and east, the Dinaric Mountains to the south, and the Alpine foothills to the west during the 9th century. This period follows the fall of the Avar Khaganate at the beginning of the century and precedes the arrival of the Hungarians at its end. Traditionally, the ethnic composition of this area's population has been treated as an objectively verifiable fact, determined by formal characteristics of material culture or political institutions. However, methodological advancements in recent decades have revealed that ethnonyms are not inherently tied to fixed criteria and are subject to constant reinterpretation by those who use them, whether for themselves or others. This thesis examines whether and to what extent Frankish observers applied the Slavic name to the political and cultural situation in this area during the 9th century. I argue that the Frankish attitude was shaped by the inclusion of that area into the Frankish Realm at a time when this Realm was trying to redefine itself from a polity of a single Christian people dominating its pagan neighbors to a homogenously Christian polity in which ethnic identities are dissolved. Consequently, this region was often perceived as a land of subjugated pagan Avars or as the province of Pannonia. The perception of this area as a Slavic land was mainly confined to the Bavarian elites who exerted direct control over it.

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As a man of few words, I will keep this section brief. I wish to thank my supervisor, Daniel Ziemann, as well as József Laszlovszky, Éloïse Adde, and Zsuzsanna Reed who all took the time and effort to help me with my thesis with their expertise. I am grateful to Zsófia Göde and Csilla Dobos for navigating me through the labyrinth of administration, making it possible for me to reach the writing stage of my thesis. I am also thankful to Luca Szemet for being my thesis buddy. Special thanks to Katarina Balcirakova for inspiring the title of my thesis, and to Liam Downs-Tepper for lending me his tablet when it was essential for my studies. I also want to express my appreciation to all the professors and fellow students who fostered such a positive and encouraging atmosphere at CEU. Finally, I wish to thank my parents and friends for giving the support I needed to bring the thesis to the end.

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List of Abbreviations

<i>AA</i>	<i>Annales Alamannici</i> (Alamannic Annals)
<i>AACM</i>	<i>Annalium Alamannicorum continuatio Murbacensis</i> (Murbach Continuation of the Alamannic Annals)
<i>AB</i>	<i>Annales Bertiniani</i> (Annals of St-Bertin)
<i>AE</i>	<i>Annales Einhardi</i> (Einhard's Annals)
<i>AF</i>	<i>Annales Fuldenses</i> (Annals of Fulda)
<i>AFCA</i>	<i>Annalium Fuldensium continuationes Altahenses</i> (Niederaltaich Continuations of the Annals of Fulda)
<i>AFCR</i>	<i>Annalium Fuldensium continuatio Ratisbonensis</i> (Regensburg Continuation of the Annals of Fulda)
<i>AG</i>	<i>Annales Guelferbytani</i>
<i>AJant</i>	<i>Annales Iuvavenses antiqui</i> (Old Salzburg Annals)
<i>AJmax</i>	<i>Annales Iuvavenses maximi</i> (Greatest Salzburg Annals)
<i>AL</i>	<i>Annales Laureshamenses</i> (Annals of Lorsch)
<i>AMpr</i>	<i>Annales Mettenses priores</i> (Older Metz Annals)
<i>ARF</i>	<i>Annales regni Francorum</i> (Royal Frankish Annals)
<i>AS</i>	<i>Annales Sithienses</i>
<i>AsEmai</i>	<i>Annales sancti Emmerammi Ratisponensis maiores</i> (Greater Annals of Saint Emmeram)
<i>AuGa</i>	<i>Auctarium Garstense</i>

<i>AX</i>	<i>Annales Xantenses</i> (Annals of Xanten)
<i>Conversio</i>	<i>Libellus de conversione Bagoariorum et Carantanorum</i> (The Treatise on the Conversion of the Bavarians and the Carantanians)
<i>EA</i>	<i>Excerpta Aventini ex Annalibus Iuvavensibus antiquis derivati</i> (Aventin's Excerpts)
<i>EBRFMAC</i>	<i>Erchanberti breviarium regum Francorum – Monachi Augiensis continuatio a. 840-881</i> (Continuation to the Erchanbert's Breviary)
<i>FRH</i>	<i>Francorum regum historia</i>
MGH Conc.	Volume in the series <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Concilia</i> , various editors
MGH Epp.	Volume in the series <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae (in Quart)</i> , various editors
MGH LL	Volume in the series <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Leges (in Folio)</i> , various editors
MGH SS	Volume in the series <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores (in Folio)</i> , various editors
MGH SS rer. Germ.	Volume in the series <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi</i> , various editors
<i>RC</i>	<i>Reginonis chronicon</i> (Regino of Prüm's Chronicle)
<i>RZO</i>	<i>Raffelstettener Zollordnung</i> (Raffelstetten Customs Regulations), originally published in the MGH as <i>Leges portorii</i>

Introduction

Topic

At the end of the 8th century expansionist drive of Pippin the Short and his son Charlemagne, kings of the Franks, reached the Avar Khaganate in the Carpathian Basin.

Both the Frankish Realm and the Avar Khaganate were heterogeneous entities in which political individuality of various groups was recognized. One of these groups were the Slavs. Communities under that name appear since the 6th century and for the first two hundred years of their history they were primarily known as unequal partners of the Avars. The conceptual problem with Slavs is that from their very beginning they were known as a politically unified group which meant that, alongside the Slavic name, names of individual “Slavic” communities would also appear. After the Franks incorporated the Carpathian Basin into their empire, Frankish sources increasingly apply the Slavic name to political actors in this former Avar heartland. However, they did not single out any specific name for these Slavs during the 9th century, unlike the names of Moravians and Carantanians applied to the Slavs of neighboring areas.

As mentioned before, at various points in time the Frankish Realm was considered to consist of multiple communities that may be termed ethnic. This raises the issue of how the population of the area limited by the Enns to the northwest, the Danube to the north and east, the Dinaric Mountains to the south and the Alpine foothills to the west (henceforth: Pannonian area) was integrated into such a system. Therefore, the topic of this thesis is not the self-perception of arguably Slavic communities in the Pannonian area, but how the identity of these communities was perceived by the Frankish elites during the period between 796, the official

beginning of Frankish rule over the Avar Khaganate, and 907, a disastrous defeat at the hands of the Magyars after which the Pannonian area disappears from the Frankish sources.

Methodology

Research on the perception of other communities by those who identified politically with the Frankish Empire remains relatively scant. This is partly because the way members of a particular community classify those who are not part of their community does not necessarily correspond to the actual political situation. This area of study has only recently gained attention in scholarship dealing with the early Middle Ages, primarily focusing on how Roman elites classified barbarian political communities.¹ For the time period under consideration, this thesis will follow the methodological guidelines on identity and ethnicity proposed by Walter Pohl in his 2013 book *Strategies of Identification* developed as part of the ‘Ethnic Identities in the Early Middle Ages’ project. Additionally, it will address certain issues raised by Florin Curta in his books *The Making of the Slavs* from 2001 and *Slavs in the Making* from 2021.²

The term “ethnicity” can be used in several different senses. The one Pohl prefers involves perceiving humanity as divided into ethnic groups.³ An ethnic group, in this context,

¹ This approach is evident from, for example, the title of the collected volume Hans-Werner Goetz, Jörg Jarnut, and Walter Pohl, ed., with the collaboration of Sören Kaschke, *Regna and Gentes: The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World* (Brill: Leiden, 2003). For an overview of scholarship as it was in 2006, see Andrew Gillet, “Ethnogenesis: A Contested Model of Early Medieval Europe,” *History Compass* 4, no. 2 (2006): 241-260.

² Florin Curta, *The Making of the Slavs: History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region, c. 500–700* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001), and *Slavs in the Making: History, Linguistics, and Archaeology in Eastern Europe (ca. 500 – ca. 700)* (London: Routledge, 2021); Walter Pohl, “Introduction — Strategies of Identification: A Methodological Profile,” in *Strategies of Identification: Ethnicity and Religion in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 1-64.

³ Pohl, “Introduction,” page 2 including note 5. For further meanings of the term “ethnicity,” see *ibid.*; Curta, *Making of the Slavs*, 14-15, 22-23; Sebastian Brather, “Ethnische Identitäten als Konstrukte der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie,” *Germania* 78 (2000): note 110 on page 160.

is a group considered to be essentially different from other such groups.⁴ Pohl points out that the practical problem in determining which groups are ethnic and which names designate ethnic groups is that the specific features typically seen as distinctive of ethnic groups can also characterize other types of communities.⁵ For instance, the narratives about the establishment of some Adriatic cities in the early Middle Ages followed a template similar to the preserved narratives of the origin of early medieval ethnic groups. These origin narratives are not attested for all early medieval ethnic groups, indicating that having a narrative of origin was not a defining feature of being an ethnic group in that period.⁶ A concept defined by Pohl that is particularly relevant to this thesis is the notion of ethnographic categories as used by classical authors. These are broadly defined groups of relatively similar culture, which are superordinate to ethnic groups (an example of such an umbrella term being *Germani*).⁷ What distinguished these ethnographic categories from ethnic groups is that there was no common self-identification with them although Slavs may have been an exception or may have become one.⁸ Therefore, Pohl proposes that the most reliable way to study ethnicity in the European early Middle Ages is at the level of discourse. This involves examining the extent to which ethnicity

⁴ Pohl, "Introduction," 11-12.

⁵ Pohl, "Introduction," 14.

⁶ Pohl, "Introduction," 10-11, 17.

⁷ Sebastian Brather, "Germanic or Slavic?: Reconstructing the Transition from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages in East Central Europe," in *Interrogating the 'Germanic': A Category and its Use in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Matthias Friedrich and James M. Harland, *Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, vol. 123 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2021), 211, 216; Pohl, "Introduction," 15; Ludwig Rübekeil, "Linguistic Labels and Ethnic Identity," in *Interrogating the 'Germanic': A Category and its Use in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Matthias Friedrich and James M. Harland, *Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, vol. 123 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2021), 226. N.b. Roland Steinacher asserted that the conventional understanding of the term *Germani* by Classical authors was much narrower in geographical scope than the one applied by Tacitus: Roland Steinacher, "Rome and Its Created Northerners," in *Interrogating the 'Germanic': A Category and its Use in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Matthias Friedrich and James M. Harland, *Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, vol. 123 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2021), *passim*.

⁸ Pohl, "Introduction," 15; Steinacher, "Rome and Its Created Northerners," 52.

was used in describing particular groups at the time, identifying a group as ethnic if it was seen as on par with other ethnic groups, and specifically, if agency was ascribed to the group.⁹ Regarding culture, although ethnic groups are often conceived of as being defined by certain objective criteria, such as common ancestry, language, or culture, in practice, no single criterion automatically leads people who share it to perceive themselves as an ethnic group. Instead, the choice of criteria by which an ethnic group defines itself is arbitrary and subject to constant change.¹⁰ It is important to note that although both Pohl and Curta approach ethnic discourse in terms of classification—how members of an ethnic group classify themselves and how they classify non-members into other ethnic groups—they assign substantially different weight to the possible disparity between self-classification and external classification.¹¹

It is important to note that Pohl maintains the same political reality can be expressed in both ethnic and non-ethnic terms.¹² This is especially pertinent when discussing the Frankish political sphere during the time period under consideration. As Peter Štih pointed out, Charlemagne's policies aimed to transform the Frankish Empire into a supra-ethnic Christian empire.¹³ However, as Helmut Reimitz showed through his thorough analysis of the historiography of the Carolingian Empire at the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century, different authors could simultaneously interpret the empire in various ways: as a non-

⁹ Pohl, "Introduction," 25-27.

¹⁰ Curta, *Making of the Slavs*, 18, 20-22, and *Slavs in the Making*, 9-10; Pohl, "Introduction," 6-8. Some relevant works dealing with the concept of ethnicity in general: Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (London: Pluto Press, 1993); Siân Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity: Constructing identities in the past and present* (London: Routledge, 1997); Michael Moerman, "Ethnic Identification in a Complex Civilization: Who Are the Lue," *American Anthropologist* 67 (1965): 1215-1229.

¹¹ Curta, *Making of the Slavs*, 19-22, and *Slavs in the Making*, 8-9; Pohl, "Introduction," 12-13, 27-29, 39-40.

¹² Pohl, "Introduction," 13, 39-40.

¹³ Peter Štih, "Sacramentum fidelitatis in integracija v Frankovsko cesarstvo" [*Sacramentum fidelitatis* and integration into the Frankish Empire], in *Marušičev zbornik: Zgodovinopisec zahodnega roba: Prof. dr. Branku Marušiču ob 80-letnici* [A volume to Marušič: a historian of the western edge: to professor doctor Branko Marušič for his 80th anniversary], ed. Petra Kolenc et al. (Ljubljana; Nova Gorica: ZRC SAZU, Zgodovinski inštitut Milka Kosa; Raziskovalna postaja ZRC SAZU Nova Gorica, 2019), 189, 194-195.

ethnic Christian empire composed of provinces, as comprising ethnic groups of varying equality, or as a combination of both, with ethnicity attributed to groups not accepted as equal members of a non-ethnic empire.¹⁴ Ildar H. Garipzanov demonstrated that this discrepancy is also evident from diplomatic evidence. On one hand, Louis the Pious and his descendants consistently present themselves as non-ethnic Christian rulers in the realm of high politics.¹⁵ On the other hand, contemporary historiography and administrative practice related to the broader population reveal a diversity of interpretations regarding the structure of the Frankish Realm.¹⁶ According to Karl Brunner, it is only at the beginning of the 10th century that ethnicity once again becomes the source of political legitimacy in the former Frankish Empire, but this time for regional rulers who see themselves as equal to kings.¹⁷

For Pohl, the long-term existence of ethnic groups of historiographic interest in early medieval Europe is tied to their successful integration into a post-Roman system of international relations.¹⁸ In this context, how communities classify other people eventually harmonizes with how those others classify themselves to ensure desired outcomes in mutual interaction. Pohl views the possibility of ethnic classifications created by imperial powers overriding the self-identification of communities as a rare occurrence in practice.¹⁹ Conversely,

¹⁴ Helmut Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity and the Framing of Western Ethnicity, 550–850* (Cambridge: CUP, 2015), 343-345, 350-359, 367-386, 393-394, 401-406, 410-422, 432-435.

¹⁵ Ildar H. Garipzanov, "Communication of Authority in Carolingian Titles," *Viator* 36 (2005): 54, 62-68; Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 435-436.

¹⁶ Garipzanov, "Communication of Authority," 43-44, 54, 48-68; Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 435-440, 443.

¹⁷ Karl Brunner, "Die fränkischen Fürstentitel im neunten und zehnten Jahrhundert," in *Intitulatio II: Lateinische Herrscher- und Fürstentitel im neunten und zehnten Jahrhundert*, ed. Herwig Wolfram (Vienna: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1973), 230, 243-245, 326-327. I will present the use of ethnicity for political mobilization in the Frankish Realm in Sub-chapter 1.1. in greater detail.

¹⁸ Walter Pohl, *The Avars: A Steppe Empire in Central Europe, 567–822* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 150-162, and "Introduction," 40-48.

¹⁹ Pohl, *Avars*, 154-155, 161, and "Introduction," 42, 46, 50.

ethnic groups whose existence is not acknowledged by others do not last long.²⁰ Pohl emphasizes that in late antiquity, political agency was an essential criterion for the existence of an ethnic group to be acknowledged.²¹ Since, as Pohl argues, ethnic groups are not defined by reference to some concrete referent outside the group itself (unlike, for example, religious communities being defined by allegiance to a common creed), ethnic identity is in practice attached to communities that are actually formed through some criterion other than ethnic identity itself, such as territory.²²

Unlike Pohl, who views ethnic classification as primarily functioning within the context of international relations, Curta sees its primary function in internal politics as a means of political mobilization.²³ Therefore, for Curta the way members of an ethnic group classify non-members does not need to have any connection to actual social grouping outside of that ethnic group itself.²⁴

The aforementioned postulate of Curta's is important because it reminds us that just because Frankish authors labeled certain people as Slavs based on their own criteria, it does not mean that the people in question applied that label to themselves or shared any of the criteria commonly associated with a shared ethnic identity, such as a sense of solidarity, language, or culture. This labeling only indicates that in the eyes of the Franks some people were Slavs. The focus of this thesis is the salience of the attribution of Slavic identity to the population of the former Avar Khaganate in Frankish sources, not the self-identification of that population.

²⁰ Pohl, "Introduction," 10.

²¹ Pohl, "Introduction," 27-28, 41.

²² Pohl, "Introduction," 25-26, 48, 50.

²³ Curta, *Making of the Slavs*, 20-21, 34-35, and *Slavs in the Making*, 9-10.

²⁴ Curta, *Making of the Slavs*, 335, 344, 346-350, and *Slavs in the Making*, 13-14, 207.

Based on the criteria proposed by Pohl an analysis of all the Frankish written sources from the time period 791-907 relating to the Pannonian area will be carried out to determine which term do they apply to the area under consideration. Since Frankish written sources that pertain to the area under consideration vary in genre and importance that was given to them, it cannot be said to what extent do they represent a cross-section of contemporary Frankish discourse. Therefore, making any comprehensive quantitative analysis of appearance of individual terms pertaining to the Pannonian area would not serve a meaningful purpose; only a diachronic analysis will be carried out.

Based on the criteria proposed by Pohl, this study focuses on analyzing the primary Frankish written sources that reference the Pannonian area from 791 to 907. The primary sources considered are annals, which span the entire century and are often written from perspectives close to the political center. For the period between 796 and 829, the study follows Helmut Reimitz's approach. Priority is given to the *Royal Frankish Annals (ARF)*, which aimed to reflect a consensus on the identity of the Frankish polity during their composition.²⁵ They narrate the Frankish war against the Avars, the gradual disintegration of the Avar Khaganate, the rebellion of Ljudevit, duke of Lower Pannonia, and the Bulgarian incursions into the Pannonian area that followed. Related to the *ARF* is a group of annals from the same period called the *Carolingian minor annals*. They relate more or less the same events as *ARF* usually much more tersely but with subtle variations, such as in terminology, offering varied perspectives. Of special note within this group are the *Alamannic Annals (AA)* which will be involved in a special analysis with the night office of Saint Emmeram and the Wessobrunn glosses for the contemporary meaning of the term Vandals that later appears as a synonym for

²⁵ Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 410-411.

the Slavs.²⁶ Other important annals from this period that are not counted among the *Carolingian minor annals* are the *Older Metz Annals* (*AMpr*) and the *Annales Sithienses* (*AS*). Besides annals, charters and other diplomatic documents will be utilized to highlight different viewpoints throughout the period from 796 to 907. This involves the *Capitulary of Diedenhofen* of 805, and the *Leges portorii* composed some time after 902 regulating trade along the Danube around the River Enns as well as charters and similar texts listed in the Second book of Franc Kos' collection *Gradivo za zgodovino Slovencev v srednjem veku* [Material for the history of the Slovenes in the Middle Ages] under numbers 40, 56, 74, 97, 106, 110, 115, 121, 131, 133, 160, 169, 170, 172, 174, 186, 193, 208, 265, 276, 277, 288, 297, 306 and 335; the aforementioned trade regulation is also included in Kos' book under number 341.²⁷ Kos' focus on the area between early medieval Moravians and modern Croatia makes his collection a comprehensive assemblage of charter evidence for the Pannonian area. After 829, the study will equally consider various annals, as none possess the universal ideological significance of the ARF. This includes the *Annals of Fulda* (*AF*), the *Annals of Xanten* (*AX*) and the

²⁶ Maximilian Diesenberger, "Repertoires and Strategies in Bavaria: Hagiography," in *Strategies of Identification: Ethnicity and Religion in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 224-227; Roland Steinacher, "Wenden, Slawen, Vandalen: Eine frühmittelalterliche pseudologische Gleichsetzung und ihre Nachwirkungen," in *Die Suche nach den Ursprüngen: Von der Bedeutung des frühen Mittelalters*, ed. Walter Pohl (Vienna: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2004), 329-353.

²⁷ *Capitulare duplex in Theodonis villa promulgatum*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH LL 1 (Hannover: Hahn, 1835), 131-136; *Leges portoriae* (sic) c. a. 906, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH LL 3 (Hannover: Hahn, 1863), 480-481; Franc Kos, *Gradivo za zgodovino Slovencev v srednjem veku*, bk. 2, (*l. 801-1000*) [Material for the history of the Slovenes in the Middle Ages, bk. 2, (Years 801-1000)] (Ljubljana: Leonova družba, 1906), Št. 40, 40, Št. 56, 50, Št. 74, 65, Št. 97, 85-86, Št. 106, 91-92, Št. 110, 93-94, Št. 115, 97-98, Št. 121, 100-101, Št. 131, 107-108, Št. 133, 109, Št. 160, 127, Št. 169, 131-132, Št. 170, 132-133, Št. 172, 134-136, Št. 174, 137, Št. 186, 143-144, Št. 193, 149, Št. 208, 156, Št. 265, 201-202, Št. 276, 210, Št. 277, 211, Št. 288, 216-217, Št. 297, 227, Št. 306, 232-233, Št. 335, 260, Št. 341, 263-266. Charter under nr. 138 in Kos' collection will not be included because according to Herwig Wolfram, ed., *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum: Das Weißbuch der Salzburger Kirche über die erfolgreiche Mission in Karantanien und Pannonien* (Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti; Zveza zgodovinskih društev Slovenije, 2012), 191-194 this text included in the *Conversio* as chapter 12 never existed as a charter.

hypothetical *Old Salzburg Annals* (*AJant*) with annalistic works derived from *AJant*.²⁸ Several non-annalistic narrative sources relevant to this thesis also appear in this period. This involves the Thegan's *Deeds of Emperor Louis* and Astronomer's *Life of Emperor Louis* that briefly relate Duke Ljudevit's rebellion as well as Notker's *Continuation to the Erchanbert's Breviary* (*EBRFMAC*) which summarizes the divisions of the Frankish Empire in the 9th century.²⁹ A unique source is the treatise *On the Conversion of the Bavarians and the Carantanians*, which, from the perspective of the See of Salzburg, provides a summary of the political developments in the Pannonian area until the late 9th century.³⁰ No detailed analysis of the textual transmission will be carried out because it would greatly come out of the scope of this thesis. Instead, background of individual sources will be considered as described in existing literature.

Unlike written sources discussed above, determining how Franks regarded local population based on archeological evidence can only be done in a very indirect way. Recently, Goran Bilogrivić has offered a valuable framework for this type of analysis. He contextualized the abundance of military equipment found in the Adriatic hinterland during the last quarter of the 8th century within the broader scope of Frankish policy toward their eastern and northern neighbors.³¹ In the mid-20th century, Croatian scholarship did not view the appearance of Frankish military equipment in the Adriatic hinterland as indicative of any significant change

²⁸ *Annales Fuldenses sive Annales regni Francorum orientalis*, ed. Friedrich Kurze, MGH SS rer. Germ. 7 (Hannover: Hahn, 1891); *Annales Xantenses et Annales Vedastini*, B. von Simson, MGH SS rer. Germ. 12 (Hannover: Hahn, 1909), 1-33. For a presentation of *AJant* and the works derived from it, see Section 2.1.2.

²⁹ *Erchanberti breviarium regum Francorum 2: Monachi Augiensis continuatio annorum 840-881*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS 2 (Hannover: Hahn, 1829), 329-330; Astronomus, *Vita Hludowici imperatoris*, ed. and Germ. transl. Ernst Tremp, MGH SS rer. Germ. 64 (Hannover: Hahn, 1995), c. 31-c. 36, 388-417; Theganus, *Gesta Hludowici imperatoris*, ed. and Germ. transl. Ernst Tremp, MGH SS rer. Germ. 64 (Hannover: Hahn, 1995), c. 27, 216-217.

³⁰ Wolfram, *Conversio*, c. 6- c. 14, 66-81.

³¹ Goran Bilogrivić, "Carolingian Weapons and the Problem of Croat Migration and Ethnogenesis," in *Migration, Integration and Connectivity on the Southeastern Frontier of the Carolingian Empire*, ed. Danijel Dzino, Ante Milošević, and Trpimir Vedriš (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 86-99.

in population or social structure.³² However, the paradigm shift following the break-up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s brought new interpretations. Vladimir Sokol and Mladen Ančić argued that the presence of Frankish equipment suggested that Croats had entered the Adriatic hinterland as part of the Frankish campaigns against the Avars at the end of the 8th century.³³ Sokol's work partly responded to the earlier theories of Neven Budak, who was influenced by the Vienna school of ethnogenesis. Budak advocated for a narrow understanding of early medieval Croat identity. He argued that this identity was limited both geographically, to areas explicitly part of the Croat polity, and socially, extending primarily to the uppermost elites rather than the broader society.³⁴ This was followed in the 21st century by a debate over whether the appearance of a Croat polity in the Adriatic hinterland should be understood primarily as a result of continuous transformation of autochthonous elites rather than as a result of a Frankish colonization of a new elite, with Bilogrivić's article being one of the most recent contributions

³² Cf. Dušan Jelovina, *Starohrvatske nekropole: na području između rijeka Zrmanje i Cetine* [Old-Croat necropolises: in the area between the rivers Zrmanja and Cetina] (Split: Čakavski sabor, 1976), 9-10, 115-126.

³³ Mladen Ančić, "U osvit novog doba: Karolinško carstvo i njegov jugoistočni obod" [At the dawning of a new age: Carolingian empire and its southeastern fringe], in *Hrvati i Karolinzi*, vol. 1, *Rasprave i vrela* [Croats and Carolingians, vol. 1, Discussions and sources], ed.-in-chief Ante Milošević (Split: MHAS, 2000), 74-81; Vladimir Sokol, "Arheološka baština i zlatarstvo" [Archeological heritage and goldsmithing], in *Hrvatska i Europa: kultura, znanost, umjetnost*, vol. 1, *Srednji vijek (VII – XII. stoljeće): Rano doba hrvatske kulture* [Croatia and Europe: culture, science, art, vol. 1, Middle Ages (7th – 12th centuries): Early era of Croatian culture], ed. Ivan Supićić (Zagreb: HAZU, Agram, Školska knjiga, 1997), 116-131, 136-138. For overviews of the paradigm shift of the 1990s and its background, see Danijel Dzino, "From Byzantium to the West: 'Croats and Carolingians' as a Paradigm-Change in the Research of Early Medieval Dalmatia," in *Migration, Integration and Connectivity on the Southeastern Frontier of the Carolingian Empire*, ed. Danijel Dzino, Ante Milošević, and Trpimir Vedriš (Leiden: Brill, 2018), passim; Trpimir Vedriš, "'Croats and Carolingians' Triumph of a New Historiographic Paradigm or Ideologically Charged Project?" in *Migration, Integration and Connectivity on the Southeastern Frontier of the Carolingian Empire*, ed. Danijel Dzino, Ante Milošević, and Trpimir Vedriš (Leiden: Brill, 2018), passim.

³⁴ Sokol, "Arheološka baština i zlatarstvo," 137, and "Panonija i Hrvati u 9. stoljeću" [Pannonia and the Croats in the 9th century], paper presented at the "Arheološka istraživanja u Podravini i kalničko-bilogorskoj regiji" scientific gathering, Koprivnica, Croatia, 14th–17th October 1986, [Izdanja HAD-a 14], ed. N. Majnarić-Pandžić (Zagreb: HAD, 1990), 193-195. For some of Budak's interpretations of Medieval Croat identity from 1980s onwards, see Neven Budak, *Prva stoljeća Hrvatske* [The first centuries of Croatia] (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 1994), 9-12, 55-70, and "The practice of ethnic labeling in the cartulary of St Peter de Gumay near Split," in *Scripta in honorem Igor Fisković: Festschrift on the occasion of his 70th birthday*, ed. Miljenko Jurković and Predrag Marković (Zagreb; Motovun: University of Zagreb - Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences; University of Zagreb - International Research Center for Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, 2015), passim.

to the topic.³⁵ Novelty of Bilogrivić's approach was framing the appearance of this equipment as a part of a broader Frankish phenomenon.³⁶ Namely, from Denmark in the north, over Bohemia and Moravia to Dalmatia in the south a large amount of military equipment of Frankish provenance appears. Bilogrivić argues that these swords arrived there as diplomatic gifts from Franks to local leaders willing to follow Frankish interests thus symbolically incorporating them into the Frankish political system. In this new context this weaponry of Frankish provenance was used in a different way than it would have been used by the Franks, such as a part of lavish burials.³⁷ This is, according to Bilogrivić, because in these local contexts these Frankish weapons may have been used, in addition to communicating the elite status of its bearers, to legitimize these elite's claim to elite status with their ability to obtain goods from the wider world, something that was not easy in their immediate surroundings.³⁸ However, presence of these Frankish weapons is not by itself an indication of a stronger integration of areas in question into the Frankish Realm. As Bilogrivić pointed out, the presence of Frankish weaponry in Denmark coincides with periods of intense conflict between Danes and Franks. Perhaps counter-intuitively, presence of these Frankish weapons in burial contexts might

³⁵ Some other contributions to the debate: Mladen Ančić, "Migration or Transformation: The Roots of the Early Medieval Croatian Polity," in *Migration, Integration and Connectivity on the Southeastern Frontier of the Carolingian Empire*, ed. Danijel Dzino, Ante Milošević, and Trpimir Vedriš (Leiden: Brill, 2018), passim; Danijel Dzino, *Becoming Slav, Becoming Croat: Identity Transformations in Post-Roman and Early Medieval Dalmatia* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 211-218.

³⁶ Cf. a slightly earlier work by Marino Kumir who treated the appearance of this equipment in burials as a phenomenon exclusive to the territory of future Croat polity in Adriatic hinterland and regarded the cases of such burials in Moravia and Zachlunia as a mysterious coincidence: Marino Kumir, "Memory and Authority in the Ninth-century Dalmatian Duchy," MA Thesis, Central European University, 2016, 42-43, note 152 on page 44, 45, note 184 on page 50. Although Dzino argued in 2010 that the changes in burial custom in the Adriatic hinterland during the 8th century are a part of the same trend that affected the Avar Khaganate and its surroundings, he attributes these changes in burial custom in general and Frankish equipment in particular so little historical significance, he does not explore the connection further; in the book this topic is dedicated five pages: Danijel Dzino, *Becoming Slav, Becoming Croat: Identity Transformations in Post-Roman and Early Medieval Dalmatia* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 146-150.

³⁷ Bilogrivić, "Carolingian Weapons," 94-97.

³⁸ Bilogrivić, "Carolingian Weapons," 96-98.

suggest lesser integration into the Frankish Realm because members of these frontier elites may have been more concerned with communicating their elite status to other members of the elite in their immediate frontier context than to the members of the elite of the broader Frankish Realm.³⁹ Conversely, such Frankish weaponry appearing in certain areas does not mean that Franks regarded those areas as thoroughly integrated into their realm either. For example, the *Capitulary of Diedenhofen* in 805 explicitly prohibited the sale of weapons and armor into the regions of Slavs and Avars. In the case of the Pannonian area the closest place at which weaponry could be bought was Lorch on the River Enns, the old Bavarian-Avar border.⁴⁰ What Bilogrivić pointed out as the decisive difference in the case of Dalmatia between whether Frankish weaponry arrived as a result of trade or as diplomatic gifts, is whether weaponry is interred together with other prestigious objects of Frankish origin that could have a civilian use, such as brooches. In the case of Dalmatia such objects do not appear, indicating a low degree of integration into the Frankish system, and it may be assumed that such a distinction can be made for other areas as well.⁴¹ Bilogrivić did not include the Pannonian area under consideration but the archeological material from the area between the Enns and the Drava has been most comprehensively presented by Béla Miklós Szőke in his 2021 synthesis.⁴² Although Szőke's synthesis addresses weaponry, too, he approaches it from a very different angle. Namely, in the Adriatic hinterland the appearance of burials with Frankish weaponry at the end of the 8th century signifies the beginning of a radically new culture that blossomed in the 9th

³⁹ Bilogrivić, "Carolingian Weapons," 96.

⁴⁰ *Capitulaire duplex*, §7, 133; Michael Glatthaar, "Die drei Fassungen des Doppelkapitulars von Diedenhofen/Thionville (805/806): Entwurf – Erlass – Revision," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 69 (2013): 451-452.

⁴¹ Bilogrivić, "Carolingian Weapons," 94-95.

⁴² Béla Miklós Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien* (Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, 2021).

century after the period of 6th–8th centuries had been almost invisible archeologically, while in the Pannonian area Frankish weaponry appears at the end of a culture that flourished precisely during this preceding period.⁴³ Szőke pointed out that within the context of the Pannonian area appearance of Frankish weaponry represents a relatively modest change because this new weaponry merely substitutes older Avar weaponry within a burial practice that otherwise remained mostly the same. In this sense Szőke focused on the disappearance of grave-goods (including weaponry of Frankish provenance) altogether and the transition to the prescribed Christian mode of burial around churches without any grave-goods instead of singling out Frankish weaponry for consideration. Details of Szőke’s analysis will be presented in Section 2.2.1.

Ultimately, this thesis will provide an overview of how the salience of the Slavic name in Frankish discourse to describe the socio-political situation in the Pannonian area varied over the period between 791 and 907 and whether such changing Frankish perceptions can be brought into connection with the societal changes under Frankish influence attestable in the archeological material.

To achieve the aim set above, this thesis will be divided into three chapters in addition to the Introduction and Conclusion. Since Pannonian area has thus far rarely been a subject of study in its own right, first two chapters will provide the historical context. The first chapter will provide a historical overview of the Frankish, Bavarian, Avar, and Slavic communities up to the end of the 9th century. This will illustrate the types of identities and political structures the Frankish political system managed until the end of the 8th century and what they may have

⁴³ Bilogrivić, “Carolingian Weapons,” 90, 94-99; Kumir, “Memory,” 41-43, 50-51; Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 411, and “Spätantike Reminiszenzen im Karpatenbecken des 8.–9. Jahrhunderts?,” *Antæus: Communicationes ex Instituto Archaeologico Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 35–36 (2017–2018): passim.

encountered in the Pannonian area. Second chapter will present the provenance of sources used, many of which have thus far not been applied to the study of the Pannonian area, along with their content relevant to this thesis. Finally, third chapter will provide a chronological overview of the terminological changes in the Frankish discourse about the Pannonian area over the period 791–907. Based on that, conclusion will be drawn connecting these changes in discourse with the broader socio-political changes in the Carolingian realm(s) and in the Pannonian area itself.

History of Research

The idea that historical authors' portrayals of other ethnic groups reflect more about how those authors view their own group's place in the world than how the other groups see themselves only entered historiography at the very end of the 20th century. However, the fundamental issue of the discrepancy of how groups are classified by outsiders, rather than how they see themselves, was addressed earlier in scholarship. During the 1860s Croatian scholarship saw a heated polemic between Croatian pan-Slavists exemplified by Franjo Rački and their ideological opponent Ante Starčević on whether there indeed existed a people of early Slavs or whether these early Slavs were merely a case of labeling by outside observers.⁴⁴ At the time the issue was resolved by firmly defining the early Slavs as speakers of the Slavic proto-language. This assumption went essentially unchallenged for over a century.⁴⁵ One thing

⁴⁴ For Starčević's views, see *Bi-li k slavstvu ili ka hrvatstvu?: Dva razgovora (iz Zvekan)* [Whether towards Slavdom or Croat-dom?: Two conversations (from Zvekan)] (Zagreb, 1867); for Rački's rebuttal of Starčević's assertions regarding early Slavs, see Franjo Rački, *Slovenski svet: historičko-statističko-etnografičke razprave*, bk. 1, *Slaveni u obće: Poviestni nacrt iz naučnoga slovnika českoga* [The Slavic world: historical-statistical-ethnographical discussions, bk. 1, Slavs in general: A historical outline from a Czech scholarly dictionary] (Zagreb: Nakladom Lav. Hartmana knjižara, 1870).

⁴⁵ Rački, *Slovenski svet*, 5-6, 50; cf. Curta, *Slavs in the Making*, 1-6, 21, 26, 36, 170-171, 210-212.

that Rački and Starčević could agree on, however, was the notion that the Croat agency during the early Middle Ages is absent from the historical sources because outside observers, who produced most of these sources, did not perceive as Croats those historical agents who did perceive themselves as Croats. Thus, part of a historian's task was finding these mis-labeled Croats.⁴⁶ This led to Rački developing the concept of "Pannonian Croatia." Namely, Rački identified the polity established by Croats in Pannonia and Illyricum according to a 10th century Byzantine source with a polity in the southern part of the Pannonian area during the 9th century that is attested in contemporary Frankish sources.⁴⁷ In doing so Rački sidelined the fact that these Frankish sources, their terminological variety notwithstanding, never use the Croat name. Rački himself was the first who deconstructed the concept of "Pannonian Croatia" in the early 1880s. This time he took the perspective of contemporary Frankish sources as authentically representing the situation in the Pannonian area. Thus he concluded that the Pannonian area was divided into two administrative units established by the Franks and designated them with geographical terms from the *ARF* – Lower Pannonia and Upper Pannonia.⁴⁸ Rački's deconstruction of his own earlier work was not welcomed in Croatian historiography at the time.⁴⁹ Tadija Smičiklas and Vjekoslav Klaić, who wrote the first modern syntheses of Croatian

⁴⁶ *Bi-li k slavstvu*, 11-12, 32, 35-36; Franjo Rački, *Odlomci iz državnoga prava hrvatskoga za narodne dynastie* [Fragments from the Croatian state law during the people's dynasty] (Beč: troškom K. Stojšića, 1861), 13-17.

⁴⁷ Franjo Rački, "Ocjena starijih izvora za hrvatsku i srbsku poviest srednjega vieka" [Evaluation of older sources for Croatian and Serbian history of the Middle Ages], *Književnik* 1 (1864): 50-51, 61-63, 68-76, and *Odlomci*, 1-6, 18-19, 28-31, 54-55.

⁴⁸ Franjo Rački, "Biela Hrvatska i biela Srbija" [White Croatia and white Serbia], *Rad Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 50 (1880): 181-186, and "Hrvatska prije XII vieka glede na zemljišni obseg i narod 1: Zemljišni obseg" [Croatia before the 12th century regarding the territorial extent and people 1: Territorial extent], *Rad Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 56 (1881): 74-76, 102-120.

⁴⁹ Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski, "Prvovjenčani vladaoi Bugara, Hrvata i Srba, i njihove krune 2: Tomislav prvi kralj Hrvatski" [The first-crowned rulers of Bulgarians, Croats and Serbs, and their crowns 2: Tomislav, the first Croatian king], *Rad Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 58 (1881): 11.

medieval history, defended the concept of “Pannonian Croatia” ensuring it would fundamentally define Croatian historiography up to the 21st century.⁵⁰

Between the time of Starčević and Rački and the 21st-century scrutiny by Hrvoje Gračanin and Krešimir Filipec, many changes occurred in the methodology of studying Early Slavs and early medieval polities. However, these new approaches were rarely applied with a focus on the Pannonian area.⁵¹ In the 1920s the search for the beginnings of Early Slavs by means of tracking the origin of the proto-Slavic language was joined in the realm of archeology by the search for the beginnings of Early Slavs by means of tracking a specific material culture as postulated by the culture-historical approach – Prague culture.⁵² After the Second world war researching the origin and spread of Early Slavs through the spread of the Prague culture and its predecessors became the ideologically mandated focus of medieval archeology in the entire Eastern Bloc.⁵³ Ultimate definition of Prague culture was made by Czech archeologist Jiří Zeman.⁵⁴ According to him it was a culture defined by Prague-type pottery, sunken-floored buildings and cremation burials.⁵⁵ In Hungarian archeology this caused friction regarding the Pannonian area in the 9th century. Hungarian scholarship had focused on the legacy of steppe peoples and the increased knowledge of the complex structure of steppe polities made

⁵⁰ Hrvatska enciklopedija [Croatian encyclopedia], s. v. “Panonska Hrvatska;” Vjekoslav Klaić, “Hrvatska plemena od XII. do XVI. stoljeća” [Croatian tribes from the 12th to the 16th century], *Rad Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 47/130 Razredi filologičko-historički i filosofičko-juridički (1897): 12-15, and *Povjest Hrvata: od najstarijih vremena do svršetka XIX. stoljeća I* [History of the Croats: from the oldest times to the end of the 19th century I] [Zagreb: Knjižara L. Hartmana (Kugli i Deutsch), 1899], 33-34; Tade Smičiklas, *Poviest hrvatska* [Croatian history], vol. 1 (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1882), 16-19, 93-94, 96-97, 102, 105, 109, 157, 160-161, 163-166, 170-179, 183, 197-198, 215-218.

⁵¹ Krešimir Filipec, *Donja Panonija od 9. do 11. stoljeća* [Lower Pannonia from the 9th to the 11th century] (Sarajevo: Univerzitet u Sarajevu, 2015); Hrvoje Gračanin, *Južna Panonija u kasnoj antici i ranom srednjovjekovlju: (od konca 4. do konca 11. stoljeća)* [Southern Pannonia in the late antiquity and the early Middle Ages: (from the end of the 4th to the end of the 11th century)] (Zagreb: Plejada, 2011).

⁵² Curta, *Slavs in the Making*, 26-29.

⁵³ Curta, *Slavs in the Making*, 29-34; Szöke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 4-5.

⁵⁴ Curta, *Slavs in the Making*, 26.

⁵⁵ Curta, *Slavs in the Making*, 32-33.

Hungarian archeologists, such as István Bóna, attentive to complex relations between material culture and ethnicity within larger polities.⁵⁶ As a result, the idea that Pribina and Kocelj's 9th-century emergent polity in the Pannonian area could be characterized as Slavic was criticized, most recently by Béla Miklós Szőke, on the ground of the fact that Hungarian research of Pribina and Kocelj's seat Mosaburg showed that the material culture of their polity had nothing in common with other emergent Slavic polities, other than what could be attributed to Avar or Carolingian influence.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, in the latter half of the 20th century, western German-speaking and English-speaking historiography saw the emergence of the Vienna school of ethnogenesis in the 1960s.⁵⁸ Austrian historiography has been preoccupied with the formal characteristics of medieval polities and the approach of the Vienna school meant treating early medieval *gentes* as just another type of polity defined by its formal characteristics.⁵⁹ The approach of the Vienna school came to be applied to individual Slavic polities (Carantania, Croatia) only in the 1990s within Slovenian and Croatian historiography.⁶⁰ A synthesis of Austrian historiography on the Pannonian area was made by Herwig Wolfram in his 2012 monograph. He posited a sharp dichotomy between the imperial structures of the Roman and later Frankish Empire on one hand and the “*gens*-like principalities” (*gentile Fürstentümer*) on their frontier on the other.⁶¹ Although these *gentes* are a product of imperial policies to ensure

⁵⁶ István Bóna, “Ein Vierteljahrhundert Völkerwanderungszeitforschung in Ungarn (1945—1969),” *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 23 (1971): passim.

⁵⁷ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 4-5, 130, 314, 442.

⁵⁸ Gillett, “Ethnogenesis,” 242-244.

⁵⁹ Gillett, “Ethnogenesis,” 242-246; cf. Wolfram, *Conversio*, 198-199, 271-274, 303-306. For such an approach to a different type of polity, “younger Frankish principality” characteristic of the 9th century, see Brunner, “Die fränkischen Fürstentitel,” 181.

⁶⁰ Rajko Bratož, “Anfänge der slowenischen Ethnogenese: Fakten, Thesen und Hypothesen,” in *Die Grundlagen der slowenischen Kultur*, ed. France Bernik and Reinhard Lauer (De Gruyter, 2010), 1-2, 27-31; Neven Budak, *Prva stoljeća Hrvatske* [The first centuries of Croatia] (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 1994).

⁶¹ Wolfram, *Conversio*, 171-173, 199-200, 293, 304-306, 326-327.

stability on the imperial frontier, they are not a part of the imperial administration.⁶² Wolfram contextualized the Pannonian area within the Austrian historiographical concept of “Bavarian Eastland” (*Bayerisches Ostland*).⁶³ The premise is that the Pannonian area during the 9th century functioned as an extension of the Bavarian provincial administration, itself a part of the Frankish imperial administration.⁶⁴ However, there was not enough Bavarian cadre to administer the “Eastland,” so on-site control of the Pannonian area was conferred to outside leaders capable of organizing fellowships with which to enforce Frankish policies.⁶⁵ These leaders were, according to Wolfram, not an integral part of Frankish administration but were its adjunct and subordinate to oversight by Frankish administrators.⁶⁶ While the Frankish administrative superstructure was stable, individual fellowships were ephemeral.⁶⁷ They could achieve permanence by producing a monarchic dynasty and an independent ecclesiastical organization, thus becoming full-fledged peoples with a successfully completed ethnogenesis.⁶⁸ According to Wolfram, no polity in the Pannonian area acquired such formal characteristics during the 9th century. Instead, local elite was becoming more integrated with Bavarian elite.⁶⁹

While Vienna school of ethnogenesis focused on how individual *gentes* came to be, for a long time it took the existence of large linguistic entities, such as Slavs, for granted.⁷⁰ The

⁶² Wolfram, *Conversio*, 274, 298, 320, 326.

⁶³ Wolfram, *Conversio*, 171-173, 272, 274.

⁶⁴ Wolfram, *Conversio*, 175-176, 271-272, 274-275.

⁶⁵ Wolfram, *Conversio*, 175-176, 200, 272-273, 301.

⁶⁶ Wolfram, *Conversio*, 175-176, 200, 233-234, 271-275, 295, 327.

⁶⁷ Wolfram, *Conversio*, 175-176.

⁶⁸ Wolfram, *Conversio*, 175, 303, 315-316, 322-331.

⁶⁹ Wolfram, *Conversio*, 173, 199-201, 298-299, 317-322.

⁷⁰ Wolfram in *Conversio* uses such an approach, esp. 315. For an analysis of such “linguistic macro-groups” (*Sprachliche Großgruppen*), see Sebastian Brather, *Ethnische Interpretationen in der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie: Geschichte, Grundlagen und Alternativen*, Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde, vol. 42 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 162-166, 217-228, 623-624.

concept of *Germani* was eventually determined to be anachronistic for the Migration Period, as no political organization took place under that name, and Roman observers soon abandoned its use. However, the situation with the Slavs was very different. As Walter Pohl pointed out, the Slavic name persisted both as a label by outside observers and as an endonym.⁷¹ In 1988, while making a synthesis of the Avar history, Pohl applied the approach of the Vienna school of ethnogenesis onto the Slavs of the 6th – 8th centuries and earlier as a group fundamentally defined by the formal characteristics of its socio-political structure. He asserted that the defining feature of the Slavs, in contrast to the Avars rallied around the Khagan or the Bulgars forming not-necessarily independent bands of steppe warriors, was their unwillingness to develop large-scale political structures and hierarchies which also made large-scale economic infrastructure unnecessary.⁷² Although Florin Curta later criticized Pohl's assertions about the Slavs, Pohl largely maintained them in the revised English edition of his synthesis on the Avars in 2018.⁷³ Curta conducted the most thorough reassessment of the concept of Early Slavs in his 2001 synthesis, which he partially revised in a new 2021 synthesis. He challenged the established approach in the archeology of the former Eastern Bloc by applying the principles of sociology, sociolinguistics and post-modern source critique to the written sources on Slavs from c. 500 – c. 700, and to the archeological material in the areas where the Slavs supposedly migrated during that period, offering only brief remarks regarding the 9th and later centuries.⁷⁴ This meant treating those communities as ethnic groups that emerge through political

⁷¹ Cf. Pohl, *Avars*, 125-126.

⁷² Walter Pohl, *Die Awaren: Ein Steppenvolk in Mitteleuropa 567–822 n.Chr.* (Munich: Beck, 1988), 328-329; Herwig Wolfram, "Vorwort," in *Die Awaren: Ein Steppenvolk in Mitteleuropa 567–822 n.Chr.*, author Walter Pohl (Munich: Beck, 1988), V.

⁷³ Pohl, *Avars*, 160-162, including notes 252 and 253.

⁷⁴ Curta, *Slavs in the Making*, passim, and *Making of the Slavs*, passim.

mobilization around specific cultural markers in times of resource competition.⁷⁵ Curta's work proved to be extremely controversial and he was forced to revise some of his original conclusions.⁷⁶ He asserted that Slavic name cannot be proven to have been a self-designation before the *Russian Primary Chronicle* in the 12th century.⁷⁷ Although it may have originally been a self-designation for a small group, in the 6th century it became a broad label used by Byzantines that they did not associate with any unique stereotype.⁷⁸ In the 7th century it was adopted by authors in the West where in the 9th century the concept of "Slavs" finally came to occupy a specific niche in the authors' worldview, namely as quintessential troublemakers to the Franks. Curta only expressed this latter conclusion in broad strokes.⁷⁹

While the research into the role of the Frankish Realm in the ethnogenesis of Slavs is a highly intriguing and relevant topic, it greatly exceeds the scope of this thesis. Therefore, it is hoped that analysis of the role that was accorded to the Slavic in relation to other identities in the context of the Frankish 9th-century discourse on the area between the Enns, the Danube, the Dinarids and easternmost Alpine foothills will provide a worthwhile contribution to future research on the Frankish political system's role in the development of early medieval ethnic identities in general and Slavic identity in particular.

⁷⁵ Curta, *Slavs in the Making*, 8-12, 34-35, 200, 210, and *Making of the Slavs*, 29-31, 33-34, 344.

⁷⁶ Curta, *Slavs in the Making*, 1-2, 4, 6, 210.

⁷⁷ Curta, *Making of the Slavs*, 349-350; cf. Curta, *Slavs in the Making*, 207-208, 212.

⁷⁸ Curta, *Slavs in the Making*, 207, and *Making of the Slavs*, 337, 344, 346-350.

⁷⁹ Curta, *Slavs in the Making*, 207, 212.

1. Processes of Ethnogenesis in the Central European Space until the 9th Century

In the 9th-century Pannonian area there was no concept of government as a specialized institutional structure separate from the society it governed. Instead, in the absence of a government bureaucracy, the only elements maintaining the cohesion of the Avar Khaganate—which ruled the Pannonian area until the end of the 8th-century—and the Frankish Empire and its successor states in the 9th century were the shared sense of belonging among their political members and the common policies implemented through interpersonal relationships between those members.⁸⁰

This means that the political status of individual communities within these highly heterogeneous polities cannot be treated as a purely legal matter, separate from the ideology through which a political community expressed its sense of identity. In turn, this also means that said ideology cannot be treated as a purely intellectual matter, existing apart from the political structures it legitimized.

In turn, this means that in order to explain how the multiethnic structure of the Frankish Empire, and thus the presence of Slavs in Pannonia, was managed in the 9th century, one has to analyze how the expression of those various ethnic identities, both in theory and practice, had developed up to that point.

Four processes of ethnogenesis will be presented as exemplary: those of the Franks, the Bavarians, the Avars, and the Slavs at large.

⁸⁰ Cristoph Haack, *Krieger der Karolinger: Kriegsdienste als Prozesse gemeinschaftlicher Organisation um 800*, Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde, vol. 115 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2020), 214-215, 228; Pohl, *Avars*, 220, 235-236; Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 377-378, 380-381, 386.

1.1. The Case of the Franks

The Frankish name appears in the 3rd century as a name by which the Romans started calling the people who lived along the Rhine, where they previously recognized the existence of several communities. It is unclear what caused this change of name. It seems that these Franks had neither a distinctive material culture, idiom, or political unity, and it is questionable to what extent did they themselves accept the Frankish identity.⁸¹ The most detailed analysis of the historical development of the Frankish identity was conducted by Helmut Reimitz who studied how different historiographical works from the 6th to the 9th century defined Frankish identity in various ways through differently formulated historical narratives.⁸² These different conceptions of Frankish identity will be presented in broad strokes in this chapter.

At the turn of the 5th to the 6th century Clovis unified the arguably Frankish polities that had formed by then in the northeast of Gaul and adopted Christianity aligned with Rome. Later he and his sons expanded the Realm by annexing other, quite diverse territories, such as Aquitaine and Burgundy.⁸³

The resulting polity under Clovis was inherently heterogeneous from its inception.⁸⁴ There was a law of Salic Franks, but it originally applied to a specific small group of Franks

⁸¹ Hans-Werner Goetz, “Gens, kings and kingdoms: the Franks,” in *Regna and Gentes: The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. Hans-Werner Goetz et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 308-318; Michael Schmauder, “The relationship between Frankish *gens* and *regnum*: a proposal based on the archaeological evidence,” in *Regna and Gentes: The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. Hans-Werner Goetz et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 277-281.

⁸² Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, passim.

⁸³ Hrvatska enciklopedija [Croatian encyclopedia], s. v. “Hildegard I.,” Hrvatska enciklopedija [Croatian encyclopedia], s. v. “Klotar I.,” Goetz, “Gens, kings and kingdoms,” 319-321.

⁸⁴ Goetz, “Gens, kings and kingdoms,” 321-322; Karl Ubl, *Sinnstiftungen eines Rechtsbuchs: Die Lex Salica im Frankenreich* (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2016), 54-55, 100-101.

and it defined them as only the uppermost in a spectrum of social classes, to the point that Patrick Wormald argued this law was intentionally conceived to encourage the adoption of Frankish identity by the Roman elite because it made Romans a lower class compared to the Franks.⁸⁵ There was no politically charged religious divide between the Franks and the Romans either, unlike the divide between Vandals and Romans in Africa or Visigoths and Romans in Spain where legislation during the 7th century defined a comprehensive identity of the Visigothic Realm at least theoretically.⁸⁶ Finally, as Helmut Reimitz argued, Clovis and his successors made no attempt on their part either to promote “the Franks” as the politically dominant group within their realm, keeping an equidistant relationship to all the communities under their rule whatever they may be.⁸⁷ Instead of there being a program “from above” to define “the Franks” and their role within the Realm, all such attempts during Merovingian rule came “from below.” As far as Gregory of Tours, writing his *Ten Books of History (DLH)* in the 6th century, was concerned, realm of the Merovingians was a purely dynastic entity established with Clovis’ coronation, in which the Franks played no special role. Instead, Gregory formulated a program whereby this Realm would evolve as a polity based on political Christianity, akin to the former Roman Empire.⁸⁸ It was not until the 7th century that

⁸⁵ Goetz, “*Gens, kings and kingdoms*,” 313-314, 327; Patrick Wormald, “The *Leges Barbarorum*: law and ethnicity in the post-Roman West,” in *Regna and Gentes: The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. Hans-Werner Goetz et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 31-33. Karl Ubl pointed out in his comprehensive analysis of the changing relevance of the Salic law within the Frankish Realm that the origin of the Salic law was obscure already in the 6th century: Ubl, *Sinnstiftungen eines Rechtsbuchs*, here 65-66.

⁸⁶ Goetz, “*Gens, kings and kingdoms*,” 330-331; Ubl, *Sinnstiftungen eines Rechtsbuchs*, 108-109. On the relations between Vandals and Romans, see J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, “*Gens into regnum: the Vandals*,” in *Regna and Gentes: The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. Hans-Werner Goetz et al. (Brill: Leiden, 2003), passim. On the relations between Visigoths and Romans, see Isabel Velázquez, “*Pro patriae gentisque Gothorum statu* (4th Council of Toledo, canon 75, a. 633),” in *Regna and Gentes: The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. Hans-Werner Goetz et al. (Brill: Leiden, 2003), passim.

⁸⁷ Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 446; cf. Ubl, *Sinnstiftungen eines Rechtsbuchs*, 134-135.

⁸⁸ Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 51, 56-65, 446-447; Ubl, *Sinnstiftungen eines Rechtsbuchs*, cf. 31, 134.

historiographical works began portraying the Franks as a distinct people and foundational to the Merovingian realm. These narratives emerged primarily as different communities within the realm sought to claim political power by emphasizing their Frankish identity.⁸⁹

Since Carolingians rose to power by appropriating the influence that had belonged to the Frankish kings of the Merovingian dynasty even before officially dethroning them, they needed to find a novel way to legitimize their newly forged status. Thus, the Carolingians were the first to instrumentalize the Frankish identity of the inhabitants of the realm of the Merovingians as a source of political legitimacy, for their own benefit.⁹⁰ Due to their rapid expansion, the Carolingians had to continuously redefine their ideological platform.⁹¹ Initially, they promoted an integralist concept of the Frankish Realm, portraying themselves as popular leaders who would ensure that all who considered themselves Franks could share in power.⁹² This phase lasted until the end of the 780s. The resistance by some communities to adopt such a Frankish identity meant that from the 790s the realm of the Carolingians was redefined as a multi-ethnic quasi-federalist realm with Christianity increasingly being the core element of shared identity of the Realm.⁹³ By the time of Louis the Pious it was meant to supersede all other political identities in a de-ethnicized Empire.⁹⁴ However, Louis the Pious tying his legitimacy to the personal quality of being an upstanding Christian meant that with his complex but changing plans for the partition of his Empire, meant to be safeguarded by religious oaths, he discredited himself and provided legitimacy to his opponents in the civil wars that broke

⁸⁹ Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 299, 326, 447-451.

⁹⁰ Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 451-453. However, Karl Ubl asserted that the Merovingian king Chilperic in the 6th century based his rule primarily on commitment to the Frankish identity while his kingdom was confined to the area where the Salic law emerged: Ubl, *Sinnstiftungen eines Rechtsbuchs*, 31, 120-127.

⁹¹ Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 333-334.

⁹² Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 298-299, 308, 309, 326, 333.

⁹³ Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 339, 343-348, 350-351, 353-359, 411-417.

⁹⁴ Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 380-382, 385, 417-422, 434-435, 437-438.

out.⁹⁵ By the end of these civil wars in the second quarter of the 9th century, the Frankish name had lost its appeal for broader political mobilization. It remained only as a narrow territorial designation for the people around Paris in the west and the River Main in the east.⁹⁶

1.2. The Case of the Bavarians

Unlike the Franks, the ethnogenesis of the Bavarians was relatively straightforward.

The Bavarian name appears certainly for the first time in the middle of the 6th century.⁹⁷ At the time the Eastern Goths ceded the territory to the north of the Alps to the Merovingian king of Austrasia who organized two new duchies.⁹⁸ To the west, *Alamanni*, under the Frankish rule for several decades, were organized into one duchy, thus receiving political unity for the first time in history.⁹⁹ To the east, a duchy was organized under the Baiuvarian name, encompassing parts of the former Roman provinces of Raetia and Noricum.¹⁰⁰ This contrasted sharply with the Gothic policy of maintaining Roman administrative boundaries.¹⁰¹ Whether Baiuvarians as such existed before the establishment of the duchy and whence they came is a matter of speculation.¹⁰²

⁹⁵ Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 422-425, 433-434.

⁹⁶ Goetz, "Gens, kings and kingdoms," 337-338; Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 432, 435-440.

⁹⁷ Hubert Fehr, "Am Anfang war das Volk?: Die Entstehung der bajuwarischen Identität als archäologisches und interdisziplinäres Problem," in *Archaeology of Identity / Archäologie der Identität*, ed. Walter Pohl and Mathias Mehofer (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), 226-227.

⁹⁸ Fehr, "Das Volk?," 229-230; Matthias Hardt, "The Bavarians," in *Regna and Gentes: The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. Hans-Werner Goetz et al. (Brill: Leiden, 2003), 437-439.

⁹⁹ Fehr, "Das Volk?," 224, 230.

¹⁰⁰ Fehr, "Das Volk?," 225.

¹⁰¹ Fehr, "Das Volk?," 229.

¹⁰² Fehr, "Das Volk?," 230; Hardt, "The Bavarians," 429-435, 441.

These Baiuvarians/Bavarians possessed a defined territory, had a distinct law, and were governed by a ducal dynasty of the Agilolfings.¹⁰³ Bavarian law, which governed the Bavarian Duchy and which was the source of ducal power, was promulgated by the Frankish king but otherwise the duke of the Bavarians governed the Duchy largely at his discretion.¹⁰⁴ In the sense of daily politics the Duchy was not involved in internal Merovingian dynastic disputes and largely lived a distinct social, political and cultural life. Thus, while the Duchy has throughout its existence been a part of the Frankish Realm, the distinct Bavarian identity became entrenched in it.¹⁰⁵ Profiling the Bavarians as a Christian people through hagiography in the 8th century might have been a strategic move to counteract Frankish claims of religion-based overlordship.¹⁰⁶

Suppression of Duke Tassilo III's upheaval in 788 marked the end of an autonomous Bavarian government but not the end of Bavarian individuality.¹⁰⁷ Although the institution of the Duke was abolished and the Treasury was absorbed into the Frankish treasury, the Bavarians continued to be recognized as a distinct people under the rule of Charlemagne. The Bavarian law was reaffirmed, and later under Louis the Pious Bavaria was acknowledged as one of the Empire's provinces.¹⁰⁸ Apart from an attempt by Louis the Pious to establish an

¹⁰³ Fehr, "Das Volk?," 229-231; Hardt, "The Bavarians," 445; Wormald, "The *Leges Barbarorum*: law and ethnicity in the post-Roman West," in *Regna and Gentes: The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. Hans-Werner Goetz et al. (Brill: Leiden, 2003), 40-41.

¹⁰⁴ Fehr, "Das Volk?," 229; Hardt, "The Bavarians," 445-448, 453-455, 460-461; Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 341-344; Wormald, "Leges Barbarorum," 40.

¹⁰⁵ Fehr, "Das Volk?," 231; Hardt, "The Bavarians," 453-461; Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 440-441, 443, 452-453.

¹⁰⁶ Diesenberger, "Hagiography," 213-223; Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 3, 384-385, 447-448.

¹⁰⁷ Fehr, "Das Volk?," 231; Hardt, "The Bavarians," 447, 455-456; Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 443.

¹⁰⁸ Hardt, "The Bavarians," 455; Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 339-345, 351-355, 411-414, 418, 420-422, 453-454; Wormald, "Leges Barbarorum," 44-46.

ethnically legitimized kingdom for his son Louis the German under the Bavarian name, it seems it is in this territorial sense that Bavaria was known in the forthcoming period.¹⁰⁹

1.3. *The Case of the Avars*

When analyzing the ethnogenesis of the Avars, the most relevant sources are of Byzantine and Frankish provenance. Therefore, reconstructing Avar ethnogenesis relies to a large extent on including these data into patterns generally known about the Eurasian steppe peoples as done by Walter Pohl.

European Avars were presumably descended from two steppe groups, the *Var* and the *Chunni*. After a serious political setback these two groups united under a third name (Avars) which had already been associated with great prestige on the Central Eurasian Steppe. Such appropriation of prestigious names and traditions by newly ascendant polities was common practice in this cultural milieu.¹¹⁰ Upon settling on the Middle Danube, Avars established a Khaganate that operated like other steppe empires. However, the Avar Khaganate uniquely integrated a sedentary population more extensively than its steppe counterparts.¹¹¹ According to Walter Pohl, the Byzantines broadly divided the society of the Khaganate into three ethnic communities which also functioned as social classes: the Avars, the Bulgars, and the Slavs.¹¹² The Avars were the narrowest political leadership of the Khaganate and the Byzantines never referred to anyone abandoning the Khaganate as an Avar. The Bulgars represented the part of the warrior elite that was not inextricably linked to the institution of the Khaganate and who

¹⁰⁹ Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 435-436.

¹¹⁰ Pohl, *Avars*, 38-48, 397.

¹¹¹ Pohl, *Avars*, 198-209, 245-246, 343.

¹¹² Pohl, *Avars*, 263, 397-399.

could act as Bulgars within different polities, even establishing large-scale independent polities under their own name. The Slavs, the lowest of these three communities, will be discussed further in Sub-chapter 3.3.¹¹³ However, the actual ethno-social structure was more complex than that as evidenced by the existence of other communities that do not clearly fit into any of these three social groups.¹¹⁴

The 7th and 8th centuries are characterized by a significant gap in written records regarding the Avar Khaganate, leaving much of its societal processes to be inferred from archeological evidence.¹¹⁵ During this period, Avar material culture became highly standardized, exhibiting only minor regional differences. This standardized culture was adopted by people across various economic strata within the Khaganate and by the late 8th century other distinct material cultures within the Khaganate, such as the Keszthely culture and the Prague culture associated with the Slavs, largely lost their earlier distinctive features.¹¹⁶ Cultural diversity will re-emerge with the onset of Frankish rule at the beginning of the 9th century, as presented in Sub-section 2.2.1.1. How to interpret cultural changes of the 8th century depends on general methodological assumptions, such as about the connection between material culture and ethnic identity.¹¹⁷ For instance, the analysis of large settlements that

¹¹³ Pohl, *Avars*, 117, 178, 208, 216-217, 397-399, and “A Non-Roman Empire in Central Europe: the Avars” in *Regna and Gentes: The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. Hans-Werner Goetz et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 579, 582-588.

¹¹⁴ Pohl, “A Non-Roman Empire,” 579-582.

¹¹⁵ Pohl, *Avars*, 10, 159, 198, 335-336, 344.

¹¹⁶ Falko Daim, “Avars and Avar archaeology: An introduction,” in *Regna and Gentes: The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. Hans-Werner Goetz et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 488; Krešimir Filipec, *Praishodište i/ili situacija: Slaveni i Hrvati - do zauzimanja nove domovine* [Primeval point of origin and/or a situation: Slavs and Croats - til the occupation of the new homeland] (Zagreb: Centar za ranosrednjovjekovna istraživanja, Katedra za opću srednjovjekovnu i nacionalnu arheologiju Odsjeka za arheologiju Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, Arheološki zavod Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 2020), 97-104; Pohl, *Avars*, 261, 344-347, 350-352.

¹¹⁷ Pohl, *Avars*, 351, 390. The fact that distribution of cultural features during the Migration Period does not by itself equate to a distribution of ethnic identities became apparent in Hungarian scholarship already at the

emerged at the time in the Khaganate indicates that living in settlements with sunken-floored buildings was not necessarily a universal characteristic of a single ethnic group such as Slavs.¹¹⁸

What is certain is that Franks, while noting the internal complexity and factional struggles within the Khaganate from 795 onwards, did not associate them with ethnic diversity, instead treating the Khaganate as an ethnically homogeneous entity.¹¹⁹ However, after a few years of Frankish dominance other ethnonyms start to appear in connection to the area around the former Khaganate.¹²⁰ After 822 Avars disappear as an organized political entity. Subsequently, none of the polities that grew in power in the broader Pannonian area during the 9th century did so under the Avar name.¹²¹

beginning of the 1970s: István Bóna, “Vierteljahrhundert,” *passim*. For recent proposals of alternative interpretations of distribution of cultural features, see: Falko Daim, “The Beauty of Theoretical Concepts and the Future of the Avars,” in *Avars and Slavs: Two Sides of a Belt Strap End — Avars on the North and South of the Khaganate: Proceedings of the international scientific conference held in Vinkovci 2020*, ed. Anita Rapan Papeša and Anita Dugonjić, *Collectanea Archaeologica Musei Archaeologici Zagrabensis*, vol. 5 (Vinkovci; Zagreb: Municipal Museum Vinkovci; Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, 2022), *passim*.

¹¹⁸ Miklós Takács, “Settlement Archaeology of the Avar Age in the Southern Parts of the Carpathian Basin – Similarities and Differences,” in *Avars and Slavs: Two Sides of a Belt Strap End — Avars on the North and South of the Khaganate: Proceedings of the international scientific conference held in Vinkovci 2020*, ed. Anita Rapan Papeša and Anita Dugonjić, *Collectanea Archaeologica Musei Archaeologici Zagrabensis*, vol. 5 (Vinkovci; Zagreb: Municipal Museum Vinkovci; Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, 2022), 131.

¹¹⁹ For example, Tudun who first approached Charlemagne with the proposal of submission is referred to as having great power “in the *gens* and realm of the Avars” (*in gente et regno Avarorum*): *Annales regni Francorum inde ab a. 741 usque ad a. 829, qui dicuntur Annales Laurissenses maiores et Einhardi*, ed. Friedrich Kurze, MGH SS rer. Germ. 6 (Hannover: Hahn, 1895), a. 795, 96. Tudun’s faction is at first also referred to as being “a large part of Avars” (*tudun...cum magna parte Avarorum*): *ibid.*, a. 796, 98. Although Alcuin in a letter of his on the occasion of the submission of the Khaganate mentions “*gentes* and peoples of the Huns” (*gentes populosque Hunorum...*), he does not name any of them individually: *Alcivini sive Albini epistolae*, ed. Ernst Dümmler, MGH Epp. 4 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1891), Ep. 110, 157. Cf. Pohl, *Avars*, 351-353, 384-387.

¹²⁰ For example, in 803 Tudun’s faction is described as consisting of both Slavs and “Huns” (*Zodan princeps Pannoniorum...Multi quoque Sclavi et Huni in eodem conventu fuerunt...*): *Annales Mettenses priores*, ed. B. de Simson, MGH SS rer. Germ. 10 (Hannover: Hahn, 1905), a. 803, 90. Cf. Pohl, *Avars*, 385-387, 394. For a more detailed analysis of the terminology in the first years of the 9th century, see Section 3.1.1.

¹²¹ Pohl, *Avars*, 389, 391-394.

1.4. The Case of the Slavs

When approaching the ethnogenesis of the Slavs, it is of drastic difference how one defines “the Slavs”. As Florin Curta noted, ancient Slavs were traditionally approached as a primordial group that merely required description rather than explanation.¹²² However, even describing what the ancient Slavs were represents a difficulty. For example, *Croatian Encyclopedia*’s article on “the Slavs,” which summarizes the traditional paradigm, begins thusly: “The Slavs, a group of related Indoeuropean tribes (connected through a shared so-called Proto-Slavic language; → SLAVIC LANGUAGES), from which present-day Slavic peoples began to form in the early Middle Ages. Depending on the geographic position and the direction of spreading, Slavs are divided into three main groups since the middle of the 1st millenium: *Southern Slavs* (...), *Eastern Slavs* (...) and *Western Slavs* (...).”¹²³ This sets up (ancient) Slavs as quite a loose entity which becomes even more apparent further from Encyclopedia’s approach to the topic: “the Slavs” were formed by pooling in of groups of various origin in the very broadly defined “primeval homeland of the Slavs” behind the Carpathians (from Croatian perspective) and even the “proto-Slavic language” (*praslavenski*), supposedly the defining feature of Slav-ness, might have originated elsewhere. Moreover, these Slavs cannot be identified with any single archeological culture. Rather, the concept of “the (ancient) Slavs” gains substantial historiographical significance by serving as a hypothetical point zero for the ethnogenesis of all subsequent Slavic peoples.¹²⁴

¹²² Curta, *Slavs in the Making*, 1, 210.

¹²³ Hrvatska enciklopedija [Croatian encyclopedia], s. v. “Slaveni.”

¹²⁴ Hrvatska enciklopedija [Croatian encyclopedia], s. v. “Slaveni;” Hrvatska enciklopedija [Croatian encyclopedia], s. v. “praslavenski.”

In the first quarter of the 21st century scholarly reliance on the concept of the “early Slavs” has been aggressively attacked by Florin Curta. He argued that the Byzantine and, later also, Frankish sources from the 6th to 8th centuries are either too likely to have been ideologically motivated or too non-specific to display a clear and fixed meaning to the term “Slavs” thus making attributing to it the meaning attributed to it by modern historiography methodologically unjustified. Instead, Curta advocated for post-modern approach whereby culture of East Central and Eastern Europe during those centuries should be studied separately from the evolution of the term “Slavs” without the need to bind the two together through the historiographical concept of “early Slavs.”¹²⁵

Ultimately, the difference between Curta and those who, while acknowledging Curta’s criticism, continue to rely on the concept of ancient Slavs, such as Krešimir Filipec or Walter Pohl, lies in their assumptions about whether a clear, commonly accepted meaning of the term “Slavs” existed between the 6th and 8th centuries.¹²⁶ In that sense “Slavs” would be considered an ethnographic category, as defined by Walter Pohl, rather than an ethnic identity.¹²⁷ This implies that studying the “ethnogenesis” of the “original” Slavs involves examining the development of cultural forms that would have led contemporary observers to categorize certain communities as Slavic. It is not about studying the emergence and ideological elaboration of a particular ethnonym by those who accepted that ethnonym as their own.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Curta, *Slavs in the Making*, 1-6, 207-212. For a greater elaboration of Curta’s positions and broader scholarly context, see Sub-chapter *History of Research*.

¹²⁶ Filipec, *Praishodište i/ili situacija*, 46-51, 92-94, 97-98, 115-116, 141; Pohl, *Avars*, 124-126.

¹²⁷ Pohl, “Introduction,” 15. For a distinction between ethnic groups and ethnographic categories, see Sub-chapter *Methodology*.

¹²⁸ Dzino, *Becoming Slav*, 1, 12-13, 211-218; Filipec, *Praishodište i/ili situacija*, 46-52.

What can be said with certainty on the topic of cultural development is that at the turn of the 6th to the 7th century fringes of the Carpathian Basin and the area around the Carpathians—from southeast of today’s Poland in the west to the River Dnieper and the Black Sea in the east, and the Danube in the south—were interwoven with cultural connections. These connections were for the most part most likely the result of migrations from those areas outside of the Carpathian Basin, likely organized by Avars, into areas that sometimes seem to have been uninhabited for decades.¹²⁹ There was a long-standing trend to try to associate all these communities with a defined archeological culture, such as the Prague culture identified with the “Sclavenes” as defined by Byzantine author Jordanes. This association was intended to track the presumed migration of Slavs from their presumed primeval homeland.¹³⁰ However, closer analysis showed that to be highly problematic. The “Prague culture” was very simple and possessed no unique features, yet communities associated with it still showed great regional variation even within this limited scope. Moreover, the nature of this culture made it exceedingly difficult to determine its predecessor culture and time of origin.¹³¹ Therefore, it is unclear whether the emergence of this “culture” preceded the movement of people caused by the establishment of Avar rule or, more importantly, the appearance of the Slavic name in the sources.¹³² Nevertheless, Filipec argued that the “cultural model” of these communities was similar enough and distinctive in the context of time that contemporary Byzantine observers

¹²⁹ Curta, *Slavs in the Making*, 3-4, 71-82, 129-133, 159-165, 173, 179-180, although Curta occasionally seems to contradict himself; Filipec, *Praishodište i/ili situacija*, 38-39, 81-86, 96-98, 102, 105, 111, 113-116, 132, 141-142, 146-149, 168.

¹³⁰ Curta, *Slavs in the Making*, 3-5, 10-11, 26-34, 47-51, 73-74, 78-79, 128, 134-135, 159, 163-164, 209-211; Filipec, *Praishodište i/ili situacija*, 38-39, 46, 82, 85-86, 95-102, 104-111, 117-118.

¹³¹ Curta, *Slavs in the Making*, 34-36, 70-82, 126-130, 133-134, 160, 182-187, 211; Filipec, *Praishodište i/ili situacija*, 39-40, 82-83, 85-86, 92-98, 102, 138-140.

¹³² Curta, *Slavs in the Making*, 4-6, 71, 74-78, 82, 129-133, 160; Filipec, *Praishodište i/ili situacija*, 93, 95, 98, 100-101, 138, 146-148.

designated it with the term “Slavs,” making the usage of this term historiographically justified.¹³³

Even with such a non-restrictive definition of Slav-ness, evidence of such Slavs in the area limited by the Danube River to north and east and mountain ranges of Dinarids and Alps to the south end west in the period before the end of the 8th century is extremely scant. Filipec even referred to them as “invisible Slavs.”¹³⁴ While objects that could be associated with the appearance of such Slavs appear relatively early in the area between the Danube and the Drava, where certain dubious written sources indicate the presence of the Slavs, they can just as well be linked with the remnants of the pre-Avar age population.¹³⁵ Meanwhile, on the southwestern edge of the said area, in what is today eastern Slovenia and northwestern Croatia, archeological evidence of a new culture appears towards the end of the 6th and in the 7th century after the area had seemingly been depopulated for several decades.¹³⁶ However, since no reliable written sources of the time address this area specifically, it remains uncertain whether members of those communities considered themselves Slavs or whether contemporary observers would have identified them as Slavs. This question is more a matter of philosophical speculation than scientific certainty.¹³⁷

¹³³ Filipec, *Praishodište i/ili situacija*, 36-38, 40-41, 46-49, 51-52, 85-87, 95-97, 117-119, 169-170.

¹³⁴ Filipec, *Praishodište i/ili situacija*, 39, 166.

¹³⁵ Curta, *Slavs in the Making*, 69-70; Filipec, *Praishodište i/ili situacija*, 38-39, 93, 95, 99-102, 138-141.

¹³⁶ Curta, *Slavs in the Making*, 72-73; Filipec, *Praishodište i/ili situacija*, 141-143, 146-147.

¹³⁷ Curta, *Slavs in the Making*, 81-82; Filipec, *Praishodište i/ili situacija*, 147-148; Pohl, *Avars*, 278.

2. Sources

2.1. Written Sources

While the written sources used in this thesis are summarily listed in the *Methodology* sub-chapter, in this sub-chapter I describe how these sources use different labels and how they describe, mention, or sometimes interpret ethnic groups and different people in relation to the Pannonian area. These sources, or parts thereof, can be chronologically divided into three groups: sources of the early 9th century (2.1.1), sources of the mid-9th century (2.1.2), and sources of the later 9th century and early 10th century (2.1.3). First group includes sources roughly composed or pertaining to the period 791-837 and the third group sources for the period 859-907, with the second group encompassing the sources of the intervening period. The main reason for this grouping is that there is a temporal gap between a charter of 837 and a charter of 859, during which there is no charter evidence except for two texts of the mid-840s. This divide coincides with two major clusters of narrative sources: one cluster narrates the reigns of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, while another portrays the increasing political fragmentation of the Carolingian Realm and the increasing political role of episcopacy in the last third of the 9th century.

2.1.1. Written Sources of the Early 9th Century

The most important written source related with this time period are the *Royal Frankish Annals* (*Annales regni Francorum*, *ARF*).¹³⁸ The *ARF* was also the source of information on

¹³⁸ *Annales regni Francorum inde ab a. 741 usque ad a. 829, qui dicuntur Annales Laurissenses maiores et Einhardi*, ed. Friedrich Kurze, MGH SS rer. Germ. 6 (Hannover: Hahn, 1895); Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 336.

the events in the Pannonian area for Einhard's *Life of Charles the Emperor* and the Astronomer's *Life of Emperor Louis*.¹³⁹ Although the emergence of the contiguous canonical text of the *ARF* covering the period 714-829, and its presumed revised version, the so-called *Einhard's Annals* (*Annales Einhardi, AE*), is a disputed process, individual sections that were eventually incorporated into it were most probably written contemporaneously to the period discussed in this thesis.¹⁴⁰ The first section of the *ARF* (741-788) was most probably written in the immediate aftermath of the deposition of the Bavarian Duke Tassilo III in 788.¹⁴¹ The last section (813-829) was most probably composed in imperial court circles contemporaneously to the events it described, as its composition stopped abruptly with the beginning of upheavals against Emperor Louis the Pious in 830.¹⁴² The emergence of the intermediate sections (788-813) is far less clear.¹⁴³ However, they were most likely at least based on the texts that emerged

¹³⁹ *Einhardi Vita Karoli Magni*, ed. G Pertz, MGH SS rer. Germ. 25 (Hannover: Hahn, 1911) c. 13, 15-17; Roger Collins, "The 'Reviser' Revisited: Another Look at the Alternative Version of the *Annales regni Francorum*," in *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History*, ed. Alexander Callander Murray (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 197, 206-213; Thomas F. X. Noble, "The Astronomer, The Life of Emperor Louis: Introduction," in *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious: The Lives by Einhard, Notker, Ermoldus, Thégan, and the Astronomer*, translated with introductions and annotations by Thomas F. X. Noble (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 221; Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 336-337, 339; cf. Collins, "The 'Reviser' Revisited," 206-213; Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 420-422.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Collins, "The 'Reviser' Revisited," passim; Jennifer R. Davis, "Reframing the Carolingian Annals," *The Medieval Chronicle* 14 (2022): 196-201; Robert A.H. Evans, "A secular shift in Carolingian history writing?," *Early Medieval Europe* 29, no. 1 (2021): 40-43, 51-53, and "Christian Language and the Frankish 'Minor' Annals: Narrative, History and Theology in the Late Eighth Century," *The Medieval Chronicle* 14 (2022): 166-167, 178-179; Friedrich Kurze, "Über die karolingischen Reichsannalen von 741-829 und ihre Überarbeitung 1: Die handschriftliche Überlieferung," *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 19, no. 2 (1894): 295-339, and "Zur Überlieferung der Karolingischen Reichsannalen und ihrer Überarbeitung," *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 28 (1903): 619-669; Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 338, 410-420, 422-426, 428-430, 441; Tibor Živković, "The 'Original' and the 'Revised' *Annales Regni Francorum*," *Исторички часопис / Historical Review* 59 (2010): passim.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Collins, "The 'Reviser' Revisited," 192-194, 197; Davis, "Reframing the Carolingian Annals," 198-201; Kurze, "Über die karolingischen Reichsannalen 1," 297-300, and "Zur Überlieferung," 629, 634; Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 339-345.

¹⁴² Cf. Kurze, "Über die karolingischen Reichsannalen 1," 321; 414-420, 422-426, 431.

¹⁴³ Cf. Collins, "The 'Reviser' Revisited," passim; Davis, "Reframing the Carolingian Annals," 199-200; Kurze, "Über die karolingischen Reichsannalen 1," 300-307, 321-322; idem, "Über die karolingischen Reichsannalen von 741-829 und ihre Überarbeitung 3: Die zweite Hälfte und die Überarbeitung," *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 21 (1896): 11-49; idem, "Zur Überlieferung," 638-645; Reimitz, *Frankish*

during that time.¹⁴⁴ Namely, during this period a series of annalistic works called the *Carolingian minor annals* was composed.¹⁴⁵ They mostly provided the same narrative as the *ARF* and had large sections of overlapping text, but through their differences they could express unique perspectives.¹⁴⁶ Although for the most part they are much terser than the *ARF*, some *Carolingian minor annals*, such as the *Annals of Lorsch* (*Annales Laurehamenses*, *AL*) and the *Alamannic Annals* (*Annales Alamannici*, *AA*), contain extensive reports on some events and sometimes include information absent from the *ARF*.¹⁴⁷ First section (688-805) of yet another annalistic work, *Older Metz Annals* (*Annales Mettenses priores*, *AMpr*), probably also originated during this period.¹⁴⁸ A part of the *ARF* for the period 806-829 was added onto it, followed by a unique continuation of the entry for 829 and a unique entry for 830.¹⁴⁹

Identity, 338, 410-419; G. Waitz, "Annales Maximiniani," *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 5 (1880): 497-499.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Collins, "The 'Reviser' Revisited," 198-199; Davis, "Reframing the Carolingian Annals," note 3 on page 184, 193, 196-197; Ildar H. Garipzanov, "Annales Guelferbytani: Changing Perspectives of a Local Narrative," in *Zwischen Niederschrift und Wiederschrift: Frühmittelalterliche Hagiographie und Historiographie im Spannungsfeld von Kompendienüberlieferung und Editionstechnik*, ed. Richard Corradini and Max Diesenberger (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), 108-109; Kurze, "Über die karolingischen Reichsannalen 3," 49; Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 412-414; Waitz, "Annales Maximiniani," 499-500.

¹⁴⁵ Davis, "Reframing the Carolingian Annals," 185-186, 197-198, 202; Evans, "Christian Language," 159-160; Garipzanov, "Annales Guelferbytani," 105-107; Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 360-361; cf. Bart van Hees, "Minor Annals and Frankish History Writing," *The Medieval Chronicle* 14 (2022): 92-96, 101-102, 105-107.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Davis, "Reframing the Carolingian Annals," 185-197, 200-205; Evans, "Christian Language," passim; Garipzanov, "Annales Guelferbytani," passim; Hees, "Minor Annals," 92-96, 103-107; Sally Lamb, "Evidence from Absence: Omission and Inclusion in Early Medieval Annals," *The Medieval Chronicle* 7 (2011): 46-48; B. von Simson, "Zur Translatio s. Alexandri und zu den Annales Maximiniani," *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 25 (1900): 187; Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 360-363; Waitz, "Annales Maximiniani," passim.

¹⁴⁷ Davis, "Reframing the Carolingian Annals," passim; Evans, "Christian Language," 171-172, 175-177, 179; Hees, "Minor Annals," passim; Garipzanov, "Annales Guelferbytani," 113; cf. Lamb, "Evidence from Absence," 46-47. For the context of the emergence of *AL*, see Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 351-368. For *AA* generally, see Roland Zingg, "Geschichtsbewusstsein im Kloster Rheinau im 10. Jahrhundert: Der Codex Madoetiensis f-9/176, die Annales Laubacenses und die Annales Alamannici," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 69 (2013), 479-502.

¹⁴⁸ Collins, "The 'Reviser' Revisited," 195; Davis, "Reframing the Carolingian Annals," 197; Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 367-375, 381-384, 410, 428.

¹⁴⁹ Collins, "The 'Reviser' Revisited," 195. For a dating of the whole text to ca. 830, see Collins, "The 'Reviser' Revisited," 196-197, 213; Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 420-421, 426, 431-432.

Of all these annals other than the *ARF*, the *Alamannic Annals*, specifically their *Murbach Continuation* (*Annalium Alamannicorum continuatio Murbacensis*, *AACM*), are the most relevant for the Pannonian area. The content of the *AACM* seems to be based around the war against the Avars since that is the topic of the first (for 790) and last (for 799) entry with the final year 800 having no entry.¹⁵⁰ However, *AACM* significantly differs from all the other contemporary annals in the portrayal of the war. While other annals emphatically describe 790 as a year of peace for the Franks and 791 as the dramatic beginning of the war against the Avars, the *AACM* mentions a great campaign of Franks, Saxons and Slavs led by Charlemagne against the Avars already in 790.¹⁵¹ Of the other sources, only *Fragmentum annalium Chesnii*, a variant of a part of the *AL*, mentions Charlemagne dispatching the largest part of his army to Bavaria against the “Huns” (Avars) that year.¹⁵² The *AACM* also reports on fights against Avars in 797 and 798 which are not mentioned in other sources either, except for *Annales Guelferbytani* (*AG*) which mention the campaign in 797; meanwhile, the *ARF* mentions Charlemagne receiving an Avar delegation that year.¹⁵³ However, analyzing the reasons for such a difference between the *AACM* and other annals would greatly exceed the scope of this thesis. Much more relevant is the usage of terms for Avars. Fights with Avars are mentioned in entries for seven years (790-791, 795-799). In 799 only the death of official Gerold is reported who is otherwise known as being killed during a campaign against the Avars.¹⁵⁴ In 791

¹⁵⁰ *Annalium Alamannicorum continuatio Murbacensis*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS 1 (Hannover: Hahn, 1826), 47-48; cf. Davis, “Reframing the Carolingian Annals,” 197.

¹⁵¹ *Annales Laureshamenses, Alamannici, Guelferbytani et Nazariani*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS 1 (Hannover: Hahn, 1826), aa. 790-791, 34, 44-45, 47; *ARF*, aa. 790-791, 86-91. For a different opinion, see Wolfram, *Conversio*, 113.

¹⁵² *Fragmentum annalium Chesnii* ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS 1 (Hannover: Hahn, 1826), a. 790, 34.

¹⁵³ *AACM*, aa. 797-798, 48; *ARF*, a. 797, 102-103.

¹⁵⁴ *AACM*, a. 799, 48; *ARF*, a. 799, 108-109.

Charlemagne is reported as devastating the “realm of the Huns” (*Hunnorum regnum*).¹⁵⁵ In 795, when the “Vandals are conquered” (*Wandali conquisiti sunt*), Tudun arriving at Charlemagne’s court is described as “duke from Pannonia” (*Rotanus/Zotanus dux de Pannonia*), similar to the entry for 803 in the *AMpr* (*Zodan princeps Pannoniorum*).¹⁵⁶ In a total of five entries (790, 795-798) the Avars are referred to as Vandals (*Wandali*) in clear distinction to the Slavs. Thus, in 790 Slavs are Frankish allies against the Avars and in 797 Slavs and Avars are the targets of two different campaigns. The so-called *Wessobrunn Glosses* (*Wessobrunner Glossen*) of the 9th century also seem to indicate “Vandals” as a synonym for “Avars.” However, by the high and late Middle Ages “Vandals” became one of the synonyms for Slavs instead. Roland Steinacher argues that this shift originated in 9th-century Bavaria as part of an effort to ideologically strengthen the solidarity between Bavarians and Slavs through an appeal to common ancestry.¹⁵⁷ The ambiguous use of these terms at the turn of the 8th and the 9th centuries is supported by Maximilian Diesenberger’s suggestion that placing the “peoples of Huns” (*gentes Hunnorum*) in the “realm of the Vandals” (*regnum Wandalorum*), i.e., the realm of the Slavs, in the night office of Saint Emmeram indicated a perception of flipped power relations between the Slavs and the Avars at the time.¹⁵⁸

Another short annalistic work that likely also emerged in the early 9th century are the *Annales Sithienses* (*AS*). Despite its small size, the *AS* is very important as a possible source for the only explicit reference to Duke Ljudevit as a Slav in the Frankish sources other than the

¹⁵⁵ *AACM*, a. 791, 47.

¹⁵⁶ *AACM*, a. 795, 47; *Annales Mettenses priores*, ed. B. de Simson, MGH SS rer. Germ. 10 (Hannover: Hahn, 1905), a. 803, 90.

¹⁵⁷ Steinacher, “Wenden,” passim.

¹⁵⁸ Diesenberger, “Hagiography,” 224-227.

Annals of Fulda (*Annales Fuldenses*, *AF*) and Thegan's *Deeds of Emperor Louis*.¹⁵⁹ The relationship between the *AS* and the *AF* had been the topic of controversy at the end of the 19th century. Georg Waitz had suggested that the *AS* was an epitome of the *AF*. In contrast, Bernhard von Simson, Isaac Bernays and Friedrich Kurze suggested that the *AS* was a source for the *AF* while Ernst Dünzelmann suggested that the *AS* was partly a source for the *AF* and the *AF* partly a source for the *AS*.¹⁶⁰ Although Waitz's opinion seems to be dominant in current scholarship, Simson's opinion seems to be more likely because the *AS* does not contain any information which corresponds between the *AF* and the *Chronicon Laurissense*, latter presumably being one of the sources for the *AF*.¹⁶¹ Such a consistent exclusion would be unlikely if the *AS* were based on the *AF*.¹⁶²

At the turn of the 8th to the 9th century, legislation was enacted to order the political situation in the Pannonian area. The most notable example is the *Double Capitulary of Diedenhofen/Thionville* of 805.¹⁶³ One of the most interesting parts of the capitulary is chapter 7 of the second part "on the traders travelling to the lands of Slavs and Avars" (*De negotiatoribus qui partibus Sclavorum et Avarorum pergunt*). It lists, from north to south, the

¹⁵⁹ *AF*, a. 819, 21; *Annales Sithienses*, [ed. G. Waitz], MGH SS 13 (Hannover: Hahn, 1881), a. 819, 37; Theganus, *Gesta Hludowici imperatoris*, c. 27, 216-217 does not explicitly call Ljudevit a Slav but it does describe him as a leader of the eastern Slavs.

¹⁶⁰ Isaac Bernays, "Zur Kritik karolingischer Annalen," Diss., Strasbourg 1883, 122-126; Friedrich Kurze, "Die Annales Fuldenses," *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 36 (1911): 357, 359, 370, 378; idem, "Über die Annales Fuldenses," *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 17 (1892): 109-116; idem, "Zur Überlieferung," 656, 669; B. von Simson, "Ueber die Annales Sithienses," *Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte* 4 (1864): passim.

¹⁶¹ Kurze, "Über die Annales Fuldenses," 110; Simson, "Ueber die Annales Sithienses," 581-582; W. Wattenbach, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter bis zur Mitte des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts I* (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, 1904), 245-247. For current scholarly consensus on the matter, cf. *Geschichtsquellen des deutschen Mittelalters*, Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities, "*Annales Sithienses*," last modified September 10, 2019, <https://www.geschichtsquellen.de/werk/415>.

¹⁶² Bernays, "Zur Kritik karolingischer Annalen," 126; Kurze, "Über die Annales Fuldenses," 110; Simson, "Ueber die Annales Sithienses," 580-583; Wattenbach, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, 246-247.

¹⁶³ Glatthaar, "Die drei Fassungen," 474-477. The dating of the earlier *Bavarian Capitulary* is disputed, making it difficult to place in a proper historical context. Consequently, it will not be discussed in this thesis.

market sites beyond which military equipment could not be transported for trade. The southernmost site on the list is Lorch on the left (Bavarian) bank of the River Enns, the historical boundary between Bavaria and the Avar Khaganate.¹⁶⁴ The purpose of these restrictions was likely not to prevent Slavs and Avars from gaining Frankish weaponry entirely. Rather, it aimed to make the acquisition of such equipment conditional on compliance with Frankish interests, as explained in the *Methodology* sub-chapter, rather than allowing it to be freely available on the open market. Notably, the capitulary does not consider the possibility of land-based trade into the Carpathian Basin from Italy.

In addition to these lengthier texts, several shorter texts also originated from this period. Among them are two texts related to the campaign against Duke Ljudevit in 819: a last will of a fighter who goes on a campaign *in Pannonia* and a brief note on a book about the lives of saints stating that its composition was begun *in Hunia*.¹⁶⁵

More significant than the two aforementioned texts are six royal charters that confirm older grants or grant new land at various places from the Enns to the Vienna Woods to various ecclesiastical institutions (monasteries of Niederaltaich and Kremsmünster, Archdiocese of Salzburg and its suffragan dioceses of Passau and Regensburg). Charters to Niederaltaich (811, 830), Passau (823) and Regensburg (832 – mentions local Slavs) refer to these estates as being located in the Avar land and invoke Charlemagne's conquest of it, charter to Passau of 823 explicitly invoking the Christianization of its population. The charter to Kremsmünster of 828 merely locates the estate into the *pagus Grunzwiti* and mentions local Slavs, while the charter to Salzburg of 837 uniquely places it in *Sclavinia*.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ *Capitulare duplex*, §7, 133.

¹⁶⁵ Kos, *Gradivo*, Št. 56, 50.

¹⁶⁶ Kos, *Gradivo*, Št. 40, 40, Št. 74, 65, Št. 97, 85-86, Št. 106, Št. 110, 93-94, Št. 121, 100-101.

2.1.2. Written Sources of the Mid-9th Century

The middle of the 9th century offers very few written sources pertaining to the Pannonian area. As Steffen Patzold noted, annals written during the middle third of the 9th century, sometimes as a continuation of the *ARF*, were in effect local or personal initiatives.¹⁶⁷ For example, the monk Rudolph of Fulda presumably wrote the second part of the *AF* covering the period 838-863 as a continuation of a historiographic compilation spanning the period 714-838.¹⁶⁸ Rudolph's part was probably written contemporaneously because it is preserved in two renditions, one of which reports on the progress and another which reports on the final outcome of the proceedings against heretic Gottschalk in 848. The *Annals of St-Bertin* (*Annales Bertiniani*, *AB*), in a section written by Prudentius of Troyes in 849, also mention Gottschalk and his travels through various lands, including *Pannonia*.¹⁶⁹ Additionally, Rudolph's part of the *AF* reports on the rule of Carloman, son of Louis the German, at the "Pannonian frontier" (*Pannonici limitis*).¹⁷⁰

Unlike the *AF*, a work which can hardly be dated but whose historiographical importance is most strongly related to the mid-9th century are the *Old Salzburg Annals* (*Annales Iuvavenses antiqui*, *AJant*). Harry Bresslau reconstructed *AJant* as a hypothetical common source for a series of other historiographical works, four of which are relevant for this thesis,

¹⁶⁷ Steffen Patzold, *Episcopus: Wissen über Bischöfe im Frankenreich des späten 8. bis frühen 10. Jahrhunderts* (Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2008), 361-363.

¹⁶⁸ *AF*, aa. 838-863, 29-61; Patzold, *Episcopus*, 363-364.

¹⁶⁹ *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. G. Waitz, MGH SS rer. Germ. 5 (Hannover: Hahn, 1883), a. 849, 36; *AF*, a. 848, 38; Patzold, *Episcopus*, 361-362; cf. Richard Corradini, "Die Annales Fuldenses – Identitätskonstruktionen im ostfränkischen Raum am Ende der Karolingerzeit," in *Texts and Identities in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Richard Corradini et al. (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), 132-133; Kurze, "Die Annales Fuldenses," 347-350, 366-367.

¹⁷⁰ *AF*, a. 861, 55.

though none of them contain the same extent of information.¹⁷¹ For example, only *Greatest Salzburg Annals* (*Annales Iuvavenses maximi*, *AJmax*), *Auctarium Garstense* (*AuGa*) and *Aventin's Excerpts* (*Excerpta Aventini ex Annalibus Iuvavensibus antiquis derivati*, *EA*) address the battle of Brezalauspurc in 907.¹⁷² Meanwhile, only *Greater Annals of Saint Emmeram* (*Annales sancti Emmerammi Ratisponensis maiores*, *AsEmai*), along with *AJmax* and *EA*, reference Ljudevit's rebellion 819-823 but they do not associate it with any territorial or ethnic terms.¹⁷³ Therefore, these references will not be analyzed further in this thesis. Furthermore, only *AJmax* and *AuGa*, in addition to *Conversio*, mention the campaign against Duke Ratimir on the Sava, dating it to 838. Although these sources do not associate Ratimir with any territorial or ethnic designations, they emphatically note that he was fighting the Bavarians. This reflects more on Bavarian self-perception than on the perception of the Pannonian area; hence, these reports will not be analyzed in this thesis either.¹⁷⁴ Lastly, among these annals, only *EA* and *AuGa* mention the takeover of the Eastern March by Carloman in 856.¹⁷⁵ Bresslau argued that *EA* and *AuGa*, both very late sources, ultimately derive the term "Eastern March" (*marchia orientalis*) from the hypothetical *AJant*, indicating the term's 9th-century usage.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷¹ For a detailed reconstruction of *AJant*, see H. Bresslau, *Die ältere salzburger Annalistik* (Berlin, Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1923).

¹⁷² *Auctarium Garstense*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS 9 (Hannover: Hahn, 1851), a. 906, 565, a. 908, 565; *Continuatio altera Annalium Iuvavensium maximorum*, [ed. Adolf Hofmeister], MGH SS 30,2 (Leipzig: Karl: W. Hiersemann, 1934), a. 907, 742; *Excerpta Aventini ex Annalibus Iuvavensibus antiquis derivati*, [ed. Adolf Hofmeister], MGH SS 30,2 (Leipzig: Karl: W. Hiersemann, 1934), a. 907, 744; cf. Bresslau, *Die ältere salzburger Annalistik*, 34 on dating of the battle in *AuGa*.

¹⁷³ *Annales Iuvavenses maximi*, [ed. Adolf Hofmeister], MGH SS 30,2 (Leipzig: Karl: W. Hiersemann, 1934), a. 823, 740; *Annales sancti Emmerammi maiores*, [ed. Adolf Hofmeister], MGH SS 30,2 (Leipzig: Karl: W. Hiersemann, 1934), a. 819, 739, aa. 820-821, 741; *EA*, a. 819, 743.

¹⁷⁴ *AuGa*, a. 838, 564; *Continuatio Annalium Iuvavensium maximorum*, [ed. Adolf Hofmeister], MGH SS 30,2 (Leipzig: Karl: W. Hiersemann, 1934), a. 838, 740; Bresslau, *Die ältere salzburger Annalistik*, 19.

¹⁷⁵ *AuGa*, a. 856, 565; *EA*, a. 854, a. 856, 744.

¹⁷⁶ Bresslau, *Die ältere salzburger Annalistik*, 28-30, 34, 42-43, 46-47.

Additionally, there is one royal charter and a brief regest of a lost charter from the mid-9th century. The charter from 844 grants a piece of land “in the field where the Ratbod’s and Rihhari’s counties border” whereas the regest briefly mentions the donation of an estate along the River *Valchau* to Pribina in 846.¹⁷⁷ Although the identification of this river is disputed, all the interpretations put that river in the Pannonian area.

2.1.3. Written Sources of the Later 9th Century and Early 10th Century

As royal authority became discredited over the course of the 9th century, the episcopacy began to assert itself as the key force in maintaining the political stability of the Realm. According to Patzold, during the last third of the 9th century individual bishops appropriated existing annalistic projects, such as the *AF*, to express their political agendas through historical narratives of recent events, targeting various audiences.¹⁷⁸ Particularly relevant for the Pannonian area are the *Bavarian Continuations* to the *AF*, covering the period 882-901. Patzold suggests these were successively composed under the auspices of bishops associated with king Arnulf of Carantania’s circle – Aspert of Regensburg, Wiching of Passau and Richar of Passau.¹⁷⁹ These continuations narrate the conflict among the aristocracy in Pannonia, reign of Arnulf of Carantania there, and mention Duke Braslav’s activities.¹⁸⁰ Similarly, in the last third of the 9th century a section covering the years from 861 or 863 to 873 was added to the *Annals of Xanten* (*Annales Xantenses*, *AX*) under auspices of archbishop Willibert of Cologne. Patzold

¹⁷⁷ Kos, *Gradivo*, Št. 131, 107-108, Št. 133, 109.

¹⁷⁸ Garipzanov, “Communication of Authority,” 66-68; Patzold, *Episcopus*, 361-368, 382-383, 390-398, 406-411.

¹⁷⁹ *Annalium Fuldensium continuationes Altahenses*, ed. Friedrich Kurze, MGH SS rer. Germ. 7 (Hannover: Hahn, 1891), aa. 897-901, 131-135; *Annalium Fuldensium continuatio Ratisbonensis*, ed. Friedrich Kurze, MGH SS rer. Germ. 7 (Hannover: Hahn, 1891), aa. 882-897, 107-131; Patzold, *Episcopus*, 364-365, 410, 557-561.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Patzold, *Episcopus*, 552-561.

describes this as “the most comprehensive annalistic work of the Middle Ages under episcopal control.”¹⁸¹ The entry for 869 in the *AX* summarizes the political situation in “the realm of late Charlemagne” listing the regions ruled by individual Carolingian kings, including Louis the German’s rule “in the East and the Slavs” (*in oriente et Sclavis*).¹⁸²

A non-annalistic work, presumably meant to express an episcopal platform, is *The Treatise on the Conversion of the Bavarians and the Carantanians* (*Libellus de conversione Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*), commonly referred to as *Conversio*.¹⁸³ The *Conversio* was most probably composed in 870 for presentation to the East Frankish King Louis the German at a synod convened to resolve the jurisdictional conflict between the Archdiocese of Salzburg and Methodius, who was engaged in missionary activities among the Slavs.¹⁸⁴ Since the terse nature of the *AJant*, presumably being composed in Salzburg, would have made it unsuitable for expressing the archiepiscopal policy statement, unlike the case in Mainz or Reims, composing a new historiographic work probably seemed more appropriate in Salzburg. This work, in 14 chapters, chronologically details the accomplishments of the Diocese—since 798 Archdiocese—of Salzburg in the Christianization of Bavaria (chapters 1-2), Carantania (chapters 3-9) and Lower Pannonia (chapters 10-14).¹⁸⁵ However, in the composition of the work chapters 3-14 are treated as a single whole because the Christianization of Lower Pannonia is treated as a part of the Christianization of the “Slavs called Carantanians, and their neighbors” (*Sclavi qui dicuntur Quarantani et confines eorum*).¹⁸⁶ Similarly, term “Sclavinia”

¹⁸¹ *das umfangreichste Annalenwerk des Mittelalters unter bischöflicher Kontrolle*, Patzold, *Episcopus*, 362-363.

¹⁸² *AX*, a. 869, 27.

¹⁸³ On the name of the text, see Wolfram, *Conversio*, 40.

¹⁸⁴ Wolfram, *Conversio*, 22-27, 202.

¹⁸⁵ Wolfram, *Conversio*, 46-47, 275.

¹⁸⁶ Wolfram, *Conversio*, 40-41, 46.

is presented as an umbrella term for Carantania and Lower Pannonia in chapters 7 and 8, along with presumably “lands of the Slavs” (*partes Sclavorum*), discussing the beginnings of Salzburg’s ecclesiastical jurisdiction in Lower Pannonia.¹⁸⁷ In chapter 10 term “eastern tract” (*plaga orientalis*) refers to the frontier area at the turn of the 8th and the 9th century that presumably includes *Sclavinia*.¹⁸⁸ Finally, in chapter 14 term “Eastern Pannonia” (*orientalis Pannonia*) appears, presumably as a synonym for Lower Pannonia.¹⁸⁹ It is questionable how contemporary are these terms to the periods they describe, as the author of the *Conversio* curated historical information to support the notion of 75 years of unbroken and successful jurisdiction of Salzburg over Lower Pannonia.¹⁹⁰

In addition to works focused on episcopal policies, the last third of the 9th century also saw the production of several historiographical works that are pertinent to this thesis due to their use of geographical terminology related to the partitions of the Frankish Empire. Other than the previously mentioned work *AX*, these texts are non-annalistic. They are the *Francorum regum historia* (*FRH*) and the *Continuation to the Erchanbert’s Breviary* (*Erchanberti breviarium regum Francorum – Monachi Augiensis continuatio a. 840-881*, *EBRFMAC*).¹⁹¹ The latter was most probably authored by Notker the Stammerer best known for his *Deeds of Emperor Charles the Great*.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁷ Wolfram, *Conversio*, 149, 151, 154, 158-162, cc. 7-8, 68-71.

¹⁸⁸ Wolfram, *Conversio*, c. 10, 72-75.

¹⁸⁹ Wolfram, *Conversio*, c. 14, 78-81.

¹⁹⁰ Wolfram, *Conversio*, 22, 28-33, 40-41, 159-162, 185, c. 14, 78-81. For the ambiguous distinction between the terms “Slavs” and “Carantanians,” see Wolfram, *Conversio*, 109.

¹⁹¹ Geschichtsquellen des deutschen Mittelalters, Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities, “*Commemoratio genealogiae domni Arnulfi episcopi*,” last modified July 19, 2022, <https://www.geschichtsquellen.de/werk/5328>; *EBRFMAC*, 329-330; *Francorum regum historia*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS 2 (Hannover: Hahn, 1829), 324-325; Wilhelm Levison, “Zur Textgeschichte der Vision Kaiser Karls III.,” *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 27 (1902): 494-497.

¹⁹² Roland Zingg, “Notker Balbulus als Fortsetzer des Erchanbert-Breviars: mit Edition,” *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 74, no. 1 (2018): passim.

Aside from these narrative texts, 14 charters pertaining to the Pannonian area were issued between 859 and 893. These can be categorized into seven distinct groups based on how they contextualize the estates within a broader geographical framework:

1. **Pannonia References:** Three texts localize the estates solely by referencing Pannonia.¹⁹³
2. **Sclavinia References:** One text localizes the estates exclusively by mentioning *Sclavinia*.¹⁹⁴ Additionally, Kocelj's donation of estates on the banks of Lake Balaton to the Diocese of Freising in 861 (Nr. 174), made in Regensburg, can be included in this category. This document refers to Kocelj as *comes de Sclavis*.¹⁹⁵ Although Wolfram interprets this phrase as "Count of Slavs," it can also be understood as a territorial designation.¹⁹⁶ The term "*Sclavi*" was used in this way in the *Chronicle of Fredegar* (CF) and more contemporaneously in the *AX*, albeit referring to the Slavs north of the Carpathian Basin.¹⁹⁷
3. **Grunzwiti References:** One charter localizes the estates solely by referring to the area known as *Grunzwiti*.¹⁹⁸
4. **"East" References:** Another charter localizes the estates only by referencing the East.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹³ Kos, *Gradivo*, Št. 160, 127, Št. 186, 143-144, Št. 193, 149.

¹⁹⁴ Kos, *Gradivo*, Št. 306, 232-233.

¹⁹⁵ Kos, *Gradivo*, Št. 174, 137.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Wolfram, *Conversio*, 199.

¹⁹⁷ *AX*, a. 869, 27; Florin Curta, "Slavs in Fredegar and Paul the Deacon: medieval *gens* or 'scourge of God'?", *Early Medieval Europe* 6, no. 2 (1997): 153.

¹⁹⁸ Kos, *Gradivo*, Št. 277, 211.

¹⁹⁹ Kos, *Gradivo*, Št. 265, 201-202.

5. **Territorial Administrator References:** Two charters explicitly reference territories defined by their administrators. A charter from the same year, 860, transferring Duke Pribina's property to the Diocese of Freising, can be added to this group as it locates Pribina's estates "in his duchy" (*in suo ducatu*).²⁰⁰
6. **Layered Territorial Divisions:** Two charters localize the estates by referencing multiple levels of territorial division.²⁰¹
7. **Non-Specific Localization:** Lastly, two charters do not specify the territorial unit in which the estates are situated, merely individual place names or names of nearby rivers.²⁰²

Following these earlier texts, two texts from the early 10th century seemingly indicate orderly functioning of the Frankish political and economic system just before the battle of *Brezalauspurc* in 907. These are a property exchange contract presumably concluded in 903 and the *Raffelstetten Customs Regulations* (*Raffelstettener Zollordnung, RZO*; originally published in the MGH as *Leges portorii*).²⁰³

In the contract, Chor Bishop Madalwin and Burckhard, bishop of Passau, exchange some properties. Madalwin transfers a combination of movable and immovable properties. Among the immovable properties, those situated between the Rivers Enns and Url are specified as being within Arbo's county, while the estate in Lillienbrunn is identified as being *in Pannonia*. In return, Burkchard gives only immobile property. Most of it is located in a series

²⁰⁰ Kos, *Gradivo*, Št. 169, 131-132, Št. 170, 132-133, Št. 297, 227.

²⁰¹ Kos, *Gradivo*, Št. 208, 156, Št. 288, 216-217.

²⁰² Kos, *Gradivo*, Št. 172, 134-136, Št. 276, 210.

²⁰³ Kos, *Gradivo*, Št. 335, 260, Št. 341, 263-266; *Codices Traditionum Ecclesiae Pataviensis, olim Laureacensis III, III, Monumentorum Boicorum collectio nova* 28,2 (Munich: Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1830), 200-203.

of territories whose names end with *-gau*. The contract lists estates first in the *gaue* around Passau, then in Traungau on the historically Bavarian side of the Enns, and finally those “beyond the Vienna Woods” (*ultra montem Comagenum*).

Meanwhile, the *RZO* is the only preserved piece of legislation relevant to the Pannonian area after the second half of 9th century. It regulates the trade along the Danube from the forest of Passau (article 1) downstream to the marketplace of Mautern (article 7) beyond which the Moravian market (*mercatum Marahorum*) began.²⁰⁴ It differentiates between professional merchants and other traders, classifying them by their country of origin. For instance, article 6 distinguishes “Slavs going from Russia or Bohemia to trade” (*Sclavi vero, qui de Rugis vel de Boemanis mercandi causa exeunt*) from “Bavarians or Slavs of that homeland” (*Bawari vero vel Sclavi istius patriae*).²⁰⁵ Article 4 also refers to “Bavarians or Slavs of that homeland entering the region” (*Bawari vel Sclavi istius patriae ipsam regionem intraverint*).²⁰⁶ Although the *RZO* does not clearly define what “that homeland” or “the region” specifically refer to, it does suggest that territorial affiliation was more significant in legislative terms than the Slavic identity was. Some provisions (article 2 and article 5) seem to give privileged status in salt trade to the Bavarians in the area between the forest of Passau and the River Enns, however.²⁰⁷ Beyond these exceptions, the *RZO* indicates that Slavs were generally considered equals to Bavarians in mixed areas.

²⁰⁴ *Leges portoriae*, §1, 480, §7, 481.

²⁰⁵ *Leges portoriae*, §6, 481; Kos, *Gradivo*, note 7 on page 264.

²⁰⁶ *Leges portoriae*, §4, 481.

²⁰⁷ *Leges portoriae*, §2, 481, §5, 481.

Finally, a significant text from the early 10th century that provides crucial insights into Arnulf of Carantania's reign and the Hungarian conquest is *Regino of Prüm's Chronicle* (*Reginonis chronicon*, RC).²⁰⁸

2.2. Archeological Sources

Archeological finds pertaining to the period of Frankish rule are of two main kinds: graves and traces of 9th-century urbanism usually connected with churches. These two types of finds are interconnected, as 9th-century churches, located in urban centers or their immediate surroundings, frequently served as burial sites.

When examining 9th-century urban centers, there is a significant disparity between their representation in archeological material and written sources. Only urban center whose urban development is both documented in detail in writing and thoroughly researched archeologically is Mosaburg—seat of Pribina, Kocelj, and possibly Arnulf of Carantania and Braslav on the confluence of the River Zala into the Lake Balaton. Meanwhile, the location of 9th-century Sisak has not yet been discovered but a 7th–9th century settlement with a cemetery including a lavish elite burial with parallels in contemporary Dalmatia has been discovered 55 kilometers to the southwest of present-day Sisak.²⁰⁹ Similarly, the precise sites associated with 9th-century

²⁰⁸ Cf. Patzold, *Episcopus*, 365.

²⁰⁹ Hrvatski restauratorski zavod, “Knez iz Bojne – novo poglavlje hrvatske povijesti” [The duke from Bojna – a new chapter of Croatian history], October 3, 2023, <https://www.hrz.hr/index.php/za-novinstvo/priopenja-za-medije/3231-knez-iz-bojne-novo-poglavlje-hrvatske-povijesti>; Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 120-123, 127; Marijana Krmpotić, “Bojna, Brekinjova Kosa – dosadašnja saznanja” [The duke from Bojna – findings thus far], presentation summary from the “Arheološka istraživanja u Sisačko-moslavačkoj županiji u Sisku” scientific gathering held in Sisak, Croatia, 05th October 2020 - 09th October 2020, and “Ranosrednjovjekovna Bojna” [Early medieval Bojna], presentation summary from the “Ranosrednjovjekovna središta moći” scientific gathering held in Zagreb, Croatia, 17th June 2021 - 18th June 2021; Vinko Madiraca et. al, “Early Medieval Finds from the Brekinjova Kosa Archaeological Site (Results of Excavations in 2011 and 2015),” *Archaeologia Adriatica* 11 (2017): passim.

Savaria (modern Szombathely) are uncertain. Although Savaria is thought to have housed a comital seat and estates belonging to the dioceses of Salzburg and Passau, definitive archeological evidence has yet to be found. A round stone enclosure in the Szombathely area, proposed as 9th-century Savaria, is unlikely to be accurate because such a fortification would be unique in the entire Frankish Empire.²¹⁰ It is a similar situation with present day Pécs. Although Pécs is located in the place of ancient *Sopianae*, its Latin name since Árpád times has been *Quinque Ecclesiae* (five churches).²¹¹ *Conversio* mentions church consecration “at five basilicas” (*ad Quinque Basilicas*) taking place in the 9th century but no contemporary constructions in Pécs have been found thus far and no contemporary use of known ancient buildings has been conclusively proven.²¹² An idea has even been proposed that the 9th-century *Quinque Basilicae* is not identical to the later *Quinque Ecclesiae*.²¹³ Conversely, several centers that are not documented in writing have been discovered archeologically. A large amount of finds including high quality ceramic on the sites of Kemenespálfa – Zombékos and Sárvár – Faképi dűlő indicates the existence of a settlement to the east of present-day Szombathely.²¹⁴ Most notably, a 9th-century ecclesiastic center has been uncovered at the shrine of the Virgin Mary above the present-day village of Lóbor, likely accompanied by a nearby settlement.²¹⁵ Additionally, traces of a 9th-century military center have also been discovered in

²¹⁰ Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 121; Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 181-185, 313.

²¹¹ Hrvatska enciklopedija [Croatian encyclopedia], s. v. “Pečuh;” Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, note 742 on page 280.

²¹² Wolfram, *Conversio*, c. 11, 76-77; Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 279-280.

²¹³ Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, note 742 on page 280.

²¹⁴ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, note 2296 on page 313.

²¹⁵ Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, image 31 on page 97.

the city of Ozalj.²¹⁶ Research during the 2010s has also uncovered presence associated with the Frankish Empire in today's Kaposvár and Visegrád.²¹⁷

Due to the differences in the researched architectural material and the overall scarcity of archeological discoveries south of the Drava River, a more detailed chronology of graves and corresponding architectural materials is only available for the area north of the Drava. The Carolingian-era finds to the south of the Drava can for the most part only be treated as a temporal whole. Moreover, much of the material to the south of the Drava cannot be restricted chronologically to the 9th century.²¹⁸

This archeological material in relation to the written sources has been most comprehensively presented by Krešimir Filipec and Béla Miklós Szőke in their syntheses from 2015 and 2021, respectively. In these books, they greatly relied on research they were personally involved in. Filipec places significant emphasis on the site of Lóbor which he himself discovered as a Carolingian-era center, while largely relying on Szőke's work for the area to the north of the Drava where Szőke has been a long-time researcher of the Zalavár agglomeration. This expertise on Zalavár is also the focal point of Szőke's book.

2.2.1. Area Between the Enns and the Drava

In this area, Szőke distinguishes three culture groups during the first third of the 9th century, reflecting different ways in which the new Frankish rule affected different areas.

²¹⁶ Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 125-126.

²¹⁷ Szabina Merva, "8th-9th Century Metalsmith's Furnace from Visegrád, Sibrik-Domb," *Hungarian Archaeology* 6, issue 4 (2017): passim; István Molnár, "Traces of a Church and Fortress Built Prior to the Hungarian Conquest Found in a Benedictine Monastery," *Hungarian Archaeology* 9, issue 3 (2020): passim.

²¹⁸ For luxurious earrings from Sisak as an example of that, see Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 160-161, note 479 on page 168.

However, he addresses further cultural changes beyond the first third of the century only in southern Transdanubia, where Zalakomár-Kehida-Vörs group emerges, because that area provides the most thorough cross-section of material from the time of the Avar Khaganate to the arrival of the Hungarians. In contrast, the material of the other two culture groups, Gusen-Auhof and Sopronkőhida-Pitten-Pottenbrunn, further to the northwest can only be dated up to the mid-9th century; thereafter the population belonging to these two groups abandons the old graveyards and is buried around churches, as required by regulations in the Frankish Empire.²¹⁹

2.2.1.1. Culture as Evidenced through Burials

Final Avar Period

This period is characterized by the implementation of aspects of the Carolingian Empire's culture (*Reichskultur*) into a culture that otherwise maintains continuity with the period of the Avar Khaganate before the 9th century, thus meriting the designation Final Avar Period (*Endawarenzeit*).²²⁰ When addressing this period, and the 9th century in general, only aspect of material culture Szőke identifies, albeit reservedly, as ethnically Slavic are the cremation burials.²²¹ Conversely, Szőke regards other aspects of material culture associated with the Avar Khaganate as features of ethnic Avars but not restricted to them, attributing these cultural aspects a more universal character and interpreting them in terms of social status.²²²

²¹⁹ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 413, 417-418, 456-457.

²²⁰ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 7, 130, 411-412, note 2795 on page 440; Wolfram, *Conversio*, 111.

²²¹ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, note 2661 on page 413, note 2709 on page 418, note 2829 on page 457.

²²² Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 3-6, 116-117, 130-131, 413-415, 457-458.

Gusen-Auhof Group

Before Frankish conquest, the official Bavarian-Avar border at the River Enns was cushioned by an expanse of no-man's land along the Danube. This area formed a relatively narrow uninhabited strip only up to the Rivers Traun and Krems on the Bavarian side but extended into a much deeper stretch of land on the Avar side, sparsely dotted with border outposts as far as the Vienna Woods.²²³ With the arrival of Frankish rule, the area between the Rivers Krems and Ybbs became a destination for settlers from both east and west.²²⁴ Although Szőke argues that the name *Sclavinia* as used in the charter Nr. 121 of 837 corresponds with this section of land, he is reluctant to identify the bearers of this culture as Slavs, defining them primarily as continuators of the culture of the Avar Khaganate.²²⁵ In that sense he points out that this culture group is not related to either (Slavic) southern Bohemia to the north, where cremation is still practiced, or to (Slavic) Carantania to the south.²²⁶ Instead, Szőke treats the Gusen-Auhof group as a hybrid, characterized by the rare continuation of Avar features in grave-goods (food), jewelry of Avar and western origin, as well as features of Christian origin such as cross-shaped pendants.²²⁷

Sopronköhida-Pitten-Pottenbrunn Group

This group appears to the east of the Gusen-Auhof group, between the River Ybbs and the Savaria-Carnuntum line.²²⁸ Szőke considers this to be the material culture of Kapkhan's group settled there in 805 because this area had been poorly inhabited before the appearance

²²³ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 130, 134; cf. Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, note 66 on page 42.

²²⁴ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 130-131, 456-457.

²²⁵ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 130-131, 133, 135, 138, 452, 456; cf. Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 47.

²²⁶ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 138.

²²⁷ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 138, 457.

²²⁸ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 133, 135-137.

of Frankish rule.²²⁹ Burials of this group are mostly similar to earlier Avar burials, including Avar dress accessories. However, the weaponry and some accessories in the graves are Frankish and, peculiarly to this group (with only two such graves found elsewhere), sawed-off beef or sheep's heads are included.²³⁰ There are also cremation graves and mound graves in this area.²³¹ In the more recent graves of this culture group finds characteristic of the second third of the 9th century appear, as they do in Pribina's polity.²³² It is this area Szőke believes to be designated by the term *Avaria* and similarly in the 9th-century written sources.²³³

Zalakomár-Kehida-Vörs Group

This group appears in southwestern Transdanubia on the axis from the area west of Lake Balaton to the present-day Pécs area, where the centers of the Keszthely culture used to be located.²³⁴ In this area, both inhumation (horse burials like before, but now also niche graves) and cremation burials appear, indicating a mixed Avar-Slavic population according to Szőke (Filipec rejects the automatic association of cremation with Slavic identity.)²³⁵ These burial types are always found in the same graveyards but form discrete groups of burials within the cemeteries.²³⁶ Szőke interprets the increased presence of cremation burials in the south of this area since the end of this period as an indicator of the relocation of presumably Slavic

²²⁹ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 131-132, 135-137.

²³⁰ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 137-138, 419, 431, 435, 456.

²³¹ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 456.

²³² Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, note 1021 on page 137, 138.

²³³ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 135-138.

²³⁴ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 318; cf. Adrienn Blay, "Überlegungen zur Bedeutung und Gültigkeit des Begriffs 'Keszthely-Kultur' und weitere mögliche Ansätze," *Antaeus: Communicationes ex Instituto Archaeologico Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 35-36 (2017-2018): 169.

²³⁵ Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 82-83; *Praishodište i/ili situacija*, 38-39; Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 155, note 1176 on page 160, 418, note 2829 on page 457; cf. Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 285.

²³⁶ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, note 2661 on page 413.

Timociani and *Praedenecenti* Abodrites to the Frankish-controlled territory.²³⁷ Inhumation burials contain Avar Khaganate-tradition dress accessories but Frankish weaponry. Unlike Sopronkőhida-Pitten-Pottenbrunn group there are no sheep's heads during this period, although food is placed in the graves.²³⁸

Changes at the Time of Pribina's Arrival (c. 830)

The beginning of the second third of the 9th century sees further changes in the culture of the population of southern Transdanubia. Up until then, burials were made in the same graveyards as before Frankish rule.²³⁹ Now, these graveyards are abandoned, and new ones are established. This does not mean a complete break in burial customs, however. These new graveyards are still established in holy groves when far from churches, but the graves are much simpler and more uniform. Sometimes the insides of graves are now completely covered in stone, though covering them with planks has become very rare.²⁴⁰ People are still buried with weapons although animal sacrifices are put as a grave-good only symbolically and in rare graves, presumably belonging to more conservative people. The practice of putting food in the graves became increasingly rare by the end of the second third of the 9th century, though some families kept the practice.²⁴¹

At the same time, graves associated with new settlers brought in by Pribina appear. In one grave at a nearby Garabonc Ófalu graveyard, the deceased was buried with a sword of Byzantine origin, while in Mosaburg itself, a deceased had a skull deformed after the Danubian

²³⁷ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 154.

²³⁸ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 418-419, 422, 431, 456.

²³⁹ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 218.

²⁴⁰ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 418-419, 422.

²⁴¹ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 422.

Bulgarian model. That as well as finds of ceramic in Danubian Bulgarian style indicate a population originating thence.²⁴² Likewise, Szőke considers the cremation graveyard at the site of Alsórajk-Határi tábla to belong to settlers from the area of present-day Poland and northern Germany due to the specific form of the burial, rather than to the autochthonous “Slavs socialized within the Avar Khaganate” who had previously made cremation burials.²⁴³ The effect of this immigration is also noticeable in terms of physical anthropology because some of the deceased in the Mosaburg area are more closely related to the communities in the Kaposvár area, Ptuj or present-day Slovakia than to the population living in this area before Frankish rule. However, majority of the population, especially the lower strata, seems to be descended from the population of that area from the period of the Avar Khaganate.²⁴⁴

Results of Christianization (after 850)

With the consecration of first churches in Pribina’s polity in 850, burials began to be made around them, as was required by Church regulations of the time.²⁴⁵ However, Szőke regards the continued addition of accessories and jewelry in these graves, which should have been donated to the poor, as a distant continuation of the pre-9th-century practices.²⁴⁶ Additionally, graveyards in holy groves where food was added as a grave-good continued being used to the end of the 9th century.²⁴⁷ Unlike in Great Moravia and the Adriatic hinterland, in the Mosaburg area there are no burials inside the churches themselves, only around them.²⁴⁸

²⁴² Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 328, note 4782 on page 437.

²⁴³ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, note 2709 on page 418, note 4782 on page 437.

²⁴⁴ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 437.

²⁴⁵ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 442.

²⁴⁶ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 440.

²⁴⁷ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 465.

²⁴⁸ Kumir, “Memory,” 58-65; Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 427.

In these church graveyards, Szőke distinguishes between the graves of the ruling elite and those of the common folk. It should be noted that Szőke considers only the uppermost stratum as the elite while regarding the vast majority of graves with military equipment, belonging to the “people in service” (*Dienstvolk*), as graves of the common folk.²⁴⁹ In both social categories, if there are any special items in the graves, women are buried with earrings and men with military equipment of Frankish origin. Unlike in Great Moravia, the Adriatic hinterland, and even Sopronköhida area, where individual men are often buried with both spurs and weapons, in the Mosaburg area these two options are mutually exclusive. Additionally, there are graves with no grave-goods at all.²⁵⁰

The uppermost elite adheres most strictly to Church burial regulations. In elite burials, there are typically no grave-goods. Their elite status is only evidenced by the proximity of the graves to the church and the quality of coffins and burial chambers.²⁵¹ Only boys are buried with lavish spurs and/or other small accessories and girls with jewelry such as earrings of gold or gold-covered silver.²⁵² Although male members of the elite seem to have had belt decoration as a part of their fashion, they were buried only with the simplest buckles.²⁵³ They were sometimes buried with accessories of daily life, too.²⁵⁴ Meanwhile, the type of earrings evolved from those used in the Avar Khaganate before Frankish rule, as is the case in Great Moravia and the Adriatic hinterland.²⁵⁵

²⁴⁹ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 422, 435.

²⁵⁰ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 435, 446, 449, 452.

²⁵¹ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 422, 425, 449, 465–466.

²⁵² Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 422, 440, 443, 466.

²⁵³ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 449.

²⁵⁴ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 449, 452.

²⁵⁵ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 443, 449.

Among the common folk, there are graves where men of all ages are buried with spurs, graves where they are buried with weapons as well as graves with no military equipment at all.²⁵⁶ They typically wear very simple belt buckles and buttons, indicating that the dress of the common folk became much simpler after the beginning of Frankish rule.²⁵⁷ Common women of all ages are buried with earrings much simpler than those of the elites, being made of cast bronze or wire.²⁵⁸ Women are also sometimes buried with everyday objects. In general, after the middle of the 9th century women in the Mosaburg area wore far less head jewelry.²⁵⁹

Until the 21st century, the only Carolingian-era churches discovered in the Raab-Danube-Drava area were in the Mosaburg region. However, following the excavations of 2014 and 2016, István Molnár precisely determined the remains of a church that was known from charter evidence to have preceded the foundation of an overlaying Benedictine abbey in today's Kaposvár in the 11th century.²⁶⁰ The discovered structure was a single-nave church with a straight apse.²⁶¹ It was surrounded by a graveyard that dates it to the 8th–9th century.²⁶² Additionally, Molnár's excavations uncovered a fortress flanking the church, which was also dated to the same period. Kaposvár is located at the southeastern edge of Zalakomár-Kehida-Vörs group area, where other identified churches from the time of Pribina and Kocelj are situated.²⁶³ However, this is only the beginning of research into the Carolingian presence in the Kaposvár area.²⁶⁴

²⁵⁶ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 435, 452.

²⁵⁷ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 231.

²⁵⁸ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, note 2806 on page 443.

²⁵⁹ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 431.

²⁶⁰ Molnár, "Traces," 13-14.

²⁶¹ Molnár, "Traces," 15.

²⁶² Molnár, "Traces," 15-16.

²⁶³ Cf. Molnár, "Traces," 20-21.

²⁶⁴ Molnár, "Traces," 13.

2.2.1.2. Urban Development of Mosaburg

Unlike Lobor, Mosaburg was an entirely new foundation by Pribina, as there was no settlement in its location before Frankish rule. However, it was founded near a *castellum* at Keszthely-Fenépuszta, which had been the center of a post-Roman community at Lake Balaton.²⁶⁵ Pribina founded this new urban center on the island of Vársziget (Zalavár-Vársziget) in the swamps on the confluence of River Zala and Lake Balaton.²⁶⁶ Several nearby islands—Zalavár-Rezes, Zalavár-Kövecses, Zalavár-Récéskút, and Zalasabar-Borjúállás—were also used, forming a broader agglomeration.²⁶⁷ On the islands of Zalavár-Rezes and Zalasabar-Dezső sziget there was a graveyard without a church, while the island of Récéskút housed a graveyard with a church.²⁶⁸ It was a stone church with three naves, and with three inscribed apses, meaning the apses were not visible from the outside, giving the church a rectangular shape. Such form indicates cultural influence from northern Italy and southern Alps.²⁶⁹ Reconstructing the church's construction process is challenging due to the presence of rows of wooden posts parallel to the church walls. Szőke proposed that these posts represented structural additions after the 9th century, which might not have had any sacral function.²⁷⁰ Meanwhile, on the island of Borjúállás another settlement was built at the beginning of the 840s. Part of this settlement was levelled within a few years to make way for a manor. The manor included the lord's residence and was surrounded by a square-shaped palisade enclosure.

²⁶⁵ Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 285; Pohl, *Avars*, 109, 262; Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, note 2354 on page 331.

²⁶⁶ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 314.

²⁶⁷ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, image 41 on page 317, 463.

²⁶⁸ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 285, 400-401.

²⁶⁹ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 405.

²⁷⁰ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 399-404.

In the middle of the manor, a single-apse single-nave wooden church with a graveyard around it was located.²⁷¹

The history of interpretation of Vársziget is by far the most convoluted.²⁷² The island is shaped like the Cyrillic letter G, and two palisade walls (north-south and east-west) were discovered, separating the northwestern section of the island from the island's southern and the eastern prong. It is possible that the north-south palisade wall curves westward to limit the northwestern section on its northern side. A trench was discovered running parallel to the east-west palisade on its southern side, with another palisade that presumably replaced the original earthen wall on the trench's southern bank.²⁷³ Within the northwestern palisade-enclosed precinct, remains of two churches were discovered. One, the Church of Saint John the Baptist, is a small wooden one typical for the eastern Frankish areas (single-nave with a rectangular apse) and includes an adjoining atrium, a baptismal well, and no graveyard around it.²⁷⁴ The other, the Pilgrim's Church of Saint Hadrian, is a lavish stone church with stained glass window, the largest known bell of the Carolingian era, and a go-around crypt (*Umgangskrypta*) for Saint Hadrian's grave.²⁷⁵ While go-around crypts are present in other churches in newly acquired areas of the Frankish Empire, albeit in a much different form, family burial enclosures adjoining Saint Hadrian's Church are entirely unique.²⁷⁶ Ágnes Cs. Sós proposed that this precinct was Pribina's original fort, with the term "city" (*civitas*) applying to the whole agglomeration and using other terms attested in sources (*munimen, castrum,...*) as synonyms.²⁷⁷

²⁷¹ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 320, 408-409.

²⁷² Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 314-338.

²⁷³ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 326, 333-338.

²⁷⁴ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 216, 333, note 2623 on page 403, 423, 464.

²⁷⁵ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 333, 354-359, 462, 464-465.

²⁷⁶ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 425, 464.

²⁷⁷ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 331, 336, note 2647 on page 408.

This raised the problem of identifying the Church of Virgin Mary, which was built within the *munimen*.²⁷⁸ Szőke proposed that the high medieval Church of Saint Hadrian, destroyed in 1702 and whose layout with three naves and an apse was fitting for the 9th century but differed from any of the churches undug thus far on Vársgiget, is actually the Church of Virgin Mary. According to Szőke, this church survived through the 10th century and was then refurbished and reconsecrated to Saint Hadrian under Hungarian kings.²⁷⁹ Szőke further proposed that the *munimen* encompassed the southern prong of the island, with the trench and a presumed earthen wall that was later replaced with a palisade wall as its northern limit.²⁸⁰ The now lost Virgin Mary's Church were built within the *munimen*, parallel to the trench.²⁸¹ If this is the case, the church's exact location can be assumed based on the distribution of some graves.²⁸² The *civitas* referred to the palisade-enclosed precinct north of the *munimen*, encompassing the pre-existent Saint John the Baptist's Church and the newly built Saint Hadrian's Church, to fulfill the legal requirements for a bishop's seat.²⁸³ Saint Hadrian's Church would have become the cathedral and the wooden buildings next to it were meant to be the bishop's residence.²⁸⁴ The trench was then partially filled with the earth of the earthen wall, which was replaced with a palisade.²⁸⁵ At some point, according to Szőke, the plan to make Mosaburg a bishop's seat was abandoned, the *civitas* and the *munimen* were combined into a single entity, the wooden buildings were removed, extending the graveyard into their space, and a new stone building was constructed

²⁷⁸ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 220-221.

²⁷⁹ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 349-354.

²⁸⁰ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 327-329, 333-335.

²⁸¹ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 220-221, Abb. 34 on page 263, 333.

²⁸² Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 333, 423.

²⁸³ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 216, 247, 310, 333-334, 338.

²⁸⁴ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 310, 336, 463.

²⁸⁵ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 334.

to the west.²⁸⁶ According to Szőke, this was to transform Mosaburg into Arnulf of Carantania's royal residence – a “royal city” (*regia civitas*) – since the surface area of the unified urban whole matches those of other Carolingian royal residences.²⁸⁷ This theory of Szőke's will be explained in more detail in Section 2.2.4.

2.2.2. Area to the South of the Drava

The archeological material from the area south of the Drava River does not provide a chronology as detailed as that of the Mosaburg agglomeration. Thus, the chronology of transition from older cultural practices, such as cremation graves, to those associated with Frankish rule cannot be precisely determined.²⁸⁸

Other than isolated finds of weaponry and jewelry, the major trace of the 9th century until the 1990s were several pieces of carved stone from the Sisak area, only one of which was certainly found in Sisak.²⁸⁹ Systematic excavations that began in the late 1990s at the shrine of Virgin Mary above Lohor led to the revolutionary discovery that an important religious center existed there at the time of Frankish rule as well.²⁹⁰ Since late antiquity, a series of churches has been built on the site of today's church.²⁹¹ Among these was a pre-Romanesque, triple-nave church with a vestibule and a bell tower at its front, constructed around the turn of the 9th to the 10th century. Beforehand, in the early 9th century, a smaller, single-nave timber church with

²⁸⁶ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 263-264, 310, 335-336, 465.

²⁸⁷ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 263, 310-312, 335, 465.

²⁸⁸ Krešimir Filipec, “The Collapse and Integration into the Empire: Carolingian-Age Lower Pannonia in the Material Record,” in *Migration, Integration and Connectivity on the Southeastern Frontier of the Carolingian Empire*, ed. Danijel Dzino, Ante Milošević, and Trpimir Vedriš (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 155-160, 162-163

²⁸⁹ Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 123, note 320 on page 125.

²⁹⁰ Filipec, “Collapse and Integration,” 161.

²⁹¹ Filipec, “Collapse and Integration,” Figure 9.7 on page 168.

a square apse and a porch had already been built nearby. This timber church was surrounded by a graveyard; however, unlike Mosaburg, burials also took place within the churches.²⁹² In the 21st century, a warriors' graveyard surrounding a pre-Romanesque church, and a nearby early medieval fortified settlement were discovered at Bojna, some 55 kilometers to the southwest of Sisak, in a frontier area between the 9th-century polity on the Sava and Drava Rivers, and the Croat Duchy in Dalmatia. This graveyard has not been a subject of a major publication yet, but the spurs, a pendant with mountain crystal, and a Byzantine coin discovered thus far are characteristic of the warrior culture of the Croat polity in Dalmatia after 830.²⁹³ This seems to corroborate a theory proposed by Margetić and Gračanin that the rule of this elite expanded into the Pannonian area south of the Drava in the 830s.²⁹⁴

2.2.3. Visegrád

The issue of Frankish presence in the eastern half of Transdanubia has long been a mystery, as most of the written sources and archaeological material pertain to its western half.²⁹⁵ This changed significantly in the 2010s, culminating in 2017 with the discovery of an 8th-9th century furnace in Visegrád at the Danube Bend.²⁹⁶ The presence of a metalsmith in this

²⁹² Filipec, "Collapse and Integration," 161-162, and *Donja Panonija*, 263-267.

²⁹³ Filipec, "Collapse and Integration," 156-157; Madiraca et al., "Early Medieval Finds," 166-181; Danijel Prerad, "Knez iz Bojne bolje se hranio od ostalih, jeo je i ribu, a u njegovu naselju bilo je političko središte" [The duke from Bojna fed better than the others, he also ate fish, and a political center was in his settlement], *Večernji list*, published May 23rd, 2019, <https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/knez-iz-bojne-bolje-se-hranio-od-ostalih-jeo-je-i-ribu-a-u-njegovu-naselju-bilo-je-politicko-srediste-1321149>.

²⁹⁴ Gračanin, *Južna Panonija*, 178-181; Lujo Margetić, "Pitanja iz najstarije povijesti Zagrebačke biskupije i Slavonije" [Questions from the oldest history of the Diocese of Zagreb, and Slavonia, *Croatia Christiana periodica* 18, no. 34 (1994): 24-25, 28.

²⁹⁵ Cf. István Bóna, "Die Verwaltung und die Bevölkerung des karolingischen Pannoniens im Spiegel der zeitgenössischen Quellen," *Mitteilungen des Archäologischen Instituts der Ungarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften = Antæus: Communicationes ex Instituto Archaeologico Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 14 (1985): 156-8; Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 279; Szöke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, Abb. 84 on page 412.

²⁹⁶ Merva, "Metalsmith's Furnace," 18-20.

place marks it as an important center, albeit on a smaller scale than Mosaburg.²⁹⁷ Preceding excavations had uncovered a spur and an earring characteristic of the Carolingian era, along with some 8th-9th century household ceramics. A certain type of ceramics found here was common throughout the broader Danubian area, including the Carolingian-ruled communities on the Zala as well as in Moravia and on the Lower Danube.²⁹⁸ The furnace, which showed unusually numerous traces of use, could be dated to the second half of the 8th century to the 9th century, consistent with the other finds.²⁹⁹ The fort of Visegrád was built by the Roman Empire in late antiquity and was reused in the early decades of the Kingdom of Hungary.³⁰⁰ These new finds suggest that it may have been used during the time of Frankish rule, when it received its Slavic name. This could mean that Slavic language was already so well entrenched with the local population that the fort's Slavic name survived the events of 907 to be first recorded in writing in 1009 as "Výssegrad," ultimately persisting to the present day.³⁰¹

2.2.4. Arnulf and Braslav

Following Kocelj's death between 876 and 880, his former polity came under the rule of Arnulf of Carantania.³⁰² In 896, Arnulf transferred control of "Pannonia with the City of the Swamps" (*Pannoniam cum urbe paludarum*) to Duke Braslav, who had ruled between the Sava and the Drava, to defend it against the Hungarians. The name "City of the Swamps" (including

²⁹⁷ Merva, "Metalsmith's Furnace," 20, 31.

²⁹⁸ Gergely Buzás et al., "The Issue of Continuity in the Early Middle Ages in Light of the Most Recent Archaeological Research on the Late Imperial Period Fort in Visegrád," *Hungarian Archaeology* 3, issue 1 (2014): 3, 5; Merva, "Metalsmith's Furnace," 19-20.

²⁹⁹ Buzás et al., "Issue of Continuity," 5; Merva, "Metalsmith's Furnace," 20-22.

³⁰⁰ Buzás et al., "Issue of Continuity," 1, 3; Merva, "Metalsmith's Furnace," 19-20.

³⁰¹ Cf. Buzás et al., "Issue of Continuity," 7.

³⁰² Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 263, 300.

its various iterations such as Mosapurc/Mosaburh and Blatěnski Kostelj) is mentioned for the last time in contemporary written sources in this context; a disastrous defeat of the Bavarian army at *Brezalauspurc*, a fort presumably named after Braslav, in 907 is considered to have marked the end of Frankish rule to the east of the Enns.³⁰³ The identification of *Brezalauspurc* has been a subject of scholarly controversy. Johannes Turmair, who composed the *EA* in the 16th century on the basis of a now-lost source, identified it with Bratislava (German: *Pressburg*). This identification was widely accepted in modern scholarship until the early 21st century, when the prevailing opinion shifted to favor Mosaburg as the more likely location.³⁰⁴

The precise impact of Arnulf and Braslav on Mosaburg is not explicitly documented. Szőke theorizes that Arnulf of Carantania transformed Mosaburg into his royal palace (*Königspfalz*).³⁰⁵ Szőke bases this notion on his interpretation of the *RC*, and the identification of Mosaburg (modern rendering of the name Mosaburc/Mosapurhc/Mosapurg) which is the issuing place of some of Arnulf's charters, one of which even refers to Mosaburg as a *regia civitas*, with the Mosaburg on the River Zala.³⁰⁶ Namely, abbot Regino of Prüm, in his chronicle, notes that Arnulf received as a part of his heirloom "Carantania..., in which a most fortified castle called *Mosaburh* is located, that makes access difficult to all those who would access it, due to being surrounded by impenetrable swamps."³⁰⁷ Szőke contends that Regino is

³⁰³ *AFCR*, a. 884, 113, a. 896, 130; Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 295-301, 303. On the basis of late medieval manuscripts, one of which uniquely renders Kocelj's title as "duke of Blatěnski Kostelj" (...*Blatěnska Kostelě*), Rajko Nahtigal posited the original Old Church Slavonic name of Mosaburg to have been "Блатънскѣ Костелъ": Rajko Nahtigal, "Nekaj pripomb k pretresu Hrabrovega spisa o azbuki Konstantina Cirila" [A few remarks regarding the discussion of Hraber's treatise on Constantine Cyril's alphabet], *Slavistična revija* 1, no. 1–2 (1948): 17-18. Thence, "Blatenski kostel" or "Blatonski Koštel" is sometimes used in Croatian literature as the name for "Mosaburg." To avoid confusion with the modern Slovenian usage of the term "Blatenski Kostel" as the name for a nearby but not identical town of Keszthely, I use the name "Mosaburg" throughout the thesis.

³⁰⁴ For the history of identification, see Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 297-301. Regarding the reconstruction of Turmair's source with further literature, see Section 2.1.2.

³⁰⁵ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 263.

³⁰⁶ Kos, *Gradivo*, Št. 285, 214-215, Št. 286, 215, Št. 293, 220; Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 307-309.

³⁰⁷ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 303.

referring to the Mosaburg at Lake Balaton and describing it correctly but inaccurately places it in Carantania due to his poor understanding of geography.³⁰⁸ Szőke argues that Regino's description more accurately matches that Mosaburg than the one (Moosburg) on the bank of the Wörthersee in present-day Carinthia around which scant archeological research has not yet uncovered a 9th century site; there are only several carved stones from that period in a nearby church.³⁰⁹ In that sense, the stone building uncovered next to Saint Mary's Church as one of the most recent building interventions would have represented Arnulf of Carantania's royal palace.³¹⁰ Despite being Arnulf of Carantania's residence, Szőke suggests that Arnulf's control of Mosaburg was not perceived as impactful in its own time. Szőke argues that Braslav, who ruled between the Sava and Drava Rivers in 880, represented Arnulf in Mosaburg already 870s-896, and was thereafter given complete control, which he retained after Arnulf's death in 899 through 907. It was then during this period Braslav's construction project to form a common wall around the unified area of the former *munimen* and episcopal *civitas*. Thanks to such long term involvement, according to Szőke, the unified fortress carried Braslav's name - *Brezalauspurc/Braslavespurch*.³¹¹

³⁰⁸ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 306-307.

³⁰⁹ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 303-307, 313-314.

³¹⁰ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 310-312.

³¹¹ Szőke, *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, 300-301, note 2229 on page 303, 309-310.

3. The Slavic Name among the Franks in the Long Pannonian 9th Century (791-907)

In this chapter, I will synthesize the information singled out from individual sources in the previous chapter. My goal is to identify and analyze the general trends in how terminology changed in relation to political circumstances in the Frankish discourse about the Pannonian area over the course of their administration.

The period of Frankish domination in the Pannonian area is sometimes referred to as “the long 9th century.”³¹² Initially, the autonomous Bavarian Duchy, operating within the Frankish Empire, displayed little interest in its eastern neighbor, the Avar Khaganate. However, this changed dramatically following the suppression of the Bavarian Duchy, which thrust the Avar Khaganate into the forefront of Frankish political strategy.³¹³ In 791, the Franks launched a large-scale invasion against the steppe empire of the Avars, initiating a prolonged campaign to subdue Avar resistance. Nevertheless, acquisition of the Avar treasury in 796 that followed the first recorded Avar submission to the Franks was seen in later years as the symbolic beginning of the Frankish rule in Pannonia. With this victory, the Franks were put into a position to establish governance over the newly acquired territories.

Despite periodic threats, Frankish rule in the Pannonian area persisted in various forms until the arrival of the Hungarians at the close of the 9th century. A crushing defeat suffered by

³¹² This topic was the subject of a scientific conference in 2015. For an overview of conference’s outcomes, see Miklós Takács, “How long indeed was the ninth century AD in the Carpathian Basin and the adjacent territories?: Conclusions of a conference,” *Antæus: Communicationes ex Instituto Archaeologico Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 35–36 (2017–2018): passim.

³¹³ Diesenberger, “Hagiography,” 224.

a Frankish army in 907 at *Brezalauspurc*, most probably named after one of the last known Frankish-appointed administrators in Pannonia, marks a symbolic end of this era.

3.1. *From the Frankish Crossing of the Enns to the Arrival of Duke Pribina on Lake Balaton (791-c. 840)*

3.1.1. From Charlemagne's Crossing of the Enns (791) to the Appearance of Duke Ljudevit (818)

The Frankish war against the Avars began with great pomp in 791.³¹⁴ According to the *ARF*, a series of events in 796 involving Charlemagne's son Pippin's acquisition of the bulk of the Avar treasury that was left at the *hring* after an earlier raid led by Vojnomir, a Slav in Frankish service, was seen as the official beginning of the Frankish rule over the entire former Avar Khaganate. This is symbolically marked by the fact that the report on the events of that year, unlike the earlier reports that speak of "the lands of the Avars" (*partes Avarorum*) or "the gens and realm of the Avars" (*gens et regnum Avarorum*), events of 796 are reported as having taken place in "Pannonia(s)."³¹⁵ This change in nomenclature might have been influenced by the monastery of Lorsch, located east of the Rhine, and it was a part of an emerging trend of reviving Roman territorial and identitarian concepts – "Gauls" (*Galliae*) and Germans (*Germani*) appear in *ARF* for the first time in 794, Avars are named "Huns" 805-811, etc. – which would be retroactively applied to earlier periods in the revised version of *ARF*.³¹⁶

³¹⁴ *ARF*, a. 791, 86-91.

³¹⁵ *ARF*, a. 791, 88, a. 795, 96, a. 796, 98, 100.

³¹⁶ *AL*, a. 791, 34; *ARF*, passim. Annals of Lorsch were written in parallel with the other annals (*AA*, *AG*) published in the same volume of MGH but terminology pertaining to the Avar Khaganate and its successor-polities varies wildly across these various sources indicating there was no consensus on the matter: cf. Ančić, "Migration or Transformation," 50-51; Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 360-363, 381-383.

Pippin's campaign included a council of bishops that accompanied him being held on the banks of the Danube, where the arrangements were made for the re-Christianization of the region. Following Alcuin's advice, this involved a much more lenient approach that would not provoke resistance as it did with Saxons. This was reflected in a reduced tithe rate that was known as "the Slavic tithe" in later centuries.³¹⁷

After 796, members of the Carolingian family did not come to "Pannonias" for generations, and the *ARF* reports on the situation there mostly in broad terms.³¹⁸ Despite the impression of stability suggested by the *ARF*, the situation in Pannonia seems to have been more volatile than portrayed. As Mladen Ančić recently indicated, there was a drive to attribute the credit for the submission of Avars to Pippin and his subordinate Eric. Consequently, Vojnomir's raid on the *hring* was omitted in the revised version of the *ARF*. The *Conversio* in the 870s would remember it similarly.³¹⁹ However, later *AMpr*, which retains the reference to Vojnomir, adds additional details suggesting that Pippin's campaign did not achieve nearly as much as *ARF* would make it seem. Unlike the *ARF* which seems intent to detach the concept of "Pannonias" from the concepts of "Avars/Huns" and "Slavs", *AMpr* seems to treat "Huns and Slavs" collectively as "Pannonians" in one of its divergent entries.³²⁰

The discrepancy between the *ARF* and the *AMpr* complicates efforts to pinpoint when did the Franks begin recognizing the "Slavs" as a distinct political factor in the Pannonian area. For example, the night office of Saint Emmeram at the beginning of the century inverts the

³¹⁷ *Conventus episcoporum ad ripas Danubii a. 796*, ed. Albert Werminghoff, MGH Conc. 2,1 (Hannover: Hahn, 1906), 86-91; Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 243-249.

³¹⁸ *ARF*, a. 797, 101-103, a. 803, 117-118, a. 805, 119-120, a. 811, 134-135.

³¹⁹ Ančić, "Migration or Transformation," 51-54.

³²⁰ *AMpr*, a. 796, 81, a. 799, 84, a. 803, 90; *Annales Maximiniani*, [ed. G. Waitz], MGH SS 13 (Hannover: Hahn, 1881), a. 803, 23, describes the occasion merely as Charlemagne "managing the matters of Avars and Pannonians" (*causas Avarorum et Pannoniorum desponens*); cf. Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 368-375.

power relations by presenting the *gentes* of the “Huns” as living within the “realm of the Vandals/Slavs” (*regnum Wandalorum*). Some other sources also place “Vandals” at such an early time in place of the Avar Khaganate.³²¹ In the *ARF*, the “Slavs” are first mentioned in the Pannonian context in 805, described as such a formidable threat to one of the Avar groups that its leader requested resettlement under Frankish protection. The *ARF* highlights that Charlemagne granted the request because the Avar leader was a Christian. Concurrently, the term “Avars” was replaced with the term “Huns.”³²² After this “Hunnish” leader died the same year, it seems his people was brought back under the authority of the *khagan*, who was reportedly baptized that year according to other sources.³²³ In contrast, *Capitulary of Diedenhofen*, passed in the same year, uses the term “lands of the Slavs and Avars” (...*partibus Sclavorum et Avarum*...).³²⁴

This move in 805 may have been intended to restore stability in the “Pannonias,” but it appears it was not successful in the long term. In 811, one of the armies dispatched by Charlemagne from Aachen was sent to the “Pannonias” to “end the controversies between the Huns and the Slavs.” The “dukes” (*duces*) who led that army sent back a multitude of political leaders to appear before Charlemagne in Aachen, among them “dukes of Slavs living along the Danube” (*duces Sclavorum circa Danubium habitandum*).³²⁵ These Slavic leaders may have been among the “leaders and envoys” of “all the eastern Slavs” (*omnes orientalium Sclavorum primores et legati*) who attended a general assembly in 815 because, when the term reappears

³²¹ *AACM*, 47-48 under a. 791 speaks of the “realm of the Huns” (*Hunnorum regnum*) but under a. 796 and a. 797 of “region of the Vandals” (*regio Wandalorum*), “Vandals” (*Wandali*), and “Slavs.” Cf. Diesenberger, “Hagiography,” 224-226.

³²² *ARF*, a. 805, 119-120.

³²³ *ARF*, a. 805, 120; *AsEmai*, a. 805, 739.

³²⁴ *Capitulare duplex*, §7, 133.

³²⁵ *ARF*, a. 811, 134-135.

in 822, it includes the *Praedenecenti* on the Danube.³²⁶ The last mention of Avars and Slavs in the area of the former Khaganate before Ljudevit's rebellion appears in the *Divisio imperii* in 817, when they are referred to as living to the east of Bavaria (... *et Avaros, atque Sclavos qui ab orientali partem Baioariae sunt...*).³²⁷

3.1.2. From the Appearance of Duke Ljudevit (818) to the Arrival of Duke Pribina at Lake Balaton (c. 840)

In stark contrast to the entries for previous years, where Pannonia has been referred to in its singular and plural forms seemingly as synonyms since 796 without any explication of its internal territorial division, Ljudevit is immediately termed “duke of Lower Pannonia” (*dux Pannoniae inferioris*) in the *ARF*.³²⁸ Meanwhile, *AS* and Thegan in his *Deeds of Emperor Louis* refer to Ljudevit as a “Slav rebelling in Pannonia” (...*Sclavum in Pannonia rebellantem...*) and a “duke of eastern Slavs” (...*orientales Sclavos, quorum dux nominabatur...*).³²⁹ In parallel to “Lower Pannonia,” “Upper Pannonia” (*Pannonia superior*) also appears – once in the context of Ljudevit's rebellion, and once regarding Bulgarian incursions in the late 820s – but it represents an inert geographic entity, seemingly with no governmental structures associated with it.³³⁰ The topic of the delimitation between these two Pannonias has been a subject of controversy, but the most detailed explanation of the issue, offered by Krešimir Filipec, posits that the Lower and Upper Pannonia of the *ARF* are completely different territorial units from

³²⁶ *ARF*, a. 815, 142, a. 822, 159; Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 114.

³²⁷ *Divisio imperii a. 817*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH LL 1 (Hannover: Hahn, 1835), Cap. 2, 198.

³²⁸ *ARF*, a. 818, 149. Astronomus, *Vita Hludowici imperatoris*, c. 31, 388 uses a slightly different expression *rector inferioris Pannoniae*.

³²⁹ *AS*, a. 819, 37; Theganus, *Gesta Hludowici imperatoris*, c. 27, 216-217.

³³⁰ *ARF*, a. 820, 153, a. 828, 174.

the *Conversio*'s division involving "Lower Pannonia."³³¹ According to this explanation, "Upper Pannonia" of the 820s would be the area of the narrowed-down Avar land between the Danube and the Drava, whereas "Lower Pannonia" would be a very long strip of land on the southern fringe of the Carpathian Basin with the Drava serving as the limit between the two. While "Lower Pannonia" was associated with the Friulian March, "Upper Pannonia" was associated with the Eastern March.³³²

A far greater mystery than the territorial extent of Ljudevit's polity is the question of the source of his power and the nature of his polity. The biggest problem is the lack of archeological material discovered thus far that can be definitively linked to Ljudevit's seemingly vast power, as shown in Sub-chapter 2.2.³³³ Unlike the immediate Adriatic hinterland, finds of Frankish military equipment in the area presumably under Ljudevit's control are extremely scant and too dispersed to clearly indicate a local military elite formed under Frankish patronage.³³⁴ Conversely, unlike communities which allied with Ljudevit (Carniolans, part of Carantanians) or failed to support the Frankish military effort (*Timociani*, *Praedenecenti*, *Guduscani*), Ljudevit's original polity is never attributed a unique ethnonym. The terms "Avars" (not "Huns") and "Slavs" reappear in the *ARF* only after Ljudevit was forced to flee his land in 822 and are now defined through their relation with Pannonia – thus, delegations of *Praedenecenti* and "Avars living in Pannonia" (...*et in Pannonia residentium Abarum*) are among those attending a general assembly later that year, where Louis set out to reorganize the "eastern parts of his realm" after Ljudevit's flight, while "Slavs living in

³³¹ Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 147-148; cf. Wolfram, *Conversio*, 150, 160-161.

³³² Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 98-100, 130.

³³³ Cf. Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 123.

³³⁴ Cf. Filipec, "Collapse and Integration," 153-155, 162-163.

Pannonia” (...*Sclavos in Pannonia sedentes*...) were the victims of an incursion by the Bulgarians, who subjected them to “Bulgarian rector” (...*Bulgaricos...rectores*...) after they expelled the “dukes” of those Slavs (...*eorum...ducibus*...).³³⁵ The strongest expression of this connection is the fact that in 822 “Avar frontier” and “Pannonian frontier” are treated as synonyms.³³⁶ At best, it could be said that Ljudevit’s polity was an experimental solution in a de-ethnicizing Christian Empire, in an area where Christianity had already gained firm ground at the end of the 8th century, as evidenced by the strong church center at Lobor.³³⁷

Apart from a single mention of *Sclavinia* in a charter of 837, the Frankish annals of the 830s make no direct mention of the group identity of the inhabitants of the Pannonian area.³³⁸ Therefore, the reconstruction of the political situation during this period will not be included in this thesis.

3.2. From the Arrival of Duke Pribina at Lake Balaton to the Battle of Brezalauspurc (c. 840-907)

3.2.1. The Rule of Dukes Pribina and Kocelj (840s-870s)

Based on the available sources, from the 840s to the 870s, area surrounded by the Rivers Raab, Danube, and Drava—called “Lower Pannonia” by the Metropolitan Province of Salzburg, as opposed to the “Upper Pannonia” to the northwest of Raab—was ruled by Duke

³³⁵ *ARF*, a. 818, 149, a. 819, 150-151, a. 820, 152-153, a. 821, 154-155, a. 822, 158, 159, a. 823, 161, a. 827, 173; cf. Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 100-103, 111-113.

³³⁶ *ARF*, a. 826, 169-170.

³³⁷ Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 250-251; Štih, “*Sacramentum fidelitatis*,” 187-198.

³³⁸ Kos, *Gradivo*, Št. 121, 100.

Pribina and afterwards, from 861, by his son Kocelj.³³⁹ The lack of sources on the area south of the Drava has led to a wide variety of interpretations, which are not relevant to the topic of this thesis.³⁴⁰ Sources on Kocelj are extensive enough to allow an understanding of his self-identification and how it was presented to or understood by different audiences.³⁴¹ His domain was considered part of the broader “Slavic Land” by the authors of the pro-Methodian texts.³⁴² This appears to align with his self-perception, as in a donation of some of his properties at Balaton to the Diocese of Freising in 861 he referred to himself as *comes de Sclavis*.³⁴³ In this context, *Sclavi* could have been a territorial designation, as it was in the *Chronicle of Fredegar* (CF).³⁴⁴ Thus, *comes de Sclavis* would translate to “a count from the Slavic Land.”

A more challenging question than Kocelj’s self-perception is the source of power for both him and his father, Pribina. Historiography has vacillated between the idea that Pribina was appointed to the “Lower Pannonia” of the *Conversio* as a duke of a particular tribe and the idea that he was appointed as a Frankish count, with Peter Štih most recently asserting he was both.³⁴⁵ However, this is dubious considering that, as Denis Alimov pointed out, no particular tribal name emerged for Pribina and Kocelj’s domain.³⁴⁶

³³⁹ Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 147-150, 156-157; Peter Štih, “O Kocljevem koncu, njegovi identiteti in anonimnem Karantancu na Ptuj” [Regarding Kocelj’s end, his identity, and an anonymous Carantanian in Ptuj], *Zbornik Pokrajinskega muzeja Ptuj - Ormož* 6 (2019): 111-112, 116.

³⁴⁰ For an analysis of the most prevalent opinions on the topic, see [Denis Alimov] Д.Е. Алимов, “В поисках «племени»: Посавское и Нитранское княжества в контексте этнополитической ситуации в славянском мире в IX веке” [In search of a ‘tribe’: The Sava and Nitra Principalities within the context of the ethno-political situation in the 9th-century Slavic world], *Historical Format* 4 (2015): 254-255.

³⁴¹ Cf. Štih, “O Kocljevem koncu,” 117.

³⁴² [Alimov], “В поисках «племени,” 249, 263-264.

³⁴³ Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, note 421 on page 156.

³⁴⁴ Curta, “Slavs in Fredegar,” 153.

³⁴⁵ Peter Štih, “Priwina: slawischer Fürst oder fränkischer Graf?,” in *Ethnogenese und Überlieferung. Angewandte Methoden der Frühmittelalterforschung*, ed. Karl Brunner and Brigitte Merta (Vienna: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1994), 209-222, and “O Kocljevem koncu,” 106-107, 110.

³⁴⁶ [Alimov], “В поисках «племени,” 251.

The problem of understanding the nature of Pribina and Kocelj's power is exacerbated by the fact that, during their time, the meanings of Frankish titles became blurred. During the height of Carolingian power, there was a loose distinction between higher-ranking "dukes" and lower-ranking "counts", where dukes were typically assigned emergency jurisdiction over a large area.³⁴⁷ The title "duke" was also used to designate leaders of Slavic communities, seemingly regardless of the size of the community, unlike Avar dignitaries who were referred to by their specific Avar titles. However, by the middle of the 9th century, military vigilance of the frontier had become a permanent responsibility of local counts, causing the titles "count" and "duke" to be used interchangeably.³⁴⁸

In addition to the meaning of titles becoming increasingly unclear, the identity of the former Frankish Empire itself became ideologically vague.³⁴⁹ Under such circumstances, it seems that Pribina and Kocelj were regarded as ordinary members of the post-Frankish aristocracy, not defined by their personal Slav-ness.³⁵⁰ However, lack of political identity-building at the time meant there was no consensus on how to regard the Pannonian area either. This is evident from the diversity of terms used to describe it as a part of Louis the German's son Carloman's domain from 856, when he first received "the Eastern march." In addition to "Pannonia," which continued in use, a frequently used term was "the East" (*Oriens*) but attitudes also varied on how much of an integral part of the post-Frankish ecumene Pannonian

³⁴⁷ Brunner, "Die fränkischen Fürstentitel," 210-214.

³⁴⁸ Brunner, "Die fränkischen Fürstentitel," 209-210, 239-241; Štih, "Priwina," 215-218.

³⁴⁹ For example *AX*, a. 869, 27 describes how four kings ruled "in the realm of the late Charlemagne" with the domain of each of them defined through a list of lands, indicating that Charlemagne's personal legacy was the only thing uniting these lands more than half a century after his death. Cf. Brunner, "Die fränkischen Fürstentitel," 212-213, 326-327; Reimitz, *Frankish Identity*, 432-440.

³⁵⁰ Štih, "O Kocljevem koncu," 107.

area was.³⁵¹ The clearest indicator of the change that occurred between the 840s and the 870s in the Pannonian area is the *Francorum regum historia*, which describes Louis the German as having gained “the realm of the Huns, ie. Avars” (*Hunnorum, id est Avarorum regnum*) in 843 and handing down “marches towards Slavs and Langobards” (*marchas contra Sclavos et Langobardos*) to Carloman in 865.³⁵²

3.2.2. The Rule of Duke Braslav (880s-900s)

This period is marked by Arnulf of Carantania’s rule to the north of the Drava and Duke Braslav’s rule to the south of the Drava. The general consensus is that Braslav’s polity encompassed an extensive area, with a power center roughly in the same area as Ljudevit’s.³⁵³

Arnulf had received Carantania as a domain from his father Carloman and gained direct rule over “Pannonia” at some point before 880.³⁵⁴ It is unclear whether Pribina and Kocelj were his subordinates during their lifetimes. Until the 1980s, a widespread theory in Slovenian historiography suggested that in the latter half of the 9th century Carantanian identity extended as far as the Danube, with *regnum Carantanum* of Arnulf’s charters including the former Pribina and Kocelj’s polity as well.³⁵⁵ However, this theory was based on circumstantial evidence and no longer has significant support.³⁵⁶ Consequently, it will not be analyzed in this thesis.

³⁵¹ *AB*, a. 849, 36; *EA*, a. 854, a. 856, 744; *AF*, a. 861, 55; *AX*, a. 869, 27; *EBRFMAC*, 329; *Reginonis abbatis Prumiensis Chronicon cum continuatione Treverensi*, ed. Friedrich Kurze, MGH SS rer. Germ. 50 (Hannover: Hahn, 1890), a. 876, 112; Kos, *Gradivo*, Št. 160, 127.

³⁵² *Francorum regum historia: pars prima usque ad a. 869*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS 2 (Hannover: Hahn, 1829), 324-325.

³⁵³ Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 158-161.

³⁵⁴ Peter Štih, “Regnum Carantanum,” *Zgodovinski časopis* 40 (1986): 228-229.

³⁵⁵ For a detailed analysis of arguments in favour of this theory, see Štih, “Regnum Carantanum.”

³⁵⁶ Cf. Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 163. Štih himself later deconstructed some of the evidence in favour of that theory in “O Kocljeven koncu.”

The *AF*'s Regensburg continuation (*Annalium Fuldensium continuatio Ratisbonensis*, *AFCR*) uses the term "Pannonia" in the singular and it seems they do not consider the land to the south of the Drava to be a part of it. Thus, Pannonia in the *AF* would correspond to the two Pannonias of the *Conversio*, but without *Conversio*'s internal division.³⁵⁷ This "Pannonia" in the *AF* is treated as a geographical unit governed like any other area under direct Carolingian control, specifically that of Arnulf.³⁵⁸ Another term that continues to appear in the *AFCR* is "the East."³⁵⁹

Unlike Arnulf's "Pannonia," Braslav's polity is referred to in the *AFCR* in purely descriptive terms. When Braslav and his land are first mentioned in a continuation of the *AF* in 884, he is referred to as "holding the reign between the Sava and the Drava."³⁶⁰ Although Braslav himself is titled "dux," his rule is termed a "regnum," which may indicate either a devaluation of terms in comparison to the first half of the 9th century or a higher degree of autonomy.³⁶¹ In 892, it is referred to as "Braslav's realm" (...*regno Brazlaronis*...).³⁶²

One term that was current from 870s to 890s but did not appear in the *AF* or its continuations is *Sclavinia*.³⁶³ This is despite the fact that the *AF* indicates the non-specified "Slavs" played a role in Carolingian politics on par with the Bavarians.³⁶⁴

³⁵⁷ This seems to follow from *AFCR*, a. 896, 130. Cf. Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 163.

³⁵⁸ This seems to follow from *AFCR*, a. 884, 110-113. Other mentions of "Pannonia" in *AF*'s continuations: *AFCR*, a. 890, 118, a. 894, 125, a. 895, *AFCA*, a. 900, 134.

³⁵⁹ *AFCR*, a. 884, 113, a. 885, 114, a. 892, 121, a. 893, 122.

³⁶⁰ *AFCR*, a. 884, 113.

³⁶¹ Cf. Brunner, "Die fränkischen Fürstentitel," 212, 261; Filipec, *Donja Panonija*, 163-164.

³⁶² *AFCR*, a. 892, 121.

³⁶³ Kos, *Gradivo*, Št. 297, 227, Št. 306, 232-233; Stanko Andrić, "Ime i pojam 'Slavonija' u ranom srednjem vijeku (do 1100.)" [Name and concept of 'Slavonia' in the early Middle Ages (until AD 1100)], *Od Sclavoniae do Slavonije: pojam, opseg i granični položaj u srednjem i ranom novom vijeku* [From Sclavonia to Slavonia: concept, extent and frontier position in the Middle Ages and early modern period], Slavonski Brod, 21st-22nd October 2021, 14.

³⁶⁴ *AF*, a. 870, 72, a. 877, 90, a. 887, 106.

In the aftermath of the arrival of the Magyars, it is interesting to note that the contemporary understanding of Pribina, Kocelj, and Braslav as Slavs did not lead to a long-term perception of the land surrounded by the Raab, Danube, and Drava Rivers as Slavic territory, except among the heirs of the Methodian mission. Notably, the *RC*, deeply influenced by the memories of the Avars, echoes the “Avar desert” mentioned in Alfred the Great’s encyclopedia by referring to the land devastated by the Magyars as the “wastelands of the Pannonians and Avars.”³⁶⁵

³⁶⁵ *RC*, a. 889, 132; Štih, “Regnum Carantanum,” 222.

Conclusion

The area surrounded by the Danube to the north and east, the Dinaric Mountains to the south and the Alps to the west became integrated into the Frankish Realm during a period of ideological transformation. Shifts in ideology were a hallmark of Carolingian rule, as the dynasty continually sought to legitimize its authority amidst the changing political circumstances.

The Carolingian predecessors, the Merovingians, had been largely indifferent to the sense of identity of their subjects. The Carolingians, who usurped rule from the Merovingians, found themselves in a completely different situation. As their political ambitions grew, culminating in the assumption of the royal title in the mid-8th century, they sought to present themselves through historiography—exemplified by the *Royal Frankish Annals (ARF)*—as popular leaders on whom the community of the Franks could rely to achieve its ambitions. In doing so, they redefined the Frankish kingly position by tying it to the sense of collective identity of its subjects. As Charlemagne's rule expanded to include other communities with well-developed political identities, such as the Bavarians in 788, his kingly position had to be redefined again to accommodate these communities. Thus, in the *ARF*, Charlemagne was portrayed as the leader of multi-ethnic Christian coalition set against the external threats to Christendom. Charlemagne's role was redefined in the *ARF* again with his imperial coronation in 800, positioning him, the Emperor, as the focus of political agency, individual political communities within the Empire disappearing. The revival of ancient Roman territorial terminology in the 790s reflects the invocation of Roman political traditions in the text. This

portrayal of the Empire was inherited by Louis the Pious from Charlemagne and continued until the end of the *ARF*'s narrative in 829.

However, it should be pointed out that the portrayal of political life in the *ARF* does not directly replicate how political processes in the Carolingian Empire functioned in practice. This is evident from the fact that the Saxons were given a written code of law in 802, making them a clearly defined community on par with the Bavarians. Since this did not correspond to the image of the Empire the *ARF* wanted to convey, this event was not mentioned in the text. Furthermore, even though the *ARF* was meant to represent the consensual view of the Empire, arguably acceptable to all, alternative views of political relations within the Empire were condoned as long as they could be instrumentalized to support the policies of the Carolingian family. This is most apparent in the *Older Metz Annals (AMpr)*, which provided an alternative interpretation of affairs to the *ARF* but were nonetheless endorsed by members of the Carolingian family. A multitude of local annals written at the beginning of the 9th century with varying terminology further points to the variety of perceptions, but none of these annals had the political weight of the *ARF* or the *AMpr*.

With the beginning of filial uprisings against Louis the Pious and the division of the Empire into kingdoms ruled by individual members of the Carolingian family, the formation of a historical narrative that could serve as a unifying element also ceased. Instead, for the rest of the 9th century, after 829, the diversity of perceptions that also existed before comes to the fore.

This is evident in how the various sources from the Frankish Empire portray the Frankish interaction with the Pannonian area and the Slavs in it, as well.

The Pannonian area first appears in the *ARF* during the Frankish conflict with the Avars. This conflict took place as the *ARF* was going to transition in its portrayal of the Carolingian realm, from the Realm being a coalition of Christian *gentes*, to it being a Christian empire with the Emperor as the initiator of political processes. This shift is evident in how the incorporation of the Avar Khaganate into the Carolingian realm is described. The decision to undertake a campaign into the “regions of the Avars” is made in 791 through a joint decision of multiple *gentes* ruled by Charlemagne. However, by the time Avars were officially subjugated in 796, it was the Roman province of Pannonia that the Charlemagne now ruled, in which Avars represented an alien body – there was no place for *gentes* in a homogenized Christian empire. However, the continued concept of the Avars served an ideological purpose. Ever since the 7th century, an important element in the construction of the Frankish identity was the notion of the providential role of the Franks to dominate their not-properly-Christian neighbors. The *AMpr* catered to those who held onto such a concept of Frankishness. Thus, Avars represented such an object of domination. This concept of Pannonia with Avars in it would persist into the 820s. The encounter with the Bulgarians in the middle of that decade shifted the geopolitical perception of the Pannonian area in the narrative sources. It came to be seen as a buffer zone, protecting the rest of the Carolingian world from outside threats—a perspective that continued until the reign of Arnulf in the 880s.

It is important to note that perceptions of the Avar Khaganate during this period were varied. The night office of Saint Emmeram and the *Murbach Continuation of the Alamannic Annals* suggest that some viewed the Avar Khaganate as primarily a Slavic territory from the very beginning of the 9th century. However, in high-level Carolingian documents, such as the

ARF and the *Capitulary of Diedenhofen*, Slavs are first mentioned in connection with the Avar Khaganate in 805, alongside the Avars. Notably, the *ARF* generally avoids using the term “Slavs,” even during Duke Ljudevit’s rebellion, although the *Annales Sithienses* refer to him as a Slav. This omission likely reflects the authors’ difficulty in leveraging the Slavs’ presence in Pannonia to enhance the ideological stature of Charlemagne’s lineage. In contrast, the concept of Pannonia linked the Carolingians to Roman heritage, and the depiction of the Avars reinforced the the Carolingians’ role as avengers of Christendom. The most significant mention of the Slavs in the Pannonian area appears in the *Divisio imperii*, which identifies “Slavs living to the east of Bavaria” as one of the entities allocated to Louis the German. This also represented another way in which the Pannonian area was viewed in the second half of the century – as an adjunct to Bavaria.

Middle of the century marked a change in the perception of the territory of the former Avar Khaganate, primarily in the fact that the Khaganate was no longer regarded as a political reality. *Francorum regum historia* reporting how Louis the German received the “Realm of the Huns, ie. Avars” but did not pass it to his son Carloman is telling in that respect. Practically, this era is marked by the tenures of Pribina and Kocelj. Whether usage of the term *Sclavinia* in the treatise *On the Conversion of the Bavarians and the Carantanians* was prompted by their tenure or whether it was a rework of the concept of the *regnum Wandalorum* of the night office of Saint Emmeram is up for debate. However, contemporary narrative sources, focused on Carolingian politics, largely overlooked their tenure. This oversight is likely because the Pannonian area and surrounding regions had become part of the domain of Carloman, Louis the German’s son. While the term “eastern frontier” as a synonym for the “Pannonian frontier”

probably emerged before Carloman took it over in 856, it was perhaps his rule that brought it to the fore, which is why the “East” appears as one of the regions ruled by Louis the German in 869 in the *Annals of Xanten*. However, after Carloman’s rule extended to Bavaria, this area was treated in the sources as an adjunct to Bavaria and was not given any identity of its own.

During Arnulf’s rule Pannonia takes center stage in the *Annals of Fulda*. Despite Duke Braslav’s significant role in Carolingian affairs, the narrative sources of the time rarely mention the Slavs in connection with Pannonia. Charter evidence, however, shows that the Slavs were a substantial part of the population in the regions tied to Bavaria, over which Arnulf extended his influence. This avoidance of the term Slavs in connection with the Pannonian area in the narrative sources had a lasting impact. When Regino of Prüm wrote about the Magyar incursions at the beginning of the 10th century, he referred to the area as “wastelands of the Pannonians and Avars.”

It is clear that the Carolingian intellectual elites considered some people in the Pannonian area to be Slavic, but understanding their reasons is a real challenge. From a postmodernist perspective, as exemplified by Florin Curta, ethnic identity is not inherently tied to language or culture but is shaped by political elites to garner support. Given the political context of the 9th century, it seems that the Carolingian elites had no intention of creating a distinct *gens Sclavorum*, or any other gens, with its own code of law in Pannonia, unlike their role in the ethnogenesis of the Saxons.³⁶⁶ Thus, the notion that the Slavs were a “the colonial term of the Carolingian intellectual elite for the population of the region” as Danijel Džino posited for Dalmatia can hardly apply for the Pannonian area. At best, it might be seen as a

³⁶⁶ Cf. Wolfram, *Conversio*, 37.

Bavarian colonial term. However, it is much more likely that, as Denis Alimov posited, the Pannonian area and its immediate vicinity are perhaps the only territories where it can be said with certainty that the inhabitants really did self-identify as Slavs during the 9th century. The frequent appearance of the term “Slavs” in contexts with minimal ideological implications, such as charters, supports this conclusion. These documents suggest that the people of Pannonia may have identified themselves as Slavs more than the Carolingian elites constructed this identity for them.

This conclusion presents another issue from a postmodernist perspective. The lack of detailed ideological elaboration on the term “Slavs” means that surviving sources do not specify what characteristics the Carolingian intellectual elites considered as defining Slav-ness. One can only paraphrase J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz’s assessment of the Vandals: in general it must have been pretty clear who was, and who was not, in this case, a Slav.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁷ Liebeschuetz, “*Gens into regnum: the Vandals*,” 71-72.

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