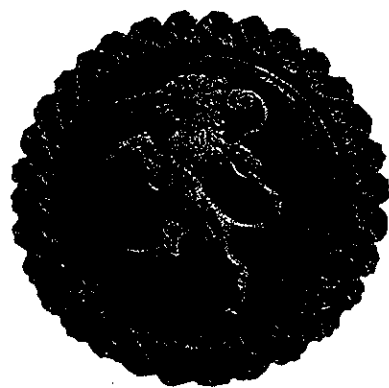


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Vol. I



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Ethnicity and Migrations in the Late Antique and Early Medieval Middle Danube Region: Examples Linking the Areas of Modern Croatia and Slovakia

Etnicita a migrácia v neskorom staroveku a včasnóm stredoveku. Povodie stredného Dunaja. Príklady spájajúce oblasti súčasného Chorvátska a Slovenska / Etnicitet i migracije u srednjem Podunavlju u kasnoj antici i ranom srednjem vijeku. Primjeri koji povezuju današnje hrvatsko i slovačko područje

This brief paper endeavours to give an outline of complex processes of ethnic changes and ethnogenesis, i.e. identity formation, in the late antique and early medieval middle Danube region from the late fourth until the late ninth century A.D. with special regard to the areas of modern Croatia and Slovakia, that is to say, more precisely, the areas of northern Croatia and western Slovakia. Chronologically, the paper will be centered around more or less distinct periods: 1) the movements of various ethnic groups in the late fourth and early fifth centuries; 2) the time of Hunnic domination; 3) the period of Germanic "polities" in the Carpathian Basin; 4) the arrival of the Avars and establishment of the Slavic populations; 5) the situation under Avar domination; 6) the creation of new political realities in the ninth century. The question of ethnic changes and ethnogenesis, i.e. identity formation, in the transitional period between Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages is in itself a very intricate one, still more so for the middle Danube area, given the conspicuous lack, for the most part and especially for the early Middle Ages, of written sources and due to the interpretatively inconclusive archaeological evidence (or not conclusive enough). The study aspires to illustrate differences and similarities in historical patterns between both areas.

Keywords: late antiquity, early Middle Ages, barbarians, migrations, ethnicity, Pannonia.

The territories of modern northern Croatia and western Slovakia entered Late Antiquity in fundamentally different circumstances. Whereas the northern Croatian area, roughly encompassing the provinces of *Pannonia Savia* and *Pannonia Secunda*, was fully incorporated into the Late Roman administrative and economic system, the area of western Slovakia existed outside the *orbis Romanus*, albeit not totally devoid of Roman presence: there was a *castellum* Gerulata, which existed from the first to the fourth century A.D. and whose remains are located in today's Rusovce in Bratislava, and another *castellum* Celemantia on the left bank of the Danube, at the village of Iža

to the east of Komárno, opposite Brigetio (Szőny), which was operational until the late fourth century A.D. The latter fort was one of the so-called counter-fortresses, military strongholds that the Romans had a habit, strategically and tactically very sound one, of establishing on the soil of *Barbaricum* along their northern borders as forward defensive outposts (bridgeheads). There were presumably more such military installations on the territory of modern south-western Slovakia along the northern bank of the Danube, as the example of Devín shows, where there was a counter-fortress of Carnuntum (Petronell-Carnuntum / Bad Deutsch-Altenburg).¹

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¹ BARKÓCZI, László: History of Pannonia. In: *The Archaeology of Roman Pannonia*. Ed.: ALFONZ LENGYEL – GEORGE T. B. RADAN. Lexington – Budapest: Kentucky UP – Akadémiai Kiadó, 1980, p. 103; FIRZ, Jenő: Administration and army. In: *Ibidem*, p. 132; FÜLEP, Ferenc: Pannonia research in Hungary. In: *Ibidem*, p. 35; SOPRONI, Sándor: Limes. In: *Ibidem*, pp. 220–221, 223; THOMAS, Edit: Religion. In: *Ibidem*, pp. 200–201. Cfr. also KOLNÍK, Titus: Römische Stationen im slowakischen Abschnitt des nordpannonischen Limesvorlandes. In: *Archeologické rozhledy*, a. 38, 1986, pp. 411–434, 467–472; KRASKOVSKÁ, Ludmila: *Gerulata-Rusovce. Rímske pohrebisko I. Fontes Archeologického ústavu Slovenského národného múzea v Bratislave*, vol. 2. Martin: Vydavateľstvo Osveta, 1974, pp. 165–166; PIETA, Karol – PLACHÁ, Veronika: Die ersten Römer im nördlichen

The closing decades of the fourth century brought new developments in the wider region of the Carpathian Basin that were marked by the advance of the Huns. Their arrival in the East-Central Europe directly influenced the ethnic shifts in the middle Danube region. Many ethnic groups were forced either to submit to the new overlords or flee from them to the Roman soil. These movements affected the Roman provinces along the Danube. In the late 370s and the early 380s, the southern and eastern Pannonian areas came under the pressure from the so-called tripartite group of peoples (the Ostrogoths, the Alans, and the Huns) who were part of the refugee wave that, crossed the Danube and settled in Thrace in 376, after the Gothic kingdoms collapsed due to the Hunnic onslaught, but then rose in rebellion against the Roman authorities in 377 and inflicted a heavy defeat upon the Romans at Adrianople in 378. Devastating raids of the tripartite group of peoples against Pannonia contributed substantially to depopulation processes, but stopped after they were settled as federates along the *limes* in Pannonia. The influx of the new ethnic groups, detectable to some extent in the archaeological finds which show arguably less-Romanized material culture, affected additionally the ethnic composition of the provincial population and enabled its further barbarization. Their presence was always felt as a potential source of instability and from the second half of the 390s crisis practically never ceased to exist in the middle Danube area. Probably in 395, the federates rebelled following the example of the Visigoths under their new leader Alaric.²

Simultaneously, the area of south-western and southern Slovakia experienced the movements of peoples when the Marcomanni, the Quadi, and the Vandals, along with the Sarmatians, crossed the Danube into the northern Pannonia and ravaged the area probably in 395.³ They might have been provoked into the action by Alaric's rebellion and presumably a similar stir among the Pannonian federates who, as it seems, failed to check the raiders. The situation was resolved a couple of years later, around 397, when the general Stilicho made a treaty with the Marcomanni who were settled in *Pannonia Prima*. Only in 399 Stilicho managed to pacify the middle Danube area, but the peace did not last for long.⁴

New disturbances followed for Pannonia after Alaric and his Visigoths passed through the Sava-Drava-Danube region in 401, meeting no resistance, and invaded Italy, affecting also the unity of the federate Ostrogothic-Alanic-Hunnic group by triggering their separation. Alaric retreated from Italy in 402, and again passed through southern Pannonia. However, in the late 405, a barbarian multitude led by Radagaisus crossed the Danube into the northern Pannonia and by the spring of 406 invaded Italy. They moved through the area of southern Slovakia, pushing forward other peoples who, on the last day of 406, crossed the Middle Rhine and invaded Gaul (primarily the Vandals, the Alans, and the Suevi). This new migrational impetus was initiated by the Huns who already approached the middle Danube area by then. Finally, in the spring of 408, Alaric again moved through the Sava – Drava – Danube region and, in the early autumn, made a renewed attack

Mitteldonauroaum im Lichte neuer Grabungen in Devín. In: *Germanen beiderseits des spätantiken Limes. Materialien des X. Internationalen Symposiums „Grundprobleme der frühgeschichtlichen Entwicklung im nördlichen Mitteldonauegebiet“*, Xanten 2.–6. Dez. 1997. Ed.: Jaroslav TEJRAL – Thomas FISCHER – Gundolf PRECHT. Köln – Brno: Archäologisches Institut der Universität in Köln – Archeologický ústav AV ČR, 1999, pp. 179–205; PIETA, Karol – PLACHÁ, Veronika: Die Römerzeitliche Besiedlung von Bratislava – Devín. In: *Archeologické rozhledy*, a. 38, 1986, pp. 339–357; SCHMIDTOVÁ, Jaroslava: Die vorrömische und frühromische Besiedlung von Gerulata. In: *Legionsadler und Druidenstab. Vom Legionslager zur Donaumetropole. Textband. Katalog zur Sonderausstellung aus Anlass des Jubiläums 2000 Jahre Carnuntum*. Ed.: Franz HUMER. Bad Deutsch-Altenburg: Archäologisches Museum Carnuntinum, 2006, pp. 133–137; VISY, Zsolt: *Der pannonische Limes in Ungarn*. Budapest: Corvina, 1988, pp. 40–41.

² For details cfr. GRAČANIN, Hrvoje: The Huns and South Pannonia. In: *Byzantinoslavica*, a. 64, 2006, pp. 29–39. On archaeological finds and their interpretation, see SOPRONI, Sándor: *Die letzten Jahrzehnte des pannonischen Limes*. München: C. H. Beck, 1985, pp. 91–93 with SALAMON, Ágnes – BARKÓCZI, László: Pannonien in nachvalentinianischer Zeit (376–476). Ein Versuch zur Periodisation. In: *Severin zwischen Römerzeit und Völkerwanderung*. Katalog der Ausstellung Enns. Ed.: Dietmar STRAUB. Linz: Oberösterreichischer Landesverl., 1982, p. 159, 162 and studies in *Germanen am Plattensee*. Ausstellung des Balatoni Museums Keszthely im Museum für Frühgeschichte des Landes Niederösterreich. Ed.: Rober MÜLLER – Peter STRAUB. Traismauer: NÖ Landesmuseums, 2002, along with cautionary remarks by TEJRAL, Jaroslav: Zur Chronologie der frühen Völkerwanderungszeit im mittleren Donauroaum. In: *Archaeologia Austriaca*, a. 72, 1988, pp. 252–253.

³ Cfr. GRAČANIN, Hrvoje: *The Huns and South Pannonia*, pp. 39–40. For the location of Marcomannic, Quadic and Vandalic groups on the middle Danube in the late fourth and early fifth centuries vis-à-vis modern Slovakia's territory, cfr. LÖFFER, Friedrich: *Völkerverschiebungen im Ostalpen-Mitteldonauroaum zwischen Antike und Mittelalter (375–600)*. Berlin – New York: de Gruyter, 2003, p. 90, 92, pp. 99–100.

⁴ For details cfr. GRAČANIN, Hrvoje: *The Huns and South Pannonia*, pp. 40–41.

against Italy, bringing about the final disintegration of the Pannonian federates.⁵

These raids and movements caused depopulation processes among the provincial population and shifting of various ethnic groups, but some still remained in their old areas. By the 430s they all had to submit to the Huns who effectively became the masters of the middle Danube area after the Romans ceded the control over the majority of Pannonian provinces to them. The Huns completed the occupation of these areas in 441 following the capture of Sirmium. The Hunnic dominance in the middle Danube area was marked by the final breakdown of the Roman administrative system in Pannonia as well as by opening the gate for the Germanic peoples to become new power-players in the region after the collapse of the Hunnic empire in the mid-450s.⁶

After the disappearance of the Hunnic superpower, the Germanic peoples were left as the true winners, regardless of whether they supported the Huns or rebelled against them in the conflict that arose after the death of the Hunnic king Attila in 453 and climaxed in the battle at the river Nedao. As it seems, the new ethnic situation along the middle Danube was, starting from the west to the east, as follows: the Herulians in the southern Moravia, western Slovakia and northern Austria; the Suevi (who probably incorporated other West Germanic groups that previously disappeared from sources, namely the Marcomanni and the Quadi) in the northern Austria, southern Slovakia, and northern Hungary; the Gepids in the area between the Maros and the Criş (Körös), while by the end of the fifth century A.D. they controlled the area between the Tisza, the Danube, the Olt, and the Carpathians; the Scyri in the middle part

of the region between the Danube and the Tisza; the Sarmatians to the south of the Scyri; and the Ostrogoths in the former Pannonian provinces. The Ostrogoths established three separate settlement groups, stretching from the north-western to the south-eastern Pannonia, and soon proved themselves as power wielders in the region, winning the status of the imperial federates and waging incessant offensive or defensive wars against their neighbours. Probably in 467, the Suevi, under their king Hunimundus, traversed the western parts of Pannonia *en route* to plunder Dalmatia, capturing the Ostrogothic cattle on the way, but were crushingly defeated by the Ostrogoths when they were returning from their successful raid in Dalmatia. In 469/470, the Ostrogoths attacked and plundered the Suevic area north of the Danube, forcing King Hunimundus to flee to the Alamanni who lived in the upper Danube area, while the rest of the Suevi had to submit to the Ostrogoths. Due to these uncertainties, the remaining local Romanized Pannonian population was under a constant pressure, but they nevertheless maintained their distinctive identity.⁷

After the Ostrogoths left Pannonia in 473, the Gepids became a new dominating power in the region. The remaining Suevi used the departure of the Ostrogoths to move into the northern Pannonia and, if the hypothesis is correct, to establish themselves in the former Late Roman province of *Pannonia Savia* since the province was known as *Suavia* in the first half of the sixth century A.D. (as testified in Cassiodorus, Jordanes, and Procopius⁸), which is clearly reminiscent of the Suevic name. It is also possible that these Savian Suevi received a populational influx when the Ostrogothic king Theodoric ordered the Alamanni,

⁵ For details cfr. IDEM: *The Huns and South Pannonia*, pp. 41–44, with IDEM: *Južna Panonija u kasnoj antici i ranom srednjovjekovlju (od konca 4. do konca 11. stoljeća)*. Zagreb: Plejada, 2011, pp. 62–65.

⁶ For details cfr. IDEM: *The Huns and South Pannonia*, pp. 49–66, with IDEM: *Južna Panonija u kasnoj antici i ranom srednjovjekovlju*, pp. 69–76.

⁷ For details cfr. IDEM: *Goti i južna Panonija*. In: *Scrinia Slavonica*, a. 6, 2006, pp. 90–103; IDEM: *Južna Panonija u kasnoj antici i ranom srednjovjekovlju*, pp. 77–86. For the location of the mentioned Germanic and Sarmatic groups along the middle Danube, cfr. POHL, Walter: *Die Gepiden und die Gentes an der mittleren Donau nach dem Zerfall des Attilareiches*. In: *Die Völker an der mittleren und unteren Donau im fünften und sechsten Jahrhundert*. Ed.: Herwig WOLFRAM – Falco DATM. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1980, p. 261, 263, 268, 269, 273, 275, 279. On the archaeology of Ostrogothic groups in Pannonia, see Kiss, Attila: *Ein Versuch, die Funde und das Siedlungsgebiet der Ostgoten in Pannonien zwischen 456–471 zu bestimmen*. In: *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, a. 31, 1979, pp. 329–339 and Kiss, Attila: *Archeologia degli Ostrogoti in Pannonia (456–473)*. In: *I Goti*. Catalogo della mostra. Ed.: Volker BIERBRAUER – Otto von HESSEN – Ermanno A. ARSLAN. Milano: Electa Lombardia, 1994, pp. 164–169.

⁸ CASSIODORI Senatoris Variarum. In: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Auctores Antiquissimi* (deinde MGH AA), vol. 12. Ed.: Theodor MOMMSEN. Berlin: Weidmann, 1894, cap. 4.49, 5.14.1, 5.15; CASTRITIUS, Helmut: *Barbari – antiqui barbari*. K poselitveni zgodovini jugovzhodnega Norika in južne Panonije v pozni antiki (od konca 4. do srede 6. stoletja). In: *Zgodovinski časopis*, a. 48, 1994, p. 139; *Getica* in: IORDANIS Romana et Getica. In: MGH AA, vol. 5.1. Ed.: Theodor MOMMSEN. Berlin: Weidmann, 1882, p. 273; Romana in: *Ibidem*, p. 218; *Bellum Gothicum*. In: PROCOPII CAESARIENSIS *Opera omnia*. vol. 2. Ed.: Jakob HAURY. Leipzig: Teubner, 1963, cap. 1. 16. 8–9.

after they were defeated by the Franks in 506, to be resettled in the wider Italian area.⁹

The new period of Ostrogothic presence in Pannonia, limited to its southern parts, lasted from the late fifth century A.D. until the 530s, and was marked by transient efforts of administrative and economic renewal which also benefited the local Romanized Pannonian population. At the same time, in the late 500s, the Lombards defeated their former masters Herulians, forced them south, and made them seek safety among the Ostrogoths and the Gepids. In 512, the Herulians were finally settled by the East Roman government in the eastern parts of modern Syrmia and in the neighbouring area around Singidunum (Belgrade), where they were used as a bulwark against the Ostrogoths and the Gepids. There, some of the Herulians survived until 551, when they were absorbed by the Gepids.¹⁰ Due to Herulians' long presence, the easternmost part of *Pannonia Secunda* was commonly known in the second half of the sixth century A.D. as the Herulian land as indicated by Menander Protector.¹¹

The Lombards became the new power in the middle Danube region and were recognized as such when, in 526 or 527, the East Roman government formally sanctioned the Lombard presence in the northern Pannonia and concluded a federate treaty with them. The East Roman – Lombard relations were strengthened further when, in 547, the Lombards received parts of the *Noricum Mediterraneum* and both South Pannonian provinces. This gave rise to a fierce rivalry between the Lombards and the Gepids, who were the masters of the eastern Carpathian Basin, which resulted in a war that broke out in 549 and reached its climax in 551, when the Lombards, to some extent aided

by the East Roman army, defeated the Gepids probably in modern eastern Slavonia.¹²

The power struggle between the Lombards and the Gepids also saw an active participation by a Lombard royal claimant (H)ildigis, who was supported by the Gepids and, in the 540s, twice sought help from the Slavs. It is usually believed that these Slavic groups were settled in the territory of modern Slovakia, but there are also opinions that they lived in Galicia. Since no archaeological finds in the middle Danube area can be attributed with certainty to the Slavs, the question of their early presence must remain unsolved, although one cannot exclude the possibility of the inflow of some Slavic groups in the western Carpathian Basin by the mid-sixth century A.D.¹³

The peace between the Lombards and the Gepids lasted until 566, when the hostilities broke out once again. The Gepids now asked and received the help of the East Romans, promising in exchange to return the Gepidic possessions in South Pannonia to the Empire, but after the victory was won they failed to fulfill their promise. The Lombards, on the other hand, decided to rely on the Avars, who appeared at the edge of the Carpathian Basin in the 560s. Faced with such a danger, the Gepids tried once again to win the favour of the Empire. However, the East Romans left them in the lurch this time and, in 567, the Gepids were decisively defeated by the allied Lombards and Avars. The Avars were left in the control of the eastern Carpathian Basin and, following the departure of the Lombards for Italy in 568, they remained the sole masters of the middle Danube area. Leaving Pannonia, the Lombards took with them many ethnic groups, among others the Suevi, the Pannonians, the Gepids, and the Sarmatians.¹⁴ The modern Slovakia's territory

⁹ For details cfr. GRAČANIN, Hrvoje: *Goti i južna Panonija*, pp. 99–101 with IDEM: *Južna Panonija u kasnoj antici i ranom srednjovjekovlju*, pp. 223–225. With regard to the hypothesis about the Suevi in *Pannonia Savia*, it is worth stressing that Procopius (*Bellum Gothicum*, 1. 15. 25–26) clearly distinguishes between the Siscians (*Siskioi*) and the Suevi (*Souaboi*), which makes it improbable that in both cases the provincial population is meant as some researchers have inferred (cfr. STEIN, Ernst: *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, vol. 2. Paris – Bruxelles – Amsterdam: Desclée de Brouwer, 1949, p. 349, nota 1; BARIŠIĆ, Franjo: The critical apparatus of Procopius. In: *Vizantijski izvori za istoriju naroda Jugoslavije*, vol. 1. Beograd: Vizantološki institut Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, p. 34, nota 51; GRAFENAUER, Bogo: *Ustoličevanje koroških vojvod in država karantanskih Slovencev*. Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 1952, p. 407).

¹⁰ For details cfr. GRAČANIN, Hrvoje: *Goti i južna Panonija*, pp. 108–113, 2007, 22–26, 34, with IDEM: *Južna Panonija u kasnoj antici i ranom srednjovjekovlju*, pp. 94–99, 106, 225.

¹¹ MENANDER PROTECTOR, fr. 5.4 in BLOCKLEY, Richard: *The History of Menander the Guardsman. Introductory Essay, Text, Translation and Historiographical Notes*. Liverpool: Francis Cairns Publications, 1985, p. 2–6. On the testimonies for the Herulian identity in the sixth century, see also ELLEGÅRD, Alvar: Who were the Eruli? In: *Scandia*, a. 53, 1987, pp. 26–28.

¹² For details cfr. GRAČANIN, Hrvoje: Gepidi, Heruli, Langobardi i južna Panonija. In: *Scrinia Slavonica*, a. 7, 2007, pp. 36–42, with IDEM: *Južna Panonija u kasnoj antici i ranom srednjovjekovlju*, pp. 101–102, 106–114.

¹³ For details cfr. IDEM: *Cepidi, Heruli, Langobardi i južna Panonija*, pp. 40–41, nota 162; IDEM: Slaveni u ranosrednjovjekovnoj južnoj Panoniji. In: *Scrinia Slavonica*, a. 8, 2008, p. 24; IDEM: *Južna Panonija u kasnoj antici i ranom srednjovjekovlju*, pp. 112–113.

¹⁴ For details cfr. IDEM: *Cepidi, Heruli, Langobardi i južna Panonija*, pp. 43–45, 2009, pp. 7–9, with IDEM: *Južna Panonija u kasnoj antici i ranom srednjovjekovlju*, pp. 115–117, 119–121.

remained outside the power struggle between the Lombards and the Gepids as a peripheral area. However, in the 560s it was probably traversed by the Avars who attacked the Frankish borders twice (in 562 and 566, respectively).¹⁵

In the 580s and the 590s, South Pannonia became a regular corridor for the advancement of the Slavic groups helped by the Avars. The same may be contended for the area of Slovakia, although recent archaeological research supposes that the Slavic settlement of Slovak territory occurred in the mid-sixth century A.D.¹⁶ Thanks to the Avar support, the Slavic groups gradually managed to establish themselves in the broad region of the Carpathian Basin, which enabled the far-reaching Slavicization of old populations. The relationship between the Slavs and the Avars was not a mere relationship between subject people and their overlords; it was considerably more stratified. It had to be, if for nothing else, because of the numerical superiority of the Slavic and Slavicized groups in comparison with the class of Avar power-holders. The Avars relied on their Slavic dependents in many ways, but they were careful to impede the ethnogenetic and identity-formation processes and the creation of the autonomous warrior elite among the Slavs, because they could have generally jeopardized the Avar position. The case of the Seremesians, a new identity group formed by the 680s from the East Roman captives and the Avar, Bulgar, and probably Slavic groups and settled in the southern parts of the region between the Danube and the Tisza, clearly shows that such ethnogenetic and identity-formation processes were not unusual. The Sermesian rebellion in the mid-680s and the fact that Slavs under Samo and the Bulgar groups broke free of the Avar rule indicates what might have become of the Avar state if the Avars had not managed to suppress such processes. It is therefore no wonder that the more substantial ethnogenetic and identity-formation processes among the Slavs in the middle Danube area (and broader) started

only after the Avar khaganate collapsed under the attacks of the Franks in the late eighth and the early ninth centuries.¹⁷

With the arrival of the Frankish power in the middle Danube region, the situation dramatically changed. Soon there were new identity groups evident in the sources, such as the Moravians. The warrior buried in Blatnica was undoubtedly a representative of the elite that emerged following the destruction of the Avar khaganate and that enjoyed the support of the Frankish authorities.¹⁸ Similar archaeological finds have also been detected in the area of north-western Croatia, in Cirkovljani near Prelog north of the Drava, in Medvedička near Đurđevac south of the Drava, in Podsused on the western edge of Zagreb, and in Požeški Brestovac near Požega, invoking the same conclusions.¹⁹

The elite of the South-Pannonian Slavs did not succeed in an attempt to establish their independence since the Franks crushed, in the early 820s, the rebellion of Liudewit, prince of the Lower Pannonia south of the Drava, centred probably at Sisak, and then ousted another South Pannonian prince, Ratimar, in the late 830s. Eventually, the situation might have changed under Braslav who is mentioned as prince of the *regnum* between the Drava and the Sava in the 880s and the 890s, and enjoyed, as a Frankish vassal, the trust of the East-Frankish king (and later emperor) Arnulf of Carinthia and was even entrusted by him with the control over the Lower Pannonia north of the Drava, which was created in the late 830s and centred at Mosapurc (Zalavár). However, any possibility for Braslav to acquire independence in the long run was frustrated by the arrival of the Magyars who destroyed both Lower Pannonian principalities in the early 900s.²⁰

The Slavic elites in the present-day Moravia and Slovakia also created their respective principalities, Moravia and Nitrava (Nitra). Nitrava was incorporated into the Moravian principality in the early 830s, after which its ruler Priwina (Pribina)

¹⁵ Cfr. POHL, Walter: *Die Awaren. Ein Steppenvolk in Mitteleuropa 567–822 n. Chr.*, München: C. H. Beck, 2002, pp. 45–46.

¹⁶ Cfr. GODŁOWSKI, Kazimierz: Das Aufhören der germanischen Kulturen an der mittleren Donau und das Problem des Vordringens der Slawen. In: *Die Völker an der mittleren und unteren Donau im fünften und sechsten Jahrhundert*. Ed.: Herwig WOLFRAM – Falco DAIM. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1980, pp. 225–232; SZYDŁOWSKI, Jerzy: Zur Anwesenheit der Westslawen an der mittleren Donau im ausgehenden 5. und 6. Jahrhundert. In: *Ibidem*, pp. 233–237; POHL, Walter: *Die Awaren. Ein Steppenvolk in Mitteleuropa 567–822 n. Chr.*, p. 97.

¹⁷ For details cfr. GRAČANIN, Hrvoje: *Slaveni u ranosrednjovjekovnoj južnoj Panoniji*, pp. 24–29, 37–38, with IDEM: *Južna Panonija u kasnoj antici i ranom srednjovjekovlju*, pp. 129–132, 137–139, 144–145.

¹⁸ Cfr. CURTA, Florin: *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages 500–1250*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 130–131.

¹⁹ For details cfr. GRAČANIN, Hrvoje: *Južna Panonija u kasnoj antici i ranom srednjovjekovlju*, pp. 165–166 with respective entries in the gazetteer of archeological finds (IDEM: *Južna Panonija u kasnoj antici i ranom srednjovjekovlju*, p. 285ff).

²⁰ For details cfr. IDEM: *Južna Panonija u kasnoj antici i ranom srednjovjekovlju*, pp. 169–196.

sought safety on the Frankish territory, then went to the Bulgars, and soon to the Franks again, and was finally given the rule of the Lower Pannonian principality north of the Drava. The Principality of Moravia, first under Mojmir I in the 840s, and again, more successfully, under Rastislav in the 850s, tried to shake off the Frankish overlordship, which was finally achieved under Svatopluk who, in the 870s and the 880s, created a political entity powerful enough to compete with the Franks for the control over the middle Danube region.²¹ Eventually, the Principality of Moravia also succumbed to the Magyars in the early 900s, and the devastating Magyar attacks caused the Moravian population to flee south arriving also on the south Pannonian territory.²² The collapse of the Principality of Moravia left an open field for the creation of new political entities in the region, the principalities of Hungary and Bohemia.

The circumstance that the respective territories of the present-day Slovakia and northern Croatia were only referred to in the medieval texts by the generic Slav names as *Sclavonia* points to a conclusion that specific identity-formation processes were frustrated due to the disintegration of existing political entities in the early tenth century A.D. It also seems that there were no groups bearing particular names in the present-day Slovakia and northern Croatia during the early Middle Ages strong enough to effectively transfer or impose their ethnonyms onto the respective Slav or Slavicized populations. This may be connected with the fact that the Avars had been a dominating force in the Carpathian Basin for so long, successfully curbing even on the edges of their khaganate any ethnogenetic and identity-formation processes that could imperil their rule. The same is also valid for the South Pannonian area.

²¹ Cfr. WOLFRAM, Herwig: *Die Geburt Mitteleuropas. Geschichte Österreichs vor seiner Entstehung 378–907*. Wien: Kremayr & Scheriau, 1987, pp. 361–367.

²² Cfr. GRAČANIN, Hrvoje: *Južna Panonija u kasnoj antici i ranom srednjovjekovlju*, pp. 230–231 with Constantine Porphyrogenitus. *De Administrando Imperio*. Ed.: Gyula MORAVCSIK. Trans.: Romilly James Heald JENKINS. Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1967, cap. 13, pp. 5–7, cap. 38, pp. 57–60, and especially cap. 41, pp. 19–25.

