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## WESTERN SLAVS IN THE 6<sup>th</sup> AND 7<sup>th</sup> CENTURY<sup>1</sup>

The history of the Slavs in the Early Middle Ages was already taken down in a number of works of contemporary chroniclers. The interest in the topic did not fade out even in the following periods. Foundations of the research into the issue were laid by Pavol Jozef Šafařík in his work *Slovanské starožitnosti*<sup>2</sup>. A multi-volume work of Lubor Niederle entitled *Slovanské starožitnosti*<sup>3</sup> and published 1902 – 1925, together with its culture-dedicated part *Život starých Slovanů*<sup>4</sup> from between

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<sup>2</sup> Pawel Josef Šafařík, *Slovanské starožitnosti: Oddíl dějepisný* (Praha, 1837). Pawel Josef Šafařík, *Slovanské starožitnosti II* (Praha 1863)

<sup>3</sup> Lubor Niederle, *Slovanské starožitnosti. Původ a počátky národa slovanského. Díl I. Sv. 1.* (Praha: Nákladem Bursíka a Kohouta, 1902). Lubor Niederle, *Slovanské starožitnosti: Původ a počátky Slovanů jižních. Díl II. Sv. 1.* (Praha: Nákladem Bursíka a Kohouta, 1906). Lubor Niederle, *Slovanské starožitnosti: Původ a počátky Slovanů jižních. Díl II. Sv. 2.* (Praha: Nákladem Bursíka a Kohouta, 1910). Lubor Niederle, *Slovanské starožitnosti: Původ a počátky Slovanů západních. Díl III.* (Praha: Nákladem Bursíka a Kohouta, 1919). Lubor Niederle, *Slovanské starožitnosti: Původ a počátky Slovanů východních. Oddíl I. Sv. 4.* (Praha: Nákladem Bursíka a Kohouta, 1924).

<sup>4</sup> Lubor Niederle, *Život starých Slovanů: Oddíl kulturní. Základy kulturních starožitností slovanských. Díl I. Sv. 1.* (Praha: Nákladem Bursíka a Kohouta, 1911). Lubor Niederle, *Slovanské starožitnosti: Oddíl kulturní. Život starých Slovanů. Základy kulturních starožitností slovanských. Díl I. Sv. 2.* (Praha: Nákladem Bursíka a Kohouta, 1913). Lubor Niederle, *Slovanské starožitnosti: Oddíl kulturní. Díl II.* (Praha: Nákladem Bursíka a Kohouta, 1916). Lubor Niederle, *Slovanské starožitnosti: Oddíl kulturní. Díl III.* (Praha: Nákladem Bursíka a Kohouta, 1919). Lubor Niederle, *Život starých Slovanů: Základy kulturních starožitností slovanských. Díl II. Sv. 1.* (Praha : Nákladem Bursíka a Kohouta, 1924). Lubor Niederle, *Slovanské starožitnosti: Oddíl kulturní. Život starých Slovanů. O právu soukromém u Slovanů v dobách strašících. Napsal Theodor Saturník. Díl II. Sv. 2.* (Praha : Nákladem Bursíka a Kohouta, 1934). Lubor Niederle, *Slovanské starožitnosti: Oddíl kulturní. Život starých Slovanů. Základy*

1911 and 1925, is considered to be the foundations for modern research into the Slavic peoples. The interest in Slavic archaeology experienced its rapid growth after the WWI and mainly after the WWII. As a result, a number of monographs on this topic were published.<sup>5</sup>

The Slavs took the stage of the old continent at the time when there was not much peace in Europe. The Roman Empire experienced its massive decline during the 4<sup>th</sup> century despite it had always been a great power before. To the east of the Roman Empire, around 370 AD, a nomadic nation of the Huns conquered the Alans who used to be settled in the region to the west of the Don River. Since that time, the Huns were moving westwards while followed by other tribes. In 375 AD, the Huns conquered the Ostrogoths who then moved away and settled in the Danube basin region ("Podunajsko"). This was the beginning of the Migration Period. It was winter around the turn of 469/470 when the Ostrogoths managed to cross the frozen Danube. The Huns under the leadership of well-known Attila gradually seized control of a great part of Europe that used to be controlled by the Roman Empire which eventually fell in 476. The Migration Period ended in 568 when the Lombards settled in Italy under pressure from the Avars. Generally, the situation in Europe at the end of the Migration Period was as follows: in the eastern part of the Roman Empire a new great power, Byzantium, came after; the Visigoths established their empire on the Iberian Peninsula; the Burgundians settled in the Rhone and the Seine basin, the Alemanni inhabited south-western Germany and southern Switzerland with the Bavarians settled to their east, central Germany was inhabited by the Thuringians and north-western Germany by the Saxons. The Franks ruled the area around Belgium, north-eastern France and neighbouring regions. Having conquered neighbouring tribes, the Franks gradually became leading power in Western Europe. On the other hand, the Slavs gradually took control over Central, Southeast and Eastern Europe.<sup>6</sup>

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*kulturních starožitností slovanských. Díl III. Sv. 1.* (Praha : Nákladem Bursíka a Kohouta, 1921). Lubor Niederle, *Slovanské starožitnosti: Oddíl kulturní. Život starých Slovanů. Základy kulturních starožitností slovanských. Díl III. Sv. 2.* (Praha : Nákladem Bursíka a Kohouta, 1925).

<sup>5</sup> For an overview of the most relevant works see Peter Ivanič, *Západní Slovania v ranom stredoveku: História – kultúra – hospodárstvo – náboženstvo* (Nitra: UKF, 2011), 10–18.

<sup>6</sup> More on the fall of the Roman Empire see Jozef Česka, *Zánik antického sveta* (Praha: Vyšehrad, 2000). Later works on the Migration Period were published by Jarmila Bednaříková, *Stěhování narodů. 1. vydání* (Praha: Vyšehrad, 2003). Peter Bystrický, *Stá-*

### Origin and ethnogenesis of the Slavs

Even today, neither ethnogenesis nor determination of the Slavs' homeland is fully explained. There are a number of scientific disciplines involved in the process of solving the issue – above all archaeology, history, ethnography, philology and anthropology.<sup>7</sup> Based on the current knowledge it can be stated that the process of ethnogenesis is a complex phenomenon. There are a number of theories today which Zdeněk Měřínský put together into five groups:

- Autochthonic theory – it is assumed that the Slavs were representatives of older cultures already known from the prehistoric times, mainly the Bronze Age Urnfield culture
- Biological continuum – it is presupposed that Neolithic farmers gradually assimilated and adopted various cultural aspects to slavonize themselves in later periods
- Migration theory – assumes that the Western Slavs settled in our region after a one-off movement
- Penetration theory – is based on the assumption that the Slavs were moving to our region gradually
- Colonisation theory – is based on the assumption that the Slavs came intentionally as the colonists of the Germans or the Avars.<sup>8</sup>

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*hovanie národov (454 – 568) – Ostrogóti, Gepidi, Longobardi a Slovania.* (Bratislava: Historický ústav SAV, 2008). Roger Collins, *Evropa raného stredoveku 300 – 1000* (Praha: Vyšehrad, 2005). Malcolm Todd, *Die Zeit der Völkerwanderung.* (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag GmbH, 2002). More on the Huns see Edward Arthur Thompson, *Hunové* (Praha: Lidové noviny, 1999). Peter Podolan, “Pôvod Hunov a ich príchod do Európy,” *Studia Mediaevalia et Antiqua* 8 (2004): 38–57. More on the Germanic tribes in the Migration Period and in the Early Middle Ages see Malcolm Todd, *Germáni* (Praha: Lidové noviny, 1999). More on the history of the Lombards see Karin Priester, *Geschichte der Langobarden. Gesellschaft – Kultur – Alltagsleben* (Stuttgart : Konrad Theiss Verlag GmbH, 2004). More on the history of the Franks in the Migration Period and in the Early Middle Ages see Jarmila Bednaříková, *Frankové a Evropa.* (Praha: Vyšehrad, 2009). Edward James, *Frankové* (Praha: Lidové noviny, 1997).

<sup>7</sup> Jerzy Nalepa, “O pierwotnych siedzibach Słowian w świetle nowszych badań archeologicznych, lingwistycznych i historycznych,” *Slavia Antiqua* 48 (2007): 11–96. Jerzy Nalepa, “O pierwotnych siedzibach Słowian w świetle nowszych badań archeologicznych, lingwistycznych i historycznych. Część II.,” *Slavia Antiqua* 50 (2009): 23–200. Adam Mesiarkin, “Prehľad pohľadov na etnogenézu Slovanov: Hľadanie pravlasti jazykovedou a archeológiou,” *Historia Nova* 2 (2011): 9–27.

<sup>8</sup> Zdeněk Měřínský, *České země od příchodu Slovanů po Velkou Moravu I.* (Praha: Libri, 2000), 37. For a detailed overview of theoretical approaches see Jan Eisner,

In the current research the autochthonic and the migration (allochthonic) theory have gained most followers. Though within them, the opinion is not united. Pavol Jozef Šafárik is considered the founder of the autochthonic (Danube) theory. In his work *Slovanské starožitnosti* he based his theoretical concept on a record in *Povesti dávnych liet* (Ancient legends) where it is stated that Paul the Apostle used to preach in Illyricum where the Slavs were originally settled down. In this text, Illyricum was understood as a region in the Middle Ages Kingdom of Hungary with neighbouring lands of the Danube basin. Šafárik assumed that the chronicler who wrote that particular part of the text was influenced by folk interpretation, i.e. national legends and songs.<sup>9</sup> In Slovakia, Alexander Avenarius<sup>10</sup> worked further on this hypothesis. Even Russian linguist and historian Oleg Nikolajevič Trubačov followed the theory that the Slavs' homeland could be found in Central Europe with the Danube being its central part. Trubačov based his hypothesis on research and linguistic analysis of onomastic material collected in the Danube area.<sup>11</sup> Lubor Niederle criticised Šafárik's hypothesis assuming that the record in **Povesti dávnych liet** (Ancient legends) is only fiction of the author.<sup>12</sup> Following written sources he assumed that the original settlement of the Slavs was situated to the north of the Carpathian Mountains and the Black Sea.<sup>13</sup> According to another autochthonic theory, the homeland of the Slavs is to be found somewhere between the Vistula and the Oder. Polish researchers Leon Kozłowski, Józef Kostrzewski, Konrad Jazdżewski are representatives of the theory which puts the origins of the Slavs to the period of the Lusatian culture; that is to the Bronze Age.<sup>14</sup> Among Czech researchers, this theory followed for instance Jan Eisner, Jan Filip and Josef Ladislav Pič.<sup>15</sup> Lech Leciejewicz

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*Rukověť slovanské archeologie* (Praha: Academia, 1966), 21–83. Zdeněk Klanica, *Počátky slovanského osídlení našich zemí* (Praha: Academia, 1986), 14–48.

<sup>9</sup> Šafárik, *Slovanské starožitnosti: Oddíl dějepisný*, 187–196.

<sup>10</sup> Alexander Avenarius, "Začiatky Slovanov na strednom Dunaji. Autochtonistická teória vo svetle súčasného bádania," *Historický časopis* 40 (1992): 1–16.

<sup>11</sup> Oleg Nikolajevič Trubačov, *Etnogenez i kul'turadrevnejšich Slavian* (Moskva: Nauka, 2002).

<sup>12</sup> Niederle, *Slovanské starožitnosti: Původ a počátky národa slovanského. Díl I. Sv. 1*, 11.

<sup>13</sup> Niederle, *Slovanské starožitnosti: Původ a počátky národa slovanského. Díl I. Sv. 1*, 14.

<sup>14</sup> See Andrzej Buko, *Archeologia Polski wczesnośredniowiecznej: Odkrycia – hipotezy – interpretacje* (Warszawa: Trio, 2005), 65.

<sup>15</sup> See Eisner, *Rukověť slovanské archeologie*, 40–47. See the list of literature.

takes the position that the original inhabitants of the region where the Lusatian culture was rooted left the land after this type of culture ceased to exist in order to find other opportunities for development. In the following periods the La Tène and the Przeworsk culture had the greatest influence on them.<sup>16</sup>

Followers of the allochthonic theory consider today's Ukraine and partly Belarus the homeland of the Slavs. Between the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC and the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, there was the Zarubintsky culture in the region along Dnieper basin, Prypiat region and in Belarus. It still carried some aspects of the fading Kiev type that was to be located in the region along the Dniester and at the river Desna between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. The representatives of the Chernyakhov culture of the period between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD were settled in the land spreading from the Lower Danube up to the Dniester. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, the already mentioned Przeworsk culture was settled in the land between rivers Odra and Burg and later moved to the Dniester and to the south of the Tisza basin. However, there have been discussions concerning the ethnicity of these cultures. Even though, there are hypotheses which hold the Slavs or at least a part of them to be the representatives of these cultures.<sup>17</sup> Around the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century new archaeological cultures appeared in the above-mentioned regions and now are definitely related to the Slavs. These cultures were the Kolocin culture (also the Kolocin-Tusemlja type) at the Upper Dnieper, along the Upper Dvina basin and at the Desna River, than the Prague-Korchak culture situated between the Dnieper and eastern slopes of the Carpathian Mountains. To its south, in the region from the Seversky Donets River, Central Dnieper and South Bug to the Dniester and in the region between the Seret and the Prut, there were settlements of the Penkovka culture.<sup>18</sup> There are Polish researchers who point out that there was a decline in population in the area of Przeworsk (southern and central Poland) and Wielbark culture settlements (east of the Vistula) at the turn of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> century. This land was later settled by the Slavs. Among the most prominent Polish representatives of the allochthonic theory are Kazimierz God-

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<sup>16</sup> Lech Leciejewicz, *Nowa postać świata: Narodziny średniowiecznej cywilizacji europejskiej* (Wrocław: Funna, 2000).

<sup>17</sup> See Měřínský, *České země od příchodu Slovanů po Velkou Moravu I*, 39–43. Marie Bláhová, Jan Frolík and Naďa Profantová, *Velké dějiny země Koruny české: Svazek I. Do roku 1197* (Praha – Litomyšl: Paseka, 1999), 146–147.

<sup>18</sup> See Měřínský, *České země od příchodu Slovanů po Velkou Moravu I*, 45–50. Bláhová, Frolík and Profantová, *Velké dějiny*, 147.

łowski<sup>19</sup> and Michał Parczewski<sup>20</sup>. Slovak and Czech archaeologists take the position that the Slavs moved to the lands of Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and Lower Austria.<sup>21</sup>

### Early records in written sources

Written accounts are very important sources of information on the Early Slavs. Here, they used to be mentioned as the Venedi, the Veneti, the Antes or the Sclavenes. The first records on the so called Venedi or Veneti from the land between the Vistula and the Baltic Sea appeared already in the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD as being mentioned by Roman writers Plinius the Elder, Ptolemy and Tacitus. Gaius Plinius the Elder (around 23 – 79 AD) in his fourth volume *Naturalis historiae* wrote that this tribe settled between the Vistula and Germanic tribes.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> See his works on the topic: Kazimierz Godłowski, *Pierwotne siedziby Słowian: Wybór pism pod redakcją Michała Parczewskiego* (Kraków: Instytut Archeologii Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2000).

<sup>20</sup> Michał Parczewski, *Najstarsza faza kultury wczesnosłowiańskiej w Polsce* (Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 1988). Michał Parczewski, *Początki kultury wczesnosłowiańskiej w Polsce: Krytyka i datowanie źródeł archeologicznych* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolińskich, 1988). Michał Parczewski, *Die Anfänge der frühslawischen Kultur in Polen* (Wien : Österreichische Gesellschaft für Ur – und Frühgeschichte, 1993).

<sup>21</sup> See Beranová, *Slované* (Praha: Libri, 2000). Bláhová, *Frolík and Profantová, Velké dějiny*, 144–149. Gabriel Fusek, *Slovensko vo včasnოსlovanskom období* (Nitra: AÚ SAV, 1994). Gabriel Fusek, “Frühe Slawen im Mitteldonaugebiet,” in *Kulturwandel in Mitteleuropa: Langobarden – Awaren – Slawen*, ed. Jan Bemmann and Michael Schmauder, (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, 2008), 645–656. Gabriel Fusek and Jozef Zábajník, “Príspevok do diskusie o počiatkoch slovanského osídlenia Slovenska,” *Slovenská archeológia*, 51 (2003): 319– 340. Luděk Galuška, *Velká Morava* (Brno: Moravské zemské muzeum Brno, 1991). Luděk Galuška, *Uherské Hradiště – Sady – Křesťanské centrum říše velkomoravské* (Brno: Moravské zemské muzeum – Nadace Litera, 1996). Luděk Galuška, *Slované – doteky předků: O životě na Moravě 6. – 10. století* (Brno: Moravské zemské muzeum Brno – obec Modrá – Krajská knihovna Františka Bartoše, 2004). Měřinský, *České země od příchodu Slovanů po Velkou Moravu I*. Nad'a Profantová, “Die frühslawische Besiedlung Böhmens und archäologische Spuren der Kontakte zum früh – und mittelawarischen sowie merowingischen Kulturkreis,” in *Kulturwandel in Mitteleuropa: Langobarden – Awaren – Slawen*, ed. Jan Bemmann and Michael Schmauder, (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, 2008), 619 – 644. Dušan Třeštík, “Příchod prvních Slovanů do Českých zemí v letech 510 –535,” *Český časopis historický* 94 (1996): 245–280. Jiří Zeman, “K problematice časně slovanské kultury ve střední Evropě,” *Památky Archeologické* 70 (1979): 113–130.

<sup>22</sup> Gaius Plinius the Elder refers to them as Venedi. Gaius Plinius Secundus, *Naturalis historia*, IV. 97. More on this issue see Leonid A. Gindin, Sergej A. Ivanov and

Publius Cornelius Tacitus (around 55 – 120 AD) in his work *Germania* sets the land of the tribe somewhere between the Lower Danube and the Baltic.<sup>23</sup> Claudius Ptolemy (100 – 170) in the third volume of his work *Cosmographia* entitled *Geographia* stated that the tribe was settled to the west of the Vistula and on northern slopes of the Carpathian Arch while reaching the Lower Danube land.<sup>24</sup> Researchers, however, prefer the opinion that the Venedi (or Veneti) are not to be seen as the Slavs. Actual written records which clearly support the existence of the Slavs originate from Byzantine writer Jordanes. Jordanes in his 6<sup>th</sup> century work *De origine actibusque Getarum* mentions the Slavs – the Venedi who are divided into a number of tribes. The best-known were the Sclavenes and the Antes. According to his descriptions, the Sclavenes lived to the north of today's Drnov and Osijek, in the east they reached the Dniester River and in the north the Carpathians. Southern border of their settlement was probably the region where the Drava River flows into the Danube. According to Jordanes, the chief of the Ostrogoths Ermanaric initiated fights against the Slavs (Ermanaric ruled in the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>25</sup> Procopius of Caesarea (the 6<sup>th</sup> century) wrote in his sixth book *De bello Gotico* that the Heruli nation moved from the Central Danube basin region to the north and that this movement happened in the year 512. Their journey led through all Slavic (Σκλαβηρώυ) nations and desert lands. Following this record, it is assumed that at that time the Slavs did not occupied all the later locations. Procopius further mentions struggles for the throne of the Lombards in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Risiulf was one of the candidates for the throne but was killed while staying at Germanic tribe of the Varni. Though, his son Hildigis fled to the Slavs only to fight them with success later while supported by the Gepids. After declared armistice, he was likely to be handed over to the king of the Lombards Audion and had to flee to the

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Gennadij G. Litavrin, *Svod drevnějšich pismennykh izvěstij o slavyanach*. (Corpus testimoniorum vetustissimorum ad historiam slaviam pertinentium). Tom 1 (1 – 4 vv.) (Moskva: Vostočnaja literatura RAN, 1994), 18–36.

<sup>23</sup> Publius Cornelius Tacitus refers to them as Venethi. Publius Cornelius Tacitus, *Germania*, 46. More on this issue see Gindin, Ivanov and Litavrin, *Svod drevnějšich*, 37–45.

<sup>24</sup> Claudius Ptolemy uses the terms Ουενέδαι (Ouenedai). Ptolemaeus, *Cosmographia* III, 5, 7 – 10. More on this issue see Gindin, Ivanov and Litavrin, *Svod drevnějšich*, 46–62.

<sup>25</sup> Jordanes uses the terms Venethi, Antes, Sclaveni. Jordanes, *Getica*, 34 – 35, 119. More on this issue see Gindin, Ivanov and Litavrin, *Svod drevnějšich*, 98–169.

Slavs again.<sup>26</sup> The 6<sup>th</sup> century work *Strategikon* which could have been written by Byzantine Emperor Maurice (also Pseudo-Maurice) describes war tactics of the Slavs (Σκλάβοι, Αυται).<sup>27</sup> A gravestone of Martin of Tours, who died in 397, dates back to the year 580 and carries a notice on tribes that had been Christianized by the bishop. The list includes the Slavs too (*Sclavus*).<sup>28</sup>

### Slavs in archaeological sources

Archaeological sources are the richest source of information on the Slavs. One of the oldest archaeological artefacts related to the Slavs in Central Europe is the Prague-type pottery culture, also known as the Prague culture. Based on written sources, the Sclavenes are considered representatives of this culture. In 1940, Czech archaeologist Ivan Borovský published already known artefacts of undecorated vessels with a bulge in its upper part and called the collection the Prague type claiming it to be the oldest Slavic pottery in Central Europe. The theory was proved by other archaeological excavations and research. Based on the current state of knowledge it can be stated that the early Slavs settled in lowlands near river basins. Such regions were suitable for agricultural growth and breeding. The Prague-type pottery culture has been found in the whole area. It was originally present to the east of the Carpathians up to the Dnieper River. Here it is known as Korchak type or the Prague-Korchak type pottery. Gradually, together with the Penkovka culture it spread to the Lower Danube area and bordered on it in the south and in the east. In the west it covered the land up to the Elbe in eastern Germany and its representatives settled in the areas of what is today known as Slovakia, Bohemia, Moravia, Poland, Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia, partly Hungary, Lower Austria and north-eastern Romania (Transylvania). In the south, the excavated artefacts reach Limes Romanus and the so called Sarmatians' Walls from the Roman Period. This culture is assumed to spread into the Eastern-Alps region and western Balkan. Central Danube area might have been inhabited by the Slavs coming from three directions. The first wave came through southern Poland and hence the Slavs are supposed to have inhabited today's Slovakia, southern Mo-

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<sup>26</sup> More on this issue see Gindin, Ivanov and Litavrin, *Svod drevnějšich*, 170–250. Třeštík, “Příchod prvních Slovanů,” 267–280.

<sup>27</sup> More on this issue see Gindin, Ivanov and Litavrin, *Svod drevnějšich*, 364–393.

<sup>28</sup> Peter Ratkoš, *Pramene k dejinám Veľkej Moravy* (Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo SAV, 1968), 60.

ravia and neighbouring regions after having crossed the Carpathian passes. The second wave came from the south along Danube basin. Heading from the east the Slavs got to the north-eastern part of the Great Hungarian Plain and Transylvania (a part of today's Romania). Slavic groups may have arrived from the south-east later on within the Avar tribal groups which reached the area in 568.<sup>29</sup>

### Slovakia

A group of Slovak researchers introduced after 1990 the theory of autochthonic origin of the Slavs along the Central Danube.<sup>30</sup> However, there are still those who advocate that the Slavs actually moved into this area. Gabriel Fusek in his works analysed archaeological fragments found in Slovakia and neighbouring regions and based his research on written sources too. He assumes that the Slavs came to our land moving from the north-east and north-west of the Carpathian basin through various passes and dated this movement back to the 70's of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Gabriel Fusek supports his point by typological match of the pottery and assumed migration source land, which was south-eastern Poland and western Ukraine, and the extinction of Germanic cultures. The researcher introduced a relative chronology of the Early-Slavic Period including three main periods as dated back to the turn of the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Gabriel Fusek and Jozef Zábajník, "Príspevok do diskusie o počiatkoch slovanského osídlenia Slovenska," *Slovenská archeológia* 51 (2003): 329–340. Měřínský, *České země od příchodu Slovanů po Velkou Moravu I*, 45–50. Oleg Michajlovič Prichodnjuk, *Archeologični pamjatki serednogo Pridniprova VI – IX st. n.e.* (Kiiv: Naukova dumka, 1980). Valentin Vasilievič Sedov, *Slavjane v drevnosti* (Moskva: Institut archeologii RAN, 1994). Valentin Vasilievič Sedov, *Slavjane v rannem srednevekovje*. (Moskva: Institut archeologii RAN, 1995). Valentin Vasilievič Sedov, *Slavjane: Istoriko – archeologičeskoe issledovanie* (Moskva: Jazykislav. kul'tury 2002). Rather sceptical point of view as regards the Prague-type pottery from Bohemia and Moravia and its relation to the Slavs is held by Florin Curta. See Florin Curta, "Utváření Slovanů (se zvláštním zřetelom k Čechám a Moravě)," *Archeologické rozhledy* 60 (2008): 643–694.

<sup>30</sup> Consider Alexander Avenarius, "Začiatky Slovanov na strednom Dunaji: Autochtonistická teória vo svetle súčasného bádania," *Historický časopis* 40 (1992): 1–16. Dušan Čaplovič, *Včasnostredoveké osídlenie Slovenska* (Bratislava: Academic Electronic Press, 1998). Bohuslav Chropovský, "Niekoľko poznámok k problematike pravlasti Slovanov," *Studia Archaeologica Slovaca Mediaevalia I* (1998): 37–42. Bohuslav Chropovský, "Some problems of the ethnogenesis of the Slavs and of the settlement process of the Central Danubian Slovaks – Slovaks in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century," in *Slovaks in the Central Danubian Region in the 6<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> century*, (Bratislava: Slovenské národné múzeum, 2000), 45–65. Pavol Mačala, *Etnogenéza Slovanov v archeológii* (Košice: Slovo, 1995).

century until the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century and the last one dated back to the pre-Great Moravian Period. The earliest and proved Slavic settlements in Slovakia were found in Žilina, Lakšárska Nová Ves, Ludanice-Mýtna Nová Ves, Nitra etc. Based on the current knowledge, the early Slavs could have settled in fertile basins, mostly in south-eastern Slovakia. Among early Slavic discoveries can be listed those found in Záhorie region. Recently, the first sites were found in eastern Slovakia too (Nižná Myšľa-Alalameneva, Ždaňa).<sup>31</sup>

### **Bohemia and Moravia**

Today, Czech researchers unanimously agree on the hypothesis that the Slavs actually moved to Bohemia and Moravia. The Lombards were settled in the land of Bohemia even in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and possibly at the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The Slavs from Moravia probably settled here not earlier than after the Lombards had left. However, researchers do not hold uniform theories on the period when the Slavs came to our land. A group of them believes that the movements took place in the first third of the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Dušan Třestík) while the others tend to prefer the last third of the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Michal Lutovský, Eduard Droberjar, Rastislav Korený).<sup>32</sup> Early-Slavic artefacts are well supported mainly in central and north-western Bohemia. The Prague-type pottery culture is found spread mainly in regions Prague-Slanec, Kolín, Pardubice, Jičín, Litoměřice, in the central Ohře River basin and in the region of Bílina. Fewer fragments representing this culture were found in western Bohemia. Settlements in eastern Bohemia still remain problematic and unclear. The Slavs used to settle areas with the most suitable climatic conditions, i.e. in the altitudes not higher than 400 meters above sea level and in the areas near river basins. Archaeologists examined mainly following locations: Březno near Louny, Roz-

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<sup>31</sup> Fusek, *Slovensko vo včasnoslávskom období*. Gabriel Fusek, "Frühe Slawen im Mitteldonauegebiet," in *Kulturwandel in Mitteleuropa. Langobarden – Awaren – Slawen*, ed. Jan Bemmann and Michael Schmauder, (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, 2008), 645–656. Fusek and Zábajník, "Príspevok do diskusie," 319–340.

<sup>32</sup> For an overview see Magdalena Beranová and Michal Lutovský, *Slované v Čechách: Archeologie 6. – 12. století* (Praha: Libri, 2009), 20–21. Eduard Droberjar, *Věk barbarů*. (Praha – Litomyšl: Ladislav Horáček – Paseka, 2005), 201–209. Rastislav Korený, "Čechy v 6. století. K problému konce germánského osídlení Čech," *Archeologie ve středních Čechách* 9 (2005): 459–522. Třestík, "Příchod prvních Slovanů," 245–280.

toky near Prague, Prague-Bohnice, Prague-Čimice, Prague-Bubeneč, Jenišov Újezd and Turnov.<sup>33</sup>

Southern Moravia between Znojmo and the Lower-Moravian Vale, the region around Brno and the Svratka River basin were inhabited by the Lombards even in the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century who later moved to Pannonia and then in 568 to southern Italy. Neither archaeological nor written sources support the idea of the Slavs and the Lombards living together. Luděk Galuška assumes that the early Slavs came to the land around central Moravia River through the White Carpathians from the area around central Vah River in today's Slovakia. As far as this region is concerned, settlements are found for instance in Ostrožská Nová Ves, Polešovice or in Uherský Ostroh. Settlements can be traced along Moravia basin to the area of today's Olomouc. Luděk Galuška believes these movements might have taken place at the beginning or in the first two or even three decades of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Moravia was finally inhabited by the Slavs in the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century and in the following periods. The Slavs were able to settle in its southern part not earlier than after the Lombards had left.<sup>34</sup> Zdeněk Měřínský has a similar opinion on this issue.<sup>35</sup>

### Poland

It used to be assumed that there was a culture community settled along the basins of rivers Oder and Vistula from the Late Roman period until the Early Middle Ages. The Przeworsk culture was considered an early Slavic culture. Today, there is an assumption that it carried aspects of Germanic culture. There were various ethnic groups in Poland at the beginning of the Middle Ages. West-Baltic tribes and the ancestors of the Prussians settled to the west of the Vistula mouth. According to Kazimierz Godłowski, the Slavs inhabited the land along the Oder and the Vistula around the half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and they appeared to the east of the Central Vistula basin already in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. In this period there still were some traces of the original population in the Polish

<sup>33</sup> For more on this issue see Beranová and Lutovský, *Slované v Čechách*, 19–32, Naďa Profantová, Martin Kuna, Dalibor Moravec and Libuše Haišmanová, “Časne slovanské osídlení Čech,” in *Počátky raného středověku v Čechách (The onset of the Early Middle Ages in Bohemia)*, ed. Martin Kuna and Naďa Profantová, et al. (Praha: Archeologický ústav AV ČR, 2005), 73–89. The list of locations of the Prague-type pottery culture in Bohemia can be found in Profantová, “Die frühslawische Besiedlung Böhmens,” 619–644.

<sup>34</sup> Galuška, *Slované – doteky předků*, 13–15. See the list of literature.

<sup>35</sup> Měřínský, *České země od příchodu Slovanů po Velkou Moravu I*, 57–59.

Małopolska and Wielkopolska provinces, Silesia and right-bank Masovia. At the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century the original inhabitants were still settled in some regions of Central Poland and Pomerania.<sup>36</sup> Settlements of the Slavs in Masovia date back to the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>37</sup> The Slavs inhabited the region of Pomerania and Pojezierze already in the 7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>38</sup> The same might have happened in the Chełmno-Dobrzyń region.<sup>39</sup> However, archaeologists did not manage to find evidence that the aboriginal inhabitants shared the land with the Slavs.<sup>40</sup> The Slavic peoples who settled in today's Poland were representatives of the Prague-type pottery culture. Within various regions there were differences regarding material culture.<sup>41</sup> Based on Marek Dulnicz's assumption, the Slavs from the Vistula, the Odra and the Elbe in the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> century were not very active and they might have settled here in later periods.<sup>42</sup>

### Austria

In the Late Antiquity, western Part of today's Austria was included in Roman provinces of Raetia and Noricum. Lower Austria together with Burgenland belonged to the province of Pannonia superior (during the reign of the Emperor Diocletian from 284 to 305 called Pannonia prima). This land was inhabited by the Boths, the Heruli and the Rugians. These tribes came here during the Migration Period and were followed by the Lombards at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The Avars ruled over the area in the period after 568. Eastern parts of Raetia and western parts of Noricum were under control of the Bavarii at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>43</sup> The eldest artefacts which give evidence of the Slavs' presence were found in cremation

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<sup>36</sup> Godłowski, *Pierwotne siedziby Słowian*, 134–168. Parczewski, *Die Anfänge*, 139.

<sup>37</sup> Maria Miśkiewiczowa, *Mazowsze płockie we wczesnym średniowieczu* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu, 1981), 26.

<sup>38</sup> Jerzy Olczak, *Formy osadnictwa na pojezierzu zachodniopomorskim we wczesnym średniowieczu* (Torun: Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika, 1991), 9.

<sup>39</sup> Wojciech Chudziak, *Zasiedlenie strefy chełmińsko – dobrzyńskiej we wczesnym średniowieczu (VI – XI wiek)* (Torun: Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika, 1996), 24–25.

<sup>40</sup> Parczewski, *Die Anfänge*, 139.

<sup>41</sup> Parczewski, *Die Anfänge*, 140–141.

<sup>42</sup> Marek Dulnicz, *Kształtowanie się Słowianszczyzny Północno – Zachodniej: Studium archeologiczne* (Warszawa: Institut Archeologii i Etnologii PAN, 2001), 210–212.

<sup>43</sup> Erik Szeimat, "Zum archäologischen Bild der frühen Slawen in Österreich. Mit fragen zur ethnischen Bestimmung karolingerzeitlicher Gräbelfelder im Ostalpenraum," in *Slovenija in sosednje dežele med antiko in karoliško dobo. Začetki slovenske etnogeneze I*. (Ljubjana: Narodni muzej, 2000), 508–509.

graves around Hohenau an der March<sup>44</sup> and Poysdorf.<sup>45</sup> Somewhat younger is the grave artefact from the site near Stein an der Donau.<sup>46</sup> Settlement artefacts were found for instance in Unterrohrbach and Mannersdorf an der March.<sup>47</sup> All these sites are situated in the north of the Danube. Jarmila Justová used to underline the relation between the sites from Hohenau an der March, Poysdorf and the earliest wave of the Slavs that might have entered southern Moravia and south-western Slovakia in the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>48</sup> Erik Szeimat dates early-Slavic pottery found in Austria back to the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century. The presence of the Prague-type pottery was so far proved in a number of sites. Considering the character of the artefacts it is assumed that there was no massive occupation within migration movements. Erik Szeimat believes the Slavs might have moved here as a part of Avars' military operations in this region who had a great influence on aboriginal Roman population.<sup>49</sup>

### Germany

Joachim Herrmann supposed the area along central Havel basin and lower Spree basin to be settled by the Slavs in the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>50</sup> Nowadays it is considered that Slavic settlement activity in the land along the Elbe and the Saale started around 600 or at the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Coastal regions of Mecklenburg and Pomerania were probably inhabited not earlier than in the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The Slavs got to the land of eastern Holstein even later, i.e. after 700.<sup>51</sup> Problematic issue is a relationship between Germanic inhabitants and the Slavs. The problem lies in distinguishing artefacts of undecorated vessels made in hand by Germanic inhabitants in the 6<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>44</sup> Jarmila Justová, *Dolnorakouské Podunají v raném středověku* (Praha: Academia, 1990), 238.

<sup>45</sup> Justová, *Dolnorakouské Podunají*, 247.

<sup>46</sup> Justová, *Dolnorakouské Podunají*, 251–252.

<sup>47</sup> Měřinský, *České země od příchodu Slovanů po Velkou Moravu I*, 59–60. Erik Szeimat, "Zum archäologischen Bild," 512.

<sup>48</sup> Justová, *Dolnorakouské Podunají*, 41.

<sup>49</sup> Szeimat, "Zum archäologischen Bild," 516–522.

<sup>50</sup> Joachim Herrmann et al., *Die Slawen in Deutschland: Geschichte und Kultur der slawischen Stämme westlich von Oder und Neiße vom 6. bis 12. Jahrhundert. Ein Handbuch* (Berlin: Akademie – Verlag, 1970), 23.

<sup>51</sup> Sebastian Brather, *Archäologie der westlichen Slawen: Siedlung, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im früh – und hochmittelalterlichen Ostmitteleuropa* (Berlin – New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 61. Marek Dulnicz, *Frühe Slawen im Gebiet zwischen unterer Weichsel und Elbe* (Neumünster: Wachholtz Verlag, 2006), 253, 259.

from those of the 7<sup>th</sup> century Slavs.<sup>52</sup> It is now proved that there was a decline in Germanic settlements in the regions situated to the east of the Saale in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Eastern Thuringia between the Saale and the Elbe was first inhabited by the Slavs in the last third of the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>53</sup> The presence of the Prague-type pottery was proved in the sites around the Elbe (e.g. Dessau-Mosigkau). The region around historical province of Lower Lusatia was settled by the representatives of the Sukow group, also called Sukow-Szeligi group. These cultures differ mostly in the shape of vessels, floor plans of their buildings (in the area of the Sukow-Szeligi group the floor plan holes have a longitudinal-oval shape).<sup>54</sup> Michał Parczewski underlines the possibility that the Sukow-Szeligi group might have followed the Prague-type culture. Felix Biermann is much of the same opinion.<sup>55</sup> The next wave of the Slavs was traditionally put into the 7<sup>th</sup> century. According to earlier theories, the Tornow group was believed to occur in Lower Lusatia, i.e. in the region of the Sukow-Szeligi group, and the Rüssen group was assumed to settle in the land along the Elbe. The Rüssen group was named after pottery which was decorated with small waves and referred to as Rüssen type. In the recent periods, however, such chronology regarding artefacts related to the above-mentioned groups as being traditionally dated back to the 7<sup>th</sup> century is challenged and the artefacts are believed to belong to later centuries.<sup>56</sup>

### Hungary

Currently there is only a little known about settlements in today's Hungary. The lack of knowledge and information is surely caused by the state of research in this field. In the region of Beech Mountains, researchers excavated an object with hand-made pottery. The settlement dates back to the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>57</sup> Artefacts of Prague-type pottery

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<sup>52</sup>Brather, *Archäologie der westlichen Slawen*, 62.

<sup>53</sup>Berthold Schmidt, "Thüringen – Franken – Sachsen – Slawen. Gesselschaftliche Veränderungen vom 6. bis 8. Jahrhundert in Mitteldeutschland," *Jahresschrift für Mitteldeutsche Vorgeschichte* 75 (1992): 313–323.

<sup>54</sup>Felix Biermann, *Slawische Besiedlung zwischen Elbe, Neisse und Lubsza: Archäologische Studien zum Siedlungswesen und zur Sachkultur des frühen und hohen Mittelalters. Ergebnisse und Materialien zum DFG – Projekt "Germanen – Slawen – Deutsche"* (Bonn: Verlag Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, 2000), 33–36.

<sup>55</sup>Biermann, *Slawische Besiedlung*, 35–36. Parczewski, *Die Anfänge*, 125–128.

<sup>56</sup>Biermann, *Slawische Besiedlung*, 33–35.

<sup>57</sup>Károly Mesterházy, "Awaren, Slawen und Ungarn im Bükkgebirge," in *Central Europe in 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. International Scientific conference, Bratislava October 2 – 4, 1995* (Bratislava: Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, 1997), 70.

were found in south-western Hungary and around Balaton region and date back to the beginning or the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century (Szepetnek-Bánfapuszta, Balatonmagyaród-Hidvégpuszta, Nagyrécse, Eszteregnye).<sup>58</sup> An evidence of a settlement was found in Kisvárd located in north-eastern Hungary.<sup>59</sup> Vessels similar to the Prague type were sometimes used as urns in Pókaszeptk burial ground situated north-east of Zalaegerszeg.<sup>60</sup>

Translate: Ján Želonka

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<sup>58</sup> Měřínský, “České země od příchodu Slovanů po Velkou Moravu I, 61. Béla Miklós Szőke, “7. és 9. századi településmaradványok Nagykanizsán,” *Zalai Múzeum* 4 (1992): 129–167.

<sup>59</sup> Eszter Istvánovits, “Korai szláv település maradványai Kisvárda határában,” *Jósa András Múzeum Évkönyve*, 43 (2001): 165–183.

<sup>60</sup> Béla Miklós Szőke, “Das archäologische Bild der Slawen in Südwestungarn,” in *Slovenija in sosednje dežele med antiko in karolinško dobo. Začetki slovenske etnogeneze I*. (Ljubljana: Narodni muzej, 2000), 479–482.

Peter IVANIČ

## WESTERN SLAVS IN THE 6<sup>th</sup> AND 7<sup>th</sup> CENTURY<sup>61</sup>

*- s u m m a r y -*

During the early Middle Ages the European continent became a theatre of important historical changes. Large areas in Middle, South-eastern and Eastern Europe gained during this period predominantly Slavic ethnical character. The history of the Slavs during the Early Middle Ages was treated in the works of contemporary medieval authors. This paper present the image of the West Slavs based on the written and archaeological sources in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century.

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