

Avars, Slavs and Franks in the Central Danube Basin in the first half of the seventh century and their mutual relations

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Throughout living memory, the life-giving River Danube has been not only the boundary between various worlds, but also a connecting line between the ethnic groups and peoples who settled along it, between the countries, empires and states that rose and fell on its banks, and between regions near and far. Life and time on both sides of the river sometimes flowed slowly, sometimes rapidly, like the water in the Danube itself and the events on its shores. Never did life stand still around the river, which for centuries was the river of “life and death”, a strategic territory from the Roman era to the time of the Turkish expansion into Europe. The Danube and life in its surrounding regions was written about from ancient times, when it bore the name *Danubius*, through medieval times, when a number of contemporary treatises were written on it and interest in the Danube lasted into the modern era. The name was also borrowed by Italian prose writer Claudio Magris (1986) for his essayistic book *Danubio*.

There is one interesting region in the early Middle Ages, particularly during and just after the Great Migration of Nations¹, the area of the (upper) Central Danube Basin, in territory lying around what is known as the Danube frontier (*limes romanus*), which separated the old Roman province of *Pannonia superior* and *Noricum ripense* from the barbarians and *terra incognita*. This is the territory around the confluence of the Danube and the Morava (nowadays Moravia, south-western Slovakia and Lower Austria) where during the first half of the seventh century, in the setting of the Avar-Slav and the Slav-Frankish wars, the Western Slavs headed by the Frankish merchant Samo created the first Slav state entity.² However, we do

1 The „Great Migration of Peoples“ is normally dated from the fourth to the sixth century, but this dating is from a Western European perspective, determined by the migration of Germanic tribes; 568 has been set as the year it ended, i.e. with the departure of the Lombards to Italy. However, for the south-eastern European and part of the Central European area this dating is quite inadequate, as other criteria are in effect here. Apart from the Western Slavs, whose settlements stabilized in the sixth century, the other sixth century migration processes were far from being over, continuing into the following centuries before the final distribution and settlement of the Slav and non-Slav ethnic groups within European geospace, particularly in its central, south-eastern and eastern areas.

2 On Samo's Empire see (623-658) LABUDA, G.: *Pierwsze państwo słowiańskie. Państwo Samona*. Poznań 1949; CHALOUPECKÝ, V.: *Considérations sur Samon, le premier roi des Slaves*. Byzantinoslavica, 11, 1950, 223-239; GRAFENAUER, B.: *Novejša literatura o Samu i njeni problemi*. Zgodovinski časopis, IV, 1950, 151-169; PREIDEL, M.: *Die Anfänge der slawischen Besiedlung Böhmens und Mährens*. Grärfelfing bei München

not have sufficient contemporary authentic sources on this geographical area to elucidate the complex local geopolitical situation, record the individual waves of migration and movements of inhabitants or clarify the complex ethnogenetic processes. Ignoring the later ninth-century source reminiscences which are closest in time (e.g. the tendentious *Gesta Dagoberti I. regis Francorum* and *De conversione Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*), the only key period source of Western European origin for this period and geographical area is the Chronicle of Fredegar,³ depicting the relations between the Avars, Slavs and the Franks as models of behaviour between conquerors wielding political power and their subjects.

1. AVARS AND SLAVS (*CHRONICARUM IV*, 48)

In 623, during the 40th year of the reign of the Frankish king Lothair, Samo arrived in the land of the Slavs, whom Fredegar called *Wends* (*in Sclavos coinomento Winedos*)⁴ and who until that time had lived in symbiosis with the Avars, called Huns (*contra Avaris coinomento Chunis*).⁵ After the death of the Avar Kagan Bajan (603), the Slavs north of the Danube in the Austrian Danube Basin began to revolt again Avar rule.⁶ Around the time of Samo's arrival, as his empire was first taking shape, the Avars suffered several decisive defeats at the hands of the Slavs (in 617, 623 and 626). The biethnic coexistence of the Avars and the Slavs in the Central Danubian region was an unequal coexistence of two ethnic groups, in which the Slavs lived under the thumb of the Avars.⁷

1954; CHOC, P.: *Sámova říše a její zápasy*. Historie a vojenství, 1957/1, 1-44; AVENARIUS, A.: *Die Awaren in Europa*. Bratislava – Amsterdam 1974, 124-147; DAIM, F.: *Die Awaren in Niederösterreich*. St. Pölten – Wien 1977; POHL, W.: *Die Awaren. Ein Steppenvolk in Mitteleuropa 567-822 n. Chr.* München 1988, 256-261; FRITZE, W.: *Zur Bedeutung der Awaren für die slawische Ausdehnungsbewegung im frühen Mittelalter*, in: *Studien zur Völkerwanderungszeit im östlichen Mitteleuropa*, ed. M. Mildenerger. Marburg 1980, 498-545 (p. 519 pinpoints the centre of Samo's Empire to the Vienna Basin, Marchfeld and the Hungarian Lowlands); ČILINSKÁ, Z.: *Slovania a avarský kaganát*. Bratislava 1992; LUTOVSKÝ, D. – PROFANTOVÁ, N.: *Sámova říše*. Prague 1995.

- 3 CHRONICARUM QUAE DICUNTUR FREDEGARII SCHOLASTICI LIBRI IB (hereinafter CHRONICARUM), in: *Magnae Moraviae fontes historici* (hereinafter MMFH) I. Annales et chronicae, ed. L. Havlík, Praha – Brno 1961, 19-27. Originally this written manuscript was considered to be the work of one person called *scholasticus Fredegarius*; however, later research showed there to be several authors, at least three (ibidem, p. 19).
- 4 CHRONICARUM, 20, IV, 8. The term *Winidi* comes from the German designation of the Slavs as Wenden (Windische), see POHL, W.: *Die Awaren*, p. 96.
- 5 CHRONICARUM, 20, IV, 8. The conflation or confusion of Avars with Huns can frequently be seen in Byzantine chronicles. The terms Avars (*Abares*) and Huns (*Ounnoi*) are used synonymously e.g. by the successor to Menander Protector, the 6th-7th century Byzantine chronicler Theophylactos Simokattes (THEOPHYLACTI SIMOCATTAE HISTORICARUM LIBRI OCTO, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB, Bonn 1834, I, 3, 38: in Latin translation *Abares Hunni*).
- 6 HAVLÍK, L.: *Starí Slované v rakouském Podunají v době od 6. do 12. století*. Rozpravy ČSAV, Řada společenských věd, 73, 9. Prague 1963, 59-60; FRIESINGER, H.: *Die Slawen in Niederösterreich*. St. Pölten – Vienna 1976; JUSTOVÁ, J.: *Dolnorakouské Podunají v raném středověku*. Slovenská archeologie k jeho osídlení v 6.-11. století. Praha 1990.
- 7 A looser form of coexistence between the Avars and the Slavs was that found in the Carpathian Basin, which was of a confederative nature, and a third form of coexistence between the two ethnic groups could be found in the lower Danube Basin, where the Slavs lived independently of the Avars; all three forms of Avar-Slav coexistence in *terra Avarorum* was of a tributary nature. See HAVLÍKOVÁ, L.: *Obléhání Konstantinopole roku 626 ve světle byzantsko-iránských vztahů*. Časopis Matice moravské, 98, 1975, 126-136, here pp. 132-133. On the relations between Byzantium and Avars, see HURBANIČ, M.: *Byzancia a avarský kaganát v roko 623-624*. Historický časopis, 55, 2, 2007, 229-248.

The Slavs' dependent status upon the Avars in the Central Danube Basin area is supported by the testimony of Fredegar, who mentions the arrangement of the Avar army, in which the Slavs served as “*befulci*”,⁸ i.e. they attacked the enemy first in double formation, while the Avars waited in the wings to see how the situation developed, i.e. if the Slavs were winning, they joined them, went on the attack and seized the spoils for themselves. The Avar warriors also demonstrated their power over the Slavs by coming to stay over winter with them every year when there was a lull in the fighting. “Staying over winter” meant not only that the Slavs provided the Avars with a roof over their heads and hot food during the winter months, but in addition they were also compelled to provide them with sexual gratification and to offer them their wives and daughters as bed companions (*Chuni aemandum annis singulis in Esclavos veniebant, uxores Sclavorum et filias eorum strato sumebat*).⁹ But the Avars later paid for the wrongs they had committed on Slav girls and women, when the generation of sons borne by repeatedly raped Slav mothers rose up against them. However, the Avars' parasitic way of life was not the only form of oppression suffered by the Slav tribes in the Central Danube Basin region. The Slavs also had to pay the Avars a tribute (*tributa super alias oppressiones Sclavi Chunis solvebant*).¹⁰ In those days this kind of tax was one of the usual ways the relationship between conquerors and subjects was shown. This model, i.e. payment of a “peace tribute” (*tributum pacis*), normally operated in the early Middle Ages throughout the European geopolitical area, whether for nomadic ethnic groups migrating into Europe, the newly established Slav states or established empires such as Byzantium.

Interestingly, there are two Latin terms used by Fredegar: *in Sclavos* and *in Esclavos*, which were translated in the former case as “to the land of the Slavs” (*Samo...in Sclavos coinomento Winedos perrexit*) and in the latter as “to the Slavs” (*Chunni.... in Esclavos veniebant*).¹¹ Both cases involve local designations, but the terms evidently had a subtle difference of meaning. If we take it into account the fact that the Chronicle of Fredegar was of a tendentious nature, the question arises whether the author used both terms (*in Sclavos*, *in Esclavos*) in a truly synonymous manner, or whether by the term *in Esclavos* he did not want to say and express something else, as the term arises in connection with the Avars staying with the Slavs over winter and the “use” of the Slav women for the gratification of the Avars.¹² This context suggests a somewhat different translation and interpretation of the term *in Esclavos*. The Latin ethnonym *sclavus*, *sclavi* and *esclavus*, *esclavi* (hence the French expression for slavery – *esclavage*) is often understood to be a synonym of Latin *servus*, *servi*. Presumably, the tendentious Fredegar, writing in the service of the Frankish sovereign,

8 CHRONICARUM, p. 20, note 3. An explanation of Fredegar's term is given by the contemporary Byzantine chronicle CHRONICON PASCHALE (ed. L. Dindorf, CSHB, Bonn 1832, I, p. 719):...*prōton men dia pezōn Sklabōn gymnōn, kata de deuteran taxin dia pezōn zabatōn*.... (see HAVLÍKOVÁ, L.: *Obléhání Konstantinopole*, 131). On *befulci* see e.g. KOLLAUTZ, A. – MIYAKAWA, H.: *Geschichte und Kultur eines Völkerwanderungszeitlichen Nomadenvolkes. Die Jou-Jan der Mongolei und die Awaren in Mitteleuropa I-II*. Klagenfurt 1970, I, 228-229 (on Samo, the Avars and Slavs pp. 199-221, 221-238), based on the work by LABUDA, G.: *Pierwsze państwo*, 324 sq.; GRAFENAUER, B.: *Nekaj vprašanj iz dobe naseljevanja južnih Slovanov*. Zgodovinski časopis, IV, 1950, 23-126, here pp. 111-112; AVENARIUS, A.: *Die Awaren in Europa*, 128-131 and POHL, W.: *Die Awaren*, 114, which meant that the Avars used the Slavs as “cannon fodder”, which TŘEŠTÍK, D.: *Vznik Velké Moravy. Moravané, Čechové a střední Evropa v letech 791-871*. Prague 2001, 26 doubts, although he concedes that the Avars treated the Slavs as “people who were expendable”.

9 CHRONICARUM, 20, IV, 48.

10 CHRONICARUM, 20, IV, 48.

11 CHRONICARUM, 20, IV, 48 (Czech translation by D. Bartoňková).

12 CHRONICARUM, 20, IV, 48.

had this meaning in mind, as elsewhere in his chronicle he referred pejoratively to the Slavs as “dogs”. So from his standpoint we could produce a “classic” translation to the effect that the Avars came to stay over winter in “the area of the (villages of) the enslaved Slavs”, or in medieval terms in “the area of the (villages of) the subordinate (subjugated, serf) Slavs”. Another way the Slavs were subjugated by and dependent on the Avars was their payment of a tribute, referred to above. Apart from Fredegar’s written report, further proof of the coexistence of the Avars and the Slavs, and the ethnic variety of the population of the north-western part of biritual Avaria, is provided by 7th-8th century Slav skeletal burial sites, identified on the basis of anthropological analyses of skeletal material, which indicate both remnants of Slav customs (Slav cremation rites and Slav grave inventories) and show signs of the material culture of the originally nomadic element of the Avar Empire (Avar inventories, characteristic cast bronze industry – scabbard tips).¹³

A parallel can be drawn between these Avar-Slav relations and relations between the Avars and the Doudlebs,¹⁴ as depicted in Nestor’s *Povest’ vremennykh let*.¹⁵ In the first half of the seventh century he mentions the Avars (*obri*), who came after the Huns (*ugri bělii*), fought the Slavs (*obri voevachu na slověněchъ*) and subjugated the Slavic Doudleb tribe (*dulěby*). Interestingly, there is a description here of the violent behaviour of the Avar conquerors towards the Doudleb women, whom they tortured and harnessed into teams in place of horses (*i nasilьe tvorjachu ženatъ dulěbъskimъ: ašče poěchati budjaše obъrimu, ne dadjaše vъprjači konja ni vola, no veljaše vъprjači 3 li, 4 li, 5 li ženъ v telěgu i povesti obъrěna, i tako mučachu dulěby*).¹⁶ The cruel behaviour of the Avars towards the Doudleb women is strongly reminiscent of the Avars’ behaviour towards the women in the Central Danubian Basin as described by Fredegar. Although the time difference between these written records is 500 years, both reports portray a specific pattern of (violent) behaviour on the part of the conquerors (the Avars) towards the subjugated (Slav) ethnic groups.

2. FRANKS AND SLAVS (*CHRONICARUM* IV, 68)

The neighbourly relations between the Franks and the Slavs, known as Wends (*Scravi coinomento Winidi*),¹⁷ were described by Fredegar as *servicium* and *amicicia*. Fighting between the Wends and the Franks (*Winidi contra Francos*)¹⁸ broke out over the haughty, “foolish” behaviour of Dagobert’s emissary Sicharius (*stultus legatus Sicharius*) at Samo’s court, when he declared that it “was not possible for Christians and servants of God to establish friendly relations with dogs”,¹⁹ meaning the Slavs. This fighting eventually ended in the victory of Samo’s Slavs,²⁰ whose alliance (“*regna*”) was joined by “Dervan, Duke of the nation²¹ of

13 JUSTOVÁ, J.: *Dolnorakouské Podunají*, 225 sq.; KLANICA, Z.: *Počátky slovanského osídlení našich zemí*. Prague 1986; LUTOVSKÝ, M. – PROFANTOVÁ, N.: *Sámova říše*, 38 sq.

14 GRAFENAUER, B.: *Nekaj vprašanj*, 45-47 and older literature quoted in the footnotes here; CHALOUPECKÝ, V.: *Considérations sur Samon*, 227.

15 *POVEŠT’ VREMENNYCH LET I-II* (hereinafter PVL), ed. D. S. Likhachev – V. P. Adrianova-Peretc. Moscow – Leningrad 1950, I, 14.

16 PVL, 14.

17 *CHRONICARUM*, 21, IV, 68.

18 *CHRONICARUM*, 23, IV, 68.

19 *CHRONICARUM*, 22, IV, 68: *Non est possebelem, ut christiani et Dei servi cum canebus amicicias conlocare possint.*

20 *Chronicarum*, p. 21-22, IV, 68.

21 D. Bartoňková translated the Latin term *gens Surbiorum* somewhat euphemistically as “národ Srbů” (“nation of

Sorbs” (*Dervanus dux gente Surbiorum*),²² i.e. the northern Sorbs, whose descendants are the modern-day Lusatian Sorbs.

The term *servicium* (from classical Latin *servitium*)²³ has traditionally been translated into Czech as “poddanství”, i.e. servitude.²⁴ This suggests that Samo was due to pay allegiance to the Frankish king Dagobert.²⁵ But as Samo’s Empire, whose nature was reminiscent of the famous German “barbarian kingdom” (*regna barbarorum*), was also described by Fredegar as *regnum* (*ad regnum Samonem*)²⁶ and thus placed at the same level as Dagobert’s kingdom (*regnum Austrasiorum*), we can conclude that *servicium* did not relate to servitude or subjugation in the later sense of the word, but that it involved a certain tributary relationship for “leased” territory. And as W. Fritze and W. Pohl²⁷ have pointed out, Samo’s Empire was a tributary state. In the early Middle Ages, payment of a tribute was not a sign of subjugation, as tributes were paid to nomadic tribes even by the rulers of the Byzantine Empire and other state entities that could not in any way be described as subjugated.

In addition to tributary allegiance, *servicium* could also mean military allegiance, as seen in the relations between the Avars and the Slavs – here we have in mind the famous Slav auxiliary divisions, Fredegar’s “*befulci*”. This auxiliary military service came under *foederati* relations which obtained between Byzantium and the Germanic Ostrogoth and Visigoth tribes, who fought as allies (*symmachoi*) of the Byzantine Empire. The term *servicium* thus designated a certain type of commitment, a certain kind of service to the sovereign,²⁸ the embryo of later vassal ties (vassalage) in Western Europe and *ligesse* (*anthropos lizios*) in the Byzantine context.

Another term used in Fredegar’s Chronicle to characterize Frankish-Slav relations (i.e. between Dagobert and the Slavs),²⁹ is *amicicia*,³⁰ “friendship”. Originally, this term was used in the classical sense for relations between Rome and other ethnic groups, which were described as “friendship with the Roman people (“nation”)", as conveyed by the institution known as *amici populi Romani*, whose roots we can find in the clientalism of the Roman Republic.³¹

For the characterization and categorization of inter-ethnic relations, the term “friendship” was also used by early medieval Byzantine authors whose work was based on the antique historiographical traditions of Thucydides, Strabo and Tacitus. Closest to the period under

the Sorbs”), although in terms of historical development the early medieval *gentes* were something quite different from either tribes or modern-era nations (see HAVLÍK, L.: *Gens Maravorum. Poznámky k vývoji gentes u Slovanů*, in: Strážnice 1946-1965. Brno 1966, 97-152; TŘEŠTÍK, D.: *Vznik Velké Moravy*, 5 sq. and note 1).

22 CHRONICARUM, 23, IV, 68 (Czech translation by D. Bartoňková).

23 Viz *Latinsko-český slovník*. Prague 1955, II, 459.

24 CHRONICARUM, 22, IV, 68 (Czech translation by D. Bartoňková).

25 CHRONICARUM, 22, IV, 68: ...*Samo et populus regni sui Dagobertum dixerint servicium*.

26 CHRONICARUM, 23, IV, 68.

27 FRITZE, W.: *Die fränkische Schwurfreundschaft der Merowingerzeit*. Zeitschrift der Savignystiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Germanistische Abteilung, 71, 1954, 74-125, here pp. 113; POHL, W.: *Die Awaren*, 258: “sich in der Stellung eines Tributärstaates befände”.

28 See *Latinsko-český slovník*, II, 459, which for *servitium* offers not only the translation of “otročtví” (slavery), “poroba” (serfdom) and “poddanství” (servitude), but also the more general “služba” (service).

29 CHRONICARUM, 22, IV, 68: *Et terra quam habemus Dagoberto est, et nos sui sumus, si tamen nobiscum disposuerit amicitias conservare...*; *ibidem*: *Non est possebelem, ut christiani et Dei servi cum canebus amicitias conlocare possint*.

30 Medieval Latin *amicicia* corresponds to classical *amicitia*; see *Latinsko-český slovník*, I, 72.

31 KORNEMANN, E.: *Die unsichtbaren Grenzen des römischen Reiches*, in: *Gestalten und Reiche*, ed. E. Kornemann. Leipzig 1943, 323 sq., particularly pp. 324 and 328 sq.

review are the historians of the sixth century. In his work on the wars with the Vandals, Procopios used the term “friend” (*filos*)³² to describe the “barbarian” Vandal kings Thrasamund and Hildiric, who ruled in Africa, describing their “political” relationship with the Byzantine Emperors Anastasios I (491-518) and Justinian I (527-565) with this term; for relations between Gilimer and the Byzantine Empire, Procopios used the term “friendship” (*filia*).³³ In 558, Menander Protector,³⁴ whose work recorded Avar-Alan-Byzantine relations, wrote that the Avars and the Alans, described as “associates” and “friends” (*gnórimoi*),³⁵ requested the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I (527-565) for “friendship”. The publisher of Menander’s text B. G. Niebuhr translated the Greek term *gnórimoi* in the Latin parallel translation as *amicitia*.³⁶ For the sake of completeness we would only add that the term *amicicia* was also used by the eighth-century chronicler Paul the Deacon for Avar-Lombard,³⁷ Lombard-Saxon and Frankish-Lombard³⁸ relations, and that this friendship was often associated, as in the case of Lombard-Saxon relations, with “assistance” (*auxilium*).³⁹

The structure of relations between the representative of the Byzantine Empire – the Emperor – and other European and non-European rulers has been analyzed by F. Dölger, who basing himself on sources of Byzantine origin created a well-known classification called “Familie der Könige”.⁴⁰ The designation *amicus*, *amici* matched the Greek-Byzantine *filos*, *filoi*, which had Ptolemaic roots and origins, relating in the Byzantine hierarchy of sovereigns to the friendship of sovereigns and rulers belonging to Dölger’s second group and relationship category (the rulers of the Hungarians, Russians, Khazars, Pechenegs, Africans and others).⁴¹ Also, Anastasius Bibliothecarius designed Constantine the Philosopher – St. Cyril as *fortissimus amicus*⁴² of the patriarch Photius in the 9th century.

32 PROKOPIOS, *Hyper tón polemón logoi*, ed. J. Haury. Leipzig 1905-1913: BV I, 8, 14 (= Haury I, p. 347); BV I, 4, 14 (= Haury I, p. 346).

33 BV I, 9, 13 (= Haury I, p. 353); BV I, 4, 14 (= Haury I, p. 326). On Byzantine „western“ policy see LOUNGHIS, T. C.: *Les ambassades byzantines en Occident depuis la fondation des états barbares jusqu’aux Croisades (407-1096)*. Athènes 1980, 56, 63, 79, 269, 314.; DÖLGER, F.: *Die “Familie der Könige” im Mittelalter*, in: *Byzanz und die europäische Staatenwelt*, ed. F. Dölger. Ettal 1953, 34-69, here p. 38 sq., notes 7 a 8, who dealt in particular with diplomatic material, was sceptical on the occurrence of the term *filia* in the Byzantine environment.

34 EX HISTORIA MENANDRI PROTECTORIS EXCERPTA DE LEGATIONIBUS BARBARORUM AD ROMANOS, ed. B. G. Niebuhr, CSHB. Bonn 1829, 281-444, here p. 282: [*Peri Abarón*] *hós polla perinostésantes hékon es Alanús, kai hiketai egenonto Sarósiú tú Alanón hegúmenu, hós an di’ autú gnórimoi esointo Rómaiós*.

35 See SOPHOCLES, E. A.: *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine periods (from B.C. 146 to A.D. 1100)*. Cambridge – London – Oxford 1914, 334.

36 EX HISTORIA MENANDRI PROTECTORIS, p. 282: *Avares quum diu multumque incerti errassent, tandem ad Alanos accesserunt, et Sarosium, eorum ducem, suppliciter orarunt, ut per eum in notitiam et amicitiam Romanorum venirent*.

37 PAULI DIACONI HISTORIA LANGOBARDORUM, ed. G. Waitz, MGH, *Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum*, t. I. Hannover 1878: lib. II, c. 7: *Tunc sedes proprias, hoc est Panoniam, amicis suis Hunnis contribuit, eo scilicet ordine, ut, si quo tempore Langobardis necesse esset reverti, sua rursus arva repeterent*. Ibidem, c. 6: *Alboin vero ad Italiam cum Langobardis profecturus ab amicis suis vetulis Saxonium auxilium petit, quatenus spatiosam Italiam cum pluribus possessurus intraret*. Ibidem, c. 5: *Eo tempore cum exire coeperunt Langobardi a Pannonia, tum fecerunt pactum et foedus amiciciae Abari cum ipsis Langobardis, et cartam conscriptionis, ut usque ad annos ducentos, si eorum oportet Pannoniam requirere, sine omnia bella certaminis ad eorum partem ipsam terram relaxarent*. Ibidem, lib. IV, c. 9 (Gregorius Theudelindae reginae Langobardorum): *Nam sicut et vos scire credimus, multis modis est utile, si se ad eius amicitiam conferre voluerit*.

38 LABUDA, G.: *Pierwsze państwo*, 266, note 12 (Chlothar from 616/18).

39 PAULI DIACONI HISTORIA LANGOBARDORUM, lib. II, c. 6 (see above).

40 DÖLGER, F.: *Die “Familie der Könige”*, 34-69.

41 DÖLGER, F.: *Die “Familie der Könige”*, 37 sq.

42 See GRIVEC, F. – TOMŠIČ, F.: *Constantius et Methodius Thessalonicenses. Fontes* (= Radovi Staroslavenskog

We can say in conclusion that for the translation of historical terms, words must be chosen correctly: the linguistic, literary and artistic translation of a word is one thing, but the historical meaning is quite another. In other words, a linguistically correct translation need not match the historical meaning of a word in the context of the historical reality of the period. The Latin term in question *amicicia*, used in the Western European environment, as shown by Fredegar and Paul the Deacon, corresponded to the sporadically occurring Greek term *filia* in the Byzantine environment. *Amicicia* designated a public-law relationship between two nations.⁴³ The term *filoi* is of a similar nature with a meaning like the Greek-Byzantine noun *gnorimoi* and the Roman *amici*. Whereas on the one hand Fredegar described relations between the Slavs and the Franks as *amicicia*, even though this could involve relations between “unequal partners”,⁴⁴ he could not on the other hand have described them as “servitude” (*servicium*), which is humanly incompatible with “friendship”, for the term *servicium*, as indicated above, designated a tributary allegiance and “servanthood”, “service” and “assistance”, mostly of a military nature, which was offered on the basis of concluded “friendship”. The early medieval legal institutions of *amicicia* and *servicium*, which had their roots in classical antiquity, provided one of the institutionalized forms of coexistence between adjacent and non-adjacent states, as well as a model for mutual behaviour and relations, and constituted instruments for implementing medieval international law.

institutata, knjiga 4). Zagreb 1960, 88.

- 43 On the term *amicitia*, see PARADISI, B.: *L'amitié internationale. Les phases critiques de son ancienne histoire*. Recueil de cours, Académie de droit international 78, Paris 1952, 329; CHRYSOS, E. K.: *The title basileus in early Byzantine international relations*. *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 32, 1978, 29-75, especially p. 64: “The transformation of the client kingdoms into subordinate principalities no doubt inflicted the loss of their sovereignty. For their legal relations with the Empire were no longer based on *amicitia* or *societas*, the traditional Roman forms of clientele, which guaranteed the ally's territory and respected, at least in theory, his sovereignty.”
- 44 FRITZE, W.: *Die fränkische Schwurfreundschaft*, p. 114 sq.; POHL, W.: *Die Awaren*, 258: “unter ungleichen Partnern”; CHRYSOS, E.: *Legal Concepts and Patterns for the Barbarians' Settlement on Roman Soil*, in: *Byzantium and the Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. E. Chrysos – A. Schwarz. Washington 1985: “In the international world of late antiquity friends did not need to be equal.”