

FROM CAROLINGIAN OFFICIAL TO CROATIAN RULER — THE CROATS AND THE CAROLINGIAN EMPIRE IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINTH CENTURY

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The author uses contemporary Frankish sources and the results of archaeological research to illustrate the political currents of the first half of the ninth century that framed the development of the Croatian dukedom (kneževina). He proposes a new reading for a passage from the Annales regni Francorum referring to Borna, Croatian duke (knez) and Frankish vassal. This new reading allows the reinterpretation of the first stages of development of the dukedom in the sense that Duke Borna expanded his territory by making use of the fighting that followed the insurrection of his neighbour Ljudevit, Duke of Pannonia Inferior. The author also surveys the typology and characteristics of societies that developed along the limes of the Carolingian Empire, and places in this context the further development and internal processes of integration in the Croatian dukedom.

After more than a century of serious research the period of Frankish rule, i.e. the period when the foundations of the early-medieval Croatian state were laid in the first half of the ninth century, is still one of special scholarly interest. This interest is motivated both by internal (the nature of sources) and external (the importance of events) reasons. This is the first period for which historians have first-class sources describing contemporary events. Unlike most other sources used to gain insight into the earliest Croatian history, these texts are not later reconstructions and rationalizations of authors who lived long after the events they wrote about. Most of them are Frankish narrative texts that were not written in Croatia, in the first place those ascribed to Einhard,¹ biographer of Charlemagne, and the autobiography of the contemporary theologian Gottschalk.² Although they were not written in the region they mention, there seems to be no doubt that their authors mostly reproduced or interpreted information that came directly from Croats. The first half of the ninth century was crucial in the formation and development of the Croatian society. Half a century of participation in the life of the Carolingian system clearly defined Croatia's place in the evolution of cultural systems and defined the starting position for its overall development in later centuries.

After a whole century of research Croatian history in this period is, of course, no longer a *tabula rasa*. All that can be done today is to reinterpret facts that are already well known, i.e. the sources themselves, and in this way perhaps learn new details and acquire a different understanding of some events.³ Today it seems hopeless even to approach that task outside the framework laid by Radoslav Katičić in a whole series of works based on philological research. His findings about the basic categories in what he appropriately calls a "gentile society"⁴ will for a long time still form the skeleton for understanding internal conditions and the functioning of institutions that may be viewed as the heritage of the common Slavic element in Croatian history.

In this paper I would like to point to the problem of interpreting a passage in the text of the Frankish *Annals*,

which is very important for understanding relations between the Frankish authorities and the first known Croatian rulers, i.e. for understanding the development of the first forms of state organization among the Croats. The passage in question speaks about the coming of envoys sent by various gentile rulers to the court of Emperor Louis the Pious in the winter of 818. After describing the stay and work done by envoys of the Beneventan duke, the *Annals* continue by listing the other envoys, which in the German reading runs as follows:

*"Erant ibi et aliarum nationum legati, Abodritorum videlicet ac Bornae, ducis Guduscanorum et Timocianorum, qui nuper a Bulgarorum societate desciverant et ad nostros fines se contulerant."*⁵

Problems with how to read this passage appeared very early, practically among its contemporaries, so that the anonymous writer of *Vita Hludowici imperatoris* gave his own reading of this passage in the *Annals*. He left out *Dux Borna's* name, probably considering him head of all the gentile reigns listed there after his name, which resulted in the following text:

*"Praeterea aliarum aderant missi nationum, Abodritorum videlicet et Goduscanorum et Timotianorum, qui Bulgarum societate relicta, nostris se nuper sotiaverunt."*⁶

At the end of the last century Franjo Rački noticed that there was something wrong with the German reading of this passage and suggested the insertion of a comma after the word *Goduscanorum*, which would designate Borna only as *dux* of the Guduscan/Gačani. He gave the following version:

*"Erant ibi et aliarum nationum legati, Abodritorum videlicet ac Bornae ducis Guduscanorum, et Timocianorum, qui nuper a Bulgarorum societate desciverant et ad nostros fines se contulerant."*⁷

However, Borna's name appears several more times in the further text of the *Annals*, always with different titles (in 819 as "*dux Dalmaciae*", in 820 without a title, and finally in 821 as "*dux Dalmaciae atque Liburniae*"), so this reading did not solve the initial problem, either. The read-

ing suggested by Rački, which is still generally accepted, indicates that Borna was the gentile *dux* (*knez*) of the *Guduscanorum*/Gačani first, and that he subsequently got the Dalmatian *ducatus* (*kneževina*) thanks to merit acquired in battles against Ljudevit, as Drinov explained long ago and as Suić partially accepted more recently.⁸ Other historians sought for an explanation in the fact that Borna ruled the Gačani among others, and that their tribal envoys at the Frankish court were simply identified with the duke's, i.e. that Borna was called *dux* of the Gačani "because his ducal power spread to that *Županija*, as well, and he was its ruler". More recently, after analyzing the *Annals* and after briefly presenting various opinions, Katičić tried to solve this apparent confusion concerning Borna's titles by saying that the reference in 820 (*dux Dalmaciae*) was in fact "only an abbreviation for the complete and real title *dux Dalmaciae atque Liburniae*", whereas rule over the Gačani was actually the only one that "gave Borna's rule gentile legitimacy".⁹

Continuing this presentation, however, Katičić faced insoluble difficulties. He first claimed that "Borna's real title was *dux Sclavorum Dalmatinorum atque Liburnorum*", and a little later concluded that "Borna as *dux Guduscanorum* was only one of the Croatian dukes". Finally, Katičić had to return to Drinov's original idea ("*Borna dux Guduscanorum... as one of the duces Croatorum or Sclavorum Dalmatinorum... rose to power over all the Croatian gentile rulers, and subjected the other duces... Borna could have gained this position most easily with Frankish support for good and loyal service, by bringing order into their Dalmatia for them*"), which he rejected with the explanation that sources do not give enough material for this construct.¹⁰ Ivo Goldstein approached the diversity of Borna's titles in an interesting although not completely new way. He does not consider it important to address this diversity but simply lists all the titles, concluding without any further explanation: "It seems that the centre of the region (Borna) ruled was in Lika, and that it was not until after Borna's death, i.e. during the reigns of Mislav and Trpimir, that Croatian rulers moved into the immediate hinterland of the Dalmatian cities."¹¹

* * *

It seems, after all, that a new reading of this passage might help clarify most of the controversy concerning Borna's titles, and provide better understanding of the entire context of Croato-Frankish relations and Croatian history in the first half of the ninth century. That new reading should be as follows:

"Erant ibi et aliarum nationum legati, Abodritorum videlicet ac Bornae ducis, Guduscanorum et Timocianorum, qui nuper a Bulgarorum societate desciverant et ad nostros fines se contulerant."

This new reading of the passage in the Frankish *Annals* leaves the title *dux* accorded to Borna undefined in the territorial, i.e. gentile sense. It places Borna's reign on the same level as that of the Abodriti, Gačani and Timočani, and the territorial or gentile content of his title is defined only in retrospect from what can be made out about it in the further text of the same source.

There are several factors to support this proposed reading of the given passage in the *Annals*. First, if we accept Katičić's view that the *Annals* recorded contemporary events and were not written later as a complete text "to cover a longer period of time",¹² then full attention must

be paid to the different titles in the continuation. On the other hand, however, we must also take into account that not all the events were recorded immediately but only in retrospect (though not after a "longer period" — to use Katičić's terminology), when further events gave them special importance. The fact that the chronicler found it necessary to describe the visit of the aforementioned envoys to Louis's court in 818 should be viewed from this context. This completely routine coming of envoys to the imperial court became important only after Ljudevit's insurrection began in the following year, because Ljudevit's conduct announced the insurrection.¹³ Since Borna played a very prominent role in events connected to the insurrection, it is not difficult to understand how and why his name was first mentioned in the *Annals* with a title, but without any more precise designation. Besides, Borna's title is made clear (*Borna vero, dux Dalmacie*) in the further text, which again refers to the insurrection and is a continuation of the record under 818, so it is even possible that it was all written as a whole after the first stage of putting down Ljudevit's insurrection.

The *Annals'* chronicler was extremely well informed about circumstances in the region under Borna's rule and in the immediate neighbourhood, all in connection with Ljudevit's insurrection. This primarily comes to expression in the rather detailed description of the insurrection and of the subjugation of the *Guduscani*/Gačani, i.e. of the way in which Borna extricated himself from a crisis situation after the Gačani left the battlefield. It is also confirmed by details about Ljudevit's campaign in Dalmatia, which give the number of the enemy killed, and mares captured and, finally, in the description of how it was decided who should be Borna's heir. Such familiarity can only be explained by lively communication between Borna and his heir on one side, and Emperor Louis's court on the other, or to be more precise, by the constant reports sent to the imperial court from Borna's "land". That these existed is clearly confirmed by the account in the *Annals* about Borna's participation in 820 in planning further action against Ljudevit first through envoys, and then in person.¹⁴ Finally, I must add that the proposed reading completely clarifies the course of events in the region of our interest in the first decades of the ninth century.

Before I undertake to analyze those events, however, I must add a word of caution about the way in which ninth century Frankish sources use geographical concepts, both those from late antiquity and those that were later used in the high Middle Ages. Recently Katičić rightly noticed that late-classical terms are used to denote *patria* which were a "framework for establishing and legalizing clan authority", later adding that those *patriae* at the same time "continue the tradition of late-Roman administrative areas".¹⁵ However, those terms hardly ever coincide with what they denoted in older sources. The *dux Dalmaciae* we will talk about here did not rule the entire province of Dalmatia. Analysis clearly shows that three Dalmatias existed for Frankish sources — one held by the tribal *dux* of the Slavs/Croats, another Dalmatia as a narrow belt around cities conquered in 804 and returned to Byzantine rule in 809 or 810,¹⁶ and a third held by the Serbs.¹⁷ In each case there was a process that took *pars pro toto*, and further analysis would confirm the same for other geographical concepts of antiquity. In the case of Liburnia things are even stranger, because every interpretation links it with the trans-Velebit (Gačani) and the Kvarner area (Trsat), and not with the area

that classical writers originally meant by that term.¹⁸ We must therefore conclude that the “continuation of the tradition of late-Roman administrative areas” is very doubtful — at best it can refer to parts of former “administrative areas”, and as time passed the meaning of geographical terms even changed.

This can probably best be seen from the example of the Frankish geographical term *regnum inter Savum et Dravum*, which has caused not a little confusion among historians from Rački onward. After the twelfth century it appeared in documents to mark the area of medieval Slavonia. For the ninth-century Franks, however, that term only marked part of *Pannoniae Inferioris*, one of the vassal states that developed at the beginning of the ninth century on the *limes* of Charlemagne’s empire. The east boundary of the region called *regnum inter Savum et Dravum*, ruled in the 880s and early 890s by Duke (*knez*) Bratislav,¹⁹ can clearly be determined from the description of the journey King Arnulf’s envoys took in 892 on their way to the ruler of Bulgaria Vladimir. Because of ambushes laid by King Svetopulk who was at war with Arnulf, on that occasion they went a roundabout way from the *regnum* of Duke Bratislav to the Odra (*de regno Brazlavonis per fluvium Odagra*), then to the Kupa and finally to the Sava, down which they sailed by boat. The description of that trip in the *Anales Fuldenses*²⁰ clearly shows that they reached the Odra and the Kupa after leaving Bratislav’s *regnum*, which means that the Frankish term *inter Savum et Dravum* did not cover the area of what is today Slavonia. However, it is not quite clear exactly where Bratislav’s *regnum* ended and another *regnum* began, a *regnum* to which the Odra and the Kupa and the Sava all belonged and through which Arnulf’s envoys could freely travel, unless the boundary on the Kupa, and then from Metlika to Samobor and on to the Sava, had by then been established and secured. As for who ruled the area through which the envoys to Bulgaria travelled after leaving Bratislav’s *regnum*, one need only recall who Pope John VIII wrote to about ten years earlier (879) recommending and even demanding protection for his own envoy to Bulgaria.²¹

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With this proposed new reading of the passage in the *Annals* and remarks concerning geographical terms in Frankish sources in general, I will begin my analysis of events in the first half of the ninth century from what the Frankish royal *Annals* recorded in the year 805. At the end of that year, after successful Frankish campaigns in the south-east had ended with the conquest of their lands, the Doges of Venice, and Zadar’s *dux* Pavao and Bishop Donat came before Charlemagne, the two latter as envoys of the *Dalmatarum*. The purpose of their arrival was obviously to organize life in the newly-conquered lands, which the emperor himself accepted (as can be seen from the sentence: “*facta est ibi ordinatio ab imperatore et ducibus et populis tam Venetiae quam Dalmatiae*”).²² It seems very probable that the area under the jurisdiction of the *dux Dalmaciae*, as perceived at the time of Ljudevit’s insurrection, and held in 818 and 819 by Borna, was defined on that occasion. Internally this title meant gentile rule over the Croats in a way that first came more clearly to expression half a century later, under Trpimir, and was recently so vividly reconstructed by Katičić.

The region over which this *dux Dalmatiae* ruled was surrounded by other similar reigns created after Charle-

magne’s successful campaigns: in the south was the newly-established jurisdiction of the Zadar *dux*, which was after several years returned under Byzantine supreme authority; in the west the Dalmatian *ducatus* bordered with the area under the gentile rule of the *Guduscanorum*/Gačani, who retained autonomy until 819; in the north lay the *ducatus* of *Pannonia Inferior*, in 817 under Ljudevit, which would function discontinuously throughout the ninth century. All these reigns were autonomous, semi-independent regions on the borders of a great empire, and their basic developmental characteristics can briefly be defined as follows:

a. in the process of being constituted as states, these entities did not have direct contact with the classical heritage, as the Merovingian Empire had, for instance, enjoyed;

b. during the implantation of political power a system of *castra* developed here rather early, so that the first local rulers governed people and land directly to a much greater extent than their neighbours on the western side of the *limes*;

c. the feudalization process on the middle levels of the social pyramid developed much later in that whole area, so hereditary offices did not appear and the institution of the royal “escort” retained importance for a long time, and was in time transformed into the “great” or “state escort”.

Despite this, societies east of the Frankish *limes* showed a relatively high level of ethnic cohesion coupled with an absence of political formations like the tribal or class *principatum* that had earlier existed among the Bavarians, Alemanni and Burgundians, and which were later drowned in the Carolingian Empire. All that we have said allows us in retrospect to single out two basic types of organization — on one hand the Frankish type, in which the Franks came as conquerors and imposed their political might on people they found in the region, and on the other hand the Polish-Bohemian type, in which primitive tribal structures were transformed into state structures.²³ For this occasion it is enough to say that the Croats, and later also the Hungarians, did not belong to either of these two models.

Borna’s and all the neighbouring dukedoms, except *Pannonia Inferior* which had a special position, were subject to the Margrave of Friuli.²⁴ How the system functioned was clearly shown in 817 when Byzantium sent envoys to the Frankish emperor demanding clear delimitation between the two great neighbouring empires — Frankish and Byzantine. After considering their demands, Emperor Louis the First summoned the Margrave of Friuli who had a special interest in the matter and insight into conditions, and he and the Byzantine envoy investigated the situation. Since they both established that it directly affected the Slavs and the Romans, as they called them, they decided to go to the region in dispute in person. As this was a matter that also directly concerned the emperor (delimitation with another great power), they were joined by the emperor’s personal *misus*²⁵ who was obviously there to protect the emperor’s immediate interests. In other words, unlike other state formations that had by then developed along the Carolingian *limes* and which took care of their eastern borders themselves, here, where the territories of the western and eastern empires directly touched, the supervision of supreme Frankish authority was much stronger. This primarily meant direct imperial competence in the question of external borders, although specific activities were to a great measure implemented by high officials and those who were the most directly interested parties, in this case the Croats.

Knowledge gained from the study of rich archaeological material²⁶ supplements this image, and clearly shows

the very tangible materialization of supreme Carolingian power. By this I mean that military alliance made it possible to acquire, and on some occasions probably also to receive, modern and high-quality weapons — swords, lances and spurs, sometimes very luxuriously made. This equipment undoubtedly ensured military balance, if not the supremacy of Carolingian vassals/allies in any clashes with enemies of the empire.²⁷ Furthermore, modern and efficient weapons were distributed within the ruling circle, strengthening its social position and internal relations.

Beyond this area of direct supervision by the Frankish authorities, in which the embryo of the early-medieval Croatian state developed, stretched the territories of the eastern neighbours of the Frankish “Dalmatian” *ducatus*, in fact a good part of the Roman province of Dalmatia.²⁸ This was held by the Serbs, who still had a poly-centric form of gentile rule. The *Annals* clearly describe this form of rule by saying that “one of their dukes” possesses his “city”.²⁹ It is not clear to what measure the Frankish authorities supervised this area, too, but it is a fact that envoys of the Timočani also appeared before Emperor Louis in 817. According to the *Annals*, they had “recently left the Bulgarians and sided with our (the Frankish) side”, which indicates some kind of supervision. Further confirmation can be found in Einhard’s *Vita Karoli imperatoris*, who says that the emperor had conquered all of Dalmatia except the narrow belt around the maritime cities and the cities themselves, which were in 812 finally handed over to the Byzantine emperor.³⁰

These relations underwent great changes in the 810s and 820s in connection with the insurrection of Ljudevit, *dux of Pannonia Inferior*. The breadth and intensity of the movement partly resulted from the personal charisma of its leader, the Duke of *Pannonia Inferior*, and his prowess at drawing the various gentile leaders to his side, which were the most efficient forms of action under conditions that existed in the early ninth century. The insurrection became a major threat to the security of the south-eastern borders of the empire.³¹ All the imperial forces that could be mustered in the wide area from Bavaria to Friuli had to be mobilized to put it down, so it is not strange that the help the emperor got from Borna as *dux Dalmaciae* was more than welcome and amply rewarded. Despite the fact that the *Annals* called them a “great mass”, Borna’s fighters and those that could be recruited by the Gačani were not of the kind to take part in the forces sent against Ljudevit. It seems that in the first campaign in 819 those two groups (*dux Dalmaciae/Croatorum* and *Guduscani/Gačani*) only secured the flank of one of the three main directions in which the Frankish forces marched.³²

This was the constellation of the well-known battle on the Kupa, when the Gačani revolted during the first clash. Their “council”, as Katičić calls the institution,³³ decided they should withdraw from the fight against the rebel Pannonian duke and return home. Their desertion from the battlefield endangered Borna himself, who had to rely on his “escort”,³⁴ but during the battle there was also treason on Ljudevit’s side when his father-in-law abandoned him. The course of the battle seems to be clear confirmation that Borna did not at all behave like the gentile ruler, the *knez*, of the Gačani. He made use of the Gačani’s refusal to support their Frankish masters, which is what their behaviour in fact was, and under the guise of re-establishing previous conditions he subjugated them. This is how his action was interpreted at the imperial court, too. He obviously in-

formed Louis’s court about everything he did in great detail, first by sending his envoys and then by going there himself after fighting off Ljudevit’s army that invaded his Dalmatia at the end of 819 and beginning of 820. It was probably on this occasion, besides planning further action against the rebel Pannonian duke, that Borna’s subjection of the Gačani was sanctioned and his direct rule over them established through the extension of his title, which was after that *dux Dalmaciae atque Liburniae*.

However, although he established direct rule over the Gačani, i.e. over the area that Louis’s educated courtiers called Liburnia, Borna could not completely crush their tradition of gentile rule. This can best be seen from the fact that when Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus described Croatia in the mid-tenth century, that region (the *županije* of Gacka, Lika and Krbava) still enjoyed special status under the rule of a *ban*, within the reign of Croatian dukes.³⁵ The degree of Borna’s control over centrifugal forces of the gentile order in his own dukedom is not completely clear, either. In their description of Ljudevit’s attack on Borna’s Dalmatia, the Frankish *Annals* mention fortifications into which Borna withdrew his forces,³⁶ which seems to indicate a different relationship from that when *unus ex ducibus* has his own *civitas*. However, this still does not show whether and to what extent these fortifications were under the direct authority of the duke, or whether some were still ruled by local gentile heads. It may generally be concluded that Borna’s rule did not yet satisfy all the nine criteria Czech archaeologist Martin Gojda recently gave as crucial for considering when an early-medieval political authority was a rounded state government.³⁷ The Croatian state did not satisfy them until the tenth and eleventh centuries.

Regardless of all this, however, later developments indicate that 820 was a real turning point in the creation of the early-medieval Croatian state. The supreme Frankish authority confirmed its territorial expansion and the definition of the future state’s nucleus, which now satisfied the status of double legitimacy of ducal power — on one hand it was legitimized as a gentile reign, as explained by Katičić, and on the other hand it enjoyed the confirmation and support of one of the two highest contemporary political authorities, the Frankish emperor. This intertwining of two legitimacies came to expression most clearly in 821, on the ascension of Borna’s heir Ladislav. The author of the Frankish *Annals* described this act, emphasizing the three elements on which the legitimacy of Ladislav’s power rested:

- a) he was elected by the “people” (the political *corpse, populus*) of the dukedom;
- b) he was a member of the ducal dynasty (he was Borna’s *nepos*);
- c) and he was confirmed by the Frankish emperor.³⁸

All the three elements clearly strengthened the ducal position, but they also paved the way for social integration on a higher level. We must say here that a precondition for this higher kind of integration, besides the clearly defined ducal dynasty,³⁹ was the existence of an orally transmitted tradition (as a category that differs essentially from neutral “folk tradition”) about the common origin of the Croats (not entering into an analysis of what that ethnic attribute means), of the kind evidenced by Constantine Porphyrogenitus in the tenth, and Thomas Archdeacon in the thirteenth century.⁴⁰ In the following decades, on the edge of and under the wing of a great empire, this tradition combined with political and armed events like the war against Ljudevit, cemented internal social links thus becoming the platform

from which the existing framework of gentile rule grew into the early-medieval Croatian state.

Although centrifugal by nature, this process was supported by imperial authority which chose the lesser of two evils on its south-east borders. The established relations of mutual confidence and aid were confirmed by events like the physical liquidation of the former rebel Ljudevit in 823. It was carried out by a member of the ruling family, Borna's uncle Ljudemisl, and Emperor Louis was immediately informed.⁴¹ It even seems possible that Ljudevit's death and the vacant position of the duke of *Pannonia Inferior* opened up possibilities for the further territorial expansion of the ruler of the Croats. Several things speak in favour of this.

Firstly, in the emperor's view a reward had to be found for the loyalty of the Croatian dukes and their ruling elite in a situation when new enemies were already apparent on the south-eastern borders — the Bulgarians. The successful Bulgarian attack in 827 was ascribed to the incompetence of the Friulian Margrave Baldrik, which resulted in an administrative reshuffle and the abolition of his margravate in 828, and its division among four *comites*.⁴² This external threat coincided with a decrease of internal cohesion in the empire,⁴³ and the growing contention in the imperial family made it even more necessary to reward potential allies. A typical situation of this kind occurred in 832 when Louis, son of Emperor Louis the Pious, marched against his brother Charles with an army of Bavarians and "those Slavs he *could draw to his side*".⁴⁴ In the context of what we said earlier about the territory ruled by the Frankish official Duke Bratislav, whose *regnum* originally stretched over the area *inter Savam et Dravam* but only in the wider Carinthian area, i.e. in today's Slovenia, it would not be difficult to support the hypothesis that it was in the years following Ljudevit's murder that some of the Croats split and took *Illyricum* and *Pannonia* later arranging mutual relations. Tradition about this was preserved in the 30th chapter of Porphyrogenitus's book.⁴⁵

Be that as it may, things gradually calmed down after Ljudevit's insurrection was quelled, and the Croatian dukedom practically disappeared from contemporary Frankish sources in the first half of the ninth century because there was no more trouble in relations between the Croatian duke, (the Friulian margrave, when the honour was re-established), and the emperor. The last known incident in those

relations, in the period before the Frankish system disintegrated and the Croatian dukes finally ridded themselves of supreme Frankish authority is connected with the stay of the theologian and missionary Gottschalk at the court of Duke Trpimir. Gottschalk's appearance at the Croatian court was obviously closely connected with his earlier stay at the court of the Friulian Margrave Eberhard,⁴⁶ on whose recommendation Trpimir must have received him. In two remarks in his memoirs, writing in a completely different context, Gottschalk left very valuable testimony about the land he had visited. One is that he called the Croatian ruler *rex Sclavorum*.⁴⁷ This should primarily be understood as a qualification of his rule, with which the learned theologian might have been acquainted at first hand. As the duke's guest, Gottschalk witnessed many royal acts, including Trpimir's campaign against the *gentem Grecorum*. The second remark is connected with Gottschalk's travels to Bulgaria, either before coming to the duke's court or afterwards. He probably took the same route down the Sava valley used in 879 and 892 by the Pope's and Arnulf's envoys. Describing this personal travel experience, he remarked that Trpimir's Dalmatia "really is a different province".⁴⁸

These two remarks clearly show that Trpimir's Croatia was no longer a small gentile reign situated on a narrow strip in the immediate hinterland of the ancient coastal cities. However, the development of the political entity ruled in the mid-ninth century by Trpimir, who called himself *dux Croatorum* but whom the learner Frankish theologian considered a *rex*, owed a lot to half a century of life in what might freely be called the "Frankish political incubator". This "incubator" enabled the country to round off its territory and to live in relative peace on the edge of a great contemporary supersystem (the Carolingian Empire), but outside and alongside the currents of "major history". In other words, it meant unhindered internal integration throughout the area of ducal jurisdiction. The great measure to which life in this "incubator" influenced overall social transformation is clearly shown by the fact that the long process of Christianization (which is very different from conversion to Christianity) was initiated by and conducted from the Friulian/Frankish church centre Aquileia. How that transformation developed and what forms it took will probably be much clearer when the results of archaeological and history-of-art research are summed up.

¹ On Einhard and his writings see in short in L. ČORALIĆ, "Einhard i 'Život Karla Velikog'" in *Einhard / Život Karla Velikog* (= *Einhard / The Life of Charlemagne*), Zagreb 1992, p. 28 ff.

² More recently Gottschalk's stay in Croatia was commented by Ž. RAPANIĆ, "Solinska epizoda europske povijesti" (= A Solin Episode of European History), *Vjesnik za historiju i arheologiju dalmatinsku* 85, 1992.

³ Cfr. e.g. N. BUDAK, *Prva stoljeća Hrvatske* (= *The First Centuries of Croatia*), Zagreb 1994, p. 17-20, 102-104; I. GOLDSTEIN, *Hrvatski Rani Srednji Vijek* (= *The Croatian Early Middle Ages*), Zagreb 1995, p. 167-171.

⁴ Thus in R. KATIČIĆ, *Uz početke hrvatskih početaka* (*On the Beginnings of Croatian Beginnings*), Split 1993, p. 174 ff., in *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* III/20, 1990 (Split 1992). Texts in the book translated from German contain the somewhat more usual adjective "clannish" (= *rodovski*) (R. KATIČIĆ, *o.c.*, p. 39 ff).

⁵ F. KURZE brings this reading in *Annales regni Francorum, Scriptores rerum germanicarum in usum scholarum* II, Hannoverae 1895, p. 149, taken over by F. KOS, *Gradiivo za zgodovino Slovencev v srednjem veku* II, Ljubljana 1906, p. 48.

⁶ F. RAČKI, *Documenta historiae chroaticae periodum antiquam illustrantia*, Zagreb 1877, p. 320.

⁷ F. RAČKI, *o.c.*, p. 320.

⁸ For Drinov's views cfr. R. KATIČIĆ, *o.c.*, p. 45, note 30; M. SUIĆ, *Granice Liburnije kroz stoljeća* (= *The Boundaries of Liburnia Through the Centuries*), in *Radovi Instituta JAZU u Zadru* 2, 1955, p. 293-294, is not so explicit, but his presentation allows a conclusion similar to that made by Drinov.

⁹ R. KATIČIĆ, *o.c.*, p. 175.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 175-6.

¹¹ I. GOLDSTEIN, *o.c.*, p. 167; F. KOS, *o.c.*, p. 48, note 1, treats Borna's titles in a similar way ("Borna was duke of Dalmatia and Liburnia. He was also called Duke of the Guduscans.")

¹² R. KATIČIĆ, *o.c.*, p. 171.

¹³ F. RAČKI, *o.c.*, p. 320: "Erant ibi ... legati ... Liudeviti, ducis Pannoniae inferioris, qui res novas molines, Cadolaum comitem et marcae Foroiuliensis praefectum, crudelitatis atque insolentiae accusare conabatur". This is the continuation of the text whose new reading is proposed here.

¹⁴ F. RAČKI, *o.c.*, p. 324: "Borna quoque primo per legatos, deinde ipse veniens, quid sibi facto opus esse videretur, suggestit".

¹⁵ R. KATIČIĆ, *o.c.*, p. 41 and 174.

¹⁶ Thus, for example, the Zadar *dux* and bishop came as "legati Dalmatarum" and decisions were made in their presence "de ducibus et populis ... Dalmatiae" (F. RAČKI, *o.c.*, p. 310).

¹⁷ F. RAČKI, *o.c.*, p. 327: "ad Sorabos, quae natio magnam Dalmatiae partem obtinere dicitur". Compare the interpretation R. KATIČIĆ, *o.c.*, p. 173 gives in this connection.

¹⁸ For classical Liburnia cfr. M. SUIĆ, *o.c.*

¹⁹ F. RAČKI, *o.c.*, p. 379, where the area of Bratislav's rule is determined as follows: "in id tempus regnum inter Dravum et Savum flumine tenuit".

²⁰ F. RAČKI, *o.c.*, p. 380: "Missi autem propter insidias Zuetinbaldi ducis terrestre iter non valentes habere, de regno Brazlavonis per fluvium Odagra usque ad Gulpam, dein per fluente Save fluminis navigio in Bulgaria perducti".

²¹ Pope John VIII's letters in F. RAČKI, *o.c.*, p. 7-9.

²² R. CESSI, *La Dalmazia e Bisanzio nel sec. XI*, in: *Istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, Atti CXXV*, 1967, p. 90, gave interesting observations of conditions and events in littoral Dalmatia in the early ninth century. See also the relevant text of the Frankish Annals in F. RAČKI, *o.c.*, p. 310.

²³ For the origin, functioning, characteristics and typology of such state formations compare Stanislaw RUSSOCKI, *Le limes carolingien — confins des systèmes du pouvoir et de la domination*, in *Questiones Medii Aevi III/1984*, Editions de l'Université de Varsovie 1986, with a reliable list of the existing references. L. LECIEJEWICZ also makes important observations, *Le limes carolingien — frontière de deux zones culturelles*, *Ibid.*

²⁴ Pannonia Inferior had a special position because it spanned the boundary of two Frankish political and church jurisdictions — the Friulian and Eastern Margravates, i.e. the Archbishoprics of Aquileia and Salzburg, which were separated by the river Drava (for the demarcation of political and church jurisdictions cfr. F. KOS, *o.c.*, p. 37, note 6; p. 51, note 3). The Friulian margrave's jurisdiction over part of Pannonia Inferior is directly confirmed by the complaints made in 818 by Duke Ljudevit of Pannonia Inferior to the emperor against Margrave Kadolah (Ljudevit, as "dux Pannoniae inferioris", to Emperor Louis "Cadolaum comitem et marcae Foroiuliensis praefectum crudelitatis atque insolentiae accusare conabatur." Cfr. F. RAČKI, *o.c.*, p. 320).

²⁵ Relevant text in F. RAČKI, *o.c.*, p. 317.

²⁶ Archaeological material was published on various occasions and in different places. For a concise survey with the necessary references see: J. BELOŠEVIĆ, *Materijalna kultura Hrvata (= Material Culture of the Croats)*, Zagreb 1980; Z. VINSKI, *O nalazima karolinških mačeva u Jugoslaviji (= On Finds of Carolingian Swords in Yugoslavia)*, in *Starohrvatska prosvjeta III/11*, 1981; D. JELOVINA, *Mačevi i ostruge karolinškog obilježja u Muzeju hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika (= Swords and Spurs of Carolingian Characteristics in the Museum of Croatian Archaeological Monuments)*, Split 1986; M. ZEKAN, *Karolinški i poslijekarolinški nalazi iz Bosne i Hercegovine (Carolingian and Post-Carolingian Finds in Bosnia and Herzegovina)*, in *Livanjski kraj u povijesti*, Split-Livno 1994. The problem of dating Carolingian finds must be solved in connection with everything that has been said here, which means that the oldest Carolingian finds on Croatian territory, those that undoubtedly originate from compact graveyards where they were placed as part of the burial ritual, should not be dated before the beginning of the ninth century. But the latest time limit of these finds is not so easy to determine, however, because it depends on the speed and success of the Christianization process, which was tightly linked with burial rituals and the custom of laying material objects and military equipment in graves.

²⁷ For the broader social importance of imported military technology, cfr. L. MAKKAJ, *Les caractères originaux de l'histoire économique et sociale de l'Europe orientale pendant le Moyen Age*, in *Acta Historica Academiae scientiarum Hungaricae XVII/3-4*, 1970, p. 268-9.

²⁸ The area under the direct rule of Croatian dukes in the first half of the ninth century can be quite precisely determined on the basis of archaeological finds with pronounced Carolingian characteristics. Cfr. M. ZEKAN, *o.c.*

²⁹ The story of Ljudevit's flight to the Serbs in 822 says: "uno ex ducibus eorum (sc. Soraborum) a quo receptus est per dolum interfecto, civitatem eius in suam redegit dicionem" (F. RAČKI, *o.c.*, p. 327).

³⁰ *Einhard / Život Karla Velikog*, p. 74.

³¹ Each of the following authors shows the insurrection in his own way: F. KOS, *o.c.*, XXXVII-XXXIX; F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata u vrijeme narodnih vladara (= The History of the Croats in the Time of Medieval Croatian Rulers)*, p. 310-316; N. KLAIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata u ranom srednjem vijeku (= History of the Croats in the Early Middle Ages)*, Zagreb 1971, p. 208-212; N. BUDAK, *o.c.*, p. 17-18; I. GOLDSTEIN, *o.c.*, p. 166-172.

³² The description of the first year of fighting against Ljudevit's rebels in F. RAČKI, *o.c.*, p. 321-323, includes the expression "Borna vero, dux Dalmaciae, cum magnis copiis ad Colapium ... occurens".

³³ R. KATIČIĆ, *o.c.*, p. 178

³⁴ For Borna's "escort" (*družina*), which the author of *Annals* calls "pretorians", cfr. R. KATIČIĆ, *o.c.*, p. 186 ff. For the "escort" (*družina*) in East Central Europe, besides the works listed here in note 23, also cfr. L. MAKKAJ, *o.c.*, p. 270-1.

³⁵ Cfr. F. ŠIŠIĆ, *o.c.*, p. 449-450; I. GOLDSTEIN, *o.c.*, p. 157.

³⁶ F. RAČKI, *o.c.*, p. 322, who says that, after Ljudevit's attack on Dalmatia, "Borna se paenitus inparem conspiceret, omnia sua castellis inclusit".

³⁷ M. GOJDA, *The Ancient Slavs, Settlement and Society*, Edinburgh University Press 1990, p. 56-57.

³⁸ F. RAČKI, *o.c.*, p. 325.: "Interea Borna, dux Dalmatiae atque Liburniae, defunctus est, et petente populo atque imperatore consentiente nepos illius, nomine Ladasclavus, successor ei constitutus est" (italics M.A.).

³⁹ Besides choosing Borna's *nepos* as the new duke, the existence and importance of the ruling dynasty is also evidenced by the role of Borna's kinsman (*avunculus*) Ljudemisl, who received Ljudevit in 823 and then executed him (cfr. F. RAČKI, *o.c.*, p. 328).

⁴⁰ The reconstruction of the myth about the arrival of the Croats would go far beyond the needs of this text, and it is enough to indicate here the course of research that N. BUDAK, *o.c.*, p. 62-64, opened up by his discussion of this question. For the importance of orally transmitted tradition in other early-medieval societies, cfr. H. MOISL, *Kingship and Orally Transmitted Stammestradition among the Lombards and Franks*, in *Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn, Teil 1* (ed. H. WOLFRAM and A. SCHWARCZ), Wien 1989.

⁴¹ Cfr. note 39.

⁴² Cfr. F. KOS, *o.c.*, p. 77, 84-85.

⁴³ Cfr. G. BARRACLOUGH, *The Crucible of Europe. The ninth and tenth centuries in European History*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1976, p. 56 ff.

⁴⁴ F. KOS, *o.c.*, p. 93: "cum Baioariis ... et Sclavis quos *ad se vocare poterat*" (italics M.A.).

⁴⁵ Cfr. F. RAČKI, *o.c.*, p. 271.

⁴⁶ Gottschalk's stay in Croatia in 846/7 was rectly presented in detail, with a review of older literature, by Ž. RAPANIĆ, *o.c.*

⁴⁷ Ž. RAPANIĆ, *o.c.*, p. 99: "Tripemirus rex Sclavorum".

⁴⁸ Ž. RAPANIĆ, *o.c.*, p. 100: "per totam Dalmatiam, longissimam revera regionem".

OD KAROLINŠKOGA DUŽNOSNIKA DO HRVATSKOGA VLADARA. HRVATI I KAROLINŠKO CARSTVO U PRVOJ POLOVICI IX. STOLJEĆA

SAŽETAK

Ukazujući na posebno značenje suvremenih franačkih vrela prve polovice IX. st., autor opširno razglaba ulomak teksta *Annales regni Francorum* koji se odnosi na boravak kneza Borne na dvoru Ludovika Pobožnoga 818. Predlaže novu lekciju, a samim tim i tumačenje ulomka, susljedno kojemu je u to vrijeme Borna još samo knez gentilne vladavine Hrvata i franački *dux Dalmacie*, odnosno pod svojom vlašću još ne drži plemensku vladavinu *Guduscanorum* — Gačana. Razglabajući pri tomu način na koji se u suvremenim franačkim vrelima koriste kako antički tako i suvremeni zemljopisni pojmovi, autor pokušava preciznije odrediti sadržaj franačkoga zemljopisnog i administrativno-političkog pojma *regnum inter Savum et Dravum* iz druge polovice IX. st. Pri tome dolazi do zaključka kako se ta odrednica u franačkim vrelima odnosi na onaj dio međurječja koji je pod izravnom carskom vlašću, dakle na Karantaniju, odnosno današnje slovensko područje.

Zaključujući uvodna razglabanja autor zatim pokušava reinterpretirati zbivanja vezana uz sudjelovanje kneza Borne u gušenju ustanka njegova susjeda, donjopanonškoga kneza Ljudevita. Susljedno predloženoj lekciji ulomka franačkih *Anala* i tumačenju koje iz te lekcije proizlazi, autor smatra kako je odlazak Gačana s bojnog polja kod Kupe 819. pri susretu s Ljudevitovim snagama protumačen kao pobuna protiv carskog autoriteta. Podvrgavajući u sljedećoj fazi Gačane svojoj vlasti, Borna istodobno restaurira i carski autoritet, a kroz novu titulu *ducis Dalmaciae atque Liburniae* dobiva i pravno pokriće proširenja svoje kneževske vlasti. Borna sve do smrti 821. ostaje vjerni carski vazal, sudjelujući aktivno u gušenju Ljudevitova ustanka i stvarajući na taj način povoljnu poziciju za nasljednike njegove kneževske časti. Ta se povoljna pozicija jasno zrcali u načinu na koji se njegov nećak i nasljednik, Ladislav, penje na kneževsko prijestolje — bira ga, iz okvira vladajuće dinastije, (politički) narod s područja njegove vladavine, a car Ludovik potvrđuje taj izbor prenoseći na njega Borninu titulu *dux*.

Razglabajući mehanizme vladanja i odnosa na relaciji franački car — hrvatski gentilni vladar i uklapajući dobijene spoznaje u poznatu tipologiju i značajke administrativno-

-političkih tvorbi koje u IX. st. nastaju na karolinškome *limesu*, autor zaključuje kako se hrvatski razvoj ponešto razlikuje od onoga što se zbiva na drugim dijelovima istočnoga *limesa* unutar okvira definiranih kao *poljsko-češki model*. Ta je razlika ponajprije posljedica blizine Bizanta s kojim karolinški dvor od 812. nema otvorenih prijepora, ali postoji latentni strah od jedine stvarno organizirane državne sile u franačkom okruženju. Drugo bitno obilježje razvoja odnosa spram vrhovne franačke vlasti jest pojava Bugara na Dunavu i Savi u drugoj četvrtini IX. st. koja carski dvor prisiljava na traženje još čvršće potpore i pomoći hrvatskog gentilnoga vladara u odbijanju bugarskih navala.

U takvoj dakle situaciji jačaju, na području hrvatske gentilne vladavine koja se teritorijalno zaokružuje tijekom i neposredno nakon gušenja Ljudevitova ustanka, a stoji pod zaštitom koju pruža franačko vrhovništvo, nutarnji integracijski procesi. Dva bitna elementa kojima autor pripisuje istaknuto značenje u tome procesu jesu stalna vanjska opasnost (Ljudevitov ustanak, borbe s Bugarima) i postojanje mita o zajedničkom podrijetlu (mit registriraju Konstantin Porfirogenet u X. i Toma arciđakon u XIII. st.). Rezultate toga procesa, koji se ne može detaljnije pratiti zbog nedostatka vrela, autor vidi u dvama izričajima što ih je ostavio teolog Gottschalk, koji je sredinom IX. st. boravio na dvoru hrvatskoga kneza Trpimira. Naime, s jedne strane Gottschalk Trpimira naziva *rexom* što autor tumači kao karakterizaciju vladarskih postupaka proizašlu iz dugotrajna boravka na kneževu dvoru i iskustva stečena za toga boravka. S druge je strane saksonski teolog zapisao kako je Trpimirova Hrvatska *uistinu duga provincija*, što posebno značenje dobiva zna li se kako je prije ili poslije boravka na Trpimirovu dvoru Gottschalk boravio u Bugarskoj. Iskustvo putovanja kroz Hrvatsku do Bugarske, ili iz Bugarske na Trpimirov dvor u blizini Splita, sadržano u tome izričaju, jasno posvjedočuje da je proces teritorijalnoga zaokruživanja hrvatske gentilne vladavine već daleko nadrastao okvire uskoga pojasa zaleđa starih dalmatinskih gradova, odnosno da je već sredinom IX. stoljeća ta vladavina obuhvaćala dobar dio današnje Slavonije.

