

Comments on the Avar-related chapters of the *Conversio* *Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*¹

TAMÁS NÓTÁRI



The *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*² about which Lhotsky wrote with much appreciation (*Die Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum (ist) das Haupt und Glanzstück der ruhmvollen Salzburger Historiographie. ... eine merkwürdige und in ihrer Art schöne Schrift.*)³ can legitimately claim wider interest also because – besides *Vita Sancti Severini* by Eugippius and *Getica* by Jordanes – it belongs to those Latin sources dating from the period after the great migrations and before Árpád's Conquest, which speak more coherently about the history of the area which later became Hungary. Its Avar-related chapters deserve interest because "It was in the Avar age when the Eastern and Western part of the Middle Danube basin became a continuously unified political entity for the first time in written history... In this sense the Avar Khaganate was the herald of later Hungary."⁴ These chapters of the *Conversio* present the disintegration of the Avar Khaganate and the later fate of the Avar population in a somewhat tendentious manner. After considering a few schematic comments on the historical period of the genesis of the *Conversio*, on its author as well as on its aims (I),⁵ the present paper will turn to the Avar-related chapters of the work.⁶ (II)

¹ A special word of thanks is due to the late Professor S. Szádeczky-Kardoss, who gave me all the time valuable advice.

² Henceforth abbreviated as *Conversio*.

³ A. Lhotsky, *Quellenkunde zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte Österreichs*. Graz-Köln 1963, 155.

⁴ S. Szádeczky-Kardoss, *Az avar történelem forrásai 557-től 806-ig*. [The sources of the Avar history from 557 to 806] Budapest 1998, 9.

⁵ Cf. H. Wolfram, *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum. Das Weissbuch der Salzburger Kirche über die erfolgreiche Mission in Karantänien und Pannonien*. Wien-Köln-Graz 1979; F. Lošek, *Die Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum und der Brief des Erzbischofs Theot-*

I) Concerning the precise date of the work both the years 870 and the 871 occur in literature, many authors do not take a stance on the issue.⁷ Wattenbach⁸ and Kos⁹ dated the work to 871, Wolfram in his 1979 edition, on the basis of the relevant sentence of the fourteenth chapter of the *Conversio*,¹⁰ also accepted the year 871 for the genesis of the work.¹¹ However, in his 1995 monograph Wolfram changed his position and adopted the medieval method of calculation according to which the year mentioned in the text must be added to the years passed, and on this basis he decided to settle with the year 870 as the work's origin.¹² In his edition Lošek also agreed with this view.¹³

Based on some references in the text one can venture to make assumptions with regard to the author's identity but he cannot be identified with certainty. Wolfram suggests that the *auctor* was Archbishop Adalwinus himself, but his wording is exceedingly cautious (...lassen diese Annahme nicht für ganz unmöglich erscheinen).¹⁴ At the same time, the Salzburgian and Bavarian provenance of the author can be inferred from the use of a first person singular in the fifth chapter.¹⁵ The authorship of Adalwinus can be supported by the following: a further first person singular immediately follows a mentioning of Adalwinus, thus it is possible that the author mentioned his own name.¹⁶ It can also be made the object of consideration that in the text of the *Conversio* only two persons get the epitheton

mar von Salzburg. MGH Studien und Texte. Bd. 15. Hannover 1997; H. Wolfram, *Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich. Die Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum und die Quellen ihrer Zeit*. Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung Ergänzungsband 31. Wien-München 1995.

⁶ The most recent Hungarian translation of the *Conversio* see T. Nótári, "Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum." *Aetas* 15:3 (2000), 93–111.

⁷ Lhotsky, *Quellenkunde*, 156; W. Wattenbach–W. Levison, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter. Vorzeit und Karolinger*. Heft 6. bearbeitet v. H. Löwe, Weimar 1990, 817.

⁸ W. Wattenbach, *De Conversione Bagoariorum et carantanorum libellus*. MGH SS. 11. Hannover 1854, 1.

⁹ M. Kos, *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*. Laibach 1936, 13, 105.

¹⁰ *Conversio* 14. *A tempore igitur, quo dato et praecepto domini Karoli imperatoris orientalis Pannoniae populus a Iuvavensibus regi coepit praesulibus usque in praesens tempus sunt anni LXXV...*

¹¹ Wolfram, *Conversio Bagoariorum*, 15, 141.

¹² Wolfram, *Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich*, 193.

¹³ Lošek, *Die Conversio Bagoariorum*, 6.

¹⁴ Wolfram, *Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich*, 197.

¹⁵ *Conversio* 5. ...orta seditione, quod carmula dicimus. Cf. *Lex Baiuvariorum* (MGH LL 5, 2. ed. E. v. Schwind, Hannover 1926.) 2, 3. *Si quis seditionem excitaverit contra ducem suum, quod Baiuvarii carmulum dicunt.*

¹⁶ *Conversio* 9. ...et adhuc ipse Adalwinus archiepiscopus per semetipsum regere studet illam gentem in nomine Domini, sicut iam multis in illis regionibus claret locis. 10. *Enumeratis itaque episcopis Iuvavensium conamur, prout veracius in chronicis imperatorum et regum Francorum et Bagoariorum scriptum reperimus, scire volentibus manifestare.*

piissimus, these being Adalwinus¹⁷ and Louis The German,¹⁸ possibly the author and the addressee of the work.¹⁹

The reason for writing the *Conversio* was the sharp contradiction occurring between the Archbishopric of Salzburg and Methodius, and by this work Archbishop Adalwinus intended to prove, or have the lawfulness of Salzburg's missionary work in *Carantania* and *Pannonia Inferior*, and the *iusdictio* issuing from this. Although the missionary work of Cyrill and Methodius in Moravia and Pannonia was supported by both Pope Nicolaus I and Hadrian II, Salzburg felt its jurisdiction threatened over these areas. After Cyrill's death in 869, Methodius returned among the Slavs as the Archbishop of Sirmium. However, the Bavarian bishops cited him in front of the tribunal of the Regensburg Council. Methodius was deliberated only due to Hadrian II's resolute intervention. The addressee of the *Conversio*, as it was mentioned, is probably Louis the German, for whom the author intended to prove the uninterrupted seventy-five years of the Salzburg jurisdiction. However, as Adalwinus, unlike the Bishop of Regensburg and the Bishop of Passau, did not act with direct violence against Methodius, the style of the work seems surprisingly calm and objective, only conferring the name *philosophus* on Methodius, which cannot be considered a serious denigration. According to its aim the *Conversio* presents the events in a tendentious manner. For example, the legal claim over *Pannonia Inferior* cannot be substantiated because while *Carantania* was recognised as being Salzburg's mission by three papal decisions in the ninth century, and this claim was also confirmed with regard to *Carantania's* area extending to the North from the River Drava by Charles the Great's 811 decision, the Archbishopric of Salzburg did not receive any permission from Rome to exercise jurisdiction over Pannonia.²⁰

II) *Conversio* 3.

"So far it has been recorded how the Bavarians became Christians, and the list of the bishops and abbots of the Salzburg Archbishopric has been compiled. Now it must be added how the Slavs, who are also called Carantans and their neighbours received teaching in the Holy Faith and how they became Christians, and the Huns drove out the Romans, the Goths and the Gepids from Pannonia Inferior, and held it until the Franks and the Bavarians, together with the Carantans, harassing them in continuous warfare finally defeated them. Those who took up their religion and accepted

¹⁷ *Conversio* 9. ...anno nativitatit Domini DCCCXXI Adaltrammus piissimus doctor sedem Iuvenensem suscepit regendam.

¹⁸ *Conversio* 12. Pervenit ergo ad notitiam Hludowici piissimi regis quod Priwina benivolus fuit erga Dei servitium et suum.

¹⁹ Lošek, *Die Conversio Bagoariorum*, 6; H.-D. Kahl: *Virgil und die Salzburger Slawenmission*. In: *Virgil von Salzburg – Mission und Ge...* hrsg. v. H. Dopsch und R. Juffinger. Salzburg 1985. 112.

²⁰ Wolfram, *Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich*, 193; Nótári, "*Conversio Bagoariorum*," 94.

Christianity the kings made their tax-payers and by the tax payed to the king they are to the present day entitled to hold the land they inhabit."²¹

The present chapter of the *Conversio* does not sustain that the Avars were completely driven out from their settlements, instead, those who were willing to accept Christianity were made the tax-payers, *tributarii* of the Frank kings. At first sight, one could take the expression *tributarii* as referring to the Avar leaders, and the *tributum* paid by them could be equated with the gifts that they were previously offering as well. However, one must consider the fact that Avar envoys appear at an Imperial Assembly for the last time in the year 822, so one can infer the existence of a subordinated, but in certain respects independent Avar vassal state until then.²² It seems more likely, though, that the expression *tributarii*, in accordance with its usage in other documents of the time,²³ designates those free inhabitants who have to do different services to the *fiscus dominicus* – both in nature and financial –, and who can even be made present together with the land they inhabit. Thus, both the social and economic conditions of the free Avars – who had lived under the rule of leaders from their own nation, who in their turn were dependent of the Frank king – deteriorated after the disappearance of these leaders.²⁴ Despite the decline in their condition, the presence of the Avar population in the Carpathian basin in the ninth century cannot be called into question, their presence being mentioned both by Regino²⁵ and Constantinus Porphyrogenitus.²⁶ It is interesting that Pohl does not mention this locus of the *Conversio* in his chapter of his monograph: "Wohin verschwanden die Awaren?"²⁷ conversely, he

²¹ *Actenus praenotatum est, qualiter Bawari facti sunt christiani seu numerus episcoporum et abbatum conscriptus in sede Iuvavensi. Nunc adiciendum est, qualiter Sclavi, qui dicuntur Quarantani, et confines eorum fide sancta instructi christianique effecti sunt, seu quomodo Huni Romanos et Gothos atque Gepidos de inferiori Pannonia expulerunt et illam possederunt regionem, quousque Franci ac Bawari cum Quarantanis continuis affligendo bellis eos superaverunt. Eos autem, qui oboediebant fidei et baptismum sunt consecuti, tributarios fecerunt regum et terram, quam possident residui, adhuc pro tributo retinent regis usque in hodiernum diem.*

²² Wolfram, *Conversio Bagoariorum*, 72; Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich, 276.

²³ T. Olajos, "La question de la survivance avare: les sources grecques et latines de l'histoire des Avars ou IX^e siècle." *Philomathestatos. Studies in Greek and Byzantine Texts presented to J. Woret for his sixty-fifth birthday.* ed. B. Janssen–B. Roosen–P. van Denn. Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 130. Leuven–Paris 2004, 487 sqq.

²⁴ J. Deér, "Karl der Große und der Untergang des Awarenreiches." in *Karl der Grosse.* Hrsg. v. W. Braunfels, Düsseldorf 1966, 1: 782.

²⁵ About Regino see S. Szádeczky-Kardoss, "Histoire des Avars et leur héritage en Europe." in *Les Hongrois et l'Europe – Conquête et intégration.* Párizs–Szeged 1999, 168; Gy. Kristó, "Regino és a magyar honfoglalás." [Regino and the Hungarian Conquest] in *Studia varia. Tanulmányok Szádeczky-Kardoss Samu nyolcvanadik születésnapjára.* Szeged 1998, 89 sqq.

²⁶ DAI 30, 67–71. ed. Gy. Moravcsik. Dumbarton Oaks 1967.

²⁷ W. Pohl, *Die Awaren. Ein Steppenvolk in Mitteleuropa 567–822.* München 1988, 323 sqq.

takes over the ancient Slavonic proverb: "Sie verschwanden wie der Obor, der weder Sippen noch Nachkommenschaft hat", also quoted by Wolfram.²⁸

Conversio 6.

"(A similar summary must be given about the Avars too.)²⁹ In ancient times the Romans ruled south of the Danube in the realm of Pannonia Inferior and in the neighbouring territories, and in their defence they built castles and fortresses, and many other buildings, as it can still be seen. They subjugated even the Goths and the Gepids. But after the year 377 A. D. and later the inhabitants of the heath North from the Danube, the Huns left their settlements and crossing the Danube they drove out the Romans, the Goths and the Gepids.³⁰ However, some of the Gepids still live there.³¹ Then after the Huns were driven out from there, the Slavs came and started to populate those regions of the Danube. Now we have to relate how the Huns were driven out from there, how the Slavs started to settle down, and how that part of Pannonia joined the diocese of Salzburg. Emperor Charles ordered comes Eric and his large army in 796 A. D. to drive out the Huns. These showed almost no resistance and with the mediation of the mentioned count they placed themselves under the rule of Emperor Charles. In the same year Charles sent his son Pippin with a great army to *Hunnia* (Avar land).³² He went as far as their famous settlement, which is called *Rinch* (Ring). There their leaders paid homage again, this time to Pippin.³³ The latter returned from there (the Ring) and, until his father Charles should come in person, he committed to Arn, the bishop of Salzburg, the part of Pannonia Inferior around Lake Balaton from the River Raba as far as the River Drava, and as far as where the River Drava flows into the Danube, as far as it was in his power, he committed it to the

²⁸ Wolfram, *Conversio Bagoariorum*, 73; Pohl, *Die Awaren*, 323 sqq.

²⁹ *Item anazephaleos de Avaris*. Cf. Lošek, *Die Conversio Bagoariorum*, 49; O. Prinz, "Zum Einfluss des Griechischen auf den Wortschatz des Mittellateins." in *Festschrift Bernhard Bischoff, zu seinem 65. Geburtstag dargebracht von Freunden, Kollegen und Schülern*. Hrsg. V. J. Authenrietti u. F. Brunhölzl, Stuttgart 1971, 9 sqq.

³⁰ Cf. *Oros. hist.* (ed. K. Zangemeister, Leipzig 1889.) 7, 33, 9. *Tertio decimo ... anno imperii Valentis gens Hunorum, diu inaccessis seclusa montibus, exarsit in Gothos eosque ... ab anti-quis sedibus expulit.*

³¹ About the Gepids see P. Lakatos, *Quellenbuch zur Geschichte der Gepiden*. Szeged 1973, 115 sqq.

³² Cf. *Annales Laureshamenses*. MGH SS 1. ed. G. H. Pertz, Hannover 1826; Stuttgart 1976. a. 796. *In ipso aestate transmisit rex Carolus Pippinum filium suum cum suis, quos in Italia secum habebat, et Paioarios cum aliqua parte Alamaniae in finibus Avarorum.*

³³ Cf. *Annales Laureshamenses* a. 796. (*Pippinus*) *transito Danuvio cum exercitu suo pervenit ad locum, ubi reges Avarorum cum principibus suis sedere consueti erant, quem et in nostra lingua Hringe nominant. Annales Maximiniani*. MGH SS 13. ed. G. Waitz, Hannover 1881. a. 796. *Dominus Pippinus rex ad locum celebre Hunorum, qui hrinc vocatur, pervenit et ibi ordinavit secundum iussionem domini Caroli patris sui. Annales Iuvavenses maximi* a. 796. *Huni se reddiderunt Pippino filio Karoli.*

bishop, ordering him to take care of the religious teaching and religious service among the population formed from the remnants of the Huns and the Slavs. Later, in the year 803 Emperor Charles came to Bavaria and in October, he arrived in Salzburg,³⁴ where in the presence of numerous followers he confirmed the permission given by his son, and declared it eternally unchangeable."³⁵

Conversio 10.

"...After Emperor Charles driving out the Huns, conferred the bishopric on the leaders of the Salzburg Church, namely Archbishop Arn and his heirs in order to retain and exercise it eternally, the Slav and Bavarian people started to populate this region from where the Huns were expelled."³⁶

The conflict between Charlemagne and Tassilo III reached its peak by the year 787 and Tassilo was compelled to subdue himself to the Frank emperor. At his demotion in 788 one of the accusations against the Bavarian duke was that he made an alliance with the khagan, and it is not certain, whether one could not dismiss this assumption as mere Frank propaganda, as this can also be seen by

³⁴ Cf. *Annales Iuvavenses maximi*. MGH SS 30, 2. ed. H. Bresslau, Leipzig 1934. a. 803. *Karolus imperator Bavoriam venit*. *Annales Iuvavenses maiores*. MGH SS 30, 2. ed. H. Bresslau, Leipzig 1934. a. 803. *Carolus imperator in Bagoaria mense augusto, in Iuvavense civitate mense Octobri*. *Annales Emmerammi maiores a. 803*. *Carolus ad Salzburc monasterium fuit*.

³⁵ Cf. Szádeczky-Kardoss, *Az avar történelem forrásai*, 193, 286, 304. (*Item anazephaleos de Avaris*.) *Antiquis enim temporibus ex meridiana parte Danubii in plagis Pannoniae inferioris et circa confines regiones Romani possederunt ipsique ibi civitates et munitiones ad defensionem sui fecerunt aliaque aedificia multa, sicut adhuc apparet. Qui etiam Gothos et Gepidos suae ditioni subdiderunt. Sed post annos nativitatis Domini CCCLXXVII et amplius Huni ex sedibus suis in aquilonari parte Danubii in desertis locis habitantes, transfretantes Danubium expulerunt Romanos et Gothos atque Gepidos. De Gepidis autem quidam adhuc ibi resident. Tunc vero Sclavi post Hunos inde expulsos venientes coeperunt istis partibus Danubii diversas regiones habitare. Sed nunc, qualiter Huni inde expulsi sunt et Sclavi inhabitare coeperunt et illa pars Pannoniae ad diocesim Iuvavensem conversa est, edicendum putamus. Igitur Carolus imperator anno nativitatis Domini DCCXCVI Aericum comitem destinavit et cum eo inmensam multitudinem Hunos exterminare. Qui minime resistentes reddiderunt se per praefatum comitem Carolo imperatori. Eodem igitur anno misit Carolus Pippinum filium suum in Hunia cum exercito multo. Qui perveniens usque ad celebrem locum, qui dicitur Rinch, ubi iterum omnes eorum principes se reddiderunt Pippino. Qui inde revertens partem Pannoniae circa lacum Pelissa, inferioris ultra fluvium, qui dicitur Hrapa, et sic usque ad Dravum fluvium et eo usque, ubi Dravus fluit in Danubium, prout potestatem habuit, praenominavit cum doctrina et ecclesiastico officio procurare populum, qui remansit de Hunis et Sclavis in illis partibus, Arnoni Iuvavensium episcopo usque ad praesentiam genitoris sui Karoli imperatoris. Postmodum ergo anno DCCCIII Karolus imperator Bagoariam intravit et in mense Octobrio Salzburc venit et praefatam concessionem filii sui iterans potestative multis adstantibus suis fidelibus adfirmavit et in aevum inconcussam fieri concessit.*

³⁶ *Postquam ergo Karolus imperator Hunis reiectis episcopatus dignitatem Iuvavensis ecclesiae rectori commendavit, Arnoni videlicet archiepiscopo et suis successoribus tenendi perpetualiter atque regendi perdonavit, coeperunt populi sive Sclavi vel Bagoarii inhabitare terram, unde illi expulsi sunt Huni, et multiplicari.*

the Avar reaction following the demotion of Tassilo III.³⁷ The Avars attacked not only Bavaria, from that time getting under Carolingian rule, but also Friaul, likewise having Carolingian connections. Thus they acted not only as the avengers of the Bavarian duke, but also as revengers of the Longobard Desiderius, father of Duchess Liutperga, probably prompted by the alliance they had made with Tassilo.³⁸ The attack of the Avars was repulsed by Charlemagne.³⁹ Although the Avars tried to negotiate with Charlemagne so that he should recognise the Western border of their empire, these negotiations did not bring any results.⁴⁰ Following this, in September 791, the Frank army, including Alemann, Bavarian, Frisian, Saxon and Slavonic troops started from Regensburg towards *Avaricum*.⁴¹ The Franks, with whom the Avars did not intend to fight, reached the River Raba without considerable resistance. However, from here they had to retreat due to an epidemic that decimated both soldiers and horses,⁴² only the attack lead by Pippin from the south-west yielded some success.⁴³ Then internal war broke out

³⁷ K. Reindel, "Die staatsrechtliche Stellung des Ostlandes im frühmittelalterlichen Bayern." *Mitteilungen des oberösterreichischen Landesarchivs* 7 (1960), 138 sqq; L. Kolmer: *Zur Kommendation und Absetzung Tassilos III.* ZBLG 43. 1980. 283 sqq., H. Wolfram: *Das Fürstentum Tassilos III., Herzogs der Bayern.* MGSL 108. 1968, 160 sqq.

³⁸ Deér, "Karl der Große," 756.

³⁹ *Annales regni Francorum.* MGH SS rer. Germ. ed. F. Kurze, Hannover 1895. a. 788. *Idem similiter et alia pugna commissa est inter Avaros ... et Francis, qui in Italia commanere videntur, opitulante Domino victoriam obtinuerunt Franci, et Avari cum contumelia reversi sunt, fuga lapsi sine victoria. Tertia pugna commissa est inter Baioarios et Avaros in campo Ibose, et fuerunt ibi missi domini regis Caroli Grahamannus et Audaccrus cum aliquibus Francis, Domino auxiliante victoria fuit Francorum seu Baioariorum. Et ista omnia supradictus dux Tassilo seu malivola uxor eius, Liutberga Deo odibilis per fraudem consiliaverunt. Quarta pugna fuit commissa ab Avaris, qui voluerunt vindictam peragere contra Baioarios. Ibi similiter fuerunt missi domini regis Caroli et Domino protegente victoria christianorum aderat. Avari fugam tum liberare curavit.* Cf. Szádeczky-Kardoss, *Az avar történelem forrásai*, 274; H. Wolfram, *Die Geburt Europas. Geschichte Österreichs vor seiner Entstehung 378–907.* Wien 1987, 253 sqq.

⁴⁰ *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi.* MGH SS rer. Germ. ed. F. Kurze, Hannover 1895. a. 790. *Hoc anno nullum iter exercitale a rege factum, sed in Wormacia residens legatos Hunorum et audivit et suos vicissim ad eorum principes misit. Agebatur inter eos de confiniis regnorum suorum, quibus in locis esse deberent. Haec contentio atque exercitatio belli, quod postea cum Hunis gestum est, seminarium et origo fuit.* Cf. Szádeczky-Kardoss, *Az avar történelem forrásai*, 277; Wolfram, *Die Geburt Europas*, 254.

⁴¹ Cf. W. Pohl, *Die Awarenkriege Karls des Grossen (788–803).* Wien 1988; Szádeczky-Kardoss, *Az avar történelem forrásai*, 279; Wolfram, *Die Geburt Europas*, 255–257.

⁴² *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi a. 791.* *Facta est haec expeditio sine omni rerum incommodo, praeter quod in illo, quem rex ducebat, exercitu tanta equorum lues exorta est, ut vix decima pars de tot militibus equorum remanisse dicatur.*

⁴³ *Annales Laureshamenses a. 791.* *Sed et ille tunc eius exercitus quem Pippinus filius eius de Italia transmisit, ipse introivit in Illyricum et inde in Pannonia, et fecerunt ibi similiter, vastantes et incedentes terram illam, sicut rex fecit cum exercitu suo ubi ipse erat.* Cf. Pohl, *Die Awarenkriege*, 316; Szádeczky-Kardoss, *Az avar történelem forrásai*, 280; Wolfram, *Die Ge-*

among the Avars during which both the *khagan* and the *jugurr* were killed.⁴⁴ In 795 – at the order of Eric, the *comes* of Friaul – Voinomir, then Pippin broke into the Ring and plundered it.⁴⁵ In 796 the *tudun* and his suite took up Christianity in Aachen in front of Charlemagne.⁴⁶ Thus the new *khagan* had to submit to Frank rule, but against expectations, no peaceful times ensued in the *Avaricum* partly because of the attempts at achieving independence lead by the *tudun* in 797, 799, and 802,⁴⁷ and partly because of the conflicts between the Avars and Slavs.⁴⁸ Later, the Avars lead by the *kapkan*, who were harrassed by the Slavs, petitioned Charlemagne to settle between Savaria and the Danube.⁴⁹ After the *kapkan*'s death, the *khagan* Abraham visited the emperor and asked him to renew the office of the *khagan*, a request that was satisfied by the emperor,⁵⁰ who thought that he could resolve the Avar–Slav conflict by unifying the Avars, though this happened only in the year 811 as a result of the armed intervention of the Franks.⁵¹

burt Europas, 265. Cf. Pohl, *Die Awarenkriege*, 317; Szádeczky-Kardoss, *Az avar történelem forrásai*, 279; Wolfram, *Die Geburt Europas*, 257.

⁴⁴ *Annales regni Francorum a. 796. ... civili bello fatigatis inter se principibus ... chagan sive iuguro intestina clade addictis et a suis occisis...* Cf. Pohl, *Die Awarenkriege*, 317–318; Szádeczky-Kardoss, *Az avar történelem forrásai*, 286; Wolfram, *Die Geburt Europas*, 257.

⁴⁵ *Annales regni Francorum a. 791. Sed et Heiricus dux Foroiulensis missis hominibus suis cum Wonomyro Sclavo in Pannonias hringum gentis Avarorum longis retro temporibus quietum ... spoliavit ... thesaurum priscorum regum multa seculorum prolixitate collectum donimo regi Carolo ad Aquis palatium misit ... Pippinum regem Italiae in Pannonias cum exercitu misso. Cuius legationes ad eum in eadem Saxonia venerunt, una quae dixit occurrisset ei Khagan cum ceteris optimatibus, quem sibi Azares post interfectionem priorum constituerunt, altera quae dixit Pippino cum exercitu suo in hringo sedere.* Cf. Pohl, *Die Awarenkriege*, 319–320; Szádeczky-Kardoss, *Az avar történelem forrásai*, 286 sqq; Wolfram, *Die Geburt Europas*, 258.

⁴⁶ *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi a. 796. Tudun etiam ille, de quo superius mentio facta est, fidem dictis suis adhibens ibidem ad regem venit ibique cum omnibus qui secum venerant, baptizatus ac remuneratus post datum servandae fidei sacramentum domum rediit, sed in promissa fidelitate diu manere noluit nec multo post perfidiae suae poenas dedit.* Cf. Szádeczky-Kardoss, *Az avar történelem forrásai*, 288.

⁴⁷ Pohl, *Die Awarenkriege*, 321; Wolfram, *Die Geburt Europas*, 293.

⁴⁸ Deér, "Karl der Große," 772 sqq.

⁴⁹ *Annales regni Francorum a. 805. Non multo post capcanus, princeps Hunorum, propter necessitatem populi sui imperatorem adiit, postulans sibi locum dari ad habitandum inter Sabariam et Carnutum, quia propter infestationem Sclavorum in prioribus sedibus esse non poterant. Quem imperator benigne suscepit erat enim capcanus christianus nomine Theodorus et precibus eius adnuens muneribus donatum redire permisit.* Cf. Pohl, *Die Awarenkriege*, 302–304; Szádeczky-Kardoss, *Az avar történelem forrásai*, 306; Wolfram, *Die Geburt Europas*, 259.

⁵⁰ *Annales regni Francorum a. 805. Et misit caganus unum de optimatibus suis, petens sibi honorem antiquum, quem caganus apud hunos habere solebat. Cuius precibus imperator adsensum praebeuit et summam totius regni iuxta priscum eorum ritum caganum habere praecepit.* Cf. Szádeczky-Kardoss, *Az avar történelem forrásai*, 307.

⁵¹ *Annales regni Francorum a. 811. Imperator in tres partes regni sui totidem exercitus misit ... alterum in Pannonias ad controversias Hunorum et Sclavorum finiendas ... fuerunt etiam Aquis adventum eius expectantes, qui de Pannonia venerunt, canizauci princeps Avarum et*

It seems worthwhile to examine the motivation of Charlemagne's campaign against the Avars.⁵² When doing this it is worth taking a look at the sources dating from roughly the same period: the official propaganda, relating the preparations for the campaign portrays the unbearable, evil behaviour of the Avars against the Christian population as the reason for armed intervention, a behaviour against which it was impossible to obtain lawful satisfaction by way of envoys.⁵³ In concordance with this, when they reached the River Enns, they organised litanies and celebrated masses, trying to obtain God's intervention for the army to remain intact, be victorious, avenge the Avars.⁵⁴ When the Avars caught sight of the army they became terrified by God's will.⁵⁵ This passage resonates with the wording reminiscent of the Old Testament of the earlier source containing descriptions of the campaign against the Avars, the *Annales Laureshammenses*: "The Lord inspired awe in them when they caught sight of him."⁵⁶ The *Annales Mettenses priores*, originating from the imperial court some time around 805 takes as its basis the material of the *Annales regni Francorum*,⁵⁷ its style is more pathetic though,⁵⁸ similarly the longobard *Rhythmus de Pippini regis victoria Avarica*: „*Multa mala iam fecerunt ab antico tempore / Fana Dei destruxerunt atque monasteria, / Vasa aurea sacrata, argentea, fictilia, / Vestem sacram polluerunt de ara sacratissima, / Lin-teamenta levitae sanctimonialium / Muliebribus tradata suadente demone.*”⁵⁹

The *Historia Langobardorum codicis Gothani* wants to legitimate the stealing of the Avars's treasures by asserting that this was only taking back the holy vessels previously stolen by the Avars.⁶⁰ Thus it can be clearly seen that official propa-

tudum et alii primores ad duces Sclavorum circa Danubium habitantium, qui a ducibus copiarum, quae in Pannoniam missae fuerunt, ad praesentiam principis iussi venerunt. Cf. Pohl, *Die Awarenkriege*, 323; Wolfram, *Die Geburt Europas*, 216.

⁵² Deér, "Karl der Große," 726 sqq.

⁵³ *Annales regni Francorum a. 791 ... propter nimiam malitiam et intolerabilem, quam fecerunt Avari contra sanctam ecclesiam vel populum christianum, unde iustitias per missos impetrare non valuerunt...* Cf. Szádeczky-Kardoss, *Az avar történelem forrásai*, 278.

⁵⁴ *Annales regni Francorum a. 791 ... Dei solatium postulaverunt pro salute exeritus et adiutorio Domini nostri Iesu Christi et pro victoria et vinbdicta super Avaros.* Cf. Szádeczky-Kardoss, *Az avar történelem forrásai*, 278.

⁵⁵ *Annales regni Francorum a. 791 ... a Domino eis terror pervenit.* Cf. Szádeczky-Kardoss, *Az avar történelem forrásai*, 279.

⁵⁶ *Annales Laureshamenses a. 791. Et terruit eos Dominus in conspectu suo.* Cf. *Iud.* 4, 15.

⁵⁷ H. Hoffmann, *Untersuchungen zur karolingischen Annalistik*. Bonner Historische Forschungen 10. Bonn 1958, 42–53.

⁵⁸ *Annales Mettenses priores*. MGH SS rer. Germ. ed. B. v. Simson, Hannover–Leipzig a. 791 ... *ut iniuriam, quam perpetraverunt Avari in populum christianum, cum Dei auxilio ulcisceretur, nam saepe legatos suos pro eodem negotio in illas partes direxit, sed iustitiam de iniquitate, quam commiserant Avari, impetrare non potuit.*

⁵⁹ *Rhythmus de Pippini regis victoria Avarica*. MGH Poetae Latini 1. ed. E. Dümmler, Berlin 1881. Cf. Szádeczky-Kardoss, *Az avar történelem forrásai*, 292.

⁶⁰ *Historia Langobardorum codicis Gothani*. MGH SS rer. Lang. ed. G. Waitz, Hannover 1878. 9. *Illi, qui ab inicio malorum stirpe progeniti inimici ecclesiarum, persecutores christianorum semper fuerunt, per isto ... domino Pippino seu et patri suo solatium supra dicto Avari*

ganda intended to show the campaign against the Avars in the light of the Augustinian *bellum iustum*, obscuring its political, non-religious motivations which became highlighted only later in the revised versions of the *Annales regni Francorum* and *Vita Karoli Magni* by Einhard.⁶¹ This ideological explanation seems to come from Charlemagne himself. In a letter sent to his wife, Fastrada, from the camp near the Enns after 7 September 791 he relates two important events: the success of his son, Pippin's military manoeuvre, starting from Italy towards Pannonia, and the religious rituals held in the camp.⁶² It is enough to compare one of his sentences to the relevant *loci* of the *Annales regni Francorum* and the *Annales Mettenses priores*. The similarity of the composition makes it obvious that the ideology of the campaign against the Avars originates with the emperor himself.⁶³ Thus Charlemagne appears in the role of the *defensor ecclesiae* overarching the entire Middle Ages.⁶⁴ Alcuin writes to Pope Leo III about the outrageous deeds of the Avars in a similar way in 796 after the second sack of the Ring.⁶⁵ In 796 Charlemagne sent a belt and a Hun sword as a present to Offa, king of Mercia,⁶⁶ as two symbols of the Avar power which were given to him by way of divine goodness.⁶⁷ The later sources deviate from this representation, contemporary with the Avar wars, and place the emphasis rather on the political, territorial, and

sunt evacuati et superati et sanctae ecclesiae defensatae ... et multa vasa sanctorum, quae illi crudeles et impii rapuerunt, per istum defensatorem ad propriam reversa.

⁶¹ Deér, "Karl der Große," 728.

⁶² Cf. L. Biehl, *Das liturgische Gebet für Kaiser und Reich*. Veröffentlichungen der Görres-Gesellschaft. Sektion für Rechts- und Staatswissenschaft, Heft 75, Paderborn 1937, 45 sqq.

⁶³ Carolus Magnus, *Epist.* MGH EE 4. ed. E. Dümmler, Berlin 1895, 20. *Nos autem, Domino adiuvante, tribus diebus letanias fecimus ... Dei misericordiam deprecantes, ut nobis pacem et sanitatem atque vicoriam et prosperum iter tribuere dignetur. Annales regni Francorum a. 791 ... ubi constituerunt letanias faciendi per triduo missarumque sollemnia celebrandi, Dei solatium postulaverunt pro salute exercitus et adiutorio domini nostri Iesu Christi et pro victoria et vindicta super Avaros. Annales Mettenses priores a. 791 ... ubi triduanum ieiunium cum letaniis et missarum sollemniis celebrare precepit, Deum humiliter postulantes, ut suum exercitum in illo itinere cum pace dimisisset.*

⁶⁴ About the concept of the *defensor ecclesiae* see H. Hirsch, "Der mittelalterliche Kaisergedanke in den liturgischen Gebeten." in *Heidenmission und Kreuzzugsgedanke in der deutschen Ostpolitik des Mittelalters*. Hrsg. V. H. Beumann. Wege der Forschung 70, Darmstadt 1963, 22–46; E. Ewig, "Zum christlichen Königsgedanken des Mittelalters." in *Das Königtum. Seine geistigen und rechtlichen Grundlagen*. Hrsg. v. Th. Mayer, Konstanz 1956, 7–73.

⁶⁵ Carolus Magnus, *Epist.* = Alcuin, *Epist.* MGH EE 4. ed. E. Dümmler, Berlin 1895, 93. *Nostrum est secundum auxilium divinae pietatis sanctam undique ecclesiam ab incursu paganorum et ab infidelium devastatione armis defendere foris, et intus catholicae fidei agitatione munire.*

⁶⁶ Cf. Szádeczky-Kardoss, *Az avar történelem forrásai*, 287.

⁶⁷ Carolus Magnus, *Epist.* = Alcuin, *Epist.* 100. *... unum balteum et unum gladium Huniscum ... quatenus ubique in populo christiano divina praedecetur clementia et nomen domini nostri Iesu Christi glorificetur in aeternum.*

material motives, overshadowing their religious, missionary aspects.⁶⁸ The negative picture of the Avars appearing in the earlier sources is by no means based on the Franks' contemporary experience, rather on certain literary *topoi* which were employed with great predilection by official propaganda for its own ends. Paulus Diaconus's *Historia Langobardorum* was perfectly suitable for this or Fredegar's *Chronicles* for that matter, works which must have been known in Charlemagne's court. The archaising tendency of these sheds unfavourable light on the Avars by identifying them with the Huns. However, the characteristics attributed to the Avars by these sources are valid concerning the description of the Avars before 626, yet they lack any real basis when describing the Avars of the eight century.⁶⁹

The falsity of official propaganda – namely the reports about the Avar danger threatening the existence of Christianity also shown by the fact that if Charlemagne had really fought a deadly battle with such a dangerous enemy as he tried to present, then after defeating them he would probably have completely annihilated and destroyed the Avars, which would not even have been surprising, taking into account the narrow concepts of medieval humanism.⁷⁰ The emperor employed much milder and humane methods than in the case of the Saxons, against whom he repeatedly implemented mass-executions and mutilations. They generally liberated the prisoners taken from the population unhurt,⁷¹ also increasing the chances of conversion by this humanistic behaviour, which was probably due to Alcuin's benevolent influence which can be expressed by his sentence: "*Fiat indulgentia et remissio*".⁷²

In order to discuss the missionary tasks, a local council was held in Pippin's camp in 796,⁷³ at which Paulinus, the Aquilian Patriarch and Arn, the Bishop of Salzburg were present.⁷⁴ The chief objects of the council were the methods to be employed in converting and baptising the Avars, in the course of which they agreed on the following principles:⁷⁵ baptism should be voluntary in each case, the preacher has to reach the desired results by persuasion and not by terror, thus "it is the horrifying pains of hell that should inspire awe and not the bloody swordblade." The priest has to decide after how much time, or delay can the holy baptism be administered, but the number of days should not exceed forty. Traditionally, baptism can be administered at Easter or Lent, but under special circumstances, the adults can be baptised on any Sunday. Only in mortal danger is it possible to deviate from Sunday. Those baptised in the name of the Holy Trinity

⁶⁸ Deér, "Karl der Große," 731.

⁶⁹ Deér, "Karl der Große," 757.

⁷⁰ Deér, "Karl der Große," 767.

⁷¹ *Annales Laureshamenses a. 791. ... et captivos, viros, et mulieres et parvulos, innumerabilem multitudinem exinde ducebat...*

⁷² Alcuin, *Epist.* 118.

⁷³ Wolfram, *Die Geburt Europas*, 261.

⁷⁴ About Arn see G. Demmelbauer, *Arno, der erste Erzbischof von Salzburg 798–821*. (Dissertation) Wien 1950.

⁷⁵ Cf. Szádeczky-Kardoss, *Az avar történelem forrásai*, 291–292. *Conventus episcoporum ad ripas Danubii*, MGH Conc. II. 1. 172–176.

need not be baptised again. Those who were baptised by ignorant priests, who did not say the baptising formula, only washed their body with water should be regarded as unbaptised and they should be baptised. In these principles one can trace Alcuin's influence who is trying to encourage his friend, Arn to preach Divine Forgiveness rather than collect the tithe, and warns him that the newly christened souls must get stronger before setting the yoke of taxation on them. He also reminds Arn that it was the aggressive collection of the tithe that endangered the success of the mission among the Saxons too.⁷⁶ At the same time, he turns to Charlemagne to remit the paying of tithe on Avar territory,⁷⁷ a request that was probably satisfied by the emperor. It is not by chance that the institution of the reduced, the so called Slavonic, tithe persisted for three centuries.⁷⁸

There is no clear information however about the way in which the Danubian Council divided the conquered Avar territories among the dioceses meant to fulfil the missionary duties. The sixth chapter of the *Conversio* is probably based on a contemporary document reporting the three-fold division among Aquilieia, Passau and Salzburg, made by Pippin in 796 and later confirmed by Charlemagne.⁷⁹ However, there is no precise decision on the appurtenance of the region between the Enns and the Raba to the bishopric of Passau, although the text of the *Conversio* would allow this conjecture, as one can read here about the activities and properties of the Salzburg bishopric stretching to the West from the Forest of Vienna, and even to the North from the Danube.⁸⁰ It is a fact, though that during the rearrangement of the *Ostland* they designated the Raba as the natural border between the jurisdictions of Passau and Salzburg.⁸¹ Nevertheless, missionary work did not immediately start once they defined the basic principles of the task. In order to defeat the Roman aristocracy's resistance against Pope Leo III, as well as in order to discuss the building of St. Paul's Cathedral and the rising of Salzburg to the rank of an archbishopric, Charlemagne sent twelve ambassadors towards the end of 797, among whom Arn, Paulinus, the Patriarch of Aquilieia and Fardulf, the Abbot of St. Denis. As a result of this diplomatic mission Arn re-

⁷⁶ Alcuin, *Epist.* 107. *Et esto praedicator pietatis, non decimarum exactor, quia novella anima apostolicae pietatis lacte nutrienda est, donec crescat et roboretur ad acceptionem solidi cibi. Decimae, ut dicitur, Saxonum subverterunt fidem.* Cf. Szádeczky-Kardoss, *Az avar történelem forrásai*, 294.

⁷⁷ Alcuin, *Epist.* 110. *His ita consideratis, vestra sanctissima pietas sapienti consilio praevideat: si melius sit rudibus populis in principio fidei iugum inponere decimarum, ut plena fiat per singulas domus exactio illarum. An apostoli quoque ab ipso deo Christo edocti et ad praedicandum mundo missi exactiones decimarum exissent vel alicubi demandassent dari, considerandum est. Scimus, quia decimatio substantiae nostrae valde bona est, sed melius est illam amittere, quam fidem perdere.* Cf. Szádeczky-Kardoss, *Az avar történelem forrásai*, 295.

⁷⁸ See F. Tremel, "Der Slawenzehntel als Quelle der Siedlungsgeschichte." in *Annales Instituti Slavici* I:2 (1966), 109–113.

⁷⁹ *Conversio* 6.

⁸⁰ *Conversio* 11.

⁸¹ Wolfram, *Die Geburt Europas*, 267; A. Sós, "Die slawische Bevölkerung Westungarns im 9. Jahrhundert." *Münchener Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte* 22 (1973), 27.

ceived the *pallium* from Pope Leo on 20 April 798 then returning from Rome, he was ordered by the emperor to travel to the conquered territories and conduct missionary work there.⁸² As missionary work did not suit Arn's personality, following the Salzburg tradition, he entrusted the direct execution of the task to a missionary bishop, Theoderich.⁸³ Bishop Theoderich (probably after the Council of Traismauer in June 799) was lead by Arn and Gerold I to the site of his activity, Carantania and conquered Avaria, which mainly fell into the sphere of influence of the *tudun*, who had subdued himself to Charlemagne.⁸⁴ The idea of the Avar territories' conquest seems to have originated from Charlemagne himself. At least the sources do not contain any hint that the Pope would have entrusted Salzburg or any other diocese with this mission or that he even encouraged such a mission. The crucial role of Salzburg in this mission seems logical: this diocese had the greatest experience in Christening the newly conquered pagan – such as the Carantan – territories. The material conditions of Salzburg were the most favourable among the bishoprics as well, and one must not forget Arn's person either whose organisational skills were known by the emperor, who gave him much freedom concerning the details of conversion. Although Arn, as a metropolitan would have had the opportunity to found a bishopric on missionary territories, which he could have brought under his own jurisdiction, he was content to – as his predecessor, bishop Virgil did in the case of Carantania – order a missionary bishop, an *episcopus chori*. By this move he ensured himself direct influence and intervention in the mission's affairs, the power of the *episcopus chori* entirely depending on the bishop and archbishop, to whom he was completely subordinated.⁸⁵ Founding a bishopric on the Avar territory would not have been suitable for different reasons, the political structure of the region was not stable enough, the Franks had

⁸² *Conversio 8. Interim contigit anno videlicet nativitatis domini DCCXCVIII Arnonem iam archiepiscopum a Leone papa accepto pallio remeando de Roma venisse ultra Padum eique obviasse missum Caroli cum epistola sua mandans illi ipso itinere in partes Sclavorum ire et exquirere voluntatem populi illius et praedicare ibi verbum Dei.* Cf. H. Schmidinger, "Das Papsttum und die bayerische Kirche – Bonifatius als Gegenspieler Virgils." in *Virgil von Salzburg. Missionar und Gelehrter*. Hrsg. V. H. Dopsch u. R. Juffinger, Salzburg 1985, 92–101.

⁸³ *Conversio 8. Inde rediens nuntiavit imperatori, quod magna utilitas ibi potuisset effici, si quis inde habuisset certamen. Tunc interrogavit illum imperator, si aliquem habuisset ecclesiasticum virum, qui ibi lucrum potuisset agere Deo. Et ille dixit se habere talem, qui Deo placuisset et illi populo pastor fieri potuisset. Tunc iussu imperatoris ordinatus est Deodericus episcopus ab Arnone archiepiscopo Iuvavensium.* Cf. Wolfram, *Conversio Bagoariorum*, 109–111; Wolfram, *Die Geburt Europas*, 261. B. Wavra, *Salzburg und Hamburg. Erzbistum und Missionspolitik in karolingischer Zeit*. Berlin 1991, 190.

⁸⁴ *Conversio 8. Quem ipse Arn et Geroldus comes perducentes in Sclavinam dederunt in manus principum commendantes illi episcopo regionem Carantanorum et confines eorum occidentali parte Dravi fluminis, usque dum Dravus fluit in amnem Danubii.* Cf. M. Mitterauer, *Karolingische Markgrafen in Südosten. Fränkische Reichsaristokratie und bayerischer Stammesadel in österreichischen Raum*. Wien 1967, 8 sqq.

⁸⁵ *Zacharias Epist. A. 747. (MGH Epp. III. 3. 481.) Chorepiscopum vero civitatis episcopus ordinet, cui ille subiectus est.*

not completely suppressed Avar resistance, the Avar leaders fighting each other would not have been able to ensure enough support for missionary work, and the geographic situation of the region was not suitable from the point of view of ecclesiastical law to implement a bishopric.⁸⁶ Furthermore – except for a few commonplaces – the *Conversio* does not expound on the conversional activity of the Salzburg Archbishopric and its results, from which one can infer that it did not achieve, or even did not intend to achieve, any special results during the Avar mission. If it had been otherwise, the author surely would have used the opportunity to buttress the legal claims of Salzburg with results.⁸⁷ The lack of success of the Salzburg mission may be due to two main reasons: the modest zeal of the Bavarian missionaries facing an immense territory, and the disordered political structure of conquered Avaria.⁸⁸

Even after such a brief overview one can conclude that the *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* is of the utmost importance with respect to the remnants of ninth century Avar population, as well as – supplemented with data from other sources – with respect to the integration of Avaria in the Frank empire and its conversion to Christianity.

⁸⁶ Wavra, *Salzburg und Hamburg*, 199.

⁸⁷ Wavra, *Salzburg und Hamburg*, 192.

⁸⁸ Wavra, *Salzburg und Hamburg*, 194.