

ANTÆUS

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*Communicationes ex Instituto Archaeologico
Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAC	Acta Archaeologica Carpathica (Kraków)
ActaAntHung	Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae (Budapest)
ActaArchHung	Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae (Budapest)
ActaMusPapensis	Acta Musei Papensis. A Pápai Múzeum Értésítője (Pápa)
ActaOrientHung	Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae (Budapest)
AFD	Arbeits- und Forschungsberichte zur Sächsischen Bodendenkmalpflege (Berlin)
Agria	Agria. Az Egeri Múzeum Évkönyve (Eger)
AHN	Acta Historica Neolosiensia (Banská)
AHSb	Archaeologia Historica. Sbornik (Brno)
AiO	Archäologie in Ostwestfalen (Saerbeck)
AiWL	Archäologie in Westfalen-Lippe (Langenweißbach)
AKorr	Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt (Mainz)
Alba Regia	Alba Regia. Annales Musei Stephani Regis (Székesfehérvár)
ANBad	Archäologische Nachrichten aus Baden (Freiburg i. Br.)
AncSoc	Ancient Society (Louvain)
Annales	Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales (Cambridge)
Antaeus	Antaeus. Communicationes ex Instituto Archaeologico Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae (Budapest)
AntTard	Antiquité Tardive. Revue Internationale d'Histoire et d'Archéologie (IVe–VIIe siècle) (Paris)
AÖ	Archäologie Österreichs (Wien)
AP	Arheološki Pregled (Beograd)
APN	Arheologija i prirodne nauke (Beograd)
AR	Archeologické Rozhledy (Praha)
ArchA	Archaeologia Austriaca (Wien)
ArchÉrt	Archaeologiai Értésítő (Budapest)
ArchHung	Archaeologia Hungarica (Budapest)
ArchKözl	Archaeologiai Közlemények (Budapest)
ArchLit	Archaeologia Lituana (Vilnius)
ArchSC	Archeologie ve středních Čechách (Praha)
ARG	Archiv für Religionsgeschichte (Berlin)
Arrabona	Arrabona. A Győri Xantus János Múzeum Évkönyve (Győr)
ASt	Augustinian Studies (Charlottesville)
AV	Arheološki Vestnik (Ljubljana)
BAR IS	British Archaeological Reports, International Series (Oxford)
BÁMÉ	A Béri Balogh Ádám Múzeum Évkönyve (Szekszárd)

BBD	Bericht der Bayerischen Bodendenkmalpflege (München)
BBVF	Bonner Beiträge zur vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie (Bonn)
BHVg	Bonner Hefte zur Vorgeschichte (Bonn)
BMMK	A Békés Megyei Múzeumok Közleményei (Békéscsaba)
BRGK	Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission (Berlin)
BudRég	Budapest Régiségei (Budapest)
Carinthia	Carinthia I. Zeitschrift für geschichtliche Landeskunde von Kärnten (Klagenfurt)
CarnuntumJb	Carnuntum Jahrbuch. Zeitschrift für Archäologie und Kulturgeschichte des Donauraumes (Wien)
CChSG	Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca (Turnhout 1977–)
CChSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina (Turnhout 1953–)
CCRB	Corso di Cultura sull'arte Ravennate e Bizantina (Ravenna 1959–1989)
Chiron	Chiron (München)
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum (Berlin 1863–)
CommArchHung	Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungariae (Budapest)
CPh	Classical Philology (Chicago)
CPP	Castellum Pannonicum Pelsonense (Budapest – Leipzig – Keszthely – Rahden/Westf.)
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinarum (Salzburg 1866–)
Cumania	Cumania. A Bács-Kiskun Megyei Múzeumok Közleményei (Kecskemét)
CurrAnt	Current Anthropology (Chicago)
Diadora	Diadora. Glasilo Arheoloskoga Muzeja u Zadru (Zadar)
DissPann	Dissertationes Pannonicae (Budapest)
DMÉ	A Debreceni Déri Múzeum Évkönyve (Debrecen)
DOP	Dumbarton Oaks Papers (Washington)
EME	Early Medieval Europe (Oxford)
FBBW	Fundberichte aus Baden-Württemberg (Stuttgart)
FMS _t	Frühmittelalterliche Studien. Jahrbuch des Instituts für Frühmittelalterforschung der Universität Münster (Berlin)
FolArch	Folia Archaeologica (Budapest)
FontArchHung	Fontes Archaeologici Hungariae (Budapest)
FR	Felix Ravenna (Faenza)
Germania	Germania. Anzeiger der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts (Mainz)
GGM	C. Müller (ed.): Geographici Graeci Minores (1855–1861)
GRBS	Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies (Durham)
GSAD	Glasnik Srpskog Arheološkog Društva (Belgrade)
HAM	Hortus Artium Medievalium (Zagreb)
Hermes	Hermes. Zeitschrift für klassische Philologie (Wiesbaden)
HGM	Historici Graeci Minores (Lipsiae 1870)

HOMÉ	A Herman Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve (Miskolc)
HZb	Historijski Zbornik (Zagreb)
ILS	H. Dessau (ed.): <i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> (1892–1916)
IMS	<i>Inscriptiones de la Mésie Supérieure I–VI</i> (1976–1982)
JAMÉ	A nyíregyházi Jósa András Múzeum Évkönyve (Nyíregyháza)
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i> (Michigan)
JLA	<i>Journal of Late Antiquity</i> (Boulder)
JPMÉ	A Janus Pannonius Múzeum Évkönyve (Pécs)
JRGZM	<i>Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums</i> (Mainz)
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i> (London)
JThS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i> (Oxford)
KSIA	Краткие сообщения Института Археологии АН УССР (Киев)
MAA	<i>Monumenta Avarorum Archaeologica</i> (Budapest)
MBAH	<i>Münstersche Beiträge zur Antiken Handelsgeschichte</i> (Münster)
MBV	<i>Münchner Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte</i> (München)
MEFRA	<i>Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome, Antiquité</i> (Rome)
FMFÉ	A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve (Szeged)
FMFÉ MonArch	A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve – <i>Monographia Archaeologica</i> (Szeged)
FMFÉ StudArch	A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve – <i>Studia Archaeologica</i> (Szeged)
MGAH	<i>Monumenta Germanorum Archaeologica Hungariae</i> (Budapest)
MGH	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i> 1–15 (1877–1919; repr. 1961)
MhBV	<i>Materialhefte zur Bayerischen Vorgeschichte</i> (Kallmünz, München)
MIÖG	<i>Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung</i> (Innsbruck – Graz)
MittArchInst	<i>Mitteilungen des Archäologischen Instituts der Ungarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften</i> (Budapest)
MPK	<i>Mitteilungen der Prähistorischen Kommission der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften</i> (Wien)
NZ	Niški Zbornik (Niš)
PA	<i>Památky Archeologické</i> (Praha)
Phoenix	<i>The Phoenix. The Journal of the Classical Association of Canada</i> (Toronto)
PLRE	<i>Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , 1: A. H. M. Jones et al. (eds) (1970); 2 and 3: J. R. Martindale (ed.) (1980–1992)
Pontica	<i>Pontica. Studii și materiale de istorie, arheologie și muzeografie</i> (Constanța)
PWRE	A. Pauly – G. Wissowa et al. (Hrsg.): <i>Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> (1893–)
Radiocarbon	<i>Radiocarbon. Published by the American Journal of Science</i> (New Haven)
RdAm	<i>Revue d'Archéométrie</i> (Rennes)
RégFüz	<i>Régészeti Füzetek</i> (Budapest)
RGA	<i>Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde</i> (Berlin – New York)
RIC	H. Mattingly – E. A. Sydenham et al. (eds): <i>Roman Imperial Coinage</i> (1923–67)

RIU	Die römischen Inschriften Ungarns (Budapest)
RKM	Régészeti Kutatások Magyarországon. Archaeological Investigations in Hungary (Budapest)
RLÖ	Der römische Limes in Österreich (Wien)
RÖ	Römisches Österreich (Wien)
RVM	Rad Vojvođanskih Muzeja (Novi Sad)
SA	Советская Археология (Москва)
SAI	Археология СССР. Свод археологических источников (Москва)
Saopštenja	Saopštenja (Beograd)
Savaria	Savaria (Szombathely)
SC	Sources Chrétiennes (Lyon)
SCIVA	Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche (București)
SHP	Starohrvatska Prosvjeta (Zagreb)
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology (Cambridge)
SIA	Slovenská Archeológia (Bratislava)
SMK	Somogyi Múzeumok Közleményei (Kaposvár)
SMP	Studia Mediaevalia Pragensia (Praha)
Spomenik	Spomenik Srpske kraljevske akademije (Beograd)
Starinar	Starinar (Beograd)
StudArch	Studia Archaeologica (Budapest)
ŠtZ	Študijné Zvesti Archeologického Ústavu SAV (Nitra)
SzMMÉ Tisicum	A Szolnok Megyei Múzeumok Évkönyve (Szolnok)
TTH	Translated Texts for Historians (Liverpool)
TVMK	A Tapolcai Városi Múzeum Közleményei (Tapolca)
VAH	Varia Archeologica Hungarica (Budapest)
Viminacium	Viminacium. Zbornik Radova Narodnog Muzeja (Požarevac)
VMMK	A Veszprém Megyei Múzeumok Közleményei (Veszprém)
WMMÉ	A Wosinsky Mór Múzeum Évkönyve (Szekszárd)
ZalaiMúz	Zalai Múzeum (Zalaegerszeg)
ZfA	Zeitschrift für Archäologie (Berlin)
ZfAM	Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters (Köln)
ZGy	Zalai Gyűjtemény (Zalaegerszeg)
Ziridava	Ziridava. Muzeul Judetean (Arad)
ZNMN	Zbornik Narodni muzej Niš (Niš)
ZRNM	Zbornik Radova Narodnog Muzeja (Beograd)
ŽAnt	Živa Antika (Skopje)

MIKLÓS TAKÁCS

**HOW LONG INDEED WAS THE NINTH CENTURY AD
IN THE CARPATHIAN BASIN AND THE ADJACENT TERRITORIES?
CONCLUSIONS OF A CONFERENCE**

Zusammenfassung: Dieser kurze Beitrag fasst die Hauptthemen der Konferenz *How long was the ninth century AD in the Carpathian Basin? New Data – New Approaches* zusammen. Die Konferenz wurde vom Archäologischen Institut, Forschungszentrums für Humanwissenschaften der Ungarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften organisiert und fand am 8.–9. Dezember 2015 im Jakobiner-Saal statt.

Keywords: chronological framework, prestige goods, import, ninth century, Carpathian Basin

The issue of chronology, the problem dating of artefacts or sites, as well as the difficulties in constructing the chronological framework of an archaeological culture or epoch represent one of the main problems in archaeology in general.¹ On the one hand, the question of dating is one of the most common archaeological tasks encountered at all times, while on the other, the determination of the chronology of single artefacts, layers, sites or a whole culture in general is an issue in which almost all other problems, whether resolved or not, of the study of a given period are reflected – if not directly, then by association. Given that dating itself is a deductive process, even in cases when the date of an artefact is clearly legible on it, as on inscriptions (another case in point being the debates on the dating sequences based on the usage of coins). Solid arguments can be mustered for underscoring the point that almost all conclusions regarding chronology are interpretations, with very few exceptions.² It must be repeatedly underlined that this controversy is universally present in archaeological scholarship, both regarding its chronological as well as its geographical dimension.

The overarching importance of the question of chronology is also reflected in the immense number of analyses on this issue in the literature dealing with the material culture of the early Middle Ages. Several reasons can be cited for the high number of chronological debates. Firstly, due to the oft-fragmented archaeological material, many, perhaps even the greater part of the problems of dating can only be resolved with varying measures of certainty. The collation of various bodies of data and their interpretation is inevitable in this situation, not least for better understanding the rationales behind other viewpoints. The second obstacle derives from the use of the so-called historical chronology, namely when the data of the archaeological chronology are, so to say, borrowed from political history. It can hardly be denied, especially concerning

¹ For the issue of chronology in general, see *Jankuhn 1981*. For the problems of constructing a chronological frame for the early medieval archaeological material of the Carpathian Basin, see *Takács 2002; Takács 2012*.

² It is a curious fact that in Hungarian archaeology this point was most clearly formulated by Ernő Marosi, a prominent art historian, in a presentation at a conference on the problems of archaeological chronology, although in a paper addressing the problem of dating in art history, *Marosi 1985*.

the archaeology of the Middle Ages, that the archaeological chronological framework only “works” if it reflects the events of political history, and therefore these events can hardly be neglected when constructing an archaeological chronology. Nevertheless, it is also obvious that the connection is often very loose and that the events of political history, no matter how serious their historiographical ranking, can hardly be directly transferred to artefacts. Thus, only rarely can the events recorded in the written sources be used for resolving issues of the so-called “fine chronology” of a concrete site or a single artefact, i.e. for outlining occupation phases or for dating finds to the decade, etc.

There is an ongoing debate in the German-speaking countries regarding the archaeology of the early Middle Ages and the geographical region of Central or East-Central Europe. Individual scholarly standpoints are very diverse. Suffice it here to refer to one of the most recent analyses based on the chronological evaluation of the archaeological material of the fifth–sixth centuries AD, published in 2016.³ Among the various argumentations, one can find also a standpoint according to which both the neglect as well the absolutisation of the chronological data of the written sources is nonsensical. While the impact of some historical events on material culture can hardly be denied, only the truly major historical events tend to have a lasting impact on material culture.

Concerning the Carpathian basin and the adjacent regions, not only is the chronology of the ninth century AD, but also the entire archaeological chronology of the Middle Ages pegged on the data obtained from the written sources, from the very beginning of this period in the fifth century up to its end in the sixteenth century AD.⁴ It can hardly be denied that the archaeology of the early Middle Ages, and particularly of the ninth century, is especially affected by this. As a consequence, the archaeologists of a given region have to address a question that is constantly reformulated, namely whether the facts and processes of political history are suitable for providing a frame for archaeological chronology. And, if we accept the presumption that in the case of the Middle Ages of the Carpathian Basin the historical data are suitable for serving as a solid foundation of archaeological chronology, we still need to answer the question of to what extent or, to put it differently, to what depth can the events recorded in the written sources be used for establishing the chronology of single artefacts, of particular sites, or even of entire archaeological cultures.

A chronological framework of the ninth century built on historical events can be found in the archaeologies of all of the region’s countries. This is the reason that the issue of chronology is often a source of confusion, as a consequence of conflicting views on the early medieval history of a given region. One must not forget that most reconstructions of the political history of the ninth century are still often rooted in the national histories constructed in the nineteenth century, which therefore contain many romantic elements. Even so, a knowledge of political history is indispensable in the case of the given region and epoch for the proper understanding of the changes in material culture. Let me here only allude to the emergence of new power centres, the appearance of new military elites at the beginning of the ninth century and at the turn of the ninth and tenth centuries AD as well.

Moreover, the different national interpretations of the political history of our region have a considerable impact on the differential treatment of the relevance of particular political events when constructing the archaeological chronological framework.⁵ A detailed analysis of this issue would lead us far from the theme of our study, that is the general conclusion that can be drawn from a conference. I shall therefore make a single remark to illustrate this point. Concerning the

³ *Friedrich 2016.*

⁴ This can also be seen in the most recent tabular summary of the archaeological chronology of Hungary published in 2003, *Vaday 2003.*

⁵ I have illustrated this tendency in a study dealing with the history of archaeology in the south Slavic lands, *Takács 2006.*

early Middle Ages, the dissolution of the Avar Khaganate at the turn of the eighth and the ninth centuries is treated most diversely, regarding both the timing as well as the nature of the events leading up to the disappearance of this specific political entity.⁶ At this point, we should recall that practically all of the region's countries trace the origins of their medieval states to these centuries. The study of the material culture of these centuries is therefore much more than simply the investigation of one small portion of the country's rich archaeological heritage.

In the light of the above, it is more comprehensible not only why debates on the chronology of the ninth and tenth centuries AD have a long tradition in the archaeologies of the countries of East-Central Europe, but also why chronology remains one of the most oft-analysed issues. To which we may add that there is also a research trend, formulated on the level of theoretical archaeology, both in continental and in Anglo-Saxon archaeological schools, which has its roots in historiography, in the works of the French historians of the so-called Annales School.⁷ One of the *chef-d'ouvres* of this school was Fernand Braudel's⁸ analysis of the Mediterranean in the Early Modern Age,⁹ whose major novelty was the division of so-called historical time into three layers, and the separate treatment of "geographical", "social" and "individual" time. Fernand Braudel's goal was to investigate "geographical time", i.e. long-term historical structures and processes, the so-called *longue durée*, an approach that had a major impact on modern historiography. The result was the adoption and extended usage of the term "the long seventeenth century" to many other, mainly medieval centuries. Let me here emphasise that this term became popular not only in historiography, but also in archaeology, especially in the archaeology of the early Middle Ages, including the ninth century.

If we try to transpose the *longue durée* approach and the terminology used by Fernand Braudel to the circumstances of the Carpathian Basin in the eighth–eleventh centuries, we encounter difficulties of various types, or, if we try to adopt an optimistic approach, we find several circumstances that are at variance with each other. On the one hand, the data contained in the written sources underline the importance of the turn of eighth–ninth and ninth–tenth centuries. The Carolingian Empire destroyed the Avar Khaganate at the turn of the eighth and ninth centuries, while the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin occurred at the turn of the ninth and tenth centuries. At the same time, looking at the period from another perspective, both processes involved many aspects that cannot be fitted in the given chronological scheme. The archaeological literature contains many instances of archaeological finds,¹⁰ which can be interpreted as signs of the survival of the previous centres of power, especially in the north-western parts of the Carpathian Basin, most of which can be assigned to the earlier tenth century.

The idea of organising a conference with the title *How long is the ninth century AD in the Carpathian Basin? New Data – New Approaches* was first raised in 2014 within the research group "Centuries of transformation – settlement structures, settlement strategies in the central parts of the Carpathian Basin in the 8th–11th centuries" (OTKA grant 104533), active between 2013 and 2017.¹¹ Our goal was to contextualise our research undertaken on the archaeological

⁶ Suffice it here to refer only to some recently published overviews, as these largely discuss the issue of the late phase of the Avar Khaganate as well as its dissolution: *Bálint 2010* 596, 612–613; *Szóke 2005*; *Takács 2018*.

⁷ For the Annales School, see *Burke 1991*. For the influence of the Annales School on archaeology, especially concerning the adoption of the term *longue durée*, see *Bintliff 1991* 1–33, esp. 6–9.

⁸ *Huften 1986*.

⁹ *Braudel 1966*.

¹⁰ The finds and sites with a chronology of this type are usually described as "post-Great Moravian period". For a new analysis of an archaeological site from this perspective, see *Frolíková-Kaliszová 2011*. For an overall evaluation, see *Měřínský 1991*; *Ruttkay 2000*.

¹¹ For the structure and the first results of the project, see *Takács 2013*; *Takács 2014* 144; *Takács 2016*.

remains of the period's settlements. The conference under this title was also organised with the aim of accentuating the importance of the question, whether the ninth century AD can also be treated as a long ninth century, at least in the Carpathian Basin, or perhaps also across the entire territory of East-Central Europe.

Remarks on the approaches and viewpoints of the conference's presentations

The conference was held on December 8–9, 2015, in the Jacobin Hall of the former building of the Research Centre for the Humanities of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Sixteen papers and nine posters were presented during the two days of the conference.¹² Some of these papers are published in the present volume.

The first main theme of the conference was the presentation of the ninth-century phase of specific sites, with a special focus on their so-called internal chronology. The studies in this section deal with the chronology of sites whose importance was recognised only recently. Both the analysis of the chronology of these sites and their overall interpretation were to a high extent affected by their later history. One of the presentations in this category was by Krešimir Filipec on the site of Lobor in Croatia, which became a place of pilgrimage in the later centuries of the Middle Ages, in which the church dedicated to Blessed Virgin Mary played a central role of. As a consequence, the analysis of the chronology of the site's early medieval phase focused on the early history of the church building, with the goal of finding its earliest phase. The most important discovery was made in 2002 when the post-holes of the posts supporting the timber framework of the first church were excavated.¹³ One of Krešimir Filipec's research priorities is the refinement of the framework-like chronology pointing to the ninth century. His paper written for the conference represents one of his efforts for clarifying the chronology of the building. The overall archaeological research design for the site of Bojná had to be prepared differently because the occupation within the earthen rampart of this site ceased after the dissolution of early medieval Moravia in the tenth century. As a consequence, the significance of the Bojná site was only recognised in the twentieth century. The discovery of a set of gilded copper plates in 2004

¹² Bajkai, Rozália – Takács, Melinda (Hungary): Continuity or Discontinuity? Research Possibilities on a Site from Nyírség Region (Nyíregyháza-Rozsátszölő, Szelkó-dűlő); Dresler, Petr (Czech Republic): Settlement between the ninth and tenth centuries; Filipec, Krešimir (Croatia): Two ninth century Churches and their Inventory from Lobor in Pannonia; Gál, Szilárd (Romania): Late Avar and Lower Danube type Finds in the Necropolis from Alba Iulia-“Stația de salvare”; Gergely, Katalin (Hungary): Chronologische Überlegungen zur Befestigung von Mosaburg/Zalavár – Datierung mit Keramik; Langó, Péter (Hungary): Tenth century Female Grave from Jászfényszaru-Kórrés – Moravian Gombikí in Early Hungarian Context; Macháček, Jiří (Czech Republic): The ‘Long’ ninth century in Moravia. The Case of Pohansko near Břeclav; Merva, Szabina (Hungary): Methodological Approaches to the Research of the ninth–tenth century in Hungary; Robak, Zbigniew (Slovakia): Chronology and Periodization of the Carolingian Imports at the Carpathian Basin; Romat, Sándor (Romania): The Present State of Research of the Hungarian Conquest and Early Arpadian Age Settlement Pattern in Ér Valley; Stanciu, Ioan (Romania): Das Obskure 9. Jahrhundert im unteren Somesch Gebiet (nordöstlichen Peripherie des Karpatenbeckens). Die fragliche Datierung der Siedlung von Lazuri-Lubi-tag (Rumänien); Szöke, Béla Miklós (Hungary): Die Veränderung des Begriffes „9. Jahrhundert im Karpatenbecken“, archäologisch und historisch gesehen; Takács, Miklós (Hungary): Summary; Tomka, Péter (Hungary): Über einige Probleme der (archäologischen) Kontinuitätsforschung; Ungerman, Šimon (Czech Republic): „Kurze“ oder „lange“ Mittelburgwallzeit in Mähren? Kontinuität bzw. Diskontinuität in der Entwicklung der grossmährischen Machtzentren und ländlichen Gräberfelder; Vangľová, Terézia (Slovakia): Frühmittelalterliche Keramik aus dem Burgwall Bojná I-Valy; Veselinov, Dušanka (Serbia): New Early Medieval Findings from the Southern Parts of the Carpathan Basin – Rescue Excavations in Novi Sad and Čenej.

¹³ *Filipec 2007* 416–418.

gave the impetus for the investigation of the earthen rampart of Bojná,¹⁴ with one of the goals being to work out of a reliable chronology as a basis for its interpretation. The first steps of the dating process were performed on the gilded copper plates and other metal finds, followed by other archaeometric measurements. Terézia Vangľová chose ceramics for her research, the – so to say – most classical artefact category in the chronological analysis of early medieval archaeological assemblages. Jiří Macháček's study on the issue of the "long ninth century" as seen through the find material of the Břeclav-Pohansko site was followed with considerable attention by the participants. In his study, the internal chronological sequence was used for presenting how the economic background of the site had evolved.

The second main theme of the conference was the chronology of specific artefact types. These analyses were for the most part undertaken with great preciseness in order to refine not only the archaeological chronology of a particular type, but also of the entire chronological framework of the ninth century. These analyses are marked by efforts for the simultaneous and comparative use of the evidence offered by the archaeological material itself and its reconciliation with the chronology outlined by the written sources. The reason for this approach was, as mentioned in the above, that the archaeological chronological framework of the ninth century in East-Central Europe is essentially based on the events of political history, i.e. on the interpretation of the data contained in the more or less contemporaneous written sources, based on the firm belief that despite its problems, the so-called historical chronology is capable of supporting the framework of archaeological chronology.

Zbigniew Robak's study provides the perhaps best illustration of the quoted approach of the conference with its goal of refining the archaeological chronology through an analysis of specific artefacts. Zbigniew Robak set himself the task of refining the chronology of the ninth century through the analysis of the Carolingian imports in the border areas of the Carpathian Basin, using spurs as a starting point. He distinguished four chronological phases, based not only on the archaeological material from Slovakia and Moravia, but also on the finds from Croatia, Slovenia and eastern Austria. The fact that these phases not only span the entire ninth century, but also extend beyond it has a special relevance regarding the overall theme of the conference. The so-called Phase 0 of Zbigniew Robak's chronology starts already in the eighth century, while the last, fourth phase ends after the turn of the ninth and tenth centuries.

The conference's third main theme is represented by studies dealing not only with the question of the chronological frameworks of the period's material culture, but also with the question of the archaeological "content" of the ninth century itself in the Carpathian Basin and the adjacent regions. Szabina Merva, Béla Miklós Szóke, Péter Tomka and Šimon Ungerman explored this problem in their studies, two of which are published in the present volume. Let us begin with Péter Tomka's study, as it covers a chronologically partly earlier group of artefacts too. He gives an overview of the issue of continuity with the aim of addressing this problem, including its theoretical background, since countless studies have already been devoted to this issue. He quotes some early medieval archaeological artefacts from the Carpathian Basin in order to underline the formulated theoretical postulates. As his examples are taken from the final phase of the Avar Khaganate, they represent another standpoint in the debate on the beginning of the ninth century in the archaeological sense. As the sites quoted by Péter Tomka geographically all lie in north-western Transdanubia, a no man's land during almost the entire ninth century, his analyses have a special relevance for those regions of the Carpathian Basin that were – temporarily or permanently – unaffected by the emerging new centres of power.

Szabina Merva's study represents one of the most complex analyses presented at the conference. In her study, she analyses the find assemblages from several settlement sites in

¹⁴ *Pieta – Ruttkay – Ruttkay 2007; Pieta – Robak 2015.*

northern Transdanubia in order to formulate questions and answers not only suitable for the interpretation of the given sites, but also for their application in a broader perspective. Her first aim is to obtain secure anchors for outlining a more precise chronology not only, or at least not solely, based on a formal analysis of ceramics, but also by relying on archaeometry. The answers proposed by Szabina Merva differ from the majority opinion in Hungarian scholarship, especially from a more recently published opinion, and therefore provides a new impetus to the research of the period's settlement archaeology. The task is to confirm or reject this new interpretative frame, which practically does not reckon with the pottery production of the ancient Hungarians of the Conquest period.

Some general remarks and conclusions

The idea of organising a conference covering the boundaries of the time-frame of the ninth century came from the chronological investigation of the given epoch, as it is especially sensitive to this issue. The problem of chronology was quite certainly one of the main concerns in the evaluation of the settlement sites studied within the framework of the research group "Centuries of transformation". But this is also a question of major importance in the early medieval archaeology of the Carpathian Basin and, in a broader perspective, of the entire East-Central European region, and within these geographic boundaries, of the archaeology of the ninth century AD. The majority of the papers and posters of the conference *How long is the ninth century AD in the Carpathian Basin? New Data – New Approaches* analysed specific details of the archaeological chronology of the ninth century in the Carpathian Basin and in other parts of the eastern half of Central Europe. These analyses were marked by efforts for the simultaneous and comparative study of the evidence offered by the written sources and the archaeological material. The reason for this approach was that the archaeological chronological framework of the ninth century in this region is essentially based on political history, i.e. on the interpretation of the data contained in the more or less contemporaneous written sources. While the ninth–twelfth-century authors may have used inaccurate sources or may have re-shuffled events according to their own concepts, their works, coupled with the archaeological material of ninth-century burials, nevertheless provide the fundamental pegs of the period's archaeological chronology.

It was quite obvious during our conference that the presented studies outline some common trends in the treatment of the chronology of ninth-century archaeology. In my view, this result is far more important than the bulk of new data presented in the papers, which can hardly be covered in this brief overview.

The papers and posters presented at the conference addressed the various "levels" in the analysis of archaeological chronology. The first and most obvious goal was to outline the precise chronology of a single site. A significant number of papers dealt with specific sites located in various geographic regions both within the Carpathian Basin and in the north-westerly adjacent areas. The newly emerging centres of power of the ninth century played a major role in this field of analysis. The geographical spread of new archaeological findspots once more underlined the importance of analyses on regional basis.

An emphasis on the importance of the geographical surroundings of the archaeological sites offers further insights, especially for the chronological attribution of the ceramics. Concerning the ninth century, the best results can be achieved if we analyse the chronology of the finds of smaller territorial units as a first step. It is of great importance to recognise the role of the newly emerging power centres when framing the archaeological chronology of the ninth century. As new trends in vessel forms usually appear in the broader areas of these influential centres, one can assume, taking all possible factors into consideration, that the regions of the entire Carpathian Basin can

be divided in two groups, the first comprising the hinterlands of the centres, where the impact of these new power centres is clearly legible in the archaeological material, while the second group comprises the areas lacking any impacts from these centres. The ninth-century pottery production of these “centre-less” areas is far more traditional, as their archaeological material lacks any indication of the adoption of new tendencies in vessel shaping, or, in fortunate cases, they are “only” less represented. Because of this discrepancy, it is less than advisable to employ the typochronological sequence of a single or a few important sites as a yardstick for dating the ceramics of the entire Carpathian Basin in the case of the ninth century.

The investigation of prestige goods and imports shows a totally different picture. The chronology of these items can be incorporated into a single framework that is valid not only for the archaeological material of the Carpathian Basin, but also for the geographical regions to its south-west, west and north-west. These articles of the archaeological material offer the possibility of synchronising “local” ceramic chronologies worked out on regional bases, although obviously only in cases when the chronology of the prestige goods is properly established.

Concerning the question of chronology in general, our conference could not offer a conclusive answer to the question of how long the ninth century was in the archaeological sense. To be quite honest, this was not its purpose, as the answer varies from one region to the next, according to the changes of political history. The Hungarian conquest played a decisive role in the disappearance of the material culture of the ninth century. This is one of the reasons that the archaeological material of the ninth century, whose final phase extends into the tenth century, can in certain regions be treated as a convincing and in others as a less convincing example for demonstrating a “long” ninth century. But even in the lack of a conclusive answer, the efforts and results presented at this event provide an impetus for the further analysis of the archaeology of the ninth century, an epoch so important to the understanding of the medieval material culture of East-Central Europe.

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