
In Transdanubia, in the old region of Roman Pannonia as far as the Carinthian Alps, lived the Pannonian Slovians, with the Slovaks settling down among them in the late ninth century. Their memory survives in numerous Slovenian words in the Hungarian language. South of the Drave, beyond the Pannonian Slovians in old Pannonia Savia, lived another group of Slovians who, since the early nineteenth century, have been known to historians as Kaj-Croats. In old Liburnia and in Dalmatia, toward the Cetina, from the seashore to the valley of the Sana and the Orbas, and to the fountain of the Rama, Croats have settled who, for a long period of time, were tax-paying subjects of the Avar Khagan. South of them, in the old province of Praevacis, the Serbs found a home.

As late as the nineteenth century, the author writes, the ur-country of the Slavs used to be searched for far beyond the Carpathian mountain range, on the grounds that the Slavs — and the Croats among them — appeared as the Scythians in the narrative of Herodotus. Pantelić is of the opinion, however, that the “ur”-country of the Slavs has to be located in the region of Pannonia-Dalmatia, from where the Romans had expelled them around the time of the birth of Christ. They “returned” to the Balkans in the sixth century A.D. Pantelić’s opinion reminds this reviewer of the Hebrew religious legends, where the children of Jacob, having fled to Egypt to escape famine, “470 years later” could return to take possession of the land of their ancestors. Or, it reads like the story in Greek mythology, where the children of Hercules were expelled from the Peloponnesus, so that they could return as Doric Greeks. In a like manner, the late-thirteenth-century Hungarian chronicler Simon de Keza with his “Hun” ideology depicted the conquest by the Magyars of the mid-Danubian region in the 890s as the return of the Huns who had previously, under their ruler Attila during the fifth century A.D., possessed the land.

Pantelić divides his report, based on his conscientious investigation into primary historical sources and secondary monographs, into ten segments. In his narrative he places emphasis upon the data he has derived from Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus’ *De administrando imperio*, followed by the information available from Cronica Nestorii, the *Russian Primary Chronicle*; he further relies upon the remarks in Pliny the Younger’s *Naturalis historia*, and the *Historia Salonitana* by Thomas of Spaleto. It is unfortunate, though, that he could not gain access to the German translation prepared by two Viennese Byzantine scholars, Klaus Belke and Peter Soustal, especially their annotations, of Porphyrogenitus’ work, published in the *Byzantinische Geschichtsschreiber* series in Vienna, 1996.

The volume under consideration, a revised doctoral dissertation, reads well and is a valuable piece of scholarly work. The first segment offers a brief debate on the origins of the Slavs, their ur-country, and their migrations. Pantelić
devotes eight pages to what he refers to as Croat beginnings in the second segment, where he differentiates between the German, Persian, Gothic and Slav historic source material related to the Croats, and — from his point of view — to the Anglo-Saxon and Greek theses concerning Croat origins. He presents an analysis of the question surrounding the geographical extent of the native lands of the Croats in Pannonia and Dalmatia in the third segment of his book, so that he may, in the fourth segment pay, regrettably very brief, attention to the south-to-east and east-to-west migrations of the Croat tribes in that region. In another far too short, hardly three-page, fifth segment — the segment appears to be an appendix, or, rather, a detailed footnote — he refers to the movements of the Linogians (=Lingons; Lini, Linoges in Latin), and the Wolinjans.

In the longer, twenty-page sixth segment of his work, the author provides a discussion, based on archaeological evidence, of the various phases of the Croat migrations which included the west-Ukraine, and the Elbe-Saale region. He pays serious attention to the latest discoveries in ceramic finds, and to technical details of house construction. This segment is perhaps the most valuable part of his work.

The seventh segment deals, again far too briefly, with the available chronicle material. It would have been by far more useful if Pantelić had provided a more detailed, analytical presentation, perhaps a synthesis, of the available and pertinent narrative data. Thus, for instance, he only makes mention of the present day status of research dealing with the works of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, offering only an outline of the report by the imperial author on the extent and location of territories occupied by the Serbs, Franks, Magyars, Pechenegs, and by the still unbaptized White-Croats during the mid-tenth century. The author ought to have consulted in depth Arnold Toynbee’s seminal work, Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his World (Oxford, 1973), for further information on the chronicler born-in-the-imperial-purple.

In referring to the Chronicle of Nestor (in modern Slavic literature frequently termed Provesti vremennykh let (=Tale of bygone years), he speaks of the assertions made by the Russian chronicler, and by the Arab Anonymus, regarding the Eastern-Croats; following Nestor, Pantelić attempts to determine the territorial extent and location of what he wants to describe as the area of the “Great White-Croatian kingdom.” He briefly touches on Arabic influence upon the Croatian migrations in the eighth segment of the volume, so that he may, in the ninth segment, explain the home-comings (Rückkehr) of the Croats in Dalmatian territory — including the neighboring Croat tribes from the Elba-Saale region, and from the Carpathians. He dates their arrival in today’s Croat land to the times of the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (610-41), while the Croats from Saxon lands arrived later, in 791, he says.

In the tenth segment of the book — it reads more like an appendix — Pantelić deals with the Christianization of the Croat people. He lays emphasis on the Christianization process that took place during the early decades of the seventh century — the times of Emperor Heraclius; he stresses the significance of the Christian mission led by Bishop Virgilius of Salzburg, under the