

PRINCEPS AVARUM AND CANI ZAUCI IN AACHEN IN THE AUTUMN OF 811.
TOWARDS THE BULGARIAN-FRANKISH RELATIONS UNDER THE
RULES KRUM (802?–814) AND OMURTAG (814–831)

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Abstract: The author offers new possibilities for interpretation of Frankish, domestic and Byzantine sources regarding the Bulgarian political control over territories of Avar Khaganate, destroyed by Charlemagne. The main focus is placed on the certificate of embassy led by Princeps Avarum and Canizauci in Aachen in November 811. Coordinating it with Bulgarian and Byzantine sources, leads to the following conclusions.

1. It is likely that the diplomatic mission to Charlemagne in 811, involving representatives of the Avar community, led by its Tudun and Slavic tribal princes, was led by the Bulgarian prince – Omurtag, the younger brother of the ruler Krum (802? – 814), in his capacity as prince (princeps) and ombritag. i. e. Avars hegemon, in the northwestern borders after 803 and „Khan’s beloved younger brother” (khani sev`ingi or khani sev(inč) ingi). In Aachen, he introduced himself as a cani zautzi, that is, with his post of „Khan’s envoy”.

2. The khanas uvigi Omurtag (814–831) missions to Emperor Louis in 824 and 825–826 appear to have also been led by a member of the ruling family in Plisk oba (Pliska), maybe from his second son – Zvinitsa/ Zvinichis. They also appear to have had a representative/s of settlers between 813 and 837 in Trans-Danubian Bulgaria (probably in the Lower Tisza region) of Bulgarian captives of Eastern Thrace of Armenian origin. One of their leaders in 837 was named Tzantzès, and his son, Stilian, and his descendants gained fame in Byzantium under the surname Ζαούτζης, Ζαούτζας. It coincides exactly with the pro-Bulgarian official title (position) zautzi (zautci), (=chaush) and probably derived from it. On this basis, we conclude that Τζάουτζην (Цауцио воевода) was performing the carrier of messages or emissary functions of the Bulgarian state before 837.

3. The considered evidence, facts and circumstances surrounding the Bulgarian diplomatic missions of 811, 824 and 825/6 provide new testifies for the Bulgarian state’s control over the southeastern parts of the Avar Khaganate after its collapse in the period 791–803. They have a contribution to clarify important aspects of the Bulgarian state’s relations with the East Frankish Kingdom, as well as with the local population of Avars, Bulgarians and Slavs there.

The interest in the topic of the relations between the Bulgarian state and the remnants of the Avar Khaganate, destroyed by the Franks between 791 and 803, as well as the relations with the new neighbour – the Frankish state, has increased significantly over the last decades.¹

To clarify the history of the Bulgarian-Avar and the Bulgarian-Frankish relations before the rule of Omurtag (814–831), attention must be drawn upon an underestimated, especially in the Bulgarian scientific literature in my opinion, written source. That source is the well known evidence of a visit of

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¹ MLADYOV 1998, 85–128; SCHWARZ 2000, 99–104; SOPHULIS 2012, 180 sqq; GRAČANIN 2013, 3–21; FILIPEČ 2015, 91 sqq; KOMATINA 2010, 55–82; BOZHILOV 2017, 280–283, 313–320; ANDONOV 2015, 206–210; NIKOLOV 2018, 84–92.

and „*canizauci princeps Avarum*” to Charlemagne (768–814) in Aachen in November 811. My contribution in the area will be to attempt a more convincing explanation and comment.

The information about the mysterious visit is attributed to an anonymous author of the Frankish chronicles (*Annorum regni Francorum*, ann. 811).² Based on that, it is accepted that the event in question is the headed by *Cani zauci princeps Avarum* embassy, consisting of representatives of the Avar Danubian aristocracy – *tudun et alii primores*, as well as *duces Sclavorum circa Danubium habitantium*. They appeared in the residency of Charlemagne in Aachen immediately after the successful end of the Frankish military expedition, undertaken in the spring of the same year – „*in Pannonia to put an end of the fights with Huns and Slavs*”. It is one of three such expeditions, through which the Western Roman Emperor aimed to stabilize his control over the different peoples around the borders of his state. In Pannonia, it appears to have been directed at a region belonging to the Middle Danube, but it is not possible to be more specific. Its immediate task has been to „*restrict (stop, finiendas, from finio) controversias*”, but not only between Huns (=Avars) and Slavs, as it is being accepted, but between the Franks and those, too. According to the generally accepted opinion, the embassy had the task to sign the so called peace from 811.

In his retelling of this evidence, Annalista Saxo (mid. 12th c.) adds that the embassy from 811 has been sent by the order of the „*Frankish Dukes*”, remaining in Pannonia after the military operation.³ It was they, who requested from the local Avar and Slavic representatives „*to present themselves*” to the emperor (*ad praesentiam imperatoris iussi sunt venire*). This suggests that the embassy headed by

Canizauci has had to explain to Charlemagne the ethno-political situation of the Danubian part of Pannonia, and guarantee the preservation of the Frankish interests there. It should not be forgotten, however, that this is information from the 12th c. and the author considers that the title of the „*Avar prince*” has been *Canizave*. Another, less known version of the reviewed evidence, with Ademar from Shaban (Chabalenian) as author, talks about *duo principes Auarume et Tudun et alii Canzauci*.⁴

In the modern historiography the text is interpreted as a message that concerns exclusively the relations between the Franks and the Avars. In a similar fashion back in the 18th c. the word *Avarum* is accepted as a Latin version of the ethnonym *Avares*⁵ and can be developed as *princeps Avar(or)um*, „*Prince of the Avars*”, exactly how Annalista Saxo rationalizes it, by the way.

Crucial for the correct interpretation of the message is the spelling and the interpretation of the title *Canizauci/Canizave/Canzauci*. Generally, it has been accepted as enigmatic. According to the linguists it has two components and has to be pronounced *cani zauci*, as it has been noticed long ago that it is similar to the Bulgarian ruler title *kana subigi*.⁶ Lately B. M. Szöke described that interpretation as an anachronism, as the khan title has been used at the earliest during Omurtag’s reign, after 814.⁷ Based on that, the attempts to decipher it as „*Avar*”, continue. From the time of Joseph Asemani and his sources it has been accepted that *canizauci* is a title or a name of an Avar Khagan, who has become a ruler of the Khaganate in the place of Theodor, killed during the civil war in 805.⁸ There are even assumptions that he has had the name Isaac.⁹ B. M. Szöke too sees the name *Isauni* behind „*canizauci*”.¹⁰ Another Hungarian scientist – L. Balogh

² SOPHULIS 2012, 193–184, n. 127; SZÖKE 2014, 24–25; FILIPEC 2015, 95. In the Bulgarian corpus with sources (LIBI 1960, 33) this evidence is not included at all. About the first edition of the source see *Annales regni Francorum*, ed. Fr. Kurze. MGH SRG, 6. Hannover, 1895, reprint 1950.

³ LIBI 1965, 140–141.

⁴ FILIPEC 2015, 95, n. 242.

⁵ MORAVCSIK 1958, 51–54.

⁶ POHL 2002, 304–305.

⁷ SZÖKE 2014, 25.

⁸ KOVACHEVICH 1977, 94–100; KLANICA 1987, 82.

⁹ PAVLOV 1997, 58.

¹⁰ SZÖKE 1991, 148.

follows its etymological convergence from Gy. Németh with *káni követ saučy*, assuming the first word is kam – a shaman, but prefers to interpret the phrase as „*khagan Izsák*”.¹¹ The Croatian historian Kr. Filipec also assumes that there is a combination of the title „Kh(ag)an” or „Kapkhan” and the Old Testament name Izak, adopted after its Christianizing.¹²

Around 811 the Avar khagan and the „old” aristocracy assembled around him, have in reality been baptised, but concentrated in a „reservation” between Savaria and Karnuntum, close to the real eastern border of the Frankish state.¹³ In this case, the assumption that several years later the Franks were accepting the election of a new Khagan for the eastern part of Avaria and that he together with *tudun* and *primores* has appeared for an audience with his suzerain in Aachen, looks improbable. Similar situation has been recorded in 798 when an Avar kingship group appeared in the Heristelle palace in Saxonia, bearing great gifts for Charlemagne.¹⁴ The situation in November 811 has been completely different, as the Avar Khaganate has already ceased to exist and this is evident in the description of the Avar embassies with Charlemagne after 798 and especially after 803, described in the Frankish chronicles.

The modern days historian of the Khaganate – Walter Pohl, is inclined to search the solution for the mysterious title in the light of its similarity to the Bulgarian *khanasubigi* and he assumes that it is a remnant of the ruling hierarchy of the Khaganate.¹⁵ But for him, considering the already stated opinions, the question if Canizauci is an „Avar khan” or a „tribal prince” (*Stammesfürst*) remains opened.¹⁶

Thus the essence of the title and the ethnicity of its bearer in 811 remain unclear. The only really serious and objective achievement we owe to the Hungarian orientalist Lajos Ligeti, who proved that

canizauci is a Turkic combination, which can be interpreted as envoy of the khan=khagan, and assumes it could be used by a member of the Khan’s family.¹⁷ Based on this though, B. M. Szőke assumed that the aforementioned has already been in front of Charlemagne in 805, with the mission to restore the previous rights of the baptized and accepting the Frankish superiority khagan Avraam.¹⁸

For me the main question here is to what extent can *Canizauci* be considered the highest-ranked representative of the Avar political establishment from the Eastern borders of the destroyed Khaganate?

The fact, that the authors of different Frankish chronicles use for the late Avars specifically the words Huni or Vandali, and sometimes pointing out family relations between them, is noteworthy. The chronicler for 811 however talks about an „Avar prince” with a title *Canizauci*, who presents himself in front of Charlemagne together with a *Tudun*, who without a doubt is a high-ranked representative of the Avar aristocracy to the east of the Danube after 803¹⁹ and who brings with himself „*other Avar notables*”. In the Frankish chronicle the *tudun* is presented as *unus ex primoribus Hunorum* and even as *princeps Pannoniae*.²⁰ Therefore it should be considered that the bearer of that title is the foremost representative of the Avars from the region of Middle Danube also in 811. As *princeps Avarorum* in the Franks’ sources is presented also *Capcanus*, i. e. the kapkhan, who sometimes is mixed up with the khagan of the Avars.²¹ He as well as *Canizauci* has been mentioned only once and with good reason is considered as a head of the east wing of the Khaganate, conquered by khan Krum in the autumn of 804.²² In relation to this, it is quite probable that the appearance of *Capcanus* in the following year *inter Sabariam et Carnuntum* is due to his relocation

¹¹ BALOGH 2017, 234, n. 36–39.

¹² FILIPEC 2015, 94, n. 235, 236.

¹³ POHL 2002, 308 sqq; SZŐKE 2014, 19–21.

¹⁴ Annales dui dicitur Einhardi, ann. 797; SZŐKE 2014, 15–16.

¹⁵ POHL 2002, 292, 300, 304.

¹⁶ POHL 2002, 304–305, n. 134 et index.

¹⁷ LIGETI 1986, 129–151.

¹⁸ SZŐKE 2014, 25. for the events, see POHL 2002, 322–323.

¹⁹ SZŐKE 1991, 149.

²⁰ SZŐKE 2014, 13.

²¹ FILIPEC 2015, 94–95.

²² SZŐKE 2014, 21.

from the eastern to the western regions of the Khaganate. Furthermore, *Capcanus* is a title connected with the Proto-bulgarian *kauchános* (*kapkánus*) and it is very likely that it originates from the titles of the Proto-bulgarian aristocracy in the eastern and south-eastern regions of the back then intact Khaganate. This could be the reason for the designation of *Capcanus* in 805 and of *Canizauci* in 811 as Avarians principes. The real Avar aristocracy with the khagan himself at the top are called by the Franks' chroniclers as „Huns”. Therefore the term „Avarian” in this case has to be interpreted more as a collective polytonym, rather as a proper ethnonym.

According to the Frankish sources, the *Tudun* is accepted as a great power among the Avars, with „representative functions of the khagan” and his proxy as a local prince who collects tax. According to B. M. Szöke he also „has been tasked with the handling of foreign relations as the khagan's personal representative”, having in mind his participation in the 811 embassy under the leadership of *Canizauci*. It is doubtful however, that both of them together have represented a semi-autonomous and dependent on the Franks state principality, in the eastern Danubian lands (the so called by W. Pohl *awarische Tributärfürstentum an den Donau*).²³ If *Canizauci* and *Tudun* were representatives of such a political structure, why was it necessary to give the leadership of the embassy to both of them at the same time? In 803 for example because of the Pannonian's affairs at the time, only the prince of the Pannonians, the so-called zodan (i.e. *tudun*) has presented himself in front of Charlemagne – representing not only the Avar population, but the local Slavic tribes as well.²⁴

A question emerges: what is the role of *Canizauci*, whose authority is not only above the Avar *tudun* and his primores, but also above the Slavic princes, who were together with him in front of Charlemagne? And also, what is hidden behind his unquestioned aristocratic dignity of an „Avar prince”? In 803 it was borne by the *tudun*, who then solely lead the mission in front of the same emperor. We have to acknowledge, that in the delegation

from 811 his title *princeps Avarum*, and prerogatives of a *unus ex primoribus Hunorum*, belonged only to *Canizauci*, while the *tudun* together with his circle has been under his authority together with the *duces Sclavorum circa Danubium habitantium*.

All this gives me the reason to doubt the foundation of the accepted concept that the embassy in Aachen from 811 has been sent by an Avar principality on the Danube, remnant of the Khaganate, and from there that the title *Canizauci* belongs to the Avars and its bearer is of Avar origin.

Without doubt *Canizauci* is a person with power superior to the one of the Avar *tudun* and his primores, and to the princes of the surrounding Slavic tribes. It should not be forgotten too, that this title of his is *hapax legomenon* and it is mentioned only during the irreversible „disintegration” of the Khaganate and furthermore – in its eastern or south-eastern regions. It is not present in the history of the independent Khaganate or in the created by the Franks dependant Avar state. Such also is the title of the so-called *Capcanus*, which as we stated has undisputed correlate in the government structure of Danubian Bulgaria in the first half of 9th c. We can assume that its bearer in 805 has appeared in the created by Charlemagne Avar protectorate as a result of the conquest of the eastern parts of the Khaganate by the Bulgarian state. Labelling *Canizauci* and the *Tudun* as *principes Avarorum* underlines their belonging to the aristocratic hierarchy in the Khaganate, but this does not define their ethnicity. Calling them „Avar princes” in the Frankish sources shows just that they are recognized as princes, i.e. someone supreme prerogatives in the governance of territories from the defeated Khaganate.

The Turk character of the title *Canizauci*, as well as the selection of an embassy representing equally the Avar and the Slavic communities from the Danube areas of the former Khaganate, should present the question – was the Frankish chronicler talking about a mission headed by a representative of the Bulgarian authority, established in the region in 804?

Around 811 the eastern and south-eastern regions of the Khaganate were partially or fully a Bul-

²³ POHL 2002, 323, n. 130.

²⁴ SZÖKE 2014, 16.

garian territory or at least in its sphere of interest. Besides that, as it has been acknowledged, in the title *Canizauci* stands out the part from the Bulgarian ruler's title – „*khana*”. The possibility that it can be accepted as the Avar „*khagan*” is also credible, but only if it is in reduced form and with added ending vowel: *kha(ga)n(a)*. It has to be said, that such writing of the Avar ruler's title is not known. Therefore, it has to be unconditionally accepted that it is the Bulgarian particle *khana*, and not the Avar *khagan* present in *Canizauci*.

What else could be said in support of the possibility that *Canizauci* is a Bulgarian title or position?

In the first place, we know, that several months before its bearer's appearance in Aachen in the summer of 811, representatives of the Bulgarian state (either provincial or of the central power) have hired, obviously in an emergency, Avar and Slavic parties to support the army of Krum, defeated on several occasions during June-July by the forces of Nicefor I (802–811). The possibility that this help has been recruited in the eastern and south-eastern parts of former „*Avaria*” is significant. These lands, as we know, have remained unoccupied by the Franks and parts, especially to the south-east of Lower Tisza, were incorporated in Bulgaria no later than 804–805.

Second, according to the evidence from the first Hambarliyski inscription, it can be assumed, that the above-mentioned military help has been secured by an unnamed „brother” of Krum, about whom the inscription says that he „*did not... forget*” the ruler, obviously meaning the situation in which he was in May–July 811.²⁵ The speed with which the Avar and Slavic force was brought in suggests that the broth-

er in question²⁶ was in, or has gone very quickly to those periphery or neighbouring areas of the state, which were predominantly populated by „*Avars*” and „*Slavs*”. In undeciphered by Beshevliev letter group in the same inscription we read: Σ.ΒΗΝΗΟ. ΖΗΑΗΕΝΗ. With some effort several years ago I detected words with Turkic character: „*sev`ingi* or *sev(inč) ingi* - beloved (loving?)²⁷ younger brother” (of Krum). I think it certainly relates to Krum's successor on the khan's throne – „*khana subigi Omurtag*”, who it seems is a younger brother and not a son of the ruler.²⁸

According to Theophilactus of Ochrid (1089–1126?), who we know was taking information from older and lost Bulgarian sources, Omurtag has had a parallel name or nickname – Ombritag.²⁹ In writing and pronunciation it means „leader, ruler (gr. *tagós*)³⁰ of the *ombri*” i. e. the Avars,³¹ as Theophilactes uses exactly this word for them.³² So Krum's „*beloved brother*” from the Hambarliyski inscription, who secured the „*Avar*” and „*Slavic*” military parties, was considered an „*Avar leader*” in Bulgaria and apparently has had this designating name (nickname?) before he became khan in 814. In such case we could also assume that in the spring and summer of 811 he resided to the north-west of the main („old”) Bulgarian territories, from where he could quickly and efficiently bring in Avar and Slavic support. In the damaged beginning of the Hambarliyski inscription we read another letter composition: ΣΑΗΝΟΙΑ. It ends with the typical for the names of the Bulgarian settlements from the 9th c. -*opa* (= *oba*) and this suggests that in the beginning there is the own (?) name of a settlement which sounds similarly to oikononyms like Solnok,

²⁵ BEŠEVĹIEV 1979, № 2, 108–110.

²⁶ V. Beshevliev and most of the Bulgarian and foreign historians accept that this is the mentioned after April 814 Dukum, who according to some Byzantine sources, late succeeded Krum, see GEORGIEV 2011, 152–154.

²⁷ In the language of the magyar the word „favorite”, „beloved”, according to the Anonymi *Gesta Hungarorum –zerelmu* (LIBI 2001, 30, note. 77).

²⁸ GEORGIEV 2011, 145–146.

²⁹ GIBI 1994, 63–64.

³⁰ In the Lexicon of Suda *ταγός* is explained as *ἡγεμών*. Cf. Suidae Lexicon 1854, 1005. Omurtag is called *ἡ(γεμόνο)ς ὁ Κρούμου* – a military commander or governor of a territory in the state of this ruler before 814 – in an inscription along side his image in a miniature attached to the Madrid's manuscript in the Chronicle of John Skilitza (82 Ra), but under the remarkable name „*The Bulgarian Kutrog*”. About this, see GEORGIEV 2011, 146–147.

³¹ LEXIKON 1862–1865, 474; FASMER 1987, 107–108; POHL 2002, 113–114.

³² GIBI 1994, 62, cf.; POHL 2002, 112–117.

Slanik etc., which are typical for the territories to the east of Lower Tisza, including Transylvania.³³ Those are territories which the Hungarian Anonym links with Bulgarian political power in the face of Keanus Magnus and his successors from the beginning towards the end of the 9th c. It looks like in ΣΑΗΝΟΡΙΑ is pointed out the name of a settlement, where the „beloved younger brother” has resided, or from where he enlisted the help for the seriously troubled Bulgarian ruler.

Therefore, the available sources, however fragmented and controversial they look, lead to a conclusion that between 804–805 and 811 there was Bulgarian administrative and military control in the conquered by Krum territories of the Avar Khaganate. It was executed by an ombri-tag – a leader (hegemon) of the local population of Avars, Slavs and Bulgarians, and that is no one else but the enthroned three years later with the official name Omurtag, which appears to be a derivative from the Ombritag, recorded by Theophylactes of Ochrid. Furthermore, as the sole ruler, he intentionally has chosen as his title the Turk-Bulgarian *khanasübigi*, which some scholars read as *khana šü bägä* – „leader of the military”. Thus it corresponds to the Greek *tagòs* (from ombri-tag) and allows us to formulate the opinion that the title *khana sübigi* has been borne by Krum’s brother in his capacity of a leader of the „Avar” parties, recruited from the eastern or south-eastern parts of the Khaganate.

All the above allows a new way of looking at the opinion that *canizauci* is an altered form of the Bulgarian ruler’s title. It also allows the possibility to identify its bearer – *princeps Avar(or)um* with *ombritag*, the leader of the „ombri” (=Avars), Omurtag, who became a sole ruler in 814.

His official title ΚΑΝΑΣΥΒΗΓΗ (ΚΑΝΑΣΥΒΙΓΗ) so far has been documented only as a ruler’s.³⁴ Its first part: *cana-* includes the noun *qan* (*khan*) and the suffix *-a, -e, -i*. In the inscriptions,

where it has been combined with titles lower in the hierarchy: *canna taban*, *canna tarkhan*, *kana boila kolobron*, *kanale irtxi tuinos* etc., the word *khan(n) a, khane* is an adjective. So the ending *-I* in the title *cani-* looks like a modification of *-aand-e*, in search of harmony with *-zauci*, which has to be a noun, structurally corresponding to *šü bäg-i*. The closest Bulgarian parallel to *Canizauci* is the inscription with Greek and Latin letters on Omurtag’s golden medallions – ΚΑΝΕΣΥΒΗΓΙΟΜΟΡΤΑΓ.³⁵ The word ΚΑΝΕΣ is used as the ruler’s title (=khan), written entirely with Latin letters. It differs from *khana* in the protobulgarian inscriptions, and from *cani-* in the Frankish chronicles, only by its nominative ending which should have underlined that this is a noun and not an adjective. Such is the role of *-YBHΓI*, which had the meaning of „(the) great”. Thus reviewed, the inscription from Omurtag’s golden medallions shows that they were issued after 814, when his previous title *khana šü bägä* – „leader of the military” has been modified to be preserved in form, but to correspond in reality the new position of a ruler, who alone rules as a successor of his late brother Krum.

In the inscription on the silver cup of “*the great jupan in Bulgaria*” (2nd half or the end of the 9th c.), the name of its owner is CHBHN. V. Beshevliev assumed that it is an analogue of the 8th c. – Σαβίνος, which Gy. Moravcsik (after W. Tomaschek) derived (in the form *sevin*) from the verb *säv* „love”.³⁶ This also applies to Omurtag’s second son’s name Ζβηνίτζης (*Zβηνίτζη*),³⁷ which derives from the same root, but is incorrectly presented as the Turk *Svinč* (=Sävinč) with the meaning „joy”.³⁸ This way, it resembles in sound and meaning the familial description of his father in the Hambarliyski inscription **khana sev`ingi* or *sev(inč) ingi*, „the Khan’s beloved younger brother”.³⁹ The name *Zvinitsa/Zvinichis* very similar to *zauci* and this suggests that it also could be understood as **s/z(a)v/utci* and translated

³³ KOLEDAROV 1979, 17 and next.

³⁴ MORAVCSIK 1958, 148–149; BEŠEVILIEV 1979, 65–67, № 56 (193–194); STEPANOV 1997, 54–59.

³⁵ BEŠEVILIEV 1979, № 86 (234). The name of the Bulgarian ruler is written this way in the Frankish chronicles (LIBI 1960, 36, 42).

³⁶ MORAVCSIK 1958, 262.

³⁷ MORAVCSIK 1958, 129.

³⁸ BEŠEVILIEV 1979, № 87, 235.

³⁹ GEORGIEV 2002, 8–9.

as “favorite”.⁴⁰ The pronunciation of the first sound as Z(zavi – zave)⁴¹ and the –u- as –v-, makes the title similar to the name S/Zävīnč (S/Zvinč). Thus Canizauci could be compared to the epithet *khana sev`ingi or sev(inč) ingi for Omurtag, but also to the name of his second son, which could be based on the tender description of his father by Krum. Obviously the more significant resemblance of the particle -zauci (-zave) to Ζβηνίτζης (Ζβηνίτζη) suggests the existence of a meaningful or at least omophonic connection between them.

Accepting of -zauci as a language and orthographic version of *šü bāg-i*, „master (commander) of the military” is not very probable, as it raises not only philological, but also historical questions. It seems that Omurtag has become „master (commander) of the military” in the state after his military successes in 811. Until then he has been called „ombritag”, „leader of the Ombrs, i. e. Avars”, who still had his own armies in 813, most probably created in the summer of 811 with Avars and Slavs as members. In the winter of 813/814 the Bulgarian state did a new, bigger in comparison to 811 recruitment of Avars and Slavs in its military. The so-called Scriptor incertus, announces that Krum „assembled a large army – and the Avars and all (not only from the ones close to Avaria?! –P. G.) Slavini” and with the prepared in advance siege equipment, intended to attack the Byzantine capital.⁴² Therefore Krum and his „hegemon”, or leader with the domestic title *šü bāgi* Omurtag have continued to rely on the military potential of the north-west territories in 814. That means that Bulgaria has continued to control lands with Avar and Slavic population after the campaign of Charlemagne’s dukes in the Danube regions of the former, since at least 803 Khaganate.

But is it realistic to think that Omurtag has been Krum’s *khana (t)zauci visiting Charlemagne already in November the same year, just about 100

days after the battle from 26th of July in Eastern Stara Planina? At first look that looks exaggerated, if not impossible. The dynamic flow of the events proves that possibility, though.

After his famous victory over Nicephor I, the brothers Krum and Omurtag have ceased military actions against the subdued adversary for almost a year.⁴³ Theophanus’ information: „And Krum after cutting Nicephor’s head off, put it on a stake for many days to display in front of the many tribes coming to him...”⁴⁴ shows that in August/September the rulers in Plisk oba were busy celebrating their triumph, receiving guests from the tribes from within and around the country. No doubt the Avar’s primores and Slavic ducaes under the command of the ombritag Omurtag were among them.

Meanwhile the Franks’ military expedition in the Danube areas of Pannonia has settled the disputes between the „Avar” and the „Slavic” elites.⁴⁵ The Frankish dukes have probably persuaded some of them to denounce their relationships (as mercenaries or allies) with the Bulgarian state. It cannot be dismissed that the pro-Frankish local aristocracy could have used the absence of the ombritag Omurtag and his local supporters to denounce the „alliance” (*societas*) with Danubian Bulgaria.

The unfavourable developments in the eastern and south-eastern parts of the former Khaganate have required the return of Krum’s „beloved brother” probably already towards the end of August 811. The restoration of the Bulgarian control must have happened quickly and efficiently, thanks to the loyal to the rulers in Plisk oba local „Avar” and Slavic aristocracy. This however has been insufficient to restore the status quo from before the summer of 811. The Bulgarian side has had to make diplomatic efforts to have their right over the „Avar heritage” recognised in the lands of the already non existent for almost a decade Khaganate. This precisely has required

⁴⁰ All the more so its writing by the Saxon chronicler is *Canizave* (=cani zave).

⁴¹ About representing S with Z see the writing of the name of the Moravian prince Sventopluk as Zuentibaldus (LIBI 1960, 45) and also the similar to the “Avar” zauci surname of the Leo VI’s *basileopatōr* –Stilian Σαύτζας, which in some manuscripts of Georgi Amartol us Σαύτζας, cf. GIBI 1965, 138; ZLATARSKI 1972, 465 (in old-bulgarian translation *Заоуца василопаторъ*). About the representation of Σερμώνης as Ζέρμων, see MORAVCSIK 1958, 130.

⁴² GIBI 1961, 23–24.

⁴³ ZLATARSKI 1970, 336–337, бeл. 30; BOZHILOV 2017, 293–294.

⁴⁴ GIBI 1960, 283.

⁴⁵ SOPHULIS 2012, 123.

Omurtag, as an „*ombritag*”, i. e. „Avar prince” to this point, to select and lead an embassy with representatives from both ethnicities: true Avars and Slavs, in

front of Charlemagne, as he has been recognised as conqueror of the Khaganate in Bulgaria too.

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Let's get back to the question about the meaning of the Proto-bulgarian title **zautzes*. According to the etymological research of Lajos Ligeti, that is a Turkic in origin word for „envoys” or „couriers”. In this line of thought the „vulgarized” presentation of the word by Ademar from Shaban in plural as *alii Canzauci* perhaps contains a memory of the practice when Bulgarian diplomats have presented themselves in the court of the Frankish, respectively German rulers with their position in Turkic language. In the Bulgarian diplomatic missions, if we judge by the one from the autumn of 811, there were also representatives of the local ethnic communities – Avars, Slavs and others – selected by the corresponding tribal aristocracy or local administrative authorities.

We unexpectedly find support for that in the Byzantine chronicles, who describe the faith of the Armenian population displaced from their birthplaces in Macedonia (nowadays Eastern Trakia),⁴⁶ who the Bulgarian authorities settled in 813 and 814 in the lands of the so-called „Trans-Danubian Bulgaria”. According to Leo Grammaticus, in the time of emperor Teophil (between 829 and 837) those migrants were lead by Τζάντζην (ЦАНСИО БОЕБОДЪ), who together with the military commander from the Macedonia, Cordilla, organized the return of the Armenian colonists by the means of a Byzantine fleet sent on the Danube. According to the famous specialist on Armenia N. Adontz, the Tzantzès in question has a typical Armenian name which he not

only makes similar to the surname Zautzès, but is actually prepared to identify himself with it altogether.⁴⁷ We cannot doubt the correctness of writing of Tzantzès as it is inscribed on a lead seal of the 11–12th c. noble Leontius ó Τζάντζ(ης).⁴⁸ Al. Kajdan and A. Kormack make a note of N. Adontz's opinion that Tzantzès was a Macedonian strategus himself⁴⁹ after his return from Trans-Danubian Bulgaria and clarify that he is the father of Basilus I and Leo VI's favourite – Stilian Zautza. The main difference in the names of the father Tzantzès and the son Zautzès is the lack of „T” in front of Zautzès. But the surname of Stilian Zautza is written with the same initial in a molibdobul of his with the title magister (around 886), so it has been written in Greek also as Tzautzès.⁵⁰ The appearance of epsilon in the place of nu there can be explained, as it is known that their minuscular versions are very similar and are often mixed up by the copiers. For this reason N. Adontz accepts the famous friend of Vasilus I Macedonian, Stilian Zautza, for a son of Tzantzus, who he, being an emperor, nominated a *protospatarius* and *heteriarch* and also in the end of his reign – as a tutor of his son and future *basileus* – Leo VI (886–912). Under him we know that Stilian Zautza acquired full trust and enormous power, which reflects in his declaration a „*basileopatôr*” – father of the emperor, around 888–889, 10 years before Leo VI married his long-standing mistress and Zautza's daughter – Zoè, making Stilian Zautza also his father in law.⁵¹ The closeness of Stilian Zautza

⁴⁶ GIBI 1961, 22 (Scriptor incertus), 56 (Georgius Monachus); Cf. spec. GIBI 1965, 155–156 (Leo Grammaticus), 118–119 (Theophanus Continuatus), 172–173 (Pseudo-Symeon). Cf. ZLATARSKI 1972, 396–401. Commentary about these events: ZLATARSKI 1970, 433–434, 397–398; BOZHILOV 2017, 339–342. According to the latter, „the narrative about the return of the Byzantine captives from Thracia, resettled from Trans-Danubian Bulgaria, cannot be considered as an authentic episode from the Bulgarian history in the 3rd decade of the 9th c.”.

⁴⁷ ADONTZ 1933, 482–483, n. 2.

⁴⁸ LAURENT 1952, Nr. 93, 58; ALEKSEYENKO 2018, 34, note 60.

⁴⁹ ODB 1991, 2220.

⁵⁰ LAURENT 1952, Nr. 91, 57–58.

⁵¹ About the date of establishment of the rank „*basileopatôr*”, see BOZHILOV 2008, 382, 408; IOANNIS SCYLITZAE 1973, 175, 10 et 179, 16.

with Basilius I was known from the time when he was recruited as a trusted servant of his imperial power. But their personal connection goes back to the time when the future emperor and Zautza's father – Tzantzès were together with their fellow countrymen – Armenian expatriates from Eastern Thracia – in Trans-Danubian Bulgaria. It appears that they have stayed close after their return to Adrianopolis around 838, when the young (25 years old) Basilius was accepted to work for the strategus for Macedonia – Tzantzius.⁵²

According to the anonymous author of the legend for St Euthimius (patriarch of Constantinople 906–911), Stilian's nickname – Ζαούτζην is „*in Armenian dialect (speech)*” and he was from „*Armenian family*”, as was Vasilus I, who put him in 886 as „*epitrop*”, i.e. a guardian of his son and heir – Leo VI.⁵³ The translation of this passage however has lately been revised and after that it has mainly become clear that Basilius I and Stilian Zautza are only countrymen – Armenians, coming from the Adrianopolis area. It appears that this fact has prompted the author of the legend to define the name Ζαούτζης, Ζαούτζας as Armenian.⁵⁴ This statement though should be accepted only as an attempt to explain the unusual sound of the name in the Greek language. In the legend from Teophanes about Stilian Zautza for example is stated that he was jokingly called by his countryman and friend – Basilius I – „Ethiopian” because of the dark colour of his face.

In this instance we should recognise the opinion of L. Breysse and Gy. Moravcsik who thought that the name Ζαούτζης, Ζαούτζας is Turkic and could be rationalized as τζαούτσις – „chaush”; „a courier” (literally, „carrier of messages”), or „emissary”⁵⁵.

What has not been pointed out so far, and is very important for us, is the complete conformity of the surname Ζαούτζης, Ζαούτζας, and also Τζαούτζης, with the part *zauci* from the Frankish chronicles for 811. This, as well as their common rationalization as „emissary, courier” shows that

the bearers had something in common. It should be looked for in the period, when the families of the person, whom the Byzantine chroniclers call by the name Tzantzès, and of the future emperor Basilius I have lived together with thousands other prisoners of war in the Bulgarian lands beyond the Danube. There they have served the rulers Omurtag and Malamir and also through the first two years of Presian's rule (836–852). The concept among some modern scholars that the surname Zautzès is Armenian with the meaning „The Dark, The Black” should be rejected. It is no coincidence that an Armenian scholar like N. Adontz does not recognize it as such.

For us it is important that both Byzantine surnames from the end of the 9th and the 10–11th c. are with common origin and with a base which reproduces perfectly the Proto-Bulgarian official title **tzautzi* „emissary” (from **kanas tzautci*, i. e. „khan's emissary”). In the light of this analysis can be assumed that it has been given and borne in Trans-Danubian Bulgaria by a Byzantine expatriate with Armenian background – „*Tzantzius*”. During the Bulgarian diplomatic missions in 824 and 825/6 he should have been around 25–30 years old, so he fully would have been able to participate in them, for example as a translator. Later, including during Malamir's reign (831–836) he could have fulfilled other diplomatic tasks as a Bulgarian τζαούτσις, and this has made him known not only among the Bulgarian governing class, but also among his countrymen – the Armenian expatriates from Byzantine Macedonia. For this reason his occupation, as it was customary, has been accepted as his nickname, and later – as his surname, which the chroniclers report as his first (in the form Tzantzès). His son Stilian however accepts as his surname the Turkic-Bulgarian term for his father's occupation in a form completely corresponding to the Frankish writing: *zauci*. That gives me the reason to think that it is correct and reproduces the „Trans-Danubian Bulgaria” pronunciation of the term.

⁵² ZLATARSKI 1972, 398.

⁵³ VASILEV 1906, 157–158, note 2; BOZHILOV 2008, 75.

⁵⁴ KARLYN-HEYTER 1957, 10; BARTYIKJAN 1992, 87, note 4.

⁵⁵ About other possible meanings of the word, see ODB 1991, 2135–2136; MORAVCSIK 1958, 308–309; JANIN 1964, 482; MOGARICHEV ET AL. 2009, 285, Nr. 64.

Who, however, is the leader of Omurtag's diplomatic missions from 824 and 825–826 to the court of Louis the Pious? Is it possible that it has been his own son Zvinitsa (Zvinich), whose name sounds very similar to the Frankish writing of the position of „khan's emissary”?

Omurtag's youngest son – Malamir – inherited his father before adulthood, probably when he was around 15-16 years old, so he should have been born around 815. So it is plausible that around 811 Omurtag has been a man around or over 30, and he has died at an age of over 50.⁵⁶ It is reasonable to assume then that his middle son Zvinitsa has been born a couple of years before Malamir, let's say around 811. This means that in the period 824–826 he should have been around 15 years old. That of course reduces the chances that he has been in the role of **khani tzaushi* at Louis the Pious. But as the information of his birth-date is not very certain, the possibility that he could have been older (20-25 years old for example) cannot be ruled out. In such a case he could have headed a diplomatic mission (in 811 his father has been around 30 years old). Furthermore, according to the information of Theophylactes of Ochrid, Omurtag could have stepped down from the political scene even before 831. So we cannot rule out the possibility that Zvinica, like his father, as a prince of the blood and younger brother to the first-born son of Omurtag – Enravota, could have been given the functions of „*ombritag*” – an Avar prince. As such he then could have been sent to negotiate with the ruler of the Franks in the role of *cani zauci*.

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Identifying Omurtag with the bearer of the title *canizauci* (= *khani s/zav/utci*) – envoy of khan Krum, puts forward a number of serious questions about the Bulgarian political presence in the region of Lower Tisza and Middle Danube.

Above all, is it justified to assume that Omurtag could present himself in Aachen as princeps Avarum? As a member of the ruling family in Bulgaria, he is a prince by blood and his leadership of the

According to Einhard, the two consecutive Bulgarian missions have been headed by the same person, who was held in high esteem by the Bulgarian ruler.⁵⁷ During the second mission in 826, a rumour has reached the emperor, that the Bulgarian khan has been killed or removed from power. For this reason he held the „*legate of his* (Omurtag's – P. G.) *kingdom*” (*legatos regi eorum*) in question till this „*fama*” has been clarified. Even more, Louis sent count Bertrich to „*the keepers of the Avar border*” in Carinthia, so he could find out the truth. This suggests that this *cani zauci* has been really close to the Bulgarian ruling house and could be assumed that he has been held by the Franks till the political situation in Bulgaria has become clear. Priority in this case had the question of the succession in Pliska (Pliska), so it is perfectly reasonable to expect that this has been the main reason for the Frankish emperor to hold the high-ranked representative of the Bulgarian khan's court. After it has become clear that the rumour was untrue, „*the emperor received the envoy and sent him back without response*” (to Omurtag's request to establish a border between the Frankish and the Bulgarian state) and entrusted the governors of the Pannonian border Balderih and Gerold to monitor „*for any movement... of the Bulgarians*”.

However, the role of the Bulgarian prince Zvinitsa/Zvinich as *cani zauci* for now is only a hard to prove possibility.

Avars to the east of Tisza has been giving him that right. In Aachen he is ahead of an embassy consisting of the elite of the Avar aristocracy, with the *tudun* himself present. There is reason to believe that he has held the supreme power over the Avars and the other people in the eastern and south-eastern territories of the Khaganate during its disintegration.

All this leads to a new assessment of the Bulgarian-Avar and respectively the Bulgarian-Slavic

⁵⁶ P. Pavlov assumes that he has been born only around 795, based on the common but wrong belief that Omurtag is a son of Krum (PAVLOV 2015, 181–183).

⁵⁷ LIBI 1960, 36–37, note 6.

relationship in the eastern and south-eastern regions of the former Khaganate, as well as of the Bulgarian-Frankish and Frankish-Byzantine relationships in the second decade of the 9th c. Considered in broader chronological and territorial frame they present important reference points for a more complete clarification of the connection between the terms „Avars” and „Avar culture” and the history of Danubian Bulgaria from its establishment to the end of the 9th c.

By the words of the early 7th c. historian Teophylactes Simmokata, the ethnonym „Avars” is a pseudonym adopted by the so-called Varhonites (Uar and Huns) in Eastern Europe and from there they carried it over as their name „*in Europe and Pannonia*” before the rule of the emperor Mauricius (582–602).⁵⁸ He thinks that the reason for the adoption and establishment of the central-Asian ethnonym is the conviction „*among the Scythian people*” that the „*Avar tribe is the most skilful*” and possesses an insuperable power. By the power of this conviction, the Avars enforced their authority among the settled or settling around the Istrum people and already back then became an universal for them ethnic name. This is especially valid for the conquered by the Avars Bulgarians in the Carpathian basin, usually referred to as „Pannonian” or „Tiszian”.

In the scientific literature it is accepted that the Danubian Bulgarians are called „Avars” in the 10th c. Byzantine sources, because of their „Scythian” origin and because of the historical fact that they have lived in the boundaries of the Khaganate and have become a part of the early and middle Avar language and cultural community.⁵⁹ It appears that identity between the names „Avars” and „Bulgarians” has been assumed already in the Hungarian Anonym, as there is no mention of the Avars and their Khaganate, but mentions that the Magyar led by Arpad met the Bulgarians, who according to him have occupied the lands to the east of Danube from the times of Attila’s huns. Because of that, already

D. Simonyi assumed that the surviving after the end of the 8th c. Avar commoners has been recorded in the sources as Bulgarians.⁶⁰ Lately in support of this assumption has also spoken L. Balogh, who thinks that in the Frankish chronicle from 811 „huns” could be not only the Avars but also the Unogundur-Bulgarians.⁶¹

According to the assessment of W. Pohl, the early Avar community has a complex ethnic structure and incorporates local and newly settled people, among which the Bulgarians in the first place.⁶² In his analysis he concludes that they are *Heerevölker*, and that the Avar ethnogenesis ends with the symbiosis of the „horse” people in the Khaganate. This is also confirmed by the words of the author of *Miracula* for the end of the 7th c., that the acceptance of the subordinate population as „*own people*” by the khagan „*is a habit among the Avars*”, and he appoints for them an „*archont*” from the Bulgarian aristocracy, as is the case with Kuber.⁶³ According to another modern historian – Panos Sofulis – the people of the Avar confederation were connected by origin and language with the local Bulgarian population and adopts Pohl’s conclusion that it is impossible to differentiate a separate Avar identity, because of the common way of life of many of the people in the Khaganate.⁶⁴ Towards 804–805 capcanus by the name of Teodor could have been Bulgarian, although it is more probable that he has been an „ethnic Avar” and because of that he has withdrawn close to the old Avar aristocracy at the Bavarian border, after the conquest of the lands to the east of Tisza by the Bulgarian state. After he has been pushed west together with a group of loyal to the khagan Avar population, in the Little Hungarian plane and the Western Carpats, a population of Avars, Bulgarians and others of Easter-European origin has remained, as it is registered by the archaeological studies. It has been under the command of a new bearer of the title *tudun* and other „Avar” *primores*. The Slavic tribes there have also been left under the rule of their own *ducaes*.

⁵⁸ GIBI 1958, 338–339; MORAVCSIK 1958, 48, 70–76.

⁵⁹ VÉKONY 1996, 328.

⁶⁰ SIMONYI 1964, 195–200; SIMONYI 1980, 81.

⁶¹ BALOGH 2017, 231–248

⁶² POHL 2002, 215–236.

⁶³ GIBI 1960, 159.

⁶⁴ SOPHULIS 2012, 182.

Above all of them however has stood a representative of the ruling family in Plisk oba (Pliska), who had the functions of an „*ombritag*” – a prince of the Avars. That in the summer and autumn of 811 has been Krum’s younger brother, the future *kanas uvigi* – Omurtag.

The situation in which these events unfold is a consequence of the processes of deepening decline and gradual weakening of the central power in the Khaganate, in the periphery of which separatist tendencies have appeared at an early stage.⁶⁵ At the same time in Danubian Bulgaria a centralised system of governance has gradually been established, and it became a factor in the process of integration of the Bulgarians from the neighbouring eastern and south-eastern areas of the Khaganate. It becomes stronger after the beginning of the Frankish-Avar war in 791. As a result, probably already under Kardam’s rule (after 776–after 796), the role of the aristocracy of the Awarischen Bulgaren in the governing and the culture of Danubian Bulgaria, grows. Kardam’s successor – Krum is being considered by some scholars (in my opinion not without foundation!) as a progenitor of a new (?) dynasty. The Byzantine authors claim that its members from the 10th c., have had „Avar`s” or „Northern-Kothrag`s” origin.

All this gives the reason to assume that with his legitimacy not only as *cani zauci* – khan’s envoy of his ruling brother – **khanas uvigi* Krum, but also as „*Avar princeps*”, Omurtag has sought from Charlemagne official recognition of his own status in the eastern land of the Khaganate, as well as recognition of those lands as part of the Bulgarian state, or at least in the sphere of its immediate interests. The main argument for that has been the domination in the internal political life of the Bulgarian ethnicity over the local „Avar-Slavic” society.

It cannot really be doubted that the demands of Krum’s brother from 811 have been rejected in Aachen. The reason has not only been Charlemagne’s unwillingness to have a strong neighbor. He also has had to consider the priority of the Frankish-Byzantine relationship. Immediately after

Nicefor I’s defeat his son in law and successor, Mihail I (811–813) has sent an embassy to the Frankish emperor, confirming the earlier concluded „peace” between the two empires.⁶⁶ The Byzantine envoys in 812 „praised” and addressed Charlemagne as „*emperor and basileus*” exactly because of his support during the war with Bulgaria. The same chronicle notes about the early spring of 813 that „*to fortify the peace with emperor Mihail*” Charlemagne has sent an embassy of his own to Constantinople. The anti-Bulgarian direction of the „peace” sought after by both empires is not explicitly stated, but the fact that the Frankish mission arrives on the eve of the major march against Bulgaria prepared by Mihail I is showing that rather clearly. Another fact that should not be underestimated is the support from the Roman pope, received in the end of 812, who blessed the agreement concluded by both emperors. In his biography of Charlemagne, Einhard summarizes: „*the emperors in Constantinople – Nicefor, Mihail and Leo voluntarily sought his friendship and union, and they have been sending to him too many envoys*”.⁶⁷ But unfortunately, there are no details mentioned about the essence of the „*healthy union*” in question, besides that it has been entered from the Frankish side to settle the argument between the two sides about the adopted by Charlemagne title „emperor”. It, as it is known, has been announced by the pope already in the year 800. Charlemagne’s aim stated explicitly in the *foedus firmissimum* from 812–813: „*there should be no occasion for misunderstanding (scandali) between the agreeing sides*”, suggests that he has had in mind the declared in November 811 claim of the Bulgarians over a part of the Khaganate’s legacy.⁶⁸ The Greek saying quoted (and written in Greek) by Einhard: „*To have the Franks as friends, but not as neighbours*” has surely been known in Bulgaria, so Krum, and also mainly his successor – Omurtag have undertaken peaceful, but at the end also military initiatives to secure the border to the north-west.

Omurtag has been confronted with the Byzantine-Frankish „*unia*” already in the first months of

⁶⁵ POHL 2002, 288 sqq.

⁶⁶ LIBI 1960, 33–34; SOPHULIS 2012, 193–194.

⁶⁷ LIBI 1960, 32.

⁶⁸ SOPHULIS 2012, 193.

his rule as *kanas uvigi*. Information about this is found in a text from Annalista Saxo from 814, announcing that on August the 1st – only 4 months after Krum's death, Louis the Pioux (814–840) received „greek envoys” „who wanted help against the Bulgarians and the other barbarian tribes”.⁶⁹ Obviously, immediately after the death of his brother, Omurtag has advanced against Byzantium and that prompted the request for help, which under the circumstances could not have been anything but military and from the north-west of Bulgaria. This is suggested by the words of the Saxon chronicler, that the help of the Franks should have been directed *contra Bulgares et ceteras barbaras gentes*. As we already stated, the Bulgarian military has included ethnic Avars, probably still under the command of their *tudun* from 811, and Slavs under the command of their princes. They should have had the leading places among the *barbaras gentes*. The requested by Leo V (813–820) military intervention from Louis the Pioux has been directed against Bulgarian territories and above all against Omurtag's allies, among which we should recognize ethnic Avars, Bulgarians under Avar influence and other ethnicities, like Wallachians in the eastern and south-eastern parts of the former Khaganate, for example. We do not know if there has been any military activity in the end of 814 and the beginning of 815. There is no information about the condition of the Bulgarian *societas* with the local population in the region. The information about the aims among some of them around 827 suggest that the Franks have been maintaining tensions in the local aristocracy until the treaty between the two states in 832, i.e. after Omurtag's death.

The political and diplomatic task, initiated by Omurtag with the embassies from 824 and 825–826 to Louis the Pioux – the settlement of the question about „the borders and limits between Franks and Bulgarians”⁷⁰ should be seen as a continuation of his unsuccessful attempt in that direction from 811, Einhard however insists that the Bulgarian mission from 824 has been „unusual embassy, never before seen in the Frankish state”. This explicitly howev-

er makes his statement suspicious. The activity in the relationship between the two countries from the first years of the 9th c. when Charlemagne, defeating the Avars, reached the Bulgarian borders, raises legitimate suspicions in the full credibility of the statement of his biographer above. The Frankish chronicles give enough examples about the activity of the Bulgarian state in Upper and Lower Pannonia during the times of Louis the Pioux and about the relationships with the principalities and people along its north-western borders. There it is evident that the Frankish diplomacy has followed closely the events in Bulgaria and was familiar with the nature of Krum's and Omurtag's demands.⁷¹ In this line of thought we have to pay attention to the fact that Einhard has made his statement on the occasion of Charlemagne's return embassy to the Bulgarian capital, sent in 824. It could have really been the first, but from the Frankish side. The Bulgarian demands certainly must have been based on those from 811 and very similar. The second refusal of the Franks has been predetermined – then and in the following years – due to the difficult but successfully forged Frankish-Byzantine union. This is confirmed by the chronicles, which clearly show that in 811–812, as well as in 824, there has been an active diplomatic exchange between the Eastern and the Western Christian empires. The aim of the court chronicles in these circumstances should have been to discredit Omurtag's diplomatic initiative from 824, presenting it as unexpected and suspicious („*pretext as if to make peace*”), and not as a reasonable and adequate after the one from 811. Also, that one surely has intentionally been presented by the nameless chronicler in such a way, so it was not revealed that behind *princeps Avarum* and *canizauci* actually stands the Bulgarian prince Omurtag.

After this excursion, we should try to specify the territory in the borders of the former Khaganate, which has been under the control of the Bulgarian „*ombritag*”. The Frankish chronicle from 811 points Pannonia and the basin of Middle Danube out as targets for Charlemagne's troops. The term „Pannonia” in the Carolingian tradition is rather broad and

⁶⁹ LIBI 1965, 141.

⁷⁰ LIBI 1960, 36–37; GEORGIEV 2014, 107 sqq.

⁷¹ LIBI 1960, 23, 31–39, 41–43, 364.

covers „Avaria” to the Middle Danube.⁷² The Frankish operation from the spring and summer of 811 has been directed towards its furthest eastern and south-eastern parts around the Danube, possibly on the left bank of Middle Danube, too. Coincidentally, Einhard in his biography of Charlemagne claims that after his war with the Khaganate, the borders of his state incorporated „both Pannonias and the lying on the other side of the Danube, Dacia”.⁷³ The Sengal monk also points out that the „belligerent Charles” conquered not only „Huns” (=Avars), but also „the Bulgarians and many more rather cruel tribes”, specifying after that, that there have been „omne Sclavorum genus et Bulgarum”.⁷⁴ According to him, those people and tribes controlled lands which did not allow the Franks to travel „to Greece” so he mostly means the lands to the south-east of Lower Pannonia.⁷⁵ At the end of his narrative about Charlemagne’s conquest of the Avars, he specifically points out: „And the Bulgarians (obviously the ones to the east and north-east from the Middle Danube – P.G.) he left alone, because after destroying the Huns, they apparently did not appear to be a danger for the Frankish kingdom at all”. This means that the eastern parts of the Khaganate together with the Bulgarians living there has remained outside of the direct interest of the Franks and their plans for conquest already after 796. This is evident by the range of the Carolingian religious activity during the first half of the 9th c. Despite announcing the christianization of the just defeated Avars in 796 during the *conventus episcoporum ad ripas Danubii*, over the next decades the process of evangelization and creation of a church organization, overseen by the prelates of Passau and Salzburg, reached just the right bank of the Middle Danube. It did not proceed in the interconnection in the lower parts of Drava and Sava, which without a doubt remained in the borders of Danubian Bulgaria.⁷⁶ These vast territories

and their population remained through the whole 9th c. in the reach of the Bulgarian state’s political interests. Until the point of its Christianization just after the middle of the century, a pillar of its power and interests there must have been „the Bulgarians and other barbaric people”, against which was directed the union between the two Empires. They are those about which the Notker of St. Gall (Monk of Sengal) says that have remained unconquered by the „belligerent Charles” („the Bulgarians and many more rather cruel tribes”). From the point of view of the Frankish government during the first half of the 9th c., they or some of them have been taxed „Abodrites (i.e. *Abodites, people who inhabit the border regions of the Empire), who we vulgarly call Predenecentes”, despite the vagueness of their localization.⁷⁷

According to the translation of the text about the Bulgarian conquest of parts of the Khaganate in the Lexicon of Souida, made by T. Olajos, it happened after „an easy defeat (capture)”.⁷⁸ That is completely natural, as there was a population with Proto-Bulgarian and Slavic origin present, which aimed to integrate with the Bulgarian state, which at that time was ruled by a khan with „Avar” origin.⁷⁹ The report from the Lexicon’s author, about the „easy capture” of the Avars by the Bulgarians, about the adoption of the specific Avar clothing, about the lessons, learned by the Bulgarians from the Avar „captives” (sic!), as well as the reasons for the ruin of their state, demonstrate different aspects of a process of convergence of the Lower Danubian Bulgarian society and the „Late-Avar”, which has started long before the end of the 8th c. Evidently this fact has made a strong impression on the anonymous author from the end of the 10th c., who in three places under the heading „Bulgarians” repeats the text about the ease with which the „Avars” from the Khaganate have surrendered their territory, governing experience

⁷² WOLFRAM 1986, 41–42; WOLFRAM 2014, 28–29; POHL 2002, 327.

⁷³ LIBI 1960, 31.

⁷⁴ LIBI 1960, 283.

⁷⁵ WOLFRAM 2014, 28–29; FILIPEC 2015, 91 sqq.

⁷⁶ SZÖKE 2009, 400–401, Abb. 3; FILIPEC 2015, 243 sqq, sl. 90.

⁷⁷ BOBA 1984, 29–37; GEORGIEV 2014, 107–124; FILIPEC 2015, 101–102, 114, 128–129, sl. 36, 49.

⁷⁸ OLAJOS 2002, 230–235; GIBI 1965, 309–310.

⁷⁹ About a process of Slaviniization of the Avar ethno-cultural community in the boundaries of the Bulgarian state during the 9th c., see FILIPEC 2015, 91–92, n. 226.

and household culture to the Krum's Bulgarians.⁸⁰ Having in mind the date of his essay, he probably has been familiar with the information from Patriarch Nikolai Mystic, Joseph Genesisius, Leo Deacon, and possibly other authors, about the „Avar” origin of the Bulgarian rulers of the 10th century.⁸¹

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⁸⁰ ZLATARSKI 1970, 545–550; PAVLOV 1997, 59, note 19; SOPHULIS 2012, 181; BOZHILOV 2017, 281–282.

⁸¹ Translated by Petyo Georgiev.

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PRINCEPS AVARUM И CANIZAUCI В ААХЕНЕ ОСЕНЬЮ 811 ГОДА
О БОЛГАРО-ФРАНКСКИХ ОТНОШЕНИЯХ ПРИ ВЛАДЕТЕЛЯХ
КРУМ (802?–814) И ОМУРТАГ (814–831)

PAVEL GEORGIEV

Автор предлагает новые возможности для интерпретации франкских, домашних и византийских источников в связи с болгарским политическим контролем над территориями разгромленного Карлом Великим Аварским хаганатом. Основное внимание уделено свидетельству от делегации во главе с *cani zauci* и *princeps Avarum*, отправленную в Аахене в ноябре 811 года. Его согласование с болгарскими и византийскими источниками ведёт к следующим выводам:

1. С большей вероятностью можно принять, что дипломатическая миссия при Карле Великом в 811 году, включающая в себя представителей аварской общности во главе с её тудуном и славянских племенных князей, была возглавлена болгарским принцем – Омуртагом, младшим братом владельца Крума (802? – 814 г.) в качестве князя (*princeps*) и *ombritag*, т. е. гегемона обров (аваров) в северо-западных пределах после 803 года и „ханского любимого младшего брата“ (*khani sev`ingi* или *khani sev(inč) ingi*). В Аахене он представился как *cani zautzi*, т. е. своей тюркоязычной должностью „ханского посланца“.
2. По-видимому, миссии *khanas uvigi* Омуртага (814–831) к императору Людовику в 824 и 825–826 годах также возглавлялись членом владетельской семьи в Плиске обе (в Плиске), может быть, его вторым сыном - *Zvinita/Zvinichis*. В них вероятно были представитель или представители заселённых между 813 и 837 годами в *Trans-Danubian Bulgaria* (по всей вероятности в районе Нижней Тисы) пленников армянского происхождения из Восточной Фракии. Один из их руководителей носил имя *Tzantzès*, а его сын – Стилиян Заутца, и его потомки приобрели в Византии известность под фамильным именем *Ζαούτζης, Ζαούτζας*. Оно полностью совпадает с прото-болгарским служебным титулом (должностью) *Ζαούτζης, Ζαούτζας* и, наверное, берёт своё начало оттуда. Основываясь на этом, оформляется заключение, что *Τζάντζην* (Цансiю воєводѣ) выполнял функции курьера или посланца болгарского государства в дипломатических миссиях до 837 года.
3. Прослеженные свидетельства, факты и обстоятельства в связи с болгарскими дипломатическими миссиями 811, 824 и 825–826 годов дают новые доказательства о контроле Дунайской Болгарии над юго-восточными частями Аварского хаганата после его распада в периоде 791–803 годов. Они вносят свой вклад в выяснении важных сторон её взаимоотношений как с Восточно-франкским королевством, так и с местным населением из авар, болгар и славян.