

ANTÆUS

35-36

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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)
FMSSt	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)

ZBIGNIEW ROBAK

**CHRONOLOGY AND PERIODISATION OF IMPORTS OF CAROLINGIAN
MILITARY EQUIPMENT IN THE CARPATHIAN BASIN BETWEEN
THE EIGHTH AND THE TENTH CENTURIES**

Zusammenfassung: In diesem Beitrag soll eine vorgeschlagene Periodisierung der karolingischen Importe (ca. 750–910) in bestimmten Regionen Mittel- und Südeuropas mit besonderer Berücksichtigung vom Karpatenbecken behandelt werden. Die Annahme beruht darauf, dass die Mode, Tracht und Waffen der West- und Südwestslawen (insbesondere bei den seit dem Ende des 8. Jahrhunderts unter dem karolingischen Einfluss lebenden Gruppen des Karpatenbeckens) ähnlichen Veränderungen unterworfen waren wie im karolingischen Reich. Das Hauptproblem ist, die genauen Anfänge dieses Prozesses als Grundlage für eine weitere Synchronisation festzustellen. Anhand der typologischen und chronologischen Analyse der karolingischen Importe aus dem behandelten Raum konnten vier Phasen mit territorialer Dimension abgetrennt werden. Der Vergleich der karolingischen Fundhorizonte mit den historischen Ereignissen führte zu einigen interessanten Ergebnissen. Dies erlaubt, bestimmte Phänomene in der materiellen Hinterlassenschaft dieser Gebiete mit den politischen und militärischen Aktionen der Franken in Mitteleuropa in der karolingischen Epoche aufeinander abzustimmen.

Keywords: Carpathian Basin, Early Middle Ages, Carolingian period, imports, *militaria*

The paper presents a proposal for the periodisation of Carolingian influences (ca. 750–910) in certain regions of Central and Southern Europe lying beyond the borders of the Carolingian Empire and in the areas marking its farthest eastern borderlands, particularly in the Carpathian Basin. Based on the typological and chronological analysis of the Carolingian imports known from the western and south-western Slavic lands, I distinguished four phases of imports of individual artefact types into particular areas (*fig. 1a*). The chronology was established using archaeological methods. The horizons were distinguished based on an analysis of mass material, mainly grave goods.¹ The chronology rests on two pillars: a comparison with similarly furnished, but better dated burials from the eastern territories of the Carolingian Empire, mainly Bavaria and Saxony, and a general scheme of stylistic transformations in Carolingian ornament.

The method applied here is based on the assumption that the culture of the western and south-western Slavs (particularly the groups living in the Carpathian Basin, who since the end of the eighth century remained under strong influences of Carolingian culture) simultaneously underwent similar changes in terms of fashion, attire and weaponry as the Carolingian Empire, particularly in its eastern parts. Typological and aesthetic convergences of artefacts such as weaponry, horse gear and warriors' costume, particularly spurs and belt sets, are noticeable at first glance, even from a very cursory comparison of these types from territories of Western, Central and Southern Europe. The key issue when considering this hypothesis was to determine the exact moment when these changes began in the culture of the Slavs, the moment that later served as a basis for synchronisation.

¹ *Robak 2013; Robak 2014*; this study was supported by APVV 14-0842 and VEGA 2/0001/18 projects.

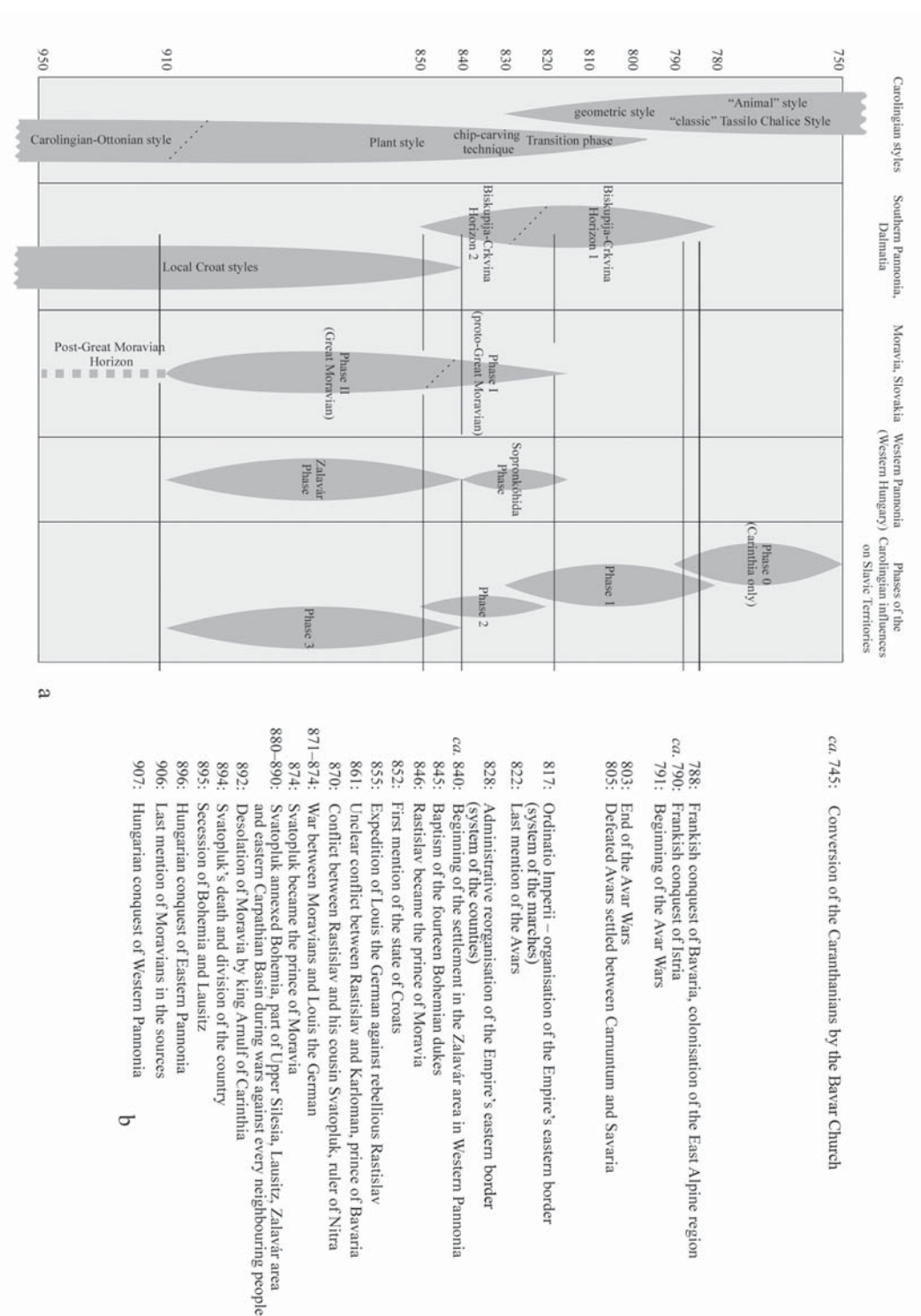


fig. 1. a. Chronology and periodisation of phases of Carolingian influences on Slavic territories, particularly in the Carpathian Basin; b. Chronology and periodisation of phases of Carolingian influences in comparison with historical events (Robak 2014)

The absolute chronology of the successive phases relies on a mass source material and thus it can only be an approximate reflection of the so-called periods of the intense use of items considered as chronological determinants. Therefore, it seems prudent to add a margin of error to each sequence (given the possibility that some types had been introduced earlier as innovations or had been in use longer as obsolete, outdated items). This perfectly describes, for example, the overlap of the stylistic phases of the Biskupija-Crkvina horizon, confirmed by the stratigraphy of burials.² For such a brief period of time as the one analysed here (and taking into account the observed extreme and fast variation of types in time), it seems that this margin cannot be greater than a few/several years, although the actual disappearance of the horizon could take longer.³ Based on artefacts made in the Tassilo Chalice Style,⁴ but also on Merovingian artefacts,⁵ we may assert that the disappearance of a given horizon of artefacts from circulation lasted about 20-30 years, corresponding roughly to one generation, and thus the duration of an artificially constructed time unit should not be shorter. Old items continue to be used during that time, but as a consequence of changes in fashion or the decrease in the number of potential customers (as in the case of Avar craft products after 803), the production of those types gradually declines. High-quality items and those made of copper-alloy or precious metals were probably used slightly longer due to their appearance or value, and they could also be set aside and used later, for example as burial gifts.

The basic archaeological source used in the analysis was provided by sets of artefacts deposited in burials.⁶ The chronological and typological framework of the study is based on the comparison of burial assemblages organised into horizons (*fig. 2*) containing particular series of items from inhumation cemeteries associated with the culture of the western Slavs inhabiting areas of today Moravia, Bohemia, Slovakia, Lower Austria and Hungary, with horizons of finds of the so-called North-Western Circle (covering Lower Saxony and Frisia⁷ in the eighth-ninth centuries) and the so-called Southern Circle (covering north-eastern Bavaria from the turn of the seventh and eighth centuries until the ninth century).⁸ These horizons were based on recurrent series of assemblages dated and sequenced with archaeological methods that were underpinned by independent chronological determinants, including coins. Gathering large amounts of data allows for drawing some general conclusions about typical equipment, correlations of the artefacts or the chronology of a given horizon, which in cases of single assemblages is always burdened, as I have already mentioned, with large errors. Furthermore, typological and chronological analyses of Carolingian-type artefacts from territories inhabited by western and southern Slavs served as a basis for outlining the stylistic and typological transformations of the various artefacts and other elements found in association with them.

Phase 0 (Late Merovingian/Early Carolingian horizon, ca. 750–780/790)

The earlier date is conventionally accepted as the beginning of the Carolingian period in Europe, although during this period, we cannot identify a clear-cut horizon of imports from Western Europe to the Carpathian Basin. This phase can mainly be observed in Carinthia, marked by the appearance of burials of the Grabelsdorf type containing warriors' attire of the late Merovingian/early Carolingian type, including mainly spurs with short yokes and late Avar or Byzantine belt

² *Petrinec 2009 226.*

³ *Steuer 1998 144; Steuer 2010.*

⁴ *Robak 2016.*

⁵ *Steuer 1998 144.*

⁶ *Robak 2013 35–44, Tab. 1–2.*

⁷ *Kleemann 2002.*

⁸ *Pöllath 2002.*

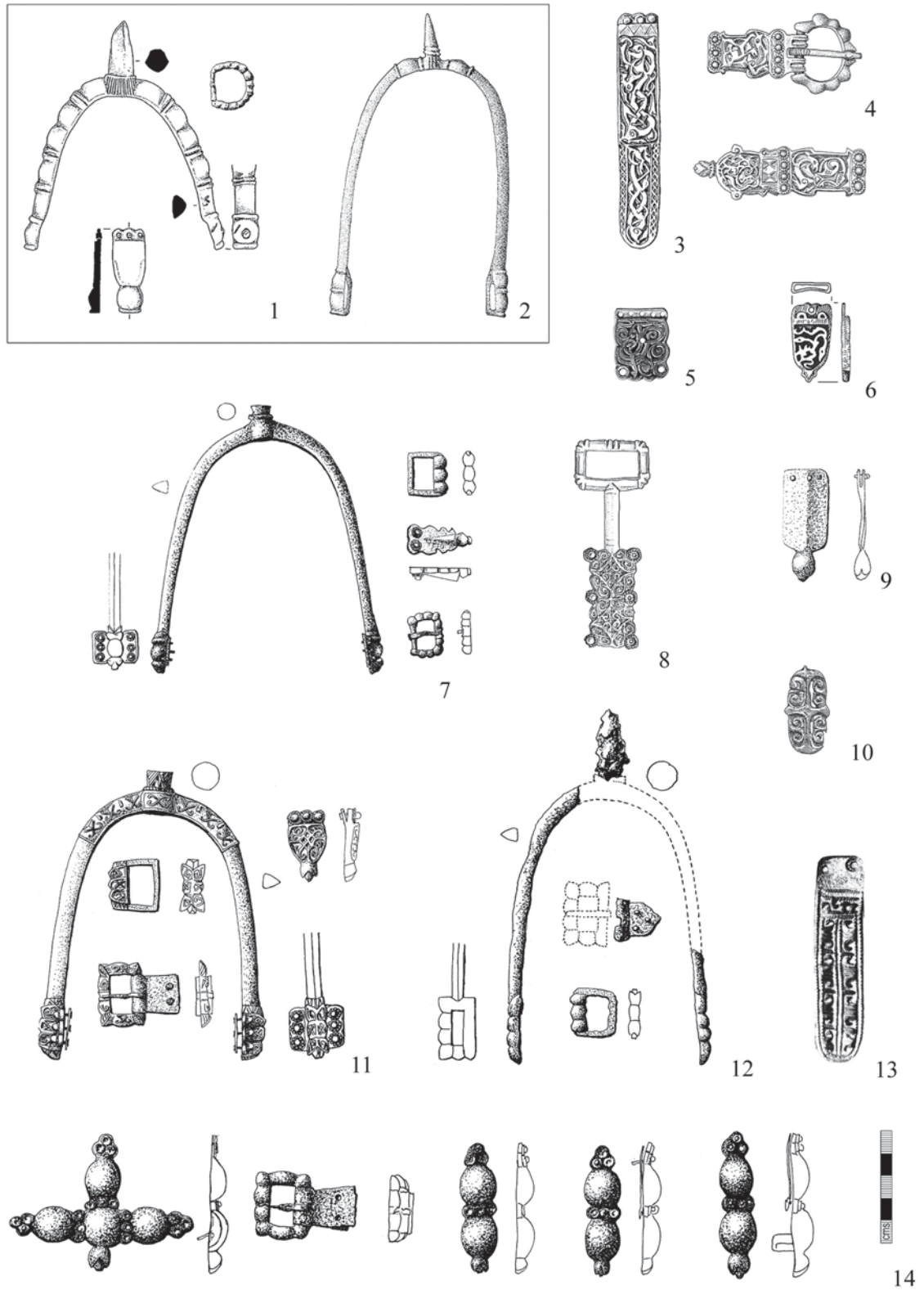


fig. 2. Types of items, assemblages and examples of ornaments typical for the first phase of the Carolingian influences on Slavic territories, 790–820/830 (Robak 2014)

fittings as well as other costume accessories. This can most likely be attributed to the region's geographic location between the areas inhabited by the Bavarians and the Avars that had a major impact on the culture of the Slavs living there. However, this phase can only be identified owing to the tradition of inhumation burials and the early Christianisation of this area (around 740), before the custom of not furnishing graves with weaponry and horse gear elements became widespread.⁹ This phase can thus be linked to the pre-Köttlach horizon. It seems, however, that the end of this "horizon" should be placed at the onset of the ninth century, possibly in its first third,¹⁰ and it would thus also overlap, at least partially, with the next phase of Carolingian imports. During this phase, particularly towards its end, we witness imports of single items in eastern Alpine areas and southern Pannonia (*fig. 2. 1–2*). This can be directly associated with the intensification of Carolingian political and military activities in the region. These items, however, are usually found out of their archaeological context and thus their presence could be a consequence of later influences, when older, already used items were perhaps imported. Phase 0 directly precedes the earliest horizon of Carolingian imports to the Slavic territories, which is particularly noticeable in Slovenia and Croatia (commonly referred to as the Biskupija-Crkvina horizon).

Items characteristic of Phase 0 include spurs with loop (loops decorated with swellings) accompanied by narrow, pointed or U-shaped strap-ends with faceted lower part and loops decorated with double swellings, all of which continue forms used in the late Merovingian period, hence the name of the phase. These elements are absent from assemblages characteristic of Phase III of the North-Western Circle, which Jörg Kleemann dated to *ca.* 740–770,¹¹ which corresponds to Phase II of the so-called Southern Circle according to Ralph Pöllath, dated to *ca.* 750–780/790.¹²

Phase 0 is lacking in most areas inhabited by the western and southern Slavs, which seems to be a consequence not of their isolation and the Avars' dominance, but rather of a distinct cultural model: people were simply uninterested in impulses from the West. This hypothesis is bolstered by the fact that despite confirmed contacts between the Polabian Slavs and the Merovingian and, later, the Carolingian Empire, there is no trace of a mass horizon of late Merovingian finds in the areas inhabited by the north-western Slavs, free of the Avar dominance. A similar situation can be observed in the Bohemian Basin.¹³ Moreover, it must be borne in mind that the Carolingian Empire had no direct influence on Slavic territories during this period. It was not until the 770s, when the Carolingians subjugated the Bavarians and conquered northern Italy, that the Carolingian Empire became a direct neighbour of the Slavic territories.

Phase 1 (Early Carolingian horizon, ca. 790–820/830)

This phase begins with expansion of the Carolingian Empire to areas occupied by the Avar Khaganate and the commencement of hostilities in the Middle Danube Basin, in the western and southern parts of Pannonia, and finally the advance into areas along the Dalmatian coast, which led to the gradual subordination of these areas and the mass import of weaponry. The characteristic articles of this phase include mainly loop spurs (*fig. 2. 2*) accompanied by strap fittings with a knob, so-called leaf-shaped fittings and D-shaped buckles decorated with swellings. During the later phase of this horizon in Dalmatia, we find assemblages containing spurs with side rivets (*fig. 2. 3*) and spurs with buckles (*fig. 2. 14*) accompanied by knobbed or leaf-shaped strap fittings,

⁹ Eichert 2010 164.

¹⁰ Breibert 2005 427; Szőke 2008; Szőke 2010 18–19.

¹¹ Kleemann 2002 295.

¹² Pöllath 2002 Abb. 34.

¹³ Robak 2016.

rectangular buckles decorated with swellings as well as loops decorated with swellings. Another characteristic group of fittings, namely large, strap-ends with a terminal knob and roof-shaped cross section are typical for Dalmatia (*fig. 2. 8*).

The dominant ornamental style of the Carolingian imports in this phase is the Tassilo Chalice Style, whose classical animal ornamentation was one of the principal traits of early Carolingian culture (*fig. 2. 4–6*). At the end of this phase we find also articles decorated solely with geometrical motifs associated with the Tassilo Chalice Style, known mainly from Dalmatia (*fig. 2. 9*). Earlier types of weaponry were replaced by newer types such as spurs with long yokes and side rivets and the prototypes of late Carolingian sword fittings (*fig. 2. 13*) or U-shaped fittings, although these were sometimes decorated in the early Carolingian taste (knobs, swellings). Single elements of early Carolingian sword fittings decorated in the Tassilo Chalice Style appear across the entire Slavic territory, although most are clustered in the areas inhabited by the south-western Slavs.

Almost simultaneously with the period of the greatest popularity of the Tassilo Chalice Style, possibly as a consequence of intense warfare, a new ornamental style appears alongside this decorative mode, whose origins are generally traced to the aesthetic irradiation of the so-called Carolingian Renaissance. At the time of its appearance, this new style was characterised by a peculiar dualism, reflected in realistic and unique plant ornaments on the one hand and simplified plant ornaments closely related to the motifs used in the Tassilo Chalice Style on the other (*fig. 2. 11–12*).¹⁴

This phase can be clearly detected in Dalmatia. A well-definable horizon of early Carolingian imports can also be seen in southern Pannonia and Slovenia, an arena of war at the time. Single items classified as early Carolingian occur also in areas of Bohemia, Moravia, western Slovakia and Lower Austria. This is mainly true of strap-ends with knobbed terminal and the fittings of sword sets decorated in the Tassilo Chalice Style. However, finds of this type are scarce in these areas and do not form a consistent horizon, being mostly stray and single finds.¹⁵ Therefore, the appearance of such finds can be linked to Charlemagne's intense military campaigns beyond the eastern borders of his state. These events possibly increased, also indirectly, the inflow of such artefacts into areas inhabited by the Slavs.

Single items in this phase of imports are found mainly in Bohemia (fittings decorated in the Tassilo Chalice Style and knob-decorated fittings, spur fragments and spur fastenings)¹⁶ and in southern Moravia (articles decorated with volutes of the so-called transition phase). Again, all of these are single finds, unassociated with other sword fittings, found without any assemblages, except for one fitting from Grave 108/II in Mikulčice.¹⁷

The end of this phase coincides with the time when articles decorated in the Tassilo Chalice Style, particularly its late, geometric variant decorated also with knobs and swellings were no longer used. It was the period when Carolingian art began to be dominated by early forms of plant ornaments.

Phase 2 (Late Carolingian horizon 1, ca. 820–840/850)

The artefacts characteristic of this phase undoubtedly include articles of the late Carolingian type (*fig. 3*), among them specific types such as spurs with side rivets in association with elongated or U-shaped, often roof-shaped or ribbed strap-ends (*fig. 3. 1*) and loops with oval, often also roof-shaped plates. This phase has sword fittings of trefoil shape (*fig. 3. 3, 13*). The beginnings

¹⁴ *Robak 2013 157–159.*

¹⁵ *Robak 2016.*

¹⁶ *Robak 2016; Profantová 2016.*

¹⁷ *Poulik 1957 326.*

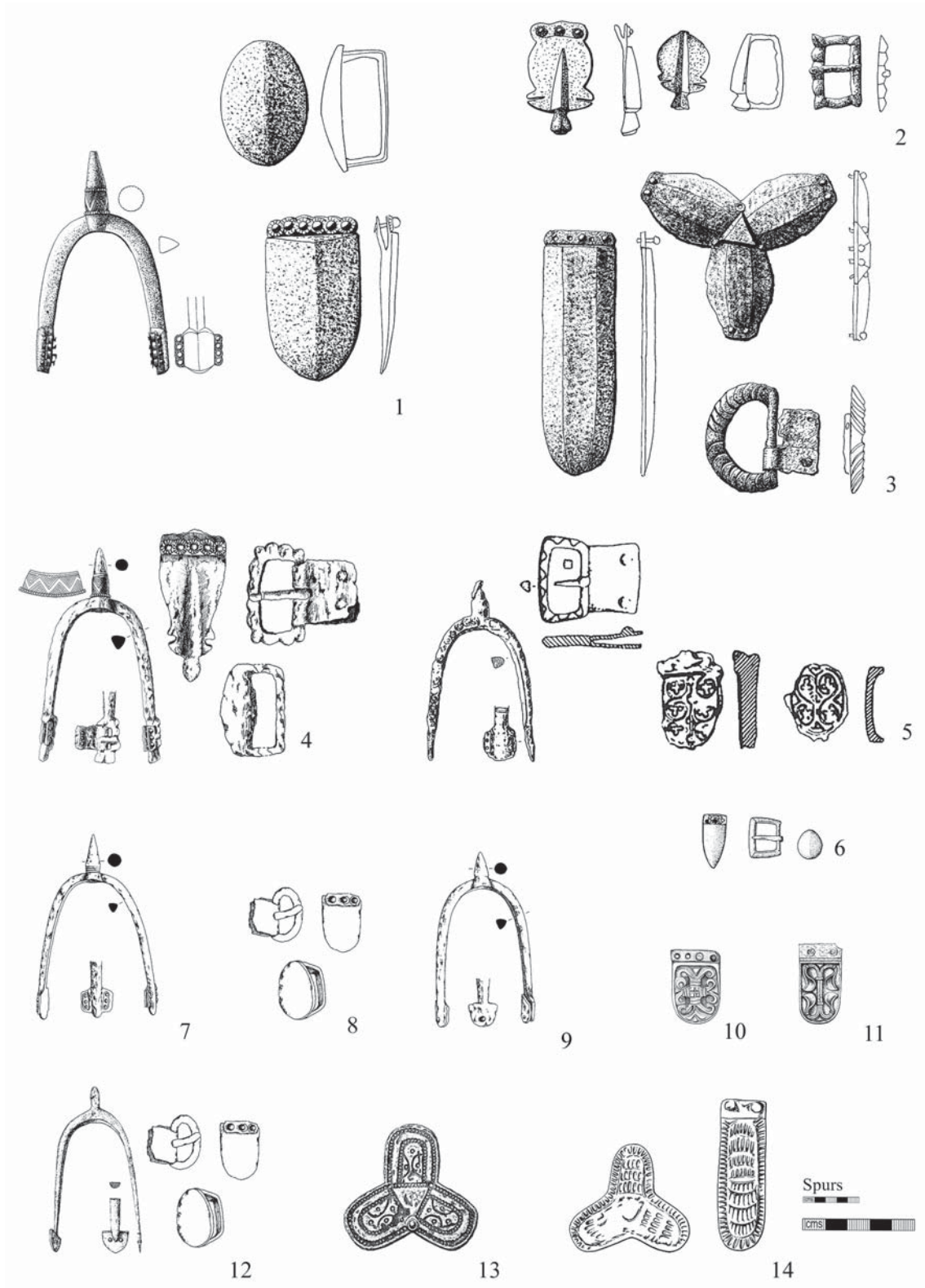


fig. 3. Types of items, assemblages and examples of ornaments typical for the second phase of the Carolingian influences on Slavic territories, 820/830–840/850 AD (Robak 2014)

of regionalisation can be noted in production, particularly in the south-western Slavic territories, where spurs with buckles and decorated prick-spurs were used (*fig. 3. 4*), and in Moravia, where in addition to spurs with side rivets, spurs with heart-shaped plate attached by two rivets became popular (*fig. 3. 12*).

A characteristic ornamental motif is the plant style in its early, rudimentary form made using the chip-carving technique (*fig. 3. 10–11*) or, less frequently, with sliver wire inlay (*fig. 3. 5*). However, the use of these techniques cannot serve as a chronological anchor for the distribution of the ornamental types or for typologies of items. The significant development of plant ornamentation can be noted during this phase.

Assemblages characteristic of this horizon appear in Croatia, Moravia, Slovakia and Bohemia, where they form the first significant horizon of imports of the Carolingian type. Various articles of this phase also appear in southern Poland, although the chronology of their inflow there cannot be restricted to this period and it is possible that they were imported later. A small number of finds is also known from the south-western Slavic territories.

This horizon corresponds to the later phase of the Biskupija-Crkvina horizon both stylistically and chronologically, and can be dated to *ca.* 820–840/850; this period marks the highest probability of the occurrence of artefacts of the Biskupija-Crkvina horizon. Despite some minor differences between the objects found over an extensive area, they are characterised by relatively small typological and stylistic variations, most likely because these items were directly imported or copied from western specimens. Individual types from Western Europe, Dalmatia and Moravia share numerous similarities, also in stylistic terms, and can thus be synchronised with each other.

Phase 3 (Late Carolingian horizon 2, ca. 840/850–910)

The artefacts characteristic of this phase are without exception objects of the late Carolingian type (*fig. 4*). High numbers of assemblages and items falling into this phase are known from Moravia, western Slovakia, Hungary and Bohemia and, to a lesser extent, from Croatia and Slovenia – this difference can be attributed to changes in burial rites and the fact that graves were no longer furnished with weaponry or horse gear.

The characteristic artefacts in this horizon are spurs with heart-shaped plate (*fig. 4. 16*) and particularly plate-rivet spurs (*fig. 4. 7*) accompanied solely by U-shaped (*fig. 4. 6*) or other fittings, but consistent with the stylistics of plates. The production and use of spurs with side rivets (*fig. 4. 15*) and roof-shaped fittings continued in this phase, although their popularity declined significantly during the final third of the ninth century. It must also be noted that this phase lacks “ceremonial” spurs with side rivets decorated in the style characteristic of this phase. It would appear that they were no longer produced and were replaced by lavishly decorated plate-rivet spurs. Rectangular fittings with raised edges as well as transverse ribs gain popularity (*fig. 4. 5*). There is a clear tendency towards longer pricks, particularly at the end of this phase (end of the ninth century), when spurs with very long pricks occur (*fig. 4. 17–19*), alongside the miniaturisation of their strap-end fittings. Many types classified as determinants of this phase are rudimentary pieces made of iron, possibly an indication that these cultural patterns also became popular among less affluent social groups.

The objects of this phase are characterised by stylistic elements and forms modelled on late Carolingian specimens, but with clear regional patterns, particularly in areas of Moravia and western Slovakia, where we can note local varieties of strap fittings with a specific decorative mode (*fig. 4. 9–10*). Although the dominant patterns in Carolingian ornamentation are created from elaborate plant motifs (*fig. 4. 13*), especially from vertical acanthus stems popular mostly in the second third of the ninth century, only a few such items occur in the Slavic territories. Imitations of

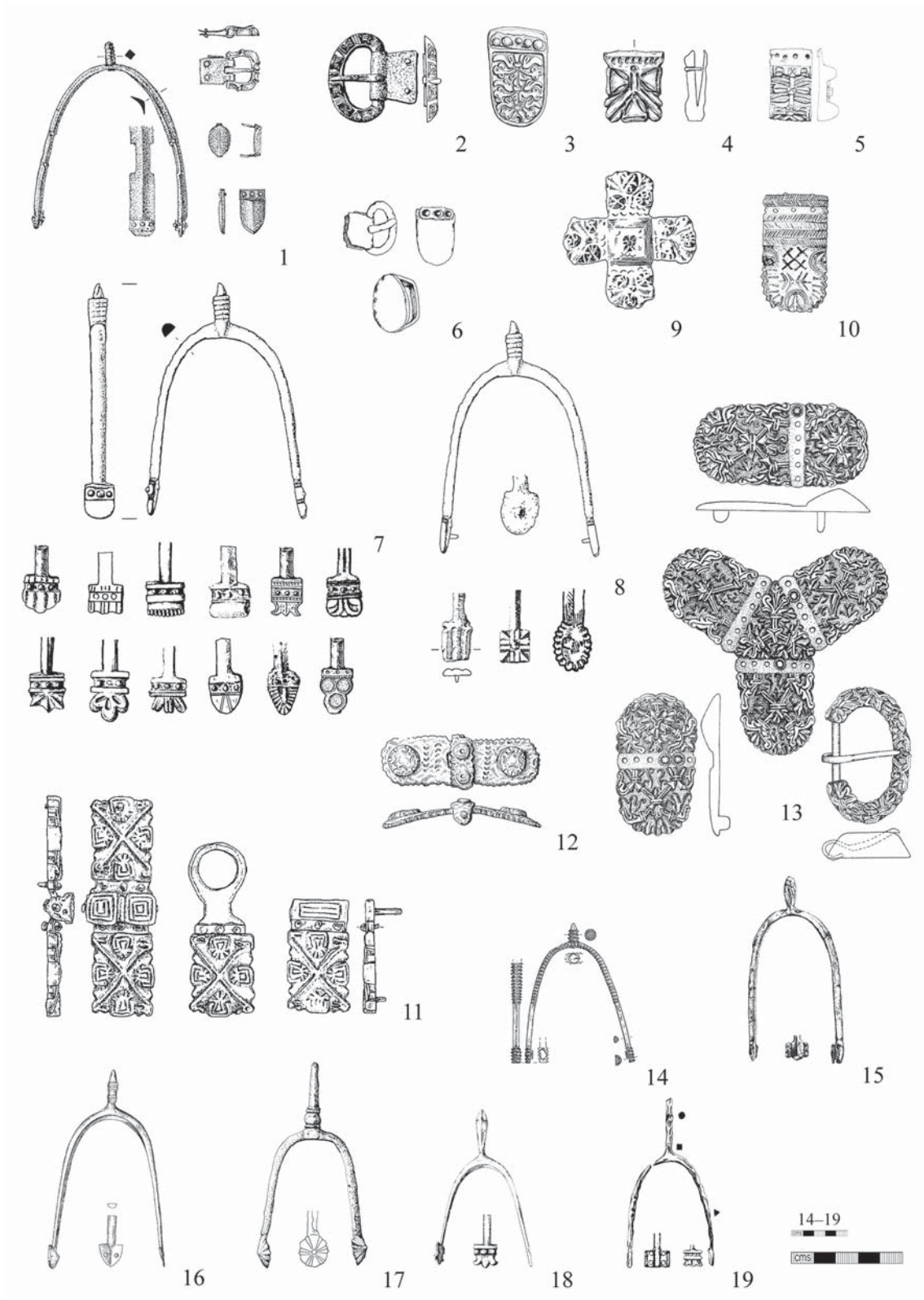


fig. 4. Types of items, assemblages and examples of ornaments typical for the third phase of the Carolingian influences on Slavic territories, 840/850–910 AD (Robak 2014)

Carolingian objects are limited to form and general stylistics, with distinct typological differences such as, for example, the appearance of new types of sword fittings in the eastern borderlands, possibly around the mid-ninth century. These types of fittings are completely unknown in Western Europe (*fig. 4. 11*).

The lack of artefacts from Lower Austria is probably a consequence of a burial custom involving the interment of the dead without any grave goods that spread particularly after these lands were incorporated into the Carolingian Empire. The only exceptions are the objects from the Gars-Thunau stronghold that have strong affinities with Great Moravian finds.

The end of this phase coincides with the collapse of Great Moravia and the arrival of the Hungarian nomads who took control over the Carpathian Basin. Simultaneously, we can observe the stylistic transformations of Western European ornamentation, reflected mainly in the appearance of new plant and animal motifs in the so-called Carolingian–Ottonian style, whose insignificant and scarce traces in the Carpathian Basin can either be linked to the ancient Hungarians' raids or were direct imports to the areas inhabited by the Slavs remaining under the empire's control (Slovenia and territories of eastern Austria). Along with the disappearance of the plant ornament in Western Europe, lavishly decorated sword fittings also vanish. In military fashion there was a return to fastening swords with simple straps and plain spur fastenings. Yet, it must be borne in mind that the use of articles characteristic of the third phase, particularly of its decline, could have continued up to the earlier tenth century. Furthermore, it is possible that the artefact types typical for the later ninth century were not only used, but also produced then, although without any significant reception of cultural or stylistic impulses from Western Europe (the so-called Carolingian–Ottonian style). This period can be described as a "post-Carolingian phase". However, it does not seem necessary to create a separate phase for this period.

The horizon of Carolingian artefacts in western Pannonia

Single artefacts of the Carolingian type, mainly weaponry and horse gear, appear in western Pannonia both in late Avar cemeteries, which can be linked to the Khaganate and to the presence of an Avar population (ethnically possibly also an Avar–Slavic population) after the collapse of the Khaganate,¹⁸ and in cemeteries that can be associated with the so-called pre-Köttlach horizon, which in this region can be dated from the turn of the eighth and ninth centuries to the end of the 830s.¹⁹ These finds, however, do not include any elements of the warriors' attire. In cemeteries assigned to the so-called Sopronkőhida-Pitten-Pottenbrunn group, linked to the above-mentioned horizon, we can note single finds of spurs with heart-shaped plates (*fig. 3. 12*) together with strap fitting sets, alongside finds of bearded axes, winged spearheads and swords of the sax type.²⁰ The cemeteries of the Sopronkőhida-Pitten-Pottenbrunn group in this area can be explicitly linked to the gradual control over western Hungary by the Church and a secular Carolingian administration (following the collapse of the Khaganate and the synod of bishops on the banks of the Danube in 796).²¹

Although the region officially became subordinate to the Carolingian State after the collapse of the Khaganate,²² it was poorly integrated into the state organisation and was still referred to as *Avaria* (*provincia Auarorum, terra Auarorum*). The beginning of a clear horizon of Carolingian artefacts dated from the end of the 830s can be linked to the Empire's administrative reorganisation

¹⁸ Szőke 1991; Szőke 2008 52; Szőke 2010 47.

¹⁹ Szőke 2008; Szőke 2010 18–19.

²⁰ Szőke 2004; Szőke 2014 41.

²¹ Szőke 2008 52; Szőke 2009; Szőke 2014 36–42; Kožiak 2006 130–133.

²² Szőke 2007 411.

by Louis the Pious that resulted in the division of the state into counties (the county of Pannonia was created at this time), followed by settlement activities undertaken by Pribina at the request of Louis the Pious, as recorded in the sources. The goal of these activities was to establish a political and economic centre in the Lake Balaton area.²³ The inhumation cemeteries (including Zalavár, Zalasabbar-Borjúállás and Garabonc-Ófalu), where a series of male burials with Carolingian equipment was found, can be associated with the settlement of large population groups from various areas who possibly arrived together with Pribina from Moravia and/or western Slovakia (which is confirmed by the Slavic names of the members of his retinue), but also, for example, from the Lower Danube region.²⁴

The horizon of the earliest Carolingian imports in eastern Austria and western Hungary is usually referred to as the pre-Köttlach horizon or the horizon of cemeteries of the Sopronkőhida–Pitten–Pottenbrunn type. Over the years, several sites from these regions were added to this group.²⁵ Jochen Giesler defined the pre-Köttlach horizon as a phenomenon preceding the Köttlach culture in the eastern Alpine region.²⁶ The characteristic features that served also as a basis for determining this horizon/group were female graves lavishly equipped with specific sets of adornments and elements of Frankish (early Carolingian) weaponry and Avar belt sets in male graves.²⁷ Recently, Béla Miklós Szőke²⁸ suggested that a new name for this phenomenon, the Ostalpen–Leitha–Neusiedlersee group, would better reflect its nature. Still, the label pre-Köttlach horizon is commonly and traditionally used in the literature.

The dating of the pre-Köttlach horizon remains controversial because the synchronisation of the assemblages typical for this horizon is crucial for dating many cultural phenomena in neighbouring areas, especially in Moravia²⁹ and Hungary.³⁰ Historically, the appearance of articles assigned to the pre-Köttlach horizon in these areas was linked to the settlement in the areas between Enns and the Vienna Woods after the Frankish–Avar war and thus the pre-Köttlach horizon was dated to the earlier ninth century.³¹ However, a comparison of the archaeological assemblages characteristic of this horizon with Western European artefacts led to a revision of the chronology, shifting it back, at least partially, to the later eighth century.³² The finds assigned to the pre-Köttlach horizon could be generally linked to those characterising Phase IV of the North-Western Circle³³ dated to *ca.* 760/770–800/10, which is no longer seriously challenged today.³⁴

A comparison of the artefacts considered as characteristic of the pre-Köttlach horizon with the objects defining specific phases of the North-Western Circle actually confirms that the beginning of the pre-Köttlach horizon should be shifted further back into the eighth century, possibly to its second half, and also supports the hypothesis of its decline at the turn of the eighth and ninth centuries. However, opinions still differ concerning the decline of the pre-Köttlach horizon, whether it should be dated to the turn of the eighth and ninth centuries³⁵ or rather to the first quarter or first third of the ninth century.³⁶ The adoption of this early chronology for western

²³ Szőke 2011.

²⁴ Straub – Tokai 2007; Szőke 2010 16; Szőke 2011 520–521.

²⁵ Breibert 2011 443–445.

²⁶ Giesler 1980 86.

²⁷ Szameit 1991.

²⁸ Szőke 2008 53.

²⁹ Ungerman 2005; Ungerman 2006.

³⁰ Szőke 2008.

³¹ Friesinger 1971 242; Friesinger 1972 156; Giesler 1980 95; Justová 1990 158–160; Szőke 1992.

³² Szameit 1986; Szameit 1991 77.

³³ Kleemann 2002 291–292.

³⁴ Nowotny 2005; Szőke 2010 18–19.

³⁵ Ungerman 2005 718, 741.

³⁶ Breibert 2005 427; Szőke 2008; Szőke 2010 18–19.

Hungary would lead to a hiatus between the end of the pre-Köttlach horizon and the next horizon of burials containing Carolingian imports, the latter reflecting the settlements undertaken by Pribina in the 840s. However, as it has already been pointed out, what we have here is a difference equalling the lifetime of a single generation, raising the point of whether such a brief period can ever be captured using archaeological methods at all? Another question is whether the pace of cultural development across the entire sphere of Carolingian influences was uniform? A comparison of the development in the North-Western Circle, and the Southern Circle³⁷ alongside the comparison of the chronological boundaries of the corresponding phases indicated that there could be minor differences and discrepancies in the order of magnitude of a few or several years, not exceeding the span of a generation.

As Erik Szameit noted, “around the year 800, graves with weaponry and Avar fittings were replaced by typical Carolingian graves with spurs”.³⁸ Still, what has truly drawn the attention of some researchers³⁹ is that cemeteries regarded as representing the earliest phase of Carolingian influences in the Eastern Alps contain elements that can hardly be dated to the eighth century – elements that are apparently the latest such as large elongated strap fittings with triangular section and a rib in the middle, loops with oval plate and spurs with side rivets or spurs with heart-shaped plate and two rivets. These artefact types compare well both with the finds from Western Europe, corresponding to Phase V of the North-Western Circle,⁴⁰ and with the objects characteristic of the Biskupija-Crkvina horizon, although not of its oldest phase, or even with artefacts typical for the Great Moravian culture. Good examples can be cited from Graves XI, LVII and CXIX from Pitten,⁴¹ Grave R9 from Baldramsdorf-Rosenheim⁴² and Graves 1, 92 and 100 from Sopronkőhida.⁴³

Béla Miklós Szőke’s contention seems to be correct in this context and is furthermore underpinned by the fact that articles of Avar origin could still have been commonly used in the first quarter of the ninth century and that at least part of the Avar belt fittings found in burials assigned to the pre-Köttlach horizon should be similarly dated.⁴⁴ He also bolstered his slightly earlier dating of the pre-Köttlach horizon⁴⁵ and apparently supports the hypothesis that the pre-Köttlach horizon should be synchronised with Phase IV of the North-Western Circle, assuming, however, a slight delay in relation to the changes to the north of the Carolingian Empire. He also correctly cites studies by Ralph Pöllath,⁴⁶ in whose chronological scheme the phases are shifted forward by about ten years in relation to the North-Western Circle.⁴⁷ Obviously, this study is hardly the place to decide which of these views is correct, but it does illustrate how difficult it is to capture in the archaeological record any chronological differences not exceeding the life span of a single generation. By extending the pre-Köttlach horizon to the late 830s, Béla Miklós Szőke filled the gap between the turn of the eighth and ninth centuries and the settlement of various groups undertaken by Pribina, which can be clearly detected in the source material through the intensification of imported and locally produced articles of the Carolingian type.⁴⁸

³⁷ Kleemann 2002; Pöllath 2002.

³⁸ Szameit 1996 223.

³⁹ Szőke 2004 373.

⁴⁰ Kleemann 2002 282, Abb. 85.

⁴¹ Friesinger 1978.

⁴² Eichert 2010 Taf. 6.

⁴³ Szőke 2004 373.

⁴⁴ Breibert 2005 422.

⁴⁵ Szőke 1992.

⁴⁶ Pöllath 2002.

⁴⁷ Szőke 2008 43; Szőke 2010 18–19.

⁴⁸ Szőke 2008; Szőke 2010.

Another, non-linear perspective on the cultural transformations in the eastern Alps during the eighth and ninth centuries has been recently proposed by Stefan Eichert,⁴⁹ who discarded the label “pre-Köttlach horizon” and replaced it with cultural groups of slightly different origins characterised by specific burial customs. His main contention, however, is that later groups could have existed simultaneously for some time.

Stefan Eichert links the material attributed to the pre-Köttlach horizon by several other researchers to the so-called Group B, which he dates to between 740–830. He contends that the origins of this group can be associated with the incorporation of Carinthia into Bavaria after 740 and consequently with new cultural influences coming from the west. He assigns the burials containing Frankish weaponry and Avar belt fittings to Group A (*ca.* 660–780) representing local traditions. The finds characteristic of the Köttlach Horizon 1 are classified as Group C1 (*ca.* 780–830) and are linked to the incorporation of Carinthia into the Carolingian Empire, but principally with the area’s intense Christianisation and the inflow of colonists. This non-linear reasoning would explain how elements of the pre-Köttlach horizon could survive as late as the first quarter of the ninth century (for example in western Hungary which remained unaffected by the colonisation), even though assemblages characteristic of the Köttlach horizon started to appear simultaneously, already at the end of the eighth century or the turn of the eighth and ninth centuries, the implication being that there are no grounds for retaining the pre-Köttlach horizon since it is genetically unrelated to the Köttlach horizon and does not directly precede it.

The horizon of Carolingian artefacts in western Hungary, whose beginning can be associated with settlement in the Zalavár area and can be generally dated to the second and last third of the ninth century according to the historical sources, is characterised by a distinctive feature, namely the widespread presence of archaic artefacts, often together with typologically later pieces. This also holds true for articles such as rectangular buckles decorated with swellings, spurs with buckles and associated strap sets, particularly bird-shaped mounts, almost identical with those assigned to the later phase of the Biskupija-Crkvina horizon (*ca.* 820–850), as well as U-shaped fittings, for example from Grave 70 of Garabonc-Ófalu I.⁵⁰ The finds even include spurs with loops typical for the early Carolingian period and the earlier phase of the Biskupija-Crkvina horizon (*ca.* 790–820). In the case of the latter, the fact that they were remodelled into spurs with buckles as well as the presence of small U-shaped strap fittings in the assemblage suggest that they were articles that had been used for a very long time, possibly even within one family as implied by burials of two men and a boy.⁵¹ In all these cases, however, we are dealing with the presence of archaic articles in assemblages that for historical reasons cannot be dated earlier than the onset of the middle third of the ninth century. Interestingly enough, there are no weaponry finds among them, even though they are common in the areas north of the Central Danube (Moravia, Slovakia), such as spurs with heart-shaped plate, roof-shaped fittings and Carolingian objects that are generally characteristic of the first phase of influences in these areas, particularly pieces decorated in the early plant style. In the case of the archaic elements, it seems plausible that they were items brought by the incoming population groups.

The later elements that can typologically be linked to the later ninth century can be directly compared with the horizon of Carolingian artefacts known from this period from Moravia and western Slovakia as well as from Western Europe. Common types include spurs with plates and rivets both with a tape-like yoke and with a yoke made of a rod accompanied by strap sets, U-shaped and rectangular fittings, some of which have perfect typological and stylistic analogies among the finds brought to light on Great Moravian hillforts. This applies not only to products in

⁴⁹ Eichert 2010 159–175; Eichert 2012 207–215.

⁵⁰ Szőke *et al.* 1992 239.

⁵¹ Szőke 2014 70, fig. 42.

the “Carolingian style”, but also to other artefacts characteristic of Great Moravian culture such as specific types of earrings and buttons (*gombik*). The fact that many of these were produced locally is confirmed by the presence of certain regional variants.⁵²

The end of Carolingian influences in western Hungary can be dated with a similar certainty as its beginning. The upper boundary is marked by the Hungarian raids into the Carpathian Basin in the 880s, the moment when this nomadic people crossed the Carpathian Mountains in 896, and the final settlement of the Hungarians in western Pannonia between 900 and 907, in the wake of which the Carolingian county collapsed and its fate was ultimately sealed by the defeat of the Bavarians in the Battle of Bratislava.⁵³

Summary

The above analysis can be summarised in few points. The earliest horizon of (early) Carolingian artefacts in the Carpathian Basin (Moravia, Slovakia and Hungary) is rather scanty and selective, and thus we cannot speak of a “homogeneous wave”, but rather of incidental imports. It cannot be compared with Dalmatia, where a clear wave of early Carolingian imports can be discerned from the end of the eighth century onward.

Although western Pannonia was officially considered as a subjugated region after the fall of the Avar Khaganate around 805, it was relatively poorly integrated into the Carolingian Empire and was still referred to as *Avaria* up to late 820s. In the case of Pannonia, the earliest singular assemblages with warriors’ “Carolingian” sets from the border areas (Pitten, Sopronkőhida – at the periphery of cemeteries) can be assigned to Phase 2 and probably mark the end of the pre-Köttlach horizon in these areas.

The cremation burial rite in Moravia and Slovakia is insufficient for explaining the lack of a clear horizon of early Carolingian finds because these finds are similarly lacking on settlements (in sharp contrast to the hundreds of Avar finds). The earliest “Carolingian” assemblages⁵⁴ can be dated to the second decade of the ninth century. In the case of Moravia and Slovakia, we can presume that the cultural model developed in the later eighth century was still continued at the onset of the ninth century.

The comparison of the chronology of the horizons of Carolingian imports using archaeological methods collated with the historical events yielded interesting results that enabled the synchronisation of certain phenomena in the material culture of these areas with political and military actions undertaken by the Franks in Central Europe during the 150 years of the Carolingian period (*fig. 1*).

The inflow of early Carolingian imports to the territories inhabited by the western and southern Slavs can be clearly associated with the beginning of the war against the Avars in 788 and the clashes with Byzantium for the dominance over the Adriatic and the Balkans. Consequently, the import of weaponry to Pannonia, where most of the fighting took place, increased. The concentration of weaponry in Slovenia, Slavonia and Croatia is a direct reflection of the presence of Carolingian troops. At the same time, we can also observe how sensitive these articles were to the intensity and direction of military actions. Unlike in the already mentioned areas, only single imports of fittings decorated in the Tassilo Chalice Style are known from Moravia and western Slovakia (where Charlemagne’s army never operated). Only a slightly higher number of such finds come from Bohemia, where the army was stationed briefly in 791 and later between 805 and 806.

⁵² Szőke 2010; Szőke 2014 104–112; Galuška 2013 252–253.

⁵³ Szőke 2014 106–115.

⁵⁴ E.g. Graves 223 and 224/51 from Staré Město: Galuška 1999; Galuška 2013 fig. 223.

The beginnings of the phase can be linked to the reign of Louis the Pious (814–840), who continued the policy of creating a buffer zone around the empire's eastern border. The visible inflow of artefacts of the late Carolingian type to Moravia and western Slovakia is consistent with the establishment of diplomatic relations between these two cultural units and generally with the rise of the Moravians in the political arena.

The end of this period is marked by the crisis caused by the struggle for power in the last years of Louis the Pious' reign and briefly after his death. Consequently, around the mid-ninth century, we witness also a series of geopolitical changes that weakened the central power and had major implications for subsequent development in this part of Europe. The same period saw the end of the political organisation of the Moravians, who in the later ninth century created a political organisation known as Great Moravia. Around the mid-ninth century, the previously unconsolidated Croatian tribes⁵⁵ established the Dukedom of Croatia and the dominance of the Franks was weakened by the new wave of Byzantine influences. The previously abandoned Pannonia became an arena of active operations of the Eastern Frankish County ruled by the Slavic Duke Pribina and his son. The third phase is a period of constant attempts to restore the Frankish dominance over the Carpathian Basin by the Eastern Frankish rulers.

The end of this phase was almost simultaneous across the Carpathian Basin and can be traced to the same cause: it is marked by the decline of Great Moravia and the conquest of the westerly regions of the Carpathian Basin by the Hungarian nomads, who had little interest in western fashion or culture, at least until the transition to a sedentary lifestyle after their defeat in the Battle of Lechfeld in 955. The symbolic end of Carolingian influence in Central Europe is marked by the death of Louis the Child, the last eastern Carolingian ruler, in 911.

In each case, the intensification of imports seems to be connected with the inclusion of the area in question in the Frankish orbit of interests and its political subordination. It should be noted, however, that these historical events cannot serve as a primary basis for chronology since the dynamics of changes in material culture differ from political changes. Nevertheless, we can discern some convergence between historical events, the reign of individual rulers of the Carolingian Dynasty and the intensification, range and nature of Carolingian impulses across the western and south-western Slavic territories.

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⁵⁵ *Dzino 2010* 175–210.

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