

= Principality of Nitra =

The Principality of Nitra (Slovak : Nitrianske kniežatstvo , Nitriansko) also known as the Duchy of Nitra , was a Slavic polity encompassing a group of settlements that developed in the 9th century around Nitra in present @-@ day Slovakia . Its history remains uncertain because of a lack of contemporary sources . The territory 's status is subject to scholarly debate ; some modern historians describe it as an independent polity that was annexed either around 833 or 870 by Principality of Moravia while others say that it was under influence of the neighbouring Slavs from Moravia from its inception .

= = Background = =

Modern @-@ day Slovakia was dominated for centuries by Germanic peoples , including the Quadi and the Longobards or Lombards , who were there until the middle of the 6th century . A new material culture characterized by handmade pottery , cremation burials and small , square , sunken huts that typically featured a corner stone oven appeared in the plains along the Middle Danube around that time . The new culture , with its " spartan and egalitarian " nature , sharply differed from the earlier archaeological cultures of Central Europe . According to Barford , a report by the Byzantine historian Procopius is the first certain reference to Early Slav groups inhabiting parts of present @-@ day Slovakia . Procopius wrote that an exiled Lombard prince named Hildigis mustered an army , " taking with him not only those of the Lombards who had followed him , but also many of the Sclaveni " in the 540s .

The nomadic Avars , who arrived from the Eurasian steppes , invaded the Carpathian Basin and subjected the local inhabitants in the second half of the 6th century . Thereafter , Slavic groups inhabiting areas around the core regions of the Avar Khaganate paid tribute to the Avars . The khaganate experienced a series of internal conflicts in the 630s . According to the Chronicle of Fredegar , the " Slavs who are known as Wends " rebelled against the Avars and elected a Frankish trader named Samo as their king in the early 7th century . Samo 's realm , which emerged in the northern or northwestern regions of the Carpathian Basin , existed for more than three decades . It disintegrated soon after its founder 's death and Avar control of the region was restored .

The Avar Khaganate collapsed around 803 as a result of several successful military campaigns launched by the Franks against it . The fall of the Khaganate contributed to the rise of new polities among the Slavs in the region . The shift in political control was accompanied by changes in military strategy and equipment . According to Curta , swords and other items of the " Blatnica @-@ Mikulčice horizon " show " a shift from the mounted combat tactics typical of nomadic warfare to heavy cavalry equipment " , and the development of a local elite in the regions to the north of the river Danube and the Great Hungarian Plain in the early 9th century .

= = Scholarly debates : the status and location of Pribina 's Nitrava = =

According to a widely accepted interpretation of the Conversion , Pribina was initially the ruler of an independent polity which was centered on Nitra . For instance , Barford writes that Pribina " was apparently prince of Nitra " . Pribina 's assumed realm is described as the " first demonstrable Slavic state north of the middle Danube " by Lukačka . Lukačka also says that Pribina had a retinue and that most its members " certainly descended from the former tribal aristocracy " but some of them " could have come from the free strata of the mass of the people " . Richard Marsina says that it " can hardly be unambiguously decided whether Pribina was prince of a greater tribe or of two or three smaller joined tribes " . He adds that Pribina may have belonged to the second or third generation of the heads of this polity , which emerged in the valleys of the rivers Hron , Nitra , and Váh .

Scholars who write that Pribina was an independent ruler also say that his principality was united with Moravia after he was exiled from his homeland . Kirschbaum and Steinhübel add that the forced unification of the two principalities ? Mojmir 's Moravia and Pribina 's Nitra ? under Mojmir gave rise to the empire of Great Moravia . According to Marsina , the inhabitants of Pribina 's principality who "

definitely were aware of their difference from the Moravian Slavs " preserved their " specific consciousness " even within Great Moravia , which contributed to the development of the common consciousness of the ancestors of the Slovak people .

Pribina was not an independent ruler , but Duke Mojmir of Moravia 's lieutenant in Nitra , according to Vlasto . He says that Pribina 's attempts to achieve independence led to his exile . The identification of " Nitra " with " Nitrava " is not universally accepted by scholars . Imre Boba and Charles Bowlus are among the scholars who challenged that identification . Imre Boba says , the Humanist historian , Johannes Aventinus , who identified Nitrava (granted along with Brno and Olomouc by Louis the German , according to Aventinus) with Nitra , because Nitrava was in " Hunia or Avaria " , to the south of Bavaria . He also says that the Latin term " locus Nitrava " could not refer to a city . According to his view , none of the modern names of Nitra (Slovak Nitra , Hungarian Nyitra and German Neutra) could develop from a " Nitrava " form . Boba 's linguistic approach is not compliant with onomastic research which suggests that Nitra was the primary form of the place name and " Nitrava " is only the secondary name ; both forms were recorded already in the 9th century . The Czech historian Dušan Třeštík , who says that the association of Nitra with Nitrava cannot be challenged , writes that the latter form developed from the name of the Nitra River , which fits well into the system of Indo-European toponyms ; other rivers with similar names are not known . Charles Bowlus also rejects the identification of Nitrava with Nitra , because the latter town was only annexed by Moravia during the reign of Svatopluk , years after Pribina 's expulsion , according to a letter that Archbishop Theotmar of Salzburg and his suffragans wrote around 900 . According to Třeštík , the content of the letter can be explained as a reasonable mistake of its compilers who knew that the territory was in the past a separate realm different from Moravia .