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SLAVS IN FREDEGAR:  
MEDIEVAL 'GENS' OR NARRATIVE STRATEGY?\*

It is often said that reports of early medieval sources on any aspect of social or political life should be understood within the early medieval mind-set. What did medieval authors mean by 'kings', 'peoples', 'nations', to mention only a few of the most controversial concepts used, where did they obtain their information about the 'others', be they peoples from afar or rulers from the more or less remote past? Questions of this kind are rarely asked by historians, particularly by those involved in research on medieval ethnicity. Philologically-oriented historical studies usually ignore the forest for the trees, while historical anthropologists accept the face-value of the text, often in its translated version, for granted.

The current historiographical view about Christian historians of the 500s and 600s is that, while transforming historiography in the image of the Christian faith and into a form fitting the new world of successor kingdoms, they applied to history the causal cycle of sin followed by punishment as a means of interpreting events.<sup>1</sup> In relation with each other, but particularly with the described 'kingdom' or 'nation', *gentes* are thus arranged in history according to the divine plan. It would however be a gross mistake to interpret any *gens* as being a mere agent of God's wrath or reward for the people whose history is to be written, be it Franks, Lombards, or Goths. Portrayals of *gentes* are not stereotyped by definition, as, for instance, Paul the Deacon's description of the Lapps can show.<sup>2</sup> This complex relation between factual records and interpretive accounts further influenced modern historiographical views. F. M. Pelzel, the first author to claim Samo for the Slavic (Czech) history as early as the eighteenth century, simply

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<sup>1</sup> E. BREISACH, *Historiography. Ancient, Medieval, & Modern*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1994), p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of Paul's account in contrast with other ancient and early medieval sources, see I. WHITAKER, 'Late Classical and early medieval accounts of the Lapps (Sami)', *Classica et Mediaevalia* 34 (1983), pp. 297–298.

transcribed Fredegar's Wendish account (IV 48 and 68).<sup>3</sup> So did František Palacky, the first historian to deal with Fredegar and Samo in a 'critical' way.<sup>4</sup> Fredegar's account was taken at its face-value, to such an extent that its use of such phrases as *regnum* or *rex Sclavinorum* led Gerard Labuda to claim Samo's 'kingdom' to be the first Slavic state in history.<sup>5</sup> Historians therefore strove to accurately delineate on (modern) maps the boundaries of Samo's state, while archaeologists rushed to find and unearth *castrum Wogastisburg*, where the Wends had so bravely resisted and eventually defeated the Franks.<sup>6</sup> The nationalistic motivation behind these historiographic attitudes is beyond the scope of this paper. It is, however, significant that such these views were rooted in what was (and still is) considered to be the 'standard' interpretation of historical sources, namely the one based on nineteenth-century criticism and its efforts to identify the 'archetype-text'. It is therefore not surprising to see Labuda's study, for instance, entirely dedicated to Fredegar's Wendish account, dealing more with questions of authorship and location, than with the purpose of the chronicle and its style. In other words, I suggest that there is a strong connection between the *kind of* questions asked about the early medieval text and the interpretation of its attitude towards *gentes*, in general, and Slavs, in particular.

Until recently, the prevailing view was that the *Chronicle of Fredegar* was the product of three different authors, the last of whom was responsible for the Wendish account,<sup>7</sup> but Walter Goffart and Andreas Kusternig rejuvenated Marcel Baudot's

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<sup>3</sup> F. M. PELZEL, 'Abhandlung über Samo, König der Slaven', in *Abhandlungen einer Privatgesellschaft der Wissenschaften in Böhmen*, vol. 1 (Prague, 1775), pp. 223–226. See O. KLÍMA, 'Samo: 'natione Francos'' in *A Green Leaf. Papers in Honour of Professor Jes P. Asmussen* (Leiden, 1988) p. 490.

<sup>4</sup> FRANTIŠEK PALACKÝ, 'Über den Chronisten Fredegar und seine Nachrichten von Samo', *Jahrbücher des böhmischen Museums für Natur- und Länderkunde. Geschichte, Kunst und Literatur* 1 (1827), pp. 387–413.

<sup>5</sup> G. LABUDA, *Pierwsze państwo słowiańskie. Państwo Samona* (Poznań, 1949), p. 286. *Contra*: O. PRITSAK, 'The Slavs and the Avars', in *Gli Slawi occidentali e meridionali nell'alto Medioevo*, vol. 1 (Spoleto, 1983), p. 88.

<sup>6</sup> See W. POHL, *Die Awaren. Ein Steppenvolk in Mitteleuropa 567–822 n. Chr.* (Munich, 1988), pp. 256–257. *Wogastisburg* was located in either Kaaden, in northern Bohemia, or in Burk, near Forchheim, in Upper Franconia. For a critique of these views, see H. KUNSTMANN, 'Noch einmal Samo und Wogastisburg', *Die Welt der Slawen* 28 (1983), no. 2, pp. 354–363.

<sup>7</sup> See B. KRUSCH, 'Die Chronicae des sogenannten Fredegar', *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 7 (1882), pp. 247–351 and 421–516; id., 'Chronicarum quae dicuntur Fredegarii scholastici libri IV cum continuationibus' (Introduction), in B. KRUSCH (ed.) *Fredegarii et aliorum chronica. Vitae sanctorum* (Hannover, 1888), pp. 1–18. For a detailed discussion of the multiple authorship thesis, see W. GOFFART, 'The Fredegar problem reconsidered', *Speculum* 18 (1963), pp. 206–241. For author C as the possible author of the Wendish account, see M. MANITIUS, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, vol. 1 (Munich, 1911), p. 224.

theory of single authorship.<sup>8</sup> Although Fredegar's Book IV ends with events that could be dated to 642, there are several indications of a *terminus post quem* in at least 658.<sup>9</sup> Fredegar knows, for instance, that after being elected king by the Wends, Samo "ruled them well for thirty-five years" (*ubi XXX et V annos regnavit feliciter*), which, according to his chronology, may indicate the year 658 for the death of the Wendish king.<sup>10</sup> Fredegar shows a most erratic attitude to chronology in Book IV, and usually post-dates events by one or two years.<sup>11</sup> He did not use either papal lists or *Fasti Hydatiani*, although it is almost certain that he had access to them.<sup>12</sup> This further suggests that Fredegar's motivation behind his use of a loose chronology may reside not in his inability to cope with a universal chronological system, but in his interest in matters others than exact dates. At least his Wendish account could illustrate this.

Fredegar knows that Samo went to the Slavs "in the fortieth year of Chlothar's reign" and that he ruled them for thirty five-years.<sup>13</sup> But all subsequent dates referring to Slavs are given in Dagobert's regnal years. Frankish merchants are killed and robbed

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<sup>8</sup> M. BAUDOT, 'La question du Pseudo-Frédegaire', *Le Moyen Âge* 29 (1928), pp. 129-170; cf. GOFFART, 'Fredegar problem'; A. KUSTERNIG, 'Einleitung', in H. WOLFRAM (ed.) *Quellen zur Geschichte des 7. und 8. Jahrhunderts* (Darmstadt, 1982), pp. 3-43, particularly p. 12. GERARD LABUDA had also embraced this idea, but insisted that the Wendish account proves Fredegar's chronicle to be based on second-hand information and definitely not an eyewitness account (LABUDA, *Pierwsze*, p. 92).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. KUSTERNIG, 'Einleitung', pp. 5 and 12, who in contrast with other authors, believes that the chronicle stops in 658, not because of the chronicler's death, but because of the removal of Grimoald and his influence in Austrasia, for Fredegar's work may easily be interpreted as a 'dynastic history' of the Agilofingers.

<sup>10</sup> FREDEGAR IV 48, p. 40. This reference appears at the end of the first Wendish chapter, even before Fredegar's main account of the confrontation between Samo and Dagobert (chapter 68), which points to Fredegar's retrospective angle. The same is true for IV 76, p. 64, where Fredegar refers to Dagobert's agreement with Sigebert, "quod postea temporebus Sigyberti et Chlodouiae regibus conservatum fuisse", i.e. until 657 (when Clovis II died). Though KRUSCH had given good reasons for doubting the precision of Fredegar's chronology, it is beyond any doubt that chapter 48 thus confirms the latest date otherwise found in the chronicle (GOFFART, 'Fredegar problem', p. 240. n. 164).

<sup>11</sup> K. H. J. GARDINER, 'Notes on the chronology of Fredegar Book IV', *Parergon* 20 (1978), pp. 40 and 44.

<sup>12</sup> KUSTERNIG, 'Einleitung', pp. 7 and 17, who believes that when writing his chronicle, Fredegar must have had at hand a manuscript similar to Codex Berolensis 127, which includes Jerome's and Hydatius' chronicles, *Fasti Hydatiana*, and *Liber Generationis*. The only reference to *Liber pontificalis* may be I 25, while for his I 26, Fredegar may have used Isidore of Seville. W. GOFFART follows H. BROSIEN in believing that the Presence among Fredegar's sources of the 'Burgundian annals' is betrayed by the notations of celestial phenomena, like eclipses, that appear until 603 and nowhere later. See H. BROSIEN, *Kritische Untersuchungen der Quellen zur Geschichte des fränkischen Königs Dagobert I* (Göttingen, 1868), pp. 30-34; cf. GOFFART, 'Fredegar problem', p. 228.

<sup>13</sup> FREDEGAR IV 48, pp. 39-40.

in Dagobert's ninth year,<sup>14</sup> the Wendish army entered Thuringia in the tenth year of his reign,<sup>15</sup> while Wends were raiding across the Frankish frontier in the eleventh year of Dagobert's reign.<sup>16</sup> It could easily be argued that Fredegar simply employs here a system based on regnal years of Frankish kings, in order to control his narrative, but this very narrative may indicate another solution. Although Fredegar describes Dagobert's conflict with the Wends in his chapter 68, closely followed by references to their raids in chapters 72, 74, 75, and 77, the 'Wendish theme' is carefully introduced in advance in chapter 48.<sup>17</sup> Here we are told how Samo came to the Wends and how he was elected their king, but nothing is said about Dagobert, who had been introduced for the first time in the preceding chapter 47. There are twenty chapters (17 pages in Wallace-Hadrill's edition)<sup>18</sup> separating the two parts of the Wendish account, with apparently no relation between them. But a closer look to the structure of the narrative shows that this is no mistake. Based as it is on Frankish affairs, the chronicle divides large sections by introducing what might be called "foreign affairs" occurring at the time of Frankish events. Chapter 48 is the first part of a large introduction to the beginnings of Dagobert's reign, dealing with affairs in the east (the Slavs) and the south (the Lombards, chapters 49–51). Chapter 68, in turn, is preceded by another survey of foreign affairs, which begins again in the East, with chapters 63–65, that deal with Heraclius and his Persian war, then describes the "race of Hagar" (the Saracens) in chapter 66. After chapter 68, with its account of the Wendish-Frankish conflict, Fredegar turns to the south and to the east, dealing with Lombard (chapters 69–71), Avar (chapter 72), and Spanish (chapter 73) affairs. What follows this survey is then a full description of how Dagobert, alienated from his Austrasian followers, gradually lost control over his kingdom. The Wends (but neither Lombards nor Avars) are involved in almost every episode of this process of fragmentation, in Thuringia as well as in Austrasia (chapters 74, 75, and 77). If Wolfgang Fritze is right in interpreting Dagobert's defeat at Wogastisburg as causing both the Austrasians' *dementatio* and duke Radulf

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<sup>14</sup> FREDEGAR IV 68, p. 56; cf. IV 67, p. 55.

<sup>15</sup> FREDEGAR IV 74, p. 62.

<sup>16</sup> FREDEGAR IV 75, p. 63.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. JOSEPH SCHÜTZ, 'Fredegar: Über Wenden und Slawen (Chronicon lib. IV, cap. 48 et 68)', *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung* 52 (1992), p. 48, who notes that Fredegar introduced the Wendish theme using a Classical rhetorical device, by answering to the whole set of *quaestiones*: when? who? where? with whom? why?

<sup>18</sup> For Fredegar's chronicle's sub-division into chapters as a later (and often absurd) arrangement of the narrative, see J. M. WALLACE-HADRILL, 'Introduction', in J. M. WALLACE-HADRILL (ed) *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar with Its Continuations* (London-Edinburgh, 1960), p. XXV. See also J. M. WALLACE-HADRILL, *The Long-Haired Kings and Other Studies in Frankish History* (New York, 1962), p. 77; KUSTERNIG, 'Einleitung', p. 15.

of Thuringia's proclamation of independence,<sup>19</sup> then we must see Fredegar's use of Dagobert's regnal years for dating Wendish affairs as a narrative strategy for emphasizing Samo's role in the decline of the Merovingian kingdom.

But why was Fredegar so much concerned with Dagobert's confrontation with the Wendish king? In order to answer to this question, we need to turn to the long-debated problem of Fredegar's identity, as well as to the identity of his audience. Regardless of the controversial issue of how many authors were responsible for the end product, it has long been recognized that the chronicle itself provides enough evidence for identifying its author(s) as a partisan of the Austrasian aristocracy, especially of the Pepinid family. Fredegar shows a considerable knowledge of juridical and administrative formulaic language,<sup>20</sup> of relationships between polities,<sup>21</sup> treaties and territorial partitions,<sup>22</sup> and even of the official language of the Byzantine court.<sup>23</sup> He must therefore have been close to or even involved in the activity of the chancery.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, Fredegar's purpose seems to have been to entertain his audience,<sup>25</sup> which could explain the epic style of his stories about Aetius, Theodoric, Justinian, or Belisarius.<sup>26</sup> Fredegar alternates tales with 'historical reports,' inviting his audience to pause and listen closely.<sup>27</sup> Both the structure of the chronicle and the legends included in it are appropriate to the needs or wishes of Fredegar's audience. His story about Xerxes, Theoderich's Avar captive, is strikingly close to an impressive list of similar stories drawn from Dietrich sagas or the Charlemagne cycle.<sup>28</sup> Although all this evidence comes from a later period, if datable at all, it surely indicates the type of audience Fredegar's chronicle may have addressed. The latter's clear anti-Merovingian attitude and declared hostility toward Brunhild and her attempts at centralization of

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<sup>19</sup> W. FRITZE, *Untersuchungen zur frühslawischen und frühfränkischen Geschichte bis ins 7. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt a.M. – Berlin, 1994), p. 285, who believes that according to Fredegar, the Slavs "hatten das austrasische Programm der endlichen Herstellung völliger byzantinisch – fränkischer Machtparität verhindert und waren dadurch allerdings zu einem Faktor ersten Ranges in der fränkischen Politik geworden."

<sup>20</sup> FREDEGAR IV 36, p. 28: "sed ut nulli paenitus iter gradiendum fit *pontificius* nisi permissum Altissimi...(emphasis added)"; IV 1, p. 4: "ubi ipsi praeciosus requiescit in corpore".

<sup>21</sup> As his knowledge of embassies shows, see FREDEGAR IV. 45, 51, 62, 65, 68, 71 and 73.

<sup>22</sup> FREDEGAR IV 53, 57, 74, 75, 76, 78, and 89.

<sup>23</sup> FREDEGAR IV 64, p. 52: "(Heraclius) advanced to the fray like a *second David* (emphasis added)".

<sup>24</sup> KUSTERNIG, 'Einleitung', p. 12.

<sup>25</sup> FREDEGAR, Prologue, p. 2: "quisquam legens hic."

<sup>26</sup> FREDEGAR II 53, 57–59, 62; see KUSTERNIG, 'Einleitung', p. 7.

<sup>27</sup> GOFFART, *The Narrators*, pp. 427–428.

<sup>28</sup> FREDEGAR II 57; D. A. TIRR, 'The attitude of the West towards the Avars', *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 28 (1976), p. 118, who cites HEINZEL's work ["Über die ostgotische Heldensage", *Sitzungsberichte der philos.-hist. Classe der kaiserlichen Akad. der Wissenschaften in Wien* 119 (1889)]. The story was echoed in *Gesta Theoderici Regis* 12, ed. B. KRUSCH, in *MGH-SRM* 3: 206, 212.

power demonstrates Fredegar to be a partisan of the Austrasian aristocracy.<sup>29</sup> It is known that in 629 Dagobert moved the center of activities from Austrasia to Paris, probably in order to escape the uncomfortable influence of the Austrasian nobility.<sup>30</sup> Fredegar, at least, knows that consensus prevailed only until the king went to Paris.<sup>31</sup> Just before Dagobert's campaign against Samo, an open conflict emerged between the king and the Austrasian aristocracy. According to Fredegar, it is the latter's *dementacio* that caused the victory of the Wends over the Franks, since the Austrasians now "saw themselves hated and regularly despoiled by Dagobert."<sup>32</sup> It is only after Dagobert placed his two-year old son Sigebert on the throne of Austrasia and confirmed the gifts he had made to the Austrasians by separate charters, that the latter accepted to "bravely defend their frontier *and the Frankish kingdom* against the Wends."<sup>33</sup>

What follows from this analysis is that in Fredegar's eyes, the Wends and their king were an essential ingredient in the dissolution of Dagobert's power, at least in Austrasia. It is because of their role in the Frankish king's failure to control his eastern domains that all dates about the Wends are given in Dagobert's regnal years. The Wendish account should therefore be seen in the larger perspective of Fredegar's attitude toward Dagobert and his ideas about the Wends' agency in the decline of Merovingian power. Fredegar may thus be viewed as the 'authoritative' historiographical voice of the Austrasian aristocracy.<sup>34</sup>

Equally important are the implications of assigning Fredegar to a specific aristocratic milieu for the problem of his sources. Fredegar, writing as he does in the late 650s or the early 660s, is surprisingly well informed about the conflict that led to Dagobert's expedition. He even criticizes Dagobert's envoy, Sicharius, for his attitude toward the Wendish king. According to Fredegar, the latter did not reject the idea of punishing those who had "killed and robbed a great number of Frankish merchants," but "simply stated his intention to hold an investigation so that justice could be done in this dispute, as well as in others that had arisen between them in the meantime."<sup>35</sup> In other words, what Samo refused was Dagobert's right to unilaterally deal with the

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<sup>29</sup> KUSTERNIG, 'Einleitung', p. 12; GOFFART, 'Fredegar problem', p. 217 n. 50, who believes Fredegar's text to be the trunk on which were later grafted the Continuations, which are indisputably a Carolingian family history.

<sup>30</sup> FRITZE, *Untersuchungen*, p. 84. See P. GEARY, *Before France and Germany. The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World* (New-York-Oxford, 1988), p. 156.

<sup>31</sup> FREDEGAR IV 58, p. 49.

<sup>32</sup> FREDEGAR IV 68, p. 58.

<sup>33</sup> FREDEGAR IV 75, p. 63. As Sigebert's tutor, Dagobert had appointed an opponent of Pippin and Arnulf, namely Otto, son of the *domesticus* Urso (GEARY, *Before France*, p. 156).

<sup>34</sup> KUSTERNIG, 'Einleitung', p. 5: "Fredegar is sicherlich das Sprachrohr einer Adelspartei, vielleicht sogar der pippinidischen."

<sup>35</sup> FREDEGAR IV 68, p. 56.

criminals. Sicharius, on the other hand, "like a fool (*Sicharius, sicut stultus legatus*),"<sup>36</sup> reminded Samo that he and his people owed fealty to Dagobert (*Dagobertum dixerint seruitium*), that is that they were all under the king's *dicio*, which implied Dagobert's right to 'unilaterally' deal with the case.<sup>37</sup> At this crucial point, Fredegar's narrative completely approaches the 'rhetoric of the scene.'<sup>38</sup> Samo's state of mind is marked by standard phrases, as Fredegar makes him reply "by now weary (*iam saucius*)" to Sicharius' threats. As if talking with a fool, Samo restrained his anger and proposed instead friendly relations with Dagobert. But *amicitia* would have implied equal rights and obligations for both parties involved in this relation.<sup>39</sup> Sicharius, however, persisted in his position, although, as Fredegar points out, "he had no authority." Fredegar thus blames Dagobert's envoy, because he believes that Sicharius was not in a position to discuss the true reason behind the conflict, namely the *seruitium* owed by Samo to Dagobert. It is however interesting to notice that this criticism is later extended to Dagobert, who, when learning about the outcome of Sicharius' mission, "confidently (*superueter*)" ordered the raising of a force throughout his kingdom of Austrasia to proceed against Samo and the Wends."<sup>40</sup> Sicharius' foolishness in threatening the Wendish king has its counterpart in Dagobert's imprudent confidence. It is not an accident that Fredegar applied to Samo the same term (*superbia*) a few lines before, when contemptuously referring to his haughtiness: "as is the way with pagans and men of wicked pride."<sup>41</sup>

But where did Fredegar find information about these events? Marcel Baudot has proposed that he had obtained it all from Sicharius' mouth.<sup>42</sup> Walter Goffart, in contrast, believes Sicharius' episode to be a too vivid a story – in other words, a tale – to be reconciled with the idea of sober contemporary information.<sup>43</sup> But as shown above, Fredegar's detailed knowledge of the juridical background of the conflict

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<sup>36</sup> For the rhetorical duel between Sicharius and Samo, see SCHÜTZ, 'Fredegar', p. 56. Fredegar's critical attitude toward Sicharius is betrayed here by his use of alliteration; see C. J. BARDZIK, 'The style of the Chronicle ascribed to Fredegar the Scholastic', M. A. thesis, St. John's University New York (1964), p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> For *dicio* as a supreme attribute of kings, as representatives of the gens, in Fredegar's eyes, see FRITZE, *Untersuchungen*, p. 138.

<sup>38</sup> J. M. PIZARRO, *A Rhetoric of the Scene. Dramatic Narrative in the Early Middle Ages* (Toronto, 1989), p. 123.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. FRITZE, *Untersuchungen*, p. 102.

<sup>40</sup> FREDEGAR IV 68, p. 57.

<sup>41</sup> FREDEGAR IV 68, p. 56. Cf. FRITZE, *Untersuchungen*, p. 283: "...angesichts der Katastrophe, zu der diese *superbia* führte, mutet ihre Erwähnung wie eine Kritik mit dem Mittel der Ironie ab." Barbarians as haughty are a recurrent trope in early medieval sources; see, for instance, *The History of Menander the Guardsman* 21, ed. R. C. BLOCKLEY (Liverpool, 1985), p. 195.

<sup>42</sup> BAUDOT, 'La question', p. 161. See also WALLACE-HADRILL, *Long-Haired Kings*, p. 75.

<sup>43</sup> GOFFART, 'Fredegar problem', pp. 237–238.

contradicts this interpretation. Fredegar was certainly not a contemporary, but nor can his account be classified as legend. Much more important is the argument of Fredegar's critical position toward both Sicharius and Dagobert. His account sounds, again, more like a political commentary of an Austrasian, such as one of the survivors of the debacle at Wogastisburc. This is further substantiated by another piece of evidence of the Wendish account.

Fredegar first introduced the Wendish theme in chapter 48 in order to explain how was it possible for the Wends and their king to become such an important power at the eastern border of the Frankish kingdom.<sup>44</sup> In this chapter, the chronicler combines two narratives, namely Samo's story and what I would call the 'ethnogenetic myth' of the Wends. According to Fredegar, the Wends emerged from a peculiar union of Avar warriors and Slavic women:

Every year, the Huns wintered with the Slavs, sleeping with their wives and daughters, and in addition the Slavs paid tribute and endured many other burdens. The sons born to the Huns by the Slavs' wives and daughters (*fili Chunorum quos in uxores Winedorum et filias generauerant*) eventually found this shameful oppression intolerable; and so, as I said, they refused to obey their lords and started to rise in rebellion.<sup>45</sup>

It has long been noted that this text strikingly resembles the story of the Dulebians in the *Russian Primary Chronicle*. Nestor, the author of this twelfth-century chronicle, describes a similar behavior of the Avars:

The Avars, who attacked Heraclius the Emperor, nearly capturing him, also lived at this time. They made war upon the Slavs and harassed the Dulebians, who were themselves Slavs. They even did violence to the Dulebian women. When an Avar made a journey, he did not cause either a horse or a steer to be harnessed, but gave command instead that three of four or five women should be yoked to his cart and be made to draw him. Even thus they harassed the Dulebians.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> There is no evidence to substantiate WALLACE-HADRILL's idea that chapter 48 is a late interpolation (see WALLACE-HADRILL, *Long-Haired Kings*, pp. 77 and 91).

<sup>45</sup> FREDEGAR IV 48, p. 40.

<sup>46</sup> The *Russian Primary Chronicle*. The Laurentian Text, transl. and ed. by SAMUEL HAZZARD CROSS and OLGHERD P. SHERBOWITZ-WETZOR (Cambridge, 1954), p. 55. The Dulebians dwelt along the Bug and participated to Oleg's expedition to Constantinople in 907 (*ibid.*, pp. 56 and 64).



The role that Slavic women harassed by Avar warriors play in both stories may suggest that they both emerged from the same tradition. A direct relation between the two chronicles is naturally out of question. However, A. A. Shakhmatov, the first historian to claim a Western origin for Nestor's account of the early Slavs, believed that a lost Moravian source of the late ninth and early tenth century may have been used by the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, an idea further developed by Roman Jakobson and Bohumila Zasterová.<sup>47</sup> There are however important differences between Nestor's and Fredegar's versions, which may indicate that they had access to different stages in the development of the story. Whatever the case, it is clear that Fredegar used here a *Slavic tradition*, though in a rationalized form. Unlike Nestor, Fredegar has a more detailed knowledge about the 'shameful oppression' of Slavs by Avars. He knows that Slavs payed tribute and "endured many other burdens." He also knows that the Slavs have long since been subjected to the Avars, "who used them as Befulci" (*Winidi befulci Chunis fuerant iam ab antiquito*).<sup>48</sup> Much has been said about *befulci*, to the extent that the term was ultimately derived from the name of the buffalo in several (modern) Slavic languages, which led scholars such as J. M. Wallace-Hadrill to absurd conclusions.<sup>49</sup> But Fredegar provides a different explanation: "The Wends were called Befulci by the Huns, because they advanced twice to the attack in their war bands, and so covered the Huns."<sup>50</sup> *Befulci* is a word related to *fulcfree*, used by the Edict of the Lombard king Rothari, and derives from the Old German *felhan*, *falh*, *fulgum* (hence the Middle German *bevelhen*), meaning "to entrust to, to give someone in guard".<sup>51</sup> The Wends may therefore be seen as special military units of the Avarian army, as Fredegar carefully explains. There are several other sources, both Greek and Latin, that indirectly support this interpretation.<sup>52</sup> They prove Fredegar's 'story' to be a reliable

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<sup>47</sup> A. A. SHAKHMATOV, 'Skazanie o prelozhenii knig na slovenskii iazyk', in *Sbornik u slavu Vatroslava Iagicha* (Berlin, 1908), pp. 172–188; R. JAKOBSON, 'Minor native sources for the early history of the Slavic church', *Harvard Slavic Studies* 2 (1954), p. 42; B. ZASTEROVÁ, 'Zu den Quellen zur Geschichte Wolhyniens und der Duleben im 6. Jahrhundert', in J. IRMSCHER (ed.) *Byzantinische Beiträge* (Berlin, 1964), pp. 231–238.

<sup>48</sup> FREDEGAR IV 48, p. 39.

<sup>49</sup> FREDEGAR IV 48, p. 40 n. 1; WALLACE-HADRILL, *Long-Hair Kings*, p. 91. Cf. LABUDA, *Pierwsze*, pp. 321–322.

<sup>50</sup> FREDEGAR IV 48, p. 40.

<sup>51</sup> J. SCHÜTZ, 'Zwei germanische Rechtstermini des 7. Jahrhunderts. Fredegari: *befulci* – Edictus Rothari: *fulcfree*', in *Festschrift für Erwin Wedel zum 65. Geburtstag* (Munich, 1991), pp. 410–411; id., 'Fredegar', p. 51.

<sup>52</sup> Theophylact Simocatta, ed. MARY WHITBY and MICHAEL WHITBY (Oxford, 1986) 1.7.3–6, pp. 28–29; 6.2.10–16, pp. 160–161; 6.3.9–6.4.1, p. 162; 6.4.4–5, p. 163. *Miracula Sancti Demetrii* 12.107, ed. by P. LEMERLE (Paris, 1979), p. 126; 13.117, p. 134; 14.138, p. 148. PAUL the DEACON, *History of the Lombards* IV 28, ed. W. D. FOULKE (Philadelphia, 1974), pp. 170–171. *Chronicon Paschale*, ed. MICHAEL WHITBY

piece of evidence. He certainly had knowledge about the specific way in which the Wends were organized as special units of the Avarian army.<sup>53</sup> He simply connected this 'military report' with the presumably Slavic tradition of the 'shameful oppression'. A quick glimpse at his ethnic terminology may further clarify the nature of his perspective.

From the very beginning, Fredegar introduces two apparently equivalent terms for the same *ethnie*: "Sclaus coinomento Winedos."<sup>54</sup> Although in the next lines the chronicler employs a similar construction for the Avars ("contra Avaris coinomento Chunis"), in Fredegar's eyes the Slavs may have not been the same as Wends.<sup>55</sup> He has variants for *Sclavi*, such as *Esclavi* or *Sclavini*, but also for *Winidi*, such as *Winodi*, *Winedi*, or *Venedi*. This may further indicate different sources for his Wendish account, especially for chapters 48 and 68, where the two terms, along with their variants, appear together. It is interesting to note, however, that 'Wends' occur particularly in political contexts: the Wends, not the Slavs, were subjects to the Huns; the Wends, and not the Slavs, made Samo their king.<sup>56</sup> There is a Wendish *gens*, but not a Slavic one.<sup>57</sup> When referring again to *gens*, Fredegar significantly employs *Sclavini*, instead of *Sclavi*.<sup>58</sup> Elected by the Wends, Samo is nevertheless *rex Sclauinorum*.<sup>59</sup> After those chapters in which he explained how a Wendish polity had emerged (namely, chapters 48 and 68), Fredegar refers exclusively to Wends (chapters 72, 74, 75, and 77). This further suggests that there is a meaning behind Fredegar's presumably inconsistent ethnic vocabulary.

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(Liverpool, 1989), pp. 173–174.

<sup>53</sup> SCHÜTZ, 'Zwei germanische Rechtstermini', p. 412: 'In der ersten Hälfte des 7. Jahrhunderts bezeichnete *befulci* ein interethnisches Rechtsverhältnis, das sich allein deshalb sinnvollem Verstehen entzog, weil seine Etymologie unaufgeheilt geblieben ist.' For the Avarian-Slavic relations, in general, see W. FRITZE, 'Zur Bedeutung der Awaren für die slawische Ausdehnungsbewegung im frühen Mittelalter', in G. MILDENBERGER (ed) *Studien zur Völkerwanderungszeit im östlichen Mitteleuropa* (Marburg, 1980), pp. 498–505. PRITSAK, 'The Slavs', pp. 397 and 411: "...the unique characteristic of the *Sklavin* troops is that they were amphibious units, trained for guerilla warfare both on water – especially rivers – and on land. To put it in American terminology, they were the marines of the epoch."

<sup>54</sup> FREDEGAR IV 48, p. 39; IV 68, p. 56.

<sup>55</sup> SCHÜTZ, 'Fredegar', p. 50: "Dies bringt die Spezifizierung mit "coinomento" zum Ausdruck, das keinesfall identifizierend steht".

<sup>56</sup> FREDEGAR IV 48, pp. 39–40.

<sup>57</sup> FREDEGAR IV 48, p. 40: "uxores ex genere Winidorum."

<sup>58</sup> FREDEGAR IV 68, p. 58: "Deruanus dux gente Surbiorum, que ex genere Sclauinorum." Along with Isidore of Seville, Fredegar is among the earliest Latin sources using the shorter form *Sclavus*, instead of *Sclavinus*. See H. KÖPSTEIN, 'Zum Bedeutungswandel von  $\sigma\kappa\lambda\acute{\alpha}\beta\omicron\varsigma$ /sclavvs', *Byzantinische Forschungen* 7 (1979), p. 76. The former will later be used as *terminus technicus*, meaning 'slave,' by tenth to eleventh century German sources; see CH. VERLINDEN, 'L'origine de 'sclavus'=esclave', *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 17 (1937), p. 125.

<sup>59</sup> FREDEGAR IV 68, p. 56. There is even a specific Slavene dress which Sicharius strove to imitate in order to be received by Samo (*Sicharius uestem indutus ad instar Sclauinorum*).

Perhaps 'Wends' and 'Sclavenes' are meant to denote a specific social and political configuration, in which such concepts as 'state' or 'ethnicity' are relevant, while 'Slavs' is a more general term, used in a territorial rather than an ethnic sense: Samo as a merchant went *in Sclauos* to do business, the people who lived *circa limitem Auarorum et Sclauorum* desired Dagobert to come to them, while Lombards made a hostile attack *in Sclauos*.<sup>60</sup>

That Fredegar's terminology is not erratic is also proved by a similar pair of ethnic names used in Jonas of Bobbio's *Life of St. Columbanus*, written sometime between 639 and 643.<sup>61</sup> According to Jonas, Columbanus had once thought to go preaching to the Wends who are also called Slavs (*Venetiorum qui et Sclavi dicuntur*), but gave up this mission of evangelization, because those people's eyes were not yet open for the light of the Scriptures.<sup>62</sup> This parallel is substantiated by the citation in Fredegar's chronicle of a long passage directly from *Vita Columbani*.<sup>63</sup> Both works, although so different in form and content, reflect the same political tensions of the mid-seventh century marked by the *damnatio memoriae* of Brunhild and her offspring. The fact that Fredegar had access to St. Columbanus's *Life* within such a short time of its being written may suggest that the chronicler must be placed within the nexus of Luxeuil, which nicely dovetails with the emphasis on Burgundian matters within the narrative. Fredegar's chronicle may thus be seen as a collection of material available to a historian working within a 'Columbanian' milieu.<sup>64</sup> Despite Fredegar's broad knowledge of Burgundian affairs,<sup>65</sup> his chronicle demonstrates an at least as much significant bias toward Metz.<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, Jonas of Bobbio belonged to a generation of Luxeuil monks who lived after Columbanus. Among them was also

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<sup>60</sup> FREDEGAR IV 48, p. 39; IV 58, p. 49; IV 68, p. 58. See SCHÜTZ, 'Fredegar', p. 50.

<sup>61</sup> H. HAUPT, 'Einleitung', in H. WOLFRAM (ed.) *Quellen zur Geschichte des 7. und 8. Jahrhunderts* (Darmstadt, 1982), p. 396; I. WOOD, *The Merovingian Kingdoms 450-751* (London-New York, 1994), pp. 248-249.

<sup>62</sup> *Vita Columbani* I 2/, ed. H. HAUPT (Darmstadt, 1982), p. 488. This reminds one of Einhard's explanation for the dubious success of the missionary campaign to the Avars after Charlemagne's conquests. The Avars, Einhard argued, were *gens idiota vel sine litteris*. For a commentary of this attitude, see TIRR, 'The attitude', p. 111.

<sup>63</sup> FREDEGAR IV 36, pp. 23-29. See WOOD, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 248: because it includes this passage from *Vita Columbani*, Fredegar cannot have finished his chronicle before the early 640s, when Jonas probably ended his work.

<sup>64</sup> WOOD, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, pp. 197 and 248.

<sup>65</sup> FREDEGAR II 36, 37, 40; IV 42, 43, 90. Cf. LABUDA, *Pierwsze*, pp. 296-320, who believes that Fredegar wrote his chronicle in St. Jean-de-Losne, near Châlon-sur-Saône, the Burgundian capital.

<sup>66</sup> FREDEGAR II 60; III 29, 55, 72; IV 16, 38, 39, 40, 58, 74, 75, 85. KUSTERNIG, 'Einleitung', p. 13, who notices that all manuscripts of Fredegar's chronicle belong to a series produced in Metz, not in Burgundy. Cf. WALLACE-HADRILL, *Long-Haired Kings*, p. 75, who however believes Fredegar to be a Burgundian.

Amandus, whose chief field of activity was in present-day Belgium (where he worked with Jonas), but who, according to his *Life* also preached among Slavs. Born in Aquitaine, Amandus entered the monastic life on the Ile de Yeu. He returned to Francia after his first pilgrimage to Rome, and was forced by Chlothar II to become a missionary bishop. Once again he visited Rome and returned to continue his work of evangelization in the northern part of the Merovingian kingdom, before turning his attention to the Danubian Slavs. His later *Life*, written about thirty years after Amandus' death in 675, describes the saint's journey across the Danube to evangelize the Slavs:

When the holy man saw a number converted by his preaching, burning with still great desire to convert others, he heard that the Slavs, sunk in great error, were caught in the devil's snares (*quod Sclavi, nimio errore decepti, a diaboli laqueis tenerentur oppressi*). Greatly hoping he might gain the palm of martyrdom, he crossed the Danube and, journeying round, freely preached the Gospel of Christ to the people (*transfraetato Danubio, eadem circumiens loca, libera voce euangelium Christi gentibus praedicabat*). But, when a very few had been reborn in Christ, seeing that he was achieving little and that he would not obtain the martyrdom he always sought, he returned to his own flock, and caring for them, led them by preaching to the heavenly kingdom.<sup>67</sup>

In so doing, Amandus was among the first to preach to pagans outside the former Roman provinces and thus went beyond the two traditions, Gregorian and Columbanian, which had probably inspired him.<sup>68</sup> It would thus be possible to presume that Fredegar found information for his Wendish account in missionary reports of Amandus and his followers.<sup>69</sup> This dovetails with his explanation of Samo's behavior: "as is the way with pagans and men of wicked pride (*ut habit gentiletas et superbia prauorum*)."<sup>70</sup> It also explains Sicharius' attitude, especially his bold reply to the Wendish king: "It is impossible for Christians and servants of the Lord to live on terms of friendship with dogs."<sup>71</sup> This metaphor reminds one of the answer given by Caesara,

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<sup>67</sup> Vita S. Amandi, episcopi et confessoris 16, ed. B. KRUSCH (Hannover, 1910), MGH SRM 5:440; the English translation in J. N. HILLGARTH (ed) *Christianity and Paganism*, 350–750. *The Conversion of Western Europe* (Philadelphia, 1986), p. 144 (for the dating of the *Life*, see *ibid.*, p. 138).

<sup>68</sup> WOOD, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, pp. 191, 245, and 313.

<sup>69</sup> WALLACE-HADRILL, *Long-Haired Kings*, p. 89 has already proposed that Fredegar may have had access to a collection of historical material from Bobbio, which would explain both his Lombard and Byzantine chapters, and the material concerning Luxeuil and Austrasia.

<sup>70</sup> FREDEGAR IV 68, p. 56.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

the wife of the Persian emperor, to her husband's envoys sent to seek for her: "I shall not address these fellows. *They live dogs' lives*. I will answer them only if they will do as I have done, and become Christians (emphasis added)."<sup>72</sup> Sicharius is thus a good example of a member of that Frankish aristocracy, to which Columbanus and his monastic tradition had provided "a common ground around which networks of northern aristocrats could unite, finding a religious basis for their social and political standing."<sup>73</sup> As for Fredegar, he might have put flesh on the skeleton of his narrative about the Wends using the perspective of the missionaries. If the latter may have been responsible for the transmission of the Wendish 'ethnogenetic myth', it may thus have provided Fredegar with useful material for explaining the extraordinary success of Samo against Dagobert and his Austrasian army.

Since J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, it is generally accepted that Book IV, particularly from 625, where Fredegar's "own uninhibited writing begins," to its end, provides the most detailed, exciting and chaotic narrative of the entire chronicle. A chaotic narrative, Wallace-Hadrill has argued, because this 'original' part of Book IV is not written on a year-to-year basis.<sup>74</sup> That Fredegar, when writing, had a plan in mind and carefully designed his narrative is suggested by a short comment at the end of chapter 81:

How this [the recover of Byzantine forces under Constans] came about I shall set down under the right year in its proper sequence (*aeuentum anno in quo expletum est in ordine debeto referam*); and I shall not remain silent if, God willing, I finish this and other matters as I desire; and so I shall include everything in this book that I know to be true.<sup>75</sup>

Fredegar did never fulfill this promise, but one can hardly fail to notice his eagerness to display events in their 'proper sequence' which strictly corresponds to his concept of 'chronicle' explained in the Prologue:

I have brought together and put into order in these pages, as exactly as I can, this chronology and the doings of many peoples (*ea tempora ponens et singularum gentium curiosissimo ordine que gesserant coaptavi*) and have

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<sup>72</sup> FREDEGAR IV 9, p. 8. FRITZE, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 281 and 428 n. 1736. *Contra*: SCHÜTZ, 'Fredegar', p. 56, who believes that 'dogs' do not refer to 'pagans' since "wohl außer Zweifel steht, daß auch Samo christ war, 'but to an insult (*\*filis canis feminae*), "gemäß dem schon awarisch eingefärbten Milieu." For the metaphor, see BARDZIK, 'The style', p. 18.

<sup>73</sup> GEARY, *Before France*, p. 172.

<sup>74</sup> WALLACE-HADRILL, *Long-Haired Kings*, p. 77, who believes therefore that the chapter about Samo and the Wends is a later insert.

<sup>75</sup> FREDEGAR IV 81, p. 69.

inserted them in the chronicles (a Greek word meaning in Latin the record of the years [*gesta temporum*]) compiled by these wise men, chronicles that copiously gush like a spring most pure.<sup>76</sup>

The Prologue itself is constructed upon an astute combination of a quotation from Eusebius (St. Jerome's) *Chronicle* with another one from Isidore's *Etymologies*, which provides Fredegar with the basic arguments for expressing his own historiographical concept:

At the end of Gregory's work I have not fallen silent but have continued on my own account with facts and deeds of later times (*temporum gesta*), finding them wherever they were recorded, and relating of the deeds of kings and the war of peoples (*acta regum et bella gentium quae gesserunt*) all that I have read or heard or seen that I could vouch for.<sup>77</sup>

The Eusebian idea that *reges* and *gentes* are agents of secular history is easily recognizable. It is more difficult to explain what exactly does Fredegar mean by *temporum gesta*. At first glance, the "facts and deeds of later times," narrated by his chronicle, are simply *bella gentium*. But *temporum gesta* refer to a synchronous history, to a juxtaposition of 'partial' histories of various *gentes*, which is typically illustrated by Fredegar's surveys of international relations at the beginning of Dagobert's reign and in its middle, at the point where the king alienated himself from Austrasia. Fredegar may thus be seen as the only early medieval historian who has seriously taken Eusebius' concept of παντοδαμῆ ιστορία.<sup>78</sup> But Fredegar's universal history lacks the teleological force of Eusebius' concept. It is, in fact, only an apparently universal history. Universal history provided Fredegar with the necessary framework in which Frankish supremacy could be explained and emphasized.<sup>79</sup> The accent, therefore, shifts from *religio* to *gens*.<sup>80</sup> The latter is the crucial concept of this new, rather hybrid form of universal history. Because history is defined only in secular terms, as the Prologue shows, Fredegar lacks any sacred foundation for his idea of *gens*. To him, just as to many other early medieval historians, such as Cassiodorus or Isidore of Seville, *gens* is

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<sup>76</sup> FREDEGAR, Prologue, p. 2.

<sup>77</sup> FREDEGAR, Prologue, pp. 2-3.

<sup>78</sup> FRITZE, Untersuchungen, p. 131.

<sup>79</sup> KUSTERNIG, 'Einleitung', p. 15.

<sup>80</sup> For Fredegar's concept of *religio*, see FRITZE, Untersuchungen, pp. 126-127.

simply the agnatic community based on blood relations.<sup>81</sup> There is however a political meaning of the term, as indicated by Fredegar's use of *gens* in contexts where he describes political alliances or conflicts. Duke Radulf concludes treaties of alliances *cum Winidis*,<sup>82</sup> while Dagobert raises a force in Austrasia to proceed *contra Samonem et Winidis*. Moreover, *gens* is the ultimate source of kings' suzerainty (*dicio*), which explains Fredegar's particular hostility toward Brunhild and her attempts at political centralization.<sup>83</sup> *Regnum* is therefore a function of *gens*, the exercise of royal power through *gens*.

In Fredegar's eyes, the Wends are a *gens* primarily in the political sense of the term. Recognizing his *utilitas*,<sup>84</sup> the Wends made Samo their king.<sup>85</sup> As *rex Sclauinorum*, Samo's election is described with the same stereotypical terms as other royal elections.<sup>86</sup> As suggested above, Fredegar prefers 'Wends' and 'Slavenes' to 'Slavs' when referring to political concepts. I am inclined to believe that this is also true for *Deruanus dux Sorbionum, que ex genere Sclauinorum*, which would further mean that the Sorbes are not a Slavic 'tribe', but a specific social or political category. That Fredegar's multifarious terminology is not an accident is also suggested by the fact that, although the *Wends* made Samo their king, his subjects are *populus regni sui*, not the Wends or the Slavs.<sup>87</sup> Besides Sorbes, Fredegar may also refer to *marca Vinedorum* or to *dux Walluc*. The only Slavic *regnum*, however, is Samo's. It is the clash between the Frankish and the Wendish *regna*, in other words *bella gentium*, that justifies Fredegar's chapter 48, which is therefore designed to first explain the emergence (i.e. the history) of the *gens*, whose *regnum* caused Dagobert's decline. But, as shown above, both chapter 48 and chapter 68 are parts of larger sections of the chronicle dedicated to synchronous histories of other *gentes*, such as Burgundians, Goths, Lombards, Persians, or Saracens. It follows from this that in Fredegar's eyes, the Wends are agents of secular history, part of *bella gentium et acta regum*. But they are so only because of their military achievements against both Avars and Franks. To claim Samo's *regnum*

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<sup>81</sup> Cf. FREDEGAR IV 38, p. 31. Fredegar also uses *natio* in the same sense, although he also has *gentium nationes* (IV 58, p. 49). In the latter case, *gentium* is a *genitivus possessivus*, which means that *natio* is a part of a *gens*. See FRITZE, *Untersuchungen*, p. 134; KLIMA, 'Samo', p. 492, who therefore interprets *Samo natione Francos* not as "a certain Frank named Samo", but as "Samo, an inhabitant of the Frankish kingdom."

<sup>82</sup> FREDEGAR IV 87, p. 74.

<sup>83</sup> KUSTERNIG, 'Einleitung', p. 5.

<sup>84</sup> For *utilitas* as a typically aristocratic feature, implying both *felicitas* and *uirtus*, see KUNSTMANN, 'Noch einmal', p. 356.

<sup>85</sup> FREDEGAR IV 48, p. 40. For *gens* as agnatic community with reference to Wends, see *ibid.* ("uxores ex genere Winidorum").

<sup>86</sup> Authari's election in IV 45, p. 38; the election of a new Persian emperor in IV 64, p. 53.

<sup>87</sup> FREDEGAR IV 68, p. 56. Dagobert, however, raises his Austrasian armies *contra Samonem et Winidis*, in which case the latter should be interpreted in a political sense.

to be the 'first Slavic state' in history is to simply misunderstand Fredegar's concept of history. *Rex* as a title applied to Slavene chiefs even by Greek sources<sup>88</sup> does not necessarily indicate the existence of a kingdom.<sup>89</sup> Samo is not different from any of his 'predecessors', such as Musocius or Perbundos, except that, unlike them, his position was strengthened by the Wends' military achievements and by the weakness of his enemies. In his own words and with his specific, narrow mind-set, Fredegar tells us the same:

It was not so much the Slavic courage of the Wends (*Sclauinorum fortitudo*) that won them this victory over the Austrasians as the demoralization of the latter, who saw themselves hated and regularly despoiled by Dagobert.<sup>90</sup>

As good historians, we may ask ourselves how possibly could Dagobert not have noticed this demoralization before his campaign against Samo. But Fredegar's argument is consistent. As soon as Dagobert confirmed his grants made to Austrasian aristocrats, the Austrasians "bravely defended their frontier *and the Frankish kingdom* against the Wends." By the agency of the latter, the kingdom thus found its necessary balance of power. It would however be a serious mistake to conclude that the Slavs, in Fredegar's eyes, are no more than *ancilla regni*. We may admire with the Wends Samo's *utilitas*, we may even assume that there *was* some Slavic courage involved in the victory at Wogastisburc. In the end, Samo is no more than a haughty pagan and the Wends simply took advantage of the Austrasian *dementacio*. They are in fact an agent of political dissolution, as indicated by their alliance with Radulf, whose victories "turned his head" (*vius superbiae aelatus*) to such an extent that he rated himself King of Thuringia and did all he could to deny Sigebert's overlordship.<sup>91</sup> He behaved in this way, Fredegar argues, as if explaining the moral of the story, "because, as they say, he who likes fighting picks quarrels."<sup>92</sup> The moral, if any, is therefore that, in Sicharius' words, only rebels and usurpers would live on terms of friendship with 'dogs'.

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<sup>88</sup> THEOPHYLACT SIMOCATTA 6.9.1, p. 170 (ὑπὸ Μουσῶκιον τὸν λεγόμενον ῥήγα τῆ τῶν βαρβάρων φωνῆ); *Miracula Sancti Demetrii* 4.235–236, pp. 209–210; 4. 231, p. 209; *Strategikon* 11.4.30, p. 123.

<sup>89</sup> PRITSAK, 'The Slavs', p. 88: "The concept that Samo's activities constituted the 'first Slavic State' should be abandoned." See POHL, *Die Awaren*, p. 261: 'seine (Samo's) Oberherrschaft kann nich mehr als ein gewisser Vorrang gewesen sein.'

<sup>90</sup> FREDEGAR IV 68, p. 58 (WALLACE-HADRILL's "Slavic courage of the Wends" is an unfortunate mistranslation, since Fredegar refers only to Slavenes).

<sup>91</sup> FREDEGAR IV 77, p. 64; IV 87, p. 74.

<sup>92</sup> FREDEGAR IV 77, p. 64.



Fredegar thus evidences the instrumental role of the Slavs in early medieval sources. He was inspired by what might have been a Biblical model in dealing with *gentes*, thus finding a place for the Slavs within their specific concept of history.<sup>93</sup> In doing so, he pictured the attitude of the eleventh to twelfth-century chroniclers of expansion. It is on this basis that Helmold of Bosau, Adam of Bremen, and Thietmar of Merseburg would later construct their image of the Wends.

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<sup>93</sup> Cf. FRITZE, *Untersuchungen*, p. 285, who even went so far as to argue that Fredegar was the first European observer of a "Slavic question."

**FREDEGÁR SZLÁVJAI: KÖZÉPKORI „NEMZET”  
VAGY ELBESZÉLŐ STRATÉGIA?**

A szerző Fredegár kora középkori (VII. század közepe táján írott) művét vizsgálja tanulmányában Samo és a vend (szláv) probléma szempontjából. Megállapítása szerint Fredegár krónikáját egy vagy több személy írta, megállapítható egy narratív stratégia megléte. Fredegár tudatosan építi fel művét, így a szláv vonatkozású fejezetek több helyre kerültek, s a külföldi országokra vonatkozó „bevezető” részben található, amelyeket a belső, frank „ügyek” leírása követ. Fredegár az ausztráziai nemesség képviselőjeként elítélte az uralkodó Meroving dinasztiát, s a bomlást Dagobert uralkodása alatt kapcsolatba hozta Samo „szlávjaival”. A szerző szerint Fredegár koncepciójában a hangsúly a „vallásról” (religio) a „népre” (gens) tevődött át. Fredegár tudatosan használja a népelnevezéseket; ha politikai képződményre utal, a vend és szklavin neveket, ha az etnikumot akarja hangsúlyozni territoriális értelemben, a szláv terminushoz folyamodik.