

SAMO – “FIRST KING OF THE SLAVS”
A CRITICAL REVIEW OF RESEARCH RESULTS

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Identity and ethnic background of Samo, the “first king of the Slavs”, have always remained controversial. Neither is there a common opinion among scholars concerning situation and size of the territory he assembled under his rule. Part of the researchers site the main part of his realm in Moravia or on the Danube, but extending a considerable distance outh of the river. Others see Samo’s realm further to the northwest and reject the possibility of it extending southwards. Analyzing relevant sources and archaeological data, the present article seeks to resolve both problems to some extent. Only the relation by the chronicler Fredegar is credible, not the later “*Conversio*”. Another result is that Samo’s setting up a “realm” on the northwestern periphery of the so-called First Avar realm (567–626/32) has to be seen in a larger context and is related above all to ethnogenesis and settlement of the Slavs as specialized subordinates of the Avars north of the Danube. The author sees Samos realm most likely in what is today Bohemia and Upper Franconia, excluding, however, Moravia and Karantania.