

"MORAVIA" OR "GREAT MORAVIA"?

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The exact geographical position of the so-called "Realm of Great Moravia" has been debated ever since Imre Boba's book, "Moravia's History Reconsidered", published in 1971. A traditional school of thought had always placed the center of this realm somewhere in Czech Moravia. Boba, however, took the view that the realm comprised not a western, but rather a southern Slavic territory, situated on the Save and Drau rivers, with its centre at Sermium. More recently, Charles R. Bowlus and the author of the present contribution between them published three monographs devoted to this question: "Franks, Moravians and Magyars" (Philadelphia 1995), "Das 'Großmährische Reich' – Realität oder Fiktion?" (Stuttgart 1995), and "Das Erzbistum des Method" (Munich 1996). Both these authors refuted the view of "Great Moravia" as a western Slavic territory. According to them both, however, the nucleus of what they called "Moravia" in the ninth century lay in eastern Hungary, in the Great Hungarian Plain (Alföld). From there, it expanded into neighbouring regions with, in their majority, a southern Slavic population, the smaller part occupied by western Slavs. In the present article, Eggers responds to criticism provoked by these three books, treating historical, philological, and archaeological aspects in their turn. Whereas to a certain extent the earlier theses had to be modified, with the help of original source material the fundamental justification of the considerable southeastern shift of medieval Moravia could be established beyond doubt.