

Religious Transition and Social Changes among the Carantians

The Christianization of the Carantians in the second half of the 8th century was the first one in the entire Slavic world, and for the Western Church an area of activity opened up that was new in some respects. For the first time in its history, the Church had to start speaking in a Slavic language in which a new Christian terminology was created based on the lexis of the Carantian Slavs, which also influenced the work of Constantine and Methodius.² The conversion of the Carantians was a phenomenon with a European dimension, although here we are not so much interested in the conversion itself but rather the societal changes that it brought with it.

Christianity and its ecclesiastical organization have a long tradition in the Noric-Carantian region that reaches back to the 4th century and is well documented in both written and archeological sources.³ The Slavic settlement under Avarian rule caused the collapse of the ecclesiastical organization at the end of the 6th century, while the Christian faith largely ceased but was not entirely eliminated. A modest survival until the time of renewed evangelization is well documented in the village of Molzbichl near Spittal an der Drau: along with the gravestone and relics, the cult of the deacon Nonnosus, who lived during the Ostrogothic rule, was transferred to the monastery there, which was founded in the last quarter of the 8th century at the time of the Carantian christianisation.⁴ Equally telling is the town name Kršna vas/Kristendorf in Jauntal, which is what the Slavs called the settlement of their baptized neighbors in an area with a strong ancient tradition.⁵

Those who carried on this Christian tradition must have been the indigenous Romans, who survived in the new times and whose identity was largely shaped by the Christian religion and the Latin language. Carinthian town names that were formed from the word *Vlahi* (Walchen), with which Slavs described the Roman population following the Germanic model, clearly indicate that this group was able to preserve its identity within the Slavic and pagan world, at least to a certain degree.⁶ In the long run, these people lost their Romance language identity (that they had been able to preserve until the middle of

¹ The article largely summarizes studies on the background of the conversion, acculturation, and integration of the Carantians in the Franconian–Ottonian Empire, which were already included in the following articles: Peter Štih, *Als die Kirche Slawisch zu sprechen begann. Zu den Hintergründen der Christianisierung in Karantien und Pannonien*, in: *Neue Wege der Frühmittelalterforschung. Bilanz und Perspektiven*, ed. Walter Pohl/Maximilian Diesenberger/Bernhard Zeller (Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 22, Wien 2018) 339–356; id., *Begegnung, Akkulturation und Integration am Berührungspunkt der romanischen, germanischen und slawischen Welt*, in: *Akkulturation im Mittelalter*, ed. Reinhard Härtel (Vorträge und Forschungen 78, Ostfildern 2014) 235–294; id., *Die Integration der Karantanen und anderer Alpenlawen in das fränkisch-ottonische Reich. Einige Beobachtungen*, in: *Festschrift für Claudia Fräss-Ehrfeld. Carinthia I 204/1* (2014) 43–59. As a result, the following notes are limited to the essentials.

² See Štih, *Als die Kirche Slawisch zu sprechen begann* 340f.

³ Rajko Bratož, *Der Einfluß Aquileias auf den Alpenraum und das Alpenvorland (Von den Anfängen bis um 700)*, in: *Das Christentum im bairischen Raum. Von den Anfängen bis ins 11. Jahrhundert*, ed. Egon Boshof/ Hartmut Wolff (Passauer historische Forschungen 8, Köln/Weimar/Wien 1994) 29–61; Rudolf Leeb/Maximilian Liebmann/Georg Scheibelreiter/Peter G. Tropper, *Geschichte des Christentums in Österreich. Von der Spätantike bis zur Gegenwart* (Wien 2003) 13–27.

⁴ Stefan Eichert, *Frühmittelalterliche Strukturen im Ostalpenraum. Studien zu Geschichte und Archäologie Karantians* (Aus Forschung und Kunst 39, Klagenfurt 2012) 51–55, 320–322.

⁵ Eberhard Kranzmayer, *Ortsnamenbuch von Kärnten 2: Alphabetisches Kärntner Siedlungsnamenbuch* (Archiv für vaterländische Geschichte und Topographie 51, Klagenfurt 1958) 131.

⁶ Hans-Dietrich Kahl, *Der Staat der Karantanen. Fakten, Thesen und Fragen zu einer frühen slawischen Machtbildung im Ostalpenraum (7.–9. Jh.)* (Ljubljana 2002) 100–110; Štih, *Begegnung, Akkulturation und Integration* 254f.; Herwig Wolfram, *Die frühmittelalterliche Romania im Donau- und Ostalpenraums*, in: *Walchen, Romani und Latini. Variationen einer nachrömischen Gruppenbezeichnung zwischen Britannien und dem Balkan*, ed. Walter Pohl/Wolfgang Haubrichs (Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 21, Wien 2017) 27–57, hier 40f.

the 8th century) in the process of assimilation and acculturation, because only German and Slovenian speakers are subsequently documented in Carinthia. But at the same time, they must have also spoken the language of the Slavs who were in power at the time. It cannot be ruled out, and even seems highly plausible, that the first Salzburg missionaries, some of whom bore a Latin or Romance name, were able to make contact with or at least facilitated contact with the Slavic speaking, pagan population with help from these Romanic, bilingual, and Christian Carantanians. Modestus could also have consecrated the first local priests from the circle of these bilingual descendants of old Christians.⁷

The old Slovenian expression *krščénica* (in the sense of baptized Christian woman) for maidservant, which has now been forgotten,⁸ as well as *servi credentes*, who stand in opposition to *infideles, qui eorum dominabantur*⁹ in the parable about Ingos' feast in the *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*, suggest that the social position of these indigenous Christian Romans within Carantanian society was very low. At the same time, in the Eastern Alps as well as in the broader Slavic world, there is no known example that would indicate that Romans were part of the social elite or that they managed to advance socially and become integrated into the social upper class. The difference between Slavic world and the circumstances in Gothic Italy or in Frankish Gaul, for example, as well as around Salzburg (key word: *genealogia de Albina*)¹⁰ is unmistakable.

In spite of this, or because of it, the question arises of how this unprivileged class from the lower end of the social ladder managed to preserve its Christian identity in a foreign, gentile religious environment. The understanding of religiousness among pagan peoples offers a possible answer to this. For a people rooted in the pagan way of thinking, the monotheistic and all-encompassing Christian concept of one true God who only brings salvation in heaven was completely unfamiliar. For polytheistic gentile religions it was perfectly natural that every people has its own gods whose impact was limited to its own people and land. These gods were generally no longer "competent" outside their own territory. Those areas belonged to other gods with the same characteristics, and this is why gentile religions had neither the need nor the desire to convert others.¹¹

As all three versions of the *Vita* of Bishop Otto I von Bamberg (1102–1139), apostle of Pomerania, clearly illustrate, pagan Slavs in Stettin viewed the Christian God, who is simply called "German god" – *Teutonicus deus* – in one of the versions, merely as the gentile god of their German neighbors and considered Christianity their gentile religion. After a plague in the city led to a crisis of faith and the old cult was revived, the highest pagan priest refused to approve the destruction of St. Adalbert's Church out of fear of the powerful Christian god. Bishop Otto I had had the church built on the site of the temple dedicated to Triglav. Instead, the pagan priest commissioned the construction of the altar dedicated to pagan gods next to the altar dedicated to the Christian god (according to the other version of Otto's *vita*, he commissioned the construction of a pagan temple built next to the St. Adalbert's Church).¹² This example indicates that, unlike in monotheistic Christianity, whose god did not tolerate any other gods

⁷ Ivan Grafenauer, O pokristjanjevanju Slovencev in početkih slovenskega pismenstva [On the conversion of the Slovenians and the beginnings of Slovenian literature], in: *Dom in svet* 2 (1934) 350–371, 480–503, here 357; Štih, Als die Kirche Slawisch zu sprechen begann 345f.

⁸ Peter Štih, Strukture današnjega slovenskega prostora v zgodnjem srednjem veku [Engl. summary: The structures of today's Slovenian territory in the early Middle Ages], in: *Slovenija in sosednje dežele med antiko in karolinško dobo/Slowenien und die Nachbarländer zwischen Antike und karolingischer Epoche* 1, ed. Rajko Bratož (Situla 39 – Razprave I. razreda Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti 18, Ljubljana 2000) 355–394, here 383.

⁹ *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* c. 7 (ed. Fritz Lošek, *Die Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* und der Brief des Erzbischofs Theotmar von Salzburg, MGH Studien und Texte 15, Hannover 1997) 112–115.

¹⁰ Wilhelm Störmer, Früher Adel. Studien zur politischen Führungsschicht im fränkisch-deutschen Reich vom 8. bis 11. Jahrhundert (Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 6/1–2, Stuttgart 1973) 212f.; Joachim Jahn, Ducatus Baiuvariorum. Das bairische Herzogtum der Agilolfinger (Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 35, Stuttgart 1991) 235.

¹¹ Hans-Dietrich Kahl, Heidenfrage und Slawenfrage im deutschen Mittelalter. Ausgewählte Studien 1953–2008 (East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages 450–1450, 4, Leiden/Boston 2011) 200–202; Rainer Christoph Schwinges, Wider Heiden und Dämonen – Mission im Mittelalter, in: *Engel, Teufel und Dämonen. Einblicke in die Geisterwelt des Mittelalters*, ed. Hubert Herkommer/Rainer Christoph Schwinges (Basel 2006) 9–32, here 14.

¹² *Vita Ottonis Babenbergensis episcopi auctore monacho Prieflinigensi* III 5 (ed. Rudolf Köpke, MGH SS 12, Hannover 1856, Nachdruck 1995) 899; Herbord, *Dialogus de vita Ottonis episcopi Babenbergensis* III 16 (ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS rer. Germ. in us. schol. [33], Hannover 1868) 130; Ebbo, *Vita Ottonis episcopi Babenbergensis* III 1 (ed. Rudolf Köpke, MGH SS 12, Hannover 1856, Nachdruck 1995) 859.

beside him and claimed an absolute monopolistic-exclusive position, polytheistic gentile religions were prepared to at least tolerate the Christian god alongside their own gods if they could not accept him into their pantheon.¹³

Gentile religions were much more tolerant towards other religions than Christianity was, and against this backdrop we can understand and explain at least the basic survival of Christianity and its community in Carantania from Late Antiquity until the renewed evangelization in the second half of the 8th century. The same is true for Christianity in Avaria, which was spread by the *sacerdotes terrae istius*, *clerici*, and *clerici inlitterati*, before the bishops, who accompanied the Frankish military on the expedition to Pannonia in 796, stipulated the guidelines for conversion there somewhere on the Danube.¹⁴ This clearly isolated Christianity without bishops within the gentile religious Avar Khaganate, could have survived from Roman times, but could also have been imported later.¹⁵

Otherwise, the conversion was anything but a purely religious act. Accepting the Christian god also meant a change in ethical and moral standards, cultural patterns, and behavioral norms for the pagans. The call for a life in harmony with Christian ethics within the framework of the church that handled social discipline brought about major changes in daily life and on an overall societal level. Many old practices were forbidden, such as pagan burial and pagan cults, polygamy, promiscuity, and generally everything that stood in opposition to the Christian notion of family. The construction of churches and paying tithes became obligatory, as did fasting and confession, worshiping saints, celebrating religious holidays, and attending mass on Sundays. Particularly through the establishment of Sundays as the “Day of the Lord” (*dies Domini = Dominica*) during which (peasant) work was forbidden, life fell into a stable and steady rhythm.¹⁶

None of this happened without resistance. Not only were those who held fast to the old gods and traditional practices dissatisfied, but those who lost their influence and were socially marginalized as a result of the new religion were as well. This is especially true for groups that managed the gentile sacral-religious spheres in which old priests and their role in society were replaced by new people. In this way, the establishment of Christianity caused changes in the relationship between those who held authority in society, which was certainly one of the reasons for resistance that arose in Carantania in the 760s. Three times in a six-year interval the opposition violently resisted the intensive religious and social changes in Carantania.¹⁷ Cheitmar, the Christian prince of the Carantanians, twice managed to defeat the uprisings with his own efforts. After his death in 769, the third, most violent and most successful uprising broke out. The opposition remained in power for three years. The clergy had to return to Bavaria and conversion came to a halt. It is easy to imagine that under these conditions the churches founded in the early days of the christianisation, which symbolized the exiled religion and the regime associated with it, were destroyed. In Salzburg, the uprisings in Carantania were called *carmula*, a term that is more part of a political than a religious vocabulary. In Bavarian legal terminology, the word stood for an uprising against the legitimate power, and in Bavaria the word was used to describe the uprisings of Pippin’s son Bernhard in Italy; Ljudewit, the Duke of Lower Pannonia and the ruler of Moravia, Rastislav.¹⁸ The uprisings in Carantania were, therefore, understood primarily as a political and not a religious act.

¹³ Ebbo, Vita Ottonis episcopi Babenbergensis III 1, ed. Köpke 859.; Kahl, Heidenfrage und Slawenfrage 203–205, 227f.

¹⁴ Conventus episcoporum ad ripas Danubii a. 796 (ed. Albert Werminghoff, MGH Conc. 2/1, Conc. aevi Karolini 1/1 742–817, Hannover/Leipzig 1906, Nachdruck 1997) 172–176, here 175f.

¹⁵ See Štih, Als die Kirche Slawisch zu sprechen begann 341–343.

¹⁶ Štih, Die Integration der Karantanen 53f.

¹⁷ Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum c. 5, ed. Lošek 106–109; see Herwig Wolfram, Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum. Das Weißbuch der Salzburger Kirche über die erfolgreiche Mission in Karantanien und Pannonien. Herausgegeben, übersetzt, kommentiert und um Epistola Theotmari wie um gesammelte Schriften zum Thema ergänzt (Dela I. razreda Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti 38 – Zbirka Zgodovinskega časopisa 44, Dritte, gründlich überarbeitete Auflage, Ljubljana/Laibach 2013) 126–132.

¹⁸ Lex Baiwariorum II, 3 (ed. Ernst Schwind, MGH LL nat. Germ. 5/2, Hannover 1926, Nachdruck 1997) 280; Annales Sancti Emmerami Ratisponensis maiores a. 818, 819 (ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS 1, Hannover 1826, Nachdruck 1976) 93; Excerpta Aventini ex Annalibus Iuvavensibus antiquis derivati a. 854 (ed. Harry Bresslau, MGH SS 30/2, Leipzig 1934, Nachdruck 1976) 744; Štih, Begegnung, Akkulturation und Integration, 265 f. und Anm. 123.

The Carantanian opposition was defeated in 772 by the direct military intervention of Tassilo III, Duke of Bavaria, which is his only military triumph.¹⁹ However, it remains debatable whether the Carantanian opposition was defeated for good. Almost fifty years later, the uprising of Ljudewit, Duke of Lower Pannonia, who worked very integratively with the neighboring Slavic peoples, was joined by a part of the Carantanians, while the other part remained loyal to the Frankish regime.²⁰ Reports that godless Slavs, *impij Sclavi*, had burned down the monastery of St. Maximilian in the Salzburg–Bavarian region of Pongau again in 820, after almost one hundred years, and that at this time a certain St. Michael’s Church (in Lungau?) may have also been destroyed,²¹ lead us to presume that Ljudewit’s uprising was supported by the descendants of those pagan forces that had resisted back in age of Cheitmar. In any case, the conflicts between pagans and Christians in Carantania are still documented after the middle of the 9th century at the time of Chorbishop Osbald (post 836–c. 863).²² Similar to the early phase of the conversion, we again witness the internal division of Carantanian society. Due to the sources, it is unclear whether these are two isolated incidents or whether internal differences shaped Carantanian society long-term and escalated again in the next major crisis.

The successful establishment of the Christian religion and the social changes among Carantanians associated with it, preceded by the political submission to the Bavarians, who were dependent upon the Franks, are unimaginable without major support for these changes in Carantania. Here the gentile chief was the central figure, who also became the main target of the proven and successful missionary methods of “conversion from above.” As soon as the political elite had decided to convert and were baptized – which often resulted from opportunism, because accepting Christianity was the prerequisite for political survival – the religious fate of the community they led was sealed and the Christianization basically decided. On the one hand, this set an example that was encouraging for all other social groups and classes. On the other hand, the converted elite had the military power and other means with which they were able to support or protect the mission and the changes connected to it.²³

Among the Carantanians, the key role of the prince in the religious transition can be seen most clearly in the case of Cheitmar. Along with the Salzburg Bishop Virgil, he occupies the central position in the early period of the Carantanian mission in the *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*.²⁴ Cheitmar, who ruled over the Carantanians for roughly seventeen years (approx. 752–769), spent almost ten years as a hostage in Bavaria during his youth. Not only was he baptized there, but he also received a monastic education. At the same time, he definitely learned the German idiom spoken in Bavaria, which was not insignificant considering the relationships he had with the Salzburg Bishop and his missionaries. The combination of all this could have opened doors to other members of the Bavarian upper class, about whom we otherwise have no reports. He became a devout Christian, who fulfilled general expectations of the church and, like other Christian princes, put himself at the head of the mission that converted his people. He was also prepared to defend Christianity with weapons.

The baptism of the Carantanian princes Cacatius and Cheitmar that followed the submission of the Carantanians to the Bavarians (Franks), or the baptism of Priwina at the behest of Louis the German immediately after he fled to Frankish territory, and not least the baptism of the Avar prince Tudun, which took place in 796 concurrently with his subjugation under Charlemagne (similarly, his two counterparts kapkan Theodor and khagan Abraham with their recent biblical names only obtained protection from Charlemagne for the groups they led through conversion) testify to the acceptance of Christianity as a

¹⁹ *Annales Sancti Emmerami Ratisponensis maiores a. 772*, ed. Pertz 92; *Annales Iuvavenses maximi a. 772* (ed. Harry Bresslau, MGH SS 30/2, Leipzig 1934, reprint 1976) 732.

²⁰ *Annales regni Francorum inde ab a. 741 usque ad a. 829 qui dicuntur Annales Laurissenses maiores et Einhardi a. 820* (ed. Friedrich Kurze, MGH SS rer. Germ. in us. schol. [6], Hannover 1895, reprint 1950) 153.

²¹ *Salzburger Formelbücher und Briefe aus Tassilonischer und Karolingischer Zeit I 2, 4* (ed. Bernhard Bischoff, *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, phil.-hist. Kl. 4, München 1973) 28f.

²² *Monumenta historica ducatus Carinthiae* 3, No. 23f. (ed. August von Jaksch, Klagenfurt 1904) 10f.; *Excerptum de Karentanis* (ed. Fritz Lošek, *Die Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* und der Brief des Erzbischofs Theotmar von Salzburg, MGH Studien und Texte 15, Hannover 1997) 136–137; Wolfram, *Conversio* 215f.

²³ See Štih, *Als die Kirche Slawisch zu sprechen begann* 348f.

²⁴ *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* c. 4 and 5, ed. Lošek 102–109.

prerequisite for political survival and the integration of the Slavic (or any other) nobility in the Frankish–Bavarian ruling class.²⁵

The extent to which the integration of society's elite was actually successful is a different matter; if it was successful, it was quickly evident in the manner of its presentation. In Carantania, where the Bavarian missionary and political activities were strengthened after the victory of Tassilo III over the insurgent pagan opposition in the year 772, the Carantanian society's elite began to present themselves as Christian and, therefore, in the way that the Franks and Bavarians did. The new self-understanding was expressed in the construction of their proprietary churches, richly decorated with tracery and other marble furnishing, which only the highest class of society could afford. With these prestigious churches, the Carantanian social elite demonstrated their commitment to the new religion and also their loyalty to the Bavarian Agilolfings and afterward to the Carolingian dynasty, and not least also their own noble splendor and high social position.²⁶ The Carinthian ornamented stone artifacts are, therefore, distant witnesses of a deep religious, cultural, and political transformation of Carantania under its last rulers and, simultaneously, the outcome of integration processes that included the upper class of the Carantanian society before the end of the 8th century.

With the inscription of the church founder in St. Peter am Bichl, this social group even stepped out of anonymity. On an architrave fragment of the church there, which was known earlier for its high quality artifacts with interlace ornaments, part of an inscription was retained with two names: *[O]tker–Radozla[v]*.²⁷ It is possible that the double name of the founder of the church – which is located only four kilometers west of Karnburg, which was most probably the seat of the Carantanian princes – conceals the name of the last Carantanian prince, discharged in 828, who is called Etgar in the *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* (and whose name before baptism could have been Radoslav).²⁸ This group could also be associated with Domitian, who, according to a later legend, is said to have converted the locals around the Millstättersee to Christianity, founded the first church (monastery) there, and eradicated paganism. For a long time, this “prince” was considered a legendary invention of the 12th century Millstätter monks. But the discovery of an inscription fragment attributed to him indicated that Domitian was a historical figure who actively contributed to establishing Christianity in his surroundings as a local ruling figure in the age of Charlemagne.²⁹

The integrative role of Christianity and its church was, of course, not only limited to the upper class. It included the entire society and, therefore, groups from the lower end of the social ladder, which are barely noted in Early Medieval sources. The call to live according to Christian ethics and church doctrine was pervasive and such commandments, instructions, and warnings affected everyone. Provisions of the capitularies and the Bishops' synods on the level of the empire outlined the decisions of the provincial synods. The holders of secular power as well as the entire clergy were responsible for implementing them, and for both it was imperative to set an example and thereby contribute to establishing the Christian way of life, focusing on the virtues of charity, humility, meekness, temperance, mercifulness, good deeds, etc. The believers had to be constantly advised from the very beginning on what was right and what was wrong, what was a sin and what was a good deed. These reminders are already recorded in the Freising Manuscripts, which are the oldest Slavic texts written in the Latin alphabet, and which were written in the context of the evangelisation of the Carantanians. The first Freising Manuscript contains a catalog of sins that every believer had to confess, such as perjury, lying, theft, envy, desecration, fornication, slander, disregarding Sunday, Christmas, and fasting.³⁰ The second Freising Manuscript considers “Satan's work” (pagan) sacrifice, slander, theft, murder, carnal lust, false oath, and ill will, while good

²⁵ *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* c. 4 and 10, ed. Lošek 102–105, 118–123; *Annales regni Francorum* a. 795, 796, ed. Kurze 97–98; Štih, *Die Integration der Karantanen* 48–51.

²⁶ Kurt Karpf, *Repräsentation und Kirchenbau. Zur Ausstattung karantanischer Eigenkirchen im 8./9. Jahrhundert*, in: *Slovenija in sosednje dežele med antiko in karoliško dobo. Začetki slovenske etnogeneze / Slowenien und die Nachbarländer zwischen Antike und karolingischer Epoche. Anfänge der slowenischen Ethnogenese 2*, ed. Rajko Bratož (Situla 39 – *Razprave I. razreda Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti* 18, Ljubljana 2000) 711–730.

²⁷ Eichert, *Strukturen* 57–60.

²⁸ *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*, c. 10, ed. Lošek 120.

²⁹ Eichert, *Strukturen* 49–51.

³⁰ *Brižinski spomeniki/Monumenta Frisingensia. Znanstvenokritična izdaja* (ed. Darko Dolinar/Jože Faganel, 3. vervollständigte Ausgabe, Ljubljana 2004) 36–38; 121f. (English translation).

deeds were done by those who “fed the hungry, gave the thirsty to drink, shod the barefooted, clothed the naked, visited the infirm in the name of God, warmed the cold, brought in the stranger under their roofs, visited people in dungeons and fettered in iron chains, and in the name of God comforted them.”³¹

In any case, it was easier to preach about Christian norms than to live in harmony with them. As two letters from Pope Nicholas I (858–867) which were addressed to Chorbishop Osbald (post 836–c. 863) show, soon after the middle of the 9th century, a great rift between the words and deeds of the priests could exist, and similar circumstances are assumed among common believers as well. The letters originated as an answer to (Chor)Bishop Osbald. He inquired in Rome about the canonical consequences of two events: in the first case, a priest hit a deacon so hard that he fell from his horse and died; in the second case, a priest killed a pagan in self defense.³² The everyday reality must have been significantly more brutal than what can be gathered from the list of priests from Carantania created at the same time, which was entered in the Reichenau *liber vitae* and provides a valuable glimpse into the ecclesiastical and social relationships in Carantania at the time of Bishop Osbald. The column *Nomina presbiterorum de Carantana* contains the names of sixty-five people led by *Osbaldus episcopus*.³³ The Carantanian clergy, which was recorded in the Reichenau “Book of Life” for memorial reasons, forms its own community with the (Chor)Bishop at the head. The surprisingly high number of clerical personnel testifies not only to a significant increase in the Church and Christianity since the time of Bishop Virgil with seventeen missionaries known by name, but also to the cultural transformation of Carantanian society. Among the recorded clerics are also some with Slavic names like Ponesit and Sidamir (perhaps also Kestilo, Zenas). These are almost certainly the first known local priests, which means they were Carantanians who were raised, trained, and ordained as priests.

In summary, the conversion sparked enormous changes in Carantanian society. The call for a life in harmony with Christian ethics and within the framework of the Church changed everyday life for every individual, who had to give up many old practices on a very concrete level. At the same time, new social norms had to be adopted, behavior patterns changed, and the rhythm of life adapted to the Christian calendar. The establishment of Christianity also brought about changes in the relationship between those who held power in society. Groups that controlled the gentile sacral-religious sphere at the time or were unable to come to terms with religious and political changes in another way were socially marginalized. None of this happened without resistance, which frequently escalated into conflicts among the Carantanians. The highest social positions were filled by people who accepted the new religion and acknowledged Bavarian (and Frankish) lordship. Accepting Christianity became a prerequisite for political legitimation and the social survival of the ruling class, which also changed the way it presented itself and was at least partially integrated into the ranks of Bavarian–Frankish nobility through marriage or in other ways. In this way, a new, integrative social elite emerged. This was also in the interest of members of the Carolingian dynasty, who individually reigned in their (*sub*)*regna*, because this strengthened their power and stabilized the social relationships in the territories under their lordship.

Overall, Christianity and its church played a central role in overcoming barriers that separated the different groups of the population within the Frankish Carolingian Empire. Submission to the authority of the Frankish king linked with baptism was one of the main ways relationships between Franks and subjugated *gentes* were regulated. Accepting Christianity meant political legitimation on the part of the Frankish ruler and opened the door into society, whose order was based on the norms of the Christian church. Inclusion in the Christian community thus created fundamental prerequisites for living together, and in this way Christianity was an unparalleled generator of integration, acculturation, and accommodation processes in the Frankish Empire. The conversion was, therefore, not only a religious act, but also pursued political goals and enjoyed corresponding political and military support.

³¹ Brižinski spomeniki/Monumenta Frisingensia, ed. Dolinar/Faganel 39–42; 123–126 (English translation).

³² See Footnote 22.

³³ Das Verbrüderungsbuch der Abtei Reichenau (ed. Johanne Autenrieth/Dieter Geuenich/Karl Schmid, MGH Libri mem. N. S. 1, Hannover 1979) 108 (Facsimile); Karl Schmid, Das Zeugnis der Verbrüderungsbücher zur Slawenmission, in: Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Salzburger Landeskunde 126 (1986) 185–205, at 190f.