Christian Identities and Practices in the Alps (ca. 600–ca. 1000). A Political Geography. Toward a New Congress

by Roberto Leggero

New societies, new problems, new Christian faiths

The transition from late antiquity to the early Middle Ages (from the 7th to the 11th centuries) led, gradually but irreversibly, to a world in which the problem of spreading and consolidating the Christian religion in its different local variations became less pressing. In Late Antiquity, religious colonisation had been achieved by occupying the territory in a punctiform manner and establishing centres of dissemination of the Christian message in the cities where public institutions already existed, as those were crucial locations for the message to germinate and grow stronger.[1] If, then, lay authorities were absent in an urban setting, religious hierarchical structures were able to replace them by performing political, administrative, cultural and even military duties in their stead. Clearly, if we move away from the political-institutional perspective and focus instead on the behaviour of the faithful and the clergy, things look different. That is where a connection begins to emerge between pre-Christian and Christian practices, uses and beliefs, enough to justify the idea of a *pagan Middle Ages*[2] – in other words, a widespread syncretism[3] that had been practised by the "barbarian" populations[4] themselves.

As has been mentioned, the prerogatives of the ancient magic-religious tradition were amalgamated with new practices from the ninth century onwards, with the goal of consolidating an image of the church as an effective mediator with the divine: "In the same way as the spells ought to be uttered correctly if they were to produce the desired effect", there was a movement towards levelling and unifying religious texts to make them "identical anywhere and equally effective; in the same way as whoever worked a spell must be pure and uncontaminated, there was a concern about the chastity of clerics, of monks and of nuns. Besides, since magic relies on the manipulation and use of specific instruments designed to facilitate the connection with the supernatural and emanate a numinous power, the Carolingian Church made sure that some items of liturgical use would be endowed with a similar special power."[5]

In any case, there was also a syncretic dimension in politics, resulting from contact with populations from northern Europe and from the Eastern steppes. Under these circumstances, the religious organisation of Latin populations acted as the "main safeguarding device of the social system of intellectual and civilian conquests of Mediterranean tradition."[6] Bishops and abbots continued to be recruited from the municipal aristocracies as the bearers of Roman senatorial culture, though they were also recruited from the German military aristocracies. The integration of the latter into a new cultural horizon gave rise to an unexpected synthesis. From this perspective, the figure of Martin of Tours, in his three roles as knight, bishop and saint, stood out as a model to look up to for all the components of the new societies taking shape. For he possessed the *potestas* of the mounted warrior, the *nobilitas* of culture and the *pietas* of the spiritual leader.[7] According to the *legenda*, Martin's very name had a military dimension, having been given to him in honour of Mars, god of war. This enabled many aristocrats of German origin, who proudly bore names inspired by Norse mythology, to take the process of identification further. It was no accident, therefore, that the Franks chose Martin as the "religious symbol of Frankish power",[8] echoing a political continuity that encompassed the reign of Clovis and the Merovingian dynasty, as far back as the Carolingians. In addition, his figure as a western saint clashed with that of the great ascetics of Eastern Christianity. In a world where dismembering corpses to multiply their relics was still unlawful[9] (it became lawful in the eighth century), what was preserved of Martin was his cloak, emblematic not of a miracle, but of devotion to Christ coupled with the ideals of *balance* and *dignity* – the aspiration and hallmark of the urban ruling classes and, no mere detail, of the bishop's rank.

A well-structured political and religious geography

As has been argued in this volume, the spread of Christianity, the conversion of the northern nations and political and social change were concomitant processes. They were neither linear nor homogeneous, just as neither "were the criteria, successively used, for telling apart 'true' Christians from 'pagans' or from 'fake Christians'. During the early mediaeval period, in other words, one may also detect, besides a major internal transformation in the structure of the Roman world, an equivalent process of renovation of Christianity in terms of doctrine, (…) of religious practices and, above all, of politics."[10]

Consequently, one may distinguish three different periods that saw the rise of the phenomenon of re-conversion to Christianity, seen as a return to an 'original' faith in contrast to a "*deviant* Christian model, hence definitely labelled as 'pagan'."[11] The first period, says Cristina La Rocca, lies between the fourth and the fifth centuries and is characterised by the individual conversion of sovereigns and by the co-existence within one single *gens* of separate religions and denominations. The second period covers the fifth to the eighth centuries, when the role of Christianity acquired strength as a defining element of the national and political identity of a *gens*. The third and last period coincides with the ninth and tenth centuries and encompasses the Christian religion of the Carolingian and post-Carolingian age, as "a means of political and territorial control vis-à-vis enemies such as the Saxons, Avars and Slavs, and thus as an indispensable means of cultural integration and political legitimacy for the converted populations."[12]

This scheme highlights the close links between political events and changes in the identity of barbarian kings and kingdoms, and how they relate to Christian religions,[13] but it also stresses the differences between what happened on the southern side of the Alps and beyond the Alps.

Recently, scholars have reviewed some observations on the connection between ethnic identities, such as the 'Germanisation' of national churches and Christian faiths, first pointed out by Giovanni Tabacco. The gist of their considerations is that the *Bible* provided its readers with a series of useful models for ethnic identification because "a world of *gentes* seems to (...) inhabit the theatre of the history of salvation and the horizon of the Christian mission itself."[14] Hence, if the notion of ethnicity and its characteristics became increasingly clear within and based on the Christian theological discourse – Walter Pohl writes – no kingdom managed to build a solid identity and territorial stability before conversion. Seeing oneself as chosen by Providence became "a key element of the dynamics of identity definition from an ethnic perspective."[15] This explains the importance of Christianity for some forms of political organisation, which could no longer rely directly on Roman tradition and were obliged to justify themselves through other cultural and propagandized paths.

The strong providential significance of the 'ethnic States' mentioned by Pohl also accounts for some features of the penetration of Christianity and its local specificities in Europe during the transition from late antiquity to the Middle Ages. Whereas in late antiquity the main problem had been to build some strongholds of penetration into regions that were on the whole alien to the new religion, in the early Middle Ages things took on a totally different hue. With some cornerstones now in place, it was time to saturate the territory by extending control and regulation, associated with the new religion but responding to a political necessity, from an ethnic perspective over the population as a whole and over the minor settlements. The

problem was, first of all, of a cultural nature, arising from the need to re-consecrate extra-urban space in a Christian sense. While in late antiquity cities had been 'besieged' by cathedrals dedicated to the martyrs and by cemeteries sited outside the city walls, and later 'conquered' once the saints' relics had been moved inside the city walls,[16] "the conversion of the rural population was a major undertaking."[17] Shifting to the countryside, along communication and transport routes, the task of the new organisations was to carry on destroying anything that could not be incorporated into Christianity (mostly, altars and statues) and adopt all the assimilable elements from the old polytheistic cultural context[18] (especially practices and habits, but also property). For the Merovingian period, the term 'osmosis' has been used to define the transition process.[19] In other words, as has been said of a more recent phase of the Middle Ages, instead of reading the customs of the countryside reminiscent of ancient rituals as polytheistic or superstitious survivals, one should preferably "interpret these practices as part of a functional continuity which did not rule out either an evolution of beliefs or their inherent complementarity."[20]

Dioceses, monasteries and parish churches (pievi)

It must be said that all these lines of development could hardly have been planned without a direct link to the local and regional political order and to the great bishops' and archbishops' sees. Therefore, while a cultural paradigm shift had been going on for some time, the religious saturation of the territory, which helped to achieve profound forms of political control over settlements and populations, could in no way be dissociated from the ambitions of the powers that be. Two typical phenomena of the early Middle Ages prove this point: the rise of the monasteries and the achievement of a network of baptismal churches in the countryside, that is, the parish churches (i.e Country churches endowed with the right to baptize, *pievi* in Italian). Such infrastructure addressed different needs. Pievi, actually under the supervision of the local bishop, assured settlement and demographic stability to rural areas by supplying essential religious services to villages that were far removed from cities and therefore hard to reach. In addition, a system of levying taxes emerged: the tithe. Formalised during the Carolingian age to offset the cost of supplying services and the upkeep of the church hierarchy, it became one of the most enduring forms of taxation.

As for mediaeval monasticism, which is known to have flourished through its connection with sovereigns, it ensured political-military control, economic exploitation and support of trade flow, while at the same time guaranteeing a constant supply of foodstuffs and commodities to urban markets. Moreover, the foundation of a monastery made sure that there was a permanent and privileged bond

with the divine, based on the frequency and stability of religious rites celebrated there. All this strengthened the legitimacy, the prestige and the power of the reigning house. Emulating the action of sovereigns, the top families of the military aristocracies consolidated their wealth and their prestige by founding monasteries – removed from episcopal supervision and not subject to taxation – or by taking charge through the election of their own representatives to the office of abbot. However, monastic institutions were often founded to the disadvantage of the local population, whether in the lowlands or in the mountains,[21] as they exerted an adverse influence on the management of natural resources and even more so on the local settlement pattern. In spite of the negative consequences for those who experienced them, these consequences may still be considered part of "the powerful action of religious and political organisation" of the rural populations.

The foundation, at the end of the sixth century, of the great Abbey of Luxeuil, in what is today the French department of Haute Saône, and of Bobbio, in Italy, both the work of the Irish missionary Columbanus, benefitted from the political and economic backing of Merovingian and Lombard sovereigns and aristocracies. In particular, Luxeuil was supported by Clovis II and, through the action of Abbot Waldebert, became the Kingdom's most prestigious abbey between 629 and 670.

In Valais (Fig. 1), the Abbey of Saint-Maurice had been founded in 515 by King Sigismund of Burgundy on the spot where the alleged relics of the Theban Legion had been placed, and dedicated to a saint who, like Martin of Tours, had been an army officer. In the absence of a capital city, the Abbey organised itself as the true spiritual heart of the kingdom and as the one element that more than any other conferred legitimacy to the crown. A converted Arian became its first abbot and the Eastern-style liturgy he introduced was based on the so-called *laus perennis* (Fig. 2).[22]

The third example is the foundation, in the eighth century, of Novalesa Abbey (located in the foothills of Moncenisio, in Piedmont). This, too, was the result of a 'purely political' motive – in the words of Giovanni Tabacco – under Frankish rule. The coenobium was promoted by Abbo, *rector* of the Moriana and of Susa, as well as by Bishop *Walcuno*. Built on land owned by Abbo himself, the foundation deed was underwritten by four bishops, two abbots and an archdeacon. By the will of the founder, neither constraint nor authority could ever set limits to the *libertas* of Novalesa except for the bond with the Abbey of Sainte-Marie in the *pagus* of Grenoble, regarding spiritual supervision and a control, which was soon to wane.[23]

Frankish monasticism was not different from that of the Lombards, inasmuch as it was "deeply rooted in the Kingdom" and "dripping with patriotism."[24] But what did 'patriotism' mean at the time, and in what way could

religious phenomena inspire it? Christianity was the glue that held together the ethnic definition, organising the population around a symbolic nucleus, far sounder and far stronger that the foundation myths of the tribes that united during the *Völkerwanderung* (migration period), i.e., the phase of changes of the Empire. The other mainstay was the relationship with the sovereign, a recognisable and symbolic element of a nation's identity. As Walter Pohl has observed, from the seventh century onwards, sovereigns began to use ethnic titles more and more frequently (*rex gentis Langobardorum*). Yet, even when the ethnonym was territorialised (*rex Angliae*), "the Christian and ethnic designations appear to merge, as though intended to legitimate the sovereign, who stands, at the same time, for the people and God's will."[25] This is why the development of a liturgy associated with the most notable moments in the Christian sovereign's life, a liturgy that enhanced his prestige and guaranteed legitimacy in the eyes of his subjects, is but the last element of a confronta-
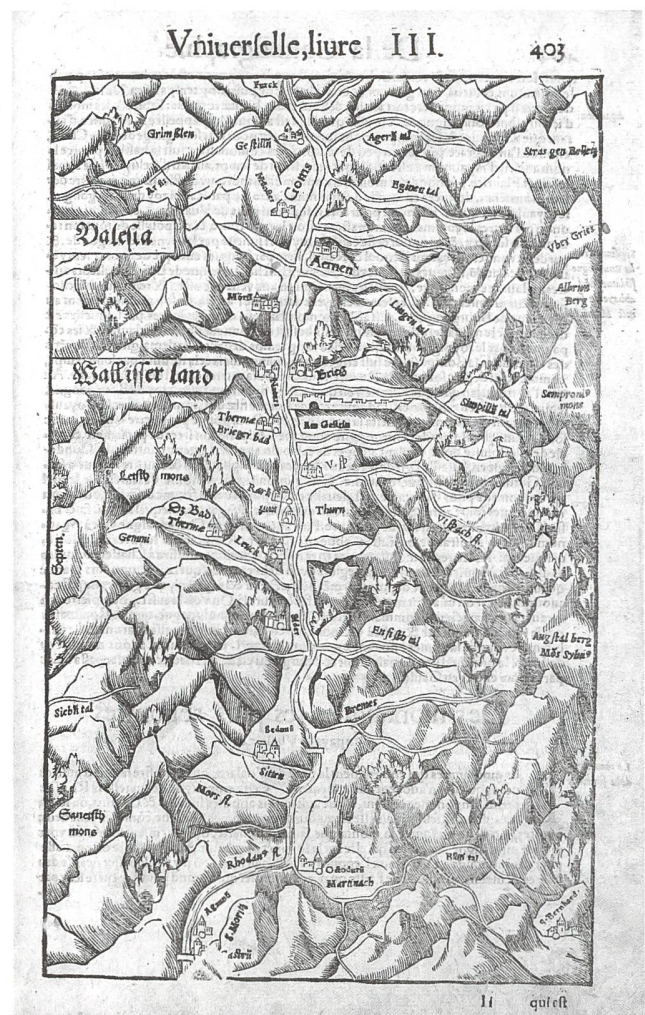

Fig. 1 Valesia, from Sebastian Münster's (1488–1552) De la cosmographie universelle, Book III.

tion in progress vis-à-vis the East, perceived as an endless challenge to the very notion of Western sovereignty. On reflection, the two phenomena, the political and the religious, feed on each other insofar as the one needs the other to justify its own existence and legitimacy, over and above the supremacy acknowledged to the former in the use of force. The Alpine arc was no stranger to the occurrence of such processes. On the contrary, given the role it played in the interregional road network, it was seen as an essential area of application.

Ecclesiae propriae

The spread of parish churches gave rise to a concurrent phenomenon, that of private churches (*ecclesiae propriae*). Giovanni Tabacco has left us with an incisive and complete definition of this phenomenon: "*Ecclesia propria* was a church founded by a wealthy landowner on his allodial estate, which he endowed with assets for a religious service primarily intended for an aristocratic family: the priest who officiated there was chosen by the lord of the manor himself, often from his *pertinenti*, *famuli* or servants. The church may also be a sanctuary entrusted to a canonical or, more frequently, a monastic community, which was under the founder's supervision and guaranteed his lineage the everlasting intercession of prayers."[26]

In the end, it is hardly surprising that landowners may have wanted to build churches to provide services to the local communities and, since it was their own property, increase their prestige and safeguard the assets granted to such churches. A further outcome was made possible by private churches: in regional environments of limited expansion, forms of regulation could be achieved on a smaller scale compared to the diocese or the parish. So, such a phenomenon might be considered as downright meddling in a process of religious territorial organisation, were it not for the fact that the social, economic and military conditions of big landowners place it inside a far more complex context, as demonstrated by the attention which bishops paid to *ecclesiae propriae* in an effort to complete the religious regulation of the countryside. In fact, Tabacco continues, "In some cases, the manorial church, with the assent of or by request of the bishop, took on the role of baptismal church: it became a parish church, in charge of a constituency and of a *populus*, without necessarily, for all that, losing its main character of *ecclesia propria*, of a church as part and parcel of a family's private wealth. Notice that a manorial church, like any other church, possessed its own, inalienable assets and received income in connection with its religious function, for example, the offerings brought by the faithful. Nonetheless, though a subject of property and revenues, it was itself the object of other people's property, so that the *dominus* could intervene in its 'operations', managing assets and enjoying any income; and he could make use of it –

in the same way as he would a castle or a mill, always in full respect of its sacred character and inviolable sanctity of property –, gifting it, exchanging it, dividing it into ideal shares, bequeathing it to children and grandchildren."[27] The mechanism worked so well that it was exploited by the ecclesiastical hierarchy itself and by monastic institutions, both of which created *ecclesiae propriae*, be it by foundation or purchase.

Christianity in the Alpine regions

In Alpine areas, where cities were few and far between and bishoprics and archbishoprics located on the plains covered extremely large dioceses that extended to include mountainous areas, monasteries played a key role in strengthening Christian faiths, defining and defending jurisdiction borders, checking transits and passes and exploiting natural resources.

We must not forget that, in the late antique period, Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths,[28] had strengthened the functions of the the control points for sluices in the Alpine area on the Italian side. He had given stability to "the frontiers (...) by putting in place military commanders (...) in critical zones (...) [of] Raetia and [of] Noricum, while simultaneously building fortifications, *clausurae*, at Susa, Aosta and Trento."[29] As Germana Gandino writes, Theodoric's paternalism was based on an image of himself as the little father and head of the West. His children were the sovereigns of the Romano-barbarian world and above him stood the figure of the Eastern Emperor. Before domestic events of the Byzantine and of the Lombard kingdoms destroyed this set-up, thereby paving the way for 'other paternalisms' (including the papal one), the attitude toward religion used to be defined in relation to the prevailing political power.[30] This seems to suggest that religious concerns were secondary to political interests and needs. Let us not forget, however, that the former justified the latter, and not only symbolically. Carloman had made the Novalesa Abbey a strategic element of his Alpine policy, decreeing its independence from the bishop's control and granting it immunity, which Charlemagne duly reconfirmed.[31] Before and after his expedition against the Lombard kingdom, in fact, the latter took care to invest massive political and financial resources in monastic and religious institutions, pursuing a strategy implemented by his predecessors.[32] Tassilo III, the duke of Bavaria (d. 794), followed the same policy of founding, endowing and supporting monastic estates within the framework of Alpine empowerment by building the Monastery of San Candido in Val Pusteria (769).

Chur played quite a major role in the Carolingian Alpine policy. As early as the sixth century, the Frankish attack against the Kingdom of Burgundy (534), the invasion of Italy (539) and the occupation of Raetia and Norico clearly showed a privileged direction of expansion. This

led, in 556, to a Byzantine backlash, to the retreat of the Franks and the reactivation and renovation of the network of sluices. Yet, whereas Christian doctrines had spread from the south, monasticism had spread from the west under the pressure of the political and cultural needs of the Frankish kingdom.[33] The bishopric of Chur, too, was affected by the relationship with the Franks, so much so that in the eighth century, when Charlemagne decided to invade Italy, the *Raetia curiense* was one of the areas of preventive action.

The Monastery of Disentis stands out among the monastic institutions with Frankish connections. Its church – founded in the eighth century – is dedicated to St Martin, a designation that clearly denotes the Frankish origin of its foundation. We owe to the monastery the existence of a series of supporting points and stopping stages along the Lukmanier route. The Frankish Sigebert, alongside the aristocrat Placido, are acknowledged as saints – the former a confessor and the second a martyr, having been assassinated by *Victor*, the governor of Raetia (Fig. 3).[34]

Remember, in fact, that evidence exists of the presence of an episcopal institution in Chur from the fifth century, and of a Christian community there as early as the fourth century when, for all intents and purposes, the town stood as the border between the world of Roman culture and the Germanic world.[35] The first bishop we find attested is a certain Asinio, whose name is mentioned in a single but important Milanese document dated 451, with which the archbishop of Milan and the suffragan bishops ratified the

Fig. 2   Saint Maurice, fresco, fifteenth century. Church of Saints Peter and Paul, Biasca (CH).
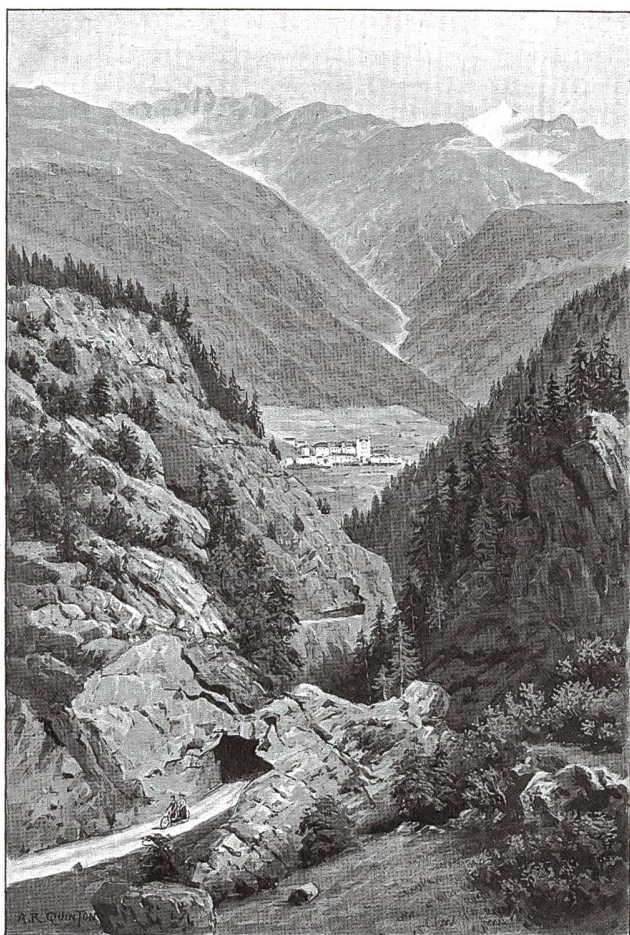
A VIEW NEAR DISENTIS.

Fig. 3 "A view near Disentis" lithography by Alfred Robert Quinton (1853–1934) showing the valley with the Abbey of Disentis in the background.

decisions of the Council of Chalcedon. We know that Asinio was not in Milan on that occasion, because it was the bishop of Como who signed on his own behalf and on behalf of the prelate of Chur. The attestation makes clear that the Milanese ecclesiastical province included the diocese of Chur. It was not until 843 that Chur was subsumed under the ecclesiastical province of Mainz, where an archbishop had been installed.[36]

The family consortium of Zacconi was a key player in the affairs of the Bishopric of Chur. From the sixth century, they asserted themselves locally with the founder of the family, Zaccone (likely to have been a Frankish military leader), having taken advantage of a weakened royal control over the area. Later, in the seventh century, the family formed an alliance with the Vittoridi family. In the middle of the seventh century, a *Vigilius*, a member of the Zacconi-Vittoridi consortium, was elected *tribunus*, and one of his three sons, Pasquale, though married, held two positions concomitantly: bishop and governor (*praeses*). The Zacconi-Vittoridi family history illustrates what was meant by the connection between family unit and religious and civil institutions. The preservation or the creation of titles of Roman resonance, such as tribune and *praeses*, emphasizes the point that Christian colonisation – the next stage after the informal spread of Christianity[37] – involved the Latin language and a culture of power influenced by the Romans.[38]

Pasquale's sons, Victor and *Jactatus*, divided the roles of bishop and *praeses* between them. Victor, together with his mother, Esopeia, was also the founder of the Abbey of Cazis. The activities of the family consortium mirrored exactly those of the big family groups which, throughout the West, not only managed their own families but were also involved in the management of religious and political roles and wealth. *Jactatus'* sons, Vigilio and Victor, also took on the offices of bishop and *praeses*, respectively, around the 720s. The fourth generation of the Zacconi-Vittoridi was the last to rule over Chur, in the person of Tello, bishop and *praeses* from 759 to 765.

Not many years later in the episcopal see of Chur, Costanzo, a figure of whom we seem to know little more than his name, is quoted in a very important document granted by Charlemagne between 772 and 774.[39] It concerned the conferment on the bishop either of the King's special protection (*mundeburdium*)[40] or of the role of *rector* of Retia. The document, in which Charlemagne addresses Costanzo by the usual appellation of *vir venerabilis*, constitutes the sovereign's acknowledgement of decisions taken locally to which he bestows legitimacy. On the other hand, the two roles of bishop and *rector* appear separately in the text. Costanzo becomes *rector* not by virtue of being bishop, but because Charlemagne's will coincided with that of the 'people.'[41] Besides, that decision was the first step along a path which enabled the King to establish a division between the role of civil servants and bishops. Indeed, as an intermediary stage, when Costanzo died, the episcopal see of Chur was filled by a Frank, *Remedius*,
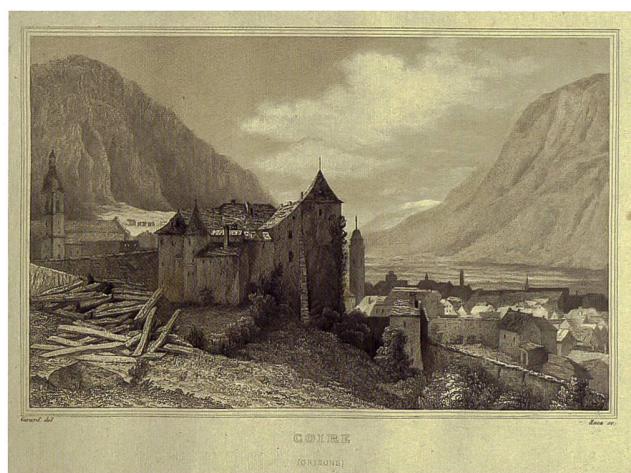

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Fig. 4 Drawing of Chur, with a palace (center) and church (left side) overlooking the valley.

and after his death in the early ninth century, there was a clear-cut break between ecclesiastical and secular administration (Fig. 4).

While Chur stood as the heart of political and religious institutions, a network of female and male monasteries was invested with the crucial responsibility of monitoring passes and access routes to the area. This role is significant in two ways. On the one hand, the network ensured a smooth flow of transport so that travellers could be guaranteed safe points of support and stopovers and, on the other hand, it reasserted political and religious interests. The leading monasteries in the region were the male ones of Disentis, and Saint John of Müstair (founded at the end of the eighth century. Initiated by Charlemagne, it was to become a private monastery of the Bishop of Chur in 881). The third leading monastery was the Abbey of Saint Mary of Pfäfers, attested in 762 and probably founded by the Zacconi family. The female monasteries included the Abbey of Cazis (eighth century) founded by the Bishop of Chur Vittore II, the Abbey of Saint Peter Mistail (beginning of the ninth century), a private monastery of the Bishop of Chur connected to Cazis, and the Abbey of Schisi (ninth century), a private foundation of the count Hunfrid of Retia.[42]

Although church and political institutions grew stronger and forms of political and religious regulation were deployed throughout the territory, several aspects of the relation between different faiths, particularly between continuity and change of mentalities and cultures (Fig. 5), remain to be clarified. One of the most interesting places to inspire a discussion of these themes is the cave of Zillis.[43] The cave sits at 940 metres above sea level, right at the end of Via Mala, the road along a gorge of the Hinterrhein river between Domleschg and the Schams. The *urbarium* of Raetia Curiensis, namely the Carolingian register subdivided into districts (*ministerii*), of the property and rights of the Empire located in the region, records the presence at Zillis in 840 of the Church of St Martin. In 940, Emperor Otto I transferred to the Bishop of Chur the churches and its four large *curtes* (farms) situated in Schams and in the upper Rheinwald.

The Church of St Martin stood a short distance from the cave of Zillis. The latter, researched by the Archaeological Department of Graubünden from the 1990s, shows signs of having been used for an extended period of time and of having been visited for cultic and ritual purposes. Inside the cave, partially closed by a low wall and a wooden panel, are several significant artefacts: fragments of worship vessels, pictures of Mercury and the Moon and images of animals evocative of mystery cults. Inside the cave, which one may well describe as a place of worship, there were altars on which sacrifices were burnt, whose ashes would then be scattered on the floor of the cave. Other findings include a great number of coins from the third, fourth and fifth centuries, fragments of rock crystals, animal bones and also a fragment of a cross.[44]

Fig. 5 The Colonne de Joux and Hospice of the Little St. Bernard. From William Brockedon (1787–1854), Illustrations of the passes of the Alps by which Italy communicates with France, Switzerland and Germany, Vol. I (1828–1829), p. 14.

It is worth noting that the cave is situated on a major transalpine axis near the gorge of Via Mala. As a stage along a difficult journey, it was a place in which to leave offerings or perform propitiatory sacrifices. Therefore, the competition exercised by the cave vis-à-vis other 'protectors' was significant because it placed travellers journeying along that route under the tutelage of an 'authority' other than the bishops of Chur, i.e., the Christian God. Between the fifth and the ninth centuries, several individuals were buried inside and outside the cave, which corroborates the idea of protracted use although we cannot find a clear reason for these burials. Since only the oldest and innermost burials in the cave can be realistically ascribed to a non-Christian presence *in loco*, one conjecture is that the most recent burials and those outside the cave may be linked to passing travellers of unclear religious affiliation or to executed criminals. In addition, recent research has highlighted the presence of buildings that can be traced back to the fifth century in the castle of Haselstein, which stands at a higher altitude than the cave, a fact that might point to the existence of a small local community. A similar, though not entirely comparable situation is that of the cave under the Church of St Michael at Rovato (the church of San Michele di Rovato (Brescia) on the slopes of Monte Orfano, an isolated pre-alpine hill in the Franciacorta region.[45]

In *Capitula Remedii* promulgated early in the ninth century by *Remedius*, the Bishop of Chur, the celebration of pagan rites was banned. Assuming that we are not dealing with a ban reaffirmed by tradition,[46] which would testify to the existence of eccentric ritualistic forms that could be performed by both Christians and non-Christians, it remains to be demonstrated that they would have taken place at that time by the Cave of Zillis. Paradoxically, it is the very complexity of that site that makes it hard to answer the archaeologists' questions: having been abandoned as a pre-Christian place of worship, did the cave temporarily become a church, or at least a space with Christian connotations, for instance a hermitage[47] endowed with a *memory*? Or were the late graves from the eighth to the tenth centuries possibly the burial place of a separate hamlet or village? Might the same argument even apply to the graves of the late sixth century?[48]

In any case, the archaeological survey has highlighted that, despite its uniqueness, the site of Zillis is no way an isolated case. The cultic and burial rites that were celebrated there must be regarded as regional and supra-regional practices.

Toward a new congress

This long introduction, certainly self-evident in some of its assumptions, aims to raise fresh questions and open a new avenue of research after the Rome congress,[49] thus leading to a new meeting. The aim would be to focus on the early Middle Ages in considering the relationship between the spread of Christianities and the Alpine world, knowing that their history, though fragmented, accidental and episodic like any other human phenomenon, nonetheless underlies projects, strategies and plans.

The last thought proposed in the previous section – which underlines the supra-regional character of some phenomena associated with the cultic and cultural dimensions that facilitated control over the territory, whether symbolically or practically – intends to draw attention to the need to modify the spatial perspective explored by the Rome Conference. While on that occasion a discussion developed ranging from West to East, exploring the southern reaches of the pre-Alps and Alps, it would now be desirable to try and examine the areas of resistance, friction, acceleration or stasis, of the forms of political-religious regulation of the local populations following a route that is equally broad but within the Alpine chain, an ideal axis stretching from Saint-Jean-de Maurienne to Sion, to Chur and all the way to Bozen and Trento.

The next conference will give scholars a chance to reflect on archaeological data, on penitentials and the local norms, on the relations between secular and religious authorities, on the destruction of temples and building of churches by the clergy,[50] on the destruction of monasteries and other sacred buildings by 'Saracens' or by 'bad Christians', and on the demise of basilicas such as that of Sion.[51] Likewise, the conference would address the very decisions of the local and supralocal political powers, which, if read with backlighting as it were, may indicate the existence of forms of resistance against consolidation of Christianities as such, either by opposing their political counterpart or by opposing the political role played locally by religious authorities.

There is evidence to prove that this was the case, mostly in the northeastern regions where early-mediaeval Slav Paganism bore features such as institutionalised cultic places or priestly hierarchies. We need to review or take a closer look at the uniqueness of that situation, in particular, in terms of what has been said about stabilising regional political rule by means of ethnic compaction, which is also and above all determined by the new Christian religion. In fact, we must "interpret any 'resistance' to Christianisation not so much as cultic tenacity of a primitive or traditionalistic kind, but rather as the product of antithetical religious identities processed locally by *élites* as a conscious form of political opposition: where downright pagan revivals came true, as was still the case with the Goth of Athanaric, during the fourth century, or in Anglo-Saxon Britain of the seventh century, they did not appear as a resurgence of a traditional creed, but rather as an aggressive opposition against 'Christian' political organisations, drawing as they did – precisely from the public and official idea of Christianity – the implications of political integration and exclusion it by now entailed."[52]

Were these phenomena a component of the early medi-aeval Alpine world even after the period covered by this volume? If so, where and how would they occur? These questions are definitely worth examining and answering.

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NOTES

[1] As Elvira Migliario reminds us in this volume, in a paragraph of her essay entitled *Strade e città per la evangelizzazione dell'Italia settentrionale*, underlining the importance of the road network, which determined the palaeography of the early bishoprics *(see pp. 205–207)*.

[2] *The Pagan Middle Ages*, ed. Ludo J. R. Milis, Suffolk-Rochester, 1998. The title of the volume echoes those of Raffaello Morghen, *Medioevo cristiano*, Bari, 1958 and Ovidio Capitani, *Medioevo ereticale*, Bologna, 1977. See also *Paganism in the Middle Ages. Threat and Fascination*, eds. Carlos Steel / John Marenbon / Werner Verbeke, Leuven, 2012; *Cristianizzazione ed organizzazione ecclesiastica delle campagne nell'Alto Medioevo: espansione e resistenze* (Settimane di studio del CISAM, XXVIII), Vols. I–II, Spoleto, 1982.

[3] Cristina La Rocca, *La cristianizzazione dei Barbari e la nascita dell'Europa*, in: Reti Medievali Rivista, 5, 2004/2, p. 6. http://www.dssg.unifi.it/_RM/rivista/saggi/LaRocca.htm (accessed 10 December 2021).

[4] On the relationship between Christians, Pagans and barbarians, see: Cristina La Rocca (see note 3); Ludo Milis, *The Pagan Middle Ages – A Contradiction in Terms?*, in: Ludo J. R. Milis (see note 2), pp. 1–12 and Alain Dierkens, *The Evidence of Archaeology*, in: Ludo J. R. Milis (see note 2), pp. 39–64.

[5] Cristina La Rocca (see note 3), pp. 30–31.

[6] Giovanni Tabacco, *Alto Medioevo*, in: Medioevo V/XV secolo, eds. Giovanni Tabacco / Grado G. Merlo, Bologna, 1981, p. 98.

[7] Martin was "plenus virtutibus et sanctitate" according to Gregory of Tours (*Gregorii episcopi Turonensis Libri historiarum X* (ed. Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum, I.1, ed. Bruno Krusch, Wilhelmus Levison, Hannover, 1951, p. 32), and Sulpicius Severus, *De vita Beati Martini liber unu* (ed. Patrologia Latina, Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum opera omnia, XX, ed. Jaques Paul Migne, Paris 1845, coll. 161). They declare that "Pater eius miles primum, post tribunum militum fuit. Ipse armata militiam in adolescientia secutus, inter scholares alas sub rege Constantio, deinde sub Juliano Cesare militavit (…) Triennium fere ante baptisma in armis fuit, integer tamen ab iis vitiis, quibus illud hominum genus implicari solet (…) Nam frugalitatem in eo laudare non est necesse (…) ut iam illo tempore non miles, sed monachus putaretur." See also Antonio V. Nazzaro, *Il De Vita sancti Martini di Paolino di Périgueux e le lettere di dedica a Perpetuo*, in: Auctores Nostri, 8, 2010, pp. 251–294.

[8] Giovanni Tabacco (see note 6), p. 77.

[9] Relics constitute a link between the everyday needs of the medi-aeval world and those of the polytheistic world: Edina Bozoky, *Paganism et cultes des reliques: les topos du sang vivifiant la végétation*, in: Carlos Steel / John Marenbon / Werner Verbeke (see note 2), pp. 139–156.

[10] Cristina La Rocca (see note 3), p. 3.

[11] Ead., p. 5.

[12] Ead., p. 5. See also Stefano Gasparri, *Culture barbariche, modelli ecclesiastici, tradizione romana nell'Italia longobarda e franca*, in: Reti Medievali Rivista, 6, 2005/2, pp. 1–56; Karol Modzelewski, *L'Europe des barbares: Germains et Slaves face aux héritiers de Rome*, Paris 2006; Wolfert van Egmond, *Converting Monks: Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Frisia and Saxony*, in: Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals, eds. Guyda Armstrong / Ian N. Wood, Turnhout, 2000, pp. 37–45.

[13] Cristina La Rocca (see note 3), p. 5.

[14] Walter Pohl, *Identità etniche e cristianesimi tra tarda antichità e alto medioevo*, in: Reti Medievali Rivista. Identità etniche, identità collettive, identità religiose. problemi aperti in prospettiva dia-cronica, ed. Luca Arcari, 16–1, 2015, p. 62.

[15] Walter Pohl (see note 14), pp. 67 and 70.

16 Andrea Augenti, *Archeologia dell'Italia medievale*, Roma-Bari, 2016, pp. 62–63. "[nell'alto Medioevo] l'addensarsi delle tombe nelle chiese dipende anche da una novità di grande portata, ovvero l'ingresso delle reliquie in città. L'alto Medioevo è infatti il momento d'oro del commercio e del movimento delle reliquie dei martiri, che dai cimiteri suburbani vengono spostate negli altari degli edifici di culto dentro le mura."

17 André Vauchez, *Reliquie, santi e santuari, spazi sacri e vagabondaggio religioso nel medioevo*, in: Storia dell'Italia religiosa 1. L'antichità e il medioevo, eds. Gabriele De Rosa / Tullio Gregory / André Vauchez, Roma-Bari, 1993, p. 465.

18 Allow me to use this expression in spite of the keen observation on the theme of "non-Christian monotheism" within ancient religions, proposed by Francesco Massa in this volume.

19 Alain Dierkens (see note 2), p. 42 "Archaeology thus allows us to see how pagan practices, traditions and activities came to be Christianised, often deliberately, from Merovingian times and even much later, by a slow, continuous process of osmosis."

20 André Vauchez (see note 17), p. 471. But see also: *Introduction,* in: Carlos Steel / John Marenbon / Werner Verbeke (see note 2), pp. VIII-IX, where attention is drawn to "the hesitation of clerics in dealing with magic, amulets, potions, ghosts, impure animals or presages such as horoscopes and astrology, the birdsong, necromancy and gifted visionary women," also corroborated by the uses reported by the *penitentials*. As the paper claims, we may quite legitimately speak of superstitious customs, referring back to polytheistic practices and beliefs without necessarily establishing an absolute chronological continuity between the two.

21 Fabrice Mouthon, *La naissance des communs. Eaux, forêts, alpages dans les montagnes de Savoie (XIIe–XVIe siècles)* (=Histoire en Savoie, vol. 30), Chambery, 2016, pp. 13–26.

22 See Eric Chevalley / Cédric Roduit, *La naissance du culte des saints d'Agaune et les premiers textes hagiographiques*, p. 33–57; Alessandra Antonini, *Archéologie du site abbatial (des origines au Xᵉ siècle)*, pp. 59–109; Anne-Marie Helvétius, *L'abbaye d'Agaune, de la fondation de Sigismond au règne de Charlemagne (515–814)*, pp. 111–133, all collected in L'abbaye de Saint-Maurice d'Agaune 515-2015. Vol. 1: Histoire et archéologie, dir. Bernard Andenmatten / Laurent Ripart / Pierre-Alain Mariaux, Gollion, 2015.

23 Giovanni Tabacco, *Dalla Novalesa a San Michele della Chiusa*, in: Monasteri in alta Italia dopo le invasioni saracene, Torino, 1966, pp. 479–526.

24 Giorgio Cracco, *Dai Longobardi ai Carolingi: i percorsi di una religione condizionata*, in: Gabriele De Rosa / Tullio Gregory / André Vauchez (see note 17), p. 136.

25 Walter Pohl (see note 14), pp. 60 and 68.

26 Giovanni Tabacco, *Profilo di storia del Medioevo latino-germanico*, Torino, 1996, p. 97.

27 Id., p. 97. On the topic see also Aldo A. Settia, *Pievi e cappelle nella dinamica del popolamento rurale*, and Cinzio Violante, *Le strutture organizzative della cura d'anime nelle campagne dell'Italia centrosettentrionale (secoli V–X)*, in: Cristianizzazione ed organizzazione ecclesiastica delle campagne nell'alto medioevo: espansione e resistenze, Spoleto 10–16 aprile 1980 (Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, XXVIII), Spoleto, 1982, pp. 445–489 and 963–1158, respectively; Susan Wood, *The Proprietary Church in the Medieval West*, Oxford, 2006; Cristina La Rocca, *Le élites, chiese e sepolture familiari tra VIII e IX secolo in Italia settentrionale*, in: Les élites et leurs espaces. Mobilité, Rayonnement, Domination (du VIe au Xie siècle), eds. Philippe Depreux / François Bougard / Régine Le Jan, Turnhout, 2007, pp. 259–271; Vincenzo Fiocchi Nicolai, *Le chiese rurali di committenza privata e il loro uso pubblico (IV–V secolo)*, in: Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana, 93, 2017, pp. 203–247.

28 Claudio Azzara, *Teoderico*, in: Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani, 95, Treccani, Rome, 2019, ed. www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/teoderico_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/ (acces-

sed 22 December 2021). "L'ostentata *imitatio imperii* e la sottolineatura dell'esistenza di un rapporto speciale fra il re dei Goti e il *princeps* romano erano funzionali anche all'affermazione della propria preminenza su tutti gli altri monarchi barbari dell'Occidente. La definizione territoriale, e non più solo etnica, del suo potere, esteso su Goti e Romani insieme, si espresse anche nell'adozione della titolatura ufficiale d'imitazione romana di *Flavius Theodericus rex*, anziché di *rex Gothorum*, e nell'ostentata assunzione di comportamenti propri del modello imperiale, opportunamente amplificati da collaboratori romani del nuovo regime, quali Cassiodoro e il vescovo di Pavia Ennodio. In questo senso vanno interpretate le ripetute testimonianze circa uno speciale zelo di Teoderico per la cura dell'edilizia urbana e per il restauro dei monumenti dell'epoca classica, o per l'efficienza del servizio del *cursus publicus* e della difesa dei confini tramite le *clausurae* alpine."

29 Patrick J. Geary, *I Franchi sull'arco alpino*, in: Carlo Magno e le Alpi, Spoleto, 2007, p. 5.

30 Germana Gandino, *Il mondo franco e l'ideologia dell'espansione*, in: Carlo Magno e le Alpi (see note 29), p. 26.

31 See the *diplomata* granted by Carloman and Charlemagne to Novalesa in: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Diplomata, Die Urkunden der Karolingen*, Hannover, 1906, in 769 (pp. 66–67), in 770 (pp. 72–74), in 773 (pp. 106–108), in 774 (pp. 301–304), in 779 (pp. 174–175); see also Giovanni Tabacco (see note 23), pp. 479–526.

32 Patrick J. Geary (see note 29), p. 5.

33 Reinhold Kaiser, *Churrätien im frühen Mittelalter. Ende 5. bis Mitte 10. Jh. 2.*, Basel, 2008.

34 Daniel Schönbächler, *Disentis*, in: Dizionario storico della Svizzera, ed. https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/it/articles/011490/2010-03-17/ (accessed 25 October 2021).

35 Patrick J. Geary (see note 29), p. 5; see also Lothar Deplazes, *Rezia curiense*, in: Dizionario storico della Svizzera, ed. https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/it/articles/008094/2016-04-21/ (accessed 21 December 2021). On the diocese of Chur, see also Simona Boscani Leoni, *Essor et fonctions des images religieuses dans les Alpes. L'exemple de l'ancien diocèse de Coire (1150–1530 env.)*, Bern, 2008, in particular, ch. 5.

36 Lothar Deplazes, *Medioevo, Coira (diocesi, principato vescovile)*, in: Dizionario storico della Svizzera, ed. https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/it/articles/011403/2020-01-09/#HEpocamoderna (accessed 25 October 2021).

37 Cristina la Rocca (see note 3), pp. 3–4 "Si può anzitutto distinguere tra una diffusione volontaria e programmatica, più o meno organizzata istituzionalmente, e una diffusione 'di fatto' effettuata attraverso le relazioni sociali quotidiane tra i barbari e il mondo romano (…) accanto a queste iniziative programmatiche si è di recente rivalutata l'incidenza dei contatti quotidiani tra romani cristiani e barbari pagani, se non altro nel familiarizzare i barbari con il cristianesimo e con personaggi cristiani. Attraverso i contatti commerciali e diplomatici con i romani, i barbari che vivevano in prossimità del *limes* erano abituati a trattare con i cristiani. Numerosi erano poi gli schiavi cristiani al servizio dei barbari, la cui presenza agì come tramite di familiarizzazione con il cristianesimo."

38 Michael Durst, *Die Anfänge der Kirche im Bistum Chur*, in: Studien zur Geschichte des Bistums Chur (451–2001) (= Schriftenreihe der Theologischen Hochschule Chur, vol. 1), ed. Michael Durst, Freiburg, 2002, pp. 13 and 20.

39 *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Diplomata, Die Urkunden der Karolingen*, Hannover, 1906, pp. 111–112.

40 Generally speaking, it is the act of entrusting oneself to the protection of a powerful lord by subordinating oneself to him. This subordination had variable features (for instance, the client could waive the protection), depending on the relevant area and period. Cf. Alessandro Barbero, *Liberti, raccomandati,*

vassalli. Le clientele nell'età di Carlo Magno, in: Storica, 14, 1999, pp. 7–60.

41   *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Diplomata, Die Urkunden der Karolingen*, Hannover, 1906, p. 112. "Ea quae iuste postolaverint concedimus (…) Ideoque notum sit omnibus (…) qualiter vir venerabilis Constantius, quem territurio Raetiarum rectorem posuimus, una cum eiusdem patriae populo missa petitione clementiae regni nostri postolaverunt."

42   Simona Boscani Leoni (see note 35), pp. 275–279.

43   Today's Zillis-Reischen, a municipality in the Schams area, Hinterrhein district, was formed in 1875 from the union of the two settlements of Zillis and Reischen.

44   On the excavations and hypotheses regarding the Zillis cave, see Christa Ebnöther / Anna Flückiger / Markus Peter, *Zillis. Von der spätantiken Kulthöhle zum frühmittelalterlichen Bestattungsplatz*, in: Archäologie Graubünden, Sonderheft 10, 2019. On the use of caves in the Christian world in the early Middle Ages, see Mechthild Schulze-Dörrlamm, *Zur Nutzung von Höhlen in der christlichen Welt des frühen Mittelalters (7.–10. Jahrhundert)*, in: Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz, 55/2, 2008, pp. 529–573.

45   Gabriele Archetti, Nolite ad fontes orare. *Fede cristiana e culti antichi nel medioevo lombardo*, in: Territorio, insediamenti e necropoli tra tarda antichità e alto medioevo, eds. Carlo Ebanista / Marcello Rotili Rogiosi, Naples, 2016, p. 92 and bibliography in footnote 53.

46   Christa Ebnöther / Anna Flückiger, *Synthese*, in: Christa Ebnöther / Anna Flückiger / Markus Peter (see note 44), p. 164 "Dazu ein kurzer Exkurs in den Originaltext: Die verschiedenen aufgelisteten Gesetzesgebote lassen sich aufgrund der Art, wie sie formuliert sind, mehreren Traditionslinien zuordnen. So spiegeln unterschiedliche Beginnformeln, vereinfacht gesagt, eine relative Chronologie des Eingangs der entsprechenden Passagen in die Gesetzestexte: Die ut / si-Formel am Anfang des hier behandelten Erlasses (*de maleficiis vel sacrilegia*, Abb. 130) kommt in den *Capitula Remedii* allerdings insgesamt nur einmal vor. Im Gegensatz zu den sonst im Text vorherrschenden si-Formeln kennzeichnet das – nur viermal vorkommende – einzelne ut jedoch herrscherliche Verordnungen und weist auf eine Tradierung dieses Gesetzesteils zurück."

47   On the presence of hermits in caves in the Alpine and pre-Alpine areas in the Middle Ages, see Gabriele Archetti, "Singulariter in heremo vivere." *Forme di vita eremitica nel medioevo della Lombardia orientale*, in: Il monachesimo in Valle Camonica, Atti della giornata di studio, Eremo dei Santi Pietro e Paolo di Bienno. Monastero di San Salvatore di Capo di Ponte – 31 maggio 2003, Breno, 2004, pp. 92–155.

48   Christa Ebnöther / Anna Flückiger (see note 46), p. 165 "Zusammenfassend sind mehr Fragen als Antworten vorhanden: War die Höhle nach Aufgabe des vorchristlichen Kultlokals doch zeitweise eine Kirche oder zumindest ein christlich konnotierter Raum, etwa eine Eremitage (mit oder ohne jüngerer *Memoria*)? Oder spiegeln die späten Gräber des 8. bis 10. Jahrhunderts allenfalls den Bestattungsplatz eines separaten Gehöfts oder Weilers? Kann dasselbe vielleicht schon für die Gräber des späten 6. Jahrhunderts vermutet werden?"

49   See the editors' foreword in this volume.

50   When dealing with the accounts in sources, we must distinguish, on one hand, between references to presumed pagan practices and, on the other, actions undertaken against "other Christian faiths", as in the *Passio sancti Vigilii episcopi*, "un testo agiografico redatto tra la fine del VI e dell'VIII secolo -, secondo cui il presule tridentino avrebbe inviato ai suoi confratelli di Verona e di Brescia una legazione per esortarli ad uscire dalle loro città e annunciare "la parola di Dio affinché non serpeggiasse più a lungo il diavolo antico" del paganesimo tra i rustici; a cui sarebbe seguito un formidabile impegno missionario che avrebbe por-

tato Vigilio a fondare una trentina di chiese nei vicini territori bresciano e veronese. In verità, compilata in piena età longobarda, e perciò lontano dal contesto vigiliano, la *passio* è piuttosto un documento dell'impegno antiariano della Chiesa tridentina in seguito allo scisma dei Tre capitoli (…), i cui echi dovettero farsi sentire pure in Valcamonica," Gabriele Archetti (see note 45), p. 77.

51   François-Olivier Dubuis, *La découverte d'une église préromane à Sion, Sous-le-Scex*, in: Zeitschrift: Archäologie der Schweiz = Archéologie suisse = Archeologia svizzera, 7, 1984, pp. 139–144; Has-Jörg Lehner, *Die Ausgrabungen in Sitten "Sous-le-Scex", Zwischenbericht über die Arbeiten von 1984 bis 1987*, in: Archäologie der Schweiz, 10, 1987, pp. 145–156; Alessandra Antonini, *Sion, Sous-le-Scex (VS), Vol. I: Ein spätantik frühmillelalterlicher Bestallungsplatz: Gräber und Bauten* (=Cahiers d'Archéologie romande, vol. 89, Archaelogia Vallesiana, vol. 1), Lausanne, 2002.

52   Cristina La Rocca (see note 3), p. 7.

IMAGE CREDITS

Fig. 1: Roberto Leggero.
Fig. 2: Médiathèque Valais, cote: RZ 1688, Viatimages / Médiathèque Valais – Sion.
Fig. 3: Freeston Charles Lincoln, Cycling in the Alps with some Notes on the Chief Passes (A Practical Guide), London, 1900.
Fig. 4: Charles Duvotenay, Atlas géographique, historique, statistique et itinéraire de la Suisse, 1837, vol. 1, p. 61.
Fig. 5: Médiathèque Valais, cote: BCV CB 60/1–2, Viatimages / Médiathèque Valais – Sion.

RIASSUNTO

Il passaggio dalla tarda antichità all'alto Medioevo (dal VII all'XI secolo) portò, gradualmente ma irreversibilmente, a un mondo in cui il problema della diffusione e del consolidamento della religione cristiana nelle sue diverse varianti locali divenne meno pressante. Emerse una geografia politica e religiosa ben strutturata frutto dello sforzo di disciplinare politicamente le popolazioni locali. Per raggiungere questo scopo, si utilizzarono nuovi strumenti come le *ecclesiae propriae* o le pievi. Sarebbe auspicabile esaminare le aree di resistenza, di attrito, di accelerazione o di stasi delle forme di regolazione politico-religiosa delle popolazioni locali nell'alto Medioevo, seguendo un percorso ampio ma interno alla catena alpina, che vada da Saint-Jean-de Maurienne a Sion, da Coira, fino a Bolzano e Trento.

RÉSUMÉ

La transition entre l'Antiquité tardive e le Haut Moyen Âge (du VIIe au XIe siècle) a porté, de manière progressive mais irréversible, vers un monde où le problème de la diffusion et de la consolidation de la religion chrétienne dans ses différentes variantes locales est devenu moins pressant. L'émergence d'une géographie politique et religieuse bien structurée est le fruit des efforts accomplis pour soumettre la population à une discipline politique. De nouveaux instruments tels que les *ecclesiae propriae* et les *pievi* (circonscriptions paroissiales) ont été utilisés à cette fin. Il serait souhaitable d'examiner les zones de résistance, de friction, d'accélération ou de stagnation des formes de régulation politico-religieuse des populations locales durant le Haut Moyen Âge, et ce, en suivant un parcours ample mais limité au contexte alpin, allant de Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne à Sion, de Coire à Bolzano et Trente.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Übergang von der Spätantike zum Frühmittelalter (7. bis 11. Jahrhundert) führte allmählich, aber unumkehrbar, zu einer Welt, in der die Verbreitung und Konsolidierung der christlichen Religion in ihren verschiedenen lokalen Varianten an Dringlichkeit verlor. Als Ergebnis der Bemühungen um die politische Disziplinierung der lokalen Bevölkerung entstand eine straff strukturierte politische und religiöse Geographie. Zu diesem Zweck wurden neue Instrumente wie die *ecclesiae propriae* oder Pfarrkirchen eingesetzt. Es wäre wünschenswert, die Bereiche des Widerstands, der Reibung, der Beschleunigung oder der Stagnation der Formen der politisch-religiösen Regulierung der lokalen Bevölkerungen im frühen Mittelalter zu untersuchen, und zwar entlang einer breiten, aber auf die Alpenkette fokussierten Route von Saint-Jean-de Maurienne bis Sion, von Chur bis Bozen und Trient.

SUMMARY

The transition from Late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages (7th to 11th century) led gradually but irreversibly, to a world in which the problem of the spread and consolidation of the Christian religion in its various local variants became less pressing. A well-structured political and religious geography emerged as a result of the effort to politically discipline local populations. New instruments such as ecclesiae propriae or parishes were employed to achieve this end. It would be desirable to examine the areas of resistance, friction, acceleration or stagnation of the forms of political-religious regulation of local populations in the early Middle Ages, following a broad but internal route along the Alpine chain from Saint-Jean-de Maurienne to Sion, from Chur to Bolzano and Trento.