

NOTE

CARANTANIA
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The following note was prompted by the appearance in 1993 of the *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe*.¹ This atlas is the first of a ten-volume series entitled *A History of East Central Europe* and is the first atlas to treat all of East Central Europe. It covers the period from the early fifth century through 1992. The volume was prepared by Paul Robert Magocsi, professor of history and political science and holder of the Chair of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Toronto, and contains eighty-nine full-color maps which, with the accompanying text, present a history of the region. The author's goal was to show "the political and administrative changes that have occurred in East Central Europe since 400 CE" (Introduction, xi). To achieve the goals of the whole series, according to series editors Peter F. Sugar and Donald W. Treadgold, "it has been necessary to carry out *new research* simply to be able to survey certain topics and periods . . . The aim has been to identify *geographical* and *political* units that were significant during the period in question. . ." (Foreword, ix). The volume is thematically coherent and carefully edited, and is an excellent contribution towards a better understanding of the problems of contemporary political currents in Central Europe.

Unfortunately, one phase of the evolution of Eastern Central European history escaped the closer attention of the author, the editors and the consultants on this project, namely, the Eastern Alpine Slavic CARANTANORUM REGIO, or *Carantania*, which was recorded in the annals of history in 623 or 626 AD and again successively in 772, 811, 862, 976, 979-982, and 989-1002 AD. Carantania was closely linked with Bavarian, Frankish, Friulian and Slavic history, and in Slovene historiography represents the pivotal axis of the evolution of the Eastern Alpine Slavic communities during the Middle Ages; its discovery at the end of the eighteenth century played a powerful role in the awakening of Slovene

¹ Paul Robert Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe*. Cartographic Design by Geoffrey J. Matthews. Seattle WA and London: University of Washington Press, 1993. 89 maps, xiv + 218 pp..

intellectuals and the Slovene population as a whole and in their developing into a modern nation. The present note is, therefore, intended to register the fundamental historical facts about Carantania, based upon primary sources, for their inclusion in Magocsi's commentaries to maps 3 and 4 in the already-planned second edition of his *Historical Atlas*.

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As is well-known, the name *Carantania* is not Slavic. In its first-recorded form, *Carantanum*, it continues the pre-Slavic toponymy of the area: linguistically it is probably part of the Celtic heritage with the Indo-European root **kar-~*ker-* "rock, stone," as also occurring in the word *karst*, Slovene *Kras*. The name must have existed before the Slavs settled in the area. The Alpine Slavs adopted it and, in its earliest use, applied it to the zone around ancient Virunum and Gosposvetsko polje/Zollfeld; this was the region first known as *Carantanum*. Two other names in this narrower region are based on the same root: *civitas Corantana* (modern Krnski grad) and *Mons Carantanus* (contemporary Šentjurska gora).

The ancestors of today's Slovenes settled in Carantania very probably in the first wave of migration south of the Danube, before 580 AD. Anonymus Ravennas, in his *Cosmographia* (c. 667-670), refers to the area with the Latin phrase *inter Carantanos*, i.e., "among the Carantians" (Kos 1902 no. 182).² This is the oldest record of the term. Fredegar's Chronicle of approximately the same date does not use the term; it speaks rather of *Sclavi coinomento Winidi*, i.e., of "Slavs [also] known as Wends" (Kos 1902, no. 154). A number of original historical documents, e.g. Charlemagne's famous Bull of 811, and such chronicles as *Annales Regni Francorum* and *Annales Fuldenses* refer to the region as *prouincia Karantana*, *regio Carantanorum*, *Carnuntum quod corrupto Carantanum dicitur*, and in *partibus Carentaniae Sclauiniequi regionis*. Finally, *Conversio*, the main source for the early medieval history of the region, refers to *Sclaiui qui dicuntur Quarantani*; in *Slaviniam regionem Caranta-*

² The "no." in the citations from Kos (1902-06) refer to the numbered passages in his *Gradivo za zgodovino Slovencev v srednjem veku*, cf. bibliography.

norum; Quarantani et dux eorum Boruth nomine; Cheitmar dux Carantanorum, and so on (Kos 1902, sub *Karantanija* and *Karantanci*).

The territorial extent of Carantania was not always the same. Its kernel area is represented by fields and valleys along the upper Drava and the upper Mura rivers. The regions north of the Karavanke mountain range lying to the east and south of this kernel area are, in the sources, sometimes assumed to be part of Carantania, and their population referred to as Carantanians. But how much of this area was under Samo's rule we do not know. What we assume is that, after 568, the kernel region of Carantania in the Eastern Alps remained independent with its own institutional structure and freely elected princes. We also assume that, when Carantanians — with the Bavarians' help — drove out the Avars in about 745 AD, Carantania was in some sort of union with Bavaria. In 788, with Bavaria, it passed into the power of the Franks. Again we may assume, with Bogo Grafenauer, the leading Slovene historian today, that during the first period under the Franks Carantania was "an internally independent semi-vassal principality" (Grafenauer 1964: 391). After the Franks occupied the western part of the Avar state during the Avar wars of Charlemagne (791-796), Carantania was subordinated to the *Markgraf* of the newly established *Osterichi* or Eastern March. Around 820 the elected native princes of Carantania were replaced by Bavarian *Markgrafen* and it became an administrative unit — a county — of the Empire. From the beginning of the ninth century, following the population drift of German and Slavic colonists into Lower Pannonia, the names Carantania and Carantanians seem to have been applied to the area around what was later to become Lake Balaton, and to its inhabitants.

After the death of Prince Kocel of Lower Pannonia in 874, the political and ecclesiastical center of the Eastern March passed into Carantania as more narrowly defined. Thus, under Arnulf in 876 the new Duchy of Carantania (referred to in the sources of the time as *regnum Carentanorum* in 888 and as *Karentariche* in 898, Kos 1906 nos. 286 and 319) included the county along the Sava and both Pannonias. By the year 900, after the Magyars had settled in north-western Pannonia and seized control of the territories of the Eastern March, Carantania again contracted to its original kernel region, linked with Bavaria in a close union.



GREAT CARANTANIA in c. 1000 AD³

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|-------|-----------------------------|
| ----- | border of Holy Roman Empire |
| | border of Great Carantania |

³ From Kowalenko 1965:383; reprinted by kind permission of Lidia Kwiecień, Rights Manager, Zakład Narodowy imienia Ossolińskich Wydawnictwo, Wrocław.

After the imperial victory at the Lech river in 955, and after further repulses of the Magyars in the 960s, the Duchy of Carantania again appeared in a strong union with Bavaria. This was in 976, after which — for a relatively short period, the seventeen years between 985 and 1002 — the Duchy combined the Slavic (Slovene) regions in the east and in the south, as well as two non-Slavic provinces, into one whole. This entity represented the south-eastern flank of the Empire, and included the following: the Upper Carantanian March (or, the March on the Mura); the March on the Drava (or Poetovio March); the March on the Sava; the Carniolan March, with Istria; and the Marches of Friuli and of Verona. This new defence borderland was indeed much larger than the old historical Carantania. It is to this later Carantania, which in the sources was still spoken of as the “Duchy of Carantania,” that Grafenauer refers with the name *Velika Karantanija* (Grafenauer 1965: 144-57). After 1002 this large borderland unit dissolved into its individual parts, marches which subsequently changed into a series of new feudal lands subordinated directly to the crown. The new, narrower Duchy of Carantania was now called *Carentana*, *ducatu Karinthie* or *Carinthia* (Kos 1906, sub *Karantanija*). This already marks the beginning of a new period in the history of the Slovene lands.

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