

THE CROWN, THE KING AND THE CITY: DUBROVNIK, HUNGARY AND THE DYNASTIC CONTROVERSY, 1382-1390

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ABSTRACT: The reign of Louis the Great, king of Hungary and Croatia (1342-1382), is considered the golden age of Croatian medieval history. After his death, the legitimate rule of queens Mary and Elisabeth was seriously challenged, and dynastic and other political struggles intensified. Dubrovnik led a well-balanced policy. It proclaimed loyalty to St. Stephen's crown and to the king who legitimately worn it, emphasizing the crown's corporate character. The patricians of Dubrovnik were well aware of the benefits such a position could have, making the most of king's suzerainty in widening the city's autonomy, territorial expansion and economic prosperity. Such attitude towards the sovereign became implanted into Dubrovnik's political ideology.

Louis the Great, king of Hungary and Croatia, died in the Slovakian Trnava, in September of 1382. Historiography generally agrees that during his reign medieval Croatia peaked both territorially and politically.¹ He managed to reunite Croatia and Slavonia with the Dalmatian towns under centralised sovereign rule, Dubrovnik having come under the suzerainty of the Crown of

¹ Tomislav Raukar, »Arpadovići i Anžuvinci na hrvatskom prijestolju«, in: *Povijest Hrvata, I: Srednji vijek*, ed. Franjo Šanjek. Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 2003: pp. 222-231.

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St Stephen for the first time.² The rivalry with Venice, which had ruled Dalmatia from the beginning of the thirteenth century, ended in 1358 with a Hungarian military victory. The peace treaty with the Serenissima was signed in Zadar, in February 1358.³ Since all Dalmatian towns had already recognised the Hungarian Crown, Venice renounced its claims to “all of Dalmatia from the middle of Kvarner down to the borders of Durazzo” (“...*toti Dalmacie a medietate scilicet Quarnarii usque ad confines Duracii...*”).⁴

As part of Dalmatia, such a formulation also included Dubrovnik, although, unlike the other Dalmatian towns, it had never before recognised the Hungarian king as its lord.⁵ It was upon this ground that the Ragusans tried to win themselves a more favourable position under Hungarian suzerainty. Aware of Dubrovnik’s remote yet significant position, Louis the Great was willing to make the concessions. Dubrovnik accepted the Hungarian claim to it but under different terms than the rest of Dalmatia, although not as *corpus separatum*, a position Dubrovnik initially negotiated.⁶ However, by signing the privilege of Visegrád, an agreement with the king had been finally reached in May of 1358. Ragusan subjects were granted protection, and their possessions, rights, legal customs and revenues were confirmed. The Ragusans were to pledge allegiance to the king, pay a yearly tribute and provide contingents for his army when required.⁷ Although such an agreement constituted all the forms of a privilege traditionally granted by the king to his subjects, it *de facto* paved the path to the shaping of Dubrovnik’s independence.⁸

Having consolidated his kingdom territorially, Louis supported economic development throughout the realm, particularly in the towns along the eastern

² Vinko Foretić, »Godina 1358. u povijesti Dubrovnika«. *Starine JAZU* 50 (1960): passim.

³ Nada Klaić and Ivo Petricioli, *Zadar u srednjem vijeku do 1409*. Zadar: Sveučilište u Splitu, Filozofski fakultet Zadar, 1976: pp. 315-322; Tomislav Raukar, *Hrvatsko srednjovjekovlje - prostor, ljudi, ideje*. Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1997: pp. 80-81; idem, »Arpadovići i Anžuvinci«: pp. 225-226; Zdenka Janeković Römer, *Višegradski ugovor temelj Dubrovačke Republike*. Zagreb: Golden marketing, 2003: pp. 64-68.

⁴ T. Raukar, *Hrvatsko srednjovjekovlje*: p. 81; idem, »Arpadovići i Anžuvinci«: pp. 225-226; V. Foretić, »Godina 1358.«: pp. 251-253; Z. Janeković Römer, *Višegradski ugovor*: p. 67.

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ Z. Janeković Römer, *Višegradski ugovor*: pp. 70, 85.

⁷ V. Foretić, »Godina 1358.«: pp. 254-255; Z. Janeković Römer, *Višegradski ugovor*: pp. 69-79.

⁸ Zdenka Janeković Römer, *Okvir slobode (Dubrovačka vlastela između srednjovjekovlja i humanizma)*. Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 1999: pp. 77-79; eadem, *Višegradski ugovor*: pp. 136-139.

Adriatic coast.⁹ As a ruler, he used his supreme authority to protect his towns—including Dubrovnik. The king provided the conditions for the expansion of Dubrovnik's trades at land and sea, the basis of its economic growth, promoting thus the general welfare of the Ragusan society in the second half of the fourteenth century. Seemingly more ambitious in demands than his successors, Louis proved benevolent on the growing Ragusan requirements for autonomy, leaving much space for the local administration to act.¹⁰ The Ragusans themselves elected the rector, administered the army and the police, and exercised full responsibility in legislative and judicial matters.¹¹ Not surprisingly, the Ragusan chronicler Junije Resti described him as a "ruler of the most eminent qualities, whose fame will remain immortal".¹² However, king's death and the emergence of political factions threatened the social stability established in the east Adriatic in 1358.¹³ Upon his death, the Ragusans shared the fate of the other subjects of the Crown of St Stephen, placing them in a position governed by new lords and in a new political environment.¹⁴

The unsettling news of king's death in 1382 spread quickly throughout Dalmatia, soon reaching the borders of Dubrovnik. The city's government organised commemoration service in his honour and almost simultaneously, emergency security measures were introduced.¹⁵ A decision of the Major Council of 25 September 1382 testifies to Dubrovnik's growing concern after Louis's death, by which the defence was to be organised "... *pro dando salvamentum nobis et nostre civitati et rebus nostris occasione obitus domini*

⁹ T. Raukar, »Arpadovići i Anžuvinci«: p. 231.

¹⁰ V. Foretić, »Godina 1358.«: p. 257; Z. Janeković Römer, *Okvir slobode*: pp. 77-79; eadem, »O poslaničkoj službi i diplomatskom protokolu Dubrovačke Republike u XV. stoljeću«. *Zbornik Diplomatske akademije* 4 (1999): p. 193; Tomislav Raukar, »Komunalna društva u Dalmaciji u XIV. stoljeću«. *Historijski zbornik* 33-34 (1980-1981): p. 153; idem, »Arpadovići i Anžuvinci«: pp. 228-229; Susan Mosher Stuard, *A State of Deference: Ragusa/Dubrovnik in the Medieval Centuries*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992: pp. 171-172.

¹¹ Z. Janeković Römer, *Višegradski ugovor*: pp. 136-139.

¹² "...*principe di tutte le più eminenti qualità, che possono render immortale la fama d'un monarca.*" *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii (ab origine usque ad annum 1451) item Joannis Gundulae (1451-1484)*, ed. Natko Nodilo. [Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum Meridionalium, 25]. Zagreb: JAZU, 1893: p. 170.

¹³ Tomislav Raukar, »Hrvatska u kasnom srednjem vijeku«, in: *Povijest Hrvata, I: Srednji vijek*: p. 321; idem, *Hrvatsko srednjovjekovlje*: p. 86; idem, »Hrvatske zemlje u doba bitke na Kosovu 1389.«. *Historijski zbornik* 42 (1989): p. 32.

¹⁴ *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii*: p. 170.

¹⁵ *Odluke veća Dubrovačke republike, I*, ed. Mihailo Dinić. [Zbornik za istoriju, jezik i književnost srpskog naroda III.15]. Beograd: SANU, 1951): pp. 145, 258-260, 273.

nostris naturalis domini regis Ungarie".¹⁶ Threatened primarily by Venice, Zadar was equally anxious, whilst Dubrovnik's concern focused mainly on the Bosnian king Tvrtko and his ambitions to open an alternative market for salt in his town of Novi (south of Dubrovnik).¹⁷ Thus the Ragusan government readily accepted Zadar's initiative to build a defence union with the Dalmatian towns. Ragusan negotiators added a clause stating that the union would be hostile to all those who should threaten the towns from the mainland (*de terra ferma*), pointing thus to the potential areas of danger. In the years to follow, attempts at creating similar bonds were made in order to avert the menace.¹⁸

Alarmed by the circumstances, the Ragusans closely followed the events in Buda, hoping to hear what they considered most important at the moment—successful succession to the throne and continuation of the privileges granted to them by the Hungarian crown. Mary, Louis's daughter and successor, was crowned in Székesfehérvár on 17 September 1382, as documented in the chronicle of Paulus de Paulo, a patrician of Zadar.¹⁹ Judging by the substantial reward given to the messengers (20 ducats' worth of silverware), the news of her coronation was greeted with relief and delight in Dubrovnik.²⁰ An embassy

¹⁶ *Odluke veća*, I: p. 295; see Mladen Ančić, *Putanja klatna: Ugarsko-hrvatsko kraljevstvo i Bosna u XIV. stoljeću*. Zadar-Mostar: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru - ZIRAL, 1997: p. 208. On king's death, additional security measures were also introduced by the Croato-Dalmatian ban, a phenomenon which, according to Ančić, should be viewed within the context of the regular activities carried out during the outbreaks of disorder (ibidem, p. 217).

¹⁷ Sima Ćirković, *Istorija srednjovekovne bosanske države*. Beograd, 1964: pp. 148-151; Vjekoslav Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata od najstarijih vremena do svršetka XIX. stoljeća*, II. Zagreb: NZMH, 1988: p. 228; M. Ančić, *Putanja klatna*: pp. 209, 217; T. Raukar, »Hrvatska u kasnom srednjem vijeku«: p. 322.

¹⁸ *Odluke veća*, I: pp. 262-263; *Diplomatarium relationum reipublicae ragusanae cum regno Hungariae*, ed. Josip Gelcich and Lajos Thalloczy. Budapest: Kiadja a m. Tud. Akadémia Tört. Bizottsága, 1887: pp. 701-702; *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii*: p. 170; Petar Matković, »Prilozi k trgovačko-političkoj historiji Republike Dubrovačke«. *Rad JAZU* 7 (1869): p. 209; V. Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika do 1808.*, I. Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 1980: p. 164; V. Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, II: p. 228; Tomislav Raukar, *Zadar u XV. stoljeću: Ekonomski razvoj i društveni odnosi*. Zagreb, 1977: p. 32; idem, *Hrvatsko srednjovjekovlje*: p. 86; M. Ančić, *Putanja klatna*: pp. 208-209; T. Raukar, »Hrvatska u kasnom srednjem vijeku«: p. 322.

¹⁹ Ferdo Šišić, »Ljetopis Pavla Pavlovića patricija zadarskoga (Memoriale Pauli de Paulo patritii iadrensis)«. *Vjestnik kr. hrvatsko-slavonsko-dalmatinskog Zemaljskog arkiva* 6 (1904): p. 5. See: János Bak, *Königtum und Stände in Ungarn im 14.-16. Jahrhundert*. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH, 1973: p. 24.

²⁰ "Prima pars est de donando illis hominibus qui venerunt cum litteris gaudii creationis domine nostre domine regine Ungarie ducati auri viginti in rebus argenteis" (*Odluke veća*, I: p. 271; *Diplomatarium relationum reipublicae ragusanae cum regno Hungariae*: p. 702).

was dispatched to the queen as an expression of Dubrovnik's loyalty. In turn, the city demanded protection and reconfirmation of the privilege granted by her father, King Louis.²¹ The other towns duly swore allegiance to the new Hungarian queen, in hope of the continuity of the fruitful relations established in 1358, which had brought economic and social prosperity to their communities.²²

The legitimacy of the Queen's rule

Mary's accession to the throne gave way to a controversy over the legitimacy of her succession. A woman on the throne was a novelty at the Hungarian royal court and a fact hardly acknowledgeable by the Hungarian nobility. Her opponents depicted it as an ill precedent and a good reason to dethrone "female rule". The underlying causes of the revolt were not in the problem of the female succession right, but in the growing aspirations of the barons to limit the central sovereign power, as well as in the internal struggle and personal animosities among the feudal elite.²³ The fact that the controversy over the right to the throne was on the agenda required an official statement from each of the political subjects. In the Ragusan allegiance to the queen of February 1383, Mary's succession right has been justified in detail. Considering that King Louis died without male heirs, his wife Elisabeth and daughter Mary succeeded to the Hungarian throne. In their allegiance, the Ragusans titled Mary as "our natural ruler" (*nostra domina naturalis*), stressing the fact that she was a first-born queen (*regina primogenita*) who succeeded her father in place of a male

²¹ *Odluke veća*, I: pp. 276, 307, 311, 313, 315, 316; Dušanka Dinić Knežević, *Dubrovnik i Ugarska u srednjem veku*. Novi Sad: Filozofski fakultet u Novom Sadu, 1986: p. 42.

²² F. Šišić, »Ljetopis Pavla Pavlovića patricija zadarskoga«: p. 5; Nada Klaić and Ivo Petricioli, *Prošlost Zadra II. Zadar u srednjem vijeku do 1409*. Zadar: Filozofski fakultet, 1976: p. 352; T. Raukar, *Hrvatsko srednjovjekovlje*: p. 86; T. Raukar, »Hrvatske zemlje«: p. 32.

²³ The cause, origin and evolution of the baronial unrest is a most complex problem, the breadth of which by far outgrows the objective of this discussion. For more on this topic, see: Elemér Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund in Ungarn (1387-1437)*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1990: pp. 7-26; J. Bak, *Königtum und Stände in Ungarn*: pp. 24-27; Pál Engel, *The Realm of St. Stephen. A History of Medieval Hungary, 895-1526*. London-New York: IB Tauris, 2001: pp. 195-208; V. Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, II: p. 244 and passim; Franjo Rački, »Pokret na slavenskom jugu«. *Rad JAZU* 2 (1868): pp. 68-160; 3 (1868): pp. 65-156, 4 (1868): pp. 1-103; Ferdo Šišić, *Vojvoda Hrvoje Vukčić Hrvatinić i njegovo doba (1350-1416)*. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1902: passim; T. Raukar, *Hrvatsko srednjovjekovlje*: pp. 85-86; M. Ančić, *Putanja klatna*: pp. 218-219.

successor (*in eisdem regnis loco masculine proles succedentes*).²⁴ Such a succession practice conformed to the Ragusan law of succession. Judging by the distinctive terminology employed in the allegiance and in the privilege, it is clear that the Ragusans adopted the interpretation of Mary's legitimacy to the throne from the Hungarian chancellery practice.²⁵ She was her father's legitimate heir, the latter being based on the words she herself phrased in a privilege granted to Dubrovnik in 1383, quoting that "*iure successorio et ordine geniture*" she succeeded the crown, the throne and the sceptre of the Hungarian kingdom.²⁶ In the Middle Ages crown was generally considered the basic criterion of legitimacy, particularly that of St Stephen.²⁷ The importance attributed to the crown would become even more apparent during the reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg and his struggle to preserve the Hungarian throne.

Sacra corona Hungariae and Dubrovnik

The legitimacy of the succession to Hungarian crown and throne requires a brief consideration. Attention here should be drawn to the idea of the sacred crown of St Stephen (*sacra corona Hungariae*) and to a better understanding of the concept of loyalty and allegiance to the crown and not to the Hungarian kingdom, of which the Ragusan sources often explicitly testify.

²⁴ "...Ludovico... quamquam prolem masculinam non genuerit, nichilominus divina gracia concedente reliquit in regnis succedentis atque regendis superstites serenissimam dominam nostram naturalem dominam Elisabet... ac carissimas natas eius dominam Mariam nostram dominam naturalem illustrissimam principissam et reginam primo genitam... in eisdem regnis loco masculine proles succedentes". (*Odluke veća Dubrovačke republike*, II. [Zbornik za istoriju, jezik i književnost srpskog naroda, III. 21]. Beograd: SANU, 1964: p. 582; Petar Matković, »Spomenici za dubrovačku povjest u vrijeme ugarsko-hrvatske zaštite«. *Starine JAZU* 1 (1869): p. 151).

²⁵ On a similar formulation in one of Mary's decrees see J. Bak, *Königtum und Stände*: p. 24, note 98.

²⁶ "...quod serenissimo principe domino Ludovico... absque prole masculina de medio sublato, nobisque iure successorio et ordine geniture coronam et solium dicti regni Hungarie ac scepra regiminis ipsius genitoris nostri feliciter adeptis..." (P. Matković, »Spomenici za dubrovačku povijest«: pp. 148-149; *Dubrovačka akta i povelje*, I, ed. Jovan Radonić. [Zbornik za istoriju, jezik i književnost srpskog naroda, III.2]. Beograd: SANU, 1934: pp. 121-123). For a similar formulation see: *Dubrovačka akta i povelje*, I: pp. 126-127; V. Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, II: p. 231. On the instructions given to the ambassadors dispatched to Queen Mary, see the decisions of the Ragusan councils from the close of 1382 and beginning of 1383 in: *Odluke veća*, I: pp. 276, 307, 311, 313, 315, 316.

²⁷ See Z. Janeković Römer, »O poslaničkoj službi«: p. 194; eadem, *Okvir slobode*: p. 79.

As János Bak has pointed out, throughout the Angevin reign the Hungarian chancellery tended to connect the notion “crown” with that of “king”. The crown was “*corona regia*”, attached to the king’s person, functioning as a semantic pair “*corona et rex*”. The terms “*ius regium*” and “*ius coronae*” were used interchangeably. “*Corona*” was a sign of the king’s honour and he referred to it as “my crown”.²⁸ However, after the interregnum of 1382, “*corona*” acquired the meaning of “sovereign”. It became a notion by itself, distinctive from the king’s person. It entered the official Hungarian chancellery as “*sacra corona regni*” in the sense of an abstract sovereign power. According to Bak, the separation of the notion of crown from that of the reigning monarch was closely related to the strengthening of a rank known in Hungary as “*regnicolae*”. The latter referred to an elite consisting of barons and prelates, holders of the highest offices at the royal court. In this respect, a document from 1386 may strike as interesting, since it was issued by no other than the “*regnicolae*” during interregnum and after the murder of Charles of Durazzo. It was upon the altar of St Stephen in Székesfehérvár that they swore to act to the benefit of the “*res publicae*” and the sacred crown. Although of earlier date, the term “*res publicae*” renders a completely new meaning here. In this context “*res publicae*” was used in relation to the notions of land and crown, as distinct from the king’s person.²⁹ This term was not adopted by the chancellery, but its meaning of an abstract “sovereign” was conveyed by the terms “*corona*” or “*regnum*”. The solemn pledge of King Sigismund of 1387 is a good example of that. The new king, among other things, promised to grant the old liberties, consult Hungarian barons and prelates “to the benefit of the crown and of the kingdom’s subjects”, and to revoke the unions he had established “*contra sacram coronam regni Ungarie*”. In the pledge, the term *res publica* was replaced by the notion *corona regni*, synonymous with the “sovereign” independent of the king’s person.³⁰ Interestingly, a tendency to use the term “*corona regni*” coincides with the rise of the noble factions in Hungary. This is best seen in the first years of the reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg, when the “*corona*” tended to acquire a true political meaning, symbolising an impersonal transfer of power.³¹ The events of spring 1401 are a good illustration. When a league of barons led by John Kanizsai, archbishop of Esztergom,

²⁸ J. Bak, *Königtum und Stände*: p. 22

²⁹ J. Bak, *Königtum und Stände*: pp. 27-28.

³⁰ Electoral charter of King Sigismund as in: J. Bak, *Königtum und Stände*: pp. 132-133, Appendix 5.

³¹ J. Bak, *Königtum und Stände*: pp. 23, 28.

revolted against the king and had him thrown into jail, interregnum was resolved by personifying the “sacred crown of the Hungarian kingdom” as a sovereign subject. Between April and October of 1401, the court council and the officials acted and issued documents in the name of the crown. Archbishop Kanizsai, also chancellor, referred to himself as “*sacre corone cancellarius*”, legal matters were the responsibility of “*auctoritas sacre corone*”, whilst the crown’s subjects were “*fidelis corone*”. The barons had even made a seal with an inscription which implied the crown’s authority—“*Sigillum Sacre Corone Regni Hungarie*”.³²

Another interesting moment to which the Hungarian historians have pointed is the fact that the chancelleries of the Dalmatian towns, from as early as the close of the thirteenth century, used the term “*corona regni*” (or “*corona Hungariae*”) in the meaning of sovereign power holder instead of the term *rex* or *corona regis*, that is, earlier than in Hungary. Bak assumes that the legally versed and politically sophisticated office holders in these towns were able to anticipate the power shift from the king’s person to an abstract notion of the crown.³³ In his opinion, the implementation of the notion “*corona regni*” in the Hungarian chancellery owes considerably to the official practice of the Dalmatian towns.³⁴ Further, thanks to a well-developed legal tradition based on the revival of the Roman law, the towns were able to anticipate not only the power shift from the king to the crown, but also the mounting of the noble rank. Through Hungaro-Dalmatian links, this fact alone could have helped mould the idea of the “institutionalisation” of the crown as a sovereign subject in Hungary.³⁵

The term “*sacra corona*” has been traced in Dubrovnik as early as 1360 in a letter the Ragusans had sent to King Louis.³⁶ The term “*sacra corona*” was not commonly used in the Ragusan sources dating from Louis’ reign as opposed to the later practice. In their letters to the king, the Ragusans tended to refer to themselves as “loyal subjects of your Royal Majesty” (*fideles et subditi*

³² J. Bak, *Königtum und Stände*: p. 33.

³³ See J. Bak, *Königtum und Stände*: p. 29.

³⁴ Bak notes that more detailed studies which could confirm this thesis have not been submitted yet (J. Bak, *Königtum und Stände*: p. 23, note 88; p. 29, note 14).

³⁵ J. Bak, *Königtum und Stände*: pp. 32-35.

³⁶ “...quando vestra sacra corona aliquid a nobis, vestris subditis et fidelibus, aliquid sibi placibile fieri requirit” (*Diplomatarium relationum reipublicae ragusanae cum regno Hungariae*: p. 16; *Libri reformationum*, II, ed. Josip Gelcich. [Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum Meridionalium, 13]. Zagreb: JAZU, 1882: p. 289).

vestre regie maiestatis).³⁷ But on his death, however, the term “sacred crown” came into regular use. In 1383 Queen Mary confirmed the Ragusan privileges “upon the glory of the crown of the Hungarian kingdom”.³⁸ In October 1382, the town of Zadar, too, swore allegiance to the queens by stressing its loyalty to the “sacred Hungarian crown”.³⁹ Further, Dubrovnik soon realised the growing significance of the nobility in the realm. Dubrovnik’s capacity to foresee its role became notably evident during the Hungarian baronial unrest—that is, the struggle between Sigismund of Luxemburg and Ladislav of Naples. At the time, the Ragusan government dispatched its envoys explicitly to the “Hungarian barons” (*ad barones Hungarie*), recommending itself to them and stating that the barons were those who elected the king.⁴⁰ From the perspective of a freshly shaped aristocratic republic based on class hierarchy such as that of Dubrovnik,⁴¹ it was not difficult to envisage the relationship between the barons and the king and to perceive the crown as a corporate body. It seems that the Dalmatian towns, Dubrovnik included, had no doubts about the legal meaning of “*corona regni*”. To them, it was an authority separate from the king’s person to which the towns felt related. They had fully adopted the idea of the crown as a non-material, abstract political conception, the latter tending to develop in fourteenth-century Western thought. The crown became the holder of supreme authority.⁴² The early years of Mary’s reign gave little rise to such an attitude, but during the dynastic controversy of the beginning of the fifteenth century it was to become the main criterion in creating Dubrovnik’s policy towards the Hungarian kingdom. Thus, while deliberating on the recognition of Ladislav as king of Naples in 1403, Ragusan patriciate made it perfectly clear that it would acknowledge only the king who had worn the

³⁷ *Libri reformationum*, IV, ed. J. Gelcich. [Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum Meridionalium, 28]. Zagreb: JAZU, 1896: pp. 117, 135; *Diplomatarium relationum reipublicae ragusanae cum regno Hungariae*: pp. 23, 61, 63, 65.

³⁸ “...*pro exaltacione honoris corone regni Hungarie*.” (P. Matković, »Spomenici za dubrovačku povijest«, p. 149; Z. Janeković Römer, »O poslaničkoj službi«: p. 194).

³⁹ F. Šišić, »Ljetopis Pavla Pavlovića patricija zadarskoga«: pp. 5-6; N. Klaić and I. Petricioli, *Zadar u srednjem vijeku do 1409.*: p. 352.

⁴⁰ *Diplomatarium relationum reipublicae ragusanae cum regno Hungariae*: pp. 118, 122, 126.

⁴¹ On political ideology and political determinants of the Ragusan patriciate see: Z. Janeković Römer, *Okvir slobode*: pp. 13-19, 56-68, 176-182.

⁴² Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *Die zwei Körper des Königs: Eine Studie zur politischen Theologie des Mittelalters*. Stuttgart: Klett-Clotta, 1992 (original title: *The Two King's Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology*. Princeton, 1957): pp. 344-387; Jean Dunbabin, »Government«, in: *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c. 350-c. 1450*, ed. J. H. Burns. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997: pp. 498-501.

crown of St Stephen.⁴³ The crown transcended the person wearing it and became an ultimate principle of political legitimacy recognised by Dubrovnik. In the political and legal terms of Dubrovnik's relationship with the Hungarian kingdom this principle played an essential role. Emphasis being given to the holding of the insignia as the main attribute of power has been traced much earlier. In 1292, for example, Trogir tried to define its relationship towards Charles Martell of Anjou by deciding that only a king crowned at the Hungarian seat of Székesfehérvár and bearing the insignia could be acknowledged as its lord.⁴⁴ The Ragusans perceived the crown as a corporate body to which they attributed an "organic" meaning, considering their city its part ("*membrum corone*").⁴⁵ Such an understanding of the crown, with emphasis on its corporate feature, was of fundamental significance for Dubrovnik. In this relationship Dubrovnik did not consider itself part of Hungary but of the crown. Such a relationship provided an excellent framework for the Ragusans to shape and develop their own autonomy. The process was well under way in the first decades of the fifteenth century, when the crown of St Stephen was worn by Sigismund of Luxemburg. This fact should add to the Ragusan benevolent attitude toward Sigismund. Glorified during lifetime, and idealised in the decades and centuries that followed, Sigismund owed much of his popularity to the fact that he was the one who wore the crown when it—*sacra corona Hungarie*—supported Dubrovnik in its political objective rendered by the extolled concept of Ragusan *libertas*.

Royal authority and the legitimacy of the city government

Having sworn allegiance to Queen Mary, the Ragusans were granted what they sought most: confirmation of the privilege, continuity of self-government and Hungarian protection. What exactly did Dubrovnik gain? Apart from security and protection, which the Ragusan community enjoyed under the wing of such an authority, acceptance of the monarch's sovereignty was also necessary for the confirmation of the government's legitimacy. That was the

⁴³ *Diplomatarium relationum reipublicae ragusanae cum regno Hungariae*: p. 119.

⁴⁴ "...quia qui se regem facit Hungarie, solet se coronari in tali civitate, unde illi qui coronaretur in regimine Hungarie, intendamus obedire" (*Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, VII, ed. Tadija Smičiklas, Zagreb: JAZU, 1909: pp. 123-124; Grga Novak, *Povijest Splita*, I, Split: Matica hrvatska, 1957: p. 140).

⁴⁵ *Diplomatarium relationum reipublicae ragusanae cum regno Hungariae*: p. 330; Z. Janeković-Römer, *Okvir slobode*: p. 78.

only way the government of Dubrovnik, that is, the city developing into a city-state, could acquire legitimacy and stability.⁴⁶ The same model was witnessed in some of the Italian city-states (Florence, Pisa, Siena), similar to Dubrovnik in size. It should be pointed out that this very issue mirrored the relationship between the monarchic and republican political system. Viewed legally, sovereignty was the most fundamental question to the growing city-states. The problem was resolved in such a way that the monarch maintained the role of the source of the legitimacy and suzerainty, while the cities were granted their own territorial sovereignty. This theory was especially expounded by fourteenth-century Italian legal commentators on the example of the relationship between Italian cities and the emperor, whose authority was nominally superior. Thus the cities became *civitates sibi principes*, representing on their territory what the emperor represented in the whole empire. Apparently, the adage “*rex in regno suo est imperator regni sui*” was at work here. In a specific sort of way they became *vice principes* over their own territory, recognising the superior authority of the emperor above them. Thus the already established governments of these city-states-to-be were soon legitimised, yet fully respecting the rules of the medieval hierarchy of sovereignty. The city thus acquired a *de facto* sovereignty, affirmed by the king’s suzerainty which was *de iure* superior to it.⁴⁷ The legitimacy of the government protected by the authority of the monarch was an important achievement on Dubrovnik’s path to independence. Although Dubrovnik was exempt from the imperial lands (*terrae imperii*), the earlier described model of the Italian cities could have been applied to Dubrovnik’s position within the Hungarian kingdom, as well as to the attitude of the city’s government towards its sovereign lord, Hungarian king, that is, to the Hungarian crown. The lesser the power influence of the sovereign ruler, as witnessed in Dubrovnik in the fifteenth century, the greater the manoeuvre area for the city government to transform its prerogatives into virtual autonomy.⁴⁸ Moreover, the recognition of the sovereignty of the Hungarian crown implied considerable security and protection in Dubrovnik’s determination to acquire independence.

⁴⁶ Z. Janeković Römer, *Okvir slobode*: p. 78.

⁴⁷ J. P. Canning, »Law, sovereignty and corporation theory, 1300-1450«, in: *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c. 350-c. 1450*: pp. 467-473; Pierangelo Schiera, »Legitimacy, Discipline, and Institutions: Three Necessary Conditions for the Birth of Modern State«, in: *The Origins of the State in Italy 1300-1600*, ed. Julius Kirshner. Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996: p. 26; E.H. Kantorowicz, *Die zwei Körper des Königs*: p. 307.

⁴⁸ J. P. Canning, »Introduction: politics, institutions and ideas«, in: *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c. 350-c. 1450*: pp. 350-351; Z. Janeković Römer, *Okvir slobode*: p. 79.

As to what the Ragusans actually expected when they demanded Hungarian protection may be gleaned from a number of cases. Namely, in the 1380s Ragusan relations with Bosnia tended to deteriorate due mainly to some economic aspirations of King Tvrtko and his attempts to threaten the Ragusan salt monopoly. He had ambitious plans of building an alternative salt market in Novi.⁴⁹ That was a direct blow on the Ragusan economy which largely depended on the regular profits from the salt sales. In this respect, salt trade received much of the government's attention. Regulations governing its sale were extremely detailed, together with the government's monopoly over it.⁵⁰ When, in 1382, King Tvrtko embarked upon building his own emporium, Ragusan diplomacy sought every way possible to prevent it. The government dispatched embassies to the Bosnian king and in December of the same year succeeded in closing the salt market on this undesirable location.⁵¹ In addition to persistent diplomacy, on this occasion and later the Ragusans did not hesitate to seek help from the Buda court. Upon demand, a privilege was granted to the Ragusans by which Queen Mary forbade her subjects in Dalmatia and in Croatia to trade in salt "at illegal markets". The charter explicitly stated that such trade was "against ancient freedom and custom of our [queen's] city of Dubrovnik".⁵² It was a privilege which protected Ragusan trade interests, as there were only four "legal" markets for the trade of salt—Drijeva or "*mercatum Narenti*" at the mouth of the Neretva River, west of Dubrovnik, Dubrovnik, Kotor and St Sergius on the Bojana River in the north-west Albania.⁵³ Apart from granting Dubrovnik its trade monopoly, the privilege issued by the

⁴⁹ *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii*: p. 171; V. Foretić, »Godina 1358.«: p. 268; Nada Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata u razvijenom srednjem vijeku*. Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1976: p. 655; M. Ančić, *Putanja klatna*: pp. 203, 209-218; S. Ćirković, *Istorija srednjovekovne bosanske države*: pp. 148-151.

⁵⁰ *Liber statutorum civitatis Ragusii compositus anno 1272*, ed. V. Bogišić and C. Jireček. [Monumenta historico-juridica Slavorum Meridionalium, 9]: II, cc. 8-9; VIII, cc. 47, 53, 65, 75; *Liber omnium reformationum civitatis Ragusii*, ed. Aleksandar Solovjev. [Zbornik za istoriju, jezik i književnost, III.6]. Beograd: SKA, 1936: VII, c. 3; VIII, c. 5; XXII, c. 6. See Bariša Krekić, *Dubrovnik i Levant*. Beograd: SKA, 1956: p. 78.

⁵¹ S. Ćirković, *Istorija srednjovekovne bosanske države*: p. 150; V. Foretić, »Godina 1358.«: p. 268; V. Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika*, I: p. 164; D. Dinić Knežević, *Dubrovnik i Ugarska*: pp. 42-43.

⁵² P. Matković, »Spomenici za dubrovačku povijest«: pp. 150-151; *Dubrovačka akta i povelje*, I: pp. 118-119, 126-128, 178-179; P. Matković, »Prilozi k trgovačko-političkoj historiji Republike Dubrovačke«: p. 210; D. Dinić Knežević, *Dubrovnik i Ugarska*: p. 43; V. Foretić, »Godina 1358.«: p. 268; V. Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika*, I: p. 165.

⁵³ Josip Lučić, »Stjecanje, dioba i borba za očuvanje Dubrovačkog Primorja 1399-1405.«. *Arhivski vjesnik* 11-12 (1968-1969): p. 109.

Hungarian queen pointed also to the nature of the Hungaro-Bosnian relations. Although the Bosnian lords managed to preserve the attributes of political individuality, in view of the Hungarian kingdom their relationship was of the vassal kind. Hungarian sovereigns considered Bosnia their “dominion” and the Bosnian rulers recognised Hungarian kings as their “overlords”, although in practice the relationship often took a different course.⁵⁴ Yet from the viewpoint of legal theory, the Hungarian “sacred crown” continued to exert much political authority over Bosnia throughout the fifteenth century.⁵⁵ The same interpretation is to be found in the privilege of Visegrád of 1358, a charter by which Dubrovnik became the town of the crown of St Stephen. Among other things, King Louis granted defence against the *ban* (ruler) of Bosnia, “our subject” (*fidelis noster*).⁵⁶ Thus when the Ragusans turned to the queen for protection, one may assume that they had taken the above nature of the Hungaro-Bosnian relationship into consideration. Dubrovnik’s sovereign lord, if formally, also claimed to be the overlord of Bosnia. Seeking protection at the royal court at Buda implied the latter’s support and influence in resolving the problems with Bosnia. No doubt, this fact must have been one of the main reasons why protection had been sought in the first place.

Following a similar pattern was a confirmation of yet another of the king’s grants, most vital for the city. The Ragusans were assured of the right to trade with Venice, Serbia and Bosnia. Upon the recognition of the Hungarian crown, Dubrovnik was permitted to trade freely with Serbia and Venice, even if Hungary was at the time at war with them.⁵⁷ As the time soon showed, the conflicts which spread throughout the territories vital for Ragusan trade failed to interfere with their ventures. Thus the Ragusans demanded confirmation of their agreements with Serbia and Bosnia from Queen Mary and, later, from her husband, King Sigismund.⁵⁸ This is but one in a succession of examples

⁵⁴ Mladen Ančić, *Na rubu Zapada: Tri stoljeća srednjovjekovne Bosne*. Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest and Dom i Svijet, 2001: pp. 12-16.

⁵⁵ M. Ančić, *Na rubu Zapada*: p. 15.

⁵⁶ *Diplomatarium relationum reipublicae ragusanae cum regno Hungariae*: p. 6; P. Matković, »Spomenici za dubrovačku povijest«: p. 143.

⁵⁷ “*Postremo concessimus, quod si nos vel filius, seu filii, aut nepotes nostri sepe dicti habere-mus discordiam cum rege Rascie aut communi Veneciarum, eo non obstante Ragusini antedicti possint libere uti cum mercibus suis tam in Rascia, quam in Veneciis.*” (*Diplomatarium relationum reipublicae ragusanae cum regno Hungariae*: p. 7; *Dubrovačka akta i povelje* I: p. 89; V. Foretić, »Godina 1358.«: p. 270; V. Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika*, I: p. 133).

⁵⁸ *Dubrovačka akta i povelje*, I: pp. 123-126, 185-188; V. Foretić, »Godina 1358.«: p. 270.

showing that it was king's duty to protect the city's economic interests, and yet another important reason why the commercially rooted Dubrovnik was persistent in its demonstration of loyalty to the crown.

Dubrovnik in the ferment of 1384-1387

By 1383 Hungary was already on the verge of political crisis which had partly generated from the queens' inexperience in statecraft, both of whom are believed to have been under a strong influence of palatine Nicholas Garai. Baronial unrest threatened to drive the country to chaos.⁵⁹ Though complex, this rivalry may in outline be described as factional. Under the leadership of the Horvat brothers—Paul Horvat, bishop of Zagreb, and his brother John—a league of barons from the southern kingdom confronted the nobles, who, unlike the former, were neither territorially nor kinship based, but belonged to court aristocracy whose immense wealth and power stemmed from the highest honours.⁶⁰ The nobles gathered around John Horvat intended to offer the crown to Charles of Durazzo, Louis' cousin and king of Naples, a familiar figure in the Croatian lands, as he was appointed *herceg* (governor) of Croatia and Dalmatia during Louis' reign. Although in 1385 the Hungarian court did give some serious thought on the break of Mary's betrothal to Sigismund of Luxemburg—margrave of Brandenburg and a younger son of Emperor Charles IV—in favour of the ties with the French royal house of Valois, the fear of Charles of Durazzo and his followers forced the queens, palatine Garai and the league of barons around them to finally crown Mary's engagement to Sigismund with marriage.⁶¹ On the other hand, Charles of Durazzo, too, had his interest in preventing the union between the royal houses of Hungary and France, for it would directly threaten his kingdom in central Italy. For his part, the offer on behalf of a group of Hungarian nobles to take the throne in Buda

⁵⁹ E. Mályusz, *König Sigismund*: p. 16.

⁶⁰ J. Bak, *Königtum und Stände*: p. 25; E. Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*: pp. 16-19; T. Raukar, »Hrvatska u kasnom srednjem vijeku«: pp. 322-323; F. Šišić, *Vojvoda Hrvoje Vukčić*: pp. 36-39; N. Klaić and I. Petricoli, *Zadar u srednjem vijeku do 1409.*: p. 352; M. Ančić, *Putanja klatna*: p. 219; V. Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, II: p. 244; S. Ćirković, *Istorija srednjovekovne bosanske države*: p. 153. On the structure of court aristocracy and honorary system in the Angevin period see also: Pál Engel, »Honor, castrum, comitatus. Studies in the Government System of the Angevin Kingdom«. *Questiones Medii Aevi Novae* 1 (1996): pp. 91-100.

⁶¹ J. Bak, *Königtum und Stände*: p. 25; E. Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*: p. 19; P. Engel, *The Realm of St. Stephen*: pp. 196-197; V. Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, II: pp. 244-245.

was more than welcome.⁶² Shortly after the wedding, Sigismund hurried to Bohemia in order to intervene in the growing dissension. Without much difficulty, his rival set foot in Senj, Hungarian ground, and arrived in Buda to claim the throne.⁶³ The queens were left with little choice but to acknowledge the state of affairs and abdicate ‘voluntarily’. Some contemporary chroniclers tried to fabricate Charles’ “succession right” by emphasising his kinship ties with the late King Louis. According to the account of Laurentius De Monacis, Mary endowed Charles with “*tuorum progenitorum regnum*”.⁶⁴ In any event, the odds were on Charles, and the crown of St Stephen was placed upon his head in December of 1385.⁶⁵ Having received the “sacred crown”, a unique sign of the royal legitimacy, Charles of Durazzo was acknowledged as king of Hungary.

In the circumstances, Dubrovnik had to play two strong hands. Mary abdicated in favour of Charles and gave him the crown. Therefore, Dubrovnik never questioned the legitimacy of his succession. Charles’ succession was taken for granted, for his was the crown of St Stephen, the main criterion of the king’s legitimate authority. Upon the news of his accession, the Ragusan Major Council decided to hold a solemn procession and in the cathedral a traditional *laudes* was to be chanted in honour of Charles’ coronation. Also, the messenger who had delivered the news was to be awarded.⁶⁶ However, in Dubrovnik’s hesitation to dispatch an embassy which would owe allegiance to the king one may read Ragusan reservations about Charles.⁶⁷ Such an attitude was well grounded, as their interests in the Hungarian succession struggle

⁶² E. Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*: pp. 16, 19; Jörg K. Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund - Herrscher an der Schwelle zur Neuzeit (1368 - 1437)*. München: Verlag CHBeck, 1996: p. 54; V. Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, II: pp. 247-249.

⁶³ J. Bak, *Königtum und Stände*: p. 25; P. Engel, *The Realm of St. Stephen*: p. 197; T. Raukar, »Hrvatska u kasnom srednjem vijeku«: p. 323; F. Šišić, *Vojvoda Hrvoje Vukčić*: p. 44; V. Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, II: p. 251.

⁶⁴ J. Bak, *Königtum und Stände*: p. 25, note 109.

⁶⁵ J. Bak, *Königtum und Stände*: p. 25; E. Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*: p. 20; F. Šišić, *Vojvoda Hrvoje Vukčić*: p. 46; V. Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, II: p. 254.

⁶⁶ “*Prima pars fiat solempnis processio et cantetur missa cum gaudis debitis propter litteras serenissimi domini domini regis Karoli continentes eius coronationem de regno Ungarie et quod detur libertas domino rectori cum suo Minori Consilio et Consilio Rogatorum de expendendo de avere communis ad honorandum nunptium qui dictas litteras nobis presentavit.*” (*Odluke veća*, II: p. 223); *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii*: p. 173; P. Matković, »Prilozi k trgovačko-političkoj historiji Republike Dubrovačke«: p. 211; D. Dinić Knežević, *Dubrovnik i Ugarska*: p. 45; V. Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika*, I: p. 167.

⁶⁷ P. Matković, »Prilozi k trgovačko-političkoj historiji Republike Dubrovačke«: p. 211.

were not on Charles' side. The city's government was more than concerned about its maritime and commercial interests being threatened by the Kingdom of Naples, particularly with Charles of Durazzo on the Hungarian throne. Confusion and disorder in Hungary, along with the obscure knowledge of Charles' true plans concerning their city determined the Ragusan diplomatic actions under the circumstances.⁶⁸ It is not surprising that Charles' death was not formally mourned. He died at the beginning of February 1386 from the wound he had received in an assassination attempted by the queens' adherents.⁶⁹ Contrary to the custom, Dubrovnik failed to witness a commemoration service for the deceased sovereign.⁷⁰ A good illustration as to how Dubrovnik experienced the short reign of Charles of Durazzo are the words of Philippus de Diversis of Lucca, schoolmaster in Dubrovnik, delivered in his speech before the Ragusan Rector, senators and the clergy in honour of the coronation of King Albert in 1438. Praising Dubrovnik's loyalty to the Hungarian king, he does not forget to mention that upon the death of King Louis, "when virtually all the towns of Dalmatia broke their allegiance and turned to Charles, who, on some pretext, arrived from Parthenope,⁷¹ only the Ragusans maintained their fidelity and allegiance, though pressured considerably to surrender themselves to Charles".⁷² Diversis' account of the events should be taken with great reserve, especially the part on the Ragusans being "pressured considerably" to recognise Charles, of which no evidence is available. Yet it is evident that by 1438, when the thesis was recorded, an image of the town truly devoted and loyal to its sovereign had already been created, this being in the reign of Sigismund, and not surprisingly, the fact that the Ragusans had recognised Sigismund's rival claimant, king of Naples, fell into oblivion.

The events that took place in Buda in only a month after the violent death of Charles are known. The struggle escalated, the queens were imprisoned, and in the early 1387 Queen Elisabeth was murdered.⁷³ The Ragusan government

⁶⁸ *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii*: p. 173.

⁶⁹ V. Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, II: pp. 255-256; J. Bak, *Königtum und Stände*: p. 25.

⁷⁰ *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii*: p. 173.

⁷¹ Diversis refers to Naples under its ancient Greek name Parthenope.

⁷² Filip de Diversis, *Dubrovački govori u slavu ugarskih kraljeva Sigismunda i Alberta*, ed. Zdenka Janeković Römer. Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2001: pp. 118-119.

⁷³ For more details see: F. Šišić, »Ljetopis Pavla Pavlovića«: p. 10; J. Rački, »Pokret na slaven-skom jugu«, *Rad JAZU* 2: pp. 128-160; F. Šišić, *Vojvoda Hrvoje Vukčić*: p. 49 et ss.; V. Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, II: pp. 256-261; *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii*: p. 174; J. Bak, *Königtum und Stände*: p. 26; T. Raukar, »Hrvatska u kasnom srednjem vijeku«: p. 323.

decided to hold a memorial service for the deceased queen,⁷⁴ and to ensure additional security, a state of alert as a reaction to the succession struggle and disorder in the realm.⁷⁵ Elisabeth's death triggered Sigismund and the magnates at the Buda court who had taken over the state affairs during interregnum to action.⁷⁶ Chopped away by power rivalries, the kingdom needed a strong hand on the throne. Having consented to the conditions of the electoral body, Sigismund was finally elected king and on 31 March 1387 received the crown of St Stephen in Székesfehérvár.⁷⁷ A new king was on the throne, a ruler whose fifty-year reign not only marked the history of Hungary and Croatia, but of the whole Europe as well.

Shortly upon the election, the new king addressed a letter to his subjects in Croatia and Dalmatia, including Dubrovnik, calling for their loyalty and elaborating the plans of crushing the rebellion led by John Horvat and prior of Vrana, John Palisnai.⁷⁸ Attention should be drawn to the terminology of this document, as it differs considerably from the style used in the Angevin period. It reads that John Horvat and John Palisnai are enemies of "the sacred crown, Hungarian kingdom and His Majesty", by which emphasis has again been placed on the meaning of the sacred crown as a corporate body, separate from king-the person.⁷⁹ In early summer, aided by the Venetian galleys and a group of Croatian lords, the king and his army managed to free the queen Mary from the Novigrad jail and restore power in the realm.⁸⁰ The news was well received in Dubrovnik, as it would lead to the stability on the throne and in the kingdom. To honour the queen's liberation from prison, the government decided to

⁷⁴ *Odluke veća*, II: pp. 354, 392; *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii*: p. 175; P. Matković, »Prilozi k trgovačko-političkoj historiji Republike Dubrovačke«: p. 210.

⁷⁵ *Liber viridis*, ed. Branislav Nedeljković. [Zbornik za istoriju, jezik i književnost, III. 23]. Beograd: SANU, 1984: c. 58.

⁷⁶ J. Bak, *Königtum und Stände*: pp. 27-30; J. Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund*: p. 61.

⁷⁷ F. Šišić, *Vojvoda Hrvoje Vukčić*: p. 55; V. Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, II: pp. 261-264; T. Raukar, »Hrvatska u kasnom srednjem vijeku«: p. 323; J. Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund*: p. 63.

⁷⁸ F. Šišić, *Vojvoda Hrvoje Vukčić*: pp. 55-56; V. Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, II: pp. 264-265; T. Raukar, »Hrvatska u kasnom srednjem vijeku«: p. 323.

⁷⁹ "Ioannes de Hericarthe (!), pridem banus et Ioannes de [Palisna] gerens se pro priore Aurane, sacre corone et regni Hungarie et nostre maiestatis speciales emuli..." (*Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, XVII, ed. Stjepan Gunjača. Zagreb: JAZU, 1981: p. 62).

⁸⁰ F. Šišić, »Ljetopis Pavla Pavlovića«: p. 11; *Listine o odnošajih između južnoga slavenstva i Mletačke republike*, IV, ed. Šime Ljubić. [Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum Meridionalium, 4]. Zagreb: JAZU, 1874: pp. 242-243; V. Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, II: pp. 267-270; F. Šišić, *Vojvoda Hrvoje Vukčić*: pp. 58-59; N. Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata u razvijenom srednjem vijeku*: p. 657.

organise a solemn procession, accompanied by the chime of the city bells, and a mass. Additionally, all the prisoners from the city jail were set free. Artists commissioned to contribute to the popular rejoicing all over Dubrovnik were to be awarded financially.⁸¹

Dubrovnik's recognition of King Sigismund in 1387: allegiance to the king and confirmation of the privilege

With the new king on the throne, Ragusan government acted in accordance with the established protocol governing the subject—sovereign relationship. An embassy was dispatched to pledge allegiance to the queen and new king and seek their protection and confirmation of privileges.⁸² In the very pledge of allegiance to Queen Mary and King Sigismund in July of 1387, the Ragusans first reminded of their deep loyalty and pledge sworn to Mary and her younger sister, Hedwig. Mary's claim to the throne "in place of the male heir" was mentioned again. Further, the Ragusans did not fail to accentuate the privileges and liberties granted to them by the late King Louis, and confirmed by Queen Mary. Then by placing their hands on the Holy Scriptures before the queen's ambassadors at the Council Hall, the Rector and the Major Council, as representatives of Dubrovnik's community, swore to loyalty and allegiance to Mary, her successors and "his serene Highness King Sigismund, husband of the Serene Queen Mary, our natural sovereign, queen of Hungary".⁸³ Towards the end of the solemn oath, the Ragusans again emphasised the privileges and liberties they had been granted by the former sovereigns, expressing thus their expectations and hope that the new ruler, Sigismund, would follow in the footsteps of his predecessors.

⁸¹ *Odluke veća*, II: pp. 321, 396.

⁸² *Odluke veća*, II: pp. 322-325, 372, 375, 397-401; Filip de Diversis, *Opis slavnog grada Dubrovnika*, ed. Zdenka Janeković-Römer. Zagreb: Dom i svijet, 2004: p. 55.

⁸³ "...ego... rector Ragusii et consilium maius nobilium virorum predictae civitatis, prout moris est, solemniter congregatur unanimiter et concorditer sigilatim unusquisque prestito sacramento, ratificamus, confirmamus et approbamus dictum sacramentum fidelitatis et subiectionis omagium prelibatis dominabus nostris alias prestitum, ut supra dictum est. Ac denuo per predictos ambasiatores requisiti, tactis corporaliter sacrosanctis scripturis, fidelitatis, subiectionis et omagii prestamus debitum sacramentum prelibate serenissime et illustrissime domine domine Marie regine Ungarie, Dalmacie et cetera domine nostre naturali et suis heredibus perpetuo descendantibus in regno successoribus atque serrenissimo regi Sigismundo, tamquam inclito consorti prelibate serenissime domine, domine Marie domine nostre naturalis regine Ungarie et cetera..." (*Codex diplomaticus*, XVII: pp. 74-75; P. Matković, »Spomenici za dubrovačku povijest«: p. 152).

On 28 October 1387 Sigismund confirmed Ragusan privileges, and in conformity with the succession procedure he confirmed all the privileges previously granted to Dubrovnik by King Louis, Queen Elisabeth and Queen Mary, making no exception with regard to their substance, conclusions or clauses.⁸⁴ With the privilege of Visegrád in mind as a starting point of all the Ragusan privileges, this, among other things, implied that in the Dubrovnik cathedral lauds would now be chanted in Sigismund's honour, his flag would fly on their land and ships, and should he come to the city, he was to be received and entertained as befitted a majestic head such as his.⁸⁵ Confirming the formerly granted privileges, the king, on his part, promised to defend Dubrovnik against the "men from the lands of Serbia and Bosnia",⁸⁶ a clause which proved of essential importance for the Ragusans throughout Sigismund's reign, first in the conflict with King Ostoja of Bosnia, from 1403 to 1405 and, later, in a feud with Pavle Radenović, a lord from the hinterland. In these conflicts, the Ragusans were able to seek protection granted by, not exacted from, the king.

Sigismund confirmed yet another clause from the earlier privileges which placed Dubrovnik in a position different from the rest of Dalmatia—the right to choose the rector.⁸⁷ The latter was by far the most controversial of all the suzerainty terms confirmed by the king. It was preceded by lengthy negotiations, as King Louis was unwilling to cede at first, insisting on his sovereign right to confirm the chosen rector. According to the first draft of the privilege of Visegrád the rector was to be chosen from among the subjects of the king, and his election confirmed by the king.⁸⁸ The Ragusans could not accept such

⁸⁴ *Diplomatarium relationum reipublicae ragusanae cum regno Hungariae*: pp. 108-110; *Codex diplomaticus*, XVII: pp. 94-97; *Dubrovačka akta i povelje*, I: pp. 185-188; P. Matković, »Prilozi k trgovačko-političkoj historiji Republike Dubrovačke«: p. 212.

⁸⁵ *Diplomatarium relationum reipublicae ragusanae cum regno Hungariae*: p. 5.

⁸⁶ "...conservandi ac deponendi terrasque seu territoria ab hominibus terrarum Bozne et Rascie.." (*Diplomatarium relationum reipublicae ragusanae cum regno Hungariae*: p. 109; *Codex diplomaticus*, XVII: p. 96; *Dubrovačka akta i povelje*, I: p. 187; see also: *Diplomatarium*: p. 6).

⁸⁷ "...iuxta antiqua statuta et consuetudines ipsius civitatis nostre rectores et iudices nobis tamen et sacre nostre corone fideles inter se eligendi..." (*Diplomatarium relationum reipublicae ragusanae cum regno Hungariae*: p. 109; *Codex diplomaticus*, XVII: p. 96; *Dubrovačka akta i povelje*, I: p. 187; see also Milorad Medini, *Dubrovnik Gučetića*. Beograd: SAN, 1953: pp. 69-73; *Codex diplomaticus*, XVII: p. 204).

⁸⁸ "...comitem autem illum assumptere tenebuntur, quem ex fidelibus regni nostri duxerint eligendum, cuius confirmatio ad nostram pertinebit maiestatem." (*Diplomatarium relationum reipublicae ragusanae cum regno Hungariae*: p. 6; P. Matković, »Spomenici za dubrovačku povijest«: p. 143).

terms. It was the right to choose their own rector that was crucial for the consolidation of the Ragusan institutions of self-government, although rector exerted no real authority in the internal structure of the city's government.⁸⁹ Although the office of rector primarily reflected the dignity of the state and its embodiment,⁹⁰ it was essential to win the right to elect their own rector and thus curb king's influence on domestic policy.⁹¹ This is a good illustration of how the Ragusans perceived their position under the Hungarian crown—its duty was to protect them but not to interfere into the city's self-government. Faced with a diplomatic challenge, the Ragusans were determined to persuade the king into making this important concession. At the beginning of 1359, the Ragusans were finally granted the right to choose their own rector, on condition that he was neither a Venetian nor any other enemy of the king.⁹² As Zdenka Janeković Römer rightly asserts, this privilege was one of the cornerstones of the Ragusan unwavering devotion to the crown.⁹³ Dalmatian towns, however, were in a much different position. They were denied the right to elect their own rector, and candidates for this office were usually chosen from among the Croatian and Hungarian lords.⁹⁴ In Louis' reign, however, Split was to experience a diminution of the rights previously enjoyed—the rector of Klis imposed customs dues, that of Omiš also violated Split's liberties, and even the king himself intervened in the court actions between the Split municipality and its citizens.⁹⁵ Several days after he had confirmed the privileges of Šibenik,

⁸⁹ Kosta Vojnović, »O državnom ustrojstvu republike Dubrovačke«, *Rad JAZU* 103 (1891): pp. 53-59; Z. Janeković Römer, *Okvir slobode*: pp. 180-181; Ante Cvitanić, »Uvod u dubrovačko statutarno, kasnije zakonsko pravo«, in: *Statut grada Dubrovnika 1272*. Dubrovnik: Historijski arhiv Dubrovnik, 1990: p. 13.

⁹⁰ For more details on rectorship see: K. Vojnović, »O državnom ustrojstvu republike Dubrovačke«: pp. 35-40; V. Foretić, »Godina 1358.«: pp. 255-256; V. Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika*, I: p. 136; Z. Janeković Römer, *Okvir slobode*: pp. 127-131; A. Cvitanić, »Uvod u dubrovačko statutarno, kasnije zakonsko pravo«: p. 13.

⁹¹ Z. Janeković Römer, *Višegradski ugovor: temelj Dubrovačke Republike*: pp. 80-81.

⁹² "...ut comitem, quem undecunque pro vobis eligere volueritis, exceptis Venetis et ipsis adherentibus ac aliis quibuslibet inimicis et emulis nostris, liberam eligendi et recipiendi habentis facultatem." (*Diplomatarium relationum reipublicae ragusanae cum regno Hungariae*: p. 15; *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, XIII, ed. Marko Kostrenčić. Zagreb: JAZU, 1915: p. 1; *Dubrovačka akta i povelje*, I: pp. 84-85; V. Foretić, »Godina 1358.«: pp. 255-256; D. Dinić Knežević, *Dubrovnik i Ugarska*: p. 20). On the document's erroneous dating and its correction see Z. Janeković Römer, *Višegradski ugovor*: p. 83.

⁹³ Z. Janeković Römer, *Višegradski ugovor*: p. 83.

⁹⁴ Z. Janeković Römer, *Višegradski ugovor*: pp. 81-82.

⁹⁵ Z. Janeković Römer, *Višegradski ugovor*: p. 111.

Sigismund promised to confirm the rector whom they would elect from among the subjects of the king.⁹⁶ The authorities of Rab, however, were condemned for not having appointed baron Pavao Zrinski as rector and were ordered to do so.⁹⁷ Contrarily, in Dubrovnik the freedom to elect rector from among themselves eliminated the possibility of external influence in the city's affairs and violation of its jurisdiction. Thus the right to appoint its own rector, a concession King Louis finally decided to make and King Sigismund later confirmed in 1387, played a pivotal role in the shaping of Dubrovnik's independence.

Sigismund's confirmation of the privilege in 1387 bears evidence to Dubrovnik's determination to expand its territory, being given a grant to purchase or obtain by any other means estates in the hinterland.⁹⁸ In this respect, one should again point to the privilege of Visegrád, by which Louis granted the territory from Kurilo (today's Petrovo Selo, a village on the western slopes of Rijeka dubrovačka) to Ston, under Bosnian control at the time, and of which the Ragusans actually acquired possession in 1399.⁹⁹ However, this example, together with Sigismund's confirmation of the right of territorial acquisition, testify not only to the Ragusan expansionistic policy but to the nature of Dubrovnik's relationship towards its sovereign lord. They epitomise the idea that monarch was the supreme overlord and his conveyance a warrant of legitimate ownership.¹⁰⁰ In the privilege King Sigismund also states his claim to these territories as well as that of his predecessors. Although Dubrovnik's expansionism followed its own course irrespective of the Hungarian sovereigns, royal confirmation of the acquisition was always required, sometimes even beforehand.¹⁰¹ This proves that Dubrovnik, too, had adopted one of the main

⁹⁶ "...ut comitem, quem per rectores dicte ciuitatis vestre eligeretis, pro duobus annis subsequentiibus vobis confirmare dignaremur." (*Codex diplomaticus*, XVII: p. 131). Nikola, rector of Krk, was confirmed rector of the town of Rab according to a similar regulation (*Codex diplomaticus*, XVII: p. 25).

⁹⁷ *Codex diplomaticus*, XVII: p. 204.

⁹⁸ "...salvis tamen terris, quas ceteri reges Hungarie predecessores nostri tenuerunt et possiderunt, precio comparandi et alio quivis modo acquirendi, et in usum ipsorum ac commodum dicte civitatis nostre applicandi, annectendi, appropriandi et perpetuo conservandi..." (*Diplomatarium relationum reipublicae ragusanae cum regno Hungariae*: p. 109; *Codex diplomaticus*, XVII: p. 96; *Dubrovačka akta i povelje*, I: p. 187).

⁹⁹ *Diplomatarium relationum reipublicae ragusanae cum regno Hungariae*: p. 6; V. Foretić, »Godina 1358.«: p. 255; J. Lučić, »Stjecanje, dioba i borba za očuvanje Dubrovačkog Primorja 1399-1405.«: passim.

¹⁰⁰ See J. Bak, *Königtum und Stände*: pp. 22-23.

¹⁰¹ Z. Janeković Römer, *Višegradski ugovor*: p. 137.

features of monarchical rule—monarch's supreme rights over the land. With territorial acquisitions well under way at the beginning of the fifteenth century, the above attribute of the monarchical authority tended to gain in prominence, as the king's confirmation of the acquired lands provided a legitimate framework for the Ragusan expansionistic activities.

In the late November of 1387, the Ragusan councillors received from King Sigismund an additional privilege of commercial nature. The "loyal citizens and merchants of Dubrovnik"¹⁰² were granted free export of silver from the region of Sylvania in the Pannonian plain, showing thus his understanding of the importance of trade for Dubrovnik. This privilege also confirms the thesis that the economic factor largely determined the sovereign's attitude towards the city, and vice versa.¹⁰³ Sigismund's policy primarily included commercially developed towns, among which Dubrovnik had its place too. From such a sovereign—city relationship both parties benefited. The king gained tribute, information and political alliance,¹⁰⁴ while the city, being permitted to trade freely, advanced economically and socially.¹⁰⁵ Economic privileges granted by the king protected and prompted Ragusan trade, their importance being paramount.

Apart from the economic factor, Dubrovnik's geographical position contributed considerably to the articulation of the suzerain relationship. On the southern fringe of the kingdom, Dubrovnik enjoyed a position different from the towns less remote from the metropolitan centre. Apart from trade channelling, such a geographical position proved valuable in Sigismund's dealings with the rivals from Venice and the East. On the one hand, the city was to become and remain his only stronghold in the southern kingdom, and

¹⁰² "...*fideliū ciuiū et mercatorū nostrorū de Ragusio.*" (*Codex diplomaticus*, XVII: pp. 110-111).

¹⁰³ Friedrich B. Fahlbusch, *Städte und Königtum im frühen 15. Jahrhundert. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte Sigismunds von Luxemburg*. Köln-Weimar-Wien: Böhlau, 1983: pp. 117, 118, 130; András Kubinyi, »Das ungarische Städtewesen in der Sigismund-Zeit«, in: *Sigismund von Luxemburg: Kaiser und König in Mitteleuropa 1387-1437 (Beiträge zur Herrschaft Kaiser Sigismunds und der europäischen Geschichte um 1400)*, ed. J. Macek, E. Marosi, F. Seibt. Warendorf: Fahlbusch Verlag, 1994: pp. 174, 177.

¹⁰⁴ State archives of Dubrovnik, *Reformationes*, ser. 2, vol. 30, ff. 102v-103r; *Acta Consilii rogatorum*, ser. III, vol. 3, f. 228r; Bariša Krekić, »Cirkulacija informacija između Dubrovnika i Bosne u prvoj polovini XV. vijeka«. *Godišnjak Društva istoričara Bosne i Hercegovine* 39 (1988): pp. 50-56.

¹⁰⁵ F. Fahlbusch, *Städte und Königtum*: p. 19; A. Kubinyi, »Das ungarische Städtewesen«: p. 174.

on the other, it was this unique position that greatly shaped Ragusan foreign policy but also its attitude towards its sovereign lord. As an important commercial, maritime and particularly intelligence centre Dubrovnik became Sigismund's valuable ally in the region. All this was incorporated into the picture of the loyal king's city, a perception originating from the reign of King Sigismund and nurtured by his successors.

In brief, general political conditions and the city's ability or inability to preserve itself from external violence determined the nature of the relations between sovereign and its dominion.¹⁰⁶ Specific political and economic conditions, different from those of the other Dalmatian towns, provided the basis of a distinctive relationship between Dubrovnik and the king. Ragusan government officials were more than aware of the benefits enjoyed under the authority of Buda. It was not until the Hungarian decline in the early sixteenth century that the Ragusans gave serious thought to a different political framework. One should point out that it was not just a question of commercial benefits or the advantages of king's protection, but an awareness of the need for supreme authority which legitimised the patrician order in the city. Attitude towards the sovereign became implanted into Dubrovnik's political ideology. The Ragusan ruling elite made the best of the medieval political model of the sovereign—vassal relationship in that it consolidated its power and class. The protectorship of the sovereign lord and the crown of St Stephen helped them build an independent aristocratic republic. The process started in the reign of Louis the Great, but much of it was accomplished during the rule of Sigismund of Luxemburg. According to the account of Philippus de Diversis from the mid-fifteenth century, the reasons should equally be sought in the fact that the Ragusans “showed unwavering loyalty to the holy majesty of Hungary”.¹⁰⁷ Such fidelity, he described, glorified the city in what the Ragusans cherished most—“in honour, state and wealth”.¹⁰⁸ Apart from sharing Diversis' opinion, I would like to add a category he failed to mention—loyalty to the Hungarian crown paved the way for the greatest achievement of Dubrovnik's history, Ragusan *libertas*.

¹⁰⁶ T. Raukar, *Hrvatsko srednjovjekovlje*: pp. 83-89, 184, 189-191.

¹⁰⁷ F. de Diversis, *Opis slavnog grada Dubrovnika*: pp. 100, 180.

¹⁰⁸ “*O quam laudabilis et perpetua memoria digne est eius modi fidelitatis servandae consuetudo, qua urbs in honore, et statu, et divitiis augetur.*” (F. de Diversis, *Opis slavnog grada Dubrovnika*: p. 180).