

# CROATS BETWEEN FRANKS AND BYZANTIUM\*

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*From the time of their settlement, Slavs in Dalmatia were subjects of the Byzantine empire. The Frankish-Byzantine war at the beginning of the ninth century meant a change, bringing a large part of Dalmatia under Frankish rule. These lands had been first put under control of the marchgrave of Friuli, and after 828 were subdued directly to the kingdom of Italy. The weakening of Frankish control enabled the Croats to gain an almost independent position. Attempts made by emperor Basil I to regain control over Croatia proved to be unsuccessful. After 888 Croatia became even formally independent. This was followed by efforts of Croatian rulers and bishops to reunite the Church of Dalmatia and Croatia. The goal was achieved in 928 by sacrificing the Croatian bishopric. Towards the end of the century relations to Byzantium were intensified and finally Stephen I Držislav was crowned king of Croatia and Dalmatia with a crown given to him by the Byzantine emperor.*

## 1. THE PEACE TREATY OF 812

To go deeper into the problem of overlordship in the former Roman province of Dalmatia after the Slav settlement and prior to the Frankish-Byzantine war would exceed the goal of this article. The lack of sources for almost two centuries prevents us from making anything more than vague presumptions about this early period. Still, I would like to point out that, in my opinion, the Byzantine emperors kept at least a formal sovereignty over the coastal towns and the Slavs and Romans living in their vicinity, at least after 641. The sovereignty over the Slavs was the result of a supposed federation treaty, made in the time of Heraclius or his immediate successors, as I tried to argue in my book, following the thesis of Ferdo Šišić.<sup>1</sup>

The war between Charles the Great and Byzantium brought considerable territorial gains to the Frankish ruler. Dux Paulus and bishop Donatus of Zadar delivered Dalmatia to Charles in 805/806,<sup>2</sup> and in the division of the empire in 806 Pipin was given Italy, without explicitly mentioning Dalmatia, Venice or Istria.<sup>3</sup> According to the treaty of Aachen made in 812, the province of Dalmatia was split so that only the coastal towns and the islands were left to Constantinople, whereas the Franks obtained the rest of the province, together with Istria, occupied by their troops some decades ago.<sup>4</sup> From 815 we have the first news about Slavic representatives coming from the newly gained territories to Paderborn.<sup>5</sup>

In 817 a Byzantine delegation came to Louis the Pious in order to settle the dispute about the borders in Dalmatia, arising between the Slavic and Roman Dalmatians.<sup>6</sup> The use of the ethnic name *Dalmatians* for subjects of both empires living in the former Roman province shows that at that time the idea of a unified Dalmatia still existed, in spite of the fact that it was divided into its Slavic (Frankish) and Roman (Byzantine) parts.<sup>7</sup> It also seems that there was no local Slavic ruler, for the only official in charge of the region mentioned (and summoned before Louis) was Cadaloh, the duke (*dux*) of Friuli.<sup>8</sup>

In that same year emperor Louis carried out the *Ordinatio imperii* according to which the Slavs east of Bavaria were given to his son Louis, whereas the emperor kept Italy with the Slavic-Avar border region, which obviously included Dalmatia.<sup>9</sup>

A year later we learn about the first presumably Slavic officials in the region. One was Borna, *dux* in Dalmatia, and the other was Ljudevit, *dux* (or rector) *Pannoniae inferioris*.<sup>10</sup>

We shall leave aside Ljudevit, for the problem of Lower Pannonia is a separate question, and shall turn our attention to Borna and Dalmatia.<sup>11</sup>

## 2. FROM DUX DALMATIAE ATQUE LIBURNIAE TO DUX CHROATORUM

After possibly being first mentioned as *dux Guduscannorum*,<sup>12</sup> Borna appears several more times in Frankish sources. In 819 he was already *dux Dalmatiae*, fighting a battle against Ljudevit on the river Kupa, which was the border between Dalmatia and Pannonia.<sup>13</sup> During the battle his *Guduscanni* abandoned him, and he was saved thanks to his personal guards, called *praetoriani* by the Frankish chronicler. After leaving the battlefield, in spite of the defeat, he managed to subdue the *Guduscanni* once again.<sup>14</sup>

Next year the emperor sent him an army as aid against Ljudevit, but neither Einhard nor Vita Hludovici mention a title in connection with Borna's name.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, he must have used the title of *dux Dalmatiae atque Liburniae*, because Einhard ascribes this title to him one year later, mentioning his death before February 821.<sup>16</sup> Finally, Einhard refers to the deceased once again in 823, giving him just the title of *dux*.<sup>17</sup>

Borna is the first Slavic ruler in Dalmatia who developed his power under the auspices of the markgrave of Friuli. He was obviously installed by the Franks, because that is the only way we can explain his title *dux Dalmatiae*, which is of territorial, and not of ethnic origin.<sup>18</sup> Besides, his successor and nephew (grandson?), Vladislav, could assume his

position only after being confirmed by Louis the Pious.<sup>19</sup> It seems that Einhard uses the title *dux* to describe two different types of Slavic officials. On one hand, the duke is a high official responsible for a whole province or *regnum*, as in the case of *dux Dalmatiae*.<sup>20</sup> On the other, a duke is a ruler of a much smaller unit: Einhard mentions the *duces* of the Sorabi, who held, as it was believed, a large part of Dalmatia. That means, that there were several dukes in just one part of a province. Moreover, it is said that Ljudevit killed one of them and took his town. It seems that such a duke ruled only over this one town or one *pagus*, resembling the Frankish *comes* who ruled over a county consisting of a *civitas* and its surrounding territory (the counties were addepted to the older system of *pagus* and *civitas*, and were divided into *centenae* or vicariates, remaining us of the Slavonic *župani* and *satnici*).<sup>21</sup>

At that time we still miss the Croats in contemporary sources. When representatives of all eastern Slavs met with the emperor at Attigny,<sup>22</sup> there were Abodrites, Sorabs, *Wiltzi*, Bohemians, Moravians, *Praedenecent*<sup>23</sup>, and Avars, but no Croats. It is obvious that only those Slavic nations were listed, which lived along the Elbe and the Danube, leaving out those in Dalmatia and *Pannonia Inferior*. This could be explained in the way that only the representatives of those peoples who recognized the suzerainty of the emperor but did not live within the borders of the empire were invited. The Slavs in Dalmatia are therefore to be seen as part of the empire proper, as in fact even Einhard puts it in his *Vita Caroli Magni*.<sup>24</sup>

In 828 the *ducatus* of Friuli was divided into four parts ruled by counts (*comites*). There were many different suggestions for how these parts should be identified, and some authors see Liburnia, or Istria and Liburnia, as one of these counties.<sup>25</sup> I see no reason why one of the counties could not have been Dalmatia with Liburnia, for there is no evidence of Dalmatia getting out of the empire in the meantime, and we must assume that the province, even after 828, had to be integrated in the organization of the southeastern bordering region of the Frankish lands.

Few conclusions can be driven from the scarce data reaching us from the following years. The Venitian chronicle of John the Deacon mentions a war between the Venitians and the Slavic *princeps* Mislav, for whom we know, from other sources, that he was predecessor to the Croatian duke Trpimir.<sup>26</sup> In a charter, probably from 852<sup>27</sup>, Mislav was titled *dux*, but this tells us little, since we can not be sure whether this was meant in the way the title was used in Italy or among the Franks. We could presume, Croatia belonging to the kingdom of Italy, that the Croatian duke was actually a *comes* in the Frankish system.<sup>28</sup> It was otherwise a common practice to use such different titles as *dux*, *comes*, *princeps* or *marchio* to describe the same office, as for instance in the case of Eberhard of Friuli, a contemporary of Mislav who had, as I believe, the same position as the Dalmatian duke.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, the fact that John the Deacon gives the title of *princeps* not only to Mislav, but also to some later Dalmatian Slavic/Croatian rulers, suggests their rather independent position, at least from the point of view of the Venitian chronicler.<sup>30</sup>

The *Pactum Lotharii* from 840, a treaty between Lothar I and Venice against the Slavs, does not mean that the Dalmatian Slavs turned hostile to the king.<sup>31</sup> It is more probable that those against whom the treaty was made were Narentanian Slavs, pirates, whose expeditions reached as far as Venice and the western Adriatic coast.<sup>32</sup> Though Dalma-

tian Slavs under Mislav also caused trouble to Venice, hostilities ceased after a peace-treaty in 839, so the *Pactum* could not refer to them.<sup>33</sup>

We have considerably more data about Mislav's heir to the throne, Trpimir. In his charter, usually dated 852, Trpimir calls himself *iuvatus munere divino dux Chroatorum* and twice simply *dux*.<sup>34</sup> This is the first mention of the Croatian name and, though I would not undertake the attempt to summarize different opinions on the Croatian ethnogeny, I would like to stress the importance of the new theories, according to which the name of the Croats indeed came into use only in the first half of the 9th c. and was not used to describe one of the peoples settling down in Dalmatia at the beginning of the 7th c.<sup>35</sup> So Trpimir's title contains two equally important informations. One is the new title of the Dalmatian *dux*, who identifies himself as the ruler of an ethnicity and not of a territory (which is some kind of a setback, compared to the situation during the more intensive Frankish sovereignty over Dalmatia). The other is the fact that he describes his power as coming from God, and not being dependant of Lothar's will.<sup>36</sup> Both changes must indicate a new position of the Dalmatian *dux* within the empire. By stressing the divine origin of his power and by relying on his ethnic/social group rather than on the Frankish system, Trpimir pointed out his independent position. On the other hand, he dated his charter also by the reign of the king of Franks in Italy. We could interpret this datation as a signal to possible Byzantine attempts at regaining their old province of Dalmatia (Trpimir fought a war with the Greeks<sup>37</sup>), or as a sign of subordination to Lothar as king of the Franks and Italy, which is more probable. Making use of conflicts which broke out among the Carolingians, Trpimir, with the help of the Croatian warrior class, gained a more or less independent position, but he did not fully reject the superstructure of the Frankish realm.

His status can be well-illustrated from the writings of Gottschalk, who stayed at Trpimir's court in 846/847. Gottschalk calls Trpimir a king (*rex Sclavorum*), and mentions that his subjects called him *regnum*.<sup>38</sup> If we add to this the title *domnus*, given twice to Trpimir by the anonymous scribe who entered his name in the Gospel of Cividale,<sup>39</sup> the *territorium regale* mentioned in Trpimir's charter from 852 and the oldest preserved stone inscription bearing the name and title (*dux*) of a Croatian/Dalmatian ruler,<sup>40</sup> we must conclude that his position was one of a king, similar to the rulers of Benevent, Spoleto or Brittany.<sup>41</sup> The comparison with Benevent is very interesting, because Arichis II, though earlier than Trpimir, behaved in the same way: he was a duke who took over royal rights within his *patria* not *ex iussione* of the emperor, but *suo arbitrio*.<sup>42</sup> Wolfram interprets Arichis' title *domnus* as an expression of the concrete royal power over the Lombards in Benevent, closely connected to the ethnic origin of Arichis' power.<sup>43</sup>

If we could prove that Trpimir really ordered his effigy to be made in the church of St. George in Putalj,<sup>44</sup> our picture of a Croatian king bearing the title *dux* would be completed.<sup>45</sup>

### 3. FROM DUX CROATORUM TO REX DALMATIAE ET CROATIAE

There is no mention of a crown being in use in ninth-century Croatia, but in 1075 two older crowns were mentioned as being kept in the Benedictine monastery in Vrana.<sup>46</sup> One of them was most probably the crown sent by the Byzantine emperor Basil II to Stephen I Držislav, but we know

nothing about the other one. Therefore, it is not impossible that it was already in use in the ninth century, though it is generally believed, without any real evidence, that Tomislav was the first king to be crowned in about 925.<sup>47</sup>

At that time even the function of the duke seems to be more clear. In Trpimir's charter there is a list of counts (*župani*), local officials governing a county or *pagus*,<sup>48</sup> but also forming the court of the *dux*. This corresponds with the Frankish system, established in the mid-ninth century, of introducing a duke between the counts and the royal palace. The office of the count gradually tended to remain in the family.<sup>49</sup> Several counties formed a *regnum*. In the 9th c. we have several *regna* which were reigned not by a king, but by dukes. During the late Carolingian period all in all eighteen *regna* were mentioned in the sources.<sup>50</sup>

Trpimir's successor, Domagoj, came from another lineage, but that did not influence his position considerably. Although he had come to power by force, expelling Trpimir's sons from the country, pope Nicholas I granted him the title of *dux gloriosus* in a letter otherwise regarding the problem of Slavic pirates under Domagoj's command.<sup>51</sup> *Dux gloriosus* is a title reserved only for independent rulers, and corresponds well with the title *Sclavorum princeps* given to Domagoj by John the Deacon.<sup>52</sup> In 871 Domagoj took part in the expedition of Louis II against the Arabs in Bari.<sup>53</sup> The opportunity was used by Byzantium to raid the Croatian coast, allegedly in retaliation for the capture of papal envoys returning from Constantinople. In reality, most probably, Basil I, giving refuge to Trpimir's son Zdeslav, tried to bring him back to the Croatian throne, in order to put Dalmatia again under Byzantine control. Three years later we learn from a letter of pope John VIII about a conspiracy against Domagoj, which the duke put down in blood.<sup>54</sup> This event was certainly a continuation of Byzantine policy, which finally reached its goal two years after Domagoj's death, when Basil managed to bring Zdeslav to his father's throne.<sup>55</sup>

Though this change was surely a turning point in Croatian politics towards Byzantium and the Franks, with Zdeslav seeking protection from the eastern emperor, it meant little for the position of the Croatian ruler within the international system of power. Pope John VIII called Zdeslav *gloriosus comes Sclavorum* and *gloria tua*, whereas John the Deacon speaks of *Sclavorum ducatus*.<sup>56</sup>

The Byzantine intermezzo was a short one, and after only one year a certain Branimir, whose origin we do not know, killed Zdeslav and became ruler of the Croats and Slavs.<sup>57</sup> It seems that at first he recognized the Frankish suzerainty, for in the chronicle of Thomas, the Archdeacon of Split, from the 13th c., there is a mention of Marinus, the archbishop of Split, who lived in the time of king Charles and Branimir, duke of the Slavs.<sup>58</sup> Such a piece of information could originate only from a charter mentioning both rulers. Indeed, although there are no charters preserved from Branimir's time, we can find a reminiscence on one of them in a charter issued by the Hungarian king Geyza II in 1158.<sup>59</sup> Branimir is there mentioned as *dux Croatorum*.

Branimir came to the throne in 879, the same year as did Charles the Fat. He immediately wrote to the pope asking him for blessing. John VIII answered soon, stating that he blessed Branimir, his *dilectus filius*, and his people.<sup>60</sup> In other letters written in 879-880 John VIII uses *princeps*, *excellentissimus vir*, *gloriosus comes*.<sup>61</sup> This is usually interpreted by Croatian historians as a proof of some kind of an "international recognition" of Croatia, but we should be

more careful making such a statement.<sup>62</sup> We saw already that even Branimir's predecessors were treated as independent rulers, even though they still recognized the kings of Italy as their sovereigns. There is no reason to believe that Branimir did anything more than renew the relations between the Croatian and Frankish rulers the way they had been before Zdeslav took over the power in the country.

The great change, I would like to argue, happened in 888. It was the year when Charles the Fat died and the empire definitely fell apart. A number of smaller kingdoms appeared all over the former empire.<sup>63</sup> There is no strong evidence that Branimir used this situation to gain complete and formal independency. I do not even believe such a step had to be undertaken. Each grade of sovereignty was achieved by small, informal steps, usually with a strong symbolic value.<sup>64</sup> The relics of Branimir's step towards complete independency are to be looked for, in my opinion, in what is left of an inscription from the church in Gornji Muć, a place situated almost in the centre of Croatia's heartland. The inscription is incomplete, but we can clearly read Branimir's name and the year 888, the sixth indiction.<sup>65</sup> This is one of the few dated inscriptions from Croatia, and certainly one of the best quality. We do not know the reason for its execution, but I believe that an inscription of such quality and significance was ordered in relation to a very important event. It can hardly be a coincidence that the first dated inscription from Croatia bears the year 888, the year of the final collapse of the empire and the birth of a number of autonomous realms.<sup>66</sup>

The charter of Branimir's successor, Muncimir, from 892 offers new evidence of the growing prestige of the Croatian ruler.<sup>67</sup> In it Muncimir calls himself *divino munere iuvatus chroatorum dux*, just as did his father Trpimir forty years before. The scribe added his formula: *domino meo Muncimiro glorioso duce*. Three years later, Muncimir's name and title, together with the year 895, were carved in a stone inscription in St. Luke's church in Uzdojce. Muncimir was called *princeps*, once again giving proof of his independence.<sup>68</sup>

In this place we should pay attention to some ecclesiastical problems closely connected to the question of political organization in what used to be Roman Dalmatia. There is, again, no possibility to go into a detailed prehistory of the problem. For two centuries after Slavs settled in Dalmatia, the very-reduced number of Dalmatian bishoprics, clustered along the coast and on the islands, was in charge of all the Christians who survived in the interior of the province.<sup>69</sup> Though the Slavs remained mainly pagan, there was no political border between them and the Byzantine towns, so that there was no obstacle for the integration of the remaining Christians into the coastal bishoprics. Things did not immediately change even after 812. Like in Istria, whose bishops remained under the jurisdiction of the patriarch in Grado, the Christians within the Frankish part of Dalmatia were still cared for by Byzantine Dalmatian clergy.<sup>70</sup> It was only after the schism of Fotius that things changed. Dalmatian bishops, including the archbishop of Split, stood on Fotius' side, while the Croatian duke remained loyal to the pope. Therefore a new bishopric was established in Nin, covering at least theoretically, all of Croatia. This was also an important step in stressing the independent position of the Croatian rulers.<sup>71</sup>

This was a big change in the traditional system of ecclesiastical organization in the former province of Dalmatia. In Late Antiquity the province was organized, with the metropolitan church of Salona at its head. After Salona became

victim of barbaric raids and social and economic changes in the 6th and 7th c., the archbishops' see was moved to nearby Split. The archbishops of Split called themselves archbishops of Salona, stressing the continuity of their primacy in the province.<sup>72</sup> The establishment of the Nin bishopric, in about 864, meant the split and collapse of the ecclesiastical province.

The first attempt at a new unification was made by Theodosius, bishop of Nin, in the time of Branimir.<sup>73</sup> We learn about it from the letters of pope Stephen VI, which are usually dated 886-888.<sup>74</sup> I believe they should be dated in 888, the whole action of the bishop being a part of Branimir's policy of building up a fully-independent kingdom. After the death of the archbishop of Split, Marinus, Theodosius tried (and almost surely succeeded) to get the position of the archbishop of Salona for himself. I think that he actually never moved from Nin to Split, as it is usually thought, but only took the title of the Salonitan archbishop in order to reunite the province, by placing its new centre in Nin and using the old tradition of the Salonitan church.<sup>75</sup> Pope Stephen mentions his work on the rebuilding of churches, which fell victim to barbaric rage. I believe that this was not meant in the way that Theodosius was erecting or mending buildings, but rather bringing into life extinguished bishoprics of which we learn a few decades later, at the council of Split in 928.<sup>76</sup>

In this way we can explain the argument arising between Aldefreda, the bishop of Nin, and the archbishop of Split in the time of Muncimir in 892.<sup>77</sup> Aldefreda argued that Trpimir had given in 852 the church of St. George on Putalj only temporarily to the archbishop of Split, as long as he performed his duty. Peter, the archbishop of Split, claimed the church was a gift from Trpimir to his predecessors. Muncimir decided in favour of the archbishop. It seems to me that we should try to explain this event in the following way: there is no doubt that Trpimir gave the church to the archbishop of Salona, what was in his time the title of the archbishop of Split. In 888, however, the bishop of Nin claimed the title of the archbishop of Salona and, as it

seems, got it confirmed by pope Stephen VI. All the rights originating from this title belonged now to the bishop of Nin and so did the possession of the church of St. George. After the death of Theodosius and the enthronement of Muncimir, son of Trpimir, Theodosius' idea of the unification of the province was abandoned and the authority of the bishop of Nin became reduced to the territory of Croatia, while the archbishop of Split could not regain the title of archbishop of Salona. Therefore Aldefreda, the bishop of Nin, claimed the church of St. George in vain.

We know nothing about the way Muncimir came to the throne, but we can assume, since he was the brother of Zdeslav, that Byzantium played a role in the comeback of the Trpimirović dynasty. Relations between Croatia and the eastern empire became more close in the course of the Bulgarian wars, during which the Croatian rulers stood firmly on the side of the Byzantine emperors. This resulted, in the 920s, with the nomination of Tomislav as the administrator of the Byzantine province of Dalmatia, and the informal union of Dalmatia and Croatia. The synods in Split in 925 and 928 strengthened this union by finally realizing Theodosius' idea of the renewal of the ecclesiastical province. Only this time it was the archbishop of Split who was to become metropolitan of the province, and not the bishop of Nin, though Gregory of Nin tried hard to achieve the title. The final result was the abolition of the Nin bishopric and the establishment of the situation prior to its foundation in the 860s.<sup>78</sup>

But the ecclesiastical organization did not only resemble the situation before the Frankish conquest of Dalmatia/Croatia. In the course of the tenth century, Croatia came more and more under the influence of Byzantium. Finally the Croatian king Stephen I Držislav got the title of a Roman *patricius* and *eparch*, together with the symbols of royal power.<sup>79</sup> He and his successors were entitled to carry the title of kings of Dalmatia and Croatia, using a territorial definition for the first time after the first half of the ninth century. The reign of emperor Basil II was the culmination of the renewed Byzantine influence in Croatia.

\* I would like to thank the Max-Planck-Institut in Göttingen, whose wonderful library I used, also for writing this article, during my stay there in 1996.

<sup>1</sup> F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata u doba narodnih vladara* (Zagreb: NZMH <sup>2</sup>1990), p. 282; N. BUDAK, *Prva stoljeća Hrvatske* (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada 1994), p. 81-82; R. KATIČIĆ, *Vetustiores ecclesiae spalatensis memoriae*, in: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* 17, Zagreb 1987, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 309-310; N. BUDAK, *Prva stoljeća*, p. 15; I. GOLDSTEIN, *Hrvatski rani srednji vijek* (Zagreb: Novi Liber 1995), p. 144.

<sup>3</sup> H. WOLFRAM, *Die Geburt Mitteleuropas. Geschichte Österreichs vor seiner Entstehung* (Wien: Kremayr & Scheriau 1987), p. 193; H. KRAHWINKLER, *Friaul im Mittelalter* (Wien-Köln-Weimar: Böhlau 1992), p. 180.

<sup>4</sup> F. RAČKI, *Documenta historiae chroaticae periodum antiquam illustrantia* (Zagreb: JAZU 1877), p. 314-316; F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 310. P. RICHÉ, *Les Carolingiens. Une famille qui fit l'Europe* (quoted after the German edition: *Die Karolinger. Eine Familie formt Europa* / dtv: München <sup>3</sup>1995/, p. 156), is not precise enough, saying that Byzantium was left in control of Dalmatia. In fact, only a small coastal part of the province was left to the eastern empire, whereas the Franks got the larger part. Therefore Einhard is right when praising Charlemagne also for the conquest of this province: P. RICHÉ, *Die Karolinger*, p. 115.

<sup>5</sup> F. RAČKI, *Documenta*, p. 316-317.

<sup>6</sup> F. RAČKI, *Documenta*, p. 318-319; N. KLAIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata u ranom srednjem vijeku* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga <sup>2</sup>1975), p. 206; H. KRAHWINKLER, *Friaul*, p. 182-183.

<sup>7</sup> On the different concepts of Dalmatia in the Middle Ages: L. STEINDORFF, *Deutungen des Wortes Dalmatia in der Mittelalterlichen Historiographie. Zugleich über die Synode auf der Planities Dalmae*, in: N. BUDAK (ed.), *Etnogeneza Hrvata* (Ethnogeny of the Croats) (Zagreb: NZMH & Zavod za hrvatsku povijest 1996), p. 250-261.

<sup>8</sup> One of the most influential and indeed excellent books on the Carolingians is the one by R. McKITTERICK, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians*, p. 751-987 (London and New York: Longman <sup>5</sup>1993). Unfortunately, when writing about Dalmatia (p. 129), R. McKITTERICK quotes neither primary, nor secondary literature, making a number of mistakes (e.g.: when proclaiming Ljudevit ruler of Dalmatian Slavs, Vojnomir chieftain of the Croats who accepted baptism, Borna and Ljudevit affirming their loyalty to Louis the Pious in 814).

- <sup>9</sup> H. KRAHWINKLER, *Friaul*, p. 186; P. RICHÉ, *Die Karolinger*, p. 181-182; R. MCKITTERICK, *The Frankish Kingdoms*, p. 135-136; H. WOLFRAM, *Die Geburt*, p. 194.
- <sup>10</sup> F. RAČKI, *Documenta*, p. 320.
- <sup>11</sup> On Ljudevit: F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 310-316; N. KLAIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 206-212; N. BUDAK, *Prva stoljeća*, p. 102-104; I. GOLDSTEIN, *Hrvatski rani srednji vijek*, p. 166-171; H. WOLFRAM, *Die Geburt*, p. 268-272; H. KRAHWINKLER, *Friaul*, p. 186-192; CH. R. BOWLUS, *Franks, Moravians, and Magyars. The Struggle for the Middle Danube, 788-907* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1995), p. 60-71.
- <sup>12</sup> About the possibility that Borna, on this occasion, was just called *dux* without being brought into direct connection with the *Guduscani*, see the article by M. ANČIĆ in this volume. Anyway, the *Guduscani* were Borna's subjects, as later events will show.
- <sup>13</sup> F. RAČKI, *Documenta*, p. 322. On Borna, using an interesting linguistic approach: R. KATIČIĆ, *Die Anfänge des kroatischen Staates*, in: H. WOLFRAM and A. SCHWARZ (eds.), *Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn*, vol. I (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften 1985), p. 299-312; Id., *Filološka razmatranja uz izvore o počecima hrvatske države*, in: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* 16 (1986), p. 77-92.
- <sup>14</sup> R. KATIČIĆ, *Pretorijanci kneza Borne*, in: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* 20 (1990), p. 65-83.
- <sup>15</sup> F. RAČKI, *Documenta*, p. 324.
- <sup>16</sup> F. RAČKI, *Documenta*, p. 325.
- <sup>17</sup> F. RAČKI, *Documenta*, p. 328.
- <sup>18</sup> In the same time Louis proved his abilities as a ruler by ordering native rulers not only to the Slavs on the fringes of his empire, but also to the Bretons: R. MCKITTERICK, *The Frankish Kingdoms*, p. 127-128.
- <sup>19</sup> F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 318.
- <sup>20</sup> F. RAČKI, *Documenta*, p. 328. Peripheral regions of the empire (Provence, Saxonia, Brittany, Bavaria etc.) were politically and administratively organized into small *regna*, from which the duchies later developed. These areas kept their territorial and non-Frankish integrity, and were ruled by either one of the king's sons or a local magnate installed by the king: R. MCKITTERICK, *The Frankish Kingdoms*, p. 96-97.
- <sup>21</sup> F. RAČKI, *Documenta*, p. 328. Another similarity of *comites*/counts and *župani* was the custom of the local magnate to be appointed count in his district, whereby some of them served also in the royal household. Through the count the king transmitted his will to his subjects: R. MCKITTERICK, *The Frankish Kingdoms*, p. 87. According to Regino of Prüm, *ducatus* could also mean the power of a marcher count: R. MCKITTERICK, *The Frankish Kingdoms*, p. 252.
- <sup>22</sup> F. RAČKI, *Documenta*, p. 327.
- <sup>23</sup> On the Praedenecenti BOWLUS, *Franks*, p. 93-94.
- <sup>24</sup> H. KRAHWINKLER, *Friaul*, p. 190, interprets the relation of Borna's Slavs to the empire as a recognition of nominal overlordship, comparable to the relation between the Bavarians and Caranthenians. R. MCKITTERICK, *The Frankish Kingdoms*, p. 129, believes Dalmatia to have been a Frankish march under the secular jurisdiction of the marchgrave or duke of Friuli. F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 307, thought that the Croats had the duties of military service and presenting yearly gifts, but were otherwise free.
- <sup>25</sup> Review of different opinions in H. KRAHWINKLER, *Friaul*, p. 194-196.
- <sup>26</sup> F. RAČKI, *Documenta*, p. 3-4, 335.
- <sup>27</sup> *Codex diplomaticus Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae* (further: CD), vol. I (Zagreb: JAZU 1967), p. 3-8. On the attempt to date the charter a decade earlier, see L. MARGETIĆ, *Bilješke u vezi s nastankom hrvatske države u 9. stoljeću*, in: N. BUDAK (ed.), *Etnogeneza Hrvata* (Zagreb 1996), p. 145-146. One of his arguments was that Lothar after 840 never returned to Italy, and therefore could after that year not be mentioned in the charter as ruling Italy. But, Lothar was also in Italy in 847. Besides, a large part of his charters issued after 840, and especially after 843, are dedicated to recipients in Italy. H. ZIELINSKI, *Ein unbeachteter Italienzug Kaiser Lothars I. im Jahre 847*, in: *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 70 (1990), p. 1-22.
- <sup>28</sup> H. KRAHWINKLER, *Friaul*, p. 197. On titles in general H. WOLFRAM (ed.), *Intitulatio, vol. II, Lateinische Herrscher- und Fürstentitel im neunten und zehnten Jahrhundert*, Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung, Ergänzungsband XXIV (1973). On the titles *dux* and *comes* K. BRUNNER, *Der fränkische Fürstentitel im neunten und zehnten Jahrhundert*, in the forementioned volume, p. 192-207, 211-214, 319-325. A thorough analysis of Croatian early medieval titles is still missing, because the Croatian historians paid little or no attention to the situation in other lands under Carolingian rule. I. GOLDSTEIN, *O latinskim i hrvatskim naslovima hrvatskih vladara do početka XII. stoljeća*, in: *Historijski zbornik* 36 (1983), p. 141-163.
- <sup>29</sup> H. KRAHWINKLER, *Friaul*, p. 245-246.
- <sup>30</sup> L. MARGETIĆ, *Bilješke*, p. 146-147, argues that Mislav used the weakened position in Dalmatia of both Byzantium and the Franks after 829 to establish an independent dynasty. Though we could generally agree with Margetić, one must not forget that the empire, after a temporary crisis, regained its strength during the last years of Louis the Pious' reign: J. L. NELSON, *The Frankish World 750-900* (London and Rio Grande: Hambledon Press 1996), p. 37-50. On the meaning of the title *princeps*: E. GARMS-CORNIDES, *Die langobardischen Fürstentitel (774-1077)*, in: H. WOLFRAM (ed.), *Intitulatio II*, p. 341-452. It is noteworthy mentioning that in two lands on the fringes of the empire, namely in Benevent and Brittany, local rulers, using the title *princeps*, took over royal rights and even crowned themselves, without becoming "real" kings. E. GARMS-CORNIDES, *Die langobardischen Fürstentitel*, p. 357-363. This should be kept in mind when discussing the position of the Croatian rulers in the ninth century.
- <sup>31</sup> H. KRAHWINKLER, *Friaul*, p. 253. On the document being a contract between the empirical towns and Venice, but not the emperor, L. MARGETIĆ, *Ugovor Mletaka i italskih gradova contra generationes Sclavorum (840.)*, in: *Historijski zbornik* 41 (1988), p. 217-235.
- <sup>32</sup> F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 328; N. KLAIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 212-220.
- <sup>33</sup> F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 327. We should also mention the opinion of Fanta that the original text of this agreement dates back to 805 or immediately after 810. A. FANTA, *Die Verträge der Kaiser mit Venedig bis zum Jahre 983*, in: *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung, Ergänzungsband I* (1885), p. 74. Šišić thought that the treaty between Venice and Mislav was maybe a result of Lothar's mediation.
- <sup>34</sup> See footnote 27.
- <sup>35</sup> W. POHL, *Die Awaren. Ein Steppenvolk in Mitteleuropa 567 - 822 n. Chr.* (München: Beck 1988), p. 269-270; N. BUDAK, *Prva stoljeća*, p. 67-69. On the question of the ethnogeny of Croats see also N. BUDAK (ed.), *Etnogeneza Hrvata*.
- <sup>36</sup> This could indicate that he was anointed, as were some other dukes of his time or earlier. K. BRUNNER, *Oppositionelle Gruppen im Karolingerreich* (Wien-Köln-Graz 1979), p. 53; E. GARMS-CORNIDES, *Langobardische Fürstentitel*, p. 361, 362, 370, 382, 383.
- <sup>37</sup> After checking the entire text of Gottschalk (D. C. LAMBOT, ed., *Oeuvres théologique et grammaticales de Godescalc d'Orbais, Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense*, vol. 20 /Louvain 1945/), who informs us about Trpimir's war against the Greeks, I must give up my earlier suggestion in: N. BUDAK, *Prva stoljeća*, p. 73, that the famous theologian, by using the name "Greeks", could have meant the Venetians, and not the Byzantines.

- <sup>38</sup> D. C. LAMBOT (ed.), *Oeuvres*, p. 169, 208.
- <sup>39</sup> F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Priručnik izvora hrvatske historije*, vol. I, part 1 (Zagreb 1914), p. 25.
- <sup>40</sup> N. KLAIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 221-231.
- <sup>41</sup> It is not possible to go in this paper into detail about the position of early medieval kings. Therefore, let us just note a few facts. There is evidence about the first crowning of a (Frankish) king only from 838, and the first anointing from 848. Even in the tenth century it was not necessary for a king to be crowned in order to perform his duties. During the ninth century there certainly was no unified inauguration ritual for kings. Moreover, even in the tenth century the situation was not clear - Widukind calls Otto I both *dux* and *rex*: J. NELSON, *Inauguration rituals*, in: P. H. SAWYER and I. WOOD (eds.), *Early Medieval Kingship* (Leeds: University Press 1977, <sup>2</sup>1979), p. 55-62.
- <sup>42</sup> E. GARMS-CORNIDES, *Die langobardischen Fürstentitel*, p. 357.
- <sup>43</sup> H. WOLFRAM, *Intitulatio I. Latenische Königs- und Fürstentitel bis zum Ende des 8. Jahrhunderts*, Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung, Ergänzungsband XXI (1984), p. 29-30: "Der Domnus-Titel der Beneventaner Herzöge dürfte daher die konkrete, königgleiche Herrschaft über den Teil des 'gens Langobardorum' gemeint haben, der den Dukatus von Benevent bewohnte. Er weist bereits auf den 'princeps huius terrae' der späteren Entwicklung hin. Dieser 'princeps gentis Langobardorum' hatte sich, dem Zug der Zeit und dem karolingischen Vorbild folgend, bereits in der ersten Generation salben lassen und führte seit der dritten Generation eine der Fürstenweihe entsprechende, das heißt eine solche Stellung legitimierende Gratia-Dei-Formel in seine Intitulatio ein." It is interesting that the inscription from Nin bearing the name of Branimir (see below) gives him the title *dominus*, but mentions also the title of a *dux Croatorum*, which could be just another Branimir's title, but may, as RAPANIĆ suggested, be evidence of a *dux Croatorum* placed under the rule of *dominus* Branimir. See Ž. RAPANIĆ, *Bilješka uz četiri Branimirova natpisa*, in: Starohrvatska prosvjeta, ser. III, vol. 11 (1981), p. 184-185. In this case the title *dominus* could be undoubtedly seen as a royal title.
- <sup>44</sup> All traces of an allegedly existing document, mentioning mosaics, representing members of the ruling dynasty in the church of St. George, are lost. Archaeological excavations of the church revealed no remains either of wall mosaics or frescoes (I thank Tonči Burić cordially for this information).
- <sup>45</sup> On the meaning of self-presentation in churches: E. GARMS-CORNIDES, *Die langobardischen Fürstentitel*, p. 360-361.
- <sup>46</sup> *CDI*, p. 139-141.
- <sup>47</sup> F. RAČKI, *Kada i kako se preobrazila hrvatska kneževina u kraljevinu*, in: Zbornik kralja Tomislava (Zagreb: JAZU 1925), p. 1-18; I. KUKULJEVIĆ SAKCINSKI, *Tomislav, prvi kralj hrvatski*, in: Zbornik kralja Tomislava, p. 40-85. F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 413-414, believed that Tomislav proclaimed himself king, but that it was Stephen I Držislav who was the first crowned king. On crowning (even dukes) see: E. GARMS-CORNIDES, *Die langobardischen Fürstentitel*, p. 358-361. The crown was, anyway, according to Gregory of Tours, as *diadema* only a symbol of imperial, and not royal power: Gregorii episcopi Tironensis Libri historiarum X, ed. B. KRUSCH et W. LEVISON, *MGH, Scriptores rerum merovingicarum T. I, pars I* (Hanover 1951), p. 214. On the position of early medieval king: H. WOLFRAM, *The Shaping of the Early Medieval Kingdom*, in: *Viator* 1 (1970), p. 1-20; J. M. WALLACE-HADRILL, *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent* (Oxford: Clarendon 1971); P. H. SAWYER and I. WOOD, *Early Medieval Kingship*; J. NELSON, *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London - Ronceverte: The Hambledon Press 1986).
- <sup>48</sup> On the counties, among many others: F. SMILJANIĆ, *Prilog proučavanju županijskog sustava sklavinije Hrvatske*, in: N. BUDAK (ed.), *Etnogeneza Hrvata*, p. 178-190.
- <sup>49</sup> R. MCKITTERICK, *The Frankish Kingdoms*, p. 87-88. The *ducatus* or duchy, in contrast to the counties, was not a fixed region until the end of the Carolingian period - in the ninth century it was still to be understood as a command temporarily entrusted to a person who had a number of counts under him, and whose functions were primarily in the military domain.
- <sup>50</sup> C. BRÜHL, *Deutschland - Frankreich. Die Geburt zweier Völker* (Köln - Wien: Böhlau 1995), p. 306-311.
- <sup>51</sup> *CDI*, p. 11; on Domagoj: F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 345-360; N. KLAIĆ, p. 244-248.
- <sup>52</sup> F. RAČKI, *Documenta*, p. 364.
- <sup>53</sup> For a different opinion: L. MARGETIĆ, *Marginalije uz rad V. Koščaka "Pripadnost istočne obale..."*, in: *Historijski zbornik* 36 (1983), p. 271-274.
- <sup>54</sup> *CDI*, p. 10.
- <sup>55</sup> On Zdeslav: F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 360-363; N. KLAIĆ, p. 248-250.
- <sup>56</sup> *CDI*, 12; F. RAČKI, *Documenta*, p. 7, 373.
- <sup>57</sup> On Branimir: F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 376-393; N. KLAIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 250-259; I. GOLDSTEIN, *Hrvatski rani srednji vijek*, p. 260-269.
- <sup>58</sup> F. RAČKI, *Thomas archidiaconus: Historia Salonitana. Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum meridionalium* vol. 26 (Zagreb: JAZU 1894), p. 36.
- <sup>59</sup> *CDII*, p. 87.
- <sup>60</sup> *CDI*, p. 13. A new edition of the letters of John VIII to Branimir and the Dalmatian clergy, with an introduction and short summaries in English: M. ZEKAN (ed.), *Branimirova Hrvatska u pismima pape Ivana VIII* (Split: Književni krug 1989).
- <sup>61</sup> *CDI*, p. 14, 18.
- <sup>62</sup> The benediction was first used by John VIII in 878. In Troyes, he blessed Louis Stammerer, from whom he expected help. The idea of blessing was important at that time, though new, but its real meaning developed only later: W. ULLMANN, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship* (London: Methuen & Co. 1969), p. 99-100.
- <sup>63</sup> P. RICHE, *Die Karolinger*, p. 258-260; H. WOLFRAM, *Die Geburt*, p. 201. Peripheral kingdoms of the empire, like Bavaria, Saxonia, Brittany or Provence became, in the course of time, duchies. They preserved their territorial, non-Frankish origin. R. MCKITTERICK, p. 96.
- <sup>64</sup> The situation in Croatia can be well compared with the development in Brittany in the times of Nominoë, when there was a gradual development towards, rather than a sudden development of, kingship. W. DAVIES, *On the distribution of political power in Brittany in the mid-ninth century*, in: M. T. GIBSON and J. L. NELSON (eds), *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom* (Oxford 1981), p. 87-105.
- <sup>65</sup> Ž. RAPANIĆ, *Bilješka uz četiri Branimirova natpisa*, in: Starohrvatska prosvjeta 11 (1981), p. 180-183.
- <sup>66</sup> About tendencies and problems in the research of the period after 888 in Europe: S. AIRLIE, *Review article: After Empire - recent work on the emergence of post-Carolingian kingdoms*, in: *Early Medieval Europe*, vol. 2, nr. 2 (1993), p. 153-161.
- <sup>67</sup> F. RAČKI, *Documenta*, p. 14-16.
- <sup>68</sup> N. KLAIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 264.
- <sup>69</sup> M. BARADA, *Dvije naše vladarske isprave*, in: *Croatia sacra* 7 (1937), p. 33; F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Priručnik*, p. 191 (he later gave up this idea: *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 333); N. BUDAK, *Prva stoljeća*, p. 86-87.
- <sup>70</sup> M. BARADA, *Dvije naše vladarske isprave*, p. 33; N. BUDAK, *Prva stoljeća*, p. 77, 88.
- <sup>71</sup> M. BARADA, *Episcopus chroatensis*, in: *Croatia sacra* 1 (1931), p. 181; N. KLAIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 232-239; N. BUDAK, *Prva stoljeća*, p. 92-96.

<sup>72</sup> N. BUDAK, *Prva stoljeća*, p. 83-86.

<sup>73</sup> F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 390-392; M. BARADA, *Episcopus chroaticus*, p. 183; N. KLAJČ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 252-257; N. BUDAK, *Prva stoljeća*, p. 95.

<sup>74</sup> *CDI*, p. 19-22.

<sup>75</sup> I came to this conclusion together with V. PROZOROV, while supervising his MA thesis "The Councils of Split in 925 and 928" at the Department of Medieval Studies of the Central European University in Budapest in 1995.

<sup>76</sup> *CDI*, p. 37. Those were the bishoprics of Siscia, Scardona and Dalma, of which the first two can be identified with today's Sisak and Skradin, whereas the identification of the third remains an unsolved problem.

<sup>77</sup> *CDI*, p. 22-25; F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 394-396; N. KLAJČ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 234, 259.

<sup>78</sup> F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 414-421, 424-428; N. KLAJČ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 293-304.

<sup>79</sup> F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 469; N. KLAJČ, *Povijest Hrvata*, p. 323-326; I. GOLDSTEIN, *Hrvatski rani srednji vijek*, p. 333-334. H. WOLFRAM, *The Shaping*, p. 12-13, stresses the importance of the connection between the title of a *patricius* and the kingship of the barbaric rulers in the fifth and sixth centuries. While at the beginning the title of *patricius* was a way for gaining a royal position, at the time when the barbaric kingdoms started to be created without imperial permission, Byzantine emperors were distributing it *post festum*.

## HRVATI IZMEĐU FRANAKA I BIZANTA

### SAŽETAK

Nakon doseljenja u Dalmaciju, Hrvati su bili pod formalnim bizantskim vrhovništvom kao federati carstva. U tom odnosu nije bilo bitnih promjena sve do franačko-bizantskog rata na samom početku 9. st. Poslanstvo na čelu sa zadarskim biskupom Donatom i vojvodom Pavlom predalo je početkom 806. Dalmaciju Francima, pa je pokrajina, a da se izriječom nije spomenula, iste godine podvrgnuta vlasti Karlova sina Pipina, kojemu je dodijeljena uprava nad Italijom.

Bizantski je protunapad vratio pod vlast istočnog carstva dalmatinske gradove i otoke, što je potvrđeno mirom u Aachen 812. g. Time je dotad barem teoretski jedinstvena Dalmacija podijeljena na dva dijela: bizantski i franački.

Franački je dio Dalmacije podvrgnut Furlanskoj markgrofoviji, što je razvidno iz spora oko granica između oba dijela nekada jedinstvene provincije, a do kojega je došlo 817. g. Bizantsko je poslanstvo došlo pred Ludovika Pobožnog, kako bi postavilo pitanje razgraničenja u Dalmaciji. No, spor nije mogao biti odmah riješen, jer furlanski markgrof Kadaloh, koji je bio zadužen za dalmatinske granice, nije bio nazočan. Čini se da u tom trenutku još nije bilo domaćeg, hrvatskog/slavenskog upravitelja u Dalmaciji, jer se nitko u toj funkciji ne spominje u raspravi oko granica.

Iste je godine car proveo *Ordinatio imperii*, kojom je Dalmacija, zajedno s avaro-slavenskim graničnim područjem, ostala vezana uz Italiju. Vjerojatno zbog stabiliziranja prilika u pokrajini, a možda i zbog lakšeg provođenja nove podjele, javljaju se od slijedeće godine u Dalmaciji i savsko-dravskom međurječju domaći upravitelji s titulom *dux*. Da je riječ o domaćim ljudima postavljenim od Franaka, a ne o gentilnim vođama, vidi se iz njihovih titula, čije je izvorište u teritorijalnom, a ne gentilnom uređenju. O ulozi franačkog vadara u procesu imenovanja kneza Dalmacije i Liburnije svjedoči slučaj Vladislava, koji je vlast preuzeo nakon što je bio izabran od naroda, ali tek po pristanku kralja.

O uključenosti Dalmacije u franačko carstvo svjedoči i činjenica da su se na saboru u Attigny našli predstavnici raznih slavenskih naroda koji su živjeli uz istočne franačke

granice, ali se među njima ne spominju ni Hrvati, niti Dalmatinci. To bi značilo da su oni živjeli unutar granica carstva, a ne izvan njih.

828. dolazi do znatnih promjena u ustroju carstva na jugoistoku. Nakon neuspješne obrane savsko-dravskog međurječja od Bugara, Furlanska je markgrofovija ukinuta i podijeljena na četiri dijela. O tome koji su to dijelovi bili, postoji u znanosti niz različitih mišljenja, ali nijedno nije uzimalo u obzir Dalmaciju kao jednu od osamostaljenih cjelina. Kako, međutim, Dalmacija i dalje ostaje unutar carstva, odnosno Italskog kraljevstva, gotovo je nemoguće zamisliti da upravo ona ne bi bila jednom od novih graničnih jedinica.

S raspadom Furlanske markgrofovije dolazi zasigurno do slabljenja utjecaja Franaka na Dalmaciju. Istovremeno, dalmatinski gradovi izmiču kontroli Bizanta, te nestaje potrebe dalmatinsko-liburnskih knezova za jačim osloncem na Franke. U takvim okolnostima započinje proces osamostaljivanja provincije na čije čelo dolazi domaća, gentilna dinastija. To je vrijeme kada se napokon javlja ime Hrvata, nositelja moći gentilne dinastije.

Potpunu je afirmaciju hrvatska vlast stekla u vrijeme Trpimira. Iako je i dalje priznavao suverenitet kralja Italije, Trpimir je na suvremenike ostavljao dojam potpuno samostalnog vladara. Najbolje se to vidi iz njegovih titula, zabilježenih u izvorima različita podrijetla. Iz naslova *rex*, *domnus* i *dux* može se zaključiti da je njegov položaj bio kraljevski, jer analogni primjeri sa Zapada potvrđuju da su kraljevi ovisni o Francima nosili iste titule (u Beneventu, Spoletu, Bretagni). S druge strane, Trpimir okuplja oko sebe župane, što odgovara praksi Franaka, u kojih se sredinom 9. st. između grofova (*comites*) i kraljevske palače postavlja *dux*. On bi upravljao oblašću označenom kao *regnum*, a kakvih je u kasnokatoličkom razdoblju u izvorima nabrojeno ukupno osamnaest.

Domagoj je u odnosu na Franke zadržao isti položaj kakvog je imao njegov prethodnik. Titula *gloriosus dux*, kojom ga časti papa, namijenjena je samostalnim vladarima, ali se suverenitet kralja Italije očitovao u Domagojevu sudje-

lovanju u opsadi Barija. Zavjera protiv Domagoja, a koja je u krvi ugušena, vjerojatno je bila prvi pokušaj Bizanta da ponovno stekne vlast nad Hrvatskom (Dalmacijom). Nakon dolaska bizantske flote u Jadran i uspostave (obnove?) tematskog uređenja, Bizant je svakako postao važnijim činiteљem na Jadranu no što su to bili oslabljeni Franci. Pa ipak, uspjeh postignut nametanjem Zdeslava za hrvatskog vladara bio je kratkotrajan. Njegovim ubojstvom Branimir nastavlja politiku svojih prethodnika i ostaje još neko vrijeme vezan uz franačkog vladara Karla Debelog.

Papin blagoslov iz 879. ne može se tumačiti kao "međunarodno priznanje" onovremene Hrvatske. Papa je blagoslov uveo u politički ritual tek nešto prije toga, u kontaktu s Ludovikom Mucavim, i u drugačijem značenju. Osim toga, pape su hrvatske vladare i prije toga označavali titulama namijenjenim samostalnim vladarima.

Do prekida s Francima ipak je moralo doći upravo u vrijeme Branimira, ako ni zbog čega drugoga, a onda zbog toga što se carstvo 888., nakon smrti Karla Debelog, definitivno raspalo. U tom se kontekstu možda smije naslućivati razlog nastanku natpisa iz Gornjeg Muća. Natpis kvalitetom svoje izrade svjedoči o važnosti, a godina njegova klesanja poklapa se s godinom raspada carstva, kada na njegovim ruševinama niču neovisna kraljevstva.

Razvoj crkvenih odnosa prati samo u određenoj mjeri političke prilike. Od vremena obnove crkvene hijerarhije u Dalmaciji sredinom 7. st., dalmatinski su biskupi bili nadležni za čitavo područje provincije, bez obzira na to koliko je daleko u unutrašnjost stvarno dosizao njihov utjecaj. To se nije promijenilo niti nakon 812. g., iako je došlo do po-

litičke podjele Dalmacije. Kao što je bizantski patrijarh u Gradu bio nadležan za Istru, tako su i bizantski dalmatinski biskupi bili nadležni za franačke podanike u Dalmaciji.

U vrijeme Focijeve shizme raspada se dotad jedinstva crkvena provincija. Dalmatinski biskupi pristaju uz carigradskog patrijarha, a za Hrvatsku se osniva nova biskupija sa sjedištem u Ninu. Do prvih pokušaja obnove provincije dolazi u vrijeme ninskog biskupa Teodozija, a možda u svezi s potpunim osamostaljivanjem Branimirove Hrvatske. Čini se da bi Teodozijeva nastojanja oko stjecanja salonitanske nadbiskupije trebalo interpretirati drugačije no što se to dosad činilo. Teodozije je postao salonitanskim nadbiskupom zadržavši svoje sjedište u Ninu, a ne otišavši u Split. Funkcija salonitanskog nadbiskupa značila je vodeći položaj u jedinstvenoj crkvenoj provinciji, a ne funkciju splitskog premeta. Na temelju toga je Teodozijev nasljednik Aldefreda tražio crkvu Sv. Jurja na Putalju, jer ju je Trpimir darovao salonitanskom nadbiskupu, koju je funkciju preuzeo hrvatski biskup.

Na taj se način može tumačiti i nastojanje ninskog biskupa Grgura da bude izabran za metropolitu ponovno ujedinjene hrvatsko-dalmatinske Crkve.

Stjecanjem potpune političke neovisnosti, proširivanjem vlasti hrvatskih kraljeva na sjever i ujedinjenjem crkvene provincije okončani su integracijski procesi započeti u prethodnim desetljećima. S druge strane, vezivanje hrvatskih vladara uz Bizant tijekom ratova s Bugarima dovest će Hrvatsku u tješnju vezu s Carigradom, što će simbolično kulminirati krunidbom Stjepana I Držislava krunom dobivenom iz Bizanta. Vladavina Ivana I i Bazilija II bit će razdoblje obnovljenog bizantskog utjecaja u Hrvatskoj.