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ON THE QUESTION OF THE BYZANTINE RULE IN CROATIA IN THE LATE 10TH AND EARLY 11TH CENTURY**

Abstract: The paper addresses the relationship between the Byzantine emperors and Croatia and its position in the context of the Byzantine re-occupation of the Balkan Peninsula on two occasions: in the late 10th (971) and early 11th century (1018). It also discusses the Byzantine court dignities of the Croatian rulers Držislav and Krešimir and suggests the possibility that direct imperial rule existed in Croatia in the second quarter of the 11th century.

Keywords: John I Tzimiskes, Basil II, Držislav, Krešimir, Byzantine Empire, Croatia, Thomas the Archdeacon, *patrikios*, Byzantine administration

Анстракт: Рад се бави односом између византијских царева и Хрватске и њеним местом у контексту византијске реокупације Балканског полуострва у два наврата: крајем X (971) и почетком XI века (1018). Такође се разматрају ознаке византијског достојанства додељене хрватским владарима Држиславу и Крешимиру и сугерише се могућност постојања непосредне царске власти у Хрватској у другој четвртини XI века.

Кључне речи: Јован I Цимискије, Василије II, Држислав, Крешимир, Византијско царство, Хрватска, Тома Архиђакон, патрикије, византијска управа

After centuries of barbarian presence, Byzantine emperors managed twice, in the second half of the 10th and the first decades of the 11th century, to reoccupy the northern parts of the Balkan Peninsula and reinstate that area into the borders of the Byzantine Empire, to which it had once belonged. That was first achieved by John I Tzimiskes (969–976) following the destruction of the Bulgarian Empire in 971 and again by Basil II (976–1025), after he finally put down the Bulgarian uprising in 1018. In both cases, the territories of the

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conquered Bulgarian lands and Serbia found themselves under direct imperial rule and were incorporated into the Byzantine administrative system by establishing military-administrative units, which will be discussed further below. The topic of this contribution is the place that was in those circumstances on both occasions assigned to Croatia, geographically the farthest from Constantinople but ideologically no less important part of the peninsula, which, like the spaces of Bulgaria and Serbia, was seen as a territory that essentially belonged to the Roman Empire and to which it had inalienable rights.¹

In a decisive war against the Russians (969–971), the Byzantine emperor John I Tzimiskes managed to conquer Bulgaria and destroy the Bulgarian Empire in 971.² In the continuation of that campaign, the Serbian lands, too, are now believed to have come under the direct imperial rule. The territory of the former Bulgarian Empire was split into a range of imperial military-administrative units,³ and a katepanate was established in Serbia, with Ras as its seat.⁴ Thus, the entire territory of the Balkan Peninsula east of Croatia was put under Constantinople's direct control. However, the Byzantine offensive seems to have stopped there. The sources offer no information about any activities of the imperial army in Croatia, and sphragistic material reveals no traces of the presence of imperial military-administrative officials in Croatia at that time.

However, that does not necessarily mean that Croatia remained completely beyond the reach of John I Tzimiskes' reoccupation policy. Thomas the Archdeacon's *Historia Salonitanorum atque Spalatinorum pontificum (History of the Bishops of Salona and Split)* from the mid-13th century includes a brief yet very intriguing passage that could perhaps shed more light on the relations between the Empire and Croatia and the latter's place in the new political order established in 971 by John I Tzimiskes in the Balkan Peninsula. In that brief excerpt, Thomas the Archdeacon claims that Martin was the archbishop of

¹ These views were most eloquently expressed in the works of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913–959), cf. Predrag Komatina, *Konstantin Porfirogenit i rana istorija Južnih Slovena*, Beograd 2021.

² Georgije Ostrogorski, *Istorija Vizantije*, Beograd 1959, 277–282; Bojana Krsmanović, “E, e, šta je to?” *Evnusi u vojnom vrhu Vizantijskog carstva (780–1025)*, Beograd 2018, 361–371.

³ Bojana Krsmanović, *The Byzantine Province in Change (On the Threshold between the 10th and the 11th Century)*, Belgrade–Athens 2008, 132–145.

⁴ *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art*, vol. 1, *Italy, North of the Balkans, North of the Black Sea*, edd. John Nesbitt, Nicolas Oikonomides, Washington D. C. 1991, no. 33, p. 100–101; Ljubomir Maksimović, “Organizacija vizantijske vlasti u novoosvojenim oblastima posle 1018. godine”, *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 36 (1997) 35–36; Srđan Pirivatrić, “Vizantijska tema Morava i “Moravije” Konstantina VII Porfirogenita”, *ZRVI* 36 (1997) 175–176; B. Krsmanović, *Byzantine Province*, 135–136, 148; Predrag Komatina, “Srbija i Duklja u delu Jovana Skilice”, *ZRVI* 49 (2012) 170–171.

Split “in the year of Our Lord 970, in the time of Emperor Theodosius and King Držislav [...] From this Držislav on, his successors were called kings of Dalmatia and Croatia. They received the insignia of kingship from the Constantinopolitan emperors and were styled their ‘eparchs’ or ‘patricians’.”⁵

This excerpt contains several important pieces of information, but here I will focus on the report that, during the time of Držislav, Croatian rulers styled themselves “eparchs or patricians” of the Constantinopolitan emperors (dicebatur eorum eparchi sive patricii). An “eparch” (ἐπαρχος) was an official of civil administration in early Byzantine provinces (Lat. provinciae = Gr. ἐπαρχίαι), and after the militarization of the administrative order with the establishment of the theme system in the 7th century, the office of eparch survived as a civil function subordinate to the *strategos* of a theme as the chief military-administrative commander.⁶ The “*anthypatoi* and *eparchoi* of themes” (ἀνθύπατοι καὶ ἐπαρχοὶ τῶν θεμάτων) mentioned in the *Taktikon Uspensky* from 842–843 most likely refer to this office.⁷ The title of “eparch” is used in 9th- and 10th-century *taktika* alternatively with the form “hyparch” for the prefect of Constantinople (ἐπαρχος/ὑπαρχος τῆς Πόλεως, as a translation of the Latin “praefectus Urbis”), whereas the *Kletorologion of Philotheos* uses both forms in the same passage.⁸ In the same way, the title of “eparch” was used in the early Byzantine period for the praetorian prefect of Italy (ἐπαρχος Ἰταλίας, praefectus praetorio Italiae)⁹ and the prefect of the Aegean Islands

⁵ “Martinus archiepiscopus fuit anno Domini nongentesimo septuagesimo tempore Theodosii imperatoris et Dirscisclavi regis... Ab isto Dirscisclavo ceteri successores eius reges Dalmatie et Chroatie appellati sunt. Recipiebant enim regie dignitatis insignia ab imperatoribus Constantinopolitanis et dicebatur eorum eparchi sive patricii,” *Thomae Archidiaconi Spalatensis Historia Salonitanorum atque Spalatinorum pontificum*, edd. Olga Perić, Damir Karbić, Mirjana Matijević Sokol, James Ross Sweeney, Budapest–New York 2006, 60.

⁶ Rodolphe Guiland, “Études sur l’histoire administrative de l’Empire byzantine – L’Eparque II. L’Eparque autres que l’eparque de la ville“, *Byzantinoslavica* 42 (1981) 186–196; Miloš Cvetković, *Niže jedinice tematskog uređenja u Vizantiji (9–11. vek)*, Beograd 2017 (unpublished doctoral dissertation), 20, n. 69, 77. I am indebted to my colleague, M. Cvetković, for his generous help with matters concerning the Byzantine administration.

⁷ Nicolas Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX^e et X^e siècles*, Paris 1972, 51.26, 343.

⁸ *Ibidem*, 49.20, 51.16, 101.19, 107.5, 113.8, 135.10, 139.6, 143.25, 149.3, 153.8, 179.7, 209.16, 23, 225.31, 247.17, 265.18, 319–320. On the frequent use of the form “hyparch” instead of “eparch” in sphragistic material, cf. George Zacos, Alexander Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. I/2, Basel 1972, no. 1309. On the office of eparch, that is, the prefect of Constantinople, cf. R. Guiland, “Études sur l’histoire administrative de l’Empire byzantine – L’Eparque I. L’Eparque de la ville“, *Byzantinoslavica* 41 (1980) 17–32, 145–180.

⁹ *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. I/1, nos. 1163, 2923; *Catalogue of Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. 1, nos. 2.1–2.

(ἔπαρχος νήσων, praefectus Insularum);¹⁰ the office of “eparch of Thessalonica” also appears on 8th- and 9th-century seals, which presumably referred to the former prefect of Illyricum.¹¹

Unlike the title of “eparch,” which denoted an administrative function (ἄξια διὰ λόγου),¹² the title of “*patrikios*” (πατρίκιος, commonly Anglicized as “patrician”) was a dignity (ἄξια διὰ βραβείων) frequently bestowed, often with other dignities, to bearers of certain, usually the highest, administrative offices.¹³ Taktika and sphragistic material from the 9th and 10th centuries suggest that it accompanied the function of *strategos*, the supreme military-administrative governor of a theme,¹⁴ on such a regular basis that it was almost considered synonymous with the function of *strategos*.¹⁵

The combination of the function of eparch and the dignity of *patrikios* is not directly attested in Byzantine taktika of the 9th and 10th centuries. However, the available sphragistic material testifies that it was well known in the practice of the imperial administration of the time. Namely, there are surviving seals of Peter, a *patrikios* and eparch from the 7th century, and another that belonged to an unknown bearer from the same period;¹⁶ of Constantine, a *patrikios* and eparch from the second half of the 8th century,¹⁷ and of Leo, who served as *patrikios* and eparch c. 750–850,¹⁸ Nicetas, *patrikios*, imperial *protospatharios* and eparch from the 9th century;¹⁹ Theodore, *patrikios* and eparch, in the 9th century;²⁰

¹⁰ *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. I/3, no. 2928; M. Cvetković, *Niže jedinice*, 129, n. 697.

¹¹ Vitalien Laurent, *Documents de sigilographie byzantine. La Collection C. Orghidan*, Paris 1952, no. 238; *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. I/1, no. 957; vol. I/2, nos. 1691, 1717A, 2382, 2588–2589, 2651; *Catalogue of Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. 1, no. 18, 18.18–23; Alexandra Kyriaki Wassiliou, Werner Seibt, *Die byzantinischen Bleisiegel in Österreich*, 2. Teil, *Zentral- und Provinzialverwaltung*, Wien 2004, no. 136; M. Cvetković, *Niže jedinice*, 20, n. 69.

¹² N. Oikonomidès, *Listes*, 281–290, 302–363, cf. 343.

¹³ *Ibidem*, 281–290, 291–301, cf. 294–295.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 47.14, 49.2–19, 137.20–139.20, 245.20–21, 25; M. Cvetković, *Niže jedinice*, 93–94. For *patrikioi* and *strategoï* in sphragistic material, cf. for example the indices in *Catalogue of Byzantine Lead Seals*, vols. 1–7, s. v. *patrikios*.

It commonly accompanied also the function of prefect (i.e. eparch/hyparch) of Constantinople, cf. “*patrikios and hyparchos*” (ὁ πατρίκιος καὶ ὑπαρχος) in the *Taktikon Uspensky* (842–843), “*anthypatos, patrikios and eparch of the City*” (ὁ ἀνθύπατος πατρίκιος καὶ ἔπαρχος τῆς Πόλεως) in the *Kletorologion of Philotheos*, N. Oikonomidès, *Listes*, 49.20, 139.6.

¹⁵ For instance, Arab lists of Byzantine themes refer to their *strategoï* as *patrikioi*, cf. M. Cvetković, *Niže jedinice*, 167, n. 898.

¹⁶ *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. I/1, nos. 462A, 1094.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, vol. I/2, no. 1444A.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, vol. I/2, no. 2128.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, vol. I/2, no. 2254.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, vol. I/2, no. 2447.

Nicholas, *anthypatos*, *patrikios* and eparch from the 10th–11th century;²¹ Nicetas, *patrikios* and eparch from the first half of the 11th century...²²

The fact that the function of eparch referred to a provincial civil official and that, in the 9th and 10th centuries, the dignity of *patrikios* was commonly used for a *strategos*, the supreme military-administrative head of a Byzantine province in the theme system of the time, gives rise to the question of the circumstances in which the Croatian ruler could have become an imperial “eparch and patrician (*patrikios*).” Since this ruler was Držislav, whose reign Thomas the Archdeacon dates to the time when Martin served as the archbishop of Split, in 970, that event is most easily associated with John I Tzimiskes and his activity in the Balkan Peninsula after the conquest of Bulgaria and Serbia in 971. Unlike in those lands, the Byzantine emperor did not establish direct rule in Croatia, a geographically distant area. However, judging by the claim that he named its ruler his “eparch and patrician,” he seems to have imposed his supreme rule and formally recognized him as his official in the land which he considered an imperial province, thereby incorporating him into the Empire’s administrative order.²³ A similar pattern

²¹ George Zacos, John W. Nesbitt, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. II, Berne 1984, no. 616.

²² *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. II, no. 867.

²³ It is clear that this applied only to Croatia and had nothing to do with the Byzantine theme of Dalmatia, which was, like before, under direct imperial rule, as the *Escorial Taktikon*, composed shortly after 971, mentions the *strategos* of Dalmatia, N. Oikonomidès, *Listes*, 267.8. However, in scholarship, Thomas’s report was taken to mean that the Byzantine emperor had given the Croatian ruler governance over the Byzantine theme of Dalmatia and appointed him “eparch” as the imperial governor in Dalmatian cities and “*patrikios*” as a friend of the imperial court, and that all of that took place during the reign of Basil II, c. 990 or after 986, when Madius, the prior of Zadar, served as the imperial proconsul of Dalmatia, cf. Ferdo Šišić, *Povijest Hrvata u vrijeme narodnih vladara*, Zagreb 1925, 467–469. Jadran Ferluga, *Vizantiska uprava u Dalmaciji*, Beograd 1957, 87–89, firmly rejects Šišić’s claim that those titles referred to Držislav’s position as the governor of imperial Dalmatia and that he and his successors ever governed Dalmatian cities. Nada Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata u ranom srednjem vijeku*, Zagreb 1971, 322–325, argues that it is unlikely that the emperor granted governance over Dalmatia to the Croatian ruler as a reward. Lujo Margetić, “Historia Salonitana i Historia Salonitana Maior“, *Historijski zbornik* 47/1 (1994) 13–18, correctly points out that the title of *patrikios* denoted a dignity and the title of eparch an office, but his inference that it referred to Dalmatia, meaning that the emperor gave Držislav the office of eparch of Byzantine Dalmatia, cannot be accepted. Ivo Goldstein, *Hrvatski rani srednji vijek*, Zagreb 1995, 333–335, believes that Držislav got his Byzantine titles from Basil II after 976 and that they did not refer to governance over the cities in the Byzantine theme, but to the Croatian territories outside of it, whereas Mirjana Matijević Sokol, *Toma Arhidakon i njegovo delo*, Jastrebarsko 2002, 254–257, in her overview of the historiographic interpretations of the relevant passage in the Thomas the Archdeacon’s work, offers no opinion on the subject. Mladen Ančić, “Zamišljanje tradicije: Vrijeme i okolnosti postanka

can be detected in the later subjugation of Croatia to the Empire, in 1018, which will be discussed in more detail below. As the imperial “eparch and patrician,” the Croatian ruler, like all other imperial dignitaries, along with his rank, received from the emperor some symbolic marks of his new position,²⁴ which Thomas the Archdeacon, writing several centuries later, could have misinterpreted as “the insignia of kingship” (*regie dignitatis insignia*) and concluded that it was precisely because of them that the Croatian rulers, whom he calls “duces” up to that point,²⁵ began to style themselves “kings of Dalmatia and Croatia,” which was, usually in reverse order, the title they bore a hundred or so years later, in the second half of the 11th century.²⁶

The fact that Thomas the Archdeacon places his report in 970 should not be taken too rigidly because that dating in his narrative probably refers only to the archbishop Martin of Split, i.e. marks the beginning of his primacy. However, the question of why Thomas identifies the relevant emperor as Theodosius rather than John I Tzimiskes (969–976) remains.²⁷ Interestingly,

30. glave djela *De administrando imperio*“, *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest* 42 (2010) 147, concludes that the bestowal of the title of “eparch and *patrikios*” on Držislav in fact meant the Byzantine emperor’s recognition of the political independence of Croatian rulers; elsewhere, he argues that he could not have received the title and office of eparch from the emperor because it, supposedly, was obsolete by then, idem, “Opatica Čika i kralj Petar Krešimir IV.: Bizant u susretu s Hrvatskim Kraljevstvom“, in: *Abatissa ingenuitate precipua. Zbornik radova sa znanstvenog kolokvija “950. obljetnica Samostana benediktinki Sv. Marije u Zadru (1066.-2016)*, ur. Pavuša Vežić, Ivan Josipović, Zadar 2020, 25–27.

²⁴ On the insignia of the dignity of *patrikios* according to the *Kletorologion of Philotheos*, cf. N. Oikonomidès, *Listes*, 93.22–95.9, 282.

²⁵ “...Marinus archiepiscopus fuit tempore Caroli regis et Branimiri ducis Sclavonie, Iohannes archiepiscopus fuit anno Domini nongentesimo quartodecimo tempore Tamislavi ducis...“, *Thomae Archidiaconi Historia*, 58–60; M. Matijević Sokol, *Toma Arhidakon*, 251–252.

²⁶ Cf. I. Goldstein, *Hrvatski rani srednji vijek*, 333–335. M. Matijević Sokol, *Toma Arhidakon*, 256–257, on the other hand, explains Thomas’s report about Držislav as the first king of Dalmatia and Croatia by his need to explain the transition from the first part of the catalogue of the archbishops of Split, in which they are dated by the reigns of the Croatian princes (*duces*) to the second, in which they are dated by the reigns of the Croatian kings (*reges*), whereas M. Ančić, “Opatica Čika“, 26–27, believes that the insignia that Držislav, according to Thomas, received from Constantinople, which included a crown (*diadema*), had nothing to do with the dignity of “eparch and patrician”. For the title of “king of Dalmatia and Croatia,” cf. J. Ferluga, *Vizantiska uprava*, 88–89, n. 14; Nada Klaić, “Diplomatička analiza isprava iz doba hrvatskih narodnih vladara (I. dio)“, *HZ* 18 (1965) 186–188; L. Margetić, “Historia Salonitana“, 18. For the titles of Croatian rulers in the sources from the 9th-11th centuries, cf. Ivana Komatina, “Papska politička teorija i praktična politika: kraljevstvo kod Južnih Slovena do kraja XII veka“, u: *Kraljevstvo i arhiepiskopija u Srpskim i Pomorskim zemljama Nemanjića*, ur. Ljubomir Maksimović, Srđan Pirivatrić, Beograd 2019, 34, n. 19, 39–40.

²⁷ Scholars hold that Thomas confused Archbishop Martin from the late 10th century with another, earlier primate of Split with the same name, who lived during the reign of Theodosius III (715–717), cf. M. Matijević Sokol, *Toma Arhidakon*, 253–256.

the *Rijmkroniek* by Thomas's slightly younger contemporary Melis Stoke, composed c. 1290–1305, reports that Arnulf, Count of Holland, was married to Liutgardis, daughter of a Greek king called Theophanus and sister of Empress Theophanu, mother of Emperor Otto III (983–1002).²⁸ This is obviously an allusion to the marriage of Otto II, Holy Roman Emperor (973–983), and the Byzantine princess Theophanu, niece of John I Tzimiskes. This Byzantine emperor seems to have been known in the West in later centuries mainly for the mentioned marriage of his niece Theophanu to the Holy Roman Emperor. However, by that time, the empress's exact origin, her relation to the Byzantine emperor who married her to the Holy Roman Emperor and his name seem to have been forgotten in the West, and she began to be known as his daughter, while he began to be called by a name derived from hers – Theophanus.²⁹ The question arises of whether a similar misconception could have been behind the unclear report by Thomas the Archdeacon, who was educated at the oldest European university, in Bologna, and must have been familiar with the Western intellectual trends of his time,³⁰ that the Byzantine emperor in question was called Theodosius.³¹

The Bulgarian uprising against Byzantine rule in 976 and the long war that ensued (976–1018) inevitably weakened Byzantine influence,³² not only in Croatia but also in Byzantine Dalmatia. The Venetian doge Peter II Orseolo (991–1009) took advantage of the situation to establish control over this far-

²⁸ *Rijmkroniek van Holland (366–1305), door een anonieme auteur en Melis Stoke*, ed. Jan W. J. Burgers, Den Haag 2004, 25, ll. 683–693. The Dutch chronicler Johannes de Beke also took this information and incorporated it into his *Chronographia* in Latin and Dutch (1346), *Chronographia Johannis de Beke*, ed. Hans Bruch, 's-Gravenhage 1973, 71; *Johannes de Beke, Croniken van den Stichte van Utrecht ende van Hollant*, ed. Hans Bruch, 's-Gravenhage 1982, 52.

²⁹ That the exact degree of kinship between Empress Theophanu and the Byzantine emperor, as well as his name, were no longer known in the West by the second half of the 11th century is inferred by Bishop Bonizo of Sutri, who reports that Otto I (936–973) gave his son and heir Otto II “a wife of Roman blood, daughter of the Constantinopolitan emperor” (“Cui Romani sanguinis dedit uxore, Constantinopolitani scilicet imperatoris filiam”), *Bonizonis episcopi Sutrii Liber ad amicum*, ed. Ernest Dümmler, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Libeli de lite imperatorum et pontificum saeculis XI. et XII. conscripti, t. I, Hannoverae 1891, 581.

³⁰ M. Matijević Sokol, *Toma Arhidakon*, 33–42.

³¹ Interestingly, the *Chronicle* of the German chronicler Dietrich of Nieheim (late 14th century) describes Otto II's wife as the daughter of the “Greek emperor” and reports that her name was “Theofilia” (“...filius dicti primi Ottonis augusti, filiam eiusdem imperatoris Grecorum, Theofilium nomine, uxorem... habere deberet...”), Dietrich von Nieheim, *Historie de gestis Romanorum principum. Cronica. Gesta Karoli Magni*, edd. Katarina Colberg, Joachim Leuschner, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Staatsschriften des späteren Mittelalters, t. V/2, Stuttgart 1980, 226.

³² Cf. Srđan Pirivatrić, *Samuilova država. Obim i karakter*, Beograd 1997, 73–132.

flung and isolated province of the Empire. The deterioration of the relations between the Croats and the Byzantine cities of Dalmatia is also attested by the contemporary Venetian chronicler John the Deacon, who reports that the doge “decisively liberated his [subjects] from the oppression of the Croat Slavs and forbade them to pay them the proscribed tribute.” When that led to a conflict with the Croatian ruler, at the request of the citizens of Dalmatia, he launched an offensive in 998 or 1000 to liberate them from the “cruelty of the Slavs,” in which he solidified his rule in the Dalmatian cities. On that occasion, he met in Trogir the Croatian pretender to the throne called Surinja, “brother of the king of the Slavs,” who had been “deprived of the diadema in a brotherly deception” and who pledged allegiance to the doge and gave him his son Stephen as a hostage. Surinja later regained the throne, and John the Deacon notes at the end of his *Chronicle* that the eldest of the doge’s four daughters, Joscella (Hicela), was married to the above-mentioned Stephen, son of “the king of the Slavs.”³³ The campaign of the Bulgarian emperor Samuel against the Byzantine possessions in Dalmatia, from Kotor and Dubrovnik to Zadar, recorded in the later tradition, tends to be seen in scholarship in the context of the described events, although it is unclear if it had anything to do with the internal wars for the Croatian succession or the Venetian doge’s intervention.³⁴

According to Thomas the Archdeacon, Paul was the archbishop of Split “in the year 1015, in the time of Emperors Basil and Constantine and Krešimir, their patrician and king of the Croats.”³⁵ Doge Andrea Dandolo, a Venetian

³³ *Johannis diaconi chronicon Venetum et Gradense*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores, t. VII, Hannoverae 1846, 29–33, 37; F. Šišić, *Povijest*, 470–479; J. Ferluga, *Vizantiska uprava*, 89–93; N. Klaić, *Povijest*, 326–329; I. Goldstein, *Hrvatski rani srednji vijek*, 339–343; S. Pirivatrić, *Samuilova država*, 107–109. According to the later chronicle of Doge Andrea Dandolo (1343–1354), the Venetian doge was granted permission for his intervention in Dalmatia by the Constantinopolitan emperors Basil II and Constantine VIII, *Andreae Danduli ducis Venetiarum Chronica per extensum descripta*, edd. Ludovico Antonio Muratori, Ester Pastorello, Scriptores rerum Italicarum, t. XII/1, Bologna 1938–1958, 196–199; Lujo Margetić, “Vjerodostojnost vijesti Andrije Dandola o Dalmaciji u XI st.,” *ZRVI* 19 (1980) 118–122.

³⁴ I. Goldstein, *Hrvatski rani srednji vijek*, 335–336; S. Pirivatrić, *Samuilova država*, 105–113.

³⁵ “Paulus archiepiscopus, etiam natione Spalatensis, fuit anno Domini millesimo quintodecimo, tempore Basili et Constantini imperatorum Constantinopolitanorum et Cresimiri, eorum patricii et regis Chroatorum,” *Thomae Archidiaconi Historia*, 62.

Ferdo Šišić, “Genealoški prilozi o hrvatskoj narodnoj dinastiji,” *Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu* 13/1 (1914) 69–81; idem, *Povijest*, 471, n. 14, identified the abovementioned Krešimir with Surinja, whose son Stephen was married to Joscella (Hicela), daughter of Doge Peter II Orseolo, noting, among other things, that Stephen’s son, who later became the Croatian ruler Peter Krešimir (c. 1060–1075), was probably named after his maternal grandfather, Doge Peter II Orseolo, and his paternal grandfather Krešimir Surinja. Idem, “Genealoški prilozi,” 79, n. 2. His conclusion was later refuted, and the hypothesis proposed earlier by F. Rački was accepted instead, that Surinja was identical with Krešimir’s brother Svetoslav, cf. N. Klaić, *Povijest*, 329, n. 172, which is still the dominant view in scholarship.

chronicler who wrote in the mid-14th century, reports that, in 1018, during the reign of Doge Otto Orseolo (1009–1026), son of Peter II Orseolo, “Krešimir, who presided over the Croatian kingdom, harassed Zadar and other Dalmatian cities with his daily attacks.” Therefore, the doge, at their invitation, intervened with his navy, repelled the attacks, and “solidified their allegiance and submission of their citizens.” Upon his return to Venice, he accepted oaths of fealty and the promise of paying an annual tribute from the clergy and inhabitants of the northern Dalmatian islands of Krk, Rab, and Cres.³⁶

When this Venetian campaign took place, the Byzantine emperor Basil II (976–1025) was fighting his last battles against Samuel’s successors and conquering the last remnants of his erstwhile state.³⁷ However, the motives that led the Croatian ruler to launch an offensive against the Byzantine cities of Dalmatia precisely at that moment and to fight against the Venetian doge, the emperor’s loyal ally, are unclear.³⁸ In any case, after his final victory over the Bulgarian “outlaws,” Basil II once again put the captured territories in the Balkan Peninsula under direct imperial rule and established new military-administrative units in them: the great doukate/katepanate of Bulgaria and a set of smaller ones, such as the theme of Serbia.³⁹

Describing the final military efforts of Basil II and his generals to break the last remnants of the Bulgarian resistance, the Byzantine chronicler John Scylitzes recorded an interesting piece of information pertaining to Croatia: “Once Bulgaria was subjugated to him, the neighboring people of the Croats joined the emperor. They had as rulers the two brothers; when they joined and

³⁶ “VIII^o ducis anno Cresimirus, Chroatorum presidens regno, Iadram et alias maritimas civitates Dalmacie cotidianis incursionibus inquietat, a quibus dux requisitus cum stolo exiit, et civitates tutavit, hostes in fugam vertit, et cives illarum in sua fidelitate et obediencia solidavit; et rediens, a Vitale episcopo Veglense, et Maio episcopo Arbense, et Martino episcopo Ausarense, et ab universo clero, prioribus et populo dictarum insularum de tributo sibi et successoribus suis annuatim in perpetuum solvendo, sponsionem suscepit,” *Andree Danduli ducis Venetiarum Chronica*, 204; Franjo Rački, *Documenta historiae Chroaticae periodum antiquam illustrantia*, Zagrabiae 1877, 32–36; *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, t. I, edd. Marko Kostrenčić, Jakov Stipišić, Miljen Šamšalović, Zagrabiae 1967, 54–57; F. Šišić, *Povijest*, 479–480; J. Ferluga, *Vizantiska uprava*, 93; N. Klaić, *Povijest*, 329–330; L. Margetić, “Vjerodostojnost vijesti Andrije Dandola“, 122–123; I. Goldstein, *Hrvatski rani srednji vijek*, 342–343.

³⁷ S. Pirivatrić, *Samuilova država*, 120–132.

³⁸ J. Ferluga, *Vizantiska uprava*, 93–94; N. Klaić, *Povijest*, 329–330; I. Goldstein, *Hrvatski rani srednji vijek*, 343.

³⁹ Lj. Maksimović, “Organizacija“, 36–42; S. Pirivatrić, “Vizantijska tema Morava“, 177; B. Krsmanović, *Byzantine Province*, 185–205; P. Komatina, “Srbija i Duklja“, 172–180.

accepted high dignities, their peoples became subjected too.”⁴⁰ Then he proceeds to describe how Constantine Diogenes, the first imperial governor of subjugated Serbia, conquered Syrmium, the last stronghold of Samuel’s followers.⁴¹

Scylitzes’s report shows that, after the conquest of Bulgaria in 1018, Basil II subjugated the Croats, who were ruled by two brothers, usually identified as the above-mentioned Krešimir and Gojslav,⁴² who joined the emperor and received certain “dignities” (ἀξιώματα) from him. Given that Thomas the Archdeacon reports that the Croatian ruler Krešimir was a *patrikios* under the Byzantine emperors Basil II and his brother and co-emperor Constantine VIII, we have no reason not to identify the “dignities” that, according to Scylitzes, the two brothers and Croatian co-rulers received from Basil II as the dignity of *patrikios*.⁴³ Again, like in the case of Držislav, Thomas’s dating to 1015 does not necessarily mean that Krešimir already in that year bore the dignity of *patrikios* and instead seems to refer only to the beginning of the primacy of Paul, the archbishop of Split. Evidently, it was the same scenario that took place after Tzimiskēs’s conquest of Bulgaria in 971, when, as we saw, the Croatian ruler Držislav recognized the emperor’s nominal authority and received from him the function of eparch and the dignity of *patrikios*.

But this state of affairs seems to have been short-lived. The next report about the Byzantine activities in Croatia that has reached us comes from the Southern Italian *Annales Lupi Protospatharii* and the *Anonymi Barenensis Chronicon* and informs us that in 1024, the seventh indiction (before 31 August), the Byzantine *katepano* of Langobardia (Italy), Basil Boioannes, “crossed into Croatia and imprisoned the *patrikia*, Krešimir’s wife, and sent her to Constantinople”, or that he “sailed to Croatia with the Bariots and captured the *patrikia* herself, Krešimir’s wife, and sent her to Constantinople with her son.”⁴⁴

⁴⁰ “Τῷ δὲ βασιλεῖ προσεεργήσαν, τῆς Βουλγαρίας δουλωθείσης αὐτῷ, καὶ τὰ ὄμορα ἔθνη τῶν Χορβάτων, ἄρχοντας ἔχοντα δύο ἀδελφούς, ὧν προσρυνέντων καὶ ἀξιώματα λαβόντων ὑπήκοα γέγονε καὶ τὰ ἔθνη.”: *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. Joannis Thurn, Berlin–New York 1973 (CFHB 5), 365.12–15.

⁴¹ *Scylitzes*, 365.15–366.30; P. Komatina, “Srbija i Duklja“, 172–178.

⁴² F. Šišić, *Povijest*, 482; N. Klaić, *Povijest*, 329–330; I. Goldstein, *Hrvatski rani srednji vijek*, 343, 346–347.

⁴³ F. Šišić, *Povijest*, 482–483; Ljujo Margetić, “Dobronja – zadarski dužnosnik ili hrvatski kralj?“, *Croatica Christiana Periodica* 58 (2006) 6–8, although he again links the Byzantine dignity received by the Croatian rulers to the governance of imperial Dalmatia.

⁴⁴ “1024... Et in hoc anno transfretavit Bugiano in Chorvatia, et comprehendit ipsam Patrocissam uxorem Cismigi, et direxit illam Constantinopolim,” *Lupi Protospatarii annales*, ed. G. H. Pertz, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Scriptores, t. V, Hannoverae 1844, 57; “Mill. XXIV. Ind. VII. Barchavit Bugiano in Corbatia cum Barenenses, et comprahendit ipsam Patricissa

This report has not gone unnoticed in historiography. It was discussed more extensively already by F. Šišić, who believed that the cause of the intervention was an offensive of the Croatian ruler Krešimir against the Dalmatian cities because of a revolt that had broken out in Venice against Doge Otto Orseolo and his family due to their aspiration to introduce a hereditary monarchy. Therefore, the emperor would have had to send the *katapano* of Langobardia across the sea because the doge, to whose authority Dalmatia still belonged, would not have been in a position to do so.⁴⁵ In contrast, L. Margetić proposed that the reason for the emperor's intervention was an internal conflict between the Croatian rulers, the brothers Krešimir and Gojслав, from which Krešimir emerged victorious with the Empire's aid, deposed his brother and expelled him from the realm.⁴⁶ In any case, it is assumed that the consequences of that offensive went no further than the establishment of direct imperial rule in Dalmatia and the capture of the Croatian ruler's wife and her internment in Constantinople. She is, quite appropriately, referred to as a "*patrikia*" (patricissa) because her husband Krešimir bore the imperial dignity of *patrikios* from 1018.⁴⁷ Krešimir is believed to have remained in power in Croatia after that: based on Thomas the Archdeacon's report that Paul was the archbishop of Split "in the year 1015, in the time of Emperors Basil and Constantine and Krešimir, their patrician and king of the Croats" and that after his death "Dabralis became the next archbishop in the year 1030, in the time of the aforementioned princes,"⁴⁸ Krešimir is believed to have reigned until at least 1030.⁴⁹ However, Thomas's dating to 1030, like in the cases mentioned above, marks the beginning of the primacy of the archbishop of Split Dabralis and is not necessarily accurate when it comes to the Croatian ruler, as it is certainly

uxor Cosmizi, et adduxit illam in Bari; misitque eam cum filio suo in Constantinopoli," *Chronicon ignoti civis Barensis*, ed. L. A. Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, t. V, Mediolani 1724, 149; F. Rački, *Documenta*, 434.

⁴⁵ F. Šišić, *Povijest*, 483–484. This interpretation was accepted by later authors, cf. J. Ferluga, *Višantiska uprava*, 94; N. Klaić, *Povijest*, 330; I. Goldstein, *Hrvatski rani srednji vijek*, 347.

⁴⁶ L. Margetić, "Dobronja", 8–10.

⁴⁷ The view proposed by L. Margetić, "Dobronja", 9, that the captured *patrikia* was not the wife of Krešimir but of his brother Gojслав is inconsistent with the claim in the sources that she was "uxor Cismigi" or "Cosmizi," which is explained as a misspelling of C(r)os(i)miri by a scribal error, F. Rački, *Documenta*, 434. M. Ančić, "Opatica Čika", 21–22, n. 25, however, questions this identification.

⁴⁸ "Paulus archiepiscopus, etiam natione Spalatensis, fuit anno Domini millesimo quintodecimo, tempore Basilii et Constantini imperatorum Constantinopolitanorum et Cresimiri, eorum patricii et regis Chroatorum... Mortuo denique Paulo archiepiscopo, substitutus est Dabralis, Spalatensis natione anno domini millesimo tricesimo, temporibus principum predictorum," *Thomae Archidiaconi Historia*, 62, 64.

⁴⁹ F. Šišić, "Genealoški prilozi", 79.

incorrect in the case of Basil II, who died in 1025, and his brother Constantine VIII, who died in 1028.⁵⁰

In fact, as L. Margetić has noted, very little is known about Croatia from 1028 to c. 1060. There is no reliable information about the identity of its rulers in that period.⁵¹ There are no surviving documents issued by Croatian rulers in that time, and within the extant corpus of Croatian early medieval documents, which have all been identified by N. Klaić, after an exhaustive diplomatic analysis, as late medieval forgeries,⁵² there are only two that date from that period: the charter of Jelenica, sister of the ban Godemir, supposedly from 1028, in which she gives her estate in Obrovac to the Zadar monastery of St. Chrysogonus and its abbot Trasus,⁵³ and the charter of the ban S., in which he donates his church to the same monastery of St. Chrysogonus and abbot Trasus, supposedly from 1042–1044.⁵⁴ Neither of them mentions the contemporaneous Croatian ruler, and both are dated only in respect to the reign of the Byzantine emperors: the former to the reign of Romanus III Argyrus (1028–1034) and the latter to the reign of Constantine IX Monomachus (1042–1055), with the auctor of the latter, the ban S., assigned the Byzantine dignity of “imperial *protospatharios*” (imperialis protospatario). However, the general assessment of the documents from the time of the Croatian “national rulers” as later forgeries,⁵⁵ with few elements of historical value, applies to both of these charters, and so their reports must be taken with grave reservations. On the other hand, although inept at emulating diplomatic patterns, the late medieval forgers from the Dalmatian cities must have had at least some elementary historical knowledge of the preceding epochs and the persons to whom they ascribed certain acts, so the documents themselves are not without any historical basis.⁵⁶ Therefore, we might ask why the late medieval composers of those two documents chose not to ascribe them to one of the Croatian rulers, like they did in the case of the numerous documents attributed to Peter Krešimir, Demetrius Zvonimir, and Stephen II from the second half of the 11th

⁵⁰ Cf. Lujo Margetić, “O nekim vrelima hrvatske povijesti XI. stoljeća (s osobitim obzirom na Osor)“, *HZ* 42 (1989) 118–119.

⁵¹ L. Margetić, “Dobronja“, 6.

⁵² N. Klaić, “Diplomatička analiza (I. dio)“, 141–188; “(II. dio)“, *HZ* 19–20 (1966–1967) 225–263.

⁵³ *CD*, t. I, 66–67.

⁵⁴ *CD*, t. I, 75–76. Ban S. is identified as the ban called Stephen Praska, who is mentioned in one of the documents issued by Peter Krešimir to the same monastery in 1066/1067, M. Ančić, “Opatica Čika“, 23–24, n. 36.

⁵⁵ For an extremely negative opinion on the value of the charter of the ban S. as a historical source, cf. L. Margetić, “O nekim vrelima“, 121–127; idem, “Dobronja“, 23–24.

⁵⁶ N. Klaić, “Diplomatička analiza (II dio)“, 262–263.

century.⁵⁷ Could it be that, based on some information available to them, they believed that there had been no independent Croatian rulers during the reigns of Romanus III Argyrus (1028–1034) and Constantine IX Monomachus (1042–1055)?

In relation to that, a noteworthy piece of sigillographic evidence has come to light in recent decades. Namely, there is an extant seal dating, according to its epigraphic characteristics, from c. 950 – c. 1050. The inscription on the reverse states that it belonged to “Leo, imperial *spatharokandidatos* and... of Croatia.”⁵⁸ As the end of the third line of the inscription is damaged, his function is unknown but, judging by the available space, the publisher argues that it could be reconstructed only as β(ασιλικός) or ἄρχ(ων): in the first case, Leo would have been an imperial official in charge of financial affairs; in the second version, he could have also been a local ruler who was subordinate to the emperor and had received from him the high dignity of imperial *spatharokandidatos*.⁵⁹ On the other hand, the title of “archon” also existed in the Byzantine theme system as one of the lower units in the thematic organization. In that sense, archons appear as aides to thematic *strategoi* in charge of civilian matters, as commanders of some fortified cities subordinate to thematic *strategoi*, and as administrators of peripheral areas before or in the early days of the imposition of the theme system and establishment of themes in those regions, when there were still no higher-ranking Byzantine functionaries in them.⁶⁰ That was the case with Dalmatia in the 8th–9th centuries,⁶¹ Crete in the same period,⁶² Cyprus in the 9th–10th centuries,⁶³ Cherson in the 8th–9th centuries,⁶⁴ and Dyrrhachion in the 8th–9th centuries.⁶⁵ According to the *Taktikon Uspensky*, their commanders bore the honorary dignity of *spatharokandidatos*, except the archon of Crete, who was a *protospatharios*, while in the sigillographic material their function is accompanied by the dignities of *spatharios*, *protospatharios*, *spatharokandidatos*, or *strator*.⁶⁶ In view of this, as an imperial *spatharokandidatos*, Leo could have indeed had the function of archon in Croatia, like the archons of the mentioned territories

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, 260–263.

⁵⁸ Λέο[ντ(ι)] β(ασιλικῶ) πα[θ(αρο)]κανδ(ι)δ(άτω) (καί) Χροβατία(ς), *Catalogue of Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. 1, no. 16.1.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁰ M. Cvetković, *Niže jedinice*, 21, 135–137.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, 138–145.

⁶² *Ibidem*, 145–149.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, 149–150.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, 150–153.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, 153–156.

⁶⁶ N. Oikonomidès, *Listes*, 51.30, 53.5, 55.15, 57.11–13, 15; M. Cvetković, *Niže jedinice*, 160.

before the theme system was fully established in them. That would mean that Croatia, governed by an archon, was one such territory, which was under direct imperial rule but where the theme system had not fully developed. Given the broad dating of the seal to c. 950 – c. 1050, the identification of this Leo proposed by M. Ančić as Leo, the imperial *prothospatharios* and *katepano* of Dalmatia, mentioned in documents dated to 1067 and 1069, should be taken into consideration. Since the dignity of *prothospatharios* with which he is mentioned in the documents is higher than the dignity of *spatharokandidatos*, if they were indeed the same person, Leo must have served as the archon of Croatia before he became the *katepano* of Dalmatia,⁶⁷ meaning that he held the post of the archon of Croatia at the end of the first half of the 11th century, before c. 1050.

The possibility that the Byzantine administrative apparatus existed in Croatia at the end of the first half of the 11th century leads us to ask if the intervention of Basil Boioannes, the *katepano* of Langobardia, in Croatia in 1024, besides capturing Krešimir's wife and son and their internment in Constantinople, had another, far more important consequence: the establishment of direct imperial rule in Croatia. The internment of the former rulers of neighboring territories after the conquest of those territories, usually along with giving them court dignities and estates, was common practice in the imperial policy of the 10th and 11th centuries.⁶⁸ In this case, however, it was not the ruler who was interned but his wife and son, which in itself would not have had carried enough political weight if he retained his ruling position. Hence it seems more likely that the Croatian ruler was killed during the Empire's military intervention or even that his death was the direct cause of the intervention and that his wife and son were sent to Constantinople to prevent any attempt at restoring local governance.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ *CD*, t. I, 107, 114; Ančić, "Opatica Čika", 24–25.

⁶⁸ Cf. the examples of the rulers of Taron 966–967, Bulgaria 971, Vaspurakan 1021–1022, Great Armenia 1044–1045, cf. *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vols. I–III, ed. Alexander Kazhdan, New York–Oxford 1991, 814, 2012–2013, 2154; S. Pirivatrić, *Samuilova država*, 31–32, 51–53; Catherine Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire (976–1025)*, Oxford 2005, 309, 316, 360–367, 483–484; B. Krsmanović, *Byzantine Province*, 144, 182–183; eadem, *Evnusi*, 366–367, and the case of the Serbian prince Stephen Vojislav after the failed uprising of 1034–1036, P. Komatina, "Srbija i Duklja", 173–174, 179.

⁶⁹ There is an interesting analogy in the case of the Georgian nobleman Peris (Pherses), who was executed by the order of the emperor Basil II for his participation in the rebellion of Nicephorus Phocas and Nicephorus Xiphias in 1022, and his wife along with the whole family and the entire household were sent as hostages to Constantinople, where she remained for twelve years, Bernadette Martin-Hisard, "La vie de Georges l'Hagiorite", *Revue des études byzantines* 64–65 (2007) 43–44; C. Holmes, *Basil II*, 515–525; Sandro Nikolaishvili, *Byzantium and the Georgian World c. 900–1210: Ideology of Kingship and Rhetoric in the Byzantine Periphery*, Budapest 2019 (unpublished doctoral dissertation), 26–27.

Perhaps the preserved numismatic material can provide more evidence to support the hypothesis about the existence of direct imperial rule in Croatia after the campaign of Basil Boioannes in 1024. Scholars have noted that the finds of Byzantine coins issued during the reign of Romanus III Argyrus (1028–1034) on the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea, not only in the Dalmatian cities but primarily in their Croatian hinterland, are much more numerous than examples of the coinage minted by all other emperors from the 10th and 11th centuries.⁷⁰ This coinage has been associated either with the imperial treasure appropriated, according to John Scylitzes, by the Serbian prince Stephen Vojislav after a shipwreck along the Adriatic coast in 1039/1040 or with the “great wealth” which, according to Kekaumenos, Dobronja (Dobronas), the “archon and toparch in Dalmatia” received from Romanus III on his visits to the imperial palace in Constantinople.⁷¹ However, the substantial quantity of the coins issued by Romanus III Argyrus found in Croatia could also suggest more intensive Byzantine presence in that area during this emperor’s reign, which would have required a larger influx of coinage to fund the local Byzantine administration.

Several decades later, Kekaumenos in his *Strategikon* brings several intriguing pieces of information about Dobronja, whose activity belonged to this period. According to him, “Iadora (Zadar) and Salona (Solina) are cities in Dalmatia, where a certain Dobronja was archon and toparch,” who twice went to “do obeisance” to Romanus III Argyrus and once to Michael IV the Paphlagonian (1034–1041). The first two times, he was received with honors and lavish gifts, but the last time, he was neglected and became annoyed, so the emperor’s courtiers proposed capturing him and taking his land. That indeed happened: he was imprisoned, imperial dignitaries occupied his land, and his wife and son were captured and taken to prison in Constantinople, where Dobronja and his wife died under Constantine IX Monomachus (1042–1055), while his son, “who was despised and appreciated by no one,” barely managed to escape.⁷² Dobronja is usually identified as the prior of Zadar and proconsul

⁷⁰ Nikola Jakšić, “Solidus romanatus na istočnoj jadranskoj obali“, *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* III, serija 12 (1982) 173–183.

⁷¹ David Michael Metcalf, “A Shipwreck on the Dalmatian Coast and Some Gold Coins of Romanus III Argyrus“, *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies* 3 (1960) 101–106; idem, *Coinage in the Balkans 820-1335*, Chicago 1966, 48–49; N. Jakšić, “Solidus romanatus“, 179–183; idem, “Il caso dell’arconte Dobronà e del proconsole Gregorio“, *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 13 (2007) 137–141.

⁷² *Sovety i rasskazy Kekavmena. Sočinenie vizantijskogo polkovodca XI veka*, izd. Genadij Grigorevič Litavrin, Moskva 1972, 300.19–302.13; *Vizantijski izvori za istoriju naroda Jugoslavije*, t. III, ur. Georgije Ostrogorski, Franjo Barišić, Beograd 1966, 203–205 (Jadran Ferluga).

and *strategos* of Dalmatia Gregory (c. 1033–1036) or is believed to have been his brother.⁷³ L. Margetić's identification of Dobronja as the Croatian ruler Gojislav, Krešimir's brother who, in his opinion, ascended the Croatian throne after Krešimir's death c. 1030 and reigned until c. 1031–1034/35, is by no means acceptable.⁷⁴ On the other hand, M. Ančić's suggestion that Kekaumenos, in his story about Dobronja, mixed up the information about the imprisonment and internment of Dobronja with the information about the imprisonment and internment of Krešimir's wife and son in 1024, recorded in Southern Italian annals,⁷⁵ is not entirely unfounded. However, according to Kekaumenos, Dobronja's son, "despised and appreciated by no one," managed to escape after the death of his parents in Constantinopolitan confinement. If that report actually referred to Krešimir's son Stephen, we have to ask whether Kekaumenos would have indeed failed to mention that he later became the ruler of Croatia.

The direct Byzantine rule in Croatia, established after the imperial intervention of 1024, proved short-lived.⁷⁶ In the late medieval forgeries of the charters supposedly issued by Croatian rulers, Peter Krešimir's earliest document dates from February 1060.⁷⁷ In this one and some other acts

⁷³ F. Šišić, *Povijest*, 484–490; J. Ferluga, *Vizantiska uprava*, 95–99; N. Jakšić, "Il caso dell'arconte Dobronà", 137–141; M. Ančić, "Opatica Čika", 20–32.

⁷⁴ L. Margetić, "Dobronja", 3–6, 12, with references to his earlier works on the subject.

⁷⁵ M. Ančić, "Opatica Čika", 21–23.

⁷⁶ The contemporaneous sources from the second quarter of the 11th century offer just one reference, indirect and vague, to the Croats. It is found in a letter addressed in 1035 by an unknown priest to Azecho, Bishop of Worms, which mentions a possible revolt of Adalbero, Duke of Carinthia, against Emperor Conrad II (1024–1039) "in cooperation with the Croats and Myrmidons" ("Cruvatis et Mirmidonibus"), F. Rački, *Documenta*, 438; Stjepan Antoljak, "Još nešto o 'Cruvatis et mirmidonibus'", *Godišen zbornik. Filozofski fakultet na Univerzitetu – Skopje* 19 (1967) 141–151; Trpimir Vedriš, "Gdje žive Mirmidonci? Prilog raspravi o značenju pojmova Mirmidones i Marab u zadarskoj legendi o prijenosu moći sv. Krševana", *Povijesni prilozi* 41 (2011) 47–50. Andrea Dandolo's report about the alleged attacks of the Hungarian kings Andrew c. 1027–1031 and Solomon in 1050 on Dalmatia has been rightly discarded as untrue, cf. L. Margetić, "Vjerodostojnost vijesti Andrije Dandola", 123–134. On the other hand, the report of Peter Damian that Bishop Gaudentius of Osor in 1041 sailed from the "Slavic kingdom" to Ancona in Italy ("de Sclavonico regno /Italiam/ navigans littoribus Anconitanae urbis applicuit"), F. Rački, *Documenta*, 443; Margetić, "O nekim vrelima", 112–116, should not be understood as evidence that Osor belonged to the Croatian kingdom at that time; instead, it should be seen in light of the fact that, from the Italian point of view, the entire eastern coast of the Adriatic was considered the "land of the Slavs," just like the *Chronicon Salernitanum* from the second half of the 10th century describes Dubrovnik as being in the "areas of the Slavs" ("in Sclavorum fines"), cf. P. Komatina, *Konstantin Porfirogenit*, 140.

⁷⁷ *CD*, t. I, 87–93.

attributed to the same ruler, his father Stephen, son of the former ruler Krešimir, is referred to as a king,⁷⁸ suggesting that the composers of those charters believed that he had been a Croatian ruler. Thomas the Archdeacon reports that Archbishop Lawrence of Split was “ordained to the see of Salona in the year of the Incarnation 1060, in the time of Emperor Michael and of the kings Stephen, Krešimir and Zvonimir, who was the last king of the Croats,”⁷⁹ but this Stephen is believed not to have been Stephen I, Peter Krešimir’s father and predecessor, who is believed to have died before Lawrence’s consecration in 1060, but Stephen II (1089–1091), the successor of Demetrius Zvonimir (1075–1089), who appears in the same context with Archbishop Lawrence.⁸⁰ In any case, Stephen I must have reigned in the 1050s, which means that the direct Byzantine rule in Croatia came to an end and a separate Croatian state was restored no later than that time, but the circumstances that led to that are impossible to elucidate.

⁷⁸ *CD*, t. I, 89, 102, 106, 113.

⁷⁹ “Ordinatus est in sede Salonitane ecclesie anno incarnationis millesimo sexagesimo, temporibus Michaelis imperatoris, regum vero Stephani, Cresimiri et Suinimiri, qui fuit ultimus rex Chroatorum,” *Thomae Archidiaconi Historia*, 88.

⁸⁰ M. Matijević Sokol, *Toma Arhidakon*, 266–267; *Thomae Archidiaconi Historia*, 88–89, n. 4.

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Предраг Коматина

О ПИТАЊУ ВИЗАНТИЈСКЕ ВЛАДАВИНЕ У ХРВАТскоЈ КРАЈЕМ X И ПОЧЕТКОМ XI ВЕКА

Резиме

Ромејски цареви су у другој половини X и првих деценија XI века у два наврата успели да, након векова варварског присуства, спроведу реокупацију северних делова Балканског полуострва и врате тај простор у границе Византијског царства, у време цара Јована I Цимискија 971. и цара Василија II 1018. године. У оба случаја територија покорених бугарских земаља и Србије нашла се под непосредном царском влашћу и била укључена у византијски административни поредак. Предмет овог прилога је место које је у таквим околностима, у оба наврата, припало Хрватској, која је из перспективе Цариграда била физички најудаљенији, али идеолошки једнако значајан део полуострва.

Византијски цар Јован I Цимискије је освојио Бугарску и 971. уништио Бугарско царство, а истом приликом су и Српске земље дошле под непосредну царску власт. Подручје бившег Бугарског царства је било подељено на низ царских војноуправних јединица, а у Србији је основан катепанат са седиштем у Расу. Иако у изворима нема података о дејству царске војске на подручју Хрватске, нити у сфрагистичком материјалу има трагова о присуству царских војноуправних функционера у Хрватској у то време, на основу једног податка Томе Архиђакона из средине XIII века би се могло закључити да Хрватска није остала сасвим изван царског интересовања. Тадашњи хрватски владар Држислав је, наиме, од цара добио наслов „епарха и патрикија”, на основу чега би се могло закључити да му је цар наметнуо врховну власт и формално га признао за свог функционера у земљи коју је сматрао царском провинцијом и на тај начин га укључио у царски административни поредак. Као царски „епарх и патрикије”, хрватски владар је као и остали царски достојанственици уз свој ранг од цара добио и одређене симболичне ознаке свог новог положаја, које је Тома Архиђакон неколико векова касније могао протумачити као „ознаке краљевског достојанства” (*regie dignitatis insignia*).

Бугарски устанак против ромејске власти 976. и дуготрајни рат који је томе уследио од 976. до 1018. довели су до слабљења византијског утицаја, не само у Хрватској, него и у Далмацији, што је искористио млетачки дужд Петар II Орсеоло (991–1009) да ту удаљену и издвојену провинцију Царства узме под своје окриље. Према каснијем млетачком хроничару дужду Андреји Дандолу, 1018. године, у време владавине дужда Отона Орсеола (1009–1026), сина Петра II Орсеола, хрватски владар Крешимир је узнемиравао Задар и друге градове Далмације, па је дужд интервенисао са својом морнарицом, одбранио градове и учврстио млетачку власт у њима.

У време поменутог дуждевог похода, ромејски цар Василије II (976–1025) водио је 1018. године последње борбе са Самуиловим наследницима и потчињавао последње остатке његове државе. После своје коначне победе над бугарским „одметницима”, цар Василије II је заузете територије Балканског полуострва ставио још једном под непосредну царску власт и на њима успоставио нове војноуправне јединице, велики дукат/катепанат Бугарске и низ мањих, попут теме Србије. Описујући завршне акције цара Василија II и његових војсковођа у сламању последњих остатака бугарског отпора, византијски писац Јован Скилица је забележио да су се, после потчињавања Бугарске, цару потчинили и Хрвати, којима су владала два брата, који су од цара добили одређена достојанства. Пошто Тома Архиђакон за хрватског владара Крешимира наводи да је био „патрикије” тадашњих византијских царева Василија II и његовог брата и савладара Константина VIII, нема разлога да у „достојанствима” која су према Скилици двојица браће хрватских владара добила од Василија II 1018. године не препознамо управо достојанство патрикија. У питању је, очигледно, иста ситуација као после Цимискијевог покоровања Бугарске 971. године, када је тадашњи хрватски владар Држислав признао цареви номиналну власт и од њега добио функцију епарха и достојанство патрикија.

Наредни податак о византијском деловању у Хрватској потиче из јужноиталијанских *Анала Луна Протоспатара* и *Хронике Анонима из Барија* и говори о томе како је 1024. године византијски катепан Лангобардије (Италије) Василије Војоан са својим људима прешао у Хрватску и заробио патрикију жену Крешимира и упутио је са сином у Цариград. Обично се сматра да последице те акције нису ишле даље од успостављања непосредне царске власти у Далмацији и заробљавања жене хрватског владара и њене интернације у Цариград. Она се сасвим прикладно помиње као „патрикија” (*patricissa*), пошто је њен муж Крешимир од 1018. био носилац царског достојанства патрикија. За самог Крешимира се сматра да је и након тога био на власти у Хрватској, на основу податка Томе Архиђакона да је сплитски архиепископ Дабрал изабран 1030. године у време његове владавине, али се та хронолошка одредница односи на самог архиепископа и не мора да буде прецизна у случају хрватског владара.

О Хрватској у периоду од 1028. до о. 1060. заправо се врло мало зна. У сачуваном корпусу хрватских раносредњовековних докумената, које је Н. Клаић означила као позносредњовековне фалсификате, само су две исправе датиране у тај период – исправа Јеленице, сестре бана Годемира, наводно из 1028. и она бана С., наводно из 1042–1044. Ни у једној од њих се не помиње савремени хрватски владар, обе су датиране само владавином византијских царева – прва Романа III Аргирија (1028–1034), друга Константина IX Мономаха (1042–1055), при чему се у другој ауктору повеље, бану С., придаје и византијско достојанство „царског протоспатара” (*imperialis protospatario*). Иако невешти у подражавању дипломатичких образаца, позносредњовековни фалсификатори из далматинских градова су морали имати макар елементарна историјска знања о прошлим епохама и личностима којима су приписивали одређена акта, тако да саме исправе нису у

потпуности лишене сваког историјског језгра. Стога би се могло поставити питање зашто поменуте две исправе њихови позносредњовековни састављачи нису приписали неком од хрватских владара, односно, нису ли на основу неких података сматрали да у време владавине царева Романа III Аргирија (1028–1034) и Константина IX Мономаха (1042–1055) није било посебних хрватских владара?

У вези с тим би требало размотрити и један последњих деценија научницима познат сигилографски податак. Сачуван је, наиме, један печат који према епиграфским одликама потиче из периода о. 950 – о. 1050. и који је према натпису на реверсу припадао „Лаву, царском спатарокандидату и ... Хрватске”. Пошто је место на коме је била назначена оштећено, његова функција није позната, али би се с великом извесношћу могло претпоставити да је у питању била функција архонта. То би значило да је Хрватска којом је управљао као архонт била територија која се налазила под непосредном царском владавином, али у којој није дошло до потпуне изградње тематског уређења. Имајући у виду оквирно датирање печата у период о. 950 – о. 1050, могла би се узети у обзир и теза коју је изнео М. Анчић, да је поменути Лав идентичан Лаву, царском протоспатару и катепану Далмације, који се помиње у исправама датираним у 1067. и 1069, што би значило да је функцију архонта Хрватске обављао пре него што је постао катепан Далмације, односно крајем прве половине XI века.

Могућност постојања византијског административног апарата у Хрватској крајем прве половине XI века наводи нас на помисао да је интервенција катепана Лангобардије Василија Војоана у Хрватској 1024. године, осим заробљавања жене и сина хрватског владара Крешимира и њихове интернације у Цариград имала као последицу и успостављање непосредне царске власти у Хрватској. Хрватски владар је приликом царске војне интервенције изгубио живот, или је пак његова смрт била повод за саму интервенцију, а његова жена и син су интернирани у Цариград како би се спречио сваки покушај рестаурације домаће управе. Претпоставку о постојању непосредне царске власти у Хрватској након похода Василија Војоана 1024. године би могао да поткрепи и сачувани нумизматички материјал, односно налази византијског новца кованог у време владавине цара Романа III Аргирија (1028–1034), који су како у далматинским градовима, тако и у њиховом хрватском залеђу, далеко бројнији од налаза новца свих осталих царева из X–XI века, што би заправо могло бити и сведочанство о чвршћем византијском присуству на том простору у време поменутог цара, које је захтевало већи прилив новца потребног за функционисање тамошње византијске администрације.

У то време пада и делатност Доброње, који се се обично идентификује са задарским приором и проконзулом и стратегом Далмације Гргуром из о. 1033–1036, или се пак сматра његовим братом, али сасвим сигурно није био тадашњи хрватски владар. Идеја да је у својој повести о Доброњи византијски писац Кекавмен помешао податке о заробљавању и интернацији Доброње са подацима о заробљавању и интернацији Крешимирове жене и сина из 1024. забележеним у јужноиталијанским аналима, није сасвим без основа.

Непосредна византијска владавина у Хрватској, успостављена после царске интервенције 1024. године није била дугог века. У позносредњовековним фалсификатима повеља хрватских владара, најранија исправа Петра Крешимира датирана је у фебруар 1060. У том и неким другим актима који се приписују истом владару се његов отац Стефан, син некадашњег владара Крешимира, назива краљем, што значи да су састављачи тих повеља за њега веровали да је био хрватски владар. Тома Архиђакон наводи да је сплитски архиепископ Лаврентије био у време хрватских краљева Стефана, Крешимира и Звонимира, али се сматра да је поменути Стефан био каснији владар Стефан II (1089–1091). У сваком случају, владавина Стефана I је припадала педесетим годинама XI века, што значи да је најкасније тада нестало непосредне византијске власти у Хрватској и дошло до обнове посебне хрватске државе, али околности услед којих се то догодило није могуће расветлити.

Оригиналан научни рад

Примљен: 28.3.2022.

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