

The Double Wreath A Contribution to the History of Kingship in Bosnia

Abstract: The fact that ban Tvrtko of Bosnia had maternal ties with Nemanjić dynasty and seized certain areas of the former Serbian Empire was used as a basis for him to be crowned king of the Serbs and Bosnia in 1377 in the monastery of Mileševa over the grave of Saint Sava. His charter issued to the Ragusans in 1378 contains the term “double wreath” which figuratively symbolized the rule of Tvrtko I over two Serb-inhabited states, Bosnia and Serbia. Tvrtko’s choice not to annex the conquered territory to his own state, Bosnia, but to be crowned king of Serbia as well required the development of a new ideology of kingship and a new form of legitimation of power. Although his royal title was recognized by his neighbours, including probably the rest of the Serbian lands, that the project was unrealistic became obvious in the aftermath of the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. What remained after his death was only the royal title, while the state ruled by his successors became exclusively related to Bosnia. Yet, echoes of his coronation in medieval Bosnia can be followed in the further development of the title and of the concept of crown and state. Interestingly, an attempt to revive the double crown concept was made in the early fifteenth century by the king Sigismund of Hungary, who requested that the Bosnians crown him the way Tvrtko had been crowned.

Keywords: Bosnia, Serbia, Tvrtko I, Hungary, double wreath, ideology of kingship, coronation

I

The most informative source for the coronation of Tvrtko as king is the proem of a charter to Ragusa (Dubrovnik) drawn up by the logothete Vladoje of Rascia [*Raška*] and dated 10 April 1378. It is probably not a coincidence that it is this “great charter”,¹ as the Ragusans later came to call it — the charter transferring to Tvrtko the Serbian kings’ rights in relation to Ragusa — that contains a concise and clear exposition of a medieval political theory.

Благоугодно и достоѣпно похваанти истинною вѣроу и желаное слово принести къ своему благодѣтелю владнцѣ Христуу. И да же всагьскаиа створенина и явленна быше на хвалословне божьствнаго смотренниа. Е же многсрдова о родѣ чловьцѣм иегоже створи во пречисты образь своего божьства, и дасть иму область и разумь яко бнти иму всѣмн земльннмн иестьствн и разумѣти и творити судь и правду по срѣде земле. Також же и мене своему рабу за многость своего божьства дарова процисти ми отраслн благосадиѣн во родѣ моемь и сподоби ме сугубиль вѣнцемь

¹ M. Dinić, *Odluke Veća Dubrovačke Republike I* (Belgrade 1951), 277.

ИАКО ОВОИ ВЛАДНІЦТВІА ИСПРАВАТИ ЛИ ПРЪВЪІЕ ОТ ИСПРЪКА ВЪ БОГОДАРОВАН'НЪИ НАДЪ ЗЕМЛІА БОСНЪ, ПОТОМЪ ЖЕ ГОСПОДУ МОЕМУ БОГУ СПОДОВАШУ МЕ НАСЛѢДОВАТИ ПРЪСТОЛЪ МОИХЪ ПРЪРОДИТЕЛЬ ГОСПОДЕ СРЪБЪСКЕ ЗАНИЕ ВО ТИ БЪХУ МОИ ПРЪРОДИТЕЛИ ВЪ ЗЕМЛЪНЪЕМЪ ЦАРСТВѢ ЦАРСТВОВАХЪ И НА НЕБЕСНОЕ ЦАРСТВО ПРЪСЕНАИ СЕ, МЕНЕ ЖЕ ВИДЕШТУ ЗЕМЛЮ ПРЪРОДИТЕЛЬ МОИХЪ ПО НИХЪ ОСТАВЪШУ И НЕ ИДУШТУ СВОЕГО ПАСТІРА, И НДОХЪ ВЪ СРЪБЪСКЮЮ ЗЕМЛЮ ЖЕЛАЕ И ХОТЕ УКРѢПНИТИ ПРЪСТОЛЪ РОДИТЕЛЬ МОИХЪ И ТАКО ШЪДШУ ЛИ ВЪНІАНЪ БЫХЪ БОГОМЪ ДАРОВАННИИ ЛИ ВЪНЦЕМЪ НА КРАЛЕВСТВО ПРЪРОДИТЕЛЬ МОИХЪ ИАКО БЫТИ ЛИ ѿ ХРИСТЪ ИСУСЕ БЛАГОВѢРОМУ И БОГОМЪ ПОСТАВЛЕН'НОМУ СТЕФАНУ КРАЛЮ СРЪБАКЕМЪ И БОСНЪ И ПОМОРИЮ И ЗАПАДНИИМЪ СТРАНАМЪ. И ПОТОМЪ НАЧЕХЪ СЪ БОГОМЪ КРАЛЕВАТИ И ПРАВИТИ ПРЪСТОЛЪ СРЪБЪСКІИЕ ЗЕМЛІЕ, ЖЕЛАЕ ПАДШАИ СЯ ВЪЗДВИГНУТИ И РАЗОРИШАИ СЕ УКРѢПНИТИ...

[It is pious and worthy to praise the true faith and to submit the word that one desires to one's benefactor, Christ the Lord, whose divine providence is praised through all creatures and phenomena and who was merciful on mankind, which He created in the image of His own divinity and gave it the power and the knowledge over all earthly nature, to comprehend and to pass judgment and justice upon the earth. In that same manner, He granted me, His servant, through the mercy of His divinity, to inherit and continue that which was planted by God in my kin, and dignified me with the double wreath, to rule both lands, first our originally God-granted land of Bosnia, and then my Lord God dignified me to inherit the throne of my forebears, the lords of Serbia, for those forebears of mine, having reigned in the earthly realm, passed to the heavenly one. And I, seeing the land of my forebears as it was left behind them, without its shepherd, went to the Serbian land wishing and wanting to restore the throne of my fathers. And having gone there, I was crowned with the God-granted wreath to the kingship of my forefathers, so that I should be Stefan [Stephen], faithful in Jesus Christ and God-appointed King of the Serbs and Bosnia and the Littoral and the Western Regions. And then with God's help I have begun to reign and to govern the throne of the Serbian land, wishing to lift up that which fell and to restore that which crumbled...]²

The term “double wreath” is used figuratively in the charter: it is double because it stands for the two states that have come under Tvrtko's rule, Serbia and Bosnia. When referring to the coronation and the actual crown later in the text, it is simply the *God-granted wreath*. The “double wreath” figure is only applicable there where the crown denotes something more than just a physical object and an emblem of authority. It is therefore reasonable to pose the question as to where the term “wreath” in its abstract meaning, symbolic of the state, in the logothete Vladoje's *proem* came from.

The term “wreath” can be traced to earlier Serbian documents, where it occurs in several different meanings: the martyr's wreath; the victor's

² Lj. Stojanović, *Stare srpske povelje i pisma*, vol. I (Belgrade – Srem. Karlovci 1929), 75–76.

wreath; a royal and imperial insignia; and the nuptial wreath.³ As early as the 1930s, A. Solovjev, examining the emergence of the concept of the state in the Slavic monarchies,⁴ studied the sources and collected all references of relevance to the question posed here. He showed that the Serbian “wreath” had covered all that the Greek *stephanos* had, and that its meaning of an insignia had only rarely been dissociated from its other meanings by introducing another word, such as *diadem*.⁵ In Byzantium, the term for the sovereign’s insignia that became established over time was *stemma*; this term was also in use in the Serbian chancery, as evidenced by the noun *stepsanije*.⁶

The “wreath” and “wreathing” are attested in the earliest Serbian sources; they had some importance for the Serbs of Rascia (*Raška*) as early as the late twelfth century. Transferring his powers as grand *župan* to his son Stefan in 1196, Nemanja “wreathed him and blessed him extraordinarily, just as Isaac had blessed Jacob”.⁷ The turning point was, however, the coronation of Stefan Nemanjić as king (1217). The fact that he was to be given the epithet “the First-Crowned” already in the time of his successors speaks of the impression the coronation left on the contemporaries and posterity. It appears that some western notions of the crown came to Serbia along with the crown itself.⁸ As Solovjev observed, this is evidenced by the term “свѣтнн вѣнъцъ” [holy wreath] which occurs in Domentijan.⁹ It is the exact translation of the Latin *sacra corona*, and has no equivalent in Byzantium.

³ L. Mirković, “Šta znači mramorni stub podignut na mestu kosovske bitke i šta kaže natpis na ovom stubu?”, *Zbornik Matice srpske za književnost i jezik* 9–10 (1961–62), 19–20.

⁴ A. Solovjev, “Corona regni. Die Entwicklung der Idee des Staates in den slawischen Monarchien”, in *Corona regni: Studien über die Krone als Symbol des Staates im späteren Mittelalter*, ed. M. Hellmann (Weimar 1961), 156–197. The study was originally published in Russian in *Przewodnik historyczno prawni* 4 (1933), 27–48, and in a somewhat revised version in Serbian (“Pojam države u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji”) in *Godišnjica Nikole Čupića* 42 (1933).

⁵ Solovjev, “Corona regni”, 172; S. Novaković, “Вѣнъц и днадима у српским krunidbenim ceremonijama”, *Rad JAZU* 43 (1878), 189–195.

⁶ S. Novaković, *Zakonski spomenici srpskih država srednjeg veka* (Belgrade 1912), 632; Solovjev, “Corona regni”, 178, n. 58.

⁷ *Spisi sv. Save*, ed. V. Ćorović (Belgrade – Srem. Karlovci 1928), 157.

⁸ The story of a purported second coronation of Stefan, which would not have had anything to do with Rome, is the result of Teodosije’s systematic rewriting of the earlier, Domentijan’s, biography of St Sava of Serbia. Domentijan involves Sava in the whole event, but does not conceal the pope’s role in Stefan’s coronation as king.

⁹ Domentijan, *Život svetoga Simeuna i svetoga Save*, ed. Dj. Daničić (Belgrade 1865), 246.

From the times of king Stefan Uroš II Milutin [r. 1282–1321], the “wreath” occurs several times in Serbian charters. Given that this decisive period saw the strongest wave of Byzantinization in the spheres of law and state, it is not surprising that the “wreath” is usually used in its meaning of an emblem of royal authority. As we have seen above, an abstract meaning had never developed in Byzantium. In the documents from the reign of Stefan Uroš III [popularly known as Stefan Dečanski, r. 1322–1331] and Stefan Uroš IV Dušan [r. 1331–1355], the wreath is as a rule used in its literal meaning.¹⁰ It is noteworthy, however, that in this very period there are also references, even if much rarer, which indicate that the meaning of the wreath as something more than just an insignia had not disappeared altogether. In the sanction of king Milutin’s charter to the monastery of St Nicholas in Hvosno, we can read: и ѿть богодарованного намъ вѣнца да буде проклатъ [and may he be cursed by our God-granted wreath].¹¹

There is no doubt whatsoever that the “wreath” is not used here in its literal meaning of a royal insignia. Here the “God-granted wreath” is dissociated from the person of its current bearer and belongs instead to an entire string of rulers. As observed by A. Solovjev, here the “wreath” is personified; it is able to curse like the persons listed in the sanction.¹² Even if we do not go as far as Solovjev did in his conclusion that here “the notion of the crown as a subject of state authority occurs for the first time in Serbian law”, it should be said that what we have here is the notion of the crown as a transpersonal symbol of kingship.

The “wreath” used in this sense in later charters is not just a stereotyped repetition of a chancery formula. This can best be seen from Stefan Dušan’s charter of 2 May 1355 threatening with a curse by “all holy Orthodox emperors and by the God-granted holy wreath of my emperorship”.¹³ The contamination is quite interesting: the expression “my emperorship” highlights the distinction between the sovereign’s person and his title; the “holy Orthodox emperors” are also compatible with Byzantine notions, but the “holy wreath” by no means is. Still more interesting for our topic is a place in Dušan’s charter for the monastery of the Virgin at Arhiljevica which

¹⁰ Solovjev, “Corona regni”, 175.

¹¹ F. Miklosich, *Monumenta Serbica* (Vindobonae 1858), 71. Cf. Solovjev, “Corona regni”, 176, n. 64; Solovjev, “Pojam države”, 83. According to V. Mošin, “Sankcija u vizantijskoj i u južnoslovenskoj ćirilskoj diplomaciji”, *Anali Historijskog instituta u Dubrovniku* 3 (1954), 36, 38, n. 60, and 40, the same element occurs in the sanctions of three charters of Stefan of Dečani and in three charters of Dušan.

¹² Solovjev, “Corona regni”, 178.

¹³ Miklosich, *Monumenta Serbica*, 143. Cf. M. J. Dinić, “Srpska vladarska titula u vreme carstva”, *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 5 (1958), 11.

Solovjev failed to notice. At the end of the proem praising Stefan Nemanja, Dušan begins to speak of himself: *якоже молитвою и помощію сподобльшоу се быти сынаслѣдннкоу того добрыи дѣломъ мнѣ, прьволоу и благовьрноу богомъ поставленому царю Стефану, обновльшому прьвѣи царьскѣи вѣнць срьбьскон и поморскон земли, и царствуюшѣ ми землекю грѣьскою и всемоу Поморію и всемъ западнымъ странамъ и всеи днсоу* [It is through his prayer and help that I, the first faithful in God and God-appointed emperor Stefan, who renewed the first regal wreath of the Serbian and Littoral land and who reign over the Greek land and all the Littoral and all the Western Regions and all Dysos, was deemed fit to be an inheritor of his good deeds].¹⁴ The “first wreath”, which corresponds to the Serbian kingdom of the Nemanjić and tacitly implies a second, is only a step away from a “double wreath”.

All the above is enough to show that the notion of the wreath as a transpersonal symbol of kingship was known in Serbia, and was an enduring one. In Tvrtko’s milieu, it was the logothete Vladoje of Rascia who splendidly accommodated this notion to the needs of the moment by devising the unique formula¹⁵ of the double wreath that God bestowed on Tvrtko for the two states he came to rule over.

The double wreath doctrine was predicated on the premise that the ban of Bosnia was the successor of the Serbian Nemanjić dynasty. Only if he lawfully succeeded to the throne of Serbia would he be entitled to the double crown. This is why the proem of the 1378 charter expressly claims that the Serbian lords, the ban’s forebears, moved from the earthly to the heavenly kingdom,¹⁶ and that the Serbian land has been left without its

¹⁴ Dinić, “Srpska vladarska titula”, 9–10.

¹⁵ The precious volume *Corona regni. Studien über die Krone als Symbol des Staates im späteren Mittelalter* (Weimar 1961), edited by Prof. Manfred Hellmann, contains studies on the crowns of England, France, Bohemia, Poland, Hungary and Russia, a very important comparative material covering almost all of Europe, but there is nothing resembling the “double wreath”.

¹⁶ Stojanović, *Povelje i pisma* I, 76. The concepts and terms in the 1378 proem draw on the ideological legacy of the Nemanjić, expressed in earlier Serbian charters. E.g. the charter of King Stefan Dečanski, *Monumenta Serbica* 88, makes a reference to the forebears who replaced “земельнымъ царствомъ небесною житію” [the earthly realm with heavenly life]. Dušan is also “отрасль благаго корене” [a shoot from the blessed stock] in the charter to the Kellion of St Sabas at Karyes, *Monumenta Serbica* 89; Stefan of Dečani is “сынъ и наследникъ светаго корѣне ихъ, вѣтьвь и отрасль” [the son and heir of their holy stock, their branch and sprout], *Monumenta Serbica* 89. The phrase about the coronation in this charter is very similar to the one used in Tvrtko’s charter: *и Богомъ дарованныи вѣнцьемъ краљевства срьпьскаго вѣнчанъ быхъ на краљевство* [and with the God-granted wreath of the Serbian kingdom I was crowned to kingship], *Monumenta Serbica* 90.

shepherd.¹⁷ Tvrtko's claim that he was related to the Nemanjić by blood was not unfounded.

The need to emphasize Tvrtko's tie of kinship with the house of Nemanjić as strongly as possible appears to have led to the creation of the earliest known Serbian genealogy. As shown by Dj. Sp. Radojičić, it was put together at a time when Tvrtko was still a ban somewhere in the part of Serbian lands which had come under his rule, perhaps at the monastery of Mileševa.¹⁸ It should be noted that the *proem* of the 1378 charter takes all members of the house of Nemanjić as a ruling family; they all are Tvrtko's "forebears", including the recently late emperor Stefan Uroš V, who could hardly be called a relative, let alone a forebear. This shows that what was insisted upon was the holy origin of the Nemanjić rather than an actual genealogical link.¹⁹ The Nemanjić family tradition no doubt influenced the shaping and spreading of the genealogical tradition of the Bosnian ban family. An early charter issued by Tvrtko contains a genealogy of the family going back to Prijezda [ban 1250–1287]. The story that the Kotromanić family had been ruling Bosnia "from the beginning", that they were of German, i.e. "Gothic", origin, is not encountered until the fifteenth century, and neither is the family name.²⁰ At any rate, the legacy of the Bosnian forebears gave the right to double the wreath, which, according to the proem, is the wreath "на краљевство прѣродителъ ѡнихъ" [of the kingdom of my forebears] the Serbian lords, and the right to call it the "double wreath".

The stage for building the double crown doctrine had been set by the course of political events in the 1370s. It is known that Tvrtko did not follow in the footsteps of his paternal uncle, Stjepan II [ban 1322–1353], and did not exploit the rise of territorial lords at the heart of the Serbian Empire to grab hold of the adjacent Serbian lands. He was also quite passive during the war that Vojislav Vojinović waged against Ragusa; he acted as an intermediary when his vassalage to the Hungarian king required that he be Ragusa's ally and supporter.²¹ He became more active only when he was faced with the aggressive policy of *župan* Nikola Altomanović [nephew

¹⁷ The expression that the Serbian land has been "left without its shepherd" is an explicit proof that the heirs of king Vukašin and emperor Simeon Uroš (Siniša) were ignored in the Serbian core areas.

¹⁸ Dj. Sp. Radojičić, "Doba postanka i razvoj starih srpskih rodoslova", *Istoriski glasnik* 2 (1948), 23–24.

¹⁹ See n. 16 above.

²⁰ L. Thallóczy, *Studien zur Geschichte Bosniens und Serbiens im Mittelalter* (Munich–Leipzig 1914), 332. Cf. V. Čorović, "Pitanje o poreklu Kotromanića", *Prilozi KJIF* 15 (1925), 15–20.

²¹ J. Tadić, *Pisma i uputstva Dubrovačke Republike I* (Belgrade 1935), 73.

of Vojislav Vojinović].²² As far as may be inferred from the surviving documents, Tvrtko's hostile relations with Nikola brought him into closer contact with the Serbian lands and lords. The result was his alliance with prince Lazar and their joint campaign against and defeat of Nikola Altomanović. The significance of this victory was twofold: it cemented Tvrtko's alliance with prince Lazar, and brought him a considerable portion of the Serbian lands. Now the lord of a large territory — from the river Lim to the river Neretva, and from the upper Drina valley to the Adriatic Sea — until recently part of the Serbian state, Tvrtko found himself facing an important turning point. He could follow in the footsteps of his predecessor, ban Stjepan II, and simply annex the captured territory to the Bosnian core area (as Stjepan II had done with the region of Hum) and, possibly, expand his title accordingly. We do not and cannot know what led Tvrtko not to opt for this simpler, if less ambitious, solution. He chose another one instead: to join his earlier and freshly-gained possessions to the Serbian state and, at the same time, to emerge as the restorer of the Serbian monarchy.

After the defeat of Nikola Altomanović, the political map of the Serbian lands became much simpler: what was left of the Serbian Empire was ruled independently by Prince Lazar, Vuk Branković, Djuradj Balšić, Radič Branković²³ and ban Tvrtko. The idea of the state as one entity did not quite die away though; room was left even in practical matters for the possibility of someone “becoming the lord emperor of the Serbs and the nobility and the Serbian land”.²⁴ None of the Serbian territorial lords had much prospect of imposing his authority on the others; there was no difference among them in authority, either in its nature or in its origin, none was above the others. Unlike the first generation of lords after emperor Stefan Dušan's death, they neither bore high-sounding titles, nor had the glory and authority of imperial generals, nor were the ruler's relatives.²⁵ None of

²² M. Dinić, *O Nikoli Altomanoviću* (Belgrade: SKA spec. eds. CX, 1931).

²³ M. Dinić, “Rastislalići. Prilog istoriji raspadanja srpskog carstva”, *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 2 (1953), 139–144.

²⁴ Stojanović, *Povelje i pisma* I, 107.

²⁵ The need of the fifteenth-century ruling dynasties, the Lazarević and the Branković, to present themselves as descendants, however distant, of the Nemanjić, was too great and the aura brought by the “saintly lineage” too tempting to permit us to accept the genealogical link suggested by the genealogies and encomia as a fact. On the contrary, the link is so fabricated, and in a manner so easy to see through, that none of it should be seen as any different from such genealogical fabrications as the one tracing Nemanja's ancestry to Constantine the Great. This all is quite irrelevant anyway; what is relevant is that in the fifteenth century the Lazarević, more precisely Stefan Lazarević, and the Branković were presented and accepted as descendants of the Nemanjić. For our topic, it is important to stress that all sources about it point to the fifteenth century, and that

them could seriously think of assuming the role of the restorer of Serbian kingship or emperorship; there was a deep gap separating them from the “holy” Nemanjić family.

As the lord of the territory between the Neretva and Lim rivers, ban Tvrtko played a role in the further Serbian political development which was equal to that of any other territorial lord. His authority over Serbian lands was essentially the same as that of the other lords: neither he nor they inherited them; they took them by the sword. But his position was considerably different from the position of the Serbian territorial lords: he was the ruler of a state, a member of a distinguished ruling family and, moreover, distantly related to the Nemanjić. All this gave him the opportunity to appear not in the role of the conqueror of territories of the former Serbian Empire, like his uncle and predecessor, but as the restorer of the Serbian monarchy. The “double wreath” doctrine served this purpose.

Tvrtko emphasizes his kingship as kingship over Serbia in the well-known proem quoted in the introduction: and then with God’s help I have begun to reign and to govern the throne of the Serbian land.²⁶ In the proem of the charter on the closing down of the salt market at Dračevica, he presents himself as one in the sequence of the Serbian monarchs: СПОДОКЛЕНЬ БЫХЪ ВЪНЬЦА И ЧЪСТН И КСУФЕТРА ЦАРСКА ПРЪВЫХЪ МОНХЪ РОДИТЕЛЬ СВЪТЫХЪ ГОСПОДЕ СРЪБЬСКЕ КРАЛІЕВЪ И ЦАРЬ И ПОСЛѢДУЮЩЕ ЖИТІЮ НХЪ И ВЪРЪКЪ И ПРАВНОМЪ ЦАРЬСКИМЪ И ВСА НЕДОСТАТЪНАІА ИСПРАВИЕ ВЪ ЗЕМЛІАХЪ БОГОДАРОВАННОГО МН КРАЛІЕВЪСТВА [I was deemed fit of the wreath and the dignity and the regal sceptre of my previous saintly fathers, the Serbian lords kings and emperors, and I follow their life and faith and regal regulations and set to right all that is improper in the lands of my God-granted kingdom].²⁷ But Tvrtko does not stop at words; he takes over the rights that belonged to the Serbian monarchs.²⁸ He feels himself bound by contracts and obliged to honour the agreement that was in force between the Serbian kings and Ragusa. His main motive for abolishing the salt market is to abide by законѣ прѣвѣ што су имѣли ДУБРОВЦІАНЕ з господомъ РАШКОМЪ [the previous agreements the Ragusans had with the rulers of Rascia].²⁹ While fighting for Kotor [Cattaro] and after seizing it, he

there are no information that could make it even remotely probable that prince Lazar and lord Vuk had been in the aftermath of the Battle of the Maritsa (1371) wrapped up in the legend that enhanced the prestige of their successors.

²⁶ Stojanović, *Povelje i pisma* I, 76.

²⁷ Ibid. 84.

²⁸ Above all, the so-called St Demetrios’ Day tribute. Cf. M. Dinić, “Dubrovački tributi. Mogoriš, Svetodmitarski i Konavaoski dohodak, Provizun braće Vlatkovića”, *Glas* 168 (1935), 232–233.

²⁹ Stojanović, *Povelje i pisma* I, 85.

underlines that it is the city of his predecessors.³⁰ Finally, he sends his troops to the Battle of Kosovo (1389), deeming that it is his kingdom that is fighting the battle there. From his perspective, Tvrtko had reasons to believe and trumpet to the world that he had won a great victory.³¹

Well-informed Ragusans, who chose to recognize Tvrtko as Serbian king in the form of address and in acknowledging his right to the St Demetrios' Day tribute, did not fail to notice a shift in his politics after the coronation. During the precarious period caused by the war between Venice and Genoa in 1378, their message to King Louis I of Hungary is: *quod rex Rassie habet expedire sua servicia de regno Rassie*.³² They are even more specific in their reply to the Hungarian envoy: *dominus rex Bossine et Rassie usque nunc iuvit nos quociens auxilium petivimus ab eo, set a modo innate, quia habet facere sua servari que intromisit de regno Rassie et est nobis longinquior, quod erat usque nunc*.³³ So, the double wreath did not remain a political theory, it was a political project set afoot.

Yet, we do not know the actual scope of Tvrtko's influence in Serbia. Jireček was quite confident in his time: "Of the Serbian rulers, Lazar [Hrebeljanović] and Vuk [Branković] no doubt consented to this act [coronation], but the Balšić did not."³⁴ The Balšić indeed did not recognize Tvrtko as king; they had been in hostile relations or at war with him for years. They would have at best recognized his title while they were in negotiations or in times of peace. The sources offer no information about the stance held by Lazar and Vuk. The fact that they were in good relations and acted in coordination may be in favour of the view that they recognized Tvrtko as king of the Serbs. Lazar must have needed support in 1379, when he campaigned against Radič Branković and considerably expanded his territory once more. Lazar and Tvrtko jointly helped Croatian lords in their opposition to the Hungarian queens and Sigismund of Luxemburg. There is also an argument *ex silencio*: Lazar and Vuk made no contracts with Ragusa until 1387, whereas the Balšić did in 1377 and again in 1385. The likely reason for this cannot be Ragusa's lack of interest, since there is reliable evidence

³⁰ ... civitas *prededessorum nostrum* Catharensis feliciter ad manus nostre maiestatis perpetually preventit, in Š. Ljubić, *Listine od odnošajih između južnoga slaventva i Mletačke republike I-X* (Zagreb: JAZU, 1868–1891), vol. IV, 221.

³¹ V. Makushev, *Istoricheskie pamiatniki Iuzhnikh Slaviani i sosednikh im narodov* (Warsaw 1875). Cf. S. Novaković, *Srbi i Turci u XIV i XV veku*, 2nd. ed. (Belgrade 1960), 455 (with my additions).

³² Monumenta Ragusina IV, 178; M. Dinić, "O krunisanju Tvrtka I za kralja", *Glas* 147 (1932), 145.

³³ Monumenta Ragusina IV, 177; Dinić, "O krunisanju Tvrtka I", 145.

³⁴ K. Jireček, *Istorija Srba* I, 2nd. ed. (Belgrade 1952), 320.

that Ragusan merchants operated in Serbia in the period between 1377 and 1387 as well. In the best-case scenario for Tvrtko, prince Lazar and Vuk Branković recognized him both as king of the Serbs and as their overlord. But even if this was the case, one should distinguish three parts of Tvrtko's kingdom in practical terms: the old Bosnian lands; the Serbian lands which (the same as Kotor) came under Tvrtko's direct control by the time of or after his coronation; and, finally, the Serbian lands controlled by Serbian territorial lords and thus only indirectly and theoretically under Tvrtko's rule. In time, what belonged to the different parts of the "double wreath" became more and more integrated, but in Tvrtko's hands. The Bosnian part of the state was a reality, while the restored Serbian kingdom remained a matter of claims and pretensions.

At the same time when Lazar and Vuk made contracts with Ragusa replicating the provisions contained in the emperor Dušan's charter, the Serbian territorial lords issued the well-known recommendations for Michael, metropolitan of Jerusalem. From these Jireček inferred that Lazar, Vuk Branković and Djuradj Stracimir Balšić had replaced the Serbian emperor as equals.³⁵ The metropolitan of Jerusalem, who was prince Lazar's guest in Serbia in 1387, did not appeal to Tvrtko in the case of Ragusa's unpaid tribute to the Jerusalem monks. This shows that Orthodox ecclesiastical circles did not bank on the king seriously. It need not be said how disadvantageous for Tvrtko's position in Serbia and how decisive for the fate of restored Serbian kingship it was.

Conspicuously, the first signs of the Serbian regional lords' growing independence become observable precisely at the time when Tvrtko begins to pursue a more active policy in the West. It also seems that the Serbian-Bosnian union and, consequently, the reality of Tvrtko's Serbian kingship, grew thinner with time. A counterproof, on the other hand, is the Battle of Kosovo, which is an evidence of Tvrtko's still strong aspirations and of a policy informed by these aspirations. It should be noted, however, that the overall situation and mutual relations in those years are not quite clear: Tvrtko is in fierce enmity with Sigismund of Luxemburg and he forces Dalmatian towns into surrender, whereas early that year Lazar reconciles with Sigismund through the mediation of his son-in-law Nicholas Garay. In June, the armies of Tvrtko, Lazar and Vuk fight together at Kosovo, which is in the territory ruled by Vuk Branković; in July, Sigismund, preparing a campaign against the "Bosnian ban",³⁶ sends his emissary to Vuk Branković; in November, he raids into Serbia, into the lands of Lazar's heir.

³⁵ *Zbornik Konstantina Jirečeka I* (Belgrade 1959), 451.

³⁶ G. Fejer, *Codex diplomaticus regni Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis* X/2, 311. The charter was published under an erroneous date, 1395, which was then corrected to 1394 in our

Be that as it may, it is in the aftermath of the Battle of Kosovo that the unfeasibility and unreality of Tvrtko's Serbian kingship becomes patently obvious. Lazar has been killed in the battle, and his successors recognize Ottoman suzerainty; Vuk takes the side of Sigismund of Luxemburg; and Tvrtko takes a political turn towards the West. Even the theoretical recognition of Tvrtko as king must have ceased in Serbia, if it had endured throughout the period at all. It meant the end of Tvrtko's concept of kingship as the restored Serbian monarchy of which Bosnia was but one, and not the most important, part. The kingship survives nonetheless, none of Tvrtko's successors relinquishes it: the title and a little something of Tvrtko's times survive, but the state becomes only and exclusively Bosnian. As a result of Ottoman suzerainty and growing pressure, in the reign of Dabiša and Helen [1391–1398] the Serbian lands and the Bosnian state territories are finally separated. After the Battle of Angora [1402], the despot of Serbia stands by Sigismund of Luxemburg, whereas Bosnia is his bitter enemy. The grant of Srebrenica to Serbia by Hungary becomes a bone of contention between Serbia and Bosnia, leading to wars and long-standing antagonisms.

With this separation, the memory of the nature of Tvrtko's kingship begins to fade. When the logothete Vladoje's proem of 1378 was copied in the chancery of king Ostoja, the reference to the "double wreath" and Tvrtko's coronation as Serbian king was omitted, only the reference to the Serbian rulers as the king's forebears was kept.³⁷ By force of circumstance, king Sigismund of Luxemburg happened to be the most loyal to Tvrtko's concept. In 1408, and again in 1410, he requests that the subjugated Bosnians crown him in the manner in which Tvrtko was crowned in his times. In October 1410, the Ragusans, in reply to the notification of the request, confirm that they will send envoys *ala incoronation del signor nostro deli regnami di Rassa et di Bosna*.³⁸ It has been remembered at Sigismund's court that it was a coronation with the crown of two states. Sigismund's wish to be crowned with a "double wreath" is quite understandable. As suzerain of both states, he was above the division into the Bosnian kingdom and the Serbian despotate. When unification was attempted once more in the last days of both states, no one reached back for Tvrtko's concept. As is well known, the whole thing was carried out in such a way that the crown prince of Bosnia was made despot of Serbia [Stefan Tomašević].

historiography. In fact, it was issued in 1389, as has been shown long ago; Törteneelmi tár 1908, 47; Századok 1875, 165. Cf. S. Ćirković, "O 'Djakovačkom ugovoru,'" *Istorijski glasnik* 1–4 (1962), 9–10, n. 17.

³⁷ Stojanović, *Povelje i pisma* I, 421.

³⁸ J. Gelchic, *Diplomatarium relationum Reipublicae Ragusanae cum regno Hungariae* (Budapest 1887), 198.

Concurrently with the political separation, the boundary that had been randomly drawn at the partitioning of the territory of Nikola Altomanović grew clearer and deeper: it became part of Serbia's border.

II

Little is known about the circumstances of Tvrtko's coronation. The date has been established by M. Dinić: St. Demetrios' Day, 26 October 1377.³⁹ As for the site of the coronation, researchers, relying on Mauro Orbini, whose story about the coronation obviously relies on an earlier source, now lost, are unanimous. According to Mauro Orbini, Tvrtko was crowned king at the monastery of Mileševa by the local metropolitan.⁴⁰ The arguments cited in favour of this version have been that the monastery was under Tvrtko's rule, that St. Sava of Serbia had been buried in it, that it was an important centre of the cult of the Nemanjić. It has been emphasized that there are references, even though of a later date, to the metropolitan of Mileševa.⁴¹

The efforts to identify the site of the coronation have not taken too much into account the *proem* of the 1378 charter, which expressly says the following: и ндохъ въ сръбьскую землю [and I went to the Serbian land].⁴² It has probably been tacitly assumed that this expression fully tallies with Orbini's narrative. As far as we know, no one has ever posed the question how likely it is that Tvrtko would have said "I went to the Serbian land" in reference to his visit to Mileševa, to a territory under his direct rule. Nor has anyone asked if Tvrtko might have been crowned somewhere else in Serbia, perhaps at the monastery of Žiča. The issue ultimately amounts to the relationship between Orbini's narrative and the piece of information contained in the charter for Ragusa. Should it turn out that the information in the charter contradicts Orbini, the information supplied by the learned Ragusan abbot will have to be relegated to legend, joining many others.

According to the 1378 *proem*, Tvrtko went to the Serbian land to strengthen the throne of his forebears, and there he was crowned king of the kingdom of his forebears. It does not necessarily follow from the context that this refers to a Serbian land beyond his direct rule. It would be vital to establish how the expression "Serbian land" was used in Tvrtko's

³⁹ Dinić, "O krunisanju Tvrtka I", 135–142.

⁴⁰ Ora essendo Tuartco per la conquista di tanti paesi salito in gran superbia, gli venne capriccio d'incoronarsi, e intitolarsi Rè di Rassia. La qual cosa comunicando con Lodouico Rè di Vngaria ciò restò molto contento, et fù del 1276. incoronato dal Metropolitanano del Monasterio di Milesceuo, et dalli suoi monaci nella Chiesa di ditto lugo: et si fece chiamar Stefano Mirce, in M. Orbini, *Il regno degli Slavi* (Pesaro 1601), 358.

⁴¹ S. Radojčić, *Mileševa* (Belgrade 1963), 41–42.

⁴² Stojanović, *Povelje i pisma I*, 421.

chancery. But the surviving documents from that period are so few that an answer to that question can hardly be deduced. The portion of the 1382 charter which speaks of the king's activity вЪ зЕМЛѦХЪ БОГОДАРОВАННОГО МН КРАЛѢВСТВА [in the lands of my God-granted kingdom]⁴³ makes mention of the construction of a fortress вЪ ПРИМОРИИ ВЪ ЖУПѢ ДРАЧЕВИЧКОИ [in the coastland, in the *župa* of Dračevica].⁴⁴ The term "coastland" [*primorje*] is too vague to permit any inferences as to how his newly-gained Serbian territories were termed. The charter of 1378 mentions the king's arrival in the immediate vicinity of Ragusa: и дошѣдшѹ мн зЕМЛѢ ПОМОРСКИЕ и тѹ ПРИШѣДШѹ мн ПРѢДЪ СЛАВНИИ и ДОБРОНАРОЧИТИИ ГРАДЪ ДУБРОВНИК [and when I came to the littoral lands and when I arrived before the glorious and fortunate city of Dubrovnik].⁴⁵ A portion of the newly-gained territories, which were under Tvrtko's direct rule, is called the "littoral" land [*pomorska zemlja*], quite in the style of the Serbian chancery. It is known that the state ruled by the Nemanjić as designated in the royal title, and in the sources, consisted of the "Serbian land" and the "littoral [land]". It is the use of the appellation "littoral land" for the annexed regions that makes it probable that the term "Serbian land" might have been used for the inland territories under Tvrtko's rule as well; even more so as the contemporaries perceived the boundary separating the lands which came under Tvrtko's rule from the others as neither ancient nor deep-cut.

Some subsequent events may be quoted in favour of Orbini's version. When in 1408, after years of warring, king Sigismund of Luxemburg achieved a more significant success, he imposed on a part of the Bosnian nobility the obligation to crown him as they had crowned king Tvrtko. Sigismund's charter for Ivaniš Nelipčić reveals what this nobleman promised: *nostramque maistatem in regem et dominum suum naturalem unacum aliis id similiter assumpmentibus assumpmens, corona dicti regni Bozne insignire, solemniter et honorifice, quemadmodum olym rex Twertthk regnavit*.⁴⁶ The following year, 1409, Sigismund was preparing himself for coronation, but it did not take place. And when Ragusan envoys came to Sigismund in Bosnia in 1410, it was known che li Bossignani sanno [!] rinduti al signore et a facto concordio et che quisti giurni lo incoronarano del regno.⁴⁷ This coronation, though unrealized again, was imaginable and viable only within the borders of the then Bosnian state, and not somewhere in the Despotate

⁴³ Ibid. 84.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 77.

⁴⁶ F. Šišić, "Nekoliko isprava iz početka XV stoljeća", *Starine* 39 (1938), 313.

⁴⁷ Gelcich, *Diplomatarium Ragusanum*, 198.

of Serbia. But for us to be able to use all this as direct evidence for Tvrtko's coronation, two more things need to be established conclusively: that the terms stipulated by king Sigismund did not change from 1408 to 1410 and, even more importantly, that he wanted to imitate Tvrtko in every respect, including the site of coronation.

Virtually nothing can be said about the coronation ceremony, even though N. Radojčić devoted a small book to the issue. He collated all available information about the coronation of the Serbian monarchs and took into account the results of the studies of coronation practices in Byzantium and Western Europe. Nonetheless, very little could be gleaned for Bosnia, except that Tvrtko had to undergo an Orthodox coronation.⁴⁸

III

The 1378 charter also contains the earliest recorded royal title: *цкѡ быти лии ѡ христѣ и сусе благовѣрному и Богомъ поставленому Стефану краљу Србљемъ и Боснѣ и Поморню и Западинимъ странама* [faithful in Jesus Christ and God-appointed Stefan King of the Serbs and Bosnia and the Littoral and the Western Regions].⁴⁹ In this form, the intitulation is a clear and unambiguous expression of Tvrtko's concept of restored Serbian kingship. By taking a place for himself in the succession of the Serbian monarchs whom he saw as his forebears, Tvrtko took the Serbian monarchic title. In doing that, he got round the imperial title and chose the royal one instead. His motives may be surmised. In some circles, notably in the Serbian Church, Dušan's coronation as emperor was considered an illegal act of self-will contrary to human and divine laws.⁵⁰ In Tvrtko's milieu the Serbian emperor was not so frowned upon: the proem of the 1382 charter mentions Serbian kings and emperors.⁵¹ What might have played a more immediate role in Tvrtko's decision was the fact that he had to have the assent of his overlord, the Hungarian king. It is unimaginable that the Angevin would have assented

⁴⁸ N. Radojčić, *Obred krunisanja kralja Tvrtka* (Belgrade 1948), 80–82.

⁴⁹ Stojanović, *Povelje i pisma I*, 77.

⁵⁰ Well known are the condemnations of Dušan in the biography of patriarch Sava, in Uglješa's charter concerning the restoration of ecclesiastical unity, and even in the biography of despot Stefan Lazarević. In secular circles, especially among Serbian and Bosnian territorial lords, Dušan was held in high esteem. This may be inferred from the fact that the Ragusans never failed to tie the provisions of their contracts to Dušan, or to glorify and extol the emperor in their negotiations with their neighbours.

⁵¹ Stojanović, *Povelje i pisma I*, 84.

to Tvrtko's coronation as emperor, even more so because he had not recognized the imperial title either to Dušan or to his son and heir, Uroš.⁵²

So, Tvrtko took the Serbian royal title, but with elements which had emerged and became established during the empire. The very form "of the Serbs" is related to Dušan's "of the Serbs and Greeks", whereas in the old royal title the Serbian or Rascian land had figured first.⁵³ Bosnia was added, and it stood for all Bosnian territories individually listed in the ban title.⁵⁴ M. J. Dinić demonstrated that "Pomorje" in the imperial title had not stood for the "littoral lands" from the royal title of the Nemanjić, but for the part of the territories seized from Byzantium. "Pomorje belonged to the Greek or Romaion lands."⁵⁵ Strictly speaking, "Pomorje" in Tvrtko's title did not correspond to any real area; it was there as a mechanical reproduction of the Serbian title. However, attempts were made early on to identify it with the coastal areas which were under the Bosnian rulers. "Pomorje" was replaced with "Primorje", and the latter was understood literally, as an area by the sea. Thus, "Primorje" features instead of "Pomorje" already in the signature in Tvrtko's charter of 1382. Even though "Pomorje" can be found in the Bosnian royal title even later, it is more often than not replaced with "Primorje".⁵⁶

The same goes for the appellation "Western Regions" in Tvrtko's title. Neither did this term correspond to any of the territories ruled by Tvrtko effectively or nominally. It too is a mechanically adopted element of the Serbian imperial title, where it had also referred to a territory seized from Byzantium.⁵⁷

The changing title of the Bosnian kings generally reflects the changing concept of kingship. For Tvrtko, it is still a mechanical borrowing and shows little effort to make modifications: the replacement of Pomorje with Primorje and, in the last years, the inclusion of Croatia and Dalmatia. Tvrtko's immediate successor, Stefan Dabiša, incorporates the entire ban title into the royal title, while retaining all elements of the Serbian title. So, along with "the Serbs", along with Pomorje, Western Regions and Bosnia, there reappear: the Land of Hum, the Lower Regions, Usora, Soli and Podrinje

⁵² M. J. Dinić, "Dušanova carska titula u očima savremenika", in *Zbornik u čast šeste stogodišnjice Zakonika cara Dušana I* (Belgrade 1951), 113–114.

⁵³ Dinić, "Srpska vladarska titula", 9–10.

⁵⁴ Dinić, "O krunisanju Tvrtka I", 142, shows that Tvrtko had never styled himself as banus Bossine et rex Rassie, but that it was a title that was only rarely and in the early days used by the Ragusans.

⁵⁵ Dinić, "Srpska vladarska titula", 11.

⁵⁶ Cf. S. Stanojević, "Studije o srpskoj diplomaciji II. Intitulacija", *Glas* 92 (1913), 125–133.

⁵⁷ Dinić, "Srpska vladarska titula", 10.

[Drina river valley].⁵⁸ The Western Regions are pulled out of the original sequence and inserted between the Lower Regions, Usora or Podrinje; obviously this term also came to refer to an actual territory, which was ranked among the last. The title of the Bosnian kings becomes fixed in the following form: N. N. “king of the Serbs, Bosnia, Primorje, Land of Hum, Lower Region, Usora, Podrinje, Western Regions etc.”⁵⁹ There is also a shorter version, which is closer to the original Serbian form: N. N. “king of the Serbs, Bosnia and Primorje etc.”⁶⁰

Adopted along with the Serbian title were the formulae, essentially Byzantine: “pious in Christ the God” and “ordained by God”, but they were used alternately with “by the grace of God” from the title of ban of Bosnia.

When Tvrtko became king, he also became Stefan. “God does not ordain him only as king but also as Stefan, if one may say so.”⁶¹ The name Stefan was and remained an integral part of the title of the Bosnian kings and, at the same time, a lasting reminder of the origin of their kingship. The meaning of the name had been symbolic of the state already in Serbia; from Nemanja onwards, Stefan was the name, or part of the name, of every Serbian monarch. A reliable explanation for this has not been offered yet.⁶² To Tvrtko, the name Stefan became more important than his first personal name. In the documents issued after the coronation, the name Tvrtko never stands alone, but rather Stefan Tvrtko or, not infrequently, only Stefan.⁶³

All Tvrtko’s successors on the throne of Bosnia bore the name Stefan: Stefan Dabiša, Stefan Ostoja, Stefan Ostojić, Stefan Tvrtko Tvrtković, Stefan Tomaš and Stefan Stepan Tomašević. The case of the latter is the most

⁵⁸ Stanojević, “Studije o srpskoj diplomaciji II”, 125–126.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ It is interesting that the Latin version of the Bosnian royal title did not develop in parallel with the Slavic one. In it, “of the Serbs” is always replaced with Rascia; the Western Parts are omitted altogether; and the lands listed in the ban title never occur. The Latin version also occurs in a shorter and a longer form. The normal form would be: N.N. dei gratia rex Rassie, Bosne et Maritime (or partiumque maritimarum or partis maritime). The shorter form, attested for Tvrtko II and Tomaš is: N. N. rex Bosne etc. For only a brief time at the beginning of Tvrtko II’s second reign does the quite short form *краль Боснѣ и к томѣ* [King of Bosnia etc.] occur in Serbian charters as well. Stojanović, *Povelje i pisma* I, 503, 505, 509 and 510.

⁶¹ M. Dinić, “Veliki bosanski zlatnik”, *Istoriski časopis* 3 (1952), 45.

⁶² The particular meaning of this name has been related to the Greek word “stephanos” (crown) or with St Stephen, the purported patron saint of the Nemanjić dynasty. The claim that the name Stefan was a “taboo” among the medieval Serbs cannot be taken seriously. I. Popović, “Hrišćanska grčka onomastika u Hrvata”, *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 5 (1958), 93, drawing on T. Vukanović.

⁶³ Dinić, “Veliki bosanski zlatnik”, 45.

illustrative. He was obviously baptized Stepan, but in the official documents another form of the same name was being added to it, to highlight the difference. For some reason the form of the name Štefan (not Stefan) was considered stylish and ceremonial and thus more appropriate for the royal title.⁶⁴ This use of the name Stefan did not go unnoticed even beyond Bosnia. Enea Silvio remarks in reference to the Bosnian king: *Bosne rex gentis Dispotus Stephanus nomine (sic enim reges suos appellare consuevere)...*⁶⁵

Reviving the Serbian kingship, Tvrtko also revived court offices and titles from the period of the Nemanjić kings. He omitted the titles and ranks granted by the emperors, such as *despot* [despotes], *kesar* [kaisar/caesar] and *sevastokrator*, and accepted those from the period of the kingdom: *protovestijar* [protovestiaros], *logotet* [logothete], *stavilac* [domestikos].⁶⁶

The practices of the Serbian chancery were also adopted: Bosnian charters now contained a proem and, at the same time, the Serbian diplomatic miniscule (which happened to be named “bosančica”) came into use.⁶⁷ These practices, which were a novelty in Bosnia, were introduced knowledgeably and with a sense of finesse. This can best be seen from Tvrtko’s charter issued to the Ragusans in 1378. Two lines, Bosnian and Serbian, are clearly distinguished in the text; the king confirms the documents issued by his Bosnian ancestors and by his Serbian forebears. The “Serbian” part contains the characteristic formula “by the grace of my kingship”, occurring in the Serbian charters from the thirteenth century onwards, while the “Bosnian” one contains the king’s word of honour to the Ragusans. In this way, a single charter continues two traditions of contractual documents.⁶⁸

Tvrtko’s coronation entailed heraldic change as well. No direct borrowing was practicable in this case, because Serbia did not know of coats of arms in the strict sense, although there were emblems carrying political symbolism. It appears that the lion, which occurs on the seals of emperor Uroš and on the gold coin of king Tvrtko, was adopted from Serbia. In all

⁶⁴ ШЕФАНЬ СТЕПАНЬ in all of the five surviving charters to the Ragusans. Stojanović, *Povelje i pisma I*, 162–167.

⁶⁵ *Aeneae Sylvii de statu Europae*, ed. Freher, *Rerum germanicarum scriptores varii* (Argentorati 1717), 104.

⁶⁶ Jireček, *Istorija Srba I*, 320. On *stavilac*, cf. M. Dinić, “Dukin prevod o boju na Kosovu”, *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 8, *Mélanges G. Ostrogorsky II* (1964), 61.

⁶⁷ G. Čremošnik, “Die serbische diplomatische Minuskel”, in *Studien zur älteren Geschichte Osteuropas II* (Graz–Cologne 1959), 103–115.

⁶⁸ For more, see S. Ćirković, *Ugovori Dubrovnika sa Srbijom i Bosnom*.

probability, the issuance of this large gold coin was also in some connection with Tvrtko's coronation.⁶⁹

IV

The question as to how the contemporaries saw Tvrtko's royal title is quite easy to answer. The few surviving documents show that the Bosnian kings' royal rank was recognized. As far as Hungary is concerned, the situation is somewhat more complicated because the kingship issue was intertwined with the issue of relations between Bosnia and Hungary. Particularly interesting for our topic is the question of the extent to which the surrounding world understood and accepted Tvrtko's coronation as the restoration of Serbian kingship.

The Ragusans were the closest to the event. Being best versed in the recent past of the neighbouring lands, they could best grasp its significance and assess how founded the pretensions were. They were able, and had to, weigh how far such pretensions and theories needed to be acknowledged to the best of their own interest. The Ragusan attitude towards Tvrtko's kingship is telling and unambiguous. They acknowledged him as the successor of the Serbian monarchs, agreed to continue paying St. Demetrios' Day tribute to him, submitted to him all earlier charters issued by the Serbian monarchs for confirmation and, of course, recognized his title.

In the Ragusan documents Tvrtko's title is *rex Rassie*; *rex Rassie et Bosne*; *rex Bosne et Rassie*; or *rex Bosne*.⁷⁰ They were careful, especially in the beginning, to acknowledge his Nemanjićian pretensions, but the Bosnian reality soon began to break through. The balance that the "double crown" was supposed to symbolize could not be maintained for long. Already under Dabiša, Tvrtko's immediate successor, Bosnia came to the foreground: in the Ragusan documents Dabiša and all subsequent kings were styled as *rex Bosne*. Only by exception, when addressing the king directly, was the "of the Serbs" added; this practically amounts to the instances when the official title was reproduced.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Dinić, "Veliki bosanski zlatnik", 45, and idem, "Oko velikog bosanskog zlatnika", *Istoriski glasnik* 3-4 (1955), 154-155.

⁷⁰ Closer examination of numerous references to king Tvrtko in Ragusan records shows the absence of any pattern. All four forms occur both at the beginning and at the end of his reign. Cf. *Monumenta Ragusina* IV, and M. Dinić, *Odluke Veća Dubrovačke Republike I-II* (Belgrade 1951-54).

⁷¹ In Ragusan records Tvrtko's successors were very rarely styled as kings of Rascia or of Bosnia and Rascia. In the Cyrillic documents where the title was reproduced, they frequently were.

Venice was farther afield, but always in touch and always well-informed of Bosnia's policies and political decision makers. The Republic was on friendly terms with Tvrtko, although his ties with the Kingdom of Naples aroused some concern towards the end of his reign. It recognized his royal title, and in the form he insisted upon. For Venice too, Tvrtko officially was rex Rassic et Bosne, but in this case the reality prevailed even sooner.⁷² There was no need to change anything in the case of his successors; they all were kings of Bosnia, while Rascia was mentioned only when the official title was reproduced.⁷³

The surviving documents are too few to allow us to learn how Tvrtko's title was received and understood elsewhere. Nothing is known of southern Italy, with which he had already established close contact. Tvrtko's successors were, of course, kings of Bosnia.⁷⁴ All the more interesting, therefore, is a reference to Bosnia and its ruler in the records of a trial by the Inquisition in Turin, because it reveals the notions of the common people, who had heard of Bosnia because of heretical teachings. According to this document, which has long been attracting the attention of scholars of the Bosnian heretical church, a Jacobus Bech was sent to Slavonia pro doctrina predicta integraliter addiscenda et perfecte a magistris ibidem commorantibus in loco qui dicitur Boxena, qui locus subest cuidam domino, qui vocatur *Albana de Boxena*, et subest dictus dominus *regi Rassene*.⁷⁵ This is an obvious contamination: it was known that Bosnia had been ruled by a ban, and it was also heard that now it was ruled by the king of Raška. As people knew nothing of the actual state of affairs, the following combination, which seemed quite natural to the contemporaries, was constructed: the ban of Bosnia is subordinate to the king of Rascia. This is why the document is important evidence of the kingship in Bosnia having been the restored Serbian kingship, and of Tvrtko's concept having been briefly accepted even in places where people had no idea of its true meaning.

The most important of all was the stance of the Hungarian king, lord suzerain of the land. There can be no doubt that king Louis I was fully acquainted with Tvrtko's plan, and that he consented to his coronation and restoration of Serbian kingship. There is reliable evidence that Louis and Tvrtko were in good relations shortly after the coronation. In 1378 the

⁷² In Venice, Tvrtko I is styled as rex Rassic much more frequently than as rex Rassic et Bosnie. Cf. Ljubić, *Listine* IV, 182, 187, 188, 194, 200, 203, 207, 209, 215, 219, 221, 223, 224, 232 and 248.

⁷³ For examples, see Ljubić, *Listine* V-IX.

⁷⁴ Cf. E. Fermendzin, *Acta Bosnae potissimum ecclesiastica* (Zagreb 1892), 72 and 83.

⁷⁵ D. Kniewald, "Vjerodostojnost latinskih izvora o bosanskim krstjanima", *Rad JAZU* 270 (1949), tab. 8.

Ragusans pleaded with the Hungarian king to intervene with the “king of Rascia”, “his relative”, to prevent the transport of foods to Kotor lest the latter should become a Venetian bastion.⁷⁶ Of course, such a petition would not have been possible had the Angevin not assented to Tvrtko’s coronation and recognized his title. The same goes for the abovementioned messages to the effect that Tvrtko now came to be estranged from Ragusa, being preoccupied with his undertaking in the Rascian [Serbian] kingdom.⁷⁷

The motivation of the Hungarian king can only be surmised. Louis was Tvrtko’s overlord and, as far as can be seen from the surviving sources, had maintained unclouded relations with Bosnia since 1366. On the other hand, he considered himself suzerain of Serbia, which had figured in the title of the Hungarian kings from the beginning of the thirteenth century. Louis had no real influence in Serbia until after Dušan’s death and the rise of regional lords. During Dušan’s reign all Hungarian attacks on Serbia had failed, and it was only the power struggle of regional lords under emperor Uroš V [r. 1355–1371] that opened the way to Hungarian influence. Villani’s account of two Raška barons and the fate of Nikola Altomanović provide a glimpse of Louis’s skilful use of the internal strife in Serbia to his advantage.⁷⁸

Tvrtko’s coronation changed nothing in the relations with Hungary. From the Angevin’s perspective, it was even better to have as Serbian king a direct and loyal vassal than an adamant adversary such as Dušan had been in his time. Even after Louis’s death, relations between Tvrtko and the Hungarian queens remained the same for a while. The queens even went a step further in recognizing Tvrtko as Serbian king by ceding Kotor to him. At any rate, Tvrtko believed that Kotor, being a city of his predecessors, was given to him rightfully.⁷⁹

The situation changed when Tvrtko began to support Croatian barons and to conquer territory in Dalmatia and Croatia on his own. Unfortunately, neither these events nor their legal aspect are sufficiently known, every reconstruction being dependent on just a few documents. It is certain that Sigismund of Luxemburg contested Tvrtko’s royal title: in a document from the summer of 1389 he announces a campaign against the Bosnian ban.⁸⁰ On the other hand, it is known that Tvrtko, having subjugated Dal-

⁷⁶ *Monumenta Ragusina* IV, 178. In the edition of Gelcich, *Diplomatarum Ragusanum*, 701, the words “proximo suo” are omitted.

⁷⁷ *Monumenta Ragusina* IV, 177.

⁷⁸ Dinić, “Rastislalići”, 143; and his *O Nikoli Altomanoviću*.

⁷⁹ See n. 30 above.

⁸⁰ See n. 36 above. While queen Maria refers to Tvrtko as king, in the document of 1387 he is “banus”. Cf. F. Šišić, *Vojvoda Hrvoje Vukčić Hrvatinić i njegovo doba (1350–1416)* (Zagreb 1902), 255, n. 158.

matian cities, restyled his title once more towards the end of his reign, this time by including Croatia and Dalmatia.⁸¹ The basis for this ambitious, if short-lived, change in the title was his effective control over large portions of Dalmatia and Croatia. Sigismund of Luxemburg later stated that the Bosnians had conquered regna Dalmatie et Croatie.⁸² Shortly before Tvrtko's death, negotiations between Bosnia and Sigismund were launched, but their outcome is not known.⁸³ Nor is it possible to infer what could have been the basis for this rapprochement. At that point Sigismund obviously recognized Tvrtko's title and, a little later, Dabiša's too.⁸⁴ Tvrtko's successor was addressed as king of Dalmatia and Croatia.⁸⁵

Sigismund of Luxemburg built his position on Bosnian kingship at the time he crushed his adversaries in Croatia and subjugated king Dabiša. He was willing to accept and recognize it, but sought to transfer it to himself as soon as possible. There were several earlier models for such a solution, above all those used by his Angevin predecessor. The institutions of the nobility as an estate, the abstract notion of the state, the separation of the ruler's transient person from the eternal royal dignity, made it possible for one person to be crowned king in two kingdoms without either of the two losing anything of its political individuality. Sigismund made his crowning as Bosnian king an item of his political agenda. As scant and fragmentary as the surviving evidence is, it still makes it possible to keep track of some phases of his effort, and of compromise solutions he was forced to accept.

The first trace can be found in the charter by which vojvoda Hrvoje acknowledged his alliance with Sigismund in the summer of 1393.⁸⁶ At that point, Sigismund managed merely to reserve for himself vojvoda Hrvoje's undivided allegiance and loyal service after Dabiša's death. The following

⁸¹ V. Ćorović, *Kralj Tvrtko I Kotromanić* (Belgrade 1925).

⁸² Fejer, *Codex Diplomaticus* X/2, 443.

⁸³ Reformationes 29, f.76', 26/12/1391: Prima pars est de scribendo et comittendo ser Clementi Mar. de Goçe quod ipse vadat ad dominum regem Bossine pro parte communitatis nostre cum literis credencialibus et congaudeat de adventu ambassiatoris regis Ungarie pro tractatu pacis cum ipso rege et recordari eidem de oblacione ipsi facta de mittendo pro parte communitatis ambassiatores ad expensas communis nostri. The next day the decision was changed in the sense that the king should only be reminded of the offer.

⁸⁴ L. Thallóczy and S. Horvath, *Codex Jajcza* MHH DD 40 (Budapest 1915). Cf. Ćirković, "O 'Djakovačkom ugovoru'," 7–8.

⁸⁵ This may be inferred from the fact that Split and Hvar addressed him as king of Croatia and Dalmatia. Šišić, *Vojvoda Hrvoje*, 257, n. 5, and 259, n. 47. Dabiša's Serbian charters, and even the Latin one of June 1394, contain the ordinary royal title.

⁸⁶ Ćirković, "O 'Djakovačkom ugovoru,'" 7–8.

year, Sigismund crushed his main opponents, and having subjugated Dabiša himself at Dobor, forced him to cede Dalmatia and Croatia; then he took a step further and imposed upon the Bosnian barons the obligation to recognize him as their king and lord upon Dabiša's death.⁸⁷ This had not been forgotten by the autumn of 1395, when Dabiša died. Immediately after Dabiša's death, when the issue of succession to the throne became a hot one, it was known in Hungarian circles that *illi de Bossena apertunt regem istum [sc. of Sigismund] in suum regem et dominum*.⁸⁸ And yet, Sigismund did not achieve his goal, but had to content himself with a compromise, i.e. with Dabiša's widow Helen on the throne, and the issue of Bosnian kingship postponed for some later time once again.

When internal change led to Ostoja's ascension to the throne in 1398 and his coronation as king in early 1399, it became clear that whatever Sigismund had managed to achieve came down to nothing. This was the likely cause of his embittered and persistent struggle with the Bosnians and, on the other hand, Bosnia's unyielding attitude and exclusive allying with the Neapolitan bloc. For the Bosnian king and barons, there was no trouble coming from that side: Ladislav of Naples recognized the Bosnian kingship and its formally retained vassal status. In 1406 he confirmed Bosnia's borders, and those from the time of ban Kulin [r. 1180–1204], which was obviously requested by the Bosnians.⁸⁹ Ladislav held Dalmatia and Croatia apart from the rest, and ruled them through his governor, Hrvoje.

It was not until Sigismund caused confusion and fear in the ranks of the Bosnian barons by the massacre at Dobor that he pressed his maximalist demand again.⁹⁰ It is obvious from the charter issued to Ivaniš Nelipčić — one of those who had submitted themselves to him — that Sigismund demanded, and the Bosnians agreed, to be acknowledged as their king and lord, and crowned the way Tvrtko I had been crowned.⁹¹ It remains unknown how wide the circle of barons who accepted the obligations was, but there is no doubt that Sigismund imposed them even on those who submitted later, in 1409 and 1410. In the spring of 1410 Sigismund was

⁸⁷ Fejer, *Codex diplomaticus X/2*, 178. On the date cf. Ćirković, "O 'Djakovačkom ugovoru'."

⁸⁸ L. Thallóczy, "Mantovai követjárás Budán 1395", *Ertekezések a történelmi tudomány köréből* 20/4 (1905), 110.

⁸⁹ J. Lucius, *De regno Dalmatiae et Croatiae libri VI* (Amstelodasi 1666), 428.

⁹⁰ When king Ostoja allied with Sigismund in 1404, the Hungarian king contented himself with a compromise according to which Bosnia remained a vassal state under the terms set at the time of king Louis. Lett. di Lev. IV, fol. 61, 19/12/1403.

⁹¹ Šišić, "Nekoliko isprava", 313.

ready to come to Bosnia from Serbia to be crowned as Bosnian king,⁹² but nothing happened this time either. By the beginning of 1410 he had worked out a provisional solution: he appointed herzeg Hrvoje, until recently his bitter enemy who had changed sides at the right time, as viceroy of Bosnia. Sigismund was a little closer to being crowned in the autumn of 1410. The Ragusans had already had gifts and charters for confirmation prepared, but the whole business failed once again.⁹³

Sigismund then abandoned his project for a while, and put aside his maximalist demand. This was probably due to his preoccupations in the West: he was elected Holy Roman emperor, which promised a much larger field for his ambitions. As far as Bosnian kingship is concerned, he appears to have returned to the compromise formula of 1404: he accepted Ostoja as his vassal with traditional obligations. This was formalized in 1415, when Sigismund stamped the imperial seal to reconfirm the charters for the towns, fortresses, estates and rights that Ostoja had been granted by the Hungarian king. The relationship was defined in a typically feudal manner: all was confirmed *tamquam regni nostri Hungarie feudali et subdito*.⁹⁴

As a result of the growing Ottoman pressure and Sigismund's involvement elsewhere, Hungary intervened in Bosnian affairs less than before. It was not until Tvrtko II re-established closer ties with Hungary during his second reign that Sigismund of Luxemburg was given another chance to make decisions concerning Bosnian kingship. He persuaded Tvrtko II to draw up a charter passing Bosnian kingship to his relative, Hermann of Cilli, in case he should die without a lawful heir.⁹⁵ Even though the whole idea had little prospect of ever being realized, it did not go without some consequences. After Tvrtko II's death, Ulrich of Cilli put forth his claim to the throne, and obstructed the confirmation by the Hungarian court of Stefan Tomaš, who had been made king in early December 1443, shortly after Tvrtko's death.⁹⁶ After months of haggling, the affair ended in Tomaš's favour. Janos Hunyadi had been so instrumental in achieving such an outcome that the new Bosnian king promised him an annual tribute.⁹⁷ Tomaš's case reveals how the actual relationship between the Hungarian and Bosnian kingships was veiled behind fictions and legal constructions. Ragusan

⁹² *Codex epistolaris Vitoldi*, Monumenta Poloniae historica VI (Krakow 1896), 171–172.

⁹³ Gelcich, *Diplomatarium Ragusanum*, 198.

⁹⁴ Thallóczy, *Studien*, 353.

⁹⁵ Fejer, *Codex diplomaticus X/6*, 900–901.

⁹⁶ Cf. S. Ćirković, *Herceg Stefan Vukčić Kosača i njegovo doba* (Belgrade: SASA spec. eds. CCCLXXVI, 1964), 72, n. 7.

⁹⁷ Thallóczy, *Studien*, 366–368.

documents show that Tomaš had effective power from the very beginning, that he had already been deep in battles, and not without success; in his own charter for Hunyadi, however, the way things are presented makes it seem as if he had not become king until he was confirmed by the Hungarian king Wladislas: nobisque post ipsius [sc. of Tvrtko II] decessum et eiusdem disposition in dominio castrorum et tenutarum corone ipsius regni remanentibus, serenissimus princeps et dominus noster gratiosus, dominus Vladislaus dei gratia Hungarie et Polonie etc. rex, de speciali consilio et bona voluntate ac dispositione magnifici et potentis viri ... nos in regem dicti Bosne solemniter instituit et confirmavit.⁹⁸

During Tomaš's long reign there was no strong central authority in Hungary and, therefore, there were no attempts to redefine the relationship between Bosnia and Hungary. It is even observable that Tomaš tried to exploit the situation to strengthen the position of Bosnian kingship. In two surviving charters, Dalmatia and Croatia (1446 and 1458) figure in the royal title, which is a sure indication of a return to the pretensions of Tvrtko I and Ostoja.⁹⁹ Nor was Tomaš always loyal to Hungary in practical politics either.¹⁰⁰ He requested the crown from the pope, which, as can be seen from the subsequent developments, was in part against Hungary's interest. Therefore, tensions were sure to ensue after Matthias Corvinus's accession. The issue was eventually resolved in the traditional manner: Matthias recognized the Bosnian king, whom he saw as his vassal.

Following in his father's footsteps, Stefan Tomašević, in a melodramatic message to the pope Pius II, requested the crown and bishops for his realm. The pope granted both requests, whereby the issue of Bosnian kingship and its relationship to Hungary was reopened. Matthias's reaction to the news of the pope's granting absolution to the Bosnian king, of the coronation performed by the papal legate, and of the bishops sent to Bosnia, was sharp and indignant. He reminded the pope of the Bosnian king's conduct before the Ottomans, above all of the shameful surrender of Smederevo. The Bosnian king was hardly deserving of absolution, and yet he was granted one: a sede apostolica ... speciales ad se legatos mitti, et se per eos non sine gravi et evidenti regum Hungarie preiudicio coronari et ita in regno confirmari...¹⁰¹ The crown granted by Rome and the coronation at the hands of the papal legate violated the prerogatives of the Hungarian kings. There was quite a difference between the confirmation of Tomaš and

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Stanojević, "Studije o srpskoj diplomaciji II", 131.

¹⁰⁰ Ćirković, *Herceg Stefan*, 231 and 234.

¹⁰¹ *Monumenta Vaticana historiam Hungariae sacram illustrantia*, 1st ser., vol. VI (Budapest 1889), 17–19.

that of his son: Tomaš himself had held that he did not become king until he was confirmed by king Wladislas Jagellon, whereas Stefan Tomašević bypassed the Hungarian king completely. By receiving the crown from a universal authority such as the papacy, Stefan Tomašević became equal to the Hungarian king and formally terminated his subordinate status. The question, however, arises as to whether that was what he actually wanted at all. It follows from the letter of king Matthias that at the time of coronation Stefan Tomašević was amidst negotiations and willing to accept the Hungarian quite difficult conditions, such as, for instance, to cede some towns in the borderland with the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, the pope must have been prepared for Matthias's protests, because the latter had already protested in 1460 at the false news that king Tomaš was seeking the crown from the pope. The pope had reassured the Hungarian king: *tenemus quoque memoria hanc ipsam coronam fuisse a nostris predecessoribus sepius postulatam, neque tamen unquam obtentam; quam si ulla ratione fuisset daturi, non sine honore et beneplacito tuo, qui ius ad illam pretendas dandum censuissemus.*¹⁰² There is a reason, then, to believe that neither the pope nor Stefan Tomašević sought deliberately to change the relationship between Bosnia and Hungary. King Matthias, for his part, saw everything in the blackest light; it seemed to him that Stefan was trying to break away, and rebuked the pope for encouraging him inadvertently.¹⁰³ As is well known, this dispute too was settled by negotiations, ending in an agreement which left the things as they had been. The relationship of vassalage was confirmed and, to Matthias Corvinus, Stefan Tomašević remained a *fidelis noster* despite his pope-granted crown.¹⁰⁴ Upon the death of the Bosnian king, Matthias laid claim to his possessions in Ragusa.¹⁰⁵

Contrary to the widespread perception of Stefan Tomašević as the last Bosnian king, Bosnian kingship did not become extinct in 1463. It even had two sequels, one under Ottoman, the other under Hungarian suzerainty.¹⁰⁶ In the eyes of the contemporaries, Bosnian kingship was independent both of the Bosnian ruling family and of any particular territory. When in 1490 arrangements were being made for Matthias's son, herzog John Corvinus, to be made king of Bosnia, only an insignificant portion of the former

¹⁰² Ibid. 14.

¹⁰³ The instructions to the Hungarian envoys to the pope quoted in Klaić, *Poviest Bosne do propasti kraljevstva* (Zagreb 1882), 329, n. 12.

¹⁰⁴ Fermandzin, *Acta Bosnae*, 250; Klaić, *Poviest Bosne*, 329

¹⁰⁵ Gelcich, *Diplomatarium Ragusanum* 762, 763

¹⁰⁶ S. M. Ćirković, "Vlastela i kraljevi u Bosni posle 1463. godine", *Istoriski glasnik* 3 (1954), 123–131; A. Kubinyi, "Die Frage des bosnischen Königtums von N. Ujlaky", *Studia slavica Academiae scientiarum Hungaricae* 4 (1958), 373–384.

Bosnian state territory was not under Ottoman rule. This was the last time that Bosnian kingship was reckoned with in practical politics.

V

There have been two hypotheses about the actual crown Tvrtko was crowned with in 1377. Jireček believed it likely that the “old crown of Stefan the First-Crowned was placed on his head”. Ćorović disagreed and was instead inclined to believe that some new crown served the purpose. Dinić, however, showed how weak arguments for both hypotheses were.¹⁰⁷ The visual sources, which had meanwhile received more attention, are not of much help in drawing more reliable inferences either.¹⁰⁸ Nothing is heard of a crown in Dabiša’s reign either. Elizabeth certainly was not crowned after her husband’s death. We know that Ostoja was crowned in early 1399, i.e. almost a year after he had actually acceded to power.¹⁰⁹ An interesting piece of information comes from the time of a Bosnian-Hungarian war in the early fifteenth century. In a charter issued to Ivan Morović, ban of Mačva, king Sigismund mentions the capture of Bobovac, a town ubi *corona ipsius regni Bosne conservatur*.¹¹⁰

This information is worthy of particular attention because it shows that there was in Bosnia a concrete crown, which then must have been de rigueur in the coronation ceremony. Such crowns were usually claimed to be of great antiquity and to have belonged to one of the most ancient and most famous rulers: e.g. in Hungary to St. Stephen, in Poland to Boleslaw the Brave, in France to Charlemagne. Such a crown did not move around with the king or about his residences, but was kept in one place like a sacred relic. It would have played an important role in power struggles, because only the crowning with such a crown could be legitimate. Suffice it to remember the exciting story of the Hungarian crown. The reference to Bobovac as the place where the crown of the kingdom was kept also suggests that the way the crown was handled was inspired by the Hungarian example. It is well known that the crown of St. Stephen was kept at Visegrad. All this speaks in favour of Jireček’s hypothesis.¹¹¹ In the early fifteenth century there was *one* crown of the kingdom, which was treated with reverence (it was the crown that, as we have seen, Sigismund of Luxemburg wished to be crowned with)

¹⁰⁷ Dinić, “O krunisanju Tvrtka I”, 142.

¹⁰⁸ J. Kovačević, *Srednjovekovna nosnja balkanskih Slovena* (Belgrade: SAN spec. ed. CCXV, 1953), 245.

¹⁰⁹ Dinić, *Državni sabor srednjovekovne Bosne* (Belgrade 1955), 34, n. 4.

¹¹⁰ Šišić, “Nekoliko isprava”, 261.

¹¹¹ Jireček, *Istorija Srba* I, 320; II, 341.

and carefully guarded. It is hard to believe that it was not an old and prestigious crown, and such a crown could only have come from Serbia.

Examining the role of the Bosnian assembly in the coronation of a ruler, Dinić discovered an important fact; namely, that the deposed Bosnian kings who regained power were crowned anew. In August 1421 the Ragusans made a decision to present gifts to king Tvrtko II in hac sua coronatione.¹¹² The need to perform a second coronation indirectly shows that the crown and the coronation ceremony enjoyed exceptional prestige. What lies behind is the notion that, by being deposed from the throne and separated from the crown, the ruler loses all grace conferred upon him by the act of coronation and, also, the notion that every reign must be rendered legitimate by the act of coronation. Particular reverence for a crown is not surprising, but the rite of coronation, and especially the question of its sacral nature, poses much difficulty.

Tvrtko's coronation was seen as the "benchmark" even as late as 1408, but this fact is of little help because we know nothing of this first rite of coronation. It is not until the coronation of Tomaš that we have some information; we know that it was performed at Mile in central Bosnia. Who performed the coronation, however, is completely obscure. There were no Roman Catholic dignitaries yet, and by being moved to central Bosnia, the rite was also moved away from the Orthodox ecclesiastical see. Judging by what is known of the "Bosnian Church", it is unlikely that it would have taken any part in a rite so remote from its teachings and worship practices. The sacral aspect of the coronation remains in complete darkness, and it would be only natural to assume that it did not matter much.¹¹³ This, however, is not consistent with the practice of re-crowning, or with king Tvrtko II's reference, in a charter for the Venetians, to his "sacred coronation" (*sacra coronatione*).¹¹⁴

The whole issue becomes complicated insofar as we can see that towards the mid-fifteenth century, when king Tomaš took a turn towards Catholicism, something defective becomes observable in the manner of coronation as it had been practised until then. Namely, Tomaš requested the crown from the pope. On the one hand, it was an indication of his tying more closely to Catholicism and Catholic states. Hence his act was directed against the interests of the non-Catholics in Bosnia. The granting of the

¹¹² Dinić, *Državni sabor*, 35.

¹¹³ From the thirteenth century a certain decline of the coronation and anointment rite becomes observable in western Europe as well. It may be ascribed to the strengthening of hereditary and dynastic elements. Cf. E. H. Kantorowitz, *The King's Two Bodies. A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ 1957), 327–332.

¹¹⁴ Ljubić, *Listine VIII*, 202.

crown by a universal authority had, however, another side to it, directed against Hungarian and Ottoman suzerainty over Bosnia. Stefan Tomašević later cited the fear of the Ottomans as his father's motive for giving up the idea of being crowned with a crown sent by the pope.¹¹⁵ As for the Hungarian position, one should remember the reaction of king Matthias at the time of Stefan Tomašević's coronation.¹¹⁶ One cannot fail to notice that Tomaš had put forth his request at a time when Hungary was practically without a king, its affairs being run by the "governor of the kingdom", Janos Hunyadi, and that it was then that he reintroduced Dalmatia and Croatia in his Bosnian title.

Pope Eugene IV had sent a crown to Tomaš, but the crown was sent back to Rome. Dinić called attention to a piece of information from Split, which shows that the papal legate Tommasini, bishop of Hvar (Lesina), took from the treasury of the cathedral of St. Domnius: unam coronam auream fulcitam perlis et lapidibus preciosis... dandam et referendam serenissimo regi Bosne ut dicebatur.¹¹⁷ When Tomaš's successor requested a crown from Rome again, he reminded of that episode: "Your predecessor Eugene offered my father a crown and wished to establish episcopal sees in Bosnia. Father rejected it back then so as not to bring Ottoman hatred on himself, because he was newly a Christian and had not yet expelled heretics and Manicheans from his kingdom."¹¹⁸ From a statement of the pope Pius II it appears that Tomaš requested a crown more than once.¹¹⁹

At any rate, in May 1466 Tomaš and his wife Catherine, daughter of Stefan Vukčić Kosača, were expected to be crowned at Mile, and in July the same year the legate Tommasini issued a note confirming the receipt of the crown which had not been used. It follows from this that an old crown served the purpose, but we still remain in the dark about the real reasons for this change of heart. Tomaš's position in Bosnia prior to the coronation was strong; he had reconciled and established marital ties with Stefan Vukčić Kosača, the most powerful figure in Bosnia, until then his opponent. It is

¹¹⁵ Dinić, *Državni sabor*, 36.

¹¹⁶ See p. 131 herein.

¹¹⁷ Dinić, *Državni sabor*, 36, n. 11.

¹¹⁸ See n. 115.

¹¹⁹ Timere celsitudo tua videtur per litteras, quas proxime accepimus, ne propter adventum oratorum Bosnensium ad concedendos illi regno episcopos, dandamque Thome regi coronam faciles aures prebeamus... Tenemus quoque memoria hanc ipsam coronam fuisse a nostris predecessoribus sepius postulatam, neque tamen unquam obtentam; quam si ulla ratione fuisset daturi, non sine honore et beneplacito tuo, qui ius ad illam pretendas (sic), dandam censuissemus. Pope Pius II to king Matthias Corvinus on 7 June 1460, *Monumenta Vaticana historiam Hungariae VI*, 14.

true that the stance of his allies Ivaniš Pavlović and Petar Vojsalić was not quite clear, but Tomaš paid little heed to them anyway.¹²⁰ He must have been anxious about the Bosnian Church. Perhaps his giving up the pope-granted crown was the price he had to pay for Kosača's friendship, or perhaps, as Stefan Tomašević later claimed, the fear of the Ottomans was the decisive factor. At any rate, in 1446 nothing essentially changed with regard to the crown and crowning.

When Stefan Tomašević acceded to the throne, he too asked the pope for a crown and bishops. Pius II granted his request, and papal legates, with full approval from the Bosnian barons assembled at Jajce, crowned Stefan Tomašević, by all accounts on 17 November 1461, the feast day of St. Gregory the Miracle-Worker.¹²¹ This time opposition came from Hungary. The sacral aspect of the coronation found its full expression, but sadly no details of the event have come down to us. The "ordines" must have been changed and Catholic rites observed. But none of it bore any fruit: the monarch's position did not change, and neither did the conception of crown and state. It all took place too late. The taking of a crown granted by the pope symbolized merely a resolute political orientation, and it was supposed to tie Bosnia to the Christian world more firmly.

Very little is known about the actual coronation ceremony and the crown as an insignia, as can be clearly seen from the text above. Yet, some rough outlines can be drawn, and they are consistent with the other elements examined here. It all began with an Orthodox coronation in the Nemanjić tradition, in accordance with Tvrtko's notion of kingship, and then Hungarian models began to enter the picture. Even so, Tvrtko's coronation remained the standard model as late as the beginning of the fifteenth century. Around the middle of the century there prevailed the desire to abandon the crown and the style of coronation hitherto observed, and in 1461 a Catholic coronation with a crown bestowed by the pope was performed.

VI

Of the impression that Tvrtko's coronation made in the country, nothing can be learned before the tardy narrative of Mauro Orbini: dopo questo [coronation] regnaua in gran pace et prosperita et ciascuno delli suoi baroni et gentilhuomini gli prestava grande vbidenza; ne osaua in cosa alcuna contraddirgli. Onde ci faceua in Bosna tutto quello voleua, senza emmetter al consiglio alcun signore. Il che era del tutto contra gl'instituti et vsanze di

¹²⁰ Ćirković, *Herceg Stefan*, 93.

¹²¹ Dinić, *Državni sabor*, 37.

Bosna et della sua libertà.¹²² It would be exceptionally important to be able to know how the learned Benedictine arrived at this conclusion. Did he pick it up from the sources which he no doubt drew on in this part of his book? Did he merely “intuit it from his sources” or did he draw the conclusion himself? Be that as it may, it seems quite likely that Tvrtko sought to model his relations with the nobility on the Nemanjić example, which would have necessarily meant at the expense of the “liberties” of the Bosnian nobility. But, with only one charter to the nobility surviving from Tvrtko’s reign, there are no reliable sources to draw conclusions from.

It is certain that the crown guaranteed to the subsequent kings neither unlimited power nor an exalted status comparable to that of the Serbian kings or the Byzantine emperors. In the early fifteenth century, barons deposed and installed kings, competed with them as governors of foreign monarchs, imposed their will on them; and yet, Tvrtko’s introduction of kingship and coronation cannot be said to have been entirely fruitless. On the contrary, however strange it may sound, the whole history of Bosnia until 1463, even a little longer, is overshadowed by Tvrtko’s coronation.

The coronation played a role in the construction of a new notion of the state, completely different from the one from the times of bans. The difference is neither easy nor simple to describe, it is true, but a glimpse of it can be caught from the surviving documents. In the times of bans, Bosnia, as a territory and a political entity, was inseparable from the person of the ruler. The state was the ban’s “lordship”. Under ban Kulin Bosnia is “my lordship”, and under Ninoslav “my lordship and my sons” [владанне мое ни моннихъ синнихъ].¹²³ There was nothing in that period that would highlight a distinction between the ban’s power over Bosnia and any other power over land and people such as, for instance, the power of a feudal lord over his peasants. To the contemporaries, there was not yet a palpable distinction between public and private power. The participation of the ban’s family members in important state affairs highlights patrimonial¹²⁴ features in Bosnian state life even more than the person of the ban. In granting and confirming hereditary possessions, in pledging and confirming the oath of fealty, there figure alongside the ruler members of his family, in a way quite comparable to the barons where decisions concerning their hereditary possessions were made only with the consent of all family members.

¹²² Orbini, *Il regno degli Slavi*, 358.

¹²³ Stojanović, *Povelje i pisma I*, 2, 8, 9 and 44.

¹²⁴ The term “patrimonial” is not used here in the sense in which it was used in the earlier legal historical literature. It is not used to discuss the origin and nature of the medieval state, but to describe the difference between two stages in the evolution of the medieval state.

The Bosnian state retained patrimonial features for too long; they were there even when they had become outdated in its neighbourhood. This inevitably led to the rivalry between different concepts, even to conflicts. Vukić's accusations against his brother, Tvrtko, for having deprived him of his inheritance¹²⁵ can only be understood as a defence of the traditional rights of the ruling family members at a time the principle of indivisibility began to predominate. The form of address used for Vuk, "junior ban",¹²⁶ is probably also the result of adjusting Bosnian concepts. The form of power sharing known from the times of ban Stjepan II and his brother Vladislav now became wrapped in a new form, after the model of Hungary and Serbia, where there were "junior kings".

After the coronation the term for the state that begins to be used is "kingship". Already in the charter of 1382 we can read: и послѣдѣнѣ житию ихъ и вѣрѣ и правиломъ царьскимъ и вса недостытнаа исправляе въ земляхъ богадарованного или краликѣвства... [and I follow their life and faith and regal regulations and set to right all that is improper in the lands of my God-granted kingship].¹²⁷ Later on there also appears "Bosnian kingship".¹²⁸ In one place, the Ragusans state that they are committed "to the honour and glory of the Bosnian kingship".¹²⁹ Here the kingship is obviously the Bosnian state, but from other contexts in which the term occurs, it may be inferred that it was also used in a narrower sense where the king remains at its core, e.g. "of the kingship and magnates of the Bosnian assembly".¹³⁰ Kingship was not synonymous with the state, just as the king was no longer seen as the only essential element of the state.

The term that was more important and more frequently used was "rusag"; it first appeared in a document of queen Elizabeth dating from 1397.¹³¹ Undoubtedly Hungarian in origin, it is attested as early as the thirteenth century, though in an older form: *uruzag*, which is a translation of the Latin *regnum*.¹³² The Bosnian *rusag* or the *rusag* of the Bosnian kingship is the Bosnian state;¹³³ but the term also denotes, already from the beginning

¹²⁵ Klaić, *Poviest Bosne*, 150–151.

¹²⁶ In the papal letter quoted in Klaić, *ibid.*

¹²⁷ Stojanović, *Povelje i pisma* I, 84.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* 451 and 498.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.* 451.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.* 503.

¹³¹ Solovjev, "Pojam države", 87–89.

¹³² S. Endlicher, *Rerum Hungaricum monumenta Arpadiana*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig 1931), 746.

¹³³ Stojanović, *Povelje i pisma* I, 269, 438, 440 and 498.

of the fifteenth century, the Bosnian state assembly.¹³⁴ What lay behind this shift in meaning was no doubt the notion that the barons gathered into the assembly constituted an essential element of the state. Thus estates elements in the Bosnian state development became clearly manifest once more.

Concurrently, the person of the individual king became overshadowed by the abstract concept of kingship. The ideas which had come with the double crown fell on fertile ground and gave an impetus to taking an important step in the evolution of political thought, the one that is reflected in distinguishing, even dissociating the person of the king, transient, frail and vulnerable to human weaknesses, from his intransient office. In time, the “wreath” gave way to the crown, the “honourable Bosnian crown”,¹³⁵ the term seldom used in the documents in our language. Only the Ragusan documents, especially those containing instructions for envoys, reveal that it was used quite frequently. As early as 1403, Ragusan envoys are explaining to vojvoda Sandalj: *che questa cita di Ragusa e francha et non se impaca dele guerre dei reali de Hongria che hanno cum quilli de Bosna, saluo pagano uno piccolo tributo a Hungaria et uno asay mazor tributo ala corona di Bosna.*¹³⁶ It seems clear from this statement that both sides must have found it quite normal that the true “owner” of the tribute was not any one king in particular, but some more permanent and more abstract community embodied in the crown.¹³⁷

It is to the crown that are tied not only tributes but also the towns and estates which are under the king’s obedience. The document has already been mentioned in which king Tomaš speaks of his accession to the throne: *nobisque post ipsius decessum et eiusdem dispositione in dominio castrorum et tenutarum corone ipsius regni remanentibus.*¹³⁸ So, a Bosnian king claims that the towns and estates belong to the crown. All that belongs to the crown is indivisible and is transferred to the next bearer of the crown.

¹³⁴ Dinić, *Državni sabor*, 4–5.

¹³⁵ Stojanović, *Povelje i pisma I*, 417.

¹³⁶ Lettere di Levante 4, f. 29, 29/1/1432 mentions ce lo tribute, lo qual e dovuto ogni anno all corona sua, Lett. di Lev. 11, f. 64’.

¹³⁷ It is interesting that a few years later the Ragusans used a different figure to say the same thing: *a сьдн за доходьк што пишете дн сьдн едноуь столу кралиевьства босаньскога дльж нн нндь н днсандо га дати [and as for the tribute about which you wrote that we owe it solely to the throne of the Bosnian king, we intend to give it thither].* Stojanović, *Povelje i pisma I*, 437. Here the throne of Bosnian kingship is used as a transpersonal symbol. The construction of this symbol probably ran in parallel with the wreath. It would be rewarding to examine all references to the throne from the *Genealogy of Bar* to the fifteenth-century charters.

¹³⁸ Thallóczy, *Studien*, 366.

From the time of Tvrtko's coronation onwards there is no trace of anything even remotely resembling co-rulership, nor is there any case of any power struggle leading to a compromise based on division. Claimants to the throne in Bosnia fight for the crown, the crown is indivisible and so is all that belongs to it. This may be seen from the way the Ragusans handled the land and house that they presented as a gift to king Ostoja in 1399 after he had sold them the Slano coast. Their charter to the king specifies that the king will hold the house and land in hereditary tenure: *у баштинѹ у племенитѹ у више викома нецѹ и неговем синовом и неговѹ унѹтию и праунѹтию од данашнега дне напредѹ да вољѹань господинь краль Остоѹа и неговѹ синове и негово унѹтиѹ рѣченѹ полачѹ дарѣвати, продати и оставити за дѹшѹ, учинити што им бѹде на волю и како имъ драго како све од своѹх баштинь [as his noble inheritance to him and his sons and grandchildren and great-grandchildren for ever and ever from this day on, and that the lord King Ostoja and his sons and his grandchildren are free to give away, sell or bequeath the aforesaid palace for the soul, to do as they will and please like with any other inheritance].¹³⁹ For all these pompous formulas and "forever-and-ever" promises, the Ragusans, after a war with Ostoja, transferred the house and land to the new king, Tvrtko II. They acknowledged him, too, as their nobleman and councillor, and their charter¹⁴⁰ speaks of the hereditary right to the Ragusan title of nobility without saying a word about the mode of inheriting the house and land. The property went with the crown and was transferred to the subsequent kings: Ostoja, Tvrtko II, Tomaš, and Stefan Tomašević. The contemporaries themselves were aware that property could be inherited in various ways and that some could belong to the crown. When Tvrtko II deposited, in Ragusa, an amount of silver, which was converted into ducats, the Ragusans took the obligation, at the king's request, that: *више рѣченѹ поставѹ ни на мане донести за ничиюрѹ волю ни по крѹни, ни по ближнитѹ (ближншастѹ), ни мо милошти, ни за страх, ни за рать, ни за ниедно прѣдѹожьѹ сеган свѣта ко бни се могло прѣгодити [the aforesaid deposit shall not be diminished at anyone's request, neither on account of the crown, nor of proximity of kin, nor out of affection, nor out of fear, nor for war, nor for any reason in the world that may arise].¹⁴¹**

The notion that it is the crown and not any one king that has towns, estates, incomes, rights etc., and that all of it indivisibly passes from one bearer of the crown to another by a law that is different from the one that governs the relationships between private persons, becomes particularly noticeable in comparison with the lands and rights of territorial lords. There, everything is still governed by old patrimonial traditions. Members of a

¹³⁹ Stojanović, *Povelje i pisma* I, 428.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 495–497.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* 517 and 518.

territorial lord's family together dispose of property and share in his main acts, especially as regards the alienation of any portion of land. An illustrative example may be Sandalj's conduct at the time of the sale of one half of Konavli area and the documents of the last of the Pavlović family. The territory was inherited according to private law, as clearly shown by the history of the Pavlović family: the territory passed from father to son, from brother to brother by the right of seniority. The land of a territorial lord was liable to division, as evidenced by the tragic history of herzog Stefan and his sons. The incomes, land and houses that the Bosnian lords were presented with by Ragusa were inherited as private assets, "po bližičastvu" [by the right of kinship], to use the term from a contemporary charter. Hrvoje's house and land passed on (not quite smoothly though)¹⁴² to his grandchildren, and from them to their offspring, so that the income from these properties continued to be paid to distant descendants as late as the early sixteenth century. The rights of Sandalj's descendants continued to be inherited even longer than that.¹⁴³

With all the above in mind, it does not come as a surprise that our sources contain places which reveal the notion that it was to the crown that the officials owed obedience and the subjects loyalty. In a charter to the Venetians, preserved in Italian translation, king Tvrtko II promises to ensure safety and protection for Venetian merchants: *che nui provedremo e si fattamente comandremo a tutti nostri baroni, conti, rectori, castelani, zuppani, ziudexi et a tutti altri officiali a la nostra sacra corona e comandamento sotoposti*.¹⁴⁴ Much later, the Ragusans commend the Vlatković family of Hum to king Tomaš in the following way: *consideramus eos esse subiectos corone bosnensis*.¹⁴⁵ Obviously, in this sphere too the crown replaced the king as representative of the royal office and dignity.

This ever-stronger emphasis on the crown at the expense of individual kings did not weaken royal position. On the contrary, the kings prof-

¹⁴² Hrvoje bequeathed his property in Ragusa to his wife Jelena (Helen), who later remarried king Ostoja. This gave grounds to Stefan Ostojić to lay the claim to the ownership of the income from the house and land. His advisor, the Ragusan renegade Mihailo Kabužić (Caboga), sought to prove that all of this was *bona regalia*. After the accession of Tvrtko II, Hrvoje's granddaughters laid claims, with the king's recommendations: Katarina, wife of Tvrtko Borovinić, and Doroteja, wife of one of the princes of Blagaj. Cf. Stojanović, *Povelje i pisma* I, 549–550 and 510–511.

¹⁴³ Dinić, "Dubrovački tributi", 241–247.

¹⁴⁴ Ljubić, *Listine* VIII, 204.

¹⁴⁵ Lett. di Lev. 16, f. 161–161'.

ited from the authority enjoyed by the intransient and timeless crown.¹⁴⁶ The crown as a symbol and embodiment of kingship helped to restore the balance of power in the Bosnian state. It stood as a counterweight to the *stanak*, the assembly of barons, a body which considered itself as being the “rusag” and “all of Bosnia”. Both the crown and the *stanak* were important for the survival of Bosnia as one political entity. A role in the preservation of Bosnia as a state despite its factual fragmentedness and many internal wars was played by the double wreath.

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¹⁴⁶ It is observable from the Ragusan instructions to the envoys to Tvrtko II during his second reign that they identify the king with the crown, and so “corona vostra” is used there where “maiesta vostra” would normally stand, Lett. di Lev. 11, f. 140, 93, 69, 68.

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