Les cultes des saints souverains et des saints guerriers et l’idéologie du pouvoir en Europe Centrale et Orientale

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THE ARPADIANS AS CROATS:
VENERATION OF RULER SAINTS IN
THE DIOCESE OF ZAGREB AT THE
TURN OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

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In Central-European medieval and early modern history, the cult of royal saints was specifically linked to the assertion of statehood, since they represented a fusion of earthly and heavenly powers with a strong territorial/national touch. In Hungary, it has been observed that the veneration of male canonized members of the house of Árpád (King Stephen, Prince Emeric, and King Ladislas) typically experienced a particular resurgence in times of crisis. One of these moments came at the turn of the eighteenth century, when Habsburg absolutism had reached its pinnacle. It is particularly interesting that the cult of the three Arpadian saints experienced a boom in Croatia at the same time, even though in many respects Croatian-Hungarian relations were far from at their best.

Let us turn back to the eleventh century for a moment in order to survey briefly the beginnings of this cult in Croatia. In 1089, after the death of his brother-in-law Zvonimir, Ladislas seized the Croatian crown and, two years later, founded the Zagreb bishopric, dedicating the new cathedral to King
2. Période post-byzantine et débuts de l’époque moderne

Stephen. Evidently, he used the cult in order to corroborate his right to rule, just as he had cleverly done in 1083 with the series of canonizations, the first ever in Hungary, in which a prominent place among the new saints was given to King Stephen, who thus “confirmed” with his heavenly authority Ladislas’s own, heavily contested succession to the throne. Ladislas was himself canonized in 1192, during the reign of Béla III.

The cults of Stephen and Ladislas, as well as Stephen’s son, Prince Emeric, were present in the diocese of Zagreb throughout the Middle Ages, since it formed a part of the Hungarian ecclesiastical organization. While Marija Mirković has given a fine survey of visual sources related to the veneration of the three royal saints in Croatia, a broader Hungarian background was supplied by Ernő Marosi.

The cult of royal saints in Croatia began to experience a particular resurgence in the seventeenth century within the framework of Counter-Reformation and the wars of liberation from the Turks. In 1641, Juraj Ratkaj Velikotaborski (Georgius Rattkay de Nagy Thabor) held a speech in honor of St Ladislas in Vienna in 1641 in which he recalled the golden times of Hungarian national history (which ended with Johannes Corvinus). The edition of his Memoria regum et banorum regnorum Dalmatiae, Croatiae et Slavoniae inchoata ab origine sua et usque ad praesentem annum MDCLII from 1652, to which both speeches are attached, bears an interesting two-page etching by a certain G. Šubarić: on one side, there is an image of the young Ferdinand IV on a horse, with a Christian army starting to do battle with the Turks in the background and a cross in the upper right corner with an inscription: In hoc signo vinces. On the other, there are ten smaller images showing Croatian ecclesiastical dignitaries and three royal saints of Croatia: Budimir, king and apostle of
Dalmatia, Croatia, and Slavonia; Ivan, son of Gostumil, king of Croatia; and Gotschalk, king of Slavonia and martyr. The message is quite clear: the Habsburgs are expected to drive the enemy from the sacred Illyrian soil. But the fact that the three royal saints who grant their heavenly authority to this sacred endeavor are imaginary characters reveals another interesting aspect: that the lack of indigenous royal saints for the assertion of statehood and territory was felt particularly acutely in those times of crisis. The selection points at the genealogy adopted by Croatian historians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: Antun Vramec (1538-1587) and Ivan Tomko Mrnavić (Ioannes Tomcus Marnavitius, 1580-1637), the latter notorious today for his tendency for historical falsifications.

The cult of the Arpadian saints, particularly that of St Ladislas, became especially prominent in the last quarter of the century. It was promoted primarily by the bishops of Zagreb. Thus, the relics of St Ladislas, which were first mentioned in an inventory of the cathedral in 1394, were placed in a new casket of gilded silver in 1690 during the episcopacy of Aleksandar Ignacije Mikulić, while the so-called mantle of St Ladislas, which had been donated, according to tradition, to Augustin Kažotić, the bishop of Zagreb (1303-1323) by the Hungarian king Charles I Robert, was mentioned in 1693 among the relics and afterwards probably deposited in the new altar of the saint. In the visual arts, it is significant of Croatian representations of Ladislas that he is almost always shown as a crowned king in armor, loosely covered with an ermine-lined royal mantle. He is wearing a sword at his belt and holding a battle axe in his hand as the main attribute. This iconographic type was developed in Hungary from the late fourteenth century onwards, in parallel with the rise of the cults of other military saints, such as St George and the
Archangel Michael. In seventeenth-century Croatia, which was plagued by Turkish incursions, Ladislas’s role as \textit{defensor indefesus} and \textit{athleta patriae}, as he was described in the late medieval Hungarian \textit{Historia rhythmica}, naturally stepped into the foreground, all the more so because Ladislas’s warfare with the Cumans was reinterpreted in the new context of the war of liberation from the Turks.\textsuperscript{13} Another prominent attribute of St Ladislas was a shield with the heraldic symbol of the double cross (\textit{crux duplicata}).\textsuperscript{14} Moreover, it was characteristic that he never appeared alone, but was always grouped together with one or two of the other saints of the Arpadian dynasty, Stephen or Emeric, and in this they were regularly represented as men of different ages (Stephen as an old man, Ladislas as mature and virile, Emeric as a beardless youth), something which at times can appear as analogous to the representation of the Magi.\textsuperscript{15}

However, the second half of the seventeenth century witnessed a shift in the visual representation of Hungarian holy rulers in the diocese of Zagreb, particularly that of St Ladislas. By the end of the century, this saint had already been intricately linked with Croatian history, almost to the point of breaking with his Hungarian origins. This development coincides with the baroque renovation of sacral buildings and altars, which took place after the Turkish devastations and the great fire of 1624 in Zagreb Cathedral, but only roughly. It can be observed that the new main altar, which was commissioned by Bishop Franjo Ergeljski and constructed in 1631/32, still contained only the Hungarian coat of arms, placed at the foot of the Virgin, at whose side stood the two Hungarian kings.\textsuperscript{16} The altar of St Ladislas from 1688-91, however, shows significant changes in this respect.

The altar was originally situated in the northern side apse, as a counterpart to the altar of the Virgin Mary in the southern
Les cultes des saints souverains et des saints guerriers et l’idéologie du pouvoir en Europe Centrale et Orientale

apse. Both later fell victim to the “cleansing” of the cathedral interior of its baroque inventory, which took place at the end of the nineteenth century at the instigation of Bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer and under the supervision of the architect Hermann Bollé. While the altar of the Virgin Mary has been almost completely lost, that of St Ladislas could be largely restored and is today preserved in reconstruction at the Zagreb Municipal Museum (Muzej grada Zagreba), together with a panel and some sculptures at the Museum of Arts and Crafts (Muzej za umjetnost i obrt). It is a traditional gothic winged altar, richly ornamented with polychrome and gilded wooden sculpture, commissioned by Bishop Aleksandar Ignacije Mikulić and canonicus Ivan Znika “in the likeness of the great altar” (the aforementioned main altar from 1631/32) and created by sculptor Johannes Kommersteiner and an anonymous painter, possibly Bernardo Bobić. Two large gilded wooden statues of St Ladislas (ill. 1) and St Emeric (ill. 2) were originally standing at the sides of the central figure of the Virgin Mary, but it is the cycle of panel paintings that is of particular importance in accentuating the “Croatian” links between King Ladislas, the bishopric, and the Croatian crown. Ten panels out of twelve have been preserved, and they reveal an interesting combination of a general iconographic scheme and specific Croatian motifs. The scenes are as follows:

On the inside (wings open) (the narrative cycle apparently starts from the lower right):

1. Lower-right: Ladislas prays at Mary’s altar of Nagyvárad, levitating in front of the amazed spectators.
2. Lower-left: Before the battle with the infidels (Cumans?), Ladislas prays on the battlefield that his soldiers may be relieved from starvation; a herd of stags and oxen appears miraculously. (ill. 3)
3. Upper-right: Battle against the infidels: Ladislas fights in armor, while golden coins, which the enemy throws at the feet of his army in order to confuse or bribe it, turn into stones.

4. Upper-left: King Ladislas hands over a monstrance and church vessels to the first bishop of Zagreb, Duh, showing his role as the apostolic king.

On the outside (wings closed)

5. Lower-right: Ladislas acts as the protector of widows, orphans, and the poor; some interpretations identify the kneeling woman as the widowed queen Jelena pleading with her brother-in-law for help.

6. Lower-left: Representatives of Croatian nobility offer the three coats of arms of Dalmatia, Croatia, and Slavonia to King Ladislas, while Queen Jelena is standing next to him, dressed in royal robes. Apparently, Croatian noblemen plead with Ladislas to unite the three kingdoms. (ill. 4) (detail: ill. 5)

7. Upper-right: Ladislas meets a deer; there is a cathedral in the background. This image has been interpreted as linked to the building or renovation of Zagreb Cathedral and it is the only one on the outside of the altar on which Ladislas does not wear a crown. It is slightly reminiscent of the miraculous episode at Vác, described in a fourteenth-century Hungarian chronicle, but possibly older: when King Géza was returning from his coronation together with his brother Ladislas, they had a vision of a deer with antlers full of burning candles, which sprang into the Danube after indicating the location where a monastery should be built. Here we can put forward the hypothesis that, in our case, this legend might have merged with the tradition of the foundation of the Zagreb bishopric.¹⁹

8. Upper-left: The architect shows his plans for the cathedral to the king.
Fixed paintings on the outside:

1. Ladislas gives alms to the poor.

2. Bishop Duh offers the Croatian crown to Ladislas. It is interesting that in Hungary Ladislas was also frequently shown as being crowned by the representatives of both secular and ecclesiastical orders, in connection with his questionable succession to the throne and the assertion of his legitimacy or *idoneitas* to rule.  

Let us now briefly reflect upon the iconographic order of images and their interpretation. It is striking that all the images on the inside of the altar (that is, those that were shown to the public only on festive occasions) displayed scenes from the Hungarian legend of Ladislas – that is, non-Croatian scenes that belonged to the general iconographic scheme and were present in other regions as well. On these images, Ladislas does not wear the crown: he is dressed only once in full armor and three times in a red buttoned jacket or a red gown with partial armor and a royal mantle; he bears his two-edged battle axe, but is bare-headed. On the other hand, the outside of the altar, which was always visible, contained only images related to Croatia, except for the one with an unidentified topic (bare-headed Ladislas meets a deer). Unless we accept that this panel was likewise linked to the building of Zagreb Cathedral, we should presume that some panels were perhaps misplaced during the transferal of the altar (we know from old descriptions of the altar that two images have been lost, and the first scholarly reconstruction of the altar in 1925 had a different order of panels; in any case, the composition must originally have been consistently divided between the inside and the outside).
Several authors have connected this Ladislas iconography to the influence of poet and historiographer Pavao Ritter Vitezović (1652-1713). This presupposition can be further sustained by the fact that he was in close relations with both Mikulić and Znika, the two commissioners of the altar. However, the scope of these scholars was primarily art-historical and thus they did not enter more deeply into the question of Ritter’s political background or his writings, which indeed offers significant clues to the image of King Ladislas in Croatian episcopal and lay erudite circles.

Vitezović was a member of the family that had obtained the status of Croatian-Hungarian nobility and a coat of arms from Emperor Ferdinand III for their service against the Turks. He spent his youth in extensive traveling and studies and then devoted himself to literature and historiography. His laudatory poems brought him fame and introduced him to high political circles. From 1681, he was active in politics, and in 1686, Croatian estates appointed him to the office of agens aulicus at the Imperial court in Vienna.

Throughout the 1680s and 1690s, Vitezović was writing patriotic poems and pragmatic historiography about Croatia, with a special emphasis on its bravery during the Turkish wars and the tragic nature of its territorial losses. The breaking point, however, was the year 1699, when Emperor Leopold signed the peace treaty at Carlowitz: stretches of territory that were considered Croatian were regained from the Turks only to be incorporated in the military zone, and this was largely felt to be an act of injustice in terms of Croatia’s role as a bulwark of Christianity. In response to this, Ritter Vitezović devoted himself with particular zeal to the task of proving Croatian greatness and independence in the past.
For some time his efforts remained within the scope of the heroic epic, historiography and historical descriptions of the Croatian territory. In 1703, however, internal Croatian circumstances became favorable to him, since the episcopal see of Zagreb and the Croatian ban (governor) were now both his friends. This may have been the trigger in his adopting a new strategy and publishing the work that is of primary interest to us: *Natales divo Ladislavo regi, Slavoniae apostolo restituti*.

As announced in its title, Vitezović wanted to restore to King Ladislas his true origins. However, in fact, his purpose was to give Ladislas back to the Croats, as revealed in an epigram added at the end of the work and written by Georgius Andreas Gladich, in which “a patriot speaks to a patriot about the return of the saintly patriot”. In other words, the 49 pages serve to prove, with the aid of numerous sources and the historiographical works of other authors and, above all, a great amount of fantasy and courage, that St Ladislas in fact originated from a Croatian noble family and was born in the town of Gorica, south of the Kupa river. The reasoning continues that the father of Ladislas, Béla, was a Croatian king, while his grandfather Mihály, son of Taksony (Toxus), was not Géza’s brother, but rather Mihovil, whom Venetian sources mention for the period around 920 as *dux Sclavorum*. In brief, a whole branch of the Arpadian dynasty was in fact Croatian.

After referring to various authorities, Vitezović eventually summarizes his arguments in 19 points, ranging from arbitrary etymology and intentional misunderstanding of the documents to iconographic interpretations.

For example, point 10 speaks about the double white cross in the red shield which Ladislas often holds in his left hand and which, according to Vitezović, the king brought from his homeland, Slavonia, and gave to the Hungarians who used it
2. Période post-byzantine et débuts de l’époque moderne

thereafter in his memory. In this interpretation, virtually all or at least most seventeenth-century representations of Ladislas would prove his Croatian origins.

Moreover, in point 8, Vitezović argues that the battle axe with which Ladislaus is usually depicted is a typical weapon of the Croats from ancient times called *pelta*, or colloquially *balta* or *bradvica*. Hungarians did not use this type of weapon; they used *hastae* (spears). Thus, he clarifies the issue of the other main attribute of the saint in Croatian as depicted in visual representations.

Another interesting point is point 11, in which he speaks of an ancient coin of Slavonia that was minted during the reign of Ladislas’s father, Béla. On the obverse side, one can see the double cross being adored by a king and a queen, above whose heads there are written the letters S and R (meaning *Slavoniae Reges*) and, in the uppermost section, a star and the moon. These were, according to Vitezović, symbols of ancient Illyricum, for which he created an allegedly “authentic” coat of arms in his *Stemmatographia sive armorum Illyricorum delineatio, descriptio, et restitutio* (1701). On the reverse of the coin, there is a marten in the act of running, which is a Slavonian heraldic symbol. (ill. 7)

This point gains particular significance with respect to the above mentioned panel from the St Ladislas altar that shows noblemen offering the three coats of arms (Dalmatia, Croatia, and Slavonia) as a sign of allegiance to the king. That is, it reveals a slight inconsistency with the usual way of presenting Slavonian coats of arms. It does not quite match: instead of a marten, there are three dogs in the act of running. An answer to this puzzle can be found in the *Stemmatographia*. It is the coat of arms of *Slavonia Danubiana*, which is one of Vitezović’s inventions. Could it be that the author of the
Les cultes des saints souverains et des saints guerriers et l’idéologie du pouvoir en Europe Centrale et Orientale

iconographic cycle, in collaboration with our imaginative historiographer, wanted to emphasize the fact that Ladislas could only accept the allegiance of that part of Slavonia which was not his homeland, thereby implying that in fact the Slavonia moderna (as he calls it in the Stemmatographia) was his homeland? Clearly, Vitezović made use of the fact that the heraldic collections of the time, such as the so-called Fojnički grbovnik and probably also the Ohmučevićev grbovnik (meanwhile lost), had introduced the tripled symbol of the marten that rather resembled a dog, and he doubled his Slavonia accordingly.28

The question that immediately imposes itself is, why did Vitezović try so hard to establish the Croatian origins of King Ladislas? Scholars have offered various suggestions. Vjekoslav Klaić, for example, was of the opinion that he did not want to admit to the fact that Ladislas had acquired Croatia as a Hungarian king, which would have implicitly confirmed a loss of independence and subjugation to the Hungarian crown.29 Instead, the annexing of Croatia is interpreted as an internal Croatian affair and an act of distinction: in his Natales, Vitezović explains that Ladislas joined Slavonia to Hungary only in order to distinguish the latter, in the same way as Jagello annexed his Duchy of Lithuania to Poland.30 In this respect, it is highly significant that the panel with the coats of arms shows Ladislas wearing a neutral baroque crown instead of the Hungarian one.31

A complementary explanation is that of László Szőrényi, whose analysis of this work through the prism of Croatian-Hungarian antagonism at the time of its composition proclaims Vitezović to be a proto-nationalist, loyal to the Austrian absolutist court, whose hostility towards Hungary and the spirit absorbed from Count Marsigli led him to view the
independent Hungary of Rákoczy as a “corpse ready to be freely disposed of”. He was now inviting Leopold I to an Austro-Croatian union, hoping that Croatia would thus regain possession of its complete territory.\(^{32}\)

The last quarter of the seventeenth century was indeed marked by a radical change in Croatian-Hungarian relations. Two main phases of this have been identified.\(^{33}\) The first phase can be identified as the period from the election of Nikola Zrinski as the Croatian ban (1649) until the defeat of the Zrinski-Frankopan conspiracy (1671) and is characterized by close cooperation between the Croatian political elite and Hungarian magnates; the policy is decidedly non-nationalist (almost unionist) and anti-Habsburg. After the defeat of the conspiracy, however, a gradual alienation of the Croatian estates from Hungary and a development of unquestionable loyalty to the Habsburgs can be observed; while Hungarian policy remains populist, the Croatian one is outspokenly elitist and looks to the court of Vienna for patronage. Additional antagonism between Hungary and Croatia was caused by the circumstance of the softer policy that the Habsburgs practiced towards Croatia based on the grounds, among others, of its declared Catholicism. As a result, most Croatian noblemen suspected of having participated in the conspiracy were reprieved, while in Hungary a period of fierce persecutions began. In return, Croatia did its best to demonstrate loyalty to the Habsburgs and at the same time use the circumstances to promote its interests: as early as 1673, a permanent Croatian ambassador (\textit{agens aulicus}) was installed at the court of Vienna for this purpose.\(^{34}\) After the Peace of Carlowitz and during the five-year activity of the Boundary Commission (in which Vitezović was active as the Croatian estates commissioner), great efforts were invested in the struggle around the
Neoacquista. This was the spirit in which Vitezović dedicated his epic *Croatia Revived* (*Croatia rediviva*) to Leopold I and his son Joseph I as “kings of all Croatia” (*totius Croatiae regibus*). In terms of ecclesiastical organization, Bishop Stjepan IV Seliščević demanded in 1701 that the newly liberated region of lower Slavonia be annexed to his diocese, which caused a conflict with the Bishop of Pécs. (It should be noted that the advisor to Bishop Seliščević in this matter was again Vitezović.) In 1708, Bishop Martin Brajković even began the process of raising Zagreb to the status of archbishopric, which would have been a decisive step in Croatian ecclesiastical independence from Hungary, but his sudden death cut short his endeavor and it was only in 1852 that independence from the archiepiscopal see of Kalocsa was achieved.

But let us return now to the cult of the holy Arpadian rulers. Another factor that should not be left out of our considerations is the role of the Pauline order. Despite the fatal Turkish devastation of its monasteries and a period of decadence culminating in the early 1630s with the threat of abolition (in 1632, Péter Pázmány, the bishop of Esztergom (Gran), recommended to the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide that it should abolish the order and subordinate it to the Dominicans, which was followed by a series of visitations and the renewal activity), the influence of the Paulines in the late seventeenth century was perhaps greater than ever. In 1667, the same Congregatio de Propaganda Fide took measures against the spread of Protestantism in Hungarian lands and entrusted the Pauline order with the missions; Martin Borković was the first *missionum praefectus* before his appointment to the episcopal see of Zagreb in 1668.
In a relatively short period of time, two members of the order became bishops of Zagreb: Borković (1667-1687) and Emeric Esterházy (1708-1722). It is significant that the Pauline order was increasingly adopting a national character and significance. In the year 1700, the Croatian Pauline province was separated from the Hungarian one after decades of conflict.\textsuperscript{39} The division occurred at the time when Esterházy was acting as the secretary general of the Paulines, and in 1700, despite being Hungarian by origin, he was officially accepted into the Croatian order. One year later, he was elected provincial vicar of the new province and in 1702 the supreme head of the entire order.\textsuperscript{40}

Although Borković cannot be directly related to the promotion of the cult of royal Arpadians, Esterházy positively promoted their veneration, a fact which is supported by ample evidence. On the tripartite silver antependium that he donated to the main altar of the cathedral (1721), which was the work of Viennese goldsmith C.G. Meichel, the Holy Family is depicted alongside St Stephen who is offering his crown to the Virgin Mary and St Ladislas who is giving thanks for the victory over the Cumans.\textsuperscript{41} To the Capuchins of Varaždin he donated an oil painting showing the Virgin Mary and St Francis dedicating the city to the Holy Trinity, together with a group of saintly patrons, among which Ladislas is present in armor holding his battle axe.\textsuperscript{42} Although Esterházy’s promotion of the cult of St Ladislas did not have such outspokenly Croatian connotations, as was the case with St Ladislas’s altar from the era of Bishop Mikulić or the \textit{Natales} of Vitezović, it should be emphasized that he sided with the Croats in the crucial moments of crisis despite his Hungarian origins, the pinnacle being his endorsement of the so-called “Pragmatic Sanction” of 1712.
It is possible that Esterházy was also behind the iconographic program of a woodcarving workshop known in scholarly literature as the “Svetice-Olimje-Sisak workshop” which became active at the time of Borković’s episcopacy until around 1714.43 It was obviously closely related to the Pauline order, since its artifacts were limited to Pauline churches, with the exception of the parish church of the Holy Cross at Sisak, to which it was probably linked through Esterházy. It is significant that it started including St Ladislas and St Stephen in the iconographic program of its altarpieces precisely around the year 1700. The oldest altars of this workshop, those of the Holy Cross and St Anthony the First Abbot in Olimje, which were made soon after the church was built (1675), lack the two Arpadian saints, but they appear at both sides of the Virgin Mary at the very end of the seventeenth century (probably shortly after the earthquake of 1699) on the main altar of the Church of Our Lady in Svetice above Ozalj.44 The statues of St Stephen and St Ladislas are similarly present on the altar of the Holy Cross in the parish church of St Nicholas in Jasenovac (1714), coupled with those of St Peter and St Paul. The altar was originally placed at the parish church of the Holy Cross in Sisak.45

Finally, we should say a few words about the importance of royal sanctity as such in the process of national self-assertion. In the medieval beginnings of Central-European Christianity and statehood, a pattern was followed that was characteristic of an archaic type of Christianity and the regions that were to a certain extent still undergoing the conversion process: royal saints were ascribed an unmistakable prominence among the first patrons of the young Christian states. As Gábor Klaniczay has pointed out, the royal saint was not only the continuance of the ancient sacrality of kingship, but was also an “envied
2. Période post-byzantine et débuts de l’époque moderne

treasure” that the living rulers used to consolidate their power at home and enlarge their esteem abroad.46

It can be observed that Croatia lacked indigenous royal saints from the very beginning, reflecting more the lack of appropriate promoters than of candidates. During the late Middle Ages, the Šubić kindred fostered the cult of King Zvonimir, the already mentioned brother-in-law of Ladislas, who died in suspicious circumstances, possibly a violent death. He was the last member of the Croatian royal dynasty, but his cult remained confined to certain segments of the Croatian church.47 The desire to retrieve or rediscover national royal saints at this crucial point in history, in the late seventeenth century, is reflected in a number of cases of which I will mention only two. The first is that of the parish church at Višnjica, where the statues of Ladislas and Stephen on the altar of St Valentine are counterbalanced with those of the Croatian kings Zvonimir and Budimir on the altar of St Joseph, both depicted as royal saints.48 The second is the seventeenth-century binding of a mass-book, the most precious liturgical codex of Zagreb Cathedral that has been preserved to the present day.

The codex itself was ordered by George, provost of Čazma (Juraj de Topusko, d. 1498) and consists of 296 folios of white parchment.49 For our purposes, however, its most important element is its binding of crimson velvet and cast silver, which can be dated to the end of the seventeenth century by the coat of arms of Bishop Aleksandar Ignacije Mikulić (1688-1694). Both sides of the binding bear heavily gilded silver medallions showing saints venerated in Croatia, each medallion being accompanied by a separate silver plate with an inscription. The front cover shows St Stephen and St Elisabeth of Hungary with three Croatian and Hungarian hermits; the back cover bears the image of St Ladislas in the company of two Croatian
bishops, Pope Caius, and two fictitious or at least historically unattested Croatian kings: *S Budimanus Dalm. Croat. Sclav. Rex Alps* and *S Godisclavus Rex Sclav. et M.* Ladislas is thus iconographically related to Croatian ecclesiastical and royal personalities rather than to those of Hungary, though we should also note that the two Hungarian kings are positioned symmetrically: one in the front, the other in the back. Scholars have linked Vitezović with this iconographical program on the account of his known friendly relations with Bishop Mikulić and the latter’s keen interest in history.50

The hypothesis as to the demand for national royal saints may also be supported by another writing by Ritter Vitezović, *Vita et martyrium beati Vladimiri, Croatiae regis*, which was published in 1705. Taking as a basis a story written down by Priest Diocleas (Pop Dukljanin), a twelfth-century author known for his fantastic historiography, he constructed a fully-fledged legend of an imaginary king of “Red Croats”, whose royal patrimony stretched as far as today’s Montenegro and Albania and who was first taken captive by the Bulgarian ruler Samuel, then married his daughter and was eventually murdered by the new Bulgarian ruler Vladislav. Written in the best traditions of tenth- and eleventh-century legends about royal martyrdom (for example, the early *passiones* of the Bohemian king Wenceslas), this piece of hagiography represents a clear attempt to provide a non-existing tradition, a characteristic trait of the beginnings of Central-European statehood. Moreover, the legend answers the demands of a heavenly protector, which tend to increase in times of peril. As an extremely pious and peace-loving figure, Vitezović’s King Vladimir was not the warrior type of ruler, but was still able to save his people by offering himself to the enemies. The author nonetheless manages to add other, more militant elements to
the legend: as Vladimir was led to the trap that had been set for his murder, his guides had a vision in which he was accompanied by angels of God in the shape of white soldiers in glistening armor; and after his death, his murderer was struck dead by an apparition of Vladimir as a soldier in arms.

**Conclusion**

At the turn of the eighteenth century, the sense of threat created by the Turkish menace and the willingness of Vienna to sacrifice stretches of Croatian territory as part of its political maneuvers, called for the rediscovery of heavenly protectors. As a canonized royal saint with glorious hagiography and iconography, and, moreover, the founder of the Zagreb bishopric, Ladislas was a highly suitable candidate: images of a manly knight in armor, winning his battles with the strength of his sword and heavenly aid, were combined with episodes from Croatia’s ancient past and decorated with heraldic symbols that reasserted Croatian statehood. In this context, the brief attempt by Ritter Vitezović and the ecclesiastical circles of Zagreb to adopt a branch of Arpadians takes on a new meaning as a valid step in the country’s search for its own *athleta patriae, defensor* and *intercessor* armed with both earthly and heavenly powers.
Ills. 1a and 1b: Statue of St Ladislas by Johannes Kommersteiner, formerly part of St Ladislas altar in the Zagreb cathedral. Photo by M. Miladinov. Courtesy of Muzej za umjetnost i obrt (Museum of Arts and Crafts), Zagreb.
Ills. 2a and 2b: Statue of St Emeric by Johannes Kommersteiner, formerly part of St Ladislas altar in the Zagreb cathedral. Photo by M. Miladinov. Courtesy of Muzej za umjetnost i obrt (Museum of Arts and Crafts), Zagreb.
Ill. 3: King Ladislas is praying before the battle with the Cumans. Panel painting from the former altar of St Ladislas in the Zagreb cathedral. Photo by M. Miladinov. Courtesy of Muzej grada Zagreba (Zagreb Municipal Museum), Zagreb.
III. 4: Representatives of Croatian nobility present King Ladislas with the coats of arms of the three kingdoms. Panel painting from the former altar of St Ladislas in the Zagreb cathedral. 

Photo by M. Miladinov. Courtesy of Muzej grada Zagreba (Zagreb Municipal Museum), Zagreb.
III. 5: Detail from ill. 4. Photo by M. Miladinov. Courtesy of Muzej grada Zagreba (Zagreb Municipal Museum), Zagreb.
2. Période post-byzantine et débuts de l’époque moderne

Works of Pavao Ritter Vitezović Mentioned in this Article:
(The call numbers refer to the National and University Library, Zagreb)

*Croatia rediviva regnante Leopoldo Magno caesare.* Zagreb, 1700. NSK Zagreb, R II F-8°-104.

*Natales divo Ladislavo regi, Slavoniae apostolo restituti.* Zagreb, 1704. NSK Zagreb, R II F-8°-620, adl. 2.

*Stemmatographia sive armorum Illyricorum delineatio, descriptio, et restitutio.* [Vienna, 1701]. NSK Zagreb, R II F-8°-620.

*Vita et martyrium beati Vladimiri, Croatiae regis.* Zagreb, 1705. NSK Zagreb, R II F-8°-620, adl. 3.
NOTES


3 The original foundation charter has not been preserved, but the report of Ladislas’s role in the reorganization of Croatian church has come down to us in the so-called “Felitian’s Charter” from 1134, Archiepiscopal Archive in Zagreb, Privilegialia, nr. 1, ed. by T. Smičiklas et al. in *Codex diplomaticus Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, 16 vols., Zagreb, 1904-76, vol. II, 42, doc. 42. On its authenticity and usefulness as a historical source on the foundation of the Zagreb bishopric, see L. Dobronić, *Biskupski i kaptolski Zagreb* [Zagreb: Bishopric and Chapter], Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 1991, 5ff.


6 J. Rattkay, *Panegyris D. Ladislai Regi Inclytae nationis Hungariae, in celeberrima et antiquissima Universitate Vienensi Patrono tutelari*, in
2. Période post-byzantine et débuts de l’époque moderne

Basilica D. Stephani protomartyris declamata anno 1641. A year later, at the Zagreb Synod, he called for the merciless treatment of heretic Protestants, as well as for the reorganization of the church. See J. Rattkay, Oratio in Synodo Zagabriensi habita 26. Augusti 1642. Both were published at the end of his Memoria regum et banorum regnum Dalmatiae, Croatiae et Slavorum inchoata ab origine sua et usque ad praesentem annum MDCLII, Zagreb, 1652. Cf. S. Antoljak, Hrvatska historiografija do 1918. [Croatian historiography until 1918], Matica hrvatska, Zagreb, 1992, vol. I, 115 and 118; S. Bene, “Ideološke koncepcije o staleškoj državi zagrebačkoga kanonika” [Ideaconical conceptions of a Zagreb canon about the corporative state], in Juraj Rattkay: Spomen na kraljeve i banove kraljevstava Dalmacije, Hrvatske i Slavonije [Memory of the kings and governors of Dalmatia, Croatia, and Slavonia], trans. by Z. Blažević, Hrvatski Institut za povijest, Zagreb, 2001, 11. Several other panegyrics and speeches referring to St Ladislas (e.g. by Žigmund Rukelj, Petar Matačić, Aleksandar Ignacić Mikulić, and Nikola Škrljic od Lomnice) might be of interest for this topic, but they are located in Vienna and I have not yet been able to consult them.

7 BVDIMERVS DALM CROA SCLAVON REX ET APOSTOLVS, IVANVS GOSTVMILI CROATIAE REGIS FILIVS, GODESCALCVS SCLAVONIAE REX ET MARTYR. I have used the copy in the National and University Library, Zagreb, NSK R II F-4°-1.

8 S. Bene, “Ideološke koncepcije” (as in n. 6), 12.

9 A. Vramec, Kronika vezda znovich zpravljena kratka szloenzkim jezikom, Ljubljana, 1578; I.T. Mrnavić, Regiae sanctitatis Illyricanae foecunditas, Rome, 1630. The seventeenth century abounded with fictitious genealogies written with the purpose of asserting political claims: thus, in Austria a series of writings served to prove that the Habsburg family originated from Charlemagne by the female line of descent (e.g. Janez Ludvik Schönleben, quoted with predilection by Croatian historiographers). Cf. Z. Blažević, Vitezovičeva Hrvatska između stvarnosti i utopiјe [The Croatia of Pavao Ritter Vitezović: Between reality and utopia], Barbat, Zagreb, 2002, 47.

10 Ivan Znika, who was likewise active in the promotion of Ladislas’s cult, was a canon of Zagreb cathedral at the time and is mentioned in the inscription at the base of the reliquary. Cf. I. Lentić, “Predmeti od metala u riznici zagrebačke katedrale” [Metal objects in the treasury of Zagreb cathedral], in Riznica zagrebačke katedrale [The treasury of Zagreb cathedral], exhibition catalog, ed. by Z. Munk, MTM, Zagreb, 1983, 141-2, description on 185.
Les cultes des saints souverains et des saints guerriers et l'idéologie du pouvoir en Europe Centrale et Orientale

11 A.B. Krčelić, Sivlenje blasenoga Gazotti Augustina, zagrebeckoga biskupa [The life of blessed Augustin Kažotić, bishop of Zagreb], Zagreb, 1747, 22. Cf. Z. Munk, “Tekstilne dragocjenosti iz katedralne riznice” [Precious textile objects from the cathedral treasury], in Riznica zagrebačke katedrale (as in n. 10), 89-93, here 89, illustrations on 48 and 95, description on 129.

12 M. Mirković, “Ikonografija sv. Ladislava” (as in n. 5), 580.


14 See below, n. 23.

15 I will mention only a few examples from the seventeenth century: St Ladislas and St Stephen on both sides of the Virgin Mary on the main altar of Zagreb Cathedral and the marble tabernacle (1631/32, demolished in 1832); St Ladislas with St Emeric on the altar of the chapel of St Fabian and St Sebastian in Vurot (1681); St Ladislas (centrally placed with St Kazimir) with side figures of St Stephen and St Emeric on the altar of St Rochus in St Peter chapel in Gotalovec (last quarter of the seventeenth century); figures of St Stephen and St Augustine paired with those of St Ladislas and St Ambrose on the altar of St Quirinus in Sisak; figures of St Stephen and St Ladislas coupled with the side ones of St Emeric and St Kazimir on the altar of St Barbara in Gornje Vrapče (the two altars were commissioned by Ivan Znika); St Stephen and St Ladislas on the main altar in the Church of Our Lady in Svetice above Ozalj (end of the seventeenth century); St Stephen and St Ladislas coupled with St Peter and St Paul on the altar of St Catherine in the Franciscan church of Krapina, as well as on no longer existing altars in St Mary of Okić, St Nicholas in Hrašćina, and St Michael in Vugrovec, mentioned in visitation reports, cf. K. Dočkal, Diecezanski muzej nadbiskupije zagrebačke II [The diocesan museum of Zagreb archbishopric], Zagreb, 1944, 39, 87, and 134; M. Mirković, “Ikonografija sv. Ladislava” (as in n. 5), 581 and 584-5; D. Baričević, “Glavni oltar zagrebačke katedrale iz 1632. godine” [The main altar of Zagreb cathedral from 1632], in Peristil 10-11, 1967/68, 99-116, here 101-2; Hrvatska/Mađarska. Stoljetne književne i likovno-umjetničke veze. Horvátország/Magyarország. Évszázados irodalmi és képzőművészeti kapcsolatok [Croatia/Hungary. Literary and visual artistic relations through the centuries], Most/The Bridge, Zagreb, 1995, illustrations on 167ff.
According to the 1792 visitation report by Bishop Maksimilijan Vrhovac, Ladislas was likewise holding the Hungarian coat of arms. D. Barčević, “Glavni oltar” (as in n. 15), 101. Cf. M. Mirković, “Ikonografija sv. Ladislava” (as in n. 5), 582.

The discarded inventory of the cathedral was donated to the poor churches of the diocese. Thus, the altar of St Ladislas ended up in the parish church Lonja na Savi, where it could not fit because of its size. The parish priest let it be dismantled and deposited in a shed, where it remained until it was discovered and partly reconstructed by Gj. Szabo and Lj. Babić for an exhibition in 1925. See the report by Gy. Szabo, “Oltar sv. Ladislava iz stare zagrebačke katedrale” [St Ladisla’s altar from the old cathedral of Zagreb], in Katalog Kulturno historijske izložbe grada Zagreba prigodom hiljadu-godišnjice hrvatskog kraljevstva 925.-1925. [Catalog of the Cultural-Historical Exhibition of Zagreb at the occasion of the millenary of the Croatian kingdom, 925-1925], Zagreb, 1925, 70-1. Cf. Lj. Gašparović, “O aktivnosti Ivana Kommersteineru u Hrvatskoj” [On the activity of Johannes Kommersteiner in Croatia], in Peristil 18-19, 1975/76, 61-90, here 64, n. 29.


E. Marosi, “Der heilige Ladislaus” (as in n. 2), 242-3.

Marosi has demonstrated that the double cross first appears in the iconography of St Ladislas in Hungary around 1400 and that it developed from a simple cross as the typical symbol of the Christian knight, subsequently adapted to Hungarian circumstances. An interesting parallel is the Szentsimon depiction of St George with a double cross from 1423. E. Marosi, “Der heilige Ladislaus” (as in n. 2), 246.


A charter by Vladislav II Jagello, issued in Buda in 1496, confirms the coat of arms of Slavonia, substituting the crescent with a marten running between two rivers. The facsimile of the original, which is preserved at the Croatian State Archive, is found in I. Bojniči-Kninski, “Grbovnica kraljevine ‘Slavonije’” [The heraldic charter of the ‘Slavonian’ kingdom], in Viestnik hrvatskoga arheološkoga društva, n.s. 1, 1896.

“The moon and the star are the general symbol of Illyricum, while the double cross and the marten are the particular symbol of Slavonia, as we can find them described by a number of ancient authors.” Luna & stella generale Illyrici, Crux duplicata & Martes Sloviniae proprium, insignia sunt: quemadmodum in pluribus antiquariis delineata invenimus. P. Ritter Vitezović, Natales, 43, point 11.

Vitezović’s passion for heraldry was probably aroused during his stay with the Slovenian historian and etcher, Baron Johannes Weikhardt Valvasor. During the year spent at the castle of Bogenšperk (Wagensberg), 1676/77, Vitezović assisted the baron in compiling his work Die Ehre des Herzogthums Krain (4 vols., 1689) and used his rich library. E. Ljubović, “Heraldika u djelima Pavla Vitezovića” [Heraldry in the work of Pavao Vitezović], in Forum, 41, 2002, 73, no. 10/12, 1190-6, here 1191. For a detailed description of the historical coat of arms of Slavonia and its development, see M. Grakalić, Hrvatski grb [Croatian Coat of Arms], Matica hrvatska, Zagreb, 1990, 18-53. Grakalić has observed that the marten of the Slavonian coat of arms is occasionally interpreted as a dog, which he attributes to an error; however, Vitezović explicitly calls the heraldic animals of his “Slavonia
2. Période post-byzantine et débuts de l’époque moderne

Danubiana” dogs: *Trinus in albenti currit mihi Vertegus agro / Sincerorum audax fidaque turba Canum. / Audacis rubeus color est, albusque fidelis; / Praeda Canum Domino sic sine lite cadit*. Ritter Vitezović, P., *Stemmatographia*, 44.


31 Z. Wyroubal, *Bernardo Bobić* (as in n. 18), 38-40; *idem*, “Kakvu je krunu” (as in n. 21); A. Horvat, “Je li Bernardo Bobić” (as in n. 18), 140.


33 Z. Blažević, *Vitezovićeva Hrvatska* (as in n. 9), 68-70.

34 Ibidem, 72.


In a letter from 25 October 1701, Vitezović instructed the bishop in detail on this matter, listing thirteen arguments that he should use against his opponent. Cf. Z. Blažević, *Vitezovićeva Hrvatska* (as in n. 9), 80, n. 140.


38 The most successful Pauline in this struggle for separation was Gašpar Malečić, a professor of philosophy at Lepoglava University, who elaborated on his 14 points in favor of division of the provinces at the general chapter of the order in 1693, placing particular emphasis on the national aspect and accusing the Hungarians of intolerance, oppression, and exploitation of the Croatian party. However, an equally fervent propagator of the idea was Ivan Krištolovec. He presented his arguments in *Libellus de origine Religionis nostrae*, which was published only in 1702, though the idea had matured during the episcopacy of Borković. Cf. A. Sekulić, “Pisci povijesti pavlinskog reda”
Les cultes des saints souverains et des saints guerriers et l'idéologie du pouvoir en Europe Centrale et Orientale


41 I. Lentić, “Predmeti od metala” (as in n. 10), 187.

42 The monastery belonged to the Franciscan province that was named after St Ladislas in the middle of the seventeenth century. It is interesting that the Franciscans of Croatia likewise separated from the Hungarians early in the eighteenth century. M. Mirković, “Ikonografija sv. Ladislava” (as in n. 5), 585.

43 The main authority on this workshop is Doris Baričević. See her studies: “Svetice i problem pavlinskog kiparstva na prijelazu XVII u XVIII stoljeće” [Svetice and the issue of Pauline sculpture at the turn of the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries], in Rad Arhiva Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti, 2, 1973, 111-29; Pavlinski kipari i drvorezbari u Sveticama [Pauline sculptors and woodcarvers in Svetice], Kajkavsko spravišće, Zagreb, 1978; Umjetničke znamenitosti crkve i samostana Majke Božje Remetske [Artistic monuments in the church and monastery of Our Lady of Remete], Kajkavsko spravišće, Zagreb, 1978; “Kiparstvo u pavlinskim crkvama u doba baroka” [Baroque sculpture in Pauline churches], in Kultura pavlina (as in n. 39), 183-218, here 186-87; and others.

44 D. Baričević, “Svetice i problem pavlinskog kiparstva” (as in n. 43), 117ff; images can be seen in idem, “Kiparstvo u pavlinskim crkvama” (as in n. 39), 187-8.

45 D. Baričević, “Pregled spomenika skulpture i drvorezbarstva 17. i 18. stoljeća s područja kotara Sisak” [An overview of sculpture and woodcarving from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the Sisak region], in Ljetopis Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti, 72, 1968, 483-518; idem, “Kiparstvo u pavlinskim crkvama” (as in n. 43), 187.

46 G. Klaniczay, “Rex iustus” (as in n. 4), 20.
2. Période post-byzantine et débuts de l’époque moderne


48 M. Mirković, “Ikonografija sv. Ladislava” (as in n. 5), 585.

49 The codex is kept today in the treasury of the Zagreb cathedral, inventory no. 354. For a detailed description, see D. Kniewald, “Misal čazmanskog prepoštta Jurja de Topusko i zagrebačkog biskupa Šimuna Erdödy” [The mass-book of George of Topusko, provost of Čazma, and Simon Erdödy, bishop of Zagreb], in Rad Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti 268, 1940, 45-84; cf. idem, “Zagrebački liturgijski kodeksi XI.-XV. stoljeća [Zagreb liturgical codices from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries], in Croatia sacra. Arhiv za crkvenu povijest Hrvata, 10, 1940, 58-60; idem, “Latinski rukopisi u Zagrebu” [Latin manuscripts at Zagreb], in Minijatura u Jugoslaviji. Katalog izložbe u Muzeju za umjetnost i obrt, Zagreb, april-juni 1964 [Miniature illumination in Yugoslavia, exhibition catalog], Muzej za umjetnost i obrt, Zagreb, 1964, 20. Cf. I. Lentić, “Predmeti od metala” (as in n. 10), 186.