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## **«OLD-CROATIAN CROWN» OR THE CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF A NATIONAL AND POLITICAL SYMBOL FROM THE LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY TO THE WORLD WAR II\***

When on October 29, 1918, the Croatian Diet (*Sabor*) severed all ties of the Triune Kingdom of Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia (*Trojedna Kraljevina Dalmacija, Hrvatska i Slavonija*) with the Empire of Austria and the Kingdom of Hungary, it also annulled the Croato-Hungarian Compromise (*Hrvatsko-ugarska nagodba*) of 1868 (figure 1). Due to the Compromise, the Triune Kingdom entered (or re-established) union with the Kingdom of Hungary and retained its statehood and autonomy within the Lands of the Crown of St. Stephen (or the Lands of Sacred Hungarian Crown) as the eastern part of Austria-Hungary<sup>1</sup>. The Compromise (article 61) allowed «Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia» to use «within their own frontiers in their internal affairs» their «own combined colours and coat of arms, the latter, however, being surmounted by the Crown of St. Stephen»<sup>2</sup>. By this centuries old custom was revived due to the fact that previously the Triune Kingdom and Hungary had been living in union for centuries. From the moment of its creation the union survived all perils and challenges to be broken during the revolutionary year of 1848 and

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<sup>1</sup> According to P. R. Magocsi by the Austro-Hungarian Agreement (Compromise) of 1867, «Hungary and the rest of Austria effectively became two states joined in personal union through a common monarch (the Habsburg emperor of Austria and king of Hungary); with common ministries of foreign affairs, war, and finance...» (*Magocsi P. R. Historical Atlas of Central Europe*. Seattle, 2002. P. 80). Magocsi added that «Croatia-Slavonia», «according to a separate agreement (Nagodba) of 1868 was allowed a degree of self-government under its own diet (Sabor) in Zagreb. The promise to incorporate Dalmatia into a Triune Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia never materialized, however, and Dalmatia remained an Austrian province» (Ibid.). For the territorial composition of Croatian lands after 1868 see: *Magocsi P. R. Historical Atlas*... P. 80–81 (map 25b on page 81), 162–163 (map 46a on page 163).

<sup>2</sup> See the text of article 61 in English in: *Seton-Watson R. W. The Southern Slav Question and the Habsburg Monarchy*. London, 1911. P. 372.

subsequently St. Stephen's crown was no longer the Croatian royal crown<sup>3</sup>. However, relations among the two sides and their real position within the union during the period before 1848 and after 1868 can not be compared. In spite of the already existing misunderstandings, prior to 1848 the fact that the Triune Kingdom belonged to the Realm of St. Stephen was widely accepted in Croatia. Also, St. Stephen's crown had occasionally been used as a Croatian symbol. For example on the flag and scepter of the Croatian *ban* (viceroy) Franjo Vlašić from 1832 (figure 2)<sup>4</sup>. So its presence on the insignia of the highest official and representative of the Kingdom is a reflection of its superior status among Croatian symbols. However, during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century most of the coats



Figure 1. The union of Hungary and the Triune Kingdom under St. Stephen's crown.

of arms were surmounted with various heraldic crowns. At that time the idea of a separate Croatian crown has not yet been in existence, so the absence of St. Stephen's crown was not the result of any intention or political/ideological concept, which would prevent its display (figure 3).

The Compromise of 1868 occurred after decades of Croatian-Hungarian misunderstanding and conflicts caused by different views on the position and status of the two countries. From the 1830s Hungarian desire to transform the Realm of St. Stephen into a unified Magyar national state was challenged by Croatian elites. They desired to unite Croatian lands and to create a modern nation state, which would closely cooperate with other South Slavic («Illyrian») peoples<sup>5</sup>. They were not demanding the annulment of the union, but their views were in harsh opposition to Hungarian ideas.

<sup>3</sup> Brief survey in Croatian language of Croatian-Hungarian relations from the Middle Ages to 1868 is: *Heka L. Hrvatsko-ugarski odnosi od Srednjega vijeka do Nagodbe iz 1868. s posebnim osvrtom na pitanje Slavonije // Scrinia slavonica. Slavonski Brod, 2008. Vol. 8. S. 152–173* (Summary in English on page 173). For details in English see: *Čepulo D. Croatian Legal History in the European Context. Zagreb, 2013* (URL: [www.pravo.unizg.hr/download/repository/Croatian\\_Legal\\_History\\_in\\_the\\_European\\_Context.pdf](http://www.pravo.unizg.hr/download/repository/Croatian_Legal_History_in_the_European_Context.pdf) (last visited — August, 25, 2014)).

<sup>4</sup> Images and descriptions see in: [Šercer M.]. *Znamenja vlasti i časti u Hrvatskoj u 19. stoljeću*. Zagreb, 1993; scepter, catalogue No. 8. P. 15 (image), 77 (description); flag, catalogue No. 2. P. 74 (images), 75 (description). — Crown on side B of the flag surmounted the coat of arms of the Triune Kingdom (three shields containing the coats of arms of Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia).

<sup>5</sup> The 1830s witnessed the emergence of the Croatian national revival (the Illyrian Movement). Ivo Banac claimed that the «Croat Revival, beginning in the late eighteenth century, in large part emanated from resistance to awakened Magyar nationalism. Stirred by the Germanizing policies of Joseph II, the Magyar nobility wasted no time after his demise in 1790 in introducing Hungarian as the replacement for Latin, previously the official language of Hungary. The threat of Magyarization implicit in this change provoked the opposition of the Croat nobility. But though the Croats expressed their objections by restating their claims to ancient municipal autonomy within the common Hungarian constitution, their spokesmen were aware that the vibrant Magyar national idea could best be countered only by an alternate national program. The construction of such a program, <...> was the task performed by the Illyrianist movement of the 1830s and 1840s» (*Banac I. The National Question in Yugoslavia. Origins, History, Politics. Ithaca; London, 1984. P. 75–76*).

For centuries prior to that both countries were ruled by a single king from various ruling houses crowned with St. Stephen's crown as the common crown. However, the first among them, King Koloman (Colomanus in Latin or Kálmán in Hungarian) from the Hungarian House of



Figure 2. The coat of arms of the Triune Kingdom surmounted with St. Stephen's crown on the flag of ban Franjo Vlašić from 1832.

Árpád, was crowned as the king of Croatia and Dalmatia at the very beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century in a separate coronation ceremony in Croatia with the still existing Croatian royal crown, which later disappeared. This custom survived up to the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>6</sup>. From that time on common kings were crowned with a single crown in a single ceremony with the still existing St. Stephen's crown<sup>7</sup>. After this the notion of a separate coronation with the Croatian royal crown faded from the memory of the Croatian nobility. For at least three centuries prior to the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was common in Croatia to interpret the foundation of the union as the «access of Croatia and Dalmatia to the Sacred Crown of the Kingdom of Hungary in 1102»<sup>8</sup>.

However, the notion has survived that once an independent Croatian Kingdom had existed with its own kings. Probably the best known was King Zvonimir, who ruled from 1075 to 1089<sup>9</sup>. Koloman and his successors were probably crowned with Zvonimir's crown, but the crown's physical appearance is unknown. Nevertheless, the image of an «Old-Croatian Crown» — a kind of helmet-like crown decorated with precious stones and three crosses applied to its top — is present



Figure 3. Combined coat of arms of the city of Zagreb and the Triune Kingdom surmounted with heraldic crown.

<sup>6</sup> More on separate coronations of common kings for the kings of Croatia and Dalmatia can be found in: *Periša D. Povodom reakcija na moju recenziju prve knjige Historija bosanske duhovnosti // Status. Mostar, 2007. Br. 12. S. 227.*

<sup>7</sup> For details about that crown, including its history, see: *Kovács É., Lovag Zs. The Hungarian Crown and Other Regalia. Second Edition. Budapest, [1985].* — For the history of the crown see chapter «The history of the coronation insignia», pp. 7–16. At the time of Koloman's ascend to Croatian throne present day St. Stephen's crown did not exist. Details related to its creation can be found on pages 43 and 54 of the above-mentioned monograph.

<sup>8</sup> See for example: [*Kušević J.*]. *De municipalibus iuribus et statutis regnorum Dalmatiae, Croatiae et Slavoniae. Zagreb, 1830. P. 7.* — In the appeal to the newly elected King Ferdinand I from the House of Habsburg from April 25, 1527, Croatian estates stressed that after the death of «our last King Zvonimir» they have joined of their freewill «the sacred crown of the Kingdom of Hungary». The appeal was published in numerous publications, both in original Latin version and/or in Croatian translation. See for example: *Matković H. Na vrelima hrvatske povijesti. Zagreb, 2006. S. 109.*

<sup>9</sup> He was mentioned in numerous works. For example: *Kušević J. De municipalibus iuribus... P. 5.* — Portrayed Zvonimir as the one with whom the line of Croatian kings had died out.

in Croatian public images today. Its outlook is based on the image of a crowned man on a Pre-Romanesque bas-relief from the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century in baptistery in Split (figure 4)<sup>10</sup>. Its existence was revealed to the public in 1861<sup>11</sup>. Already during the 19<sup>th</sup> century most of experts agreed that the shape of its crown was typical for the crowns of Carolingian (Frankish) kings and the image of a crowned man was recognized as the image of a king.

It is therefore important to add that at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century some experts saw the crowned figure as representing the Christ surrounded by Apostles<sup>12</sup>. It could therefore be a religious symbol, but the latter constructed image of the «Old Croatian Crown» is based on the image from the bas-relief in Split.

The first to identify the crowned man as Croatian king was Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski in 1873, opening thus the ground for the transformation of its crown into the symbol of «Old-Croatian Crown»<sup>13</sup>. Several years before, the official use of St. Stephen's crown as Croatian royal crown was imposed by the Compromise. Since most of Croats considered the Compromise to be the tool of Hungarian domination, that provision could not win the hearts of the Croatian population. It is possible to claim that St. Stephen's crown which was present in public on a large scale (on public buildings, on seals, forms, documents, etc.) was observed by many people as the most visible sign of foreign domination (figure 5)<sup>14</sup>. During the same period the unofficial use of Croatian symbols included images of numerous heraldic crowns, both in the Triune Kingdom as the part of the Lands of the Crown of St. Stephen and in other Croatian lands or lands inhabited by Croats (primarily in Dalmatia)<sup>15</sup>. Such heraldic crowns could be found in heraldic manuals and general lexicons. One of them was designed by Austrian herald Hugo



Figure 4. The present situation of the bas-relief in the baptistery in Split.

<sup>10</sup> For details see: *Fisković I.* Reljef kralja Petra Krešimira IV. Split, 2002. — The author concluded that image is showing King Petar Krešimir IV who ruled from 1056 to 1074.

<sup>11</sup> *Eitelberger v. Edelberg R.* Die mittelalterlichen Kunstdenkmale Dalmatiens in Arbe, Zara, Traù, Spalato und Ragusa. Vienna, 1861. S. 123–124. — The author described the bas-relief and published its drawing as *Figur* — Figure 83.

<sup>12</sup> The champion of such a view was then leading Croatian archaeologist Frane Bulić. See: *Bulić F.* Hrvatski spomenici u kninskoj okolici uz ostale suvremene dalmatinske iz doba narodne hrvatske dinastije. Zagreb, 1888 (reprint: Zagreb, 1995). S. 38–40; the image (drawing) of the bas-relief on T. XV as Figure 42.

<sup>13</sup> *Kukuljević Sakcinski I.* Putne uspomene iz Hrvatske, Albanije, Krfa i Italije. Zagreb, 1873. S. 53. — Described it as the image of «one of the Croatian kings sitting on the throne, wrapped by mantle, holding a cross in his hand and being covered with some unusual crown with three crosses». He dated it into the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>14</sup> It was also present on the «emblem of the Joint Affairs of the territories of the Hungarian Crown», which «is formed by the combined arms of Hungary and of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia». See article 62 of the Compromise as published in English by *Seton-Watson R. W.* The Southern Slav Question... P. 372. Already in 1868 the coat of arms of Transylvania was added, and later even the coat of arms of the city of Rijeka.

<sup>15</sup> For example the crown which surmounts the coat of arms of the Triune Kingdom on the basis of the monument erected in 1889 in the honor of the poet and writer fra Andrija Kačić Miošić in Dalmatian town of Makarska.

Gerhard Ströhl, the author of numerous tables with the coats of arms from the territory of Austria-Hungary. On most tables a uniform heraldic royal crown surmounted coats of arms of the all kingdoms of the Monarchy (including Croatia and Dalmatia), which did not have actual royal crowns like Hungary and Bohemia (the Crown of St. Wenceslas) (figure 6)<sup>16</sup>. Taken as a pattern, it surmounts several versions of Croatian coats of arms published in various publications. Among them are numerous postcards with patriotic motifs, which were in mass use from the very end of the 19th century to the WWI (figure 7)<sup>17</sup>.

By that time the Croatian checkered coat of arms has gradually been transformed into the all-Croatian coat of arms, as a kind of a symbol of desired integration and unification of all Croatian lands. It is not surprising then that the idea of the «Old-Croatian Crown» as the symbol of the sovereignty of a desired united Croatian state had emerged. During this period, historical research revealed that King Zvonimir was crowned with a crown



Figure 6. Croatian checkered coat of arms (silver and red fields) surmounted by heraldic crown of Hugo Gerhard Ströhl



Figure 5. The coat of arms of the Triune Kingdom surmounted by St. Stephen's crown on the avers side of medal (commemorative coin)

sent to him by the pope, with which Koloman was later crowned. In 1861 Ivan Krstitelj Tkalčić stressed that by electing Koloman, Croats had not subjected themselves to the king of Hungary. They «crowned him for their king with the crown of Zvonimir, and by doing that they have saved their peoples' [national] crown, so that the Hungarian crown does not have any influence or right on Croatian kingdom»<sup>18</sup>. So Tkalčić indirectly marked Zvonimir's crown as the symbol of Croatian sovereignty. There is no wonder why during the following years and decades the idea emerged of Zvonimir's crown as the symbolic representation of desired a Croatian sovereignty.

In 1869 the Croatian politician and intellectual from Dalmatia, Mihovil Pavlinović, stressed that the Croats «recognize the Hungarian crown as Croatian, inasmuch as today the Croatian crown is temporarily

<sup>16</sup> For example see table «Österreichisch-Ungarische Länderwappen» [«The Coats of Arms of Austro-Hungarian Lands»], published as inlay in color besides article «Österreich» [«Austria»] in Meyers Konversations Lexikon. [Fifth edition]. Bd. 13. Nordseekanal bis Politesse. Leipzig; Wien, 1897. — On the same table the coat of arms of Dalmatia surmounted with the same crown and the facsimile of Ströhl's signature besides it was published. Later editions contained the same table, but without the author's signature.

<sup>17</sup> One of them with the title/salute «Hrvatski pozdrav!» [«Croatian salute!»] was published by Naklada Selzer i Rank from Osijek, probably around the year of 1900. Croatian checkered coat of arms (25 white and red squares) of that postcard is surmounted with «Ströhl's» heraldic golden royal crown.

<sup>18</sup> Tkalčić I. K. Hrvatska povjestnica. Zagreb, 1861 (reprinted edition — Zagreb, 2011). S. 41; for Zvonimir's rule see pages 33–35.

and by some custom joined with that crown and as long as it is worn by kings from the family of Habsburg-Lothringen who were elected by Croats freely and independently <...>. As soon as that family dies out, the union of that crown is legally going to end, and from it again two separate crowns are going to arise. Stephen's crown for Hungarians, Zvonimir's crown for Croats»<sup>19</sup>. At the same time poems and popular images were strengthening in public the image of Zvonimir as the symbol of Croatian freedom and past glory. Probably the most popular among them is Ferdo Quiqueretz's painting «The Coronation of King Zvonimir» from 1878, which was in 1884 printed on oleograph and as such become present in public on mass scale<sup>20</sup>. However, his version of Zvonimir's crown did not have anything in common with the crown from Split.

At that time the idea of the Croatian crown as Zvonimir's crown was challenged, so in 1882 historian Tadija Smičiklas claimed that many had thought of Zvonimir as the first Croatian king to receive the crown. They therefore marked Croatian crown as Zvonimir's crown, but Smičiklas denied the validity of such thoughts by stressing that the signs of royal authority existed «by our fathers» already before his rule<sup>21</sup>. In 1881, a decade after King Tomislav was revealed as the first Croatian king; Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski indirectly linked the image from Split with him<sup>22</sup>. However, the idea of Zvonimir's crown has survived<sup>23</sup>.



Figure 7. Croatian checkered coat of arms (silver and red fields) surmounted by heraldic crown based on the design of heraldic royal crown by Hugo Gerhard Ströhl on the postcard with the title/salute «Hrvatski pozdrav!» [«Croatian salute!»]

<sup>19</sup> For the passage of Pavlinović's unpublished manuscript «Hrvatska misao (program)» [«Croatian thought (program)»] from 1869 see: *Stančić N. Iz rukopisne ostavštine Mihovila Pavlinovića // HZ. 1972–1973. God. XXV–XXVI. S. 306–307.* The same passage can be found in *Razgovor o slavenstvu, jugoslavenstvu, srbo-hrvatstvu* (published in 1876), which was later included into a collection of his works entitled *Hrvatski razgovori*. The reprint of its 1877s' edition is available as: *Pavlinović M. Hrvatski razgovori / Priredio Nikša Stančić. Zagreb, 1994* (cited text on page 240).

<sup>20</sup> As printings in color oleographs were very popular at that time. They were offering the illusion of real painting available for a few coins, so everybody could get them. They differed in motifs and sizes, but patriotic motifs (including the motifs from Croatian history) were numerous. More on oleographs and on the print of Quiqueretz's painting can be found in: [*Kamenov K.*] *Oleografija u Hrvatskoj 1864–1918. Osijek, 1988. S. 3–6, 27, 46.*

<sup>21</sup> *Smičiklas T. Poviest hrvatska. Dio prvi. Zagreb, 1882. S. 252.*

<sup>22</sup> King Tomislav as the first Croatian king was revealed by historian Franjo Rački. See: *Rački F. Kada i kako se preobrzi hrvatska kneževina u kraljevinu // Rad JAZU. Knj. XVII. Zagreb, 1871. S. 70–89; Kukuljević Sakcinski I. Prvojenčani vladaoci Bugara, Hrvata i Srba, i njihove krune. II. Tomislav prvi kralj hrvatski // Rad JAZU. Knj. LVIII. Zagreb, 1881. S. 1–52.*

<sup>23</sup> *Šulek B. Hrvatski ustav ili konstitucija godine 1882. Zagreb, 1883. S. 82.* — Claimed that Croatian and Dalmatian coats of arms were crowned with the crown of Zvonimir (or Zvinimir, as he named that king) <...> He concluded that united coats of arms of the Triune Kingdom should be crowned with

Finally in his above-mentioned book from 1888 Frane Bulić published the drawing of the bas-relief from Split. Although he championed the idea of the crowned man as a Christ, by publishing the drawing he made it to become well known to the Croatian public (figure 8). It was published again in 1899 by then leading Croatian historian Vjekoslav Klaić, who linked it with



Figure 8. The drawing of the bas-relief from Split published by Bulić in 1888 and by Klaić in 1899.

the first Croatian King Tomislav<sup>24</sup>. Klaić omitted Bulić's opinion and added that Kukuljević identified the crowned man as that king. He indirectly marked the crown as Tomislav's by indicating that Koloman was crowned with the «ancient crown, which once adorned Tomislav, Petar Krešimir and Dmitar Zvonimir». He thus secured the position of the appearance of the bas-relief's crown as the design of the old Croatian royal crown. This is probably why the earliest known examples of such «Old-Croatian Crowns» can be dated around the year 1900. Among them is the crown on the flag of the Croatian singing society «Vijenac» from Požega in Slavonia from 1907<sup>25</sup>. It consisted of the «Old-Croatian Crown» in gold surmounted on the Croatian checkered silver and red coat of arms, which was applied to the central white strip of the adverse side of that Croatian red, white and blue tricolor (figure 9). It can be seen as proof that by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the image of the crown from Split had already been transformed into a new symbol. However, at that time most of Croatian crowns in unofficial use were still heraldic crowns.

The collapse of Austria-Hungary in 1918 was followed with beliefs and hopes that the newly founded Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes would be a guarantee of Croatian freedom.

However, these beliefs and hopes proved to be illusions, so even the autonomy guaranteed by the Compromise of 1868 and along with it the official use of Croatian state symbols faded away. The new state was a centralized Monarchy ruled by King (by 1921 regent) Aleksandar Karađorđević and the elites of the prewar Kingdom of Serbia, which in reality treated the new state as an expanded Serbian state<sup>26</sup>. The inequality of nations within the Yugoslav state dissatisfied a vast

«their old crown of Zvinimir». Nevertheless, in order not to forget that «we are now under the crown of St. Stephen», the Compromise imposed it to «our coat of arms».

<sup>24</sup> Klaić V. *Povjest Hrvata od najstarijih vremena do svršetka XIX. stoljeća*. Sv. I. Zagreb, 1899. S. 72.

<sup>25</sup> For details about the flag and its streamers containing similar coats of arms surmounted with the same crown see catalogue: *Zastave povijesne zbirke Gradskog muzeja Požega*. Požega, 2003. S. 11–12; see also: *Jareb M. Hrvatski nacionalni simboli*. S. 100, 147.

<sup>26</sup> For Yugoslav politics, society and culture during the first years of its existence see: *Banac I. Banac I. The National Question in Yugoslavia. Origins, History, Politics*. Ithaca; London, 1984. — On page 407 the author concluded that after «the unification, the denial of the national individuality of each South Slavic nation <...> greatly facilitated the introduction of centralism. Under the conditions that prevailed, with all the institutions of the former Serbian state virtually intact, centralism was the system least likely to foster national equality. Instead, it furthered the goals of Serbian supremacy, reflected in the dominant position of the Serbs in all spheres of public affairs». There are several useful surveys in English of Yugoslav — and Croatian — history from 1918 to 1941; see for example: *Rothschild J. East Central Europe between the Two World Wars*. Seattle; London, 1974. P. 201–280.

majority of Croats, so the main goal of all Croatian parties became the establishment of a free Croatian Republic within a common South Slavic state or as an independent country.

However, by the new state's adoption of the Croatian checkered red and white coat of arms as a symbol for Croatia was recognized as a form of all-Croatian coat of arms, but there was no space for separate Croatian crown<sup>27</sup>. Similarly to their behavior prior to 1918, Croatian elites continued to exploit historical arguments in proving that a united Croatia should at least enjoy wide autonomy within Yugoslav state. There is no wonder why they decided to exploit a kind of Croatian Millennium — «One thousand years of the Croatian Kingdom» as a celebration in the memory of the alleged coronation of the first Croatian King Tomislav in the year of 925. The celebration, which took place in 1925 was a symbolic act intended to affirm the idea of Croatian statehood, so these symbols played an exceptionally important role<sup>28</sup>. The image of King Tomislav as an independent and powerful king became a central symbol. Since the image of a king is unimaginable without a royal crown, the time had come for «Old-Croatian Crown» to briefly take its place among Croatian national symbols. In the meantime all of those who were claiming the crowned man in Split had represented a Christ have abandoned such opinion. At that time it was widely accepted in public as Tomislav's crown, but the assumption of the crown as Zvonimir's crown had survived the celebration of 1925. So both opinions were present in public and discussed by experts.



Figure 9. The avers side of the flag of Požega's Croatian singing society «Vijenac» from 1907.

During 1925 and in following years numerous images of King Tomislav and other old-Croatian kings emerged, usually crowned with the «Old Croatian Crown» (figures 10 and 11)<sup>29</sup>. Among several versions of the «Old-Croatian Crown» based on the image from Split, the one

<sup>27</sup> The coat of arms of the new state consisted of white double-headed eagle surmounted with heraldic crown and the shield composed of three national («tribal») coats of arms (Serbian, Croatian and Slovene) placed on eagle's chest. Both the eagle and the crown were taken as basic elements of the coat of arms of the Kingdom of Serbia as it has existed prior to 1918. Heraldic crown was in 1929 replaced with crown created in 1903 for the coronation of Serbian (from 1918 first Yugoslav) King Petar I Karadorđević. More on the coats of arms of the Kingdom of Serbia and on the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (from 1929 to 1941 the Kingdom of Yugoslavia) can be found in: *Милићевић М. Грб Србије. Развој кроз историју*. Београд, 1995. С. 90–98. On Serbian royal crown see: *Ацовић Д. М. Хералдика и Срби*. Београд, 2008. С. 483–485, 487, 510.

<sup>28</sup> More about the celebration can be found in: *Matković H. Proslava Tisućogodišnjice Hrvatskog Kraljevstva 1925. godine i njezini odjeci u Hrvatskoj // Prvi hrvatski kralj Tomislav. Zbornik radova / Ur. J. Bratulić*. Zagreb, 1998. S. 271–280. Summary in English on pages 387–388.

<sup>29</sup> One among the best-known publications was the collection of scholarly works *Zbornik kralja Tomislava u spomen tisućogodišnjice Hrvatskoga Kraljevstva*. Zagreb, 1925. Its cover contained the «Old-Croatian Crown» printed in gold. More publications which contained the image of the crown were intended for wide layers of the population, such as: *Srkulj S. Kratka povijest Hrvata*. Zagreb, 1926.



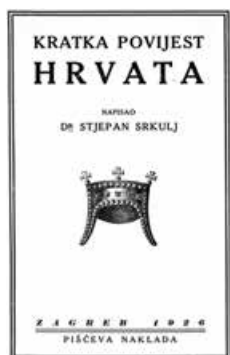


Figure 10, 11. «Old-Croatian crown» on the book covers (1925, 1926).

designed by Croatian painter and art-historian Ljubo Babić has become widely accepted. The helmet-like crown with three crosses applied to its top was decorated with precious stones and pearls marked its edges. Already in 1925 Babić presented it as the crown of old-Croatian kings on a poster, which contained the images of the most important personalities from Croatian history (figure 12)<sup>30</sup>. In 1931 he returned to the same design by illustrating the collection of poems on Croatian rulers by then leading Croatian poet Vladimir Nazor (figure 13)<sup>31</sup>.

Similar designs of the crown are still today well known to most Croats due to the fact that the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary with the Infant Jesus in the Croatian national shrine of Our Lady of Marija Bistrica in Marija Bistrica was crowned with similar crowns (both the heads of Mary and Jesus) in 1935 (figure 14)<sup>32</sup>.

At the same time the Croatian public could see another «Old-Croatian Crown» presented as the crown of King Tomislav on the monumental equestrian statue sculpted by Robert Frangeš Mihanović. The creation of the sculpture followed the celebration of 1925 and was completed by 1935. The lack of funds prevented then the completion of the monument on King Tomislav's Square in the center of Zagreb<sup>33</sup>. However, the statue had already by 1935 been presented to the public in numerous publications, for example in a lengthy report illustrated with a number of high-quality photographs published in Zagreb's popular illustrated weekly *Svijet* (figure 15)<sup>34</sup>. The monument was finally completed and unveiled in 1947 and remains today one of the most recognized symbols of the Croatian capital.

<sup>30</sup> Cartouches containing the images of nine old-Croatian kings crowned with such crowns were placed on the genealogical tree of «The Rulers of the Croatian Peoples' Dynasty» [«Vladari hrvatske narodne dinastije»]. Larger cartouche with Tomislav's image occupied the very center of the tree and of the poster. See the reproduction and the description of the poster (exhibition No. 27) in: *Haramija P. Stoljeće političkog plakata u Hrvatskoj*. Zagreb, 1992. S. 18 (image), 33 (description).

<sup>31</sup> *Nazor V. Hrvatski kraljevi*. Zagreb, 1931. — From 1931 to 1941 several unchanged printings followed one another and is probable that Babić's art significantly contributed to the popularity of that very edition. The images of old-Croatian kings can be found on initial page (page 2) which contained the image of Croatian king on the throne which resembles the image from Split, and as the elements of initials D and G.

<sup>32</sup> The idea of the coronation of the statue with new crowns emerged in 1934, so finally on July 7, 1935, the Archbishop of Zagreb Ante Bauer crowned the statue. The crowns' design followed the image of «Croatian royal crown from the 10th century, as it is preserved in the baptistery in Split» (Jubilejska kruna Majke Božje Bistričke / Ur. S. Ritig. Zagreb, 1935. S. 119). For details about the crowns and their creation (including photographs) see pages 118–120. The sketch of one crown decorated book's cover. For details about the creation of crowns and the coronation of the statue in July 1935 see: *Jareb M. 1) «Starohrvatske kruna»... S. 42; 2) Hrvatski nacionalni simboli*. S. 189–190.

<sup>33</sup> See: *Kolar-Dimitrijević M. Zagreb i izgradnja spomenika kralju Tomislavu (U povodu pola stoljeća otkrivanja) // Prvi hrvatski kralj Tomislav... S. 281–305*. Summary in English on pages 388–389.

<sup>34</sup> *Spomenik prvom hrvatskom kralju Tomislavu // Svijet*. 1935. God. X. Sv. XIX. Br. 17. S. 343–345. — The image of the monument dominated on the cover of the same issue of *Svijet*.



Figure 12. Old-Croatian kings crowned with the «Old-Croatian crown» on the poster by Ljubo Babić from 1925.

From 1935 to 1941 the image of «Old-Croatian Crown» has remained present in public due to its publication in various publications, but its presence is not to be compared with the presence of other Croatian symbols — coat of arms, flag, or even with old-Croatian interlace.

The idea and image of the «Old-Croatian Crown» was resurrected as a symbol after the foundation of the Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska* in Croatian — NDH) within the Axis dominated «New Europe» in April 1941<sup>35</sup>. Due to complex relations of the NDH with fascist

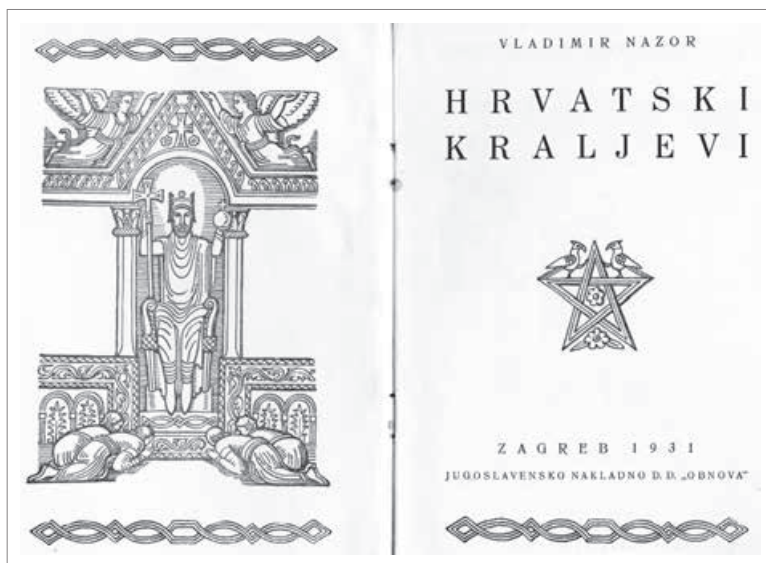


Figure 13. The image of some old-Croatian king on the throne by Ljubo Babić in the collection of poems by Vladimir Nazor *Hrvatski kraljevi* from 1931.

Italy, it was to become a kingdom with an Italian prince as the king<sup>36</sup>. Due to that the head of the state and of the ruling Ustasha Movement Ante Pavelić created a symbolic “Crown of Zvonimir” and on May 15 issued a Decree on the Crown of Zvonimir. According to § 1 the «Crown of King Zvonimir represents the sovereignty of the Independent State of Croatia»<sup>37</sup>. It is not known why Pavelić chose the name of Zvonimir and surprisingly the description of the crown in § 2 was not based on the image from the bas-relief from Split. The decree was followed by another one instituting the Order of the Crown of Zvonimir. Since the appearance of its crown was not described, it was probably based on the form prescribed by the first decree.

The NDH never became a kingdom and the designated king never became a king, but that was not the only reason why the image of the crown described in the first decree was abandoned. Namely, since both decrees from May 1941 «were written up in haste and without consultations which regularly precede these projects, a new decree on instituting the Order and Medal of the Crown of King Zvonimir which revoked the previous decree was

<sup>35</sup> Brief survey of its history can be found in: *Matković H. Povijest Nezavisne Države Hrvatske. Drugo, dopunjeno izdanje. Zagreb, 2002.*

<sup>36</sup> More on that can be found in: *Jareb M. The NDH's Relations with Italy and Germany // Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions. 2006. Vol. 7. No. 4. P. 461, 469.*

<sup>37</sup> The decree was published both in official bulletin of the Independent State of Croatia and in the press. For example see the article: *Kruna kralja Zvonimira predstavlja suverenitet Nezavisne Države Hrvatske // Hrvatski narod. 1941. God. III. Br. 93. S. 1.* Complete text of the decree was published in: *Prister B. Odlikovanja Nezavisne Države Hrvatske. Zagreb, 1997. S. 77.*

issued on December 27<sup>th</sup> 1941»<sup>38</sup>. A new decree and its changes from November 1942 failed to describe the crown. However, the image of a crown which, decorated orders and medals that were actually produced from the end of 1942 to the end of the war show that the new form based on the image from Split was probably adopted by the end of 1941 (figure 16)<sup>39</sup>. Displayed on orders and medals it was present in public, but never became one of the significant symbols of the NDH. As before the war, it could occasionally be found in various publications, usually as one element of more complex illustrations, which symbolically represented important moments of Croatia's past. It was used as the symbol of past times, not of the present, which was symbolized with the Ustasha symbol — the sign based on the letter «U»<sup>40</sup>. The crown as the symbol of the past with its specific meaning as a royal insignia could not become a new national symbol. This is true for before the war among Croats who desired the establishment of the republic, as well as during the war among Croats on both belligerent sides.

Wars' end did not bring the ban of its use, but under the new circumstances it found even less of a place in new People's Republic of Croatia as part of Communist Yugoslavia. The crowns

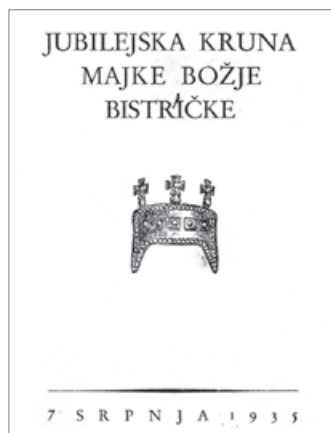


Figure 14. The sketch of the crown on the statue of the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Marija Bistrica.

in Marija Bistrica and on the monument of King Tomislav have thus survived as public reminders of its wide use and popularity during previous decades.

The fall of communism in 1990 and the emergence of the independent Republic of Croatia have witnessed occasional use of that symbol<sup>41</sup>. However, it is not present in public on a mass scale and it is certainly not the one among widely accepted national symbols — as the coat of arms and flag undoubtedly are.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century and up to 1918 it existed primarily as the idea of a separate Croatian royal crown as the symbol of the sovereignty of the Croatian Kingdom. Along with the transformation of the image from the baptistery in Split to the image of an «Old-Croatian Crown» its meaning has changed. The disappearance of the Triune Kingdom as the heir of the old Croatian Kingdom and once existing Croatian royal crown in 1918 has prevented the use of any separate Croatian royal crown as the real symbol of the present, so both the idea of a Croatian crown and the constructed image of the «Old-Croatian Crown» could serve only as relics and symbols of the past. So in spite of the fact that the celebration of 1925 has affirmed its use, it could not

<sup>38</sup> Prister B. *Odlikovanja Nezavisne Države Hrvatske*. S. 69.

<sup>39</sup> For the decree from November 1942 in Croatian see page 81 (Appendix No. 11) of Prister's book. See also page 69 of the summary in English.

<sup>40</sup> For details about Ustasha symbol and the state symbols of the NDH see: Jareb M. *Hrvatski nacionalni simboli*. S. 210–211, 269–276.

<sup>41</sup> It is today a central element of the coats of arms of two counties (the County of Šibenik-Knin and the Split-Dalmatian County) and several cities in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. During the Homeland War from 1991 to 1995 some units of the Croatian Army and of the Croatian Council of Defense in Bosnia and Herzegovina applied it to their emblems.



Figure 15. Monumental equestrian statue of King Tomislav by Robert Frangeš Mihanović on the cover of popular Zagreb's illustrated weekly *Svijet* from April 1935.



Figure 16. The crown of King Zvonimir and the image of the King on the averside of the Iron Medal of the crown of King Zvonimir (without ribbon).

secure it the position of a modern national symbol. Continuously present in public since then, it is however recognizable element of Croatian national identity, albeit less today than several decades ago.

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*Figure 16.* The crown of King Zvonimir and the image of the King on the avers side of the Iron Medal of the crown of King Zvonimir (without ribbon).

#### Данные о статье

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**Заголовок:** «Старая хорватская корона» или конструирование и использование одного национального и политического символа в период с конца XIX в. до Второй мировой войны

**Резюме:** В статье рассматривается процесс конструирования и использования образа хорватской королевской короны, именуемой также «старой хорватской короной», как одного из хорватских государственных символов в период с конца XIX в. до Второй мировой войны. Факт существования в раннем Средневековье независимого Хорватского королевства во главе с правителем, увенчанным королевской короной, способствовал появлению идеи хорватской королевской короны как символической репрезентации хорватского суверенитета в объединенном хорватском государстве, к которому стремилось хорватское общество. В начале эта идея использовала фигуру хорватского короля Звонимира, правившего с 1076 по 1089 г., имя которого оставалось в памяти хорватской элиты как имя могущественного и независимого монарха. В ходе исторических исследований было обнаружено, что он был коронован короной, посланной ему папой Григорием VII, вследствие чего хорватскую королевскую корону стали именовать короной Звонимира. В те времена Хорватия (Триединое королевство Далмации, Хорватии и Славонии) была составной частью земель Короны св. Стефана, а венгерская корона в течение столетий выступала в роли хорватской королевской короны. Этот факт принимался хорватским обществом, вследствие чего сама корона св. Стефана время от времени использовалась как хорватский символ. Между тем, нараставшие противоречия между Хорватией и Венгрией привели к конфликту и к разрыву унии в революционном 1848 году, вследствие чего корона св. Стефана более не признавалась в качестве хорватской королевской короны. Впоследствии уния была восстановлена на базе заключенного в 1868 г. венгерско-хорватского соглашения. Оно

позволило Триединому королевству сохранить свою государственность и автономный статус в рамках земель Короны св. Стефана, но из-за доминирующей роли, которую данный договор обеспечивал венгерской стороне, большинством хорватов он рассматривался как инструмент венгерского господства. Положение договора о том, что хорватский герб при его официальном использовании должен быть увенчан короной св. Стефана, не могло в данных обстоятельствах завоевать сердца хорватского населения. Неудивительно, что идея отдельной хорватской королевской короны, в то время обычно определяемой современниками как корона Звонимира, возникла как символ хорватского суверенитета, к которому стремилось общество. Со временем имя Звонимира из названия короны было вытеснено именем первого хорватского короля Томислава, но сама идея особой хорватской королевской короны осталась неизменной. В самом конце XIX в. с публикацией происходящего из Сплита раннесредневекового барельефа с изображением увенчанного короной хорватского монарха была заложена основа для визуализации этой идеи и ее превращения в символ, основывающийся на изображении реального объекта из прошлого. В течение последующих лет и десятилетий был создан символический образ «старой хорватской короны». Его широкое использование в качестве символа прошлого основывалось на праздновании Тысячелетия Хорватского королевства в 1925 г., во время которого, как и в течение последующих лет, были созданы многочисленные изображения этой короны. Вероятно, самым известным в общественном пространстве является изображение данной короны на монументальной конной статуе первого хорватского короля Томислава, установленной в Загребе на основе решений, принятых в 1925 г. Сегодня это один из наиболее узнаваемых символов хорватской столицы.

В 1941 г. образ «старой хорватской короны» был воскрешен в качестве символа с основанием «Независимого Государства Хорватии» (НГХ), которое должно было стать монархией во главе с королем — итальянским принцем. В связи с этим была спроектирована символическая «корона Звонимира», однако ее первое описание не имело ничего общего с изображением на сплитском барельефе. НГХ так и не стало королевством, а предназначенный на роль короля принц так и не стал хорватским монархом, что, однако, не было единственной причиной, по которой был отвергнут первый проект короны. Позднее образом короны, опиравшимся на изображение со сплитского барельефа, были украшены орденом и медалью короны короля Звонимира. Таким образом, корона присутствовала в публичном пространстве, но так и не стала одним из значимых символов НГХ — заимствованный из прошлого символ, обладавший специфическим значением королевской регалии, не подходил на роль нового государственного символа. Сказанное справедливо как для довоенного периода в истории Хорватии, для тех хорватов, которые желали учреждения республики, так и для военного времени, причем для обеих враждовавших сторон.

В последующие десятилетия, включая период после падения коммунизма в 1990 г., данный символ продолжал время от времени использоваться в общественном пространстве Хорватии. Он присутствует в нем и сегодня, хотя определенно не принадлежит к числу общепринятых хорватских национальных символов, таких как герб и флаг. Впрочем, он все же остается узнаваемым символом хорватской идентичности, пусть и не таким популярным, каким он был много десятилетий назад.

**Ключевые слова:** «Старая хорватская корона», корона св. Стефана, венгерско-хорватское соглашение 1868 г., король Звонимир, король Томислав

#### Information about the article

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**Title:** «Old-Croatian Crown» or the Construction and Use of a National and Political Symbol from the Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the WWII

**Summary:** The article is dealing with the construction and use of the Croatian royal crown and later «Old-Croatian crown» as a type of Croatian national symbol from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the WWII. The notion of the existence of an independent Croatian Kingdom in the early Middle Ages with its own king and royal crown contributed during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the emergence of the idea of a Croatian royal crown from the past as the symbolic representation of a desired Croatian sovereignty in an united Croatian state. At the beginning the idea relied on the name of Croatian King Zvonimir, who ruled from 1076 to 1089. His name remained in the memory of Croatian elites as the name of a powerful and independent king. During the following decades historical research revealed that he was crowned with the crown sent to him by Pope Gregory VII, so some circles marked the Croatian royal

crown as Zvonimir's crown. At that time Croatia (The Triune Kingdom of Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia) constituted a part of the Realm of St. Stephen. The Hungarian St. Stephen's crown served for centuries as a Croatian royal crown as well. During this period the inclusion of the Triune Kingdom in the Realm of St. Stephen was widely accepted in Croatia with St. Stephen's crown occasionally used as a Croatian symbol. However, misunderstandings led to conflict and to the break up of the union during the revolutionary year of 1848, subsequently St. Stephen's crown was no longer acknowledged as the Croatian royal crown. The union was re-established in 1868 on the basis of the Hungarian-Croatian Compromise of the same year. The latter allowed the Triune Kingdom to retain its statehood and autonomy within the Lands of the Crown of St. Stephen, but due to the dominant position it secured to Hungarian side it was always observed by the majority of Croats as a tool of Hungarian domination. The provision that the Croatian coat of arms should in official use be surmounted with St. Stephen's crown could not in these new circumstances win the hearts of the Croatian population. It is not surprising that the idea of a separate Croatian royal crown, at that time usually marked by contemporaries as Zvonimir's crown, emerged as the symbol of a desired Croatian sovereignty. During the course of time the title Zvonimir's crown was challenged by the name of the first Croatian king Tomislav, but the idea of a Croatian crown survived. At the very end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the publication of the image of a crowned early Medieval Croatian King from a bas-relief in Split the ground was laid for the visualization of the idea and its transformation into a symbol based on the image of a real object from the past. During the following years and decades the symbolic image of the «Old-Croatian Crown» was created. Its wide use in the public as the symbol of the past is based on the celebration of the Thousandth Anniversary of the Croatian Kingdom in 1925, during which and during the following years numerous images of that crown were created. Probably the best-known image in public is the image of the crown on a monumental equestrian statue of the first Croatian king, Tomislav, which was created as the result of decisions made in 1925. It is today one of the most recognizable symbols of Croatian capital of Zagreb.

In 1941 the idea and image of the «Old-Croatian Crown» was resurrected as a symbol after the foundation of the Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska* in Croatian — NDH), which was to become a kingdom with an Italian prince as the king. Due to that a symbolic «Crown of Zvonimir» was created, but its first description did not have anything in common the image from the bas-relief from Split. The NDH never became a kingdom and the designated king never became a king, but that was not the only reason why the image of the crown described in the first decree was abandoned. Later the image based on the one present on the bas-relief from Split decorated the Order and Medal of the Crown of King Zvonimir. So it was present in public, but never became one of the significant symbols of the NDH. as the symbol of the past with its specific meaning as a royal insignia could not become a new national symbol. This is true for before the war among Croats who desired the establishment of the republic, as well as during the war among Croats on both belligerent sides.

The following decades, including the period after the fall of communism in 1990, have witnessed the occasional use of that symbol. It is still present in public, but it is certainly not among the widely accepted national symbols — as the coat of arms and flag undoubtedly are. However, it remains a recognizable element of Croatian national identity, albeit less today than several decades ago.

**Keywords:** «Old-Croatian Crown», St. Stephen's crown, Hungarian-Croatian Compromise of 1868, King Zvonimir, King Tomislav

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