

JUDIT GÁL

Dalmatia and the Exercise
of Royal Authority
in the Árpád-Era
Kingdom of Hungary



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in the Árpád-Era Kingdom of Hungary**

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PÁL FODOR AND ATTILA ZSOLDOS



Research Centre for the Humanities
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I first became interested in history thanks to my grandmother, whose stories about her childhood planted the earliest seeds of my desire to understand the past. The colorful, sometimes mystical world of the Balkans, especially Croatia, captivated me from an early age as well. I spent a large part of my childhood in the nineties, and thus the defining experiences of my formative years included dispatches from the Yugoslav wars and the 1998 World Cup. My father and I cheered for the Croatians, who took part in the competition as an independent nation for the first time that year, and we were overjoyed to see them succeed despite their country's checkered fate, coming away as bronze medalists. I have no family ties to the nations of the Balkans, but this was a pivotal moment of my childhood, one that ultimately led me, early on in my university studies, to a conscious choice to become a historian of Croatia – and in particular, medieval Dalmatia. By the time I traveled to Croatia in 2013, I had been doing research on the cities of the Adriatic coast for three years; that first visit coincided with a rare snowstorm, which I waited out by acquainting myself with the libraries and archives of Zagreb, one after another. Over the years, Croatia – and in particular, the cities of Zagreb and Split – has become my second home, a place where I have been able to acquire professional experience and form real friendships.

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Judit Gál
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■ I. INTRODUCTION

Within three years of his coronation as King of Croatia and Dalmatia in 1102, the Hungarian king Coloman the Learned had occupied the most important cities of northern and central Dalmatia, thereby unifying Hungary and Croatia into a single state – a union which would last more than 800 years. Among these newly occupied territories were cities with histories stretching back several centuries, and thus their social structures, ecclesiastical and secular administration, customs, levels of urban development, and economies diverged significantly from those of any other region of the Kingdom of Hungary. The cities of Dalmatia did not constitute a unified political community, and thus their new ruler was forced to overpower them one by one, reaching separate agreements with the citizens of each of these settlements so as to secure his royal authority over them. After being conquered by Coloman the Learned, the cities of Dalmatia took pains to preserve their distinctive status within the Kingdom of Hungary; succeeding rulers granted them privileges which guaranteed their autonomy, and Hungary's ecclesiastical and secular administrative institutions had little influence over the Adriatic coast. Thus, maintaining control over this neighboring, yet distant territory confronted Hungarian rulers with a series of challenges.

My goal in writing this book was to explore the relationships between the Árpád-era kings of Hungary and the cities of Dalmatia, to examine the exercise of royal authority there, and thus to analyze Dalmatia's position within the Kingdom of Hungary. In the course of this work, I have attempted to describe the relationships between Hungary's kings and the cities of Dalmatia by situating them within the dual context of Hungarian and Adriatic society, and by taking particular care to compare them with the policies of other powers who maintained a presence on the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea. The geographical framework of this study is limited to Dalmatia, generally understood to mean the narrow strip of seacoast from the Kvarner Gulf to the Bojana River (the present-day border between Montenegro and Albania), along with the adjacent islands.¹ I have bounded the time frame for this

¹ Petrovics, "Hungary and the Adriatic Coast in the Middle Ages", 62–73.

analysis by starting in 1091, when Ladislas I became the first of Hungary's kings to invade Croatia with the intention of seizing its throne and taking control of the cities of Dalmatia – a military campaign which was only partially successful, insofar as a Cuman attack prevented Ladislas from occupying the cities of Dalmatia and consolidating his power over Croatia. As the end date for this investigation, I have chosen 1301, the year of the death of Andrew III, the last of the Árpád kings. The period under discussion thus includes struggles between Hungary and Venice for control of the cities of Dalmatia, wars between Hungary and the Byzantine Empire, Crusades which affected both Dalmatia and the Kingdom of Hungary, Hungarian throne feuds which played out on Croatian territory, the Mongol invasion of Hungary (which reached all the way to the Adriatic coast), and, as Hungarian dominion over the region began to wane in the late 13th century, the attempts of local noble families to assert their own authority. Using this roughly two-century period as an object of study will make it possible to examine numerous changes in the exercise of royal authority in the region, as well as the various measures Hungarian rulers took in reacting to social and political changes in the cities of Dalmatia. Finally, I will approach Hungarian-Dalmatian relations and the exercise of Hungarian royal authority from two principal perspectives, first by examining the ecclesiastical policies of the kings of Hungary and the dukes of Slavonia, and then by investigating these Hungarian rulers' links to the secular administrations of the region.

■ II. SOCIAL-HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL-HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The first substantial links between the Kingdom of Hungary and the cities of Dalmatia were established in the latter half of the 11th century. In the mid-1060s, King Solomon of Hungary and his cousin Duke Géza helped the latter's brother-in-law Demetrius Zvonimir, the ban (and later king) of Croatia, in his conflict against the Carantians; Géza and Demetrius Zvonimir's wife Helen were both children of the Hungarian King Béla I.¹ Relations between the Kingdom of Hungary and the territories of Croatia and Dalmatia underwent a momentous change in the early 1090s. Demetrius Zvonimir, who had established a significant degree of centralized authority, failed to leave an heir when he died in 1089, and was thus succeeded on the Croatian throne by the apparently aged and sickly Stephen II, a nephew of Demetrius Zvonimir's predecessor Peter Krešimir IV who had already withdrawn into a monastery. During his reign, royal authority deteriorated; Stephen was likely little more than a titular ruler, and when he died in 1091, the Trpimirović dynasty of Croatia died out with him.² The power vacuum that resulted from Stephen's death led to a chaotic period in the political life of the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea, especially in Croatia and northern and central Dalmatia.³ Various groups of Croatian nobles supported several possible successors to the throne, including another of Demetrius Zvonimir's brother-in-law, King Ladislas I of Hungary.⁴ A charter issued by Dragus, the *prior* of Zadar, is the source of our knowledge that the Hungarian king ultimately invaded and occupied Croatia and Dalmatia in 1091.

Tamás Körmendi's most recent research has indicated that Ladislas' military campaign was not merely dynastic interference in the affairs of a neighboring

1 Pauler, *A magyar nemzet története az Árpád-házi királyok alatt*, vol. I, p. 115.

2 Nikolić Jakus, "Ugarska", p. 621.

3 Pauler, *A magyar nemzet története az Árpád-házi királyok alatt*, vol. I, p. 201.

4 The tradition that Ladislas I was "invited" to assume the Croatian throne appears in medieval Croatian narrative sources, among others. In his *Historia Salonitana*, Thomas the Archdeacon describes the events that took place around 1090 by saying that a Slavonian nobleman who had fled from Croatia invited King Ladislas to take the throne. An anonymous chronicle of Split, a short narrative source probably composed in the 14th century, suggests that a group of nobles offered Split and all of Croatia to the Hungarian ruler. See *Historia Salonitana*, pp. 94–98; Šišić, *Priručnik izvora hrvatske historije*, p. 321

country, but rather a carefully planned foreign-policy initiative. The international situation was then favorable to the Hungarian king, insofar as the Investiture Controversy had flared up again during the papacy of Urban II, prompting the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV to launch a second invasion of Italy in 1090. The other great power in the region, the Byzantine Empire, was also tied down at that time, given that Emperor Alexios I was occupied by efforts to repel a Pecheneg invasion launched in 1090.⁵ In addition to Croatia, Ladislav probably also had designs on the coastal territories then under Byzantine control, though the attack of the Cumans prevented him from realizing his plans to take possession of them.⁶ We lack unambiguous accounts of the size of the territories Ladislav occupied; our most reliable source of information about this campaign is the *Historia Salonitana*, which was written by Thomas the Archdeacon almost two and a half centuries after the fact. According to this version of events, King Ladislav did not reach the Adriatic coast in 1091. Even so, as Tamás Körmendi and others have highlighted, Hungarian historians have tried to establish the extent of the territories Ladislav occupied by using indirect sources as data, primarily the extent of the Kingdom of Hungary at the end of Ladislav's reign and the size of the other Croatian territories under Hungarian control. Using the aforementioned charter issued by *Prior Dragus* as a starting point, Gyula Pauler first concluded that Ladislav had conquered the portions of the medieval Croatian state which lay in the vicinity of Zadar; Pauler later referred to the subjugation of the entire Kingdom of Croatia. This is relevant to discussions of Dalmatia given that the Croatian state encompassed several coastal communities, including Biograd na Moru.⁷ Following in Pauler's footsteps, György Györffy also adopted the stance that Ladislav had occupied Biograd na Moru in the course of his invasion, though none of the sources confirm this view.⁸ Despite these uncertainties, there is one thing we can report with confidence: Dalmatia was not incorporated into the Hungarian sphere of influence in 1091. Ladislav put his nephew Álmos in charge of the Kingdom of Croatia, though his authority there was probably only nominal.⁹ Croatia's domestic political crisis and the uncertainties surrounding succession to its throne would persist for close to a decade, and several local rivals opposed Álmos' rule.¹⁰

Soon after Ladislav's death, in the spring of 1097, his successor Coloman the Learned led another invasion of Croatia in order to strengthen his dynasty's claim to the territory. At the Battle of Gvozd Mountain, Coloman's forces defeated and killed Petar Snačić, a leading claimant to the throne whom a subset of Croatia's

5 Makk, *Magyar külpolitika*, p. 130.

6 Körmendi, "Szent László és Horvátország", pp. 84–88.

7 Pauler, *A magyar nemzet története az Árpád-házi királyok alatt*, vol. I, p. 157.

8 Györffy, "A „lovagszent” uralkodása", p. 558.

9 Font, "Megjegyzések a horvát-magyar perszónál unió középkori történetéhez", pp. 11–25.

10 Ančić, "From the 'Demigod' King to the First Ideas About a 'National Kingdom'", pp. 61–62; Ančić, "Desetljeće od 1091. do 1102. u zrcalu vrela", pp. 246–247.

nobles had elected as their king.¹¹ In addition to the Kingdom of Hungary, the Byzantine Empire also lay claim to the Dalmatian territories, though in 1097 they were tied down by the First Crusade and other affairs in Asia Minor, and thus the defense of Dalmatia was entrusted to the Doge of Venice,¹² who adopted the title of duke of Croatia and Dalmatia.¹³ King Coloman was also beset by domestic political difficulties at that time, and was thus unable to confront the Doge of Venice, to whom the citizens of Trogir and Split pledged their allegiance in 1097. In 1098, Coloman and the Doge of Venice agreed to a treaty of friendship according to which Croatia would remain under the sovereignty of the Hungarian ruler, while Dalmatia would remain Venetian territory.¹⁴

Five years later, in 1102, Coloman finally asserted complete control over the region by having himself crowned king of Croatia and Dalmatia in Biograd na Moru, the traditional coronation city of the Croatian ruling dynasty. However, his authority outside of Croatia seems only to have extended as far as Biograd na Moru and its environs at that time. The occupation of the principal cities and islands of Dalmatia took place in 1105, when Hungary took possession of Zadar, Trogir, and Split.¹⁵ In debating the questions of whether Coloman had seized territories which had been under Byzantine control and how this occupation affected Hungarian-Byzantine relations, the Hungarian historians István Kapitánffy and Ferenc Makk gave two divergent answers. Kapitánffy argued that starting in late 1104, the Emperor of Byzantium was threatened not only by Pecheneg attacks from the east, but also by the Normans from the west. Prince Bohemond I of Antioch traveled to Western Europe in late 1104 to organize reinforcements for his crusade against Byzantium, and thus there existed a genuine danger that the king of Hungary, who had allied himself to the Norman dynasty by marrying the daughter of Roger I of Sicily, might join Bohemond's campaign and open a new front against the Byzantines. In order to circumvent this possibility, Emperor Alexios made overtures toward the Hungarian king which resulted in the negotiation of a marriage alliance between the heir to the Byzantine throne and the deceased King Ladislas' daughter Piroska, known in Byzantium as Irene of Hungary. The Byzantine emperor presumably took this marriage as an assurance that Coloman would help defend him against the Normans, in exchange for which he allowed the Hungarian king to invade the Dalmatian territory under his control.¹⁶ Makk, on the other hand, contended that the Hungarians and Byzantines had not reached any sort of agreement prior to the Hungarian invasion, and after Coloman the Learned occupied the cities of Dalmatia, the Byzantine ruler was unable

11 Pauler, *A magyar nemzet története az Árpád-házi királyok alatt*, vol. I, p. 213.

12 Makk, *Magyar külpolitika*, p. 148.

13 *CDCr*, vol. II, pp. 1–2.

14 Makk, *Magyar külpolitika*, p. 148.

15 Györffy, "A 12. századi dalmáciai városprivilegiumok kritikája", p. 49; Makk, *The Árpáds and the Comneni*, p. 14.

16 Kapitánffy, "Magyar-bizánci kapcsolatok Szent László és Kálmán idején", pp. 153–169.

to do anything but resign himself to their loss. According to Makk, the Hungarian conquest might have alerted the Emperor to the fact that he was threatened not only by the Normans and the Antiochenes, but also by the Hungarians, whom he hoped to appease by arranging the aforementioned marriage alliance in late 1105 or early 1106. Peace between the two states was confirmed not only by this marriage, but also by the Byzantine Emperor's recognition of the Hungarian conquest of Dalmatia; for his part, the Hungarian ruler promised to help defend Byzantium against a Norman attack, which eventually took place in 1107–1108.¹⁷

In the wake of the Hungarian king's military and political successes, the cities of Dalmatia managed to maintain a relative degree of independence; Hungarian rule was significantly more favorable to them than that of Venice. Given that the Italian city-state was among the Dalmatians' trading rivals, it restricted their commercial freedoms as long as they were under its control, while Hungarian rulers promised the Dalmatian cities protection and liberty and put no limits on their commercial activities.¹⁸ Moreover, not only did Coloman pay genuine attention to these cities while formulating their privileges, he also visited Dalmatia every three years for the rest of his life.¹⁹ Following Coloman's death in 1116, Venice reoccupied the Dalmatian territories, which Coloman's successor Stephen II then attempted to reclaim, though this effort proved a failure and led him to agree to a five-year truce.²⁰ After the expiration of this peace deal, around 1124, Stephen II managed to reoccupy most of the coast (all except for Zadar and the islands of the northern Adriatic), though the Italian city-state would recapture these territories again in 1125.²¹ The Hungarian king Béla II would reclaim the cities of Dalmatia yet again in 1136, when he took control of the Adriatic coast,²² though he was unable to reassert authority over the entire area Coloman had occupied; the Venetians continued to rule Zadar and the islands of the Kvarner Gulf. The citizens of Zadar revolted against their Venetian rulers several times in the latter half of the 12th century; when they did so the first time, in 1159, they were apparently counting on help from the Hungarian king Géza II. Venetian armies put this rebellion down in short order and managed to maintain control of Zadar all the way into the 1180s.²³ Hungarian-Dalmatian relations took a significant turn in the early years of the reign of Stephen III, who was at war with Byzantium throughout the period between 1162 and 1165.²⁴ Byzantine forces occupied central Dalmatia in 1165.²⁵ In 1166 and 1167, the

17 Makk, "Néhány megjegyzés a Kálmán-ági királyok külpolitikájához", pp. 3–15.

18 Fekete Nagy, *A magyar-dalmát kereskedelem*, pp. 9–10.

19 Györffy, "A 12. századi dalmáciai városprivilegiumok kritikája", p. 49.

20 Makk, *The Árpáds and the Comneni*, p. 14.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

22 *Ibid.*, pp. 18–21, 96–99.

23 Klaić and Petricoli, *Zadar u srednjem vijeku*, p. 165.

24 Makk, *The Árpáds and the Comneni*, pp. 96–98.

25 Pauler, *A magyar nemzet története az Árpád-házi királyok alatt*, vol. I, p. 394.

Hungarian ruler counterattacked and ultimately succeeded in reoccupying Šibenik and its surroundings.²⁶ Then in July of 1167, Byzantine forces inflicted a serious defeat on the Hungarians at the fortress of Zimony (Zemun) near Nándorfehérvár (now known as Belgrade, Serbia). In accordance with the terms of the resulting peace agreement, the Hungarians ceded several territories to the Byzantine emperor, including Dalmatia.²⁷ In 1180–1181, following the death of Emperor Manuel I Komnenos, King Béla III of Hungary reoccupied central Dalmatia before regaining control of Zadar; he then turned south, taking possession of the islands of Korčula and Lastovo, which had never been under Hungarian rule. The Venetians attempted unsuccessfully to reassert control over Zadar in 1187, then signed a two-year ceasefire with Béla III in 1188.²⁸ Over the course of 1192 and 1193, Venice attempted another invasion in hopes of reoccupying Zadar, but failed to do so.²⁹ After his death, Béla III was succeeded by his son Emeric, though from the beginning of the latter's reign he was challenged by his younger brother Duke Andrew, who defeated Emeric's forces in the Slavonian town of Macsek (now Mački, Croatia) in 1197 and assumed control over Croatia and Dalmatia.³⁰

When Pope Innocent III called on the rulers of Christendom to participate in the Fourth Crusade, a group of primarily Flemish, French, and German knights gathered in Venice with the understanding that the Venetians would convey them to Egypt. When the crusaders proved unable to pay for their transportation, they agreed instead to help the Venetians advance their interests along the Adriatic coast. Venice's primary goal was reasserting control over Zadar, to which the crusaders' fleet lay siege in October of 1202, eventually occupying it. When the crusaders set sail, the residents of Zadar attacked the remaining Venetian fleet, at which point the Venetians built a fortress on the adjacent island of Ugljan. At the request of the Hungarian ruler, Archbishop Bernard of Split hired ten galleys to assist the citizens of Zadar, which soon arrived bearing Hungarian supplies.³¹ With their help, the Zadrani seized the new fortress; however, their success was short-lived. By 1204, Zadar was again under Venetian control, and Venice dispatched numerous ships in order to punish the archbishop of Split who had taken part in the defense of Zadar, demolishing the palace near Split in which they had lived.³² The Hungarian king Béla IV occupied Zadar again in 1242, though his reign over the city would again be brief. Venice attacked Zadar in 1243, prompting Béla IV to send Denis, the ban of

26 For the privileges granted to Šibenik, see *CDCr*, vol. II, pp. 115–116.

27 For more on the 12th-century relationship between Byzantium and Dalmatia, see Ferluga, *Vizantiska uprava u Dalmaciji*, pp. 127–153; Goldstein, “Bizantska vlast u Dalmaciji od 1165. do 1180. godine”, pp. 9–27.

28 Jászay, *Velence és Magyarország. Egy szomszédság küzdelmes története*, p. 20.

29 Makk, *The Árpáds and the Comneni*, pp. 115–116, 120.

30 Szabados, “Imre és András”, pp. 85–111.

31 *Illyricum sacrum*, vol. III, p. 236.

32 *Historia Salonitana*, p. 151.

the whole of Slavonia, to help defend the city. After the Hungarians' unsuccessful attempt to provide relief, the citizens of Zadar fled and the Venetians went on to lay siege to the town of Nin. The Hungarians and Venetians reached a peace settlement in January of 1244. Béla IV surrendered Zadar, while the Venetians offered assurances that they would not support the claims to the Hungarian throne asserted by Beatrice d'Este, the widow of King Andrew II, and her son Stephen the Posthumous.³³ Hungarian royal authority over Dalmatia diminished considerably following the death of Béla IV, which power vacuum Venice exploited. The city of Hvar accepted Venetian sovereignty in 1278, at which time the Italian city-state also took control of Brač; having wearied of the threats posed to their ships by the pirates of Omiš, the Venetians occupied that city in 1280. And though a significant portion of central Dalmatia still remained in Hungarian hands, royal authority over those areas was essentially notional; it was effectively governed by the Šubić family, one of the most powerful clans of Dalmatian nobles, who had taken control of the cities of Dalmatia and most of the rest of the seaside province.³⁴

In addition to this political and historical background, an understanding of the relationships between the cities of Dalmatia and the Kingdom of Hungary will also require an investigation of the social and institutional histories which characterized Dalmatia prior to the Hungarian occupation. First of all, it is important to clarify which Dalmatian settlements were considered to be cities. In contrast to Hungarian medieval legal practice, Dalmatian communities were not raised to the rank of cities by the granting of royal privileges, but rather by becoming the seat of an archdiocese or bishopric. The Dalmatian settlements of the 9th, 10th, and 11th centuries – including both the cities which met the local legal definition and the larger communities which would later come to satisfy it – can be divided into two general groups on the basis of their social and administrative systems. The first group includes communities which were under the control of the princes and kings of Croatia, such as Nin, Biograd na Moru, Skradin, and Šibenik (which was not the seat of a bishopric, and thus not regarded as a *civitas*, but was nonetheless a community of some significance). These cities, like the coastal territories of the medieval Kingdom of Croatia, were under the authority of Croatian kings and their representatives, the *župani*; the process by which they gained their independence was long and slow. Setting aside a few exceptions, most of these communities were founded by Croatian rulers and thus did not have histories stretching back to late antiquity. As a result of these circumstances, most of these settlements started the process of evolving into communities and developing into autonomous cities in the 11th century – that is, at a much later date than those cities which had already taken root in late antiquity and which were not then under Croatian control.³⁵

33 Makk, *The Árpáds and the Comneni*, pp. 122–123.

34 Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans*, pp. 206–207.

35 Beuc, *Povijest institucija državne vlasti Kraljevine Hrvatske, Slavonije i Dalmacije: pravno-povijesne studije*.

The other group consists of cities which were mostly under Byzantine control from the 9th to the 11th century and had embarked on the process of urbanization much earlier. This group would include Zadar, Split, Trogir, Osor, Krk, and Rab, as well as more southerly communities like Dubrovnik and Kotor. These cities were already significant settlements in late antiquity; some of them, such as Zadar, Rab, and Trogir, developed out of Roman era or late-medieval settlements, while others, like Dubrovnik, were founded by refugees whose settlements were destroyed as a result of the mass migrations of Avars and Slavs into the region.³⁶ The cities under Byzantine control had begun to assert their independence and develop forms of local autonomy by the 10th century, and the process of communal development would subsequently prove more advanced in these areas than in cities which were founded by Croats or already in Croatian hands. The case of Zadar, which is the best documented, demonstrates that its citizens took advantage of the weakening of the Byzantine Empire in the early 10th century and asserted an ever-increasing degree of freedom. In addition to Byzantium's fading into the background, these cities were also helped by the rise of the Kingdom of Croatia and the intensification of its links to – and especially its trading relationships with – the communities along the Adriatic coast. The resultant economic boom enabled these cities to achieve the broadest possible degree of autonomy.³⁷

Given the lack of resources, we know very little about Dalmatian urban society and the establishment of secular administration there from the 9th to the 11th century. What little data we do have suggests that though there were differences in the level and nature of the development in the cities under Croatian and Byzantine control, the societies and administrations of the Dalmatian settlements of the late 11th century were fairly similar before the Hungarian conquest. Given the relative abundance of data about Zadar, it will serve as the best model for an analysis of the social segmentation of the urban population. In general, urban society consisted of clergy and laymen, the former being exempt from the jurisdiction of secular courts of law. The process of social stratification began in the 10th century, primarily as a result of the weakening of Byzantine authority, the increasing strength of Croatian rulers, and the growth of urban autonomy. The intensification of trade between these cities and the hinterland and the resulting economic development led to the formation of a patrician class within the citizenry. This wealthy stratum strove to establish clans, and the economic power concentrated in their hands allowed them to take over these cities' secular and ecclesiastical offices.³⁸ A good example is the case of the Madius family, which produced numerous bishops and *priors* in this period, some of whom also served as these cities' secular leaders. Thus social

36 Ravančić, "Grad u hrvatskom srednjovjekovlju", pp. 103–113.

37 Klaić and Petricoli, *Zadar u srednjem vijeku*, pp. 80–114.

38 Ravančić, "Grad u hrvatskom srednjovjekovlju", pp. 103–113.

stratification and the establishment of an aristocracy were also driving forces in the development of urban autonomy.³⁹

The period in which social stratification began to intensify was also marked by the emergence of closer ties between the coastal cities under Byzantine control and the hinterland (meaning the territory of the Kingdom of Croatia); the two regions developed a kind of symbiotic relationship. These connections exhibited a particular intensification in the 11th century, during the reigns of Peter Krešimir IV and Demetrius Zvonimir, who were able to expand their influence over the territories of the Adriatic coast. Croatian rulers supported these cities and their churches by granting them privileges; it also seems clear that the original, Neolatin-speaking native populations of these settlements were augmented in this period by increasingly large influxes of Slavic immigrants from the hinterland. The role the Croatian nobility played in the lives of these cities would expand continually over the course of the following centuries; by the 13th century, the authority of the most powerful noble families, such as the Šubići of Bribir, extended to governing cities. Furthermore, the history of the cities of Dalmatia cannot be differentiated from that of the hinterlands, economically, socially, or politically; for instance, as the coastal cities expanded, their citizens would acquire property in the hinterlands as well.

Given the lack of resources concerning the development of urban administration in the 9th, 10th, and 11th centuries, it is impossible to reconstruct this process precisely; even so, the available resources indicate that these cities were led by a *prior* (or bishop) who was selected by the citizens at a city assembly; judges also seem to have played a role in governing these cities.⁴⁰ In their internal structures and in the organization of their administrative frameworks, the cities of Dalmatia seem to have been influenced by Italian cities, as was the case for the entire medieval period. The binary, ecclesiastical-secular form of city government mentioned above was characteristic of the city-states of northern and central Italy, having developed there in the 9th century.⁴¹ The church played a fairly significant role in these cities; bishops – and the clergy in general – occupied important positions in these cities' secular governments. In the 12th century, the cities which came under Hungarian control were able to maintain their internal administrative structures thanks to the privileges they had been granted; the only observable change was that the secular leader in charge of a community came to be known by the title *comes* (Latin for *count*) instead of *prior*.⁴² With few exceptions, these titles, *prior* and *comes*, were held by urban aristocrats or nobles from the hinterlands, who were also increasingly influential in the cities of the coast. As a result, the occupier of this office was not completely impartial in his handling of local affairs, given that he also had his own – or his

39 Klaić and Petricoli, *Zadar u srednjem vijeku*, pp. 86–94.

40 Novak, "Comes, potestas, prior, consul, rector, capitaneus i miles grada Splita", pp. 227–273.

41 Jones, *The Italian City-state: From Commune to Signoria*, pp. 359–440.

42 Novak, *Povijest Splita*, pp. 298–299.

family's – interests in mind. The resulting weaknesses of *comes*-led governments in ensuring the stable functioning of their communities were most conspicuous when the settlements in question were affected by social tensions or a state of war, as was the case in Split in the mid-13th century. During this stormy period, in 1239, at the urging of Thomas the Archdeacon, the citizens of Split replaced their *comes*-led administration with an Italian-style *podesta*-system; the city's first *podesta* was a citizen of Ancona named Gargano de Arscindis. This system was also known as the *regimen Latinorum*, based on a concept of state administration developed by Italian legal scholars.⁴³ Its essence was that the leader of the city, the *podesta*, would be chosen by a city assembly or council for a short period of specified length, generally a year. Another important element of this new system was that the *podesta* had to come from a foreign territory and was required to bring his officials with him from abroad so as to avoid partiality in managing the city's internal affairs. This experiment did not take hold in Split, which returned to a *comes*-led form of administration in the latter half of the 13th century. Even so, *podestas* did not disappear from the cities of Dalmatia, though their role would be transformed; in the late 13th century, they appeared as proxy officers and deputies for absentee *comites*, not as officials brought in from abroad.⁴⁴

The initial processes of communal development can be traced to the 12th century, and occurred in the most advanced, formerly Byzantine-controlled cities before they reached the settlements which had been under Croatian authority. Urban legal frameworks were established beginning in the 13th century, while these cities' internal administrative structures developed in accordance with local needs, rather than at the behest of national rulers. Two types of assemblies evolved in the cities of Dalmatia in the 13th century: a large portion of the citizenry was allowed to participate in general assemblies, which occupied themselves with a variety of affairs concerning the city; the participants in smaller assemblies were generally the *comes* and the judges. The purview of the latter gatherings varied, though they were primarily tasked with managing affairs which necessitated quick decisions. The *comes* usually had a deputy known as a *vicarius* who served as his proxy in specific areas or governed the entire city when the *comes* was absent. In addition to these officials, another important set of institutional actors in these communities were the notaries public, who were responsible for legal documentation.⁴⁵

43 Matijević-Sokol, "Regimen Latinorum Arhidakona Tome u teoriji i praksi", pp. 17–32.

44 Karbić, *The Šubići of Bribir. A Case Study of a Croatian Medieval Kindred*, pp. 280–282.

45 For more on the notaries public of Dalmatia, see Grbavac, "The Professional Formation of Public Notaries in Dalmatia from the Second Half of the Twelfth Century to the End of the Fourteenth Century", pp. 285–312.

■ III. THE EXERCISE OF ROYAL AUTHORITY AND THE CHURCH

1. The transformation of Dalmatia's ecclesiastical structure

The church played a significant role in the secular life of the cities of Dalmatia, and thus any precise description of the ways in which Hungarian kings maintained and exercised their authority there will depend on an examination of the kinds of relationships those rulers cultivated with local churches. In this chapter, I will discuss three important aspects of this subject: first, I will explore changes in the structure of the church and the role Hungarian rulers played in such modifications; second, I will look at the personalities of the prelates of Dalmatia and changes in their roles in the wake of the Hungarian takeover; and third, I will examine the role royal and ducal donations to the church played in the exercise of royal authority. Finally, after focusing on the foregoing issues in analyzing the ecclesiastical characteristics of the exercise of Hungarian royal authority, I will also position Hungarian rulers' ecclesiastical relations within the context of great-power politics along the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea.

1.1 THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE DALMATIAN CHURCH BEFORE THE HUNGARIAN CONQUEST

The origins of the Dalmatian church stretch all the way back to the Roman era. The administrative and ecclesiastical seat of the Roman province of Dalmatia was Salona,¹ where the region's first diocese was established in the 3rd century CE; it flourished until the Avars and Slavs arrived and destroyed it.² Zadar had also become an important ecclesiastical centre by the 4th century; after the bishop of Salona, the

1 The ruins of this settlement lie just to the northeast of Split in a community now known as Solin.

2 Dusa, *The Medieval Dalmatian Episcopal Cities: Development and Transformation*, p. 56.

prelate of Zadar was the region's most important ecclesiastical figure in the period.³ From the 4th to the 6th century, functioning church organizations were established in Senj, Zadar, Rab, Iudrum, Skradin, Hvar, Delminium (now Duvno), Bistua (now Vitez), Martar (now Lisičići), Sarsenterum (in the vicinity of modern Mostar or Konjić), Makarska, Naronā (now Vid), Epidaurum (near modern Cavtat), and Rhisium (now Risan). We cannot do more than approximate the locations of some of these ecclesiastical centres, while for others we have no basis on which even to hazard a guess. The primary reason for this lack of information is that the church organizations which had been built up by the 6th century were seriously damaged or almost completely destroyed during the invasions of the Avar and Slavic tribes.⁴ Even so, this stormy period did not sweep away the church's structure in its entirety; it would be reorganized on the foundations of the remaining urban infrastructure and the traditions of late antiquity. For instance, after the destruction of Salona, its function as an ecclesiastical centre was transferred to Split, just a few kilometers away, though scholarly opinion is divided on the date of the founding of the archdiocese there – either the 7th, 8th, or 9th century.⁵ In addition to the revival of the former metropolitan see of Salona, another of the most important events in the early medieval history of the eastern Adriatic church was the founding of the bishopric of Nin in the 9th century. This new diocese was established thanks to the increasingly powerful Duchy of Croatia, which asserted its independence from the bishoprics of Dalmatia by locating its ecclesiastical seat in Nin.⁶ As a result of the foregoing, a conflict developed between Split and Nin, which would be resolved only at the church councils of Split; I will devote more attention to this subject in my discussion of the role of prelates below (section III.2.1).

We do not know the specific dates of the church councils of Split, though one certainly took place before 925 and another between 925 and 928.⁷ The pre-925 council is known for the decision to transfer the rights of the metropolitan see of ancient Salona to Split, and to grant the new archdiocese authority over a geographical area corresponding to that of Salona's.⁸ On the basis of the decisions of this council, the aforementioned ecclesiastical seat of the kings of Croatia, the bishopric of Nin, was obliged to recognize the supremacy of the archdiocese of Split,⁹ inasmuch as

3 For more on the origins of the church in Zadar, see Strika, "Kada i gdje se prvi put spominje zadarski biskup?", pp. 31–64.

4 Molnár, *Katolikus missziók a hódolt Magyarországon I*, p. 38.

5 Novak, *Povijest Splita*, vol. I, pp. 49–52.

6 Šanjek, *Kršćanstvo na hrvatskom prostoru*, p. 95.

7 Novak, *Povijest Splita*, vol. I, p. 51; Waldmüller, *Die Synoden in Dalmatien, Kroatien und Ungarn*, pp. 25–49.

8 Dusa, *The Medieval Dalmatian Episcopal Cities: Development and Transformation*, pp. 41; Novak, *Povijest Splita*, vol. I, pp. 52–54.

9 Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata u ranom srednjem vijeku*, p. 232.