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Guardians of the Holy Crown

The Restoration of the Army Crown Guard and Hungarian Traditionalism

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Abstract

The Crown Guard was restored as an Army unit in 2011 after six decades. This is a unique development in a republican State, and marked one of the first explicitly traditionalist actions in the political and aesthetic realms taken by the Orbán government. It is also a testament to the importance of the Holy Crown in Hungarian political culture, derived from the Doctrine of the Holy Crown, a political-legal formulation that ties the Hungarian State and its citizens to the Crown as an object and as a "body". The Doctrine drew its legitimacy from the sacredness attributed to the Crown itself by St. Stephen's dedication of it, and of the Kingdom itself, to the Virgin Mary. The importance of the Crown-as-an-object led to the creation of the Crown Guard, and its consolidation as a prestigious unit within the Hungarian Army, a status that was inherited by the revived body. This article analyses the restoration of the Crown Guard from a traditionalist perspective, contextualising it within the resurgence of the Holy Crown in public discourse and the rise of traditionalist-inspired historical revivalist policies pursued by the Hungarian government throughout the 2010s.

Introduction

Since 2011, the Hungarian Army has counted among its ranks a Crown Guard (in Hungarian, *Honvéd Koronaőrség*). The Crown Guard was formed from within the prestigious 32nd Budapest Guard and Ceremonial Regiment, Hungary's honour guard *par excellence*, which also comprises the Presidential Palace Guards and the Army Hussars. The existence of a Crown Guard in Hungary much precedes 2011, however, dating back to the 14th century and existing, under various arrangements and names, until the adoption of a republican form of government. The Guard's restoration as a military unit is the result of a traditionalist approach to historical and aesthetic topics, as promoted by the present government, which complements its national-conservative political ideology.

The establishment of a Hungarian Crown Guard as a unit of the Hungarian Army may appear anachronistic at first. The case of a State with a clearly republican form of government that has nonetheless a contingent of its Armed Forces dedicated to the protection of the Crown, and bound thereto with an oath on their lives, is indeed one of a kind. It is even more surprising that such a unit was re-established sixty-seven years after the *de jure* end of the Hungarian monarchy. Thus, The restoration of the Crown Guard cannot be fully understood without taking into account both the role of the Holy Crown in Hungarian legal, political, and societal thought, and the popularisation of historical revivalism in Hungary since the early 2010s. The present work aims to analyse the restoration of the Hungarian Crown Guard from a historical and traditionalist perspective. As such, it will take into account the historical development of the Doctrine of the Holy Crown and its incorporation into Hungarian political culture, and the historical evolution of the pre-dissolution Crown Guard. An outline of the concepts of "traditionalism" and "revivalism" will also be presented, through which the 2011 restoration of the Crown Guard will be analysed.

The Holy Crown and its Doctrine

The end of the monarchy and the imposition of Communism in Hungary put an end to the nearly-thousand-year connection between the people, the State, and the Crown. Such a relationship had, for the past centuries, been one of the pillars of Hungarian political, legal, historical, and ethnological thought. This historical-legal relationship between People, State, and Crown is one of many peculiarities of Hungary. Over the centuries, this relationship was discussed at length. From the 19th Century onwards, these tenets became the subject of intense research, upon which they became collectively known as the Doctrine of the Holy Crown.

From St. Stephen's reign, the Holy Crown became associated with State and Nation (here understood as the union of Magyar tribes under the King) alike. After the first

Apostolic King's death, and especially upon the end of the Árpád dynasty, the Crown's significance was further enhanced by the story, narrated in several Chronicles and legends of the period, of its dedication by St. Stephen to the Virgin Mary, shortly before his passing.[1] The dedication of the Crown forms the theological basis for the Doctrine of the Holy Crown, being interpreted as passing legal property of the Kingdom itself to the Virgin Mary - hence its classification as a *Regnum Marianum*.[2] The Doctrine transcends the ontological reality of the Crown as an object to interpret it as a *corpus* consisting of the union of the Hungarian State, represented by its King - the *Caput Sacrae Coronae* - and its nobility.[3] These two components - which, from 1848 onwards, were slightly modified to include non-noble Hungarians - were called the *Totum Corpus Sacrae Coronae*, the "whole body of the Holy Crown".[4] Notwithstanding its mostly legendary status, the dedication's presence in most Hungarian chronicles and its importance for the legitimisation of the Crown's sacredness as an object and as a "body" has positioned it as one of the defining events in early Hungarian history. A testament to its lasting impact in the Hungarian national consciousness is the presence of a painting depicting it prominently on the right aisle of the St. Stephen's Cathedral in Budapest, behind the Holy Right, realised by the Hungarian historicist painter Gyula Benczúr, as late as 1901.

Modern-day conceptions of the Doctrine of the Holy Crown are based on a number of treatises on the Crown itself and on its relationship with the State, notably the 16th- and 17th-century works of István Werbőczy and Baron Péter Revay. These *summae* compiled and translated into concise and consistent legal doctrine and historiography a number of relevant legal, political, and historical developments of the past centuries. Two periods were fundamental in the establishment of the foundations of the future Doctrine of the Holy Crown: the reign of St. Stephen, especially in his latter years, and the 13th and 14th centuries, starting from the enactment of the Golden Bull. Certain developments that took place during these two periods would provide the etiological, constitutional, and historical justifications, firstly to Werbőczy and Revay, and, centuries later, to a burgeoning school of legal thought dedicated to the understanding and application of the Doctrine in the comprehension of Hungarian law. The inclusion of "historical" justifications is not accidental, as history plays a key role in all aspects of the Doctrine and many of its later formulations have a markedly historiosophical character. For several centuries, it was believed that the present Crown is the same one worn by St. Stephen, which is also the one that would have been dedicated to the Virgin Mary, thus creating the "celestial bond" binding the Hungarian Kingdom, the *Regnum Marianum* gifted to the Virgin Mary, by the work of an eternal oath, to its crown.[5] [6] This idea was openly promoted by Chronicles and treatises throughout the first centuries of the Kingdom's existence, and strongly contributed to the Crown's importance in the Hungarian national consciousness, as reflected in its coronation rites, the most

important symbolic manifestation thereof.[7] Nevertheless, modern scholarship attests to the Crown's somewhat latter origin, with the *corona Graeca*, i.e. the lower part of the Crown, being estimated to date from the 1070s.[8]

Among the pre-19th century writers on the subject, Werbőczy is the most well-known, including outside of Hungary, and one of the most well-regarded Hungarian legal scholars of all time. In his *Tripartitum*, Werbőczy developed, inter alia, his understanding of the Kingdom's law, the role of the Sovereign and of the Holy Crown therein. The *Tripartitum*, a collection of legal precedents and doctrines compiled by Werbőczy as per the King's request, received the status of a legally binding document across Hungary in the decades following its publication.[9] Werbőczy reaffirmed the idea of the Holy Crown as a body constituted by the Sovereign, its head, and the nobility, its members. If, on the one hand, the author recognised all nobles as equal, regardless of title or possessions, he on the other hand excluded peasants and burghers from the *corpus*, with wide-ranging legal and political consequences.[10] Latter formulations of the Doctrine recognised free cities and the clergy as components of the *corpus*, but it was not until 1848 that peasants were recognised as Members of the Holy Crown, when such a definition was extended to the entirety of the Hungarian nation.[11] Another important idea outlined in the *Tripartitum* is the Holy Crown as being the *radix omnium possessionum* (the root of all possessions), drawing from the 1351 Fundamental Laws, which also defined it as the *radix omnium bonitum et iurium* (the root of all goods and rights).[12] [13]

Baron Revay, himself a Crown Guard, wrote *De Monarchia et Sacra Corona Regni Hungariae centuriae septem* (lit. Seven centuries of monarchy and the Holy Crown of Hungary), which was posthumously published in 1656, in the latter stages of the Ottoman occupation of Hungary.[14] *De Monarchia* is a seminal treatise on the history of the Kingdom of Hungary and the Holy Crown, originally published in Latin and subsequently translated into several European languages. At the time of its publication, which coincided with heightened interest in Hungary among European elites, it became one of the best-known and most widely quoted sources on these matters.[15] It is, moreover, a testament to Hungary's complex religious tapestry that Baron Revay, a Protestant, was the author of one of the most influential works in the study of the Holy Crown, whose mythology, authority, and doctrine were strongly based on Catholicism, hagiography, and Marian imagery. Baron Révay, as well as other Protestant scholars throughout the Kingdom's history, attest the Doctrine's 'catholicity' within the Hungarian realms, beyond its strictly Catholic etiological myth.

The Doctrine of the Holy Crown was reexamined throughout the 19th and early 20th century, in light of the important political developments that took place in Hungary. Already in the 19th century, the Doctrine faced strong criticism from both reformist

factions within the Hungarian Diet, which perceived it as an anachronistic legal device that impeded the societal and economic development of the Nation.[16] The citizenship reforms of 1848, which for the first time recognised the equality of all citizens, resulted in non-nobles being incorporated into the *corpus* of the Holy Crown as Members, thus ending its perceived exclusionary character.[17] The reforms also legally abolished the principle of *radix omnium possessionum*. Despite these reforms, interest in the Doctrine increased, and, for the first time, concise formulations under the name "Doctrine of the Holy Crown" appeared in Hungarian academic, legal, and political thought. It was during the latter years of the Dual Monarchy, and, afterwards, the Horthy era, that the two leading "currents" in the modern scholarly debate over the Doctrine of the Holy Crown appeared, namely that of Akos Timon and that of Ferenc Eckhart.

Timon and Eckhart were not contemporaries, with the former preceding the latter by decades. Timon's contributions to the debate on the Doctrine of the Holy Crown, as well as those of his followers who engaged in direct debate with Eckhart, were representative of a method of research and analysis based on legal history. Eckhart, on the other hand, was a positivist legal scholar, who rejected many of the postulates that were, at the time, mainstream among Hungarian legal scholars, most of whom - including Timon - had a strongly conservative view of history.[18] The two schools of thought diverged on the Doctrine's historical and current relevance, its uniqueness to Hungary, its origins, and the very idea of the *totum corpus Sacrae Coronae*. On the one hand, the legal history school, of which Timon was the leading scholar, claimed that the Doctrine was a uniquely Hungarian development that, through the idea of the *corpus Sacrae Coronae* and the detachment between the Crown and the person of the King, introduced public law into the Hungarian legal system from the early days of the Kingdom. Timon affirmed that the Doctrine's attribution of personality to the Crown itself - i.e., the Crown-as-an-object - is another uniquely Hungarian development, not to be found in any other European legal system.[19] He rejected the notion that the Doctrine was influenced by foreign legal systems, defending, rather, that the Hungarian one much precedes those that Eckhart would later claim as inspirations thereto. Eckhart, on the other hand, defended that the Doctrine was not uniquely Hungarian, denying that it was present in St. Stephen's Admonitions, nor that it was created during or immediately after his reign.[20] Eckhart claimed that for the first centuries of the Hungarian Kingdom, the Crown was perceived as a representation of royal power rather than State power or "public law" (i.e. a *corpus* of State and Nation) similarly to other European States, notably in Northern and Western Europe, while also alleging Polish and Bohemian influence in its development.[21]

The debate between the two schools of thought continued throughout the first half of the 20th century, during which the Holy Crown retained some legal significance as Hungary remained, *de jure*, a Kingdom. In the aftermath of the Communist takeover,

however, the debate lost prominence, not least due to political persecution by the regime against several of the intellectuals who took part in it, and by Eckhart's own participation in the Revolution of 1956. The Communist regime was actively opposed to any positive portrayal of the Hungarian monarchy. The Holy Crown itself would only return to Hungary in 1978 from the United States, where it had been temporarily kept since 1945. Since the end of the Communist regime, however, the Crown has once again gained prominence in the public sphere, both symbolically and physically. The transfer of the Holy Crown from the National Museum to the Parliament, a *locus* of political power, through the "Act of the Holy Crown", a law enacted in 2000 upon the celebration of the Millennium, was an important symbolic event in the reclaiming of the Crown's place in Hungary's political consciousness.[22] A further step in this direction was taken by the introduction of a reference to the Holy Crown in the Fundamental Law, and the creation of an article in Hungary's Criminal Code to punish expressions of "dishonour or disregard" against, *inter alia*, the Holy Crown.[23] [24]Although the Doctrine of the Holy Crown remains an element of Hungarian legal and political history, rather than of present-day Hungarian law, it retains a strong, and rising, influence in the country's institutional framework, political culture, and general cultural self-perception.

First Incarnations of the Crown Guard

The original Crown Guard precedes in time the publication of either the *Tripartitium* or *De Monarchia*. The existence of specialised military units dedicated to the protection of the Holy Crown has been attested as early as the 13th century, when Church-led military forces were allocated to its protection in the Féhervar castle.[25] An official Crown Guard, subordinate to the King of Hungary, rather than to ecclesiastical authority, would be established a century later. Definitive rules would only be set up in the latter half of the 14th century, in the aftermath of a turbulent period that saw it being stolen from Royal possession, transported to the Holy Roman Empire, and eventually recovered by King Matthias Corvinus, through the payment of a hefty sum.[26] [27]Following the recovery of the Crown, and in order to avoid a similar incident in the future, a law was enacted in 1464, establishing the need for the State to provide for the Crown's protection through the allocation of an appropriate space and personnel.

> *We therefore, by virtue of our mission in order to ensure the properguarding and protection of the crown as well as in agreement with and of the will of the prelates and the barons and the nobilities of the country, wish to provide a special place and qualified persons in order to avoid the loss of the crown, Heaven forbid.*[28]

The text of the Law specifically refers to the incident and emphasises the collegiality of the decision amongst the King, in whose name it is enacted, the nobility, and the

Church - the three components of the Holy Crown-as-a-body which, per the Doctrine of the Holy Crown, were united into both object and institution by Saint Stephen's Marian dedication.

King Matthias Corvinus' successor, King Vladislaus II of Hungary and Bohemia, further reformed the Crown Guard. It was under his reign that the first wide-ranging reforms of the nascent body took place, mostly through the approval of new rules thereon by the Diet in 1498.[29] Henceforth, the Diet was charged with the election of two Crown Guards (*koronaőr*) from amongst military noblemen. These noblemen would swear an oath to protect the Holy Crown and the other Hungarian Crown Jewels - a tradition that has persisted throughout the original Crown Guard's existence and was subsequently incorporated in its revived version, in 2011.[30] The oath sworn by the first Crown Guard appointed by this system, a Visegrád guardsman of noble extraction named Laszló Kolos, was recorded in local Chronicles. It included detailed instructions of his expected conduct towards the Holy Crown, including in the eventualities of his being relieved of his duties as a Crown Guard, and of the Visegrád castle, where the Crown was located, being besieged.[31] The oath was taken on the Guard's Christian faith and in the name of "the living God, the Virgin Mary, and all the Saints" and, interestingly, emphasised the Guard's loyalty to the Bishop of Győr, who had been directly responsible for his appointment, as guardianship of the Crown was heretofore a shared duty of Church and military.[32] Nevertheless, from 1498 onwards, clergymen would no longer serve as Crown Guards, with the responsibility falling exclusively under the prerogative of soldiers of noble extraction. Some among these soldiers, such as Reváy and Werbőczy, would become important scholars of the Crown, authoring the treatises that are, to this day, used as references regarding the Doctrine of the Holy Crown and its historical evolution.

The Guard underwent further major reforms throughout the centuries. A few decades after King Vladislaus' reforms, a period of chaos and uncertainty for the Crown and its Guard ensued, lasting from the Battle of Mohács in 1523 to the return of Holy Crown to Hungary in 1608 from Vienna. The Crown had travelled between Transylvania, Austria, and Visegrád during this period, reflecting the unstable political situation in Hungary. Its "travels" began in 1526, upon the election as King of Hungary of János Szapolyai, formerly a Crown Guard and by the time the ruler of Transylvania, a "vassal State" of the Ottoman Empire.[33] Following the coronation of Szapolyai, the Crown was transported by another Crown Guard, Péter Perényi, to the coronation of Ferdinand I, and returned to the Visegrád castle. The Crown was captured by Ottoman troops during the occupation of Visegrád, and eventually returned to Szapolyai, in whose hands it remained until the King's death and the accession to power of his widow, Queen Izabella.[34] The return of the Holy Crown to Habsburg possession happened through negotiations between the Holy Roman Empire and Queen Izabella. The Crown,

now under Austrian possession, was kept in Vienna and Prague until 1608, when it was permanently returned to the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary and kept under watch of the Crown Guard in the Pressburg Castle (today known as Bratislava Castle). Upon the transfer, a Law was enacted establishing a 60-strong elected military body exclusively responsible for the guarding of the Crown, whose members were to be known as "Crown Guards" (Koronaőr) - although not yet officially under the official name of Hungarian Crown Guard. Pressburg, at the time the coronation city, held special prestige as a host to the Holy Crown, and every further detachment of the Crown was only carried out with explicit consent of the two Crown Guards on duty at the time.[35]

The Crown Guard was only established as a unit under this name in 1751, under Empress Maria Theresa. Rendered in English, in the same manner of its successor incarnations, as the Royal Hungarian Crown Guard, the unit was known in Hungarian as the *Királyi Magyar Koronaőrség*, and in German as *Königlich Ungarische Kronwache*. The unit was now recruited amongst veteran soldiers, mostly grenadiers, of Hungarian and German origins, and integrated into Army structures with the same status as grenadiers - as opposed to the *sui generis* status it had enjoyed until then.[36] The reforms added to the prestige of the Crown Guard, which now counted on a contingent of 43 members, eventually rising to 109, stationed in the Imperial city of Pozsony (nowadays Bratislava, in Slovakia), as they elevated it in status within the military.[37] This incarnation of the Crown Guard, although short-lived (it would be disbanded by Maria Theresa's successor in the Habsburg Throne, Joseph II) formed the basis for the reestablishment of the body over 100 years later, following the Compromise of 1867. The Royal Hungarian Crown Guard was reestablished by law in 1871, on the initiative of Emperor Franz Joseph, in what was to be its final incarnation, surviving until the end of the Second World War, apart from a brief interlude during the Hungarian Soviet Republic. From that time until its final abolishment, its Hungarian name was *Magyar Királyi Koronaőrség*, a slight modification from the name it had under Empress Maria Theresa. It was during this period, and, particularly, in the *fin-du-siècle*, that the Crown Guard was given its unique identity and uniform, and its status as an elite body in charge of the foremost relic of the Hungarian Nation was emphasised.[38] This was all the more relevant at a time when, as per the previous section, academic and legal debates surrounding the Doctrine of the Holy Crown focused, *inter alia*, and the Crown's place in Hungarian ethnogenesis.

The Royal Hungarian Crown Guard until 1945

The Royal Hungarian Crown Guard, as it existed at the end of the 19th Century, had a double function as both an Honour Guard and an elite unit dedicated to the protection of the Crown Jewels. It was granted a unique uniform, based on the national colours

and on the traditional attire of Hungarian nobility and military elites. This uniform, still worn today by the military folkloristic Royal Crown Guard Association, was intended to be both in line with Hungarian traditions and modern needs of an honour guard.[39] Crown Guards wore a green attila coat, red trousers, and a white cape and gloves.[40] These were completed by a green cap adorned with an engraved Hungarian coat of arms in gold and topped with white feathers. The Crown Guard's ceremonial weapons were a sword and the *vibárd*, a specially designed halberd decorated with the Hungarian coat of arms and other motifs. The Crown Guard also enjoyed a unique status, as per the 1896 Law that regulated its functioning: it was an independent unit within the *Honvéd*, commanded by an elected Captain, whose task in peace- and wartime was the protection of the Crown and other Hungarian Royal regalia.[41] The Guard also featured prominently in processions at national holidays, such as St. Stephen's Day, and other civic and religious holidays, where its members, oscillating between 45 and 60, displayed their ornate uniforms.

The Crown Guard maintained its status as a prestigious body in the Hungarian Armed Forces, serving both ceremonial, traditional, and defence purposes throughout the latter years of the Empire. It was briefly dissolved during the 1919 Communist insurrection, at which time the Guard remained loyal to counter-revolutionary forces, as Soviet Republic authorities sought to locate and destroy the Holy Crown. The restoration of the Kingdom of Hungary under the Regency of Admiral Miklós Horthy allowed for a reorganisation of the Crown Guard, with some minor modifications compared to its 1896 regulations. During the Horthy era, the Crown Guard featured prominently in national celebrations, being also present in certain religious festivities. The Horthy years saw renewed interest in historical and religious elements of Hungary's national history and etiological myth, which was eagerly supported by the Regent and his Prime Ministers alike. Both the Regent and the successive Prime Ministers, all of which shared a conservative and *de jure* monarchist outlook, supported "history-based" interpretations of the Doctrine, such as those of Timon. Effigies of Crown Guardsmen were present in government propaganda as well, alongside those of the Holy Crown and other symbols associated with St. Stephen, such as the Holy Right, or even the King himself.

The Second World War marked the end of the Kingdom of Hungary and, as a consequence, of the Royal Crown Guard. It was precisely in its last years of existence that the Crown Guard performed one of the actions for which it remains best known to this day, i.e. the transportation of the Holy Crown into safety away from Buda Castle. It was through a delegation of Crown Guards, under the initiative of Major General Ernő Pajtás, that the Holy Crown and other regalia of Hungary were delivered to the US Army

in Mattsee, Austria, to avoid capture by the advancing Soviets.[42] The Royal Hungarian Crown Guard was dissolved for one last time in 1945, after which it would not be reconstituted until 2011, this time under the present name of Army Crown Guard (*Honvéd Koronaőrség*). Between the final dissolution of the Royal Crown Guard and the reestablishment of the Army Crown Guard, the tradition of Crown Guardianship was preserved by a military-folkloristic association founded by, *inter alia*, former members of the Royal Crown Guard. The Association was founded in 1991 by Jozsef Vitez, a former Crown Guard, following decades of efforts to preserve the history, memory, and legacy of the Royal Crown Guard, including in the diaspora.[43] Upon the dissolution of Communism, the Association established a strong presence in Hungary, often participating, in full ceremonial uniform, in official celebrations connected to the Holy Crown.

Traditionalism, Revivalism, and the New Crown Guard

The Holy Crown, as an object, as an idea, and as a constitutional body, has shaped Hungarian history for the past millennium in a way no other Crown, real or symbolic, could be claimed to have done for its own nation. As such, any actions taken towards either the Crown-as-an-object or the Crown-as-a-body, even in the republican era, ought to be looked at through the lens of its historical and ethnological role as a symbol of Hungary and of Hungarians. In other words, the Crown ought to be regarded as both a symbolic manifestation and the root whence the unification of Hungarians, as per the Doctrine, emanates - as the highest manifestation of the idea of *totum corpus Sacra Coronae*. Before proceeding to this analysis, certain considerations ought to be made regarding the approach of the present Hungarian government, led by the national-conservative Fidesz party, to historical topics and their role in contemporary Hungary. Based on the arguments herewith presented, present-day Hungarian policy could be considered be aesthetically and culturally traditionalist and revivalist while being politically conservative.

Since taking office in 2010, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has pursued a unique policy of cultural renovation and valorisation of Hungarian traditions and traditionalism, including through the restoration of tangible and intangible heritage. Much of this policy (which is not a unified programme, but is rather divided into several governmental initiatives) is attributed to the Prime Minister's conservative ideology, and thus described, itself, as part of a "conservative" plan or programme. Although correct from a political point of view, from a historical, aesthetical, and cultural perspective, Orbán's pre-Communist restorationism is best described as traditionalist. Traditionalism and conservatism are often equated due to their proximity on a political level and to their common origin in Romantic-era historicism. Establishing a clear

definition of "traditionalism" is complicated by the fact that it is neither a purely political movement, nor based on a well-established ideological framework. Moreover, traditionalism, both as a term and as a phenomenon, tends to manifest itself more strongly in aesthetic and cultural spheres, while conservatism is more present in purely political discussions. In some cases, such as that of Hungary, there is a *mélange* of the two, which is often called "traditionalist conservatism".

Traditionalism is, in the present Western reality, a set of ideas characterised *in prims* by two components: a partial or total rejection, from a philosophical perspective, of modernity or contemporaneity; and the active preference for aesthetic, cultural, spiritual, and political ideas, styles and tenets that are perceived to be intrinsic to a place, culture, and time by virtue of their inheritance. Herein lies one of the key differences between traditionalism and (contemporary) conservatism: while the *leitmotif* of conservative ideology is the preservation of existing traditions, values, and, in a broad sense, heritage, that of traditionalism is a conscious reorientation towards certain aspects of the past. Traditionalism is, thus, intrinsically restorationist, while conservatism is only so if it is also traditionalist. All traditionalism is politically conservative, but not all conservatism is culturally and aesthetically traditionalist. In this sense, traditionalism has parallels to the "conservative instinct" as defined by Scruton: "the enactment of historical vitality, the individual's sense of his society's will to live".[44]

Two further points ought to be made on traditionalism before advancing to an analysis of the restoration of the Crown Guard. Firstly, traditionalism in the Hungarian context is intrinsically historicist. Historicism is an artistic, cultural, and aesthetic phenomenon with early Romantic origins that came into prominence in the 19th century, eventually outliving Romanticism itself.[45] Historicism manifests itself in several domains of the arts, with architecture and the visual arts being the most prominent, albeit not the only ones. In 19th century Central Europe, historicism was strongly attached to national revival movements, and helped provide legitimacy to existing and emerging historiographies and etiological myths. Historicism arose as a reaction to the then-dominant rationalist, Enlightenment-inspired philosophical currents. It emphasises the singularity of processes of intellectual, aesthetic, and political development in each historical period, ultimately contributing to a rediscovery of a place's (in this case, the broader Western world) own identity.[46] In the arts, particularly in architecture, this resulted in the return of aesthetic styles and preferences of previous eras, albeit through the use of contemporary technology, a phenomenon that became known as revivalism.[47] In a traditionalist worldview, revivalism, whether in architecture or in other aesthetic manifestations, plays an important role, often attached to a broader trend of revisiting or restoring traditional or pre-modern(ist) ideals, styles, and institutions.

Furthermore, in contrast to post-Enlightenment ideologies, traditionalism is imbued with a strong spiritual dimension, partly owing to its own metaphysical foundations being found in what is, by definition, a pre-Enlightenment past. Marco Pallis, regarded as a leading scholar and proponent of traditionalism in the 20th century, defined one of the great virtues of tradition as its ability to "maintain the polar balance between theory and practice, between wisdom and its effective realization, through calling into play the appropriate spiritual means".[48] While Pallis wrote in and of a different context than that of 21st-century Hungary, his assessment of tradition from a broader perspective remains relevant for the analysis of the restoration of the Hungarian Crown Guard, not least due to the lingering influence thereon of the Doctrine of the Holy Crown. It is impossible to analyse any phenomenon related to the Holy Crown, let alone one as intrinsically connected to its history and destiny as that of the Crown Guard, without taking into consideration its religious-spiritual dimensions, even if from a purely aesthetic point of view. While it would be daring to claim that the restoration was determined by the Doctrine itself, nor by any specifically religious reasoning, religious and spiritual symbolism are strongly present in the revived Crown Guard's own military traditions.

The present Crown Guard, named the *Honvéd Koronaőrség*, was reestablished in 2011, following the approval of a Law on the topic in late-2010, as an independent unit under the aegis of the 32nd Military Battalion of the *Vitéz Sándor Szurmay* Budapest Garrison Brigade, to which other ceremonial and honour guard units also belong. The process leading to the establishment of the Army Crown Guard followed a traditionalist line of thought and action. The very choice of the name *Koronaőrség* for the new body, restoring a term that had been in official use since the 18th century and fell into disuse upon the end of the Kingdom of Hungary, was a conscious one, signalling the body's intent to reclaim the old unit's (and, by consequence, the Kingdom's) inheritance. From the onset, the (re)foundational process included, alongside Hungarian servicemen, historians of the Holy Crown and the Royal Crown Guard, and members of the military-folkloristic Royal Crown Guard Association. Authorities sought to establish a clear link between the refounded Crown Guard and its predecessors, despite the loss of institutional continuity caused its dissolution and the decades of Communism, with the Crown Guard Association acting as a form of "middleman" of traditions. One notable difference between the Royal Crown Guard and its present-day successor, however, lies in their uniforms. The unit was given a new ceremonial uniform, markedly different from that of the Royal Crown Guard, but featuring Crown Guard symbolism, on a red background, in prominent positions.[49] The present uniform of the *Honvéd Koronaőrség* is a modified version of the "*Tihány*" ceremonial military uniform worn by Palace Guards, another constituent of the 32nd Battalion.[50]

Three further points can be made in arguing that the process of reestablishment of the Crown Guard is based on a traditionalist (and revivalist) historical and aesthetic outlook. Firstly, the discourse employed by both the Armed Forces and media close to the Ministry of Defence at the time of the reestablishment heavily emphasised the restoration of historical continuity with the original Crown Guard.[51] The unit was presented not as a "new" creation - which, legally, it was - but rather as a restoration of a service that had been dormant for six decades. Secondly, the incorporation into the preparatory process, and, subsequently, into ceremonies related to the Holy Crown of the Crown Guard Association, indicate a strong willingness to preserve the historical-traditional continuity between the Royal Crown Guard and its republican successor. The Association's role as "custodians" of the Crown Guard tradition allowed it to perform such a role from a cultural point of view, transmitting long-lost military traditions, such as the Oath of the Crown Guard, and fostering their development and adaptation into a new institution. In this sense, it is also interesting to note that before the initiation of the first Army Crown Guards in 2011, all postulants paid a visit to the tomb of the last commander of the Royal Crown Guard, Major General Ernő Pajtás.[52] This process is, itself, strongly revivalist. Even after the establishment of the Crown Guard, members of the Royal Crown Guard Association, dressed in its 19th-century ceremonial uniform, continue to take part in events commemorating historical dates linked to the Holy Crown, often standing alongside the Army Crown Guard. The input of historians of the Holy Crown, whose tasks ranged from assisting in the development of the new uniforms to giving lectures on the Crown, its Doctrine, and its importance to the Hungarian nation, is also remarkable.[53]

Finally, a point ought to be made regarding the Doctrine of the Holy Crown, i.e. the historical-spiritual dimension of the traditions associated with the Crown. The restoration of the Crown Guard marked another relevant step in the return of the Crown towards a symbolic centre of Hungarian political culture, a decade after the transfer of the Crown itself to the Parliament building. As outlined in the previous sections, the Crown's history has been closely attached to that of the Crown Guard - in one of its many institutional and non-institutionalised forms - for seven centuries, with the latter enjoying a special, spiritual bond to the former. One of the most explicitly "spiritual" demonstrations of this bond is the oath taken by each Crown Guard upon his initiation, in which the Guard swears, in the name of God, to protect the Crown with his own life. The oath, which has existed in several forms throughout the centuries, has survived as a part of the introductory ceremony of the Royal Crown Guard Association as it was sworn in the early 20th century.[54] In line with the traditionalist-revivalist ideal that has guided the Crown Guard's reestablishment, a modified form of the oath was introduced. The new oath is always sworn on the 15th of August, the Day of the

Assumption, in yet another traditionalist nod to the custom of associating dates related to the Crown and coronations with religious holidays, especially Marian ones.[55]

Conclusions

It has thus been established that the Holy Crown holds a paramount role in Hungarian historical, political, and legal developments since at least the 11th century, upon the dedication of the country by St. Stephen to the Virgin Mary. This role was further enhanced by the development of a unique Doctrine of the Holy Crown, establishing as legal doctrine the view of the Hungarian State and Nation as components of the *corpus* of the Holy Crown. The Crown, as an object, was thus both a religious and a political relic, its sacredness in the former sense legitimising its sacredness in the latter. It is not a uniquely Hungarian feature to consider the Crown as a legal person. What is, indeed, a *hungaricum*, as Timon defined it, is the attachment of legal personality to a *specific* object, rather than an abstract "Crown", its detachment from the person of the King, and the wide-ranging legal and political consequences for both Hungary and its citizens that the Doctrine carried all the way to the 19th century. Despite their rejection by the Communist authorities and a period of relatively little political interest in the matter in the first decades following the end of the regime, the Holy Crown has gradually reclaimed a role in Hungarian legal, political, and aesthetic discourse since the 2010s.

The restoration of the Crown Guard was a quintessentially traditionalist measure. It is the present government's aesthetic orientation towards traditionalism, rather than any drifts from its republican form of government, that prompted the return of the Holy Crown and its symbolism to the public sphere. Its intellectual and aesthetic foundations are markedly historicist-revivalist, in line with the broader cultural policy of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. Nevertheless, due to the unique role the Holy Crown plays in Hungarian history, the restoration of the Crown Guard must be analysed not only from a purely aesthetic perspective, but also through the lens of the Doctrine of the Holy Crown, and the recentralisation of the Crown in Hungarian political culture. The previous sections outlined the foundations, historical evolution, and academic debates on the Doctrine up to the abolition of the Kingdom in the 20th century. While the present work does not intend to contribute to the legal debate surrounding the Doctrine, its endurance as a Hungarian "tradition", and its role as a historical-spiritual dimension to the Crown's *mythos*, is fundamental for a traditionalist assessment of the restoration of the Crown Guard. In fact, the restoration of the permanent guard returns to the Holy Crown an honour and prestige that is unprecedented for a crown in any republican polity. This is, in itself, another *hungaricum*.

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