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The Illyrian Movement: A Croatian Vision of South Slavic Unity

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Background

In the last year of his life, a poet from the province of Carniola,¹ Jožef Žemlja (1805–1843), published an epic poem, *Seven Sons*, allegorizing the seven Slavic nations—the Russians, Poles, Bohemians, Croats, Winds, Illyrians, and Bulgarians²—as seven children condemned to death at birth by a pitiless mother. The sons are secretly spared by their father, Ban Mikić, who reunites them as adults and reveals to them their mother’s perfidy, upon which the sons forgive her. Žemlja’s contemporary, France Prešeren (1800–1849), born and raised in a neighboring Carniolan village, three years before his own death published another epic poem, *Baptism by the Savica Falls*. *Baptism* depicts the battle between pagan and christened Slovenes in the eighth century. Though the pagans are defeated, their leader declares that it is better to fight for freedom and die than to remain alive and enslaved (Hladnik 2001). The two poems stylize the conflicting perspectives of the South Slavs³ at the outset of the nineteenth century. Žemlja proposes that the cruel past be forgotten and the grand unity of the Slavs restored for the common weal. Prešeren opts to cultivate local identity. Žemlja was an Illyrian and his name is now dimly remembered. Prešeren was a Slovene and is today celebrated as the national poet of Slovenia.

The Illyrian movement (1835–1848) strove to establish a broad national identity among the South Slavs, who were subjects of two empires, Austro-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, by creating a single language for the people who today identify themselves as Slovenes, Croats, Bosnians, Bosniacs (Muslims of Bosnia), Serbs, Montenegrins, and Macedonians. At first the apolitical movement tried to create a “spiritual brotherhood” among Slavs by developing their language and

promoting literacy in it. Its main proponents were Croats, and as it developed, it moved away from broad South Slavic, focusing increasingly on Croatian political concerns, having failed to attract many followers outside of Croatia. By 1848 the movement had succeeded in creating a Croatian national identity from the provinces of Civil Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia (the Triune Kingdom), Istria, and much of the Military Frontier, but by then Slovenes and Serbs had already developed their own national identities that were incompatible with the Croatian one. Nevertheless, Croats and Serbs subsequently (1850) agreed upon a common basis for their language. Despite clearly defined national identities, reinforced by religious differences—Croats being Catholic, Serbs Eastern Orthodox—their languages were deemed to be variants of a single code, named Serbo-Croatian or Croato-Serbian.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Habsburg Empire, centered in Vienna, was multi-ethnic and multilingual, containing within its boundaries the majority of Slavic speakers outside of the Russian Empire, the remaining South Slavs (Bosnians, Serbs, Macedonians, Bulgarians) being subjects of the Ottoman Empire. The internal organization of the South Slavs within Austro-Hungary was highly fragmented: the provinces of Carinthia, Carniola, Styria (now Slovenia), Istria (now divided between Slovenia and Croatia), and Dalmatia (Croatia) belonged to the Austrian part of the Empire; Civil Croatia, Slavonia (Croatia), and Vojvodina (Serbia) belonged to the Hungarian Kingdom. The Military Frontier

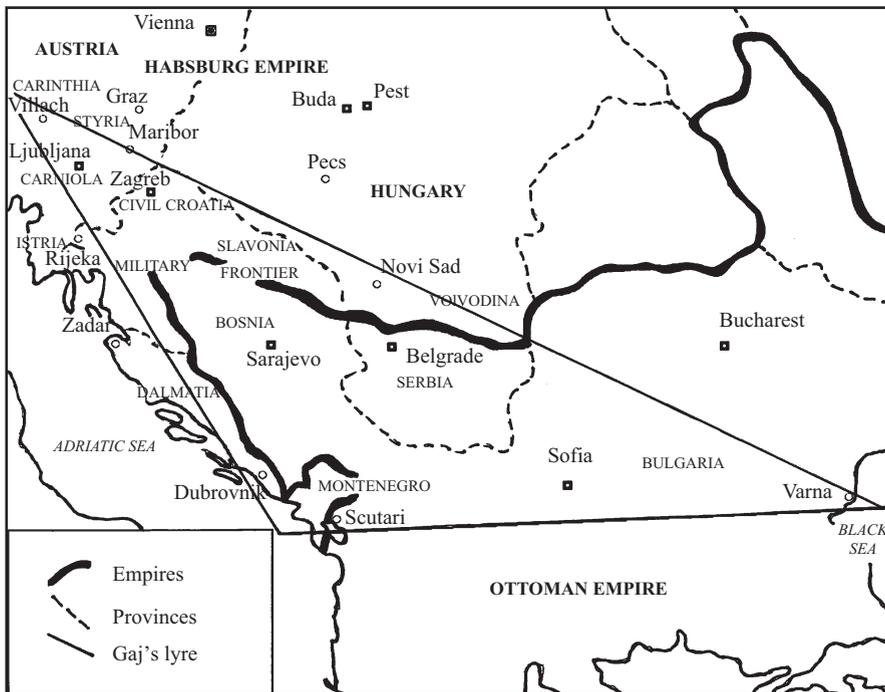


Figure 29.1 “Illyria”—Gaj’s lyre

(Croatia, Serbia, and Romania), which was ethnically mixed, formed a buffer between the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires, and was controlled by Vienna (see map, figure 29.1).

Hungarian Nationalism Fosters the Illyrian Movement

In the late eighteenth century, during the period of enlightened absolutism, Maria Theresa and her son, Joseph II, enacted reforms to unify the Empire. Among other things, their reforms centralized taxation and weakened regional decision-making. To effect centralization in the early 1780s, German-speaking bureaucrats were introduced into the regional administration and German was declared to be the language of administration and education, replacing Latin. In response, over the next several decades the Hungarians pushed for and attained greater autonomy and the right to use Hungarian in the administration and education in the eastern part of the Empire. In 1827 Hungarian was made compulsory in all Croatian schools. Croatian patriots used law, ideology, and language to push back against the assimilatory aims of Hungarian nationalism. On the legal front, Croatian patriots asserted their rights of inherited local autonomy (*iura municipalia*). Pan-Slavism, which was “in the air” among Slavic intellectuals, informed the Illyrian ideology and provided a framework in which to counter Hungarian nationalist challenge to Croatian identity. Because the European concept of nation was then seen primarily as a language community, it followed in the thinking of the time that the promotion of a common literary language was the central tool with which to advance Illyrian ideology.

One of the responses to the assertion of German and Hungarian and the loss of neutral Latin in the Empire was the emergence of a thin layer of Slavic intellectuals promoting Pan-Slavic ideology. The Slovak pastor and Pan-Slavist Ján Kollár (1793–1852) envisioned a literary and spiritual (apolitical) brotherhood of Slavs through his concept of “reciprocity,”⁴ entailing the creation and promotion of Slavic literary languages, literature written in those languages, Slavic libraries and reading rooms, and the active reading of others’ literatures in their original Slavic languages. In Kollár’s vision, Slavic is a “language,” its variant forms are “dialects,” and the groups of people who speak them “tribes.” He identifies four extant “dialects” in which books are published: Russian, Illyrian, Polish, and Czech-Slovak. Illyrian referred to all of the “dialects” of the South Slavic area.

The Three Vertices of the Lyre

The Illyrian movement that began with Kollár’s Pan-Slavic notion was carried forth by Croatian and other South Slavic patriots. Kollár mentored the central figure of the movement, Ljudevit Gaj (1809–1872) (Auty 1958, 399; Despalatović 1975, 51), who in 1835 depicted Europe allegorically as a maiden and Illyria as her lyre, the three vertices of which were formed by Lake Scutari (bordering Montenegro and Albania), Varna (on the Black Sea in Bulgaria), and Villach (in Austrian

Carinthia); and the strings representing Carinthia, Carniola, Styria, Istria, Civil Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Dubrovnik, Bosnia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bulgaria, and lower Hungary (Vojvodina) (Despalatović 1975, 90; Stančić 1989, 139–140). But the program was not just a romantic dream aimed at a hypothetical spiritual unity; rather, it tried from the beginning to use language both to assert South Slavic unity and to achieve political autonomy from Hungary. In 1832 Gaj wrote in an essay on the Hungarian language policy that abandoning Latin directly threatened the existence of a Croatian nation. Latin was a neutral language, used throughout Central Europe without ethnic or national connotations, so it had allowed Croatian identity to remain intact. Gaj's associate, the older and influential Croatian industrialist Count Janko Drašković (1770–1856), a member of the Croatian *Sabor* (Parliament), went a step further in his *Dissertation or Discourse for the Benefit of the Noble Deputies* (1832), urging for the autonomy from Hungary of an “Illyrian Kingdom,” consisting of Civil Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Bosnia, Rijeka, the Military Frontier, and Slovenia (see map, figure 29.1). The medium of Drašković's *Dissertation* was in part the message: Drašković wrote his pamphlet in Croatian, not the neutral Latin, giving it a political edge.

The Language Question 1: Kajkavian First

Gaj's and Drašković's 1832 efforts, however, were only precursors to the movement in its full form. They had hoped to promote the public use of a narrow form of the Croatian language spoken in Zagreb and other towns in Civil Croatia, called Kajkavian. Kajkavian is structurally close to Slovene and it had been written using Hungarian spelling conventions. Two years earlier, Gaj had attempted to modernize Kajkavian, but he would soon militate against it in favor of the broadly inclusive Illyrian language. Nevertheless, his *Short Primer of Croatian-Slavic Orthography*, published in 1830 in Buda, was iconoclastic: it broke with the tradition of employing Hungarian orthographic principles and introduced the use of diacritic marks (modifications of single letters replacing double letters).⁵

The First Illyrian Publications and the Attempt to Create an Illyrian Identity

In 1835 the Illyrian movement began in earnest with the first issue of Gaj's newspaper *Croatian News* and its literary supplement *The Morning Star of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia*. The names of the newspaper and its supplement indicate the received state of affairs and hint at the direction the movement would subsequently take: the term “Croatia” (*Horvatzka*) then referred to Kajkavian-speaking Civil Croatia around the towns of Zagreb and Varaždin, the noble and middle-class citizens of which were mostly pro-Hungarian and thus unlikely to be sympathetic to the Pan-Slavic ideals of the Illyrism. The “morning star” symbolizes national awakening, while the reference to Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia name the separate administrative and cultural entities formed in the medieval period. The first issues discussed Slavic history, language, and included mottos, poetry, and prose calling for South Slavic unity. In 1835

and 1836 Gaj tested the waters to determine whether the call for South Slavic unity would engender a backlash from the pro-Hungarian (and Kajkavian-speaking) Croatian gentry, and so his paper was initially written in the Kajkavian standard of the time. He gradually increased the use of the name Illyrian as a cover term for “South Slavic,” until in December 1835 he announced that the newspaper would henceforth be called *Illyrian National News* and the supplement *Illyrian Morning Star*. Correspondents to the paper were identified with the formula “an Illyrian from (locality),” for example, Ljubomir Martić, an Illyrian from Bosnia. To retain anonymity, writers sometimes omitted their names and used only the second part of the formula.

The Language Question 2: The Switch from Kajkavian to Štokavian

In 1836 the writers of the *News* and *Morning Star* stopped using the Kajkavian dialect and began writing in a stylized variety of the Štokavian dialect,⁶ called “Illyrian.” According to Drašković’s *Dissertation*, 65 percent of the people in Croatian territories spoke the Štokavian dialect, implying that the percentage of the Štokavian speakers—if Muslims and Serbs were included—would have been even higher. The prestige of Dubrovnik Renaissance and Baroque writing in the Štokavian dialect, moreover, had particularly inspired the Illyrians. The rapid shift from Kajkavian to Štokavian is remarkable not just because it came suddenly, but also because the majority of its early writers were Kajkavian speakers. The shift was made consciously in view of the tradition of the Štokavian writing traditions of Dalmatia, Slavonia, and Dubrovnik, as well as with a view to achieving a maximum readership throughout the South Slavic lands.

Growing Pains as the Illyrian Movement Develops from Ideology to Political Force

Outwardly, Gaj and his program appeared to be in favor at the Viennese Court. In August 1839, Emperor Ferdinand awarded Gaj a diamond ring in recognition of his literary efforts, and Gaj officially proclaimed his loyalty to the Habsburgs. In the pursuit of his national program, however, Gaj was prepared not only to engage in internal politics, but also to seek assistance outside of Austro-Hungary. In pursuit of Illyrian goals, Gaj engaged in a secret agenda apart from the Illyrian Party. In just one striking example, in 1838 he appealed to the Russian tsar for financial support for his publishing venture, but later that fall he also conveyed a secret memorandum asking for Russia to aid in effecting a military coup against Vienna, liberating the South Slavs from the Habsburgs altogether and appealing in Pan-Slavic terms for protection of the Russian crown. The memorandum was not taken seriously by the Russian government, though official Russia had been known to take a measured interest in Pan-Slavic initiatives (Moseley 1935).

By 1841 the Illyrian movement had become an organized political party, opposing the Croatian-Hungarian Party, which was run by the conservative Croatian gentry sympathetic to the Hungarian national movement. To make the

Illyrians more acceptable to (pro-Hungarian “Magyarone”) Croatian conservatives, in 1841 Gaj formulated the motto “in the name of all true Illyrians... May God bless the Hungarian constitution, the Croatian Kingdom, and the Illyrian people!” (Šidak et al. 1988, 136). Nevertheless, the Hungarian government and its Magyarone sympathizers continued to view the Illyrians as hostile to them in view of their Pan-Slavic and (at least) implicitly separatist sympathies.

Part of the Illyrian strategy was not just to promote a common language, but also to represent itself visually to the public. Illyrian political life now also included public demonstrations with members dressed in a special costume of a blue or red peasant-style topcoat (*surka*) worn over a waistcoat, and a red cap with the Illyrian coat of arms, a half-moon and the morning star, and a saber.

The Empire Strikes Back

In January 1843 Emperor Ferdinand banned the use of the Illyrian name. He did not wish to curtail the right of the Croats to use their own language, but it was necessary to end political instability in the Triune Kingdom. A new Censor, hostile to the Illyrian program, made it difficult for Illyrians to publish, pushing some of their activity to move abroad. Many in the Party blamed Gaj for the change of favor and after that Gaj became less involved directly in the movement’s politics. Others carried on the work of the Illyrian Party. In response to the Emperor’s ban, the Party changed its name to the National Party, and Gaj renamed his paper from *Illyrian National News* to simply *National News*. When the Hungarians objected to the word “national,” the paper became *Croatian, Slavonian, and Dalmatian News*. The Vatican, too, played a hand, warning Vienna of the Illyrians’ ideological contacts and fund-raising activities with French Revolutionaries, Czech Protestants, and Russian schismatics. This did not mean the end of the Illyrian program, however, as many of the National Party members still held positions in the Sabor and were elected to the Joint Parliament.

Vienna’s mistrust of Ljudevit Gaj was not misplaced. Throughout the mid-1840s, Gaj traveled widely throughout Europe, secretly attempting to gather support for South Slavic autonomy. He worked through his personal contacts, rather than through Illyrian Party channels, to establish ties to the Serbian Constitutionalist Party. His goal was to set up a South Slavic state made up of Serbs and Croats and headed by the (Serbian) Karadorđević dynasty. The 1844 *Draft* by Ilija Garašanin (1812–1874), Minister of Internal Affairs to Serbian Prince Aleksandar Karadorđević, proceeded from Gaj’s and his representatives’ cooperation and asserted—without Illyrian Party assent (and unlikely to have gained it)—that the Illyrian movement would cooperate in a combined Serbian-Croatian state ruled from Serbia. Moreover, during 1843–1844 Gaj’s loyalties were unclear and seemingly Machiavellian in that he established ties not only with the Principality of Serbia, but also with the right wing of the Polish émigré community in Paris (which saw Croatia as the focal point of Slavic opposition to Austria), at the same time as he pushed for greater autonomy for Illyria and tried to convince the Austrian government of Illyrian loyalty to the Viennese Court.

Nevertheless, Vienna and the National Party, along with the conservative (i.e., non-nationalist) political faction in Hungary found common cause against the Hungarian nationalists, and in 1845 the Illyrian name was again permitted by the Emperor.

Inviting the Neighbors 1: The Serbian Response

Gaj and the Illyrians tried to attract followers from outside the Triune Kingdom, but had limited success. Serbs both in the Principality of Serbia and Vojvodina objected to the name Illyrian, which they felt not only referred to an ancient language,⁷ but also negated their own identity as Serbs. Their identity hinged on their “Serbianness” and on their Eastern Orthodox faith. Serbs viewed the Illyrian movement as Catholic and alien. Moreover, the Serbs’ own language movement had already begun with Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (1787–1864), who had since 1815 advanced a standard language based on the Štokavian dialect as spoken by everyday people. This standard language was written with a straightforward letter-for-sound correspondence, based on the Cyrillic alphabet, in order to make literacy as widely accessible as possible.

Karadžić’s proposed standardization broke with the Slaveno-Serbian standard language, a secularized variety of Church Slavic heavily influenced by Russian that only a small, educated elite within Serbia could understand. Karadžić also advanced his view that all speakers of the Štokavian dialect (on which Illyrian was also based) were Serbs. Not only did this view clash with the aims of the Pan-Slavic ideology of the Illyrian movement, but it also conflicted with the beliefs of those Illyrians who understood the movement as a primarily Croatian national endeavor. Karadžić’s view, like the Illyrian one, assumed that language defines the community, but he opposed the supranational character of the Illyrian endeavor, taking ancient dialect divisions as historical indicators of ethnicity. By this definition he expanded the notion of the Serbian to include Catholic and Muslims.

The Illyrians challenged Karadžić’s definition of Serbian ethnicity by appealing to history and law. The Illyrian lexicographer Bogoslav Šulek (1816–1895), editor of the Illyrian newspaper *Branislav* (“Defender of Slavs”), published clandestinely in Serbia in 1844–1845, articulated Illyrian opposition to Karadžić’s view by defining the historical and legal bases of South Slavic unity and contesting Karadžić’s equation of the Štokavian dialect with Serbian ethnicity. Though circulated in various forms before, the full statement of Karadžić’s theory is found in his essay “Serbs All and Everywhere,” published in 1849.

Inviting the Neighbors 2: The Montenegrin Response

Like the Serbs, the few Montenegrin literati found the Illyrian name and the Catholic-Latinate framework of the movement alien to their cultural heritage and contributed only minor writing to the Illyrian newspapers. The most prominent Montenegrin poet, Prince Petar Petrović Njegoš (1813–1851), expressed sympathy

to the principle of South Slavic unity, but only observed the Illyrian movement from the sidelines. On the other hand, Montenegro's legendary heroism was romanticized in one of the masterpieces of Illyrian literature, the epic poem *The Death of Smail aga Čengić* (1846) by the Croatian writer Ivan Mažuranić (1814–1890).

Serbian and Montenegrin reluctance to join Illyrism sharpened Gaj's conception of the relationship between Illyrism and ethnic identity. In a manifesto published in *The Morning Star* in 1839, Gaj recognized that "a Serb will never be a Croat or a Carniolan just as the latter two cannot ever be Serbs" (Vince 1990, 226). He went on to assert that Illyrian would not replace the ethnic designations but would simply unite them under the Illyrian name. This meant also reaffirming the religious heritage as well as the use of the Cyrillic alphabet for Orthodox (Serb, Montenegrin) traditions, alongside with and in opposition to Latin for the non-Orthodox. Despite these clarifications, the Orthodox were not drawn to the Illyrian movement, but Gaj's shift in thinking about the ethnic problem set the stage for the later acceptance of Croatian-Serbian language unification in the aftermath of Illyrism in the second half of the eighteenth century, which will be discussed below.

Inviting the Neighbors 3: The Slovene Response

A small number of clerics and intellectuals in Carinthia and Styria were interested in the Pan-Slavic ideals of the Illyrian movement. Slovenes, who were also Catholics, did not have the same objections as the Serbs. The failure of Slovenes to follow the movement in greater numbers was largely due to the fact that by the 1830s France Prešeren had established a literary standard for Slovene that the Carniolan gentry had accepted. Politically, the Slovenes stood outside of the conflict with Hungarians and thus were not a party to the antagonism between Hungarian and Croatian nationalists. On the contrary, the leading figures of the Carniolan gentry were in favor of Austro-Slavism, which viewed in positive terms the allegiance of Slavs to Vienna (see Vidmar 2006).

The most notable Slovene proponent of Austro-Slavism was Jernej Kopitar (1780–1844), who was influential not only among Slovene literati but among South Slavic scholars in general. Kopitar wrote the 1808 *Grammar of the Slavic Language in Carniola, Carinthia, and Styria*, which was to establish the structural basis for the modern Slovene standard language. Furthermore, from 1810 Kopitar served in the influential positions of Censor for Slavic, Greek and Romanian publications and as Librarian to the Court Library of Vienna. These roles gave him an unprecedented position from which to influence the course of publication and, consequently, language planning among the South Slavs. He both socialized with and helped shape the ambitious projects of his students, who included the Slovene comparative linguist Franc Miklošič (1813–1891), who established the general outlines of the relatedness of Slavic languages (revising Dobrovský's work), and Karadžić, who promoted his Serbian language project (see Ivić 1985).

Both Styria and the eastern territory and Carinthia, north of the Alps, constituting parts of what later was to become Slovenia, might have embraced the Illyrian

movement had they not begun their own regional language movements and proposals for literary languages. Clashing visions of language and orthography among Carniolans and Styrians in 1830–1831 became so heated that today we call them “the ABC-War.” Nevertheless, this conflict was inward-looking and not oriented toward a Pan-Slavic vision, let alone an Illyrian one. The Illyrians’ greatest hope among the Slovenes was the poet Stanko Vraz (1810–1851), a Styrian native who shared the Pan-Slavic ideals and did not feel close to the Carniolan-based standard language of Prešeren. Vraz initially admired Gaj and followed the movement with ardor, but later opposed Gaj on the grounds that the movement had narrowed its focus to Croatian interests and that Illyrian failed to allow sufficient freedom to allow elements from Styrian and other dialects. Vraz also held Kopitar’s view that Kajkavian Croatian and Slovene are the same language and, consequently, the “Slovene ethnicity” of Zagreb and its Kajkavian speakers meant that Slovenes should embrace Illyrian.

Vraz’s perspective clashed with Gaj’s. Gaj rejected Kopitar’s linguistic position; on this and other points, including financial disagreements over Vraz’s publications, the two men split and never reconciled. In 1842 Vraz founded his own Illyrian newspaper, *Kolo*, though it had relatively few subscribers. Vraz was also able to engage some like-minded Illyrists among the Carinthians, notably Urban Jarnik (1784–1844) and Matija Majer-Ziljski (1809–1892). These Carinthian Illyrians advocated a strong sense of local identity through the preservation of their language. While Jarnik and Majer-Ziljski—both priests and ethnographers—shared Pan-Slavic ideals and declared their sympathy for the Illyrian movement, they disagreed on the use of the Illyrian language, insisting that Slovene be kept intact and that rapprochement between Slovene and Illyrian unfold as a gradual process.

Perhaps there were more than ideological and linguistic reasons for the failure of the Illyrians to attract the Slovenes, who, after all, shared both Catholicism and a similar language to the Croats of Civil Croatia. A vignette raises the issue of different cultural values: Vraz traveled the Slovene provinces for the Illyrian cause and sometimes wore the Illyrian parade uniform and a beard. In Carniola and Carinthia, where most men wore western suits and were clean-shaven, he received bemused stares (Petrè 1939, 202; Zajc 2006, 212–214). Slovenes and Croats had by the first half of the nineteenth century become so different culturally that a mode of dress that was viewed as positive in one culture (i.e., the Illyrian dress in Croatia) was viewed negatively in the other.

Inviting the Neighbors 4: The Bosnian Response

The Illyrian influence in Bosnia extended exclusively to the Franciscans, who were connected through their studies to Catholic centers in Rome, Vienna, Budapest, and Zagreb. Though individuals (Martin Nedić [1810–1895], Ivan Jukić [1818–1857], Grgo Martić [1822–1905]) contributed to Illyrian newspapers and attempted to gain support for the movement among their Bosnian brethren, Bosnian church officials viewed their activities with alarm and

suppressed their efforts for fear of rebellion and, consequently, reprisals from the Ottoman authorities.

The political situation was indeed sensitive: in May 1840 the governor of Bosnia, Mehmed Vedzihi Pasha, complained to the Croatian Ban of Gaj's "political agitation" in Bosnia, which threatened relations between Turkey and Austria. Though Vienna recognized that the rumors of a Bosnian insurrection, allegedly organized by Gaj, were overblown, from this point forward Metternich through his spies monitored Gaj's activities. Nevertheless, Gaj's personal activism in traveling to Dalmatia and Bosnia in 1840 caused the movement to spread beyond the narrow focus of Civil Croatia and Slavonia (the parts subject to the Hungarian part of the Empire). Though short of the Illyrian goal of uniting all of the South Slavs, Gaj's success in drawing the interest and sympathy of intellectuals in these regions marks the beginning of the modern notion of a Croatian national identity, which is arguably the most enduring by-product of the Illyrian movement.

Inviting the Neighbors 5: The Dalmatian Response and the Zadar Circle

A more complex relationship arose between the language planners of Dalmatia and the Illyrian movement. In Dalmatia a long tradition of writing with the Štokavian dialect, reaching back to the Baroque, had already established a rich grammatical and lexicographical tradition. Two distinct Dalmatian traditions had coexisted here, each with its own variety of the Štokavian dialect, one in Dubrovnik using the Cyrillic alphabet, the other in central and northern Dalmatia, using Latin letters. In addition, Dalmatia differed from Civil Croatia and Slavonia in that Italian, rather than German and Hungarian, was the language of the dominant culture. Some Dalmatians, such as Božidar Petranović (1809–1874), urged cooperation with the Serbs and Karadžić's reforms, and he himself used the new Cyrillic alphabet in his own writing. Some followed the Illyrian movement faithfully.

Others went a third way. A circle of reformers working around the newspaper *Dawn of Dalmatia*, begun in Zadar in 1844, opposed the elements of both the Illyrian movement's language as well as Karadžić's Serbian literary language. The two most notable figures of this circle were Šime Starčević (1784–1859), an eminent philologist, and Ante Kuzmanić (1807–1879), a medical doctor and political journalist. Though the Zadar Circle believed generally in the Pan-Slavic ideal of reciprocity, they argued that Gaj's Illyrian language, in attempting to integrate elements from all the South Slavic dialects, was devoid of Croatian specificity. They believed that Croatian individuality should be expressed by continuing and advancing the use of the Dalmatian literary language, though their own variety, not the one connected with the Dubrovnik tradition. Moreover, they resented the thrust of the movement, with language at its center, being run from Zagreb and Civil Croatia, which they viewed as a rustic backwater in contrast to Dalmatia, with its grand literary tradition and its "brilliant Latinized civilization" (Vince 1990, 331). They also opposed the egalitarianism of Karadžić's language on the grounds that it elevated the speech of the uneducated, rather than aiming to raise the level of

expression. Starčević argued further that the supranational character of the movement mooted the legal foundations of the Croatian case against Hungarian hegemony by deflecting attention from the *iura municipalia*.

The Illyrian Movement’s Critical Mass Lay in Croatia

To convey a sense of the relative number of Illyrian activists by region, we can examine table 29.1, which shows by region and province how many individuals wrote for Illyrian newspapers. The number in the Triune Kingdom (Croatia) is somewhat greater than 150, whereas the total number in Bosnia, Serbia, Montenegro, and Slovenia is under 65.

How to Write Illyrian 1: Karadžić’s Serbian versus Illyrian

At the center of the entire debate was the Illyrian language. The structure of the Illyrian language itself contrasted fundamentally with structural innovations proposed for the standard languages of the Slovenes and Serbs. The first grammarian of nineteenth-century Illyrian,⁸ Vjekoslav Babukić (1812–1875), distinguished its basic orthographic principle from Karadžić’s Serbian “Write as you speak, speak as you write” (a notion taken from eighteenth-century German grammarians) by stating: “Write for the eye, but speak for the ears.” What did this mean? Karadžić’s Serbian orthography aimed for one letter per sound, whereas the Illyrian rendered in letters the basic structure of the meaningful parts of words (morphemes), ignoring contextual alternations or regional variation. The point is consequential: Karadžić intended to make literacy possible for the masses by removing the arcane elements of Slaveno-Serbian; the Illyrians sought to unite heterogeneous dialects into a single, supranational literary code. Both Karadžić’s and the Illyrians’ ideas for streamlining their writing systems removed many of the arcane and provincial elements that were impediments to widespread literacy, but the Illyrian

Table 29.1 Contributors to Illyrian Newspapers

Region	Province	Number of contributors
Croatia	Civil Croatia	ca. 50
	Slavonia	> 50
	Dalmatia	> 50
Bosnia Serbia		< 15
	Principality of Serbia	< 20
Montenegro Slovenia	Vojvodina and S. Hungary	< 15
		< 5
		< 10

Based on statistical map in the article “Ilirski pokret” [The Illyrian movement], *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije* (1988), vol. 5, p. 523. Numbers are approximate, as some writers were anonymous.

orthographic innovations, which tried to reach beyond a single (albeit widespread) dialect, ended up including elements that were too artificial and therefore hard to learn. Among the most famous examples of this artifice is the writing of *-ah* for the plural of the genitive case (a word-form meaning “of something, pertaining to something”) of nouns. The normal ending in most dialects for this case was simply *-a*, but the *h* was added because it created a parallel shape to the form of the adjective ending *-ih*. Though this made the adjective and the noun visually more like one another (*mnogih Hèrvatah*, “of many Croats”), the construction belonged neither to any living dialect nor any historical tradition. The Zadar Circle derided the Illyrians with the epithet *ahavci* (“those who say *ah*”). Consequently, the structure of the new Illyrian standard language itself became an impediment to its widespread acceptance.

How to Write Illyrian 2: Building New Vocabulary for a New National Identity

In addition to drawing on heterogeneous dialects and inserting artificial constructs into the grammatical system, Illyrian language planners used neologisms to express scholarly and specialized terms previously expressed in German or Latin borrowings. Bogoslav Šulek is remembered largely for building new native vocabulary through word-formation processes, introducing purism into the language standardization process, a strategy in contrast to Karadžić’s reliance on folk language.⁹ For example, the borrowing *absolutizam* (“absolutism”) was replaced by *samovlast* ← *samo* (“self, only”) + *vlast* (“rule, power”). Purism offered speakers an alternative to German, which would have remained the default language for educated discourse had erudite vocabulary not been developed for Croatian (unless the Hungarians had succeeded in supplanting both German and Latin as the language of national prestige). On the other hand, though it included logical principles, Illyrian was more difficult to learn than Karadžić’s Serbian, and was therefore an impediment to widespread literacy at a time when literacy was limited to a relative few. Purism and politics went hand in hand.

Kajkavian Strikes Back

Other opponents of the Illyrian language, both from Croatia and outside it, objected to its mixed character. Ignac Kristijanović (1796–1884) campaigned for the continued use of the Kajkavian literary language, the language of the conservative gentry of Civil Croatia. Kristijanović wrote a grammar (1837) and published a journal, *The Zagreb Morning Star* (an obvious reference to Gaj’s journal), from 1843 to 1849. In his grammar Kristijanović argues that the mixing of dialects is an unacceptable manipulation of language, which belongs to the people, and that mixed language will not be taken seriously among Europeans. He praised the model of German, which is based on the elevation of single dialect, and suggested that Kajkavian, too, could be raised to the level of a Croatian standard language with widespread use. Prešeren also appealed to established practices in standardization,

arguing to Vraz that the similarity among Romance dialects did not obviate separate French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese literary languages and that the fusion of such different languages as Slovene and Serbian was untenable.

The 1848 Revolution and the End of the Illyrian Movement

Aside from the movement's limited success at spreading its influence from Croatia to its South Slavic neighbors, pressures from above—the Viennese court, Hungarian nationalists and their Magyarone sympathizers—pressed the movement to concentrate on internal Croatian issues. The maneuvering between Gaj and the Illyrian Party, with their aspirations for Slavic autonomy, and the forces of Austria, Hungary, and the Croatian gentry unfolded in the context of national liberation movements throughout Europe in the years preceding the revolutionary year of 1848. In 1848 Austria (with Russian assistance) suppressed the Hungarian uprising and Croatia emerged under Ban (“viceroy”) Josip Jelačić (1801–1859) in military opposition to Hungary but in support of Vienna, which was seen as the protector of Pan-Slavist aspirations to which Jelačić subscribed.

The developments of 1848 obviated the Illyrian movement. First, Hungarian nationalism no longer threatened Croatian identity; second, though the Croats had lost their autonomy under the new absolutist regime in Austria-Hungary, the movement had succeeded in consolidating Civil Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, and, to an extent, Bosnian (“Turkish”) Croatia into a common national entity. By this time it was amply clear that neither the Serbs nor the Slovenes would join into a common language nor spiritual brotherhood, let alone a state. The language movement no longer forged ahead with the Illyrian name nor with many of its artificial elements (e.g., the writing *ě* for the historical sound *jat*, *ah* in the genitive plural of nouns, the admixture of grammatical features and lexicon from heterogeneous dialects) that had been introduced at the outset. In the aftermath, elements of the Illyrian movement would be revived. A significant holdout was Bishop Juraj Strossmayer (1815–1905) of Đakovo (eastern Slavonia), the founder of the Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Sciences in Zagreb, who continued for some time to work for Croatian and Serbian national unity, but became disillusioned with the project in the context of the rise of Serbian nationalism in the second half of the nineteenth century. The discourse moved in new directions, and in the 1860s and 1870s, with Ante Starčević and Vuk Karadžić articulating scenarios of mutual, but converse, national assimilation. Starčević anticipated the assimilation of the Serbs into the Croatian nation; Karadžić, on the other hand, assumed that the Croats (at least those speaking Štokavian, their “brothers in the Roman rite”) would eventually come to realize their Serbian identity. Neither came to pass—the discourse only served to sharpen nationalist views on both sides. Gaj himself was discredited in the public view by the “Obrenović” affair, in which he was accused of extorting money from Prince Miloš Obrenović of Serbia during the latter's visit to Zagreb for the installation of Ban Jelačić in 1848. Gaj no longer played any significant role in politics, and he ceased publishing *Morning Star* in 1849, registering a new official paper, *News* in 1850.

The Vienna Literary Agreement of 1850 and the Birth of “Serbo-Croatian”

On the language front, the Vienna Literary Agreement of 1850 established that the basis for the literary languages of Croatia and Serbia was to be Štokavian (referred to then as the “southern dialect”) in its Ijekavian variety (the *zvijezda*-type) and to be named Croatian as a variety of a single language, together with Serbian. The 1850 meeting included the Serbian linguists Karadžić and Đuro Daničić (1825–1882); the Croats Dimitrije Demeter (1811–1872), Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski (1816–1889), and Ivan Mažuranić; and the eminent Slovene linguist Fran Miklošič. Ljudevit Gaj was not in attendance.

Although the Illyrian movement ceased to exist after 1850, the memory of its events and achievements was recalled with increasing vigor in the second half of the nineteenth century when, in the face of the crisis of deteriorating empires, South Slavic intellectuals continued to imagine broader ideological and political frameworks for their future. A period of neo-Illyrism from the last decade of the nineteenth into the early twentieth century, involving not just Croats, but also Serbs and Slovenes, led to the Yugoslav movement and the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes formed in 1918.

Illyrian Linguistic Creativity Lives On

Despite having established a separate Slovene language and national framework, the Slovenes nevertheless took elements from the language-planning side of the Illyrian movement. By 1840 they had accepted Gaj’s alphabet, abandoning Prešeren’s use of a modified German orthography (called *Bohoričica*). They were also sympathetic to the puristic trend, using Šulek’s word-formation principles and even accepting into Slovene many of his proposals for Croatian words. Other important traces of the Illyrian language also remained, even if the Illyrian language and its Pan-Slavic vision were rejected. For example, the Slovene city *Maribor* was Slavicized through Illyrian inventiveness: originally German *Marburg* (← *march* [“border”] + *burg* [“town”]) was imagined to be a corruption of an earlier Slavic name *Maribor* by comparison to the equivalence the Czechs had made between their *Branibor* and German *Brandenburg*.¹⁰ On the political front after the Illyrian movement proper ended, the Slovenes aligned themselves more frequently with Croatian interests. This period in the last third of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, now referred to as the Neo-Illyrian period, revived the vision of South Slavic unity and contributed to the formation of Yugoslavia.

Conclusion

The Illyrian movement attempted in the framework of Pan-Slavism to unite the South Slavs by creating a single unified literary language. The movement, which

lasted from 1835 to 1848, was based in Zagreb and driven at its beginning largely by the activity of its charismatic leader, Ljudevit Gaj. The movement acted on a widespread impulse among Slavs of Central Europe, but was a considerably more extensive solution to the problem than the Croatian patriots were ready to accept. Moreover, its appeal to neighboring South Slavic groups was limited. In retrospect, it is clear that Croatian patriots were responding mainly to Hungarian nationalism, which they feared would efface their national identity through linguistic assimilation. The movement solved this problem by uniting the regionally and linguistically variegated Catholic regions into a political entity by promoting a unified a language, contemporary Croatian, based on the Štokavian dialect. The Illyrian literary language as such was abandoned, though in Croatia many of its principles of construction persisted and even reemerged with vigor in the post-Yugoslav period; it has also left traces elsewhere throughout the South Slavic standard languages.

A mark of the Illyrian movement's success is its marginalization of the Kajkavian language of Civil Croatia, which had heretofore been the language of prestige in Zagreb and surrounding towns. The movement failed, however, to integrate the Slovene lands whose inhabitants consolidated their national identity around the language of Carniola; nor did it draw in Serbia and Montenegro, which followed a different vision of language standardization. On the other hand, the Illyrian movement laid the foundation for the rapprochement of the Croatian and Serbian languages, whose standard forms are based on a common dialect, and led also to the political construct of Yugoslavism. Consequently, seen in retrospect as a Croatian national program, the Illyrian movement may rank 10 on the 1–10 success scale; as a program to unite all the South Slavs, perhaps 5: it united a large swathe—but not all—of them for nearly a century and a half (1850–1990).

Notes

1. Carniola is a province located in today's Republic of Slovenia. Ljubljana, the capital city of Slovenia, is situated in this central province.

2. These designations, based on an early classification by Josef Dobrovský, do not correspond to the Slavic nation-states today. Žemlja himself did not state the identities of the nations, which is understandable, given that the concept of Slavic nations had not yet fully crystallized in his day.

3. South Slavs refers to the groups that constitute the majority populations in today's Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Bulgaria.

4. For details and analysis of Kollár's thought, see Maxwell's introduction to Kollár 2008.

5. Gaj's principle, which he took from the then-forgotten work of Pavao Ritter Vitezović (1652–1713), who himself relied on Czech precedent, would continue not only in the Illyrian language, but also, with some modifications, in the Štokavian-based Serbian and Croatian standard languages that emerged after Illyrian was abandoned, as well as in Slovene. In commemoration of Gaj's efforts, the modern South Slavic alphabets using diacritics and Latin letters are today referred to as *gajica*, "the Gaj alphabet."

6. The Štokavian dialect refers to the most widespread dialect of the South Slavic group, as it is spoken by many Croats and all Serbs, Bosnians, and Montenegrins.
7. In fact, the name Illyrian was used by a pre-Roman Indo-European people whose language is probably continued by today's Albanians. At the time, however, most South Slavs thought of Illyrian as referring to their own forebears in antiquity. For more information, see Katičić 1976 and Blažević 2008.
8. Many grammars of varieties of Croatian had appeared with the name Illyrian in previous centuries—see Iovine 1984, Blažević 2008, Peti-Stantić 2008.
9. Puristic principles have remained in Croatian language planning ever since and have been revived since the 1990s with new vigor in an attempt to maximize the differentiation between Croatian and Serbian (and, implicitly, Bosnian).
10. The name Maribor was first proposed by Vraz in a letter to Gaj in 1836 (Snoj 2009, 252).

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