



The Fundamental Misconception of the Balkan Ethnology: The “Illyrian” Theory of the Albanian Ethnogenesis¹

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The Illyrian theory of the ethnic origin of the Albanians (created by the German and the Austrian scholars) became purposely the most popular theory of the Albanian nation’s derivation among the majority of Albanian scholars, politicians and intellectuals.² The crucial and concluding point of this theory is that the Albanians are not only an authentic nation (ethnolinguistic group) of the Balkans, but the oldest, aboriginal and autochthonous one in this part of Europe. As a result, the Albanians’ South Slavic neighbors (the Serbs, Montenegrins,³ and Macedonian Slavs) in contrast to the “indigenous” Albanians are just “newcomers” to the Balkans who arrived at this peninsula “only” at the turn of the 7th century CE.⁴ Therefore, their ethnicity and nationality are much more recent than that of the Albanians.⁵ Subsequently, “historical rights” of the Balkan “autochthonous” Albanian population on certain disputed Balkan territories (primarily between the Albanians and the South Slavs but also and between the Albanians and the Greeks) are stronger, more justifiable and historically more deeply rooted than the “historical rights” of the Serbs, Montenegrins or Macedonian Slavs.⁶ For that reason, it is expected that a “democratic” West will support the “justifiable” Albanian imperialistic territorial claims framed by the nationalistic idea of a united Greater Albania.

The theory of Illyrian-Albanian ethnolinguistic continuity posits that the Albanians are descendants of the ancient Balkan population – the Illyrians. The national name of the Albanians has to come from the name of one Illyrian tribe – the *Albanoi*. Furthermore, the tribal name, *Albanoi*, was the designation applied to the entire number of the Illyrian tribes around the Ionian Sea during the Greco-Roman eras.⁷

Proponents of the Illyrian theory of the Albanian ethnographic origin have built their hypothesis mostly on the pure speculation that the modern Albanian language is directly descended from the ancient Illyrian one as well as the assumption that both belong to the same Indo-European language-group.⁸ This claim is disputed by

contemporary linguistic science. The fact is that the *Albanian* language as a spoken language of the inhabitants of the present-day Albania was not mentioned in any historical source until 1285 CE when it is for the first time recorded under this name in the manuscripts from Dubrovnik in which the language was referred to as *lingua albanesca*. The name for the land – *Albanon* (the territory on which the Albanian language speakers live) is derived from the name of the language. This term for Albania, appears in several 13th century Latin dictionaries, as well as in some of the Byzantine historical sources. These medieval sources referred to the region between Mache river on the north and Schumbe river on the south (both in the present-day Albania) as *Arbanon* (or *Arber*) but without any connection with the Albanian ethnic name. The Serbs who were living there before the Albanians occupied this territory having come from Sicily in 1043. They called this region *Raban*. According to the 2nd century Greek geographer Ptolemy, this territory was settled by the *Albanoi* tribe which was of Illyrian origin.⁹ However, the name of the Balkan Albania and subsequently of the ethnic Albanians is not derived from *Albanoi* or *Arbanon* but rather from the town-name of *Albanopolis* or *Albanum* (Whitetown or Belgrade).¹⁰

The partisans of the Illyrian theory of the Albanian origin speak in support of the school of thought on the origin and evolution of the Illyrians, which claims that the ancient Illyrians did not migrate to the Balkans. Instead, they were an autochthonous people in this part of Europe and even one of the oldest settlers in Europe. It has been suggested that the Albanians, as the direct ethnic, political and cultural offspring of the ancient Illyrians, are the original and indigenous inhabitants of the Balkans, even more aboriginal than the ancient Greeks since the ancient Greeks migrated to the Balkans inhabitants, emerged after the occupation of the Balkans by the more powerful South Slavonic tribes.¹¹

There is particular emphasis in this part of the Illyrian theory on the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913 as a way of refuting Serbia's claims on the territory of the North Albania – a territory populated by the Serbs before 1043 when the Albanians became a Balkan people. Furthermore, it is claimed that the Illyrian-Albanian population from the lowland of Kosovo-Metochia began to come under the Slavonic political-cultural influence, while the Illyrian-Albanian mountainous tribes from the Albanian highlands, who had less contacts with the Slavs, succeeded in maintaining their social system and cultural inheritance without alteration. The defenders of this theory claim that the Byzantine province of *Theme Dyrrhachium* (which was established around 809 and covered the entire present-day Albania's territory, part of the North Epirus, the West Macedonia and the main part of the Montenegrin littoral with the area of Scodra lake) was inhabited by the Albanians who "caused the region to develop a special (Albanian) character."¹² Charles I of Naples (1227–1285) established his own feudal domain under the name of the *Regnum Albanai*, which is tendentiously considered in the Albanian historiography as the first

Albanian national state, located on the territory of the Byzantine *Theme Dyrrhachium*. Its capital became the city of Dyrrhachium (Durazo in the Italian, Durës in the Albanian or Drač in the Serbian).

According to the Illyrian theory, the Albanians as one of the oldest European peoples, who had lived on the same territory since the early period of the Antiquity, deserved to be taken into account as one of the original inhabitants of Europe. They were descended from the Illyrians, i.e. from a special branch of the Indo-European peoples, just like the Greeks or the Armenians. Moreover, the Albanians were considered to have a language which reflects the quality, intensity and period of important pre-Indo-European and Mediterranean (i.e., Pelasgian) influences. Their culture is different from neighboring ones in terms of religious tolerance, a common history of permanent resistance against any foreign power and subjugation, a partial (mediaeval) experience in independent statehood, a culture which is an amalgamation of the Illyrian-Balkan origins and the East-West European elements, a very old and distinctive folk culture, and ultimately a certain kind of "individualist toughness which, all together, singles the Albanians out of their immediate surroundings..."¹³

In accordance with this theory, the following territories in the South-East Europe were and are inhabited by the Balkan Illyro-Albanians and as such they should be defined as the territory of a united (Greater) Albania, as the national state of all Albanians, in the future. This Greater Albania would extend from the area of Scodra lake in Montenegro on the north, to the Bay of Ambrazio in Greece on the south, and from the Adriatic Sea on the west, to the Treska river in Macedonia and Preševo, Medveđa, Bujanovac and Lebane districts in Serbia on the east.¹⁴ That was and is, in the eyes of supporters of the Illyrian theory of Albanian ethnogenesis, the exact territory of the Illyro-Albanians who have a 2000-year-old and continuous history and culture.¹⁵

The aim of the Albanian national movement *Rilindja* (1878–1913), as the foundation of all later and current Albanian geo-political and megalomaniac territorial claims was not, as it is officially presented by both the German and the Albanian historiographies, the Albanian liberation from the Ottoman rule and the creation of a Greater Albania.

The current brutal policy of barbaric extermination of the Christian Orthodox Serbs from Kosovo-Metochia followed by a systematic destruction of their Christian cultural heritage committed by the Sunni Muslim Albanians (who are of the same Islamic denomination as the Islamic State in the Middle East) is a continuation of the historical project established in 1878 with a direct sponsorship by the Ottoman government of that time. The German-established false theory of the Illyrian-Balkan origins of the Albanians is just serving as the formal academic basis for the geo-political realization of the racist project of a Greater Albania.

Nevertheless, the objective historiography based on various historical sources shows that the Balkan Albanians originated in the South Caspian where an Albania that was both a region and the state during the Graeco-Roman period and the early Middle Ages covered present day territories of Azerbaijan and Dagestan. The Caspian Albanians were even not Indo-Europeans as the Balkan Illyrians were and linguistically had nothing to do with any Balkan indigenous ethnic group. The sources, moreover, are calling the Slavs as the Illyrians including primarily the Serbs but not the Albanians who became re-settled by the Arabs in the 8th century from the Caucasus to Arabia and Syria and further to Sicily where from they arrived to the territory of the present day Central Albania in 1043 as a part of the Byzantine rebellious army commanded by the Sicilian strategist George Maniaticus. Thus, the Balkan Albanians may be among the youngest rather than the oldest present-day ethno-nations in the region.

A Brief Account of the Illyrians

Every story about the Balkan Peninsula begins with the ancient Illyrians.¹⁶ Historians believe that this Indo-European people were one of the largest European populations to inhabit the western portion of the Balkans from the coasts of the Ionian Sea and the Adriatic Sea to the Alps about 1000 BCE. Their eastern neighbors were also Indo-European peoples – the Thracians. The demarcation line between their settlements and their cultural and political influence was the Morava river in present-day Serbia (in Latin, the Margus located in the Roman province of Moesia Superior) and the Vardar river in present-day North Macedonia. On the north, on the shores of the Sava and the Danube rivers, their neighbors were the Celts, while on the south the Pindus Mountains separated the Illyrians from the ancient Macedonians and the Greeks.¹⁷ According to Greek geographer Hecateus (Hecateus), the Illyrians lived on the eastern littoral of the Adriatic Sea around 500 BCE from the city of Miletus in Asia Minor. According to the early Byzantine historian Pseudo-Scylax, who lived 150 years later, the Illyrian settlements in the Balkans in the south extended to the southern Albanian port of Valona (Vlorë).¹⁸ Among the ancient and early medieval historians and geographers the most reliable information on the geographic dispersion of the Illyrians and the demography of the Illyrian territory appears in the writings of Herodotus, Livy, Pliny, Ptolemy, Appianus, Strabo, Procopius of Caesarea, Synecdemus of Hierocles, Isidorus Hispaniensis, and Euagrius.

When the Celts came to the Balkans in the 3rd century BCE some of the Illyrian tribes mixed with them. In the same century, the Illyrian King Agron from the *Ardaei* tribe organized the first Illyrian state. At the time of greatest expansion its borders extended to the Neretva river in Dalmatia, to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Vjosë river in the Southern Albania and Lake Ohrid in FYROM. Some of the 20th century Albanian historians and national workers claimed that a proclamation of independent state of

Albania on November 28, 1912, was based on the Albanian political-state inheritance which dated back to King Agron's Illyrian kingdom. Nevertheless, the Romans succeeded in defeating the Illyrians and abolishing their state organization during the three Illyrian-Roman Wars between 229 and 168 BCE.

The administratively-political concept of "Illyria", or "Illyricum", was used in subsequent centuries by the Romans who after the new conquests in the Balkans established first the Province of Illyricum, and in the 4th century the Praefectura of Illyricum.¹⁹ It stretched from the Istrian Peninsula in the north-west to Northern Albania on the south-east, and from the Adriatic littoral in the south to the Drava river in the north. However, the main portion of present-day Albania was not included in this "Illyrian" province and became part of the Roman Province of Macedonia. This was the result of the Roman conclusion that only the territory of Northern Albania had been settled by the Illyrian tribes, but not the Central and Southern Albania. The proponents of the Illyrian theory of the origins of the Albanians did not provide an answer to the question of why all of Albania was not absorbed into the Roman Province of Illyricum if it was entirely settled by the ancient Illyrians? The Romans finally brought under control all of the Illyrian tribes during a new war of 6–9 CE.²⁰

From that time the overwhelming and very successful process of Romanization of the whole Balkan Peninsula began.²¹ Some protagonists of the Illyrian theory of Albanian origin developed the hypothesis that the Roman Emperors Aurelian, Diocletian and Probus, who were from the western part of the Balkans, which was settled by the Illyrian tribes, were the predecessors of the modern Albanian nation.²² During the reign of Diocletian (284–305), who was of Illyrian origin, the whole Balkan Peninsula, except its eastern part, was administratively organized as the *Praefectura Illyricum*. Mainly due to such Roman administrative organization of the Balkans the names Illyria and the Illyrians were preserved for a very long period of time as common names for the peoples who lived in the western and central parts of the Balkans, i.e. for the South Slavs²³ and the Albanians.²⁴ However, since the 19th century, the consensus of historians, ethnologists, and philologist who have specialized in studying this region is that the Illyrians and Slavs were not synonymous as the later came to the Balkans 1,500 years after the Illyrians.²⁵

The name *Illyrians* disappeared in the 7th century at the time of the Slavic migrations to the Balkans. After the 6th century, however, Byzantine texts do not record any accounts of Illyrians abandoning Balkan territories from the Dalmatian Alps to the Danube. The new Illyrian political and cultural center became the region of *Arbanum* (in Greek, Αρβανον or Αλβανον, in Serbian, Раџан) in the Southern Albania. The name "Albani" appeared in historical sources no earlier than the 9th century. Byzantine historians employed the name "Albani" for the Slavic inhabitants living around the seaport of

Durazzo (ancient Dyrrhachium) in Northern Albania. From the 11th century the name “Albani” (in Latin, Urbaneness, or Albanese, in Greek, Αλβανοί or Αρβανίται) was associated with all Albanian tribes.²⁶

In the Middle Ages the “Albanoi” lived in the area between the cities of Saddar (Scodra), Prizë, Ohrid and Valona. According to the champions of the Illyrian theory of Albanian ethnogenesis, the Slavic raids and migrations to the Balkans in the early Middle Ages did not affect the native inhabitants of the territory of present-day Albania. They continued to live there, preserving their own culture, habits and social organization. The southern Illyrian provinces retained their earlier ethnic composition. And of course, this ethnic composition was identified, although without supporting evidence in the sources, as the Albanian regardless of historical evidences and facts that the original homeland of the present-day Balkan Albanians is the ancient Caucasian Albania.



A grave place of a member of the Kosovo Liberation Army with a clear political message what they were fighting for during the Kosovo War of 1998–1999. That was a Greater Albania

Conclusion

A territory of Kosovo-Metochia or *Ancient Serbia* (from the Italian mediaeval sources a *Vecchia Servia*) became the first “Albanian” land incorporated into the framework of a Greater Albania – a project based on both a racist ideology of “Illyrian” origin of the Balkan Albanians and ideology of the Islamic fundamentalism practiced today by the Islamic State in the Middle East. Moreover, Kosovo-Metochia became transformed into the first Europe's Islamic fundamentalist “stan” state that was and is

directly sponsored by Washington and its NATO allies The Kosovo War in 1998–1999 was primarily the prototype for the next wars of globalization²⁷ used by the terrorist Kosovo Liberation Army to separate Ancient Serbia from its historical roots and to include it as a Kosovostan into an Islamic Greater Albania.

The Illyrian theory of the Albanian ethnogenesis, that claims that the present-day Balkan Albanians originate in the ancient Balkan Illyrians is based on unscientific speculations as there is simply not a single direct material, archival or linguistic proof to support this theory which is used as such for the realization of geo-political anti-Slavic, anti-Greek and anti-Christian Orthodox geo-political aims in the region.

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¹This is a slightly amended text to be published in the new updated and revised edition of Malcom N., *Kosovo: A Short History*. (New York: New York University Press, 1999).

² See, for example [Magmalike R. *Albania and Albanians*. London, 1975, 5–9; Meredith Z. *Istorija Albanaca* (“Iliri i etnogeneza Albanaca”). Beograd, 1969, 6–13; *Historia e popullit Shqiptar*. I, Prishtinë, 1969, 155–161].

³ The “Montenegrins” should be considered from a cultural, religious and ethnolinguistic point of view as the Serbs from Montenegro [Glomazić M. *Etničko i nacionalno biće Crnogoraca*. Beograd: TRZ „PANPUBLIK“, 1988]. Historical, political, religious, economic and cultural relations between the Serbs from Montenegro (the Montenegrins) and the Serbs from Serbia are similar to those of the Germans from Austria (the Austrians) and the Germans from Germany. However, today 60% of the citizens of Montenegro claim that they are ethnolinguistic “Montenegrins” different from the Serbs. On this problem see more in [Lazarević D. “Inventing Balkan Identities: Finding the Founding Fathers and Myths of Origin – The Montenegrin Case”. *Serbian Studies: Journal of the North American Society for Serbian Studies*. Vol. 25, No. 2, 2011 (2014). 171–197].

⁴ Malcolm N. *Kosovo: A Short History*. New York: New York University Press, 1999. 22–40.

⁵ However, the Albanian national identity was created by Austro-Hungarian authorities at the late 19th century and the very beginning of the 20th century. Bulgarian scholar Teodora Todorova Toleva in her book on the creation of Albanian national identity published in 2012, cites unpublished documents from the Austrian State Archives (*Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv*) in Vienna that demonstrate that the Austro-Hungarian authorities had a crucial influence on the creation of Albanian nationality in the years of 1896–1908 [Тодорова Толева Т. *Влиянието на Австро-Унгарија за създаването на албанската нација, 1896–1908*. Софија: CIELA, 2012]. This book is based on her Ph.D. dissertation defended at Barcelona University on September 16th, 2008. See also: [Schanderl D. H. *Die Albanienpolitik Österreich-Ungarns und Italiens 1877–1908*. Albanese Firsching № 9. Wiesbaden: Otto Harassovitz, 1971].

⁶ About the problem of relations between national identification and border identities, see [Wilson Th., Donnan H. (eds.). *Border Identities. Nation and state at international frontiers*. Cambridge, 1998].

⁷ However, contemporary German historiography does not mention the Illyrian tribal name *Albanoi*. The territory of Albania in Greco-Roman times was populated only by one Illyrian tribe, the *Taulantii*. In addition, neighboring present-day Greek territories were settled by the Illyrian tribe *Dassaretii*, while in ancient Macedonia by the *Paeones* and *Dardanes*, and in Kosovo and Metohija by the *Cartons* [Westermann Grower *Atlas fur Weltgeschichte*. Braunschweig, 1985. 38–39].

⁸ The “Illyrian” linguistic theories of Albanian and South Slavic ethnogenesis have certain similarities with the “Thracian” linguistic theory of the ethnic origin of the Lithuanian nation that was championed by the 19th century Lithuanian linguist and national worker Jonas Basanavičius. The theory was the result of Basanavičius’ linguistic research of ethnogenesis of the 19th century Lithuanian nation. In his book *Lietuviškai trakiškos studijos* he developed the theory that part of the ancient Tracians emigrated from their Balkan homeland and ultimately settled in the eastern littoral of the Baltic Sea. Basanavičius claimed that these Thracian migrants from the Balkans were the predecessors of the modern Litvanian nation. This theory was based on the fact that the ancient Thracian language was similar to the 19th century Lithuanian language. Both of these languages belong to the family of Indo-European languages. Basanavičius was working for years

in Bulgaria and in order to prove his theory collected documents with the Thracian personal names, toponyms and names for different kinds of drinks and then compared them to those of the Lithuanians. He claimed, for example, that Lithuanian name *Getas* comes from the Thracian tribal name *Getai* [Basanavičius J. *Lietuviškai trakiškos studijos*. Shenandoah, PA, 1898. 8–15; Seen A. E. *Jonas Basanavičius: The patriarch of the Lithuanian national renaissance*. Newtonville, MA, 1980]. According to Basanavičius, the name for the mediaeval Lithuanian capital *Trakai* was derived from the Greek name for the ancient Thracians, while some of the “Polish” names for the settlements (for instance, Kalisz in the region of Poznan) were not originally Polish: they were of Lithuanian-Thracian origin. Basanavičius concluded that the ancient Thracians were of the same ethnicity as the Lithuanians [Basanavičius J. *Lietuviškai trakiškos studijos*. Shenandoah, PA, 1898. 21–74].

⁹ Before the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans, the population of Albania called themselves *Arbërësh/Arbënesh* and their country *Arbën/Arbër*. The South Slavonic name for the people from Albania was *Arbanas*. The *Arnauts* (Арнаути) were Islamized and later Albanized Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija who still did not forget their original ethnicity [Цвијић Ј. *Основе за географију и геологију Македоније и Старе Србије*. III, Београд, 1911. 1162–1166]. However, during the period of the Albanian national revival movement in the late 19th century the Albanians called themselves *Shqipëtarë* and the country *Shqipëtaria*. The name is most probably derived from the word *shqipe* what means “eagle” referring to the mountainous settlers of the highlands of Albania. However, this word probably comes from the ancient Dacian-Moesian language adopted by the Bulgarians who settled the Roman province of Moesia Inferior in 680/681. In the Bulgarian language “Shqiptars” means the “highlanders”. The popular nickname for the Albanians is the “Sons of the Eagle” and for Albania the “Land of the Eagle”. Two of the most important and powerful Albanian tribal units around 1900 were the Ghegs (the Roman Catholics) in Northern Albania and the Tosks in Southern Albania. The Albanian population was (and is) divided with respect to religion. They are Muslims (the majority of the Albanians), Roman Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox (the minority of the Albanians). The last group occupies South-Eastern Albania around the cities of Korçë and Gjirokastër (Argyrus). For more details see [Hobhouse J. C. (Lord Broughton). *Travels in Albania and other provinces of Turkey in 1808 and 1810*. I, II. London, 1858; Skendi S. “Religion in Albania during the Ottoman rule”. *Südost Forschungen*. № 15. München, 1956; Hobsbawm E. J. *Nations and Nationalism since 1789. Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge, 2000. 70].

¹⁰ Деретић И. Ј., Антић П. Д., Јарчевић М. С. *Измишљено досељавање Срба*. Београд, 2009. 266.

¹¹ This opinion is also shared by some Serbian scholars. For instance [Ferjančić B. *Istorija Albanaca* (“Albanija do XII veka”). Beograd, 1969. 29]. The champions of the Illyrian theory frequently cited the words of Milovan Đilas, one of the leading Yugoslav communists after the Second World War (and a war criminal) from Montenegro who wrote: “The Albanians are the most ancient Balkan people – older than the Slavs, and even the ancient Greeks” (cited from [Costa N. *Albania: A European Enigma*. New York, 1995. 1]), or French scholar Andre Malraux who wrote that “Athens was, alas no more than an Albanian village” [Malraux A. *Anti-Memoirs*. New York, 1968. 33].

¹² Marmullaku R. *Albania and Albanians*. London, 1975. 8; Ferluga J. “Sur la date de la création du thème de Dyrrhachium”. *Extrait des Actes du XII Congrès International des Etudes Byzantines*. vol. 2. Beograd, 1964. 83–92. Regarding the borders of the Byzantine Theme Dyrrhachium see [Engel J. (ed.). *Growßer Historischer Weltatlas. Mittelalter*. München, 1979. p. 14].

¹³ Ismajly R. “Albanians and South-Eastern Europe (Aspects of Identity)”. *Conflict or Dialogue. Serbian-Albanian relations and integration of the Balkans. Studies and Essays*. Subotica, 1994. 269.

¹⁴ For example [Protest of the Population of Shkodra, Podgorica, Shpuza, Zhabjak, Tear, Lupin, Gruda, Kelmend, Hot and Kastrat addressed to the Ambassador of France in Istanbul against the annexation of Albanian lands by Montenegro (Shkodra, May 8th, 1878). *Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères*. Paris. Fund of the French Embassy at the Sublime Porte, Turkey. vol. 417. 51–54, supplement to the report № 96]. Original in French. English translation in [Pollo S., Pulaha S. (eds.). *Pages of the Albanian National Renaissance, 1878–1912*. Tirana, 1978. 12–13; *Contents of the coded telegram sent by Dervish Pasha from Shkodra* (December 27th, 1880). *Basbakanllik Arsine*. Istanbul, Fund of Jildiz seas evraki, 14 88/16 88 12. Original in Turkish. See figure 2]. For the Albanian scholars, of course, any project of creation of a Greater Albania is only the myth [Kola P. *The Myth of Greater Albania*. New York: New York University Press, 2003].

¹⁵ However, several written historical sources from different cultural environments (Byzantine, Arab...) clearly say that the Albanians arrived in the Balkans in 1043 from the Eastern Sicily and that their original home was in Caucasus Albania which is mentioned in several ancient sources as an independent state with its own rulers. The Caucasus Albania was neighboring the Caspian Sea, Media, Iberia, Armenia and Sarmatia Asiatica (see figure 4). The most important source which mentions that the Balkan Albanians came from Eastern Sicily in 1043 is the Byzantine historian Michael Ataliota [Ataliota M. *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantine*. Bonn: Weber, 1853. 18]. This historical fact is recognized and by some of Albanian historians like Stefang Pollo and Arben Puto [Pollo S., Puto A. *The History of Albania*. London-Boston-Hebley: Routledge & Kegan, 1981. 37].

¹⁶ Stipčević A. *Every Story About the Balkans Begins with the Illyrians*. Priština, 1985; Buda A. “The Southern Illyrians as a Problem of Historiography”. *Historical Writings*. vol. 1. 13–15. During the last decades, many scholars have claimed that the Balkan Illyrians (and Thracians) were nothing else but ethnolinguistic Serbs [Бајић Ј. *Блажени Јероним, Солинска црква и Србо-Далмати*. Шабац, 2003; Деретић И. Ј., Антић П. Д., Јарчевић М. С. *Измишљено досељавање Срба*. Београд: Сардонија, 2009; Милановић М. *Историјско порекло Срба*. Београд: Admiral Books, 2011; Земљанички Б. *Срби староседеоци Балкана и Паноније у војним и цивилним догађајима са Римљанима и Хеленима од I до X века*. Београд: Стручна књига, 1999]. In other words, they claim, that the Serbs, but not the Albanians, are the only autochthonous people (nation) on the Balkan Peninsula, according to the historical sources of the time.

¹⁷ Islami S., Anamali S., Korkuti M, Prendi F. *Les Illyriens*. Tirana, 1985. 5; Anamali S. “The Illyrians and the Albanians”. Prifti K., Nasi L., Omari L., Xhufi P., Pulaha S., Pollo S., Shtylla Z. (eds.). *The Truth on Kosova*. Tirana. 1993. 5; Cabanes P. *Les Illyriens de Bardylis à Genthios, IV–II siècles avant J.C*. Paris, 1988. 17. The borders of geographical distribution of the Illyrian population in Antique Balkans are primarily reconstructed according to the writings of the Greek historians Herodotus who lived in the 5th century B.C. and wrote *Historiae* and Appianus who lived in the 2nd century A.D. and wrote *Illyrica*.

¹⁸ The most outstanding Illyrian tribes were: *Iapudes, Dalmatae, Autariatae, Docletae* and *Taulantii*.

¹⁹ The Praefectura of Illyricum was subdivided into the following Provinces: Dacia Ripensis, Dacia Mediterranea, Moesia Superior Margensis, Dardania, Praevalis, Macedonia Prima, Macedonia Secundo, Epirus Nova, Epirus Vetus, Thessalia, Achaia and Creta.

²⁰ Ростовцев М. *Историја старога света: Грчка и Рим*. Нови Сад: Матица српска, 1990. 383–384.

²¹ Regardless of the fact that the Latin language did not replace the Illyrian one in the territory of Albania during Roman rule, Latin did not become the language of the common people. The Illyrian language was Romanized to a certain degree and the Latin alphabet was later chosen by the Albanian national leaders as the national script of the Albanians (one of the reasons for such a decision was purely political). For sure, the Roman culture and Latin language participated in the process of the ethnogenesis of the Albanians. However, the proponents of the Illyrian theory of Albanian ethnogenesis refute this opinion emphasizing that the number of Latin inscriptions found in Albania is small when compared with the number found in the other provinces of the Roman Empire. Their total number is 293. Half of these inscriptions are found in and around the Roman colony located in the ancient city of Dyrrhachium. Theodore Mommsen thought that people used exclusively the Illyrian language in the interior of Albania during the Roman occupation [Mommsen T. *The Provinces of the Roman Empire*. vol. 1, Chicago, MCMLXXIV. 202–203]. Dardania was one of the least Romanized Balkan regions and its native population preserved its ethnic individuality and consciousness. Subsequently, the Dardanians, who escaped Romanization and survived the South Slavic migrations to the Balkans, emerged in the Middle Ages with the name of the Albanians. Nevertheless, Latin terminology in modern Albanian and the place-names in Albania are evidence of the Illyrian-Albanian Romanization/Latinization.

²² However, the proponents of the theory of Serbian Balkan origin claim that all Balkan-born Roman emperors (around 20) were ethnic Serbs. Diocletian and Constantine the Great are the most important among them.

²³ Among the South Slavs, and in part among the Poles and Russians, the Illyrian theory of Slavic origin was widespread from the early 16th century to the early 19th century. According to this theory, the South Slavs were the autochthonous population in the Balkans originating from the ancient Illyrians. Furthermore, all Slavs formerly lived in the Balkans and were known by the ancient authors as the Illyrians. At the beginning of the Middle Ages they split into three groups: one group migrated to Central Europe (the Western Slavs), another group went to Eastern Europe (the Eastern Slavs) while the last group remained in the Balkans (the South Slavs). According to several medieval chronicles, the South Slavic ascendants were the ancient Illyrians, Thracians and Macedonians. Thus, Alexander the Great, Constantine the Great, Diocletian and St. Hieronymus were of South Slavic origin. In the time of Humanism, Renaissance, Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, a number of Dubrovnik (Ragusian) writers became the most prominent champions of this theory. They included Vinko Pribojević (*On Origin and History of the Slavs*, published in Venice in 1532), Mavro Orbini (*De Regno Sclavorum*, published in Pesaro in 1601) and Bartol Kašić (*Institutiones Linguae Illyricae*, published in 1604). Pribojević claimed that all Slavs spoke one common language, which originated in the Balkans. For him, the Russians spoke a Dalmatian dialect of the common Slavic language. This common Slavic language was named by Dubrovnik writers as “Our”, “Illyrian” or “Slavic” one. Subsequently, all Slavs who spoke “Our” language belonged to “Our” people. The influence of the Illyrian theory of (the South) Slavic origin can be

seen in: 1) the work of Serbian noblemen from Transylvania, Count Đorđe Branković (1645–1711) who in 1688 wrote the first political program of the South Slavic unification into a free and independent state which he called the “Illyrian Kingdom”; in 2) the fact that Orbini’s *De Regno Sclavorum* was translated into Russian in 1722; and in 3) that the Croatian movement of national renewal from the time of the first half of the 19th century was officially called as the “Illyrian Movement”.

²⁴ Miridita Z. *Istorija Albanaca* (“Iliri i etnogeneza Albanaca”). Beograd, 1969. 9–10; Qabej W. *Hyrje në historinë e gjuhës shipe*. Prishtinë, 1970. 29–32; Prifti K., Nasi L., Omari L., Xhufi P., Pulaha S., Pollo S., Shtylla Z. (eds.). *The Truth on Kosova*, Tirana, 1993. 5–73; Dobruna E. “On some ancient toponyms in Kosova”. *Onomastika e Kosovës*. Prishtina, 1979; Anamali S. “The problem of the formation of the Albanian people in the light of archaeological information”. *The National Conference on the formation of the Albanian people, their language and culture*. Tirana, 1988; Çabej E. “The problem of the autochthony of Albanians in the light of place-names”. *Buletini i Universitetit Shtetëror të Tiranës*. № 2. 1958. 54–62.

²⁵ For instance, see [Ђоровић В. *Историја Срба*. Београд: БИГЗ, 1993. 3–66; Ферјанчић Б. *Византија и Јужни Словени*. Београд: Завод за издавање уџбеника Социјалистичке Републике Србије, 1966. 20–26; Kont F. *Sloveni. Nastanak i razvoj slovenskih civilizacija u Evropi (VI–XIII vek)*. Beograd: Zavod za izdavačku delatnost „Filip Višnjić“, 1989. 14–43; Пипер П. *Увод у славистику*. 1. Београд: Завод за уџбенике и наставна средства Београд, 1998. 81–96].

²⁶ The name for the Albanians - “Арбанаси” is derived from the Latin name for the Albanians as the “Arbanenses”.

²⁷ Collon M. *Media Lies and the Conquest of Kosovo. NATO’s Prototype for the Next Wars of Globalization*. New York, 2007.