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DIFFERENT COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES: APPIAN'S VIEWS ABOUT ILLYRICUM

Abstract: Appian regarded it as important to define the boundaries of the Roman Empire, and indeed he outlined them in the very beginning of the *Preface* to his *Roman History*. He was aware that borders were of the utmost importance, although often they did not correspond to natural geographical or ethnic boundaries, and consequently could rarely be clearly delimited. Nonetheless, the core of a nation, a people, or a tribe could usually be well distinguished, and each had its peculiar development and specific history. Appian was fascinated by the grandeur of the Roman Empire and by its immense diversity, and described it nation by nation – in accordance with his ethnic conception – in his *Roman History*. The appendix to his Macedonian book was dedicated to Illyricum, and it is interesting that Appian compared the differences between various so-called Illyrian peoples to the differences between Greek peoples living in Greece. Similarly incorrect is his equating of Illyricum with those regions in which the Illyrian customs and other 'Illyrian' tribes had been collected. Most probably his definition reflected the common opinion of his age, when, due to the fact that some parts of Illyricum were for almost two centuries profoundly Romanized, the Romans were no longer aware of the once profoundly different ethnic situation of the western Balkans, the eastern Adriatic and southeastern Alpine regions, while the interior was too remote to be understood.

Importance of boundaries in Appian

In the very beginning of the *Preface* to his *Roman History* Appian first of all regarded it as important to define the boundaries of the Roman Empire: "When I decided to write the history of the Roman state I thought it necessary to determine beforehand the boundaries of the nations under Roman rule" (Τὴν Ῥωμαϊκὴν ἱστορίαν ἀρχόμενος συγγράφειν, ἀναγκαῖον ἡγησάμην προτάξαι τοὺς ὅρους ὧσων ἐθνῶν ἀρχουσι Ῥωμαῖοι). Diachronically speaking, borders have always been of the utmost importance in our world, and the Roman Empire was no exception,¹ although often they did

¹ Alonso-Núñez 1984.

not correspond to natural geographical or ethnic boundaries, but depended on the will and political aims of the conqueror. Thus border regions could rarely be clearly delimited, while the core of a nation, a people, or a tribe could usually be well distinguished. Each had its peculiar development and specific history, and perhaps this was one of the reasons why Appian decided to offer, as a part of his *Roman History*, short histories of all the main nations and peoples who constituted the Roman Empire.² It has long been known that Appian's approach to writing history was somewhat specific precisely on this point, particularly since no other ethnographically divided history has been preserved from antiquity.² The exact scope and intentions which Appian set himself when he chose to write a Roman history are still disputed in modern scholarship and will perhaps never be quite clear to modern historians, but the so-called ethnic conception may well have been his own, original, contribution, as was also his particular choice of the historical data that he decided to include in his work, his omissions, as well as his occasionally expressed judgements and opinions.³

In Appian's own words, the *Illyrica* is an appendix of the ninth book of his *Roman History* dealing with the conquest of Macedonia.⁴ In a passage from his *Civil Wars* referring to 35 BC, he noted Antony's departure to Armenia, while Octavian invaded with his army the regions of the Illyrians and other peoples who had repeatedly attacked and harmed Italy. Appian most probably estimated that Octavian's Illyrian wars had been an important step both in terms of Octavian's struggle to overpower all possible rivals in order to attain supremacy, as well as in terms of conquering the peoples some of whom had menaced Italy for almost two centuries. He realized rather late that he needed a book dealing with Illyricum, about which he was not well informed. Since he could not collect enough data about the history of this country to fill up an entire book, he decided to append it to his *Macedonian History* (5.145.601–602). Insufficient as his *Illyrian History* actually is, it must nonetheless be emphasized that it is the only extant *Illyrian History* from antiquity, and perhaps the only work that had ever been written on this subject in antiquity – hence its importance for the history of Illyricum is indisputable. Even if the *Illyrica* did not aim at a systematic history

² See on Appian particularly Gabba 1956; Brodersen 1993; Gowing 1992; Famerie 1998; Bucher 2000.

³ See, e.g., Goldmann 1988.

⁴ Dobiáš 1930; Marasco 1993.

of the area known as Illyricum in Appian's times, it nonetheless contains so much data about the two hundred years long history of its conquest by the Romans that it should be regarded as one of the best sources for its history in the Republican and Augustan ages, particularly from the First Illyrian War in 229 BC onwards. However, at first sight it seems to offer merely a few glimpses into the long history of Illyria, except of course for the Illyrian Wars of Octavian in 35–33 BC, which are described in great detail and therefore spoil the balance of the narrative. Its thirty chapters – the division is modern – are in parts only loosely connected with each other, which may partly reflect Appian's use of different sources. Due to their most differing nature the structure of his narrative is extremely uneven.⁵

Appian's geographical and ethnographical approach

In the first chapter, Appian offered a short geographical description of the Illyrian lands; their extent and distances are given, and both Greek and Roman writers are mentioned as authorities. Numbers referring to the longitude of Illyricum are correct, since the Adriatic was relatively well explored at an early date,⁶ while its latitude is much too short, probably betraying data from early Greek geographers and times when the dominant Illyrian kingdom had only been a relatively small state. Although Appian distinguished between the latitude of Illyria as described by the Greek geographers from that noted by the Romans, even the latter is nonetheless not long enough – or, perhaps, we cannot interpret it correctly. The length of Illyricum as defined by Appian extended above Macedonia and Thrace, from the Chaonians and Thesprotians up to the Ister, and equalled a thirty day journey on foot according to the Greek writers, or 6000 stades according to the Roman ones. The width was reckoned by Appian from the Macedonians and the mountainous Thracian regions to the Paeonians, the Ionian Sea, and the foot-hills of the Alps. It equalled a five day journey according to the Greeks, or 1200 stades according to the Roman writers. According to Polybius (3.39.8 and 34.12.4; cf. Plin., *N. h.* 2.85), a stade was about 1/8 of a Roman mile;⁷ Appian's numbers would thus equal 750 and 150 Roman miles, respectively, i.e. 1125 and 225 km, if a Ro-

⁵ See in general on Appian's sources Hahn 1982.

⁶ On Greek and Roman geography still relevant Bunbury 1883, *passim*. For the eastern Adriatic regions: Kozličić 1990.

⁷ See Dilke 32–33, on the problem of longer and shorter stades; 65.

man mile is reckoned as measuring ca. 1500 m. The given length more or less corresponds to the actual length of the eastern Adriatic, while it is not possible to estimate where exactly were the starting and the end points of Appian's width, i.e. which source he used. However, most probably the sources were the same for both measurements, an early Greek historian/geographer and an unidentified Roman source, probably from the Augustan age, and not Appian's contemporary. Even in the time of Octavian the hinterland of the Adriatic coast had not yet been sufficiently explored.

In the second chapter, the mythological origin of the peoples settled in Illyria is explained. It is most interesting that the story Appian chose to narrate was a Syracusan mythological story about the Cyclops Polyphemus and the Nymph Galatea, their love story having been described by Sicilian poets, notably by the Syracusan bucolic poet Theocritus. This ultimately indicates that Appian used a historian or mythographer who drew on Sicilian sources. Illyrius, the son of Polyphemus and Galatea (who had Celtus and Galas for brothers) was the mythic ancestor of all the main Illyrian peoples, and of some others as well. The Syracusan colonization must have no doubt had a great impact on the countries along the eastern Adriatic coast, and Dionysius I clearly endeavoured, at the time of his Adriatic expansion under Philistus (who had also been a well-known historian) and his alliance with the Celts after they had defeated the Etruscans, to integrate both the Illyrians and the Celts within his sphere of influence;⁸ mythology was often conveniently exploited for political purposes. This story – which must have been elaborated at a later date since late-comers such as the Scordisci are noted in it – comprised many so-called Illyrian peoples, which no doubt best suited the purpose of Appian. He obviously wished to include in one story as many of them as possible. In this sense the story of Illyrius, the son of Cadmus and Harmonia, was not at all suitable, since it is most of all connected with southern Illyrian peoples and early Illyrian kingdoms.⁹ Appian understood the extent of Illyricum in terms of his own age, which he explained in the sixth chapter. Hence in addition to some 'Illyrian' peoples such as the Taulantii, Enchelei, Autariatae, Dardanians, Partheni, Dassaretii and Darsi (= Daorsi) also Pannonian peoples are mentioned, as well as the Celtic Scordisci and the Thracian Maedi and Triballi, and even the Epirote Perrhaebi who had never been included in Illyricum.

⁸ Sordi 1999 (= 2002).

⁹ Rossignoli 2004, 103–124 (some interpretations are misleading).

Other mythological stories no doubt only partially illuminated the origin of various so-called Illyrian peoples.

In the third chapter, a few sentences are devoted to the Scordisci, Triballi, Ardiaei, and Liburni, and in the fourth, the catastrophe of the Autariatae is described. In the fifth chapter, the Scordisci, Maedi and Dardani are mentioned, and these beginning five chapters were understood by Appian as an introduction to the history of those peoples that were “*regarded by the Greeks to be the Illyrians*”, as he expressed himself at the end of the fifth chapter. At the beginning of the sixth chapter, however, he stated that “*the Romans differentiate these peoples and in addition also the Paeones (i.e. the Pannonians), the Raeti, the Norici, the European Mysians (i.e. the Moesi) and other neighbouring tribes who live on the right bank of the Ister, in a similar manner as the Greeks differentiate the Greeks; each people is called by its own name, and together they are all considered to be living in Illyria*”. It was important to Appian to note both the Greek and the Roman point of view, and it seems that the Greek concept of Illyria reflected the earlier, Hellenistic, period, while the Roman concept should be understood in terms of Appian’s own time.

This is clear from his next statement in which he referred to the Illyrian customs and taxes, which were collected in the provinces from Raetia and Noricum to the Black Sea coast.¹⁰ His intention was to include the conquest of all these vast regions into his narrative, beginning with the First Illyrian War. He pointed out that he had not been able to find in his sources precise data about the reasons and pretexts for the wars with various Illyrian peoples. In chapters 7–9, he gave a short account of the three Illyrian Wars, summarizing the main events and avoiding all details. Appian regarded as a proper beginning of the Illyrian history in the strict sense the first phase of the Roman conquest of Illyricum, thus he began his narrative with the Illyrian Wars.¹¹ This procedure was not unlike his original plan of narrating the Roman history *kata ethne* – how all these peoples had gradually come under the Roman sway, ending up by having been a constituent part of the huge Roman Empire in which all the peoples had their importance. In the tenth chapter, mention is made of the war against the Palarii and Ardei (= Pleraei and Ardiaei) under Fulvius Flaccus in 135 BC, as well as of the expedition against the Iapodes and Segestani in 119 BC, while in the eleventh chapter

¹⁰ De Laet 1949; Vittinghoff 1953, 358–368.

¹¹ Wilkes 1969, 13–28; Cabanes 1988, 256 ff.

the war against the Delmatae in 156 BC, under C. Marcius Figulus, is briefly described. These chapters, not unlike those previously mentioned, consist of more or less disconnected pieces of information; single events are described that took place at different places and in different periods and do not form a continuous – or even exhaustive – narrative. Even in terms of chronology the described events, as we have seen, do not follow each other in the correct sequence, and it is not quite clear why Appian did not continue his narrative of the Illyrian Wars with the description of the First Delmataean War. Probably he regarded the history of the Ardiaei and Pleraei as a direct continuation of the history of the Illyrian kingdom, since the Illyrian dynasty of Agron, Teuta, and Pinnes had been, according to well-informed Cassius Dio, Ardiaean (e.g. 12, fr. 49).

Appian devoted the next two chapters (12–13) to Caesar's proconsulship in Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum;¹² although he omitted much data he did mention the Delmatae, the main Roman enemies since the fall of the Illyrian kingdom. Along with their gradual expansion, the concept of Dalmatia, originally denoting the regions settled by the Delmatae in the interior (the hinterlands of Iader, Salona, and Naron), grew ever larger, until it eventually comprised the province of Dalmatia. Appian mentioned the conflict of the Delmatae with the Liburni in the course of which Caesar sent military aid to the latter but was defeated by the former. Appian's Caesarian narrative mainly rotated around the Delmatae, their (partial) victories over Gabinus and Vatinius, as well as their embassy to Caesar in Rome to plead for an alliance.

After the next two chapters, again offering some disconnected information (14–15), the Paeones are described. Appian confused the Paeonians with the Pannonians, calling both 'Paeones'. In this chapter he gave a brief account of both, referring to the Paeonians by way of mentioning one of their tribes, the Agrianes, famous as allies of Philip II and Alexander the Great.¹³ However, in the rest of his narrative, Appian actually always referred to the Pannonians when he mentioned the 'Paeones'.¹⁴ He understood that the Pannonian people must have consisted of many tribes settled in the vast area between the Alps and the Dardanians, since he claimed that "*the Paeones are a large nation along the Ister who extend from the*

¹² Šašel Kos 2000.

¹³ Hammond, Walbank 1988, 40 ff.; Petrova 1999, 11.

¹⁴ Grassl 1990.

Iapodes to the Dardanians” (14.40). However, he did not distinguish them from the Illyrian peoples and regarded them as ‘Illyrian’. Appian did not conceal his astonishment at having found so few data about the early history of Illyricum in the sources he was able to use, and he was in particular surprised that as late as Octavian, most of the so-called Illyrian peoples – so near Italy and a constant threat to it – had not been conquered earlier by the Romans (14.42).

The description of Octavian's Illyrian Wars unbalanced the narrative

The campaigns of Octavian against the Iapodes, Segestani, Delmatae, and other Illyrian peoples are described in detail in chapters 16–28. This part of Appian's *Illyrian History* is a coherent and vividly described narrative,¹⁵ and is greatly disproportioned in terms of the rest of his *Illyrian History*. Strangely, the conquest of the Salassi is also included in it, although they had never been regarded as ‘Illyrian’, not even by Appian. They must have been conquered in a separate campaign parallel to Octavian's Illyrian Wars, and both descriptions were taken by Appian directly from the *Commentarii* of Augustus, which explains why Appian's account is so accurate and minute. It is a precious source for various details of historical topography and geography of the regions and places described.

The Raeti and Norici are mentioned in the twenty-ninth chapter, while the last chapter deals with Lucullus' war against the Mysians (= Moesi). The former two peoples should have had, strictly speaking, no place in an Illyrian history, since they are generally not regarded as Illyrian in other sources, even those contemporary to Appian. He justified their inclusion by the fact that their regions formed part of the countries where Illyrian customs duties were levied.

Clearly, the value of Appian's *Illyrica* for the history of Illyria/Illyricum in the late prehistory and antiquity is limited, inconsistent, and uneven; it is only exhaustive in terms of Octavian's conquest of some parts of Illyricum (the Iapodes, Segestani, and Delmatae). Although the complicated history of these regions during the Republican age had not at all been treated adequately by Appian, it must nonetheless be concluded that very few events attested elsewhere were entirely omitted by Appian for the period between

¹⁵ Schmitthenner 1958; Šašel Kos 1999.

the First Illyrian War and the proconsulship of Caesar. Omitted were notably two wars against the Delmatae, that of P. Cornelius Scipio Nasica in 155 BC, which continued Figulus' campaign and brought it to a successful end, as well as the war of C. Cosconius in 78–76 BC. From Caesar onwards, however, Appian's data can well be supplemented by the known facts from other sources. As a rule, his information is extremely concise, so much so that it is seemingly imprecise while it is actually correct, but it is deficient in so far as the briefly mentioned events are not set in a sufficiently explained historical/geographical context.

The uneven structure of the book as a whole is due to the lack of adequate sources for the early history of Illyria; Appian did not carry out a systematic research to find more information concerning various peoples of Illyricum, thus creating an unbalanced narrative. The equilibrium has been destroyed not so much by the lack of information in the first fifteen chapters and in the last two, but more so by the account of Octavian's Illyrian Wars overloaded with details. Although it is expressly mentioned by Fronto in his letter to the emperor Antoninus Pius that he and Appian spent much time studying in various libraries in Rome ("*devoting time to almost daily studies*"),¹⁶ it should not be imagined that studying in the libraries of the second century AD could be compared to modern use of the libraries (even before the age of computers!), where various editions of books accompanied by indexes are readily available. It was no doubt difficult to consult early Greek and Roman writers for specific local problems if there were no indexes to help the researcher. Appian most probably consulted predominantly (early) Hellenistic sources, which can be inferred from the fact that some important peoples, who were regarded as Illyrian only after the wars of Tiberius in Illyricum in the reign of Augustus, found little mention in his *Illyrian History*. The wars which brought the entire Illyricum under Roman sway were the Pannonian and Dalmatian wars of Tiberius in the years 12 to 9 BC; due to unrest among the Pannonian peoples, already M. Vipsanius Agrippa (together with M. Vinicius) initiated a Pannonian war in 13 BC, shortly before his premature death (Dio, 54.28.1–2). However, Tiberius vanquished the 'Illyrian' and Pannonian peoples for good in the course of quelling the great Pannonian-Dalmatian Revolt of AD 6–9. The Liburnians and the Pirustae were only referred to by Appian, while e.g. Ditiones, Breuci,

¹⁶ *Epist. ad Anton.* 9: *cum quo mihi et vetus consuetudo et studiorum usus prope cotidianus*. Cf. Hout 1999, 396 ff.

and probably also the important Daesitiates (unless they should be identified with Appian's Daesii: 17.49), and others who had settled in what is present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina, were not mentioned at all.¹⁷ It is most interesting that the Liburnians were never regarded as Illyrian in the early sources, while the other mentioned peoples were all Pannonian peoples defined as such by Strabo (7.5.3 C 314). On the other hand, due to a very detailed account of Octavian's campaigns, mention is made of some of the most obscure peoples, or even only of tribes, for several of which no evidence – or almost none – is preserved elsewhere.

Appian's attempt at defining Illyria

The most important section concerning the definition of Illyria/Illyricum is Appian's sixth chapter, which must be the starting point for our understanding and interpretation of Appian's views. Both in his first and sixth chapters he explained what were in his opinion the extent and the boundaries of Illyria and who were the peoples settled within these regions. He may have been aware of differing definitions and contradictory accounts, since it could be seen at first glance that the names Illyrian, Illyria, and Illyricum were variously understood by ancient writers, while not even modern interpreters are unanimous on these long-disputed points; modern scholarship has often added some additional confusion. Appian's statement is clear, although it may not be entirely correct, at least not from our point of view; he claimed that the Romans distinguished among the Illyrian peoples in a similar manner as the Greeks distinguish among the Greeks; *"each people is called by its own name, and together they are all considered to be living in Illyria"* (6.15). He added: *"When and how such a concept was adopted I could not discover, although it is still current, and thus also the tax which is collected from these nations extending from the source of the Ister to the Pontic Sea is leased as one tax and is called Illyrian"* (6.16). Neither is his comparison with the Greeks – and how they differentiate between various so-called Greek peoples – quite accurate, nor is he correct in equating Illyricum with those regions in which the Illyrian customs and other 'Illyrian' tributes had been collected. The Greeks were much more united by the common Hellenic culture and the Greek language than various so-called Illyrian peoples and tribes had ever been, perhaps not even those,

¹⁷ Bojanovski 1988; Wilkes 1992.

united in various Illyrian kingdoms. Pannonian and Moesian peoples had an entirely different tradition. Central Balkan tribes could never be compared with the Hellenized and Romanized peoples inhabiting the Adriatic coast. With regard to the Illyrian customs it has already been stated that various regions had taken part in this fiscal organization – no doubt for the sake of simplifying the imperial customs system – which had never been included in Illyricum, such as the Raeti, Norici, and various Thracian peoples.¹⁸

It was perfectly clear to Appian that after the Roman conquest Illyricum was actually inhabited by many very different peoples and tribes; in this chapter he therefore attempted to explain how all these peoples came to be regarded as Illyrians. By his own admission, he could not find a proper explanation for this usage. He wanted to compose a narrative, which would be as complete as possible (although not necessarily systematic), superficially covering the history of all the regions he included as Illyrian. However, all along he very well knew that matters were much more complicated and the lacunae of his knowledge enormous. His aim at being complete at least in terms of mentioning all main peoples that inhabited Illyricum, is best expressed at the end of the last chapter in which he affirmed: “*since the Romans regard the Mysians as belonging to Illyria and since my narrative is devoted to Illyrian history, which should be complete, I deemed it proper to say in advance that they were conquered by Lucullus*” (30.88).

It could be argued that within the Roman Empire no other region the size of the western and central Balkans included more different peoples and could display a greater ethnic and cultural diversity (see the map).¹⁹ On one end it was delimited by the Greek and Macedonian regions,²⁰ with Greek colonies reaching far up along the Ionian Sea, as well as along the Black Sea, and on the other by Italy with Aquileia as a major emporium for both Noricum and Illyricum. Other neighbours to Illyricum were the Thracian kingdoms and the Dacians, as well as the Getae. Vast regions in between were settled by various peoples that differed from each other enormously. The Histri were rapidly Romanized after the fall of their kingdom in 177 BC; they had since been dependent on Cisalpine

¹⁸ Šašel Kos 2005, 219 ff.; see also, for a brief outline of ‘Illyricum’, Kastelic 1990, 106–107.

¹⁹ Papazoglu 1978; Katičić 1995.

²⁰ Wilkes, *Frontiers*, forthcoming, for a most recent discussion of the linguistic boundary between Greek and Latin in the Balkans.

Gaul and were included in Italy when Cisalpine Gaul ceased to exist as a province. They are only mentioned once by Appian, in relation to the piratical attacks of Demetrius of Pharos against the Romans, which he carried out in concert with the Histri. Indeed, they never belonged to Illyricum,²¹ although they are occasionally counted among the Illyrian peoples by some ancient writers, even by Strabo (7.5.3 C 314). In antiquity, they may have been counted to Illyricum only in so far as the entire eastern Adriatic coast was regarded as Illyrian – as opposed to the Italian coast – with the dividing line starting at Aquileia. The Liburni, who may have been closer to the Etruscans than to other ‘Illyrian’ peoples, and who were settled along the coast and were excellent seamen and also pirates, had always had close connections with the Greek world, as well as with Italy.²² It seems that during the early Iron Age they played a dominant role in the Adriatic, reaching as far as Corcyra.²³ Their northeastern neighbours, the Iapodes, settled in the Lika region and along the Una valley, were infinitely less civilized and were in general hostile towards their neighbours, both to the Liburni and northern Italy.²⁴ The Delmatae, too, threatened the Liburni, the Issaeian Greek settlements on the coast near Salonae, as well as the Daorsi, the Roman allies.²⁵ The most primitive of all were probably the Moesi, who, settled in the region between the Morava River, the Balkan Mts. and the Danube, led the life of savages who had no permanent settlements and lived from primitive agriculture and stock-raising, and whose customs seemed repulsive to the Romans. Of the central Balkan tribes, merely the Dardanians established a political organization of supratribal character and eventually had kings.²⁶

The southern coastal regions always took advantage of their contacts with the Greeks.²⁷ The Illyrian kingdoms developed through their constant wars with the Hellenized – although aggressive – Macedonian kings, and eventually they minted their own money and attained quite a high degree of acculturation. They had an important navy and were active as pirates; shortly before the First Illyrian War, in the course of which the Romans defeated them, they

²¹ Šašel Kos 2000, 286–288.

²² Čače 1985.

²³ Čače 2002.

²⁴ Olujčić 1999.

²⁵ Zaninović 1966; id. 1967.

²⁶ Papazoglu 1978.

²⁷ *Dalmazia* 1999; *Greek Influence* 2002; *Greci* 2002.

threatened Epirus and northern Greece, as well as the Greek coasts of Ellis and Messenia.²⁸ The peoples of the mountainous interior, whose main occupation was small stock breeding, had more or less limited contacts with the more civilized countries. These were tribes of the later province of Moesia, such as the Scordisci, Triballi, Dardanians, and Moesi. The tribes in the interior of the future provinces of Dalmatia and Pannonia were also settled in areas relatively remote from civilized countries, such as the Autariatae, Daesititates, and Breuci, the latter two having been counted to the Pannonians. According to Appian, the Pannonians led a particularly miserable life in villages and scattered dwellings in large families and clans; he emphasized that they had remained without more developed organization even in times of war (*Illyr.* 22.63).

Appian and the contemporary concept of Illyricum

As has been pointed out, Appian erroneously projected the extent and the boundaries of Illyria/Illyricum of his own day into the past, most of all due to the fact that the Romans called the *portorium*, levied in several provinces and including those in Illyricum, the Illyrian (*publicum portorii Illyrici*). Since under Antoninus Pius the Illyrian customs became united with the *portorium ripae Thraciae*, they indeed, according to Appian, included all the regions “from the sources of the Danube to the Pontic Sea” (*Illyr.* 6.16). His idea of the extent of Illyricum closely resembles the definition of Illyricum by a generation later historian Cassius Dio, who governed under the Severan emperors both Dalmatia and afterwards also Pannonia, knowing these regions very well, and in whose words “the name of Illyricum had once been attached to other places, but was later transferred into the hinterland, in the regions above Macedonia and in those territories of Thrace which extend to the inner side of Mt. Haemus and near Mt. Rhodope. Illyricum is situated between these two mountain chains and the Alps, between the rivers Aenus and Ister, extending as far as the Euxine Sea, and in places even across the Ister” (12, Zon., 8.19.8). This was the conception of Illyricum as it was familiar to the Greek and Roman writers of the imperial age. Its usage originated with the conquest of Illyricum by Octavian and Tiberius.

In terms of imperial administration, the so-called ‘Illyrian’ provinces were often united into larger units, particularly in the se-

²⁸ Šašel Kos 2002.

cond century AD, which is reflected in the complicated administration of the important imperial mines in Illyricum,²⁹ but also, for example, in the organization of traffic, where at some point Upper and Lower Pannonia, as well as Upper Moesia and Noricum were united under the same prefect (*vehiculatio Pannoniae utriusque et Moesiae superioris et Norici*: CIL III 6075 + p. 1285 = ILS 1366). The main imperial routes crossed many provinces, such as the road leading from Italy across a narrow part of Noricum around Celeia to Pannonia and Moesia, and all these measures may have been in one way or another interrelated, notably also to the levying of customs-duty. The Illyrian customs-duty comprised not only the two provinces which had developed out of the original province of Illyricum, i.e. Pannonia (= *Illyricum inferius*, divided into two provinces after Trajan) and Dalmatia (= *Illyricum superius*), but also Noricum, Moesia Superior and Inferior, including *ripa Thraciae*, as well as Dacia,³⁰ and even at least a part of Raetia, where, however, *statio Maia* (Obermais-Meran) belonged to the Gallic customs-system (*XXXX Galliarum*).³¹ Moesia began to be regarded as 'Illyrian' soon after its conquest by Tiberius – which is also well reflected in Appian's narrative – while Raetia, Noricum, Dacia, and Thrace were on the whole regarded to have been a part of Illyricum only exceptionally or in the late Roman period. And indeed, Appian did not include either Dacia or Thrace in his *Illyrian History*, although, on the other hand, he did include – in terms of his own age – Raetia and Noricum.

Obviously, the name 'Illyrian' must have gradually acquired, particularly from the Augustan age onwards, such a broad meaning that it could have been somehow applied not merely to the Adriatic regions but to the Balkan regions in general, and it may certainly be said that this denomination gave way to the late Roman usage of the word *Illyrian*, when, in the reign of Septimius Severus, it began to designate the army stationed in the Balkans, as well as, later, the emperors who originated from this territory, the so-called *Illyrian emperors* (Maximinus Thrax, Decius, Claudius II, Aurelian, Probus, Diocletian, Constantius Chlorus, and his son Constantine the Great). The cult of *Hercules Illyricus* should be understood in terms of such a broad usage of the name *Illyrian*, referring mainly to the army.

²⁹ Dušanić 2004; see also Škegro 1998, 54 ff.

³⁰ Vittinghoff 1953, 358–361. On *publicum portorii Illyrici*, see also Dobó 1940; De Laet 1949, 175–245.

³¹ France 2001, 331–332.

Since the reign of Diocletian, however, the meaning of the name Illyricum became much broader, and actually corresponded closely to the regions in which the *publicum portorii Illyrici* had been collected. In the Pannonian-Balkan area, three dioceses were created within Diocletian's new territorial-administrative division of the empire, and these were Pannonia, Moesia, and Thrace, belonging to Illyricum, which was one of the four prefectures created by Constantine.³²

When, however, Appian claimed that the Romans regarded various peoples as Illyrian in the same way as the Greeks regarded various peoples as Greek, although those peoples differed in certain characteristics from one another and each was known under its separate name, his view is not only far too simplified, but he is actually not correct. Most probably his words reflected the common opinion of his age, when nobody really cared to know what a picturesque and profoundly different ethnic situation was in fact concealed under the uniform denomination. From the point of view of ethnic origins, very different peoples were united within the boundaries of even one and the same province. *Regnum Noricum* – as much as Raetia – had always been entirely separate formations and were never a part of Illyricum proper, except that they were included in the same customs system. Some of the inhabitants of the province of Noricum were Celtic and had only been settled in the eastern Alpine region since the fourth and the third centuries BC; they had partly merged with the autochthonous population. The Celtic invasions greatly changed the ethnic situation in the western Balkans. Most of northern Pannonia was Celtic; the Scordisci had occupied a large territory at the expense of the autochthonous population,³³ and even an epichoric tribe such as the Iapodes came to be known, according to Strabo, as a mixed Illyrian and Celtic people (7.5.2 C 313), although in their case the Celtic influences are at least archaeologically indistinct.

The Greeks, however, were much more united by the same language – despite many different dialects – and by, roughly speaking, the same culture, but most of all also by the sense of belonging to a common culture and civilization. The 'Illyrian' tribes had never been united by anything. F. Papazoglu in her exhaustive study of the central Balkan tribes well formulated the state of affairs issuing from lack of evidence and insufficient knowledge about these peoples: "Peoples, like individuals, outlive their physical disappear-

³² See the relevant chapters in *Late Empire* 1998.

³³ *Skordisci* 1992.

ance in the works and memories they leave behind them. The Triballi, Autariatae, Dardanians and Moesians did not have great towns or lasting buildings to satisfy the tooth of time, or works of art in which their images were engraved, their thoughts and beliefs expressed. They did not create works to hand on their tales, their experience and their views on life from generation to generation. Unlike the Mediterranean peoples, they did not hew stone or carve or model clay or paint. They left behind them no pictured representation, no written word.”³⁴ Indeed they still elude us, their boundaries changed in the course of time and cannot be precisely determined for any given period; we must attempt to recapture their history from scraps of evidence such as the *Illyrica*.*

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³⁴ Papazoglu 1978, 3.

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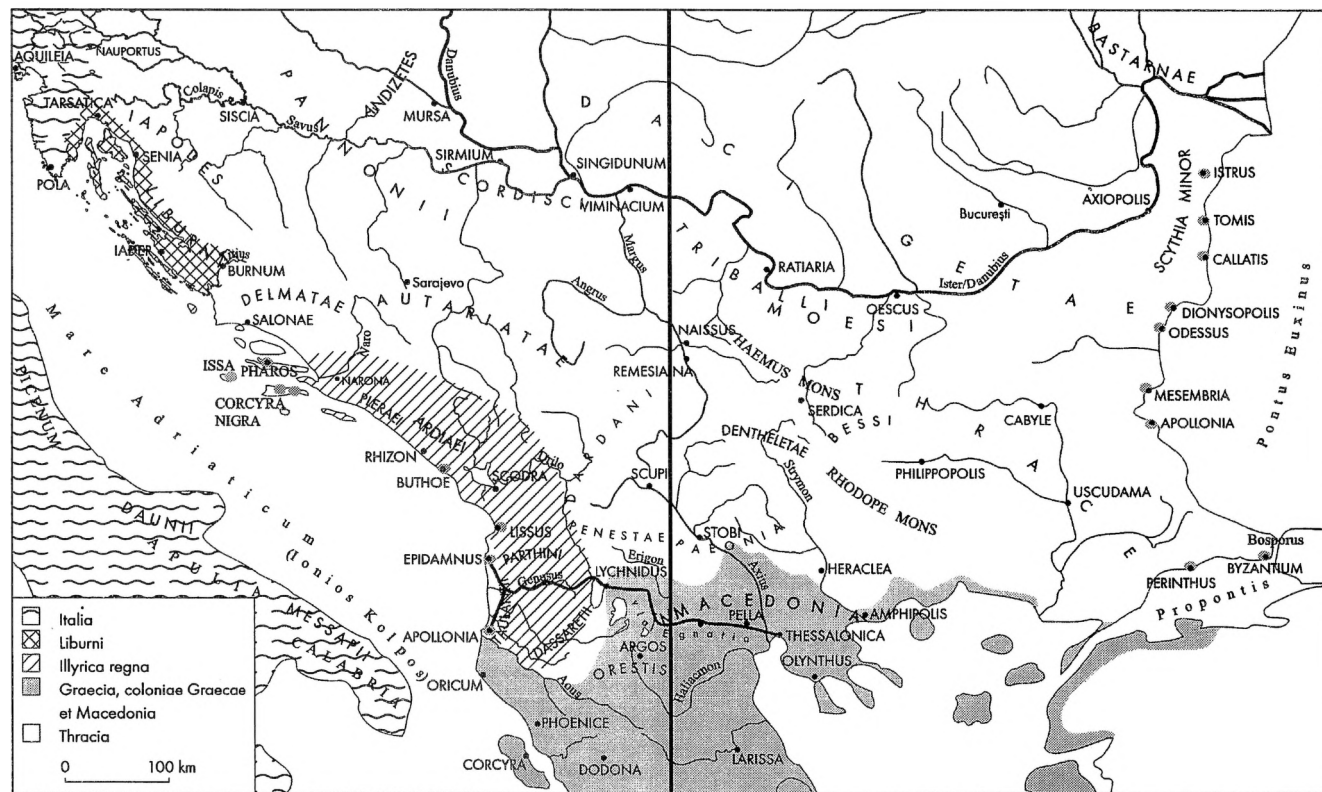


Fig.: Map of Illyricum and adjacent regions