



## **Puljcan Juric, Lea. Illyria in Shakespeare's England**

Goran Stanivukovic

Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533): Faith, Antiquity, and the Witch Hunt

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[See table of contents](#)

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textual and visual device; the early colonial “discovery” texts that document the unhappy dynamics of encounters with indigenous peoples; or the ways in which street culture and architecture, let alone urban and rural topographies, contributed to early modern sensibilities.

Spectatorship, as this volume convincingly shows, entails identity, agency, aesthetics, and the imaginative spaces in which seeing as a form of knowing became a critical site where interpretative struggles over *how* to see were deeply generative of new forms of expression, political or otherwise.

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**Puljcan Juric, Lea.**

***Illyria in Shakespeare’s England.***

Madison and Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2019. Pp. 353 + 12 ill. ISBN 978-1-68393-176-8 (hardcover) US\$115.

Illyria was as much a land of imagination as it was a territory of uncertain boundaries, but it was of much interest to Westerners, as Lea Puljcan Juric convincingly demonstrates in the most documented and detailed book on the subject available in English. Puljcan Juric’s compelling *Illyria in Shakespeare’s England* is a work of cultural historiography and literary criticism that models a new paradigm for early modern scholarship by advancing a cross-cultural, cross-linguistic, and comparative perspective. The Renaissance in Europe—in which Illyria was integrated—merits this approach. Yet decades of focus on the national Renaissance more generally, and cultural histories of early modern England that rely on Anglophone scholarship specifically, have narrowed our view of England’s engagement with the world beyond. Puljcan Juric’s book changes this critical landscape. Based on extensive historical research of primary documents and on a deft analysis of a large body of critical literature on the subject in several languages, this book makes a significant contribution to Shakespeare criticism and to the study of the early modern Mediterranean.

Puljcan Juric rethinks Shakespeare’s plays—those set in the eastern Adriatic that reimagine Illyria—by locating them in the Croatian Adriatic more broadly but also by explaining how the elasticity of the term “Illyria” contributed to the diversity of meaning with which Illyria resonated in the

creative and political imagination of the early moderns who perceived it either from the distance of London or in direct contact. While Shakespeare's plays are at the centre of the argument, other literary genres, as well as travel writing, proto-ethnographic treatises, geographical maps, and political texts are brought together in an argument about the making of Illyria in early modern writing.

The book is divided into five substantial chapters. It ends with a coda and a useful appendix in which various early maps of Illyria are gathered together as a visual inset. Each map illustration is accompanied with a brief description of the image's provenance and a background on the mapmaker. This is a useful way of separating images from the text and creating space to explain them individually.

The Introduction lays the ground for the book's argument by providing a comprehensive review of critical literature and by making a case for countering "orthodox readings of Shakespeare's Illyria" (2) by treating it as a "geopolitical region" (2) known to Shakespeare. The term is charged with its contemporary meaning in which geography and politics intersect with socio-political interests, rivalries, and alliances. Yet these were also early modern contexts that defined Illyria in relation to colony at the time when it might have been known to Shakespeare. In a way, this is a book produced by the post-colonial spirit of inquiry without being explicitly immersed in the lexicon of, and ideology that underpins, post-colonial theory.

The first chapter is devoted to a discussion of the Renaissance geographical representations of Illyria from 1570 to 1620. The cartographer Abraham Ortelius plays an important part here (and elsewhere in the book) in an impressively researched argument that engages with all the possible and available associations of Illyria as a historical concept and research problem or subject. Its links with the sea, the Balkan hinterland, the Slavic linguistic and socio-cultural link (with the Latinity within which "imperium" it was absorbed), the English connection, and finally the Ottoman claim and Islamic threat that came with it—all play a part in determining what Illyria was for the early moderns. The second chapter is devoted to the study of merchant-adventures and miscellaneous travellers in Illyria, with frequent references to what is today the seaside Croatia as well as to plays (like those of Marlowe). The chapter ranges from an examination of the Illyrian body to fascinating revelations about how Illyrian natural resources attracted the curious eye of the early traveller. The third and fourth chapters are devoted to what Puljcan Juric very usefully calls "Adriatic Romance," a term

that describes both the prose and drama set in the region, and that gives *Twelfth Night* new meaning. The key research question, “how did Shakespeare draw on the wealth of information about Illyria that complemented his picture of early modern Europe?” was largely answered in the previous chapters. Chapters 3 and 4 provide the strongest argument so far that Shakespeare’s Adriatic plays and the non-Shakespearean Adriatic prose romance belong both to English literature but also to the early modern heritage of Illyria narrated in European accounts across time. The argument about Illyria being the conduit for the flow of Christian ideas from the eastern Mediterranean to the West puts *The Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Cymbeline* at the centre of this cultural transmission.

The Coda is a reminder of Illyria’s borderland existence as a crucial element in defining European relationships with the world beyond. In this theoretically sophisticated chapter, in which current cultural and critical theories intersect with the movement of people from beyond the historical Illyrian space(s) into Europe, Puljcan Juric implicitly claims urgency for her book, and makes us aware that Illyria mattered to Shakespeare just as it has continued to matter up to the present moment. The variety and coverage of the historical sources and data change the paradigm of early modern Mediterranean studies in the English context; many are original in the sense that they are brought into the conversation with English sources and English historiography for the first time. There, too, lies the originality and freshness of this elegantly written book.

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**Keymer, Thomas, ed.**

***Prose Fiction in English from the Origins of Print to 1750.***

The Oxford History of the Novel in English 1. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. xxxiv, 637 + 17 ill, 1 table. ISBN 978-0-19-958003-3 (hardcover) US\$125.

Chronologically, *Prose Fiction in English from the Origins of Print to 1750* comes first in the series The Oxford History of the Novel in English (12 volumes, 2011–2019). As the entry volume of the series, it is a collection of thirty-five