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Le immagini della musica

N. 4

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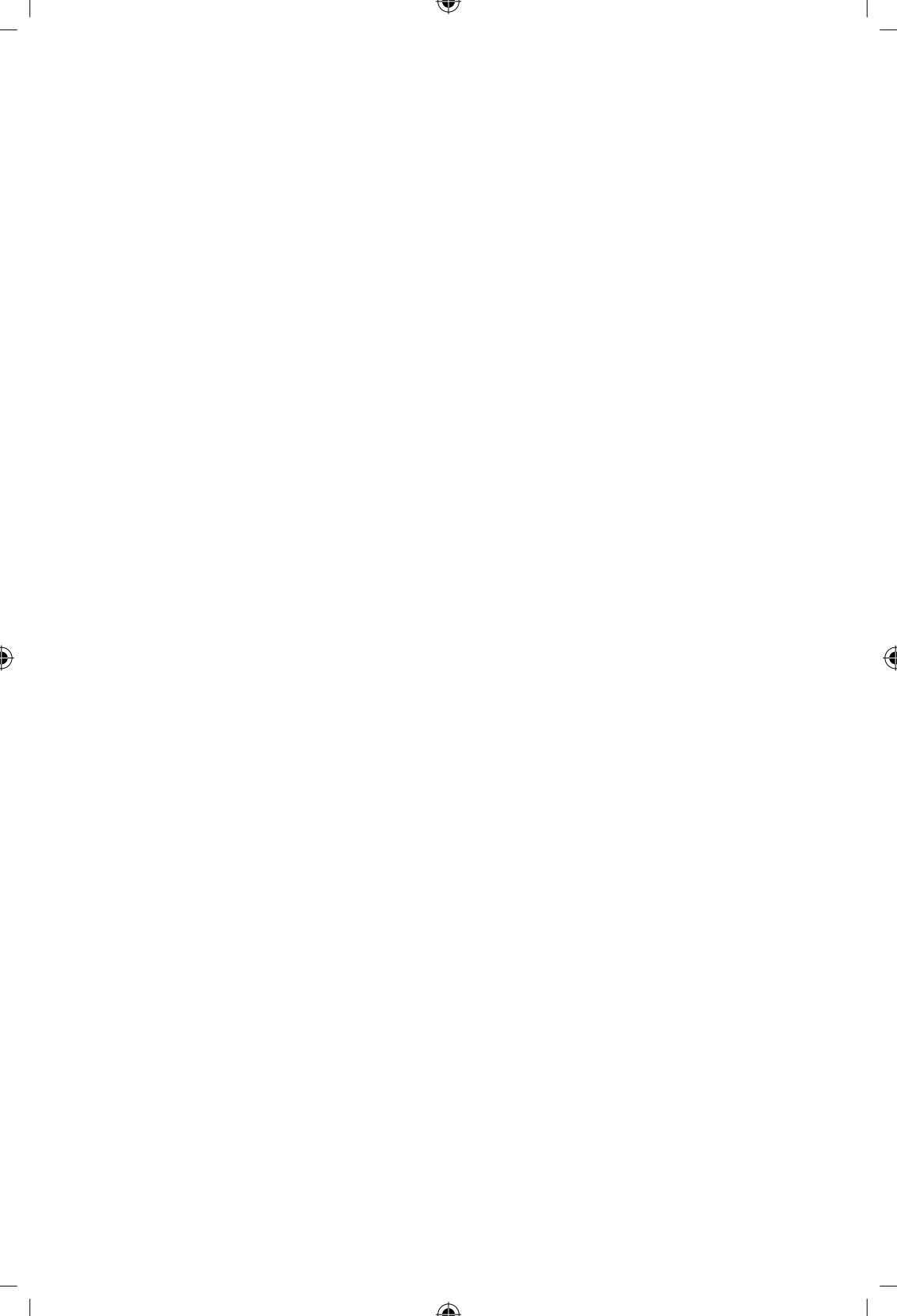
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NATION AND/OR HOMELAND

Identity in 19th-Century Music
and Literature between Central
and Mediterranean Europe

Edited by
Ivano Cavallini



MIMESIS
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IVANO CAVALLINI

FROM THE MORLACK TO THE SLAV: IMAGES OF
SOUTH SLAVIC PEOPLE BETWEEN EXOTICISM AND
ILLYRISM IN ITALIAN LITERATURE AND OPERA
DURING THE 19TH CENTURY

From the 1770s to the nineteenth century, Europe began to pay new attention to the South Slavic peoples, particularly when the botanist Alberto Fortis from Padua published his diary of travel through Dalmatia in 1774 (*Viaggio in Dalmazia*).¹ Although there had been evident interest in these peoples, up to now musicology has not focused on the phenomena of Exoticism and national awakening in Croatia and in other Balkan regions, as stated in Italian sources – books, periodicals, novels, theatre, ballets, and operas.

In this respect Fortis's book appears important, especially the chapter on the Morlacks, which was a landmark in European literature. This was a means to discover in the wild inhabitant of inner-Dalmatia, the so-called Dalmatinska Zagora, an example of the *bon sauvage*.² Abbot Fortis's memories were immediately translated into German, French, English and Swedish. A paragraph on the Morlacks was also included by Jean-Benjamin De Laborde in the *Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne* (1780, see: "Poésie lyrique des morlacques et de leur musique"), but it is a simple paraphrase without any new information in reference to Fortis's preceding *Viaggio*.³ Goethe and Herder edited some epic songs in *Die Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* (1778) as *Radoslaus, Die schöne Dolmetscherin, Ein Gesang von Milos Cobilich und Vuko Brankowich*, and the *Klaggesang der Edlen Frauen Asan Agà (Hasanaginica)*.⁴ Justine Wynne Rosenberg-Orsini, a noblewoman, wrote the novel *Les morlacques* (1788), then transformed into the *Twelve Poems on the Morlacks* by Bishop Giandomenico

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- 1 Alberto FORTIS, *Viaggio in Dalmazia*, Venice: Milocco, 1774, in two volumes.
 - 2 The chapter "De' costumi de' morlacchi", vol. I, 45-104.
 - 3 Jean-Benjamin DE LABORDE, *Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne*, Paris: De Pierres, 1780, 1st vol., Chapter XXV, 440-445.
 - 4 Johann Gottfried HERDER, *Volkslieder*, Munich: Müller, 1911.

Stratico from Zadar (*Dodici pezzi poetici sopra i costumi de' morlacchi*, manuscript 1793).⁵

The Morlackmania also influenced the Italian opera and theatre, as demonstrated by the titles listed below:

Camillo Federici (actor and writer), *Li antichi slavi, ossia le nozze dei morlacchi*, comédie larmoyante, Venice 1793;

Giulio Artusi (librettist) – Vittorio Trento (composer), *Le nozze dei morlacchi*, ballet, Padua 1802;

Gaetano Gioia (choreographer), *I morlacchi ballo di carattere*, ballet, Rome 1810;

Antonio Cherubini (choreographer), *Le nozze dei morlacchi*, ballet, Venice 1811;

Ferdinando Gioia (choreographer), *I morlacchi ballo di carattere*, ballet, Milan 1833;

Giuseppe Sapio (librettist) – Romualdo Sapio (composer), *I morlacchi*, opera, Palermo 1878;

Pietro Platania (composer), *Festa valacca. Danza canzone*, orchestral music, Palermo or Naples, undated.⁶

The figure of the Morlack – *vlah* or *vlahj* in modern Croatian – covered one hundred years of Adriatic life and history. The semantic surface of the term identifies both the *other*, as a problem of ethnicity and culture, and the ancient South Slav. In the first case, the *vlah* was the *other*, not only for the majority of the European nations but also for the Croats who lived in the coastal area, largely devoted to Italian culture. The *mauroblachoi*, the *vlasii* or the *morovalacchi* (this one in Venetian dialect) were the Balkan immigrants settled in the mountains of Dalmatia, namely the escaped people from Walachia, a mix of Catholic and Orthodox people whose language

5 Mate ZORIĆ, *Italia e Slavia. Contributi sulle relazioni letterarie italo-jugoslave dall'Ariosto al d'Annunzio*, Padua: Antenore, 1989, Chapter IV "Arcadi e illuministi in Schiavonia", Chapter VI "Foscolo a Spalato".

6 Some titles are quoted in ZORIĆ, *Italia e Slavia*, 100-105, 164-167. The *Festa valacca* of Platania is kept in the Library of Naples' Conservatory. Vittorio Trento composed the music for three ballets on the Slavic subject: *Giorgio principe della Serbia*, staged in Venice (1798) with the opera *Gli Orazi e i Curiazi* by Marcos Antonio da Fonseca Portugal, *Giorgio Despot re della Serbia*, perhaps a remake with a new title for the Paduan Teatro Nuovo (1798), and finally *Baja Duska* (1815). In 1815 the same Teatro Nuovo staged the ballet *Marcovich*, based on the quoted *Nozze dei morlacchi*, see Maria Nevilla MASSARO, "Il ballo pantomimo al Teatro Nuovo di Padova (1751-1830)", *Acta Musicologica*, 57/2, 1985, 215-275 and Inoslav BEŠKER, "Quando Foscolo portò l'amico al ballo dei morlacchi", *Atti e Memorie della Società Dalmata di Storia Patria*, XXV, n.s. XIV/5, 2003, 153-165.

was a *štokavian*-type different from the *čakavian* spoken in the littoral. In various countries of our continent the term Morlack became a negative word, which defined the outsider. Even today the words *welsch* and *lak* are used to mock the Italian people of the Südtirol and the Slovene hills around Trieste (Kras, It. Carso). Vice versa, as people of South Europe, the Italian is still the *włoch* in Poland and another branch of the authentic *vlach* is still retraceable in Moravia. Owing to this complexity and the provocative use of this term, it should be noted that none of the ethnic groups of the Balkan regions calls himself Morlack or *vlah*.⁷

Abbot Fortis was a protégé of John Stuart, Earl of Bute, who funded the printing expenses for the *Poems of Ossian*, gathered by James Macpherson in the 1760s and the Italian translation published by Melchiorre Cesarotti. In the *Viaggio* and in the previous *Saggio sopra l'isola di Cherso ed Osero* (1771) Fortis sketched a parallelism between the Celtic-Scottish poems and the heroic songs of the Morlacks (“In the same way of Your Scottish Celts, lot of curious and interesting pieces of national poetry are transmitted [by heart]”); as examples he translated into Italian the texts of *Hasanaginicca* (*Canto della dolce sposa di Asan Agà* in the quoted *Viaggio*) and two *pjesme* titled *Canto di Vuko Brancovich e Milos Cobilich*.⁸ Some years later, the Dalmatian Giulio Bajamonti edited his “Morlacchismo d’Omero” in the Venetian periodical *Nuovo Giornale Enciclopedico d’Italia* (1797).⁹

7 Inoslav BEŠKER, “Dell’identità dei morlacchi”, *Atti e Memorie della Società Dalmata di Storia Patria*, XXVIII, n. s. XVII/8, 2006, 63-83; Id., *I morlacchi nella letteratura europea*, Rome: Il Calamo, 2007.

8 Alberto FORTIS, *Viaggio in Dalmazia*, “De’ costumi de’ morlacchi”, 88-90: “Io ho messo in italiano parecchi canti eroici de’ morlacchi, uno de’ quali, che mi sembra nel tempo medesimo ben condotto e interessante, unirò a questa mia lunga diceria [i.e. *Hasanagica*]. Non pretenderei di farne confronto colle poesie del celebre bardo scozzese [i.e. *Ossian*], di cui la nobiltà dell’animo vostro donò all’Italia in più completa forma [referred to John Stuart], facendone ripubblicare la versione del chiarissimo abate Cesarotti, ma mi lusingo che la finezza del vostro gusto vi ritroverà un’altra spezie di merito, ricordante la semplicità de’ tempi omerici e relativa al costume della nazione. Il testo illirico, cui troverete dopo la mia traduzione, vi metterà a portata di giudicare quanto disposta a ben servire alla musica e alla poesia sarebbe questa lingua, vocalissima ed armoniosa, che pur è quasi totalmente abbandonata anche dalle nazioni colte che la parlano”; Id., *Saggio d’osservazioni sopra l’isola di Cherso ed Osero*, Venice: Storti, 1771, 145; *Lettera al signor Giovanni Symonds*: “Ho trovato che nello stesso modo si perpetuano molti curiosi e interessanti pezzi di poesia nazionale all’uso de’ vostri Celti scozzesi”.

9 Giulio BAJAMONTI, “Il morlacchismo d’Omero”, *Nuovo Giornale Enciclopedico d’Italia*, X, Venice: Storti, 1797, 77-98.

Bajamonti's Morlackism is very different from the contemporaneous exotic descriptions of the *vlas*, because the polymath from Split introduces a new anthropological paradigm.¹⁰ At that time, the founders of a renewed Primitivism, as Cesarotti, Friedrich Herder and Michael Denis, this last one the father of the *Bardendichtung*, were engaged in a debate about Homer and Ossian as a consequence of the true concept of nation and its poetry, referring to Scotland, Italy, Germany, Croatia, Poland, and so on. They rejected the universal principles of nature, established by the French Enlightenment. Their aim was also to demonstrate that the technique, and partially the matter, of the ancient unwritten songs performed by Scottish and Gaelic bards, or the Greek rhapsodists, were the same.¹¹ Bajamonti's discourse interrupts this controversy and introduces a breakdown in the framework of Classicism. He analyses the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* from an opposite point of view, rejecting any philological approach to the poems. In his short treatise, he lists the same attitudes of the ancient Hellenic civilization and the Morlack folk tradition, on the basis of a new original interpretation. In fact, he relies on the authoritative Giambattista Vico's *Scienza nuova* and explains that the Morlack, as the Greek at the time of the war of Troy, lives in the heroic period, in which the mind is unable to distinguish by analogy or difference.¹² This is the phase of human progress in which mythology flourishes.¹³ So the *guslar* player from Dalmatia is not comparable with the Celtic bard, who cancelled any reference to gods: this is why Homer is the

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- 10 The life and works of Bajamonti are described by Ivan MILČETIĆ, "Dr. Julije Bajamonti i njegova djela" [Doctor Giulio Bajamonti and His Work], *Rad*, JAZU, 192, 1912, 97-250.
- 11 Mira JANKOVIĆ, "Ossian kao poticaj za sakupljanje narodnih pjesama kod Južnih Slavena" [Ossian as Stimulus to Collect the Folk Songs of South Slav Peoples], *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje*, knjiga 38, JAZU, Zagreb 1954, 177-221; Ivan MIMICA, "Mjesto Julija Bajamontija u hrvatskoj usmenoj književnosti" [Giulio Bajamonti's Position in the Croatian Unwritten Literature], in *Splitski polihistor Julije Bajamonti. Zbornik radova sa znanstvenog skupa održanog 30 listopada 1994. godine u Splitu* [The Polyhistorian Giulio Bajamonti from Split. Proceedings of the Congress Held in Split, October, 30, 1994], Split: Književni krug, 1996, 199-219.
- 12 Sanja ROIĆ, "Giulio Bajamonti, un vichiano dalmata", *Bollettino del Centro Studi Vichiani*, XXIV-XXV, 1994-1995, 195-203.
- 13 Giambattista VICO, *La scoperta del vero Omero seguita dal Giudizio sopra Dante*, Pisa: ETS, 2006; Antonino PAGLIARO, *Altri saggi di critica semantica*, Messina - Florence: D'Anna, 1961, the chapter "Omero e la poesia popolare", 447-474.

unique archaic pattern for the Morlack, without any compromise with Ossian or the primitive man à la Rousseau.¹⁴

It is noteworthy that Bajamonti's poetic Morlackism and the ethic Morlackism replace the traditional categories offered by the historians and philologists on the example of the *Empfinder* Ossian. In a narrow sense, the poetic Morlackism is sustained in several ways. Firstly the technique of the blind *guslar*, who sings by heart epic poems on the *gusle* and recreates some stanzas about Slavic heroes such as Kraljević Marko and the Albanian Lek Skanderbeg, is a heritage from the Homeric time. Secondly, the structures of the *Iliad* and of the *pjesme* are very similar; for instance the repetition of the same verses is similar in introducing the poem, in passing from one theme to another or in the conclusion. In the *pjesme*, the adjectives that depict some parts of the human body, or some details of the heroes' insight or of the landscape, are reminiscent of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The same happens with the custom of hand-butchered animals or drinking and eating abundantly. To be precise, the author emphasises Thetis's protests as a way to demonstrate how the Morlack woman has the same attitude to express her dissatisfaction about her own husband. Such a behaviour is unacceptable for the repressive morality of modern European society, which denies sexuality in marriage if practised for pleasure. Nevertheless, there are two incongruities in this writing: the first one refers to the paradox of the title and the second one to the choice of the language. Bajamonti explains the use of an anachronism – Homer after the Morlacks – to demonstrate to the European intelligentsia the greatness and the beauty of the Morlacks' songs.¹⁵ Concerning the language, it can be hypothesized that he used Italian as a way to divulgate his ideas, because this language was known in several Mediterranean countries.

Bajamonti describes his patriotic feeling (he calls the Morlacks “nostra gente”), disdaining the Dalmatian learned class that had neglected its native Slavic/Croatian language. On the contrary, he appreciates the poets of Dubrovnik, as his family friends Sorkočević and the Latinist Đuro Ferić, who uphold the tradition of writing in Croatian. Bajamonti's friendship with Ferić helps us to clarify other two aspects of the cultural life in Dalmatia, i.e. the polemics about Ossian and the birth of Romanticism in Croatia. Through Count Stefano from Zadar and Ferić, Bajamonti could send his “Morlacchi-

14 One can find a similar idea in Herder's writings about Ossian and Homer: Isaiah BERLIN, *Vico and Herder. Two Studies in the History of Ideas*, London: Hogarth Press, 1976; see also Luigi FERRERI, *La questione omerica dal Cinquecento al Settecento*, Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2007.

15 BAJAMONTI, “Il morlacchismo d'Omero”, 79, 97-98.

smo” to Michael Denis, court librarian of the Hofbibliothek in Vienna, and he also prepared a translation of his essay in German.¹⁶ In fact, after the fall of Venice he saw Austria as the only place to spread the culture of the Croatian inhabitants of the coast. In 1799, Ferić published an epistle in Latin in honour of Bajamonti (*Ad clarissimum virum Julium Bajamontium spatatensem. Georgii Ferrich ragusini Epistola*), stating that the Gaelic traditions were the cause of the difference between the Caledonian and the Morlack (“sunt alii a nostri et Homeri a moribus”).¹⁷ Probably with the aim of studying the Morlacks’ costumes, Bajamonti visited Dalmatinska Zagora in 1796. From the observation of people he deduced that the Morlack was different both from the Barbaric peoples without poetry and myths, and from the civilized ones. The Morlacks represented a rare case of survival of an ancient *genos* that still lived in the first historical phase as did Homer’s Greeks. Since the ancient South Slav survived in the Morlack ethnic group, Bajamonti, as the first of the Romantic writers, wanted to collect the old poetries and recover the language of his ‘ancestors’. In light of this, he discovered his own identity as he confesses in the “Morlacchismo”: “The thought has come to me to make him [Homer] a Slav. I see no other means by which to understand that this divine genius belongs to me. I thus want to make myself related to him in a certain manner”.¹⁸

During the nineteenth century the term Morlack came to be used less and less in Dalmatia and it was transformed into an ambiguous nickname denoting a lowest degree of human civilization. As noticed by Larry Wolff, “the population of Habsburg Dalmatia was counted by language” and 96 percent of the inhabitants were designated as “Serbisch-Kroatisch”¹⁹ in the census of 1910. Deprived of ethnic significance, the Morlack gradually vanished in the years when the Slavic prototype was extended from Croatia to other regions such as Bosnia, Serbia and Montenegro. This is highlighted

16 JANKOVIĆ, “Ossian kao poticaj za sakupljanje narodnih pjesama kod Južnih Slavena”, 200-201.

17 *Ad clarissimum virum Julium Bajamontium spatatensem. Georgii Ferrich ragusini Epistola*, Ragusa [Dubrovnik]: Trevisan, 1799, 21. On Ferić as a collector of popular poetry see Slobodan Prosperov NOVAK, “Metamorfoze hrvatskog prosvjetiteljstva” [The Metamorphosis of the Croatian Enlightenment], *Kolo*, XIV, 4, 2003, 96-143: 129-131.

18 Partially translated by Larry WOLFF, “The Rise and Fall of Morlacchismo. South Slavic Identity in the Mountains of Dalmatia”, in *Yugoslavia and its Historians: Understanding the Balkan Wars of the 1990s*, ed. by Norman M. Naimark and Holly Case, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003, 37-52.

19 WOLFF, “The Rise and Fall of Morlacchismo. South Slavic Identity in the Mountains of Dalmatia”, 48.

by Federici's comedy of 1793, whose title reveals that the term Morlack refers to the ancient Slav (*Li antichi slavi, ossia le nozze dei morlacchi*). At the time of the Illyrian Movement of the 1830s, the chronotype was inverted, so that the Morlacks became an imaginary community cancelled by the *Realpolitik*. This evolution has a propitious medium in the Italian periodical *La Favilla*, edited by Francesco Dall'Ongaro in Trieste, a strategic town at the boundary of the Slavic and German worlds. Inspired by Giuseppe Mazzini's idea of democracy and the mutual help among nations, the magazine had three eminent Dalmatians among its collaborators: Niccolò Tommaseo from Šibenik, Ivan August Kaznačić and Orsatto Pozza, known as Medo Pucić, both of them from Dubrovnik.²⁰ From 1839 to 1844, these intellectuals worked as promoters of the unity of the South Slavs with the help of the *Favilla* editor-in-chief, Dall'Ongaro. Tommaseo and Kaznačić enthusiastically emphasised the reform of Ljudevit Gaj, the leader of the Illyrian Movement, who introduced the *štokavian* idiom in Croatia as a standard language for all countries at the South-East of the Habsburg Empire: i.e. from Slavonia to the borderline with Bulgaria. As a consequence, they rejected the Dalmatian custom of speaking Italian. From 1842 to 1844, Pucić and Kaznačić intensified this linguistic and cultural mission with fifteen articles on European Slavic literature entitled "Studi sugli slavi", written for the Italian public and for the Slav people of Trieste: autochthonous Slovenes, Croats from the surroundings, and the rich Serb merchants, who had come from Venice one century before.²¹ They broadened the idea that the authentic national literature was linked to the poems sung by the "Illyrian bards", embodying those poems composed on recent events, too. From this populism associated to the pan-Slavic idea derives the rejection of the tenebrous North European models and the corrupted "Latin countries" (particularly referred to Milton, Scott, Hugo and Byron). According to their opinion, Trieste was the best melting place where three different and representative cultures of the continent interacted. A consequence of their romantic thought was the birth of a new concept of people and nation, without any social or linguistic differences in the Balkan area. Pucić and Kaznačić anthologized biographies on Ivan Gundulić,

20 See the anthology edited by Giorgio NEGRELLI: *La Favilla (1836-1846). Pagine scelte tratte dalla rivista*, Udine: Del Bianco, 1985.

21 See the Introductory Word written for the "Saggio d'una nuova versione dei canti popolari illirici", *La Favilla*, VIII, 1843/22, 369: "la *Favilla*, edita in una città mista, circondata da popoli d'origine slava, posta sul confine d'Italia e della Germania, doveva mostrare una fisionomia dove le tre nazioni in certa maniera si distinguessero".

Dositej Obradović and Petar Preradović and published excerpts from their works.²² The Italian public knew Adam Mickiewicz's works thanks to the translations of some pages of *Dziady* (*The Ancestors*). The needs for a Balkan synthesis is also testified by the volume collecting the lectures on the Serb epics and songs, held by Mickiewicz at the College of France in 1841. In his introductory word, Count Pucić talked about the changes he made in the original title, i.e. Serbs Songs transformed into Illyrian Songs (*Dei canti popolari illirici, discorso detto da Adamo Mickiewicz nel Collegio di Francia a Parigi e tradotto da Orsatto Pozza con un'appendice dei testi illirici citati dall'autore*, 1860).²³ This modification was justified for two reasons. Firstly because the lyrics analyzed by the poet of Zaosie were a common patrimony of Slavonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Dalmatia; secondly because the Serbian language represented the most beautiful model for the literature of the southern Slavs: "On the frontispice I have substituted the title Serb songs, as named by Mickiewicz, with Illyrian songs to explain to the Italian reader [...] the country it refers to".²⁴

The passage from the Morlack to the Slav also influences the theatrical activity in Italy. In Federici's comedy *The Ancient Slavs, or the Wedding of the Morlacks*, the protagonists show three variants of the same ethnic group, whose temperaments can be grasped in these following characters: Sericza is a young man of Slavic origins who has accepted the Italian culture; Marcovich represents the wisdom of the old Morlack, proud of his own traditions, who happily cohabits with the Italians; Dusmanich is the cruel Balkan man who fights the Turks and looks with suspicion at the Italians, too.²⁵ The comedy also has realistic qualities: for example some

22 Bernard STULLI, "Tršćanska Favilla i južni slaveni"[The Triestine Favilla and the South Slavs], *Anali Jadranskog Instituta JAZU*, Zagreb, 1, 1956, 7-82.

23 Adam MICKIEWICZ, *Dei canti popolari illirici, discorso detto da Adamo Mickiewicz nel Collegio di Francia a Parigi e tradotto da Orsatto Pozza con un'appendice dei testi illirici citati dall'autore*, Zadar: Fratelli Battara, 1860.

24 Under the Italian name Orsatto Pozza, Medo Pucić writes in the Foreword to this book: "Sul frontespizio ho sostituito al nome di Canti serbi, come li chiamò il Mickiewicz, quello di Canti illirici, per indicare al lettore italiano con una voce più comune, sebbene meno esatta, il paese del quale si tratta; ora però voglio ricordargli esser essi patrimonio di quella privilegiata parte degli slavi abitanti nell'Illirio che occupano la Slavonia, la Servia, il Montenegro, la Bosnia, l'Erzegovina ed una parte della Dalmazia, formano la famiglia serba, tengono il mezzo fra i bulgari ed i croati, parlano il miglior dialetto, hanno avuto ed hanno la miglior storia e la miglior letteratura"; see *Avvertenza del traduttore*, in MICKIEWICZ, *Dei canti popolari illirici*, 4.

25 Published in *Opere teatrali edite ed inedite di Camillo Federici per la prima volta pubblicate e corrette da lui medesimo*, t. XIII, Venice: Andreola, 1816, 209-275.

quotations refer to the *bariactar* (soldier with the flag), the *marama* (scarf), the *rakia* (national liqueur), and the *svati* (wedding witnesses), moreover Marcovich exalts the national heroes Kraljević, Skanderbeg and Dukgin, a Serb and two Albanians, united in the same epic tradition. It can be deduced, through these characters, that the author has symbolized civilization as a process linked to the sea shores. The result is a dichotomy between the coastal inhabitant and the inland one. The young Sericza, having accepted the laws of progress, could be an Italian while, to the contrary, Dusmanich, away from the Adriatic shores, still lives as a barbarian.

During his stay in Trieste as editor-in-chief of *La Favilla*, Francesco Dall'Ongaro worked as a supporter of the Slavic Renaissance and he contributed with his writings to the creation of a new South Slavic type, who replaced the former Morlack. In fact *La fidanzata del Montenegro* (*The Girlfriend of Montenegro*, 1869) is based on the stories of his friend Petar Petrović Njegoš, Prince of Montenegro, who frequently stayed in the Adriatic town.²⁶ Dall'Ongaro's new mainstream is characterized by the creation of human types like the avenger Usca, the Dalmatian wise man Drascovich, the Uskok pirates, all taken from history or real life as imposed by Italian Romanticism. The dispersion of the Morlack in the *mare magnum* of the Balkan nations is witnessed by Dall'Ongaro's novels and ballads. Examples are the tragedy *I dalmati* (*The Dalmatians*, 1845), the play *L'Ercole serbo* (*The Serb Hercules*, 1847), the ballad about the heroine Usca and, along the lines of George Sand's *Uscoque*, the ballad *Wila del Monte spaccato e l'origine della bora* (*Wila of the Broken Mountain and the Origin of the Bora*, 1842), translated into Croatian by August Šenoa (*Vila uskočka ili postanak bure*), which inspired the librettist Leone Fortis and the musician Francesco Petrocini to compose the opera *L'uscocco* (Milan, 1858, 1862).²⁷ The themes of revenge and honour in the tragedy *I dalmati* was not welcomed by the Dalmatian residents of Trieste. While, on the one hand they could accept the schematic separation of the urban Slav from the Barbaric one of the Military Borderland (in German:

26 Francesco DALL'ONGARO, *Racconti*, Florence: Le Monnier, 1869, 200-339.

27 Francesco DALL'ONGARO, *I dalmati*, Turin: Schiepatti, 1847, *Usca* was published in Id., *Poesie*, I, Trieste: Marenigh, 1840, II; Trieste: Weis, 1841, *Wila del Monte Spaccato*, in Id., *Fantasie drammatiche e liriche*, Firenze: Le Monnier, 1866. On the unknown *Ercole serbo*, staged in 1847, see Persida LAZAREVIĆ DI GIACOMO, *Il caso Ercole serbo: un tentativo di ricostruzione del dramma di Francesco Dall'Ongaro*, web site *Projekat Rastko - Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti* (Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts).

Militärgrenze), on the other hand they could not share the same cultural characteristics of the Balkan people.²⁸

Renewed attention to the Slavs was felt in Italy after the Unity in 1861. At that time, our country initiated its foreign policy aimed at attracting into its own orbit Dalmatia and the Balkans in order to undermine Austrian strength. The political compromises between the Italian minority and the Croats in Dalmatia are reflected in the opera *La madre slava* (*The Slav Mother*, 1865) by Nikola Strmić (quoted also as Niccolò de Stermich) from Zadar, in which two Illyrian anthems are sung.²⁹ That was a failed attempt to construct a national South Slavic drama, as required by the musicologist Franjo Ksaver Kuhač, because the structure, language and grammar of the *Madre slava* are Italian.³⁰ This opera by number, dedicated to the bishop of Đakovo Josip Juraj Strossmayer, is an abridgment of the homonymous tragedy written by Luigi Fichert from Zadar, a follower of Mazzini and pupil of Tommaseo.³¹ For political reasons the scenery and the story are located in Montenegro, the only free nation of the Balkans admired by Mickiewicz for the heroic deeds of its citizens, who fought for their independence from the Ottomans and Austria. In the original tragedy, translated into Croatian as *Slavska majka* (*The Slav Mother*) by Antun Šimonić in 1861, the foreword explains the patriotic and supranational thoughts of the author.³² In fact, the *Madre slava* is an allegory on the Italian and Slavic peoples against the Habsburg Monarchy; at the same time Fichert rejects the aggressive Panslavism and apologizes to readers for having written in Italian and not in his mother tongue. The use of the

28 The protests of Dalmatian residents are remembered by the author in the Foreword: "Notizie storico-critiche sull'argomento di questo dramma", DALL'ONGARO, *I dalmati*, 10.

29 Namely *Još Hrvatska nij' propala* (*Croatia Hasn't Fallen Yet*), composed by Ferdo Livadić on the text of Ljudevit Gaj, and *Mi smo braćo ilirskoga* (*We Are Brothers of Illyria*) by Mijo Hajko. The manuscript score of Strmić's opera is kept in the National Library of Zagreb. See Caterina BRUGNERA, "La madre slava di Nikola Strmić: un tentativo di incontro tra illirismo e opera italiana", *Musica e Storia*, XII/3, 2004, 591-609.

30 Zdravko BLAŽEKOVIĆ, "Prilog biografiji Nikole Strmića" [A Contribution to the Biography of Nikola Strmić], *Rad, JAZU*, 409, 1988, 285-313. In this article there are some important letters sent by Kuhač to Strmić.

31 See Mate ZORIĆ, "Romantički pisci u Dalmaciji na talijanskom jeziku" [Romantic Authors in Dalmatia Who Wrote in Italian], *Rad, JAZU*, 357, 1971, 353-476: 457-463.

32 The Italian and Croatian versions of Fichert's tragedy were published by the same printer Battara: Luigi FICHERT, *La madre slava*, Zara: Fratelli Battara, 1857, Antun ŠIMONIĆ, *Slavska majka*, Zadar: u Knjigopečatnji Braće Battarah, 1861.

Italian language is justified by the author's necessity to inform our country about the social and national situation of the littoral. Concerning his fear of Panslavism, he shares Mazzini's ideas, who affirmed: "instead of a Slavic confederation among three groups (Polish, Czech, and South Slavs) with the strength of forty million free men", there would be a Russian unity with one hundred million slaves!³³ The same occurs in the article *Panslavisme* written by Mickiewicz: "Les savants invoquent toujours la communauté de race, oubliant que ce sont les institutions religieuses et politiques qui ont créé les separations qu'ils voudraient anéantir, et qu'il est impossible de détruire tout le passé historique d'une nation pour la ramener à son origine physique [...]. On doit donc renoncer à l'espoir de grouper le peuples slaves autour de telle ou telle forme gouvernementable, autour d'une idée purement physique de sang et de race".³⁴

Two months before the presentation of *Madre slava*, the Bellini Theatre of Palermo staged *La vendetta slava* (*The Slav Revenge*) by Pietro Platania.³⁵ The libretto of this opera, written by Francesco De Beaumont, has the same title as a Giovanni Prati's ballad and the names of the protagonists, Ivano baritone and Lida soprano, are also the same.³⁶ Nevertheless, the name Svaran (the father of Ivano and Lida) has Celtic rather than Slavic origins and it is taken from the *Poems of Ossian*. The narrative plot is set in Slavonia during the Tenth Century, and provides a lot of references to the Baltic provenience of the Slavs as well as the conflict between the Venetians and the South Slavs. The opera also involves the god Perun, the Slavic *Jupiter quercus*, and the topos of blood feud that appears in some novels and poems as the *Fidanzata del Montenegro* of Dall'Ongaro, *Jele* published in the journal *La Favilla* by Giovanni Battista Machiedo, and *Vendetta slava* by Giovanni Prati: each of them written in the 1840s.³⁷ The

33 Giuseppe MAZZINI, *La questione d'oriente: lettere slave*, Rome: Commissione per la Pubblicazione delle Opere di Giuseppe Mazzini, 1877, 33.

34 The article "Panslavisme" in Adam MICKIEWICZ, *Les Slaves: pages choisies*, Paris: Sansot, 1913, 261-262.

35 The manuscript score is kept in the Library of Naples' Conservatory; some numbers for vocal score were published by Ricordi in Milan (undated).

36 See Francesco de BEAUMONT, *Vendetta slava. Melodramma in tre atti*, Palermo: Lao, 1865, a copy of the libretto can be found in the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana of Venice; Giovanni PRATI, *Vendetta slava*, in Id., *Opere edite e inedite*, vol. I, Milan: Guigoni, 1862, 238-245.

37 Francesco DALL'ONGARO, *La fidanzata del Montenegro*, in Id., *Racconti*, Florence: Le Monnier, 1869, 305: "In una capanna posta sull'estrema frontiera del Montenegro, non lungi da Cattaro, le guardie incaricate di raccogliere le camicie insanguinate, ebbero molto da fare prima di strapparne una dalle mani di due po-

topic on the bloodstained shirt of a dead man, hung up as a reminder of revenge, previously ascribed to the Morlacks by Fortis,³⁸ emerged later from the friendly conversations about folk tradition in Montenegro between Dall'Ongharo and the Vladika Njegoš, during their stay in Trieste.

With regard to the musical structure, the score compounds both the Italian tradition and the French grand opéra; therefore the roles of choir and the *couleur locale* are very important, even though the latter is invented. For instance, the Perun prayer hymn, *O formidabile, possente nume* (Ex. 1), is a sad chromatic tune inspired by exotic oriental melodies, and the theme of revenge, *Fia Svaran vendicato* (Ex. 2), is a war omophonic anthem, both of them unrelated to the Balkan music culture.

Once again the *Vendetta* reintroduces a standardized Slavic type either as a barbaric hospitable person, or as a vindictive man of honour. The story does not deal with the political meaning as the *Madre slava* does and further, the Sicilian maestro, with his own work, conveys the “reminiscences” in a modern way. The driving force of the revenge theme, played by cellos and double basses, comes out at the end of the first act. Ivano, at the beginning of the second act, sings a recitative. The amazed avenger looks at the table, while the bloody dress of Svaran is hung up. From the window of the house we can see the idyllic landscape of the country. The inside-outside contrast is a metaphor that reflects Ivano's inner struggle; he loves his sister Lida but he is obliged to kill her Venetian husband Veniero. His doubts are removed when he listens to the revenge theme sung by the Slavic people offstage. The function and meaning of this invisible chorus are similar but not identical to the Wagnerian *Leitmotiv*, because the music is only inside Ivano's mind. It is worthwhile to remember that the same escamotage was introduced by Giuseppe Verdi in the conclusion of the first act of *Traviata*, when Violetta hears from outside some fragments of Alfredo's aria, which is not included in the libretto.

vere donne. Esse la riguardavano come una santa reliquia, come un talismano prezioso”. Giovan Battista MACHIEDO, “Jele”, *La Favilla*, I, 1846, XXI, 249-251.

38 Cf. FORTIS, *Viaggio in Dalmazia*, I, 59.

Soprano
O for - mi - da - bi - le - pos - sen - - - te

Tenore 1
O for - mi - da - bi - le - o for - mi - da - bi - le pos - sen - te

Tenore 2
O for - mi - da - bi - le pos - sen - te

Basso
O for - mi - da - bi - le - pos - sen - te Nu - - - - -

S
Nu - me dall' - oc - chio vi - gi - le e - ter - no lu - me

1
Nu - me dall' - oc - - - - chio vi - gi - le e - ter - no lu - me

2
Nu - me dall' - oc - chio vi - gi - le e - ter - no lu - me

B
me dall' - oc - chio vi - gi - le e - ter - no Nu - me

Ex. 1 The Slavic theme: *O formidabile, possente nume* (Act I, 8, chorus).

SCENA REC. E ROMANZA

Per ignoti estranei lidi

Per Baritone

Eseguita dal Sig.^r Enrico Storti.

Allegro agitato.

p

VOCI INTERNE (sul palco scenico) Fia Sva - ran ven - di - ca - to

Fia Sva - ran ven - di - ca - to

f

Ex. 2 The revenge theme *Fia Svaran vendicato*
(Act II, 1: "Scena, recitativo e romanza", chorus and Ivano).

Piano introduction for the first system, featuring a treble and bass staff with various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

(S'alza la tela)

E il suo tet - to non più conta - mi - na - to

E il suo tet - to non più conta - mi - na - to

Vocal line with lyrics and piano accompaniment.

Piano accompaniment for the second system, including a treble and bass staff with notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as *ff*.

IVANO seduto, tien appoggiato il capo sulla tavola.

Piano accompaniment for the third system, including a treble and bass staff with notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Piano accompaniment for the fourth system, including a treble and bass staff with notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

M.D. *pp*

IVANO **Recit.**

Il dop-pio ol-trag-gio al-la pater-na tom-ba can-celle-rò col

Recit.

All.^o giusto

san-gue! Mi pa-gherai tu l'on-ta, o

ve-neto su-per-bo, e tu del

sf *v*

After the two mentioned operas, in the second half of the nineteenth century the Slavic exoticism lost its attractiveness. A new consciousness, that the Croat and the Italian inhabitants of Istria and Dalmatia are branches of the same family, develops gradually, preventing the Italian composers to work on Slavic subjects. Further, the Croats do not accept the role of subordination, which sees them as good interpreters of exotic plays; at the same time the Italians are deprived of their supremacy as they are unprepared in front of a new adversary. While the secular social separation between the two peoples is no longer a topical argument, another incomparable conflict develops – the sudden change in which the colonialist and the colonised become indistinguishable provokes dismay. A loss of self-confidence, which arises from the perfect similarity between the two peoples, dominates, and the previous paternalism turns into suspicion and suspicion turns into repulsion. New prejudices lie in ambush; the enemy is the illiterate peasant of the hills around Trieste, and of the Istrian and Dalmatian lands, instigated by the middle class and the clergy. This prejudice is a political lie, taken as a slogan to demonstrate that the Slav is an inferior human being. Nevertheless, the reconstruction of this profile, repeated *ad nauseam*, is not only the fruit of the unacknowledged or unexpected effect of the loss of the Italian authority, but also the result of the standardization provoked by the Illyrian movement, involved in constructing a monolithic but unreal cultural unity. From 1830s onwards, the Illyrian elite cancelled every form of linguistic autonomy and elaborated a transversal language for the Balkans, as a means to glorify the epic of all Slavic peoples and with the basic intent to show that the Slavs had European dignity. This would have been an impossible effort without the help of a populist censorship; a tendency that influenced also the great collection of folksongs *Južnoslovenske narodne popevke* (*South Slavic Folk Songs*) of Franjo Ksaver Kuhač, published in four volumes between the years 1878 and 1881.³⁹ While the Slovenes reacted negatively to the success of the national South Slavic Revival (*Narodni preporod*) – see the case of France Prešeren, but also the notable exception of the Slovene Stanko Vraz who wrote in *štokavian* – to the contrary, the Croats sacrificed their *kajkavian* language, as emphasised by the disrespectful words of Petrica Kerempuh. The verses of Miroslav Krleža tell us, through an allegory, that Ljudevit Gaj, the head of the gravediggers

39 Stanislav TUKSAR, “Die Geburt der Musik aus dem Geiste des Volkes: The Construction of the Idea of National Music in Franjo Ksaver Kuhač’s (1834-1911) Historiography – Slavic vs. German vs. Italian”, *Musica e Storia*, XII/3, 2004, 563-590.

(*oberpilko*), walked in procession with the young Illyrians, “the procurers of death” who buried the Northern Croatian (i.e. *kajkavian*) language:

Ileri kak pilki, faklonosi,
 zaškrabani dijaki, larfonosi,
 pokapali su paradno starinsku reč KAJ
 [...]
 A oberpilko v gali,
 s pogrebnom faklom v roki
 med ilerskimi fanti,
 mertvečkemi snuboki,
 španceral se
 Doktor Ludwig von Gay.⁴⁰

40 Cf. Miroslav KRLEŽA, *Le ballate di Petrica Kerempuh*, ed. by Silvio Ferrari, Turin, Einaudi, 2007, 190-191. On the diffusion of *neoštokavjan* and the various linguistic compromises about the adoption of the so-called Serbo-croatian see Ivo BANAC, “Main Trends in the Croatian Language Question”, *Most/The Bridge. Journal of Croatian Literature*, 1, 1990, 7-96.



A. Forlani del.

USCA

*No l'ascolai corvandosi
Aemar Martina... ingrati!*

The revenge of Usca from Francesco Dall'Ongaro, *Usca* (1840).

DEI
CANTI POPOLARI ILLIRICI

DISCORSO DETTO DA

ADAMO MICKIEVICZ

NEL COLLEGIO DI FRANCIA A PARIGI

e tradotto da

ORSATTO POZZA

CON UNA APPENDICE DEI TESTI ILLIRICI

CITATI DALL'AUTORE.



ZARA

FRATELLI BATTARA TIPOGRAFI EDITORI

1860.



Guslar of Vlaho Bukovac. It is interesting to note that this Croatian painter was baptized in Dubrovnik with the name Biagio Faggioni.