THE SLAVIZATION OF THE SLOVENE
AND CROATIAN LEXICONS:
PROBLEMS IN THEIR INTERRELATIONSHIP IN THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY

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Prominent in the catalogue of Rado Lencek’s scholarly interests has always been the study of the development and emergence of the Slavic literary languages of the Habsburg Empire. This paper treats an important aspect of the lexical development and close relationship of those two languages on which he has concentrated most of his attention—Croatian [Cr] and Slovene [Sln].

While the occasional use of Cr words in Sln goes back at least to Sebastian Krelj (1538-67), it is not until the dictionaries of Pohlin (1781) and Gutsmann (1789) that the rich Cr lexicographical tradition was exploited in any systematic fashion for the enrichment of the Sln lexicon. In Cr, on the other hand, there was, as one might expect, little if any discernible Sln lexical influence before 1800.

The incorporation by Sln and Cr of lexical items from other Slavic languages has a long history dating back at least to the 16thC. To be sure, the early lexical enrichment can be characterized on the whole as unplanned and spasmodic. During the course of their emergence as fully fledged literary codes in the 19thC, however, both languages underwent what is commonly referred to as “Slavization” on a quite unprecedented scale. For Slovene, for example, it has been estimated that about a third of all words and derivatives is “the product of the artificial Siavization of the literary language”. This recourse to material from other Slavic languages fulfilled several functions simultaneously:

1) it brought about a rapprochement with the other Slavic languages;
2) it facilitated rapid enrichment (intellectualization) of the vocabulary;
3) it satisfied demands for the removal of non-Slavic elements (especially German, Italian and Hungarian);
4) it provided word-building models for further enrichment.

In the case of Slovene, the Slavization process was crucial in the setting of the norms of the orthography, morphology and syntax of the literary language. This paper, however, is concerned only with the lexicon.

The Slavization of Sln and Cr should not be studied in isolation but rather against the background of those patterns of diffusion and migration which characterize recent intra-Slavic lexical contact. The position of the two languages in these patterns is complicated by several factors:

1) each language could in theory be beneficiary and benefactor to the other;
2) each language might serve the other as conduit for the transmission of words from yet other Slavic languages.

The aim of this paper is to address the problem of this complex interrelationship with a view to unravelling some of these entanglements in the migratory patterns.

It is axiomatic in Ján Kollár’s doctrine of Slavic reciprocity, which provided the theoretical underpinning for the Slavization process, that any of the Slav languages could in principle serve as sources of lexical enrichment. In practice, however, the choice was limited by historical ties, confessional solidarity, political circumstances, and the prestige
of individual languages. For Sln and Cr the obvious model for lexical enrichment (as also in orthography) was provided by Czech [Cz]. As well as reassessing its own internal resources and calquing heavily on German, Cz had borrowed extensively from Polish [Pol] and Russian [R]. What concerns us here is whether such words emanating from Cz passed through Sln on their way to Cr or vice versa. Sln and Cr were also open to enrichment from R (either via Cz or Serbian [Sb] or directly). Finally, Cr and Sln evolved in quite similar circumstances, faced similar problems, were in close geographical proximity, had virtually identical word-building potentialities and were considered by some to be dialects of the same language. Therefore, all the prerequisites were present for a fruitful interpenetration of lexical items, even after Preseren and Cop had explicitly rejected the model of a common literary language for the Slovenes and Croats, as advocated by the Illyrians.

The problem of sorting out the contributions of the individual Slavic languages to Cr was first recognized almost a century ago by Tomo Maretić. The possibility of Sln intermediary for Slavic loans in Cr was first explored by Anton Breznik, the author of several studies on Slavic loans into and out of Sln. Despite valuable contributions from Vladoje Dukat on contemporary Cr dictionaries, Ljudevit Jonke on purism and Slavic loans in Cr, Annalies Lāgreid on R loans in Sln, and Matthias Rammelmeyer on calques in Cr, there is still a great deal that is unknown not only about the patterns involved but also the route of entry of many individual words. Moreover, both Slovene and Croatian scholarship suffer from a lack of serious studies of Slavization in their respective languages, a situation compounded by the extraordinary absence of any proper examination of the nature of the relationship of the two languages in the 19thC.

The observations I shall present here are based on a detailed investigation of approximately 150 key words in Cr of the 1830’s and 1840’s. They stem from my work on the influence of the Illyrian Movement on the vocabulary of literary Cr. Clearly, for the subject at hand, they have two distinct limitations:

1) the smallness of the sample precludes a proper statistical extrapolation;
2) the relationship is seen from an overwhelmingly Cr perspective.

It is my belief, however, that, if future investigators can answer my challenge by extending the sample or by undertaking a similar examination of contemporary Sln usage, we shall be much closer to a solution of this interesting chapter in the Sln-Cr relationship.

In addition to difficulties of documentation and dating, two major problems must be faced:

1) since the two languages are so closely related and it is possible for a word to be equally well motivated in one language as in the other, the possibility that a given word has arisen autochthonously in each language cannot be ruled out.
2) since these loanwords usually undergo a regular set of sound-substitutions as they pass from one language to another, it is often impossible to use phonetic criteria for the purposes of identification.

On the other hand, there are several kinds of evidence which can provide a clue to identification:

1) A specific dictionary in the other language may be cited as the source.
2) Contemporary purists may voice an objection to the introduction of a given word.
3) The word may not be semantically motivated in the language in question.
4) The distribution of the lexeme in the various Slavic languages may correspond to a recognizable pattern.
At this point it seems appropriate to say something about the general lexical development of literary Cr and Sl in the first 60 years of the 19thC. All available evidence suggests that Sl was heavily influenced by Cz at the very beginning of the 19thC. This was chiefly the result of close contact between those Sl scholars belonging to the Baron Zois circle and Josef Dobrovský and his contemporaries. The dictionary compiled by Valentin Vodnik (1758-1819) throughout his life but left unpublished at his death for lack of funds, for example, incorporates many words from Dobrovský’s Cz dictionary of 1801. It is from this period too that the first conspicuous influence of R on Sl dates.

This productive activity in Slovene letters coincides with a period of decline in Cr lexicography and lexical enrichment (evident, among other things, in an inadequate knowledge of word-building mechanisms, the lack of responsible lexical enrichment, the absence of an authoritative dictionary, and the disunity of the dialectal base), which lasted until the early 1830s.

When at last the Cr situation began to improve, the Bohemianisms, Russianisms and neologisms of the Sl dictionaries found their way into Cr. This was accomplished in the main by use of Murko’s dictionary of 1833, which was not only a source for the Mazuranić-Užarević dictionary of 1842—the major lexicographical artifact of the Illyrian Movement—but was also well known to the Illyrians themselves from the time of its publication.

For the Slovenes, the 1830s and 1840s were crucial not only for the widespread rejection of the “Illyrian” model but also for the formation of a norm for literary Sl. In the lexical sphere, however, Sl did not undergo the wholesale enrichment process which characterizes Cr of this period. Thus, when Janežič’s dictionary appeared in 1850, many new words taken from recent Cr usage were registered in Sl for the first time. Another important conduit of Illyrian vocabulary for Sl was the publication in 1853 of a quadrilingual political and legal terminology for the use of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs of the Habsburg Empire. The reversal of the earlier direction of influence continued unmitigated throughout the century, despite the opposition of some purists.

The foregoing provides a convenient, if somewhat crude, framework for understanding the Sl-Cr lexical relationship. Unfortunately, however, the absence of good data for Cr of the 1820s and for Sl for the late 30s and 40s tempts the investigator into using both a priori and ex silentio arguments when assessing the provenance of a particular word. Furthermore, since the words in question are themselves then used as evidence for gauging the influence of one language on the other, the dangers of falling into a circular argument are clear to see. To exacerbate matters further, some scholars, notably Breznik, are too quick to assume an influence on the basis of anteriority alone. Not only is this dangerous in view of the inadequate evidence (made worse in Breznik’s case by his apparent ignorance of several key non-dictionary sources of the Illyrian period) but it is open to the challenge that it is based on the post hoc ergo propter hoc fallacy. It is simply not sufficient for Breznik to claim that, since a given lexeme is present in Murko in 1833 and absent in any Cr dictionary before Mazuranić-Užarević of 1842, it must be a Sl loan in Cr.

A proper examination of the Sl-Cr interrelationship must proceed on the basis of detailed individual word-histories seen in the context of the distribution patterns of similar words in the other Slavic languages. In order to illustrate some of the problems faced in investigating a word’s origin I offer the following, by no means atypical examples:

Sl nareče Cr narječe ‘dialect’:
In this meaning (as ‘adverb’ already in Stuili (1806) for Cr and Vodnik for Sl), the word is not attested in a Cr dictionary before Mazuranić-Užarević (1842), much earlier than
Janežič (1850), as given by Lägreid for Sin. Its first use in Cr dates from Gaj’s *Kratak Osnova horvatsko-slovenskoga pravopisa poleg mudrožubnih narodnih i prigospodarneh temelj i zrokov* (Buda, 1830). Despite its absence from his dictionaries (1818 and 1852), the word is recorded in Vuk’s *Pismenica* of 1814. The probable source of this word in Vuk, as indeed for most of his linguistic terms, is Russian, though it is perhaps worth noting that the same lexeme was already in use among Czechs and Slovaks in Vienna, where Vuk had just moved before writing his grammar. There is no justification, in any case, for regarding the Cr word as a Serbianism, since the vocabulary of Gaj’s work is not otherwise influenced by Vuk (the first widespread use of Vuk’s terms in Cr is not found until Vjekoslav Babukić, *Osnova slovnice slavjanske narčja ilirskoga* (Zagreb, 1836), another important early instance of the word in Cr usage). Furthermore, it would be more reasonable to accept this as one of several Bohemianisms introduced by Gaj in this work, written, it should be noted, shortly after his meeting with Ján Kollar, for whom Cz *nářečí* was a key term in his model of Slavic unity. It is instructive that the first instance of the new meaning in Sln cited by Lägreid is in a piece written in 1836 in Sln by the Illyrian Stanko Vraz. There seems little doubt that the word entered Sln from Cr, which had in its turn borrowed it from Cz.

**Sln Cr priroda ‘nature’**

*The earliest South Slavic dictionary attestations of this word are in Joakim Stulli, *Rjecoso-loxje*, 2 vols. (Dubrovnik, 1806) and Murko (1833). According to the Yugoslav Academy Dictionary, the word is first used in Obradović’s fables published in 1788. In Cr prose usage it is first found in *Danica Ilirska* in 1838 (though already listed in *Šbirká někôjih rečí* . . . published as a supplement to *Danica* in 1835). For Sln, the earliest recorded instance, according to Lägreid, p. 104, is in an article in *Krajnska Bčelica* (1832) written by J. Zupan, who could have known it from SCr usage. In Cz, *priroda* is usually seen as a Russianism of the early 19thC despite its appearance in texts from an earlier period.*

It seems unlikely that the word entered Cr usage directly from Obradović, where the source is clearly Russian. Stulli, where the word is similarly a Russianism, should be discounted as a probable source for Cr of the Illyrian period. The evidence of usage of the 1830’s, while suggesting that the word became acclimatized more quickly in Sln than in Cr, is insufficient as a basis for claims that the word entered Cr from Sln. A simultaneous loan in Cr and Sln from R (direct or via Cz) seems a better proposition.

**Cr glagol(tj) / Sln glagol ‘verb’**

*The earliest instance in Sln is in Vodnik’s *Pismenost* (grammar) of 1811 (cf. Lägreid, pp. 68-9). The form *glagol* is found in Vuk’s *Pismenica* of 1814, the probable source of Babukić’s *glagolj*, a form, be it noted, which Vuk explicitly criticized. Murko, who by marking it with an asterisk underlines its newness, notes both its attestation in Vodnik and its Russian origin. The evidence therefore suggests that the lexeme has entered Sln direct from R, and Cr via Sb from R. The fact that in contemporary Cz *hlahol* was gaining ground on the earlier calque *časoslov* before itself being replaced ultimately by the neologism *sloveso* may have helped to popularise *glagol* in Cr and Sln. However, there is no evidence in this instance of influence of Cr on Sln or vice versa.*

**Sln Cr slovar ‘dictionary’**

*Not surprisingly, in view of its lack of semantic motivation (‘word’ being in Sln *beseda*, in Cr *riječ*), this word is not recorded in Sln and Cr until relatively late. There has always been puristic resistance to it. For example, Vodnik was dissuaded from using it as the title
of his dictionary. Murko too registers the word but uses besednik in the title. Janežič is the first to call his dictionary slovar, since when it has become the usual Sln word. In Cr it is registered in a cross-reference in Stull but is not common until the Illyrian period, where it appears in the title of the Mažuranić-Užarević dictionary. It has subsequently been replaced by the better motivated and, even in the Illyrian period, better attested rječnik. Contemporary Cz, Slk and R all use the word and could have supplied the model for Sln and/or Cr. The fate of the word in Cr and Sln well illustrates the problems attendant on separating out the mutual relations of the two languages.

Of the words introduced or revived by the Illyrian Movement, 29 (or 19% of the sample) have an equivalent Sln form in either Vodnik or Murko. If we examine these lexemes with the same critical eye as the four words treated above, they fall into the following four groups (a separate Sln form is given only where contemporary spelling in the two languages differs):

1) words whatever their origin appearing simultaneously in Sln and Cr (22):

2) Bohemianisms entering Cr via Sln (3):

3) Sln forms borrowed from Cr (3):
   medmetak (Sln medmet) ‘interjection’, umjetnost (Sln vmetnost) ‘art’, utisak (Sln vtisk) ‘impression’.

4) Older Cr words borrowed by Sln (1):
   mudroljubje (Sln modroljubje) ‘philosophy’.

The large number of words listed as arising simultaneously in Sln and Cr (usually from a common source) compared to words where a clear direction of influence can be discerned should not surprise us. Critical examination can no longer support Breznik’s claim for several words, e.g. časopis, krajobraz, okolnost, slovstvo, that they undoubtedly entered Cr via or from Sln during the Illyrian period (he is equally mistaken about some supposed loans from Janežič’s dictionary by Šulek, e.g. blagostanje, glazba, mudrošlovac, mudrošlovje, predstava, sustav). Indeed to try to seek out the Cr element in Sln and vice versa in the 1830’s is to distort the realities of the situation. Both languages were equally open to influence from Czech and, as Lägreid has shown, Sln was open to R influence from a number of directions. Furthermore, words were free to pass back and forth between Ljubljana and Zagreb, since the languages were completely open to enrichment from each other. Each community was well informed about the activities of the other. This flow of information was facilitated of course by the not inconsiderable number of Slovenes who, in the early years at least, were sympathetic to, or even involved in, the Illyrian Movement. In short, the most salient characteristic of the Sln-Cr inter-relationship of this period is the
Of the words revived or introduced into Cr usage during the Illyrian period, a considerable number are attested at a later date in Sln:


It seems probable, though not provable in all cases, that these words have entered Sln directly from Cr. Of these 47 words, 25 are natively formed Cr words (calques, neologisms or resemanticized older words), 12 are from Cz, 4 from R, and 6 from R or Cz. This phase in the relationship of Cr and Sln is thus fundamentally different from the previous one:

1) Common, cooperative lexical development has given way to enrichment in one direction.
2) The Slavization process in Sln channelled through Cr.
3) The majority of the words originate in Serbo-Croatian itself.

In Cr, at least until Serbification at the end of the century introduced large numbers of words of Russian origin, Slavization was virtually synonymous with Bohemianization. For Sln, on the other hand, the valuable contributions of Jakopin and Lāgreid to the study of the R component in the language notwithstanding, it would be no exaggeration to describe Slavization as essentially a process of “Serbo-Croatianization”. Many Slovene purists of the 20th century came to recognize this fact and sought (especially after the First World War) to diminish the dominance of Sln by SCr. The attempted removal of SCr-isms, however, because of the problems of identification, entailed a de-Slavization of the language. A similar situation, it is worth noting, is evident in the treatment of Cz words by Slovak purists.

Interestingly enough, the words in our sample were not on the whole subject to removal and, as a result, most of them have remained in the Slovene literary language. The retention of these words is attributable to a combination of the following factors:

1) the word was already well established;
2) the word was semantically motivated and conformed to the word-building mechanisms of Sln;
3) Slovene purism was confronted with a flood ofSCR-isms and concentrated on those unnecessary and highly visible items which threatened to swamp the language at the end of the 19thC.

Ironically, the list of Illyrian words retained in SLn includes several items which, because of pressures of internationalization (a much stronger tendency in Cr than SLn) and Serbification, are now obsolete or archaic in modern Cr, e.g. bajeslovje, iztis, narodopisje, narodoslovje, slovnica, vzduh (but cf. Sb vzduh).

As we observed earlier, one of the main functions of Slavization was the rapprochement of the lexical systems of the Slavic languages. This rapprochement was particularly noticeable among the Slavic languages of the Habsburg Empire. Of the 155 words which I have investigated as part of the contribution of the Illyrian Movement to the development of the Cr lexicon, for example, as many as 49 lexical items are common to the four main Slavic languages of Austria-Hungary (the figures for individual languages are Cz: 59, Slk: 57, SLn: 82). Without question, the key role in this common development was played by Cz, which provided a model for the other 3 lexicons. However, the high correlation between SLn and Cr is also the result of:

1) their early close mutual cooperation; and
2) the impact of the Illyrian reforms on both Cr and SLn particularly in the 1830’s and 1840’s.

It is to be hoped that future studies of the SLn and Cr literary languages during this crucial phase in their lexical development will take proper cognizance of this close and fruitful relationship.

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REFERENCES

1. The term is used for instance by Lencek himself in The Structure and History of the Slovene Language (Columbus OH. 1982) 272-3.
2. France Bezlay, “Slovanske izposojenke v slovenčini,” 190-95 in Jezikovni pogovori, I (Ljubljana, 1965), 194. Unfortunately for the purposes of this paper, no estimate is available of the relative impact of the individual Slavic languages on the SLn lexicon.
3. For a recent attempt to establish such distributional patterns, see G. Thomas, “Problems in the Study of Migratory Loanwords in the Slavic Languages,” Canadian Slavonic Papers 27 (1985) 307-325, esp. 317-22.
5. For the general background to Cz as a model, see Dalibor Brozovič, “Češki standardni jezik kao etalon u doba srpskih narodnih preporoda,” 39-48 in Alois Jedlička and Vladimír Barnet (eds.), Slovanské spisovné jazyky v době obrození (Prague, 1974).


13. Much of the problem stems from an over-reliance on the evidence of dictionaries alone. This is particularly true of the work of Breznik and Maretic. The first scholar to demonstrate the need to use primary sources was Fr. Iliešič with his exemplary word-histories for the concepts ‘university’, ‘railway’, ‘station’, ‘train’ in Slo and Cr in “Iz istorije naših reči” (*Južnoslovenski filolog* 12 (1933) 147-186). A further, unfortunately rather rare, virtue of Iliešič’s work is his insistence on treating lexical developments in the two languages side-by-side. Only too often, even in a work otherwise as exemplary as Lägreid’s, the events in the two languages are treated in splendid isolation.

14. The absence of monographs on Slavization in Slovene, for instance, is duly noted by Bezlaj, 190.


17. For the description of the genesis and fate of this manuscript, see Lägreid, 47-54, who has used it as one of her major sources for the study of R loans in Slo. For more information on Vodnik, see I. Modic, “Vodnik kot jezikoslovec,” *Dom in svet* 22 (1909) 414-21, 446-53, 495-500.

18. Josef Dobrovsky, *Deutsch-bohemisches Woerterbuch,* 3 vols. (Prague, 1802-21); the publication of Vols. 2 and 3 was the responsibility of Jaroslav Puchmayer and Václav Hanka respectively.


25. Juridisch-politische Terminologiefür die slavischen Sprachen Österreichs... *Deutsch-kratische, serbische und slovenische Ausgabe* (Vienna, 1853).

26. There is no general account of purism in Slo; some indications of attitudes and trends may be gleaned from several essays in: Boris Urbančič, *O jezikovni kulturi* (Ljubljana, 1972).
27. For detailed histories of the other words listed below, see the glossary in Thomas, The Impact of the Illyrian Movement.


29. For an admirable treatment of this word in Cz. see Lilić, 112-4.


31. This view is shared by Rammelmayer, who speaks (11) of a "lebhafter Austausch in beiden Richtungen".

32. According to Bezlaj, 191, after 1848 this predilection for Slavisms (i.e. SCR-isms) became a veritable mania.


34. For a comparison of Slovak and Slovene anti-Slavic purisms, see Robert Auty, "The Role of Purism in the Development of the Slavonic Literary Languages," (Slavonic and East European Review 51 (1973) 335-343). The closeness of Slovak and Czech is illustrated by the fact that of the most frequent 5000 words in each language, only 54 are different, see Katarina Habovštiaková, "Frekvencia slov v slovenčine spisovnej a predspisovnej," Slovenská Reč 34 (1969) 287-302, p. 299. It would be interesting to know what a contrastive study of Sln and Cr along similar lines would reveal.

POVZETEK

SLOVANJENJE SLOVENSKEGA IN HRVAŠKEGA BESEDIŠČA: VPRAŠANJA O NJUNI MEDSEBOJNI ODNOSNOSTI V 19. STOLETU

Tako slovenščina kot hrvatsčina sta bili podvrženi procesu slovanjenja v času, ko sta se pojavili kot popolnoma razvita knjižna jezika v 19. stoletju. Ne samo da sta si izposojali veliko besed iz drugih slovanskih jezikov, v glavnem iz češčine in ruščine, ampak sta se tudi sami bogatili v medsebojnih stikih. Ta medsebojna odnosnost še ni bila zadovoljivo preučena glede slovenske in hrvatske besediščne zgodovine. Članek preiskuje nekaj vprašanj glede presoje te medsebojne bogatitve v času t.i. 'preporoda'. Po več podrobnih študijah besed avtor razpoznava značilnosti tega medsebojnega vpliva na podlagi 155 besed, ki so bile oživljene ali pa skovane v hrvatsčini v dobi ilirizma. Omenjene so morebitne slovenske besede v hrvatsčini in besede, ki so nastale v obeh jezikih hkrati, ocenjen pa je tudi pozneji vpliv ilirškega besedišča na knjižno slovenščino. Nazadnje je pretehtan puristični odnos do srbohrvatskih besediščnih prvin.