Dora Riffer-Maček

The Rendering of the Geographical Name of Great Britain in 19th Century Croatian Newspapers

Proper nouns and geographical names make a special category in linguistic borrowing, because they are borrowed most frequently.1 English geographical names are in modern standard Serbo-Croatian more or less fixed in pronunciation as in spelling. During the formation of early standard Croatian the rendering of English geographical names was very unsettled and there were no fixed (standard) forms for their rendering.

The material I used for this study are the earliest Croatian newspapers Kragl'ski Dalmatin, and Narodne novine the first Croatian newspaper and Danica ilirsk a the first Croatian weekly issued in Zagreb, during the first five years of publication, that is from 1835 to 1840.2

The first Croatian newspapers started to come out in the first half of the 19th century, and the language of their articles is the early standard Croatian, in which foreign names were rendered in various ways mostly differing from present-day usage.

The following geographical expressions and names, which are fixed in contemporary usage, were by no means so in the early 19th century.

Great Britain today Velika Britanija is a loan-translation of the title, with the Latin form of the proper noun spelt according to the rules of present Serbo-Croatian orthography.

1 Hermann Paul »Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte«, Halle, 1909, p. 393
England. Serbo-Croatian Engleska
is an adapted form of the original, actually again a loan-translation
without the generic part of the name, i. e. land, which
was left out for the sake of speech economy.¹ The full name
would be: Engleska zemlja (the English land), Engleska being
an adjective derived from the foreign stem Engl-, with the
Serbo-Croatian suffix -ska (used to form adjectives with the
meaning »belonging to«), feminine in concord with the omitted
noun zemlja, which is feminine. Such an adjective, used without
a noun and more or less converted into a noun, is very frequent-
ly used to denote a country, e. g. Francuska — France, Špa-
njolska — Spain.
Engleska often does not refer merely to England, but to
Great Britain as a whole.
Scotland in present usage Škotska
is rendered on the same principle as Engleska, with the Croa-
tian spelling and the sound [ʃ] instead of the original [s] at
the beginning of the word, which might be due to German
influence (German: Schottland).
Wales appears either as Wales or Vels
which is the spelling for the modified pronunciation: [w] not
existing in Serbo-Croatian, the nearest sound is used, i. e. the
voiced labiodental fricative [v], the usage of which is due to
the spelling pronunciation probably on the German model. The
diphthong [ei] is also lacking in Serbo-Croatian, and so is
replaced by a simple close [e].
Ireland is rendered according to the same pattern as
England, that is, with the feminine adjective Irška converted
into a noun.
During the early period of modern Croatian (first half of
the 19th century) the rendering of loan-words and foreign names
was in a formative stage, as was indeed the standard language
itself. So it is not surprising that Croatian forms of geographical
names varied considerably until they became fixed in the late
eighteen thirties. The varying forms found in use between 1806
and 1840 were frequently a result of the influence of German,
Italian or Hungarian, which were the commonest intermediaries
through which English words came into Croatian.
The earliest geographical expressions for the United King-
dom are chronologically as follows:
Ottoci Britanski (the British Isles)
This is a compound geographical name, with the generic part (a
masculine substantive in plural) preceding the specific part
(an adjective, meaning »belonging to«, in concord with the

¹ M. Arousseau: The Rendering of Geographical Names, London
1957.
substantive). This word order is the reverse of the English word order, but is not common in Croatian either, so it is probably due to Italian influence.

*Otôkâ Britanskih* (delle Isole Britanniche)\(^1\)

The spelling also follows the Italian model, as the newspaper Kragliski Dalmatin was issued in Napoleon’s Dalmatia, which was still under Venetian administration. The newspaper was published simultaneously in Italian and Croatian, the Croatian text being a mere translation of the Italian. The spelling is inconsistent nevertheless, so there can be found the same example, but here Britanski is spelt with one *t*, and the generic part is without a capital *O* as if it were a common noun:

> «Varhu opside otoka Britanskih».\(^8\)

A similar expression occurs in *Danica ilirska*:

> «Vu veliko-britanzkom otoku predmet dnevnoga spomenika je O’Connell.»\(^3\)

*Veliko-britanski otok* — the Island of Great Britain is a compound adjective consisting of the adjective *veliko* (great) with an *o*-stem, and the adjective *britanski* in concord with the noun *»otok«* (singular, masculine). Here the word order is regular, the spelling modelled on the Hungarian orthography, which was followed throughout 1835. At the end of that year the reform war carried out which established the spelling as it remained, in general, to the present day.

An interesting example from *Narodne novine* is:

> «vu severnih ztranah otoka (Insule) ...»\(^4\)

and

> «Proti ovomu otoku (insuli)»\(^5\)

Here *otok* (island) is used without the specific part to denote the *Island of Great Britain*, similar to the usage in Britain. In brackets follows an explanation of the word in Latin. In present-day usage *»otok«* does not mean *Great Britain*, but any island, and I believe the same can be said of the 19th century usage, because these two examples are the only ones to be found in the texts examined. The instance can be accounted for by the literal translation of the news from an English or German newspaper.

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\(^1\) Kragliski Dalmatin I/1806, 25, p. 197  
\(^2\) Kragliski Dalmatin II/1807, 9, p. 64  
\(^3\) Danica ilirska I/1835, 11, p. 43  
\(^4\) Narodne novine I/1835, 3, p. 9  
\(^5\) Narodne novine I/1835, 16, p. 61
The poetical name for Great Britain Albion, occurs only twice and it has not undergone any modifications.

The title: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland never occurs as a whole, but only either the first or the second part of it.

The United Kingdom was found as a loan translation: sojedjeno kraljevstvo only once.2

Great Britain and Ireland is the form that is used most frequently.

"za cestitost od vellike Bretagne."3 Vellika Bretagna is a compound name; the adjective Great is translated and in concord with the noun which is feminine and in its Italian form.

In northern Croatian the most frequent form is:

Velika Britania4
or spelt: Velika Brittanija5, which once again shows in consistency in spelling.

As mentioned above Britania is of Latin origin. Twice it is found alone without the adjective Great6.

Very often Ireland is included too, and thus the title is Velika Britania i Irskia.

Irskia for Ireland, the form common in present usage, appeared first in 18367 and has been in use ever since. In the beginning the form Irzka8 was used, which is the same as the above mentioned form, only with the old spelling used before 1836. The earliest form in Narodne novine is: Velika Britania i Irlandia.9

Irlandia is the adapted form of Ireland. The form without »e« is according to the conventional European usage for this noun, plus the feminine suffix — ia, which forms names of countries on the Latin model.

Twice the names Irlandia and Irzka were used side by side and each time one of them was used in brackets to explain the other:

1 Narodne novine I/1835, 13
   Narodne novine I/1835, 28
2 Narodne novine II/1836, 15, p. 57
3 Kraljski Dalmatin II/1807, 52, p. 403
   Kraljski Dalmatin III/1808, 1, p. 1
4 Narodne novine I/1835 to Narodne novine VI/1840
5 Narodne novine V/1839, 90, p. 355.
6 Narodne novine I/1835, 13
7 Narodne novine II/1836, 4 and onwards
8 Narodne novine I/1835, 8, p. 25 till Narodne novine I/1835, 32, p. 126
9 Narodne novine I/1835, 3, p. 9 to Narodne novine I/1835, 11, p. 4

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Irlandiu (Irzku)
Irzke (Irlandie)
Thus it is possible to watch how the new form Irzka replaced the older one, Irlandia.

In Kraglski Dalmatin the only form in use is the Italian form Irlanda, which can also be inflected as a feminine substantive:

»smutgne u Irlandi«

In only one instance the ancient and poetical name of Ireland Erin is used without any adaptations except that it is inflected like a masculine noun:

»szini zelenoga Erina«

Scotland and Wales are also rendered in various interesting forms.

In Kraglski Dalmatin Scotland is rendered in the Italian form Skoczia, a feminine noun, and similarly only differently spelt, in Danica ilirska: Skocia. This is an isolated example, as is Škocia, which is a peculiar mixture of Italian and German forms (ś — an imitation of German pronunciation).

The most common form is Skotzka, till after the reform of the spelling, when it became Škotzka. This is a loan-translation of the name Scotland, with the generic part left out (i.e. land — zemlj) and the feminine adjective, derived from Scot- and then converted into a substantive.

Walesia is adapted by adding the Latin feminine suffix because it was not so often used as England or Scotland. Even in modern usage it has not been modified in the way England or Scotland has.

Walesia is adapted by adding the Latin feminine suffix — ia and then inflected like other feminine substantives.

Sometimes the English form Wales is used.

»tu Anglianszkoj y Valiszu«

In the above example Valisz is a masculine substantive, rendered according to the German form Wallisisch, with the Hungarian spelling.

1 Narodne novine I/1836, 10
2 Narodne novine I/1835, 11
3 Kraglski Dalmatin II/1807, 4, p. 24
4 Narodne novine I/1835, 60, p. 237-8
5 Kraglski Dalmatin II/1807, 46, p. 363
6 Danica ilirska IV/1838, 24, p. 95
7 Narodne novine II/1836, 50, p. 197
8 Narodne novine I/1836, 16, p. 61 to Narodne novine II/1836, 15.
9 Narodne novine I/1836, 14, p. 53
10 Narodne novine II/1836, 15, p. 57
11 Narodne novine I/1835, 21, p. 82
"po celoj Engleskoj i Walliskoj"  
Here Walliska is a feminine adjective formed on the pattern of Engleska, from the above mentioned German form, and then converted into a noun.

There is also one example of the phonetic spelling of the name Wales, adapted to the Croatian phonological system. The lacking bilabial semivowel [w] is replaced by the labiodental fricative [v], also in accordance with the German pronunciation:

"duhovni sudovi po Engleskoj i Valesu"  
The name of England also went through several forms before Englezka the form it has today was established.

"mir ov France Ingliterom s'koin jest utemegliena..."  
Inglitera is the Venetian form, but more common is the standard Italian form:

Inghilterra  
None of these expressions refer only to England, but as in contemporary usage to Great Britain as a whole. The same is true of most of the following examples.

"od Anglianitke zemlj"  
Here Anglianitka zemlja is the only example of the loan-translation of the name England where the generic part is not omitted. The adjective Anglianitka is a derivation of the Latin name. The most common form throughout 1835 is either merely the adjective Anglianitka converted into a noun, or the Latin name Anglia, a feminine substantive.

"ter otide z kervavim blagom v Angliu"  
In the issues of 1835 there is also one instance of the form Englezka (converted feminine adjective, derived from the foreign stem Engl-). Since 1836 this form has been used regularly up to the present.

It may refer to England:

"duhovni sudovi po Engleskoj i Valesu"  
or to Great Britain:

"Poslje Franklin, kad je njegova hvala već i do Englezke doperla bila, ... pošte načelnikom... učinjen."  

Thus English geographical names are in the early 19th century Croatian mostly adapted both in spelling and in form so

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1 Danica ilirska III/1837, 5, p. 19
2 Narodne novine V/1839, 40, p. 159
3 Kraglaki Dalmatin II/1806, 6, p. 5
4 Kraglaki Dalmatin II/1807 till IV/1809
5 Narodne novine I/1835, 5
6 Danica ilirska I/185, 11, p. 43
7 Narodne novine V/1839, 40, p. 159
8 Danica ilirska III/1837, 3, p. 11

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that nouns ending in a consonant could be inflected as Croatian masculine substantives (Wales, Vales, Valisz) and those ending in -a as Croatian feminines (Englezka, Velika Britania, Škotska, Walesia, Walliska). Adjectives were derived from English or other foreign stems, with the addition of Croatian suffixes. Designation such as the British Isles were translated as a rule. All this holds true of English common nouns as well, except that there is a larger number of foreign words and a larger number of loan-translations, because common nouns are more easily translated than proper nouns. The adaptation in spelling and form is the same, and foreign influence (especially German and Italian) is strongly felt.