

BULGARIAN SURNAMES WITH ROMANIAN COUNTERPARTS

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Abstract

The article examines 25 Bulgarian surnames, which are best analyzed when their Romanian counterparts are taken into account. The twenty appellatives, on which they are based, form several semantic groups, and nearly half of them represent names according to occupations such as *барзар* ‘cabman’, *габровян* ‘merchant of products from Gabrovo’; **гьоладжия* ‘fiddler’ and others. Although nearly half of the discovered bases are not entirely Romanian, they show a number of features that give reason for these surnames to be analyzed as a Wallachian component in the Bulgarian anthroponymy. The majority of them were brought from the population in process of migration from Wallachia to the south of the Danube. And there are those for which we do not find relevant surnames north of the Danube, but we have for their stems near congeners in the Romanian vocabulary. They are formed in the Wallachian/Aromanian language/dialect south of the Danube and should be considered as a Wallachian/Aromanian component of the Romanian anthroponymy.

Key words: *Aromanian, Wallachian, surname, name of occupation, stem*

Résumé

Cet article analyse 25 noms de famille bulgares mis en évidence lorsque leurs correspondants roumains sont pris en considération. Les vingt appellatifs dont on part forment plusieurs groupes sémantiques, presque la moitié en représentant des noms donnés en fonction des métiers, tels *барзар* «charretier», *габровян* «commerçant de produits de Gabrovo»; **гьоладжия* «musicien» et d’autres. Bien que presque la moitié des bases découvertes ne soient pas intégralement roumaines, elles présentent toute une série de caractéristiques qui justifient l’analyse de ces noms de famille comme composante valaque dans l’anthroponymie bulgare. La plupart ont été apportées par la population en processus de migration de la Valachie au sud du Danube. Et ce sont toujours pour elles qu’on ne retrouve pas de noms de famille pertinents au nord du Danube, mais qu’on a pour leurs bases des congénères proches dans le vocabulaire roumain. Elles se sont formées dans la langue/le dialecte valaque/aroumain au sud du Danube et devraient être considérées une composante valaque/aroumaine de l’anthroponymie roumaine.

Mots-clés: *aroumain, valaque, noms de famille, noms de métiers, base*

The article deals with the origin, word-formation structure and primary semantics of 25 Bulgarian surnames. As in several previous publications of this kind, the surnames, object of the present analysis, usually with a low frequency and distribution – have not been studied in general, or have not been interpreted in a satisfactory manner.

They are excerpted from the Computer archive of the Center of Bulgarian

Onomastics “Prof. Nikolai Kovachev” at St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Turnovo, as well as from the work of S. Ilchev¹.

The analysis follows the alphabetical order of the names in Cyrillic.

1. **Арбински** is recorded twice in NW (in the area of Sofia & Montana). Regarding its origin cf. the Arom. *arbines*, corresponding to the Rom. *arbănaș* ‘Albanian’².

2. **Аржанов** and **Арженов**

2.1. **Арженов**, missing in CA, Ilchev notes in Plovdiv area, but does not interpret it³. It is a variant of *Аржанов* (see 2.2.) with a mutation of the vowel *a (> e) after the consonant ж (< *дж).

2.2. **Аржанов**, recorded 13 times in SW (Plovdiv area). Regarding its base, cf. Rom. surname *Argeanu*, with the suffix *-eanu* from the geographical name *Argea*⁴.

3. **Арицев**, recorded twice in SW (Blagoevgrad area), has a pronunciation of the consonant ч as ц, which is typical for Megleno-Romanian & Aromanian, and it is based on the nickname from the common noun *ariț* (= Rom. *arici*) ‘porcupine, hedgehog’⁵, also known as a lexical borrowing *арѹч*, *ърѹч* with the same meaning in the Bulgarian dialect of the village of Novo selo, Vidin area⁶. The nickname may reflect appearance, “a bristling beard, as a hedgehog”, or the character traits, “bristling up like a hedgehog = cantankerous, grumpy”⁷. In other words, the surname *Арицев* is a Bulgarian adaptation of the Megleno-Romanian variant corresponding to the surname *Аричев*⁸, identical with the Mold./Rom. surname *Арѹчу/Aricea*, *Ariciu*, from *arici* ‘porcupine, hedgehog’⁹. Regarding the meaning cf. Bulg. *Таралежов*, *Таралежков*¹⁰.

4. **Арканов**, recorded three times (twice in NE, Razgrad area; once in SE, Burgas area). Regarding the stem, cf. the Romanian surname *Arcan*, from the noun *arcăn* ‘lasso; a kind of folk dance’¹¹, but not of Turkic origin, as it was thought until recently¹², but rather from Pre-Romanian, ultimately – from IE. **arqu-* ‘arched, arcuate, vaulted’¹³.

5. **Арпанов**, recorded four times (thrice in NW: Vidin area; once in SW: Sofia). Concerning the stem, cf. the Romanian surname *Arăpanu*, which comes from the surname “*Arăpeanu* < *Arapu* + suffix (of an anthroponomical function) *-eanu*; the «disappearance» of *-e-* is a dialectal peculiarity”¹⁴. And the surname *Arapu* is based on the ethnonym “*arap* ‘Arab’; ‘black’”. Recorded in the 17th century, as a name of a boyar’s family from Moldavia”¹⁵. The Bulgarian surname is formed with the disappearance (apocope) of the vowel *ă* before the stressed syllable (*Arăpanu* > *Arpan-*).

¹ Илчев, 1969.

² Constantinescu, 1963, p. 182; Iordan, 1963, p. 266–267.

³ Илчев, 1969, p. 52.

⁴ Iordan, 1963, p. 35.

⁵ Ciorănescu, 2002, p. 50, № 404; Vinereanu, 2009, p. 91.

⁶ Младенов, 1969, p. 168, 300.

⁷ “barbă de arici = barbă țepoasă”, “zbîrlit ca un arici = supărăcios, ursuz” (DLRM, p. 42).

⁸ About it see Селимски, 2006, p. 74.

⁹ Constantinescu, 1963, p. 182; Iordan, 1983, p. 36.

¹⁰ Илчев, 1969, p. 477.

¹¹ Iordan, 1983, p. 35.

¹² Ciorănescu, 2002, p. 47, № 379.

¹³ ‘arcuit’: Vinereanu, 2009, p. 87.

¹⁴ Iordan, 1983, p. 35.

¹⁵ Iordan, 1983, p. 34.

6. **Баздарски**, with a frequency of 19 times, and a concentration – 12 times – in the area of Kyustendil, is formed with the suffix *-ски*, but derived from such a base as **баздър*, that corresponds to the Romanian appellative *băzdără* ‘hornet, gadfly’, although there is not a Romanian surname **Băzdăr-*.

7. **Баруцов**, that is recorded in NW 7 times (4 times in Vidin area, thrice in Montana area), is identical with the Rom. surname *Baruția*, which is analyzed as formed with the diminutive suffix *-uț(ă)* on the base of the surname *Bar* or *Baru*¹⁶.

8. **Баятов** occurs in different places of the country, with an overall incidence of 21 times. According to Ilchev’s analysis, it is based on the adjective (about bread) “*баят* ‘old, stale’ (Turk. *bayat*)”¹⁷. This analysis seems acceptable from a phonetic point of view. However, it cannot ignore the fact that the surname *Баятов* exactly corresponds to the sound form of the Rom. surname *Băiatu, Băietu*, which is analyzed as based on the appellative *băiât* ‘1. boy; 2. son; 3. servant’¹⁸. And this is in my opinion much more acceptable from the standpoint of the semantics too.

9. **Бекерски**, which appears twice in the NW, in the areas of Vratsa and Pleven, is too close in sound shape to the Romanian surname *Becher(u)*, based on the appellative *bechér* ‘bachelor, unmarried man’¹⁹. In any case, with regard to the base it stands much nearer to the Romanian *Becher(u)*, than to the Bulgarian *Бекярски* and *Бекяров*, based on the same Turkish borrowing *bekâr* ‘unmarried man, bachelor’²⁰, which are distributed within the spreading area over the country and have a much higher frequency (197 and 1897).

10. **Бераджиев**, which is recorded only in NE (twice in Dobrich area), is based on the appellative *бераджия* ‘producer/seller or lover of beer’. However this *бераджия*, formed by using the suffix *-джия*, is not a derivative from the literary *бѣра* ‘beer’, rather from the dialectal *бѣра*, which is found within a restricted spreading area (Rousse, Shoumen & Dobrich), and represents a borrowing – from the Rom. *bère* ‘beer’²¹.

11. **Бировски** is recorded 24 times: 22 in NW, Pleven area, twice in NE, Rousse area. It is based on the appellative *бирџина* ‘rural crier’²², *бирџин* ‘rural crier’ in Ново село, Vidin area²³. According to S. Mladenov the word comes “from Hung. *biró*: rural crier”²⁴, from Hung. *biro* < *birou*²⁵, which occurs in S.-Cr. *birov* ‘communal elder; servant of the communal elder’²⁶. Judging by the place of the stress in *бирџин*, with the suffix *-ин* (for a morphological adaptation), that in the process of derivation is subject to cutting, this word has entered the Bulgarian language by Wallachian mediation. Cf. Rom. *birău* ‘village mayor (in Transylvania)’, also as a base of the surname *Birău*²⁷, a next congener of the Bulg. surname *Бировски*.

12. **Барзарска** (for women) appears twice in SW: Kyustendil area and Sofia. It is

¹⁶ Jordan, 1983, p. 49.

¹⁷ Илчев, 1969, p. 67.

¹⁸ Jordan, 1983, p. 53.

¹⁹ Jordan, 1983, p. 58.

²⁰ DLRM, p. 75; Илчев, 1969, p. 69.

²¹ Илчев, 1942, p. 38.

²² Геров, vol. 1, p. 42.

²³ Геров, vol. 6, p. 24.

²⁴ Младенов, 1951, p. 148.

²⁵ Décsy, 1959, p. 33.

²⁶ Skok, vol. 1, p. 156.

²⁷ Jordan, 1983, p. 64.

based on the appellative *бързар*, that means ‘cabman’, judging by the use in the context: “The coachman – *barzar* settled and skilfully tied our luggage in the carriage [...]”, and also above: “Fortunately the carter was one of the Rousse fiakri (‘barzari’)” – note of the author)²⁸. I am going to draw attention to the circumstance that the denomination for a person *бързар* has nothing in common with the Bulgarian adjective *бърз* ‘fast’ and the verb *бързам* ‘hurry’. I attract it for an analysis, considering it to be a semantic equivalent of the names for ‘carter’ and/or ‘waggoner’. However, I must emphasize, that regarding the word-formation structure and primary meaning, it represents an inhabitant’s name. Furthermore, it can be considered as identical with the Romanian surname *Bărzaru*, that is derived from the base of the place name *Bîrz* or *Barza*²⁹, to which the suffix *-ar* is attached – rare in Bulgarian with this function, but typical for some languages in the Balkans³⁰.

13. **Габровянов** is recorded twice in NW, in Vidin area. It seems at first sight, that it is an entirely Bulgarian surname, but the analysis of its word-formation and semantic structure does not confirm it. Both components of the base **габровян-* are also Bulgarian: the place name *Габрово* and the suffix *-ян* (< *-jan-* [-ѣн/-’н-]). But this base, considered as a whole, should – eventually – be recognized as a Wallachian borrowing. The equivalent Bulgarian name of ‘inhabitant of Gabrovo’ is formed with the suffix *-ец*: *габровец*. The surname *Габровянов* raises yet another problem for the researcher, concerning its place in a semantic classification. Before us there is a stem of an inhabitant’s name (from the point of view of its word-formation structure and primary meaning), which is elsewhere functioning as a nickname³¹. However it receives after a time a meaning of name according to occupation: “outdated *gabroveán* ‘merchant of knives. - From *Gabrovo* (city in Bulgaria) + suff. *-ean*”³²; “(outdated) merchant of products from Gabrovo (bowls, braids, etc.)”³³. And in analyzing the surname *Gabrovan* the meaning ‘cutler, bad knives master’ is also taken into account³⁴.

In that case, what is Wallachian in this surname?

The inhabitants’ names with the suff. *-ean-* (in the Romanian language borrowed from Oldb. suff. *-ѣн/-’н-* < IE. *-ēn-*) are of the Wallachian type, in the Bulgarian language recessive one, giving way before the effusive/expansive type, in which the old suff. *-ан/-ян-* (from Oldb. *-ѣн/-’н-*) appears in the extended variants *-ан-ец/-ян-ец* and *-ч-ан-ин*. Whereas the inherited Romanian suffix with this function is the suffix *-în-* (< Lat. *-ān-us*). Cf. Lat. *romānus* (on the base *Roma*) and its regular continuer *rumîn* ‘Romanian’ (with the changed meaning ‘serf’), in contrast to the literary variant *român*, “adjusted” to its older Latin congener³⁵, on the one hand, and its outdated “parallel” *rîmlean* ‘Roman’ (borrowed from Old Bulgarian in the 16-17th centuries), with the suffix *-ean-*, from Oldb. *-ѣн/-’н-* (in *римлянинъ*)³⁶, on the other hand.

²⁸ „Файтонджията – *бързар* настани и привърза умело багажа ни на файтона[...]”, „За щастие коларят бе един от русенските фиакри («бързари») – б. а.” (Каниц, vol.3, p. 292).

²⁹ Jordan, 1983, p. 56; Zăbavă, 2010, p. 103.

³⁰ Дуриданов, 1970; Duridanov, 1976.

³¹ Zăbavă, 2010, p. 55.

³² DLRM, p. 325.

³³ Р-БР, p. 445.

³⁴ Jordan, 1983, p. 212.

³⁵ Rosetti, 1966, p. 43, 212.

³⁶ „v. sl. *rymljaniniŭ*” (sic! with the letter *y!*) in the DLRM, p. 720. Cf. Skok, 3, p. 143. This Wallachian ingredient in the Bulgarian anthroponymy is presented in detail by L. Selimski: Селимски 2005a and 2005b [reprint: Селимски, 2007, p. 129–141; 116–129].

14. Гьоладжиев, with a frequency of 45 times, mostly in SW (27 in Smolyan area, 15 times in Plovdiv area), is based on the name of occupation *гьоладжия ‘fiddler’, derived from the appellative гьола ‘fiddle’ in the same area, which is a borrowing from the Italian *viola* (by way of the Greek βιόλα ‘viola’), with the change *v* > *g*’ on Aromanian soil³⁷. It is with the suffix -джия, attached to the stem by agglutination – without cutting of the ending -a for the feminine. Cf. Гьолджиев (see 14a).

14a. Гьолджиева, for woman, recorded twice in the same area as Гьоладжиев (see 14), on the same base гьола ‘rebec(k)’ and with the same suffix -джия, but connected to the base гьола in a manner, which is typical for the inflexional languages – with truncation of the ending -a. Or simply, the unstressed vowel *a* in the middle of the stem, in the position before the stressed syllable, disappeared (syncope): Гьоладжиев > Гьолджиев-.

15. Дарабанска, for woman, is recorded once in NW, in Vidin area. It must be identical with the Rom. surname *Daraban(u)*, *Dărăban(u)*, from the outdated *daraban*, *dărăbàn* ‘infantryman, foot soldier’³⁸.

16. Ладарев, recorded once in SE (Stara Zagora area), and **Ладарски**, in NE, also once, must be of the same origin as the Romanian surname *Ladaru*, *Lădaru*, from “*lădar*, missing in the dictionaries, meaning ‘crates’ worker’”³⁹, derived with the suff. -ar from the Romanian appellative *ladă*, *lăzi* ‘crate, box, frame; chest’, from the Germ. *Lade* ‘drawer, chest’⁴⁰. The surname *Lădaru* is known also in Oltenia⁴¹.

17. Пиларев, Пиларов, Пиларски and Пилярски

17.1. Пиларски, which is the most frequent (33 times), is explained by S. Ilchev as based on the “dial. *пилàр ‘which saws logs with a large file’”⁴². But the presumed *пилàр is not confirmed in БЕР 5. The four variants of this surname show overall frequency of 47 times with a concentration in SW, where, in the area of Blagoevgrad, the variant *Пиларски* occurs 28 times. We therefore assume that it is related to the Aromanian minority in this region, that explains its kinship with the Romanian surname *Pilariu*, from *pilar* ‘shopkeeper (especially ambulant and of vegetables)’⁴³. It is known as a lexical borrowing in the Bulgarian dialect in Banat *пилàр* ‘middleman, retailer’⁴⁴, in Serbian and Croatian: *piljār* ‘small seller of edible products; second-hand dealer’. It is probably borrowed from Turkish, considered of a Persian origin⁴⁵.

18. Рекинов, occurring mostly in NE (53 times in Rouse area, twice in Gabrovo area) and twice in SW (Sofia). It is recorded by S. Ilchev⁴⁶, but without any attempt to analyze it. This surname should be from a nickname on Wallachian soil, based on appellative such as the Rom. *rechîn* ‘shark’, which is used figuratively,

³⁷ БЕР, vol. 1, p. 306.

³⁸ Constantinescu, 1963, p. 257; Iordan, 1983, p. 166, 168.

³⁹ “*lădar*, absent în dicționare, cu sensul «lucrător de lăzi»” (Iordan, 1983, p. 272, 274).

⁴⁰ DLRM, p. 443.

⁴¹ Zăbavă, 2010, p. 110.

⁴² Илчев, 1969, p. 394.

⁴³ “negustor (în special ambulant și de zarzavaturi)” (Iordan, 1983, p. 365). About Rom. *pilār* cf. also: “(Reg.) Пресупеџ. – Sb. *piljār*” (DLRM, p. 616), i.e. the Rom. *pilār* is considered to be a Serbian borrowing.

⁴⁴ Стойков, 1968, p. 173.

⁴⁵ Škaljić, 1973, p. 518, without specifying not just its Persian form, but even the Turkish one. Cf. the Persian پلوار [пилевàр/pilevār] ‘small trader’ (Миллер, 1960, p. 102).

⁴⁶ Илчев, 1969, p. 423.

meaning ‘greedy and unscrupulous man’⁴⁷, although to my knowledge there isn’t any Romanian surname **Rechin*. Hence, the stressed syllable must be the second: *Рекѝнов* (Ilchev has the random *Рѝкинов*). Regarding the semantic motivation, cf. the Bulgarian surname *Сомѝдов* and the Romanian *Somnea*, both from the Romanian *somn* ‘catfish’; the Bulgarian generic nickname *Сѝмете*, explained as “who jangle and are at each other’s throats, probably predatory as a catfish” etc.⁴⁸. However, the most exact semantic parallel to our *Рекѝнов* and **Rechin* is the Serbian surname *Пешикан*, from the appellative *пешикѝн* meaning ‘shark’, otherwise called, past *ѝjkula* also *мѝрскиѝ нѝс/мѝрскиѝ рѝс*, i.e. ‘sea dog’. This word entered Serbian from Croatian, where *pešek*, *pešikan*, also known as a *surname*, in its turn, is borrowed from the Italian *pesce cane* ‘(literally) fish dog’⁴⁹, to which the Turk. *köpek balığı* best corresponds. From the Serbian *пешикѝн* there is also a Macedonian surname *Пешикан* – hardly reasonable is its explanation as based on the first name *Пешикан*, which is interpreted as derived from the first name “*Пеше* + *-ик* + *-ан*”⁵⁰, in view of the fact that in the work of Станковска (1992) a first name **Пешикан* has not been recorded.

19. Тунаров has a frequency of 13 times, mostly in NE (7 times in Varna area) and in SW (twice in Blagoevgrad area). It must be of the same origin as the Romanian *Tunar(i)u*, based on the appellative *tunâr* ‘gunner’⁵¹, derived with suffix *-ar* from the Romanian *tun* ‘gun, cannon’. It is known in Oltenia⁵² and Muntenia⁵³. Concerning the meaning cf. *Тончиев*, from the Turk. borrowing *тончия* ‘gunner’⁵⁴.

20. Фиников, that Ilchev notes in Varna, but does not try to analyze⁵⁵, is equal regarding its origin with the Romanian first- and surname *Finică*, from the appellative *finică* ‘fig (fruit)’⁵⁶.

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As seen from the analysis, for each of the Bulgarian surnames we find a more or less exact corresponding surname in the Romanian anthroponymy, and the majority of them are best analyzed with the aid of their Romanian counterparts. The discovery in some cases of an appellative from which there is no documented Romanian surname, gives grounds to presume that the Bulgarian surname from the same base is not brought from Wallachia, but is formed in the Wallachian or Aromanian language/dialect soil to the south of the river Danube, in Bulgaria. Such names must be considered a Wallachian/Aromanian component of the Romanian anthroponymy. In some cases, this suggestion is supported by the area in which the surname appears: mostly in NW, especially in the areas of Vidin and Plevna, in NE – in the area of Rousse and Dobrich, and in SW – in the area of Blagoevgrad.

In the analyzed 25 surnames there are 20 appellatives that form several semantic groups, most of them with only one representative:

⁴⁷ DLRM, p. 701.

⁴⁸ Селимски, 2006, p. 142.

⁴⁹ Skok, 1, p. 17, s.v. *ajkula*; 2, p. 646–647, s.v. *peš*².

⁵⁰ РПМ, vol. 2, p. 280.

⁵¹ Jordan, 1983, p. 464.

⁵² Zăbavă, 2010, p. 110, 117.

⁵³ Оансă, 1998, p. 22, 154.

⁵⁴ Илчев, 1969, p. 490.

⁵⁵ Илчев, 1969, p. 423.

⁵⁶ Илчев, 1969, p. 423.

1. Names of persons:
 - 1.1. according to occupation (9): **бераджия*, *барзър* ‘hack’, **бирòв* ‘rural crier’ *габровян* ‘merchant of products from Gabrovo’; **гьоладжия* ‘fiddler’; **дарабън* ‘foot soldier’; **ладър* ‘master of boxes, chests’; *пилър/пиляр* ‘retailer’; *тунър* ‘gunner’;
 - 1.2. according to nationality (2): **арбън-* ‘Albanian’; *арапян* ‘Arab’;
 - 1.3. according to residence/origin (1): *арджан-*;
 - 1.4. according to family/social status (2): *баят* ‘boy; son; servant’; *бекер* ‘unmarried man’.
2. Names of living beings (3): *баздър-* ‘hornet, gadfly’; *аръц* ‘porcupine/hedgehog’; *рекън* ‘shark’.
3. The name of household items (1): *аркън* ‘lasso; kind of folk dance’.
4. The name of the fruit (1): *финик*.
5. Surname, with added diminutive suffix (1): **Баръц-* (from *Bar* or *Vara*).

Although the reviewed surnames belong to the Wallachian component of the Bulgarian anthroponymy, we must emphasize that they are not entirely Romanian. This applies to almost half of the stems that we find in them: *арън*, *габровян*, *бекер*, *бераджия*, *бирòв*, *дарабън*, *ладър*, *пилър*, *рекън*, *финик*.

As S. Ivanchev said, “many of the facts of the Anthroponymy in the north and south of the Danube are common; the processes in all the integrated territory from a linguistic point of view are going on, and are still running in the same, or similar way”; in many cases it refers to “a common Bulgarian-Romanian area”; “Bulgarian and Romanian anthroponymy [...] could hardly be studied independently of each other”⁵⁷.

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⁵⁷ Иванчев, 1979; 1988, p. 210–215.

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