FAMILY NAMES DERIVED FROM *ЙОГУР* AND **ЙОГУРТЧИЯ* IN BULGARIAN

Ludwig SELIMSKI
The Institute of Slavonic Philology
Sosnowiec, Poland

Abstract

This article aims at analyzing the family names derived from the term *йогур* in Bulgarian. The analysis focuses on 17 family names based on phonetically changed forms of the denomination *йогур*. We also refer to the equivalent nouns that exist in other languages of the Balkan region (Serbian, Romanian, Macedonian, Albanian), and point out the phonetic changes that the family names have undergone in Bulgarian, sometimes on account of hypercorrectness.

Key words: *anthroponym, Bulgarian, yogurt, denomination, phonetic changes*

Résumé

Cet article a pour but d'analyser les noms de famille dérivés des termes *йогур* et *йогуртчия*, en bulgare. L'analyse est axée sur 17 noms de famille et sur le changement des formes phonétiques de la dénomination *йогур*. On s'intéresse, aussi, des substantifs équivalents qui existent dans les langues balkaniques (serbe, roumaine, macédonienne, albanaise) avec la mise en évidence des changements phonétiques que ces noms ont souffert en bulgare, parfois à cause de la volonté d'être hypercorrecte.

Mots-clés: *anthroponyme, bulgare, yogourt, dénomination, changements phonétiques*

1. The subject of analysis here are 17 family names based on phonetically changed forms of the denomination *yogurt/йогурт* 'sour milk' (3.1.–3.6.) and *yogurtman/*йогуртчия* 'yogurt producer/yogurt seller'. Only one surname in this group *Yurgudov/Юргѝдов* has been mentioned by Ilchev but he has provided no explanation. The remaining 16 have been dwelt upon here for the first time.

BDD-A3813 © 2010 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 08:47:39 UTC)

Bulgarian sour milk is known under the name *yogurt/йогурт*, borrowed from the Turkish *yoğurt*, and spread in all Balkan languages and in many European languages (for the versions in the respective languages/dialects cf. Stachowski 2006). The significance of this culinary product in everyday life and culture in the Balkans is illustrated by the fact that the saying about 'the person with bitter experience' encountered in all Balkan languages but without exact correspondent in other languages is based on this name. I have in mind here the Bulgarian saying "He who has been burned by the gruel blows to cool it" in its extended but less familiar version "He who has been burned by the bread (*трениця/trienitsa*), blows to cool the yogurt as well" (Ikonomov, 1968: 187). The corresponding saying in the other Balkan languages is a compound sentence expressing the meaning that who was burned by the hot gruel/soup/milk, etc., would also blow to cool the sour milk/yogurt/"mutenitsa" (*мътеница* 'yogurt mixed with water').

This saying is based on the denomination *yogurt* (*йогурт*) in three Balkan languages: Turkish, Greek and Romanian. Compare: Turkish *Sütten ağzı yanan*, ***yoğurdu*** *üfliyerek yer*; Greek *Οποιος καεί με το χυλό φυσά και το* ***γιαούρτι***; Romanian *Cine s-a fript cu ciorbă, suflă şi în* ***iaurt***/*Cine s-a fript cu ciorbă, suflă şi-n* ***iaurt***. Along with the Turkish version, which is the only one including the component 'eat/eats' (Turkish *yer*), there exists a version with the component 'drink/drinks': *Sütten ağzı yanan*, ***yoğurdu*** *üfliyerek içer* 'Who burned himself with the milk blows to cool the yogurt while drinking it'. In its correspondence in Macedonian "Кој се попарил од млекото, дува и на ***матеницата***" and in its shorter version "*дува и на* ***машеница*****(*****та*****)**", the basic denomination is not the expected *yogurt* (Maced. *јогурт*), but *matenitsa* 'butter-milk or yogurt diluted with water "*матеница/машеница*" (that is, you can make "matenitsa" by mixing yogurt with water)'. In the Albanian equivalent the basic word, similar to the one in Macedonian, is *irin*, from Turkish *ayran*, from which comes the Bulgarian *airan* (*айрàн/mutenitsa*). Still more generalized is the Serbian version – it lacks the word *yogurt/јогурт* or a synonym for it: *Ко се један пут ожеже, и на* ***хладно*** *пуше* 'Who is once burned blows on cold things too'.

BDD-A3813 © 2010 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 08:47:39 UTC)

St. Stachowski points out a few derivatives from the word *yogurt*/*йогурт* in some languages. Among these of more pertinence to the purpose of this article are: the Turkish *yoğurtçu* ‘a person who makes or sells sour milk, a milkman’, the Romanian *iaurgìu/iugurgiu* and the Spanish-Hebrew *yagurčí* with the same meaning (Stachowski, 2006: 186). The Polish researcher has omitted the Romanian *iaurgerìe* ‘milkshop’ (a place selling milk). The Bulgarian word **йогуртчия* ‘a milkman, a person who makes or sells yogurt’ has not been mentioned. This particular word, as I am trying to prove further on, like the forming word yogurt, becomes part of the stem of a dozen of family names, which are the subject of my further analysis.

*

* *

2. In Bulgarian the Turkish word ***yoğurt*** is encountered in the following 12 versions:

2.1. ***йогѝрт*** (RRODD 180).

2.2. ***йѝогурт*** (Galichnik, area of Debar; cf. BER 2: 104), with the typical Macedonian shift of stress from the last syllable towards the first syllable of the word.

2.3. ***йъгѝр*** (Strahilovo, Veliko Turnovo district), with the omission of the final consonant of the stem of the word (*-m*/ **-∂*).

2.4. ***огѝрт*** (and 3 other variants), with the omission of the sound [й] before a vowel ***огѝрт*** (Sliven; Krustina, area of Aitos; Targovishte), ***огѝрт’***, with palatalization of the end *-m* * (> *-m’*) (Alvanovo, Pevets, Targovishte district; Sachanli, area of Gyumyurgina; area of Pavel and Shiroka Laka, Smolyan district; area of Ardino and Madan; Yakovo, area of Momchilgrad; Pastrogor, area of Svilengrad; ***огѝрд***, with a voiced consonant at the end of the stem (Dushantsi, area of Pirdop), ***огѝрдь***, with palatalization of the final **-∂* (> *-∂’*), in the Smolyan district (BER 4: 782). The alteration of voiced ~ voiceless type of the end consonant of the stem is

BDD-A3813 © 2010 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 08:47:39 UTC)

encountered in the Turkish form of the name, from which it is taken: *yoğurt*, *yoğur**d**-u*.

2.5. ***уɡурт'***, with omission of the sound [й] before a vowel (**ŭo-* > **o-*), reduction (**o-* > **y-*) and palatalization of the end **-m* (> *-m'*): according to Gerov (5: 418) and in Momchilovtsi, Smolyan district (IIBE 4: 86).

2.6. *у**рɡ**ỳm*, with omission of the pronunciation of the sound [й] before a vowel (**ŭo-* > **o-*), reduction(**o-* > **y-*) and metathesis (**-ɡур-* > *-рɡ**ỳ**-*, cf. RRODD 527, in L. Karavelov: "what yogurt *урɡут*, what matenitsa"); about the metathesis compare the Greek ***γιαργούτι*** (according to Stachowski 2006: 186);

2.7. ***югỳрт***, with reduction **ŭo-* > **ŭy-* (RRODD 583; RČD 1007);

2.8. ***юурт/уurt*** (according to Stachowski 2006: 185), as in *yugurt* / *югỳрт* (2.7), with elision of the Turkish *ğ*, the so called "soft" *g* (Turkish: yumuşak *ğ*);

2.9. ***ягỳрт***, with mutation (**ŭ**o**-* > **ŭ**e**-*) and opening of articulation (**ŭe-* > **ŭ**a**-*) ***ягỳрт*** (RRODD 587); for the beginning of the word compare *ŭ**ъ**ɡỳр* (2.3.);

2.10. ***ягỳрт*** (RRODD 590), with mutation (**ŭo-* > **ŭe-*) and opening of articulation(**ŭe-* > **ŭ**a**-*), like in *ягỳрт* (2.9.), as well as with elision of the Turkish soft *ğ*. This form of the denomination coincides with the Russian *яу́рт*, the Romanian *iaùrt*, the Greek ***γιαγούρτι***, ***γιαούρτι*** and the French *yaourt*.

*

* *

3. Family names from ***yogurt/ŭoɡурт*** and versions.

Along with some family names from the words for agents or doers, parallel functioning formations for denominations of a respective object or

BDD-A3813 © 2010 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 08:47:39 UTC)

instrument of activity are in use. Thus along with *Airandjiev/Айранджиев*, from the dialectal word *airandjia/айранджия* "a seller or lover of matenitsa (Turkish *ayrancı*)", the surname *Airanov/Айранов*, comes into existence and is considered an "abbreviation from *Airandjiev/Айранджиев*" (Ilchev, 1969: 44). In a similar manner, along with the greater number of more frequent family names from the agent word "milkman" (**йогуртчия*) there are also family names only from the stem of *yogurt/йогурт* (and versions). There are suggestions that the nicknames of the second type, serving as basis for the respective family names, designate the person according to the line of activity/occupation, very much like the typical suffix for doers -*čiya*//-*džiya* (-*чия*//-*джия*). The studied family names here refer to this type (3.1.–3.6.). They are 6 in number and are encountered 17 times.

3.1. *Yortov*(*a*)/**Йортов(а)**, from 1936, encountered and recorded 2 times (in the district of Bourgas and Sliven)[1]. The common noun **йорт* (*yort*) which is in its stem, lacks the pronunciation of the sound [й] before a vowel, shows assimilation and contraction (*-*оу*- > -*о*-) from **йòурт*, which shows elision from the Turkish "soft" *ğ*, as is the case with ***яўрт*** (2.9.), from the Turkish *yoğurt* 'sour milk', and with the same accentuation as in *йòгурт* (2.2.).

3.2. *Urguteva*/**Ургутева**, only one occurrence, from 1920, in the Plovdiv district. Cf. 2.6. for the changes in the sound structure of the name of the activity which forms the stem of the word.

3.3. *Urtov*/**Уртов**, one occurrence only, from 1957, in the Rousse district. The name of the line of activity which is in the stem **урт* shows contraction (**у*- < **уу*-) from **уўрт*, which lacks the sound [й] before a vowel and shows reduction from **йоўрт* (from the Turkish *yoğurt* "sour milk"), as well as ***о**гўрт'* and *угўрт'* (cf. 2.4. and 2.6.) and elision from the

[1] Всички данни за хронологията на поява, честотата и разпространението на изучаваните фамилни имена са според *База данни от компютърен архив-картотека на фамилните имена у българите през XX век в Центъра за българска ономастика "Професор Николай Ковачев" при ВТУ "Св. Св. Кирил и Методий" във Велико Търново*.

BDD-A3813 © 2010 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 08:47:39 UTC)

Turkish *ğ* (“soft” *ğ*), as is the case with ***яўрт*** (2.9.).

3.4. *Urutov*(*a*)/**Урутов(а)**, from 1901, recorded 8 times: 6 times in the Rousse district, 2 in Sofia. The name of the line of activity **урўт*, which is in the stem shows metathesis (**-ур- > -ру-*) from **уўрт*, which shows reduction (**о- > у-*) and elision from the Turkish “soft” *ğ* from the form **оурт*, for which compare *огўрт’/угўрт’* (2.4 and 2.6) and *яўрт* (2.9.).

3.5. *Urugov*(*a*)/**Уругов(а)**, from 1926, recorded 5 times: 2 in Blagoevgrad district, 2 in the district of Razgrad, 1 in the district of Pazardjik. It is possible that it might contain an error – the letter *g* instead of *t* from *Uru**t**ov* (cf. 3.4.).

3.6. *Yurgudov*/**Юргудов**, which is missing in the data base (cf. reference 1), Ilchev (1969: 567) mentions it in Varna, but refrains from interpreting. It is also based on the name of the produced/sold or favourite product as is the case with ***ургўт*** (2.6.), but with preserved initial phoneme *ŭ-* and the voiced variant of the end consonant of the stem (from Turkish *-t*//*-d*), as is the case with *огўрд* (2.4). Compare *Ургутева* (3.2).

The analysis of those 6 family names (3.1–3.6) from versions of the stem *yogurt/ŭогўрт* (from Turkish *yoğurt*) allows for the restoration of 4 other dialectally altered versions of this stem which have not been known so far: 1. ****йорт*** (< **ŭòурт*, cf. 3.1), 2. ****урт*** (< **уўрт* <**оўрт*, cf. 3.3), 3. ****урўт*** (< **уурўт* < **уўрт*, cf. 3.4), 4. ****юргўд*** (cf. 3.6), but hardly **уруг* (cf. 3.5) as well.

*

* *

4. Family names from ***yogurtchia/*йогуртчия*** and versions.

4.1. *Yordjiev*/**Йорджиев**, occurring only once, from 1918, in the district of Razgrad. It is a denomination according to occupation, on the basis of the dialectal **йорджия*, “a person who prepares or sells yogurt, a milkman”. Like other words, formed from a derivative with the suffix *-čiya*//*-džiya* (*-чия*//*-джия*) here again the stem to which the suffix *-джия* is added, is characterized not only by the elision of the Turkish *ğ* (the so-called “soft” *g*) but also of the ***у*** following it, when placed before a stressed

BDD-A3813 © 2010 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 08:47:39 UTC)

syllable. We have to mention that from the composition of this stem the ending *-m* (Turkish *-t*//*-d*) is dropped. Thus after the changes shown here it does not sound **ŭop**m**/*ŭor**d**-* (< Turkish *yoğur**t**, -**d**u*), but just **ŭop*. This makes the occurrence of the voiced version *-джия* possible (from Turkish *-**cu***//*-çu*). Thus the common noun **ŭорджùя*, which is in the stem of the family name *Йорджиев*, corresponds rather to the Romanian *iaurgìu* "producer/seller of yogurt" than to the original Turkish *yoğurtçu*. The Romanian *iaurgìu* can be considered to be formed by the suffix *-giu* (about the suffix cf. Misterski 1987: 38–39, 46–47; Ciorănescu 412, no. 4258), on native Romanian soil, from *iaùrt* 'yogurt', with disintegration of the end *-t* (//*-d*) of the stem or from an unmentioned dialectal **iaùr*, very much like the Bulgarian *ŭъгỳр* (2.3) and some others, which are restored further on (cf. 5).

4.2. *Yortchiev*(*a*)*/***Йортчиев(а)**, from 1913, recorded twice in the Shoumen district. It comes from the same dialectal form **ŭортчия*, as *Йорджиев* (4.1). The Bulgarian dialectal word **ŭортчия* differs from the Turkish term mainly in the elision of the Turkish "soft" *ğ* and the prestressed ***y*** following it: the expected form substantivising the Turkish stem would be **Йоуртчùев* or **Йогуртчùев*. Compare *Юртчиев* (4.10).

4.3. *Ogorchiev/***Огорчиев**, a single occurrence only, from 1984, in the district of Yambol. It is also derived from **ŭортчия*, from the Turkish *yoğurtçu* (as in *Йортчиев*: 4.2), but with a few phonetic changes and spelling characteristics: the omission of pronunciation of [ŭ] before a vowel (**ŭo-* > *o-*, cf. 2.4 and 2.5) and the hypercorrect ***-o-*** instead of **-y-* in the stem: **ог**о**р-* < **ŭог**у**р-* (the retaining of the Turkish called "soft" *ğ*).

4.4. *Ugordjieva/***Угорджиева**, a single occurrence only, from 1980, in the district of Haskovo. It comes from a denomination of profession, formed with the suffix *-джия* from a stem such as *угурт*' 'yogurt' (Momchilovtsi, IIBE 4: 86). Besides the hypercorrect ***-o-*** instead of **-y-* in the stem (**уг**о**р-* < **ŭог**у**р-*), a remarkable feature of the derivation in this single case is the dropping of the final *-m* (Turkish *-t*//*-d*) from the stem **угор**m***/**угор**d*** (Turkish *yoğur**t**, -**d**u*). It is precisely the sonorous consonant *-p*, which due

BDD-A3813 © 2010 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 08:47:39 UTC)

to this change comes at the end of the stem **угор* and conditions the use of the suffix ***-джи**я*//-*чия* (< Turkish ***-cı**/*/-*çı*) in its voiced version ***-джи**я* (< Turkish ***-cı***).

4.5. *Urudjova/***Уруджова**, single occurrence only, from 1960, in the district of Blagoevgrad. While suggesting that what we have here in this single case is just a spelling version (hardly can we talk of a real metathesis **у**ур**-* > *у**ру**-*) instead of **Урджов-*, from the Turkish dialectal **уурджў* (< **uğurcu*), I have to stress on the fact that we come across the same characteristic here as in *Угорджиева* (cf. 4.4). In this version the derivation is performed on the basis of the main **уўр-*, likewise with the dropping of the end *-m* (Turkish *-t*//*-d*) in **уўр**м**/*уўр**д*** (< Turkish *yoğur**t***, ***-d**u*) of the stem as a result of the occurrence of the voiced version of the added suffix ***-джи**я*//-*чия* (from Turkish ***-cı**/*/-*çı*). Compare the place name *Урджулар*, instead of **Уурджулар*, also written "(erroneously *Орджуларе* […] Lozen)" in the district of Pazardjik (Koledarov/Michev 1973: 156, 252), supposedly from the Turkish **Yoğurcular*.

4.6. *Yurdjiiski/***Юрджийски**, a single occurrence only, from 1960, in the Pazardjik district. In this version, as in *Угорджиева* (cf. 2.4) and *Уруджова* (cf. 4.5), we have a derivation from the dialectal version of the stem, which is characterized by the dropping of the end consonant *-m* (Turkish *-t*//*-d*) of the supposed stem **ўуўр**м**/*ўуўр**д*** (< Turkish *yoğur**t***, ***-d**u*) In this case, however, the stem is considerably better preserved than in *Уруджова* (cf. 4.5) – without the dropping of the pronunciation of [й] before a vowel and without the strange metathesis. The shaping of the final name with the suffix *-ски* instead of *-ов* refers this family name *Юрджийски* to the western parts of the country.

4.7. *Yurdchaeva/***Юрдчаева**, a single occurrence only, from 1923, in the district of Kardjali. In this case we most probably have an error in spelling or printing instead of the name *Юрдч**и**ева* (cf. 4.8) that is encountered in the same district.

4.8. *Yurdchieva/***Юрдчиева**, a single occurrence, from 1947, in the

BDD-A3813 © 2010 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 08:47:39 UTC)

district of Kardjali. Considering again the version of the Turkish *yoğurtçu* ‘a person making or selling yogurt, a milkman’, with the suffix *-çu* from *yogurt*, in this case we have a hypercorrect spelling version of *Юр**т**чиев* (4.10), in the composition of which the phoneme ***т*** is interpreted as a seemingly voiceless ****д***.

4.9. *Yurkchieva*/**Юркчиева**, a single occurrence, from 1913, also in the district of Kardjali. Behind this form is the name *Юр**т**чиев* (cf. 4.10), which is closer to the dialectal **юртчия* (from Turkish *yoğurtçu*), but with partial dissimilation as far as the place of articulation is concerned (*-***т***ч- > -*кч*-).

4.10. *Yurtchiev*(*a*)/**Юртчиев(а)**, from 1906, with 9 recorded occurrences in the district of Stara Zagora. It comes from a denomination of a professional occupation **юртчия*, from the Turkish *yoğurtçu* ‘a person who makes or sells yogurt’ with the suffix *-çu* (> *-чия*) from *yoğurt*. This form differs from its closest form (and also closest to the Turkish stem) *Йортчиев* (cf. 4.2) in the reduction of the vowel in the initial syllable (**йо*- > *йу*-/spelt *ю*-). Compare the place name *Юртчии* from the same origin, the former name (until 1906 г.) of the village of Lyubenovo (since 1969 part of Parvomai; cf. Duridanov, 1958: 18), as well as *Юртчулар* (with its Turkish ending for plural *-lar*), the former name (until 1934) of the village of Mogilyane in the district of Kardjali (cf. Koledarov/Michev, 1973: 158, 172, 275).

4.11**.** *Yurchiev*(*a*)/**Юрчиев**(**а**), from 1906, recorded 62 times in the Smolyan district. This refers to the same in origin and original meaning formation, which is in the stem of *Iortchiev*/*Йор**т**чиев* (4.2.) and *Yurtchiev*/*Юр**т**чиев* (4.10.). In this case, the phonetic change of sounds which makes articulation much easier than the change in *Yurkchiev*(*a*) (cf. 4.9), is the dissimilative disappearance(****т***ч > *ч*). This archaic denomination of the professional occupation lies in the stem of the place name *Yurchii*/*Юрчии* (along with *Юр**т**чии*, cf. Koledarov/Michev, 1973: 172, 275), quite aptly translated by renaming it *Mlekarevo*/*Млекарево* (in the Sliven district).

BDD-A3813 © 2010 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 08:47:39 UTC)

*

* *

5. We conclude that the stems of 11 family names (4.1.–4.11.) contain the name of the occupation of milkman **йогуртчùя/*йоуртчùя* (from the Turkish *yoğurtçu*) 'a person who makes or sells yogurt; a milkman'. On account of a few sound changes pointed out in this analysis – phonetic or on account of hypercorrectness – it occurs in the following 10 versions; **йорджия* (4.1.), **йортчия* (4.2.), **огорчия* (4.3.), **угорджия* (4.4.), **уурджùя* (but not **уруджùя*, cf. 4.5.), **юрджия* (4.6.), **юрдчия* (4.7., 4.8.), **юркчия* (4.9.), **юртчия* (4.10.), **юрчия* (4.11.). This also means that the basic denomination *yogurt/йогурт* is encountered in the respective dialects in several other phonetic forms: **йор*, **огор* and **угор* can be restored with greater certainty. Further on, maybe **уùр* as well (but not **урù*, 4.5), **юр* and **юрт* (but not **юрк*), because here we do not refer to the change of *-т* (or *-д*) to *-к*, but to a partial dissimilation of **-тч-* to **-кч-* (**-ттш-* > **-ктш-*), if we imagine the affricate sound *ч as *тш*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

*** *Bălgarski etimologičen rečnik* (BER), 1-6, Sofia, 1971-2002.

*** *Izvestiya na Instituta za bălgarski ezik* (IIBE 4), Sofia, 1955.

*** *Rečnik na čuždite dumi v bălgarskiya ezik* (RČD), Izd. na BAN, Sofia, 1982.

*** *Rečnik na redkite i ostareli dumi v literaturata ni ot XIX i XX vek* (RRODD), Red. St. Ilčev. Izd. na BAN, Sofia, 1974.

Cioranescu, A., *Dizionario etimologico romano*, Laguna, 1958–1960.

Duridanov, Iv., *Toponimiyata na Părvomaiska okoliya*, in "Godišnik na Sofiyskiya universitet. Filologičeski fakultet", t. 52, 1958.

Gerov, N., *Rečnik na bălgarskiya ezik* (Gerov 5), T. 5: R – Ya. Fototip. izd., Sofia, 1978.

Ikonomov, N., *Balkanska narodna mădrost*, Sofia, 1968.

Ilchev, St. *Rečnik na ličnite i familni imena u bălgarite*, Izd. na BAN, Sofia, 1969.

Koledarov, P., Michev, N., *Promenite v imenata na selištata v Bălgariya 1878 – 1972* , "Nauka i izkustvo", Sofia, 1973.

BDD-A3813 © 2010 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 08:47:39 UTC)

Misterski, H., *Sufiksacja w języku rumuńskim*, Poznań, 1987.

Stachowski, St., *Osmanisch-türkisch yoġurt ‘geronnene Milch, Joghurt*, in “The Orient Where the Gracious Light… Satura orientalis in honorem Andrzej Pisowicz”, Kraków, Księg. Akad., 2006, p. 185–190.

BDD-A3813 © 2010 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 08:47:39 UTC)