ON THE SURNAME *ЧЕРЧИЕВ* (AND ITS VARIANTS) IN BULGARIAN

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Abstract

There are five names discussed in the article: the nickname *Charchì*/**Чарчи** that Ilchev incorrectly explains as derived from *charkchì*/**чаркчи** "driver, grinder; proprietor of mills"; the surname *Chirchìev*/**Чирчиев** wrongly identified by Ilchev with the surname *Kyurkchìev*/**Кюркчиев**; the surnames **Чарчиев**, **Чарчийска** and **Черчиев** that are analyzed here for the first time. The author considers they are all based on the occupational name *charchìya*/**чарчия** "a dealer who resells any products by retail" which is borrowed from the Turkish *çerçi*, having the same meaning.

Key words: *appellative, nickname, surname, Turkish borrowing, occupational name*

Résumé

Dans cet article sont discutés cinq noms propres: le surnom *Charchì*/**Чарчи** qu'Ilchev explique incorrectement, comme dérivant de charkchì/**чаркчи** «meunier; propriétaire de moulins»; nom de famille *Chirchìev*/**Чирчиев** identifié incorrectement par Ilchev par le nom de famille *Kyurkchìev*/**Кюркчиев**; les noms de famille **Чарчиев**, **Чарчийска** et **Черчиев** sont analysés pour la première fois dans cet article. L'auteur considère que tous les substantifs propres énumérés sont basés sur les noms d'occupation *charchìya*/**чарчия** «commerçant qui revend tout type de produits en détail», terme emprunté du turc *çerçi*, qui signifiait la même chose.

Mots-clés: *appellatif, surnom, noms de famille, turquismes, noms d'occupation*

1. As it is known, according to profession or occupation, family names consist of one of four semantic groups of lexical units that family names are based on in many languages. In Bulgarian, as in other Balkan languages, a number of names of professions from the past are borrowed from the

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Turkish language. Many of these names are forgotten: some of them because the respective professions or occupations were abandoned, others because there appeared new names either made up of autochthonous elements or borrowed from European languages. Some of them have already been subject of scientific analysis, while others are contained in the archives of some research centers and such names accompany us to this day, even if we don't realize it. We refer to the type of names that new generations have inherited from their ancestors – first as **nicknames** and subsequently as **surnames** motivated by the former. To most people and often to their carriers, many of these surnames don't have a clear word structure, origin or meaning. They pose serious problems even to experienced researchers in anthroponymy. Such an example is the surname *Cherchìev*/**Черчиев** which is being analyzed in this article.

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The surname *Cherchìev*/**Черчиев** has not been subject of such an analysis in Bulgarian onomastics. However the nickname *Charchì*/**Чарчи**, on which the surname **Черчиев** (and its three variants) is based, was already considered by St. Ilchev in *Rechnik* (Ilchev 1969), but it was given an explanation which is not satisfactory in my opinion. And this is the concrete reason of this article. All five forms – the nickname **Чарчи** and the surnames **Чарчиев**, **Чарчийска**, **Черчиев** and **Чирчиев** – will be discussed below in alphabetical order.

2. Ilchev notes that the nickname *Charchì*/**Чарчи** (Ilchev 1969: 536) was attested in Pazardzhik in 1853; he wrongly connects it with a different name of profession, *charkchì*/**чаркчи** 'driver, grinder; proprietor of mills', and applies it to the surname *Charkchiev*/**Чаркчиев**. He correctly explains *Charkchiev*/**Чаркчиев** as derived from the dialectal form *charkchìya*/ **чаркчия**, the two having the same meaning. Such a supposition, i.e. the change of **чаркчи** to **чарчи** is not entirely excluded, though a simplification of the consonant group (*r**k**č* > *rč*) is quite possible. I do not consider such a change, however, because the word *chark*/**чарк**, on which the technical **чаркчия** is based, is a well known word, and this protects its

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derivative **чаркчия** from an undesirable deformation. There is one more important reason to seek another explanation for the nickname **Чарчи**, namely the existence of a name referring to a person who has the occupation of **чарчия**, which is completely identical in form with our nickname **Чарчи**. The common noun **чарчия** is mentioned by N. Gerov (1904) as having the meaning ‘dealer who resells any products by retail’ (Gerov 5: 536). The only phonetic difference between the two forms is that the trisyllabic appellative name **чарчия** is adapted morphologically by adding the ending **-я** (cf. *хаджи ~ хаджи**я***). N. Gerov also notes the derivative **чарчийница**, ‘a shop in which any products are sold by retail’ (Gerov 5: 536).

We have some older records from Plovdiv concerning the form **чарчия**. From a baptismal book (dated from1839–1840) about the former Paulicians converted to Roman Catholicism, L. Miletich provides “examples showing the social situation of Paulicians, residents of the city of Plovdiv in 1839–40, because in the short baptismal notes the occupation of the father of the baptized child is often indicated” (Miletich 1903: 318), and so is the profession of the godfather. According to this book, on December 3, 1839 the vicar Joannes Ptáček baptized “Franciscum, pierum” (i.e. Francis, a boy), and during the ceremony the godfather “patr[inus]” was “Josef Stoinof, ciarcia” (Miletich 1903: 318). The name of the godfather’s occupation “**ciarcia**” is written in Latin letters but just like Gerov’s **чарчия**, with the change of the vowel **e* (> *a*) placed after *č*, and is borrowed from the Turkish *çerçi* meaning ‘1. hardware, 2. peddler of hardware’. There is no reason to seek an explanation of the nickname **Чарчи** – in this phonetic form a disyllabic word, not adapted morphologically – in another lexical unit, except Gerov’s **чарчия**. Therefore, only this nickname having the phonetic form discussed above undoubtedly motivates the surname **Чарчиев** (see 2.1). And only the appellative name **чарчия** – changed in several cases but displaying minimal phonetic differences – forms the stem of the surname **Черчиев** (and its variants).

2.1. According to the 1925 “CA” data, the surname **Чарчиев**(**а**) is mentioned 6 times in NE (in Varna district). As mentioned above (see 2), it

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is based on the nickname **Чарчи**, which undergoes the change of **e* (> *a*) when placed after the consonant *č*. The word's stem is borrowed from the Turkish *çerçi*.

2.2. The surname **Чарчийска** (about a woman), mentioned in 1916, only once in SW (Kyustendil), is a word-building variant – with the suffix **-ски** instead of the suffix **-ов** (see 2.1).

2.3. The surname **Черчиев**(**а**), attested in 1897, is mentioned 12 times: 5 times in SE (Stara Zagora district), 7 times in NE (Rousse district). This phonetic form is based on another variant of the name, **черчия**, with the same meaning, testified by N. Gerov (Gerov 5: 547). This is the most punctual substitution of the Turkish *çerçi*.

The same *cerci* [cyrilic: **черчи**] used as a nickname derived from an occupation name (or as a surname – in statu nascendi) is recorded in a liber confirmatorum from Plovdiv (1803–1812), concerning the confirmation of two sisters, by the vicar Georgius Tuno. The two sisters are *Anna cerci Ghendova* and *Cecilia cerci Ghendova*, "Anna & Cecilia [daughters of] Ghendo [whose profession is] cerci", cf. Miletich (1903: 315–316). Miletich considered that the word "cerci" was satisfactorily explained just by quoting its Cyrilic form **черчи** in a footnote.

The same Turkish *çerçi* is in the stem of the Maced. **черчија*, motivating the surname *Черчиевски* (see 3), the SCr. *čèrčija* 'retailer' with its derivative *čèrčijka* 'a woman who goes from door to door and sells goods' (Škaljić 1973: 171) and the variants *čērčǐka* // *čerčǐka*, *čèrčinka* and the nomen actionis/acti *čērčǐlak* // *čērčilьkъ* 'retailer'. P. Skok, adds to the enumeration the Rom. *cercelar* 'retailer' (Skok 1: 310), formed with the suffix *-ar* from the stem *cercel* 'ring' and belonging to the Romanian language heritage (cf. Cioranescu 1951: 161).

2.4. The surname **Чирчиев**, missing in "CA", is mentioned by Ilchev as attested since 1908 in SW (in Karabunar, Pazardzhik district). The author also agrees that the form is the result of several changes: the simplification of the consonant group **rkč* (> *rč*), the change of **k*' (> *č*) and the delabialization of **yu* (> *i*). Therefore, he comes to the incorrect conclusion that **Черчиев** is used "probably instead of **Кюркчиев**" (Ilchev, 1969: 543), which is derived from the common noun **кюркчия**, borrowed from the

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Turkish word *kürkçü* ‘furrier’. In fact, the form that interests us reflects only one change, namely the reduction of the vowel **e* (> *i*) when placed before a stressed syllable: **Чирчиев** appears instead of **Черчиев**, and not “instead of **Кюркчиев**”.

3. The Bulgarian surname **Черчиев** (and its variants) corresponds exactly to the Macedonian **Черчиевски**, based on the identical nickname ***Черчија**, from the same Turkish word *çerçi* ‘retailer’, but formed with an extended suffix **-евски** (RPM 2: 706).

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Thus the Bulgarian surname **Черчиев** is based on the nickname ***Черчия** (> **Чарчия**), from the obsolete and forgotten name of occupation/profession **черчия** // **чарчия** ‘peddler of hardware’, borrowed from the Turkish *çerçi*; that seems to be a more correct etymology rather than the one alleged by Ilchev: **чаркчия** and **кюркчия**, which are derived with the suffix **-чия** from the bases **чарк** ‘cogwheel’ and **кюрк** ‘coat’. The word **черчия** // **чарчия**, on which the above studied surnames are based, is an unmotivated noun, indivisible from the point of view of word formation. Ilchev was mistaken supposing that the above analyzed family names (**Черчиев** and var.) are based on the nomen agentis containing the suffix **-чия** (a variant of the suffix -**джия**). He wrongly identified the final syllable **-чи-** with the suffix **-чия**.

“CA” = Database from the **computer archive** file of Bulgarian surnames in the XX-th century, “Professor Nikolay Kovachev” Centre for Bulgarian Onomastics at “St. Cyril and Methodius” University of Veliko Tarnovo. All the data concerning the chronology of appearance, frequency and spreading of the analyzed family names are provided on the basis of “CA”.

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