

Ruthenian Family Names in Serbia

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Abstract After presenting the results of the previous researches on the topic, the author concludes that the most frequent Ruthenian surnames are Nadj, Kiš, Pap, Hardi, etc. in Ruski Krstur and Hromiš, Hornjak, Ruskovski, Fejsa etc. in Kucura. The Ruthenians living in Ruski Krstur recognize each other not only by surnames but also by cognomens, such as Andriško, Bandurik, Džambas, Jeva, Makajička, Nadjmiška, Poštarov and Jonov for surname Nadj. There are around 600 surnames for the Ruthenians in Serbia. More than 40 % of them are of Hungarian origin. The oldest Hungarian surnames and cognomens in the Ruthenian language emerged from the direct contacts of Slavs and Hungarians. Most of them originate from the times before the Ruthenians settlement in Bačka in the middle of the 18th century.

Keywords Ruthenian / Rusyn Language, Onomastics, Ruthenian Family Names, Surnames, Cognomens, Hungarian Influence, Ruthenians in Serbia

1. Introduction

Literature dealing with Ruthenian / Rusyn surnames in Serbia is not voluminous. The most important references which provide an insight into this topic are the article "The Surnames and Cognomens of the Ruthenians in Yugoslavia" by Mikola M. Kočiš[1] and the book *The Surnames of Hungarian Origin of the Bačka-Srem Ruthenians* by Hajnalka Firisz[2]. The second reference presents a doctoral dissertation, defended at the Budapest University in 2010. Two university diploma works on this topic were defended at the Department of Ruthenian Studies at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Novi Sad – "The Names and Surnames in Šid"[3] and "Hungarisms in the Ruthenian Language"[4]. As far as onomastic research on Ruthenian surnames abroad is concerned Ukrainian linguist Prof. Dr. Pavlo Čučka[5] and Hungarian linguist Prof. Dr. Istvan Udvari[6] dealt with them as well.

The ancestors of the Bačka-Srem Ruthenians (living in Serbia and Croatia today) lived in the Hungarian linguistic environment since the Hungarian Conquest. Before moving into Bačka in the middle of the 18th century, the ancestors of the Bačka-Srem Ruthenians had been living in the Hungarian counties of Abauj, Boršod, Sabolč and South-Zemplin. After moving into Bačka they also got into the Hungarian linguistic environment. The Hungarian language was the official language for the Ruthenians till 1918. Until that year Ruthenian-Hungarian bilingualism had ruled. The Hungarian language had high reputation and affected the

Ruthenian language in three different ways: 1. by the Hungarian administration; 2. by the everyday language connections; 3. by the Ruthenian-Hungarian bilingualism (for the bilingual Ruthenians) (as in[2]).

For the benefit of collecting the taxes it was very important for the administration of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy to make it compulsory for the inhabitants to take stable surnames. Because of that, in 1780, Joseph II decreed that it was compulsory to use the family names. Franz I issued a decree prohibiting any changes of surnames without special ministry permissions in 1814. This leads to the conclusion that most of the Ruthenian surnames had been created in the Upper Northern Hungary when all the Ruthenians lived together, before their settling in Bačka.

Since the censuses from the second half of the eighteenth century show the same surnames both of the Ruthenians in the Carpathian homeland and of those who moved to Bačka, it can be stated that most of the surnames of the Ruthenians had been formed before the migration from the northern regions of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire to the southern regions – in Bačka, in the village of Big Krstur (1751) and Kucura (1763)[7].

2. Previous Researches on Ruthenian Family Names

Nikola Kočiš noted that there exist two family names in Ruski Krstur, the place with the largest Ruthenian population. One of them is official – the surname, and the other is unofficial – the cognomen (as in[1]). The number of cognomens varies from two to eight. The appearance of more cognomens for a particular surname undoubtedly indicates a greater frequency of the surname. It is reasonable to assume that the most frequent Ruthenian surnames in Ruski Krstur

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are those with eight, seven and six cognomens.

Eight cognomens have been registered for surnames Kiš and Nadj:

KIŠ – Adam, Arsim, Hrico, Gali, Đurikov, Međeši, Onder, Filjipkov

NADJ – Andriško, Bandurik, Džambas, Jeva, Makajička, Nadjmiška, Poštarov, Janov;

Surnames Pap, Hardi and Sivč are found with one of the following seven cognomens:

PAP – Haluška, Djuranj, Dulič, Matov, Papjanko, Petranj, Janov

HARDI – Vereš, Vojvoda, Ivanov, Malacko, Miškanj, Miškov, Šokec

SIVČ – Vincrilj, Hičo, Katrina, Markov, Ferkanj, Ferko, Ferčo;

Surnames Dudaš, Mihnjak, Rac and Čizmar are found with one of the following six cognomens:

DUDAŠ – Danko, Ivan, Mijov, Ragaji, Romančo, Seman
MIHNJAK – Pekarov, Mica, Mičurkov, Miškanj, Miško, Miškov

RAC – Hrico, Dzvonar, Krenjicki, Miško, Racmiška, Tirkajla

ČIZMAR – Bosoho, Eržanj, Peštika, Rusov, Sceranka, Čizmarjanka;

Surnames Miklovš and Mudri have five cognomens:

MIKLOVŠ – Kulič, Lalicki, Mica, Njaradi, Mikolka

MUDRI – Berci, Koljesar, Luskanci, Minar, Šandor;

Surnames Barna, Budinski, Edelski, Juhas and Sabadoš have four cognomens:

BARNA – Hrobar, Gajder, Šutoho, Juhas

BUDINSKI – Brugoš, Burjan, Huzder, Midja

EDELINSKI – Brugoš, Hornjak, Mikolkov, Funtos

JUHAS – Barna, Gičko, Tomaš, Pisi

SABADOŠ – Bora, Hika, Lisi, Sabadoščik;

The following surnames are followed by one of three cognomens:

BESERMINJI – Berci, Hricko, Oleksa

VARGA – Haluška, Šokec, Šokinj

VISLA VSKI – Mudri, Mudrička, Palko

KOSTELJNIK – Adamčo, Homza, Masnoho

NJARADI – Bučko, Dzvonnarka, Dzvonnarov

PAPUGA – Djurkov, Djurča, Jakim

SEMAN – Zahorski, Petraška, Radjov

SIMUNOVIČ – Kerekjarta, Poljivka, Janov

HAJDUK – Lackanjin, Lisi, Štefančik

HORNJAK – Adamčo, Ilijaš, Kuhar;

The following surnames are followed by one of two cognomens:

HARHAJI – Hatraš i Homza

HERBUT – Gaži i Ljovčoš.

Cognomens distinguish one family from another. According to Kočiš the most important reason for the identification of families in this way has been a need to provide a sign which clearly points to the fact that there are no kinship ties between families with the same surname. Hajnalka Firis points out that the Ruthenians lived in mixed, bilingual, Hungarian-Ruthenian communities and that is also

one of the reasons for the parallel coexistence of the Hungarian and Ruthenian family name forms (for ex. Mali – Kiš, Kuhar – Sakač, Koljesar – Kerekjarta, Hrin – Torma, Vovk – Farkaš etc.) (as in[2]).

Mihajlo Fejsa conducted a research on frequency of Ruthenian surnames in the village of Kucura. Based on his research the most common surnames in Kucura are Beserminji, Buila, Fejsa, Hornjak, Hromiš, Ivan, Makaji, Ruskovski, Sabo, Šanta and Varga ([8]). There are only a few dual family names in Kucura. The author registered the following examples: official Cap – unofficial Peljvaš, official Hornjak – unofficial Kuhar, official Sabo – unofficial Dajko, official Molnar – unofficial Pipaš and official Olejar – unofficial Onda. Two examples show that it is possible to join one official and one unofficial surname and create a complex official surname – Hornjak Kuhar and Sabo Dajko.

The fact that the Ruthenians of Ruski Krstur and the Ruthenians of Kucura did not come (over a period of 12-13 years) from the same counties causes the appearance of some surnames that are characteristic only for Ruski Krstur or Kucura. Thus, for example, the family name of the author is characteristic only for Kucura. Even if a person with the surname Fejsa does not live in Kucura at the moment, we can be sure that the person or one of his/her ancestors moved there from Kucura ([9]). The Ruthenians of Kucura came from the following counties: Abauj, Zemlin, Gemer, Šariš, Spiš, Beregovo, Hajdu, and Sabolč. The Ruthenians of Ruski Krstur came from a much wider area – from the northern and northeastern counties of historical Hungary ([10]). After the defeat and withdrawal of the Ottoman Empire in 1699, the Austrian-Hungarian authorities needed more population in the south of the state and they encouraged the colonization of Germans, Hungarians, Slovaks, and others, as well as Ruthenians ([11]). That is why the ancestors of the Ruthenians (whose descendants live in Serbia and Croatia), according to the agreement with the state authorities, in the status of free citizens ("Ruthenus Libertinus," as they were called) and of Greek Catholic (United) religion, were allowed to settle in the mid eighteenth century in Bačka ([12]).

According to Anita Govlja's research, the most common surnames in Šid, the largest settlement in Srem, are: Kanjuh – 3.5%, Hornjak – 2.9%, Dance – 2.7%, Edelski – 2.1%, Ždinjak – 2.1%, Krajcar / Grajcar – 2%, Zahorjanski – 1.9%, Lazor – 1.7%, Mikloš / Miklovš – 1.6% and Torma – 1.6% (as in[3]).

Leona Hajduk tried to give a more precise answer concerning origin of cognomens in Šid[13]. There are several reasons for existence of parallel surnames:

a) a particular surname can be brought from Kucura and Krstur or from the Carpathian area, for ex. official surname Abodi – cognomen Nirčak / Njirjak, Barna – Ždinjak, Barna – Šuti, Pastovnjicki – Kocurskoho, Torma – Hrin, Biki – Geci, Edelski – Baltar, Hardi – Oleksa, Hardi – Miškanj;

b) a particular surname can be brought by a husband who comes to live in wife's house, for ex. Bodjvanjski – Bučko,

Segedi – Timko, Dance – Parčetić, Majher – Keteleš, Kanjuh – Barjanoš, Mikloš – Kulić, Kohut – Mikloš, Kiš – Racik, Kiš – Geci, Kiš – Medješi, Lukač – Ribar, Mitrov – Horbatoho, Nadj – Vislavski, Čižmar – Magoč, Segedi – Tamaš, Šandor – Kraloš, Šljivak – Farkaš;

c) a particular surname can be created according to activities at work or in everyday life, for ex. Drumar, Žicar, Ekonom, Kuna, Sobotar, Paprigar, Kovač, Taščar, Spira etc.

It has been noticed that several surnames appear in variant forms. For example: Beserminji and Besermenji, Sabo and Sabol, Mikloš and Miklovš, Nota and Novta, Buila and Bujila, Havrilčak and Harvilčak, Dorokazi and Dorokhazi, Kerekjarta and Keregjarta, Paroškaji and Paroškaj, Palinkaš and Pal'enkaš, Hološnjaji and Kološnjaji, Vereš and Vereši, Zubko and Zupko, Kostelnik and Kostel'nik, Balint and Baljint, Čižmar and Čizmar. Once written down the particular family name (though different from the original) is passed from generation to generation.

There are 594 Bačka-Srem Ruthenians surnames. 299 (50.3 %) of them are of Hungarian origin. There are 186 cognomens. 66 (35.5 %) of them are of Hungarian origin. Hungarian origin surnames and cognomens also exist in the Prešov Region (Slovakia), the Lemko Region (Poland) and in the Transcarpathian Region (Ukraine).

3. Classification of Ruthenian Surnames and Cognomens

Hajnalka Firis grouped Hungarian origin surnames of the Bačka-Srem Ruthenians into the following branches (as in[2]):

1. surnames from Hungarian first names (for ex. Bal'int, Miklovš, Tamaš, Farkaš);

2. surnames from geographic names - macrotoponyms and microtoponyms (for ex. Beserminji, Vina i, Vislavski, Edelski, Eme(j)di, Madi, Maka, Mučenski, Salontaji, Magoč, Ujfalusi, Kašaji, Keresturik, Medeši, Dorok(h)azi, Segedi, Radvanji, Ruskaji, Keveždi, Makaji);

3. surnames which were motivated by some kind of inner or outer characteristics (for ex. Nadj „big“, Kiš „small“, Barna „brown“, Fekete „black“, Balog „lefthanded“, Laboš „bigfooted“, Nadjfeji „bigheaded“, Meleg „warm“, Čorej „poor“, Šovš „salty“, Šarik („muddy“), Žiroš („greasy“);

4. surnames which were motivated by profession names (for ex. Bodnar, Varga, Vašaš, Dudaš, Pap, Sakač, Sabo, Molnar, Juhas, Lovas, Čordaš, Čovs, Keregjarta, Keteleš, Sivč, Katona, Kondaš, Šajtoš);

5. surnames which have been created from folk or ethnic group names (Lendjer „Pole“, Oros „Russian“, Tot „Slovak“, Rac „Serbian“);

6. surnames which show the social or financial status (for ex. Keteleš, Sabadoš, Bireš);

7. surnames from objects (for ex. Fejsa, Firis, Cobor, Čakan);

8. surnames from names of animals (for ex. Baran, Govlja, Farkaš);

9. surnames from names of flowers (for ex. Toržič, Torma, Fa);

10. surnames from measure and value names (for ex. Gusoš, Grajcar);

11. surnames from food names (for ex. Kolbas, Ciberej).

The groups 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 8 are characteristic of Ruthenian cognomens.

There are complex surnames created from two components of Hungarian origin as well. For example: Kišjuhas (from Kiš and Juhas, meaning "little shepherd"), Nadjmakaji (from Nadj and Makaji, meaning "great Makaji"), Papharhaji (from Pap and Harhaji, meaning "priest Harhaji") and others.

Among these complex surnames there are some which are combined of a Hungarian component and a Ruthenian origin one. For example: Papdanko (from Pap and Danko), Paplacko (from Pap and Lacko), Kišjankov (from Kiš and Janko), Nadjpopov (from Nadj and Popov), Papjanko (Pap and Janko) and others.

The complex family names make 8.67 % of all Hungarian origin surnames (Hornjakdanko, Kišgeci, Kišonder, Kišpečo, Kišracik, Kišjuhas, Kišjankov, Nadjlukač, Nadjmakaji, Nadjmičo, Nadjordja, Nadjpopov, Papandriš, Papharhaji, Papdanko, Papdančo, Papdjuranj, Papdjurdes, Paplacko, Papjanko, Racmiška, Racpeti).

4. Slavic / Ruthenian and Hungarian Suffixes

Some Ruthenian surnames are formed by suffixes. The suffixes are both of Hungarian and Slavic / Ruthenian origin (as in[2]).

The most frequent Hungarian suffixes are:

1. suffix -š (variants -aš, -oš, -eš, -iš), for ex. Birkaš, Gubaš, Dudaš, Čordaš, Šajtoš, Sabadoš, Laboš, Žiroš, Vereš, Feješ, Hegediš;

2. suffix -ar, for ex. Kalmar, Molnar, Čižmar;

3. suffix -as, for ex. Lovas, Juhas, Bindas;

4. suffix -i, for ex. Segedi, Njaradi, Medješi, Beserminji, Abodji; suffix -i is sometimes omitted, for ex. Vinaj(i), Makaj(i), Hološnjaj(i).

The most frequent Slavic / Ruthenian suffixes are:

1. suffix -ski, for ex. Vadaski, Bodvanjski, Papjanski; suffix -ski can be combined with suffixes -in and -ov making complex suffixes -inski and -ovski, for ex. Edelski, Beserminjski, Venčeljovski, Kašovski;

2. suffix -in, for ex. Djuranjin, Malackanj, Jankanjin;

3. suffix -ik, for ex. Keresturik, Šarik, Kišracik;

4. suffix -čik, for ex. Arvalčik, Karčmarčik, Tamaščik;

5. suffix -ič, for ex. Abodič, Andič, Sanič; suffix -ič can be combined with suffix -ov- making complex suffix -ovski, for ex. Pavlovič, Demetrovič, Todorovič;

6. suffix -ov, for ex. Djuranjov, Jankanjov, Miškov;

7. suffix -ak i -čak, for ex. Balaščak, Njirčak, Ferencak, Senderak;

8. suffix -ač, for ex. Takač, Sakač, Kovač;

9. suffix -ko, for ex. Danko, Sinko, Malacko.
The same suffixes are found in the Carpathian area too.

5. Conclusions

There are 594 surnames for the Bačka-Srem Ruthenians; 299 of them are of Hungarian origin. There are 186 cognomens; 66 of them are of Hungarian origin.

The Hungarian language was the official language of the Ruthenians till 1918. Since the vast majority of today's Ruthenian surnames of Hungarian origin are found in the Carpathian area (mainly in Slovakia, Hungary and Ukraine), it can be concluded that the Ruthenian surnames of Hungarian origin were created in the homeland, before moving to Bačka in the middle of the eighteenth century.

There are 11 ways of creating Ruthenian family names. They can be formed on the basis of first names, geographic names, inner or outer characteristics, profession names, folk or ethnic group names, social or financial status, objects, names of animals, names of flowers, measure and value names, and food names.

Both Slavic / Ruthenian and Hungarian elements can be detected in complex family names and in suffixes.

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