SERBIAN ANTHROPONYMS THAT ORIGINATE FROM NAMES OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Anca-Maria BERCARU
Universitatea din București

Abstract: In the present paper we submit to analysis the category of the traditional Serbian names that originate from names of plants and animals. We included here the feminine and masculine names that are formed through conversion from common words of the vocabulary that represent the animal and botanical world such as the feminine *Kaćuna* that comes from the noun *kaćun* 'orchid', *Košuta* created from the noun *košuta* 'roe' and the masculine names *Golub* or *Jablan* created from the nouns *golub* 'pigeon', and *jablan* 'poplar'.

Keywords: Serbian names, plants, animals, conversion.

The Serbian system of personal names contains three major categories of anthroponyms: traditional names, Calendar names and modern names.

In the present paper we submit to analysis the category of the traditional Serbian names that originate from common words of the vocabulary which represent names of plants and animals.

The Serbian bibliography offers little information about the motives that led to the conversion of certain common names into proper names. Even if most of the anthroponyms lost their initial semantic meaning, the Serbian language has a series of names in whose form we can recognize the words from which they were created. For the primitive people, choosing a name was a complex process, due to the belief that the fate of the future bearer of the name would be influenced by the name itself. Consequently, the parents selected names which they wanted to be representative off the child's life and destiny. If they wanted their daughter to be beautiful, they would choose the name *Lepotica*, created through the process of anthroponymical conversion from the noun *lepotica* 'beautiful woman'. If their primary desire was to have a healthy child, then they would name their child *Zdravko* or *Zdravka* derived from the adjective *zdrav* 'healthy'.

The names listed below are either motional forms derived from their masculine correspondents (created, in their turn, from common names of the vocabulary), or directly created from common words through the process of anthroponymical conversion. The names are additionally accompanied by their scientific Latin correspondents and a brief explanation regarding the motif which led to the selection of a particular name wherever the bibliographical sources provide us with one.

The names are divided into two categories: masculine and feminine names that come from names of plants and trees and masculine and feminine names that originate from names of animals.

https://biblioteca-digitala.ro

1. NAMES THAT COME FROM NAMES OF PLANTS AND TREES

This category includes names that are created from names of flowers, plants, fruit and trees.

Bosilj, Bosiljko m.n. (Grković 43); ***Bosiljka*** f.n. (Karadžić 43, Miklosich 31, T. O. 61, Vukanović 64) are created from the noun *bosiljak* 'sweet basil' '*Ocimum bacilicum*' (Tomić I 88). In the popular culture the smell from heaven was associated with basil. It is assumed that this is the reason for the spreading of the name (Vukanović 64). The feminine form led to the creation of the masculine name *Bosiljko*;

Božur, Božurin m.n. (Grković 40); ***Božura, Božurka*** f.n. are names that have a controversial etymology. In the fourteenth century, the *chrysobulls* of the Dečani monastery mention the masculine name *Božurin*[1]. T. Vukanović (Vukanović 65) links the feminine name *Božurka*, which is a motional form created from *Božur*, to the noun *božur* 'peony' '*Paeonia officinalis*' (Tomić I 89), a plant that was considered to exert a protective power against evil spirits because of its association with the colour red. In the opinion of Petar Skok (Skok I 180), the etymology of this common name should be associated with the noun *bog* 'god' – an etymology also accepted by the linguist Velimir Mihajlović[2];

Cveta f.n., created through conversion from the noun *cvet* 'flower'[3] (Vukanović 65). It also functions as a hypocoristic form for the feminine compound names *Cvetimira*, *Cvetislava*;

Drenko m.n. (Grković 84) is a prophylactic name created from the noun *dren* 'horn or cornel tree' '*Cornus mas*' (Tomić I 185), which in the popular belief stood for strength and health;

Dunjo m.n (Grković 85), ***Dunja*** f.n. (Bogosavljević 53, Novaković 62, Karadžić 154) with the var. ***Gdunja*** (Novaković 56, T. O. 63) come from the n. *dunja* 'quince tree, quince' '*Cydonia oblonga*' (WEUD 1180). The masculine form is created from the feminine one;

Georgina f.n. (Grković 236) < n. *georgina* 'dahlia, georgine' '*Dahlia variabilis*' (Tomić I 240);

Gorocvet m.n. (Grković 66) < n. *gorocvet* 'pheasant's eye' '*Adonis annua*' (WEUD 1080);

Gorun m.n. (Grković 66) < n. *gorun* 'oak' 'genus *Quercus*' (WEUD 992);

Grozdan m.n. (Novaković 56), ***Grozda*** f.n. (Stojanović III 314, Miklosich 54, T. O. 62), ***Grozdana*** f.n. (Novaković 56, Karadžić 111, Miklosich 54) are created from the n. *grozd* '(bunch of) grapes' 'genus *Vitis*' (WEUD 616);

Jablan m.n. (Novaković 113, Grković 102), ***Jablana*** f.n. (Grković 258) with the deriv. ***Jablanka*** (Grković 258) come from the n. *jablan* 'poplar' '*Plopus pyramidales*' (Tomić I 364). The feminine form is created through motion from the masculine one;

Jabuka f.n. (Grković 258) < n. *jabuka* 'apple tree, apple' '*Malus pumila* (Pyrus Malus)' (WEUD 72, Tomić I 364);

[1] Milica Grković, *Rečnik imena banjskog, dečanskog i prizrenskog vlastelinstva u XIV veku*, Belgrade, Narodna Knjiga, 1986, p. 34.

[2] Velimir Mihajlović, "Neki problemi semantike naših ženskih imena", in *Prilozi proučavanju jezika*, no. 4, Novi Sad, 1968, p. 209–225.

[3] The generic nouns cvet in Serbian, respectively *flower* in English have as Latin correspondent the noun *flos, flor-*, URL: [https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/flower_1], accessed February, 10th, 2021.

https://biblioteca-digitala.ro

Jaglika f.n. (Novaković 113, Karadžić 273, Miklosich 116) < n. *jaglika* 'cowslip' '*Primula veris*' (Tomić I 366);

Jagoda f. n. (Novaković 113, Stojanović III 342, Karadžić 274, Miklosich 31, T. O. 63) < n. *jagoda* 'strawberry' '*Fragaria elatior*', 'wild strawberry' '*Fragaria vulgaris*' (Tomić I 366);

Jasenija, ***Jasenka*** f.n. (Grković 259), created from the n. *jasen* 'ash(tree)' '*Fraxinus excelsior*' (Tomić I 370) with the suffixes *-ija* and *-ka*;

Jasika (Miklosich 117, T. O. 63) < n. *jasika* 'aspen tree' '*Plopus tremula*' (Tomić I 370);

Jasmin m.n. (Grković 104), ***Jasmina*** f.n. (Grković 259) < n. *jasmin* 'jasmine' '*Jasminum officinale*' (Tomić I 370). *Jasmin* is a motional form from *Jasmina.*

Javor (Grković 102), ***Javorko*** m.n. (Grković 102); ***Javorika*** (Grković 258), ***Javorina*** f.n. (Grković 258) < n. *javor* 'sycamore maple' '*Acer pseudopaltanus*' (Tomić I 372);

Jorgovan m.n. (Grković 108) < n. *jorgovan* 'lilac' '*Syringa vulgaris*' (Tomić I 382);

Kaćuna f.n. (T. O. 63) < n. *kaćun* 'orchid' 'any terrestrial or epiphytic, perrenial herb of the family *Orhidaceae*' (WEUD 1012, Tomić I 387);

Koviljka f.n. (Miklosich 68, T. O. 63) < n. *kovilje* 'feather grass' '*Stipa pennata*' (Tomić I 452);

Kruška[4] f.n. (Vukanović 65), created from the n. *kruška* 'pear tree' '*Pinus communis*' (Tomić I 470);

Lovorka f.n. (Grković 272) < n. *lovor* 'laurel' '*Laurus nobilis*' (Tomić I 515);

Loza f.n. (Novaković 74, T. O. 63), ***Lozana*** f.n. (Novaković 74, T. O. 63), created from the n. *loza* 'grape-vine' '*Vitis viniferar*' (Tomić I 515);

Ljiljana f.n. (Stojanović VI 299, Miklosich 72), ***Lilijana*** f.n. (Novaković 73), ***Liljana*** f.n. (Novaković 73, Miklosich 72, T. O. 63), < n. *ljiljan* 'lily' '*Lilium candium*' (Tomić II 6);

Ljubičica f.n. (Grković 271) < n. *ljubičica* 'violet' '*Viola odorata*' (Tomić II 6);

Malina (Novaković 75, Karadžić 384, Miklosich 74), ***Malinka*** f.n. (Novaković 75, Karadžić 384, Miklosich 74) < n. *malina* 'raspberry' '*Rubus idaeus*' (Tomić II 17);

Mirta f.n. (Grković 282) < n. *mirta* 'myrtle' '*Myrtus communis*' (Tomić II 49);

Narandža f.n. (Novaković 83) < n. *narandža* 'orange tree' '*Citrus Auratium*' (Tomić II 117) with the var. ***Nerandža*** (Miklosich 83);

Neven m.n. (Grković 144) < n. *neven* 'marigold' '*Calendula officinalis*' (Tomić II 176);

Odoljen m.n. (Grković 151) < n. *odoljen* 'garden heliotrope, setwall, valerian' '*Valeriana officinalis*' (Tomić II 228);

Pšenica f.n. (T. O. 64) < n. *pšenica* 'wheat' '*Triticum aestivum*' (WEUD 1625, Tomić II 584);

Ruzmarin m.n. (Grković 1747), ***Ruzmarinka*** f.n. (Grković 300) < n. *ruzmarin* 'rosemary' '*Rosmarinus officinalis*' (Tomić III 87);

Ruža m.n. (Grković 174), ***Ruža*** f.n. (Bogosavljević 53, Daničić III 59, Novaković 98, Miklosich 95, T. O. 64) are created from the n. *ruža* 'rose' 'any of the wild or cultivated, usually prickly-stemmed, showy-flowered shrubs of the genus

[4] This feminine name is not listed in the dictionary of Milica Grković, *Rečnik ličnih imena kod Srba*, Belgrade, Vuk Karadžić, 1977.

https://biblioteca-digitala.ro

Rosa' (WEUD 1245, Tomić III 87). It belongs to the category of traditional names through which parents hoped to ensure beautiful features and youth;

Spomenko m.n. is created through motion from the feminin ***Spomenka***[5] (Grković 308) < n. *spomenak* 'forget-me-not' '*Myosotis palustris*' (WEUD 556);

Šebojka f.n. (Grković 324) < n. *šeboj*, 'wall-flower' '*Cheirantus Cheiri*' (WEUD 1606);

Trešnja f.n. (Grković 315) < n. *trešnja* '(sweet) cherry tree, (sweet) cherry' 'the fruit of any of various trees of the genus *Prunus*' (WEUD 253);

Trnjina f.n. (Miklosich 31, T. O. 66) < n. *trnjina* 'sloe tree, blackthorn' '*Prunus spinosa*' (WEUD 155);

Vaniljia f.n. (Grković 228) < n. *vanilija* 'vanilla' '*Vanilla planifolia*' (WEUD 1597);

Višnja f.n. (Miklosich 31, T. O. 62), created from the n. *višnja* '(morello) cherry tree, (morello) cherry' '*Cerasus vulgaris, Prunus cerasus*' (Tomić III 408, WEUD 931). It belongs to the small category of the feminine names which have no masculine correspondent in the Serbian language. The name is documented for the first time in some papers regarding the history of Belgrade from the 18th century. The mother of the Serbian ruler Miloš Obrenović was also named *Višnja*;

Zumbula (Grković 255), ***Zumbulka*** n.f. (Grković 255) < n. *zumbul* 'hyacinth' '*Hyacinthus orientalis*' (WEUD 695).

2. NAMES THAT COME FROM NAMES OF ANIMALS

Čavka f.n. (Novaković 113, Karadžić 392, Miklosich 114, Grković 322), created from the n. *čavka* 'jackdaw' '*Corvus monedula*' (WEUD 760);

Gavran m.n. (Grković 62) < n. *gavran* 'raven' '*Corvus corax*' (WEUD 1194);

Golub m.n. (Grković 66), ***Golubica*** f.n. (T. O. 62) < nouns *golub* 'pigeon' and *golubica* 'hen-pigeon' 'any bird of the family *Columbidae*' (WEUD 1091). The motives that led to the popularity of these names are diverse. They symbolise purity, candour and devotion. In certain parts of Serbia, they exert a protective function by keeping the bearer of the name safe from the influence of the evil spirits (Vukanović 62). The same symbolism of purity, fidelity and devotion is the reason why parents chose for their children the names *Grlica*, *Kumrija* and *Srna*;

Grlica f.n. (Vukanović 63) < n. *grlica* 'turtle dove' 'any of several small to medium-sized, Old World doves of the genus *Streptopelia*, esp. *Streptopelia turtur*' (WEUD 1528);

Jelen[6] m.n. (T.O. 55) < n. *jelen* 'deer' '*Cervus alaphus*' (Tomić I 377);

Jež m.n. (Grković 105) < n. *jež* 'hedgehog' 'any of several Old World, insectivorous mammals of the genus *Erinaceus*, esp. E. *europaeus*' (WEUD 657);

Košuta f.n. (Novaković 71, Miklosich 69) comes from the common noun *košuta* 'roe deer' '*Capreolus capreolus*' (WEUD 1240) and can be interpreted in two ways. It can be regarded as a name with protective function, because in popular culture, the milk of a roe was considered to be an effective medicine against many diseases

[5] Milica Grković (Grković 308) considers the possibility that this name comes from the n. *spomen* 'memory'.

[6] It is also possible that this name is created through regressive motion from the feminine *Jelena*.

https://biblioteca-digitala.ro

(Vukanović 62). Alternatively, it could be regarded as a name to express the parents' desire that the bearer be harmless and delightful as a roe. The exact semantic meaning led to the anthroponymical conversion of the common noun *srna* 'doe' into the feminine proper name *Srna* (Grković 308);

Kumrija f.n. (Novaković 72) < n. *kumrija* 'turtle dove' 'any of several small to medium-sized, Old World doves of the genus *Streptopelia,* esp. *Streptopelia turtur*' (WEUD 1528);

Labud m.n. (T. O. 55), ***Labuda*** f.n. (T.O. 63) < n. *labud* 'swan' '*Cygnus olor*' (Tomić I 488);

Lisica m.n. (Grković 120) < n. *lisica* 'fox' 'any of several carnivores of the dog family, esp. those of the genus *Vulpes*' (WEUD 562);

Medved m.n. (Grković 129) < n. *medved* 'bear' 'any of the plantigrade, carnivorous or omnivorous mammals of the family *Ursidae*' (WEUD 130);

Orao m.n. (Novaković 88) < n. *orao* 'vulture' 'any of several large, primarily carrion-eating Old World birds of prey of the family *Accipitridae*' (WEUD 1602). Like the name *Medved* the choice of this name shows the wish of the parents for their child to be strong and powerful as a vulture (Maretić I 85);

Pauk m.n. (Grković 155) < n. *pauk* 'spider' 'any of the numerous predaceous arachnids of the order *Araneae* (*Araneida*)' (WEUD 1369);

Pčela f.n. (Grković 295) < n. *pčela* 'bee' 'any hymnopterous insect of the superfamily *Apoidea*' (WEUD 133);

Slavuj, ***Slavujko*** m.n., ***Slavujka*** f.n. < n. *slavuj* 'nightingale' 'any of several, small Old World, migratory birds of the thrush family, esp. *Luscinia megarhyncha* of Europe' (WEUD 966);

Sokol m.n. (Novaković 102) < n. *sokol* 'hawk, falcon' 'birds of prey of the family *Accipitridae* or of the family *Falconidae*' (WEUD 651);

Srna m.n., f.n. (Grković184, 308) < n. *srna* 'roe deer' '*Capreolus capreolus*' (WEUD 1240). This name symbolizes purity, commitment, devotion, and kindness. Moreover, it was believed that the milk of a deer could be used as medicine against many diseases. (Vukanović 62);

Vidra f.n. (T. O. 62, Vukanović 62) is like *Košuta* and many other names of this type created through the process of anthroponymical conversion from the common name *vidra* 'otter' 'any of several, aquatic, fur-bearing, carnivorous, musteline mammals of the genus *Lutra*' (WEUD 1020). In the popular culture of the Southern Slaves the otter was considered to be an intelligent entity with the power of predicting the future and whose teeth and hair had magical powers (Vukanović 62);

Vuk m.n. (Grković 59)**,** ***Vuka***[7] f.n. (Grković 234) < n. *vuk* 'wolf' 'any of several large, carnivorous mammals of the genus Canis, of the family *Canidae*, esp. *C. lupus*' (WEUD 1641). The arguments for the vast spreading of this name lie in the binary semantic values in which the medieval people believed. The wolf offered protection, but, at the same time, it was a force that had to be reckoned and respected. The name *vuk* provided protection against witches, who would not dare approach a child bearing the name of a totemic animal. In certain regions of western Serbia, if a child came

[7] The anthroponymical theme *Vuk-* is very popular in the Serbian system of names and led to the formation of a considerable number of hypocoristic forms, derivatives and compound names (*Vukan, Vukadin, Vukosav, Vukomir m.n.; Vukana, Vukadinka, Vukmira, Vukosava* f.n.).

https://biblioteca-digitala.ro

down with epilepsy, the parents would change the child's name to *Vuk* m.n. or *Vukosava* f.n.[8];

Zeka f.n. (Grković 254), ***Zeko*** m.n. (Grković 96) come from the hypocoristic form *zeka* 'bunny', the pet name for a rabbit, 'any of several rodentlike lagomorph mammals of the genus *Sylvilagus*, esp. the cottontail' (WEUD 1183).

In conclusion, these are the names we found in the researched bibliographical sources which we consider to be representative for the category of Serbian masculine and feminine names created through anthroponymical conversion from common words that represent names of animals and plants in the Serbian language:

1. Feminine names that come from names of plants and trees: *Bosiljka*; *Božura*; *Božurka*; *Cveta*; *Dunja* (with the var. *Gdunja*); *Georgina*; *Grozda* (with the deriv. *Grozdana*); *Jablana* (with the deriv. *Jablanka*); *Jabuka*; *Jaglika*; *Jasenija*, *Jasenka* (both derived from the n. *jasen*); *Jasika*; *Jasmina*; *Javorika*, *Javorina* (both derived from the n. *javor*); *Kaćuna*; *Koviljka*, *Kruška*; *Lovorka*; *Loza* (with the deriv. *Lozana*); *Ljiljana* (with the var. *Liljana*, *Lilijana*); *Ljubičica*; *Malina* (with the deriv. *Malinka*); *Mirta*; *Narandža* (with the var. *Nerandža*); *Pšenica*; *Ruzmarinka*; *Ruža*; *Spomenka*; *Šebojka*; *Trešnja*; *Trnjina*; *Višnja*; *Zumbula* (with the deriv. *Zumbulka*).
2. Feminine names that come from names of animals: *Čavka*; *Golubica*; *Grlica*; *Košuta*; *Kumrija*; *Labuda*; *Pauna* (with the deriv. *Paunka*, *Paunica*); *Pčela*; *Slavujka*; *Srna*; *Vidra*; *Vuka*; *Zeka*.
3. Masculine names that come from names of plants and trees: *Bosilj*; *Bosiljko*; *Božur* (with the deriv. *Božurin*); *Drenko*; *Dunjo*; *Gorocvet*; *Gorun*; *Grozdan*; *Jablan*; *Jasmin*; *Javor* (with the deriv. *Javorko*); *Jorgovan*; *Neven*; *Odoljen*; *Ruzmarin*; *Ruža*; *Spomenko.*
4. Masculine names that come from names of animals: *Gavran*; *Golub*; *Jelen*, *Jež*; *Labud*; *Lisica*; *Medved*; *Orao*; *Pauk*; *Paun*; *Slavuj* (with the deriv. *Slavujko*); *Sokol*; *Srna*; *Vuk*; *Zeko*.

The inventory of traditional names presented in this article is not complete. There are many derivatives and hypochoristic forms created from the names listed above. However, we have offered a representative image of the categories of Serbian masculine and feminine names created from common words that represent names of animals and plants in the Serbian language.

ETYMOLOGY KEY

esp.	especially
deriv.	derivative
f.n.	feminine name
n.	noun
m.n.	masculine name
var.	variant

[8] Mirko Barjaktarović, "Zašto se nerado pominju neka imena kod našeg naroda", in *Zbornik za filologiju i lingvistiku*, VI – 2, Novi Sad, 1962, p. 236.

https://biblioteca-digitala.ro

ABBREVIATIONS OF WORKS CITED

BOGOSAVLJEVIC	Bogosavljević, Dragan, "Ženska lična imena u turskim defterima Srbije, Crne Gore i Hercegovine (XV–XVI vek)", in *Onomatološki Prilozi*, XI, 1990, pp. 47–61;
GRKOVIC	Grković, Milica, *Rečnik ličnih imena kod Srba*, Belgrade, Vuk Karadžić, 1977;
KARADZIC	Karadžić, Vuk Stefanović, *Srpski rječnik, istolkovan njemačkim i latinskim riječma (1818)*, Belgrade: Prosveta, 1966;
MARETIĆ	Maretić, T., "O narodnim imenima i prezimenima u Hrvata i Srba", in *Rad*, vol. 81, pp. 81–146, vol. 82, pp. 69–154, Zagreb, Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjietnosti, 1886;
MIKLOSICH	Miklosich, Franz, *Die Bildung der slavischen Personennamen*, Besonders abgedruckt aus dem X. Bande der Denkschriften der philosophisch-historischen Classe der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Viena, 1860;
NOVAKOVIĆ	Novaković, Stojan, "Srpski pomenici XV – XVIII veka", štampano iz *Glasnika srpskog učenog društva*, knj. XLII, Belgrade, 1875;
SKOK	Skok, Petar, *Etimologijski rječnik hrvatskoga ili srpskoka jezika*, I–IV, Jugoslavenska Akademija Znanosti i Umjietnosti, Zagreb, 1971–1974;
T.O.	T(ihomir) O(stojić), *Srpska narodna imena*, Kalendar manastirske štamparije za prostu 1895, Godinu, Novi Sad, 1895;
TOMIĆ	Tomić, Mile *Dicţionar sârb-român*, I–III, Timişoara, 1998–1999;
VUKANOVIĆ	Vukanović, Tatomir, "Lična imena kod Srba", in *Glasnik etnografskog muzeja u Beogradu*, no. XV, pp. 56–74, Belgrade, Štampa Državne Štamparije Kraljevine Jugoslavije, 1940;
WEUD	Webster's encyclopedic unabridged dictionary of the English language, 1994, published by Gramercy Books, distributed by Random House Value Publishing, Inc., 40 Engelhard Avenue, Avenel, New Jersey 07001.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BARJAKTAROVIĆ, Mirko, "Zašto se nerado pominju neka imena kod našeg naroda", in *Zbornik za filologiju i lingvistiku*, VI–2, Novi Sad, 1962, pp. 235–242;

BERCARU, Anca-Maria, "Traditional feminine names in the Serbian anthroponymy", in *Analele Universităţii Bucureşti. Limbi şi literaturi străine*, 2008, pp. 87–98;

—, *Antroponimele feminine la sârbi şi români*, Bucharest, Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, 2014;

GRKOVIĆ, Milica, *Imena u dečanskim hrisovuljama*, Novi Sad, 1983;

—, *Rečnik imena banjskog, dečanskog i prizrenskog vlastelinstva u XIV veku*, Belgrade, Narodna Knjiga, 1986;

LUBAŠ, Vladislav, *Studije iz srpske i južnoslovenske onomastike i sociolingvistike*, Matica srpska, 2002;

MIHAJLOVIĆ, Velimir, *Ime po zapovesti. Imperativni onomastikon srpskohrvatskog jezika*, Belgrade, 1992;

—, "Neki problemi semantike naših ženskih imena", in *Prilozi proučavanju jezika*, no. 4, Novi Sad, 1968, pp. 209–225.

https://biblioteca-digitala.ro