

Posh Anthroponyms in Northern Bulgaria

Antropónimos de moda en el Norte de Bulgaria

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Abstract: This study focuses on the most recent trends in the name-giving process among the Bulgarians, citizens of the Northern part of the country, specifically the major settlements in the area including Pleven, Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse, and Varna, over a ten-year research period (2008 – 2018).

Key words: contemporary Bulgarian anthroponymic system, new variants of traditional foreign given name, Northern Bulgaria settlement, new name-giving trends.

Resumen: El presente estudio se centra en las tendencias más recientes en el proceso de asignación de nombres entre los búlgaros habitantes del Norte del país, particularmente en los poblados más grandes del área incluyendo Pleven, Veliko Turnovo, Ruse y Varna a lo largo de una década de investigación (2008-2018).

Palabras clave: el sistema antroponímico contemporáneo búlgaro, nuevas variantes de nombres tradicionales foráneos, poblados del Norte de Bulgaria, nuevas tendencias en el proceso de asignación de nombres.

The article introduces observations on the newest trends in the contemporary Bulgarian anthroponymic system, derived from detailed research focused on the name-giving process in some of the biggest

Bulgarian settlements for a ten-year period (2008 – 2018). This research is part of the project “Personal Names in Bulgaria in the Beginning of 21st Century”, conducted by scholars from the Institute for Bulgarian Language, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Onomastic Section and funded by The National Science Fund of the Republic of Bulgaria. The project is based on official statistical data of the National Statistical Institute (NSI) in the Republic of Bulgaria (Petkova, 2023).

The primary research object of this article is the emergence of new variations of traditional Bulgarian foreign personal names within the anthroponymicon influenced by the popularity of the so-called international names among parents nowadays all over Europe.

As traditional foreign Bulgarian onyms are taken names of saints and martyrs that enter the anthroponymic system after the Orthodox Christianity became the official religion of the country in 9th century AD, while as new posh variations of them are accepted their equivalents used in other contemporary languages like French, Italian, Spanish, etc. (for instance, *Teodop/ Teodor* is an example for a new variation of the traditional foreign anthroponym *Todop/ Todor* that appears only in Bulgarian and Serbian personal name systems and is more or less a marker for ethnical identity).

This study's investigation area is limited to four of the most important centers in Northern Bulgaria regarding their economics, cultural heritage, and education – Pleven, Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse, and Varna. These settlements were chosen intentionally as it is believed that the name-giving traditions in the towns mentioned above remain as conservative and strong as in the past.

The main aim is those new and still bizarre for common Bulgarians onyms to be figured out in the top 15 lists of the most preferred masculine and feminine personal names in the researched settlements anthroponymic systems for the period 2008 – 2018.

The methodology followed here is developed by A. Choleva-Dimitrova and B. Yanev and represents a “corpus-based empirical study” using NSI official data (Choleva-Dimitrova & Dancheva, 2018).

The given names included in the researched lists reflect the most popular names for boys and girls in Bulgaria. Male anthroponyms registered in all four settlements are *Теодор/ Teodor* (variant of *Тодор/ Todor*), *Крестиян/ Kristiyan* (variant of *Християн/ Hristiyan*), *Крестиан/ Kristian* (variant of *Христиан/ Hristian*), *Константин/ Konstantin* (variant of *Костадин/ Kostadin*), while for the female *Никол/ Nikol* (variant of *Николема/ Nikoleta*), *Теодора/ Teodora* (variant of

Тодора/Todora), *Натали/Natali* (variant of *Наталия/Nataliia*), *Даяна/Dayana* (variant of *Диана/Diana*).

In conclusion, the study reveals that contemporary name-giving trends in Northern Bulgaria are influenced by international names but with a delay if compared with the capital city Sofia (Choleva-Dimitrova & Vlahova-Angelova, 2019). Despite the influence of globalization, local traditions continue to play a significant role in the name-selection process in these major settlements. In general, Anglo-American variations prevail. A bigger diversity is observed among the female onyms. They are numerous than the male ones and often with more than one variation of one and the same traditional personal name.

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