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# **Foreigners in the Bulgarian Anthroponymic System: Non-traditional Variants of Traditional Given Names?**

## Abstract

Nowadays, a very fashionable trend can be observed for parents to choose so-called international names for their newborn children. This is done in the hope that their descendants will avoid challenges in the future if they wish to settle down in a foreign country.

Actually, this tendency is widely practiced not only by Bulgarians but also by all Europeans. It is the reason why most parents in Bulgaria prefer universal, atypical variants of given names perceived as traditional for our onomasticon by the common people. Their motivation is to make sure that the children will have no difficulties adapting to an external culture, where appropriate.

The present text aims to study that tendency in the official statistical data for a 10-year period (2008–2018). The objective is to compare the findings for Sofia – the capital of Bulgaria, with those observed in the smaller town of Veliko Tarnovo; this is due to the fact that every new fashion starts in the largest city of the country while in smaller settlements the name-giving tradition is generally more conservative.

The research is part of the “Personal Names in Bulgaria in the Beginning of 21st Century” project developed by scholars from the Institute for Bulgarian Language, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Onomastic Section.

## Keywords

Bulgarian traditional forenames, foreign variants

## 1. Introduction

There are several major waves observed when foreign personal names enter the Bulgarian anthroponomasticon. However, the greatest influence by far comes from Biblical names and those of saints and martyrs canonized by the Church and included in the lists of saints. Soon after Christianity became an official religion in 9th century AD, those names started to be so frequently used by Bulgarians that subsequently they were regarded by the general public as traditionally Bulgarian (Ilchev, 1969/2012, p. 10; Zaimov, 1988/1994, p. 8; Kovachev, 1995, p. 13). Another reason why those onyms did not vanish during that long period of time, from 865 to the present day, is that for decades newborn children were named after their grandparents as a sign of honor and respect for the patrons of the home and the family (Choleva-Dimitrova et al., 2020, p. 252). As a result of the will of family members to save the patronyms and matronyms traditionally used by their kin, the tendency for a female anthroponym to be derived from a male one and vice versa is observed quite often (Felecan, 2009, p. 403).

In any case, traditions are not the same anymore. Nowadays, a very fashionable trend can be observed for parents to choose so-called international names for their offspring in the hope that their children will have no problems in the future if they wish to move to another country, for example to study or work there.

This tendency is valid not only for Bulgarians but for all Europeans alike. Most parents in Bulgaria prefer universal, atypical variants of given names that are considered traditional for our onomasticon by the common people so that their children will have no difficulties with the adaptation to a foreign culture, where appropriate (Choleva-Dimitrova et al., 2020, pp. 251–252). Nowadays, for example, *Кристина* [*Kristina*]<sup>1</sup> appears very frequently instead of *Христина* [*Hristina*] (Choleva-Dimitrova, 2002, p. 283; Choleva-Dimitrova et al., 2020, p. 253).

<sup>1</sup> English transliteration of a name is given in square brackets.

## 2. Aims and methods

The present text aims to study the above-mentioned tendency in the official statistical data of the National Statistical Institute (NSI)<sup>2</sup> in the Republic of Bulgaria, as a source of information, for a 10-year period (2008–2018). The objective is to compare the findings for Sofia – the capital of Bulgaria, with those observed in the smaller town of Veliko Tarnovo, the previous capital city of the country, since, as proved in all the contemporary studies on the trends and development of Bulgarian anthroponymicon, every new fashion starts in the largest city of the country while in smaller settlements the name-giving tradition is usually more conservative (Kalkanova, 1996, p. 60; Choleva-Dimitrova et al., 2021, p. 19).

Different phonetic foreign variants of one and the same traditional Bulgarian forename will be defined, analyzed, and the most preferred ones will be presented.

It is still uncommon to find investigations on the present status and development of the Bulgarian name system that consider different aspects and aim to identify all of the features and explain the reasons for the appearance of the names in it, especially if compared with research done in other European countries (Choleva-Dimitrova & Dancheva, 2018, p. 122; Choleva-Dimitrova & Vlahova-Angelova, 2019, p. 373).

Bulgarian personal names are part of our language and culture so their statistical and linguistic analyses will help us to define recent patterns and trends in name-giving (Dancheva, 2021, p. 226). This will be done by comparing the results from the investigated towns and cities (Veliko Tarnovo and Sofia) for a 10-year period (beginning in 2008, with the middle in 2014, and ending in 2018).

<sup>2</sup> In accordance with personal data protection and the Law on Statistics of the Republic of Bulgaria, the NSI shares information that only consists of the forename, gender (unfortunately, there is no such data in the lists for 2014 (Vlahova-Angelova, 2021, p. 187)), the place and year of birth (or registration) as well as the number of the newborns with one and the same forename (Vlahova-Angelova, 2019, p. 82; 2021, p. 187), i.e., there is no information about the parents'/guardians' permanent or temporary address, their ethnicity and nationality. From 2014 on, as an additional means of personal data protection, forenames with a single and dual reference are not made public by the NSI (Vlahova-Angelova, 2019, p. 82; 2021, p. 187).

All the analyses are done by means of the methodology developed by Anna Choleva-Dimitrova and Boryan Yanev and presented in their work from 2015 entitled “Съвременната българска антропонимна система (мода на личните имена)” [The Contemporary Bulgarian Anthroponymic System (Fashion in Personal Names)]. It is a corpus-based empirical study based on the official NSI data (Choleva-Dimitrova & Dancheva, 2018, p. 122). By means of a statistical analysis the frequency of male and female personal names used in a given Bulgarian city for a certain year is found. Then a corpus of the top 15 Bulgarian traditional onyms, masculine and feminine, is manually selected from the dataset.

The object of scientific interest is the new variants of the traditional Bulgarian personal names of foreign origin, which became part of the anthroponomastics of Veliko Tarnovo and Sofia in 2008, 2014, and 2018. Being innovative, these alternatives are unconventional and sometimes not part of the traditional Bulgarian onomasticon.

### 3. Sofia data analyses

In 2008, 13,619 children were born in Sofia (6864 boys and 6755 girls). The number of newborns in 2014 was 13,552 (7122 boys and 6430 girls; see Choleva-Dimitrova & Dancheva, 2018, p. 122; Choleva-Dimitrova & Vlahova-Angelova, 2019, p. 372), while in 2018 it decreased to 12,363 (6399 boys and 5964 girls).

There are 4525 forenames (2673 masculine and 1852 feminine), part of the top 15 chart for 2008. In 2018 their number was 4329 (2596 masculine and 1733 feminine). Unfortunately, there is no such data in the statistics used for 2014.

Table 1 and 2 present only the names (masculine and feminine respectively) that occupied 15 top positions in Sofia in the years 2008, 2014 and 2018. The new variants of traditional foreign anthroponyms, which are the object of the present research, are given in both tables in bold.

### 3.1. Masculine given names

**Table 1. List of top masculine names in Sofia in the years 2008, 2014, 2018**

Rank	2008		2014		2018	
	Name	Freq.	Name	Freq.	Name	Freq.
1.	Александър [Aleksandar]	374	Александър [Aleksandar]	384	Александър [Aleksandar]	297
2.	Мартин [Martin]	316	Мартин / Martin	308	Борис [Boris]	274
3.	Георги [Georgi]	266	Георги [Georgi]	295	Калоян [Kaloyan]	230
4.	Калоян [Kaloyan]	172	Никола [Nikola]	261	Георги [Georgi]	213
5.	Никола [Nikola]	171	Калоян [Kaloyan]	253	Никола [Nikola]	210
6.	Николай [Nikolay]	170	Борис [Boris]	236	Мартин [Martin]	199
7.	<b>Кристиан [Kristiyan]</b>	167	Виктор [Viktor]	231	<b>Теодор [Teodor]</b>	175
8.	Виктор [Viktor]	158	Димитър [Dimitar]	182	Виктор [Viktor]	155
9.	Димитър [Dimitar]	152	Даниел [Daniel]	181	Даниел [Daniel]	148
10.	Даниел [Daniel]	150	Николай [Nikolay]	169	Димитър [Dimitar]	129
11.	Борис [Boris]	147	<b>Теодор [Teodor]</b>	166	Николай [Nikolay]	126
12.	Иван [Ivan]	121	<b>Кристиан [Kristiyan]</b>	161	<b>Кристиан [Kristiyan]</b>	113
13.	<b>Теодор [Teodor]</b>	112	Иван [Ivan]	160	Самуил [Samuil]	112
14.	Стефан [Stefan]	100	Божидар [Bozhidar]	145	Симеон [Simeon]	109
15.	Божидар [Bozhidar]	97	Михаил [Mihail]	119	Михаил [Mihail]	106

Source: own work based on the official statistical data of the National Statistical Institute (NSI) in the Republic of Bulgari.

During the 10-year period in Sofia, only two onyms of the investigated type are found in the top 15 list – *Кристиан [Kristiyan]* (167/7<sup>3</sup> for 2008; 161/12 for 2014; 113/12 for 2018) and *Теодор [Teodor]* (112/13 for 2008; 166/11 for 2014; 175/7 for 2018). It is clear from the statistical data that the first one is becoming less

<sup>3</sup> Number of the newborns with a given name/rank in the top 15 list.

frequent, while the second is gaining in popularity. Their traditional Bulgarian equivalents are not found in the table presented.

### 3.2. Feminine given names

**Table 2. List of top feminine names in Sofia in the years 2008, 2014, 2018**

Rank	2008		2014		2018	
	Name	Freq.	Name	Freq.	Name	Freq.
1.	Виктория [Viktoriya]	276	Виктория [Viktoriya]	267	София [Sofiya]	217
2.	Александра [Aleksandra]	186	<b>Никол [Nikol]</b>	253	Виктория [Viktoriya]	208
3.	<b>Никол [Nikol]</b>	165	Мария [Mariya]	208	<b>Никол [Nikol]</b>	159
4.	Мария [Mariya]	157	София [Sofiya]	202	Мария [Mariya]	115
5.	Габриела [Gabriela]	127	Александра [Aleksandra]	172	Дария [Dariya]	111
6.	Йоана [Yoana]	118	Дария [Dariya]	138	Елена [Elena]	108
7.	Рая [Raya]	114	Йоана [Yoana]	137	Рая [Raya]	106
8.	Калина [Kalina]	109	Рая [Raya]	127	Ема [Ema] Калина [Kalina]	104
9.	Симона [Simona]	99	Габриела [Gabriela]	121	Йоана [Yoana]	100
10.	Андреа [Andrea]	98	Калина [Kalina]	111	Александра [Aleksandra] Карина [Karina]	92
11.	София [Sofiya]	96	Ема [Ema]	109	Михаела [Mihaela]	76
12.	Елена [Elena]	84	Елена [Elena]	104	Яна [Yana]	71
13.	Моника [Monika]	78	Карина [Karina]	99	<b>Теодора [Teodora]</b>	70
14.	Михаела [Mihaela]	75	Михаела [Mihaela]	96	Анна [Anna]	64
15.	<b>Теодора [Teodora]</b>	70	Сияна [Siyana]	88	Симона [Simona]	62

Source: own work based on the official statistical data of the National Statistical Institute (NSI) in the Republic of Bulgaria.

Female anthroponyms are much more diverse in comparison with the male ones. In 2008 *Никол [Nikol]* (165/3) was among the three most popular girl names in the capital. The other representative of the onyms of interest is *Теодора [Teodora]* (70/15). In 2014 *Никол [Nikol]* (253/2) was still at the 2nd position,

while *Teodopa* [*Teodora*] was absent. In 2018 both feminine forenames already mentioned were registered but this time in different positions – *Никол* [*Nikol*] (159/3) and *Teodopa* [*Teodora*] (70/13). Their traditional Bulgarian correspondents are not found in the table presented, either.

#### 4. Veliko Tarnovo data analyses

In 2008, 726 children (367 boys and 359 girls) were born in Veliko Tarnovo. The number of births in 2014 was 643 (330 boys and 313 girls), while in 2018 it decreased to 614 (318 boys and 296 girls).

There are 254 forenames (153 masculine and 111 feminine), part of the top 15 chart for 2008. In 2014, their number is 259 (148 masculine and 111 feminine), while for 2018 it is 265 (170 masculine and 95 feminine).

It is important to mention that from the official data for Veliko Tarnovo, it is obvious that in many cases a given name included in Table 3 and 4 has the same frequency of use as others. As a result, the top 15 list does not contain every forename recorded and a phenomenon is observed that all the forenames officially registered are part of the chart, with the exception of those with a single or dual reference.

Tables 3 and 4 present the names (masculine and feminine respectively) that occupied top positions in Veliko Tarnovo in the years 2008, 2014 and 2018. The new variants of traditional foreign anthroponyms are given in both tables in bold.



#### 4.1. Masculine given names

**Table 3. List of top masculine names in Veliko Tarnovo in the years 2008, 2014, 2018**

Rank	2008	Freq.	2014	Freq.	2018	Freq.
	Name		Name		Name	
1.	Александър [Aleksandar]	23	Мартин [Martin]	18	Мартин [Martin]	18
2.	Георги [Georgi]	14	Александър [Aleksandar]	16	Борис [Boris]	17
3.	Ивайло [Ivaylo] Мартин [Martin]	12	Георги [Georgi]	14	Георги [Georgi]	14
4.	Калоян [Kaloyan] Кристиан [Kristian]	10	Никола [Nikola]	12	Александър [Aleksandar] Даниел [Daniel]	13
5.	Никола [Nikola]	9	Калоян [Kaloyan]	11	Никола [Nikola]	12
6.	Виктор [Viktor] Денислав [Denislav] Иван [Ivan]	8	Божидар [Bozhidar] Виктор [Viktor] Даниел [Daniel] Димитър [Dimitar] Николай [Nikolay]	8	<b>Теодор [Teodor]</b>	11
7.	Даниел [Daniel] Димитър [Dimitar] Симеон [Simeon]	7	<b>Кристиан [Kristiyan]</b>	7	Калоян [Kaloyan]	10
8.	<b>Константин [Konstantin]</b> <b>Кристиан [Kristiyan]</b> <b>Николай [Nikolay]</b>	6	Боян [Boyan] Владимир [Vladimir] Иван [Ivan] Павел [Pavel] <b>Теодор [Teodor]</b>	6	Преслав [Preslav]	8
9.	Дамян [Damyan] Пламен [Plamen] Стефан [Stefan] <b>Теодор [Teodor]</b>	5	Борис [Boris] Ивайло [Ivaylo]	5	Владимир [Vladimir]	7
10.	Алекс [Aleks] Борис [Boris] Йоан [Yoan] Максим [Maksim] Преслав [Preslav] Християн [Hristiyan]	4	Борислав [Borislav] Валери [Valeri] Габриел [Gabriel] Денислав [Denislav] Йоан [Yoan] Мирослав [Miroslav] Стефан [Stefan]	4	Виктор [Viktor] Николай [Nikolay] Стефан [Stefan]	6

Rank	2008	Freq.	2014	Freq.	2018	Freq.
	Name		Name		Name	
11.	Атанас [Atanas] Валентин [Valentin] Давид [David] Иво [Ivo] Кирил [Kiril] Павел [Pavel]	3	Адриан [Adrian] Веселин [Veselin] Давид [David] Максим [Maksim] Михаил [Mihail] Петко [Petko] Петър [Petar] Преслав [Preslav] Радостин [Radostin] Цветослав [Tzvetoslav]	3	Михаил [Mihail]	5
12.					Боян [Boyan] Давид [David] Ивайло [Ivaylo] <b>Кристиан [Kristian]</b> Любомир [Lyubomir] Симеон [Simeon]	4
13.					Алекс [Aleks] Алексей [Aleksey] <b>Кристиан [Kristiyan]</b> Лъчезар [Lachezar] Максим [Maksim] Петър [Petar] Самуил [Samuil] Светослав [Svetoslav] Христиан [Hristiyan]	3

Source: own work based on NSI.

During the 10-year period researched, there is no foreign variant of a traditional Bulgarian personal name in the top 3 of the most popular male given names in Veliko Tarnovo. In 2008 the following names were registered: *Кристиан* [Kristian] (10/4) and *Кристиан* [Kristiyan] (6/8) (variants of *Hristian* [Христиан] and *Hristiyan* [Християн]), *Константин* [Konstantin] (6/8) (variant of *Костадин* [Kostadin]), and *Теодор* [Teodor] (5/9) (variant of *Тодор* [Todor]).

In 2014, *Кристиян* [*Kristiyan*] (7/7) and *Теодор* [*Teodor*] (6/8) went up by one position (from 8th to 7th and from 9th to 8th), while *Кристиян* [*Kristian*] and *Константин* [*Konstantin*] are absent from the list.

In 2018 *Теодор* [*Teodor*] (11/6) continued to go up and reached the 6th position, while the more popular, according to the data from 2008, *Кристиян* [*Kristian*] (4/12) and *Кристиян* [*Kristiyan*] (3/13) fell in the list to places 12 and 13, which are at the bottom of the table. *Константин* [*Konstantin*] is missing.

Let us make a remark on the ranking of the traditional Bulgarian equivalents of the given names researched: in 2008 *Християн* [*Hristiyan*] (4/10) is used and it is ahead of its foreign variant in the table; in 2018 *Християн* [*Hristiyan*] (3/13) is observed, but it occupies a lower position if compared with *Кристиян* [*Kristian*] and *Кристиян* [*Kristiyan*].

## 4.2. Feminine given names

**Table 4. List of top feminine names in Veliko Tarnovo in the years 2008, 2014, 2018**

Rank	2008	Freq.	2014	Freq.	2018	Freq.
	Name		Name		Name	
1.	Александра [Aleksandra]	12	<b>Никол [Nikol]</b>	13	<b>Никол [Nikol]</b>	11
2.	Виктория [Viktoriya] Габриела [Gabriela] Йоана [Yoana] <b>Никол [Nikol]</b>	9	Виктория [Viktoriya]	11	Михаела [Mihaela]	9
3.	Наталия [Nataliya] Симона [Simona] Яна [Yana]	7	Габриела [Gabriela] Ивайла [Ivayla] Пламена [Plamena] Рая [Raya]	7	Габриела [Gabriela] Йоана [Yoana] София [Sofiya]	7
4.	Даная [Danaya] <b>Теодора [Teodora]</b>	6	Сияна [Siyana]	6	Виктория [Viktoriya] Дария [Dariya] Рая [Raya]	6
5.	Ивелина [Ivelina] Магдалена [Magdalena] Мария [Mariya] Михаела [Mihaela] Рая [Raya] <b>Стефани [Stefani]</b>	5	Александра [Aleksandra] Ема [Ema] Изабел [Izabel] Преслава [Preslava] Христина [Hristina]	5	Ивайла [Ivayla] Мария [Mariya] Пламена [Plamena] Симона [Simona]	5

Rank	2008	Freq.	2014	Freq.	2018	Freq.
	Name		Name		Name	
6.	Гергана [Gergana]	4	Дария [Dariya]	4	Александра [Aleksandra]	4
	Елена [Elena]		Йоана [Yoana]		Ема [Ema]	
	Ивайла [Ivayla]		Карина [Karina]		Мирела [Mirela]	
	Калина [Kalina]		Катерина [Katerina]		Християна [Hristiyana]	
	Карина [Karina]		<b>Кристияна [Kristiyana]</b>			
	<b>Кристияна [Kristiyana]</b>		Магдалена [Magdalena]			
	Пламена [Plamena]		Мария [Mariya]			
	Преслава [Preslava]					
7.	Анелия [Aneliya]	3	Анастасия [Anastasiya]	3	Анна [Anna]	3
	Билияна [Bilyana]		Анна [Anna]		Ая [Aya]	
	Бояна [Boyana]		Дарина [Darina]		Белослава [Beloslava]	
	Василена [Vasilena]		Деа [Dea]		Дея [Deya]	
	Десислава [Desislava]		Диана [Diana]		Емма [Emma]	
	Елица [Elitza]		<b>Емили [Emili]</b>		Илина [Ilina]	
	Ема [Ema]		Зорница [Zornitza]		Калина [Kalina]	
	Емилия [Emiliya]		Йоанна [Yoanna]		Магдалена [Magdalena]	
	Камелия [Kameliya]		<b>Кристина [Kristina]</b>		Мия [Miya]	
	Мартина [Martina]		<b>Марая [Maraya]</b>		<b>Микаела [Mikaela]</b>	
	Моника [Monika]		Мартина [Martina]		Моника [Monika]	
	Ния [Niya]		Мая [Maya]		Тeya [Teya]	
			Моника [Monika]			
			Ния [Niya]			
			Радина [Radina]			
			Сиана [Siana]			

Source: own work based on NSI.

Just as was the case in Sofia, female anthroponyms are much more diverse.

As can be seen, some of the foreign variants of female names even reach the top 3 positions in Veliko Tarnovo. In 2008 *Никол* [Nikol] (9/2) (corresponding to *Николета* [Nikoleta]) is in the second position, followed by *Теодора* [Teodora] (6/4) (instead of the old-fashioned *Тодора* [Todora]), *Стефани* [Stefani] (5/5) (instead of the widely used *Стефка* [Stefka] in the 20th century), and *Кристияна* [Kristiyana] (4/6) (a variant of *Християна* [Hristiyana]).

In 2014 *Никол* [Nikol] (13/1) ranked first; *Кристияна* [Kristiyana] (4/6) remained in the same position; *Теодора* [Teodora] and *Стефани* [Stefani] disappeared from the list and *Емили* [Emili] (3/7) (variant of *Емилия* [Emiliya]),

*Марая* [Maraya] (3/7) (variant of *Мария* [Mariya]), and *Кристина* [Kristina] (3/7) (variant of *Христина* [Hristina]) emerged instead.

In 2018, *Никол* [Nikol] (11/1) was the most frequent female name in Veliko Tarnovo. A new member in the table is noticed – *Микаела* [Mikaela] (3/7) (variant of *Михаела* [Mihaela]).

What is the place of the traditional Bulgarian equivalents in the statistical data? In 2014 *Христина* [Hristina] (5/5) and *Мария* [Mariya] (4/6) took higher positions than their foreign variants, while in 2018, the same was true of *Михаела* [Mihaela] (9/2).

## 5. Comparison of Sofia and Veliko Tarnovo data

The influence of the name fashion in Sofia on the trends in Veliko Tarnovo is visible when these two places are compared. It is more than obvious that naming traditions in Veliko Tarnovo are more traditional than those in Sofia. All the newest trends in the process of name-giving in the capital city are visible, though with a slight delay, in the former capital.

For example, the masculine personal name *Кристиан* [Kristiyan] in Sofia experienced a drop in popularity from position 7 in 2008 to 12 in 2014 and this trend continued in 2018 as well. The observation about the onym *Теодор* [Teodor] is just the opposite – in 2008 it ranked 13, in 2014 it took position 11, and in 2018 it came 7th. Almost the same fluctuation for the same two male given names is registered in the table containing the statistical data for the top 15 masculine names in Veliko Tarnovo.

What is the situation like with the feminine names? More or less, *Никол* [Nikol] changed its place in the tables in a similar way for 2008 and 2014.

The appearance of some of the female given names in the table that contains the top 15 most preferred personal names in Veliko Tarnovo is probably caused by their more frequent use in the capital city. For instance, *Емили* [Emili] has 23 references for 2008 and 26 references for 2014; *Марая* [Maraya] has 10 references for 2008 and 30 references for 2014.

Therefore, to conduct a complete investigation, it is of great importance to also comment on the information related to the foreign variants of traditional

Bulgarian personal names in Sofia that are not part of the top 15 chart for 2018. They are indicators for the future development of the anthroponomasticon not only in Sofia, but also in smaller towns in the country, where the new trends in name-giving are observed with a delay (Kalkanova, 1996, p. 60; Choleva-Dimitrova & Vlahova-Angelova, 2019, p. 372).

The point is not to mention all the foreign variants of traditional Bulgarian personal names registered in Sofia in 2018 but to identify the influences from abroad so that connections with other fashionable trends in name-giving may become visible.

It is not surprising that Anglo-American variants are observed more often than others (e.g., *Александър* [Alekszandar] instead of *Александър* [Aleksandar], *Антъни* [Antani] instead of *Антон* [Anton], *Дейвид* [Deivid] instead of *Давид* [David], *Майкъл* [Maykal] instead of *Михаил* [Mihail], *Марк* [Mark] instead of *Марко* [Marko], *Стивън* [Stivan] instead of *Стефан* [Stefan]; *Даяна* [Dayana] instead of *Диана* [Diana], *Елизабет* [Elizabet] instead of *Елисавета* [Elisaveta], *Емили* [Emili] instead of *Емилия* [Emiliya], *Марая* [Maraya] instead of *Мария* [Mariya]). They are followed by those from the Romance languages (French, Italian, Spanish, etc., e.g., *Андре* [Andre] instead of *Андрей* [Andrey], *Антоан* [Antoan] and *Антонио* [Antonio] instead of *Антон* [Anton], *Матео* [Mateo] instead of *Матей* [Matey]; *Джулия* [Dzhuliya] instead of *Юлия* [Yuliya], *Евелин* [Evelin] instead of *Евелина* [Evelina], *Катрин* [Katrin] instead of *Екатерина* [Ekaterina], *Кристин* [Kristin] instead of *Христина* [Hristina], *Микаела* [Mikaela] and *Мишел* [Mishel] instead of *Михаела* [Mihaela], *Натали* [Natali] instead of *Наталия* [Nataliya]), and the Germanic ones (German, Dutch, Swedish, etc., e.g. *Ян* [Yan] instead of *Иван* [Ivan]).

## 6. Conclusions

In Sofia during the 10-year period analysed, 2 masculine foreign variants of traditional Bulgarian personal names and 2 feminine ones were found in the list of the top 15 most popular officially registered forenames in the capital city (the onym *Никол* [Nikol] is even in the top 3 girl names for the researched years). Their traditional equivalents were not part of the list.

Although the number of the foreign variants of traditional Bulgarian personal names in Veliko Tarnovo was found to be higher than that in Sofia (4 male and 8 female), their traditional equivalents are still chosen as a fore-name for the newborn child more often by the parents.

There is an influence of the name-giving trends in Sofia on the anthroponomasticon of Veliko Tarnovo, which is also observed and proved by other research in the field of modern Bulgarian onomastics. Unfortunately, that process causes such a unification of the onomasticon in the Bulgarian capital city with that of the smaller cities and towns all over the country, of which Veliko Tarnovo is just an example, that it may lead to the disappearance of numerous anthroponyms from the Bulgarian personal name system.

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