# THE FIRST NAME *FRANCESCO* AND ITS VARIANTS IN BULGARIAN ANTHROPONYMY

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**Abstract**

The article proposes 1) a brief overview of the origin, word-formational structure and the primary meaning of the first name *Francesco* (> *Франческо*), and 2) a more detailed analysis of the formal changes – phonetic and word-formational – that it has undergone on Bulgarian language/dialect soil. It penetrates in Bulgaria in the early 17th century, simultaneously with the Catholicization of the former Paulicians. It occurs as male and female in 36 variants, 19 of them are shortened (without the initial syllable *Fran-*/*Фран-*). And 12 male variants occur as basis for 11 surnames.

**Key words:** *nickname, folk names, Christian names, semantic motivation of the name, variants*

**Résumé**

Le but du présent article est de brièvement rappeller lțorigine, la structure compositionnelle et la toute première signification du prénom *Francesco* (> *Франческо*). Nous analysons aussi par plus de détails la manière dont ledit prénom est passé par des modifications sur le territoire bulgare et à lțintérieur des dialectes bulgares (dans sa phonétique et sa structure compositionnelle). Ledit prénom est apparu en Bulgarie au début du XVIIème siècle, lorsque les anciens Pauliciens sțétaient convertis au catholicisme. En bulgare, ce prénom apparait sous 36 variantes, aussi bien masculines que féminines. Parmi celles-ci, 19 sont raccourcies (sans la première syllabe *Fran-*). Onze sobriquets trouvent leur origine dans 12 variantes masculines dudit prénom.

**Mots-clés**: *sobriquet, noms fréquents, noms de baptême, motivation sémantique, variantes*

The article presents the origin, word-formational structure and primary meaning of the Christian name *Francesco* (I) as well as its functioning in Bulgaria: its adaptation to the formal peculiarities of the Bulgarian language and dialects of the Catholics in the country (II).

## 1. The first name *Francesco* as a Christian name

A major proportion of Bulgarian names represent the group of the so-called Christian names. They differ from the older and newer Slavic names mostly in that they cannot be derived from an inherited (home) word, and (unlike in the case of Bulgarian folk names, such as *Добри*, *Найден*, *Първан*, *Весела*, *Рада*, etc.) their bearers usually do not know what their names mean, nor do they realize what ideas or concepts they connote. Christian names are a chronologically newer layer in the Bulgarian Name List and, by origin, are mainly borrowings from Hebrew, Greek or

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Latin. Historically, owing to the status of Christianity, the names of saints, major figures in the Old and New Testaments, or toponyms of the Holy Land (such as *Витлеем*, *Йерусалим*, *Йордан*), or names related to biblical events, holidays, or ideas related to Christian morality have proven to be preferred over the folk names.[1] It needs to be noted, however, that many of the names we call "Christian," are, in fact, Christian "by proxy": many of them had been known and used before Christ in numerous pre-Christian cultures, and many of the motives underlying the choice of such names remain yet to be determined. An obvious example of such a seemingly Christian name is the name *Marco*. Derived from the Latin name *Mārcus* (interpreted as an adjective **Mārt*(*i*)*co*-*s*[2], derived from the name of the pagan god of war *Mars*, -*tis*), the name starts to be distributed as a baptismal name among many nations of the world only after Mark the Evangelist, the patron saint.

Much less obvious, however, is the fact that there exist Christian names, which, originally, used not to be names in the proper sense of the term. The first bearers of those were beatified saints. A good example of such a case is the name *Francesco*. The first bearer of this name was Saint Francis of Assisi (Italy), Ital. san Francesco d'Assisi (1181/2-1226), whose factual, baptismal name was John the Baptist, Ital. *Giovanni Battista*. Intriguingly, the name *Francesco/Franciscus* which is now remembered as the primary appellation of "the poor man of Assisi," comes from a nickname that had accompanied the Saint since his early childhood and teenage years. Some historians believe it was the Saint's father, the wealthy merchant Petro Bernardone, to have coined the nickname by jokingly calling Giovanni "a little Frenchman"[3].

The range of questions to be addressed involves those concerning the language in which the nickname was originally created, the history of the nickname's formation, its morphemic structure and its possible meanings at the time of its occurrence. The following section of this paper attempts to address these questions one by one.

Ital. *Francesco*, Lat. *Franciscus* contains in its morphemic composition and in its word formation structure the suffix -*iscus* which in the Italian language changed to -*esco*. The Slavic equivalent of this suffix is well documented Old Bulgarian -*ьскъ* (from com. Slav. **-ьskъ*), which is a loan in the Romanian -*escu*. This suffix, added to stems of ethnic or tribal names, designates the ethnic affiliation of the bearer. The stem of the derivative under analysis – Ital. *Francesco*, Lat. *Franciscus* – comprises the Fr. *franc* 'open, sincere', which, through the latinized *francus*, ascends to old high Germ. *frank* 'free'.

The German adjective *frank* 'free, open', borrowed in the 15th century from the Fr. *franc* < middle Lat. *Francus* 'Frank, Frankish, free', functioning from the beginning mainly in the phrase "frank und frei" ('openly, sincerely'), now occurs exclusively in this phrase. The synonymous position of "Frankish" as "free, open" was justified by the historical significance of the Franks, who, in the Roman Gaul, were perceived as conquerors and free men. Thus, through their tribal name, the

[1] Malec, 1996a; Malec, 1996b.
[2] Ernout, Meillet, 1951, p. 689.
[3] Burgio, 1992, p. 173.

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Franks are described as "brave, courageous"[4]. The etymologically related German adjective *frech* now means 'bold', cf. MHG. *vrech* 'cheeky, brave, bold, lively, pertly', OHG. *freh* 'untamed, eager, greedy'[5], etc. According to another etymological analysis, the ethnic name of the Franks originates from the Germ. **χrang*, based on the verb **χringan* 'squeeze, extract', which characterizes the Franks as a tribe wrested from homeland (and settled in the West)[6]. Historically, the tribe's march to the West started on the coast of the Black Sea[7].

The structural semantics of the formation of the name *Francesco*, Lat. *Franciscus*, is based on the adjective 'Frankish, which belongs to (applies to/come from) Franks', considered nobles. The Lat. *Franciscus* changes into the old French *franceis*, and later to *françois*, and is used both to denote the 'Franks' (as in the famous epic "La chanson de Roland", i.e."The Song of Roland" at the end of 11th century) and as a personal name.

It is only later, i.e. after the merger between the Frank conquerors and the native population of the Roman Gaul, that the Ital. *Francesco*, Lat. *Franciscus*, French *franceis* (> modern *français*) began to denote the 'Frenchman', i.e. resident of France. In the plural form, the word *Franceschi* was used by Dante in his *Divine Comedy* (the beginning of the 14th century). According to Ch. Ionescu, it is possible that even earlier – in 10th and 11th century – the Italian adjective *francesco* may have been used as a nickname referring to a person of a particular ethnicity[8], much like Romanian ethnic names (such as *Bulgaru*, *Rusu*, *Sîrbu*, etc.) used as surnames[9]. In light of the above, it seems reasonable to assume that the name of Saint *Francesco* of Assisi originates from one of such formative derivatives.

After the etymological analysis of the stem *franc/frank*, one way or another reduced to the German base as the tribal name *Frank*, and having performed a formative analysis of its derivatives (Ital. *Francesco*, Lat. *Franciscus*), it is now possible to seek an answer to the curious question of what the nickname *Francesco* could exactly mean at the time of its appearance and what sense its creator could bestow upon it.

Several complementary (rather than contradictory) theories have been proposed on this issue. Some researchers interpret the nickname *Francesco* as meaning 'a person of French ethnic origin', although, in fact, it denotes the son of an Italian of Assisi and points to his diminutive character, i.e. meaning 'little Frenchman'[10]. Others look for the motivation of this nickname in the boy's good command of the French language[11]. His father appreciated the fact that his son would enjoy to learn French[12] especially that he needed someone to help him correspond with his partners in France. Therefore, as these scholars propose, he would jokingly call him *Francesco*[13], 'little

[4] Kluge, 1967, p. 214; Drosdowski, 1989, p. 202 (s.v. *frank*).
[5] Drosdowski, 1989, p. 203 (s.v. *frech*).
[6] Room, 1992, p. 194.
[7] Cf. WEOxf. 6, p. 54.
[8] Ionescu, 1975, p. 142–143; Camola, 1992, p. 57.
[9] Ionescu, 1975, p. 142.
[10] Bubak, 1993, p. 113; Majtán, Považaj, 1993, p. 67.
[11] Knappová, 1985, p. 97; Bubak, 1993, p. 113; Kohlheim, 2007, p. 162.
[12] Keber, 1996, p. 211.
[13] Kopečný, 1991, p. 92.

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Frenchman'. The above notwithstanding, the boy's rapid progress in French was noted at school, which allows an alternative theory: rather than his father, it may have been his classmates to have coined the nickname[14]. Yet another scholar suggests that "his father [...] would call his son 'little Frank' to echo his sentiment for the Franks, with whom he shared vivid commercial interests"[15]. There is also an opinion that his father may have called his son *Francesco* 'little Franchman' to reiterate the fact that the boy's mother came from the French Provence[16]. Finally, according to A. Burgio, the Italian word *francesco* denotes a man who "returned or went to France and established commercial relations there. Unless it refers to the Frenchman, with the name that flaunts its origin"[17]. The scholar also suggests that "the first *Francesco* to be remembered in Italy is the son of Peter Bernardone [...], who, for the sake of his trade relations with France, changed the baptismal name of his son, Giovanni, to one more appropriately fit for his business: Francesco"[18].

Francis of Assisi was proclaimed saint (whose holiday is celebrated on October 4th), as early as 1228, just two years after his death. Owing to the extreme popularity of the Saint, his name quickly won widespread fame among many Catholic nations and henceforth has continued to live its own life in numerous variants formed according to the rules of the local language and/or dialect. In Central Europe today, the first name *Francesco* still occurs in numerous formative and phonetic variants in Polish[19], Slovene[20], Croatian[21], Ukrainian[22], Byelorussian[23], Romanian[24], and in Bulgarian (cf. II).

**2. The name *Francesco* in Bulgarian anthroponymy**

2.1. Like other Christian names characteristic of the Western Rite, the secondary name of St. Francis penetrates into Bulgaria at the time of the Catholicization of the former Paulicians at the end of the 16th to the middle of the 17th century. The most significant contribution to the this historical process was made by the monks of the Ordine dei Frati Minori, founded by St. Francis of Assisi in 1209. Therefore, in Bulgaria the name under study occurs in the Italian phonetic form *Francesco*, [cyr.] *Франческо* (fem. *Франческа*), although in the church books of births, confirmations, weddings and funerals, i.e., in texts that are generally drawn up in Latin, it is usually recorded in the Latinized phonetic and morphological form of *Franciscus* (in an appropriate case form), which is the derivational base for the rare forms of (cyr.) *Франциск* (fem. *Франциска*). The sound forms *Франческо/Франческа* are generally more common than *Франциск/Франциска*. It is only much later that the German form of this name, i.e. *Франц* (from Germ. *Franz*), first appears in Bulgaria. Documentation suggests that the appearance of this

[14] Bubak, 1993, p. 113; Kohlheim, 2007, p. 162.
[15] Gołębiowski, 1, p. 102.
[16] Bauer [red.], Leksykon świętych, 2, 48; Gerr, 2003, p. 45.
[17] "venuto o andato in Francia. A meno che non si tratti d'un Francese, che col nome ostenta la propria origine" (Burgio, 1992, p. 173).
[18] Burgio, 1992, p. 173.
[19] Malec, 1994, p. 218.
[20] Keber 1996, p. 210–212.
[21] Skok, 1, 532–533, s.v. Frugy; Šimundić, 1988, p. 117–119.
[22] Трійняк, 2005, p. 395.
[23] Усціновіч, 2011, p. 212.
[24] Constantinescu, 1963, p. 276; Ionescu, 1975, p. 142–143.

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form should chiefly be associated with the establishment of the Austrian mission in Plovdiv (1836-1840), in which region the frequency of the occurrence of the name *Франц* has been (and remains to be) much higher than in other parts of the country. Subsequently, the increase in the popularity of this form of the name seems to be concurrent with the development of close political and economic ties between Bulgaria and Germany.

Bulgarian Catholics, who live in several villages in the region of Nikopol and Svishtov (Northern Bulgaria) as well as in the city of Plovdiv and in the region of Plovdiv (South Bulgaria), became first acquainted with the name *Франческо*/*Франциск* via sermons delivered in churches and through ecclesiastical texts. Shortly thereafter, they would begin to baptize their children by that name.

Next to the aforementioned basic forms – *Франческо* and *Франческа*, *Франциск* and *Франциска* – 13 other variants of the full trisyllabic form of this name have been documented, including 12 phonetic variants (1-12) and 1 formative motivated (13). Phonetic variations reflect the sound characteristics of the local people's speech: the reduction of the broad vowels (here [cyrill.] ***а*** > ***ъ***) and substitution of ***ф*** by ***в***, and of ***в*** by ***ў*** or ***у***, (also occurring in other dialects), as well as the shift from ***è*** > ***ѝ***, characteristic only for the dialect of the Bulgarian Catholics and for certain related Rhodope dialects.[25] The forms featuring the ***è*** > ***ѝ*** change are manifest in private and casual styles of communication (that vocalic shift is avoided in communications pertaining to the spaces of schools, administration, or public discourse). The appearance of the consonant ***š*** (cyr. ***ш***) in place of ***s*** [cyr. ***с***] is considered to be a result of partial assimilation *ч – с* > *ч – ш* consistent with the system proprieties of the Bulgarian language. The above notwithstanding, one should not reject the possibility that the change may also be explained as a phonetic Occidentalism: the Bulgarian [cyr.] ***ш*** in the component *-че**ш**ко* (instead of *-че**с**ко*) may reflect the pronunciation of the Bosnian Franciscans of the first decades of the 17th century (such as manifest in the Croatian version if the name: *Frančeš**k**o*, *Frančeš**k**a*), or, alternatively, it could be attributed to Italian influences, especially the pronunciation of ***s*** as ***š*** in Italian dialects.

The list of documented variants includes the following:

1. *Франциск**о***, Б, Ж, according to the base of *Франциск*, but ending in *-о* according to the full form *Франческ**о***;

2. *Францеско*, Ж, with *ts* [cyr.] ***ц*** according to the base of *Франциск*, but ending in *-о* according to the full form *Франческ**о***;[26]

3. *Францешко*, О, with ***ts*** [cyr.] ***ц*** according to the base of *Франциск*, but with vowel ***е*** in the base, ending in *-о* and consonant *š* [cyr.] *ш* of the base/stem of *Фран**че**ш**ко***;

4. *Франче**ш**ко*, О, with assimilation (*ч – с* > *ч – ш*) from *Франче**с**ко*;

5. *Франче**ш**ка*, Б, О, Д, Ж, К, М, with assimilation (*ч – с* > *ч – ш*) from *Франче**с**ко*;

6. *Франч**и**ско*, Ма, with dialect change *è* > *ѝ*, from *Франче**с**ко*;

7. *Франч**ии**шко*, Б, Т, Д, Ж, with the change *è* > *ѝ*, and assimilation (*ч – с* > *ч – ш*) from *Франч**ес**ко*;

[25] Селимски, 1974.

[26] It is noted at the Montana (Илчев, 1969, p. 513), but it is absent in Ковачев, 1995.

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8. ***В**ранчешко*, Б, О, with [cyr.] ***в*** instead of ***ф*** from ***Ф**ранчешко* (cf. 4);

9. ***В**ранчешка*, О, with [cyr.] ***в*** instead of ***ф*** from ***Ф**ранчешка* (cf. 5);

10. ***В**рънчешко*, Ма, with [cyr.] ***в*** instead of ***ф*** and reduction (*а* > ъ) from ***Ф**ранчешко* (cf. 4);

11. ***У**ранчишко*, О, with [cyr.] ***у*** instead of ***ў*** < ***в*** as substitution of ***ф***, from ***Ф**ранчишко* (cf. 7);

12. *Вранчеша*, О, with phonetic changes, as at ***В**ранчешка* (cf. 9); the elimination of the consonant phonemes *k* from the stem is due to the understanding of the final part of the name (*-ка*) as a Bulgarian suffix for diminutives. In other words, the name *Вранчешка* perceived as a diminutive, motivates the name *Вранчеша* (as arisen through rederivation or backformation), in accordance with the findings of augmentative semantics.

Another phonetic form of the full stem of the name *Франч**еш**ко* (< *Франч**ес**ко*) is found in the derivational from of the dialectal word [cyr.] ***уренчешк**àрин* (fem. ***уренчешк**àркя*) 'Member of the Society of Franciscan lay', i.e. *tertiary*, members of the "third order" (Lat. *tertii ordinis*) of St. Francis.

The name *Франч**ес**ко* / *Франч**ес**ка* is found in a number of **shortened variants** – with apheresis of the first, non-stressed syllable *Фран-* of the full stem. Moreover, some of them repeat/reproduce – with some sound changes – the last two syllables of the name *Франч**ес**ко* (i.e., *-ч**ес**-ко*, etc.):

13. *Чешко*, Бз, Г, from *Франчешко* (cf. 4), *Вранчешко* or *Врънчешко* (cf. 8, 10);

14. *Чишко*, Бз, from *Фран**чишко*** (cf. 7), and/or *Ура**нчишко*** (cf. 11).

Another group of variants of this name retains only a part of the stressed syllable (*-чѐс-*) of the full form *Франч**ѐ**ско* / *Франч**ѐ**ска*. Thus the corresponding formations should be considered as Bulgarian formative derivatives – with suffix [cyr.] *-но* (for fem. *-но*) and subsequent derivatives – diminutives – with the final soft consonant (*-ньо*, *-ню*) or with the vowel ***-е*** (or ***-е*** > ***-и***) and diminutive suffix *-ко* (fem. *-ка*). So, only the syllable [cyr.] *-чѐ-*, which appears also in its dialectally changed form *-ч**ѝ-*** (with the change *è* > ***ѝ***), is functioning as a formal relationship (or word formational motivation) with the primary form of the name *Франч**ѐ**ско* / *Франч**ѐ**ска*. These include:

15. ***Че**но*, Б, Т, Д, Ж, К, М, С, with suffix [cyr.] *-но* from ***Че**шко* (cf. 13) or directly from *Франч**е**ско* or *Франч**е**шко* (cf. 4);

16. *Чена*, Б, Ма, О, Т, Бз, Бо, П, С, female from *Чено* (cf. 15) or directly from *Франч**е**ска* or *Франч**е**шка* (cf. 5);

17. *Ченко*, in many places, with the suffix *-ко* from ***Чен**о* (cf. 15);

18. *Ченку*, О, with reduced ****о*** (> [cyr.] ***у***) from ***Ченк**о* (cf. 17);

19. *Ченка*, Д, С, of women from *Ченко* (cf. 17), or with suffix *-ка* from *Чена* (cf. 16);

20. *Чен**ьо***, in many places, from ***Чен**о* (cf. 15), with palatalisation – of diminutive function – of the final consonant ([cyr.] *н* > *н'*);

21. *Ченю*, Д, with reduced ****о*** (> [cyr.] ***у***) from *Чен**ьо*** (cf. 20);

22. *Чене*, Ма, from *Чено* (cf. 15) or *Ченьо* (cf. 20), with final vowel ***-е*** of diminutive function (as suffix *-е* from **-ęt-* for names of the offspring of the animals);

23. *Чен**и***, Ма, Т, with reduced *-е* (> *-и*) from *Чен**е*** (cf. 22);

24. *Ч**и**но*, Б, Д, Г, from *Ч**е**но* (cf. 15), with dialectal change *è* > ***ѝ***;

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25. *Чина*, Б, О, from *Чена* (cf. 16), with change *è* > *ѝ* or female from *Чино* (cf. 24);

26. *Чинко*, О, Т, Бо, with change *è* > *ѝ*, from *Ченко* (cf. 17), or with suffix *-ко* from *Чино* (cf. 24);

27. *Чиню*, Бз, with the change *è* > *ѝ*, from *Ченьо* (cf. 20) or от *Ченю* (cf. 21).

Some formations with *-ко* in final position are more difficult to analyze. It may be presumed: a) derivation (on Bulgarian background) on the shortest base *-чè-*/*-чѝ-*, as in *Чено*/*Чино* (cf. 15, 24), or b) reducing – with cutting of the consonant *š* ([cyr.] *ш*):

28. *Чеко*, Ма, О, К, with suffix *-ко*, as *Чено* (cf. 15), or – abbreviated – with truncation of the consonant š ([cyr.] *ш*) – from *Чешко* (cf. 13);

29. *Чико*, Б, with suffix *-ко*, as *Чино* (cf. 24), or – abbreviated – with truncation of the consonant š ([cyr.] *ш*) – from *Чишко* (cf. 14).

Even if we disregard the rare and obscure forms *Вица*, О, and *Шена*, Б (albeit both have been documented as feminine derivative forms of the name *Франческа*[27]), it seems necessary to mention two variants from village Ж, which are well known to me, though not documented in writing:

30. *Чиша*, Ж, with change *è* > *ѝ* and apheresis of the first, non-stressed syllable *вран-* from *Врančеша* (cf. 12), as an augmentative form, a result of rederivation (backformation);

31. *Франчинко*, Ж, a contamination of *Чинко* (cf. 26) and the old form *Франческо* or the new form *Франц* (cf. 32).

32. **Франц** shall be acknowledged as the newest of the full or official forms of the name of interest, borrowed from Germ. *Franz* (in the statistics provided here counted as a short form). According N. Kovachev[28], the name *Франц* is of greater frequency (263 times) than the other full names together (of total frequency 159) – masculine names (*Франциск*, *Франциско*, *Франческо* and *Франчешко*), with an overall incidence of 68 times, and feminine names (*Франциска*, *Франческа* and *Франчешка*), with an overall frequency of 91 times. The abbreviated name *Ченко*, with a frequency of 252 times (almost the same as of the name *Франц*) is identified with *Франц* in the community of Catholics in Bulgaria, although it is not the sound that appears in both names. Therefore, the expansive name *Франц* shifts *Франческо* and *Франциск*(*о*). It manifests itself as a motivating one not only to female *Франческа* etc., which is quite obvious. It is motivating also in terms of abbreviated forms, such as *Ченко*, etc. But the people, who are foreign to the Catholic community, even if being an experienced researcher, cannot suggest that.

Summing up, one may conclude that in Bulgarian anthroponymy the name *Франческо* occurs in 36 variants.

16 of them occur in a full, unabridged trisyllabic form (with the exception of *Франциск*): 11 masculine forms (in alphabetical order: *Врančешко*, *Врънчешко*, *Уранчишко*, *Францеско*, *Францешко*, *Франциск*, *Франциско*, *Франческо*, *Франчешко*, *Франчиско*, *Франчишко*) and 5 feminine forms (*Врančеша*, *Врančешка*, *Франциска*, *Франческа*, *Франчешка*).

The other 19 variants represent abbreviations that have appeared in Bulgarian dialects: disyllabic formations such as *Чено* etc. Existing forms include 15 masculine

[27] Селимски, 1999, pp. 138, 193.
[28] Ковачев, 1995, p. 537.

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variants (*Чеко*, *Чене*, *Чени*, *Ченко*, *Ченку*, *Чено*, *Ченьо*, *Ченю*, *Чешко*, *Чико*, *Чинко*, *Чино*, *Чиньо*, *Чиню*, *Чишко*) and 4 feminine variants (*Чена*, *Ченка*, *Чина*, *Чиша*). Conventionally, the list of these **19** names is complemented by the monosyllabic ***Франц*** (borrowed in this phonetic form from the Germ. *Franz*) as the 20th variant of the name.

The above said, it needs to be observed that the occurrence of the variants has historically been influenced by factors beyond those of "evolutionary" nature. Because it has been so clearly marked by its association with the Catholic minority in Bulgaria, the name *Франческо* (and all its derivative – formative and phonetic – variants), rapidly decreases in frequency after World War II, when some variants disappear completely. This phenomenon may be explained by the political and ideological changes of the time, resulting in the institutionally fostered intolerance towards the Catholic Church and religion in general, which tolerance yields interesting results in terms of the developments of the Bulgarian anthroponymy. For example, the manifestly Catholic primary form of the name, i.e.: *Франческо*, is last documented in a baptism certificate of the 1960s. At the same time, the less evidently marked *Ченко* (in some studies wrongly associated with the adjective *черен* 'black'), inferior in terms of frequency only to *Франц*, is substituted by the name *Чавдар*, quite foreign to the Catholic minority in the country, but, through the initial phoneme ***ч-***, resembling the name ***Ч****енко* and, by extension, related to *Франче*ско and *Франц*. The increase in the frequency of the "phonetic" substitutes of the name would certainly merit a separate study, yet at this point, suffice it to say that the study of anthroponymy may offer an interesting insight into the history of culture beyond the limitations of traditional divisions of academic disciplines.

It can be assumed that after the political changes in the country in 1989 the fear of the doctrinal marked name *Франческо* is overcome. And no one could serve as a model for such moral virtues as the defender of the poor, the patron saint of animals, patron saint of ecologists. And for the first time this year on, in 2013, the name *Франческо*/*Francesco* will hear and read, will be transmitted to posterity, obiter, as name of the bishop of Rome, as name of the heir to the throne of St. Peter.

**2.** The name *Francesco* and its derivatives as surnames

Apart from the listed variants of the first names, Bulgarian anthroponymy also accounts for the occurrence of 12 masculine variants of the name *Франческо* / *Франц* (of 27) functioning as surnames (numbers in brackets correspond to the frequency of surnames motivated by the name): *Франц* (→ *Францов* 135 and *Францев* 21), *Франческо* (→ *Франческов* 9), *Франчешко* (→ *Франчешков* 35), *Чене*, *Ченьо*, *Ченю* (→ *Ченев* 201), *Чени* (→ *Чениов* 1), *Ченко* (→ *Ченков* 918 and *Ченковски* 24), *Чено* (→ *Ченов* 87), *Чино* (→ *Чинов* 192), *Чиньо*, *Чиню* (→ *Чинев* 84).

Arranged on a sliding frequency scale, the 11 surnames are as follows (names motivating them in parentheses): *Ченков* 918 (← *Ченко*), *Ченев* 201 (← *Чене*, *Ченьо*, *Ченю*), *Чинов* 192 (← *Чино*), *Францов* 135 (← *Франц*), *Ченов* 87 (← *Чено*), *Чинев* 84, (←*Чиньо*, *Чиню*), *Франчешков* 35 (← *Франчешко*), *Ченковски* 24 (← *Ченко*), *Францев* 21 (← *Франц*), *Франческов* 9 (← *Франческо*), *Чениов* 1 (← *Чени*).

As can be seen, in terms of frequency, the redundant bases *Ченко*/*Ченьо* (and *Чинко*/*Чиньо*) and the new *Франц* are in the lead. However, the statistic should take into account the possibility that stems such as *Ченко*/*Чено* (and *Чинко*/*Чиньо*) may

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not have derived from *Франческо/Франц* but also from other stems, especially when once considers the range of distribution of these names, which cannot be reduced to the Catholic community alone. It is noteworthy that the oldest form of the name, *Франче**с**ко*, proved four times less productive in the role of a surname motivator than its later phonetic variant – *Франче**ш**ко*.

*

* *

The anthroponymic study of the fates of the name Francesco/*Франче**с**ко* in the culture of Bulgaria leads to an interesting, interdisciplinary conclusion. The evolutionary developments of the Bulgarian anthroponymy, sometimes altering their course due to political turmoils and ideological changes, not only document the paths of the history of the nation's culture but also may serve as a foundation for further, interdisciplinary studies of predictive character. For instance, the decrease in the frequency of the name *Франческо* (and derivatives thereof) in the context of the post WWII transformations in what has then become the Eastern Block and juxtaposed with the fact that today, after political changes that have come about in the country since 1989, the fear of the doctrinally marked Catholic name *Франческо* may have been overcome, may lead to the conclusion that 12 variants in the foundations of the 11 family names will persevere and continue to evolve, and that the already harbingered return of the original, non substitutive forms of the first name will soon become a cultural fact. In this context, it may be also be assumed that contemporary, ecologically-conscious generations, educated in the post-structural awareness of the discourse of race, class and gender, generations distrustful of the oppressive ideologies underlying the former totalitarian systems, could hardly find a more adequate ideological patron than the defender of the poor, the patron saint of animals and ecologists, Saint Francis of Assisi, which supports the prediction even further. Significantly, this global transformation echoes in the recent choice of massive political consequences: the name *Франческо/Francesco*, symbolically adopted by the Pope elected by the conclave of 2013, will henceforth be transmitted to posterity as the name of the bishop of Rome, heir to the throne of St. Peter. Thus legitimized by the name of the Supreme Pontiff, the Franciscan values, symbolically, may well become guidelines for the future, which in itself may yield a tangible result in the increase in the frequency of the original name among the Bulgarian Catholics.

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**ACRONYMS**

Б – Белене (in former county of Nikopol, in former district of Pleven, Northern Bulgaria)

Бз – Белозем (today a quarter of Plovdiv, South Bulgaria)

Бо – Борец (in former county of Plovdiv, South Bulgaria)

Г – Генерал Николаево (today a quarter of Rakovski, South Bulgaria)

Д – Дуванли (in former county of Plovdiv, South Bulgaria)

Ж – Житница (in former county of Plovdiv, South Bulgaria)

М – Миромир (today a quarter of Hisar, in former county of Plovdiv, South Bulgaria)

Ма – Малчика (in former county of Nikopol, former district of Pleven, Northern Bulgaria)

О – Ореш (in former county of Svishtov, former district of V. Turnovo, North. Bulgaria)

П – Парчевич (today a quarter of Rakovski, South Bulgaria)

С – Секирово (today a quarter of Rakovski, South Bulgaria)

Т – Трънчовица (in former county of Nikopol, former district of Pleven, Northern Bulgaria)

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