

# Theoretical considerations on the time and space “travel” of certain Anglo-Saxon proper names

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## Theoretical considerations on the time and space “travel” of certain Anglo-Saxon proper names

**Abstract:** The role of proper names in society may be discussed from several viewpoints; however, I believe that an eloquent analysis should start from the degree of transparency of those proper names in the source language. At the same time, the causal theory of names is still efficient in explaining the “travel” of those proper names that crossed the boundaries of their native cultural space. Various non-linguistic factors influence both the evolution of a proper name in the culture that contributed to its birth and existence, and the borrowing and acknowledgment of that name in other cultures.

**Keywords:** proper name, lexical meaning, pragma-semantic associations, conversion, etymology.

The present paper aims at establishing a general theoretical frame which to enable our further research on the perception of Romanian speakers on some proper names of English origin, considering the contemporary tendency of the young generation towards using such names. Our main concern will be represented by a corpus of typical Anglo-Saxon first names, in various variants and including diminutives and hypocoristic forms, chosen so as to reflect the theoretical aspects presented. When the case arose, the Romanian counterparts were discussed. The metaphor of the ‘journey’ used in the title is meant to cover two dimensions of proper names evolution, each representing a subdivision of the article:

- their journey through time, sometimes implying a process of conversion into common nouns (though the reverse can also happen) which facilitated the intensification of their circulation within the source language; this effect was also obtained by the pragmatic values acquired by the short forms of proper names;

- their geographical journey, i.e. the cross-cultural circulation of proper names<sup>1</sup>, which could be blocked by several factors: a. semantic opacity or even bleaching; b. phonetic identity / similarity and distinct etymology; c. common associative meaning characterising pairs of names (English vs Romanian proper names) having distinct etymologies.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the word circulation theory at the level of the vocabulary stated by Hasdeu and D. Macrea, it is not the quantity or the number of names that matters in onomastics but their circulation value (apud Constantinescu 1963: XXVI).

### Internal conversion as a result of words journey in time

Proper names have no intension<sup>2</sup>, i.e. they do not directly indicate any attribute pertaining to the referents but display a range of presuppositional meanings<sup>3</sup>. Proper names derived from common nouns might constitute an exception, at least in the early stages of their use as such.

Initially used deictically, proper names have preserved a weak anaphoric value since they resume the reference made by means of a definite description or they designate a referent known directly by the speaker. The two values are also shared by common nouns which can have either a deictic or an anaphoric value (if they are part of a referential chain). At the same time, the two classes of nouns are closely connected due to their shared asserted or presupposed lexical or categorical meaning (Langendonck, 2007: 153). Giering et al. (1980: 59) clearly stated that 'there is no strict line of division between proper and common nouns'. Designating various referents but preserving the basic level features, some proper names reached a level of frequency which enabled them to designate prototypical referents and the next step in their 'journey' in time was their conversion into appellatives, i.e. into common nouns<sup>4</sup>. But within that process more than one path of evolution was possible, depending on what semantic feature took scope over the others.

### Proper names turned into common nouns

The historical 'journey' of a proper name implies in many cases its conversion into a common noun, given some favourable circumstances which concern the name bearer or the name form, on the one hand, and the receptive skills of the users, on the other. A large category of proper names undergo the process of being used as common nouns, and this is the result of a metonymical process: 'the inventor/creator/producer standing for the creation/product'. In our opinion, this process involves the common background of the members of the linguistic community who are bound to share the informational load concerning the features which make the bearer of the proper name distinct from the others and, therefore, famous. Of course, after the name was implemented and accepted in the basic vocabulary of the language as a common noun, its grounding may or may not remain part of the encyclopedic knowledge of the users.

An example is offered by the proprial lemma *John* > *john*<sub>1</sub>; *john*<sub>2</sub>. As a proper name, *John* is derived from a Hebrew etymon and borrowed through Latin and French (in the variants *Ian*, *Jan*), becoming one of the most frequent male names because of the religious

<sup>2</sup> Langendonck (2007: 111) acknowledges that 'there is something like a minimal lexical categorical sense specifying personal names, city names, country names'.

<sup>3</sup> categorical meanings (basic level meanings), associative senses (introduced via the name bearer or via the name form), emotive senses and grammatical meanings (Langendonck 2007: 7).

<sup>4</sup> Langendonck (2007: 15) discusses a trichotomy of categories including the dictionary lemma (proprial lemma), the proper name being regarded as a mere lexeme, in an abstract way; the grammatical category and the phonological or phonetic form of the proper name. In the same line, Anderson (2003: 390) refers to the process of the 'conversion of names' into less typical name-types or into common nouns.

connotations<sup>5</sup>. In this case the historical grounding overlapped the etymology of the name ensuring it a lasting worldwide popularity. That led to its conversion into a common noun:

*john*<sub>1</sub> ,a woman's lover; client of a prostitute'<sup>6</sup>; even though both meanings are confined to the slang register of English, the latter (attested since 1911) acquired an additional negative connotation within the semantic area of ,illicit love'. In this case, in the process of converting the proper name into a common noun, the stress is on the categorial features ([+human referent]) and on the grammatical content of the proper name ([+male] referent); the generic value is preserved in the syntagm *John Doe*<sup>7</sup> which developed a feminine counterpart, *Jane Doe*. The novelty of the syntagm at the moment when it appeared in language consists in the fact that the feature [-known identity] is the distinctive seme; from the specialized meaning the syntagm entered general English vocabulary.

*john*<sub>2</sub> ,public toilet' (the term being used with that meaning since 1932, probably from *jack*, *jakes* used ever since the 16-th century) cf. Rom. *vespasiană* borrowed from French. Both in English and in Romanian the corresponding terms are not in general use nowadays: *vespasiană* is obsolete in Romanian, the word being completely opaque to most speakers in terms of its etymology (it is derived from the name of the Roman emperor *Vespasian*).

There are special cases when the proper name preserves only its categorial features, as a prototypical nominal category; its meaning is bleached. The proper name becomes just a grammatical marker of gender, a functional word, getting into combination with a head word and forming a compound. In time, the compound can come to be used metaphorically, retrieving some lost features (i.e.[+human]) in the process. In other cases, compounding is followed by a process of conversion. This is the case of the proper name *Jack*:

*Jack* is a masculine proper name, attested around 1218, probably an Anglicization of O.Fr. *Jacques* (which was a diminutive of the Latin *Jacobus*<sup>8</sup>; in spite of its etymology, English speaking users linked it to *Johan*, *John* which led to it being considered a native word<sup>9</sup>. In this line, *Jack* was initially a diminutive from *John* or *Jacob/Jakob*. Later on it has become a distinct proper name, without being felt as a diminutive derived from a base name.

It has remained a component of compounds referring to sailing, at present being felt as opaque. The name has acquired a generic value due to its frequency of use and it has encompassed the feature [+sailor], the seme [+male] being included in the denotation of

<sup>5</sup> Masculine proper name, mid-12-th century., from M.L. *Johannes*, from L.L. *Joannes*, from Gk. *Ioannes*, from Heb. *Yohanan* (in full *y'hohanan*) lit. 'Jehovah has favored', from *hanan* 'He was gracious'. It was one of the most common Christian given names, and in England by early 14-th century it rivaled *William* in popularity (<http://www.etymonline.com>).

<sup>6</sup> *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language* 1994: 769.

<sup>7</sup> Fictitious plaintiff in a legal action, attested from 1768. By 1852, John Doe was being used for 'any man whose name is not known' (<http://www.etymonline.com>).

<sup>8</sup> *The Wordsworth Dictionary of First Names* (1995: 108) states that there is no connection between *Jack* and *Jacques*, deriving the former from the ME *Jankin*.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.etymonline.com>

the word<sup>10</sup>. We include the syntagm *Jack of all trades* into the same category of examples. The basic level features of the proper name are relevant in this idiom, where *Jack* appears as a prototypical male name and in some dictionaries it appears non-capitalized as an effect of the generic value of the proper name. The ironical connotation represents an additional semantic layer. Its basic level features are relevant in turning it into a common noun but only in slang English. We list the first five meanings of *jack* as a common noun (Volceanov, Doca 1995: 122): 1. policeman; detective; MP member (British English) 2. money; 3. five pound bill (British English); heroine tablet (British English); 5. tobacco for hand-made cigarettes (American English). What is to be drawn from the list of meanings is that both in British English and in American English the referent designated by the noun can be inanimate, which might be explained as a result of a more recent development of the word which underwent a metonymical process: the user (typically male) for the product (typically) used by him (money, drugs, cigarettes), extralinguistic data proving the preponderance of male users. In these last cases *jack* is merely a phonological form, semantically void.

The proper name also becomes a grammatical word, marker of gender, in the compound *Jack-ass* ‚male ass’; it is hyphenated, which keeps the proper name transparent in point of its basic level features, whereas in the structure *jackass* (a metaphoric use of the previous compound), the elements of the compound are written in one word as a materialization of the fact that the components are taken semantically as one unit denoting ‚a stupid person’<sup>11</sup>.

### Common nouns turned into proper names

The opposite of the phenomenon discussed is also true, common nouns can, in their turn, become proper names as a result of a process of metaphorization. The causal theory of naming is at work in this situation, since the general feature associated to a plant, animal etc, is metaphorically transferred to human referents. It is generally a real feature which is observable through senses. The denotative motivation specific to common nouns becomes a connotative motivation when they are turned into proper names. The name chosen reflects the wishful thinking of the parents, corresponding to a moral code or to the prototypical qualities associated to the bearer as a reflection of the social role held in society. Cognitive metaphors explain in the best way the cognitive process underlying the name motivation:

*Margaret* (cf *Pearl*<sup>12</sup>) illustrates that the phonetic identity involving a common noun and a proper name can concern a borrowed anthroponym. The Rom. *Margareta* is wrongly connected etymologically by most speakers of Romanian to the common noun *margaretă* which stands for the English *daisy* (literally expressing a metaphor, ‚day’s eye’), itself

<sup>10</sup> *Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language*, 1994: 760.

<sup>11</sup> *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* 2004: 692.

<sup>12</sup> *The Wordsworth Dictionary of First Names* (1995: 183) mentions the German novelist Rose Tremain as the authoress of a novel called *Sacred Country*, one of the characters of which bore the name; the mentioning of this information counts as the social grounding of the name. Nevertheless, N. Hawthorne’s use of the name in *The Scarlet Letter* is not to be neglected.

become an anthroponym. The true etymology of the name derives it from a common noun but that noun is the correspondent of the English *pearl*, which makes the two proper names *Pearl* and *Margaret*, existent in contemporary English, synonymous. Both common nouns derive from a Latin etymon, in its turn borrowed from Greek:

Eng. *Margaret* < Lat. *margarita* ,pearl'

Eng. *Pearl* < O.Fr. *perle* (13-th century) < M.L. *perla* of unknown origin.

Actually the word *margarita* did eventually refer to the flower under discussion, maybe because the flower opens at dawn and the dew on its petals might make it shine like the precious stone, therefore the name is the result of a metaphorization. If in English the proper name *Margaret* has also the variant *Marguerite* borrowed from French and spelled accordingly (Ionescu 1975: 199) and it is doubled by the Germanic proper name *Daisy*, in Romanian the name *Margareta* is attested beginning with the 14-th century and it has a series of variants among which we mention: *Marghita* (existing also as a toponym, and whose form is influenced by the Hungarian variant of the name), *Mărgărita*, *Marga*, *Margo* (the last paying a tribute to its French etymon). The name becomes spread in most western countries of the European continent due to a Christian martyr. Both names correspond to the cognitive metaphor WOMAN IS A PRECIOUS STONE / JEWEL.

*Hope*<sup>13</sup> (cf *Speranța*), *Faith*, *Mercy*, *Charity* etc reflect Christian values even if they are not devotional names, either linked to saints, Biblical characters or religious holidays; at the same time, they are augural names, motivated by denotation. The bearer is intended to benefit from the quality denoted by the names from the others and he/she should behave similarly in relation to the others. Such names are explained by the cognitive metaphor WOMAN IS VIRTUE (= A GOOD CHRISTIAN)

Masculine proper names may be explained according to the same criteria in point of name motivation: for instance, *Wolf* cf Rom. *Lupu* (both as first and last names), Sl. *Vuk* corresponds to the cognitive metaphor MAN IS COURAGE (though the use of the name is assumed to have acquired the role of an exorcism) whereas *Lion*(*el*) vs Rom. *Leonard*, *Leontin*, *Leonaș* is accounted for by the cognitive metaphor MAN IS MAJESTY; MAN IS NOBILITY.

### Connotative motivation of diminutives

#### Formal identity and semantic contamination

A large number of diminutives have become first names, which implies the loss of their original meaning and also the diminished emphasis on their associative meaning connoting [+affection]: *Jack*, *Nick*, *Tom*, *Bob* etc. Sometimes, a double process takes place, the diminutive becomes a proprial lemma and then it may be converted into a common noun.

In some cases there is a phonetic identity between a proper name and a common noun, the two having totally different etymologies. Such an example is *Candy* < *Candice*<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Puritanism contributed to the large circulation of these names in the 17-th century but their interpretation as augural names has ensured their preservation and passing on till the present-day.

<sup>14</sup> *Candace* was a title of the queens of Ethiopia (*The Wordsworth Dictionary of First Names* 1995: 35).

cf It. *Candid(a)*, Fr. *Candide* < *candid* 'white', attested in the 1620s, from L. *candidum*, 'white; pure; sincere, honest, upright', from *candere*, 'to shine'. In English, the metaphoric extension to 'frank' was first recorded in the 1670s (cf. Fr. *candide*, 'open, frank, ingenuous, sincere' cf *candy* attested in the 13-th century, meaning 'crystalized sugar', from O.Fr. *çucre candi*, 'sugar candy', ultimately from Arabic *qandi*, from Pers. *qand*, 'cane sugar', in its turn derived from Sanscrit)<sup>15</sup>. As a verb, it was attested beginning with the 16-th century.

In Romanian the name *Candid* is not frequent and is included into the category of learned loan words, under the influence of French literature and art. The 'contamination' of the proper name with the etymology of the common noun is presumable, for instance, in the choice of the diminutive as a stage name. The feminine form of the name is also the scientific name of a fungus, which might explain the reluctance of Romanian users regarding the Italian variant of the name.

### Surnames become first names and further clipped

Some proper names used as forenames made up compounds with the common noun *son* (become the combining form *-son*), thus designating an indefinite number of referents who are descendants from a known ancestor. The compounds thus obtained have been used as surnames: *Harrison, Jackson, Robinson* etc. In time, out of extra-linguistic reasons, due to the fading away of their associative meaning (linked to the word form), the names underwent a process of clipping, changing to their initial form, now felt as a short form. Such examples are *Harry, Jack, Robin*, the last being used as a boy's or a girl's name.

An interesting case is represented by the name *Clifford* > *Cliff* < ?*cliff*. O.E. *clif*<sup>16</sup>, from P.Gmc. \**kliban* (cf. O.S. *clif*, O.N. *kliif*, O.H.G. *klep*, M.Du. *klippe*, Ger. *Klippe*, 'cliff, steep rock'), perhaps from PIE base \**gleibh-*, 'to adhere, be attached'<sup>17</sup> + *ord*<sup>18</sup> cf *Peter, Petre*. It can be used as a family name and *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language* (1994: 277) includes it as a dual gender name.

### Short forms used as dual gender proper names

The sortal presupposition implying the feature of gender is cancelled in this case. If the initial ostension or description of the referent is missing, then the categorial presupposition cannot be calculated, which might block proper communication<sup>19</sup>. The phonetic form of the name leads to its wrong interpretation and incorrect use respectively.

*Alex* < *Alexander* from Latin but from a Greek etymon meaning 'defend' + 'man, warrior'; the feminine form *Alexandra* was made popular in English by Queen Alexandra, wife of Edward VII; cf Rom. *Alexandru*.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.etymonline.com>

<sup>16</sup> *clif* neuter noun (-es/cleofu, clifu) 'cliff, rock, promontory, steep slope' ([http://home.comcast.net/~modean52/oeme\\_dictionaries.htm](http://home.comcast.net/~modean52/oeme_dictionaries.htm)).

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.etymonline.com>

<sup>18</sup> *masculine noun* point, spear-point, spear; source, beginning; front, vanguard; chief'; *pl* 'first men, the flower' ([http://home.comcast.net/~modean52/oeme\\_dictionaries.htm](http://home.comcast.net/~modean52/oeme_dictionaries.htm)).

<sup>19</sup> For the Romanian language, N.A. Constantinescu (1963: XXVI) discusses the confusion of gender in case of several first names which acquire the feature [+dual gender].

Regarding the perception of the name, depending largely on the subjectivity of the user, we quote some fragments from Mircea Horia Simionescu's novel, *Dicționar onomastic*, considering that his perspective might not be so far from the perception of a large category of users. The phonetic form of the name, its length and alternation of vowels and voiced consonants conveys some solemnity; the name preserves its historical grounding precisely because it does not send back to a saint or god name but to the name of a king and hero, made popular by folk tales and legends:

'ALEXANDRU'<sup>20</sup> – Neutru, însă expresiv și vibrant. [...] Bărbații cu acest nume aspiră către titluri și situații sociale remarcabile [Men bearing this name have high aspirations and aim at a remarkable social status].

SANDU mic, prost, ipocrit.[...] [SANDU small, stupid, hypocrite].

ANDI ori impertinent ori extrem de plăcut. [ANDI either impertinent or extremely agreeable].

ALEX cărarea din mijlocul capului atârnă ca o ață nevăzută ca să-i țină ridicat nasul. Tipul masculului imberb' (Simionescu 2000: 25). [ALEX his central parting seems to hang like an invisible thread meant to keep his nose up. Immature macho man type].

Beyond the irony of the text we must admit the present-day preference of Romanians for the everyday use of the long form of the name or of the variant *Alex*, due to the fashion of adopting Anglo-Saxon names, since they seem to sound more pompous, even if there is a risk to appear snobbish.

Below there are other examples illustrating the metamorphosis of the diminutives with emotional meaning into proprial lemmas (proper names in their own right); they are used to designate referents whose gender is irrelevant: *Chris* < *Christopher* / *Christian* / *Christine*, *Coop* < *Cooper*, *Jo* / *Joe*, *Jackie* / *Jacky* < *Jack(son)* / *Jacqueline*, *Kelly*, *Kim* < *Kimberly*, *Les* < *Leslie* / *Lesley*, *Max* < *Maximilian* / *Maxwell* / *Maxine*, *Mike* < *Michael* / *Michelle*, *Mel*, *Robin* < *Robert(a)*, *Percy* < *Percival* (as a feminine name, sometimes it is combined with the augural name *Chance*, thus resulting a strange combination: *Percychance*).

In Romanian there is a clear preference for the short forms of Christian names which don't have a gender marker; it is easier to pronounce them, they are shorter and can convey pragmatic meanings but they do not generally become proprial lemmas if there is a risk of creating confusion regarding the gender of the bearer.

### **Semantic bleaching and the cross-cultural journey of words**

In spite of the fact that their etymology is not known by the people bearing those respective names, the semantic opacity of the names does not make them automatically less used, the focus being transferred to their phonetic characteristics or to the associative meaning linked to various name bearers.

<sup>20</sup> „Nume domnesc, boierii și poporul preferau derivate și hipocoristice ale numelui.” [Princes' name, the boyars and the people preferred the derivatives and the hypocoristics of the name.] (N.A.Constantinescu 1963: 7).

### Proper names of Greek or Latinate origin turned opaque

Initially, the semantic content of some names used to be identical with the content of a definite description but in time the proper name has acquired its own associative value, connected to its bearers; therefore, the users' knowledge of identifying the description etymologically denoted by the name is not required for their linguistic (i.e. pragmatic) competence, since the definite description does not fix the referent. Such examples are:

*Cecily, Cecil, Cecilia* cf Rom. *Cecilia*, presumably from *caecus* 'blind' though many linguists consider this hypothesis as explainable by folk etymology; the pre-Roman etymology (probably Etrurian) links the name to the proper name *Caecina*. Initially *nomen gentilicium* it becomes a *cognomen* and then an independent name. Irrespective of its pre-Christian evolution, it was reinforced by its association to a Christian martyr (Ionescu 1975: 80). At present we find it in Romance and Slavic languages and in Hungarian.

*Philip(a) > Pip, Pippa* cf Rom. *Filip* 'horse lover', a name of Greek origin. What prevailed in the social grounding of the name proved to be not its Greek etymology, i.e. its link to the meaning of the common nouns making it up, but the association to Phillip II, the king of the ancient Macedonia, father of Alexander the Great.

*Caesar* cf Rom. *Cezar, Cezara*<sup>21</sup>, *Cezarina*

It is a name of Etrurian origin, its significance being 'god'; it became a cognomen of the members of the Iulia family, then designated a *nomen gentilicium*; later it made reference to a ruling class member and once the Roman Empire was founded it became part of the Emperor's title; in time its sole use was limited to the designation of an emperor, thus illustrating a process of metonymy. Its revival was due to the Renaissance period when the interest for ancient culture increased. The interesting aspect is that the proper name was not borrowed into English, being exclusively used to refer to the Roman emperors, especially Caius Julius Caesar. In Romanian, the masculine form of the name is extremely popular, unlike its feminine counterpart, which determined the opinion of M. H. Simionescu quoted above as an endnote. The speakers of Romanian are totally unaware of the denotative meaning of the name, its selection being determined by its phonetic form and by the link to Roman emperors.

### Proper names showing phonetic identity / similarity and distinct etymology

The cross-cultural borrowing can be blocked by the presence of an identical or very similar name in the target language:

*Carl / Karl*, fem. *Carla / Karla* (increasingly popular since 1950s)<sup>22</sup> < *carl* c.1300, from O.N. *karl* 'man, male, freeman'. By extension *Carl* can be associated to the meaning

<sup>21</sup> "Cezara – de tipul Manola, Vintila, Costica, Vlada, Chirila, Mitica" [Cezara – from the same category as Manola, Vintila, Costica, Vlada, Chirila, Mitica] (Simionescu 2000: 96). Though a fictional piece of literature, the quoted novel gives the perception of the author, a native speaker of Romanian, which can raise some questions regarding the general perception of the name. The irony intended by the author is obvious: he considers the adjustment of the name to designate a [-male] referent to be rather artificial considering the etymology and grounding of the source name.

<sup>22</sup> *The Wordsworth Dictionary of First Names* 1995: 36.



peasant' which makes it a synonym to *George/Gheorghe* in point of denotation. On the other hand, in the Middle Ages, the Christian name *Michael*, enforced by its connection to the archangel with the same name, became the typical name for German peasants.<sup>23</sup> It is another proof that the etymology of the name can become irrelevant in comparison to the pragmatic circumstances of use.

A similar masculine name in point of form is *Carol* < M.L. *Carolus* cf Irish Gaelic *Cathal* 'battle' + 'strong'<sup>24</sup>. *Caroline*<sup>25</sup> > *Carol* / *Karol* / *Carroll* / *Carole* / *Carola* / *Caryl* (fem.) > *Caro* / *Carrie*; the variant *Charles* < Fr. *Charles*, fem. *Charlene*, having the same etymology, was preferred in English precisely because there was an overlapping between the masculine and the feminine variant of the name and, at the same time, the feminine form could be linked to the common noun *carol* 'joyful song', also 'dance in a ring', from O.Fr. *carole* 'kind of dance in a ring', from M.L. *choraula* 'a dance to the flute' from L. *choraulos*, from Gk. *khoraules* 'flute player who accompanies the choral dance' from *khoros* 'chorus'. The meaning 'Christmas hymn' is attested round 1500<sup>26</sup>. In Romanian the masculine name *Carol* was attested in the 18-th century.

Eng. *Charlotte* is the feminine of *Charles* cf Rom. *Carlota* / *Charlotta*<sup>27</sup>. The feminine was never very frequent in Romanian but it was preserved in the common noun *șarlotă* designating a kind of cake.

Eng. *Brad*<sup>28</sup> < *brad* 'small wire nail' (attested in the late 13-th century) < O.N. *broddr* 'spike, point, arrow' (cf. O.E. *brord* 'point, prick, blade of grass', O.H.G. *brort* 'point, edge, crown'<sup>29</sup>. Pierre Malvezin (1903: 39) considers the word *brad* as a verb meaning 'augmenter, grandir' ['augment, increase'], the root to be found in old Irish and old Cornish. What holds true is that the common name was turned into a proper name as a result of a metaphorical transfer: the bearer was to be sharp, swift, full of majesty.

Rom. *Brad* (literally 'fir-tree') is the result of an internal conversion which produces a metaphorical extension<sup>30</sup>; it is a descriptive name also connoting the wish that the bearer should be 'as tall and straight as a fir-tree' cf the idiom *înalt ca bradul*; the name is rather used as a surname.

<sup>23</sup> Idem, 210.

<sup>24</sup> Idem, 38.

<sup>25</sup> It is considered that the name *Caroline* became popular due to Caroline de Anspach (1683–1737) who married George II (*The Wordsworth Dictionary of First Names* 1995: 30–31).

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.etymonline.com>

<sup>27</sup> <sup>31</sup> „din categoria femeilor mari, întregi, depline, bine echilibrate, înzestrate cu multe calități, cu suferință și seninătate.” [of the category of big, complete, accomplished, well-balanced women, endowed with many qualities, with a propensity towards suffering and serenity.] (Simionescu 2000: 92)

<sup>28</sup> *The Wordsworth Dictionary of First Names* (1995: 30–31) links the name *Brad* to *Bradley* 'broad clearing', a surname derived from a toponym or from *Bradford* 'broad ford' undergoing the same processes.

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.etymonline.com>; *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language* 1994: 178.

<sup>30</sup> „simbol de vigoare și tinerețe” [a symbol of vigour and youth] (Constantinescu 1963: 213).

### Proper names with distinct etymology but displaying common associative meaning

*Callie* < the verbal root *cal* ,be white, bright, full of light' cf Gr. *kalos* ,beautiful' (Constantinescu 1963: 49) or from the Irish Gaelic *Cathal* > *Cal*.

The name is doubled by the corresponding names having French and Italian origin respectively: *Blanche*, *Bianca*. The Italian variant of the name, *Bianca*, was borrowed into Romanian in the 19-th century. The French variant *Blanche* entered the English vocabulary after the Norman Conquest, being considered popular in the 19-th century America<sup>31</sup>.

*Lily* is considered to derive from *Lil(l)ian* or *Elisabeth* > *Lilibeth* but it evolved from the status of a diminutive having an associative meaning to an independent name, and in this line it can be linked to the common noun *lily* (see above), seen by Christians as a symbol of purity cf Rom. *Crina*<sup>32</sup>. *Crina* is not the result of internal word formation means but a loan word (< Gr. *krinon* ,lily') (Ionescu 1975: 191). Some linguists consider that the semantic connection is based on an accidental phonetic resemblance both in English and in Romanian, but the association made between the proper name and the name of the flower facilitated the increased popularity of the name, since in many cases the feminine name illustrates the cognitive metaphor THE GIRL/WOMAN IS A FLOWER. The interesting observation to be made in relation to the proper name *Lili* in Romanian is that it is considered as a diminutive either from *Liliana* or from *Elena*<sup>33</sup>. The speakers of Romanian establish no connection between the two names, *Lili* and *Crina*, the former becoming totally opaque in point of its denotational motivation. Nevertheless, if we accept the lack of connection between the two names, the perception of the users would be completely accurate.

### Conclusions

Some proper names extensively used and possessing a historical grounding which is still relevant to the users acquire a prototypical value which enables them to be used as common nouns designating classes of elements which share one or another of the features characterising the original name.

If throughout time proprial lemmas have developed diminutives with emotional value, at present the reverse phenomenon occurs, diminutives become in their turn proprial lemmas, i.e. independent proper names, their neutral value increasing in the process; sometimes it is impossible to establish the direction of evolution of the word: from the basic variant to the diminutive or viceversa. The long variant is either a short form used as a hypocoristic or a derivative or compound form containing the basic name.

Proper names can undergo a further process of semantic bleaching turning into grammatical words; the opposite can also happen: in such compounds, the grammatical word can take over the meaning of the head word which is left out; the result is a shorter and more suggestive lexeme semantically enriched.

The borrowing of a proper name into a target language might be blocked by its formal identity with a native proper name of different origin for fear of confusion.

<sup>31</sup> *The Wordsworth Dictionary of First Names* 1995: 29.

<sup>32</sup> Also seen as a diminutive of the Romanian name *Măcrina*.

<sup>33</sup> M. Vincler, D. Antonescu (1997: 99; 62); the authors consider *Liliana* a diminutive from *Lili* and not viceversa.

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