The Reinterpretation of Vocatives as Nominatives

The reinterpretation of morphologically marked vocatives as nominatives is a not infrequent phenomenon, sometimes language-internally, but much more prominently in situations of linguistic contact when a language that has no morphologically marked vocative borrows names from a language that does. Occasionally, such reinterpretations give rise to new inflectional classes in the borrowing languages (e.g. the so-called *e*-declensions of Etruscan and Raetic, e.g. Etr. *Nemetieś* with the Etr. ending *-ś* added to a stem derived from the vocative of Gaulish *Nemetios*; or Iberian *Likinete* with the Ib. ending *-te* added to a stem derived from the vocative of Latin or Celtiberian *Likinos*). The language-internal example of Latin nom. *Iuppiter* < Proto-Indo-European voc. *$d\textit{i}eu\ ph_2ter$* was identified at an early period. Here the divine epiclesis has come to be used for the nominative.

The number of previous studies devoted to this topic is small. The first and probably only wide-ranging survey was undertaken by the orientalist Enno Littmann who in 1916 produced an insightful article that discusses both the transference of forms of address to new base forms, as well as the reinterpretation of vocatives as nominatives in contact situations. He adduced examples mainly from languages of the Near East (Aramaic, Arabian, Ethiopian, Armenian). Later scholars like Wackernagel 1920 or Svennung 1958 took most of their examples directly from Littmann and added almost no new forms to the discourse. An open-eyed search for literature on the subject brings to light a rich number of studies where individual new cases of the reinterpretation of vocatives are identified (e.g. Rix 1995 for Latin and Greek-derived names in Etruscan, Adams 2003 for contact situations of Latin, Stifter 2008 for Old Prussian names in Low German), but the phenomenon as a whole has not been studied.

Since I have become aware of the phenomenon, I have been able to identify numerous new cases that had hitherto gone unnoticed, mostly in historic language contact situations throughout the whole of Europe. The examples involve mainly the contacts of old Indo-European languages with non-Indo-European languages or with other Indo-European languages.

I intend to give an overview of the collected material and of particular problems of interpretation (it is not always easy to decide whether a particular form can be interpreted as a transferred vocative or has a different explanation, e.g. Slavic masc. names in *-o* like *Ivo* could be vocatives of hypocoristic *ā*-stems, cp. the variant *Ivica*, or could continue the inherited Indo-European ending *-os* of *o*-stems). At the end of the paper, I will try to draw typological conclusions from the material.

References:

Adams 2003   James N. Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, Cambridge 2003.

Littmann 1916   Enno Littmann, 'Anredeformen in erweiterter Bedeutung', in: *Nachr. v. d. Königl. Ges. d. Wiss. zu Göttingen. Phil.-hist. Kl.* Berlin 1916, 94–111.

Rix 1995   Helmut Rix, '105. Etruskische Personennamen', in: *Namenforschung. Ein internationales Handbuch zur Onomastik.* Hrsgg. Ernst Eichler et al., 1. Teilband [= HSK 11.1], Berlin – New York, 719–724.

Stifter 2008   David Stifter, 'OPr. *kelleweſze* 'Driver of a Cart'', *Historische Sprachforschung* (2008), 281–296.

Svennung 1958   Josef Svennung, *Anredeformen. Vergleichende Forschungen zur indirekten Anrede in der dritten Person und zum Nominativ für den Vokativ*, Uppsala – Wiesbaden, 1958.

Wackernagel 1920   Jacob Wackernagel, Vorlesungen über Syntax mit besonderer Berücksichtigung von Griechisch, Lateinisch und Deutsch, Basel 1920.