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## ***Appellative Use of First Names in Swiss German: Denominations for Animals, Plants, Parts of the Body, Objects, and Concepts***

### **1. Introduction**

Deonymization, depropriation or appellativization of names is well known and described when product or company names (ergonyms) are concerned (e.g. KNAPPOVÁ 1996, ŠRÁMEK 1996). Prominent examples include the English verbs *to xerox* and *to google*. In a similar way, persons' names can be appellativized and become generic expressions when they refer to individuals well-known for a particular characteristic or deed. Such deonymic appellatives are usually based on a surname. But even given names can be appellativized when a certain person is known by this name. This is the case with Swiss German *Vit* 'wuss, ninny', which is said to be a semantic reversion of the biblical *David's* boldness (24;<sup>1</sup> ID. 12: 549).

In contrast to this phenomenon, the subject of this paper are given names used in an appellative way without referring to well-known individuals. This distinction between names of eponymous "individuals who stood out with positive, negative, or ridiculous deeds that were linked with great discoveries, inventions, high-quality products, or atrocities" on one hand and highly common, frequent names as eponyms on the other hand was already broached by BACH (1952: 322, § 169).<sup>2</sup>

Unlike deonomastica based on the given names of individually determinable persons (HAUBRICHS 2002: 343), the deonymic use of incognito personal names is still a bit disregarded in onomastics. Still, it is a common process. In German, *Hinz und Kunz* ('Heinrich and Konrad') simply means 'everybody', while the origin of Swiss German *Trīne*<sup>n</sup> 'simple, fatuous person' (58, 25; ID. 14: 1080) is an abbreviation of *Katharina* or a hypocoristic (affectionate) form of *Dorothee*. Even though ID. (3: 1102) suggests that in cases such as *glänze*<sup>n</sup> *wie Fīge*<sup>n</sup>-*Ludi*<sup>3</sup> ('to be shining like fig Ludwig') 'to be superbly frilly, dressed to kill' (69), there must have been a long forgotten fact such as a once well-known local grocer who used to dress like a dandy that led to the saying, and FREI (1981: 18)

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<sup>1</sup> All one- to three-digit numbers given to each name refer to the sequential number in the alphabetical collection of 117 given names in the appendix.

<sup>2</sup> All translations of quotations from German texts by This Fetzler.

<sup>3</sup> For the sake of compositional clearness, compounds with names are hyphenated throughout this text even though this is not standard in German.



insists there should have been an initial name bearer, though possibly forgotten for centuries, the only traceable motivation for the appellative name use is the fact that these names were very common and therefore easily seen as somehow generic.

By analyzing the whole accessible number of given names used in this way within Swiss German, I will try to add a new perspective to the outlines given by BACH (1952: 323ff., 169 ff.) and to systematize the knowledge on the phenomenon. Which categories of names and meanings are involved? What mechanisms are working in this kind of deonymization?

Uses of given names that are excluded from the analysis are: appellatives gained by means of derivation (cf. SCHWEICKARD 1992) or composition with a non-onymic primary word (e.g. *achilleisch* ‘Achillean’, DWB 1: 1351; *Adams-Britzelchen* ‘particular kind of cookies’, “Rheinisches Wörterbuch” 1: 56), thus only pure conversion (GLESSGEN 2002: 197) is considered; names used in sayings (such as the above-mentioned *glänze<sup>n</sup> wie Füge<sup>n</sup>-Ludi* ‘to be superbly frilly, dressed to kill’); verbs and adjectives formed on the base of names (always using a suffix, such as *otmärle<sup>n</sup>* ‘celebrate St. Otmar’s day [November 16<sup>th</sup>] by visiting each other’s wine cellars to degustate young wine’ [85; ID. 1: 605]); human names used for individual animals (therefore *Lise* ‘name for any individual female domestic animal lacking attributes that could serve as a name base’ [26; ID. 3: 1423] will not be considered, while *Heini* ‘stork’ [42; ID. 2: 1314] will be included as this does not refer to a particular stork, but to any stork); several names used to avoid the tabooed use of devil (cf. RIS 2002: 233); and those used as swearwords without real reference to an object (such as *Bim Toni!* [9] ‘malediction’, probably an alteration of *Bim Donner!* [‘thunder (malediction)’]; ID. 13: 262, 241).

## 2. Basic Figures

About 600 appellative meanings of given names could be retrieved from the almost fully searchable online version of the Schweizerisches Idiotikon (Dictionary of Swiss German, ID.). Very few are added from other sources (FREI 1981, whose records are mainly based on ID.; RIS 2002). These meanings can be allocated to only 117 different basic names, often in an abbreviated or hypocoristic form or in a compound with the name as a primary word. Many actual name forms are given with more than just one meaning. In other cases, a name can have different abbreviations all equipped with the same meaning.

Many of the appellative meanings have very limited validity: some were reported within restricted regional boundaries, a few exclusively in clearly historical context, and most of them go back to the time when the data for the dictionary were collected in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, thus may be

unknown to present-day speakers. Some might even be individual ad-hoc creations (occasionalisms) not declared as such by ID.

So what meanings do given names used as appellatives have? The basic semantic distinction is the one between name appellatives used to describe people and those referring to animals, objects, and concepts. About two thirds of the 600 records refer to persons and are disregarded here but will hopefully be examined at a later stage. With a more formal perspective, the most important dichotomy is the one between given names used as appellatives without any modification and those which form the bases of compounds or are accompanied by an adjective. A third distinction is the one between female and male given names, the first of which account for about one third of the whole material as well as of the names used for people.

Of the roughly 200 name appellatives not referring to humans, not all are easily attached to a semantic category. Below, the most consistent and prominent categories will be introduced with each a few examples.

### 3. Categories

#### 3.1. Human Functions, Hierarchy

While, as has been said above, most name-derived appellatives describe individuals (or their looks, intelligence, character, and behavior, more precisely), a few names are not used to refer to actual persons but to their function. *Büre<sup>n</sup>-Joggeli* ('farmer Jakob'; 48; ID. 3: 27), *Han-Eich* ('Johannes Heinrich'; 42; ID. 2: 1315), and *Mist-Hans* ('dung Johannes'; 52; ID. 2: 1472) all stand for 'farmer', while a *Grēt* is any 'peasant woman' (74; ID. 2: 824), *Püre<sup>n</sup>-Grēt* any 'farm girl' (74; 2: 825), and *Meili* simply means 'maidservant' (75; ID. 4: 356), as farming used to be as common as these names. Therefore, these actually are closer to 'any (particular) person' rather than to a function such as the following.

*Gröss-Hans* ('tall Johannes') was used as a term for 'someone of higher grade in military' as opposed to *Chlī<sup>n</sup>-Hans* ('small Johannes') 'rank and file' (52; ID. 2: 1471). *Meister Pēter* ('master Peter') was the name of the 'executioner' (88; ID. 4: 1841), though this might be an individualism. *Chnabe<sup>n</sup>-Hans* ('bachelors' Johannes') is only recorded as a surname but goes, according to ID. (2: 1472), back to the function 'master of a bachelors' association' (52). *Post-Heiri* ('mail Heinrich') is used for the 'postman' (42; ID. 2: 1315).

RIS (2002: 233) adds a few newer examples for this name usage: *Fade<sup>n</sup>-Trīni* ('thread Katharina') 'teacher for textile handicraft' (58), *Radio-Heini* ('radio Heinrich') 'radio editor' (42), *Fērnsēh-Grūtli* ('television Margareta') 'television actress' (74), or *Jod-Heiri* ('iodine Heinrich') 'paramedic' (42).

### 3.2. Animals

The idea of naming an individual animal using a human given name is self-evident. But as has been highlighted above, the records presented here designate generic members of a species rather than referring to individually distinguishable creatures, even though this non-official language use somehow individualizes the animal in question.

31 entries belong into this category. The individual affection put into these namings can be illustrated with *Michel* ‘house cats’ pet name’ (83; ID. 4: 61, clearly indicated as appellative use). *Hans* ‘horse’ (52; ID. 2: 1470) as well as *Storche<sup>n</sup>-Heini* ‘stork’ (42; ID. 2: 1313) and *Storche<sup>n</sup>-Bäbi* ‘female stork’ (13; ID. 4: 918) also contain a certain idea of individuality (therefore, *Hans* can also be an individual horse’s name). *Gäber* means ‘gander’ (36 [uncertain]; ID. 2: 65), *Mätz* ‘bitch’ (81; ID. 4: 612; similar to English *bitch*, *Metz* means ‘bitch’ as well as ‘whore’).

A few entries stand for ‘ladybird’, all but *Anne-Bäabeli* (‘Anna Barbara’; 13; ID. 4: 917) based on *Katrīnli*, *Trīnli*; examples are *Chäfer-Trīnli* (‘bug Katharina’) and *Fraue<sup>n</sup>-Trīnli* (‘Our Lady Katharina’; 58; ID. 3: 561, 14: 1079–1081). The variety is easy to explain as variations of the compound *Katrīne<sup>n</sup>-Chäferli* ‘Katharina bug’ (Hotzenköcherle 6: 227, not recorded in ID.) that have lost their primary word.<sup>4</sup> The reason for the naming is said to be found in the name of *Saint Catherine of Alexandria*, either because she was believed to influence the weather conditions and hence the occurrence of the bug (BUCHELI BERGER–LANDOLT 2014: 81) or because the last ladybugs of the season can be seen around Saint Catherine’s commemoration day (November 25; WIMMER–MELZER 1982: 482).

No humanization is conveyed by *Hans Walter* ‘louse’ (114; ID. 15: 1676; probably a folk-etymological borrowing from argot in the primary word according to WOLF 1956: 131, no. 2060), *Jäggi*, *Jäggsch* ‘a particular species of biting housefly’ (48; ID. 3: 24). Why the ‘harvestman’ was named *Zeiger-Heini* (‘indicator Heinrich’; 42; ID. 2: 1316) and the ‘newt’ *Wasser-Päggi* (‘water Peter’; 88; ID. 4: 1079) remains unknown.

A unique case is *Hans-Anni* ‘Johannes Anna’ used to describe ‘a hermaphrodite goat’ (8; ID.: supplementary material).

<sup>4</sup> Strictly speaking, a compound with the given name as a determiner should be excluded from the analysis of deonymic appellativization by means of conversion; I will nevertheless include these words as they are probably lexicalized.

### 3.3. Figures, Dolls

Still closely related to human denominations are names for particular figures of human shape. The first main group consists of ‘bogles, scarecrows’. A *Hard-Joggeli* protects grainfields from being stepped into (48; ID. 3: 27; the determiner of the compound is uncertain: *Hard* ‘woodland, now often used as field’ or an abbreviation of the given name *Gebhart*; ID. 2: 1596), a *Bābi* is used in grain- or poppy fields (13; ID. 4: 916), a *Rēb-Hansel* (‘vine Johannes’) protects vineyards from children stealing grapes (52; ID. 2: 1473), while a *Trübe<sup>n</sup>-Hans(eli)* (‘grape Johannes’) is put into vineyards regardless of who might invade them (52; ID. 2: 1474), just like *Bantli* (87; ID. 4: 1397). The motivation to give such figures human names is clear: they are often built to look human.

This is also true for the second group, which consists of dolls and puppets: *Bääbi* (13; ID. 4: 916) is probably the most common Swiss German expression for ‘doll’. The same meaning is conveyed by the name’s variants *Bābe<sup>n</sup>* and *Bābi* as well as by the compounds *Hosche<sup>n</sup>-Bābi* (‘uncleanly [woman] Barbara’), *Titti-Bābi* (‘suckling Barbara’ or ‘puppet Barbara’), and *Togge<sup>n</sup>-Bābe<sup>n</sup>* (‘puppet Barbara’ or ‘lump Barbara’; 13; ID. 4: 917–918), but also by *Bantli* (87; ID. 4: 1397; male name used with neutral gender). Some compounds give more precise information about a puppet’s characteristics: a *Biwegi-Bābe<sup>n</sup>* (‘flex Barbara’) is a ‘jointed doll’ (13; ID. 4: 918), while *Brieggi-* as well as *Schrei-Bääbi* (‘crying Barbara’, ‘snivelling Barbara’) of course both denominate ‘puppets with a mechanism that produces squeaking sounds’ (13; ID. 4: 918), and *Hudle<sup>n</sup>-Bääbi* (‘rag Barbara’) is ‘a puppet made of rags’ (13; ID. 4: 917).

### 3.4. Gaming Terms

Less closely related to human associations are given names used as gaming or playing terms. The link can be made when keeping in mind that some of the toys involve physical movement or humanlike sounds such as *Schnurre<sup>n</sup>-Heirch* (‘spinning Heinrich’; 42; ID. 2: 1315) ‘humming top’ or consist of playing cards portraying human figures, hence *Schelle<sup>n</sup>-Chäsperli* (‘bells Kaspar’; German cards) ‘Jack of diamonds’ (French cards; 57; ID. 3: 533). In other cases, personal names are used for players. *Schwīzer-Pēter* (‘Swiss Peter’) is the name of the ‘seeker’ in hide-and-seek (88; ID. 4: 1842). Often, the name of a player is transferred to the game itself, such as *der schwarz Pēter* (‘black Peter’) ‘the loser in the old maid game’, then ‘the last card in the game’ and ‘the game itself’ (88; ID. 4: 1841). As the loser of this game has a moustache painted on as a punishment, he as well as the last card are also called *Schnauz-Pēter* (‘moustache Peter’; 88; ID. 4: 1842). The direction of the name shift remains uncertain, though. If the card is seen as the original eponym, the



whole process would be more like the above-mentioned *Vit* ‘wuss, ninny’ < biblical *David* case because the card can be seen as a well-known individual within a particular set of cards. But the name receiver also is an individual in the framework of the game, thus it is generally not so clear if such cases should count as deonyms. Similarly, *Lunzi* is used for the ‘person walking around in a game similar to duck, duck, goose’ (65; ID. 3: 1347). The handkerchief placed behind one of the other participants by the walker is called *Lunzi* as well. In some cases, personal names denominate a particular constellation of cards, such as *Bābeli* and *Sibylle* ‘trump seven in the Emperor (Kaiser) game’ (13; 102; ID. 4: 916, 7: 63), and *Bābeli* can also mean ‘full house (all nine pins) in nine-pin bowling’ (13; ID. 4: 916). The relation in most of these constellations has a certain degree of individualism.

### 3.5. Parts of the Body, Illnesses

About ten entries refer to parts of the body. The association is a *totum pro parte* usage. *Der grōss Pēter* ‘big Peter’ is used for ‘middle finger’ (88; ID. 4: 1841; the *grōss* goes back to another denomination *Grōssfinger* ‘large finger’, ID. 1: 864). *Sūw-Ludi* (‘sow Ludwig’) is the name of a particular ‘bone in a sow’s back’ (69; ID. 3: 1103). According to LÜTOLF (1865: 111–112), the name is motivated by a legend in which a jew hides from Jesus in a vat prepared for slaughtered sows. The term *Lieni* is used for ‘paunch’ (64; ID. 3: 1286). *Chnoche<sup>n</sup>-Hansli* ‘bone Johannes’ is a ‘human skeleton’ (52; RIS 2002: 233), surely imagined as the remains of a real human bearing a personal name.

The only other part of the body designated with given names is ‘membrum virile, penis’: *Heichel* (42; ID. 2: 1314), *Hans* (52; RIS 2002: 233), *Chnoche<sup>n</sup>-Sepp* (‘bone Josef’; 53; ID. 7: 1222), *Daniël* (23; ID. 13: 101), *Willi* (116; ID. 15: 1326), and *Schangi* (50; ID. 8: 927). One main reason evokes the use of male given names in this way: The penis is the male body part par excellence and more or less tabooed due to its sexual connotation, thus humanizing or trivializing it using a rather harmless personal names comes in handy.

Among the illnesses denominated, ulcers are predominant: *Grētli* ‘suppurative eye-lid ulcer’ (74; ID. 2: 826) and *Grētli*, *Röösli*, *Urseli* ‘hordeolum’ (74, 95, 111; ID. 2: 825; 6: 1405; 1: 468). This is one of the rare cases in which ID. itself remains insecure about the origin and motivation of the usage: Should ‘hordeola’ be seen as a kind of ‘daughters of a body’, in analogy with the Latin *pupilla* ‘girl’ > ‘pupil (anatomy)’? Or is *Urseli* a folk-etymologically influenced borrowing from Italian *orzo*, French *orge* ‘barley’ (corresponding with German *Gerstenkorn* and English *hordeolum*)? *Röösli* and *Grētli* would then be secondary denominations following the model of *Urseli*.

### 3.6. Clothes, Garment

Even clothing items can be seen as somehow related to people. A ‘children’s bib’ is named *Ueli*, *Geifer-Ueli* (‘spittle Ulrich’), *Mues-Ueli* (‘mush Ulrich’; 109; ID. 1: 183, 184, 185) as well as *Geifer-Ludi* (‘spittle Ludwig’; 69; ID. 3: 1103). The name *Bantli* is used for ‘old outerwear that is no longer treated with care’ (87; ID. 4: 1397). This usage is probably motivated by one of the several other appellative meanings of the name such as ‘thick and tall straw puppet that is buried during carnival’ when keeping in mind that such a puppet is usually dressed with old clothes, or even *Bantli* ‘messy, untidy woman’ (87; ID. 4: 1397). *Öpmer* is used for ‘(woollen) garment, worn in wintertime by women above the shirt’ (85; ID. 1: 605). According to ID., there is a correlation between *Öpmer* and the saint *Otmar*, but this correlation is unfortunately not specified.

### 3.7. Plants

Thirty-five of the name records are used as plant names. As is the case with the above-mentioned names of playing cards, it is arguable to what extent the names of botanical species are appellatives or proper names. They do not refer to individual plants, but when speaking about one species out of several, the respective appellatives can have an onymic function and gain a certain degree of propriality.

*Baschi* (101; ID. 4: 1758), *Bābeli* (13; ID. 4: 916), *Hans-Ueli* (‘Johannes Ulrich’; 109; ID. 1: 184), and *Wēber-Hansli* (‘weaver Johannes’; 52; ID. 2: 1474) all designate particular kinds of apples. *Bābeli* is a variant of synonymous *Bābeli-Epfel* (ID. 1: 373), and *Hans-Ueli* is just an abbreviation of *Hans-Ueli-Epfel* (ID. 1: 368), which indicates that the other, too, probably are abbreviations of compounds with the primary word *Epfel* ‘apple’. Similarly, *Jörel* ‘particular kind of potato’ is short for *Jörel-Erdepfel* (38; ID. 3: 68). *Trockene’ Martin* (‘dry Martin’) is the name of ‘a kind of pear’. (78; ID. 4: 426).

About thirty entries in this section denominate flowers. They roughly split into a half derived from male and the other half derived from female given names. *Mattūsli* is the ‘common poppy’ (80; ID. 4: 553) and *Franziske* the ‘Japanese kerria’ (33; ID. 1: 1312). *Grütli/Grēti im Busch/im Strüss* (‘Margareta in the bush/bouquet’; 33; ID. 2: 825) seems to be a personalized interpretation of the Standard German name *Jungfer im Grünen* (‘virgin in the green’), who both also share motives with their English pendant ‘devil in the bush, ragged lady’. *Jakobē* ‘silver ragwort’ (49; ID. 3: 33) and *Joggebē* ‘common ragwort’ (49; ID. 3: 27) both correspond to the scientific denominations *Jacobaea maritima* and *Senecio jacobaea*. Vernacular flower names often apply to several species. Therefore, *Margrütli* not only stands for ‘ox-eye daisy’, but as well for ‘common

daisy’, to which add the botanically non-related ‘ragged-robin’ and, as a compound *Wald-Margrītli* (‘forest Margareta’), ‘false aster’ (74; ID. 4: 402).

### 3.8. Dishes And Drinks

Eleven of the records are used for dishes and drinks. The dishes are mostly very simple, old-school preparations no longer common: *Chuchi-Michel* (‘kitchen Michael’) is a ‘pastry made of milk, flour, slices of bread and spices’ (83; ID. 4: 61). *Bābi* is ‘a dish made from thinly sliced apples, slices of bread and sugar, fried in butter’ (13; ID. 4: 916). *Stungge<sup>n</sup>-Werni* (‘mush Werner’) can be either a ‘dish prepared by alpine herdsmen, made from cream that is cooked over open fire, thickened with flour’ or ‘mush from potatoes and bacon bits with cream’ (115; ID. 16: 1543, 1544). The origin and motivation of the name of the dish are unknown; interpretations such as “das stungäd den Werni, daß er eine Weile nicht mehr hungert” (“this will stuff Werner so he won’t be hungry for a while”; 19th century manuscript in the library of the ID.) and the variant *Stungge<sup>n</sup>-Wärmi* which suggests the primary word is actually *Wärmi* ‘warmth’ are probably folk-etymological.

*Hose<sup>n</sup>-Joggi* (‘trousers Jakob’) ‘gingerbread’ is just a *pars pro toto* generalization of the same compound used for ‘relief of a man on gingerbread’ (48; ID. 3: 27). *Zwätschge<sup>n</sup>-Lisi* (‘plum Elisabeth’) is the name of a dessert made from ‘plum icecream with plum brandy’ (26; RIS 2002: 233; *Zwätschge<sup>n</sup>* can also be used as a short form for *Zwätschge<sup>n</sup>-Wasser* ‘plum brandy’, ID. 16: 1845). *Hans von Vivis* (‘Johannes from Vevey’) is a 16<sup>th</sup> century humorous appellation for ‘wine from the canton of Vaud’ (ID. 2: 1470; supposedly based on the comparison of this kind of wine and the given name, which are both almost generic).

### 3.9. Human Behavior

A few names are used to characterize human behavior itself rather than the individuals who behave this way. *Bēti am Arm* (‘Elisabeth on the arm’; 26; ID. 4: 1810), *Bābi* (13; ID. 4: 916), and *Zürich<sup>ch</sup>-Bābi* (‘Zurich Barbara’; 13; ID. 4: 918) all mean ‘inebriation’. *Der trunke<sup>n</sup> Ueli* (‘drunken Ulrich’) is a ‘personification of gluttony’ (109; ID. 1: 184). As LÖTSCHER (1995: 456) and CHRISTEN (2013: 84) have pointed out with regard to denominations used to describe persons, the vast majority of them focus on negative characteristics. This is even more the case with personal names denominating behavior itself.

### 3.10. Customs



A few names designate customs. *Chuered* is used for ‘a supper offered to masons and carpenters by their employer after finishing work on Saturday

evening' (60; ID. 3: 335). As ID. assumes, the naming could follow the name of the saint *Conrad of Constance*, who is usually depicted holding a chalice (WIMMER–MELZER 1982: 493). *Bajass-Hans* ('tomfool Johannes') is a carnival custom consisting of 'felling a large tree, decorating it, and transporting it into the village before selling it to the highest bidding' (52; ID. 2: 1472, 1: 974).

*Haber-*, *Chorn-*, and *Weize<sup>n</sup>-Michel* ('oat, grain, and wheat Michael') are the names of 'demons or other figures formed with the last sheaf when harvesting' (83; ID. 4: 61). These figures are often formed to resemble persons or animals (cf. the synonyms *Fuchs* ['fox'], ID. 1: 657; *Zēh<sup>e</sup>nte<sup>n</sup>-Jungfrau<sup>w</sup>* ['tithe virgin'], ID. 1: 1249; *Grōs<sup>s</sup>-Mueter* ['grandmother', used for small sheaves], ID. 4: 592; *Bankert* ['bastard', used for sheaves differing in size], ID. 4: 1390). They are at the heart of numerous rites to celebrate the end of harvesting and to propitiate fate (once widespread in Europe, cf. *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde* 67 [1971]: 327; cf. *letzte Garb* ['last sheaf'], ID. 3: 1467). Similarly, *Togge<sup>n</sup>-Bābe<sup>n</sup>* ('puppet Barbara') can be the name for a 'pastry shaped like a baby given as a New Year's gift' (13; ID. 4: 918), and *Hoger-Ueli* ('bump Ulrich') is a 'carnival mask with bumps' (109; ID. 1: 184).

The more a custom has an individual character (celebrated in great intervals or in limited areas), the more its denomination, gained by means of deonymization, is reappropriated.

### 3.11. Containers

The last semantically consistent group is made up of words for different containers. *Sami* is used for 'bedwarmer (jug)' (99; ID. 7: 942). The same object is also called *Buebeli* ('little boy', ID. 4: 929), (*Bett-*)*Münch* ('bed monk', ID. 4: 318), and (as a pouch filled with cherry pits, serving the same purpose) *Chriesi-Ma<sup>m</sup>* ('cherry man', ID. 4: 266). The personification appearing in all these denominations is explained by ID. (4: 266) as follows: "used mainly by the gentler sex and therefore probably initially created with humorous allusion" (to the fact that a woman who needs a bedwarmer lacks a real man). *Mar-Jōsi* 'old-fashioned double jug' ('Maria Josefa'; 54; ID. 3: 76) and *Helēne<sup>n</sup>* 'coffeepot; jug of a particular size' are other humorous denominations (ID. 2: 1143). As names for containers are often transferred to individuals (ID. 3: 308, annotation under *Kanaster*), the use of personal names for containers might just be a vice versa movement. The use of containers to measure volume is common, thus their names are also easily assigned to volumes, such as *Nāzi* 'one liter' (46; ID. 4: 885).

#### 4. Discussion

As some of the examples illustrate, names can be used as appellatives in simplex form, extended in compounds as well as enlarged with an attributive adjective. There seems to be no general difference between simple and extended name appellatives: compounds and adjectival formations are just a way to stress the appellative character of a name usage.

The appellative usage of some personal names is influenced by biblical characters or saints and their attributes. Apart from the above-mentioned *Chuered* ‘meal offered by the employee on Saturday evening’ (60; ID. 3: 335), *Stëffe* used for a ‘big glass containing a particular volume; used by the guests of certain restaurants on December 26, who all drank from that same glass’ (105; ID. 10: 1424) is an example, as that day is *St. Stephen’s Day*. More common are names that are influenced by folk etymology. Many names only gain their appellative meaning by adaptation of a phonetically resembling appellative. Several names of flowers are folk-etymological variations of purely appellative plant designations: *Mareieli* ‘kind of apricot’ is probably based on the synonymous *Amarille* (75; ID. 4: 356, 1: 215), *Wäg-Heirech* (‘path Heinrich’) ‘plantain’ quite obviously just a reinterpretation of the Standard name *Wegerich* (42; ID. 2: 1315, 15: 952), and *Salemööndli* ‘poppy anemone’ is almost certainly an alteration of the scientific name *Anemone coronaria* (98; ID. 7: 693). The reason for such processes might be the fact that many flowers actually bear human names such as *Jakobē* ‘silver ragwort; *Jacobaea maritima*’ (49; ID. 3: 33, 1: 263). Other semantic categories are concerned as well, as the example of *Ferdi* ‘heavy inebriation’ shows: This is an assimilation to *Fert* ‘load’ (31; ID. 1: 995, 1038).

Generally speaking, a tendency to identify particular animals, objects, and ideas with human beings stimulates the use of personal names as appellative denominations. But in the vast majority of depropriated names, the precise motivation for the process remains unknown. It is not so hard to understand why animate creatures as well as concepts and objects that can be personalized in some way are more prone to the phenomenon – but why do some inanimate things such as dishes and containers bear human names? Why, to finish with some hardly explainable examples beyond the categories mentioned above, is the ‘state as an employer’ paraphrased as *Bund-Christel* (‘Union Christian’; 19; RIS 2002: 233) and a particular ‘medicine’ as *röter Heinrich* (‘red Heinrich’; 52; ID. 2: 170)?

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### Appendix: List of Standard German Names in the Data

The following alphabetical list contains the 117 given names for which deproprialized use is recorded. Only full forms of names in their modern Standard German version are given, no abbreviations, variants, or Swiss German forms.

number	name	number	name	number	name
1	Adelheid	40	Gregor	79	Matthäus
2	Afra	41	Gustav	80	Matthias
3	Agate	42	Heinrich	81	Mechthild
4	Alfons	43	Helene	82	Melchior
5	Alois	44	Herkules	83	Michael
6	Ambros	45	Hermann	84	Nikolaus
7	Andreas	46	Ignaz	85	Otmar
8	Anna	47	Ingomar	86	Pankraz
9	Anton	48	Jakob	87	Pantaleon
10	Antonia	49	Jakobäa	88	Peter
11	Apollonia	50	Jean	89	Petermann
12	Auguste	51	Jodocus	90	Petronella
13	Barbara	52	Johannes	91	Philipp



14	Bartholomäus	53	Josef	92	Rebekka
15	Benedikt	54	Josefa	93	Regula
16	Burkhard	55	Justus	94	Rochus
17	Candidus	56	Karl	95	Rosa
18	Charlotte	57	Kaspar	96	Rudolf
19	Christian	58	Katharina	97	Ruprecht
20	Christoph	59	Kleophea	98	Salomon
21	Chrysostomus	60	Konrad	99	Samuel
22	Coelestine	61	Kreszenz	100	Sarah
23	Daniel	62	Kunigunde	101	Sebastian
24	David	63	Leodegar	102	Sibylle
25	Dorothee	64	Leonhard	103	Silvester
26	Elisabeth	65	Leonz	104	Simeon
27	Esther	66	Leopold	105	Stefan
28	Eva	67	Louis	106	Susanna
29	Fabian	68	Ludovika	107	Theodor
30	Felix	69	Ludwig	108	Theophil
31	Ferdinand	70	Lukas	109	Ulrich
32	Florian	71	Magdalena	110	Urban
33	Franziska	72	Malchus	111	Ursula
34	Fridolin	73	Marcellus	112	Valentin
35	Friedrich	74	Margareta	113	Veronika
36	Gabriel	75	Maria	114	Walter
37	Gebhart	76	Markus	115	Werner
38	Georg	77	Marta	116	Wilhelm
39	Gertrud	78	Martin	117	Xaver

## Abstract

While the use of product and company names (ergonyms) as deonyms (appellatives) is well known and even appellatives derived from persons' (inventors', scientists', politicians') names are well established in onomastics, the denonymic use of baptismal names not referring to individuals is still a bit disregarded.

Apart from the general vocabulary presented in the Swiss German Dictionary (Idiotikon), this dictionary also documents given names that were common in the German-speaking area of Switzerland between the 13th and the early 20th centuries. Surprisingly many of these names can not only be used as baptismal names, but also with appellative sense. Deonymization of non-individual given names thus proves to be a common phenomenon.

Most of these given names are derived from relatively few basic names by means of abbreviation, suffixation, compounding, or a combinations of these. Analyzing all given names and their variants as filed in the Idiotikon, in this paper I will try to outline the processes that lead to the appellative senses of different names (e.g. frequency of certain names; folk-etymological associations and phonetical resemblance; influence of saints' attributes) and use a semantic categorization for the meanings conveyed, such as animals, body parts, and containers, while names referring to humans, but not individuals, will be analyzed at a later stage.

**Keywords:** deonymisation, , first names (baptismal names), Swiss German, hagnonyms, folk etymology, hypocoristic, name compounds