

# Toponyms as Anemonyms

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WIND NAMES CONSTITUTE an intricate chapter in onomatology. In spatial terms, they illustrate phenomena of acculturation, of borrowing and wandering; in chronological terms, they often preserve old material and reveal interesting patterns of innovation; in semantic terms, they perpetuate varied concepts of time, location, or orientation. Occasionally, the names are so closely connected with the area of the origin of the winds that, genetically at least, they fall within the linguistic field of toponymics. Four examples are illustrative.

The first is the Mediterranean designation of the 'northeast wind', *greco*. Earliest recorded in the 13th century, it is widely spread, from Spain to the Sea of Azov: in the West, there are Span. *griego*, Catal. OProv. French *grec*, Ital. *greco*; in the East, Venet. *grego*, SerboCroatian *grego*, Alban. *greyu*, Russian *grego*, and ModGreek *ghréos*. The derivation is instantly apparent: the name of the wind goes back to *greco* 'Greek', a shortened form of some such expression as *vento greco* 'wind blowing from Greece.' Obviously, as Vidos<sup>1</sup> pointed out, such a name for the northeast wind could have originated only in an area in which a wind blowing from Greece was a northeast one. This is true of just one region between Spain and the Sea of Azov: Southern Italy, particularly, Sicily. There, the term had both meanings, 'Greek' and 'northeast.' However, once the newly coined term began to wander from Sicily towards the East and West, it lost the older meaning 'Greek' and preserved only the secondary one, 'northeast.' This development is clearest of all in Greece itself, where no naive native speaker connects the familiar wind name, *ghréos*, with the name of his country.

<sup>1</sup> B. E. Vidos, *Storia delle parole marinaresche italiane passate in francese* (Florence, 1939), p. 446.

The second example is the common Mediterranean designation of the 'southwest wind,' *libéč*, also recorded for the first time in the 13th century. Its distribution is as follows: Span. *lebeche*, Catal. *llebeig*, Prov. *labech*, OFr. *lebeche*, Ital. *libeccio*, Dalmatian *lebič*, Arab. *labaš*. Former derivations of the term from AncGr. *lips* or from Arabic have proved unsatisfactory; the first through difficulties of form, the second through lack of supporting indigenous material. Corominas,<sup>2</sup> pursuing a suggestion by Rohlf's,<sup>3</sup> proposes a Greek basis *libúkion* 'coming from Libya,' which develops in Southern Italy (following the usual pattern of the Greek of Magna Graecia) into *libiči*, a term that becomes, as far as form is concerned, the immediate basis of the Mediterranean wind name. Again the question arises as to where Libya and the southwest wind could have become identified, i. e., could have been used, in the spoken language, in the same distribution. The answer is Egypt, and, indeed, as early as the 2nd century A. D., Ptolemy, writing in Alexandria, used the adjective *libukós* in the meaning 'western'. The form *libúkion*, with the so-called diminutive suffix *-ion*, corresponds to one of the common derivational patterns of Byzantine Greek. The term, then, originated in Egyptian Greek, spread to the Greek of Magna Graecia and from there, possibly from Sicily, to the rest of the Mediterranean. The derivation of the name, long since lost to the naive speaker, is supported by the obsolete synonym *africano*.<sup>4</sup>

The third term, *provenza*, of varied and even contradictory meanings, is a wind name widely used in the Mediterranean.<sup>5</sup> It is first recorded in the first half of the 15th century, as *provenz*, an Italianism in a Middle High German text by Oswald von Wolkenstein. The distribution of the term is the following: (1) in the West: Catal. *provença* 'rainy northwest wind,' Tyrrhenian Sea (Corsica, Tuscany, Elba) *pruvenza* 'icy wind,' SoItaly (Calabria) *provenza pruvenza prudenza* 'cold wind,' (Sicily) *pruvenza* 'winter

<sup>2</sup> J. Corominas, *Diccionario crítico etimológico de la lengua castellana* (Madrid, [1954-57]), III, 59.

<sup>3</sup> G. Rohlf's, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der unteritalienischen Gräzität* (Halle, 1930), no. 1250.

<sup>4</sup> Reale Accademia d'Italia, *Dizionario di marina medievale e moderno* (Rome, 1937), p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> H. and R. Kahane and A. Tietze, *The Lingua Franca in the Levant* (to be published: Urbana, Illinois, 1958), no. 522.

wind, very cold,' Arabic of Malta *provenz* 'wind which brings rain'; (2) in the East: Venetian *provenza* 'fog,' Adriatic Sea *proensa* 'warm westwind,' Dalmatian *provénca* 'calm, of long duration, usually in winter; fair weather with a sudden wind,' Gr. *provenza* *prevenza* 'reversal of the wind from south to north', Turkish, 16th century, *porvença* *pirevença* *porivansa*, and modern *provezza* 'strong westwind.'

The wind name, obviously from *provenza* 'Provence,' must have originated in a region where 'Provence' and 'northwest' could be used in similar distribution, perhaps in the area of the Tyrrhenian Sea. G. Maver<sup>6</sup>) has analyzed the connection between the two broad areas of the term with their opposed meanings: the western one with the basic meaning 'cold wind,' and the eastern with the frequent meaning 'warm wind.' The term, as a nautical term, wanders from western Italy to Venice not over land, where it is unknown, but over sea, along the coasts of Italy; from Venice it spreads to the East. The original meaning, 'wind from Provence,' disappears and is replaced by a secondary meaning reflecting the differing climatic conditions of the East.

The last example is the well known Mediterranean designation of the 'southeast wind,' *sirocco*<sup>7</sup>), today an international designation for 'a wind blowing from a heated region.' The term, recorded for the first time in the 13th century, has usually been derived from Arabic. One such derivation goes back to Arab. *šurūk* 'sunrise', but semantic reasons, above all, make this improbable. The Mediterranean term, whether referring to south, southeast, or southwest, always implies a southerly direction. A semantic basis 'sunrise' would obviously point to a meaning 'east,' seldom recorded in the large material of *sirocco* congeners available, whether Arabic or Romance. Another derivation goes back to Arab. *šalūq šulūq*, but this theory, too, is unsatisfactory, first, because the word is not used by medieval Arabic authors, and, second, because its origin in Arabic cannot be established.

To solve this etymological problem, we should like to propose as a starting point a heretofore neglected variant, OProv. *exalot*, recorded at the end of the 13th century. Prov. *exalot* is a precise

<sup>6</sup> *Mélanges de linguistique et de littérature romanes offerts à Mario Roques III* (Paris, 1952), pp. 149-152.

<sup>7</sup> Kahane and Tietze, op. cit., no. 603.

rendition of AncGr. \**eksalōtēs* 'wind from the sea'. This would not be the first example of a Greek linguistic relic in Provence. Wartburg<sup>8</sup>) has proved that linguistic material pertaining to the ancient Greek settlements in what is now Southern France (with Massalia, today Marseilles, as a center) still survives in the modern dialects of that region. This form of Greek and all linguistic relics of Greek in the region have been subsumed under the term Massaliotic Greek. The reconstructed Massaliotic term \**eksalōtēs*, 'wind from the sea,' then, would consist of the recorded ancient adjective *éksalos* 'out of the sea' (a derivative of *hals* 'sea') plus the suffix *-ōtēs* 'someone or something found at, or connected with, the place expressed in the stem.' The etymological meaning 'wind from the sea' continues to survive in Provence; but the geographical location of Provence makes it logical for a term originally designating a wind from the sea to be perceived as designating a wind from the south (alternating between southeast and southwest). This semantic change, from the etymological meaning 'wind from the sea' to the secondary meaning 'southwind,' is typical of Provence, where similar changes occurred in the cases of *marin*, from MARĪNUS, and *autan*, from ALTĀNUS, which belongs to (MĀRE) ALTUM. When the Old Provençal term was borrowed by Arabic, it had the primary meaning: the oldest Arabic record, *šalauq*, of the 13th century, meant 'wind from the sea.'

In Old Provençal the term is found at the end of the 13th century, in 1288, in the *Breviari d'Amor*, as *exalot*, and three years later, in 1291, in a document from Marseilles, as *eissalot*. This Old Provençal form *eissalot*, which survives in Modern Provençal, suffered a change of suffix; and the resulting pattern, (*eysalók*), became the new starting point for the Mediterranean word family. Usually, although certainly not always, the Mediterranean term refers to the southeast. Almost without exception, however, it contains the element 'south.' The whole semantic development is, then, from 'from the sea' to 'from the south, particularly the southeast' to 'from arid and heated regions.' The latter meaning, applied to winds of, say, Texas, shows the Massaliotic term as intercontinental.

In summary, local geographical conditions caused the three toponyms and the toponymoid under discussion to develop into

<sup>8</sup> *Von Sprache und Mensch* (Bern, 1956), 61-126.

anemonyms. In the first stage the wind names were noun modifiers: *vento greco*, *ánemos libukós*, *vento de Provenza*, and *ánemos eksalótiēs*. In the next stage, the noun modifiers became nouns: *greco*, *libúkion*, *provenza*, and *eksalótiēs*. In the third and last stage, the nouns changed from proper to general nouns. In the original stage, the terms were used in distributions where both place name and wind name made sense. In the final stage, the toponym becomes incomprehensible, and only the anemonym survives.

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*Headwaters of the Sacramento.* — In my article, “Frémont-Preuss and Western Names” I stated that the second Frémont expedition crossed the headwaters of Pit River, i. e. the creeks which discharged into Goose Lake from which the Pit River issued. Further map study has convinced me that Preuss was mistaken in labeling on his map a stream “The Headwaters of the Main Branch of the Sacramento [i. e. Pit] River.” Since the party did not cross Klamath Lake but Klamath Marsh north of it, and since Preuss marks the course of the stream close to Summer Lake, it was probably the modern Sycan River, which has a southern course but is an affluent to Sprague River, which empties into Klamath Lake.

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