



TYCHE

Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte Papyrologie und Epigraphik

Herausgegeben von

Gerhard Dobesch, Bernhard Palme
Peter Siewert und Ekkehard Weber

Band 20, 2005

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ARGYRO B. TATAKI

The Sea as a Factor for the Formation of Greek Personal Names

The imposing presence of the sea and the admiration for it is reflected in Greek mythology, visual arts and literature; the relation of many Greek gods to the sea has been expressed with a long series of epithets that emphasize this connection as well as with the formation of many personal names derived from their names, the numerous theophoric names easily recognizable¹. Most of the epithets describe Poseidon, the primary sea divinity; they are followed by those for Aphrodite. Zeus, Dionysos, Apollo, Helios etc. also have a share in the list of epithets formed by words connected with the sea².

Of the many references to the sea in classical Greek texts I chose, as an appropriate introduction to my subject, to quote for you Strabo's lively description of the waving of the sea: „the sea is like animated beings, and, just as they inhale and exhale their breath unremittingly, so in like manner the sea too is subject to a certain recurrent motion that proceeds from itself and returns to itself unremittingly“ (1, 3, 8)³.

Greeks have exhibited an immense, an endless imagination in the formation of personal names. The classification of Greek anthroponyms according to their meaning we owe to F. Bechtel's basic work, published in 1917 and still a precious guide for those who study the Greek personal names⁴. Much work on the subject has been added in more recent years and our knowledge has been greatly enlarged by the accumulation of many new personal names attested in more recent epigraphic publications and the studies on them by eminent scholars, to mention only the great contributions by

This is an extended version of a paper read in the International Conference „Ancient Civilisations and the Sea“, Varna, October 13–15, 2004, in honour of Prof. M. Lazarov.

¹ The most recent contribution on this subject is by R. Parker in: S. Hornblower, E. Matthews (edd.), *Greek Personal Names*, Oxford 2000, 53–79.

² According to W. H. Roscher, *Lexicon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* VII, Leipzig 1893. For Poseidon: ἀλίβρεκτος, ἀλικράτωρ, ἀλιμέδων, ἀλυκός, ἀρχιθάλασσος, εἰνάλιος, ἐνάλιος, θαλάσσιος, θαλασσομέδων, κυμοθαδῆς, μεσοπόντιος, ναυμέδων, πόντιος, ποντοκράτωρ, ποντομέδων, ποντοποσειδῶν, ὑδρομέδων, ὕδατοεῖς. For Aphrodite: ἀναδυομένη, ἀφρογένεια, ἀφρογενής, ἀφρώ, θαλασσαίη, θαλασσίγονος, ποντία, ποντογένεια, ποντογενής. For Zeus: λιμενοσκόπος, πυθμῆν. For Dionysos: θαλασσόμοθος, θαλασσοπόρος. For Apollo: ἄκτιος; to this can be added εὐρύαλος according to Hesychios. For Helios: ἀλιτρεφής. For Pan: ἄκτιος, ἀλίπλαγκτος.

³ The translation is by H. L. Jones (Loeb), p. 195.

⁴ F. Bechtel, *Die historischen Personennamen des Griechischen bis zur Kaiserzeit*, Halle 1917.

L. Robert and O. Masson⁵. Recently our approach and study of the Greek onomasticon has been revolutionized thanks to the *LGPN* vols I–IIIB⁶.

The word θάλασσα, that means sea in modern Greek also, and words derived from it have been used as personal names; inspiration for the formation of names gave some more words meaning also the sea as ἄλς, πέλαγος, πόντος, ὠκεανός (= open sea), λιμὴν (= harbour) etc. Related to them are names connected to ships and navigation such as Εὐπλους, Εὐπλοια, Πλοῦς, and professions connected to the sea as Ναύτας (= seaman), Ναύαρχος (= admiral), Λιμέναρχος (= harbour-master) etc. All these with their derivatives and compounds form a considerable category of names attested all over the Greek world; not surprisingly their presence is stronger in the Aegean islands, covered by volume I of the *LGPN* and in Attica covered by volume II of the same work⁷. They are not in general very frequent names; many among them are attested only one to three times. One of the most frequent is Εὐπλους borne by 19 Athenians, and by 14 residents of S. Italy and Sicily. The observation that most of the attestations of this name date from the imperial period led us to try to approach our subject in chronological order.

The earliest Greek names have been read in the Linear B tablets and their presence constitutes an additional evidence for the validity of M. Ventris' decipherment of this script as registering texts in Greek, since we know that Greek names had a meaning corresponding to or derived from one word or from a combination of two words, as is the case of compound names. There have been discussions on the origin of some of the words connected with the sea and the seafaring and some are considered as non indo-european, as having been inherited from the time of the Minoan Thalassocracy, as e.g. the word *thalassa*⁸. This discussion is not important for our subject; what is more important is to show some sides of the immense ability of the Greek language to produce personal names.

We will present now the names read in the Linear B tablets that are relevant to our subject: Ἀκταῖος (= coastal), Πόντιος and Ποντεύς (= of the open sea), as names derived from one word belong to the first category; to the second category belong compound names containing words connected with ships and seafaring and em-

⁵ L. Robert's work is full of observations on anthroponyms; more particularly see „Index commenté de noms de personnes“ in N. Firatlı, *Les stèles funéraires de Byzance gréco-romaine*, Paris 1964, 131–189 and *Opera minora selecta I–VII*, Amsterdam 1969–1990. Most of O. Masson's collected articles can be found in *Onomastica graeca selecta I–II*, Paris 1990, and III, Geneva 2000.

⁶ P. M. Fraser, E. Matthews (edd.), *A Lexicon of Greek Personal Names I: The Aegean Islands, Cyprus, Cyrenaica*; III.A: *The Peloponnese, Western Greece, Sicily and Magna Graecia*; III.B: *Central Greece: from Megarid to Thessaly*, Oxford 1987–2000; II: (M. J. Osborne, S. G. Byrne [edd.]): *Attica*, Oxford 1994.

⁷ Unless otherwise indicated references in this paper are given to the respective volumes of the above cited work, *supra* n. 6.

⁸ H. van Effenterre, *La langue de la thalassocratie*, in: R. Hägg, N. Marinatos (edd.), *The Minoan Thalassocracy: Myth and Reality*, Stockholm 1984, 55–57.

phasising some good characteristics of them as Εὔπλοος, Εὔναος, Ναυσικλῆς, Ὠκύνωος (= fast ship)⁹.

Homer is the next rich source for early names connected with the sea. Homeric names have been thoroughly classified and interpreted by Hans von Kamptz in a work published in 1982¹⁰.

From the word ἄλς (= sea) two persons are named Ἄλιος in the Homeric texts; in the Iliad it is the name of a Lycian killed by Odysseus (Hom. Il. 5, 678), in the Odyssey it is borne by one of the sons of the king of the Phaeacians Alkinoos (Hom. Od. 8, 119. 370). Εὐρύαλος (= of the wide sea), Ὠκύαλος (= of the fast moving sea), Ἀγχίαλος (= near the sea), Ἀμφίαλος (= with sea on both sides)¹¹ are all names of noble Phaeacians (Hom. Od. 8, 115. 127. 140. 158. 396. 400; 8, 111; 8, 112; 8, 114. 128). Εὐρύαλος and Ἀγχίαλος are also names of heroes in the Iliad (Hom. Il. 2, 565; 6, 20; 23, 677 und 5, 609).

From πόντος (= open sea) are formed the names: Ποντεύς, another Phaeacian (Hom. Od. 8, 113) and Ποντόνοος (= one who has the sea in his mind), the name of the herald of king Alkinoos (Hom. Od. 7, 179. 182; 8, 65; 13, 50. 53).

From the word ναῦς (= ship) are derived: Ναυτεύς, another Phaeacian (Hom. Od. 8, 112) and the compound names Ναυβολίδης (ναῦς+βάλλω = shipowner) (Hom. Il. 2, 518; Hom. Od. 8, 116), Ναυσίθοος (= with rapid ships), an appropriate name for one of the sons of Poseidon who also was the father of king Alkinoos (Hom. Od. 6, 7; 7, 56. 62. 63; 8, 565)¹². This relationship of king Alkinoos to Poseidon is certainly emphasized with the concentration of all these sea-meaning names in his kingdom that, as an island, was surrounded by the sea. Ναυσικῆ was the daughter of the king (Hom. Od. 6–8), Ἀκρόνεως, Ἀναβησίνεως, Ἐχένηος, were other Phaeacians (Hom. Od. 8, 111; 8, 113; 7, 155 and 11, 342), as well as Κλυτόνηος (= famous ship), the name of one more son of king Alkinoos (Hom. Od. 8, 119. 123). Finally Πολύνηος, also from the same island, owned, according to his name, many ships (Hom. Od. 8, 114). It is not without interest to point out here that he was the father of Ἀμφίαλος (= with sea on both sides) (Hom. Od. 8, 114. 128), a feature that manifests the persistence for sea-meaning names in the same family. Εὔνηος (= with good ships), mentioned in the Iliad (Hom. Il. 7, 468; 23, 747), is another appropriate name for the king of a maritime kingdom of the Aegean, that of Lemnos.

From parts of the ship, probably connected with the occupation of a person, some more names were produced as Ἐλατρεύς that, according to Hesychios, is a thrice forged iron which has been explained as meaning the handle of an oar¹³, Ἐρετμεύς (=

⁹ J. Chadwick, M. Ventris, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*, Cambridge ²1973, 92–105; for more names as Αἰγιάλιος, Ἀμφίαλος see P. Attinger, *Les noms parlants des forgerons de Pylos*, *ŽAnt* 27 (1977) 55–75, esp. 73.

¹⁰ H. von Kamptz, *Homerische Personennamen*, Göttingen 1982.

¹¹ Cf. *supra* n. 10.

¹² Cf. N. M. Contoleon, *Οἱ Ἀειναῦται τῆς Ἐρετρίας*, *ArchEph* (1963) 12.

¹³ Kamptz, *Personennamen* (s. n. 10) 123, 268.

rower), Πρῶμνεύς (= of the stern) and Πρῶρεύς (= of the prow)¹⁴; they are all present in the Odyssey and are all borne by Phaeacians (Hom. Od. 8, 111. 129; Hom. Od. 8, 112; Hom. Od. 8, 112; Hom. Od. 8, 113).

We will now try to trace the above names in later in date sources in order to see which of them survived from the archaic up to the Hellenistic period. Εὐρύαλος is the name of a Spartan of the 7th century mentioned by Pausanias (4, 20, 8) in the description of the 2nd Messenian war¹⁵; according to Hesychios it was also an epithet of Apollo¹⁶. The same and Ἀγχιάλος are the names of two Megarians of the 6th century, listed in the same inscription. Ναύτης (= seaman) is attested 6 times in Attica in the 5th and 4th centuries, 3 times in Thessaly and 1 in Cyrene; Ναυσικλῆς is well documented in Attica with 13 attestations that start in the 5th century; the same name is borne by a *theorodokos* in Epidaurus and there is a Ναυβωλίδας on a funerary monument from Melos dated in the 4th century. Ἀκταῖος and Ἄλιος are known in Attica in the 4th century B.C.; Pontios, also an epithet of Poseidon, and many compounds of it, are attested in S. Italy from the Hellenistic period on¹⁷.

Connected to these very ancient names are the feminine Ἀγχιάλῃ from Samos of the 5th century and Ἀλίη attested 5 times in Kos in Hellenistic times. Παράλιος (= by the sea) and Πάραλος are mostly known from Athens from the 5th century on. As it was mentioned earlier the most frequent among these very ancient names, the name Εὐπλοῦς, is known mostly from late in date records, mostly of the Roman imperial period. Another ancient name the Homeric Ὠκύαλος (= of the fast moving sea) survived only three times in one place, in Thera, also in A.D. dates, while Ναυσικᾶ is the cognomen of a high priestess of the Achaean league in the 2nd century A.D. Taking into consideration the accidental nature of the finds on which we are basing our observations we are aware that often it is not possible to draw conclusions about the extent of time in which each individual name was in use, especially when dealing with names that were not frequent. However there are indications on categories of names and at least for some of the ones examined here an increase in their popularity is observed as time progresses, due to the increase of the records in our disposal and, for some names, due also to a change in taste for names, a subject to which will we return later.

In an unpublished dissertation of 1979 by Anne Thompson, dealing with Greek personal names attested from the archaic period to the beginning of the 4th century B.C. in all regions, all the names with the element Ναυ-/Ναυσι-/νεως have been collected¹⁸. 42 of them are compounds of Ναυ-/Ναυσι- and 8 have -ναυ/-νεως as a second compound, as e.g. are the names Ἀριστοναύτης, Ἀρχεναύτης, Σωσίνεως,

¹⁴ On these and more names derived from shipping see G. Neumann, *Schiffahrt und Seehandel im Spiegel altgriechischer Personennamen*, BN 22 (1987) 1–10; cf. SEG 37 (1987) 1806.

¹⁵ P. Poralla, *A Prosopography of Lacedaemonians*, Chicago 21985, p. 57.

¹⁶ Cf. *supra* n. 2.

¹⁷ All references are to LGPN.

¹⁸ A.-A. Thompson, *Studies in Greek Personal Names down to about 400 B.C.*, Ph. D. Diss. Cambridge University 1979, 201–209, 297–301.

Σωναύτης (the last two come from the wish for safety at sea), Φιλοναύτης, Φιλόνεως, Χαριναύτης etc.¹⁹. Thompson observed that for Attica, from which the overwhelming majority of these names are known, there is evidence for the status of some of the families among whom these names were popular; many among their bearers had a connection to the sea, including three trierarchs, a master of slaves serving in the army (meaning the rowers of the Athenian fleet), persons listed as casualties of war, or as making a dedication to Poseidon or to Theseus, who is also known to have been a hero of seafaring²⁰. Now with the volumes of *LGPN* in our disposal the popularity of the compounds of *Ναυ-/Ναυσι-* names in Athens can be better appreciated; there are 54 such compounds with most frequent among them the name *Ναύιστρατος* (= ship+army), a reflection of the Athenian sea-power and definitely an Athenian name, appearing in Attica 33 times from the 6th century on and only very rarely elsewhere (twice in Rhodes, once in Siphnos and Epiros and once on a funerary epigram from Mesambria dated in the 3rd century)²¹. Finally *Ναύκληρος* (= shipowner), a rare name of the same category, is attested quite late as the cognomen of a Sinopeus honoured in Chersonnesos Taurike²², but is certainly a much older name as is shown by a *Ναυκλαρίδας*, attested in Boeotia already in the 5th century. Related in meaning to the above compounds of the word for ship is *Λέμβος* (= boat), attested once in Boeotia in the 6th/5th centuries; *Λέμβιον* (= a small boat), probably also an ancient name, we know exclusively from an attestation of the 2nd century A.D. from Samos.

In the same in general category belong many other names not attested in earlier sources but most probably as ancient as them. Analogous to the Homeric names formed by words for a part of a ship are the names *Ἰστιάρχος* (= sail master) and *Εὐίστιος* (= with a good mast or sail); the first is known mostly from Sicily's five attestations, four of which are dated in the 5th century; the second is attested only once in Boeotia²³.

From the word *ἔμπορος* that originally meant one who travels on a ship as a passenger and quite early it also meant the trader, the merchant, some more names were formed. *Ἐμπορίων* is known from Athens from as early as the 6th century B.C. and a little later from Lesbos; the earliest attestation of *Ἐμπορος* comes from Boeotia, where also the feminine *Ἐμπορίς* is attested. Finally *Ἐμπορικός*, the most frequent of all these is known only from 10 attestations from Athens, all of late date²⁴.

There is a unique appearance of the name *Θάλαττα* in the 5th century; it was the name of a prostitute who inspired the comic poet Diokles, probably an Athenian, to

¹⁹ Thompson, *Studies* (s. n. 18) 297–301; *Χαριναύτης*, not included in Thompson, is borne by six Athenians from the 4th century on; see also Bechtel, *Personennamen* (s. n. 4) 325–327.

²⁰ Thompson, *Studies* (s. n. 18) 207.

²¹ *LGPN* I and IIIA; *IGBR* I 343 septies.

²² *IosPE* II 72.

²³ *LGPN* III.A and III.B s.v. *Ἰστιάρχος*.

²⁴ Names ending in *-ικος* were popular in late sources, cf. the reverse index of H. Solin, *Die griechischen Personennamen* III, Berlin, New York 1982, 1415–1416.

write a play entitled by her name²⁵. Derived from it are the names Θαλασσίς, Θαλάσσιος, and Θαλασσίων²⁶; they are all quite rare but their appearance covers an extended time span. There is a Θαλασσίς in Athens in the 4th century B.C. while Θαλάσσιος is known from Christian inscriptions found in Syria, in Thessalonike and in Maroneia of the 5th and 6th centuries A.D.²⁷. Κυμάτιον (= small wave) is a charming feminine name connected with the sea that seems unique and is known from the funerary monument of an Herakleotis buried in Athens²⁸.

The word λιμῆν (= harbour) was also used as a name (Λιμῆν)²⁹ as well as some names derived from it; they are rare names appearing once or twice mostly late. Their late date is probably accidental since one of them Λιμενοῦχος (= the holder of the harbour) is attested in Megara at the end of the 6th cent. B.C. and another compound Ἐλλιμένιος (= in the harbour), is known at the same time for a Thasian. Λιμῆνιος is the name of an Athenian player of cithara of the 2nd cent. B.C., Λιμέναρχος (= harbour master) is known only once from a Thessalian list of names of the 3rd century; other names as Λιμένδας, Λιμένη, Λιμένιος we know from sources of the Roman imperial period³⁰, as well as compounds meaning a good harbour as Εὐλίμενος and Εὐλιμένης³¹.

This presentation of the words connected with the sea that contributed to the formation of personal names is not meant to be exhaustive; one more example is going to be added here, the word πέλαγος (= open sea). Πελαγία, Πελάγιος, Πελάγισ, are derived from it, all of late date, attested mostly in S. Italy and Sicily; with them we come closer to another phase in the history of the Greek names that of the Greek names that were in use in the Roman world. We can isolate the ones connected with the sea thanks to the work of H. Solin on the Greek personal names of Rome³². It was in Rome and almost exclusively in inscriptions written in Latin that some of the names discussed already became very popular. *Pelagia* is attested 62 times, in sources dating from the time of Augustus to the 4th century A.D., an extremely frequent name, taking into consideration that feminine names are in general less frequent because references to women were fewer; it was borne among others by a woman of the senatorial class, by many free born women and some slaves³³. Other

²⁵ Athen. 13, 567c; G. Kaibel, *Diokles* 46, RE V (1903) 796–797.

²⁶ According to *LGNP*: Θαλασσίς: twice in Cyrenaica, once in Athens; Θαλάσσιος: once in S. Italy, add also *infra* n. 27; Θαλασσίων: twice in Samothrace, once in Athens.

²⁷ *SEG* 40 (1990) 1759, 1773; D. Feissel, *Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de Macédoine* (BCH Suppl. VIII), Paris 1983, 164b; *SEG* 47 (1997) 1073.

²⁸ *IG* II² 8707; see also O. Masson, *Remarques sur les noms de femmes en grec*, MH 47 (1990) 136 = *OGS* III 100; Κυματοθέα (= looking at the waves) is the name of a Nereid and should not have been included in *LGNP* IIIA; cf. *LIMC* VI, 1 160.

²⁹ *LGNP* IIIA once in Epiros once in S. Italy.

³⁰ In *LGNP*: Λιμένδας: once in Thasos, Λιμένη: once in S. Italy, Λιμένιος: once in Thessaly.

³¹ In *LGNP*: Εὐλίμενος: once in Thera, Athens and Illyria, four times in S. Italy; Εὐλιμένης: once in S. Italy.

³² Solin, *Personennamen* (s. n. 24) I–III.

³³ Solin, *Personennamen* (s. n. 24) II 977–978; *id.* *Die stadtrömischen Sklavennamen* II, Stuttgart 1996, 483–484. See also *PIR*² 688 for Iulia Pelagia *clarissima femina*.

frequent names in Rome are *Pelagius* (21 times), *Thalassa* (25), *Euplous* and *Euplia* (29 times each)³⁴.

Comparisons made to similar in meaning names of the Latin onomasticon such as *Marinus* and *Marina*, *Aequoreus*, *Marinia*, *Marinianus/-na*, *Maritimus/-ma*, *Maritimanus* and those connected to the shores: *Litorius* and *Litorinus* showed two things: that they are very limited in number compared to the Greek ones and less popular than the Greek ones; only the first two, *Marinus* and *Marina*, were frequent names³⁵.

Parallel to the extended use of ancient Greek names and the revival of some of them that characterizes the onomasticon of the Greco-Roman world there is also a new taste for heroic names³⁶, including names derived from divinities connected to the sea like *Νηρέυς* and *Ὠκεανός* and their mythical daughters, the Nereids and the Oceanids, bearing numerous beautiful names, a subject that exceeds the limits of this paper.

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³⁴ According to Solin, *Personennamen* (s. n. 24) II 976, 1132–1133, 855, III 1223–1224.

³⁵ I. Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomina*, Helsinki 1965, 308.

³⁶ On the new trends in the onomasticon of the Roman period see L. Robert, *Les gladiateurs dans l'Orient grec*, Paris 1940, 298–302; see also A. B. Tataki, *Ancient Beroea: Prosopography and Society* (Meletemata 8), Athens 1988, 367 and n. 271, 371, 378, 385 and n. 364, 386.