

Birro: tracking down the origins of an ornithonym

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The small Spanish village of Nova Tabarca, a traditionally Catalan-speaking settlement located on the homonymous island (also called *Illa Plana* ‘flat island’), speaks a variety of Catalan that is almost identical to the one spoken in the nearby cities of Santa Pola and Alicante, except for a handful of words among which we find the one used to denominate the common swift (*Apus apus*), i.e. *birro*. These words are completely unrelated to any other form found within the Catalan linguistic domain¹, and, although their origins have already been studied and — for the most part— determined², questions still remain about the facts concerning their history of conservation, evolution, and specificity.

The present work will dig deeper into the history and evolution of the word *birro* while paying attention to the referent’s characteristics, habits and relationship with the speakers’ society in an attempt to elucidate the remaining problematics concerning this term and, by extension, the rest of the unique forms found in the small island’s severely endangered dialect.

References.

¹ Beltran Calvo, V. and Segura-Llopes, C. (2017): *Els parlars valencians*. Publ. Universitat de València, Valencia (in Catalan).

² Toso, F. (2020): *L’Illa Plana: Language death e sopravvivenze identitarie*. In Toso, F. *Il mondo grande* pp. 123-140. Publ. Università degli Studi di Sassari, Sassari (in Italian).