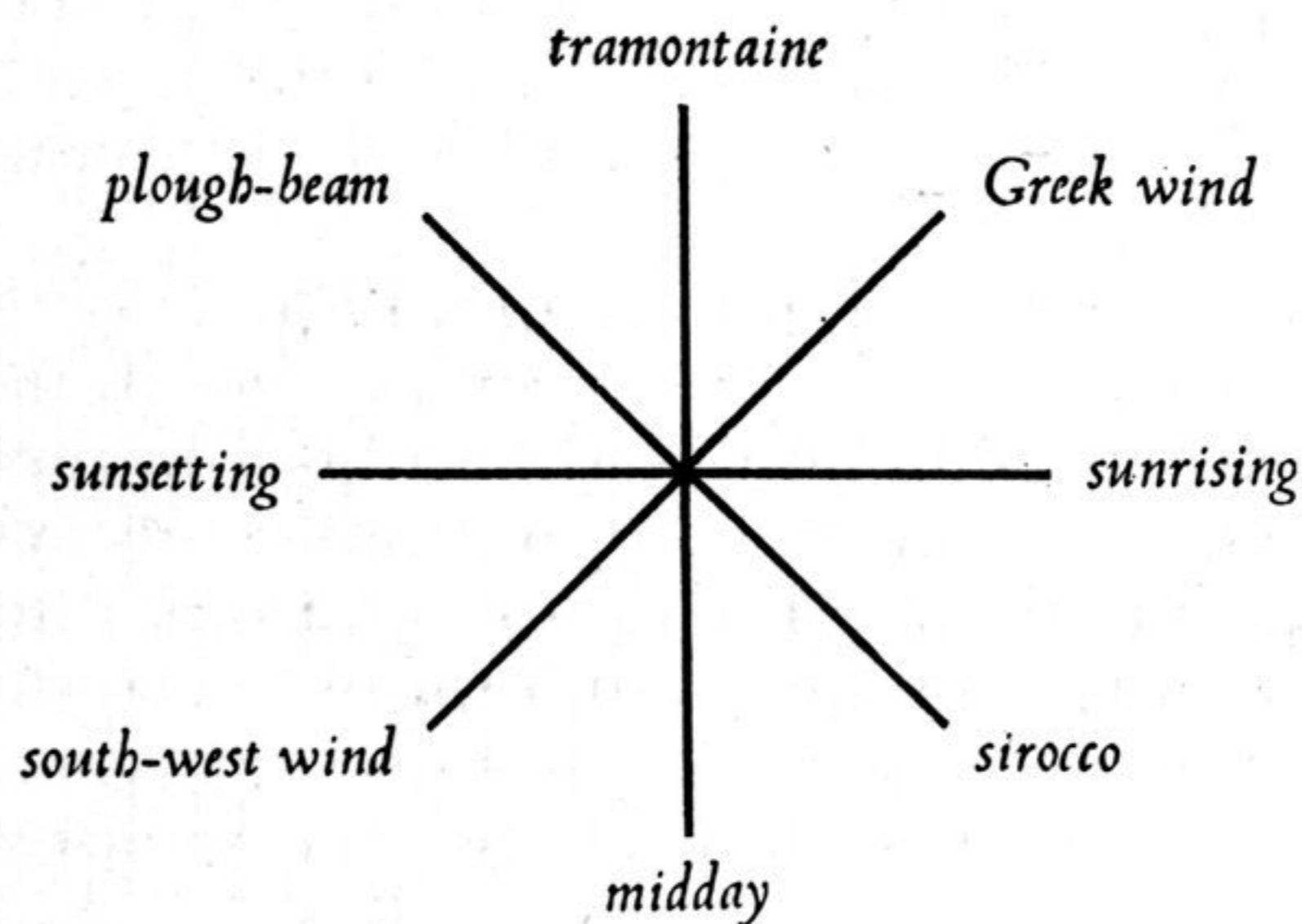


THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD & THE WAYS OF THE WIND

One feature of the translation needs some explanation. It did not seem to be right to reduce Marco Polo's picturesque points of the compass, named after the sun, stars, and winds, to commonplace north, south, east, and west; and yet the *plough-beam* or the *Greek wind* might not enable the reader to steer a correct course without some clearer guidance. According to Marco's contemporary Brunetto Latini the winds, and consequently the points of the compass, were named as follows. He gives first the book name and then (if it is different) the sailor name, sometimes adding the origin of it: E., *levant* or *orient*; S.E., *eromes*, *siloc* (*sirocco*, Arabic *sbaraqa*); S., *midi*; S.W., *aufriques*, *garbin* (*porce que cil pais que le scripture dit aufrique lan le dit en uulgal parleure le garp*), or *lebech*; W., *couchant* or *occident*, *ponent*; N.W., *thorus*, *maistre* (*por .vii. estoiles qui sont en celui meismes leu—i.e. the Plough, maistre, plough-beam*); N.N.W., *arec*; N., *tramontaine* (*stella tramontana, the Pole-star*); N.E., *uularie, grec* (*porce quil uient deuers grece*).¹ The names used in the translation are shown below.



suggest the existence of an earlier French *iou* in place of the *iu* which ultimately prevailed. Initial *q* or *qu* is again French, *qen* read *ken*, and *quian*, *kian*; while other consonants seem to be Italian and generally, I think, Venetian, but apparently without rigidly fixed values. *Baian* one supposes must be read *Bayan*, but *Caraian* should be read *Carajan* and is indeed alternatively written *Caragian*; and we see in *toscaor* a trace of that confusion of *r* and *l* which could make a man write *vissibel* & *inuesiber*. While the spellings of *F* may be, on the whole, the best guide we have to Rustichello's original spelling, yet the text as we have it has suffered many changes; and if BENEDETTO may be right in thinking that the original was more Italian in its wording, it may also have been more French in its spelling.

¹ *Le Livre dou Tresor*, c. 98, "De lair & de la pluie & dou vent & des choses qui sont en lair" (Bibliothèque Nationale MS. fr. 12581, fol. 112).