

New Perspectives on 'Ictis' of Pythéas of Massalia

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Abstract

"Ικτίν – or Ictis – features prominently in the earliest piece of written history concerning the British Isles, that of Pythéas of Massalia, dating from around 2300yrs ago. Ictis was the place where British tin was shipped before being sold to merchants and transported to the continent and Mediterranean. A multidisciplinary study has been undertaken to evaluate evidence the location of Ictis, the first since 1972, considering themes of toponymy, etymology, phonology, textual criticism, geoscience and the classical disciplines. Critical analysis of Diodorus' text reveal axioms by which to test evidence. The effects of glacio-isostatic adjustment on steric sea level are considered for the first time, as well as new philological and archaeological evidence. There is a strong agreement between independent sources that associate"Ικτίν with the "Ουηκτίς" of Ptolemy, referring to the Isle of Wight. Diodorus' inter-tidal criteria are found to match the geomorphology of the Wight hinterland, in particular Portsea, Hayling, Thorny and Selsey Islands. Its etymology is suggested to be proto-Celtic with British and Gallic cognates proposed. Wight's central role as a trading hub throughout history, including for metalliferous commodities, is considered in this context. The results of the paper aim to glimpse light on a two thousand year old mystery and propose questions for future studies.

Introduction

Approximately 2350 years ago saw the beginning of British written history with the voyage of Πυθέας ὁ Μασσαλιώτης (Pythéas of Massalia, the modern *Marseille*). His is the earliest record of a literate traveller having visited the British Isles and whose account survives in large part to this day.² In the words of the arctic explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson, Pythéas was a "[Christopher] Columbus with a flavour of Darwin"³. Certainly he was a scientist of the 4th century BC, fluent if not pioneering in the latest methods of celestial measurement⁴, and an ethnographer interested in the lifestyles and customs of the people he met.⁵ Yet in spite of this, his work, which was

1 The project website can be found at www.kassiteros.org

2 Notwithstanding the apocryphal mentions of the Carthaginian Himilco in Avienus and Pliny (Roller, 2006, p.27)

3 Stefansson (1940)

4 "The degree of shadow from the gnomon which Pythéas states ... " (Strabo Geog.1.4.4).

"The fourth century bc was one of great scientific achievement." (Dilke, 1998, p.26)

Pythéas may have been a pioneer of the measurement of latitude, a skill required uniquely for travelling far north or south of the Mediterranean (Dilke, 1998, p.26).

5 He was called "philosophos" and "doctissimus" during antiquity, with even his detractor Strabo crediting his work as "historia", or research (Roller, 2006, p.63).

known as *Tὰ περὶ τοῦ Ὡκεανοῦ*, did not survive long into antiquity independently after his time and today we have but only 39 fragments, of which Scott (2021) is the latest editor.

Despite its fragmentary survival, a large part of Pythéas' description of the British Isles has escaped oblivion and reached us for study today. He is said to have traversed the whole of the British Isles by foot from Lands End to John O'Groats⁶, giving us our first measurement of the Island's circumference, and notably recording the place names for Kent, Orkney and Cornwall (our three cardinal extremities), Ireland and British Isles itself as Κάντιον⁷, Ὀρκαν, Βελέριον, Ἰέρνη and Βρεττανικῆς respectively. However within his ethnographic remit, Pythéas records but one other toponym, a 6th: **Ικτίν.** Ἰκτίν, understood as the feminine singular accusative of the third declension, is often latinised as as the nominative *Ictis*⁸. It features prominently in Pythéas' work as epitomised by the 1st century BC Sicilian greek historian Διόδωρος (*Diodoros*) in his Βιβλιοθήκη (Bibliotheca Historike), accounting for essentially the whole of chapter 22 in book 5. Ictis was the place were British tin was shipped before being sold to merchants, transported first to the continent and finally mediterranean to make bronze; its alloy with copper. In fact almost all classical authors who describe the British Isles from the first few centuries BC to the first century AD place emphasis on its tin deposits, only found in territory of the Δουμνόνιοι people; now Devon and Cornwall. During the industrial revolution, Cornish mines were the world's largest tin producers,⁹ however from the earliest accounts of the medieval exchequer - the 800 year old *magnum rotulum scaccarii* or "pipe rolls" – we see that Devon with its easily worked surface deposits on Dartmoor National Park known as *streamworks*, then held this preeminent role.¹⁰ It is from Δαμνόνιον that we get the modern word *Devon*.

Despite featuring almost ubiquitously in textbooks, attempts to securely identify the historical Ictis with extant landmarks today have come to variable and inconsistent conclusions. This is quite unlike the five other toponyms recorded by Pythéas which have secure identifications; aiding historical, philological, etymological and archaeological studies respectively. This paper is a genuinely interdisciplinary study of this enigmatic aspect of unsolved ancient geography; the last unidentified place name of the British Isles at the dawn of our history. It introduces new perspectives and brings up to date current research in archaeology, geoscience, classics, toponymy, textual criticism and philology. The last study of its kind was published in 1972.¹¹

The Sources: Fragments of Pythéas

Pythéas' voyage to northern Atlantic coast of Europe, which had tones of trade as well as science, can be dated by the fact that, despite the ostensible relevance of his work, he is never cited by Aristotle but *is* by his student Δικαιάρχος (Dikaiarkos), placing it within the appropriately vague period circa 320s BC. Pythéas may have been inspired by the concept of the *νήσους Κασσιτερίδας* ("Kassiterides Islands") of Herodotus, and Aristotle's *Τὸν κασσίτερον τὸν Κελτικὸν*

6 "Pythéas ... claims that he traveled through all of *Brettanica* overland, gives the perimeter of the island as more than 40,000 stades" (Strabo 2.4.1; Pothecary, 2024)

7 Strabo 1.4.3; Diodorus 5.21; *Cantium* (BG 5.13-14+22); *Cantia* (HE 1.15)

8 However its form in this case is never actually attested in the corpus; its declination is presumed the same as for, for example, the athematic *πόλις*.

9 Schmitz (1979)

10 Hatcher (1973)

11 Maxwell (1972)

("Celtic tin"); Roller (2006) suggests he may have even been linked directly to the Lyceum which would make sense of the pioneering nature of his excursion. Ostensibly Pythéas was interested in learning about geography of the unknown regions of the *οἰκουμένη* and finding the source of tin and amber that arrived in Massalia through the continental trade routes of Gaul.¹²

Scott (2021) collects Pythéas' fragments based on previous work by Mette (1952), Roseman (1994) and Bianchetti (1998). He places Diodorus 5.22 as *F5* of Pythéas, however here only epitomised indirectly via Τιμαῖος of Ταυρομένιον (Timaios of Tauromenion; .350 B.C. - c.260 B.C.), in modern Sicily. Despite never citing his sources directly, it is possible to infer Diodorus' source for this chapter because of the mention of Timaeus in the opening of book 5, and by cross referencing it with Pliny's chapter on the British Isles in which he *does* explicitly cite Timaeus (4.16 or 30). Indeed, it is also possible to infer that Diodorus is not using Pythéas directly or another author such as Posidonius, by cross referencing him with Strabo. Examples are given below:

- Diodorus mentions Timaeus by name in the introduction to book 5¹³, meaning he had access to him as a source.
- Pliny states¹⁴ that Timaeus is the source for his reference to Ictis; so Timaeus is the only author known for certain to mention the place.
- Pliny states that whilst Pythéas called the Amber Isles *Abalus*, Timaeus referred to it as *Basilia*.¹⁵ Diodorus refers to *Basileia* but never mentions *Abalus*.¹⁶
- Diodorus also made use of Posidonius as a source, as did Strabo¹⁷, however Strabo does not mention Ictis but Pliny, who uses Timaeus, does. Posidonius never visited the British Isles but was aware of its tin trade, perhaps also via Timaeus or Pythéas.¹⁸
- Diodorus' measurements for the size of Britain correspond to Pythéas' as quoted by Strabo and Pliny:

Table 1: Concordance of Measurements of the British Isles by Pythéas

Side	Length (Stadia)		Length (miles)
	Diodorus ¹⁹	Strabo	Pliny
Kantion–Belerion	7500		
Kantion–Orka	15,000		

12 Cunliffe (2003)

13 "Timaeus, ... bestowed ... the greatest attention upon the precision of his chronology ... but he is criticized with good reason ... [and he is] given by some men the name Epitimaeus or Censurer." BH 5.1.3

14 NH 4.16/41

15 "Pythéas says that the Gutones, a people of Germany ... at one day's sail from this territory, is the Isle of Abalus, upon the shores of which, amber is thrown up by the waves ... Timæus, too, is of the same belief, but he has given to the island the name of Basilia." NH 37.11

16 BH 5.23; Cunliffe (2004, p.146-149)

17 BH 5.35+38 = Geog. 3.2.9

18 Geog. 3.2.9

19 BH 5.21

Orka to Belerion	20,000	20,000 ²⁰	
Total	42,500	over 40,000 ²¹	4875 ²²

Ostensibly, when Timaeus was writing in the early 3rd century BC, Pythéas was the only source of information on the British Isles and Northern Europe; this would remain so over the next nearly 400 years for remote regions such as Caledonia, literally until the campaigns of Agrippa in the 1st century AD.²³

Diodorus 5.22

Essential to this study has been producing my own translations of the key texts. I have used the *textus receptus* from the Teuber edition of 1888; I actually find this more reliable than the 2015 *Les Belle Lettres* by Casevitz. The reason I have undertaken translations of my own rather than used those of Casevitz (2015) or Scott (2021) is because I feel like these and many others (e.g. the Loeb of Oldfather, 1937) go too far with their interpretations rather than allowing for the appropriate vagary and polysemy (multiple meanings) of words. Hence I have tried to translate grammar and vocabulary as literally as possible, suggesting alternative words where less common meanings of homonyms, metaphors and similes are preferred.

I have used the stemma codicum of Bertrac & Vernière (1993) to assess the prototype manuscripts for the tradition, of which there are four. My transcriptions of these have indicated some variances not cited in the critical apparatus of Casevitz (2015), which may suggest there is still more work to be done here.

For translations I use *The Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek* (2019) and *Liddell–Scott–Jones (LSJ)* for vocabulary.

νῦν δὲ περὶ τοῦ κατ' αὐτὴν φυομένου καττιτέρου διέξιμεν.

here we shall describe how tin comes from [Britain].

τῆς γὰρ Βρεττανικῆς κατὰ τὸ ἀκρωτήριον τὸ καλούμενον Βελέριον οἱ κατοικοῦντες φιλόξενοί τε διαφερόντως εἰσὶ καὶ διὰ τὴν τῶν ξένων ἔμπόρων ἐπιμιξίαν ἔξημερωμένοι τὰς ἀγωγὰς.

Those who live around the promontory on Britain called Belerion are particularly hospitable because of their mixing with foreigners they have a civilised way of life.

20 "Pythéas tells us that the island [of Britain] is more than 20,000 stadia in length" Geog. 1.4.3

21 "... Pythéas ... states ... that the island is above 40,000 stadia in circumference." Geog. 2.4.1

22 "Pythéas and Isidorus say that its circumference is 4875 miles." NH 4.30; This would assume a stadion length of 169.65m, midway between the Itinerary and Olympic stadion.

23 Scott (2021); Roller (2006)

οὗτοι τὸν καττίτερον κατασκευάζουσι φιλοτέχνως ἐργαζόμενοι τὴν φέρουσαν αὐτὸν γῆν.

They produce tin with artisanal techniques by working the land.

αὕτη δὲ πετρώδης οὔσα διαφυάς ἔχει γεώδεις,

But this rock has earth [e.g. soil]-bearing veins,

ἐν αἷς τὸν πόρον [πῶρον²⁴] κατεργαζόμενοι καὶ τήξαντες καθαίρουσιν.

in its midst they make pore²⁵ and melt-purify [smelt].

ἀποτυποῦντες δ' εἰς ἀστραγάλων ρύθμοὺς κομίζουσιν εἴς τινα νῆσον προκειμένην μὲν τῆς Βρεττανικῆς, ὀνομαζομένην δὲ Ἰκτιν·

Then they impress it into astragalus-size [or shape] [pieces] carrying it to the island who lays before Britain, so called Iktin;

κατὰ γὰρ τὰς ἀμπώτεις ἀναξηραινομένου τοῦ μεταξὺ τόπου ταῖς ἀμάξαις εἰς ταύτην κομίζουσι δαψιλῆ τὸν καττίτερον.

for at low tide the area in between becomes dry, in wagons they carry abundant tin to it.

ἴδιον δέ τι συμβαίνει περὶ τὰς πλησίον νήσους τὰς μεταξὺ κειμένας τῆς τε Εύρωπης καὶ τῆς Βρεττανικῆς.

But peculiarities happen to the islands lying closely [nearby] between Europe and Britain;

κατὰ μὲν γὰρ τὰς πλημυρίδας τοῦ μεταξὺ πόρου πληρουμένου νῆσοι φαίνονται, κατὰ δὲ τὰς ἀμπώτεις ἀπορρεούσης τῆς θαλάττης καὶ πολὺν τόπον ἀναξηραινούσης θεωροῦνται χερρόνησοι.

for upon high tide the passage between is made full, islands appear, then upon low tide the sea flows away, many places dry up and headlands behold.

24 After Neapolitanus suppl. gr. 4. Compare this with Casevitz (2015) and Teubner (1888). This is πόρον in Laur. Plut.70.1 and also πόρον in Vat gr 130; Vat gr 996 is unreadable. [πόρον](#) and [πῶρον](#) are different words in LSJ but ultimately their spellings overlap considerably with πῶρον often spelled πόρον. LSJ cites Plin.HN [36.132](#) “a stone called ‘porus,’ which is similar to Parian marble in whiteness and hardness, only not so heavy.” (*Parioque similis candore et duritia, minus tantum ponderosus, qui porus vocatur.*). The two were clearly polysemal homophones.

25 Impossible to translate beyond doubt. Either in the sense of a ‘passageway’ or as ‘marble, a type of stone’. LSJ

ἐντεῦθεν δ' οἱ ἔμποροι παρὰ τῶν ἔγχωρίων ὀνοῦνται καὶ διακομίζουσιν εἰς τὴν Γαλατίαν.

Hence the merchant-sailors buy from the natives and transport to Gaul;

τὸ δὲ τελευταῖον πεζῇ διὸ τῆς Γαλατίας πορευθέντες ἡμέρας ὡς τριάκοντα κατάγουσιν ἐπὶ τῶν ἕπων τὰ φορτία πρὸς τὴν ἐκβολὴν τοῦ Ῥοδανοῦ ποταμοῦ.

then finally they transport by foot for 30 days their horse's wares, leading back to the mouth of of the river Rhône.

Pliny (iv.16 or 41)

Timaeus historicus a Britannia introrsus sex dierum navigatione abesse dicit insulam Mictim, in qua candidum plumbum proveniat; ad eam Britannos vitilibus navigiis corio circumscutis navigare.²⁶

Timaeus the historian says that the island Mictim is 6 day's sail within Britain[‘s waters] from where the tin is produced; and mentions that the Britannos sail there in wicker boats covered with hides.

The spelling of *Mictim* – which appears at least as early as the early 8th century within the manuscript tradition – is perhaps an example of prophetic dittographic scribal error²⁷, or possibly nasalisation of a prosthetic approximate. It is assumed to be the singular masculine/feminine accusative i-stem declination; a feature of early latin before Virgil (70 B.C. - 19 A.D.), later lowered phonetically to “-em”. Within the manuscript tradition, the earliest manuscript of Diodorus survives only from the 10th century and it is not clear which of Diodorus or Pliny’s textual transmissions is the more true to their archetypes.

Textual Interpretation

By stating “τῆς γὰρ Βρεττανικῆς κατὰ τὸ ἀκρωτήριον τὸ καλούμενον Βελέριον … οὗτοι τὸν καττίτερον”, Βελέριον (*Belérion*) is connected to tinworking and therefore securely placed in the context of Devon and Cornwall. The indigenous population are described as being well integrated into continental trading networks; archaeologically consistent with the Iron age La Tène culture. There then follows a geological description of the ore deposit and their extractive methods. The deposit is described as “πετρώδης ούσα διαφυάς ἔχει γεώδεις”; here πετρώδης (rock) is contrasted with γεώδεις (soil/earth) to imply a method of mining inconsistent with underground hardrock mining described elsewhere in the book (e.g. Iberian Spain); and is finally detailed by the adjective “διαφυάς”, *veiny*. It is perhaps consistent with a description of tin streaming in alluvial/eluvial placer deposits. The Crownhill Down tinwork may have sections contemporary with this, as dated by Sandy Gerrard in an archaeological survey for Wolf Minerals.²⁸ This section is Britain’s oldest geological description.

26 Text from Janus (1870, p.178; textual apparatus on p.LI); agrees with that from Sillig (1851, p.320). Mayhoff (1875, p.349) corrects the text to read “Ictim”, citing Diodorus 5.22. The Janus text was used by Rackham (1942).

27 Brown (2021) suggests a cacographic error in copying minims.

What follows is a description of the method of working. Within the geological substrate (*ἐν αἰ̄ς*) they make *πόρον*; the literal translation of this is “passageway”, used in the same context as a ferry passage, or a passage between buildings; from *πόρον* we get the words *pore* and *porous*, meaning permeable to another medium, usually water. Perhaps this describes the eluvial *streamworks* of Dartmoor and Bodmin moor.²⁹ An alternative translation is possible given its homonym *πῶρον*, meaning various kinds of stone, which appears in the earliest of the four manuscripts. *τήξαντες καθαίρουσιν* – melt purify – gives us our Ancient Greek description of tin smelting; from *καθαίρουσιν* we get the word *catharsis*.

In the following section the verb *ἀποτυποῦντες* is used to describe the act of forming the tin ingots; its literal translation is *to impress* and is mainly used in the context of impressing wax seals. Morphologically, the end result is said to be the *ρύθμοὺς* – size/shape, typically used to refer to any repeating pattern (such as in poetic meter or music) - of an *ἀστραγάλων*. The *ἀστραγάλος* is a small rectangular bone found in the tarsal joint of bovids and those from sheep/goats were used as tokens for the ancient game of *Knucklebones* or the divine art of *Astragalmancy* throughout antiquity and into medieval times. A fresco from Herculaneum depicts five Ancient Greek women playing Knucklebones with alacrity³⁰ and piles of astragali are on display in museums such as at the *Forum Romana*. By creating a simile/metaphor with astragali, Diodorus is constraining the size of the commodity he is describing. The Greek word *πλίνθος* (“brick”) could be used to describe an ingot³¹, but the simile of astragali on the scale of >1cm to <5cm corresponds to metallic scrap bullion frequently encountered in the archaeological record; for example the small but super numerous examples from the Bigbury Bay and Salcombe prehistoric shipwrecks³², recorded through the Portable Antiquities Scheme and elsewhere.³³ These small pieces of bullion were easier to transport and store as well as smelt, owing to their large surface area to volume ratio.

The aforementioned tin bullion was then brought to *”Ικτίν* which is described as an island (*νήσους*) “set before” (*προκειμένην*; the prepositional verb is used in other contexts to for example “set a table” or “lay out” an argument) Britain (*Βρεττανικῆς*). Further geomorphological description is provided in the following clause, where low tide is described as *ἀμπώτεις ἀναξηραινομένου* or “[the sea] being sucked back and made dry” making the *μεταξὺ τόπου* (“area between”) *”Ικτίν* island and Britain navigable by *ἀμάξαις* (literally meaning “chassis” from when we derive the modern word, but here being a metaphor for any wheeled vehicle such as a wagon). The following adjunct clause adds yet more geomorphological context, stating that the same inter-tidal phenomena occurs with the other islands lying *πλησίον* (“near by” or “neighbouring”) to Ictis, which in turn lays between (*μεταξὺ*) “Britain and Europe” (*Εὐρώπης καὶ τῆς Βρεττανικῆς*; e.g. the English Channel coast). It is the focus on tidality here that Roller (2006)

28 Gerrard (2015; published via his website <https://earlytin.wordpress.com/surveys/crownhill-down/>, accessed July 2025)

29 Gerrard (2000)

30 Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli inv.5952

31 LSJ

32 Wang et al. (2016)

33 Todd (1987, p.232)

uses to propose and Scott (2021) then accepts that the passage is a fragment of Pythéas, whose lost works are known to have had a focus on tidal/celestial phenomena (Cunliffe, 2001). Based on the description of "Mictim", attributed to Timaeus of Sicily, the 4th-3rd century BC historian and contemporary of Pythéas, by Pliny the Elder, Scott places this as a fragment of Pythéas 3rd hand via Timaeus and Diodorus. Ultimately Pliny describes *Ictis* as six-day's sail along the British coast (*navigiis...introrsum*) from the tin's region of origin (*proveniat*). Tin is described as *candidum plumbum* ("white lead") and the boats (*navigiis*) used for the journey as being made out of wicker (*vitilibus*; e.g. willow stems, like a wicker basket) covered by leather skins (*corio*) sewn together (*circumsutis*) such that they were water tight. This is a description of the tradition of sea going boat building that survived in Ireland into modern times called *currachs*, of which the Broighter boat was a contemporary example.³⁴ In Old Irish sources such as Cormac's Glossary, the English Channel is described as *Muir-nlcht*.³⁵

At *Ictis* the indigenous British people (ἐγχωρίων) were met by ἔμποροι (literally, "seamen" but here meaning "merchants"; from here we get the word *emporium*), trade was made (ἀντανταί) and the goods purchased transported (διακομίζουσιν) to continental Gaul (Γαλατίαν).

Once on the continent, goods (φορτία) were carried by packhorse - πεζῇ "by foot" is paired with ἵππων (híppōn, horse - to the mouth (ἐκβολὴν) of the River Rhône (Ῥοδανοῦ ποταμοῦ), modern Marseille; a journey which took 30 days (ῆμέρας ὡς τριάκοντα).

Studying the two texts, Pliny and Diodorus, in parallel therefore reveals key criterion for assessing evidence pertaining to *Ictis*:

- *Ictis* was an island trading emporium.
- Tinworking occurred in *Belerion*.
- The local *Britannos* sailed within British waters for 6 days to reach *Ictis* from *Belerion*.
- *Ictis* was an inter-tidal island.
- The other islands neighbouring *Ictis* were also intertidal.
- The tin was shipped to Gaul and carried by horses to the mouth of the river Rhone, a journey of 30 days.

Later Attestations

I do not know of any later attestations to Timaeus' passage on *Ictis*/*Mictis* than Pliny. Indeed Pliny, writing c.72 A.D., is the last author to connect tinworking with the British Isles in any form in antiquity; the next to do so is Henry of Huntingdon in c.1129-54.

34 Cunliffe (2003, pp.104-105)

35 See below.

However our study of ancient British geography only begins with these early sources; from the advent of the Roman occupation the resources available to the toponymist proliferate tremendously as is demonstrated by the 1979 standard work on *The Roman Place Names of Britain* by Rivet and Smith. These include in latin the *Itinerarium Antonini Augusti* (Antonine Itinerary), *Ravennatis Anonymi Cosmographia* (Ravenna Cosmography) and the *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* of the venerable Bede; and in greek we have the great Γεωγραφικὴ Ὑφήγησις by Ptolemy as well as his lesser known κανὼν πόλεων ἐπισήμον (Table of Noteworthy Cities). Additionally we have Celtic language witnesses for British geography in Old Irish and Welsh sources, and the Germanic equivalent in Old English. Assuming that Ictis did not exit the lexicon after Pythéas' voyage but instead like Kent, Orkney and Britain itself remained in use in its evolved forms, can we find evidence of this toponym in these later geographic sources?

Ptolemy

The 2nd century A.D. polymath of Egypt, *Πτολεμαῖος*, after having developed a projection system for the cosmos in his work known to us as the *Almagest*, turned his attention to coordinate projection for cartography. The result was his *Geography*, which gives some 8000 geographic coordinates to be used for producing a map of the known world.³⁶ For Britain alone he records 137 of these places along with some two dozen ethnonyms.³⁷ However only 7 of his toponyms concern islands: amongst these, Οὐηκτὶς is textually the most similar to Ἰκτὶς.

Table 2: British Islands in Ptolemy II.3

Ptolemy ³⁸	Σκιτίς	Δοῦμνα	Τολιάτις	Κώουεννος	Ὀρκάδες	Θούλην	Οὐηκτὶς
Modern ³⁹	Skye	Lewis	Thanet	Mersea?	Orkneys	Thule	Wight

The *Geography*, despite its worldwide scope, was essentially unknown to Europeans until 1295 when it was rediscovered by the Byzantine monk Maximos Planudes at the request of Emperor Andronikos II and almost all manuscripts within the stemma codicum, including all extant maps, descend from his researches and therefore bare witness to his ammedments and corruptions.⁴⁰ The only exception to this is the 12th century manuscript in the Vatican Library, to which its editor Mittenhuber (2010) gives the siglum X: "The so-called Codex X is of particular significance, because it contains many local names and coordinates that differ from the other manuscripts ... which cannot be explained by mere errors in the tradition".

X is the earliest manuscript to preserve the *Geography*, however its sister work known as the *Table of Noteworthy Cities* is preserved by no less than four 9th century codicies. These each bare witness to the Isle of Wight however their exact spelling varies considerably: οὐηκτη (L), ουηκτὶς

36 Stückelberger et al. (2017, p.23)

37 PG II.3

38 After Stückelberger et al. (2017, p146-158); PG II.3

39 After Rivet & Smith (1979, passim.)

40 Jones & Berggren (2000)

(V), *[ou]ηκτις* (M) and *οὐικτὶς* (f). Additionally it is possible to establish which prototype tradition is the most exact a copy of the lost archetype by the rare survival of an early 3rd century papyrus in the Rylands Library.⁴¹ In total 28 place names survive on this fragment corresponding to areas of modern Italy and Serbia; these can be used for comparison with the four codices produced some 600 years later.

Table 3: Scribal modifications in the prototypes of Ptolemy's Table of Noteworthy Cities

Siglum	Exact Copy	Close Copy	% Exact	% Exact or Close
M	13	8	46	75
f	11	6	39	61
L	11	4	39	54
V	6	2	21	29

This demonstrates that codex *M* is at least 7% more likely than *f* to exactly preserve the papyrus recension, but also that there is more than a 50% chance that neither codex does. *M* and *f* ultimately only differ based on their initial vowel quality in ⟨η⟩ and ⟨ι⟩. The close front unrounded vowel [i] was the consistent phoneme for ⟨ι⟩ throughout essentially the whole Greek phonological history, however ⟨η⟩ underwent a sound change from [e] in Attic raising to [ɛ] during koine and finally raising again to [i] completing the merger (iotaism). If *M* is an exact copy of the archetype then ⟨η⟩ represents [e], however if this is copyist's correction, as was the case in the manuscript at least 50% of the time, then by the 9th century ⟨η⟩ would have represented [i].

Antonine Itinerary

The British section of the Antonine Itinerary records some 109 place names⁴², however it is its adjunct, the *Itinerarium Maritimum*, that concerns itself with Islands. Amongst these it seems to include few directly adjacent Britain itself, instead mainly listing those in the Channel closer to the coast of Gaul. Among the former is found *Vecta*, however we find that in manuscript B (9th century) this is written as "ecta" e.g. without the initial ⟨v⟩ representing the semivowel [w] or bilabial approximate [β].⁴³ This may simply represent a haplography, a phonetic elision or perhaps a genuine tradition with "Vecta" therefore demonstrating prothesis.

Table 4: British Islands in the Maritime Itinerary⁴⁴

<i>Itinerarium Maritimum</i>	Modern⁴⁵

41 It is however extremely unfortunate that its surviving fragment preserves literally the adjacent two columns to where Wight would have once been recorded; alas.

42 Rivet and Jackson (1970, p.68 Appendix II)

43 This variant is not mentioned in the published critical apparatus by Cuntz (1990, p.81)

44 The section is introduced as *Item in mari oceano, quod gallias et brittanias interluit*, which creates problems for interpreting *insula Clota in Hiverione* (Cuntz, 1990, p.81).

45 After Rivet and Smith (1979, p.180)

<i>Orcades</i>	Orkney
<i>Clota</i>	Clyde?
<i>Vecta</i>	Isle of Wight
<i>Riduna</i>	Alderney?
<i>Sarmia</i>	Sark
<i>Caesarea</i>	
<i>Barsa</i>	Herm?
<i>Silia or Lisia</i>	Guernsey
<i>Andium</i>	Jersey
<i>Sicdelis</i>	
<i>Uxantis</i>	Ouessant (Ushant)
<i>Ina</i>	Île de Sein
<i>Vindilis</i>	Belle Île
<i>Siata</i>	Île d'Houat
<i>Iga</i>	

Ravenna Cosmography

The British section of the Ravenna Cosmography contains 315 toponyms, however the three prototype manuscripts of the stemma only agree in spelling unanimously on 200. It lists British Islands in chapter 30 where we find “*vectis*” in manuscript B(P) and C(B), and “*nectis*” in A(V). Parthey & Pinder (1860) and Fitzpatrick-Matthews (2022) both place B(P) as the closest to the archetype in the stemma codicum. The form “*nectis*” may simply represent a *v/u/n* cacography by the copyist or perhaps initial mutation similar to “*Muir nlcht*”(see below).

Table 5: British Islands in the Ravenna Cosmography

Ravennatis	<i>Euania</i>	<i>Vectis</i>	<i>Malaca</i>	<i>Insenos</i>	<i>Taniatide</i>
Modern	Isle of Man ⁴⁶	Wight	Mull	Île de Sein	Thanet

46 Fitzpatrick-Matthews (2022, p.11)

Medieval authors

The Venerable Bede refers to Wight in 3 places in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* in the form *vectae* and *vectam*⁴⁷, suggesting it is of the first declension paradigm and presumably feminine. Most notably he records an ethnonym for the Jutish settlers of Wight: *Victuarii*, and this spelling is confirmed by manuscripts of both the “m” and “c” stemmae suggesting it is a faithful copy of Bede’s original.⁴⁸ Here the initial vowel quality has been raised to [i], perhaps representing an allophonic contrast as also it appears in the same sentence as “*vectam*”.

Medieval Irish sources refer to the English Channel as the *Muir n-Icht*⁴⁹, literally the “*sea of Wight*”.⁵⁰ This is found in at least four old and middle Irish sources of the 9th and 10th centuries: the *Sanas Cormaic*,⁵¹ *In Cath Catharda*⁵², Broccán’s Hymn⁵³ and *Saegul Adaim*⁵⁴ as *nicht*, *Icht*, *Ict* and *lucht* respectively. Note the examples of *nicht* and *lucht* demonstrate Celtic grammatical mutation in the form of epenthesis and prothesis.⁵⁵

In Old Welsh we find “*insula gueith*” in the 11th century manuscript of the *Historia Brittonum* referring to Wight. Here the latin ⟨u⟩ may plausibly reflect the semivowel approximate /w/ or the back vowel /u/, and therefore ⟨gu⟩ would produce the voiced labialized velar stop /gʷ/.⁵⁶ We see ⟨gv⟩ and ⟨gw⟩ being used to transcribe ⟨v⟩ in other medieval loan words.⁵⁷

Finally in Old English we find an epitome of the HE i.15 for the year 449 in the Anglo Saxon Chronicle where Wight is rendered as *piht* with its ethnonym as *pihtpara* (e.g. /wiht/ and /wihtwara/), in both cases demonstrating lenition of stops to glottals.⁵⁸ In Domesday we find “*insula de wit*”.⁵⁹

It is clear from the study of Greek and Roman toponymy that “Wight” is only plausable island place name recorded throughout antiquity and into modernity with sufficient similarity to “*Iktaic*” to suggest potential evolutionary descent.

47 As *Vectae* (i.pref.) when describing Bishop Daniel of Winchester as his informant; as *Vectam* (i.3) under Vespasian’s conquest; and again as *Vectam* (i.15) describing the Jutish settlement of sub-Roman Wight.

48 Congrave & Mynors (1969, p.50-1; HE i.15)

49 Note the grammatical n-prothesis and similarity to “*nectis*” in the A(V) manuscript of the Ravenna Cosmography.

50 eDIL s.v. 4 *Icht* (Available at: dil.ie/27160, accessed July 2025)

51 O’Donovan and Stokes (1868, p.112-113); O’Davoren et al. (1862, p.29)

52 Stokes (1909)

53 Stokes & Strachan (1901, pp.328-329); Bernard & Atkinson (1898, p.191)

54 Stokes (1883, p.34)

55 Fife, 2007, p.7

56 Stifter (2009)

57 Such as for “*gwaith*”; Thomas, R. J. et al. (1950–present; available online: <https://welsh-dictionary.ac.uk/gpc/gpc.html?gwaith> accessed July 2025)

58 Thorpe (1861, p.20-21)

59 Hampshire folio 5 (OpenDomesday.org; accessed July 2025)

Phonology

To my knowledge, no study has been made of Massalian greek phonology of the 4th century BC, and so phonemic reconstruction Pythéas' source material – notwithstanding variance in the textual transmission – can only be approximate. Therefore generalised models of Attic and Koine greek phonology must be used; Ranieri (2023) has created some very useful tools based on research by Allen (1987), Teodorsson (1978), Horrocks (2010) amongst others that demonstrate the development of coeval phonemes in Greek.⁶⁰ The temporal evolution of each phoneme in ⟨'Ικτις⟩⁶¹ is given in the table below.

Table 6: Coeval Greek phonemes in 'Ictis'

Grapheme	Phoneme										
	Attic	Koine					Byzantine				
	4th c.	3rd c.	2nd c.	1st c.	1st c.	2nd c.	3rd c.	4th c.	5th c.	6th c.	7th c.
⟨ι⟩	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i
⟨κ⟩	k	k	k~c	k~c	k~c	k~c	k~c	k~c	k~c	k~c	k~c
⟨τ⟩	t	t	t	t	t	t	t	t	t	t	t
⟨σ⟩	s	s	s	s	s	s	s	s	s	s	s

The 4 unique graphemes present in the toponym demonstrate very little evolution during the Attic to Byzantine timeframe; the only change occurring at ⟨κ⟩ where from Koine onwards it started alternating between the voiceless velar stop /k/ and the voiceless palatal stop /c/. The same approach can then be taken with ⟨Ούνκτις⟩. The table below introduces the new graphemes.

Grapheme	4th c.	3rd c.	2nd c.	1st c.	1st c.	2nd c.	3rd c.	4th c.	5th c.	6th c.	7th c.
⟨ού⟩	uː										
⟨η⟩	ɛː	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	i

During the same time period the monophthong ⟨ou⟩ shortened from /uː/ to /u/ but the main sound change occurred at ⟨η⟩. This raised from the long open-mid /ɛː/ in Attic, to the long-mid /e/ in Koine, to the short /e/ in late antiquity and finally completing its *iotacism* to the short-close /i/. Since the Classical period, the Greek orthography lacked the semivowel /w/⁶² and so could not accurately transcribe the /w/ phonemes represented by the semivowel ⟨v⟩ found in Latin. It is not known when the orthographic convention of using ⟨ou⟩ to transcribe latin ⟨v⟩ was developed,⁶³ however it might have only entered Koine once the burden of transliterating

60 His [spreadsheet](#) can be found on his website, lukeranieri.com (accessed July 2025)

61 Here assuming the nominative singular for the only attested form: the accusative "Ικτις".

62 Originally digamma ⟨F⟩ for /w/ was used but this had ceased by the Attic period Allen (1989, p.40)

Roman literature became necessary⁶⁴. Therefore such spellings vary according to both orthographic and phonotactic limitations.

Table 7: IPA Transcriptions of *Ἰκτίς* and *Οὐηκτίς* demonstrating temporal sound changes

	Attic	Koine	Byzantine 7 th c.
⟨ <i>Ικτίς</i> ⟩	/iktis/	/iktis/~/ictis/	/iktis/~/ictis/
⟨ <i>Οὐηκτίς</i> ⟩	/wεɪktɪs/	/wektis/~/wectis/	/wiktis/~/wictis/

The phonetic quality of *Οὐηκτίς* and *Οὐικτίς* as found in the two 9th century prototypes of the *Table of Noteworthy Cities* would have merged to /wiktis/~/wictis/ by the 7th century at the latest, which may account for the variance in transmission.

The variation in spelling we see of Vecta, Vectis, Vectam, Vectae and Victuarii in Latin demonstrates the application of Italic case endings to the originally Celtic root word. Celtic and Italic languages differ in their paradigms of grammatical inflection with Celtic languages being characterised in early times by initial mutations rather than case endings.⁶⁵ Therefore the root word in these examples was perhaps *Vector* or *Vict* to which Latin later applied its case system. There are not enough attestations in Greek to be certain that *Οὐηκτίς* follows this same pattern, however it must do if *Ἴκτιν* is assumed to be the feminine singular accusative *i*-stem.

Ranieri (2023) has also produced a useful aid on coeval phonemes in Latin, based on the work by Calabrese (2005), Allen (1989) and others⁶⁶. Considering the phonemes present in the variants of ⟨Vectis⟩ and ⟨Mictim⟩ cited above, this table gives vernacular pronunciations for Italy in urban, non-rustic contexts.

Grapheme	4th c.	3rd c.	2nd c.	1st c.	1st c.	2nd c.	3rd c.	4th c.	5th c.	6th c.	7th c.
⟨v⟩	w	w	w	w	v	v	β ^w	β ^w	β	v	v
⟨m⟩	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
⟨n⟩	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
⟨i⟩ ⁶⁷	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	e	e	e	e
⟨e⟩ ⁶⁸	ɛ	ɛ	ɛ	ɛ	ɛ	ɛ	jɛɪ	jɛɪ	jɛɪ	jɛɪ	jɛɪ

63 We see this in the 2nd c. A.D. Rylands Papyrus of *ραονεννα* for “Ravenna”; this had become *ραβεννα* in the 9th c. codices.

64 For example we see Pliny writing *Victumularum* for what Strabo had previously written *Ἴκτουμούλων* (Smith, 1872)

65 Fife (2009, p.7)

66 Adams, J.N. (2016) *Social variation and the Latin language*. CUP

Adams, J.N. (2016) *An Anthology of Informal Latin, 200 BC–AD 900*. CUP

Lord, F.E. (1894) *The Roman pronunciation of Latin*. Boston, Ginn & company.

And others. His [spreadsheet](#) can be found on his website, lukeranieri.com (accessed July 2025)

67 Unstressed or closed

68 Open, stressed

We see that $\langle v \rangle$ demonstrates the most temporal evolution, spirantising from the semivowel /w/ to the bilabial and labiodental fricatives /β/ and /v/.

Table 8: IPA transcriptions demonstrating coeval phonetic variations in Latin attestations to Wight (Celtic lemma without Latin case endings)

	Old Latin	Late Classical	Late Latin
⟨Vectis⟩	/wɛkt/	/vɛkt/	/vekt/
⟨Mictim⟩	/mikt/	/mekt/	/mekt/
⟨Nectis⟩	/nɛkt/	/nɛkt/	/nekt/
⟨Ectis⟩	/ɛkt/	/jɛ:kt/	/jɛ:kt/

This phonemic evolution during this time period demonstrates the assimilation in allophonic vowel quality of 〈i〉 and 〈e〉 with final 〈i〉 unstressed 〈e〉 both representing /e/ and could be used interchangeably. This merger is well attested in Gaulish inscriptions as vulgar or rustic latin evolved into proto-Western Romance languages; in the case of Gallic the merger finalised on mid-front /e/.⁷⁰ Therefore we see a phonetic merger of the vowels qualities in 〈Vect〉 and 〈Mict〉 by late latin. Cicero attests to differences in rustic pronunciation outside of urban centres in *De Oratore*:⁷¹

Qua re Cotta noster, cuius tu illa lata, Sulpici, non numquam imitaris, ut Iota litteram tollas et E plenissimum dicas, non mihi oratores antiquos, sed messores videtur imitari.

We also see palatalised prothesis on top of stressed ⟨e⟩ in the form of /jɛː/. Another example of this is found in the greek Ἰκτουρούλων of Strabo⁷² being transcribed into latin as *Victumularum* in Pliny.⁷³ In this example the prothesis is a velar approximate (/w/) but this could also attest to an intermediate palatalised approximate stage (/ɥ/) which could otherwise not be rendered within the latin orthography at this time.

69 Unstressed

70 Adamik (2023, p.325); Calabrese (2005, p.74); Adams (2007, p.143)

71 3.46

72 Geog. 5.1.12

73 NH 33.21.6 or 33.4; See Rivet & Smith (1979, p.488), Smith (1872, p.12) and Ridgeway (1924, p.136)

We also find the afore-mentioned phonemes within the phonetic system of Old Welsh. In *gueith* we see vowel qualities such as *i* representing /i:/, long *e* for /ɛ:/ and *u* strictly for /u:/ however it may have stood for /w/ depending on the Welsh/latin orthography being used. We also see *gwy* develop a mode of transcribing /wi/ in latin loan words such as for *vitrum* > *gwydr* 'glass' and in primitive Welsh where *Venedotis* is found on the 5th century Cantiorix Inscription for what we now call Gwynedd.⁷⁴ Therefore *gueith* would probably represent /gwiθ/ and alternating with /wit/ depending on degree of spirantised lenition.

We again observe the same phonemes, grammatical mutations and sound changes in Old Irish⁷⁵ for *n/cht*, *lcht*, *lct* and *lucht*; these variations are perhaps examples of lenition of velar stop *c* /k/ to velar fricative /χ/ - a morphophonemic inflection.⁷⁶ In IPA the root, whose spelling is *lcht* ~ *lct*, would have been approximately /ikt/ ~ /ixt/. Whilst present in the orthography of Primitive Irish⁷⁷, /w/ if subject to initial lenition later became /f/ due to sandhi phenomena or was even lost entirely (zero), /ø/, and is therefore not found in Old Irish.⁷⁸

Finally in Old English the use of *p* helps us identify with certainty the /w/ phoneme.⁷⁹ Therefore we find *piht* as simply /wiht/.⁸⁰

In summary we can tabulate the phonetic variants outlined above.

Table 9: IPA transcriptions of attestations to Ict, Mict and Wight

Lexeme (root)	Language					
	Greek ⁸¹	Latin ⁸²	Old Welsh	Old Irish	Old English	Modern
⟨ Ikt ⟩	/ikt/ ~ /ict/					
⟨ Mict ⟩		/mikt/ ~ /mekt/				
⟨ Wight ⟩	/wɛkt/ /wikt/ ~ /wict/ ⁸³	/wɛkt/ /vekt/ ~ /vɛkt/	/gwiθ/ ~ / wit/	/ikt/ ~ /ixt/	/wiht/	/waɪt/

Placed in a timeline of authorial references, notwithstanding either earliest attestations in their manuscript traditions and corruption in transmission, we see:

74 Willis (2009, p.128)

75 Stifter (2009, p.61)

76 Stifter (2009, pp.64-65)

77 Stifter (2009, pp.57-59); /w/ appears to have had an ogham symbol which is listed by Stifter.

78 Stifter (2009, p.61)

79 In the latin orthography ⟨w⟩ had only became widely used by the 15th century.

80 Fulk (2012)

81 For Attic to Byzantine variations see above. Neither Greek or latin here takes into account regional variations.

82 For Old – Late variations see above.

83 Depends on whether the form *οὐκτίς* or *ουηκτίς* is used, see above.

Table 10: Timeline of authorial references to Ict, Mict and Wight

4 th B.C. (1 st B.C.)	4 th B.C. (1 st A.D.)	2 nd A.D.	3 rd A.D.	8 th	9 th	11 th ⁸⁴
”Ικτ	Mict	ούικτ orουηκτ	vect	vect orvict	ict, ƿiht or gueith	wit
Diodorus	Pliny	Ptolemy	Antonine Itinerary	Bede	Cormac, Anglo Saxon Chronicle and Pseudo- Nennius	Domesday

In order of their earliest manuscript attestations we see:

Table 11: Timeline of manuscript attestations to Ict, Mict and Wight

Date	Toponym	Manuscript
8th	Mict	Leiden Voss. Lat. F. 4
9th	ούικτ orouηκτ	Vat. gr. 331 Laur. Plut. 28.26
	vect	BnF latin 4807
	vect orvict	Cott. Tib. c ii
	ƿiht	various
10th	”Ικτ	Neapolitanus suppl. gr. 4
11th	gueith	Reg. Lat. 1964
	ict	Dublin MS A 2
	wit	Domesday

From the tables above we see considerable variation in the phonetic rendition of Wight, often characterised by Celtic morphophonemic mutations. “Mict” appears at the earliest point in the manuscript tradition, substantially before ”Ικτ, but the stemma and transmission of Diodorus is better understood than Pliny.⁸⁵ The initial “M” may simply be dittography upon “insulam mictim”, or if it is genuine, perhaps an example of Celtic morphophonemic phenomena such as we see in Insular Celtic *gueith* against Goidelic *ict*. Other examples exist of /w/ prothesis during greek-to-latin transcriptions of toponyms such as Ἰκτουμούλων to *Victumularum*. Variations of spelling within language orthographies such as *vict* and *vect*, or *ict*, *icht* and *iucht* possibly demonstrate vowel merger or allophonic variation. In the 4th century B.C. the greek orthography had no

⁸⁴ Watkins (1996, p.109) gives its 12th and 13th century spellings as *Wiht*, *With*, *Wicht*, *Wict*, *Wight*, *Wycht*, *Whyht*, *Wyht*, *Wythe*, and *Wyght*.

⁸⁵ Bertrac & Vernière (1993); Reeve (2007)

means of transcribing /w/ and it is not known at what point the ⟨ou⟩ convention necessary for representing Celtic phonemes was developed.

In short, accounting for phonotactic limitations of transcription, orthographic limitations in transliteration, corruptions within the transmission of the text and sound changes within host languages, the phonemes outlined above can plausibly be said to be identical in their etymology. We observe similar phonemic and orthographic changes in Κάντιον, Ὄρκαν and Βρεττανικῆς across their 2300 years of recorded use.

Etymology

Within the greek canon there is the word ὕκτις which refers to the genus of weasel, *marten*,⁸⁶ which also appears in latin as the loan word "ictis".⁸⁷ Similarly 'vectis' appears in latin meaning "lever", "crow-bar" or "bolt".⁸⁸ In Welsh we find 'gueith' in the Black book of Carmarthen as the ancestor of modern 'gwaith', meaning "work, labour, act, deed, task, job; aid."⁸⁹ In Irish, 'icht' has at least three distinct meanings ranging from its cognate of 'gwaith' as an "act" or "deed"⁹⁰, to "kindness, clemency, trust, confidence"⁹¹, "race, people, tribe" and "province, district".⁹² In Old English we see that 'piht' meant "living being male or female, person; something, anything".⁹³

In proto-Celtic we see the reconstructed *wextā from the proto-Indo-European root *weǵʰ meaning either "time, course, turn", "work" or "carrying, transport"; a common ancestor of Welsh "gwaith" and Irish "icht" (fecht).⁹⁴ *wextā was commonly homophonic with *wixtā, the latter however had the more violent connotations of "fight", "conquer" and "rage".⁹⁵ *wixtā existed in the lexicon of Roman Britain in the ethnonym for the Ὀρδούικες (Ordovices) tribe, e.g. Ὀρδούικες "Ord-wikes" where it is paired with proto-Celtic *ordos meaning 'hammer'.⁹⁶ This is also seen in the continental Gallic ethnonyms of Λεμοουίκες (Lemovices) and Ἐβουρουικοὶ (Eburovices).

Violent tribal names in Gaul were commonplace, for example:⁹⁷

- Bellovaci from *bellos meaning "speak, roar"
- Catuvellauni from *catu- and *walo meaning "war chiefs"
- Atrebates from *attreb- meaning "settlers, colonisers" and *-atis, "belonging to"

86 Beekes (2010, p.586)

87 Lewis & Short

88 Lewis & Short

89 Thomas, R. J. et al. (1950–present; available online: <https://welsh-dictionary.ac.uk/gpc/gpc.html?gwaith> accessed July 2025)

90 eDIL s.v. 2 icht; available online dil.ie/27158 (accessed July 2025); potentially also cognate with latin "ictus".

91 eDIL s.v. 1 icht; available online dil.ie/27157 (accessed July 2025)

92 eDIL s.v. ? 3 icht; available online dil.ie/27159 (accessed July 2025)

93 Watkins (2000); in the Anglo Saxon Chronicle dwarves are referred to as "pið dpeorh"

94 Matasović (2009, pp.419-420)

95 Matasović (2009, p.421)

96 Or more commonly Ordovices.

97 Matasović (2009, *passim*.)

- Belgae from proto-Celtic **belgos* meaning “wrathful”, “proud” otherwise “swollen [with anger]”

Tribes such as the Belgae, Parisi and Catuvellauni all share their names in common with continental Gallic tribes mentioned by Ptolemy and Strabo; their migration to and settlement in Britain is attested in names such as the *Atrebates*. Caesar describes their belligerent nature at the beginning of *de Bello Gallico*.⁹⁸ This might be an example of ritual or endemic warfare, a type of warrior culture observed in anthropological contexts in certain tribal societies.⁹⁹

Archaeology

Finds of Greek coinage from the first centuries B.C. are distributed widely across the Channel coast of England with concentrations around the Hampshire/Dorset coast and Thames estuary.¹⁰⁰ This distribution is similarly found in imported Dressel type I and IA wine amphorae,¹⁰¹ as well as exported Black Burnished ware and other imported European potteries.¹⁰² Concerning metallurgy, these were also the primary export nodes for lead ingots during the Roman occupation¹⁰³ and earlier during the middle bronze age for shield-pattern palstaves.¹⁰⁴ Similarities in the archaeological assemblages at Mount Batten (Devon) and Hengistbury Head (Dorset) lead Cunliffe to suggest it represented “short haul coastal traffic linking the two ports”¹⁰⁵ Late bronze age shipwrecks at the Salcombe and Erme estuaries in Devon might attest to this trade route in earlier times.¹⁰⁶ The Bloscon 1 Roman shipwreck discovered at l’île de Batz, Finistère, contained some 700-800 tin ingots (Hulot, 2015) and some of the northeast mediterranean shipwrecks near Marseille holding tin ingots amongst their cargo have been suggested to have derived that portion of their cargos from the British Isles.¹⁰⁷ Also in Brittany, a shipwreck containing British lead ingots was found in 1983 at l’Archipel des Sept-îles.¹⁰⁸

In Ptolemy’s Geography, “νῆσος Οὔηκτις” is described as “ὑπὸ δὲ τὸν Μέγαν Λιμένα” e.g. *below the great harbour*, a unique place name in the British Isles.¹⁰⁹ Within this vicinity was also built Fishbourne Palace during the Roman occupation, the largest building of its kind north of the Alps.¹¹⁰ Intertidal islands such as Hayling in the Wight hinterland had unusually diverse indigenous numismatic assemblages, perhaps attesting to trade links between tribal communities.¹¹¹

98 “Horum omnium fortissimi sunt Belgae ... continenter bellum gerunt” BG 1.1

99 There is a large literature on this, for example S. A. LeBlanc (1999), *Prehistoric Warfare in the American Southwest*, University of Utah Press

100 Laing (1968, p.18)

101 Cunliffe (2001, pp.389-390)

102 E.g. Mayen, Argonne and A’ L’Eponge wares; Cunliffe (2001, pp.443-444)

103 Lewis (2011, p.188)

104 Williams (2019, pp.1190-1991)

105 Cunliffe (1983, p.125)

106 Wang et al. (2016); Wang and Roberts (2018)

107 Cibecchini (2018, p.80)

108 L’Hour (1987)

109 Stückelberger (2017, pp.158-159)

110 Cunliffe (1998)

111 Tomalin (2022, p.42)

In medieval times southwest tin saw its largest markets in the ports of London and Southampton with its primary purchasers as Italian merchants.¹¹²

Geomorphology

Two key tenants of Diodorus' description are that Ictis was A: an intertidal island, and B: is adjacent to other intertidal islands. This is a question of coastal geomorphology which is known to continually change due to steric relative sea level (RSL) rise, best modelled by the effects of post-glacial isostatic adjustment (GIA) caused by the retreat of the Celtic ice sheet at the end of the pleistocene. This was modelled by Bradley et al. (2011) using GPS data and paired with terrestrial measurement of sea level index points (SLIPs) by Shennan et al. (2018); facilitating the latter in generating holocene RSL curves for 89 regions of the British Isles. Part of the 2018 publication included their database of SLIPs which can be used to assess data for temporal RSL at given locations.

The Solent is up to 46m deep¹¹³ which would suggest, given Shennan et al.'s RSL curves¹¹⁴, that it has been permanently flooded throughout the holocene. The Isle of Wight was therefore a non-tidal permanent island in classical antiquity. However with an RSL at the Hampshire coast of approximately -1m to -2m (relative to today)¹¹⁵, Hayling Island with its deep channel and perhaps its neighbours Portsea, Selsey, Thorney and other smaller islets would have remained intertidal. This is evidenced by the at least Roman palynographic dates for the Langstone to Hayling wadeway tidal causeway.¹¹⁶

Discussion

Philological analysis shows a plausible evolutionary descent between the forms attested in classical antiquity of *Ικτίν* and *Mictim* and the modern day *Wight*. A central theme of the Diodorus and Pliny texts are that *Ικτίς* was the meeting place for international buyers and indigenous producers of tin, perhaps amongst other commodities. It was an important place, worth sailing for six days from Devon and Cornwall along the coast to reach. Its name survives in the slightly evolved form in Ptolemy's Geography as *Οὐηκτίς* and *Οὐικτίς*.

The Isle of Wight, separated from the Hampshire coast by the Solent, is incompatible with Pythéas' intertidal description. However Wight's hinterland sports Portsea, Selsey, Hayling and Thorny islands, all appearing to have been intertidal in the Iron Age and Romano-British times. Ptolemy describes Wight as below the *Μεγας λιμον* or "Great Port": Chichester or Bosham. Perhaps this *Great Port* was a direct legacy of the tin trade.

112 "... the practice of shipping a substantial part of the tin production along the coast to London was, of course, of great antiquity ..." Hatcher (1973, pp.136-141)

113 Dyer (1975)

114 Shennan et al. (2018, p.152)

115 The exact data points are -1.68m at 2561 cal. B.P. ($2\sigma +173/-199$) and -2.04 at 2417 cal. B.P. ($2\sigma +314/-273$); RSL 2σ uncertainty of 0.22m.

116 Maritime Archaeology Ltd (2007)

In Roman times Wight was also the entrepôt for lead and silver produced in the Mendip mines.¹¹⁷ Williams (2019) suggests that British copper produced in the Middle Bronze Age was also traded through coastal sites on the Dorest, Hampshire and Sussex coast. Cunliffe (2001)¹¹⁸ tracks the multilateral trade of material culture with the region present in the archaeological record from Neolithic to medieval times. Finally, Hatcher (1973) demonstrates that from the 13th to 16th centuries A.D. Southampton and London were the most important ports of trade for British tin. In summary, Wight seems to have been the main multi-commodity entrepôt or trading emporium for the British isles from neolithic to modern times; it was the *London Metal Exchange* of its day. Tin that it sold was produced exclusively in Devon and Cornwall: through Wight, produce of those two modern counties reached the Greek Mediterranean and beyond during the Iron Age.

Ictis, in its root /ikt/, may preserve the proto-Celtic word for “*fight, conquer, age*” that is also attested in the ethnonym *Ordovices*. If this etymological similarity is true then *Ictis* too might preserve a lost ethnonym or perhaps indicate a connection with the *Ordovices*. Immediately inland from the Isle of Wight inhabiting modern Hampshire were the *Belgae*, a migratory tribe whose belligerent continental ethnonym attests to their settlement in the British isles at some point in the time prior to Ptolemy’s source for his Geography. We also find attestations of settlers in the ethnonym for the *Atrebates*. Iron age numismatic evidence from Wight shows they were most closely affiliated with the *Durotriges* tribe of modern Dorset and that the Island was sufficiently important to have its own mint.¹¹⁹ A potential etymology for “*Durotriges*” is from proto-Celtic **duro* “door” and **trāgi* “beach, low tide”, e.g. ‘gateway to the sea’¹²⁰; perhaps indicative of its maritime trade connections¹²¹.

A possible hypothesis is that the migration and settlement of the *Belgae* in Hampshire displaced people from the tidal islands of the Hampshire coast who settled on the Isle of Wight, giving it its name. This is the case for the *Ordovices* in the case of *Dinas Dinorwig*, for the *Cornovii* in the case of *Cornwall* and the *Dumnonii* in the case of *Devon*. We do not know what names Portsea, Hayling, Thorney and Selsey islands had in Romano British times; whatever Celtic names they once had were replaced by Germanic names during the Jutish settlement, as attested by Bede.¹²² The people of the Isle of Wight had their own ethnonym in Bede’s time, *Victuarii*, similar to the *Vecto-Durotrigan* identity separate to the *Belgae* of Roman times. Did the ethnonym develop from the toponym or visa versa? If correct, the dislocation of *‿iktīç* from its original situation upon the intertidal islands of the Hampshire coast to the modern Isle of Wight would echo the evolution of *”Orkav* from being once a description of mainland John O’Groats/Dunnet Head to the offshore Orkney Islands.

117 Such as at *Ischalis*: Charterhouse (Lewis, 2011)

118 p.404; *passim*.

119 Tomalin (2022, p.42)

120 Matasović (2009, p.111+387)

121 Cunliffe (2001, p.404)

122 Coates (1989)

A Note on Historiography

Speculations on the location of Ictis have a long and confused history that I have deliberately not referenced so far in this study. The historiography of its study, its conclusions and their implications for nationalism, Cornish in particular, are the subject of Cara Sheldrake's 2012 thesis; readers are directed to her for a detailed outline of previous works published.

Camden appears to have been the first English writer to interpret Diodorus' and Pliny's texts, coming to the conclusion that Ictis was Vectis (based on textual similarity) but was distinct from Mictim.¹²³ Borlase was the first to connect Ictis with St Michael's Mount but did not believe that in Antiquity it was an intertidal Island.¹²⁴ The Victoria County History of Hampshire gives a short historiography of associations made by authors throughout the 18th and 19th century between Ictis and Wight.¹²⁵ Of major importance was the 1811 publication of John Hawkins' "Observations on the tin trade of the ancients in Cornwall, and on the 'Ictis' of Diodorus Siculus" which substantiated an argument for St Michael's Mount instead of Wight based on the geomorphological criteria of its intertidality; thereby rejecting the toponymic similarity with *vectis* relied upon by previous authors.¹²⁶ Sir William Ridgeway took the opposite view in an 1890 article on "The Greek Trade-Routes to Britain", preferring the toponymic evidence over intertidal criteria. In 1905 Sir Clement Reid FRS aimed to bolster this claim by attempting to demonstrate that in pre-Roman times Wight was connected to the mainland by a limestone ridge extending from near Yarmouth to Pennington;¹²⁷ a hypothesis which is universally rejected.¹²⁸ The Rev. Taylor's 1932 book on St Michael's Mount made more cases in support for its identification of Ictis. In his 1937 translation of Diodorus, the first into English in over 200 years, Oldfather footnotes Ictis as St Michael's Mount. With this De Beer (1960) agrees.¹²⁹ However in 1968 Laing published an article in *Cornish Archaeology* appraising evidence for ancient Greek trade with Cornwall in which he cited the concentration Greek numismatics in southeast England and paucity of finds in Cornwall as evidence against a southwest situation of Ictis. This is the article that Maxwell specifically references in his introduction to his 1972 article: "The Location of Ictis"¹³⁰. His approach is honest but riddled with errors¹³¹; he concludes:

123 Camden (1587, pp.639-640)

124 Borlase (1756, pp.76-78)

125 Doubleday (1973, p.325); For example Warner (1795, p.6)

126 Sheldrake (2012, p.223; *passim*.) discusses the influence of this publication at length

127 Reid (1905)

128 Dyer (1975); Penhallurick, (2008); Maxwell (1972); Doubleday (1973, p.325) correctly calls the hypothesis "totally incredible in any form.". Reid's error can be forgiven; he made important contributions to coastal geomorphology in other ways such as his work on submerged forests and the Dogger Bank.

129 He is perhaps overconfident when he states "The name Iktin means tin port, just as Cyprus means copper island." and "There is only one place that fits this description of Britain's earliest known port of export, and that is St. Michael's Mount" (p.162)

130 Maxwell (1972, p.293) comments that Laing's article was a "reversal of the generally accepted view"

131 "The place-name [Ictis] has not been in use for a very long time and there is therefore no direct evidence concerning the site to which it referred" Maxwell (*ibid*.)

"Though it cannot be proved beyond doubt that Ictis was St Michael's Mount, the identification appears to be nearly certain. And there, it would seem, the matter must rest – at least until such time as new and significant evidence may come to light"¹³²

Despite this, Rivet and Smith in their 1979 opus on *The Place Names of Roman Britain* favour an association with Vectis on philological grounds, citing amongst others Ridgeway (1890).¹³³ Cunliffe (1982) associated Ictis with Mount Batten (Devon) based on an iron age finds assemblage rich in imported mediterranean trade goods. Hawkes (1983) expanded this by suggesting multiple sites as contenders for Mictim and Ictis separately, whilst also noting the problem of St Michael's Mount not being an island in the iron age. Penhallurick (1986) was aware of Rivet and Smith (1979) but does not cite them at all in his chapter on Ictis, concluding "*St Michael's Mount is the one locality that fits all the facts*".¹³⁴

However archaeological investigations on St Michael's Mount in the 1990s and 2020s failed to find any significant remains of iron age trade, let alone with the greek mediterranean,¹³⁵ Cunliffe concurred with this interpretation in 2017.¹³⁶ Based on SLIPs gathered in the 1990s,¹³⁷ authors of the palaeoenvironmental study of Mounts Bay were able to conclude that St Michael's Mount did not become an island until post-Roman times.¹³⁸ No consensus has yet been found within the classics either,¹³⁹ with even Bianchetti (1998) and Scott (2021) identifying it on geomorphological grounds as St Michael's Mount. Meanwhile etymological studies of the Isle of Wight by Durham (2010) and Breeze (2019) both rejected association with Ictis, favouring instead a proto-Germanic or Italic root for *Vectis*; leading Tomalin (2023) to also reject any association with Ictis in his book on *Roman Vectis*.

Conclusions

The goal of this study was to investigate all available primary evidence that survives for one of Britain's only six toponyms recorded by Pythéas in the late 4th century B.C.; the earliest surviving work of British geography. All others had secure identifications but the last, Ictis, has divided option since 1811 if not long before.

The results of the study suggest a plausible phonemic pathway of how *’Ik̥tiv* and *Mictim* of Diodorus and Pliny evolved into the modern day *Wight*. At some point in time, perhaps

132 Maxwell (1972, p.316)

133 Rivet & Smith (1979, pp.487-488)

134 (p.146); Rivet & Smith are only cited 3 times in the whole work. There is some concern over confirmation bias present at a fundamental level: "Writing this book has been a spare-time occupation since 1978, the fruition of a student ambition of 15 years earlier to achieve for Cornish antiquity what Oliver Davies had accomplished for the 'Roman Mines in Europe'" (p.xii), leading Roller (2006, p.72) to state "see, cautiously, [Penhallurick] ... whose use of ancient sources leaves something to be desired".

135 Herring (1993 & 2000); Jones and Allen (2023)

136 Cunliffe (2017, p.314)

137 Healy (1995); Shennan et al. (2018)

138 Jones & Allen (2023); The causeway is only covered by approximately 2m of water at high tide in modern times. Healy (1995) did not gather dater specifically for Pythéas' time however and estimates of RSL c.2300 B.P. currently must be interpolated. Most study is necessary.

139 Roller (2006, p.73) states "St Michael's Mount (Iktis?)". Broderick (2009, p.10) also associates it with St Michael's Mount. Neither refute Rivet and Smith (1979).

coinciding with settlement of modern day Hampshire by the Belgae tribe, Ictis as a name appears to have become disassociated with the tidal islands of Portsea, Hayling, Thorney, Selsey and other smaller islets which were only accessible via intertidal causeways until recent times. The placement of Ictis upon the Hampshire and Dorset coastline accounts for abundance of iron age traded greek and mediterranean material culture observed in the archaeological record,¹⁴⁰ the placement of Britain's only "*Great Port*" by Ptolemy, the situation of Fishbourne Palace, and the dozens of nearby Roman villae.¹⁴¹ The word Ictis seems to observe the same proto-Celtic root word for "*fight, conquer, rage*" as found in tribal names elsewhere in the British Isles and Gaul. This root descended directly into Goidelic Old Irish and remained in use throughout early medieval times as their name for the English Channel; it was also accepted and assimilated into Old English rather than replaced like all other place names in its vicinity, potentially revealing information about the Anglo-Saxon settlement of Wight.

It is our joint earliest placename in the Britain Isles¹⁴² and is as old as the name *Britain* itself. What is even more exciting is that this is a word still in use today. It has been claimed that Kent, the Κάυτιον of Pythéas, is "the oldest recorded name still in use in England";¹⁴³ this is a claim that can now be said to be held jointly with the Isle of Wight. 2300 years later, even Pythéas himself would recognise these four words we use: *Kent, Orkney, Britain* and *Wight*, even if he would not understand the Germanic bastard language we speak.

Further Work

Perhaps what ancient Tyre was to the Silk Road, Wight and its hinterland was to the '*Tin Road*'? Pythéas described tin being traded not directly with continental buyers but via an intermediate emporium; the island entrepôt of Ictis. The reason for this is probably because in return for metals, wool and other tradable commodities, the Brettanni merchants expected to receive other continental and mediterranean commodities in return.¹⁴⁴ This is why markets exist; a place where buyers and sellers can both attend to mutual benefit.

Ictis is Britain's earliest recorded port of trade and it appears as a whole chapter, literally taking up half of the earliest piece of written British History as epitomised by Diodorus. Contextualising the archaeology of the British Isles within this framework should help to make sense of the abundance of iron age continental and mediterranean finds on the Channel coast of England. I am not aware of any comprehensive databases of all finds of Greek provenance; data currently exists but is spread out in many places such as the American Numismatic Society, Portable Antiquities Scheme, Oxford Iron Age Coins of Britain database and various publications. Work also needs to be done on identifying ex-officio marks on the Carnanton¹⁴⁵, Battersea¹⁴⁶, and

140 Cunliffe (various); Trott (2003)

141 Tomalin (2023)

142 Notwithstanding the aforementioned references to Albion.

143 Matthews, C. M. (1972). *Place-names of the English-speaking world*.

144 Goods traded with the British Isles are well attested to, by for example Caesar or Strabo.

145 RIB 2405.1

146 RIB 2406.1-10

Bloscon 1¹⁴⁷ tin/pewter ingots; were these cold stamped in Britain and if so, where? Where were the sources for this tin? OSL dataing by Gerrard at the Crownhill Down eluvial/alluvial tinwork in 2015 was inconclusive but indicated the utility of such studies.

More SLIPS must be gathered in the vicinity of the intertidal islands of the Hampshire coast, and indeed of Mounts Bay in Cornwall to fully understand the paleoliminality of these coastlines in the context of steric RSL rise.

In performing my study and actually going back to the original manuscripts themselves I have realised just how much work there is still to be done at the root of all classics: textual criticism. I was made painfully aware that we do not yet have a truly critical edition of Pliny which makes comprehensive use of the whole manuscript tradition. This also appears to be the case with Herodotus and even Caesar. In the case of Herodotus we have perhaps over two dozen fragmentary papyri that need analysing and placing within the stemma. Whilst it is true that we are unlikely to find any major revelations through such dedicated study, occasionally it makes all the difference. It was finding the reference to *οὐικτὶς* in the 9th century Laurentian manuscript of Ptolemy's *Table of Noteworthy Cities* – a work that few people, even amongst classicists have ever heard of – not mentioned in the critical apparatus of its editors Mittenhuber and Stückelberger (2006) that really inspired me to continue trawling through the sources myself. Mistakes and omissions that we look for in our comparative studies of manuscript transmission also affects us ourselves. This was also the case with "ecta" instead of "vecta" in the 9th century BnF manuscript *latin 4807*. I have not yet been able to transcribe all the Diodorus prototypes proposed by Bertrac & Vernière (1993) and thereby reappraise their work fully, however I did find that they corrected their text without comment to read "Πρεττανικῆς" when all of the manuscripts I found to actually read "Βρεττανικῆς". With the dawn of AI, identifying scribal error and modifications in transmission is as simple as having a few well formatted prompts for your LLM once accurate transcriptions of the sources have been made.

Going back to Ptolemy, I also found that Mittenhuber and Stückelberger (2006)'s study of Ptolemy's *Table* had not transcribed the relevant portions of each codex prototype for comparison with the Rylands papyrus. This has been an invaluable and very rewarding study to undertake myself independently of its previous editor Defaux (2020), particuarly with a view to describing the phonological changes and relating them to what has been lost. Doing so quantitatively allows for rigorous assessment of how likely given phonemes might be to have existed in the lost portions.

This study has also highlighted the need for detailed phonological study of British placenames. How interesting would it be to reappraise Rivet and Smith's work within the modern framework of IPA? Due to phonotactic and orthographic limitiations, the same words may well be homophones hidden in plain sight. Therefore the assessment of place names of this nature, certainly when subject to large temporal or geographical variance, should always consider the relevant literature on these subjects.

Finally, it stands that after some 2300 years since Pythéas' time, the route of the 'Tin Road' should be recreated for the benefit of experimental archaeology. It would involve collecting tin from streamworks in Devon and Cornwall, smelting it to *astragali*, sailing around the coast to Wight, then over to the estuaries and up the rivers of France to finally arrive at Marseille itself. Presumably this will be the first time it has been conciously attempted since antiquity, but who will be willing to make the journey by currachs and horseback?

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Finally I would like to thank my parents Nigel and Yasmin. They have spent more time than anyone putting up with my obscure and often poorly substantiated theories. Dad deserves true credit for first identifying the geomorphological similarity with Hayling Island and for just stating the obvious: 'the Solent is the sailing Mecca of England today; what if that has always been the case?'

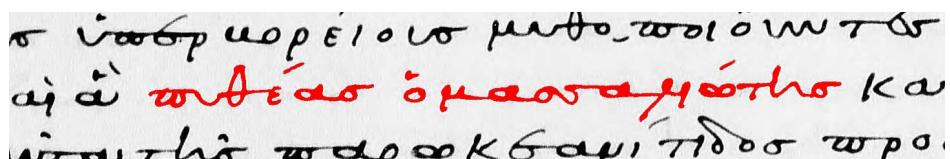


Figure 1: Pythéas of Massalia in Strabo (Geog. 7.3.1) from manuscript BnF gr. 1397 (10th c.)

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Author	Work	Library	Shelfmark	Date	Lang.	Type	Source	Siglum	Link
(Pseudo) Nennius	Historia Brittonum	Vatican	Reg. Lat. 1964	1000-1100	Latin	Codex	Giles (1906)	M	Link
Anon.	Antonine Itinerary	Parisinus	latin 4807	800-900	Latin	Codex	Cuntz (1990)	B	Link
Anon.	Ravenna Cosmography	Parisinus	Lat. 4794	1200-1300	Latin	Codex	Schnetz (1990)	B (P)	Link
Anon.	Ravenna Cosmography	Vatican	Urb. Lat. 961	1300-1400	Latin	Codex	Schnetz (1990)	A (V)	Link
Anon.	Anglo-Saxon Chronicle	Bodleian	Laud misc. 636		Latin	Codex	Thorpe (1861)		Link
Bede	Ecclesiastical History	British Library	Cott. Tib. c ii	800-850	Latin	Codex	Colgrave & Minors (1962)	C	Link
Broccán	Broccán's Hymn	University College Dublin	MS A 2	1075-1125	Old Irish	Codex	Stokes & Strachan (1901); Bernard & Atkinson (1898)		Link
Cormac	Sanas Cormaic	Royal Irish Academy	23 P 16	1408–1411	Old Irish	Codex	Stokes (1862)	A (B)	Link
Diodorus	Bibliotheca Historica	Neapolitanus	suppl. gr. 4	900-925	Greek	Codex	Bertrac & Vernière (1993)		Link
Diodorus	Bibliotheca Historica	Laurentian	Plut. 70.1	1330	Greek	Codex	Bertrac & Vernière (1993)		Link
Diodorus	Bibliotheca Historica	Vatican	gr. 130	925-975	Greek	Codex	Bertrac & Vernière (1993)		Link
Diodorus	Bibliotheca Historica	Vatican	gr. 996	1000-1200	Greek	Codex	Bertrac & Vernière (1993)		Link
Pliny	Natural History	Parisinus	Lat. 6797	800-1000	Latin	Codex	Reynolds (1983)	E	Link
Pliny	Natural History	Leiden	Voss. Lat. F. 4	700-750	Latin	Codex	Reynolds (1983)	A	Link
Pliny	Natural History	Vatican	Lat. 3861	800	Latin	Codex	Reynolds (1983)	D	Link

Ptolemy	Geography	Vatican	gr. 191	1175-1225	Greek	Codex	Mittenhuber (2010); Stückelberger et al. (2017)	X	Link
Ptolemy	Geography	Vatican	Urb. 82	1200-1300	Greek	Codex	Mittenhuber (2010); Stückelberger et al. (2017)	U	Link
Ptolemy	Table of Noteworthy Cities	Leiden	BPG 78	813-820	Greek	Codex	Stückelberger & Mittenhuber (2006)	L	Link
Ptolemy	Table of Noteworthy Cities	Vatican	gr. 1291	820	Greek	Codex	Stückelberger & Mittenhuber (2006)	V	Link
Ptolemy	Table of Noteworthy Cities	Marcian	gr. 331	800-900	Greek	Codex	Stückelberger & Mittenhuber (2006)	M	Link
Ptolemy	Table of Noteworthy Cities	Laurentian	Plut. 28.26	875-900	Greek	Codex	Stückelberger & Mittenhuber (2006)	f	Link
Ptolemy	Table of Noteworthy Cities	Rylands	gr. 3.522	225-250	Greek	Papyrus	Defaux (2020)	P	Link
Strabo	Geographica	Parisinus	gr. 1397	900-1000	Greek	Codex	Radt (2002)	A	Link

Appendix 1: Rylands Papyrus and Table of Noteworthy Cities Manuscripts

Papyrus	M	F	L	V	Metaplasms	
	[?]ηκτις νησοσ	ούικτὶς νῆσοσ	ουϊκτη νησοσ	ουηκτις νησοσ		
καρβαντι[α]	καρβαντια	σκαρβαντια	-		Prothesis of ⟨σ⟩ in F	
ημωνα	ημωνα πολισ	ήμώνα πόλ[ισ]	-		Identical with addition of "πολισ"	
	καρνουτον	καρνουῦτοσ			Not found in original mss.	
παννον[ι]ας τη[ς κατω]	παννονιας της κατω	παννονιας τ[η]ς κατω	παννονιας της κατω		Identical	
σεβιτιον	σερβιτιον	σερβίτιον	σερβιτιον		Epenthesis (excrescence) of ⟨ρ⟩ between ⟨ε⟩ and ⟨β⟩. Possible example of loss of phonemic vowel length.	
μουπσεια	μορσια?	μουρσα	μουρσαλλα		Possible shift from voiceless bilabial trill ⟨π⟩ [β] to trill ⟨ρ⟩. Lowering of ⟨ου⟩	

					to ⟨o⟩ and assimilation of ⟨ει⟩ to ⟨i⟩ in M; syncope of ⟨ει⟩ in F. Replacement of ⟨εια⟩ with ⟨αλλα⟩ in L.	
σιρμιον	σιρβιον	σιρμιοη	σιρμιον		Denasalisation of ⟨μ⟩ to ⟨β⟩ in M	
ιλλυριδος	ιλλυριδος [??]	Ιλλυριδ[ος] λιβρνι Δαλμα	ιλλυριδος χωρ		Identical with addition of words after toponym	
ιαδερ	ιαδιρα	ιαδερα	ιαδερ		Paragoge of ⟨α⟩	
σαλωναι	σαλωναι	σαλῶναι	σαλωναυ σιαρωναμ ?		Identical MF, mutated L	Identical in M & F, corrupted in L
συρδων	σιδρωνα	σιδρὼν			Metathesis of ⟨ρδ⟩ to ⟨δρ⟩; fronting of ⟨υ⟩ to ⟨ι⟩	Only present in M & F
ναρωνα	ναρωνα	ναρξῶν ? δαυρ[οσ]	ναρωνα		Identical ML; excrescence of ⟨Ξ⟩, apocope of ⟨α⟩ and addition of words in F	M & L agree
σαρδωνα νησος		σαρδώνα νῆσος	σκαρδωνη σιανης		Excrescence of ⟨κ⟩ after ⟨σ⟩; possible raising of ⟨α⟩ to ⟨η⟩	Absent in M, identical in F, corrupted in L

			επιδαυρος		Not found in original mss.	
ιταλιας	ιταλιας	ιταλιας	ιαται	ΙΤΑΛΙΑΣ	Identical MFV; apocope of ⟨ç⟩ in L	
νικοτεραι αρικια	νικαια	νικαια	νικεια πασσαλιωτ	νεικεια	Misidentification	
			πεισιαι		Svarabhakti of ⟨t⟩ before ⟨ai⟩	These two words correspond with πραινεστος & πεισαι in the papyrus but in have been transposed up 9 places to above ταρακειναι and their order reversed.
			πτετεστος		Shift from trilled ⟨ρ⟩ to plosive ⟨τ⟩; assimilation of diphthong ⟨ai⟩ to ⟨ε⟩; denasalisation of ⟨v⟩ to ⟨τ⟩.	
ταρακειναι	ταρακιναι	ταρρακίναι	ταρρακειναι	ταρραικείναι	Geminaton of ⟨ρ⟩ in FMV; monothongisation of ⟨ει⟩ in M & F; vowel breaking of ⟨α⟩ to ⟨ai⟩ in V	
νεαπολις	νεαπολίς	νεαπολις	νεαπολις	νεαπολις	Identical	Identical in all mss.
ρηγιον ιουλιον	ρηγιον ιουλιον	ρήγι[ον] ιουλιον	ρηγειον ιουλειον	ρηγιον ιουλιον	Identical	
ταρρας	ταρας	τάρας	ταρρας	ταρας	Degemination of ⟨ρρ⟩ in all but L	
βρεντεσι[ον]	βρεντεσι[?]ν	βρεντήσιον	βρεντεσιον	βρεντεσιον	Assimilation of ⟨ε⟩ with ⟨η⟩ in F	Demonstrates state of iotaism in F: ⟨η⟩ [e] had not yet been raised to

						[i] and fused with ⟨i⟩
αγκων	αγκων	άγκωη	αλκων	ακων	Possible cacography between majuscule ⟨H⟩ and ⟨N⟩ in earlier recension.	
ραουεννα	ραουεννα	ράουεννα	ραβεννα	ραβεννα	Spirantisation of semivocalic ⟨ou⟩ [w] to bilabial fricative [β], possibly via the approximant [β].	
ακουλεια	ακουλια	άκουληια	ακυληια	ακυληια	Monothongisation of ⟨ει⟩ in M; considered vowel hiatus and assimilation of ⟨ε⟩ with ⟨η⟩ in F, L & V. Assimilation of ⟨ou⟩ with ⟨u⟩ in L & V.	Demonstrates F & M do not have a common parent. Compare with βρεντήσιον to demonstrate state of iotaism.
πραινεστος						Only preserved in M, F and L but both transposed. See above and below.
πεισαι						
ρωμη	ρωμη	ρῶμη	ρωμη	ρωμη	Identical	Identical in all mss.
μενουεντος	ουενεβενδοσ	βενεβενδὸς	βενεβενδτορ[ο]ν		Svarabhakti of ⟨ε⟩ after ⟨ν⟩;	

					denasalisation of ⟨u⟩ before front vowel ⟨ε⟩ to semivocalic ⟨ou⟩ [w] or voiced bilabial approximate ⟨β⟩ [β].	
		πρενίτος			Monothongisati on and lowering of ⟨ai⟩ to ⟨ε⟩ before ⟨v⟩; raising of ⟨ε⟩ to ⟨i⟩ after ⟨v⟩	These two words correspond with πραινεστος & πεισαι in the papyrus but in have been transposed down 4 places to below μενουεντος
		πιοσα			Excrescence of ⟨o⟩ before ⟨σ⟩; apocope of ⟨i⟩; Monothongisati on of ⟨ει⟩ to ⟨ι⟩	
καπυη	καπυη	καπυη	καπυη		Identical	Identical in all mss.
	πρενεστος				Assimilation of ⟨ai⟩ with ⟨ε⟩	These two words correspond with πραινεστος & πεισαι in the papyrus but in have been transposed down 7 places to below καπυη
	πεσια				Either scribal error - transposition of ⟨ai⟩ to ⟨ia⟩ - or apocope of ⟨i⟩ and excrescence of ⟨i⟩ before ⟨a⟩	
κυρνου [νησου]	κυρνου νησου	κύρνου νήσον	κουρνου αλερια		Assimilation of	M & F agree.

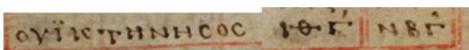
					⟨u⟩ with ⟨ou⟩ in L	
Totals	13 exact, 8 close	11 exact, 6 close	11 exact, 4 close	6 exact, 2 close		

Appendix 2: Wight in the *Table of Noteworthy Cities and Geography*

κανών πόλεων ἐπισήμον

Kanòn Póleon Episémon / Table of Noteworthy Cities

References to the Isle of Wight in prototype manuscripts of Ptolemy's *Table of Noteworthy Cities and Geography*

L:  ουϊκτη νησοσ ΙΘΓ' ΝΒΓ'

Cod. Leidensis 78, fol. 66r
c.820 AD

V:  ουηκτις νησοσ ΙΘΓ' ΝΒΓ'

Cod. Vaticanus Graecus 1291, fol. 17v
c.820 AD

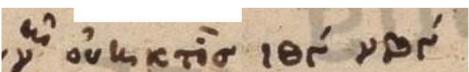
M:  ουικτις νησοσ ΙΘΓ' ΝΒΓ'

Cod. Venetus Marcianus Graecus 331, fol. 1r
9th century

F:  ούικτις νησοσ ΙΘΓ' ΝΒΓ'

Cod. Florent. Laurentianus 28.26, fol. 51r
End of 9th century

Γεωγραφική Υφήγησις / Geography

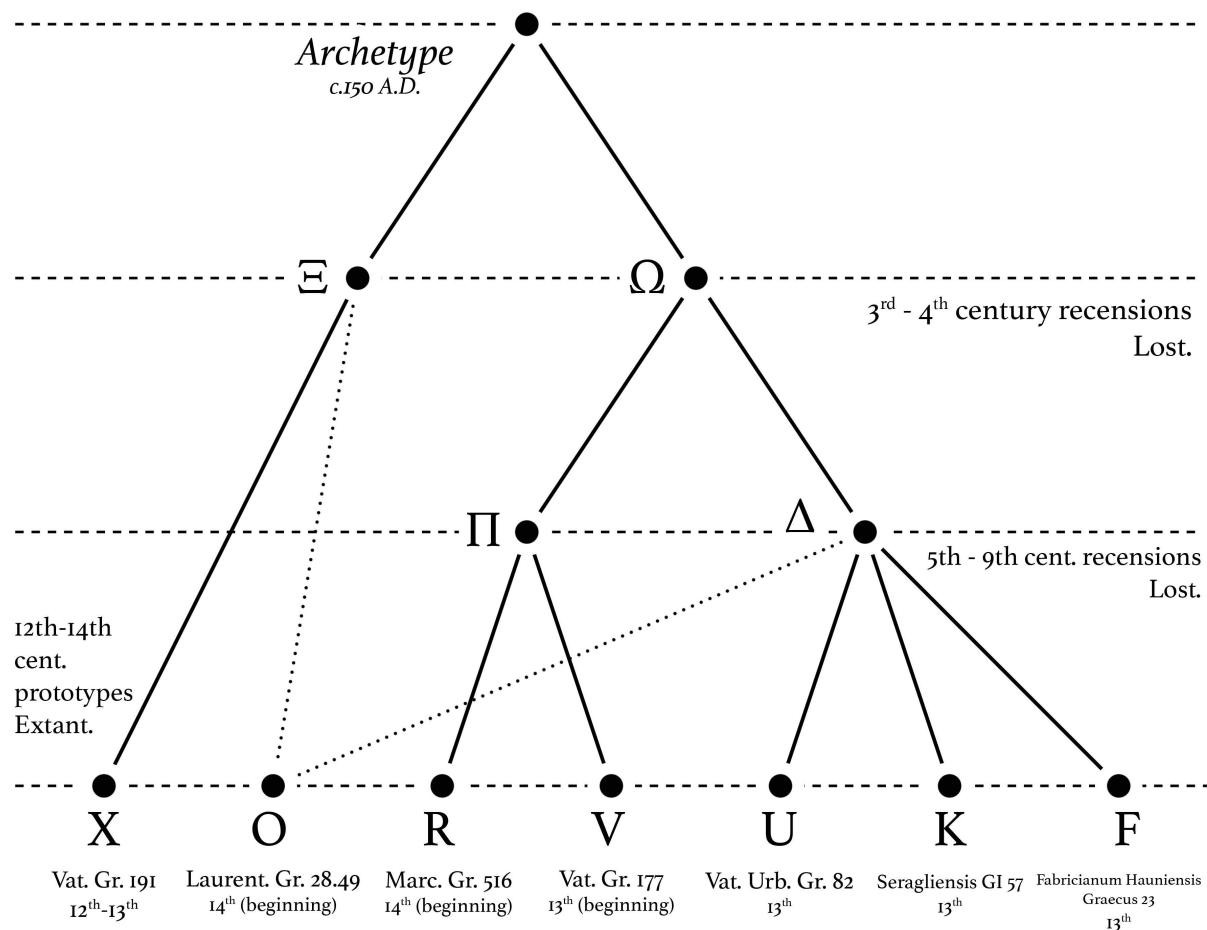
X:  ν[ησοσ] ούηκτισ ΙΘΓ' ΝΒΓ'

Cod. Vaticanus Graecus 191 fol. 139v
13th century

Ben Sumpter (2025)

Appendix 3: Stemma Codicum for Ptolemy's Geography

Stemma Codicum Πτολεμαῖος Γεωγραφικὴ Υφήγησις
Ptolemaios Geographike Hyphegesis



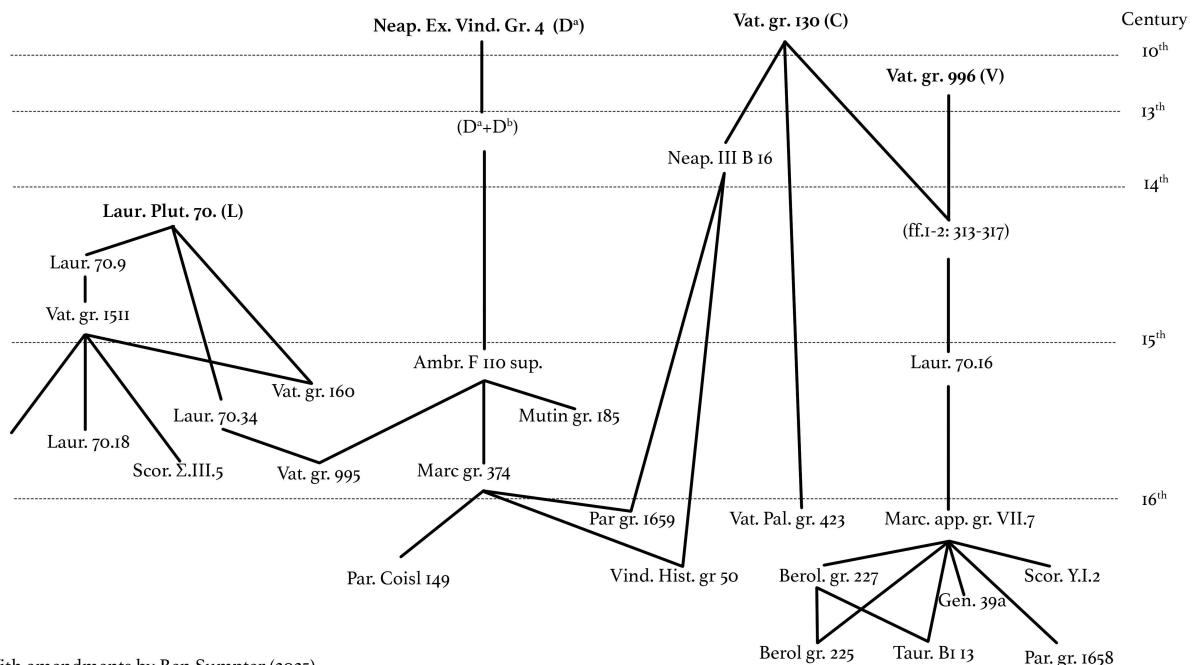
Adapted from:
 Mittenhuber, F. (2010) 'The Tradition of Texts and Maps in Ptolemy's Geography', in A. Jones (ed.) *Ptolemy in Perspective*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands (Archimedes), pp. 95–119.

Ben Sumpter (2025)

Appendix 3: Stemma Codicum for the Bibliotheca Historica

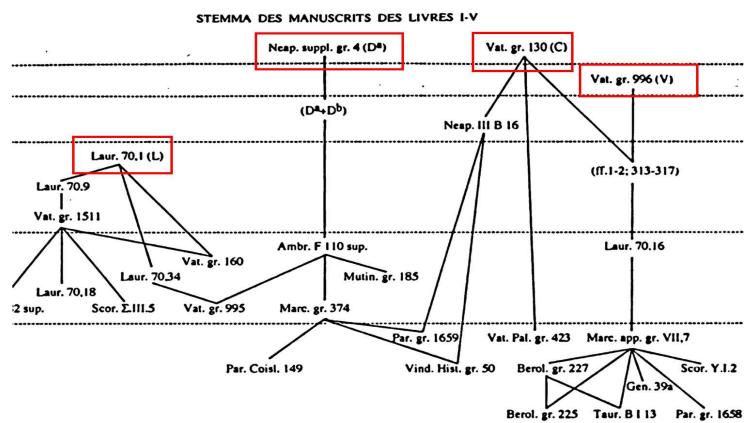
Stemma Codicum of Diodoros Bibliotheca Historica Books I-V

After Bertrac, P. (ed.) (1993) *Bibliothèque historique. Tome I: Introduction générale. Livre I - Diodore de Sicile*. Translated by Y. Vernière. (Collection Budé).

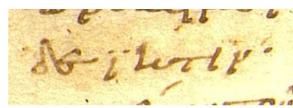


Appendix 4: Ictis in Prototype Manuscripts of the *Bibliotheca Historica*

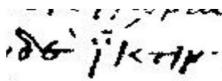
Ικτίν References in Prototype Manuscripts



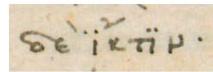
Neapolitanus Suppl.Gr.4
(early 10th cent.)



Vaticanus Gr.130
(mid 10th cent.)



Plut.70.1
(c.1330)



Appendix 5: Transcription and Translation of BH 5.22.2 from the Naples Manuscript

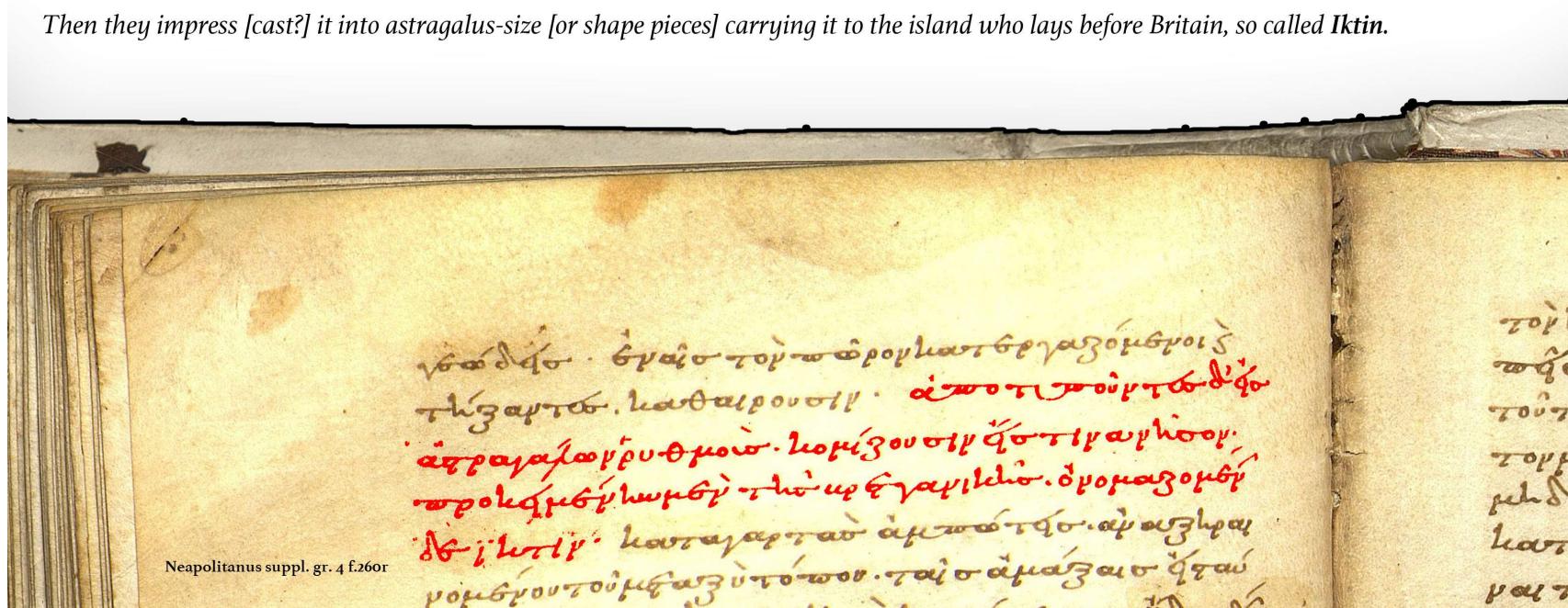
Διόδωρος, Βιβλιοθήκη Ιστορική
Diodoros, Bibliothike Historike
1st cent. B.C.
Book 5 Chapter 22 Section 2; Sentence 2 Clause 1

Ben Sumpster (2025)

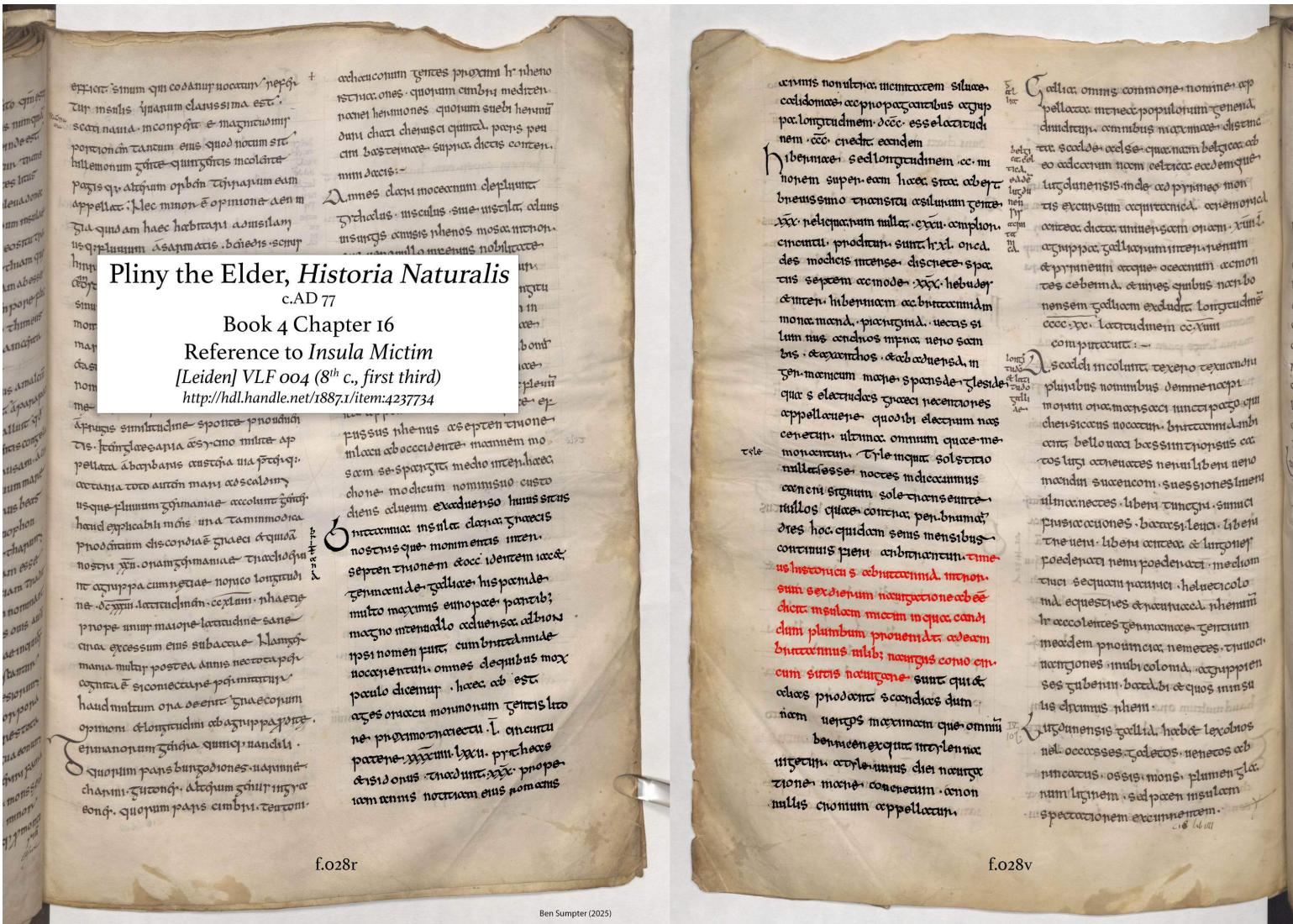
αἰσθοτισσούμενος ἀπραγαλλούμενος. Ιαρίζουσιν ἄστραγαλούς. ὀροκέμμενοις ἀναγράφειν. ὀρομαζομένοις δέ οἱ θεοί.

ἀποτυποῦντες δ' εἰς ἀστραγάλων ῥυθμοὺς κομίζουσιν εἴς τινα νῆσον προκειμένην μὲν τῆς βεττανικῆς, ὀνομαζομένην δέ Ικτιν.

Then they impress [cast?] it into astragalus-size [or shape pieces] carrying it to the island who lays before Britain, so called Iktin.



Appendix 6: NH 4.16 (30/41) in the Leiden Pliny



Appendix 7: Transcription of BH 5.22 in Neapolitanus suppl. gr.4

§1. ἀλλὰ περι μὲν τῶν κατ αυτὴν νομίμων· καὶ των ἀλλων ἕδιωμάτων· κατα μέρος ἀναγράψομεν. ὅταν ἐπι τὴν καίσαρος γενομένην στρατάιαν ἀις βρετγανίαν· παραγενηθῶμεν· νῦν δε περι τοῦ κατ αυτὴν φυομένου κασσιτέρου διέξαιμεν· τῆς γαρ βρετγανικῆς κατὰ τὸ ἀκρωτήριον τὸ καλούμενον βελέριον· ὁι κατοικοῦντες· φιλόξενοι τε διαφερόντως εἰσὶν· καὶ δια τὴν τῶν ξένων ἐμπόρων ἐπιμιξίαν ἔξημερωμένοι τὰς ἀγωγὰς· οὔτοὶ τὸν κασσίτερον κατασκευάζουσι· φιλοτέχνως ἔργαζόμενοι τὴν φέρουσαν ἀυτὸν γῆν·

§2. αὕτη δε πετρώδης οὔσα· διαφυὰς ἔχει γεώδεις· ἐν αἷς τὸν **πῶρον**¹⁴⁸ κατεργαζόμενοι κ[αὶ] τίξαντες· καθαιρουσιν· ἀποτ[ο]ποῦντες δ ἔις ἀστραγάλων ῥυθμοὺς· κομίζουσιν ἔις τινα νῆσον· προκειμένην μὲν τῆς βρεττανικῆς· ὀνομαζομένην δε ἵκτιν· κατα γαρ τὰς ἀμπώταις· ὀναξηραινομένου τοῦ μεταξὺ τόπου· ταὶς ἀμάξαις ἔις ταύ την κομίζουσι δαψιλή τὸν κασσίτερον·

§3. ἕδιον δέ τι συμβαίναι περι τὰς πλησίον νήσος τὰς μεταξὺ καιμέρας· τῆς τε ἔυρώπης καὶ βρεττανικῆς κατα μεν γαρ τὰς πλημμυρίδας¹⁴⁹. τοῦ μεταξὺ πόρου πληρουμένου· νῆσοι φαίνονται· κατα δε τὰς ἀμπώταις· ἀπορρεούσης τῆς θαλάττης· και πολὺν τόπον ἀμαξηραινούσης· θεωροῦνται χερρόνησοι·

§4. ἐντεῦθεν δε · ὁι ἔμποροι παρα τῶν εγχωρίων ὀνοῦνται· καὶ δια κομίζουσιν ἔις τὴν γαλατίαν· το δε τελευταῖον· πεζῇ δια τῆς γαλατίας πορευθέντες ἡμέρας ὡς τριάκοντα· κατάγουσιν ἐπι τῶν ἵππων τὰ φορτία· προς τὴν ἐκβολήν τοῦ ῥοδανοῦ ποταμοῦ·

148 Compare this with Casevitz (2015) and Teubner (1888). This is πόρον in Laur. Plut.70.1 and also πόρον in Vat gr 130; Vat gr 996 is unreadable. [πόρον](#) and [πῶρον](#) are different words in LSJ but ultimately their spellings overlap considerably with πῶρον often spelled πόρον. LSJ cites Plin.HN 36.132 “a stone called 'porus,' which is similar to Parian marble in whiteness and hardness, only not so heavy.” (*Parioque similis candore et duritia, minus tantum ponderosus, qui porus vocatur.*). This is perhaps an example of syncretism.

149 Geminated μ is probably a dittography.

Appendix 8: RSL Curves for Southwest England

