

PYTHEAS OF MASSALIA AND HIS VOYAGE TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC IN THE LIGHT OF ONOMASTICS

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ABSTRACT: The aim of the paper is to review the voyage of Pytheas of Massalia in northern waters of the Atlantic Ocean, as well as to give a structural and etymological analysis of some island names which probably appeared in Pytheas' work *On the Ocean* for the first time. The Arctic Ocean was known as the "Cronian Sea; Sea of Cronos" (Gk. Κρόνιον, Lat. *Cronium*) or as the "Congealed Sea" (Gk. πεπηγυῖα θάλαττα, Lat. *mare concretum*). All the islands located north to Great Britain demonstrate names of Greek origin or with an obvious Hellenic structure (e.g. the Greek suffix -άς, pl. -άδες, hence Lat. *-ades*; the Greek ending -η, hence Lat. *-ē*). The following nesonyms of the Northern Atlantic are thoroughly discussed: the Orkneys (Gk. Ὀρκάδες, Lat. *Orcaes*), the Shetlands (Gk. *Αἰμῶδα, Lat. *Haemodae*), the Hebrides (Gk. Ἑβουδαί or Αἰβοῦδαί, Lat. *Hebudes* or *Ebudes*), the Faeroes (Gk. *Βέργοι, Lat. *Bergi*), Streymoy, the largest island of the Faeroe archipelago (Gk. *Βερρικῆ, Lat. *Berricē*) and Iceland (Gk. Θούλη or *Θύλη, Lat. *Thulē*, *Thylē*, *Tylē*). The toponymic nomenclature of the North Atlantic used by Pomponius Mela, Pliny the Elder and other Roman and Greek geographers evidently derives from Pytheas' work.

Pytheas of Massalia (ca. 380–310 BC) was a Greek traveller, who made a journey to North Europe during the second half of the fourth century BC, as well as an author of sailing and chorographical diaries¹. As many as eighteen known ancient writers mention Pytheas of Massalia by name², in particular

¹ See M. CARY, E.H. WARMINGTON, *The Ancient Explorers*, London 1929, pp. 33–40; H.J. METTE, *Pytheas von Massalia*, Berlin 1952; D. STICHTENOTH, *Pytheas von Marseille: Über das Weltmeer. Die Fragmente übersetzt und erläutert*, Köln–Graz 1959; Ch. HORST ROSEMAN, *Pytheas of Massalia: On the Ocean. Text, Translation and Commentary*, Chicago 1994; B. CUNLIFFE, *The Extraordinary Voyage of Pytheas the Greek*, London 2001; S. MAGNANI, *Il viaggio di Pitea sull'Oceano*, Bologna 2002; D.W. ROLLER, *Through the Pillars of Herakles. Greco-Roman Exploration of the Atlantic*, New York–London 2006; S. BIANCHETTI, M.R. CATAUDELLA, H.J. GEHRKE (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Ancient Geography: The Inhabited World in Greek and Roman Tradition*, Leiden–Boston 2016; T. BILIĆ, *Pytheas and Hecataeus: Visions of the North in the Late Fourth Century B.C.*, GRBS LX 2020, pp. 574–593; L. SCOTT, *Pytheas of Massalia. Texts, Translation and Commentary*, New York 2022.

² HORST ROSEMAN, *Pytheas...* (n. 1), p. 7.

Strabo and Pliny the Elder³. Although his most significant work *On the Ocean* (Gk. *Περὶ τοῦ Ὀκεανοῦ*) has not survived as a whole to the modern times, it was frequently quoted or referred to by the ancient writers. This is one of the reasons why we believe in the reality of Pytheas' voyage⁴. Some of the ancient scholars were distrustful of Pytheas (the most famous example being Strabo, who died some 20 years before Claudius began the occupation of Britain). In the light of the present understanding of the northern Europe's geography, we can refute many of their criticisms. Strabo considers Pytheas an unbelievable falsifier, clearly proving that the Greeks, as well as the Romans, did not positively verify the Arctic data of the Massaliote traveller until the early decades of the 1st century AD. This was done only by the Romans after the conquest of Britain (43 AD) and Orcades (80 AD). There is no doubt, therefore, that the Hellenic or Greek-sounding neonyms of the Northern Atlantic, quoted by Pomponius Mela (in his *Chorographia* published around years 43–44 AD), Pliny the Elder (died 79 AD), Tacitus (ca. 55–ca. 120), Solinus (3rd or 4th c.) and other Roman authors, must have come from Pytheas' *On the Ocean*.

Various aspects of Pytheas' voyage have been investigated by numerous scholars; for example, the exact route of his travel⁵, the chronology and scope of his voyage⁶, the aim of his journey⁷, the location of Thule⁸, the question of

³ HORST ROSEMAN (*Pytheas...* [n. 1], p. 10) considers Strabo "unquestionably the single most important figure in the textual transmission of Pytheas' work", and Pliny the Elder "the most important source for citations of Pytheas after Strabo" (*ibidem*, p. 13). Also Duane W. ROLLER (*The Geography of Strabo. An English Translation, with Introduction and Notes*, Cambridge 2014, p. 25) emphasises that Strabo "is the primary source for the Arctic voyage of Pytheas of Massalia".

⁴ As claimed by Raymond CHEVALLIER, *The Greco-Roman Conception of the North from Pytheas to Tacitus*, Arctic XXXVII 1994, pp. 341–346, at 342, "What is no longer in doubt today is the reality of Pytheas's voyage". He continues to discuss various arguments in favour of this assumption.

⁵ C. MCPHAIL, *Pytheas of Massalia's Route of Travel*, Phoenix LVIII 2014, pp. 247–257.

⁶ Cf. R. KNAPOWSKI, *Probleme der Chronologie und der Reichweite der Entdeckungsreisen des Pytheas von Massalia*, Poznań 1958, with a scrupulous presentation of earlier opinions.

⁷ Numerous researchers suggest a purely commercial aim of Pytheas' journey (for obtaining tin and amber), whereas others postulate research as the main scope of his voyage, cf. W. SIEGLIN, *Entdeckungsgeschichte von England*, in: G. KOLLM (ed.), *Verhandlungen des Siebenten Internationalen Geographen-Kongresses*, vol. II, Berlin 1901, pp. 841–76, at 862; J.O. THOMSON, *History of Ancient Geography*, Cambridge 1948, p. 210; KNAPOWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 6), p. 58 ("Pytheas privatim und ausschließlich zu wissenschaftlichen Zwecken gereist sei"). Most of them doubt that Pytheas of Massalia visited northern territories as a Greek tourist, cf. J.M. ŚLUSARCZYK, *Horyzonty geograficzne starożytnych turystów greckich*, Turystyka Kulturowa IV 2017, fasc. 4, pp. 42–58, at 50.

⁸ See e.g. I. WHITAKER, *The Problem of Pytheas' Thule*, CJ LXXVII 1982, pp. 148–164; Ch. HORST ROSEMAN, *Hour Tables and Thule in Pliny's Natural History*, Centaurus XXX 1987, pp. 93–105; MCPHAIL, *op. cit.* (n. 5), pp. 247–257; D.J. BREEZE, A. WILKINS, *Pytheas, Tacitus and Thule*, Britannia XXXIX 2018, pp. 303–308; D. KEDWARDS, *The Mappae Mundi of Medieval Iceland*, Cambridge 2020, pp. 127–133.

the Baltic amber⁹, the analysis and interpretation of preserved fragments¹⁰. In our article we would like to review Pytheas' onomastic terminology devoted to the Arctic Ocean and the northernmost islands of the Atlantic, which was later repeated in the ancient (Greek and Latin) literary sources after his work *Περὶ τοῦ Ὀκεανοῦ*.

1. THE ARCTIC OCEAN

Albert Lionel F. RIVET and Colin SMITH discuss numerous ancient names of seas around Britain, e.g. the North Sea is named Ὀκεανὸς Γερμανικός by Ptolemy and *Mare Germanicum* by Pliny the Elder; the English Channel is called Ὀκεανὸς Πρεττανικός and *Oceanus Britannicus* by the same authors¹¹. Unfortunately, it is unclear whether these names were used by Pytheas of Massalia or not. However, the Massaliote seafarer was the only Greek writer who personally saw and described the frozen sea (Gk. πεπηγυῖα θάλαττα), i.e. the Arctic Ocean, which – in his opinion – was located one day of the sailing from Iceland and about six days from the northern coast of Britain¹². The Arctic Ocean was also called the Cronian Sea or the Sea of Cronos (by Pseudo-Agathemerus and Philemon, who described the northern Europe on the basis of Pytheas' observations). It is worth emphasising that the North Pole in the fourth century BC was located in a different place than today, thus the Arctic Circle was placed further south than today (66° N), probably ca. 62° N¹³. In fact, 62° N demonstrates the same latitude as the Faeroes¹⁴, whereas Iceland is generally located between 63° and 66° N¹⁵.

Sources:

1.1. Strabo of Amasea (I 4, 2): εἶτ' ἐπὶ τὸν κύκλον τὸν διὰ Θούλης – ἦν φησι Πυθέας ἀπὸ μὲν τῆς Βρεττανικῆς ἐξ ἡμερῶν πλοῦν ἀπέχειν πρὸς

⁹ See e.g. W. SCHULZ, *Das Bernsteinland des Pytheas und der Wanderung der Teutonen*, Forschungen und Fortschritte XXV 1949, pp. 230–232; H. ŁOWMIAŃSKI, *Początki Polski*, vol. I, Warszawa 1963, pp. 127–134.

¹⁰ See especially METTE, *op. cit.* (n. 1); STICHTENOTH, *op. cit.* (n. 1); HORST ROSEMAN, *Pytheas...* (n. 1); SCOTT, *op. cit.* (n. 1).

¹¹ A.L.F. RIVET, C. SMITH, *The Place-Names of Roman Britain*, London 1979, p. 44.

¹² RIVET, SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 42.

¹³ HORST ROSEMAN, *Pytheas...* (n. 1), pp. 106–107 and 119, fig. 7.

¹⁴ It is worth adding that the Faeroe Islands “lie between 61°21' N and 62°24' N, and have 19¾ hours of daylight at summer solstice”, according to HORST ROSEMAN, *Pytheas...* (n. 1), p. 157, n. 17.

¹⁵ Ptolemy locates Thule (i.e. Iceland) at 63° N (according to BREEZE, WILKINS, *op. cit.* [n. 8], p. 306). If these data are based on Pytheas' work, then the measurement, as long as it is assumed to be correct, must have been prepared on the southern coast of the island. Note that Vík í Myrdal, the southernmost village in Iceland, is placed at 63°12'10" N. On the other hand, Raufarhöfn, a small village in the northeastern part of Iceland, is placed at 66°27'15" N. It should be emphasised, however, that the North Pole in the fourth century BC was located ca. 4° further south than today. If so, then the position of Thule must have been measured by Pytheas near the north coast of Iceland.

ἄρκτον, ἐγγύς δ' εἶναι τῆς πεπηγυίας θαλάττης – “then to the parallel that runs through Thule (which Pytheas says is six days’ sail north of Brettanike [i.e. Britain] and is near the Frozen Sea)”¹⁶.

1.2. Pliny the Elder (*HN* IV 104): “A Tyle unius diei navigatione mare concretum a nonnullis Cronium appellatur” – “One day’s sail from Thule is the Frozen Ocean, called by some the Cronian Sea”¹⁷.

1.3. Philemon *apud* Pliny the Elder (*HN* IV 95): “Philemon Morimarusam a Cimbro vocati, hoc est mortuum mare, inde usque ad promunturium Rusbeas, ultra deinde Cronium” – “Philemon says that the Cimbrian name for it is *Morimarusam* (that is, ‘Dead Sea’), from there up to Cape Rusbeae, and from that point onward the Cronian Sea”¹⁸.

1.4. Pseudo-Agathemerus: Κρόνιον (*scil.* πέλαγος) “Cronian (Sea)”¹⁹.

1.5. Gaius Iulius Solinus (22, 9): “Ultra Thylen accipimus pigrum et concretum mare”²⁰ – “Beyond Thule we find the sluggish and frozen sea”²¹.

1.6. Solinus (19, 2): “Oceanum septemtrionalem ex ea parte, qua a Propaniso amne Scythia adluitur, Hecataeus Amalcium appellat, quod gentis illius lingua significat congelatum. Philemon a Cimbris ad promunturium Rubeas Morimarusam dicit vocari, hoc est mortuum mare; ultra Rubeas quicquid est Cronium nominat”²² – “Hecataeus says that the part of the Northern Ocean, on which Scythia is washed by the river Propanisus, bears the name *Amalcium*, which means ‘the Frozen Sea’ in the language of this (Scythian) nation. Philemon says that the Ocean from the Cimbrian people up to the promontory Rubeae is called *Morimarusam*, that is the dead sea; whatever is beyond the Rubeae promontory, it is named *Cronium*”²³.

¹⁶ S. RADT (ed.), *Strabons Geographika*, vol. I, Göttingen 2002, p. 156. The English translation (partially modified) is quoted after ROLLER, *The Geography...* (n. 3), pp. 88–89. See also H.L. JONES (ed.), *The Geography of Strabo*, vol. I, London–Cambridge, MA 1960, p. 232 (Greek text) and p. 233 (English translation); METTE, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 19; HORST ROSEMAN, *Pytheas...* (n. 1), pp. 120–121. There is no doubt that Philemon used the Greek explanation νεκρὸς πόντος or νεκρὴ θάλασσα (lit. ‘dead sea’), translated into Latin as *mortuum mare* by Pliny the Elder.

¹⁷ I. MIKOŁAJCZYK (ed.), Gajusz Pliniusz Sekundus, *Historia Naturalna*, vol. I, Toruń 2017, p. 332. English translation: H. RACKHAM (ed.), Pliny, *Natural History*, vol. II, Cambridge, MA–London 1961, p. 199. See also HORST ROSEMAN, *Pytheas...* (n. 1), p. 92.

¹⁸ RACKHAM, *op. cit.* (n. 17), vol. II, p. 192 (Latin text) and p. 193 (English translation, quoted with a modification). Cf. also HORST ROSEMAN, *Pytheas...* (n. 1), p. 83.

¹⁹ RIVET, SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 44.

²⁰ B.J. KOŁOCZEK (ed.), Gajusz Juliusz Solinus, *Zbiór wiadomości godnych uwagi albo Poli-histor*, Kraków 2020, p. 180.

²¹ Our own translation. An alternative translation is proposed by A.E. APPS, *Gaius Iulius Solinus and His Polyhistor*, PhD diss., Sydney 2011: “Above Thule we hear that the sea is sluggish and frozen”.

²² KOŁOCZEK, *op. cit.* (n. 20), p. 170.

²³ Our own translation.

1.7. Isidore of Seville (*Orig.* XIV 6, 4): “Unde [*scil.* ultra Thylen] et pigrum et concretum est eius mare”²⁴ – “Hence (i.e. beyond Thyle) its sea is sluggish and frozen”²⁵.

Etymology: The purely Greek term πεπηγυῖα θάλαττα, rendered as *mare concretum* in Latin (both mean ‘congealed sea’), was originally used by Pytheas of Massalia, as we may assume on the basis of Strabo’s statement (II 1)²⁶. The form πεπηγυῖα (lit. ‘frozen, congealed’) represents a feminine form of the reduplicated participle of the perfect tense derived regularly from the Greek verb πήγνυμι ‘to fix firmly in the ground; to set firmly; to plant in the ground; to stick, plunge, plant; to fix together, construct, build; to fix, establish, set, hold firm; to make solid or stiff; to be frozen, freeze, coagulate, stiffen’²⁷. Also the term Κρόνιον (πέλαγος) ‘the Cronian Sea; the Sea of Cronos’ was probably taken from Pytheas’ work *On the Ocean*²⁸. It evidently derives from the Greek theonym Κρόνος, denoting the main god of older generation, son of Uranus and Gaia, who reigned all the world before Zeus and the Olympic gods.

Other ancient and modern names: Claudius Ptolemy (II 2, 1) prefers the basic term Ὑπερβόρειος Ὠκεανὸς ‘the Hyperborean Ocean’. Codices B, E, Z of Ptolemy’s *Geography* unanimously add that the same ocean is alternatively named Ὠκεανὸς Πεπηγῶς ἢ Κρόνιος ἢ Νεκρὸς (‘the Frozen Ocean or the Cronian Ocean or the Dead Ocean’). Codices F and Ω document a similar interpolation: Ὑπερβόρειος Ὠκεανὸς, ὃς καὶ Πεπηγῶς ἢ Κρόνιος ἢ Νεκρὸς καλεῖται (‘the Hyperborean Ocean, which also is called the Frozen or the Cronian or the Dead’)²⁹. Both interpolations are probably taken from Dionysius Periegetes’ poem entitled *Οἰκουμένης περιήγησις* (‘Description of the known world’), lines 30–35:

²⁴ A. VALASTRO CANALE (ed.), Isidoro de Siviglia, *Etimologie o Origini*, vol. II, Novara 2014, p. 204.

²⁵ S.A. BARNEY, W.J. LEWIS, J.A. BEACH, O. BERGHOF, *The “Etymologies” of Isidore of Seville. Translated with Introduction and Notes*, Cambridge 2006, p. 294.

²⁶ Note that METTE (*op. cit.* [n. 1]) consequently gives the writing ἡ Πεπηγυῖα Θάλαττα, thus he treats it as a proper name, originally introduced to the Greek language by Pytheas of Massalia, cf. p. 2, n. 1 (“als ‘Πεπηγυῖα Θάλαττα’ bezeichnet Pytheas das Nordmeer”) and p. 48, s.v. Πεπηγυῖα Θάλαττα. Most editors prefer to write this term with small letters. The same scholar consequently introduces the Latin term *mare concretum* as a proper name, cf. p. 4 (“*Mare Concretum* (die Πεπηγυῖα θάλαττα des Pytheas)”) and p. 6 (“Schließlich aber spricht unser Fragment wiederum von dem ‘Geronnenen Meere’, der ‘Πεπηγυῖα θάλαττα’ des Pytheas, das wir bei Plinius als ‘*Mare Concretum*’ kennen lernten, und setzt dieses in der Nähe der Insel Thüle an”).

²⁷ F. MONTANARI, *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, Leiden–Boston 2018, pp. 1660–1661; J. DIGGLE (ed.), *The Cambridge Greek Lexicon [= CGL]*, vol. II, Cambridge 2021, pp. 1129–1130. See also R. BEEKES, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, vol. II, Leiden–Boston 2010, p. 1184.

²⁸ METTE, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 48, s.v. Κρόνιον Πέλαγος.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 3, n. 9.

Ἄτλας ἐσπέριος κικλήσκειται, αὐτὰρ ὕπερθεν
 πρὸς βορέην, ἵνα παῖδες ἀρειμανέων Ἄριμασπῶν,
 πόντον μιν καλέουσι πεπηγότα τε Κρόνιον τε·
 ἄλλοι δ' αὖ καὶ νεκρὸν ἐφήμισαν εἴνεκ' ἀφαυροῦ
 ἡελίου· βράδιον γὰρ ὑπεῖρ ἔλα τήνδε φαίνει,
 αἰεὶ δὲ σκιερῆσι παχύνεται ἐν νεφέλῃσιν

Its name's the western Atlas, but above, | Northwards, the warlike Arimaspi's
 sons' domain, | They call it Cronian and Frozen Sea; | Others call it dead one,
 from the dreary | Sun, which briefly shines above that sea, | And always is
 engrossed in shadowing cloud³⁰.

In his geographical poem Dionysius of Alexandria called *Periegetes* (AD 2nd c.) used two main names denoting the northernmost part of the Atlantic Ocean, i.e. the Arctic Ocean: ὁ Πεπηγὼς Πόντος (“the Frozen Sea”) and ὁ Κρόνιος Πόντος (“the Cronian Sea”). Both are probably adapted from Pytheas’ work³¹. He added the alternative term ὁ Νεκρὸς Πόντος (literally “the Dead Sea”) taken from other Greek source, most probably from a lost work by Philemon, as Pliny the Elder and Solinus seem to suggest (see 1.3 and 1.6).

Three Greek names denoting the Arctic Ocean (namely ὤκεανός, Κρόνιος πόντος and νεκρὴ θάλασσα) appeared in the so-called *Argonautica Orphica*. The authorship and the date of this epic poem are uncertain³², but there is no doubt that the *Orphic Argonautica* must have been written after the publication of Pytheas’ work *On the Ocean*. The text in question (*Arg. Orph.* 1081–1082) runs as follows:

ἔμπεσε δ' ὤκεανῶ, Κρόνιον δέ ἐ κικλήσκουσι,
 πόντον Ὑπερβόρειοι μέροπες, νεκρὴν τε θάλασσαν.

...and [Argo] fell into the Ocean, which the Hyperborean men call the Cronian Sea or the Dead Sea³³.

As far as we know, the Greek term ἀρκτικός ὠκεανός “the Arctic Ocean” appeared for the first time in the *Roman History* (XLIX 43, 1) by Cassius Dio (AD ca. 164–ca. 235)³⁴. It was transferred via MLat.³⁵ *Oceanus Arcticus* to most

³⁰ J.L. LIGHTFOOT (ed.), Dionysius Periegetes, *Description of the Known World. With Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, Oxford 2014, p. 157.

³¹ It is worth emphasising that the Ancient Greeks commonly used four almost synonymous terms for ‘sea’: θάλασσα / θάλαττα (f.), πέλαγος (n.), πόντος (m.) and ὠκεανός (m.).

³² According to Emilia ŻYBERT (*Argonautyki orfickie*, Wrocław 2011, p. 24), it was recorded in Hellenistic times, perhaps in the third century BC in Alexandria.

³³ J. COLAVITO, *The Orphic Argonautica: An English Translation*, Albany, NY 2011.

³⁴ F.R. ADRADOS, *Diccionario griego-español*, vol. III, Madrid 1991, p. 514.

³⁵ Abbreviations used: Cher.: Cheremiss (Mari); Corn.: Cornish; E.: English; Elfd.: Elfdalian; Est.: Estonian; Far.: Faeroese; Fi.: Finnish; G.: German; Gael.: Irish-Gaelic; Gk.: Greek; Icel.: Icelandic; It.: Italian; Kam.: Kamassian; Koib.: Koibal; Lat.: Latin; Lith.: Lithuanian; MDu.:

European languages, e.g. E. *Arctic Ocean*; Est. *Arktika Ookean*; G. *Arktischer Ozean*; It. *Oceano Artico*; Pol. *Ocean Arktyczny*; Sp. *Océano Ártico*³⁶. Also an anonymous author of the late-antique treatise introduced two Greek terms similar to modern terminology: “the Arctic Ocean” and “the Northern Ocean” (Ἀρκτικός καὶ Βόρειος λέγεται), indicating that the same ocean is alternatively named “the Cronian Sea” and “the Frozen Sea” and “the Dead Sea” (ὁ δὲ αὐτός οὗτος σύμπας καὶ Κρόνιον Πέλαγος καὶ Πεπηγώς καὶ Νεκρός ἐπονομάζεται)³⁷.

2. THE ORKNEYS

The Orkneys are firstly registered as *Orcades* by Pomponius Mela, who informs that the archipelago comprises 30 islands³⁸. Pliny the Elder uses the same name *Orcades* saying that they are 40 in number. The Orkneys (Lat. *Orcades*, acc. *Orcadas*) are also mentioned by Juvenal, Tacitus, Orosius, Julius Honorius, Jordanes and Bede. Ptolemy calls them Ὀρκάδες νῆσοι (‘the Orkney islands’). The alternative version *Orchades* appear in some Late Latin sources (Solinus, Eutropius, Jerome, Isidore of Seville), as well as the Greek ones (Gk. Ὀρχάδες in Paeanius and the *Suda*). Paulus Orosius explains that the Orkneys creates an archipelago of 33 islands, among them 13 are inhabited and 20 uninhabited. Jordanes writes that there are 34 Orkney islands, though not all are inhabited³⁹.

Selected sources:

2.1. Pomponius Mela (*Chor.* III 54): “Triginta sunt Orcades angustis inter se diductae spatiis”⁴⁰ – “The thirty Orcades [Orkney Islands] are separated by narrow spaces between them”⁴¹.

Middle Dutch; MLat.: Mediaeval Latin; Mordv.: Mordvinian; Nen.: Nenets Samoyed (Yurak); Ngan.: Nganasan Samoyed (Tawgi); NSaa.: Northern Saami; OE.: Old English; OHG.: Old High German; OIr.: Old Irish; ON.: Old Norse; PCelt.: Proto-Celtic; PG.: Proto-Germanic; Pol.: Polish; Saa.: Saami (Laponian); Scot.-Gael.: Scottish-Gaelic; Selk.: Selkup Samoyed; Sp.: Spanish; Udm.: Udmurt; Yen.: Yenisey Samoyed (Enets); Zyr.: Zyrian.

³⁶ R. FAURE SABATER, *Diccionario de nombres geográficos y étnicos del mundo*, Madrid 2004, p. 56. The Greek adjective ἀρκτικός ‘northern’ derives from the noun ἄρκτος f./m. ‘bear’ and ‘north’. The name refers to the constellation called Μεγάλη Ἄρκτος or *Ursa Maior* (“the Great Bear”), which indicates the North Pole, cf. J. STASZEWSKI, *Mały słownik: pochodzenie i znaczenie nazw geograficznych*, Warszawa 1968, p. 42.

³⁷ Anon. Geogr. Comp. 45. Cf. METTE, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 3, n. 9; G. RASCH, *Antike geographische Namen nördlich der Alpen*, Berlin–New York 2005, p. 45, s.v. *Cronium mare*.

³⁸ RIVET, SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 11), pp. 40, 433.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 40.

⁴⁰ A. SILBERMAN (ed.), Pomponius Mela, *Chorographie*, Paris 1988, p. 82; S. SZARYPKIN, K.T. WITCZAK, *Pomponiusza Meli Chorografia czyli Opis kregu ziemi*, Piotrków Trybunalski 2011, p. 152.

⁴¹ F.E. ROMER (transl.), *Pomponius Mela's Description of the World*, Ann Arbor 1998, p. 117.

2.2. Pliny the Elder (*HN* IV 103): “Sunt autem XL Orcades, modicis inter se discretæ spatiis”⁴² – “There are the 40 Orkneys, separated by narrow channels to each other”⁴³.

2.3. Tacitus (*Agr.* 10, 4): “hanc oram novissimi maris tunc primum Romana classis circumvecta insulam esse Britanniam adfirmavit, ac simul incognitas ad id tempus insulas, quas Orcadas vocant, invenit domuitque” – “A Roman fleet then for the first time sailed around this shore of the most distant sea and confirmed that Britain was an island, and at the same time discovered and subdued islands that had been unknown up to this time, which men call the Orcades”⁴⁴.

2.4. Claudius Ptolemy (II 3, 31): Ὑπὲρ ἤν αἱ Ὀρκάδες, περὶ τριάκοντα τὸν ἀριθμὸν, ὧν τὸν μετὰξὺ ἐπέχει μοίρας λ – ξᾶ γό⁴⁵ – “Above these islands are the Orcades, about thirty in number, the middle of which is in 30° – 61°40’ N”⁴⁶; “Nördlich von ihr die Orkaden/Orkney-Inseln, ungefähr dreissig an der Zahl; ihr Mittelpunkt liegt bei 30° 61°40’”⁴⁷.

2.5. Solinus (22, 9): “Secundum stationem euntibus Orchades praebent. Sed Orchades ab Ebudibus porro sunt septem dierum totidemque noctium cursu numero tres. [...] Ab Orchadibus Thylen usque quinque dierum ac noctium navigatio est”⁴⁸ – “The Orchades provide the second outpost for those journeying. But the Orchades, three in number, are seven days and as many nights further on from the Ebudes. [...] From the Orchades all the way to Thule, the voyage is five days and nights”⁴⁹.

2.6. Paulus Orosius (*Adv. pag.* I 78): “A tergo autem unde oceano infinito patet Orcadas insulas habet quarum XX desertae sunt, XIII coluntur”⁵⁰ – “To its rear, where an infinite expanse of Ocean lies open, are the Orkney Islands. Twenty of these are deserted and thirteen are inhabited”⁵¹.

⁴² MIKOŁAJCZYK, *op. cit.* (n. 17), vol. I, p. 330.

⁴³ RACKHAM, *op. cit.* (n. 17), vol. II, p. 199.

⁴⁴ H.W. BENARIO (transl.), Tacitus, *Agricola, Germany, and Dialogue on Orators*, Indianapolis–Cambridge 2006, p. 32. See also BREEZE, WILKINS, *op. cit.* (n. 8), p. 303.

⁴⁵ A. STÜCKELBERGER, G. GRASSHOFF (eds.), Ptolemaios, *Handbuch der Geographie*, Basel²2006, p. 157.

⁴⁶ E.L. STEVENSON (transl.), Claudius Ptolemy, *The Geography*, New York 1991, p. 51.

⁴⁷ STÜCKELBERGER, GRASSHOFF, *op. cit.* (n. 45), p. 157.

⁴⁸ KOŁOCZEK, *op. cit.* (n. 20), p. 180.

⁴⁹ Translated by APPS, *op. cit.* (n. 21).

⁵⁰ C. ZANGEMEISTER (ed.), *Pauli Orosii Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII*, Vindobonae 1882, p. 29.

⁵¹ A.T. FEAR (transl.), Orosius, *Seven Books of History against the Pagans*, Liverpool 2010, p. 45.

2.7. Jordanes (*Get.* I 34): “nec non et Orcadas numero XXXIV, quamvis non omnes excultas” – “besides the Orcades [Orkneys], thirty-four in number, though not all inhabited”⁵².

2.8. Isidore of Seville (*Orig.* XIV 6, 5): “Orcades insulae Oceani intra Britanniam positae munero triginta tres, quarum viginti desertae sunt, tredecim coluntur”⁵³ – “The Orkneys (*Orcades*) are islands of the Ocean within Britannia, numbering thirty-three, of which twenty are uninhabited and thirteen colonized”⁵⁴.

Comments: The Orkney Islands, conquered in AD 80 by Agricola's fleet, became part of the Roman empire beginning from the first century AD. They are frequently mentioned in the Roman and Greek literary sources. This is why the identification of Orcades with the Orkneys is certain and accepted by all researchers⁵⁵.

Etymology: Most scholars believe that the name *Orcades* represents a Celto-Greek hybrid, containing most probably the Celtic noun **orkos* ‘pork, young pig’ (< IE. **porkos* m. ‘young pig, piglet’, cf. OIr. *orc* ‘piglet, young pig / porc jeune’⁵⁶, Lat. *porcus* m. ‘tame, swine, hog, pig’, OHG. *farah* n. ‘piglet’, OE. *fearh*, Lith. *pařsas* m. ‘castrated male pig, hog, barrow, pork; piglet, young pig; male pig, boar’, Pol. *prosię* ‘young pig’)⁵⁷, used as a tribal or totemistic designation, and the Hellenic suffix -άδες (in plural). We generally agree with RIVET and SMITH's statement that this name was taken by Pomponius Mela (and other Roman writers) from an earlier (Ancient Greek) geographical literature, which may indicate that the nesonym *Orcades* (< Gk. Ὀρκάδες) was “already old when [it] came to Mela, and had been first set down in the Greek of Pytheas”⁵⁸. There is no doubt that when the name *Orcades* (acc. pl. *Orcadas*) “became known to Pytheas, a Celtic people must already have established in the islands”⁵⁹.

⁵² C.C. MIEROW (transl.), *The Gothic History by Jordanes*, Princeton–London 1915, p. 53. Translation augmented and slightly modified.

⁵³ VALASTRO CANALE, *op. cit.* (n. 24), vol. II, p. 204.

⁵⁴ BARNEY, LEWIS, BEACH, BERGHOF, *op. cit.* (n. 25), p. 294.

⁵⁵ See especially RIVET, SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 434: “Identification. The Orkney Islands”.

⁵⁶ J. VENDRYES, *Lexique étymologique de l'irlandais ancien*, vol. II, Dublin–Paris 1959, p. O-28. There are also homonyms in Old Irish and Middle Irish, cf. OIr. *orc* m. ‘salmon, *Salmo salar* L. / saumon’ (< IE. **porkos* m. ‘a stripped fish’, cf. Lat. *porcus* m. ‘a kind of freshwater fish’, perhaps ‘trout’, Ligurian river name *Porcobera*, literally ‘bearing the fish called *porkos*’, perhaps ‘trout-bearing’), as well as Mlr. *orc* m. ‘egg / œuf’ and Mlr. *orca* f. ‘calf (of a human) / mollet’.

⁵⁷ R. MATASOVIĆ, *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Celtic*, Leiden–Boston 2009, p. 137. He additionally notes that “[t]he name of Orkneys is probably from the same PCelt. root”. See also W. SMOCZYŃSKI, *Lithuanian Etymological Dictionary*, vol. III, Berlin 2018, p. 915 and M. RYCHŁO, *Ślady prawa Grimma w angielszczyźnie w zestawieniu z polskimi wyrazami pokrewnymi: pie. *p > pgerm. *f*, *Język Polski* XCIV 2014, fasc. 3, pp. 200–211, at 208.

⁵⁸ RIVET, SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 433.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 433–434. See also W.S. WATSON, *The History of the Celtic Place-Names of Scotland*, Edinburgh 1926, pp. 28–30.

RIVET and SMITH review opinions of earlier scholars devoted to the semantic motivation of the nesonym *Orcades*. They tentatively assume that it “might mean literally ‘whale islands’ or refer to a sea-monster or to some large creature such as seals or porpoises (Williams), or it might mean ‘îles de saumon’ (Guyonvarc’h); it can scarcely refer literally to pigs or boars. But it is also possible, according to Watson 28–30, that the name derives from a tribal designation, **Orcoi* ‘boars’, which as Watson notes was a noble animal in Celtic folklore”⁶⁰.

It cannot be ruled out that the Celtic word *orc* once designated a large marine mammal living in the Atlantic Ocean⁶¹. Indeed, the Romans borrowed a similar sounding term for a large sea animal from some northern source (presumably from a Gaulish or Brythonic or Goidelic dialect), cf. Lat. *orca* f. ‘a large sea mammal’, prob. ‘the grampus’ (Plin. *HN* IX 12–14)⁶² (< PCelt. **orkā* f. < IE. **porḱā* f. ‘pig, swine, sow’, cf. Lat. *porca* f. ‘a female pig, sow’). Moreover, the Romans used their native terms for designating marine animals, cf. Lat. *porcus* (*marinus*) m. ‘harbour porpoise, *Phocoena phocoena* L. / marsouin’ (Plin. *HN* XXXII 19, 56, 150) ← Lat. *porcus* m. ‘male pig, boar’⁶³; Lat. *porculus marinus* m. ‘a fish, perhaps a kind of shark, *Centrina salviani* L.’ (Plin. *HN* IX 45) ← Lat. *porculus* m. ‘young pig’⁶⁴; Lat. *suillus* m. ‘a kind of marine animal’ (Isid. *Orig.* XII 6, 12: “*porci marini, qui vulgo vocantur suilli, qui dum escam quaerunt, more suis terram sub aquis fodiunt*”) ← Lat. *suillus* m. ‘young or small pig’⁶⁵. The Brittonic Celts also introduced a number of associative names for sea animals, e.g. W. *morhwch* ‘dolphin’ (< PCelt. **mori-sūkā*, literally ‘sea sow’); OW. *morfil* ‘whale’, Corn. *morvil* ‘cetous’ (< PCelt. **mori-mīlon* n. ‘whale’, lit. ‘sea animal’, cf. OIr. *mīl mora* ‘whale’, lit. ‘animal of the sea’)⁶⁶.

⁶⁰ RIVET, SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 433.

⁶¹ FAURE SABATER (*op. cit.* [n. 36], pp. 445–446) expresses the following opinion: “El topónimo se documenta en época romana como *Orcades*, y en el año 970 como *Orkaneya*. Parece tratarse de un derivado del céltico *orc*. que servía para designar grandes animales marinos, como focas, orcas o ballenas, voz emparentada con el latín *orca*, ‘orca’. La forma española *Orcades* se tomó de la latina”.

⁶² J.T. WHITE, *A Complete Latin-English and English-Latin Dictionary*, London 1899, p. 429, s.v. *orca* (“etym. dub.; but prob. of northern origin, the word *orc* in Erse signifying a pig, a salmon, a whale”). It is worth emphasising that most researchers suggest a Greek origin of Lat. *orca*, referring to Gk. ὀρυξ (acc. sg. ὀρυγα) ‘eine Walfischart’, see E. DE SAINT-DENIS, *Le vocabulaire des animaux marins en latin classique*, Paris 1947, p. 77; A. WALDE, J.B. HOFMANN, *Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. II, Heidelberg 1954, p. 220; P.G.W. GLARE (ed.), *Oxford Latin Dictionary* [= *OLD*], Oxford 1968, p. 1265.

⁶³ See DE SAINT-DENIS, *op. cit.* (n. 62), p. 90. The author gives a number of similar formations attested in the Romance and Germanic languages, including It. *porco marino*, Fr. *porc de mer*, OHG. *merisuin*, G. *Meerschwein* ‘porpoise’. See also Pol. *morświn* ‘harbour porpoise’.

⁶⁴ *OLD*, p. 1265.

⁶⁵ DE SAINT-DENIS, *op. cit.* (n. 62), pp. 90 and 111.

⁶⁶ W. STOKES, A. BEZZENBERGER, *Wortschatz der keltischen Spracheinheit*, Göttingen 1894, p. 217.

Modern names: E. *Orkneys*; Pol. *Orkady*⁶⁷; Sp. *Orcadas*. The Nordic name of the Orkneys, *Orkneyjar*, was registered for the first time as *Orkaneya* in 970. It derives from ON. *orkn* n. 'a kind of seal / Robbenart' and ON. *ey* f. 'island', thus it probably denotes "the seal islands / Robbeninseln"⁶⁸. The Nordic term for 'island', attested in Far. *oyggj* f. 'island' and Elfd. *ä* f. 'id.', derives from PG. **aujō* f. 'wetland, island', cf. OE. *īeg* f. 'island', MDu. *ooi*, *ouwe* f. 'island in a river, wetland', OHG. *ouwa* f. 'island, meadow', G. *Aue* f. 'meadow'⁶⁹. The Proto-Germanic noun in question appears in some names of the northern European islands or peninsulas, attested in ancient times, e.g. *Austeravia* (Plin. *HN* IV 97) 'Helgoland' (originally 'the eastern island')⁷⁰; *Scatinavia* (Plin. *HN* IV 96) 'Scandinavia or Scandinavian Peninsula'. The English name for the Orkney Islands is of Nordic origin. Although the earliest quotation for the Orkneys provided by the *Oxford English Dictionary* dates from year 1805, a significantly earlier evidence can be found in Layamon's *Brut* (ca. 1190–1215), a Middle English poem compiled and recast by the English priest Layamon. In line 11289, we find the following nesonyms: *Gutlond & Irlond, Orcaneie & Islond* "Gotland and Ireland, the Orkneys and Iceland"⁷¹.

3. THE SHETLANDS

The Shetlands are mentioned as *Haemodae* by Roman authors (e.g. Pomponius Mela, Pliny the Elder)⁷², who distinguish as many as seven islands in the archipelago. This number referred presumably to the inhabited Shetland islands in antiquity⁷³. According to Pomponius Mela, the Shetlands are located facing

⁶⁷ STASZEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 36), p. 320.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 189–190; J. DE VRIES, *Atlnordisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Leiden 1977, p. 420, s.v. *orkn*; W.B. LOCKWOOD, *On the Early History and Origin of the Names Orkney and Shetland*, Namm och Bygd LVIII 1980, pp. 19–35, at 20–23.

⁶⁹ G. KROONEN, *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Germanic*, Leiden–Boston 2013, p. 41. See also V. OREL, *A Handbook of Germanic Etymology*, Leiden–Boston 2003, p. 4.

⁷⁰ On PG. **austera-* 'east, eastwards', see KROONEN, *op. cit.* (n. 69), p. 43. Helgoland was primitively treated as the easternmost island of the Frisian archipelago. RASCH (*op. cit.* [n. 37], p.24) does not suggest a concrete location (an unidentified island "vor der friesische Küste").

⁷¹ G.L. BROOK, R.F. LESLIE (eds.), *Lazamon: Brut. Edited from British Museum MS. Cotton Caligula A. IX and British Museum MS. Cotton Otho C. XIII*, vols. I–II, London 1963–1978.

⁷² RIVET, SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 41 ("probably the Shetlands") and p. 241 ("probably the Shetland Islands, which were misidentified as *Thule* by Agricola's fleet"). HORST ROSEMAN (*Pytheas...* [n. 1], p. 90) correctly stresses that the Orkneys (Lat. *Orcades*) and the Shetlands (Lat. *Haemodae*) were known to Pomponius Mela (*Chor.* III 54). Also BREEZE and WILKINS (*op. cit.* [n. 8], p. 303) accept this position, strongly stressing that "[t]here is no reason to doubt Rivet and Smith's conclusion that the Shetland Islands were *Haemodae*".

⁷³ Today fifteen Shetland islands are inhabited. Some researchers note, however, that "[t]here are 16 islands in the Shetland archipelago, but seven larger islands", see BREEZE, WILKINS, *op. cit.* (n. 8), p. 305.

Germania (“contra Germaniam”)⁷⁴, which means that they face the North Sea (called *Mare Germanicum*).

Sources:

3.1. Pomponius Mela (*Chor.* III 54): “septem Haemodae contra Germaniam vectae” – “the seven Haemodae extend opposite Germany”⁷⁵.

3.2. Pliny the Elder (*HN* IV 103): “VII Haemodae” – “the 7 Shetlands”⁷⁶.

Comments: The identification of *Haemodae* with the Shetlands is wholly convincing. The Shetland archipelago contains, in fact, seven larger islands⁷⁷. Pomponius Mela is correct that the Shetlands face towards the North Sea, thus they are opposite to the Germanic areas in Scandinavia, Jutland and the European coast between Rhine and Elbe (Lat. *Albis*).

Etymology: According to RIVET and SMITH, the derivation of the island name in question is “unknown”⁷⁸. It seems probable, however, that the Latin nesonym *Haemodae* renders Gk. *Αἰμῶδαι or a similar Hellenic prototype (e.g. *Αἰμῶδεις), which derives from the Greek noun αἷμα n. ‘blood’⁷⁹. In fact, the name *Αἰμῶδαι is not attested in the preserved Ancient Greek literature. In other words, the tentative hypothesis according to which the nomenclature *Αἰμῶδαι or *Αἰμῶδεις (attested as *Haemodae* in the Latin geographical works) goes back to the lost work *Περὶ τοῦ Ὀκεανοῦ* by Pytheas of Massalia, is noteworthy. It cannot be excluded that the proper name *Haemodae* was connected with a possible bloody slaughter of marine mammals on coasts of the Shetland islands. Note that every year there is a traditional hunting of dolphins and whales on the Faeroe islands, known as *grindadráp*. In September 2021, over 1,400 dolphins were killed. A similar massacre of the marine mammals used to take place in the historical times on the Shetlands.

⁷⁴ HORST ROSEMAN, *Pytheas...* (n. 1), p. 90, n. 94.

⁷⁵ Translated into English by ROMER, *op. cit.* (n. 41), p. 117. Note that the translator wrongly identifies the islands called *Haemodae* as “Denmark”. Also SILBERMAN (*op. cit.* [n. 40], p. 286) suggests that the *Haemodae* should be identified with “îles danoises”. For a different interpretation, see SZARYPKIN, WITCZAK, *op. cit.* (n. 40), p. 152. In fact, the Danish islands are not located towards the Germanic seashore (*contra Germaniam*), understood by the ancient Romans as the coast of the North Sea from the Rhine to the Elbe.

⁷⁶ RACKHAM, *op. cit.* (n. 17), vol. II, p. 199; MIKOŁAJCZYK, *op. cit.* (n. 17), vol. I, p. 330.

⁷⁷ BREEZE, WILKINS, *op. cit.* (n. 8), pp. 305–306.

⁷⁸ RIVET, SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 241.

⁷⁹ *CGL*, vol. I, p. 32. It is worth emphasising that the island name *Haemodae* ‘the Shetlands’ cannot be directly related to Gk. αἰμῶδης, -ες adj. (*es*-stem) ‘bloody, blood red’, also ‘that has irritated (or bleeding) teeth’, cf. ADRADOS, *op. cit.* (n. 34), vol. I, p. 89; MONTANARI, *op. cit.* (n. 27), p. 52. The regular plural form of the Hellenic adjective should be αἰμῶδεις. This is why the proper name *Αἰμῶδαι is structurally unclear. Of course, the Latin name *Haemodae* could be wrongly created on the basis of a Greek inflectional form (e.g. gen. pl. *Αἰμῶδῶν).

Modern names: E. *Shetland*; Pol. *Wyspy Szetlandzkie*, *Szetlandy*⁸⁰; ON. *Hjaltland*; Scot.-Gael. *Catuibh*; Saa. *Ketje* (< *ketje* 'end'). The modern name of the Shetlands is probably first recorded in 1190 in the form *Hetland*, attested in a letter written by Harald, earl of Orkney, Shetland and Caithness: "Dilectissimis amicis suis et hominibus Haraldus Orcardensis. Hetlandensis et Catanesie comes salutem" (*Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, 1190). Most researchers believe that *Hetland* probably stems from the Old Norse words *hjalt* 'hilt', and *land* 'land'⁸¹. According to Peder GAMMELTOFT, "[t]he specifics betray that the original form of the specific of Shetland must be akin to **Hjat-*, and not *Hjalt-* as is often claimed"⁸². It cannot be excluded that the initial part **het-* derives from ON. *hetja*, Icel. *hetja*, Far. *hetja* 'brave warrior / mutiger Krieger'⁸³, thus the name of *Hetland* can theoretically denote "the islands of brave warriors". Józef STASZEWSKI explains *Hetland* by means of the Saami word *ketje* 'end', noting additionally that "czarnowłosa pierwotna ludność tutejszych wysp wydaje się również pochodzenia fińskiego ze Skandynawii" [the black-haired indigenous population of the local islands also seems to be of Finnish origin from Scandinavia]⁸⁴. In his interpretation, the original name *Hetland* represents a Saami-Nordic hybrid compound denoting "the land at the end (of the world)".

The English name *Shetland* demonstrates [ʃ] in the initial position. In order to explain the change of the initial consonant, it can be hypothesised that the initial letters <hj> reflected a voiceless sonorant, which may have been interpreted as a fricative *sh* [ʃ] by the speakers who lacked voiceless sonorants in their phonological system.

4. THE HEBRIDES

The Hebrides (Gk. Ἐβρουδαί or Αἰβοῦδαί; Lat. *Ebudes* or *Hebudes*) was mentioned by some Ancient Greek geographers (e.g. Ptolemy, Stephanus of

⁸⁰ STASZEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 36), p. 414.

⁸¹ LOCKWOOD, *op. cit.* (n. 68), p. 20. Note that ON. *hjalti*, *hjaltr* m. denotes 'an inhabitant of the Shetlands / Bewohner der Shetland-Inseln', whereas the Shetlandic term *sjalti*, *sjalt* means 'Shetland pony, shelty / Shetlands-Pferd', cf. J. JAKOBSEN, *Etymologisk Ordbog over det orrøne Sprog på Shetland*, København 1921, p. 741; DE VRIES, *op. cit.* (n. 68), p. 231.

⁸² P. GAMMELTOFT, *Shetland and Orkney Island-Names – A Dynamic Group*, in: R.M. MILLAR (ed.), *Northern Lights, Northern Words. Selected Papers from the FRLSU Conference, Kirkwall 2009*, Aberdeen 2010, pp. 15–25, at 21. The mediaeval attestations for the Shetlands (e.g. *Hetlandensis* 1190; *Hiatlandi* 1299; *Hietlandie* 1266; *Hietlandie* 1379; *Hiatlandi* 1405; *Hieltland* 1412; *Hetland* 1431) clearly demonstrate that the name *Hetland* must be assumed as primitive. The alternative form *Heltiland* is of innovative origin (it appears as early as the 15th century AD). In other words, the semantics "Hilt-land" is secondary, probably caused by a folk etymology.

⁸³ DE VRIES, *op. cit.* (n. 68), p. 226.

⁸⁴ STASZEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 36), p. 414. He refers to TAYLOR (1888).

Byzantium), as well as some Roman writers (e.g. Pliny the Elder, Solinus)⁸⁵. Pliny knows 30 islands, Solinus only 5. Stephanus of Byzantium places five islands called Αἰβοῦδαι north to Ireland. Ptolemy notes additionally that the most westerly island of the Hebrides is known as Ἔβουδα⁸⁶.

Sources:

4.1. Pliny the Elder (*HN* IV 103): “XXX Hebudēs”⁸⁷ – “the 30 Hebrides”⁸⁸.

4.2. Claudius Ptolemy (II 2, 10): Ὑπέρκεινται δὲ νῆσοι τῆς Ἰουερνίας, αἵ τε καλούμεναι Ἔβουδαι, ἑ τὸν ἀριθμὸν. ὧν ἡ δὲ δυτικότερα καλεῖται Ἔβουδα⁸⁹ – “Above Hibernia [= Ireland] are the Ebuda islands [= Outer Hebrides] five in number, the largest of which toward the west is called Ebuda”⁹⁰.

4.3. Solinus (22, 9): “A Calidoniae promuntorio Thylen petentibus bidui navigatio est. Inde excipiunt Ebudes insulae quinque numero, quarum incolae nesciunt fruges, piscibus tantum et lacte vivunt. [...] Sed Orchades ab Ebudibus porro sunt septem dierum totidemque noctium cursu numero tres”⁹¹ – “For those seeking Thule, the voyage from the Calidonian promontory to the Ebudes islands is two days long. These are five in number, and their inhabitants do not know grain, but live on fish and milk. [...] But the Orchades, three in number, are seven days and as many nights further on from the Ebudes”⁹².

4.4. Stephanus of Byzantium (*Ethn.* α.90): Αἰβοῦδαι· νῆσοι εἴ τῆς Πρετανικῆς, ὡς Μαρκιανὸς ἐν περιπλῶ. τὸ ἐθνικὸν Αἰβουδαῖος⁹³ – “*Aibudai* (Hebrides), the five Britannic islands, as Markianos in his periplus. The ethnic name is *Aibudaios*” (our own translation).

Comments: Pliny’s thirty *Hebudēs* are commonly identified with the Hebrides. Ptolemy and Stephanus of Byzantium presumably refers Ἔβουδαι (later transcribed as Αἰβοῦδαι), five in number, to the Outer Hebrides and not to the Inner Hebrides. It is uncertain whether or not Ptolemy’s single Ἔβουδα refers to Lewis and Harris, the largest island of the Outer Hebrides.

Etymology: William J. WATSON suggests that the Old Irish term *Ibdaig* (‘Hebrideans’), denoting one of tribes of the Mediaeval Ireland goes back to the

⁸⁵ RIVET, SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 40.

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 354.

⁸⁷ MIKOŁAJCZYK, *op. cit.* (n. 17), vol. I, p. 330.

⁸⁸ RACKHAM, *op. cit.* (n. 17), vol. II, p. 199.

⁸⁹ *Claudi Ptolemaei Geographia*, ed. K.F.A. NOBBE, vol. I, Lipsiae 1843, p. 66.

⁹⁰ Translated by STEVENSON, *op. cit.* (n. 46), p. 49. Our additions are placed in brackets.

⁹¹ KOŁOCZEK, *op. cit.* (n. 20), p. 180.

⁹² Translated by APPS, *op. cit.* (n. 21).

⁹³ M. BILLERBECK (ed.), *Stephani Byzantii Ethnica*, vol. I, Berolini–Novi Eboraci 2006, p. 74 (Greek text) and p. 75 (German translation). See additionally G.F. BENSELER, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Eigennamen*, Braunschweig 1911, p. 28; ADRADOS, *op. cit.* (n. 34), vol. I, p. 76.

Celtic archetype **Ebudācī* ‘men of the *Ebudae*’⁹⁴. Moreover, the Scottish Gaelic *Ibdach* refers to the modern population of the Hebrides. The name of the islands, as well as that of the tribe, cannot be explained on the basis of the Celtic vocabulary, thus it is convincingly suggested that they “may well be pre-Celtic”⁹⁵. The non-Celtic origin of the primitive inhabitants of the Hebrides seems possible, if the Picts, the earliest people in the North Scotland, represent a foreign Pre-Celtic population. On the other hand, Roberto FAURE SABATER suggests a purely Celtic etymology for *Hebudes*, referring to W. *hebyd* ‘without grain / sine cereal’⁹⁶. The last explanation seems to suggest that the Hebrides were considered by the Brittonic Celts as distant islands devoid of useful things for the human life (cf. W. *hebyd* ‘without’).

Mediaeval and modern names: Gael. *Inse Ghall* (literally ‘Gaelic Isles’); ON. *Suðr-eyjar* (‘Hebrides’, lit. ‘Southern Isles’); Icel. *Suðreyjar*, Far. *Suduroyggjar* (lit. ‘the southern islands’). The Nordic nesonym was evidently given from the point of view of inhabitants of Iceland, the Shetlands and the Faeroe Islands⁹⁷. Most modern names seem to reflect an English innovation created in the 18th century on the basis of a wrong reading of the ancient nesonym *Hebudes*⁹⁸. Secondary names: E. *Hebrides*; Sp. *Hébrides*; Pol. *Hebrydy* and so on⁹⁹.

5. THE FAEROES AND THE STREYMOY

The Faeroe Islands are mentioned as *Bergos* (acc. pl.) by Pliny the Elder, who distinguishes the largest island of them, i.e. Streymoy, under the Latin name *Berricē* (< Gk. **Βερρικῆ*)¹⁰⁰. Pliny adds that one may sail from Berrice to Thule (i.e. to Iceland). Pomponius Mela stresses that Thule is opposite the coun-

⁹⁴ WATSON, *op. cit.* (n. 59), p. 38. See also RIVET, SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 355.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 354.

⁹⁶ FAURE SABATER, *op. cit.* (n. 36), p. 290, s.v. Hébridas: “La etimología del nombre es incierta, aunque se ha señalado la posible relación con el galés *hebyd*, ‘sin cereal’, como alusión al hecho de que la isla era un terreno inculto; de hecho, en fuentes antiguas se señala que los habitantes de estas islas no conocían el cultivo del cereal”. See S. LOSIQUE, *Dictionnaire étymologique des noms de pays et de peuples*, Paris 1971.

⁹⁷ LOCKWOOD, *op. cit.* (n. 68), p. 19.

⁹⁸ RIVET, SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 355 (“Modern *Hebrides* derives from an English misreading of Solinus’ *Ebudes*, and with reference to the two large groups of outlying islands, is a misapplication of the ancient name”). See also STASZEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 36), p. 168; FAURE SABATER, *op. cit.* (n. 36), p. 290.

⁹⁹ FAURE SABATER, *op. cit.* (n. 36), p. 290. According to STASZEWSKI (*op. cit.* [n. 36]), the Hebrideans are a mixture of the Goidelic and Nordic tribes. The name of the main island of the Outer Hebrides called *Lewis and Harris* demonstrates the same treatment. E. *Lewis* derives from Gael. *Leoghas* (lit. ‘marshland’) and E. *Harris* from ON. *Har ey* (lit. ‘high island’).

¹⁰⁰ S. WOLFSON (*Tacitus, Thule and Caledonia. The Achievements of Agricola’s Navy in their True Perspectives*, Oxford 2008, p. 20, n. 47) stresses that Berrice is a Greek name, which

try of the Belcae (i.e. to the Faeroe Isles)¹⁰¹. Thus, it can be suggested that the Faeroes were settled either by Belgae, the well-known Celtic tribe, or by a local (non-Celtic) people, whose tribal name (Lat. *Belcae*) was accidentally similar to that of Belgae.

Sources:

5.1. Pomponius Mela (*Chor.* III 57): “Thyle Belcarum litori adposita est” – “Thule is located near the coast of Belcae”¹⁰².

5.2. Pliny the Elder (*HN* IV 104): “Sunt, qui et alias prodant: [...] Bergos maximaque omnium Berricen, ex qua in Tylen navigetur”¹⁰³ – “Some writers speak of other islands as well [...] the Faeroes (*Bergi*), and Berrice, the largest of all, from which the crossing to Thule starts”¹⁰⁴.

Comments: Christina HORST ROSEMAN notes that Ireland, Britain, the Orkneys, the Hebrides and the Shetlands are “securely identified”¹⁰⁵. In her opinion, “[t]he *Bergi* might also indicate the Faeroes”, though she does not exclude other alternative possibilities (e.g. *Bergi* “could be taken as an earlier name for the Shetlands” and “Berrice might be the largest of these, Mainland”)¹⁰⁶. Pliny the Elder distinguishes between the *Bergi* islands and the *Haemodae* (i.e. the Shetlands), thus the suggested identification of *Bergi* with the Faeroes and Berrice with Streymoy, the largest island of this archipelago, seems the best possible option. Note that the Faeroe islands are exactly located between the Shetlands and Iceland. They may be treated as the last known stay during a sea journey from Britain to Thule, i.e. Iceland.

The Mediaeval Irish sources inform about a semi-legendary people called *Fir Bolc* or *Fir Bolg*, who was registered as *Builc* (Old Welsh nom. pl.) in the early ninth-century Latin text of Nennius’ *Historia Brittonum*¹⁰⁷. Nennius (*floruit* ca. 830) informs us that this people possessed a number of islands, including

evidently derives from Pytheas’ relation. Other scholars agree with his opinion, see e.g. BREEZE, WILKINS, *op. cit.* (n. 8), p. 305.

¹⁰¹ O.A.W. DILKE, *Geographical Perceptions of the North in Pomponius Mela and Ptolemy*, Arctic XXXVII 1984, pp. 347–351, at 348. The author correctly notes that Pomponius Mela treats *Belcae* as a synonym for the Scythians (*Chor.* III 36), which may suggest that “the *Belcae* were the inhabitants of *Balcia*” (quotation from p. 349). The island of *Balcia* is commonly identified with Pytheas’ *Basilica* (< Gk. *Βασιλειᾶ).

¹⁰² ROMER, *op. cit.* (n. 41), p. 117. For the Latin text, see SILBERMAN, *op. cit.* (n. 40), p. 83; SZARYPKIN, WITCZAK, *op. cit.* (n. 40), p. 152.

¹⁰³ MIKOŁAJCZYK, *op. cit.* (n. 17), vol. I, p. 332.

¹⁰⁴ Translated by RACKHAM, *op. cit.* (n. 17), p. 199, with some modifications.

¹⁰⁵ HORST ROSEMAN, *Pytheas...* (n. 1), p. 90.

¹⁰⁶ For these quotations, see HORST ROSEMAN, *Pytheas...* (n. 1), p. 94.

¹⁰⁷ VENDRYES, *op. cit.* (n. 56), vol. I, p. B-68.

Eubonia (= Isle of Man) and other near islands¹⁰⁸. The book entitled *Lebor Bretnach* (§13), being a translation of Nennius' work into Old Irish, made by Gilla Cóemain (11th c.), gives OIr. *Fir Bolg* (< PCelt. **viroi Bulkoi* 'men of the Belgi/Belgae') as an equivalent of OW. *Builc*. It was claimed that the people of Fir Bolg used their own language called *belgaid* or *bealgoth*. According to Joseph VENDRYES, *belgaid* is an imaginary language, inspired by the name of *Belgae* ("nom d'une langue imaginaire attribuée aux *Fir Bolg* [...]. Inspiré par le nom de peuple *Belgae*")¹⁰⁹. We cannot agree with his claim. The *Belgae* and other tribes of the Gallia Belgica spoke their own language, which was completely different from Gaulish and Aquitanian (= Ancient Basque), as it is explicitly documented by Julius Caesar (*Gall.* I 1, 1–3):

Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres, quarum unam incolunt Belgae, aliam Aquitani, tertiam qui ipsorum lingua Celtae, nostra Galli appellantur. *Hi omnes lingua, institutis, legibus inter se differunt.* Gallos ab Aquitanis Garumna flumen, a Belgis Matrona et Sequana dividit. Horum omnium fortissimi sunt Belgae...

Gaul, if you take all of it into account, is divided into three regions. The *Belgae* live in one, the *Aquitani* in the second, and in the third a people called *Celts* in their own language but *Gauls* in ours. *These three peoples are all different from one another in their languages, institutions, and laws.* The *Garumna* River separates the *Aquitani* from the *Gauls*, and the *Matrona* and *Sequana* Rivers separate the *Gauls* from the *Belgae*. Of all these groups, the most warlike are the *Belgae*...¹¹⁰

The *Belgae* invaded the British Isles in prehistorical times, probably earlier than the Goidelic Celts and the Brittonic Celts. According to Arthur W. WADE-EVANS, the *Builc* (= OIr. *Fir Bolg* 'men of the Bolg', genetically related to *Belgi* or *Belgae*) were "pre-Scottish invaders of Ireland who, after their defeat at Mag Tuired in Co. Sligo, fled to various islands"¹¹¹. It is possible that a fraction of the

¹⁰⁸ Nennius (*HB* 14): "Builc autem cum suis tenuit Euboniam insulam et alias circiter" – "Builc with his followers held the island of Eubonia, *Man*, and other around about"; translated by A.W. WADE-EVANS, *Nennius's "History of the Britons" together with "The Annals of the Britons" and "Court Pedigrees of Hywel the Good"*, also "The Story of the Loss of Britain", London 1938, p. 41. See also J.A. GILES (transl.), Nennius, *History of the Britons (Historia Brittonum)*, Cambridge (Ontario) 2000, p. 8.

¹⁰⁹ VENDRYES, *op. cit.* (n. 56), p. B-30, s.v. *belgaid*. The author rejects any connection of *belgaid* 'a native language of the Fir Bolg' and the tribal name *Belgae* 'ancient Belgians' with the Old Irish adjective *belgach* 'bavard, loquace, talkative, gossipy / bavard' (< PCelt. **belgākos* adj.), though there are numerous examples of an obvious relation between the tribal names and the adjectives denoting a kind of saying, e.g. E. *Laconian* 'a native dialect of the ancient Spartans', *Laconians* 'the Spartans; ancient inhabitants of Laconia' (< Gk. Λάκωνες) and *laconic* adj. 'speaking in a blunt, concise way; saying shortly, using few words; expressed in few words'.

¹¹⁰ RAAFLAUB's translation, see K.A. RAAFLAUB (transl.), Julius Caesar, *The Complete Works. Gallic War, Civil War, Alexandrian War, African War, and Spanish War*, New York 2017, p. 3.

¹¹¹ WADE-EVANS, *op. cit.* (n. 108), p. 41, n. 3.

Pre-Celtic Belgi settled in the Faeroe Islands before the fourth century BC. This is why Pytheas of Massalia termed the Faeroes *Βέργοι (hence *Bergī*, acc. pl. *Bergōs*, in Pliny's work) after their local inhabitants (hence *Belcarum litus* 'coast of the Belcae' in Mela's geographical treatise)¹¹². The Greek nesonym *Βέργοι, containing the liquid stop ρ [r] instead of λ [l], may be easily explained by influence of the proper name *Βερρική (hence Lat. *Berricē*) referred to Streymoy, the largest island of the Faeroes.

Modern names: E. *Faeroes*, *Faeroe Isles*; Dan. *Färøerne*; ON. *Færeyjar* ('the Sheep Islands / Schafinseln')¹¹³; Far. *Fær Øer* ('The Islands of Sheep'); Sp. *Féroe islas*¹¹⁴. Pol. *Wyspy Owcze* (lit. 'the Sheep Islands') seems to be a linguistic calque of the original name¹¹⁵.

6. THULE – ICELAND

The island called Thule (Gk. Θούλη or *Θύλη, Lat. *Thulē*, *Thylē*, *Tylē*), mentioned for the first time by Pytheas of Massalia, refers to "the furthest land of the north". It is to be identified, as we believe, with Iceland (and not with Norway). It is the most popular identification beginning from mediaeval times. Of course, one should agree with RIVET and SMITH that Pytheas' Thule may be treated not only as "a geographical term (of various application)", but also as "a semi-mythical and literary commonplace"¹¹⁶.

Selected sources:

6.1. Publius Vergilius Maro (*Georg.* I 30): "tibi serviat ultima Thule"¹¹⁷ – "Ultima Thule bow down to you"¹¹⁸.

6.2. Strabo of Amasea (I 4, 2): εἴτ' ἐπὶ τὸν κύκλον τὸν διὰ Θούλης (ἦν φησι Πυθέας ἀπὸ μὲν τῆς Βρεττανικῆς ἐξ ἡμερῶν πλοῦν ἀπέχειν πρὸς ἄρκτον, ἐγγὺς δ' εἶναι τῆς πεπηγυίας θαλάττης) – "then to the parallel that runs

¹¹² It may be alternatively translated as 'coast of the Faeroes'.

¹¹³ DE VRIES, *op. cit.* (n. 68), p. 149.

¹¹⁴ FAURE SABATER, *op. cit.* (n. 36), p. 240.

¹¹⁵ STASZEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 36), p. 137, s.v. *Färøerne*, concludes that the common sense ("Sheep Islands") represents a folk etymology. Is it possible to assume that ON. *Færeyjar* (f. pl.) 'the Faeroe Isles' was, in fact, a specific adaptation of the Pre-Nordic name *Bergi* (< Gk. *Βέργοι)? According to A.W. BRØGGER, *Den Norske bosetningen på Shetland-Orknøyene: studier og resultater*, Oslo 1930, the Nordic name of the Faeroes imitated a Goidelic Celtic nesonym, related to MÍr. *fearann* 'land, country, territory / Land, Gebiet', cf. DE VRIES, *op. cit.* (n. 68), p. 149. If this hypothesis is correct, then Pytheas' phoneme *β- (hence Lat. *b-*) appears to render PCelt. *v- or *w-.

¹¹⁶ RIVET, SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 11), p. 473. For a literary representation of Thule, see M. MUND-DOPCHIE, *La survie littéraire de la Thulé de Pythéas*, Ant. Cl. LIX 1990, pp. 79–97; A. FERRARI, *Dizionario dei luoghi del mito*, Milano 2011, pp. 959–960.

¹¹⁷ S. OTTAVIANO, G.B. CONTE (eds.), P. Vergilius Maro, *Bucolica, Georgica*, Berlin–Boston 2013, p. 124.

¹¹⁸ J. LEMBKE (transl.), *Virgil's Georgics*, New Haven–London 2005, p. 4.

through Thule (which Pytheas says is six days' sail north of Brettanike [i.e. Britain] and is near the Frozen Sea)" (see 1.1).

6.3. Strabo (I 4, 3): ὁ τε γὰρ ἱστορῶν τὴν Θούλην Πυθέας ἀνὴρ ψευδίστατος ἐξήτασται, καὶ οἱ τὴν Βρεττανικὴν <καὶ> Ἰέρνην ἰδόντες οὐδὲν περὶ τῆς Θούλης λέγουσιν, ἄλλας νήσους λέγοντες μικρὰς περὶ τὴν Βρεττανικὴν – “For the one who records Thule, Pytheas, has been established as a man of the greatest falsehoods, since those who have seen Brettanike [i.e. Britain] and Ierne [i.e. Ireland] have nothing to say about Thule, although mentioning other islands (the small ones around Brettanike)”¹¹⁹.

6.4. Strabo (IV 5, 5): Περὶ δὲ τῆς Θούλης ἔτι μᾶλλον ἀσαφῆς ἡ ἱστορία διὰ τὸν ἔκτοπισμόν· ταύτην γὰρ τῶν ὀνομαζομένων ἀρκτικωπάτην τιθέασιν. ἃ δ' εἶρηκε Πυθέας περὶ τε ταύτης καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν ταύτη τόπων ὅτι μὲν πέπλασται, φανερόν ἐκ τῶν γνωριζομένων χωρίων – “Concerning Thule our historical information is still more uncertain, on account of its outside position; for Thule, of all the countries that are named, is set farthest north. But that the things which Pytheas has told about Thule, as well as the other places in that part of the world, have indeed been fabricated by him, we have clear evidence from the districts that are known to us”¹²⁰.

6.5. Pomponius Mela (*Chor.* III 57): “Thyle Belcarum litori adposita est, Grais et nostris celebrata carminibus. In ea, quod ibi sol longe occasurus exsurgit, breves utique noctes sunt, sed per hiemem sicut alicubi obscurae, aestate lucidae”¹²¹ – “Thule is located near the coast of Belcae. This island is celebrated in Greek poetry and in our own. On it – because there the sun rises far from where it will set – nights are necessary brief, but all winter long they are as dark as anywhere, and in summer bright”¹²².

6.6. Pliny the Elder (*HN* IV 104): “ultima omnium quae memorantur Tyle [...]. Sunt, qui et alias prodant: Scandias, Dumniam, Bergos maximaque omnium Berricen, ex qua in Tylen navigetur. A Tyle unius diei navigatione mare concretum a nonnullis Cronium appellatur”¹²³ – “The most remote of all those recorded is Thule [...]. Some writers speak of other islands as well, the Scandiae, Dumna, the Faeroes (*Bergi*), and Berrice, the largest of all, from which the crossing to

¹¹⁹ RADT, *op. cit.* (n. 16), vol. I, p. 156; transl. by ROLLER, *The Geography...* (n. 3), p. 89 (with some modifications and additions). See also JONES, *op. cit.* (n. 16), vol. I, p. 234 (Greek text) and p. 235 (English translation); HORST ROSEMAN, *Pytheas...* (n. 1), p. 24.

¹²⁰ RADT, *op. cit.* (n. 16), vol. I, p. 526; transl. by JONES, *op. cit.* (n. 16), vol. II, p. 260 (Greek text) and p. 261 (English translation); HORST ROSEMAN, *Pytheas...* (n. 1), p. 68.

¹²¹ SILBERMAN, *op. cit.* (n. 40), p. 83; SZARYPKIN, WITCZAK, *op. cit.* (n. 40), p. 152.

¹²² Translation by ROMER, *op. cit.* (n. 41), p. 117, with some modifications. According to DILKE (*op. cit.* [n. 101], p. 350), “Mela describes Thyle as the darkest place in winter and the lightest in summer”.

¹²³ MIKOŁAJCZYK, *op. cit.* (n. 17), vol. I, p. 332.

Thule starts. One day's sail from Thule is the Frozen Ocean, called by some the Cronian Sea"¹²⁴.

6.7. Tacitus (*Agr.* 10, 4): “Dispecta est et Thule, quia hactenus iussum et hiems appetebat” – “Thule was only seen from far off, since their orders went only so far and winter was approaching”¹²⁵.

6.8. Claudius Ptolemy (II 3, 32): Καὶ ἔτι ὑπὲρ αὐτὰς [*scil.* τὰς Ὀρκάδας] ἡ Θούλη¹²⁶ – “Far above these [Orcaades, i.e. the Orkneys] is the island Thule”¹²⁷.

6.9. Solinus (22, 9): “Multae et aliae circa Britanniam insulae, e quibus Thyle ultima, in qua aestivo solstitio sole de cancri sidere faciente transitum nox [paene] nulla: brumali solstitio perinde nullus dies. Ultra Thylen accipimus pigrum et concretum mare. A Calidoniae promuntorio Thylen petentibus bidui navigatio est. [...] Ab Orchadibus Thylen usque quinque dierum ac noctium navigatio est. Sed Thyle larga et diutina Pomona copiosa est”¹²⁸ – “There are many other islands around Britain. Of these, Thule is the farthest away. There, when it is the summer solstice, and the sun is making its crossing down from the star of Cancer, there is no night. Similarly, at the winter solstice, there is almost no day. Above Thule we hear that the sea is sluggish and frozen. For those seeking Thule, the voyage from the Calidonian promontory to the Ebudes islands is two days long. [...] From the Orchades all the way to Thule, the voyage is five days and nights. But Thule is large and fertile with plentiful, long-lasting fruits”¹²⁹.

6.10. Martianus Capella (VI 595): “solstitiali vero tempore, cum caeli verticem sol invecus subiectas deorsum terras perpetui diei continuatione collustrat, itemque brumali descensu semiannuam facit horrere noctem, quod in insula Tyle compertum Pytheas Massiliensis asseruit”¹³⁰ – “In fact, at the time of the summer solstice, when the sun has reached the top of heaven, it lights up the lands beneath successively with continuous day, and likewise causes them to shiver in

¹²⁴ RACKHAM, *op. cit.* (n. 17), vol. II, p. 199 (translation slightly modified). See also HORST ROSEMAN, *Pytheas...* (n. 1), p. 92.

¹²⁵ BENARIO, *op. cit.* (n. 44), p. 32.

¹²⁶ *Claudi Ptolemaei Geographia*, vol. I, p. 74.

¹²⁷ Translated by STEVENSON, *op. cit.* (n. 46), p. 51.

¹²⁸ KOŁOCZEK, *op. cit.* (n. 20), p. 180.

¹²⁹ Translated by APPS, *op. cit.* (n. 21); the last phrase contains our small improvement. Gaius Iulius Solinus, the Roman writer of the third century AD, says that Thule is a large island (“Thule larga [...] est”) accompanied by fertility (*copiosa*) and long-lasting fruits (*diutina Pomona*). It seems that alleged fertile aspects of Thule could be inspired with some Greek fantastic romances like e.g. Antonius Diogenes’ *Τὰ ὑπὲρ Θούλην ἄπιστα* (“The Wonders beyond Thule”), published in the second century AD, cf. FERRARI, *op. cit.* (n. 116), pp. 959–960. It is uncertain whether Pytheas of Massalia described Thule as a large island or not.

¹³⁰ J. WILLIS (ed.), *Martianus Capella*, Lipsiae 1983, p. 209.

a six month night during its winter descent – which Pytheas the Massaliote asserted he found in Tyle island”¹³¹.

6.11. Orosius (*Adv. pag.* I 79): “Deinde insula Thyle, quae per infinitum a ceteris separata, circium uersus medio sita oceani, uix paucis nota habetur”¹³² – “Then comes the island of Thule, which is separated from the others by an infinite stretch of water and lies to their north-west in the middle of the Ocean. It is known to very few men”¹³³.

6.12. Jordanes (*Get.* I 35) “Habet et in ultimo plagae occidentalis aliam insulam nomine Thylen, de qua Mantuanus: Tibi seruiat ultima Thyle” – “And at the farthest bound of its western expanse it has another island named Thule, of which the Mantuan bard makes mention: ‘And Farthest Thule shall serve thee’”¹³⁴.

6.13. Stephanus of Byzantium (*Ethn.* θ.54): Θούλη· νῆσος μεγάλη ἐν τῷ Ὠκεανῷ ὑπὸ τὰ Ὑπερβόρεα μέρη, ἔνθα τὴν θερινὴν ἡμέραν ὥρων ἄ ἡλίος ἰσομερινῶν ποιεῖ, τὴν δὲ νύκτα δ, τὰς δὲ χειμερινὰς τούναντιον. τὸ ἔθνικὸν Θουλαῖος, ἴσως δὲ καὶ Θουλίτης¹³⁵ – “*Thoulē*: a great island in the Ocean beyond the Hyperborean areas, where the sun appears twenty equinoctial hours every summer day and the night lasts four hours, but every winter hours of the day and the night are reversed. The ethnic name is *Thoulaios*, perhaps also *Thoulitēs*” (our own translation).

6.14. Isidore of Seville (*Orig.* XIV 6, 4): “Thyle ultima insula Oceani inter septentrionalem et occidentalem plagam ultra Britanniam, a sole nomen habens, quia in ea aestivum solstitium sol facit, et nullus ultra eam dies est. Unde et pigrum et concretum est eius mare”¹³⁶ “Ultima Thyle (*Thyle ultima*) is an island of the Ocean in the north-western region, beyond Britannia, taking its name from the sun, because there the sun makes its solstice, and there is no daylight beyond (*ultra*) this. Hence its sea is sluggish and frozen”¹³⁷.

Comments: Iceland is the most popular identification of Pytheas’ island named *Thule* (also *Thyle*, *Tyle*), beginning with Bede and mediaeval times¹³⁸.

¹³¹ HORST ROSEMAN, *Pytheas...* (n. 1), p. 79.

¹³² ZANGEMEISTER, *op. cit.* (n. 50), p. 29.

¹³³ Translated by FEAR, *op. cit.* (n. 51), p. 45.

¹³⁴ Translated by MIEROW, *op. cit.* (n. 52), p. 53.

¹³⁵ M. BILLERBECK, C. ZUBLER (eds.), *Stephani Byzantii Ethnica*, vol. II, Berolini–Novi Eboraci 2011, p. 246 (Greek text) and p. 247 (German translation).

¹³⁶ VALASTRO CANALE, *op. cit.* (n. 24), vol. II, pp. 204.

¹³⁷ BARNEY, LEWIS, BEACH, BERGHOF, *op. cit.* (n. 25), p. 294.

¹³⁸ See I. VALTONEN, *The North in the Old English Orosius. A Geographical Narrative in Context*, Helsinki 2008, p. 58: “A definite identification is impossible, but Iceland is the clear favourite”; KEDWARDS, *op. cit.* (n. 8), pp. 127–141. One can agree with the opinion that Adam of Bremen was the first writer who explicitly identified Thule with Iceland (IV 36: “Thyle nunc Island appellatur a glacie, quae Oceanum attingit”). No ancient author was able to make such identification, as nobody knows a different name for Thule in antiquity. Orosius, Jordanes and Isidore of Seville

Other alternative suggestions include a number of North Atlantic islands (e.g. the Shetlands, the Orkneys, the Faeroes, Greenland), different parts of the Scandinavian Peninsula or the Jutlandian one, and even some islands located in the Baltic Sea (e.g. Bornholm, Gotland, Saaremaa)¹³⁹. Paulus Orosius and Isidore of Seville explicitly indicate that the island Thyle is located northwest of Britany, as well as Ireland, and not northeast of them, thus all eastern proposals for locating Thyle should be completely rejected, if we accept a possible conclusion that their words exactly reflect Pytheas' description. Jordanes also confirms the westernmost location of Thule, the furthest island of the Northern Atlantic.

Etymology: RIVET and SMITH express their own opinion, according to which the name Thule "is obviously very ancient; no origin or meaning can be suggested for it". According to Isidore of Seville, Thule is named after the sun, because the sun makes its solstice near the island. In fact, there is no relation between the name of Thule (Gk. Θούλη) and Lat. *sōl* m. 'sun', as well as Gk. ἴδιος m. 'id.' (< IE. **sāuel-*, **sāuelijos*). Eric P. Hamp treats the Greek nesonym *Θούλη (transcribed commonly as Θούλη) as a borrowing of foreign origin. He explains it as a reflex of the Prehellenic (or "Pelasgian") word **thulā* 'land', which may be treated as the precise equivalent of Slovene *tla* (plurale tantum) 'ground, floor'¹⁴⁰. Unfortunately, the Ancient Greek appellative *θύλη with the meaning 'land, ground, floor' is completely unknown. Moreover, it can hardly be accepted that the Prehellenic term **thulā* was exclusively preserved in the Massaliotic dialect. The name of an island located in northern waters of the Atlantic Ocean should be borrowed from a local (northern) source rather than from the Prehellenic inhabitants of Greece, who – according to some researchers – are believed to be an extinct people of Indo-European origin¹⁴¹.

Some scholars derive Pytheas' name Θούλη (pronounced originally as [ˈtʰule:]) from the North Germanic root **paul-* or **pul-* denoting 'the narrow fjords / die engen fjorde', cf. ON. *paularvágr* 'bay to get stuck in / Bucht, in der man festsitzen bleiben kann', Icel. *paul* 'get stuck / sich festreden'¹⁴². They

unanimously agree to locate Thule in the northwestern part of the Atlantic Ocean, where Iceland is placed. The Romans visited Iceland in antiquity, as evidenced by findings of three Roman coins, see F.M. HEICHELHEIM, *Roman Coins from Iceland*, Antiquity XXVI 1952, pp. 43–45. Irish monks also settled in Iceland in early mediaeval times.

¹³⁹ As far as we know, about 80 different theories about the location and the identification of Thule have been suggested. Most of them must be rejected. See O. DREYER-EIMBCKE, *Island, Grönland und das nördliche Eismeer im Bild der Kartographie seit dem 10. Jahrhundert*, Hamburg 1987, p. 3; VALTONEN, *op. cit.* (n. 138), p. 58, fn. 84; FERRARI, *op. cit.* (n. 116), p. 959, s.v. Tule.

¹⁴⁰ E.P. HAMP, *Prehellenica*. 8. *Thule, Thyle*, *Živa Antika* XXIX 1989, p. 84.

¹⁴¹ I.R. DANKA, *Pelazgowie autochtoni Hellady: pochodzenie, język, religia*, Łódź 2007.

¹⁴² B. COLLINDER, *Der älteste überlieferte germanische Name*, *Namn och Bygd* XXIV 1936, pp. 92–97 (he also refers to Scandinavian place-names: Norw. *Taul*, *Taule*, Sw. *Tölö* as possible equivalents of Gk. Θούλη); STASZEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 36), p. 433; DE VRIES, *op. cit.* (n. 68), p. 606.

believe that the semantic motivation is connected with the waterfront of the great fjords¹⁴³. Of course, the coast of Norway is full of narrow fjords, but the Iceland (i.e. the ancient Thule) rather does not fit this feature.

Lennart MERI suggests that the Pytheas' legendary Thule should be identified with Saaremaa, the largest Estonian island in the Baltic Sea¹⁴⁴. He translates Thule as “the island of fire”, referring to Est. *tuli* (gen. *tule*) ‘fire’ (< Common Finnic **tule* ‘id.’) and to the crater lake named Kaali, formed by a meteor strike in prehistory (ca. 1530–1450 BC). He suggests that the meteor strike, creating a big fire in Saaremaa, was remembered by the Estonian people, who constantly believe that the sun rests on the island of Saaremaa¹⁴⁵. Johanna LAAKSO suggests that the name of the Thule island, located in northern parts of the Atlantic Ocean, can be explained as a loanword of Uralic origin¹⁴⁶. She believes that the nesonym *Thule*, if it could lie in Norway or in Estonia, might be motivated by the Proto-Uralic term **tule* ‘fire / Feuer’, cf. Fi. *tuli* (gen. *tulen*) ‘fire’, Est. *tuli* (gen. *tule*) ‘id.’, NSaa. *dollâ* (gen. *dolâ*) ‘fire’, Mordv. *tol* ‘spark, fire’, Cher. *tul* ‘fire’, Udm. *tjil* ‘id.’, Zyr. *tjil-kert* ‘iron for striking fire’; Ngan. *tui* ‘fire’, Nen. *tū* ‘id.’, Yen. *tuu* ‘id.’, Selk. *tyy* ‘fire’, Kam. *šuu* ‘id.’, Koib. *siu* ‘id.’ and so on¹⁴⁷. In fact, the Greek words ἡ Θούλη νῆσος (“the island of Thule”) may be easily explained as a partial calque of a Proto-Finnic term denoting “the island of fire”, cf. Est. *tule saar*, Fi. *tulen saari* (literally ‘the island of fire’), NSaa. *dolâ suolu* (‘id.’). Thus, it is possible that Pytheas of Massalia took his mysterious name Θούλη from a local informant of West Finnic or Saami origin¹⁴⁸. Unfortunately, such an ex-

s.v. *paul*. It should be emphasised that the suggested nominal root **paul-* or **pul-* is completely absent in the standard Proto-Germanic dictionaries, cf. OREL, *op. cit.* (n. 69); KROONEN, *op. cit.* (n. 69). A different etymology is also suggested by V. BLAŽEK, *On Chronology of the First Germanic Sound Shift (Lex Rask – Grimm)*, *Lingua Posnaniensis* LXIV 2022, fasc. 1, pp. 7–26, at 8–9, who explains the nesonym *Thule* with a reference to ON. *pollr* m. ‘fir-tree, pine-tree’ (< PG. **pullaz* m. ‘id.’). This etymology seems hardly possible if *Thule* is to be identified as Iceland because the island in question was devoid of trees in antiquity.

¹⁴³ STASZEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 36), p. 433.

¹⁴⁴ L. MERI, *Höbelvalge: Reisikiri tuulest ja muinaluulest*, Tallinn 1976.

¹⁴⁵ According to Old Estonian folk poems, the crater lake of Kaali (in Saaremaa) is depicted as the place where “the sun went to rest”, cf. MERI, *op. cit.* (n. 144).

¹⁴⁶ J. LAAKSO, *Erasmus guest lectures at the University of Padova, October 2006*. Handout as PDF file; <http://homepage.univie.ac.at/Johanna.Laakso/Padova2006/> (2006) 1.

¹⁴⁷ B. COLLINDER, *Fenno-Ugric Vocabulary. An Etymological Dictionary of the Uralic Languages*, Hamburg 1977, p. 80; K. RÉDEI, *Uralisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. I, Budapest 1986, p. 535, s.v. *tule*¹ ‘Feuer’.

¹⁴⁸ It is worth emphasising that – according to the Byzantine writer Procopius of Caesarea (6th c. AD) – the island of Thule was settled by the Saami-Finnic tribes called *Skriithiphinoi*: Τῶν δὲ ἰδρυμένων ἐν Θούλῃ βαρβάρων ἐν μόνον ἔθνος, οἱ Σκριθίφινοι ἐπικαλοῦνται, θηϊώδη τινα βιοτήν ἔχουσιν – “But among the barbarians who are settled in Thule, one nation only, who are called the Scritiphini, live a kind of life akin to that of the beasts”, see BLAŽEK, *op. cit.* (n. 142), p. 22. It is possible that Procopius’ *Thule*, in fact, represented Scandinavia, but such a conclusion

planation seems to eliminate Norway as a possible equivalent of Thule. It should be strongly emphasised that Iceland is the only one island in the North Atlantic with frequent volcano eruptions, which can be seen from a long distance. In other words, only Iceland could be called “the island of fire” for natural reasons.

Other mediaeval and modern names: ON. (in 9th c.) *Snæland* or *Snjoland* (‘the land of snow’, cf. ON. *snær* (gen. sg. *snjóar*), *snjár*, *snjór* m. ‘snow / Schnee’, Icel. *snjór*, Far. *snjógvur*, *snjó* ‘id.’)¹⁴⁹; ON. (from 9th c.) *Ísland* (‘the land of ice’); E. *Iceland*; Pol. *Islandia*¹⁵⁰; Sp. *Islandia*¹⁵¹. According to STASZEWSKI¹⁵², Iceland was inhabited by Celts in the second half of the eighth century. This claim can be supported by the testimony of the monk Dicuilus (*De mensura orbis terrae* 825). STASZEWSKI also provides the evidence coming from various toponyms, e.g. *Ira*, *Iragardi*, which seem to preserve some Irish traces. Adam of Bremen was the first writer who explicitly connects the name Thule with Iceland (*Gesta* IV 36): “Thyle nunc Island appellatur a glacie, quae Oceanum attingit” – “This Thule is now called Iceland, from the ice which binds the ocean”¹⁵³.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The detailed analysis of the Ancient Greek and Latin onomastic data devoted to islands situated north of Britain leads to the following conclusions:

8.1. Pytheas of Massalia visited all the main islands and archipelagos of the North Atlantic, including Britain, Ireland, Iceland, the Orkneys, the Shetlands, the Hebrides and the Faeroes.

8.2. Pytheas created new onomastic terminology connected with Northern Europe, which was later repeated or adopted by most Ancient Greek and Roman geographers, including πεππηγυῖα θάλαττα (hence Lat. *mare concretum* “the Frozen / Congealed Sea”) and Κρόνιον πέλαγος (hence Lat. *Cronium* “the Cronian Sea”) as designations for the Arctic Ocean.

is not necessary. In the sixth century (and earlier) Iceland could theoretically have been inhabited by Scythians, according to the testimony of Procopius. Note that Scandinavia was the homeland of the Gothic tribes, as well as Nordsmen (*Suiones* in Tacitus’ *Germania* 44–45). We believe that the Scandinavian people called *Sithones* (*Germania* 45), ruled by a woman, should be associated with the Saami tribes. The Latin ethnonym *Sithones* may derive from the Saami term for ‘camp, village’, cf. Lule Saami *sii’ta* ‘Lappendorf, Lappenlager’, NSaa. *sii’da* ‘mountain camp, (Saami) camp’, Kildin Saami *sijt* ‘lappisches Dorf’ (< Proto-Saami **sijtā*).

¹⁴⁹ DE VRIES, *op. cit.* (n. 68), p. 527; OREL, *op. cit.* (n. 69), pp. 355–356; KROONEN, *op. cit.* (n. 69), p. 460, s.v. **snaiwa-*.

¹⁵⁰ STASZEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 36), pp. 189–190.

¹⁵¹ FAURE SABATER, *op. cit.* (n. 36), pp. 318–319.

¹⁵² STASZEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 36), pp. 189–190.

¹⁵³ F.J. TSCHAN (transl.), Adam of Bremen, *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, New York 2002, p. 217. See also STASZEWSKI, *op. cit.* (n. 36), pp. 189–190.

8.3. He was the first known writer who used the following proper names: Ὀρκάδες (hence Lat. *Orcades*) for the Orkney Isles, *Αἰμῶδεις or *Αἰμῶδαι (hence Lat. *Haemodae*) for the Shetlands, Ἑβουδαί or Αἰβοῦδαι (hence Lat. *Hebudes* or *Ebudes*) for the Hebrides, *Βέργοι (Lat. *Bergi*) for the Faeroe Islands, *Βερρική (hence Lat. *Berricē*) for Streymoy, the largest island of the Faeroes and also Θούλη (or Θύλη) for Iceland, the furthest island of the Northern Europe.

8.4. Most neonyms created by Pytheas reflect some local (northern) names of islands partially adopted to the Ancient Greek language by means of purely Greek suffixes (e.g. -άς, pl. -άδες) or endings (e.g. -η).

8.5. Pytheas' Θούλη [t^hule:], referring originally to Iceland, appears to be a partial translation of a West Finnic or Saami proper name denoting 'the island of fire', cf. Est. *tule saar*, Fi. *tulen saari* 'id.'. This etymology can be justified on the grounds that Iceland is the only volcanic island in the North Atlantic.

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