

Translation of the Non-Latin Text on a Metal Pendant at Aquae Sulis in Roman Britain showing that it was in Venetic

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This paper translates, using Adriatic Venetic, a sentence among Roman British texts at Aquae Sulis that is not in Latin. Aquae Sulis was the name of the location, today at Bath, England, where the Romans developed Roman baths and a temple around natural hot springs there. Archeology has found located there, 130 writings on small sheets of lead written in Roman British Latin and containing requests from the goddess of the hot springs to bring bad luck upon people who had wronged the writer of the message – such as an unknown thief of a possession.

But there is ONE inscription not on a sheet of lead, and written in another language onto a pendant, and which scholars believe is in “Brittonic Celtic”. Because I spent years interpreting the Venetic inscriptions of ancient northern Italy, and saw patterns used in writing on thin bronze sheets at shrines to goddess Rhea, I was quickly able to decipher this text and found it NOT to be Brittonic Celtic, but quite Venetic-like, which my earlier deciphering of Adriatic Venetic revealed to be Finnic in nature. This paper translates the mystery text and finds that the visitor to the baths appears to have given the pendant as an offering to the goddess in exchange for a long life to the Veneti king. We conclude by exploring the possibility that the Venetic language in its original Finnic form as determined in the Adriatic inscriptions was established in Britain in the centuries before the Romans.

1.1 Introduction

Aquae Sulis was the name of a small town in Roman Britain, which is today the city of Bath, Somerset, England.

Before the Roman conquest of Britain there was a large natural hot spring at that location which appears to have been celebrated by the native British and where apparently a goddess was worshipped that Romans say was called *Sulis*.

The Romans were attracted to these natural springs, the only one with hot water, not long after their arrival in Britain in 43AD. According to archeologists, the Roman military road, Fosse Way, crossed the river Avon near the site. The Romans, with their institution of Roman baths, took the liberty of developing the location for that purpose, preserving the original celebration of the goddess *Sulis* there, but viewing her also in the form of the Roman goddess *Minerva*. A temple was also developed around the baths. It is easy to imagine that Roman Britons – officials and military – dominated attendance at the baths, and that native British who went there had to adapt to the Roman Baths practices.

The town that developed around the site is believed to have been a religious settlement. Were the buildings private dwellings or intended to accommodate pilgrims to the temple and baths? That has been debated.

The Roman development of the area continued until the Romans departed from Britain about 410AD, after which it appears violence erupted and the Roman developments fell into disrepair.

The site was rediscovered by archeologists since the 18th century and it is now one of Bath's major attractions. There is a Roman Baths Museum there now, which include artifacts like stone sculptures, excavated remains of the main temple courtyard, and the Roman Baths themselves including the original Roman Great Bath fed by the hot spring through lead pipes.

Proof that Latin-speaking Roman British dominated the use of the site through the several centuries of Roman rule, can be found in the 130 lead tablets that has been found with a Roman writing on them. The writing is in vulgar British Latin. Since scholars know Latin, they have been able to decipher the writings and found them to be in the not uncommon Roman practice of asking deities to curse people who have wronged the writer.

The lead tablets are small and rectangular and actually made of lead alloyed with tin. Some were cast under pressure into thin flexible sheets with a smooth paper-like finish. Others were hammered thin from a molten lump. Being thin, the texts, in Roman capitals or cursive script could be inscribed by pressure from a stylus.

As I said, the messages at Bath invite the deity to curse people who had wronged the worshipper. They generally express distain towards some known or unknown person who has wronged the writer. Often a regular visitor to the baths might have some possession stolen while in the baths. And example of a request to *Minerva/Sulis* to curse a culprit is "*May he who carried off Vilbia from me become liquid as the water. May she who so obscenely devoured her become dumb*" All 130 inscriptions on the small thin lead sheets are such curses.

However there is ONE piece of writing that is not in Latin, and is not even written on a lead tablet. It has been assumed the writing is in "Brittonic Celtic". It is written on a metal pendant and probably had to be inscribed ahead of time. In spite of it being so out of character with the 130 thin lead tablets, scholars have assumed the writing on this pendant is a curse too and have attempted to decipher it as such, using Celtic. The sentence reads:

ADIXOUI DEUINA DEIEDA ANDGIN UINDIORIX CUAMENAI

Translations of it include the following: *May I, Windiorix for/at Cuamena defeat the worthless woman, o divine Deieda*

This translation is based on Celtic interpretations as follows: *Windiorix* –nominative masculine subject (literally *windo* 'fair-headed' *rix* 'king') *Dewina Deieda* – nominative/vocative feminine (*deiada* 'goddess'); *Andagin* – accusative feminine 'woman'; *Cuamenai* – locative/dative feminine of Cuamena.

Modern linguists will say that the mere ability to find word matches has little value, since human languages have a limited number of vocal sounds and every language, with manipulation can get results. What counts is the result. The truth is assessed by the meaningfulness of the result and the absence of manipulations to make the sentence work. False interpretations will tend towards inappropriate or absurd sentences which need to be poetically manipulated to even make sense. So the resulting interpretation is what we have to assess. Is it probable that a pendant would have on it *May I, Windiorix for/at Cuamena defeat the worthless woman, o divine Deieda*? Compare it with the result I will arrive at *Let us give, to add to, to You Divine-one (ie*

Sulis), for the *Veneti*-king to live long which I will argue is more natural for an object that does not follow the Roman practice in any way, when we consider similar prayers to a goddess in the Adriatic Venetic world.

Before we attempt to analyze the *Aquae Sulis* pendant inscription from the point of view of it being in Venetic of the time, we first have to elaborate on the nature of the ancient Venetic language, particularly in Brittany and Britain.

1.2 Background: The Nature of Ancient Venetic

I have already spent years deciphering the Venetic inscriptions found in northern Italy and dating to before the Roman Empire, and which I published in *VENETIC LANGUAGE An Ancient Language from a New Perspective: FINAL*.¹ In my deciphering of the Adriatic inscriptions, I managed to approach it with direct analysis and found Venetic was Finnic. This is not strange given the Adriatic *Veneti* were agents of Baltic amber and there was a long history of carrying on amber trade from the Finnic speaking Baltic coast, to the southeast European civilizations.

The major difficulty with ancient Venetic, is that the *Veneti* name occurs in the historical record in many places and forms— in ancient Greek *Eneti* or *Henetoi*, in more recent history in forms like *Wendi*, *Venta*, *Vindo*, etc. Traditionally academics have explained it in terms of migrations of an Indo-European language farming people. But with such distance and time between the various colonies, the various manifestation would diverge quickly from lack of contact. This problem of divergence is solved if we regard the ancient *Veneti* as long distance traders regularly in contact with one another over long distances. They would be descended from the aboriginal boat peoples who emerged in prehistoric times in northern Europe out of the archeological “Maglemose” culture. Notably the *Veneti/Eneti* probably first emerged as traders travelling to Asia Minor with mainly furs and Baltic amber, since archeologists have found Baltic amber dating to before 3000BC in tombs in Babylon and in Mycenaean Greece since before 2000BC. Since the prehistoric peoples in the north can be associated with Finnic language and a nomadic boat-culture (dugouts originally) it is not difficult to connect the language of the Venetic language to Finnic, especially since in Finnic Estonian the word *vene* means boats, and the plural genitive is *venede*, and can be used as ‘(people) of the boats’. The Finnic Livonians only some centuries ago used the term *Venede* for those “Wends” located first where Venta River is today, and later where Cesis is today. They used the word also for Votes (shippers carrying wares along the Russian rivers down to the Black Sea whose Estonian name *Vadja* sounds like *vedaja* ‘agents of transporting’)

Being of Estonian descent and having been raised in Estonian, the amber trade story along with archaeological finds of two amber routes in pre-Roman times descending from the Baltic to the Adriatic *Veneti*, suggested to me that there was a pretty good chance that if I were to tackle trying to decipher the Adriatic Venetic inscriptions, that it would look quite Finnic in nature. But to avoid forcing Finnic onto the inscriptions, I tried a new methodology – trying first to interpret some of the simplest inscriptions directly from the archaeological contexts in which they were found, starting with an inscription accompanying a picture of a peasant or hunter handing a distinguished looking man a duck. If you read my summary of it in *VENETIC LANGUAGE*

¹ A very controversial study because it achieved much more extensive results, hence undermining traditional attempts to interpret the Adriatic inscriptions by forcing Latin or Slovenian onto it, which is the wrong approach in ancient writing deciphering. The book can be viewed at academia.edu or the author’s webpage at www.paabo.ca

you will see how I directly determined the inscription essentially said ‘Let remain to the ‘Papa’ a duck’ By directly translating several such nearly obvious inscriptions, I was able to get leverage to decipher more – using the technique that if we can translate all words in a sentence except one, the context of the known words will reveal the unknown. Again and again the results produced Finnic patterns in word stems and grammar, so that near the end of the project I was able to even do a comparison of Venetic, Finnish and Estonian grammar.

I leave it to the reader to evaluate the work yourself, since the academic literature wants to ignore this departure from deeply entrenched views that Venetic was Indo-European.²

In my analysis in *VENETIC LANGUAGE* one group of inscriptions were done on bronze sheets and objects left at a sanctuary to the Venetic goddess. This is the reason I bring the Adriatic Venetic inscriptions into this analysis of the unusual *Aquae Sulis* inscription on the pendant. There are remarkable similarities.

After completing my interpretation of the Adriatic Venetic inscriptions, I needed to determine if the language of the Brittany *Veneti* was the same, and I began scanning archeological papers for grave markers dating to the Roman era or earlier, to see if they contained Venetic. But before we look at my results, let us review one of the ancient Adriatic Venetic inscriptions that was written for a goddess. We will find that the *Aquae Sulis* pendant inscription has many similarities, especially the way it addresses a goddess.

1.3 Adriatic Venetic inscriptions to their goddess *Rhea*, as a forerunner for the non-Roman inscription at *Aquae Sulis*.

The writing of messages to a goddess on thin metal sheets already existed before the rise of the Romans among the *Veneti*, and it is likely the Romans inherited it from *Veneti* or maybe Etruscans who were their neighbours in centuries BC. It is possible that the Romans converted the hopeful prayers to curses as a reaction to the earlier traditions among a different people?

The inscribed objects found in northern Italy and attributed to the ancient Adriatic *Veneti* before the rise of the Romans, involved the writing of hopeful messages to a goddess on thin sheets of metal. The Adriatic *Veneti* wrote to the goddess *Rhea*, using thin bronze sheets and the Venetic language and alphabet. The Adriatic Venetic inscriptions on thin bronze sheets came from the sanctuary archeology uncovered at Baratela near Este. The bronze sheets were about 15x10 to 20x15cm in size, and writing was pressed into them with a stylus.

Because of the similarity to the writing to *Sulis/Minerva* on thin metal at *Aquae Sulis*, it is worth my reviewing in more detail here what I discovered in regards to the similar Adriatic Venetic practices of writing messages to *Rhea*. Objects with inscriptions already written on them could be left as well, thus. Leaving an object like a pendant, with inscription pre-written, would be acceptable too. (But I believe that most objects left at such sites, having practical value, were stolen or scavenged and there is little for archeologists to find.) It looks like the person who left the pendant of *Aquae Sulis* was well versed in the Venetic tradition, and by the inscription being NOT in coarse Latin, that visitor was defying Roman practices of making it a curse and writing it in Latin. I wonder if the pendant was actually hidden, not found among the coarse Roman curses on lead. The following is a good example of the Adriatic Venetic hopeful prayer on a bronze sheet left near Este from my analysis in *VENETIC LANGUAGE*

² Finnic is NON-Indo-European, part of the Uralic language family, and completely different from Indo-European, so this is not a case of using anything previously done from the Indo-European point of view.

NORTHERN ITALY CENTURIES BC.
EXAMPLE VENETIC INSCRIPTION ON BRONZE SHEET IN PRE-ROMAN TIMES



6.D)[vda.]n[.]vo.l.t[iio.n.]mno.s.[do]na.s.tokela.g.[s.]to\$ a.i.nate.i.re.i.tia.i. o.p[vo].l.tiiole[n[o] - [MLV-12A, LLV-Es27]

The text above represents the Venetic alphabet, transformed into small case Roman alphabet including the dots within the Venetic. The [] represent reconstructions of faded or missing pieces based on similar texts in other inscriptions, and | represents a change in direction. The \$ in my analysis represents a long S as in English "hiss". The text is continuous but comparison with the body of inscriptions allows us to introduce word spaces and the results would be

vda.n vo.l.tiio.n.mno.s. dona.s.to ke la.g.s.to \$a.i.nate.i. re.i.tia.i. o.p vo.l.tiio leno

These tablets/sheets were inscribed at a shrine to the goddess *Rhea*, probably accompanying a burnt offering. All the texts indicate that something is being conveyed up into the sky to join the goddess *Rhea* there. The *Veneti* appear to have believed that the spirit or essence of something was conveyed to the heavens via smoke.

In my study, which deciphered the inscriptions from first principles and found it was in a Finnic language, yielded meaningful results for most of the complete sentence inscriptions, and we found solid results for this inscription.

'I convey into the heavens-going the bringing (ie offering I bring) also gift to join you divine Rhea --- up to the heavens fly!'

(See my document **THE VENETIC LANGUAGE** for detailed description of the analysis)

The sanctuaries of the Adriatic *Veneti* would be physically defined by fencings or walls to set them apart from the regular urban environment. Inside the sanctuary space one would find the facilities – including pillars, statues, pedestals, etc - for practicing the religion whether it be processions, rituals, prayers, offerings. Gifts and offerings, including sacrifices, accumulated in such places. Permanent temple structures were only built at more important sanctuaries in the larger cities. Religious rituals carried out at the sanctuaries included purification rituals involving liquids, and sacrifices of animals to deities.

Thus the Adriatic Venetic practices have similarities to practices at the *Aquae Sulis* site. Both have communicating with the goddess by writing onto thin metal sheets, and perhaps also by leaving gifts. The main difference is that the messages to the goddess *Rhea* were very reverent and basically made offerings (usually burnt) to the goddess in the infinite realm high up and far away, without asking for anything in exchange, the Roman-British inscriptions are less reverent, and quite selfish and presumptuous in asking for the goddess to curse someone who had wronged

them. But it could merely reflect the secular attitude of visitors who came only to bathe, as well as the Romans turning a widely used foreign practice backwards. If a shrine was situated within a Roman Bath, the religiousness would deteriorate from the context of visiting for bathing. Still, there could have been some Venetic visitors who defiantly left reverent prayers like in earlier centuries at Baratela.

At the Adriatic site at Baratela, there were both bronze sheets onto which visitors to the shrine would actively write a message, and there were objects with appropriate messages of prayer already on them that appear to have been left there. I discovered that the sentences to a deity followed a formula that can be described with **me^{go} dona.s.to...Sa.i.nate.i. re.i.tiia.i.** ‘our offeringto divine Rhea’ Some of the words could be left out and be assumed, but the structure was the same

(I used “\$” to represent the Venetic alphabet character that sounds like a long SS, as in “hiss”, but which I believe sounded something more like “ySS”. And the dots found in the Venetic writing, I determined marked mostly palatalizations, and only affect how the language sounded. When Venetic was written with the Roman alphabet, the dots vanished.)

Let me review how I broke down the words **Sa.i.nate.i. re.i.tiia.i.**

Sa.i.nate.i.

Sa ‘lord, god’ (equivalent to Etruscan *ais*, Estonian *issa* - ‘god’)

.i. is best seen as Finnic marker for the plural stem (giving ‘gods’).

na which could be the Essive case ‘as’ since the *-na* Essive exists in both Estonian and Finnish and is therefore very old. Etruscan *-na* has been interpreted as producing an adjective – for example *eis* > *eisna* = ‘godly’.

(This gives **Sa.i.na** ‘as the gods’, ‘in the form of the gods’, ‘godly’, or simply ‘divine’)

te.i. we view as a formal ‘you’ in the Partitive. When the context of the sentence describes movement, the Partitive adds ‘to’ as in ‘to You’ But this is not a Dative but a dynamic Partitive meaning something akin to ‘unite with god’, or ‘become one with god’

(This gives **Sa.i.na te.i.** ‘to unite with You, of the character of gods’, ‘to You, Divine...’)

re.i.tiia.i.

re was generally the term for ‘path, way’ of pre-Indo-European Europe. It is the first part of the Estonian *rada* ‘path’, and the ancient people called Raetians (who carried goods over mountain trails), and even endures within Germanic words for ‘road’.

.i. is best seen to pluralize, giving ‘routes’

t probably introduced to break up the vowels and has no meaning (Finnish will do this. For example if an ending beginning with a vowel is to be added to *maa*, a T is first added to break up a long string of vowels. as in *maata* ‘a piece of land’)

ii Indicating directed action like Illative, Allative, etc. We call it the “Iiative” because of unique features. Meaning ‘extending eternally(to)’ or perhaps simply ‘to everlasting’. (Hence **re.i.tiia** ‘to everlasting REIA/ Routes-One’)

a.i is the dynamic Partitive ending, attached to the Iiative.

Sa.i.nate.i. re.i.tiia.i.

‘to You, of-the-gods, to everlasting REIA’,

In better English: ‘to unite (the gift) with You, Divine Rhea’

This interpretation of will become important in our interpretation of the Aquae Sulis pendant inscription. But first, let us review my investigation in *VENETIC LANGUAGE* of my finds of Venetic in Brittany and Wales in Roman times or shortly after. This will help us find it

believable that Venetic speakers were found in southwest Britain at least, during the Roman age. (My investigation summarized below was not exhaustive and I would be happy to find more inscriptions not in Latin from the Roman period or earlier to analyze for Venetic.)

1.4 Parallels between Adriatic Venetic and several Inscriptions found on gravestones in Brittany and southwest Britain in the Roman period or shortly thereafter

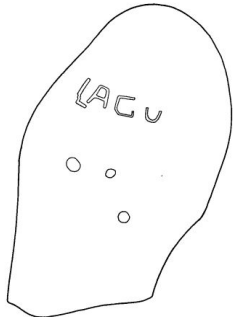
In my investigation of writings on gravestones in Brittany, Cornwall and Wales, I discovered that there was a tendency – as there was for Adriatic inscriptions – for academics to assume that when there was a single word on a gravestone, that it was simply the name of the deceased. In my view this is cheating. It is more logical that as in recent history, the most common single word repeated on tombstones will express the sentiment of either 'rest (in peace)' which views the deceased to be sleeping or a sentiment of being remembered by the living, as in Latin *in memorium*.

Thus I looked first at the word that appeared repeatedly on Adriatic Venetic obelisks that marked the location of tombs, which was **.e.go**³ which I directly interpreted as something similar to 'rest (in peace)' but which I could then compare to the Finnic Estonian word *jäägu* ('let rest, remain'). Remarkable parallels with Estonian was what revealed Venetic to be Finnic.

So I searched papers posted on the internet showing tombstones from around the Roman period which might have a word similar to Adriatic Venetic **.e.go** or Estonian *jäägu*

The following was exactly what I was looking for:

10c-2.B) JAGU: - 'REST, REMAIN'



[image after Davies, W. et al. (2000) *The Inscriptions of Early Medieval Brittany. Les inscriptions de la Bretagne du Haut Moyen Âge Andover and Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies Publications. Dean Davids/1892, Fig. M7.3]*

Grave marker found in Brittany. The stone located near the chapel of Sainte-Brigitte on the Le Plec peninsula of Morbihan. Three incised 'cup-marks' are clearly visible on the north face of the stone below the inscription. Such cup-marks are incised singly or in groups of up to twenty, or more, on Neolithic and Iron-Age monuments, and on natural rocks, throughout Brittany. Such cup marks on stone are quite widespread. On this stone is only one word, and the only issue among scholars is the first letter. It has been interpreted by academics as **IAGU**, **JAGU** and **LAGU**. We choose **IAGU** or **JAGU** for the following reason:

The same argument applies here as with the Venetic tomb-markers – that the most probable meaning for the first, repeated, or in this case only word is either to do with resting eternally, or to be remembered. We discussed this in detail in our determining that Venetic **.e.go** was paralleled by Estonian *jäägu* 'let remain'

Scholars have traditionally assumed that the word was simply the name of the deceased.

Next the word I looked for were those expressing the idea of remembering. In the Adriatic *Veneti* such a word appeared once on a round stone that was placed on the floor of tombs. It appeared as **mu.i.ste** which is identical to Finnic *muista* 'remember'. I did not find that particular word in the limited inscriptions in Brittany, Wales or Cornwall but I found another

³ (Venetic alphabet writing is represented in small case Roman, including the dots. The dots mostly mark palatalizations, hence **.e.go** sounded like JEGO)

word. Used every day the Estonian *mäleta* ‘to remember’ must be very old (since the commonly used words tend to have more weight and change least),

But first I want to present a very good example found in Brittany.

Thus I found two examples of the universal term of ‘rest’ or ‘remember’ in archeological finds in Brittany.

MELITA: ‘REMEMBER’ IN VENETIC OR FINNIC



[image after Davies, W. et al. (2000)

The Inscriptions of Early Medieval Brittany.

Les inscriptions de la Bretagne du Haut Moyen Âge Andover and Aberystwyth Celtic Studies Publications. DeanDavids/1892, Fig. 16.5]

Slate cist-graves were discovered in Retiers, a town on the eastern edge of Brittany, 30km south east of Rennes. According to Davies, W. et al. a year after it was found, a site assessment preliminary to constructing a parking lot revealed four dug graves and another slate-lined grave. Later, another three dug graves and a further slate-lined grave were revealed. The left-hand panel of the southernmost of the three graves found in 1994, bore the inscription, which was revealed when the panel was washed.

Did I find any longer sentences? The following, almost lost and forgotten in an old graveyard in southwest Brittany appears to follow a practice of running Roman alphabet letters together and backwards, something that also occurred in the early years of Roman writing in the ancient Adriatic.

I straightened out the Roman letters to their normal Roman form, and you can see what I believe the words intend in the text to the side.

I translated the inscription as *‘Let be carried towards; to the side of, turn; also carry; to the side of the sky realm; in the*



- 6. VAUBAOS
- 5. IUVANTS
- 4. VOLTEO BO
- 3. GA CANATO
- 2. BODURN
- 1. FOGIA PO

eternal, free, direction’ or in better English *‘Let be carried towards, turn towards, also bear, to the sky realm, towards the free eternity’*. The great similarity of the words of this sentence to Adriatic Venetic proves that Venetic was in use there in Brittany in Roman times. Perhaps the letters were jumbled up so that Roman officials would not be able to read it? This example suggests that Venetic was still in use into the Roman period, although probably Romans frowned on it, and its speakers kept their use of it secret.

10c-2.C) A VENETIC MESSAGE IN MAGICAL WRITING:- A DEGENERATED VENETIC (See illustration above)

Gravestone, found at Plumergat in Brittany. Plumergat is in the southern Morbihan, the ancient *Veneti* area, 22km north of the coast. First identified in the cemetery there, is now set into the ground outside the parish church of Plumergat, on the east of the path to the south door. At the time of drawing the first cadastral map (1832) the church and its churchyard were focal to the settlement; it is reasonable to suppose that there was a church on or near this site in the early Middle Ages, given the bourg’s location at the centre of a plebs (an early medieval poto-parish) and the cluster of religious buildings. One side of the stone has a newer inscription and cross, from the Middle Ages, since presumably the Church decided to make use of the unused side of the stone, placing a newer grave on that unused side. The inscription on the front obviously uses Roman letters, but superimposes them, in the manner we saw with the T and E in OPTERGN in Grouping 1, except here it is done extensively and sometimes three letters are made into one symbol. That this is the case is obvious. What is not obvious is how to take them apart to reveal the Venetic words. Interpreting this inscription can only be done after we have determined words from the Adriatic inscriptions, and then the combined characters can be deconstructed into their original words. The illustration above shows how I deciphered the words.

If we read the sentence from bottom up – in the direction the spirit flies – we have **FOGIA PO BODURNA GA CANATO VOLTEO BO IUUVANTS VAUBOS**

Our deciphering of the north Adriatic inscriptions reveals almost all of this. I made one original determination – that BODURNA might contain the origins of the English turn, hence BODURNA is interpreted as ‘turn towards’. Adding insights from Estonian we arrive at *‘Let be carried towards; to the side of, turn; also carry; to the side of the sky realm; in the eternal, free, direction’* or in better English *‘Let be carried towards, turn towards, also bear, to the sky realm, towards the free eternity’*

It fits so well to the situation that by the laws of probability the chances are very high that this is correct, or close to correct.

This may be unsettling to scholars who have decided the Brittany *Veneti* spoke a Celtic language. They point to their proposed interpretations of names with Celtic. But as you will see later, Finnic language works even better in interpreting names. For example Celtic scholars claim that the confederation of seagoing nations in the north which Caesar identified as *Armoricae*, translates as ‘men of the sea’. But the word interprets even more descriptively as a confederation via Finnic *armo-riigi* ‘nations mutually supportive of one another, sympathetic to one another’. (I will propose later that the Brittany *Veneti* became Celtic-speaking after several centuries of living under Roman rule, just as the Adriatic *Veneti* became Latin-speaking and south Baltic *Venedi* became Slavic-speaking in the course of history from Roman times and after. One can actually see the conversion of Adriatic *Veneti* to Latin in their cremation urn inscriptions!)

The Roman Empire in its 4-5 centuries of existence had a major impact on ancient Europe. Considering how fast in recent history Europeans have converted North America, a great deal of change can occur in mere centuries. The Venetic language can disappear during those centuries if the Roman Empire now promoted Latin and a prior Venetic large scale trade *lingua franca* lost its usefulness and disappeared. The idea that Brittany *Veneti* began with its original Finnic-based form, and after four centuries had been replaced by Celtic, both in Brittany and in Britain, is a viable theory.

Next in my seeking the Finnic type Venetic, I continued scanning archeologist literature for gravestones in southwest Britain, as close to Roman times as possible. As with Brittany, I looked for the repetition of words that could mean ‘rest (in peace)’ or ‘remember’. Note I did not do an exhaustive search but scanned scholarly papers of books I found on the internet.

WALES GRAVE MARKER MESSAGE - ‘REMEMBER, MEMORIES’ IN FINNIC

Since Brittany was closely tied to southwest Britain such as Wales, I scanned the internet to see if I could find an article on very old grave markers in Wales. I found a particular words stem repeated and this word does not resonate with Latin. In these cases, the stem MELI- is repeated in a single word so often per found gravestone, that it cannot be a person’s name but must be one of the two words – ‘rest’ or ‘remember’ and in these cases in my deciphering I saw the word ‘remember’

Besides Estonian *mäleta*, there are other versions like *meeles* ‘in memory’

10c-3.A) **MELITU**: The following example was found at Caernarvonshire (Caernarfon), Wales. It reads **MELITU**.

[image developed from
The Early Christian Monuments of Wales,
 Nash-Williams, V. E. (1950), Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 88, plate II
 Drawing inset derived from Macalister 1945 C.I.I.C.]



10c-3.B) **MELI-** Two seemingly abbreviated versions of the same kind of expression are shown below. The first one is found in Wales, at St Nicholas, Llandrudian Farm, Pembrokeshire.

[image from Nash-Williams, V. E. (1950)
The Early Christian Monuments of Wales.
 Cardiff: University of Wales Press, p217, Fig. 249]

It appears to read **MELI-**. Gravestones of that period included a dash at the end of an abbreviation presuming that the reader filled in the blank, that is, to fill it out to MELITU or MELITA or some alternative similar ending that was common there. Any implication of abbreviation means the word must be a commonly used word (and not specific like a person’s name)

10c-3.C) **MAILIS--**



[Figure in Nash-Williams, V. E. (1950)
The Early Christian Monuments of Wales.
 Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 55]

All the above results are from early Christian era, which began at the end of the Roman era. In addition to the several instances of words reflecting ‘remember’ paralleling *meeles* ‘in memory’ or *mäleta* ‘to remember’⁴

⁴ I also encountered some instances in the early Christian period in which there was Latin and the words HIC IACIT ‘here lies’ were used on gravestones. IACIT is the Latin word *iaceo* ‘lie, be situated, lie dead, etc’. It could have originated from the Venetic **.e.go** or some similar Etruscan word – since Latin evolved in the Italic Peninsula where both the Etruscans and *Veneti* preceded them. The fact that *iaceo* occurs alone in the Latin dictionary whereas

If the above examples of *Mailis*, *Melitu*, *Mel-* come from the Early Christian period, it suggests that Finnic language was present in Wales. Perhaps these represent ancient Venetic colonies along the coast that Venetic traders visited, where the use of Latin had not reached.

In any event I have continued to be attentive towards discovering more examples of non-Latin writing in Roman Britain, to see if the language is actually Venetic or some form of Finnic. I was elated to learn of the inscription of the pendant at *Aquae Sulis*, to see if it would translate with my knowledge of Venetic and Finnic languages.

What do we have before translating the *Aquae Sulis* pendant? We have evidence that the Brittany *Veneti* had the same Venetic language as at the Adriatic, except with dialectic deviations and borrowings. Therefore finding Venetic at *Aquae Sulis* will not be unusual. *Veneti* traders were probably frequenting the area when they arrived at ports up the Bristol Channel. We have a practice in the Adriatic Venetic inscriptions that seems like a precedent for activity at *Aquae Sulis* and for leaving a pre-inscribed gift, a pendant, to the goddess, with a positive inscription not a curse. The construction of the sentences addressing a goddess using **Sa.i.nate.i.** resonate with the text on the pendant at *Aquae Sulis*, as we see below.

Last but not least, we have established the validity, from the results in **VENETIC LANGUAGE**, of also looking towards Finnic Estonian for insights into the meaning of words that were not used in the Adriatic Venetic inscriptions.

The following passage from Julius Caesar confirms that the Venetic traders of Brittany/Armorica were constantly frequenting Britain.

These Veneti exercise by far the most extensive authority over all the sea-coast in those districts, for they have numerous ships, in which it is their custom to sail to Britain, and they excel the rest in the theory and practice of navigation. As the sea is very boisterous and open, with but a few harbours here and there which they hold themselves, they have as tributaries almost all those whose custom it is to sail the sea.

[Caesar, *The Gallic Wars*, 3, 8]

What Caesar describes had probably been going on for the previous 4 or 5 centuries, given that mention of tin coming to Greece from Britain (ie *Cassiterides* at the ends of the earth) was already established at the time of ancient Greek historian Herodotus in around 420BC. There was plenty of time for the British Isles to have been shaped by large scale Venetic trade before the arrival of the Romans or even the immigration of Belgic tribes into southeast Britain. I do not believe the Belgic tribes were invaders, but rather entrepreneurs who sought to extend Gaul across the Strait of Dover into southeast Britain. They only sought to conquer the already existing tin industry and had to adapt to what the *Veneti* had already established, including the Brittanian language..

We have learned in recent times how the shaping of Britain by international trade goes back much further than around 500BC, and we really cannot tell when the traders became specifically “Veneti”. Archeology has discovered the international character of Britain began perhaps as early as 2000BC around which time there was large scale mining of copper in northern Wales. The amount of copper removed was much more than would be needed locally, hence it is believed to have been intended for markets outside of the British Isles. It is worth noting that about the same general time – around 2000BC – megalithic constructions were developing

there are many words in Latin based on *iacio* ‘throw, cast, hurl, etc’, suggests *iaceo* was a borrowed word. But I have not shown examples of HIC IACIT because it appeared within Latin texts, and not within Venetic-like texts.

around the British Isles, often in widely separated locations. Does this suggest large scale traders were working the British Isles widely long before 500BC? What is the connection between the early “Megalithic traders” and the *Veneti*? By the time the Romans arrived, the Brittany *Veneti* home base was at Vannes, a location that is close to a major megalithic stone alignments at Carnac, and at a natural harbour was ideal for seagoing ships. It looks like the *Veneti* continued an activity that was already very very old. What was the circumstances of the change? It is worth noting that the megalithic culture came to an end which suggests a new seafaring people who did not worship megaliths, displaced the original seafarers.

I have described my finding Venetic in Brittany and Wales funerary stones above for two reasons: first to show that finding more Venetic in southwest Britain will not be unusual, but also as evidence to argue that the native British language may have been shaped by Venetic throughout the large scale trade system in which they were involved. Let us now proceed to the inscription.

1.5 Translating the *Aquae Sulis* Pendant as Venetic

Having established that Brittany and at least southwest Britain had a pre-Celtic Venetic language, that was – as I already discovered in the Adriatic inscriptions – Finnic in nature, we are now equipped to translate the inscription on the *Aquae Sulis* pendant thought to be in ancient British.

ADIXOUI DEUINA DEIEDA ANDGIN UINDIORIX CUAMENAI

The key to interpreting this is my earlier interpretation of **\$a.i.nate.i. re.i.tiia.i.** (See earlier box) First of all there seems to be a parallel in it to **\$a.i.nate.i.** except it used Latin *deus*. The parallel words are:

DEUINA DEIEDA

If we replace Venetic **\$a** for ‘god’ with DEU we find the exact same structure – the I for the plural, and –NA for the Essive case.

The second word DEIEDA, is similar to **te.i.** except that there is an added EDA. But if we consider Estonian, where the partitive is not the vowel-.i. of Venetic, but a –D, then it works. It would imply, though, that northwest European Venetic was influenced by Estonian language in the long distance trade across the north. We can thus decide that we will not find the same Partitive in the *Aqua Sulis* inscription, but we still have the option of interpreting **vowel-.i.** and an infinitive. In today’s Estonian the partitive of *teie* ‘You’ is *teid*. It is possible that an added E gave it an Allative meaning since in modern Estonian one says *teile* ‘to You’ and so it is possible in ancient times one could say *teide* ‘to You’

In any event, there is a remarkable parallel in DEUINA DEIEDA to **\$a.i.nate.i.** and so we can determine that DEUINA DEIEDA meant ‘to You, Divine (*Sulis*)’

But that is not all the parallels. We find in two words – ADIXOUI and CUAMENAI – with the **vowel-.i.** ending, which in the Adriatic Venetic translations on verbs meant the infinitive.

Furthermore, the word contains MENAI, a word which appears in the Adriatic Venetic inscriptions, except with palatalization the vowel E or I has been lost. As in **mno.i.** It would mean ‘to go’.

Thus we have one powerful parallel in DEUINA DEIEDA and another in the infinitive ending and another in the presence of the word for ‘to go’. But we also saw parallels to Estonian in DEIEDA, and there are other parallels with Finnic, in a fashion that resonates with Estonian.

This is the sentence. Let us interpret it with Venetic, Estonian, and a couple of obvious borrowings from Latin

As I said, this inscription is probably NOT a curse because it is on a pendant and not on the typical thin lead sheet. Perhaps this inscription was on an object intended as an offering to the goddess, following the practice of the *Rhea* sanctuary where objects that were not thin sheets were left.

It is also not necessary that the message on this pendant would be a curse. A thin lead sheet was disposable, but a crafted pendant had practical value. I believe that it was a custom to leave such objects, but that such objects had value and were removed before archeologists found them. This it is possible the curse messages were a peripheral use of the site, and maybe there were genuine prayers to goddess *Sulis*. The Adriatic Venetic texts do not ask the goddess to carry out revenge. They are more respectful, humble, and careful. It seems to me that if at the *Aquae Sulis* site, people asked for someone to be cursed by the goddess, why could a visitor not ask the goddess to give someone the opposite – good fortune. It would be more consistent with human nature.

Let us now look at the mystery inscription from the point of view of it being Venetic and Finnic.

There is all the more reason for looking at it from a Venetic perspective not just because of all the coincidences I cite above, but the fact that the word UINDIORIX contains VINDO which was a high version of VENTA which refers to *Veneti*.

ADIXOUI DEUINA DEIEDA ANDGIN UINDIORIX CUAMENAI

DEUINA DEIEDA as I said reminds me of the Venetic in **\$a.i.nate.i**. We have already translated it above as ‘to You, Divine (*Sulis*)’

If we allow Estonian to recognize DEU as ‘god’ it can say *DEUina teid(l)e*

This gives us the translations in steps – from 1. to 5.

1. ADIXOUI - to You, Divine-one – ANDGIN UINDIORIX CUAMENAI

ANDGIN Next we know in Venetic there is a word indicating giving or offering. I see that in ANDGIN. From an Estonian perspective it looks like a first person plural imperative of verb *anna* ‘give’ *andma*, *anda* ‘to give’. For example in Estonian *andgem* ‘let us give’. Other possibilities could be conditional mood as in Estonian *andaksin* ‘I should give’. Either form will work.

2. ADIXOUI - to You, Divine-one – let us give (or I should give) – UINDIORIX CUAMENAI

UINDIORIX Next, I see UINDIORIX as a name, but considering *Veneti* were still frequenting southern Britain and fetching tin, etc. it could be taken literally and mean ‘Venetiking’ Here too we see possibly a borrowing from Latin - *rex*, ‘king’. I have already pointed out that *Vindo* was in use by *Damnoni* for the *Veneti/Venta*. When we consider the context of giving

an offering to the goddess, it seems a follower of a king or chief of the *Veneti* might be motivated to celebrate the king rather than themselves. I think it is in the nominative case.

3. ADIXOUI - to You, Divine-one – let us give (or I should give) – Veneti-king CUAMENAI

CUAMENAI is quite interesting. The word MENAI immediately reminds me of the Venetic word for ‘to go’ which in Adriatic Venetic would be **mno.i**. In Adriatic Venetic it was often combined into a compound word as in the example in the box above. Here we again see a compound word, **vo.l.tiio.n.mno.s.**, but here we are combining **CAU** and **MENAI**. While **MENAI** is represented in ancient Venetic, the **CUA** is not but it is a word very common in Estonian as *kaua* ‘long (in time)’. Considering the **AI** ending to indicate an infinitive, the resulting meaning is literally ‘longtime-to go’. In the context, I think it means ‘to live long’. The idea is very much like the historic ‘Long live the King!’ Here the sentence asks the goddess to grant the king a long life. Replacing it in our sentence we get:

4. ADIXOUI - to You, Divine-one – let us give (or I should give) – Veneti-king – to live long (literally longtime to go)

ADIXOUI is left. Given that Latin is common in Roman Britain, the initial **AD** suggests there is a borrowing from Latin in this word. Scanning a Latin dictionary there are a number of possibilities. For example there is *adicio* ‘throw to, add to’. Let us assume this word is borrowed from this Latin word (*ici* could become X). We see the ending **UI** which seems to be a Venetic infinitive marker. Thus I will assume **ADIXOUI** is ‘to add to’

Thus we have:

5. To add to - to You, Divine-one – let us give (or I should give) – Veneti-king – to live long (literally longtime to go)

Looking at it as a whole. The nominative and subject is Veneti-king, the verb is ‘let us give’ and ‘to live long’ related to the king, and the rest is a humble acknowledgement of the goddess. Let us rewrite it to better express the concept. The final result – keeping it close to the original grammar.

Let us give, to add to, to You Divine-one (ie Sulis), for the Veneti-king to live long

This interpretation is both in agreement with my deciphering of Venetic and allows for developments of Venetic in the centuries into the Roman Age, such as replacing original Venetic words with borrowings from Latin. It is in full agreement of pilgrims to a shrine not just writing on sheets, but also leaving objects with writing on them. Yet this inscription is also in keeping with the nature of asking the goddess for something. If some will ask for someone else to be cursed, then it surely is possible to ask the goddess to grant someone good luck.

It is far more satisfying than the Celtic interpretation given earlier. You can be the judge, the Celtic interpretation: *May I, Windiorix for/at Cuamena defeat the worthless woman, o divine Deieda* versus the Venetic-Finnic interpretation *Let us give, to add to, to You Divine-one (ie*

Sulis), for the Veneti-king to live long In both cases a grammatical rationalization was made. I have not merely been ‘trying to hear things’ an not even trying to rationalize grammar.

If the interpretations are done well, including dealing with grammar, the decision falls to the resulting meaning. I question whether the Celtic interpretation would be what we would expect on a pendant. The Celtic translation is a curse and better suited to be coarsely scratched out onto a thin piece of lead rather than a crafted object? By Adriatic Venetic traditions, when an inscribed object was left as a gift, it was a very religious move, with positive intentions. The inscription would have been made by a craftsman in advance. Thus it is more natural that the pendant, a crafted object might have a positive request, thought out and crafted well in advance. Thus, I believe my Venetic-Finnic interpretation is the correct one.

To conclude our investigation of the pendant of *Aquae Sulis*, let us interpret the word *Sulis*, if that was the name of the goddess of the springs. The fact that the goddess *Sulis* was used by the natives before the Romans developed the area, suggests that the word *Sulis* must be meaningful in the native language and if the native language was Venetic-like, then we should be able to translate it as such. A possibility interpretation based on Finnic is that the name was SUO/LA/SE ‘(goddess) of the spring (wet) place’. In Finnic the words *suo* or *soo* are common words. They refer to wet places. Indeed the Finnish word for Finland is *Suomi*, which derives from ‘wet-country’. Furthermore there is the word for ‘mouth’ as in Estonian *suu*. Add to this the *-la* ending meaning ‘place of’ we can easily determine that the hot springs were SUO-LA ‘wet-producing place’, or SUU-LA if the spring was seen as a mouth. The additional *-SE* is a naming suffix commonly used in Finnic. The goddess was a personification of the place. It was common in ancient and prehistoric times to personify nature.

References

My several years intepreting the Venetic inscriptions found in northern Italy, are documented in the work:

A Paabo, *VENETIC LANGUAGE An Ancient Language from a New Perspective: FINAL*

This document also contains additional related information about northern Europe in the Appendix, including analysis of the Suebic language.. For a quick overview read the short version of the book. It is advisable since the full document is very comprehensive.

Both and more on the ancient *Veneti* see: <https://independent.academia.edu/APaabo> or <http://www.paabo.ca>

For the origins of the original prehistoric British, see the story of the boat peoples found under the heading “Uirala” at www.paabo.ca/uirala/index/html There is also a paper at general paper at <https://independent.academia.edu/APaabo>

For more on Ptolemy and his geographies search via google. There are copies of his geographies that can be downloaded from the internet

Other references such as to Ptolemy’s, Tacitus’, and Caesar’s work, or the examples of Venetic in Brittany and Wales are cited when they are presented or in the footnotes