

Research Report

The Hand of Irulegi

Basque-Iberism return after seventy years of dismissal

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Abstract - The Hand of Irulegi is a Iberian bronze plate with a hand shape which is scripted with Iberian-Tartessian signs and has been found in an archaeological site (at Mt Irulegi) close to Pamplona, Navarre (Spain). It was probably fabricated at the 1st century BC to be hanged at the outside house door. Part of the Iberian signs have been officially transcribed and translated by official scholars by using Basque meaning of Iberian wording. It implies that Basque-Iberism returns to official scholars after about 70 years of dismissal. In this work, we have proposed a transcription and translation of the full four lines of the inscription by using phonetic-semantic similarities between Basque and Iberian wording and Iberian-Tartessian signary. Translation has come out to be in the **Hospitium** Iberian striking (to Romans) custom/tradition which consisted of a warm invitation and reception to foreigners to be hosted in the house. Also, it is now possible that Iberian-Tartessian rock scripts at Canary Islands may also be studied by official Iberian scholars and also the possible early origins of Iberian-Tartessian signary on the Lineal Megalith Scripts found in rocks in Mediterranean and Atlantic Euro-Africa. The main conclusion about “The Irulegi Hand” Iberian writing meaning is that it is within the frame of foreigners invitation to be hosted Iberian tradition or “Hospitium”. However, work on the exact meaning is not yet finished.

Keywords: Iberian, Tartessian, Irulegi, Hospitium, Canary Islands, Lineal Megalithic Scripts, Tartessos, Sertorio, Pompeius, Vascones, Baskunes, Basque-Iberism, Humboldt, Lineal Megalithic Rock scripts, Irulegui (Spanish), Hand.

Introduction

Irulegi has been in the past a important place to Pamplona (Iruña in Basque) main city defense of nowadays Spanish Navarre. It is placed 6 miles away from present day Pamplona and it was populated by Baskunes in prehistory, who apparently helped Pompeyo against Etruscan Sertorio that had been sent by Rome but turned against it and commanded a Iberian army against Romans. Mt Irulegi top remains show to have undergone a fire by this time (1st Century BC). A castle was constructed on the man-made flat top of Mt Irulegi by year 1371 or before because Muslim/Christian confrontations (Pellon 2006: https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castillo_de_Irulegui).

Baskunes language was Iberian or very similar whatever ethnicity is attributed to them: multiple typical coins were fabricated with this name on it and written in Iberian. In June 2021 a metal hand shaped plate was found in a archaeological excavation on the top of Mt Irulegi, close to the castle (**Fig. 1**). It is a bronze hand shaped plate composed of 53% tin, 41% copper and 2% lead. Its size is 143x13cm approximately and has 1mm of thickness

(https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mano_de_Irulegui) (**Fig. 2**). Four lines writing were performed Iberian characters (**Fig. 3**) both by dots and lines between them. The first line has been officially transcribed and translated into Basque language with a obvious meaning like the one proposed by us (see below). Prof. Aiestaran and Leire Malkorra are project director and hand discoverer, respectively. Irulegi hand has tentatively been dated by 1st century BC.

Materials and Methods

Iberian-Tartessian signary was used for transcription of evident Iberian signs (**Fig. 3**) (Gomez-Moreno 1949, 1962). Our methodology of phonetic and semantic Basque/Iberian transcription and translation proposal may be found at Arnaiz-Villena (2000, download chapter 9 <http://chopo.pntic.mec.es/~biolmol/publicaciones/Usko.pdf>). Transcription and translation proposal have been done with the help of ancient Basque language before it was unified (Batúa) (Keretxeta 1990; Sota *et al.* 1989).



Fig. 1 Place where the Hand of Irulegi was found.
A) Mt. Irulegi placement: Aprox. 5 miles away from Pamplona city. **B)** Castle of Irulegi: archaeological excavation is shown at upper-right corner of the image.



Fig. 2 The Hand of Irulegi. A bronze-based inscription (in the shape of a hand) in Iberian-Tartessian signary (see [Fig. 3](#)).

Iberian →		Tartessian ←	Phoenician	Ancient Greek	Iberian →		Tartessian ←	Phoenician	Ancient Greek
RDP P	a	ΔΔ	κ	α	P P	bi	γ	β	π
EE E	e	ƒƒ (ε)	ε	η	X X X	bo	⊗ ⊗ ⊗		
N N	z	u u (v)	z	ι	□	bu	□ (i)		
H H	o	o o p	o	ο	X	ka	+ X +	+ X +	τ
ΔΔ ↑	u	4 ↑ ü?	Y Y	υ	⊖ ⊖ ⊖	le	⊖ ⊖ ⊖	⊖	θ
ΛΛ Λ	l	1	Λ	λ	Υ Υ Υ	li	⊞ ⊞ ⊞	⊞	β
o o o	r	4 q	4	ρ	v w w	lo	⊞ ⊞ ⊞		
M M	s	M M M	w	μ	⊕ Δ Δ Δ	lu	Δ Δ v (x)	Δ Δ	δ
ξ ξ ξ	z	ƒƒ (ε)	ƒ	ξ	Α Α Α	ca	Λ (⊗)	1	γ
Y Y V Y	m	ξ ξ	ξ	μ	< G G <	ke	⊞ ⊞ ⊞	Y	κ
N N	n	u u u (v)	u	ν	f u u	ki	1 z (z N?)		
l	ba	l			X	co	⊗		
o o o	be	u u			⊖ ⊖	cu	⊖ ⊖	⊖	ϕ

Fig. 3 Iberian-Tartessian semi-syllabary assembled by Manuel Gómez-Moreno (Gómez Moreno 1949; 1962).

Results and Discussion

The hand of Irulegi is made of a metal alloy which is very resistant to corrosion: bronze, (copper and tin) with lead. Other Iberian scripted hands have existed, i.e.: the Alcubierre hand, made with lead (Huesca, Spain). Other figures, such as pigs or horses with Iberian inscriptions may have been used to be hanged on the doors of the house entrance by Iberians. Distinguishing between Iberians and Celtiberians is for us an artifact created by different Roman and pre-Roman writers in different places and times (Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2017)

Our Hand of Irulegi translation proposals turned out to describe a utilitarian function, more than a religious or ritual one, without the latter being conjointly ruled out. It seems an invitation to foreigners to enter the house.

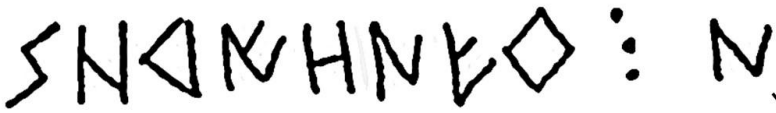
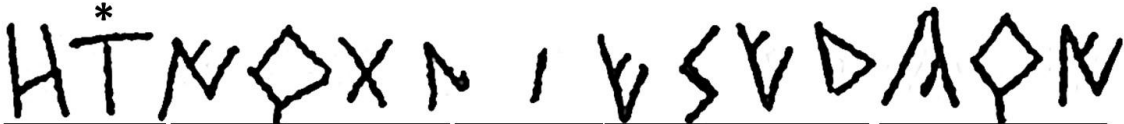
		
TRANSC. (BASQ.)	S O R I O N E K U (!) N	
TRANSL. (SPA)	FELIZ TU	(SÍ)
TRANSL. (ENG)	HAPPINESS	(YES!)
		
TRANSC. (BASQ.)	(A)TE	N E KE BE E GI R A T E R E N
TRANSL. (SPA)	PUERTA – CANSANCIO – RESPETUOSO – DE ELLOS	
TRANSL. (ENG)	AT THE DOOR – TIREDNESS – RESPECTFULL – ALL (EARNEST)	
		
TRANSC. (BASQ.)	O TA	I R TAN (A)PA E S E R KA R I
TRANSL. (SPA)	A LA CASA – SALIR – BOSQUE – SENTARSE – SUJETO (PAJAR/CORRAL) (CAMBIAR DE SITIO) (COLOCARSE, DESCANSAR) (realiza la acción)	
TRANSL. (ENG)	HOME PART – MOVE OUT – WOODS – SITTING – SUBJECT (BARNYARD) (RESTING) (WHO ACTS)	
		
TRANSC. (BASQ.)	E R A U KO	N(A) BA
TRANSL. (SPA)	DE TI MISMO	– PALMA DE MANO
TRANSL. (ENG)	OF YOURSELF	– HAND PALM

Fig. 4 The Hand of Irulegi.

Transcription and translation proposal. Old Basque pre-Batua or unified Basque repositories have been used for transcription and translation proposal (Keretxeta 1990; Sota et al. 1989).*=T (A). This sign is controversial. It may be taken from ancient Greek as it was taken at Alcoy Serreta lead tablet (https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plomo_de_La_Serreta) (see Fig. 3). Also, it could be an Etruscan sign: letter "T" because it is likely that Irulegi village was on the Etruscan Sertorio band when it was destroyed by Pompeius army (Arnaiz-Villena and Alonso-

Garcia 2008). Meaning of translation on the context of Iberian traditional “*Hospitium*” does not change translation proposal removing this “T” part. Vertical 2 or 3 points is emphatic “Yes” for us or!. First line final “N” did not have space and had to be placed at 1st line.

Spanish proposed translation: 1st line “Sea Feliz” or “Felicidades”! 2nd - “El honesto cansado que este a la puerta (todos)” 3rd “salga del bosque y descanse (en un lugar de la casa, si se traduce OTA)” 4th “Te damos la mano” o “Choca la mano!”

English proposed Translation: 1st line: Be happy! 2nd: The earnest person who stays at door (any). 3rd: move out wood and rest (in a part of house, if OTA is translated). 4th: Shake hands!

Hospitium

Hospitium is an Iberian use that was surprising to Romans in Iberia around III century BC. It was documented by various writers (i.e.: Diodorus 2012, <https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hospitium>). It was the Iberians offer to lodge to unknown foreigners in their homes. It was, apparently, a kind of contract between the home owner and the visitor. It is unknown whether *Hospitium* had a kind of civil, religious, or ritual advantage. Diodorus wrote that “(Iberians)...behave very sweetly and kindly with foreigners. They all beg foreigners to kindly lodge in their houses and live with each other in hospitality. Those to whom foreigners render service enjoy great favor and are called beloved of the gods”.

Our proposed translation of hand of Irulegi seems to be related to the *Hospitium* Iberian institution/ customs.

Hand of Irulegi: Transcription and Translation proposal

Our proposal of and English translation of the hand if Irulegi could be as follows:

<<Happy you!>>

<<All earnest people tired at door >>(all of you, in Basque, “eren”).

<<Go out the forest to place yourself (in a house room)>> (“ota”, if it is a correct transcription, may be in Basque “within a home” or even “part of house”: farmyard/courtyard or straw loft).

<<Shake hands>> (literally, “Of yourself”: “erauko” - “palm of hand: “naba”, in Basque.

Thus, hand script would begin wishing happiness or luck, and finish “shaking hands”, still a very common greeting in Iberia and parts of present day World, whose origin is not a matter to address here. This was the practice of the Iberian

“*Hospitium*” (See above). A part of the hand (first line) has been officially translated, and it is the first Basque-Iberian text accepted as genuine by Spanish scholars in the last 70 years.

Basque-Iberism

Mythology is considered history by some: Evemero identified mythical gods with true people (<https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evemero>). The mythology of very ancient history of Iberia has not only been long denigrated but also concealed. Even the tiniest Pacific island (such as Easter Island) has a much more extensive and widely disseminated mythology. It seems that apart from Greco-Roman and Egyptian mythology, no other mythological traditions existed in the Mediterranean (i.e.: Persian, African, Iberian and others). The Atlantic coast of Europe and Africa, which borders and extends into the Mediterranean, has been ignored, and official chroniclers who recounted the ancient mythological history of Iberia ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2019, 2023](#)), Tartessos and Atlantis scholars have been labeled as forgers and attacked. The first mentions of Tartessos (by Hecataeus and Herodotus in the 6th century BC) and Iberia (by Pompeius Trogus and Justinus in the 1st century BC) have never been acknowledged. He clearly suggested that Basque language was the first documented Iberian language. The works of Plato, which provide endless details about the location of Atlantis in the Atlantic Ocean near the Strait of Gibraltar are ignored and dismissed as literary fiction without further attention. St. Isidoro, St. Jerome, and King Alfonso X the Wise already told about the lineage of Tubal and Geryon, and the labors of Hercules, that some of them took place in the area of the Strait of Gibraltar, in the Western Mediterranean. Annio de Viterbo and Florián de Ocampo, chroniclers of the Catholic Kings and the Emperor Charles V, respectively, are disparaged for recounting the tales of Tubal and his lineage, Gargoris and Habidis, and Hercules, all of which are connected to the foundation of Iberia and the chronicles of Tartessos. The memory of these figures provides an identity or resemblance between ancient Iberians and the Basque or present day Euskera speaking people. Tubal, a grandson of Noah, and his lineage are attributed to the origins of both the Basque and Iberian cultures in many cultural and practical aspects. Strabo tells us in the 1st century BC that the southern part of France and Iberia spoke a very similar language (Pompeyo Trogo, [Celestino-Pérez](#) and [López-Pérez 2020](#)). Today, the kinship between Basque and France Aquitanian is widely accepted ([Gorrotxategi 2020](#)).

Leaving aside mythological history, Esteban de Garibay, chronicler of Philip II, began to establish Basque-Iberian etymological equivalences, which were later continued by Larramendi, Andrés de Poza, Baltasar de Echave, and finally by Astarloa, Moguel and Hervás y Panduro. They convinced Humboldt in 1804 of the Basque-Iberian connection, which he spread worldwide.

Connexion of Tartessos culture and Basque-Iberism and its beginnings has been described (Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 2023). In the mid-20th century, Koldo Mitxelena and Antonio Tovar doubted Basque-Iberian connections, and a school of dogmatism took hold in the university, not only doubting but strongly denying Basque-Iberian ties, effectively blocking the path for Basque-Iberian scholars who were disciples of Valencian professor Domingo Fletcher and many others. In recent times, our own work (Arnaiz-Villena, 2000), "Euskeraren Jatorria" ("The Origin of the Basque Language") association, asociacion "Vascoiberismo" (www.leguaiberika.eu), and the identification of Orduña (2005) and Ferre i Jane (2009) of the very similar Iberian and Basque numerals and twentieth numeration system have once again brought Basque-Iberian ties to the forefront. However, the recent discovery near Pamplona of the "Hand of Irulegi," written in Iberian with translated Basque words described through phonology and semantics, has definitively reinforced this connection (Arnaiz-Villena 2000).

Basque in Europe

Prof Theo Venneman and ourselves have found a basic Basque language substrate along Europe a Mediterranean Basin and Middle East languages and other languages. It suggests that Basque language is one of the oldest extant languages (Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 1999, 2000, 2002; Hamel *et al.* 2003, Venneman 2003)

Genetics

On the other hand, experts are increasingly skeptical on the origin of the Iberians regarding massive migrations of populations. While the influx of genes (people) into populations is occasionally detected, it is rarely significant between inhabitants on both sides of the Strait of Gibraltar. The relationships over the past thousands of years, and even earlier, have been very close between southern Iberia and northern Africa. Therefore, it can be said that the Iberians originate from North Africa, although the flow

of people and languages has been bidirectional. Additionally, in the mid-20th century, the space shuttle "Columbia" demonstrated through infrared photography that beneath the Sahara Desert, there existed a significant number of rivers and lakes (and consequently, a high population density that gradually disappeared after 10,000 BCE due to the cessation of rainfall and the onset of desertification. The people of the Sahara moved in all directions continuously, fleeing from the forming desert. Genetic studies, using modern technology also support these findings ([Currat et al. 2010](#); [Botigue et al. 2013](#); [Arnaiz-Villena et al. 1999](#) and [2002](#); [Gonzalez-Fortes et al. 2019](#), [Corell et al. 1991](#)).

Iberian-Tartessian rock scripts at Canary Islands and Iberia Megaliths: possible precursor signary

In fact, we have discovered rock inscriptions (in hard-to-reach locations) with Iberian affiliations in the Canary Islands and in the central Sahara. These inscriptions provide a simple transcription and proposed translation of a religious nature regarding the Paleolithic and Neolithic "Mother Goddess" of Europe, the Mediterranean, and North Africa ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2019, 2020, 2022a](#)).

The origin of these linear scripts may have been within what we have defined as the Canarian-Saharan Circle ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2021](#)). The earliest securely dated linear inscriptions are found in the Balkan Peninsula (Sitovo and Gadeshnitza inscriptions, Bulgaria). Additionally, Strabo tells us that Tartessian-Iberian was being written 6,000 years ago, although Iberian scholarship refers to an antiquity of 700 years before Christ. There are traces of Tuareg linear script in the southern Sahara dated to 3,000-4,000 years BCE. The late datings of Iberian-Tartessian are based on questionable and forced historical connections, and they should be debated, reviewed, and achieve consensus using more precise techniques.

Since the Iberian-Tartessian script is found engraved on rocks in the Canary Islands and in the African continent (Sahara), we have postulated a Canarian-Saharan Circle as a possible origin of the Tartessian-Iberian script ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2021](#)). Short phrases or words in Iberian-Tartessian are found on engraved rocks in the Canary Islands, sometimes mixed with the Linear Megalithic Scripts that we have also discovered in the Alcalar dolmens (Portimao, Portugal), San Bartolome Dolmen (Huelva, Spain), Cumbres Mayores Menhir (Huelva, Spain) and Zalamea la Real Menhir and rock/stones (Huelva, Spain). Furthermore, Cádiz, Málaga, Seville, and the

Portuguese Algarve are particularly rich in dolmens, many of which are dated 2,000 years before the pyramids of Giza in Cairo (7,000 years ago), such as the Dolmen de Alberite in Villamartín (Cádiz), which we have also studied, located near the area with the highest rainfall in Spain (Sierra de Grazalema) (Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 2013, 2023).

This abundance of dolmens is likely due to the mineral wealth of the Iberian Pyrite Belt, which stretches from Alcalar do Sal in Portugal (south of Lisbon) to Gerena (Seville) and was the source of copper, gold, and silver that made Tartessos famous in ancient times. The oldest open-pit mines in Iberia are found in Zalamea la Real, Huelva (El Chinflón Mine), between the dolmens of El Pozuelo and very close to the mines of Riotinto, which historically belonged to the municipality of Zalamea la Real until recent times. We believe that due to the Basque-Iberian etymology of the name Zalamea (meaning "hard, compact mineral"), this is where the furnaces of the El Chinflón and Riotinto mines were located, at least (Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 2022b).

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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