

Research Report

Tindaya Guanche sacred mountain, Fuerteventura (Canary Islands, Spain) and its Ibero-Guanche (Latin) rock inscriptions

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Abstract - Tindaya volcano is a sacred Guanche (or Majo)* mountain, Canary Islands, Spain. This mountain was probably a religious / pilgrimage place for Guanche /Majo people. Many of its rocks are covered by lineal and figurative motifs with incised or picketed (carved) technology the most abundant reported are podomorphs, which in the Atlantic European façade usually point towards either the summer solstice sunset or the sunset yearly arch at these latitudes (Northwest direction). Podomorphs are generally admixed with other motifs in the rock panel. Among these motifs are the so called Ibero-Guanche incised Lineal Megalithic Scripts or pre-Guanche-Iberian signs. These are similar to those found in other Canary Islands, Algerian Sahara Desert or Iberia, some of them scripted in dolmens themselves (5-3,000 years BC). This finding at Tindaya volcano supports a very early Fuerteventura Island, longer before than Punic or Roman influence, if any; podomorphs today's Bronze Age chronology in Iberia supports ancient peopling in Fuerteventura and other Canary Islands. In the present paper we analyse these incise Iberian-Guanche (or earlier) writing and put forward a mainly religious/ funeral meaning in the context of the Paleolithic/Neolithic widespread Religion of the Mother. The Saharo-Canarian cultural circle may have been the origin of Eurafrikan and Mediterranean Lineal scripts, like Runes, Iberian Tartessian, Etruscan, Lepontic, Minoan Lineal A and others. Particularly Iberian-Guanche scripts and their probable precursor Linela Megalithic signs also present in Sahara supports that Saharan people migration when desertification started about 10,000 BC was origin of this culture.

*Majos= Lanzarote and Fuerteventura Islands inhabitants.

Keywords: Majos, Guanches, Tindaya, Podomorphs, Iberian-Guanche scripts, Fuerteventura, Canary Islands, Basque Iberian, Lineal Megalithic Script, Archaeoastronomy, Etruscan, Runes, Tartessian, Berber, Tuareg, Sahara, Lepontic, Vinca. Gradeshnitsa.

Introduction

The Tindaya mountain (397 m above sea level) is located in the municipal area of La Oliva (Fuerteventura, Canary Islands) (Figs 1 and 2), rising on a flat ground known as Llano de Esquinzo. Its geographical coordinates are 28° 35' 13" N, 14° 04' 13" W, near to the same-named Tindaya village. It is a mountain made up of trachytic-type acid volcanic rock partly covered by quaternary basaltic flows. This rock has close similarities with that of other trachytic deposits on the Jandía peninsula, also placed in the southernmost part of Fuerteventura Island (Hernández-Pérez & Martín-Socas 1980).

The discovery of first scripts found in Tindaya mountain could be associated to C. Vera, but other publications affirm that P. Carreño had previously known them since May 1973 (Carreño 1979).

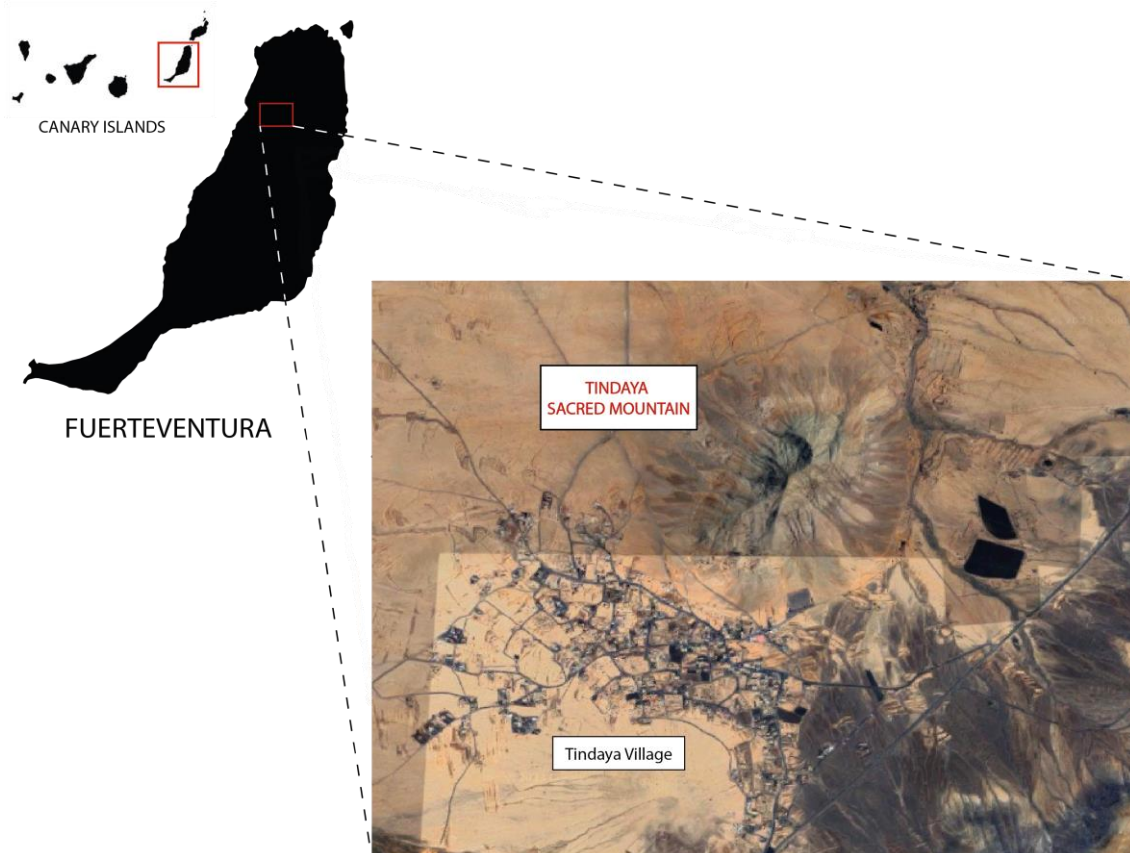


Fig. 1 Map showing Fuerteventura Island (Canary Islands, Spain) and the location of Tindaya Sacred Mountain, nearby the same-named Tindaya Village, Northwest Fuerteventura. Fuerteventura coast is only 90 km away from continental Africa coast.



Fig. 2 Tindaya Sacred Mountain is placed in La Oliva municipal area, Fuerteventura Northwest area (28° 35' 13" N, 14° 04' 13" W) (see [Fig. 1](#)). It is 397 meters high and has 18.7 million years in antiquity.

Two types of techniques were used by the Fuerteventura aboriginals in the Tindaya scripts, picketed and incised, and they can be separated in four different groups ([Hernández-Pérez & Martin-Socas 1980](#)):

- 1) Reticular geometric figures
- 2) Podomorphs: abundantly found in Tindaya scripts but also typical of other North African (Western Sahara, South Tassili, Morocco, Southern Great Atlas, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt), Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal) and European archaeological sites (France, Ireland, Sweden, Germany and Italy) ([Molina-Garcia 1989](#)). Podomorphs are believed to have magic/religious meanings and are the most represented figures in Tindaya mountain. Their chronology is established in the late Bronze Age ([Moreira and Bettencourt 2021](#))
- 3) Rectangular and ovoidal figures
- 4) Feet imprints

Podomorphs are generally mixed with other scripts, and little channels and small wells also for magic/religious purposes and widespread in Iberia. They are also present in Middle East and chronologically they may be as old as 3000 years BC ([Almagro-Gorbea et al. 2022](#)). Atlantic (North Portugal) footprints and podomorphs are usually placed far from inhabited areas, mixed with other scripts/drawings in rock panels: they were probably places of religious/ritual pilgrimage. A second character is that most of podomorphs point towards sunset in solar solstice (Northwest), but others could also point to any other point of the sunset arch in another year time: the Northwest sunset yearly arch in northern hemisphere middle latitudes (including Portugal, Spain and Canary Islands) ([Moreira & Bettencourt 2021](#)).

In addition to these three types of engravings at Tindaya site, there are others that do not form clear geometric figures and that can be included within other group of inscriptions so abundant in other Canarian rock sites and that probably correspond to Iberian-Guanche inscriptions or to another more primitive stage of them, Lineal Megalithic Script ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2022d](#)).

Lineal rock inscriptions in Lanzarote Island were first described and exposed at the Arrecife museum (Lanzarote) in 1980 by Jose Brito (Brito and Espino, 1980). These inscriptions were named “Latin” and found widespread by Fuerteventura and Lanzarote Islands (Canary Islands) ([Pichler 1995; 2003](#)). However, these inscriptions were transcribed and translated by using the old Iberian semi-syllabary (Gomez-Moreno, 1949; 1962) and its Basque correspondence ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 1999; 2001; Arnaiz-Villena & Alonso-García 2001; 2012](#)). They have been found in all main Canary Islands ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2020a; 2020b](#)), and they have been named as Iberian-Guanche inscriptions by us because it was not possible a universal translation from Latin language ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2019](#)). Also, they lack some typical Latin letters like Q, C, J, K, Y, Z, P or X. However, there exists the typical Iberian “I” (see Appendix I), which is a specific Iberian-Tartessian sign. Sensible translations may be proposed from Iberian-Basque equivalents.

The Tindaya sacred mountain has more than 300 engravings, particularly podomorphs, and they were all made by Guanche or first prehistoric Canary Islands Inhabitants (in Fuerteventura Islands are also called “Majos”).

Material and methods

A Sony Camera Cybershot 14.1 Megapixels Carl-Zeiss lens Vario-Tessar and Sony Xperia G3112 cellular phone camera were used for photograph work. Magnification of photographs and computational analyses of rocks have been performed with Adobe Illustrator 2020 and Mac OS images visualizer. All photographs were taken by Antonio Arnaiz-Villena (AAV), and Marcial Medina (MM) and they may be used under complete citation of paper and permission, as law permits.

Some of the incised rock engravings will be studied in present work. A more exhaustive study is ongoing.

Methodology used for proposing a translation hypothesis for “Latin” or Iberian-Guanche Inscriptions (Arnaiz-Villena 2000)

We have followed a methodology which is similar to that proposed by Greenberg and Ruhlen (Ruhlen 1994) based on phonology and semantics. Our premises for approaching these Usko-Mediterranean languages are:

- 1) Languages may correctly be classified, and decipherment approached with 10-20 "diagnostic" cognates (i.e., the personal pronouns and other frequently used cognates like plant names, family generics and tools and common life terms existing in Neolithic and pre-Neolithic societies). We use phonology and semantics similarities.
- 2) Most of the written ancient Mediterranean languages studied previously by us (i.e., Iberian-Tartessian, Etruscan, Linear A and others) refer to an apparently common religion (Poulianos 1969; Arnaiz-Villena & Alonso-García 1998; 2001; Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 2001, 2022d). This decipherment has been possible to the Basque-Spanish translation of words found in the above-mentioned extinct languages and showing a Basque correspondence. The topics found in this religion are: the Mother (Ama= mother, in Basque (B.)), the way of the Zen (dead, in B.) towards another life, going through The Door or Atan (B.). The flames (Kar, B.), which make the dead to be afraid, etc. A detailed transcription and translation hypotheses are found in (Arnaiz-Villena 2000, download chapter; Arnaiz-Villena & Alonso García 2001; Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 2001).

- 3) Most of these deciphered "Usko-Mediterranean" languages refer to the following matters: **A.** Religion and after death (90%) ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2022d](#)). **B.** Accountancy related to food-storage and other topics. This skewed thematic writing may be due to that writings have been better preserved in sanctuaries and/or palaces, and not in normal living people housing (the latter being constructed with more perishable materials). Also, Neolithic and pre-Neolithic societies may have used written words as a magic or totemic sense related to permanent keeping of possessions and also to securing a proper and pleasant after death life; casts of clerks (related or not to religion) could have further driven this tendency in order to keep up with privileges. In addition, it is obvious that primitive societies felt less secure than nowadays more complex ones; this could have led people to find religion and food register to be essential.
- 4) There are groups of words that are found together in the different languages ([Arnaiz-Villena 2000](#)), i.e.: Atinas (B.), the door of darkness. Other idiomatic expressions preserved in both ancient Iberian and Basque are shown in chapter 7, section 2.6 of the same reference.
- 5) Beginning and ending of words are problematic and unless meaning is known, it is very difficult to define them. Only known and repeated meanings (in several languages) are taken as sound cognate identification.
- 6) Common and proper names are almost impossible to distinguish. Many proper names come from a common name like in English "Rose" and also in Mediterranean languages like Basque (for males, Bilebai= Circumcision; Gurutz= Cross; Eztegu= Wedding; Lor= Flower; Aintza= Glory; Sein= Innocent; Lihoa= Linen; Ama=Mother; Edurne= Snow; Gentza= Peace; Deunoro= All Saints; Bakarr= Loneliness) and Spanish (for females: Azucena= White Lily; Gloria= Glory; Cruz= Cross; Flor= Flower; Inocencio= Innocent; Lino= Linon; Nieves= Snows; Paz= Peace; Santos= Saints; Soledad= Loneliness. Ancient societies tended to name people with common names (Great Bear, Eagle, Sitting Bull), as it is well known with North American Indians.
- 7) Basque language has remained with little modifications throughout time, because invasions have not modified this and other Basque society characteristics (Collins, 1989).
- 8) Basque language was much more widespread than its present-day limits ([Venemann 2003](#); [Intxausti 1992](#)).

Transliteration and translation hypothesis of Usko-Mediterranean languages including Iberian

Iberian-Tartessian, Etruscan and Minoan Linear A have been transliterated and a translation proposed, as referred in (Poulianos 1969; Arnaiz-Villena et al. 1999; Arnaiz-Villena 2000). All bibliography recollection for transliteration was achieved from libraries of University Complutense of Madrid (Philosophy and Geography Faculties, and CSIC). Thirty-six books were used at the same time by a group of residents directed by Prof. Arnaiz-Villena at Doce de Octubre Hospital, Madrid. Basque-Spanish cognate meanings have provided the basis for the translation. Berber has been distinguished from the Arab contamination by comparison with Basque (Sota *et al.* 1976; Keretxeta 1990), Iberian-Tartessian (see Chapter 7, of Arnaiz-Villena 2000) and Arab (Corriente-Cordoba 1977). The ancient Lybic scripts were studied from (Chabot 1940a; 1940b; 1941; Harden 1971); some of them were written in Punic characters. Directions of the scripts were generally vertical and only assessed by the sense of meaning (Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 1999). Etruscan texts were taken from D'Aneusa (1997). Hittite, Sumerian, Eblaic, Elamite, Ugaritic, Egyptian and Guanche texts were taken from the transliterated references of the most recognized World specialists (see references list of Arnaiz-Villena 2000, chapter 9 pages 210, 245, 246, which may be download from <http://chopo.pntic.mec.es/~biolmol/publicaciones/Usko.pdf> (See Arnaiz-Villena & Alonso-García 2001).











Results

Tindaya sacred mountain was searched. Among many scripts panels of podomorphs figures and lines, the following exclusive incise lines were chosen for a partial study (Figs 3, 4 and 5).



Fig. 3 Iberian-Guanche inscriptions (or their precursor Lineal Megalithic Scripts) found in a rock at Fuente La Palma in Tindaya Sacred Mountain, Fuerteventura, Spain (28° 35' 13" N, 14° 04' 13" W).

These scripts are very similar to other Iberian scripts found in other Canary Islands ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2019; 2020a; 2020b; 2021c](#)), Ti-m Missaou (Algerian Sahara Desert, close to Mali) ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2021a](#)), Cumbres Mayores (Huelva, Spain) ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2022a](#)), Alcalar (Portimao, Portugal) ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2022b](#)) and Zalamea la Real (Huelva, Spain) ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2022c](#)). Note that rock seems to stay now upwards; however, it could have stayed downwards in a volcanic landscape, or writers could have started to perform some incise signs upside down sticking chest to rock from upper part. In addition, no words seem to be written and signs may have been done by different people in different times. An interpretation of scripts transcription and translation of some signs found in this rock is put forward as follows. Distinction between M and L is difficult since we do not exactly know writing direction. "I" sign could also be=(A) BA, Basque ABA meaning both Priest/Forest (see Appendix I and also [Gomez-Moreno 1949;1962; Sota et al.1976](#)) (Photograph by MM):

1-.  = (A)TA = the door	6-.  = (A) M (A) = the Mother
2-.  = BA = yes (or emphasis)	7-.  = (A)KA = the dead
3-.  = (I) L = the dead	8-.  = (A) M (A) = the Mother
4-.  = (A) M (A) = the Mother	9-.  = KE = smoke (referring to a burnt corpse)
5-.  = (A)KA = the dead	10-.  = (A)TA = the door

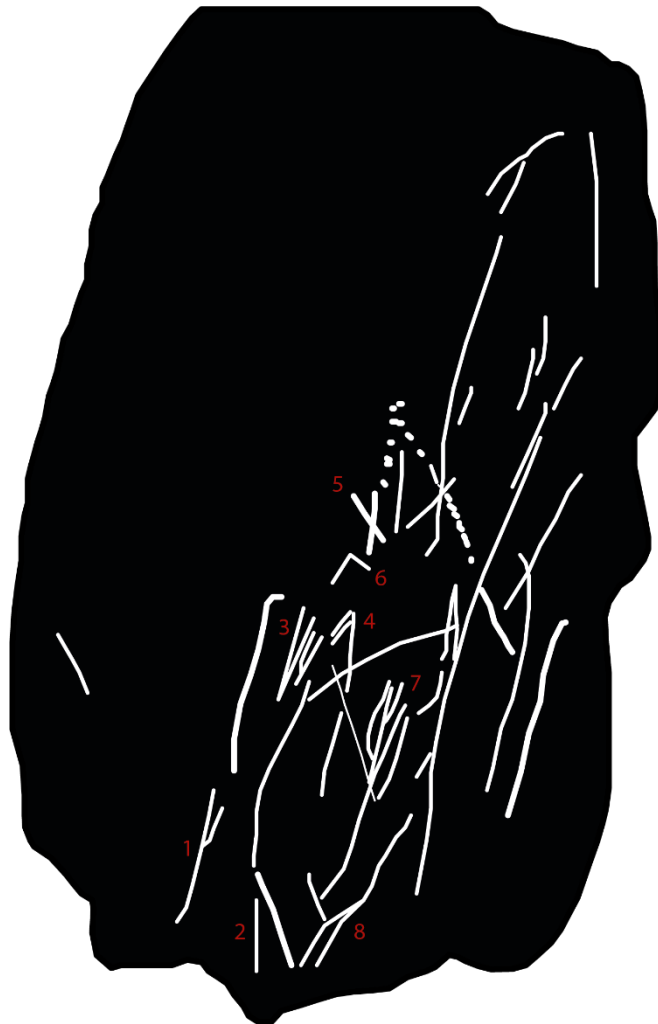


Fig. 4 Iberian-Guanche inscriptions (or Lineal Megalithic Scripts) found in a rock at Llano del Tablero de la Casa site, in Tindaya sacred mountain, Fuerteventura, Spain (28° 35' 13" N, 14° 04' 13" W).

Note that rock seems to stay now upwards; however, it could have stayed downwards in a volcanic landscape, or writers could have started to perform some incise signs upside down sticking chest to rock from upper past. In addition, no words seem to be written and signs may have been done by different people in different times. An interpretation of scripts transcription and translation of some signs found in this rock is put forward as follows. Distinction between M and L is difficult since we do not exactly know writing direction (see Appendix I and also [Gomez-Moreno 1949; 1962](#)). "I" sign could also be=(A) BA, Basque ABA meaning both Priest/Forest (see Appendix I and also [Gomez-Moreno 1949;1962](#); [Sota et al.1976](#)))

(Photograph by MM):

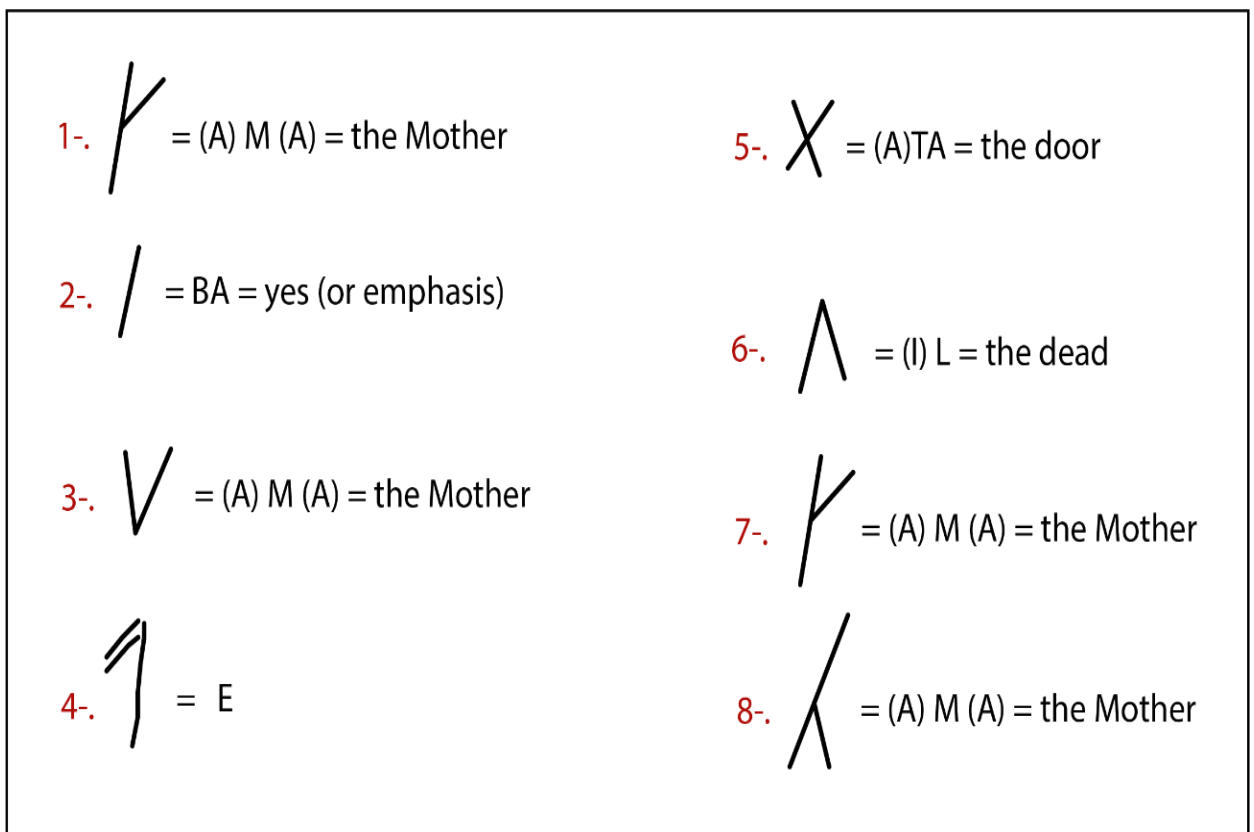
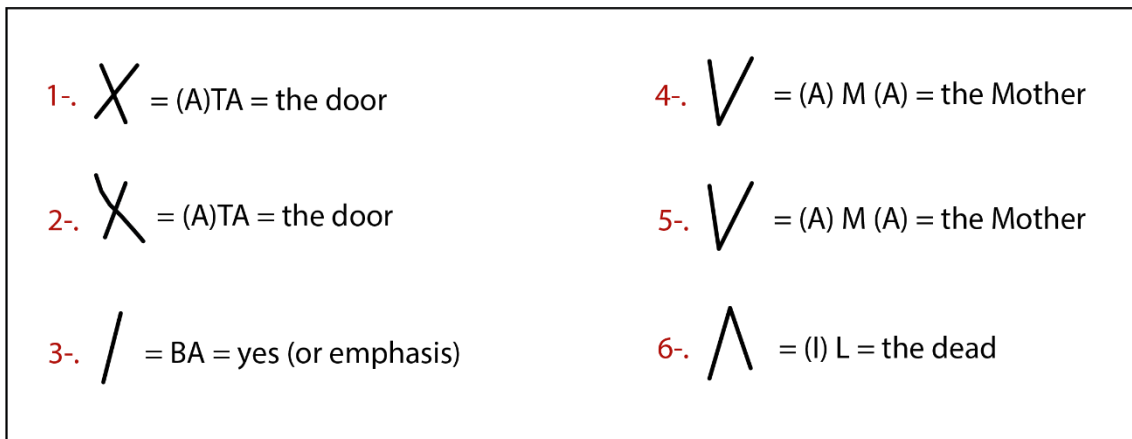




Fig. 5 Iberian-Guanche inscriptions (or Lineal Megalithic Scripts) found in a rock at Llano del Tablero de la Casa site, in Tindaya sacred mountain area, Fuerteventura, Spain (28° 35' 13" N, 14° 04' 13" W).

An interpretation of scripts transcription and translation of some signs found in this rock is put forward as follows. Distinction between M and L is difficult since we do not exactly know writing direction (see Appendix I and also [Gomez-Moreno 1949;1962](#)). "I" sign could also be=(A) BA, Basque ABA, meaning both Priest /Forest (see Appendix I and also [Gomez-Moreno 1949; 1962; Sota et al.1976](#)) (Photograph by MM):



Discussion

Podomorphs figures in Tindaya Mountain

Podomorphs are widespread scripts mainly found on rocks of Europe and North Africa. They are usually mixed with another figurative or lineal engravings. Their chronology has been established to be Bronze Age in Europe and North Africa although some may have been performed also in Iron Age ([Almagro-Gorbea et al. 2022; Moreira and Bettencourt 2021](#)).

Podomorphs are either lineal rectangular forms with or without fingers and sometimes they are represented as footprints. Many of them point to the sunset arch in the northern hemisphere (Portugal). This could also happen in Tindaya mountain.

Rock incise podomorphs are the most frequent incised representations at Tindaya, which is considered a sacred place. Also, podomorphs are recorded to be apart from living settled human groups in more solitary rock places which may be subject to ritual or religious pilgrimage ([Moreira and Bettencourt 2021](#)).

Archaeoastronomy in Tindaya Mountain

Podomorphs in Atlantic Europe façade are mostly pointing to the sunset yearly arch and about half of them recorded (about 350 figures) are pointing to the solstice day sunset. There are some indications that Tindaya podomorphs may also be pointing to the Northwest (yearly sunset arch). This enhances the religious and ritual importance of podomorphs and Tindaya sacred mountain ([Moreira and Bettencourt 2021](#))

Fuerteventura rock scripts are found in the main seven Canary Islands

The fact that the same type of this lineal rock inscriptions is found in all main Canary Islands ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2020a; 2020b](#)) may imply that navigation was ongoing during prehistoric times among all Islands. The same type of culture was operating during a long time because this type of incise lineal writing was already observed by Pichler ([Pichler 1995; 2003](#)) who interprets as a careful made work without enough skill. In fact, the word “Lines” was used by Marin de Cubas ([Marin de Cubas 1694](#)). More specifically for quoting “lines with a remembering function done on plane stone/rock surfaces”. He is probably referring to this type of inscriptions which are most times carefully incised or otherwise sometimes picketed. These man-made lines noted by Pichler ([Pichler 1995; 2003](#)) were only referred to Fuerteventura and perhaps Lanzarote, and he “had seen thousands over Fuerteventura Island and photographed hundreds”. They were on stones or half-earthed rocks sizing from one fist long to 110 cm approximately, and with an apparently polished surface: the same type of stones described by us, as Lineal Megalithic script precursor of other lineal writing like Iberian-Tartessian.

Age, meaning and men makers of Canary Islands incise rocks scripts

[Pichler \(2003\)](#) compares these scripts with similar ones found in Southern Europe Stone Age, including Vinca and Grtadeshnitsa Scripts (Balkans) and Gradeshnitsa, although signs are not concordant with this latter 3.500 years old scripts ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2021a](#)). At studying Vinca scripts, [Masson \(1984\)](#) attributed these incise lineal signs as a prewriting attempt or that they were incised by amateur people trying to mimic texts or letters ([Winn 1981](#)). Thus, Canary Islands scripts are very similar or identical to others found in a megalithic context of Cumbres Mayores (Huelva, Spain) ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2022a](#)), Alcalar Dolmen (Portimao, Portugal) ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2022b](#)) and Zalamea la Real (Huelva, Spain) ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2022c](#)) (**Fig. 6**). Also, many lineal

megalithic scripts have been described by [Muñoz-Gamero \(2019\)](#) around Andalusia and other parts of Spain.

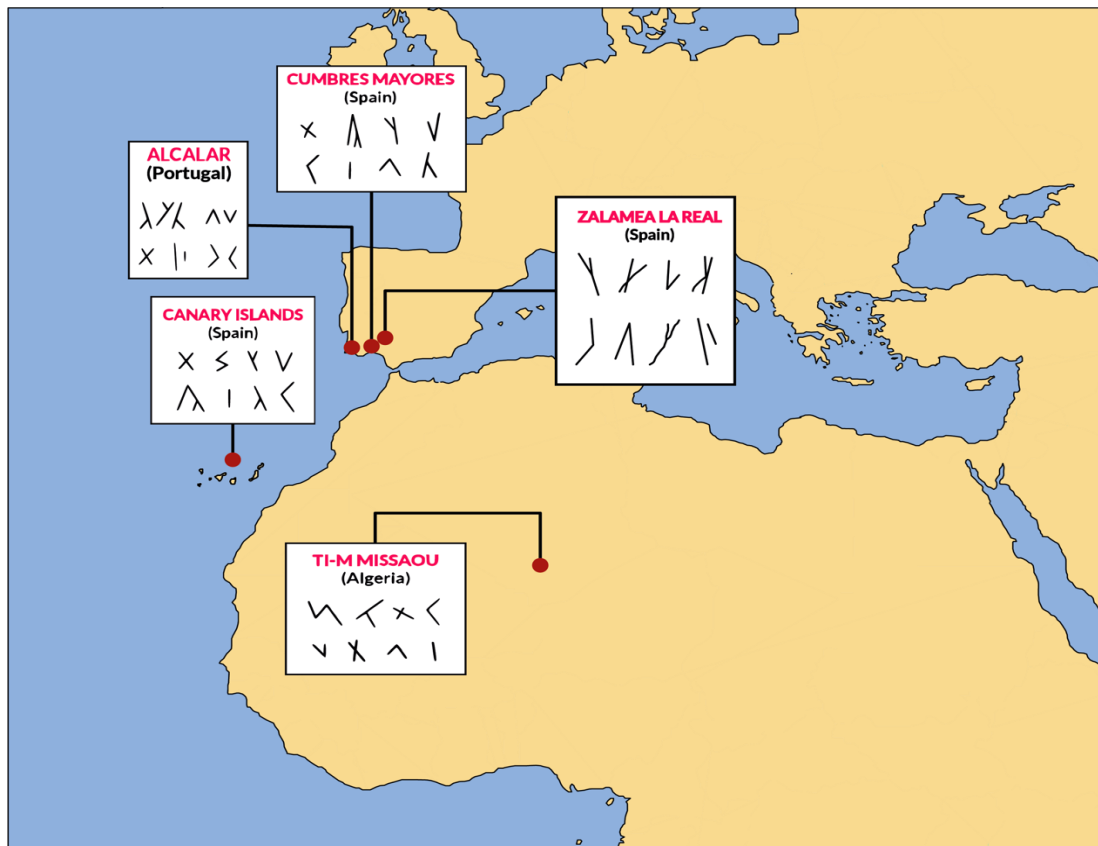


Fig. 6. Rock scripts included in Iberian-Tartessian semi-syllabary (Appendix I) are found in a wide extension area including Cumbres Mayores (Huelva, Spain), Alcalar (South Portugal), Canary Islands (Spain) and Ti-m Missaou (Algeria, Sahara Desert). These scripts which may be found in a megalithic context (5000-3000 years BC) ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2020a; 2020b; 2021a; 2021b; 2022a; 2022b; 2022c](#)).

These repetition of certain signs both in Southern Portugal and Spain megalithic context, and also in Canary Islands and Sahara Desert (Ti-m Missaou, Algerian Sahara) ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2021a](#)) would suggest that Fuerteventura incise signs were done also in neolithic times (3000-4000 years BC). The repetition of these lineal “remembering signs” ([Marín de Cubas 1964](#)) could mean remembering of dead and may have a ritual, religious and funerary meaning as their transcription and translation proposal suggests ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2022d](#)). These signs could be included into the widespread Paleolithic-Neolithic Mother Goddess religion because of the proposed transcription and translation ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2022d](#)). Genetics of North Africa and Iberia supports a relationship between these two areas ([Hajje et al. 2018](#)), which is also supported by our own work method ([Gomez-Reino et al. 1991](#)).

In addition to these scripts, there are clear rock Iberian-Guanche inscriptions in Canary Islands, sometimes admixed with lineal Paleolithic/Neolithic writing ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2019; 2020a](#)). The Iberian-Guanche are more structured and with a direct translation from Iberian/Basque (see Material and Methods section). It is possible that these Lineal Megalithic Rock Scripts represent an earlier stage of Iberian-Guanche and other lineal Euraffrican/Mediterranean/Atlantic scripts like Runic, Etruscan, Latin and Greek among others ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2021a](#)) ([Fig. 7](#)).

Otherwise, Lineal Megalithic writing could have been performed by amateur citizens who were not rulers or priests and did not have a proper writing knowledge. However, Lineal Megalithic Scripts are intriguing but carefully done ([Pichler 1995; 2003](#)). The number of Megalithic Scripts found in Tindaya Sacred Mountain may be related to a political/religious function of this place.

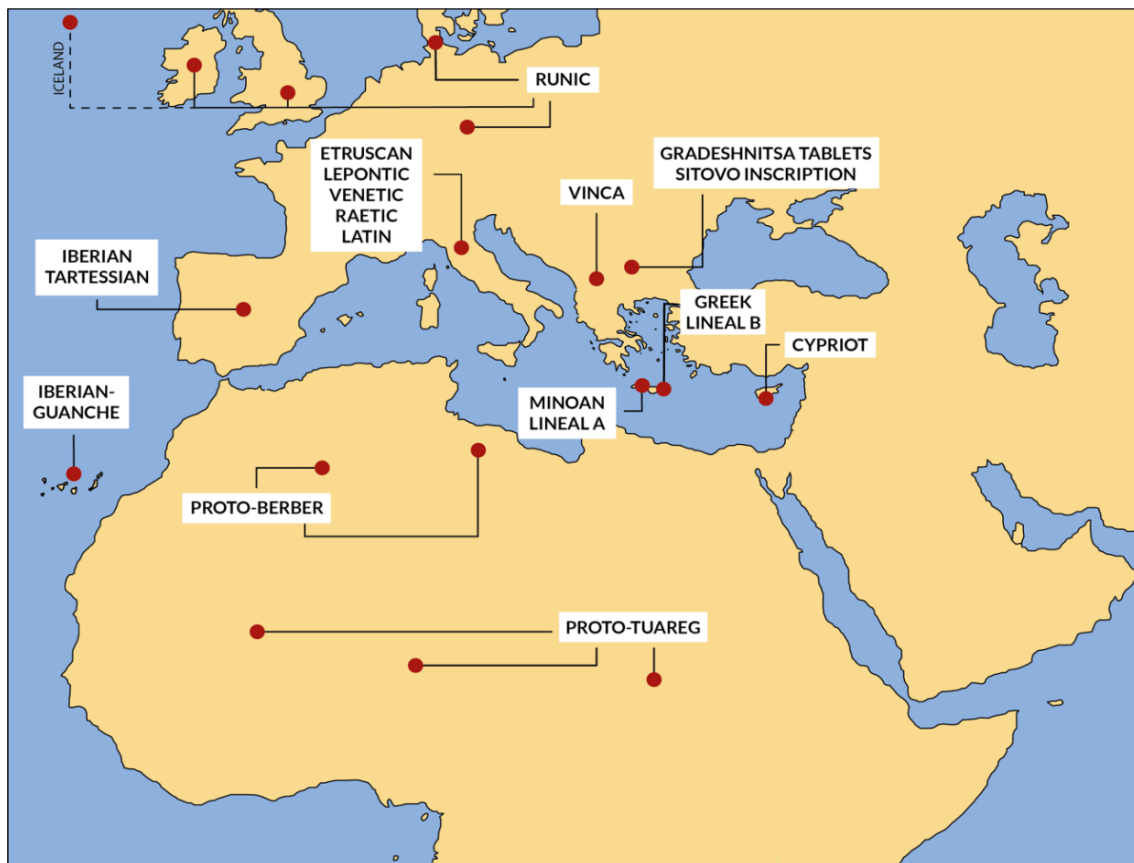


Fig. 7 Spread of lineal writing with probably Megalithic/Paleolithic origins of transmission of different ancient languages writing. The Paleolithic /Neolithic religion of the Mother may have been a cultural link in this big extension of Lineal Writing which may have been originated in the Saharo-Canarian culture cycle, after green Sahara started drying and people were forced to migrate because of desertification after 10,000 BC ([Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2022d](#)).

Appendix I

Iberian →		Tartessian ←	Phoenician	Ancient Greek	Iberian →		Tartessian ←	Phoenician	Ancient Greek
R D P P	a	Δ Δ	κ ϕ	ϑ α	ρ ρ	bi	γ) ρ	γ ρ
EE E	e	ϕ ϕ (ϕ ϕ)	ϕ	ϕ	ϕ ϕ ϕ	bo	ϕ ϕ ϕ		
NY	z	ϕ ϕ (ϕ ϕ)	z	z i	□	bu	□ (i)		
HH	o	o o ϕ	o	o	x	ka	+ x +	+ x +	T e
Δ Δ ↑	u	ϕ ↑ ü?	ϕ ϕ	ϕ ϕ	⊖ ⊖ ⊖ ⊖	ke	⊖ ⊖ ⊖ ⊖	⊖ ⊖	⊖ ⊖
Λ Λ Λ	l	l	l	l j	ϕ ϕ ϕ ϕ	li	ϕ ϕ ϕ ϕ	ϕ ϕ	ϕ ϕ
⊖ ⊖ ⊖ ⊖	r	ϕ ϕ ϕ	ϕ	ϕ ϕ	v w w	lo	ϕ ϕ ϕ		
MM	s	M M M	w h	M	⊕ Δ Δ Δ	lu	Δ Δ ϕ (ϕ Δ)	Δ Δ	Δ d
Ξ Ξ Ξ	ς	ϕ ϕ ϕ (ϕ ϕ)	ϕ	ϕ x	Α Α Α	ca	Λ (⊗)	l ϑ	l ϑ
ϕ ϕ ϕ ϕ	m	ϕ ϕ	ϕ ϕ	ϕ	< ⊖ ϕ ϕ <	ke) ϕ ϕ ϕ ϕ (⊖)	ϕ ϕ	ϕ ϕ
NY	n	ϕ ϕ ϕ (ϕ ϕ)	ϕ	ϕ	ϕ ϕ ϕ ϕ	ki	l z (z n?)		
l	ba	l			⊗	co	⊗ ⊗		
ρ ϕ ϕ ϕ	be	ϕ ϕ			⊖ ⊖	cu	⊖ ⊖ (⊖)	⊖ ϑ	⊖ ϑ

Iberian-Tartessian semi-syllabary [Gomez-Moreno 1949, 1962](#)

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest

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