



Short Research Report

The Myth of the Abduction of Europa: its African, Cretan and Iberian bases

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Abstract - The myth of The Abduction or Rape of Europa tells that a Middle East aristocrat (princess) was abducted by Zeus (gods father in Greek mythology) disguised as a white bull. The Bull-Zeus took Europa to Crete (Zeus birth place) and Europa became as the the first Creta Queen. Minos was one of the Zeus and Europa sons. He was a legendary Cretan King who kept the Minotaur a monster man with a bull head in a labyrinth. Some authors maintain that the Minotaur was a direct son of Europa and the Bull-Zeus. Crete was imposing Athens to offer young people that were left in the labyrinth and eaten by the Minotaur. Finally, Theseus, founder of Athens and Attica killed the Minotaur and freed Athens from being submitted. On the other hand, Cretan Lineal B was later discovered as Greek language; Cretan Lineal A (Minoan) is possible a Lineal B and Greek language precursor. Also, laws from Crete were taken to continental Sparta by Lycurgus. Crete genetics and bull culture are closer to Iberians than to other Europeans. This Europa myth was very popular all along classical Mediterraneans. We interpret this myth as the Saharan people climate displacement which carried out cultural elements (lineal writings, usko-mediterranean languages) to Europe, mainly coming through Crete and Iberia, both of them having many prehistoric bounds with North Africans in language, genetics and cultural manifestations.

Keywords: Europa, Myth, Crete, Iberia, Usko-Mediterranean, Basque Iberism, Africa, Sahara, Guanche, Canary Is.

Background

The name of “Europa” probably emerged in the Mediterranean Area during the thousands of years that a relative density of people was allocated between the Ices in the North and the drying Sahara in the South. Thousand years BC peoples from Iberia to North India elaborated the bases of European culture. Many theories have been proposed about the meaning of the name. However, we and also others have invoked the Basque language as a substrate of European languages (Vennemann 2003). In this respect, we propose that for Mediterranean people, Europe was a cold continent and a direct translation from Euskera could be: Eur (=Edur; Snow) and Opa (give, offer), i.e.: a place where snow and ice was present (Sota *et al.*, 1989; Kerexeta 1990). Also, Europa was possibly a common name for Europe and Asia, since both are in the same continental Eurasia tectonic plate and names separation could be somewhat late and artificial named by classic Mediterraneans (<https://earthhow.com/eurasian-plate/>).



Fig. 1. Painting by Alejandro DeCinti (2019).

The Myth of the Abduction (or rape) of Europa was widespread in the Mediterranean. Europa (apparently a princess of the Middle East aristocracy) was abducted by a white bull (Zeus, the Father God) who raped her and took her to Crete where he had been born. Minotaur was born from Europa and lived in a Cretan labyrinth

(maybe Knossos Palace at Heraklion, Crete) and finally was killed by the Athenian hero and its founder: Theseus. Crete was taking Athenian young people for sacrifices and also other tributes from Athens (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theseus>).

Also, the Spartan political/administrative system was copied by Lycurgus (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lycurgus>) from Crete before about the 8th century BC. In addition, one of the deciphered Cretan languages, Lineal B (Cretan Lineal B) tablets exist from 1,500 years BC and was written in Greek characters (later it was concluded that it was ancient Greek language). This Cretan language signs were taken to Athens by Achaeans and originated in Mycenaean Greek writing. However, Minoan Lineal A is still undeciphered (<https://teopalacios.com/lineal-b/>) although proposals have been put forward (Arnaiz-Villena & Alonso-García 1999b).

On the other hand, Crete did not participate neither in the Athens/Aegeans Medic wars against Persians, nor in Peloponnesus wars against Spartans) and was always closer to North Africa. Bulls cult and ritual/plays were common in Crete (Fig. 2). Also, Iberia had a cultural, linguistic and genetic relationship with North Africa (Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 2024) and also had ritual/plays involving bulls and man (Figs 3 and 4).



Fig. 2. Wall painting of Knossos Palace at Heraklion (Crete). Three people playing with a bull (1,750-1,450 BC)

Iberian language is close to other North African and Mediterranean languages: the Usko-Mediterranean languages (Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 1999a; Arnaiz-Villena 2000; Arnaiz-Villena and Alonso Garcia,2007). Today, Basque and old Iberian language are

proved to be close to each other (Orduña-Aznar 2005; 2013; Ferre i Jane 2009; Arnaiz-Villena & Juarez 2023a). In the present work, we are using data from genetics, anthropology and language semantics that Crete, Iberia and Africa established the bases of the Rape of Europa Myth. We put forward that it is based in a flood of Saharan/African culture (and genes/people) when the desertification started in Sahara humid populated areas before 10,000 BC (Fig. 5).

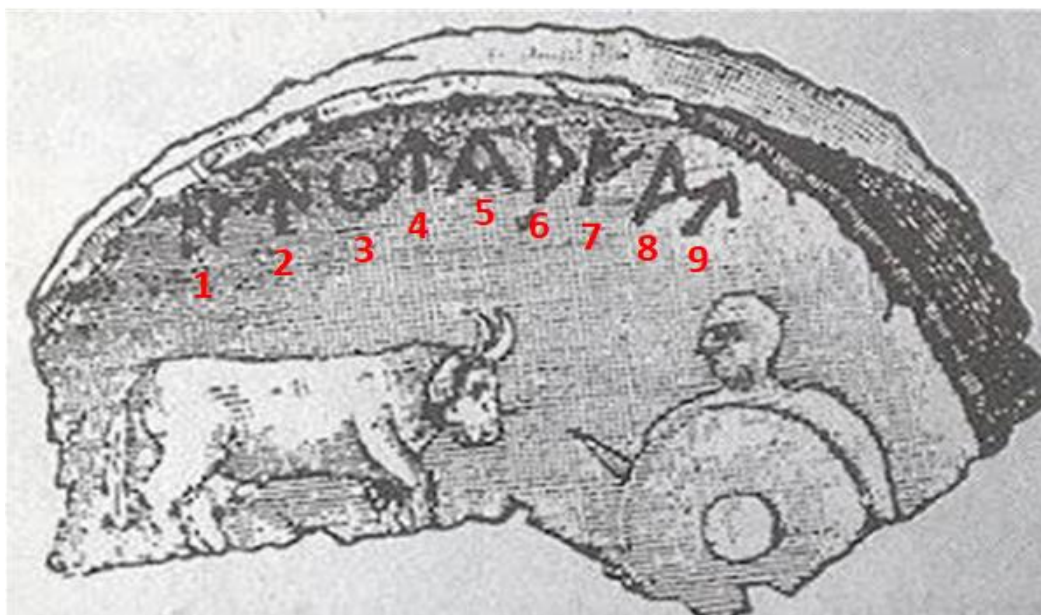


Fig. 3. Stella found in Clunia (Burgos, Spain) with iberian characters script.
1=N, 2=U, 3=KU, 4=U, 5=KA, 6=A, 7=I, 8=A, 9=U. Words: NUKU in Basque being afraid and UKAI, “avoid” results in an approximate meaning that man with sword should avoid fear because of bull. This is one of the first documents of a fight between a bull and a man in Iberia (undetermined time BC)
Transcription according to Gomez-Moreno (1949, 1962)



Fig. 4. Bull head found in Costitx, Majorca (Balearic Islands, Spain). Bronze Age.

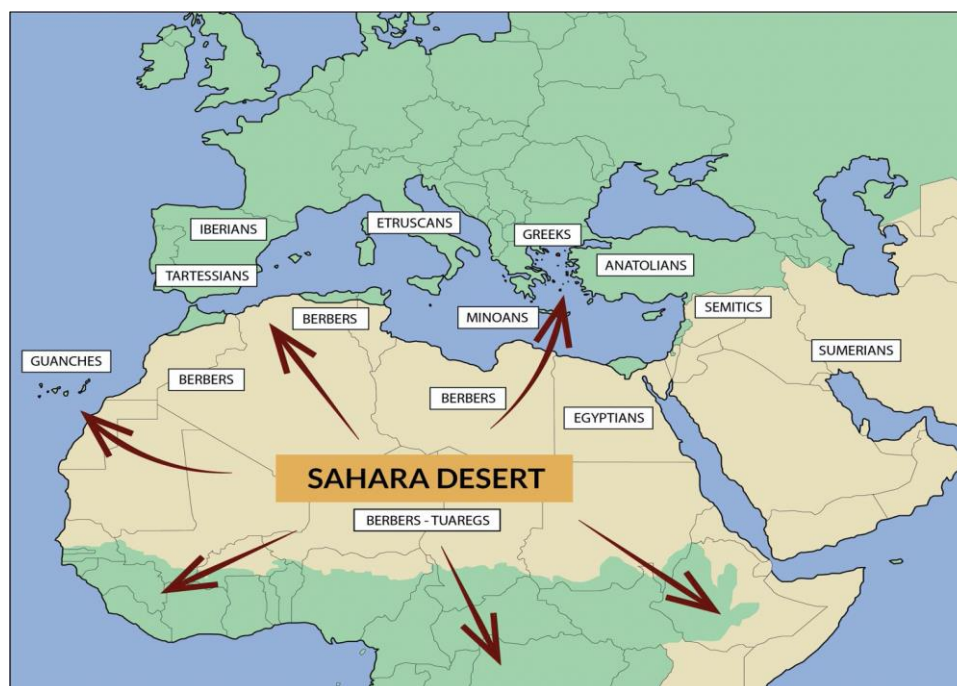


Fig. 5. Map showing Mediterranean and Saharan areas with classic populations (squares). Arrows represent population movements from drying Sahara settlements to other Mediterranean and African areas between 10,000 – 6,000 years BC.

The “green” Sahara Desert increasing aridity forced people movements towards the Mediterranean Basin (Fig 5)

The Sahara Desert is the biggest desert in the World; it spans from the Red Sea in the East to Morocco and Occidental Sahara in the West. There is a semi-arid savannah belt towards the south, called ‘Sahel’, which covers the Sub-Saharan area. However, the climate of the Sahara has undergone enormous variations over time, ranging from wet to dry over the past hundreds of thousands of years (Ehret 2002). This variability is due to a 41,000-year cycle in which the axis of the earth changes between 22° and 24.5° (Ehret 2002). Currently, it is in a dry period, but the Sahara is expected to turn green again in about 15,000 years. Due to these desertification-greening cycles, it is possible that very different human populations inhabited the last humid stage. The Tassili N’Ajjjer National Park and Ahaggar Mountains in Algeria show a record of rock art that proves human settlement and culture in the Sahara (Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 2021). However, when the desertification began around 10,000 BC, the populations that inhabited the Sahara fled to other more habitable northern areas. The Sahara desiccation causes are now well established after 4,000 BC and Columbia shuttle infrared photographs showed that the desert was a fertile

land with many lakes and rivers (Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 1999a). It is well established that North Africans and southern Europeans are genetically related, and this may be due to a long lasting circum-Mediterranean cultural and genetic flow particularly during the last glacial peak (Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 1995; 2000). Both Sumerians and Egyptians are thought to have arrived at their respective homelands before written and archaeological records about their activities were obtained. Old Canaan (nowadays Palestine), including the coast, was populated by people of unknown origin, but probably related to both Egyptians and Sumerians (Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 2001a). On the basis of our present day genetic and linguistic studies, we have postulated that many people coming from what is nowadays the Sahara Desert started to move towards East, West, North, and also South, being an important part of the primitive people stock of Sumerians, Egyptians, Guanche (Canary Islands), Iberians, Etruscan, Minoans, Anatolians (currently called Turks on only linguistic bases), Kurds, and other islanders or northern Mediterraneans (Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 2001a; 2001b; 2021).

Phonologic and epigraphic relatedness of North African and Old Mediterranean languages

Common prehistoric rock signs have been recorded in caves of Americas, Europe, Africa, Asia and Oceania dated between 30,000 and 10,000 years ago, which are mainly of lineal or pictographic characters (von Petzinger 2017; <https://www.openculture.com/2019/03/40000-year-old-symbols-found-in-caves-worldwide-may-represent-the-earliest-written-language.html>). This implies a wide human contact throughout the World long before than previously thought. It is also supported by rock geometrical-incised signs in Blombos and Klasier River Caves, and Howiesons Poort complex rocks or pieces found in South Africa and dated, 60,000 – 100,000 years BC (Henshilwood & Dubreuil 2011; Henshilwood & D’Errico 2011; Texier *et al.* 2010). Some of these latter signs are similar to those described by us on the Rock of the Dead in Tenerife, Barranco de Ruiz, San Juan de la Rambla, Canary Islands (Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 2019a) or at La Palma Island (Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 2020); and also to those other incise/lineal rock scripts found at all other Canary Islands (Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 2015; 2019b; Benito-Mateo *et al.* 2016; de Balbín-Behrmann *et al.* 2009; del Arco-Aguilar *et al.* 2009; González-Antón *et al.* 1995; 2016; Asociación sociocultural Archinife 2016). In addition, many other ancient rock lineal scripts are named Lineal Megalithic Writings or signs. Whether these signs represent one single or several

languages, symbolic or utilitarian material (i.e.: measuring space/time/sky schemes) is not known. They have also been found in Iberia in a Megalithic context (thus its name): more or less unclassifiable lines and signs are found in Southern Spain like in Huelva and Cadiz dolmens (Vazquez-Hoys 2008; Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 2013) respectively, and Antequera Dolmens (Muñoz-Gamero 2019). Linear rocks incise lines and signs are also found in Northern Spain Pontevedra Stone, Galicia, Spain (Muñoz-Gamero 2019); some of them are mixed with typical Iberian semi-syllabary scripts, as the typical vocal “i” (Arnaiz-Villena, personal observation), (Muñoz-Gamero 2019; Arnaiz-Villena, Piedra de Pontevedra, Museo Galego, personal observation). In summary, together with the so-called Lineal Megalithic Scripts (Vazquez-Hoys 2008; Muñoz-Gamero 2019) found in North and South Iberia, Iberian semi-syllabary signs are found (Fig. 3). A continuum timeline of lineal painted and incised lines is found from lineal more ancient or Megalithic more recent alphabetic-like signs like Sitovo and Gradeshnitsa in Bulgaria (Fig. 6), which are dated older than 3,500 years BC, Iberian (Fig. 3) and syllabaries/alphabets evolution timeline may go back till about 70,000 years (in South Africa, Paleolithic) to 1st millennium BC and later (Henshilwood & Dubreuil 2011; Henshilwood & D’Errico 2011, Texier *et al.* 2010). Full developed Iberian language may be found in all Canary Islands. An example is found at Mt Tenezera Lanzarote (Fig. 7).

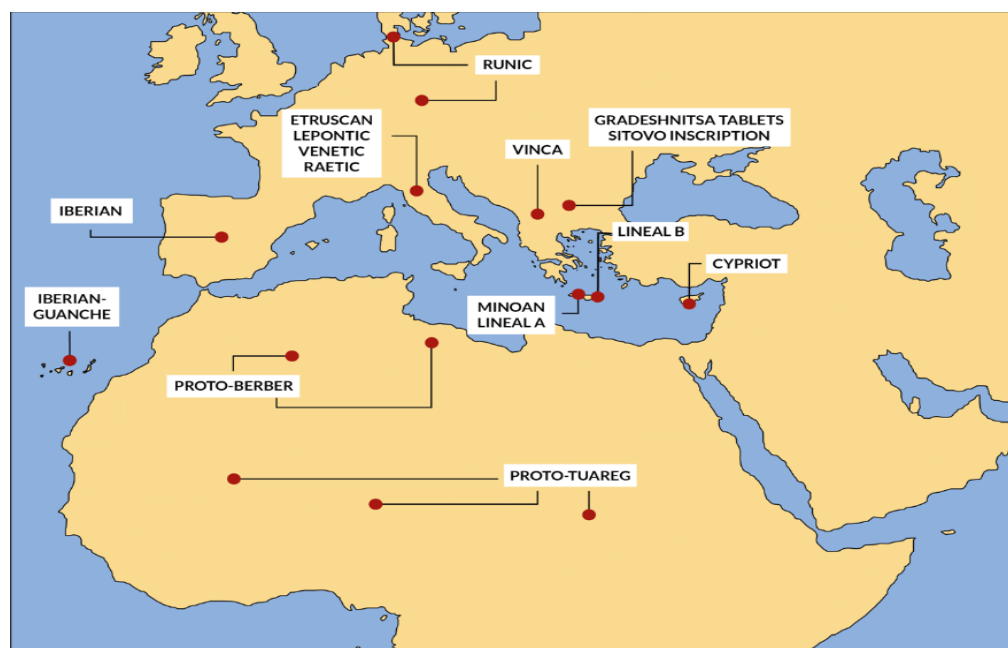


Fig. 6. Map showing examples of ancient Lineal Writings of Europe, Mediterranean Area, North Continental Africa and Canary Islands main locations.

Also, Iberian phrases and signs have been found in the Middle of Sahara Desert, 200 km Southwest of Tamanrasset, Algeria (Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 2021a). Origin of these lineal writings may have been in “green Sahara” culture before desiccation occurred and people emigrated (Fig. 5).



Fig. 7. Iberian (or Iberian-Guanche) script found engraved in a rock in Monte Tenezara volcano, Lanzarote Island, Spain. Transcription and translation from Iberian have been proposed previously in (Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 2020). Transcription and translation hypothesis were carried out according to Gomez-Moreno Iberian signary (Gomez Moreno 1949, 1962)

Archaeologic common traits through North Africa: the case of Egypt and Canary Islands

Zonzamas “Quesera” (Zonzamas “Cheeseboard”) is a lunisolar calendar according to evidences shown in the present paper. It represents Ancient Canarian Year (“Atxano”, meaning “stick, axis or hill shadow”), which started at Summer Solstice, June 21st. Six carved channels –left to right- sequentially represent the first six Canarian months. The first carved channel shows: a) the first Old Canarian month starting June 21st with 30 days; following channels were following five Ancient Canarian months and b) landscape as observed from Zonzamas “Quesera” that includes Maneje and Tahiche mountains (where sun rises June 21st) and part of coast and sea. Also, intermediate (between carved channels) basalt rock prominent strips (right to left) represent sequentially the second six Canarian month, starting with Winter Solstice when it is the 7th Ancient Canarian month. The 3rd rock strip (right-left direction) represents 9th Ancient Canarian month and has a conic salient, probably representing that a correction should be done in this month (February-March in Gregorian Calendar), for example, adding one day each four years (Leap Year). Thus, Zonzamas “Quesera” is a 365 year sun calendar according with our evidences, which also may take into account lunar month phases as it will be detailed in

another forthcoming paper. Zonzamas “Quesera” is put in context of old “Guanche”/”Majo” aborigine culture which may go back according to archaeological findings to an Epoch of Atlantic/Mediterranean Bronze Age-Megalithic culture at least and before Punic or Roman culture reached Canary Islands

It is apparently clear that Zonzamas Lanzarote Cheeseboard is an Egyptian type lunisolar calendar representation and that it is placed high enough in a privileged place facing East that permits observation of sunrise, moonrise and celestial bodies rise like Sirius star during all year. If axis, sticks and ropes (and/or unknown tools) were placed in this Zonzamas “Quesera”/Cheeseboard site, shades for a sun time observation and other stars astrological measurements could be achieved for the routine man life-survival or ritual/ religious activities. Lunar rising could either directly been detected or by a possible reflection on water filled “Quesera”/Cheeseboard channels. A recent finding of a Quesera Egyptian type calendar in Jerusalem (Al-Quds) shows that Saharan specific culture reached at least from Jerusalem to Lanzarote (Canary Islands, Spain) (Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 2023b).

Methodology used for proposing a translation hypothesis for Iberian (and Iberian-Guanche) Inscriptions (Arnaiz-Villena 2000, https://www.academia.edu/111676569/Usko_Mediterranean_Languages)

Methodology is fully explained on this referenced downloadable book chapter. In summary, it is based in both phonology and semantics terms. The transcription of Mediterranean languages was taken from the most reputed specialists (see reference). Phonology was attributed to a meaning of Basque language which is the remaining bases of Iberian-Tartessian and the usko-Mediterranean languages, **Fig. 8** (Arnaiz-Villena 2000; Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 2001; Ferrer i Jane 2009; Orduña-Aznar 2013).

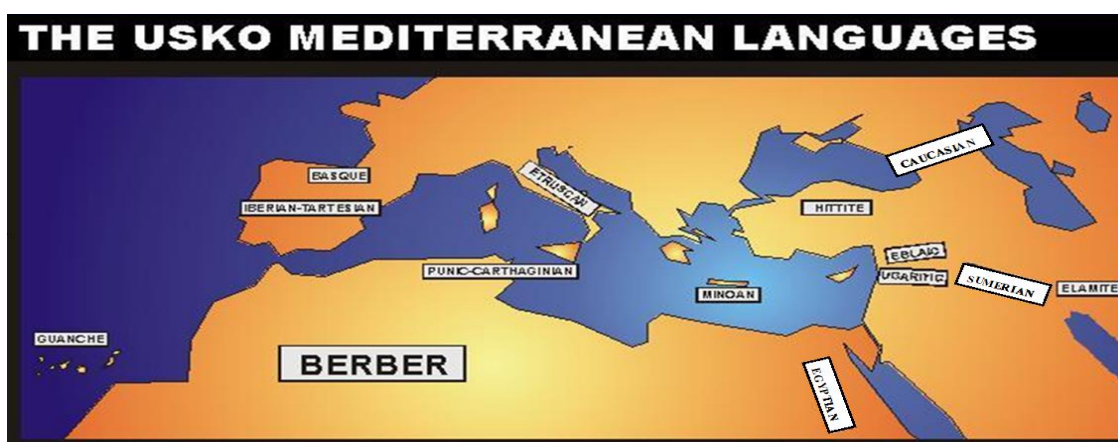


Fig. 8. The usko-mediterranean languages are defined in (Arnaiz-Villena 2000; 2001b) European Lineal writings found in Canary Islands (see below) and Algerian Sahara near Mali (Tim-Missau) (Arnaiz-Villena 2021b) and also spread (Figs. 5, 6, 7) to Europe.

The bull in the Mediterranean culture

The bull and man together relationship after 10,000-year CE is documented in Crete (**Fig. 2**) and Iberia (**Fig. 3**). In Crete the Zeus/Europa /Minotaur son Myth has been told by several ancient writers. Euripides (5th Century BC), Plato (5th Century BC), Ovid (1st Century BC), Diadoros Siculus (1st Century BC) and others.

In Spain, bulls are still killed or played by through the country and in Portugal bulls are played also by man throughout the country. 8 men (“os forcados”) play with bulls “cavaleinos”, “matadores” and “banderilleros” play all in Portuguese bullfighting but no animal killing is accomplished. They are also called “corridas de toros”, like in Spain. It is doubtful that this was a Roman tradition because Iberian first “bullfight” representation most likely prior to Iberia Roman empire. This figure inscription seems to refer that the man does not be afraid of fighting with the bull (**Fig. 3**). Other bulls have been gods and/or extant in the Mediterranean, but direct interaction involving play/killing by men is not documented (except in Etruscan Tomb of the Bulls, Tarquinia (Italy) see below).

Sin is the lunar god-bull in Mesopotamia. Apis Egyptian bull is the representation of Osiris. Hindu cows are also sacred. Roman mosaics showing fighting between human and bulls are present mixed with other human fights with other animals are seen in Roman Circus (**Morales-Muñiz 1995**). Arabs origin of Iberia bullfight is denied since Muslim religion forbids animal harm.

Lastly, we know that Etruscan-Sabines founded Rome and are the main precursors of Roman culture (**Arnaiz-Villena & Alonso-García 2008**). The Etruscan Bulls Tomb (Tarquinia, Etruria) shows a bull with human face and two men in front of them engaged in a sexual intercourse: this is a mysterious interaction between a bull and man in a sexual context. Thus, it shows also that Etruscan played with bulls and probably this was inherited by Romans in their fight with bulls in circus performances (**Oleson 1975**). We have put already forward that Etruscan had more in common with Iberians and Iberian language than with Greeks (**Arnaiz-Villena & Alonso-García 2008**).

Genetics

In the last years, a extensive review of HLA studied population showed that North Africa and western Europe are genetically related (**Hajjej et al. 2018**) further supporting a northern migration from deserting Sahara after 10,000 BC (**Fig. 9**). Iberia and Crete were

probably one of the main entrances of Saharan people to Mediterranean area and Southern Europa (Arnaiz-Villena *et al.* 2024).



Fig. 9. North African and Iberian populations genetic relatedness have been put forward by different authors (Hajje *et al.* 2018).

Conclusions

1-The Mediterranean widespread myth “The Abduction of Europe” has its real bases in the migrations from a drying Sahara that flooded Mediterranean area a southern Europe. Genes, cultural traits and languages-epigraphy were introduced.

2- Iberia and Crete were important main ways of emigration passing through (but not the only ones). This is illustrated by the Bull-Zeus which raped Europa and both Iberia and Crete have documented prehistoric particular rituals of interaction between man and bull.

Conflicts of interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest

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