

Spelling tartessian

De ortografía tartésica

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Abstract: This paper provides an updated collection of examples for consonant groups in Tartessian and considers possible spelling strategies for groups of stop + consonant, if such clusters existed in the language.

Key words: Tartessian, spelling rules, consonant groups.

Resumen: En este artículo se ofrece un *corpus* actualizado de los ejemplos de grupos consonánticos en tartésico y considera posibles estrategias ortográficas para los grupos de oclusiva + consonante, si es que tales grupos existieran en la lengua.

Palabras clave: Tartésico, reglas ortográficas, grupos consonánticos.

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§ 1 This paper presents a list of consonant groups and possible consonant groups in Tartessian or the language of the South-western inscriptions. It is merely an update of similar collections which have been made before by others.¹

The spelling of consonant groups in Tartessian is straightforward in some cases where sequences of letters (i.e. alphabetical/segmental signs) are involved, but in others it is complicated by the semi-syllabic script, which, moreover, usually makes use of redundant vowels. The information we can glean from the inscriptions is difficult to assess in further ways, namely by the fact that we cannot read all signs with certainty, we do not know the language, and we do not know word boundaries. It follows that all observations here will be very tentative.

§ 2 To begin with the last point: as is well known, word boundaries can be established to a certain extent by internal analysis. The criteria are: text ends, recurring elements and signs for word division.² Most complete texts end in vowels, but some show words ending in *-n* and possibly *-r̄*. Recurring elements, like so-called formula words, can be used to establish the word end before them. Such forms are **uarb^aan**, itself ending in *-n*, **b^aare**, various forms beginning with **narfk^e**- and a few others.³ Apparently, in some cases word dividers are used, although the texts are normally written in *scriptio continua*.⁴ These approaches again point to *-n* at word end, and also to *-r*, *-l* and possibly *-ś*. In the examples below, the recurring forms are not in bold and I have introduced word divisions in most cases, in order to make them easy to recognise.

Cf. the following examples for consonants at the end of words:⁵

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- 1 See recently Correa Rodríguez 2009, Ferrer i Jané 2016, Ferrer i Jané & Moncunill 2019, § 4.2, Correa & Guerra 2019.
 - 2 See *MLH IV* 158 §§ 507ff., and suggested divisions for individual inscriptions in that edition.
 - 3 See *MLH IV* 159 §§ 510ff.
 - 4 See Wodtko in print. The dividers need not separate words in the strict sense, but may coincide with word ends if, e.g., they separate phrases.
 - 5 \ indicates complete text end or text start. Letters are underlined when damaged or otherwise of uncertain reading. + denotes unreadable signs. My collection here is based on the corpus in *MLH IV* supplemented by the editions by Guerra 2002, 2009, 2013 Guerra et al. 1999, Almagro-Gorbea 2004. Lost inscriptions are marked as such, as the reading cannot be rechecked. The transliteration in general follows *MLH IV*, but see § 8 below.

(1) *-n* at the end of complete texts

\\ aśǿlab°o↑ir nar̄k°enai aśǿlanab°olon \\ J.7.1
 \\ t°alainont°uřek°uioir[+]nošt°aeb°are nar̄k°en \\ J.14.1
 b°esaru?an \\ Mesas do Castelinho (= MdC, Guerra 2009)
 na[.]k°ent°ab°eanoχion \\ Monte Gordo (Guerra 2013)

-n followed by a divider

]uab°an | ne(++re) [J.16.5
 t°arielnon | lir̄niene nar̄k°enai \\ J.55.1
]k°oloion : k°oloar+[Monte Novo do Castelinho (Guerra et al. 1999)

-n preceding formula words **b°are**, **nar̄k°e-**, **uarb°an**

]+++nar̄k°enii raśen b°are \\ J.7.10
 ?]+anan uaǿb°an eDe nar̄[J.9.1⁶
 ?]uk°esaen b°are nar̄k°e b°eso++ J.27.1 (lost)

(2) *-r* at the end of complete texts:

\\ iǿ+or+ k°efk°ar \\ J.18.3

(3) *-r* preceding formula words **b°are**, **nar̄k°e-**, **uarb°an**

\\ aśǿlab°o↑ir nar̄k°enai aśǿlanab°olon \\ J.7.1
 \\ oořoir nar̄k°en↑i \\ J.19.2
 ? \\ soloir uarb°an[ina[]o+[]+ar̄k°enii \\ J.11.3
 ? \\ uur̄saar+ar̄b°ant°e b°ar+b°a nar̄k°ent°i \\ J.16.1⁷

-r before recurring elements which are probably words

\\ uarb°oiir saruneeā b°are nar̄k°enii \\ J.22.1 (cf. J.22.2)
 saruneeaoar[)
 leb°oiir erob°are nar̄k°e[MdC (cf. J.18.2]ant°e erob°are na[)

-r at line end with a following space, thus probably word end

\\ b°ot°oǿar []+aak°arnerionire \\ J.7.2

(4) *-l* before formula word

\\ b°et°isait°eeb°arent°iiru arb°uiel nar̄k°e|n| uśnee \\ J.23.1
 ? \\ irualk°usiel nar̄k°ent°i mub°at°ero b°are ǿat°aneat°e \\ J.12.1⁸

6 If **uarb°an** is intended, see *MLH* IV 270.

7 I follow the reading of *MLH* IV 264, 286 for this and the previous example.

8 But the more likely reading instead of | here is a divider | (*MLH* IV 270), which leaves only one example for *-l* at word end. The sequence **t°ero b°are** recurs in J.1.1. In J.18.2 (|

(5) ? -ś before formula / recurring element

\\ a++↑**oiona** |**řak^uurs** t^e b^aare nařk^eeii \\ J.1.3 (cf. t^e b^aare J.18.1 and Vale de Águia⁹)

\\ **ak^oosioś** nařk^eeti \\ J.56.1¹⁰

Obviously, there is no evidence for stops at word end, either because they do not exist – as in Ancient Greek – or perhaps because the spelling system fails to represent them¹¹. But there are clear indications that *-n* can be word-final. In discussing consonant clusters beginning with *-n-* (§§ 7ff.) we must therefore be aware of the possibility that there might in fact be a word boundary rather than a word-internal consonant group. We must also keep in mind that we do not understand the workings of any sandhi phenomena or assimilations, suppressed consonants or mute vowels, if such factors exist.

§ 3 Consonant groups consisting of several letters rather than syllabic signs should be quite uncontroversial for the semi-syllabary. There are examples for groups like *ln* and *nl*, and also for groups beginning with *s*, *ś* like *st*, *śt*.¹²

ln t^a**arielnon** | **liřniene** nařk^eenai \\ J.55.1

ls \\ **salsaloi**ǂ[J.12.4

nl]**onlinb^ooireanb^aa**[J.11.2

nř \\ **aalaeinře**[J.15.3

ns]**onsol**[J.6.3

rn ?]**arsk^eeirⁿ**+ [J.11.5

liřnest^aak^uunb^aaneofoir J.19.1

] **uřnib^eeliřonuarn b^aane+** J.20.1¹³

rs \\ **uursaar+arb^aant^e b^aar+b^aa** nařk^eenti \\ J.16.1¹⁴

řn | **liřniene** nařk^eenai \\ J.55.1

ant^eeerob^aarena) t^eeerob^aare occurs in unclear context. In MdC **erob^aare** is attested in the sequence **leb^ooiirerob^aarenarřk^e**].

9 Guerra 2009.

10 But see Rodríguez Ramos 2002, 89f., 94 n.5, who suggests to read \mathfrak{M} rather than \mathfrak{M} (ś), i.e. **-n** | **nařk^eeti**. See § 4.

11 J.7.7]**iark^o** with missing redundancy in auslaut could be a mistake (*MLH* IV 247).

12 For groups of nasals and liquids followed by stops see below, § 7.

13 **b^aane** is in the 2nd line, cf. **b^aane** J.11.1, J.19.1? (see *MLH* IV 160 § 513).

14 I follow *MLH* IV 286 in assuming a sequence *uarb^aan t^e b^aare.

- rr* **arb^uuiel** nar^rk^e|n| J.23.1
 +tⁱrt^oosneb^aa nar^rk^eeni \ J.1.2
sn tⁱrt^oosne J.1.2
sb ↑iHsb^aanorb^aaset^aa J.53.1 (lost)
st \ ainst^aa | at^aa[J.16.4
 liirnest^aak^uunb^aaneoo^ooir J.19.1
 \ b^aast^eeb^uufoion S. Martinho (Guerra 2002)
sk]arsk^eeirn+[J.11.5
*st*¹⁵ \ ist^u+ J.7.4
 +]nost^aaeb^aare nar^ken \ J.14.1
sn nar^kenii ali^sne \ J.11.4 (lost)
 us^snee \ J.23.1

§ 4 Among attested consonant groups there are very few examples for geminates, although, e.g., *-ll-* or *-ss-* would pose no problem for the semi-syllabary¹⁶. It is possible that the language does not have such geminates, but it is also possible that they are left unexpressed in writing. The latter seems to be the case in Celtiberian. In Celtiberian script, the systematic lack of geminate continuants is restricted to the interior of words as in the personal name **amu** (K.1.3, I-56) in the Celtiberian semi-syllabary, but *Ammo* (e.g. *CIL* ii 2797, Clunia) with the geminate spelled out in Latin script. At a word boundary, the same sign *m* is written twice, but with a word divider, as in the name formula **akuia : alaskum : memunos** (K.1.3, II-13).

In Tartessian, geminate spellings occur for double *nn* in a few examples¹⁷. In one of these (J.16.5) a word divider is used, and it has been suggested that there is a further example of this in J.56.1.¹⁸ Cf.:

-]uab^aan | ne(++re)[J.16.5
]urnib^eeli^sonuarn b^aane+b^aar[.]n nar^ken[J.20.1

Possible further examples from lost inscriptions are:

- \ aioofo^rarainb^aaanon++earonb^aaren nar^kenii ali^sne \ J.11.4 (2x; lost)
 \ | k^eenilarin b^e+nnenb^a+rne \ J.17.4 (lost)

15 Rodríguez Ramos 2005-9, 85 n.6 suggests to read as^slla (J.7.1, 2x) as a^st^a.

16 Cf. *MLH* IV 163 § 527.

17 Correa Rodríguez 2009, 303 with n.49; Ferrer i Jané 2016, 44.

18 Rodríguez Ramos 2002, see n. 10 above.

If the spelling **b^aar[e]n** before **nařk^ee-** in J.20.1 reflects the spoken form, which is usually left unexpressed in writing, then it is possible that *b^aaren* rather than **b^aare** preceding *n-* is in fact much more frequent, and only suppressed by a spelling convention which avoids geminates. There are at least 9 examples for **b^aare** preceding *n*, usually before a form beginning with **nařk^ee-**.¹⁹ However, clear evidence for a form **b^aare** without final *n* is found in other contexts, including at text end in J.7.10 (cf. § 2 above). The example in J.20.1 then could be an exceptional spelling of a sandhi form.

As Tartessian inscriptions apparently use word dividers quite reluctantly, geminate spellings may perhaps be generally avoided even at a word boundary. On the other hand, the example of]**uab^aan|ne** in J.16.5 suggests that exceptionally the need for spelling double *nn* was felt, and that there was then an attempt to clarify the sequence by using a word divider.

§ 5 In the study of attested Tartessian consonant groups another comparison with Celtiberian writing can be put to the test. Celtiberian rather than Iberian is chosen for the comparison because sound values can be better controlled there. The recognition that Celtiberian is an Indo-European language belonging to the Celtic branch allows for a much better understanding of its words and forms at least on a structural level, even if the lexical semantics remain unknown. A matching form transmitted in the Latin alphabet or an equivalent form in another Celtic language can shed a lot of light on the phonemics of Celtiberian writing in the indigenous semi-syllabary. The implication, therefore, is not, that Tartessian is a language particularly close to Celtiberian, but rather that Celtiberian is a language written in a similar kind of script, and yet a language which is far better understood.

In the Celtiberian semi-syllabary, there are several strategies for writing consonant groups. The question affects mostly groups of *muta cum liquida*, stops followed by liquids. It would encompass groups of stops followed by nasals or other continuants, like *s*, if there were such clusters.

In writing groups of stop + liquid, Celtiberian texts make use of one of the following spelling conventions:²⁰ so-called “plene” spelling as in **kolounioku** for *Clounioq.*, where the stop sign **ko-** is used with a mute vowel and the “real” vowel follows after the **-l-**; “inverse” spelling as in **konterbia** for *Contrebia*,

19 Cf. J.1.3, 14.1, 18.2, 22.1, 26.1, 27.1, MdC, Vale de Águia, Monte Gordo. In J.23.1 **b^etⁱsait^eeb^aarentⁱiru** may or may not be another instance of *b^aaren*.

20 See *MLH* IV 380ff. § 503.

where the letter **r** is written after the stop sign **te** with the inherent vowel *e*, although the sequence *-tre-*, not *-ter-*, is intended; finally, there is what we can call “defective” spelling, as in **kontebakom** for **kontrebakom* where the liquid is left unexpressed.

§ 6 Before turning to Tartessian, it must be recalled that we know the sound value *Contrebia* for the word written **konterbia** with “reverse spelling” in Celtiberian from external sources: from the transmission of names in the Latin (or Greek) alphabet and from etymological considerations which draw on other Celtic or Indo-European languages.²¹ Similarly, our understanding of **kontebakom** as /kontrebakom/ is based on our knowledge of Celtiberian and Celtic word formation. Such external sources are not available for Tartessian, nor are any related languages known as yet.

Moreover, the spelling conventions differ from Celtiberian in that Tartessian apparently makes regular use of redundant vowels, which are rather rare in Celtiberian.²² This means that a form like **kolounioku**, which is spelled with a mute vowel in the syllabic sign **ko**, would possibly be written with vowel redundancy in Tartessian, where not only the vowel inherent in the stop sign but also the following redundant vowel might be mute, if the redundancy is understood as a mere spelling convention.²³

It could be that groups of *muta cum liquida* simply did not exist in Tartessian, as has been argued by Valério 2008. He assumes that only groups of *liquida cum muta* existed, in words like **uarb^aan**. This hypothesis is part of an attempt to elucidate the creation of the South-western script. The implication is that the Phoenician alphabet was adopted to write specifically the language of the South-western inscriptions, and that the spelling conventions we can observe are conditioned by the structure of this language.²⁴ In this framework, the spelling rule concerning “redundant” vowels could have been created precisely because the language *does not have* clusters of stop plus consonant.

Another aspect of this theory is that the stop signs in the South-western script are not actually syllabic in character, although this is indeed the case in Iberian and Celtiberian.²⁵ In Tartessian, by contrast, stop-signs can be un-

21 For *Contrebia* see the attestations in *MLH* VI 367f. and the etymology in *MLH* v.1, 193f.

22 See *MLH* IV 138 § 403 and 380 § 502.

23 See de Hoz 2010, 388.

24 See Valério 2008, 121-123, 135.

25 See Valério *ibid.*; Rodríguez Ramos 2000, 23, *id.* 2005-9, 84.

derstood as simple stops, because it seems that they are not used with syllabic values. This means that the signs which we transliterate as t^a , t^e , t^i , t^o , t^u etc., are in fact only various signs for the stop /t/. Their respective use is conditioned by the vowel which follows, by a convention comparable to the Latin use of *K* before *a* or the Greek use of *Qoppa* before a back-vowel.

For the sake of the argument, I here accept the second point of the hypothesis: that the Tartessian stop signs need not be regarded as truly syllabic. The first point — that the writing system was developed for this very language and not adopted from another Palaeo-Hispanic system — I leave open.²⁶

§ 7 The following examples attempt to illustrate how Tartessian would look like, if there were indeed spellings for consonant clusters comparable to the Celtiberian strategies, in spite of the redundancy. The first list gives examples where continuant plus stop spellings uncontroversially denote this sound sequence and no interpretation in the sense of a “reverse” spelling is possible:

rk $na\acute{r}k^e$ -variants *passim* (more than 20 examples)

? $\acute{r}b^{27} + nioeb^u alak^i mu\acute{r}b^o anark^e eb^a a +$ S. Martinho

? *rt* uncertain (see note on the previous ex.): $isak^a oea\acute{r}t^e$ [or:
+ $faeoak^a asia\acute{s}$ (for this and the previous line, J.24.1, see *MLH* iv
324ff.)

lb no certain example; possibly in unclear context, without
redundancy:

? $] + + alb^u t^e b^a are na\acute{r}$ [(Vale de Águia)

lt $] uul^i inaar \underline{D}ie\acute{r}it^u ula$ [J.12.3

lk $\backslash \ irual \underline{k}^u usie \mid na\acute{r}k^e ent^i \ mub^a at^e rob^a are \ \acute{V}at^a aneat^e$ J.12.1

rb $uarb^a an$ (3-6 exx.: J.3.1, 4.1, 21.1, less certain J.11.3, 1.2, 9.1)

$] uarb^o \ \acute{O}i \mid$ J.7.5

$\backslash \ uarb^o oiir saruneea b^a are na\acute{r}k^e enii \ \backslash$ J.22.1

$\backslash \ k^u arat^e et^u n \ \acute{I} \ \acute{H}sb^a anorb^a aset^a$ J.53.1 (lost)

$\backslash \ \underline{k}^u iarairb^u + + \mid \] \ \acute{r} are na\acute{r}k^e ent^i \ \backslash$ J.17.2 (lost)

$\backslash \ b^e et^i isait^e eb^a arent^i iiru arb^u uiel na\acute{r}rk^e \ e \mid n \ \ \acute{u} snee \ \backslash$ J.23.1

rt $\backslash \ aok^o olio + eer^t^a aune \ t^a arielnon \mid lirniene na\acute{r}k^e enai \ \backslash$ J.55.1

26 Valério has not defended this in later publications, see, e.g., Valério 2014, 443 and 2016, 116.

27 Rodríguez Ramos 2015, 133 suggests to read $\acute{r}t^a$.

- rk* \\ **aark^uuioriou**+ J.7.6
]+**ek^uuiuurk^eeot^eerk^aar**[+ J.1.4 (2x)
]**ninok^oor**[]**iark^o** \\ J.7.7 (without redundancy in auslaut)
uuf^eerk^aarua+++n^oik^eark^aareronb^aare na[.]k^eent^aab^eeanoXion \\
 Monte Gordo (2x)
- nb* \\ **irub^aaruaionb^a**[J.7.9
]**onlinb^ooireanb^aa**[J.11.1 (2x)
 \\ **uuf^eerk^aarua+++n^oik^eark^aareronb^aare na[.]k^eent^aab^eeanoXion**
 \\ Monte Gordo
 \\ **aiooforainnb^aanon++earonb^aaren nark^eenii ali^sne** \\ J.11.4
 (lost; 2x)²⁸
nark^eeb^aa+eanb^aara S. Martinho
- nt* ++**k^eeuuak^ee**[]**eb^oot^eeb^aere nark^een emunt^uureaiub^a** \\ J.7.8
 \\ **t^aalainont^uuf^eerk^auio**[+]**n^ost^aae b^aare nark^een** \\ J.14.1
 ? **uuf^eerk^aarua+++n^oik^eark^aareron b^aare na[.]k^eent^aab^eeanoXion**
 Monte Gordo²⁹
 \\ **b^eetⁱisait^eeb^aarentⁱiiru arb^uuiel nark^ee|n** | **usⁿee** \\ J.23.1
- nk* nar[-]**ek^aa^oisiiink^oolob^ooiit^eero b^aareb^eet^easiioonii** \\ J.1.1

The examples show that groups like *rb* or *nt* exist, with the caveat that there may be word-boundaries which I have not been able to identify. Best attested is *rk* in the variant forms beginning with **nark^ee-** in numerous examples. There are also uncontroversial cases of *rb*, in the formula word **uarb^aan** and elsewhere. *nb* and *nt* are fairly frequent; on the other hand groups of *l* plus stop are scarce, and I have found only one instance of *rt* (**+eert^aaune**, J.55.1).

§ 8 Before proceeding, it must be kept in mind that not all signs of the Tartessian semi-syllabary have yet found an unanimous interpretation. In general, I follow here the transliteration system of *MLH*. But below, I provide an alternative transliteration with regard to the signs **kⁱ**, **k^u** and **b^u**.³⁰ There are of course further issues with the interpretation of signs, but I have left them out of account here.³¹

28 A word boundary is likely unless *-ron-* is a prefix.

29 A word boundary **nark^een t^a-** is possible, cf. **nark^een** \\ J.14.1.

30 See *MLH* iv 153 and Rodríguez Ramos 2000, 33f.

31 See, e.g., de Hoz 2010, 374-386, Valério 2014, Rodríguez Ramos 2015, Ferrer i Jané 2016, Ferrer i Jané & Moncunill 2019 § 4.2. Unclear signs include, e.g., †, ‡, X, “H-shaped” signs (H, H̄ etc.), see *MLH* iv 146ff.

Reading Φ as k^i , 𐌺 as b^u and 𐌿 as k^u , the following list would emerge:

$\Phi = k^i$

nk \ \ **u**fer**k**^aaru**a**++++*nk*ⁱ**ik**^eear**k**^aar**e**ron b^a are na[Monte Gordo

This provides a possible further example for *nk*.

𐌺 as b^u and 𐌿 as k^u affects:

lb \ \ **i**ru**a**l**b**^u**u**sie| na**r**k^eentⁱ**i**mub^aat^eerob^aare**𐌺**at^a**a**ne**a**t^e J.12.1

? \ \ **t**ⁱile**b**^uul**b**^u**u**ark^aast^a**a**k^uut^eeb^aantⁱile**b**^ooi**i**rerob^aare MdC

lk -

rb \ \ **a**ar**b**^u**u**ior**i**ou+ J.7.6

? \ \ **t**ⁱile**b**^uur**b**^u**u**ark^aast^a**a**k^uut^eeb^aantⁱile**b**^ooi**i**rerob^aare MdC

rk \ \ **b**^uiar**a**ir**k**^u++[] \downarrow are na**r**k^eentⁱ \ \ J.17.2 (lost)

\ \ **b**^eetⁱisait^eee**b**^aarentⁱiru ark^u**u**iel na**r**k^ee|n| **u**snee \ \ J.23.1

Both *rb* and *rk* are well attested in other contexts already (§ 7). If the interpretation of the signs b^u and k^u is reversed, so is the statistics for *lb* and *lk*; otherwise there is little difference.

§ 9 The next group of examples shows the hypothetical alternative readings in the interpretation of “reverse” spellings of the type **konterbia**. If such a spelling was possible in Tartessian, the sequence **tⁱirt^oos** could still merely be a spelling for /*tirtos*/ with two different signs for *t*, but it could also be a possible spelling for ^{*}*tritos*. Even then, the sign **tⁱ** would be correctly used before the vowel *-i-*. But the vowel would follow the *-r-* rather than precede it. In this hypothesis, the writing system would not be a perfect match for the language, but would rather entail compromises.³²

rk \ \ **i** \downarrow +**o**rⁱ+ **k**^eer**k**^aarⁱ \ \ J.18.3

^{*}*k^rek^aar*³³

rb -

rt -

rn]+**a**ak^aar**ner**ionire \ \ J.7.2

^{*}*k^ran-*

?]**u**r**n**ib^eeli**son**uarn **b**^aane+ J.20.1

^{*}*K^run-*³⁴

lb -

32 See de Hoz 2010, 388.

33 Or is this a reduplication?

34 Assuming that a stop sign K^u preceded.

- lt* \ \ **lok^oob^ooniirab^oot^ooaraiaik^aalt^eelok^oonane** nar[-]e J.1.1 **klat-narf^{k^e}*[**aΦi
uulii+eianiit^aaeanirak^aalt^eet^aaob^eesaru?an** MdC **klat-lk* ? \ \ **tⁱilek^uul^{k^u}uark^aast^aab^uut^eeb^aantⁱileb^ooiirerob^aare** MdC (or *-rk-*) **kluk-rb* +]**neob^aarb^aara**[+**ba^aat^aaoret^oo** § \ \ J.4.1 **brabara*-³⁵
- rl* **k^oof^oDob^aar^lH** \ \ J.53.1 (lost) **bral-*
- rn*]**t^aarne^{k^u}un^{b^a}ane**[+**b^aare** nar^{k^e}[J.26.1 **tran*-³⁶
- rs*]**fa^{k^u}urs^{t^e}e** b^aare J.1.3 **kruś-*
- rt* \ \ **k^oob^eelib^oonaΦib^uuoira** uarb^a+**tⁱirt^oosneb^aa** nar^{r^{k^e}}eni \ \ J.1.2 **trit-*
 \ \ **b^ootiⁱanak^eert^oorob^aat^ee** b^aareb^aa nar^{k^e}enti \ \ J.18.1 **kret-*
- rk*]+**ek^uuiuurk^eeot^eerk^aar**[+ J.1.4 **trek-*
 ? \ \ **tⁱilek^uur^{k^u}uark^aast^aab^uut^eeb^aantⁱileb^ooiirerob^aare** MdC (or *-lk-*) **kruk-nb* ?]**aΦin^{b^a}aiⁱ rola^lai aⁱb^uuris**[? uarb^aan **ub^u**[? **k^a** J.3.1 **Φnib-*
 ? cf. \ \ **salsaloi** []ⁱ/_n **b^aeb^aalaΦin** [J.12.4 **Φni* [-
liirnest^aak^uunb^aaneoo^ooireb^aa+ []+++**k^eenii** J.19.1 ? **knu* # **b^aane**³⁷
- nt* **nar^{k^e}enti** (7 exx., 5 certain) but **nar^{k^e}enii** (5 certain exx.),
 thus unlikely **-knet-*
b^aanorb^aaset^aalak^eentⁱira^lak^aaset^aana J.53.1 (lost) but **nar^{k^e}enti**,
 thus unlikely **-knet-*
 \ \ **tⁱilek^uur^{k^u}uark^aast^aab^uut^eeb^aantⁱileb^ooiirerob^aare** MdC **bnat-nk*]**lok^oon^{k^e}eloia** nar^{k^e}[J.57.1³⁸ word boundary? **knok-*
 ? *ks* \ \ **tⁱilek^uur^{k^u}uark^aast^aab^uut^eeb^aantⁱileb^ooiirerob^aare** MdC **kuarksata-*

In this interpretation of “reverse” spellings, there is only one possible example for *rb* which could be read *br*. As we have seen previously (§ 7), there are a number of examples for *rb* which must be read *rb*. The example **nar^{k^e}enti** is in theory open to an interpretation as **nar^{k^e}knetⁱ*, but the existence of variant forms like **nar^{k^e}enii** makes this rather unlikely, because it shows that forms in **nar^{k^e}en** exist. Forms like **k^eer^{k^a}ar** \ \ (J.18.3) and **b^aarb^aara** [(J.4.1) could rather show reduplication, as is perhaps also the case in **salsaloi** and **b^aeb^aala** in J.12.4. For examples of *n* + stop word boundaries may be considered, as *n* is

35 Or is this a reduplication?

36 *MLH* IV 331 suggests to read **t^aarne^{k^u}un**.

37 Cf. **b^aane** in J.11.1.

38 See Almagro-Gorbea 2004, 14, 33.

well attested at word end. All in all, the number of examples which could allow such an interpretation is fairly small.

§ 10 The same is even more true for hypothetical reinterpretations of spellings as *plene* according to the model of Celtiberian **kolounioku**, cf.:

<i>bl</i>	\\ aś[ab°o↑ir nar̥k°enai	aś[anab°olon	\\ J.7.1	*blon ³⁹
	\\ salsaloi[] ⁱ / _n b°eb°alaΦin[] ⁱ		J.12.4	*bebla ⁻⁴⁰
<i>tl</i>	\\ t°alainont°urek°uioir[+]nošt°ae b°are nar̥k°en		\\ J.14.1	*tlai-
	b°anorb°aset°alak°ent°ira[ak°aset°ana		J.53.1 (lost)	*tlak-
<i>kl</i>	nar̥[-]ek°aΦišiink°olob°oiit°ero b°are b°et°asiioonii		\\ J.1.1	*klob-
	[k°oloion : k°oloar+[Monte Novo do Castelinho			*klo-
<i>tn</i>	b°anorb°aset°alak°ent°ira[ak°aset°ana k°ofDo		J.53.1 (lost)	*tna
<i>br</i>	+]neob°ar[b°ara[+ b°at°aoret°o		Φ \\ J.4.1	*barbra ⁻⁴¹
<i>tr</i>	\\ b°oti[anake[ert°orob°at°eb°areb°a nar̥k°enti		\\ J.18.1	*ketro ⁻⁴²
	? kst \\ t°ilek°urk°uark°ast°ab°ut°eb°ant°ileb°oiirerob°are		MdC	*(kuar)ksta ⁻⁴³

Only a few examples permit such a reading at all. Of these, most have the liquid *l*, while there were not many clear examples for groups *l* + stop (§ 7). Nevertheless, because the corpus is so small as yet, this preliminary statistical observation does not allow any conclusions, let alone predictions.

§ 11 Because the attestation is not yet rich enough, I do not attempt to provide hypothetical Tartessian counterparts for the third Celtiberian strategy, the type **kontebakom** where the continuant is suppressed in writing. Instead, the last group of examples gathered here are potential candidates for writing groups of stops. Groups of stops are a challenge for all syllabic writing systems. Moreover, in this case, a comparison with Celtiberian does not offer a clue to a possible solution, because, apparently, Celtiberian did not have groups of stops. In Proto-Indo-European a frequent stop cluster was stop plus **t*, because a number of derivational suffixes and of inflectional endings begin

39 But see arguments for *-bol-* in *MLH* IV 236.

40 See § 9 for the possibility that this is a reduplication.

41 See above § 9 for possible **brabara-*; I assume that only one spelling strategy is used in the same text.

42 See above § 9 for possible **ketoro-*.

43 See above § 9 for possible **kuarksata-*.

with **t* and were added to other elements. However, in Celtic, clusters of stop + **t* developed into clusters containing a spirant. There is, to my knowledge, no clear example of the treatment of dental stop + *t* in Celtiberian, but other Celtic languages show reflexes like *st* or *ss* and this may have been the development in Celtiberian as well.⁴⁴ Proto-Indo-European gutturals and labials became a guttural spirant χ before *t* and also before *s* in Proto-Celtic, and I assume that this spirant is left unexpressed in Celtiberian spellings like **retukenos** (*Rectugenus* < **h₃reġ-tu-*) and **usama** (*Uxama* < **ups-*, cf. Gr. ὑψηλός) because there was no sign in the semi-syllabary to express it.⁴⁵ Therefore, it seems that Celtiberian writing does not need strategies for representing groups of stops.

Whether Tartessian knew such groups is of course unknown. It is also unknown how many different manners of articulation are expressed by the Tartessian stop signs which are conventionally transliterated here as beginning with *b*, *t* and *k*.⁴⁶

The following is a list of examples, where two stop-signs followed by the same vowel occur. The hypothetical interpretation is, again, that the redundant vowel which follows the first stop could be mute and only a spelling convention for the vowel which in fact follows the second stop sign.⁴⁷

kb \ \ **lok^oob^ooniirab^oot^ooafaiaik^aalt^eelok^oonane** naf[- J.1.1 **lokbo*-⁴⁸

kk]**řk^eek^eeio**+[J.16.2 **řkke*-

bt \ \ **lok^oob^ooniirab^oot^ooafaiaik^aalt^eelok^oonane** naf[- J.1.1 **bt_o*-

\ \ **b^oot^oořar** []+**aak^aarnerionire** \ \ J.7.2 **bt_o*-

naf[-]**ek^aPhišiiink^oolob^ooiit^eero** b^aareb^eet^easiioonii \ \ J.1.1 **bte*-⁴⁹

44 Cf. forms like Gaul. *melitho-*, OIr. *milis* < **melit-t-*; see VKG I § 87. For a possible Celtiberian example see Jordán Cólera 2017, 142f.; for recent discussions of sibilants in Celtiberian see Jordán Cólera 2015, Simón Cornago & Jordán Cólera 2018.

45 See MLH v.1 XXIII § 23.

46 In the hypothetical interpretations of sequences $K^V V_1 K^V V_1$ as containing a mute vowel in the 1st V , there may have been assimilation in the manner of articulation if more than one is phonemic, cf. e.g. Ancient Greek groups like $\chi\theta\acute{\omega}\nu$, $\kappa\tau\acute{\alpha}\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$, $\beta\delta\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omega$. For stops in anlaut in pre-Roman place-names see Correa Rodríguez 2002, for aspirates in Turdetanian names see *id.* 2009, 297f.

47 Mute vowels are of course frequent in syllabic writing systems, cf., e.g., Myc. *e-ko-to* : Ἐχτωρ, Cypr. Greek *po-to-li-se* : πτόλις; but the redundancy is a specifically Tartessian characteristic.

48 But note **lok^oon** later in the same text.

49 But note the lack (?) of redundancy; see MLH IV 148f. § 433, 208, Rodríguez Ramos 2000, 36ff. with n.27.

+]**neob^aarb^aara**[+**b^aat^aaoret^o** § \\ J.4.1 *btao-
tb \\ *t^aab^aa*+ J.1.6 *tba-

Potential examples in Tartessian texts are, again, very few. All involve *b* with the exception of a possible geminate *kk* in J.16.2; but as we have already seen (§ 4), consonantal geminates are rare in writing even in the case of letters. This may suggest that double **k^e** in J.16.2 could be something else.

§ 12 Finally, we can review the interpretation of some inscriptions within this hypothesis and ask how the reading would change, if we assume *plene* spelling for consonant clusters.

In a few texts, there is more than one possible example. Thus in J.1.1,

\\ **lok^oob^ooniira**b^oot^ooafaiak^aalt^eelok^oonanenar[-]
ek^aaΦiíiink^oolob^ooiit^eerob^aareb^eet^e
asiioonii \\

the assumption of *plene* spelling for groups could refer to both **lok^oob^o** at the beginning of the text and **b^oot^o** following after **niira**, as well as perhaps to **b^eet^aasiioonii**, which follows **b^aare**. With a liquid, the sequence **k^oolob^o** could be **klobo-*.

In J.4.1,

\\ §**ib^ooijonasune** uarb^aan **ek^uur**[+]**neob^aarb^aara**[]+**b^aat^aaoret^o** \\

plene spelling could apply to both **b^aara**[and +**b^aat^aao**.

In the inscription from Monte Novo do Castelinho there might be two examples of **klo-*:

]k^ooloion : k^ooloar+;

and in the lost inscription J.53.1 both **t^aala** and **t^aana** are open to this interpretation:

b^aanorb^aaset^aalak^eentⁱiraak^aaset^aana k^oof**Do**ba**arl** \\

The text of the latter, and also of J.1.1, is fairly long and statistically we may expect to find examples in long inscriptions. Yet, there is only one instance (**k^aast^aa**) in Mesas do Castelinho — the longest text so far — which would allow for such an interpretation. There is none in the inscription from S. Martinho, another long text.

This again stresses the very hypothetical character of the interpretations I have put to test here.

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