

## **Ivernii, Ivernia, Ivernus ..... and the Erinyes winds doth blow! Cork to Biscay and beyond.**

(A speculation on etymology and more).

### **Hib or Uíbh**

Hibernia from *Hí* a corruption of *Uíbh* (*Uí*) meaning a tribe / clan/ family, and Iber ( a personal name or a geographical name?) as in Iberia? So, *Uíbh Ernia* or *Uíbh Eirinne* becoming Latinised as *Hibernia*? What form of Latin would change the pronunciation, or consonant forms, from *Uí* to *Hí* when speakers from the Roman world e. g. maritime merchants, or as those in their homelands who hear their stories, attempt to pronounce the Gaelic words in Latin? The Vulgate?

Hibernia of the Roman world being a play on words, Iberia the warm land, Hibernia the cold land in the Atlantic North West ...from a Roman Mediterranean geographic perspective?

Or, as in *Erni* (ierni?), as in *Erin* (from *Eirú*, a goddess, one of three sisters) or *Eirinn* / *Erinn* (Eireann?) a people of early Irish history/ pseudo-history and their tribal landscape area... not across the whole island but just in the south west, Brow Head on the Mizen Peninsula being the nearest land to the European landmass, to Biscay Bay and the Mediterranean; further north being just hearsay?

### **A Rule of Three?**

*Eirú*, *Eire*, one the three goddesses whose names were used to describe to name the Island of Ireland i.e. *Eiriú*, *Banba* and *Fódla*. Who were they? What was the significance of three? Was it a classical mythological formula? Did each goddess belong to a different tribal grouping or tribal confederation on the island at one time reflecting their ethnogenicity and places of origin?

The Furies of Greek and Classical literature i.e. three goddesses associated with the winds of the North West and named *Alecto*, *Megaera* and *Tisiphone*.

The three goddesses of the Red Claw, the Red Claw mythologised as a wound gashed across the side of the goddess Anu. Anu fell down on her back after a battle of the gods and her body became the landscape of South West Munster; her breasts, each with a cairn (a burial mound rather than just a conical pile of stones) on its peak, becoming known to place named and to folklore as the Paps of Anu, a mountain range familiar today to people driving from Cork city to Killarney. The Red Claw is a spur of the mountain range which descends to an ancient circular stone enclosure known as a caher ( *cathair* ), the seat of or focal point of cattle based festivities in centuries past. The caher / *Cathair* is locally known as the 'City'; the word *Cathair* is the Gaelic word for a city - as we know them today i.e. congregated settlement architectures though the word city also referred at one time to a scattered architectural/ landscape concept as in a semi-cenobitic monastic city (eastern style). The site of the *Cathair*, beside the Red Claw, is known as Shrone (*Shrón* i.e. meaning a nose or a mountain spur). The *Cathair* has a holy well and is still a place of religious pilgrimage. The Red Claw has been interpreted as a flow of blood from the wound gashed across Anu's side, blood flowing outward in the form of three rivulets, each of which represents a goddess. Who are these three goddesses? What names did they once have? Who mythologised the geomorphology of this part of the mountainscape here and why? Was it Gaelic poets, or hedge-school masters, wandering Gaelic scholars with classical educations? Or was it something of a much older vintage surviving within the psyche of clan and tribe in the *Slieve Luachra* district of North West Cork - and its neighbouring lands in County Kerry?

The *Erinn* and the *Corcú Laoidhe* tribe. The *Corcu Laoidhe*, their heartland the South West of Ireland, the *Ivernii* their heartland the South West of Ireland over-mapped on that named for the *Corcú Laoidhe*, their rise to power over about a 500 year span in time and their influence across Munster and northwards towards a kingship at Tara in the province of Meath.

How common today, in the world of ethnography studies, to discover that the name for a people, as known in published literature and in general parlance, is not the name by which they

know themselves? How interesting to learn that the Travelling People of Ireland, a once largely nomadic group, a population group of unfolding very ancient heritage on the island of Ireland, a people who still have a language of their own, know themselves as *Mincéirs*.

So, the Ivernii as the people of Iber and their tribeland area, their seasonal gathering place or *aonach* ( festival place e.g. the autumn and *Lughnasa*) place labelled Ivernis...a large safe harbour for foreign ships from the south along a dangerous craggy coastline of rough stormy Atlantic seas and many shipwrecks...trade, cargos and exports... (a Bantry Bay place perhaps, a Kenmare Estuary place perhaps?) ... a place of the *Erinn* people, by which the land of that part of the island they interact with is known to them and their mariners, known to the Greek world of the east and west Mediterranean, as well as its Atlantic ports; as subsequently known to the Roman world and its traders, its naval mariners and its outposts including Britannia?

People of the Erinyes winds, of the Furies on the edge of the known world in the north west seas? To the North West of the Mediterranean world view, at the South West coastline of the island of Ireland ...

Mount Gabriel (*Cnoc Osta* in local Gaelic) on the Mizen Peninsula as the copper mines of the Oestymnides, of the Greeks? The Argo of Orpheus as the mythical Argo on its southward journey around the fringes of the known world bends its keel around a great promontory to catch favourable winds to bring it to the European coastline; instead of being blown westward, pushed by strong currents, into the open Atlantic and beyond the known world of the time, to a place of fickle gods?

### **Before the Lisbon tsunami**

Before the Lisbon tsunami of 1755 and its impact on the monastic town Timoleague (i.e. west beyond Kinsale's Old Head coastline) as a West Cork port ( see [deepmapscork.ie](http://deepmapscork.ie)), its impact in creating slob land and the economic and social impact of this leading to abandonment of the port's activities, how much of what was in

Bennet's history of Bandon town was true and on what scale and for how long a period in time?

Since Saint Molagga founded a cell (*cill / cluain*) there in the 7th century how much trade took place between the coastline area from Courtmacsherry / Timoleague Bay... in conjunction with Kinsale and the Old Head linked to it by a water tunnel beneath the causeway of the Old Head in avoidance of rough seas?... and the harbour / port of Timoleague during Roman times and post Roman / Early Medieval / Anglo-Saxon times with the Atlantic coastline of Europe? With the Bay of Biscay and southwards of it along the Iberian coastline, and on into the Moroccan coastline and on into the world of the Mediterranean sea? As Iberia became Islamic from the 7th century onwards, how much maritime trade existed with southern Ireland at this time, that time that Molagga founded his monastery at Timoleague, a port town growing beside the monastery? To along the same maritime / river channel, which brought ships into the Timoleague monastery quay, another monastic foundation, that of Abbeymahon moved; from its original site of Aghmanister and Spital ( spital meaning medieval hospital including lepers), slightly further to the west but within its own demesne / promontory lands. Why, to avail of the economic activity of European maritime trading?

Writing in the late 1740s historian and topographer Charles Smith spoke of Cork city, a small port town a few miles east along the coastline from Timoleague as having Dutch as well as Spanish in its urban architecture. Kinsale, a small port town became the focal point of Spanish ships landing troops during the great Battle of Kinsale in 1601. Its next port westward was Timoleague. Bennet's 19th century history speaks of Spanish merchants once being frequent visitors to Timoleague and interacting with the local Gaelic chieftains prior to the 1755 tsunami. Other stories survive of Gaelic chieftains of the South West interacting with pirates from Algiers, and there was the era of the Great Pirate Round from the coast of Barbary in North Africa to West Cork as an annual summer event of the 16th and 17th centuries. From which Iberian and North African ports did these Spanish as well as North Africans sail? How many Spanish ships came from Biscay Bay? How far back in time did such connections, and the sea routes connected to them, go? Why

did some Gaelic chieftains feel a strong connection to Spain after the Battle of Kinsale was lost? Does some of what has been presumed to be relatively recent history along the Irish south coast represent a heritage of behavioural patterns with a much deeper and longer history / heritage than currently understood? If so, how long and deep over time? Why does the British Museum's 19th century acquisitions register ascribe a Romano-British date to the Dunworley glass beads/sticks coming from Courtmacsherry / Timoleague Bay and from the shore line of a promontory fort called Dún Urling i.e. *dún* of the ships wall?

Why the Gaelic Lord named **O Suileabháin Bere (Beara)** from deep in West Cork to Spain after his Great March and the end of Gaelic Ireland in the 16th - 17th centuries? Why **Dónal Spaineach (Spanish)** of the *MacCárthaigh Dubh* (McCarthy Blacks) of North East Cork : a cadet branch of the House of Muskerry?

Does an ancient call of the Mediterranean still echo along West Cork shores? Does another still echo of the Atlantic coastline from Biscay to Gibraltar?