

3,000-year-old treasure found in Spain is not from planet Earth

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A 3,000 year old treasure collection, known as the treasure of Villena contains pieces that were made from iron sourced from a meteorite.

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A stunning discovery has been made in Spain, where a 3,000 year old treasure has been found to contain jewellery made with metals from 'beyond planet Earth'. The Treasure of Villena, which consists of 59 gold-plated objects, was unearthed in 1963 near the town of Villena in the province of Alicante. It is one of the most important finds of gold artifacts dating from the Bronze Age in the Iberian Peninsula.

Among the treasures, two pieces stand out for their unique composition and origin: a gold-plated sword hilt pommel and an open bracelet, both made of iron. A recent study by a team of researchers from the National Archaeological Museum, the Durriya Gate Development Authority, and the Spanish National Research Council has revealed that these iron objects were not made from terrestrial iron, but from iron that came from a meteorite that fell to Earth about a million years ago.



The researchers used mass spectrometry to analyse the iron-nickel alloy traces in the objects, and confirmed that they matched the composition of meteoritic iron. They also compared the objects with other known examples of meteoritic iron artifacts from ancient cultures, such as the Egyptian dagger of Tutankhamun and the Inuit ulu knives from Greenland.

The study, published in the journal *Trabajos de Prehistoria*, suggests that these are the first and oldest meteoritic iron objects found in the Iberian Peninsula, and that they date back to the Late Bronze Age (1400-1200 BC). The researchers also propose that the iron was obtained from a meteorite that impacted near the site of the treasure, and that the local people used it to make these prestigious and symbolic items.



The fusion of gold and iron in these objects carries a significant cultural and social value, as it represents the combination of two rare and precious materials, one from the

earth and one from the sky. The researchers believe that these objects may have belonged to a community rather than an individual, and that they may have been hidden as a treasure for protection or ritual purposes.

The discovery of these objects sheds new light on the history and culture of the Bronze Age in the Iberian Peninsula, and reveals the existence of a metallurgical tradition that used material from beyond planet Earth. It also raises questions about the origin and meaning of the treasure, and the manufacturing process and the source of the material.

The Treasure of Villena stands as an awe-inspiring testament to Spain's rich historical heritage and cultural diversity. Discovered in the municipality of Villena, this remarkable archaeological find not only showcases the artistic brilliance and metallurgical expertise of ancient civilizations but also underscores humanity's enduring fascination with the unknown and the celestial. Through its intricate craftsmanship and exquisite design, the treasure unveils the cultural sophistication of ancient Spanish societies while also highlighting the profound interplay between earthly civilizations and the celestial realms above. As we marvel at its ornate jewellery and ceremonial objects, we are reminded of the deep-seated human connection with the cosmos and the age-old quest to comprehend its mysteries. The Treasure of Villena thus serves as a poignant symbol of our shared human history and the boundless wonders that lie beyond our earthly horizons.

