

## **Ireland, New Grange chamber tomb: 'You bring the sheep'**

North of Dublin, in the immediate vicinity of New Grange chamber tomb, lie many other chamber tombs and large earth mounds built between 4000 BC and 3200 BC, after which a catastrophe killed the entire population.

The entrance passage at New Grange slants upward, so that horizontal rays of the rising sun at spring solstice illuminate the floor of the deepest niche like an arrow. Two side chambers form a cross within the circle of the mound.

A cross within a circle spells A ME, an abbreviation of Akka Meian meaning 'Old Woman of the Sea'. This is the first phrase of a nautical prayer to the sea goddess before embarking on a voyage. A jar in Greece repeats this stanza three times, followed by a different fourth stanza.

Old Woman of the Sea,  
Old Woman of the Sea,  
Old Woman of the Sea,  
Bring my son (husband, lover) home to me.

Inscriptions decorate many large standing stones and surrounding curb stones. The tourist center provides a sheet of these inscriptions, most of which are deeply incised map symbols that accompany the chamber tombs<sup>1</sup>. Five, however, are Old European. These five tell a story, written by two young shepherds:

"You bring the sheep, I'll bring the beer," she wrote her friend on a stone within the passage grave, 5,000 years before it was called New Grange.

Crouching low, the shepherdess edged out of the dry, dark chamber and climbed the grassy mound where her sheep grazed. Around this sacred site, light green meadows contrasted with a patchwork of dark forests. Other hilltops held similar mounds from the past, but her sheep kept only this mound free from trees.

The next day he returned and wrote, "I felled ewes, many I got." It would be a happy celebration, a time to renew friendships, to sing and dance till the sun rose.

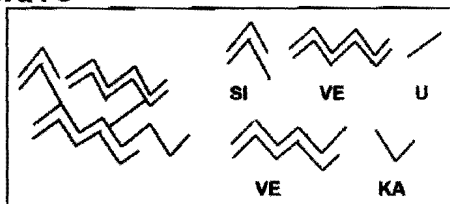
But the beer changed things. On a stroll with her companion, she found he had other things on his mind besides talking. Afterwards she crept deep into the passage and wrote, "He began a new speech. Abruptly other feelings lashed out. Many flirts he made there, father of swine."

As she feared, he got her pregnant. Returning to the dark passage, the young woman called on her gods for vengeance: "Smite Ve! Smite Ve! Smite Tuuri!" The customs were strict about unwed mothers. Her parents might banish her for having loose morals, or worse. She entered a final inscription, written like someone drowning beneath waves: "Tears rain down, tears of grief, tears for me." (Stuart Harris, Kilkenny, Ireland, July 2011)

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<sup>1</sup>Jay Wakefield & Reinoud de Jonge, *Ancient Rock Art and Megalithic Navigation*, 2008.

### New Grange 'double wave'



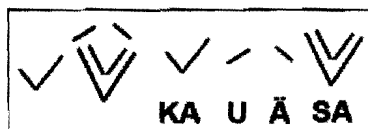
**Old Eur:** SI VE U, VE KA

**Finnish:** Sie veä uuhe, veän ka'ja.

**English:** You bring the sheep, I'll bring the beer.

The young woman wrote this, as only women made beer.

### New Grange 'eyebrow'



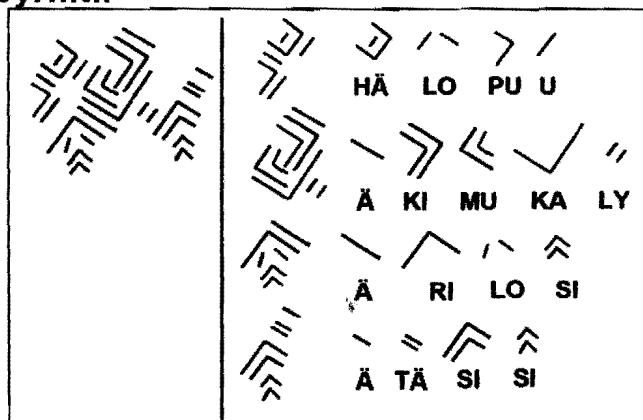
**Old Eur:** KA U Ä SA

**Finnish:** Kaa'an uuhet, äijä saan.

**English:** I felled ewes, many I got.

The writing style changes, written by the male.

### New Grange 'labyrinth'



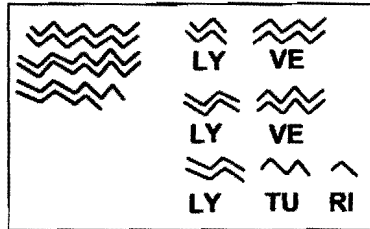
**Old Eur:** HÄ LO PU U. Ä-KI MU KA LY. Ä RI LO SI, Ä-TÄ SI-SI.

**Finnish:** Hän loihe puhe'et uuen. Äkin muu kaihot lyöä. Äijä riät loi siihen, ätä siaksin.

**English:** He began a new speech. Abruptly other feelings lashed out. Many flirts he made there, father of swine.

The young woman skillfully chose words written as diagonals. The noun 'flirts' means something like 'attempted marriage', where marriage meant the physical union of man and wife after a wedding.

### New Grange 'triple wave'



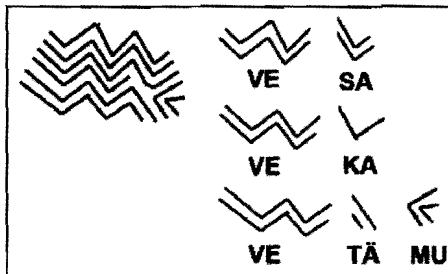
**Old Eur:** LY VE. LY VE. LY TU-RI.

**Finnish:** Lyö'ös Ve! Lyö'ös Ve! Lyö'ös Tuuri!

**English:** Smite Ve! Smite Ve! Smite Tuuri!

Three sets of wavy lines look like decoration but actually invoke a plea to two Norse deities: **Ve**, the giant brother of Odin and victorious leader of the rival clan of Vanir; and **Tuuri**, a giant woodsman who brought good luck by swinging his great axe.

### New Grange 'sea waves'



**Old Eur:** VE SA, VE KA, VE-TÄ MU.

**Finnish:** Ve'et sa'a, ve'et kaihon, vettä mua.

**English:** Tears rain down, tears of grief, tears for me.

Her words form a salty sea of tears.

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