

## Columbia River eagle petroglyph: 'Our eagle-clan is oh so dilapidated'

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Preservationists salvaged this eagle petroglyph from Petroglyph Canyon on the Columbia River just before being flooded by the Dalles Dam. This and many others can be seen at the outdoor Dalles Dam viewing area, while Koos Bay Historical Museum carries an excellent reproduction. This petroglyph may be the only one that represents writing, which language was Finnish.

The effigy is an exceptionally clever rebus, written in Old European that reads left to right, top to bottom. It follows conventional spelling rules except that heavy lines should be read twice. The overall design represents an eagle, the eagle clan, whose head and wings spell 'Our eagle'. It dates from on or before 7100 BC, after which no literate person remained.

### Translation

A desperate, starving scribe from the eagle clan composed this complicated petroglyph as an appeal for salvation from the Old Man, reminiscent of how ancient Finns appealed to Ukko, the Old Man. Lewis and Clark encountered the same phenomena, entire villages starving while waiting for the seasonal salmon run. Perhaps a tornado or hailstorm destroyed their food cache, "smashed, caught fast on the ground".

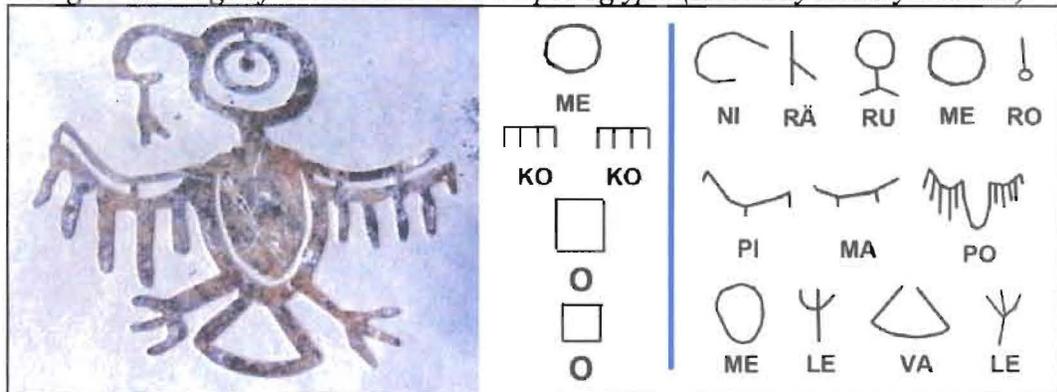
**Old European:** ME KO-KO O O NI RÄ, RU-ME RO, PI MA. PO ME-LE VA-LE.

**Finnish:** Meiän kokko on oi niin rähjä, ruo'amme rouhi, pihin maan. Pois meille, Vanhalle.

**English:** Our eagle-clan is oh so dilapidated, our food smashed, caught fast on the ground. Free us, Old Man.

### Image and Transcription

Figure 1: Image of Columbia River bird petroglyph. (Koos Bay History Museum)



## Notes on Translation

K. refers to chapter and verse of Kalevala, composed in Old European c. 1430 BC.

**ME** = *meidän* 'our'; K25.434 "why do our () children not sing?"

**KO-KO** = *kokko* 'eagle'; K02.265 '**An eagle** () flew through the heavens'

**O** = *on* 'it is'; K01.165 "**It is** (*on*) cold for me to be here"

**O** = *oi* 'oh'; K03.512 "Oh (*Oi*) mother mine, you who bore me"

**NI** = *niin* 'so'; K01.195 '**So** (*niin*) then the mother of the water'

**RÄ** = *rähjä* 'dilapidated'; not in K.

**RU** = *ruo'a* 'food' from *ruoka*; K26.028 "set out some **food** (*ruoka*;) quickly"

**-ME** = *-mme* 'our'; a common suffix

**RO** = *rouhi* 'it smashed'; K35.063 "**you smashed** (*rouhit*) the net floats to rubbish"

**PI** = *piihin* 'caught fast'; K15.270 '**caught fast** (*piihin*) in the teeth of the rake'

**MA** = *maan* 'on the ground'; K32.280 "pleasant to lie down **on the ground** (*maan*)'

**PO** = *pois* 'release, set free' from *poistaa*; K03.454 "**set me free** (*pois*) from here"

**ME-LE** = *meille* 'us'; K49.415 "Give **us** (*meille*) health"

**VA-LE** = *vanhalle* 'old man'; K04.239 "ordered me to provide for **an old man** (*vanhalle*)"