Photographed below is an intricately carved, highly polished, colored figure of a seated person wearing a headdress, whose design carries an inscription. It was found in a dry creek bed in northern Georgia. H 5½”, W 2 3/8”, weight 0.53 lbs.

The inscription of the headdress is Tartessian, a well-documented civilization with a written language from southwest Portugal. Tartessians were long-range sailors who raised horses and cattle. In 700 BC they arrived from Turkey, as did Iberians in Spain and Etruscans in Italy. All derive from Phrygians, who raised horses and cattle and migrated out of Turkey between 705 BC and 700 BC. Thus in 700 BC, all four groups employed the same syllabary, such that if you can read one of them, you can read them all. Over time the syllabaries diverged somewhat, so that only Tartessian has every letter in the headdress. The language is Finnish.

Between 700 BC and 400 BC, Tartessians expanded from the Atlantic coast into the adjacent interior of Spain, until around 400 BC, when Carthaginians invaded Portugal. Afterwards Tartessians disappeared. They did not migrate to Europe because none of their characteristic tombstones have been found.

The inscription tells of a war when family spears were outnumbered ten to three. The scribe sends for the family champion in hope that he can win the war, sweep the exchange.

Image of seated figure with headdress from five perspectives.
Transcription of the seated figure with headdress.

Tartessian
KO-MI KE KO 10.
VÄ SO, VO! HA PE U VO. NU HA VA.
NU TE KO ME NU TE MI
KE-RA KE.

Finnish
Kolmi keihäät kohin 10.
Vähä soa, voi! Haen pe’en urhon voia. Nuohoaa han vaihoit.
Nuohoaa tehon kohin meiän nuotehet miehien
kera keihot.

English
Three spears facing 10.
Few will battle, alas! I will fetch the family’s champion to win. He
will sweep surely the exchange.
He will sweep with power near our retinue of men
with spears.
NOTES==================================
KO-MI < kolmi ‘three’
KE < keihäät ‘spears’
KO < kohin ‘facing’
10 < 10, sign for ten
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VÄ < vähä ‘few’
SO < soa ‘will battle’
VO < voi ‘alas’
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HA < haen ‘I will fetch’
PE < pe’en ‘the family’s’
U < urhon ‘champion’
VO < voia ‘to win’
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NU < nuohoaa ‘he will sweep’
HA < han ‘surely’
VA < vaihoit ‘the exchange’
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NU < nuohoaa ‘he will sweep’
TE < tehon ‘with power’
KO < kohin ‘near’
ME < meiän ‘our’
NU-TE < nuotehet ‘retinue’
MI < miehien ‘of men’
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KE-RA < kera ‘with’
KE < keihot ‘spears’
DETAILS==================================
KO dawn; of a Lappish tent; dog; device, machine; toward, to, straight for-from, facing, near; rise; a test, experiment; try, test I-you try, will try, tried, raised (he tried is koki); -question clitic; one third
KO-MI three
MI I; man, man’s, person, fellow, male, men, of-to men; boy; manly; ten; more x-ly (adverb); who, what, whatever, where, why, how; now; by as much as, as many as; any, anything, see mikä
KE who, whoever, the one who, anyone who; ring, circle; curved; setting; spear, spear point; wind, twist, reel; you boasted; setting
KE-KO lung(s)
KO dawn; of a Lappish tent; dog; device, machine; toward, to, straight for-from, facing, near; rise; a test, experiment; try, test I-you try, will try, tried, raised (he tried is koki); -question clitic; one third
KO-MI three
MI I; man, man’s, person, fellow, male, men, of-to men; boy; manly; ten; more x-ly (adverb); who, what, whatever, where, why, how; now; by as much as, as many as; any, anything, see mikä
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VÄ few; small, little, minor; people; my strength; somewhat
SO war, of war, battle, in battle; I-you-he battle, will battle, battled; ring out; the fens; row, rowed, you rowed, rowing
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/PU threshed; tree(s), of trees, treetops, in-to the trees; wood; mast, pole; fair; handsome; pure, innocent, clean, neat, naked, sheer; mouth; to speak, I-you-he speak, I-you-he will speak, I-you-he spoke; to blow, I-you-he blow, I-you-he blew; speech, words; dress, gown, suit; half
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VO woe, alas; butter; to be able, I can; to win, defeat; to anoint
HA what? why? Imported; clenched; pasture; fetch, I fetch; float lightly; vanish, fade away; certainly, indeed, rather, surely; -after all, -surely; goose, geese, of-for geese; rotten tree trunk; fallen branches; stag; deep, depths; pike, of a pike; warm, warming up; softened
PE family; fly
U new, fresh, of new, newly, newly cleared; swim, was swimming; haze, mist; sheep, ewe, ewes; boasting; ardor; champion, hero
U-VO howl, roar
VO woe, alas; butter; to be able, I can; to win, defeat; to anoint
VO-NU you could [not] eat
NU cold, flu; those, that; wipe, sweep, to sweep, I-you-he sweeps, will sweep; sweeper
/NI heddles; then, then on; so, so then, so on; thus, accordingly; well; as, such; also, as well, likewise; now; -my, -me
HA what? why? Imported; clenched; pasture; fetch, I fetch; float lightly; vanish, fade away; certainly, indeed, rather, surely; -after all, -surely; goose, geese, of-for geese; rotten tree trunk; fallen branches; stag; deep, depths; pike, of a pike; warm, warming up; softened
HA-VA aspen; sparse; she does wake up

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VA dishes; furrow; exchange; beeswax; boulder; maple tethering stake; roofed stairs, outer stairs; shed; deficit, lacking; to demand, claim; you have exchanged; but, just, only; or; –doing or having something; foam

NU cold, flu; those, that; wipe, sweep, to sweep, I-you-he sweeps, will sweep; sweeper

TE you; power, capacity, efficiency; reconnoiterer; acorn; enchantment; -maker; to make, build, do, act; done; disposed;

KO dawn; of a Lappish tent; dog; device, machine; toward, to, straight for-from, facing, near; rise; a test, experiment; try, test I-you try, will try, tried, raised (he tried is koki); -question clitic; one third

KO-ME three; handsome, lovely

ME we, us, our, ours, of ours, for our, toward us, -our; honey; mead, elixir; juice, sap, nectar;

NU cold, flu; those, that; wipe, sweep, to sweep, I-you-he sweeps, will sweep; sweeper

NU-TE retinue; young

TE you; power, capacity, efficiency; reconnoiterer; acorn; enchantment; -maker; to make, build, do, act; done; disposed;

MI I; man, man’s, person, fellow, male, men, of-to men; boy; manly;
ten; more x-ly (adverb); who, what, whatever, where, why, how; now;
by as much as, as many as; any, anything, see mikä

KE who, whoever, the one who, anyone who; ring, circle; curved;
setting; spear, spear point; wind, twist, reel; you boasted; setting

KE-RA with, once,

RA hail, hailstones; collar; willow, sallow; iron; money; violence, fury, rage; peace, calm, harmony, tranquility; strap, trace; bench, footstool; border; limb; pitiable creature; to border, limit, confine; to have the heart to; peacefully, calmly; busy, active;

RA-KE strap(s), trace(s), of the traces; hailstones; tractable one; faint; sleepy

KE who, whoever, the one who, anyone who; ring, circle; curved;
setting; spear, spear point; wind, twist, reel; you boasted; setting