The language of

MA

the primal mother

The evolution of the female image in 40,000 years of global Venus Art

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Introduction

13  1  The circle closed: The discovery of the Venus of Hohle Fels. Introduction.
15  2  The book in a nutshell. Summary.
15  2.1  Part I
17  2.2  Part II

Part I
VENUS ART  MOTHER ART

21  CH 1  ABOUT VENUS
21  1  The classical Venus
21  1.1  The ‘demure’ Venus
22  1.2  Venus as a naked but still chaste lady
22  1.3  How a ‘demure Venus’ gradually covers herself
23  1.4  Venus half-dressed
23  1.5  Venus imprisoned in shame, passivity and submission
24  2  Venus in the Palaeolithic
24  2.1  Venus: from prostitute to saint?
25  2.2  The Venus of Willendorf as the pinnacle of primal voluptuousness
26  2.3  Mrs Willendorf?
26  3  Venus in the Neolithic
27  3.1  Venus occurs in Latin America
28  4  Venus and her many faces
29  4.1  Venus as a life-giving goddess and goddess of death
30  4.2  Venus with a child at her breast
30  4.3  Venus as creatrix and clan mother
30  4.4  Venus with the beard, Venus Barbata
31  4.5  An armed Venus, Venus Armata
31  5  Remember your mother tongue, summary of chapter 1
33  CH 2  WHAT IS VENUS ART?
33  1  Division about the definition
34  2  Division about the description
36  3  Division about the interpretation
36  3.1  The 19th century: Venus as a sex bomb and pagan pin-up
36  3.2  Turn of the century: Venus as a goddess
37  3.3  The reaction in the sixties: Venus no longer a goddess
37  3.4  Post-modern scepticism of the New Archaeology school: Venus an ordinary woman
37  3.5  The Ucko syndrome
38  3.6  Division about Venus Art in the Cyclades
39  3.6.1  Feminine art is far in the majority
39  3.6.2  Colourful ladies
39  3.6.3  The artists
40  3.6.4  The interpretations in the 19th and 20th centuries: From goddess to concubine and slave
40  3.6.5  A primal mother?
40  3.6.6  The contemporary interpretation given in the Cycladic Museum
40  3.6.7  The 21st century and the interpretation of Cycladic Art: important ladies
41  4  The 21st century and the interpretation of Venus Art: the symbolic and spiritual interpretation
41  5  Venus: from idol to icon
43  5.1  Condemnation of Venus Art
45  6  From chaos to order and unity
46  7  Remember your mother tongue, summary of chapter 2

49  CH 3  THE BLINKERS REMOVED
50  1  Stone Age women were is not depicted
50  1.1  The men depicted
53  2  The end of the myth of the passive primal woman
54  3  The end of a history without women
55  4  Remember your mother tongue, summary of chapter 3
CH 4  VENUS ART IN THE ICE AGE

1  Venus comes from Africa
1.1 Venus has darker characteristics
1.2 'Black Venus' or the 'Hottentot Venus'

2  Venus Art: Two main groups

3  Life in the Ice Age
3.1 The highway to the south from the ice
3.2 Those who remained at home
3.3 About rock and portable art
3.4 In the cave

4  The visual language of Venus
4.1 Many more animals than humans
4.2 Many more women than men
4.3 The vulva
4.4 Geometric marks
4.4.1 The explanations
4.5 Venus as a calendar
4.5.1 Lunar calendars
4.6 The women's hands rediscovered
4.7 The masculine barely depicted
4.8 The phallus
4.9 The function of the phallus

5  Clan mothers or pin-up girls, the interpretation
5.1 The 19th century and the interpretations of Palaeolithic Venus Art
5.2 The 20th century and the interpretations of Palaeolithic Venus Art
5.3 The 21th century and the interpretations of Palaeolithic Venus Art
5.4 The contemporary use: the Onggod figures from Mongolia

6  The prototype: The Venus of Hohle Fels
6.1 The Venus look

7  The axis of the feminine iconography
7.1 Western Europe: Germany, Austria, France, Italy
7.2 Central Europe
7.3 Central Russia
7.4 Siberia
7.5 The characteristics of the feminine system of symbols

8  Venus and the three phases of her life
8.1 The young girl
8.2 Venus becomes pregnant
8.3 The mature older lady

9  The poses of the body
9.1 The primal mother and ancestress gives birth
CH 5 VENUS ART AFTER THE ICE
1 The ice melts and the earth warms up
2 The Mesolithic era: from hunting to farming; from lazing around to grinding away
3 Göbekli Tepe: A garden of Eden for hunters and food-gatherers
   3.1 A hill sanctuary
   3.2 The ancestors are worshipped
   3.3 A Sacred Space or a Stone Age Zoo?
   3.4 A balanced male-female system of symbols
4 The early Neolithic era: the first agrarian cultures
   4.1 The first farmers are women
   4.2 The first farmers’ children’s illnesses
   4.3 Women farmers and the herdsmen
   4.4 Egalitarian societies in balance
5 The great flood around 6500 BC
6 Agriculture before and after the great flood
7 The Bronze Age: Steppe tribes in Eurasia: from agriculture and livestock-raising to nomadism
   7.1 The first wave of migrations: 4300-4200 BC
   7.2 The second wave: The second wave: 3400-3200 BC
   7.3 The third wave: 3000-2800 BC
   7.4 The fourth wave: 2400-2200 BC
   7.5 Subsequent invasions
8 The end of Old Europe
   8.1 The transition
   8.2 The differences between farmers and drovers
9 Remember your mother tongue
   9.1 The system of symbols is expanded

CH 6 VENUS ART IN THE NEAR EAST
1 Much feminine art
2 The various types of Venus Art
   2.1 Stones (idols)
   2.2 Life-size ancestral mother statues
   2.3 Skulls and masks
   2.4 Figurines
   2.5 Statuettes
   2.6 Pendants as mascots and ‘taliswomen’ (amulets)
3 Two main groups
4 Naturalistic Venus Art
   4.1 The seated lady
   4.2 The standing lady
5 Abstract Venus Art
   5.1 The pebble shaped type
   5.2 The lemniscate shaped type
   5.3 The violin shaped type
   5.4 The block and spade shaped type
   5.5 The disk shaped type
   5.6 The plank- and bottle shaped type
   5.7 The type with flipper or wing-like arms
   5.8 The eye idol, a variation of the block and spade shape
6 The Venus poses in the Near East
   6.1 The primal mother and ancestress gives birth
   6.2 The ‘dea genetrix’ seated on the earth or standing
   6.3 The ‘dea gravida’ pose
   6.4 The ‘dea nutrix’ pose
   6.5 Mother of animals and plants
   6.6 The ‘uplifted arms’ pose (invocation)
   6.7 Androgyny (Dual sexual nature with breasts and phallus)
   6.8 Mother with child or Kourotrophos, ‘dea lactans’ or breastfeeding pose
6.9 Blessing
6.10 Grieving
6.11 Mourning
6.12 Feminine duality and trinity
6.13 The ‘dea regeneratrix’ or the goddess of death and new life
7 The body language of Venus and the degeneration of the female image through the ages

7.1 Venus poses: measure of woman's status in the Neolithic 9400-5000 BC

7.2 The body language of Venus in the Copper Age 5000-3300 BC

7.2.1 The Mother of the animals

7.2.2 She slims down

7.3 The body language of Venus in the Early Bronze Age 3300-1000 BC

7.3.1 Her hair

7.3.2 Reclining on the bed

7.3.3 The lady and her plants

7.3.4 The tree is sacred

7.4 The body language of Venus in the Middle Bronze Age 2200-1550 BC

7.4.1 The lady is given a face

7.4.2 The lady has an open eye

7.4.3 The lady has a large listening ear

7.4.4 The lady gets a partner

7.5 The body language of Venus in the Late Bronze Age 1550-1000 BC

7.5.1 The lady mediates and protects

7.5.2 City and land goddesses appear

7.6 The body language of Venus in the Iron Age (1000-586 BC)

7.6.1 The lady arms herself

7.6.2 The goddesses enshroud themselves with star symbols

7.7 The body language of Venus after the Iron Age, after 586 BC – the start of our era

7.8 Remember your mother tongue

8.1 The continuity of the system of symbols established

8.2 The system of symbols is expanded

8.3 From clan mother to goddess, priestess and adorant

8.3.1 The riddle solved: clan mother, goddess, priestess or ordinary woman

8.3.2 How do you recognise a clan mother, goddess, priestess or ordinary woman?

8.3.3 The end of the Iron Age: the human-masculine portrayed (1050-750 BC)

8.3.4 The change from head goddess to head god in the 12th century BC

8.3.5 Fewer feminine and more masculine figurines from 750 BC

8.3.6 Enormous production of Venus Art in the Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic periods (750-50 BC)

8 Two main groups

8.1 The material

8.2 Which group was there first?

8.3 The naturalistic type in the (E) Neolithicum

8.4.1 The seated full-figured lady with the fat rear end

8.4.2 The standing full-figured lady with the fat rear end

8.4.3 The slimmer type with the fat rear end

8.4.4 Figures and figurines of the Cyclades

8.6.1 The face and body decoration

8.6.2 The Plastiras type (3200-2700 BC)

8.6.3 The Louros type (2700 BC)

8.6.4 The pre-canonical type (2700 BC)

8.6.5 The canonical type (2700-2300 BC)

8.6.6 The Koumala type (2300-2000 BC)

8.6.7 The post-canonical type (2300-2000 BC)

8.6.8 Pairs

8.6.9 Her male partner

8.6.10 Trinities

8.6.11 The lady enthroned, her musicians and staff (c. 2700 BC)

8.6.12 The hunter-warrior (2300-2000 BC)

8.6.13 Who is being depicted?
Abstract Venus Art

Diagrammatic figurines on the Cyclades

The pebble type

The violin type

The violin like or violin shaped type

Examples of ‘diagrammatic’ figurines

Bottle-shaped pendants from Malta

Pendants from Cyprus in bottle, violin, comb and cruciform shape

The cruciform type

The bone shaped type

Pillar shaped figurines

Pillar figurines with bird face (‘bird’ figurines)

The plank-shaped figures (‘plank’ figures)

The plank-shaped figurines (‘plank’ figurines)

The ‘eunuchs’ of Malta

The hermaphrodite in Hellenistic times

The body poses of Venus in Old Europe

The primal mother and ancestress gives birth

The ‘dea genetrix’ seated on the earth or standing

The ‘dea gravida’ pose

The ‘dea nutrix’ pose

Mother of animals and plants

The ‘uplifted arms’ pose

Androgyny

Mother with child or Kourothrophos

Blessing

Lamenting (Grieving) Mourning

Praying

Feminine duality and trinity

The ‘dea regeneratrix’ or the goddess of death and new life

How to recognize the body language of the dea regeneratrix

The ‘eunuchs’ of Malta

The body poses of Venus in Old Europe

The primal mother and ancestress gives birth

The ‘dea genetrix’ seated on the earth or standing

The ‘dea gravida’ pose

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Mother of animals and plants

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Androgyny

Mother with child or Kourothrophos

Blessing

Lamenting (Grieving) Mourning

Praying

Feminine duality and trinity

The ‘dea regeneratrix’ or the goddess of death and new life

How to recognize the body language of the dea regeneratrix

Remember your mother tongue

The system of symbols is expanded

Venus Art is Art of the Primal Mother

Remember your mother tongue:

global similarities

From venerating the ancestress to venerating the ancestor

Guide in the feminine system of symbols

How do you analyse a Venus statue?
Part II  Remembering your mother tongue

CH 1  HER FORMS AND NUMBERS

1  The one
2  The two
3  The three
4  The four
5  The feminine side of the one
6  The feminine side of the two: the mother-daughter dyad
6.1  The male dyad
7  The feminine side of the three: the grandmother-mother-daughter triad
7.1  The mother gives birth to a son: the female-male dyad
7.2  The mother-daughter-son triad and the male triad
8  The feminine side of the four
9  The feminine side of the seven
10  The feminine side of the eight
11  The feminine side of the nine
12  The feminine side of the thirteen

CH 2  HER FAVOURITE PLACES

1  The water
1.1  The sea
1.2  The lake
1.3  Rivers and sources
1.3.1  Identifying the Lady in her sacred landscape
2  The island
3  The temple
4  The garden
5  The mountain
5.1  The pillar
5.2  The open-air sanctuary in high places on the mountains
5.3  The mountain in folk art
5.4  The mountain in folk story
6  The tower
6.1  The bed on the 7th floor
7  The throne
8  The cave
8.1  The underground cave temple
8.2  The temple/cave above ground
9  The stone
9.1  The sacred landscape
9.2  The ancestral stone
9.3  The ancestral mother as dolmen
9.4  The ancestral mother as a stele and a menhir
10  The gate, the threshold and the crossing

CH 3  HER FAVOURITE ANIMALS

1  The fish
2  The frog and the toad
3  The sea-serpent and the sea-dragon
4  The serpent
5  The bird
5.1  The bird of prey
5.2  The owl
5.3  The dove
6  The wild herd animals
7  The big predators
7.1  The leopard
7.2  The lion or the lioness
7.3  Concerning Lion gates and Lion avenues
7.4  The lion(ess) conquered
8  The cow
8.1  The mother cow with her newborn calf
8.2  The bull
9  The goat and the sheep
10  The horn wearers: from gods to devils
11  The insects

CH 4  HER FAVOURITE TREES AND PLANTS

1  The World Tree
1.1  Egypt
2  The Tree of Life
2.1  Mesopotamia
3  The Tree of Knowledge
3.1  Malta
4  The Tree of Enlightenment
4.1  Crete
5  The sacred tree in ancient and modern cultures
4.5  Northwest Europe
5.6  The Near East
6  From Tree of Life to wooden cross
7  The tree with fragrant odor is her favourite
8  Her favourite flowers and herbs
9  Plants that expand the personal consciousness
10  Her life-bread, the grain
### CH 5 HER FAVOURITE BODY PARTS

1. The belly
2. The womb, the uterus
3. The unborn child
4. The fallopian tubes
5. The umbilical cord
6. The placenta
7. The blood
8. The mons Veneris (pubic mound)
9. The vulva
10. The hair on the Venus mound
11. The navel
12. The breast
13. The phallus
14. The foot
15. The hand
16. The head
17. The ear
18. The eye

### CH 6 HER FAVOURITE CLOTHING, HEADDRESS AND OUTFIT

1. From walking naked to thin, transparent clothing
2. The sacred clothing becomes pompous and complicated
3. Dresses and skirts
4. The hip belt
5. The apron and the pinafore
6. The tail
7. Straps and ribbons
8. The knot
9. The headdress
10. Her hairstyle
11. The mask
12. Precious metals and stones
13. The torch, candle and light
14. The mirror
15. The book
16. Weapons
17. Musical instruments
18. The clothing and other items of Artemis of Ephesus
19. The complexity of her clothing
20. From Artemis to Mary

### CH 7 HER FAVOURITE BODY POSES

1. The clan mother or ‘dea genetrix’
2. The very pregnant lady or ‘dea gravida’
3. The Lady giving birth.
4. The Lady presenting her feeding breasts or ‘dea nutrix’
5. The Mother with child or ‘kourotrophos’
6. Venus gives birth squatting or with legs wide open
7. On a birthing stool
8. In the delivery room
9. The midwife depicted
10. The Lady presenting her feeding breasts or ‘dea nutrix’

### CH 8 HER FAVOURITE GAME: TURNING AND RETURNING

Maps
Literature
List of images used
Alphabetical list of images used
Index
2 The book in a nutshell

Part 1 consists of eight chapters, part 2 the same. This is no coincidence. Three and four make seven. Seven plus one makes eight. In the eight begins a new octave, a new time, a new mankind. In the lemniscate of the eight, the independent feminine and masculine come together in perfect balance. By bringing the forgotten feminine into the picture, balance and connection is created with the masculine. Unity.

Part 1 deals with the period 40,000 BC until the year 0. We will bridge these huge time spans in two steps: the first giant step runs from 40,000-10,000 BC, and the second from 10,000 BC until 0. Around 40,000 BC the early modern humans spread throughout Europe and gave us the first proof of artistic ability and appreciation. This is why the book starts at this point in history. The first period from 40,000-10,000 BC covers the time of hunters and gatherers. Around 10,000 BC, the last Ice Age finished and the transition from hunting and gathering to agriculture began. Hence the second period from 10,000 BC to 0 covers early and high agrarian cultures.

Part 1 categorises genres and varieties of Venus Art and includes them in a coordinating system of symbols.

Part 2 is set out thematically. We follow characteristic themes from the feminine system of symbols transversely through time and culture from 10,000 BC to the year 0. There is order, method and logic in this visual language. The patriarchalisation of the system of symbols can be followed through the centuries, theme by theme. In addition, it goes from feminine and egalitarian and balance between masculine and feminine to exclusively masculine and misogynistic. Throughout the line it is possible to see reflected in Venus Art a general hardening and militarisation of society, in which the position of women and thus the image of women deteriorates.

Parts 1 and 2 make two things very clear. Firstly, that Venus Art occurs throughout the world. Secondly, that later, a younger system of symbols in which the exclusively masculine is central, is superimposed on top of the system of Venus symbols.

2.1 Part 1

In chapter 1 you become acquainted with the patriarchal Venus as the goddess of erotic love. You read how she is wrongfully sexualised and how this one-sided image is projected back onto women of great dynamism and power from prehistory. I will show that the primal Venus has more aspects than just eroticism.

In chapter 2 you learn about the misunderstandings and misconceptions around Venus and her art. You read how archaeologists used to fragment and isolate feminine art and thus missed the greater intercultural connections. There are diverse opinions on the function, which in definition and conception have created a Tower of Babel-like confusion in relation to Venus Art. Moreover, there is considerable bias as words like ‘idols and ‘false gods’ are used. I have provided a list of neutral appellations, so that the terminology and the jargon used in this book are clearer.

In chapter 3, on the basis of new archaeological, anthropological and genetic research, the traditional image of prehistory without women is dismissed. The time is ripe for a new, less one-sided approach in which the contribution of woman to evolution is reclaimed.

Chapter 4 goes back to the Palaeolithic and shows how Venus Art spread from Western France to Eastern Siberia over an ‘axis of feminine iconography’. Venus has revealed a coordinating system of symbols with ten basic characteristics. She is in seven sacred poses. Three age groups are depicted in Venus Art: the young lady or maiden, the pregnant lady and the older, experienced and wise lady who is part of many cultures: the clan mother, midwife, healer or woman shaman. Items of clothing such as belts, trains, and round caps which Venus women wear throughout the axis of feminine iconography, are depicted. These accentuate their role and social standing.

In chapter 5, we jump to the Mesolithic and Neolithic era during which the first agrarian cultures emerged. It is clarified why women were important in early agricultural societies and stand at the forefront. Venus Art shows clan mothers in a matrilinear system of family relationships. After this, the process of patriarchalisation is covered. Migrations of pastoral people are linked with mini ice ages and climate
deterioration. As a result, the Indo-Europeans migrated to Western Asia and South-Western Europe in several waves. This action created a snowball effect. It sparked war and an unprecedented aggression in humanity and the world changed into a valley of tears.

In chapter 6 the focus is on Neolithic Venus Art in the Near East. There are two main groups: the naturalistic (figurative) and the semi-abstract art. Belonging to the first group are the oldest Venus figurines from early agrarian cultures which are firmly seated on Mother Earth. After this, they start to stand up slowly and become significantly slimmer over the course of time. Recent archaeological research has made clear that these small ‘female figurines’ have to do with miniatures of a larger devotional image of the clan mother. Later she became deified and developed into a ‘mother goddess’ and ‘village goddess’ (India).

The seven body poses from the Palaeolithic appear repeated in this period. In addition, six ‘new’ sacred body poses occur: the Venus figurines from the Near East are in a total of 13 sacred body poses, each one with a specific message. I then place the changing body poses of Venus figurines within a historic framework. As the centuries progress, it becomes clear how the favourable position of women in early agrarian cultures visibly founders. The sacred image of woman crumbles.

It remains a comfort to conclude that the feminine system of symbols has continued from the Palaeolithic into Venus Art in the Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Bronze- and Iron Age. It is consistent!

In chapter 7 I investigate whether the extensive Venus Art from the large cultural area of Old Europe corresponds with that of the Near East. The system of symbols and iconography seem to continue and correspond with characteristics of symbols found previously. The masculine element comes into play. Venus Art in Cyprus enables us to pinpoint the patriarchalisation of the system of symbols. As well as this, guidelines are provided on the basis of which it is possible to distinguish an ancestral mother from the Palaeolithic and Neolithic from a goddess, priestess or adorant (worshipper) in Bronze Age and classical times.

The focus is on the second group of abstract art which occurs in great numbers and huge variation. In this second group the abstracted sitting and standing ladies are found: only their female forms are schematized and simplified. The colourful body painting is worn away. This group, which to date has been recorded as sexless and neuter, can now definitively be considered as female, if the masculinity is not expressly depicted with a beard and/or phallus. It is becoming easier to identify the basic outline of the primal ladies, the mothers of life.

In Old Europe, the thirteen body poses seem extremely popular. What is noteworthy is that among the group of male-females or androgynes a duality is depicted: a symbol for dual partnership, connectedness: unity. Furthermore, the pose of the lady who in death regenerates new life is very popular.

In chapter 8 I follow the hunter-gatheresses and early farming women in ancient non-Western cultures. As well as numerous large Megalithic structures, they have also left on Mother Earth a trail of tiny Venus figurines. The smaller one fits into the larger one. Throughout the world, Venus Art is traceable using an unfolding system of symbols. The conclusion is that Venus Art is global and occurs in a connecting intercultural primal layer, which still exists in remaining cultures. Some non-Western people still make ‘ancestral mother figurines’ or ‘little mothers’. Venus Art appears to be art of the primal mothers. The system of symbols from ancient cultures corresponds with that from classical and modern non-Western cultures. The definition of what Venus Art actually is, can now be established. Village goddesses in India appear to be local and earthly manifestations of a collective feminine life force that is called ‘Mother’. The female primal energy is visualised in Venus, who is the mother of mothers and stands at the beginning of creation and the evolutionary process. She is the Great Lady who reconnects and unifies all fragments, in her Venus Art also.

Summary

Now all threads come together. The former conclusions are signposted so the reader does not get lost among the trees of the great forest of Venus Art.

In the first paragraph the 10 basic characteristics and 13 body poses from Palaeolithic and Neolithic times are compared to Venus Art in later and modern non-Western cultures. In the second paragraph, the transition from ancestral mother worship to ancestral father worship is mapped. Ancestor art is characterised by enlarged sex organs. The ancestral fathers are also depicted: this seems to be a later development, as ancestral mother worship pre-dates ancestral father worship.
In the third paragraph you learn to distinguish a primal mother from a goddess, priestess and adorant of later classical times.
The fourth paragraph. The section finishes with a checklist to support you in your analysis of Venus Art while travelling, in museums, galleries or anywhere else.

The final conclusion is this: The visual Venus language displays a striking consistency and continuity. The feminine system of symbols shows an intercultural and transcultural cohesion in which symbolic characteristics remain repeated over thousands of years and large geographical areas. Preponderant feminine Venus Art has to date been neglected and remained outside of consideration. Venus Art can make a huge contribution to the further dismantling of our history that does not include women.

2.2 Part 2

Chapter 1 starts with the basic original forms of the round feminine and the elongated masculine. Shapes and numbers were developed from this combined basis. It appears that humanity was first more aware of the female aspect. Images of twin goddesses occur everywhere in agrarian cultures, long before masculine duality was depicted. There is feminine duality and there is feminine trinity, before the masculine was included.

In chapter 2 the primal mother leads us to her favourite places. These are any locations with water: the sea, the lake, the river and the spring. But you can also find her on the green island or in the fragrant garden; on the mountain, the high place or the tower; in the cave, in the stone or on her throne. We find feminine symbols on earthenware and carpets, in folk tales and customs, in folklore.

In chapter 3 her relationship with the animal world is discussed. You find the primal mother in the company of her favourite creatures: fish and reptiles such as the frog, the dragon and the snake; birds including raptors and doves; large predators such as the lioness, the leopard and the panther; domesticated animals such as the cow, the goat, the sheep; the mother cow milking her baby bull calf, that later becomes her bull mate. And finally, the insects.

In chapter 4 it becomes clear that her favourite trees and plants are intricately linked with the central themes of life, death and rebirth. There is special attention for fragrant trees and plants. In cultures well-disposed towards women, an attractive fragrance represents divinity. She also has a soft spot for hallucinogen herbs and she has a particular love for grain.

In chapter 5 her body parts are given centre stage: belly, womb, vulva, Venus (pubic) hair, fallopian tubes, the unborn child, the placenta, umbilical cord, umbilicus, blood, breasts, ear, eye and hand. Nor do her own body parts escape the masculinisation of the feminine language of symbols.

Chapter 6 depicts what clothing she wears, her hairstyle and headdress, and the attributes she conveys. Initially she walks naked, but later she covers herself in thin, translucent fabrics. As the ages of patriarchy approach, her clothing becomes thicker. I have paid special attention to her fertility belt, with which she has faithfully girded herself for 40,000 years. With the increasing size of her headdress and hairstyle, she seems to wish to disguise the devaluation of her position. This flamboyance is nothing more than ostentation. Inside she knows that she has lost ground to her masculine partner.

In chapter 7 I show her standard poses throughout eras and cultures. The first of these are the nanas or clan mothers who sit or stand in various bodily poses, both in naturalistic and abstract form. Then we see the pregnant ones in the act of giving birth: squatting, lying down or sitting. Then we take a look in the delivery room and examine the new mother and her midwife or midwives. The mother-to-be sometimes clings to birthing ropes that have already been used in the family for many generations, also in the worship of ancestors. Life and death are woven together in the birthing rope. When this difficult task is done, the proud mother shows us her prominent breasts with which she breastfeeds her newborn child. An impressive line of mothers and children is presented. It makes clear how old and universally loved this pose is, long before the christian Madonna carries her child.

Chapter 8 is about the christian Mary, who brings much of the symbolic language of Venus with her to the christian period. As the Lady of all Nations, who in Judaism and Christianity is called Miriam and Mary, she is given other names in Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. But underneath all this diversity hides the uniformity of that one face of the primal mother once known as Venus.

“Many are her names, but She is One”.

General remark about the divine feminine in texts and art of Ancient Israel. In several chapters of part two, the system of symbols of the Great Lady of Israel is examined and is linked with that of Mary. In the Old Testament the Great Lady of Israel was c. 600 BC (and later) written out of the text by scribes carrying out 'corrections'. Using the new method of 'text archaeology', we are able to trace the corrections made by the scribes in the canonical Hebrew edition of Old Testament texts and to discover the female-friendly layer below these 'corrections'. This enables us to reconstruct the system of symbols of the Great Lady of Israel and to show that it is coherent with the system of symbols of other ancient cultures in the Near East and the global system of symbols. The conclusion must be that the internationally used feminine system of symbols, which showed a balance between the female and male element (mother and son / consort), must have been known and active in pre-monotheistic ancient Israel and is transculturally transferred to Mary, Lady of all Nations.

In parts 1 and 2, numbers between round parentheses ( ) refer to the chapter in question. Numbers between square parentheses [ ] in part 1 and 2 refer to the illustration about which I write. At the end of the chapters in part I, the facts discovered are listed.

Maps. In the back of this book you will find up-to-date maps of the cultures discussed, along with the most important archaeological sites.
Part I

Venus Art  Mother Art
this type also occur and this is why it is assumed that they concern Aphrodite in her dual aspect and not Demeter and Persephone, two other goddesses with a dual aspect.25 Who it is is not really important, however. This is what comes across: it is about their different functions which include more than our western one-sided erotic vision of Venus/Aphrodite. (II.1.6, the female two) [II.1.16-29, double goddess]

■ 4.2 Venus with a child at her breast
[I.1.28] Aphrodite breastfeeding, Cyprus. Venus has more unexpected aspects. This little statue from Kition (Cyprus) which dates from 600-450 BC is of the type ‘Aphrodite with child at the breast’ or ‘Aphrodite Kourothrophos’.26 She is neatly dressed in many pleated gowns, and even wears a veil over her head. This she holds onto firmly with her right arm, while she holds the baby to her breast with her left arm. This aspect is not well known in the west. [II.6.5b, heptastolos showing her breasts] (I.6.6.8; I.7.11.8, mother with child or kourothrophos) [II.7.50-77, mothers with child]

■ 4.3 Venus as creatrix and clan mother
[I.1.29] Venus Genetrix, Italy. This marble statue of 171.3 m high from the 5th to the 4th century BC currently in the Louvre in Paris shows Venus as a creatrix. Her naked body is barely visible through the transparent gown. The name of this image is: Venus Genetrix. This indicates her creative and life-giving capacity.

[I.1.30] Venus Genetrix. Italy. Here you see Venus on a Roman silver coin from 46-45 BC from Spain.27 On the front, she preens with a diadem, a rosette or a star in the knot of hair and wears earrings. The upper edges of her clothing are held together with a fibula or pin. At the neck a small Cupid obtrudes. She holds the sceptre behind her head; in front of her head is a spiral-shaped staff used by the augurs (interpreters of omens) to explain the flight of birds. Venus is depicted here as a clan mother of the lineage of Julius Caesar from which the first Emperor Augustus originated, as ‘Venus Genetrix’. In addition, she is also the legendary tribal mother of the Roman people because she is the mother of Aeneas, the reputed founder of Rome.

■ 4.4 Venus with the beard, Venus Barbata
[I.1.31] Venus with the beard or ‘Venus Barbata’, Cyprus. There are even images which are known as ‘Venus with the beard’. A terracotta figure of a bearded Aphrodite has been found in the temple of Aphrodite at Amathus on Cyprus. This is about this so-called Aphrodite with the beard, or ‘Venus Barbata’. The lady has a beard and hair in the shape of a wig. She wears a very thin dress over her female body. This is a Hermaphrodite, a female-male human, a Hermes-Aphrodite. In Cyprus, before Aphrodite’s aspect of eroticism and love was emphasised, her other aspects were also shown here. The ancient Aphrodite that pre-dates the Greek era is bisexual and androgynous, just like the goddesses Inanna and Ishtar, she carries life within herself and generates the life force from within. These oriental aspects were
later adopted into Greek culture and embodied into the Hermaphrodite.28 [I.7.103-04, two Hermaphrodites]

4.5 An armed Venus, Venus Armata
[I.1.32] Venus armed or ‘Venus Armata’, Cyprus. Finally, a last unexpected side of Venus. She is armed with a sword or a spear. The goddess of love can also be the goddess of war. Once again, she seems to have inherited this predilection for armed toughness from her eastern predecessors Inanna and Ishtar. [I.6.79-80; II.6.51-53, armed goddesses] It could be related to the hunt, an occupation of many young women in ancient times. [I.4.54-55, hunting young ladies] It could also have to do with changing times of aggression and war, which heralded the historical period of the patriarchy. Goddesses and amazons now need to protect themselves. They train in peaceful times to be prepared for the worst. This mosaic from a Roman villa of Nea Paphos (Cyprus) shows an armed and half-naked Aphrodite, leaning on a small column or pillar with a long spear in her left hand. With her right hand, she is holding onto the point of her clothing with which she covers her head and her back.

[I.1.33] Cyprus, ‘Venus Armata’. The naked ‘Aphrodite Hoplismene’ from Paphos (Cyprus) (right) is believed to have carried a sword. She raises it high to strike her enemy. Crossways is a shoulder belt from which to hang the sword. Thus here her erotic charm is linked with her ancient eastern assertiveness and toughness.

Finally. So far, these are some of the many faces of Venus that hide behind this highlighted erotic aspect. In the west Venus is known exclusively as the goddess of love. However, under this cover of love, many strong primal qualities are hidden. Prehistoric Venus stands up for herself before she is expurgated and enchained... and it is still not clear who exactly is hiding behind Venus...

5 Remember your mother tongue, summary of chapter 1

1 The name ‘Venus’ is given to ancient images of women as a nickname. This later developed into a generic name.

2 In the Classical and Hellenistic Venus, the vulva and pubic hair is no longer depicted. She barely has a woman’s waist and her figure is chaste and childish. By contrast, male sexuality in men is depicted right down to the finest detail of pubic hair.

3 Despite her nudity, the Classical western Venus gives an impression of virginal demureness. She seems ashamed of her nakedness. By contrast, ancient eastern goddesses proud display their nudity and point to their vulvas.

4 In the west, the modest, demure Venus covers up more and more. She is half-dressed.

5 The first Venuses found in the 19th and early 20th century were given derogatory nicknames which expressed their supposed erotic nature, and other aspects.

7 What is striking is that in the literature, the Venus figures have different names. There is confusion in the description and naming. (more about this in 1.2)

8 Venus figures not only occur in the Palaeolithic, but also in the Neolithic, and on other continents outside of Europe, such as Latin America and Japan. (see also 1.8 and summary)

9 Venus has many faces. This has to do with her eastern past where she rules the entire annual cycle: spring, summer, autumn and winter and spring again. She is the goddess of the upper and the underworld.

10 Initially there are double images which depict her heavenly and underworldly character. She governs life, death and new life. She is no goddess of death, because from her underworldly aspect she gives new life.

11 Her third face shows us Venus holding her child to her breast.

12 Her fourth face is Venus as clan mother.

13 Her fifth face is the ‘Venus with beard’: a feminine/masculine or androgynous Venus.

14 Her sixth aspect is the armed Venus. She is forced to defend herself and protects herself by taking up arms.

15 In this chapter, three sacred poses occur: Venus stands with her hands over her belly, her hands on her breasts and she carries her child. It is no coincidence that these body poses occur very frequently in Venus Art.
Part II

Remembering
your mother tongue
Switzerland, St. Anne and Mary, c. 1500. Here, from the Christian tradition is St. Anne and her strapping daughter Mary. The statue is currently located in the Louvre and originated in the workshop of Jos Gun tersommer of Basel, between 1489 and 1517. Originally there was a small Jesus to the left of both their feet, but he has disappeared. In this way, the statue is similar to that of Demeter and Kore and ‘the divine child’, a son, at [II.1.30a]. Or other Anna selbstdritt-statues. [II.1.45; II.2.18d; II.4.43, St. Anne, Mary and Jesus]

6.1 The male dyad

Germany, Bamberg, God the father in kourothrophos pose and the Son, medieval. God the father and the son are seldom depicted in Christian art. Here a statue from an art gallery in Bamberg where we saw the exhibition ‘God female’ in 2010. This is a picture of a rare wooden statue with an enthroned God the father with the son on his lap and holding the apple in his right hand.

The evolution of the system of symbols from female to male. God the father as kourothrophos; the male in a very ancient body pose of the divine female. The sacred female mother-child type is much older than the father-child type. In this book we manage to show the evolution of the sacred female image into the male one. The previous series has given the proofs.

7 The feminine side of the three: the grandmother-mother-daughter triad

The feminine two-in-one image represents the life-giving and death aspects. In addition to these, the feminine three-in-one depicts the third aspect of regeneration and rebirth. The basis of the three-in-one aspect lies in the phases of the moon. From ancient times the three phases of the moon has run through the history of the motherland in a continuous thread. These phases are shown in female figures.

India, Auroville, three women ascending to the moon, 20th century. This modern painting shows three women ascending to the moon from the primal waters.60 The picture is from the Centre of the Mother in Auroville, in India, where her temple, the Matrimandir or Temple of the Mother, is also located.61 The three women symbolise the course of the moon, from the new or waxing moon, through the full moon to the waning moon and black or new moon. Not only do they wish to express the process in nature with this, but also the course of humans from birth via death to rebirth. The goddess of death is also the wise goddess. She knows that trials and suffering will lead to transformation and inner regeneration. This is why the (moon) goddess always has three aspects.

Hence the female trinity returns in the images of the three roots of the primal Tree of Life, for example, but also in the three Graces and the three Muses, who later develop into the nine Muses. Let us first focus on ‘The Three Graces’.

Greece, The Three Graces, 1-2nd century AD. Here is the first of three examples of the ‘Three Graces’, a type that has remained a favourite theme throughout the history of art. The first is a classical design from the Louvre from the 1st or 2nd century AD. Compared to the older Neolithic statues of women, these women’s bodies are tender, young, without a clear waist or rounded feminine hips, Venus hair (pubic hair) and do not have a clear slit.

Second, in the same pose, three women from a mosaic from the ancient city of Zeugma in Turkey, dating from the 2nd century AD, and currently located in the Gaziantep Museum in Turkey.

The three Graces are the three daughters of Zeus and Eurynome. (II.2.1, Eurynome dances across the primal waters) They are called Aglaia, Thalia and Euphrosyne. They are associated with Aphrodite, the Arts and the Muses. In Rome they are called the Gratiae. [II.2.1, Aphrodite and one of the (clothed) Gratiae or Charites]

Belgium, The Three Graces, 1635. Flemish artist Peter Paul Rubens painted the ‘Three Graces’ in 1635, in an idyllic setting among blooming flowers in an imposing painting measuring 221 by 181 cm. The painting is in the Museo del Prado in Madrid.62

Turkey, The female Three in One, Çatal Höyük, c. 6000 BC. On one of the many, many wall paintings in the Neolithic sanctuary in Çatal Höyük, a lady stands in a dancing pose, in the company of two smaller ladies.63 [I.6.19-21, Çatal Höyük] They are flanked by leopards, which have their tails raised in a playful manner. [II.3.23, 33; II.5.8, leopards]

Romania, the three-fold cult figure, a triad, 4500-4100 BC. In Trusesti, Romania, a triad or three-fold cult figure from Old Europe was found.64 It is a large terracotta plate with three abstract heads 74 cm high by 70 cm wide, from the Cucuteni culture, stage A, 4500-4100 BC. All this
The mountain symbolises her body, belly with vulva. The carpet is in the ‘Turk ve Islam’ museum in Istanbul. The abstract goddess on top of the mountain is depicted in long rows on other carpets and art. [II.2.44, lady on mountain]

Modern significance of the symbol. A triangle can represent the tent, the house (and the mountain) in modern Turkish kelims, and it is a symbol of family happiness. Turkish women weave the triangle into their carpets. They say the motif brings good fortune. Turkish brides fold their headscarf into the shape of a triangle for three years, thus expressing their hope of future happiness and fertility.

10 The hair on the ‘Venus’ mound

On many Venus figurines, the hair on the ‘Venus’ mound, traditionally called ‘pubic’ mound, is clearly accentuated. Sometimes this is in the form of dots, possibly also symbolising the seed. It is also done as little hairs, clearly incised into the fired clay. There is a splendid example from Gilat in Israel from 4000 BC.

[5.31a] Israel, Gilat, lady with butter bowl on her head, with slit and hair on ‘Venus’ mound, 4000 BC. Here is a remarkable lady from Gilat in Israel dating from the Chalcolithic Age, c. 4000 BC. She is made of fired clay and painted in a reddish-brown colour. She holds a butter bowl on her head – which means that her users produce milk and butter – and has a full height of 30 cm. Her hair and eyes are painted, her nose is indicated, and breasts, arms and legs are tiny. However, her distinctive feminine slit is clearly carved and the notches around it undoubtedly indicate the hair on her ‘Venus’ mound. She holds a drum under her left arm. She was previously located in Israel, but nowadays she is part of the collection of the project Bibel+Orient of the University of Freiburg.

[5.31b] Mesopotamia, bird goddess with large triangular vulva with ‘Venus’ hair, 2100-1900 BC. Here is the first example of a Lady with a pointed bird nose, head cover and decorated headdress, various necklaces and a girdle in the shape of a large triangle on which the ‘Venus’ hair is accentuated. She comes from Central Mesopotamia, from the city of Tell Asmar (ancient Eshunna), dates back to 2100-1900 BC (Ur III or Isin-Larsa) and is in the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

11 The navel

The navel forms the connection between mother and child, hence its special significance and the interest in it. Through the umbilical cord, the life force reaches the centre of the child’s belly, the navel. People move the navel and the belly while dancing a belly dance. A jewel is often inserted there, or the area around it is painted.

The navel or centre of the world of a special culture. Many places on Mother Earth are regarded as places where heaven and earth meet via the link with the world tree or axis mundi. These places are thought to be the centre (the navel or omphalos) of the world inhabited by certain people, with a particular culture. This is why those sacred places are marked with navel stones. (II.2.9, the stone) The Etruscans in Tuscany have such a worldview; they structure their land and organise their society and their cities round the navelarea of their world. (II.4.1, world tree, the world axis rests in the omphalos)

Navel stones. These are manifestations of ancient feminine spirituality, in which the stone and the mountain are venerated as locations where the visible and invisible worlds unite. These places are marked with navel stones. The belly with the navel is an important place in the body.
What this book offers you

1. This book is the first pioneering study of global ‘Venuses’ who are part of an ancient and contemporary art traditionally called ‘Venus Art’, the art of the primal mother(s), the art of the female ancestors.

2. Venus Art reflects the consciousness of egalitarian societies of peace in which women and feminine values play or have played a central role, in which MA or the MATER or MOTHER and the primal mothers of the clan are central.

3. To date Venus Art has been misunderstood, neglected and not integrally researched. The art has become eroticised and sexualised. The purpose of this book is to rehabilitate Venus Art. Venus is no pin-up or sex idol. She is a manifestation of the divine Mother MA.

4. This innovative view of Venus Art can significantly contribute to the dismantling of our history that does not include women. Feminine art is demonstrably in the majority in Palaeolithic and Neolithic cultures and in some present-day indigenous peoples. The time is ripe for a new art historical approach in which the contribution of woman to evolution is reclaimed.

The language of MA is innovative

1. It reveals the symbolic and spiritual character of Venus Art with its basic themes of life, death, life after death and reincarnation.

2. It uncovers a system of feminine symbols in Ice Age Venus Art. Venuses are presented in the axis of feminine iconography over a distance of 8000 km from France and Spain, Germany and Austria via the Czech Republic, Ukraine and Central Russia, as far as Eastern Siberia. There is a connection between Ice Age Venus Art and Venus Art from after the Ice Age.

3. It reconstructs a global system of feminine symbols that displays a striking consistency and continuity and shows an intercultural and transcultural cohesion in which symbolic characteristics remain repeated over thousands of years and large geographical areas.

4. It classifies Venus Art into two main groups (naturalistic and abstract). Naturalistic Rubensque Venus ladies from early agrarian cultures are seated firmly on Mother Earth. Recent archaeological research has clarified that these little mothers are miniatures of a larger devotional image of the clan mother, who later became deified.

5. It gives guidelines on the basis of which it is possible to distinguish an ancestral mother of Palaeolithic and Neolithic times from a goddess, priestess or adorant (worshipper) in Bronze Age and classical times.

6. In the schematised and simplified forms of sitting and standing ladies of the second group, it recognises the feminine form. To date this huge group has been recorded as genderless. It can now definitively be considered female, if the masculinity is not expressly depicted with a beard and/or phallus.

7. It gives a historical framework in which the female image evolves, but also crumbles within the Near East from 10,000 BC to the year 0. This shows that while at first the well-rounded sitting lady enjoys a respected position in society, during the Bronze and Iron Ages she is considerably slimmed down and loses her nudity by being swathed in layers of clothing. This reveals how the position of woman and the image of the feminine deteriorate against the backdrop of an increasingly complex, hierarchical and militarised society.

8. It demonstrates that from the Iron Age following 1000 BC in cultures all over the world a male system of symbols was superimposed over the female system, and that in the emerging world religions the feminine was suppressed; the monotheistic world religions in particular labelled Venus Art as a fertility cult and idolatry.

9. It recovers the Lost Lady of Israel. In the Old Testament she was written out of the text by scribes carrying out ‘corrections’. A female-friendly layer is rediscovered behind these ‘corrections’. The conclusion must be that the internationally used feminine system of symbols, which showed a balance between the female and male element (mother and son / consort), must have been known and active in pre-monotheistic ancient Israel and is transculturally transferred to Mary, Lady of all Nations.

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In July 2010 33 world-women were honoured in the ‘Manifest Female Energy’. Annine van der Meer was one of six Dutch women to be decorated. According to the manifest, they have contributed to transformation processes in the world; a new world, in which feminine and masculine energies mutually inspire each other and are growing towards a new, powerful and creative world order.

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