

## Divine Surprise, the female side of God.

Article in the book of Dr. Erella Shadmi, *Mother's Path*, (Hebrew: Derech Em), Tel Aviv, 2015.

*In the year 2013 major events related to motherhood and spirituality took place in Holland. What happened in these Low Countries close to the North Sea? We will take a look in: present, past and future.*

At the end of August 2013 I was invited by EEVA, the organisation of midwives of the district Amsterdam and surroundings, to give a lecture about motherhood and midwifery in relation to the exhibition *Divine Surprise, the female side of God*. It took place a few days before the closing of the exhibition. On their special request we gathered in a hall in the Bible Museum on the same floor and in the immediate vicinity of the exhibition rooms of *Divine Surprise*. First there was the lecture, than the tour and after wards we had a circle meeting in the sunny museum garden.

**About the exhibition *Divine Surprise*.** This temporary exhibition showed 200 female figurines from the Near East. The oldest Neolithic little (clan) mothers from Israel and Syria were sitting on Mother Earth, naked and full figured. The later ones from Bronze Age (2000 BC) and Iron Age (800 BC) were naked but more skinny. All of them presented their full breasts and ostentively showed their womb and vulva, some of them even had hair engraved at the large triangular vulva on their naked body.

But this female power did not last forever. After 600 BC and more specific in Hellenistic and Roman times, the ladies got dressed and veiled. They had to hide their breasts and vulva under complicated dresses and overcoats because they were supposed to be ashamed of breasts and womb now called 'pubic triangle'; their hair had to be covered by veils and towering headgear. Gone were the ancient nakedness, self-confidence and freedom. Let's follow the midwives visiting the exhibition. First I gave a lecture, than I guided them through the exhibition and after wards we had a circle meeting in the sunny museum garden.

### 1. the Past: the primal mother(s) revealed

I started with an introduction and said that I would remove seven veils which were draped around the primal mother during the patriarchal phase in history.

**The 19<sup>th</sup> century interpretation of Venus Art.** I explained that anyone studying women and their art in the prehistory must take into consideration the fact that 19th and 20th century scientists were mainly men. This is why the older scientific and popular scientific literature is focused on men. Men are depicted as macho hunters, breadwinners, shamans, rock painters, and sculptors.

Therefore the first anthropocentric archaeologists described the primal mothers of tribe and clan as 'idols' and 'prostitutes' and called them 'Venusses'.<sup>1</sup> They sexualized and erotized them.<sup>2</sup> They gave them nicknames as for example Mr. Punch (La Polichinelle) of the Playing Card (The Double Venus or Laussel, probably a mother birthing a child).<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately this 19<sup>th</sup> century view is still popular among present archaeologists; this is proven by the following. In 2009 an archaeological team discovered the latest



and also the oldest Venus figurine in Germany.<sup>4</sup> They called her 'the Venus of Hohle Fels' dating 40.000-37.000 BC. The team presented her to the world press as 'the pin-up of prehistory' and as 'play girl of the year' because they found next to her a much younger phallus from 28.000 BC and a flute of nearly her age!<sup>5</sup>



**Some 20<sup>th</sup> century interpretations of Venus Art.** I could give many other examples of other outdated interpretations of Venus Art, that became popular after 1960 in the school of the 'New Archaeology'. Here is a very recent one. In the temporal exposition 'Ice Age Art. Arrival of the modern mind' in the British Museum from 7 February to 26 May 2013. Curator Jill Cook describes the 'Venus of Willendorf' as 'the Woman of Willendorf'.<sup>6</sup> In the exhibition she describes the 'Venus of Dolni Vestonice' as an 'obese women who had several children'.<sup>7</sup> This evoked critical reactions on the internet site of the British Museum; one of them had strong objections against the term 'obese' and was called 'Pathologizing Venus' (see my webarticle 'Venus or an obese woman?'). Within the New Archaeology School Cook is an adept of the 'anatomic realism'. The adherents of this stream discern 'real' and 'normal' Stone Age Women in the Venusses, but cannot explain why they walk naked in freezing times and are Rubenesque when they should be muscular and slender; therefore in their eyes these 'normal' women must be sick or heavily pregnant.<sup>8</sup> In the same tradition enormous Ladies of Malta are described as 'Fat ladies'.<sup>9</sup>

**The 21<sup>st</sup> century interpretation.** I explained that Venus Art is the sacred feminine art of nature peoples with birth, death and rebirth as its central themes. You can rediscover in the Venus-figurines the most ancient clan mothers and shamans, leaders of early humanity, depicted in a *symbolic-spiritual language*. The *full ladies* express the life-giving qualities of Mother Nature, the *stick-like and doll-like slender ones* manifest the *death-aspect* and reveal her *regenerative* qualities.<sup>10</sup> The language of the ancient mothers once was spoken all over the world; the proof is the global system of feminine and androgyne symbols that is integrally researched recently; their results are described in the MA book.<sup>11</sup> What are the proves?

### **1. Rediscovering the contribution of women to early human evolution**

In Ice Age not only men but also women have contributed substantially to human evolution.

**Socio-biology** indicates that female animals and women in early groups of humans were central and had the leadership, while the male animals and the men provided peripheral protection. This social order is said to have been maintained in early human cultures.

**Biologically**, there is the fact that a mother gives birth to a child. It is certain who the child's mother is, but not certain (in that time) who the father is. Mother and child, whether a son or a daughter, create a bond together.

**Linguistically**, mothers are at the cradle of language formation; they develop a close emotional bond with their daughters and sons.

**Socially**, women work in teams and weave social networks, safety nets with which they manage to survive sickness and catastrophes with often very young children. They talk a lot to frighten the animals. Men keep silent during the hunt.

There is the **spiritual aspect**: women have the key to life and rebirth. They give birth to the ancestors again. There is an inextricable combination between **braiding, weaving, communicating with the ancestors** and giving (re)birth. Birthing women hang in ancestor ropes or wear them on their naked body. They made many **perishable** ropes of grasses and braided nets and baskets for hunting and fishing. They used needles in order to make (thicker) clothing.<sup>12</sup>

But more can be added:

There is the **economic** argument: women also hunted and they gathered food in teams: by gathering food, women contribute 75% to the community's nutrition and are thus the main breadwinners. Research in ninety modern gatherer communities in Africa, Asia, America and Australia and in

present-day indigenous or nature peoples in Botswana indicates that the lion's share of the meals consists of vegetable matter gathered, and not meat that was hunted.<sup>13</sup>

Because women assembled herbs they also knew a lot about the *healing qualities* of those herbs.

They were the *first shamans and healers* (and not the assistants of male ones).<sup>14</sup>

Women were among the *rock painters, sculptors and potters* (inside the caves the hands of women and adolescents also occur in addition to those of men, so they also turn out to be 'artists' who communicate with ancestral spirits while they painted).<sup>15</sup>

Oral traditions from the Amazon area and Melanesia tell us that women were the *first musicians*, they knew how to use knowledge of how sounds work in making and using sound instruments<sup>16</sup>:

percussion<sup>17</sup>, wind<sup>18</sup> and humming instruments.<sup>19</sup>

**Concluding:** Women have made their contribution to evolution as *huntresses and gatherers of food, as mathematical geniuses who make calendars<sup>20</sup>, as rope-makers and weavers, as painters, sculptresses and potters, as midwives, healers, musicians and shamanesses.*<sup>21</sup>



## **2. Rediscovering 40,000 years of Venus Art that reveal a coherent system of symbols**

Over 40,000 years one can discover a Venus-tradition in the art of hunting-gathering and agricultural societies; some non-Western contemporary peoples are depicting their ancient mothers till now. I will give some examples in the notes.<sup>22</sup> *What are the main characteristics of this global system of symbols?*

\* Feminine art is demonstrably in the majority in Palaeolithic, Neolithic cultures and in some present-day indigenous peoples.

**Ice Age Art.** Geometric patterns occur twice as much as animal figures in Ice Age art; there are far more animal figures than human (a good 90% more). But of the 5% of human figures depicted in Ice Age Art, the vast majority of these are female.<sup>23</sup> It is the feminine and not the masculine that determines the portrayal of mankind.<sup>24</sup>

**Art after the Ice Age.** This continues in early agricultural societies after the Ice Age.<sup>25</sup> Swiss theologians Othmar Keel and Silvia Schroer have been researching feminine art from the Near East for many years.<sup>26</sup> Their field of investigation covered the area in the Near East known as the Fertile Crescent, but then with Egypt and Anatolia included. In 2004 they published a catalogue with specific physical poses and similarities in symbols.<sup>27</sup>

They were in a position to base this work on hundreds of separate archaeological studies and various overview reference works.<sup>28</sup> Along with many other researchers, Keel and Schroer have established that in their field of investigation, many items of feminine art have been discovered. In this opinion, they are not alone.<sup>29</sup> In the notes I give some recent research from the Near East.<sup>30</sup> I also pay attention to Central and Eastern Europe; data from this areas were first assembled by Marija Gimbutas<sup>31</sup>. Her example is followed by recent researchers.<sup>32</sup>

\* In the last Ice Age the axis of iconography follows the Tundra steppes which extended below the belt of ice from west to east, from France to Siberia. Here is where 95% of Venus Art has been found. There are countless mutual similarities on the basis of which the coordinating system of feminine symbols can be reconstructed. Changes are slowly starting to come about in the fragmented approach and some archaeologists have pointed out similarities.<sup>33</sup> There is a connection between Ice Age Venus Art and Venus Art from after the Ice Age.<sup>34</sup>

\* In Venus Art there are two main groups, naturalistic and abstract. Naturalistic Rubenesque 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.<sup>35</sup>

\* In the schematised and simplified forms of sitting and standing ladies of the second group, it recognises the feminine form.<sup>36</sup> 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.<sup>37</sup> Schematic female figurines are often found in graves. They embody the life-giving force of the Mother and the little mothers of matrika's after death.<sup>38</sup>

### **3. The characteristic elements of the female image**

In the Ice-Age Venus tradition, which continues itself after wards in agricultural societies, the following characteristics are the most important:

1. Venus' female sex organs and her breasts and lower body with thighs, buttocks, Venus (pubic) mound and vulva are given the greatest emphasis and are depicted as enlarged.
2. She often has a fat posterior that protrudes out behind her (steatopygia).
3. Her arms are thin or absent; the lower legs and feet are neglected.
4. Venus is naked, which in these cold times indicates a sacred function.
5. Venus' naked body shows traces of red ochre (menstruation or life blood).
6. In Venus Art women are in various phases of their lives: the young girl, the pregnant lady and mother and thirdly the older (grand) mother, who is frequently shown.

### **The female image in agrarian cultures after the last Ice Age, after 10.000 BC.**

In agrarian cultures the central position of women in hunter-gatherer cultures is continued and for a time even expanded. The first farmers are women.<sup>39</sup> The men remain hunting for longer, and later tend the herds for part of the year. Women build themselves a large house near their gardens and fields. The family house is the centre and base for the extended family and from where plants, animals and humans are looked after. The family altar with the ancestor statues is by the fire, and here the bones of the ancestors are reburied in a 'second funeral'. In these egalitarian societies, women and female values played a central role. In cultures in which the 'mater' or mother is central, there are the values of community spirit, collaboration, connection with the ancestors, respect for life and nature in all dimensions. These are societies of peace; societies in balance.<sup>40</sup>

**From ancestral mother to mother goddess.** The Neolithic little mothers, with their enormous hips and buttocks, like to sit firmly on the earth, with various leg- and arm positions. Whenever the lower legs are folded in underneath them, they show stumpy upper legs. This is considered a birthing pose. The abundant Venus Art in agrarian cultures portrays ancestral mothers: the ancestors of the lady of the house in the female line. Venus Art is part of ancestor worship in a matrilineal system of relationships.<sup>41</sup>

Their descendants honoured the ancestresses in such a way that they become 'deified'. As a result, the primal mothers develop into village, city and regional goddesses.<sup>42</sup> There are the small figurines in the houses, while the larger cult statues are in the larger shrines.<sup>43</sup>

### **Universal and age-old body positions**

There are 13 global body positions over 40,000 years.<sup>44</sup> In the Ice Age, seven sacred body poses occur:

1. The birthing pose
2. The standing pose of the clan mother or 'dea genetrix'
3. The 'dea gravida' pose with both hands on (pregnant) belly
4. The 'dea nutrix' pose with both hands presenting breasts
5. The Mother of totem animals and plants symbols
6. The invocation pose with the arms raised up high
7. The androgynes or feminine-masculine with the wide lower body and phallic upper body

After the Ice Age, these poses are supplemented with 6 poses:

8. The 'dea lactans' pose or Mother breastfeeding or child
9. Blessing
10. Grieving and lamenting
11. Praying

12. 'Dea regeneratrix' or the goddess of death and new life, sometimes elongated and stiff with lower arms and hands in front of stomach

13. Feminine duality and trinity

#### **4 The relationship between function and location of discovery: a house, shrine of grave.**

What is confusing is that figurines can have several different functions. If the figurine is located in a dwelling on a house altar, then it is there to bring blessings and protection to the home. However, if it is in a shrine, then it could be a votive gift to express a wish for fertility or healing: it is a votum. The figure could also be placed in thanks for the fulfilment of this wish: this is an ex-voto. Whenever the figurine or idol is placed in a grave, it is given to the deceased as comfort and protection and as a plea for rebirth. The conclusion is therefore that the statue can be multifunctional and that the size, material and function are dependent on the specific place where it is found: in a house, shrine or grave.<sup>45</sup>

#### **5. The degeneration of the female image**

The historical framework, in which the female image evolves within the Near East from 10,000 BC to the year 0, shows that it also crumbles. At first the well-rounded seated lady enjoys a respected position in society, but during the Bronze and Iron Ages she is considerably slimmed down and loses her nudity by being swathed in layers of clothing.<sup>46</sup> 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. There are guidelines which enable the student of Venus Art to distinguish a Palaeolithic or Neolithic ancestral mother from a goddess, priestess or adorant (worshipper) in Bronze and Iron Ages and classical times.<sup>47</sup>

#### **6. The suppressing of the feminine in 'world religions'**

From the Iron Age after 1000 BC in cultures all over the world, a male system of symbols was superimposed over the female system. In classical and Hellenistic Greece philosophers promoted fatherhood and started to deny motherhood. In the philosophy and theology of emerging world religions the feminine was suppressed.<sup>48</sup> The monotheistic world religions in particular labelled Venus Art as a fertility cult and idolatry.<sup>49</sup>

#### **7. The disappearance of the feminine in three monotheistic world religions.**

There are many similarities between the children of Abraham, united in Judaism, Christianity and Islam.<sup>50</sup> One of these is that their denial of their women centred roots.<sup>51</sup>

Recent research recovered the Lost Lady of Israel. In the Old Testament she was written out of the text by scribes carrying out 'corrections' after 600 BC, after the return from the Babylonian Captivity in the period of the Second Temple. A female-friendly layer is rediscovered behind these 'corrections'.<sup>52</sup> The Hebrew 'El Shaddai' or 'God with Breasts' was 'translated' in 'God Almighty' and later on in 'Yahweh' or 'The Lord' (*Gen. 49:25; Ex. 6:3*).<sup>53</sup> 'Qudshu' or 'the Holy One' was corrected in 'the holy ones' and later on in 'male prostitutes' (*1Kings 14:23-4*).<sup>54</sup> 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.<sup>55</sup>

#### **The images**

After this theoretical introduction I showed the audience a short presentation of Venus-symbols on a huge screen. The first picture showed several vulvas, one of the oldest symbols that occur universally: the Venus mound, the womb or gate or source of life. There are thousands of depictions of it with about a hundred of these in France alone.<sup>56</sup> I told them that in the awareness of the ancients the dark cave remembered them on their previous

lives as unborn child in the womb. One of the younger ones asked when she looked at certain triangular forms of vulva's from Germany and France how I could know that these forms were vulvas; 'Why for example it could not be a tent'? I reacted with: 'Your question is a beautiful example that this symbolic language of the mother(s) that once was fully understood now is completely lost and sunk in the subconscious. I said: 'Wait and see: in the exhibition *Divine Surprise* you will see this symbol endlessly repeated on the lower body of our little mothers. Then you understand and perhaps remember that this symbol is a Venus mound or vulva and not a tent!'

I told her that the exposition also would show her several headdresses of goddesses in omega or womb shape, the so called 'Hathor headdress'.<sup>57</sup> The oval which comes back in the oval formed and almond shaped eyes of Asherah of Israel is again a hint to the womb of the primal mother.<sup>58</sup>

**From cave to temple.** I pointed the young midwife's attention to the vulva's in a more semi circled and U-form from Kostenki in Russia. The sanctity of the natural cave from Palaeolithic times is continued in later times when artificial temple mounds are raised consisting of large stones and roofed with other stones covered by earth and grass. Inside it is dark like in the womb of the mother and the pavement and ceilings are mostly painted red. Temples and temple rooms are built in womb-form. These were the models for ancient artificial sacral places or later temples, as for example in Göbekli Tepe, Malta and England.<sup>59</sup> Even in later temples with a more classical form there were special departments called 'birth houses', as in the Egyptian temples.<sup>60</sup> Birth giving was a sacral act and related to cave and temple.



**The 'Venus of Willendorf'.** Then I showed several famous Ice Age Venuses. First came the 'Venus of Willendorf' from Austria, 24,000 BC with her bent head encircled with a cap of seven braids. The vulva is clearly indicated. The accent is on the breasts and the lower body. The tiny arms are folded over the breasts. In this same 'hands on breasts' pose there is a large clan mother statue of Ain Ghazal from the valley of the Jordan from ca 7200 BC, discovered in 1983.<sup>61</sup> The iconography of Canaan and ancient Israel show the continuity of this 'dea nutrix' pose with clan mothers and goddesses.<sup>62</sup> And around 800 BC the pillar figurines of Asherah of Israel stand in the same 'dea nutrix' position.<sup>63</sup>



**The Venus with the Horn.** The rock in which she is engraved is 54 cm high, she herself is 43 cm tall. She has no features and orients her face to the bison horn she is holding up in her right hand. The Venus triangle with vulva is clearly indicated. She holds her bulging belly firmly with the fingers of her left hand. With her right hand she is holding a bison horn on which you see thirteen stripes that represent the thirteen lunar months in the lunar year and the thirteen days necessary for the waxing moon to become full on the fourteenth day in the month of 28 days.<sup>64</sup>

A kind of Y-mark is engraved into her thigh. This mark is also engraved on the right arm of the 'Venus of Hohle Fels'. The Venus of Laussel is becoming a mother, and according to expert gynaecologists who have examined her physical pose, that moment is close. Her head, body, hips and belly show traces of red ochre. Just like the P mark, the Y mark stands for pregnancy. This P mark occurs in many pregnant animal species.

*A sacred space within the sheltering cave.* In a space of thirty square meters there were found four of the five reliefs. The find of the fifth relief of the Double Venus in birthing pose was not properly registered; we cannot situate this find. Four of the five reliefs were originally applied to the back wall of a more uphill located part of the sheltering cave. There were special women's areas were set out in caves. In that time, people also often operated in men's groups and women's groups. So this sacred space must have been a place for female rituals, ceremonies and birthing.<sup>65</sup> The women's group menstruated together with dark moon and ovulated on full moon. It was the rhythm of the moon which influenced the rhythm of the fluids in the female body. It was this mutual bond that persisted through early, classical and even colonial patriarchy, just till the Agrarian and Industrial Revolution when large family groups were untied and the roots with the ancestral land disappeared. Then people moved to the city where the nuclear family came about. The Amsterdam midwives reacted immediately on this solidarity and togetherness of the women in traditional and pre-industrial societies. This was important in their view.



*The Venus of Lespugue.* The dark 'Venus of Lespugue' found in a cave in Western-France in 1922, is 14.7 cm long and thus one of the longer Venus statuettes. She is carved from a black mammoth tusk. She dates from 23,000 BC. She has a small, round, bent head. No features are visible. She holds her extremely narrow hands on her low-hanging breasts which are exceptionally pendulous. She is not pregnant. She has heavy buttocks that stick out behind her (steatopygia). Seen from behind, it appears as though her buttocks are pushed up and to the side by the 'hip belt' with a short skirt or tail of woven grass at the back. The inconspicuous footless lower legs taper into a point. She shows the famous rhombus-shaped pattern which accentuates the breasts, belly and hips.<sup>66</sup>

This is the moment to take a closer look at her belt with rope skirt. On the sketch, you see how the belt tapers from the back into a rope skirt or fertility tail. The skirt consists of 11 cords attached to a basic cord that serves as a belt. This is definitely craftsladyship, both in the weaving and braiding as well as in the sculpting. There are more Venusses with belts and tails.<sup>67</sup> The tail could indicate that Venus is a midwife and shamaness.<sup>68</sup>

*Similarities between the 'Venus of Willendorf' and the 'Venus of Lespugue'.* The similarities between the Venus of Willendorf and the Venus of Lespugue are: a bent head, no facial features, small arms over the large breasts in the 'dea nutrix' pose (which infers that they are not pregnant) and the emphasis on breasts and lower body. The comparison of the Venus of Lespugue with the Venus of Hohle Fels also highlights the fact that a strap is worn around the hips or the middle of the naked body.

After these images it is time for the tour.

## 2. The present: the tour

We rotated through the intimate three rooms, the dark red one, the more orange red one and the final dark blue room. The figurines gave a special radiance and every time you entered you felt this special atmosphere that made you happy inside.

First we entered the red room and immediately saw the clan mothers from Israel sitting on Mother Earth on their huge bottoms. There is the oldest and most tiny little mother from Netiv ha-Gedud from 9400-8800 BC.<sup>69</sup> There is the seated nana or ancestress or clan mother from Munhata in the Jordan Valley, south of the sea of Galilee, Yarmuk culture



dating 6400-5800 BC; we see a copy of the one from the Israel museum in Jerusalem.<sup>70</sup>

We pass several small heads of Asherah with her smiling face, her big almond shaped eyes, her large listening ears and her curly hair. We pass the collection of standing Asherah pillar figurines. We pass the double throne of a throning goddess and god. According to the Swiss catalogue this couple must depict Asherah and Yahweh. It was found in Tell Bet Mirsim, 20 km south of Hebron and dates from 750-620 BC., the period of the First Temple.<sup>71</sup> My guests are amazed finding Jahweh and Asherah together in four 'blessings of Yahweh and Asherah'; two were found in Kuntillet el-Ajrud in the Sinai and in two graves in Hebron.<sup>72</sup> They are surprised to find the cow-calf symbol on the same



side of pithos where *in Hebrew* is written the names of Yahweh and Asherah. Could the cow-calf relationship point at the mother-son relation of Asherah and Yahweh? Did the biblical God have a mother and partner?

**The Mother of Life.** For me one small figurine is the highlight of the 199 other ones. She is called the 'Mother of Life'. She is from Israel, from Afek, to the west of Jerusalem from 1300 BC. She stands in a birthing position and opens with both her hands her round womb, which is very strongly emphasised. You see the dark hole of it.<sup>73</sup> She stands in the same position as the Celtic Mother of Life, the Sheela-na-gig, the vulva lady, still to be seen above the entrance of some hundred churches in Ireland and England.<sup>74</sup>

Her hair is in a Hathor style and she wears a half-moon pendant around her neck. Besides her fertile vulva there are on her upper legs two trees of life with two caprids feeding from it. She feeds the children, the plants and the animals. Here, at the time of the Amarna letter, in which the king of Jerusalem was named 'servant or man of Eve', a 'Mother of all Life' was depicted.<sup>75</sup> In her body she embraces and encircles all life: the cosmos and stars, the stones, the trees, the animals and the sons and daughters of humanity. She really is Mother of all Life, she is the predecessor of the patriarchal Eve, who was introduced in the sacred text after 600 BC.

**In the garden.** After wards we sat in a large circle under the shadowy trees in the sunlit museum garden with all kinds of biblical plants and trees, a flowing fountain, lotuses, water lilies and in the centre a seven pillared round temple of Sophia or Wisdom. The participants communicated that they felt impressed and empowered by what they had heard and seen. They had not known how often the expectant mother was depicted in all kind of birthing positions in ancient female art. They did not know how motherhood was respected and how often the assisting midwife(s) was depicted. They felt empowered in a time when their profession in Holland (and in Belgium) is under pressure.

### 3. The future.

At the end of August the temporary exhibition *Divine Surprise* closed its doors. The management of the Bible Museum was more than pleased with the unexpected stream of visitors which flocked the museum in order to see *Divine Surprise* since March 2013.

This success proves that the rehabilitation of Venus Art can make a huge contribution to the further dismantling of our history that does not include women. The study of Venus Art can provide a major leap in matriarchal research. In Holland the tide is turning for motherhood, spirituality and the Mother of God. Yes: the 21th century started with this Divine Surprise!

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**Dr Annine E.G. van der Meer** (1953) is a Dutch historian of religion and holds a PhD in theology from the University of Utrecht. She is the author of several books. Her latest book is titled *The Language of MA, the primal Mother. The evolution of the female image in 40.000 years of global Venus Art*, published in 2013.

She has travelled widely to retrace the universal hidden Mother in sacred art, symbols and texts. She is founder and president of the Dutch PanSophia Academy, school of Wisdom, where she also teaches.

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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PanSophia Academy website: [www.academiepansophia.nl](http://www.academiepansophia.nl)

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<sup>1</sup> *The language of MA*, 21: Venus Impudique or Immodest Venus; 25: Venus of Willendorf.

<sup>2</sup> Jill Cook, *Ice Age Art, arrival of Modern Mind, published to accompany the exhibition at the British Museum from 7 February to 26 May 2013*, London, 2013, 103, 224.

<sup>3</sup> Cook, *Ice Age Art*, 99; MA 24-25, 66, **89**.

<sup>4</sup> MA, 13: Leader of the excavation team was Prof Dr Nicholas Conard, professor of Archaeology at the University of Tübingen and Dr Paul Mellars, connected with the University of Cambridge; MA, 72: the 'Venus' was found by the Swiss student Alexandra Mistireki.

<sup>5</sup> Nicholas J. Conard, 'Die Anfänge der Musik. Eide Knochenflöte aus dem unterem Aurignacien', *Eiszeit. Kunst und Kultur, Begleitband zur Grossen Landesausstellung Eiszeit-Kunst und Kultur im Kunstgebäude Stuttgart 18. September 2009 bis 10. Januar 2010*, Stuttgart, 2009, 324-326, 326: the flute lies among the remains of hunted animals, stone objects and burned bones; MA 13, 104, 69.

<sup>6</sup> Jill Cook, *Ice Age Art*, 76.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 64; MA 49, 78.

<sup>8</sup> E. Trinkhaus, 'The adiposity paradox in the Middle Danubian Gravettian', *Anthropologie*, vol 58 (2-3), 2005, 263-271, 272; E. Trinkhaus, J.A.Svoboda eds., *Early Modern Human Evolution in Europe: the people of Dolni Vestonice and Pavlov*, Oxford, 2006; MA 70.

<sup>9</sup> Anthony Bonanno, *Malta, een archeologisch paradijs*, Malta, 2000, 29; MA 43, 511.

<sup>10</sup> Harald Haarmann, *Interacting with figurines. Seven dimensions in the study of imagery*, Vermont, 2009, 147, 149; Sandra Sázelová, 'Female Figurines of Northern Eurasia: an ethnographic approach', in: J.A. Svoboda, *Petrkovice: On shouldered Points and Female Figurines*, Dolni Vestonice Studies, vol. 15, Brno, 2008, 224-32; *Ice Age Art*, 107 n 45; MA 41, **70-1, 83**.

<sup>11</sup> MA 40-41, 70-72.

<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth J. W. Barber, *Prehistoric Textiles*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1991; *Women's Work: The First 20,000 years*, New York, 1994; J.M. Adovasio, D.C. Hyland, O. Soffer, *The Invisible Sex. Uncovering the True Roles of Women in Prehistory*, Smithsonian Books 2007, *De Onzichtbare Vrouw*, Amsterdam, 2008; O. Soffer, J.M. Adovasio and D.C. Hyland, 'The "Venus" Figurines'. Textiles, Basketry, Gender and Status in the Upper Palaeolithic, *Current Anthropology*, vol 41, nr 4, August-October 2000, 511-537; R. A. Joyce, 'Women's Work: Images of production and reproduction in pre-Hispanic southern Central America', *Current Anthropology* 34 (1993), 255-74, 256; MA 94.

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<sup>13</sup> Peter M.M.G. Akkermans and Glenn M. Schwartz, *The Archaeology of Syria. From Complex Hunter-Gatherers to Early Urban Societies (c. 16.000-300 BC)*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, 77 n 57 and 58; Louis Beyens, *De Graangodin. Het ontstaan van de landbouw (The Goddess of Grain. The creation of agriculture)*, Antwerp, Amsterdam, 2004, 2009, 129-133, 163-69; Theya Molleson, 'The People of Abu Hureya', *Village on the Euphrates*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, 301-324; J.M. Adovasio, D.C. Hyland, O. Soffer, *The Invisible Sex. Uncovering the True Roles of Women in Prehistory*, Smithsonian Books 2007, *De Onzichtbare Vrouw*, Amsterdam, 2008, 247-48 mention the research of Marsha Ogilvie in Arizona US; MA 123.

<sup>14</sup> Barbara Tedlock, *The Woman in the Shaman's body. Reclaiming the Feminine in Religion and Medicine*, New York, 2005; MA 103.

<sup>15</sup> John T. Manning, D. Scutt, J. Wilson and D.I. Lewis-Jones, The ratio of 2nd to 4th digit length: a predictor of sperm numbers and concentrations of testosterone, lutinizing hormone and oestrogen. *Human Reproduction* 13: 3000-3004, 1998; J. T. Manning, Digit Ratio, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick (NJ), 2002; Snow, 'Sexual dimorphism', See article Dean R. Snow, 'Sexual dimorphism in Upper Palaeolithic hand stencils', 5 January 2005 and revised on Oct. 2005 on [www.thefreelibrary.com/Sexual+dimorphism+in+Upper+Palaeolithic+hand+stencils.-a0148277777](http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Sexual+dimorphism+in+Upper+Palaeolithic+hand+stencils.-a0148277777), 4-5,9; Norman Hammond, 'Cave painters giveaway handprints at Pech-Merle', *The Times*, 11 September 2009; Gerard Bosinski, 'Kunst in Jeder Form, Von Höhlenbilder und Frauenfiguren im Gravettien', *Eiszeit, Art and Culture*, 272-77, 273; MA 68.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas A. Gregor and Donald Tuzin, *Gender in Amazonia and Melanesia. An Exploration of the Comparative Method*, Berkeley, 2002; Fokke Sierksma, *De roof van het vrouwengeheim: de mythe van de dictatuur der vrouwen en het ontstaan der geheime mannengenootschappen (The plunder of women's mysteries: the myth of the dictatorship of women and the creation of secret men's societies)*, The Hague, 1962, 148-9; MA 104.

<sup>17</sup> Layne Redmond, *When the Drummers were Women. A Spiritual History of Rhythm*, London, New York, 1997; MA 103.

<sup>18</sup> Suzanne C. Münzel, Nicholas J. Conard, 'Flötenklang aus fernen Zeiten, Die frühesten Musikinstrumente', *Eiszeit. Art and Culture*, 317-321, 319; MA 104.

<sup>19</sup> Phons Bakx, *Boek Zoemhout, de wereldomvattende cultuurgeschiedenis van een zoemtoon (Bull-roarer book, the worldwide cultural history of the bull-roarer)*. Antropodium, Middelburg, 2010, 9, 222, 224; MA 104.

<sup>20</sup> Alexander Marshack, *The Roots of Civilization, The Beginnings of man's first art, symbol and notation*, New York, London, 1972, 142; MA 65.

<sup>21</sup> MA 53-55.

<sup>22</sup> The Lenape are an Indian tribe from the north-eastern United States. They make small wooden statues, which they name 'odas' or grandmothers. Russia has the matrushkas or round-bellied mother figures that fit inside each other. Madonna statues in Sicily are known as 'matrices' or 'mothers'. Among modern hunter/gatheresses such as the Ket in Siberia, the ancestresses are still presented as small dolls today. The *Bambara* from Mali in West Africa have multifunctional ancestress statues. They help their descendants in all phases of life and in critical situations. The *Luba* from the Democratic Republic of Congo in Central Africa venerate their female ancestors in particular in the form of small statues, which provide protection. Centuries ago the *Ashanti* in Ghana made ancestor statues which only depicted the head. In more recent times, young women attach small wooden ancestress statues which resemble tiny dolls to their clothing (akua-ba). This makes the women fertile and ensures healthy progeny. In ancient cultures of the *Zapotecs* in Central America there are many female figurines or little ladies - just like everywhere else in the world. In *Japan*, there are the 'dogu statuettes'. Ancient *Etruscan* culture had the female and male family and house gods. We know the human-sized and small 'teraphim' from *ancient Israel* (1Sam19:13) (*Gen. 31:17-35*); MA 236, 239, 247.

<sup>23</sup> Jan Jelinek, *De Grote Encyclopedie van de Mens in de Oertijd*, Haarlem, 1974, 413; Clarie Bellier, Pierre Cattelain, Peter van der Plaetsen, *De vrouw in de prehistorie*, Oudenburg, 2003, 27, 38; Pepe Rodríguez, Pepe, *God is als vrouw geboren (God Was Born a Woman)*, Amsterdam, 2005, 191; transl. of Spanish ed. *Dios nació mujer*, Barcelona, 2000; Adovasio, Sommer, Page, *De Onzichtbare Vrouw*, 189; Soffer, 'The "Venus" figurines, 516; MA Old Stone Age 63, 69; MA New Stone Age 141, 182.

<sup>24</sup> Conard, 'Eindeutlich männlich, Ein Phallus aus dem Hohle Fels', *Eiszeit*, 282-85, 282; Soffer e.a., 'The "Venus" Figurines', 527; MA 63.

<sup>25</sup> MA 141, 182.

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<sup>26</sup> Silvia Schroer, 'Idole – die faszinierende Vielfalt der Frauen- und Göttinnen-Figürchen', *Eva-Mutter alles Lebendigen*, Prologue 1, 8-24, 15; Schroer, S., 'Kontinuität und Wandel – der Zugang über die Typologie', *Eva-Mutter alles Lebendigen*, Othmar Keel en Silvia Schroer eds., Prologue 2, 26-43.

<sup>27</sup> Othmar Keel, Silvia Schroer, *Eva-Mutter alles Lebendigen. Frauen- und Göttinnenidole aus der Alten Orient*. Academic Press Fribourg, Freiburg (Schweiz-Switzerland), 2004.

<sup>28</sup> This includes reference works with lists of figurine types from James B. Pritchard (1943: Palestina), Julia Asher-Greve (1985: Mesopotamia), Ora Negbi (1976: Canaan), Marie-Thérèse Barrelet (1968: Mesopotamia), Raz Kletter (1996: Judea) Sarit Paz (2003: Israel), Urs Winter (publications from 1977 and 1987: Middle East), Christoph Uehlinger (several publications between 1988 and 2004: Middle East), Othmar Keel (many publications between 1974 and 2008) and Silvia Schroer (many publications between 1985 and 2004), Stephanie Böhm (1990: early Greek art) and Valentin Müller (1929, art from Greece and the Near East).

<sup>29</sup> Joan Oates, 'The baked Clay Figurines from Tell Es-Sawwan', *Iraq* 28/2 (1966) 151: masculine statues are rare; Joan Oates, 'The Background and Development of Early Farming Communities in Mesopotamia and the Zagros', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 39 (1973), 147-181.

<sup>30</sup> *The near East*. In recent research in 2003, Peter Akkermans and Glenn Schwartz also reported finding figurines made of stone, bone, clay and plaster in many Neolithic settlements in the Near East. They have presented animals and people. Where this figurines are of humans, both of them state about their area of investigation, Syria, that these figurines are "almost invariably female", MA 141. Israeli archaeologist Omer Bar-Yosef has confirmed this concept of the Neolithic era in the area that covers Canaan and Ancient Israel, MA 141.

<sup>31</sup> *Central and Eastern Europe*. Marija Gimbutas was professor of European Archaeology in the University of California at Los Angeles, UCLA, between 1963 and 1989. Under the auspices of this university, she led five important excavations of early Neolithic sites in Bosnia, Macedonia, Greece and Italy. She found hundreds of figurines and ritual objects in Thrace in Sitagroi, north-eastern Greece, and in Achilleion in Central Greece, which she believed were regarded as "curiosities of art history for which at the time there was no standard method of description and interpretation", MA 182. She wrote: "I saw thousands of figurines lying in boxes in museum storerooms, completely ignored and not understood", MA 182. She discovered that over 3000 excavation sites, approximately one hundred thousand fragmentary figurines were found. In addition, 30,000 complete examples had been found, spread over hundreds of museums. Barely 2 to 3 percent of these are male, MA 182. According to Joan Marler, who along with others is continuing Gimbutas' work, of the 250 figures found in Sitagroi, none could be identified as male. Of the 200 figures found in Achilleion, a Sesklo culture excavation in Thessaly in central Greece, two of these might be male, MA 182.

<sup>32</sup> *Recent information from Central and Eastern Europe*. The above distinctively unequal relationship between feminine and masculine Venus Art in Old Europe is confirmed by new numbers, MA 182.

*Bulgaria*. According to prestigious archaeologist Henrieta Todorova, more than 90 % of the figures found in Bulgaria that date from the Neolithic are female, MA 183. Experts have emphasised that this picture applies to all of south-eastern Europe, Anatolia and pretty much the entire Mediterranean Sea region, MA 183.

*Romania*. Research archaeological investigations have established that in the thousands of Neolithic settlements, a large majority of figurines is female, MA 183. In the southern Romanian Gumelnita culture (Eneolithicum 4600-3900 BC), almost exclusively female figurines occur within the human group, often grinning. The same applies for the group of copper figurines from this culture. The figurines have lively faces, often with stump-shaped arms raised high in a hailing pose. They have a sacred function as a ritual container (rhyton) from which consecrated water can be poured. Many of these examples are of exceptional colourful beauty.

*Moravia*. Moravia is situated in the eastern Czech Republic. In 2010, an exhibition in Milan was dedicated to the Venus Art from Moravia. The Czech curators point out that of the 2500 complete or fragmented figurines found on four sites dating from between 4750 and 4450 BC in Moravia, barely 1.8% is male, MA 183. The vast majority are female. One example is the Venus of Strelice. Large family houses have also recently been investigated here, in combination with rich clan mother graves.

*Greece*. More research has been carried out by Maria Mina since 2007 on 1093 Aegean figurines from the Neolithic period (7000-3200 BC). Her findings are that 70% is female and only 2 % is male, MA 183. She considers the primary female features to be: breasts and pubic triangle and the secondary features to be the swollen abdomen, the narrow waist, wide hips and protruding buttocks. The primary male features are phallus and beard and straight torso. The second largest category of 18 % lacks any anatomical feature. But they show a broadly comparable degree of decoration with the general anatomically female category. They also show a similar uniformity in terms of clothing, jewellery and body decoration. Therefore the conclusion is that the figurines without sex from the second category are not genderless, but should be read as alternative expressions of the anatomically female gender category. This result increases the size of the female group to 88%, which is consistent with research in areas outside Greece.

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<sup>33</sup> Luc Moreau, 'Die Zeit der starken Frauen. Das Gravettien', *Eiszeit*, 96-99, 96 speaks of social and communal characteristics of the Venus figurines in the Gravettian era and a communal system of values of the Ice Age population and the uniformity of the representations in the period 24,000-22,000 BC; Sibylle Wolf, 'Vorherrschaft der Frau – eiszeitliche Venusstatuetten aus ganz Europa', *Die Venus vom Hohle Fels*, Nicholas Conard and Stefanie Kölb eds., Blaubeuren, 2010, 39-65; 39: like Moreau Wolf mentions a 'Statuettenhorizont' with homogeneity in relation to style; 61, denies a 'uniform codex'; Göran Burenhult, 'De Venusfiguurtjes', *De Eerste Mens*, G. Burenhult ed., 102-111, 103; Jan Jelinek, 'De Gravettiaan-kunst in Moravië'in: Catalogue *Vijf miljoen jaar menselijk avontuur*, catalogue with exhibition from 14 September till 30 December 1990 in Brussels, Brussels, 1990, 104-117, on 116-117; Margaret Ehrenberg, *Women in Prehistory*, London, 1989, 72; Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother, An Analysis of the Archetype*, Princeton University Press, Bollinger Series XLVII, Princeton, New York, 1955, 1961, 94; MA 74-85.

<sup>34</sup> Jelinek, *De grote encyclopedie van de mens in de oertijd*, 395-97; MA 85, 195.

<sup>35</sup> Yosef Garfinkel and Michelle Miller, *Sha'ar Hagolan I, Neolithic Art in Context*. Oxford, 2002, 221-233; Yosef Garfinkel, *The Goddess of Sha'ar Hagolan: Excavation at a Neolithic site in Israël*, Jerusalem, 2004, 149; Silvia Schroer, 'Idole – die faszinierende Vielfalt der Frauen- und Göttinnen-Figürchen', *Eva-Mutter alles Lebendigen*, 19; Devdutt Pattanaik, *The Goddess in India: Five Faces of the Eternal Feminine*, Rochester Vermont, 2000, 152; Max Dashu, *The Matrika's, Icons of the Matrix II*, 5, [www.surpressedhistoriesarchives.com](http://www.surpressedhistoriesarchives.com); MA 145, 240-41.

<sup>36</sup> Cook, *Ice Age art*, 242 for Palaeolithic Art; for Neolithic Art see Jürgen Thimme, *Art and Culture of the Cyclades, Handbook of an Ancient Civilization*, Karlsruhe, 1977, 418; Olaf Höckmann, 'Cycladic Religion', Thimme ed., *Art and Culture of the Cyclades*, 37-52, 44 with ref. to Thimme, 1965, 82; MA 40, 203.

<sup>37</sup> MA 183 with ref. to Maria Mina, 206, 246.

<sup>38</sup> See Max Dashu, 'Icons of the matrix', 'The Matrikas', see [www.surpressedhistoriesarchives.com](http://www.surpressedhistoriesarchives.com), MA 247; in India, there are the matrikas or little mothers.

<sup>39</sup> Theya Molleson, 'The People of Abu Hureya', *Village on the Euphrates*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, 301-324; Akkermans and Schwartz, *The Archaeology of Syria*, 77 n 57; Beyens, *De Graangodin*, 163-69; Adovasio, Sommer, Page, *De Onzichtbare Vrouw*, 247-48; MA 123.

<sup>40</sup> Heide Goettner-Abendroth ed., *Societies of Peace. Matriarchies past present and future*, Toronto, 2009; Heide Goettner-Abendroth, *Matriarchal Societies. Studies on indigenous cultures across the globe*, New York, 2012; MA 124, 235-42.

<sup>41</sup> Harald Haarmann, *Das Rätsel der Donauzivilisation, Die Entdeckung der ältesten Hochkultur Europas*, München, 2011, 151; About the reversal to see David Anthony, *The Horse, Wheel and Language, How Bronze-Age Riders from the Eurasian Steppes shaped the Modern World*, Princeton University Press, 2007, 138.

<sup>42</sup> G. Rollefson, 'The Uses of Plaster at Neolithic Ain Ghazal', *Archeomaterials* 4 (1990) 33-54; Beyens, *De Graangodin*, 217; Gary O. Rollefson, 'Ain Ghazal', Göran Burenhult, *De Eerste Mens*, Atrium, Rijswijk, 1996, 248-9; Silvia Schroer, 'Idole – die faszinierende Vielfalt der Frauen- und Göttinnen-Figürchen', *Eva-Mutter alles Lebendigen*, 19; MA 148, 248; Pattanaik, *The Goddess in India*, 152; Max Dashu, *The Matrika's, Icons of the Matrix II*, 5, [www.surpressedhistoriesarchives.com](http://www.surpressedhistoriesarchives.com); MA 241, 249.

<sup>43</sup> O. Höckmann, 'The Cyclades and their Eastern Neighbours', Jürgen Thimme ed., *Art and Culture of the Cyclades, Handbook of an Ancient Civilization*, 37-52, 43; MA 197, 251 n 40 en 41.

<sup>44</sup> MA 108, 178, 230, 246.

<sup>45</sup> MA 143, 197, 251.

<sup>46</sup> Schroer, S., 'Kontinuität und Wandel – der Zugang über die Typologie', *Eva-Mutter alles Lebendigen*, Othmar Keel en Silvia Schroer eds., Prologue 2, 26-43, 42; MA 167-76.

<sup>47</sup> MA 250.

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- <sup>48</sup> Scribes from the school of Deuteronomy 'corrected' and changed the texts (tiqqune sopherim) see D. Barthélemy, 'Les Tiqqune Sopherim et la Critique Textuelle de l'Ancien Testament', *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum* Vol IX, 1963, 285-304; Raymond F. Person Jr., *The Deuteronomistic School. History, Social Setting and Literature*, Atlanta, 2002; Margaret Barker, *The Mother of the Lord*, London, 2012; MA 249-50.
- <sup>49</sup> Othmar Keel, *Gott Weiblich. Eine verborgene Seite des biblischen Gottes*, Freiburg, 2008, Einführung: Weibliche Aspekte des Gottes der Bibel, 8-21; Dutch trans. *Divine Surprise, Het vrouwelijke in God. Een verborgen kant van de Bijbelse God*, Amsterdam, 2013, Inleiding, 8-21; MA 36, 70.
- <sup>50</sup> Karl-Josef Kuschel, *Streit um Abraham. Was Juden, Christen und Muslime trennt - und was sie eint*, Munich, 1994, Zoetermeer, 2001.
- <sup>51</sup> Francesca Stavrakopoulou, John Barton eds., *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah*, London, 2010, 2012; Beate Pongratz-Leisten ed., *Reconsidering the Concept of Revolutionary Monotheism*, Winona Lake, Indiana, 2011; Antalya Brenner, *I am. Biblical Women Tell Their Own Stories*, Minneapolis, 2005.
- <sup>52</sup> Margaret Barker, *The Mother of the Lord*, London, 2012, 2, 9, 11; Annine van der Meer, *Van Sophia tot Maria. De wedergeboorte van de verborgen Moeder in de 21e eeuw*, Geesteren, 2008, 120, 134, 144, 161; MA 290, 379.
- <sup>53</sup> Barker, *The Mother of the Lord*, 126-139; MA 358, 462.
- <sup>54</sup> Barker, *The Mother of the Lord*, 113, 189; MA 317.
- <sup>55</sup> MA 545.
- <sup>56</sup> MA 63.
- <sup>57</sup> MA 444-45.
- <sup>58</sup> MA 258-260.
- <sup>59</sup> Klaus Schmidt, *Sie bauten die ersten Tempel. Das rätselhafte Heiligtum der Steinzeitjäger*, Munich, 2006; Mehmet Özdoğan, Nezhil Basgelen eds., *Neolithic in Turkey. The Cradle of Civilization, New Discoveries*, 2 dl. Text and Plates, Istanbul, 1999; MA 118 Göbekli; 324-26 Malta.
- <sup>60</sup> MA 523, 525.
- <sup>61</sup> MA 144, 505.
- <sup>62</sup> MA 162-63, 169, 529-535.
- <sup>63</sup> MA 358, 532.
- <sup>64</sup> MA 66-7, 86, 101.
- <sup>65</sup> Alain Roussot e.a., *Du biface à l'épée. 700.000 ans de Préhistoire en Aquitaine*, Bordeaux, 1991, 48: hypothesis of G. Lalanne about a cella or sacred space in the abri; MA, 66.
- <sup>66</sup> MA 77, 99, 479.
- <sup>67</sup> MA 97-100 with ref. to Olga Soffer e.a.
- <sup>68</sup> MA 100, 201, 480 with ref. to Barbara Tedlock, *The Woman in the Shaman's body*, 33, 289 n 13.
- <sup>69</sup> Keel, *Eva- Mutter alles Lebendiges*, 44; MA 504.
- <sup>70</sup> MA 149, 506.
- <sup>71</sup> Keel, *Gott Weiblich*, 42; Keel, *Divine Surprise*, 42.



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<sup>72</sup> Graffity in Kuntillet Arjud: 'I bless you by Yahweh of Samaria and by Ashratak' and 'I bless you by Yahweh of Teman and by Ashratak'; G. I. Davies, *Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004 nr 8017 and 8012; J. Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, Sheffield University Press, Sheffield, 2000, 51; Becking and Dijkstra, *Één God Alleen...? (Only one God. Monotheism in Ancient Israel and the Veneration of the Goddess Asherah)*, Kampen, 1998, 21, 29; Barker, *The Mother of the Lord*, 109, 121; MA 337, 387, 419, 466 n 92 and 93.

<sup>73</sup> Keel, *Gott Weiblich*, 80; Keel, *Divine Surprise*, 80; MA 536-7 photo and sketch.

<sup>74</sup> MA 454-455.

<sup>75</sup> Othmar Keel, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und die Entstehung des Monotheismus*, I, II, Göttingen, 2007, I, 116 sketch.