

The language of

MA

the primal mother

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



Annine van der Meer

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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 I

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 very 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 figurine 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.



I.7.42

I.7.43a

I.7.43b

I.7.44

I.7.45

I.7.46



I.7.47a

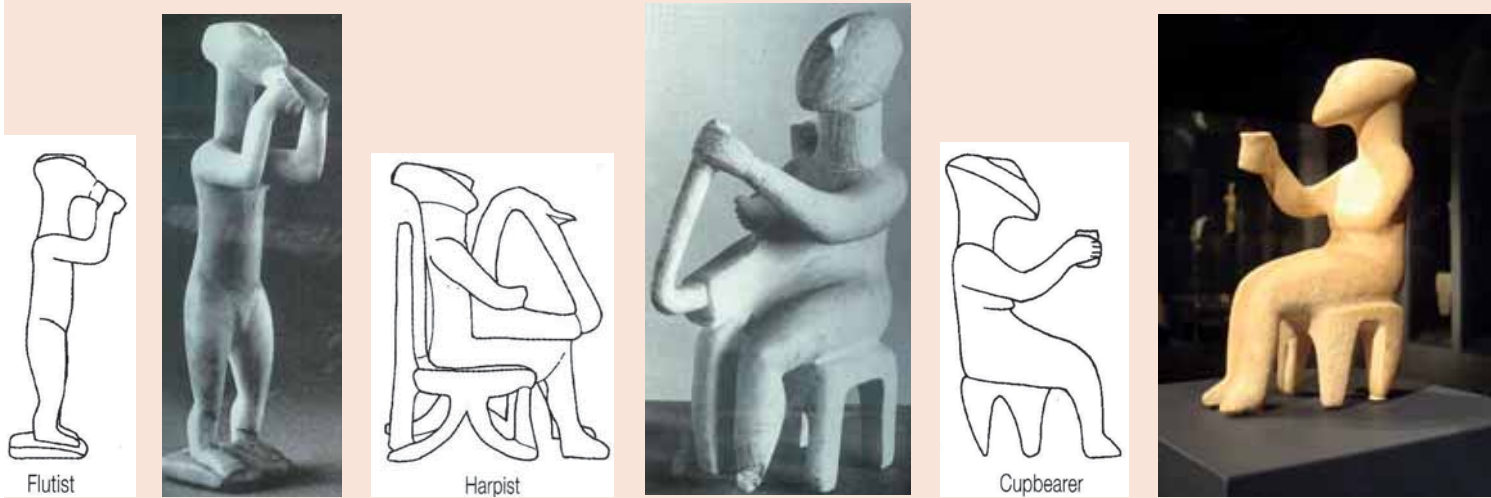
I.7.47b

I.7.48a

I.7.48b

I.7.49a

I.7.49b



I.7.50a-1

I.7.50a-2

I.7.50b-1

I.7.50b-2

I.7.50c-1

I.7.50c-2

information about the gender. Most of them are said to be from the hand of the master sculptor known as ‘Schuster Master’. (1.2.3.6.3, the artists) So far, researchers have scarcely wondered whether women played a role in the manufacture of these overwhelmingly female statues.

[1.7.42] *Mixture-group*.

5. *The Chaliandriani variant*. The fifth and last sub-group, the Chaliandriani variant, consists of 52 figurines measuring between 7 and 30 cm high, of which 50 are certainly female.¹³¹

[1.7.43ab] *The Chaliandriani variant*.

■ 6.6 The Koumasa type (2300-2000 BC)

[1.7.44] *The Koumasa type*. Of this type 37 figurines are known, all of which are female except for just one male torso.¹³²

■ 6.7 The post-canonical type (2300-2000 BC)

[1.7.45ab] *The post-canonical type*. There are 47 known examples of the post-canonical type, 41 of these are female. The other 6 are said or appear to be men; two are believed to be androgynous.¹³³ Here, the traditionally closed position of the arms is changed and the lower arm lies diagonally on the breast, a mourning or lamentation pose in the Ancient East. Also, the left arm is no longer placed above the right, but vice versa. You see several examples from the Cycladic Museum in Athens.

■ 6.8 Pairs

[1.7.46] *The horizontal double ladies*. Double statues occur which consist mostly of two ladies standing horizontally arm-in-arm; there are 11 of this type in existence, which vary in height from 18 to 45 cm. These could be two sisters or a mother and daughter.¹³⁴ In other cultures there are countless examples of feminine duality. [11.1.13-32] In agrarian cultures, mother and daughter represent both the eternal and the changing aspects of nature, as expressed in the Greek myth of Demeter and Kore (Persephone).

[1.7.47ab] *The vertical double ladies*. A double statue also occurs in the Cyclades, with a smaller head on top of the head of the larger lady; there are three examples of this.¹³⁵

[11.1.23] Another example of the seated mother with daughter on the head can be found among the cruciform pieces on Cyprus, which will be discussed later.

■ 6.9 Her male partner

The fact that there are very few male statues among many female statues on the Cyclades might, according

to Höckmann, have to do with influences from Anatolia and Syria, where the oral Inanna-Dumuzi tradition and corresponding rituals during the annual cycle were flourishing at the time.¹³⁶ The male statue stands in the closed arm pose. He is the one who accompanies the ‘goddess of death’ in the grave. They sometimes occur as a pair.

Höckmann considers these statues as later representations of a male deity that develops into the son and consort of the great goddess.¹³⁷ In myths, he takes over the role of her sister or young daughter who descends into the earth. In Sumeria, Ereshkigal, sister of Inanna, lives in the underworld. In Greece, Kore descends in autumn and re-emerges in spring.¹³⁸ Dumuzi (from ‘Damu’ or ‘son’) occurs in Sumeria as a later male partner.¹³⁹ In Canaan, there is Baal.¹⁴⁰ Elsewhere are partners such as Osiris, Adonis, Attis or Dionysos.¹⁴¹

Feminine duality changes into masculine-feminine duality. On a famous relief from Eleusis in Greece, the young king of Eleusis is initiated into the mysteries of agriculture by Mother Demeter in the Classical 5th century BC. [11.4.65, comp 4.55 en 4.66] Daughter Kore stands beside them, watching.

The ‘Thinker’. Among the male figurines there is a figure of the ‘Thinker’ type. [1.3.8] He sits on a four-legged stool and rests his elbows on his knees; he may have had his head in his hands.¹⁴²

■ 6.10 Trinities

[1.7.48ab] *Trinities*. Some triple statues of 19 cm also occur, on which two male helps show the newborn daughter to the people.¹⁴³

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

[1.7.49ab] *The lady enthroned*. Around 2700 BC the shapes become more complicated. You find the lady seated on a throne; there are ten examples that vary from 3.7 to 23 cm.¹⁴⁴

[1.7.50abc] *The musicians and assistants*. She is in the company of various male *musicians* who play the flute (a) and the harp (b). And she is assisted by a cupbearer (c).

[1.7.50a, sketch and photo] *The flutist*. There are 8 standing male *flutists* from 20 to 34 cm high.

[1.7.50b, sketch and photo] *The harpist*. There are 12 *harpists*; the height varies from 6 to 35.8 cm. Most sit on a low chair without a back; some sit on a throne with a back.¹⁴⁵

[1.7.50c, sketch and photo] *The cup bearer*. Then there are three *cup bearers* (c): one sits on a stool with four legs and two others are standing; their lengths vary from 15 to 21 cm.¹⁴⁶

Part II

**Remembering
your mother tongue**



I.31



I.32



I.33



I.34a



I.34b



I.34c



I.35



I.36

[1.31] *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 Guntersommer 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 selbstdrittstatues. [II.1.45; II.2.18d; II.4.43, St. Anne, Mary and Jesus]

■ 6.1 The male dyad

[1.32] *Germany, Bamberg, God the father in kourothrophos pose and the Son, mediaeval.* 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.

[1.33] *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’.

[1.34a] *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.

[1.34b] *Anatolia, The Three Graces, 2nd century AD.* 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]

[1.34c] *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

[1.35] *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

[1.6.19-21, Çatal Höyük] They are flanked by leopards, which have their tails raised in a playful manner. [II.3.23, 33; II.5.8, leopards]

[1.36] *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



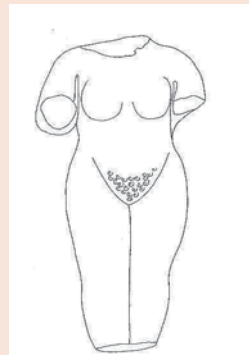
5.31b



5.31c



5.31a



5.31d



5.31e

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.⁵⁶ 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.⁵⁷

[5.3.1a] *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.⁵⁸ 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.

[5.3.1b] *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.

[5.3.1c] *Cyprus, terracotta figurines with Venus triangle with ‘Venus’ hair, bird-like faces and pierced ears, 1450-1200 BC.* Here are two ladies with large vulva triangles with ‘Venus’ hair in them. They come from a grave in Enkomi and are in the British museum in London. The hair on the Venus triangle is also accentuated on many images from Cyprus.⁵⁹ [1.7.1.1 lab, 124] [II.7.65, bird mother with bird child]

[5.3.1de] *Assyria, life-size statue of a naked Lady with ‘Venus’ hair, 11th century BC, sketch (d) photo (e).*

The Assyrian ruler Assur-bel-kala (1073-1056 BC) had life-size statues of a naked Lady with her ‘Venus’ hair accentuated placed throughout his empire. This is the only Assyrian statue that remains. He did this to increase his subjects’ joy of living, as can be read in an inscription on the back of this statue. Remember that the king was not doing this for erotic reasons. It was meant to be a supplication for the gift of fertility and good fortune for men, animals and plants throughout his empire. The statue belongs to the collection of the British Museum in London. You see the sketch first (d) and then the photo (e).⁶⁰

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

