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Sacred Display:

New Findings

by

Miriam Robbins Dexter and Victor H. Mair

Victor H. Mair, Editor

Sino-Platonic Papers

Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations

University of Pennsylvania

Philadelphia, PA 19104-6305 USA

vmair@sas.upenn.edu

www.sino-platonic.org

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Sacred Display: New Findings
Miriam Robbins Dexter^a and Victor H. Mair^b

^a *UCLA* and ^b *University of Pennsylvania*

Introduction

This article updates and expands upon our book *Sacred Display: Divine and Magical Female Figures of Eurasia* (Cambria Press, 2010).

Sacred Display: a definition

Female figures doing a “sacred display” of their genitals are found in two iconographic forms: (1) a bent-knee dance — the legs often taking an M-position — and (2) crouching and strongly displaying the genitals. Some figures, such as the Irish Sheela na gig from Kiltinan,¹ do both, dancing a magical dance while opening and displaying her vulva. Sheela na gigs are medieval female display figures which are placed in the walls of churches and castles in the British Isles; they are both protective and apotropaic.

In prehistory as well as in the modern era, piscine imagery is frequently connected with these figures, as we discussed in *Sacred Display*.

Sacred Display figures represent both the beneficent and the ferocious aspects of the divine feminine: they are apotropaic, warding off the enemy, and — a natural concomitant — they are protective for their people. They bring both fertility and good fortune. The apotropaic function of female genitals may be found as early as the Aurignacian era of the Upper Palaeolithic, ca. 35,000–32,000 BCE.

Anasyrma

This apotropaic function underlies the phenomenon of *anasyrma*, the lifting up of the skirts to display oneself. (Figure 1) Anasyrma is used to bring the rain — for example, in many cultures, including those in Serbia, Bulgaria, India, and Africa (described in *Sacred Display*), where women dance nude to

¹ See Dexter and Goode 2002; Goode and Dexter 2000. See also Goode forthcoming.

bring the rain; (Figure 2) and it is also used to bring back the sun — for example, in Egypt, as Hathor (Figure 3) does a display for the sun-deity Prē'-Harakhti, bringing back his happiness and the sun; and in Japan, as Ame-no-Uzume no Mikoto dances nude on an overturned tub, which leads to the restoration of the sun-goddess, Amaterasu. (Figure 4)

This display is also used in an apotropaic manner. Women lift up their skirts in order to ward off the enemy (whether an enemy to themselves or to their society). In Africa, *anasyrma* is used by older women in order to curse their enemies. Among the Yoruba, the concept of personal power, *àshẹ*, is associated with menstrual blood. This power in women becomes stronger with age. In fact, the *àshẹ* of elderly women — "past childbearing and unhappy about that fact" — can metamorphose into a witch's power; this power is thought to be very harmful, because it is no longer alleviated through menstruation. Yoruba witches (and this occurs elsewhere in Africa) perform naked and frequently upside-down.² This "genital curse" thus may underlie the apotropaic use of "Sacred Display."

The V in Upper Palaeolithic cave art

Cave art dating to the Upper Palaeolithic — ca. 35,000 BCE through ca. 10,000 BCE — depicts a powerful symbol: the V, the female pubic triangle. A female figure with only a huge pubic triangle and legs was recently highlighted in a documentary film about Chauvet Cave, a vast underground cavern in the Ardèche gorge in the south of France, discovered in 1994 by spelunkers.³ At the time the cave was discovered, it had not been disturbed for 20,000 years: a massive rockslide had sealed off the original entrance. Because the cave had been undisturbed for so long, the paintings in the cave are exceptionally vivid — so much so that at first there were doubts as to their authenticity. But over the paintings are layers of calcite and concretions which take thousands of years to grow, so the paintings cannot be forgeries.

The documentary, "Cave of Forgotten Dreams," directed by Werner Herzog, shows a female figure with large pubic triangle, carved on a limestone outcropping, that dates to the Aurignacian

² See Stevens 2006: 594–595.

³ See Clottes 2001.

period (ca. 35,000–32,000 BCE).⁴ (Figure 5) She is found in the last and deepest chamber of the 1,300 foot-long cave, the "Salle du Fond," and she may well have had an apotropaic function,⁵ guarding the entrance to the furthestmost gallery, the "holy of holies." She is in an area in which lion paintings are found, an association of apotropaic female figure and feline which will continue for tens of thousands of years. (Figure 6) Four other female representations limited to just the pubic triangle are in the cave; they are all in the system including the Galerie des Megaceros and the Salle du Fond, indicating each time the entrance to the adjacent cavities. The felines are often grouped in the deepest part of Upper Palaeolithic caves.⁶ "Lion galleries" abound in these caves.

Some time after the female figure guarding the "Salle du Fond" was carved, a bison, called by

⁴ See Bocherens et al. 2006: 374. This site has yielded the oldest parietal art yet (370).

⁵ Bradshaw Report: http://www.bradshawfoundation.com/chauvet/venus_sorcerer.php: "Perhaps the female representation relates directly to the corridor to the chamber, which opens just behind her.... A cluster of convergent data suggests that the Venus is Aurignacian and that she was created in the first period of the decoration of the Chauvet Cave." This apotropaic function may extend to female figures depicted in other caves of this period: what seem to be vulvas are carved into the rocks of caves and rock shelters, for example, Abri Castanet:

<http://news.sciencemag.org/sciencenow/2012/05/engravings-of-female-genitalia.html>,

<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2012/05/08/1119663109.short>, <http://www.pnas.org/content/109/22/8450.abstract>.

Dating to later in the Upper Palaeolithic are the two nude reclining female figures which appear at the entrance to La Madeleine (elsewhere spelled La Magdelaine) cave in Tarn, France (ca. 13,000 BCE); see Goode forthcoming; Leroi-Gourhan 1967: 347, 438 (photos and drawings of the two women), figures 501–502. Below one of the female figures is a bison; to the right of the other is a horse. An interesting artifact from La Madeleine rock shelter, Dordogne, is a figurine which has on one side a male with a muzzle-shaped face and on the other side a female with an animal head. (Leroi-Gourhan 1967: 429, figure 440); these may represent male and female shamanistic figures, but that may be too simplistic an interpretation. Marshack 1991: 318–319 writes of the red-painted bell-shaped vulvas associated with plant forms found at the early Magdalenian site of El Castillo, in northern Spain, and a vulva associated with a plant form in the cave of Tuc d'Audoubert in the Ariège Pyrenees. Marshack believes that the female figures represent an aspect of a seasonal myth, and that they are not meant to represent copulation or the erotic. See his table of "female" symbols, including what may represent vulvas, by archaeological site: 1991: 199. Marija Gimbutas (1989: 103) also illustrates vulvas paired with vegetation from two Upper Palaeolithic caves: El Castillo in Northern Spain, and La Mouthe in Southern France.

⁶ Leroi-Gourhan 1967: 110.

some "The Sorcerer,"⁷ was superimposed upon her depiction.⁸ Although some have written that the bison and the female figure were engaging in a "hieros gamos,"⁹ that became a possibility only after the bison was carved. The female figure was carved earlier than the bison, so the original intent was to depict, not sex between male and female, but the sacrality and very likely the protectiveness of the pubic triangle, the V. We may also note that the female figure — the pubic triangle with legs — does not have feet, similarly to the celebrated "Venus" of Willendorf, a female figure dating to ca. 24,000 BCE, discovered in lower Austria and now in the Naturhistorisches Museum in Vienna, Austria. (Figure 7)

Chauvet Cave was a place of ritual, rather than habitation.¹⁰ Bones, including skulls, of cave

⁷ See Clottes 2001; Thackeray 2008: 21.

⁸ http://www.bradshawfoundation.com/chauvet/venus_sorcerer.php, on the Venus and The Sorcerer: "The Venus is the earliest of the designs. The feline on the left, the Sorcerer, and the multiple lines on the right, are all painted or engraved later."

⁹ See Thackeray 21; Clottes 2001. Both authors posit that the two images were juxtaposed, assuming that they were carved at the same time, with the concept of sacred sex; this also assumes that the bison is male, although no male genitalia are depicted.

Leroi-Gourhan associates bison with females. He illustrates a woman with bison horns on her head (1967: figure 434) from two sites in the Midi-Pyrénées region in France, the Magdalenian site of Abri Murat (stone plaquette with female figure in profile; two lines above the head may represent bison horns) (1967: 481, discussion), and bison/women on the ceiling of a side chamber of Peche Merle cave (25,000–16,000 BCE) (1967: 420, figure 367), so at least sometimes the female took on the persona of a bison. Multiple figures indicate successions of transitions from the outline of a bison to that of a woman (Figures 368–371). This may indicate the stages of a spiritual shape-changing, similar to that of the female figures metamorphosing into felines depicted on Indus Valley seals. See below.

Whatever the gender of the bison figure in Chauvet Cave, since the Venus figure was carved earlier, sexual union cannot have been the original intent.

¹⁰ See Clottes 2001: 111. J. Robert-Lamblin (2005) discusses possible religious connotations of the different parts of Chauvet cave, in particular citing differences between parts of the cave and between depictions of bears (which are covered with ochre and which are presented as simple silhouettes) and of felines (which are presented as realistic and dynamic), and of the female figures, particularly the pubic triangle and legs on the outcropping leading to the Salle du Fond. According to the author, the area presided over by the female figure was a temple of the origins of life, and the areas where bears are depicted were perhaps used for mortuary practices.

bears have been found within.¹¹ One bear skull, unfortunately lacking collagen for DNA analysis, was placed on a rock — likely by a human who was using the cave.¹² There are two main periods of occupation of Chauvet Cave: the Aurignacian and the Gravettian, around ten thousand years later.¹³

In the Upper Palaeolithic, female figures with large pubic triangles, often called "Venus" figures, were also sculpted. The oldest yet discovered is the tiny female figure, carved from a mammoth tusk, found in 2008 in the Swabian Alb mountains of Southwestern Germany, in a cave called Hohle Fels, Swabian German for "hollow rock;" it dates to between 40,000 and 30,000 BCE, the Aurignacian period — the same dating as for the female figure from Chauvet Cave.¹⁴ (Figure 8) A flute made from a vulture bone was found just 70 cm from the female figure.¹⁵ (Figure 9) The combination of music and sacred female figure very likely indicate a ritual space, rather than "pornography" as suggested by one article in the *Huffington Post*. (Figure 10)

There was an earlier find in the Swabian Alb region, in Stadel Cave. In 1939 a geologist found the pieces of a sculpture fashioned from mammoth tusk; thirty years later the pieces were assembled to form a 12-inch-tall sculpture of an anthropomorphic lion. (Figure 11) This sculpture too dates to the same part of the Aurignacian era as the Chauvet Cave pubic triangle. The combination of animal and

¹¹ See Bocherens et al. 2006. The authors analyze the DNA of cave bear bones found at the site. The radiocarbon age measured on 8 cave bear bone collagen samples clustered between 30,690 plus/minus 180 BP and 28,850 plus/minus 170 BP. There was one sample measured at 37,410 plus/minus 290 BP (a jawbone buried in red clay and exposed by water erosion). Unfortunately, a bear skull, which seemed to have been consciously placed on a rock in the "Salle du Crâne," contained insufficient collagen, and therefore could not be dated. (372) The bear bones which were able to be dated originate from areas close to paintings and hearths. According to the authors, the dates for the bear bones cannot be transferred into historical ages since the C¹⁴ calibration curve only extends back for 26,000 years. The authors suggest that calendar ages are older than C¹⁴ ages in this time range. Although both humans and bears used the cave between ca. 32,000 and 28,000 BP, it is possible that the two species alternated in habitation over years or centuries (375). Geneste (2005: 136ff), who indicates that the evidence regarding bears is "interesting," asks us to pay equal attention to possible material remains of human habitation: remains of charcoal, flintwork, and a mammoth ivory spear tip, among others.

¹² See Clottes 2001: 212.

¹³ Geneste 2005: 144.

¹⁴ See Conard 2009.

¹⁵ See Mair 2006.

human characteristics has led researchers to interpret the sculpture as a representation of a shaman taking the form of a lion.¹⁶ The lion seems to be standing on tiptoe, perhaps an indicator of a shamanic dance.

There are six stripes on the upper left arm; the right arm, which was missing, has now been found. There is a small plate on the abdomen which originally was interpreted as a "penis in a hanging position." More recently, the palaeontologist Elisabeth Schmid has classified it as a pubic triangle. The navel is especially pronounced, and a horizontal crease runs across the lower abdomen; these are features typically belonging to female figures. Although many pieces were missing from the original find, recently about 1,000 more pieces were found in a new investigation of the cave. There is still debate over the gender of the lion, but plans are being made to reassemble the sculpture, and with the new finds may come an answer to the debate.¹⁷ If this is a female figure, then there is further indication of the association of female and feline found in the earliest Upper Palaeolithic artifacts; this association continues throughout thousands of years, throughout Anatolia, the Indus Valley, and historic India.¹⁸

The Neolithic

Spiritual phenomena related to caves, and also rock art, continue into the Neolithic. A cave painting from Peri Nos, Lake Onega, Republic of Karelia, depicts a dancing figure, likely doing a magical-religious dance. (Figure 12) Neolithic rock art also depicts a female dancing figure holding a bow and doing a magical dance. (Figure 13) The bow and sometimes arrows, according to Elizabeth During

¹⁶ Lamblin (2005: 206) does not believe that the anthropomorphic lions in these Aurignacian caves have a shamanic function (2005: 206), rather seeing them as doubles of the virile male hunter, but we believe that it is more likely that the lions were the associates of the female figures, and that the anthropomorphic lions represented religious leaders who mediated between this world and the Otherworld for the members of their groups. On the whole, however, this article is a very good effort to combine the realms of knowledge of anthropology and archaeology in order to reach hypotheses about early prehistoric religious life.

¹⁷ <http://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/is-the-lion-man-a-woman-solving-the-mystery-of-a-35-000-year-old-statue-a-802415-druck.html>

¹⁸ See Dexter 2009.

Caspers, are the paraphernalia of what she calls the shaman as hunting magician, male or female. The religious adept employs the bow and arrow as objects of divination.¹⁹

This magical dance was combined with a display of the female genitals in the earliest Neolithic: in this "display," the female figure is often depicted as nude, displaying a large, magical vulva. Very similar female figures were depicted throughout Eurasia in a broad chronological sweep, from at least 8000 BCE to the early historic and modern eras, throughout Eurasia. These figures continued the function of apotropaia found in Upper Palaeolithic figures such as the "Venus" of Chauvet Cave.

Dance, accompanied by rhythmic sound, can entrain the brain;²⁰ this entrainment can lead to ecstatic experience, and, according to Yosef Garfinkel, discussing dance in prehistoric Europe, group dance can lead to an altered state of consciousness and to trance for some members of the group. The trance is a form of contact between the community and supernatural powers, a mystical event.²¹ Scenes of communal dance are depicted on the pottery of Southeast Europe, where the figures are portrayed in a dynamic posture, often with bent arms and legs.²² (See below, on Romanian dancing figures.)

Garfinkel also reports on dancing scenes from Nevalı Çori, in Southeast Anatolia, as well as from many other sites in the Near East and South Asia. (Figure 14) He discusses painted pottery from Samarra, dating from the late seventh to the early sixth millennia BCE, which depicts multiple female figures, probably dancers, with streaming hair. The streaming hair may indicate the movement of the body portrayed.²³ A decorated rim fragment of a bowl from the Indus Valley culture of Mehrgarh, Baluchistan, dating to ca. 4500 BCE, depicts a row of dancing women, *en face*, holding hands.²⁴

¹⁹ During Caspers 1993: 70.

²⁰ See Strong 2012: "The ability of an auditory stimulus, such as the shamanic drumming rhythm, to entrain internal brain wave frequencies is known as auditory driving."

²¹ Garfinkel 2010: 206.

²² Garfinkel 2010: 207; Dexter and Mair 2010: figures 3–4.

²³ See Garfinkel 2003: 86.

²⁴ Garfinkel 2003: 89–91.

Garfinkel thinks that the dance was a means of depicting an ideology of equality — dancers were depicted as being of an equal size — in cultures which were becoming increasingly hierarchical,²⁵ but it is more likely that early Neolithic dance was non-hierarchical because the cultures themselves were not yet hierarchical: we believe that hierarchy was a product of the agricultural era (ca. 4000 BCE and beyond), rather than of the earlier horticultural period. In early and middle Neolithic Southeast Europe — in Romania, for example — homes were often arranged in circles or spirals, often grouped in nests, reflecting (equalitarian) kinship relations. In most cultural sites the homes are of the same size.²⁶ Further, there are few grave goods in early Southeast European Neolithic burials — no exceptionally rich graves which would indicate an unequal distribution of wealth.²⁷ Early Neolithic sites such as Çatalhöyük, in Southern Anatolia, likewise offer no evidence of hierarchy.²⁸ Burials in Neolithic and Chalcolithic Anatolian sites generally correspond to burials in Southeast Europe, culturally and formally.²⁹

Göbekli Tepe

The image of the sacred pubic triangle and the function of apotropaia evolved into female “display” figures in the earliest Neolithic. One dancing figure, found in level II of the Southeast Anatolian site of Göbekli Tepe, dates to the aceramic, pre-agricultural Neolithic no later than 8000 BCE (the site dates from 9600–8000 BCE³⁰); she is crouching, and her arms and legs are bent, in an M-position, in a magical dance or stance. (Figure 15) The figure was carved on a stone slab that was found in the Lion

²⁵ Garfinkel 2003.

²⁶ Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici, Gheorghe-Corneliu Lazarovici, and Senica Țurcanu: 26. For example, Scânteia, Petreni, and Târpești, among many others, had such groupings of homes.

²⁷ Bacvarov 2006: 101.

²⁸ See Hodder 2004. Hodder believes that there is proof that women and men in this 7000 BCE town of ca. 8000 were egalitarian in most respects.

²⁹ Bacvarov 2006: 102.

³⁰ See Dietrich et al., 2012: 35.

Pillar building (probably a shrine) on a shelf or bench (which may have been an altar³¹) at the entrance to the room. Because she protected the entrance to the shrine — just as the pubic triangles in Chauvet Cave protected entrances to galleries — the female figure of Göbekli Tepe too was apotropaic, similarly to most Upper Palaeolithic, Neolithic, and later female figures which did a sacred display. She was the divinity who protected the worshippers in the temple. This apotropaic function has been assigned to female display figures for millennia; the early historic Greco-Roman Medusa and the medieval era Irish and British Sheela na gigs are examples of historic female figures whose functions included the apotropaic.

The female figure was found between pillars containing depictions of felines, yet another association of apotropaic female figure and felines which very likely began in the Upper Palaeolithic. (Figures 16–17) This “lion pillar building” may continue the iconography of lion galleries in Upper Palaeolithic caves. This was one of ten enclosures excavated so far, containing T-shaped pillars. There may be as many as ten more structures to be excavated.³²

Not far from Göbekli Tepe was found a limestone statue. (Figure 18) Although it does not have breasts, to indicate that it is female, the position of the hands is much like that of the Lepenski Vir statue, which shows the figure’s hands pulling apart her vulva, as do many other display figures we describe in *Sacred Display* and this article. The statue was found near the surrounding city wall in the central part of Şanlıurfa (Urfa), the closest city in Southeastern Turkey to the site of Göbekli Tepe; it dates to about 9000 BCE.

Yet another similar figure is an anthropomorphic statue from Kilisik, in the Taurus foothills. There seem to be two figures composing this statue, a smaller one under the genitals of the larger. The upper figure has her hands in “display” position, while the lower figure has its hands touching a hole that may represent a vagina.³³ In 2009 a similar statue, 1.92 metres, was discovered in Göbekli Tepe. It was excavated in 2010. There are three figures composing this statue, much like totem poles found in

³¹ We thank Joan Marler for this insight. Personal communication, August 12, 2012.

³² Animals dominating other structures include snakes and foxes. Dietrich et al., 2012: 39.

³³ See also Verhoeven (2001, 8–9).

other parts of the world.³⁴ Large snakes are visible on both sides of the pole. The sculpture was in a rectangular room, placed into the northeastern wall, which had completely covered the sculpture. The middle figure seems to be giving birth to the lower one.³⁵ (Figure 19)

The limestone T-shaped pillars excavated in numerous small buildings at Göbekli Tepe have attracted media attention, and there is much speculation about the function of this site. In a *National Geographic* article published in June of 2011,³⁶ Charles Mann begins with the heading, "We used to think agriculture gave rise to cities and later to writing, art, and religion. Now the world's oldest temple suggests the urge to worship sparked civilization." This is quite a radical thought, since it directly disagrees with Gordon Child's theory of the "Neolithic Revolution," wherein a scarcity of food led to the need for plant domestication and sedentarism, which then gave rise to both hierarchical societies and religion. Importantly, as Mann reports, there is as yet no good evidence for a social hierarchy. Klaus Schmidt, the excavator, speculates that peoples living within a hundred-mile radius of Göbekli Tepe created this one site as a holy place to gather, yet there are several other sites nearby, including Nevalı Çori and Çayönü, which evidence T-shaped pillars as well. There are multiple sophisticated religious sites in Southeast Anatolia which may have been larger areas for gatherings. It may be significant as well, that this is the area — near the Karacadağ Mountains — that gives the first evidence of domesticated einkorn wheat.³⁷

Lepenski Vir

In *Sacred Display*, we described the crouching "fish" figure (Figure 20) from Lepenski Vir, a Mesolithic archaeological site in the Iron Gates region of the Danube River in eastern Serbia. (Figure 21) The arms of the figure reach down to grasp a deeply incised vulva. The figure has small breasts in the shape of

³⁴ See Dietrich et al., 2012: 47. We thank Lydia Ruyle for this image.

³⁵ See Dietrich et al., 2012: 49.

³⁶ Mann 2011.

³⁷ See Heun et al. 1997.

knobs — perhaps the breasts of an adolescent girl. She dates to ca. 6800 BCE. Copies of this and other “fish” sculptures are displayed in the Lepenski Vir Museum.³⁸

Sacred Display and Chinese Pots

In our book, we introduced Chinese pots from the Machang phase of the Majiayao culture of Liuwan, Western China (ca. 2300–2000 BCE), in the far northwestern province of Qinghai. (Figures 22, 23, 24) After the publication of our book, we noticed even more congruencies between the cultural artifacts of Neolithic Southeast Europe, dating to ca. 5000 BCE, and prehistoric China, dating to ca. 5000–2500 BCE, and between the cultures of Neolithic Southeast Europe and those of the Indus/Sarasvatī Valley as well (we will enumerate the latter below).

Yangshao pots

Gheorghe and Magda Lazarovici and Senica Țurcanu, in their book on the Romanian Cucuteni culture, discussed pots excavated from the Chinese Yangshao culture, which dated from 5000–3000 BCE. The Yangshao civilization flourished along the Yellow River, through numerous provinces. One Yangshao pot illustrated by the authors (Figure 25) is remarkably like a Machang pot (Figure 26) that we illustrated in *Sacred Display*; both have finny protuberances at the elbows and knees.³⁹

Artifacts from the Yangshao culture include pots with representations of fish, birds, animals, celestial bodies, and the “primordial egg” (Figures 27–28) — all symbols exceptionally similar to those found on artifacts from the Southeast European Cucuteni culture. (Figure 29) Although the distance between Southeast Europe and China is huge: more than 4,000 km — the authors point out that, in the same way, the Cardial Ware complex spread from east of the Mediterranean Sea — from Mersin to the Bay of Biscay to the south of Brittany — also a distance of 4,000 km. Given enough time, and

³⁸ This figure was found among other sculptures in house No. XLIV (which dates to Lepenski Vir level II). According to the excavator, Dragoslav Srejović, these figures may have been “apotropaic representations to keep away the unwelcome activities of external powers.” (Srejović 1972: 111).

³⁹ See Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici, Gheorghe-Corneliu Lazarovici, and Senica Țurcanu 2009: 11, figure 2C; see also pp. 11–13 for discussion of the notable resemblances between pottery from Southeast European cultures and those from the Yangshao culture, as well as samples of highly congruent symbols from the writing systems of the two cultures.

roadways between the cultures, such symbols and mythological themes can spread along incredible distances.

Likewise, bangle technology may have traveled across very great distances. It may have spread from the Danube River cultures to the Indus Valley, to Central Asia, and thence to East Asia.

Bangles dating to ca. 2000 BCE were found in Southeast Asia. Copper-base bangles were found as grave goods at Ban Chiang, northeast Thailand;⁴⁰ bangles were the most deliberately shaped prehistoric copper-base artifacts found in Thailand, and clay lost-wax molds for casting the bangles have been found as well.⁴¹ More children than adults are found with bangles in burial contexts at Ban Chiang. Importantly, there is no evidence for social hierarchy at these Southeast Asian sites. The Southeast Asian metallurgical tradition has more in common with the Eurasian Steppes than with the more sophisticated central China.⁴² This Southeast Asian metal technology may have originated with the Seima-Turbino culture, perhaps in the Altai mountains, rapidly moving as far west as Finland, a distance of several thousand kilometers; the technology would have spread south and east from the Altai, with an extension westward.⁴³ If one accepts the possibility that at least an offshoot of the Seima-Turbino metals technological tradition might have been in the Gansu corridor ca. 2000 BCE, in the Qijia culture, then horse domestication in the Qijia culture may have facilitated the further rapid long-distance transport of technology. From the Qijia culture, communication extended from Southern Gansu to northern Sichuan; one of the prehistoric sites along this route was that of the Mijiayao.⁴⁴

We will see shortly that we may assume a like trajectory between Southeast Europe and the Indus Valley.

⁴⁰ White and Hamilton 2009: 363.

⁴¹ White and Hamilton 2009: 369.

⁴² White and Hamilton 2009: 374.

⁴³ White and Hamilton 2009: 381.

⁴⁴ White and Hamilton 2009: 387.

Majiayao pots

With regard to the Machang pot we introduced in our book, we should note that the figure on the pot has a distended navel, which echoes the navel of the Upper Palaeolithic lion sculpture. We have recently noticed two other pots, also from the Majiayao culture, but this time from the Banshan phase (ca. 2300 BCE) in Gansu Province, that have an important bearing on our subject.⁴⁵ The figure on each pot has lines extending outward laterally from either side of the torso; on one figure they look like wings and on the other like long, skeletal ribs. Each pot also has several instances of the earliest decipherable Chinese character, that for "mage," which Victor wrote about more than two decades ago⁴⁶ and which he has discussed in more detail in a new article.⁴⁷

One of the figures seems to have a *vesica piscis* in the middle of a circle: the latter may represent her womb. (Figure 30) One figure has its arms and legs in an inverted M or VV — a frog — or childbirthing-position. (Figure 31) Further, one of the figures has two tiny holes along the rim of each ear, indicating that, at one point, it must have worn ornaments at its ears.

The V

The V is found inscribed on many artifacts of Neolithic Southeast Europe (often called "Old Europe.") Many inscriptions on figurines and other ritual objects consist of just one sign, very frequently the V; this may have been a logogram.⁴⁸ This V was also used as a base for many symbols of the Danube Script.⁴⁹ It is an important symbol in the art and language of many cultures,⁵⁰ since it is expanded by

⁴⁵ <http://dxrb.gansudaily.com.cn/system/2011/10/17/012220649.shtml>.

⁴⁶ Mair 1990. In this article, Mair demonstrates that the Old Iranians were in contact with the Chinese as early as the second millennium BCE, and that the words for "magi" and "chariot" were borrowed by the Chinese from the Iranians or related peoples.

⁴⁷ Mair 2012a; see also Mair 2012b.

⁴⁸ See Haarmann 2009: 34.

⁴⁹ On the "V" as a sacred sign of the Danube Script, see Gheorghe Lazarovici, Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici, and Marco Merlini 2011: 114, on incisions in the shape of V's marked on the forehead of an anthropomorphic protome from Tărtăria, and comparable incisions on the base of the head of a monumental idol from the Zau culture. Linear motifs such as V's decorate a vessel found in the Middle Neolithic Starčevo settlement of Porodin as well as a mask of a ram from

means of multiple diacritics.⁵¹ The V, which takes the shape of a triangle open at the top, may well have as its base the magical and enlarged vulva depicted in Upper Palaeolithic caves and represented by the sculpted female figures which were excavated by the thousands (Figures 32–33) from Neolithic and Chalcolithic sites throughout prehistoric Anatolia and Europe,⁵² and which continued to be depicted in iconography and text into the early historic period — again throughout Europe, the Near East, and even into the Far East.⁵³ Though the V must have been an abstract symbol, given the multiplicity of diacritical markers, yet we believe that the core of spiritual meaning would have remained within each symbol.

By the time the Danube Script was being formulated, female figurines with large pubic triangles were being crafted throughout Southeast Europe and elsewhere.

The M

The M was probably built upon the V. In fact, one Neolithic anthropomorphic pot has an M right next to the location where the pubic triangle is indicated. (Figure 34) In representations of the dance — which may be a ritual dance — the legs are frequently bent in an M-position, and often the arms mirror the legs, raised and forming a VV. One or both arms can also hang from the elbows, and the legs can be spread wide or with one leg up and one leg down. In Old European and Indus Valley cultures, the legs of a dancing figure sometimes are depicted in a very abstract manner (Figures 35, 36, 37); this M is found as a character of the Danube Script as well.⁵⁴

Balatonszárszó–Kis-erdei-dűlő. According to the authors, "The linear sequential organization of the frieze and the selected geometric elements indicate that the decoration did not function as a pure aesthetic ornament, but carries a symbolic meaning and message." (153) The V is discussed throughout their book with relation to many artifacts dating from the Upper Palaeolithic through the Neolithic (pp. 183–208; 222; *et passim*).

⁵⁰ Jayakar (1990), writing of rural art in India and comparing it to the art and symbols of the Indus Valley, says that "the goddess was the seed of the universe in the form of a triangle."

⁵¹ See Gheorghe Lazarovici, Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici, and Marco Merlini 2011: 285.

⁵² See Gimbutas 1989, 1991, 1999.

⁵³ See Dexter and Mair 2010.

⁵⁴ See Dexter forthcoming.

Two potsherds which we depicted in our book, from Stara Zagora, Bulgaria, demonstrate a bent-knee dance position — very likely a magical dance. (Figures 38–39) Figures represented in the magical dance position also have been found in Romania. Two figures, excavated and published by Magda and Gheorghe Lazarovici, demonstrate this dance. The first, excavated by C-M Lazarovici, dates to Cucuteni A-3 (4300–4050 BCE); it is from Scânteia, Romania. (Figure 40) The arms are raised and the legs form a crouching position in mirror image to the arms. The second, excavated by Gheorghe Lazarovici, dates to Vinča B (4300–4200 BCE); it is from Zorlențu Mare, Romania. (Figure 41) Further, there are Romanian pots which suggest the *Hora*, or round dance, which are related to the ritual life of the communities which make them.⁵⁵

The M was very important in the Danubian civilization, not only in the dance but in the material culture as well. M-shapes formed part of house models from Opričari and Stenče.⁵⁶ The frontal and back openings of the house models are both stylized pubic triangles and the entrances of the shelter; the lateral openings may represent windows.⁵⁷

The M is the underpinning of a particular type of female figure, the "Display Figure." Marija Gimbutas associated the M with birthing and "the frog goddess as life regenerator,"⁵⁸ and we find that the frog, a symbol of fertility around the world, is depicted with legs in this birthing- and M-position. It is found in the Neolithic Balkan culture of Sesklo (Figure 44), in Neolithic Anatolia (Figures 45–46), the Indus Valley (Figures 47–48), and ancient Egypt (Figure 49) as well. K. De B. Codrington illustrates a figure from Mathura, the front of which is a crouching Lajjā Gaurī, and the back of which is a frog;⁵⁹ he dates the figure to the early second century CE. Thus one figurine brings together the principles of human female fertility and the fertility thought to be brought by frogs.

⁵⁵ See Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici, Gheorghe-Corneliu Lazarovici, and Senica Țurcanu 2009: 75; see also 2009: 76, on figures which may represent the magic dance, as well as catalogue nos. 135, 242, 263.

⁵⁶ See Angeleski 2008: Figures 7 and 8.

⁵⁷ Sote Angeleski, personal communication, September 9, 2011.

⁵⁸ Gimbutas 1999: 46.

⁵⁹ Codrington 1935: 65; Plate E. See also Bolon 1992: Figures 66–68.

Triangles

There is also a continuity of triangular-shaped dancing figures, in both Southeast Europe and the Far East. In *Sacred Display*, we discussed the petroglyphs incised into a mountain at Kangjashimenzi, near Qutubi, in East Central Asia; they depict dancing figures represented with triangular bodies. (Figure 42) These figures, which date to ca. 1000 BCE, very strongly resemble earlier triangular-shaped dancing female figures depicted on Romanian and other Eastern European pots dating to ca. 4000 BCE.⁶⁰ (Figure 43) Male figures too are depicted in this dance. On a clay representation from Tărtăria, a male figure (with genital indication) dances with arms outspread, suggesting "dance, rotation."⁶¹

The Double V or W and the M: Cosmology

Gheorghe Lazarovici and his colleagues connect the W (which we would designate a VV, since the W-character is a considerably later invention) and the M signs to the constellation Cassiopeia:

...Cassiopeia appears in the form of an M; it appears in the night sky in the course of six months (from December to June), and it ends up in the form of a W in the morning from July to December.⁶²

Further:

What is important to remark is the oblique position of the sign W, which corresponds to the 22nd hour of the night or to one of the months of the year..⁶³

⁶⁰ Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici 2008, Figures 9–13. Like figures have been found throughout the Middle Neolithic of Southeastern Europe and elsewhere. See Gimbutas 1989: 239–243; Gimbutas 1991: 170 et passim.

⁶¹ Gheorghe Lazarovici, Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici, and Marco Merlini 2011: 114–115, Figure VI.6 a.

⁶² Gheorghe Lazarovici, Fl. Draşovean, and Z. Maxim, 2001: 271:

Cassiopeea apare în forma lui M noaptea sau în decursul a 6 luni (din decembrie în iunie), prin rotire ajunge în formă de W dimineaţa şi din iulie în decembrie...

All translations in this paper are by the authors.

⁶³ Gheorghe Lazarovici, Fl. Draşovean, and Z. Maxim, 2001: 274:

According to Lazarovici, "This corresponds to the dates between 21 March and 23 September; the position of the constellation changes in time, beginning as a W [[again, which we would designate as a VV]] and slowly becoming an M."⁶⁴

Thus, in this view, the VV merges in time into an M, and then it once again reverses itself into a VV as the year progresses.

The Indus Valley

The Indus Valley (or Indus/Sarasvatī Valley⁶⁵) cultures had many features which echoed those of the earlier Danube cultures, including "sacred display" figures. These civilizations produced few weapons and do not give evidence of hierarchy. Each produced a script — still undeciphered — as well as beautiful pottery and other evidence of high culture.⁶⁶ There are several characters in the Danube Script which find correlates in the Indus Script.⁶⁷ Further, there is evidence of comparable ornamentation in both cultures.

Very well-made armlets or bangles are evidenced for the Indus/Sarasvatī Valley peoples,⁶⁸ as

Ce este demn de remarcat este poziția înclinată a semnului W, ceea ce corespunde orei 22 din noapte sau a uneia din lunile anului...

⁶⁴ Gheorghe and Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici, personal communication, October 23, 2011. Figures with M's are found throughout Southeast and Central Europe in the early and middle Neolithic. Gheorghe Lazarovici, Magda Lazarovici, and Marco Merlini report on a bottle-shaped vessel discovered in a Transdanubian Linear Pottery dwelling from Biatorbágy-Tyúkberek (Pest County, Hungary). The vessel formed a human figure representing the embryo within the womb; its face is framed by an "M"-shaped line. (2011: 225) See also Merlini 2009: 174 on the M found near the base of a vessel from Battonya-Gödrösök (Hungary) (Tisza-Herpály-Csöszhalom complex.); also Merlini 2009: 181; 293; 360; 446; 594; 603; 620; 668. For several examples of the M and the W (VV) on sacred vessels, see Lazarovici 1995.

⁶⁵ The Indus Valley culture flourished in the river valley between the ancient Indus river and the now dried-up Sarasvatī/Ghaggar Hakra River. (McIntosh 2008: 3; 19ff; 116) There were many more settlements along the Sarasvatī than along the Indus: around fifty sites along the Indus compared with around a thousand along the Sarasvatī. (McIntosh 2008: 20) Thus a better designation for the culture would be the Sarasvatī Valley (or at least Indus/Sarasvatī Valley) culture.

⁶⁶ See Dexter 2012.

⁶⁷ See Gheorghe Lazarovici, Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici, and Marco Merlini 2011: 315, 317, 318, 319, 326 (Table), 329.

⁶⁸ See Kenoyer (1998: 122): bangles were traditionally worn on the left arm of adult women of the Indus Valley. Bangles

well as for both the early historic and recent cultures of India. Bangles appear not only as indications of jewelry on artifacts, but they are themselves part of grave goods. An elderly woman was buried with seven shell bangles, worn smooth, seemingly from having been worn for many years. (Figure 50)

Bangles have also been found in excavations of Danube cultures. The ritual pit of the Lady — or priestess — of Tărtăria shows signs of a great honoring of this elderly woman. A *Spondylus gaederopus* armlet was found in her ritual pit; just as with that belonging to the elderly woman from the Indus/Sarasvatī Valley, the bangle of the Lady of Tărtăria showed signs of having been deeply worn — that is, worn throughout a lifetime.⁶⁹ (Figure 51) This bangle may have been one sign of her office, rather than the customary ware of other women of the culture. Indeed, we postulate that this may have been the first use of bangles/armlets. A like phenomenon is the transition of tall “witches” or priestesses’ hats to bridal hats in Central Asia. (Figure 52) That is, the hats became generalized to ceremonial garb for young women, where before they were attached to what were probably priestesses in special female burials — for example in the Tarim Basin (Figure 53) and in the Altai Mountains (Figure 54);⁷⁰ therefore, in like manner, perhaps the bangle was originally a marker of a priestess or shaman, exemplified by the spondylus shell bracelet found in the burial pit of the Lady of Tărtăria. Later, the bangle would have become a more general marker for women in the Indus Valley and then in historic India.

Figurines with bangles or armlets have been found in several excavations of Neolithic Southeast European sites: an armlet encircles the left arm of a figurine from Durankulak, Bulgaria, dating to 4550–4450 BCE (Figure 55); one encircles the right arm of a pregnant figurine from the

were made of many different raw materials: terracotta, stoneware, even gold. (146) With regard to gold, one source of the metal was along the Oxus river in northern Afghanistan, where Shortugai, a distant trading colony of the Indus cities, was built. This settlement may have been established in order to obtain gold and other precious commodities from Central Asia. (96) It is possible that the Central Asian trade routes were very distant in extent: a mass spectrometer has been used to study a 3,300-year-old treasure trove of gold found in Northern Germany, and some researchers believe that the fingerprint of the metal leads to Central Asia. (Schultz 2012)

⁶⁹ Gheorghe Lazarovici, Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici, and Marco Merlini 2011: 109; 125; 146; 147, Figures VII.B.23–24.

⁷⁰ See Polosmak 1994: 79–103. For images of the headdress and striking tattoos worn by both the Altaic woman and the men who accompanied her, see Stewart 2012 and the *Siberian Times* 2012.

Pavlovac site (F.Y.R.O.M.) (Figure 56); and a Vinča terracotta figurine from the Stublive site in Serbia bears three armlets on the right arm.⁷¹

Early historic Indic female figures have correlates in the earlier Bronze Age Indus Valley culture and the Bactria-Margiana Complex; these cultures have produced seals depicting both Durgā-like (that is, in the image of the Great Goddess: Devī/Kālī/Durgā) and Lajjā-Gaurī-like (female display) figures. A large wood sculpture (28 inches high) of a nude female, from the Harappan culture, dated to ca. 2400 BCE, is shown squatting and displaying her genitals.⁷² (Figure 57) This figure and Indus Valley seals of female figures in display positions (Figures 58–59–60) relate Indus Valley iconography to later Hindu and Buddhist Lajjā Gaurī figures — nude figures which hold their legs in positions resulting in a bold display of their genitals. In fact, the Indus Script itself has a crouching figure which seems to be in a sacred stance or dance.⁷³ (Figure 61)

Pre–Durgā

In Indus Valley stamp seals, a yogi (more likely a yoginī) has a tiger-beard.⁷⁴ (Figure 62) This is enough to make most archaeologists deem it a male figure, even though its breasts are not those of a man. However, a third-century-BCE to third-century-CE figurine from Nilgiris depicts a ferocious-looking female figure with breasts and the beard of a tiger (Figure 63) — a historic age depiction which echoes the earlier Indus depiction of the goddess turning into a tiger, which we will discuss shortly.

The historic-age Great Goddess Durgā is depicted with felines. Her mount is the lion in the *Devīmāhātmyam*, but she is associated with the tiger elsewhere: according to Alf Hiltebeitel, a specialist in Indic religion, the tiger is replaced by the lion in later tradition.⁷⁵

⁷¹ See Gheorghe Lazarovici, Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici, and Marco Merlini 2011: 221–222.

⁷² http://www.tantraworks.com/Ancient_Tantra.html#indus. March 14, 2006. We thank Vicki Noble for this reference.

⁷³ See Newberry 1988–1990: "Serpents in the Indus Script": 7, 'crouching offerer'; "Yogis in the Indus Script": 9; Dexter 2012.

⁷⁴ Kenoyer 1998: Figure 6.19, Cat. No. 23 (as well as cover).

⁷⁵ Hiltebeitel 1978: 777.

A carved steatite⁷⁶ seal from the Mohenjo-daro culture of the Indus Valley, dating from ca. 2600–1900 BCE, depicts a woman standing between a sami tree and a tiger. (Figure 64) The tiger has the leaves of a tree as a headdress. The woman is undergoing metamorphosis, since her feet have become hooves or claws and she has developed a tail and horns.⁷⁷

Two other seals from Mohenjo-daro depict tree goddesses perhaps summoning tigers, which are looking back at her.⁷⁸

In a seal from Mohenjo-daro, the tiger and the woman become united. (Figure 65) Here, the woman has the distinctive horns of the Markhor goat. A square stamp-seal from Kalibangan also depicts the unification of woman and tiger, and here too the tiger-bodied goddess has the horns of a markhor goat. (Figure 66)

The human-tiger motif is repeated on another seal from Kalibangān. A woman with long, flowing hair stands between two males; she wears a long skirt and she has bangles on her arms.⁷⁹ Nearby is the tiger goddess, also with long, streaming hair,⁸⁰ and her arms too are covered from wrists to shoulders with bangles. The tiger-woman wears a headdress with animal horns and a tree branch, and she stands between a tree barren of leaves and a tree covered with leaves. (Figure 67)

The female deity of the tree is also depicted on a seal from the site of Nausharo. (Figure 68)

On another seal is depicted the Indus Valley tree deity, with seven female figures (with long braids) bordering the bottom of the seal. (Figure 69) Both the deity and the seven attendants wear

⁷⁶ Soapstone (also known as *steatite* or soaprock) is a metamorphic rock, a talc-schist. It is largely composed of the mineral talc and is thus rich in magnesium. (Wikipedia).

⁷⁷ Shaw 2006: 429, Figure 21.3; Jayakar 1990: Figure 6.

⁷⁸ A) Jayakar 1990: Figure 5; b); Kenoyer 1998: Text figure 6.22, Cat. No. 26.

⁷⁹ On this figure, see also Parpola 1999: 103, footnote 4. Parpola believes that the woman is a goddess of war, similar to the Mesopotamian Inanna/Ishtar, but there is no evidence of war in the Indus Valley. Parpola equates this female figure with both the later Durgā and Vāc. Parpola cites the Jaiminīya-Brāhmana [2,115], "which tells us of the goddess Vāc. Angered, she became a lioness with a mouth at either end of her body. Standing between the gods and demons who were fighting with each other, she grabbed whomever she could reach on either side." On other references to Vāc as a lioness, see pp. 119–120.

⁸⁰ See above, on painted pottery from Samarra depicting female figures, probably dancers, with streaming hair.

multiple bangles. The seven female figures may well represent the Pleiades, and they may have evolved into the Saptamatrika (saptamāṭṛkā), the powerful "seven mother" goddesses.

The pre-Indic iconography may underlie the possibility of a later Buddhist goddess-feline such as the Tantric lion-headed goddess, Simhamukhā.⁸¹ (Figure 70)

East Indian Female Figures — Southern Asia — Kālī

With the Indus Valley material in mind, we consider again the Hindu Great Goddess, Devī/Kālī/Durgā (and she has many other names as well).

The Indic goddess Kālī brings death but also *protects* the worshiper from death — that is, she is apotropaic, much like figures as early as the Upper Palaeolithic large pubic triangles guarding the entrances to chambers in Chauvet Cave, the early Neolithic Göbekli Tepe woman, and as late as the Irish and British Sheela na gigs. Kālī has been represented in the bent-knee or "dancing" pose taken by several of the prehistoric figures we have discussed. (Figure 71) Many other Indic female figures are portrayed in the dancing position as well. (Figures 72, 73, 74) Kālī, as well as other Indic goddesses, can appear in the cremation grounds, the place of death, dancing on the corpse, just as she dances upon her consort, Shiva [Śiva], in order to awaken him. (Figure 75)

Kālī is one of the forms of the Indic "great-goddess" Devī; in one of Devī's ferocious forms, as Durgā, (Figure 76) she appears as a rather bloodthirsty savior of the Indic gods in her battles against the *asuras*, the demons. Kālī becomes a major figure in the *Devīmāhātmyam* (from the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*), one of the earliest and most significant Tantric hymns to the Great Goddess Devī in her many manifestations, written in the fourth to fifth centuries CE. In Chapter Seven of the *Devīmāhātmyam*, the asuras Chaṇḍa, "the fierce one, the violent one" and Muṇḍa, "the shaved one, the bald one" are threatening Devī, trying to capture her. Devī becomes furious, and her countenance becomes dark.

⁸¹ See also Shaw 2006: 428–429; Amdo Region, Tibet, nineteenth century. The Newark Museum, 1936: 36.518. Plate 15.

Then, [as Durgā] contracted her brows, out of the flat surface of her forehead came Kālī, the gaping-mouthed one, having a sword and noose.⁸²

Thus, in this version of the myth, Kālī is born from Durgā's forehead. She wears a tiger's skin and a necklace of skulls. She is emaciated, and her eyes are sunken and reddish. She kills Chaṇḍa and Muṇḍa and after that she receives the epithet Chāmuṇḍā.⁸³ In iconography, she holds their decapitated heads;⁸⁴ she appears,

Her mouth becoming huge, her tongue lolling, terrifying.⁸⁵

Devī is described as the "red-toothed" one, her teeth bloody from devouring her enemies:

After I shall consume the great and mighty Asuras...

My teeth shall become reddened [like] the uppermost blossoms of the pomegranate tree.

After that, the gods in heaven and mortals on earth, extolling me, shall forever speak of [me as] the red-toothed.⁸⁶

⁸² *Devīmāhātmyam* 7.6. Ca. 500 CE. The Sanskrit text is in Jagadiswarananda, ed. 1953:

Bhrukuṭīkuṭilāttasyā lalāṭaphalakāddatam
Kālī karālavadanā viniṣkrāntāsipāśinī.

⁸³ *Devīmāhātmyam* 7.27.

⁸⁴ See Mookerjee 1988: 76.

⁸⁵ *Devīmāhātmyam* 7.8. The Sanskrit text is in Jagadiswarananda, ed. 1953:

atīvi stāravadanā jīhvālalanabhīṣaṇā

⁸⁶ *Devīmāhātmyam* 11.44–45. The Sanskrit text is in Jagadiswarananda, ed. 1953:

Bhakṣayantyāśca tānuḡrān ... mahāsūrān
raktā dantā bhaviṣyanti dāḍimīkusumopamāḥ
Tato mām devatāḥ svarge martyaloke ca mānavāḥ
stuvanto vyāharīṣyanti satatam raktadantikām.

Indic Lajjā Gaurī Figures

The large wood sculpture we discussed earlier, as well as the Indus Valley seals of female figures in a display position, relate Indus Valley iconography to later Hindu and Buddhist Lajjā Gaurī figures — nude figures that hold their legs in positions which result in a display of their genitals. These figures date from the first century BCE through around the sixteenth century CE, and they are found in temples throughout India. Some Lajjā Gaurīs have human heads, but, by the first few centuries of this era, the heads were largely replaced by lotuses (Figure 77) and snakes. (Figure 78) There is also a froglike Lajjā Gaurī with a lotus head. (Figure 79) The Buddhist Lajjā Gaurīs retained human heads with the addition of the long ears emblematic of Buddhist iconography. (Figure 80) The snakes and lotuses symbolize fertility; snakes can shed and then regenerate their skin, and they thus give a visual demonstration of the possibility of renewal, while the lotus is a symbol of regenerative vegetation. Many images of Lajjā Gaurīs are abstracted as flowers, (Figure 81) very similar in their imagery to the flower- Lajjā Gaurī from the Bactria-Margiana complex. Some of the early Lajjā Gaurīs are depicted with vegetation growing out of their mouths or navels. (Figures 82–83)

It is the concept of fertility that is important: the female gives birth to all things out of her body:

Thereupon, O Gods, I shall maintain the whole world by means of life-sustaining vegetables, produced from my own body, until it rains.⁸⁷

This is a promise made by the Goddess Devī/Durgā. Thus, both Durgā and the Lajjā Gaurīs are sources of vegetation. According to Laura Amazzone,⁸⁸ on the ninth day of the great festival of Durgā

⁸⁷ *Devīmāhātmyam* 11.48:

*Tato'hamakhilāṁ lokamātmadehasamudbhavaiḥ
bharīṣyāmi surāḥ śākairāvṛṣṭeḥ prāṇadhārakaiḥ.*

⁸⁸ Amazzone 2010: 99, 183; see also Kinsley 1988: 95, 111.

in contemporary India, the goddess manifests as nine forms of sacred plants;⁸⁹ Durgā is the power inherent in all vegetation.⁹⁰

Another symbol of the Lajjā Gaurī is the "brimming vase [of fortune]," the *pūrṇa kumbha*; *kumbha* means both "pot" and "womb." (Figure 84) The Lajjā Gaurī are thought to bring good fortune to the temples in which they reside. In the village societies of India, the pot is the symbol of the divine feminine, the mother.⁹¹ The Mangala Gaur celebration is important for new brides in Maharashtra. On the Tuesday of the month of Shravan, within a year after her marriage, the new bride performs the Śivalingam *puja* for the well-being of her husband and new family.⁹² Sanskrit *maṅgala* is "happiness, welfare, auspiciousness,"⁹³ so the festival is the "Gaurī Auspiciousness" or the "Auspiciousness of Gaurī." Further, at one point in the Durgā festival a pot is identified with the goddess; edible fruit and plants are placed in the pot. The pot contains water from the Ganges, and in a prayer the priest identifies the pot with the source of the nectar of immortality, the *amṛta*,⁹⁴ produced at the churning of the Sea of Milk. (Figure 85) Thus, the "brimming pot" of auspiciousness or good fortune is associated with the genital display of the propitious Lajjā Gaurī.

In one silver seal from Kashmir Smast, the legs of the Lajjā Gaurī are in an 'M'-position and the mirrored arms are in a VV (W)-position. (Figure 86) A seal with a comparably positioned Lajjā Gaurī, from the Allahabad district, dates to the Kushana period. (Figure 87) Finally, a female display figure stands among the many female figures on the Konark Sun Temple in Orissa. (Figure 88).

There are alternative possible etymologies for Lajjā Gaurī. One of the names given to Devī, the "great" goddess, is Gaurī, who is "the shining one." Sanskrit *gaura* is "yellowish," and then "white, brilliant, shining;" it is a description given to several goddesses, including Parvatī Gaurī, the wife of

⁸⁹ See Amazzone 2010: 99; 183.

⁹⁰ Kinsley 1988: 111.

⁹¹ Jayakar 1990: 31.

⁹² (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marathi_people#Mangala_Gaur. Retrieved July 2, 2011)

⁹³ Monier-Williams 1899: 772.

⁹⁴ Kinsley 1988: 111–112.

Śiva.⁹⁵ Devī is given the epithet Gaurī in *Devīmāhātmyam* 4.11, 41; since she is paired there with Śiva, she is there Parvatī Gaurī. A gaurakī is "a girl 8 years old prior to menstruation," that is, a virgin.⁹⁶ Forms of Gaurī are worshipped throughout rural India.⁹⁷ Lajja is "shame" in Bengali and other Indic languages, so the Lajjā Gaurī could be a "shameful young woman," because she does a bold display. This is a rather negative naming, in contrast to the fact that Lajjā Gaurīs are believed to bring good fortune.⁹⁸ Indeed, an alternate etymology is given by Dr. Ramachandra C. Dhere in his book, *Lajja Gauri*: he believes that Lajja is a form of Lanja/Lanjika, "naked."⁹⁹ Certainly, this definition would better fit the nude female figures.

Early Historic Medusa and Medieval Irish and British Sheela na gigs

In *Sacred Display* we also wrote about two female figures which carry on the functions of apotropaia and protection. Medusa's apotropaic function was manifested iconographically by the numerous Gorgon antefixes which have been found throughout Greece.¹⁰⁰ (Figure 89) The Medusa head was placed on soldiers' shields, over doorways, as antefixes on roofs, on doors of ovens and kilns, and on Athena's aegis. (Figure 90) Further, just as the prehistoric figures, Medusa has a "bent-knee" pose; the Medusa portrayed on the pediment of the Artemis temple in Kekyra (Figure 91) is in this posture. She is nine feet tall; her waist is cinched with serpents, and there are snakes in her hair. She appears with a lion and with her children, Pegasus and Chrysaor. Finally, in an Etruscan artifact, she is in full Display pose, with her legs in an M-position.¹⁰¹ (Figure 92)¹⁰²

⁹⁵ Monier Williams 1899: 369.

⁹⁶ Monier-Williams 1899: 370.

⁹⁷ Jayakar 1990: 130 ff.

⁹⁸ On the Lajjā Gaurīs see Bolon 1992; Brown 1990; Donaldson 1975 (Donaldson demonstrates that erotic art decorating the temples of Orissa served two functions: that of blessing the temple and that of warding off natural disasters: the two functions which display figures worldwide seem to serve); Sonawane 1988.

⁹⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lajja_Gauri; retrieved July 2, 2011.

¹⁰⁰ On Medusa see Dexter and Mair 2010: 75–84. Dexter 1990: 11–12; 119; 179; Dexter 2010.

¹⁰¹ See Dexter and Mair 2010: 75–84; 91–99.

Sheela na gigs also served an apotropaic function; many Sheelas were placed above the doors to churches and castles. The Sheelas protect these powerful and sacred places. The most powerful and sacred place of all, as depicted by the Sheela, is the vulva of the goddess, which leads to the womb and regeneration for all.

Sheela na gigs take magical postures. The Sheela na gig from Kiltinan stands on one foot with her left hand lifted to her face, while her right hand displays her vulva. Her knees are bent, in a dance. (Figure 93) The Moate Sheela na gig is found crouching, in the same position as the Lepenski Vir fish figure. (Figure 96) Further, both the Moate and the Cavan Sheela have huge mouths, similar to the fishy mouth of the Lepenski Vir fish figure. The Cavan Sheela has a magically large vulva which hangs down below her knees. She is emaciated as well, with well-defined ribs, just as the Indic goddess Kālī is often represented.

Again, to these figures we may compare the prehistoric figures: the goddess as vulva on the limestone outcropping in Chauvet Cave, who protected the entrance to the Salle du Fond; and the dancing female figure from Göbekli Tepe, who protected the temple at whose entrance she performed her magical dance.

Female Display Figures of the Pacific

In a book chapter titled "The Heraldic Woman: A Study in Diffusion," Douglas Fraser discusses female display figures worldwide, found in two themes: symmetrically flanked display figures — flanked by birds, felines, or other creatures — and solitary display figures.¹⁰³ The flanked figures appear thousands of years later than the solitary figures.

Fraser finds that the Pacific display figures (in Sepik art in New Guinea, in Borneo, Sumatra, Hawaii, New Zealand, and some other cultures) were brought to this region from Changsha in the Chu culture area of South China during the late Zhou period; they had the Gorgon in their repertoire in the

¹⁰² We thank Starr Goode for this image.

¹⁰³ For example, a female figure flanked by ibexes, on a bronze pinhead from Luristan, ca. 1000–600 BCE. (Fraser 1966:37–38) It is also found in Etruscan art, for example a bronze carriage-front dating to ca. 500 BCE, depicting a Gorgon flanked by two lions. (Fraser 1966: 41–42)

third-fourth centuries BCE, employing its representations as tomb guardian figures.¹⁰⁴ This image was not depicted in the art of the original Malayo-Polynesian peoples when they first migrated into the Pacific, ca. 2000–700 BCE.¹⁰⁵ In Sepik art, indeed, display figures may appear as the foremost part of headhunting canoe prows.¹⁰⁶ There may be some relationship to double-tailed mermaids found on ships in diverse parts of the world, for example, the modern Greek Gorgona, whose upper body is human and whose lower body is that of a fish. Some of the figure-heads (bowsprits) on Greek ships are Gorgona-antefixes, which are thought to protect the ship from the evil eye.¹⁰⁷ (Figure 97)¹⁰⁸

Female display figures are also carved on lintels placed over the entrances of Maori council houses. Fraser suggests that they may represent the goddess of death,¹⁰⁹ but we believe that they may signify regeneration as well. They were also placed over gateways and entrances to Maori fortified villages,¹¹⁰ and attached to the gable of the men's houses in Palau, Micronesia.¹¹¹ In New Zealand, the figures are also found on architectural lintels, as well as jade ornaments. In Borneo, Gorgon-type faces, some with long tongues, were used on masks, and attached to shields, homes, and grave houses¹¹² — that is, they had precisely the same uses as they did in ancient Greece. These display figures begin to appear in Indonesian art ca. 200 CE. Fraser believes that these figures reached Indonesia from China sometime between 400 BCE and 300 CE.¹¹³ He believes, too, that Mediterranean and Near Eastern

¹⁰⁴ Fraser 1966: 51.

¹⁰⁵ Fraser 1966: 51.

¹⁰⁶ Fraser 1966: 49–50. Fraser compares these figures, with their long-tongued faces, to Medusa, who, as he reminds us, is also the victim of a headhunter. (51)

¹⁰⁷ See Dexter and Mair 2010: 89. See also Lubell 1994, Figure 10.2. Double-Tailed Mermaid over the main entrance at the Cathedral of Saint Michael, Lucca, Italy. 13th Century CE.

¹⁰⁸ We thank Andrew Katona for both this information and this image.

¹⁰⁹ Fraser 1966: 53–54.

¹¹⁰ Fraser 1966: 54–55.

¹¹¹ Fraser 1966: 60.

¹¹² Fraser 1966: 55.

¹¹³ Fraser 1966: 51.

ideas regarding display figures were diffused to West Africa, since, as he says, the multiplication of similarities makes the possibility of independent creation improbable.¹¹⁴ Moreover, Fraser finds the same motif on the Northwest coast of America, existing in moveable objects as well as architecture. It is found among the Nootka, the Kwakiutl, the Haida, the Tsimshian, and the Tlingit. In this area, when the display figure is not a human female, it is a bear, otherwise depicted in Northwest Coast art by a long, protruding tongue.¹¹⁵ (Figure 98) This strikingly reminds one of the bear display-figure from the early Neolithic Anatolian site of Çatalhöyük.¹¹⁶ (Figure 99)

Display figures are found as well in the pre-Columbian art of central Peru, the Peruvian coast, and in Ecuador.¹¹⁷ In Ecuador the figures sit with the legs in an M-position and the arms mirroring them, upraised in a VV (W)-position.¹¹⁸ This position strongly recalls figures found throughout Neolithic Southeast Europe and the Indus Valley, which we discussed above.

Fraser also discusses the influence of the Dongson culture of Southeast Asia upon display figures of the Pacific — particularly upon shell ornaments found throughout the Pacific Basin.¹¹⁹ Robert Heine-Geldern holds that the images were transmitted from the West to China via a route in Central Asia. Heine-Geldern was a prescient pioneer in discerning such transcontinental trajectories. His perceptions have been borne out by more recent research, which shows that Eastern Eurasian Steppe traits, such as the construction of stone graves, the use of avian and animal motifs for decoration, and spiral-hilt swords, are found in later Neolithic Southwest China, especially toward the end of the second millennium BCE, perhaps with the advent of bronze metallurgy. Such traits were not found in previous Neolithic strata. Dian artifacts in Yunnan include figurines with braided hair, spiral-hilt swords, and European facial features. It is likely that the Di people were composed of

¹¹⁴ Fraser 1966: 47.

¹¹⁵ Fraser 1966: 57–60. Fraser regards this as a particular index of Late Zhou influence.

¹¹⁶ See also the 'bear' display figure at the Anatolian Civilizations Museum, Ankara. Tableau of display figure and bovine heads.

¹¹⁷ Fraser 1966: 71–74.

¹¹⁸ Fraser 1966: 74–75.

¹¹⁹ Fraser 1966: 64–65.

Eurasian Steppe nomads along with indigenous Chinese inhabitants; the two groups intermarried and engaged in semi-nomadic animal husbandry along with some cultivation.¹²⁰ Indeed, the latest research on the spread of metallurgy firmly supports the fundamental findings of Heine-Geldern.¹²¹

The findings of Fraser, Heine-Geldern, and others who viewed Eurasia as an integrated ecumene have been corroborated by a remarkable masterwork entitled *Strange Parallels*, written by Victor Lieberman (2003, 2009). In this hefty, two-volume study, Lieberman constructs a paradigm that links up the whole of Eurasia and beyond into a politico-cultural system that brilliantly explains the dynamic relationship between the heartland and the periphery. What is particularly exciting about Lieberman's work from the standpoint of the present paper is that it fully recognizes the vital importance of the denizens of the steppe for crucial developments in the settled zones, and it unprecedentedly gives due weight to Southeast Asia and Oceania in the overall scheme of things.¹²²

A tremendous amount of investigation carried out in recent years, particularly that based on newly discovered archeological materials, has demonstrated how influences from the steppe penetrated south of the Yangtze River and beyond, all the way to South China and Southeast Asia. Methodologically, John S. Major's landmark article of 1978, entitled "Research Priorities in the Study of Ch'u Religion" set the stage for a series of later studies that have detailed the penetration of steppe culture into what is now thought of as "South China," but that originally consisted of independent peoples and kingdoms. One of the most impressive of these states was Chu (ca. 1030–223 BCE) itself. Long before Major's article appeared, Alfred Salmony in 1954 outlined the manner in which Gorgon-like figures guarded tombs in that region.¹²³

¹²⁰ Chiou-Peng 1998.

¹²¹ See the brief summary and appreciation of Heine-Geldern's work in Fraser 1966: 161–164. The following are essential references for the most recent and important research on bronze metallurgy in Central and East Asia coming from the west: Sherratt 2006; White and Hamilton 2009; Mei and Rehren 2009; Fitzgerald-Huber 1995; Fitzgerald-Huber 2003.

¹²² Mair 2011.

¹²³ Chaffin (2007), in an exhaustive cataloguing of archeologically discovered Chu tomb guardians (so-called *zhenmushou*) — the vast majority of which were not available when Salmony wrote his brilliant monograph — supports Salmony's thesis of a strongly Western source for these figures, but disagrees with him that the transmission was through India. Instead, she sees a connection with sites in the far north and northwest, such as Pazyryk, where similar antlered and long-

The prevalence of steppic elements in the South has been powerfully reaffirmed in a stunning new exhibition, "The Search for Immortality: Tomb Treasures of Han China," at the Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge University, May 5–November 11, 2012). The exhibition presents striking materials from a number of southern principalities, but focuses on what Sinocentric persons refer to as the kingdom of Nan Yue (Southern Yue), but which individuals of a more Southeast Asian persuasion call Nam Việt. Be that as it may, one cannot walk away from this exhibition or finish reading the exhibition catalogue without a powerful sense of how North and South were intimately intertwined already during the Western Han empire (206 BCE – 220 CE). But the links to the north and northwest did not end at fabled places like Pazyryk, since the latter was permeated by strong Achaemenid (Iranian) elements, themselves in many cases betraying a Hellenistic legacy.¹²⁴

This diffusion of the idea of the female display figures explains why so many parts of the world, hitherto thought unconnected, have Gorgon-like figures. In its origins and development, "sacred display" is a quintessentially Eurasian phenomenon.

Conclusion

We were recently referred to a medieval version of anasyrma. The Italian countess Caterina Riario Sforza de' Medici (ca. 1463–1509) would not yield her castle when her enemies besieged it and threatened to kill her children. She stood on the ramparts, lifted up her skirts, and pointing to her genitals, declared, "I have in myself the mould [i.e. the equipment] for making others!"¹²⁵ That is, instead of weeping over the possibility that her children might be killed, she asserted that she could just bear more children.

Evidence now demonstrates that female display figures have had apotropaic and protective functions from the earliest Upper Palaeolithic era — for example, in Chauvet Cave — through the modern era. In medieval times, Sheela na gigs were placed on the walls of churches and castles,

tongued images have been found.

¹²⁴ Lin 2012.

¹²⁵ "*Ho con me lo stampo per farne degli altri!*" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caterina_Sforza. For a more complete version of the story, see Lev 2011: 133. Not all accounts of this siege included the detail of her anasyrma, but Niccolò Machiavelli repeated this version in his *Discourses*. We thank Thomas Mair and Katherine Wang for this reference.

presumably to ward off the enemy and protect those inside. Gorgon antefixes were placed on the walls of houses, on roofs, on ovens, on shields, and even in the aegis of the goddess Athena, for the same purposes. Further, Gorgon figures were placed on tombstones¹²⁶ and sarcophagi¹²⁷ (Figure 100), most likely as a symbol of, and hope for, regeneration. The blood of ancient Medusa could both destroy and heal.¹²⁸ Even today, Indic Lajjā Gaurī figures are thought to heal in a different manner: they bring good fortune to the temples in which they reside.

These figures represent apotropaia, protection, birth, death, and regeneration. In displaying their genitals, they are a potent image of the gateway to the womb — the womb of the Great Mother — the literal matrix of birth, the place to which one returns at death, and the source of regeneration.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ See Fraser 1966: 42.

¹²⁷ Numerous examples of Gorgons on sarcophagi are extant — for example, in the Antalya Museum in Southern Turkey. Here there are a number of sarcophagi with garlands and images of Medusa.

¹²⁸ Euripides, *Ion*: 1003–1005; Apollodorus, *Atheniensis Bibliothecae*, 3.10.3. See Dexter 2010.

¹²⁹ Today more artists are honoring "sacred display." "The Great Wall of Vagina," by British artist Jamie McCartney, was exhibited in London in May-June 2012. The exhibit consisted of monumental wall sculptures of castings of the vulvas and labia of 400 women, in order to allow women to see that there is beauty, not shame, in the female genitalia. We thank the poet Annie Finch for referring us to this exhibit. See <http://www.greatwallofvagina.co.uk/>.

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Figure 2: *Dodola*: Butterfly dance. Romania. Internet photo.
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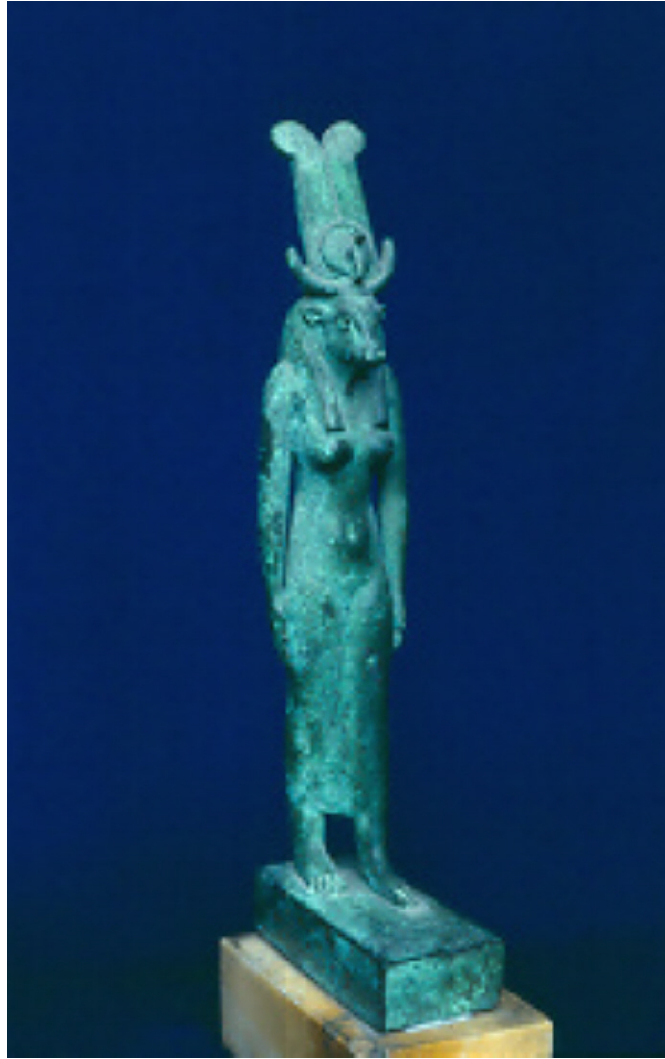


Figure 3: Bronze figure of the Egyptian goddess Hathor, with head of a cow. Fourth century BCE, Serapeion, Memphis, Egypt; ht 0.95; lg 0.63. Louvre, AF 303. Courtesy of the Musée du Louvre. Photograph by Gregory L. Dexter.



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FLUTE: Five holes were drilled into this vulture's wing bone 35,000 years ago. Researchers say it signifies a society that enjoyed music, dancing and drinking around the fire.

Germany's 1st nightclub?

A cave yields the oldest known musical instrument and hints at a lively culture among the earliest Europeans.

THOMAS H. MAUGH II

The wing bone of a griffon vulture with five precisely drilled holes in it is the oldest known musical instrument, a 35,000-year-old relic of an early human society that drank beer, played flute and drums and danced around the campfire on cold winter evenings, researchers said Wednesday.

Excavated from a cave in Germany, the nearly complete flute suggests that the first humans to occupy Europe had a fairly sophisticated culture, complete with alcohol, adornments, art objects and music that they developed there or even brought with them from Africa when they moved to the new continent 40,000 years or so ago.

"It is not too surprising that music was a part of their culture," said archaeologist John J. Shea of Stony Brook University, who was not involved in the research. "Every single society we know of has music. The more widespread a characteristic is today, the more likely it is to spread back into the past."

The making of music probably extended even further back into the past, he said, but the flute may represent "the first time that people invested time and energy in making instruments that were [durable enough to be] preserved."

The flute was discovered last summer in the Hohle Fels cave, about 14 miles southwest of the city of Ulm, by archaeologist Nicholas J. Conard of University of Tübingen in Germany. Conard described the find in a report published online by the journal *Nature*.

The cave is the same one where Conard found the recently described 40,000-year-old Venus figurine, the oldest known representation of the female form; as well as a host of other artifacts, including ivory carvings of a horse's or bear's head; a water bird that may be in flight; and a half-human, half-lion figure.

The cave, which was occupied for millennia, "is one of the most wonderfully clear windows into the past, where conditions of preservation are just right," Shea said. "Combine that with a gifted excavator, and you get truly great archaeology."

The reconstructed flute, a little under 9 inches long, was found in 12 pieces in a layer of sediment nearly 9 feet below the cave's floor. The team also found fragments of two ivory flutes — which are less durable — that are probably not quite

as old.

The surfaces of the flute and the structure of the bone are in excellent condition and reveal many details about its manufacture. The maker carved two deep, V-shaped notches into one end of the instrument, presumably to form the end into which the musician blew, and four fine lines near the finger holes. The other end is broken off, but, based on the normal size of the vultures, Conard estimates the intact flute was probably 2 to 3 inches longer.

In 2004, Conard found a 30,000-year-old, 7-inch, three-holed ivory flute at the nearby Geissenklosterle cave, and he has found fragments of several others, although none are as old as the Hohle Fels artifact. Combined, the finds indicate the development of a strong musical tradition in the region, accompanied by the development of figurative art and other innovations, Conard said.


The presence of music did not directly produce a more effective subsistence economy and greater reproductive success, he concluded, but it seems to have contributed to improved social cohesion and new forms of communication, which indirectly contributed to demographic expansion of modern humans to the detriment of the culturally more conservative Neanderthals.

thomas.maugh@latimes.com

Figure 9: Flute from the Hohle Fels Cave, ca. 35,000 BCE. *Los Angeles Times* 6/25/2009.

Venus of Hohle Fels: PREHISTORIC PORN

This is the print preview: [Back to normal view »](#)

PATRICK MCGROARTY | 05/13/09 03:42 PM | 

BERLIN — A 35,000-year-old ivory carving of a busty woman found in a German cave was unveiled Wednesday by archaeologists who believe it is the oldest known sculpture of the human form. The carving found in six fragments in Germany's Hohle Fels cave depicts a woman with a swollen belly, wide-set thighs and large, protruding breasts.

"It's very sexually charged," said University of Tuebingen archaeologist Nicholas Conard, whose team discovered the figure in September.

Carbon dating suggests it was carved at least 35,000 years ago, according to the researchers' findings, which are being published Thursday in the scientific journal *Nature*.

"It's the oldest known piece of figurative sculpture in the world," said Jill Cook, a curator of Paleolithic and Mesolithic material at the British Museum in London.

Stones in Israel and Africa almost twice as old are believed to have been collected by ancient humans because they resembled people, but they were not carved independently.

The Hohle Fels cave discovery suggests the humans, who are believed to have come to Europe around 40,000 years ago, had the intelligence to create symbols and think abstractly in a way that matches the modern human, Conard said.

"It's 100 percent certain that, by the time we get to 40,000 years ago in Swabia, we're dealing with people just like you and me," Conard told The Associated Press, referring to the southern German region where the sculpture was recovered along with other prehistoric artifacts.

Conard believes the 2.4-inch-tall (6-centimeter) figure may have been hung on the end of a string. The left arm is missing, but Conard said he hopes to find it by sifting through material from the cave.

The Hohle Fels sculpture is curvaceous and has neither feet nor a head, like some of the roughly 150 so-called Venus figurines found in a range from the Pyrenees mountains to southern Russia and dating back about 25,000-29,000 years.

But Cook warned against trying to draw any connections between the Venuses and the Hohle Fels figure, saying that would be like comparing Picasso to a classical sculptor — too much time had passed.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/05/14/venus-of-hohle-fels-prehi_n_203418.html?view... 9/9/2010

Figure 10: *Huffington Post* article on the "pornographic" Hohle Fels female figure.

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Figure 11: Anthropomorphic lion, ca. 35,000 BCE. Swabian Alb region of Germany.
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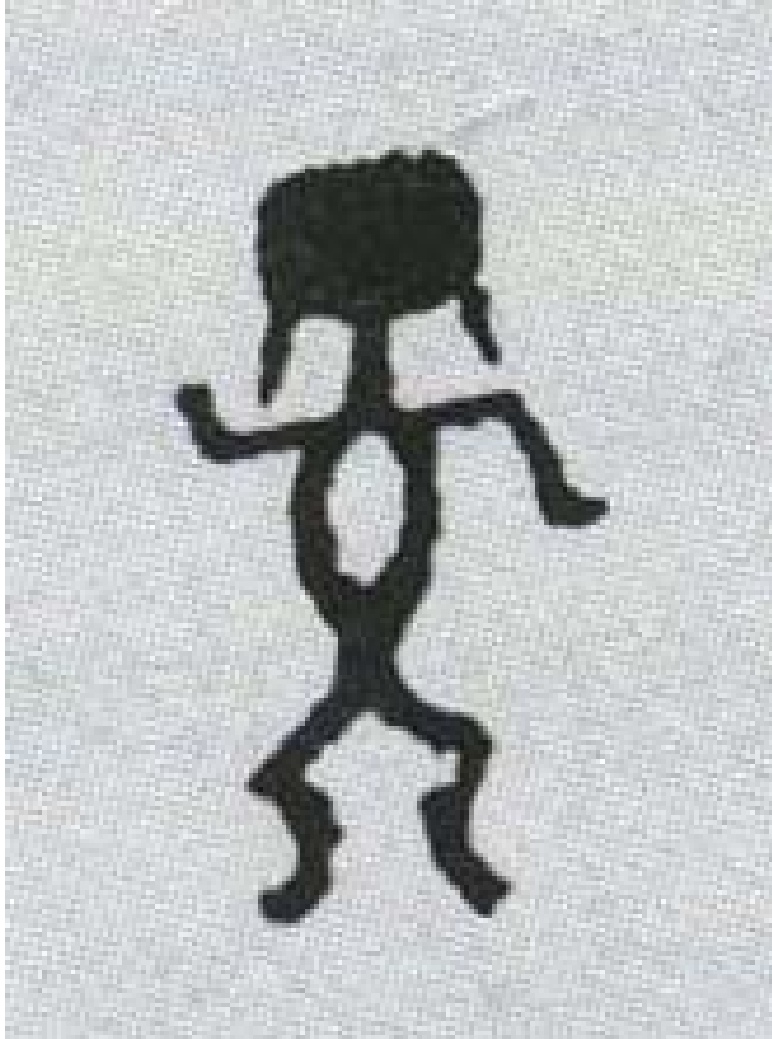


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Figure 14: Nevalı Çori dancing figures. Pre-pottery Neolithic (10,000–8000 BC). Internet photo from the archives of H. Hauptmann.
<http://www.fhw.gr/chronos/01/en/gallery/intro/nevcori/nc5.html>



Figure 15: Stone slab with depiction of a female figure in magical dance, found in the Lion Pillar Building in Göbekli Tepe, Southeastern Turkey; ca. 8000 BCE. Source: Schmidt 2006.

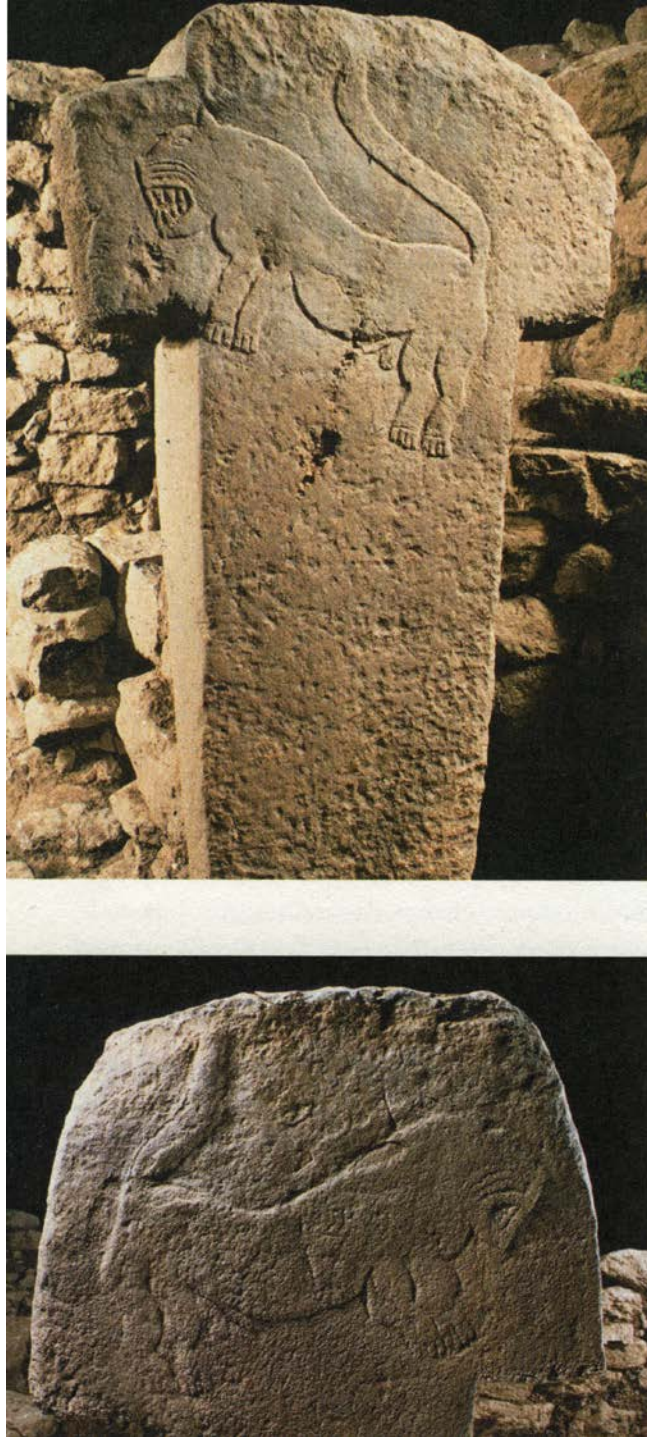


Figure 16: Lion pillars from Lion Pillar Building, Göbekli Tepe, Southeastern Turkey, ca. 8000 BCE. Source: Schmidt 2006.



Figure 17: Location of dancing female figure from Göbekli Tepe, Southeastern Turkey, ca. 8000 BCE. Source: Schmidt 2006.



Figure 18: Limestone statue ca. 1.9 m. high, found near the surrounding city wall in the central part of Şanlıurfa (Urfa), in Southeastern Turkey, near the site of Göbekli Tepe. The figure pulls apart [her] genitals; pre-pottery Neolithic, ca. 9000 BCE. Şanlıurfa (Urfa) Museum. Photograph by Gregory L. Dexter.

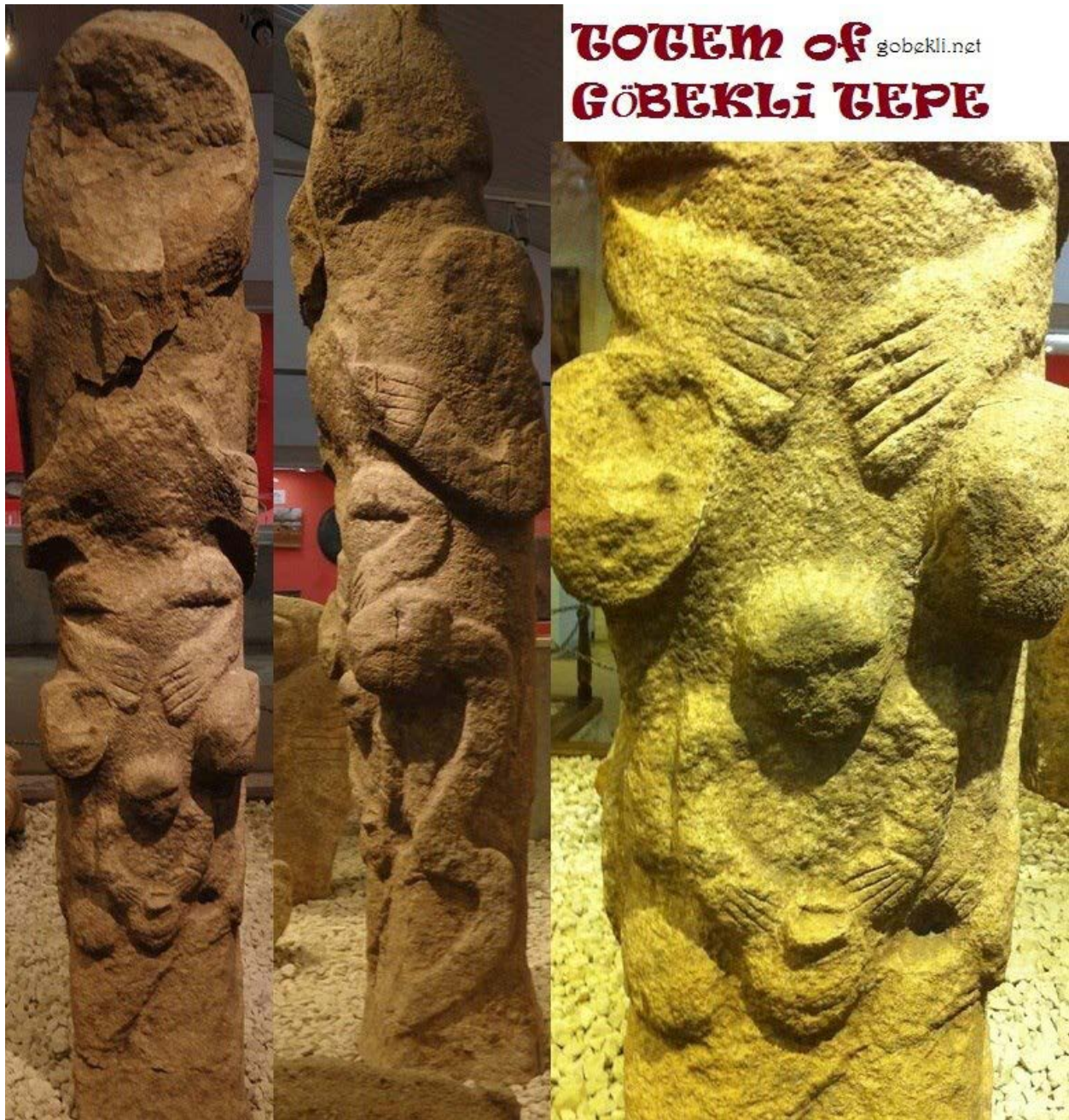


Figure 19: Göbekli Tepe totem, excavated in 2012. Image courtesy Lydia Ruyle.



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Figure 21: Lepenski Vir, Danube Gorge. Internet photo.
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Figure 22: Pot with sculpted human "display" figure, with hands indicating the vulva, and small breasts. Ledu, Liuwan, Western China, Machang Phase of Majiayao Culture, ca. 2300 BCE. Courtesy National Museum of China.



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Figure 24: Vessel with two handles and a spout. China, Neolithic Period, Machang Type, late third millennium BCE. Earthenware with stylized "finny" design and brown pigment. E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation and Edwin F. Jack Fund. 1988.31. Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



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Figure 26: Pot depicting figure with "finny" arms and shoulders. Western China, Machang Phase of Majiayao Culture, ca. 2300 BCE. Charlotte and John Weber Collection. 1992.165.8. Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 27: Yangshao pot. Lazarovici, Lazarovici, and Țurcanu, 2009, Figure 2a. Iași: Palatul Culturii Publishing House.



Figure 28: Yangshao pot. Lazarovici, Lazarovici, Țurcanu, 2009, Figure 2d. Iași: Palatul Culturii Publishing House.



Figure 29: Dimini pot. Lazarovici, Lazarovici, Țurcanu, 2009, Figure 2f. Iași: Palatul Culturii Publishing House.



Figure 30: Majiayao Chinese pot. Banshan Phase of Majiayao Culture.



Figure 31: Majiayao Chinese pot. Banshan Phase of Majiayao Culture.



Figure 32: Marble female figurine with large pubic triangle, Central Bulgaria, 6000 BCE. Stara Zagora Museum. Photograph by Miriam R. Dexter.



Figure 33: Marble pregnant cycladic figure, 2800–2300 BCE. British Museum.
Courtesy British Museum. Photograph by Gregory L. Dexter.

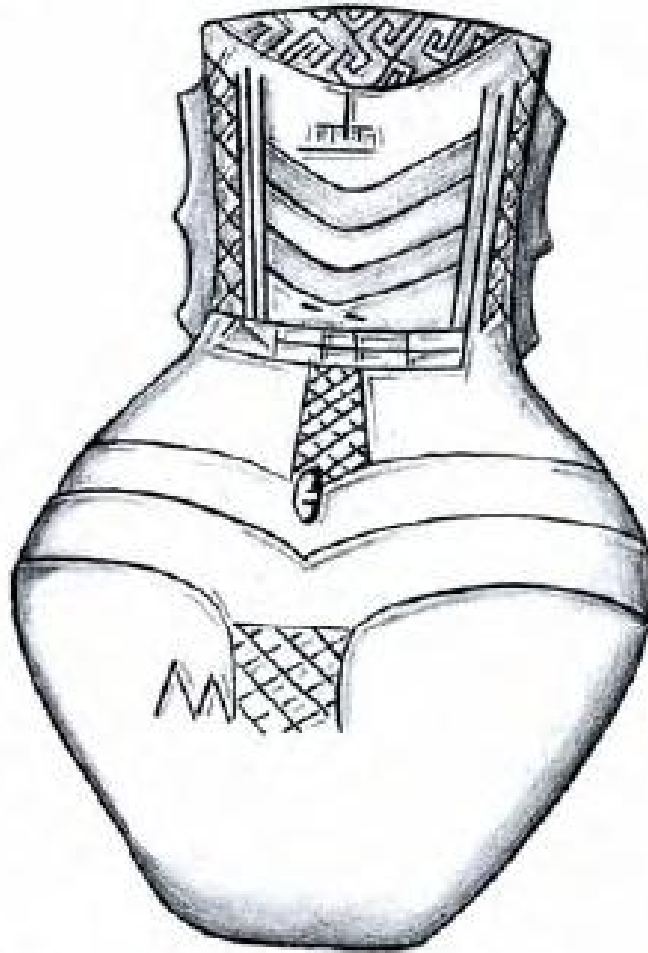


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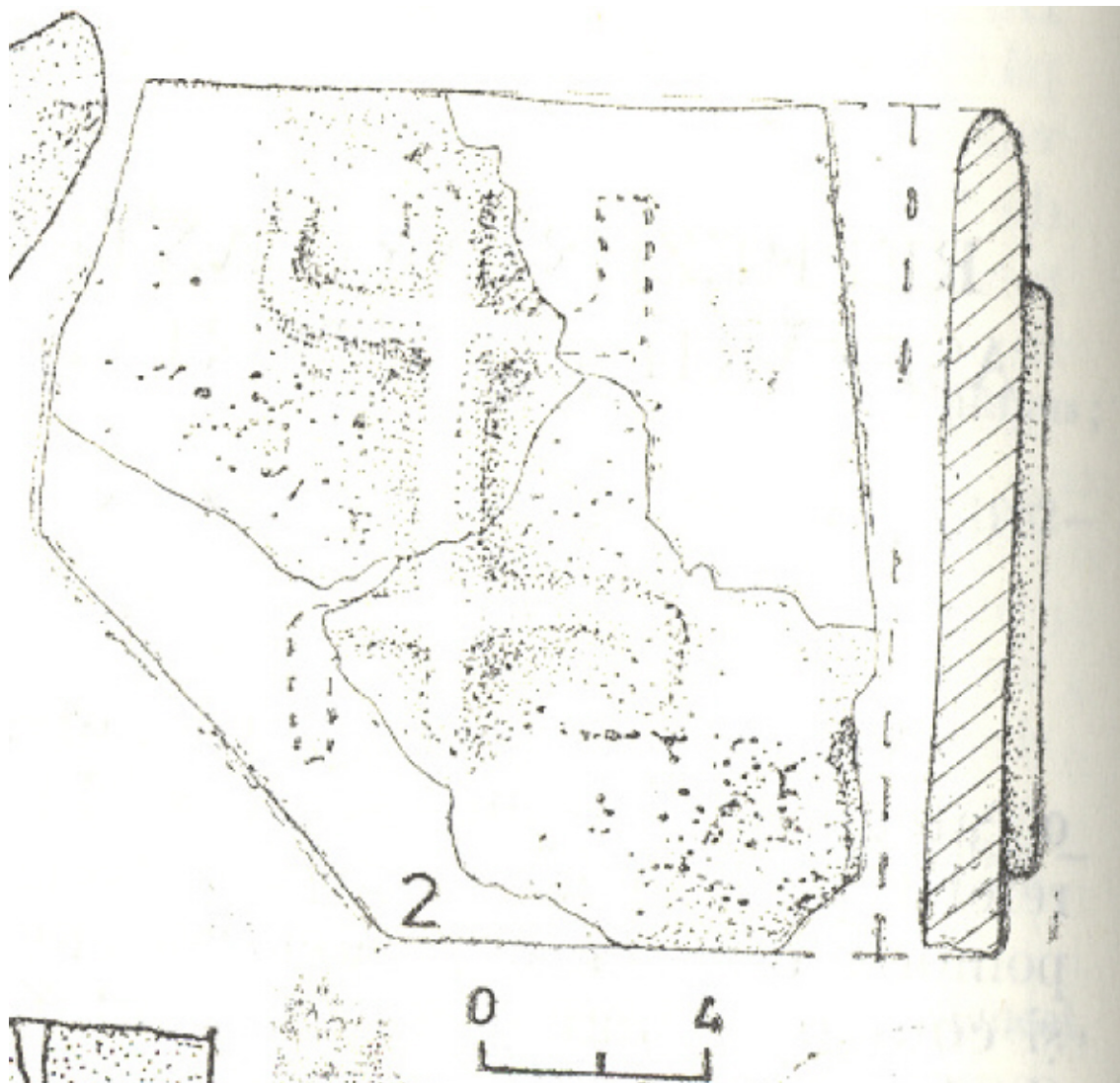


Figure 40: Dancing figure, Scânteia, Romania. Cucuteni A-3 (4300–4050 BCE). C-M Lazarovici, excavator. From Mantu (Lazarovici) 1992. Courtesy Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici.

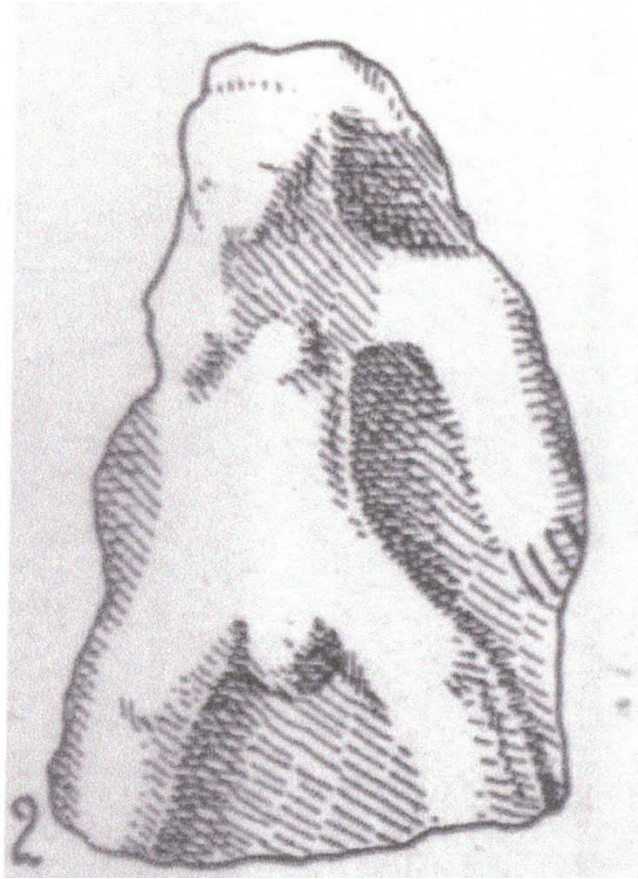


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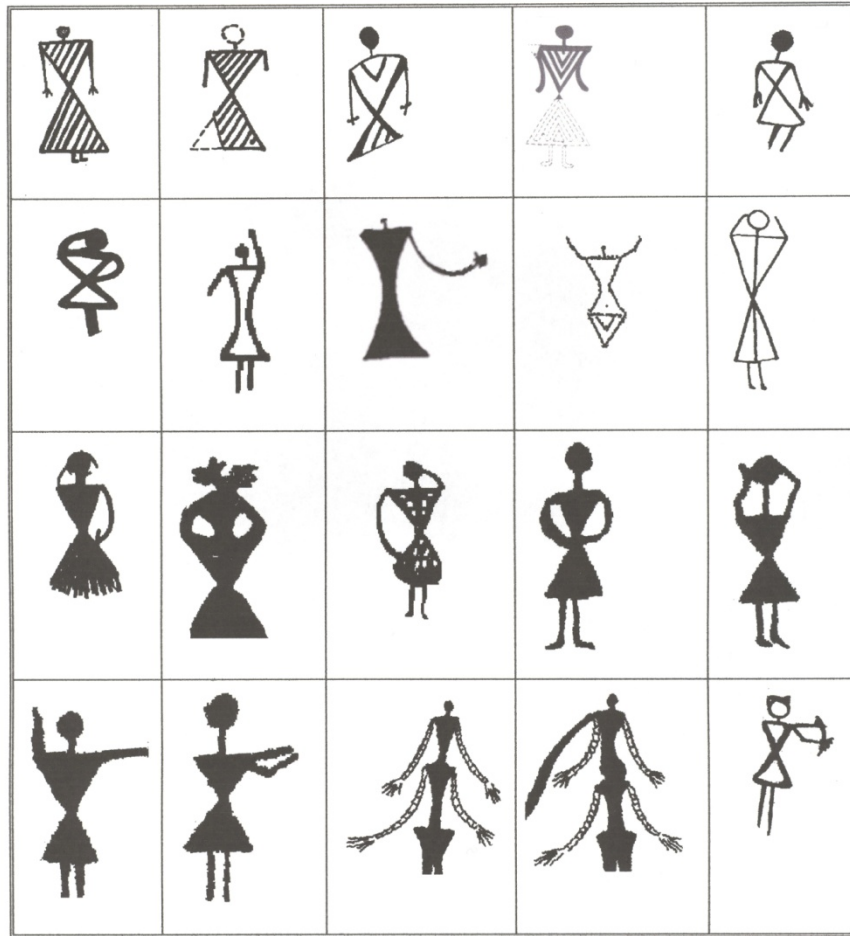


Figure 43: Female silhouettes, painted and incised. Cornelia-Magda (Mantu) Lazarovici, excavator. C-M Lazarovici, 2009: 93, Figure 9. Cucuteni A-B, B = Tripolie BII and CI; ca. 4100–3500 CAL BCE sites from Romania, Poland, Ukraine. Courtesy Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici.



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Figure 46: Frog-female figures. Hacilar Culture. Anatolian Civilizations Museum, Ankara. Photograph by Gregory L. Dexter.



Figure 47: Ivory pendant showing scorpion and frog. Rehman Dheri, Early Kot Diji phase of the Indus Valley civilization, 3200–2800 BCE. Le Martin, 2010. Courtesy Max Le Martin.

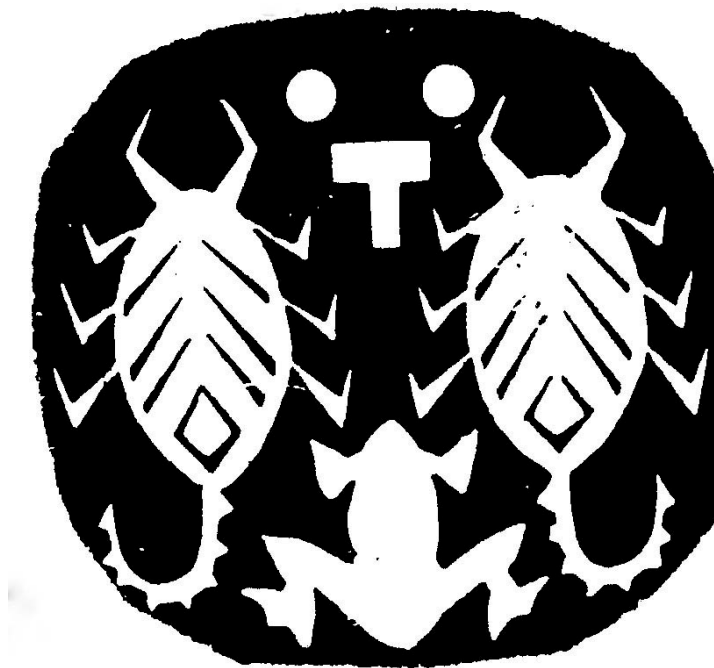


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Black marble. Private collection of Max Le Martin. In Le Martin, n.d., "Lajjā-Gaurī-
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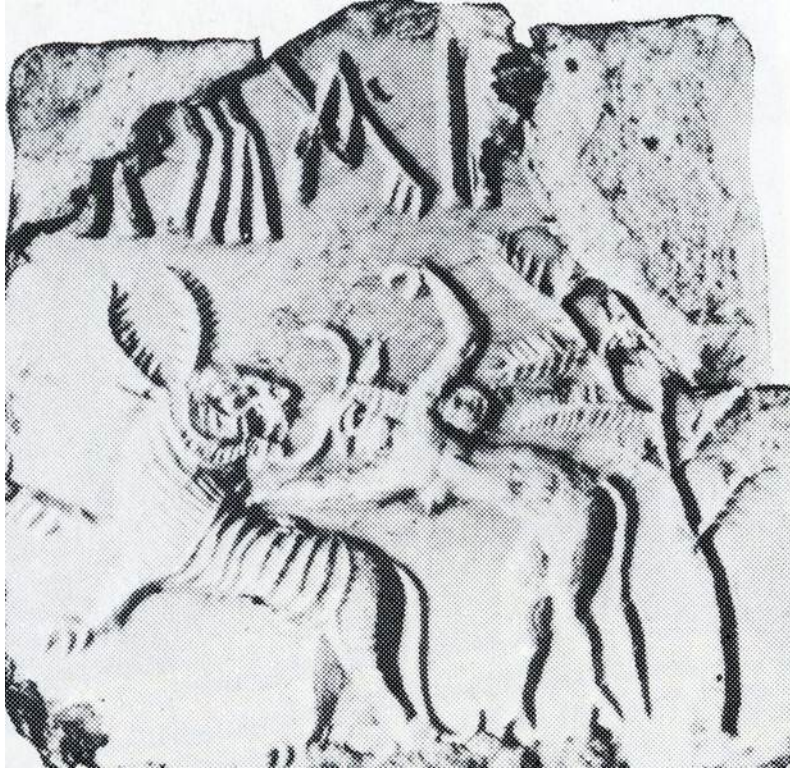


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Figure 65: Woman-tiger. Seal from Mohenjo-daro. National Museum, New Delhi. Jayakar 1990, figure 7.



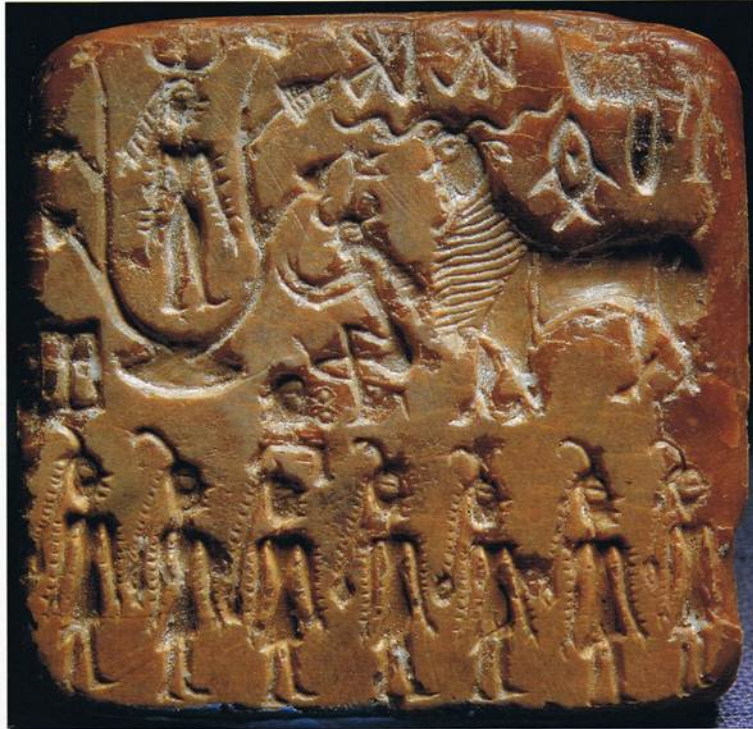
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Figure 72: Dancing Vajravārāhī/Dorje Pagmo. Red figure. Nepal, Himalayas; Central Tibet. Himalayas 1.LACMAM74_106_1. Courtesy Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

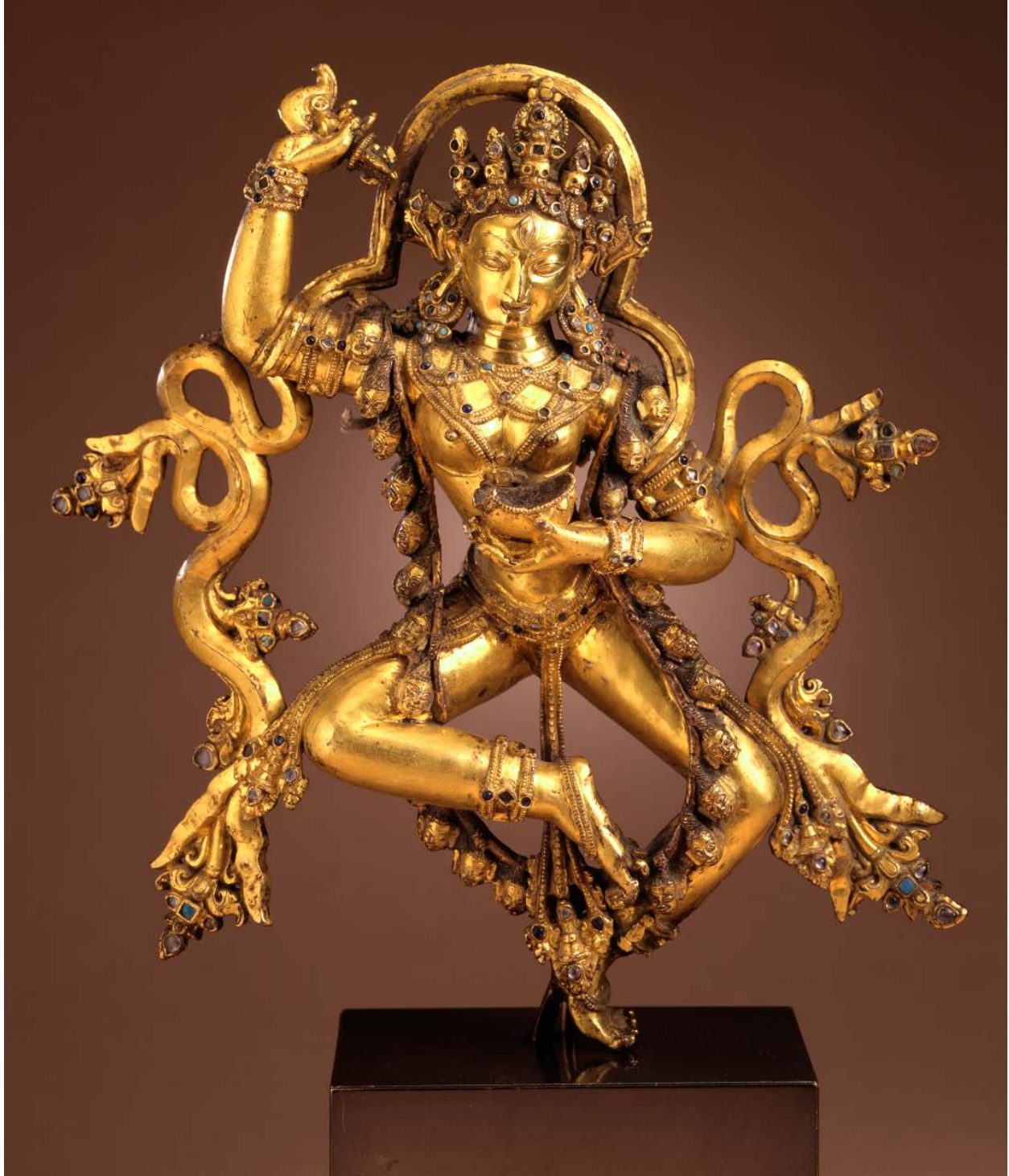


Figure 73: Dancing Vajravārāhī/Vajrayoginī. Himalayas, Central Tibet. Courtesy Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

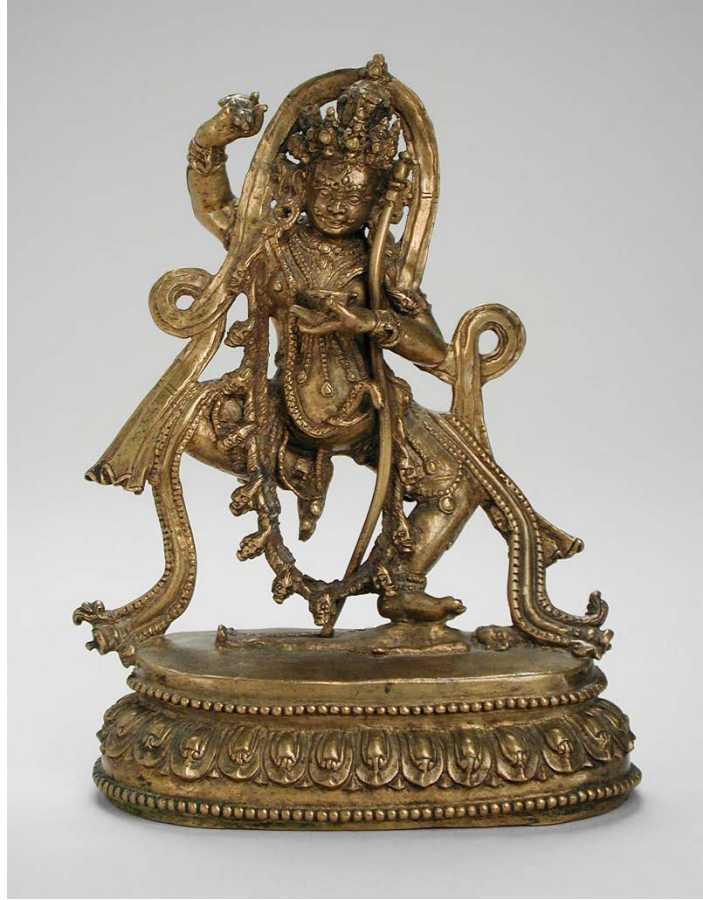


Figure 74: Vajravārāhī. Central Tibet. Himalayas 1.LACMAM74_106_1. Courtesy Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



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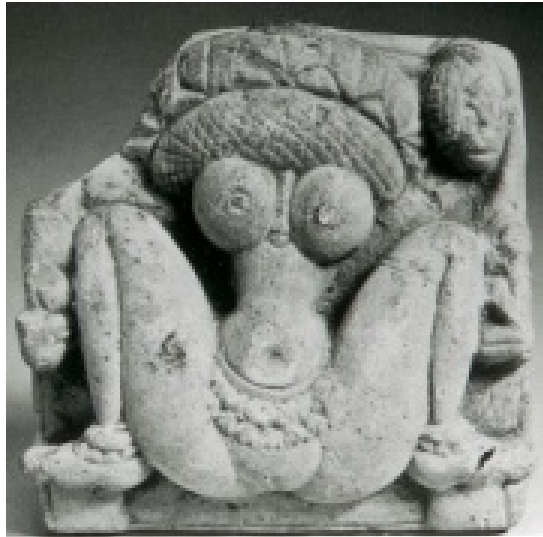


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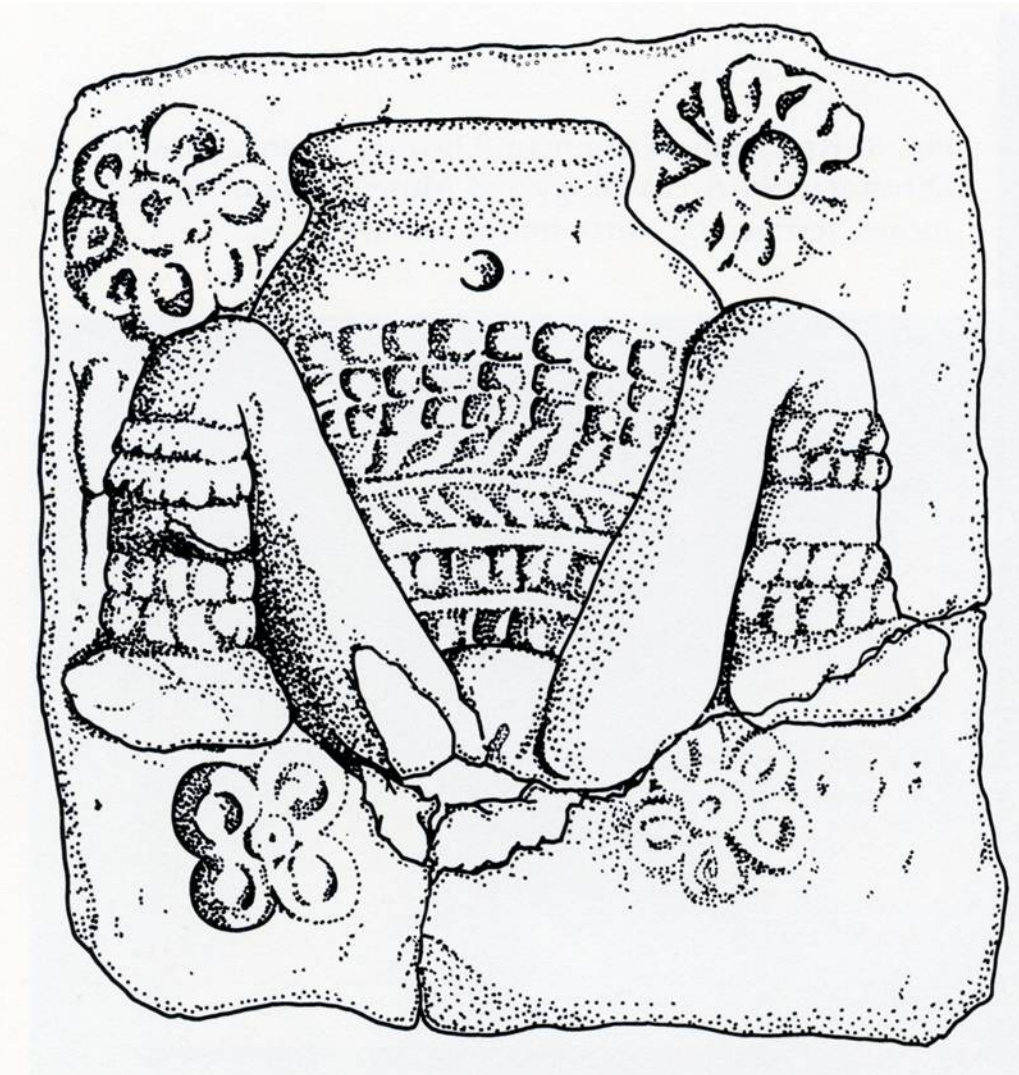


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Figure 86: Lajjā Gaurī, silver seal. Kashmir Smat, second century CE. 1.9 cm × 1.9 cm.
From the private collection of Max Le Martin, purchased at an auction in British
Columbia. Courtesy Max Le Martin.



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Allahabad district, UP, Kushana
period. 17.5 x 15 cm. Patna
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Figure 87: Lajjā Gaurī. Kaushambi, Allahabad District, Kushana Period first to third
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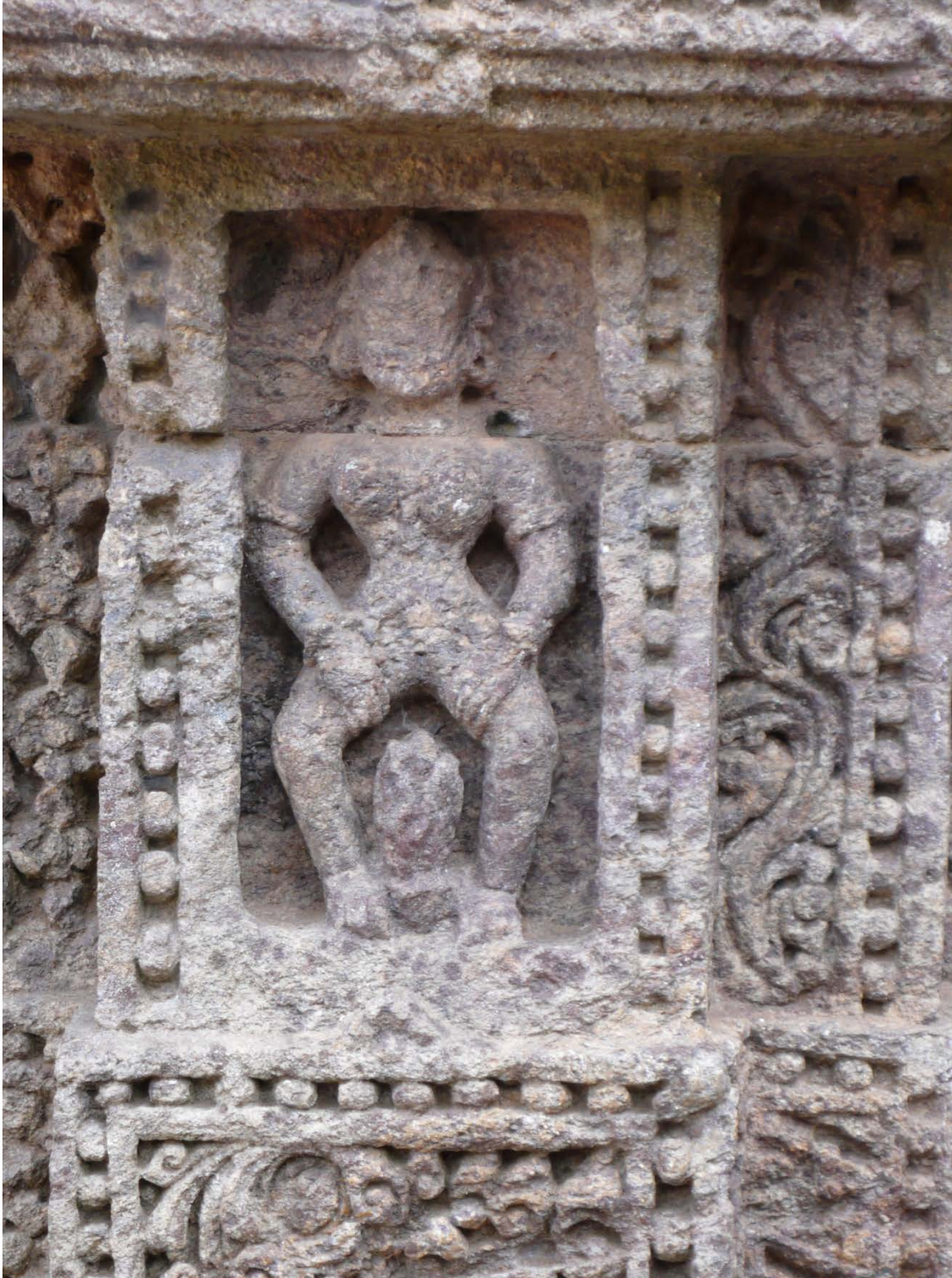


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