

# Re: The eternal female: Worship of the mother goddess

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On Feb 12, 2:28 pm, Jack Linthicum <jacklinthi...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

Stonehenge, Crete, Thera, pretty much a tourist's tour of the Bronze Age, and earlier, cultures that honored or featured women.

But the author has missed the revelations about the Phaistos Disk.

The eternal female: Worship of the mother goddess

Thursday, 12 February 2009

Some experts believe megalithic societies were matrilineal, with women placed at the apex of the civilisation not as rulers, but as birth-givers. Perhaps a line can be traced from the Natufian women of Lebanon, or even as far back as the 24,000-year-old Venus of Willendorf . After all, women were the original seed-gatherers while men went out to hunt. It was they who probably developed the most intimate expertise in agriculture, using instinct and common sense to select the best seeds for the next year's crops, unwittingly instituting what we now call artificial selection.

The mother goddess took a variety of different forms. Sometimes she was a snake, or a vulture, or the Moon. Each symbol represented a cycle of death, birth and regeneration: the snake hibernates, then wakes up and sheds her skin; the vulture recycles dead flesh by eating it; and the Moon dies and is reborn every 28 days, mirroring the feminine menstrual cycle.

Moon worship was very highly advanced in megalithic times. It has recently been recognised that temples such as Stonehenge were originally built to glorify the Moon as well as the Sun. Every month, shafts of moonlight line up perfectly with gaps in the massive stones, the architects having positioned them precisely to accommodate the subtly shifting patterns of the Moon's rising and setting cycles, that repeat themselves exactly every 18.6 years. The full moon has had historic and religious significance going back thousands of years, since it was by the light of the full moon that many hunter-gathering

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tribes hunted, providing the best opportunities for a good catch.

Matriarch island: The enigmatic civilisation of Minoan Crete

Europe's mother goddess culture grew to its climax on the Mediterranean island of Crete in the second millennium BC. Here it also survived longest. Crete thrived on trade routes that linked the Mediterranean with the rest of megalithic Europe and North Africa. The flowering of the island's Minoan civilisation coincided with the growth of the Indus Valley civilisation, from c3300 to 1700 BCE. Homer, a Greek poet who wrote in the eighth century BCE, claimed there were as many as 90 cities on Crete, and archaeologists have found a number of "palaces", including the largest of all at the island's capital, Knossos.

The discovery of this ancient island civilisation was chiefly the work of Sir Arthur Evans, an eccentric but meticulous Victorian archaeologist. As soon as he set foot on Crete in 1894, Evans rigorously pursued the mystery of the mythical King Minos, who, legend has it, ruled from a fabulous palace at Knossos which housed an appalling monster, the minotaur. Half-man, half-bull, this beast lived in an impenetrable maze and feasted off the flesh of still-living virgins.

Minoan Crete was like a heart pumping at the centre of the Bronze Age trading system. Its trade links stretched as far as Mesopotamia in the east, to Spain in the west. Tin and copper were imported and exported for smelting into bronze, while luxury crops such as bright yellow saffron were grown in the island's fields and exported as flavouring for food.

Evans discovered that the people of ancient Crete followed the megalithic tradition. Women and men had equal rights. Wall paintings from the palaces of Knossos and Phaistos show that women were able to express themselves freely. They are depicted as bare-breasted, wearing short-sleeved shirts open to the navel and long, flowing, layered skirts.

Statues, vases and wall paintings show images of sporting contests where women competed equally alongside men. The island's favourite sport was the impossible-sounding bull-vaulting. An acrobat (sometimes female) would grab the horns of a bull and somersault on to its back. Then, in a second somersault, she would leap off its back and land upright, with her feet back on the ground. No wonder Minoan women were the first people known to have worn fitted garments and bodices essential prerequisites, you would think, for a sport like this.

Women did not dominate society, but they did oversee it. Frescoes at the palace of Thera, on the island of Santorini, 100km north of Crete, show women standing on balconies overseeing processions of young men who are carrying an animal for sacrifice. Most priests on Minoan Crete

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were female. In Minoan law, women retained full control of their property. They even had the right to divorce at pleasure. It was a tradition, too, that a mother's brother was responsible for bringing up her children. Customs such as these, which seem strange to us today, lingered long in the Mediterranean mind.

Minoan palaces were not mighty and dominant like those in Egypt or Sumeria. Rather, they functioned as the region's communal administrative and religious centres, providing a place of work for craftsmen, storage spaces for food and temples for goddess-worship. One look at a model reconstruction of the palace at Knossos and you can understand why Greek invaders might later imagine that the corridors and irrigation channels resembled an impenetrable maze.

Like the traders of the Indus Valley and other European megalithic people, the Minoans had their own form of symbolism which shows that their civilisation was culturally and technologically advanced. In 1903, archaeologists excavating the palace of Phaistos, on the southern side of the island, made a discovery which has had historians baffled ever since.

The Phaistos Disc, currently on display at the archaeological museum in Herakleion, Crete, is thought to date from some time between 1850 and 1600BCE. It contains 45 unique symbols arranged in a spiral shape, resembling the swirls found on vases at Knossos, or even in European megalithic tombs such as that at Newgrange in Ireland. No one really knows who made the disc, or what the symbols mean, but it does show that the people of Minoan Crete were artistic, prosperous and highly ingenious.

Following excavations at a site called Akrotiri in 1967, the Minoans are now known to have spread to the island of Santorini. There, archaeologists have discovered the remains of a vast, ancient island city which had been buried for thousands of years under thick layers of volcanic ash. Although only the southern tip of the town has so far been examined, houses three storeys high have been unearthed with fine wall paintings, stone staircases, columns and large ceramic storage jars, mills and pottery. Minoan Akrotiri even boasted a highly developed drainage system, featuring the world's first known clay pipes with separate channels for hot and cold water supplies.

A distinct pattern is discernible from the evidence that has been left by these early civilisations. Stretching from the ancient Indus Valley, right across the mountains of Anatolia, to the islands of the Mediterranean and as far as the topmost island of Orkney in Scotland, what emerges is a series of like-minded civilisations whose temples and graves bear witness to a lifestyle of peace and a veneration for mother nature. Their common belief in the continuous cycle of birth, death and regeneration is personified by their worship of a mother goddess in all her forms: snake, vulture, pregnant woman or moon. Excellence in craftwork, technical skill and exquisite art are some of

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their legacies, along with a spirit of natural equality. This was not to continue. During the second millennium BC, the last of these early civilisations fell. New power in the form of military might was sweeping across Europe, the Middle East and Asia. Warriors had worked out how to prey off the profits of others, ushering in an age when human elitism, ruthlessness and terror had their true beginnings.

<http://www.archaeologynews.org/story.asp?ID=392606&Title=The%20eterna...>

and

<http://tierneylab.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/07/30/a-fake-famous-disc/?ap...>

and

<http://www.minervamagazine.com/phaistos.asp>

Hi, Jack !

I love your posts, but this time you made a mistake by quoting only papers, which consider the Phaistos Disk as Minoan. It's too bad that you didn't also quote a discussion I've had in this Group in 2004 about the matter. So, I repeat it here :

The arguments in favour of a Minoan origin of the Phaistos Disk are of two kinds :

1)– "The Phaistos Disk has been found in Crete. Therefore, it "must" be Minoan".

It's obvious that such an argument has no value : Hittite tablets have been found in Egypt, and Egyptian scarabs in Crete. Moreover, there are **STRONG** reasons going against such an idea :

a)– In spite of **EXTENSIVE** diggings in Crete, **NO** other Disk has been found. Such an isolation would be strange if the Disk was Minoan. It's a normal thing if it has been **IMPORTED**.

b)– It has been shown that the clay of the Phaistos Disk was not Cretan . (Research done at the beginning of the 20ies. Conclusion mentioned by G. Glotz in "La Civilisation Egéenne" (p. 434): the Disk's clay is **NOT** Cretan.

c)– the **BAKING** is not Minoan : **NONE** of the Minoan tablets have been baked in an oven. They were burned by accident, into a fire.

d)– the use of stamps **IN RELIEF** is not Minoan. **ALL** the Minoan stamps are "in hollow". There are **ONLY TWO** exceptions : 1)– The jug n° 14276, decorated by stamping, with a stamp bearing the sign n°12. 2)– the clay–sealing HM 992, made with a stamp corresponding to Sign n° 21. The fact that the jug n° 14276 is the **ONLY ONE** of this kind amongst hundreds of jugs found in Crete, and the fact that both exceptions have been stamped with stamps in relief **BEARING** signs of the Phaistos Disk, are **STRONG REASONS** for seeing both items as **IMPORTS**, like the Phaistos Disk itself, **COMING** from the same **FOREIGN CULTURE**.

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e)– Several hieroglyphs of the Phaistos Disk cannot be Minoan, but they belong to other Cultures.

e.g. sign n° 2 (Philistine Culture) — Sign n° 6 (Ugarit and Mycenes)

— Sign n° 12 ("People of the Sea") — Sign n° 25 (Keros–Syros Culture) — Etc.

2)– "The Arkalochori Axe has also been found in Crete. Its script "has similarities to Linear A" and to the Phaistos Disk's script. Moreover, it's "a typical Minoan double axe".

The argument is also without real value:

a)– The "double axe" was not only Minoan. It was also known in Anatolia (See for instance the Legend of the Amazons).

b)– The votive offerings in the Arkalochori cave were not all "Minoan". Some, like the "long swords" found with the axe, belonged to the Philistine Culture.

c)– the script has NOTHING to do with Linear A : only ONE sign, out of 11, has a correspondent in Linear A (NA–sign).

d)– The script is not the same as the Phaistos Disk's script. In fact, its most noticeable links are with the other "Proto–Philistine Scripts", for instance with the "Dagger from Lachish" or the "Sherd from Gezer" (See "Les Proto–Ioniens..." by Jean Faucounau, Fig. 28).

The CONCLUSION is obvious : there is no reason for seeing in the Phaistos Disk a Minoan artifact. On the contrary, it appears as an IMPORT. And such has been the opinion of most scholars : A.Evans, A.Reinach, G. Glotz, J. Chadwick, J. Faucounau, etc. to quote a few of them.

And I will not mention that this view has been DEFINITELY confirmed by the VERIFIED Proto–Ionic decipherment of the Phaistos Disk (See the several papers and books (in French) of J. Faucounau.

My CONCLUSION : The worship of a mother Goddess is NOT ONLY "Minoan", but belongs to several Ancient Cultures.

grapheus

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