

## 5. 85,000, Ocher at Kapthurin Formation Plus Other Sites.

*ReGenesis* is the first open-access encyclopedia to  
liberate pre-colonial research  
to its rightful 3,000,000 BCE origins  
- and -  
liberate female spirituality.  
(RGS.)

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### *Use of Ocher (or Ochre).*

Beginning of *symbolic culture* that  
'long antedate[s] the production of  
representational imagery on inanimate surfaces'  
(i.e. Upper Paleolithic rock painting.)  
(ECC: 509-510.)

### *Ocher is the Root of all Religions.*

Given that ochre is at the core of the  
earliest appearance of symbolic culture,  
propose that Qafzeh Cave  
is the earliest known spiritual culture.  
(RGS.)

According to S. McBrearty in "The Middle Pleistocene of East Africa," over 70 pieces of red ocher/ochre (iron oxide) were found at the Kenya site called, Kapthurin Formation, c. 285,000 BCE. (MPEA: 92.) Given extensive archaeological and geological evidence, other significant BCE ocher sites are: The Cave of Becov c. 250,000; Maastricht-Belvedere in the Netherlands c. 2000,000; \* the Bambata and Pomongwe Caves in Zimbabwe c. 125,000; the Olduvai BK II, developed Oldowan levels in Tanzania; Wonderwerk Cave in the North Cape region of South Africa; the Twin Rivers in Zambia; Blombos Cave in South Africa c. 70,000; and the Lion Cavern in South Africa c. 43,200. (EKP: 89-135; ECC: 515.) \* Zorich, Zach. "Neanderthals in Color." *Archaeology* 65.3 (May-Jun. 2012): 18. (NC.)

The following discussion speaks to the ancient significance of ocher (or ochre) as the beginning of *symbolic culture* that "long antedate[s] the production of

representational imagery on inanimate surfaces (i.e., Upper Paleolithic rock painting).” (ECC: 509-510.)

The record of pigment use in the course of prehistory is consistent with the neurological and symbolic regularities discussed above. Black and red pigments were the earliest to occur in prehistory [ancient history] and are relatively abundant in Paleolithic sites. Of the two colors, it is red that dominates the Paleolithic color palette (Bahn and Vertut 1997: 115), usually in the form of ochre, ‘an earthy, pulverulent, red [hematite], yellow, or brown [limonite, goethite] iron oxide that is used as a pigment’ (Bates and Jackson 1980). Clearly, the ochre found in archaeological sites was not necessarily acquired and/or used for its color and in symbolic contexts. The inclusion of iron oxides in an archaeological deposit may be the result of natural depositional processes or of its use (e.g., as preservatives or medicines) because of physical or chemical properties to which color was incidental and irrelevant. Indeed, 15 years ago acceptance of archaeological finds as indications of Middle Paleolithic symbolism-including color symbolism-was a risky, not to say naive, proposition (Bar-Yosef 1988, Chase and Dibble 1987). Since then, however, new discoveries and new analyses have been advanced as support for the claim that the mental and cognitive capacities for symbolic behavior were already in place by the Middle Paleolithic (d’Errico and Nowell 2,000; Hayden 1993; Hovers et al. 1995; Hovers, Kimbel, and Rak 2000; Marshack 1989, 1996; Schepartz 1993) (ECC: 493).

On the basis of the abundant ochre record from Africa, whose beginnings can be traced to the late Middle Pleistocene, Knight, Power, and Watts (1995) and Watts (1999) have postulated that symbolic culture as a systematic behavior emerged within an African Middle Stone Age population of modern humans. Their line of reasoning is characteristic of the ‘symbols as tokens’ approach in that it views symbols as information carriers and places their origins in rational behavior designed to satisfy material needs (Robb 1998). ... According to the suggested model, the use of ochre as the first cultural symbolic construct emerged as a sociobiological response to the reproductive stress [including menstruation] experienced by females during the phase of encephalization associated with archaic *H. sapiens*. ... They argue that the signal of menstruation, appropriated from an individual by a collective, communicated for the first time a ‘symbolic’ construct, and because the symbol as such came into being only within a social context they view the use of ochre as the beginning of symbolic culture. Knight, Power, and Watts (1995) and Watts (1999) see clear indications in the African archaeological record that the beginnings of the postulated symbolic culture long antedate the production of representational imagery on inanimate surfaces (i.e., Upper Paleolithic rock painting). Watts (1999) accepts that the Middle Stone Age does not share the elaborate symbolic culture evident in the Late Stone Age (and the Upper Paleolithic in

Europe) but maintains that all the essential elements appear to have been in place by, or shortly before, the Last Interglacial-within the Middle Stone Age 2 and approximately coincident with the emergence of anatomically modern humans. Significantly, he notes that the frequency and intensity of the use of ochre increase gradually over time from the Middle Stone Age onwards (ECC: 509-510).

For further ochre research:

- Bednarik, Robert G. "The Earliest Evidence of Palaeoart." *Rock Art Research: The Journal of the Australian Rock Art Research Association and the International Federation of Rock Art Organizations* 20.2 (Nov. 2003): 89-135. (EKP.)
- Collins, Christopher. *Paleopoetics: The Evolution of the Preliterate Imagination*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2013. (PE.)
- Hovers, Erella, et al. "An Early Case of Color Symbolism: Ochre Use by Modern Humans in Qafzeh Cave." *Current Anthropology* 44.4 (Aug.-Oct. 2003): 491-522. (ECC.)
- Marshack, Alexander. "On Paleolithic Ochre and the Early Uses of Color and Symbols." *Current Anthropology* 22.2 (Apr. 1981): 188-191. (POE.)
- McBrearty, S. "The Middle Pleistocene of East Africa." *Human Roots: Africa and Asia in the Middle Pleistocene*. Eds. Lawrence S. Barham, and K. Robson-Brown. Bristol, England: Published for the Centre for Human Evolutionary Research at the University of Bristol, by the Western Academic & Specialist Press, 2001. 81-92. (MPEA.)

Further research on ancient ochre: 500,000-300,000, Dark Mother Tan-Tan of Morocco; 280,000-250,000, The Berekhat Ram Figure; 92,000, Qafzeh Cave and Ochre Symbolism; 70,000, Blombos Cave and V Shaped Engraving; 50,000, African Homo Sapiens Migrations and Matrilineal Motherline; 31,000, Chauvet Cave and Vulva Engravings; 10,000, Grotta dell'Addaura; 2600-2000, Early Bronze Age, Crete, Chthonian \* Prepalatial/Early Minoan (EM I-III); and 1500, Lachish Ewer, Triangle, and Menorah. (RGS.)

\* (Earth mother, Chthonia.)

IMAGE: OCHER FROM KAPTHURIN FORMATION: KENYA, AFRICA.

ILLUSTRATION: © GSA. DESCRIPTION KAPTHURIN FORMATION OCHER, MIDDLE PLEISTOCENE OF EAST AFRICA, KENYA,

SLIDE LOCATION , SHEET , ROW , SLEEVE , SLIDE # , BCE.

ON LOCATION: ILLUSTRATION/IMAGE IN PROCESS.

NOTE 1: FIELDWORK PROJECT.

PHOTO NOTE:

FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND IMAGES OF: KAPTHURIN FORMATION C. 285,000 BCE; CAVE OF BECOV C. 250,000; THE BAMBATA AND POMONGWE CAVES IN ZIMBABWE C. 125,000; THE OLDUVAI BK II, OLDDOWAN LEVELS IN TANZANIA; WONDERWERK CAVE IN THE NORTH CAPE REGION OF SOUTH AFRICA; THE TWIN RIVERS IN ZAMBIA; BLOMBOS CAVE IN SOUTH AFRICA

C. 70,000; AND THE LION CAVERN IN SOUTH AFRICA c. 3,200 (EKP: 89-135;  
ECC: 515). (RGS.)

RESOURCE: (ARCHAEOLOGY, ARCHITECTURE & ART.)

RESOURCE: (BRITISH MUSEUM.)

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