

## 8. 70,000, Blombos Cave and V Shaped Engravings

*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.)

\* \* \*

### *Symbols.*

Symbols  
transcend rational analysis,  
arise from the unconscious,  
and mediate meaning in human life.  
(SOG: 233; DOF.)

### Blombos Geometric Art.

Currently, the oldest known examples  
of specifically symbolic practices.  
(BC: 5.)

### *Symbolic Codes.*

The Blombos collection,  
matched piecemeal elsewhere in Africa,  
suggests a population engaged in the  
material symbolic codes.  
(DH: 200-201.)

### *Significant Blombos Finds.*

There are two remarkable Blombos results from this site,  
including tool industry and rich ochre [ochre] assemblage,  
much of which is worked, and perhaps  
most spectacularly two pieces are engraved designs.  
(MAU: 113.)

Blombos Cave is located on a high cliff in the Blombosfontein Nature Reserve in southern Africa near Still Bay, approximately 100 miles from the Indian Ocean. (EB: 309.) Recent discoveries include deliberately engraved designs on both bone and ochre (or ochre) pieces including the Blombos Ochre Plaque as illustrated below. (EB: 309.) In “An Engraved Bone Fragment from, c. 70,000-Year-Old Middle Stone Age Levels at Blombos Cave South Africa: Implications for the Origin of Symbolism and Language,” Francesco d’Errico, et al. state that the “cut marks are typically V shaped.” (EB: 314.) \* They add, “such engraving was a

symbolic act with symbolic meaning” and evidence an articulate oral language that was most likely acquired or learned through “linguistic communication rather than by observation or mimicry.” (EB: 309, 317.)

\* Further dating considerations are c. 77,000 – 76,000 years old.

In 1989 CE, more than a decade prior to the findings published by d’Errico, Gimbutas addressed the symbolic meaning of the ancient V iconography, stating that the V, as well as the double chevron, and triple V, are associated with the source of life waters and the great mother as *Life Giver*. (LOG: 1.) In *dark mother*, Birnbaum adds that ochre and the pubic V were special fertility trademarks of the African dark mother, eventually dispersed to all continents during the African migrations. (DM: 61-62.)

In addition to the pubic V shaped cut marks on the Blombos Ochre Plaque, suggest an additional (Blombos) interpretation is a diamond – shaped lozenge or conjoined triangles at the apexes: vulva iconography that is frequently illustrated and discussed by archaeologists Alexander Marshack, Marija Gimbutas, \* and Siegfried Giedion. Another diamond – shaped lozenge or conjoined triangle includes the engravings on a baton \*\* from Lorthet cave in the Hautes – Pyrénées France. (TROC: 261-262.) Giedion says that this diamond – shaped lozenge is “an extremely widespread fertility symbol, that extends from primeval times into the high civilizations, though this does not necessarily imply an unbroken line of continuity.” (EP: 190, 192, 198-9, 227-8, 338, Fig. 132.)

\* Further research including examples of lozenges and triangles with a center dot, (COG plus LOG: 143.)

\*\* The Musée des Antiquités Nationales, Saint-Germain-En-Laye, France, just outside of Paris.

The following is an enhanced discussion about the V – Vulva iconography:

The palace of Knossos was itself called *labyrinthos*, or ‘the palace of the double-axes and both the labyrinth, a universal symbol of the uterine maze, and the double-axe from the word labrys (labia/lip)’ fertile womb of the Great Mother Earth (EW: 65). Cameron adds that from this same ‘root comes the word labia, the elaborate folds of the labia majora and the labia minora of the vulva. The butterfly/double – axe symbol could represent [the] opened labia (SA: 10, n. 7; RGS). (RGS: 30,000, Labyrinths, Spirals, and Meanders).

Campbell’s discussion of the *bindu* and *yantras* expands on the vocabulary of V symbology:

Among the best known of those Indian tantric diagrams [of interlocking triangles] known as *yantras*, designed to inspire and support meditation, that explicit symbol of female energy in its generative role. This triangle is an adaptation of the prominent genital triangle of the typical Neolithic female statuette. The dot is known as the *bindu*, the ‘drop’ (which, like a drop of oil in water, expands), and the triangle as the *yoni* (womb, vagina, vulva; place of origin, birth, and rest). As contemplated by the *Sakti* worshiper, what whole sign is of the Goddess, alone, as *maya-sakti-devi*, in the sense of those earliest Neolithic figurines, recognized and interpreted by Gimbutas, of the goddess ‘absolute and single in her generative role,’ at once the cause and the substance (like the spider in its web) of this universe and its life (MN: 78).

Further migration research \* and dating refinements:

- Journey of Man*. Dir. Jennifer Beamish. Eds. Clive Maltby, Gregers Sall, and Spencer Wells. Tigress Productions, Public Broadcasting Service (U.S.), et al. 1 videodisc (120 min.) PBS Home Video, 2004. (JOM.)
- Mitchell, Peter. *African Connections: Archaeological Perspectives on Africa and the Wider World*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira, 2005. (ACA.)
- Stahl, Ann Brower, Ed. *African Archaeology: A Critical Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005. (AAC.)
- Zimmer, Carl. "The First Farmers." *New York Times*, Oct. 18, 2016: D31, D6. (TFF.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Oldest Fossils of Homo Sapiens Found in Morocco, Altering History of Our Species." *New York Times*, Jun. 7, 2017: A6. (OFH.)
- Zorich, Zach. "New Evidence for Mankind's Earliest Migrations." *Archaeology* 64.3 (May-Jun. 2011): 9-10, 66. (NEM.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Timelines: Tracking When Humans, Neanderthals, and Denisovans Crossed Paths – And What Became of Their Offspring." *Archaeology* 69.4 (Jul.-Aug. 2016): 33-35. (TT.)
- \* Also see G. Connah's *Forgotten Africa* (2004).

Further research on Blombos Cave including dating considerations:

- Henshilwood, Christopher S. *Holocene Prehistory of the Southern Cape, South Africa: Excavations at Blombos Cave and the Blombosfontein Nature Reserve*. Oxford, England: Archaeopress, 2008. (HPS.)
- Jabr, Ferris. "Ars Longa." *New York Times Magazine*, Dec. 7, 2014: 18, 20. (ARSL.)
- Tattersall, Ian. *The Fossil Trail: How We Know What We Think We Know about Human Evolution*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009. 244-245. (FT.)

For general research and interpretations of megalithic iconography:

- Collins, Christopher. *Paleopoetics: The Evolution of the Preliterate Imagination*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2013. (PE.)
- Daniel, Glyn E. *The Megalith Builders of Western Europe*. London, England: Hutchinson, 1958. (MB.)
- Dunbar, Robin Ian MacDonald, Chris Knight, and Camilla Power, Eds. *The Evolution of Culture: A Historical and Scientific Overview*. Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 1999. (EC.)
- Gimbutas, Marija Alseikaite. *Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe, 6500-3500 BC: Myths and Cult Images*. 2nd ed. London, England: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 1984. [*The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe, 7000-3500 BC: Myths, Legends, and Cult Images*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974.] (GGE.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Language of the Goddess*. San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1989. (LOG)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Civilization of the Goddess: The World of Europe*. San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1991. (COG.)
- Marshack, Alexander. *The Roots of Civilization: The Cognitive Beginnings of Man's First Art, Symbol and Notation*. Mount Kisco, NY: Moyer Bell, 1991. (TROC.)
- 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)

Twohig, Elizabeth Shee. *The Megalithic Art of Western Europe*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press: 1981. (MAWE.)

Further research on ancient Dark Mothers (Creatrix?) and related trade routes: 3,000,000, Overview of Hominid Evolution Including Dark Mothers and Later Migrations; 500,000-300,000, Dark Mother Tan-Tan of Morocco; 280,000-250,000, The Berekhat Ram Figure; 50,000, African Homo Sapiens Migrations and Matrilineal Motherline; 40,000, Har Karkom; 30,000-25,000, Aurignacian Age; 30,000-25,000, Goddess of Willendorf, Austria; 26,000, Grimaldi Caves; 25,000-20,000, Gravettian Age; 25,000, Caravanserai, Trade Routes, and Dark Mothers; 25,000-20,000, Goddess of Laussel; 24,000, Dolni Vestonice; 23,000, Austrian Goddess of Lespugue; 10,000, Grotta dell'Addaura; 7000, Jericho, Canaan/Palestine: Mesolithic to Neolithic; 7000, Hieros Gamos; 6000, Sicilians to Malta; 5200, Malta and Gozo; 4700, Dolmens; 2200, Nahariyah and Ashrath-Yam; 1900-1800, Dawning of the African Alphabet and the Aniconic Goddess Triangle; 1000, Ephesus, Anatolia; 800, Tanit; 800, Carthage, Africa, the Goddess Tanit and Sacrifice; 750-650, Cybele and King Midas, Anatolia; 664-525, Neith and the Black Virgin Mary Temple at Sais, Egypt; 600, Goddess Kaabou at Petra, Jordan plus Mecca, Saudi Arabia; 400, Cathedra Goddess Isis; and 370, Isis and Philae, Egypt. (RGS.) Additional Goddess considerations from other ancient populations and time periods include: German Hoherfels (40,000 BCE); Russian Kostenki - Borshevo (25,000 BCE); \* and French Carbonnel (4,000 BCE). \*Although Stone Age female (i.e. vulva) finds are abundant, archaeological male (phallus) discoveries are rare and timeline starts around 28,000-26,000 BCE. (Don Hitchcock. [Donsmaps.com/venustimeline.html](http://Donsmaps.com/venustimeline.html))

Further research on vulva images: 34,000-28,000, Les Eyzies Vulva Engravings, Dordogne Caves; 31,000, Chauvet Cave and Vulva Engravings; 30,000-25,000, Aurignacian Age; 30,000-25,000, Goddess of Willendorf, Austria; 25,000-20,000, Goddess of Laussel; 5300-4300, Climactic Phase and Script in Old Europe; 3000-2000, Cycladic Goddesses; 2600-2000, Early Bronze Age, Crete, Chthonian; and 400, Celtic Sheela-na-gig. \*  
\* For additional CE research, see illustration of a 1600 c. vulva labyrinth design in: Bord, Janet. *Mazes and Labyrinths of the World*. New York, NY: Dutton, 1976. 85, Fig. 127.) (MLW.)

Further V/triangle/vulvic research: 34,000-28,000, Les Eyzies Vulva Engravings, Dordogne Caves; 31,000, Chauvet Cave and Vulva Engravings; 30,000-25,000, The Aurignacian Age; 30,000, Labyrinths, Spirals, and Meanders; 30,000-25,000, Goddess of Willendorf, Austria; 8000/7000-5000, Early Neolithic; 7000-5000, Early Neolithic Crete; 5500-3500, Cucuteni (Tripolye) Culture, Eastern Europe; 5300-4300, Climactic Phase and Script in Old Europe; 4000-3000, Locmariaquer, Brittany Hook Symbology; 4000-3500, Gavrinis, Brittany France; 2000, Asherah; 1900-1800, Dawning of the African Alphabet and the Aniconic Goddess Triangle; 1790-1700, Goddess of Kultepe, Anatolia; 1500, Lachish Ewer, Triangle, and Menorah; and 800, Tanit (Also Taanit, Ta'anit, Tannit, or Tannin). (RGS.)

Further research on symbolic systems including ochre, the V/triangle/vulvic cave engravings and gender emergence:

Caldwell, Duncan. "Supernatural Pregnancies: Common Features and New Ideas Concerning Upper Paleolithic Feminine Imagery." *Arts & Cultures*. Geneva, Switzerland: Barbier-Mueller Museums, 2010. 52-75. (SPC.)

- Clottes, Jean, and J. David Lewis-Williams. *The Shamans of Prehistory: Trance and Magic in the Painted Caves*. Trans. Sophie Hawkes. New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, 1998. (SOP.)
- Conroy, L. P. "Female Figurines of the Upper Paleolithic and the Emergence of Gender." *Women in Archaeology: A Feminist Critique*. Eds. Hilary du Cros and Laurajane Smith. Canberra, Australia: Dept. of Prehistory, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1993. 153-160. (FF.)
- 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.)
- Jabr, Ferris. "Ars Longa." *New York Times Magazine*, Dec. 7, 2014: 18, 20. (ARSL.)
- Joan, Eahr Amelia. "Ochre's Living Lineage: The Gyne-Morphic Bloodline of Spirituality." Publication, 2018. (OLL.)
- Marler, Joan, and Miriam R. Dexter, Eds. *Signs of Civilization: Neolithic Symbol System of Southeast Europe*. Novi Sad, Hungary: Institute of Archaeomythology, 2009. (SC.)
- Marean, Curtis W. and Zelalem Assefa. "The Middle and Upper Pleistocene African Record for the Biological and Behavioral Origins of Modern Humans." Ann Brower Stahl, Ed. *African Archaeology: A Critical Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005. 93-129. (MAU.)
- Marshack, Alexander. "On Paleolithic Ochre and the Early Uses of Color and Symbols." *Current Anthropology* 22.2 (Apr. 1981): 188-191. (POE.)
- McCoid, Catherine Hodge and LeRoy D. McDermott. "Toward Decolonizing Gender." *American Anthropologist* 98.2 (Jun. 1996): 319-326. (TDG.)
- Rubin, Alissa J. "A Mirror of Subterranean Wonders: Replica of Chauvet Cave Bristles with Lifelike Paintings." *New York Times*, Apr. 25, 2015: C1-C2. (MSW.)
- Tedlock, Barbara. *The Woman in the Shaman's Body: Reclaiming the Feminine in Religion and Medicine*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 2005. (WSB.)

Further research indicates that ancient cave artists who made the hand stencils 'were predominately female':

- Snow, Dean. "Sexual Dimorphism in European Upper Paleolithic Cave Art." *American Antiquity* 78.4 (Oct. 2013): 746-761. (SDE.)

Further ancient symbol research of the double-axe and butterfly that may relate to the X, V and triangle:

- Gimbutas, Marija Alseikaite. *Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe, 6500-3500 BC: Myths and Cult Images*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. London, England: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 1984. (GGE: 186-7.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Language of the Goddess*. San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1989. (LOG: 13.)
- Haarmann, Harald. *Early Civilization and Literacy in Europe: An Inquiry into Cultural Continuity in the Mediterranean World*. New York, NY: Mouton de Gruyter, 1996. (ECLC.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Writing in the Ancient Mediterranean: The Old European Legacy." *From the Realm of the Ancestors: An Anthology in Honor of Marija Gimbutas*. Ed. Joan Marler. Manchester, CT: Knowledge, Ideas and Trends, Inc., 1997. (WAM: 116-118.)

\_\_\_\_\_. *Ancient Knowledge, Ancient Know-How, Ancient Reasoning: Cultural Memory in Transition, from Prehistory to Classical Antiquity and Beyond*. Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2013. (AN.)

Further research on ancient ochre: 500,000-300,000, Dark Mother Tan-Tan of Morocco; 285,000, Ochre at Kaphthurin Formation Plus Other Sites; 280,000-250,000, The Berekhat Ram Figure; 92,000, Qafzeh Cave and Ochre Symbolism; 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.)

For a more in-depth discussion and detailed fertility images, see *ARAS (Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism)*

<http://resources.ciis.edu:2058/index.aspx>.

Keyword suggestions include: V shape; lozenge; diamond; or triangle. (Access requires username and password.)

Further research on the Lorthet Baton:

*ARAS (The Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism)*: record number [1Cc.037](#). (Access requires username and password.)

Also, for Lorthet Baton research:

Giedion, S. *The Eternal Present: The Beginnings of Art: A Contribution on Constancy and Change*. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, 1957. London, England: Oxford University Press, 1962. 190, 192, 198-9, 227-8, 338, Fig.132. (EP.)

For images of the Blombos Ochre Plaque see the US museums or websites of the Smithsonian Museum Hall of Human Origins in DC <http://humanorigins.si.edu> or New York's [The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#).



When citing Blombos site: Pearson Education and/or Research Gate – Henshilwood’s

<http://www.uib.no/en/persons/Christopher.Henshilwood#uib-tabs-publications>

Contact: [enquiries@blomboscave.co.za](mailto:enquiries@blomboscave.co.za)

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IMAGE: BLOMBOS OCHRE PLAQUE, BLOMBOSFONTEIN NATURE RESERVE: AFRICA.  
PHOTO: © GSA. DESCRIPTION: V SHAPED CUT MARKS OR DIAMOND ON THE  
BLOMBOS OCHRE PLAQUE, BLOMBOSFONTEIN NATURE RESERVE IN SOUTHERN  
AFRICA NEAR STILL BAY.

SLIDE LOCATION , SHEET , ROW , SLEEVE , SLIDE # , 70,000.

ON LOCATION: ILLUSTRATION/IMAGE IN PROCESS.

NOTE 1: IN ADDITION TO THE PUBIC V SHAPED CUT MARKS ON THE BLOMBOS  
OCHRE PLAQUE, SUGGEST A FURTHER BLOMBOS INTERPRETATION IS A  
DIAMOND-SHAPED LOZENGE OR CONJOINED TRIANGLES AT THE APEXES.

NOTE 2. BLOMBOS ART.

ABSTRACT GEOMETRIC INCISIONS MADE ON ONE SIDE OF A RED OCHRE  
PIECE AROUND 73,000 YEARS AGO. ... THIS AND SIMILAR PIECES FROM THE  
SAME LOCATION ARE CURRENTLY THE OLDEST KNOWN EXAMPLES OF  
SPECIFICALLY SYMBOLIC PRACTICES. (BC: 5.)

PHOTO NOTE: ILLUSTRATOR, CHRISI KARVONIDES.

PHOTO NOTE: FOR FURTHER BLOMBOS RESEARCH AND IMAGES:

RESOURCE: (MUSEUM ART RESOURCE.)

RESOURCE: (BRITISH MUSEUM: LONDON, ENGLAND.)

RESOURCE: (ARCHAEOLOGY, ARCHITECTURE & ART.)

IMAGE: ICE AGE HORSE IN THE LASCAUX CAVE: LASCAUX, FRANCE.

PHOTO: © GSA. DESCRIPTION: ICE AGE HORSE FROM LASCAUX CAVE, NEAR VILLAGE OF MONTIGNAC IN THE DORDOGNE REGION OF SOUTHERN FRANCE. SLIDE LOCATION NEO. PAL. FRANCE, SHEET 1, ROW 4, SLEEVE 4, SLIDE #44 , c. 15,000-12,000 BCE.

CU\_NPF\_S1\_R4\_SL4\_S44.jpg

SHOT ON LOCATION: THE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY: NEW YORK, NY.

NOTE 1: TO-SCALE PROTOTYPE.

NOTE 2: FIELDWORK PROJECT 1993.



