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Introduction to the Neolithic Great Goddess

Welcome to an overview of the Neolithic Great Goddess of Old Europe. Before we start, a word about her name. The name 'Great Goddess' is synonomous in my usage with 'White Goddess' (cf Graves 1966) and I shall use the terms interchangeably. One of the primary epiphanies of the Great Goddess was the White Goddess of Death and Regeneration, which held a particular fascintion for Robert Graves as he attempted to trace her survival in the Medieval and Renaissance Celtic world.

This text was written with a several goals in mind. When Marija Gimbutas (1989) published The Language of the Goddess in 1989, a landmark work of scholarship was made available to the public. This study is not only unique, it carries the stamp of authenticity and quality. It is the first in-depth overview of the Neolithic Great Goddess that draws upon the wealth of archeological and mytho-poetic evidence from Old Europe. Old Europe was a cultural area in what is now Eastern and Central Europe that was unified by virtue of its mytho-poetics. Each culture had a social and religious structure determined by the mytho-poetics of the Great Goddess and this unity lasted for several thousand years. Specifically, the evidence from Yugoslavia, Thessaly, the Balkans, Transylvania, Moldavia and the Ukraine is sifted, interpreted and then intergrated with that from Iberia, France, Italy, Sardinia, Malta, and NW Europe. The result of this magnificent synthesis is the first comprehensive look at the Great Goddess in all of her complex manifestations, metaphors and ritual.

Given the success of Gimbutas' work, one may ask why write about it? I would not have done so, if I felt there was not something I could contribute that is not present. For all of its brilliance, her writing at times is quite disorganized and the chronology often falls apart as folk tales are told and commented upon. Also, much of the important information in the book is contained in captions to illustrations. This forces a disjointed, back and forth reading process and, indeed, almost guarantees that several readings are necessary to gain a complete understanding of the material. My first objective was to compile a detailed outline of the Goddess' iconography and derived metaphor according to the scheme presented by Gimbutas, but paying stricter adherence to the historical chronology. Gimbutas' tripartite division of the Goddess' mytho-poetics into Life Giving, Death and Regeneration and Energy Unfolding is brilliant and I have no wish to modify it. This outline is of great use to me as I search for the Great Goddess elsewhere and contemplate her specific metaphors in other times and places (Blumenberg 1992a, 1992b). The White Goddess was not restricted

to Old Europe and the nearby regions; Gimbutas does not journey to India, Tibet, China or Japan and her exploration into Celtic realms and ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean is incomplete. Perhaps this 'field guide' to the Great Goddess will be of interest and value to you.

   I also wished to present my original thoughts and interpretations for your contemplative pleasure and mid-way through this text you will begin to come upon them. I pereceive a four layers of iconography, that may be found both as discrete categories or in combination. There are extensions to the modern realm of genetics and evolution that are apparent and I wish to explore those in order to widen the parameters for that never-to-be-achieved final synthesis. The Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind (Janes 1976) is a provocative hypothesis that has been exiled by most scholars and laypersons and I wish to bring it into the arena of possible models and mechanisms behind surface reality. The fundamental principle behind 'chaotic phenonmena', as strictly defined by modern physics, may be seen in these mytho-poetics and I wish to briefly introduce that possibility. Another study will explore Chaos in cultural and biological evolution in detail. Finally, I desired to demonstrate the usefulness of the 'field guide' by exploring an interpretation of Joseph Campbell (1988) regarding an artefact of the Paleolithic Goddess that I believe misconstrues what is present and draws conclusions that are unwarranted.

   This software 'volume' is the first in the series about the Great Goddess now being published by Reality Software; those publications ocurring out of sequential order. If you have our other packages about Celtic Realms and/or China and Japan, this text will greatly enrich the exploration of those materials, although they are self-contained. If you have not yet previewed them, two files in this package will allow you to do so and I hope they spark your interest. Also scheduled for release in 1992, are packages about the Great Goddess in India and Tibet and in early 1993, one about the Great Goddess in ancient Mesopotamia and the Classical Mediterranean world.

              References

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