



Anatomy of a Backlash: Concerning the Work of Marija Gimbutas

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Introduction: Marija Gimbutas' Pioneering Work in Five Areas

Anyone who assumes that material published under her own name will stand as an inviolable record of her positions might well consider the case of Marija Gimbutas (1921–1994). She is a renowned Lithuanian-American archaeologist who was internationally regarded as occupying the pinnacle of her field, having left an extensive written record of her pioneering work for over half a century (scores of monographs and excavation site reports, editorships of scholarly journals, presentations at international conferences published in proceedings volumes, three hundred fifty articles, and more than twenty volumes translated into numerous languages). Yet, particularly after her death, she was relentlessly misrepresented in the extreme, pilloried for holding positions that she repeatedly argued against, and demeaned and dismissed—beginning first with a small group of professors and spreading to such an extent that her work is no longer read, assigned, or cited in the classes of many Anglo-American professors of European archaeology. Instead, sweeping cartoon versions of her Kurgan theory and her interpretations of Neolithic symbolism replace accurate discussions. She is barely mentioned in textbooks and was not only toppled but nearly erased entirely.

Once that was accomplished, her detractors and their supporters could claim in their own books and articles—usually after

distancing themselves from a caricature of Gimbutas' work they termed “outdated”—that they had made a number of fresh discoveries and conclusions about Neolithic societies which are, in truth, exactly what Gimbutas had discovered, observed, and written about decades earlier. An example is “Women and Men at Çatalhöyük” by Ian Hodder in *Scientific American*,¹ in which Hodder incorrectly informs his readers that Marija Gimbutas “argued forcefully for an early phase of matriarchal society.”² In this article on the excavation of Catalhöyük in Turkey, Hodder announces “fresh evidence of the relative power of the sexes” in that Neolithic settlement—as if it were a breakthrough discovery of his own, supposedly disproving the work of Gimbutas. Hodder declares that “the picture of women and men is complex” and that “We are not witnessing a patriarchy or matriarchy.”³ In fact, that is the exact position taken by Gimbutas: based on the roughly egalitarian graves and other material evidence, she concluded that Neolithic societies of Europe and Anatolia had “a balanced, nonpatriarchal and nonmatriarchal social system.”⁴ To express this balanced culture, Gimbutas expressly avoided using the term “matriarchy,” trying out several other terms. She

¹ Hodder 2004: 77-83; see especially 78 and 83.

² Ibid.: 78.

³ Ibid.: 83.

⁴ Gimbutas 1989: xx; 1991: 9, 324, 344; see also “The Fall and Transformation of Old Europe: Recapitulation 1993,” and other articles in Gimbutas 1997.

was certainly not a so-called “matriarchalist” as she has repeatedly been accused. One might wonder if Hodder had ever read Gimbutas’ work. In fact, Hodder admitted in a subsequent interview that he had only “read her [early] work as an undergraduate a long time ago” and that he was probably influenced by “what other people have said about her and written about her and how that stuff has been used by other people.”⁵

Who was this pioneering scholar who has been the brunt of so many unwarranted attacks? I first met Marija Gimbutas in 1979, the year after I had written *Lost Goddesses of Early Greece: A Collection of Pre-Hellenic Myths*. A few years later, I made a trip to Germany and Croatia, where I wanted to visit a cave on the island of Hvar in which an archaeological excavation had discovered Neolithic goddess figurines, which had subsequently been moved to a museum in Zagreb. I went first to the office of the archaeological museum in Zadar, on the Croatian mainland, where I was met with the usual lack of interest that commonly greets Americans in Europe. Everything changed, however, when I presented a brief letter of introduction from Marija Gimbutas. The two archaeologists were amazed: this insignificant tourist actually knows Gimbutas! They immediately hastened to get me a chair and asked cordially if they might be of any assistance.

Why were the Croatian archaeologists so impressed with even my modest connection to Professor Gimbutas? Why was she so highly regarded not only in European circles of archaeology and paleolinguistics but also in the United States, where she was the editor for Eastern European archaeology at the *Journal of Indo-European Studies*, which she co-founded? Gimbutas was and is considered a giant in her field because, from the early 1950s until her death in 1994, Marija Gimbutas developed

groundbreaking archaeological work in the following five areas:

1) The Civilization of Neolithic “Old Europe”

In 1956, as a Research Fellow at the Peabody Museum at Harvard University, Marija Gimbutas published *The Prehistory of Eastern Europe*, the very first monograph to present a comprehensive evaluation of the Mesolithic, Neolithic, and Copper Age cultures in Russia and the Baltic area. Until this volume appeared, the information available to Western scholars about the prehistory of Eastern Europe was fragmentary due to linguistic and political barriers.⁶ After thirteen years at Harvard, Marija Gimbutas accepted a full professorship in European Archaeology at UCLA in 1963 and produced, among other works, studies of the prehistoric Balts and Slavs, and the comprehensive *Bronze Age Cultures in Central and Eastern Europe* in 1965, which established her world-wide reputation as an expert on the European Bronze Age.

Gimbutas recognized that the Neolithic and Copper Age settlements of southeastern Europe were not primitive versions of later Bronze Age cultures. Instead, these earlier societies were radically different in numerous aspects from what came later in terms of burial patterns (roughly egalitarian between males and females), the use of a sophisticated symbol system (evidence of a systematic use of linear signs for the communication of ideas), widespread evidence of domestic rituals (with a vast outpouring of elegant ritual ceramics), the continual creation and use of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines (the vast majority being female), and the absence of weapons and organized warfare. Because of the sophisticated level of cultural development; the long-lasting, stable societies; their commonalities regarding an egalitarian social structure; the well-built

⁵ Ian Hodder in Marler, 2007: 16.

⁶ Gimbutas 1955: 3.

houses and community design; the refinement of technologies and material culture; evidence of the development of a script; and interconnections through long-distance trade, Gimbutas determined that the non-Indo-European cultures of southeastern and eastern Europe during the Neolithic era constituted a civilization, which she called “Old Europe.”

She produced the first overview of this civilization in 1991, *The Civilization of the Goddess*, in which she drew from her extensive knowledge of past and present excavation reports. These were available to her because she read thirteen languages and traveled extensively as an exchange scholar cultivating professional relationships throughout the region. (Most of these site reports are still not translated, so many of her Anglo-American detractors are unable to read them.) She herself was the project director of five major excavations of Neolithic sites in southeastern Europe.

2) The Indo-European Transformation of “Old Europe”

Gimbutas combined her extensive background in linguistic paleontology with archaeological evidence to develop an explanatory model initially known as the “Kurgan Hypothesis” in order to locate the homeland of Proto-Indo-European speakers and to explain the extensive spread of Indo-European languages and the dramatic cultural changes that took place in Europe between c. 4500-2500 B.C.E.⁷ Gimbutas coined the term “Kurgan culture” to refer to the pastoral communities found as early as the fifth millennium B.C.E. in the Volga-Ural-Caspian steppe region north of the Black Sea. She borrowed the term “Kurgan” from a Turkic loan word into Russian meaning “barrow” (a mounded burial site common to early Indo-European cultures, in which a patriarchal chieftain is buried with his possessions, often including his retainers, wives, concubines,

horses, and artifacts; this type of burial was never found in Europe before the arrival of Kurgan people). In Gimbutas’ view, these proto-Indo-European speakers of the steppes, who shared many common traits (burial customs, territorial behavior, and patriarchal social structure) infiltrated Copper-Age “Old Europe” in three major waves: c. 4400–4200 BCE, 3400–3200 B.C.E., and 3000–2800 BCE. As these nomadic pastoralists moved into Europe, a cascade of cultural and linguistic changes took place which Gimbutas described as a “collision of cultures” leading to the disruption of the extremely old, stable, egalitarian culture systems of Old Europe and the appearance of warlike Bronze Age societies.

Gimbutas’ model, initially presented in 1956 and refined over nearly four decades, emphasizes that the Indo-Europeanization of Old Europe was a complex process with changes rippling in many different ways through a succession of dislocations. In some areas, ancient culture sites were abruptly destroyed and abandoned, often burned down, with indigenous farmers dispersed to the west and northwest; in other places, indigenous and alien traditions coexisted for various periods.⁸ Gimbutas noted that the Indo-Europeanization of Old European cultures resulted in various local versions of hybrid societies with surviving elements of a non-Indo-European substratum. This explanatory model illuminates various patterns and elements that have survived in European cultures, even into the modern era.⁹ The archaeologist James Mallory has noted that “the Kurgan theory” has been widely accepted and featured in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and the *Grand Dictionnaire Encyclopédique Larousse*.¹⁰ In addition, research in historical genetic mapping supports Gimbutas’ theory: in an interview in 1993 in the *New York Times*,

⁸ See “The Fall and Transformation of Old Europe: Recapitulation 1993” and other articles in Gimbutas 1997. Also see Marler 2001: 89-115 and 2005a: 60.

⁹ See Gimbutas 1997.

¹⁰ Mallory 1989.

⁷ See Marler 2005a: 53-76.

Luigi Luca Cavalli-Sforza, head of an extensive historical genetic research project at Stanford University, stated, “We discovered an area of population expansion that almost perfectly matched Gimbutas’ projection for the center of Kurgan culture.”¹¹

3) Contextual Archaeology

Gimbutas significantly challenged the econometric model that dominated archaeology during the post-World War Two era, a time when all the social sciences were attempting to become as strictly quantitative and materialist as possible so as to appear as “tough-minded” as the natural sciences. A project director of an archaeological excavation, for instance, was expected to focus on the evidence of material production of the economy, not ritualized figurines, which resist quantification. Gimbutas recognized that wearing econometric blinders during excavations would surely result in a very narrow and skewed perception of the cultures. She insisted that it was impossible to understand these early societies without investigating their beliefs, rituals, and worldviews. Through years of studying the ritualized art and artifacts of the non-Indo-European settlements, and drawing from her background of studies in ethnology and the history of religion, Gimbutas realized that the central organizing principle of those cultures was a complex engagement with the processes of regeneration and renewal within a cosmological religious orientation (embeddedness, sacrality, immanence), rather than having economic activity as the organizing focus. Today the foundational synthesis and insights of Gimbutas’ work concerning the civilization of Old Europe are still accepted and are being further developed by numerous

¹¹ Levathes 1993. See also Cavalli-Sforza 1997 and 2000 in which Cavalli-Sforza and his team continue to maintain that their research in the area Gimbutas studied verifies her conclusions, while adding tactfully that research on the flow of genes from Anatolia into Europe might at some point verify Renfrew’s theory.

Eastern and Western European scholars, who have coined a new umbrella term: “the Danube civilization.”¹²

4) A Multidisciplinary Approach called Archaeomythology

Gimbutas created a multidisciplinary approach for comprehending the non-Indo-European cultures of Old Europe that went far beyond the conventional practices of her time: the *cultural-historical phase* approach (pre-WWII–1958 and beyond); *New Archaeology* (or *processual archaeology* after 1958), and post-modern *post-processualism* (initiated in the late 1980s by Hodder). Although Lewis Binford made a plea in 1962 that the New Archaeology should not neglect culture and belief systems, and although post-processualists talk about the importance of culture and symbols, all three of the approaches in practice tend to avoid serious attention to religion or any sacral dimension of culture. A colleague at UCLA recalled that Gimbutas was “the one person who was, even then [1963], revolutionizing the study of East European archaeology. . . [bringing together] archaeology, linguistics, philology, and the study of non-material cultural antiquities.”¹³

Gimbutas was able to do so because she brought to the work a penetrating intellect and scholarly training not only in archaeology but also in linguistics and comparative religious symbolism. (She had earned her doctorate in three areas of concentration: archaeological prehistory, the history of religion, and ethnology, conferred by the University of Tübingen in 1946.) Most archaeologists of her day had a far narrower training. She also possessed a knowledge and love of sculpture, which allowed her to appreciate the ritualized figurines in ways that had escaped earlier archaeologists, who

¹² See, e.g., Marler 2008.

¹³ Recollection by Dr. Jaan Puhvel, Memorial Service for Marija Gimbutas, Fowler Museum of Cultural History, UCLA, March 3, 1994 (quoted in Marler 1997:13).

commonly disdained the stylized statuettes as grotesque Venuses. Such dismissals, of course, reflect the grave limitations of the rationalist, literal mentality when it encounters the ritualizing, symbolizing mind.

A senior archaeologist who was a specialist in the pre-Indo-European Vinča culture at the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Novi Sad, the late Bogdan Brukner, recalled in 2002 the revolutionizing effects of Gimbutas' leadership when he was a young member of an excavation team she headed in 1969-71. The approach taken by Gimbutas was very exciting to the young archaeologists because she was the first person to ask questions about the meanings of the art and symbolism and to bring in anthropological insights and interdisciplinary parallels. Brukner noted that Gimbutas was not only an excellent excavator but brought a very sophisticated, nuanced, and insightful perspective to the investigation of symbolization and cultural development. Most importantly, she brought a cosmological context to the interdisciplinary approach she was developing.¹⁴

5) The Symbol System of Old Europe

Since a comprehensive study of Old European symbolism did not yet exist, Gimbutas turned her attention to an intensive investigation of the wealth of Neolithic artifacts, especially the ritual artifacts, sculptures, and symbols found in Neolithic cultural contexts throughout southeast Europe. Her initial study resulted in *The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe* in 1974 (republished in 1982 with the title as it originally appeared on the manuscript, though disallowed by the editor: *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe*). This work on the symbol system was followed in 1989 by *The Language*

of the Goddess. In addition to being the first archaeologist of Neolithic Europe to focus on religion,¹⁵ she initiated the study of the continuity of symbols and metaphors in European religion, mythology, and folklore, which she continued in *The Living Goddesses* in 1999 (published posthumously and edited by Miriam Robbins Dexter).¹⁶ Today this type of archaeological work is called focusing attention on “visual metaphor.”

In spite of these impressive accomplishments in five areas, many archaeologists in North America, Britain, and Germany—influenced by the (orchestrated) “hearsay” in the field after her death, to which Hodder referred—now routinely assure students as well as journalists that everything Gimbutas wrote must be “dismissed.” In truth, the rapid sea change with respect to the status of Gimbutas' pioneering shaping of the field of non-Indo-European archaeology was extraordinary. The sudden shift was driven by a handful of archaeologists and provides a case study of the politics of the social sciences and its distorting effects on the creation of knowledge.

The Three Stages of a Backlash

According to Dale Spender in *Women of Ideas and What Men Have Done to Them*,

These techniques [of control] work by initially discrediting a woman and helping to remove her from the mainstream; they work by becoming the basis for any future discussion about her; and they work by keeping future generations of women away from her.¹⁷

¹⁴ Bogdan Brukner, unpublished interview which took place at the Liguria Study Center, Bogliasco, Italy, June 7, 2002, conducted by Joan Marler, Executive Director of the Institute of Archaeomythology.

¹⁵ Gimbutas 1980a.

¹⁶ Gimbutas 1989. Also see Marler 2001 and 2000.

¹⁷ Spender 1982: 32.

Phase One of a Backlash

During the last several years of Gimbutas' life, as she was undergoing grueling cancer therapies at the UCLA Medical Center, efforts to undercut her standing in the field of archaeology began to appear. These were not merely scholarly disagreements; rather, they continually urged readers to "dismiss" Gimbutas. The strongest initial source of a categorical negativity was a one-sided rivalry nurtured in the mind of a long-time colleague, Colin Renfrew, a professor of archaeology at Cambridge University. He had assured her for years, jokingly it seemed, that he would find a way to prove her widely accepted theory wrong and apparently thought he had finally found that way in paleolinguistics (an area of expertise not his own). In 1987, Renfrew presented his counter-theory (later downgraded to a hypothesis) about Neolithic Europe in a book titled *Archaeology and Language: The Puzzle of Indo-European Origins*.¹⁸ A year before it was published, Gimbutas related to me, Renfrew had visited her in her home in Topanga Canyon near Los Angeles and had declared, while pointing to a large table on which the chapters of Gimbutas' current manuscript were laid out, that when his own book, came out, "all this will be swept away." Gimbutas was surprised by this declaration and intention from her old friend, but she did not imagine what was about to happen in the next few years. After all, either his book would be sound or it would not.

In fact, Renfrew's book failed to have the effect he had hoped for. Briefly, his counter-hypothesis asserts that proto-Indo-European language came into Europe not through migrations of pastoralists from the Eurasian steppes but, rather, via farmers gradually migrating into southeastern Europe from western Anatolia (present-day Turkey). As several prominent paleo-linguists pointed out in reviews, Renfrew's counter-hypothesis ignores 150 years of paleolinguistic findings to the

contrary: for at least two millennia *after* farming technology entered Europe from western Anatolia, around 7000 B.C.E., there is *no* trace of proto-Indo-European language in Europe—and there is *no* trace of Indo-European language in western Anatolia at the time the farmers began to migrate into Europe. Rather, proto-Indo-European language appears only later, at the time when genetic and archaeological evidence indicates that peoples from the North Pontic-Volga region (the "Kurgans," as Gimbutas called them) began to move east into Europe, around 4400 B.C.E.¹⁹ Moreover, Renfrew's hypothesis fails to account convincingly for the sudden change in the burial patterns, the sudden disappearance of the non-Indo-European symbol system, and the sudden appearance of constructed fortifications. It also cannot account for the way that Indo-European technology and implements of warfare appear in Neolithic Europe.²⁰

At that point Gimbutas still held a preeminent status in European archaeology, but Renfrew had something she did not: a politically powerful position in the academic infrastructure of the field of archaeology, emanating from the endowed professorship he held for years at Cambridge University (he is now Professor Emeritus); his directorship of an affiliated institute of archaeological studies; his indirect but effective influence over the Cambridge archaeological journal *Antiquity*, and the archaeological books published by Cambridge University Press; and his power to ease or block the way of young and mid-career archaeologists with regard to recommendations, employment,

¹⁹ Skupkin (1989) found Renfrew's argument "non-evidential"; Wescott (1990), a linguist who is vice-president of the Association for the Study of Language in Prehistory, noted Renfrew's "relative ignorance of linguistics," which "not only muddles him but dampens his flair for imaginative innovation"; Haarmann (1999) presented abundant evidence that renders Renfrew's counter-hypothesis impossible.

²⁰ Gimbutas 1988a: 453-456. Also see Gimbutas' review of *Archaeology and Language*, 1988b.

¹⁸ Renfrew 1987.

grants, and other recognition. His position of power caused skeptics to keep silent, elicited some early praise from close colleagues, and allowed him to convince the media that, in spite of the drubbing his counter-hypothesis had received from paleolinguists, it was a courageous triumph of a noble David going up against the “conventional” theory in Indo-European archaeology (formulated by the looming Goliath, Marija Gimbutas). Thus was he celebrated in mainstream publications such as *Scientific American*, *Science News*, and the *New York Times*, which ran both an admiring article plus an editorial celebrating Renfrew’s “refreshingly iconoclastic approach” and his “robust and economical thesis.”²¹

Marija Gimbutas was invited to review Renfrew’s book in two publications, *Current Anthropology*²² and the *Times Literary Supplement*.²³ She stated his argument accurately and then noted dozens of his theoretical assumptions and claims that are contradicted by the evidence unearthed and reported by numerous European archaeologists and by paleolinguists. In a response in *Current Anthropology*,²⁴ Renfrew skirted around Gimbutas’ substantive critique and was able to keep it sidelined in the subsequent discourse. Renfrew was also able to control the discourse on his home turf. First, in the Cambridge University journal *Antiquity* Gimbutas is once again erroneously depicted as having written of “a perfect matriarchy” in Old Europe.²⁵ Second, as director of the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research at Cambridge University, Renfrew selected contributors to its scholarly publications, often from Russia, who were invited to come to his institute and write papers that support any minor argument with Gimbutas’ Kurgan Hypothesis. At times, however, even these hand-picked participants

have presented papers explicating all the reasons that Gimbutas’ Kurgan Hypothesis is far more plausible than Renfrew’s counter-hypothesis.²⁶ Even so, Renfrew has written repeatedly in the introduction to McDonald Institute volumes that “we” in the field of archaeology now reject the work of Gimbutas.

Beginning in 1990, Gimbutas was often “disappeared” in print. For example, a Canadian archaeologist at McGill University, Bruce Trigger, told the Canadian magazine *Maclean’s* that he thinks Gimbutas’ interpretation of the non-Indo-European symbol system makes “reasonably good sense,”²⁷ yet when he had published *A History of Archaeological Thought*²⁸ the previous year with Cambridge University Press, he apparently understood what was necessary: he omitted any mention of the work of Marija Gimbutas. All twenty of Gimbutas’ archaeological books, which were then taught in numerous British and European universities, were omitted from Trigger’s history, which featured all of Renfrew’s books. When Renfrew himself co-authored a textbook titled *Archaeology* in 1994,²⁹ he notes several pioneering female archaeologists but makes scant mention of Marija Gimbutas except to cite from a derogatory article that had been written by a graduate student in his department, pronouncing Gimbutas’ work “pseudo-feminist.”³⁰ A few years later, Alison Wylie, author of *Thinking from Things: Essays in the Philosophy of Archaeology*, included many of Renfrew’s books in her bibliography but not one book by Gimbutas. Also, when Renfrew wrote a book about interpreting archaeological art, *Figuring It Out*, an area Gimbutas had pioneered, he omitted any mention of her among the archaeologists who had worked in this area.

A second type of “launch” article in this initial phase of what became a backlash against

²¹ Renfrew 1989; Bower 1995; Stevens 1991; Wade 1989.

²² Gimbutas 1988a.

²³ Gimbutas 1988b.

²⁴ See, e.g., Renfrew 1988: 437.

²⁵ Meskell 1995: 74-86.

²⁶ Comrie 2002. Also see Dergachev 2002: 93-112.

²⁷ Trigger quoted in McGee 1990.

²⁸ Trigger 1989.

²⁹ Renfrew and Bahn 2000.

³⁰ *Ibid.*: 218-19.

Gimbutas was “Old Europe: Sacred Matriarchy or Complementary Opposition?” by Brian Hayden. At the conference on “Archaeology and Fertility Cult in the Ancient Mediterranean” on the island of Malta in 1985, Hayden had not been invited as a presenter by the convener, but he mailed in a paper, which was read aloud in his absence. (Renfrew was present, but it is not known whether he encouraged the convener to have Hayden’s unsolicited paper read to the audience and included in the proceedings volume.) Rather than engaging with reasons for a different reading of particular symbols, Hayden’s paper presented a mocking, raw-toned, and aggressive attack on Gimbutas’ interpretation of the non-Indo-European symbol system, which many in attendance felt was demeaning and contemptuous.³¹ At the end of the reading of Hayden’s paper, the audience, including Gimbutas, sat in stunned silence. Hayden subsequently wrote additional factually problematic but aggressive dismissals of Gimbutas.³²

Phase Two of a Backlash

A couple of negative, even aggressive, articles do not by themselves constitute the beginning of a backlash. Only if others take up the theme and join in the toppling does the effort gain momentum.

Taking up both Renfrew’s call to consider Gimbutas’ work “outdated” and Hayden’s critique that it was insufficiently male-oriented, Brian Fagan wrote an extensive review in *Archaeology* magazine in 1992, “A Sexist View

³¹ Hayden (1986: 21), e.g., berated Gimbutas over the meaning of the pillar symbol; he was apparently ignorant (as Gimbutas was not) of the long cultural history of the symbol of the sacred bough/Tree of Life/sacred pillar-trunk/Maypole in indigenous, nature-based European religious traditions, which were later blended with Christianity, because he insisted that “all common sense and psychiatric wisdom would associate it instead with the phallus or masculine forces.”

³² Hayden 1998. For a corrective response, see Marler 1999.

of Prehistory,” in which he dismissed Gimbutas’ comprehensive overview of the cultures of Old Europe, *The Civilization of the Goddess*, as one of the “fads and fancies” of academia.³³

During the 1990s, which became the white-heat period of the backlash against Gimbutas, two of Hayden’s colleagues, Margaret Conkey and Ruth Tringham, jointly taught a course at the University of California at Berkeley titled “Archaeology and the Goddess,” in which all of Gimbutas’ work was presented as emphatically wrong. They have written that the dual impetus for initiating that course was a phrase that caught their eyes in the descriptive publicity issued by HarperSanFrancisco prior to the publication of Gimbutas’ *Civilization of the Goddess* in 1991, presenting the book as “the definitive answer to prehistory.” This phrase by a publicist at HarperSanFrancisco particularly irked Tringham, she later wrote, because she had recently read Jean-Paul Bourdier, so was freshly convinced that any work not situated explicitly in ambiguity must be rejected. Moreover, Conkey and Tringham saw the undercutting of (certain, targeted) authority figures as an inherently feminist task on their part.³⁴ The strangest aspect of their course, though, was their position that the archaeological work of Gimbutas is tainted because her books were read by a particular group, the “Goddess movement,” some of whose members then cited Gimbutas’ archaeological findings in overly broad ways. Conkey and Tringham actually took class time from archaeology to teach disapprovingly a variety of materials from the “Goddess movement.” (Although I have long felt that a few non-archaeologists irresponsibly overstated the case that is carefully presented in Gimbutas’ books, that is obviously not the fault of Gimbutas. For instance, when Gimbutas wrote that the cultures of Old Europe were “peaceful,” she meant that the archaeological evidence

³³ Fagan 1992: 14.

³⁴ Conkey and Tringham 1996: 225, 228.

indicates that the settlements were not routinely sacked; she did not ever write that the residents of Old Europe did not have any arguments in daily life or constituted a utopia.)

In their class and in subsequent articles, such as “Archaeology and the Goddess,” “Cultivating Thinking / Challenging Authority,” and “Rethinking Figurines,”³⁵ Conkey and Tringham asserted that Gimbutas was an inadequate archaeologist because she did not insert “probably” into each of her conclusions and because (after they vastly oversimplify her complex, multi-staged study of the dislocations in Old Europe as the waves of Indo-Europeans arrived) they declared her work to be supposedly an oversimplification that “lacks complexity.” They also accuse her of pandering to the “Goddess movement,” an entirely erroneous charge I shall address presently.

The other main “pile-on” article in Phase Two, “Goddess, Gimbutas and ‘New Age’ Archaeology” (1995) was written by Lynn Meskell, who was then a graduate student in Renfrew’s department, studying with Hodder, and who had received and makes reference to the manuscript of Conkey and Tringham’s article (then “in process”). After presenting a facile caricature of “the Goddess movement” as a “fad and fiction” that “seeks justification” in archaeology, Meskell erroneously states that Gimbutas “dismissed” any figurines from Old Europe that were male; Meskell then actually asserts that Gimbutas perceived highly ritualized female figurines as Goddess because Bachofen, Freud, and Jung had “asserted that devotion to female deities appeared early in human evolution.” Without mentioning the historical genetic mapping and all the excavated material evidence indicating that Gimbutas’ Kurgan theory is correct, Meskell repeats Renfrew’s label that such an explanation (supposedly based on Bachofen, Freud, and Jung) is “outdated.” Moreover, she further

asserts that Gimbutas imagined the Kurgan invasions into Old Europe from the steppes because Stalin’s invasion of the Baltic countries at the time of World War II planted the idea in her mind. Meskell then repeats Hayden’s problematic examples supposedly proving that there actually were fortifications in Old Europe. She repeats Conkey and Tringham’s clearly erroneous feminist criticism that Gimbutas is “essentialist” because she supposedly sees women’s power as purely biological but not cultural. Like Conkey and Tringham, Meskell ends her article by nobly positioning herself as a feminist unafraid to “contest theories presented by women which seem to espouse pro-female notions” and to challenge “a gendered superiority.”³⁶

To the delight of those archaeology professors who found Conkey and Tringham and Meskell convincing, a sociologist named Cynthia Eller wrote a derogatory book about the women’s spirituality movement in 2000, *The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory*, in which she refers to all the women’s spirituality authors, and also to Gimbutas, as “the matriarchalists”—even though Eller admits in the book that she knows that most do not hold the view that Neolithic Europe was a “matriarchy.” It’s merely a convenient label, she explains, so she’ll use it! The many problems with factual correctness in her book have been identified in reviews.³⁷

At a conference on “Gender and Archaeology” at Sonoma State University in October 2002, presenters included Conkey, Tringham, and Eller. Eller gave a slide presentation mocking Gimbutas and the “Goddess movement” with dripping sarcasm, which caused most of the archaeologists in the audience to whoop with derisive laughter. Several archaeology professors then gave enthusiastic testimonials expressing gratitude for Eller’s book, which many of them actually

³⁵ Conkey and Tringham 1994, 1996; Tringham and Conkey 1998.

³⁶ Meskell 1995.

³⁷ See, e.g., Marler 2005b.

used in their archaeology classes, for what they assumed is an accurate depiction the “Goddess movement,” Gimbutas’ work, and the purported causal link between them. During these testimonials, Gimbutas was labeled a “fundamentalist matriarchalist”—in spite of the fact that Gimbutas herself had rejected *in print* the label “matriarchy” for the non-Indo-European cultures.

During Phase Two, other archaeologists jumped in. For instance, John Chapman asserted in a biographical essay on Gimbutas in the book *Excavating Women* that he felt duty-bound to note that her identifying fertility themes in some of the non-Indo-European symbols occurred at the time, by his reckoning, when she had reached menopause, “a time when her own personal fertility is disappearing and her own children leave home.”³⁸ Why is the theme of fertility, so common among indigenous cultures, regarded in non-Indo-European archaeology as so improbable as to be a foolish projection of Gimbutas’ supposedly overwrought imagination? Besides, she saw birth as only one part of the cycles of regeneration and transformation that were expressed in the artifacts and symbols of Old Europe.

Phase Three of a Backlash

As Dale Spender noted in 1982, a repetition of disparaging comments—through articles in which the initiators cite each other—eventually gains currency, acquiring over time the status of common knowledge. This “parroting” is exactly what happened regarding the backlash against the work of Marija Gimbutas. Writers, sometimes in archaeology but often in fields far removed, repeated items from Meskell’s or Conkey and Tringham’s widely circulated articles. In the “parroting” stage, though, the inaccuracies and the charges are exaggerated beyond even the initial targeting articles. It is rather like the children’s game called

“Telephone,” as various aspects become intensified and enlarged with seeming authority. For example, Meskell states in passing at the beginning of her negative article that Gimbutas had a “recognized academic standing and long history of fieldwork in southeast European sites,”³⁹ but that fact gets lost in the “parroting” articles outside the field, in which the esteemed scholar is treated as a buffoon who never had any status whatsoever in archaeology.

An example is the article “The Women Warriors” by the journalist Lawrence Osborne in *Lingua Franca: The Review of Academic Life* in late 1997, which opened with his thematic set-up: “For decades, scholars have searched for ancient matriarchies. Will they ever find one?” When he gets to the section on Marija Gimbutas (but why was she in an article about matriarchies, as she clearly wrote that the non-Indo-European cultures were not matriarchies?) Osborne tells readers that she “found little of value in the rigors of her field,” that she “made grand claims about ancient matriarchy,” that she had a “belief in a lost female Arcadia,” and that her archaeological work “gained only a small foothold in academe,” being supported “primarily among radical feminist scholars like herself.” After repeating Meskell’s idea about the influence of Stalin’s invasions on Gimbutas’ archaeological reasoning, Osborne assures readers, “The Stone Age, by contrast, was, in her conceit, an era of irreproachable feminine piety.” Completely ignorant of Gimbutas’ undiminished status among the archaeologists of Central and Eastern Europe, who are the most familiar with the hundreds of site reports in various languages from which she drew, Osborne concludes by declaring that “Gimbutas’ influence was limited to a handful of scientists and a handful of sites in eastern Europe.”⁴⁰

Even *Feminist Studies* published an otherwise carefully researched, insightful article

³⁸ Chapman 1998.

³⁹ Meskell 1995:74.

⁴⁰ Osborne 1998.

in 2009 on “Goddess: Women’s Art and Spirituality in the 1970s” by an art historian, Jennie Klein, which, oddly, contained a section on Marija Gimbutas, whose work was not widely known in the women’s spirituality movement until after 1982.⁴¹ The section is extremely derogatory, identifying Gimbutas as “the ‘high priestess’ of the women’s spirituality movement in Southern California” (false: she was not even in the women’s spirituality movement, let alone presiding as a “high priestess”) and describing her as “flamboyant” (false: she was reserved and very European, gracious and kind). Drawing from Meskell’s erroneous article, Klein assured readers that Gimbutas did not care about empirically verifiable evidence, thought all figurines were female and most structures temples (false: see her books), and had little support among archaeologists (false: see previous sections). Klein also wrote that Gimbutas’ only support was from a group of feminists for whom “she became a hagiographic figure for these women” (false: Most European archaeologists did agree with her; we in the women’s spirituality movement were a very small portion of her readers; and we did not regard her as a saint; we considered her an extremely knowledgeable archaeologist who had kindly answered our questions – and subsequently was, for several years, struggling for her life against lymphatic

⁴¹ Marija Gimbutas’ book *Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe* (1974) was out of print for several years before the University of California Press published the new edition (with the corrected title, matching the original manuscript) in 1982. In 1982, I included an article by Gimbutas, “Women and Culture in Goddess-oriented Old Europe,” in the anthology I edited, *The Politics of Women’s Spirituality* (Doubleday), which went through several printings in the 1980s; I excerpted this article from Gimbutas 1982b, “Old Europe in the Fifth Millennium B.C.: The European Situation on the Arrival of Indo-Europeans,” delivered at the conference on “The Indo-Europeans in the Fourth and Third Millennia B.C.,” University of Texas at Austin, Feb. 4-5, 1980. I put a new title on the excerpted version. My abridgement of Gimbutas’ article, with my title, was then reprinted in another anthology, Plaskow and Christ 1989.

cancer). We visited her, held gatherings to wish her well, expressed our gratitude, and offered other acts of friendship.

What can one say about such fervent misrepresentations? There was a time, not so long ago, when no self-respecting scholar would dream of writing about another’s work without having read the primary sources, rather than relying on distorting hit pieces. Perhaps the same standards once applied in science journalism, but when Michael Balter wrote a book in 2005 about the ongoing excavation at Çatalhöyük, *The Goddess and the Bull*, he made the strange decision, as he has stated in an interview, to simply publish as fact all the demeaning comments about Gimbutas conveyed to him conversationally by the excavation team (Hodder, Tringham, and others). Still, Balter stated after his book was published that he finds somewhat suspect (“going beyond the bounds of fair argumentation”) the refusal by the Hodder group (including Meskell) to acknowledge “even stylistic continuities between the Upper Paleolithic ‘Venus’ figurines, the so-called goddess figurines that have been found at Çatalhöyük and other Neolithic sites, and similar imagery from the Bronze Age, such as from Minoan Crete and the Myceneans” (a continuity that Gimbutas noted and wrote about).⁴²

As the backlash continued to careen around the intellectual grapevine, the classicist Mary Beard, in the course of reviewing a book on the role of women in Minoan culture in the *New York Review of Books* in 2009, mentioned Marija Gimbutas only to dismiss “the frankly dotty ideas of matriarchal goddesses floated by Robert Graves and Marija Gimbutas.”⁴³ The following year McGill University Press published a book titled *Sanctifying Misandry:*

⁴² Michael Balter, cited in Rigoglioso 2007. Also see Balter 2005. To his credit, Balter corrected in the paperback edition some of the erroneous, derogatory descriptions of Gimbutas conveyed to him by the Hodder group.

⁴³ Beard 2009: 61.

Goddess Ideology and the Fall of Man by Katherine K. Young and Paul Nathanson, which, according to the publisher's description, exposes "a feminist conspiracy theory of history" based on the supposedly imaginary Indo-European transformation of Neolithic Europe (citing popular writers who interpreted or drew from Gimbutas' work, such as Riane Eisler and Dan Brown), which supposedly requires the hatred of all men. The book further exposes a purported cultural plot by man-hating "goddess feminists and their academic supporters" to "restore the goddess and therefore paradise as well." Clearly, these two scholars of religion were inspired by the backlash orchestrated by a few archaeologists (plus perhaps the books by Cynthia Eller) and have built their case on it.

Inside the field of archaeology itself, the standards for integrity of scholarship (reading the primary sources) seemingly continue to be waived whenever someone targets the work of Gimbutas. The magazine *Archaeology* published an article in 2011 titled "The New Upper Class" by Andrew Curry (a journalist on their staff). In it Curry claims that new attention by Western archaeologists to the gravesites in Varna, a Neolithic excavation site along the Black Sea coast in Bulgaria, will change all the received thinking about the Copper Age (technically the transitional Chalcolithic, or Eneolithic, Age), which lingers under the "shadow" of the foundational work of Gimbutas. Curry falsely asserts that Gimbutas thought Old Europe was "run by women" and was a "feminist utopia"; he even repeats Meskell's charge that anti-Soviet sentiment is the secret reason Gimbutas presented all the archaeological evidence that nomadic Indo-European cultures from the steppes of the Dnieper-Volga basin moved aggressively into Old Europe. Regarding Varna, Curry notes that there are four graves with a rich array of metalwork objects, that there were copper mines and copper production nearby, and that some tells at other sites have populations larger than

previously recognized. These facts were hardly unknown to Gimbutas: she wrote about the anomalous aspects of the Varna necropolis in *Civilization of the Goddess*,⁴⁴ noting that the richly endowed graves at Varna were the first indication of social change within an otherwise egalitarian context. She attributed this development to a rapid rise of trade activities between Old Europe inhabitants of the Black Sea coast and the encroaching populations moving westward from the Dnieper-Volga steppe. The appearance of weapons and ornaments of male status in the Varna graves reflect the influence of trade between Varna and the warrior cults of the nomadic, Indo-European steppe cultures; the Varna graves do not adopt the Indo-European style of a chieftain in a barrow. Moreover, far from being ignorant of the complexity of the period of cultural transformation from 4500-2500 BCE, Gimbutas explicitly addressed it in an article in the *Journal of Indo-European Studies* in 1980.⁴⁵ Still, acting once again as if Gimbutas' actual writings about the Varna graves do not exist, the claim is made in *Archaeology* magazine that her observations and insights have now been entirely supplanted.⁴⁶

Issues on the Table for Discussion

For those who created or subscribe to the backlash, there are no issues on the table at present concerning the work of Marija Gimbutas. Even most of the archaeologists who found the backlash articles to be offensive in tone, incorrect or exaggerated in content, and overblown in effect have taken the safe course of keeping silent in the intervening years. Gimbutas, however, had an abiding faith in science and predicted shortly before her death that it would take thirty-five years for her

⁴⁴ Gimbutas 1991: 338, 352-401.

⁴⁵ Gimbutas 1980b.

⁴⁶ Curry 2011: 40-45.

insights, observations, and conclusions to become accepted by the field. We are now nearly half way through that period. Just in case archaeological evaluations of her work might someday take place without prejudice, it is useful to now reconsider the straw-man arguments and charges that were made against her in the 1990s in light of various ideological currents of that time and in light of changes in academia since then. Truly, several major developments in academia are moving in her direction, not least of which is that archaeology has finally become somewhat more interdisciplinary. Gimbutas wrote in 1980 that

the period of 4500–2500 B.C. (calibrated chronology) is one of the most complex and least understood in prehistory. It is a period which urgently demands a concerted effort by scholars from various disciplines.⁴⁷

She not only called for but pioneered such an effort, which is gradually coming to pass. Consider, for example, the following five areas of study.

1. Archaeology and Religion

Religion, sacrality, and ritual were long considered peripheral to the proper concerns of archaeology. Even the post-processualists, nominally interested in symbols, disdain metanarratives such as a unifying metaphysical perception that informs a culture. They also oppose—more correctly, in my view—the projection back in time of concepts that were culturally constructed in the historic West; however, they apply that caution in such ways as to deny the possibility of any elements of cultural continuity from prehistoric times forward. For example, Conkey and Tringham urge readers to dismiss Gimbutas for using “terms such as *religion*, *temple*, *shrines*, and *rituals* that imply, among other things, the clear

separation of sacred from profane that is characteristic of Western belief systems.”⁴⁸ In truth, however, Gimbutas’ writing emphasizes that that sort of Greek dualistic metaphysics is exactly what was *not* present in the non-Indo-European cultures. Moreover, the field of archaeology did not heed Conkey’s and Tringham’s prohibition: the study of religion and ritual is now a compelling area of study. Examples of books in this relatively new area include *The Archaeology of Cult and Religion*, an interdisciplinary anthology edited by Peter Biehl and François Bertemes with Harald Meller (entirely different editions in 2001 and 2007) and *Archaeology, Ritual, Religion* by Timothy Insoll (2004).

In her pioneering work in the religious orientation of Old Europe, Gimbutas perceived various artifacts in the non-Indo-European symbol system as expressing central truths, which she grouped as follows: Life-Giving, The Renewing and Eternal Earth, Death and Regeneration, and Energy and Unfolding. She presented these groupings, with numerous examples of excavated artifacts in each category, in *The Language of the Goddess*, which was the first major archaeological book on religion, following her initial exploration of “myths and cult images.”⁴⁹ Gimbutas used the term “Goddess” to refer to the diverse visual and folkloric imagery of metaphor and symbol, behind which lies a complex of concepts expressing an awareness of embeddedness, participatory consciousness, and the immanence of the sacred: “the holistic and mythopoeic perception of the sacredness and mystery of all there is on Earth.”⁵⁰ Encompassing the cosmological drama of the changing seasons, the bounty of the land, and the cycles of endless regeneration, “The Goddess in all her manifestations was a symbol of the unity of all

⁴⁷ Gimbutas 1980b: 1-2.

⁴⁸ Conkey and Tringham 1994: 217.

⁴⁹ Gimbutas 1974, 1982.

⁵⁰ Gimbutas 1989: 321.

life in Nature.”⁵¹ In fact, she *is* Nature:

The multiple categories, functions, and symbols used by prehistoric peoples to express the Great Mystery are all aspects of the unbroken unity of one deity, a Goddess who is ultimately Nature herself.⁵²

Though Gimbutas felt that all depictions of the Goddess were an expression of one orientation, she stated that it was an open question whether there was literally one Goddess or many.⁵³ By the way, *Goddesses in World Mythology*, a biographical dictionary published by Oxford University Press in 1993, lists 11,000 goddesses and fifty-eight categories of their powers and attributions. Why are Gimbutas’ detractors so certain that it is “absurd” to propose that any of these deeply held cultural symbols had roots in prehistoric religion?

In Insoll’s book, *Archaeology, Ritual, Religion*, he devotes only two paragraphs to Gimbutas in which he dismisses all her contributions to the subject, citing “extensive” charges against her by Conkey and Tringham, Meskell, and others who repeated them; foremost, he agrees with their assertion that Gimbutas’ work must be ignored because her style of presenting her conclusions was too authoritative and “too literally claimed.”⁵⁴ (This was the style of her generation of archaeologists.) Surprisingly, Insoll also states as fact Conkey and Tringham’s remarkable claim in 1998 that there is “no ‘firm evidence’

for the Kurgan invasions.”⁵⁵ While it is true that both Insoll’s book and the anthology edited by Biehl and Bertemes have furthered the discussion of religion in archaeology, the case can be made that it was Gimbutas’ groundbreaking study of the religious orientation of an excavated civilization that forced the debates of the subject today within the field.

Given the scope of Gimbutas’ work on the religious orientation of Old Europe, numerous particulars—or even the entire orientation she perceived—can be debated. However, as Insoll notes, an accepted approach for archaeologists considering religious orientations is to put forth the plausible premise that prehistoric cultures may have had much in common with indigenous cultures, which may possess a cultural continuity of some sort from prehistoric times, often a nature-based, metaphysical sense of embeddedness in the cosmological and ecological “Great Mysterious.” Moreover, in many early cultures around the world the powers of nature were perceived metaphysically to have female qualities, presumably because of the easily observed parallels: women have a red tide that flows in rhythm with the cycles of the moon; they can swell up like the full moon; and they can bountifully produce (babies and milk), as does nature. Drawing on her background in ethnography and the history of religion, as well as archaeology, Gimbutas pioneered this approach in archaeology, which is clearly situated in the category Insoll describes. Can the other side of the debate negate this highly plausible orientation, other than simply denying it?

Then there is the matter of whether excavated artifacts demonstrate a continuity of concepts, not only through time periods but also across spatial regions. Insoll notes that the “particularistic” approach and the post-processual approach eschew suppositions about continuity, holding that only a study focused on the excavation of one particular settlement can

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Gimbutas 1991: 223.

⁵³ Marija Gimbutas, “The World of the Goddess,” public lecture delivered at the California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, 1990; VHS videotape was made by the Green Earth Foundation, P.O. Box 327, El Varano, CA 95433. In this talk, Gimbutas states that the images of the Great Goddess may have roots in two groups: totemic animal-goddesses (hybrid woman-animal), and the procreative sacral female (perhaps the Original Clan Mother).

⁵⁴ Insoll 2004: 57.

⁵⁵ Ibid.; Insoll cites from Tringham and Conkey 1998.

be trusted to yield solid, nonspeculative data. On the other side of the debate are a growing number of archaeologists who find the strong and extensive evidence of continuity to be compelling. Writing in the 2001 edition of an anthology titled *The Archaeology of Cult and Religion*, Svend Hansen, for instance, remarks in “Neolithic Sculpture: Some Remarks on an Old Problem” on “the stunning uniformity of representational types and design principles of Neolithic ‘idols’ in the Balkans.”⁵⁶ He refers to this continuity, or “uniformity,” as “an indication that the figurines transferred distinct ideas. In this sense they seem to be a religious phenomenon.”⁵⁷ Although Hansen sets aside Gimbutas’ work on the erroneous grounds that she saw the figurines as denoting a “matriarchy” and a “pointed” projection of a mythological Great Goddess (apparently he was not familiar with her specific use of that term; see above), he goes on to state that the majority of scholars today agree with Gimbutas that “the figurines are objects with a broadly based magic-religious meaning”⁵⁸—though the concept he uses, “magic,” has several connotations and may not be a good fit with Gimbutas’ perception of nature-based religion. Hansen also asserts, contra those of Gimbutas’ critics who claim that the figurines were merely fertility fetishes,

The widespread interpretation of the figurines as symbols of female ‘fertility’ has no empirical basis. Indeed, it is an unhistorical formula. Already the small group of Paleolithic figurines shows several different types, which likely represent different meanings. From the Paleolithic to the Neolithic period, a continuity of production is evident.⁵⁹

Certainly students of archaeology should

⁵⁶ Hansen 2001: 41.

⁵⁷ Ibid. Also see Haarmaan (1995) on cultural continuity of iconography, symbolism, and writing. Also see Marler 2003: 9-24.

⁵⁸ Hansen 2001: 38.

⁵⁹ Ibid.: 45.

be informed that there are two sides (or more) to the contemporary debates regarding “continuity vs. no continuity” and “metaphysical meanings vs. household/ production-oriented meanings” concerning the interpretation of the ritualized figurines from the non-Indo-European cultures. For those interested in examining the evidence for continuity of visual symbols and concepts across space and time during the Neolithic era, a recent book is relevant: *Introducing the Mythological Crescent: Ancient Beliefs and Imagery Connecting Eurasia with Anatolia* by Harald Haarmann and Joan Marler. The “Mythological Crescent” they posit is “a broad zone of cultural convergence that extends from the ancient Middle East via Anatolia to southeastern Europe, opening into the wide cultural landscape of Eurasia.”⁶⁰ Regarding the second, and related, debate—interpretations of the figurines of non-Indo-European cultures—a recent book articulates an insightfully context-rich method, *Interacting with Figurines: Seven Dimensions in the Study of Imagery*, by Harald Haarmann.⁶¹

A stumbling block in these discussions has been the connotation of “mythology” in the minds of most people schooled in modernity, including most archaeologists. Because Gimbutas wrote of “mythology” with regard to the nature-based religious concepts of Old Europe, detractors repeatedly deduce that she must have been under the spell of Arthur Evans, Jane Ellen Harrison, Robert Briffault, and/or Robert Graves and that she was, therefore, erroneously projecting back through time the soap opera on Mount Olympus.⁶² On the

⁶⁰ Haarmann and Marler 2008. Also see Poruciuc 2010.

⁶¹ Haarmann 2009. Haarmann states, “These sculpted figures must be understood within the context of the cultures in which they were fashioned. Are they religious in nature? Perhaps. Are they concrete expressions of past generations fashioned by the present? At times. Are these figures, most of them female, incarnations of goddess divinities? Could be. Are they living components of the daily lives of their creators? Definitely.”

⁶² See, e.g., Hutton 1997: 91-99.

contrary, what Hansen and others call the “magic-religious” quality of many of the Neolithic artifacts is what Gimbutas (and most scholars of indigenous religions) call “mythopoetic,” the sense of the mythic orientation as a vibrant experiential sense of the concrete and the abstract, the immanent and the transcendent, and the visible and the ineffable at once in the sacral lived world. This orientation is expressed in myriad cultural variations, all of which express visually and otherwise the immediacy and the power of the natural world as alive and sacred. As archaeology continues to develop a relationship with the history of religion, no doubt their common misunderstanding about “mythology” will be cleared up.

2. The Symbol System of Old Europe

It is generally agreed by archaeologists that the linear markings, signs, and symbols in common use in the cultures of Old Europe were most likely used to transmit meaning, but do they constitute a form of “writing”? Gimbutas thought so and perceived a script in the symbol system. In order to further the discussion of how to define “script” and how to approach an agreement of what qualifies as “writing,” the first international symposium on the subject, and an accompanying exhibition of artifacts,⁶³ was held in 2004 in Novi Sad, Serbia, sponsored jointly by the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts and the Institute of Archaeomythology. Both the proceedings volume of the Serbian symposium, *Signs of Civilization: Neolithic Symbol System of Southeastern Europe*, and a catalogue from a subsequent exhibition at the Brukenthal Museum in Sibiu, Romania, *The Danube Script: Neo-Eneolithic Writing in Southeastern Europe*, present articles on the history of the study of what Gimbutas first identified as the “Old European script” and on recent scholarly developments in the study of the widespread usage of it (now called the

Danube script) throughout Neolithic and Eneolithic southeastern Europe. Articles address the debate over whether particular signs are ritual or domestic symbols, the “non-verbal messages on anthropomorphic figurines,” and a report on a database with 3200 entries of “signs and symbols of spiritual life.”⁶⁴

One of the articles, “The Danube Script and Its Legacy,” engages with the subject of the continuity of this symbol system over space and time.⁶⁵ While many archaeologists have come to agree with Gimbutas’ perception of continuity of symbols from the Paleolithic era over thousands of years into the Neolithic era, she also perceived what might be called a grand continuity of these symbols and signs from the Paleolithic and the Neolithic into the historic periods and all the way into the modern era. Gimbutas demonstrated in *The Living Goddesses* that several patterns of symbols from pre-Indo-European religion are evident in the subsequent religions of the Greeks, the Etruscans, the Basques, the Celts, the Germanic peoples, and the Balts. Sometimes this survival of symbols occurred via the indigenous goddess in various European cultures whose characteristics and symbols were merged with those of the Virgin Mary when Christianity moved northward from the Mediterranean. This fascinating subject will no doubt continue to be examined and debated.

After Gimbutas published the first of her copiously illustrated books on the symbol system of Old Europe, two male art historians theorized that all of the ritually stylized sculptures were actually about nothing more than foreplay for the men during the sex act—soft porn for the neolithic male.⁶⁶ Gimbutas responded eloquently on the mythopoetic orientation in “Vulvas, Breasts, and Buttocks of the Goddess Creatress: Commentary on the

⁶³ See Starović 2004.

⁶⁴ Marler and Dexter 2009; Marler 2008.

⁶⁵ Haarmann 2008: 61-76.

⁶⁶ Onians and Collins 1978.

Origins of Art.”⁶⁷ Subsequently, Douglass Bailey asserted in the *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* that “the forms of graphic displays of female sexual parts (breasts, vulvae) and capabilities (pregnancy) in figurine form” were actually “displays” that “functioned as sexual insults” of a subordinate group.⁶⁸ (Surprisingly, Conkey and Tringham actually praise this highly speculative hypothesis.⁶⁹)

Similarly, Hodder has argued, as cited by Renfrew, for the assumption of universal patriarchy by asserting that

the elaborate female symbolism in the earlier Neolithic expressed the objectification and subordination of women. ... Perhaps women rather than men were shown as objects because they, unlike men, had become objects of ownership and male desire.⁷⁰

These assertions are saturated not only with a deep attachment to the ideal of universal patriarchy but are also influenced by the social-constructionist premise that any relationship (expressed by the figurines, for instance) must have been about displaying either power or submission because all relationships are to be seen as primarily power-laden, or “political.” It is difficult for scholars of that persuasion to consider the possibility of relationships of metaphysical and cosmological import. In fact, the social sciences in general have often demonstrated great difficulty grasping sacrality, especially when it is expressed through a blending of physical and abstract perceptions. For example, Bailey asserted in 2010 that a “modern” approach to the figurines of Old Europe concludes that they are not religious but, rather, are objects through which the people “perceived their appropriate appearance within their communities,” not unlike, he notes, the way Barbie dolls influence girls’ thinking about

their bodies.⁷¹ This is an example of the new “cognitive archaeology,” which uses the mind shaped by modernity (their own) as their point of reference rather than the indigenous mind explicated variously in ethnography, on which Gimbutas based her cognitive archaeology decades ago.

3. The Cause of the Indo-European Transformation of Neolithic Europe

As nearly all the archaeologists working on the non-Indo-European sites of southeastern Europe agree, the evidence indicates that Indo-European language, social structure, technologies, and culture entered Old Europe via three waves of migrating Indo-European pastoralists from the Eurasian steppes (specifically the Middle Volga basin, the Ural and Caucasus Mountains, and the Don and lower Dnieper River basins), which is the evidence-based explanation framed by Gimbutas’ Kurgan theory. As noted earlier, Renfrew’s idea (now known as the Farmer/Diffusion Hypothesis) has been rejected by paleolinguists and most Indo-European archaeologists. Also, the alternative explanation for the burned-down and suddenly abandoned Neolithic settlements put forward by Tringham—that those people probably burned down their own settlements⁷²—has not attracted a wide following. Still, for archaeology professors who teach the debate between the Migration Hypothesis and the Farmer/Diffusion Hypothesis, a relevant assignment would be Gimbutas’ final articulation of her hypothesis in an article written a few months before she died: “The Fall and Transformation of Old Europe: Recapitulation 1993.”⁷³ Also relevant is a 2002 interview with the late Bogdan Bruckner, an archaeologist with the Serbian Academy of

⁶⁷ Gimbutas 1982d.

⁶⁸ Bailey 1996: 281-307.

⁶⁹ Tringham and Conkey 1998: 42.

⁷⁰ Ian Hodder, cited by Renfrew and Bahn 2000: 218-9.

⁷¹ Bailey 2010: 124-125.

⁷² Tringham and Krštic 1990; regarding Tringham’s idea of the “Burned House Horizon,” see 114-116 and 609-615.

⁷³ Gimbutas 1997: 351-372. Also see Comrie 2002 and Dergachev 2002.

Sciences and Arts, in which he notes that the Kurgan theory has become even stronger since Gimbutas died, in light of a vast range of evidence subsequently unearthed by himself and many other Eastern European archaeologists.⁷⁴ For example, Dergachev's article, "Two Studies in Defence of the Migration Concept," provides detailed evidence that supports Gimbutas' Kurgan Hypothesis (and also discusses the weaknesses of the new "narrative" model of research as opposed to more rigorous research models used by Gimbutas).⁷⁵ More recently, in 2011, the archaeologist David Anthony observed in *Archaeology* magazine that at hundreds of tells all across the western Balkan region radiocarbon dates reveal a similar story:

There are a lot of radiocarbon dates for 4700, 4600, 4500, 4300, and then it drops off a cliff. Something really catastrophic—something culture-ending—happened there.⁷⁶

This is exactly as Gimbutas concluded.

Within this area, a debate has arisen over whether the pre-Indo-European settlements did or did not have structural fortifications prior to contact with the abrupt arrival of the Indo-European horsemen. After studying hundreds of Neolithic site reports, Gimbutas concluded that there were no Indo-European-type fortifications before the appearance of steppe peoples. Circular ditches may have protected settlements from wild animals. In the textbook *Archaeology: The Science of Once and Future Things*, Brian Hayden asserts, contra Gimbutas, that there were several constructed fortifications in Old Europe. This view is comprehensively refuted by Dergachev in "Two Studies in Defence of the Migration Concept" and by Marler in the article "Warfare in the European Neolithic: Truth or Fiction?," in which a close

reading of Hayden's text reveals numerous problematic uses of archaeological sources.⁷⁷

Surprisingly, many feminists have taken the position that any historical evidence of a patriarchal society invading a nonpatriarchal society must be rejected because the preferred theory of the day is that patriarchy must always and everywhere have resulted strictly from internal societal reasons. Sherry Ortner, for example, theorizes in *Making Gender*, 1996, that patriarchy "arose as an unintended consequence of arrangements which were originally purely functional and expedient."⁷⁸ Conkey has agreed, noting that "we" (feminist archaeologists) now think of patriarchy as a by-product of technologies and internal social upheavals.⁷⁹ Evidence of any invasions is strictly off-limits, yet the notion that there can be only one set of causes of patriarchal cultures worldwide must ignore not only all the evidence of the patriarchal Indo-Europeanizing of Neolithic Europe via their invading migrations but also the classic study made by the anthropologist Peggy Reeves Sanday in 1981 of the anthropological data on 156 cultures, which she presented in *Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality*. Sanday found that the evidence suggests a variety of social forms based on local, ecological, and historical circumstances. In general, she noted that some cultures functioned around what she labeled an "inner orientation" (nature is a partner; food is obtained rather easily from the earth or sea; the forces of nature are sacralized; the social structure is non-patriarchal; the origins story involves a goddess (or Original Mother) or a divine couple (often Original Mother and her male associate); and a reciprocal flow is perceived between the power of nature and the power inherent in women, a power dynamic in

⁷⁴ Marler interview with Bruckner, op. cit.

⁷⁵ Dergachev 2002.

⁷⁶ David Anthony cited in Curry 2011: 45.

⁷⁷ Hayden 1992; Marler, n.d.

⁷⁸ Sherry Ortner, cited by Osborne 1998: 55.

⁷⁹ Margaret W. Conkey, cited from an interview by Osborne in "The Women Warriors," *ibid.*

which men can participate through ritual). The other cultural orientation Sanday found she labeled an “outer orientation” (engagement with nature revolves around seasonal migration and the pursuit of large animals (or later on herding); there is a focus on creating weapons for interpersonal violence among men; the social system is patriarchal; the origins story centers on a god; and a metaphysics drives men to fear and defend against an implicit power that is “out there” (often associated with female sexuality).⁸⁰ In this anthropological schematic, the Indo-Europeans were a warrior-oriented “outer” culture that moved in on a region of non-Indo-European “inner” cultures. It is thought that the Indo-European nomadic tribes may have moved eastward into Europe from the steppes for climatic reasons.

4. The Social System of the Cultures of Old Europe

Gimbutas wrote the following on the social structure of the civilization of Old Europe:

The earliest civilizations of the world—in China, Tibet, Egypt, the Near East, and Europe—were, in all probability, matrilineal “Goddess civilizations.”

Since agriculture was developed by women [the former gatherers], the Neolithic period created optimum conditions for the survival of matrilineal, endogamous systems inherited from Paleolithic times. During the early agricultural period women reached the apex of their influence in farming, arts and crafts, and social functions. The matriclan with collectivist principles continued. ... We do not find in Old Europe, nor in all of the Old World, a system of autocratic rule by women with an equivalent suppression of men. Rather, we find a structure in which the sexes are more or less on equal footing. ... I use the term *matristic* simply to avoid the

term *matriarchy* with the understanding that it incorporates matriliney.⁸¹

With regard to the continuity of matrilineal descent and matricentric cultures in Europe, Gimbutas further observed:

A strong indication of the existence of matriliney in Old Europe is the historic continuity of matrilineal succession in the non-Indo-European societies of Europe and Asia Minor such as the Minoan, Etruscan, Pelasgian, Lydian, Lykian, Carian in western Turkey, Basque in northern Spain and southwest France, and the Picts in Britain before the Celts. This influence is also found in Indo-European-speaking societies—Celts, Teutons, Slavs, and Balts—who absorbed matricentric and matrilineal traditions from the rich substratum of Old European populations.⁸²

Meskel took Gimbutas to task for “reverse sexism” and for the supposedly far-fetched idea that Old Europe was a matrilineal, matrifocal, matristic civilization in which “there were no husbands”⁸³—but how well-founded is such a criticism? In 2002 Clifford Geertz noted in a review of *A Society Without Fathers or Husbands: The Na of China* by Cai Hua, a book on the Na, a Burmo-Tibetan-speaking tribal people in the Yongning hills of Yunnan province of southern China, that the cornerstone of anthropology, the theory of kinship system (which he calls “a culture-bound notion if there ever was one”) can no longer be accepted as describing a universal social structure. Both variants of kinship theory (“descent theory” and the “alliance model”) have assumed universal patriarchal family structures and have acted as blinders on anthropology—as well as archaeology. In fact, many cultures have been observed to be matrilineal, matrilocal, and matrifocal, giving great honor and centrality to the clan

⁸⁰ Sanday 1981.

⁸¹ Gimbutas 1991: 324.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 344.

⁸³ Meskel 1995: 78, 83.

mothers, who distribute material wealth and play a central role in the culture. Among the Minangkabau of West Sumatra in Indonesia, for example, the anthropologist Peggy Reeves Sanday noted that the *adat ibu* (women's customary law) refers to a system of symbols and a set of life-cycle ceremonial practices placing senior women at the social, emotional, aesthetic, political, and economic center of daily life along with their brothers.⁸⁴ In many such cultures, children are raised in a stable household consisting of their mother and her sisters and brothers. There are lovers (and maternal aunts, uncles, grandmothers, and grand aunts and uncles) but no husbands and wives. A number of women who live or were raised in such cultures in Polynesia, Micronesia, Mexico, Panama, Saharan Africa, West and South Africa, Northeast India, Southwest India, Sumatra, Indonesia, and China traveled to Texas in 2005 to speak about the matrilineal, matrilocal, matrifocal societies in which they live, at the Second World Congress on Matriarchal Studies, held at Texas State University at San Marcos.⁸⁵ Moreover, in addition to Sanday, several other anthropologists have also published particularist studies of such cultures since 1993, including Maria Lepowsky, Annette Weiner, Shanshan Du, Yang Erche Namu, and Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen.⁸⁶ When one grasps how centrally important the clan mothers were, and are, to all aspects of their cultures (they are sometimes, when performing a ceremony, called a name that means “Original Mother”), one can better appreciate Gimbutas’ insight that the prehistoric personification of the powers and cycles of nature and cosmos as Goddess, often sculpted with her attendants, may well “reflect

the role of an honored elder, the great clan mother, who was assisted by a council of women.”⁸⁷ Indeed, a culture’s sense of the Original Mother, progenitor of all the clans, may well have been an inspiration for the metaphysical presence that also incorporated nature-based and cosmological dimensions, which Gimbutas called Goddess.

Sanday, unlike Gimbutas, has long argued that the label “matriarchy” should be used for such cultures on the grounds that there is sufficient anthropological data to require a redefining of the term. In writing the entry on “Matriarchy” for the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History* (2008), Sanday notes that

matriarchy is part of a social ontology giving women control with their brothers over economic resources and political influence. This system of thought makes women the originators and performers of practices that *authenticate* and *regenerate* or, to use a term which is closer to the ethnographic details, that *nurture* the social order.⁸⁸

Power is “balanced in the sense that it is diffused among those who work in a partnership to uphold social rules and practices.”⁸⁹ Sanday’s redefinition reflects a “maternal social philosophy” that she and her colleagues have witnessed closely in action.

In short, Meskell’s criticism of Gimbutas for positing an indigenous European culture with “no husbands”—like Conkey’s and Tringham’s charge that Gimbutas was “outdated” to propose that the indigenous cultures of Old Europe had different roles and types of work for the two sexes, and like Cynthia Eller’s sweeping dismissal in *The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory*—is stunningly ill founded.

In a similar vein, the accusation of “essentialist” was repeatedly affixed to

⁸⁴ Sanday 2008.

⁸⁵ Papers from the Second World Congress on Matriarchal Studies are posted on the conference website: www.second-congress-matriarchal-studies.com.

⁸⁶ Sanday 2002; Lepowsky 1993; Weiner 1992; Shanshan Du 2002; Namu and Mathieu 2003; Bennholdt-Thomsen 2000; Lamu Gatusa 2005.

⁸⁷ Gimbutas 1991: 344.

⁸⁸ Sanday 2008 (online version).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

Gimbutas' work in the 1990s. It began with Conkey and Tringham who claim that Gimbutas' reading of prehistory is so "essentialized" that it precludes "an engendered prehistory" that "envisages women as thinking and acting people who affect the course of prehistory."⁹⁰ The charge was repeated by many other feminist archaeologists and was also applied to the "Goddess movement," which Gimbutas' detractors delight in erroneously conflating with her. For instance, Lucy Goodison and Christine Morris (formerly a research assistant for Renfrew) state in their introduction to the anthology *Ancient Goddesses*,

Their biologically essentialist vision is one which they share with reactionary forces who have always opposed the emancipation of women; it serves, as Lauren Talalay has pointed out: "to isolate women outside of history. ... If women's reproductive capabilities are the source of their power, then women remain, to some extent, locked within an unchanging domestic sphere."⁹¹

Essentialist is a derogatory term that was invented in post-structuralist feminist circles in the 1980s to demean any women who noted, say, a connection between female embodiment and religious honoring in any past or present culture; it was claimed that any such honoring necessarily limits women to *nothing but* our biology and prevents us from being agents of culture. The "anti-essentialist" scholars accept the traditional divide in patriarchal societies between nature and culture, agreeing that any association with nature situates one on the wrong side of the chasm. Although I have been addressing this straw-man argument since 1991 (in *States of Grace*), suffice it to say here that it is nonsensical that anyone could read the passages cited above from Gimbutas' writings about women and culture in Old Europe and

honestly accuse her of viewing women as not being cultural agents and being outside of history.

Finally, Gimbutas' conclusions about Old Europe as a matrilineal but balanced (roughly egalitarian) civilization was apparently enough to set off alarm bells in the psyche of many male archaeologists and journalists, who reacted with angry charges such as "A Sexist View of Prehistory" (Brian Fagan) and "Gyn-supremacism" (a journalist writing in the *Chicago Tribune*).⁹² Visceral feelings about the utter rightness of patriarchal culture and a male godhead are apparently no more uncommon in archaeology than elsewhere.⁹³ Even Gimbutas' observation that most of the Neolithic figurines were female is seemingly received by some male archaeologists as an affront that requires retribution.

5. The Women's Spirituality Movement

The backlash required a *bête noire* with whom to tar the eminent scholar by association so they created a depiction of a moronic "Goddess movement" that supposedly formed around Gimbutas and her promises of a past "perfect matriarchy." Conkey and Tringham first put forth this severely distorted depiction in their 1995 article, and Meskell immediately repeated it in her article. Repeating the conflation the following year, Peter Biehl delivered a paper to the European Association of Archaeologists in which he conveyed the danger that archaeology was being contaminated by the interest of the "Mother-Goddess-Movement," which had supposedly corrupted the work of Gimbutas; he proposed an escape from the perilous situation, titling his paper "Overcoming the 'Mother-Goddess-Movement': A New Approach to the Study of Human Representation." Apparently the exorcism was not entirely successful, though, because Biehl wrote in 2001,

⁹⁰ Conkey and Tringham 1994: 219.

⁹¹ Goodison and Morris 1998: 14.

⁹² Margolis 1995.

⁹³ See Goldenburg 1997.

There is an overriding fear that their [archaeologists'] work will be classified alongside and somehow equated with Marija Gimbutas' work on prehistoric figurines and the so-called "Mother-Goddess-Movement."⁹⁴

In 1998 Goodison and Morris repeated, in their introduction to *Ancient Goddesses*, the unchronological causality asserted by Conkey and Tringham (that Gimbutas' work was "the impetus" for the "Goddess movement"), yet none of them ever did a shred of fact-checking of their instrumental assumption. As I explained earlier, they got it backwards: the women's spirituality movement emerged in the mid-1970s, as is well documented. That movement learned about Gimbutas' work only in 1982 because that was the year the University of California Press brought her book *Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe* back into print. It was also the year my anthology, *The Politics of Women's Spirituality*, was published, to which I had added at the last minute an article by Gimbutas, in the historical section on the perception in numerous cultures of a divine, cosmological presence as female. She did not write an article for that anthology but kindly allowed me to include an abridged version of a scientific paper she had presented to an archaeological conference. The impetus for Gimbutas' moving ahead as quickly as possible with the two major books she had long planned—*Language of the Goddess* and *Civilization of the Goddess*—was her diagnosis of cancer in the early 1980s, not the interest of a group of feminists.

Had Gimbutas' detractors ever used the correct name for the women's spirituality movement, the second word in the term might have tipped them off to the extremely broad and substantive nature of the phenomenon. It is not a group of simpletons who believed, as Meskell asserted, that "the establishment of an originary myth on the basis of historical scientific reality

will facilitate the restoration of women's power. It then follows that the patriarchy will be dismantled and the lost pre-patriarchal culture can be regained."⁹⁵ Rather, the women's spirituality movement is a loosely constituted, highly diverse part of the feminist movement in which women unsatisfied with patriarchal religions have explored and created numerous paths to authentic spiritual experience, including working within the Abrahamic and other religions to transform them; practicing Buddhist meditation (no godhead of either sex); reading about the 11,000 known goddesses or the various cultural traditions of female shamans; studying the intimate communion with nature in traditional native people's religions; and creating meaningful spiritual practices. By the 1990s an academic counterpart was well established, which studies women and world religions, the cultural history of women's sacred arts, and the many philosophical issues that radiate from a shift to a deeply relational perspective on religion, culture, history, politics, economics, and education.⁹⁶

Reflections on Feminist Process

Beginning in the 1970s feminists entered the professions not only to pursue individual careers but to change the destructive ways in which business is often conducted in the patriarchal world of work. In academia, under the veneer of supposedly ethical intellectual discourse and a carefully deliberative process of framing knowledge often lurk the dynamics of a blood sport. Everyone who has spent any time in academia easily recognizes the difference between articles that aim to annihilate someone's status and work as opposed to articles that acknowledge what seems right and

⁹⁴ Biehl 1996: 59-67. Also see Biehl and Bertemes 2001.

⁹⁵ Meskell (1995: 82) is citing Tina Passman.

⁹⁶ Several institutions offer an M.A. in Women's Spirituality; to my knowledge, the only doctorate is the Ph.D. in Philosophy and Religion with Concentration in Women's Spirituality from the California Institute of Integral Studies, a graduate institute in San Francisco.

valuable in someone's work and then argue for a different, or enlarged, perspective or conclusion. The steady drumbeat of *Gimbutas must be dismissed* has now influenced an entire generation of young professors. It is disappointing to see, all these years later, feminist academics employing many of the tactics long established in patriarchal dust-ups—such as misrepresenting an opponent's positions in order to force them off the discussion table, thereby scoring off the targeted person so as to elevate oneself. Meskell, the youngest of the anti-Gimbutas authors, often reminds readers that she is writing as a Third Wave feminist, as if the female version of the patriarchal pattern of “killing off the fathers” in a field in order to establish oneself is the noble path to take. Her strange accusation that Gimbutas must be dismissed because her work amounts to “pseudo-feminism”⁹⁷ is ironic.

Whether one is grateful or resentful, feminist academics stand on the shoulders of our intellectual mothers and grandmothers who entered the disciplines when they were extremely hostile territories for women. Those pioneering scholars had to produce high-quality work that exceeded that of most of their male colleagues just to be grudgingly considered adequate for promotion and grants. Some of those women did even more than excel within the established parameters of their field; a few, like Gimbutas, figured out the answer to long-standing questions and broke new ground to revolutionize their field and significantly advance the development of knowledge. Speaking in 1990 of Gimbutas' willingness to take archaeology in new, multidisciplinary directions, the archaeologist Linda Ellis told Peter Steinfels of the *New York Times* that “she's a very brave woman, very brave to step over the boundary.”⁹⁸ As noted above, the more various streams of multidisciplinary knowledge enrich the perspectives within archaeology—

especially knowledge of relevant ethnographic studies in anthropology and indigenous religion—the more the dismissive articles from the 1990s attacking Gimbutas' plausibility are shown to be largely underinformed or ideological and baldly competitive.

It is disheartening to see that a small group could achieve such a toppling (in order to subsequently put their own stamp on the field), that so few people seem to consult the original sources referred to in a critique, and that the press can be so easily taken in. When all this feels particularly repugnant, I think of the last time I visited Marija, two months before she died. She had a hospice bed set up in her study with its walls of glass through which she could gaze at the beautiful green canyon. Surrounded by her books and replicas of non-Indo-European Goddess figurines, she was completely calm and was confident that everything would turn out all right regarding her numerous contributions to European archaeology. Indeed, she was remarkably happy. Today, when I reflect on all the aggressive misrepresentations—far more than she could have imagined during her final days—I cannot share her deep confidence in the course of science.

Still, it should be noted that some archaeology professors have stood up to the backlash forces, have refused to “dismiss” Gimbutas in any way, and actually practice the virtue of multivocality, which is much touted by but oddly elusive for many of the post-processualists: Tristan Carter, for instance, taught a course on “Archaeology of Prehistory: In Search of the Goddess” at Stanford University in 2006 in which he provided a detailed, in-depth, and appreciative view of Gimbutas' work and then did the same for Renfrew and Meskell.⁹⁹ Perhaps he is a portent of a post-backlash rebalancing.

⁹⁷ See Meskell 1995: 82-84.

⁹⁸ Linda Ellis, cited in Steinfels 1990.

⁹⁹ E-mail communication from Mara Keller on March 11, 2010; Prof. Keller attended Prof. Carter's course at Stanford University.

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