



A new interpretation of female symbols and figures produced in prehistoric Europe – The hypothesis of the centrality of women

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ABSTRACT

Female symbols and figurines produced in prehistoric Europe (Palaeolithic and Early Neolithic periods) have generally been interpreted in terms of male dominance or religious offerings for fertility. This paper is suggesting a new interpretation based on modern knowledge of human neuroscience and the behaviour and values of contemporary hunter-gatherers. The main novelty resulting from such an approach is the centrality of women in Palaeolithic and Early Neolithic cultures. The new interpretation of female symbols and figures would therefore be that artists were celebrating the important role that women had in nonviolent communities at times (first 90,000 years of human existence) when male dominance and structural violence had not emerged yet. This hypothesis has direct implication for the understanding of human nature and the progress of peace studies.

RIASSUNTO

Figurine e simboli femminili prodotti in Europa in epoca preistorica (nel periodo Paleolitico e primo Neolitico) sono stati generalmente interpretati come simboli del predominio maschile o come offerte religiose effettuate per ottenere fertilità. L'articolo avanza una nuova ipotesi interpretativa basata sulla moderna conoscenza della scienza neurologica, degli stili comportamentali e dei valori degli odierni cacciatori-raccoglitori. La novità che emerge da questo nuovo tipo d'interpretazione è la centralità del ruolo femminile nel Paleolitico e nel primo Neolitico. Probabilmente, riprodurre simboli e figure femminili era per l'artista un modo per celebrare l'importante ruolo che ricopriva la donna all'interno delle comunità non violente di quell'epoca (durante i primi 90.000 anni dell'esistenza umana) in cui il predominio dell'uomo e la violenza strutturale non erano ancora emerse. Questa ipotesi interpretativa ha dirette implicazioni nella comprensione della natura umana e negli studi legati alla diffusione della pace.

INTRODUCTION

One of most interesting features of Palaeolithic and Early Neolithic rock art in Europe are the symbols, engravings, paintings, figurines and statues that relate to women. The meanings and functions of these items have been the topic of a debate that has seen interpretations ranging from expressions of sexual desire to totems of fertility,¹ through the representation of a 'binary opposition' between female and male in society.² Of course, female anthropologists offer interpretations of the same art that differ from those of their male colleagues.³ Marija Gimbutas has much contributed to the documentation of the rich artistic representation of women during the transition from the Palaeolithic to the Neolithic periods in Europe. Although her idea of a Great Goddess and a Great Mother has been criticised as simplistic, the criticism itself derives from a superficial analysis of her work.⁴ Gimbutas sees the 'binary opposition' as clearly separated in time and space – matrifocal or matrilinear (not matriarchal) cultures in the early Neolithic period of Southern Europe (around the 8,000 years before present, BP), followed by androcratic (or patriarchal) cultures imposed by the belligerent Indo-Europeans who migrated from the north-east around 3,500 BP – while her re-interpretation of 'venus' figurines as 'queens' or 'ladies', instead of goddesses or totems, is less clear.⁵ This paper proposes a new point of view about female symbols and figures, which moves away from reli-

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gious interpretations and inappropriate gender oppositions, to attempt an exploration of prehistoric minds as they possibly operated within a partially known social environment. This study develops within the general theme of the author's research on the origins of violence after the domestication of nature.⁶

THREE TYPOLOGIES OF SYMBOLS AND FIGURES

As examples for this preliminary analysis of the representation of women in prehistory, I have chosen three prehistoric periods with their corresponding typology of art: a) Upper Palaeolithic (Aurignacian period, about 25-35,000 BP) with its vulvar signs engraved on stone blocks, b) Upper Palaeolithic (Gravettian period, about 22-27,000 BP) with its so-called 'venus' figurines, and c) Early Neolithic (Malta's Temple period, about 4,5-6,000 BP) with its female figures.

These three types of rock art are different enough to allow the examining of specific, concrete cases. The two Palaeolithic examples differ in the quality of artistic representation, but they both concern hunter-gatherer cultures, while the Neolithic example concerns a rather sophisticated food-producing culture that, however, had not yet developed large settlements and a strong social stratification. Importantly, all three cultures share the characteristic of not having evidence of organised violence and related weapons.⁷ This may justify a generalisation concerning the position of women in European prehistoric cultures, the topic of discussion in this paper.

Of course, we are considering here important problems and new ideas, which require an extensive investigation to be properly supported. A Valcamonica Symposium may be the appropriate occasion to test the general validity of a novel approach before undertaking a time-consuming project.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION TO FORMULATE HYPOTHESES ABOUT THE MEANING AND FUNCTION OF ROCK ART

While discovering and describing a great number of sites with prehistoric rock art, palaeoarchaeologists have embarked in the attempt of understanding the motivations behind these works, as the idea of art for the art's sake is not finding acceptance.⁸ In this section I am reviewing, very briefly, current interpretative approaches, before suggesting a novel one and applying it to three specific cases.

First of all, there is a clear tendency in the literature of attributing religious significance to artefacts whose function otherwise escapes explanation. I am sceptical about the religiosity of prehistoric human beings, while supporting the idea of their profound sense of spirituality.⁹ One should therefore adopt more refined terminology and concepts when dealing with this topic. Another explanatory approach that should be used with great caution – or rather not used at all – is the one attributing to prehistoric people values and conceptual frameworks that emerged only in historical times, namely after the domestication of animals and plants.¹⁰ These values – for example, a male centred-society – are still dominating the psyche of scholars and make it more difficult for them to imagine prehistoric minds and their motivations. One particular aspect of this trend of anachronism is the explanatory approach of some psychoanalysts. The problem with this approach is that, according to modern neuroscience, the the human subconscious is not congenitally determined and it does not represent a phylogenetic remnant of ancient brains or atavism.¹¹ Therefore our brain has a typical 20th century subconscious, while palaeolithic artists had conscious thoughts and a subconscious typical of the 20th millennium BP, that is the values of hunter-gatherers, which takes us to the novel interpretative approach.

I suggests that one should make use of what we know about modern neuroscience and contemporary hunter-gatherers¹² in order to imagine the motivations of prehistoric artists. It is true that !Kung people of the Kalahari Desert, Australian desert Aborigines and polar Eskimos were not carbon copies of our prehistoric ancestors, but, in spite of a lack of reciprocal cultural contacts, they had important common features in social behaviour and values.¹³ This strengthen the idea that these feature are associated with the social-environmental situation they had in common with prehistoric people.

The new explanatory approach suggested here is therefore based on imagining, for the study relating to this paper, that European palaeolithic people had the same, o similar, social organisation, values, and way of thinking that have been described by anthropologists who lived in the first half of the 20th century with contemporary hunter-gatherers. In this author's view, the risk of possible errors of interpretation made by referring to 20th century industrialised cultures or outmoded concepts of human psychology is much higher than the one made by referring to the cultures of contemporary hunter-gatherers.

Palaeolithic vulvar signs and female symbols

The anthropological literature generally indicates the Aurignacian (circa 25-35,000 BP) as the period when *Homo sapiens* began to produce art, but by including all relatively simple signs left behind by the first human beings who entered Europe from Africa and through the Middle East we can claim 40,000 years of European art.¹⁴ As an example of Aurignacian art, I am referring here to the group of 19 engraved stone blocks that are

described by Emmanuel Anati at this XXII Valcamonica Symposium. These items are important for the aims of this paper as they represent an homogeneous selection of blocks all found within small distances (up to 20 km) around the township of Les Eyzies de Tayac in Dordogne and all carrying the same extremely limited grammar of engraved signs: vulvae and cup marks as female signs, one fallus and batonnets as male signs. Most blocks also represent very simple or elusive outlines of an animal's head, possibly connected with wild bovine species. For the detailed description of the stone blocks in question, I refer to Anati's paper.¹⁵ Here I am outlining only the features that are relevant to the present discussion about the role of women in palaeolithic communities. The relevant features of the 209 graphemes on the 19 blocks are the following:

- a) The female symbols are more than the male symbols: 43 vulvae compared to one phallus, 60 cup marks compared to 28 batonnets.
- b) The outlines representing vulvae are generally larger and more deeply engraved than other graphemes.
- c) The zoomorph is only one for each stone block and it is present most of the times (12 elusive figures and 2 unsure representations out of 19 blocks).
- d) Stone blocks in question were found in locations used as living quarters.

On the basis of these features and of the explanatory approach proposed above, I would suggest that each stone block or slate was identifying an extended family living in that region about 30,000 BP. The animal associated with each block would have represented the totemic identity of the older woman who founded the family and, consequently, the identity of the extended family. The social importance attributed to women in that culture would explain the prevalence and artistic relevance of vulvae. If the similarity with contemporary hunter-gatherers holds, women would have been perceived as the important providers of stable food supply through their gathering of fruit and vegetable and hunting of small animal preys, while men's large prey hunting depended much on chance and migration patterns. If male exogamy was practised also by prehistoric hunter-gatherers, women would have represented the stable identity of the extended family, probably made of about 3-4 women (the average number of vulvar figures on the blocks), 3-4 men and a dozen of children and adolescents, who were affected by a relatively high rate of infant mortality. Mating couple would have been clearly identified and would have been rather stable, with occasional extra-conjugal affairs causing some tension. There would have not been any hierarchical organisation among men, who consequently could not seek any official association with more than one woman. Children would have known one woman as their mother, with all other adult members of the family equally responsible for their care. The central role of women would also have derived from the generating 'magic' of birth (through the vulva) and the dispensation of warm milk from their breast for 3-4 years. The size of blocks and slates was compatible with carrying them along during the occasional nomadic movements of the family. Otherwise the stone block would have been kept in an appropriate position inside a rock shelter or temporary huts where the family lived as an identifying symbol of them. The extended family would have been part of a band of 50-100 people that cooperated and took important decisions together.¹⁶

PALAEOLITHIC REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

Female figurines or small solid representations of women have been found throughout a broad arc of western, central and eastern Europe and normally associated with the industries of the Gravettian period (25-23,000 BP). The representation of these so-called 'venus' can be realistic such as those of Willendorf (Austria) and Laussel (Dordogne, France), sketchy such as those of Vestonice (Moravia, eastern Czech Republic), Menton (France), Savignano (Italy) and Parabita (Italy), stylised such as those of Lespugne (Haute-Garonne, France) and Avdieievo (Ukraine), and just symbolised such as those of Pekarna (Moravia) and Trou Magrite (Belgium).¹⁷

The interpretations of these statuettes are various: religious offerings to obtain fertility, the cult of a female goddess, items of ritualistic exchanges between communities, but Barry Conliffe also mentioned "an emphasis of the central role of women in Upper Palaeolithic society".¹⁸ I would support such an interpretation by adopting for the same explanatory approach presented above for Aurignacian signs and symbols: comparison with contemporary hunter-gatherers, as the least risky approach, and recognition of women centrality in the human adventure. The Gravettian period corresponds to an increase in ice distribution in Europe and perhaps a further challenge for human beings to adapt to a changing environment, but the basic social organisation must have been essentially the same as Aurignacian cultures.

Before elaborating further on the explanation of Gravettian female figurines, one should consider the reasons for not accepting current alternative ideas. One should remember that fertility was typically a concern for advanced agricultural communities, but not for hunter-gatherers (see references in note 12), which would eliminate the idea of fertility offerings. Moreover, the concept of divinity and gods developed only with the emergence of high priesthood and institutionalised religion in the large settlements



of the advanced Neolithic period, while prehistoric people expressed their spirituality outside a religious framework,¹⁹ which would eliminate the idea of special rituals and a goddess. It remains the idea of the centrality of women in Palaeolithic cultures.

Prehistoric artists probably represented with engravings, paintings and sculptures life forms that were important for them, a way of expressing emotions and sharing them with others, just as contemporary artists, singers and writers do. This is not art for art's sake or aesthetics, it is communication. Interestingly, prehistoric artists represented animals most of the times in a realistic way, but their own body was usually represented in an abstract way, that is with symbols, signs, simple silhouettes, and stylised shapes. As suggested in the previous section, women probably enjoyed a central position (not political power) in the Palaeolithic hunter-gathering society, therefore the frequent woman/animal association in art simply recognised two important aspects of that particular world view. Female figurines of the Gravettian ranged from realistic to symbolic representations of women. Regardless of the degree of realism, all or some female attributes were emphasised: breast, vulva, and the natural female pattern of fat distribution on legs, hips and buttocks. Prehistoric 'venus' were probably not intended to be obese as such; they simply represented middle aged women (those with knowledge) of healthy, well nourished communities of the time.

Beyond the artistic motivation that generated female statuettes, the problem remains of imagining their practical use. As contemporary hunter-gatherers practised gender equality, not women centrality as such, and used art to represent food (hunting or gathering) and spiritual concepts (mythology of origins and totemic relationship with nature), a comparison with them perhaps does not help in this case. One could imagine that the use in question was the same suggested for stone blocks in the previous section. Female statuette may have been kept in appropriate locations where an extended family lived at the moment, in order to identify the woman who founded it and, by extension, the family itself.

NEOLITHIC REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

In the third example selected for this preliminary re-interpretation of prehistoric representations of women, we consider the female statuettes and statues produced during the Temple period in Neolithic Malta (about 5/6,000 BP). In this case we are toward the end of prehistory and at the beginning of the important revolution that changed human social structure, behaviour and collective thinking: the domestication of plants and animals (see note 10). Small agricultural communities of the Early Neolithic, especially in Southern Europe, had not as yet developed a highly stratified social organisation, structural violence and male dominance.²⁰ During this transition from food gathering to food production *Homo sapiens* maintained certain fundamental social values that are part of a resilient deep culture.²¹ One reads from the publication "Neolithic period" by the National Museum of Archaeology of Malta (2006, pp. 6-8):

"The evidence of Malta's first inhabitants dates back to circa 5,200 B.C. This period, the Early Neolithic, along with successive Temple Period, form part of the Maltese Neolithic Period, which ends at circa 2,500 B.C. With no written record for this span of time and with an abundance of prehistoric remains that one finds on our islands, interpretation is very subjective and open to discussion. During the Early Neolithic Period the human population was made up of farmers, succeeding the predecessors who were hunters and food gatherers (p. 6) ... During the early phases, these first settlers must have been clustered in groups, probably made of extended families that were self-supportive. The absence of weapons makes us believe they were peaceful people who, later, during the Temple Period, pooled their resources to originate the wonderful megalithic structures which have withstood the rest of time and can still be admired nowadays ... (p. 8)."

This period, characterised by peaceful and cooperating food producers, corresponds to the production of female figurines (the Sleeping Lady of Hal Safieni and the Venus of Malta at Hagar Qim) and large standing female statues present outside and inside temples (Hal Safieni, Hagar Qim, Tarxien, etc.). Only the 'venus' statuette is nude and very realistic, while the others represent dressed corpulent women, which are realistic (Sleeping Lady) or stylised ("fat ladies" statuettes and large standing statues).²² Importantly, no comparable reproductions of men have been described in this Maltese period. By way of comparison, the small female figurines of the Cypro-Archaic Period (Bronze Age, circa 2,500 BP) – almost all nude and in static, symbolic positions – coexisted with many dynamically active male figurines (about 650 published items), 5% of which with weapons or on war charts and the rest with professional tools of agriculture and navigation; only one male figurine was nude with an exposed penis.²³

It is difficult to avoid the suggestion of a centrality of women in the Maltese Temple Period, a social position that was subsequently lost in the later Neolithic periods, when human settlements became larger and/or Southern Europe was invaded by Indo-European cultures, which were belligerent and male-dominated. The importance of women, therefore, did not faint away soon after the invention of the domestication of nature not only because of the resilience of deep culture, as discussed above, but also because very

probably they were actually women those who made this invention²⁴ and consequently their pre-agricultural relevance became even enhanced in the Early Neolithic period.

The correlation between a possible female centrality (matrifocal cultures) and nonviolent communities has clear implications for the definition of human nature and peace studies, as discussed below.

A lingering tradition in Southern European deep culture

As indicated in Introduction, the presence of female figurines in European prehistory has nurtured the idea of the worshipping of a Mother Goddess that moved from Africa and across Southern and Central Europe in the last 25,000 years. This idea, which was first introduced, carefully documented and discussed in a sophisticated way by Marija Gimbutas,²⁵ should probably be translated into more general anthropological terms. A centrality of women, or a special relevance of them or even a state of gender equality,²⁶ has very probably been an important adaptive factor in the emergence of *Homo sapiens* out of all the different evolutionary experiments attempted by non-human Hominids. In simple terms, human evolution may well have acted on the gender that most invested in reproduction, nurturing and caring, a concept often purported by female evolution scientists,²⁷ but stubbornly ignored by their male colleagues and museum directors, who continue to display the evolution of Man the Hunter, with small women squatting in the background.

The distant memory of a relatively recent situation (only 3-4,000 BP) when women were especially important in society may be still lingering in popular deep culture, especially in Southern Europe. Contemporary evidence may be found in the relevance, almost centrality, of Mary Mother of God in the Catholic and Orthodox traditions and the persistent worshipping of many Black Madonnas throughout the Catholic world. Moreover, in contemporary Southern Europe the apparent subordination of women in public life coexists with an effective power of married women at home. Mothers also enjoy a central, important position in the private life of Jewish and Islamic cultures. This situation could not be explained without referring to a not so distant period when male dominance did not exist.

Implications for the origins of violence and peace studies

This author has offered a hypothesis of the origins of structural violence²⁸ (and later of war) as a unavoidable consequence of food production, that caused the emergence of large-size settled communities and job specialisation, that in turn caused social stratification and the rise of a small minority controlling a large majority.²⁹ The present study introduces new palaeoarchaeologic evidence of the possibility that *Homo sapiens* emerged as a species characterised by a nonviolent, matrifocal social organisation. This characteristic of our species was the result of a process of biocultural (not simply biological) evolution,³⁰ as the norm for social Primates. With the invention of food production the harmony between congenital predispositions and postnatal cultural transfer was broken and purely cultural changes introduced structural violence and war. In this way 90,000 years of nonviolent life style, firmly based on female centrality, were lost in the violent agricultural and pastoral cultures of the last 8,000 years. The study of prehistory can therefore contribute potentially useful hypotheses in peace studies, as the idea that we are congenitally violent is still hampering effective social changes toward the recovery of a nonviolent culture.

CONCLUSION

The problem of interpreting the motivations and purposes of prehistoric rock art is a difficult and complex one. This paper has suggested that modern knowledge about contemporary hunter-gatherers and neuroscience may provide a source of information more appropriate for explanatory hypotheses about prehistoric hunter-gatherers than those relating to a post-agricultural framework, characterised by social stratification, male dominance and institutionalised religion.

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(FOOTNOTES)

- 1 Cunliffe, B. (1997) *Prehistoric Europe – An illustrated history*, p. 69 ff. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- 2 This idea was supported by André Leroi-Gourhan (1976 “Una foresta di simboli”, p. 231. In Facchini, F. & Magnani, P. (curatori) (2000) *Miti e riti della preistoria – Un secolo di studi sull’origine del senso del sacro*. Jaca Book, Milano. Several philosophers, either structuralists or not, observe that the world is organized according to *male* and *female* paradigms. *Male* is traditionally seen as dominant over *female* because of the presence of a phallus, while the vagina would represent its absence or loss.
- 3 For example, Wiber, M. G. (1997) *Erect men, undulating women – The visual imagery of gender, “race” and progress in reconstructive illustrations of human evolution*. Wilfrid Laurier University Press, Waterloo (Canada). See also note 27.
- 4 For an analysis of Gimbutas’ work see Berggren, K. & Harrod, J. B. (1996) “Understanding Marija Gimbutas” *Journal of Prehistoric Religions*, vol. 10, pp. 70-73.
- 5 Gimbutas, M. (1989) *The language of the Goddess*. Harper & Row, New York, or (1989) *Il linguaggio della dea*. Longanesi, Milano. For example, from the Italian traslation: “Le dee ereditate dall’Europa antica ... non sono ‘veneri’ dispensatrici di fertilità ... sono molto di più ... sono ‘regine’ o ‘signore’ ...” (p. xix). The ambiguity springs from this easy moving from religion to social organisation. See also Gimbutas, M. (1992) “La religione della Dea nell’Europa mediterranea – Sacro, simboli, società” In Julien Ries (curatore) *Le civiltà del Mediterraneo e il sacro*, pp. 49-67. Jaca Book, Milano.
- 6 Giorgi, P. P. (2001) *The origins of violence by cultural evolution*, second edition. Minerva E&S, Brisbane. This edition is out of print, but it can be downloaded from <www.pierogiorgi.org> while a third edition is being prepared.
- 7 For a discussion about the origins of violence and war see Giorgi, P. P. & Anati, E. (2004) “Violence and its evidence in prehistoric art – A comparison of ideas” in Anati, E. (ed) *Prehistoric and tribal art – New discoveries, interpretations and methods*, pp. 263-269. Edizioni del Centro, Capo di Ponte, Brescia (Italy).
- 8 Cunliffe, B. (1997), op. cit. note 1.
- 9 Spirituality represents the realm of personal and collective thoughts and actions concerning fundamental metaphysical questions such as the origin of the universe and life forms, who am I, what is the purpose of life, how do I relate to others, the meaning of death, etc. In the case of prehistoric people, spirituality would concern the mythology of the origins of their physical world and the totemic relationship between humans and certain elements of nature. Religion is the practice of spirituality within a hierarchical framework of priesthood, belief in God(s), rituals, and moral instructions. The social institution of religion is relatively recent (Middle Neolithic), as it appeared after the invention of food production (agricultural and pastoral economy) and the emergence of structural violence in large Neolithic settlements (cf. note 6). Therefore one cannot speak of religion or gods in the Palaeolithic and Early Neolithic periods.
- 10 Textbooks of anthropology seem to present the emergence of agricultural and pastoral economies as a natural continuum of human improvement, while it represented a dramatic discontinuity in human evolution, an interruption of the established harmony between biology and culture, setting up a fast and purely cultural innovation that was not conducive to human nature (neurological predispositions). For a discussion on this topic, see Giorgi, P. P. (2001), op. cit. note 6, pp. 186-187.
- 11 Neuronal connections associated with subcortical regions are formed in our brain during the first 5-6 years of life under the defining influence of post-natal experiences. They establish logical connections between cultural situations and their consequences (social values). At a later age memories of this experience settle within subcortical regions and escape consciousness to become the so-called deep culture. Deep culture keeps influencing conscious behaviour throughout life via reciprocal connections with the cerebral cortex, but escaping the awareness of the subject. In this way we are convinced of carrying congenital drives that are beyond our control (the imaginary instincts), while we are just influenced by very early postnatal inputs. On this topic see Giorgi, P. P. (2001), op. cit. note 6, p. 88. See also Ellis, Bruce J. & Bjorklund, David F. (eds) (2005) “Origins of the social mind” The Guilford Press, New York, and Nelson, C. A., de Haan, M. & Thomas, K. M. (2006) *Neuroscience of cognitive development – The role of experience and the developing brain*. John Wiley, Hoboken (NJ). The other important concept of modern human evolution (population biology) is that our neurological potentialities (practically, human nature) could not change in the last 50,000 or so. See Giorgi, P. P. (2001), op. cit. note 6, pp. 125-126.
- 12 Contemporary hunter-gatherers have been carefully studied by a number of cultural anthropologists during the first half of the 20th century, before the subjects of their study were killed or forcibly acculturated. For example: Montague, A. (1957) *Anthropology and human nature*. McGraw-Hill, New York. Montague A. (1968) *Man and aggression*. Oxford University Press, London. Fromm, E. (1977) *The anatomy of human destruction*. Penguin Books, London. Lee, R. B. (1979) *The !Kung San – Men, women and work in a foraging society*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. See also entries regarding Kalahari Bushmen, Australian Aborigines and Polar Eskimos in Bonta, B. (1993) *Peaceful people – An annotated bibliography*. The Scarecrow Press, Metuchen (NJ).
- 13 See Giorgi, P. P. (2001), op. cit. note 6, pp. 105-138.
- 14 Anati, E. (éd.) (2003) *40.000 ans d’art contemporain – Aux origines de l’Europe*. Edizioni del Centro, Capo di Ponte, Brescia (Italy).
- 15 Anati, E. (2007). “Engraved palaeolithic stone blocks of La Ferrassie style” in Anati, E. (ed.) *XXII Valcamonica Symposium*. Edizioni del Centro, Capo di Ponte, Brescia (Italy).
- 16 The view of prehistoric people presented here is based on modern anthropological research (see note 12) and has nothing to do with the romantic views of J. J. Rousseau and his alleged “noble savage”. In reality, the original works of Rousseau described “negros and savages” or “Caribbeans” as “solitary, indolent” or “destitute of every species of intelligence” and other such insulting remarks, because he had no access to modern scientific knowledge and carried contemporary prejudices about indigenous cultures. See Giorgi, P. P. (2001), op. cit. note 6, pp. 14 & 188-189. Nothing ‘noble’ therefore about Rousseau’s savages. One should read the original text of the authors of the past, not keep reporting inappropriate but popular cliché, which are often politically motivated.

- 17 Jelinek, J. (1975) *Encyclopédie illustré de l'homme préhistorique*, pp. 374-390. Grund, Paris.
- 18 Cunliffe, B. (1997), op. cit. note 1, p. 69.
- 19 See note 9 above and Giorgi, P. P. (2001), op. cit. note 6, pp. 156-157.
- 20 Giorgi, P. P. (2001), op. cit. note 6, pp. 152-158.
- 21 For a definition of deep culture, see note 11.
- 22 Sultana, S. (2006) *The National Museum of Archaeology – The Neolithic Period*. Heritage Books, Valletta (Malta).
- 23 Karageorghis, J. (1999) *The coroplastic art of ancient Cyprus*. A.G. Leventis Foundation, Nicosia (Cyprus).
- 24 Giorgi, P. P. (2001), op. cit. note 6, pp. 149-151.
- 25 See note 5.
- 26 Riane Eisler has proposed the term *gilana* (from the Greek *gy-l-andros*) to refer to a social system with gender equality, but with a matrilinear mode of generation. It was practised in Greece, Etruria, Rome, Basque Country, for example. Eisler, R. (1987) *The chalice and the blade – Our history, our future*. Harper & Row, New York.
- 27 For example, Reed, E. (1978) *Sexism and science*. Pathfinder Press, New York. See also Wiber, M. G. (1997), op. cit. note 3, pp. 22-34.
- 28 Structural violence is affected by those sets of ideas and institutions that prevent individuals from fully expressing their human potentialities. Galtung, J. (1969) "Violence, peace and peace research" *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 6, pp. 167-191.
- 29 Giorgi, P. P. (2001), op. cit. note 6, pp. 140-151.
- 30 Biocultural evolution is the parallel evolution of behavioral predisposition (congenital characteristics of the brain, not specific behaviour) and specific behavior acquired by youngsters after birth from their cultural context. In general, evolution (modification of species) is the result of the natural selection of traits in the course of adaption for survival. In the current climate of exaggerated biological determinism, biocultural evolution is not well understood, but it occurs, in different degrees, in all social animals and specifies their social behaviour. See Lopreato, J. (1984). *Human nature and biocultural evolution*. Allen & Urwin, London. See also Giorgi, P. P. (2001), op. cit. note 6, pp. 93-103.

