

Marija Gimbutas

Transnational Biography, Feminist
Reception, and the Controversy of
Goddess Archaeology

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Chapter 4

New Archaeology, Old Europe, and the Feminist Science Debates

Marija Gimbutas' "Pre-Her-Story" in
Academia

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4 New Archaeology, Old Europe, and the Feminist Science Debates

Marija Gimbutas' "Pre-Her-Story" in Academia

Marija Gimbutas made an impressive scholarly career and achieved fame beyond academia. However, in the last decades of her life, Gimbutas' scholarly authority was subject to much debate. Gimbutas' work on the civilization of Old Europe, starting with her monograph *The Gods and Goddesses* in 1974, was puzzling to many of her archaeologist colleagues, as it did not seem to follow the established norms of the discipline. In *The Gods and Goddesses* and her later works, Gimbutas told a coherent story about the social and spiritual structure of prehistoric Old Europe as a matristic, peaceful, and egalitarian civilization. Her ideas were very much the contrary of the androcentric narratives of (pre)history pervasive in archaeology at the time. Gimbutas was criticized by other archaeologists for promoting a view of prehistory based on ideology and fantasy, advocating ideas that contradict "common sense," and lacking scholarly rigor in her analysis. In the late 1980s and the 1990s, there appeared so much criticism of her work and *ad hominem* attacks that the feminist spirituality movement interpreted it as an "orchestrated" attempt to destroy Gimbutas' academic reputation.¹ The ideas about the prehistoric Goddess religion faced a strong backlash from the academic establishment, argued the feminist theologian Carol P. Christ, because they posed a dangerous threat to the underlying logic of "patriarchal Western hegemony."²

Indeed, Gimbutas' work provided a pioneering engagement with archaeological materials from the European Neolithic from a women-centered perspective, and proposed a powerful counter-narrative to the dominant androcentric interpretations of the prehistory of her day. Gimbutas did not assume that prehistoric society was male-dominated, or that archaeological materials, such as the so-called prehistoric "Venuses," were made by men or had to be seen from the perspective of a male gaze. Instead, she presumed that women and femininity had a central social, political, and spiritual role in prehistoric Europe, and that the material remains had to be read as symbols of feminine power, as different manifestations and aspects of Goddess-centered spirituality. Gimbutas denied any ideological motivation for her work, and argued that the materials themselves have prompted her

gynocentric interpretation, indeed, that her work was simply good archaeology. However, she also did not shy away from claiming almost witch-like powers of insight and wisdom.

Was Gimbutas really “demeaned and dismissed” from mainstream archaeology due to her ideological affiliation with feminism?³ Or was it rather her affiliation with a “wrong” kind of feminism and her controversial scholarly persona that made her especially vulnerable to critique and even *ad hominem* attacks? In this chapter I argue that while it is true that the archaeological “mainstream” met Gimbutas’ work on matrilineal Old Europe with skepticism, it was, rather paradoxically, the developing gender and feminist approaches in archaeology that provided the most elaborate critique of Gimbutas’ work. In the 1980s and in particular in the 1990s, in the decades of increasing self-reflexivity about the impact of socio-political factors in the production of archaeological knowledge, Gimbutas was cast by other archaeologists as an example of ideologized and biased research. In this chapter I propose that feminist archaeologists, struggling to make gender a legitimate topic of interest within the discipline of archaeology, eagerly distanced themselves from Gimbutas’ work, which represented, for them, the problems of an old-fashioned and “essentialist” feminism of the Second Wave. This resulted in the double marginalization of Gimbutas, both from the mainstream and from feminist science historiographies.

In what follows, I trace Gimbutas’ pioneering engagement with gender and women as a research topic in her works, giving credit to her ingenious rewriting of European prehistory from what I see as an undoubtedly feminist point of view. I compare Gimbutas’ ideas to radical feminist ideas, which appeared in theology and religious studies around the same time, showing that Gimbutas’ hypothesis of Old Europe exposed and tackled the androcentrism of archaeology of her day, even if it did so by *reversing* the gendered binary in the understanding of prehistory, rather than dismissing the binary thinking altogether. Gimbutas denied any political, ideological, or theoretical motivation for her work, and instead wanted to be seen as an archaeologist who allows the material remains to “speak for themselves,” claiming that a women-centered interpretation was inherent to the archaeological materials she excavated. In the second half of the chapter I analyze the many critiques of Gimbutas’ work and place them within the context of the changing paradigms of the discipline of archaeology. In particular, I show how the introduction of post-structuralist feminist methodologies and approaches to archaeology changed the way scholars perceived the question of gender in prehistory and, by extension, Gimbutas’ work. The chapter aims to properly historicize Gimbutas’ input to the gender question in archaeology as well as the science question in feminism, without idealizing or dismissing her work. Finally, I suggest considering her work as a “remedial feminist study,”⁴ or, as I propose to call it, a “pre-her-story” of archaeology.

Old Europe Meets New Archaeology

In the late 1950s and the 1960s in the U.S. academia processual archaeology (the so-called New Archaeology) gradually became the dominant paradigm for the study of prehistory.⁵ This was also the period when Marija Gimbutas matured as a scholar and propelled her academic career. Gimbutas worked shoulder to shoulder with some prominent names in New Archaeology. One of the curators of the Peabody Museum, where Gimbutas worked for more than 12 years, for example, was Philip Phillips, one of the proponents of New Archaeology.⁶ At UCLA Gimbutas was colleagues with Lewis Binford – probably the most prominent pioneer of New Archaeology.⁷ Finally, Gimbutas' colleague and collaborator in the 1970s and the 1980s, Colin Renfrew, is one of the best-known British proponents of the paradigm of processual archaeology.⁸ New Archaeology, as the name indicates, aimed at a radical break with the previously dominant Culture-Historical approach towards prehistory, which, they thought, was overtly preoccupied with the establishment of chronologies and the description of past cultures. The invention of radiocarbon dating technology in the late 1940s and other technical aids for the study of unearthened materials made archaeologists increasingly confident in their ability not only to describe, but also to explain the developments of the past. New Archaeology therefore turned towards the scientific explanation of the archaeological record, based on the hypothetico-deductive method of analysis.⁹ Archaeologists aimed to discover general rules governing social processes, like sociologists or economists, and not simply describe the peculiarities of the past like historians did.¹⁰ In short, archaeology had to become a strictly scientific discipline.

According to the philosopher of science Alison Wylie, the turn to a rigorous adherence to scientific methods in archaeology was driven by desire; first, to enhance the scientific credibility of the field, and second, to protect scholarship from biased interpretation, in this way achieving “genuine (i.e., objective) knowledge of the cultural past.”¹¹ This was especially important in the postwar era, since during the Second World War the reputation of archaeology was tainted due to its association with Nazi racist and militarist goals.¹² The advocates of processualism stressed the self-reflexive qualities of New Archaeology which, they hoped, would help to produce a more sophisticated and holistic understanding of the past¹³ and arrive at a deeper understanding of the prehistoric social organization.¹⁴

Critics, however, have pointed out that the emphasis on the general laws and structures of human behavior and social development in New Archaeology was inseparable from the American scientific imperialism of the postwar era.¹⁵ According to the historian of archaeological thought Bruce Trigger, processualists aimed to provide “objective, ethically neutral generalizations that were useful for the management of modern societies,” disregarding the importance of national cultures and histories, thus working in accordance with American ambitions of global domination.¹⁶ Human

behavior was best understood, processual archaeologists thought, as an adaptation to their changing natural environment, forced by necessity. Such an understanding fed into American postwar rationalism and positivism, minimizing the agency of prehistoric people and embracing the narrative of inevitable progress.¹⁷ Processual archaeology largely dismissed the role of symbolism, spirituality, or social norms and values.¹⁸

It is in the general atmosphere of the rise of New Archaeology that Gimbutas was accepted by the academic community as a “fine researcher”¹⁹ and made quite a remarkable career. Without a doubt, Gimbutas’ success was facilitated by her ability to adopt new scientific methods and embrace the positivist scientific methodology. In her work Gimbutas was an enthusiastic promotor of the usage of the radiocarbon dating technique and dendrochronology, which supported her hypothesis of Old Europe.²⁰ She used “hard data,” extracted by the careful usage of scientific methods that enabled the establishment of prehistoric chronology.²¹ Gimbutas was known for her careful descriptions of material evidence and synthesis of information about an enormous number of artifacts. She mastered many Eastern European languages,²² which enabled her to access information unavailable to other U.S. researchers, and would often make a point about relying on primary sources. She took up the topic of the origins of Indo-European speaking people, which, due to its association with Nazi archaeology, had been somewhat abandoned in archaeological circles,²³ and became one of the first experts of Eastern European archaeology in the West after the Second World War.²⁴

It was, however, not only Gimbutas’ characteristics and talents that enabled her to climb to the position of authority in one of the most positivist social sciences of the day. Gimbutas also established a successful scientific persona that allowed her to navigate the hierarchical and androcentric discipline of archaeology and establish authority as a female scientist.²⁵ In the postwar U.S., archaeology was (and in many respects still is) a discipline highly structured according to gender lines,²⁶ and Gimbutas took up what was perceived as “unfeminine” endeavors: excavations and big theory making. The exclusion of women from excavations, as the feminist archaeologist Joan M. Gero noticed, has long been one of the invisible gendered divisions of labor in archaeology. Women archaeologists (or as Gero ironically calls this phenomenon, “women-at-home-archaeologists”) were expected to work indoors, in the museums or laboratories, sorting out materials provided by the excavations.²⁷ Excavations, on the other hand, were seen as masculine endeavors, because they required “active, exploratory, out-of-doors, dominant, managerial, and risk-taking work,” associated with male scholars.²⁸ Contrary to the expectations of the discipline, between 1967 and 1979 Gimbutas directed five major excavations in South-East Europe.²⁹ Similarly untypically for female archaeologists of her time, Gimbutas focused her research on the question of the origins of the Indo-European – the question of ‘origins’ being prestigious in archaeology and facilitating

academic success.³⁰ Despite institutionalized sexism in archaeology on the socio-political level, and androcentrism on the epistemological level, she became accepted among the “old boys”³¹ of this conservative discipline.

It was therefore unexpected to the scientific community, when in the mid-1970s, Gimbutas, an established and respected scholar, decided to break some of the unwritten and written rules of the discipline with her monograph *The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe: 7000 to 3500 BC. Myths, Legends and Cult Images* (1974). Reflecting on the controversy surrounding this book, Gimbutas’ student and colleague Ernestine S. Elster argued that the scholarly community was mostly perplexed by the choice of her research subject, that is, religion and symbolism, and her writing style, which presented the picture of prehistory as an appealing and coherent narrative.³² While Gimbutas relied on excavation materials, specialist analysis, and “hard data,” she broke some of the unspoken conventions of the discipline, at the time strongly influenced by positivist ideas.

The timing was of crucial importance here. Had Gimbutas published her book but a decade earlier, it would have landed in a much more welcoming *milieu*, at least among European scholars. As the historian Ronald Hutton argues, in the 1950s and early 1960s Britain, archaeologists and historians more or less agreed on the centrality of a female deity in Neolithic Europe and the Middle East, influencing also probably the excavation of Catal Höyük by James Mellaart.³³ With the rise of processualism in the 1960s, however, scholars increasingly avoided dealing with questions of culture and spirituality, especially in the absence of written sources. In 1963, the archaeologist Peter Ucko published an article in which he expressed doubts over the interpretation of the prehistoric anthropomorphic figurines through the framework of the “Mother Goddess” religion. Stressing the diversity of possible readings of such figurines, as derived from anthropological research into tribal communities (ranging from children’s toys to magical objects), he argued for the diversification of interpretative frameworks.³⁴ Ucko’s article influenced many archaeologists and turned the field towards embracing agnosticism regarding the question of prehistoric religion.³⁵

Being clearly out of sync with the theoretical developments in the field, Gimbutas’ hypothesis of Old Europe was first met with silence within archaeology, and later became a target of criticism. Researchers in other disciplines, such as linguistics and comparative religions, which have in particular appreciated Gimbutas’ earlier work on Indo-Europeans,³⁶ were also rather skeptical of her work on Old Europe.³⁷ Although Gimbutas was unconventional in both the choice of her research object and her rhetorical style, what might have been potentially even more challenging to the discipline, was the fact that, with *The Gods and Goddesses*, Gimbutas started interpreting prehistorical artifacts in an explicitly gendered and women-centered way. While in some ways her thinking indeed returned to the earlier widely accepted notion of the centrality of a family deity in prehistoric spirituality, it also reversed some of the earlier tenets of the “Mother Goddess”

hypothesis. In what follows next I show how Gimbutas elaborated her approach to women and gender in prehistory very much in line with the contemporary developments in (radical) feminist thinking.

Gender in Gimbutas' Work

The gendered aspects of Gimbutas' archaeological interpretation always went hand in hand with the importance she placed on explaining prehistoric spirituality and religion. Already in Gimbutas' early English-language archaeological monographs one can notice her interest in the gendered dynamics of prehistoric societies.³⁸ In her book *The Bronze Age Cultures of Central and Eastern Europe* (1965) Gimbutas elaborated her famous Kurgan hypothesis³⁹ which postulated that the Proto-Indo-European speakers, or Kurgans, arrived to Europe from the Eurasiatic steppe around 2300–2200 B.C.⁴⁰ Among other things, she repeatedly noted the gender oppression and social hierarchy characteristic of Kurgan cultures. Gimbutas emphasized, for example, that grave goods suggested the ritual sacrifice of a woman after the death of her husband.⁴¹ In another early book, *The Balts*, Gimbutas identified the custom of the immolation of the widow with masculine domination, and noted the persistence of this tradition among various cultures into modern times.⁴² Already in these early works Gimbutas hinted at the existence of a different, more gender egalitarian, indigenous European culture, which was, in her view, eradicated and partially assimilated by the Kurgan invaders.⁴³ In another article from 1960 Gimbutas noted the prominence of female symbolism in Neolithic European art, possibly indicating the Goddess cult. She further hypothesized that “the importance of a female deity and portrayals of woman in art allow the assumption that women had a significant role in religion and in society.”⁴⁴ Gimbutas' addressed the question of gender in prehistory in close relation to spirituality, assuming a correlation between the prominence of women-centered religious symbolism (which she saw in the shapes and figures represented on the archaeological artifacts) and the importance of females in prehistoric societies.

While her interest in gender and spirituality is evident already in her earlier works, *The Gods and Goddesses* marked a break in Gimbutas' writing, with the Goddess-centered prehistoric spirituality becoming central to her analysis.⁴⁵ In this monograph Gimbutas ventured further back into prehistory, leaving behind the Bronze Age, her area of expertise thus far, and presented a careful and detailed gendered reading of the archaeological artifacts from the Neolithic-Chalcolithic sites in South-East Europe. In *The Gods and Goddesses* she explicitly formulated her hypothesis of Old Europe, which, to put it in a nutshell, proposed that before the first arrival of Kurgans around 3500 BC., and the import of their hierarchical social system, Europe enjoyed the flourishing of a peaceful, egalitarian, and women-centered civilization.⁴⁶ Starting from the observation that female Goddess symbolism dominated early figurine art, she placed this symbolism at the

center of her analysis of prehistoric religion and social structure. In *The Gods and Goddesses* she analyzed around 30,000 artifacts from 3,000 sites of Neolithic-Chalcolithic southeast Europe, reading the majority of these artifacts as representing some elements of the Goddess-oriented spirituality.⁴⁷ Wishing to emphasize the prominence of women-oriented spirituality in Old Europe, Gimbutas initially wanted to publish her book as *The Goddesses and Gods ...*; however, the publisher apparently opposed her suggestion.⁴⁸ Only in 1982 the book was republished as *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe, 6500–3500 B.C.: Myths and Cult Images*,⁴⁹ indicating the changing gender politics in academia and the broader society.

The Reinterpretation of the Prehistoric “Venus”

In *The Gods and Goddesses* Gimbutas proposed that the civilization of Old Europe was Goddess-worshiping and women-centered, and countered the assumptions about prehistoric Europe being “primitive.”⁵⁰ Gimbutas argued that Old Europe had a cosmology which was radically different from the modern worldview and therefore, she claimed, the surviving Old European artifacts deserved an interpretation which would not be based on modern prejudices. Most importantly, she argued against interpreting the early figurine art as a result of a lack of technical ability, or a “barbaric” lack of aesthetic judgement. The figurines had to be seen instead as “abstract symbolic conceptual art,” a product of the spiritual tradition of these people.⁵¹ This distinguished her from the nineteenth-century proponents of the idea of prehistoric matriarchy, such as J.J. Bachofen, who saw patriarchy as a higher stage of development of human societies.⁵² In fact, Gimbutas believed that the “primitive” prehistoric societies of Europe and their matristic spirituality were much superior to the following patriarchal social and religious structures, in line with Jacquette Hawkes’ views on Minoan and Mycenaean cultures of the Mediterranean.⁵³ It was this reversal of the progress narrative and the reconsideration of the modern gendered value system that eventually made Gimbutas’ work attractive to feminists. Since the publication of *The Gods and Goddesses*, the issue of prehistoric women-oriented spirituality became Gimbutas’ central research concern, to which she dedicated the majority of her articles and books up until her death in 1994.

In *The Gods and Goddesses* Gimbutas took upon herself the task to systematically reinterpret the female figurines – the so-called “Venuses” – which constituted the majority of artifacts from the Neolithic-Chalcolithic sites in South-East Europe. She proceeded by first of all dismissing what was in her opinion biased and, although she never said that explicitly, sexist interpretations of prehistoric figurines. Habitual androcentric interpretations of the so-called “steatopygous”⁵⁴ figurines depicted them as representations of obese female bodies. This led to the dismissal of them either as “ugly” and primitive, or as an erotic object for the satisfaction of the prehistoric male. Countering such androcentric interpretations, Gimbutas argued that these

images were not merely naturalistic, but symbolic, fusing abstract representations of human, bird, and the cosmogenic egg in one figure, representing the Great Goddess in one of her many manifestations.⁵⁵ Those figurines did not reflect the androcentric modern worldview, she wrote, but a matrilineal worldview of Old Europe, hence they had to be interpreted accordingly.

Gimbutas expanded further on this topic in her article “The “Monstrous Venus” of Prehistory of Goddess Creatrix.”⁵⁶ In this article, she argued for interpreting the continuous repetition (across the period of around 25,000 years) of various representations of vulvas, breasts, buttocks, and the pregnant belly, as signifying the symbolic importance of these female body parts for the spiritual beliefs of the prehistoric people. The symbolic significance of the vulva, also connected with an image of a seed or a grain, Gimbutas wrote, was continuous across Europe for around 30,000 years, and represented the regeneration of nature as a whole. The female body symbolism in ancient human art, Gimbutas argued, had to be seen as “philosophical, rather than sexual or pornographic.”⁵⁷ In her last book, *The Civilization of the Goddess*, Gimbutas continued her polemic with earlier androcentric interpretations of prehistoric “Venuses,” and wrote, disapprovingly, that the assumption that the Paleolithic figurines have been created “for the erotic stimulation of males” does not account for the presumably gynocentric social and spiritual structure of these prehistoric societies.⁵⁸ By attaching gynocentric cultural meanings to these figurines Gimbutas aimed to liberate them from reductive and sexist interpretations, and bring them closer to what she thought was the original worldview that produced these representations.

Gimbutas’ interpretation was counter-intuitive in the broader context of acceptable scholarly discourse about gender in prehistory. In 1978, four years after the publication of Gimbutas’ *The Gods and Goddesses*, the opening piece of the first issue of the journal *Art History*, written by art historians Desmond Collins and John Onians,⁵⁹ illustrated very well the kind of discourse that Gimbutas was trying to counter in her work. The article discussed the earliest human art, that is the female figurines and cave paintings of the Upper Paleolithic (33,000–32,000 B.C.), yet it did not refer to Gimbutas’ recent work. According to Collins and Onians, the prominence of certain female body parts (breasts, buttocks, vulvas, bellies) in this earliest human art was due to the erotic function that these figurines served for the prehistoric male. As Collins and Onians meticulously laid out in their analysis, it was the female body parts that would be the most important for the male tactile experience during the “preliminary phases of love-making”⁶⁰ that deserved the greatest attention of the prehistoric artist and were carved or engraved in such a manner that touching them would remind of “the swelling curves of a real woman”⁶¹ or “nice rounded pair of buttocks.”⁶² Their presumption that the prehistoric artist was male was based on a hetero-sexist tautology, which postulated that since “love-making” must have been on the mind of someone who made these female-looking figurines,

hence, it must have been a male. Articles like the one by Onians and Collins were far from aberrations – they rather illustrated the “male gaze” that permeated the scholarly understanding of prehistory and that came under systematic scrutiny by feminist archaeologists only in the 1990s.⁶³

The margins of Gimbutas’ private copy of this article, held at the “OPUS archive”, give some insight into her criticism of this piece, as they were filled with penciled question marks, and notes such as “nonsense” and “man again.” Countering the archaeological mainstream of her time, way before feminist critiques made a substantial contribution to archaeology, Gimbutas’ did not assume that the prehistoric figurines were made by men or for men’s purposes and desires. Rather, in her work Gimbutas argued that women and femininity were central both in the prehistoric artistic creation and in the religious and social structure of prehistoric societies. Instead of seeing the exaggerated bodily areas, represented on the Neolithic figurines, as eroticized or ugly, she interpreted them as symbols of feminine power. Gimbutas reimagined the symbolism of female genitalia – vulvas, breasts, buttocks – as representing the spiritual worldview of the prehistoric human. The common representations of the breasts, for example, were interpreted by Gimbutas as the symbolism of the Bird Goddess, the Source of Nourishment, related to the Old European beliefs in regeneration.⁶⁴ The metaphor of the Goddess as the nourishing vessel appears, Gimbutas argued, in the earliest examples of pottery, through the symbolic images of breasts, as recurring on anthropomorphized vases.⁶⁵ The images of vulvas, Gimbutas argued, were of even bigger symbolic importance, and could be divided into three categories: a supernatural triangle, an image of a sprout, and an oval “swollen” vulva, connected to the different aspects of triple Goddess.⁶⁶ One can find references to a triple Goddess from the Upper Paleolithic art to the surviving folklore of some European nations, argued Gimbutas.⁶⁷

Challenging the Hierarchies

The symbolic power of femininity, according to Gimbutas, was not only connected with women’s ability to give birth, but rather, the Great Goddess of Old Europe in all her manifestations was the “supreme Creator” in a more general sense, creating all life and nature out of her omnipotence.⁶⁸ Here again she differed from the earlier proponents of the idea of the prehistoric Mother Goddess cult, who readily identified female goddesses with fertility. Gimbutas’ rethinking of female embodiment resonated rather with the work of her contemporary feminists, such as Adrienne Rich, who, in the 1970s, aimed to revoke the contemporary negative associations with the female body and overcome stereotypes of femininity as passive, empty, and receptive. Radical feminists in the U.S. aimed to challenge the androcentrism of the Western religious, scholarly, and philosophical mainstream by fundamentally rethinking the associations with femininity and masculinity.⁶⁹ Thinkers like Rich aimed to find access to the prepatriarchal “primordial

clusters of association,” where femininity and the female capacity for reproduction and nurturing appeared as powerful and active, as a source of transformation and life.⁷⁰ Gimbutas’ work indeed allowed to rethink the female symbolism in prehistoric art not as “passive,” but as transformative, as both life enabling and death containing. In that sense her thinking paralleled the developments in feminism.

Starting with *The Gods and Goddess*, published in 1974, Gimbutas targeted some of the most pervasive assumptions and biases about the hierarchies of value, inherent in Western science – hierarchies that contrasted masculinity with femininity, progressive with primitive, and beautiful with ugly. Gimbutas argued that the spirituality of Old Europe was not gender-polarized, in a sense that female or male principles were not subordinate to one another, but, in a radical feminist fashion, she inverted the modern Western scholarly assumptions about masculinity as “active” and femininity as “passive.”⁷¹ In Gimbutas’ interpretation, the main Goddess in the spirituality of Old Europe was not merely a symbol of fertility and an embodiment of a passive Mother Earth, which becomes impregnated by the active Sky God, as the later Indo-European religions would have it. Instead, Gimbutas described the Great Goddess as the “supreme Creator,” the creative principle.⁷²

Gimbutas attributed the “creative and active” characteristics to the female Great Goddess of the Old European pantheon, and argued that male gods were supplementary, that they “strengthened” the female goddess. “The male divinity in the shape of a young man or a male animal appears to affirm and strengthen the forces of the creative and active female,” wrote Gimbutas, emphasizing that femininity nor masculinity “complemented” each other.⁷³ In this interpretation she not only implicitly questioned the male bias of modern Western science, but also reversed the Judeo-Christian patriarchal religious understanding of gender “complementarity,” where the female divine is interpreted as being in service to the male divine.⁷⁴ As the feminist theologian Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has argued, “traditional academic scholarship has identified humanness with maleness and understood women only as a peripheral category in the human interpretation of reality.”⁷⁵ Reversing this orthodoxy of Western scholarship, inherited from the patriarchal religious dogma, Gimbutas placed female as the central category for the prehistoric human spirituality, and male as peripheral, while claiming that the female could express universality. This theoretical move spoke to similar developments in the feminist movement, which was advancing around the same time in religious studies and theology.

In her last and most controversial monographs, namely, the *Language of the Goddess*⁷⁶ and *The Civilization of the Goddess*,⁷⁷ Gimbutas further elaborated on her theory of Old Europe. In these books she aimed to better categorize the Goddess symbolism and explain in more detail the social and spiritual structure of prehistoric European civilization. In the last two

monographs Gimbutas also broadened the temporal and geographical limits of the women- and Goddess-centered civilization, theorizing not only the Neolithic-Chalcolithic periods, but also Paleolithic as characterized by female leadership, and finding the signs of Goddess-worship not only in South-East Europe (her primary area of fieldwork), but across the whole European continent.⁷⁸ In the *Language of the Goddess*, she introduced her interdisciplinary methodology of archaeomythology, which meant employing the study of folklore and mythology in the interpretation of archaeological remains.⁷⁹ Gimbutas argued that the folklore and traditions of the peripheral and for a long time rural European nations, such as “Basque, Breton, Welsh, Irish, Scottish, and Scandinavian countries, or where Christianity was introduced very late, as in Lithuania” can serve as the best sources for the reconstruction of the prehistoric beliefs.⁸⁰ Being removed from the transformations and developments of the Western civilization, she argued, these marginal cultures had preserved the treasures of Old European spirituality and worldview. In this way, Gimbutas reversed yet another hierarchy of archaeological and historical scholarship, namely, by making the peripheral European nations central in her re-narration of European prehistory.⁸¹

Differently from *The Gods and Goddesses*, the two last books of Gimbutas showed clear signs of her familiarity with the interests and ideas of the women’s spirituality movement and in some ways directly responded to them. Firstly, she made much broader ideological statements, explicitly saying that her archaeological work should serve as an inspiration for a socio-political transformation. For example, in *The Civilization of the Goddess* Gimbutas proposed that the very notions of “progress” and “civilization” should be rethought and that humanity could benefit from turning back to the values embodied by the Goddess-worshipping Old European civilization.⁸² Secondly, Gimbutas also updated her vocabulary in line with the developments in the feminist spirituality movement. She used, for example, the word “gylany,” borrowed from Riane Eisler⁸³ to describe the social system of Old Europe as based on values of partnership between the sexes.⁸⁴ Lastly, she started using the words “Creatrix” and “Regeneratrix” to describe the Great Goddess of the Old European pantheon, instead of the formerly used “Creator” and “regenerator,” thus changing the masculine grammatical form of these words of Latin origin to an alternative feminine form.

While Gimbutas’ challenge to the androcentric progress narrative of Western civilization became very explicit in her last two books, it was already *The Gods and Goddesses* (1974) that established her as one of the pioneers of critical engagement with the male-centrism of the Western scholarly tradition. As the sociologist Hester Eisenstein defined it, the “woman-centered analysis or perspective,” which characterized the work of such feminist thinkers as the historian Gerda Lerner or the poet Adrienne Rich, meant a belief that “female experience ought to be the major focus of study and the

source of dominant values for the culture as a whole.”⁸⁵ Gimbutas did precisely introduce such a women-centered approach to the study of European prehistory through her theory of Old Europe, which essentially rewrote the archaeological narrative of the prehistoric development of European societies from a female perspective. Without claiming the label of feminism, she wrote, as one might call it, a “pre-her-story” of civilization, a visionary reinterpretation of prehistory, which posed a strong counter-narrative to the androcentric progress narrative of Western civilization.

Gendered hierarchies and related biases in academia came under serious feminist scrutiny only in the 1970s and 1980s, with the growing influence of the feminist movement in American universities. These were the decades of the emergence of feminist theology and religious studies,⁸⁶ feminist science studies,⁸⁷ as well as feminist criticisms in many other disciplines, including anthropology and history. In comparison to these disciplines, feminist archaeology was quite late to develop, at least in the United States. There were no self-proclaimed feminist works published in archaeology up until the late 1980s.⁸⁸ Preceding these developments, Gimbutas addressed gendered biases in the interpretation of archaeological materials already in 1974 and throughout the 1980s, implicitly and explicitly countering what the philosopher of science Alison Wylie has called “the projection onto prehistory of a common body of presentist, ethnocentric, and overtly androcentric assumptions about sexual divisions of labor and the status and roles of women.”⁸⁹ Gimbutas’ challenge to these androcentric assumptions left her vulnerable to criticism from mainstream archaeology, which alleged that her research was biased and serving feminist political needs.⁹⁰ At the same time, as I will show, Gimbutas’ conviction to not label herself as a feminist or engage in depth with the developing feminist methodological tools eventually led to her dismissal by feminist archaeologists.

Gimbutas as a Scientist and as a Ragana

Women’s historians have paid particular attention to the way that female scientists and public intellectuals construct their scholarly persona, namely, how they employ various discursive scripts and narrative strategies to establish their reliability as scholars.⁹¹ How did Gimbutas navigate the competing academic and social pressures in the formation of her public persona after the publication of *The Gods and Goddesses*, which so obviously addressed many radical feminist concerns and created so much controversy? Despite the fact that her work on Old Europe challenged the androcentrism and other power hierarchies of mainstream archaeology, Gimbutas denied any connection with feminism, and did not consider her work to be an example of gender or feminist archaeology, neither in the early 1970s, when writing her groundbreaking *The Gods and Goddesses*, nor in the early 1990s, when her name was already associated with feminism. Gimbutas consistently argued that her works were inspired not by any political ideology or

movement, but by the archaeological findings themselves, and by her wish to do justice to the social and spiritual structures of human prehistory. In short, she claimed that her work on Goddess spirituality in European prehistory arose out of her desire to do better science, and was not inspired by any ideological or political goals. Nevertheless, Gimbutas also sought authority in unusual places for a scientist, namely, by claiming divine inspiration and a certain prophetic power embodied by the figure of the *witch*, or, as in Lithuanian folklore – *Ragana*.

Gimbutas did not engage directly with the first pioneering attempts at introducing feminism to archaeology in the late 1980s and the early 1990s.⁹² It is, however, difficult to precisely evaluate how much Gimbutas was familiar with feminist works in disciplines other than archaeology. Gimbutas had no or little contact with the Women's Studies program at the UCLA,⁹³ because, as she explained, of their divergent interests: feminist scholars were only interested in contemporary politics, and paid no attention to prehistory or the Goddess.⁹⁴ Gimbutas' personal library, currently held by the Pacifica Graduate Institute, contains only a small collection of feminist books, mainly written from the perspective of women's spirituality and published after *The Gods and Goddesses*.⁹⁵ Gimbutas' student and close colleague Ernestine Elster argued that Gimbutas was "a product of her generation and experiences; to expect her to adjust to a change in social thought that took decades to be adopted and understood [...] is absurd."⁹⁶ Elster argued that the new social movements that started roughly around the time when Gimbutas moved to Los Angeles had little effect on Gimbutas' thinking. She belonged to an earlier generation of female scholars and therefore never claimed to be a feminist.⁹⁷

Gimbutas consistently denied her relation to the women's movement and feminist ideas. When asked directly about her connections to feminism Gimbutas claimed that she was never inspired by anything else but her quest for "truth."⁹⁸ The positive reception of work by feminists came to her as a surprise. While Gimbutas was too preoccupied with her work to be involved in the women's movement, she was impressed to see how "intelligent" and "strong" the movement was, and was grateful for the women's support.⁹⁹ In an interview with her assistant and biographer Joan Marler, Gimbutas stressed her dedication to science and purity from ideological thinking or speculation. She responded in a similar way to the Lithuanian writer Kazys Saja, as shown in a short documentary made for the Lithuanian Radio and Television (LRT). Asked by Saja if she considered herself a feminist, or "a queen of feminists," as he put it jokingly, Gimbutas appeared to be irritated, and responded that while she was not herself a feminist, she was glad that feminists found her work to be useful and inspiring.¹⁰⁰ In these and other instances Gimbutas was clearly trying to establish that *feminism* was influenced by her thought rather than that *she* was influenced by feminism. She wanted to be seen "as a scientist, as an archaeologist" and not anything else.¹⁰¹

Despite the proximity of her ideas to a certain strand of feminist thought, as I have shown in previous sections, Gimbutas hardly quoted any feminists in her work (she also quoted very few women in her work, a rare exception being Riane Eisler and Heide Göttner-Abendroth, who both kept in correspondence with Gimbutas in the late 1980s and the early 1990s) and was more prone to quoting such male scholars as Erich Neumann, Carl Gustav Jung, J.J. Bachofen, and others. Despite the fact that she was making political claims that were inspiring for the women's spirituality movement and ecofeminism, in her books and interviews Gimbutas did not align herself with feminism, but rather with the male intellectuals of her generation and older, such as the Romanian religious scholar Mircea Eliade, the Lithuanian semiotician Algirdas Julius Greimas, and the American mythologist Joseph Campbell.¹⁰² Some of these male scholars, Campbell in particular, strongly endorsed Gimbutas' work and even contributed a foreword to her book *The Language of the Goddess*.¹⁰³

Gimbutas as a Scientist

Even if Gimbutas was little affected by the theoretical developments in academic feminism, by the late 1980s she was surely conscious of the label of feminism that was often attached to her with the related accusation of an ideological motivation for her research on Old Europe.¹⁰⁴ Being aware of the criticism that her work is politicized and therefore lacks scientific rigor, Gimbutas rhetorically distanced herself from any influences, feminism especially, and claimed only a disinterested scholarly motivation for her work. Gimbutas promoted an image of herself as a scholar, who approached the study of pre-Indo-European Europe without any preconceived theory, model or formula; motivated only by pure curiosity and spontaneous inspiration.¹⁰⁵ One might say that in constructing her scholarly persona Gimbutas followed the conceptual framework of a scientist as a "modest witness"¹⁰⁶ – as someone who engaged in intellectual activity with enormous patience, perseverance, and, importantly, a *disinterested perspective*. As the feminist science studies scholar Donna Haraway has argued, this specifically modern European masculine imagination of science assumes that a truly objective scholar can allow the facts to speak for themselves, as if subjectivity and embodiment, as well as interpretation, were not involved in the process of doing science.¹⁰⁷ This was precisely what Gimbutas emphasized in her narrative of the "discovery" of Old Europe.

Working in a discipline notorious for its susceptibility to misinterpretation and ideologization,¹⁰⁸ Gimbutas often emphasized the constraints of the material evidence on her interpretation. While in the 1980s awareness of the influence of subjective factors on archaeological interpretation increased, the field still largely retained trust in the ability of material evidence to guide and restrict interpretation.¹⁰⁹ Espousing her belief in the "truth" of the material evidence, Gimbutas argued that the very archaeological artifacts,

unearthed during her excavations in South-East Europe in the 1960s and the 1970s led her, after years of careful analysis and interpretation, towards a female-centered interpretation.¹¹⁰ As the *Los Angeles Times Magazine* journalist Jacques Leslie wrote in an article about Gimbutas, published in 1989, “the sheer tonnage of arms found at the Indo-European sites sickened her, making Gimbutas inquire into the earlier, apparently more peaceful period.”¹¹¹ Indeed, instead of the weapons prevalent in the Bronze Age graves and the proof of social inequality and warfare in Kurgan societies, the earlier Neolithic Old European settlements were rich with hundreds of female-shaped figurines and other sophisticated artifacts, decorated with what Gimbutas would later decipher as Goddess symbols.¹¹² It was as if the artifacts themselves led her to a certain interpretation. In *The Language of the Goddess* Gimbutas thus wrote:

Archaeological materials are not mute. They speak their own language. And they need to be used for the great source they are to unravel the spirituality of those of our ancestors who predate the Indo-Europeans by many thousands of years.¹¹³

The archaeological materials, Gimbutas argued, were speaking for themselves, and her work was only to use the information that these materials provided, to translate the materiality into a textual interpretation of spirituality, which would be comprehensible to contemporary audience.



Figure 4.1 Archaeological artifacts spoke to Marija Gimbutas in their own language. At an excavation in Greece, c. 1970.

Gimbutas often emphasized the tedious and decades-long work with the figurines and other artifacts, which eventually led her to developing the very idea of the Old European civilization. She stressed on numerous occasions that the very archaeological evidence, the female-shaped figurines, made it self-evident that the female Goddess should be located at the center of the analysis of European prehistory. Encouraging the self-fashioning of Gimbutas as a translator between two worlds, in his foreword to *The Language of the Goddess* the mythologist Joseph Campbell compared Gimbutas' reconstruction of the Old European symbolism with the decipherment of the Rosetta Stone by Jean-François Champollion.¹¹⁴ Gimbutas was thus portrayed as a "discoverer" of a new civilization, the only scholar in the twentieth century who was able to unearth a whole new layer of history.¹¹⁵

Gimbutas as a Ragana

The "translation" of materials artifacts was, however, more complicated than a simple translation of one language to another – it was a translation between two distinct worldviews. Despite impressive technological innovations since the 1950s, modern archaeology became more and more aware of the limitations inherent in the interpretation of archaeological materials. As the historian Bruce Trigger argues, while there was a consistent progress in understanding prehistoric technology and economic systems, the interpretation of social structure and ideology of prehistoric societies remained very limited, simply because of the countless possibilities of variation and the general unpredictability of the relations between different layers of social organization and human behavior.¹¹⁶ In constructing her narrative of the Old European civilization, Gimbutas left aside such doubts and claimed to be able to decipher the worldview of Old Europe from material remains, and vice versa, that her interpretation of material remains was based on a deep knowledge of the worldview of these people. This allowed Gimbutas to reverse the contemporary associations with femininity and masculinity in her interpretation of Old Europe and insist on the feminine imagery being positive, powerful, and creative, despite the denigration of the "feminine" in the contemporary patriarchal context. Of course, claiming such insight into the minds of prehistoric people could not be justified only through the framework of a disinterested scientific perspective, and required Gimbutas to supplement her scholarly persona with an element of supernatural wisdom, a certain prophetic power.

It was already in the late 1960s that Gimbutas started using the imagery of goddesses and female spiritual power in her public representation, if not yet in her scholarly work. This can be seen for example in Gimbutas' self-fashioning during the 1968 *Los Angeles Times* "Woman of the Year" awards, where she was acknowledged together with 12 other women.¹¹⁷ According to the *LA Times* journalist, upon receiving the award, Gimbutas thanked

“the goddess of fate” for creating her a woman, “a creature superior to man.” Upon drawing the applause from the audience, she added “tactfully” that “we women still need the help of wise men.”¹¹⁸ In this early public utterance Gimbutas already chose to play with the imagery of female power and female goddess in constructing her public persona. Later Gimbutas supplemented her public image with the imagery of *Ragana* – witch in Lithuanian folklore – claiming for herself supernatural wisdom beyond pure science. In doing this she followed the Romantic notion of science as an endeavor that requires a certain natural genius, a divine inspiration.¹¹⁹ Later the imagery of the female goddess would become an apparently inescapable metaphor to describe Gimbutas’ scholarly persona.¹²⁰

Despite her self-fashioning as primarily a scientist, and her belief in the power of the scientific method and new technological developments, Gimbutas also criticized the limitations of positivism and scientism of New Archaeology (or processual archaeology), which dominated the archaeological thinking in the United States roughly between the 1950s and the 1980s.¹²¹ Gimbutas expressed views very similar to Jacqueline Hawkes, who argued that the desire to become as “scientific” as the natural sciences has turned archaeology into a quantitative and technology-based endeavor, which moved away from humanistic historical interpretation.¹²² In an interview, published in the diaspora newspaper *Akiračiai* in 1976, Gimbutas criticized processual archaeology, which was, according to her, going “to an absolute extreme” of positivist approach to science. While arts and religion were increasingly devalued in the “sterilizing” environment of archaeology, Gimbutas turned back to prehistoric religion in search of poetry, a “taste of strawberries”:

Yes, the archaeology of today is far from poetry. But there is some taste of wild strawberries in every branch of science. It can be found when a scientist is also a poet (or a *ragius* – “the one who sees”).¹²³

Gimbutas criticized the narrow positivist and scientist understanding of archaeology, promoted by the dominant processualism. Denouncing what she saw as a fear of meaningful interpretation of prehistoric ideology, religion, and worldview, she appealed to the imagery of a *Ragana* or *Ragius*, implying that a truly gifted scientist should be able to see “beyond” the dry facts and statistics, to present a visionary account of prehistory.

In a response to a critical review of her work by the well-known Lithuanian folklorist Jonas Balys, Gimbutas implied to be gifted with the poetic and visionary powers of a *Ragana*.¹²⁴ In her last major English-language publications Gimbutas explained that in her native Lithuanian the word *Ragana/Ragius* is etymologically connected with the word “to foresee” (Lit. “regėti”),¹²⁵ in this way claiming this mythological character has prophetic qualities. In line with other researchers of Baltic mythology, Gimbutas thought *Ragana* to be a Lithuanian pagan goddess of death and regeneration, demonized in the process

of the Christianization of the country.¹²⁶ This powerful Goddess, Gimbutas wrote in the *Civilization of the Goddess*, was “demonized and degraded into the familiar and highly publicized image of the witch.”¹²⁷ Gimbutas, whose work reversed the contemporary patriarchal gendered assumptions and value hierarchies, aimed to reconstruct the true nature of the Goddess Witch – *Ragana*, as a positive symbol. By referring to herself as *Ragana* Gimbutas also established an affinity with the heritage of the mythological supernatural female power and associated her own person with the values of Old Europe, a female-centered civilization, which she aimed to reconstruct and reevaluate.

The image of the scientist both as a disinterested truth-seeker and a genius with a “divine spark” has been criticized by feminist science studies since the 1980s, leading to the currently broadly accepted belief that any academic work is always inescapably biased and representing a partial perspective.¹²⁸ Demonstrating the profoundly social and political nature of science facts was probably one of the biggest achievements of the (feminist) science studies, and, at least since the 1990s, it became a common-sense assumption in Western academia. While feminism continues to receive accusations of “biased,” “ideological,” or “political” research, feminist science studies has convincingly shown that the very notion of objective science has been constructed to serve the interests of a very specific scholarly subject – white, male, and European.

Gimbutas, who was criticized, similarly to other proponents of women-centered research, for being biased and political, did not choose to claim, in her defense, that *every* perspective on prehistory is biased, or argue in favor of a certain relativism when interpreting the materials remains. Quite the contrary, she chose to stick to the classic modern and Romantic notions of science in order to retain her scholarly authority. She presented her discovery on Old Europe both as a result of disinterested truth-seeking and as a fruit of divine inspiration. However, the “divine” inspiration that Gimbutas referred to, challenging the androcentric norms of scientific imaginary, was a subversive and magical women’s power, rooted in her native Lithuanian culture. While partly retaining an image of a scientist as a “modest witness” Gimbutas also embraced the power of witches, which had nothing to do with modern science and can even be seen as its antithesis. Such an ambiguous and contradictory scholarly persona of Gimbutas made her rather vulnerable to *ad hominem* critiques both from mainstream archaeology and, later, also gender archaeology, illustrating the process of negotiation of what counts as proper (feminist) science.

Mainstream Archaeological Reception

The 1980s and the 1990s were decades of increasing awareness about the socio-political constraints on the production of archaeological knowledge. Historians of science demonstrated convincingly how the development of archaeological ideas was always influenced by the prevalent ideologies

– nationalist, imperialist, colonialist, etc.¹²⁹ In the 1990s the field of archaeology was strongly criticized for the failure to produce a sufficient reflection on its “service” to problematic political goals, such as the spread of National Socialist ideology in Germany and elsewhere in Europe.¹³⁰ Others noted how the Nazi abuse of archaeology was fundamentally similar to the ways Western colonial powers employed archaeological artifacts to promote the perception of the racial superiority of white colonialists.¹³¹ These developments echoed similar criticisms formulated in the field of science and technology studies and feminist science studies, leading to an increased awareness of the inherently subjective and situated, political nature of science.¹³²

The increased reflexivity within the academic community led some archaeologists to worry that after accepting the “hyperrelativity” of scientific knowledge it would not be possible anymore to distinguish between a sound account of prehistory and a complete fantasy, or an intentionally ideological interpretation. Moreover, some archaeologists worried that the very idea that *any* interpretation of the prehistoric materials is biased might hinder the authoritative critique of those archaeological explanations which were more *obviously* derived from political agendas. Awareness of the inevitable subjective factors shaping the archaeological interpretation urged archaeologists to look for ways to distinguish between biased and objective research, and cast those theories that are “clearly” ideological outside the boundaries of proper science. The late 1980s and especially the 1990s became also the decades of the most intense debates about Gimbutas’ academic authority, with some scholars accusing her of biased and ideological research, while others defending her work.

The publication of *The Gods and Goddesses* in 1974 was first met with a relative silence from the archaeological community. Rare scholarly reviews praised the author for the materials she gathered, but criticized the interpretation of symbolism as too subjective and therefore unverifiable.¹³³ There was, however, no deeper engagement with her ideas within archaeology. The first thorough criticism of Gimbutas’ work on Old Europe was articulated by the archaeologist Brian Hayden in the article “Old Europe: Sacred Matriarchy or Complementary Opposition?” only in 1986.¹³⁴ In this text Hayden criticized Gimbutas for reviving the old-fashioned notion of prehistoric matriarchy¹³⁵ and argued instead for a view of prehistoric culture as dominated by the symbolism of “basic sexual duality” and most likely ruled by men.¹³⁶ While Hayden attacked Gimbutas for a lack of methodology and rigor in her analysis, his critique was not substantiated by competing evidence or a more rigorous methodology than employed by Gimbutas. Hayden aimed to contradict various female-centered interpretations of archaeological artifacts that Gimbutas provided in *The Gods and Goddesses*, relying on his expertise in folklore, just like Gimbutas herself. However, he did not always make it clear why his interpretations should be seen as more reliable than Gimbutas’.

Hayden argued, for example, that while Gimbutas interpreted the pillar as one of the many symbols representing the Great Goddess, “all common sense and psychiatric wisdom would associate it instead with the phallus or masculine forces.”¹³⁷ Hayden referred to “common sense” as well as psychoanalytic explanations, instead of providing a comprehensive alternative methodology for the interpretation of the figurines. In a number of instances throughout the article, he argued that Gimbutas’ interpretations can be replaced by what he considered more “logical”¹³⁸ interpretations, without any explanation of the principles of reasoning that brought him to this conclusion. Instead of providing a sound critique, Hayden therefore can be said to have substituted Gimbutas’ matristic theory of Old Europe with his own theory of sexual “complementarity,” as the title of his article also indicates. While Hayden saw his own interpretation as simply “logical,” Gimbutas’ work was presented as serving the ideological needs of the feminist movement.

Hayden’s article exemplified the conceptual dilemma intrinsic in any effort at refuting Gimbutas’ hypothesis about the matristic, Goddess-centered Old Europe, namely, that the “common-sense” interpretation of prehistoric materials often relies on the unacknowledged androcentric prejudices that qualify male-centered analysis as more “logical,” while female-centered as “biased.” The difficulty to argue against Gimbutas’ gendered interpretations without revealing the interlocutors’ own gendered biases regarding prehistory might have been one of the reasons why the critique of the theory of Old Europe was eventually supplemented with *ad hominem* arguments. To put it simply, by not being able to systematically challenge Gimbutas’ interpretation without reiterating androcentric bias, critics aimed instead to discredit Gimbutas’ ideas as ideological and politicized, as tainted by her Eastern European nationalism and/or her feminist leanings.¹³⁹

It is worth noting that none of Gimbutas’ academic critics in the 1990s represented themselves as anti-feminist. Quite the contrary, most of them declared support to the development of gender approaches in archaeology. In fact, most of Gimbutas’ critics argued, in one way or another, that it was their support for *sophisticated* gender archaeology that motivated them to expose Gimbutas’ “sexist agenda.”¹⁴⁰ These critics argued that Gimbutas propagated women’s superiority, instead of a complex view of gender relations in prehistory. These articles not only argued that Gimbutas’ work was motivated by feminism, but also stressed that it was a *wrong* kind of feminism – spiritual, or Goddess feminism – which motivated an essentialist view on gender in Gimbutas’ work and therefore made it unscientific.

Probably the most representative examples of such “debunking” of Gimbutas’ work are articles by the archaeologists Lynn Meskell¹⁴¹ and John Chapman.¹⁴² Meskell’s article “Goddesses, Gimbutas and New Age Archaeology” (1995) criticized the utopian vision of the prehistoric Mother Goddess and argued against Gimbutas’ selective treatment of figurines, weak methodology, interpretative jumps, and overtly authoritative

voice in *The Language of the Goddess* and her earlier works.¹⁴³ A large part of Meskell's text was dedicated to Gimbutas' personality and biography, which was intended to demonstrate that Gimbutas' work was allegedly motivated by a two-fold political agenda. On the one hand, Gimbutas' approach was tainted by "pseudo feminism" as embodied by the Goddess movement,¹⁴⁴ while on the other hand she was motivated by the "modern nationalist concerns"¹⁴⁵ of the Baltic countries occupied by the Soviet Union. Meskell argued that Gimbutas' work provided an inspirational origin myth for the women's movement and was detrimental to feminist goals in academia at large. Gimbutas' work, she thought, might associate bad scholarship, based on "emotional narratives" and "pure fantasy,"¹⁴⁶ with the gender perspective in archaeology. Instead of promoting "reverse sexism"¹⁴⁷ and a "gynocentric agenda,"¹⁴⁸ she argued, feminist archaeologists should work on providing a balanced gendered vision of prehistory, taking both sexes into account.

Meskell implied that Gimbutas was not only motivated by feminist political goals, but also by her nationalist sentiments. She argued that Gimbutas' life experiences, especially the experience of Nazi and Soviet occupations which forced her to escape into exile, had a "strange congruence" with her archaeological theories. The "barbarian invaders from the East," that is the Soviet occupants of Lithuania, were transformed into the image of the Kurgan invaders of Old Europe in Gimbutas' narrative.¹⁴⁹ Meskell argued that Gimbutas projected her personal trauma and her nationalist sentiments onto her scholarly work. In this way, she dismantled the rhetorical framework of "modest witness," to which Gimbutas appealed in the construction of her scientific persona.

Why was it so easy for Meskell to deconstruct Gimbutas' appeal to a position of a disinterested scholarly view? I believe it was because Gimbutas failed to fit into the framework of masculine and Western-centric normativity of scientific "transparency."¹⁵⁰ Meskell used some of the facts of Gimbutas' biography, especially those that made her life different from the normative life-narrative of a Western Anglo-American scholar – namely her experiences as an Eastern European war refugee – to be the "truth" behind her work. Although claiming a feminist motivation of her criticism, in fact Meskell debunked Gimbutas' work by using probably the oldest strategy in dismissing the public achievements of prominent female scholars – she reduced Gimbutas' work to her personal life experiences and her psychology.¹⁵¹

The idea that Gimbutas' theory of Old Europe is a mirror reflection of her life trajectory and trauma, first elaborated by Meskell, was fleshed out by the archaeologist John Chapman in a biographical essay on Gimbutas, published in the edited volume *Excavating Women: A History of Women in European Archaeology*.¹⁵² In this chapter Chapman speculated that when an archaeologist experiences migration or displacement during their lifetime, this experience might form a psychic "undercurrent," which, without

the archaeologist's conscious intention, might affect how he or she interprets prehistory.¹⁵³ In the case of Gimbutas (which was the only "case study" analyzed in Chapman's text), her experience of displacement during the Soviet occupation of Lithuania was allegedly directly translated to her theory of Old Europe and Kurgan invasions. Chapman illustrated his argument with a schematic representation of Gimbutas' biography, juxtaposed with Gimbutas' chronology of prehistoric Europe. Chapman argued that the memory of the "idyllic childhood" in Lithuania was unconsciously translated by Gimbutas into a utopian vision of Old Europe, while the violent experiences of war, occupation, and exile informed her Kurgan hypothesis.¹⁵⁴ Chapman, like Meskell, explained Gimbutas' work in pseudo-psychanalytic terms, using her personal experiences as proof of her unconscious bias. However, differently from Meskell, Chapman also implied that her gender, that is being a woman, made Gimbutas more susceptible to biased interpretation.

While the usage of the neutral language of "gender" in Chapman's article might create an impression that his analysis is equally applicable to both male and female scientists, in fact, the article was built on an assumption that in the field of archaeology only women have "gender," which can affect their work. This is made clear when Chapman argues, for example, that "gender makes a critical difference in the life and oeuvre of female archaeologists."¹⁵⁵ Chapman suggested that women, more than men, are inclined to include their subjective emotional experiences in their academic work, even when the "masculine frame of rhetoric" would limit it.¹⁵⁶ Following this line of argumentation, Chapman sketched out Gimbutas' biography, emphasizing what he considers to be the "feminine" aspects of her experience. For example, he speculated that Gimbutas' menopause might have prompted her interest in the issues of fertility:

The second point is one perhaps not easily discussed by a male prehistorian. It concerns the personal fertility of Gimbutas and its loss at the time of menopause; this latter can be dated to some time in the 1960s. It may be no more than coincidence that a woman with strong professional interests in the Mother Goddess, regeneration and fertility begins to write most vividly about fertility symbols at a time when her own personal fertility is disappearing and her own children leave home. Yet this is a factor which I would be loathe to omit from my account.¹⁵⁷

The biological essentialism implicit in Chapman's "critical biography" of Gimbutas is strikingly contradictory, because Chapman otherwise expresses criticism of "essentialism" in Gimbutas' work. While Chapman uses the term "gender," a term that was carved by feminists to denote the social construction of femininity and masculinity and resist biological determinism,¹⁵⁸ in his article the term is employed merely as a synonym for biological sex. Following Chapman, the reader would have to believe that Gimbutas'

“femaleness” – her biological sex – made her especially susceptible to bringing her personal experiences into her scholarly work.¹⁵⁹ Chapman expressed how for him it would be “hard to believe that a male scholar would have made such a link, let alone constructed such an edifice on top of this image, as Gimbutas did with the image of the prehistoric Mother Goddess.”¹⁶⁰ Chapman, to put it in other words, used the “gender” of the female scholar, namely the fact that Gimbutas was a woman, in order to debunk her “gender essentialist” work.

The pervasive tendency to see female scientists as more prone to be biased, while normative masculinity is still perceived as a “disinterested”¹⁶¹ position, turned Gimbutas into a perfect object for demarcating the space between subjective and objective, political and scientific in the field of archaeology. Meskell’s and Chapman’s texts were inspired by the increasing self-reflexivity in the field of archaeology in the 1980s and the 1990s. However, instead of acknowledging the subjective biases and political ideologies that shape all archaeological explanation, they focused on creating a paradigmatic case of “biased science” as embodied by Gimbutas. In this way, Gimbutas’ critics also reproduced the idea that archaeology can be non-ideological if done in a “proper” way. As I have demonstrated, both Chapman and Meskell criticized Gimbutas’ work by referencing Gimbutas’ gender, nationality, and her traumatic experiences, thus reducing her scholarship to her personality and/or her biography. Appealing to those aspects of Gimbutas’ experience that make her different from the – male, Western, privileged – norm of scientific objectivity, they argued her to be allegedly more susceptible to subjectivity and bias.

Published at the outset of gender critiques in archaeology, these *ad hominem* attacks on Gimbutas functioned, I believe, also as a sort of a warning sign for feminist archaeologists. Meskell, speaking from the position of a “feminist and archaeologist,” was concerned with the popularity of Gimbutas, because of her alleged “disservice” to the potentially fruitful field of gender archaeology.¹⁶² Meskell suggested that “sound feminist scholarship needs to be divorced from methodological shortcomings, reverse sexism, conflated data and pure fantasy, since it will only impede the feminist cause and draw attention away from the positive contribution offered by gender and feminist archaeologies.”¹⁶³ Similarly, referring to Gimbutas’ work, the archaeologist and popular writer Brian Fagan warned readers that the credibility of the archaeology of gender “depends on fine-grained scientific research, not on subjective impressions, however brilliant.”¹⁶⁴ These authors implied that gender approaches in archaeology, as well as female scholars in general, are somehow more easily susceptible to “weaknesses” such as emotionality, partiality, and lack of scientific rigor. Therefore, scholars employing a feminist approach in archaeology were implicitly warned to be proactive in proving their “scientific” character and avoiding any association with such complicated and unorthodox scholars as Gimbutas if they wanted to be taken seriously.

Reception in Gender and Feminist Archaeology

In North American academia, explicitly feminist critical gender approaches in archaeology developed much later than in anthropology or history.¹⁶⁵ One of the first articles arguing against the pervasive lack of conceptualization of gender in prehistory was Margaret W. Conkey and Janet D. Spector's *Archaeology and the Study of Gender*, published in 1984.¹⁶⁶ The authors showed how androcentric presumptions informed the construction of allegedly objective knowledge of prehistoric societies (such as the Mante-Hunter model of human evolution) and advocated moving towards a more sophisticated theory of human social life, including its gendered aspects. Perceiving a lack of progress in the following years, and aiming to encourage gender-sensitive research in archaeology, in 1988 Conkey and Joan M. Gero organized a conference, which then resulted in the volume *Engendering Archaeology: Women and Prehistory* (1991).¹⁶⁷ Since then, the engendering of the field has been explosive, suggests Conkey, resulting in a diversity of approaches: from gender archaeology as interested in women and gender relations, to feminist archaeology as critically engaging with feminist literature on gender and applying it to archaeological research.¹⁶⁸ Gimbutas' work, pioneering in challenging the implicit androcentric biases and providing a women-centered perspective in archaeology, was initially discussed among the essays on gender archaeology in the aforementioned volume. It was, however, gradually erased from the genealogy of feminist and gender archaeology, as I show in what comes next. Following the insights of the theorist Claire Hemmings on the role of narratives in feminist historiography,¹⁶⁹ I argue that the active dissociation from Gimbutas was a part of a rhetorical strategy to establish the scientific credibility of gender archaeology and strengthen its belonging to the field.

Contributors to *Engendering Archaeology* reflected, among other things, on the potential reasons which delayed the establishment of gender approaches in archaeology. One of the reasons discussed was the very nature of prehistoric archaeology as a science, which deals almost exclusively with material (rather than textual) remains of past cultures, therefore creating the problem of gender attribution.¹⁷⁰ In other words, there is no self-evident link between prehistoric artifacts and individuals of one or another gender. According to the philosopher of science Alison Wylie, another reason for the belated arrival of gender approaches was the positivist profile of American archaeology since the 1960s, embodied by New Archaeology, which privileged large-scale system-level explanations and left the interpretation based on ethnographic materials aside as not objective enough.¹⁷¹ All of this contributed to the state of affairs where the contemporary "common-sense" Western understanding of gender relations was simply projected onto the past, assuming (implicitly) that gender is natural and fixed and, as a side product, essentializing the current gender order. In this context, the contributors to the volume *Engendering Archaeology* presented

their work as inaugurating the gender approach in the field and working without any preexisting “recipe”¹⁷² to rely on, inventing an innovative feminist voice in archaeology.¹⁷³

Perceiving themselves to be the pioneers of feminist archaeology, Conkey and Gero turned to the conceptualization of gender as it was developed in other disciplines, in particular anthropology, history, and critical theory in the 1980s. This meant that the scholars of *Engendering Archaeology* worked under a strong influence of post-structuralist understanding of gender as historical, contextual, fluid, and relational; that is the approach which by that time became dominant in these fields. Drawing on the work of scholars such as the historian Joan W. Scott, anthropologist Gayle Rubin, theorist Jane Flax, and others, the editors of *Engendering Archaeology* proposed a theoretical framework for gender archaeology, which would rely on the “rejection of the biological determinism that is implicit in many models of sex role differentiation.”¹⁷⁴ The introduction of this sophisticated post-structuralist understanding of gender was hopefully to shake the very foundations of positivist archaeology, by focusing on the micro-scale production of social categories rather than solely on the systemic macro-scale changes, and keeping in check the socio-political factors that influence the production of scientific knowledge.¹⁷⁵ Clearly, Marija Gimbutas, with her rather static understanding of gender as a binary category marking diametrically opposed femininity and masculinity among other things, was not a suitable intellectual “foremother” for such a scholarly endeavor. Hence, the first self-defined feminist archaeologists in the context of North American academia aimed to establish a clear differentiation between their work and the legacy of Gimbutas.

Ruth E. Tringham’s chapter in *Engendering Archaeology* (1991) aimed to establish a genealogy of gendered archaeology and included Gimbutas’ work in it as a “remedial feminist study.”¹⁷⁶ Tringham, the only author in this volume to mention Gimbutas,¹⁷⁷ however, also explicitly distanced her approach from that formulated in Gimbutas’ works on Old Europe.¹⁷⁸ Tringham criticized Gimbutas’ approach for failing to question the very epistemological and theoretical assumptions of “Establishment archaeology,” for failing to meet the standards of scientific method, and, most importantly, for her overtly broad generalizations about the gendered shifts in prehistory.¹⁷⁹ Tringham compared Gimbutas’ work with Marxist archaeology, and explained both as ideological, as constructing a utopian vision of the past, and therefore problematic from a scientific point of view.¹⁸⁰ Tringham argued that since the question of gender in prehistory has been connected with “ideological” research frameworks, this has caused a lack of serious consideration of gender issues from the archaeological “Establishment” of New Archaeology in the West.¹⁸¹ Interestingly, this argumentation put the blame for the belated interest in gender issues in American archaeology on the supposed outsiders to the Western academic establishment. It was the fault of Marxist scholars and Gimbutas that the question of gender became

“ideologized.” Secondly, it implied that the U.S.-born New Archaeology was *not* ideological, that it was neutral, contrary to Soviet archaeology for example.¹⁸² Tringham, as a result, created a clear distinction between ideological and non-ideological science, positioning the non-Western others – Soviet archaeologists and Gimbutas – outside the boundaries of objective science. Despite that, Tringham still maintained in this article that Gimbutas’ work had some value in challenging the androcentrism of academia.

If in 1991 Gimbutas was still seen by some as a part of the genealogy of feminist approaches in archaeology, only a few years later she was unequivocally cast outside the emerging canon of gender archaeology. Two articles written by Tringham and Conkey in 1995 and in 1998 interpreted Gimbutas’ work as the *opposite* of what feminist archaeology is supposed to look like.¹⁸³ In the 1995 article, Conkey and Tringham argued that Gimbutas’ approach was antithetical to the critical gender approach that feminist archaeologists should follow.¹⁸⁴ They took Gimbutas’ approach to be representative of the Goddess movement, which they called “a seemingly feminist social movement”¹⁸⁵ and the phenomenon of “popular culture.”¹⁸⁶ Their most fundamental criticism was that her interpretation of archaeological artifacts is based on gender essentialist ideas, and instead they proposed to see gender as a “fundamentally ambiguous category.”¹⁸⁷ In the second critical article written in 1998, Conkey and Tringham¹⁸⁸ stressed that Gimbutas not only overtly succumbed to the demands of popular culture, but that it presented a “markedly authoritative voice that is in line with the prevalent mode of discourse among both traditional and New (processual) Archaeologists.”¹⁸⁹ Gimbutas’ exclusion from progressive gender archaeology was therefore double – it was seen as both too popular, serving the interest of laymen, and as too authoritative, following the lines of the discourse of the “Establishment.” Most importantly, her view was seen as gender essentialist, and not in line with the new and complex post-structuralist understanding of gender.

Conkey and Tringham presented Gimbutas’ work on Old Europe not only as problematic, but also as threatening to progressive gender research, as it “forecloses the goals of feminist – and even traditional – archaeology: to probe and understand how and why humans use material culture and to probe the various symbolic and social complexities of past human lives.”¹⁹⁰ In a similar vein, the archaeologist Lauren Talalay argued that Gimbutas’ work was “antagonistic both to the future of women’s movements and to the development of new perspectives on Mediterranean prehistory.”¹⁹¹ Given such characterization, the 2003 overview article by Conkey “Has Feminism Changed Archaeology” published almost a decade later, did not mention Gimbutas’ work at all, casting her outside of the framework of the historiography of gender and/or feminist archaeology.¹⁹²

How can we interpret this gradual erasure of Gimbutas from the ranks of gender approaches in archaeology? Writing in the 1990s, feminist archaeologists had to balance between, on the one hand, the critical interrogation



Figure 4.2 Marija Gimbutas stayed friends with Colin Renfrew, despite their diverging views on the Indo-European origins. Los Angeles, U.S., 1984.

of the androcentric norms of the discipline of archaeology and objective science in general, and, on the other hand, the necessity to work within the scholarly requirements, rules, and hierarchies of this same discipline. According to Wylie, feminist archaeologists chose not to subscribe to the “hyperrelativism” of postmodern critique, while at the same time they criticized the alleged neutrality and objectivity of processualism.¹⁹³ As I have shown above, feminist archaeologists were eager to show that engendering archaeology did not mean that “anything goes” in archaeology, but on the contrary, that consideration of gender would strengthen the reliability of its findings and increase the explanatory potential of the discipline. Ascribing the label of gender essentialism exclusively to Gimbutas, Conkey and Tringham represented their own approach as non-essentialist, and therefore less ideological, as in not presuming anything about the prehistoric gender order in advance (and therefore not imposing any “feminist agenda”).

The feminist theorist Claire Hemmings demonstrates the pervasiveness of three narratives – progress, loss, and return, as she calls them – in the feminist stories about the past struggles and the future goals of the women’s movement. Hemmings demonstrates how these stories create a textual affect, which establishes the subject positions of the author as well as that of the reader. “We agree or disagree with the narrative strand we encounter partly through how it constitutes us, what kind of subject it promotes to

the status of feminist subject, and what that means for our own claims so to become,” she argues.¹⁹⁴ The dissociation from Gimbutas’ “ideological” work proved an efficient rhetorical tool to demonstrate the scientific and rigorous character of engendered archaeology. To paraphrase Hemmings’ analysis of the construction of a “progress” narrative in feminist stories, this allowed the new feminist archaeologists to position themselves as the heroines of the feminist thinking and activism in academia, as the most progressive theoretical development, liberated from the limitations and blind-spots of past feminisms, such as gender essentialism.¹⁹⁵ Actively casting Gimbutas outside the canon of gender archaeology also demonstrated the loyalty of feminist archaeologists to the scientific method within the discipline, while helped to promote the post-structuralist approach to gender as a legitimate and even cutting-edge part of the disciplinary toolbox.

Old Europe as “Pre-Her-Story”

As I have shown in this chapter, gender played an important part in Gimbutas’ work starting with her first English-language monographs which led to her developing a full-fledged women-centered archaeological approach by the 1970s. The theory of Old Europe, first proposed in *The Gods and Goddesses* in 1974, and later on fleshed out in a number of articles during the 1980s, and in two grand monographs: *The Language of the Goddess* (1989) and the *Civilization of the Goddess* (1991), proposed a challenge to the androcentric narratives of prehistory and the habitual masculine-centered interpretations of archaeological materials. Gimbutas’ work preceded the development of feminist approaches in North American archaeology by at least a decade, but it mirrored similar developments in other scholarly disciplines in the 1970s, as well as the ideas popularized by the radical feminist movement around the same time. In her work Gimbutas reimagined femininity in a positive light, rendering female embodiment as a metaphor for divine power of creation, life, death, and regeneration. In this way, she challenged the androcentric dogmas of both the Judeo-Christian tradition and Western scholarship and proposed a challenge to the androcentric narratives of prehistory in mainstream archaeology at the time.

Writing on the women-centered spirituality and culture of Old Europe in the context of the highly positivist discipline of archaeology in the post-war U.S., Gimbutas struggled with creating a solid scholarly persona. She presented herself at times by referencing the modern ideals of impersonal, objective science, and, at other times, by employing rather esoteric notions of divine inspiration and witch-like prophetic insight. It might be said that while Gimbutas criticized the overly positivist approach to archaeology, she did not formulate her criticism from a postmodern or feminist point of view, but rather used a Romantic notion of divine inspiration. While she herself never embraced the label of feminism, Gimbutas’ critics often pointed out her alleged political/ideological interests in promoting a “gynocentric

agenda” via her theory of Old Europe. The critique of her work often took the shape of misogynistic attacks on her personality, as in the case of the article by Chapman, and made her into a sort of a warning sign for those wishing to implement feminist approaches in archaeology. The fact that Gimbutas was a woman, moreover, an Eastern European woman with experience as a war refugee, was turned against her in trying to discredit her authority as a scholar, to demonstrate that her work was inherently biased.

However, as I have shown, one of the strongest criticisms of Gimbutas’ work came from the pioneers of gender and feminist approaches in academic archaeology, who dismissed Gimbutas’ work as gender essentialist, too rigid and authoritative, and too pop-cultural. I think it is crucial to historicize the reception and eventual dismissal of Gimbutas’ work in academia within the context of the growing influence of post-structuralist approaches in academia and the debates over “essentialism.” The first self-defined feminist archaeologists, like Conkey and Tringham, were informed by a postmodernist approach, which avoids assigning any fixed meaning to gender or any fixed identity in general, and positioned themselves in contrast to the radical feminist tradition of the “Second Wave,” exemplified by Mary Daly and the proponents of women’s spirituality.¹⁹⁶ Feminist archaeologists in the 1990s were eager to propose a progress narrative, which positioned them at the forefront of the progressive developments in their discipline, and presented the past, embodied by Gimbutas, as problematic and old-fashioned.

Gimbutas’ critics noticed the obvious fact that she did not embrace, nor did the women’s spirituality movement, the post-structuralist approach to gender as socially constructed. Instead, Gimbutas took sexual difference as a metaphysical reality, an archetypal binary in Jungian fashion. It is not surprising therefore, that Gimbutas’ Old Europe was made, by post-structuralist feminists, into a symbol of the problems of the Second Wave radical feminism, from which a post-structuralist feminist approach (in archaeology) wished to dissociate itself. Gimbutas’ thinking represented the simplistic dualistic and essentialist thinking that academic feminists had supposedly overcome by thinking in terms of “gender,” and not in terms of “women.” What is problematic, however, is that the result of this theoretical disagreement was the purification of the historiography of feminist and gender archaeology from such “complicated” cases as that of Gimbutas. The contribution of Gimbutas’ work in questioning, ahead of her times, the androcentrism of archaeology, was almost completely erased from the history of feminist interventions in archaeology.

Following the early article by Tringham, I would, however, like to reintroduce Gimbutas into the chronology of engendering archaeology as a “remedial feminist study,”¹⁹⁷ which indeed countered the androcentrism of mainstream archaeology by focusing on women, even if she failed to adapt to the changing gender approaches in academia. Drawing a parallel with the development of feminist approaches in the field of history, one might consider Gimbutas’ Old Europe to be an archaeological equivalent of

“her-story” in feminist historical research. Indeed, it does not seem to be an exaggeration to say that while the field of archaeology was dominated by androcentric narratives,¹⁹⁸ Gimbutas became a pioneer in making “women a focus of inquiry, a subject of the story, an agent of the narrative.”¹⁹⁹ The insistence on uncovering women’s participation and agency in historical processes, was, as the historian Joan W. Scott suggests, the main feature of women’s history since the advent of the Second Wave feminism, unifying the field despite the diversity in its approaches and methods. Gimbutas’ work on Old Europe embraced all aspects of “her-story”: it focused on women’s experience as different from men’s; it added women as a new subject of analysis; it used evidence on women’s agency in order to challenge progress narratives; and it suggested a new periodization and historical narrative.²⁰⁰

Gimbutas made herself vulnerable to post-structuralist critiques by assuming that femininity and masculinity are diametrically opposed categories, straightforwardly represented by different physiology, and associating the positive characteristics with femininity for the sake of reversal of the androcentric point of view. Nevertheless, Gimbutas’ “pre-her-story” provided a radical antidote to the androcentrism of archaeology at least a decade before the first self-defined feminist attempts at introducing gender analysis in the discipline. Her work served, I suggest, as a springboard for a potentially more nuanced gendered archaeology, and therefore deserves a place in the genealogy of feminist archaeology, and academic feminism in general. Treating Gimbutas’ work as a part of the narrative of the development of feminist approaches in academia allows us to see the relationship between the women’s movement and modern science as fundamentally ambiguous, caught between the desire for objective knowledge and the lingering gendered hierarchies, stereotypes, and imaginations.

Notes

- 1 See Charlene Spretnak, “Beyond the Backlash: An Appreciation of the Work of Marija Gimbutas,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 12, no. 2 (1996): 91–98; Charlene Spretnak, “Anatomy of a Backlash: Concerning the Work of Marija Gimbutas,” *The Journal of Archaeological Mythology* 7 (2011): 1–27.
- 2 Christ, “A Different World,” 56.
- 3 Spretnak, “Anatomy of a Backlash,” 1.
- 4 Ruth E. Tringham, “Households with Faces: The Challenge of Gender in Prehistoric Architectural Remains,” in *Engendering Archaeology: Women and Prehistory*, ed. Joan M. Gero and Margaret W. Conkey (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 115.
- 5 Bruce G. Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
- 6 Philip Phillips and Gordon R. Willey, *Method and Theory in American Archaeology* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1958).
- 7 Lewis R. Binford, “Archaeology as Anthropology,” *American Antiquity* 28, no. 2 (1962): 217–225.
- 8 “Correspondence between Marija Gimbutas and Colin Renfrew”; Renfrew, *Archaeology and Language*.

- 9 Colin Renfrew and Paul G. Bahn, *Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice*, 2nd ed (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1996), 36–37.
- 10 Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, 313.
- 11 Alison Wylie, “The Engendering of Archaeology Refiguring Feminist Science Studies,” *Osiris*, 2nd, 12, no. Women, Gender, and Science: New Directions (1997): 80.
- 12 Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*; Bettina Arnold, “The Past as Propaganda: Totalitarian Archaeology in Nazi Germany,” *Antiquity* 64, no. 244 (1990): 464–478.
- 13 Renfrew and Bahn, *Archaeology*, 39.
- 14 Binford, “Archaeology as Anthropology.”
- 15 Bruce G. Trigger, “Alternative Archaeologies: Nationalist, Colonialist, Imperialist,” *Man*, New Series, 19, no. 3 (September 1984): 366.
- 16 Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, 407.
- 17 It was not until the late 1980ies and early 1990s that the hegemony of the New Archaeology was shaken by post-processualism, inspired by postmodern ideas about the relativity of knowledge (see, for example Ian Hodder, *Reading the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)), and feminism, with its exposure of androcentric bias (see for example Joan M. Gero, Joan and Margaret W. Conkey. *Engendering Archaeology: Women and Prehistory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Basil Blackwell, 1991)).
- 18 Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, 443.
- 19 Ernestine S. Elster, “Marija Gimbutas: Setting the Agenda,” in *Archaeology and Women: Ancient and Modern Issues*, ed. Sue Hamilton, Ruth D. Whitehouse, and Katherine I. Wright (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2007), 103.
- 20 Gimbutas, *The Gods and Goddesses*, 13–15.
- 21 Elster, “Marija Gimbutas: Setting the Agenda,” 103.
- 22 Different sources claim Gimbutas being able to use in her work “most Eastern and Western European languages” (see Joan Marler, “Introduction,” in *From the Realm of the Ancestors: An Anthology in Honor of Marija Gimbutas*, ed. J. Marler (Manchester: Knowledge, Ideas and Trends, 1997), 1–6.), or “at least 20 to 25” languages (see Jacques Leslie, “The Goddess Theory. Controversial UCLA Archaeologist Marija Gimbutas Argues that the World was at Peace When God was a Woman,” *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, June 11, 1989, Marija Gimbutas’ Collection, OPUS Archives and Research Center).
- 23 Colin Renfrew, *Marija Rediviva: DNA and Indo-European Origins (Marija Gimbutas Memorial Lecture)* (University of Chicago: Oriental Institute, 2017). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pmv3J55bdZc>.
- 24 Renfrew, in Donna Read and Starhawk, *Behind the Screen Interview with Colin Renfrew*, Behind the Screen: The Uncut Interviews (Belili Productions, 1999), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3h-cLCl8K0>.
- 25 Wesseling, “Judith Rich Harris”; Bosch, “Persona and the Performance of Identity.”
- 26 Joan M. Gero, “Socio-Politics and the Woman-at-Home Ideology,” *American Antiquity* 50, no. 2 (1985): 342–350.
- 27 Gero.
- 28 Londa L. Schiebinger, *Has Feminism Changed Science?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 141.
- 29 Elster, “Marija Gimbutas: Setting the Agenda.”
- 30 Margarita Díaz-Andreu and Marie Louise Stig Sorensen, *Excavating Women: A History of Women in European Archaeology* (London: Routledge, 1998).
- 31 Schiebinger, *Has Feminism Changed Science?*, 9.
- 32 Elster, “Marija Gimbutas: Setting the Agenda,” 103–104.

- 33 Ronald Hutton, "The Neolithic Great Goddess: A Study in Modern Tradition," *Antiquity* 71 (1997): 96.
- 34 Peter J. Ucko, "The Interpretation of Prehistoric Anthropomorphic Figurines," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 92, no. 1 (1962): 38–54, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2844320>.
- 35 Hutton, "The Neolithic Great Goddess: A Study in Modern Tradition," 97.
- 36 Susan Nacev Skomal and Edgar C. Polomé, eds., *Proto-Indo-European: The Archaeology of a Linguistic Problem: Studies in Honor of Marija Gimbutas* (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of Man, 1987).
- 37 Leslie, "The Goddess Theory. Controversial UCLA Archaeologist Marija Gimbutas Argues that the World was at Peace When God was a Woman."
- 38 Marija Gimbutas, *The Prehistory of Eastern Europe Part 1: Mesolithic, Neolithic and Copper Age Cultures in Russia and the Baltic Area* (Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum, 1956); Marija Gimbutas, *The Balts, Ancient Peoples and Places*. Vol. 33 (New York: Praeger, 1963); Marija Gimbutas, *The Bronze Age Cultures in Central and Eastern Europe* (New York: Humanities Press, 1965).
- 39 The Kurgan hypothesis was almost universally accepted by archaeologists until at least the 1980s (Elster, "Marija Gimbutas: Setting the Agenda"). In the 1987, Gimbutas' colleague Colin Renfrew proposed an alternative solution to the problem of the Indo-European origins, see Renfrew, *Archaeology and Language*, suggesting that Anatolia was the homeland of PIE speakers. However, recently, in 2017, Renfrew gave a lecture at the University of Chicago, where he acknowledged that the most current DNA research supports Gimbutas' Kurgan hypothesis and largely contradicts his own Anatolian hypothesis. Renfrew, *Marija Rediviva: DNA and Indo-European Origins (Marija Gimbutas Memorial Lecture)*.
- 40 Gimbutas, *The Bronze Age Cultures in Central and Eastern Europe*, 21.
- 41 Gimbutas, *The Bronze Age Cultures in Central and Eastern Europe*, 264–265, 285, 545, 617.
- 42 Gimbutas, *The Balts*, 42.
- 43 Gimbutas, *The Bronze Age Cultures in Central and Eastern Europe*, 23.
- 44 Marija Gimbutas, "Culture Change in Europe at the Start of the Second Millennium B.C.: A Contribution to the Indo-European Problem," in *Men and Cultures. Selected Papers of the Fifth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences*, ed. Anthony F. C. Wallace (Berlin and Boston, MA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960), 542.
- 45 Gimbutas, *The Gods and Goddesses*.
- 46 Gimbutas, 17.
- 47 Gimbutas, *The Gods and Goddesses*.
- 48 Renfrew, Read and Starhawk, *Behind the Screen Interview with Colin Renfrew*.
- 49 Gimbutas, *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe, 6500–3500 B.C.: Myths and Cult Images* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1982).
- 50 Gimbutas, *The Gods and Goddesses*, 38.
- 51 Gimbutas, 37.
- 52 Cynthia Eller, *Gentlemen and Amazons: The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory, 1861–1900* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2011), 9.
- 53 Jacquetta Hawkes, *Dawn of the Gods* (New York: Random House, 1968).
- 54 *Steatopygia* is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as "an excessive development of fat on the buttocks that occurs chiefly among women of some African peoples and especially the Khoisan." A good background for understanding the development of this term in the context of nineteenth-century

- scientific racism is contemporary research on the life of Sarah Baartman, the so called “Huttentot Venus,” see for example Clifton C. Crais and Pamela Scully, *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and a Biography* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).
- 55 Gimbutas, *The Gods and Goddesses*, 106–107.
 - 56 Marija Gimbutas, “The ‘Monstrous Venus’ of Prehistory of Goddess Creatrix,” *Comparative Civilizations Review* 7, no. 7 (1981): 1–26.
 - 57 Gimbutas, 9.
 - 58 Marija Gimbutas, *The Civilization of the Goddess: The World of Old Europe*, ed. Joan Marler (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1991), 223.
 - 59 “The Origins of Art,” *Art History* 1 (1978): 1–25.
 - 60 Collins and Onians, 12.
 - 61 Collins and Onians, 14.
 - 62 Collins and Onians, 15.
 - 63 Margaret W. Conkey, “Has Feminism Changed Archaeology?,” *Signs* 28, no. 3 (2003): 867–880.
 - 64 Marija Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1989), 41.
 - 65 Gimbutas, 36.
 - 66 Gimbutas, 99.
 - 67 Gimbutas, 109.
 - 68 Gimbutas, *The Gods and Goddesses*, 196.
 - 69 Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women’s Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973); Rosemary Radford Ruether, ed., *Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974); Merlin Stone, *When God Was a Woman* (New York: A Harvest/HBJ book, 1976).
 - 70 Adrienne Rich, “Prepatriarchal Female/Goddess Images,” in *The Politics of Women’s Spirituality: Essays on the Rise of Spiritual Power within the Feminist Movement*, ed. Charlene Spretnak (New York: Doubleday, 1982), 37. The piece was reprinted in Spretnak’s collection from Rich’s “Of Woman Born” (1976).
 - 71 Emily Martin, “The Egg and the Sperm: How Science has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles,” in *Feminism and Science*, ed. Evelyn Fox Keller and Helen E. Longino (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 103–117. The role of gendered assumptions in science has been the object of many brilliant analyses by the feminist science studies scholars since the 1980s. See for examples, Evelyn Fox Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985); Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: Male and Female in Western Philosophy*, 2nd rev. ed., Ideas (Routledge) (London: Routledge, 1993); Schiebinger, *Has Feminism Changed Science?*; including also archaeology, for example Margaret W. Conkey and Janet D. Spector, “Archaeology and the Study of Gender,” *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* 7 (1984): 1–38; or Wylie, “The Engendering of Archaeology Refiguring Feminist Science Studies.”
 - 72 Gimbutas, *The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe: 7000 to 3500 BC. Myths, Legends and Cult Images*, 196.
 - 73 Gimbutas, *The Gods and Goddesses*, 237.
 - 74 Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 143.
 - 75 Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “In Search of Women’s Heritage,” in *Weaving the Visions: New Patterns in Feminist Spirituality*, ed. Judith Plaskow and Carol P. Christ (New York: Harper Collins, 1989), 35.
 - 76 *The Language of the Goddess*, 1989.

- 77 *The Civilization of the Goddess*.
- 78 This was later criticized for leading to many mistakes in chronology and periodization. See Hutton, "The Neolithic Great Goddess: A Study in Modern Tradition."
- 79 Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*, 1989, xviii.
- 80 Gimbutas, xvii.
- 81 This also allowed her to focus on the folklore of her own homeland Lithuania as a key element in the interpretation of the prehistoric Old European findings, as I will discuss in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6.
- 82 *The Civilization of the Goddess*.
- 83 Riane Eisler, *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future* (Cambridge, MA: HarperOne, 1988). Eisler has relied extensively on Gimbutas' earlier work when writing her popular *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future*, where she proposed an interpretation of human history as a story of competition between the two systems: partnership and domination. Gimbutas in turned praised Eisler's work. Marija Gimbutas, "Implications of the Chalice and the Blade for the Relation of Archaeology to Social Science," *World Futures* 25, no. 3-4 (1988): 289-295.
- 84 Gimbutas, *The Civilization of the Goddess*, 324.
- 85 Hester Eisenstein, *Contemporary Feminist Thought* (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1984), 47.
- 86 Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow, eds., *Womanspirit Rising. A Feminist Reader in Religion* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1979); Rosemary Ruether, "Goddesses and Witches: Liberation and Countercultural Feminism," *The Christian Century*, no. September 10-17 (1980): 842-847.
- 87 Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science*; Evelyn Fox Keller and Helen E. Longino, eds., *Feminism and Science* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
- 88 Joan M. Gero and Margaret W. Conkey, *Engendering Archaeology: Women and Prehistory* (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1991).
- 89 Wylie, "The Engendering of Archaeology Refiguring Feminist Science Studies," 82.
- 90 Brian Hayden, "Old Europe: Sacred Matriarchy or Complementary Opposition?," in *Archaeology and Fertility Cult in the Ancient Mediterranean: First International Conference on the Archaeology of the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. Anthony Bonanno (Amsterdam: B.R. Grüner Publishing Company, 1986), 17-30; Lynn Meskell, "Goddesses, Gimbutas, and 'New Age' Archaeology," *Antiquity* 69, March, no. 262 (1995): 74-86.
- 91 Wesseling, "Judith Rich Harris: The Miss Marple of Developmental Psychology Elisabeth Wesseling."
- 92 Gero and Conkey, *Engendering Archaeology*.
- 93 Women's studies were first granted formal status as an academic program at the UCLA in 1975, growing into a degree program in 1987. In Elizabeth Marchant, "Message from the Chair," *UCLA Gender Studies*, 2019, accessed June 9, 2019, <http://www.genderstudies.ucla.edu/message-from-the-chair>.
- 94 Joan Marler and Marija Gimbutas, "Gimbutas Biography Transcriptions," November 17, 1990, 67, Marija Gimbutas' Collection, OPUS Archives and Research Center.
- 95 One of the exceptions to this rule is a copy of Simone de Beauvoir's seminal philosophical treatise *The Second Sex*, originally published in France in 1949, and highly influential among feminist circles in the United States starting with the 1960s. Gimbutas' personal library includes the English reprint of *The Second Sex* from 1974, exactly the same year in which Gimbutas published her *The Gods and Goddesses*, and includes comments penciled in the margins,

- especially in the “Part II. History,” which was clearly the most relevant to her own work. Gimbutas had underlined passages in the chapter “Early Tillers of the Soil” and written “wrong” in the margins, expressing her disagreement with Beauvoir’s views. Namely, Gimbutas disagreed with Beauvoir’s evaluation of matrilineal societies as being more “primitive,” in comparison to the successive patriarchal civilizations, and the interpretation of the prehistoric Goddess religion as expressing the voluntary self-enslavement of Man. Beauvoir proposed in *The Second Sex* that any religion in the history of humanity was always created by men, even if it was centered around a female goddess, as men have always been superior: “woman’s place in society is always that which men assign to her; at no time has she ever imposed her own law” (Beauvoir 1974, 109). Gimbutas’ work, obviously, countered such proposition.
- 96 Elster, “Marija Gimbutas: Setting the Agenda,” 106.
- 97 While the generational factor indeed has affected the way Gimbutas positioned herself in relation to feminism, it certainly does not provide a sufficient explanation, because other women of the same generation as Gimbutas, even with rather similar life trajectories, like, for example, Gerda Lerner (1920–2013), did not distance themselves from the label of feminism, but embraced it.
- 98 Joan Marler, “The Circle Is Unbroken: A Brief Biography,” in *From the Realm of the Ancestors: An Anthology in Honor of Marija Gimbutas* (Manchester: Knowledge, Ideas and Trends, 1997), 7–25.
- 99 Marler, 20.
- 100 Saja, “Geresnio gyvenimo ilgesys. M. Gimbutienė. [Longing for better life. Marija Gimbutas].”
- 101 Marler, “The Circle Is Unbroken: A Brief Biography,” 20.
- 102 Marler, “Introduction,” 18.
- 103 Algirdas Julius Greimas, “Europa be indoeuropiečių [Europe without IndoEuropeans],” in *Laimos palytėta*, 183–187; Campbell, “Foreword.”
- 104 Hayden, “Old Europe: Sacred Matriarchy or Complementary Opposition?”; Leslie, “The Goddess Theory.”
- 105 Marler and Gimbutas, “Gimbutas Biography Transcriptions,” 68.
- 106 Donna Jeanne Haraway, “Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium,” in *The Haraway Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 223–250.
- 107 Haraway.
- 108 Arnold, “The Past as Propaganda”; Trigger, “Alternative Archaeologies.”
- 109 Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, 381.
- 110 Marler, “The Circle Is Unbroken: A Brief Biography,” 16–21.
- 111 Leslie, “The Goddess Theory,” 11.
- 112 Leslie, “The Goddess Theory.”
- 113 Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*, 1989, xix.
- 114 Campbell, “Foreword.”
- 115 Vytautas Kavolis, “Civilizacijos atradėja, darbo ir džiaugsmo žmogus [The discoverer of the new civilization, the person of work and joy],” in *Laimos palytėta: straipsniai, recenzijos, pokalbiai, polemika, laiškai, vertinimai, prisiminimai*, ed. Austėja Ikamaitė (Vilnius: Scena, 2002), 187–190.
- 116 Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, 392.
- 117 Among them also Nancy Reagan, the wife of the then governor of California, Ronald Reagan.
- 118 Ursula Vils, “Thirteen Receive Awards as Times Women of the Year,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 10, 1968.
- 119 Wesseling, “Judith Rich Harris.”
- 120 Austėja Ikamaitė, ed., *Laimos palytėta: straipsniai, recenzijos, pokalbiai, polemika, laiškai, vertinimai, prisiminimai* [Touched by Laima: articles, reviews,

- conversations, discussions, letters, opinions, memories] (Vilnius: Scena, 2002); Joan Marler, *From the Realm of the Ancestors: An Anthology in Honor of Marija Gimbutas* (Manchester: Knowledge, Ideas and Trends, 1997).
- 121 Marler, "Introduction," 18.
- 122 Jacquetta Hawkes, "The Proper Study of Mankind," *Antiquity* 42, no. 168 (December 1, 1968): 255–262.
- 123 Marija Gimbutas, "Apie žemuogių skonį archaeologijoje (1976) [About the Taste of Wild Strawberries in Archaeology]," in *Laimos palytėta*, ed. Austėja Ikamaitė (Vilnius: Scena, 2002), 93.
- 124 Ragana – a Lithuanian pagan Goddess, a synonym for a witch. Marija Gimbutienė, "Apie lietuvių mitologijos popularizacijos reikalą bei šaltinius Baltų mitologijai atkurti. Atsakymas Jonui Baliui [About the Popularizing of Lithuanian Mythology and the Source for the Reconstruction of Baltic Mythology. An Answer to Jonas Balys]," in *Laimos palytėta*, ed. Austėja Ikamaitė (Vilnius: Scena, 2002), 187–190.
- 125 Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*, 1989, 210.
- 126 Gimbutas, 185. See also Vytautas Kavolis, *Moterys ir vyrai lietuvių kultūroje* [Women and men in Lithuanian culture] (Vilnius: Lietuvos kultūros institutas, 1992).
- 127 Gimbutas, *The Civilization of the Goddess*, 244.
- 128 Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism*; Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 575–599.
- 129 Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*; Trigger, "Alternative Archaeologies."
- 130 Arnold, "The Past as Propaganda."
- 131 Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, 164.
- 132 Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979); Haraway, "Situated Knowledges."
- 133 See, for example, J. D. Muhly, "Review: The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe, 7000 to 3500 BC: Myths, Legends and Cult Images by Marija Gimbutas," *The American Historical Review* 80, no. 3 (1975): 616–617.
- 134 Hayden, "Old Europe: Sacred Matriarchy or Complementary Opposition?"
- 135 Gimbutas insisted on not using the word "matriarchy," arguing that Old Europe was not a "mirror reflection" of patriarchy but a gynocentric, gylanic, matristic, and matrilineal, women-centered, etc. society, thus stressing the equality of sexes that was allegedly characteristic to these societies. Her critics, however, often used the word "matriarchy" in describing her Old Europe.
- 136 Hayden, "Old Europe: Sacred Matriarchy or Complementary Opposition?," 25–27.
- 137 Hayden, 20.
- 138 Hayden, 19, 21, 23.
- 139 Hayden, "Old Europe: Sacred Matriarchy or Complementary Opposition?"; Brian Fagan, "A Sexist View of Prehistory," *Archaeology* 45, no. 2 (March–April) (1992): 14–15, 18, 66; Meskell, "Goddesses, Gimbutas, and 'New Age' Archaeology."
- 140 Fagan, "A Sexist View of Prehistory."
- 141 Meskell, "Goddesses, Gimbutas, and 'New Age' Archaeology."
- 142 Chapman, "The Impact of Modern Invasions and Migrations."
- 143 Marija Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1989).
- 144 Meskell, "Goddesses, Gimbutas, and 'New Age' Archaeology," 83.
- 145 Meskell, 78.

- 146 Meskell, 83.
147 Meskell, 83.
148 Meskell, 76.
149 Meskell, 78–79.
150 Haraway, “Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium,” 233.
151 Toril Moi, *Simone de Beauvoir: The Making of an Intellectual Woman* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1994).
152 Díaz-Andreu and Sorensen, *Excavating Women*.
153 Chapman, “The Impact of Modern Invasions and Migrations.” The text by Chapman is sloppy as a biographical essay, as it contains many factual mistakes, such as claiming, for example, that Gimbutas’ husband was German (he was Lithuanian) or that it was “the Free University of Lithuania” that granted the honorary doctorate on Gimbutas (there is no such “Free University of Lithuania,” and it was Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas that granted this title to Gimbutas).
154 Chapman, 290.
155 Chapman, 288.
156 Chapman, 289.
157 Chapman, 300.
158 Joan Scott, “The Uses and Abuses of Gender,” *Tijdschrift Voor Genderstudies* 16, no. 1 (2013): 71.
159 Chapman, “The Impact of Modern Invasions and Migrations,” 288.
160 Chapman, 296.
161 Haraway, “Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium,” 232.
162 Meskell, “Goddesses, Gimbutas, and ‘New Age’ Archaeology,” 82.
163 Meskell, 83.
164 Fagan, in James B. Harrod and Brian Fagan, “Great Goddess Flap,” *Archaeology* 45, no. 4 (1992): 11.
165 Margaret W. Conkey and Joan M. Gero, “Tensions, Pluralities, and Engendering Archaeology: An Introduction to Women and Prehistory,” in *Engendering Archaeology: Women and Prehistory*, ed. Joan M. Gero and Margaret W. Conkey (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 3–30; Wylie, “The Engendering of Archaeology Refiguring Feminist Science Studies.”
166 Conkey and Spector, “Archaeology and the Study of Gender.”
167 Gero and Conkey, *Engendering Archaeology*.
168 Conkey, “Has Feminism Changed Archaeology?,” 870.
169 Clare Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).
170 Conkey and Gero, “Tensions, Pluralities, and Engendering Archaeology,” 11.
171 Wylie, “The Engendering of Archaeology,” 36–37.
172 Tringham, “Households with Faces,” 103.
173 Conkey and Gero, “Tensions, Pluralities, and Engendering Archaeology,” 8.
174 Conkey and Gero, 8.
175 Alison Wylie, “Gender Theory and the Archaeological Record: Why Is There No Archaeology of Gender?,” in *Engendering Archaeology: Women and Prehistory*, ed. Joan M. Gero and Margaret W. Conkey (Cambridge, MA.: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 31–54.
176 Tringham, “Households with Faces.”
177 Probably mainly because they work on a similar prehistoric period.
178 Tringham, “Households with Faces.”
179 Tringham, 115–116.
180 This would have been of course an offensive argument for Gimbutas to encounter, had she read the article. As the first half of this book shows, Gimbutas was a staunch anti-Communist, and had no sympathies for Marxism.

- 181 Tringham, "Households with Faces: The Challenge of Gender in Prehistoric Architectural Remains," 97.
- 182 For a different interpretation, see Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*.
- 183 "Archaeology and the Goddess: Exploring the Contours of Feminist Archaeology," in *Feminisms in the Academy*, ed. Domna C. Stanton and Abigail J. Stewart (University of Michigan Press, 1995), 199–246; "Rethinking Figurines. A Critical View from Archaeology of Gimbutas, the 'Goddess' and Popular Culture," in *Ancient Goddesses: The Myths and the Evidence*, ed. L. Goodison and C. Morris (London: British Museum Press, 1998), 22–45.
- 184 "Archaeology and the Goddess."
- 185 Conkey and Tringham, 205.
- 186 Conkey and Tringham, 199.
- 187 Conkey and Tringham, 231.
- 188 Conkey and Tringham also gave a course at Berkley entitled "Archaeology and the Goddess," which involved debates about Gimbutas' narrative as potentially "a feminist narrative of resistance." See Tringham and W. Conkey, "Rethinking Figurines," 44. While students in this course seem to have had a disagreement on the issue, Tringham and Conkey's answer to the feminist potential of Gimbutas' work was negative in this article.
- 189 Tringham and Conkey, "Rethinking Figurines. A Critical View from Archaeology of Gimbutas, the 'Goddess' and Popular Culture," in *Ancient Goddesses: The Myths and the Evidence*, eds. C. Morris and C. Goodison, 22–45, (London: British Museum Press): 23.
- 190 Tringham and Conkey, 44.
- 191 Lauren Talalay, "A Feminist Boomerang: The Great Goddess of Greek Pre-History," *Gender and History* 6, no. 2 (1994): 172.
- 192 Conkey, "Has Feminism Changed Archaeology?"
- 193 Wylie, "The Engendering of Archaeology," 85.
- 194 Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory*, 133.
- 195 Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory*.
- 196 Conkey and Tringham, "Archaeology and the Goddess," 209.
- 197 Tringham, "Households with Faces," 115.
- 198 Conkey and Tringham, "Archaeology and the Goddess," 201.
- 199 Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 17.
- 200 Scott, 18–20.

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