

DARK ARTS

**The Secret History of
Cultures by their Symbols**

by Jerry Glover

SAMPLE CHAPTER

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PART I

Hunters, Herders, Spinners and Weavers

What follows is always organically related to what went before.... and as Being is arranged in a mutual co-ordination, so the phenomena of Becoming display no bare succession but a wonderful organic interrelation.

Marcus Aurelius
Meditations

Chapter One

A Dark Art

Let us realise that “symbolism” is not a personal affair, but ... a calculus. The semantics of visible symbols is at least as much an exact science as the semantics of verbal symbols, or “words”.

Anand K. Coomaraswamy

Symbols and the Interpretation of Symbols

We are shortly going to embark on an epic adventure deep into human history along the seldom-explored paths of symbolic arts and architecture. Despite countless histories, these facets of culture continue to hold great potential to connect us with people who have left behind few other traces, people who have been central to history’s unfolding, particularly since the end of the last Ice Age. This involves reflecting on some assumptions about the dominant ways in which history has been traditionally approached, and making forays into speculation that some may regard as unsustainable, but not without reference to the best available material. History is more a conversation between various viewpoints than it is a series of immutable laws carved on tablets, and this ‘dark art’ as a prism through which history is projected, filtered further through tangential material like mythology, deserves a fuller chance at adding to our knowledge of what has gone before, long ago and even up to relatively recent times. Much has been lost, and forever will be, but enough remains for us to

salvage and reconstruct outlines of some of the most dramatic and significant events to have ever occurred, and examine some bold notions about them and how they reflect on our own times.

What now seems like decades ago I began investigating ‘popular mysteries’ (as they are generally called) as a journalist, and whilst on the isle of Sark in the Channel Islands in August 2005 I heard of a strange old carving on a fireplace in one of the island’s houses. As I began working on a magazine article about it, something unusual I’d heard about my local church back home came to mind, something related that I thought I’d better take a look at. What I found there turned out to be the most engaging and mysterious subject I’ve ever encountered. Not just a mystery in itself, but obscure for the fact of its very existence, and yet no less far-reaching for being so.

Although the thirteenth century church of All Saints in Leighton Buzzard, some fifty miles north of London, has been described as the cathedral of the county of south Bedfordshire, the aptness of this is only really apparent upon actually entering the building, when the full scale of the interior is revealed as greater than its designation of parish church suggests. The sheer prominence of the building and its spire which the builders had raised so high as to ensure that on a clear day their church would be visible from over ten miles in several directions, makes it easy to assimilate into a person’s mental picture of the district, and therefore easy to ignore – which is precisely what I had been doing for years. The late thirteenth century ironwork on the main doors, created by Thomas of Leighton who later fashioned the ironwork for Queen Eleanor’s tomb in Westminster Abbey did not interest me. Nor did the carved angels on the ceiling, the fifteenth century originals replaced following a devastating fire in recent times. Not even the eagle lectern, carved in the thirteenth century from oak, and is the oldest in the country, or the fifteenth century choir stalls, said to be from St Albans Abbey, and within which many carved figures, animals, and heraldry are hiding under the seats.^[1.] No work of iron, no lectern, no painted angel, no misericord however special was going to entice me inside All Saints church, much less a service.

What I had come to see was graffiti, ancient graffiti. Here was something outside the sphere of features normally referenced in church guidebooks. A secret art.

The one that is impossible to miss, cut so deeply into the chalky stone of the south transept it is almost a bas-relief, illustrates a memorable folk tale, being the scene of a man and a woman in medieval attire apparently having some kind of a to-do. The woman is holding a spoon in her left hand, the man's ear with her right hand. Some traces of colour can still be discerned. This scene of apparent domestic discord is interpreted as what happened when a couple called Simon and Nell decided to prepare a meal to celebrate the return of their children on Mothering Sunday. With only a leftover Christmas Pudding and some flour in the cupboard, the husband wanted to make a pudding which had to be boiled. The wife wanted to bake a dough instead and after an argument about what to do, the pair decided to prepare the ingredients both ways, and so the Simnel, a light fruit cake served at Lent or Easter, was born from the argy-bargy of Simon and Nell.

As in so many English churches, much of All Saints' medieval graffiti was lost for decades underneath repeated coats of whitewash, a practice which while often necessary to preserve the crumbling stonework has obscured many frescoes and works of art. The whitewash at All Saints, Leighton Buzzard has not been entirely eradicated, allowing a great deal of the graffiti to be seen, and the unruly duo of Simon and Nell were just the beginning of the secret art to be discovered at this church.

With my eyes tuning into the subtle contrasts left by these ancient lines, the church interior became revealed as a veritable picture book of ancient graffiti, carved mainly on the pillars and the main piers beneath the central tower. There are various animal and bird carvings, including that medieval mythical favourite the basilisk or cockatrice, said to be symbolic of sin or Satan. There is also a crane or heron, wisest of all birds, for among other reasons it flies above storm clouds like the person who rises above life's storms. There are several heraldic coats of arms, various kinds of crosses, a crowned royal head, a procession of grotesque and comic folk. Other figures are barely discernible: a headless pikeman holding a halberd and wearing an scalloped tunic and long pointed shoes from around the middle of the fifteenth century cuts a ghostly figure. The faint figure of a man wearing a very unusual headdress and someone who could be fleeing from him is decidedly strange and dramatic. The figure with the headdress (if that's what it is) has been interpreted as a demon, but to my eyes looks rather more human than that.**[2.]** There are at least five

carvings of medieval window tracery designs, perfect scale-miniature schematics of early Gothic tracery that could well show what the windows looked like before the perpendicular style became dominant in the fifteenth century and walls were heightened, and clearly inscribed using tools such as medieval artisans would have used.

The use of tools to render some of these graffiti is also apparent in a *croix pattée* cross, a motif often associated with Crusaders and the Christian church since early times, inscribed within a circle on the pillar by the font. The church has several of these, mostly on the nave pillars, all described within one or two compass-inscribed circles (Figure 1).

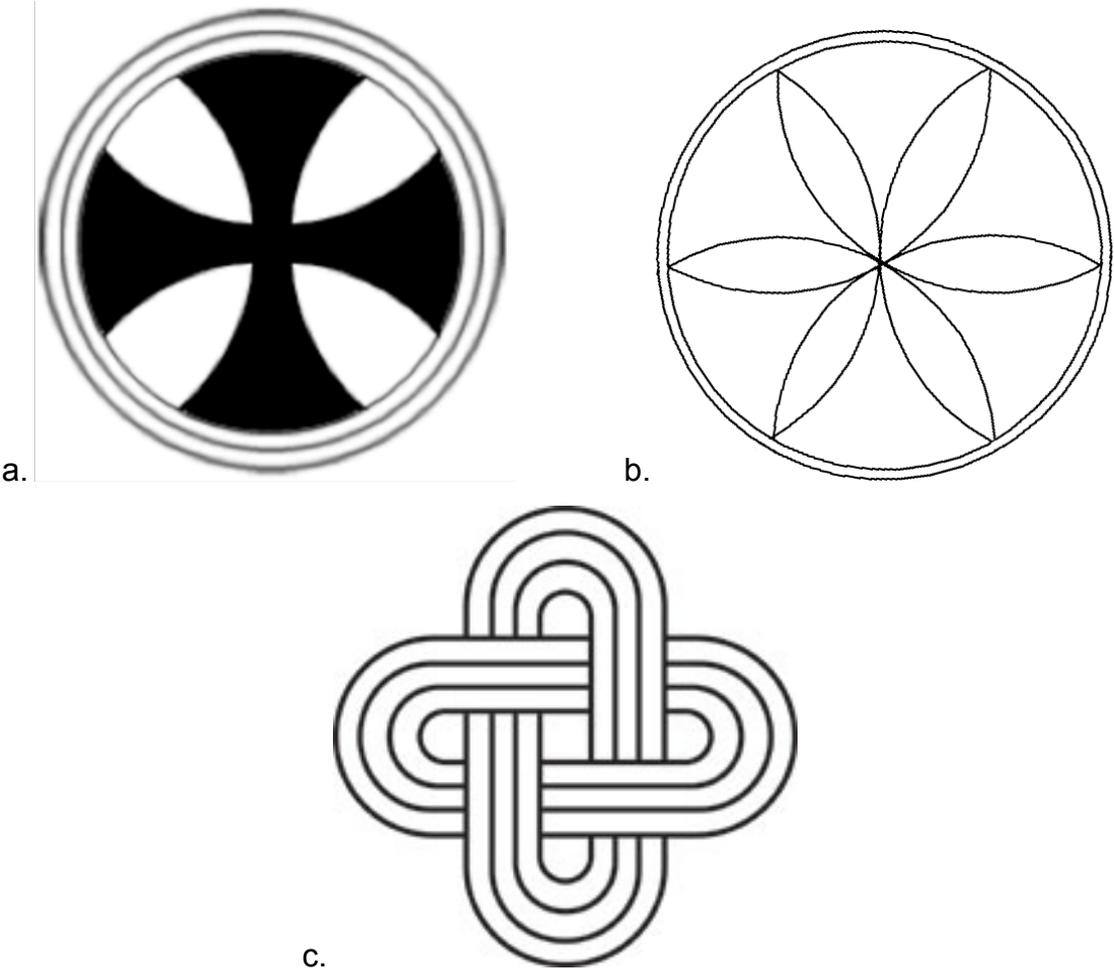


Fig. 1. Graffiti geometric motifs found at All Saints church, Leighton Buzzard. (a.) *croix pattée*, (b.) *hexafoil*, (c.) *Solomon's Knot*.

Other circular motifs comprise six petals instead of four, elegant and precisely inscribed within one or two circles, *hexafoils*. I found three examples of these at All

Saints, including a slightly more elaborated, web-like one half-observed behind the miserichords in the chancel. Another especially eye-catching one is a complex interlacing array. Its lines fainter than most of the others, its intricate delicacy nevertheless far surpasses them. It must have been difficult to draw with such precision on a vertical surface. This particularly ornate pattern extends the basic theme to make a profusion of overlapping hexafoils within two bounding circles the diameter of a tea-tray; a masterwork of medieval graffiti that is to all intents perfectly without error. The inaccuracy of measurement across the entire emblem is measurable only in fractions of a millimeter, much more accurate than my attempt to produce a diagram of it even with the original pattern to use as a template and unlimited means of correcting it using a computer. Embarking on such a complex design on a curved vertical surface with no possibility of correction should but a single placement of the compass point be less than absolutely accurate would hardly have been conceivable to someone who wasn't a master geometer of the first order, very likely a worker in a profession where geometry such as this could be directly applied to real forms, a stonemason or carpenter.

A careful search revealed another at the back of the church also on the south side, which despite bearing paint traces in some of the lines, is harder to spot owing to a more severe whitewashing and surface erosion. Either the inscriber or someone else at a later time wanted to make this second 'master design' stand out even more by painting these lines, which are so accurate they have an almost machine-like quality that makes it hard to easily picture how they were achieved. Is it possible to paint fine narrow lines with a compass?

By overlaying graphics onto photographic images I reconstructed the artist's original design, and in both instances it was the same pretty spectacular creation in terms of graffiti, old or modern. The pattern is not symmetrical, as a glance suggests. The number of circles around the edges varies between four and six circles. This was the cause of much trouble as I reconstructed the design, wondering why it didn't appear right as I kept adding circles. Even using software the task was an illusionary eye-waterer, and in a way it felt like the artist who first carved it had set a test for one like myself as I struggled to make it all balance: *Think you know what it is, do you? Look again!*

Another geometric motif was even harder to see, an interlace knot, popularly

called the Solomon's Knot. Centered within a tracery design that is all but obliterated, the conjunction of these forms had to be significant, but how?

Cedar Lewisohn, a researcher of modern urban graffiti, struck a chord about the potential significance of the geometric graffiti:

The experience of writing illegal graffiti is difficult to describe. Essentially, the attraction is one of breaking the law mixed with the opportunity to be creative. There is also the afterglow the next day, when the work is in the public domain [...] the graffiti writers see their work and feel great pride in what they've done. We can imagine this as a secret society or secret language of the city. To be involved in that language and the conversation that the city is having with the public can be seen as an exhilarating opportunity, especially for people with little other voice in society.[3.]

Though referring to his experience of modern-day urban artists, Lewisohn captures universal truths about the act of creating graffiti, the 'great pride' felt by anyone expressing themselves in this way. More intriguing was his suggestion that these graffiti artists were involved in a 'secret language'. The idea that the geometric symbols could be in the same vein seemed possible, their careful precision, intricacy, and repetition expressing something more than pleasing visual designs. Did they hint at some kind of 'secret language' known only to their artists, or were they just pleasing visual designs, doodles drawn to while away the time?

Obviously Hidden

Graffiti – literally “little scratchings”, from the Italian verb *graffiare*, “to scratch”, although it now includes painted examples as everyone familiar with urban graffiti almost anywhere on Earth well knows – is imbued with intent and meaning. The tradition of socially-significant graffiti, best known these days from the work of artists such as Blek le Rat or Banksy whose stenciled works satirizing state authority and the urban landscape are torn from their streets and auctioned for thousands of pounds, goes back as far as human civilizations. Early examples from the walls of

Pompeii include political commentary, real-estate advertisements, lost-and-found notices, and quotations from Virgil and Ovid.[4.] There are as many intentions behind the creation of graffiti as any other form of artistic expression, if not more than most. Probably the earliest known representation of Jesus, the Alexamenos graffito on a plaster wall in Rome from somewhere between the 1st and 3rd centuries, shows a crucified figure with the head of a donkey, making it a satirical, mocking representation (another idea is that it represents the head of an Egyptian god, Anubis or Seth, a hypothesis not widely shared). From some eight or nine thousand years ago, the graffito of a woman giving birth at the base of a pillar at the pre-ceramic site of Göbekli Tepe in southeastern Turkey is a particularly significant example which is investigated in Chapter Three. As a declaration of love, an advertisement, a political or cultural allegiance, a protest, a name, an ethos, graffiti is always the result of a very conscious decision to express an idea or an identity, usually somewhere public where as many people as possible can see it. Despite its relative scarcity compared to more durable modes of art, it has proved very valuable in helping understand facets of cultures that would otherwise remain obscure, and while modern graffiti has been raised to the form of high art, most graffiti pre-dating the modern era of spray cans and stencils has remained unexplored as a source of study and enquiry.

Of the few who have done so Violet Pritchard did more than anyone to record it in England, spending decades investigating dozens of parish churches across south eastern counties. Her one book, *English Medieval Graffiti*, shows the range of this lost art, from the humorous and the emotional, to the mundane to the bizarre, each with a story to tell, or a mystery to be uncovered. She suggested that it could be even more useful towards understanding the past than written inscriptions:

The drawings are in some ways of greater interest than the inscriptions, for they invoke the past in a manner which no inscription could achieve. A picture arrests time and brings to life a lost moment in a century long past. Many of the drawings are hitherto unknown gems of medieval art: lost treasures refound, only to be lost again for ever if steps are not taken to preserve them.[5.]

Lost treasures – how often does that phrase occur in a scholarly work?

Pritchard's enthusiasm for her subject was catching as I too was starting to see this art as being treasures lost and found again.

From discoveries in other contexts such as centuries-old English timber-framed buildings, it is now widely-accepted that the hexafoil design was an apotropaic sign to ward off evil, or was even intended to fascinate and trap demons in its never-ending paths of circles.[6.] The same applies to the Solomon's Knot. Yet why this meaning was ascribed to these particular designs, and how much it applies to the exact same symbols appearing in many other contexts from wood-carved folk art in Scandinavia, to Sufi tomb art in medieval times from eastern Europe to India, to 18th century Puritan gravestones in England and the United States, and even going all the way back to antiquity, to mention just a few, is another question. Surely they cannot all be apotropaic?

In terms of the hexafoil, what the folk magic interpretation fails to account for is the symbol's deeper meaning that was understood far more widely and for longer, a clue to which actually appears as textual graffiti on the nave pillar between the two 'master hexafoils' at All Saints, a Latin inscription which translates as "The image present here is neither God nor man; but its sacred form signifies both God and Man." [7.] It seems that these lines are indeed referring to the 'master hexafoils' graffiti since the number of interlacing circles is fifty-five, whereas the number of complete hexafoil motifs is thirty-three, the same as the age of Jesus upon his death. So if it was a symbol of Christ, albeit an obscure one, why was it not part of ordinary church decoration? Where did the idea that a geometric symbol such as this indicated "both God and Man" come from, and what did that curiously-worded and ambiguous statement actually mean?

Soon my medieval graffiti-tuned eyes started to see many examples of geometric graffiti. Cropping up repeatedly in a good proportion of medieval churches, mostly drawn with care, all this indicated a mystery deserving further scrutiny since nothing in any of the books on church architecture or symbolism I consulted showed these precise designs. Apparently, these emblems existed outside the corpus of ordinary religious iconography.

The question of one or a number of people contributing to the carvings became less relevant to the main focus of my research than what the combination of forms within the geometry – the *cross pattée*, the hexafoil motif, the 'master hexafoil' array,

and the interlace knot – meant to the artists who made them. The question also remained as to why, in churches already rich in symbolism, these designs existed solely as graffiti, a spontaneous and ‘unsanctioned’, form of expression – a sort of folk art. Even if the apotropaic explanation gave a tidy reason for the protective purpose of the symbols, it shed no light whatsoever on the reasons as to why these particular symbols acquired this purpose. What caused such powerfully meaningful symbols to be ‘lost’ to orthodox decoration, surviving only in folk art?

Starting with the hexafoil (Flower of Life), after several years of research and with many areas of knowledge and history opening up I thought I knew just about all there was to know about it and published an article with a few of my key findings.[8.] Obsessively in pursuit of a single idea, I proceeded to unearth this ‘forgotten symbol of God’.

Then something happened that completely changed the course of my research.

In pursuing the hexafoil and the lost knowledge and history that it was a gateway into, and with more examples of the symbol coming to light it became apparent how it cannot be adequately explained in isolation from other unusual geometric symbols that kept cropping up in association with it in various era, many of them apparently disconnected. In texts about symbolism these symbols also often receive similar sparse or blanket interpretations that fall well short of what I was uncovering from a plethora of reliable sources. By becoming seduced by the unfolding character of the Flower of Life, like the demons it was sometimes supposed to enthrall, I was overlooking an even more fascinating perspective.

A clue as to the mutability of certain symbols occurs in graffiti examples of the hexafoil Flower of Life in tandem with the fourfold *croix pattée*. After finding out much about the hexafoil very early on, I found myself judging the *croix pattée* to be far less interesting than its geometric cousin, the hexafoil, when it too has a story that is equally rich and fascinating, if not even more so. Like the hexafoil, this and other geometric symbols such as the interlace knot, despite often being displayed in plain sight in prominent places such as museums and historic buildings, have been similarly overlooked or isolated in the history of art and civilizations, yet they hold massive potential for gaining a better understanding of them. In their entirety, they constitute the lost language of symbolism.

As I became open to a flood of fresh material, hints of a new kind of historical

narrative emerged from some of history's more obscure waters. This information appeared in discrete pieces at first, like submerged islands being revealed as the water surrounding them begins to secede, drawing back further so that what initially appeared as islands are revealed as being interconnected. Eventually an entirely new landmass of historical narrative is perceived, a landmass defined by symbolic art.

'Real Writing' versus Writing Without Words

Curiously, nearly all of the undeciphered languages of the world are pictographic and non-syllabic. Of the twenty undeciphered languages that fall into the established category of what constitutes a language, all of them save one – Cretan Linear A in use between 2500-1450 BC – are pictographic and in all likelihood non-syllabic, often with elements that are recognisable as simplified abstract shapes of actual things: person, bull, implement, etcetera. They have resisted decipherment (though not for lack of interpretation) partly because there are no Rosetta Stones by which to compare them to other known languages, and also because they do not conform to the models of syllabaries and lexicons that marry so well to ordinary logo-syllabic languages. Scholarly efforts to make pictographic languages like Cretan Linear A or the notoriously succinct Indus Valley 'script' fit into systems emulating those successfully applied to the decipherment of glottographic logo-syllabic languages have, and in spite of some tantalising potential breakthroughs, largely failed. These approaches at decipherment are heavily versed in extremely technical jargon and imposed categorical breakdowns which make the languages appear far more complex than they really are. If the explanation is complicated, the language must be too seems to be the assumption.

What these unknown pictographic languages were designed to convey can perhaps be approached first by expanding the horizons of what we might think constitutes a language in the first place, for as certain scholars over the past century have begun to tentatively propose, the story of how humans used permanent, transferrable means of communication for various reasons is not the sole province of

the history of writing. That is to say, literate, logographic writing emerging from spoken language.

The concept of 'writing without words' has been defined by linguistic anthropologists studying ancient civilizations in Mesoamerica where they call it *semasiographic* writing.[9.] Road signs, washing labels on clothes, the tiny icons on television remote controls, these and many other examples are, to such specialists, all semasiographic writing. Even mathematical notation is a very pure example. Semasiographic language does not appear to be connected to glottographic scripts derived from spoken language, although they have coexisted in ancient times as indeed they still do today. It tends to exist in the intellectual shadows of the 'real writing' practiced by the early high civilizations of the Mesopotamians and the Egyptians. Ethnographer and art historian Elizabeth Hill Boone forcefully describes the failure of academic interest: "It is telling that the denial of pictographic writing systems as "real writing" has generally been accompanied by an insidious pejorative tone, which reveals an inability and unwillingness to understand other systems"[10.] Why has this happened?

The comparatively very recent recognition of semasiographic scripts among the Inca, Aztec, and Zapotec civilizations in Mesoamerica is challenging the traditional perception of how those societies developed since semasiographic systems were efficient enough to manage the functioning of society at a complex level of statehood. The classic example of this is the Quipu ('talking knots') system used by the Inca since 3000 BC, cord arrays with knots tied at different points to denote base ten decimal units, although features such as different colours could have encoded more complex information that is yet to be deciphered.

Rug and carpet designs are another kind of semasiographic system only fleetingly understood outside its places of making. The colourful patterns and motifs of tribal kilims and carpets and rugs, for example, denote communities of weavers, as well as characters from mythology and folklore reaching back deep into antiquity. They can be almost as redolent in narrative terms as illustrated books, and shops selling carpets and rugs of traditional designs are as much 'woven bookshops' as furnishing shops – if only we knew how to read the language on display. In Chapter Five a few outlines of how this vast area of symbol-art language can be approached are highlighted, taking as my cue some of the most formative clues from its early

history in south eastern Europe.

These two examples, which only in the past few decades have been accorded the status of complex systems of communication, are still quite far from being completely understood. The medium of transmission of these languages, fabrics, are rare in the context of archaeological digs due to their perishable nature, so it has taken much longer for them to be seen as, not 'just decorative' items, as information-meaningless, but intricate narratives about numerical accounting or data recording in the former, and mythology and tribal identities in the latter. The closer, more subtle, meanings of these languages that straddle the boundaries between decoration, iconography, symbols and language are still waiting to be known, and as to the more overtly symbolic languages such as carpet patterns, always will be undeciphered if new ways of approaching them do not appear. Probably inevitably, computers will prove useful in unlocking of these and other undeciphered languages. But there has also been an imaginative failure and the responsibility for providing that must come from humans.

Civilizations are essentially literate ones and the civilizations we have been most ready to identify with following on from the explosion of archaeological discoveries in the nineteenth century were also literate. They created systems of signs that were glottographic, closely tied to spoken sounds, and were universal within the domains of power elites that emerged over a huge area from the Near East to the western shores of the Pacific in the early Bronze Age. In Sumerian Mesopotamia, cuneiform, a fully-developed system of writing that was logosyllabic-based, emerged around 3100 BC, and was adopted wholesale by the Mesopotamian Babylonians and the Persian Assyrians, simplified and refined over a wider area during the following millennium. This and other sign systems that were also logosyllabic were compact enough to allow for the creation of records and accounts that allowed these leading economies to expand and maintain stability, as well as texts. Later on, these early logosyllabics became alphabetic, leading to the glottographic languages used by the vast majority of people today. The people to whom Eurasians owe so much in terms of their origins is defined primarily (before archaeology and genetic studies) by languages that have been traced to a common source, the Proto-Indo-European Language (PIE). Languages who were are, where we are from. They are one of the prime forges out of which our history is shaped, text

upon text upon text. Yet by perceiving how non-verbal, information-rich symbologies have migrated across geographies, transcending cultures, and ethnicities, these distinctions, which were largely created by linguists supplemented by advances in the study of genetic drift, melt away to a relatively large degree.

This can be said because predating and running parallel with logo-syllabic writing systems is a much older 'phylum' of signs and symbols on the tree of human communication, a branch of symbolic 'life' that has developed separate from written information. Many of these non-literate, semasiographic systems of information have aspects less in common with written language developed for administrative and recording purposes than they do with alternate, but no less important, preoccupations to do with survival, creativity, identity, power, and concepts that written text-based culture has either shied away from, ignored, or in some very notable instances wholly misperceived because it lacks the grammar on which to understand generations of accrued meaning.

Symbolic, non-verbal, 'decorative' art has performed a far more integral function in the formation and life of societies than has hitherto been acknowledged except in highly-specialized case studies. This 'secret language' of concepts and identities is a key contributor to some of the greatest and most mysterious achievements we know. From this perspective an outline of history emerges, one that doesn't rely on named personages, recorded events, or the burial traces of people and buildings, but instead charts the equally dynamic and much more elusive flow of 'second-tier' players. They are the invisible, unnamed ones who were always at the forefront of culture by virtue of their highly valued creations, and yet are relegated to the shadows in historical terms. Out of the channels cut through history by these various 'user groups' of semasiographic symbolic and 'decorative' systems, it is possible to reveal a new way of looking at history, one that perceives ebbs and flows of people using symbolic signs for purposes other than those suited to written language derived from speech.

As the voluminous but elusive Dark Matter is to the composition of the physical universe, so too are 'decorative' symbols to the universe of language. These decorations and their symbols are the Dark Matter in the story of human communication, their progression and development the Dark Energy that powers the engine of History.

The general idea of the significance of non-verbal writing systems is yet to reach a tipping point in the study of the development of civilizations in Europe where the evidence, despite including some of the most well-known artistic creations of all time, is still very much within the remit of art studies, although this is changing. Researchers working across different historical fields are beginning to show that a similar phenomenon was happening thousands of years before the Mesoamerican examples that are currently the earliest established examples of 'non-verbal' communication. Predating literate, 'real' writing by many thousands of years, these two great branches on the tree of human communication eventually ran concurrent, with the symbolic art-language of identities and concepts finding its greatest preferment among societies and groups that eschewed writing in favour of the non-verbal art-symbol languages for their own purposes which are still largely unknown. By revealing the threads and networks running through history where it travelled we will encounter what some of greatest cultural mysteries yet known, and with the best currently available information, as well as mythological and other primary sources, we can begin to crack the symbolic code and propose some ideas to render these mysteries less obscure.

The Fallen Language of Symbols

How can it be we are only just beginning to recognise the existence of this symbolic language, and why hasn't more progress been made to define its very existence, let alone the lack of progress in decoding it?

In the first instance, the reason is likely rooted in the ideological sea-change that followed in the wake of the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century. Up to that time clergy and churchgoers were well-versed in the language of symbols. They could 'read' the iconography of a church far more easily than in the subsequent period in which a far stronger emphasis on knowledge from texts was placed, emphasizing the "word" over the "sacraments". This shift in this zeitgeist by the effects of the Reformation and a concurrent surge in literacy undermined the former

store placed in symbolism to the point where images once redolent with complex meaning became reduced in the mind's eye to decorative objects with only superficial meaning, and this attitude has persisted in scholarship, as pointed out by William Dever, a biblical scholar who observes that his fellow biblical scholars are not even aware of the power of symbols and tend to dismiss objects like figurines as 'mere symbols'. This is especially true of Protestants, he maintains, who make up the mainstay of white, male biblical scholars, people trained to look to texts as the ultimate source of knowledge and downplay or completely overlook the significance of symbols. Symbols, Dever says, "are if anything *more* evocative of the past than are texts, because the so-called "precise and unequivocal meaning" of texts is an illusion."**[11.]** Floris Vermeulen develops this point to include decorative symbolism in his thesis on religious symbols:

It appears that the growth of literacy also created a literalism that ignored the significance of the symbols. Many scholars of religion and anthropology still seem to analyse symbols and the phenomenon of symbolism itself as ornaments, albeit as ornaments valued by primitive cultures, despite the fact that most 'primitive' cultures were extremely practical in all they did, even in their rituals and beliefs. **[12.]**

On the lack of progress in decoding this lost language of symbolism, much blame for this can be ascribed to the Victorian symbolists, who despite reclaiming some of the ground lost by the attitude that downplayed the existence of symbolically-recorded information when examples of abstract symbolism were first being systematically gathered and described, could not quite get out from under the weight of certain cultural assumptions, making them perpetuate some key misunderstandings and wrong assumptions that have pervaded critical thinking right up to the present.

By cross-comparing the symbols being turned up by archaeologists out of the dust of ancient kingdoms such as Egypt, Assyria, Anatolia, and India, Eugene Goblet d'Alviella (1846-1925) noticed how certain geometric symbols appeared repeatedly and in cultures that were separated, otherwise appearing to have almost nothing in common apart from these symbols. In the seminal work getting to grips with these curious aspects, *The Migration of Symbols*, d'Alviella set out his purpose:

My aim is simply to furnish a contribution to this history, by investigating the limits within which certain symbolical representations have been transmitted from people to people, and how far in the course of their migrations their meaning and their form may have been modified. I have here applied myself particularly to figures which, by the importance and the very complexity of their role, have seemed to me the most capable of throwing some light on the general conditions of symbolical transmission.[13.]

This chimed with what I had come to realise about the shifting nature of the hexafoil, and how it did not appear fully formed; it developed over time. The story of how this happened throws light on the reasons for the symbol's 'success' and its eventual 'downfall'.

Eugene d'Alviella chose six symbols as his 'origin symbols' and when I found this I'd also pinned down about six 'root' symbols that were intertwined with the story of the hexafoil, two of which were also on d'Alviella's list. By looking at symbols in close orbit with the hexafoil, and by tracing their timeline upstream to their places of origin, seeing how they existed in a symbolic 'ecology' with other symbols, it became possible for me to discern origin points where a new symbol had evolved out of the convergence of two or more symbols that were in use in earlier times. This small revelation was first arrived at by d'Alviella, perceiving how certain symbols had evolved from earlier symbols and had, at some points in history, actually merged with each other to create new symbols, "lose themselves in intermediate types". The reality of the plasticity of symbols from the many variations that could be traced back to a few common roots which he described as "coincidences [that] can hardly be explained by chance, like the combinations of the kaleidoscope", [14.] is one of d'Alviella's lasting achievements. Some of the most quietly spectacular examples of this phenomenon of 'symbol convergence' will become apparent throughout this book.

Outdated as his work is today, fatally compromised by advances in linguistic and archaeological knowledge, Eugene d'Alviella perceived the phenomena of the physical reach of certain symbols like no one before, describing a kind of pictographic

'syllabary' on which the proto-language of symbolism could be approached in a coherent way. When it was published in 1891, *The Migration of Symbols* created a mini-sensation that altered the course of the study and interpretation of the history of religion, although little of this information beyond some very general suppositions has filtered out beyond academic walls.

A side to d'Alviella's work that accords less well in his specific area of study was his interpretive side. Acknowledging the weaknesses of the legacy of Enlightenment-era European mythographers who had worked with a Casaubon-like doggedness towards a 'one myth fits all' scheme of ancient religion,[15.] and alluding with disparagement to an enclave of racially-motivated thinkers that "cause us to retrace our steps", d'Alviella celebrated the prolific expansion of knowledge of ancient societies and the enrichment of museums, the wealth of publications and organs. Citing the advances being made in ethnography by Andrew Lang (1844-1912), who had started to explain elements of mythology and fairy tales as the religious stirrings of 'noble savages', and Max Müller (1823-1900), a formidable Orientalist scholar who was allying language to belief systems, d'Alviella heralded the coming of age of his own comparative field, proclaiming "Henceforth there is no longer any reason why in the study of symbols we may not arrive at results as positive as in the study of myths".[16.] Spoiled as he felt he was by the advances of his own time, d'Alviella simply did not have the information that is available to us, subsequent discoveries have rolled back the limits of history further than Eugene d'Alivella and his generation could even imagine. Even so, his introduction of a new age of comparative studies is valid and still holds true as a topic that can yield fresh insights into history.

An early example of d'Alviella's shortcomings is how he discusses the ubiquitous shape of the cross. With reference to the ideogram of the Assyrian god Anu he notes that the four cruciform characters that issue at right angles from a circle denote the sun because "Is not the sky indeed the space in which light radiates?"[17.] With that oddly meaningless turn of phrase d'Alviella locks the shape of four straight lines at right angles to the sun. He develops the notion with reference to six other civilizations of the Bronze Age who also used the cross with the reason that the cross symbol denotes "the main directions in which the sun shines". To be perfectly clear then, d'Alviella is saying that from the earliest times he knows, the early Bronze Age, the cross is a symbol for the sun. Such a simple mental equation

to make, crystalizing from presumed assumption into unquestioned fact. Circle... Cross... Sun. The symbol of the cross or the circle, and all of their variants, equalled man's reverence for and awe of the sun.

An influence on d'Alivella's assumption was certainly exerted by his contemporary Friedrich Max Müller who was using Sanskrit to build an ancient cosmology that placed the sun at the pinnacle of the earliest conceptions of ultimate reverence. This was and still remains the dominant paradigm that has slipped through essentially virtually unchallenged. D'Alviella's assumption typifies an idea that formed in the Enlightenment, promulgated through European intellectual circles throughout the nineteenth century, and has permeated right through academic texts, filtering down into the popular interpretation of cross and circular symbols ever since as a self-perpetuating truism.

The permanence and ubiquity of D'Alviella's informed guess runs counter to one of symbology's greatest discoveries: the evolution and mutation of the ideas, identities, and values embodied by symbols. Although D'Alveilla was one of the first to perceive this a little over a century ago, progress on developing his discoveries has been achingly slow. It is more convenient to accept the crude essence of the conclusions of the first explorers from the Enlightenment and Victorian periods into the lands of symbolism, unless it is within the narrowly focused category of 'comparative symbolism.' As compartmentalization of specialized enquiry has increased, so have more misconceived notions over a wider range of knowledge sets, from 'general knowledge' right through to specialist areas; a kind of flowing to the lowest point of resistance, analogous to common fallacies. Art Historians use the phrases 'abstract decoration' and 'doodles' as barriers to further consideration. This negative approach was the cultural norm decades before Post Modernism, which views the meaning of any symbol as the by-product culmination of experiences in the mind of its perceiver, in effect without meaning beyond a given individual, existed. The Ceylonese philosopher and art curator Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877-1947) castigated this position:

The scholar of symbols is often accused of "reading meanings" into the verbal or visual emblems... On the other hand, the aesthetician and art historian, himself preoccupied with stylistic peculiarities rather than with

iconographic necessities, generally avoids the problem altogether; in some cases perhaps, because an iconographic analysis would exceed his capacities. We conceive, however, that the most significant element in a given work of art is precisely that aspect of it which may, and often does, persist unchanged throughout millennia and in widely separated areas ... *no "art history" can be considered complete which merely regards the decorative usage and values as a motif, and ignores the raison d'être of its component parts, and the logic of their relationship in the composition* [my italics].... The graduate, whose eyes have been closed and heart hardened by a course of university instruction in the Fine Arts or Literature is actually debarred from the complete understanding of a work of art. If a given form has for him a merely decorative and aesthetic value, it is far easier and far more comfortable for him to assume that it never had any other than a sensational value, than it would be for him to undertake the self-denying task of entering into and consenting to the mentality in which the form was first conceived. It is nevertheless just this task that the professional honour of the art historian requires of him; at any rate, it is this task that he undertakes nominally, however great a part of it he may neglect in fact.[18.]

It is not difficult to find historians who do not accept that relatively sophisticated graffiti conveys any meaning whatsoever, failing even to recognise what paleontologists and ethnographers have from unearthing the earliest examples of human markings found thus far.

The first hint comes from the island of Java where a distant human ancestor, *Homo erectus*, took a freshwater mussel shell and scored a zigzag marking on its surface somewhere between 430 000 and 540 000 years BC.[19.] Discovered only in 2014, this is more than four times older than the previous oldest evidence for human art, diamond patterns etched on stones at the Blombos Cave in South Africa from around seventy-seven thousand years ago – itself a doubling of the previous earliest time when humans are thought to have developed abstract thought capabilities, expressing ideas with symbols. Another recent discovery comes from a rock inside a sea cave in Gibraltar. Dated to around forty five thousand years ago, this deep

engraving by a Neanderthal is again that of a crisscross forming a diamond shape.**[20.]** Other fantastically-ancient artefacts bearing the same engraved zigzagging patterns made by our most distant ancestors include...

A bone fragment from the Bacho Kiro cave in central Bulgaria from the Middle Paleolithic era, dating from three hundred-thousand to forty-five-thousand years ago.**[21.]**

A cortex of flint engraved with a criss-cross motif (similar to an asterisk minus the horizontal line through the centre) from the Moravany Banka site in western Slovakia dated to the Gravettian era, around thirty-four to twenty-four thousand years ago.**[22.]**

The fragment of an ostrich shell from Patne in Maharashtra in Central India engraved with a strip of lozenges formed from intersecting zigzags running between parallel lines, dated to the middle of the Upper Paleolithic era around twenty-five thousand years ago.**[23.]**

And a core of crystalline chalcedony from Chandravati in Rajasthan, India, finely engraved with a winding cross-hatched spiral of nested diamond lozenges, thought to be Mesolithic, from around ten thousand years ago.**[24.]**

We have just spanned more than half a million years and three continents, and yet the art in all the chosen examples is – or seems – remarkably similar. A sign is always a mark of something meaningful, carrying information which can be interpreted. This is true for any sign made by humans in the period since a modern human cut marks into the surface of an animal bone in the Blombos Cave seventy seven millennia ago, and possibly even the shell from Java ten of thousands of years earlier. The more sophisticated the sign and the more that is known about its context, the greater the potential to glean information, the “system to the patterns”. What such systems could be we are about to explore in addition to the art giving expression to them, as well as looking at theories competing to explain the system to the patterns, since one theory in particular, as I will argue in the next chapter, has for the huge weight accorded to it become more of a hindrance towards understanding the lost language of symbolic art.

NOTES

Chapter 1 – A Dark Art

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3. Cedar Lewisohn, *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution*, Abrams (2008), p.45
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5. Violet Pritchard, *English Medieval Graffiti*, Cambridge University Press (1967), p.vii
6. Timothy Easton, 'Ritual Marks on Historic Timber', *Weald and Downland Open Air Museum Magazine*, Spring 1999, pp.22-30
7. "Nec Deus est, nec homo praesens quem cernit imago, Sed Deus est et homo, quem signat sacra figura." S. John Forrest, *ibid.*, p.206
8. Jerry Glover, 'A Sacred Symbol', *Resurgence* magazine issue 261 (July/August 2010)
9. Geoffrey Sampson, *Writing Systems: A Linguistic Introduction*, Stanford University Press (1986)
10. Elizabeth Hill Boone, 'Introduction: Writing and Recording Knowledge', Elizabeth Hill Boone and Walter Mignolo (eds.), *Writing Without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes*, Duke University Press (1994), p.7
11. Willian Dever, *Did God Have A Wife? Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel*, William B Eerdmans Publishing (2008), pp. 52-54
12. Floris Nicholas Vermeulen, *Egyptian Religious Symbols in Judah and Israel From 900 B.C.E. to 587 B.C.E.: A Study of Seal Iconography*, Doctorate thesis, University of South Africa (February 2010), pp.63-64
13. Eugene d'Alviella, *The Migration of Symbols*, p.8
14. Eugene d'Alviella, *Op. Cit.*, p.11
15. Charles François Dupuis(1742-1809) advocated the religious and cosmological unity of the myths of all nations. Georg Friedrich Creuzer (1771–1858) attempted a reconciliation between Judaeo-Christian religion and an ancient wisdom revealed via the Pelasgians, the earliest indigenous Greeks.

16. Eugene d'Alviella, *ibid.*, p.6
17. Eugene d'Alviella, *ibid.*, p. 13-14
18. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Symbols and the Interpretation of Symbols*, Studies in Comparative Religion, Vol. 14, Nos. 1 & 2, (Winter-Spring, 1980)
19. Ewen Callaway, 'Homo erectus made world's oldest doodle 500 000 years ago', *Nature* (3 December 2014)
20. Ewen Callaway, 'Neanderthals made some of Europe's oldest art', *Nature* (1 September 2014)
21. Robert Bednarik, 'Pleistocene Paleoart of Asia', *Arts* 2013, 2 (2), pp.46-76
22. Katzman, 'Geometric Engravings on the cortex of flint (Willendorf Kostenki)'; (February 15, 2011), online at aggsbach.de/2011/02/geometric-engravings-on-the-cortex-of-flint-willendorf-kostenki
23. Kalyan Chakravarty & Robert Bednarik, *Indian Rock Art and its Global Context*, Motilal Banarsidass Publications (1997), p.63 (Chandravati core), p.82 (colour image of Patne ostrich shell).
24. Robert Bednarik, 'A global perspective of Indian paleoart' (1993), online at researchgate.net

Chapter Two SUMMARY – The Seeds of Symbolism

The 'entopic' theory of Paleolithic cave art and its relative merits and demerits are discussed before we reach post-glacial times, whereupon we look closely at the Mezin ivories of Ukraine in 15 000 BC, their zigzagging, spiralling, and meandering patterns among the most decorative works of the era. The idea of Russian specialists that these signify a "bonded corporate identity" seems to reflect negatively on the entopic theory. But what of the patterns, where did they come from?

The history of string! Yes string, that most remarkable of prehistoric technologies, adaptable into bags and nets, cords and snares, tethers and leashes. Making baskets and the earliest evidence for baskets. Making threads. The spindle, the invention that supercharged the Paleolithic. Spinning to make threads. The earliest spindle whorls. A plethora of technologies that gradually tipped the odds of survival in favour of the tribes who populated post-Ice Age Europe and Eurasia, eg. the fire drill, blankets, bags, mats. Discussion of the view that women made and controlled these technologies. Venus figurines of the Paleolithic. The patterns on the Mezin ivories in the context of weaving, and the earliest direct evidence for clothing. In Transylvania I meet Monica Soos, a fabric artist who employs decorative patterns common with prehistoric art, including the Paleolithic ivories, learning how the patterns mutate according to the weaving technique. The astonishing longevity of this decorative symbolism, even to the present.

15 000 BC, climate change, migrations in the North Caucasus, and the rock art of the Gobustan in Azerbaijan (14 000-12 000 BC), female figures with similarities to much older Venus figurines, their body art decorations echoing weaving patterns. Weaving and spinning in the Nart sagas of the North Caucasus, and the 'mother of the Narts', a crafts goddess, and the creation myth of the world being woven on a spindle. The 'Seven Beauties' rock carving of Beyukdash mountain in Azerbaijan, and the differences with the Gobustan art and Venus figurines.

CHRONOLOGY

All dates are BC / BCE, before the Common Era. Dates in brackets refer to the end of the given period. Due to the uncertainty of many dates in prehistory, dates are fixed at the mid-point between a range usually derived from radiocarbon dating results.

Natural events are italicized.

- 18 000 Mezin ivories, Ukraine (-15 000)
- 14 000 Gobustan rock art, Azerbaijan (-7000)
- 12 500 *Late Glacial Maximum. Increasing rainfall in southern Levant (-9500)*
- 11 000 Natufian culture horizon (-8500), cultivation techniques, southern Levant.
- 10 700 Hallan Çemi culture, pig domestication, southeast Turkey (-9210)
- 10 400 Hilazon Tachtit cave shaman burial, Israel (-10 000). Natufian culture
- 10 078 Wadi Faynan, Jordan (-8220)
- 10 000 *Younger Dryas event (Clovis Comet hypothesis). Colder, drier climate worldwide (-9600)*
- Increased rainfall in North Africa, 'Green Sahara' (-5500)*
- Tell Qaramel (stone towers -9650) and Mureybet, Syria (-8000). Jericho communal buildings, Jordan. Late Natufian culture
- 9800 Nemrik 9, northern Iraq (-8270)
- 9700 Göbekli Tepe layer III, southeast Turkey (-9400)
- 9650 Jerf al-Ahmar, Syria (-8610), Mureybet culture horizon
- 9600 Netiv Hagdad, Levant-Jordan. Abu Hureyra, Syria. Year round farming in the Levant, long distance trade. Natufian culture (-8500)
- 9400 Rapid growth of cereal use in the Middle East
- 9300 Mureybet, token system, Mureybet culture, Syria (-8600)

- 9100 Göbekli Tepe Enclosures D and C, layer II (-8600), Taşlı Tepe, Körtik Tepe, Sefer Tepe, Cafer Höyük, southeast Turkey. Şanlıurfa culture horizon (-7000)
- 9000 Karahan Tepe and Djade al-Mughara, Syria
- Shigir Idol, Middle Urals, Russia
- Nabta Playa settled, southwestern Egypt
- Roundhead culture Phase 1, Djado plateau, northeastern Niger (-6000)
- 8870 Zawi Chemi Shanidar, northern Iraq
- 8820 Amesbury settled, England
- 8800 Çayönü culture horizon, Syria (-8500)
- 8500 Nevalı Çori (-7000) and Hamzan Tepe, Turkey. (Şanlıurfa culture)
- Çayönü 'skull building' and channelled building phase, Syria
- Boncuklu Höyük, central Turkey (-7500)
- 8200 Aşıklı Höyük, Turkey (-7400) (Şanlıurfa culture)
- Obsidian trade across the Middle East
- Çayönü II, mixed animal domestication, Syria (-7150)
- 8000 Göbekli Tepe layer I (-7000), Karahan Tepe, Cafer Höyük, Yeni Mahalle, Adiyaman-Kilisik and Aşıklı Höyük, Turkey. Çayönü trade, farming. (Şanlıurfa-Çayönü culture horizon)
- 7550 Kiffian culture, Gobero, Niger (-6200)
- 7500 Çatalhöyük East, central Turkey (-6800)
- Pastoral rock art, Sahara (-3000)
- 7400 Göbekli Tepe eradication begins. Şanlıurfa-Çayönü culture collapse horizon (-6900)
- 7300 Çayönü III-V, animal domestication (-7150)
- Dotted Wavy Line pottery horizon, Niger
- 7200 Çayönü revolts and collapse, Nevalı Çori dismantled, Göbekli Tepe final

- dissolution (-6900)
- 7100 Jarmo, Iraq
- 7000 Maglemosian culture, Zealand (-6000)
- Tazina rock art horizon, North Africa (-3500/2000)
- Migrations between Scandinavia (Saami) and northern Africa (Amizagh) populations
- 6900 Tell Seker al-Aheimar, northeast Syria. Earliest ceramics in the Middle East (-6700)
- Ship navigation in Sudan, North Africa
- 6800 Çatalhöyük East abandoned
- 6700 Cardial impressed pottery, North Africa and western Mediterranean
- 6600 Çatalhöyük West, central Turkey (-5500)
- 6500 Kösk Höyük, Tepecik-Çiftlik, central Turkey
- Ubaid culture, Syria/Iraq (-4000)
- Hassuna culture, Iraq (-3800)
- Samarra culture, Syria/Iraq (-5500)
- Hacilar, western Turkey (-4800)
- Increased rainfall in Morocco (-5000)*
- 6250 *Climatic crisis ('8.2 kiloyear event', meltwater pulse reaches Northern hemisphere, 'Black Sea Flood event'). Aridification and cooling (-6000/5800). Mesolithic sites in Spain abandoned (-5400). Sahara aridity and migrations to southern Spain and Portugal*
- 6250 Tenerian culture, Gobero, Niger (-2550)
- 6200 Karanovo culture, Bulgaria (-5500)
- 6100 Nabta Playa ceremonial centre, cattle burials, southwestern Egypt (-5600)
- 6000 Starčevo-Criş-Körös culture (Eastern Linear Pottery culture) horizon, eastern Hungary/Romania/Serbia/Montenegro/Bosnia/Croatia (-5250) Old Europe civilization and Danube Script horizon

- Roundhead culture Phase 2, Tassili n'Ajer, southeast Algeria (-3500)
- Kongemose culture, southern Scandinavia (-5200)
- 5900 Ulucakhöyük, western Turkey
- Cucuteni-Trypillian culture horizon; Romania, Moldova and Ukraine, Old Europe civilization (-3400)
- 5800 Halaf culture, Syria and Iraq (-4500)
- Uğurlu, northern Aegean, Greece. Danube Script horizon
- Sesklo culture (middle period), Greece (-5300)
- Ceramics and domestic animals in Algeria and northern Morocco (-4900)
- 5700 Hacilar, central Turkey (-5000)
- 5500 Çatalhöyük West decline
- Hacilar destroyed and rebuilt
- Mergharh culture, Pakistan (-3500), Indus Valley civilization horizon
- Linear Pottery culture (LBK) (-4500)
- Pronounced climate transition, increased dryness (-3100)*
- Bovidian style (naturalistic cattle) rock art, Sahara (-3900)___
- 5450 Neolithic in western Algarve, Portugal
- 5400 Cattle in Algeria
- Neolithic in Maghreb, western Sahara
- Old Europe civilization mature stage. Early Vinča-Turdaş culture, southeastern Europe, copper and gold metallurgy (-4800). Starčevo-Körös-Criş culture, central-southeastern Europe (-4500). Karanovo-Gumelnita culture, Bulgaria and Romania (-4200). Tiszapolgár culture, central Balkans (-4300). Danube Script maturity (-4500)
- 5370 Tărtăria tablets, central Romania, Old Europe civilization (-5140)
- 5300 Ertebølle culture, southern Scandinavia and northern Germany (-3950)

- Early Ubaid culture, Iraq (-4500)
- Herxheim, Germany (LBK culture) (-4950)
- Cattle sacrifices, Messak Settafet plateau, Libya (-4100)
- 5200 Hamangia culture, Romania and Bulgaria (-4500), Old Europe civilization
- Adrar Bous, Niger cattle burials (-4100)
- Middle Pastoral culture, stone monuments, north Africa (-3700)
- 5000 *'Neolithic Humid'. Wet, warm. Middle Holocene climatic optimum.*
- Domesticated cattle across the Sahara (-2500)
- 5000 Hacilar decline
- Lengyel culture, Hungary, Old Europe civilization (-3400)
- Tazina style rock art, Morocco (-2000)
- 4900 Ring enclosures in central Europe (eg. Goseck, Herxheim), Stroke-Ornamented Ware (STK) (-4600)
- 4800 Megalithic building, Brittany and Portugal
- Late Vinča-Turdaş culture, southeastern Europe (-4200). Old Europe civilization
- 4730 Uan Telocat rock shelter, Acacus Mountains, Libya
- 4700 Gumelnița-Karanovo-Varna culture, eastern Bulgaria/Romania, Old Europe civilization (-4350)
- 4650 Vinča-Turdaş culture, southeast Europe, Old Europe civilization. Tin-bronzes at Pločnik, Serbia
- 4625 Rossen culture, Germany (-4250)
- 4600 Nabta Playa megalithic phase, Bunat El Ansalim people, southwestern Egypt (-3600)
- 4500 Amber bear from Jutland (Ertebølle), contact with LBK settlements in Limburg, similar amulets from the Baltic
- Plough introduced in Europe

- Sumer, Iraq (-4001), proto-writing, Ubaid culture
- Khvalynsk culture, middle Volga, Ukraine (-3500)
- Cucuteni-Trypillian culture migrations to Caucasus, Sredni Stog culture, Kemi Oba culture, Ukraine. (-3500 Yamnaya culture)
- Karanova VI culture, Bulgaria
- Bodrogkeresztúr culture, Romania
- 4400 Sredni Stog culture intrusion into eastern Europe (Early Proto-Indo European Wave 1) (-4200/3900)
- Varna culture, Bulgaria. Gold and copper metallurgy (-4100); Boian culture, Romania / Bulgaria (-3500), Classical Cucuteni-Trypillian culture; Romania / Moldova/Ukraine, Old Europe civilization (-4000), Old Europe civilization
- Badarian culture apex, cattle burials, Upper Egypt (-4000)
- 4200 *Piora Oscillation / Early Subboreal climate event, cold period (-3800)*
- Gumelnița, Karanovo VI, Varna Cultures abandoned, decline of Old Europe civilization in the region (-3900)
- Susa founded, Ubaid culture, western Iran
- Nabatya Playa, Egypt
- 4250 Carnac megaliths, Brittany
- Alta petroglyphs, Norway
- 4000 Maikop culture, Western Caucasus (-3000)
- Funnelbeaker (TRB) culture horizon (-2800)
- Susa, Uruk, Sumerian civilization, Iraq/Iran (-3100)
- 3900 *5.9 kiloyear event, worldwide migrations to river valleys, Sahara begins aridification*
- Late Pastoral culture, north Africa (-1700)
- 3800 Tell Brak massacres, advanced warfare in Syria (-3600)

Mild climate restored in Europe

Late Cucuteni-Trypillian culture; Romania, Moldova and Ukraine; Old Europe civilization (-3500)

3700 Kemi Oba culture (Maikop culture), Western Caucasus and Ukraine (-2200)

3600 Yamnaya culture, middle Volga, Ukraine (-2300)

3525 Mankhor, Algeria, cattle burials (-2865)

3500 Cucuteni-Tripolye culture peak population

Tell Hamoukar destroyed, Syria

Funnelbeaker/TRB culture, north Germany. 5000 megalithic tombs (-3200)

Sahara and Arabia desertification (-2500/1600, depending on location)

Naqada II, Egypt (Gerzeh culture)(-3200)

Yamnaya culture kurgan expansions into Europe (Indo-European Wave 2 hypothesis) (-3000), Maikop culture resulting in advances of "kurganized" hybrid cultures into northern Europe around 3000 BC (Globular Amphora culture, Baden culture, and ultimately Corded Ware culture)

Wheeled vehicles appear north of Caucasus, Mesopotamia, Northern Europe (-3100)

Pit Grave culture peaks, Proto-Indo European society, Ukraine (-3000)

Proto-cuneiform writing, Iraq / Iran (-3100)

3300 Fertile Crescent Bronze Age

3250 Potter's wheel in Near East

Novosvobodnaya culture (Maikop), North Caucasus (-2900)

3200 Uruk IV, stone-cone temple, Iraq

Piora Oscillation (-2900), abrupt cold and wet period.

Proto-Elamite, Iran (-2700)

- 3114 Start of Mayan calendar
- 3102 Kali Yuga, India
- 3100 Sumer, Jemdet Nasr period (-2900), emerging bureaucracy, more inequality, Syria / Iraq
- Cucuteni-Trypillian culture at 15 000 citizens
- 3000 *Burckle-Madagascar Impact hypothesis (-2800)*
- Cucuteni-Tripolye culture in decline
- 2900 Sumer dynastic period, Iraq. Gilgamesh

.... **To be continued.**

You've reached the end of the sample.

The rest of the book will be published as an ebook, and possibly a physical book, in the near future.

It depends on you!

If you'd like to be kept informed on the progression of the release of this, the first book in the DARK ARTS series, you can contact me via the website, or my email, jerryvglover@gmail.com

Your details won't be shared with anyone else, of course, and will only be used to notify you about my work.

Thank you for reading this far, and for thinking of joining me on the rest of this journey through ten thousand years of history and art. We have much to see and discover.

See you in Time,

Jerry Glover
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Yup, that's all for now.