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30,000 LABYRINTH, SPIRALS, AND MEANDERS

Going on means going far,
Going far means returning
(Tao Te Ching)

The emergences of the aniconic phenomena of the labyrinth can be traced back to the spiral and meander c. 30,000 BCE. * This new prominence is supported by further engraved artifacts and stones plus cave finds that include:

- * the oldest ‘picture layers’ from the Altamira (Santander) Cave (EP: 295, 301, Fig. 184);
- * meandering imagery on a bull’s head from the ceiling in Altamira (Santander) Cave (EP: 301, Fig. 188, 300);
- * mammoths and bird goddesses plus other full breasted goddesses located in the gallery known as the Hall of the Hieroglyphs in the Pech-Merle Cave (EP: 52, 54, 295, 305, 397, 530, 538, Fig.18);
- * sixty spiral cupules from a rock shelter in La Ferrassie Dordogne France (EP: 136, Fig.79, 138);
- * bird goddess with engraved meanders, Mézine Ukraine (TROC: 313-315, Fig. 185);
- * an engraved bone with a serpentine pattern of sixty-nine spherical indentations from Abri Blanchard Dordogne in the Gorge d’Enfer Rock Shelters (TROC: 44-9, 54, 90, Figs. 7, 9, 10 a-b, 8); plus
- * spirals, meanders, and goddesses from Mal’ta, near Irkutsk, Siberia (TROC: 337, Fig. 202c; LOG: 89, Fig. 146, 2c; MS: 100, Figs. 13-14; ARAS numbers 1Ca.061 and 1Ca.062).
(EP: 295, 301, Fig. 184; EP: 301, Fig. 188, 300; EP: 52, 54, 295, 305, 397, 530, 538, Fig.18; EP: 136, Fig.79, 138; and TROC: 44-9, 54, 90, Figs.7, 9, 10 a-b, 8; TROC: 337, Fig. 202c; LOG: 89, Fig. 146, 2c; MS: 100, Figs. 13-14.)

For a more in depth discussion and detailed images, see *ARAS (The Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism)*, <http://resources.ciis.edu:2058/index.aspx>. ARAS record numbers include: 1Ca.002; 1Ca.003; 1Ca.008; 1Ca.016a; 1Ca.060b and 1Ca.104a. The keyword phase is “meanders and spirals.” Also see ARAS record numbers: 1Ca.061 and 1Ca.062; keyword is “Mal’ta.” (For the first *Re-Genesis* entry that includes the spiral, see 50,000 BCE African Homo Sapien Migrations and Matrilineal Motherline.)

FURTHER RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS:

Although c. 30,000 BCE saw a further development of the aniconic spiral and the meander, it was during the Neolithic (8000-3500/3000 BCE) that the labyrinth and labyrinthine engravings became more pronounced along with the coil, spiral (oculi), snake, concentric circles, and owl goddess configurations. Selected Neolithic labyrinthine ceramics, sites, monuments, and other related iconography to research include: the 5790-5750 kilim with labyrinth design, Catal Huyuk Anatolia ARAS Record, 2Da.117; 5500-5200 ceramics, Bukk Culture, northeast

Hungary and east Slovakia (COG, 43-7); 5500-4000 ceramics, Dimini Culture, Greece (COG, 25-29); 4500 Karanovo-Gumelnita square labyrinth homes; 4000-3000 Locmariaquer, Brittany France; 4000-3500 Gavr'Innis (or Gavrinis), Brittany France; 3800, Hal Saflieni Hypogeum, Malta; 3500-3200 New Grange or Newgrange, County Meath, Dowth, and Knowth Ireland (COG: 214, Fig. 6-33 plus 298, Fig. 7-119); 3400 Egyptian tomb of King Perabsen (MLW: 33, Fig. 38); 3300, Tarxien, Malta (MS: Fig. 55); 3250 Abydos, Egypt; 3150 Tomb of King Ka'a, First Dynasty, Egypt; 3100 Stonehenge, England; 3000 Avebury, England; 3000 Woodhenge, England; 3000 Troy, Anatolia; Entrail-labyrinth, Mesopotamia (MS: Fig. 2); Rocky Valley near Cornwell, England; ancient Val Carmonica, Lombardy, Italy (LCS: Fig.7); Naquane in Valcamonica, Italian Alps; Lerfall in Ukraine; Knossos, Crete; and spirals on clay stamps (LOG: 123, Fig. 193).

Additional research-keywords for labyrinth and related labyrinthine BCE examples that followed the Neolithic include: 2000, Knossos coin pattern, later Gotland Island Sweden + the US Hopi Indian tribes; 1842-1797 Egyptian Labyrinth Temple of Amenemhet (or Amenemhat) III (NLEL: 111-120; LFS: 21) plus Egyptian meander hieroglyphs and possibly the first Greek key pattern (LFS: 5-7); 1750 literary descent of Sumerian Inanna, Uruk Babylon (RAR); 1700 Phaistos Disk, plus Cretan palaces, labyrinths, and owl coins (MS: Fig. 51); Glastonbury Tor, England; Labyrinth Court, Palatine Hill, Rome; Malekula, New Hebrides Island; burial chamber Bryn Celli Ddu on Anglesey Island, Wales; 1000 representation of Solomon's Labyrinth (ARAS, record #5Do.002); and Oraibi Arizona USA (MLW: 32, Fig. 37).

Similar patterns of the labyrinth, spiral, and meander continued to emerge for thousands of years on stone engravings, numerous painted cave walls, and sacred sites including: Egypt; Africa; Australia; Scandinavia; Turkey; Mesopotamia; Russia; India; Indonesia; Tibet; Greece; Brittany; China; South America; and Americas Pueblos tribes including the Hopis; Zunis; and the Pimas. (LCS: xxii-xxiii; 24.)

Selected CE examples include: 500 Villa of the Mysteries fresco (Villa dei Misteri); 'initiation and descent ritual' of Roman women plus the House of the Labyrinth, Pompeii Italy (ARAS record #3Pa.017); 9th century Samarra Mosque, Iraq (MS: Fig. 48); 1167-1200 city plan of the walls of Jericho (LCS: 12, Fig. 33); 1200 Chartres Cathedral plus the Cathedrals at Poitiers, Amiens, Revenna, and St. Omer (LCS); 1400 Notre Dame, Paris; 1510 vulva labyrinth design by Stabius, in *Concerning Maze* (MLW: 85, Fig. 127); 1549 Villa d'Este Tivoli Gardens (MLW: 116, Fig. 177); 1674 Versailles; 1699 Saffron Walden, Essex England (MLW: 52-3, Fig. 79-81); 1899 Vincent Van Gough's *Starry Night France* (MS: Fig. 25); and the 1991 indoor labyrinth followed by the 9-3-1995 outdoor labyrinth installation at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco.

THEORY:

Kerenyi theorizes that the labyrinth, spiral, and meander are [unicursal] paths or journeys in which one re-returns to the beginning (D: 92-93). Labyrinth means the

place of the labrys (MTPC: 11). The etymology for both labyrinth and labrys is the Greek *labyrinthos* ‘a network of intricate passageways.’ Cameron suggests, “from this same root comes the word labia. The butterfly-symbol may represent [the] opened labia” (SA: 10). Adding to the butterfly-labia consideration, archaeologists Sir Arthur Evans “published a series of chrysalises, butterflies, and goddesses related to chrysalises or with butterfly wings. (RN: 53-71.) He interpreted the chrysalis as an emblem of new life after death” (GGE: 186-7).

In addition to the labrys symbols, ‘butterfly-chrysalises–labia,’ the double axe is also a prototype of Cretan Labryses and a common theme found in Minoan-Mycenaean art. The double axe has two conjoined triangles. Also images of Minoan-Mycenaean butterflies are frequently portrayed with double axe wings or conjoined triangles. Gimbutas adds, “these schematized butterflies are the prototypes of the Minoan double-axe” (GGE: 186). The ancient symbols for the triangle, double axe, and butterfly may well be the X and V as first introduced in the *Re-Genesis* 70,000 BCE entry, Blombos Cave followed by numerous other *Re-Genesis*’ entries as noted below to see: “for additional V/triangle/vulvic information.” (GGE: 186-7; LOG: 13; WAM: 116-8; ECLE.)

The double-axe indicates significant objects of worship that were used for ritual purposes in caves, mountains, and on altars in temple shrines including the Shrine of the Double Axe and the Tomb of the Double Axe. These and other labyrinth cave sanctuaries are the prototypes of 12th century CE cathedrals. It is also of note that the size of double axes varies significantly. Many are either 6-8 feet tall (MAL: 30-31, Fig. 9) such as the ‘pillar cult’ finds from the Dictaeon Cave as discussed by Evans (MTPC: 9-13) – or - much smaller bronze or stone votive objects found in conjunction with priestess and rituals. *Re-Genesis* suggests that the labrys is a manifestation of incantation rites and metamorphosis or re-generative rituals. Interpretations of the labrys include the: labia, butterfly; chrysalises; double axe; figure 8 (eternity); earth’s center; and or the waxing and waning moon. Significance may be a home coming to self and mother or matrix that sparks or enhances be-ing and be-coming.

The re-turning journey to the labrys is known in Greek as the *katabasis* or the descent. Metaphorically walking the labyrinth may have three stages including: detachment; re-birth; and then integration or a *Re-Genesis* during the exit or ascent. As noted by Janet Bord in *Mazes and Labyrinths of the World*, W. K. Jackson links the themes:

of death and rebirth with the labyrinth when he says that the labyrinth is a ‘microcosm of the earth and a macrocosm of the human anatomy.’ In death one returns to the earth, the mother, from which one is eventually reborn. The presence of the labyrinth at burial structures signifies a ritual entry into the earth; the labyrinth represents both the earth and the human body as sources of life (MLW: 10; MLT).

From the earliest spirals, meanders, labyrinths, and labryses starting with ancient rock and cave symbols and engravings are reminders of human's "unceasing preoccupation with the spiral order and his [one's] spiral development" (MS: 29). The spiral may also "be thought of as an elementary unicursal labyrinth as they have an indirect path leading to a hidden center (MLW: 18)."

The spiral [and meander], depicted in ancient tombs, implies a death and re-entry into the womb of the earth, necessary before the spirit can be reborn in the land of the dead. But death and rebirth also mean the continuous transformation and purification of the spirit throughout life; the alchemists use the word VITRIOL to stand for *Visita interiora terrae rectificando invenies occultum lapidem*. 'Visit the interior of the earth; through purification thou wilt find the hidden stone.' Such a descent into the underworld (the kingdom of Pluto) is the theme for most initiation rituals, and is comparable to the passage through the wilderness, or the 'dark night of the soul', which is experienced by mystics [and all soul seekers] on their path. The spiral furthermore nearly always symbolizes it. Those on the columns of the Treasury of Atreus (a relic which is still to be found in the volutes of the Ionic column) have a further correspondence; by passing between two spiral columns, the initiate becomes the central axis or pillar and consciousness and equilibrium, for he [and she] has thus passed between two opposite pillars of the Tree of Life, or between the coils of the serpents of the caduceus, and has thereby come into direct contact with the Source of Being (MS: 29-30).

In a more contemporary light is the hypothesis that the soul or spirit's search for wholeness is an ongoing labyrinthine journey back to the labrys that includes further considerations such as the: center; matrix, matter, or mother earth - and - with each new spiraling re-turn or *katabasis* to mother earth, is the possibility of another *Re-Genesis*. In William Braud's article "The Ley and the Labyrinth: Universalistic and Particularistic Approaches to Knowing" he eloquently speaks to the spiraling re-turn or nonlinearly process.

The labyrinth is the winding, all-encompassing path; meandering here and there, moving nonlinearly toward, then away from, then toward the goal again-patient path that seems to enjoy its own winding [serpentine] journey. ...The winding labyrinth path that touches and depends upon each and every point of its area may symbolize the infinite possibilities that may be realized-an infinite appreciation of a pluralistic universe (LL: 1, 17).

Suggest that these infinite possibilities might well include brain synchrony that supports a healing consciousness by utilizes alternative ways of knowing.

For additional labyrinth, labrys, spiral, and meander information, see BCE entries: 30,000-25,000, Aurignacian Age; 2600-2000, Early Bronze Age, Crete, Chthonian; 2000-1450, Middle Bronze Age, Crete; 2000, Asherah; and 1450-1260, Hattusa, Anatolia.

For additional V/triangle/vulvic information, see BCE entries: 70,000, Blombos Cave; 34,000-28,000, Les Eyzies Vulva Engravings, Dordogne Caves; 31,000, Chauvet Cave and Vulva Engravings; 30,000-25,000, The Aurignacian Age; 25,000-20,000, Goddess of Laussel; 8000/7000-5000, Early Neolithic; 7000-5000, Early Neolithic Crete; 5500-3500, Cucuteni (Tipolye) Culture, Eastern Europe; 5300-4300, Climactic Phase and Script in Old Europe; 4000-3500, Gavrinis, Brittany, France; 2000, Asherah; 1790-1700, Goddess of Kultepe, Anatolia; and 1500, Lachish Ewer, Triangle, and Menorah.

For additional information on earlier female identified shrines and sacred sites that were replaced later by churches, mosques, and synagogues, see BCE entries: 12,000, Pumukale/Hierapolis, Anatolia (Central Turkey); 1290-1223, Abu Simbel, Egypt; 700-550, Apollo At Delphi and Didymaion; and 282-263, Demeter's Priene Temple, Anatolia.

For additional information about earlier pagan shrines and labyrinths that were replaced with Christian churches and cathedrals, see CE entries: 410, Fall of Rome And Cybele; 401-402, Christian Destruction Of Gaza Temples; 324, St. Peter's Basilica Built Over Pagan Site, Rome; 326-1243, Byzantine Period and Constantine the Great; 432-440, Santa Maria Maggiore Church Built Over Pagan Site; 12th and 13th Centuries, Cult of the Virgin Mary; 1280, Catholic Church Built Over Pagan Sanctuary, Rome; and 1870, Lyons Basilica Built Over Cybele's Pagan Temple.

For further information on Upper Paleolithic and Neolithic script of spirals, concentric circles, meanders, and labyrinths beginning in the 7th millennium BCE, see:

Gimbutas, Marija Aleikaite. *The Civilization of the Goddess: The World of Europe*. San Francisco: Harper, 1991. (COG, 308-321.)

For exceptional illustrations of the spiral in Megalithic Europe, see:
Twohig, Elizabeth Shee. *The Megalithic Art of Western Europe*. Oxford, England: Oxford Press, 1981. (MAWE)

For further information on Mycenaean pillar worship or pillar cult and the Labrys see:

Evans, Sir. Arthur. *The Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult and Its Mediterranean Relations: With Illustrations from Recent Cretan Finds*. London, England: Macmillan, 1901. (MTPC)

For further information on Amenemhat III's Labyrinth Temple see:
Uytterhoeven, Inge, and Ingrid Blom-Boer. "New Light on the Egyptian Labyrinth: Evidence from a Survey at Hawara." *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* V 88 (2002): 111-120. (NLEL)

For further labyrinth, labrys, spiral, and meander research see:

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PHOTO: GSA. GAVR'INNIS (OR GAVRINIS), BRITTANY FRANCE, 4000-3500 BCE.
ON LOCATION.

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