

## Extracts Regarding Scaloria from “The Language of the Goddess” & “Civilization of the Goddess”

Gimbutas, Marija

1989 The Language of the Goddess. San Francisco, Harper and Row Publishers, p. 223.

Womblike caves, filled with stalagmites and stalactites and sheltering sacred water at the bottom, were sanctuaries, At Scaloria, in Manfredonia, southeastern Italy (unpublished; excavated by Gimbutas and Winn 1977-80), cultural remains date to 5600-5300 B.C. More than 1500 whole and fragmented vases painted with egg, plant, snake, Triangle, hourglass, V, and chevron motifs were recovered there. Some were standing at the base of stalagmites, deep in the narrow lower cave. One hundred and thirty-seven skeletons, most of which were in a mass burial and had traces of peculiar cuts at the base of their skulls, were found in the upper cave close to the entrance to the lower cave. Perhaps Death and Regeneration Mysteries were celebrated here. The cycle of regeneration is mirrored in the cave's uterine shape, the life water below, and the stalagmites in a constant state of formation.

Gimbutas, Marija

1991 The Civilization of the Goddess. San Francisco, Harper, A division of HarperCollins Publishers, p. 292

### *Scaloria Cave in Southeast Italy*

The Scaloria Cave in southeastern Italy near the city of Manfredonia consists of two separate parts: the top cave is a wide hall, suitable for habitation where ceramic and stone tools were found, dating from the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> to the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C.; the lower cave is long and narrow like a sleeve, with stalagmites and a live spring near the bottom. Near this spring many painted ceramic objects were found indicating, through radiocarbon dates, that ceremonies occurred there during the mid-6<sup>th</sup> millennium (c. 5600-5300 B.C.). (FIGURE 7-114A)

Local archaeologists as well as amateurs found the cave in the beginning of this century and large quantities of ceramics were taken out. Fortunately, there are well-preserved vases which solidified next to the stalagmites which could not be removed. During my expedition in 1979 and 1980, pottery sherds were collected from upper and lower cave levels which belonged to 1,500 vases. These were decorated systematically with symbols of regeneration: eggs, triangles, snakes, plant and sun designs, and symbols of the Goddess of Regeneration herself –V's, triangles, hourglass shapes, and butterfly motifs. (FIGURE 7-114B). Ceremonies which took place at this mysterious depth near the "water of life" must have been related to regeneration.

At the entrance to the narrow cave, as many as 137 persons were buried on top of each other without any order. Most of the skeletons belonged to young individuals, particularly to women 20-22 years old who probably died at childbirth, and to children. Some skulls had been removed before the rest of the bodies were deposited, and some had cut marks. This discovery can now be understood within the context of ancient and widespread burial practices in which the heads of the dead were removed to receive special ritual attention before being buried separately. This does not indicate human sacrifice.