Female Figurines and Batons Engraved with Sexual Symbols in the World Paleolithic Age

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On the Eurasian continent, female figurines from the Aurignacian period to the Gravettian period and Kostenki period (42,000 to 24,000 years ago) in the upper Paleolithic Age represented the figures of pregnant women just before childbirth and were talismans to pray for pregnancy and safe and easy birth. After that, the Solutrean period (25,000 to 23,000 years ago) was devoid of female figurines, and in the Magdalenian-Mezin period (21,000 to 14,500 years ago) in the late Paleolithic Age, line-engraved female figures and female figurines appeared. Those types of female figurines in Japan are older if the assumption is made that the stone items unearthed from the Iwato site in Oita Prefecture of about 25,000 years ago are female figurines. Stone female figurines were discovered at the Kamikuroiwa site in Ehime Prefecture dating back 14,500 years. After that, 13,000 years ago, clay figurines appeared, leading to the development after the Initial Jomon Period.

The female figurines from the late Paleolithic Age can be classified into the following types: Laugerie-Basse type in France, Gönnersdorf type mainly in Germany, Mezin type in the Russian Plain, Maininskaya type in Siberia, and Kamikuroiwa, Kayumi-Ijiri and Aitani-Kumahara types in Japan.

The Laugerie-Basse type originates in the relief engraved female figures of the French Angle-sur-l'Anglin type from the rock shelters. The Gönnersdorf type originates in the line-engraved female figures of the French Lalinde type from the rock shelters or in the line-engraved female figurines on plate stones of the German and French Hohlenstein type. The origins of the Mezin type, the Maininskaya type and the Kamikuroiwa type of female figurines are currently unknown.

The female figurines of the Gönnersdorf type have flat abdomens with almost no breasts, and they do not appear to represent pregnant women. The line-engraved female figures of the Pech Merle type, however, which precede the line-engraved female figures of the Lalinde type, represent the figures of pregnant women. The line-engraved female figures of the La Marche type also represent pregnant women just before childbirth. Assuming that the female figurines of the Gönnersdorf type also symbolize pregnant women, there is a high possibility that the female figurines in the upper Paleolithic Age, as with the female figurines in the late Paleolithic Age, were used as talismans for safe pregnancy and birth. Against the background to this, there was a seemingly global tendency of infertility that manifested in the on-going maximum of the Last Glacial Age.
The line-engraved batons from the Kamikuroiwa site in Ehime Prefecture have pinnate patterns and triangular shapes engraved on rod-like stones. These shapes and patterns are the symbols of sexual intercourse which represent female genital organs on priapic ivories in Eurasia. People in the Paleolithic Age at the Mezin site on the Russian Plain played a type of music indoors, beating cranial bones, mandibular bones and blade bones of mammoths with pinnate patterns on them, which symbolize female genital organs, with priapic clappers made from ivory. When it is assumed that female figurines were talismans for pregnancy and childbirth, praying to invite pregnancy or childbirth was a fertility ceremony, and there is a possibility that the line-engraved batons from the Kamikuroiwa site were used for the same purpose.

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