Appendix

Introduction

1. Footnote 60:

In terms of cross-cultural comparisons between India and Greece, twentieth-century Professor R.F. Willetts too, Chairman of the School of Hellenic and Roman Studies at the University of Birmingham and author of several studies on ancient Crete, reminded us of some notable facts. In Cretan myth, he noted, Lampros was the son of Pandion, whose name is associated with sun and moon. He compared Lampros’ and Galatea’s bisexual children to the bisexual creatures identified by Plato with sun and moon, whilst he further observed that the Attic festival of the Pandia was probably celebrated at plenilunes.\(^1\) It seems significant that Pandia is also the name of a Dravidian dynasty allegedly descended from the moon and mentioned in various traditional Indian epics such as the Shilappadikaram,\(^2\) whereas the Pandavas are encountered in the Mahabharata as sons of Pandu the “White”.\(^3\)

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2 Daniélou, Gods of love and Ecstasy, 39.
3 Ibid.
2. Footnote 68:

Marija Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*. (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2006), 130, fig. 210: "Illustrated here is the back of the Minoan faience statuette from the place of Knossos, 1600-1500 B.C.".
Chapter one

3. Footnote 143:

Regarding the meaning “humorous”, in connection to the term *spirto*, it may be noted that joyfulness as a feature in certain pre-Christian cults is something that has occasionally been observed by modern scholars. For instance, in the joyous (yet ambivalent and complex) aspect of the Roman *Hilaria* festivals. The parallelisms found by Clark between Sabbath’s rituals of inversions, “the ecclesiastical feasts of fools”, and burlesques of the French urban confraternities, the *sociétés joyeuses*, as well as carnivals in general and the idea of “wise folly over foolish wisdom” are also interesting. This is reminiscent of the joyful witch-cult unrealistically postulated by Murray. Unrealistic because the pre-Christian cults aforementioned were probably long extinct at the time of witch-trials and to impose a literal interpretation of whatever evidence in which witnesses claimed to have felt great joy at the Sabbath is exceptionally simplistic and highly problematic. Yet, on the other hand, the belief in a joyous Sabbath—which occasionally survived Christian demonisation—may derive from the mentioned joyous aspects of certain pre-Christian rituals. The main traits of such cults could be said to be embedded in folklore and folk-beliefs and in those witch-trials confessions that such popular beliefs reflected, e.g. in the case of the Women from Outside. Other examples that show a certain sense of humour transpiring from witch-related beliefs, although unrelated, could be that of how old women were corrupted by the Devil by being asked to perform certain acts at mass which seemed to be clearly aimed at ridiculing the Christian faith. Or, also, confessions such as those from Temperace Floyd, Mary Floyd, and Susanna Edwards, “being asked at their Tryal to say the Lords Prayer, they answered, that they could not, except it were backward”.

6 A tradition which clearly derives from the Roman Saturnalias with its traditional inversions and celebration of primordial Golden Age “anarchy”.
7 Bibi; see also ibid 9-25.
10 For instance, in the beliefs of the Women from Outside, who feasted on the best food and wine and dressed up with people’s clothes, [see Henningsen, “The Ladies from Outside”, in Bengt Anakrloo and Gustav Henningsen, ed., *Early Modern European Witchcraft, Centres and Peripheries*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 197], a belief that is reflected with slight (and darker) variants in France.
12 W.W., *A true and iust recorde, of the information, examination and confession of all the witches, taken at S. Ofes in the countie of Essex whereof some were executed, and other some entreated according to the determination of lawe. Wherein all men may see what a pestilent people witches are, and how enencory to lyue in a Christian Commonwealth. Written orderly, as the cases were tryed by evidence*. (London : At the Three Cranes in the Vinetree by Thomas Dawson, 1582), 5.
Chapter 2

4. Footnote 2 (cf. also 39, introduction and 155, chap.3):

For the purposes of footnote 2, in chapter two, there will be listed here, in some length, a few confessions narrating of animal transformations, some of which may be found scattered and fragmented throughout the dissertation for disparate purposes. An interesting confession in which the folkloric component can be appreciated in its full is, for instance, one of those provided by Giovanni delle Piatte. In December 1504 (Val di Fiemme), he confessed going to “Monte delle Sibille” (Sybils’ Mountain), also called “Monte di Venere”\textsuperscript{13} (Venus’ mountain)\textsuperscript{14}.

For three days, the priest took Giovanni outside of Rome; and before reaching the entrance of the mountain, they approached a light-blue lake, and near the lake, they found a great priest all dressed in black and he was black too. The priest that accompanied Giovanni told him that he should cease to remember God and the Saints and that from that point they had to cross the lake. And thus the priest told Giovanni that he had to deny God and Virgin Mary and give himself to the devil in body and soul. …And so he gave himself to the devil in body and soul to serve him. Thereafter, the black priest transported them across the lake in a moment, and into a cavity found within the mountain, where they had to go through a door that would open and close quickly by itself, and as soon as it opened they had to jump quickly through the entrance, otherwise they would have been crashed and reduced to dust. Past the door and a great serpent, they arrived to another door over which was an old man named Eckart the believer, who warned people not to stop more than a year, or else they would be never be able to get out. And with Giovanni there were ten other people, whom he did not know however. And when they had come into the mountain in the internal cave, they saw an old man with a white beard asleep, lying on a table, his name was Tonhauser. And there were women and girls and lady Venus and some men as well. And lady Venus for three days a week she turned into a snake from the waist downwards, Saturday, Sunday and Monday until midday, and then she turns back into

\textsuperscript{13} Luisa Muraro, La Signora del Gioco, La caccia alle streghe interpretata dalle sue vittime. (Milano: La Tartaruga Edizioni, 2006), 72-75.

\textsuperscript{14} A term that is linguistically ambiguous in that it is also used to indicate the female pubic area, which may be worth noting in view of the sexual symbolism connected with shape-shifting discussed throughout chapter two, in particular in regards to the snakes, also mentioned later in this confession.
a woman like before and she comes, and she brings with her beautiful girls… and she seems like other women but she’s cold to the touch.\textsuperscript{15}

Another confession narrating of animal transformation (see footnote 39, chapter 1), this time from England, in which on the other hand we can appreciate in detail the daily context in which the narration take place, is the examination of Sarah Brook of Baildon who took upon oath on the 11\textsuperscript{th} of November 1736, in West Riding of Yorkshire:

This examinant saith upon the fiffh day of this month hearing a noise in the house of Francis Goldsbrough of Baildon aforesaid stepped into the yard to know the meaning of yt noise. Immediately came out of Goldsborough’s house one Mary Hartley of Baildon and said that Bridget Goldsbrough of Baildon turned herself into two grey catts and went into John Hartley’s house. Also that Margaret Godlbsbrough went there in her full shape and said yt the said Margaret had with her a black saddle and a bridle, and that Margaret offered [i.e. attempted] to put a bridle upon her son John Hartley & wou’d needs ride him to some hill, and & swor ‘dam them he wou’d kill them all (meaning this examinant supposed the said Bridget and Margaret Goldsborough), they shall be killed out of the way. They shall do no more mischief, kept constantly calling them witches and gave very dangerous language.

The Examination of James Brook of Baildon taken upon oath the day abovesaid. Thus examinant saith being just coming home from selling meat, found a very great crowd of people and a noise in Baildon town street, asked the meaning of it. Upon that this examinant’s wife told him that John Hartley had defamed Bridge and Margaret Goldsborough for witches. Upon that this examinant addressed himself to the said John Hartley & asked him why he wou’d reflect so upon them, he said they were witches and came th 4\textsuperscript{th} of this instant to his (the said John Hartley’s) house, that Bridget sat down upon the coals & turned herself into two grey catts, that Margaret stood in here shape & offered to put a bridle upon him and a girth around his body yt he wou’d kill them.

The Examination of Margaret Goldsborough of Baildon taken upo\textsuperscript{n} oath the day abovesaid. This examinant saith the 5\textsuperscript{th} instant came to her father’s house one Mary Hartley of Baildon to pretend to sell becoms, & upon that begun to say to Bridget this examinant’s mother, I wou’d have you let my barn [i.e. bairn, child] alone, he works hard for his living and cannot bear to be disturbed at night. Upon that this examinant’s mother said ‘What do you mean?’. The said Mary replied, ‘You know well enough, you know where you were last night’, and then begun of saying that both the said examinant & her mother were witches, & was riding of her sone to Pendle Hill the night before and that Margaret brough a saddle & bridle & wou’d put the bridle into his mouth but that the bitts were too large. Upon that the said Mary Hartley went into the streets & begun of scolding. Then came John Hartley out & said, ‘dam thee Peg, thou knwst I laid a besome start upon thy rig [i.e. I laid a besom handle upon thy back] last night, & I whaled thee bravely about 3 of the clock I will have thy life for thou shalt live no longer for I cannot bear thee’, so that after in one voice the said Mary Hartley, John Hartley &

\textsuperscript{15} Muraro, \textit{La Signora del Gioco}, 72-75.
one other John Hartley called red John said ‘Kill them all and let them live no longer’, and gave such dangerous language to this examinant and her mother that she craves the sureties of the peace may be granted against them.16

Another interesting English trial mentioning transformations into animals is that of Temperance Lloyd (“for using and practicing of Witchcraft upon the Body of Grace Thomas”17) from July 1682:

…The said Temperance was demanded by the said Mr Ogilby how long since the Devil did tempt her to do evil.
Whereupon she the said Temperance did say and confess, that about twelve years ago she was tempted by the Devil to be instrumental to the death of William Herbert named in her said Examination. And that the Devil did promise her that she should live well and do well. And she did then also confess that she was thereupon an Instrument of the death of the said William Herbert. And so the said Grace Thomas, she further said and confessed, that on Friday was Sevennight, (which was the 23rd day of June last past) she the said Temperance came into the said Thomas of Eastchurch’s Shop in the form and shape of a Cat; And fetcht out of the same Shop a Puppit or Picture, (commonly called a Childs Baby) and that she carried the same up into the Chamber where the said Grace Thomas did lodge, and left it about the Bed whereon the said Grace Thomas did lie; but would not confess that she had prickt any Pins in the said Puppit or Baby-picture, although she were demanded particularly that Question by the said Mr Ogilby.

Also the said Temperance did then and there confess that she was the cause of the death of Anne Fellow, the Daughter of Edward Fellow, named in her said Examination. Also she did then and there confess, that she was the cause of the death of one Jane Dallyn, the late wife of Symon Dallyn of Biddiford Marriner, by pricking of her in one of her Eyes, which she did so secretly perform, that she was never discovered or punished for the same. Also the said Temperance Lloyd did confess and declare, that she did bewitch unto death one Lydia Burman of Biddiford aforesaid spinster, because she had been a Witness against the said Temperance at the Trial for her Life and Death at the Assizes when she was Arraigned for the death of the said William Herbert, and had deposed that the said Temperance had appeared unto her in the shape of a red Pig at such time as the said Lydia was brewing in the house of one Humphry Ackland of Biddiford aforesaid.18

Another confession is that of Jovanina da Rodi, again from the North of Italy, in July 1650.

Following a morning of increasingly heavy torture in which the accused tries to claim her innocence, she finally gave up to physical and psychological pressure and confessed of being taken to the Devil by Caterina Capuscio, told to deny God, the Virgin and the Saints, baptism

16 West Riding Record Office, Wakefield, Quarter Sessions Rolls, QS1/76/2/File 3.
17 Lloyd, Temperance. A True and Impartial Relation of the informations against Three Witches, Temperance Lloyd, Mary Tromble and Susanna Edwards, Who were Indicted, Arraigned, and Convicted at the Assizes held for the County of Devon at the Castle of Exon, Aug. 14, 1682. With Their several Confessions, taken before Thomas Get Mayor, and John Davie Alderman of Biddiford in the said County, where they were Inhabitants. As also their Speeches, Confessions, and Behaviour, at the time and place of Execution on the Twenty fifth of the said Month. (London: Freeman Collins, 1682), in James Sharpe and Peter Elmer ed., English Witchcraft, 1560-1736, vol. 5. The later English trial pamphlets. (London; Brookfied, VT: Pickering & Chatto, 2003), 23.
and sacraments. Then she met a young man with a red hat called Balzabuzo (a dialect term for “Satan”) whom she must accept as bridegroom and master and who gave her several coins of gold and silver. Since the judges wanted to know what happened to the money, Jovanina told them she had thrown it away after it had turned into coal. She then recounted of being taken to a place where some thirty people danced in a circle, two by two to the music of horns and trumpets and she joined the dances too. Jovanina also said she could not recognise the faces of anybody there, under the pressure of denouncing other people. After the dances followed the cooking of bread in a great cauldron and the salt-less banquet which does not satisfy as discussed in chapter two. To further pressing questioning, Jovanina described of being sodomised by Balzabuzo. She also described Satan as a great black man, dressed in black, with a plumed hat and two horns like a deer, to whom it was necessary to courtesy when passing near him. After this, she recounted of stepping over the cross and sitting on it. At the end, she was given a powder wrapped in a piece of fabric and she was told to throw it on the cultivated fields, on animals and people, with the left hand “in the name of the Devil”. In the end, she was given a black ointment in a container, with which she had to spread a wool spool and which would turn into a horse with horns to take her to the Barlott. At which point the accused was so exhausted she could not talk anymore and was left to rest until the next “session”.

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Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*, 250, fig. 434: “The bull is connected with the moon from earliest times, as these bovines with horns as lunar crescents in Upper Paleolithic cave painting and engraving attest.” (1)–(4) La Pileta, S. Spain; (5) Escural, Spain; (6) and (9) Parpalló, Valencia, Spain; (7) Lascaux, S. France; various periods between 15,000 and 10,000 B.C.
Footnotes 38, 39:

Marija Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*, 265, fig. 411

Gimbutas, *The Living Goddesses*, 34, fig. 27: “Stylized female torsos revealing a bucramium in the position of the uterus and fallopian tubes”; c.6000 B.C. (Temple A. III/11, Catal Huyuk, southern Turkey).
7. Footnote 60:

Miranda Green, *The Gods of Roman Britain*, (Buckinghamshire: SHIRE PUBLICATIONS LTD., 2003), 57, plate 40: Chester. (Photograph and copyright Grosvenor Museum, Chester.)

8. Footnote 62, 73 (chap. 2) and 79 (chap. 3):

Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*, 118, fig. 186: “This example of the characteristic bear-legged rhyton with large ring handle, probably a cult vessels, is decorated with aquatic stream, striated triangle, and lozenge designs. Two views.” Danilo (Smilčić, at Zadar, Adriatic coast, Yugoslavia; c. 5500 B.C.) H. 17.5 cm.
In regards with the discussed view of the cauldron as lower part of female body, it is interesting to observe vases such as this, made of the lower parts of the body of an animal, such as the bear, typically associated to Goddesses such as Artemis, Greek version of Diana, associated with witches in Europe, in turn associated with cauldrons, as discussed in chapter two. The bear, as noted by Gimbutas, is also associated with motherhood, which again fits our proposed view of the cauldron. As previously discussed, Gimbutas associated zig-zag lines with female amniotic fluids, (contained in fact in the lower female body) as well as water (which vases may contain).
Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*, 268, fig.436: Linear Pottery (Brno, Moravia; c.5000 B.C.)

Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*, 281, fig.438: “Since snakes were considered creatures of the water, it is not surprising that symbols of the two are associated on ceramics from the mid-6th millennium B.C. On this Dimini vase, spirals sweep across a striated background representing streaming water. There are chevrons on the handle. Painted brown on buff. (Rakhmani II; end of 5th mill. B.C.) H. 24.15 cm.”
Gimbutas compares this to Silbury Hill in Great Britain, which she defines as “a gigantic representation of the Pregnant Goddess in a seated posture.” This view, however arguable (and even though England is out of Gimbutas areas of expertise, as discussed in the introduction), may be correct. The oven does look like a pregnant stomach with a prominent belly button and the shape of the indicated archaeological site does appear to resemble a seated pregnant woman.
Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*, 143, fig. 219: this, according to Gimbutas, would be a “pregnant Goddess with hands on the belly in seated posture”. Sesklo (Magula near Sofades Karitsa Plain, Thessaly; 6000-5800 B.C.-5800 B.C.) H. 4cm.

Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*, 143: In the Copper Age of east-central Europe, the Pregnant Goddess is sometimes portrayed seated on a chái or throne. This one, from Bulgaria, is marked with a multiple lozenge design over the pregnant belly and two lines across the hips. Karanovo VI, mid-5th mill. B.C. (Selo Kalekovets, district of Plovdiv). H. 10 cm.
Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*, 163, fig. 252: “This...mammoth ivory sculpture conflates breasts and buttocks into a zone of eggs circling the figure’s middle.” Gravettian-Upper Périgordian (Des Rideaux, at Lespugue, Haute Garonne, France; c. 21,000 B.C. Breasts-buttocks in front were found damaged; here they are shown in reconstruction). H. 14.7 cm.
With regard to the question regarding steatopygia of Upper Paleolithic and Neolithic “Venuses”, Gimbutas answers it in terms of increased fertility.22 This view would well fit the one discussed here in regards to the cauldron of birth, which in this perspective would be emphasised in representations of these parts of the female body almost as an independent entity, which in its schematization becomes the cauldron. This would also explain the cults of cauldrons in association with Goddesses.

This anthropomorphic vase may be seen as a further confirmation of the discussed view of cauldrons and containers in association with the lower parts of the female body.

22 Gimbutas, The Language of the Goddess, 163.
9. Footnote 63: For more examples of triplication in an archaeological context see below.


Green, *Celtic Goddesses*, 100: “Stone relief of the British water-goddess Coventina, from Carrawburgh, Northumberland. The natural spring was developed as a cult-site in the second century AD. The carving depicts either the goddess and two nymphs or (more likely) a triple image of Coventina.”
Green, *The Gods of Roman Britain*, 56: “Relief of *genii cucullati*, portrayed as triangular, schematised figures; Cirencester, Gloucestershire. (Photograph: C. J. Bowler; copyright: Corinium Museum).”

Green, *Celtic Goddesses*, 81: “Stone plaque depicting three mother-goddesses, one with a baby, the second with a napkin and the third with a basin and sponge.” From the Romano-Gaulish settlement at Vertillum (Vertault), near Chatillon-sur-Seine, Burgundy.
With regard to the connection between motherhood, virgin groups and fertility/prosperity, throughout this dissertation we have explained symbols present in witchcraft beliefs through legends and tales, beliefs and female-cults, presided over by Gods and Goddesses, at the centre of which there were sects of women surrounded by secrecy and a halo of mystery. Their existence has been recorded, on the edge between history and myth, in various historical periods and geographical locations. These female figures followers of Goddesses or Gods, often keepers of sacred fires, supposedly participated in ecstatic dances, fantastical trances, wild cavalcades through the skies, orgiastic rituals, cannibalistic feasts, wild runs across hills and mountains, enchanted corteges in hillsides, etc. At times, in different cultures and historical periods, these groups of priestesses were held responsible for the luck of the community and prosperity of the land, at times for the sterility and misfortunes of the same. At times, they were slandered, like the Striges, the Amazons and the Bacchants, whereas at times they were worshiped like the Vestals or the “Good Ladies”. Yet they were in any case connected to and somehow perpetuating the discussed “magical beginnings”. In fact, if for instance, the Bacchants were accused of running across mountains overwhelmed by a sort of divine rapture, prey of savage (or simply socially unacceptable) instincts, eating animals alive and tearing to pieces males who dared spy on them, they were also said to be able to cause rivers of honey and milk to flow by scratching the ground, which reminds us very clearly of Hesiod. They were also believed to suckle wolf cubs and deer, crossing the barrier between human and animal, as well as between natural and supernatural, for their sensual “folly” was attributed to Dionysus, their hermaphrodite God. The fertility rituals, the ritual orgies at particular times of the year (e.g. spring) for the purposes of bringing good luck and prosperity of the land are only a minor aspect of much more complex, multi-faceted cults, but it is nonetheless a significant aspect. Also, the ritual orgies that were practised and open to wider strata of the population are not to be confused with the orgiastic dances and rituals of the hermetically closed, elitist circles of the adepts, to which neither men nor common people in general were ever allowed.

A sacred folly was also attributed to the priestesses of the Pythia of Apollo, a folly who gifted them with prophetic powers, of which the community benefited and which increasingly it

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24 ibid, 107.
abused, particularly towards the decline of the cult. Amongst these legendary figures, on the “worshipped side” of the spectrum, were the Vestals, believed to bring fertility to the land and luck and prosperity to the whole community in view of their beneficial connection with the divine dimension. This is a concept that is reminiscent of that of the Irish Kings marrying the deity of the Land, and proving the importance and power attributed to females in patriarchal societies. For this reasons their opinions in political matters were listened to and they enjoyed privileges unthinkable for women of their time. The Vestals, in fact, were independent from patria potestas in a fully patriarchal era as that of the Roman Empire; however they were subject to terrible punishments if they broke their ritual virginity before the end of their office. In fact, they were appointed between six and ten years of age and had to remain virginal for at least thirty years, the time of their appointment. If they broke their vow, they would be buried alive. Figures possibly comparable to the Vestals for their protective roles, are the Good Ladies discussed by Ginzburg, as home deities, rather than priestesses of the state. Giuseppe Pitrè, nineteenth-century Sicilian folklorist, described the Women from Outside (Donas de Fuera) as a crossbreed between a fairy and a witch.

Other comparable Mulierum Societatis are the nineteen Irish Christian nuns of Saint Brigid, keepers of a secret fire which, like that of the Vestals, was never allowed to die to die out, a cult of obvious pre-Christian origin perpetuated in Kildare until 1220 when the Bishop of Dublin forbid it as a survival of Pagan practices. Then there were semi-legendary figures of the Amazons, connected to Diana’s cavalcades, and reminiscent also of the mythical Valkyrs of Norse myth; the German women’s secret societies called Fraubunden, in honour of Goddesses like Holla (and Berta); and the Gallisenae, Gallic priestesses who were nine “perpetual Virgins” (however they occasionally chose for themselves men as lovers) as described by Pomponius Mela and said to live on the island of Sena in the British sea. Then we have Ariadne’s (ari-agne, literally “the most virgin”) mythical cortege of, who is both a Virgin but also immortal bride of Dionysus, her paredro, who pushes women to abandon their homes and families to follow him on

29 Ginzburg Ecstasies, 101, 122-123.
32 Francesco Pedari, La amazzoni rivendicate alla verità della storia: con un quadro della storia, con un quadro della origine, delle costumanze, della religione, delle impere, del decadimento e della totale loro dispersione, Avvalorato con documenti tratti dalle tradizioni, dagli storici e dai monumenti di scultura, pittura e numismatica dell’Antichità. (Milano: Tipografia di Santo Bravetta, 1839), 56, 59.
34 Miranda J. Green, Exploring the world of the Druids, (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2010), 103-104.
the mountains, curiously enough, not unlike Shiva\textsuperscript{35} and, on a more individual Aphrodite, for whom women abandoned house and duties, as sung of in a poem by Sappho.\textsuperscript{36}

In classical Greece again we have the \textit{Thiasos} in honour of Aphrodite and the Muses, like that of Agesicora from whom “from whom girls received peace of love” as narrated by Alcman;\textsuperscript{37} or that of Sappho, one of whose epithet was in fact “virgin”, as sung in Alcaeus’s poem “oh crowned of violets, divine, sweet, laughing Sappho”.\textsuperscript{38} Here “divine” translates into Greek \textit{agna}, “virgin”. This in spite of the fact that Sappho was said to be mother of a child called Cleis and lover of Alcaeus. There also were the Spartan \textit{agelai}, of Virgins were, as narrated by Pindar, were the daughters of the \textit{homoi} (“the equals”, and “the most noble” amongst the Spartans) who were said to have a kind of intimate amorous relationship amongst themselves which was believed to encourage contact with the divine.\textsuperscript{39} This of course recalls again of the \textit{Yoginis}, Indian priestesses who practised the previously discussed cults of Kaula in tantric tradition, in honour of the Goddess Durga, “the inacessible”,\textsuperscript{40} similarly practised also by the \textit{Wu}, Chinese priestesses who followed a kind of sexual Taoism.\textsuperscript{41} Since the religious conception of Sparta probably came from Crete, probably linked to India as discussed in the introduction, the Snake Goddesses statuettes representing the Potnia may be a confirmation for the suitability of these comparisons. Virgil called these Spartan groups of women “virgins” and their rituals Bacchic,\textsuperscript{42} whilst Alcmane’s defined these \textit{mulierum societatis} as the “most noble” and “the most beautiful”.\textsuperscript{43} It seems therefore that these women practised a kind of what may be currently, and perhaps incorrectly, termed “ritual homosexuality”, which however did not seem to preclude them from contact with the male dimension (at least as long as the male in question was not a “common mortal”, hence a human man) as testified by the notorious legends of unions between Bacchants and Satyrs for instance, semi-divine half goats and half men. These figures seem likely to have become the semi-bestial demons or \textbf{incubi} of medieval/early modern demonology and the image of the horned goat-like Devil itself. Also the Maenads of the Loire did have men lovers, however they

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[35]{see introduction.}
\footnotetext[36]{Sappho, \textit{Frammenti}. (Milano: Arnoldo Mondadori, 1996).}
\footnotetext[37]{Giulio Guidorizzi, La letteratura in Grecia, (Torino: Einaudi, 2000), 157.}
\footnotetext[38]{Alceo, “La decima Musa”, in Giuseppe Passarello, Giusto Pecoraro, \textit{Il passato e noi: Pagine di autori classici e moderni sulla civiltà antica e medievale.} (Palumbo, 1968), 141.}
\footnotetext[40]{Wolf-Dieter Storl, \textit{Shiva: the wild God of power and ecstasy}. (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2004), 117.}
\footnotetext[43]{cited in Claude Calame, \textit{l’Amore in Grecia}. (Bari: Ed. Laterza, 1983) 81-83, 128.}
\end{footnotes}
chose them,\textsuperscript{44} which may have possibly meant they elected as lovers men who submitted themselves to priority of their religion, thus not hindering their all important relationship with their God.

Cults such as those in honour of Artemis “the Virgin”, in which, apparently, sensual dances and use of phallic symbols were common practice, may confirm the erotic nature of some of these female ecstatic cults, as well as the ambiguity of meaning given to the word “virgin” which obviously could not mean “chaste”.\textsuperscript{45} At this regard, another Virgin Mother Goddess was Vesta, virgin yet mother of Romolus and Remo, with God Mars who would be the father. Also, Plutarch commented, in the story about Numa Pompilius, how in Greece a female group which was “not run by Virgins but by chaste women”.\textsuperscript{46} Furthermore, Estia was also a Virgin and was connected to a cult of virgins around the omphalos, a round temple, literally meaning “umbilical cord”, which curiously reminds us of the symbolism, of the Benandati’s caul. The followers of Artemis were also said to practice their orgiastic cults in a round temple which had a strong resemblance to the female belly and may be associated to the Cauldron, which also reminds us of the cults of Anna Perenna, for a copper cauldron has been found in recent years, near Rome, in areas attributed to her worship.\textsuperscript{47}

The question that has repeatedly emerged throughout the dissertation with regards to these women is why were they or their Goddesses (e.g. Roman Diana and Greek Artemis or Finnish Mielikki, or the Celtic Goddesses\textsuperscript{48}) would be described as virgins, and how could they both be virgins, mothers and lovers. Miranda Green discussed this problem that many scholars have encountered in regard to the virginity attributed to Celtic Goddesses who were also mothers.\textsuperscript{49} She explained this in terms of independence\textsuperscript{50} rather than in the sense of “chastity”, but however probably very near to the core of the issue, she does not completely solve it. Fifty years ago, Pestalozza also faced this same problem confronting this same controversy with regards to the Mediterranean Potnia, virgin and yet, also, poly-amorous lover, and mother.\textsuperscript{51} Pestalozza explained such controversy with the moon phases. The black moon would be the virgin aspect of

\textsuperscript{44} Green, Exploring the world of the Druids, 103-104.
\textsuperscript{47} http://www.romeguide.it/monumenti/fontane/annaperenna/annaperenna.html, accessed 3\textsuperscript{rd} September, 2011.
\textsuperscript{48} Green, Celtic Goddesses, 57-60, 63, 142.
\textsuperscript{49} Green, Celtic Goddesses, 58 : “…To Arianrhod herself, morwyn [the word used for Arianrhod’s virginity] may simply have meant a free, unattached young girl unobehden to any man’s patronage”.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid, 58, 104.
\textsuperscript{51} Pestalozza Religione Mediterranea.
the Potnia, the crescent the lover, the full the mother. These aspects appear to symbolise different phases of female life, or different aspects of femininity. Thus, the Goddess, believed to encompass all that exists and has been created, is alternatively all these things in turn, with the Paredro (“him who sits next”), brother, son, and lover, but never husband and father, at her side, equal, never superior.52

Other less known explanations proposed by more recent academics are based on linguistic evidence and appear to integrate the above views. For instance, it has been suggested that the word virgin, derived from Latin virgo, may be related to the root Varg, in Sanskrit Urg.53 The meaning of which would be “being turgid, swollen, full of juice, vigorous, luxuriant and full of energy”,54 a literal meaning very far from that of “chaste” later attributed to the term.55 It has also been noted how all the ancient Greek words today translated as “virgin” tended to originally mean more “unmarried, not subdued to marriage yoke”.56 One of these Greek words would be “adamete, ‘untameable’… as the prefix ad gives a value of denial to the rest of the word, and mete is said to derive from damoa or damazo, ‘to tame’, ‘to give or to subjugate someone to marriage’ and ‘to marry’…”.57 Another Greek word today translated with the term “virgin” was “parthenos, meaning ‘unmarried girl’, ‘not married’, deriving from the root then, from which derive the terms eutheneia, ‘abundance, fullness’, and eutheneo, meaning ‘being fecund’ or ‘prolific’…”58 A meaning which very much fits Pestalozza’s description of the Mediterranean Potnia, as androgynous divine mother who rejects the yoke of marriage but nonetheless lives her female nature fully, also sexually.59 Artemis herself, to whom in Greece was given mostly the attribute of parthenos, was said to be “eilitheia, protector of the women in labour and mother of Partenopeo, which literally means ‘born out of marriage bonds’…”.60 Furthermore, it seems worth of noting that she, like Aphrodite, was also “… she, whose power on women is absolute… and [she,] to whom girls offered silver vulvas and celebrated only-female dances”.61 So, noted Barné, virgin would correspond to an idea of “natural fullness, wholeness, and being uncontaminated, not

52 Pestalozza Religione Mediterranea.
53 By a contemporary French-Italian classicist Leda Barné, see Leda Barné, Le Vergini Arcaiche. (Milano: Edizioni della Terra di Mezzo, 2006).
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid. 13.
57 Barné, Le Vergini Arcaiche, 15.
58 Ibid, 15.
59 Pestalozza Religione Mediterranea.
60 Barné, Le Vergini Arcaiche, 15.
61 Ibid.
corrupted in vital force, as well as ‘being unmarried’ 
\textsuperscript{62} as also noted by Richard Farnell.\textsuperscript{63} In fact, many Greek Goddesses are called by the epithet \textit{parthenos} including Aphrodite, who—in consideration of the fact that she was the Goddess of beauty and love, love also in physical sense, connected with desire, seduction, Eros etc.—could hardly be considered a “virgin” in the sense of chaste. Likewise Isis, sister and lover of Osiris, has a name which may derive from the root \textit{sid}, from which would derive the Greek word \textit{side}, meaning “melagrana” (the fruit which as we have seen repeatedly was offered to her by her followers as symbol of her intimacy) and also meant “vulva”.\textsuperscript{64} So Isis, whilst being the first to give birth to a God is also \textit{nosfi gamon}, “far from marriage”, \textit{ater filototes}, “without lover”, and \textit{apateira}, “without father”.\textsuperscript{65} Another Greek word translated as “virgin” was \textit{agne}, which according to Otto reunites the meanings of “pure” and “sacred” and is associated with the uncontaminated-ness of secluded nature (hence where the Sabbath is famously supposed to take place). Artemis was also \textit{agrotera} “wild” and venerated by her priestesses in secluded places, \textit{eschatiai}, “liminal”.\textsuperscript{66} This reminds us of aforementioned intermediary role of the shamans, and of the God Janus, deity of the doors and masculine version of Jana, Diana, the Goddess of the witches.

All the above suggests the idea that this concept of virginity, rather than physical chastity (at least in the earlier versions of the above cults), may have been prerequisite to the worship of the Gods and Goddesses, or as keepers of sacred fires symbolising the presence of divine light on earth, as discussed. Thus, virginity would not simply be, as supposed by Green, a question of “undissipated sexual energy” because of the extraneousness to the sexual dimension as in the instance of child-priestesses.\textsuperscript{67} Rather, it would be about, supposedly, a dimension of dignity, in which priestesses, protected by their halo of sacredness did not have to undergo the humiliation, and indeed violence of unwanted sexual relationships (whilst still being enabled to choose their partners hence living their sexuality), unlike common women who were completely subjected to fathers and husbands (also sexually, it can easily be conjectured). This situation of freedom from male dominance might have been what connected these groups of women to a kind of “eternal childhood”, as suggested by the term \textit{aepais} (“the always child-girls”) attributed to various groups

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{64} Pestalozza \textit{Religione Mediterranea}.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid; Barné, \textit{Le Vergini Arcaiche}, 15.
\textsuperscript{66} Barné, \textit{Le Vergini Arcaiche}, 15.
\textsuperscript{67} Green, \textit{Celtic Goddesses}, 142.
of Virgins in Greece. In fact children, protected by their ages, like the priestesses by their sacredness, were also supposedly immune from invasive sexual contacts.

This may clarify why these Virgins “sacred to the Gods” in the name of whom their orgiastic dances and cults were practised, could then be considered “brides of the Gods”, as to some degree may be said witches in regards to the Devil, as testified by those accounts in which the Devil asks the witch if she wants to be “only his own”, or in which the witch promises the Devil to be his in body and soul.\(^\text{68}\) This view could possibly explain the meaning of a Catalina de Lizardi claiming to Inquistor Salzar that “after copulation she had remained a virgin [interestingly, in view of the blood she mentioned losing, it seems we are not talking of virginity in current sense], and an old woman claimed the same of herself”.\(^\text{69}\)

To return to Cohn’s objections about fertility cults, the above explanation of virginity may also justify why much of the ecstatic cults of these said groups of virgins seem to have been centred largely on eroticism. In view of the associations, similarities and linguistic evidence discussed above, it may be clear that whenever these orgiastic cults were considered ecstatic, it was because such rituals allegedly led to trance states which broke the normal perceptions of reality, as in the case of Diana, Artemis, Dyonisus, Holla, Durga\(^\text{70}\) etc. Further confirmation of this hypothesis that views female ecstatic practices effectively as erotic ecstatic practices may also be confirmed not only by the alchemic parallels, but also, once again, by the intrinsic etymological meaning of the word Virgin. This has been in fact also connected to the Greek

> ergon ‘activity, pull, work’; orgao, ‘to be full to the brim, rich of fecund humour, full of ardor’; orgas, ‘humid, fertile, flowering earth’, and orgia, ‘secret ceremony, mystic cult, sacred ritual’; orgiasticos ‘inspired by God’, and orghiazó ‘to celebrate, take part in a orgiastic feast, to worship, to initiate to the Mysteric Cults’.\(^\text{71}\)

It could be thus conjectured, in view of the supposed purpose of the above cults and the parallels with alchemy, that the Virgins’ sacred Fires, as well as the torches held by the Bacchants during their wild runs above the mountains, may be a metaphor for not only of divine light (hence good fortune for the community, as the Fires of Estia, Vesta or Brigid) but also of the alchemic fire. The fire necessary to work the Materia Prima in the alchemic oven (Atanor), or the fire under the witches’ cauldron where the victims (adepts) would be “cooking”. A fire, which may therefore be

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\(^{68}\) See chap. 3, p. 98.

\(^{69}\) De Salazar, The Salazar Documents, 298.

\(^{70}\) Whose cults somehow appear to survive in (often very distorted) modern interpretations of left hand Tantrism.

\(^{71}\) Barné, Le Vergini arcaiche, 105.
a metaphor for the “wild enthusiasm” attributed to the Bacchants, i.e. their *furor*, which perpetuated to the liminal extremes of perception that allegedly caused a trance like state, symbolising their communication with Dionysus and the divine dimension to which he belonged. This enthusiasm can easily be associated to the wild “folly” of the Prophetesses of the Pithya of Appollo, which caused prophecy. Also, as noted by Professor Teresa Tonchia from Trieste University, between these priestesses and their God (Apollo) too “there is an erotic relationship”. Such relationship with the divine may, in the case of the mythical followers of Diana, Herodiade or Holla, may be symbolised by the flight “to the moon”, archetypical symbol of these Goddesses, whereas in Norse myth the ecstatic state could be represented by the Valkhyrs’ cavalcades.

11. Footnote 66:

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Raco dels Moros at El Cogul, Lerida. The cave has been used by prehistoric man since about 7000BC. The paintings range over 5000 years until about 100BC. [http://www.flickr.com/photos/marialuisa/4008578486/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/marialuisa/4008578486/) Accessed 12 August, 2011.

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12. Footnote 113:


13. Footnote 125 (and 113):

According to Gimbutas, “If the head of the figure is of a waterbird, it represents the earliest human/waterbird hybrid marked with a symbol of water, a generative force”. Being water, a universal symbol of birth, this could confirm the association with motherhood given by Gimbutas to bird-human hybrid. In which it could possibly be seen as the archetype for the Strix, hence originally symbol of birth as well as death, as is typical of the most ancient divinities.

14. Footnote\textsuperscript{126} (and 113):

\begin{flushleft}
\textit{Gimbutas, The Language of the Goddess}, 33, fig.50:
Chassée (Capdenac-le-Bout, Lot, S France; c.4000 B.C.)
H. 50 cm. According to Gimbutas this sculpture represents a bird Goddess.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
Ibid, fig. 51: Karanovo VI/Gumenlița
(Ciolanesti, S Romania; 4500-4300 B.C.) H. 9.1.
Interesting here is also how the lower part of this supposed bird-Goddess becomes a container, in support of note 64.
\end{flushleft}
Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*, 36, fig. 55: (1) and (2) Early Vinca (Vinca; 5200-5000 B.C.); (3) Classical Vinca (Rast, SW Romania; c. 5000 B.C.).
(1) H. 7 cm. (2) H. 7.5 cm. (3) H. 5.3 cm.

Ibid, 37, fig. 59: Bukk (Tiszadada, at Kalvinhaza, NE Hungary; c. 5000 B.C.) H. 10 cm.

Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*, 36, fig. 56-57: [56] Terracotta from Ozieri (Sa Ucca de Su Tintiriolu, Mara, N Sardinia; early 4th mill. B.C.) H. 6.9 cm.; [57] Incised terracotta figurines (1) and (3) and painted figurine from a shrine (2): (1) Sesklo (Chaeroneia, central Greece; c. 5800-5600 B.C.). (2) Anatolian Neolithic (Shrine E IV 4, Catal Huyuk, central Anatolia; mid-7th mill. B.C.). (3) Butmir (Butmir, near Sarjevo, Yugoslavia; early 5th mill. B.C.). (1) H. 7.4 cm. (2) H. 3 cm. (3) H. 6 cm.
**15. Footnotes 126, 133 (and 113):**

As in the images above, there is a constant repetition of images of bird-human hybrid with accentuated breasts, at times pendulous as the Striges’ breasts by stereotype. This focus upon the breast could indeed underline the nourishing aspect of a life giver bird Goddess, as suggested by Gimbutas.

Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*, 37, fig 58: “‘Madonna from Gradac.’”

Here Gimbutas draws attention on the beaked face on the baby, and appears to be correct in stating that “the presence of life giving milk is symbolized by groups of parallel lines incised across the breasts and shoulders.

Ibid, fig. 60: “Bird-headed and winged figures with large breasts are from Minoan seal impressions (Zakros, E Crete; 1500-1450 B.C.). (1) H. 3.9 cm. (2) H. 4.7 cm.”
Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*, 38, fig. 62 (above, left) and 63 (below, right). (62): “‘Nippled vase,’ brown-colored with multiple chevrons above the nipples and a beaked mask on the neck. (The beak is broken.)” Early Vinca (Radacje, near Nis, SE Yugoslavia; 5200–5000 B.C.) H. 23.2 cm. (63): “This...jug excavated from a Cretan cemetery is characteristic of the Early Minoan period. The beaked and winged figure has nipples that are actually spouts”. (Mallia, E Crete; end of 3rd mill B.C.) H. 16.4 cm.
Chapter three

16. Footnote 57 (and 141, chap. 2)

It is worth noticing that besides the various, at times complex etymologies given for the word “art”, this word is formed by the Sanskrit suffix ar, which, as noted by Professor Mario Negri,

means ‘to put together, to join’, and in Greek assumes the meaning of action, of a superlative or elitist way of being or behaving. It in fact gives origin to the word aretē, which means ‘excellent quality, value, virtue’; and to the word arkē, ‘principle, authority, dominion’; to the verb arko, which means ‘to guide, to precede, to lead, to show the way’...[it also gives origin to the word ärístos], which means ‘excellent, great, the best’. In Latin the same suffix originates words such as ara ‘altar’, ardeo, to ‘burn, to shine, to twinkle’ [and to] argutus ‘humourous, cheerful’.

What is curious about the meaning of this suffix is that (apart from being the same of the name Artemis) it provides a twofold link. Firstly, to the concept of elitism, as in the sectarian and closed-circled elitism of the previously discussed female groups of Virgins, which, as we have seen, had in many ways the purpose of “leading” their societies, at least on a spiritual level, but sometimes not only, as in the case of the Vestals. Secondly, it provides a link to the concept of fire, to which many of these groups were devoted. It also links, semantically, to the etymology of spirto as discussed in note 3, with regard to the issues discussed in chapter one. Of further note is that the word fire itself in Sanskrit is agni, interesting in view of the Greek meaning of this word and its importance in relation to the word Virgin and the legendary figure of Ariadne. Agni in fact is also a Vedic God of fire.
Footnote 61:

18. Footnote 62:

19. Footnote 63:

21. Footnote 67:


*Aphrodite Pandemos*, Late Augustan period, Roman agate and onyx cameo. Naples, Museo Nazionale. Photograph: in Zika, 315.
22. Footnote 77:
Regarding early modern demonisation of female sexuality associated with witchcraft, see further artistic examples below.

Hans Baldung Grien, Witches, 1514, drawing, white wash.

Medieval woodcut depicting demons and witches
23. Footnote 80:

24. Footnote 95:


25. Footnote 116:

Miranda Green *The Gods of the Celts* (Avon: body her upper The Band Press, 1993), 100: Stone phallic head; Eype Dorset
Daniélou, *Gods of Love and Ecstasy*, 138, fig. 2.: Phallus with face and serpent, back and front, two views. Maryport, Cumberland.

Gimbutas, 2001, *The Living Goddesses*, 37. According to Gimbutas this is a bird Goddess of regeneration (noting the vulture claws) resembling a phallus and her lower body testicles. Starcevo culture, c. 5600-5300 B.C. (Endrod-Szujokereszet, Koros Valley, south eastern Hungary).
26. Footnote 156:

27. Footnote 157 and 159:


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