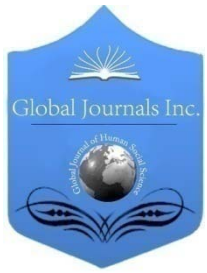
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Did the Spiral Engravings in the Rock Art of our Distant Ancestors Portray Chakras?

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The chakras are intermediaries between the physical body and consciousness (Motoyama 1981).

Abstract- This paper characterizes the use of spirals in rock carvings and other artifacts by early mankind. It formulates the hypothesis that these widely distributed symbols may represent chakras, which are typically considered the route for out-of-body experiences documented in some current vital energy disciplines. A characterization of the types of spirals commonly encountered in rock art, such as those found recently in a cave in Sardinia modelled on the Earth Goddess Gaia, and they suggested the hypothesis that Fermat spirals might also symbolize two-way communication.

I. Introduction

The remarkable phenomenon provoking this article was the discovery in Sardinia of a cave with simple but evocative internal paintings; the 'Pala Larga'. Here, the spirals on the walls must play a leading role in our understanding of the purpose of this site. Pala Larga is one of many 'Domus de Janas' or fairy caves on the island, which point to the activities of the ancient inhabitants and their earth goddess religion. Dating back to the late Neolithic (the 4th to 2nd millennium), the cave contains evidence of ancient belief systems which are frankly surprising, and I believe are more easily interpreted by reference to chakras. This cave is now sealed, but two sketches based on photos of this site are shown in Figs 1 and 8.

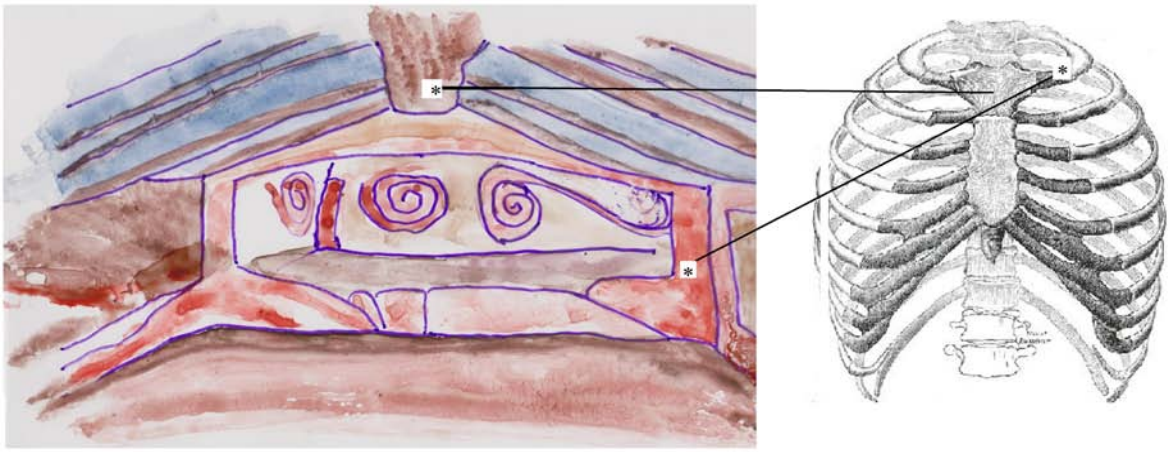


Fig 1 : Sketch of the internal view of the 'Pala Larga looking towards the 'head end', (based on images in: www.twcenter.net/forums/showthread.php?t=351728). By contrast, the human thoracic cavity is shown (from Wikipedia)

This cave is a 'Spiritual Cavity' (how else could one consider it?), and raises questions on the activities that went on within its confines. You are reminded of common archaic structures on the island of Sardinia, the misleadingly named 'Giant's tombs' (Fig 2). Although these were considered graves for heroes and sages, the high ground energy of their carefully-chosen locations would have prevented rapid decomposition, but also provided a site for regeneration of spiritual energies. Mauro Aresu, a local dowser with an important record of discovery of ancient sites, has investigated these 'tombs'. From dowsing, he concluded they were invariably constructed over a high-energy water 'dome' where underground streams meet and emanate prana upwards. Paraphrasing his words:

"A pairing of effigies of a bull, the male fertilizing principal – (also present in the Pala Larga), and the Mother Earth, together give vital force for human and animal fecundity through the medium of fertile earth and water".

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Fig. 2 : View of a Giant's Tomb' in Sardinia

The ground energy irradiating the tomb makes it an effective location for spiritual healing. It also confirms the sensitivity of the former inhabitants to events within the Earth itself, and their belief in the Earth Goddess. A person suffering from a medical or psychological problem could pass 5 days inside the Giant's tomb (Fig. 2) while fasting, and during this time he/she hoped to be visited by a curing entity. The procedure was described retrospectively as ancient by Aristotle, (who referred to these structures as the 'tombs of the sleeping heroes'), and has some resemblance to an activity in ancient Ireland described by Michael Dames (1992), which took place within tombs shaped after the Earth Mother. In pre-Christian times, a young couple hoping for a child sought the blessing of the earth goddess (often referred to as 'the Old Hag'), and would spend the night in the tomb engaged in reproductive activities. Creating a new human baby within the image of the Earth Mother may have other magical effects we can only speculate upon, one of which could be the reincarnation in your offspring of an important person recently deceased, given that reincarnation was a component of Celtic beliefs.

II. The Purpose of Chakras

I became fascinated by the phenomenon of chakras after learning to sense them with my hands as taught in the Pranic Healing school of the Philippine energy master Shoa Kok Sui. I mentioned in my book (Caddy 2006a) how on several occasions, I had 'seen' my own chakras while in particular mental states. In a more recent paper (Caddy 2006b) I described a Stone Age engraving from the Grenada Museum of Archaeology which showed a shaman projecting energy from one of his lower chakras (Fig. 3). These phenomena led me to consider what significance such experiences might have had for Stone Age peoples. Given the absence of written records, I suppose that their brains (the same size as ours) were certainly dedicated to other issues than reading printed texts. This unused brain capacity was available for functions not often experienced by modern man. Given the risks involved in living close to nature, they may have been more sensitive to 'messages' from their body, from the environment and from other persons.

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An example comes from the work of Belinda Gore (1995), who documented how, by assuming particular bodily postures (e.g. Fig. 3), ancient peoples may come to be placed in contact with spiritual 'locations' guarded by non-physical entities. Belinda learned of this technique from the strange contortions on very early figurines and statues: the bodily positions shown were necessary to contact an entity having particular skills or knowledge. She confirmed this by meditations while in the same bodily position: showing that 'experiential archaeology' may be the vital link to interpreting ancient artifacts. The basic assumption involved, is that our ancestors, (more than ourselves – though we must share some sensitivities), were aware of subtle energy and disembodied spirits.



Fig 3 : (left); Dames (1992) illustrating a position portrayed in Stone Age sculptures, which induces a particular clairvoyant trance, and (right); a photo of an engraving by Stone Age peoples of a shaman participating in a similar trance (note energy lines from the lower abdomen) – Caddy 2006a)

Activating the chakras is a well-documented and ancient procedure, and is often thought (perhaps incorrectly?) to have arisen first on the Indian subcontinent, judging from early Sanskrit texts. It has now become a common practice in the teachings of modern energy schools to stress the role of chakras in the energy body. Although many scientists (and archaeologists!) are reluctant to acknowledge the existence of chakras, their portrayal as 'rock spirals' offers an important clue to ancient religious phenomena. Evidently chakras were once known in ancient Europe, although subsequently lost in this part of the world, perhaps millennia ago. Even today, from T.C. Lethbridge to Clare Graves' theory of Spiral Dynamics, the spiral is identified as the route to higher spiritual states. Their role in European pre-history is implied by the frequency with which spirals (the basic configuration of the chakra in my hypothesis), occur in early stonework engravings. So did the spiral have a particular significance for early peoples? Robert Graves gives a clue to this question in his esoteric book, 'The White Lady'. He mentioned that in pre-Christian Ireland, death was referred to as 'Going to Spiral Castle', where a 'Spiral Castle' was a Stone Age funeral structure covered with images of spirals (e.g. Fig 4). In the late Stone Age, structures and rock faces decorated with spiral themes were common throughout Europe and elsewhere, and are unlikely to be an attempt to represent living organisms. They seem evidence for a belief system extending over much of the planet, where prior to 'sky-based religions', the Earth's sacred spirit was worshipped. The spirals were significant as 'portholes' to another realm below the

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earth, and in discussing their original significance, we should not assume that the thought processes of our ancestors were either simple or primitive.

The belief in an Earth Mother, Gaia, or similar female deities under other names, was widespread in prehistory; though inevitably we have few written records describing the belief systems involved. Many of the 'superstitions' about the magic properties of springs, wells, lakes and mounds, standing stones, fairies and gnomes etc, are probably associated with this 'earth-bound' religion. Dowsing is a practical application of 'earth beliefs' that has persisted from then, despite criticism from scientific quarters. Considering that this 'earth-bound' belief system maintained continuity for millennia, many aspects of it must be tied to man's paranormal abilities. Hence it deserves further attention, since our distant ancestors were certainly further ahead of us in this field.

More recent clues to sensibilities we rarely use come from near-death experiences, where the person having a pre-death vision travels down a 'silver tube' to meet defunct persons of his former acquaintance (Van Lomel et al., 2001). This tube was described by some returning from near-death visions as engraved on the inside by a spiral. An example of this spiral configuration is seen in Maltese monuments from 3000-3500 BC: perhaps the most ancient in Europe (Fig. 4). One easy assumption is that such massive stone structures are funeral emblems. This may be the case, but like the 'giants tombs' in Sardinia, there seems evidence that they were also used for paranormal rites, where the spiral was an important symbol.



Fig. 4 : An ancient Maltese 'tomb' showing linked spiral engravings

Spirals are engraved on many rock surfaces, but also used in the 'dream catchers' developed by American Indians as a protection from negative experiences while sleeping (Fig. 6). This application provides a clue to possible functions of the chakras, namely, as a means of communication of energies to and from individuals, or a route for excursions of the soul from the body to other realms. From archaeological evidence, this postulated mechanism was extensively distributed, implying that spirals formed a common spiritual context for early humanity.

One aspect that makes these early evidences difficult to interpret comes from the change over from a religion based on an earth goddess, to the 'sky-centric' belief systems which now dominate modern religious thought. These latter credos are based on the idea that the Deity (and Heaven) are above the earth, and not below it. Having made this transition, the mode of thinking of modern mankind is certainly out of tune with interpreting the beliefs of their early ancestors.

a) Modern shamanic experience provides strong analogies!

Another source of evidence not readily accepted by archaeology is to look for analogies with human activities in the modern day. The spiral tube leading to the lower world can be encountered in shamanic practice. While participating in drumming sessions accompanying voyages to the Lower World of shamanism, we enter a tube leading down to the Lower World paradise. In my experience as a drummer, persons often return from such a voyage describing encounters with persons they knew who have passed on. This personal evidence gives me the temerity to suggest a possible explanation for the configuration of the paintings on the walls of Sardinian locations. I follow the precedent of Graham Hancock (2006), who also reinterpreted a linkage between the Cro-Magnon paintings and shamanic rituals. If we take into account the characteristics of ancient activities that persist into the modern age, we may have more success hypothesizing the rituals once carried out so long ago. If we imagine what religious activities we would carry out if we believed in a global earth goddess, we might erect better hypotheses than if we are influenced by modern sky-centric rituals.

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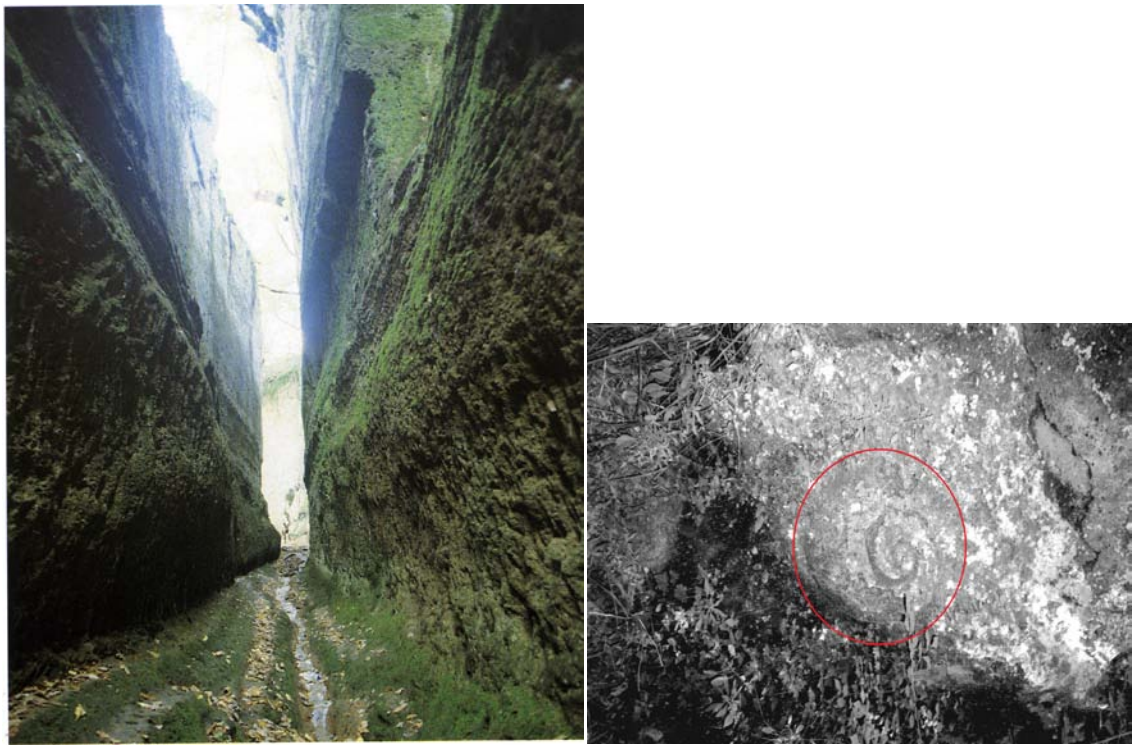


Fig 5 : An Etruscan 'quarry cut' (left), and an engraved spiral at its entry point

Ancient Etruscans excavated deep rifts through the soft tufa bedrock which were referred to as 'quarry cuts' by Giovanni De Feo (1993); an expert on Etruscan traditions and artifacts. The original purpose of the quarry cut is mysterious, but they appear not to have been intended as either waterways or roads. According to local tradition they were traversed by torch-lit processions on special occasions, presumably in recollection of defunct family members resident in the Etruscan equivalent of Hades; a below-ground afterlife. At the entrance to this rift, a small cave was located, and below it, a rock protrusion marked by a engraved spiral (Fig. 5). This suggests that a preparatory ceremony was held there before traversing this below-ground structure.

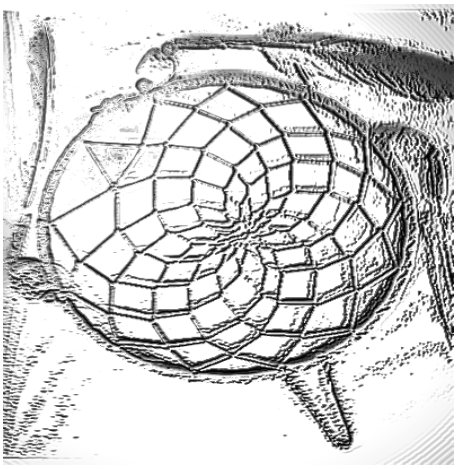


Fig 6 : An American Indian 'dream catcher'

b) The possible significance of spirals and concentric circles

As well as its ubiquity, a wide variety of spiritual meanings have been attributed to the spiral. Carl Jung saw the spiral as an archetypal symbol representing cosmic force. A spiral has also been associated with cyclic events: the seasons, birth, growth and death, and is used in *hypnosis*. Some consider the spiral a symbol for the spiritual journey, which is consistent with the association of spirals with shamanic voyaging. In other words, a common view of many mystics is that chakras are symbols of a portal or cosmic gateway to an alternate plane of reality, and relevant descriptions are given by Robert Bruce (1999).

The fact that many structures in the natural world are spiral in form, means that this is one of the oldest abstract geometric motifs brought to the attention of mankind. Although different mathematical shapes are grouped together by non-mathematicians and categorized as spirals (see Wikipedia), these typologies are not usually characterized in modern terminology; nor perhaps are they adequately distinguished in meaning from a related configuration: the concentric circles also seen in early engravings.

One may wonder if copying natural spiral objects was the main motive for their imitation in ancient times? Natural phenomena assume a variety of similar mathematical forms, such as those of snails and tornados, DNA and galaxies, but assuming they were intended to imitate these structures seems a facile interpretation. The Etruscan spiral in Fig. 5 takes on a

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logarithmic form, but most (as in aboriginal Australian art and Celtic art) can be classified as even-spaced or Archimedean spirals. Apart from two dimensional representations, three dimensional or helix spirals are typical of many natural structures – for example, the shape of the DNA molecule, and of some mollus can shells. Another category is the so-called Fermat spiral, (see Fig 7), where the line, on reaching the centre of the spiral, turns back and retraces a spiral to the outside.

In the Pala Larga case, in its configuration and coloring the cave itself shows a remarkable likeness to the upper body of a large person, and there are examples of linked Fermat spirals in the 'head end' and down the side. One speculation is that these were intended to represent chakras and two-way communication to (and from?) a distant location. Thus, the way to visualize Fermat spirals might be to consider them extended from two to three dimensions (Fig. 7). After spiraling outwards they are envisaged as narrowing in to a distant location – effectively like the 'worm holes' postulated by modern cosmologists as a way of creating a 'short cut' through space, linking two locations, such as X and Y in Fig 7.

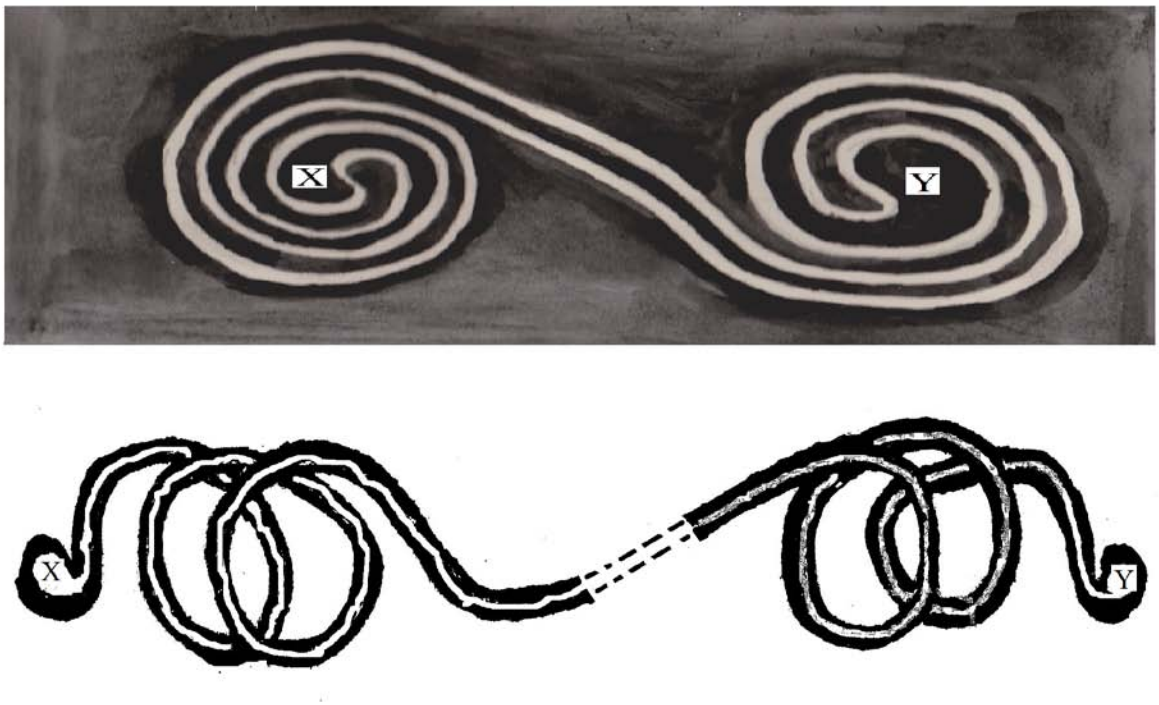


Fig 7 : (Above): Two linked Fermat spirals on the wall of the cave at Pala Larga and (below) their interpretation in 3 dimensions, as a 'worm hole' or means of communication, (possibly by telepathy?) between X and Y

Some of the few practical uses of spiral-like structures we know of are of interest: the 'dream catchers' of some American Indian tribes (Fig. 6) are intended to protect children by filtering out negative or harmful entities in the energy transmitted to them while sleeping. The chakra-like construct in Mandelbrot's (1977) portrayals was a mathematically-generated component of the boundary between dimensionally separate regimes. The intriguing fact about Mandelbrot's 'spirals' (see e.g., Peitgen and Richter 1986), is that they appear to lead from a high magnification down to a microscopic scale, and may be considered to join macro and micro worlds. A modern equivalent in Asiatic religions is the Mandala. The idea of a chakra as a route between different realities seems to be a perception shared by many mystics, who view them as traversing a boundary to other dimensions. This gives us a clue as to the supposed meanings of these spiral symbols; they suggest either a change in scale, or even a portal to another dimension, as we approach the centre of the spiral. Gazing fixedly at the centre of the spiral has even been suggested by some experts as a means of initiating a cosmic voyage.

Linked Fermat spirals occur in the 'head' region of the Pala Lunga cave, in what has been referred to as a 'Cornu' spiral. These are similar to the triple spiral or triskell, (considered variously to represent Land, Sea and Sky, Mind-body-spirit, or the cycle of life, death, and rebirth), examples of which can be seen at Newgrange, County Meath in Ireland, dating back to 2500 BC.

Alternatively, if the chakra analogy is correct for these spirals, the paired spirals on the inside of the skull

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'head region' of what seems a Gaian portrayal of a buried mother figure, are the ajna or brow chakra, and the crown chakra. The other 7 spirals along the wall to the left are perhaps the lower chakras, described by Hiroshi Motoyama (1981) based on his personal experience and on the writings of Indian mystics in Sanscrit. Should this analogy be correct, one could suppose that whatever ceremony was carried out, concerned visions, prayers or communications directed from within the body of the Earth on her behalf.

Examining Fig. 7, the complex double Fermat spiral must have had a particular meaning for the creators of Pala Larga. Fig. 7 suggests one way of viewing the linked spirals, that is, by expanding them into three dimensions as if they were a coiled spring with a point of communication at each end. Fig. 7 shows we have effectively created what is referred to as a 'wormhole' in cosmological studies. This could perhaps permit long-distance communication or linkages between multiple universes?

c) What ceremonies were carried out in Pala Larga?

The above thoughts on the significance of the Pala Larga spirals are of course 'just speculation', since we have no written records on the significance or ceremonial importance of these symbols for the ancient inhabitants of Sardinia, nor will we ever have them. Nonetheless, a more certain speculation concerns the resemblance of the cave to the human chest cavity (Fig. 1) which, as noted, suggests analogies with activities of peoples in the Animist/Earth Goddess tradition elsewhere, who identified the Earth Mother as existing below ground level as the Earth Mother. In fact, the cave seems to resemble the chest cavity of a large human being lying on 'her' back. The red color of the walls supports this anatomical analogy, with the ribs portrayed in blue and white. The overall effect then, is an uncanny portrayal of the human anatomy. For example, instead of assuming as for Etruscan tombs (e.g. at Cerveteri) that the 'ribs' in the roof of the tomb are beams of a house, why not consider them as simply ribs attached to a 'sternum?' The obstruction framing the end of the cavity, seems to be a 'clavicle' separating a smaller 'head cavity' from the main 'body' of the cave. If we assume this to be a Mother Earth portrayal, the spirals on the back wall correspond to symbols inscribed inside the top of the skull, where communication was initiated?

Presumably this cavity was used either for celebrating the passing of an important person in the community, for communication with spirits, or prayers for reincarnation. Or the cave was a location where visits to and from what may be called the shamanic lower world were carried out. Obviously, these ideas are hypotheses, but it seems evident that in seeking a meaning for the ceremonies carried out, we will never find a written explanation. We have to use personal experience in sensing the possibilities and forming our hypothesis for the role of such structures, and not suggest prosaic materialist explanations. We need to take into account the global distribution of some patterns, and reconstruct the spiritual ideas that underlay them. One deduction that seems more reliable than others, is that the presence of spirals on the walls of Pala Larga implies communication, and the facilitation of transfer of earth energies to and from the sacred cave. Ideally, we should be prepared to carry out personal experiments in 'experiential archaeology' in a similar location, with the spiritual elements in mind of an Earth Mother and her spiral communication aids.

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