

EARTH MOTHERS OF CURDI AND USGALIMAL

She was not only the Mother Goddess who commands fertility, or Lady of the Beasts who governs the fecundity of animals and all wild natures...but a composite image with Traits accumulated from both the pre-agricultural and agricultural eras ...She was giver of life and all that promotes fertility, and at the same time she was the wielder of destructive forces of nature....

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The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe: 7000 to 3500BC Myths, Legends & Cult Images

The image of Earth Mother or Mother Goddess, carved on a large laterite rock bed of the Selaulim River bank in Curdi, in Sanguem taluka (fig.1), is estimated to have existed for at least



Fig.1. Deshpande, *Purabhilekh-Puratatva* (1989)

2500 years. In 1988, before the tributary of Zuari River at Selaulim was dammed, the Directorate of Archives and Archaeology, concerned that the prehistoric treasure would be submerged by the newly-created reservoir, decided to salvage and relocate the iconic megalith from the watery grave.



Fig.2. Now located at Verna

The 8.2-feet (2.5m) *Lajja Gauri* or *Shiroyukt Korraivai* goddess, weighing 16-tons with its rock base, was transferred to the Verna plateau in the vicinity of the old temple of “*Mahalasadevi*, a female deity, believed to be an evolutionary form of the Mother Goddess”. The entire cut-out block, after it was transferred to Verna, is shown in the photograph to the right (Fig.2).

At the same time the ancient temple of *Mahadeo*, located about 20 meters from the original site of the carved image, was similarly salvaged and rebuilt with the same stones on a high ground nearby. However, several of the rock-cut caves in the general vicinity are now submerged. According to experts at the Department of Archaeology, Curdi, not far from Usgalimal, was likely the biggest Neolithic/Megalithic settlement in Goa.

Betal-Santer, the cult of the earliest Goan tribes - *Gauddes* and *Kunbis* - was later merged with the cult of *Shantara* or *Shanta Durga*. Goddess *Durga* is the mother of the universe and is worshipped as the supreme power of the Supreme Being. According to Sonak, *Malkhazan* is the traditional deity of *Gauddes* of *Gaodongre* and *Manoseshwar*, deity of sluice gates – analogous to the Sumerian anthropomorphic deity *enki* (god of water, creation and fertility), as protector of dikes and ditches (Kramer).

Since *Gauddes* and *Kunbis* are the first settlers of Goa and founders of the *gaumponn* (village communities), can it be that there is a link to the “black-headed” Sumerians?

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, there is a distinction between Mother Goddesses and Earth Mothers. The former are fertility deities; are young, full-breasted and highly sexual,

whereas, the latter are cosmogonic figures, the eternal fruitful source of everything. She is fertilized by the sun, rain and heavenly spirits through the prominently exposed vulva, to bring forth terrestrial life. The stone-carved mothers of Curdi (Figs.1, 2) and the therianthrope one at Usgalimal (Fig.3), with prominent vulvas, appear to be of the latter type. Thus, befitting the description by Gimbutas: “*Lady of the Beasts who governs the fecundity of animals....*”



Fig. 3. A therianthrope Earth Mother with prominent vulva and compound heads of an animal and a snake or eagle atop.

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