

## V-Shaped Chest-Markings Re-Considered: a Palaeolithic Figurine as Explanation of Their Wide Modern Distribution

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In my article entitled "V-Shaped Chest-Markings: Distribution of a Design-Motive in and around the Pacific" (*Anthropos* 47, 1952, pp. 99-118), I illustrated a number of such markings from Southeast Asia, the islands of the Pacific, and North and South America. At the end of that article I also mentioned the sporadic occurrence of such markings in Negro Africa. From this study it appeared that, despite variations, there is one type of marking which occurs repeatedly in almost every region: this is a "V" composed of two or more parallel rows of dots. The widespread occurrence of this "double-dotted V" among "primitive" peoples throughout much of the modern world seems to invite the inference that the type must have originated very long ago. Now evidence of its prehistoric origin has indeed come to light. Six years after the appearance of the above-mentioned article in *Anthropos*, EFIMENKO published a report on his excavations at the upper palaeolithic site of Kostiënki-I on the Don River in South Russia, in which were found a number of female figurines of mammoth ivory, including that here reproduced as figure 1, showing exactly the same kind of double-dotted V-shaped chest-marking as occurs so widely among modern "primitives" - a sampling of which is provided for comparison in figures 2-9. It therefore now seems appropriate to re-consider, at least briefly, the problem of the "V-shaped chest-markings" in view of this prehistoric evidence, in order to determine to what extent and in what way archaeology and ethnology may here shed light upon each other.

The V-shaped marking on the chest of this figurine is formed of two roughly parallel rows of superficial nicks running from the shoulders to a point between the breasts. The marks appear to have been made by successive jabs of a sharp instrument, resulting in a series of tiny chevrons rather than of "dots" or "spots", as they generally appear in the chest-markings of modern "primitives". But the similarity of concept and arrangement is nevertheless striking.