

Session title: GENDER, IDENTITY AND MATERIALITY

Organizers: Margarita Sánchez-Romero, Universidad de Granada, Granada, Spain
Sandra Montón-Subías, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain
Liv Helga Dommasnes, Bergen Museum, University of Bergen,
Bergen, Norway
Nancy Wicker, University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi, USA
Tove Hjørungdal, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Time: Friday all day

Room: Gateway Building, Hall C

Session abstract:

Since the end of the 80s, archaeological theory has emphasised the fact that archaeological knowledge is situated knowledge since it is produced by scholars in a situated time and space. In tune with this premise, it has also been acknowledged that cultural constructions of the distant past are oftentimes gender-biased. As scholars, we make choices based on our social contexts and choose to address approaches we consider fruitful for our way of constructing knowledge about gender and materiality in the past.

This whole-day session will be divided in five smaller sessions in which we will explore, within a cross-cultural and multi-vocal European context, existing research on:

- a) how knowledge that includes gender and materiality is constructed.
- b) pathways for developing strategies to overcome present day assumptions about women and gender relations in the past. These assumptions currently influence the comprehension of gender relations and the nature of women in the present.

Contributors to the session will be discussing the following issues:

1. Different ways in which people of Europe have constructed a gendered past and integrated it into the present.
2. How knowledge is constructed in specific material contexts. Ways in which both gender and the practices and experiences of women in the past have been conceptualised within different European Modern intellectual traditions.
3. What are the prerequisites behind the production of knowledge? On which paradigms, theories and methods do we construct knowledge? Why and how do we make particular choices in order to construct specific kinds of knowledge? Finally, what makes our knowledge production gender critical and feminist?
4. The construction of knowledge about gender, identity and materiality. How gender and age identities are created and sustained in daily life. How these identities are manifested, exhibited, and extended through the treatment of the body (in the funerary record and in artistic representations). Gender and age identities will be examined from an interdisciplinary point of view encompassing not only archaeology but also paleoanthropology, social anthropology, ethnoarchaeology, art, and material culture studies.
5. Recent and new analytical categories to interpret the social and (pre-)historical practices and experiences of women in the past related to the management of daily life. Discussion of the conceptualisations that we currently use to understand the past

and the ways they seem to determine the interpretations. A reconceptualisation of the gendered past would also have to affect the ways we see other categories, like age.

6. New presentations of the past. Gender, identity and materiality in cultural heritage. Whose heritage is seen as valuable, which heritage is protected, and why? Overcoming gender stereotypes through the dissemination of cultural heritage.

Paper abstracts:

Session I: The construction of knowledge. Archaeological frameworks (chaired by Margarita Sanchez-Romero)

THOROUGHLY MODERN MINOANS: WOMEN AND GODDESSES BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE ORIENT

Christine Morris, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

Throughout its history the island of Crete has been poised in dialogue between East and West. When the Cretan Bronze Age was rediscovered at the turn of the 20th century it was widely observed that there were obvious influences from the older, neighbouring Near Eastern and Egyptian civilizations, but Minoan Crete also quickly came to be described in terms of its western identity, as belonging to the heritage of Europe. This tension permeates early scholarship about the Minoans, as exemplified by Arthur Evans' seminal works. It is therefore a major ingredient in how gender issues, relating both to the mortal and divine worlds, were framed and discussed in scholarly works and then absorbed into the popular, public imagination. This paper explores how ideas about Minoan female deities and about gender relations were situated within contemporary (19th-early 20th century) ways of viewing the world, such as Orientalism and the ideology of the 'separate spheres'. The value of this analysis lies not only in its interest for the history of archaeological thought, but in revealing how these modes of thought continue, albeit more subtly, to influence our own engagements with gender in the Cretan Bronze Age.

SITUATING STANDPOINTS: PATHWAYS TO OUR CHANGING PASTS

Liv Helga Dommasnes, Bergen Museum, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

Situatedness and *standpoints* are conceptual tools, relevant for the subjects as well as the objects of research that have contributed to changing our perceptions of the past during recent decades. Partial perspectives and the insights that societies are better understood from below than from the top of a hierarchy have resulted in important criticisms of previous research, and hopes for new approaches.

In this paper I aim to present examples of connections between partial perspectives, standpoints and presentations of the past in some of the Nordic archaeological traditions that have been criticised for being gender biased. I also want to discuss how one can incorporate lessons from our research history in new approaches to past gender arrangements.

TIMES FOR WOMEN: SCALES AND MEANING OF TEMPORAL APPROACHES IN ARCHAEOLOGY

Paloma Gonzalez-Marcén, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Barcelona, Spain

The temporal structure of historical narratives imply two kind of arguments relevant for developing feminist approaches in archaeological research: first, the structuring factors of narration which visualize and pinpoint continuities and discontinuities in the existence of human groups; second, the different points of view associated to the adopted temporal perspective, i.e., from history explained as an abstract long-term process since a conception of history as singular experiences in specific socio-cultural contexts.

Starting from temporal schemes proposed in the last 50 years by historians of different theoretical schools, the temporal scales traditionally used and recently proposed in archaeology are re-examined and their implication for developing feminist approaches in archaeological research are evaluated.

TRANSLATING MATERIALS INTO ACTIVITIES AND ACTIVITIES INTO PERSONS: THE PERSISTENCE OF GENDER PREJUDICES IN PAST NARRATIVES IN THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

Ana Margarida Vale, University of Porto, Porto, Portugal

Gender Studies, Feminist Approaches or Queer Perspectives have been questioning the way the modern West understands concepts like gender, body or sexuality, and by consequence how archaeologists have perceived the past. However, the majority of the narratives about the so-called “fortified settlements” (dated from the 3rd millennium BC) in the Iberian Peninsula seems to perpetuate the association of women and men to well defined tasks (like pottery, metallurgy, gathering and weaving). The presence of explicit gender prejudices are connected with the way archaeologist see themselves, the past and how they represent it. Thus, it is necessary to question the base in which those texts were raised and look closer to the iconic images that were produced. I argue that in those narratives the materials were translated into activities and the activities into persons, in order to construct a “past as it really happened” without questioning the role of the archaeologist as an author in the weaving process of past stories. I suggest that the concept of translation as creation and transformation (after Mieke Bal and Walter Benjamin) could help to overcome gender dichotomies and the belief that it is possible to bring to the present a frozen past that is no more than each one in the present looking to her/himself at the mirror.

GENDER AND ARCHAEOLOGIES IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA AND SLOVENIA: APPROACHES AND RESEARCH

Vesna Merc, Ljubljana Graduate School of the Humanities, Ljubljana, Slovenia

The present paper studies how the genders and social structures of the past were (re)constructed in the archaeologies of former Yugoslavia. Special emphasis will be laid not only to Yugoslav archaeologies in the 70s and 80s but also to the studies of

prehistory in contemporary Slovenia. Through a detailed analysis of the main publications we will identify theories, methodologies and strategies employed in (re)constructing prehistoric social structures and genders.

**Session 2: Gender and material culture. The funerary evidence
(chaired by Sandra Montón-Subías)**

**GENDER AND AGE IDENTITIES IN IBERIAN FUNERARY CONTEXTS
(6th – 1st centuries BC)**

Lourdes Prados and Clara Ruiz, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain

In many cases, gender studies are developed without consider the different ages of individuals, their social status or ethnic groups. Our paper tries to establish how these different groups are defined, in the Iberian culture, analyzing the funeral and iconographic manifestations

It is evident that not all the inhabitants of the settlements have the “right” to be buried. The relatively low number of burials in relation with the extensive time of use of the Iberian necropolis, or the basic models of burial in a necropolis throughout the time, is information to bear in mind. Of the evidences stated in the Iberian Culture one seems to deduce the existence of differential rituals for certain social segments, as well as different places of burial, form of deposition of the body, etc. It is necessary to highlight, for example, that not all the burials that contain weapons are masculine, since the armament can indicate also other aspects, as social status, etc.

As for the iconography it has revealed the incorporation, from the beginning of the 4th century BC of the female image in funerary sculpture. This fact reveals not only new languages in the figurative arts, but also an increasing and plural participation of women in the funeral rite.

**GENDER AND SPATIAL ORGANISATION IN TWO IBERIAN
NECROPOLISES: LA SENDA AND EL POBLADO (400-180 BC)**

M^a Antonia García Luque, Universidad de Jaén, Spain

Despite gender analyses have only been incorporated very recently to the study of the funerary record of the Iron Age Iberian communities, the results demonstrate how fundamental they are to their understanding.

In this paper, I will compare the spatial pattern of two Iberian cemeteries, La Senda and El Poblado (400-180 BC), using a GIS database developed for my PhD. Although these two sites belong to the very same community, they manifest clear differences that acquire new meaning from a gender interpretation.

THE IRON AGE SARGAT WOMEN: STUDY OF KURGAN BURIALS

Natalia Berseneva, Ural Branch of RAS, Chelyabinsk, Russia

The Iron Age Sargat population occupied the vast area of the Ural-Siberian forest-steppe. Chronologically, the sites covered the period from the 6th century BC to the 3-4th centuries AD. These people may be called semi-nomadic and their economy was based on stock-breeding. The majority of the population inhabited permanent settlements and fortresses. Cemeteries of the Sargat cultural groups are represented by burial mounds (*kurgans*). The forest-steppe Iron Age societies have a great potential for gender studies. The legend of the Amazons recorded by Herodotus (IV: 114) is well known. The ancient Amazons were often identified with Sauromatian and Sarmatian women, because Iron Age female burials are relatively rich in weaponry. These nomadic steppe cultures actively influenced the Sargat population. The Sargat mortuary ritual had features in common with Saka and Sarmatian rituals (such as the kurgan way of interment, a ditch, extended position of the dead, abundance of weapons in the burials).

This study concerns the female burials of the Sargat cultural groups. It has several purposes. The main aim is to try to define the gender roles of females that could exist in the Sargat society. The second is to determine a relative status levels among the women on the basis of analysis of grave goods and spatial localization of burials.

GENDER, IDENTITY, AND DISPLAY: VARIATIONS IN MATERIALITY AMONG DIFFERENT GROUPS OF THE NORTH-WESTERN CASPIAN REGION DURING THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

Irina Lita Shingiray, Boston University, Boston, USA

In my paper I will address archaeological material culture from burial ritual sites left behind by communities of the wider north-western Caspian region during the second half of the first millennium AD. I will also examine the diverse ways in which ritual practices and the rites of passage inform the gender-specific displays of material culture among the groups which had varying cultural ideas regarding identities, social organizations, and religious worldviews. I will discuss the construction of knowledge about gender based on the analysis of particular patterns of material remains which suggest the negotiation of status and honour between different communities by means of material display. Often preserved in interred contexts, such ritual material displays can speak louder than words about gender roles in everyday life and special ceremonial ritual contexts which involve wider communal participations. In these contexts the acts implicated in the negotiation of status and identity through gendered displays evokes the larger social paradigms of organization and cultural worldviews and the political ethos of people. These patterns are most revealing when the archaeological contextual data is combined with other types of data and approaches which include specifics of textual, figurative, and oral culture representations.

**Session 3: Gender and material culture. Interpreting space
(chaired by Nancy Wicker)**

SOME COMMENTS ON THE USE OF SPACE IN MYCENAENAN ARCHITECTURE IN RELATION TO GENDER

Helène Whittaker, University of Tromsø, Tromsø, Norway

In contrast to the later Greek historical period in which questions concerning women and gender are fully established as mainstream research topics and even represent areas of specialisation, gender as an analytical category has, with some exceptions, not been very much in evidence in studies of the Greek Bronze Age (Mycenaean period). In fact, the people of Late Bronze Age Greece often appear as strangely inhuman. We talk about the Mycenaeans in relation to social topics such as burial customs, domestic architecture, or ritual, but the Mycenaean world is in a sense not thought of as peopled by individual men and women who interact with each other in various ways.

A potential source of information concerning the extent to which gender works as a structuring factor in society, also at non-elite levels, is provided by domestic architecture. The purpose of this paper is to investigate connections between the archaeological remains of architecture and the social roles and personal status of Mycenaean men and women.

THE MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES IN THE FORTIFIED CONTEXT OF PEÑALOSA: THE STRUCTURAL COMPLEX XA

Eva Alarcón and Margarita Sánchez Romero, Universidad de Granada, Granada, Spain

In the following paper we propose a different perspective for the study of the material culture and the organisation of space in prehistoric societies. We will use the concept of maintenance activities as the basic element to understand the social dynamics of the Argaric settlement of Peñalosa.

NEW PATHWAYS FOR WOMEN IN 12TH CENTURY BERGEN, NORWAY

Gitte Hansen, Bergen University Museum, Norway

What roles did women take when they moved into town, did some of them find untraditional ways of making a living? Archaeological and historic sources from 12th century Bergen in Norway are investigated to throw light upon this question. Within medieval studies emphasis is most often on the “big questions”; actors and politics in the highest levels of society gets the attention. The remnants of advanced food production – in this case sausage pins – is a neglected source category, perhaps because it, in fact, represents food production, which is traditionally considered a domestic activity carried out by actors on a lower level of society (women) and thus not so interesting for the “big questions” in main stream studies? In this study sausage pins play an intriguing role because insight in the spatial distribution of the pins has triggered “the discovery” of a new urban trade. Bergen was founded in the first quarter of the 11th century and in the following generations to come the town developed from a materialized idea into a living urban community. A new town may have been a place where old (rural) traditions could be renegotiated because behavioural norms were under development. With this as a background, remnants of advanced food production and textile production are studied in relation to the traces of visitors of the town. And it is seen that inn-keeping and the production of food for

sale were new urban trades that soon emerged. It is also seen that women in all likelihood were central actors in the new urban trades.

WOMEN IN THE LANDSCAPE: ETHNOGRAPHIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPROACHES.

Sigrid Kaland, Cultural Historical Collections, Bergen Museum, University of Bergen Norway

In this paper I will discuss the construction of the general knowledge based on analysis of some archaeological artefacts. Is it possible to see the past more alive if we as archaeologists look upon the material left in full context with the environmental landscape? My approach is to combine archaeological material with ethnographic knowledge of women's activities in a specific cultural landscape type, and thus show that women's role and social place differ within different landscapes.

Session 4: Gender and material culture. Iconography and the body (chaired by Liv Helga Dommasnes)

IN SEARCH OF THE CYCLADIC HUNTER-WARRIOR

Maria Mina, University of Cyprus, Cyprus

Traditional interpretations of the Early Bronze Age (EBA) in Europe have argued for the advent of a patriarchal social order and the elevation of men to a warrior status. Though recent interpretations have deconstructed and reviewed such narratives, the portrayal of a male-dominated EBA continues to be evoked in archaeological research. In the field of Aegean prehistory in particular, there is an unspoken consensus that perpetuates the portrayal of EBA society as androcratic. Within the new EBA social order, men are seen as occupying a prominent position as warriors or hunters, while women are viewed as restricted to passive roles of subordinate status.

Such interpretations have been based mainly on the study and interpretation of Cycladic anthropomorphic figurines and particularly of the type commonly labelled as the *hunter-warrior*. However, the discussion has revolved around male *hunter-warrior* figurines of dubious provenance, a serious problem that still troubles Cycladic figurine studies. Conversely, eidoloplastic representations of *secure* female *hunter-warriors* have been ignored. Figurine evidence, in association with data of the Aegean archaeological record, however, does not indicate the emergence of gender asymmetries in the EBA.

This paper proposes that a re-appraisal of the available evidence helps us understand and interpret Aegean EBA gender roles and social organisation more critically. Ultimately, our aim should be to re-examine evolutionary social models, as applied today in archaeology, but also the implications they generate for the understanding of gender in prehistoric societies.

ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE BODY: NEW APPROACHES TO WOMEN'S LIVES IN THE BRONZE AGE

Margarita Sánchez Romero, Universidad de Granada, Spain

During the last years, the so-called “Archaeology of the Body” has emphasised the relevance of the study of women’s bodies in order to reflect lived experiences. The activities they carry out, their social status, their identity, etc. are reflected not only in the osteological remains but also in the cultural manifestations. In this paper, we will analyse the material culture of the Bronze Age societies of the South of the Iberian Peninsula to assess how women create their own images during their life span.

SITUATED KNOWLEDGE OF SCANDINAVIAN MIGRATION PERIOD: BRACTEATES FROM TYPOLOGIES TO AGENCY AND BODILY ADORNMENT

Nancy L. Wicker, University of Mississippi, USA

Since the time of the nineteenth-century Swedish archaeologist Oscar Montelius, the study of fifth- and sixth-century Scandinavian gold pendants called bracteates has been dominated by attempts to classify them and to interpret their iconography. Most of these bracteates apparently display images of male gods (although there are a few intriguing examples that may represent women), yet they were discovered in burial context on the bodies of women.

The ways in which 19th- and 20th-century male scholars constructed typologies and chronologies of these objects unconsciously reflected their own unspoken biases toward androcentric ways of thinking to construct specific kinds of knowledge. My own research into the role of female agency in the production of these objects and the integration of them as parts of women’s bodily appearance rather than merely exercises in seriation likewise reflects situated knowledge. As an American woman in the 21st century, I attempt to construct self-reflexive and self-critical knowledge compatible with a feminist and post-modern gendered past.

PUBLIC PATRIARCHATE IN CONTEMPORARY ROMANIAN ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE IMAGES OF WOMEN IN THE ROMANIAN NEOLITHIC AND BRONZE AGE

Nona Palincas, Institute of Archaeology, Bucharest, Romanian Academy, Romania

We can consider two sets of observations. One set concerns the specialist literature on the Romanian Neolithic and Bronze Age:

1. Archaeologists writing on Neolithic frequently refer in their interpretations to women and the “Mother Goddess”, and ideas of Marija Gimbutas are readily embraced;
2. Archaeologists writing on Bronze Age hardly ever mention women in their interpretations to the point the reader is left with the image of a social life that went on perfectly without any participation of women. In fact one could be convinced that the archaeological record itself does not allow archaeologists to talk about women and the contrast to the Neolithic is not even acknowledged, let alone accounted for.

The other set concerns the Romanian archaeologists that produced this specialist literature:

1. There is no significant difference in the gender and age structure of the archaeologists specialized in the Neolithic and the Bronze Age, both groups presenting the characteristics of public patriarchy;
2. Feminist archaeology has a particularly bad name among both categories and gender archaeology is only at its very beginning.

The aim of this paper is to investigate the relationship between the patriarchal character of the archaeological practice and the emerging dominant androcentric (in local reading of the majority “scientific”) stance on one hand, and the roles ascribed to women in the interpretations of the archaeological record on the other.

Session 5 – Suggesting new pathways (chaired by Tove Hjørungdal)

GENDER AND POWER RELATIONS AMONG THE AWÁ (MARANHÃO, BRASIL): A REFLECTION ON THE CATEGORY OF GENDER IN PAST SOCIETIES

Almudena Hernando Gonzalo, Universidad Complutense, Madrid

Analytical categories used to describe past societies do not usually include gender. And when they do, as in feminist and gender archaeology, present categories of gender are often applied, as if they were universal. By doing this, archaeologists use socially-constructed differences between men and women from our society in order to recover the most remote past, imposing a bias that keeps us from understanding the cultural dynamics that we aim to reconstruct. We present an ethnoarchaeological case here, out of our conviction that archaeology needs to open new ways of thinking about gender relations in the past: the Awá Indians of Brazil. The Awá seem to present a more complex relationship between gender and power than a simple projection of present concepts of man and women would foresee. Through our case study, we will reflect on the possible meaning of the social behaviour of both sexes and we will defend the necessity of taking into account socio-economic complexity and historical particularities to explore gender issues on a more solid ground than usually done.

PREHISTORIC HEGEMONIC MASCULINITIES

Lisbeth Skogstrand, Kulturhistorisk Museum, Universitetet i Oslo, Oslo, Norway

In my PhD project I aim to explore ideas of masculinity; how masculinities were expressed in cremation burials in Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age (1000 BC-400 AD) in Southern Scandinavia and how this might have changed over time. The theoretical approach is based on feminist theory in general and theories on masculinity in particular.

In this paper I will argue that androcentric research is not really about men, and that one way of challenging androcentric science is to study masculinity. Further I will discuss the concept hegemonic masculinity, its potential in an archaeological approach and how it may be combined with an understanding of gender as performative.

BLACK SWANS IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

Sandra Monton-Subias, ICREA-Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain

The introduction of Gender and Feminist perspectives in archaeology has demonstrated how a gender sensitive agenda to the analysis of the past may lead to new frameworks of historical explanation.

In this paper, I will share my thoughts about the need to consider black swans in archaeological interpretation and will consider its filiations with the emphasis on quotidian and everyday dynamics posed by Gender archaeology.

CONTEXTUALISING STIGMA: VISUALISING OBJECTIVITY AND MATERIALISING GENDER INEQUALITY IN MEDIEVAL THEOLOGY AND CONTEMPORARY TECHNO-SCIENCE TRADITIONS

Diane Roege and Stephanie Koerner, University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

Until rather recently, the most controversial disputes around the construction of knowledge revolved around questions about how change in the *content* of authoritative abstract ideas has related to socio-historical *contexts*. Over the last decades, there has been a sea of change in terms of what questions researchers are trying to illuminate, and thus the approaches they have developed. Recognition of the engendered nature of knowledge construction has played important roles in shifting attention from disputes over timeless, abstractions to questions about the roles of ideologies of gender inequality in wider crises over representations of pedagogical and political authority. Much interest has begun to centre on the roles of materially embedded instruments and embodied practices of visualisation in such major controversies over credibility, as those which have transformed predominant conceptions of objectivity and gender.

In this contribution, we illustrate how these developments bear upon key themes of the session in light of our research on comparisons, which can be made between how visualisation technologies were used to settle late medieval controversies over stigmata and how they are used today in diagnosis of congenital abnormalities. We will conclude by suggesting that claims about timeless sources of objectivity, employments of visualisation technologies to reduce matters of trust to the exclusive purview of expert competence, and gender inequality technologies are intrinsically linked.

WOMEN, HERITAGE AND MUSEUMS

Laia Colomer, Museu d'Història de la Ciutat, Barcelona, Spain

Begoña Soler, Museu de Prehistòria, Valencia, Spain

In this paper we will present a new protocol to analyse the relative weight of women in museum exhibitions to understand how knowledge has been constructed. We will specially focus on the analysis of the City History Museum in Barcelona and the Museum of Prehistory in Valencia.

NEW PATHWAYS: NEAR FUTURE ON REMOTE PASTS

Sandra Montón Subías, ICREA-Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain

Liv Helga Dommasnes, Bergen Museum, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

DrMargarita Sánchez Romero, Universidad de Granada, Spain

Ericka Engelstad, University of Tromsø, Tromsø, Norway

More than a paper on the traditional sense of the word, under this title we would like to present and discuss with you a new European project on Gender Archaeology as well as to settle the basis for future collaborative research.