

**Session title: SEXUALITY AND CULTURAL REPRODUCTION IN PREHISTORIC EURASIA**

**Organizers:** Cristian Schuster, Archaeological Institute, Bucharest, Romania  
Lolita Nikolova, University of Utah & International Institute of Anthropology, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA/Institute for Development and Innovations in Education and Science, Sofia, Bulgaria

**Time:** Friday afternoon

**Room:**

**Session abstract:**

Sexuality as a social and psychological construct varies within the socio-cultural traditions in the history of the human society. The absence of prehistoric written records does not allow us to explore in depth its genesis, so we have to use models and hypotheses based on fragmented and indirect data and on comparative studies.

In this session we will attempt to explore the following problems:

- (1) The role of sexuality as a psychological and social construct in Eurasian Prehistory;
- (2) The interrelation between sexuality, biological reproduction and cultural reproduction in Eurasian Prehistory;
- (3) How the most recent research on sexuality, sex and brain and especially on the psychology of sexuality can be applied to Prehistory, in particular to archaic Eurasia;
- (4) To understand the construction of sexual identity and its relation to gender and social identity in Prehistoric Eurasia;
- (5) To detect traces of different types of sexuality and gender relations in the archaeological record of Prehistoric Eurasia;
- (6) To understand how the concepts of sex, sexuality and gender influenced the aesthetics and semiotics of the early Eurasian art.

**Paper abstracts:**

**PROBLEMS OF INTERRELATION BETWEEN THE BIOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL REPRODUCTIONS IN EURASIAN PREHISTORY**

Lolita Nikolova, International Institute of Anthropology, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA/Institute for Development and Innovations in Education and Science, Sofia, Bulgaria

The development of social complexity in Eurasian Prehistory resulted in dynamic social standards in which traditions and innovations were in a dialectic connection. The presentation in particular will approach the role the interrelation between biological and cultural reproductions during the Neolithic, Copper and Bronze Age. Of special interest are the cemetery regional data within a long span of time and

cross-cultural comparative studies although inner migrations and the fragmentary archaeological records do not allow drawing definite conclusions.

A demographic boom at the beginning of the painted pottery in the Balkans will be projected (the beginning of the sixth millennium cal BCE). It seems a regulation of the biological reproduction should be proposed already for the early Neolithic limited possibly to 4-6 children which depended on the subsistence strategies and the opportunity of development of a successful cultural reproduction. The data of the cemetery of Durankulak give some fragmentary comparative evidence for later Neolithic and Copper Age while the Pit Grave culture allows to discuss the problem in a broad Eurasian Early Bronze context and in comparison with other cultures, for instance from the Corded Ware Horizon.

## **IS THERE A SEXUAL DISTINCTION AMONG BURIALS OF THE NEOLITHIC AND BRONZE AGE PERIODS FROM ROMANIA?**

Alexandra Comşa, Institute of Archaeology "Vasile Pârvan", Bucharest, Romania

A comparative study of the burials from the Neolithic and Bronze Age from Romania, as archaeology and anthropology are concerned, could reveal a lot of interesting aspects concerning the different "value" of a body with a certain sex. We have taken into account some of the burials which we found more interesting and supportive for our hypothesis. The main idea was to point out some differences existing in time, regarding the treatment of a deceased with a certain sex.

## **THE MALE AND HIS SEXUAL ATTRIBUTES IN THE PREHISTORIC FIGURINES OF THE SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE**

Cristian Schuster, Institute of Archaeology "Vasile Pârvan", Bucharest, Romania

Even a superficial analysis of the prehistoric figurines in South-Eastern Europe offers the proof that the male individuals were less documented, as compared to the female ones.

In our presentation we will analyze examples of human figurines from Neoeolithic mobile art (the Boian, Hamangia, Gumelnița, Tripolye-Cucuteni and other cultures), which gender is identified due to their male realistically or schemetically represented attributes. It is possible that, they could have rendered minor divinities, who accompanied the Mother Goddess or, warrior personages. There are also instances of the prehistoric material cultures identified as substitutes of male figures, especially burnt clay phalluses. Some of them had a longitudinal piercing or small handles for suspension, while others, being modelled in a very realistic way, displayed the naked foreskin and *urinary meatus*.

## **PREHISTORIC SYMBOLIC MESSAGES ON THE HUMAN CLAY FIGURINES**

Marco Merlini, The Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Romania

The human body was employed as one of the first “books” to write messages. Hundreds of anthropomorphic statuettes from the Neo-Eneolithic of Southeastern Europe are incised with inscriptions of the Danube script which developed between ca. 6000-3500 BC. Among the 4,408 occurrences of script signs recorded by *DatDas* (Databank for the Danube script) developed by the author, the most frequently inscribed objects (after potshards) are human figurines: more than one artifact in five.

A number of inscribed figurines have female gender and have been recovered within a ritual context, such as domestic altars, sanctuaries, temples, and open ceremonial areas.

The author proposes an interpretation of the typology of the messages carried by these figurines according to statistical evidence from *DatDas* and documentary and iconographic support.

## **GENDER AT THE NORTHERN THRACIANS: ICONOGRAPHY AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES**

Valeriu Sîrbu, Brăila Museum and Institute of Archaeology “Vasile Pârvan”, Bucharest, Romania

Livia Sîrbu, Brăila Museum, Brăila, Romania

So far, there is no synthesis study on the representation of sexuality and erotic scenes on various categories of items from the northern Thracians. That is why it is our intent to approach this phenomenon based on the archaeological discoveries, as well as the iconographic representations or the written sources. Geographically speaking, we will refer to the Thracians north of the Balkans. Chronologically speaking, we will deal with the period between 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC and 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD. It is mostly on precious-metal treasures, but also on some representations from tombs or on pottery, that there are scenes which allow us to identify the ways in which the Thracians portrayed men and women: by depicting sexual organs, breasts, chins and haircut, as well as by means of the different clothes, the presence or absence of weapons, categories of jewels or tools etc. Several funerary discoveries including a male and a female in one and the same grave, as well as the paired anthropomorphic figurines offer us precious pieces of information. Also, there are several iconographic representations or archaeological discoveries that, without a doubt, depict sexual scenes.

Based on the archaeological contexts and the types of items or representations, we will attempt to decipher the meaning of these discoveries in the Thracian world.