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GENDER AND ARCHAEOLOGY

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Introduction

In archaeology, gender is not a simple man-woman binary classification. It is the performance and embodiment of an identity that intersects with age, sex, race, sexuality and class. One is not born, but rather becomes, a gendered person over time. Ideally, gender is explored as one of the structuring principles in societies. Gender archaeology challenges the notion that gender is timeless, biologically determined, and universal. By addressing questions to the material evidence—landscape, space, architecture, food, bodies, and artifacts—it investigates gendered roles and identities. A gender role comprises societal expectations: how people are supposed to walk, talk, dress, and act. This can be more straightforward than explorations of gendered identities, which are personal conceptions of self. Genders can be performed or embodied differently throughout the life course, meaning that people consistently (re)negotiate gender roles and identities throughout time. However, some studies still equate gender with sex, view gender as a binary (man and woman), or implicitly assume that gender identities follow Western or European models. We must be aware that, like now, gender exists on a wide spectrum, and assume the presence of various identities, including trans or pan folkx as well as categories of normative women and men. From its inception in the 1980s, gender archaeology, drawing on inspiration from other areas of the humanities and civil rights movements (as well as anthropology more generally), endeavored to change archaeological practice. It highlighted the problematic assumptions made in the present about the past, including ideas of universal male dominance. Challenges to this were rooted in second-wave feminist activism: women were

demanding space, both within contemporary society and in accounts of the past. Feminist archaeologists firstly engaged in the process of making women visible. Drawing from wider post-structural and postcolonial thinking, from the mid-1990s onward, gendered approaches moved toward conversations of “difference” including explorations of power as well as agency, moving on from the “add women and stir” approach. This meant dismantling the concepts of apparently stable gendered identities of “man” or “woman” and embracing the fluidity of identity, characteristic of third-wave feminism. This resulted in wider conversations on sexualities, the body/embodiment, ethnicity, personhood, and life course. At this time, too, there was a surge in studies of masculinities, which had been left out in the pursuit of making women visible. Yet archaeology remains dominated by stories of anonymous, elite white men. With signs of renewed feminist activism (the fourth wave?), there is hope for different, better and inclusive narratives.

General Overviews

In gender archaeology, there is a range of readers, edited collections, as well as single-authored articles and books that provide overviews of feminist and gender approaches. This compiled bibliography deals primarily with English-language publications, but there exists a wealth of publications on feminist and gender archaeology in German, Spanish, Swedish, Norwegian, Portuguese, and French.

Journals

There is no current journal of “gender archaeology”; the only dedicated journal for feminist and gender studies in archaeology was a Norwegian publication entitled *Kvinner i Arkeologi i Norge* (KAN, Women in Archaeology in Norway). This ran from 1985 until 2005 but is no longer being

published. Articles that discuss or employ feminist and gender archaeology feature in many leading journals. A selection of Anglophone examples includes [Antiquity](#), [American Antiquity](#), [Norwegian Archaeological Review](#), [European Journal of Archaeology](#), [Historical Archaeology](#), [Medieval Archaeology](#), and the [Journal of Social Archaeology](#). Gender features most prominently in the [Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory](#), which has hosted many single-authored papers and at least two influential special editions, including [Conkey and Wylie 2007](#) and [Ghisleni, et al. 2016](#). However, all of these and other journals have room to improve when it comes to featuring articles on gender and/or having special editions that deal with topical or current debates.

**American Antiquity*[<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/american-antiquity>]*. 1936–. [class:periodical]

Peer-reviewed quarterly journal, considered field leading in North America. Features some articles on gender archaeology and also gender inequality.

**Antiquity: A Review of World Archaeology*[<https://antiquity.ac.uk/>]*. 1927–. [class:periodical]

Peer-reviewed journal that features world archaeology without temporal or geographical limits.

Conkey, Margaret W., and Alison Wylie, eds. 2007. *Special issue: Doing archaeology as a feminist*. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 14.3. [doi:10.1007/s10816-007-9034-4][class:journalArticle]

This edited special journal issue reflects on the work completed in gender and feminist archaeology through a series of essays by feminist archaeologists (Erika Engelstad, Stephanie Moser, Silvia Tomášková, Margaret Conkey, Alison Wylie, Joan Gero, Rosemary Joyce, and Ruth Tringham). It highlights how a feminist standpoint can enrich archaeological

interpretations, including gender. This is a must-read for all feminist scholars as it acts as a review of theoretical approaches, an overview of gender work more generally, and new ways of thinking that encourage plurality and disrupt the norm.

**European Journal of Archaeology*[<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/european-journal-of-archaeology>]*. 1998–. [class:periodical]

Peer-reviewed quarterly journal of the European Association of Archaeologists that publishes new archaeological research undertaken in and around Europe.

Ghisleni, Lara, Alexis M. Jordan, and Emily Fiocoprile, eds. 2016. *Special issue: “Binary binds”: Deconstructing sex and gender dichotomies in archaeological practice*. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 23.3. [doi:10.1007/s10816-016-9296-9]
[class:journalArticle]

A collection of essays that endeavor to highlight the ongoing issues with sex and gender dichotomies. It foregrounds current gender theory and also embeds this in archaeological analysis across a broad thematic, geographic, and chronological span, including practice, theory, and interpretation.

**Historical Archaeology*[<https://www.springer.com/journal/41636>]*. 1967–. [class:periodical]

Peer-reviewed quarterly journal of the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA), with an international focus on the archaeology of the historical era. Covers archaeological exploration of enslaved people and slavery, gender, race, ethnicity, and social class, as well as globalization, industry, landscapes, material culture, battlefields, and so on. Of note is the special edition on sex work, brothels, and households (see [Seifert 2005](#), cited under [Archaeologies of Sex, Sexuality, and Desire](#)).

**Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*[<https://www.springer.com/journal/10816>]*. 1994–. [class:periodical]

Peer-reviewed international journal that engages critically with the theories, method, and practices of archaeology. Gender features prominently—from time to time—in this journal. It has hosted at least two influential special editions : [Conkey and Wylie 2007](#) and [Ghisleni, et al. 2016](#).

**Journal of Social Archaeology*[<https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jsa>]*. 2001–. [class:periodical]

Peer-reviewed international journal that features interdisciplinary research focused on social approaches in archaeology that includes queer theory, sex, gender, and feminism, as well as reflecting on contemporary social inequalities.

**Medieval Archaeology*[<https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ymed20/current>]*. 1957–. [class:periodical]

International journal that publishes interdisciplinary archaeology research on the Middle Ages. Gender features with papers but not often as a topic of discussion.

**Norwegian Archaeological Review*[<https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/sarc20/current>]*. 1968–. [class:periodical]

International journal with a focus on theory, and to a lesser degree on method and practice. Captures current trends and ongoing international debates including gender.

Edited Volumes and Readers

There are a number of edited volumes and readers dedicated to the study of feminist and gender archaeology that are of value to students, scholars, and wider interested audiences. [Gero and Conkey 1991](#) was one of the first such collections with the explicit aim of addressing imbalances in interpretations by foregrounding a feminist gendered archaeology and focusing on women's experience. Through careful analyses, these collected essays show how gender was one of the structuring elements of societies, and also demonstrate how, with a different perspective, alternative readings of the past are possible. Similarly, [du Cros and Smith 1993](#) examined women's roles in archaeological practice and heritage in Australia but also challenged assumptions relating to gender interpretation, especially the imposition of Eurocentric models. Both volumes focus on gender theory. Many edited collections feature one special theme with regard to gender, such as [Matić and Jensen 2017](#) on violence, [Baxter 2005](#) on children, or [Hadley 1999](#) on masculinity in medieval Europe. In terms of a broader overview, [Smith 2014](#) is an encyclopedia that contains a series of articles on gender, as well as biographies of feminist archaeologists. It also covers international perspectives on gender archaeology from a European, American, Australian, and Spanish perspective. One of the articles, [Montón-Subías and Meyer 2014](#), provides a clear, concise, and current review of feminist, queer, and gender archaeology and includes international perspectives. [Nelson 2006](#) and [Bolger 2013](#) are specifically readers in gender—both are very comprehensive, covering topics from gender theory to material culture as well as having a wide-reaching geographical and cultural scope. [Bolger 2013](#) in particular embraces third-wave feminist approaches that focus on the body and multiple overlapping identities. [Hays-Gilpin and Whitley 1998](#), though slightly dated, is still of value to the gender scholar as it brings together a number of key essays that highlight emergent gender theory of the

1980s and 1990s. Recently reworked and reissued, [Meade and Wiesner-Hank 2021](#) has a number of articles that feature gender archaeological approaches from across the globe.

Baxter, Jane. 2005. *The archaeology of childhood: children, gender, and material culture*.

Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press. [ISBN: 9780759103320]

An introduction to the gendered lives of children and women. Provides a neat summary of theories and methods for archaeological studies of childhood as well as highlighting how women have been marginalized in archaeological interpretations. Its research material is primarily from the United States.

Bolger, D., ed. 2013. *A companion to gender prehistory*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

[\[doi:10.1002/9781118294291\]](https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118294291). [ISBN: 9780470655368]

An excellent comprehensive and current guide to gender and gender archaeology. The thematic approach covers current debates and future thinking on gender as well as investigations of bodies, identity, and material culture. Its focus is prehistory but there is a wide geographic and chronological range within this. Of note is the regionally specific gendered historiographies which highlight how multifaceted gendered approaches are across the globe.

Du Cros, Hilary, and Laurajane Smith, eds. 1993. *Women in archaeology: A feminist critique*.

Canberra: Australian National Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9780731515424]

Emerging from the first Women in Archaeology Conference, Australia (1991), this volume covers gender theory and its application to a variety of time periods as well as women in archaeological practice and heritage management. It comprises a range of informative chapters, including analyses of the imposition of Eurocentric gender roles (Judy Birmingham), critiques

of Venus figures (Alison Wylie), and heritage issues in relation to class, gender, and racial bias (Laurajane Smith).

Hays-Gilpin, Kelley, and David S. Whitley, eds. 1998. *Reader in gender archaeology*. London: Routledge. [ISBN: 9780415173599]

This reader combines a number of key essays that captured emergent and changing theories from the 1980s and 1990s. These classic works are drawn from a number of different publications and are arranged thematically: Sex, Gender, and Archaeology; Human Origins; Identifying “Sexual” Divisions of Labour; From Sexual Divisions to Gender Dynamics; Gender Iconography and Ideology; Power and Social Hierarchies; and New Narratives, New Visions.

Gero, Joan M., and Margaret W. Conkey. 1991. *Engendering archaeology: Women and prehistory*. Oxford: Blackwell. [ISBN: 9780631165057]

An innovative book that brought together a series of essays with the aim of gendering archaeology and foregrounding women’s experience. Explicitly stated as a desire to correct “the appalling absence of concepts that tap women’s experience.” Theoretically informed analyses of prehistoric data are used to consider gender of past societies from food and technology to space, images, and things.

Hadley, Dawn, eds. 1999. *Masculinity in medieval Europe*. London: Routledge. [ISBN: 9780582316447]

Collection of essays that explore masculinity of medieval men and women in the Middle Ages, ranging from the 4th to the 15th century, not all of which are archaeological. It endeavors to explore how gender is constructed relationally between people and highlights the formation of

medieval masculinities. This volume covers a number of topics, from the processes of attaining masculinity to the performance of masculine identities as military leader, religious men, and the secular community.

Matić, Uroš, and Bo Jensen, ed. 2017. *Archaeologies of gender and violence*. Oxford: Oxbow. [ISBN: 9781785706882]

An important edited collection of essays that highlights and disentangles the intersection of sex, gender, and violence. Dealing sensitively with a difficult topic, the authors remind us that, like gender, violence is culturally and contextually specific as well as being socially meaningful. This volume is enriched by contemporary approaches, current gender thinking, and new analyses of violence, including the effects of war on noncombatants.

Meade, A. T., and M. E. Wiesner-Hank, eds. 2021. **A companion to global gender history*[<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/book/10.1002/9780470693568>]*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell. [ISBN: 9781119535805]

Contains overviews, reviews, analyses, and detailed case studies of gender, gender theory, women's studies, and feminism from across the globe throughout human history that will be of interest to the gender scholar. While archaeology is not the core focus, there are a number of contributions by gender archaeologists, such as Marie-Anne Dobres's "Gender in the Earliest Human Societies" and Rosemary Joyce's "Gender in the Ancient Americas: From Earliest Villages to European Colonisation."

Montón-Subías, S., and W. Meyer. 2014. Engendered archaeologies. In *Encyclopedia of global archaeology*. Edited by C. Smith. New York: Springer. [[doi:10.1007/978-1-4419-0465-2_259](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-0465-2_259)]. [ISBN: 9781441904263]

Encyclopedia entry on feminist and gender archaeologies that covers historiographies and method as well as signposting future directions, with helpful reference lists for further reading.

Nelson, Sarah M. 2006. *Handbook of gender in archaeology*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

[ISBN: 9780759106789]

A collection of articles on feminist and gender archaeology that covers theory, material culture, personhood, hierarchies, household, landscape, sexuality, masculinity, early human societies, and death. It also provides an overview of gender archaeology in different global regions (Asia, Australia, Africa, Europe, and North, South, and Meso America). These contributions are authored by leading or recognized experts and captured the state-of-the-art in the 2000s.

Smith, C., ed. 2014. **Encyclopedia of global*

archaeology[<https://link.springer.com/referencework/10.1007%2F978-1-4419-0465-2>]*.

New York: Springer. [ISBN: 9781441904263]

This is not a dedicated gender encyclopedia, but it does contain contributions from gender scholars on current understandings of gender, queer, and feminist archaeology from a variety of international perspectives. Alberti and Danielsson concentrate on the United States, Montón-Subías on Spain, De Leiuon discusses Australia, and Dommasnes focuses on Europe.

Books, Monographs, and Case Studies

Discussed here is a small selection of the wide range of publications currently available that focus on gender and feminist archaeology (see also [Gender Archaeology Historiography](#), [Theories and Approaches](#), and [Scales of Analysis](#)). Janet Spector's creative book [Spector 1993](#) employs feminist gender theory enmeshed with a biographical approach. It focuses in particular on women's stories as a way to understand the story of the past beyond grand narratives. This

attention to the micro-scale is a key tenet of feminist archaeology. The concept is employed in [Gilchrist 1994](#), which focuses on the lived experiences and interior lives of medieval nuns in England, as well as gendered ideologies and identities as negotiated through space and things. This study remains a leading example of how rigorous empirical archaeological analyses and gender interpretations are not mutually exclusive, as critics often argue. [Gilchrist 1999](#) outlines gender archaeology and gender theory but also showcases its application through a series of case studies. [Nelson 2004](#)—updated from 1997—also provides a commentary of gender archaeology but then explores how gender and power intersect as well. More recently, [Joyce 2008](#) discusses concepts of the gendered body and embodiment. This complex topic is dealt with through a series of easy-to-read case studies that are especially suitable for emerging gender scholars. The body remains a key focus in current gender theory and practice (see [The Body](#)). [Rebay-Salisbury 2016](#) addresses concepts of the gendered body, human remains, and bodily representations in Iron Age Central Europe. Moving into the more recent past, [Battle-Baptiste 2011](#) is deeply relevant for our contemporary world, comprising a detailed theoretical overview of Black feminist theory and its application to archaeology. Through a combination of fieldwork, archival research, and ethnography, Battle-Baptiste outlines how it is possible to engage with gender and race. In doing so, she has created a go-to guide or methodological toolkit for intersectional archaeological practice that manages to capture big stories from the small scale of daily life. Staying within a North American context, [Wilkie 2010](#) explores masculine identities and ideologies through an analysis of fraternities in university life. It, too, features the mundane or everyday life, but with an emphasis on young men within the context of changing gendered roles in the early 20th century.

Battle-Baptiste, Whitney. 2011. *Black feminist archaeology*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press. [ISBN: 9781598743791] [[doi:10.4324/9781315096254](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315096254)]

A reflexive and engaging work that highlights how Black feminist theory can bring new, more inclusive perspectives that transform archaeological interpretations. Three case-study sites, Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, W. E. B. Du Bois's Homesite, and Lucy Foster's Homestead, are used to foreground the everyday experiences or intimate details of the people who lived, worked, and/or were enslaved in these locations. Questions of gender and race are foregrounded but women's work, family life, and home are central to the archaeological story of this book.

Gilchrist, Roberta. 1994. *Gender and material culture: The archaeology of religious women*. London: Routledge. [[doi:10.4324/9780203037126](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203037126)] [ISBN: 9780415089036]

Through the application of gender theory with a feminist archaeological approach to communities of religious women, this monograph highlights the lives of understudied religious women. Comprising detailed archaeological analyses of material culture and built environment, it demonstrated that nunneries were only "hidden from history" owing to the androcentric narratives in archaeology.

Gilchrist, Roberta. 1999. *Gender and archaeology: Contesting the past*. London: Routledge. [[doi:10.4324/9780203007976](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203007976)] [ISBN: 9786610193684]

First review and overview of gender archaeology that has a broad chronological and geographic range, covering sex, gender, the body, and performance theory through a series of detailed examples and case studies from precolonial Peru to the warrior body, medieval castle arrangements, and prehistoric rock art.

Joyce, Rosemary. 2008. *Ancient bodies, ancient lives: Sex, gender and archaeology*. New York: Thames & Hudson. [ISBN: 9780500051535]

Accessible and thorough explanations of sex and gender through a series of case studies from Paleolithic Europe to Mayan societies. Covers key points in historiography and concepts in gender archaeology, from sex and gender to the body and wider material culture. Essential reading for the gender scholar. Approachable book for undergraduates.

Nelson, Sarah M. 2004. *Gender in archaeology: Analyzing power and prestige*. 2d ed. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press. [ISBN: 9780759115743]

An updated version of a 1997 edition that covers the historiography of feminist and gender archaeology and archaeologists as well as current debates. Its broad chronological range and the presentation of conceptually difficult topics in a clear manner makes this a go-to guide for all. Thematic discussions of power and prestige are embedded throughout, but specific arguments related to early people, households, belief, and labor are also explored.

Rebay-Salisbury, K. 2016. *The human body in early Iron Age Central Europe: Burial practices and images of the Hallstatt world*. London: Routledge. [[doi:10.4324/9781315277233](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315277233)] [ISBN: 9781472453549]

Explores various intersecting ideas of gendered identities through thematic analysis of the body (in life and death) with a focus on the everyday life in early Iron Age societies in Europe. Considerations of motherhood, age, material culture, and representations of the (gendered) body.

Spector, Janet. 1993. **What this awl means: Feminist archaeology at a Wahpeton Dakota village*[<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/54411>]*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press. [ISBN: 9780873512770]

This book focuses on excavations and discoveries at Little Rapids, a 19th-century Eastern Dakota planting village near present-day Minneapolis. It uses a biographical approach that foregrounds the story of women—both the archaeologist (Spector) and the Wahpeton/Dakota community. It shows how it is possible to center different details in the story of the past outside of traditional narratives of power or economy. While certain concepts are no longer accepted, this remains an excellent book that can still, after nearly thirty years, provide a “way-in” to gender archaeology for students.

Wilkie, Laura. 2010. *The lost boys of Zeta Psi: A historical archaeology of masculinity at a university fraternity*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press. [ISBN: 9780520260597]

Discussion on the gendered realities of “Greek” life or fraternities that provides an insight into this particular form of masculine identity in the first fraternity at the University of California, Berkeley. Careful analysis of architecture, oral histories, as well as archaeological excavations enables a nuanced commentary on emerging masculinities and broader societal changes. It focuses on shifting gendered roles and identities, and shows the value of studies of the recent past to encourage a contemporary audience to reflect changes in the present.

Organizations and Groups

There are a number of gender research working groups or committees that champion approaches to gender archaeology, such as [Archaeology and Gender in Europe](#) (AGE) under the umbrella of the European Association of Archaeologists. In North America within the [Society of American](#)

Archaeology], there are special interest groups such as “Queer Archaeology” and “Women in Archaeology.” The [Society for Historical Archaeology] has a “Gender and Minority Affairs Committee,” which is an antiracist organization that desires to address structural issues of inequality relating to race and gender. This is also a core principle of the [Society of Black Archaeologists]. In the United Kingdom, the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists has a dedicated [Equality and Diversity Group]. In Germany, [FemArc—Network of Women in Archaeology] promotes feminist archaeological research and offers peer support for like-minded people. Other more informal groups such as [Paye ta Truelle] have been established to combat sexism and provide people with a platform to share sexism as well as other issues related to inequality.

Archaeology and Gender in Europe, European Associations of Archaeologists[<http://www.archaeology-gender-europe.org/>].

The main aim of this group is to develop a formal and permanent European network of gender archaeology as well as promoting gender/feminist approaches. The website has a helpful list of gender scholars, with some of their current work on gender in Europe. This group is active and regularly hosts sessions at the European Associations of Archaeologists.

Equality and Diversity Group, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, UK[<https://www.archaeologists.net/equality-and-diversity-group>].

This group is open to all, including nonmembers and students. Its core aim is to combat inequality as revealed in two decades of surveys in the archaeological professional. These demonstrated that the workforce in British archaeology is predominantly white, able-bodied,

and has notably less women over the age of forty, translating to a lack of women and others in senior roles.

FemArc—Network of Women in Archaeology[<https://www.femarc.de/en/>].

Netzwerk archäologisch arbeitender Frauen e.V. is a German organization that aims to promote feminist and gender archaeology. This website has a helpful list of publications from members.

Paye ta Truelle[<https://payetatruelle.wixsite.com/projet>].

This project was set up by Belgian archaeologist Laura Mary in order to combat sexism and promote equality and diversity in archaeology in the French-speaking world. Its origins are connected with research and publications on sexism in archaeology. See also the article

“Sexism in the Archaeological Discipline: The Situation in the French-Speaking World[<https://equalityanddiversitygroup.wordpress.com/2017/03/07/sexism-in-the-archaeological-discipline-the-situation-in-the-french-speaking-world/>].”

*Society for Historical Archaeology, Gender and Minority Affairs

Committee[<https://sha.org/committees/gender-minority-affairs-committee/>]*.

The Gender and Minority Affairs Committee seeks diversity so that the membership of the Society for Historical Archaeology is reflective of the wider population. It is antiracist and desires to address structural issues of inequality. It has clear long- and short-term goals as well as schemes such as fieldwork awards to support these aims.

Society of American Archaeology[<https://www.saa.org/quick-nav/about-saa/interest-groups>].

The Society of American Archaeology has a range of special interest groups that offer SAA members the opportunity to exchange information and ideas on specific topics. Of interest to gender archaeology are the “Queer Archaeology” and “Women in Archaeology” groups.

Society of Black Archaeologists (SBA)[<https://www.societyofblackarchaeologists.com/>].

The main aim is to foster social responsibility, academic excellence, and the creation of inclusive spaces.

Gender Archaeology Historiography

Drawing on inspiration from the civil rights, women's, and Black Power movements, the humanities, especially anthropology, have sought out equal representation and desired to deconstruct the male-dominated narratives that were projected onto the past from the present. Feminist archaeology emerged during this time and endeavors to change archaeological practice. One catalyst for change was undoubtedly crystallized during the now infamous "Man the Hunter" conference in 1965, which championed male-dominated hunting activities as the key to human evolution. While this trope is no longer accepted, it was feminist responses that challenged this narrative, such as Frances Dahlberg's *Woman the Gatherer* (1981), an edited volume that showcased women's roles in food procurement in the past. It is important to note that feminist archaeology precedes gender archaeology, and not all gender archaeology is feminist. At the outset, feminist approaches occurred in a series of "steps," redressing the imbalance of representation that typically involved inserting women into familiar preconstructed narratives. Subsequently, through much dialogue and interdisciplinary exchange, it became clear that trying to understand the past through a binary of apparently stable gendered categories of "women" and "men" was reductive. It did not account for the differences that exist, both now and in the past, in terms of age, ability, race, ethnicity, sexuality, status, religious orientation, and so on. Feminist and gender archaeology have moved toward accounting for these differences. Many studies try to embrace this complexity, but often narratives return to the dualism or opposition of the man/women categories. However, there still exists a culture of positivism

within archaeology that is suspicious that gender archaeology cannot “prove” anything. Critics have suggested that gender archaeology lacked empirical rigor and was subjective. This assertion is significant: “objectivity” is viewed as scientific, and in turn science is seen as male—this means, then, that gender studies are seen as unscientific and feminine. Feminist and queer archaeology set out to disrupt this status quo of one timeless, universal way of being and to challenge the idea that there is only one scientific way to discuss the past. Perhaps the only way to challenge this fully is to move toward a new fourth wave of feminism—which ultimately embraces the more-than-human world in our understandings of the past.

Initial Steps

[Conkey and Spector 1984] remains a widely regarded paper that highlighted a framework for the study of gender which was absent from archaeological research. This did not mean that gender itself was missing, but that it was not engaged with as a method of analysis. Implicit assumptions about the gender roles and ideologies of past people were made based on contemporary societal values and expectations or stereotypes. In other words, an insidious narrative that gender is timeless and universal was encoded into most previous archaeological understandings. [Gifford- [Gonzalez 1993] and [Moser 1993] demonstrated how in archaeological illustration and interpretation women were shown as passive and tied to the domestic sphere, while men were depicted in active, socially powerful roles such as hunters or warriors. Typically, these took the form of essential biological characteristics that were then related to the assumed stable categories of “man” and “woman.” This reinforced a binary dyad of male/female, man/woman, biology/culture initially employed by [Ortner 1974] and [Rosaldo 1974] as a way to highlight women. Second-wave feminist archaeology’s focus on the very necessary critique of androcentrism and identifying women left little room for thinking about what the categories of

man and woman comprised. Broadly, they were treated as homogenous, without acknowledgement of different classes, ages, religions, and ethnic backgrounds, factors that shaped how people experienced gender in the past. From the 1990s, gender archaeology was becoming a global field with a wide chronological, cultural, and geographical range, including perspectives on Australia (Balm and Beck 1995), North America (Bacus, et al. 1993 and Kent 1998), and Africa (Kent 1998). Conkey and Spector 1984 put forward a methodology for gender archaeology, including models of spatial organization and sexual division of labor. These approaches were later showcased in Gero and Conkey 1991 (cited under Edited Volumes and Readers) and Conkey and Geo 1997. Increasingly, emphasis was placed on how the archaeological record can tell us of gendered lives and difference in the past. Evidence for this was drawn from diverse areas such as burial in Arnold and Wicker 2001, material culture in Spector 1993 (cited under Books, Monographs, and Case Studies), architecture and spatial organization from religious institutions in Gilchrist 1994 (under Books, Monographs, and Case Studies), in houses in Tringham 1991 (under Feminist Archaeology), and in brothels in Seifert 2005 (under Archaeologies of Sex, Sexuality, and Desire), as well as patterns of daily life, including the socialization of children explored by Hays-Gilpin and Whitley 1998 (under Edited Volumes and Readers). It emphatically challenged many of the implicitly held assumptions about what was assumed to be “normal” or “natural” in relation to gender (and other aspects of identity).

Arnold, Bettina, and Nancy L. Wicker. 2001. *Gender and the archaeology of death*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press. [ISBN: 9780759101364]

Collection of theoretical and methodological examples of gendered approaches to mortuary practices. There is a conflation of sex and gender in some contributions which was common at the time; nevertheless, the papers collectively provide access to interesting source material and analyses. Papers by Eleanor Scott, Barbara Crass, Emily Weglian, Sandra E. Hollimon, and Diana L. Doucette are worth a close reading, as they are critically engaged and theoretically informed.

Bacus, Elisabeth A., Alex W. Barker, Jeffrey D. Bonevich, et al. 1993. *A gendered past: A critical bibliography of gender in archaeology*. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan, Museum of Anthropology. [ISBN: 9780915703319]

Very useful annotated bibliography that captures gender and feminist archaeology up to the early 1990s. It remains valuable as a testament to and source of many scholarly works that are perhaps forgotten, or for some reason, through no fault of their own, fall outside of the current canon.

Balme, J., and W. Beck, eds. 1995. *Gendered archaeology: The second Australian women in archaeology conference*. Canberra: ANH Publications. [ISBN: 9780731521746]

The second collection of essays on gendered approaches in archaeology, within and outside of Australia, following the second “Women in Archaeology” conference (see [Cros and Smith 1993](#), cited under [Edited Volumes and Readers](#)). It includes critical enquiry, political activism, as well as discussion of terminology by Marcia-Ann Dobres, who, in particular, focuses on the clarification of concepts that articulate the distinction between an archaeology of gender, engendering archaeology, and feminist archaeological practice.

Conkey, Margaret W., and Joan M. Gero. 1997. Programme to practice: Gender and feminism in archaeology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26:411–437.

[<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2952529>]

A reflective essay on the value of an explicitly feminist standpoint when considering gender in archaeology. It acts as an overview, a point-by-point methodology and rallying cry for all feminist archaeologists to engage with feminist epistemologies to challenge the normative structures that still bind archaeology.

Conkey, Margaret W., and J. D. Spector. 1984. *Archaeology and the study of gender[<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20170176>]*. *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* 7: 1–38.

Groundbreaking, discipline-changing article that introduced the concepts and methods of gender archaeology to a wider audience. Detailed analysis of how gender archaeology was influenced by feminist anthropology. Incorporating feminist theory into archaeological interpretation that challenged male bias in archaeological interpretations. This paper is now almost forty years old, and contain some essentialist thinking, but it remains important to current archaeological research on gender.

Gifford-Gonzalez, D. 1993. You can hide, but you can't run: Representations of women's work in illustrations of Palaeolithic life. *Visual Anthropology Review* 9:3–21.

[[doi:10.1525/var.1993.9.1.22](https://doi.org/10.1525/var.1993.9.1.22)]

This essay highlights the deeply problematic practice of marginalizing children and women in archaeological (and heritage) interpretations. Their place at the edges of artists' representations is reflective of the position that they hold in archaeological thought. While gender bias is particularly prevalent, so too are problematic ideas about class, age, and gendered passivity.

This article is as relevant today as it was thirty years ago (see also [Gender Archaeology, Heritage, and Public Outreach](#)).

Kent, Susan Kingsley. 1998. *Gender in African prehistory*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press. [ISBN: 9780761989684]

Twelve essays in this volume present the different conceptions of gender in prehistoric societies in Africa, and the problems that archaeologists can face when trying to challenge contemporary bias but also dealing with diverse source material. The theoretical approach of the papers is varied, and ranges from inserting women or making women visible to working through how fundamental gender was to different social organizations. This volume ends with an excellent review by Sarah Nelson.

Moore, J., and E. Scott, eds. 1997. *Invisible people and processes: Writing gender and childhood into European archaeology*. Leicester, UK: Leicester Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9780718500245]

A collection of seventeen different studies that cover a variety of geographic and chronological contexts which foreground the importance of age and gender in archaeological investigation. These papers, with varying successes, endeavor to move past problematic dichotomies of male versus female or adult versus child to encourage a more fluid approach that acknowledge that age like gender is just one part of a range of relationally constructed identities.

Moser, S. 1993. Gender stereotyping in pictorial reconstructions of human origins. In *Women in archaeology: A feminist critique*. Edited by Hilary Du Cros and Laurajane Smith, 75–92. Canberra: Australian National Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9780731515424]

Similar to [Gifford-Gonzalez 1993](#), Moser too highlights the problems of “pictorial reconstruction” that reinforce a particular gendered ideology that is wrapped up in the heteronormative family unit, as well as a particular expression of manhood (see [Gender Archaeology, Heritage, and Public Outreach](#)).

Ortner, Sherry B. 1974. *Is female to male as nature is to

culture?[\[http://radicalanthropologygroup.org/sites/default/files/pdf/class_text_049.pdf\]](http://radicalanthropologygroup.org/sites/default/files/pdf/class_text_049.pdf)*. In *Woman, culture, and society*. Edited by M. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere, 68–87. Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9780804708500]

An early feminist approach to the study of gender in archaeology (or anthropology). While of course the nature/culture dualism is not accepted in contemporary scholarship, this remains an important paper, as it charts the emergence of a consciously feminist approach to understanding the past.

Rosaldo, Michelle. 1974. Women, culture and society: A theoretical overview. In *Women, culture and society*. Edited by M. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere, 17–42. Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9780804708500]

This was one (along with [Ortner 1974](#), cited under [Initial Steps](#)) of the foundational essays in gender anthropology, where Rosaldo argues that women can never attain publicly valued power because they are subordinate to men owing to their association with the domestic sphere. This has led to many discussions on “separate spheres” in archaeology (see [diZegera Wall 1994](#) and [Rotman 2006](#), under [Household Archaeology](#))

Seifert, Donna J., ed. 1991. *Special issue: Gender in historical

archaeology[<https://www.jstor.org/stable/25616124>]*. *Historical Archaeology* 25.4.

[class:journalArticle]

Special edition journal featuring nine papers on gender and feminist approaches to historical archaeology in North America from the 18th to the 20th century. Seifert's introduction notes how interpretation in archaeology reinforces binaries opposition of gender: "men hunt, women gather; men produce, women process; men are wage-earners, women are homemakers; men are active, women are passive" (p. 1). She suggests that exploring women's roles also refines understandings of men and masculinities.

Gender Archaeology in the 1990s and 2000s

From the scholarship of the 1990s onward, into the publications of the 2000s, there was an increased awareness of, and activity in, gender archaeology. The study area developed, drawing inspiration from post-structuralist theory, including queer and feminist approaches influenced by [Butler 1990](#) and [Haraway 1991](#). Gender archaeology became more conscious of multivocal pasts, including previously unexplored areas such as sexuality in [Schmidt and Voss 2000](#).

Gender archaeology from a feminist standpoint, demonstrated by [Wylie 2007](#) (cited under [Feminist Archaeology](#)), was a more inclusive way of examining the archaeological record to produce or account for a diverse past that is full of the messy realities of people.

Methodologically, it sought to explore how the material and social practices of people can inform us of how they participated in, legitimized, negotiated, and naturalized cultural systems of gender, as highlighted in the many essays in [Bolger 2013](#). Scholarship examined diverse archaeological assemblages (in the widest interpretations of that term) to understand differing aspects of personhood and gender identities that are not restricted to men, women, and children

or binary formations. [Kent 1998], [du Cros and Smith 1993] (under [Edited Volumes and Readers]), and [Linduff and Sun 2004] feature global geographical and cultural contexts. Gendered power was the subject of many studies, as shown in [Sweely 1999], [Joyce 2000], and [Nelson 2004] (under [Books, Monographs, and Case Studies]). Edited collections such as [Casella and Fowler 2004] demonstrated the desire to disrupt hegemonic and universal assumptions of “man” or “woman” and to strive for multiple meanings and fluidity of identities. Special editions of journals emerged, such as [Dowson 2000] (under [Queer Archaeology]) on queer theory in *World Archaeology* and [Conkey and Wylie 2007] (under [Journals]) on doing archaeology as feminists in the *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*. Impactful single-authored papers such as [Franklin 2001] discussed overlapping identities on the intersection of feminism and racial inequality. Thematic approaches to gendered bodies and embodiment became a focus for scholars, as in [Joyce 2008] (under [Books, Monographs, and Case Studies]) and [Soefar 2006]. [Hadley 1999] (under [Edited Volumes and Readers]) and [Knapp 1998] brought much needed masculinity studies to gender archaeology; previously, the gender category of “man” had been ignored or treated as a homogenous whole. Throughout this period of scholarship there remained a necessary focus on the lives of women, who were still underrepresented and undervalued, as discussed by [Aranda, et al. 2009].

Aranda, G., S. Montón-Subías, M. Sánchez-Romero, and E. Alarcón. 2009. Death and everyday life: The Argaric societies from Southeast Iberia. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 9.2: 139–162. [doi:10.1177/1469605309104134]

Provides a brief review of gender archaeology, and outlines how mortuary assemblages when explored through the lens of maintenance activities, enabled a greater understanding of the

social perception and construction of women's identity and the practices that they may have carried out on an everyday basis in southeastern Spain (c. 2250–1450 BCE).

Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. London: Routledge. [ISBN: 9780415900423]

This is, of course, not a book about gender archaeology; however, much of the theory or current thinking on the performance of gender in archaeology (and other areas) is influenced by Judith Butler. This is not essential reading, but those who desire to explore gender theory further can consult this and other works. See also works by Donna Haraway, Elizabeth Groz, and Rosi Braidotti.

Casella, Eleanor, and Chris Fowler. 2004. *The archaeology of plural and changing identities*. New York: Springer. [<https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9780306486937>]

An edited collection that explores the complex ways in which identity is not fixed but changes over time, and is spatially constituted, both in terms of geography and scale. Contributions by Barbara Voss, Robert Schmidt, Chris Fowler, Joanna Brück, and Eleanor Conlin Casella contemplate gender and personhood. Underpinning many of the essays is how “things” can take on new meanings or represent different social affiliations depending on the context.

Franklin, M. 2001. A Black feminist-inspired archaeology? *Journal of Social Archaeology* 1:108–125. [doi:10.1177/146960530100100108]

This essay provides a concise theoretical overview of Black feminist theory and advocates for its suitability as a frame of inquiry for communities that have been subject to colonial oppressions or suffer from structural inequality. A short case study demonstrates the unique value Black feminist theory brings to explorations of the intersection of race and gender for

enslaved Black women from an archaeological perspective. This essay is also an excellent source for further reading in feminist archaeology and Black feminist theory.

Haraway, D. J. 1991. **Simian, cyborgs, and women: The reinvention of nature*[https://monoskop.org/images/f/f3/Haraway_Donna_J_Simians_Cyborgs_and_Women_The_Reinvention_of_Nature.pdf]*. London: Free Association Books. [ISBN: 9781853431388]

The feminist philosopher Donna Haraway rejects the rigid boundaries that humans have imposed on the world, especially dualisms (e.g., male/female or culture/nature). Haraway advocates for fluid and plural “affinities” rather than fixed identities. In this volume, still important essays for gender scholarship include “‘Gender’ for a Marxist Dictionary,” “The Sexual Politics of a Word,” and “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective.”

Joyce, Rosemary. 2000. *Gender and power in prehispanic Mesoamerica*. Austin: Univ. of Texas Press. [ISBN: 9780292740655]

One of the first analyses of power and gendered relations that explored gender not as fixed identity associated with an apparently fixed biology, but fluid, changing with the life course and in accordance with status. In particular, the focus is how gender was performed and inscribed on the body, and embraces the ambiguities that are present as embodied in the some of the Classic Maya figures discussed.

Knapp, B. 1998. Who’s come a long way, baby?: Masculinist approaches to a gendered archaeology. *Archaeological Dialogues* 5.2: 91–106. [doi:10.1017/S1380203800001215]

This article gives an overview of gender theory, and highlights some important and also problematic aspects of gender archaeology. It discusses the term “masculinist” not as a shorthand for a male-dominated androcentric approach but one that advocates for an appreciation of multiplicity of masculine identities.

Linduff, Katheryn M., and Yan Sun, eds. 2004. *Gender and Chinese archaeology*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press. [ISBN: 9780759104082]

This volume of eleven contributions explores gender structures across a broad chronological and geographic range in China. It presents data-rich studies that highlight the potential for future more theoretically informed gendered studies that move away from androcentrism.

Schmidt, Robert A., and Barbara L. Voss, eds. 2000. **Archaeologies of sexuality*[<http://repository.umpwr.ac.id:8080/bitstream/handle/123456789/131/Archaeologies%20of%20Sexuality.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>]*. New York: Routledge. [ISBN: 9786610112951]

An excellent wide-ranging collection of essays that, for the first time, dealt with sexuality. This remains core reading on this subject area. See [Archaeologies of Sexuality: Schmidt and Voss Edited Volume](#).

Sofaer, J. R. 2006. *The Body as material culture: A theoretical osteoarchaeology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press. [doi:10.1017/CBO9780511816666]. [ISBN: 9780521818223]

Theoretically informed consideration of “the body,” drawing from both social theory and bioarchaeology. This book demonstrates that it is possible to study the skeletal body from a gendered perspective that eschews biological determinism. Chapter 5, “Sex and Gender,” is especially informative.

Sweely, Tracy L., ed. 1999. *Manifesting power: Gender and the interpretation of power in archaeology*. London and New York: Routledge. [doi:10.4324/9780203165218]. [ISBN: 9786610182800]

An edited collection of eight essays with an introduction by Sweely that sought to explore the relationship between gender and power, primarily focused on North America, with some examples from different geographical locations. There is no unifying understanding of power, but essays largely treat it as a relational construction that varies over time and space. An afterword by Sarah Nelson critiques power, and perhaps even its study, as an androcentric construction.

Tomášková, Silvia. 2011. Landscape for a good feminist: An archaeological review.

Archaeological Dialogues 18.1: 109–136. [doi:10.1017/S1380203811000158]

Review, overview, and critical commentary on gender archaeology from a feminist perspective.

Into the 21st Century

There has been a sustained interest in gender archaeological approaches, as evidenced by the publication of broad and thorough readers such as Nelson 2006 and Bolger 2013 and special journal volumes such as Spencer-Wood 2011 (see also General Overviews). In Dommasnes, et al. 2010; Lozano Rubio 2011; Sterling 2014; and Moen 2019 the continued emphasis on historiography and epistemology is visible, and it remains important to highlight the problematic assumptions made in relation to gender. Ghisleni, et al. 2016 (cited under Journals) and Frieman, et al. 2019 challenge binary gender categories of woman/man. Answers about how to address these continued binaries might be in the application of Black feminist theory to form an

intersectional archaeology, as highlighted in [Battle-Baptiste 2011](#) (under [Books, Monographs, and Case Studies](#)). Exploring colonialism from a feminist gendered perspective, [Montón-Subías and Hernando 2018](#) and [Odewale, et al. 2018](#) bring structural inequality to the fore. This is seen on a more individual scale in [Fulkerson and Tushingham 2019](#), where occupation, opportunity, and bias are considered. Both individual experience and societal issues relating to gender and violence are discussed in [Matić and Jensen 2017](#) (under [Edited Volumes and Readers](#)). Yet there is room for much more, and archaeology of the 21st century can continue to emerge stronger. In 1995, Janet Spector's review of [A Gendered Past: A Critical Bibliography of Gender in Archaeology](#) (under [Initial Steps](#)) noted that only one title from 197 entries was from *American Antiquity*, a premier journal in North American archaeology. This meant that there was an absence of gendered approaches being published in mainstream archaeology journals, texts, and anthologies. In the intervening years this has not really changed, a point made by [Tomášková 2011](#) (under [Gender Archaeology in the 1990s and 2000s](#)) and [Dempsey 2019](#). But, perhaps with greater gender awareness, growing acceptance, and increasing feminist activism, we can advocate for further change. [Solometo and Moss 2013](#) (under [Gender Archaeology, Heritage, and Public Outreach](#)) argues that self-reflective practice consistently offers new ways through which gender can be analyzed, critiqued, and explored within the archaeological record, echoed in [Prados Torreira 2016](#) (under [Gender Archaeology, Heritage, and Public Outreach](#)). Indeed, as [Gero and Conkey 1991](#) (under [Edited Volumes and Readers](#)) noted, "feminist reasoning insists on the relevance and importance of multiple perspectives." We must continue to challenge problematic versions of the past by building inclusive, reflexive, and empathetic interpretations of the past.

Dempsey, K. 2019. Gender and medieval archaeology: Storming the castle. *Antiquity* 93.369: 772–788. [doi:10.15184/aqy.2019.13]

A critique of how the construction of archaeological knowledge affects representation and impacts upon our “archaeologies.” It asserts that the dominant voice in archaeology remains male, as is reflected in publishing practice. This article then explores the relative absence of gendered approaches within archaeology through the lens of later medieval archaeology, with a micro-focus on castle studies in Britain and Ireland.

Dommasnes, L. H., T. Hjørungdal, S. Montón-Subías, M. Sánchez Romero, and N. L. Wicker. 2010. *Situating gender in European archaeologies*. Budapest: Archaeolingua. [ISBN: 9789639911154]

An overview of gender archaeology and research history in Europe. Through fifteen different studies and case studies, gender relations in Iberia, Scandinavia, Russia, Eastern Europe, and the Eastern Mediterranean are explored.

Frieman, Catherine J., Ann Teather, and Chelsea Morgan. 2019. Bodies in motion: Narratives and counter narratives of gendered mobility in European later prehistory. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 52.2: 148–169. [doi:10.1080/00293652.2019.1697355]

Highlights how contemporary archaeological practices and interpretations still reinforce patriarchal narratives of the past. Using the “Egtved Adolescent” (usually and erroneously labeled “Girl”) as a case study outlines how alternative readings that account for more varied lifeways are possible.

Fulkerson, Tiffany J., and Shannon Tushingham. 2019. Who dominates the discourses of the past? Gender, occupational affiliation, and multivocality in North American archaeology publishing. *American Antiquity* 84.3: 379–399. [doi:10.1017/aaq.2019.35]

Detailed analysis of bias in archaeological publications that focuses on the intersection of gender and occupational affiliation. It highlights the preferred avenues of publication for women, and those working in the development-led sector, and outlines the reasons behind these choices. It advocates for the sharing of knowledge outside of the male-dominated peer-reviewed journals that dictate discourse.

Lozano Rubio, Sandra. 2011. Gender thinking in the making: Feminist epistemology and gender archaeology. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 44.1: 21–39. [doi:10.1080/00293652.2011.572674]

This paper creates a genealogy of gender archaeology from the point of view of epistemology, covering feminist empiricism, standpoint theory, and feminist postmodernism.

Moen, Marianne. 2019. Gender and archaeology: Where are we now? *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress* 15:206–226. [doi:10.1007/s11759-019-09371-w]

Outlines a concern that gender archaeology is marginalized as a subdiscipline, and that presentism, in the forms of binary genders, remains prevalent in conceptions of the past. Moen advocates for an intersectional approach that would go some way toward mitigating these problems.

Montón-Subías, Sandra, and Almudena Hernando. 2018. Modern colonialism, Eurocentrism and historical archaeology: Some engendered thoughts. *European Journal of Archaeology* 21.3: 455–471. [doi:10.1017/eea.2017.83]

This article is feminist archaeological theory in practice. Here, a feminist standpoint is used to explore colonialism and the pervasiveness of Eurocentric thinking in archaeology. It highlights how a particular form of Western hegemonic individualized masculinity has been projected into the past. An eye-opening article and a must-read.

Odewale, Alicia, Justin Dunnivant, Ayana Flewellen, and Alexandra Jones. 2018. Archaeology for the next generation. *Anthropology News* 59.1: e210–e215. [doi:10.1111/AN.729]

The authors demonstrate the lack of representation of Black archaeologists within archaeology, which is a feminist issue. The paper details the success of Estate Little Princess Archaeological Fieldschool, St. Croix, the first field school to be directed by a team of African American archaeologists. Its foundational principles are opportunities to practice archaeology, the democratization of knowledge and rights to participate: this is Black feminist archaeology in practice.

Solometo, J., and J. Moss. 2013. Picturing the past: Gender in *National Geographic* reconstructions of prehistoric life. *American Antiquity* 78.1: 123–146. [doi:10.7183/0002-7316.78.1.123]

In the same way that Moser 1993 and Gifford-Gonzales 1993 (both under Initial Steps) showed the problematic representation in heritage and archaeological context, this article highlights the ongoing issues of representations in *National Geographic*. Analysis reveals that women and women’s work are significantly underrepresented and undervalued, and gender archaeology has had little impact on this magazine’s “imagined past.”

Spencer-Wood, Suzanne M. 2011. Introduction: Feminist theories and archaeology. *Archaeologies* 7:1–33. [doi:10.1007/s11759-011-9169-5]

Introduction to a special issue on “The Impact of Feminist Theories on Archaeology,” which provides a detailed overview of feminist archaeological theory. The remaining papers in this volume are all worthy of further readings (e.g., Sarah Milledge Nelson, Alice Beck Kehoe, Wera Grahn, Anne Yentsch).

Sterling, Kathleen. 2014. *Man the hunter, woman the gatherer? The impact of gender studies on hunter-gatherer research (a retrospective)[<https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199551224.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199551224-e-032>]*. In *The Oxford handbook of the archaeology and anthropology of hunter-gatherers*. Edited by Vicki Cummings, Peter Jordan, and Marek Zvelebil. New York: Oxford Univ. Press. [[doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199551224.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199551224.001.0001)]. [[ISBN: 9780198831044](https://www.isbn-international.org/product/9780198831044)]

While is it not necessary to pinpoint a beginning of feminist archaeology, it certainly emerged out of frustration—among many other things—relating to the trope of “Man the Hunter, Woman the Gatherer.” This essay on hunter-gathers and gender studies provides a good foundation for understanding the impact of gender on archaeology more generally.

The Future, Fourth-Wave Feminism, and the Anthropocene

Feminist and gender archaeology started out life as a way to address inequality and then difference. But now “gender” is often a package, when used without engagement in Feminist theory, that projects assumed binaries from our contemporary world into the past. Gender archaeology is still endeavoring to achieve its feminist goals: challenging heterosexist orthodoxy, disregarding assumed gender binaries, and becoming more firmly and fully intersectional. It ultimately desires to remake or unmake the usual empirical tools to push back against positivism that reproduces unequal binaries of nature/culture, man/woman, science/humanities. Feminist

and gender archaeology must respond to the problems of the Anthropocene. If posthumanism is a critique of anthropocentrism and a desire to disassemble the ontological divides so present in contemporary Euro-Western worldviews, then it can also decenter the man/woman binary that still pervades archaeological interpretations. But “fourth-wave feminism” in archaeology must be post-anthropocentric practice that advocates for a translational, relational, and other-than-human approach. This means gathering together the knowledge gained from the identification of women in the past (second wave), the recognition of intersecting identities gendered or otherwise (third wave), to exploring the ways which all matter matters in our world, as shown by [Todd 2016](#), [Barad 2003](#), [Haraway 1991](#), [Haraway 2016](#), [Braidotti 2013](#), and [Fredengren 2018](#). . In reconsidering ontologies in archaeology, it is necessary to be cognizant that Indigenous scholars such as [Kimmerer 2013](#) and [Todd 2016](#) warn of the dangers of neocolonialism and co-opting ideas of more-than-human relations: where Western scholars as part of the “ontological turn” appropriate Indigenous ways of thinking. These discussions of human/animal/plant relations, more-than-human agents, and multispecies approaches are very important, as is the recognition of Indigenous knowledge production and lifeways. Where does or where can gender fit in to this Fourth Wave? Gender remains a structuring principle in many of our world societies, which makes it essential to explore to enable us to question assumptions or inequalities now and in the past. Perhaps gender itself is like the “contaminated diversity” of the late capitalist world that [Tsing 2015](#) discusses; a constantly emergent, intersecting, challenging, changing, adaptive, and reactive identity that is not bounded, homogenous, or static. As [Bickle 2020](#) notes, “The question is no longer what is gender? But rather how does gender allow ‘people’ to participate in the world as active?” Feminist archaeology argues for constant reshaping and rethinking reflexive practice, so perhaps it will be necessary to rethink how (gendered) difference is understood and

how gender is created, embodied as well as performed. As [Fredengren 2018](#) suggests, feminist gender archaeology must continue to embrace the body as a permeable space where many actors, including the more-than-human, are co-creators in formation of “person”-hood which gender is but one part.

Barad, K. 2003. *Posthumanist performativity: Toward an understanding of how matter comes to matter [<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/345321>]*. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28.3: 801–831.

Warrants (necessitates) repeated readings. Asks why “matter does not matter?” Through performance theory which embraces multivocality, this is a materialist and posthumanist exploration of how the world can be understood by accepting all matter (people, animals, plants, things, landscapes) as active, interactive, reactive and participative in world making. Matter is relational.

Bickle, Penny. 2020. Thinking gender differently: New approaches to identity difference in the Central European Neolithic. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 30.2: 201–218.
[[doi:10.1017/S0959774319000453](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774319000453)]

Argues that difference in gender archaeology is undertheorized. Employing assemblage theory and accounting for “difference within itself,” this case study of LBK societies moves beyond interpretations that only employ sex/gender binaries. By focusing on difference (rather than defining others using Freudian ideas of “lack”), this analysis of burial contexts shows how a more relational understanding of grave gifts and bodies inform us of LBK lifeways, including certain social constraints or freedoms related to gender (see [Bioarchaeology, aDNA, and Gender](#)).

Braidotti, R. 2013. Posthuman humanities. *European Educational Research Journal* 12.1: 1–19. [[doi:10.2304/eeerj.2013.12.1.1](https://doi.org/10.2304/eeerj.2013.12.1.1)]

Opening up what the “humanities” could or can do means stepping away from the centrality of “man” to humanism. This (detailed) introduction to posthumanism and the (post)humanities outlines how by reaching beyond traditional divides of sciences/humanities or people/nature we can make sense of the world as a nature-culture continuum that people are but one part of. The essay ranges from political consciousness and environmentalist activism to more-than-human (including digital) agents as well as feminist and gender thought in the future-humanities.

Fredengren, Christina. 2018. Archaeological posthumanities: Feminist re-invention of science and material pasts. In **A Feminist companion to the posthumanities* [<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-62140-1>]*. Edited by Rosi Braidotti and Cecilia Åsberg, 129–140. Cham, Switzerland: Springer. [ISBN: 9783319621388]

Outlines some key points of post-human archaeology, which is not about moving beyond considering human lives and cultures but more concerned with how we can understand and explore the different multispecies entanglements of the world. The short section “Gendered Down to the Bones?” is of particular interest noting how we must not create a sex/gender dichotomy but appreciate the material reality and historicity of the body.

Haraway, Donna J. 2016. *Staying with the trouble: Making kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9780822362142]

Serious but playfully written discussion essays that highlight the need to embrace the bigger, more-than-human world. At its heart, it is offering a way out of the impending environmental

disaster caused by capitalism (among other things). It is not a gender archaeology, but its foundational tenets are key for any scholar interested in Fourth-Wave feminist and gender archaeology.

Kimmerer, Robin Wall. 2013. **Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge, and the teachings of plants*[<https://milkweed.org/book/braiding-sweetgrass>]*. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions. [ISBN: 9781571313355]

This Indigenous feminist text is centered on plants, gendered people, and our relationship to things in the world. Beautifully written and advocates for an empathetic ways of living in and understanding the world.

Todd, Zoe. 2016. An Indigenous feminist's take on the ontological turn: "Ontology" is just another word for colonialism. *Journal of Historical Sociology* 29.1 (March): 4–22. [[doi:10.1111/johs.12124](https://doi.org/10.1111/johs.12124)]

An Indigenous feminist appraisal of anthropology's interest in the posthuman/more-than-human as appropriation of Indigenous knowledge as colonial violence. Feminist practice is about advocating for structural change in the world—this must be built into posthuman approaches but without erasing the practices and experience of Indigenous scholars. Indigenous scholars are not "a well" from which to draw ideas. If engaging in posthuman feminist archaeologies, it is crucial that great effort is also made to decolonize the academy.

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. 2015. *The mushroom at the end of the world: On the possibility of life in capitalist ruins*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9780691162751]

An ethnographic and anthropological exploration of the many lives and identities of the matsutake mushroom, which serves as a way to understand and imagine our world. Looks at

how different interactions and collaboration form new ways of life and living. In this way, its story can be that of gender, and how it is contextual and relational whilst allowing for changes across time.

Gender Archaeology and Women's Roles in Archaeological Practice

A key part of feminist archaeology, and enmeshed within gender archaeology, is a focus on women in contemporary and historic archaeological practice, as outlined by [Gilchrist 1991](#), [Claassen 1994](#), [Díaz-Andreu and Stig Sørensen 1998](#) and [Bowdler and Clune 2000](#). Studies continue to critically assess (unequal) conditions of employment, both professional and academic, as noted by [Moser 2007](#) and [Hamilton 2014](#). The particular positions and specialisms of women archaeologists was previously discussed in [Conkey and Gero 1997](#) (cited under [Initial Steps](#)), but gendered imbalances in working life continue to be of interest from analysis of publishing, as in [Bardolph 2014](#), [Dempsey 2019](#) and [Fulkerson and Tushingham 2019](#) (under [Into the 21st Century](#)). Recently, a group of feminist scholars—Brenna Hasset, Victoria Herridge, Suzanna Pilar Birch, and Rebecca Wragg Skyes—set up [Trowelblazers](#), an online and in-real-life community that highlights pioneering women in archaeology as well as geology and paleontology. Their website hosts over two hundred biographies that showcase women's achievements. These efforts of archaeological activism against sexism remain an important part of gender archaeology. Of course, there are still many other problems in archaeology related to racial or class inequalities, as emphasized in [Franklin 2001](#) and [Battle-Baptiste 2011](#) (under [Books, Monographs, and Case Studies](#)). These inequalities are layered with gender and are often left out of discussions. [Odewale, et al. 2018](#) (under [Into the 21st Century](#)) and [Seabrook 2020](#) show how archaeology is still alarmingly exclusive of Black and Indigenous People of Color (see

also Black Feminist Archaeology). This is linked to ongoing structural inequalities and cannot be separated out from that fact that archaeology is rooted in colonialism.

Bardolph, Dana N. 2014. A critical evaluation of recent gendered publishing trends in American archaeology. *American Antiquity* 79.3: 522–540. [[doi:10.7183/0002-7316.79.3.522](https://doi.org/10.7183/0002-7316.79.3.522)]

Examines the relationship between gender identity and patterns of authorship in peer-reviewed journals to reflect on the gendered production of knowledge as well as explore who primarily controls the creation of dominant narratives. The sample is drawn from publications in major peer-review journals from 1990–2013 and highlights the inadequate representation of women in archaeology.

Bowdler, Sandra, and Genevieve Clune. 2000. *That shadowy band: The role of women in the development of Australian archaeology[<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40287449>]*. *Australian Archaeology* 50:27–35.

Highlights the role of women in early Aboriginal archaeology and wider archaeological practice from the 19th century up to the 1980s.

Claassen, C., ed. 1994. *Women in archaeology*. Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press. [ISBN: 9780812232776]

An edited volume that, through a series of essays, documents women in archaeology, both past and present. It serves to highlight the way in which archaeology as a discipline is still focused on androcentric narratives.

Díaz-Andreu, Margarita, and Marie Louise Stig Sørensen, ed. 1998. *Excavating women: A history of women in European archaeology*. London: Routledge.

[doi:10.4324/9780203981511]. [ISBN: 9786610158485]

As the title of this edited volume suggests, it should come as no surprise that there is a need to highlight women and their achievements in archaeological practice, as they are typically omitted or marginalized in many histories of archaeology. To disrupt the male-dominated historiographies, these essays focus on women archaeologists from a number of European countries from the 19th to the late 20th century.

Du Cros, Hilary, and Laurajane Smith, eds. 1993. *Women in archaeology: a feminist critique*.

Canberra: Australian National Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9780731515424]

The volume resulted from the first Women in Archaeology Conference in Australia (1991). The first half focuses on the theoretical application of gender archaeology, followed by the discussions around women in archaeology, not just gender bias but also a history of women in the profession.

Gilchrist, Roberta. 1991. Women's archaeology? Political feminism, gender theory and historical revision. *Antiquity* 65:495–501. [doi:10.1017/S0003598X00080091]

Reflection on feminism and archaeology as well as a succinct overview on gender theory of the early 1990s. It highlights the difficulties to have gender or women recognized as a valid category of analysis. It notes that feminist archaeology has a key role in theory building, which has the potential to reveal more of the everyday lives of men and women.

Hamilton, S. 2014. *Under-representation in contemporary archaeology[<http://www.bajrfed.co.uk/bajrpress/under-representation-in-contemporary-archaeology/>]*. *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology* 24.1: 1–9.

This paper demonstrates that despite overall gender parity in archaeological practice, academia, and undergraduate studentships, there is a continuing gender imbalance in the achievement of permanent employment (particularly in academia), in access to career progression, and in the achievement of higher-level positions and pay for women.

Moser, Stephanie. 2007. On disciplinary culture: Archaeology as fieldwork and its gendered associations. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 14.3: 235–263.
[[doi:10.1007/s10816-007-9033-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10816-007-9033-5)]

Focusing on Australian archaeology, this study explores the cultural dimension of fieldwork, and how it reinforces or shapes different gender regimes. It provides a really interesting historiography of the sociology of archaeology and the archaeological community.

Seabrook, Melina. 2020. *A deafening absence[<https://medium.com/@melina.seabrook/a-deafening-absence-69dad8cd3bec>]*. [class:webLink]

A blog post that brings to light the lived experience of implicit and explicit racial and gendered bias that Melina Seabrook experienced as a Black woman and doctoral candidate in archaeology.

Towelblazers[<https://trowelblazers.com/>].

Trowelblazers (Brenna Hasset, Victoria Herridge, Suzanna Pilar Birch, and Rebecca Wragg Skyes) is an online and in-real-life community that highlights pioneering women in archaeology as well as geology and paleontology.

Gender Archaeology and Activism

Much activism in archaeology stems from feminist practice. Activism in the form of challenging inequality, racial, or gender bias is a frequent focus for scholars, as seen in [Hassett, et al. 2017]; [Claassen 2000]; [Heath-Stout 2020]; and [Seabrook 2020] (cited under [Gender Archaeology and Women's Roles in Archaeological Practice]). Channeling new gendered and inclusive understandings through pedagogy is important. Such activism takes the form of an autoethnography on the rewards of engaging with gender in [Arnold 2005], research through teaching in [Cobb and Croucher 2014] and [Cobb and Croucher 2016], and the importance of mentorship in [Brown 2018] and [Battle-Baptiste 2011] (under [Black Feminist Archaeology] and [Books, Monographs, and Case Studies]). Embracing inclusivity in both print and practice are earmarked as catalysts for social change in [Weismantel 2013]. Disruption to the status quo is the focus of [Cook 2019], which shows the endless potential of, but also downsides to, feminist digital archaeology. Feminist digital archaeology can amplify unconventional voices, but, as with all activism, risks are involved. These approaches, as outlined in [Cook 2019], are central to confronting bias in a “constructive, disruptive, supportive and empathetic way.”

Arnold, Bettina. 2005. Teaching with intent: The archaeology of gender. *Archaeologies* 1:83–93.

This biographical essay focuses on the teaching of gender archaeology, and how this has the power to enact societal change.

Blouet, Helen. 2020. Teaching interdisciplinary archaeology: Our students as our future agents of change. *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 8.1: 15–24. [doi:10.1017/aap.2019.41]

This article demonstrates through a series of detailed case studies that teaching interdisciplinary archaeology, conscious of gender roles and bias, leads to engendering deep critical thinking in students, which makes them agents for change in society.

Brown, Kaitlin M. 2018. Gender, race, and mentorship: A perspective from California archaeology. *California Archaeology* 10.2: 187–209.

[[doi:10.1080/1947461X.2018.1535814](https://doi.org/10.1080/1947461X.2018.1535814)]

Quantitative and qualitative assessment of the importance of mentorship using data from the UC Santa Barbara Gender Equity in Archaeology Group, led by Dr. Amber VanDerwark. The results showed a continuing gendered and racial disparity in Californian archaeology, which should be challenged by creating a more inclusive space in informal and formal ways. This model could be applied to many places and spaces.

Claassen, C. 2000. Homophobia and women archaeologists. *World Archaeology* 32:173–179.

[[doi:10.1080/00438240050131162](https://doi.org/10.1080/00438240050131162)]

Claassen discusses the historiography of homophobia in archaeology, in particular toward lesbians. It is indicated as a factor that discouraged many women from becoming archaeologists in the early to mid-20th century. Claassen contextualizes the lack of peer mentoring and women networks in archaeology within late-20th-century homophobia, also echoed by [She 2000](#) (cited under [Queer Archaeology](#)). Highlighted too is how this is a situation which continues in many faculty departments.

Cobb, Hannah L., and Karina Croucher. 2014. Assembling archaeological pedagogy: A theoretical framework for valuing pedagogy in archaeological interpretation and practice.

Archaeological Dialogues 21.2: 197–216. [[doi:10.1017/S138020381400021X](https://doi.org/10.1017/S138020381400021X)]

Argues that equality, representation, and respect are feminist principles. This paper highlights the value of pedagogy in the co-curation of knowledge, which is feminist archaeology in practice.

Cobb, Hannah L., and Karina Croucher. 2016. Personal, political, pedagogic: Challenging the binary bind in archaeological pedagogy. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 23:949–969. [doi:10.1007/s10816-016-9292-0]

Discussions center on how cultures of archaeological teaching and practice reinforce binary binds. It provides a statistical overview of gender representation in archaeology, and shows through the application of assemblage theory how diversity from gender, race, ethnicity, age, and abilities can be recentered to challenge the binary bind. The feminist activism at the core of the paper desires to disrupt the hierarchical status quo in archaeology and academia.

Cook, K. 2019. EmboDIYing disruption: Queer, feminist and inclusive digital archaeologies. *European Journal of Archaeology* 22.3: 398–414. [doi:10.1017/eea.2019.23]

Highlights how the use of digital technologies offers alternative ways of imagining the past that breaks down divides and challenges inequality. These queer approaches promote greater transparency and open access. But it is also noted that this online presence can be risky as it also holds the power to amplify unconventional voices, disrupt dominate narratives, and redress inequality and past injustices.

Hassett, B. R., S. Pilaar-Birch, V. Herridge, and B. Wragg-Sykes. 2017. TrowelBlazers: Accidentally crowd-sourcing an archive of women in archaeology. In *Shared knowledge, shared power*. Edited by V. Apaydin, 129–141. Cham, Switzerland: Springer. [doi:10.1007/978-3-319-68652-3_9]

Article outlining the origin and development of the Trowelblazer collective, which became involved in STEM, feminist, and heritage actions by celebrating female archaeologists, geologists, and paleontologists.

Heath-Stout, Laura E. 2020. Who writes about archaeology? An intersectional study of authorship in archaeological journals. *American Antiquity* 85.3: 407–426.

[doi:10.1017/aaq.2020.28]

In order to better assess equity in publication, a survey of 1,377 published authors in twenty-one leading archaeology journals was carried out. This incorporated race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender. The results show that despite the increasing numbers of women, people of color, and queer people conducting archaeological work, the majority of authors in leading journals were cisgender straight white males, who still retain the most official influence in archaeological knowledge production.

Weismantel, M. 2013. *Towards a transgender archeology: A queer rampage through prehistory[https://www.academia.edu/3085588/Towards_a_Transgender_Archaeology_A_Queer_Rampage_Through_Prehistory]*. In *The transgender studies reader 2*. Edited by S. Stryker and A. Z. Aizura, 319–335. New York: Routledge. [ISBN: 9780415517720]

Advocates for the inclusion of multiple and diverse gendered narratives that challenge the persistence of heteronormativity in archaeological imaginations.

Gender Archaeology, Heritage, and Public Outreach

Gender archaeology has a public-facing role in terms of sharing diverse gender narratives to public audiences in museums, heritage representations, and displays, as well other learning mediums such as textbooks for schools. This form of public outreach or knowledge sharing is

integral to challenging heteronormative views and gendered binaries that are still so prevalent in many national and international institutions or public fora across the world. It is not only that there is an assumption that the past is straight (and often white), but also that it was male-only, as discussed in [van den Dries and Kerkhof 2018](#). This is as true for representations in school and popular science books as it is for computer games or international magazines such as *National Geographic*, as noted by [Solometo and Moss 2013](#) and [Sycamore 2017](#). [Fries, et al. 2017](#) is a collection of papers that discusses the issues that arise from uncritical use of images in gendered representations in academia, popular culture, and museums. Essays such as [Trémeaud 2017](#) focus in particular on the representation of women. Pictorial representations too often carry a particular aesthetic of slim, conventionally attractive, able-bodied white women. But this is not a new concern; [Gifford-Gonzales 1993](#) and [Moser 1993](#) (both under [Initial Steps](#)) also highlight deeply problematic practice of marginalizing children and women in archaeological (and heritage) interpretations who are consistently depicted as passive in comparison to warrior-like men (see [Gender Archaeology Historiography](#) and [Initial Steps](#)). This not only skews our view of the past but also reinforces this status quo in the present and upholds a particular active, aggressive perception of manhood. This vision of masculinity is often projected onto archaeology too in the form of treasure hunting or warfare in computer games, as discussed in [Sycamore 2017](#). Examining and reflecting on these concerns is an important part of gender archaeological practice, as noted by [Prados Torreira 2016](#) when considering how museums deal with gendered concerns. Prados Torreira also argues that museums must endeavor to reflect the diversity in 21st-century society. It is important that gender interpretations not only show men, women, and children, as well as diverse gendered identities, ideologies, and concepts, but also how they might be seen to relate to each other in a gendered way.

Dempsey, K., R. Gilchrist, J. Ashbee, S. Sagrott, and S. Stones. 2020. Beyond the martial façade: Gender, heritage and medieval castles. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 26.4: 352–369. [[doi:10.1080/13527258.2019.1636119](https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2019.1636119)]

Explores the role that gender currently plays in public interpretations of medieval castles in Britain. The enduring narrative of male dominance and militarism is discussed. Also considered are the interpretative issues where gender is understood as equating with “making women visible,” and addresses what makes a “good gendered interpretation” at a public heritage site.

Fries, J. E., D. Gutmiedl-Schumann, J. Z. Matias, and U. Rambuscheck, eds. 2017. *Images of the past: Gender and its representations*. Münster, Germany, and New York: Waxmann. [ISBN: 9783830937098]

Edited collection, with an introduction by the four editors, which discusses the representation of gender in different public mediums, including computer games, books, films, and museums. There are ten papers in the volume split between two sections: “Images of the Past in Academia and Popular Media” and “Images of the Past in Museums.” Essential reading for those interested in how gender is represented and influences contemporary audiences.

Prados Torreira, L. 2016. Why is it necessary to include the gender perspective in archaeological museums?: Some examples from Spanish museums. *Museum Worlds Current Approaches to Museum Archaeology* 4.1: 18–32. [[doi:10.3167/armw.2016.040103](https://doi.org/10.3167/armw.2016.040103)]

Focusing on gendered presentations in Spanish museums, in particular how women are represented or presented to the public and the problems of androcentric narratives. Uses some recently opened or renovated exhibitions to discuss how it is possible to create inclusive

narratives and discourses in which different social groups, ethnicities, age groups, and gender concepts and relations.

Solometo, J., and J. Moss. 2013. Picturing the past: Gender in *National Geographic* reconstructions of prehistoric life. *American Antiquity* 78.1: 123–146. [doi:[10.7183/0002-7316.78.1.123](https://doi.org/10.7183/0002-7316.78.1.123)]

This article returns to the ongoing problems of pictorial representations in *National Geographic*. Analysis reveals that both women and women's work or activities are significantly underrepresented and undervalued. Shows that despite decades of feminist gender archaeology, there appears to have been little development in how archaeological conceptions of the past are represented.

Sycamore, R. 2017. Is it all warfare and treasure hunting? Gender roles and representations in video games. In *Images of the past: Gender and its representations*. Edited by Jana Esther Fries, Doris Gutschmiedl-Schumann, Jo Zalea Matias, and Ulrike Rambuscheck, 85–102. Münster, Germany, and New York: Waxmann. [ISBN: 9783830937098]

Interesting article that explores the gendered roles of men and women in archaeological-themed video games. Observations indicate that the female characters are highly sexualized and do not typically have leading roles. For the most part, much of the focus of these games is on combat.

Trémeaud, C. 2017. How to make prehistory attractive: Women's representation of the Bronze and Iron Age. In *Images of the past: Gender and its representations*. Edited by Jana Esther Fries, Doris Gutschmiedl-Schumann, Jo Zalea Matias, and Ulrike Rambuscheck, 47–64. Münster, Germany, and New York: Waxmann. [ISBN: 9783830937098]

In a similar vein to other studies on representations in scientific publications, Treméaud shows how women are sexualized and gender roles are traditional. The people depicted in imagery tend to conform to a particular aesthetic or physicality.

van den Dries, M. H., and M. J. H. Kerkhof. 2018. The past is male—Gender representation in Dutch archaeological practice. *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 6.3: 228–237.

[doi:10.1017/aap.2018.15]

This detailed study of gender representation in Dutch archaeology from schoolbooks and museum visits demonstrates that public conception of the past is often male and related to warfare or heroism where a particular type of male body is valorized. This is related to how the past is presented to the public in the imagery used, and it also plays a part in how gender stereotypes are reinforced in society today.

Theories and Approaches

Gender theory and approaches in archaeology are numerous and overlapping. Most feminist methods begin with disrupting the binaries of gender and sex, the connection of gender with assumed natural behaviors and challenging biological determinism (see [Gender and Sex](#)).

[Feminist Archaeology](#), from which gender archaeology emerged, focuses on sexism, though initially there was an emphasis on gendered imbalance at the expense of truly intersectional interpretations, as embraced by [Black Feminist Archaeology](#). Overall, these theories and approaches share a focus on equality. This can be practical, such as a desire for equal opportunities, open access, and transparency in work and organizational settings. However, this emphasis on inclusivity is also in interpretation. There is a desire to account for all people in narratives inclusive of normative and diverse sexualities and gender orientations (see

Archaeologies of Sexuality: Schmidt and Voss Edited Volume), as well as difference as experienced through ethnicity, race, ability, age, and so on. This plurality is a key focus of Black, feminist, and queer archaeologies (see *Queer Archaeology*).

Feminist Archaeology

As *Conkey and Spector 1984* (under *Initial Steps*) and *Battle-Baptiste 2011* (under *Books, Monographs, and Case Studies*) noted, feminist archaeology is not the study of women but rather an interrogation of the archaeological record to understand differences at a variety of scales, especially in relation to gender and other aspects of social identity, both now and in the past, including but not limited to race, class, age, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality (see also *Gender Archaeology Historiography*). Historiography is an important part of feminist research, and reviews are provided in many publications, such as *Gilchrist 1999*, *Conkey 2003*, *Brumfiel 2007* and *Spencer-Wood 2011* (under *Into the 21st Century*), *Conkey and Gero 1997* (under *Books, Monographs, and Case Studies*), *Wylie 2007*, and *Wilkie and Hayes 2006* encourage scholars to recognize how current knowledge and worldviews or standpoints influence scholarships. *Gilchrist 1991* shows that the feminist critique challenges the process of how archaeologists project their ideas of contemporary gender ideology onto the past, consciously or not. For example, *Franklin 2001* discusses the intersection of gender and race, in terms of the contemporary bias impacting Black archaeologists, or lack thereof. Methodologically, feminist archaeology aims to tell stories of the past from a wide range of perspectives that account for varied and complicated lifeways. Dempsey 2019 discusses that this can mean not assuming everything is male until proven otherwise. Challenging the notion of a false objectivity is a core aim of early feminist archaeology. Importantly, as Voss 2000, Dowson 2000, and Matic 2016

(under [Queer Archaeology](#)) note, feminist approaches highlight aspects of past lives or people who have received less attention because of modern political or gendered ideologies. [Alberti 2006](#), [Meskell 1999](#), and [Lozano Rubio 2011](#) discuss how the experiences of men are often unexplored, and disentangling the gender category of “man” could challenge androcentrism, thereby eschewing a focus on a single (white) male perspective, also noted by [Skogstrand 2011](#). [Tringham 1991](#) demonstrates how feminist archaeology is not about “filling in the gaps,” where women are inserted into preconceived male narratives, but rather about asking new questions of the evidence and avoidance of male dominance that remain present in visual, literal, and digital interpretation, as noted by [Gifford-Gonzales 1993](#) (under [Initial Steps](#).) Following this practice, feminist archaeology avoids reinforcing the grand narratives that do not account for life on a human scale and attends to complexity, as shown by [Joyce and Tringham 2007](#). Finally, feminist archaeology is political: it is activism that is directed at changing gender-based power relations in the present, and which also intersect with race, age, ability, and class (see also [Gender Archaeology and Activism](#) and [Black Feminist Archaeology](#)). Feminism advocates for practices that are inclusive—equal gender representation, open access publication, open forums for discussion, and presence of many different voices.

Alberti, B. 2006. Archaeology, men, and masculinities. In *Handbook of gender in archaeology*.

Edited by S. M. Nelson, 401–434. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press. [ISBN: 9780759106789]

Overview of gender-archaeological approaches and understandings of masculinities. Discusses how absenting masculinity from gendered studies reinforces “man” as a gendered norm that is both timeless and universal. Highlights how bodies can escape overly simple sexed dichotomies, and that sexual difference is not always central to identity.

Brumfiel, E. M. 2007. Methods in feminist and gender archaeology: A feeling for difference—and likeness. In *Women in antiquity: Theoretical approaches to gender and archaeology*.

Edited by S. M. Nelson, 1–28. Lanham, MD: AltaMira. [ISBN: 9780759110823]

Succinctly recounts the historiography of gender and feminist archaeology, including the shift toward understanding difference. Outlines the different methodologies to investigate gender from ethnography and ethnohistory to representational art and mortuary analyses.

Conkey, Margaret W. 2003. *Has feminism changed

archaeology?[<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/345322>]* *Signs* 28:867–880.

Discussion of feminist archaeology, and the ways in which it is practiced but also outlines how feminist epistemology has influenced or challenged archaeology.

Dowson, Thomas. 2000. Why queer archaeology? An introduction. *World Archeology* 32:161–165. [[doi:10.1080/00438240050131144](https://doi.org/10.1080/00438240050131144)]

Introduction to an edited volume on queer archaeology that contains approaches and case studies. This volume challenges heteronormative interpretations and outlines why the apparent “norm” must be interrogated, not universally accepted.

Franklin, M. 2001. A Black feminist-inspired archaeology? *Journal of Social Archaeology* 1:108–125. [[doi:10.1177/146960530100100108](https://doi.org/10.1177/146960530100100108)]

Highlights the ongoing exclusions or absence of Black archaeologists. Advocates for Black feminist archaeology as it already has the theoretical underpinnings to address questions related to difference and inequality particularly in relation to race and gender.

Gilchrist, Roberta. 1991. Women’s archaeology? Political feminism, gender theory and historical revision. *Antiquity* 65:495–501. [[doi:10.1017/S0003598X00080091](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00080091)]

Reflection on feminism and archaeology as well as a succinct overview of gender theory. It highlights the difficulties in the early 1990s to have gender or women recognized as a valid category of analysis. Notes that feminist archaeology has a key role in theory building, which has the potential to reveal more of the everyday lives of men and women.

Joyce, Rosemary A., and R. E. Tringham. 2007. Feminist adventures in hypertext. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 14.3: 328–358. [[doi:10.1007/s10816-007-9036-2](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10816-007-9036-2)]

This article demonstrates how digital media allows feminist archaeology to show the complexities of its approaches from the micro-scale to multivocality. Leading by example, showing how their own digital feminist archaeologies (*Sisters Stories* and *Chimera Web*) offered alternative ways to communicate archaeology to much wider audiences.

Meskel, L. 1999. *Archaeologies of social life: Age, sex, class et cetera in ancient Egypt*. Oxford: Blackwell. [ISBN: 9780631212980]

Feminist archaeology in practice with enmeshed theory and archaeological evidence to investigate the experience of being-in-the-body in relation to gender, sexuality, and status/wealth. Includes a detailed review of feminist theory. See especially chapter 2, “Feminisms, Gender Trouble and Sexuality,” and chapter 4, “Mapping Age, Sex and Class at Deir el Medina (Egypt).”

Skogstrand, L. 2011. Is androcentric archaeology really about men? *Archaeologies* 7:56–74. [[doi:10.1007/s11759-010-9149-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11759-010-9149-1)]

Explores the influence of androcentrism on archaeological research. Outlines how stereotypical depictions of “maleness” do little to shed light on men or masculinity; in order to remedy this, it is noted that they must also be theorized as part of feminist archaeological approaches.

Tringham, Ruth. 1991. Households with faces: The challenge of gender in prehistoric architectural remains. In *Engendering archaeology: Women in prehistory*. Edited by Joan M. Gero and Margaret W. Conkey, 93–131. Oxford: Blackwell. [ISBN: 9780631165057]

Outlines the difficulties faced in moving beyond the “add women and stir” approach, using archaeological evidence to envisage “people with faces” who have their own personal, political, and social ideologies as well as gendered identities. The article is interspersed with alternative ways of telling stories to ensure that its message is clear. Tringham’s paper is deeply reflective, and in that way captures some of the best things about feminist practices.

Wilkie, L. A., and K. H. Hayes. 2006. Engendered and feminist archaeologies of the recent and documented pasts. *Journal of Archaeological Research* 14:243–264.

Overview of engendered historical archaeology inclusive of feminist standpoint. Highlights trends in research as well as future directions.

Wylie, A. 2007. Doing archaeology as a feminist: Introduction. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 14.3: 209–216. [doi:10.1007/s10816-007-9034-4]

This article introduces the essays as part of a special edition on feminism and archaeology. It outlines feminist practice and epistemology as well as reflecting on contemporary critiques.

Black Feminist Archaeology

Black feminist theorizing encompasses political engagement that accounts for the wide variety of women’s experiences and suppressions, as shown by [hooks 1981]. Mainstream feminism often focused exclusively on sexism (typically related to that experienced by white women). Black women have experienced racism within the feminist movement. [Crenshaw 1989] outlined the theory of intersectionality, highlighting how race, class, age, ability, and gender, as well other

structures of inequality, conjoin or “intersect” in collective oppression. [Franklin 1997] notes that Black feminism is about fighting these inequalities to champion large-scale institutional and structural change. Black feminist archaeology democratizes knowledge and challenges the systemic issues that affect Black archaeologists, and in particular Black women, who are still deliberately excluded and silenced within academia, as highlighted by [Franklin 1997] and [Battle-Baptiste 2011]. A recent blog, [Seabrook 2020] (cited under [Gender Archaeology and Women’s Roles in Archaeological Practice]), shows how this particular practice of racism remains prevalent at university. Christen A. Smith, a social anthropologist, researches gender and state violence, as evidenced in her paper [Smith 2016]. Smith founded the [Cite Black Women] initiative in 2017 to address the fact that work completed by Black women has been unacknowledged, unread, and not integrated into university syllabi. This applies to archaeology, as pointed out in [Flewellen 2017]. Black feminist archaeology is an intersectional practice that explores how different forms of social identity overlap and combine in order to disrupt the assumed norm. In archaeology, most of the work completed using a Black feminist approach is by scholars within the discipline of North American historical archaeology. [Franklin 2001], [Franklin 2020], and [Battle-Baptiste 2010] are good examples of theory in practice in both archaeology and activism. [Battle-Baptiste 2011] provides the reader with a methodological “toolkit” to examine the African American past through Black feminist theory. Like other archaeological theories, its approach is applicable beyond these geographical or cultural boundaries. [Sterling 2015] demonstrates how a Black feminist approach can be applied to Pleistocene Europe, which results in an understanding of its inhabitants without adhering to competitive narratives. Sterling’s work, more generally, uses a Black feminist approach to explore gender among hunter-gatherer societies in Europe (see [Sterling 2014], cited under [Into the 21st Century]). [Wilkie 2003] does not explicitly use the term

“Black feminist archaeology,” but Wilkie’s consideration of the structural dynamics of motherhood for African American women in the post-Emancipation southern United States is worthy of inclusion.

Battle-Baptiste, Whitney. 2010. Sweepin’ spirits: Power and transformation on the plantation landscape. In *Archaeology and preservation of gendered landscapes*. Edited by Sherene Baugher and Suzanne M. Spencer-Wood, 81–94. New York: Springer. [ISBN: 9781441915009]

This paper explores the gendered power dynamics at the Hermitage, a former plantation owned by Andrew Jackson that was also lived in by an enslaved or captive African community. In particular, it focuses on the yard spaces as places of Black cultural reproduction that were primarily shaped by the agency of women.

Battle-Baptiste, Whitney. 2011. *Black feminist archaeology*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press. [ISBN: 9781598743791] [[doi:10.4324/9781315096254](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315096254)]

This is a deeply reflective consideration of the material character of Black womanhood in 19th- and 20th-century America. It also explores the material practices of African American life from those enslaved to freed or free. Of particular note is the exploration of Mary Burghardt and her son, W.E. B. Du Bois, through the concept of the homeplace. Battle-Baptiste frames the larger life story of the famous scholar through the micro-scale of the (material) stories of the women that shaped him.

Cite Black Women[<https://www.citeblackwomenscollective.org/>].

A collective that endeavors to address the fact that work completed by Black women has been unacknowledged, unread, and not integrated into university syllabi.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 1989. Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1:139–167.

Outlines intersectionality as the way in which race and gender overlap to form intersecting structural inequalities that must be understood in relation to each other. Using Black feminist theory, Crenshaw demonstrates that there is a multidimensionality to Black women's experience that is ignored and erased. She argues for a new framework that allows for intersectional subordinations that Black women have to contend with.

Flewellen, Ayana Omilade. 2017. Locating marginalized historical narratives at Kingsley Plantation. *Historical Archaeology* 51:71–87.

This article examines the intersection of power, gender, Black women's experience, and the way in which contemporary heritage fails to capture this appropriately. Focusing on the Kingsley Plantation, in Jacksonville, Florida, this article argues that the story of this place is told from the perspective of the white-elite planter/enslaver. The gendered voices of enslaved Black women are not fully represented but marginalized, which can be seen in the analysis of signage, its content, and geographic location.

Franklin, M. 1997. Why are there so few Black American archaeologists? *Antiquity* 71.274: 799–801. [doi:[10.1017/S0003598X00085732](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00085732)]

A short but powerful article that highlights ongoing structural racism that results in a serious lack of African American archaeologists in North American archaeology. Also highlights how this is lamentable, as archaeology is uniquely placed to add new dimensions to Black histories.

Franklin, M. 2020. Enslaved household variability and plantation life and labor in colonial Virginia. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 24:115–155. [[doi:10.1007/s10761-019-00506-x](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10761-019-00506-x)]

Outlines household formation of enslaved families, household variability, as well as working lives, including the “extra-domestic labor” of women. This gendered analysis of labor within three plantation sites in Tidewater Virginia reveals how enslaved women’s work challenges the assumed universal of a public/private divide. It also demonstrates how scale in relation to plantations and the work involved has an impact on household organization.

hooks, b. 1981. *Ain’t I a woman: Black women and feminism*. Boston: South End Press. [ISBN: 9780896081284]

bell hooks is a leading Black feminist theoretician. This book examines the long-standing effects of racism and sexism on Black women, including the ways in which white feminists have absented or excluded them and the impacts of misogyny.

Smith, C. 2016. Facing the dragon: Black mothering, sequelae, and gendered necropolitics in the Americas. *Transforming Anthropology* 24.1: 31–48.

Smith is the founder of the “Cite Black Women” initiative; here she considers the particular ways anti-Black state-led violence impacts Black women, and highlights their resistance to and negotiation of the “the racial, hetero-patriarchal social.”

Sterling, K. 2015. Black feminist theory in prehistory. *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress* 11:93–120.

Detailed overview of Black feminism as well as Black feminist archaeology and anthropology. This article is a critique, an historiography, and an example of how to put Black feminist theory

into practice. For the latter, Sterling shows how we could read interactions between Neanderthals and Cro-Magnon (anatomically modern homo-sapiens) beyond competition, which typically dominates discussions of the past (i.e., an explanation that legitimizes subordinate others across time and space and therefore often upholds the current status quo).

Wilkie, Laura. 2003. *The archaeology of mothering: An African-American midwife's tale*. New York: Routledge. [ISBN: 9780415945691]

Of concern for feminist research are practice of mothering and child care, and how these things are socially constituted and inform structural dynamics, including inequality. This book outlines how motherhood is a performative (gendered) identity. Exploring archaeological evidence appropriately contextualized, from a house site of an African American family in Mobile, Alabama, an archaeology of mothering is established that endeavors to account for mothering ideologies in the post-Emancipation South of the United States, particularly related to Black womanhood.

Queer Archaeology

In archaeology, and other disciplines, the story of the past is largely told through the experiences of (elite white) men. There are still too few explorations either implicit or explicit of the wide spectrum of gendered identities and ideologies that must have existed in the past. [Claassen 2000](#) (cited under [Gender Archaeology and Activism](#)), [Dowson 2000](#), [Dowson 2009](#), and [She 2000](#) argue that archaeology is heteronormative and patriarchal; in other words, that a gendered elite white “male gaze” is present in “observations” of archaeological material. Queer archaeology is focused on disrupting the pervasiveness of heteronormativity in archaeological interpretations, challenging binaries but also querying the apparent norm, as pointed out by [Dowson 2000](#), [Voss](#)

[2000], [Reeder 2000], and [Alberti 2013]. Like third-wave feminist archaeology, queer archaeology is anti-essentialist. [Halperin 2003] discusses how queer theory asserts that everything is queer other than the norm, and it aims to be deliberately disruptive. Queer archaeology is often misunderstood as concentrating solely on gender and sexuality or its social (re)production, and while this has been a dominant focus, [Voss 2000] and [Croucher 2005] discuss how it can be applied beyond these bounds. Unlike many feminist archaeologies, [Voss 2000] and [Alberti 2013] highlight how queer readings do not shy away from incorporations of sexuality. Gender and sexuality are things people do, not what people are. [Voss 2012] (under [Archaeologies of Sex, Sexuality, and Desire]) notes that this doing is always contextualized spatially, temporally, and materially. In 2000, Voss noted that queer theory is often used in a theoretical sense, but is not truly employed to interpret archaeological evidence. But this is changing, as queer perspectives are increasingly applied. [Croucher 2005] uses a queer approach to challenge chronocentrism, a fixation on strict temporal divisions that often are too grand to inform the micro-scale. [Cobb 2005] offers alternative readings of hunter-gathering societies that query the presumption of a transhistorical heterosexual group. Both [Cook 2019] and [Cobb and Croucher 2016] (both under [Gender Archaeology and Activism]) use queer theory to consider the impacts of new archaeological communication and technological innovation for knowledge sharing that eschews the status quo. [Ransley 2005] offers a queer reading of the disciplinary shortcomings of maritime archaeology. In showing movement as messy and complicated, [Frieman, et al. 2019] (under [Into the 21st Century]) approaches the story of the Egtved Adolescent through queer mobility (See [Issues of Sex: Birka Burial, Sweden, and the “Princess of Vix,” Germany]). Together, this more recent scholarship indicates the ongoing desire to tell nonlinear complex life stories.

Alberti, Benjamin. 2013. Queer prehistory: Bodies, performativity, and matter. In *A companion to gender prehistory*. Edited by Diane Bolger, 86–107. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

[doi:10.1002/9781118294291]. [ISBN: 9780470655368]

As an article on queer archaeology, is it perhaps appropriate that this is a multidimensional paper: it acts as an overview, a review, and critical commentary. In particular it highlights how queer approaches can be normative or transgress epistemologies (She 2000, Dowson 2009). It also contains important discussions of the body as well as new materialism as examined through queer theory.

Cobb, Hannah L. December 2005. Straight down the line? A queer consideration of hunter-gatherer studies in North-western Europe. *World Archaeology* 37.4: 630–636.

[doi:10.1080/00438240500395862]

Reconsiders hunter-gathers of prehistoric Scotland from a queer perspective to challenge heteronormative stereotypes.

Croucher, Karina. 2005. Queerying Near Eastern archaeology, *World Archaeology* 37.4: 610–620. [doi:10.1080/00438240500418664]

By exploring time differently and using a sensorial approach, this article challenges normative archaeological approaches to Skull Building at Çayönü Tepesiin, Southeast Anatolia. Instead of “seeing” the data as a tool for identifying the appropriate time period (chronocentrism), for contemporary archaeologists the human experience of the site is foregrounded in a multi-sensual way, ultimately showing alternative ways of living in the world that included other aspects of identity and personhood as well as familial and more-than-human relationships.

Dowson, Thomas. 2000. Why queer archeology? An introduction. *World Archaeology* 32:161–165. [[doi:10.1080/00438240050131144](https://doi.org/10.1080/00438240050131144)]

Introduction to an edited volume on queer theory that contains approaches and case studies which challenges heteronormative interpretations and outlines why the apparent “norm” must be interrogated, not universally accepted. Essential reading.

Dowson, Thomas. 2009. Queer theory meets archaeology: Disrupting epistemological privilege and heteronormativity in constructing the past. In *The Ashgate research companion to queer theory*. Edited by N. Giffney and M. O’Rourke, 277–294. Farnham, UK: Ashgate.

[[doi:10.4324/9781315613482](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315613482)]. [ISBN: 9780754690573]

Reflective overview that highlights how much more queer theory can bring to archaeological interpretations beyond the identification of sexual politics, identities, or genders that conform to contemporary worlds. Calls for a recognition of how archaeology is complicit in maintaining a heteronormative narrative that is ultimately homophobic.

Halperin, David M. 2003. The normalization of queer theory. *Journal of Homosexuality* 45.2–4: 339–343. [[doi:10.1300/J082v45n02_17](https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v45n02_17)]

Reflective essay on how queer theory has been standardized, which has the potential to remove its radicalness.

Matić, Uroš. 2016. (De)queering Hatshepsut: Binary bind in archaeology of Egypt and kingship beyond the corporeal. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 23:810–831.

[[doi:10.1007/s10816-016-9288-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10816-016-9288-9)]

Through a relational approach, Matic⁶ demonstrates that queer readings of Egyptian female king Hatshepsut move beyond the heteronormative perspective that typically enforces an identity of “a cross-dresser, gender-bender or woman with a beard.”

Reeder, Greg. 2000. Same-sex desire, conjugal constructs, and the tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep. *World Archaeology* 32.2: 193–208. [[doi:10.1080/00438240050131180](https://doi.org/10.1080/00438240050131180)]

A re-analysis of iconography that discusses the potential of imagery of the tombs of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep as evidence for some form of same-sex desire or sexuality. It serves to highlight the previous and ongoing heteronormative bias in Egyptian archaeological interpretations.

Ransley, Jesse. 2005. Boats are for boys: Queering maritime archaeology. *World Archaeology* 37.4: 621–629. [[doi:10.1080/00438240500404623](https://doi.org/10.1080/00438240500404623)]

Highlights how maritime archaeology is entrenched in the “Western, androcentric, dualistic, heteronormative paradigm” that perpetuates myths of only men (or boys) as voyagers and explorers that are ultimately colonial. Discusses how the sea, or maritime locations, which are zones of constant change, intersection, interactions, and communication, are in themselves queer. The study shows that maritime archaeology has much to offer beyond the conservative narratives that center on construction, production, and technological skills.

She. 2000. Sex and a career. *World Archaeology* 32.2: 166–172.

[[doi:10.1080/00438240050131153](https://doi.org/10.1080/00438240050131153)]

An autobiographical essay that demonstrated the degree to which being an “out” lesbian affected the author’s education and career. It highlights how sexuality shapes the world of

archaeological pedagogy and collegial interactions; but also points out that the ways in which knowledge or research networks are created is ultimately homophobic.

Voss, Barbara L. 2000. Feminisms, queer theories, and the archaeological study of past sexualities. *World Archaeology* 32.2: 180–192. [doi:10.1080/00438240050131171]

Provides an overview of feminism and queer theory, situating it within its cultural and political context. Highlights how archaeology has much to gain by applying queer thinking to the past.

Weismantel, M. 2013. *Towards a transgender archeology: A Queer rampage through prehistory[[https://www.academia.edu/3085588/Towards a Transgender Archaeology A Queer Rampage Through Prehistory](https://www.academia.edu/3085588/Towards_a_Transgender_Archaeology_A_QUEER_Rampage_Through_Prehistory)]*. In *The transgender studies reader 2*. Edited by S. Stryker and A. Z. Aizura, 319–334. New York: Routledge. [ISBN: 9780415517720]

Argues archaeology's adherence to Western ontologies prevents deeper understandings of multiple ways of being a gendered person in the past. Archaeology can benefit from embracing transgender studies, which would remedy the limits that modern thinking on sexuality and gender imposes onto the past. Conservative contemporary ideas or norms are at odds with the widely varying material traces of desire, sexuality, and gender from the past (see [Marshall 2000](#), cited under [The Body](#)).

Archaeologies of Sex, Sexuality, and Desire

Archaeologies of sexuality set out to address heteronormativity and patriarchy but also interrogate the production of enforced gender and sexual norms; see [Voss 2012](#) for a detailed overview and [Archaeologies Of Sexuality: Schmidt And Voss Edited Volume](#). This approach can also challenge the notion that past societies were always competitive, heterosexual, male-dominated structures, as disputed in [Tarble de Scaramelli 2012](#). Heterosexist ideas assume and

project a “straight” past, as noted by [Reeder 2000](#) (under [Queer Archaeology](#)). Discussions in [Voss 2006](#) indicate how sexuality is wrongly understood as essentially biological and therefore—also wrongly—viewed as universal and unchanging. [Voss 2008](#) outlines how it is not that sexuality is untethered to biological functions, but that it is set, performed, and interpreted within a cultural context. Sexuality may be approached by the same methodological toolkit that is used to interpret political religious organizations or cultural constructs of identity, as shown by [Casella 2000](#) (under [Archaeologies Of Sexuality: Schmidt And Voss Edited Volume](#)) and [Seifert 2005](#). There is a range of different possibilities to explore within sexualities, from carnal desire, sexual attraction, marital ties, and intimacies to power, coercion, control, and colonial ethnogenesis. Unfortunately, [Voss 2006](#) indicates that gender is often explored with an emphasis on heterosexual marriage and the division of labor, but little focus is placed on how the institution of marriage or other institutions might regulate sexuality. Archaeologies of sexuality often concentrates on fertility management as in [Wilkie 2003](#), on sexual economies, as in [Seifert 2005](#) or [Casella 2000](#) (under [Archaeologies Of Sexuality: Schmidt And Voss Edited Volume](#)), on sexual orientation, as in [Reeder 2000](#) (under [Queer Archaeology](#)), and on erotic representations, as in [Voss 2012](#), [Meskell 1999](#), and [Joyce 2008](#) (under [Books, Monographs, and Case Studies](#)). Sex work or prostitution has received much attention, including the special edition journal on “Sin City” ([Seifert 2005](#)). However, here, as in other aspects of archaeology, economic concerns are given the most consideration. [Voss 2006](#) and [Hall 2012](#) both argue that we must recognize that the evidential, methodological, and epistemological tensions that archaeologies of sexuality present are in fact present in all archaeological interpretations. Difficulties exist not only in method but also in the form of prurient notions of sexuality and the past. [Weisental 2012](#), a reexamination of the Moche “sex pots,” shows just how pervasive and

damaging this can be. Nonetheless, this field of study has continued to grow and emphasize its connections to other areas, including colonialism and empire, as demonstrated by [Weiss 2012](#) and Voss and Casella's edited collection *The Archaeology of Colonialism* (2012; see various chapters cited below). What makes a difference is asking questions from alternative perspectives.

Hall, Martin. 2012. Sexuality and materiality: The challenge of method. In *The archaeology of colonialism: Intimate encounters and sexual effects*. Edited by B. L. Voss and E. C. Casella, 323–340. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9781107401266]

This is the final essay in Voss and Casella's edited collection. It offers a methodology for archaeologies of sexuality and an overview of the challenges in these approaches.

Seifert, Donna J. 2005. *Introduction: Archaeology in Sin

City [www.jstor.org/stable/25617232]*. *Historical Archaeology* 39.1: 1–3.

[www.jstor.org/stable/25617232]

Introduction to a special edition focused on sex work, brothels, and related households.

Features many notable papers, some of which are now dated but nonetheless valuable for exploring the way in which archaeological thinking has changed in the intervening years.

Table de Scaramelli, Kay. 2012. Gendered transformations on the Orinoco Frontier. In *The Archaeology of colonialism: Intimate encounters and sexual effects*. Edited by B. L. Voss and E. C. Casella, 138–155. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9781107401266]

Explores the different ways in which Indigenous women negotiated their agency under colonial rule, including social mobility and economic gain. Focus on but not limited to sexuality/sexual favors, concubinage, and exogamy.

Voss, Barbara. L. 2006. Sexuality in archaeology. In *The handbook of gender in archaeology*.

Edited by S. M. Nelson, 365–400. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press. [ISBN: 9780759106789]

Considers how archaeologists theorize sexuality from early sexology, sex/gender systems, as well as queer theory. Overview of then current research which concentrated on reproduction, erotic or sexual representation, fertility, prostitution, and homosexuality. It ends with a

discussion of the work of Lynn Meskell and Rosemary Joyce (see also [Gender Archaeology](#) [Historiography](#) and [Feminist Archaeology](#)).

Voss, Barbara. L. 2008. *The archaeology of ethnogenesis: Race and sexuality in colonial San*

Francisco. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press. [ISBN: 9780520244924]

Focused on El Presidio de San Francisco (1776–1846), this book explores race, sexuality, gender, and colonialism, but also landscape, pottery, artifacts and foodways. The complexities and plurality of social identity are emphasized, with an emphasis on race and sexuality.

Chapter 3, in particular, focuses on the agency of colonial women, who are often left out of patriarchal accounts in terms of colonial records.

Voss, Barbara L. 2012. Sexual effects: Postcolonial and queer perspectives on the archaeology

of sexuality and empire. In *The archaeology of colonialism: Intimate encounters and sexual effects*. Edited by B. L. Voss and E. C. Casella, 11–30. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press.

[ISBN: 9781107401266]

Explores sexuality and empire, but asserts neither are stable facts but highly variable through time and space.

Weismental, Mary. 2012. Obstinate things. In *The archaeology of colonialism: Intimate encounters and sexual effects*. Edited by B. L.Voss and E. C. Casella, 303–322. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9781107401266]

Alternative exploration of pre-Columbian Moche “sex pots,” which moves away from the often lurid or even prurient understanding of these ceramics as “sexually explicit art.” In doing so, sensory sexualities/sensualities are accounted for and the importance of the experiential is highlighted.

Weiss, Lindsay. 2012. Transformation of the domestic sphere on the late-nineteenth century diamond fields. In *The archaeology of colonialism: Intimate encounters and sexual effects*. Edited by B. L.Voss and E. C. Casella, 49–66. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9781107401266]

In part discusses the agency of captive mine workers in the South African diamond fields, and their consensual and emotionally connected same-sex mine marriages that occurred during the workers’ servitude within the oppressive colonial system.

Wilkie, Laura. 2003. *The archaeology of mothering: An African-American midwife’s tale*. New York: Routledge. [[doi:10.4324/9780203821176](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203821176)]. [ISBN: 9780415945691]

Following the life story of an African American midwife, Lucrecia Perryman, Wilkie discusses fertility management, health, and social care in terms of magical-medical practices.

Archaeologies of Sexuality: Schmidt and Voss Edited Volume

Voss and Schmidt’s *Archaeologies of Sexuality* volume remains a go-to publication for this area of research. It comprises individual contributions that cover a wide chronological and geographic span. Their introduction provides an overview of archaeologies of sexualities, but also gives the

framework through which the essays in the volume can be understood. Essential reading for those interested in archaeology and sexuality. [Seifert, et al. 2000] focuses on sexual agency in brothels in North America. The inner sexuality of medieval nuns is contextualized with space and material culture in [Gilchrist 2000]. Female homosexuality and gender transformations in convict-era Australian prisons is explored in [Casella 2000]. Archaeological evidence for “two-spirit people” whose nonprocreative sexual activity was a crucial part of the ’aqi gendered identity in the Chumash society is examined in [Hollimon 2000]. The settlement patterns of the San Franciscan leathermen community is the focus of [Rubin 2000], whose approach combines psychogeography, archaeology, and historical archival research. [She 2000] (under [Queer Archaeology]) addresses the issue of how their own sexuality shaped their archaeological practices. In *Archaeologies of Sexuality* it is noted that typically sex work has been viewed through an economic lens; however, [Conlin-Casella 2000] gives voices to the many actors who played roles in prostitution. [Buchli 2000] considers how archaeologies of sexuality can be explored through space and architecture by examining how particular narratives have influenced architecture and reflected sexual and gender norms. While there have been other excellent publications in this area, an important starting point to understand archaeologies of sexuality should begin with this volume.

Buchli, Victor. 2000. Constructing utopian sexualities: The archaeology and architecture of the early Soviet state. In **Archaeologies of sexuality* [[http://repository.umpwr.ac.id:8080/bitstream/handle/123456789/131/Archaeologies%20of%20Sexuality.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](http://repository umpwr.ac.id:8080/bitstream/handle/123456789/131/Archaeologies%20of%20Sexuality.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)]*. Edited by Robert A. Schmidt and Barbara L. Voss, 235–250. London and New York: Routledge. [ISBN: 9786610112951]

A study of heterosexuality, gender, and sexual identities as idealized by the then USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics). A desire for gendered norms can be traced in early Soviet architectural forms, which were inspired by earlier Marxist archaeological interpretations about the deeper past. The key point is that all archaeologies, intentionally or not, have an implied sexuality at their core.

Casella, Eleanor Conlin. 2000. *Bulldaggers and gentle ladies: archaeological approaches to female homosexuality in convict-era Australia. In **Archaeologies of sexuality*[<http://repository.umpwr.ac.id:8080/bitstream/handle/123456789/131/Archaeologies%20of%20Sexuality.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>]*. Edited by Robert A. Schmidt and Barbara L. Voss, 143–160. London and New York: Routledge. [ISBN: 9786610112951]
Discusses transgression of sexual and gender roles within Australia’s convict era prisons or female factories, with an emphasis on women and homosexuality.

Gilchrist, Roberta. 2000. Unsexing the body: The Interior sexuality of medieval religious women. In **Archaeologies of sexuality*[<http://repository.umpwr.ac.id:8080/bitstream/handle/123456789/131/Archaeologies%20of%20Sexuality.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>]*. Edited by Robert A. Schmidt and Barbara L. Voss, 89–104. London and New York: Routledge. [ISBN: 9786610112951]
Explores the interior sexuality of medieval religious women through examinations of material and visual culture as well as architecture of primarily religious houses in medieval Britain.

Hollimon, Sandra E. 2000. Archaeology of the 'aqi: Gender and sexuality in prehistoric Chumash society. In **Archaeologies of sexuality*[<http://repository.umpwr.ac.id:8080/bitstream/handle/123456789/131/Archaeologies%20of%20Sexuality.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>]*.

[s%20of%20Sexuality.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](http://repository.umpwr.ac.id:8080/bitstream/handle/123456789/131/Archaeologies%20of%20Sexuality.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)]*. Edited by Robert A. Schmidt and Barbara L. Voss, 179–197. London and New York: Routledge.[ISBN: 9786610112951]

Discuss the organization and interrelatedness of gender, sexuality, and labor among the Chumash of the Santa Barbara Channel area in coastal Southern California. In this society it appears that nonprocreative sexual activity is critical in the identification of the 'aqi gender (consider or explored in this article as a third gender), and that these aspects are linked to the undertaking (caretaker of the dead) occupation.

Rubin, Gayle. 2000. Sites, settlements, and urban sex: Archaeology and the study of gay leathermen in San Francisco, 1955–1995. In *Archaeologies of sexuality*[<http://repository.umpwr.ac.id:8080/bitstream/handle/123456789/131/Archaeologies%20of%20Sexuality.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>]*. Edited by Robert A. Schmidt and Barbara L. Voss, 62–88. London and New York: Routledge.[ISBN: 9786610112951]

An archaeological landscape approach supported by ethnohistory and brief material culture analysis to understand the emergence and geography of the gay leathermen of San Francisco in the mid- to late 20th century.

Schmidt, Robert A., and Barbara L. Voss. 2000. Archaeologies of sexuality: An introduction. In *Archaeologies of sexuality*[<http://repository.umpwr.ac.id:8080/bitstream/handle/123456789/131/Archaeologies%20of%20Sexuality.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>]*. Edited by Robert A. Schmidt and Barbara L. Voss, 1–34. London and New York: Routledge.[ISBN: 9786610112951]

This introduction is an overview of archaeologies of sexualities, but also gives the framework through which the essays in the volume can be understood. Essential reading for those interested in archaeology and sexuality.

Seifert, Donna J., Elizabeth Barthold O'Brien, and Joseph Balicki. 2000. Mary Ann Hall's first-class house: The archaeology of a capital brothel. In **Archaeologies of sexuality* [<http://repository.umpwr.ac.id:8080/bitstream/handle/123456789/131/Archaeologies%20of%20Sexuality.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>]*. Edited by Robert A. Schmidt and Barbara L. Voss, 117–129. London and New York: Routledge. [ISBN: 9786610112951]

Essays highlights the material reality of brothel life in 19th-century Washington. The assemblage reflects the economic and social status of Mary Ann Hall and her family, as well as the brothel as a residence and place of business.

Ethnoarchaeology and Gender

Ethnoarchaeology comprises direct field observation of ongoing social practices of societies, analysis of their material culture and settlement in the modern world, and then making parallels between these understandings and past communities. This approach was one of the foundational ways in which gender was mapped onto the past; it certainly contributed to early gender archaeological studies such as [Spector 1993](#), a collaborative archaeology of a Wahpeton village. [Brumbach and Jarvenpa 1997](#), a study of Chipewyan communities in northern Canada, revealed that women participated in hunting activities far more than previously accepted. To 21st-century gender scholars, this might not be surprising, but these earlier “making women visible” approaches were crucial to the informed feminist gender perspectives present in research today (see [Gender Archaeology Historiography](#), [Into the 21st Century](#)). More recent ethnoarchaeological studies on gender, such as [Hernando, et al. 2011](#), have focused on the relationship between gender and mobility in hunter-gather societies. [Jones 2009](#), a study of contemporary Fijian life, offers interesting observations on foodways and identities as well as the different relationships men and women have with food preparation and procurement. Women

carried out near-shore fishing and men baked meats and fish in earth ovens, whereas women boiled fish in the kitchen. Men primarily ate fish heads. The direct historical approach used to draw comparison between these practices and the archaeological evidence in middens as well as historic data offers a more convincing argument that contemporary practices when contextualized in appropriate cultural context can inform us of past communities gendered practices. However, there are concerns about ethnoarchaeological approaches. [Gosselain 2016](#) is a deliberately provocative article which argues that ethnoarchaeology was in part an extension of colonial ethnography. Also discussed is how the discipline reified a racist ideology that at its core privileges the developed Western world over the “exotic” societies subject to study, namely those of different parts of Africa, Oceania, South America, and Alaska. Its methodological approach is to create universals and often draw unsuitable analogies, ignoring historical contingency and the specificity of cultural contexts. Others argue that, as a discipline, it is endeavoring to challenge these problems. [Whittaker and Kamp 2017](#), the editors of *Ethnoarchaeology*, suggests that they must “widen the road” in terms of approach. They believe that Gosselain’s arguments do not take account of the current trajectory of the discipline. But there remains the concern that ethnoarchaeological studies will continue to reinforce the inherent androcentrism of early ethnology that is already so persistent in archaeology, as noted by [Moen 2019](#) (cited under [Into the 21st Century](#)).

Brumbach, H., and R. Jarvenpa. 1997. Ethnoarchaeology of subsistence space and gender: A subarctic Dene case. *American Antiquity* 62.3: 414–436. [[doi:10.2307/282163](https://doi.org/10.2307/282163)]

Using direct historical analogy, this long-term project with the Chipewyan communities in Saskatchewan, Canada, endeavored to show the multiplicities of women’s roles in hunter-gather societies. Some important points are made relating to spatial organization and gender as

well as women's participatory role in meat acquisition, trading, and production of certain objects. Excellent source for understanding the development and application of gender archaeological practices.

Gosselain, Olivier P. 2016. To hell with ethnoarchaeology! *Archaeological Dialogues* 23.2: 215–228. [[doi:10.1017/S1380203816000234](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203816000234)]

This is not a gender archaeological essay, but it does focus on why the use of ethnoarchaeological approaches should be approached with caution owing to colonial narratives and assumptions of rationality as well as notions of the supremacy of the Western world. Interrogating narratives in such a way is feminist archaeology.

Hernando, A., G. Politis, A. Ruibal, and E. Coelho. 2011. Gender, power, and mobility among the Awá-Guajá (Maranhão, Brazil). *Journal of Anthropological Research* 67.2: 189–211. [www.jstor.org/stable/41303283]

A detailed study on how the lifeways of the Awá-Guajá have altered after contact with wider Brazilian society. Their subsequent “move” to a reservation has led to reduced mobility, once a core aspect of their lifeways. In particular it is noted how these changes affected women and their gendered roles. Uses ethnographic data to interrogate assumptions about greater equality in mobile hunter-gatherer societies in comparison to more settled communities. Also provides a good overview of gender inequality and gender complementarity.

Jones, S. 2009. *Food and gender in Fiji: Ethnoarchaeological explorations*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. [ISBN: 9780739134801]

This ethnographic study of the community on the small island of Nayau, eastern Fiji, gathered data on modern Fijian food culture from the procurement, preparation, and consumption to the

cosmological significance of food. Using a direct historical approach, this information was applied to the archaeological record. Focuses on women's role in foodways from labor to belief, as well as exploring how age and status intersect with gender.

Spector, Janet. 1993. **What this awl means: Feminist archaeology at a Wahpeton Dakota village*[\[https://muse.jhu.edu/book/5441\]](https://muse.jhu.edu/book/5441)*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press. [ISBN: 9780873512770]

Feminist archaeological, ethnohistorical, and ethnoarchaeological collaborative approach that engaged with Indigenous communities and Dakota elders in order to develop a greater understanding of a Dakota summer village. Self-reflective and inclusive work that prioritizes people's stories rather than economic focus. Ultimately serves to highlight the often untold stories of women's labor through material culture analysis.

Whittaker, John, and Kathryn Kamp. 2017. Editorial reflections. *Ethnoarchaeology* 9.1: 1–2. Argues that an ethnoarchaeological approach is important and relevant when applied in an appropriate manner. Written as a response to [Gosselain 2016](#).

Scales of Analysis

In archaeology, a picture of gender identities is built through investigating the organizational, spatial, temporal, and material characteristics of tasks carried out by people to produce, maintain, and arrange their lives, communities, dwelling places, and landscapes. The methodological approaches for gender are ultimately the same as for archaeology more generally: the study of past peoples and their practices through their material remains. What is different are the questions that are addressed to the evidence, what is included, what is noticed, and the investigative framework employed. Sometimes gendered approaches employ ethnographic

analogy, explore mortuary contexts, including the use of grave gifts, or analyze deposition of objects within particular spatial contexts, such as houses, or particular points in the landscape, such as bogs or mountains. In some cases, these analyses can be complemented with written documents, imagery, and other representations. Within gender archaeology, there is a great attention placed on the micro-scale of daily life that can account for the human experience inclusive of feelings, relations, and identities. Altogether, this means the examination of bodies, material culture, burial practices, households, settlements, and so on, in order to develop a multivocal, interactive gathering of materials (real and imagined) that help us to understand the past and the way it is created in the present. Most importantly, it highlights stories that often get left out of grand narratives, those things that are not neat or do not correspond with the norm. The different scales of analysis featured here should be considered as overlapping and complementary. Most should be or can be used together to build up an idea of individual, group, or societal gendered ideas, identities, practices, and ideologies.

Gender and Sex

[Gilchrist 2009] discusses how biological sex is understood as the genetic (chromosomal), hormonal, and anatomical makeup of bodies. This is often explored in a binary form through segregating the spectrum of sex into male/female and corresponding YY or XX chromosomes. Yet [Fausto-Sterling 2000], [Joyce 2008] (under [Books, Monographs, and Case Studies]), and [Gilchrist 2009] show that biological studies indicate that sex cannot be easily mapped into this two-part division. Joyce cautioned that “anatomy, chromosomes, and hormones do not form two simple packages” (p. 45). Unfortunately, biological difference between males and females is still uncritically assumed to determine gendered behaviors, as noted in [Bolger 2013]. Biological sex is connected with gender, as [Geller 2009] and [Geller 2017] point out. This does not mean that sexual

dimorphism or bodily difference is the key marker in defining expressions of gender. Gender was initially understood as a cultural expression of biological sex, which was explored through a “two-sex/two-gender model.” This approach was very much linked with early gendered approaches in burial archaeology, where male- or female-sexed bodies became associated with particular material culture, and these things went on to define gender (see [Mortuary Archaeology and Gender](#)). [Moral 2016](#) charts how this resulted in oppositional understandings of male/female and man/woman categories. The sex/gender model is no longer viewed as an appropriate way to appreciate the spectrum of sex or gender, as discussed in [Voss 2005](#) (under [Beyond Binaries: “Third” Genders, Another Bind](#)). [Geller 2008](#) explores how a theoretically informed feminist bioarchaeology can offer alternative readings in terms of a sex/gender divide.

Fausto-Sterling, Anne. 2000. *Sexing the body: Gender politics and the construction of sexuality*. New York: Basic Books. [ISBN: 9781541672895]

Outlines how sex and gender are imposed on the body, providing a detailed critique of past scientific and medical approaches that indicate a pronounced bias.

Gilchrist, Roberta. 2009. The archaeology of sex and gender. In *The Oxford handbook of archaeology*. Edited by B. Cunliffe, C. Gosden, and R. Joyce, 1029–1047. New York: Oxford Univ. Press. [[doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199271016.013.0033](https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199271016.013.0033)]. [ISBN: 9780199271016]

Overview of sex and gender that deals with often complicated scientific elements in an easy to understand manner. Provides a concise historiography of the development of theory (biological constructivist and social constructivist), including the problematic “sex is biological” argument.

Geller, Pamela. 2008. Conceiving sex: Fomenting a feminist bioarchaeology. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 8.1: 113–138. [[doi:10.1177/1469605307086080](https://doi.org/10.1177/1469605307086080)]

From a feminist perspective, this important paper highlights the shortcomings in bioarchaeology's analysis of sex, which is often assumed to be dualistic (male/female) and unchanging.

Geller, Pamela L. 2009. Identity and difference: Complicating gender in archaeology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 38:65–81. [[doi:10.1146/annurev-anthro-091908-164414](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-091908-164414)]

Outlining how the resistance to feminism in gender archaeology must fade, in particular, within bioarchaeology, which has the most to benefit from these approaches.

Geller, Pamela L. 2017. *Bioarchaeology of socio-sexual lives: Queering common sense about sex, gender, and sexuality*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International. [[doi:10.1007/978-3-319-40995-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-40995-5)]. [ISBN: 9783319409931]

Case studies from Neolithic Europe, pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, and 19th-century United States that bring together diverse evidence from bioarchaeological remains, which are used to showcase difference through contextually analyzing socio-sexual beliefs and practices that are culturally constructed.

Moral, Enrique. September 2016. Qu(e)rying sex and gender in archaeology: A critique of the “third” and other sexual categories. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 23.3: 788–809. [[doi:10.1007/s10816-016-9294-y](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10816-016-9294-y)]

Puts forward the argument that introducing “third” genders does not challenge the sex/gender binaries. Suggests that the pushing together of nonbinary genders into one category creates

another artificial category. Highlights how the body and person cannot be ontologically distinguished, and therefore that segregation based on sex characteristics is flawed.

Beyond Binaries: “Third” Genders, Another Bind

The limitations of a “two-sex/two-gender” model were noted by [Prine 2000](#) and [Hollimon 2006](#) in particular when studying Indigenous people in America. Through archaeology, ethnography, and ethnohistory of First Nations communities, both encountered a “two-spirit” individual, who was understood as possessing gender fluid characteristics. This led to the rise of a “third gender” interpretation, discussed further by [Schmidt 2005](#) and [Weismantel 2013](#) (cited under [Gender Archaeology and Activism](#)) as one way to challenge the dualism or dyad of man/woman.

However, critiques of this model, such as [Voss 2005](#), [Moral 2016](#) (under [Gender and Sex](#)) and [Matić 2016](#) (under [Queer Archaeology](#)), suggested that the use of a third sex/gender immediately implies that this is the “other” category, which of course then suggests that “man/woman” is the norm and transhistorical. Judith Butler, whose works have been influential in both gender and feminist archaeology, has argued that biological sex is an identity or a performative categorization, that it does not preexist but is created, like gender (see [Butler 1990](#), under [Gender Archaeology in the 1990s and 2000s](#); see also the *Oxford Bibliographies* articles “[Feminist Epistemology\[obo-9780195396577-0158\]](#),” “[Feminist Theory\[obo-9780199756841-0093\]](#),” and “[Queer Theory\[obo-9780199791286-0185\]](#).” Performance theory sees both sex and gender as continually produced through social actions, which are unstable and changing. This necessitates their inscription and sometimes imposition on the body and in society through repetition and constant citation. [Voss 2000](#) (under [Queer Archaeology](#)) argues that rather than separating out gender, biological sex, and sexuality, we must understand their dynamic

intersections. [Joyce 2008] and [Robb and Harris 2013] (under [The Body]) also suggest it is important to examine what people do rather than what they are viewed to be by present-day research. Archaeological investigations show many different conceptions of gender not related to physical biology. In [Hollimon 2006] gender is understood as expressed in multiple formations beyond primary or secondary sex characteristics. In an analysis of figures from Çatalhöyük, a Neolithic and Chalcolithic settlement in southern Anatolia, [Nakamura and Meskell 2009] explores figurines that are traditionally explored as expressing sex, gender, and desire. However, the authors show that the body or different types of bodies inclusive of figurines can mediate other social concerns and practices beyond expressions of gender or sex. This implicit critique is echoed by [Fuglestedt 2014], which suggests sex and gender theory is essentialist because it in part reinforces contemporary norms and genders the past unnecessarily. [Ghisleni, et al. 2016] (under [Journals]) argues that tensions remain in our epistemological and ontological understanding of sex and gender; these must be addressed in order for alternative ways of discussing difference beyond binaries to emerge.

Fuglestedt, Ingrid. 2014. Declaration on behalf of an archaeology of sex. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 21:46–75. [doi:10.1007/s10816-012-9136-5]

Critique of sex and gender theory as essentialist because it in part reinforces contemporary norms and genders the past unnecessarily. Proposes a new theory of “an archaeology of sex,” in which lived experience is not defined as gender nor is a person’s own sexual orientation a defining characteristic of their social role.

Hollimon, S. E. 2006. The archaeology of nonbinary genders in native North American societies. In *Handbook of gender in archaeology*. Edited by S. M. Nelson, 435–450. New York: Altamira Press. [ISBN: 9780759106789]

Discussions of the archaeological investigation for multiple (“third” and “fourth”) genders in Native North American societies, whose systems frequently base gender on other variables outside of primary or secondary sex characteristics.

Nakamura, Carolyn, and Lynn Meskell. 2009. Articulate bodies: Form and figures at Çatalhöyük. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 16:205–230.

[[doi:10.1007/s10816-009-9070-3](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10816-009-9070-3)]

Discussions of different miniature clay figure types at Çatalhöyük and wider Neolithic Anatolia, which are sexualized and gendered. However, careful research into their depositional practices show that these figures were more likely to be associated with different expressions of societal values that may be unrelated to gender.

Prine, Elizabeth. 2000. Searching for third genders: Towards a prehistory of domestic space in middle Missouri villages. In *Archaeologies of sexuality*. Edited by Robert A. Schmidt and Barbara L. Voss, 197–219. London: Routledge. [ISBN: 9786610112951]

Discusses “berdaches,” or two-spirit people within Native North American societies, who were nonbinary persons understood to have combined or multiple gendered identities. A core case study is the identification of a double-posted earth lodge, which belonged to a *maiti*, a person who was identified as male at birth but shifted gender during adolescence, had association with spiritual roles maintained a same-sex household, and were highly regarded in society.

Schmidt, Robert A. 2005. The contribution of gender to personal identity in the Southern Scandinavian Mesolithic. In *The archaeology of plural and changing identities*. Edited by E. Casella and C. Fowler, 79–108. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum.

[[doi:10.1007/b109969](https://doi.org/10.1007/b109969)]. [ISBN: 9780306486944]

Overview and critique of modern archaeological conceptions of gender “narrowly conceived as two non-overlapping bodies” which must be central to people’s identity. Characterizes “sex/gender intensity” as the way in which a society desires conformity (high) or allows for fluidity (low). Through a case-study of Mesolithic Scandinavia, it is suggested that sex/gender binary categories are not expressed in mortuary practice. The high degree of variability in burial practice might indicate a level of fluidity that has not been previously considered.

Sofaer, J. 2006. *The body as material culture: A theoretical osteoarchaeology*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press. [[doi:10.1017/CBO9780511816666](https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511816666)]. [ISBN: 9780521818223]

Discusses the body as a site of interaction between the past and the present but also as a contested material entity where theoretical debates between social theory and osteology become hyper-visible. Approaches to the body are discussed in detail, with particular attention paid to sex and gender. See chapter 5, “Sex and Gender,” in particular.

Voss, Barbara. L. 2005. Sexual subjects: Identity and taxonomy in archaeological research. In *The archaeology of plural and changing identities*. Edited by E. Casella and C. Fowler, 55–77. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum. [[doi:10.1007/b109969](https://doi.org/10.1007/b109969)]. [ISBN: 9780306486944]

Detailed discussion of sex, emergence of sexology, and its long-lasting impact on understanding sex and gender. This can be seen in the tensions that remain between gender and sexuality, sexual identity categories, and biological and cultural model of sexuality. Highlights

how problematic heteronormative interpretations are, and gives examples of alternative readings.

Weglian, E. 2001. Grave goods do not a gender make: A case study from Singen am Hohentwiel, Germany. In *Gender and the archaeology of death*. Edited by B. Arnold and N. L. Wicker, 137–155. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press. [ISBN: 9780759101364]

Highlights the problems associated with limiting our understanding of gender to modern sex categories. By focusing on a series of burials considered “anomalous” in Bronze Age Germany, space is made for the inclusion of gender variability and alternative sex/gender systems.

Bioarchaeology, aDNA, and Gender

Bioarchaeological analysis determines the age, diet, health, and sex of human remains and situates these interpretations at the intersection of biology, culture, and the environment, as detailed by [Geller 2009](#). This can also include other scientific evaluations, such as stable isotope analysis, which identifies chemical signatures relevant to understandings of long-term patterns of diet or dietary reconstruction as well as geological locations, which are used to infer geographical information. [Geller 2009](#) discusses how research often begins with the implicit notion that two sexes are expected to be present; remains are “sexed” based on certain criteria, especially the pelvis. Sex is then used as a basic axis of analysis from which archaeologists map patterns of skeletal changes, wear, or pathologies, which can in turn be used to address questions of gender to the past. [Bickle 2020](#) discusses how using male/female sexed bodies is often only a partial picture, as many individuals whose sex cannot be identified are usually excluded from further analysis or float under an “unidentified” label. [Geller 2017](#) also critically outlines how

genetic sex identification is employed to place individuals into strict binary categories, which are linked with modern thinking on ideologies surrounding sex that are rooted in biological determination (see [Gender and Sex](#)). Ancient DNA analysis is used, among other things, to determine the chromosomal sex of individuals in past societies, though ancient societies would not have understood their bodies in this way, a point noted by [TallBear 2013](#) in relation to DNA more generally. [Crellin and Harris 2020](#) outline that aDNA cannot be applied uncritically, as it, like all interpretations, is a product of our societal biases. This has particular concerns for gender archaeology, as many interpretations return to biological determinisms, such as enslaved women and warrior men, as highlighted by [Battle Baptiste 2020](#). In some models, skeletal analysis adheres to the dualism of biological/social and sex/gender, but that is increasingly challenged, as in [Sofaer 2006](#). Sofaer argues that some contemporary scientific ideas of biological sex disassociate the bones from the bodies' lived and gendered experience. But others, such as [Lewis 2016](#) and [Franklin and Wilson 2020](#), examine the lived gendered experiences of work and life through an examination of the bioarchaeology of sexed remains. [Villotte and Knusel 2014](#) use a similar approach to relate spear throwing to men's activities in prehistoric Europe. Current scholarly discussions can impose current gendered behavior onto sexed individuals. For example, [Novak 2017](#) shows how archaeological interpretations of possible interpersonal violence differ between male and female remains: women are interpreted as subject to violence, but men are active perpetrators, mirroring aspects of contemporary domestic abuse. [Geller 2009](#) discusses this projection as "temporalization," where certain social behaviors are seen as "human nature" (i.e., gender), when in reality these are often reiterations of contemporary Western culture.

Battle-Baptiste, Whitney. 2020. The strange afterlife of biodeterministic imagination.

Archaeological Dialogues 27.1: 25–27. [[doi:10.1017/S1380203820000069](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203820000069)]

Cautions that biodeterminism and aDNA profiling are not new ways to understand the past, but are often the very tools used to perpetuate race and racial myths that can also be applied to gender.

Bickle, Penny. 2020. Thinking gender differently: New approaches to identity difference in the Central European Neolithic. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 30.2: 201–218.

[[doi:10.1017/S0959774319000453](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774319000453)]

An analysis of how gender operated in the Linearbandkeramik (LBK, c. 5500–5000 BCE), the first farming culture of Central Europe through inhumations and funerary assemblages. This careful feminist analysis demonstrates that it is possible to move away from gendered interpretations that interpret women as lacking what men have, and its corollary. It concludes that there was diversity and fluidity in female identities, while male identities were more rigid, or at least limited, and therefore subject to social constraints.

Crellin, R., and O. Harris. 2020. Beyond binaries: Interrogating ancient DNA. *Archaeological Dialogues* 27.1: 37–56. [[doi:10.1017/S1380203820000082](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203820000082)]

Discussions of the problems with use and interpretations of aDNA analyses, from a feminist perspective. In particular, this critique focuses on the binaries employed where genetic evidence is used to divide people neatly into opposed sexes (male/female) with no consideration of the complexity of either biology or gender.

Franklin, Maria, and Samuel M. Wilson. 2020. A bioarchaeological study of African American health and mortality in the post-Emancipation U.S. South. *American Antiquity* 85.4: 652–675. [[doi:10.1017/aaq.2020.58](https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2020.58)]

The article uses data from previously excavated US cemeteries (Elko Switch, Foster, Ridley Graveyard, Cedar Grove, and Providence) to explore post-Emancipation Black experiences and lifeways, from a bioarchaeological perspective. It notes the role that gender played (e.g., women, from both rural and urban communities died younger than men). This is linked to Black women's caring, working, and reproductive lives, which are then contextualized within structural inequalities related to race and gender.

Geller, Pamela L. 2009. Biology, bodyscapes, and heteronormativity. *American Anthropologist* 111:504–516. [[doi:10.1111/j.1548-1433.2009.01159.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1433.2009.01159.x)]

Proposes a bioarchaeology that employs feminist-inspired theories to assess the categorization of sex. Suggests that many current interpretations use the “biomedical bodyscape” to reinforce heterosexist idea of gendered labor division and familial organization. Proposes that “bodyscape” thinking allows space to consider how “the body” has previously been essentialized, especially in relation to sex and gender. Asks why interpretations of skeletal remains start with sex determination? Essential reading.

Geller, Pamela L. 2017. Brave Old World: Ancient DNA testing and sex determination. In *Exploring sex and gender in bioarchaeology*. Edited by S. C. Agarwal and J. K. Wesp, 68–106. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press. [ISBN: 9780826352583]

Discusses how genetic sexing is simply a modern method for determining sex, which is imbued with ideological (problematic) beliefs about the body, and identity, including gender and race.

Lewis, M. 2016. Work and the adolescent in medieval England (AD 900–1550): The osteological evidence. *Medieval Archaeology* 60.1: 138–171.

[[doi:10.1080/00766097.2016.1147787](https://doi.org/10.1080/00766097.2016.1147787)]

Detailed analysis of the remains of approximately 5,000 adolescents in medieval England, which revealed gendered differences in the working lives of young men and women.

Novak, S. A. 2017. On the stories of men and the substance of women. In *Exploring sex and gender in bioarchaeology*. Edited by S. C. Agarwal and J. K. Wesp, 129–164. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press. [ISBN: 9780826352583]

Discusses how contemporary archaeological interpretations often project particular assumed gendered behaviors of men and women onto the past, especially in relation to interpersonal violence (e.g., the passive female and active male).

Villotte, Sébastien, and Christopher Knüsel. 2014. “I sing of arms and of a man . . .” Medial epicondylitis and the sexual division of labour in prehistoric Europe. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 43:168–174. [[doi:10.1016/j.jas.2013.12.009](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jas.2013.12.009)]

Uses skeletal remains to infer that tendon injuries and wear in certain male skeletons, and their absence in female examples, are related to the practice of spear throwing in prehistoric societies’ hunting practices.

Sofaer, J. 2006. *The body as material culture: A theoretical osteoarchaeology*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press. [[doi:10.1017/CBO9780511816666](https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511816666)]. [ISBN: 9780521818223]

This remains a go-to book for understanding the body in archaeology. It moves beyond dualism and offers an integrated theoretical approach that is cognizant of the lived gendered experience. See especially chapter 5, “Sex and Gender.”

TallBear, K. 2013. *Native American DNA: Tribal belonging and the false promise of genetic science*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. [ISBN: 9780816665853]

In this Indigenous feminist approach to DNA, the focus is placed on disentangling scientists' assumptions about migration, settlement, and kinship, and how these things have influenced the collection and interpretation of genetic data, in particular that related to Native American/Indigenous communities. In particular, the focus is on the construction of race and bodies and the problems of conflating DNA with kinship.

Issues of Sex: Birka Burial, Sweden, and the "Princess of Vix," Germany

Bodies have been "sexed" wrongly, or at least sex has been based on particular sexed assumptions relating to grave gifts. In the Viking burial Bj.581 from Birka, Sweden, the particular abundance and type of grave gifts was typically taken to be indicative of the identity of a male warrior. Recent reanalysis of aDNA revealed that the skeleton was interpreted as biologically female or a female-sexed body. But should that change the interpretation? [Price, et al. 2019](#) provides a good overview of the arguments that have been put forward, including that this female-sexed body could have assumed the identity of a warrior, been transgender, or gained the special status of warrior in death. However, it seems that prior to the "sex" being established it was assumed that this was a quintessentially male warrior burial, yet this interpretation altered once the skeleton was sexed female. Here we see how gender essentialism is still present (e.g., females are not warriors). A similar story exists for the much debated "Princess of Vix," a richly furnished Iron Age grave site excavated during the 1950s in Germany. The burial contained grave furniture and personal ornaments as well as numerous luxurious grave gifts, which were virtually unparalleled in previously excavated intact Iron Age grave sites, as detailed in [Arnold 1995](#) and [Arnold 2012](#). However, it was seen as problematic that this was a female-sexed body.

Initially, the individual was interpreted as a “transvestite male priest,” as quoted by [Arnold 2012](#). Later skeletal reanalysis by [Knüsel 2002](#) identified bodily irregularities that, through ethnographic parallels, led to an interpretation that these attributes conferred a spiritual status on the remains; it was, in other words, an “honorary male.” However, [Arnold 1991](#), [Arnold 1995](#), and [Arnold 2012](#) show how this was likely a female-sexed body who held a form of social power that was important to that society to showcase in death. Another similar study is the recent reanalysis by [Frieman, et al. 2019](#) of the Egtved “Girl” shows they are more appropriately understood as a mobile adolescent whose identity may have been “normalized” (and deliberately gendered) by dressing the body in regionally specific clothing. [Arnold 2012](#) notes that within interpretations of mortuary contexts it still remains an impossibility to contemplate that political or social power could be held by a female-sexed body without qualification. Arnold’s implicit argument is that this is androcentrism in action. For a similar case in Post-Classical Mexico, see [McCafferty and McCafferty 1994](#). All provide perfect examples of how contemporary meanings are inscribed upon the dead of past societies.

Arnold, Bettina. 1991. The deposed Princess of Vix: The need for an engendered European, prehistory. In *The archaeology of gender: Proceedings of the 22nd annual Chacmool conference*. Edited by D. Walde and N. D. Willows, 366–374. Calgary: Univ. of Calgary. [ISBN: 9780889531406] [class:conference-paper]

Feminist response to androcentric interpretations within Iron Age gender studies in west-central Europe. Focuses on the Vix burial as a case study to highlight how deeply problematic previous explorations had been.

Arnold, Bettina. 1995. "Honorary males" or women of substance? Gender, status, and power in Iron-Age Europe. *Journal of European Archaeology Archive* 3.2: 153–168.

[[doi:10.1179/096576695800703757](https://doi.org/10.1179/096576695800703757)]

Highlights a methodological approach that makes use of written, ethnographic, and archaeological sources in order to overcome the bias inherent in all sources. Argues that the Princess of Vix was more likely to be an elite female burial utilizing status symbols in order to reinforce their gender rather than performing as a man.

Arnold, Bettina. 2012. The Vix Princess redux: A retrospective on European Iron Age gender and mortuary studies. In *La arqueología funeraria desde una perspectiva de género*. Edited by L. Prados Torreira, 215–232. Madrid: UA Ediciones.

Using the Vix burials as a case study, this paper discusses gendered mortuary practices and their interpretations.

Frieman, Catherine J., Anne Teather, and Chelsea Morgan. 2019. Bodies in motion: Narratives and counter narratives of gendered mobility in European later prehistory. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 52.2: 148–169. [[doi:10.1080/00293652.2019.1697355](https://doi.org/10.1080/00293652.2019.1697355)]

Largely related to the biased understandings within archaeology on gendered mobility. A careful case study of the "Egtved Adolescent," through a queer reanalysis of archaeological evidence, shows an individual (unsexed adolescent) who may have transgressed gender norms by atypical recurrent movement between two relatively distant places. Authors argue that the funerary context might represent an example of a body in death that was deliberately normalized.

Knüsel, C. J. 2002. More Circe than Cassandra: the Princess of Vix in ritualised social context. *European Journal of Archaeology* 5.3: 275–308. [[doi:10.1177/146195702761692329](https://doi.org/10.1177/146195702761692329)]

Revisits the Vix burial and, through detailed analysis of the material remains, interprets that bodily irregularities may have marked this person as different thereby enabling them to occupy an alternative social and gendered identity.

McCafferty, S. D., and G. G. McCafferty. 1994. Engendering Tomb 7 at Monte Albán, Oaxaca: Respinning an old yarn. *Current Anthropology* 35:143–166. [<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/204252>]

The authors examined a Mesoamerican Mixtec (elite artisan) burial from Monte Albán. This comprised a central, potentially mummified burial that had a range of associated objects, including other burials. Owing to its archaeological richness, this burial assemblage had been previously interpreted as male, but contextual evidence and the presence of a female mandible suggest it was more likely to have been a woman.

Price, Neil, Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson, Torun Zachrisson, et al. 2019. Viking warrior women? Reassessing Birka Chamber Grave Bj.581. *Antiquity* 93.367: 181–198. [[doi:10.15184/aqy.2018.258](https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2018.258)]

Overview of the interpretative implications of a female-sexed body being inhumed in what was understood as a quintessentially male-warrior burial. The authors resist nonbinary explanations.

Mortuary Archaeology and Gender

A large part of archaeological investigation of gender focuses on death, burial, and mortuary practice. This includes a wide variety of practices from inhumations, excarnation, and cremations to the treatment of the body itself (see [The Body](#)), as well as the occurrence of grave gifts and

personal ornaments (see also [Grave Gifts and Gender](#)), all of which are key in interpreting gender. Early feminist studies such as [Bertelsen, et al. 1987](#) highlighted that the past, including burials, were defaulted as male. Many studies that use gender as an analytical category often follow an empirical approach, as in [Yong 2004](#), [Arnold and Wicker 2001](#) (cited under [Initial Steps](#)) is a reader in mortuary practices, which was followed by Liv Nilsson Stutz and Sarah Tarlow's *Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Death and Burial* in 2013. Both cover a wide variety of topics and approaches on this subject while also foregrounding gender. [Sofaer and Sørensen 2013](#) gives an insightful overview of key concepts relating to gender and death, with particular attention paid to the body. Previous studies have focused more on the inclusion of objects in mortuary contexts (see [Grave Gifts and Gender](#)). In some societies, burial rites have associated texts or iconography in the form of grave markers or monumental architecture, as shown in Meso-America by [Joyce 2008](#) and in Roman culture in Europe by [Carroll 2013](#). Altogether, these aspects can tell us about how societies in the past navigated their world through their ritualized handling of death, conventional or otherwise, as discussed in [Arnold 2006](#) and [Lucy 2000](#). This informs us of the construction, negotiation, and reinforcement of gendered identities and differences throughout the life course (see [The Life Course](#)). As [Brück 2004](#) argues, these expressions of personhood and the identities of the wider community often took material form in the mortuary context.

Arnold, Bettina. 2006. Gender in mortuary ritual. In *Handbook of gender in archaeology*.

Edited by Sarah M. Nelson, 137–170. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press. [ISBN: 9780759106789]

Useful overview of gender and mortuary archaeology, and some interpretative issues.

Discussion of gender as one form of mortuary differentiation. See also [Arnold and Wicker 2001](#), cited under [Initial Steps](#).

Bertelsen, R., G. Lillehammer, and J. R. Næss, eds. 1987. *Were they all men? An examination of sex roles in prehistoric society*. Stavanger, Norway: Arkeologisk Museum. [ISBN: 9788290215687]

An early feminist archaeology analysis that advocates for the inclusion of women and highlights their presence through a series of evidenced based case-studies.

Brück, J. 2004. Material metaphors: The relational construction of identity in early Bronze Age burials in Ireland and Britain. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 4.3: 307–333. [[doi:10.1177/1469605304046417](https://doi.org/10.1177/1469605304046417)]

Not explicitly discussing gender, but shows how identity—inclusive of gender, one assumes—is relational. It is through a web of things, places, and people that relationships and personhood are developed. In death, such connections take the form of grave gifts and mortuary contexts (material metaphors).

Carroll, Maureen. 2013. Ethnicity and gender in Roman funerary commemoration. In *The Oxford handbook of the archaeology of death and burial*. Edited by Liv Nilsson Stutz and Sarah Tarlow, 559–580. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press. [[doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199569069.013.0001](https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199569069.013.0001)]. [ISBN: 9780199569069]

Demonstrates how Roman funerary monuments were ways in which ethnic affiliations and gendered behaviors were expressed through differing dress and bodily adornment in funerary portraits.

Lucy, S. 2000. *The Anglo-Saxon way of death*. Stroud, UK: Sutton. [ISBN: 9780750921039]

Detailed discussions of mortuary contexts, biological sex, and gender for early communities in Britain.

Sofaer, J., and M. Sørensen. 2013. Death and Gender. In *The Oxford handbook of the archaeology of death and burial*. Edited by Liv Nilsson Stutz and Sarah Tarlow, 527–542.

Oxford Univ. Press. [[doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199569069.013.0001](https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199569069.013.0001)]. [ISBN: 9780199569069]

Overview of gender in mortuary archaeology, including key concepts and challenges.

Discussions include the body as (gendered) material culture and the way in which the funerary context, including grave gifts, serves to construct the body as a gendered social being.

Yong, Ying. 2004. Gender, status, ritual regulations, and mortuary practice in the State of Jin.

In *Gender and Chinese archaeology*. Edited by K. M. Linduff and Y. Sun, 161–202. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press. [ISBN: 9780759104082]

In a pushback against stories of men, this empirical analysis highlights the lives (and deaths) of noblewomen through contrast with their male counterparts in the Zhou period (c.1046–221 BCE) in the State of Jin.

Gender and Burial

The overall ways in which the dead body was arranged, the inclusion of grave gifts, and how the grave or burial context was constructed, organized, and located, as well as the erection of monuments, give clues as to how differences, connections, and kinship between people, including gender, were intentionally expressed. In understanding gender through death and burial, questions can also be directly addressed to the dead body and the diagnostic traces it

contained, as detailed by [Soefar 2006] (see also [The Body]). This can show how that person's life impacted upon them—wear to muscle and bone including trauma—and how we can understand gender from this. [Robb 1997] demonstrates that body modification in the form of tooth removal was part of the gendered life course for some women in Neolithic Italy. Important, too, is how and why communities intentionally buried people or treated their remains in particular ways. [Brück 2009] illustrates that previous assumptions that correlated high-status male inhumations in Bronze Age Britain masked the complex links of kinship that were being articulated in the apparently lower-status, typically female, cremations. In a similar challenge to assumptions, [Geller 2005] argues that too often a direct connection is still made between sex and gender when it comes to human remains, but engaging fully with the body through a bioarchaeological and feminist approach can lead to greater understandings. This gives information on age, sex, diet, and general health, each of which play an important role in gendered identities. This leads to a greater understanding of the lived and gendered experiences of people in the past. This approach is used in [Hayeur Smith, et al. 2019], a detailed examination of a Viking era grave containing a female-sexed body, which is then linked with gender and women's mobility in medieval Iceland. [Crawford 2003] also explores furnished graves of women in early medieval England, interpreting difference in grave gifts between males and females as well as investigating how grave location was important for families when burying their kin. [Gilchrist 2009] shows how more than binary gendered identities can be explored by exploring the ways in which the ambiguous gender role of medieval priests was expressed as sacred power in life and death.

Brück, Joanna. 2009. Women, death and social change in the British Bronze Age. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 42.1: 1–23. [doi:10.1080/00293650902907151]

Discusses how previous readings of inhumation and cremations as practices that correlated with gendered hierarchies are incorrect. Instead, a relational approach reveals these funerary practices were indicative of different positions and kinship roles within Early Bronze Age society, where the circulation of women's burnt remains was integral to maintaining connections.

Crawford, S. 2003. Anglo-Saxon women, furnished burial and the church. In *Women and religion in Medieval England*. Edited by D. Wood, 1–12. Oxford: Oxbow Books. [ISBN: 9781842170984]

Rich female burials of the 7th to 9th centuries integrated Christianity with the preexisting furnished burial rite. Notes the role of burials in the negotiation of several intersecting concerns, from gender to inheritance, as well as social perceptions of status.

Geller, Pamela L. 2005. Skeletal analysis and theoretical complications. *World Archaeology* 37:597–609. [[doi:10.1080/00438240500404391](https://doi.org/10.1080/00438240500404391)]

Overview of the complications of the burial record when dealing with biological sex and gender. Through a case study of pre-Columbian Mayan burials, Geller highlights the possibility of a bioarchaeological, gender, and feminist reading of the skeletal remains.

Gilchrist, Roberta. 2009. Rethinking later medieval masculinity: The male body in death. In *Mortuary practices and social identities in the Middle Ages*. Edited by D. Sayer and H. Williams, 236–252. Exeter, UK: Exeter Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9780859898317]

Discusses the evidence for changing masculine identities in medieval England, and through detailed burial analysis suggests that burials of priests, who occupied an ambiguous gendered

position, were statements of their particular masculine identity in life, which was connected to sacred power.

Hayeur Smith, Michèle, Kevin Smith, and Karen M. Frei. 2019. “Tangled up in blue”: The death, dress and identity of an early Viking-Age female settler from Ketilsstaðir, Iceland. *Medieval Archaeology* 63.1: 95–127. [[doi:10.1080/00766097.2019.1589816](https://doi.org/10.1080/00766097.2019.1589816)]

Discussion of a Viking era grave complete with ornate grave gifts typically thought to express a female gendered identity. Close attention is paid to the personal ornament assemblage and textiles, noting especially the possibility of the color blue being related to women in death. Investigations include multiple approaches, from landscape context and artifact analysis to strontium-isotopic analysis. Highlights the complexities of understanding gender, mobility, death, and burial.

Robb, John. 1997. Intentional tooth removal in Neolithic Italian women. *Antiquity* 71:659–669. [[doi:10.1017/S0003598X00085380](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00085380)]

Discusses the possible deliberate anterior tooth removal of a number of female-sexed remains in Neolithic Italy, and suggests this body modification presents as a cultural marker related to gender.

Sofaer, J. 2006. *The body as material culture: A theoretical osteoarchaeology*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press. [[doi:10.1017/CBO9780511816666](https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511816666)]. [ISBN: 9780521818223]

Overview article that succinctly address historiography and current concepts of death and gender in mortuary archaeology. Specifically addresses the treatment of the body and the use of grave gifts to articulate a socially constructed identity.

Sofaer, J., and M. Sørensen. 2013. Death and gender. In *The Oxford handbook of the archaeology of death and burial*. Edited by Liv Nilsson Stutz and Sarah Tarlow, 527–542. Oxford Univ. Press. [doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199569069.013.0001]. [ISBN: 9780199569069]

Excellent essential reading. Review of gender and mortuary analysis, but also explains the key role of the body and how it can tell us of the individual life as well as wider social and cultural norms from the scene set during the intentional burial. Also discussed are key concepts, frameworks, and methodological issues such as the sexing of skeletal remains.

Grave Gifts and Gender

Examination of objects located within mortuary contexts forms one of the primary parts of gender analyses by exploring spatial patterning, absence, or presence, and repeated association of different objects with different categories of individuals, as well as difference. Grave gifts or mortuary assemblages are often associated with the biological sex as a starting point to understand gender identities, as discussed in [Weglian 2001](#) and shown in [Yao 2013](#). [Sofaer 2006](#) cautions against the correlation of certain grave gifts with a binary sex model that replicates modern concerns (or inequalities). This means not assuming certain objects are “male” or “female”; things have culturally specific meanings, as noted in [Arnold 2016](#) and [Stratton 2016](#). Although sometimes this is appropriate, as noted in [Gilchrist 2011](#), which discusses and contextualizes the long association of textile material culture and women. More often, assumed binary interpretations mirror contemporary Western ideologies or gender stereotypes. [Doucette 2001](#) shows the significance of this in Indian Knoll societies, noting that atlatyls, a type of spear thrower typically seen as a men-only item, occurred in a wider variety of mortuary contexts, disrupting previous assumptions. [Sofaer Derevenski](#)

[2000] (cited under [The Life Course]) shows this multiplicity of meaning present in personal ornament; rather the metalwork indicating high status, it is used to signify changing gender roles across the life course. [Härke 1990], a foundational paper in the emergence of masculinity studies, demonstrates how weapon burials were expressions of male identities that had little to do with actual warfare or battle. [Treherne 1995] is an analysis of gender identities in prehistoric male warrior burials in Europe, and highlights that an emphasis was placed on a particular beauty aesthetic: toilet implements for personal grooming were repeatedly associated with a male warrior beauty. This contrasts with how other aspects of warrior identities are often prioritized in our world today, such as martial objects. Modern presumptions about gender and grave gifts are particularly present in interpretations that feature women or children, which presume them to be of lower status to men, as noted in [Joyce 2008]. This is pointed out in [Arnold 1991], [Arnold 1995], and [Price, et al. 2019] (the latter two cited under [Issues of Sex: Birka Burial, Sweden, and the “Princess of Vix,” Germany]) in their respective treatments of the “Princess of Vix” and the Birka burial. This is, of course, deeply concerning in terms of inequality, but it is also problematic, as it often reinforces a two-sex/two-gender model that projects a false binary model onto the past, which is discussed in [Geller 2009] (under [Gender and Sex]) and [Joyce 2008] (under [The Body]).

Arnold, Bettina. 1991. The deposed Princess of Vix: The need for an engendered European prehistory. In *The archaeology of gender: Proceedings of the 22nd annual Chacmool conference*. Edited by D. Walde and N. D. Willows, 366–374. Calgary: Univ. of Calgary. [ISBN: 9780889531406] [class:conference-paper]

Highlights the gender bias of contemporary scholarship in interpretations an Iron Age furnished burial. See [\[Issues of Sex: Birka Burial, Sweden, and the “Princess of Vix,” Germany\]](#) for further discussion.

Arnold, Bettina. 2016. Belts vs. blades: The binary bind in Iron Age mortuary contexts in southwest Germany. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 23.3: 832–853. [\[doi:10.1007/s10816-016-9289-8\]](#)

Focusing on Iron Age mortuary contexts in Europe, this paper highlights how it is possible to understand the complexities of social identities, in particular gender, and the ways in which they overlap and intersect in a multitude of ways that cannot be reduced or explained through binaries. Here gendered identities are taken to exist on a continuum.

Doucette, D. L. 2001. Decoding the gender bias: Inferences of atlatls in female mortuary contexts. In *Gender and the archaeology of death*. Edited by B. Arnold and N. L. Wicker, 159–177. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press. [ISBN: 9780759101364]

Overview of the previous interpretations of atlatls and their mortuary contexts in North American Indian Knoll societies during the Archaic period. Using this evidence, attempts to disrupts the association of only men as hunters and users of atlatls.

Gilchrist, Roberta. 2011. The intimacy of death: Interpreting gender and the life course in medieval and early modern burials. In **Interpreting the early modern world: Transatlantic perspectives*[\[https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9780387707587\]](https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9780387707587)*. Edited by M. C. Beaudry and J. Symonds, 159–173. New York: Springer. [ISBN: 9780387707587]

Reviews some of the burial practices in medieval England through the lens of gender and age. In particular, an emphasis is placed on women's role and the use of textile related material culture as grave gifts

Härke, H. 1990. Warrior graves? The background of the Anglo-Saxon weapon burial rite. *Past and Present* 126:22–43. [[doi:10.1093/past/126.1.22](https://doi.org/10.1093/past/126.1.22)]

Disrupts the narratives that grave gifts were a reflection of the individual status in life, but argues that in the context of Anglo-Saxon weapon burials, they were expressions of male identities that had little to do with actual warfare or battle. Foundational article for development of studies of masculinity—although the article itself does not explicitly use gender theory.

Hollimon, S. E. 2001. Death, gender, and the Chumash peoples: Mourning ceremonialism as an integrative mechanism. *Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association* 10.1: 41–55. [[doi:10.1525/ap3a.2001.10.1.41](https://doi.org/10.1525/ap3a.2001.10.1.41)]

An examination of gendered cosmological symbols of the ancestral Chumash societies. While gender appears to not have been of crucial importance for the treatment of individual burials, it seems to have been foundational in the gendered concepts of deities, ritual practitioners (e.g., the 'aqi; see [Hollimon 2000](#)), under [Archaeologies of Sexuality: Schmidt and Voss Edited Volume](#)), and the mortuary context.

Stratton, Susan. 2016. “Seek and you shall find”: How the analysis of gendered patterns in archaeology can create false binaries: A case study from Durankulak. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 23.3: 854–869. [[doi:10.1007/s10816-016-9290-2](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10816-016-9290-2)]

Through a case study of Durankulak cemetery on the Bulgarian Black Sea, it is shown how false gender binaries are projected onto societal structures of Late Neolithic/Copper Age societies. Demonstrates through analysis of grave gifts, including axes and jewelry, that other realities are present that account for differing aspects of social identities.

Treherne, Paul. 1995. The warrior's beauty: The masculine body and self-identity in Bronze Age Europe. *Journal of European Archaeology* 3.1: 105–144.

[doi:10.1179/096576695800688269]

A classic text using the idea of the “technology of the body” to discuss change in the representation of the body in burials and the use of objects in particular to construct and deconstruct the warrior identity,

Weglian, E. 2001. Grave goods do not a gender make: A case study from Singen am Hohentwiel, Germany. In *Gender and the archaeology of death*. Edited by B. Arnold and N. L. Wicker, 137–155. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press. [ISBN: 9780759101364]

Highlights the problems of using gender correlates as evidence for male and female burials.

Not only does this create normative categories and serve to absent nonconforming burials, but it also limits our ability to see multiple expressions of genders. See also [Gender and Sex](#).

Yao, A. 2013. Engendering ancestors through death ritual in ancient China. In *The Oxford handbook of the archaeology of death and burial*. Edited by Liv Nillison Stutz and Sarah Tarlow, 581–596. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

[doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199569069.013.0001]. [ISBN: 9780199569069]

Reviews how gender is relatively unexplored in studies of ancient China. Uses evidence from biological sexed skeletal remains in burial contexts to discuss various aspects of social identity, including status and gender particularly in related to women.

The Body

The body was once understood as a timeless and universal biological entity. Research focused on skeletal remains and the information they contain about diet, disease, or biological sex. Bodies were also seen as ways to communicate gender or status through clothing or ornament (Sørensen 1997). Here, the body was seen as a reflective object through which material culture mirrored gendered “givens.” More recent work concentrates on embodiment, or how things are experienced as a person with a body within a society, as in Meskell 1999 (cited under Feminist Archaeology) and Joyce 2008. Performance theory (see Butler 1990, under Gender Archaeology in the 1990s and 2000s; see also the *Oxford Bibliographies* articles “Feminist Epistemology[obo-9780195396577-0158]” and “Sex versus Gender[obo-9780199756384-0153]”). disrupted the idea of the body as a biological stable entity and saw it as a key part of personhood. This means understanding how people created, lived, and structured gender through their bodies with their clothes, movements, gestures, and so on. Marshall 2013 shows, too, how personhood can be explored through various bodies in various ways by using feminist archaeological approaches of storytelling. Sofaer 2006 argues that the materiality of the body combines social, biological, and embodied interpretations. Sofaer articulates this as “skeletal expressions of gender,” which she sees as the way in which gender becomes inscribed on the body, such as the effects of labor that leave particular markers, as outlined by Macintosh, et al. 2017 and Lewis 2016 (under Bioarchaeology, aDNA, and Gender). Sometimes bodies can be

deliberately transformed by physical interventions as a way to highlight gender differences, in life and death (see [Robb 1997](#), under [Gender and Burial](#)). But [Robb and Harris 2013](#) outlines that bodies do not always leave or have skeletal expressions of gender that are obvious to us today. [Joyce 2000](#) shows, in a Mesoamerican context, that children's bodies were materially shaped through clothing and ear and lip piercing at differing moments related to specific life cycle rituals. [Weismantel 2013](#) (cited under [Gender Archaeology and Activism](#)) suggests that we must not assume that gender is always expressed in the form of bodily differences. Like gender, the body changes, its movements and ornamentation alter over time, as argued by [Marshall 2000](#) (see also [The Life Course](#)) and [Dezhamkhooy 2011](#). This means that the body is socially mediated: it forms a key aspect of the cultural discourse of gender. The body, or different types of bodies, inclusive of figurines, can mediate other social concerns and practices, as revealed by [Nakamura and Meskell 2009](#).

Dezhamkhooy, M. 2011. The interaction of body, things and the others in constituting feminine identity in lower socio-economic ranks of Bam, Iran. *Archaeologies* 7:1–15.

[\[doi:10.1007/s11759-011-9168-6\]](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11759-011-9168-6)

Discussions of how gender identity is one of the important aspects of individual identities. In particular, this article focuses on the body as a site of action for the formation and inscription of gendered agency and structure systems for (married) women in contemporary Bam, Iran, with a focus on socioeconomic class.

Frieman, Catherine J., Anne Teather, and Chelsea Morgan. 2019. Bodies in motion: Narratives and counter narratives of gendered mobility in European later prehistory. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 52.2: 148–169. [\[doi:10.1080/00293652.2019.1697355\]](https://doi.org/10.1080/00293652.2019.1697355)

Largely focused on disrupting current approaches to gender mobility. In part discusses problematic approaches to female-sexed bodies, which are often considered as passive objects to communicate gender or status of their male counterparts. In particular the authors highlight the heterosexist idea that women wore ornamentation as a way to enhance the status of their husbands. They argue that the body is more than a reflective object to mirror gendered “givens.”

Gilchrist, Roberta. 1999. Experiencing gender: Identity, sexuality and the body. In *Gender and archaeology: Contesting the past*. By Roberta Gilchrist, 54–78. London and New York: Routledge. [ISBN: 9786610193684]

This chapter is particularly relevant to studies of the gendered body, focusing on interrogating the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality as well as challenging the social constructivist point of view that creates an oppositional dyad of sex/gender. Discussions are contextualized through case studies, including the male warrior body.

Joyce, Rosemary. 2008. *Ancient bodies, ancient lives: Sex, gender and archaeology*. London: Thames & Hudson. [ISBN: 9780500051535]

Study of sex, gender, the body, sexuality, and embodiment. Focuses on lived experience and change throughout the life course.

Marshall, Yvonne. 2000. Reading *images stone b.c.* *World Archaeology* 32:222–235.

Endeavors to explore the intersection of feminist and queer theory through an archaeology of a collection of prehistoric stone sculptural artifacts from northwest Canada previously studied by Wilson Duff and published in *Images Stone B.C.* (1975). These appear to indicate multiple and overlapping conceptions/cosmologies of gendered identities and bodies.

Marshall, Yvonne. 2013. Personhood in prehistory: A feminist archaeology in ten persons. In *A companion to gender prehistory*. Edited by Diane Bolger, 205–225. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. [doi:10.1002/9781118294291]. [ISBN: 9780470655368]

Discusses the body, and the gendered body, through a series of ten case studies, including Iron and Bronze Age Britain, to examine personhood from a feminist perspective. Thoughtful and reflective engaging with contemporary theoretical concerns, from New Materialism to assemblage theory. Good overview of the development of concepts of personhood in archaeological scholarship.

Macintosh, Alison A., Ron Pinhasi, and Jay T. Stock. 2017. Prehistoric women's manual labor exceeded that of athletes through the first 5500 years of farming in Central Europe. *Science Advances* 3.11. [doi:10.1126/sciadv.aao3893]

Analysis of the remains of prehistoric Central European agriculturalists, showing that the female-sexed remains had skeletal markers indicative of a very strong upper body. This was understood to result from the labor involved in daily grain grinding, a task long associated with women. However, rather than confirming a gender stereotype, it also indicates that women were physically muscular, and therefore it cannot be asserted that women were not strong enough to construct the large, monumental architecture of prehistoric societies.

Nakamura, Carolyn, and Lynn Meskell. 2009. Articulate bodies: Form and figures at Çatalhöyük. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 16:205–230.

Discussions of different miniature clay figure types at Çatalhöyük and wider Neolithic Anatolia, which have often been misrepresented or idealized as gendered/sexualized objects. Shows how these fired clay figures were used to mediate different social concerns not just related to gender and sexuality.

Robb, John, and Oliver J. T. Harris. 2013. *The body in history: Europe from the Palaeolithic to the future*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press. [ISBN: 9780521195287]

Excellent collection of essays on the body spanning from the Paleolithic to contemporary society; gendered discussions feature throughout the book but are relatively short.

Sofaer, J. 2013. Bioarchaeological approaches to the gendered body. In *A companion to gender prehistory*. Edited by D. Bolger, 226–243. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
[doi:10.1002/9781118294291]. [ISBN: 9780470655368]

Discusses the importance of a bioarchaeological approach for gender studies in archaeology, and comments on the ways in which gender cannot be uncoupled from sexed bodies.

Highlights how bioarchaeology can further inform understanding of lived experiences and can add to explorations of the intersection of social identities from age to gender.

Sørensen, M. L. S. 1997. Reading dress: The construction of social categories and identities in Bronze Age Europe. *Journal of European Archaeology* 5.1: 93–114.

Comments on how personal appearance, and the use of specific material culture, creates social identities that transmit cultural and gendered ideologies. However, this does not account for lived experience and the body is not embodied but an instrument that transmits signals.

The Life Course

Studies of the life course tie the human body to cultural events and norms that situates age in constructing personal and social identities. A special edition of *World Archaeology* edited by Roberta Gilchrist brought together a series of wide-ranging archaeological studies (see Gilchrist 2000). Gilchrist 2012 argues that many societies across the world have different ways of marking gendered time through the extended life course, from conception to the afterlife. There

are complex social rituals associated with age or life stage that are connected to various rites of passage, as noted in [Joyce 2000]. [Dempsey 2021] uses the life course as storytelling tool in order to show how discussions of women's lives can be brought the fore in areas where they are often absent. The social construction of age, and life stages, means that time is also gendered—different bodies, different genders experience the passing through the life course in a myriad of ways. One such example, outlined by [Joyce 2000], is the onset of puberty, which can be treated differently for men, women, and other gendered bodies. [Sofaer Derevenski 2000] also shows how different types of metalwork deposited in mortuary contexts during the Copper Age in the Carpathian Basin are used as indicators of change to the gendered life course. Previously, copper objects such as arms rings were only interpreted as indicators of status, but they were in fact more entangled with the social age and life stage of men. [Haughton 2018] focuses on a micro-scale analysis of mortuary contexts and practices at a Bronze Age cemetery in Scotland, revealing it was possible to interpret a particular gendered ideology of people who used this specific place to bury their dead. Haughton notes that children were almost always buried with an adult and were clustered toward the center of the cemetery. But he also notes that cremated males and females only occur together with children, and that there is evidence for gender complementarity, as no two males or two females occur together. Here, it seems that it was less important to construct a gendered difference in the life course, but that age appears very significant in the arrangement of burials in certain mortuary contexts. This is completely unlike the burials discussed by [Sofaer Derevenski 2000], where each gendered life stage appears to be mapped onto the human remains.

Dempsey, K. 2021. Herstory: Exploring the material life of Gundrada de Warenne. In *Relations of power: Women's networks in the Middle Ages*. Edited by E. Bérat, R. Hardie, and I.

Dumitrescu, 169–197. *Studien zu Macht und Herrschaft*. Gottingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. [[doi:10.14220/9783737012423.169](https://doi.org/10.14220/9783737012423.169)]. [ISBN: 9783737012423]

Demonstrates how it is possible to explore a single (named) medieval woman in northern Europe, and her journey through life, by making connections across very different types of material culture in order to highlight women's gendered networks.

Gilchrist, Roberta. 2000. Archaeological biographies: Realizing human lifecycles, -courses and -histories. *World Archaeology* 31.3: 325–332. [[doi:10.1080/00438240009696924](https://doi.org/10.1080/00438240009696924)]

Introduction to a special edition of *World Archaeology* on “Human Lifecycles,” a collection of essays focusing on the life course and gender. Briefly outlines life-course studies, and the ways it can be gendered.

Gilchrist, Roberta. 2012. *Medieval life: Archaeology and the life course*. Woodbridge, UK: Boydell and Brewer. [ISBN: 9781843837220]

An interwoven account of medieval lifeways inclusive of age, gender, and status, primarily situated in England. An excellent study that showcases gender and feminist archaeological approaches in evidence-based accounts.

Haughton, Mark. 2018. Social relations and the local: Revisiting our approaches to finding gender and age in prehistory; A case study from Bronze Age Scotland. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 51.1–2: 64–77. [[doi:10.1080/00293652.2018.1517821](https://doi.org/10.1080/00293652.2018.1517821)]

A micro-scale mortuary and spatial analysis of a Bronze Age cemetery in Scotland shows how different aspects of social identity, such as age, gender, or position in the life course, are mediated at a local level. This highlights that examining site specifics rather than regional,

national, or international blurs is crucial if the complicated intersecting identities of people are to be understood.

Joyce, Rosemary A. 2000. Girling the girl and boying the boy: The production of adulthood in ancient Mesoamerica. *World Archaeology* 31.3: 473–483.

[doi:10.1080/00438240009696933]

Through rich archaeological evidence, this article explores the socialization of Aztec children (c.1500–400 BCE) and construction of adult gendered bodies through citational actions, costume, and bodily ornamentation and modification.

Sofaer Derevenski, Joanna. 2000. Rings of life: The role of early metalwork in mediating the gendered life course. *World Archaeology* 31.3: 389–406. [doi:10.1080/00438240009696928]

A case study–based discussion of the relationship between age, aging, and gender during the Chalcolithic period in the Carpathian Basin. Sofaer asserts that metalwork performed a mediating role between biological life and social change.

Gender and Understanding “Work”

Early gender archaeologies such as [Ortner 1974] and [Rosaldo 1974] (both cited under [Initial Steps]) endeavored to explore the “sexual division of labor,” which focused on pinpointing particular male or female tasks related to production or subsistence activities. There was an assumption that male/female divisions of labor could be associated with oppositional behaviors that were related to biology, as discussed in [Bolger 2013]. Certain objects were assigned a sex/gender owing to their presence or absence in mortuary context, or their association with what archaeologists viewed as women’s or men’s roles. Ethnographic analogies such as in [Spector 1991] and [Marshall 1985] were used to understand how different tasks and activities are carried

out. [Wright 1991](#) and [Clarke 2002](#) highlight how some such interpretations were problematic, such as the assumption that only women were potters, owing to uncritical use of ethnographic analogy. There was a tendency to assert universal roles for women, especially relating to child care; in this, biological essentialisms underpin the argument, such as the idea that women cannot work because of child-bearing/care, as outlined by [Gilchrist 1999](#) (under [Books, Monographs, and Case Studies](#), see also [Gender Archaeology Historiography](#)) and [Bolger 2013](#). Women in archaeological interpretations were confined to the interior, “the home,” and therefore excluded from the “outside” world of power, religious rituals, and political life (see also [Household Archaeology](#)). This biased understanding of labor still forms many of the contemporary, unspoken assumptions of what gender roles comprise in archaeological interpretation, as argued by [Rotman 2006](#) (under [Household Archaeology](#)). Some interpretations equated the mobility of women with patrilocal exogamy while at the same time mobile men are viewed craftworkers or traders with specialist knowledge, as discussed in [Frieman, et al. 2019](#) (under [Issues of Sex: Birka Burial, Sweden, and the “Princess of Vix,” Germany](#) and [Into the 21st Century](#)). Where women’s roles were explored, they were assumed to have a lesser status and be less technologically innovative. [Crown 2007](#) discusses this in relation to pottery, whereas [Watson and Kennedy 1991](#) focuses on horticulture, which is related to the discussion on pastoralism in [Crabtree 2006](#). Yet activities stereotypically associated with women require underappreciated specialist knowledge and technological skill: cooking, pottery making, fire keeping, horticulture, and textile work, as explored by [Hurcombe 2000](#) (see also [Maintenance Activities](#)). Gender archaeological studies of labor, production, and technology are more nuanced and now also employ textual data, as shown by [Brumfiel 2006](#), visual representations in pre-Hispanic southern Central America, in [Joyce 1993](#), as well as use of mortuary data, as in [Hendon 2006](#) (see also

[The Body] and [Mortuary Archaeology and Gender]). As gender archaeology developed and critically reflected on its own practice, different approaches were employed to navigate away from essentialized understandings to create a more dynamic understanding of labor, production, and technology from a gendered perspective that would account for differences such as age, social status, or ethnicity, as well as regional and geographic influences, as noted by [Dobres 2000]. Tasks are much more likely to be contextualized within a particular group's organization, productions, and distribution activities, as argued by [Bolger 2013] and [Costin 2013].

Brumfiel, E. 2006. Cloth, gender, continuity, and change: Fabricating unity in anthropology.

American Anthropologist 108.4, n.s.: 862–877. [[doi:10.1525/aa.2006.108.4.862](https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.2006.108.4.862)]

Comparative historical anthropological study that highlights how weaving is practiced in many societies across time and space; the cultural context means this craft meant different things at different times, whether relating to gender, ethnicity, or status. Disrupts the idea of monolithic understanding of both “woman” and textile work.

Clarke, Joanne. 2002. Gender, economy and ceramic production in Neolithic Cyprus. In

Engendering Aphrodite: Women and society in ancient Cyprus. Edited by D. Bolger and N.

Serwint, 251–263. Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research. [ISBN: 9780897570596]

Comments on the (almost universal) idea of women as potters. Refutes previous theories of stylistic variation in pottery being related to the movement of women in patrilocal exogamy.

Highlights how the variety of social interactions in early farming societies must have led to both dynamic activity sharing and ceramic decorative variation.

Costin, C. L. 2013. Gender and textile production in prehistory. In *A companion to gender prehistory*. Edited by D. Bolger, 180–202. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

[[doi:10.1002/9781118294291](https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118294291)] [ISBN: 9780470655368]

Costin has published widely on gender and the organization of cloth production. This paper summarizes the reasons textile work remains somewhat underappreciated, acknowledges how labor-intensive it was, and suggests it was completed intermittently. Highlights that while women are associated with textile production, the entire manufacturing process was shared between all genders and children. Yet there remains gendered ideological concepts of task allocation.

Crabtree, Pamela. 2006. Women, gender and pastoralism. In *Handbook of gender in archaeology*. Edited by S. M. Nelson, 571–592. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press. [ISBN: 9780759106789]

Discusses social context for domestication of animals and subsequent husbandry. Focuses on women and men's roles in agropastoral societies in Europe and Middle East. Highlights how the association of women and horticulture can be upheld, but cautions that this might be a reflection of how the status of large animal husbandry is seen as greater.

Crown, Patricia. 2007. Life histories of pots and potters: Situating the individual in archaeology. *American Antiquity* 72.4: 677–690. [[doi:10.2307/25470440](https://doi.org/10.2307/25470440)]

Women have long been considered as potters, but this paper highlights the ways in which pots result from multiple contributions from many gendered people, including children over time, from initial clay gathering, to processing, to teaching, and onward to firing, polishing, and mending.

Dobres, Marcia-Anne. 2000. *Technology and social agency: Outlining a practice framework for archaeology*. Oxford: Blackwell. [ISBN: 9781577181231]

Technology is seen as central to social organization, shaping behaviors and norms related to gender (age and kinship, too). Suggests the archaeologists should concentrate more on how artifacts are made and used rather than trying to isolate individuals as experts and separate things from people (chaîne opératoire approach).

Hendon, Julia A. "Textile production as craft in Mesoamerica: Time, labor and knowledge." *Journal of Social Archaeology* 6.3 (October 2006): 354–78. [[doi:10.1177/1469605306067841](https://doi.org/10.1177/1469605306067841)]

This article argued that by accepting textile work as craft—complete with specialist knowledge and embodied skills—a more rich and detailed picture emerges of the social roles of craftworkers (often but not exclusively women) as part of Mesoamerican society. By situating this craft and the social coordination of labor (knowledge transmission, production, technology, social value/status) within its appropriate context using archaeological data and related historical sources, its significance for the craftworkers' lives, and their roles in shaping society, including gender within the households and beyond, becomes apparent.

Hurcombe, Linda. 2000. Time, skill and craft specialization as gender relations. In *Gender and material culture in archaeological perspective*. Edited by Linda Hurcombe and Moira Donald, 88–109. New York and London: Palgrave Macmillan. [[doi:10.1007/978-1-349-62334-1_6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-62334-1_6)] [ISBN: 9781349623365]

Focuses on gender division of labor related to plant/basketry/textile/clothing sphere of craft production. Foregrounds that this is a specialist processes and need not be seen as mundane but

as part of different transformative processes and innovations. Discusses gendered social contexts of production, in particular the time and the skill involved in production activities/craftwork, to explore social relationships.

Joyce, Rosemary A. 1993d. *Women's work: Images of production and reproduction in pre-Hispanic southern Central America[<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/2041671>]*. *Current Anthropology* 34.3: 255–273

Explores whether the production of human images in the form of stereotypical males and females can be related to increased social stratification, which resulted in or from a renegotiation of the gender roles of men and women. A series of human figurines from Classic Maya, Honduran, and Lower Central American societies are discussed, whose overall imagery suggests gendered dialogue related to contributions to society in terms of status and power.

Kennedy, Mary C., and Patty Jo Watson. 1991. The development of horticulture in the Eastern Woodlands of North America: Women's role. In *Engendering archaeology: Women in prehistory*. Edited by Joan M. Gero and Margaret W. Conkey, 225–275. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. [ISBN: 9780631165057]

Highlights androcentrism in the idea that while women were viewed as plant carers and gatherers, they were not responsible for the technologies of horticulture and the domestication of plants.

Marshall, Yvonne. 1985. *Who made the Lapita pots? A case study in gender archaeology[<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20705934>]*. *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 94:205–233.

Through the construction of an ethnographic model of gender and pottery production, Marshall investigated how labor is divided, and in what ways or contexts women and men made pots.

She uses this to infer gendered roles in the production of prehistoric Lapita pots.

Spector, J. 1991. What this awl means? Towards a feminist archaeology. In *Engendering archaeology: Women and prehistory*. Edited by Joan M. Gero and Margaret W. Conkey, 388–406. Oxford: Blackwell. [ISBN: 9780631165057]

Task differentiation is a framework of understanding to investigate activities linked to the maintenance of a community, group, household, or family unit. This can include physical (i.e., buildings repair) or social (care, ritual, or health practices) maintenance. Questions are then asked regarding how these relate to site formation, mobility patterns, and time scales through attention to material processes of production, transformation, and deposition from a gendered perspective. While no longer accepted as an archaeological method, it is important reading.

Wright, Rita P. 1991. Women's labor and pottery production in prehistory. In *Engendering archaeology: Women and prehistory*. Edited by Joan M. Gero and Margaret W. Conkey, 194–223. Oxford: Blackwell. [ISBN: 9780631165057]

Argues contemporary gendered divisions of labor have skewed archaeological interpretations of prehistoric pottery production and development. Women are portrayed as passive in ethnographic accounts of pottery production, which reinforces a (false) notion of women as subordinate. A case study on pottery production in Harappan society (6000–1800 BCE) highlights that the emergence of the state society, and increased specialization of pottery production, did not result in women's exclusion from this craftwork and industry.

Household Archaeology

The household is a key area of exploration for gender archaeology, as it contains evidence for the everyday social relations, processes, behaviors, and relationships of people. Questions concerning the formation and performance of gender roles and ideologies are addressed to evidence such as spatial patterning, material culture, built remains, and environmental data, as shown in [Lawrence 1999]. [Robin and Brumfiel 2008] discusses the importance of reevaluating essentialized understandings of gendered household organization and labor. [Franklin 2020] notes that it remains important not to assume a universal or stable idea of home/household. Key areas of investigation are domestic labor and (re)production, and the housework completed as part of that (see [Maintenance Activities]). [Tringham 1991] (cited under [Feminist Archaeology]) argues that the “household scale of analysis” was how the “invisible women” of prehistory and their work could be visible (see also Feminist Archaeology and [Maintenance Activities]). Researchers began to discuss not just what households were but what they did, and how people created and maintained them, as seen in [Robin and Brumfiel 2008], [Hastorf 1991], [Hendon 1996], [Sweely 1999], and [Lawrence 1999]. Many studies have focused on specific artifacts associated with the presence of women, which typically included textile work, as discussed in [Hendon 1996] and [Beaudry 2006]. There are also numerous analyses of the gendered use of space, from pre-Hispanic Sausa, as in [Hastorf 1991], to Central Europe, in [Tringham 2012], and historical America, in [Hardesty 1994] and [Battle-Baptiste 2004] (under [Maintenance Activities]). Others have identified particular archaeological signatures, including but not restricted to artifact gender correlates for households that were occupied by single- and mixed-sex groups. This included brothels ([Seifert 2005], under [Archaeologies of Sex, Sexuality, and Desire]), religious communities ([Kryder-Reid 1994]) and mining homes ([Hardesty 1994]). The (sub)discipline

moved beyond the identification of “female” artifacts or spaces, to think about the dynamic nature of gender, within its appropriate historical context. [Lawrence 1999] focuses on how household assemblages associated with both men and women differ from men-only examples in colonial Australia. [Hendon 1996] explores how weaving, a task traditionally associated with women and the home, was part of political displays in Mayan society. [diZegera Wall 1994] argues that women and men operated in “separate” spheres, an idea countered by [Rotman 2006], showing greater interrelation than previously accepted. In rejecting dualism or binaries it is possible to see the analysis of gender beyond pinpointing particular assemblages and identities to understanding how those artifacts are made meaningful in the formation of gendered identities, which is central to [Kryder-Reid 1994], [Lawrence 1999], and [Sweely 1999]. However, that is not to take away from the fact that in many historic societies, women were associated with the home and household in a way that is not biologically determined but cultural, as noted by [Montón-Subías and Sanchez-Romero 2008] (under [Maintenance Activities]) and [Sweely 1999]. “The home” and “housework” remains undervalued for the critical roles it plays in creating, maintaining, and defining our world which forms key arguments for [Montón-Subías 2010] (under [Maintenance Activities]).

Beaudry, Mary. 2006. *Findings: The material culture of needlework and sewing*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

This book explores the “small finds” associated with the cultural complex of (ordinary and fancy) needlework and sewing. Using a diverse range of sources, Beaudry articulates how scissors, shears, thimbles, and pins can be understood as parts of societal expressions of

gender and embodied gender identities that are signaled and (mis)understood, but which can also transform or shift depending on the context.

diZerega Wall, Diana. 1994. *The archaeology of gender: Separating the spheres in urban America*. New York and London: Plenum. [[doi:10.1007/978-1-4899-1210-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4899-1210-7)]. [ISBN: 9780306445514]

Discussion of gender relations in historical America through a focus on the complementarity of gender roles of men and women, and their division between the public and private spheres of work and home. Later critiqued by [Rotman 2006](#) for enforcing binaries.

Franklin, M. 2020. Enslaved household variability and plantation life and labor in colonial Virginia. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 24:115–155. [[doi:10.1007/s10761-019-00506-x](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10761-019-00506-x)]

Discussion related to the “extra domestic labour” of women from enslaved families in three plantation sites in Virginia. Highlights the issues with a public/private dichotomy particularly related to obscuring women and their work. Also outlines the heterogeneity of enslaved households that is often underappreciated.

Hardesty, D. L. 1994. Class, gender strategies, and material culture in the Mining West. In *Those of little note: Gender, race, and class in historical archaeology*. Edited by E. M. Scott, 129–145. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press. [ISBN: 9780816514113]

Multilevel approach to gender, especially spatial patterning, in the Mining West of North America. Notes the presence and absence of particular buildings related to gendered activities, and that women tended to be located within more securely settled areas such as towns and ranches rather than satellite settlements.

Hastorf, C. 1991. Gender, space and food in prehistory. In *Engendering archaeology: Women and prehistory*. Edited by Joan M. Gero and Margaret W. Conkey, 224–251. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. [ISBN: 9780631165057]

Discusses gender roles and power in pre-Hispanic Sausa through a combination of ethnohistory, spatial patterning of charred maize seed in house compounds, and isotopic analysis of selected of human remains. Discusses how the changing patterns of seed dispersal can be linked to difference in household organization and gender roles.

Hendon, Julia. 1996. *Archaeological approaches to the organization of domestic labor: Household practice and domestic relations[<https://www.jstor.org/stable/21558171>]*. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 25:45–61.

Overview of the meaning of the terms “household” and “domestic,” as considered by feminist scholars. Shows how research on household archaeology, craft specialization, and gender is relevant to the study of the organization of domestic labor. Through studies of craft specialization and women’s economic production, emphasizes how dynamic the interactions between household and society are.

Kryder-Reid, Elizabeth. 1994. “With manly courage”: Reading the construction of gender in a nineteenth-century religious community. In *Those of little note: Gender, race, and class in historical archaeology*. Edited by Elizabeth M. Scott, 97–114. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press. [ISBN: 9780816514113]

Really interesting study of a religious community of men in historic Maryland. This site-specific study focuses on St. Mary’s, Annapolis, which was inhabited by a congregation of Redemptorist priests and lay brothers. This paper explores the construction of gender at this specific site, and suggests multiple gendered roles are evident with the same-sex household.

Ultimately, argues that the lay brother became feminized as per the gender ideology about women in this all-male space.

Lawrence, Susan. 1999. Towards a feminist archaeology of households: Gender and household structure on the Australian goldfields. In *The archaeology of household activities*. Edited by Penelope M. Allison, 121–142. London: Routledge. [doi:10.4324/9780203014929]. [ISBN: 9786610334230]

Insight overview of gender and historic household archaeology. Focusing on 19th-century Moorabool goldfields close to Melbourne, and the relatively temporary camps there, it is shown how household assemblages associated with both men and women differ from men-only examples. Importantly, it shows that using gender as a category of analysis affects other aspects of social relations.

Robin, Cynthia, and Elizabeth Brumfiel, eds. 2008. *Gender, households, and society: Unraveling the threads of the past and the present*. Archeological papers of the American Anthropological Association. . Malden, MA: Blackwell. [ISBN: 9781444334036]

Excellent edited collection that covers many topics, from challenging gendered hierarchy and binary interpretations to domestic economy and collective responsibilities. Covers a variety of geographic regions, from North Africa to Guatemala and Mexico to the Andes and Mexico. Introduction by Brumfiel and Robin gives overview of discipline and gendered/feminist approaches.

Rotman, D. L. 2006. *Separate spheres? Beyond the dichotomies of domesticity[<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/506286>]*. *Current Anthropology* 47:666–674.

Through a case study of Deerfield, Massachusetts, in the 19th and 20th centuries, Rotman contests the idea of separate spheres (public/private, male/female, work/home) by demonstrating that gendered space within the home and town was fluid, and women were active in local village life, outside the home.

Sweely, T. 1999. Gender, space, people, and power at Ceren, El Salvador. In *Manifesting power: Gender and interpretation of power in archaeology*. Edited by T. Sweely, 155–172. London: Routledge. [doi:10.4324/9780203165218]. [ISBN: 9786610182800]

In this book Sweely explores the way Mayan women ground grain in public, therefore showcasing their work at feeding and nourishing, which transcended the notion of a public/private divide. Food making and preparation were inherently political acts linked with status.

Tringham, Ruth. 2012. Households through a digital lens. In *New perspectives on household archaeology*. Edited by B. Parker and C. Foster, 81–120. Winona Lake, IL: Eisenbrauns. [ISBN: 9781575062525]

Tringham has been publishing feminist household archaeology for decades (see [Tringham 1991](#), under [Feminist Archaeology](#)). This paper is a disciplinary review and also provides new thoughts on the future.

Maintenance Activities

“Maintenance activities” is a term coined by Spanish feminist archaeologists in the 1990s. Its importance is argued by [Montón-Subías and Sanchez-Romero 2008](#), including contributing authors to the volume. The term, and area of study, was designed to capture and emphasize the range of domestic activities completed in the household, from spatial organization, the nurture

and care of children, food production, and fire technology, as well as care for the dead. Included in this are the ways in which these things facilitate and reproduce different types of social relations and identities (something that [Beaudry 2006](#) (cited under [Household Archaeology](#)) discusses, but not as part of the maintenance activity tradition). [Montón-Subías 2010](#) points out that maintenance activities require very specific sets of expertise and technological skills; for example, cooking requires knowledge of tools, temperatures, fire control, and food hygiene. Gender and feminist archaeology identified that housework or domestic activities were not recognized as being important, despite their pivotal role in maintaining society. These points are also considered in [Battle-Baptiste 2004](#) regarding historical America. These things have been and continue to be underappreciated in archaeology (and society more generally) owing to patriarchal narratives and concerns. [Montón-Subías 2010](#) notes that domestic activities have historically been part of the social roles of women, but that does not mean that they will always be gendered in this way.

Battle-Baptiste, Whitney. 2004. A space of our own: Redefining the enslaved household at Andrew Jackson's Hermitage Plantation. In *Household chores and household choices: theorizing the domestic sphere in historical archaeology*. Edited by K. S. Barile and J. C. Brandon, 33–50. Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press. [ISBN: 9780817313951]

Using Andrew Jackson's Hermitage Plantation as a case study, it is argued that the study of the enslaved household as a social unit should be given more attention. Notes the centrality of women's work to the household and how this labor is materially articulated in the outside spaces from the first Hermitage site. These spaces reinforce the function and meaning of families and households, including kin networks and gender roles.

Montón-Subías, Sandra. 2010. Maintenance activities and the ethics of care. In *Situating gender in European archaeologies*. Edited by L. H. Dommasnes, T. Hjørungdal, S. Montón-Subías, M. Sánchez Romero, and N. L. Wicker, 23–34. Budapest: Archaeolingua. [ISBN: 9789639911154]

Argues that studies of maintenance activities do not essentialize the role of women but serve to highlight their importance in this work and the key role it plays in the construction of various relational networks.

Montón-Subías, Sandra, and Margarita Sanchez-Romero, eds. 2008. *Engendering social dynamics: The archaeology of maintenance activities*. British Archaeological Reports International Series 1862. Oxford: Archaeopress. [ISBN: 9781407303451]

A collection of eleven essays from notable feminist scholars that brings together a variety of studies that serve to highlight the role and the importance of maintenance activities through human history.