

GENDER ARCHAEOLOGY IN CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA

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The Russian archaeology has some distinctive traits. Firstly, over a long period of time, the Soviet archeology has been hidden behind the “iron curtain”. Secondly, by virtue of the great poor populated territory, the Russian archaeology remains mainly focused on the field excavations and exclusively empirical works. And finally, the Marxist ideology dictated a preferred studying of the social inequality and the state origin. The Russian archaeological traditions are still based on the Soviet heritage. Unfortunately, such important sections of the social archaeology as gender and childhood have been little studied.

In contrast to Western archaeology, **gender** studies are still not widely considered in Russian archaeology. The study of *social* relations between men, women, children and other gender classes of prehistoric cultures are extremely rare, and they are examined usually within the framework of vertical status hierarchy and traditional sex/age concept. The contribution children made to past societies has largely been ignored. The archaeologists, who work on the gender problems, can be count in this abstract! Besides me, I can call only two (!) scientists, whose works were directly focused on the gender issue – Natalia Polos'mak and Elena Kupriyanova. Polos'mak has studied the social status of ancient nomadic women in the Early Iron Age (Altay, Pasyryk Culture, so-called *Frozen Tombs*). Kupriyanova has recently published the book *The Shadow of Woman: women's costume of the Bronze Age as a “text”*, concerning the Bronze Age women of the Trans-Urals. Unfortunately that is all.

In contemporary Russia the gender archaeology has the great area for investigations. The archaeological material accumulated by Russian archaeologists is extremely abundant. Nevertheless the great number of problems is still left unexplored, and gender aspects require the detailed study in such vast region as Russia.