

Burial Mound Ladies – Gender, Age and Status in Mound Building Prehistoric Societies

On several previous occasions we have established the fact that even in those past societies that are archaeologically closely identified with burial mounds, this type of monument is in fact an exception to the general method of burial or body disposal. People buried under mounds in prehistory appear to have been perceived by their own communities as members of an exclusive group. Depending on the scope of the inclusive criteria used to establish the mound type of burial, which varies significantly geographically as well as temporally, this exclusivity may include an elite burial category. Although in many of the societies practicing interment in mounds the elite burials were primarily reserved for men, women appear across the spectrum of mound building cultures to have held a wide range of complex roles. The aim of this session is to explore the diversity of interpretative models of the burial mound record as it relates to women and to offer approaches to the following questions:

How did women achieve burial mound status in different societies cross-culturally?

Was this related to their gender or to their affiliation with a special group within the community, such as social vs. religious status categories or age-grades?

What was their relation to other women within the same community based on non-mound burial evidence, i.e. are there differences between women buried with gender-specific markers and women that appear in burial mound contexts otherwise reserved for men?

What information can be extracted from grave good inventories such as costume elements?

What impact might gender, age and status have on the temporality of grave assemblages as well as the relative visibility of certain social groups in the mortuary record?

How might evidence for gender-specific patterns of mobility and residence manifest themselves in the mound burial record?

What is the relationship between biological sex and gender in the burial mound record?

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Mounds as Social Signifiers in early Iron Age southwest Germany

Sophie Bergerbrant, Stockholm University
Bronze Age Identities: Costume, Conflict and Contact in Northern Europe 1600-1300 BC

Lena Fahre, Midgard Historical Centre, Norway
The Monumental Mounds of Oseberg and Borre in a Gender Perspective

Diana Gergova, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
The Thracian Woman: Burials and Social Status

Erszébet Jerem,
Graves of High-Ranking Women within the Kalenderberg Group of the Eastern Alpine Hallstatt Area

James A. Johnson, University of Pittsburgh
Gendered Paradoxes? Analyses of Wealth, Status and Mound Burials in Early Iron Age Ukraine

Patricia Richards, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Effigy Mound Construction, Social Complexity and Evidence for Gender Differentiation

Katharina Rebay-Salisbury, University of Leicester
Burial Mounds and Gender in the North-east Hallstatt Area (Kalenderberg Group)

Svetlana Sharapova, Russian Academy of Sciences, Ekaterinburg
Interpreting Female Status – Unconformities in the Archaeological Record

Maya Vasileva, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Representations of Status: Women's Visibility in the Archaeological Record of Phrygia and Thrace