

ACADÉMIE ROUMAINE  
INSTITUT D'ARCHÉOLOGIE « V. PÂRVAN »

# D A C I A

REVUE D'ARCHÉOLOGIE  
ET D'HISTOIRE ANCIENNE

NOUVELLE SÉRIE

LVI

2012



EDITURA ACADEMIEI ROMÂNE

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ACADÉMIE ROUMAINE  
INSTITUT D'ARCHÉOLOGIE «V. PÂRVAN»

DACIA LVI, 2012

REVUE D'ARCHÉOLOGIE ET D'HISTOIRE ANCIENNE  
JOURNAL OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ANCIENT HISTORY  
ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR ARCHÄOLOGIE UND GESCHICHTE DES ALTERTUMS  
ЖУРНАЛ АРХЕОЛОГИИ И ДРЕВНЕЙ ИСТОРИИ

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TO QUEER OR NOT TO QUEER? THAT IS THE QUESTION:  
SEX/GENDER, PRESTIGE AND BURIAL NO. 10  
ON THE MOKRIN NECROPOLIS

UROŠ MATIĆ\*

**Key words:** Early Bronze Age, Mokrin necropolis, grave no. 10, sex/gender, prestige, queer theory.

**Abstract:** Modern heteronormative views of sex and gender largely influenced examination and interpretation of sex/gender on the Early Bronze Age Mokrin necropolis in previous studies. The “normative” burial treatment on Mokrin necropolis was defined on the basis of heteronormative views of biological sex and gender: male individuals were oriented north-south and females were oriented in the opposite direction, with appropriate grave goods. However, when the orientation was not the one expected for the osteological sex of the deceased, several explanations were given (wrong sex determination, gender not matching sex, not a community member, special status in the community etc.). It is clear that biological genital sex, read from the osteological sexing, was considered a primary category in engendering buried individuals, naturalizing a binary division of their bodies. This approach by default queers the body of an older osteologically male individual buried in grave no. 10, who was oriented south-north and buried with dress ornaments usually associated with adult osteological females: a pair of “Cypriote” knot-headed pins, a neck-ring, four copper bracelets and two gold spiral hair-rings. Given the “reversed” orientation and specific grave goods, some have even labelled this individual as “hyperfemale”. Why should we queer the body as non-normative if the osteological sex is different in comparison to other burials with the same body treatment? This paper provides a critical history of research of sex/gender on Mokrin necropolis based on queer theory. The number of sexes/genders cannot be assumed before the analyses are conducted; therefore this paper suggests multiple sexes/genders paradigm in approaching mortuary data in order to avoid a priori made conclusions about sex/gender system in Mokrin society. How materiality of the body and context of dress ornaments can be of great importance in approaching sex/gender on Mokrin necropolis is in this paper primarily discussed in the case of grave no. 10.

**Cuvinte cheie:** epoca timpurie a bronzului, necropola de la Mokrin, mormântul nr. 10, sex/gen, prestigiu, teorie homosexuală.

**Rezumat:** Perspectivele moderne heteronormative asupra sexului și genului au influențat în mare măsură examinarea și interpretarea sexului/genului în studiile anterioare consacrate necropolei din epoca timpurie a bronzului de la Mokrin. “Norma” funerară în necropola de la Mokrin a fost definită pe baza unor perspective heteronormative asupra sexului biologic și a genului: indivizii de sex masculin erau orientați nord-sud iar cei de sex feminin erau orientați în direcția opusă, cu inventarul funerar adecvat. Atunci când orientarea nu era cea așteptată pentru sexul osteologic al indivizilor decedați, au fost oferite mai multe explicații (determinare greșită a sexului, gen diferit de sex, apartenența la altă comunitate, statute speciale în comunitate etc.). Este limpede că sexul biologic genital, identificat prin procedura osteologică de diferențiere a sexelor, a fost considerat o categorie primară în atribuirea de genuri indivizilor îngropați, ceea ce dus la o naturalizare a diviziunii binare a corpurilor lor. Această abordare duce implicit la o încadrare aparte a unui individ mai în vârstă, de sex masculin, îngropat în mormântul 10, orientat sud-nord și cu piese de port care sînt de obicei asociate cu indivizi adulți de sex feminin: o pereche de ace cu buclă (*Schleifennadel*) “cipriote”, colier, patru brățări din cupru și două inele de păr spiralate din aur. Avînd în vedere orientarea “inversată” și inventarul specific unii au etichetat acest individ ca fiind “hiperfeminin”. De ce oare ar trebui să considerăm corpul ca fiind în afara normei dacă sexul osteologic este diferit de ce ne-am așteptat pornind

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de la morminte cu o tratare similară a corpului? Acest articol oferă o istorie critică a cercetării relațiilor de sex/gen în necropola de la Mokrin, bazată pe teoria homosexuală (*queer theory*). Numărul de sexe/genuri nu poate fi asumat înainte de efectuarea analizelor. De aceea acest articol sugerează paradigma unor sexe/genuri multiple pentru abordarea informațiilor oferite de necropole, pentru a evita concluzii apriorice despre sistemul de sex/gen din societatea de la Mokrin. Modul în care materialitatea corpului și contextul pieselor de port pot fi de mare importanță în abordarea sexului/genului în necropola de la Mokrin este discutat în acest articol mai ales pe baza mormântului 10.

## Introduction

This is a study of a peculiar, but actually quite often, archaeological case of the so called gender ambiguous burials, where the “biological“ sex and “social“ gender are not in mutual accordance with each other from anthropological and archaeological point of view<sup>1</sup>. Several such so called ambiguous burials are known from Mokrin necropolis (nowadays Serbia) so far. However, in this paper I will focus on only one burial (grave no. 10) as my aim is not so much to reconstruct “gender“ in the society which buried their deceased on this necropolis, as to raise central problems with different approaches to sex and gender in the past. Exactly this grave no. 10 is most often quoted in discussion of the so called gender reversals, gender ambiguous burials and alternative genders. Thus, this paper provides a critical history of research of gender on Mokrin necropolis based on queer theory in order to propose not so much new interpretations as more carefully framed approaches<sup>2</sup>. Next to this critical history of research in this paper I suggest framing future studies within multiple sexes/genders paradigm<sup>3</sup>, with special focus on corporeality, which I will here discuss as materiality of the body<sup>4</sup>. Hopefully, this approach will be helpful both for future studies of sex/gender in past societies from the perspectives of queer theory and for studies of sex/gender in Early Bronze Age Maros communities.

Mokrin necropolis is located near the town of Kikinda (Serbia), in the area between river Tisza in the west, Maros river in the north, old canal of river Begej in the south, and Romanian border in the southeast. First finds from the site come from 1880-1885., when certain number of Bronze Age artefacts were discovered during the dig of Đukošin canal<sup>5</sup>. The first information about the site was published by Felix Milleker (1940) and the first skeletons in the Mokrin necropolis were discovered by Luka Nadlački in 1953<sup>6</sup>. Systematic excavations on the site were started by Milorad Girić in 1953. and lasted till 1969., with several pause periods. Overall, 312 graves were excavated, but 50-100 more graves are left unexcavated in the northern and northeastern part of the necropolis, eastern part of the centre of necropolis, and southeastern part of the necropolis<sup>7</sup>. Mokrin is unique among the Maros cemeteries being dated via <sup>14</sup>C independent of ceramic and metal artefacts typology<sup>8</sup>. Six dates have been provided for the Mokrin necropolis spanning from 2086 to 1807 cal. B. C<sup>9</sup>. Based on pottery found in the graves of Mokrin necropolis it was attributed to Maros (Perjámos) culture at the close of the Early Bronze Age and during the Middle Bronze Age<sup>10</sup>. Mokrin necropolis is one of the most often quoted in social studies in Early Bronze Age archaeology<sup>11</sup>, as wide variety of data are present, however more is to be done both in different analyses of the skeletal record and exploring other questions related to Early Bronze Age society.

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<sup>1</sup> For overall discussion see Díaz-Andreu 2005; Gilchrist 1999; Jensen 2007; Sofaer 2006; Sørensen 2000.

<sup>2</sup> More on sex and gender in queer theory in Butler 1990, 1993, 2004; For queer theory in archaeology see Dowson 2000a, 2000b, 2006, 2009; Jensen 2007; Voss 2005, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Schmidt 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Sofaer 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Stefanović 2006b, 244.

<sup>6</sup> Porčić and Stefanović 2009, 261.

<sup>7</sup> Girić 1971.

<sup>8</sup> Girić 1971; Soroceanu 1991; Wagner 2009.

<sup>9</sup> O’Shea 1996, 58.

<sup>10</sup> For more on chronology of Mokrin necropolis and Maros culture in general see Fischl 2003; Garašanin 1983; Girić 1971; Kulcsár 2003; O’Shea 1996; Soroceanu 1991.

<sup>11</sup> Bösel 2008; Harding 2000; O’Shea 1995, 1996; Parker-Pearson 1999; Porčić 2010; Porčić and Stefanović 2009; Rega 2000; Schumacher-Matthäus 1985; Stefanović 2006a.

### Research questions and aims

Several burials from Mokrin necropolis are often considered to be gender ambiguous. The most often mentioned is grave no. 10 of an older male individual buried in the orientation which is considered to be reserved for female individuals on the necropolis, and with grave goods which are also considered to be reserved for females. What is also important is that this burial was quoted as one of the richest, if not the richest, on the Mokrin necropolis, and this was one of the reasons the individual in this grave was interpreted as an individual of some kind of special status. However, what can be noticed is that those authors who considered this individual as an individual of special status, often view this privilege of “special” in connection to the “queerness” and gender ambiguity of the burial<sup>12</sup>. This approach in binding “queerness”, status and wealth is inherently orientalist and based on erroneous Eurocentric assumptions<sup>13</sup>, but I will also add heteronormative assumptions<sup>14</sup> which I will try to question in this paper. This is often the case in studies of sex/gender, status, wealth and prestige in mortuary data. However, wealth and status are not always correlated 1:1<sup>15</sup>, neither is “queer identity”, whether this is gender, sex or sexuality, a one way ticket to “special status” in past and present<sup>16</sup>. If what queer is “whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant”<sup>17</sup>, then when “normativity” in Mokrin record collides with modern heteronormativity (the normal, the legitimate, the dominant), even before the conducted archaeological analyses, we should question not only the results, but also methods and theoretical backgrounds that led to this. In the end we should queer what has been queered on the basis of these analyses.

That is why this paper aims to use queer theory to criticize the assigned “queerness” to the individual buried in grave no. 10, as it was queered on the basis of western binary sex/gender system by several authors<sup>18</sup>. What is queer in present society from a heteronormative perspective doesn’t have to be queer nor marginal in the past, neither does it have to be a key for special status in a certain society. These ideas ought to be studied in context and are constantly supposed to be questioned if we have a goal of reconstructing the past.

First I review previous studies of sex and gender on Mokrin necropolis and point to some problems of their interpretations from a queer perspective. Queer theory in archaeology is not a chase for homosexuals in the past, as it was stressed in several previous studies, and even these categories (heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, lesbian etc.) have their genealogy<sup>19</sup>. Queer theory is rather a challenge to quite often heteronormative assumptions in interpreting the past. Thus, my aim is to show that binarism in archaeological approach to sex/gender is not objective because it is “natural” and evident in skeletal record, rather it is naturalized through this binary approach and results gained from the same. This was already criticised even by some bioarchaeologists<sup>20</sup>. Analyses conducted on skeletal material can easily miss the point that sex attribution is already gender attribution in this discourse. What however is not in accordance to majority of cases studied like this is usually interpreted as an “alternative”, and these “alternative” cases are thus *a priori* queered. That is why part of the paper is concerned with establishing the frame of the approach used in the discussion of grave no. 10. My second aim is to discuss the sex/gender of this individual by paying close attention to connections between bioarchaeological sexing and dress ornaments and also their specific context on the body. In the end I propose a multiple sexes/genders paradigm already used in archaeological research<sup>21</sup> to question the heteronormative binarism rooted in mortuary gender archaeology. The main questions this paper poses are:

1. Is the orientation of some burials not in accordance to the biological sex, or is the biological sex not in accordance to prescribed “normative” orientation defined by previous authors<sup>22</sup>?

<sup>12</sup> O’Shea 1996, 140; Parker-Pearson 1999, 110.

<sup>13</sup> Jensen 2007, 28.

<sup>14</sup> For problems with heteronormativity in archaeological interpretations see Dowson 2000a, 2000b, 2006, 2009.

<sup>15</sup> Babić 2005, 76.

<sup>16</sup> Jensen 2007, 28.

<sup>17</sup> Halperin 1995, 62.

<sup>18</sup> O’Shea 1995, 1996; Parker-Pearson 1999; Porčić 2010.

<sup>19</sup> Dowson 2000a, 2000b, 2006; Jensen 2007; Voss 2005.

<sup>20</sup> Geller 2005, 2008; Hollimon 2011.

<sup>21</sup> Schmidt 2002, 160-162

<sup>22</sup> Girić 1971; O’Shea 1995, 1996; Parker-Pearson 1999; Porčić 2010.

2. How and why is individual from grave no. 10 buried opposite to the “normative”? Is there really a “normative“ on Mokrin necropolis like the one defined by some scholars? How is this reflected on the interpretation of sex and gender on Mokrin necropolis?

### Sex is burning! Sex and gender on Mokrin necropolis

John M. O’Shea emphasized “the unique constellation of funerary treatments that characterize the Maros cemeteries“. He distinguished “the Maros normative funerary program“, including individual inhumation, a flexed burial posture, the orientation of the body along a north-south axis facing east, and differential orientation of males and females: males with their heads to the north and females with their heads to the south<sup>23</sup>. This “normative“ was also noticed earlier by Milorad Girić on Mokrin necropolis, and he also noticed (as later O’Shea did) burials of individuals who are not buried according to this “normative“<sup>24</sup>. This “normative“ was built on biocentric, binary view of sex and gender, where gender is emerging as a cultural reading of “biological“ sex, or a cultural writing on a blank surface of “biological“ sex. Therefore authors studying gender in this way defined how were “sex“ differences, derived from osteological sexing, manipulated culturally. Within this interpretative process, different objects, body orientations and treatments were regarded specific for different sexes/genders. Thus, sexes stayed innate, and objects and treatments became gender, cultural readings of “biological“ sex<sup>25</sup>. In the end gender became nothing more than sex, as it was always framed within binarism of genital sex read from the analyses of skeletal data<sup>26</sup>.

O’Shea writes that when the burial has an opposite orientation to “biological“ sex of the deceased (not “normative“), this raises the question of accurate sex determination, or, if the determination is accurate, the burial reflects a more complex “alternative“ treatment. He proposes that such a reversal might represent specific individuals whose “social“ gender did not match their “biological“ sex<sup>27</sup>. Elizabeth Rega also points that orientation of the graves appears to be correlated with the “biological“ sex of individuals<sup>28</sup>. Mechthild Bösel analyses Mokrin burials equating osteological sex with gender, and she also does the same in analysing three more cemeteries (Battonya, Hernádkak, Tápé)<sup>29</sup>. Marko Porčić and Sofija Stefanović claim that it is “realistic to expect“, as supposedly O’Shea has empirically demonstrated for the Maros culture, that some of the item categories and even materials would be “*sex or gender specific*“ (*italic* by Uroš Matić), and this is why in their opinion it is necessary to perform separate analyses for osteological males and females<sup>30</sup>.

In all these previous studies “males“ and “females“ are on the basis of osteological binary sexing *a priori* taken as objective sex/gender binaries in the studied society. However, this “empirical approach“ often neglects some cases which are not “normative“. The problem emerges exactly when there are individuals whose orientation is not correlated with “biological“ sex or the supposed “normative“. These individuals are from the mentioned heteronormative biocentric perspective usually described as alternative, genderly reversed or they are said to constitute a society’s “third gender“. It is quite interesting how within this perspective different cultures have almost the same concept of “third gender“ which is usually queer, from a heteronormative perspective<sup>31</sup>. Thus, concept of “third gender“ is more fixing than destabilizing and denaturalizing binarism of sex/gender in gender studies. By uncritical application of sex/gender binarism all data which do not fit the same binary structure are easily interpreted as “third gender“ Other. The next step would be to find “similar“ analogies in the anthropological record and strengthen the supposed binarism without taking into account that anthropological “third gender“ is also quite problematic concept. That is how everything can easily fit

<sup>23</sup> O’Shea 1996, 56.

<sup>24</sup> Girić 1971.

<sup>25</sup> Rubin 1975, 1984.

<sup>26</sup> Butler 1990, 1993, 2004; Voss 2005.

<sup>27</sup> O’Shea 1996, 156.

<sup>28</sup> Rega 2000, 240.

<sup>29</sup> Bösel 2008, 67.

<sup>30</sup> Porčić and Stefanović 2009, 266.

<sup>31</sup> Herdt 1994.



heteronormative assumptions and the anthropological Other is always cited, quoted, framed, illuminated at the same time losing power to signify, negate or initiate<sup>32</sup>.

There is an idea that if “social“ gender doesn’t match “biological“ sex there is a necessity to explain the case as an “alternative“, and not as part of cultural rites or notions of engendered or sexual difference in certain society. The reason for this is the implicit binarism in considering “biological“ sex as natural, and “social“ gender as cultural. Thus the known Cartesian split in binary division of nature/culture, body/mind, female/male is maintained<sup>33</sup>. This binarism is explicit in bioarchaeology, especially in determining sex of the deceased on the basis of skeletal data. Bioarchaeology conceptualizes sex as unshakeable truth, fixed essence and observable fact. Easy and reductive connections between sex and gender are made often turning to biomedicine as a scientific base. Bioarchaeologists often in this way strengthen universalizing narratives about sex and gender which reify the modern binary sex/gender system by pushing it further in to the past<sup>34</sup>. Denial of “sex“ as a culturally constructed category demonstrates not just ethnocentrism but also scientism in delimiting ways by which to “know“ the body. It is troubling that physical anthropology has not engaged with feminist perspectives on the body beyond early second-wave feminism<sup>35</sup>.

However, as it is stressed by many authors already, sex is not “natural“<sup>36</sup>. “There is no nature, only the effects of it, naturalization and denaturalization“<sup>37</sup>. Categories “male“ and “female“ are not outside of time and history, and confining the operation of the dialectic between the sexes in a heteronormative binary way assures rather than destabilises the identities which we are supposed to be questioning, denaturalizing, and opening to time and change<sup>38</sup>. Queer view of sex, gender and sexuality can (may) be summarised with a model in which sex, gender and sexuality are not automatically mutually dependent and in which they have the opportunity to preserve their independence<sup>39</sup>. However, this model should be considered just as a working model, because it would be a big mistake to deduce a definite model from ideas which are entirely based on poststructuralist thought. This is because there is an endless play of signifiers and practices of exclusion which form identities and allow them to be in a state of constant emergence and process of becoming. That is why the complexity of past identities will may never be entirely grasped, as some signifiers are lost for us on this chain of signifiers and some practices of exclusion maybe do not have known analogies. “Different regimes of materialization will have existed in the past, resulting in bodies that were lived and experienced in ways which would be quite unfamiliar to us“<sup>40</sup>. It is necessary to study how body itself is formed and materialized, not only how was it socially dressed. In Judith Butler’s words: “This is not to say that the materiality of bodies is simply and only a linguistic effect which is reducible to a set of signifiers. Such a distinction overlooks the materiality of the signifier itself. Such an account also fails to understand materiality as that which is bound up with signification from the start; to think through the indissolubility of materiality and signification is no easy matter“<sup>41</sup>. For archaeology this is especially not easy matter, because it seems that in “reading“ the body there still prevails a notion that we are reading from a surface, a meaningless surface, and with every reading we are only peeling of layers of signifiers trying to find a “transcendental signified“, a “trace“ of the body<sup>42</sup>. Reading Jacques Derrida and Judith Butler I argue that by peeling these layers of meaning we will eventually be left of anything to peel, and find that we lost the wanted body, our wanted “trace“. The core is an illusion, and the core isn’t matter; “trace“ cannot be caught and the only thing we are left with

<sup>32</sup> Bhabha 1994, 31.

<sup>33</sup> Meskell 1998, 143-144; Meskell 2000, 14-15; Thomas 2004, 78-79; Thomas 2007, 213-214.

<sup>34</sup> Geller 2008, 115.

<sup>35</sup> Geller 2005, 600; also true for authors who studied Mokrin necropolis, see Bösel 2008; O’Shea 1995, 1996; Parker-Pearson 1999; Porčić 2010; Porčić and Stefanović 2009.

<sup>36</sup> Alberti 2001, 2005; Butler 1990, 1993; Geller 2005, 2008; Meskell 1998, 2000; Nordbladh and Yates 1990; Perry and Joyce 2001.

<sup>37</sup> Derrida 1991, 216.

<sup>38</sup> Nordbladh and Yates 1990, 223.

<sup>39</sup> Jensen 2007.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas 2007, 218.

<sup>41</sup> Butler 1993, 30.

<sup>42</sup> see Derrida 1976.

is materiality of the body<sup>43</sup>. However, the body is unintelligible prior to its signification, as a body outside of culture and language has no materiality. According to Julian Thomas the crux of the matter is this: “as long as we accept that the body’s nature is fixed in biology, and that the character of its materiality is unquestionable, we have no option but to maintain the mind/body dualism<sup>44</sup>. This doesn’t mean that the corporeality of the body is denied. The corporeal then is like a “supplementarity, which is nothing, neither a presence nor an absence, is neither a substance nor an essence of man. It is precisely the play of presence and absence, the opening of this play that no metaphysical or ontological concept can comprehend<sup>45</sup>. This means that corporal should not be overlaid with meaning; rather it is embedded in meaning itself.

However, most of those authors who emphasise the construction of sex do not deal with skeletal material or mortuary contexts, but with studies of the body using textual records or traditional material culture, thereby sometimes avoiding the skeletal body<sup>46</sup>. I argue that no matter the difference in the studied material and object of the particular research different ways in which bodies were lived and experienced in the past and different meanings and values of sexual difference have to be outknowledge<sup>47</sup>. The way in which differences between male and female bodies are expressed derives from particular social structures and the places of the sexes within these, but can also reinforce such structures by locating their origin in unquestionable “natural“ facts<sup>48</sup>. Thus, we should ask what does it mean to be a man or a woman or etc. in certain society? Is femininity reserved to female bodies and masculinity to male bodies? If not, what does it mean to be male or female?

How cultural conceptions of male and female can affect our twenty first century assignment of sex can be seen in the controversy surrounding individuals born with ambiguous genitalia. Intersex individuals, who represent 2 percent of all live births, have chromosomal combinations distinct from XX and XY, as well as disjunction between their chromosomal (or genotypic) sex and phenotypic sex. Throughout the twentieth century, medical practitioners regarded intersex as pathological and advocated surgical and hormonal intervention soon after birth<sup>49</sup>. However, the intersex community has opposed to the practice of coercive surgery on infants and children with sexually indeterminate or hermaphroditic anatomy for the sake of normalizing these bodies. Intersex activists work to revise the assumption that every single body has an inborn “truth“ of sex waiting for medical professionals to discern and bring to light. Their movement offers a critical perspective on the heteronormative version of the “human“, as the norms that govern idealized human anatomy work to produce a differential sense of who is human and who is not, which lives are liveable, and which are not<sup>50</sup>.

When they make determinations of sex, many bioarchaeologists also make an implicit interpretation about gender, and in this way problematically naturalize and universalize biology as destiny<sup>51</sup>. No different than mentioned surgeons they intervene on bodies they analyse. However, the question is can we refer to a given sex or a given gender without first inquiring into how sex and/or gender are given, through what means? And what do we mean by “sex“? Is it natural, anatomical, chromosomal, or hormonal?<sup>52</sup>. Skeletal analysts typically record features indicative of morphological differences and quantifiable dimorphism in their estimations of sex. In order to further identify a range of sexually dimorphic features, they have also suggested the use of a scoring system with a three- or five-point scale that is contingent on the skeletal element. Based on the mentioned diagnostic traits, estimations of sex are assigned to five categories: ambiguous sex, female, probable female, male and probable male. Thus, femaleness and maleness are at opposite ends of a continuum with ambiguity

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<sup>43</sup> Sofaer 20006.

<sup>44</sup> Thomas 2007, 214.

<sup>45</sup> Derrida 1976, 244.

<sup>46</sup> Sofaer 2006, 96.

<sup>47</sup> Alberti 2001, 200-203; Alberti 2005, 117-118; Laqueur 1990, 25.

<sup>48</sup> King 1998, 7.

<sup>49</sup> Geller 2005, 601; Geller 2008, 118.

<sup>50</sup> Butler 2004, 4-6.

<sup>51</sup> Geller 2008, 123.

<sup>52</sup> Butler 1990, 10.

situated in the middle<sup>53</sup>. What is important here is that we are left with limited biological distinctions between males and females in the skeletal record, and not only that, but we are also frequently left without knowledge of the ways bodies are marked as different in a specific cultural context. That is precisely why it is not “objective“ to consider only skeletal difference in making “sex“ and gender difference. The problem is that even considering this in a research, those scholars dealing with prehistoric contexts are left with nothing more than skeletal data, and that is why their results of “sexing“ must be contextualised and not automatically used as one of the keys in understanding bodily differences. This sexing is however quite often binary and rarely outknowledges its heteronormativity, eurocentrism and modernism.

Recently published paper by Porčić dealing with gender on Mokrin necropolis stresses that views of “biological“ sex as yet another construct, are products of “modern theories of radical constructivism“ which in opinion of Porčić is not so radical, as from emic point of view there is only what we see through *kulturbrille*. Agreeing with Porčić, to some extent, I would add that the problem is that archaeologists sometimes forget to take off their own *kulturbrille*. Porčić gives example of “modern transsexual individuals who changed sex using surgical intervention“ to stress that it is hard to speak of sex as a fixed category<sup>54</sup>. Indeed, it is hard to speak of “biological“ sex as a fixed category, but not in this peculiar case Porčić mentioned, as surgical interventions turning one genital sex into another, on the contrary, only stress the fixity of sex/gender binarism and heteronormativity. Crossdressed bodies are sometimes naturalized exactly through surgical interventions and this naturalization is a heteronormative discursive product (like in the intersex case). Sometimes however naturalizations are deliberately dragged. However, such surgical interventions (transsexual) were not known in the Early Bronze Age, thus when “postprocessual gender archaeologists“ (as Porčić quotes them) speak of fixity or not, they refer to different views of embodied difference in the past, different numbers and views of sexes/genders, different materializations and “draggings“ of the same, not of sex change. Gender and queer archaeology dealing with sex/gender in the past is not proposing to leave the analyses of skeletal data (!), rather to outknowledge that number of sexes/genders should not be assumed before the analyses<sup>55</sup>. It is by assuming that we are always from the start working with two sexes/genders that we naturalize sex/gender binarism, heteronormativity and look for the so called “third genders“ in the record. What is missed is that “third“ from the start means hierarchy, and therefore male is “first“, female is “second“, and “third“ usually turns into queer or abnormal, or inverted. That sometimes some sexes are first, and some second is an important notion for every archaeologist whether he is “processual“ or “postprocessual“ (whatever this means nowadays for both) and it is a problem already stated by Simone de Beauvoir in “The Second Sex“ (1949) and she was neither<sup>56</sup>. If we are to be objective in studying gender on Mokrin<sup>57</sup>, we should be aware that modern definitions of “biological“ sex are just one of the ways bodies can be ordered. Thus, applying binarism *a priori*, and afterwards deal with “inconsistencies“ as “gender reversals“ is certainly not objective.

There are many examples of “inconsistencies“ in the Maros cemeteries<sup>58</sup>. For Mokrin it is valuable to mention that four individuals of female “biological“ sex, determined by physical anthropologists, are buried in opposite orientation to the mentioned “normative“<sup>59</sup>. These are individuals in graves no. 88 (Adult), 160 (Adult), 94 (Infans I) and 95 (Infans I) with no associated grave goods, except pottery in graves no. 94 and no. 95. There are also four individuals determined by physical anthropologists as males but buried in opposite orientation to the “normative“<sup>60</sup>. These are individuals in graves no. 10 (Senile), 79 (Senile), 122S (Adult), and 281 (Senile). More will be said about grave no. 10 in the following text as this grave and individual buried in it is the main topic of discussion in this paper.

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<sup>53</sup> Geller 2005, 598.

<sup>54</sup> Porčić 2010, 166.

<sup>55</sup> Schmidt 2002.

<sup>56</sup> de Beauvoir 1989.

<sup>57</sup> Porčić 2010, 166.

<sup>58</sup> O'Shea 1996, 157.

<sup>59</sup> Porčić 2010, 168.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*

Biocentric “normative“ fails to explain its heteronormativity in the sense that for example, at Mokrin and Szöreg bracelets are much more common among individuals determined as females by bioarchaeologists, but are present also in graves of male individuals buried according to the “normative“<sup>61</sup>. The only explanation we are left with is that they are an alternative.

### **Undoing Queerness: Sex/gender and Burial no. 10 on Mokrin necropolis**

Most frequently quoted “non normative“ burial on Mokrin necropolis is grave no. 10. Inconsistency of this burial is a consequence of binary view of sex, and sex/gender dualism as it was previously discussed in this paper. How exactly this individual is undermining the previous interpretations of sex and gender, but also status, on Mokrin necropolis is going to be discussed in the following lines. Grave no. 10 contained the body of a man, age Senium, rested on the right side, orientation south-north. The body was placed in a very large grave pit, the dimensions of which greatly exceed the size of the skeleton: length 205, width 135cm. Above the pit, at a depth of 0,40m, a part of the horn and a leg of a bovine, as well a damaged egg-shaped pot with a lug, were found. The bottom of the pit lay at a depth of 1,35m. The body was positioned with the skull laying on the right cheek and facing toward the east, arms were unevenly bent at the elbows, so that the left hand was in front of the body at the level of the shoulder and the right hand at the face. The legs were bent at the knees with the femurs making an angle of 90° with the body, while the shins were slightly drawn under the femurs. The feet were extended. The skeleton of good preservation had a length of 112 cm<sup>62</sup>. What could be immediately noticed is that osteological sex of this individual is not in accordance to the defined “normative“. Buried individual in grave no. 10 was not only a senile male buried in opposite direction to majority of male individuals on Mokrin necropolis, but also had grave goods usually connected to female individuals, as in majority of cases they are found with osteological females. These are a spiral pendant (made of gold wire, doubled in the middle and at the ends) placed under the skull, another spiral pendant (made of one and a half coils of twofold gold wire) underneath the clavicle and a torque (made of circular copper wire with flat, beaten ends bent in a tubule) around the neck. There were also two arched “Cypriote“ knot-headed pins (“Zyprische Schleifennadeln“) on the chest (!) and two bracelets (made of copper wire) on each of the forearms, all together four. In front of the chest a small biconical amphora was placed, and a big biconical bowl behind the back<sup>63</sup>.

Hair rings were more common among osteologically determined females than males, particularly adults (7 adult females and 3 adult males) on Mokrin necropolis. Two of these males were oriented as females, and the third (grave no. 21) was in posture ascribed to male individuals. Among subadults, hair rings occur in roughly equal numbers between males and females (4 with males, 5 with females). It is important to point that hair rings from grave no. 10 were made of gold and that gold objects are more often found in graves of adult females and children (both male and female)<sup>64</sup>. Copper and bronze neck rings (torques) were equally placed in graves of both male, and female individuals, and only one was found in the grave of the subadult female (grave no. 268) and one in the grave of juvenile male (grave no. 16), and the rest in graves of adults. It is important that the torques were mainly found in the graves which contained finds made of gold<sup>65</sup>. Opposite to the torques, the so-called “Cypriote“ knot-headed pins, were as other pins, in almost all cases, found with adult female individuals. The only exception on Mokrin necropolis is grave no. 10<sup>66</sup>. Copper bracelets also show greater occurrence in female than in male graves<sup>67</sup>. The burial of this elderly male is certainly intriguing, bearing in mind that there is a striking contrast between the poverty of most old people’s burials and the fact that this was one of the most splendidly equipped graves of the whole region<sup>68</sup>. Bösel argued on the basis of her analyses of the whole Mokrin necropolis that reputation in the community was increasing with age<sup>69</sup>.

<sup>61</sup> O’Shea 1996, 199.

<sup>62</sup> Girić 1971, 43.

<sup>63</sup> Girić 1971, 43-44.

<sup>64</sup> Girić 1971, 228-229; O’Shea 1996, 201.

<sup>65</sup> Girić 1971, 215; O’Shea 1996, 198.

<sup>66</sup> Girić 1971, 216; O’Shea 1996, 194.

<sup>67</sup> Girić 1971, 214; O’Shea 1996, 199.

<sup>68</sup> Parker Pearson 1999, 110.

<sup>69</sup> Bösel 2008, 76.

What is to be said about sex/gender of the individual in grave no. 10? There are so far several offered interpretations based on previously discussed biocentric heteronormative binary view of sex and gender. O'Shea is suggesting that "biological" males with metal pins were treated consistently as females in both dress and burial treatment<sup>70</sup> and that individual in grave no. 10 is buried with "hyperfemale" grave assemblage and didn't receive special treatment, rather that it had assumed specific gender<sup>71</sup>. The question is, why is this individual interpreted as "hyperfemale" and not just as a high status persona? Most probably because heteronormativity implies that when femininity is taken by a male body it has to be exaggerated. The "wealth" of the grave assemblage will be interpreted as an exaggeration of femininity as long as we stick to heteronormative assumptions about sex/gender. If on the contrary we allow a male body to be as feminine as a female body we would probably not label it as "hyperfemale", but rather focus on the assemblage and context of dress ornaments on the body. Michael Parker Pearson proposes that this individual probably had special position in Early Bronze Age society because of appearance, and that it probably provoked certain fear and respect<sup>72</sup>. As it was discussed earlier this interpretation is a consequence of heteronormative queering. Did Parker Pearson refer to fear and respect because of grave assemblage or because of this individual was not in accordance to "normativity" on the necropolis? Would he assign "fear of" to an equally equipped burial if it belonged to an individual buried according to the "normative"? Porčić didn't deal explicitly with grave no. 10, rather he tried to analyse all burials which are not "normative". He explored possible connections between physical activities and burial treatment in order to see if "biological" males and females buried opposite to the "normative" also engaged into activities opposite to their osteological sex. His hypothesis was that these individuals maybe achieved their gender identity by working like the desired gender, more precisely, males buried as females worked like females buried as females, and opposite. In his analyses of burial treatment, osteological sex and skeletal markers of occupational stress of these non-normatively buried individuals, he concluded that his initial hypothesis is true only for one individual<sup>73</sup>. He also concluded that older male individuals tend to be "misoriented", or to assume opposite sex/gender, which is not the same with female individuals, as some of them belong to group of younger individuals<sup>74</sup>. This very interesting and valuable study however defines individuals which are not buried according to the archaeologically defined "normative" as individuals of "inverted" gender. Exactly here it fails to question the assumptions, results and terminology as Porčić doesn't explain what exactly does he mean by "inverted". Inverted here is something not according to the norm, which is, as it was said earlier, a modern heteronormatively defined norm, visible archaeologically only if we assume sex/gender binarism. Therefore "inverted" is "queer" and "nonnormative". Porčić made a valuable point that male individuals engaged into harder work than female, but fails to use this argument in discussing activities of older individuals. Stress markers tend to change and people are not working hard throughout of their lives. Sex/gender identity is also not fixed; it can change during the life course. Thus, it is valuable to develop Porčić's argument further as sex/gender doesn't always mean certain activities, rather certain activities are a base for certain genders, and not biological/genital sex<sup>75</sup>.

Paul Treherne argued for specific body treatment of warriors in Bronze Age and that caring for the body was as relevant as any other activity in forming self-identity of warriors<sup>76</sup>. Can this body care be traced in other social groups? As Yannis Hamilakis wrote, we can not neglect corporeality and conditions of human embodiment<sup>77</sup> as the body can not be reduced only to a metaphor, to a representation. When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex (where sex is fixed), gender itself becomes a free-floating signifier, with the consequence that *man* and *masculine* might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and *woman* and *feminine* a male body as easily as a female one<sup>78</sup>.

<sup>70</sup> O'Shea 1996, 194.

<sup>71</sup> O'Shea 1996, 298.

<sup>72</sup> Parker Pearson 1999, 110.

<sup>73</sup> Porčić 2010, 176.

<sup>74</sup> Porčić 2010, 176-177.

<sup>75</sup> see Hollimon 2000, 2001; Jensen 2007

<sup>76</sup> Treherne 1995.

<sup>77</sup> Hamilakis 2002, 122.

<sup>78</sup> Butler 1990, 10.

We, however, must investigate how these significations affect the materiality of the body from the start. Joanna Sofaer argues that the deliberate attempt to mask sex in the process of dressing and become another may indeed reinforce the fixity of body sex characteristics. She argues that by removing themselves from the category “reproductive male“ or “reproductive female“, individuals do not necessarily leave the category “male“ or “female“ and become another sex as physiologically they may still appear as man or women<sup>79</sup>. However, we should bare in mind that how some women can be (appear) feminine or masculine, and how some men can be (appear) masculine or feminine, even without surgical or hormonal interventions, can indeed surprise us even in our society. Sofaer is rightfully pointing that we should not forget the materiality of the body, but this materiality has to be outknnowledged to be unpredictable and subjected not only to change but also a cultural framework which from the start defines what is masculine or feminine. Genital sex is one thing, and the rest of the body can be an entirely different matter with the use of objects or not<sup>80</sup>.

Objects found in grave no. 10 are mostly found in graves of osteologically female individuals on Mokrin necropolis, and the individual in grave no. 10 was an osteological male oriented as female. How exactly was he viewed as female by other members of the community if corporeality of the body can not be denied? I propose several possible answers, some of them actually questioning the initional question. Masculinity and femininity have their own histories, and our contemporary ideas about male and female bodies must be avoided as a way of interpreting other cultures and past societies. Masculinity myths in our society are concerned with the assertion of toughness, stoicism, courage, rationality, and distinguishing this from “soft“ femininity<sup>81</sup>. If masculinity is simply anything men ever do, then a man can never be buried with feminine grave goods, since men are by definition masculine and so all grave goods buried with men become masculine. However, transgression is in fact possible and not everything men ever do is equally masculine<sup>82</sup>. We have to realize that the male/female binary is a construct of our own social order, and its importation into the past is not without problems. Is then justified to find other critically comparative social orders, other sex/gender systems in order to widen our interpretative capabilities?

Archaeologists may uncover material traces of gender relations that may have no clear modern, historical, or ethnographic counterparts<sup>83</sup>. Unlike gender systems that identify sex/gender on the basis of external genitalia and sexual object identification, Native American gender markers place emphasis on supernatural endowment, preference for types of work, and temperament. The Chumash gender system at the time of missionization included culturally defined categories of women, men, and a “third gender“, *'aqi* (also *'axi*), identified by indigenous and non-indigenous sources as biological males who adopted certain aspects of women’s clothing and work (undertakers). Several ethnographic accounts indicate that the undertakers were “old women“, suggesting that post-menopausal women could also be identified as *'aqi*. Perhaps the *'aqi* gender consisted of liminal culturally defined women (or non-men), in the sense that they were non-reproductive females or biological males without offspring. As biologically non-reproductive individuals, male-bodied “third gender“ persons were also socially recognized as *'aqi*<sup>84</sup>. This Native American example warns us that one gender can leave different traces on the necropolis in the sense that some biologically male and female individuals can be viewed actually as one gender group. Thus, gender is not always cultural reading of a pre-social sex, as some heteronormatively argue for our own society and use this argument to interpret the past. *Hijra* in India include transvestites, emasculated or “incomplete men“, followers of the mother goddess, ritual specialists at marriages and male births, prostitutes, and nonmenstruating or infertile women. The category of *Hijra* incorporates individuals whose genitalia and reproductive functions are in question (at least for those who operate within a Western biomedical frame). These individuals may represent a minority of the larger population, but they are important because they, like intersex individuals, bring our conception of sex into sharp relief. Variability is as applicable to sex as it is to gender. The *Hijra* also provide a valuable lesson about

<sup>79</sup> Sofaer 2006, 95.

<sup>80</sup> Jensen 2009.

<sup>81</sup> Dowson 2006, 92-93.

<sup>82</sup> Jensen 2007, 26.

<sup>83</sup> Perry and Joyce 2001, 64; Thomas 2007, 218.

<sup>84</sup> Hollimon 2000, 181-182.

mutability in terms of conceptual change over time and of biological sex<sup>85</sup>. Males who are part of *Hijra* adopt female dress and are endowed with the divine power of the goddess. Impotent men are said to attribute their condition to a defective sex organ and to interpret their impotence as a call to serve the goddess. They choose new sex and gender identity by removing genitals, and this dangerous operation is done by a *Hijra* midwife. After that, they are treated as women after childbirth and are integrated in a community as brides, wearing the erotic female colour of red. They occupy certain culturally sanctioned ritual roles; they perform at marriages and at the birth of male children. However, they also engage actively in prostitution and when performing in public they flout the conventions of Indian femininity<sup>86</sup>. Thus, being “sacred” cannot feed a *Hijra*. Their position is mostly marginal, and they are part of the complex political situation, as since colonial times Indian law has prohibited male homosexuality, and the only way to be a homosexual man in India is to become a *Hijra*. This involves the process of castration (illegal in modern India), and it is practised with highly dangerous methods. The limited religious acceptance of the survivors comes with a high price<sup>87</sup>. What should be an important part of our approach to the body in archaeology is thus the embodied presence and corporeality of others<sup>88</sup>. *Hijra* example is showing how exactly this reference to other bodies and their behaviour affects our own bodies and behaviours. They are performing their gender, but as Judith Butler wrote, not as “free play nor theatrical self-presentation”<sup>89</sup>, because they are framed in the embodied presence and corporeality of others. Their use of objects indicates their position as an alternative gender as they dress, comb their hair and are adorned as women, but they smoke hookahs or cigarettes, something women are not allowed to do<sup>90</sup>. *'aqi* and *Hijra* sexes/genders are good examples of identity, status, work and prestige (or the lack of) embedded in definitions of sex/gender systems. They are valuable; however they are not to be used as direct analogies for prehistoric communities, rather to broaden our thoughts on different sexes/genders.

Before turning again to the body of an individual buried in grave no. 10 I will also make a point that heteronormativity in interpreting sex/gender on Mokrin affected not only definitions of sex/gender in this society but simultaneously economy, wealth, status, and power relations. I will first consider the question of wealth, as the grave no. 10 on Mokrin necropolis was described by various scholars as one of the richest on the necropolis<sup>91</sup>. Porčić and Stefanović argue that wealth in Mokrin society should be understood as quantity and quality of grave goods. They also emphasize that anthropological implications are not as clear cut – whether differences in quantity of grave goods imply differences in wealth as an economic category. Porčić and Stefanović do correlate status and wealth, but in the process of deducting such a conclusion they often exclude certain finds which were not “statistically significant”<sup>92</sup>. One of clear examples for this is the exclusion of weapons category from correspondence analysis because it occurred only in one female grave. Power is not simply a “reality” of force or the control of resources but is also closely linked to meanings, values and prestige<sup>93</sup> and that is why weapons in female graves even if not engendered can maybe have high value, economic but also symbolic. Porčić and Stefanović concluded that status and wealth (in terms of quantity and diversity of grave goods, but with uncertain economic interpretation) are correlated at Mokrin. “The correlation *is not perfect*, hence, the total number of items needs to be corrected by giving more weight to item categories with apparent *social importance*”<sup>94</sup> (*italic* by Uroš Matić). Exactly this *social importance* is what should be important from the start and we should bare in mind that the distinction between symbolic and social law cannot finally hold as symbolic itself is the sedimentation of social practices<sup>95</sup>. Staša Babić argues that there is no reason to doubt that diverse

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<sup>85</sup> Geller 2008, 124.

<sup>86</sup> Gilchrist 1999, 59-60.

<sup>87</sup> Jensen 2007, 27.

<sup>88</sup> Hamilakis 2002, 122.

<sup>89</sup> Butler 1993, 95.

<sup>90</sup> Díaz-Andreu 2005, 23.

<sup>91</sup> Girić 1971; O’Shea 1996; Parker Pearson 1999.

<sup>92</sup> Porčić and Stefanović 2009, 265-267.

<sup>93</sup> Hodder and Hutson 2003, 230.

<sup>94</sup> Porčić and Stefanović 2009, 267.

<sup>95</sup> Butler 2004, 44.

humankind existed in the past and that inequality may have been perceived, articulated, expressed and contested in a variety of different ways, giving rise to a wide variety of status identities. However, archaeologists should transcend the equation linking social prestige directly to possession<sup>96</sup>. Besides the analyses of wealth and status, Porčić and Stefanović also tested the relation of the general intensity of activities performed by the individuals during their lifetime and the vertical status; however no relation was found<sup>97</sup>. When osteological sex and age are included into the analysis the picture changed. They found that the status and the overall intensity of activity are correlated when sexes are considered separately. The female case would seem to conform to the “life is laborious for the poor“ hypothesis that women of high status worked less, but the situation with male sample is just the opposite – males of higher status as measured by S/W tended to work more<sup>98</sup>. What is not clear is which graves were included in the sample. Presumably those belonging to individuals for which the musculo-skeletal markers (MSMs) of activity were analysed by Stefanović<sup>99</sup>. However, individual buried in grave no. 10 was not included, neither are most of those individuals whose burials are not in accordance to the “normative“. This is strange because if the wealth and status are to be studied as these authors did, then individual in grave no. 10 would be one of the wealthiest if not the wealthiest. Porčić in his later study concluded that sex/gender transgression on Mokrin also meant certain activities (work) related to desired opposite sex/gender<sup>100</sup>. If however we raise the problem of status here<sup>101</sup>, and accept that some women had played quite an important role in this society<sup>102</sup> we can maybe also argue that certain men could achieve higher status in community by transgressing borders of society’s sex/gender<sup>103</sup>. This however is closely linked to how we define sexes/genders on Mokrin.

The objects considered to be valuable are in grave no. 10 at Mokrin found as part of the dress. They were part of what is creating a social persona, what frames an individual in community and different power structures and relations. However, the one who had this objects was not just an arena of display in the sense of blank field filled with symbols and meanings materialised in dress<sup>104</sup>. This individual was active in the process as it enacted the meanings of the dress in the very performance of being certain sex/gender. Here is where I come back to sex/gender of individual buried in grave no. 10 again. The grave no. 10 shows that femininity was not reserved only for biological/osteological females, but how is then this notion of femininity in Early Bronze Age society to be understood?

Practices by which gendering occurs (the embodying of norms), are compulsory practices, forcible productions, but not fully determining ones. The embodying is after all a repeated process<sup>105</sup>. As a social construct gender needs to be continually reconfirmed and elaborated by society, and individuals must maintain an active attitude towards it; they need to demonstrate in their daily lives that they belong to their own specific gender group<sup>106</sup>. Gender performance involves public, repetitive actions of movement, gesture, posture, dress, labour, production, interaction with objects, and the manipulation of space<sup>107</sup>. What happens in death however is an entirely different matter. Burial record only provides a frozen and static picture of the society. If we understand this picture as a representation of predetermined social norms (community of the dead reflecting actual social structures) just maybe we are close to understand certain aspects of past society<sup>108</sup>. However, if this picture is used to bend the norms we should be aware that what it represents is maybe not the reality of embodied lives. Never the less, we can always discuss what culturally could be represented whether or not the representation in question had reality in every

<sup>96</sup> Babić 2005, 76.

<sup>97</sup> Porčić and Stefanović 2009, 268.

<sup>98</sup> Porčić and Stefanović 2009, 269.

<sup>99</sup> Stefanović 2006a.

<sup>100</sup> Porčić 2010.

<sup>101</sup> see Porčić and Stefanović 2009.

<sup>102</sup> Bösel 2008, 105.

<sup>103</sup> see similar arguments in Hollimon 2000, 2001.

<sup>104</sup> Meskell 1998, 141; Meskell 2000, 16–17.

<sup>105</sup> Butler 1993, 231.

<sup>106</sup> Díaz-Andreu 2005, 17.

<sup>107</sup> Butler 1990.

<sup>108</sup> Bösel 2008, 47.



social context. That is why dress ornaments from grave no. 10 at Mokrin are valuable when contextually framed on the body not only as signifiers but as embedded in the very materiality of the body and caring for the same. “Cypriote“ type knot headed pins are especially interesting here as they are found on the chest of the individuals with whom they were buried with. It can be argued that they were a part of some sort of a corset or a brassiere or simply part of the specific dress. The fact that they are in all cases (except in grave no. 10) found on the bodies of osteologically female individuals is showing that individual in grave no. 10 gave much importance in being feminine, or the ones who buried this individual gave much importance in representing this individual as feminine. Corsetry for example creates temporary modification of the figure and, potentially, permanent figure-shaping, and is celebrated in some contemporary body modification circles as a practice for both men and women. It can offer a non-surgical form of feminizing the body by creating an hourglass shape<sup>109</sup>. We cannot argue that individual in grave no. 10 was a castrate or intersex, nor that the “Cypriote“ type knot headed pins were a figure-shaping corset. However, we can argue on the basis of the dress and orientation that the individual in question went through (or the community went through) an effort to represent himself/herself as feminine. How long or how repeatedly was this carried out is the question which can not be answered. Body preparation was certainly part of it in the sense of more accurate representation of gender. “Cypriote“ type knot headed pins were in this case non-surgical way of feminizing the body. It is mentioned several times in this paper that binarism in treating human body is present at Mokrin necropolis (grave goods and orientation, not sex/gender binarism), but this can be described and re-constructed in many ways and what looks like sex/gender binarism maybe isn’t so. The problem is that different sex/gender systems can lead to equifinality in the mortuary record.

This leads us to at least two probable models in which “transgressive sex/gender performance“ occurs in societies where sex/gender acts were structured as dualistic, but this does not mean that sex/gender was dualistic. One model is transgression as nothing more than part of body treatment and performance in becoming other sex/gender. In this case we can argue that power structures tend to exclude this kind of gender transgression as something which is not “free play nor theatrical self-presentation“, but “forbidden play“. This exclusion can be related to prestige in the community (connected or not to wealth or status). Sex/gender transgression can be allowed only to some. I would argue that in this case these individuals would not have been in position to be as wealthy buried as the individual in grave no. 10 at Mokrin, rather they would be given place in the power structures in the process of constructing certain social groups or sexes/genders in which such practices are allowed only under certain conditions. In such a scenario individual from grave no. 10 would have to be a high status persona or someone having prestige only in certain context. The other model is the one in which there are dualistic sex/gender acts but they are not privileged to certain sexes/genders, and this is how the transgressive gender performance would not be sanctioned or discursively framed under ascribed conditions. They would probably not be transgressive at all from this point of view.

Those who “transgressed“ could all be members of one sex/gender in opposite to ones who do not; they could be members of two distinct sexes/genders both “transgressing“ the other two sexes/genders (which we usually call man and women); they could also be members of only two sexes/genders which were not based on genital sex etc. Thus, how we define sex/gender in our own society largely affects our interpretations of the past, and exactly because of often equifinality of sex/gender systems in prehistoric mortuary contexts, we should be highly critical of our interpretations.

O’Shea proposes an interpretation of these non-normatively buried individuals as “abnormal“ because they “occupy particular kinds of social statuses, such as shaman or medical practitioner, that place them on the fringe of the community or in an abnormal position relative to it“<sup>110</sup>. Status is, however, conceptualised as *socially constructed* in constant negotiation and interaction by individuals and groups, taking up *culturally specific* forms dependent upon the particular historical and geographical setting<sup>111</sup>. Bo Jensen already outlined the basic erroneous assumptions concerning this drawing on ethnographic variety of data, and I will only repeat that queerness in gender or sexual terms isn’t a one way ticket to

<sup>109</sup> Pitts 2003, 97.

<sup>110</sup> O’Shea 1996, 140.

<sup>111</sup> Babić 2005, 75.

ritual speciality<sup>112</sup>. Shamanism is a widely exploited concept in this way because the association between shamanic power and gender ambiguity has been documented among societies that cover a wide geographic area; these include the Sami of Fenno-Scandia, Hungarians of Central Europe and the Central Asian Uzbek. Numerous Siberian groups have also been described with regard to these phenomena, including the Khanty-Vakht, Nivkh-Gilyak, “Samoyed“, Koryak, Kamchadal-Itelmen, Chukchi, Evenk-Tungus, and Ob-Ugrian<sup>113</sup>. However not all “gender ambiguous“ individuals have to be shamans just in order for archaeologists to explain them in the frames of heterosexual binary sex/gender system. O’Shea concludes in his exploration of the Maros social life that gender ambiguous individuals “did not occupy some third or fourth or fifth gender category; they rather, and emphatically in some cases, occupied the normative gender...there were only two genders into which individuals could be classified“<sup>114</sup>. If there were only two sexes/genders in this society then even the individuals not buried according to the defined “normative“ must belong to one of these two sexes/genders. The only reason they are considered to be buried not according to the defined “normative“ is because this “normative“ was defined on the basis of modern binary and heteronormative view of sex/gender.

### Conclusion

Dress ornaments are part of what constitutes embodied identity. Grave no. 10 at Mokrin necropolis is an example where they can start a complex discussion shaking the very optimism we held regarding our quest for the meanings of the past. After this discussion what is to be concluded is just a fragment of possible meanings connected to the studied case. Grave no. 10 at Mokrin necropolis is maybe showing that status is negotiable and that sex/gender transgression is one way of gaining, preserving and performing it. This is if we compel to binarism and heteronormativity in concerning sex and gender. I would argue that Mokrin mortuary record is showing how femininity and masculinity are not reserved for certain osteological sexes, neither are certain activities. Thus, sex is in Mokrin communities nothing but gender, as they are both the same construct of a network of embodied relations intersected with status and prestige. Only when we stop assuming the number of sexes/genders we will be able to push our available record to the theoretical and methodological limits of archaeology. This is certainly more progressive for our discipline than writing-in modern embodied identities on the flesh of the past people.

To conclude, if the sex/gender system was based on genital sex, then, all the non “normative“ burials can be interpreted as transgressions which are allowed in this society only in certain conditions and for certain prestigious individuals. Analyses done by Porčić showed that not all non “normative“ burials can be described as wealthy<sup>115</sup>. Thus, if wealth is correlated with status to certain extent, then we can argue that transgression was not dependent of wealth/status. However, if the sex/gender system was not based on genital sex, rather on different aspects of identity (e.g occupation, work, status etc.) then we cannot easily define the number of sexes/genders in this society, but we can argue that, at least on the basis of the record, changing sex/gender would not be labelled and sanctioned as transgression. We can maybe assume that four sexes/gender are evident (“biological“ males, “biological“ females, “biological“ males oriented as “biological“ females, “biological“ females oriented as “biological“ males), but this number fails to address those burials oriented according to the defined “normative“ but with grave goods usually not associated to their sex/gender. The basic problem is equifinality in the record of the necropolis. Possible way to resolve this is to conduct previously done analyses<sup>116</sup> without *a priori* defining number of sexes/genders, rather testing different possible gender systems<sup>117</sup> and paying close attention to dress ornaments and their context.

### Acknowledgements

Uroš Matic is indebted to Dr Nona Palinceş for a kind encouragement and invitation to finish this paper, Dr Julia Koch and Julia Wagner for help with bibliography, and organizers (Dr William Meyer,

<sup>112</sup> Jensen 2007.

<sup>113</sup> Hollimon 2001, 126.

<sup>114</sup> O’Shea 1996, 376.

<sup>115</sup> Porčić 2010.

<sup>116</sup> Bösel 2008; Porčić and Stefanović 2009.

<sup>117</sup> Schmidt 2002.

Dr Margarita Diaz-Andreu and Dr Ericka Engelstad) and visitors of the session “Feminist, masculinist, and queer visions of the past“ on “The 16th Annual Meeting of European Association of Archaeologists, The Hague“ for allowing me to share and discuss my ideas with them. Special acknowledgments go Dr Staša Babić for our discussion on the topic in The Hague and to all my friends discussing with me on the topic of this paper in Strumica (Macedonia) in Spring 2010.

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## ABRÉVIATIONS

- ARMSI – *Academia Română. Memoriile Secțiunii istorice*, București.
- ActaMN – *Acta Musei Napocensis*, Cluj-Napoca.
- AÉ – *Année Épigraphique*, Paris.
- ANRW – *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung*, H. Temporini, W. Haase (eds.), Berlin - New York.
- Archeologia – *Archeologia*, Varșovia.
- Britannia – *A Journal of Roman-British and Kindred Studies*, London.
- BJ – *Bonner Jahrbücher des Rheinischen Landmuseums in Bonn und des Vereins von Altertumsfreunden im Rheinlande*, Bonn.
- CCA – *Cronica cercetărilor arheologice din România* (valable à <http://www.cimec.ro>), București
- CCARB – *Corso di cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina*, Ravenna.
- Chiron – *Chiron. Mitteilungen der Kommission für alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, München.
- CIG – *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*, Berlin.
- CIL – *Corpus Inscriptiorum Latinarum*, Berlin.
- CRAI – *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, Paris.
- Dacia – *Dacia. Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne*, București.
- EphemNap – *Ephemeris Napocensis*, Cluj-Napoca.
- ESA – *Eurasia Septentrionalis Antiqua*, Helsinki.
- FgHist – *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker*, ed. F. Jacoby, Berlin-Leida, 1923.
- HSCPh IDR II – *Inscripțiile Daciei romane, II, Oltenia și Muntenia*, culese, însoțite de comentarii și indice, traduse în românește de G. Florescu și C.C. Petolescu, București, 1977.
- IGBulg – *Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria Repertae*, G. Mihailov (ed.) I, *Inscriptiones orae Ponti Euxini* 2, Sofia, 1970; II, *Inscriptiones inter Danubium et Haemum repertae*, Sofia, 1958; III/2, *Inscriptiones inter Haemum et Rhodopem repertae. A territorio philippopolitano usque ad oram Ponticam*, Sofia, 1964.
- IGLNovae – *Inscriptions grecques et latines de Novae (Mésie Inférieure)*, V. Božilova, J. Kolendo, (eds.), Bordeaux, 1997.
- ILBulg – *Inscriptiones Latinae in Bulgaria Repertae*, B. Gerov (ed.), Sofia, 1989.
- ILS – *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, H. Dessau (ed.), ed. a IV-a, 1974.
- ISM V – *Inscripțiile din Scythia Minor, grecești și latine. V. Capidava-Troesmis-Noviodunum*, reunite, însoțite de comentarii și index, traduse în română de E. Doruțiu-Boilă, București, 1980.
- JDAI – *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, Berlin.
- PAS – *Prähistorische Archäologie Südost europas*, Berlin.
- REB – *Revue des Études Byzantines*, Paris.
- RÉSEE – *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes*, București.
- RMM.MIA – *Revista muzeelor și monumentelor. Monumente istorice și de artă*, București.
- RIB – *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain*, R.G. Collingwood, R.P. Wright (eds.), Oxford, 1965.
- SEG – *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*.
- ZPE – *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, Bonn.







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