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SYMPOSIUM

SOCIAL AND GENDER INEQUALITY IN EARLY IRON AGE GREECE

Social and gender inequalities are usually thought to be reflected in the material culture of Early Iron Age Greece as footprints of kings, aristocrats, warriors, traders, princesses and priestesses. Such simplistic perceptions of Greek societies' structuring not only downplay their complexity but also obscure their uneven evolution over time and space.

This symposium wishes to examine social relations from a perspective that is embedded in social and anthropological theory and is informed about social inequality and reproduction.

The objective is to highlight regional variabilities in social organisation through the integration of macro and micro scale approaches and to explore the interaction among different social systems within Greece and beyond it. We wish thus to examine why and how certain societies operated with different degrees and forms of inequality that may have been manifested through more or less egalitarian or ranked social systems. For this reason studies that discuss regional differentiations in a comparative manner are particularly encouraged.

Our major exercise will be to examine the manifestations of social and gender differentiation in material culture after having realized the pitfalls of objectification of cultural material that used to be practiced in previous decades: how far can dominant hierarchies be recognised in the funeral ritual, the spatial pattern of burial grounds or the quantification of burial goods? Were large buildings with a distinct position in settlements seats of chiefs or places of communal social practice? Were there other forms of institutionalized competition beyond feasting and how far do these reflect social ranking? Did emerging religious institutions operate in a manipulative fashion in the formation of new social relations? How can growing specialisation in production, control over raw materials, and distribution of commodities be archaeologically defined as indicators of social complexity in Greece? How was labour and surplus production manipulated to increase social differentiation? In what way did control over the modes of production affect the social status of women? Finally, was large scale human mobility a means of reshaping social relations?

