Warriors and Other Men

Notions of Masculinity from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age in Scandinavia

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1. Introduction

This book is mainly about men. It is about men's burials, masculine behaviour, and about unmanliness. It aims to be a feminist gendered study of men, questioning and examining male categories, roles, identities and ideals that may have existed and were expressed in the burial custom through the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age in Scandinavia.

In every society, however large or small, people seek acceptance and social standing in their community and will strive to achieve this through appropriate behaviour to the extent they are allowed and in the degree to which they are capable. The definition of those attributes that confer status upon the individual, and the culturally approved manner in which the individual is permitted to pursue such aims, varies from one community to another (Goldschmidt 1989**:** 20). Gender is a significant standard in this process, as one of the most fundamental forms of social categorisation we know. Gender influences almost every aspect of human social life and is one of the axes around which social life is organized and through which we understand our own experience (Kimmel 2000**:** 5). Gender is individual identity and social structure, is performed, lived and experienced and cannot be reduced to any other social category. The cultural meaning of gender is produced, reproduced, or changed through social practice and is constantly renegotiated (Butler 1990; Moore 1994; Sørensen 2000). Gender is elusive, changeable and contextual and has to be investigated and questioned, not assumed. Gender cannot be isolated, but is an aspect of almost every other social phenomenon and thus nearly all sides of human life may be studied with a gendered perspective. To focus on gender in a study of prehistory provides another approach to social mechanisms, power relations and historical changes and gives different knowledge and understanding than studies that do not take gender into consideration.

1.1 Problems, method and material

The primary problem of this study is to explore prehistoric notions of masculinities. I want to challenge the often static and stereotype understanding of men and masculinity presented in archaeological literature. I will examine how male tasks, roles, categories or symbols were expressed through the burial customs and discuss what notions and ideals of masculinity they may reflect and how this might have changed over time. The study will be based on grave material, a type of data material which I consider appropriate for the purpose because funeral rituals are an arena where individual and collective practices meet and because bodily remains may provide information of sex, a biological aspect of gender. My working hypothesis is that gendered roles, categories, and norms, and thus notions of masculinities, changed throughout prehistory and I want to explore the causes and effects of such changes.

More specifically, I will examine and analyse osteologically sexed cremation burials from Eastern Norway and Funen in Denmark dated to the time span from the Late Bronze Age to the end of the Roman Period, that is 1100 BC – 400 AD. I will analyse the Late Bronze Age (LBA), the Pre-Roman Iron Age (PRIA) and the Roman Period (RP) separately and explore any systematic differences between male and female burials and between individuals of different age groups. I will search for what might have been considered exclusively male or female, but also explore differences among males with regard to specific treatment in connection with the funeral rituals.

On this basis, I will discuss what notions of masculinities or unmanliness that may have structured society and men's actions, and influenced the construction of identity. I will employ Raewyn (formerly Robert William or Bob) Connell's (1995) theory of *hegemonic masculinity* and her understanding of the dynamics in masculine practice and how action creates and is created by concepts of ideal masculinity. This study aims to identify expressions of hegemonic masculinity and discuss how such ideals may have influenced on the everyday practice of most men.

Initially, I intended to carry out three equal analyses of osteologically examined cremation burials from respectively LBA Funen, Eastern Norway and the cemetery at Møllegårdsmarken in Funen (see 6.1, 7.1 and 8.1) and equally discuss interpretations of the results separately. However, while the analyses of material from LBA Funen and Eastern Norway provided a long range of interesting results, the analysis of Møllegårdsmarken turned out, on one hand, to be more extensive than expected, but on the other hand, to only partially answer the problems raised. To limit the size of this study, no independent discussions of the analysis results from Møllegårdsmarken are accomplished. Only the results which are comparable to those from the analysis of Eastern Norway, and thus may contribute to the final discussions of masculinities in Scandinavia in the Roman Period, will be presented in the text. The other analyses results still illustrates the complexity of gender as social practice and research subject, and are summarised in chapter 8 with reference to tables in appendix 3 and the database in appendix 6.

1.2 Why men and masculinities?

The feminist critique of archaeology that appeared in the late 1970'ties and 80'ties demonstrated that archaeological research had a male bias and that women and children were generally invisible (Bertelsen et al. 1987; Conkey and Spector 1984). Today, more than 30 years of feminist critique of androcentrism and studies in women in prehistory have indeed made women more visible and brought about some awareness among most archaeologists (at least in Scandinavia) that women existed in prehistoric societies and even contributed to the historical development. However, an unintentional consequence of the pronounced focus on women is that gender has become equal to woman, and feminist studies or gender archaeology are commonly considered as women's studies. Men, on the other hand, are usually not regarded to have a gender (Shanks 2007), neither in studies of prehistory nor in our present society. While prehistoric female roles and statuses have been searched for, examined and discussed, male roles, their positions and gendered norms are still taken for granted or implicitly assumed. Hence, even though women have been put on the agenda, men are still often considered as an omnipresent norm and often applied synonymous with human. In addition, men are often hunters, warriors, farmers, or chiefs, and these figures look the same, regardless of time and place, with the same status, position and identity. Men and masculinity are, in other words, generally presented as stereotype and unchanging, and it is time to question this conception.

Men are a differentiated group with unlike access to power and resources, and men's actions, identities and options in life are structured by their gender just as much as women's. What it means to be a man is culturally dependent and interrelated to social understandings of humanity, society, and identity, and also to technological development, modes of warfare, and religious beliefs. Consequently, to study masculinity is to examine one of the most basic social structures which influences, and is influenced by, nearly all sides of any society.

1.3 Epistemological framework

This study is attempted performed within an epistemological framework called *situated knowledge* which concerns the nature of knowledge production. It is also inspired by the epistemological discussions within *symmetrical archaeology* regarding the process of interpreting material things.

1.3.1 Situated knowledge

The epistemological basis is derived from Donna Haraway's (1991) concept *situated knowledge*. In her article 'Situated Knowledge: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective' she sharply criticises the traditional understanding of objectivity and the belief that knowledge can be universal, especially within modern science and technologies, and calls it '…the god-trick of seeing everything from nowhere…' (Haraway 1991**:** 189). As an alternative, Haraway (1991**:** 186) holds out for a feminist version of objectivity. She stresses the importance of the vision, and claims that any vision is embodied. It is always some*body* who sees and this somebody is located in time and space. We have to acknowledge that any perspective is limited and partial and this partiality must be positioned through critical reflection. The scientific and academic production of knowledge is a cultural production as it in no way can be regarded as being outside of culture and society, and situated knowledge recognises the idea of science as a social construction (Engelstad and Gerrard 2005**:** 3).

Haraway (1997) argues that traditional reflection is not enough, as it mainly makes the researcher see him/herself. She calls for a more critical and pervasive reflexivity and introduces the metaphor *diffraction* which refers to how light is dispersed through a prism (or basically, how all waves encounter an obstacle) into the coloured lights of the rainbow. *Diffraction* gives a multi-faceted light which is intangible and complex and illustrates how we always select our material, perspectives and interpretations from a wide, multiple and changeable range of possibilities (Moser 1998; Rustad 1998). The reality is infinite and by categorising it we force the world into effective objects and simplify and distance ourselves from it (Haraway 1991**:** 185). Science decontextualises the lives of those researched. The knowledge we produce is never the total picture but always a result of specific evidence, the standpoint of the researcher, the choice of perspective and the context of production. Knowledge is not a constant but a process and there are always more stories to tell. Different perspectives give different understandings which are linked through webs of connections and make up a more comprehensive knowledge of connected stories (Engelstad and Gerrard 2005; Haraway 1991; Rustad 1998).

To situate our knowledge we have to critically reflect, not only on our own position and context, but also on the partiality of our perspective and how our choices of perspective or categories limit reality and the knowledge we produce. Situated knowledge also requires that the process of knowledge production is accountable and responsible. Finally situating of knowledge is, however, impossible as the subjects and objects involved in knowledge production is constantly moving (Haraway 1991; Lotherington and Markussen 1999; Rustad 1998; Skogstrand 2005b). Partiality is nothing new for archaeologists dealing with a rather fragmentary data material. Situating our fragmentary partial knowledge may, still, transform archaeological knowledge from a general diffuse partiality, 'seeing something from

somewhere', into specific stories where the perspective, context, and limits of our knowledge become accountable and clear.

To situate our knowledge Haraway (1991**:** 197-199) also demands that we reflect on the meetings between research subject and objects. The traditional subject-object relation within science is asymmetrical and situated knowledge requires rearticulating this relationship (Engelstad and Gerrard 2005**:** 4). Inspired by the works of, among others, Bruno Latour, she argues that we should see the research objects as actors or agents and stresses their dynamic potential. An object is not passive but has an infinity of interconnected stories. Similar thoughts have been advocated within archaeology for the last decade, especially within the so-called *symmetrical archaeology* (e.g. Ingold 2007; Olsen 2003, 2007, 2010; Shanks 2007; Witmore 2007).

1.3.2 Symmetrical archaeology

Symmetrical archaeology is not a new theory or methodology but a response to 'the ignorance of things' remarked upon by numerous researchers, within social sciences as well as in archaeology (e.g. Hodder 1984; Ingold 2007; Latour 2005; Miller 1987; Olsen 2003, 2007, 2010; Serres and Latour 1995; Shanks 2007; Witmore 2007). Bjørnar Olsen (2010**:** 7) argues that material culture is often regarded as passively representing inscribed cultural concepts and ontologically distinct from the human mind. Language, text and discourse are given primacy and even though the phenomenological body has gained importance within social sciences and humanities, the things that the human bodily subject relates to are marginalised and missing.

Several archaeologists (e.g. Ingold 2007; Olsen 2003, 2007, 2010; Shanks 2007; Witmore 2007) have called for a better symmetry between things and their meaning to terminate the hierarchical opposition between materiality and language. Societies are not just cognitive sketches resting in people's minds but physical and real entities solidly built and tied together. 'Things, materials and landscapes possess real qualities affecting and shaping both our perception of them and our cohabitation with them.' (Olsen 2010**:** 4). Material things play an essential role in common life and may even be autonomous realities, independent of individuals (Durkheim 1951**:** 313-314; Olsen 2003**:** 97). Material culture is in the world in a fundamentally different constitutive way from text and language, and makes the very conditions of opportunity for those features we associate with social order and structural durability. Contrary to actions, performances, and speech, things last and have memory-preserving qualities, and places and objects serve as locales of collective remembering which secure continuity. 'Without material spaces, objects, and equipments, the possibilities of repetitious action will be erased.' (Olsen 2010**:** 123). Rather, things should be recognised as having agency, not in the sense of having intentions, but in the sense of inflicting some kind of blow on reality, being constitutive and imperative with their different properties and thus making relations possible (Olsen 2010**:** 156-157). Things act on us in our daily life, spent among objects whose very presence invites us to play a part. The materials of past societies should, therefore, be seen as constituent parts, even explanatory parts, of historical and social processes (Olsen 2010:38).

Symmetrical archaeology draws heavily on Latour's actor-network theory (Latour 1993, 2005; Olsen 2007, 2010; Witmore 2007). Humans and things are not defined by oppositions but by their relations, collaboration, and coexistence, and society is seen as a complex fabric of intimate relations that link and associate people, things, and nature (Olsen 2010**:** 138-139). The past is not regarded as exclusively bygone as prehistoric networks also include relationships with the present. 'Something of the past exists in the material here and now. It is accorded action and as such multiple pasts continue to mediate aspects of people's lives in a multiplicity of ways today.' (Witmore 2007**:** 556). Prehistory isn't some objective reality that will win through into our understanding because of the 'force of evidence'. All objects have a long range of stories and are part of a wide cultural context, not only in the past but also in the present. We will always re-evaluate the significance of the past in the light of the present and retell the past in new ways (Shanks 2007**:** 593).

The archaeological material cannot speak for itself but needs representation, translation and mediation through the work of a scholar. Archaeology is, thus, a representative act, which means it is '…simultaneously inscription, witnessing and speaking for the past, in its absence, in circumstances of evaluation and judgement, connecting past events with contemporary understanding.' (Shanks 2007:592). Consequently, we cannot separate the past from the contemporary location and viewpoint of the archaeologist.

Symmetrical archaeology has some obvious points in common with Haraway's *situated knowledge*. Especially the acknowledgement of the researcher subject and his/her present cultural context as inseparable from the knowledge he/she produces about prehistoric objects and the awareness of the partial nature of knowledge resemble. As already said, Haraway (1991**:** 197-198) promotes the agency of the researched objects. She is, however, not very clear on how objects act as agents and she is not particularly concerned with tangible objects. Olsen (2007, 2010), on the other hand, provides a more specific approach to how things have agency and how this should influence our research. Artefacts are *social facts,* and things, buildings, and physical constructions, in short, material culture, not only expresses but

also possesses and offers real physical qualities which influence human action and the construction of meaning. Accordingly, gender specific artefacts deposited in burials or monumental mounds do not just reflect prehistoric notions of gender. Such physical manifestations also created gendered ideas in the past and shape our interpretations of the gendered past in the present (see also e.g. Hodder 1982b).

Haraway (1991) gives little attention to how, exactly, knowledge should be situated in the actual research process. Situating and reflexivity are thus in danger of becoming elusive concepts without methodological consequences outside the context of theoretical reflection (Lotherington and Markussen 1999**:** 13). Others have argued that researchers must be acutely and critically aware of their working methods and how they are tied to power and networks of meaning, and constantly work to find approaches which promote critical and contextualising visions (Engelstad and Gerrard 2005; Lotherington and Markussen 1999).

To situate the knowledge produced in this study I will critically reflect, which in practice means thoroughly discuss and/or be critical to, those aspects which I consider to have most influence on the knowledge process. I have already briefly debated why I am asking the questions in concern and I will return to questions of perspective throughout the work. I will discuss and define what I mean by central concepts like gender, masculinity, sex, age, burial, and artefact, to clarify their content and how they are applied in specific contexts but also elucidate their limits. The study will be situated within a historical context of archaeology and within the relatively short tradition of gender archaeology. I am going to discuss and define all variables to show the diversity which such categories actually embrace and reflect on what parts of reality the investigated archaeological record may represent and thus on the limits of the knowledge I produce. As a part of making the research accountable and responsible, the numerical basis of every analyses presented in the text is given in separate tables in the appendixes. In addition, all databases are available online.

I will only barely situate myself as a person during the text. I am constantly reflecting on how my background and position may influence on my research. However, Haraway stresses that personal confessions and reflection on your own standpoint do not challenge anyone, and that situating is not about using personal pronouns (Asdal and Brenna 1998**:** 29-30).

1.4 The structure of the book

The book starts out with three chapters of theoretical discussions, where I will account for the historical context of studies in masculinity, and discuss and define central concepts. *Chapter 2* considers the relation between feminist theory and gender archaeology in general and the study of men and masculinity in prehistory in particular. The concept of gender, the relation between sex and gender, the material and experienced body and the body and gender as performative will also be discussed. *Chapter 3* continues the discussions on gender by focusing explicitly on masculinity. I will give a brief outline of the history of men's studies, discuss masculinity as social phenomena and analytical concepts. In particular, the theory of hegemonic masculinity and ideas of complementary masculinities and unmanliness will be considered. The chapter will also include an examination of how men are presented in archaeological literature and what knowledge this research actually provides of prehistoric masculinity. At the end of this chapter, I will give a short account of the rather small body of critical studies of masculinity in archaeology. *Chapter 4* discusses the nature of burial data and the relation between mortuary rituals and social reality. I will consider how gendered structures, categories, notions and beliefs might have been performed, negotiated and reproduced through funeral practice.

In the second half I will present the results of the analyses of cremation burials and consider various interpretations. *Chapter 5* constitutes a prelude to the material analyses in which analytical methods are presented and discussed and all categories and variables in the data analyses defined and described. I will also consider source critical issues related to certain variables. *Chapter 6* deals with cremation burials from Funen dated to LBA. First the analyses results are presented, and then I will suggest some interpretations and discuss what notions of masculinity that may have existed in this area in LBA. *Chapter 7* concerns Eastern Norway and burials from the whole time span under investigation. In the first half of this chapter the analyses results are presented. In the second half, I will discuss the results from different periods and regional variations, suggest male roles and concepts of masculinity and unmanliness. I will also discuss how notions of masculinity changed over time. In *chapter 8* some of the results from the analyses of burials at Møllegårdsmarken in Funen are presented. *Chapter 9* will shortly sum up the results and contributions of the study. I will compare results from different areas and periods, discuss general long term changes in masculinities in general and the warrior role in particular.

2 Feminist Theory and the Conceptualisation of Gender

In this chapter I will start with a brief sketch of the relation between feminist theory and gender archaeology and situate my standpoint in relation to feminist theory and feminist archaeology. Then I will turn to the concept of gender; its relation to sex, age, and bodily experience. At the end I will discuss how performativity can be a suitable concept for studying gender in archaeology.

2.1 'I'm not a feminist, but…' Gender archaeology and feminist theory

From its very beginning in the 1960'ties, feminist theory and gender studies were tightly intertwined with the political feminist movements and the second wave of feminism. During the 90-ties, the third wave of feminism moved the interdisciplinary field of gender studies from focusing on women's lives to embrace nearly everything (for broader historical surveys see e.g. Bolger 2013b; Gilchrist 1999; Sørensen 2000). Recent feminist studies within social sciences and humanities examine, among other things, the reproduction of inequalities, construction of sexual identities, men's violence, and the intersectionality between gender, ethnicity, race, sexuality and global differences (e.g. Berg et al. 2010; Herrera Vivar et al. 2011; Hesse-Biber and Yaiser 2004). Important motivations for feminist studies are still to reveal engendered power structures that marginalise groups of people, and thus initiate knowledge-based societal changes. Feminist science critique and epistemologies are other central issues which continuously question the production of knowledge within most fields of science (see e.g. Grasswick 2011; Haraway 1991; Harding 1986; Keller 1985; Markussen and Lotherington 1999; Moi 2003). Feminism and feminists are by no means homogenous ideas or groups, but multi-vocal, multi-dimensional and even self-contradictory (Engelstad 2004; Lorentzen and Mühleisen 2006; Nestor 2005) and to do science as a feminist will be as diverse and situationally specific as what it means to be a feminist (Wylie 2007**:** 211).

The engendering of archaeology was initially associated with the feminist project of revealing androcentrism and 'finding' women in prehistory (e.g. Bertelsen et al. 1987; Conkey and Spector 1984; Dommasnes and Mandt 1999[1988]; Gero and Conkey 1991; Mandt and Næss 1986). The main focus on women in various contexts still persists but the attitude to feminism has changed. While some archaeologists explicitly define themselves as feminists and their research as feminist archaeology (e.g. Conkey 2003; Engelstad 2004, 2007; Spector 1993; Voss 2000; Wylie 2007), most have employed the more neutral term 'gender archaeology' during the last couple of decades. Margaret Conkey (Conkey 2003**:** 870) states that studies in gender archaeology without the engagement of feminist resources are far more numerous and visible than explicit feminist archaeological studies. Many even avoid using the term 'feminist' and several have argued that gender archaeology should be separated from feminism (e.g. Gilchrist 1999; Moore 1997; Sørensen 2000; Sørensen 2013; see Engelstad 2007 for a thorough discussion). The question is why this turn has taken place and what implications it may have for archaeological gender research.

Toril Moi (2006) argues that in the United States elements of the conservative pro-life and family campaigns against feminism in the 1990s have become part of mainstream American culture. As equal rights for women are generally accepted (actual practice is another debate), feminists are presented as irrational extremists who want to oppress men and the very word feminism has become toxic. These ideas are voiced not only by conservatives, but even by liberals and feminists wanting to remake feminism in their own image. Moi (2006) shows how an array of books promoted various new or reformed kinds of feminism the 1990s, and they all appear to find it necessary to start by attacking feminism in general and the 'radical feminist establishment' in particular (see also Segal 1999). The critiques contain a common use of words like 'many', 'often', 'some' or 'certain' feminists, but few or no names are referred to. The ideological power of such 'subtle little sideswipes' is nevertheless strong, and gains precisely from their vagueness (Moi 2006**:** 1738).

Moi's descriptions correspond by and large with the picture Ericka Engelstad (2004, 2007) and Alison Wylie (2007) draw of gender archaeology. Engelstad (2004, 2007) notes that even prominent gender archaeologists seem to reject a conception of feminism that mainly may be associated with the feminist movement and struggle for equality in the 60'ties and 70'ties (see also Moi 2006). Some assert that a feminist archaeology is at risk of creating a 'whished-for' gendered past (Moore 1997**:** 251). Others argue that feminist epistemology implies a conviction that women hold fundamentally different cognitive abilities from men, and thus *per se* produce different and better knowledge, and hence feminism endangers gender archaeology (see Sørensen 2000**:** 36-37). Engelstad (2007**:** 226) suggests that the motivation for this dissociation is a desire for being 'mainstream'

and a fear of being controversial and political, and thus marginalized. The fear of being political is a paradox, as a main point within the feminist science critique and epistemology is that science can never be objective in the traditional meaning, whatever the subject. We all have a standpoint, a perspective, and a vision, and as discussed in 1.3.1, our knowledge is always partial whether we study prehistoric gender or landscapes (Haraway 1991).

Wylie (2007**:** 210) points out that it is ironic that feminism should be credited with having such a powerful (negative) effect on gender archaeology, given the lack of feminist engagement that characterizes its Anglo-American formation (see also Brumfield 2006; Engelstad 2004; Hanen and Kelley 1992; Hays-Gilpin 2000). In fact, most publications in gender archaeology have few, if any, references to third-wave or other current feminist studies, discussions or concepts (Engelstad 2007**:** 226; Meskell 1999**:** 83-87; Wylie 2007). The lack of recent feminist theory in gender archaeological studies may partly be due to a general scepticism to anything related to feminism. More important, however, is probably the apparent overall fear of theory in archaeology in general (Conkey 2007; Olsen 1997; Wylie 2002). Many have called for more theory and further development of gender archaeology (Conkey 2003; Meskell 1999; Sørensen 2000) but 'Despite the oft-repeated connection to post-processual archaeology, gender archaeology appears more processual than post-processual; particularly due to its emphasis on non-theoretical case studies, most often based on ethnographic analogy, and its lack of theoretical debate of basic concepts.' (Engelstad 2004**:** 42).

In the introduction to a most recent publication (Bolger 2013a), Diane Bolger (2013b) argues that gender archaeology is not so polarised as it sometimes seems, and in general actually theoretically oriented and politically engaged. Bolger (2013b**:** 8) claims that Engelstad (2007) is extremely critical towards third-wave approaches in gender archaeology. However, as I read Engelstad, she criticises the so-called third-wave gender archaeology for not being particularly third-wave due to the absence of references to third-wave feminist theorists in general and the lack of critical reflection that characterises third-wave feminist theory in particular. Beside an apparent need to construct some radical established feminists to oppose, resembling Moi's (2006) description, Bolger (2013b) confusingly illustrates a central problem in some of these debates; the lack of definitions and thus an inconsistent and intermingling use of the concepts feminism, feminist archaeology, feminist framework and feminist theory. The article also provokes some questions; what qualifies gender research within archaeology to be labelled third-wave? Is a reference to Judith Butler or an application of the concept *intersectionality* enough? Are critiques of gender bias and androcentrism something to move beyond and to be ascribed only to second-wave feminist archaeology (cf Bolger 2013b**:** 8-9)? And are second- and third-wave fruitful categorisations of gender archaeology at all, considering the lack of engagement with feminist theory to which these concepts are related? (see also Engelstad 2007**:** 224)

These questions should be examined further but such debates are far beyond the scope of this project. The aim of the current discussion is rather to situate this study within recent debates in gender archaeology concerning feminism and feminist theory.

2.1.1 To be, or not to be a feminist archaeologist

First of all, some clarifications are required; *Feminism* is a political ideology initially countering oppression of women and promoting equal rights and equality between men and women. *Feminist theory* is an extension of feminism into theoretical and philosophical discourses aiming to explore the nature of gender inequality in various contexts. In other words, feminism and feminist theory have the same origin but are not necessarily interchangeable concepts. Still, these terms are often swapped and the labels 'feminist perspective' and 'doing science as a feminist' are applied interchangeably within archaeological discussions concerning feminist theory, establishing an impression that anything concerning feminism or feminist come as an indivisible package.

Wylie (2007**:** 211-212) discusses what 'Doing archaeology as a feminist' actually means and lists four shared commitments for a feminist social science; 1) To address questions that are relevant to women or those oppressed by gendered-structured systems of inequality, 2) to ground the research in the situated experience of women and those marginalised by conventional sex/gender structures, 3) to be accountable and implement egalitarian, collaborative forms of knowledge production that counteract power dynamics and hierarchies within social science, and 4) to recognise that all aspects of research reflect the situated interests of its makers and, therefore, to cultivate a stance of critical reflexivity to contextualise the knowledge production. Wylie does not specify whether all points have to be fulfilled in order to consider archaeological studies as feminist and she concludes with a rather open characterisation of feminist research as keeping questions of gender relevant and open and holding presuppositions and results of inquiry accountable. She defines a *feminist perspective* as a critical, theoretically and empirically informed standpoint on knowledge production (2007**:** 213).

Engelstad (2007) argues that feminist theory and science critique is so 'much more than gender' and not simply a critique of androcentrism or merely a perspective. She maintains that gender archaeology should be founded on feminist critique and theory and that we should strive for a situated feminist archaeology. To concern with gender in archaeology without feminist theory, epistemology

and critique of science is simply a process of add gender and stir, resulting in under-theorised studies which challenge neither the understanding of prehistory nor archaeological research practice (Conkey 2003; Conkey and Gero 1997; Engelstad 2004, 2007; Wylie 2007). I cannot see how gender archaeology can gain anything or even progress by ignoring recent developments within interdisciplinary feminist discussions and gender studies. Feminist theory and epistemology may give an edge to gender archaeology and create research processes that are relevant to archaeology and produce knowledge that is significant to gender studies within other research areas and to the society outside academia.

Having said this, the apparently indivisible package of feminism and feminist theory still disturbs me. This project is largely based on feminist theory, is tentatively carried out within Haraway's (1991) feminist epistemology and has a feminist perspective in the sense of focusing on gender in prehistoric societies, questioning gendered stereotypes in archaeological literature, and aiming at a critical, accountable and reflexive knowledge production. But I am not doing archaeology as a feminist; I am doing archaeology as an archaeologist. The reason for separating feminism from feminist theory is not a fear of being political or controversial, or a desire for being mainstream (cf Engelstad 2007). All archaeological research is subjective and potentially political (Haraway 1991; Shanks 2007), I don't consider feminism or a feminist standpoint to be particularly controversial and, thus, I have no problem with defining the theoretical base for this study as explicitly feminist. In the steadily increasing diversity of archaeological research there is hardly such a thing as a mainstream archaeology (see also Engelstad 2007**:** 229). Why do I still feel a need to separate feminism from gender archaeology?

As argued in chapter 1, personal confessions are not a part of situating knowledge (Asdal and Brenna 1998**:** 29-30). There is, however, one exception which I find highly relevant for situating my standpoint in this debate and which also may challenge others. As a child of a full-time working feminist of the 70'ties, I have been raised with gender neutral toys, with Gro Harlem Brundtland[1] as Prime Minister, and the persuasion that girls can do whatever they want; we have the same rights, abilities, and possibilities as boys. Living and working in the current social democratic Norwegian model of gender equality,[2] despite all its remaining challenges, provides quite another standpoint as a woman, mother and archaeologist than in the 80'ties, or if I were an American, Southern European, or Eastern Asian (see Skogstrand 2009). I perfectly realise that I have come a lot easier to things than the generations of female academics before me but also that we still have a long way to go before full gender equality is achieved in the society as well as within academia. However, in a global perspective, I am holding a position nearly as privileged as it can be, I do not have personal experience as marginalised or oppressed, and I cannot say that I have a view from below (cf e.g. Harding 1986; Harding 1991, 2004; Keller 1985). To me, feminism is overall important in a local and especially global present context. I am not taking my current privileged situation for granted, but to say that I am doing archaeology as a feminist feels like cracking nuts with a sledgehammer. It is too much, and out of place.

An important motivation to feminist science is to initiate knowledge-based changes within our contemporary society. Archaeology can hardly serve such a purpose beyond challenging the sometimes applied legitimation of modern gender stereotypes by references to diffuse conceptions of prehistoric gender roles as natural (especially stone-age stereotypes of man the hunter and female caretakers) with long term understandings of the construction of gender. To debate and promote changes in the present situation for female archaeologists in various countries and work for improvements are crucial feminist tasks. Nonetheless, such discussions are not archaeological research and even though feminist science critique has proved the social and political nature of all science and how knowledge production is influenced by the social context of the researcher subject (e.g. Haraway 1991; Harding 1991, 2004), I find it essential to separate my ambitions in our contemporary society from investigating the questions asked in this project. To 'do archaeology as a feminist' blurs this distinction to me. This is not to say that nobody else should do archaeology as feminists, a critique of those finding such a standpoint fruitful or even a final decision that I will never do. It is, rather, a critical reflection on my current situation and my intention with this project resulting from my own present experience with gender (see Sørensen 2013**:** 409). To do archaeology as an archaeologist, incorporating feminist theory and epistemology is, in my view, a step towards making feminist theory '…substantially transform archaeology.' (Engelstad 2007**:** 231).

2.2 The conceptualisation of gender

As said in chapter 1, gender is a fundamental form of social categorization, and influences nearly every aspect of human social life. Basically, gender is related to how cultures explain, understand and legitimate why male and female bodies are experienced, appear and develop differently through life and how various cultural categories, social norms, notions, and personal identities are related to this (Brumfield 2006**:** 37; Gilchrist 1999**:** 1; Moi 1999**:** 113-114). Human societies all over the world recognize biological differences between women and men, but what they make of those differences is

[1] The first female Prime Minister of Norway, governing in three periods; 1981, 1986–89, 1990–96.
[2] See e.g. http://www.gender.no/Facts_figures/1322 [visited 14.01.2016]

extraordinarily variable (Moore 1994**:** 71). Gender systems may contain several gender categories related to a long range of other conditions like age or sexuality (Gilchrist 1999; Herdt 1994; Meskell 1999) and the biological differences between males and females are only one of many reference points (Sofaer 2006**:** 98). Gender is both individual identity and social structure, it is performed, lived and experienced and it is intertwined with other social structures like race, class, or ethnicity. The cultural conceptions and meaning of gender is constantly produced, renegotiated or changed through social practice and discourse (Butler 1990; Moore 1994).

Gender is an aspect or a quality of things, actions, identities, and meaning and even though the biological differences between males and females are important reference points, gender is much more than just their meaning and social organisation. 'Gender is a verb, not a noun. Gender is always about the production of subjects in relation to other subjects, and in relation to artefacts. Gender is about material-semiotic production of these assemblages that are people.' (Haraway 2004**:** 328, see also Butler 1990, 34). Gender is elusive with so many facets and aspects that it seems impossible to pin down as an unambiguous concept. What gender really *is* depends on what level, context or issue we are focusing on and within which discipline. In other words, gender is not an analytical concept but an all-embracing term including everything that is gender-related, material as well as social, cultural and psychological, and therefore, it is required to discuss and define what aspects of gender that are studied and in what contexts.

In an archaeological approach, the relations between gender and various material manifestations are crucial. As discussed in chapter 1, material spaces, objects, and equipment influence human action and the construction of meaning, and material culture, possess and offer real physical qualities which are prerequisites for repetitious actions (Olsen 2010). Material culture is not just a source for finding gender representations; it is also itself implicated in the construction of gender at different levels (Sørensen 2006**:** 105). Objects are media through which gender can operate and become 'real' (Sørensen 2000**:** 82). Gendered actions may result in and be created by all kinds of material culture which simultaneously represent and affect gender. Through objects, spaces, monuments, and buildings and their associated activities, gender is enacted and becomes an affective dimension of both personal and social life (Sørensen 2006**:** 113).

In addition, remains of the material body and its biological differences, also called sex, may often be identified in the archaeological record, especially in burial contexts. Thus the relation between biological differences and the cultural and social understanding of gender are of major importance to archaeology. I will, therefore, start with a short account of the sex-gender debate and, based on the critiques of this concept pair, I will discuss and define the material aspects of gender and their relation to the construction of gendered meaning.

2.2.1 Sex and gender

The conceptual distinction between sex and gender was originally developed within medical sciences and psychiatry to explain the phenomenon of trans-sexuality (see e.g. Stoller 1968). The separation between sex as naturally given, and gender as socially constructed, defined gender as culturally dependent and thus changeable (Kessler and McKenna 1978). The concept-pair was soon adopted into feminist theory and became a fundamental political as well as an analytical tool. The distinction clearly contradicted the ruling idea of biology-as-destiny and justified women and gender as research objects (Moi 1999; Rubin 1975).

Margaret Conkey and Janet Spector (1984) introduced gender as distinct from sex into archaeology and challenged the general view of gender as a biologically determined identity and a natural phenomenon in prehistory. They questioned established assumptions about sex roles and social behaviour and gave new meaning, reasons and possibilities to women's studies within archaeology. The concept pair was rapidly adopted and gender archaeology established as a term and field of study (see e.g. Du Cros and Smith 1993; Gero and Conkey 1991; Moore and Scott 1997; Willows and Walde 1991). However, the distinction also met criticism, among other things, for creating a problematic dichotomy between the natural sex and the cultural gender (e.g. Gatens 1991; Haraway 1991). From an archaeological point of view, it was argued that sex as a category also is a cultural construct. Hence, we cannot take for granted that any prehistoric society organised all humans into one of two groups; male or female (Nordbladh and Yates 1990; Sørensen 1992). The distinction further creates a problematic paradox when burials are sexed by artefacts, as sex is then deduced from gender, presupposing accordance between them and causing confusion about whether we speak of sex or gender. The question is if it is indeed possible to separate sex from gender in archaeology (Sørensen 1992).

The most significant and influential critique of the distinction of the concepts came with Judith Butler's (1990) deconstruction of the sex-gender dichotomy in *Gender Trouble. The Subversion of Identity*. She attacks the idea that sex is a given pre-discursive entity and argues that 'natural sex' is constructed, produced and established through the gender discourse. Butler shows how gender depends on sex for its definition but at the same time designates the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established. Consequently, it makes no sense to define gender as the cultural interpretation of sex, as sex itself is a gendered category. As a result sex is

absorbed by gender as the distinction turns out to be no distinction at all (Butler 2006[1990]**:** 8-10).

Butler's book caused vast debates, especially concerning the importance of the material and experienced body in the construction of gender. The subject has been a gender theoretical battlefield for the last 20 years and is still far from being exhausted (e.g Blumenfeld and Breen 2005; Braidotti 2002; Butler 1993; Fausto-Sterling 2005; Grosz 1994; Hull 1997; Langås 2008; Moi 1999; Moore 1994). Butler (1990**:** 9) argues that when gender is theorised as distinct from and radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice. Ironically, the absorption of sex by gender has caused gender to become nothing but social constructions, text and discourses. Olsen (2010**:** 57) shows how Butler continues the tradition of modern western thought of giving primacy to text, language and discourse, rather than materiality, which is viewed with suspicion and contempt. Moi (1999**:** 42) argues that post-structuralist feminist theorists fear that recognizing biology will lead to determinism and in their attempts to escape the sexist and suppressive structures in the heterosexual matrix (Butler 1990), they have tried to erase the category 'sex'. However, things and bodies possess qualities beyond human cognition and are not just 'stand-ins' representing the more important 'social', 'political' and 'cultural' (Olsen 2010**:** 3). The materiality of the body influences the construction of gendered meaning (Alberti 2001; see e.g. Beauvoir 1953; Butler 1993; Engelstad 2001; Grosz 1994; Joyce 2005, 2006, 2008; Meskell 1999; Meskell and Joyce 2003; Moi 2002; Moore 1994) and so do the experienced body to which I will return below.

The distinction between sex and gender is rather insufficient to understand gender (Moi 1999). As a biological phenomenon sex it not even a stable or static category but varies throughout life, within and between populations (Fausto-Sterling 2005), and not all societies recognize sex as binary (see e.g. Gilchrist 1999; Joyce 2008; Nordbladh and Yates 1990; Voss 2006). In addition, '…when we are examining the remains of human bodies, we must acknowledge that a large proportion, including all the children and youths, cannot be divided into two categories, and that even if we could do so, differences we see may owe more to other factors than sex/gender' (Joyce 2008**:** 129). Sex is, thus, not a neutral pre-discursive category and Butler (1993**:** 49) stresses that she is not considering the materiality of sex but the sex of materiality. Through this inversion she invokes the sedimented history of sexual hierarchy but also states that sex is only one aspect of the material body.

However, as an analytical concept or category sex is not meant to describe reality but to make realities accessible to investigation (see 1.3.1 and 5.1). It should be possible to acknowledge that the notion of sex as it is understood in osteoarchaeology is a product of a specific contextual and historical perspective without suggesting that observable differences between men and women are some sort of irrelevant mirage (Sofaer 2006**:** 96). In the following analyses I will apply the sex categories male and female as analytical concepts referring to specific skeletal sexual characteristics (this will be further discussed and defined in 5.2.5). They were not necessarily relevant in all prehistoric contexts, they do certainly not represent the diversity of the prehistoric realities, but they are analytical and methodological tools (see 5.1 for further discussion of categories) applied to examine these diversities by initially exploring in which contexts sexual differences were significant or irrelevant and by which means differences and similarities were expressed.

Whether patterns in relation to males or females identified in the following analyses are expressions of gendered categories and meaning and how they may be related to other social structures and identities will be carefully considered and discussed in each case.

In the following analyses, I will use male and female in the meaning of sexual characteristics in the cremated bones, which usually reflect male and female bodies and I will discuss this further in 2.3.1. When applied in the text, male/female generally refers to the biological differences between male/female bodies. Further, I will employ the terms men and women, masculinity and femininity when considering any prehistoric cultural categorizing, meaning or significance associated with the male/female sexual categories in a particular context. This meaning is not separated from sex, but deriving partly from the material and bodily experiences with sex. However, because sex is so fundamental to the modern western understanding of gender (and thus mine) and because sex as a category is a cultural construct, there will always be a borderland in between sex and gendered categories where the distinction is hard to maintain. I will apply the term I find most appropriate in each context but my choices may reflect the ambiguity in the difference between sex and gender.

2.2.2 Age and life course

Along with gender, age constitutes a basic socially organising principle (Melhuus et al. 1992**:** 92). The human body inevitably grows, develops and matures physically and psychologically through life and these changes are culturally negotiated and incorporated into social life. As a process, ageing is both universal and culturally specific, as well as a personal experience. While some cultures distinguish only between immature and mature, others have a long range of formal age statues, indicating that physiological factors are not always of paramount importance (Derevenski 2000**:** 390; Gilchrist 1999**:** 89; Stoodley 2000). Age systems provide 'time strategies' for individual change which

are means to constantly create and legitimate differences between people and, as such, age may be connected to social hierarchies (Derevenski 2000; Gilchrist 1999).

Age and life course are closely related to gender, and gender and age should be regarded as linked processes (Gilchrist 1999**:** 92). The understanding of gender categories are constantly renegotiated and changed throughout life. Men and women often go through dissimilar life courses (Derevenski 1997; Stoodley 2000**:** 469) and may thus be ranked and valued through different variables (Sørensen 2000**:** 141). The transition between age stages might be important moments in the life course and can include birth, puberty, initiation, marriage, parenthood, retirement and death and, as such, be related to physiological ageing and/or social changes (Gilchrist 1999). *Rites de passages* (Gennep 1999 [1908]) in connection with the transition to a new life stage may be a most important arena of cultural gender marking, especially the passage to adulthood, as it often includes instructions in the proper conduct expected of gendered adults in the given society. Initiation rites create personhood and individual gender identity and integrate personal perspectives with a wider political economy and cosmology (Hollimon 2006**:** 437).

In this study, children are left out of the analysis, partly because they cannot be sexed osteologically and partly to limit the size of the study, and notions of childhood will therefore not be considered. In the following analyses, age groups based on physical characteristics in the skeleton are applied as analytical categories (see further discussion and definitions in 5.2.5). To initially divide adults into classes of age obviously establishes certain conditions and restrictions to which age-related patterns it is possible to identify and might transfer modern concepts and notions of age stages to prehistory. Ideally, age categories should be explored in the data and not imposed from outside (Derevenski 2000**:** 401). However, first, age estimations on cremated bones are in most cases rather imprecise and not suited for fine-meshed age studies (Holck 1986; Iregren 1991) and second, as I rely on the osteological analyses of others, I have to depend on their categorisations (Holck 1986; Thrane 2004). Age groups within the analytical categories can thus not be recognised, but general differences between younger and older individuals should be identifiable.

2.3 The body

As discussed above, gender and age are connected with the cultural understanding of material bodily qualities. Bodies are subjects and objects at the same time, and they do not operate in space as things; they inhabit and haunt space (Meskell 1999**:** 43, see also Merleau-Ponty 1994[1945]). Bodies are tangible and their materiality influences on our understanding of our own and of other people's bodies. A widespread tradition within archaeology favours seeing the body as a product of discourse and a scene of display where social meanings are inscribed and power relations negotiated. More recently, the body has been viewed as a phenomenological centre of experience and the material aspects of the body are emphasised (Bulger and Joyce 2013**:** 68, for further discusions see e.g. ; Joyce 2005, 2007, 2008; Meskell 1999; Meskell and Joyce 2003; Rautman 2000; Sofaer 2006; Tarlow et al. 2002; Tilley 1999; Yates 1993) This study is based on analyses of physical remains of bodies and I will now turn to the relation between the body as a physical entity and a centre of experience.

2.3.1 The bioarchaeological body

The human body has a unique status within archaeological practice, and remains of the body are often regarded as different from other archaeological finds. While the living body is a person with identity and agency, the dead body is a physical memory of lived life. Only the remains of certain bodies are recognised in the archaeological record. For some reason they where chosen and treated in particular ways, which occasionally also led to their preservation. Sometimes signs of e.g. hunger, monotonous work, or injuries are detectable on bodily remains and such traces may have been caused by specific culturally lived life courses. Within gender archaeology, bioarchaeological studies of the body has a pivotal role, as osteological estimations of sex offers a possibility to approach gender detached from biases of the gender associations of certain objects (Sofaer 2013**:** 226).

The morphological differences between male and female bodies may be said to constitute a spectrum of diversities (Nordbladh and Yates 1990). But the physical varieties are not evenly distributed along this spectrum, rather they constitute two clusters of similar features, either metrical or qualitative. Even though individuals with certain syndromes, hermaphrodites, or other circumstances causing indeterminate sex exist, they are relatively rare exceptions from the normal male/female body within a population (Sofaer 2006:92; see also Herdt 1994). Benjamin Alberti (2013**:** 96) argues that bodies can be understood as fluid and their boundaries as amorphous or permeable and, therefore, fixed categories of bodies such as male/female are no longer safe grounds for analysis. However, for a boundary to be permeable it has to be defined as a demarcation in the first place, otherwise there is nothing to exceed. A permeable analytical category is not particularly efficient to identify either prehistoric categories or their amorphousness (see further discussions of analytical categories in 5.1). It is not possible to explore the potential fluidity of sex, how bodies may escape the male/female categories or even challenge 'the primacy of genitality to identity' (Alberti 2013**:** 97) without taking sex into account at some level. When Alberti (1997, 2005, 2013) in his studies argues

that the bodies in the figurative art from Late Bronze Age Knossos lack physical sexual attributes and are not divided into a male and female binary division of bodies, he still applies the very same distinction and dualism as a reference to understand the imageries by explaining what they are not.

Even though sex is no neutral pre-discursive or pre-social category (see 2.2.1) this does not eliminate the fact that sex has physical characteristics which can be sensed and experienced, and thus sex is not simply a representation or construct of discourse (see Butler 1990; Foucault 1980-1986). Sex is, nevertheless, always understood and experienced as a social fact and the osteological categories male and female are products of a modern western perception of bodies. Still, because these categories can be identified in the archaeological record it is possible to investigate their social relevance, fluidity or duality in the past. This is not to say that the terms are objective accounts of what sex is, describes the experience of sex, or reveal the variation which our social concepts of sex, male or female suppress (Sørensen 2000**:** 47-48). Rather, they are analytical concepts and methodological tools to explore prehistoric practices and beliefs (see 5.1.1).

2.3.2 The experienced body

The body is not a thing, but both an object and a subject of practices and knowledge, and a permanent condition of lived experience. We experience the world by perception through our body. Experience is never immediate but a result of reflexive processes and thus there are no pre-reflexive or 'objective' bodily experiences available to our consciousness (Merleau-Ponty 1994[1945]). Mary Douglas (1996[1970]) argues that the physical experience of the body always is modified by the social categories through which it is known. There is a continual exchange of meanings between the bodily experience and the perception of the body so that each reinforces the categories of the others. Communication and homologies are established between the bodily physicality, and the social group and life-world or culture. Thus the cultural categories, through which the body is perceived, will correlate closely with the categories in which society is seen insofar as these also draw upon the same culturally processed ideas of the body. The understanding of bodily experiences thus sustains a particular view of society and the perception of comparable experiences will differ between members of different cultures or classes due to contextual categories and values. In other words, bodily experiences are not universal but cultural, social and individual. As a result of this interaction, the body itself is a highly restricted medium of expression, but at the same time a potent source of metaphors for understanding and ordering the social world. Through lived experience it is the most accessible image of a social system (Douglas 1996[1970]; Tilley 1999).

Male and female bodies have different bodily functions and develop differently through life, offering bodily experiences that group most males and most females together through resembling knowledges. Such knowledge may provide basis for social distinctions between those who share certain experiences and those who don't. However, having a male or female body is no assurance of certain experiences. For example, not all females give birth, and other social categories, like class, may prescribe very unlike lives and thus bodily experiences for different females/males. Every society will have their own emphasis on what experiences and what bodily knowledge is considered relevant in the definition of gendered groups.

Marcel Mauss (2006[1935]) notes that each society has its own special habits when it comes to bodily techniques, like the way people walk or dig. Bodily knowledge and techniques are often habitual knowledge independent of intellectual reflection (Merleau-Ponty 1994[1945]**:** 101). '...knowledge is not something just sitting in our heads. It is also acquired through and stored in our bodies.' (Olsen 2010**:** 7). Bodily memories are embedded in our habitual practices, accumulated through shared experiences, and preserved by repetitious practice (Hamilakis 2002**:** 129; Olsen 2010**:** 116). Repetitious practice requires material spaces, objects and equipment, and incorporated bodily practices and techniques of the body are learned, unfolded and performed in active engagement with objects. It is impossible to cycle without a bike, row without a boat and oars, or efficiently swordfight without a sword. Things act on us and are fundamentally involved in practice, and assign or instruct bodily behaviour and techniques. They require certain formalised skills acquired through rehearsal which again provide bodily experiences (Bergson 2004; Olsen 2010). Cultures often prescribe different practices and thus provide different bodily experience for boys and girls through upbringing, rites de passages, various training and task differentiation, reinforcing the construction of gendered categories. Practice may also cross sex categories or be reserved for certain males/females, constructing other groups and fellowships by creating a common basis of references and metaphors through shared bodily knowledge.

Lynn Meskell (1999) stresses the difference between body and embodiment (see also Bulger and Joyce 2013). 'An embodied body represents, and is, a lived experience where the interplay of natural, social, cultural and psychical phenomena is brought to fruition through each individual's resolution of external structures, embodied experience and choice.' (Meskell 1999**:** 36). A body is never simply a human or a social body but always represents several different and irreducible domains such as the biological and social, the individual and collective, or structure and agent. Meskell (1999**:** 37) argues that embodiment is made up of a number of related experiences. First, there is the materiality of

bodies, second, there are the elements of construction, the social setting and constitution of the body depending on cultural context, third, there are the operations of sex/gender upon the body and all the other identity markers of age, sexuality etc. and fourth, there is the individual dimension which is our unique experience of living in and through our own specific bodies. In this way, Meskell intends to overcome the distinction between experiential embodiment and social constructionism; the feelings and passionate conduct of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and the political history and functions of Michel Foucault in their approaches to understand being-in-the-world (Bulger and Joyce 2013). Through embodiment, gender is experienced, practiced, created, expressed and reproduced as a cultural and historical construction, bodily matter, individual or group identity, and social norms, discourse and power.

Thus, in this study, the primary centre of attention is not the body or embodied subjects but how various bodily experiences may have created, reproduced and given meaning to different gendered categories. To connect notions of embodiment and gender with the material world, Butler's (1990, 1993) thesis of gender as *performative* has been embraced by many archaeologists (see Bulger and Joyce 2013**:** 74) and will be employed here.

2.4 Gender as performative

Butler (1990) argues that gender has no objective interior essence but is an effect and a function of social discourse. Gender is an expectation that ends up producing the very phenomenon that it anticipates and has to be repeatedly performed through actions to have meaning; gender is *performative*. Performativity is not a singular act but a reiteration of a norm, or set of norms, which achieves its effects through its naturalisation in the context of a body. Words, acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance in coherence with the surface of the body. Gender is understood as inherent to the body and we expect and idealize a correspondence between the surface of the gendered body and its inner true core. The meaning of gender is produced, negotiated and reproduced through repetitious actions which are performed within the existing structures of the gender system (Butler 1993**:** 12, 2006[1990]**:** xv, 135-141). Butler's ideas bears resemblance to Pierre Bourdieu's (1990) *habitus*, Anthony Gidden's (1984) structuration theory, and to Erving Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical perspective and theories on the individual actor's staging of him/herself in social life. Through specific actions individuals, more or less conscious of what they are doing, stage themselves as the kind of man or woman they are or want to be (Butler 1990; Goffman 1959). Gender is both a structure and a field and while some aspects of gender may be consciously performed and actively staged by society or individual subjects, others are incorporated into daily habitual practice.

Butler (1993) argues that gender performativity cannot be theorized apart from the practices of regulatory sexual regimes. These regimes of discourse/power operate '... to circumscribe and contour the 'materiality' of sex, and that 'materiality' is formed and sustained through and as a materialization of regulatory norms...' (Butler 1993**:** 15). Bodies which materialise within the norm qualify as bodies that matter, reproducing the very same structuring norms. Butler is mainly concerned with our modern western (American) society and names this regime the heterosexual matrix or hegemony. We cannot assume that the idea of heterosexuality was a guiding principle for the understanding of sexual bodies in prehistory. Still, the thesis that the cultural understanding of sex is directive for the construction of gender is highly relevant. As already said, Butler gives primacy to language and discourse rather than materiality (Meskell 1999**:** 38; Olsen 2010**:** 57) something which is obvious when she declares that a return to matter requires a return to matter as *sign* (Butler 1993**:** 49). Nonetheless, her work is useful for archaeology because she focuses on the surface of bodies and on the visible and mutually generative relationship between bodies, material culture, and identities (Alberti 2005**:** 108). Gender is not just social discourse but a material and visible process where gendered identities and sexed bodies are produced through repeated performative gendered actions (see Alberti 2013**:** 95).

Material culture is an important arena to perform as well as negotiate the understanding of gender. Through repetitious actions and associations with material culture, gender is materialised and as such perceived as something constant, tangible and real (Sørensen 2000**:** 82). Objects are made and used within contexts of meaning and material regularities can be viewed as mechanisms for the regulation of gender. They are produced with intentions and shaped according to assumptions about how, when, and who may be using them and in their use they reinforce or alter such expectations (Perry and Joyce 2005**:** 115; Sørensen 2006**:** 114). 'It is the combinations of materiality and practices that lend themselves to the repetitive performance of gender as a difference as well as providing locales for its negotiation.' (Sørensen 2000**:** 206). Objects, clothes, images or monuments constitute material arenas which enable repetitious actions and where gender is actively performed, created, communicated and reproduced through material discourse but also manipulated, negotiated and changed. Changing normative ideals is a slow process but is possible by using the logic of the dominant culture in new ways and in new contexts (Bulger and Joyce 2013**:** 76). However, we should not overstate the regularity in gender performances. The flexibility in gender systems is culturally dependent and people, in the past and today,

are not always or only engaged in tightly regulated gender performances but show large variations in their practices (Perry and Joyce 2005**:** 118). In addition, the possibility for alternative and even *queer* categories and norms should be considered (e.g. Alberti 2013; Voss 2000).

Butler (1993**:** 234) stresses that performativity should not be reduced to performance. While performativity is a reiteration of norms which precede, constrain, and exceed the performer, performance presumes a subject. A performance originates from a person's will, while performativity enables the conditions of a subject and his/her/its will (see also Alberti 2013**:** 99). In this project, I will study the remains of funerary rituals. Such rituals often follow strict rules and are habitual repetitious actions. They may express cosmological beliefs, social structures, and personal interests at the same time, and are both performances and enables conditons for actions. As such, mortuary rituals are performative and may be an arena for the active negotiation of gender within a cosmologically sanctioned frame (see further discussions of burials and rituals in chapter 4).

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I aimed to situate the study within recent discussions of feminism and feminist theory within gender archaeology. I have discussed gender as a social phenomenon and analytical concept and explored the relation between sex and gender and between gender, age and life course. The body was considered as a bioarchaeological category as well as phenomenologically experienced and I argued that both aspects and their relation are useful in an archaeological approach to explore gender in prehistory. I also accounted for the thesis of gender as performative and how gender may be performed and negotiated through material culture.

As discussed in chapter 1, there is no objective past reality to discover (see 1.3.2). Rather, we are trying to understand the past through working upon what is left of it in a creative process of translation and mediation and in this process our own notions and categories are the only feasible points of departure (see e.g. Gadamer 1979; Haraway 1991; Kyvik 2002; Shanks 2007; Zahavi 2003). Butler (1990) shows how fundamental the conceptions of dualistic biological differences between male and female bodies are in our modern western understanding of gender. Accordingly, even though the conceptualisation, categorisations, and notions of gender may have been essentially divergent in prehistory, the only way we can explore what is different is through our own prejudices and understanding, which imply the categories male and female.

Throughout the preceding discussions, the term repetitious practice has been reiterated. Performative gendered actions are repeated practices which create and reflect bodily experience, bodily memory, and habitual memory. When defined groups of males or females gain differing bodily experiences through day-to-day gender-specific tasks or the participation in once-in-a-life-time initiation rites, these experiences establish, create, reproduce, and legitimate gendered categories and their meaning. As such, the meaning of gender and gendered categories are not primarily based on biological features and experiences with differing bodily functions of males and females. Rather, gendered norms and notions constantly structure and produce repeated performative actions which cause differing bodily experiences that provide various habitual memories, gendered identities, and common group metaphors and perspectives of the world. In this way, practice is a dynamic basis for the construction of gendered groups and ideas, and as practice, gender is always negotiable and contextual and always potentially in change.

By exploring prehistoric practices that may have provided differing bodily experiences for males and females, and by investigating how males and females were treated differently in funeral contexts and thereby provided diverse experiences related to certain groups of males or females, we might gain knowledge of how gendered categories and meanings were produced, maintained or negotiated.