

cate, and in some cases, erase their presence in history. The corpus of Mycenaean figurines illustrates this issue, in which the specialised types of kouroutrophic figurines (woman and child), and charioteer figurines (perceived as male) are interpreted. The male figurines are perceived as depictions of everyday life, while the female and child figurines are interpreted as depictions of a “Mother Goddess”. Ancient women are rarely afforded the courtesy of their mortal agency and are instead diminished and obscured. By exploring this topic, it is possible to identify the issues that are inherent in how scholarship perceives the past, and the more modern ideologies and agendas which colour our representation of past cultures. By using a multidisciplinary approach, it is possible to create a more nuanced interpretation of material culture, as well as address more gendered material in a thoughtful and holistic manner. As with the discipline of Art History, where the feminist revolution has been making changes for decades, Archaeology benefits from fresh perspectives, inclusive ideologies, and interdisciplinary frameworks. Using kouroutrophic Mycenaean figurines as a vehicle for feminist critique allows for a discussion of the diachronic history of the material, and the historiography of its study. While keeping the important role of motherhood central to this argument, the acknowledgement of human agency and complex identity beyond a single facet is important to remember. Their agency and identity, to some extent, is retrievable.

## 4 EMPOWERING MOTHERHOOD - CREATION AND PRODUCTION DURING IBERIAN LATE PREHISTORY

**Abstract author(s):** Vale, Ana (University of Porto - CITCEM/FLUP)

**Abstract format:** Oral

Women in Prehistory are defined by their sexuality. The prehistoric goddesses rely on their bodies - the naked body is fertile. The prehistoric goddesses persist in the modern Western imaginary through stereotypes like the femme-fatal, defined by her autonomous but distant sexuality. On the other hand, mothers in Prehistory are represented in archaeological imagery by the abstract qualities of being a mother; in the Christian tradition, inspired by the image of Mary - the body is dressed. This polarisation of the female body, between the sacred and the profane, naturalises the inferiority of female sexualised bodies. Although recent studies have interpreted the display of female sexual attributes in representations (rock and portable art) from late Prehistory as collective identifiers, male representations continue to be understood as integrated into a trajectory of individualisation of power whereas female sexuality is linked to collectiveness, natural characteristics, and the private sphere of human life.

In this presentation, I would like to argue that this perspective is based on an impoverished vision of motherhood. The concept of motherhood creates constraints even for feminists because it remains linked to procreation and reproduction, and to the idea of controlling women's power within patriarchal societies. Motherhood does not define what it is to be a woman, but not revisiting this concept today implies a diminution of the rights of female mothers and a perpetuation of a bias in the past that relegated them to the private sphere. Understanding and studying motherhood as creation and production in Prehistory may contribute to guaranteeing the right and freedom to be a mother as a human project and free women from definitions based on androcentric sexual visions, which in Prehistory validate the definition given to motherhood by the modern Western world as a natural function of every female body.

## 5 “WARRIORS” AND “WEAVERS” CHALLENGING GENDER STEREOTYPES IN ITALY: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE (OSTERIA DELL’OSA AND FOSSA)

**Abstract author(s):** di Giovanni, Andrea (Università La Sapienza di Roma) - d’Ercole, Vincenzo (Università Gabriele d’Annunzio Chieti-Pescara) - Fulminante, Francesca (Hanse-Wissenschaft Kollegen, Bristol and Oxford University and University Roma Tre)

**Abstract format:** Oral

Already in the 1990s, John Robb provided a comprehensive overview of the development of gender symbolism and ideology in Prehistory. During the Neolithic gender representation seems to be much more ambiguous and blurred. With the Copper-Bronze Age and more distinctively with the Iron Age and Archaic Period, a binary ideology seems to emerge, especially from the funerary evidence, between ‘martial warriors’ and ‘beautiful weavers’ (Robb-Harris 2017).

While Robb-Harris’ model partially still holds today, many scholars have challenged this binary conception. The recent paper *Gender or not Gender* by Gaydarska et al. is the most up-to-date discussion on the topic and presents the state of the art (2023). In addition, several studies have showed that the intersectionality between indicators of personhood and identity aspects, such as age, status, class and even ethnicity and gender and sex is much more complex than previously thought.

We present a contextual analysis of the cemetery of Osteria dell’Osa (Latium vetus, 1000-500 BC) and Fossa (Abruzzo, 825 BC-100 AD), which show mostly gendered individuals. However, there is also a significant number of ungendered individuals, burials with both female and male elements and some burials anthropologically determined as female with male objects, and viceversa. In some cases anthropological analyses are ambiguous, or the odd objects could be votive offerings, but the study highlights some complex patterns that deserve further investigation. In future,