

Warriors and Maidens Fair: Discourses of gender and children's roles in prehistoric warfare, conflict & violence

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## **Abstract**

This paper focuses on demonstrating that a particular picture of prehistoric conflict archaeology has been presented within the majority of narratives. The discourses of prehistoric conflict archaeology are examined and the issues of gender and children's roles within prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence are highlighted. Males are often presented as the only active participants within prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence. Females and children are often relegated to passive, inactive roles in the background. These prescribed roles are rarely supported by evidence.

Three case studies and their associated narratives are investigated in detail. Ofnet Cave in Bavaria, Germany; Crow Creek in South Dakota, USA; and Riviere aux Vase in Michigan, USA are deconstructed to extract the raw archaeological data each site provides. The narratives developed using the sites are then compared with the raw data to establish to what extent these narratives are based on evidence and to what extent they are based on assumption and bias.

It is concluded that many archaeological narratives of prehistoric conflict are largely based on assumption and bias rather than on evidence. New methods of excavation, analysis and interpretation are then discussed which will provide a more realistic view of gender and children's roles in prehistoric conflict.

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## **Introduction**

This piece of research will focus on the portrayal of gender and children's roles in archaeological narratives of prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence. The reason that gender and children's roles in prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence have been chosen as the subject of study is twofold.

Firstly, childhood is a subject which is under-studied in archaeology in general, and particularly so where prehistory is concerned. The literature concerning conflict archaeology in general shows a notable absence of research into or discussion of children's roles. There seems to be a general assumption that children were present in the past but did not play an active part or contribute to the community. However, on average, children make up between 40-65% of any population (Baxter, 2005, 16). Therefore, to ignore their possible roles in prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence is to exclude a large proportion of individuals from the archaeological analysis of prehistoric conflict and is potentially very harmful to our understanding of the subject.

Secondly, the literature concerning conflict archaeology seems to demonstrate a distorted social dynamic in terms of gender. Women are often excluded from discussions of warfare, conflict and violence in prehistory or are marginalised and reduced to fulfilling passive, inactive roles such as that of abductee. The focus is on studying men and their roles as active participants in warfare, conflict and violence. These prescribed gender roles are reiterated repeatedly within the literature despite a lack of evidence or in spite of evidence which could suggest alternative roles. Although gender roles in many other areas of prehistoric life are



being re-examined in archaeological narratives, there seems to have been little research conducted examining alternative gender theories in conflict archaeology. There is also an issue in terms of the homogenization of gender roles within conflict archaeology. Very little attention is given to discussing different roles in warfare, conflict and violence for different individuals. It is often assumed that all men were warriors and that all women were passive, inactive participants without considering the high level of variability within human societies where gender roles and activities are concerned.

It is not the aim of this study to provide a comprehensive overview of the entirety of the literature concerning conflict archaeology and gender and child roles within the subject. The scope and time-scale of this research would not allow for that. It is also not intended to provide any kind of extensive reinterpretation of the evidence for prehistoric conflict. Rather, the aim is to highlight pressing issues and problems within the current discourse. It is hoped that highlighting these issues and problems will spark a critical re-evaluation of these well established, often unchallenged narratives.

This paper takes the form of three main chapters and a concluding chapter. Chapter One is a brief overview of the existing conflict archaeology literature which aims to demonstrate that gender and children's roles are being portrayed in a particular way which is not necessarily supported by the evidence available. A selection of archaeological narratives are discussed which demonstrate specific biases and assumptions about gender and children's roles in prehistoric conflict. These examples include discussions of prehistoric conflict in general as well as narratives concerning specific sites and evidence. Chapter One aims to demonstrate that archaeologists often present little or no evidence to support the gender and child roles

which they suggest prehistoric people fulfilled and that these unsupported theories are accepted in academic archaeology with little or no criticism. Chapter One includes a table which provides a concise summary of examples of biases and assumptions made about gender and children's roles in prehistoric conflict archaeology which are not included within the main text. Chapter One also aims to discuss in detail the different categories of bias' and assumptions demonstrated, such as androcentrism and modern, western gender and child stereotypes. These categories are discussed and critiqued within the wider archaeological literature but not with specific reference to conflict archaeology.

The aim of Chapter Two is to address the issues of how and why the biases and assumptions demonstrated in Chapter One have developed within conflict archaeology. The methodologies that archaeologists use to gather and interpret evidence and to construct narratives of prehistoric life will be examined to determine whether or not they are flawed and if they are contributing to the problems concerning the interpretation of gender and children's roles in conflict archaeology. Possible reasons why flawed methodologies may have been developed in archaeology will then be discussed. For example, the domination of men in academic and professional archaeology and the issue of homophobia will be discussed with reference to their impact on conflict archaeology and gender and child roles. Chapter Two will also discuss the study of children in archaeology and the reasons why they may have been under-studied in both a wider archaeological context and in prehistoric conflict archaeology in particular.

Having demonstrated that a particular picture of prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence is being presented in archaeological narratives, and discussed the possible reasons for the

construction of such a picture, Chapter Three will examine three case studies in detail. These case studies are Ofnet cave in Bavaria, Germany; Crow Creek in South Dakota, USA; and Riviere aux Vase in Michigan, USA.

These case studies have been chosen primarily for their relevance to the subject of study. All of the case studies represent sites of possible warfare, conflict and violence in prehistory and all of the sites provided human remains with possible evidence for violent death or violence in the course of life. All of the case studies feature the remains of male, female and subadult individuals. Therefore, the discourses concerning these case studies feature either discussions of male, female and sub adult roles or the notable absence of discussion of particular individual's roles which warrants commentary. These case studies have also been chosen for their accessibility to the author. In terms of the scope and time-scale of this piece of research, any case studies chosen had to be readily available in terms of basic site evidence and archaeologist's interpretations of that evidence in order to provide sufficient material for detailed examination and deconstruction. European evidence for violence in prehistory, although available, is often written in languages other than English which are inaccessible to the author. However, of the literature concerning Ofnet, there was sufficient material published in the English language to enable a detailed study of the site. Crow Creek and Riviere aux Vase, both being located in the USA were also readily available in publications accessible to the author in terms of language. All of the material relating to the chosen case studies was also readily available electronically or locally to the author and as travel time and options were limited, were chosen for this reason also. This is a study of the archaeological discourse surrounding prehistoric conflict archaeology. It is not intended to conduct a comprehensive reinterpretation of any of the case studies. The case studies chosen provided suitable discourse to discuss.

However, there are distinct differences between the sites which are also important for this piece of research. Ofnet cave represents a disputed site of violence; archaeologist's opinions differ over what the evidence represents. Ofnet provides a discourse of differing opinions and might represent the beginnings of a critique of the well-established gender and children's roles demonstrated within this paper. The aim when examining the evidence at Ofnet is to decipher why there is a dispute concerning what the evidence represents. It is also to establish if the evidence supports any of the theories postulated in the discourse.

Crow Creek is an example of a site which is undisputedly that of a massacre. However, despite the unanimity among archaeologists concerning this matter, there are still assumptions being made about the roles of men, women and children at Crow Creek. This study aims to establish whether or not the evidence supports these roles and to challenge them if it does not.

Riviere aux Vase is a site which has a small amount of evidence for violence which has been woven by Wilkinson (1997) into a very detailed and specific narrative of prehistoric violence, which describes very 'traditional' gender roles. Riviere aux Vase offers an opportunity to examine and deconstruct a theory which is more heavily reliant on assumption than the previous case studies. The factual archaeological evidence and the possible theories and narratives it might support will be discussed.

All of the case studies will be deconstructed to enable the examination of the bare, factual, archaeological evidence. Archaeologist's narratives will be examined and compared with the

evidence in order to determine how much of the narrative is based on fact and how much is based on assumption. Using the evidence, alternative theories concerning gender and child roles will be explored.

The concluding chapter will summarise the main points of the previous chapters and offer some suggestions as to how archaeologists can move forward in interpreting prehistoric archaeological evidence for warfare, conflict and violence.

## Chapter One

This chapter will provide a basic (but not comprehensive) overview of some of the evidence of assumptions made in archaeological narratives of warfare, conflict and violence about gender and children's roles. The purpose of this chapter is to lay the foundation for the rest of this paper by demonstrating that a particular picture of prehistoric conflict is being presented within the majority of archaeological narratives and that this picture is rarely supported by evidence. Subsequent chapters will then analyse and challenge the origins of and methodologies used to construct this particular picture.

Many archaeological narratives make assumptions about both gender roles and children's roles in prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence with little or no discussion and presenting little evidence to support such assumptions. Table 1 (page 23) provides a concise summary of some gender assumptions and assumptions about children's roles in relation to prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence. There were numerous examples of assumption and bias discovered during the course of researching this paper, not all of which it would have been possible to discuss at length within the main text due to the limited size of this paper. Also, many of the examples were very similar in the nature of their assumption and it would have been repetitive to discuss them all at length within the main text. Therefore, Table 1 is constructed using examples which it was not necessary to include within the main text due to a similar example already having been included and discussed at length. It is intended to give an idea of the scale of the assumption and bias present within the archaeological literature.

## Examples of Gender and Age Assumptions in Archaeological Narratives

Waddell (1990, 13) describes cemeteries in Yorkshire dating from the Iron Age, which contain the burials of men, women and some children. He argues that, "...some males were evidently warriors, being interred with iron swords and spears". There is an assumption that being buried with weapons automatically means the deceased person wielded the weapons in life. However, Waddell (1990, 13) goes on to describe the graves of two "warriors" excavated at Wetwang in 1984. The two graves contained male individuals with associated weapons and flanked the burial of a female buried with "...chariot, horse-bits, an iron mirror and a few other grave goods, but no weapons". Waddell describes this female as a woman of the "highest status"; however, no mention is made of her having used the chariot in life, or what roles or activities this may have associated her with, despite Waddell's previous assertions that males buried with weapons must have wielded them in life. It seems that males buried with items are deemed to have actively used them in life, but grave goods in female graves are status symbols. A female being buried with a chariot and horse bits could reveal important information about the community she lived in and raises interesting questions concerning both what such chariots may have been used for and which members of the community would have used them. However, these questions are not discussed because the chariot is dismissed as a status symbol due to the individual's biological sex.

This is an example of males being interpreted as active members of the community producing and using material culture, and women being interpreted as inactive,

passive members of the community. Baker (1997, 188) argues that it is often assumed to be fact in archaeology that the material studied was used by men, however, evidence is required in order to prove that women were there and used such material also. Women and children are often considered passive people in archaeological narratives, they are rarely described as actively making or using items, particularly items archaeologists interpret as being associated with violence or warfare. In many archaeological narratives it is deemed normal for adult males to produce and use material culture. Children are often only discussed when miniature items are found (Baxter, 2005, 22). However, it is just as likely that children used the same material culture as adults. Finlay (1997, 254) argues that archaeologists *are* aware that women and children were present in the past but “the tacit assumption is that they were ‘there’ rather than active and dynamic participants in structuring their society”.

Dolukhanov (1999, 75-76) provides an example of similar assumptions whilst interpreting burials from the site of Sungir in Eastern Europe. One of the graves contained the remains of a “senior male” buried with “an unusually long spear made of mammoth tusk”. Another grave contained the remains of two adolescents: one male, one female. This grave contained “similar spears and other prestige items”. Dolukhanov argues that these finds suggest an “advanced stage of social hierarchy in a male-dominated society and the hereditary character of social power”. Firstly, Dolukhanov is using the evidence for weaponry associated with one older male individual to characterise an entire society. It is assumed that the weapons represent power and domination and that, because one male is buried with weaponry, that domination was based solely on biological sex. Secondly, the assumption is made that the adolescent individuals must have inherited their “social power” rather than having



earned it, as Dolukhanov argues that their power is inherited. It could be argued that the young age of the individuals leads Dolukhanov to assume that they cannot have earned any power in their own right as they were not active, contributing members of society. It is assumed that only adults (as defined by modern, western age criteria) can earn and hold social power. Thirdly, the entire society is classed as being male-dominated despite one of the individuals associated with the weaponry and prestige items being female. Dolukhanov simply ignores the evidence which might suggest a female being involved in violence or warfare in order to assert the assumption that only males were actively involved in prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence.

Martin (1997) discusses violence in the La Plata river valley in the American South West. Martin (1997, 65) states that skeletal trauma is absent in children in the La Plata valley. However, she then goes on to discuss a triple grave which contained two adult women and an 11 year old child and argues that the child was slain when the women died (Martin, 1997, 69). This interpretation is based on Martin's theory that the injuries to the women in the La Plata valley are the result of the women being part of an "underclass". Martin automatically associates the child with the women, classing them as one group of people who share the same experiences; despite there being no evidence of trauma to any of the children at the site. The child is also automatically associated with a victim status.

Guilaine & Zammit (2001, 162-164) describe the burial of an adult male from the Rinaldone culture in Italy, dating from 3200-2500 BCE. The male was buried in a tomb and was approximately 30 years of age when he died. His grave goods included a bowl and drinking goblet, a copper-bladed dagger, 15 arrowheads, a battle-axe made

from stone and a metal-bladed axe (Guilaine & Zammit, 2001, 164). Guilaine & Zammit argue that he was possibly also buried with a wooden bow. They state that the bow no longer remains but provide no evidence to support the suggestion that it ever existed, other than the idea that, in their opinion, it would make a complete set of weaponry (Table 1). A young female was also buried in the tomb. She had a broken skull and was placed at the feet of the male. The female's grave goods consisted of a copper awl and three pendants (Guilaine & Zammit, 2001, 164). Guilaine & Zammit argue that this young female has been "sacrificed" in order to accompany her "master" into the afterlife. A further argument is made that this grave is representative of a general "patriarchal ideology" shared by all of the community in this area at this time.

However, (as with the example previously discussed from Dolukhanov) it could be argued that evidence from one grave is not sufficient evidence to make a statement about the ideological beliefs and social structure of an entire prehistoric community. Guilaine & Zammit are making several assumptions about gender in this interpretation, which there is little evidence to support. Firstly, it is assumed that the female has been deliberately killed. Although there is evidence of injury to the skull, it is by no means clear that this was a deliberate killing. Arguing that the female has been sacrificed is relegating the female to a passive role where violence is concerned. She is assumed to have been a victim of violence and her life and activities within the community are assumed to be of lesser importance than that of the male, and of such little importance generally that she can be sacrificed with little or no impact on the remaining community. Therefore, she is assumed to have to follow the more important member of the community into the afterlife. Guilaine & Zammit describe

the female's grave goods as serving either a "domestic role" or being used for "seduction purposes". The grave goods are assumed to represent her main roles and activities in life, that she was confined to the domestic sphere and her main value was her biological ability to bear children. This interpretation reinforces the common assumptions made by archaeologists that women in prehistory were not active participants in the community, that their social importance was low and that they were dispensable.

The assumptions that Guilaine & Zammit make about the Italian Rinaldone grave are remarkably similar to the assumptions that Albrethsen & Brinch-Petersen (1976) make about a triple burial in the Mesolithic Vedbaek cemetery in Denmark. The grave contained two adults (one aged 25-30 years and one aged 35-40 years) and a one-year-old child (Albrethsen & Brinch Petersen, 1976, 14). Neither of the adult skeletons could be accurately sexed based on anthropological data. The younger adult was found to have a bone arrowhead lodged in-between the second and third thoracic vertebrae, which had entered from the front and caused immediate death. The older adult showed no evidence of skeletal injury but there was a small blade-knife placed just below the lower jaw. The child also showed no skeletal evidence of injury.

Albrethsen & Brinch Petersen (1976, 14) argue that the grave goods found associated with the older adult (over 50 tooth beads, three human teeth, six red deer teeth, two wild pig teeth and some animal bones) are "decidedly female" and therefore, it is likely that the older adult was female. Although Albrethsen & Brinch Petersen do not explicitly state why they believe the grave goods to be 'female' in nature, it could be suggested that the beads represent jewellery and this is unconsciously associated with females rather than males. Albrethsen & Brinch Petersen (1976, 22) continue on to

argue, “it is of course natural to regard this grave as a family grave, even though the slain one, who would then be the husband, is the younger of the two adults”. There is an assumption, firstly, that the Mesolithic community burying their dead at Vedbaek cemetery lived in the modern, western nuclear family unit of mother, father and children. Secondly, there is an assumption that they conformed to the modern, western social ‘norm’ of females forming relationships with slightly older males, rather than the other way round. There is no evidence to suggest that the Mesolithic people burying their dead at Vedbaek conformed to either of these modern, western social norms.

However, Albrethsen & Brinch Petersen (1976, 22) use these assumptions to conclude that “the wife and child have had to follow the husband in the grave, and the blade-knife below the woman’s chin might symbolize the weapon with which they were slain”. Albrethsen & Brinch Petersen’s use of language is important to note here. It could be argued that using the terms ‘husband’ and ‘wife’ to describe prehistoric relationships is not appropriate. Both of those terms carry heavy connotations concerning male and female roles in modern, western society which cannot be directly applied to Mesolithic communities. Using such terms also evokes an image of a modern, western nuclear family unit. It is not even clear whether or not the Mesolithic people burying their dead at Vedbaek formed monogamous, male-female partnerships in the same way the majority of modern, western people do. The blade is assumed to have been used as a weapon against the (possibly) female adult, and the child is assumed to have been ‘slain’ alongside her. Like Martin (1997), Albrethsen & Brinch Petersen unconsciously associate the child and adult female and view them as one group or class of people. It is presented as natural for them to have shared the same

fate as passive victims. However, there is no evidence of skeletal injury to the child or any evidence of weapons being associated with the child's skeleton. It is also assumed that the male was more important socially and, therefore, a female and a child, as less important and less active members of the community, would have had to follow him into the grave. Again, no consideration is given to the (possible) female and child's importance and/or contribution to the community or the impact that their deaths may have had on the community. This further reinforces the view that they were inactive, non-contributing members of the community.

Albrethsen & Brinch Petersen made their interpretation of the triple burial at Vedbaek in 1976. Guilaine & Zammit were writing in 2001. Despite there being over 20 years between the two publications, very little has changed in the way that they interpret violence in relation to gender. Similar gender assumptions concerning male, female and child roles, activities and social importance are made in both interpretations.

These common assumptions concerning gender and age in relation to warfare, conflict and violence in prehistory are also found in publications which specifically address women and children's place in the past. Milledge-Nelson (2004, 43) writes from an openly feminist perspective but still makes gender assumptions when discussing women and violence. She argues that "...increased trauma to women may indicate wife battering, implying men's rights over women and a concomitant decrease in status and autonomy...". She adds that other explanations may be possible but does not discuss what these other possibilities may be. There is an assumption that trauma to females must have occurred as a result of male violence and must have gone hand-in-hand with increased male domination and control over women.

Wileman (2005, 129) specifically addresses the archaeology of children's lives and argues that children are frequently the casualties of 'primitive' war as, without children, an enemy's survival is compromised and the killing of children results in the demoralisation of parents with minimum risk to the attacker. However, it could be argued that killing off any particular sector of society in its entirety (i.e. males, females or children) is compromising the enemy's survival as both males and females are required to create children and children are essential to the continuation of a community. Wileman is also making the assumption that children are innocent and powerless by suggesting that attacking them involves minimum risk.

Therefore, assumptions concerning gender and age in relation to warfare, conflict and violence in prehistory are not limited to specific schools of archaeological thought but pervade even those narratives derived from specifically female and child focused research.

There is discussion in the wider archaeological literature concerning problems with assumption and bias in gender archaeology. For example, the issues of gender bias, androcentrism, heteronormative assumption and gender and child stereotypes in archaeology are all discussed within the wider archaeological literature. However, none of these issues are ever discussed in specific relation to prehistoric conflict archaeology. Therefore, these general archaeological issues will now be briefly discussed in relation to their use within the discourse surrounding prehistoric conflict archaeology.

## Gender Bias in Archaeology

Conkey (1997, 58) discusses gender bias in archaeology in general and argues “...gender assertions are made regularly in interpretations. Often these assertions are so implicit that archaeologists don’t really ‘see’ them as specific ideas that need to be confirmed or tested.” As with the examples that have been presented, implicit ideas about gender and children permeate many archaeological narratives and are often not recognised as culturally influenced assumptions which need to be supported with evidence. The gender assumptions being asserted are often so implicit that they manifest themselves in the type of language archaeologists choose to use. The use of terms such as ‘husband’ and ‘wife’ has been previously discussed. The fact that archaeologists choose to use such terms demonstrates their assumption that people in prehistory generally lived in similar family groups as modern, western societies.

Guilaine & Zammit (2001, 27 & 29) use subheadings which present a very specific picture of prehistoric conflict. The subheadings “Ritual Warfare and War Between ‘Great Men’”, and “Prehistoric Man: Neither Brutish nor Docile” automatically exclude women and children from the business of prehistoric violence and present males as the sole perpetrators of violence in prehistory. This is before the reader has embarked on the main body of text and the evidence (if any) is presented to them.

Within the main text, Guilaine & Zammit repeatedly use language which excludes women and children from their analysis, as well as making statements concerning gender roles and violence with no evidence provided to support them (Table 1).

Guilaine & Zammit’s own cultural worldview determines that weapons signify violence and that violence is a masculine concern. Therefore, when males are buried

with weapons in prehistory, it must mean that those males were warriors and that violence and warfare was a defining feature of prehistoric masculinity.

Baker (1997, 188) argues that archaeologists “treat as fact the assumption that the material we find was used by men, we have faith that men were there, while women must be found”. However, gender archaeology has become a subject which is now widely discussed. There have been numerous volumes published which specifically address gender in archaeology (e.g. Ehrenberg 1989, *Women in Prehistory*; Moore & Scott (eds) 1997, *Invisible People and Processes*; Gilchrist 1999, *Gender and Archaeology*; Whitehouse R (eds) 1999, *Gender and Italian Archaeology*; Milledge-Nelson & Rosen-Ayalon 2002, *In Pursuit of Gender: Worldwide Archaeological Approaches*; Sørensen 2000, *Gender Archaeology*; Hays-Gilpin & Whitley 1998, *Reader in Gender Archaeology*; Gero & Conkey 1991, *Engendering Archaeology: Women and Prehistory*; Milledge-Nelson 2004, *Gender in Archaeology: Analysing Power and Prestige*; Hamilton et al 2007, *Archaeology and Women: Ancient and Modern Issues*). However, there is very little literature specifically addressing gender, children and prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence.

### Androcentrism in Archaeology

Conkey & Spector (1998, 13) discuss the issue of androcentrism in archaeology. They define androcentrism as the “imposition of ethnocentric assumptions about the nature, roles and social significance of males and females derived from our own culture on the analysis of other groups.” Many of the examples already discussed demonstrate that modern, western androcentrism often influences archaeological narratives of



warfare, conflict and violence. Conkey & Spector argue that archaeologists often assume that certain gender characteristics are “essential” or “natural” because they seem that way in modern, western society. This modern western androcentric worldview results in archaeological narratives that implicitly suggest a “cultural continuity in gender arrangements from the earliest hominids into the present” (Conkey & Spector, 1998, 13). Thus, many archaeological narratives present the view that “contemporary gender dynamics are built into the species through unspecified evolutionary processes” (Conkey & Spector, 1998, 13). This makes such dynamics and gender roles appear natural and ‘right’ when, in fact, they are the result of culturally influenced assumptions and preconceived notions. Conkey & Spector (1998, 11) argue “archaeology has substantiated a set of culture-specific beliefs about the meaning of masculine and feminine, about the capabilities of men and women, about their power relations, and about their appropriate roles in society.” These culture-specific beliefs are being used in the analysis and interpretation of many examples of prehistoric violence. Cobb (2005, 631) argues that, although there has been a steady development of critique of androcentrism in the gender archaeology literature, this critique has been slow to filter through to interpretations and narratives of prehistoric life.

### A Heteronormative Picture of Prehistoric Society

Cobb (2005, 631) discusses Mesolithic hunter-gatherers of northwest Europe and argues that archaeological interpretations of these people are based around “modern western heteronormative concepts of identity”. Cobb believes that many archaeological accounts of Mesolithic society implicitly envisage a heteronormative

society which is based on modern, western nuclear family units. It could be argued that, when discussing prehistoric communities, many archaeologists take this view. Brothwell (1999) and Milledge-Nelson (2004, 43), for example, both use the term 'wife' in their interpretations. Albrethsen & Brinch Petersen use the term 'husband' in theirs. These are modern, western terms, which carry heavy cultural connotations and are closely associated with the modern western notion of a nuclear family. Using such terms projects a very specific, modern, gendered image in the reader's mind. Brothwell (1999, 25) uses the phrase "raiding for wives" (Table 1) which not only projects the image of a typical modern, western nuclear family unit into the reader's mind but also implicitly suggests that women played a passive role in prehistoric conflict: that of abductee. Milledge-Nelson (2004, 43) uses the term 'wife-battering', which is term used to describe a very specific type of violence, which occurs in specific circumstances in modern, western societies. It could be argued that using this terminology is not appropriate when discussing prehistoric communities as it carries cultural assumptions and connotations, which results in culturally biased narratives of prehistoric life.

### Modern, Western Gender and Child Stereotypes

The modern, western worldview typically presents males as "stronger, more aggressive, dominant, more active, and in general more important than females. Females, in contrast, are presented as weak, passive and dependent" (Conkey & Spector, 1998, 13). Women and children are often viewed as one group or sector of a society by archaeologists, instead of as two separate groups of people each with their own individual identities and experiences. Baker (1997, 183) argues that children

have been defined as feminine in archaeology and are, therefore, rendered invisible in a similar way to women. It is common for women and children to be mentioned only in the context of raiding or massacres. For example, Forgey & Williams (2005) discuss the Nasca trophy head collections and argue that women and children's heads must have been obtained through raiding (Table 1). Women and children are almost always portrayed as innocent victims who do not participate or take an active role in any kind of violence. Keeley (1996, 37), Roksandic (2004, 56), Vencl (1999, 59) and Guilaine & Zammit (2005, 21,22, 24, 72, 73, 159) all make the assumption that women and children were the victims of prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence and not the active participants (Table 1). Little or no evidence is presented to support their assumptions. Baker (1997, 186) argues that there have been very few attempts to actively examine the lives and experiences of women and children in prehistory and yet, many archaeologists assume that it is known that women and children were "inactive, home-based, less inventive, subordinate people". Scott (1997, 6) argues that "agency is male by default"; that men are assumed to be the active members of the community, not women and children. Sometimes women, and particularly children, are overlooked entirely and their roles and activities not discussed at all. Lesick (1997, 36) argues that childhood is a subject which has been seriously understudied in archaeology in general. Although there is now some discussion of children in archaeology as a category of people in their own right (e.g. Crawford 1999, *Children in Anglo-Saxon England*; Crawford & Shepherd (eds) 2007, *Children, Childhood and Society*; Krum, B (ed) 2008, *Babies Reborn: infant-child burials in pre- and protohistory*; Lally & Moore (eds) 2011, *(Re)thinking the little Ancestor: new perspectives on the archaeology of infancy and childhood*; Baxter 2004, *The Archaeology of Childhood: Children, Gender and Material Culture*; Derevenski

2000, *Children and Material Culture*; Moore & Scott 1997, *Invisible People and Processes*); very few of these publications mention children's roles in prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence.

However, it is not only women and children whose roles and activities are stereotyped as a result of modern, western androcentric and heteronormative influences on archaeological narratives. This issue also heavily affects the way males are portrayed in archaeological narratives of violence. Men are often portrayed as the only active participants in warfare, conflict and violence and are nearly always described as the perpetrators of such violence. It is common for males to be described as 'warriors'. In the same way that females and children are relegated to passive, inactive roles, males are automatically assumed to have been the only active participants in warfare, conflict and violence. This assumption limits males to one role in the same way females and children are restricted to one role. Any other roles they may have carried out are ignored. This also presents males as aggressive individuals in prehistory, an assumption which may not have been true of all males even if it were true of some. In the same way that all women and children are grouped together as one and assumed to have shared the same experiences and identities, men are all grouped together with one identity and one shared experience: that of 'warrior'.

This chapter has presented examples of assumptions concerning gender roles and children's roles in prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence. It has been demonstrated that a particular picture is being presented in many archaeological narratives about prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence and the roles that males, females and children played in this aspect of prehistoric life. The issues of gender bias,

androcentrism, heteronormative assumption and gender and child stereotypes and their effect on archaeological narratives of prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence have been discussed. It has been shown that, although gender is now widely discussed in archaeology in general, gender bias and assumptions are still evident in narratives of warfare, conflict and violence. The type of language chosen not only reveals underlying culture-bound assumptions but also contributes to the gender biased view of prehistory being presented. Androcentrism is resulting in a heteronormative view of prehistoric life being presented in many narratives and here, again, the type of language used displays the culturally-influenced notions about gender and children under-pinning many narratives. Women and children are often viewed as one category of people and are usually viewed as passive, non-contributing, non-combatants in warfare, conflict and violence. Men are deemed to be the only members of the community who actively engage in warfare, conflict and violence. Having demonstrated that a particular picture of prehistoric conflict is being presented, the next chapter will focus on establishing *how* this picture has been developed.

Author/Reference	Site/Time Period	Summary of argument/quotation	Evidence presented	Assumption
Keeley (1996, 145)	Prehistory	Argues that women's experience of warfare in prehistory was generally negative; that they received many of the risks but few of the benefits associated with war.	None	Women did not take an active part in warfare (i.e. fight as warriors) but were generally victims (i.e. abductees).
Keeley (1996, 37)	Gebel Sahaba	Describes wounds children received to the head and neck as "execution shots".	None	Children are passive victims of violence.
Roksandic (2004, 56)	Mesolithic cemeteries in the Iron Gates Gorge	Describes a head injury sustained by a child of approximately 9 years of age. Argues that the young age of the individual makes an accidental cause for the injury more likely.	None	It is not normal/right/usual for children to take part in activities which may be dangerous (i.e. warfare/conflict) or to be deliberately injured by another individual.

Forgey & Williams (2005)	Nasca trophy heads (Peru)	Argue that, in order for trophy head collections to have been obtained through warfare and still contain the heads of women and children, those individuals must have been captured during raids.	None	Women and children are passive victims of warfare and do not take an active role as fighters. Only men can be warriors.
Vencl (1999, 59)	Prehistoric cemeteries	Argues that prehistoric cemeteries which contain multiple burials of men, women and children must represent mass violence and not warfare as warfare would not affect those of both sexes and all ages.	None	Women and children would not have been involved in warfare. Only men are involved in warfare.
Lillie (2004, 94)	Prehistory	Describes females of 'child-bearing' age and young, adult males as great losses to a community.	None	Prioritises biological potential to bear children as a woman's most important contribution to her community. Assumes that all warriors/fighters were young, adult males and that their role as warrior was most important to the community.

Brothwell (1999, 25)	Prehistory	“Raiding for wives or trophy heads, or to settle old grievances does not equal war”	None	Women are assumed to be passive victims of warfare. The term ‘wife’ is used; this term is culturally loaded and carries modern western cultural connotations.
Guilaine & Zammit (2001, 21/22)	Prehistory	Re-creates Keeley’s (1996) diagram showing % of men killed and % of total population killed in ‘primitive’ and ‘modern’ warfare.	None	Assumes that only men fought and lost their lives in warfare.
Guilaine & Zammit (2001, 22)	Prehistory	“In most societies, for example, it is the adult males who engage in combat.”	None	Statement which specifically states that men almost exclusively engage in warfare with no supporting evidence presented.



Guilaine & Zammit (2001, 159)	Prehistory	<p>Argue that as hunting became less important in prehistory, weapons grew more symbolically powerful.</p> <p>“The tripartite bow/dagger/axe combination formed the basis and visible expression of the symbolic masculine domain.”</p> <p>“...these instruments provided a means of defining and positively identifying the masculine domain in contrast to the female domain.”</p> <p>“...they also served as emblems, defining the male domain and prerogatives, perhaps even its monopoly, within the framework of hunting, confrontation, and other such energetic endeavors.”</p>	None	<p>Males were the sole creators and wielders of weapons. Weapons were symbolically linked with masculinity.</p> <p>Women or children were not associated with weaponry in any way.</p> <p>Suggests that hunting, fighting and all other “energetic” activities were male dominated.</p> <p>Women and children were passive, non-contributing members of society.</p>
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<p>Guilaine &amp; Zammit (2001, 24, 72, 73,</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>“...man had no hesitation in slaying his fellow man.” (pg 24)          “This was clearly more than just a confrontation between the adult males of two different communities.” (pg 72)          “Certainly, this would have been a bloody attack and not just a case of simple tensions between groups resulting in a few men being killed.” (pg 72)          “...manpower...” (pg. 73)</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>All of these are examples of the use of the word ‘man’, either implicitly or explicitly stating or suggesting that only males engaged actively in warfare and conflict in prehistory.</p>
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**Table 1:** A summary of some of the assumptions made or implied in archaeological narratives concerning gender and child roles in warfare, conflict and violence in prehistory.

## Chapter Two

Having demonstrated in chapter one that assumptions and stereotypes are influencing many archaeological narratives concerning prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence, this chapter will focus on establishing *how* women and children have been excluded from prehistoric conflict archaeology. The methodologies used by archaeologists to gather evidence, analyse and interpret such evidence, and how they contribute to the assumptions and stereotypes presented in chapter one will be discussed. The first section of this chapter will discuss the methods of exclusion used by archaeologists to write women and children out of archaeological narratives of prehistoric conflict or to relegate them to passive, inactive roles. The latter part of the chapter will examine the possible reasons for the development of such methodologies.

### Methods of Exclusion

Scott (1997, 2) identifies three methods by which women have been excluded from archaeological narratives: exclusion, pseudo-inclusion and alienation. Exclusion, Scott argues, is when women are simply not included in the archaeological analysis at all. The male experience is given priority in archaeological narratives and no allowance is made for the existence of women and their different experiences. Scott argues that exclusion is regularly practised in archaeology and that the original method of doing this was to use the term ‘man’ in reference to humans. This method of exclusion is still being used by some archaeologists in relatively modern publications (e.g. Guilaine & Zammit, 2001). Thiele (1992, 27) argues that exclusion is an active and therefore deliberate process in archaeology and that “...women are

structurally excluded from the realm of discourse...” Keeley’s (1996) diagram comparing the percentages of men killed in primitive warfare and modern warfare is an example of exclusion. Only men are included in the analysis, implicitly suggesting that males being exclusively involved in violence is the norm and making no allowance for the activities or experiences of women and children. Guilaine & Zammit (2001) re-create Keeley’s diagram and, therefore, perpetuate the exclusion in a more modern publication.

Pseudo-inclusion is “tokenism; women are included briefly for form’s sake, but are then marginalized or dismissed without forming an integral part of the analysis” (Scott, 1997, 3). For example, including women in an archaeological volume but as a chapter specifically addressing women. “Women are seen as a category rather than gender being seen as an underlying process” (Scott, 1997, 3). Therefore, the norm is deemed to be male with women being seen as a category relating to the male norm rather than as an integral and essential part of prehistoric life. Guilaine & Zammit (2001) and Albrethsen & Brinch Petersen (1976) both discuss the females in their interpretations as sacrificial victims. This is an example of pseudo-inclusion; the women *are* discussed but only in direct relation to the males as their sacrificial victims. Pseudo-inclusion, Scott (1997, 3) argues, is now more widely practiced than exclusion in archaeology. This may be the result of changing attitudes to gender in western society. Archaeologists are now acknowledging that women and children must be included in archaeological narratives and exclusion is no longer a politically correct or academically acceptable option.

Alienation is when women are included in an analysis but only in terms of categories, which are deemed to be of interest to the archaeologist. Therefore, women's experiences are interpreted through male categories as the methodologies and values of the theorists remain androcentric. For example, women may be included in archaeological narratives but only as mothers, wives or prostitutes. Sometimes, women are only included as exchangeable commodities; e.g. the trade of luxury goods and women. Women remain an interesting aside to the fundamental and important activities males engage in.

All of these methods are commonly used with children also, possibly due to the fact that children are often classed as feminine and discussed as part of the interpretation of women. In Albrethsen & Brinch Petersen's interpretation of the triple grave at Vedbaek, the child is automatically classed as a victim along with the (possible) female. However, it could be argued that exclusion is more commonly used than pseudo-inclusion in archaeological narratives of prehistoric violence where children are concerned. Adult male is deemed to be the norm and although adult women are beginning to be recognised in archaeological narratives often no allowance is made for the existence or experience of children. For example, Guilaine & Zammit (2001) do not consider children's roles in warfare and conflict at all.

### Male Domination of Archaeology

One possible reason for the lack of research concerning children and the exclusion of women in prehistoric conflict archaeology is that for many years men dominated the discipline of archaeology. This led to women and children being excluded from

archaeological narratives or their roles being reduced to a minimum (Finlay, 2006, 41). Whilst archaeology was dominated by males, the topics studied were determined by men. These topics were then investigated and analysed from a male perspective for a male audience. So although the topic of warfare, conflict and violence is discussed in prehistoric archaeology, it is deemed to be a masculine topic and women and children are excluded. Since the 1960s there has been a steady rise in archaeologists specifically addressing gender in archaeology and the subject is now widely debated. Although attitudes towards gender have and are changing in western society in general, these changes seem to be taking time to filter through to academic archaeology. Vandkilde (2006a, 65) argues that the majority of scholars involved in conflict archaeology are still male and the study of warfare, conflict and violence in prehistory continues to be dominated by the discussion of male roles and women and children are often either completely excluded or have their roles reduced to an inactive minimum. As the rise of pseudo-inclusion in archaeological narratives demonstrates, modern archaeology *is* recognising the need to include women and children; however, the methods being used to include them are often flawed. Unfortunately, males are still considered warriors and women and children are reduced to being passive victims and non-combatants, even where there is a lack of evidence to prove either or in spite of evidence that suggests otherwise.

### Homophobia in Archaeology

Linked to the domination of the discipline by males is the issue of homophobia in archaeology. Claassen (2000, 173) and Dowson (2000, 162) both argue that archaeology as a discipline is heavily influenced by homophobia. It could be argued

that the domination of archaeology by men has contributed to this level of homophobia within the discipline. Claassen defines homophobia as “the irrational fear of gender expansion”. Dowson argues that this homophobia among archaeologists results in a certain group of archaeologists and their ideas being dominant. This dominant group controls “who can produce the past, the classes of archaeological data that can and cannot be used, the way in which those data are accessed, the kind of data required, the methodologies by which constructions of the past are produced, and the ways in which those constructions are presented in both academic and popular contexts” (Dowson, 2000, 162-163). Consequently, the past is interpreted in a heterosexual manner (Dowson, 2000, 162). Dowson (2000, 164) argues that the modern, western concept of the family is presented as the norm in past societies and this can be seen in some of the examples presented in Chapter One. Archaeologists find living spaces, huts and houses and impose on those dwellings nuclear families. Many archaeologists talk of ‘husbands’ and ‘wives’ (e.g. Brothwell, 1999 & Milledge-Nelson, 2004) without producing or discussing any evidence that “a male and a female, conjoined in some form of ritual matrimony, and their legitimate children lived in those structures” (Dowson, 2000, 162). A western, idealised notion of ‘family’ is presented as being as ancient as humanity itself (Dowson, 2000, 164) and the general presumption in archaeology and western society of heterosexuality as the norm results in such narratives of the past being adopted uncritically and remaining unchallenged (Dowson, 2000, 162). This uncritical acceptance of a heteronormative prehistory results in modern, western gender and child stereotypes being projected into prehistory and heavily influences prehistoric conflict archaeology and the roles men, women and children are deemed to have played.

## Gender as a Research Category in Archaeology

Although the rise in popularity of gender as a research category within archaeology is in many ways beneficial to the discipline, it can also be detrimental. The focus on gender as a category and the fact that modern, western roles in society are often determined or influenced by gender results in archaeologists often viewing biological differences in sex as structuring social roles and positions within past societies (Conkey & Spector, 1998, 13).

It could be argued that too much focus is being placed on gender. Archaeologists often attempt to determine an individual's biological sex as one of the first methods of gathering evidence when human remains are found. Sexing skeletons as biologically 'male' or 'female', or as a sub adult, is standard practice. By dividing individuals into biological sex categories as a primary method of gathering evidence archaeologists are projecting a modern, western social division onto a prehistoric community and placing significance on that division without first establishing exactly how that particular community may have divided their society socially. Biological sex may not have always been the primary basis for identification between people in human history; however, many archaeological discussions do not consider this possibility (Joyce, 2008, 55).

Vandkilde (2006a, 68) argues that archaeologists in the modern, western world have a habit of thinking in rigid, contrasting categories and it is usually assumed that there is one type of fixed female gender which all females share and one type of fixed male gender which all men share. However, the diversity of gender and sexuality in human



societies is now widely discussed in prehistoric archaeology (e.g. Bevan 2001; Diaz-Andreu 2005, 13-42; Fowler, 2004; & Taylor, 1996). Davis-Kimball (2002) posits the idea that there may have been many different types of gender within one community, and that within those gender categories, there may have been many different types of male and female gendered identities. Therefore, within one community and within one archaeological site, there may be represented many different types of females and males, some of whom may have fought in warfare and conflict and some of whom may not. The social appropriateness of an individual taking part in combat in prehistory may not have been based on whether that individual was biologically male or female, as many narratives seem to suggest. Milledge-Nelson (2004, 40) agrees and argues against the homogenizing of males and females within past cultures. She argues that not all men and women do the same things, act the same way or are perceived in the same way by others. Reducing prehistoric communities down to two gender identities and then assigning tasks to one or the other ignores the complexities of human societies and also ignores the complexities of gender identity. Joyce (2008, 85) argues "...men and women lived their lives in positions as constrained or determined by their economic wealth, skill, age and other kinds of identity as by their sex".

Conkey (1997, 62) argues that gender should not become the primary focus of archaeological research. Milledge-Nelson (2004, 39) agrees and argues that a division of labour according to sex and/or gender is a question in archaeology, not a given. Archaeologists cannot assume that tasks, activities and identities focused on or were divided strictly by sex and gender. Archaeologists often assume that gendered tasks and activities in the past were mutually exclusive; that female activities were off-

limits to males and vice versa (Milledge-Nelson, 2004, 65). Therefore, when discussing prehistoric conflict, if males are found to have been buried with weaponry they are assumed to have been warriors, and warfare, conflict and violence are classed as masculine activities. Therefore women and children are automatically excluded.

It must also be considered that people's roles in prehistoric conflict were dependent on the particular definitions their community used for such roles and that such definitions may have varied considerably from modern, western ideas. For example, Wileman (2005, 16) notes that Aztec women giving birth were viewed as brave warriors by their community. The Aztec definition of a warrior differs significantly from the generally accepted modern, western definition of a warrior. Archaeologists should, therefore, accept the Aztec definition of a warrior when discussing Aztec society and not allow their own cultural definitions of roles to affect their interpretation of the past.

### Material Culture and Gender

The initial division according to biological sex that most archaeological investigations carry out then affects how any artefacts associated with human remains are interpreted. Once divided into age and sex categories according to modern, western notions of age groups and biological sex, it is difficult for archaeologists not to subconsciously associate modern, western stereotypes with the community in question and treat any material culture accordingly. Once archaeologists have divided the community into male, female or sub-adult, any artefacts associated with those individuals tend to be directly related back to the individual's biological sex and/or

age, perhaps due to the only solid evidence available about the individual being biological sex and/or age. Joyce (2008, 61) argues that archaeologists should begin by looking at what people *do* rather than what people *are* in order to more accurately understand the material traces left behind by prehistoric people. She argues that archaeologists should avoid such initial categorizations like that of biological sex or “we will always find what such categorizations assume is there” (Joyce, 2008, 113). Whelan (1995) agrees that archaeologists should begin by looking at artefact categories before considering the sex of individuals in order to avoid “the unconscious re-creating of present gender arrangements in the past”. Conkey & Spector (1998, 20) agree that archaeologists tend to bring preconceived notions about what each sex *should* do to their work and that this structures the way in which artefacts are interpreted.

Therefore, archaeologist’s analysis of prehistoric sites can be heavily influenced by prior assumptions or notions about what is ‘normal’ or ‘natural’ for males, females and children and artefacts are then interpreted accordingly. This often results in sweeping conclusions about what activities males, females and children in that particular society carried out, or how their identities were formed. The result is narratives of prehistoric societies based on the division of male, female and child (and what ‘appropriate’ tasks were carried out by each category of people), a division that may not have been made or deemed significant by the prehistoric society in question. Albrethsen & Brinch-Petersen’s (1976) interpretations of the Mesolithic triple grave at Vedbaek, and the material culture associated with it, seem to have been affected by their modern, western, culturally influenced ideas about what activities it was appropriate for males and females to be carrying out. The individual with an

arrowhead lodged in their throat is interpreted as male because it is deemed appropriate for a male to have been involved in violence or warfare. The other adult individual is deemed to be female on the basis that there are artefacts that could be interpreted as jewellery associated with that individual. The presence of a knife associated with this individual must then be explained away because it is not deemed appropriate for a female to have been involved in violence or warfare. In the modern, western perception, women are associated with a passive, victim status where warfare, conflict and violence are concerned and, therefore, the knife is interpreted as a weapon by which the individual was slain as a sacrificial victim in order to accompany the male in death.

These interpretations are made despite the fact that neither adult could be positively sexed based on the anthropological evidence available. Modern, western cultural notions about male and female gender roles and identities heavily influence the mechanisms used here to interpret the individual's biological sex and then make inferences about their activities based on their gender. Another of the graves excavated at Vedbaek by Albrethsen & Brinch Petersen (1976, 8-9) contained the remains of a female aged approximately 18 years and a baby aged between the eighth and ninth month of the foetal stage. The baby was placed on top of a swan's wing and a large, truncated blade was placed across the pelvis. Albrethsen & Brinch Petersen suggest that the blade indicates that the baby was probably a boy. This is an example of modern, western ideas about weaponry being masculine artefacts influencing the interpretation of the biological sex of an individual. There is no evidence that the Mesolithic community burying their dead at Vedbaek placed any gendered significance on blades or weapons.

## Children and Archaeology

As well as negatively affecting the interpretation of gender in warfare, conflict and violence, it could be argued that the explicit focus on gender now common in many archaeological studies may be a contributing factor to the lack of research concerning children in prehistory. As has been previously discussed, the focus in many archaeological discussions of prehistory is often on dividing communities by sex. It is possible, therefore, that children are often ignored because they are difficult to sex based on skeletal evidence and consequently difficult to assign to a sex category. The heavy focus on gender and biological sex in archaeology and the significance placed on assigning tasks to either males or females leads to children being excluded, as they often cannot be placed in either category. Instead of functioning, contributing members of prehistoric societies with a gendered identity, children are classed as 'subadults' and their roles are often not considered at all, particularly where conflict, violence and warfare are concerned.

However, it is not just the focus on gender in many archaeological studies which leads to the exclusion of children from narratives of warfare, conflict and violence in prehistory. Modern, western culturally influenced assumptions and ideas concerning children in general also affects the lack of attention they receive. Derevenski (2000, 7) argues that archaeologists often implicitly regard children as 'people who play rather than contribute socially or economically to society'. Kamp (2001, 3) agrees and states that children are generally thought of in modern, western society as dependent, and that they must be controlled and cared for by adults. If children are regarded this way

by archaeologists then they are not actively studied because they are not deemed to be important, contributing members of society.

However, the modern, western idea of childhood is a cultural construct (Kamp, 2001, 3). It was only in the late 1800s in Europe and the USA that the modern concept of a childhood, which focused on learning and play rather than work and significant economic contribution, began to be adopted by the middle-classes (Kamp, 2001, 15). As late as 1910, the US census reported nearly 2 million child workers between the ages of 10 and 15 and these official figures did not include workers younger than 10 or those unpaid children assisting parents at home, on farms or in businesses (Kamp, 2001, 15). Kamp (2001, 3) argues that the idea of a “universal period of childhood, grounded in biological and psychological reality, pervades...western scholarship”. It is further argued that “like gender, age categories and roles are culturally defined and must be investigated rather than assumed” (Kamp, 2001, 4). Childhood is a modern, cultural construct that has a relationship with biology but is not determined by it (Kamp, 2001, 3).

However, in modern, western society childhood (much like gender) is generally thought of as biologically defined and therefore universal and it is often directly applied to past societies (Kamp, 2001, 3). Kamp (2001, 3) argues that “cross-culturally, there is considerable variability in definitions of childhood” and that in many preliterate societies biological age is not considered significant. Instead, “skills, capacities, personality and other individual attributes” are considered important. In modern, western society children are not generally trained in work skills or expected to perform such tasks, however, this does not mean that children are incapable of

assuming responsibility or performing complex tasks (Kamp, 2001, 18). In reality, children's contribution to the work force in many cultures is significant (Kamp, 2001, 15). Therefore, the concept of a childhood, which involves only learning and play, is relatively modern by archaeological standards and cannot be readily applied to prehistoric societies. There is, therefore, every possibility that children were capable of and may have been involved actively in prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence.

Children in modern, western societies are generally not expected to take part in any kind of warfare or serious conflict where they may come to real physical or emotional harm. Deliberate violence towards children is deemed to be morally wrong by the majority of modern, western society. Archaeologists from western societies may unconsciously disassociate children and violence and, therefore, not consider their presence or actions when discussing evidence for violence in prehistory.

Alternatively, as children in modern, western society are viewed as inactive, non-contributing members of society, they may be discussed in archaeological narratives of prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence but only as passive victims of violence. As has been previously discussed, the automatic association of children with women has also contributed to their exclusion from prehistoric conflict archaeology because women have been viewed as passive non-combatants.

The issue of children being involved in warfare and violence in prehistory is also a potentially contentious issue in modern, western society. Behaviours found to have taken place in prehistoric communities are often marketed as 'natural' and 'right'; as ancient as humanity itself, to the public. Kamp (2001, 26) notes that children as young as 10 years and younger have been involved as active participants in recent wars.

Using children in war is generally condemned in western society. However, if children are found to have been actively involved in prehistoric warfare and violence, the modern, western view that a child being involved in any kind of violence is morally wrong may be called into question. Children's roles in modern conflicts may also then be called into question. Children and violence may be an issue archaeologists are (consciously or unconsciously) avoiding due to its potential influence on contentious and sensitive modern issues.

In conclusion, this chapter has discussed how and why women and children have been excluded from archaeological narratives of warfare, conflict and violence in prehistory. Scott identifies three methodologies whereby women are excluded from archaeological narratives in general. All of these methods are used to exclude both women and children from archaeological narratives of prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence. Basic exclusion was the original, commonly used method of exclusion of women. However, whilst this method is still widely used in relation to children, pseudo-inclusion is now more commonly used in relation to women. This may reflect changing attitudes towards gender in western society generally. The reasons why these methodologies of exclusion have been developed in archaeology are less certain. However, possible reasons include the male domination of archaeology resulting in research topics being determined by males and, subsequently, the evidence being analysed and interpreted by males for a male audience. Homophobia in archaeology results in a heteronormative view of prehistoric society which projects modern, western gender and child stereotypes onto prehistoric societies. Therefore, women and children are seen as passive, inactive members of society who were not active participants in warfare, conflict or violence. The focus on gender as a category in its



own right in archaeology in more recent years has resulted in archaeologists viewing gender as a key, defining, biological social divider. As males are deemed the active, contributing members of society in general they are seen as thus in warfare, whereas women and children are not. Although there is much literature concerning alternative gender theories in prehistoric archaeology, many narratives concerning warfare, conflict and violence do not seem to consider it. The heavy focus on gender as a key factor in the division of tasks, labour and roles in prehistoric society results in children being excluded from archaeological narratives due to the difficulties in correctly identifying their biological sex. Also, the modern, western view of children as ‘people who play’ and are incapable of taking on complex tasks and the modern concept of childhood being a period focusing on play rather than active contribution to society results in children being overlooked in archaeological narratives of warfare, conflict and violence. There is also a possibility that discussing children being involved in warfare, conflict and violence in prehistory may stir up contentious modern issues concerning children’s roles in modern conflicts around the world.

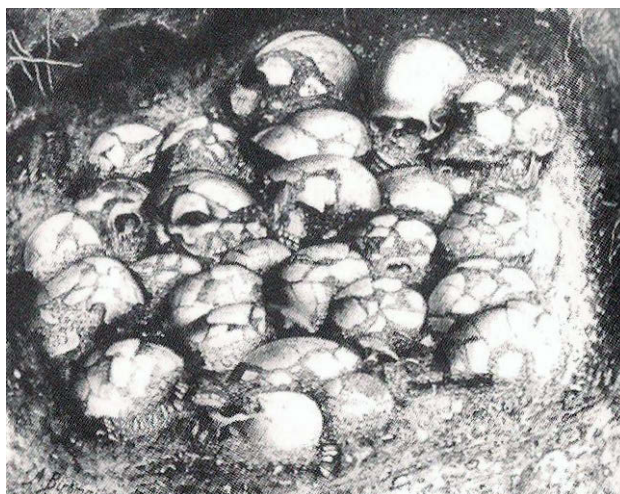
The next chapter will focus on analysing the discourse surrounding three archaeological sites of violence in prehistory from Europe and the USA. The narratives constructed using these sites will be deconstructed to ascertain whether they are based on evidence or assumption and the discourse surrounding the sites will be discussed.

## Chapter Three

In order to demonstrate the extent to which modern, western assumptions can affect the analysis and interpretation of archaeological sites, and the narratives of prehistoric warfare which result from them, three case studies will now be examined in detail. The case studies are Ofnet Cave in Bavaria, Germany; Crow Creek in South Dakota, USA; and Riviere aux Vase in Michigan, USA. Archaeologist's reports and interpretations of these sites have been deconstructed and the basic factual information and the conclusions which can be drawn from this basic data will be presented. The interpretations and narratives derived from this data and presented by other archaeologists will then be examined in order to ascertain whether or not any assumptions have been made which cannot have been demonstrated by the data itself. Each site will then be briefly re-interpreted based on the factual data and alternative gender and children's roles will be considered. A full and comprehensive reinterpretation of each site would not be possible in a piece of research on this scale and so a brief reinterpretation will be given with some possible alternative gender and child roles.

### Ofnet Cave – Data

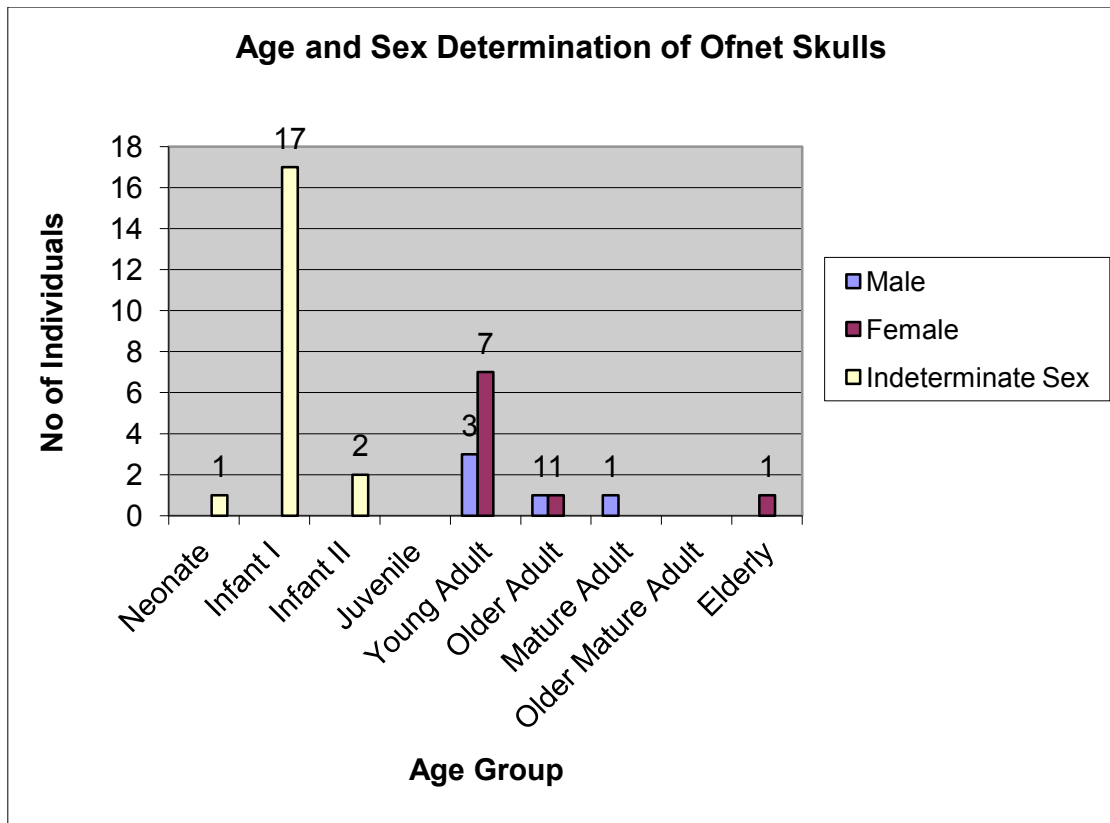
The site of Ofnet is located in Bavaria, Germany and was excavated in 1908. The cave contained two pits (Hofmann, 2005, 194), at roughly the same depth and approximately one metre apart (Frayner, 1997, 184). The pits contained human remains consisting of skulls and some associated vertebrae. The skulls were arranged in concentric circles, all facing the entrance to the cave (Hofmann, 2005, 194). Opinion on the total number of skulls present at Ofnet varies, as Table 2 demonstrates.



**Figure 1:** The larger of the two skull collections at Ofnet Cave (taken from Hofmann, 2005).

Author	Total number of Skulls	Number of skulls in smaller pit	Number of skulls in larger pit
Hofmann (2005)	34	6	28
Frayner (1997)	38	6	31
Orschiedt (2005)	34	6	28

**Table 2.** Estimations of the total number of skulls deposited at Ofnet Cave.

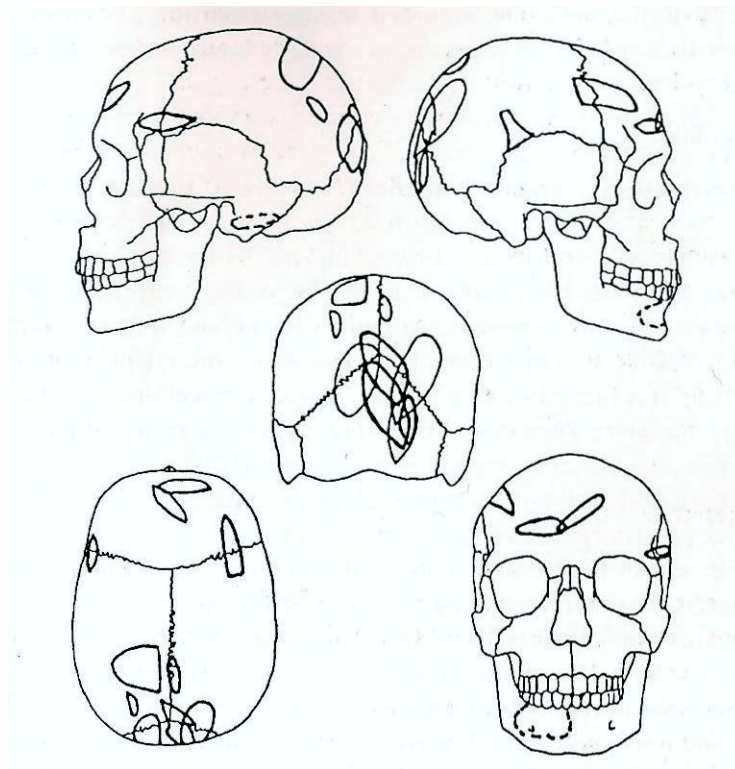


**Figure 2.** Age and sex determination of the Ofnet skulls (data from Orschiedt, 2005, 68).

Figure 1 shows the age and sex determination of the Ofnet skulls, according to Orschiedt (2005, 68). In total, there are 14 adult individuals and 20 infant individuals. Orschiedt argues that the sex of the infants present at Ofnet could not be determined. However, Hofmann (2005, 195) argues that there are 8 possible female children and 2 male children. Children are notoriously difficult to sex accurately using osteological techniques, especially when only the skull is available for analysis and Hofmann does not explain how the subadult's sexes were established.

The presence of vertebrae associated with some of the skulls suggests the heads were cut from the bodies soon after death (Hofmann, 2005, 195 & Orschiedt, 2005, 67). The remains were stained with red ochre (Frayer, 1997, 184-185) and 215 deer teeth and 4250 shells were found associated with the remains (Hofmann, 2005, 194-195).

Some of the individuals bore evidence of lethal violence (Hofmann, 2005, 196). Orschiadt (2005, 70) sets this figure at six. Two of these individuals were children aged between one and six years of age, three were 'young adults' and one was a 'mature adult'. Orschiadt (2005, 70) states that none of these individual's injuries showed any signs of healing, suggesting an immediate fatal outcome. The majority of the fatal skull injuries recorded were delivered to the back of the head (Orschiadt, 2005, 70). Only two individual's injuries suggest attack from more than one angle. Both of these individuals were male and have the highest number of fatal skull injuries.



**Figure 3:** The position of some of the fatal skull injuries found on six of the Ofnet skulls  
(taken from Hofmann, 2005).

Frayer (1997, 192) argues that just over 50% of the skulls show evidence of perimortem trauma; 5 males, 3 females and 10 unsexed subadults. It is generally thought that the Ofnet skulls had been de-fleshed or scalped (Hofmann, 2005, 196), hence the perimortem trauma Frayer notes. Frayer (1997, 205) argues that only 4 individuals show evidence of healed injuries, one of which is a 2-4 year old child with a pair of healed wounds on the left frontal.

There is some discrepancy concerning the deposition of the skulls in Ofnet cave. Frayer (1997, 187) argues that the radiocarbon dates suggest that the two pits are “roughly contemporaneous” and therefore that the skulls were probably deposited simultaneously on one occasion. Hofmann (2005, 197), however, (in a more recent publication) argues that the radiocarbon dates range between 6460 and 6180 BC and therefore allow for the possibility of several depositions. Orschiedt (2005, 68) agrees and does not believe that the skulls were deposited simultaneously. The original excavators commented that the skulls at the centre of the circles may have been deposited earlier than the others (Hofmann, 2005, 197).

### Ofnet Cave - Analysis

The evidence from Ofnet is often disputed. What can be said for certain is that the demography shows an over-representation of subadults and adult females and an underrepresentation of adult males. The people interred at Ofnet probably represent only a segment of the total population in the area at the time (Frayer, 1997, 209). Therefore, either an inordinately high proportion of subadults and adult females were dying or being killed in comparison to adult males or adult males were generally being disposed of elsewhere or in a manner which leaves no archaeological trace. The significant underrepresentation of adult males has several possible explanations. The adult males may have been separated from the

rest of the group carrying out specific work in another area or perhaps away involved in warfare elsewhere. It is possible that the adult males were with the rest of the group if and when the attack happened and were disposed of elsewhere or in a different way.

Ofnet does offer some evidence to support the more traditional views of gender and children's roles in prehistoric warfare. The injuries sustained by some of the people interred could be interpreted as execution blows as they are to the back of the head. The victims may have been attempting to flee when they were attacked or they may have been captured and systematically executed. There are only five males within the total adult sample of fourteen and two of those males have multiple injuries to the skull delivered from multiple angles. These injuries could be interpreted as injuries sustained in combat. Therefore, Ofnet could be interpreted as a site where women and children were the victims of warfare, executed with blows to the back of the head, whilst the men were the active participants in warfare, sustaining multiple injuries in battle. Indeed, Orschiedt (2005, 67) describes Ofnet as "an example of warlike conflict in the Mesolithic" and Frayer (1997, 181) interprets the site as a "massacre".

However, it is possible to challenge the view that Ofnet represents an episode of warfare at all, and therefore may not represent traditional gender and children's roles in prehistoric warfare. In terms of violence, roughly 6 of approximately 34 individuals bear evidence of lethal violence. This violence does not seem to have been targeted at any one particular sector of the population as the victims vary in age and sex. This demonstrates that both children and adults (male and female) seem to have been appropriate targets for violence. It cannot be stated for certain, based on these figures, that Ofnet represents a violent episode of warfare as many of the skulls show no signs of violence. Also, there are red ochre, deer teeth and shells

associated with the remains. Mesolithic mortuary ritual is complex and varies widely geographically (see discussions in Fowler, 2004: 130-154; Nilsson Stutz, 2003; Schulting, 1996: 335-350; & Pettitt, 2011) and this treatment of human remains has been noted in several Mesolithic cemeteries (E.g. Skateholm & Vædbeck) where there is little or no evidence for violence. Therefore, there is a strong possibility that the individuals interred in the cave did not die as the result of a massacre or some form of warfare but were interred in the cave after dying of natural causes. The small number of individuals with evidence for lethal injuries may have died as a result of some other form of violence such as abuse, internal group violence or as a punishment of some kind. If this is the case then it seems that women and children were not immune to such treatment and, indeed, may have been the specific targets of such violence as they are over-represented within the sample. There is also the possibility that some individuals were involved in warfare and were interred alongside individuals who were not involved in warfare; not all of the individuals had to have shared the same experiences. The lack of evidence for older injuries suggests that serious violence was not regularly encountered by the people interred in Ofnet cave. However, as only the skulls were deposited, all theories are speculative as injuries may have occurred to other body parts or may have been flesh wounds which did not show on bone.

The common interpretations of Ofnet as a massacre site or the result of warfare could be a result of the modern, western assumption that women and children are the victims and not the perpetrators of violence. Hofmann (2005, 196) argues that much of the discussion surrounding Ofnet tends to focus on the violence as this is of great importance to the scholars themselves. This is because violence in our own society is such an important factor (Hofmann, 2005, 199). Alternatively, there may be such a focus on the violence at Ofnet because many of the victims are women and children.



Regardless of whether or not Ofnet is interpreted as a massacre or as evidence for warfare or not, the disposal of the bodies in this very specific way raises interesting questions. In terms of massacre or warfare, one possibility is that the remaining community somehow recovered the bodies of their dead and buried them. The individuals at Ofnet may have been buried in this particular way because of the violent way in which they died. However, no other sites like Ofnet have been found to support this theory. Another explanation is that their killers deemed them worthy of some kind of burial. It is possible that burying the individuals in this manner was some kind of specific burial rite reserved for enemies.

Regarding the site as a Mesolithic burial ground is also interesting. Although there are other Mesolithic sites which have evidence for red ochre, shells and teeth being associated with the remains, there are no sites which mirror the placing of de-fleshed skulls only in the grave. However, there is evidence from the late Mesolithic to late Neolithic burial ground of Zvejnieki in Northern Latvia of two infants having fragments of their skulls removed at the time of burial and placed under a stone in the grave with them (Zagorkis, 2004 79-80). Therefore, manipulation, removal and mutilation of body parts after death may have been practiced by some Mesolithic communities as a burial rite.

Ultimately, it cannot be stated for certain that Ofnet cave represents a massacre or an episode of warfare as the actual number of injured individuals stands at only 6 out of a total of approximately 34 individuals. The presence of red ochre, animal teeth and shells suggest a burial rite of some sort. It is clear that not all of the community are represented; adult males are under-represented. Ofnet cave may represent a massacre of villagers whilst the adult males were not present for some reason. It could just as easily represent the grave of females and children killed in warfare, possibly whilst fighting. There is also a very real possibility

that Ofnet cave is a burial ground of some sort with no connection to warfare at all. There is simply not enough evidence from the site itself and neither is enough known about the cultural beliefs and identities of the community interred at Ofnet cave to say with any amount of certainty what actually occurred. Therefore, describing the site as “evidence for warlike conflict in the Mesolithic” or stating that it was the result of a massacre is misleading.

### Crow Creek - Data

The site of Crow Creek is located in Buffalo County, Central South Dakota, on the east bank of the Missouri river (Zimmerman, 1997, 75 & Willey, 1990, 3). The site is located on the present day Sioux Indian Reservation (Zimmerman, 1997, 76) and covers approximately 18 acres of a prominent terrace (Willey, 1990, 3). The site has been dated to approximately 1325 AD (Willey, 1990, 1). Willey (1990, 3) states that the site is in “an excellent defensive position” with natural boundaries on two sides and a third boundary consisting of a man-made, 1250 foot long, 6 feet deep fortification ditch which is 4 feet wide at the bottom and 12 feet wide at the top. It was in this ditch that the remains of approximately 486 individuals were discovered when erosion partially exposed them in 1978 (Zimmerman, 1997, 80 & Willey, 1990, 1). An excavation was subsequently carried out which lasted four months and revealed a mass grave consisting of two bone beds covered with a 30cm thick layer of clay (Zimmerman, 1997, 82).



**Figure 4:** Crow Creek fortification ditch with massacre victims in situ (taken from Haas, 1999).

The majority of the remains were disarticulated due to dismemberment, decay and scavenging, suggesting that the remains were left out in the open and not buried immediately after death (Zimmerman, 1997, 83). Willey (1990, 34) argues that the bodies were probably left exposed above ground for less than one month in cold weather as no insect remains were discovered (as would be expected in warm or hot weather). Chew marks on the bones indicate the presence of scavengers (Willey, 1990, 34).

Zimmerman (1997, 83-84) and Willey (1990, 60) both argue that the 486 individuals deposited in the mass grave are not representative of the entire village population. Estimates of village size at Crow Creek vary but it is thought that approximately 744-831 individuals lived there at the time of the deaths of the individuals in the ditch (Zimmerman, 1997, 84). Due to the site being located on Sioux reservation land, excavation limits were imposed and

resulted in approximately fifty individuals remaining unexcavated in the ditch; however, this still leaves nearly 300 people unaccounted for (Zimmerman, 1997, 84).

Age in Years	Males	Females
20-29	48.30	20.56
30-39	29.29	21.07
40-49	19.53	28.26
50-59	21.07	41.62

**Table 3:** Crow Creek adult age intervals by sex (adapted from Willey, 1990, 49).

Zimmerman (1997, 84) argues that the demographic reconstruction of the remains shows an under-representation of females between the ages of 15 and 29 and an over-representation of females over the age of 40, further demonstrated by Willey's (1990, 49, Table 2) table of the Crow Creek adult age intervals by sex. Willey (1990, 54, Table 3) also compares the Crow Creek age distribution with the age distributions from cemetery samples in the same region. Willey's results show a significant under-representation of individuals aged between 0-29 years and a slight under-representation of individuals aged between 30-49.

Age in years	Crow Creek (cumulative %)	Mobridge 1 (cumulative %)	Mobridge 2 (cumulative %)	Larson Cemetery (cumulative %)
0-9	27.38	69.94	48.20	53.88
10-19	50.77	74.54	59.71	76.01
20-29	65.53	80.29	70.81	83.54
30-39	76.32	86.53	80.18	90.57
40-49	86.56	92.61	91.16	96.60

**Table 4:** Age distribution of Crow Creek skeletal sample compared with those of Middle Missouri Region cemetery samples (adapted from Willey, 1990, 54).

The attack at Crow Creek was undeniably extremely violent and Zimmerman (1997, 84) notes that no age or sex was immune from this violence. Nearly 90% of skulls bore evidence of scalping (Zimmerman, 1997, 84 & Willey, 1990). Approximately 40% of skulls showed depressed fractures; blows were most common on the top and topsides of the cranial vault (Zimmerman, 1997, 86). There were 4 individuals who had nasal apertures, suggesting the removal of noses or slashing of faces. Cuts on some individuals suggested the removal of the tongue and Zimmerman describes decapitation as “fairly common”. Hands were commonly removed, cut marks on the arms might suggest the attempted removal of arms at the shoulders and elbows and cut marks were also commonly found on the hip joints and feet. Willey (1990, 151) states that “the effort to mutilate and disfigure the bodies was extensive” and that many of the mutilations “would have been sufficient to cause death”. Only five projectile points were found associated with the remains (Zimmerman, 1997, 85) and the low numbers of projectile points, combined with the osteological evidence for close, personal violence, suggests that ranged weapons were not used extensively in the attack on Crow Creek. However, as Zimmerman (1997, 85) notes, it is possible that the arrows may have

been recovered by the attackers or that the points may have dropped out whilst the bodies lay exposed to the elements.

Zimmerman (1997, 87) argues that the village may have been undergoing a renewal of defences at the time of the attack, as at least six post-holes contained human skull fragments. This suggests that they were open at the time of the attack. Houses within the village had been burned and Zimmerman argues that the attack may have taken place in late autumn or early winter, as the decomposition of the remains did not occur as quickly as in spring or summer. Zimmerman (1997, 87-88) argues that burial of the bodies may have taken place in spring, once the remains were free of snow and clay could be brought up to cover the bones. Zimmerman (1997, 82-83) notes that fetching the clay would have been labour intensive.

Zimmerman (1997, 89) comments that there was evidence of malnutrition in the Crow Creek skeletal sample. Osteological evidence suggests that the victims were suffering from long-standing, chronic iron-deficiency anaemia, famine and scurvy.

### Crow Creek – Analysis

There is little doubt that the individuals buried in the fortification ditch at Crow Creek were victims of an attack. The evidence for violence and mutilation is over-whelming. Zimmerman (1997, 84) believes that the demographic statistics from Crow Creek suggest a pattern of warfare which led to high numbers of young males dying in combat and leaving women over-represented in the age range of 40 years and over. Zimmerman (1997, 84) also argues that young women of “child-bearing age” were taken as captives when the attack took place, explaining the under-representation of younger women. Zimmerman is making the

assumption that young males were primarily warriors and does not discuss any other possibilities for their under-representation, such as that they may have been taken as captives. Zimmerman also highlights women's child-bearing capabilities as the reason they would have been taken captive, not taking into consideration any other roles women may have carried out or any other possible explanations for their absence from the group, such as that young females may have been involved in warfare and died in combat. However, Willey discusses historical evidence which mentions the taking of young female captives on raids; therefore, there may be some evidence to support Zimmerman's theory. Of the remains present in the ditch at Crow Creek, no age or sex was immune to the violence carried out. This suggests that it was not deemed inappropriate to violently kill and mutilate the bodies of women or children. There is, therefore, every possibility that they may have been actively involved in violence and warfare and in the defence of the settlement.

Zimmerman conducted age and sex analysis on the remains at Crow Creek and states that all age groups and both sexes are represented. However, although adult male and female roles in warfare and raiding are discussed in relation to the demographic statistics, there is no discussion concerning the children and infants who are present and the roles they may have played. Table 3 shows a significant under-representation of children between the ages of 0-9 compared with cemetery samples from the region. Neither Zimmerman nor Willey discuss this notable absence. However, it is interesting to consider what may have happened to the children. They may have been taken alive as captives. As has been previously discussed, children can contribute economically to a community. Another possibility is that they may have been buried or disposed of elsewhere. Zimmerman notes that the fetching of the clay for the burial of the bodies would have been labour intensive. There is a possibility that survivors of the Crow Creek settlement may have done this. Therefore, perhaps they deemed it

necessary to bury the children elsewhere. It seems odd to imagine that the attackers would leave the bodies exposed for approximately 1 month and then return to carry out a labour-intensive burial. However, this may be a possibility if they planned to re-occupy the site, for example.

Although there is some historical evidence to draw upon where Crow Creek is concerned, it cannot be assumed that the historical evidence is completely reliable and neither can that historical evidence be readily applied to all sites in the area. Alternative roles for the men and women at Crow Creek must be considered as there is simply not enough evidence to prove why there is an under-representation of young men and women. The possibility of men being taken as captives and women dying in combat for example, although reversing the well-established gender roles in prehistoric conflict archaeology, is certainly possible. The under-representation of children must be considered more fully and given more importance as it may be a key part of the Crow Creek narrative. If the children were abducted, their experiences and the impact of their abduction on any survivors of the attack and on the groups into which they were abducted is important to consider.

#### Riviere aux Vase – Data

The site of Riviere aux Vase is located in South-eastern Michigan (Wilkinson, 1997). The site consists of a cemetery, in use from AD 1000 to AD 1300, which was excavated in 1936 and 1937 (Wilkinson, 1997, 23). The skeletal sample consists of the incomplete remains of 220-350 individuals and Wilkinson describes the mortuary behaviours displayed at the site as “many and complex” (1997, 23). These behaviours include, extended, primary inhumations, ossuary-type burial with mixed skeletal elements, group burials with one or more primary



burials and secondary bundle burials, isolated skulls and trunks, cremations, partial burials and multiple-individual primary burials (Wilkinson, 1997, 38-39). Bender (1979) carried out a demographic reconstruction of the population interred at Riviere aux Vase and concluded that the cemetery showed an under-representation of children and infants and an over-representation of older adults and young, adult females. There were a total of 19 individuals with cranial fractures out of a total 212 fragmentary and complete crania (Wilkinson, 1997, 25). The cemetery also contained a high number of injured females (see Table 4 for sex specific mortality data); the ratio of females to males within the injured sample from the cemetery is nearly 4:1 (Wilkinson, 1997, 25). In order to be included in the ‘injured’ category, the individual’s injuries must have shown some signs of healing in order to rule out post-mortem fractures. Therefore, to be included in the sample of injured individuals the person must have survived the injury, at least for a short time. ‘Older’ (45+ years of age) women constitute approximately half of the sample studied, however, all but one of these women’s injuries are classed by Wilkinson (1997, 28) as ‘mild’. All but one of the ‘severely’ injured females are between the ages of 16 and 40 (Wilkinson, 1997, 28). Therefore, it is mostly young, adult women sustaining severe injuries.

Age (years)	Males	Females	Injured Males	Injured Females
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16-20	3	21	0	1
21-25	7	14.25	0	3
26-30	4	4.75	0	0
31-35	10.71	8.25	0	1
36-40	8.29	7.75	1	1
41-45	11	12.18	0	2
46-50	8	5.82	0	2
51-60	14	9.43	2	3
61-70	4	13.57	1	2
71+	3	1	0	0
Adult	20	16	0	0
Totals	93	114	4	15

**Table 5:** Sex specific mortality data for adults at Riviere aux Vase (crania only) (Taken from Wilkinson, 1997, 26).

The cranial injuries sustained by females were numerous, widespread and of varying sizes (Wilkinson, 1997, 28). They were found on the front, rear and both sides of the skull. There was one instance of facial damage. Cranial injuries sustained by males were restricted to the front of the skull. Postcranial fractures were deemed to be at ‘normal’ levels and in ‘normal’ locations in both males and females (Wilkinson, 1997, 33). Wilkinson does not quantify what ‘normal’ levels are. No children showed any signs of injury.

#### Riviere aux Vase – Analysis

When taking into account the length of time in which the Riviere aux Vase cemetery was in use, the number of victims of violence is fairly low (19 individuals out of 220-350).

Wilkinson does not provide any dating information, therefore it is not clear if the injuries are roughly contemporaneous or not. If so, it would suggest one or two violent episodes. If the injuries were sustained over a longer period of time but were still limited to several generations, it could suggest some sort of cultural pattern of violence. If the injuries occurred over a very long period of time then a more sporadic pattern of violence seems likely with few victims. Wilkinson also does not provide any data on the location of the injured individuals within the cemetery. If they were all located in one small area, it would seem more likely that the victims were connected in some way than if they were scattered around the cemetery. Regardless of lack of dating and location information, it does not seem that the people burying their dead at Rivere aux Vase encountered or engaged in violent behaviour on a regular basis. If the injured sample all came from one violent episode then it seems to be the only violent episode which occurred over a 300 year period. If the victims were spread out over the 300 year period then the number of violent deaths per generation was very low. However, there is always a possibility that injured individuals were disposed of elsewhere or in a different way which does not leave any archaeological trace.

The extreme variety of burial practices in use at the site suggests that the cemetery may have been used by more than one group of people with different mortuary practices (Wilkinson, 1997, 38-39). Therefore, violent clashes between groups may have been the cause of the injuries. However, the injuries are very specific in terms of location and there are no other severe visible injuries to other parts of the body. It might be possible that a specific method of fighting was inflicting such specific injuries.

To be included in the cranial injury category by Wilkinson the injury must have shown signs of healing (to rule out post-mortem fractures). The individuals sustaining these injuries generally survived them. Therefore, it is possible that these blows were not intended to kill and the victims seem to have received treatment and care after sustaining the injuries. It is interesting, therefore, to consider who may have inflicted these injuries and for what purpose. Warfare may be one possible explanation. There is evidence of tribal societies using less deadly methods of injury when fighting neighbouring tribes despite having more deadly methods of combat available to them. For example, the Tiv of Nigeria only used poisoned arrows when fighting non-Tiv enemies (Keeley, 1996, 52). The aim was not necessarily to kill. Internal group violence may be another possible explanation. Disagreements between group members may have resulted in fighting, a level of systematic abuse may have been taking place or the injuries may have been the result of some form of punishment. Abduction or capture may also be a possibility for the origin of the injuries. The injured individuals may have been captured (or an attempt may have been made to capture them) and they may have been injured in the abduction process or deliberately injured by their abductors.

There is a higher instance of females with injuries than males, despite there being a roughly equal total number of males and females within the cemetery. This suggests that females were more likely to be involved in violent activity, or the targets of violence than males. In contrast, no children were found to have sustained injuries and it could be argued that children were not generally involved in or the targets of violence. However, there is an underrepresentation of children within the cemetery and it is possible, therefore, that children may have sustained injuries but were disposed of elsewhere.

Wilkinson (1997, 33) believes that the evidence from Riviere aux Vase overwhelming shows that “violence, in the form of blunt weapon attack, was directed at the head, and it was directed at the women”, despite the relatively low frequency of injuries in such a large number of people over such a long period of time. Wilkinson (1997, 33) argues that the “severity, location and female predominance of the cranial injuries are clear indicators of intentional, interpersonal violence”. Wilkinson (1997, 33-34) rules out accident on the basis that the sex difference is too pronounced and the improbability that all of the individuals fell or had objects fall on them. Wilkinson (1997, 36) then briefly discusses the possibility that women may have been the perpetrators and/or aggressors and also discusses the possibility of spousal abuse but rules it out due to the lack of ethno historic evidence. Wilkinson’s use of the term “spousal” is imposing the modern, western notion of a nuclear family onto the community at Riviere aux Vase, conjuring up an image of husbands abusing wives. Ultimately, Wilkinson (1997, 36) takes the more “traditional”, heteronormative or homophobic view that males were the perpetrators of the violence at Riviere aux Vase, despite a lack of evidence. Wilkinson (1997, 38) argues that abduction was the most likely explanation for the injuries; the women may have been natal members of the group who were victims of attempted abduction or abducted women who failed to co-operate with their captors. This is a distinctly possible explanation for the injuries present at Riviere aux Vase. The fact that the injuries had all healed either fully or slightly suggests a degree of care was shown to the females after their injury and abduction (either attempted or successful) would facilitate this. However, the evidence could suggest a number of explanations for the violence and by settling on abduction, Wilkinson is associating women with a passive role in conflict. It is just as possible that the women were injured in warfare or combat and cared for by their community afterwards.

Wilkinson (1997, 38) also argues that the women were fully integrated into society after their abduction, as they were not treated differently in burial. It could be argued that the extreme variety in burial practices at the site makes it difficult to ascertain whether or not these women were, indeed, treated 'normally' in burial or not. It could also be argued that the cemetery at Riviere aux Vase may actually represent an 'abnormal' form of burial in itself. The variety in burial practice and unusually high numbers of particular members of society (i.e. older adults and young, injured females) might suggest that Riviere aux Vase *is* the unusual burial ground and that other individuals (i.e. uninjured females, males, children and infants) are buried elsewhere in a more usual, 'normal' burial ground.

Wilkinson takes the heteronormative/homophobic view that women were abducted at Riviere aux Vase. Other explanations for their injuries are briefly mentioned but quickly dismissed despite there being no solid evidence for any of the theories postulated: an example of pseudo-inclusion. The conspicuous under-representation of infants and children is not discussed beyond mentioning the fact that they are under-represented, an example of the exclusion of children from archaeological narratives. No possible explanations for their absence are discussed, despite the fact that their absence from the cemetery could potentially provide important information on the community's identities and burial habits. The children are perhaps not deemed important, contributing members of society and their absence, therefore, is not deemed significant enough to discuss at length.

### Comparative Discussion of Case Studies

All of the case studies discussed feature unusual population demographics. Ofnet Cave contained an over-representation of children, infants and adult females. Violence was directed towards both children and adults (male and female). The possibility of a massacre is suggested but not the possibility of the females and/or children being involved in warfare as combatants. The question remains whether or not this possibility would have been suggested had the cave contained an over-representation of male individuals.

Crow Creek features an under-representation of young females and an over-representation of older females. Again, the possibility of the females being the victims of warfare (as abductees) is suggested but not the possibility of their absence being due to their active participation in warfare. This is despite the fact that brutal violence has been meted out to the people at Crow Creek regardless of age and/or sex. There is no discussion of the children's roles in the events.

At Riviere aux Vase there is an under-representation of children and infants and an over-representation of older adults of both sexes and young female adults. Children's roles are not discussed at all. It is suggested that young adult women were regularly the victims of violence. However, the actual frequency of violence is fairly low considering the period of time the cemetery was in use. Still, Wilkinson focuses on the violence, possibly because it is targeted towards women. This is unusual in modern, western society and Wilkinson may have assumed that this was unusual in the community at Riviere aux Vase also. The possibility of the women sustaining their injuries in warfare as active combatants is not mentioned.

These case studies reinforce the issues highlighted in previous chapters. Children are rarely discussed in detail, even where there is a significant over-representation or under-representation of them or where they have clearly been subject to violence. Women are reduced to fulfilling victim roles where warfare, conflict and violence are concerned, such as that of abductee or abuse victim. There is no suggestion of females or children taking part in warfare, conflict and violence even where the evidence could suggest such activity.

All of these case studies also display a heavy focus on the violence apparent at the different sites. This is despite the fact that, at Ofnet Cave and Riviere aux Vase, the actual frequency of violence is fairly low. It could be argued that the violence evident at the sites becomes the primary factor of interest for the archaeologists, to the detriment of the study of other aspects of the community's lives. As Hofmann (2005, 196) suggests, this may be due to violence being an important factor in the archaeologist's own lives. Archaeologists have a habit of focusing on topics which are of importance to themselves in modern society. However, it is not certain that this violence was such an important factor for the prehistoric communities being investigated.

The concluding chapter will summarise the issues of assumption and bias evident in archaeological narratives of prehistoric violence discussed in Chapter One and the possible reasons for the development of flawed methodologies suggested in Chapter Two. Chapter Three and the case studies presented within it will be summarised and suggestions will be made as to how archaeologists might begin to move forward in a positive manner in the study of warfare, conflict and violence in prehistory and the development of narratives resulting from such studies.



## Conclusion

This piece of research aimed to demonstrate that a very specific picture is being presented concerning male, female and child roles in prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence. This picture consists of males being portrayed as the active, participating individuals in warfare, conflict and violence and females and children being portrayed as passive, inactive participants. Within many archaeological narratives males are assumed to have been the only individuals within a community to actively engage in conflict and women and children are assumed to have been the perpetual victims of conflict, often being described as abductees, murder victims or sacrificial victims. Vandkilde (2006b, 515) argues that the stereotypical male warrior role has a strong influence on archaeologist's understanding of European prehistory. Chapter One provided examples of this picture being presented in numerous archaeological narratives. These prescribed roles are often re-iterated despite evidence which suggests otherwise or in absence of any evidence to support them. Children are often ignored completely in archaeological narratives of prehistoric conflict, even in the case of sites where their remains have been found or where there is a notable absence of their remains. When children are discussed, they are often simply included in a discussion about women's roles and assumed to have shared the same experiences and identities, commonly that of victim. Many archaeologists do not take into account that women and children constitute two separate groups of people who may have been viewed and treated as such in prehistoric communities. It is often assumed that women and children were present in the past but were not active, dynamic members of society.

Linked to the issue of males being viewed as the only active members of the community is the issue of material culture, particularly weaponry. Many archaeological narratives (not only those concerning prehistoric conflict) assume that material culture was produced and used by adult men. However, there is often little or no discussion of women and children producing and using such material culture also. This is particularly so where material culture interpreted as weaponry is concerned. Women and children are rarely described as having produced or used weaponry or other artefacts interpreted as being associated with warfare, conflict and violence. It is common for the grave of one male individual with associated weaponry to be used to characterise the gendered nature of warfare within an entire society. However, where there is evidence for females being associated with warlike artefacts such as weaponry it is often explained away in a manner which is consistent with the female playing a passive role. For example, describing a weapon found associated with the remains of a female as a weapon with which she was slain as a sacrificial victim, rather than a weapon which she may have wielded in life, as Albrethsen & Brinch Petersen (1976) did. Sometimes, evidence for weaponry being associated with a female is simply ignored in archaeological interpretations rather than being explained away e.g. Dolukhanov (1999). Other interpretations describe artefacts which may have been utilised in warfare, and were found associated with a female, as status symbols rather than explore the possibility of a female participating in warfare. Otto et al (2006, 18) argue that, particularly in European funerary archaeology, the 'warrior' stereotype can seem very convincing when looking at the evidence. However, they also argue that the extent to which these presentations represent actual prehistoric cultural ideals is questionable. Vandkilde (2006a, 57) discusses the presentations of warriors and peasants in archaeological interpretations and argues that, depending on the agenda of the archaeologist, the evidence has been used to support theories of a violent and a peaceful past. For example, weapons may be described as real weapons of war used to inflict real harm or as purely

symbolic items representing power, status and prestige. Therefore, the evidence can be presented in such a way as to support different theories.

However, these issues are not limited to conflict archaeology specifically and the issues surrounding gender in archaeology are being highlighted and discussed within the wider archaeological literature. Gender bias, androcentrism and heteronormative assumption and bias are all discussed and critiqued within the archaeological literature in general. However, none of this literature specifically addresses prehistoric conflict archaeology in detail.

Modern, western assumptions about the roles and social significance of males, females and children are still being imposed unchallenged onto prehistoric communities where conflict is concerned. These assumptions are often implicit; they are not openly discussed as theories which require evidence to support them but are presented as normal, natural and universal truths. The gendered roles demonstrated as being present in many archaeological narratives of prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence are presented as being “built into the species” (Conkey & Spector, 1998, 13) rather than as contemporary, culture-specific beliefs. The language used by archaeologists often reflects their modern, western perspective when discussing prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence. The terms ‘husband’ and ‘wife’ are used by many archaeologists when discussing prehistoric conflict (e.g. Albrethsen & Brinch Petersen, 1976; Milledge-Nelson, 2004; Brothwell, 1999). Guilaine & Zammit (2001) use the term “prehistoric man”. Whitehouse (2007, 27) argues that using the term ‘man’ generalises and normalises the male experience and renders invisible (or unimportant) the experiences of women and children. A heteronormative picture of prehistory is thus produced; one of nuclear families with ‘husbands’, ‘wives’ and legitimate children. This reinforces a view of prehistoric society with modern, western gender and child stereotypes super-imposed on it and presented as natural.

These fixed gender and child roles are repeatedly applied to sites of prehistoric violence and whilst there is critique of gender bias, androcentrism and heteronormative bias and assumption in the general archaeological literature, there is little or no explicit critique of or challenge to these ideas in the conflict archaeology literature.

The methodologies used by archaeologists to excavate, analyse and interpret sites of prehistoric violence are a key contributor to the picture being presented in many archaeological narratives as they are heavily influenced by modern, western, culture-specific gender beliefs, ideas and stereotypes. The basic methodology used by archaeologists when excavating prehistoric human remains is to determine an individual's biological sex (or identify them as a subadult) as a primary piece of data. However, there are several issues with this methodology.

Firstly, this imposes a modern, western social divider onto a prehistoric community and implicitly suggests that biological sex was a primary social divider within that community, as it often is in modern, western society. Secondly, this division automatically conjures the 'male', 'female' and 'child' gender stereotypes and assumptions which have been proven to exist within archaeological narratives of warfare, conflict and violence in Chapter One and which are based on modern, western culture-specific beliefs and ideas. A modern, western image of prehistoric society is automatically conjured. Thirdly, the particular focus that archaeologists place on biological sex and gender significantly affects the research and interpretation of children in archaeology across the discipline. Children are often ignored because they cannot be easily identified as biologically male or female and, therefore, cannot be placed into a category and assigned roles, tasks and activities. Therefore, a potentially

active, contributing sector of prehistoric society is routinely being ignored in many archaeological interpretations, possibly due to an excessive focus being placed on the importance of biological sex.

Finally, this division affects the process of interpreting any artefacts associated with the remains. Once an individual's biological sex is identified, artefacts are often then related back to biological sex and archaeologists specifically look for patterns connecting artefacts and biological sex (i.e. females, males or children commonly buried with particular items). This then allows them to produce data sets which show patterns of artefact and biological sex association, presenting the impression that the community in question placed great importance on biological sex, and that activities and roles within that community were determined or heavily influenced by biological sex.

The artefacts are then associated with certain roles, tasks and activities (according to the archaeologist's interpretations), such as warfare, hunting or flint-knapping. Certain groups of people (i.e. men, women or children) are then assigned such roles, tasks and activities.

Although there is now much discussion in archaeology regarding different perspectives on gender, there are still narratives which describe roles, tasks and activities as either exclusively male or exclusively female. Therefore, if a male individual is found to have been buried with what a modern, western archaeologist interprets as a weapon, he is classed as a warrior.

Warfare, conflict and violence are subsequently classed as male activities and women and children are excluded from any discussion.

Modern, western beliefs which categorise warfare as a male activity influence archaeologist's views on weapon association and often very little evidence is needed for the archaeologist to class a male as a 'warrior'. Conversely, a great deal of evidence is needed to convince an archaeologist that a female may have been involved actively in warfare. For example, in Waddel's interpretation of the female buried with a chariot (1990), there is no discussion of the possibility of that she may have used the chariot in warfare. This may have been due to the fact that Waddel has already classed warfare as a male activity because of the males found buried with weaponry at the same site. Often, the presence of a weapon associated with a female is explained away because warfare has already been classed as 'male'. Even when women are accepted as possible active combatants, they are seen as an anomaly, an exception to the rule. This suggests that it is not 'normal' for women to be warriors and reinforces the predominant view that warfare is a male only activity. This way of thinking leads to instances such as the baby at Vedbaek (Albrethsen & Brinch-Petersen, 1976) who was interpreted as a male due to the fact that it was buried with a blade, despite the fact that there is no possible way to determine the baby's true biological sex. The narratives of prehistoric life produced using this data are directly affected by the interpretations made about roles, tasks and activities within that community, despite the fact that the very basic data gathering process at the excavation stage is flawed. It imposes modern, western social divisions on a community who may not have placed any importance on biological sex. The communities in question may not have so rigidly associated biological sex and roles, tasks and activities.

As well as flawed methodologies concerning the gathering of archaeological data, there are flawed methodologies used in the subsequent construction of narratives of prehistoric conflict which result from such data. Scott (1997, 2) identified three methods of exclusion used in the construction of archaeological narratives, which are discussed in Chapter Two. Exclusion

was the original method of marginalising women in archaeological narratives: simply not including them in interpretations as if they were not present in prehistory. This method is less common in more modern publications and pseudo-inclusion and alienation are now more often used methodologies. Changing attitudes to women in western society in general as well as the increased presence of women in academic and professional archaeology may have contributed to the decline in exclusion and the rise in pseudo-inclusion and alienation. It is no longer appropriate to exclude women from archaeological narratives altogether. All of the exclusion methods described by Scott are also used when discussing children in archaeological narratives of prehistoric violence. This may be partly due to the fact that women and children are seen as one group or category of people and therefore, they have been subject to the same treatment by archaeologists. However, exclusion is more commonly used in relation to children. Most narratives of prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence do not discuss children's roles at all, even where children's remains have been found. Therefore, even when evidence is gathered which might challenge the stereotypes in prehistoric conflict archaeology, methodologies such as exclusion, pseudo-inclusion and alienation are used which simply use such evidence to reinforce the stereotypes. Hamilton et al (2007, 17) argues that all knowledge is socially produced. The people who produce the knowledge and the practices used to produce it are of vital importance to what is eventually produced. The methodologies used to construct archaeological narratives of prehistoric violence and the people who use the methodologies undoubtedly form an essential part in the process of the exclusion of and/or the assumptions made concerning women and children in prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence.

Identifying and de-constructing the methodologies used to exclude or marginalise women and children in archaeological narratives of prehistoric warfare, conflict and violence is more

straightforward than identifying and understanding the reasons why these methodologies have developed in the first place. Whilst it was not the aim of this paper to conduct a full study of the history of gender in archaeology, some possible reasons for the development of such methodologies were discussed in Chapter Two. As the main focus of this paper is on discussing the discourse surrounding prehistoric conflict archaeology this was done with the aim of creating awareness and prompting further discussion among the archaeological community about such issues.

For many years, both the academic and professional aspects of archaeology were dominated by men, as was western society in general. For a long time women did not practice archaeology; nor did they become involved in the academic discipline. Therefore, the topics studied were determined by males, investigated by males and analysed by males for a male audience. Sørensen (2007, 42) argues that the ‘man the hunter’ model presented by Lee & DeVore in 1968 was very influential in archaeology and led to the widespread belief that males developed co-operative and innovative behaviour in all aspects of early human society. Therefore, a distorted social dynamic was presented as existing within early, small-scale hunter-gatherer societies; one of dominant, intelligent, active males and submissive, passive, inactive women. The problem of the exclusion and marginalisation of women and children was a problem across the discipline, not just within the sub-topic of conflict archaeology. However, western society has and is continuing to change in terms of gender divisions and social dynamics. As a result of these changes, gender is now widely discussed in archaeology and has become a research topic in itself. There has been a steady development of criticism of androcentric and heteronormative narratives in other areas of archaeology. It could be argued that the sharp focus on biological sex previously discussed is a possible result of these



changes. Therefore, women's roles in other aspect of prehistoric life, such as subsistence, are beginning to be re-considered in archaeological narratives.

However, the topic of warfare, conflict and violence continues to be dominated by the discussion of active male roles and passive female and child roles. This may be due, in part, to the nature of women's roles in modern, western warfare, conflict and violence. Women are not as actively involved in modern warfare as men. As of 30.09.2010, only 14.5% of the total US armed forces were female (<http://www.womensmemorial.org/PDFs/StatsonWIM.pdf>). Warfare in modern, western society is still generally seen as a predominantly male activity and Vandkilde (2006b, 515) argues that, when archaeologists think of war, they automatically associate it with gender. However, the modern, western perspective on the gendered nature of warfare should not, strictly speaking, affect the interpretations made about prehistoric warfare. If we do not actively attempt to identify our own culture-bound assumptions and biases then we are merely interpreting prehistoric communities through a visor tinted with whichever culture we happen to be living in at the time.

Intrinsically linked to the domination of academic and professional archaeology by men is the issue of homophobia in archaeology. It could be argued that this domination produced the level of homophobia present in archaeological narratives of conflict today. Homophobia (the fear of gender expansion) results in the past being presented in a heteronormative way. As Hamilton et al (2007, 17) argues, all knowledge is socially produced, and a dominant group of archaeologists are constructing narratives of prehistoric society along the same lines in which modern, western society is structured. Consequently, because the norm in modern, western society is to live in small, nuclear family units, this is how the prehistoric family is

presented. This then results in modern, western gender stereotypes associated with such nuclear families being projected onto these prehistoric families.

Children in archaeology are severely understudied in general and, arguably, particularly understudied in conflict archaeology. This lack of research concerning children is partially a consequence of the way children are viewed in modern, western society. Children do not contribute to modern, western societies' economic survival and are, therefore, deemed inactive people. Modern, western archaeologists have a tendency to research topics which are directly related or of importance to themselves in their own modern lives. For example, Otto et al (2006, 15) argue that warfare did not become an established area of study within archaeology until the past decade. They argue that this surge in studies of past warfare was influenced by events in the modern world, notably the ethnic wars and genocides of the 1990s. Vandkilde (2006a, 64) argues that a period in conflict archaeologies' history when the past was presented in a pacified manner coincided with the end of World War II when people were recovering from years of hardship and genocide. Therefore, modern archaeologist's current local and world surroundings and experiences can heavily influence their interpretations of past conflict. Perhaps because children do not practice archaeology in modern, western society there is a lack of research concerning them. The fact that an increased proportion of women in professional and academic archaeology coincided with a surge in research concerning women and a backlash against androcentric accounts of the past supports this theory. However, it is highly unlikely that children are going to become contributing members of the academic or professional world of archaeology in modern, western society and, therefore, adult archaeologists must begin giving as much attention to children's lives as they do to adult's lives.

Also, children's involvement in warfare, conflict and violence is generally deemed morally wrong in modern, western society. Archaeologists may unconsciously disassociate children and war when investigating and interpreting the evidence for violence in prehistory. The issue of children being involved in warfare is a contentious modern issue which archaeologists may be attempting to avoid, whether consciously or unconsciously, due to the effect it may have on the issue of children being involved in warfare in the modern world. Otto et al (2006, 9) make a very relevant point concerning the emotional connection archaeologists have with conflict in the past. They argue that it is very challenging to study past conflict and strike a balance between feeling compassion but not allowing such compassion to override impartial analysis. Where children and violence are concerned compassion is certainly an issue for modern, western archaeologists. Children are seen as helpless, innocent individuals and the general feeling within modern, western society is that it is wrong to involve children in any kind of violence. This results in the topic becoming very emotional for archaeologists. This may be a possible reason why children are not included in most discussions of prehistoric violence in archaeology. However, the concept of a childhood focused on learning and play and not on significant social or economic contribution is a modern concept. It is also a concept still not present in all areas of the modern world, even though it is prevalent in the west. Prehistoric societies may not have viewed childhood in the same way and, therefore, children may have played a more active role in prehistoric conflict than is currently being portrayed in most archaeological narratives.

Chapter Three used case studies to try and put into practice some of the theories, criticisms and suggestions explored in the previous chapters. All of the case studies featured in Chapter Three share some common features in the way in which archaeologists interpret the evidence and subsequently develop narratives. They all focus heavily on the violence evident at the site

as the primary interest feature. Although at Crow Creek the evidence for violence is overwhelming, at both Ofnet and Riviere aux Vase the actual frequency of violence is fairly low when considering the total number of individuals buried and the length of time the sites were in use. Therefore, it could be argued that the archaeologists interpreting and analysing these sites are focusing too heavily on the violence. As Hofmann suggests, perhaps this is because, in modern, western society, violence is considered an abhorrent behaviour which needs to be eradicated. It could also be argued that there is an excessive focus on the violence because many of the victims of this violence are adult females and children, something which is also considered abhorrent and morally wrong in modern, western society. Therefore, archaeologists feel the need to focus on any evidence of violence at a site as a primary feature to discuss even if it is just to prove their own socially expected and appropriate horror at the violence. There is little discussion of the communities' lives at all three sites, other than the way in which they perished.

Also, all of the interpretations of the sites feature a need to find gender differences in evidence for violence and a compulsion to explain away these differences, often basing theories on little or no factual evidence and without discussing fully all the alternative explanations. All of the interpretations use very basic factual data and embellish it with assumptions derived from modern, western notions to create full narratives. However, like most prehistoric sites, none of the sites feature an abundance of evidence and when reduced to bare facts very little can be said for certain concerning the sequence of events at the site or the cultural beliefs and practices of the people using or interred at the sites. It is understandable that archaeologists focus heavily on basic, solid evidence such as biological sex as it is often the only solid evidence available. However, although biological sex is often one of the only tangible and visible types of archaeological evidence available thousands of

years after an individual perished does not necessarily mean that it was the most defining feature of that particular person's life or that it was of paramount importance to the rest of their community. All of the case studies discussed also featured disproportionate population demographics, such as an over or under representation of particular groups of people. However, where there was an over-representation of young adult females the only possibility suggested to explain this was massacre or the males being away or killed in warfare. Even where there were injuries to the young females, the possibility of them being involved in warfare was not mentioned within any of the discourses studied. Where there was an over or under representation of children and infants, sometimes with injuries, this was not discussed beyond mentioning the fact that they were over or under represented.

These case studies reinforced the issues highlighted in Chapter One; that females are almost always discussed in the role of victim and that children are either discussed as part of the female group or their roles are ignored completely. The case studies also highlight in more detail the numerous possibilities which the evidence can support which are currently not being discussed.

The focus of this paper was to examine the archaeological discourse surrounding prehistoric conflict. The aim was to highlight issues within this discourse concerning gender and children's roles, which required more critical discussion within archaeology. It was not the aim of this paper to conduct a full study or reinterpretation of the entirety of evidence for prehistoric conflict. The aim was primarily to initiate discussion. In order to move forward in the excavation, analysis and interpretation of the evidence for prehistoric violence, archaeologists must begin to re-examine their own culture-bound assumptions concerning

male, female and child roles in prehistoric conflict. Vandkilde (2006a) argues that the current view of the prehistoric warrior is static and does not take into account the variability of these roles within and between societies. This re-examination must begin at the excavation stage. It may be beneficial to collect other types of data prior to biological sex and/or age. For example, looking primarily at artefact types first and foremost before identifying sex and/or age. This may enable archaeologists to view prehistoric communities in a light which is closer to how they may have viewed themselves, rather than looking at them from a modern, western perspective.

There must also be a clear distinction made between biological sex and culturally-defined gender. Many archaeologists have preconceived notions about what it is appropriate for men, women and children to do and often evidence is moulded around these notions. Any evidence which might challenge any of these notions is explained away in a manner which fits with the notions of the archaeologist or is simply ignored. Evidence should be excavated and examined with as little assumption and bias as possible. The explanation of events or suggestion of cultural beliefs that the evidence provides should be taken without attempting to fit such sequences or beliefs around modern, western systems of belief and understanding, however strange those events and/or beliefs may seem from a modern, western perspective.

It is not the intention of this paper to suggest that any of the theories or interpretations discussed are categorically wrong or implausible in any way. Indeed, all of the theories and interpretations discussed are very much plausible and possible explanations for the evidence. They are, however, only a fraction of the number of possible explanations and theories which could be possible based on the evidence available. The issue lies with the manner in which

such theories and interpretations are being presented within the archaeological discourse. Rather than presenting theories and interpretations as one of a number of plausible options, many archaeologists are simply presenting one theory or interpretation, often heavily influenced by modern, western culture-specific beliefs and ideas, as the only one. It would be beneficial to explain clearly that the evidence is usually sparse and supportive of multiple explanations.

To summarise, archaeologists must be consciously aware of their own culture-bound assumptions about gender, children and warfare, conflict and violence. This awareness should begin at the excavation stage and biological sex or age should not necessarily be the first or most primary piece of data gathered. Pre-conceived ideas about the gendered nature of warfare, conflict and violence must be cast aside and the evidence examined on its own merit rather than moulding the evidence around such pre-conceived notions. And, again, it is in no way intended to suggest that any of the theories, interpretations or narratives examined in this study are wrong or implausible in any way. It is merely suggested that the manner in which they are presented (as the one and only explanation) is misleading as the evidence is often not strong or convincing enough to state with any certainty what the sequence of events was or what the cultural beliefs of the community in question were concerning warfare, conflict and violence. Often, the number of possibilities based on the little evidence available is vast and they can stretch far beyond any modern, western notions of gender, children, warfare, conflict and violence.

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### Web Resources

<http://www.womensmemorial.org/PDFs/StatsonWIM.pdf>. Accessed 13.09.2011