

## Re: bronze age weapons

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On 28 Feb 2006 10:01:28 -0800, in sci.archaeology, Day Brown wrote:

I've not seen anyone post a report on the forensic exam of the Varna "chieftan". The notion was proposed in "The Prehistory of Sex" by Taylor. That would explain the presence of the gold penis sheath better than any other theory I know of.

Ok, but the fact that the sheath was buried in the ground point down could have something to do with fertilising the earth, and would suggest that the skeleton was indeed male.

What both the femmonazis and the social conservatives miss was that it was \*sex\* which was used to maintain the peace. Neither of them want to think about that. But those of us who know anything about the psychology of men can understand how a warlord proposing a raid on a place where the men had all regularly gone to get laid in "fertility rite", would regard it with all the enthusiasm of going to burn down a whorehouse.

The point Doug makes about polypod Vikings scratching is relevent, and relates to the even more ancient tradition of the Sauna, in which the heat on the skin was sufficient to kill body lice, while the thermal mass of the host was sufficient to survive for a long enough time.

Not this Doug, I haven't commented on that.

But what seems to have killed off the tradition of 'fertility rites' was the increased speed of Roman roads, such that a man with the clap could arrive in town, whereas before, the rigors of travel were such that one needed to be in perfect health to survive.

Matriarchy worked better in those thinnly populated rural areas with small communities, in which the witches had close personal contact with

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everyone, and was able to control the transmission, not only of STDs, but other pathogens. But as the cities grew, this personal contact was lost, there were brothels and other women offering sexual services– who were not under the care and control of the witch health services.

So– of course, in the cities, the Christian misogyny made more sense. And it would have worked, if monogamy was perfectly practiced. But alas, we are where we are, and with HIV need new solutions.

I dont read every word Doug or anyone else says, so I often dont respond, and often dont bother.

And it shows. It makes life a lot easier if you don't try to respond to people who point out where you are wrong.

I dont have time, nor do very many of us, to repond to every challenge of every point of every post. Timothy Taylor mentions transvestite Balkan chieftains, and since then, I've seen a Discovery channel interview with one such dyke.

I dunno about the dykes you know Doug.

I didn't comment on lesbians, just your use of the word 'dyke'.

The ones I know are more mature,

and dont let any man elicit a feeling of anger no matter what he calls them. The superior dont bother with responding to the sneers of the inferior since they dont need the support of the latter to maintain their position.

<Virtually all archaeologists who study prehistory know that there were ceremonial axes such as the ones you describe above. There were also real axes, used to chop trees and almost certainly in hunting and fighting.> Let's be precise here by your own definition. What they have is \*artifacts\*. In this case, the artifacts are of such thin gold that they are useless as weapons, and are made in the same shape as butterfly icons which are also seen on pottery with icons of the cryalis in the same era.

The oral tradition recorded in myth suggests that the cryalis/butterfly is an allegorical message about rebirth from an apparently dead form. Logically, the holder of the gold wand is a cleric, just as Christian clerics hold the Cross.

There are \*no\* images of such double bitted axes being used on victims such as we see in later eras when the warrior class took over. So–

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while it may be a double bitted axe in \*your\* eyes, many of us would be more interested in what the artifacts meant to those who made and used them.

Again, I didn't comment on double-bitted axes. Nor do I disagree with the last part of your sentence.

I frankly dont care what the femmonazis have to say, and dont bother responding to criticisms of what you, or anyone else think their position is.

Nor did I comment about femmonazis [sic].

By the use of the term, you seem to think that matriarchy

is just as tyrannical as patriarchy. Which suggests a lack of familiarity with male/female instinct. The latter are more emotionally adaptable, and in a patriarchic system, will operate by patriarchic rules just like Maggie Thatcher did.

Rather, I refer you to the Maitreyasamiti Texts in Tocharian A, in which we see the Gautimid Queen in conversation with the living Buddah. And here again, it aint what is there, but what aint there... a total lack of all the ostentatious language we see associated with patriarchic Oriental potentates. Buddah is not like Moses, laying down the law. The two of them engage in polite dialogue, and at the end, agree to consult with the monks at Sibushi.

This is \*NOT\* some kind of femmonazi tyranny, but a typically female search for consenses. Characteristic as well, the brothels in Kucha were owned by the city. In effect, the Gautamid queen is a madam.

As for Timothy Taylor:

Yvonne Marshall The Prehistory of Sex: Four Million Years of Human Sexual Culture. By Timothy Taylor. Bantam/Fourth Estate: 1996. Pp. 353. \$23.95, 18.99.

In this Wide-ranging Survey of sexual behaviour in human history, Timothy Taylor argues, in opposition to sociobiologists, that human sexuality must be understood as primarily cultural rather than biological. To him, the diversity of sexual practices in prehistory indicates that human sexuality is as much a social activity as a reproductive necessity. Combine this with an attempt to account for the origins of patriarchy, and one might reasonably expect a good read. But all is disappointment.

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Just because a book is written for a general audience does not mean it is excused from meeting the requirements of good scholarship. As the successes

of Stephen Jay Gould's many books demonstrate, good scholarship sells widely. Although we cannot all aspire to such pinnacles of achievement, adequate referencing of source material, especially when it is contentious or poorly known, and the development of a coherent, theoretically informed argument, constitute a good start.

But Taylor neglects these basic requirements, offering instead a series of anecdotal comments that lack authority and fail to develop ideas in any meaningful way. This is evident from page four where, sandwiched between titillating speculations about whether Otzi, the Iceman, still has semen preserved in his body and, if so, whether it resides in his scrotum or rectum, we are informed that early hominid females had large clitorises while males "had vanishingly small penises". Thankfully this alarming situation was sorted out in the course of human evolution and the "clitoris

reduced in size, while the penis grew dramatically larger". Such riveting, if dubious, assertions promise a rollicking good story. But, typically, Taylor has little more to tell us and his tossed salad of anecdotes eventually becomes boring.

In pursuit of his objective "to challenge the sociobiologists" Taylor provides summaries of theories he intends to take issue with and quotes extensively from authors he wishes to criticize. But, ironically, without a well developed argument of his own, this has the effect of promoting sociobiological ideas to the reader: his thumbnail sketches of other people's theories seem comparatively convincing placed alongside his own. Similarly, his attempts to promote feminist perspectives have the opposite effect because he clearly does not understand the literature on sex, gender and sexuality and cannot even use these concepts consistently, never mind make an original contribution.

What's more, relevant work by feminists is ignored or commented on only briefly. One example is the work of Adrienne Zihlman and Nancy Tanner, who suggested in 1976 that the first artefact was probably a bag invented by women for carrying plants and babies. Yet Taylor seems to claim this idea for himself: "I believe that the invention of the baby-sling was the single most crucial step in the evolutionary development toward larger brains." Just one more immaculate conception.

In the same way, Marie Louise Sorenson, an archaeologist well known for her work on prehistoric clothing, is never mentioned despite Taylor's frequent use of the idea that clothing transformed sexual relations. Such omissions are numerous. Epitomizing Taylor's failings is the bizarre interpretation he offers for the image portrayed on a silver-gilt horse harness and reproduced as the cover illustration. In this image, a seated man is shown copulating with a woman astride his lap. Another woman holds in one hand a vessel and in the other a plant that hovers over or

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between the couples heads. This scene is usually described as a sacred marriage, and I agree with Taylor that this interpretation takes a fair degree of licence. But his own assertion that "it seems clear that the man is being seduced, even raped", made on the basis that the man must be drugged and the plant obscures his view of the woman, is simply ridiculous.

The challenge to sociobiology presented by the archaeological evidence of past human sexuality informed by feminist theory is not only real, but also has the potential to transform our understanding of what sex, gender and sexuality mean in human terms. To find it reduced to a series of facile, unfounded assertions is enraging. One can only hope that a more intelligent treatment will appear quickly.

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