Major shift of gears here
- from methods and materials to be analyzed
- to questions about the past we want to answer

Gender roles
- to understand a society, past or present, one of the basic issues is the relations between men and women
  - determines a lot about family structure
  - how people spend their time
  - how economy is organized, etc.

Sex and gender
- **sex**: biological male, female, or occasionally intersex (one or two in 1000)
- **gender, gender role**: the social categories constructed to accommodate variations in sex and associated behaviors
  - in some societies, gender closely parallels sex
    - with alternatives being suppressed or not considered to be distinctly different
  - other societies have "third" genders, which may be heterosexual, homosexual, asexual, or have other sexual aspects
    - in some cases, “genders” are not even tied to sexual activity at all
  - gender roles have many components that are not biologically connected to sex
    - expected forms of dress
    - expected ways of speaking
    - expected jobs or tasks
      - roles such as being shamans, handling the dead, or other socially-charged tasks are sometimes restricted to certain genders, sometimes "third" genders
    - degrees and arenas of power and respect, etc.
- **gender ideology**: beliefs about nature of gender, relationships, power, etc. associated with gender

Gender in archaeology
- we should not assume that gender roles in the past are the same as we know them now, in our own culture
  - instead, we should attempt to reconstruct them from the available evidence
- research questions:
  - what different kinds of gender roles and ideologies have existed at different times and places?
    - that is, what is the range of possibilities that humans have tried out?
  - how and when did our own (or other modern) society’s gender roles and ideologies arise?
  - what roles have gender systems played in shaping other aspects of prehistory and the evolution of societies?
- in practice, much of this work has emphasized debunking assumptions
replacing them with rigorously supported alternatives has been much harder
- typical: ridiculing old museum displays, textbooks, and popular culture documentaries
  - this has current political value
  - it denies that any one gender system (particularly one that is disadvantageous for females) is ancient, inherent, "right", or unchangeable
- unfortunately, really sound gender archaeology will be extremely difficult
  - because gender categories are in people's heads
  - they may not be material in any obvious way
  - so reconstructing gender roles is a great but maybe unachievable goal
- The most straightforward way of addressing gender in the past: burials
  - what goods are buried with biological males, and what with females?
  - or other variation, like positions of the body, form of the tomb, etc.
  - but burials require caution
    - goods are placed in them by the survivors, not the occupants
    - for complex reasons
      - ideas about death and the afterlife, if any
        - what might be needed there
        - do the dead stay in contact with us, can they affect us, and what do they want?
        - are the dead benificent, dangerous, malevolent…?
        - are possessions of the deceased dangerous, or polluted?
      - politics and status of survivors as well as deceased
        - to impress others at the burial event
        - with the survivors’ wealth
          - or religious piety
          - or modesty, etc.
        - grave goods may not be what the deceased would have wanted
          - may not even be particularly related to the deceased…
    - also, biological sex of the bones does not necessarily tell us the gender identity of the deceased
      - often, but not always
  - example of Upper Mantaro (Peru) burial with a spindle whorl (for spinning yarn from wool) and an infant
    - excavator assumed it was female
    - turned out to be male
  - Example: Upper Mantaro (Peru) sex differences in maize consumption
    - bone isotopic fractionation of $^{13}C$
    - males consumed more maize
      - presumably as chicha beer
    - using historical and ethnographic analogy, probably due to extensive feasting put on by local leaders supported by the Inka state
    - in which women participated less or not at all
    - suggests males’ roles in public, political realm
    - vs. females’ roles in less public realm
Example of gender issues in archaeology: sex roles and ideology at Çatal Hüyük

In Anatolia (Turkey), about 7400 - 6400 BC, calibrated

A neolithic town, densely packed rectangular rooms something like a southwestern pueblo

Architectural/domestic evidence concerning gender roles:

Forty rooms (over 1/4 of all rooms excavated) were sufficiently decorated that the excavator James Mellaart called them "shrines"

Although others suggest that many were just decorated rooms

Reliefs on walls

Include arrays of bumps that Mellaart interpreted as modeled human breasts

Inside the clay of each is the cranium of a raptorial bird or a wild feline - dangerous predatory animals

Stone and clay female “statues”, showing young woman; woman giving birth to child, ram, or bull; older woman; possibly variants of a single deity

Usually found in grain storage areas

A recently found one is a fat female on the front… and a skeleton on the back!

Apparently some complex ideas about female gender, fertility, dangerous animals, and death

A few male “statues” as well

Wall paintings showing hunts by people with pointed black beards

Burial evidence concerning gender roles:

Burials of both sexes contained textiles, wooden vessels and boxes

Female burials: jewelry, bone spatulae and spoons, obsidian mirrors, baskets with red pigment powder

But also adzes, which are heavy woodworking tools, for tasks like squaring up beams

Male burials: maceheads, flint daggers, obsidian points, bone hooks and eyes, belt fasteners

Suggesting hunting, maybe fighting; fasteners suggest more warm clothing, possibly needed for hunting

But also clay seals… why?

Easier with literate societies like the Maya

Example of male and female elites such as lintels from Yaxchilan

Point: gender roles are interesting, but tough to work out with archaeological data

Kinship

System of identifying and relating to relatives by descent and marriage

Nuclear or extended family organization

Form of marriage

Monogamous (one male, one female)

Polygamous (more than two spouses)

Polygynous (multiple females)

Polyandrous (multiple males), etc.

Descent system: how family line, inheritance, etc. are determined and passed on

Matrilineal (through wife’s / mother’s kin)

People belong to a given matrilineage
− patrilineal (through husband’s / father’s kin)
  − people belong to a given patrilineage
  − bilateral or ambilateral (both play major roles)
− **residence system**: rules of where new couples live
  − matrilocal (couple lives with wife’s relatives)
  − patrilocal (couple lives with husband’s relatives)
  − neolocal (couple sets up an independent household)
− clans: groups of lineages that are believed to be related
− moieties: two halves of a society, each including multiple lineages and clans, if present
− crucial for understanding any living society
  − affects organization of power
  − often based on matrilineages and/or patrilineages
  − distribution of wealth and tasks
  − the context for almost everything in people’s lives
− like gender, kinship is hard to get at archaeologically
  − one clue: look at biological relatedness among many burials from a single site
    − using DNA or skeletal markers
    − or markers of birth location, like strontium isotopes
    − or markers of birth ethnicity, like cranial deformation
  − if males are similar, but females vary, we infer patrilocal residence
    − wives were brought into the husband’s group
  − if females are similar, but males vary, then matrilocal residence
− but frankly, kinship practices may be another important aspect of society that archaeology is just not able to recover very well
− like language, music, dance, religious ideas…