

Moving Beyond Gender Stereotypes: Reinterpreting Female Celtic Statues from
Entremont, France

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I. Introduction

This paper addresses the problem of androcentric (male-centered) biases in the interpretation of Celtic art that features women. I use the statues from the site of Entremont, France, as a case study. The Entremont statues are unique because Celtic art does not represent women as often as men, and less so in the form of a statue specifically. These statues, which date prior to the Roman occupation beginning ca. 125 BCE, should have incited further study of women within this small society and the larger Celtic world, as statues of women are not common for these peoples. However, scholars examined these statues through a sexist framework. They saw them only in relation to the male statues at the site; the female statues were not allowed to have any agency or meaning of their own (Py 2011). Also, by downplaying the contributions of women within society, scholars ignore a crucial part of Celtic culture. I suggest that the study of women can shift our view of Celtic society to a more holistic narrative of this ancient group.

After discussing the biases and gender stereotypes in previous interpretation, I analyze the use of gender theory and draw comparisons to other information on Celtic women from archaeology and Classical authors. Looking at statues in a different area of Western Europe, Iberia (present day Spain), also helps us understand Celtic women and their place within society. Burials and burial goods from Celtic and Iberian society are another form of evidence that complicate the interpretation of how gender and power were related within the Mediterranean world. I argue that the analysis of all these archaeological features and artifacts makes it possible to begin asking the right questions about the Celtic women of ancient Gaul in order to gain a wider perspective on them beyond the stereotype of the typical subservient woman.

In the rest of this paper, I first identify who the Celts were, and why the study of these peoples is important to our understanding of the ancient world. Next, I discuss the issues that male bias has caused within archaeology focused on ancient women. As part of this discussion I highlight the statues and interpretations where this bias is prevalent. Using data from burials and statues from ancient Iberia, I challenge the standard view (Py 2011) on gender roles and women's roles in the ancient Mediterranean world. Then, I draw on recent scholarship of these topics (e.g. Arnold 1991, 2012; Diaz-Andreu & Monton-Subias 2013; Dietler 1989, 2015; Hendon 1996; Pollock 1991, 2003; Weintraub & Kumar 1997; Wylie 1991) to show how Celtic women at the site of Entremont, France could have held power within their society. Finally, I look at how women could have held influence over society through domestic activities, and how they could have participated in the greatest display of power in Celtic society: feasting (Dietler 1989, 2015). Through my analysis, I conclude by arguing that the public/ private dichotomy is not useful, as women participated in both the public and private spheres of society.

II. Who were the Celts?

The Celts were ancient peoples who lived in mainland Europe and the Atlantic Isles. Today, there are seven Celtic regions: Scotland, Ireland, Isle of Man, Wales, Cornwall (southwest England), Brittany (eastern France), and Galicia (northwest Spain) (Cunliffe 1997). Present-day conceptualization of the Celts focuses mostly on the peoples of the Atlantic Isles, who are associated with popular symbols such as the claddagh, the color green, and even the concept of the Neo-Druid. The mainland Celts of France, Spain, and other parts of Europe have not had such a place in popular ideas of the Celt.

The Greeks referred to the Celts as the *Keltoi*, which applied to both the insular and mainland peoples. The term *Keltoi* has been present since the 6th century BCE, and was mentioned by 5th century Greek historian Herodotus. The Romans used the Latin term *Galli* and sometimes *Celtae* for these peoples; the Greeks later used the term *Galli* as well (Cunliffe 1997: 2). According to Julius Caesar's Commentaries on the Gallic War, Celtic people of the past referred to themselves as the Celts (Caesar, *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* 1.1).

The area in which many Celts lived, and which is the main focus of this paper, is Mediterranean France. This region is in the southern part of France along the Mediterranean Sea, including present-day Languedoc-Roussillon and Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur. The Gauls lived in this area for the entirety of the Iron Age. When the Greek settlement of Massalia was founded in 600 BCE, the Greeks and Gauls started to trade, and goods such as wine and high-quality vessels came into Celtic society (Luley 2006: 36). Just a few years later, between the years 575 and 550 BCE, Emporion, an important market center in north-east Spain, was settled and, like Massalia, was an important source of goods flowing into southern France (Sanmarti 2008: 21). Also, during this time period, the mainland Celts started to build and live in oppida, which were fortified towns normally situated on hilltops. As time went on, people continued to move from their rural homes in the countryside to the oppida, and these communities became larger and more densely populated (Luley 2006: 36). These types of settlements continued well into the second century BCE. However, the way of life for many Gauls in southern France was interrupted by the Romans sometime between 125-121 BCE, during which a series of campaigns destroyed many of the oppida (Dietler 2010, 257-332; Luley 2006: 36).

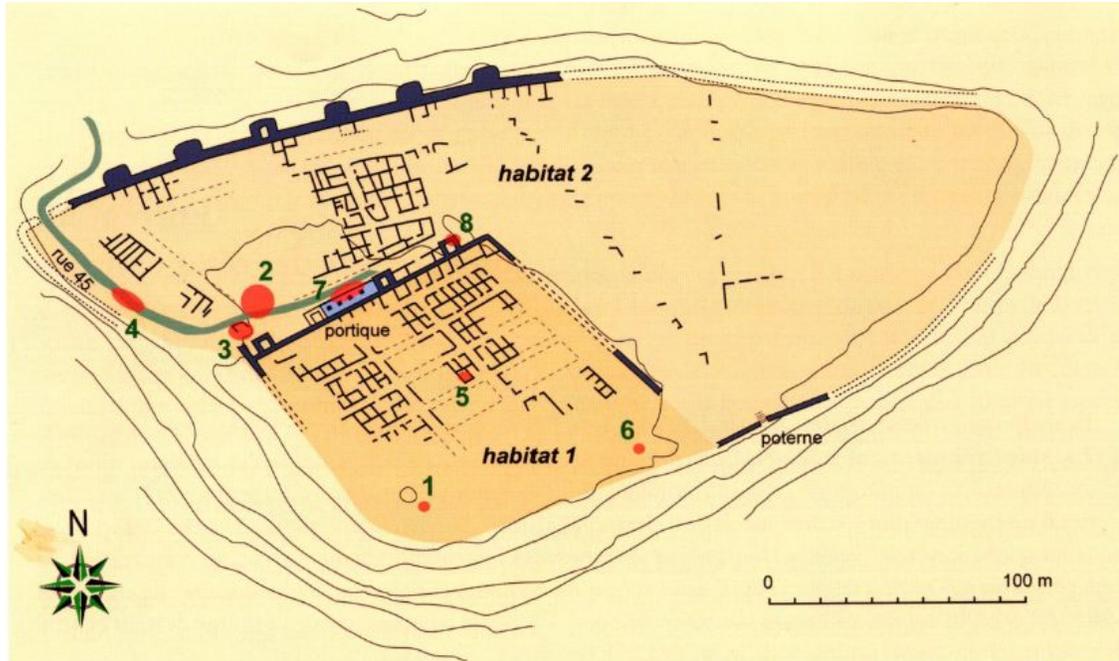


Figure 1: Map of Entremont

Entremont, which was one of the oppida in southern France, was destroyed in ca. 125 BCE. Prior to its destruction, it had existed as a settlement with two occupations: the first from its foundation at the end of the 3rd century BCE to the middle of the second century BCE, and the second during its expansion ca. 150 BCE to its destruction ca. 125 BCE. The site was likely the capital or chief city of the local Celtic peoples known in English as the Salyes and as the Salluvii to the Romans (Hubert 18: 2013), and for this reason was a target of the Romans during their conquest. Evidence that Entremont was destroyed by the Romans is seen through the remains of catapult balls in the destruction layers (Py 2011: 119-120).

The female statues examined in this paper were found in locations 2, 3 and 4 (see Figure 1) in the destruction layer from ca. 125 BCE, and therefore were almost certainly destroyed by the Romans. Male statues were also found around the same area. Locations 2, 3 and 4 are along

the public road next to the settlement, so the statues of the men and women were probably seen as people entered and left the oppidum. The statues were not in their original context; they were placed somewhere in the first phase of occupation, and then moved to the road during the second phase. The statues may have lined the road all the way to location 7, where a monumental portico for displaying trophy heads once stood. However, they were probably not associated with the portico itself, since they were found only leading up to, and not in, the portico. Michel Py postulates that the statues date to 200 BCE, the foundation of the settlement. It is unclear in which context they were displayed during the first phase of Entremont, but they served as public displays during the second phase (Py 2011: 119-121).

III. Problem of Male Bias

Archaeology began as a pastime for wealthy men. However, it has grown to include an astounding community of scholars and theories which are constantly providing new interpretations and shedding light on a variety of peoples from the past. As progressive as this dynamic field is, however, there are still several problems within the study of archaeology and the presentation of its information that can be misleading and detrimental to the study of specific groups.

In examining previous interpretations of the Entremont statues, it becomes clear that the interpretations have been affected by male bias. This creates sexist and incomplete ideas about Celtic women and their place in society. Despite a fairly equal proportion of men and women in the field of archaeology today, some archaeologists have called attention to the issue of androcentrism caused by male bias for several decades (e.g. Slocum 1975; Milton 1979). Male

bias occurs when there is an androcentric view of the peoples or society being studied, which can lead both sexist ideas as well as a disregard for female influence within society. It can be present within both practice and theory, since theory has had a long tradition of being influenced largely by men (Milton 1979: 40). According to April Bailey and Marianne LaFrance, scholar Sandra Bem has gone so far as to believe that androcentrism has caused men to be seen not only as superior to women, but also as more innately human than women. Therefore, she suggests that women have become “othered” in society in some cases (Bailey & LaFrance 1993: 683). This has been a problem since the very beginnings of archaeology, as shown by Jose Pijoan, who dedicates a sentence in his 1912 article to pointing out that he believed the Iberian sculpture he was studying was ugly. “Most of the statues of the Cerro were tolerably ugly, and for a long time no one paid any attention to them...” (Pijoan 1912: 68). This, despite having nothing to contribute to the literature on this topic, expressed the sexist nature of some of these discussions, as well as the “othering” of the statues solely because of the physical characteristics of the women depicted.

Preconceived notions about women and gender through this male bias may also alter the research that men do, leading to information that is neither holistic nor necessarily correct. Sally Slocum addresses issues from male bias in “Woman the Gatherer: Male Bias in Anthropology”, where she discusses how certain activities from the very beginning of human existence, such as hunting, were thought by scholars to be performed solely by males due to their biology, psychology, and other innate factors. This kind of idea excludes women from this part of life and creates an imbalance in the study of peoples and societies (Slocum 1975: 308). Another activity that male scholars have prohibited ancient women from participating in is the making of stone

tools (Gero 1991: 163). Some male archaeologists have suggested that only males created stone tools (Thomas 1983), and the tools were a sign of the intellectual capacity of men (Gero 1991: 165). This is due to stereotypes that exist in the modern, Western world, rather than taking into consideration the context of the period discussed. Since men are often the ones involved in the production and use of tools today, this concept is transferred to ancient society, despite there being no evidence to support a male-exclusive stone tool production (Gero 1991: 168). However, Gero suggests that women could have, and probably did, create stone tools, and were not limited by childcare responsibilities, lack of strength, or lack of intelligence (Gero 1991: 171-176).

Modern female archaeologists are challenging male bias through their archaeological work. Feminist theories have become more popularly employed in archaeology, creating a different lens to view women from ancient societies (e.g. Conkey & Gero 1991, Nelson 2006, Wylie 1991). Scholars such as Margaret Conkey and Joan Gero addressed how the study of women can transform the study of archaeology by questioning the frameworks that archaeologists have worked within previously (Conkey & Gero 1991: 6). By challenging the stereotypical characteristics of genders and their influence, no longer do we have the invisible woman who needs to be found among the context of their society (Conkey & Gero 1991: 12). The androcentric past must be engendered if archaeologists are going to move beyond gender stereotypes and the limitations that come with them.

Western Europe has had varying success in the incorporation of gender archaeology, often due to the history and culture of the area in which it is being practiced. Spain, which has had a long history of repression and lack of freedom in anthropology, finally came to the forefront in gender archaeology after the end of the Franco dictatorship. The right-wing

dictatorship restricted the amount of creative activity in the field of anthropology, as well as in several other fields. When Franco's rule ended in 1975, second-wave feminism came sweeping into the country, and scholars eagerly took up gender archaeology beginning in the 1980s. Also encouraging these different theoretical approaches were changes within universities after the end of the dictatorship. Older professors retired, and they were replaced by younger academics who brought fresh ideas, and students, now allowed to study abroad, brought back cultural ideas and experiences to further archaeology in Spain (Diaz-Andreu & Monton-Subias 2013: 440).

While Spanish archaeology has enjoyed some success in gender archaeology, issues still remain. French archaeologists have not generally adopted some approaches that have become common in other areas of the world, specifically regarding gender. Scholars such as Diaz-Andreu and Monton-Subias describe gender and archaeology in France as going in opposite directions to each other (Diaz-Andreu & Monton-Subias 2013: 439), and French scholars have expressed disinterest in these theoretical approaches due to cultural differences. "French archaeologists appear perplexed by what they consider to be a historically and culturally specific Anglo-American concern with gender, a term that, they claim, has no translation into French." (Conkey and Gero 1997: 414). For many archaeologists in France, the concept of gender does not transfer over to French cultural ideas, and therefore they do not apply these ideas the same way as other countries. This is prevalent in the study of statues in Entremont, France, in which the female statues found were not given nearly as much consideration as the male statues, despite being a more unusual find.

While male statues are fairly common among Celtic sites, the female statues from Entremont pose interesting questions: who do these statues represent? and how do they fit into to

Celtic society? The female statues provide a rare opportunity to look at the lives of Celtic women in the society of Entremont and beyond. However, the male archaeologists who excavated this site and subsequently wrote about the results did not provide as detailed of interpretations of the female statues, and many of the interpretations that they provided seem very biased. The male statues were given most of the attention, not only because of the greater prominence of them across many Celtic societies, but also because French scholars seem to believe that they are more telling of Celtic life and customs than the few female statues at Entremont. Therefore, it is one purpose of this paper to try to give the women of Entremont greater visibility through examining the statues without placing them against men and their “inarguable” dominance in society.

IV. Entremont Statues

The most comprehensive source of information for these statues comes from Michel Py’s *La Sculpture Gauloise Meiridionale*, a book on Mediterranean Celts published in 2011. Py dedicates only a few pages to describing several fragmented female statues and summarizing how scholars have interpreted them. The data considered here consist of six fragmented statues, each containing a piece that makes them identifiable as female as opposed to male. The statues that are examined in this paper are Statue #40, Statue #41, Statue #42, Statue #43, Statue #47 and Statue #48 (see Appendix A, Figure 2). The data represented do not include all of the statues found, but rather those reported by Py, which have best survived and are therefore able to be studied more thoroughly (See Appendix A, Figures 3-8 for pictures of the statues).

Statues #40, #41, and #42 are fragments consisting of heads, which are stylistically female. All have veils which cover their hair and at least some part of the ears, and all have

similar noses, eyes, and mouths. However, the heads differ in the presence of jewelry and which jewelry adorns the women, and the positioning of the head in relation to the rest of the body.

Statues #40 and #42 are both wearing earrings; the veils do not obscure so much of the ears as to hide this attribute. The earrings from Statue #42 are reminiscent of La Tène Period artistic styles from Switzerland in the second and third centuries CE. Statue #42 also was found with a torc, which was a neck ring typically made from a metal, and was a sign of wealth and status within Celtic society (Py 2011: 157). Statue #41 is apparently devoid of jewelry on the head, as the veil covering the head also completely obscures the ears of the woman. Statue #40 is unique because the head is tilted upwards, and the woman seems to be looking up at something or someone, whereas the other heads are looking straightforward.

Statue #43 and #48 are remains of other parts of the bodies of the female statues, the first of the shoulder and lower back, and the second of the feet and a pedestal which is attached to them. Statue #43 consists of two fragments which represent the upper right shoulder (from the back side) and the lower torso. These pieces show details of the textured garments worn by the woman, depicted in a series of horizontal and vertical lines, as well as the length of the veil worn on the heads. The veil, which travels from the top of the head all the way down the center of the back, is decorated with a fringe at the very bottom, shown by the series of parallel horizontal lines.

The fragment from statue #47 is the hand and wrist of a female statue, decorated with a large bracelet that recalls bronze bracelets from the Teste-Negre type, named after the site of Teste-Negre. There were three bracelets of this type found: the first is associated with a hand that is flat against the drapery of a female garment, the second is the fragment from statue #47, with

the hand enclosed around an object, and the third is too degraded for further study. The bracelets were molded, and they belong to La Tène plastic style art (Py 2011: 159). The enclosed hand is important for one of my arguments later in this paper.

The last of the statues in the data set is #48, which is the feet and the pedestal upon which the statue stood. Both feet are present, with the right positioned slightly in front of the left, and they are in leather sandals. The pedestal has drawn interest in some scholars, and some believe that the statue, rather than standing, is seated with her legs up near her chest. The pedestal may be part of a type of high seat that the female rested upon. This kind of comparison can be seen in Iberian statues such as the Dama de Baza and Dama de Cerro de los Santos, which both depict women as sitting in thrones (Py 2011: 160).

Michel Py (2011: 162-164) also provides a useful overview of his own interpretation of these statues as well as those of four other scholars. I summarize his overview to give a sense of the different ideas that have been presented and to make apparent the sexism in these views of the female statues. The current interpretations of these statues were put forth by male archaeologists from France who each believed that the women are representative of something different. However, none of these men took into consideration that women could have held status in their own right, but rather were heavily analyzed in regard to the men.

As summarized by Py, the late Fernand Benoit, the first archaeologist who discovered these statues between 1943-1947 (Py 2011: 154), interpreted the female statues as figures serving funerary and religious purposes, associated with deceased divinities or deified ancestors (Py 2011: 162). Therefore, he believed that these women were figures from mythology. Despite his interpretation that the women were worthy of worship within society, he made it clear that they

were not representative of actual members of society, which could potentially make it difficult to equate these women to real life.

Again drawing upon Py, the French archaeologist François Salviat, who discovered more fragments of the female statues in 1976 (Py 2011: 154), in contrast, does not believe these statues to represent divinities. Rather, he thinks that they could have been members of society who would have commissioned the creation of the art. Despite this, he does not believe that the female statues represent powerful females in their own right, but represent women who are associated with men in power. He describes the sculptures as “chefs et des dames” (Py 2011: 163), translating to “the chiefs and their ladies”, therefore placing all of the power on the males and leaving the women as simply ladies or wives who hold no position of their own.

Patrice Arcelin and Andre Rapin, the third and fourth archaeologists to examine the female statues, Py describes as reaffirming Salviat in that they believe the statues represent real members of society, who were likely part of the aristocracy or warrior class. These two are unique in their belief that the statues date stylistically from before Entremont was established, c. 300 BCE, although this has not and likely cannot be proven. They believe that the women are sitting on low seats, especially through the examination of the feet and pedestal of Statue #48 (Py 2011: 164). Arcelin and Rapin also believe that the statues could have some ritual context, and they postulate that some of the statues may have held stone representations of *situlae*, a kind of bronze vessel used for ritual and feasting (see Appendix A, Figure 9). Type Eggers 18 *situlae*, which were present c.150-80 BCE or even earlier, were found on the site of Entremont. They could be related with women of Entremont and could also indicate a more egalitarian society.

Lastly, the author of the most comprehensive text on the female statues from Entremont, Michel Py, gives his own interpretations of how these statues fit into the larger context of Celtic society. Unlike Arcelin and Rapin, he does not believe that the statues date before 200 BCE, and does not think there is a such a large hierarchy in which there was an aristocracy as they had described. Instead, he postulates that Celtic society was fairly egalitarian, but strays slightly from equality with the male and female statues, which he believes represents local elites. Sexism is prevalent in his interpretation of Statue #40 particularly, which is the head that it tilted upwards. He believes that in her soft expression she gazes upwards at a man in admiration and submission, rather than enjoying any kind of equality in power with men (Py 2011: 168).

The statues serve to represent how many women of the past are not given any agency. Many scholars examine them based off preconceived gender ideals, often discounting their societal influence in favor of the stereotypical ancient man, who is more physically, economically, and politically powerful than the ancient woman. Whenever there are instances of women displaying some sort of power over society, it is considered an anomaly, something uncommon, and therefore unique. Archaeology has become accustomed to these kinds of ideas, and the right kinds of questions are not asked and spheres of life not examined in order to give a new definition of power to women. For too long women have been hidden in the shadows of the men in their lives, their voices not heard, and their authority not taken seriously. However, it is clear that women in the Mediterranean world were not passive observers of the world around them, but they contributed heavily to all parts of their societies.

VI. Using Burial Data to Add Context to the Entremont Statues

The limitations of these interpretations are that they create a very narrow and sexist view of Celtic society in the past. It recalls to mind what Alison Wylie wrote in her article on gender theory in archaeology, “Women worthies and women’s contributions were often judged against criteria that had been developed in consideration of male-associated activities.” (Wylie 1991: 39).

The reluctance of male archaeologists to give Celtic women agency in regard to these statues does not reflect the evidence for power and exceptionalism seen in women from Western Europe. However, many burials and their associated materials indicate women in Celtic and Iberian society could have held some dominance in their settlements, and sometimes possessed power in spheres that women were thought to have been excluded from. The Celtic burial of the Lady of Vix, located in northern France, the Iberian burial at Baza with the Iberian statue known as the “Dama de Baza”, and the Iberian cinerary urn known as the “Dama de Elche” exemplify women with power in Western Europe, and why it is imperative that archaeologists examine carefully the lives of women in ancient society.

Bettina Arnold, an archaeologist who studies Celtic society with a focus on women, believes that they held high status positions, and that archaeologists do not take them into consideration because of the androcentric view of many scholars:

There were certain conditions in Iron Age society in which women were able to occupy high status positions, whether by dint of ability, marriage, birth, or a combination of all three. This happened frequently enough to warrant closer examination...The picture we have of Iron Age society at present is grossly oversimplified in favor a male dominated

world view. (Arnold 1991: 373)

The strongest example of a powerful female in Celtic society comes from the burial of the Lady of Vix from 500-480 BCE, which is an elaborate representation of elite status. The burial, which was found in northern France in the province of Burgundy, was considered ornate and exceptional in its own right. Archaeologists found several imported and expensive items within the grave, including a decorated wagon box, a large bronze krater from Magna Grecia (which is the largest of its kind known in central Europe), and an elaborate gold torc which was imported from Iberia (Arnold 1991: 366-368). These items alone would indicate that this individual held high status that allowed them not only the means to get such widespread items, but also that they could afford them. As an economically and politically strong individual, most people immediately declared the individual to be male, not even considering that women could hold such great strength over these realms of life.

However, the remains were sexed to be female through skeletal analysis (Arnold 1991: 370). Also, all of the other items found in the grave and in association with the body of the deceased were not clearly indicative of either sex and were only used to assign status (Arnold 1991: 368-369). For example, weapons are found in both female and male burials (although many do not like to believe that women could be associated with weaponry) and was a sign of rank rather than of sex. Therefore, the skeletal analysis was the only factor that could be used to determine the sex. Arnold describes this burial as “almost certainly exceptional, but it is not unique” (Arnold 1991: 373), indicating that this woman’s status in society could have been part of a larger norm in which women could hold power as well as men.

Despite there being a clear indication that this burial belonged to a female, archaeologists have tried very hard to discredit the idea that a woman could be powerful by her own ability and worth, or even that a woman could be powerful at all. Some scholars have gone so far as to suggest that the interred was a transvestite warrior (Arnold 2012: 216-217), as if this was the only way to explain the feminine attributes seen in a grave of this kind of wealth and status. Also brought to the forefront through this discreditation is the concept of exceptionalism, and the idea that women needed to have it in order to be highly regarded within society. This concept was most prominently attributed to the Vix Princess by Christopher Knusel. According to Arnold, Knusel believed that the Vix Princess had features that “othered” her from society, and therefore allowed her to become an agent of ritual practice. After some testing and examination of the physical remains, it was determined that the Vix Princess may have had physical deformities in her face and body that made her stand out. Due to these abnormalities especially, Knusel argues that members of her society thought she had healing abilities (Arnold 2012: 218-219). “Knusel elevated the Vix Princess to elite status on the basis of her physical anomalies, which he interpreted as providing her with the exceptional qualities necessary to justify placing a woman in a position of power” (Arnold 2012: 219). Therefore, to scholars such as Knusel, it seemed simply too far out of the realm of possibilities for the Vix Princess to hold any power over the society in which she lived unless there were extraordinary conditions which allowed her to do so.

However, in Spain, where gender archaeology is more progressive and willing to see females as agents of power and authority, scholars have given more attention to several burials and statues associated with interred females, and their roles in society. The Dama de Elche, which is an Iberian stone urn depicting the well-known bust from 4th c. BCE in present-day

Elche, Spain, depicts a highly decorated woman from Iberian society. This woman has an abundance of jewelry and other decorations on her body, consisting of several long necklaces across her chest and a large, and a complex headdress which consists of a diadem across the top of the head and two large circular pieces on the sides of her head. She wears a cloak with a garment underneath. The bust became even more intriguing at the discovery of an opening in the back, which holds the remains of a cremated body. Although it is impossible to tell which sex was situated in the Dama de Elche (Pilar-Luxan 2011: 7), its use as a funerary device is very telling nonetheless. The Dama, if depicting the person whose ashes were placed inside, would indicate that women in Iberian society held important positions in any number of roles. Considering that she looks almost royal in her appearance, she could have been a queen or another member of aristocracy. The most popular interpretation of the Dama de Elche is that she was an aristocratic woman from the area who was deified by her descendants. Therefore, scholars suggest that this woman was widely respected and honored enough to have been considered worthy of divine status, indicating that her roles went beyond the private sphere of domestic life (“Interpretations of the Lady of Elche”).

The Dama de Baza (4th century BCE) is another Iberian statue located within a grave context from Baza, Spain, and it has an entire necropolis associated with it. The burial in which the Dama was found contained the body of a woman (Prados & Izquierdo 2006: 492). This statue, which depicts a high-status woman sitting in a throne, is similar to the Dama de Elche in that she is dressed in a cloak with a tunic underneath and is decorated with large necklaces and earrings. The head covering on her is less complex than that of the Dama de Elche, but she is obviously representative of someone in power. Her left hand is curved, and it likely held some

type of offering to the deceased. Within the grave itself, there were burial goods that broke the general gender dichotomy of items thought to be associated with males and items thought to be associated with females. The burial held a fine piece of armor, which was typically associated with males only (Prados & Izquierdo 2006: 492-493).

More interesting, however, is the space around which the deceased was buried, which reflected an even greater importance of this individual. The necropolis was organized around the Dama de Baza's burial, as if this was the main and most important focus (Prados & Izquierdo 2006: 492). Instead of disturbing the interred in order to build perhaps more efficiently or the way they had first wanted, everything was built in association with this one deceased person in mind, showing a level of respect and dignity which may not have been present for other buried peoples.

Through these several burials and statues, it is clear that women were not defined to secondary roles in the Western Mediterranean world and beyond, and they held power in society. The Lady of Vix, who was an influential woman given enough importance to be buried with incredibly rare and expensive items, shows that Celtic peoples did not omit women in their structures of power. The Iberian cases also show measures taken to display the female as having a strong position within society economically, as seen with the fine garments both statues wear, and politically, as a throne, as seen with the Dama de Baza, and would indicate some kind of authority. This is further emphasized in the Baza Necropolis, since the burial of this woman seemed to be the main feature of the site, with all the other structures created around and in consideration of this grave.

V. Women in Power

The statues from Entremont and the Celtic and Iberian burials raise the question as to whether or not the women from this settlement held power, and if so, where and how they exerted this power. As already noted, many archaeologists did not consider that women could be powerful. Whether these women are stereotypically lumped into a domestic sphere, or are not even regarded at all, they have had difficulty finding their place in modern discussions on many ancient societies and the people which comprised them. Alison Wylie summarizes this up well when she writes:

Dominant archaeological theories can obscure women and gender as subjects directly, by incorporating assumptions about women and gender that explicitly deny their relevance for understanding the subject domain, and indirectly, by selectively directing attention to certain categories of variables or dimensions of the subject domain that exclude women or gender on the assumption that they are irrelevant to its understanding (Wylie 1991: 37).

Recognizing different forms of power in society is important in determining if Celtic women did hold positions of power, and within which contexts. Most people associate power with political authority or economic control; however, there are many more facets of society to consider.

Women may be dominant in one sphere of life, while men may be dominant in another. Through this, neither sex is necessarily subordinated, but they are important in different areas of society.

Women may have more power in a setting such as religious activity, which may be just as central

to society as economics or politics for a certain groups. In ritual settings, it is not uncommon to have on record instances in which women were priestesses and could be a part of important ritual activities (Pollock 1991: 369-370), whereas men could not. They could have held power over men in these cases, since they had specific rights to an activity. Women and their activities may also transgress the spheres of influence that scholars may wish to define them under. I suggest that the French scholars who have analyzed the female statues from Entremont have not considered the larger implications of women's contributions to society.

Due to the abundance of literary and archaeological data that discusses the different kinds of power held by Celtic men, women whose roles are expressed to some extent in these two media are often considered in relation to the activities of men within society. Celtic men were known to be powerful military, political, and social leaders, leaving little to no room for women to explore power in these spheres, so thought by many archaeologists. However, it is clear that these women were not passive in their society and the men did not assume all of the vital roles. In fact, we need to look beyond the stereotypical roles within society as well, as scholars are often caught up in trying to put aspects of the ancient world into a paradigm that fits into present-day events and conditions.

According to texts written by Julius Caesar and Strabo, women in Celtic society held some power over their own social lives and were able to have some agency and choice within this sphere of life. In their texts, they discuss the physical attributes of the Celtic peoples and cultural aspects of their society. Both ancient authors write with some degree of surprise that Celtic women seem to have power in areas where Roman women never would. Julius Caesar recorded that Celtic women had control over finances within their marriage, and therefore held

equal economic authority with their husbands. Marriage wealth was kept in a joint account, and the man would match the amount of money that he received from his wife's dowry and place it in the account. Whichever spouse died first, the other received the entirety of the funds, with no regard to gender (Caesar, *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* 6.19). Strabo, in *Geography*, goes even further as to describe how Celts' customs were opposite for men and women as compared to the Romans, "Their [the Gauls'] practice in regard to men and women, of distributing their tasks in a way opposite to our custom, is one which is common to many other barbarian peoples" (Strabo, *Geography* 4.4.3). Although Strabo is rather vague in what he considers to be opposite of Roman custom, we can postulate a few things. In Roman society, women were often not included in public activities except for in some religious and ritual contexts (Rawson 1987), such as in the case of the Vestal Virgins (Rawson 1987: 51). Therefore, the opposite role for women in Celtic society would be to perform public activities. Public activities that men were a part of in Roman society included farming, since they were often the ones on the fields doing the heavy tasks. However, in Celtic society, women could have controlled many forms of food production, from being the ones who farmed, cooked, and served the food in various contexts within society. Strabo's comment could have extended even further into other realms of life; it is not so unusual to believe that Celtic women could have held power over politics, economics, or even in the case of Boadicea, the militaristic endeavors of Celtic society.

Figures such as Boadicea show how women can be vital to the autonomy of Celtic society. Boadicea, a Celtic woman from the British Isles, led her tribe against the Romans in 60 CE (MacDonald 1988: 40). Leading them into battle, she brandished weapons and fought just as the men. She was considered an anomaly due to her deviation from gender norms, but also

proved that it was not so strange for women to have status in realms outside of what is stereotypical. Despite these ancient accounts from those who encountered the Celts, scholars today still subordinate the women of Entremont.

The myth of the founding of Marseilles in 600 BCE also seems to support the idea that Celtic women held some rights over their own social lives. In the story, Gyptis, the daughter of King Nanus of the Segobriges, is able to choose who she wishes to wed by offering the groom a cup symbolic of her decision. During the large feast attended by her suitors, including men who had just arrived from Ionia in Greece, Gyptis chooses a Greek man named Protis as her husband. King Nanus then gives Protis, his new son, an area in which to start a new city with Gyptis. This city becomes Massalia, which later becomes Marseilles (Dietler 2010: 1). Therefore, it was not the decision of the king, despite having power over all of his peoples including his family, but his daughter, who had the right to choose the person she was going to marry. Her place in the feast also reflected the powerful position she held within this activity, going against the common notion that it was an exclusively male event and that women could not participate in a public sphere. While this is mytho-history, it represents a model for real world action for a society that could have given women this agency in their own lives.

The issue of the subordination of women greatly stems not only from male bias, but also from the way that scholars have become accustomed to analyzing ancient societies. Western societal systems have had a long history of a binary of public and private, two spheres of life that were separate from one another, and to some extent were also engendered. This does not allow for the full scope of contributions from women or men. Many scholars today (e.g. Hansen 1997; Hendon 1996; Rotman 2006) reject the use of the public/private dichotomy since it does not

account for span of influence that many types of activities have on society. The domestic private sphere, thought only to have influence on the home and those within it, limited women in how they could assert power within society. This calls to mind Roger Handsman's discussion on how women are often restrained to roles that are conventional for the female sex based on archaeologists' own preconceived notions:

Women are 'discovered' in all the most familiar social, mythical, and sexual places, and their roles, archaeological presence, and cultural positions are, restricted to these places. By seeing and talking about women in this way...art can be about women but it cannot empower them, nor can it be made by them. (Handsman 1991: 333)

Roger Handsman proposes that women in many societies can be represented through artistic media, but scholars do not see status and power in feminine art, nor the female itself as an active agent in its production. Instead, scholars confine women to the sections of life that are expected of them, without any further examination into the implications of artistic pieces. The French scholars previously mentioned have fallen into this trap as well, with none expressing any ideas that could lend to female empowerment.

Generally, the public sphere refers to what is open and accessible, or part of a collective system in which several individuals are involved. The private sphere refers to the opposite, and therefore is associated with what is generally hidden and/or only available for an individual (Weintraub & Kumar 1997: 1-5) or intimate group associated with an individual. Scholars have applied this binary in a variety of ways across many societies, and therefore it cannot be universally defined. The accessibility does not mean that everyone within this group had equal

opportunity within the public sphere, as there was some hierarchy that distinguished different groups from one another. Regarding Celtic society, the public sphere includes the economic, political, and social interactions outside the home that are seen as way to display power.

Archaeologists tend to assume that men were associated with the public sphere. The private sphere, therefore, is seen as the place of women, who are regarded as the hidden background figures who take care of household duties, and do not have as much influence in their settlement. The stereotypical domestic role that many archaeologists believed women held was hidden in that they were out of the public eye within their homes, and therefore away from all of the commercial and political activity; it was individual as their households consisted of the family unit, a small group tied closely with the individual. Even if we work within these preconstructed spheres of influence, there is much overlap within roles supposedly confined to one area of life, and how they affected society as a whole.

Archaeologists (e.g. Brown 1970; Py 2011; Thomas 1983) have assigned women to the roles which have been approved for their gender by present-day standards, despite cultural differences in the idea of gender and the ways that they should perform. Present-day narratives put ancient women in the domestic sphere, where they take care of the home, children, and other aspects associated with these things. Women in Celtic society, if they were confined solely to the domestic sphere that they have been placed in by male archaeologists, need to be examined within the context of their power over the household. This has become the norm in societies of the Mediterranean, emphasized by the semi-recent stereotypical domestic roles performed by women in many Western societies. However, all cultures have different ideas on gender roles, and these shift too over time, as shown in the European and American societies where women

are now taking charge in the workplace, and some men are staying home to perform the domestic duties.

Patrice Arcelin, Andre Rapin, and François Salviat, the archaeologists who believed that these statues represented women who were associated with men in power, but did not have any power from their own accomplishments within society, do not take into account the roles they could have as “simply” the wives of the chiefs. If these women had any kind of association with chiefs, they would have likely had some more influence over society than lower class women and also lower-class men. In any case, women who were or were not associated with powerful men performed tasks in the household, where they were the head of their own smaller community within the larger settlement, and therefore exercised incredible influence on the development of Entremont as a whole.

However, archaeologists almost always equate domestic responsibilities to lesser responsibilities as compared to political and economic roles within societies. While scholars give the men a large amount of credit for their military prowess, their writing and enacting of laws, and for their association with both the successes and failures of their people, women provide the means to maintain their society in ways that are not noticed or appreciated by most scholars.

Domestic activities were, and still are, the building blocks of many parts of society, and therefore influence aspects within and outside of the household. Therefore, the public/ private dichotomy is useless in a few ways. Diaz-Andreu and Monton-Subias introduced the concept of maintenance activities, which are necessary for stability of daily life. They describe the maintenance activities as “practical chores involved in the management of daily life from a gender-oriented perspective: cleaning, making clothes...these activities become indispensable

for social stability and governance of daily life.” (Diaz-Andreu & Monton-Subias 2013: 443)

Through these seemingly average, everyday activities, women exert power over all of society, allowing for social order and the existence of all other systems in place within a settlement.

Some of the activities associated with the home, and therefore thought to have been the responsibility of the woman, were child rearing, cooking, and making clothing. Each of these activities is vital for society, and without these functions, the entire basis on which society is formed would be dismantled. When examining the roles of Celtic women through the concept of the maintenance activities, the dichotomy between public and private spheres becomes obsolete.

First and foremost, women are the ones who produce new members of society through childbirth and allow it to grow and continue. Then, these women were tasked with creating productive members of society who share the values and mindset of the community to continue its success. Therefore, it is evident that the women within Celtic society, had they just been limited to household roles, still would have had a profound impact on Celtic society and its social order.

Clothing was not only a necessary item to bear the weather and fit into the societal norm, but it also distinguished status, gender, and other identities (e.g. DiPaolo Loren 2003; Tarlo 1996; Twigg 2009). Men and women dressed differently in Entremont based on several factors. The statues of men wear more revealing outfits, exposing sometimes their midsections and a large majority of the legs, and the wealthy women associated with the men wear fine garments that covered them from head to toe, with a veil upon their heads and a dress going down to the ankles. The style of the female garments was likely not meant as a form of subordination through forced modesty, but rather made to emphasize the complexity and detail of the beautiful clothing.

The high-ranking males, wearing less clothing with what looked to be a breastplate, were probably associated with their role as warriors who needed to have mobility provided by lighter clothing, but also the protection provided by armor. Therefore, clothing exposes the nature of the individuals' economic, social, and military roles within the society, and would have been an important way to easily distinguish both the biological and cultural aspects of a person.

This was further specified into wealth and status, depending on the type of material used to make the garment and perhaps also the color. For example, the female statues are dressed in what at first glance appears to be average clothing, with a long garment covering the entire body, and a veil covering the head. However, when these statues were first made, they were painted in various colors and had other details that emphasized the high quality of the materials that the clothing was made of (Arcelin, *The Gauls in Provence: The Oppidum of Entremont*). The women represented in these statues, therefore, are of high status, although it is not exactly clear why or how they have obtained this prominence.

Another part of Celtic society where women could have participated, and therefore exerted power in their society, was through feasting. “‘Feast’ is an analytical rubric used to describe forms of ritual activity that involve the communal consumption of food and drink.” (Dietler 2001: 65). They are an important way for communities to come together and form relationships. Dietler describes the ways in which feasting is used in some communities in Africa to emphasize its various applications within a society. For example, he uses the term “empowering feasts” to describe how goods and actions are employed during feasting activities to obtain or maintain status (Dietler 2001: 76). With the Dorze of Ethiopia, having the high political title of “balak’a” means that there is the responsibility to hold lavish feasts in order to

continuously display this power. Many people are hesitant about taking the position because of the amount of effort that is expected for the feasts (Dietler 2001: 78-79). Celtic feasts were similar to the “empowering feasts”.

Feasting in Celtic societies was a large component of social and ritual life (Dietler 1989), and cooking would have played a vital role in facilitating interactions between members of the society and bringing them together under overarching beliefs and desires. Even if one does not believe that women participated directly in feasting, their contribution through providing the food for the feast would have helped to facilitate interactions within the community nonetheless. Julia Hendon makes a similar argument in her discussion of household production in various Mesoamerican societies. In many of these societies, despite a difference in time and space, providing food for feasts or for tribute to political leaders (Hendon 1996: 50) was an invaluable part of life. Since cooking was a task given to women in Mesoamerican society, the women then became involved in the political sphere. Women in Mesoamerica also may have contributed to the production of new types of vessels based on the needs of those involved in food production (Hendon 1996: 51). The material culture, and perhaps even religious and ritual life of Mesoamerican society, was influenced by the household activities of the women.

If we consider these two forms of food culture as a way for women to exert authority over other spheres of influence, the women in Celtic society at Entremont could have also been part of the public and private sphere, rendering the dichotomy meaningless. Feasting was a well-known form of maintaining and exerting status and power through exchange of prestige items. Any kind of role that women had in relation to feasting would have connected them to the political and social spheres of Celtic society, allowing them to participate in activities that have

been engendered for male participants only. If women held control over cooking for the feasts, they would know the ways in which it would have to be prepared for special occasions (Pollock 2003: 18), therefore helping the success of communal feasting activities. Likewise, women could have contributed to Celtic culture by influencing the creation, or creating themselves, new vessels for cooking and eating. When just a few domestic tasks are extended into a larger context, it is evident that even if society confined Celtic women to the home and the responsibilities within it, they would have affected society as a whole. The tasks, which seemed small when examined in the household alone, may also seem insignificant to the larger picture of the Celtic settlement at Entremont; however, this is most certainly not the case. Women, in fact, likely had an integral role in many aspects of Celtic society. If Celtic women, like the Mesoamerican women, had a role in the way that people within their society ate individually and communally, that could have led to changes in larger political and social conditions, such as the feast itself.

However, not only is there likely a connection between women and the feast through maintenance activities, but there is also evidence for their direct interaction within the feast. Feasting in Celtic society was heavily influenced by prestige goods, or items that were more difficult to obtain because they were typically imported. Wealthy and high-ranking members of society used them to show that they had power and authority. The most powerful person in the feast distributed the desired item, such as food, drink or another object representing wealth. The Celtic chief Louernius, who was at the head of a feast, used the gift of gold to reward and encourage behavior in his favor by increasing an individual's status. When a bard arrived late to the feast, he sang a song apologizing for his lateness and praising Louernius. Louernius, desiring

to have the bard continue singing about his greatness, gave the man gold to encourage him to do so and spread his positive attributes as a leader (Cunliffe 1997: 106). Therefore, the status of the receiver increased when he was publicly given a gift by the leader of the society, and the status of the giver, the chief, also increased by rewarding behavior in his favor, and by showing his authority in having the ability to gift an expensive, desirable good.

Within Mediterranean France especially, the item that held the most prestige was wine, which was imported from areas such as Rome. A Mediterranean site such as Entremont would have been in contact with the Romans and would have had access to wine, so this likely held true for this settlement as well. Elites, therefore, would be distinguished further for having wine, and would mobilize power through the sharing of this special drink (Dietler 1989: 356-357). Those whom the leaders of society wished to have power were given small amounts of wine, whereas those who they did not would not receive any. This was an important form of social control in which people were enticed to act in accordance to the elites in society if they desired any kind of reward, as well as reaffirming the power of the high-status individuals.

Feasting equipment is often found in Celtic female tombs, and the presence of it in other contexts could indicate a gender-balanced political role in society through the feasting. Some items within the burial of the Vix Princess reflect that she may have held status in her own right, and possibly a right to share it as she wished. As feasting was an important way of showing status within Celtic society, the presence of objects associated with the practice within the Vix grave may indicate a connection with this realm of life as well. Not only was she buried with a large krater, which was used for mixing wine with water, but also with a bronze pitcher and two kylikes, one made of silver and the other of monochrome ceramic (Arnold 1991: 366-368),

which were used to drink wine. Scholars have long thought that feasting was solely for males, and that women were excluded from this activity, as they were from many other areas of society. However, archaeologists have discovered feasting goods in so many female burials that this does not seem likely. If women were associated with the feasting goods, especially with items related to the consumption of wine, they could also be associated with the status that accompanied it.

Arcelin (Py 2012: 162), who has interpreted the female statues in further depth than the other archaeologists, believes that the statues could have been holding representations of bronze vessels which were both used for ritual activity and for holding wine during feasts. These vessels, known as *situlae*, were containers made of various types of metals and originated in the East. They are cylindrical in shape, with the top wider and towards the bottom narrowing out, and generally have decoration which could depict a wide variety of scenes (Perez de Dios 2015: 258). These vessels were brought into the Mediterranean by the Etruscans as early as the 8th century BCE (Bonfante 1985: 277), and later became popular in Roman society. The peoples who were in contact with the Romans adopted many of their cultural practices, including the use of the *situlae*.

Evidence of the presence of *situlae* in Entremont comes from the remains of two stone *situlae* made of the same material as the female statues. These *situlae* are simply decorated, with the first having a design near where the handle meets the body of the vessel, and the second with a wavy line delineating what looks to be the lid from the rest of the container. These two stone *situlae* seem to have broken off a larger work of art and have therefore been thought to have been included in the statues. Interestingly, however, it is thought that these *situlae* were associated with the females specifically, and not the male statues. Part of this is due to the remains of Statue

#47, which consist of just a hand in a curved position as if holding something. Arcelin proposes that this statue held one of the situlae, while the other was placed on the ground near the bottom of the leg of the same or a different statue (Py 2012: 162).

The situlae held ritual and feasting importance, but the French scholars have not examined further how the situlae could have placed women directly in the role of feasting. If women were found in association with situlae, then they could have not only been a part of feasting, but also could have exerted their power and status through wine, a prestige good, which was held in the situlae. Py explains that in light of their previous interpretations, Benoit would have believed that these vessels were cinerary urns, Salviat “vases de prix” which would have distinguished her as wealthy, and Arcelin as offerings (Py 2012: 162). Therefore, while the French scholars could consider the situlae to represent a wealthy or ritually important woman, it is as if the concept of a woman being able to exert and exhibit power during feasting is too exotic.

It is unfair, however, to ignore the situlae’s well-established function as a wine vessel, as it creates an entirely new interpretation of these Celtic women not only as people who could flaunt wealth but could have obtained it through their own power and authority. The situla as a feasting vessel for holding wine would connect these women to the prestige good that was used to emphasize and distribute power. Therefore, their status as being elite by their spouse cannot be the case, or at least the only case, within this society. Women presumably would not be given access to such items if they were not seen as worthy to have and use these items accordingly. If men used the wine as a prestige good to enforce a hierarchy and control the social strata as he wished, then it can be postulated that women could do the same.

We need to keep in mind the lopsided nature of our knowledge on this cultural group which modern day groups have influenced. Since the very beginnings of written sources about Celtic people, there have only been a few lines dedicated to women by Romans especially. Men typically enjoyed higher literacy rates in the ancient world and were more focused on male activities than female ones, since men were considered superior to females in Rome. Therefore, what is recorded by these ancient texts cannot be taken at face-value. The Celtic women were described in relation to their male counterparts, and the Roman authors controlled the amount of agency present with the Celtic women in their writings, affecting their future study (Pollock 1991: 368-371). However, Celtic women, in line with the gender-balanced society in which they supposedly enjoyed, may have had several roles in society beyond domestic work, despite this being in itself influential. If we assume that women held political, social, and economic roles, we must consider in which ways they may have been incorporated into these spheres, and how the statues may represent their power in these ways.

VI. Conclusion

“The women of the Gauls are not only like the men in their great stature but they are a match for them in courage as well” (Diodorus Siculus V, 32).

The field of archaeology must consider the climate of the time in which it is being practiced and adapt to changing viewpoints within society. While its practice may have been dominated heavily by men for several decades after its foundation, it is clear that female insight brought about in more recent years has become vital to the holistic view of cultures and peoples. As female anthropologists can no longer be disregarded, women of the past cannot be either. Due

to common Western ideas of women holding a lesser position in society than men, this has been reflected in research on women in several areas of the world. In the case of the female Celtic statues of Entremont, France, the few interpretations that have given attention to women have painted an image of subordination and exclusion from political, economic, and societal power. The Celts had a slightly hierarchical society, but this does not mean that there was a gender imbalance in the roles within society; this is demonstrated in burials such as the Vix Grave, indicating that a narrative of female inferiority is not sufficient.

Closer examination of the Celtic statues provides a broader perspective of the positions which Celtic females could have held within society. Instead of being the secondary characters to their husbands, as previously surmised, they were also participants, and sometimes important figures, in their societies. Celtic society did not work under a strict dichotomy of the public and private spheres, and women held power in both areas of life. Maintenance activities, which work to extend the influence that women with household duties had throughout society on a larger scale, allow for the Celtic women to have performed political, economic, and social roles in ways in which they had not been previously recognized. Cooking was not just a means of feeding the family, but also of providing for those participating in the feast, putting this food production in the category of political affairs. Feasts could not have been proper affairs without access to food. The creation of clothing became social, economic, and political, since the materials and designs used could denote many aspects of the person wearing the garment. Clothing informs age, sex, social status, and wealth; by controlling clothing production, women were integral in how people were identified within Celtic society and therefore were influential in the social sphere.

The Celtic statues show that these women could have had access to high quality goods and materials, seen specifically in the jewelry and clothing they wear and their likely association with wine, which was a prestige good. These female statues were associated with feasting and the materials associated with this activity. Representations of bronze situlae, which were wine vessels used for ritual and feasting, were found at Entremont and connected with the female statues. Feasting activity is directly associated with the showcasing of power within Celtic society, and wine specifically was good that held power. Therefore, these women too could have been important members of the feast due to the possibility of the female statues being linked with the situlae representations. Scholars must consider these kinds of observations, since they can shift dramatically how we see peoples of the past. The duty of anthropologists should be to seek out the stories of ignored groups such as the Celtic women and bring them to the forefront, providing interpretations that help recognize their contributions to past and even contemporary society.

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Appendices

Appendix A.

Figure 2: Entremont Statues

Statues	Remaining Pieces	Jewelry	Details
#40	Head	Earrings	Head tilted upwards, eyes looking upwards, veiled
#41	Head	N/A	Head level, eyes straightforward, veiled
#42	Head	Earrings, Torque	Head level, eyes straightforward, veiled
#43	Shoulder & Lower Back	N/A	Remnants of head, veil falling down the length of back, textured garment
#47	Hand & Wrist	Bracelet	Hand curved as if holding something
#48	Feet & Pedestal	N/A	Feet in sandals, right foot slightly positioned in front of the left, rests on a pedestal



Figure 3: Statue #40



Figure 4: Statue #41



Figure 5: Statue #43

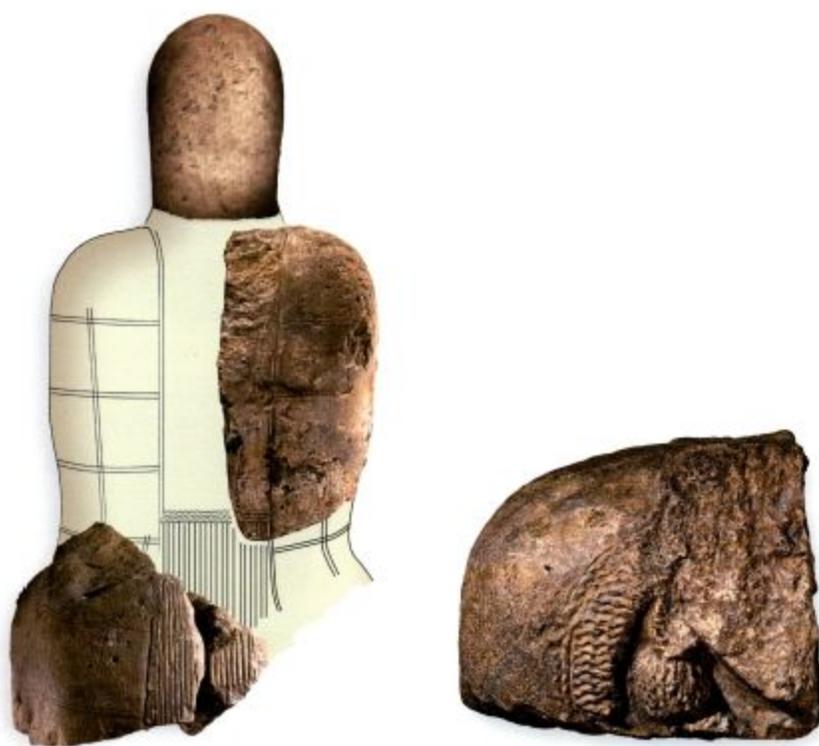


Figure 6: Statue #44



Figure 7: Statue #47



Figure 8: Statue #48



Figure 9: Situlae