quality and amount of grave goods they contain, a possible relationship between mode of descent and level of wealth might be mooted. However, while Douglas emphasizes poverty, she in fact finds matriliny both where there is poverty and where there is wealth (on the latter, she cites Polly Hill's 1963 work on matrilineal cocoa farmers in Ghana), depending on context and/or society. Here, too, the risks of being misled into positing false characteristics for prehistoric peoples, many of whom we cannot even identify, should therefore make us cautious.

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Before his retirement in 2017, Dr Robert Parkin had taught in the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, University of Oxford, since 2002. Before then he had taught anthropology at the University of Kent, as well as having shorter-term appointments in a number of other universities. His longest academic interest has been in kinship, especially in relation to the Munda populations of east-central India, for which he earned his doctorate. Since then, he has also developed an interest in the anthropology of Europe, both in Eastern Europe and on the EU as an anthropological topic. Among his book publications are *The Munda of central Europe* (1992), *Kinship. An introduction* (1997), *How kinship systems change* (2021) and *White eagle black eagle* (2023; on German–Polish ethnic relations).

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Fostering interdisciplinary dialogues

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My article proposes that the 'notion of gender-egalitarian societies and socio-cultural anthropological insights should be consulted to avoid the process of rethroning, namely a priori associating

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matrilineal descent with the female rule' (Cveček, this issue). Importantly, it is not a defence of Gimbutas's work but a call not to equate matrilineal descent with female rule while leaving open a possibility that gender-egalitarian societies may have existed in the Aegean during the Neolithic and the Bronze Age. Moreover, the article is also a reminder to consider cross-cultural, ethnographic insights on kinship, gender and social status seriously for the purpose of an advancement of our understanding of prehistoric kinship in the region and beyond. Lastly, it highlights the importance of *critical* engagement with *some* of Gimbutas's ideas instead of discarding her entire opus. I argue that 'quoting Gimbutas does not imply agreeing with her archaeomythological work, Mother Goddess hypothesis or her conception that the Aegean Neolithic period was a peaceful paradise. Instead, it would display a good scholarly practice' (Cveček, this article) that promotes interdisciplinary dialogues and the acknowledgment of good ideas rather than building walls between disciplines. After reading the valuable comments on my article by Christine Morris, Maria Mina and Robert Parkin, I am convinced that addressing difficult topics in a dialogical approach may bear fruitful results.

A name change cannot repair a troubled history

Valuable comments from Christine Morris add several new dimensions to this debate, which are a welcome addition to my thoughts on the subject. For example, Morris reflects on the troubled history of 'matriarchy' as a concept and discusses the possibility of discarding or 'dethroning' the term rather than keeping it in the archaeological toolbox with a new and substantively different meaning. A new meaning of matriarchy as a cosmological, social and ritual order that 'pivots around female-oriented symbols' supported by 'gift giving and ritual acts coordinated by women- . . . grounded in this order' (Sanday 2018: 6) may be a useful provocation among current anthropological discourses of ethnographically grounded meanings. Such an understanding of matriarchy may remain stimulating for archaeological exploration. This could be achieved without supporting versions of matriarchy defended by scholars such as Heide Goettner-Abendroth, which are 'not aligned with socio-cultural anthropological insights' (Cveček, this article).

It comes as a welcomed surprise that Morris – as an archaeologist and a specialist in the prehistory of the Aegean world – also acknowledges the ways Gimbutas's approaches have been dismissed. Her additional references to the more recent work add a list of more appreciative attitudes towards Gimbutas's achievements that have been recognized among archaeologists, including in Colin Renfrew's talk at the University of Chicago in 2018. At the same time, I wonder whether it had to take a decade or two after Gimbutas's death for archaeologists to begin acknowledging and reconciling her work. Alongside caring deeply about the dead, should we not promote collegial, respectful and productive interactions among the living? At the same time, I highly appreciate Morris's point that the fear of not being taken seriously should not determine what we shall and shall not study. This is a key message I fully agree with as an early-career, female, first-generation academic. We should not allow fear to prevent us from exploring 'the wrong' topics but the passion for probing the boundaries of our disciplines.

Morris's third point touches upon using figurines to address female-centred societies. I do not fully agree with Morris that Mother Goddess interpretations stand to be entirely dethroned in Aegean and/or Anatolian prehistory if we consider interpretations beyond Çatalhöyük. As I have shown, however, figurines continue to be used as an argument in support of female leadership in the past (cf. Risch 2018). This was proposed without any critical engagement with the contextual evidence, such as in the case of the Platia Magoula Zarkou house model, yet accompanied by the proposal for an inadequate name change, i.e., 'cooperative affluent societies' (Risch 2018). Thereby, the old conception of female-dominated societies was recently sent through an attempted reinthronization for the Aegean Neolithic without adequately addressing the troubled research history.

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Differing views of our discipline(s)

Maria Mina's interesting comments highlight stark differences in our perspectives on each other's fields in terms of historical development and current scope. For example, anthropology stems not only from French and British (early colonial) encounters with indigenous peoples in the 17th and 18th centuries but also from late-18th-century non-colonial German-language enlightenment and early Romanticism – the former in colonial contexts, and the latter outside of, or at the remote margins of, early colonial interests (i.e., Kant, Herder and Schlözer; see Gingrich 2005: 64–72; Vermeulen 2015). Hence, socio-cultural anthropology does not share the same origins as archaeology and is not in its entirety a colonial product from the outset. Instead, it was born from the tensions and conflicts *between* colonial and enlightenment interests. Consequently, a refined awareness of the two fields' histories would have been helpful in defining the contours and basics of Mina's claims.

Importantly, socio-cultural anthropology has also been at the forefront of criticizing and overcoming its colonial legacies. Today, socio-cultural anthropologists comprise more postcolonial voices than many other fields in the humanities and social sciences, let alone archaeology. A more self-reflexive introspection into Mina's own field's limitation and legacies in this regard would have been a welcome starting point for a productive debate concerning my article's main proposal that definitional clarity of particular kinship and social status terms would benefit archaeological explorations of prehistoric kinship. Dialogically oriented archaeologists may also not agree with a generally dismissive attitude towards socio-cultural anthropology, which instead should continue to remain a friendly neighbour to archaeology (see Cveček and Schwall 2022; Cveček 2023). Addressing kinship, including the reckoning of descent, inheritance, marriage patterns and postmarital residence is not a product of 'colonial ideology' but rather a requirement of conducting empirically grounded, comparatively and analytically valid and theoretically informed research.

Socio-cultural anthropology hence remains crucial for the understanding of prehistoric kinship. This is not the opinion of trained socio-cultural anthropologists alone (cf. Cveček 2024) but archaeologists as well. For example, Chris Fowler acknowledges that 'the interpretation of Neolithic kinship *necessarily* draws on anthropological terms and ethnographic comparisons' (Fowler 2022, italics mine). In contrast, Mina concluded that 'archaeology can help unlock kinship in past societies independently' (Mina, this article) by referring to Alexander Bentley (2022). However, Bentley has, in fact, suggested leveraging cross-cultural databases such as the eHRAF World Cultures Database (https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu) and the Database of Places, Language, Culture and Environment (D-PLACE; https://d-place.org) for a better understanding of prehistoric kinship. At the same time, historical records, including 'deviant' cases of brother–sister marriage documented in Roman Egypt (Scheidel 1997), may be of interest to archaeologists as well.

Interdisciplinarity in archaeology should necessarily include socio-cultural anthropology (Parkinson 2017; Nilsson Stutz 2022: 48). Most archaeologists recognize that socio-cultural anthropologists have advanced the topic of kinship for 150 years. For lack of evidence, it remains unclear to me why and how archaeologists should attempt to master the topic all of the sudden on their own.

Embracing a diversity of matrilineal kinship

Finally, I would like to thank Robert Parkin for adding supporting evidence for the diversity of matrilineality that has been documented by ethnography. Whereas I cannot fully agree that my article is a 'measured defence' of the work of Marija Gimbutas, I welcome Parkin's observation of how challenging archaeological inquiry into prehistoric kinship is. As one of the leading experts on kinship in socio-cultural anthropology around the globe, Parkin highlights the biggest

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methodological challenge, namely that ties of kinship may have little direct physical evidence. Hence, they are challenging to trace archaeologically and need to be addressed with caution and far-reaching contextual considerations. While being critical of the archaeological interpretations in terms of living groups, Parkin's comment opens up an additional array of possibilities that embrace cross-cultural diversity concerning human kinship.

Parkin importantly highlights the possibility of female founders among patrilineal societies, which may pose an additional layer to address archaeologically. Another such 'contradicting' issue comprises the well-known 'matrilineal puzzle', in which matrilineally related kin live in dispersed patrilocal communities. Among them are also the Ohaffia Ibo (Nsugbe 1974: 12), whose residential group is the patrilineage; at the same time, they cultivate a 'strong emotional attachment to the ancestral posts (*ududu*) of a long line of ancestresses of which are left in the care of the head of the matrilineage.' Importantly, Parkin also highlights that subsistence practices cannot be easily aligned with the most likely descent or residence pattern. Many studies from Papua New Guinea point towards *patrilineal* horticulturalists, among them also the Baruya (Godelier 1986).

Apart from other examples, Parkin's ethnographic examples include the occurrence of visiting (bi- or dislocal) husbands, the high divorce rate in matrilineal societies and the occurrence of dual descent, in which societies can trace matrilineal and patrilineal descent in different situations or for different purposes. Despite the 'shallow histories' ethnography may provide, Parkin's examples also show that ethnography has the power to debunk certain evolutionist predispositions. For example, Parkin points out the case of a Nicaraguan fishing village where matrilineality is emerging for the first time. Hence, ethnography and socio-cultural anthropology have the power not only to decentre Western conceptions of kinship imposed onto the archaeological settings but also to provide well-documented examples in which seemingly 'anti-evolutionary' processes and socio-political constellations may appear in the ethnographic record. The *big man* societies of Melanesia (see Lederman 2015) are among such 'anomalous' cases that do not conform to a simple socio-economic and evolutionary model.

Archaeological dialogues on kinship

I am heartily indebted to the productive engagement of Christine Morris, Maria Mina and Robert Parkin with my article. Their comments add richness and vitality to the topic that I would not have been able to communicate on my own. Addressing kinship in Aegean prehistory may have not been at the forefront of archaeological inquiry until very recently. Yet, this may gain importance with the rise of ancient DNA studies. Hence, fostering fruitful interdisciplinary discourses instead of building walls between disciplines remains crucial to sustaining inclusive, sustainable and supportive work environments while expanding the frontiers of anthropological and/or archaeological knowledge in a rigorous manner. It is inspiring to see what productive dialogues and empirical interactions between interested socio-cultural anthropologists and archaeologists may lead to. Long may they continue.

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