

Stichting Archaeological Dialogues, Leiden University's Archaeological Forum, and the Leiden Archaeology PhD committee present:

BEYOND MALINOWSKI

Reconnecting Archaeology and Anthropology

▲ 21st of February 2019 ★
Van Steenis Building - Einsteinweg 2 - 2333CC Leiden



13:00 - Opening

13:15 - Ellen Finn (Trinity College Dublin)

The power of three: the models of Van Gennep, Hertz and Turner in the funerary archaeology of Prepalatial Crete

13:50 - Piet van de Velde (Leiden University)

On the expansion and demise of the LBK: socio-cultural facts require socio-cultural explanations

14:25 - Mirjam Kars (VU Amsterdam)

Anthropological answers to the 'archaeological problem' of Merovingian object-production

15:00 - Coffee

15:15 - Eric Venbrux (Radboud University Nijmegen)

Can grave gifts be seen as restorative gifts?

15:50 - Caroline Jeffra (UvA Amsterdam)

Practicing Anthropological Archaeology: Investigating and Interpreting Technological Change in the Human Past

16:25 - Pieter ter Keurs (Leiden University/RMO)

Archaeology and Anthropology: Problems and Challenges

17:00 - Discussion & Drinks

For registration please e-mail archaeologicaldialogues@gmail.com before February 16th

Beyond Malinowski – Reconnecting Archaeology and Anthropology

Room E001

- 13:00 opening
- 13:15-13:50 Ellen Finn (Trinity College Dublin)
The power of three: the models of Van Gennep, Hertz and Turner in the funerary archaeology of Prepalatial Crete
- 13:50-14:25 Piet van de Velde (Universiteit Leiden)
On the expansion and demise of the LBK: socio-cultural facts require socio-cultural explanations
- 14:25-15:00 Mirjam Kars (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)
Anthropological answers to the ‘archaeological problem’ of Merovingian object-production
- 15:00-15:15 *coffee*
- 15:15-15:50 Eric Venbrux (Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen)
Can grave gifts be seen as restorative gifts?
- 15:50-16:25 Raymond Corbey (Universiteit Leiden)
Poop, or why life is like a chicken coop ladder
- 16:25-17:00 Pieter ter Keurs (Universiteit Leiden; Rijksmuseum van Oudheden)
Archaeology and Anthropology: Problems and Challenges
- 17:00-17:15 discussion
- 17:15 *drinks (Main Hall)*

The power of three: the models of Van Gennep, Hertz and Turner in the funerary archaeology of Prepalatial Crete

Ellen Finn

Trinity College Dublin

From their earliest beginnings in the nineteenth century, socio-cultural anthropology and Cretan Bronze Age archaeology have essentially been connected, as fields of inquiry which simultaneously – and often symbiotically - sought to elucidate a shared object of study: that of humankind. However, upon close examination of the humanities' histories, it becomes apparent that it is far more than their mutual interests that are intertwined, rather that multiple influential figures and concepts appear in the annals of both disciplines, many of which similarly emerge from the intellectual background of classical scholarship.

It is unsurprising that the tripartite anthropological models of Arnold Van Gennep, Robert Hertz and Victor Turner have been used extensively to interpret the evidence for 'secondary deposition' at the tombs of Prepalatial Crete (c.3200 – 1900 B.C.), as a funerary practice markedly dissimilar to our own, during which the body was physically interacted with after its initial interment within the monumental, communal structures. This paper will highlight that the widespread – and often inconsistent – application of these anthropological models has had substantial impact on archaeological interpretations of ancient eschatological belief, personhood, embodiment and ancestorhood, in a period from which no deciphered script survives.

Similarly, it will be argued that whilst anthropologists have urged caution in relation to the seminal models' seeming universality, this critique is yet to be acknowledged in archaeological interpretations in which they are applied. Recent archaeological evidence from Crete which conflicts with the models' trajectories, thus prompts us to reconsider their applicability, staticity and entrenched interpretative influences, in an acknowledgement of the potential of anthropology in its ability to communicate the very many diverse ways in which humankind confronts its inevitable mortality.

On the expansion and demise of the LBK: socio-cultural facts require socio-cultural explanations

Piet van de Velde
Universiteit Leiden

In this lecture, I present the kinship system of the first farmers in Continental Western Europe (the Bandkeramik Culture or LBK, ca. 7000 BP) as derived from graveyard inventories; combining patrilocality with matrilinear succession to titles that system has been called “disharmonic” by Lévi-Strauss. Tensions resulting from this arrangement were initially alleviated by migration of (probably) younger members of the kin groups. Thus an internal social cause explains the rapid colonisation of continental Europe by this culture, rather than widespread acculturation (adoption of agriculture by local hunting and gathering groups), as assumed until recently. Also, theoretical predictions of the successive development of that kin system towards ‘harmonic’ arrangements turned out to match other excavated “facts” as well, suggesting a (when not ‘the’) structural cause of that culture’s demise in NW Europe and its radical transformation in Central and Western Europe.

Anthropological answers to the 'archaeological problem' of Merovingian object-production

Mirjam Kars

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

The production of quite sophisticated Merovingian objects, which are in high numbers predominantly known to us as items from graves, can be approached from a technological but also a social viewpoint. This presentation deals with especially the social sides of production, since this is an aspect of Merovingian society which is not yet fully explored. It is aimed at presenting an overview that captures 'the archaeological problem of production', which is illustrated with the iron animal style belt fittings of the 6th and 7th centuries. This 'archaeological problem' is discussed on the basis of some important questions that relate to the initiative of production, to the passive or active role of craftsmen with regard to the appearances of objects, and to when, where and by whom the symbolic references embedded in objects were created. The overview is defined as an 'archeological problem' since archaeology itself can provide answers only to a certain degree. It is therefore discussed which answers can be found in anthropological studies that deal with various social aspects of production.

Can grave gifts be seen as restorative gifts?

Eric Venbrux

Centrum voor Thanatologie, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen

What are the pros and cons of considering grave gifts 'restorative gifts'? The concept of 'restorative giving' implies that the dead are dead and that reciprocity is virtually impossible. Does this make sense from an anthropological perspective? Are we dealing with sharing and is the term 'gift' a misnomer? Or is the understanding that the dead are dead reflecting Protestant/secularist dogma? Are we confusing physical death with social death? In reflecting on the matter I will draw on anthropological and archaeological findings as well as survey data from 1937 and 1964 concerning grave gifts in The Netherlands.

Symposium 'Beyond Malinowski: reconnecting archaeology and anthropology', Leiden University Archaeological Forum/Foundation Archaeological Dialogues, Leiden, 21 February 2019.

Poop, or why life is like a chicken coop ladder

Raymond Corbey
Universiteit Leiden

In all ethnographically and most archaeologically known societies certain humans, actions, places and things are considered marginal and/or impure. This talk, starting from a rich casuistry, explores: (1) how classificatory grids are strongly normative and are usually centred on and deploy the taboo-ridden margins, orifices and secretions of the human body; (2) how “liminal” aspects of human existence such as birth, death, sex, eating and defecation incur impurity and are so hedged with rituals; (3) how analytical tools from British Neo-Durkheimian ethnology in particular can be used to better understand how things marginal and liminal are conceptualized and handled, in terms of a cultural logic of purity and contamination.

Archaeology and Anthropology: Problems and Challenges

*Pieter ter Keurs
Rijksmuseum van Oudheden
Universiteit Leiden*

This is easy to say that archaeology and anthropology need each other, but in reality it remains difficult to have good, fundamental discussions between researchers of the two disciplines.

Malinowski and Mauss are of course excellent examples of how anthropology can be of use to archaeology. The problem is however that there are more types of anthropology and more than one type of archaeology. In this lecture I will reflect on the wide range of sub-disciplines within our respective fields and how this variety determines to a large extent the interest in each other's work.

In the second part of the lecture I will focus on heritage studies as a field that interests both anthropologists as well as archaeologists. By combining insights from both disciplines we can also contribute to more recent and politically sensitive discussions on the agency of objects and restitution of collections to the countries or the cultures of origin. Although this may sound like a move away from the classical studies of Malinowski and Mauss, I will argue that here too the works of these two founding fathers of anthropology are of crucial importance.