

UBC ARCHAEOLOGY DAY 2016

## ***The Stuff of Lives: Materiality in Culture and Archaeology***

**Saturday, March 19, 2016, (9:15–4:30 pm; light breakfast at 8:30am)  
ANSO, UBC**

Where would archaeology be without things? Archaeology hopes for, perhaps even expects, a simple relationship between people and their stuff, usually mediated by some conception of culture. The more we ponder this arrangement, the more data we collect, and the more we hear from people who live with stuff, the less clear this relationship becomes. Things appear to have ‘agency’ ‘social lives’ ‘affectations’; they exist in ‘entangled’ ‘hybrid’ ‘distributed individuals’; they are vessels of power whose influence engenders ethnocentrism. The 2016 Charles Lecturer, Bernard Knapp challenges us to consider the complexity of the relationships between people and their things and vice versa, in his keynote talk, “The Way Things Are...”. Our speakers for this event come from within and beyond archaeology. We invite them explore methods, interpretations, conversations, and implications of the role of things in life through the archaeological lens: what can we know about people when all we have are their things.

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### **Keynote Lecture (Charles Lecturer):**

**Dr. A. Bernard Knapp** (Professor Emeritus of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Glasgow)

### **Title: The Way Things Are ...**

Abstract: Appadurai’s edited volume *The Social Life of Things* (1986) first sought to highlight multiple ways in which ‘things’, like people, have active social lives, even biographies. Since then, this train of thought has taken multiple turns, and gone through many diversions and amplifications to, amongst others, agency, materiality and object agency, the ‘cognitive life of things’, human-thing ‘entanglements’ and ‘symmetrical’ archaeology (i.e., the ‘New Materialisms’). The end result appears to be a sweeping critique of ‘anthropocentricity’, in which it is argued that the archaeological study of cultures need not have any reference to humans, whether agents, individuals, subjects or collectivities, but instead must focus on the nexus amongst things. Things, then, are not just tokens or surrogates for human acts or activities, but rather act as material agents in their own right. Taking some materials from archaeometallurgy — specifically that of Bronze Age Cyprus as known from regional archaeological survey and excavation — as my point of discussion, this talk critiques the notions of ‘material agency’ and considers the cultural biography of metallurgical ‘things’, seeking to separate the chaff of materiality from the wheat of material culture.

### **Schedule**

8:30-9:15      Coffee and Light Breakfast

- 9:15-9:20 Welcome
- 9:20-9:40 **Shoshana Hereld (UBC CNERS) *Hair, There and Everywhere: Transfer of Late Bronze Age Hathor Iconography***
- 9:40-10:00 **Nick Waber (UBC Anthropology) *Comparing Apples to Apples and Strokes to Strokes: Toward Gesture Standardization in Lithic Use-wear Experiments***
- 10:00-10:20 **Lisa Cooper (UBC CNERS) *The Pleasure of Ruins: Fantasy, Fancy or Fetish?***
- 10:20-10:30 **Anthony Shelton (UBC MOA) *Turquoise & Fire: Aztec Material and Symbols***
- 10:30-11:00 Coffee Break**
- 11:00-11:20 **Franco De Angelis (UBC CNERS) *The Parting of the Ways: Tracing the Origins of the Schism between Texts and Material Culture***
- 11:20-11:40 **Paul Spzak (UBC Anthropology) *Examining Trade of Wool Textiles in Prehistoric Peru: An Isotopic Approach***
- 11:40-12:00 **Ryan D. Schroeder (UBC CNERS) *Culture Contact and Linguistic Choice as Agency in the Texts of Ugarit***
- 12:00-1:30 Lunch**
- 1:30-2:30 **Charles Lecturer Keynote A. Bernard Knapp (University of Glasgow) *The Way Things Are...***
- 2:30-2:50 **Fuyubi Nakamura (UBC MOA) *A Future for Memory through Photographs: In the Aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami***
- 2:50-3:10 **Zichun Jing (UBC Anthropology) *The Materiality of Jade Use in the Shang Dynasty***
- 3:10-3:30 **Iain Mckechnie (University of Victoria) *Thoughts on a Zooarchaeology of Fur (not Food) on the Northwest Coast***
- 3:30-3:50 Coffee Break**
- 3:50-4:10 **Sue Rowley (UBC Anthropology) *Ookpik: The Anthropology of a Fad***
- 4:10-4:30 **Courtney J. Innes (UBC CNERS) *Where there is Smoke, There is Fire: Attempting to Understand Philistine Cultic Stands at Yavneh***