

The Fund for Ethnology Leiden cordially invites you to the:
3rd Adrian Gerbrands Lecture by

Finbarr Barry Flood

(New York University)

Sanctified Sandals Imaging the Prophet in an Era of Technological Reproduction

Time and Location

29 November 2013, 15:45 hrs (reception afterwards)
National Museum of Ethnology, Steenstraat 1, 2300 AE Leiden

After the collapse of the Ba'ath regime of Iraq in 2003, images of Iraqis beating fallen statues of Saddam Hussain with the soles of their shoes proliferated in the global media. Connected with the most polluting part of the body, the shoe has often been associated with iconoclastic practices in many societies. Conversely, however, individual aura or charisma may be sufficiently powerful to transform the otherwise dirty or polluting shoe from a reviled to a revered object. This was the case with one of the most important relics of the Prophet Muhammad: his sandal.

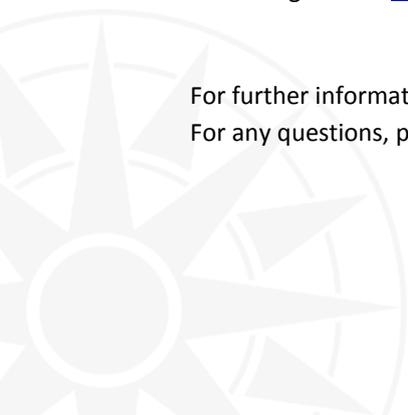
Although recent controversies about the historical representation of the Prophet have focused on figural paintings, these were relatively rare and circulated in a limited milieu. More commonly, the Prophet was represented metonymically, by depictions of his footprint or sandal. The most famous example of the Prophet's sandal was kept in Damascus; from the twelfth century onwards, images of this sandal relic were generated by tracing its outline. Such tracings were believed to circulate the blessings (baraka) conferred by this cherished vestige through contact with the body of the Prophet. Tracings of the relic were often copied in their turn, generating an enchainned series that enabled the sandal and its blessings to travel as an image from Morocco in the west to India in the east, often borne by pilgrims.

The copying of the sandal relic continued into modernity, when new print technologies and photography were applied to the reproduction of its image. The deployment of modern technologies of mass (re)production to the circulation of the relic as an image may be related to debates within Islam about the acceptability of relics, shrine veneration and mediation, debates that continue until the present day. However, the ability of mass-produced images to transport and transmit the charisma of the original relic (and, ultimately, its owner) also raises more general questions about the nature of images, copies and mediation, which will be addressed in the lecture.

Please register at: http://volkenkunde.nl/en/sign_up_symposium_and_gerbrands_lecture

For further information about the Gerbrands Lecture see www.fel-leiden.nl

For any questions, please contact us at caos@fsw.leidenuniv.nl



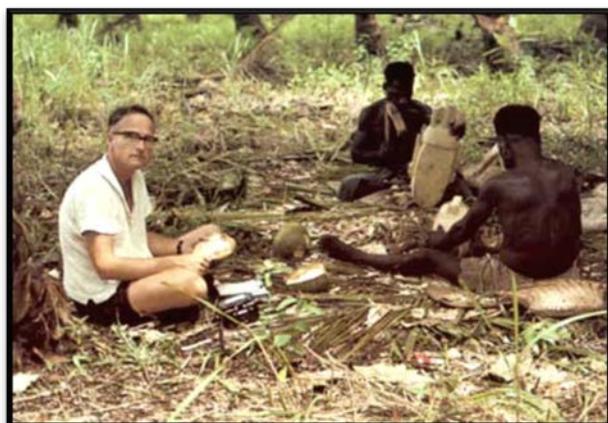


Finbarr Barry Flood

Dr. Finbarr Barry Flood is William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of the Humanities. He teaches the art and architecture of Islamic lands at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. He is the author of *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval 'Hindu-Muslim' Encounter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), which won the 2011 Ananda K. Coomaraswamy Prize of the Association for Asian Studies. His current book *project Islam and Image: Polemics, Theology and Modernity*, will be published by Reaktion Books, London.

Gerbrands Lecture

The Annual Adrian A. Gerbrands lecture is a joint initiative of the Fund for Ethnology Leiden, the National Museum for Ethnology (Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde), the Beeld voor Beeld Documentary Film Festival and the Institute for Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology (Leiden University). The lecture intends to promote academic and popular interest in research combining material culture studies, the anthropology of art, and visual anthropology. As early as the 1960s, Gerbrands pointed out the theoretical and practical challenges emerging from the overlap between these fields. Gerbrands (1917-1997) held a chair at the Leiden Institute for Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology, was deputy director of the National Museum of Ethnology, and an early advocate of ethnographic film in the Netherlands.



Gerbrands during fieldwork with Kilenge mask carvers in West New Britain, 1967

Additional activities

The Gerbrands Lecture concludes the symposium '[Haji: Global Interactions through Pilgrimage](#)' which will take place at 28 and 29 November in Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde. The lecture also connects to the museum's exhibition '[Longing for Mecca: The Pilgrim's Journey](#)'

Saturday 30 November, Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde and Beeld voor Beeld / SAVAN organize an afternoon with films and discussions on '[Lopen als religie](#)' (in Dutch), about pilgrimage in the media (with Abdelkader Benali and Herman Vuijsje). [Holland Doc 24](#) broadcasts that week the 3part BBC-series 'The Life of Muhammad'.

The 24th Beeld voor Beeld festival is from 18 - 22 December at EYE Amsterdam: www.beeldvoorbeeld.nl