

Between Anthropology and Archaeology: An Approach to Concepts and Fields

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Abstract:

This study seeks to stimulate discussion on the relationship between anthropology and archaeology as two of the most prominent branches of the humanities concerned with the study of humanity in its temporal and cultural dimensions. This relationship raises a number of questions at both the theoretical and methodological levels, given the differences in research tools and their simultaneous complementarity in understanding humans and their relationship with their environment and society. Anthropology is concerned with the study of humans in their cultural and social context, whether in the present or the past, whereas archaeology focuses on the study of the material remains left by humans, including tools, settlements, and artifacts, with the aim of reconstructing ancient lifeways. From this perspective, the archaeologist may be regarded as a material historian within the anthropological field, as they seek to reconstruct historical events on the basis of tangible evidence. Archaeology was previously viewed as an auxiliary science to history, yet it has undergone notable development as a result of epistemological and theoretical transformations, particularly with the emergence of what is known as archaeological anthropology, which integrated material analysis with cultural interpretation. Thus, archaeology is no longer merely a descriptive account of archaeological finds, but has become an analytical discipline that seeks to understand the social and symbolic structures of ancient societies. Accordingly, archaeology constitutes an essential tool that enables contemporary humanity to recover its history and understand the development of its cultures, making it complementary to anthropology in its comprehensive endeavor to understand humanity across time.

Keywords: Anthropology; Archaeology; Physical Anthropology; Excavations; Geology.

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I- Introduction :

Anthropology has long constituted a field of knowledge with a global character, whose emergence and development have been linked to the movement of researchers across cultures and societies, as their diverse experiences contributed to the construction of analytical perspectives that integrate both insider and outsider viewpoints. This dimension enabled anthropology to evolve into an academic discipline grounded in comparative study and field investigation, relying on qualitative methodologies that seek to understand humans within their cultural and social contexts.

Within this framework, archaeology emerges as one of the fields of knowledge that intersects with anthropology in its central subject, namely the human being, yet differs in its angle of approach, as it focuses on the study of the material remains left by humans throughout the ages. It relies on the analysis of archaeological finds and historical sites in order to reconstruct ancient lifeways and explore the transformations experienced by human societies over time.

This intersection between the two fields has generated a number of epistemological issues, particularly at the historical and theoretical levels, where conceptions regarding the nature of their relationship have varied. Some view it as a complementary relationship based on methodological overlap and the exchange of tools, whereas others consider it a relationship of distinction grounded in differences in subject matter and analytical methodology. Contemporary epistemological transformations have also contributed to the reconsideration of this relationship within new approaches, most notably what is known as archaeological anthropology, which seeks to transcend the traditional separation between the material and cultural dimensions. From this perspective, the following questions are raised:

- To what extent can the relationship between anthropology and archaeology be considered one of epistemological and methodological complementarity, or is it instead based on distinction and separation between the two fields?
- How does linking the material data studied by archaeology with the cultural analysis provided by anthropology contribute to reconstructing and understanding human societies across time?

From this perspective, the study of the relationship between anthropology and archaeology falls within a broader problem concerning how to understand the human being in its multiple dimensions, by linking the material remains left behind with the cultural and symbolic systems produced, thereby enabling a rereading of the human past in light of integrated scientific approaches.

This study was conducted with the aim of exploring the domains and objectives of both anthropology and archaeology, while seeking to clarify the methodologies employed in each discipline and to raise the question of the nature of their relationship: is it one of integration and continuity, or one of differentiation and separation? It also seeks to approach this subject in light of contemporary scholarship by tracing its presence across different temporal and spatial frameworks, thereby allowing for an understanding of the transformations that have affected this relationship in the context of current epistemological developments.

The study focuses on analyzing the principal conceptual aspects that contribute to clarifying the nature of this relationship, through an approach based on linking the cultural dimension addressed

by anthropology with the material dimension studied by archaeology, considering them as two complementary dimensions in understanding the human phenomenon.

The significance of this study lies in its treatment of the problem of interconnection or separation between anthropology and archaeology within a systematic scientific framework that highlights the central role of anthropology in interpreting archaeological data. While archaeology is concerned with the study of the material evidence of human civilizations, anthropology seeks to understand the human being as the producer of this evidence and the bearer of its symbolic and cultural meanings. Consequently, understanding human action, civilizational movement, or cultural transformations remains contingent upon integrating material evidence with in-depth anthropological analysis, thereby enabling the reconstruction of a more comprehensive picture of the human being in both past and present.

II– Conceptual Approach:

1. Anthropology:

Anthropology, also referred to as the science of humanity, is a vast and wide-ranging field encompassing all scientific disciplines that aim to study and understand the human being in all dimensions. Despite the diversity of these disciplines, they contribute to an overall conceptualization that can be organized around two principal axes. The first axis connects the human past with the human present, while the second represents the relationship between human biology and culture. When the poles of these two axes are combined, the four scientific subfields of anthropology emerge. Two of these enable the study of humans in the past. One concerns the study of material and cultural productions left by humans, known as archaeology. The other focuses on the biological characteristics of our ancestors through the examination of buried skeletal remains, namely paleoanthropology. The remaining two subfields permit the study of humans in the present, either from a socio-cultural perspective, which is cultural anthropology, or from a biological perspective, which is biological anthropology.

This unique being known as the human has always been, and continues to be, the subject of reflection and study by numerous natural and human sciences alike. Since ancient times, humans have generally observed differences among the peoples of the human species and have sought to understand human nature, as well as variations in physical features, skin color, customs, traditions, religions, arts, and other aspects of life. Within the framework of this interest and inquiry, studies developed during the modern era, giving rise to a new branch of knowledge that came to be known as anthropology.

If one attempts to formulate a precise definition of this science, it becomes clear that specialists agree that its subject is the human being. However, it does not study the individual in isolation but rather concerns itself with the social, civilizational, and cultural characteristics of humanity as a whole (Auge & Colleyn, 2008, p. 07).

The anthropologist seeks to describe the biological and cultural characteristics of the human species across time and across all regions (Tolra & Warnier, 2014, p. 07). This includes analyzing local biological and cultural traits, as well as examining social systems and interpreting the results of such studies within the framework of evolutionary theories (Fahim, 1986, p. 14).

It should be noted that anthropology is closely connected to two other disciplines of considerable importance, namely ethnology and ethnography. Despite the overlap between the two terms, ethnography refers to the descriptive study of ways of life and the set of traditions, customs, values, tools, arts, and folklore of a particular human group during a specific period of time (Salim, 1981, p. 375). Ethnography constitutes one of the oldest branches of knowledge within anthropology, emerging when Europeans described indigenous tribes and peoples in America, Africa, Australia, and Asia. They documented their tools, customs, traditions, and all aspects related to their diverse material cultures. Anthropologists quickly adopted this information and employed it in their studies to advance understanding of human society.

Ethnology, by contrast, is concerned with the analytical and comparative study of ethnographic material, with the aim of developing theoretical conceptions or frameworks regarding various human social systems in terms of their origins, evolution, and diversity. Accordingly, these fields overlap in both their subjects and methodologies. Ethnology and ethnography together are referred to, within the French school, as cultural anthropology, which examines social behavior that typically takes the form of social systems such as the family, kinship structures, political organization, legal procedures, religious practices, and others. It also studies the relationships among these systems, whether in contemporary societies or in historical societies. It should also be noted that this branch of anthropology constitutes the focus of our study in this contribution.

2. Archaeology

Archaeology is concerned with the study of the human past through the examination of material remains that were required in daily life, as well as the investigation of modes of production, beliefs, constructed buildings, and the social and economic activities carried out by humans. Written texts in ancient languages, when available, also constitute an important source for obtaining precise details about human life. Archaeology has further been concerned with the study of human origins and civilization, drawing on the most advanced laboratory, terrestrial, and spatial technologies that examine the most minute details related to the lives of ancient populations. Archaeology therefore encompasses a long chronological span exceeding one million years in terms of comprehensive scientific study across various places and periods.

This term is a translation of the English word Archaeology, which is derived from the Greek word *Arxaiologia*, meaning the science of the ancient. Given the broad scope of archaeology, as it addresses and investigates the human past and history and everything left behind, including minor and major objects, built architecture, burial practices, and sometimes detailed studies of ancient plant and animal remains, some scholars have classified archaeology as a discipline belonging to cultural anthropology, which, alongside physical anthropology, forms what is referred to as anthropology.

By its nature, archaeology is an analytical science. It was previously considered an auxiliary discipline to other sciences such as history, geography, biblical studies, and philosophy. However, in the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century, it became an autonomous discipline with its own tools and methodologies, which at times incorporate selected instruments from the humanities, natural sciences, engineering, and planning. Through this combination, archaeology reconstructs the image of social life reflected in these silent traces. It also integrates other fields such as history, particularly in the study of later periods in which chronology and written records were

employed, as well as social sciences such as philosophy and sociology, relying on these disciplines as supporting tools (Zaki, 2015).

It has also been considered a branch of anthropology that focuses on past human societies and cultures rather than present ones. Specifically, it studies artifacts such as tools, buildings, and vessels, and whatever remains of them that has persisted to the present. It also examines human fossils and past environments in order to understand the extent to which natural forces, such as climate and available food resources, have influenced the formation of human culture (Barnes, 1987, p. 15).

Archaeology is a means through which contemporary humanity retrieves and understands human history by studying natural remains and material culture such as bones, pottery, ornaments, weapons, and architecture. In the second half of the twentieth century, the term "New Archaeology" emerged, combining ethnological orientation with social approaches. It employs spatial analytical methods and engages with the sciences on the basis of the new evolutionary theory. New Archaeology aims to study the organization of human groups within their regions and to understand their social structure, with the objective of linking these elements to a general system of human behavior.

New Archaeology moves toward new trajectories that broaden its horizons and advance its development, which can be summarized in three principles:

- The use of new techniques in documentation and the application of computers for statistical and graphical analysis of information, alongside the expansion of the role of environmental archaeology in understanding the economic and subsistence foundations of prehistoric societies in particular.
- The treatment of civilization from the perspective of evolutionary theory.
- The definition of civilizations as units within systems operating according to the concept of evolution, the establishment of a close relationship between archaeology and anthropology, the direction of research toward the systematic study of settlement patterns, the highlighting of ethnographic analogies, and the comprehensive reconstruction of prehistoric life.

This new orientation in archaeology involves the theoretical reconstruction of religious and social life, the identification of subsistence strategies and patterns of ritual and environmental change, and the submission of abstract information to mathematical calculation.

III- Fields and Methodologies:

The study of archaeology possesses an important and fundamental dimension that cannot be overlooked, namely the scientific and academic study of material remains in ways that enable the researcher to derive a substantial body of information about discovered artifacts and the nature of human life in ancient periods. The study of antiquities plays a significant role in the history of nations, as it constitutes a living record through which one can identify the lives of peoples, their customs, relationships, political systems, and cultures. It is also considered one of the means of preserving a nation's history and a faithful mirror reflecting the stages of human civilization and its progress. The objective of archaeological study lies in excavation, digging, and the analysis of the cultural remains of humans who lived in a given region (Nuwibat, 2014, p. 52).

Archaeology is concerned with the study of material elements that help describe and interpret the development of human cultures. The archaeologist performs a role analogous to that of a historian among anthropologists, attempting to reconstruct events as they occurred in the past. However, the archaeologist differs from the historian in that the latter is concerned only with written history extending back several thousand years, whereas the archaeologist traces developments back millions of years in order to follow the growth of human culture prior to the emergence of writing. For this reason, the archaeologist relies on the objects left by early humans to assemble evidence that clarifies how ancient cultures developed, spread, and interacted with one another.

Anthropology, particularly physical anthropology, is concerned with the study of the human being as a biological organism. Its scholars focus on major areas such as the study of human evolution through the analysis of fossils. Specialists in this field maintain that *Homo sapiens* evolved from other human species. The theory of evolution constitutes one of the most important subjects of this branch, asserting that species and types undergo development and change in their bodily structures and the functions of their organs as they reproduce across ages. Physical traits of human groups, together with their movement patterns, and their responses to geographical elements including their location and weather conditions, serve as study subjects for anthropologists. Physical anthropologists who study human biology now use genetic information together with organic chemical knowledge to understand human population differences and how different groups adapt to their environmental surroundings (Ismail, 1986, pp. 27-28).

Anthropology emphasizes comprehensiveness and the integration of different sciences. It is a science of the human being and human activity, aiming to understand all types of phenomena that affect humans by employing the methods and results of other sciences. It investigates human problems and follows them without adhering to rigid boundaries that separate different scientific disciplines (Linton, 1967, p. 15).

The principal concern within the anthropological field is the cultural branch of anthropology, namely cultural anthropology, which is devoted to the study of cultures, beliefs, creative human practices, and their civilizational, intellectual, scientific, cultural, and literary products. Accordingly, this branch of anthropology closely engages with research efforts in scientific heritage and constitutes both an analytical tool and an in-depth research methodology for studying intellectual and material legacies alike.

Cultural anthropology often relies on ethnography, understood as a descriptive form of documentation used in anthropology to present data about a particular people or human group. It frequently draws on participant observation research conducted according to the empirical method. Ethnology, sometimes referred to as the science of ethnic cultures, is based on the systematic comparison of different cultures using the historical method. Cultural anthropology is also referred to as social anthropology or socio-cultural anthropology, since culture is the product of society and the central axis of its outputs.

The study within this research approach also extends to the analysis of archaeological finds, which constitute a gateway to anthropology, as well as to the study and documentation of ancient maps through examining land use and the material remains present in the designated study area. It also involves defining the temporal scope of the study by analyzing the tools used within it.

Accordingly, these elements represent a research component and a productive analytical instrument for uncovering scientific heritage.

Such studies may also focus on various instruments of civilization in land studies and different demographic analyses. This includes examining health conditions and their transformations, since patterns of disease indicate directions of settlement and habitation. It also encompasses the study of archaeological artistic inscriptions in places of worship, state institutions, and ancient buildings, which serve as indicators of the cultural and civilizational level of the society under study. Moreover, the study and excavation of cemeteries and the stones fixed upon them constitute documented sources of information. In addition, the study of coinage and the possessions of different states reflects economic conditions, standards of living, and development within society. Accordingly, the anthropological study of humans considers them specifically in relation to their achievements.

Archaeological studies provide original research material for historical studies within the experimental method in cases where data collected from written sources, according to the transmission-based method or the logical analytical method that relies on written sources, prove insufficient. They also contribute to historical study through the complementary use of the logical analytical and experimental methods.

This also applies to the study of sites for which no transmitted texts exist, even if they belong to later periods, such as archaeological studies conducted in certain regions of the Arabian Gulf, its cities, and population centers that were not historically documented through transmitted texts.

Accordingly, archaeological studies that rely on material sources constitute both an input and a methodological foundation for studies and research aimed at uncovering and verifying scientific heritage, particularly in historical research that follows the experimental inductive method in fields where transmitted sources are insufficient, alongside the logical deductive method. They therefore represent the experimental scientific component in historical studies and sciences, lending them methodological rigor and high scientific credibility (Hussein, n.d.).

Anthropological studies also intersect with archaeology in their use of field research, particularly since both are field sciences whose premises and results form theoretical stations characterized by methodological pluralism. In archaeology, field research is generally conducted in a traditional manner through observation with the naked eye of every trace on the ground surface. This method is employed when the results provided by aerial imagery are incomplete and when the use of more advanced techniques is not feasible. Both disciplines also employ descriptive, analytical, historical, and comparative methods.

Archaeology and physical anthropology are the two branches of anthropology that are particularly concerned with the human past. Within the field of archaeology, some scholars specialize in uncovering the past of cultures with written histories, while others specialize in investigating prehistoric cultures.

IV- Anthropology and Archaeology: What Relationship:

Archaeology is one of the most important auxiliary sciences of anthropology. It is observed that anthropology is divided into physical anthropology, which studies human biological evolution up to modern humans, and cultural anthropology, which includes three main subdivisions: linguistics,

ethnology, and archaeology. Archaeology therefore belongs to anthropology, which constitutes an interdisciplinary field extending bridges between the natural, life, social, and human sciences.

Anthropological inquiry and the application of modern scientific methods have introduced new dimensions that have achieved significant progress in the capacity to understand and interpret the past. The distinctive anthropological concern with the ways populations lived, their social organization, and the achievement of this understanding through generalization and comparative approaches has profoundly influenced the theoretical and interpretive aspects of all branches of archaeology. In prehistoric archaeology, for example, the emphasis shifted from techniques to the investigation of changes in hunting patterns that may reflect increasing knowledge, closer social organization, and new means of exploiting the environment (Kafafi, 2004, p. 26).

Archaeology is concerned with uncovering the remains of the past that reflect the development of human life. It constitutes a scientific study of the material remains of past human civilizations and the lives of ancient peoples. These remains include buildings, artistic objects, tools, pottery, and even bones. In the American continent, archaeology is considered part of anthropology, whereas in Europe archaeologists view their work as closely linked to the field of history.

Archaeology is the study of all tangible and visible remains that indicate past human activity, ranging from simple traces to objects of considerable value, regardless of their type. Through these remains, past societies can be understood in terms of their social structure, customs and traditions, ways of life, modes of thought, artistic expressions, and surrounding environment, primarily through the study of what they produced rather than relying on what they reported about themselves. Accordingly, archaeology addresses the human past on the surface of the earth. On this basis, it is closely associated with history and constitutes one of the most important methods that enrich and contribute to it, yet it is distinguished by its comprehensive perspective.

In general, archaeology draws upon a number of applied and human sciences, foremost among them anthropology, which studies discovered skeletal remains to determine the race or races to which these remains belong, as well as their chronology and development within their environments. Archaeology also relies on geology and geography to help determine the natural setting or environment in which humans carried out their activities across different periods. In addition, archaeology makes use of numerous other sciences such as topography, ethnography, physics, chemistry, and atomic science.

What does the archaeologist do in the work of the field anthropologist?

Ethnology is a research approach that involves the use of information from living cultures, in the form of ethnography, ethnology, ethnicity, and experimental archaeology, to understand patterns present at archaeological sites. The ethnologist obtains evidence concerning ongoing activities within any society and employs these studies to construct models of contemporary behavior in order to clarify and interpret the patterns observed in archaeological contexts.

The purpose of ethnology is the formulation and testing of methods, hypotheses, models, and theories derived from archaeological and ethnographic data. Ethnological studies are typically conducted using cultural anthropological methods, particularly participant observation. However, behavioral data are also drawn from ethnological and ethnographic reports, as well as from oral

history. The essential requirement is reliance on robust evidence of any kind to describe artifacts and their interactions with people within activities.

Ethnological data can be found in published or unpublished written accounts, including archives and field notes, photographs, oral histories, public or private collections of artifacts, and, naturally, observations intentionally conducted for archaeological purposes within a living community.

The archaeologist Patty Jo Watson argued that ethnology should also encompass experimental archaeology, in which the archaeologist creates the conditions to be examined rather than merely observing them as found. Observations are still made of variables relevant to archaeology within a living context (Watson, 1980, pp. 55-64).

The archaeologist Nicholas David clearly described the issue by defining ethnology as an attempt to bridge the gap between the ideational system, including ideas, values, norms, and representations of the unobservable human mind, and the phenomenal system, including artifacts and objects shaped by human activity, which vary according to material, form, and context (David & Kramer, 2001, p. 78).

The need among archaeologists to understand the nature of the relationship between human behavior and the material it employs has led to numerous studies aimed at observing and documenting these relationships, the factors influencing them, and the changes affecting them. However, the isolation of archaeology as a sole methodological framework for understanding this relationship has rendered the resulting conclusions limited.

To overcome this methodological impasse, it became necessary to draw upon the methodological framework of ethnology, a discipline concerned with describing contemporary so-called primitive societies and employing present-day data to interpret the past.

Anthropological studies have contributed to providing archaeologists with information that facilitates the understanding of certain aspects related to discovered archaeological material. Nevertheless, these studies have largely focused on the socio-cultural dimensions of societies in isolation from the material culture they use, thereby reducing the opportunity to establish a relationship between two fundamental components of the cultural phenomenon: human behavior and the material culture employed.

To address this methodological deficiency, archaeologists began to study contemporary primitive societies themselves in order to obtain information that would help interpret the critical duality of behavior and material. This step led to the emergence of a scientific specialization known as ethnoarchaeology, which aims to:

- Establish the relationship between the present and the past in order to identify similarities and differences between source and subject, that is, by relying on the method of analogy or comparison.
- Formulate and test hypotheses, interpretive models, and theories that arise from archaeological concerns or orientations through ethnographic information.

Archaeology is an integral part of anthropology and constitutes a field in which all interests related to the human being converge. As a component of anthropology, archaeology is ultimately concerned with the study of the culture of ancient humans through those aspects of culture that can be known across distant periods of time. Naturally, the temporal proximity or remoteness of the periods studied in archaeology has a direct impact on the type and diversity of cultural material that the discipline can obtain through research.

Anthropology is the study of the human being encompassing all aspects of human life, not only in the present but also in the distant past. Archaeology, by contrast, is the study of artifacts excavated from beneath the surface of the earth that relate to the past. This study provides extensive information about the culture, lifestyle, and history of ancient humans. Accordingly, archaeology is a branch of anthropology, which itself is closely related to sociology.

Anthropology and archaeology share a common interest in studying human beings through their different approaches to analyzing human existence. Anthropology studies human conduct along with their values and the social structures, which determine how communities function in their everyday existence. Archaeology studies human material artifacts through tool discoveries and settlement remains, and structural evidence to reveal their historical background and their habitat conditions. Archaeological anthropology now enables researchers to combine physical evidence with cultural studies. This leads to better understanding of human behavior and how cultural practices become physical artifacts. The two academic fields now study human development through their combined approaches, which examine both historical and contemporary human existence.

V- Conclusion:

The connection between anthropology and archaeology proves to be complex because it extends beyond basic links between their academic fields. The relationship between the two fields exists as a complex system, which switches between uniting and separating their approaches depending on how researchers study their fields and what knowledge they seek to acquire. The study of material artifacts serves as evidence for archaeological research to investigate historical periods, but anthropologists study human beings through their cultural and social aspects. Each therefore offers a distinct approach that is nonetheless complementary in essence.

The current intellectual landscape reveals that the two fields must abandon their strict separation because modern academic approaches now combine physical examination with cultural meaning analysis. The integration process enables researchers to create detailed and accurate reconstructions of human populations throughout different historical periods. The study of human beings requires researchers to connect physical artifacts, which people left behind, with the cultural symbols they created for proper understanding.

Hence, the importance of adopting an integrative approach that combines anthropological tools with archaeological methodologies becomes evident, as this contributes to deepening the understanding of the human phenomenon in its historical and civilizational dimensions and enables a more conscious reading of the past in light of the present.

Anthropological writings in social anthropology have developed according to a historical anthropological approach oriented toward objectives linked to colonial expansion. Most researchers concerned with social structures were associated with colonial authority, and consequently their

studies were produced in the service of colonial plans and objectives. The fields of anthropology and archaeology are overlapping domains of knowledge centered on humans, and they converge through conceptual integration of methodologies, which necessarily leads to a deeper understanding of their shared subjects. This conceptual interconnection among disciplines, at the methodological level, leads to examining the depth of their relationship in both domains and methods. Anthropologists and archaeologists study tools and phenomena and analyze them in order to obtain more information through direct experience. The relationship between archaeology and anthropology is longstanding, since it is difficult to write the history of peoples without knowledge of their cultural and social systems. Anthropology is regarded as a field of knowledge that reveals facts and effectively contributes to enriching historical understanding. Research into the history of peoples requires cooperation among historians, anthropologists, and archaeologists in order to combine techniques and reach distant historical truths.

In general, archaeology draws upon a number of applied and human sciences, foremost among them anthropology, which studies discovered skeletal remains to determine the race or races to which those remains belong, as well as the chronology of their presence and their development within their environments. Archaeology also relies on geology and geography to help determine the natural setting or environment in which humans practiced their activities across different periods. In addition, archaeology makes use of many other sciences, including topography, ethnography, physics, chemistry, atomic science, and others.

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