

Building a Contemporary Legacy



Thomas Barfield
Professor, Anthropology

CURRENT RESEARCH

How anthropology provides insight into resolving contemporary issues

Wars embedded in cultural, religious or ethnic conflicts arise throughout our world, but their complexity makes settling them exceptionally difficult for outsiders. Research in anthropology, with its sensibility to such cultural issues, provides a critically significant way for both the general public and policymakers to understand how other parts of the world work. Without such an understanding, it is not possible to propose relational solutions to such conflicts and bring them to an end. Dr. Thomas Barfield, Professor of Anthropology at Boston University, studies various societies and political structures to understand their cultural and political formation and transitions. A renowned academic contributor of the work on nomadic peoples, Dr. Barfield is also one of the world's experts on Afghanistan, and has been invited to consult at the White House, US State Department and international agencies on the problems in that country. He grounds strong empirical research with theory to gain a deeper understanding of our world's history, many of which are relevant to current international disputes.

Reaching across disciplinary boundaries, Dr. Barfield is a published author of many award-winning books that encompass a wide number of fields. His widely cited *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China (1989)*, now translated in Chinese, Korean, and Russian, outlines a model for explaining the rise and fall of nomadic empires as well as foreign dynasties that ruled China over a period spanning 2000 years. He has also produced an award-winning study, *Afghanistan: An Atlas of Indigenous Domestic Architecture* in 1991. In the 2000s, he conducted a variety of new studies on customary law for the...

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AFFILIATION

 Boston University

EDUCATION

- Ph.D. in Social Anthropology 1978, Harvard University
- M.A. in Social Anthropology 1974, Harvard University
- B.A. in 1972, University of Pennsylvania

AWARDS

- Outstanding Academic Title in Middle East & North Africa, 2011
- Guggenheim Fellowship, 2006 - 2007
- Outstanding Academic Book in Art and Architecture, 1993
- Fellow of the American Anthropological Association, 1993

RESEARCH AREAS

Humanities, Anthropology, Archaeology, History

FUNDING REQUEST

Your contributions will support the continued research of Dr. Thomas Barfield as he conducts rigorous studies on nomads, Afghanistan, and the Shadow Empires and engages in intensive writing processes. Donations will further support his writing, and enable support for students to join his research. Partner with Dr. Barfield to help better prepare for pressing, international issues!