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Gordon Randolph Willey. *New World Archaeology and Culture History*

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that pursuit of knowledge demands curiosity and the courage to think differently. It treats the past like a collection of family heirlooms. There is little sense of a world yet to be made. The student is expected to be an appreciator, not entrepreneurial.

There are excellent essays at the end of each chapter giving suggestions for further reading, or viewing, or musical listening. There is little on varying methods of analysis or the problems of evidence. The book does not encourage students to approach the past critically but rather deferentially. If students have only one course in common in their college years, is this attitude of deference what we want to be taken as the mark of an educated person? For myself, I say no.

Corinne Lathrop Gilb

CIVILIZATIONAL ARTICLES OF A NEW WORLD SPECIALIST

Gordon Randolph Willey. *New World Archaeology and Culture History. Collected Essays and Articles*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990.

This book is a collection of articles published from 1945 to 1986, arranged by subject, with added discussions before each group of articles giving Willey's present opinion on that subject. The age of some of these articles makes them very debatable reference sources, but even the older articles do provide one source of information that can be useful both to outsiders and to specialists; Ideas which now seem dated may turn out only to be unfashionable. If they are not precisely correct, they may still be the inspiration for new approaches to stubborn problems, and such collections as this one thereby become useful outside the normal relevance of such articles. The book is not complete (for example, most of Willey's articles about the Maya were published elsewhere), and it says next to nothing about the areas north of the Rio Grande and very little about those east and south of the Inca Empire. Otherwise, the breadth of coverage is about as much as one could ask for, from the high civilizations of Mesoamerica and Peru to the "intermediate" areas of Central America and the islands, from standard archaeological discussions to points of religion and ideology seldom seen on a library's archaeology shelves. Willey's point of view, stated on the first page of text, is also of direct relevance to this Society's purposes:

I am inclined to think that one either basically approves or disapproves of comparative analyses of the developmental trajectories of civilizations. I have always counted myself among the "approvers"; and, as the first essay of this group indicates, I seem to have been of this turn of mind early in my career.

One may suggest that the Americas are a natural laboratory for the comparative-civilizationist, much more so than any parts of the Old World, because of one straightforward study aid. There is a base line for

the study; in the Americas we can see civilization growing from its Archaic (corresponding to the Old World Paleolithic) antecedents, through the gradual establishment of agriculture and of population centers, into cities and states that amazed the Spaniards when they arrived. Nowhere else in the world is this continuous record available (or at least, adequately dug up yet), and in most of the world, these early developments are buried under the debris of an additional two to five millennia of more developed cultures. More than this, the beginnings of civilization in Mesoamerica and Peru occurred at approximately the same time, so the two areas act as natural controls on hypotheses about each other. If a hypothesis that such-and-so a development is "natural" to a particular early stage of evolution cannot be applied to both Mesoamerica and Peru, then some very good reasons had better be supplied. Prof. Willey is familiar with both areas and so can write about each with informed opinion on the other, which is a very useful trait for the civilizationist approaching both areas from outside.

The presence of such a single baseline for the two areas automatically raises the question of contacts between them; the Americas are thus also the best laboratory for the idea of diffusion in very early civilizations. The first and sixth groups of articles in this collection particularly address these problems of diffusion and parallel development, and other articles in the book concern the same question from different viewpoints.

The Americas have seen at least two probably separate pristine developments of civilization and so are a necessary area of study for anyone interested in beginnings. This book includes Willey's classic article "The Early Great Styles and the Rise of the Precolumbian Civilizations," which is absolutely a must-read on origins, one of the few on the subject that is not an excursus on political or economic determinism. His newly-written discussion of this article (page 272) is worth quoting on its own:

I remain fascinated by and convinced of the main thesis of the essay; however, it met with considerable resistance from many colleagues. Some said that my appraisal of the Intermediate Area "control case" was mistaken, that the Intermediate Area did, indeed, produce "civilizations" and "empires" of the stature and quality of those of Mesoamerica or Peru. The other line of criticism accused me of claiming that art styles were to be seen as causative forces in the rise of civilizations. It was not my intention to say this. I assumed, rather, that Olmec and Chavín art, per se, followed upon the establishment of intercommunicative networks in their respective areas and, in effect, set the seal of approval upon an area-wide ideological unity or "ecumenism" (see Kroeber 1952*). I suppose what my idea does is to

*The reference is to A. L. Kroeber, 1952, "The Ancient Oikumene as a Historical Culture Aggregate," in *The Nature of Culture*, pp. 379-395.

move the question of "the rise of civilization" a step back in time. What the forces were that brought about the intercommunicative networks, and what degree of area-wide ideological unity they represented are, of course, still unanswered questions.

For those familiar with my own work on origins, this study and J. H. Howard's *The Southeastern Ceremonial Complex and Its Interpretation* (Missouri Archaeological Society, Memoir 6, 1968) were the two proposals most influential on my own proposal of a similar development, similarly concurrent with the establishment of subsistence agriculture, centered on the religion of the Great Goddess in the Near East at the end of the seventh millennium BC.*

Regarding other points, the article "Mesoamerican Civilization and the Idea of Transcendence" discusses the philosophy of the Toltec priest-king Topiltzin Quetzalcóatl, both in its own right and as a competitor to the established religion of Tezcatlipoca, and will be of interest to students of both religion and philosophy. There is a fair amount of discussion of the ideas of other archaeologists, which will serve as introduction to and informed comment on those works. The essays opening each section frequently contain new information and discussions of current status, noting for example that the Swasey phase in Belize, once thought to date almost a thousand years before the Olmec horizon, now seems to be only contemporary with it. The book also includes an occasional echo of the classroom, for example in the reminder that "the construction of a simulation model of a system and the demonstration of the internal consistency of that model do not necessarily offer proof of what actually happened in the past" (p. 378). By no means all the important controversies in the area are discussed—it was disappointing to see nothing on the problems of radiocarbon dating in the Americas, and particularly the annoying inconsistencies of the Mesoamerican Middle Classic—but in all, the book's coverage is both wide-ranging and interesting, and it is a convenient reference to use in place of trips to many different journals and prior collections. The book is recommended for the library shelves of universities of all sizes and the personal shelves of the American archaeologist and the comparativist who is using American archaeology as a major source of data. Other comparativists in a wide range of fields would be well advised to dip into it to check for information relevant to their own work.

John K. Hord

A TRANSDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO CIVILIZATION ET AL.

Roger Williams Wescott. *Getting It Together: Linking the Humanities to One Another and to the Sciences*. Chattanooga: University of Tennessee, 1990.

*J. K. Hord, 1987, "The Twilight of the Goddess: An Ancient Religious Revolution," *Comparative Civilizations Review* 16:57-91.