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ISCS Historical Documents



DREW UNIVERSITY

Madison, New Jersey 07940 / 201-377-3000

September 4, 1971

Dear Colleague:

Our session on "Crucial Transitions in Civilization," sponsored by Section H of the A.A.A.S., will be held between 9 A.M. and 5 P.M. on Wednesday, December 29, 1971, on the Mezzanine Floor of the Warwick Hotel at 1701 Locust Street (the corner of 17th Street) in Philadelphia. If you wish to make room reservations by telephone, call 215 - PENNYPACKER 5 - 3800.

Papers are to be presented between 9 and 12 A.M. in the Mirror Room (which seats about 145 persons) by Professors Hall, Kavolis, Lanning, Melko, Wescott, and Wolf, as your mimeographed program indicates. If one of these gentlemen is unable to present his paper, we will call on our alternate, Professor William M. Cross of the Sociology Department at Valparaiso University, Indiana, to present his paper (submitted after the May program was distributed) "Leadership and the Evolution of Civilization."

At 2 P.M. we will reconvene in the Book Room (which seats about 45 persons) to discuss the future of *The Comparative Civilizations Newsletter*, edited by Professor Matthew Melko of the Sociology Department of the State University of New York at Geneseo. The *Newsletter* is already becoming too big a job for uncompensated spare-time labor by a single scholar. Suggestions on how to help Dr. Melko in terms of time, labor, and financing will be gratefully received.

A second major afternoon topic will be that of future sessions on the comparative study of civilizations to be held in conjunction with the regular meetings of other and larger organizations. A very promising prospect is that of a session sponsored by the Ninth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, to be held in Chicago from September 1 to 8, 1973. But, if we are to submit historiographical papers for that occasion -- whether singly or in concert -- we must provide titles, abstracts, and other details to Professor Sol Tax of the University of Chicago by January 1, 1972. Since this date falls only three days after our meeting, we should, if possible, formulate our ideas about potential Chicago topics and titles well before December.

Needless to say, if any of you have ideas about other subjects to be considered in the course of our afternoon planning session, I welcome suggestions from you to that effect at any time prior to the week of the Philadelphia A.A.A.S. meetings.

Mr. D. W. Thornhill, A.A.A.S. Annual Meeting Manager, asks that all session participants send him a complete manuscript -- or, at the very least, a 2000-word summary -- of their presentations "by October." (Since no date

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is given, I recommend that we play safe and assume that October 1 is intended.)
His address is: American Association for the Advancement of Science,
1515 Massachusetts Avenue North West, Washington, D.C. 20005.

In addition, I would appreciate your sending copies of your full texts
(or extended summaries) both to me and to the Secretary of Section H,
Professor Anthony Leeds, Anthropology Department, University of Texas,
Austin, Texas 78712.

Thanks very much. I look forward to seeing you all in Philadelphia.

Yours faithfully,

R. W. Wescott
Professor and Chairman
Anthropology Department

Office: 201 - 377-3000, Ext. 258

Home: 201 - 377-9031

CRUCIAL TRANSITIONS IN CIVILIZATION: A Problem in Macro-Cultural Interpretation

A topical session sponsored by Section II (Anthropology), to be held in connection with the Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Philadelphia, Pa., December 26-30, 1971

Section Chairman: Anthony Leeds, Anthropology Department, University of Texas

Session Chairman: Roger Wescott, Anthropology Department, Drew University

Date of program submission: May 22, 1971

A formal morning session will be held, at which the following six papers will be read:

The Resolution of Transitions Through Novel Patterns

Matthew Melko, History Department, Bradford Junior College
(after June 30: Sociology Department,
Geneseo College, State University of New York)

Crucial civilizational transitions are always resolved by the organization of a novel set of patterns, never by disintegration, ossification, reformation, or reconstitution.

Demographic Factors in the Evolution of Civilizations

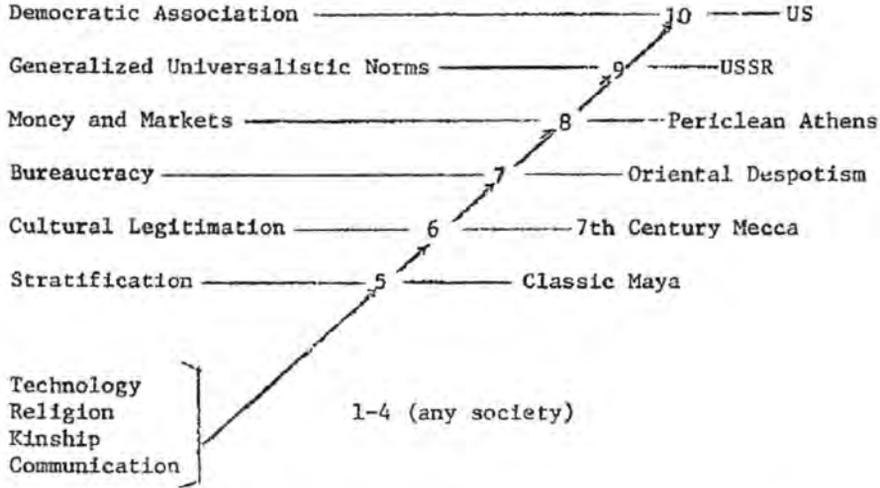
Edward P. Lanning, Anthropology Department, Columbia University

Population size, density, and growth rate, and the degree of population pressure on basic resources, have played significant roles in the evolution and differentiation of civilizations. The importance of these factors is most evident in the archaeological record, and has been studied most fully in the case of the ancient American civilizations. Early accelerated population growth in geographic contexts of closed frontiers led to the precocious development of Rural Nucleated and, later, Synchoritic Urban civilizations in Mesoamerica and Peru. Micro-environmental reduction under mounting population pressure was a primary cause of these early developments. Delayed population growth in similar geographic contexts led to the growth of Achoritic Urban civilizations in at least Colombia and Ecuador. Reduced pressure on resources, coupled with microenvironmental retention, was largely responsible for the delayed development of Achoritic Urbanism. There was no original evolution of civilization in areas of consistently low population density, nor in areas with open frontiers, though some of these areas were eventually incorporated into conquest empires.

Evolutionary Universals and Universal Evolution

Charles Wolf, Sociology Department, Brown University

Parsons' ten "evolutionary universals" are used to indicate "crucial transitions" in the civilizational process.



Whether they form a perfect and unidimensional scale cannot be decided at present for lack of conceptually ordered historical materials. Underlying societal development may be a general process of "structural differentiation" whose analysis yields insight into transformatory mechanisms. The arraying of "classic confrontations" between social types, roles and relations (e.g., the artisanate vs. the mandarin) permits substruction closer to the level of data. Childe and White's approach of "universal evolution" allows cross-cultural and historical generalization in parallel with Parsons. Complementary series of "societal revolutions" (agricultural, urban, industrial) invite comparison and integration with his list, while incurring similar methodological difficulties. Nevertheless they represent strategic workpoints for building and testing empirical theories of civilization.

Current Socio-Cultural Changes in the Perspective of Civilization Theory

Vytautas Kavolis, Sociology Department, Dickinson College

What does the civilization theory contribute to the understanding of contemporary socio-cultural changes? Do the latter require or suggest reconceptualizations of the civilization theory so far available?

The Evolution of Civilization

Robert Hall, History Department,
New School for Social Research

The fundamental evolution of the one human civilization in progressive stages of cognition of the world in contrast to the differing participation in these stages of the historical-geographic civilizations; hence the deep structures of consciousness unifying basic cultural systems in contrast to the varying surface structures of ideology, technology, and artistic style.

Boundaries Between Civilizations

Roger W. Wescott, Anthropology Department, Drew University

Spatial boundaries between civilizations (such as that between the Indic and the Mexican) are relatively easy to draw. Temporal boundaries, both between civilizations (such as the Mesopotamian and the Arabic) and within civilizations (as in the case of the "Medieval" and the "Modern"), are more difficult to draw. Yet both types seem objective in comparison with stylistic boundaries, such as the division between contemporaneous "classical" and "romantic" manners. This paper is an attempt to establish the validity and extent of cultural boundaries in the comparative study of civilizations.

An afternoon period will be kept free on the same day for informal exchanges of views and for discussion of problems involving organization and planning.

Final 1971 Program (Submitted September 10)

AAAS SECTION H: ANTHROPOLOGY

TITLE: Crucial Transitions in Civilization:
A Problem in Macro-Cultural Interpretation

ARRANGER: Roger W. Wescott, Drew University
(Madison, N. J. 07940; phone 201-377-3000,
Ext. 258, or 201-377-9031)

DURATION: One Day (Two 3-hour Sessions)

SYNOPSIS: Historiology, the comparative study of civilizations, has been a stepchild among established disciplines since the 1850's. While philosophy, history, sociology, and anthropology have provided intermittent havens for this interdisciplinary enterprise, no lasting intellectual home for it has thus far been found. Yet the questions posed by historiology are critical ones, bearing on such diverse practical problems as population growth, urban dislocation, social cohesion, stylistic persistence, communicative efficacy, and educational method. Moreover, historiology constitutes a natural diachronic bridge between antiquarian and futuristic interests. Without historiological background, it is scarcely possible to give an informed answer to the question posed by Kenneth Boulding, Daniel Bell, Marshall McLuhan and others as to whether civilization -- in the traditional sense -- is now ending and what its termination, if imminent, may mean in terms of concrete human experience.

MORNING SESSION: Between 9 and 12 A.M., there will be six speakers, each of whom will make a 15-minute presentation and allow about 10 minutes for subsequent questions and discussion from the audience. The Arranger will introduce the session as a whole, enforce the time limitations, and offer a brief afterword at its conclusion.

SCHEDULED SPEAKERS:

Robert L. Hall	"The Evolution of Civilization"
Vytautas Kavolis	"Current Socio-Cultural Changes in the Perspective of Civilization Theory"
Edward P. Lanning	"Demographic Factors in the Evolution of Civilizations"
Matthew Melko	"The Resolution of Transitions through Novel Patterns"
Roger W. Wescott	"Boundaries between Civilizations"
C. P. Wolf	"Evolutionary Universals and Universal Evolution"

ALTERNATE SPEAKER:

William M. Cross "Leadership and the Evolution of Civilization"

AFTERNOON SESSION: At 2 P.M. Matthew Melko, Editor of *The Comparative Civilizations Newsletter*, will report on the progress and problems of the publication. C. P. Wolf of Brown University will review the historiological sessions held during the past decade in conjunction with the meetings of larger and more highly organized groups (such as the American Sociological Association, the American Anthropological Association, and the North Eastern

Anthropological Association) and make suggestions about prospective sponsorship of future sessions. R. W. Wescott, American Representative of the (currently inactive) *International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations*, will open discussion of the question of whether to attempt to revive the Society in Europe, to move it to the United States, or to found a wholly new organization. The floor will then be opened to general discussion of the place of historiology among the social sciences, of its legitimacy as a field of scholarly specialization, and of related matters. The session will end no later than 5 P.M.

AUDIENCE: All social scientists, many humanists, and any natural scientists with broad interests should find both sessions stimulating. They are invited to put questions to the speakers and to join in the discussion.

PUBLICATION: A report on the two sessions will appear in *The Comparative Civilizations Newsletter*. Full texts of papers submitted, however, must be submitted to professional journals.

Revised 1971 Program (Submitted September 17)

AAAS SECTION H: ANTHROPOLOGY

Crucial Transitions in Civilization:
A Problem in Macro-Cultural Interpretation

Arranged by ROGER W. WESCOTT
Professor and Chairman, Anthropology Department
Drew University, Madison, N.J. 07940

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1971

Warwick Hotel, Mirror & Book Rooms

9:00 a.m.

Formal Papers

Chairman: ROGER W. WESCOTT

The Resolution of Transitions Through Novel Patterns

MATTHEW MELKO (Associate Professor of Sociology, State University of New York, Geneseo)

Demographic Factors in the Evolution of Civilizations

EDWARD P. LANNING (Professor of Anthropology, Columbia University, New York)

Evolutionary Universals and Universal Evolution

CHARLES P. WOLF (Lecturer in Sociology, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island)

Current Socio-Cultural Changes in the Perspective of Civilization Theory

VYTAUTAS KAVOLIS (Professor and Chairman, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania)

The Evolution of Civilization

ROBERT L. HALL (Adjunct Professor of Philosophy and History, New School for Social Research, New York)

Boundaries Between Civilizations

ROGER W. WESCOTT (Professor of Anthropology and Linguistics, Drew University, Madison, New Jersey)

2:00 p.m.

ORGANIZATION & PLANNING SESSION

Chairman: ROGER W. WESCOTT

Publication Problems of The Comparative Civilizations Newsletter

MATTHEW MELKO (Associate Professor of Sociology, State University of New York, Geneseo)

Future Conferences concerning the Comparative Study of Civilizations

CHARLES P. WOLF (Lecturer in Sociology, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island)

The Status and Prospects of The International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations (Salzburg, Austria)

ROGER W. WESCOTT (Professor of Anthropology and Linguistics, Drew University, Madison, New Jersey)

A Consideration of the Role of Leadership in the Evolution of Civilizations and of Organizations Devoted to Their Study

WILLIAM M. CROSS (Assistant Professor of Sociology, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana)

General Discussion of Historiographical and Organizational Problems

OFFICERS, SPEAKERS, AND AUDITORS IN THE SESSION

Historiology, the comparative study of civilizations, has been a stepchild among established disciplines since the 1850's. While philosophy, history, sociology, and anthropology have provided intermittent havens for this interdisciplinary enterprise, no lasting intellectual home for it has thus far been found. Yet the questions posed by historiology are critical ones, bearing on such diverse practical problems as population growth, urban dislocation, social cohesion, stylistic persistence, communicative efficacy, and educational method. Moreover, historiology constitutes a natural diachronic bridge between antiquarian and futuristic interests. Without historiographical background, it is scarcely possible to give an informed answer to the question posed by Kenneth Boulding, Daniel Bell, Marshall McLuhan and others as to whether civilization -- in the traditional sense -- is now ending and what its termination, if imminent, may mean in terms of concrete human experience.