

**Thank You to Minna and Gordon Hewes:
Friends of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations
from the Ecumene¹**

The ISCSC is always extremely appreciative when it receives a special gift from those who support its intellectual and organizational endeavors. This certainly was the case when it recently received a generous bequest from the estate of Mrs. Minna Hewes, the most substantial financial donation in the history of this organization.

This bequest reminds us that through planned gifts donors can leave a legacy behind after they pass. That's why planned-giving, including bequests, are often called legacy programs. When leaving a bequest as a tribute to an organization, donors benefit from such planned gifts because they can make a lasting impact on a cause that is important to them, enabling the organization to continue to operate in a robust fashion.

The ISCSC is a cause about which Gordon and Minna Hewes felt passionate. Their bequest to the organization has been received over the past few months. As longtime members know, Minna Hewes and her husband Gordon Hewes were active supporters of ISCSC over the years. Gordon Hewes passed away in 1997, at age 80. Minna Hewes died in 2016, at age 97.

Though to the ISCSC membership Gordon was the officially known academic of the couple, Minna was his dynamic, intellectual life partner. Gordon married Minna in 1939. In many ways she mirrored her mother, Belle Winestine, a Montana-born daughter of Romanian Jewish refugees. She was, in the early 1900s, a well-known women suffragette campaigner, leader of the Montana League of Women Voters, political advisor and secretary to Jeannette Rankin (the first woman elected to Congress) and editor of the *Montana Progress*.² For Gordon, Minna mirrored Belle's ability as a facilitator and collaborator and shared fully in his field work.³

Gordon's teaching career spanned the years 1939 to 1988. He began as a Teaching Assistant at the University of California; his professional expertise culminated in his becoming a full Professor and Acting Chairman of the Anthropology Department at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

¹ *Ecumene* (U.S Spelling), *Oikumene* (U.K. spelling)

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belle_Fligelman_Winestine

³ *Miscellaneous Obituaries of Anthropologists* available at <http://www.obitcentral.com/obitsearch/obits/misc/anthro2.htm>

At the University of California, Berkeley, Hewes had been a student of the renowned American anthropologists Alfred Louis Kroeber and R. H. Lowe; he earned his PhD. in 1947 with a dissertation on aboriginal fishing in California and the Pacific Northwest.⁴ During World War II he served in the Geographic branch of the Office of Strategic Services.⁵

Life Partners

Minna and Gordon were true intellectuals and life partners. Together they crisscrossed the globe multiple times. While Gordon was lecturing, teaching and researching, Minna fully participated in his endeavors, including transcribing his lectures, recording his archeological digs,⁶ and collaborating in selective efforts, such as their much-cited edition of Pablo Tac's *Indian Life and Customs at Mission San Luis Rey*.⁷

Between 1956 and 1984, Gordon and Minna visited both ports and inland centers on every continent, including Australia and several of the islands of Oceania.⁸ In 1978, they circumnavigated the globe aboard the U.S. Universe on behalf of the Institute for Shipboard Education. A year's stay in Japan while on a Fulbright grant led Gordon and Minna to build a Japanese-inspired 3,000-square-foot home with a pagoda-style roof and massive library corner in Boulder. Designed by locally renowned architect Hobart Wagener, today it serves as a minor landmark in Boulder.⁹

Gordon's life reflected his enduring commitment to anthropological holism—an approach that was championed by Franz Boas and Alfred Kroeber, and it encompassed the fields of ethnology, archeology, primate biology, and linguistics. Gordon himself read and spoke German, French, Spanish, Russian, Japanese, and Mandarin Chinese;

⁴ See the wonderful appreciation of the life of Prof. Hewes written by the former ISCS president Roger Wescott in 1997. Entitled *Gordon Winant Hewes (1917-1997)*, it was published in the *Comparative Civilizations Review*: Vol. 37, Article 7. See, also, the reference to Dr. Hewes's original contributions in an article by David J. Staley in the preceding issue, Vol. 36. It is entitled *Visualizing the Relationship Between Speech, Image and Writing*, available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/ccr/vol36>. A search of the CCR index online reveals a great many additional intellectual contributions from Dr. Hewes.

⁵ Prabook.com available at https://prabook.com/web/gordon_winant.hewes/1696868

⁶ Some of their jointly collected Native American artifacts are now deposited at the Phobes Hearst Museum of the University of California, Berkeley. The record is available at: https://portal.hearstmuseum.berkeley.edu/?f%5Bobjcollector_ss%5D%5B%5D=Minna+Hewes&f%5Bobjtype_s%5D%5B%5D=archaeology&f%5Btaxon_ss%5D%5B%5D=Mammalia—refined+identification+pending

⁷ Tac, Pablo. *Indian Life and Customs at Mission San Luis Rey*. Edited and translated by Minna Hewes and Gordon Hewes. *Americas* 9, no.1 (July 1953): 87-106

⁸ c.f. Westcott, Roger. 1997. p.1

⁹ <https://www.modboulder.com/advice/the-hewes-house-own-a-piece-of-mid-mod-history> architect Hobart Wagener

he knew American Sign Language; and he actively incorporated the methods and insights of geography, history, economics, sociology and psychology into his research and writing.¹⁰ His life work included three books and over 200 articles, including *The Anthropology of Posture*,¹¹ *World Distribution of Certain Postural Habits*,¹² and *World Ethnographies and Culture-Historical Synthesis*.¹³

Among the amazing variety of his professional endeavors was his role as Director of the Colorado Nubian Expedition to recover Egyptian antiquities. The expedition was held during the construction of the mammoth Aswan Dam.

The Ecumene

Among the topics on which Dr. Hewes was a pioneer were the connection between food-carrying and human bipedalism; the link between bipedalism and the use of hands for pointing; and the sequence of deictic behaviors leading to manual gesture-language. During the last three decades of his life, Gordon was the leading international exponent of “manualism.” This is the theory that human language was gesture-based before being vocal.

A much beloved and familiar presence at the annual conferences of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilization (ISCSC), Prof. Hewes served on the executive committee of the organization and was extraordinarily helpful to younger members seeking a pathway for their intellectual explorations.

In retrospect, one can see how the lives together of Gordon and Minna Hewes reflected Gordon's attachment to the concept of the *ecumene*, an ancient Greek term for the known inhabited world (and used by the Romans to connote “civilization” as they envisioned it) and, thus, to the proposition that the entire breadth of humanity should be conceived in historical and geographical relation to the world around it.¹⁴

The idea of the *ecumene* was further developed in the 18th century by the German geographer and ethnographer Friedrich Ratzel, under his concept of *Lebensraum* (“living space”), and it was reflected in Kroeber's own work which sought to portray a discernable cultural phenomenon of continuity and differentiation linking Europe, Central Asia and China.

¹⁰ c.f. Wescott, Roger. 1997 p.2

¹¹ Hewes, Gordon. 1957. *The Anthropology of Posture*. Scientific American pp. 122-132

¹² Hewes, Gordon. 1955. World Distribution of Certain Postural Habits. *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 57, No. 2, Part 1. pp. 231-24

¹³ Hewes, Gordon, 1959. World Ethnographies and Culture-Historical Synthesis. *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 61, No. 4 (Aug). pp. 615-630

¹⁴ en. wikipedia.com. Ecumene. available at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecumene>. public domain

This premise was later expanded in anthropology to the idea that there are delineable culture areas across the entire globe. This concept strove to demonstrate a shared human "unity in diversity" as part of an overarching panhuman civilization and culture.

It is likely that Dr. Hewes's most ambitious endeavor, in congruence with the idea of *ecumene*, was an unfinished project to document the global history of the 7th century AD. This was a challenge he chose specifically because he considered the 7th century AD to be the least manageable century for such a world-wide survey.¹⁵ (The unfinished survey reportedly is more than 10,000 pages long and rests with the anthropology department of the University of Colorado in Boulder, awaiting someone, with an equally expansive mind as Gordon's, to arise and carry his work forth to conclusion.)

Our Thanks to the Fabulous Hewes Couple Put Into Practice

Today, the ISCSC that the Hewes have so generously supported over the years is embarking on a new endeavor. This effort seeks both to inspire widespread interest in the study and application of the concept of civilization on a global level and to engender a corresponding renewed expansion of its organizational membership across multiple disciplines and countries.

As a result, the twin contributions of Gordon and Minna Hewes, both intellectually and financially, to the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations could not be timelier and more germane. The members of the society cannot adequately express their appreciation to this brilliant couple.

John Grayzel
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The University of Maryland, College Park,
on behalf of the ISCSC

¹⁵ c.f. Hewes, Gordon. W., Wheat, Joe B. & Riley, Carol L. 1954. *A Conspectus of the World's Cultures in 1500 A.D.* University of Colorado Press. Boulder: available at <https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/articles/b8515p16f>

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- Modboulder.com. at <https://www.modboulder.com/advice/the-hewes-house-own-a-piece-of-mid-mod-history> architect Hobart Wagener
- Prabook.com. at https://prabook.com/web/gordon_winant.hewes/1696868 Tac, Pablo. *Indian Life and Customs at Mission San Luis Rey*. Edited and translated by Mina Hewes and Gordon Hewes. *Americas* 9, no.1 (July 1953): 87-106
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