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The ISCSC Newsletter



The International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations

www.wmich.edu/iscsc

The ISCSC was founded in 1961 by Othmar Auerle, Rushton Coulborn and Arnold Toynbee in Salzburg (Austria). In 1971 the Society's leadership moved to the U.S. Over 30 foreign countries are represented in the Society's membership. Benjamin Nelson became the Society's first American president.

Civilization Matters



Professor Ricardo Duchesne, University of New Brunswick, Sociology, Host of the ISCSC - 2008 Conference in Saint John, Canada. See p. 2.

His main area of research is: why it is only in Europe that a culture is to be found in "a continuous succession and free spiritual movements."

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The State of Civilization



So far we have spoken about civilization in terms of centuries and even millennia. But to talk about civilization in terms of quarters? Perhaps it is pure nonsense. On the other hand, if we are going to pay \$5/gallon for gas in Summer 2008 than the issue of **civilization resilience** will become more obvious.

We know that the climate is rapidly changing (some people in California think that it is warming, we in Midwest think that it is cooling). Strategic resources are depleting faster since we have awakened two sleeping Giants, China and India, who emulate the American way of

life. So, the world is flattening. Poverty is still a big problem for the majority of the inhabitants of our Planet.

But **something new** also becomes evident. Nowadays we deal with too many **crises and catastrophes** at all levels of the Globe and Society, including at the individual level. At the same time, the **complexity of civilization** becomes enormous.

We cannot cope with this new kind of complexity effectively since **our civilization is not designed for it!**

Perhaps some can cope. For example, this is reflected by the awarding of the Oskar and Noble Prizes to Al Gore in 2007 for ad-

ressing the issue of climate change.

What can we do? We, as specialists of civilization, should show our *know how* and improve societal awareness about the clash of civilizations, the clash of peoples, the clash of live styles, and so forth.

Our research should be more **focused and relevant** to our realm. Two of our conferences in 2008 and 2009 undertake this challenge.

Lastly, it looks that our civilization loses its resilience and self-sustainability. However, it is not my last newsletter.

Andrew Targowski (WMU)
President

The State of the Society – Blossoming in Spring 2008?

I think that after a hard winter (in the Midwest and East Coast) and the move of the Society's assets from Florida to Michigan, we are slowly recuperating and I am sure that we should "blossom." The

good news is that:

- A new Treasurer, Betsy Drummer (WMU), is fully in charge of the Society's finances. Perhaps you may have noticed that she is active and pleasant to work with.

- The Conference Program Committee led by Steve Blaha (Chair), Ricardo Duchesne (Conference Chair), Laina Farhat-Holzman (Secretary General), Dario Fernandez-

In Memoriam

*Our colleague
Professor Ronald Robel
died of cancer last Au-
gust, 2007.*

He was known within the IS CSC for his book and peer reviews and as the man to consult on arcane points in Chinese history. Ron was director of the Career Language Center and a member of the Department of History at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

He was always a gentleman, courteous in debate, and generous and reliable source of information on Eastern and world history.

Matthew Melko

Leaving our civilization?



The State of the Society – Blossoming in Spring 2008?

Morera, Michael Andregg, Sanford Hoist, and David Wilkinson have done very important work in filtering paper proposals for Conference-2008.

- The Membership Committee, led by Norman Rothman, Matt Melko, Betsy Drummer, and Thakur Pudasaini carefully updated The Society's list of individual and institutional members. It was and still is a long and detailed process.
- The nature has taken away some of our members.
- Western Michigan University meaningfully supports our Conference in 2009.
- Your President traveled to a major Midwestern University (south of Indianapolis) to speak with

its President about a possible place for Conference-2010, when we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Society. I think that we need strong local academic support. Other members are also looking for the appropriate site for this conference. So the issue is open.

- Your President, with the help of students, has developed a **database with about 3,000 international addresses** of potential participants for our conferences. About the same amount of bulk mail has been sent to those addresses. The response is as it is expected in direct mailing—very low. Perhaps we need to limit this list and focus on domestic participation. The Society's new web site

is www.wmich.edu/is CSC and is free for the Society. It was difficult to communicate with the previous Website provider, who did not want to see me as the next decision-maker about The Society's website. The Secretary General intervened and I submitted all legal documents including a copy of my driver license. It did not work. Perhaps they do not know how to deal with societies whose officers change. The new website is slowly being updated, which is promising.

On June 26-28, 2008 in Saint John, we will speak about the future of our Society, which can be more optimistic if we can encourage the younger generation to find time for organizational work.

Andrew Targowski

The IS CSC International Conference in Saint John – NB, Canada - 2008

Exploring Multiculturalism In Globalizing Civilizations, June 26-28



The Program Chair is

Dr. Stephen Blaha who has written three books, as well as papers, on patterns of civilizations and early civilizations of the period from 7,000 BC to 10,000 BC as well as early Andean and Mayan civilizations. Dr. Blaha received his Ph.D. in Physics from The Rockefeller University and continues his research activities in Theoretical Physics as well.

Papers will be presented from countries such as Korea, Ethiopia, Belarus, Canada, the USA, the UK, China, the Caribbean, Kenya, India, Japan, the Philippines, and Malaysia. The topics span all areas of civilizations' studies and provide for a set of sessions that will have wide appeal to Conference attendees.

In addition to speakers from Western and Far Eastern civilizations we are especially gratified to receive papers from scholars from African Civilizations, from Islamic Civilization and from an abortive (in Toynbee's terminology) Mormon Civilization.

Keynote Speaker
*Nine-Eleven and Afterwards:
A Twenty-First Century
Civilizational Encounter*

Professor Toby Huff
Research Associate, Harvard U.

How shall we think about the aftermath of the events of 9/11? Were those events the most disastrous in Muslim history, leading to a "clash," or could they open a door for genuine civilizational dialogue? Is an Islamic "Reformation" unfolding and who might be the players in this 21 century civilizational encounter?

Toby Huff is Chancellor Professor Emeritus at UMass Dartmouth and currently a Research Associate at Harvard University. He is the author of *The Rise of Early Islam, China and the West* (2nd ed. Cambridge 2003), and co-editor with Wolfgang Schluchter of *Max Weber and Islam* (Transaction Books, 1999). Recently he published a school text called, *An Age of Science and Revolutions, 1600-1800* (Oxford, 2005).

Keynote Speaker
*Of Civilization-Origin,
Composition, and Development of the Idea
and of the Term*

Professor John M. Headley
The University of North Carolina.
Distinguish University Professor

Professor Headley, educated at Princeton and Yale, is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His books include studies of Martin Luther, Thomas More, Habsburg bureaucracy, San Carlo Borromeo, and the reformer Tommaso Campanella. For the past ten years his attention has been directed toward issues involving empire, civilization, and humanity within a larger, global context.

The IS CSC International Conference in Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA – 2009

Civilization In a Time of Change and Crisis

The 39th international meeting will take place at Western Michigan University, where every year about 4,500 medieval historians meet in May. We, the civilizationists, will meet June 3-6. The first

part of the Congress will be on **Civilization in a Time of Change and Crisis**. The second part will be on **Civilizational Responses to Crisis (Past & Present)**. Dr. Laina Farhat-Holtzman has agreed to serve as a Program Committee Chair

with the “old team,” which did such a good job for the St. John meeting in 2008. As always, the program will be discussed among the Program Committee team. A new component of this meeting will be a contest for the **best student paper/art**. WMU funds student prizes.

Call for Papers and Panels-2009
Send your proposals to
Dr Laina Farhat-Holtzman
lfarhat102@aol.com
Send to me examples of questions (issues) on civilizations which will be answered by the students in 2009.
targowski@wmich.edu

Ideas for 50th Anniversary of the Society

from legacy to future of civilization, is our time running out?

What about the following:

1. Legacy of the IS CSC to be evaluated by each living president with a volunteer who can evaluate periods of presidents who passed away.
2. Legacy of the Civilization Study in general.
3. Further research on civilization in terms of current challenges.
4. [The future and impact of the Society?](#)

Wilkinson's Legacy (I)

The **Central Civilization**, which was formed about 1500 BC by the collision and fusion of the South-west Asian and Northeast African (Egyptian) Civilizations, has continued to the present day, expanding from its original Eastern Mediterranean locale to its contemporary global scope. The following periods or regions, often wrongly classified as independent, historically autonomous civilizations, are

in fact parts or epochs of Central Civilization: "Classical (Greco-Roman) Civilization," "Orthodox/Russian Civilization," "Medieval Civilization," "Islamic Civilization," and "Western Civilization." As it grew, Central Civilization engulfed other independent, historically autonomous civilizations (e.g. Mesoamerican, Andean, Indic, Far Eastern and Japanese), until it had no other competitors left on Earth. The current phase of Central civilization may therefore be labeled "**Global Civilization**." CCR, Fall 1987, pp 31-59

Melko's Legacy (I)

Are civilizations real or simply reifications?

They are reifications (visible-invisible entities) based upon cultural and transactional observations, somewhat in the sense that Europe or Indian Ocean are reifications. All have geographical reality but depend for their identity on consensus. (2008)



Civilization versus Culture?

Darlo Fernandez-Morera (Northwestern University-Chicago) has excellent arguments to the very old issue *is civilization defined by culture only?*

According to Prof. Fernandez-Morera: **civilization** is indicated by the presence of a **city** or cities, with constructions of relatively long standing and also relatively long standing public monuments of a religious or political nature. This would exclude groups of wooden houses forming a village or a group of villages forming an association of villages. That is not a civilization, but **a culture** of some kind which has not yet reached a civilization stage”

A civilization has a city or cities with monuments of

certain **permanence**. An archaeologist who finds evidence of such characteristics will have found a civilization. A culture, on the other hand, does not have cities with monuments.

For instance, the Maya were



a civilization, with urban centers such as Palenque, Bonampak and Tikal with lasting monuments of various kinds.

In contrast, Polynesians do



not have cities or permanent monuments and therefore constitute a culture, more or less fascinating, but not a civilization.

How long a civilization lasts depends on a number of variables, among them climactic conditions, the power of its enemies and the coherence and resiliency of its internal structure.

In turn, the coherence and resiliency of this structure will depend on other factors,

such as unity or disunity in language, religion and race.

Some of these factors may be strong enough to make up for other weaknesses. For example, the civilization of the Greek Roman Empire (the so-called “Byzantine” Empire) comprised several ethnic groups, but was unified by religion (Christianity) and language (Greek), so it managed to last nearly a thousand years in the face of many internal dissensions and many external and powerful enemies which included Islam, Persia, Slavic and Germanic invaders, and several Turkish groups.

For further discussion on “civilization defined?” Go to www.wmich.edu/is CSC

About the Members

Michael Andregg (University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN) made his next documentary movie on "9/11." He tells us that about two years ago Ground Zero Minnesota was asked him to take a look at evidence pertaining to what really happened on Sept. 11, 2001 in New York City and elsewhere. We agreed to spend one year examining that topic because of its extreme importance, then to publish an official opinion. With very great regret Dr Andregg have concluded that the critics of the official conspiracy theory contained in the official report of the 9/11commission are correct in their fundamental conclusion that other parties besides Osamabin Laden and Al Qaeda had to be involved. The most basic observation is that World Trade Center tower #7 could not have been destroyed by Al Qaeda (no planes hit that tower, and while there was some damage and small fires they could not explain the symmetrical, smooth, and total collapse of this 47 story steel structure in less than 7 seconds on about 5:20 pm that day). Furthermore there's substantial evidence that intelligence entities from several other countries were very aware of the impending attack, and that at least one was actually present on the day. That noted, a year's review of a very complex evidence field required a 60 minute video documentary with 12 conclusions discussing many other important details, so we produced one which can be seen on Google video or on our website at www.gzmn.org.

Ashok Malhotra (SUNY, Oneonta, NY) argues that the Society's one of next meetings should be in India, which has one of the oldest and richest civilization on our Planet (and is the best in cricket). *Can we say no?* Here is some information on holding ISCS conference in the Historic, Religious and Culturally Rich City of Varanasi. It is one of the most ancient cities of India with history going back to 1000B.C. The city is still a thriving cultural and civilizational cross roads of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. We will get good cooperation from the University of Benaras. We could hold the conference there and also could arrange pre- and post conference trips to the Northern parts of India such as Agra (Taj Mahal); Khajuraho (Erotic temples), Jaipur (Pink City) and Delhi (Historic City) and /or Southern parts such as Mumbai (Bollywood), Goa (Christian Hub); Trivendrum/Cochi (Christian/Jewish area), Mysore and Bangalore (Technology Hub). Hotel/food etc. costs are reasonable and airline tickets cost is between \$1100 and 1500 from NY City. If we stay at one hotel, no costs of conference rooms.

The Society's Archives

Society Archivist: James Gerencser (Dickinson College) agreed to supervise a student intern tasked with the examination and organization of The Society's 15 linear feet collection of materials. The cost of student work is about \$2560 plus the cost of 20 boxes and 1000 folders. The Society transferred the fund and expects to possess excellent civilization archives for the "survivors" of our civilization I. If you have some materials which should be archived please send them to:

James Gerencser, The College Archivist
gerencse@dickinson.edu
 College Archivist, Library and Information Services
 Dickinson College P.O. Box 1773
 Carlisle, PA 17013
 Phone (717)245-1399, Fax (717)245-1439

Legacy Papers *towards consolidation of our tacit knowledge*

John Hord (Florida) accepted consulting work to develop a description of the contributions of the following civilizationists: Toynbee, Spengler, Quigley, Kroeber, Sorokin, Melko, Wilkinson, Snyder, McGaughey, Blaha, and Hord. Each civilizationist's contribution will be described in 5 pages in a structured and comparative style. After discussion of John Hord's work, it will be published in CCR and website. If this project will be successful, the other civilizationists' contributions will also be investigated.

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What is Next?

1. Energize committee work. Be active!
2. Organize a committee, which could plan 2-3 years ahead the next conferences.
3. Update and integrate the Society and CCR's missions.
4. Present and publish your focused and relevant ideas.
5. **Plan your trip to Saint John-2008 and to Kalamazoo-2009. Look at www.wmich.edu/iscsc**
6. Look for new members of the Society.
7. Look for the academic support of the Society.

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