
Congratulations to the Tenth Anniversary of the Journal*

The Name 'Social Evolution & History'

The founders of this international Journal chose its name wisely more than ten years ago. 'Social Evolution' refers to groups instead of individuals. The emphasis is on humans because we are a highly social species. 'History' emphasizes study of the well documented past instead of the journalistic recent news or archeological inferences from artifacts preserved prior to written records.

Throughout its first ten years the Journal has adhered to its name. The first issue, July 2002, contains articles on the transition from independent communities to small states. This transition appears to be uniquely human. Some species, notably ants and honeybees, have developed genetically mediated communities but not larger organizations. The present volume (vol. 11, num. 2, September 2012), contains a discussion of whether formation of a small state is prevalently attributable to military conquest of nearby communities by a community that is larger or stronger or more aggressive.

Other articles in this Journal contribute in other ways to its title *Social Evolution & History*. According to Darwin's theory of evolution, competition by multiple human groups for limited territory and other resources help to explain both formation and destruction of great empires during thousands of years of recorded human history.

The title *Social Evolution & History* encompasses a wide variety of specific topics. Many diverse articles have been published in this Journal. In the same way that evolutionary progress is aided by a large number of diverse individuals, scientific progress is aided by a large number of diverse periodicals. Scientific journals contain the initial reports of new information and interpretations. The brevity of most articles increases the number of readers and improves their use of the information. The successive issues and volumes provide a record of accumulative knowledge and understanding.

Herbert Barry III

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In the decade since its inauguration, *Social Evolution & History* has established itself, without a doubt, as the premier journal of its kind in the world. Drawing on a broad spectrum of internationally renowned scholars in matters of social evolution and Big History, it has greatly advanced our understanding of how, from simple beginnings, the world has come to be what it is.

Robert Carneiro

Evaluation of Evolutionism

These ten years of *Social Evolution & History* demonstrate that a journal dedicated to evolutionism and related subjects is a necessity. There is a need for it. The editors must be congratulated for their courage to start a journal, dedicated to one specific theme. The years have shown that they were right in doing this. Evolution and evolutionism are important, not to say crucial, concepts in the social sciences and history. One may differ in opinion of whether these concepts are great theories, or just research strategies but I think, this is not an important difference. It is the results of the research based on evolution and/or evolutionism that count. The contents of *Social Evolution & History* make clear the importance of evolution studies.

It is strange that in some countries (e.g., the USA) the editors of leading journals in anthropology consider evolutionism as ‘outdated’, and ‘no longer a main stream topic’. The only field where evolutionism is still found to play a (minor) role is (inevitably) prehistory. Is this the consequence of the American hang for newism – every ten years a new theory to cultivate? It is, anyhow, a disadvantage for the social sciences over there. Fortunately, many American scholars have found an outlet for their ‘heretic’ or ‘outdated’ views in *Social Evolution & History*. Indeed, it is good that this journal exists – and I can only hope that it will continue its great service to social sciences and history for many years to come.

Henri J. M. Claessen

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I discovered recently that I feel excited each time I am holding an issue of SEH. It might be because I have always admired the efforts of enthusiasts and innovators, to whom I attribute a group of anthropologists and philosophers who pioneered and spearheaded this Journal. Besides, *SEH* was the first journal which showed a sincere interest to my research and due to this I consider this Journal as a parental for my scientific career.

After the postmodernist storm in social sciences, many journals keep distance from laws, schemas, patterns and even theories. Narrative and agency dominate everywhere and above it we see a rational man who makes history at his discretion. Fortunately, we have *Social Evolution & History Journal* where we can discuss objective sides of social dynamics and not to be limited by narrow approaches, no matter how convincing they are.

Well, at 10-year jubilee, I want to share a dream – it would be great if the Journal initiated international conferences (say, at each five-year anniversary of the Journal). This would not only give a pleasure of personal communication and serve as a source of ideas but also would significantly raise the leading position of *SEH* in this field.

Sergey Dobrolyubov

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Social Evolution & History focuses so effectively on social history from both a world-wide comparative and deep-time perspective. The journal's engagement with big issues of social process set a standard for international research. Congratulations on the journal's 10th anniversary. I commend you for your efforts and continue to enjoy reading each new issue.

Tim Earle

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Bruce G. Trigger opened his impressive tome, *Understanding Early Civilizations*, with the following observation: ‘The most important issue confronting the social sciences is the extent to which human behaviour is shaped by factors that operate cross-culturally as opposed to factors that are unique to particular cultures’.¹ This was a prescient mark to put down since for well more than a century those of us studying comparative history and social evolution have struggled mightily to establish a proper balance between these conceptual poles. Since its inception, the Journal has provided a highly productive forum to illustrate and debate this framing question central to any comparative consideration of the human career, through the dissemination of both theoretical treatises and conceptually guided case studies. At the same time, the journal has served as an accommodating, yet sometimes appropriately critical platform for cross-field dialogue and discussion, one that can bridge the disciplinary silos and national borders that all too often have constrained communication and stifled broadened understanding. I congratulate this

publication's editors, advisory boards, and contributors, while looking eagerly toward even greater promise in the future.

Gary Feinman

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Recent decades have been darkened by skepticism toward the scientific study of history, society, and culture. Application of reason to these phenomena – even to all phenomena – has been variously attacked as futile at best, and as racist, sexist, or ethnocentric at worst. Yet the scientific, evolutionary approach to history, society, and culture has not been extinguished. Among the beacons continuing to light the way, *Social Evolution & History* has shone very brightly indeed. Hearty congratulations on your tenth anniversary!

Robert Bates Graber

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Quite ten years ago, I discovered in the web the international congresses *Hierarchy and Power in the History of Civilization* held in Moscow from the group (Leonid Grinin, Andrey Korotayev, and Dmitri Bondarenko) that founded the journal *Social Evolution & History*.

It was very easy for me to keep in touch with these scholars and to go to Moscow for the congress of July 2004, where I presented a paper on the Early State in Italy, readily printed in the journal.²

Five years later, I proposed the idea to organize an entire session on the emergence of the State in Europe. The session was a part of the programme of the 2009 congress, with the participation of English scholars like Simon Stoddart and Ian Ralston. Also in this case the papers presented in that occasion were readily printed on the journal.³

Finally, I have been requested to comment on a seminal paper by Robert Carneiro on his 'circumscription theory' in the present issue of the journal.

In all these circumstances I could appreciate the original character of the journal, the main international 'forum' for debate on social evolution between anthropologists, historians, economists and archaeologists, with the participation of many talented scholars that it is possible to meet in the Moscow congresses, in a spirit of cooperation that is the best legacy of the post-Soviet years.

I can only make my best wishes for the prosecution of the journal, perhaps with a better involvement of archaeologists, the only experts that can throw a light on the earliest stages of social evolution!

Alessandro Guidi

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The journal *Social Evolution & History* is an important platform for scholars interested in political anthropology and world history. It keeps the discussion on social evolution alive, both for theory building and exchanging valuable extensive case studies. It comprises contributions on World History, World Politics, Early States and Chiefdoms, but also innovative topics such as ‘celebrities as a new elite status’. Its website is a valuable medium for interaction, reference and potentially for scientific community building. I congratulate the editors of *SEH* with this very significant achievement.

Renée Hagesteijn

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I have followed and read *Social Evolution & History* since its first issue. I have even made a few contributions to it. It has been an important addition to academic journals because it covers topics that are often ignored or buried in other journals. While it does overlap here and there with other journals, it has a unique core of interests described in its title that not addressed fully in any other journal. I also appreciate the wide variety of views, approaches, and authors that *SEH* includes. It makes many relevant papers originally written in Russian available to an English reading audience. Leonid Grinin, Andrey Korotayev, and Dmitri Bondarenko have enriched the literature and discussions of the evolution of history.

Thomas D. Hall

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I wish to congratulate the editors and staff of *Social Evolution & History* on their jubilee year. This journal represents a unique publication at the interface between the social sciences, including history, and the more traditionally quantitatively oriented publications of the so-called hard sciences. It is interesting to consider, however, that the problems addressed by the papers in *SEH* are far more complex and far less tractable than those addressed by the hard sciences, yet, the authors published in this journal present with clarity and insight, consequently making available to the interested reader and scholar arcane research, research characterized by both depth and breadth of thought, that would otherwise not be accessible.

This journal, along with the seminal publication of Peter Turchin's *Historical Dynamics*, is one of the pioneering works in the quantitative and mathematical social sciences, but *SEH* stands apart from *Historical*

Dynamics but with the electronic *Journal for World Systems Research* as also being a vehicle for the support and dissemination of research on world systems analysis. Wallerstein's original idea of the world system provides a model for understanding and clarifying the complexity of the social, political, and economic world, and *SEH* provides a superb vehicle for that research.

Social Evolution & History provides at least one more essential service. In the near term, from whatever perspective one wishes to take, political, economic, social, biological, geological, *etc.*, our planet's immediate future is not rosy, and journals such as *SEH* provide articles with the context and insight into understanding the adversities ahead from the perspective of the social sciences.

In summary, *Social Evolution & History* is a uniquely structured journal at the interphase between the social sciences and the more traditional sciences that provides a conduit for world systems research, a vehicle for the publication of mathematically focused social and historical research, and also provides articles with vision into the future. The wide range of papers and the diversity of scholars brought together constitute a truly unique contribution to human knowledge. Again, kudos to the editors and staff and may many more jubilees be celebrated for this excellent publication.

Tony Harper

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Social Evolution & History is an innovative, important journal for the social sciences. This journal entertains refreshingly different perspective on the central theme of long-term change in human society. It happily ignores disciplinary boundaries and is open to the empirical and the theoretical, the case study and the broad comparison. *Social Evolution & History* is truly international in that each issue typically includes articles by scholars from multiple countries and from quite different scholarly traditions. There is nothing else like it.

Journal editors always have the difficult task of improving the quality of the articles they publish. One way of getting better submissions is to get more submissions, which allows for more selectivity. Perhaps there are ways for the editors, board, and council to encourage more authors to submit their work to *Social Evolution & History*, emphasizing that this journal is a way for scholars to air their ideas and results in a more international forum than the national/regional outlets in which they publish most of their work.

Stephen A. Kowalewski

**Social Evolution & History:
A Needed Corrective in Anthropological Thinking**

The editors of *Social Evolution & History* (*SEH* hereafter), Professors Bondarenko, Grinin, and Korotayev provided a very special publishing outlet to scholars. *SEH* offers a rich variety of information from an array of international scholars dedicated to a host of problems and methodologies for which it is hard to find an equal. The editors deserve applause for initiating *SEH*. That does not mean that I am enamored of everything that is published in *SEH*.

I find the attention given to the idea of the 'state' bewildering. Anyone who is familiar with my writings on this idea (precious few I suspect) knows that I think that the idea of the state is methodologically unsound.⁴ The overwhelming tendency by advocates of the 'state' idea is to anthropomorphize the state – an abstraction – and ignore the actions of the incumbents of the offices that constitute the government of that abstraction. This is unfortunate, for all the activities that we attribute to the state really derive from governments. States do not declare war, surrender sovereignty, impose taxes, or most anything else. It is the incumbents of the offices that constitute the state who draw upon the powers vested in those offices that are the source of the agency which so many attribute to the 'state'.

That said let me turn to the most powerful contribution *SEH* has provided scholars like me: that is an outlet for serious analyses regarding the evolution of the non-biological aspects of the human condition. For example, *SEH* recently published a paper I wrote on the evolution of social organization.⁵ I wanted to write this paper for over thirty-five years. I did not because of the very limited publishing outlets for evolutionary thinking. In that article I argue that the differentiation and specialization of the social roles and institutions that constitute the social organizations of human societies are a better indicator than the idea of cultural in explaining non-biological evolution. Since the idea of *Social Evolution* is written into the title of *SEH* I like to think that the editors are somewhat sympathetic to this idea.

Regardless, in the United States, except for archaeologists, writings by anthropologists on non-biological evolution have been unacceptable for almost forty years. This is often attributed to the fantasies concocted by the nineteenth-century armchair evolutionists. Still, a few of those thinkers did provide provocative insights.

Social Evolution & History provides an important forum and badly needed corrective to the idealist orientations that currently dominates much anthropological thinking, especially in America. The editors of

SEH are to be commended for providing an outlet for those of us who want to explore the human condition from historical, evolutionary, and other processes. I wish *SEH* a long life and look forward to its continuing contribution to explaining and understanding human social and cultural processes.

Social Evolution & History: happy tenth anniversary!

Dr. Donald V. Kurtz

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The cross-disciplinary journal *Social Evolution & History (SEH)* connects archaeology, anthropology, sociology, and history with philosophy and offers a platform for exchange of ideas and debate on the evolution of social organization. The traditional historical approach to present the past is to review it as a chain of particular events (culture histories), but this typical for European archaeology outlook has been, as the title of the journal suggests, augmented by an attempt to fuse the traditional with the processual standpoint to view social history as a chain of interrelated events (cultural processes) presented in a wider anthropological perspective. Surely the *SEH* is searching for its identity and is coming of age by offering an interesting epistemological perspective, which, hopefully, will contribute to a new knowledge. Over the last decade the journal has become a useful source of information on a range of issues related to studying social organization and the evolution of political systems, a forum for stimulating discussions concerning the rise of social complexity in general. The *SEH*'s ten-year run is successful because there still is a need for presenting empirical studies concerning changes in social organization (evolution of political organization) and supported by interpretive historical accounts whenever possible.

As a reader, I have enjoyed the *SEH* for its emphasis on publishing empirically-based studies on one of the fundamental traits of human culture, social organization and specifically the evolution of social complexity (political organization). In addition to enjoying the journal as a platform for diversified authorship, I also value the variety of theoretical views and methodological approaches discussed here as much as the comparative data on state formation processes in different regions. I would like, however, to see more of the current ethnographic reports and case studies on changes in political organization regarding nonindustrial societies as well as concerning indigenous peoples in contact with industrial states, a context that generates conditions for increased political competition and produces new, often unexpected forms of political organization. Currently conducted studies reveal a variety of political structures especially in the context of

regulating access to scarce resources by emphasizing the rules and levels of governability, which offer clues to what may have occurred in the past. I would also enjoy reading more the *Current Anthropology*-style debates as the presented in this issue discussion on Robert Carneiro's refinement of his circumscription theory, as well as book reviews and/or book review essays devoted to scrutinizing the publications in other than English languages.

As a contributor, I enjoyed working with the able, patient and helpful editors and staff on two different occasions. They offered quick acceptance of papers after positive reviews and timely publication of the submitted materials. One suggestion that might help future contributors relates to clear rules as to what manuscript style contributors should follow, such as the SAA or Chicago style, *etc.*

As a managing editor of a leading anthropological and environmental science journal *Human Ecology. An Interdisciplinary Journal* for the past fifteenth years, I can offer several suggestions about the journal but especially four seem appropriate for the moment: 1. invest more time in editing of the accepted manuscripts for language and content as authors, naturally, do not always have a good perspective on their own writings and should be offered help in presenting their ideas in a clear and jargon-free language, understandable by a larger audience; 2. limit and/or discourage self-citations (references to papers published in *SEH*) as ranking agencies, such as Thompson Reuters, pay attention to these and assume such citations as self-promotion in the attempt to increase the journal's impact factor, (surely the Russian agency preparing the citation index also recognizes attempts of self-promotion); 3. diversify categories of submissions into articles (full feature papers), research reports (ongoing projects, case studies, *etc.*), and communications (reports on new methods, ideas, findings, *etc.*), book reviews and book review essays, and consider publishing more of topical/regional special issues, and finally, 4. update your webpage and keep it current.

I wish you many successful decades to come.

Ludomir R. Lozny

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I congratulate *Social Evolution & History* on its tenth anniversary.

This journal occupies a key place in the social science literature. While fields such as anthropology become increasingly specialized and fragmented, *Social Evolution & History* continues to integrate ethnology, history, and archaeology, and to pursue scientific explanations of mankind's past.

Joyce Marcus

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Indeed, *SEH* has made it for ten good years. As I mentioned to Dmitri when I recently saw him in Paris, *SEH* needs to be truly peer reviewed journal so that we can apply for impact factor and higher international appreciation. As far as I know at his stage we have B status in ERIH (I was instrumental to suggest *SEH* when I was on the expert panel of ERIH for Anthropology) but are not taken into account by Web of Science and Scopus. Also a better language copy editing is needed. Some of the readers I spoke to pointed out that some articles suffer from language shortcomings.

Otherwise, I find *SEH* a very important medium which has gained acclaim worldwide. When I saw Anatoly Khazanov some ten years ago when *SEH* was just beginning he was skeptical about the need for such a journal. I trust his pessimism has withered.

Congratulations to *SEH* and this means first of all you three! You may be assured of my continuous support.

Petr Skalnik

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Social Evolution & History has become an important voice in the international social scientific exchange between Russia and the rest of the world and at the same time is an important source for global world system scholarship. I wished there were many more such journals, not only in Russia, but also in other 'BRIC' countries and also in large parts of the Muslim world. Talking about globalization, but always publishing and being read in the exclusive quadrangle between Tokyo, Perth, Miami and Oslo becomes exclusivist and is boring at the same time. By focusing on core issues of 'world system paradigm' and yet being published outside the 'core' of the world system, the journal is a vital source of information for all those scholars, whose horizon does not end at the very borders of the 'center'. Ad multos annos!

Arno Tausch

Ten years of Social Evolution and History

The scope of subjects discussed in *SEH* is broad, in time ranging from early humanity to the present day (e.g., post-Soviet Central Asia). Notwithstanding their great variety, *SEH* has a distinctive face. The most obviously present theme is Claessen's concept of the Early State. But also alternatives to the Early State are the subject of discussion in *SEH*, as well as the role of nomadism in social evolution, and the chiefdom. Besides, *SEH* publishes articles on the statistical analysis of correlations of features like urbanization with stages of social

evolution. In a similar vein the journal presents mathematical modeling of the evolution of human societies on a global scale, covering sometimes millennia of human history. Analogues of biological evolution and the evolution of human societies thus also are the subject of papers in *SEH*. ‘Macropattern’, ‘cultural genes’, and ‘aramorphoses’ are typical terms in this kind of studies. There are three main problems: the trap of realism, the hardness or rather the softness of the data on which some statistical studies (sometimes very broad generalizations) are based, and the use of prehistoric, archaeological data, which is necessarily interpretative and thus speculative.

Edward Ch. L. van der Vliet

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Congratulations on the 10th anniversary of *Social Evolution & History*! I cannot imagine what the study of the evolution of human society would have been for the past decade without this journal. We now take it as our home, where scholars of varied fields around the world enjoy discussions with one another.

I really love this journal. Hope more and more Chinese topics would be discussed there in the future for China is one of the six regions where the pristine states arose and it did not obtain the attention deserved since the 19th century, which is not good for us to establish universal theories of social evolution.

Jianping Yi

NOTES

* You can find the full version of the ‘Congratulations to the Tenth Anniversary of the Journal’ at the *Social Evolution & History* homepage <http://www.sociostudies.org/journal/seh/>

¹ Trigger, B. G. 2003. *Understanding Early Civilizations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (p. 3).

² Guidi, A. 2006. The Archaeology of Early State in Italy. *Social Evolution & History* 5(2): 55–89.

³ Guidi, A. 2010 (guest editor). Urbanization, Regional Diversity and the Problem of State Formation in Europe. Special Section. *Social Evolution & History* 9(2): 11–92.

⁴ See Kurtz, D. V. 1993. A Reconceptualization of the Anthropomorphized State and the Centrality of Political Agency in State Formations. *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 16(1): 16–30; *Idem* 2006. Political Power and Government: Negating the Anthropomorphized State. *Social Evolution & History* 5(2): 91–111.

⁵ Kurtz, D. V. 2011. The Evolution of Social Organization. *Social Evolution & History* 10(2): 3–47.

⁶ Morgan, L. H. 1963 [1877]. *Ancient Society*. Cleveland, OH: The World Publishing CO (p. 4).

⁷ White, L. A. 1949. *The Science of Culture: A Study of Man and Civilization*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux; *Idem* 1959. *The Evolution of Culture: The Development of Civilization to the Fall of Rome*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.

⁸ Steward, J. H. 1955. *Theory of Culture Change: The Methodology of Multilinear Evolution*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

⁹ Goldschmidt, W. 1959. *Man's Way*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

¹⁰ Among others: Carneiro, R. L. 1970. A Theory of the Origin of the State. *Science* 169: 733–738; Cohen, Y. A. (ed.) 1968. *Man in Adaptation: The Cultural Present*. Chicago: Aldine; Harris, M. 1979. *Cultural Materialism: The Struggle for a Science of Culture*. New York: Vintage Books; Sahlins, M. D., and Service, E. (eds.) 1960. *The Evolution of Culture*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press; Service, E. 1962. *Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary Perspective*. New York: Random House.