Abstracts

Marshall Hodgson's Civilizational Analysis of Islam: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives
Johann P. Arnason

Marshall Hodgson was one of the very few area specialists who not only adopted a civilizational perspective, but also formulated an explicit and distinctive theoretical approach to civilizational studies. The paper reconstructs his basic assumptions and main lines of argument, and links them to current debates in the field of civilizational analysis. Hodgson's conceptual framework developed in relative isolation from sociological inquiry, but his ideas are in some ways comparable or complementary to those of the sociologists who have ventured into the field of large-scale comparative studies. That applies, in particular, to his understanding of cultural traditions and their transformations during the Axial Age. In the broader context of comparative history, these themes can also be linked to his trans-cultural concept of absolutism, which appears as an alternative to the Weberian model of patrimonialism. When it comes to the analysis of early and classical Islam, the theoretical orientations and their implications must be discussed in connection with more recent historical scholarship in the field. Hodgson's interpretation would seem to be compatible with a more revisionist historical account than the one it relies on, and it even prefigures some revisionist arguments. But it is not compatible with radical revisionism; in that regard, it anticipates some of the metacritical objections to revisionist criticism. If Hodgson's analysis of the classical phase is reconsidered in light of these questions, a somewhat different perspective emerges: a more differentiated picture of the very early stages, but also a stronger emphasis on divergent trends and problematic legacies of the classical period.

The Middle Period Islamic Axiality in the Age of Afro-Eurasian Transcultural Hybridity
Babak Rahimi

An attempt is made to develop Marshal Hodgson's notion of "interrelations of societies in history" by focusing on the Afro-Eurasian landmass from the 9th/10th to the 13th/14th centuries. This study identifies this period as the age of transcultural hybridity, defined as the inauguration of a period in the escalation of shifts in civilizational hybridization dynamics towards hemispheric integration, fusion and cross-fertilization that brought about an impressive degree of intense creativity and exceptional broadening of cultural horizons. In the first section, while briefly covering regions like China, Japan, Southeast Asia, north Africa and Europe, it is argued that the age of transcultural hybridity was formed as a result

of contact between societies and the formation of new hybrid civilizational complexes with the increase of interaction between cultures that led to the proliferation of myriad forms of public spaces, social organizations, institutions and political orders. Yet the upshot of such transcultural interactive zone in the Afro-Eurasian landmass was determined by conflict, rivalry, exchange, encounter and chronic collision between competing forms of political orders that, in turn, led the way to complex processes of greater intercivilizational hybridization. The second section focuses on the appearance of the Turkish and Persianate cultures, marking an era of unprecedented political fragmentation and cultural creolization in the context of nomadic and sedentary relations. "The Middle Period" of Islamic history, which marked the formation of new Islamic civilizational complexes, was the result of cultural encounter and civilizational cross-fertilization between the Central Asiatic and the Iran-Mesopotamian societies as a result of successive waves of Turkish tribal migration from the steppe grass lands of Central Asia to the settled regions of Anatolia and the Iran-Mesopotamian plateaus. Accordingly, the proposed notion of the "Middle Period Islamic Axiality" denotes the emergence of new modes of reflexivity and communication in Islamic history, in relation with the crystallization of distinct social movements and political orders and in the context of heterdoxical and orthodoxical settings, as a result of such interciviliational encounters.

Identity Formation in World Religions: A Comparative Analysis of Christianity and Islam
Arpad Szakolczai

The aim of the paper is to compare the manner in which the unique charisma and mission of the founders of the two most influential world religions, Jesus and Mohammed, was recognised in the early part of their mission by their immediate followers and disciples. For this purposes, apart from the Weberian concept of 'charisma,' the paper relies on Alessandro Pizzorno's theoretisation of identity formation through recognition, and also on the work of Victor Turner about liminality and René Girard ideas about the mimetics of desire and rival brothers.

The comparative analysis of the earlier period of Christianity and Islam focuses on four main themes. The first contrast the way the descent of Jesus breaks with traditional genealogical lineage on both ends with the problematic of the descent and the 'true heir' of Mohammed. The second theme moves from issues of personal identity to identity as a religious founder, and focuses on the exact sequence in which charisma was recognised, and the link between this recognition and various experiences. The next section contrasts the different kind of persons who first recognised, or failed to recognise, charisma in the two traditions, including other prophets, women, children, and disciples, focusing especially on the question of the difference between recognising human sincerity and prophetic or in general charismatic gifts; and the extent to which the pronouncements of

personal acquaintances on such qualities can be taken as authoritative. Finally, the last section of the paper moves to the image of the enemy, contrasting and comparing the attacks of Jesus on the Pharisees, using Weber's brilliant but little known essay at the end of *Ancient Judaism*, with the attacks of Mohammed on the 'hypocrites' (*munafiqun*).

The Emergence of Islam as a Case of Cultural Crystallization. Historical and Comparative Reflections
Johann P. Arnason

The concept of cultural crystallization has been used to describe world-historical transformations of a particular kind: those that combine major redefinitions of cultural premises with corresponding institutional innovation and the formation of traditions that generate their own internal disputes and conflicts. This model has proved particularly relevant in the context of debates about the Axial Age and its place in world history. The emergence of Islam would seem to be an exemplary case in point, all the more so since the formation of a new monotheistic religion was – within a strikingly short span of time – combined with the construction of a new empire and the cultural unification of a large, central and diverse region. But discussion of the Islamic historical experience has been obstructed by dominant trends in civilizational analysis: both classical and contemporary approaches have tended to neglect the Islamic world and focus on issues more attuned to confrontation of the West with East or South Asia. On the other hand, attempts to redress the balance must come to terms with changing historical perspectives on the sources, beginnings and early developments of Islam as a religion and a civilizational core. Traditionalist view have been found wanting, but radical revisionism has also been criticized on convincing grounds. A tentative account of the Islamic crystallization must distinguish a pre-conquest, intra-Arabian phase from the post-conquest one. Within the latter, further distinctions are best based on the changing relationship between religious and political forms of central authority and social power.

Revolution in Early Islam. The Rise of Islam as a Constitutive Revolution
Said, A. Arjomand

Muhammad's unification of the Arabian tribes on the basis of a new monotheistic religion is analyzed as a revolution and in the light of a typology of revolutions in world history. From the viewpoint of sociology of revolution, it is found to fit closely the ideal-type of 'constitutive revolution.' Contrary to conventional wisdom, Muhammad did not constitute a centralized state or even provide clear guidelines to that end. By contrast, it did create a new supra-tribal political community, and mobilized it for revolutionary struggle in the path of the one God.

The cultural pre-conditions for the unification of Arabia and the Messianic stimulus to it are presented as the background to the constitution of the new community and its revolutionary mobilization. The essay concludes with an analysis of the succession to Muhammad's charismatic authority as the decisive factor in setting the direction of the consequences of the revolution.

´Abdallah b. Salam: Egypt, Late Antiquity and Islamic Sainthood
Georg Stauth

Ancient Egypt, with the exception of Moses and his times, was sidelined in Axial Age theory. Focussing on monotheism and revelation, Egypt was hardly made an issue of axial breakthroughs and of the emerging patterns of cultural reconstruction culminating in Early Christianity and Islam. This paper brings Egypt into the story of the formation of Islam. It attempts to show some of the antagonisms which relate to the synchronic co-existence between 'primary' civilisational heritage of Egypt and the axial impacts on the absolute monotheistic principles followed by Islam. It are these antagonisms which have shaped the vitality of a lived religion, and specifically, as viewed here, in local contexts of the eastern Nile Delta. Taking a view on the role of ´Abdallah b. Salam – the first Jewish witness of Muhammad's monotheistic revelations in the prophetic tradition, and at the same time a local Islamic venerated saint today – it becomes evident that the "negation" of 'Egypt' is as much a source of orthodox monotheist reconstruction in Islam (as it was in Christianity) as much as it bears a great part of the 'primary' symbolic, legendary and mythological civilisational heritage. In this it is important to know that 'axiality' can not merely explain new symbolic and institutional order. It are the negations of Pharaonic civilisation and its miracles and wonders which occupy – and have occupied – a great role in Islam. Paradoxically, it is the negation which also preserves and incorporates the archaism which is so important to understand mass religion and the terms of its modern continued importance.

History, Knowledge and Spirituality: The Yemen as the Turning Place between the Persian, Arab and Biblical Traditions
Raif G. Khoury

Yemen was an important cultural centre in pre-Islamic times, it also formed a field of intensive cultural exchange which had a great impact on later Islamic traditions. Story telling in the main, wisdom literature and prophetic tales have entered this field and were passed on to the expanding Islamic world. Thus, the Yemeni share in institutional and religious settings of Early Islam was highly significant and can be traced today mainly in fields of Early Islamic narratives. In

Yemen some very well established literary figures like for example Wahb b. Munabbih, who was a wandering figure between Persian, Arabic and Jewish identities, developed and maintained the art of transmitting mythical, prophetical and literary wisdom in a region that seemed marginal to the major civilisational events of the time. However, as it more and more becomes clear to historians and literary specialists today, the Yemeni crossroads of highly intensive cultural exchange shaped much of the religious and literary tastes of later Islamic periods. Public life in Early Islam where story telling and representation of religious and historical wisdom became so important, was shaped drastically by institutional and conceptual imprints which Yemeni figures left behind. A large body of later Islamic historiography and literature can be traced back to the Yemeni meeting ground of Persian, Arabic and Biblical traditions.

Islam and the Axial Age
Joseph van Ess

The article mainly intends to express some doubts about the validity of the Achsenzeit-model. In its first part the author tries to put Jaspers's concept into its historical context, with regard to German and European thought after World War II. The second part raises a few points concerning Islam, the "belatedness" of its civilization and its connection with a Late Antiquity of longue durée. The third part compares Jaspers's Achsenzeit with other and more recent models; it also ponders over the hypothetical question whether there could be a genuine Muslim positioning of Islamic history within world history.

Islam and the Path to Modernity: Institutions of Higher Learning and Secular Political Culture
Said A. Arjomand

This essay is part of a series of studies that examine the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as a possible turning point in Eurasian social transformation with reference to the Islamicate civilization. Following an earlier study of urban politics in this period, the present paper focuses on the colleges of higher learning (*madrasa* s), and the impact on political culture of their teaching. Comparing the legal foundations of the *madrasa* in Islamic law to that of the newly established European universities of the thirteenth century in Roman law, it finds the latter suffered from two major disadvantages: lack of corporate legal personality as *universitas*, and the consequent lack of autonomy and legal jurisdiction. Turning then to a comparison of the reception of Aristotle in the Western and Islamic institutions of higher learning in the same period, the fact that *Politics* is the one and only major work of Aristotle that was not translated into Arabic is singled out as a serious setback for the development of political modernity in the Islamicate civilization.

Global Ages, Ecumenic Empires and Prophetic Religions
Arpad Szakolczai

The aim of this paper is to revisit, jointly, the 'axial age' thesis and Weber's ideas about the importance of prophetic religions, and to draw some consequences both for social theory and concerning the rise and dynamics of modernity. It starts by arguing that the remarkable spiritual outbursts that constitute the core of the axial age, especially the co-temporaneity of Heraclitus, Confucius and the Buddha, can be explained as the outcome of the temporal and spatial liminal conditions produced by the rise of the first truly global empire, the Persian. The problem with Jaspers' idea of the 'axis time,' however, is that the three emergence of the three great world religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) escape this time frame, suggesting a return to Weber's thesis about prophecy, though recognising the links between the emergence of prophetic religions and the rise and fall of major empires.

On this basis, the paper develops three elements of a theoretical framework. It argues that the contrast between charisma and the Trickster present a broad, anthropologically, mythological and theologically based framework for the sociology of shifting normative evaluations; that the metaphor of the spiral can serve as a model to capture the type of changes represented by the emergence of world-conquering empires and in general of global ages; and that the model of gift-giving, developed in the footsteps of Marcel Mauss, can serve as a third model for establishing social order, beyond the duality of violence and the law. On the basis of this theoretical framework, the paper argues that the dynamics of global ages can be explained by the activity of Trickster-like figures who help to escalate the movement, while a genuine solution to such maelstrom-like, all-encompassing social changes can provided by a different type of spiralling movement, connected to the way 'grace,' in its various meanings, equally emphasising the theological and the philosophical, and within it the epistemological, ethical and aesthetic components, can be turned into a lasting guiding force of human conduct.

Reflexivity, Praxis, and "Spirituality": Western Islam and Beyond
Armando Salvatore

The approach to axial transformations has laid a privileged emphasis on the emergence of specific patterns of reflexivity, considered as the axial contribution to later modern trends in public and political life. This study critically reconsiders the centrality of reflexivity within western axiality and situates it within the problematique of the relation between the prophetic and the philosophical modes of axial transformations. It focuses on the theoretical development of praxic and institutional forms of reflexivity within Islamic traditions.

After a synthetic portrayal of Islam as a plea for taming the sequence of prophetic eruptions and therefore as moderating their long term messianic impetus, the study probes into the specific strength of the Islamic philosophy of law in imposing a common denominator on Islamic traditions (prophetic, philosophical, juridical and "mystical," i.e. Sufi) through the elaboration on the concept of *maslaha.* This is translatable as "common good" or "public interest," and its theorizing culminated in the work of the Andalusi jurist al-Shatibi in the 14th century.

The approach to *maslaha* and the trajectory of its maturation are examined in their capacity to provide a model of praxic reflexivity, which is integral to the history of Europe before the end of the Christian *reconquista* of the Iberian peninsula, and in contrast with the sectarian and often spiritualist movements that have characterized European history since the 13th century and even stronger after the Reformation, finally ushering in what Voegelin has called "political religions."

The patterns of praxic and institutional reflexivity produced by Western Islam lived on in the work of thinkers like Spinoza, whose family was also of Andalusi origin, and provide seeds of a post-axial alternative to both the totalitarian and the liberal trends that have dominated European modernity thus far. It is not surprising that these seeds have been revived first by Muslim reformers under European colonial domination, and now even stronger in the contemporary configurations of Euro-Islam. It is the process through which *maslaha* is folded into *res publica* and revives it, also affecting the latter's conflicted and securitized nature.

Public Spheres and Political Dynamics in Historical and Modern Societies
Shmuel N. Eisenstadt

For a very long time there has been prevalent in scholarly literature as well as in – especially Western – public discourse the "orientalist" view that in Muslim societies, in contrast especially to the Western societies, there did not develop a strong, autonomous public sphere or civil society. In this paper will show in contrary that a very vibrant and autonomous public sphere was of crucial importance in shaping the dynamics of Muslim societies. Of crucial importance to understand these vibrant dynamics, in them is the place of the community, rooted also in the basic premise of Islam – the equality of all believers and their access to the sacred. These conceptions have necessarily given members of the community a right to participate, if not directly in the central political arena, certainly in the communal and religious ones. This is where a decoupling between the make-up of the public sphere and access to the political arena proper and the decision making of the rulers is to be observed. This decoupling was manifested in the combination, on the one hand, of large sectors of the society, the major actors in

the public sphere having rather limited autonomous access to concrete policy-making, and on the other hand, the fact that the upholding of the moral order of the community was vested in the ulama and in the members of the community, with the rulers playing a secondary role. The constitution of public spheres, above all in relation to the political arena, has greatly changed with the onset of modernity and with the constitution of modern states. The single most important aspect of this change was, of course, that given the basic premises of modern polities the traditional separation, even if partial, between the public sphere and the political arena has seemingly almost disappeared. There developed a very strong tendency to a more direct engagement of the actors both in the public sphere and in the political arena – with the newly constituted modern political regimes, with the state attempting to appropriate, control, and even monopolize it. Accordingly, the autonomy of the public spheres could also be greatly undermined and there developed continual tensions and contestations between the various actors in the public sphere and between them and actors in the political arenas. These modern developments have exacerbated the tensions and confrontations between pluralistic and totalistic tendencies in Muslim societies. These problems became even more acute with the rise of contemporary fundamentalist movements that build on the older sectarian tendencies and politicize them into hitherto unknown extent. Many of these movements developed from within the public sphere and often combine the control mechanisms of the modern states with strong Jacobin tendencies, legitimized in terms of an essentialized tradition.