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Data Base

■ Anthropologists open a new door in their use of microcomputers with the appearance of the electronic journal *World Cultures*, published quarterly on microcomputer diskettes. The first two issues, released in 1985, contain coded information on world societies, sampled cross-culturally, from scores of major comparative research projects. The founder and general editor of the journal is Douglas R. White, University of California, Irvine, co-director with the late G. P. Murdock of the Cross-Cultural Cumulative Coding Center and author of numerous cross-cultural articles and database systems. Associate editors are Michael Burton (UC Irvine), Karl Reitz (Chapman College), and David Gregory (Dartmouth College). The availability of such an electronic database makes it possible for researchers to engage in a wide variety of secondary research projects, for teachers to run courses or training programs in ethnological or comparative research, and for program developers to adapt a variety of modes of information processing to these new resources. Anthropologists are invited to use *World Cultures* to access, discuss, and contribute to the cumulative cross-cultural database and its uses.

Unlike early electronic journals that emulated the static paper form of publication, *World Cultures* offers materials uniquely suited to the world of easy-to-use personal computers. Readers equipped with appropriate software use journal data and text files for a variety of purposes. A forthcoming issue features anthropologists' reviews of their experiences with *World Cultures* materials in connection with microcomputer word processors, statistical programs, database systems, electronic information networks, and educational experiments. Materials published in the journal are in generic format—raw text or numeric files—easily listed on a screen or printer or input to commercial word processors or statistical or graphics packages. Nearly any software already purchased for personal computers is sufficient to begin work with the journal.

Given the inherent richness of cross-cultural research in opening perspectives, the cumulative nature of its ethnographic databases offers exciting prospects for anthropologists and other social scientists. As new theoretical or ethnological problems surface, they can be related, through the cross-cultural database, to earlier theories, hypotheses, and concerns. What makes this retesting of theories possible is the limited number of ethnographically well-described societies. Whether by the design of standard samples or the accidental overlap of any two large cross-cultural samples, the codes contributed by different researchers offer cumulative information on common or intersecting sets of societies.

The electronic journal offers the vehicle for easy distribution on floppy diskettes (for any PC) of the components of the cumulative database. Sample composition, bibliography, cumulative codes, cumulative codebooks, and sampling frames are scheduled for publication for a variety of samples. The scholarly material that Murdock, White, and others have assembled on their standard cross-cultural sample (SCCS) is being distributed by this means. Contributions of coded data from other researchers are invited. Many are providing the unpublished codes on which published studies were based. John Whiting

provides his SCCS weather-station data, new language codes, and numerous codes used in testing the Whiting paradigm on other samples. Joseph Jorgensen makes available his Western North American Indians material. Karen Paige and Peggy Sanday contribute unpublished materials on reproductive rituals and female status, respectively. A host of already published materials will now be available through *World Cultures* in electronic or computer-readable form, among them Murdock's *Ethnographic Atlas* and the Cumulative Coding Center codes on subsistence, community organization, politics, division of labor, cultural complexity, infancy, childhood, initiations, kin terms, and concepts of illness. Also available are codes published in *Ethnology*: Martin Whyte's on the status of women, Marc Ross's on political conflict and decision making, Gwen Broude's and Sarah Greene's on sexual attitudes and marital relationships, and Ronald and Evelyn Rohner's on parenthood.

Biases of all kinds (sampling, ethnographer, informant) are a problem in cumulative as well as newly chosen samples. The cumulative databases published in the electronic journal provide data quality control variables—such as Ronald and Evelyn Rohner's codes—to check for possible sources of bias. Naroll's work remains a classic statement of the appropriate methods for doing so.

A microcomputer database of scholarly cross-cultural materials also has word-processing applications. The cumulative SCCS codebook is provided as a text file, and portions can be extracted and reedited for special purposes. One might organize a project or write an article using a particular set of variables and make up a modified codebook for it by editing the original text file. The SCCS bibliography will be published as a text file. With appropriate modification, it can be converted to a data file and sorted alphabetically by author for an efficient search of sources in a local library. Other word-processing and database applications are easily envisioned.

The database is also of obvious pedagogical value. *World Cultures* is intended to provide ample materials for student use in a variety of classroom applications. Lee Wilkinson's SYSTAT package, a set of statistical and database management programs, is available for most PC's from software dealers or from SYSTAT's office in Evanston, Illinois. Cross-cultural researchers find it very useful for data analysis. Its use is fairly easily taught to students. Special-purpose programmed instructional applications, however, remain to be developed. Authors of such programs are also encouraged to publish through the electronic journal.

Anthropologists interested in connecting with the cross-cultural research community, which spans several disciplines, will find the electronic journal to be a new means of networking a scientific discipline, providing broader dissemination of research and instructional materials.

Subscriptions are \$60 per year plus a one-time \$95 database entry fee. Issues are published quarterly on double-sided diskettes; single-sided diskette subscriptions cost an additional \$5/issue, or \$20 per annum. With a faculty or sponsoring subscription, subsidiary student subscriptions are provided at \$30 annually, with no entry fee. Faculty may also purchase these subsidiary subscriptions for each separate microcomputer on

which instructional use is planned. The type of microcomputer should be identified in the subscription request. Write: *World Cultures*, P.O. Box 12524, La Jolla, Calif. 92037-0650, or Douglas White, School of Social Sciences, University of California, Irvine, Calif. 92717.

■ The Centre for Chinese Archaeology and Art, established in 1978 under the directorship of Cheng Te-k'un at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, is dedicated to the coordination of all the research projects undertaken by faculty members on the subject and to the promotion of cooperation with similar research programmes abroad. A comprehensive bibliographical index and data archive have been built up and are ready for use. The former aims at listing all the books and publications known to us, while the latter covers journals, field reports, and articles recently printed in China. A special collection of archaeological and art books, periodicals, and newspaper cuttings has also been accumulated for reference; it is perhaps one of the most comprehensive collections in this field outside China. The Centre constitutes 13 project associates and 4 correspondent fellows overseas.

■ CICIBA (Centre International des Civilisations Bantu) is a research centre serving a number of African countries. The Bantu culture area covers more than one-third of Africa, and Bantu people constitute a majority in 23 African countries, totalling 170 million people.

The CICIBA project was conceived at the first-ever meeting of ministers of culture from countries within the Bantu area. At the second conference, held in January 1983, a constitution was ratified by 10 African states. CICIBA defined a number of objectives which included the preservation of the Bantu heritage in all its traditional forms, the promotion of research, the formation of an archive, and the dissemination of research results.

Specific research objectives were isolated, and a series of "round-table" meetings were planned for archaeologists, musicologists, linguists, and those interested in traditional medicine. Other projects include the compilation of an atlas of the Bantu world, the convocation of a colloquium on Bantu history, and the publication of a review called *Muntu* (Man) and an iconographic history of the Bantu. It was also anticipated that CICIBA would be responsible for the first recordings of a Bantu musical anthology.

Beginning in 1986, the following archaeological research projects are to be carried out: studies of Bantu agriculture, metallurgy, and sedentism, research into the ancient kingdoms of Congo and Téké and the areas which came under their influence, and a study of the evolution of the relationship between the Bantu and their forest environment. Research will also be carried out in the field of traditional medicine, with the compilation of catalogues of medicinal herbs and traditional remedies. The preparation of an anthology of Bantu music will get under way. Linguistic studies will consider the survival of the Bantu language in isolated communities, and a lexicology of Bantu language will be drawn up. Social anthropologists will investigate social hierarchies and traditional political structures.

CICIBA invites the collaboration of all interested parties. The results already achieved would not have been possible without the cooperation of national and international institutions whose specialist areas include cultural anthropology, science, and education.

Interested individuals and organizations should communicate with S. Souindoula, Centre International des Civilisations Bantu, Libreville, B.P. 770, Gabon.

■ The Catholic Archdiocese of Tamale, Ghana, is establishing a centre of cross-cultural research on human development called the Tamale Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies (TICCS). Its purpose is to provide academic resources and research facilities such as quiet work space in pleasant surroundings and a well-equipped library of Africana, development studies, social anthropology, and religion for social science researchers, development/extension workers, volunteers, church workers, etc. Consultation services for development organizations and supervision for research students are offered by staff. TICCS also runs courses on introduction to Ghanaian life and culture, a language-learning course aiming at fluency, and 12 lecture courses on such subjects as "Development Anthropology in Africa," "West African Islamic Movements," and "Medical Systems of Northern Ghana." Besides the more traditional methods of collecting and documenting the ethnological data of the area, TICCS has begun a long-term project to videotape the rituals of northern peoples. It is particularly interested in the practical applications of field research. Write: Jon P. Kirby, Tamale Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies (Ghana), c/o les Pères Blancs, B.P. 5563 Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

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