HAN on the Web

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HAN ON THE WEB: With a view to the future, we are establishing a HAN website at

http://anthro.spc.uchicago.edu/han/

As of press time, there is nothing to be found there save our logo, but we do plan to develop the site over the next several months. The format and content categories are not yet definite, and we welcome suggestions as to the sorts of material that might be included. Although we do not plan to include current numbers of HAN as such, the site will probably offer selected material from past volumes, as well as "between numbers" bibliography.

FOOTNOTES FOR THE HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Burckhardtian Culture History and the "Durkheim-Mauss Bug"
in Paul Radin's Letters to Edward Sapir

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Paul Radin was one of the most heterodox anthropologists among the first generation of Franz Boas' students. His primary theoretical works, Primitive Man as a Philosopher (1927) and Method and Theory in Ethnology (1933), reflect a characteristic interest in the role of individuals in "primitive" cultures (a description he used with a degree of irony), and in a humanistic, rather than scientific form of ethnology. Two letters from Radin's correspondence with Edward Sapir provide insight into the development of his idiosyncratic approach to anthropology. Written during the period (1913-1917) when Radin was employed through annual contracts by the Geological Survey of Canada (then headed by Sapir) to do research on the Ojibwa Indians of southeast Ontario (DuBois 1960:xi, Sacharov n.d.), they anticipate the key themes of Radin's main published theoretical works. The first letter, from early 1914, contains a critique of Boas, not unusual among the first generation of students in this period, but one which Radin would later elaborate (and extend to Sapir and other Boasians) in Method and Theory of Ethnology (1933). The letter provides a succinct introduction to Radin's notion of "culture history," a research agenda very different than the contemporary approaches of other Boasians such as Sapir, or than that subsequently developed in recent decades by proponents of historical anthropology or ethnohistory. Radin's criticism of Boas for having "not once told [his students] to study the Indian as individuals" in the first letter is picked up and elaborated in the second letter, written two years later. Judging by the letter's contents, the occasion seems to have been the publication in Science that week of Clark Wissler's "Psychological and Historical Interpretations of Culture" (1916). Radin's critique of "the French school" is pertinent for its unique framing of his interest in the individual in sociological terms. In the later Method and Theory, Radin programmatically distinguished his own culture historical approach from "sociological" and other approaches to ethnology. His suggested temperamental typology of the "intellectual, emotional and man of action" later appeared much more prominently in Primitive Man as Philosopher (1927). The second typology of "the religious, moderately religious, and non-religious" temperaments had already appeared in his "Religion of the North American Indians" (1914) and is an important presupposition of his analysis of the text he published as Crashing Thunder: the Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian (1926). Radin's discussion of the "intellectual whims" of the "four Semites" (Sapir, Lowie, Goldenweiser, and himself) in the introductory paragraph of the second letter adds to our awareness of the already recognized propensities of the early Boasians to look to the