



UDK 930.1

## HUMAN CIVILIZATION AS A CONDITION OF SOCIETY

## ЛЮДСЬКА ЦИВІЛІЗАЦІЯ ЯК УМОВА СУСПІЛЬСТВА

**Kartashov M.O. / Карташов М.О.***1st year Master's Student majoring in B9 «History and Archeology»**Department of History, Archeology and Tourism**Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University:**17 John Paul II St., Kyiv, 01042***Mykhaylyuk V.P. / Михайлюк В.П.***D.Hist.S., Prof. / д.іст.н., проф.**ORCID: 0000-0002-8458-0617**Department of History, Archeology and Tourism**Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University:**17 John Paul II St., Kyiv, 01042***Sarytska O.M. / Сапицька О.М.***PhD in Hist., Associate Prof./к.і.н., доц.**ORCID:0000-0001-9197-9952**Department of History, Archeology and Tourism**Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University:**17 John Paul II St., Kyiv, 01042*

**Abstract:** *The article presents a concise historical-thematic review of scholars' research on the processes of humanity's transition from the most primitive states to a civilizational state and the factors driving this phenomenon. The conclusions emphasize the significance of anthropogenesis, demonstrating the transition to a civilized state as the result of long-term evolutionary changes, such as the development of the brain, empathy, the ability to cooperate, and the care for others. The civilizational aspect is supported by research, particularly by showing how the ancient Roman concept of "civilis," which contrasted public order with "barbarism," acquired a broader meaning during the Enlightenment, connected with culture, law, and social institutions. Based on the research, it has been determined that the true turning point was the emergence of Homo sapiens, after which society ceased to be merely a tool for survival and transformed into a conscious form of coexistence.*

*The article emphasizes and summarizes a new perspective on civilization as a universal, historically formed state of human society, based on the priority of social needs, moral norms, and cooperation over basic survival needs.*

**Keywords:** *historical-thematic review, anthropogenesis, civilizational state, evolutionary changes, the concept of "civilis", civilization, society.*

**Introduction**

Ancient philosophical thought proposed the theoretical idea of civilization, and during the Enlightenment, in the mid-18th century, the term «civilization» was coined. In our opinion, this concept is a social invention, and therefore, the term «civilization» is conditional. Due to the absence of a sole objective criterion that can be defined as a classic and necessary component of civilization, starting from the 19th century and continuing to the present day, there have been several interpretations of the term, which



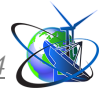
generally refer to a specific type of society. However, we propose considering this concept precisely as the state of society, which is directly related to the fundamental principles of the development of humanity as a whole.

### **Main text**

The first theoretical foundations of «civilization» as a definition developed in ancient times, when social life, thoughts, and ideas were largely based on social institutions such as the city and citizenship. We consider the Latin term «civilis» meaning «civil» or «urban» to be the starting point for the development of the concept. At that time, the idea behind this concept was quite simple. It was the order in which ancient society existed, which was the direct opposite of the barbaric, largely nomadic way of life, characterized by a lack of any significant material or cultural achievements.

The next important stage in the development of the term «civilization» was the Age of Enlightenment. At that time, ancient views, ideas, and ideals were already established tightly and developing in society, so it is not surprising that this concept also acquired a broader interpretation during this period. European, particularly French, thinkers and lawyers began to use the term «civilization» – the former to refer to a society characterized by literacy, urban life and a system of values, such as religious values [1], the second is in the context of civil cases [2], but both aimed to highlight civil status as a counterbalance to barbarism.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, significant breakthroughs occurred in the development of the humanities. History, along with philosophy, anthropology, ethnology, and other disciplines related to humans and human development, began to engage not only in recording and transcribing historical facts, but also in actively constructing theoretical views, primarily in the context of the general evolution of society. A civilizational approach is being formed, and with it, several definitions of «civilization». For example, Henry Morgan believed that there are three stages through which society passes: savagery, barbarism, and civilization, characterized by the acquisition of natural resources and the presence of industry [3]. Arnold Toynbee defines civilization as a community of people characterized by shared values and lifestyles, as well as a significant degree of social organization [4]. Another example is



Samuel Huntington, who defined civilization as an organized community of people with the highest level of cultural identity, particularly religious identity [5]. Other researchers emphasized organization, material, and technical achievements as the foundations of civilization. In general, it is noticeable that «civilization» in modern common usage refers to a certain type of society - a highly organized society.

We propose using this term to refer specifically to the state of society, which does not confront but rather complements the commonly used meaning. In the context of civilization as a condition, we believe that the central idea can be expressed in a simple formula: Homo Socialis (Social Man) > Homo Individualis (Individualistic Man). In other words, civilization is a state of society in which humans have been able to rise above biological behavior, and the individual, for whom the satisfaction of basic natural needs is paramount, recedes into the background, while the fulfillment of social needs and cooperation with other individuals become priorities. In other words, civilization is a shape of society in which humans have been able to rise above biological behavior, and the individual, for whom the satisfaction of basic natural needs is paramount, recedes into the background, while the fulfillment of social needs and cooperation with other individuals become priorities.

To fully understand this state, and, in fact, why it is precisely the state of society, one must delve into anthropogenesis. Humans, like any other living creature, are subject to the laws of nature, but these laws vary in their manifestation depending on the challenges that threaten the existence of the creature. The unique evolutionary strategy of human beings allowed them to transition to a state of civilization that stands not only on, but also above the natural (biological) state.

Starting with the structure of the brain and its changes in parallel with the development of the evolutionary strategy of hominids: approximately 25 million years ago, a structure responsible for understanding the actions of other subjects - mirror neurons has appeared in the brain of a human ancestor shared with monkeys and chimpanzees. It should be noted that there is still no precise confirmation of when mirror neurons first appeared, but their presence in humans and higher primates suggests that they emerged during the period mentioned above [6]. At this time, the

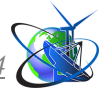


foundations of understanding what another individual really.

The next important stage is the period from 4 million to 2 million years ago, because at this moment several fundamental transformations take place, Broca's area begins to form in the brain, which is responsible for motor skills, and later for speech and coordination of actions with other individuals, meanwhile individual behavior becomes less selfish [7], and Hominidae beings replace ancestral forms. At the same time, the evolutionary strategy that ensured survival is changing: instead of groups with a clearly defined leader who controlled the use of resources and regulated relations within the group, preventing self-destruction, cooperation is emerging [8]. At that time, cooperation was instrumental, with each individual participating for their own goal — survival, which is similar to cooperation among chimpanzees and did not yet have qualitative social superstructures [9]. Survival itself was based on meeting biological needs, primarily food, which we will discuss further below.

In the context of cooperation as an evolutionary strategy, individuals perceive themselves as separate entities among other individuals, but not as part of a shared society. In other words, for most of its existence, almost until the emergence of Homo Sapiens, society lived as a union of many «I», but not as a single, united «We». In the context of such a worldview, nature significantly prevailed over the beginnings of civilization, and therefore, the process of providing oneself with food could take place through acts of cannibalism, even within one's own group. Today, we have a number of findings that testify to acts of cannibalism, and in relation to members of the same group: Homo Habilis 1.5 million years ago [10], Homo Antecessor 800 thousand years ago [11], Homo Neanderthalensis 100 thousand years ago [12]. We see that various forms of human beings, both primitive and archaic humans, as well as fairly advanced paleoanthropics, still prefer «naturalness» to «humanity».

Despite the dominance of biology in the worldview of ancient hominids, parallel processes are taking place that indicate the emergence of «humanity» among human beings, which in fact became a prerequisite for the transition to a new condition, such as civilization. A good example of the first manifestations of «humanity» is also a number of archaeological finds: Homo Erectus 1.8 million years ago [13] – the oldest



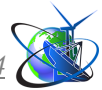
find, which is the first evidence of concern for other individuals, *Homo Neanderthalensis* 45 thousand years ago [14] – already at that time caring for other individuals became a more widespread phenomenon, and signs of burial and rituals appeared, indicating the development of moral aspects in society.

Considering all the above, we can conclude that the period from 2 million to 30,000 years ago was a transitional phase between civilizational and natural conditions, when biological individuality still dominated, but manifestations of «humanity» were emerging and gradually becoming widespread. Technically, this was only a prototype of what would later be called «civilization», and the subjects of that period were only ancestral forms, not humans (*Homo Sapiens*).

The transition to a new condition - civilization took place with the appearance of modern humans, the Cro-Magnons, about 40,000 years ago. It is in *Homo Sapiens* that the brain structure is most developed for existence within society, and the number of findings demonstrating cannibalism is quite small; moreover, these findings mainly demonstrate ritual practices. Instead, there is a wealth of evidence of care, mutual aid, empathy, and so on [15].

Most importantly, we can identify the key point of transition from the condition of nature to civilization. We believe that this happened at the very moment when society (the union of individuals) ceased to be an evolutionary strategy and instead became a generally accepted way of life, it was not a forced and unexpected response to the challenges of life, but rather an awareness, understanding, and acceptance of a social order in which social structures and moral values exceed the desire to primarily satisfy individual biological needs. The chronological identification of this moment is rather conditional, but we will assume that it took place about 25,000 years ago, when *Homo Sapiens* settled all parts of the world, and their interactions became a permanent phenomenon rather than random encounters, and that is why civilization, as we understand it, is a universal human condition rather than a characteristic of a particular society. From then, «We» dominated «I» in the context of coexistence.

Finally, it is worth explaining some points that may raise questions. For example, if civilization is a condition of society, is it possible to return to a state where nature

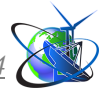


dominates over «humanity»? Yes, among historical examples, we can cite the First Crusade, during which there are records of acts of cannibalism among the army [16], and similar cases were recorded in the 19th century, when during shipwrecks, survivors killed and ate other members of the crew [17], and human flesh was also consumed for survival during the Holodomor famine of 1932-1933 [18]. All of the above is an example of behavior characteristic of animals that are willing to eat their own children for the sake of their own survival, and animals, in turn, are a direct component of the natural world without any superstructures. Leaning towards this kind of action, an individual or a certain group of people leaves the condition of civilization and moves to the natural level, while retaining such attributes as literacy, urbanization, and industry, which many point out as fundamental for the use of the concept of «civilization» in the context of a particular society. However, it is essential to note that the overall standard of living and living conditions have reached a high level, which ensures the stability of civilization as a state and minimizes the manifestation of natural individualism within social superstructures

It is necessary to emphasize that not all antisocial activities, even cannibalism, are a departure from civilization. A departure from civilization and a return to the biological level is the desire to satisfy basic natural needs without which a person cannot survive, namely, food, water, oxygen, and sleep. However, wars or rituals of any kind are not manifestations of such behavior; they are merely social constructs associated with ideology, religion, racism, or other worldviews of an individual or a limited community of individuals [19-22].

### **Conclusions**

In conclusion, we can see that the concept of «civilization», particularly global civilization, can be viewed not only as a type of society, but also as its condition. This state is characterized by the awareness of the existence of society not as an evolutionary strategy, but as an accepted way of life, in the context of which not only one's own life becomes a priority, but also the lives of other individuals, as well as a qualitative elevation of moral norms and the elevation of altruism above biological individualism.

**Literature:**

1. Mirabeau Victor de Riquetti marquis de. L'ami des hommes: ou, Traité de la population. À Hambourg: Chez Chrétien Herold, 1758. 523 p.
2. CIVILISATION: Etymologie de CIVILISATION. Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales. URL: <https://www.cnrtl.fr/etymologie/civilisation>
3. Lewis H. Morgan. Ancient Society. Chicago: Charles H Kerr And Company, 1877. 570 p.
4. Toynbee Arnold J. Study of History. Oxford University Press, 1964. Vol. 12: Reconsiderations. 617 p.
5. Samuel P. Huntington. The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order. New York: SIMON & SCHUSTER PAPERBACKS, 2007. 368 p.
6. Michael A. Arbib. How the Brain Got Language: The Mirror System Hypothesis (Oxford Studies in the Evolution of Language). Oxford University Press, 2012. 432 p.
7. Lieberman P. Uniquely Human: The Evolution of Speech, Thought, and Selfless Behavior. Harvard University Press, 1993. 224 p.
8. McBride M. Early hominins and the reversal of dominance hierarchy. Evolution and Human Behavior. 2025. Vol. 46, no. 3.
9. Boesch C. Wild Cultures: A Comparison between Chimpanzee and Human Cultures. Cambridge University Press, 2012. 292 p.
10. Briana Pobiner Michael Pante & Trevor Keevil. Early Pleistocene cut marked hominin fossil from Koobi Fora, Kenya. Scientific Reports. 2023. Vol. 13.
11. Yolanda Fernández-Jalvo J. Carlos Díez José M. Bermúdez de Castro Eudald Carbonell and Juan Luis Arsuaga. Evidence of Early Cannibalism. Science. 1996. Vol. 271. P. 277–278.
12. Defleur A. White T. Valensi P. Slimak L. Crégut-Bonnoure E. Neanderthal cannibalism at Moula-Guercy, Ardèche, France. Science. 1999. Vol. 286. P. 128–131.
13. David Lordkipanidze Marcia S. Ponce de León Ann Margvelashvili Yoel Rak G. Philip Rightmire Abesalom Vekua Christoph P. E. Zollikofer. A Complete Skull from Dmanisi, Georgia, and the Evolutionary Biology of Early Homo. Science. 2013.



Vol. 342. P. 326–331.

14. Trinkaus E. The Shanidar Neandertals. Academic Press, 1983. 502 p.

15. Spikins P. A., Rutherford H. E., Needham A. P. From Homininity to Humanity: Compassion from the Earliest Archaics to Modern Humans. Time and Mind. 2010. Vol. 3, no. 3. P. 303–325.

16. Rubenstein J. Cannibals and Crusaders. French Historical Studies. 2008. Vol. 31, no. 4. P. 525–552.

17. Korn D. Cannibal: the history of the people-eaters. London: Channel 4 Books, 2002. 288 p.

18. ARCHIVE DOCUMENTS AS A SOURCE OF THE RESEARCH ON THE HOLODOMOR OF 1932–1933 (BASED ON THE MATERIALS OF THE FUND 32 "CRIMINAL CASES BY JUDICIAL AND EXTRAJUDICIAL BODIES" OF THE SECTORAL STATE ARCHIVES OF THE MIA OF UKRAINE) / V. SHCHERBATYUK et al. Almanac of Ukrainian Studies. 2023. No. 33. P. 162–173. Maeterlinck M. What Is Civilization? Literary Licensing, LLC, 2012. 230 p.

19. Copp D. Morality, Normativity, and Society. Oxford University Press, 2001. 262 p.

20. Spengler O. Decline of the West, Two Volumes in One. Cosimo, Inc., 2020.

21. The Social Bond, an Investigation into the Bases of Law-Abidingness, Vol. II: Antecedents of the Social Bond, the Ontogeny of Sociality. Fordham University Press, 1978. 242 p.

22. Genetic documentation of filial cannibalism in nature / J. A. DeWoody et al. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. 2001. Vol. 98, no. 9. P. 5090–5092. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.091102598> (date of access: 26.10.2025).

**Анотація:** Стаття являє собою стислий історико-тематичний огляд досліджень вчених про процеси переходу людства від найпростіших станів до цивілізаційного стану та чинників здійснення цього явища. Підкреслене висновоків про значення антропогенезу, який демонструє перехід до цивілізованого стану як результат довготривалих еволюційних змін, таких як розвиток мозку, емпатії, здатності до співпраці та турботи про інших.

Цивілізаційний аспект доказово обґрунтований у дослідженнях, зокрема, на показі, як давньоримське поняття «civilis», що протиставляло громадський порядок «варварству», в епоху Просвітництва набуло ширшого змісту, пов'язаного з культурою, правом і суспільними інститутами. Визначено, на основі досліджень, що справжнім переломним моментом стало



виникнення *Homo sapiens*, після чого суспільство перестало бути інструментом виживання і перетворилося на свідому форму співіснування.

Стаття підкреслює і узагальнює новий погляд на цивілізацію як універсальний, історично сформований стан людського суспільства, заснований на пріоритеті соціальних потреб, моральних норм і співпраці над базовими потребами виживання.

**Ключові слова:** історико-тематичний огляд, антропогенез, цивілізаційний стан, еволюційні зміни, поняття «civilis», цивілізація, суспільство.

Статтю надіслано: 15.12.2025 р.

© Карташов М.О., Михайлюк В.П., Сапицька О.М.,