

CALL FOR PAPERS  
“Flags at the Confluence of Civilizations in the Americas”  
HemisFlag: The 28th International Congress of Vexillology  
15-19 July 2019 | San Antonio, Texas, USA

The Congress theme is “Flags at the Confluence of the Civilizations in the Americas.” This theme directly echoes the HemisFair theme, reflected in the Juan O’Gorman mural at the Lila Cockrell Theater on the River Walk. Born to an Irish immigrant father and a Mexican mother in Mexico at the turn of the last century, O’Gorman was a renowned artist and architect of the mid-20th century. While serving as a visiting professor at The University of Texas at Austin, O’Gorman visited San Antonio and was commissioned by the HemisFair organizers to create a mural for the fair’s new theater.

Installed in 1968, the mural is once again a landmark sight in San Antonio atop the newly restored HemisFair Park. The mural “symbolizes the progress made by the confluences of civilization in the Western Hemisphere: Mesoamerican civilization is sculpted on the left, Adam and Eve are depicted in the middle, and European civilization is sculpted on the right.” The civilizations meet in the middle to form a new civilization, thus “reflect[ing] the human need for combined cultures in America.”

The mural imagery is described as [o]n the far left, Quetzalcoatl, the plumed serpent, resplendent in his cloak of colored feathers and jade, ancient god of Mesoamerica, undulates across the landscape, embodying the spirit and culture of Latin America. On the far right, another drama begins in ancient Macedonia as the mighty Greek god Zeus travels towards the center, past the influences of Europe, the industrial age, and religion. Everything is connected by a great river, the universal symbol of transformation, change, and growth, flowing across the bottom of the mural, glittering in the Texas sun.

“For us the ‘Confluence of Civilizations’ is more than a poetic phrase,” says Henry Cisneros, the first Hispanic mayor of San Antonio and Secretary of Housing and Urban Development under President Clinton. “Here it is a real and functioning ideal. We are a physical place where European and indigenous cultures met, we are a crucible of converging histories, we are a melding of traditions, and together we comprise a people who live, work, gather, and worship with the conviction that by transcending our differences we create the blessing of an exemplary city.”

The HemisFlag theme asks, then, how we might “understand more accurately and more completely the nature of human society” (as articulated by Whitney Smith) through the use by the cultures of North and South America of flags, flag-related material culture, and other symbols. It also seeks insights from a focus on the confluence of different cultures or civilizations in other parts of the world, in a context where a flag (or flags) are symbols that lead us to deeper insights of how cultures past or present have flowed into each other (or not). Contributions exploring these questions are encouraged, including interdisciplinary contributions by integrating

and building on research done by those in fields such as political science, anthropology, history, sociology, and psychology, as well as those from allied disciplines such as heraldry, phaleristics, and sigillography.

As always, we welcome abstracts on any subject with a connection to vexillology (both theoretical and applied), not solely those inspired by this year's theme. We encourage you to reach out to your vexillologically-inclined colleagues by organizing thematic sessions or panels, as well as submitting individual papers and posters. HemisFlag is interdisciplinary and international, and we welcome voices from all communities, especially this year from our Central and South American colleagues. We intend to reserve panel slots specifically for papers from non-English speakers, although the official language of the conference is English. *The Scientific Committee wishes to note that it will accept papers that are written (and will be delivered) by two or more joint authors.*

Please submit your abstract or proposal for panels and poster sessions to Annie Platoff, FF, Scientific Committee Co-Chair, at [platoff@ucsb.edu](mailto:platoff@ucsb.edu). If you have any problems accessing the website, please contact us. While papers may be submitted in English, French, Spanish, German, all abstracts must be submitted in English. Because of the anticipated larger than normal participation this year, we encourage early submissions. The deadline for submission of abstracts is 15 April 2019. Please include the following information in your submission:

- Author's name
- Institutional affiliation and academic status, if any
- Email address
- Title of paper (in English)
- Abstract in English (maximum of 150-200 words)
- Keywords/phrases (maximum of six words/phrases in English)

Abstracts for individual papers or for panels and organized sessions (3-4 papers), as well as poster presentations, must include all of the above information. Papers are for a 20-minute presentation. An acknowledgment of receipt of your abstract will be sent to you within two weeks from the date of submission. Electronic letters of acceptance will be sent to the selected participants starting 1 May 2019 and will continue until 30 June 2019.

Papers presented at the meeting will be published in the Congress proceedings, which will be issued as a special number of *The Flag Bulletin*. Further details and deadlines will be specified as they are determined. We ask that completed papers be submitted by 1 July 2019; however, because of the timing of the Congress, you may submit your work to date if it is not finished by 1 July. A secondary deadline for completed papers after the Congress concludes will be established by the Scientific Committee.

Awards for the best paper in several categories will be presented at HemisFlag to those whose work represents important, critically significant, or groundbreaking research in their respective areas. By recognizing these select papers for their contribution to vexillology, ingenuity, and

importance, FIAV and the Congress organizers highlight some of the theoretical and practical innovations that are likely to shape the future of the scholarly study of flags. Under FIAV rules, only single-authored papers are eligible for the Whitney Smith Award.

The awards that will be presented at HemisFlag are:

- The Whitney Smith Award for the best paper delivered at an International Congress of Vexillology (conferred by FIAV).
- The William Wharton Award for the best paper making a contribution to vexillology in Texas (i.e., on or concerning Texas) (conferred by VAST).
- The Gherardi Davis Prize for a significant contribution to vexillological research (conferred by FRC).

Other FIAV members may be granting awards or prizes for papers delivered at HemisFlag. Please check their websites and publications for more details.

We are looking forward to having a full schedule of papers on a variety of topics presented by speakers from all over the world. If you have any questions about the submission or acceptance process, please contact Annie Platoff at [platoff@ucsb.edu](mailto:platoff@ucsb.edu).

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