

EDITORS' PREFACE

This Issue is composed of two panels, namely *Section I (Special)* and *Section II*. The major part of the issue belongs to *Special Section 'The Early State in Anthropological Theory'* with Peter Skalník, one of the founders of *the early state concept*, as its Guest Editor.

Our journal constantly publishes separate research articles, as well as special issues devoted to the problems of the *evolution of statehood*, and, especially, to *the Early State* problematic. We believe this makes sense, as the understanding of evolution of complex social systems is actually impossible without the analysis of the development of statehood. In the meantime the problems concerning state origin and transformations are undoubtedly among the most complex and significant in political anthropology.

Special Section comprises six papers. The articles are devoted to the various aspects of the early state concept, including the analysis of the place this concept occupies both within the body of general anthropological theory and among the theories of political anthropology. The early state as a concept has emerged with the publication of *The Early State* in the fall of 1978. There is no doubt that this concept continues to remain one of the most important achievements of political anthropology. However, thirty years in social sciences is a sufficient time for the development of new possibilities within any theory, for the emergence of new approaches to its various particular. The articles of this special section display some of such alternative approaches, and also demonstrate that the concept of early state still possesses a strong potential to develop political anthropology as a whole.

In *Section II* one can find two papers devoted to the problems of social theory as well as to the ways to reveal patterns across time and culture through cartography.