# Editorial Foreword

SYMBOLS OF NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS. Just as poets (and scientists) have claimed to find revelation in a grain of sand or a single flower, so students of society would like the common-place to be revealing. The unlikely topics of these two articles—on the mundane prose of cookbooks and the inconsequential world of horse breeding—is part of their appeal. In fact they deal with a more familiar and difficult issue, the relationship of national consciousness to cultural symbols. One could not write for long about the first without invoking the latter, but the achievement of these essays is to go beyond the incontrovertible claim that symbols and consciousness are related in order to expose the process by which they are brought together. Arjun Appadurai shows the building of a national consciousness. Cooking and eating—tightly tied in ceremony and habit to cultural perceptions of family and health, social roles and hospitality—did not in India produce cookbooks; but with urbanization and middle class self-consciousness such books are sought after. Their practical guidance for modern living considers cooking to be cuisine and forms meals around menus in which regional dishes reflect the nation. (Bentley's essay on ethnicity and practice in *CSSH*, 29:1, offered a theoretical framework that could be applied here.) John Borneman works from the other end, starting with the symbols (as Roberts did in reflecting on a cricket match, 27:3)—which in this case are the categories used by American horse breeders—and suggests that applying concepts of totem and clan, as a kind of anthropological litmus test, reveals an underlying national consciousness preoccupied with ethnicity and inclined to give it multiple meanings. How horses are seen becomes an expression of democracy and race in America. In both essays a battery of imaginative questions arose from alert comparisons, which suggested that some apparently commonplace practices might hide extraordinary significance; in both we are reminded how elastic concepts of identity tend to be (as McGilvray noted in 24:2).

POLITICS OF KINSHIP. Aidan Southall's description of the segmentary state suggestively connects kinship to state making, and it was therefore perhaps inevitable that his ideas would soon be extended beyond his initial usage—one of those ambiguous honors the social sciences confer. (On kinship, the law, and the state also see Saltman, 29:3; Lindholm and Dirks, both in 28:2; and Kumar in 27:2.) Here Southall reconsiders the transcontinental applicability of his controversial concept and courageously, if cautiously, proposes that it may even describe a series of logical stages in state making. In developing that argument he suggests that "ritual becomes the political when coercion can be applied," a comment that points directly to some of the



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central issues in Irene Silverblatt's article on Incan claims to kinship with the gods and the expression of imperial power inherent in their capacity to extend such ties selectively to conquered peoples. Her argument extends Ingham's discussion of human sacrifice among the Aztecs (26:3) and, in its emphasis upon the Incan use of history, compares interestingly with Farriss' article (29:3) on history among the Mayans.

EARLY MODERN REVOLUTION. Although revolutions remain a favorite topic for comparative study (and an interesting essay could be written on why that should be so), there has been a significant change in the way the topic is approached. The elaborate typologies and taxonomies used to discover uniformities in revolution, conceived as a distinct kind of event (note Gates's warnings about this practice in 28:3), have given way to studies of the social and political processes revolutionary crises can reveal. The two articles in this issue explore that interest in process on opposite scales. Jack Goldstone identifies common factors and parallel crises throughout Eurasia during the seventeenth century to show how they led to contemporaneous revolutions with divergent outcomes in England, Turkey, and China. In doing so he contributes to an extensive literature that includes the article by Zagorin but also those by Hermassi and by Skocpol in 18:2. Wayne Te Brake closely studies the local conflicts of a brief period in one small country (much as Siddiqi did in 28:3) to explain the political mobilization that makes a revolution, with or without violence. In both studies revolution provides the added light that, through wide-angle lens or microscope, illuminates processes otherwise hidden; in both, some common assumptions (for example, about English singularity or the peaceable Dutch) are thus called into question.

CSSH DISCUSSION. One of the recurring tasks of scholarship is to break down the retaining walls that established categories have inadvertently built up. Ida Altman accomplishes that by considering Spanish rule in America as a topic in the history of emigration. More frequently studied in terms of strained imperial administration and tragic cultural clash, that Empire was also part of Spain's own social history (a point that reinforces Schmitter's argument, in 26:2, about the importance, when studying later migrations, of looking at the states that send their citizens forth).

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