# Editorial Foreword

*Exhibitionism*. Museums are machines of irony. They proclaim their high purpose across displays of loot—each object a node of intersection for visitors' vague curiosity, curators' systematic interest, and the (imagined) makers' multiple purposes. As full of conflict as an ethnographer's diary, museums have become easy targets, inviting barrels of dead fish for poststructuralists with shotguns. The fact remains that literal constructions of culture, sensitively studied, have a lot to teach beyond the important point that power is knowledge. E. V. Winans reviews this modern awareness that the museum is the message and then draws us into the surprising mystery story of a missing skull, a tale of violence in which each piece of detective work further complicates the issue of where power resides. Symbols of conquest become sources of resistance, and the rebel's skull becomes a German fetish, then an anthropometric totem, then an imperial token until Mkwawa's head (was it really his?) returns to Kalenga to sustain another kind of power (compare Kenny in *CSSH*, 30:4 and Dixon in 33:1 on political beliefs in Africa). Much as the fate of an African skull can reveal the anthropology of imperial politics, the study of American museums can reveal the institutional politics of anthropology. David Jenkins also views museums broadly and finds in them the dynamism of their inherent contradictions (see Clifford, 23:4, and Breckenridge and Mitchell, both in 31:2). Without the complicating experiences of overseas empire, American study of other cultures was heavily influenced by its institutional ties to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, universities, and museums. Modes of organization become ways of thinking, and the collections exhibited display contested meanings that reflect the history of American anthropology and the unresolvable immediacy of its conceptual controversies.

*Societies of the Seas*. Communities of seafarers have more often been the focus of novels and films than of scholarly studies, although their distinctive rhythms are as revealing of social structure as their atmosphere is conducive to suspense. The two essays here start with the singular structural characteristics of fishing villages and of port cities, both seemingly peripheral to industrial production, and then study how these societies change in response to industrialization. Their findings tell us about that larger process as well as about the adaptable societies that live by the sea. In Reginald Byron's hands, the household economies of fisherman's families, with their distinctive gendered roles, become an indicator of industrialization's sociological impact on society at



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large (note Thompson, 27:1, and Wylie, 35:2). Villages apparently wrapped in their own lore and tradition shared in and even foreshadowed a wide range of social change in which, strikingly enough, the lives of women changed more than those of men (compare Roberts, 26:2, and Bernal, 36:1). On a different scale, Josef Konvitz considers the port cities of the Atlantic in their heyday at the end of the nineteenth century. They are, he suggests, a distinctive type characteristic of their era (note Yearley's comparison of London, Paris, and New York, 15:1) that had a special relationship to the hinterland (see Lees and Hohenberg, 31:3, on the regional role of cities in an earlier era). Sensitive to the use of space as well as the demands of capital, he draws larger lessons from the history of these ports about labor relations (on dock workers, see Miller, 11:3), political systems, and urban planning.

*Markets and the State*. The economic policies of the Dutch in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and of the Soviet Union under Lenin are two of the best-known topics of economic history and examples that sit at the core of prominent theoretical work on the world-capitalist system (Wallerstein, 16:4) and on the transition to socialism. In each case, however, the fresh, systematic analyses presented here challenge familiar impressions, call for significant changes in historical accounts, and modify the theories based on them. The two essays are similar as well in their attention not simply to the role of the state but to the specific historical contingencies that shaped its policies and the responses to them. Julia Adams demonstrates how the flexible creativity of corporate bodies stimulated an expansion that altered the world economy and created a kind of political and economic stalemate that necessitated a state (compare Root, 33:2). Her analysis of the rise of Dutch trade and of the decline of Dutch power addresses, and argues for some rethinking of, the rich body of literature on early modern state making and economic development. William Rosenberg also addresses an extensive literature, both theoretical (especially on peasants' participation in markets; see also Forman and Riegelhaupt, 12:2; Lehmann, 28:4) and empirical (on social relations in Russia at the time of World War I and early Soviet policy). His powerful analysis establishes the extraordinary structural constraints that facilitated revolution and inhibited change, necessitating Lenin's New Economic Policy while making it less new than most interpretations would have it and in practice not the policy intended (see Holmes and Quartert, 28:2, on peasant workers; and compare Solinger, 21:2; Duara, 29:1; Yang, 31:1 on China). When economic history, attentive to theory and historically informed, brings the state back in, social relations comes with it.

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