

PREFACE

In September 1978 the volume *The Early State*, edited by Henri J. M. Claessen and Peter Skalník, was published by Mouton (The Hague, The Netherlands). Since then many things have changed. Peter Skalník spent, after a short stay at Leiden University, nine years at the University of Cape Town, and finally returned to the Czech Republic, where he now holds the position of Senior Lecturer at the University of Pardubice. Henri Claessen retired some years ago from his chair at Leiden University. And Mouton Publishers was incorporated by Walter de Gruyter of Berlin.

The *Early State* volume received considerable attention after its publication and in the years that followed appears to have become a useful reference work. It was a pleasant surprise when Leonid Grinin, the co-editor of the journal *Social Evolution & History* invited us to edit a special issue of that journal to commemorate the publication of *The Early State* thirty years ago.

A small Editorial Committee was formed, in which, apart from Henri Claessen, participated Pieter van de Velde, who with Henri Claessen and M. Estellie Smith co-edited *Development and Decline* (1985), and with Henri Claessen *Early State Dynamics* (1987) and *Early State Economics* (1992), and Renée Hagesteijn, who over the years had assisted and collaborated in the production of all these works and a number of other early state publications. Regrettably the large (geographical) distance between the Netherlands and the Czech Republic prevented Peter Skalník to participate in the preparations.

The Committee asked several scholars working on Early State research whether they were willing to write an essay evaluating their experiences with the views expressed in *The Early State*. As a result twelve interesting essays have been collected. It proved quite difficult to arrange the papers in a logical order, so we decided to place them in alphabetical order. The exception to this arrangement is the introductory paper by Henri Claessen. While preparing this volume we received the sad news that Albert Trouwborst had died; thus his essay here is the final tribute to his life-long commitment to the political developments in the Interlacustrine Area of Eastern Africa; more generally we greatly appreciate his many contributions to the Early State Project.

We are grateful to the editors of *Social Evolution & History* Dmitri Bondarenko, Leonid Grinin, and Andrey Korotayev for offering us the opportunity to see to what extent the views expressed thirty years ago have survived the storms and controversies they have raised.

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