
Editorial Preface

The present issue appears unique in two ways. First, it is an anniversary issue. We take this opportunity to thank everyone who has sent us their greetings and we will try to take into account all the wishes. We also thank our authors and readers for their support of the journal.

Second, the issue is devoted to the discussion of a central subject of political anthropology – the origin of the state as well as of the chiefdom. Unfortunately, at present political anthropologists give far less attention to this subject (as well as to the problems of pre-state and non-state forms of political organization) than it was earlier. This actually does not belittle its importance; on the contrary, this fact enjoins us on constant returning to it. As a matter of fact, this subject has somehow been discussed in our journal during the whole decade. It is not by chance that the authors of congratulations emphasize it as the journal's achievement. We are proud of the fact that *Social Evolution & History* makes a significant contribution to the research of this subject.

The transition to statehood appears to be one of the most crucial changes in the humankind historical development. On the whole, without the analysis of the statehood development, it is almost impossible to understand the course of human history. So the analysis of models, the investigation of causes, environment and circumstances of state formation and evolution has been and will remain very important.

The better understanding of the past allows a clearer understanding of the present day phenomena. Among such problems one can mention the emergence of analog forms of chiefdoms in the form of military-tribal formations in Afghanistan and other regions, and also the peculiarities of the so-called failed and fragile states (some articles of our journal are devoted to these subjects). Thanks to the political anthropologists' research the specific phenomena of this kind as well as many others can be understood better.

A cute eye will see that – though it may seem strange at first glance – the contemporary world to a certain degree faces the sys-

temic tasks similar to the ones encountered by the pre-state societies, namely: to increase and integrate and still preserve own identity and image. In the distant past the process was also going on which can be named using the modern catchword 'globalization'. Indeed, what was that rapid transformation of the previously autonomous territories into a part of huge empires if not a globalization within the frameworks of the ancient and medieval world? And such global process as the worldwide transformation of state sovereignty and the formation of supranational organizations also requires a more detailed research of the ancient political processes, including the state formation process, in which typological similarities to modern transformations are observed (as one can see from the discussion materials). On the other hand, the understanding of present day processes allows a clearer understanding of the past. There is a good reason that some participants of discussion used the modern phenomena for the explanation of the changes occurring hundreds and thousands years ago.

Coming round to the discussion in the present issue, we would like to note that we are satisfied with its results. In a certain way they have even surpassed our expectations. Besides Robert Carneiro, twenty-three authors from eight countries took part in the discussion, including three editors of the journal; so the total number seems quite impressive. The activity and the number of the participants show that this subject continues to excite many anthropologists, archaeologists, ethnologists. And that is one of the reasons why this subject (along with other subjects which are important for anthropology but are often considered outdated) deserves a worthy reflection on the pages of academic press and also in the university courses, TV and radio programs about anthropology, *etc.*

In general, the discussion has demonstrated the current state of the research on the problem of state origin; it has outlined the most important directions of the research and has given it a certain impulse. In a word, we hope the discussion can be considered successful.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to Robert Carneiro and commentators for their contribution to this discussion.