

# Editorial

**HEIRS.** In an earlier article, 'Adoption in Cross-Cultural Perspective' (vol. 11:1, January 1969), Jack Goody traced the custom of adoption in ancient Eurasian societies to the rise of vertical inheritance, the motivation involved being the strong desire for an heir who would care for one's property and perform ancestral rites correctly. He now goes on to review the various strategies, in societies with a similar attitude to property, by which men try to assure themselves of an heir. His concluding discussion of the high probabilities, under pre-industrial demographic conditions, of dying without a son, will be most useful to anyone working on inheritance customs.

**CITIES.** Our long series of city studies continues in two new directions. Ira M. Lapidus corrects many current fallacies about the place of city life in early Islam. One of his most interesting suggestions, as he traces the growing separation between the Caliphate and the religious community, is that in many ways Islam recapitulated processes of change observable in the ancient world. We would welcome comment from historians of the ancient Middle East on his rich social analysis. C. K. Yearley, writing of London, Paris and New York between 1850 and 1910, is concerned with putting today's pessimism over the technical problems of urban sprawl in a perspective that is both historical and social. His comparisons raise and try to answer the question, how did the middle classes lose the confidence of their early reformist spirit? His discussion is in sharp contrast with John Friedmann's optimistic 'Cities in Social Transformation' (vol. 4:1, October, 1961).

**FOLK SAINTS.** Barbara J. Macklin and N. Ross Crumrine, writing of Mexico, and W. A. Christian, Jr. writing of Spain, tell and comment on the stories of several modern folk saints who developed a popular following through healing power. Their fate, suppression by secular authority in Mexico, by ecclesiastical authority in Spain, is understandable yet sad

and strange by comparison with the communal healing rituals described for us earlier by Raymond Firth in *Malay* (vol. 9:2, 1967) and by G. Obeyesekere in *Ceylon* (vol. 11:2, 1969).

ASSIMILATION. Song Nai Rhee reviews a well-known case of assimilation of an old Jewish community in China into the Confucianism surrounding them. An earlier series of articles on immigrant communities, republished as *Immigrants and Associations* (Mouton, 1967), contained only cases of non-assimilation. L. A. Fallers' explanation of the reasons for this, in his introduction to that book, may be interestingly compared with the analysis in this article.