

From the Editors

THIS special issue, *The Culture of the Holy Roman Empire, 1540–1680*, represents in some respects a new departure. But it conforms entirely to the original intentions of the founders of *Central European History*. Since the beginning, it has been the objective of the editors to publish articles “using all approaches to history, and dealing with all historical periods,” from the Middle Ages to the present. We also made clear our eagerness to consider interdisciplinary and comparative articles. We have published articles dealing with the Germanic tribes, with the late Middle Ages, with the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, with cultural and intellectual history, with comparative history, and we have continued actively to seek them out; and there has always been at least one member of our Board of Editors whose specialty was the history of early modern Central Europe. But for various reasons, mainly having to do with the research interests of readers and contributors, articles dealing with the political history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have tended to predominate.

This special issue on the cultural history of a neglected period provides an opportunity to reaffirm and intensify our commitment to this broad approach to the history of Central Europe. Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann explains in his introduction the purpose of the exhibition and symposium which gave rise to this group of articles, and discusses its relevance to general history. The remaining essays approach the period from the perspectives of cultural history, history of literature, and history of art. We welcome this disciplinary cross-fertilization, and hope to see more of it in the future.

In intensifying our attention to the field of early modern Central European history we will have the assistance of Professor James Allen Vann, who joins the faculty of Emory University in the fall of 1985. He will play an active advisory role with *Central European History* in the early modern field—as he has already done with the present issue, and as a member of the Board of Editors for several years. Thomas S. Burns, already at Emory, will serve the same function in the field of medieval history. With their help, we look forward to a continued broadening of the scope of our coverage in the future.