

JASO VOL. XIV No. 1: Editors' Introduction

This issue of *JASO* has been specially enlarged so as to accommodate three papers on the subject of Death in Portugal that were originally presented at a conference held at St Antony's College, Oxford, in June 1982.

The theme of death is a classic one in social anthropology, where the pioneer studies of Robert Hertz and A. van Gennep still provide important reference points for recent works in the anthropology of death in Western European societies as well as in other parts of the world. The 'new history of death', initiated by French historians in the 1960s - the key names here being Ariès and Vovelle - has provided an important inspiration and stimulus for a number of the papers that appear here. These works form part of the intellectual background for a reconsideration of the ways in which an analysis of death practices throw light upon forms of life and cultural change in modern Portugal.

The Editors of *JASO* record their grateful thanks to the *ad hoc* group of sponsors whose subsidy has made possible the publication of this enlarged issue of the Journal: the Anglo-Portuguese Society (London), the Instituto Português do Livro (Lisbon), and the London branches of the Banco Espírito Santo e Comercial de Lisboa, the Banco Nacional Ultramarino, the Banco Português do Atlântico and the Banco Totta e Açores. This group of sponsors, together with the U.K. branch of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation of Lisbon (under the patronage of which the Conference was organised last year in Oxford), have also helped with the simultaneous publication, by *JASO*, of a volume entitled *Death in Portugal: Studies in Portuguese Anthropology and Modern History*. This contains the three anthropological essays published here together with four further essays - by Maria de Fátima Brandão, Margarida Durães, T.F. Earle and Augusto Santos Silva - on the subject of Death in Portugal from other perspectives in social studies and the humanities. *Death in Portugal*, which appears as *JASO* Occasional Papers, no. 2, is edited by Rui Feijó, Herminio Martins and João de Pina-Cabral; it is available, price £6.25 post free, directly on application to the Editors of *JASO*. We owe a special debt of gratitude to Rui Feijó for enlisting the support of the above-named sponsors and for his help in the preparation of the papers presented in *Death in Portugal* as well as those in this issue of *JASO*.

1983 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of Portuguese Studies in Oxford. By devoting a substantial part of this issue to the anthropology of Portugal, the Editors of *JASO* are pleased to associate the Journal with the commemoration of this jubilee anniversary. A note on Portuguese Studies in Oxford has accordingly been appended to this special group of papers.