



GODFREY LIENHARDT (1921–1993)

## PREFACE

THE editors of *JASO*, on whose behalf as well as my own I now write, are pleased to publish this Special Issue of the Journal in memory of Godfrey Lienhardt. In doing so, we think back to Lienhardt's retirement in 1988, which was marked by the publication of two volumes. A Special Issue of this Journal on 'Names and their Uses' (guest-edited by J. H. W. Penney) was published with contributions from a number of colleagues, friends, and students who had participated in a series of informal colloquia that Lienhardt had organized on the topic of Names (see *JASO*, Vol. XIX, no. 2 (1988)). Former students and others inspired by his work also contributed to the publication of a volume in *JASO*'s Occasional Paper series: *Vernacular Christianity: Essays in the Social Anthropology of Religion Presented to Godfrey Lienhardt*, a Festschrift volume edited by Wendy James and Douglas H. Johnson (*JASO Occasional Papers No. 7*; Oxford: *JASO*, 1988).

Taken together, the three volumes—the two earlier ones and this present one—emphasize Lienhardt's close involvement and support for the Journal from its earliest days until his death in 1993. He chose it as the vehicle for the publication of a number of his essays, most notably for his Frazer Lecture for 1991, which appeared in these pages shortly before his death (Vol. XXIV, no. 1 (1992), pp. 1-12). More than this, however, he provided moral support through encouraging a diverse range of students and scholars to contribute to the Journal. Through this he helped to make *JASO* better known, not only within Oxford but also in wider anthropological circles in Britain and abroad, and thus contributed to the international reputation of the Journal. In 1981 or thereabouts Meyer Fortes remarked to me how disappointing it was that Lienhardt was publishing so little, and that what he was publishing was appearing in *JASO*, rather than in *Africa* or *Man*. Lienhardt, I think, saw publishing in *JASO* as achieving two aims. He was contributing to the discipline that was so important to him (and to which, *pace* Fortes, he continued to contribute up until the time of his death), and he was supporting

an important institution for anthropology at Oxford. Lienhardt had no ambition for himself, but he was ambitious for his students and saw the *Journal* as providing valuable experience for those who worked on it and as an excellent vehicle in which young anthropologists could publish for the first time.

This support for Oxford anthropology also applied to *JASO*'s 'sister' institution, the Oxford University Anthropological Society. Lienhardt joined the Society soon after his arrival in Oxford in 1948 and remained a member for the rest of his life. Typically, though he was technically already a Life Member and had no need to pay any subscription in later life, he insisted on paying an annual subscription, as well as supporting the activities of the Society in other ways. He also addressed the Society on at least three occasions. He spoke at the 472nd meeting (held on Wednesday 24 May 1950) on 'Some Nilotic Religious Beliefs'. Serving as the Society's President for the year 1956–57, he gave his presidential address at the 548th meeting (held on Wednesday 4 December 1957) on 'The Beliefs and Customs Surrounding the Situation of Death among the Anuak'. Finally, he addressed the 557th meeting (held on 18th February 1959) with a 'Comment on Anthropology and Literature', presumably a revised version of the talk given at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London in 1955 that was later published in *JASO* (Vol. IV, no. 2 (1973), pp. 59–67).

Lienhardt also served as President more recently, for the 1981–82 and 1982–83 academic years. With hindsight this period appears to have been one of the most successful in the Society's history. Meetings were held regularly every other week during term and attracted substantial audiences from the Oxford anthropological community and from the multidisciplinary collegiate community of Wolfson, where the meetings were held. These meetings contributed to the prominence of anthropology at Wolfson, Oxford's largest postgraduate college. Of course, Lienhardt's presence—and that of other fellows and students attracted to the college—had already given anthropology a presence at Wolfson, but the activities of the Society confirmed the intellectual and social contribution that anthropologists could make to the life of the college. Anthropology's presence at Wolfson—and Lienhardt's contribution to it—is now marked by the establishment of the Godfrey Lienhardt Memorial Fund. This was set up with funds bequeathed by Lienhardt himself and contributions from his colleagues, friends, and students. The Fund exists 'for the promotion of social and cultural anthropology in the continent of Africa south of the Sahara Desert, but excluding the Republic of South Africa'. The first awards have already been made and the Fund remains open for further contributions. An announcement about the fund appears below (page 137). The fund will continue to remind us of Lienhardt's support for anthropology at Oxford.

This brief Preface has touched on a limited aspect of Lienhardt's immense contribution to anthropology. Other aspects of his life and work—at Oxford, in the Sudan, and elsewhere—are dealt with in Ahmed Al-Shahi's biographical notes and in the memoirs and appreciations, contributed by former colleagues, students, and friends, that appear below. We hope that this Special Issue, taken as a whole,

constitutes a fair reflection of a remarkable and much-loved personality, whose passing we continue to mourn.

In preparing this Special Issue for publication, Ahmed Al-Shahi and I have received assistance from a number of people. For general assistance we are grateful to Tania Kaiser. For helping to resolve particular queries, we are grateful to the following: Peter Allmond of the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford; Jonathan Benthall of the Royal Anthropological Institute; Mr John Davis of the BBC's Written Archives Centre; Dennis Duerden; Professor John Haffenden; Dr M. A. Jamieson of the Department of Anthropology, London School of Economics; Miss B. J. Kirkpatrick of the Royal Anthropological Institute; Ms Therese Nolan of Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc.; Professor W. S. F. Pickering; and Ms Jan Scriven of Wolfson College, Oxford. We are also grateful to Mike Morris of the Tylor Library at Oxford's Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology and to the staff of the Bodleian Library for their expert, unfailing assistance.

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JEREMY COOTE