

# Editorial

The first article in this issue of *Ethnologia Europaea* – the discussion by Arthur E. Imhof (Berlin) of the consequences of the increase in the length and certainty of our life spans over the last three hundred years – was also the lecture that opened “The Life Cycle”, SIEF’s third congress April 8–12, 1987, in Zürich. The congress, which had brought together about 150 scholars from ethnology and related subjects, included five plenary lectures and a great number of papers for the nine working sections on different aspects of the very broad congress subject. The plenary lectures and a few of the papers from the sections will be published in forthcoming issues of this journal, which will also feature a report on the congress.

The other contributions to this issue cover a wide range of approaches. As in the paper by Arthur E. Imhof, the point of departure of Thomas Sokoll (Hagen) is in demography. “The Pauper Household Small and Simple” is a critical reassessment of one of the classical theses of historical demography: that the households of the poor were always particularly small and simple in structure. With the article by Beatrix Le Wita (Paris) and Annick Sjögren (Stockholm) we are taken to the upper levels of French society and to a preliminary description

of what has till now been a rather neglected ethnological field of study: the life style and ideology of the bourgeoisie.

In his contribution, the Dutch anthropologist Rob van Ginkel (Amsterdam) takes up fishermen’s taboos in the fishing villages of the North Atlantic fringe in a comparative study, offering a fascinating new explanation of some of the features in these popular conceptions. Finally the Hungarian ethnologist Tamás Hofer (Budapest) returns to a subject that has earlier been dealt with in this journal by Anton Blok and Henk Driessen (Nijmegen): the agrotowns of southern Europe. Through a detailed study of the agro-town of the great Hungarian plain, Tamás Hofer explains these settlements as the result of specific historical conditions in the European periphery.

In addition to the SIEF congress a meeting in the editorial board of *Ethnologia Europaea* was held in Zürich. The following were elected as new members of the board: Dr. Václav Frolec (Brno), Professor Joaquim Pais de Brito (Lisboa), Professor Klaus Roth (Munich), Dr. Martine Segalen (Paris) and Professor Zofia Sokolowicz (Warsaw).