

a disinterestedness, a practicality, and an unremitting thoroughness for which all concerned with material and social advances in Africa and the development of African studies are deeply indebted.

D. F.

## GERHARD LINDBLOM

1888–1969

WE deeply regret to record the death in his eighty-second year on 18 June 1969 of Professor Gerhard Lindblom, Professor Emeritus of Ethnography in the University of Stockholm, former Director of the Swedish Naturhistoriska Riksmuseum, and later the State Ethnographic Museum. Professor Lindblom was a founder member of the Institute. He was elected as a representative of the Riksmuseum, Stockholm, on the Governing Body in 1928, and was a member of the Executive Council until 1957 when he was invited to become an honorary life member.

Born in 1888, Professor Lindblom joined the Riksmuseum as an Assistant in 1912 on his return from field studies in East Africa. He succeeded to the Directorship in 1923 and was also Director of the State Ethnographic Museum from 1928 until his retirement in 1954. Awarded professorial status in 1928, he held the first teaching post in General and Comparative Ethnography at the University of Stockholm from 1933. His ethnological studies included work on African and Indian influences on the negro bush cultures of Surinam which led him to further researches on West African cultural influences in central and north-eastern South America. He also inquired into evidence for Asiatic contacts with East Africa. From the twenties onwards he published many distributional studies on various aspects of material culture in Africa, a Tharaka grammar, and several studies of Kamba folklore.

But undoubtedly Lindblom's major achievement was his study of the Akamba. The outcome of one and a half years of fieldwork in East Africa from 1910 to 1912, his main work *The Akamba: an Ethnological Monograph*, Uppsala, 1920, set new standards in both thorough description and careful analysis in East African ethnography. Originally published as a Doctoral Dissertation in 1916, it was later expanded in a revised edition. Lindblom anticipated many of the procedures later advocated in anthropological field research, learning the language and placing great stress on systematic participant observation. His accuracy and thoroughness have been confirmed by later field studies in East Africa and both his detailed records and many of his interpretations, notably with regard to the political institutions and the significance of ritual on which he brought to bear a very wide knowledge of the anthropological literature, provided the foundation for later work on the comparative ethnography of the north-eastern Bantu. His monograph has not only remained a standard work; much of it still reads with freshness and cogency that could well be emulated today.

Professor Lindblom continued to take a keen interest in the affairs of the Institute after his retirement and had been looking forward with great pleasure to the meeting of its Executive Council this year in Sweden which he had himself warmly advocated. Members of the Institute and those of its staff who met him during his visits to London after the war will remember his courtesy and kindness and join in extending our sympathy to his widow, children, and grandchildren.

D. F.