

logists, as lists of African musical recordings form a substantial part of it. The catalogue has been compiled on behalf of the International Folk Music Council and is supplementary to the *International Catalogue of Recorded Folk Music* (IFMC/UNESCO; London: Oxford University Press, 1954).

[Communicated by Mr. David Rycroft]

### *An Award to Professor Edward Ullendorff*

ON the instructions of the Emperor Haile Selassie, a gold medallion has been presented to Dr. Edward Ullendorff, Professor of Semitic Languages and Literature in the University of Manchester, in recognition of his book *The Ethiopians*.<sup>1</sup>

### *The Exhibition of Nigerian Tribal Art*

WE have to thank the Arts Council of Great Britain, the British Museum, the Nigerian Government, and a host of other museums and private collectors for an exhibition which has just ended at the Arts Council Gallery, London, and which now moves to the City Art Gallery, Manchester (26 Nov.–31 Dec.), and thence to the City Art Gallery, Bristol (26 Jan.–25 Feb. 1961).

It is by far the most comprehensive and representative exhibition of Nigerian sculpture that has yet been held and one that is not likely to be repeated for a very long time. The exhibits have been brought together from all over the world and from hiding-places as diverse as the Chicago Museum of Natural History and the City Museum, Ipswich. Mr. William Fagg, who was responsible for their selection and arrangement, has done a magnificent job and instead of producing a rehash of the old familiar masks and carvings has made a point of including as much new material as he could lay his hands on, and what a lot there is! Most people who are interested in African art can tell a Yoruba from an Ibo or an Ibibio mask, but very few have seen any examples of the lesser-known styles. We are now shown a representative selection of these and of other masterpieces which earlier collectors overlooked and which are now barred under the Nigerian Antiquities Ordinance from ever leaving the country.

They fall into three main categories: firstly a few stone and terra cotta heads and figures from the Plateau area and from Esie and Ife, secondly a representative collection of *cire perdue* bronzes from various localities from central and southern Nigeria, and thirdly a large number of carvings in hard and soft wood, mainly the latter, from the Western and Eastern regions. The Plateau heads are the only exhibits which can be dated by archaeological methods. Carbon 14 tests take them back to the end of the first millennium B.C. Some of the bronzes can be classified as Yoruba and Benin work or, like the Tiv examples, as recent local styles; the rest could have come from anywhere in the Niger-Benue valley or in the area south of it, and, like the Benin work, attempts to date them still remain hypothetical and based on inadequate typological analysis. The wood carvings are not much better documented, though we now know where most of them came from and can assume that for climatic reasons they are recent and unlikely to be more than a hundred years old at the outside.

The supporting catalogue is disappointing. The plates, with some notable exceptions, convey little of the beauty or the structure of the masks and statuettes, while some of them, notably plate xxix, are gross distortions. The text contains rather too many of Mr. Fagg's hypotheses and not enough ethnographical facts. However, it would be too much to hope for a catalogue as authoritative as the one which Olbrechts produced for a rather similar exhibition of the art of the Belgian Congo at Anvers in 1938. Indeed, the wealth, variety, and vitality

<sup>1</sup> Reviewed in *Africa*, July 1960, p. 296.

of this collection of Nigerian sculpture makes one realize the complete inadequacy of present methods of classifying negro African sculpture. What, for instance, is meant by 'Tribal sculpture', or by 'Ibo, Ibibio and Ekoi styles'? The Ugbom statuettes (nos. 221-5) are labelled Ibo presumably because their former owners spoke this language, but they have nothing in common with other Ibo sculpture and little with Ibibio. They were fashioned a few generations ago by local carvers for a new 'Play'—a women's fertility dance—produced by a few Ibo villages on the Ibo-Ibibio border. The style of these carvings is unique but, like the play, it is now dead and the only good examples of it are buried in a few Nigerian museums. On the other hand, the seated mother and child statuettes (nos. 311 and 312) now classified as 'Afo tribe' and previously labelled 'Tiv' are quite as obviously a derivative of the Yoruba style as the Igala and Idoma masks (nos. 288-92) are derivatives of the northern Ibo style, while the masks included under 'Ekoi tribe' could have been made by any of the peoples on or near the Cross River. It is easy enough to pick holes in systems of classification devised by museum curators and art connoisseurs, but until anthropologists are prepared to devote as much study to African material culture and African aesthetics as they do to African social structure we shall have to put up with it, and with such notes as 'Tiv—nos. 295-300. Six human figures probably connected with the ancestor cult.'

A far more important point, and one that has received no notice in the catalogue or elsewhere, concerns the number of masterpieces in this exhibition which were discovered and collected recently. In the case of the better-known negro sculpture of the French colonies no significant additions have been made since Carl Kjersmeier popularized Bambara sculpture in 1935 and most of the best examples are in the hands of private collectors. In the case of Nigerian sculpture the position is the reverse. A great deal of the more significant sculpture was collected in the thirties and some of the more exciting styles were unknown, except to a few people in Nigeria, until after the last war. This exhibition is a belated tribute to the years of selfless work begun by Government Education officers in the nineteen-thirties and continued by the Antiquities Department after the war, and in particular to that of Mr. K. C. Murray who, first as an Arts and Crafts officer and later as Curator of the Lagos Museum, has devoted the best part of his life to the recording, collecting, and preservation of Nigerian art.

[Communicated by Mr. G. I. Jones]

### *The Eastern Africa Law Reports*

A NEW series of Law Reports for East Africa is being issued by Messrs. Butterworth and includes reports of decisions of the superior courts in Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Aden, Seychelles, and Somaliland; of the Court of Appeal for Eastern Africa; and of the Privy Council on Appeal from these courts. The reports are issued in quarterly parts beginning with the year 1957. The 1957 and 1958 Reports are available in bound volume form and three of the four parts for 1959 have already been issued. Further details may be obtained from Messrs. Butterworth & Co. (Publishers) Ltd., 88 Kingsway, London, W.C. 2.

### *Africana in Tenri, Japan*

A CATALOGUE has been published of books relating to Africa in the Tenri Central Library, Japan. The collection comprises some 3,200 titles of books and periodicals, most of which came from the library of the late Viscount Takesada Tokugawa, sometime Professor of Tokyo University and Director of the Naval Institute for Technology. The majority of the titles date from the first half of the present century down to 1940 and are mostly works of travel, hunting, and zoology, a few modern anthropological studies being included, however. Some 70 titles date from the eighteenth century and earlier.