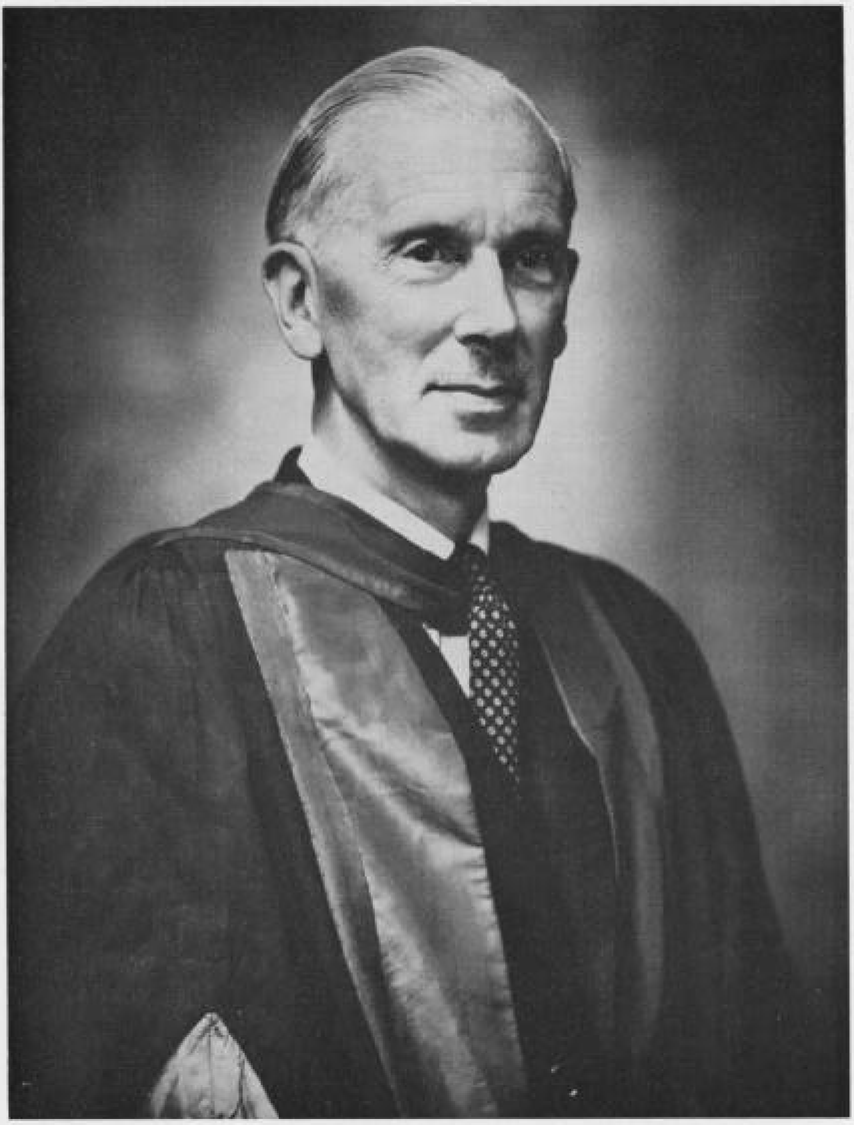
PLATE XXXVII



MALCOLM GUTHRIE

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1903–1972

MALCOLM GUTHRIE was born on 10 February 1903, the eldest son of Malcolm Guthrie and Maude Louise, née Lindeboom, his father being of Scottish and his mother of Dutch extraction. According to his brother, Dr. Donald Guthrie, Malcolm was born at Hove, Sussex, but the family moved shortly afterwards to Ipswich, the county town of East Suffolk, where the formative years of his life were spent. He received his primary education at Bramford Road Schools, Ipswich, where he is remembered as a very tall, shy, quiet boy, whose drawings were always very neat and precise. For his secondary education he went to Tower Ramparts (later Northgate) School, also at Ipswich. Here his bent for science and chemistry became apparent, and even when still at school, he had a reputation for a photographic memory; he could memorize in a few minutes a complete wall chart of formulae or equations, where his fellows took an hour or more. The concentration, patience, and methodical approach which characterized him in later years were even now apparent, and a friend from those days, Mrs. Millicent Salmon, cannot recall his ever obtaining anything but the correct results in science experiments. He was, it is said, 'very uncommunicative', but was greatly respected by his schoolfellows, to the point that some stood in awe of him.

The Guthries attended the Bethesda Strict Baptist Church, the minister of which, the Revd. Tydeman Chilvers, a profound Bible student and noted for his scripture expositions, became a considerable influence on Malcolm. The church was well attended, with a large congregation of some thousand, and apart from the regular services, there were frequent open-air meetings. These were renowned for the fine music, both vocal and instrumental, and it was here, perhaps, that he learned the value of music in worship, an aspect which absorbed much of his interest later in Africa. He himself learnt to play both organ and piano, and had a strong, pleasant singing voice. At these gatherings he is remembered as shedding some of his reserve, 'walking round the crowds, encouraging, giving out hymn sheets, mingling with the fringe observers and attracting children to the inner ring'. All his life he found his religious faith a support and an inspiration.

The area in which Ipswich lies is one of great historical and archaeological interest. The town itself contains a number of medieval churches and other buildings, the great park and mansion of Christchurch, begun in 1548, the house where Cardinal Wolsey was born in 1475, and the Hadleigh Road Saxon cemetery. Weapons and jewellery from the latter, and Palaeolithic implements found in the district, are in the Ipswich Museum (which now contains also replicas of the Sutton Hoo and Mildenhall treasures, not yet discovered at this time). Some of these finds were made by the Ipswich and District Historical Association, which from time to time invited sixth formers from the Northgate School to join their rambles. Malcolm Guthrie's interest in geology was aroused at this time, since the leaders of the Association encouraged study of the geological strata, as well as the search for artefacts.

There was a strong engineering tradition in the Guthrie family. Both Malcolm senior and a grandfather were engineers, and an uncle was an Engineer Commander in the Royal Navy. An ancestor at the time of the American Civil War is credited with the manufacture of the Claxton machine-gun, also known as the Guthrie and Lee, after the name of the firm—a distinction not greatly appreciated by his more pacific descendants. Until the end of his school and university careers it seems to have been assumed, by Malcolm himself as much as by anyone else, that he would follow this tradition and become an engineer also. His interests and abilities seemed firmly set within the sciences, rather than the arts, with the exception of music. Of linguistic ability he showed no trace, and in fact failed his General School Certificate French at the first attempt. This stung him to prodigious efforts, and he not only retook, and passed, the examination in December of the same year, but also went on to take the Higher School Certificate in the same subject after only one year's preparation instead of the customary two. In later years his mastery of French was such as to make his early failure almost unbelievable—he not only wrote but lectured and conducted research in the language—but it may have been this experience, which, albeit somewhat negatively, directed his attention to language as a subject of study.

He was virtually an only child, since it was not until he was thirteen years old that his twin brothers, Donald and Raymond, were born, followed three years later by his sister, Doris. In his early childhood, the family were in very straitened circumstances, but by the time of the first memories of the younger children, their fortunes had improved, and Malcolm had entered Imperial College, London University, where he took a B.Sc. in metallurgy, and then became an Associate of the Royal College of Mines. In London he attended the Metropolitan Tabernacle, and very soon after taking his degree, he felt called to the life of a Baptist Minister. In 1925 he entered Spurgeon's College, in the London suburb of South Norwood. The Revd. W. H. Cox, one of the same 'batch', remembers this occasion:

> At the beginning of September 1925, about a dozen new students entered Spurgeon's College for the 4 year course, including Malcolm Guthrie—tall, thin, erect and somewhat austere . . . quite naturally Malcolm often took the lead in discussion and debate . . . it soon became evident that he was a student of promise, a scholar in the making . . . exceptionally good at languages, Greek, Latin and Hebrew, as his College marks ranging from 98–100 always showed; . . . I possess one of his Hebrew notebooks with exercises neatly written out as though they were printed. In his room, neat and tidy, he would have on his table only the one or two books he was studying at the time. He possessed a marvellous memory, probably a visual one, and always preferred to work things out for himself. I should add that he was put on 2nd year straight away, soon catching up with the rest of that year.

Another fellow-student of those days, the Revd. W. C. Johnson, who shared a room with Malcolm Guthrie, comments on another aspect of his personality:

> Malcolm was by nature a reserved man and had few close friends. He lived very much within himself. We did not know of his musical gifts possibly because, since there were many others having those gifts, he did not reveal himself. When other students were enjoying the exercise of games, football and cricket, Malcolm would be in his study. Sometimes he would ask me to test his knowledge of a language text book when he would proceed to recite every detail on any chosen page. He was a brilliant student in all subjects but notably in Greek, Latin and Hebrew, a gift later revealed in his linguistic achievements.

Yet another fellow-student, the Revd. P. H. Crundon, recalls that not only was he the sole student to obtain 100 per cent in the Hebrew examination, but also that he drew attention to a mistake in the question paper!

It would appear, then, that somewhere between the ages of sixteen and twenty-two, when he entered Spurgeon's, Malcolm Guthrie discovered, acquired, or developed a phenomenal talent for languages. Otherwise, the boy was very much father to the man; the passion for order, the perseverance and determination to win against all odds, the refusal to waste time on non-essentials (such as games), the deep religious faith and the self-enclosure, as well as the self-possession, were as much marked in childhood and youth as in adulthood.

On leaving Spurgeon's he took up a pastorate at Rochester, Kent, and it was while he was minister of the Baptist Church there that he met (Helen) Margaret Near. In 1929 she was staying at Arundel House, a Christian holiday house run by the Baptist Union, with her sister Winifred. The latter recollects that Malcolm Guthrie was one of several young ministers, some of whom were about to take a pastorate for the first time. There were in addition a number of older and more experienced ministers, who often gave counsel to the younger men. None, however, attempted to counsel Malcolm Guthrie; as one of them put it, 'No need to tell *that* one anything, he doesn't need any advice!' The Near girls were themselves daughters of a Baptist minister, and two years later, in 1931, Malcolm and Margaret were married, in Penge Baptist Church, on the Saturday preceding Easter weekend.

Margaret Guthrie was the perfect companion for her husband. Like him, she had a passion for order, but she was also—perhaps less like him—a good listener.

In 1932, the year following their marriage, the Baptist Missionary Society was appealing for a young married minister to go to Léopoldville in the Belgian Congo (now Kinshasa, the Zaire). The Guthries responded to this appeal, and in the same year went out to the Congo. It appears that Malcolm had some contact with the School of Oriental and African Studies, then in the Finsbury Circus quarters, before going out to the Congo, since he is remembered as a 'truly precocious' student in Professor Alice Werner's classes at this time.

The Revd. R. V. de Carle Thompson, who was at that period in charge of the Lower River Church work, welcomed the young couple:

> The Guthries had brought out to Zaire the complete furnishings of their home in Rochester, even their stair carpets! The year we spent together in the capital was a very enjoyable one. We were the only protestant mission at work at that time in Kinshasa and we shared the work between us. My wife and Mrs. Guthrie ran the Women's school which had to be carried on in three different languages (Kikongo, Lingala and Tshiluba). Malcolm was responsible for the boys' school. His musical ability was a great asset as he was the only one able to play the harmonium.

> The Church, built in what was then called the native city, catered for [the European community of consular people and English company agents, as well as] the Upper River folk who came from most of the tribal groups of Zaire, but were shepherded under one lingua franca, Lingala; and the Lower River folk . . . [who] all spoke or at any rate understood Kikongo.

However, a survey made by João Dembo, the Sunday School Superintendent, revealed that some 120 languages were used in their homes by the schoolboys. Malcolm Guthrie set himself to learn, not only Lingala and Kikongo, but also a number of the other languages—some of which had not then been committed to writing—sufficiently well to enable him to conduct pastoral work in them. (Later he calculated that he had a working vocabulary of some 600 words in over 200 languages.) He became particularly interested in the Teke languages; Lingala, however, remained his principal concern in the Congo, and by 1934 he had published the *Lingala Grammar and Dictionary*. This book was a source of embarrassment to him in after years, and he himself condemned it in a later work as 'peu scientifique'. It was indeed largely his dissatisfaction with the models he had used for this grammar that led him to ask permission, when on furlough in 1935, to attend SOAS again for further instruction. This time he studied under Mrs. E. O. Ashton, later known for her work on Swahili and Ganda. R. A. Snoxall, the only other student in the class, a Carnegie Scholar, who had been at the same course with Guthrie previously, and later joined the SOAS staff, recollects the impression made on him by his brilliant fellow:

> It was now clear to me that Guthrie's thirst for comparative Bantu study, which had in 1930 rather irked some members of the class, whose vision was strictly limited by the necessity of their passing a Government Lower Standard Examination in Kiswahili, had also in the interim infected me. The constant flow of examples which he was able to adduce from the several languages with which he was then acquainted was supplemented, somewhat diffidently, by me from Luganda. This mutual interest in each other's language field was wisely and carefully stimulated by Mrs. Ashton. Although these sessions took place almost forty years ago, I am still able to enjoy the pleasure which Guthrie's probing intellect and amazing width of knowledge contributed to them.

In 1939, after his return to the Congo, he published his *Grammaire et dictionnaire de lingala, avec un manuel de conversation français-lingala*. This rapidly became a standard work, and a second edition appeared in 1951. The dictionary was published as a separate item in 1939, and the phrase-book likewise in 1951. The whole was reprinted in 1966. At the same time, he was translating the New Testament into Lingala, although the finished version did not appear until 1942. He also translated over 200 hymns into the same language, and composed others in Lingala and Mfinu, some of which he set to music himself. One correspondent puts the figure at 500 or more, including translations and original compositions. His interest in this aspect of his work is evident from an article he contributed to the *Congo Mission News* in 1939, entitled 'Music in African worship'.

Margaret Guthrie took a full part in missionary activities, sharing the work of the women's and girls' schools in Kinshasa during their first tour. A photograph taken at this time brings a reminder of the perils of missionary life in Africa; it shows Malcolm baptizing in the river, and on the back Margaret has written that it was necessary to beat the water for at least a quarter of an hour beforehand, to frighten off crocodiles!

Their second tour was spent at Upoto, where it was felt that Malcolm would be better able to study Lingala. During this tour, Margaret developed typhoid, and was seriously ill. It appears that she preceded her husband back to England, since he often told the tale of his own homecoming in 1940, when he reached the north of France only to find the Germans in occupation, and retreated to Marseille with the invading forces hard on his heels. Arrived at the port, he could only obtain a passage to England by working his way as a ship's stoker; so the family tradition was to some extent maintained after all.

In the same year, he contributed an article to the *Bulletin* of SOAS, 'Tone-ranges in a two-tone language (Lingala)'. Tone in Bantu languages interested him throughout his life, and he was later to obtain his doctorate by a thesis on the same subject. He applied once more to the School for further training, but instead was offered a lectureship. The decision to leave the missionary field to which he had felt called, and even more, to abandon the pastorate as a full-time occupation, was difficult in the extreme. He looked back on this later, in the talks which he gave at the Woodlands House of Prayer, Eastbourne, and which were published in 1955 as a book, *Learning to Live*. Here he says:

> I found myself confronted with an issue which resolved itself into whether or not I dare trust God with my life, without any reservations whatever.

Fortunately for the Department of Africa, SOAS, and Bantu Studies, the struggle ended in a decision to take up the university post, and in 1942 he was appointed Senior Lecturer in Bantu Languages. The Department of Africa at this time was headed by Dr. Ida Ward, with a staff consisting of two Readers, the Revd. G. P. Bargery and Dr. A. N. Tucker (later Professor of East African Languages), and two lecturers, Mrs. E. O. Ashton and Miss M. M. Green, supplemented by a panel of Additional Lecturers, including Sir Hanns Vischer, Dr. L. S. B. Leakey, and Mr. (later President) Jomo Kenyatta.

Almost immediately upon appointment, Guthrie went back to Africa for eighteen months' study leave, from August 1942 to April 1944. He had two major objectives. Firstly, he was to conduct an investigation, on behalf of the British Council, into the desirability and feasibility of establishing or developing the Council's activities in the then British dependencies in East and Central Africa; this resulted in a confidential report to the Council and the Secretary of State for the Colonies. In addition he presented, before the Royal Society of Arts, a paper with the title 'East Africa's reactions to European culture', which brought him the award of the Society's Silver Medal, and was afterwards published in the *Journal* of the Society (vol. xciii. 4698, 1945). The second aim was a linguistic survey of the same area. In preparation for this, he spent *one month* in Zanzibar, and in his study leave report remarks tersely: 'On leaving Zanzibar I had a sufficient knowledge of Swahili to enable me to conduct my researches on the mainland by means of that language.' This record outdoes even that of the legendary Schliemann, who allowed himself six weeks in which to master a language. Likewise there can be few such reports which contain, as does his, the statement, 'it proved possible to carry out almost everything'.

His interest in classification was well to the fore, as can be seen from a later sentence in the same report: 'By developing a suitable technique it proved possible in the short time available for each language to get enough information about it to enable it to be classified, as well as to discover whether any further research is necessary.' Tone, however, was still a considerable preoccupation. Of the 200 or more languages and dialects he says: 'In addition the plan of research was so worked out that the material gathered gave a clear idea of the tonal system of that language.' At Kisumu he stayed with Godfrey and Dorothy Benson. Godfrey Benson, who also became a member of Guthrie's staff at SOAS later, records that much of the data he collected during his visit was elicited from inmates of the prison, and that he preached at the European church on Sunday, 'with careful erudition, as always'.

More intensive research was reserved for Bemba, spoken in what is now Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia) and Congo-Kinshasa (Zaire), Sukuma, in Tanganyika, and Yao, also in Tanganyika, and some parts of Nyasaland (Malawi) and Mozambique. Of Yao he says, 'Enough material was gathered in this case to solve the difficult problem of its tones.' The Yao study was never, alas, published, but the material collected for Bemba—which included a 7,000-item vocabulary—formed the basis for his doctoral thesis, *The tonal structure of Bemba*, presented to the University of London in 1945.

One would give much to know more of the 'suitable technique' developed for studying a language in a short time, and the 'plan of research' which made it possible to gain a clear idea of a language's tonal system. It was however probably at this time that he worked out his basic Bantu vocabulary, in use among his students for many years.

Towards the end of the tour he travelled to South Africa and spent two months with C. M. Doke, then Professor of Bantu Languages at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, and the doyen of Bantu studies in his country. Guthrie had regretfully to cancel a projected visit to G. P. Lestrade, at Cape Town University, owing to 'the erratic nature of the shipping facilities'; this was, of course, still wartime. Instead he returned via the Belgian Congo, taking the opportunity for more research into the languages of the Congo region which he had not previously been able to study.

His first publication after this study leave was again on Lingala, 'The lingua franca of the Middle Congo', *Africa*, xiv. 3, 1943. By now he had begun the work which led up to the appearance, in 1948, of *The classification of the Bantu Languages* (reprinted 1967). He was not by any means the first to attempt this task, but he sought to improve on the work of predecessors such as Bleek, Lepsius, Cust, Johnston, Torrend, Jacottet and Meinhof. The aim was twofold: to establish criteria to be 'applied to a language to discover whether it would fall within the Bantu family or not', and to develop a method of classification. In the first case, a difficulty immediately presented itself; many widespread Bantu features are not present in some languages one would certainly wish to class as Bantu. To deal with this problem, he divided the criteria into Principal and Subsidiary. The Principal Criteria are two, and consist firstly of the 'grammatical gender' system, known also as the noun class system; to qualify as Bantu a language must have at least five genders (pairs of classes). The second is the common vocabulary, 'which can be related by fixed rules'. Here he was already more rigorous than his predecessors, in demanding 'fixed rules' for cognates. The Subsidiary Criteria are again two: the 'set of invariable cores, or radicals, from which almost all words are formed by an agglutinative process', and the balanced vowel system, *a* plus an equal number of front and back vowels. Since this still leaves out numbers of languages which conform to some but not all of the criteria, he coined the terms 'Sub-Bantu', for languages which obeyed the Subsidiary and perhaps one of the Principal Criteria, but not both, or else incompletely, and 'Bantoid', for languages which obeyed the first Principal Criterion, but none of the others. This enabled him to relate to Bantu certain languages of Nigeria and the Cameroons, which have only grammatical gender, but very different morphology and vowel systems from the main Bantu languages. He did not, however, progress further at this time with these 'incompletely Bantu' languages.

In developing his method of classification, he first critically discusses the Historical and Empirical methods. The former he judges impossible for Bantu languages, because of the dearth of records; the latter, using various kinds of linguistic differentia for plotting isoglosses, throws up absurd results in some areas. His own method he dubs the Practical, admitting 'some arbitrariness . . . as an essential modification of the empirical method'. Here the starting point is the individual language; as one moves outward, there are grouped with the reference language 'adjacent languages which display similar characteristics'. In other words, geographical contiguity is as important as common linguistic features, and indeed, not all groupings have an identical set of features in common.

From this approach he developed the now well-known classification into sixteen *zones*, labelled by letters of the alphabet, and consisting of *groups*, identified by numbers (e.g. Bemba, M. 42). Though well-known, however, it has not gained universal acceptance, whether in its original 1948 form, or in the considerably revised version which appeared in *Comparative Bantu.* (The most important differences are in Zones A and B, plus the collapsing into one Zone S of the former Zones S and T, and the addition of Zone Z containing Tiv and the Ekoid languages.)

C. M. Doke, whose own classification appeared in 1945, and is based on similar criteria, distinguished only seven zones, given geographical names, but with the two additional levels of *cluster* and *dialect* below that of the group. J. H. Greenberg, whose studies in linguistic classification began to appear in 1949, the year after Guthrie's, regards Bantu languages as members of the 'Benue–Congo branch' of the 'Niger–Congo branch' of the 'Niger–Kordofanian family', and much subsequent debate has consisted of attempts to defend, demolish, or reconcile the arguments of Guthrie and Greenberg.

In the same year as the *Classification*, Guthrie published *Bantu Word Division: A New Study of an Old Problem*, dealing with a burning issue in the many African countries torn by strife on the subject of orthography. Here, illustrating from Bemba, he examines the several criteria which might be and sometimes have been applied, coming to the conclusion that 'function of segments' is the most useful guide. He likewise contributed to that year's *Bull. SOAS*, a paper on 'Gender, Number and Person in Bantu Languages', in which he discussed his modified concept of gender, as suitable for Bantu languages. In this scheme, nominals belong to one-, two-, or multi-class genders; he also established the useful category of 'classless words' for nominal-like items resistant to gender tests.

All Guthrie's writing is characterized by lucidity and conciseness; like Leibniz, he sought *in verbis claritas, in rebus usus*. He owned to finding it sometimes difficult to reconcile his preference for succinct statement with sufficient clarity, but in neither his writing nor his lecture style was there a hint of this struggle. In an age given to verbose vapouring and (apparently deliberate) opacity, in scholarly productions as in the mass media, Guthrie's luculent and vigorous prose stands out as refreshing and inspiring. To him, economy, adequacy, and consistency were not enough; one must also have clarity (which he sometimes called simplicity). Pretentious display of learning did not impress him, and he reacted against this tendency in others—some would say, over-reacted—by rarely quoting the works of others, even his own sources.

He had been appointed Reader in Bantu Languages in 1947, and in 1949 he spent a further six months in Africa, visiting the Moyen Congo, Gabon, and Caméroun territories of French Equatorial Africa, with the intention of making a pilot survey of the Bantu languages of this area, many of which were either ill-documented, or not at all. As a consequence, he was able considerably to improve on the outline of this region given in the *Classification*, in *The Bantu Languages of western equatorial Africa*, which appeared in 1953. As before, he contrived to acquire information on a vast number of languages in a very short time, and in addition to the customary account of research completed, he reported in great technical detail on the performance of the wire recorder and station-wagon issued to him by the School.

At the same time, he set in motion the western half of the 'Bantu Line' project, organized by the International African Institute. The Bantu Line Survey engaged the energies of a number of scholars, Belgian and French as well as British, over a considerable time, and attracted a certain amount of academic wit. At the 1951 Annual Ceremony at SOAS, for instance, the Director, Professor (now Sir) Ralph Turner, commented, '*Vita brevis, linea longa*', and indeed, it was not until 1956 that Volume 1 of the *Linguistic Survey of the northern Bantu borderland* got into print.

Irvine Richardson, now Professor of Linguistics at Dar es Salaam, one of the workers on the Survey whom Guthrie was to meet, tells the following story:

> His resourcefulness and many attainments always managed to pull him through. In 1949 he was in Gabon trying to reach Jacquot and me in Caméroun. A part in the engine of his car broke. Unable to repair it, he cabled Fords in London, who flew the part out to him. He installed it and drove on, only to find that a massive landslide had made the road impassable. So he retraced his path to the coast, loaded his car on the next available ship to Douala, and from there drove over to keep his appointment with us at Bafang.

In 1950 he was appointed Head of the Department of African Languages and Cultures at SOAS, and in the following year became the first occupant of the newly established Chair of Bantu Languages. The report on the teaching in Great Britain of Oriental, Slavonic, East European, and African languages, under the chairmanship of the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Scarbrough (and hence generally known as 'The Scarbrough Report') had been presented in 1946, and this resulted, during the quinquennium 1947–52, in the provision of a substantial ear-marked grant for SOAS. Guthrie's Headship of Department thus began during an era of expansion, and he was able during his tenure substantially to increase the size of the department (now consisting of over twenty members) and the number and diversity of aspects of African language and culture studied. In consequence of these policies, African studies received an impetus, and growing respect from other subjects and disciplines. A Readership in, and later a Chair of West African Languages were instituted, and Readerships in Cushitic and Hausa, in addition to a number of lectureships and fellowships. The subjects covered were broadened to include not only a greater range of languages, but also African literature, art, and music.

Sir Ralph Turner, now retired, writes of the reputation Guthrie achieved as Head of Department:

> The British General commanding the brigade in which my unit, a battalion of Gurkhas, served beside three British battalions, wrote at the end of the war in 1918 that whatever was happening elsewhere he never had to worry about the 2/3 Gurkhas. Very soon after Guthrie took charge . . . that was the way I felt about the Department of Africa. As a member of the Heads of Departments Committee his contribution was invaluable, not only in discussions affecting his own Department, but on questions concerned with other Departments, or policy affecting the whole School. Usually he came in towards the end of the argument and then with a clear and considered judgment, firmly and clearly expressed.

Up to 1958, the teaching of the Department had been limited, in the words of the 1916 Charter of Incorporation, to 'courses suitable to the needs of persons about to proceed to the East or to Africa for study and research, for the public service or commerce, or for the pursuit of a profession or other calling'. Teaching in the sense usually applying to a university was confined to postgraduate work. Under Guthrie's leadership, the African Studies Degree, in which an African language was combined with Anthropology and some Linguistics, was instituted in 1958. (This was later superseded by the present Combined Studies Degrees in an African Language and Anthropology/History/ Linguistics.) The new degree was the first combination of its kind in the Faculty of Arts, and required a great deal of careful planning and well-argued justification, both before its acceptance and during its operation.

Further stimulus and recognition for the work of the Department was provided when in 1960 Guthrie initiated *African Language Studies*, a collection of occasional papers by members of the Department or those having close associations with it, and which has since appeared annually. This he edited for ten years from its inception, as well as contributing two articles in the 1960 and 1962 numbers. One of these, 'Teke radical structure and Common Bantu', was the only one of his publications devoted to this group of languages, although he had a great quantity of material concerning them, and had hoped to work further on this during his retirement. It was most fitting that the eleventh volume, that of 1970, formed a *festschrift* presented to him on his retirement.

During his eighteen years as Head of Department, Guthrie was heavily involved in administrative responsibilities of all kinds. There was scarcely a School or University Committee on which he did not at some time serve. In SOAS itself he was a member of the Library and Publications Committees, the Editorial Board of the *Bull. SOAS*, the Academic Board, and the Governing Body. For a short while he was also Adviser to Men Students. Within the wider context of the University, he was for twenty years a member of the Board of Studies in Oriental and African Languages and Literatures, and Chairman from 1960 to 1965. He also served on the Boards of Studies in Anthropology, Comparative Linguistics, and Theology, the Board of the Faculty of Arts—where he was Vice-Dean from 1966 to 1967—the Advisory Boards in Colonial and Religious Studies, the Committee of Management of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, and the Senate Committee for Colleges Overseas in Special Relation. As a member of the last-named, he visited the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (now the University of Rhodesia) in Salisbury, to advise on whether or not the Special Relationship, whereby students at the University College took External London degrees, should be continued. (In the event the Committee pronounced in favour of such continuance, and the Special Relationship has only recently come to an end.)

He had already visited Ibadan and Ghana in 1958–9 in his capacity as External Examiner for Indigenous Beliefs, and indeed had numerous opportunities during this period for maintaining contact with Africa. August and September of 1955 were spent in Bukavu, on Lake Kivu, Belgian Congo, as UK Representative in the Linguistics Section of the CCTA/CSA Conference in the Social Sciences, and while in the Congo he took the occasion to visit the new University of Lovanium at Léopoldville. In 1962 he presented a paper, 'Multilingualism and cultural factors', before the CCTA/CSA Symposium on Multilingualism, held at Brazzaville, French Equatorial Africa, in July. His last visit was towards the end of 1971, as the guest of his old friend and former pupil, Dr. John Carrington, at the Université Nationale, Kisangani (formerly Stanleyville) in the now independent République Démocratique du Congo, as Zaire was first called after the granting of statehood. The two men had first met in 1938, when Guthrie was stationed at Kinshasa, and Carrington, trained as a botanist, had received considerable help from Guthrie in learning the Upper River languages, and in the preparation of his doctoral thesis on drum languages. The Carringtons had also been married by Guthrie, in the chapel at Kinshasa, in 1940. At their last meeting, over thirty years later, Guthrie was severely critical of the new Lingala translation of the Bible, which had replaced his own of 1942; he was himself working on a new edition of the Lingala grammar, in English this time, and while at Kisangani made recordings of the modern language.

His activities were by no means confined to the University and the School. He was Chairman of the Executive Committee which met in 1952 to arrange the 7th International Congress of Linguists in London; a member of the Interim Committee of the International African Institute, and of the same body's Linguistic Advisory Committee responsible for the four volumes of the *Handbook of African Languages*, of which his own *Bantu Languages of western equatorial Africa* formed part; and the Brazzaville Colloquium of 1962 referred to above was organized by the Inter-African Committee on Linguistics, on which he also served. His missionary and linguistic background and training made him an obvious choice for the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society. He was greatly interested in the promotion of the study of African languages within the territories where they were spoken, and gladly accepted the Chairmanship of the African Sub-committee of the Cambridge University Examinations Syndicate Advisory Board's Committee on Overseas Examinations. He was active, too, in founding the African Studies Association of the United Kingdom, of which he was a Council Member from 1963 to 1966, and the SOAS branch of the Association of University Teachers, of which he was the first Chairman.

Many tributes have been paid to his skill as a member, and more especially as a Chairman, in committee-work—notoriously a waster of academic energies and time. He was regarded as an excellent 'committee man', with 'a talent for putting into a coherent form ideas which had been thrown out by others in the course of discussion'. Colleagues recall that he showed unusually wide knowledge of University regulations, and was a conscientious and well-informed Chairman, efficient and dependable, who had always made minute preparation for the meetings. J. B. Segal, Professor of Semitic Languages in the University of London, served with Guthrie on many of these bodies, and thus had considerable opportunity for watching Guthrie at work in this sphere:

Guthrie mastered the work and the functions of the Board of Studies in Oriental and African Studies so fully that his period as its Chairman left an indelible mark on its character and its attitudes. It was not simply that he was conversant with the regulations; it was his insistence that they should be observed in the spirit rather than merely in the letter. He watched jealously over the maintenance of academic standards. At the same time he took care to ensure that no individual student, however inconspicuous, would suffer hardship. He protected in particular the mature student who wished to acquire academic skills somewhat late in life, often after long spells of service in the field as missionary or administrator.

As a result of Guthrie's dedication to the Board of Studies its reputation in the University stood remarkably high. On University Committees his judgement was valued for its integrity and impartiality; it was by universal consent that he was nominated Vice-Dean by the Board of the Faculty of Arts.

His output in terms of publication during this period was 'solid rather than prolific', as described by D. W. Arnott in his obituary, *Bull. SOAS* xxxvi. 3, 1973. One can distinguish three main preoccupations.

Firstly, there were his studies on individual languages, such as 'Some features of the Mfinu verbal system', contributed to *Bull. SOAS* in 1956; 'A tale from western equatorial Africa [Fumu]', in the *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, 1967; and 'Features of verbal structure in south-west Fang', in the *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 1969 (the memorial volume for Hans Wolff). It has often been regretted by his colleagues that he never published a full-scale language description, apart from the early Lingala works. Among his papers after his death was found the almost complete manuscript of a description of Bemba, which may yet see print, but he himself acknowledged that shortly after 1950 his attention was increasingly claimed—as he put it, 'side-tracked'—by classificatory and comparative interests.

Secondly, there was the gradual building up of analytical and descriptive techniques, together with a technical vocabulary. Guthrie's influence upon others in this respect was exerted through his oral teaching as much as by his published works. The present writer vividly remembers his lecture courses on Bantu Grammar and Tonology of 1951–2; his lecturing was informed with the same clarity, sound argumentation, and plain good sense as distinguished his writing. He had no patience with jargon or high-flown language. Despite his generally severe demeanour, he would from time to time bring out an exquisite piece of humour, as on the occasion when he argued, completely convincingly, that a syllable in a certain language consisted of 'half a silent *k*'! He was quite proud of his ability to produce weird noises, and his students sometimes uncharitably asserted that his partiality for examples from Mfinu and Fang arose chiefly from the highly complicated vowel and tone systems of these languages, requiring exceptional expertise to master.

The most important production on these subjects to come from his pen during his headship was *Bantu Sentence Structure* (1961), a work which many feel has not received the attention it merits. It proposes for Bantu languages a method of syntactic analysis based on the 'tagmemic' approach of K. L. Pike, but marked with the specifically Guthrie stamp of explicit, step-by-step exposition, and his unflagging insistence that all systematization develop from examination of the data. A trait in some modern practitioners of linguistics which he abhorred was the reverse approach, the application of a general theory to the data; trained in scientific inductive reasoning, he found any other method 'unscholarly' and 'bogus'—these being his strongest terms of opprobrium.

E. O. J. Westphal, a former member of the Department, and now Professor of African Languages at Cape Town University, describes Guthrie's attitude in these terms:

> He was resistant to the idea of spinning mental abstracts and then deriving 'explanations' of natural occurrences from such products of sheer thinking. . . . His name will remain linked with [Carl] Meinhof's and [Sir Harry] Johnston's. It is especially with Johnston—whom he admired—that his name should be linked, for he revived and carried on a British tradition that lay dormant for a while after Johnston's death. It was a descriptive factual tradition as against Meinhof's historical tradition . . . by following his [Guthrie's] inductive way we may come to many new conscious insights that were not granted Meinhof who followed an intuitive way.

Another colleague called *Bantu Sentence Structure* 'a magnificent piece of engineering', and it is true that the mathematical flavour and the precise, dovetailed manner of the presentation make the compellative not inapt.

There was in addition a series of articles on various aspects of morphology and general considerations arising therefrom, which carried on the kind of investigation started in the 'Gender, Number and Person' article of 1948. 'Observations on nominal classes in Bantu languages' was contributed to the *Bull. SOAS* in 1956; 'Variations in the range of classes in the Bantu languages' appeared in a volume devoted to nominal classification, produced by the CNRS, Paris, in 1967; and 'The status of radical extensions in Bantu languages' in *J. Af. Lang.*, 1962.

A third strand was formed by the articles preparing the way for *Comparative Bantu.* Here one may discern several stages. From his very first visit as a missionary to the Congo, he had concentrated a great deal of attention on problems of classification, and the 1948 *Classification* has already been mentioned. This interest continued, as is shown by the articles: 'La classification des langues bantus: approche synchronique, méthodes et résultats' in *Travaux de l'Institut de Linguistique de l'Université de Paris* (1959), and 'Language classification and African studies' in *African Affairs* (1965). By about 1950, however, his thoughts had turned towards comparative study as a means of establishing *genetic relationship*, as was clear from his lectures and conversation at the time, although he published nothing on the subject until 1959. He frequently inveighed against the methods of predecessors in the field of comparative Bantu, in particular at the lack of rigour displayed in establishing so-called cognates, and of the status of *reconstructions* given to the 'Ur-Bantu' roots by, e.g., Meinhof. Moreover, the methods suitable for Indo-European, with its records spanning centuries, were inappropriate for Bantu; therefore a new method had to be worked out.

The first publication heralding *Comparative Bantu* appeared, rather strangely, in French: 'Problèmes de génétique linguistique: la question du Bantu Commun', in the same issue of *Travaux de l'I.L.U.P.* as 'La classification . . .'. He followed this by two lectures delivered in 1960 at the École Nationale des Langues Orientales et Vivantes, in which he described what afterwards came to be well known as the *two-stage method.* (One cannot help thinking that the articles and lectures in French must have been a source of considerable satisfaction to him who as a boy had failed School Certificate French.)

English readers had to wait until 1962, which was marked by the publication of three important papers: 'A two-stage method of comparative Bantu study' in *Af. Lang. Stud.* iii; 'Bantu origins: a tentative new hypothesis' in the *J. Af. Lang.* iii; and 'Some developments in the prehistory of the Bantu languages' in the *Journal of African History*, iii. Evidently, by the time these were written, he had worked out his new comparative method to his own satisfaction, and was already well on in the work, although five years were still to pass before the publication of the first volume of his *magnum opus.* The two-stage procedure is perhaps the most notable of Guthrie's contributions to linguistic methodology, and hence deserves some account here. The following description is taken from *Af. Lang. Stud.* xiv (1973), the collection of critical papers presented at a series of seminars held at SOAS in 1972 to mark the completion of the publication of *Comparative Bantu*; it forms part of the Introduction by Theodora Bynon and Michael Mann:

> At *stage one* lexical items from different languages with a common meaning and regular sound-correspondences are collected into Comparative Series, and symbolized by starred forms. Strict conditions are imposed on the establishment of correspondences and semantic equations, and full Comparative Series are required to meet minimum conditions of geographical extension. [They must contain items from at least three different zones. H. C.] These starred forms however are seen merely as internally consistent constructs, and all historical considerations are set aside at this stage. *Stage two* on the other hand is concerned with the historical interpretation of the output of stage one. This is done by means of 'a co-ordinated set of hypotheses framed to account for the state of affairs revealed in the corpus of Comparative Series known as Common Bantu' . . . [Thus there is a] methodological separation of the two stages—strictly formal relationships at stage one versus hypotheses about linguistic prehistory at stage two . . .

For the 'historical reconstructions' of his forerunners, Guthrie put 'synchronic constructs'; in place of their laxity and intuitional approach, he put his own scientific rigour; and he refused to let the two stages overlap, being concerned to avoid 'feedback'. Michael Mann also records that in a letter to him, Guthrie maintained that 'in my case there was an essential *chronological* aspect to the whole thing. I have a suspicion that very few people really believe that I actually did complete stage one before beginning stage two. But that was in fact what happened.' The implication is that he had finished stage one—the compilation of Common Bantu—by 1960.

In 1963 he elaborated further on his methods in a paper given before the Philological Society and afterwards published in the Society's *Transactions* of 1964 (publ. 1965), under the title 'Some uses of arithmetical computation in comparative Bantu studies'. Another 'preparatory' article, 'Comparative Bantu: a preview', appeared in the *J. Af. Lang.* (1965), when *Comparative Bantu* was already in press. Finally the work itself came out: Volume 1 in 1967, Volumes 3 and 4 in 1970, and Volume 2, most eagerly awaited of the four, since it contained the historical hypotheses, in 1971.

The years 1966–8 were marked for him by a great deal of ill-health and personal sorrow. He suffered throughout his life from severe migraine, and in 1966 spent a period in hospital with intestinal trouble. A recurrence of this in 1968 necessitated an emergency operation. He had for several years borne the pain of seeing his wife slowly succumb to cancer; he nursed her devotedly, but on 30 November 1968 she died. Earlier in 1968 he had laid down the burden of the Headship, although he was still two years from retirement, passing it over to Wilfred Whiteley, who had been his Reader since 1959, and Professor by title since 1965. Guthrie had great respect for his younger colleague, and, sadly, his own last publication was in the *Bull. SOAS*, xxxvi. 1, 1973, an obituary for Whiteley, who had died on 16 April 1972 at the early age of 47, some seven months before his own death.

Despite the private distress of those years, they were outwardly a time of success, when much of his work came to fruition, and was awarded growing recognition. In 1968 he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy, the first ever in the field of African language study, and in the following year he was invited to Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, as Visiting Professor. In these later years, friends and colleagues noted a marked mellowing of his personality. He became more relaxed and affable; Gwendolen Carter, Professor and Director of the African Studies Center at Northwestern, remarks of his stay there:

> ... he shared his wide-ranging knowledge with our students drawn from many disciplines, and did so with such clarity and easy flow of language that they could all follow his explanation.... Moreover, he proved one of the most approachable and helpful visiting professors we have ever had. Knowing his erudition, and even a reputation for being somewhat remote, particularly from the affairs of undergraduates, it was a remarkable and very rewarding experience.

By the time the first volume of *Comparative Bantu* appeared, his work had already attracted the attention of historians and archaeologists, and he was invited to the seminar held at SOAS under the chairmanship of Dr. David Dalby, Reader in West African Languages, in which specialists from these fields participated, together with linguists. Guthrie's paper presented to this seminar was published as 'Contributions from Comparative Bantu Studies to the Prehistory of Africa', in *Language and History in Africa* (1970). In 1970–1, a further series of seminars was held, under Roland Oliver, Professor of African History, at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, on the subject of Bantu Origins, and Guthrie attended most of these. Frank Willett, Professor of Art History at Northwestern, remembers an occasion on which was raised the topic which had become the chief bone of contention between Guthrie and the historians:

> I think it was at the last of these meetings that we had a relatively heated disagreement about the impenetrability to human beings of the African forests, in this case, of the Gabon. This is a myth about which I have long held very strong views, but I was quite unable to convince Guthrie that the forest was not as impenetrable as he seemed to think and as I had never set foot in the Gabon I was forced to yield the field to him. Throughout the seminar his views had been attacked from one quarter or another and I felt a little embarrassed the next time I met him in the street, a few weeks later, but I was very pleased to find that he greeted me most cordially, and did not allow our academic disagreement to develop into any kind of personal rancour.

Comparative Bantu has been the target of much criticism, notably of the stage-two historical interpretation, but also for Guthrie's curious omission to state his sources. This was characteristic of all his published work; as Westphal remarks, 'He hardly ever quoted anybody in his works.... His feeling however was that it was the subject matter of his investigations that was important, and not the person who first brought this or that subject matter to the attention of the linguistic world.' Also characteristic of his academic endeavours—as of his private life—was an independence of mind which led him to work out methods and solutions for himself, rather than follow any pre-existing ones, or ask help from others; this was already evident in his college days. A former student, A. T. Cope, now Professor of Bantu Languages at Durban, sums up Guthrie's achievements and the sacrifices, in terms of personal relationships, that were required for the work's bringing to completion:

> . . . his evident academic dedication and devotion, particularly in the field of Comparative Bantu linguistics, just as evidently demanded detachment, seclusion and even isolation. As a student I had the greatest admiration for him as an academic, his dedication (the word repeats itself), and his insistence on the highest standards, which he exemplified ideally in himself.
>
> His contribution to the study of Bantu languages was to provide a model of grammatical description sufficiently flexible to accommodate the peculiarities of individual languages—a combination of discipline and flexibility. . . . But Guthrie's contribution is and always will be assessed in terms of his monumental *Comparative Bantu*, a work of wonderful scholarship and, notwithstanding the complexities of the field which it was not in Guthrie's nature to side-step but rather to tackle fearlessly,

> eventually of clarity. The intensity of his concentration and again his dedication has brought order out of chaos. It is the authoritative and definitive statement, and it is difficult to imagine future studies that will be other than applications and elaborations of this magnificent study.

Similar tributes have come from scholars all over the world.

As previously mentioned, to mark the occasion of his retirement in 1970, his colleagues presented him with a special number of *Af. Lang. Stud.* (vol. xi), edited by Dr. Guy Atkins, who also compiled a bibliography of Guthrie's published works. Some thirty contributors, from abroad as well as the UK, co-operated in this, and astonishingly, there was no leakage of the secret. Guthrie was taken completely by surprise, and was clearly touched, for the tribute was of genuine affection as well as admiration and respect. After his retirement, the title of Professor Emeritus was conferred on him by the University.

Some indication has already been given of the impression he made on others. Again and again one finds it said of him that he appeared aloof, remote, lacking in warmth; his many actions benefiting others seemed less the result of kindness than of charity—in the sense of desiring the highest good of others, not their immediate gratification, and even less their gratitude. One felt that, like C. S. Lewis's New Men, he 'loved you more but needed you less'. One correspondent has written:

> He always struck me as a man of somewhat inflexible views, a meticulously careful worker who, having reached a conclusion, could not be diverted from it. His intellectual inflexibility of manner carried over into his everyday life and I know that some of his acquaintances found this upsetting. Yet it seemed to me to be quite typical of the man that his rather ascetic and rigid moral view of life should be totally reflected in all aspects of his life.

On the reverse side of the coin were his sense of justice and fair treatment, his loyalty to his colleagues—which inspired loyalty to him in return—his absolute trustworthiness, his determination and perseverance in any cause he thought worthwhile, his direct and fearless expression of opinion (even when unfashionable or unpopular), and his refusal ever to condemn a person, or to bear a grudge. One small measure of this side of his character is that, in drawing up this Memoir, the present writer has been able to be completely honest; nothing has been glossed over.

There were those who considered him straitlaced, chiefly because of his refusal to smoke or drink, but this was in fact a misconstruction. He did not smoke, because his own father had been advised to give up the habit for health reasons. He did not drink alcohol, because he had seen the effects of alcoholism in his own family. Indeed, Pierre Alexandre, Professeur at the École des Langues Orientales, recalls that when staying in the Alexandre flat in Paris, Guthrie could sometimes be persuaded to take 'a wee dram of claret for dessert instead of his usual ice-cream'.

Some have seen in his aloofness a cover for deeper feelings of insecurity and fear of hurt. Be this as it may, against the rather unprepossessing picture of an upright, God-fearing man who, however just and reliable, had at least a touch of the arrogant, one must set his loving care of his wife in her long last illness, his constant readiness to help colleagues—always *practically*—in times of personal crisis, and his almost childlike enthusiasm for the book he had just read, or the music recording he had just acquired, which overflowed into his conversation.

His tastes in literature were very wide, but in later life he was attracted particularly by the work of the Oxford Inklings, Charles Williams, C. S. Lewis, and J. R. R. Tolkien, and, through them, George Macdonald. Since he is often said to have had little time for undergraduate concerns, it is worth recording his membership of the SOAS Tolkien Society, a student association, in which he was known as an authority on the Fëanorian script. He pursued this interest in 'adult fantasy', relating triumphantly how he had acquired a new reprint of William Morris or E. R. Eddison. One of the last books to kindle his enthusiam was Antonia Fraser's *Mary, Queen of Scots.*

In these last years he sought out the company of others more than formerly, and patently enjoyed the visit of an old friend, pupil or colleague to 'Brambletye', his home at Cowden, near Edenbridge in Kent. Here he had set up his stereo equipment and apparatus for listening to the sound of television programmes; here he had his almost complete set of Vivaldi records and, in the garden, his collection of heaths and Alpine flora. At one time he had thought of moving from this house, with its sad associations with Margaret's illness and death, but the invitation to visit Kisangani interfered with this plan and it was never put into execution.

At the time of the presentation of the *festschrift*, there was no premonition of the complaint which led to his death two years later. His vigour seemed, not only unimpaired, but actually increased by the prospect of retirement, during which he hoped to work on his Teke material, bring out a new edition of the Lingala grammar, and devote more time to his many hobbies. He had maintained his interest in science, and read the *New Scientist* regularly; he was an expert amateur photographer, able to do his own processing and enlarging.

He did not, however, cut his links with SOAS, and still undertook work for the School. In May of 1972 his last Ph.D. student, Rosalie Jones-Phillipson (now Finlayson), presented her thesis, a work taking *Comparative Bantu* as a starting-point, which pleased him greatly.

Throughout his academic life he actively participated in the work of the Baptist Church, as lay pastor and deacon in the various places where he and Margaret lived: Stanmore, Amersham, Ham, Balham and Edenbridge. He was a member of the Council of Spurgeon's College for over twenty years, and it was a matter of great gladness to him when he was made a Life Member. His Christian faith was not the 'believing that which we know to be untrue' of so many, but, in his own words, 'the result of experience, a *practical* thing'. In *Learning to Live* one sees this attitude throughout: Christianity is presented as a way of life, not a set of beliefs. One never saw Guthrie despondent or self-pitying—states which he regarded as 'pre-Christian'.

Frequently he was asked to preach, and shortly before his death accepted an invitation to deliver the John Laing Memorial Lecture at the London Bible College, an invitation extended by his brother, Dr. Donald Guthrie, who lived in the grounds of the College with his wife and family. Malcolm and Margaret Guthrie had never had children, and he was never quite at ease in their company, despite his generous support of the Save the Children Fund. His young nephews and nieces vacillated between awe of their eminent uncle, and competition as to who could most successfully rag him. Thus they would save up questions, hoping to catch him out.

All who knew him even slightly can testify to his extraordinary range and depth of knowledge; I quote again from the Revd. R. V. de Carle Thompson:

> He had an encyclopaedic mind full of 'pigeon-holes' stored with facts on almost any subject and from which he could produce expert knowledge as the occasion offered. I heard him once trying to persuade a steamer captain of some standing when it was high water and when low on different parts of the river [Zaire]. I never felt that he displayed his knowledge with a feeling of pride, he had the knowledge which he knew was correct and so felt bound to tell you all about it.

Equally remarkable, in the case of some of these facts, is how he could have contrived to come by them. He knew, for example, the number of gallons of water needed for a steam-engine to climb a certain hill near his home; the composition and relative fertility of the soil anywhere in Africa one cared to name; the temperature and humidity of every place he had ever visited; and that, in order to make tea properly, the kettle must be held exactly fifteen inches above the bottom of the teapot.

A week before his death he visited the School and took morning coffee in the Senior Common Room, of which he was an Honorary Member. There, in conversation with the present writer, he told of his recent medical examination, after which he had been assured that he had the physique of a man of fifty (he was then in his seventieth year). A day or so later, however, he began to feel unwell, and spent 21 November in bed. On the morning of the 22nd, his housekeeper, Mrs. Nicholls, found him lying dead across the bed, having apparently attempted to get up, possibly to reach the telephone. The diagnosis of death from a heart attack was unexpected, as he had displayed no symptoms of heart disease, although his younger brother Raymond had died some ten years previously from similar causes.

It is of course difficult to assess the importance of any man so soon after his death. Much of Guthrie's influence was indirect, through his students. Richardson writes further:

> Only those who worked with him at SOAS will realise that he has founded a dynasty of Bantu studies which has spread round the world. His former pupils are now among the foremost in their field. They hold positions of importance in many widely separated places .... There is already a second generation beginning to occupy university teaching positions.... There must be many others who never met Guthrie but are teaching what he taught ...

As a supervisor of postgraduate students, many of them members of staff, Guthrie demanded the highest standards. He had no compunction in handing back a draft chapter with the comment, 'Take this away, it's no good'. Although such treatment could appear near brutal at times, for those who had the courage to endure it, and the perception to realize that Guthrie had one's best interests (if not one's feelings) at heart, the experience was invigorating, if at times exhausting. Gradually he would leach away the mental fat, relentlessly expose faulty reasoning, irrelevant matter, and questionable assumptions, sending one back again and again to justify each conclusion, and logically to connect each step. Nevertheless, he was completely fair. If one argued soundly in response to his challenges—and under Guthrie one learned to argue soundly or not at all—he would allow the conclusion to stand, even if unpalatable to him. He exerted force only to bring out the best of which one was capable, and one was buoyed up, even when reprimanded, by the feeling that he could apparently see capabilities beyond one's own vision. The highest praise was to have one's work called 'scholarly'.

An entity as complex as a human being can never be described in human language; moreover, there are depths and hidden places in the life and the soul where no other may come. Miss Joan Oliver, his secretary at SOAS for fourteen years, picks out the characteristics by which most of us will remember him:

> I hope that he will be remembered as a person as well as a scholar. I believe he was a singularly gifted and also a tireless and methodical worker, of complete integrity. He went about his researches like a mathematician, when [another colleague] regarded his own material like a poet. Malcolm Guthrie abhorred any kind of sycophancy, and his straightforwardness and absolutely dependable ethics made him someone for all of us to value, and a cornerstone of the Africa Department. I cannot ever recall him indulging in pettiness, backbiting or underhand political scheming, and, although he had considerable concern for individuals in the Department, it was the cohesion of the whole unit which he cared for. He frequently did much to help individual members of staff in the Department—on most occasions they were unaware of it and I'm sure Professor Guthrie himself would have been surprised to know what affection he inspired in many of us and what a continuing sense of loss his death has caused. When I remember him, it is not just as an eminent Professor and Head of Department, who seemed at times to be rather exacting and unapproachable, but I also think of the man pointing out with pride his Morning Glories, showing concern about his wife when she was alive, playing with his cat (who followed him about like a little dog), or showing you the *correct* way to cut really thin bread and butter!

At the Memorial Service, held at the Bloomsbury Baptist Church on 21 February 1973, representatives of his religious, missionary, and scholarly interests gathered with members of his family to pay tribute to him. Excerpts from his favourite composer, Vivaldi, were played, and a choir of SOAS students and staff sang one of the Lingala hymns for which he had written both words and melody. A colleague afterwards described it as 'a happy occasion', and few would object to this description. He had, more than most, made the best possible use of his talents, and lived life to the full.

There must be some regret that he never completed his Bemba grammar, his General Bantu grammar, and the Lingala manual, or the work he was planning on Teke. There must however be more than equal thankfulness that he did complete *Comparative Bantu*, which of all his achievements will surely be that by which he is remembered.

In the compilation of this Memoir I have been helped by many, some of whose names appear above. In addition to members of the Guthrie family, fellow students from Spurgeon's, members of the Baptist Church and Missionary Society, and colleagues from SOAS and other university institutions throughout the world, I should like to thank particularly Professor D. W. Arnott, who made over to me the material he had collected for his own obituaries of Guthrie, and very kindly allowed me to see his manuscripts before publication.

IN VIRTUTE TUA DOMINE LAETABITUR JUSTUS

HAZEL CARTER