

## OBITUARY



**HERBERT BALDUS**  
1899-1970

AFTER a long and weary illness, endured with much patience, the great German-Brasilian anthropologist Professor Dr. Herbert Baldus, a true pioneer and philanthropist of the South-American ethnology, died in São Paulo. He was not only an important scientist, but also an incorruptible fighter for high standards of justice and charity.

His death leaves a grievous and irreplaceable gap for his South American Indian friends and his colleagues. Only a week before his death I visited him in São Paulo, and I was happy to see with what interest he followed my report of my last, just finished

Amazon Expedition; as in old times, he at once started an active discussion. Therefore, I had great hope that his condition would soon improve, but a fourth heart-stroke a few days later brought an end to his industrious life.

Herbert Baldus was born on the fourteenth of March, 1899, in Wiesbaden. In his boyhood he had already joined the cadet-corps in Potsdam; by the last year of the First World War he was active as an officer in the air force, a time that inspired him to many poems.

Already in his youth he loved South-America and its Indians; he traveled, driven by a certain pleasure of adventure, in 1921 to Argentina and later on to Brazil in order to become acquainted with the heart of these countries and their aborigines. In 1923, he undertook a journey to the Indians in the Gran Chaco in Paraguay, to the tribes of the Chamakoko, Kaskihá, and Sanapaná.

In 1927, he visited the Guarani on the Paulistian Coast; in 1928, he went again to the Chaco-tribes. After that he returned to Germany, and at the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Universität of Berlin he took up studies in ethnology under Richard Thurnwald, Americanism under Konrad Theodor Preuss and Walter Lehmann, and also philosophy under Heinrich Meier, Dessoir, Lieber, and Spranger; and he took his doctorate. As a student, Herbert Baldus published his first great scientific book *Indianerstudien im nordwestlichen Chaco* (1931). At the same time, he did some literary works; one of these is especially worth mentioning as a novelistic biography of Madame Lynch, the famous North-American mistress of the Paraguayan dictator Solano Lopes.

In the meantime, Germany was shadowed by the darkness spreading from the takeover of the National Socialists. A liberal man like Herbert Baldus could not endure this climate, and he therefore went back to Brazil.

The Nazis burnt his books and deprived him of his German citizenship. But he did not stay stateless, for the generous Brazilian Government at once offered him naturalization, and so that beautiful, great country became his new home, for which he was indefatigably active until his death. Straight away he obtained a ministerial position as the director of the ethnological department in the Paulistonian State Museum. Later, he was appointed as assistant director of the museum (from 1953 to 1960 he was its managing director); at the same time he was made professor for ethnology at the Escola de Sociologia e Política, a complementary institute of the State University of São Paulo. A few years later he received a second professorship for ethnology at the faculty of philosophical studies at the University of Rio Claro in the state of São Paulo.

Herbert Baldus was a splendid teacher, and he aroused in his students an enthusiasm for ethnology. Personally, I thought myself immensely happy for being allowed to work under him as his scientific assistant in 1954-56, 1958, and 1961. During that time he became a true friend to me and a never tiring patron of my work. His alert, active mind together with a good sense of humor made my working with him an everlasting pleasure. Today the greater number of his students are among the internationally known scientists in our subject, such as the professors Egon Schaden, Florestan Fernandes, Darcy Ribeiro, Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira, and David Maybury-Lewis, to mention only a few.

Through Herbert Baldus, São Paulo became the undisputed heart of Americanistic research in South America, for he was the first to systematize the studies of South American ethnology. Besides continuing field research and teaching, he was also the editor and publisher of the *Revista do Museu Paulista* and co-publisher of the journal *Sociologia* (São Paulo) and of the *Revista do Arquivo Municipal* (São Paulo).

The amplitude of his fieldwork may be indicated by the following account: In 1933 he led an expedition into South Brazil. At

first he worked on the Kaingang of Palmas; subsequently, he lived for months with the Guayakí on the right banks of the upper Paraná. On this occasion he discovered a still unknown, wandering group of that tribe. After that followed a short stay with the Shiripá in eastern Paraguay. In 1934, he traveled to the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso. Here he examined the rock drawings of Sant'Ana da Chapada, and afterwards he studied the Boróro Indians on the river Meruri as well as the Tereno Indians. In 1935, he took up research in the Boróro village of Tori-paru. From here he went to the Karajá on the Ilha Bananal in the Rio Araguaya. By canoe, he traveled to the Tapirapé Indians, on the river of the same name. His later monograph on the Tapirapé became his most significant book. It was published serially in the *Arquivo Municipal de São Paulo*. Shortly before his death, an amplified revision of the already classic book was published. In 1941, he undertook a journey to the Japanese colony in the Ribeira valley in the state of São Paulo, together with his colleague E. Willems and some students of the Escola de Sociologia e Política, to carry out studies on problems of acculturation. In 1944, he was engaged in archaeological excavations in the state of Paraná. In 1946, he collected mythological material about the Kaingang on the Ivaí and carried out psychological tests with this group of Indians. In 1947, he visited the Kaingang in Icatú in the state of São Paulo and the Tereno in Arararibá. In the second half of that year, he traveled again to the Rio Araguaya to carry on studies on the Karajá and Tapirapé. In 1949, he was invited as a guest of the North American government, and on this occasion he visited some tribes in Arizona and New Mexico. In 1952, he worked in the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, carrying out research work on the Kaingang of Noná and Guarita as well as on the Mbyá-Guaraní. In 1958, he traveled through Peru, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico. There his work was of an archaeological and ethnographical nature.

Furthermore, his merits as an organizer of congresses must be pointed out. Thus, in 1954, he organized the XXXI International Congress of Americanists, and in 1963 the VI Brazilian Congress of Anthropologists.

Manyfold were the honors he received from learned societies in many countries: Honorary Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland; member of the directorate of the Academia e Sociedade Goetheana, São Paulo; Honorary Member of the Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte; Honorary Member of the Ethnologische Gesellschaft Hannover e.V.; Foreign Fellow of the American Anthropological Association; Membre titulaire de la Société des Americanistes de Paris; Membre correspondant de la Société Suisse des Americanistes; Miembro correspondiente de la Sociedad Argentina de Americanistas; Sócio correspondente de Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa; Sócio emérito do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de São Paulo; Sócio Honorario da Sociedade Numismática Brasileira; Member of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Völkerkunde; Membro do Conselho Científico de Associação Brasileira de Antropologia, etc. He was president of the last mentioned society from 1961-1963.

The peak of his lifetime work are undoubtedly the two volumes of *Bibliografia Crítica da Etnologia Brasileira*, of which the first volume was published in São Paulo in 1954, and the second in Hannover in 1968. (As the first volume was already sold out of stock, it was reprinted by Kraus Reprint, Nendeln, Liechtenstein; both volumes now appear as Vols. III and IV in the *Völkerkundliche Abhandlungen* of the Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover.) This work was epoch making in the history of Brazil's ethnology. All publications, either descriptive or analytical, about groups of Indians that once lived in Brazil or are still living there today, were compiled, for the first time, into a complete order, starting from the discovery and going up to 1968. Scientific honesty and objectivity led his judgment to incorruptibility and distinct ex-

pression leaving no doubt. Its representation, clear and concise, at times picturesque, shows a complementation of the human being, the artist, and the scientist in him. The wide horizon under which various works were evaluated deserves highest appreciation. But also the introductions which comprise an English and in the second volume also a German version of the Portuguese original, should not remain unmentioned, for here, in an illuminating summary, Herbert Baldus depicts the history of Brazilian ethnology while he is appreciating the works of the most significant authors. From Pero Vaz de Caminha, whose famous letter to Dom Manuel in 1500 contains an abundance of ethnological data and which must be regarded as the oldest source of Brazilian ethnology up to the present professionally trained field researchers, the author gives an overview broken up into centuries. At the same time, the reader is acquainted with all the intellectual currents that have ever influenced Brazilian ethnology. This work made Brazil the first country in America for which such a complete historical and ethnological bibliography could be presented.

In conclusion, we cannot pass without mention the award to Herbert Baldus of the Goethe medal for his unique scientific achievement; as well as a high Spanish order, "Encomienda de Isabel la Católica."

On the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday (March 14, 1964), a festive publication *Beiträge zur Völkerkunde Südamerikas* (Vol. I of the *Völkerkundliche Abhandlungen*, Hannover) was dedicated to him; it contains the contributions of thirty-one renowned Americanists from America, Europe, and Asia expressing their loyalty to their great friend, teacher, and colleague.

Herbert Baldus has left us, but his work will live on; and for all those who in following generations become devoted to South American ethnology, especially to that of Brazil, he has set an inspiring example.

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