

## OBITUARIES



RAIMUND VON KLEBELSBERG—1886–1967

RAIMUND VON KLEBELSBERG ZU THUMBURG, Professor Emeritus of Geology and Palaeontology at the University of Innsbruck, died after a long illness on 6 June 1967 at the age of 81 in Innsbruck. Born on 14 December 1886 in Brixen in the South Tyrol, where he was educated at the k.k. Gymnasium, he entered the University of Munich in 1906 to study natural sciences, foremost geology, palaeontology and botany. In 1908 he went from Munich to the University of Vienna, where he received his doctorate in 1910. There, under the influence of Eduard Brückner he became interested in glaciology and in glacial geology. Back in Munich he continued his studies in palaeontology under August Rothpletz and Ferdinand Broili. During the same time, working as assistant at the Alpine Museum, he completed a model of the Pleistocene Inn glacier which was based on detailed investigations in the field. In 1912 he took part in "Deutscher Geographentag" in Innsbruck and listened fascinated to the

discussions around the main themes "Quaternary history" and "glacial morphology". On that occasion he met for the first time Albrecht Penck who was to become his master and friend. In 1913 von Klebelsberg took part as geologist in the Pamir Expedition of Deutscher und Österreichischer Alpenverein where he collected the material for his first book *Beiträge zur Geologie West-Turkestans*. Between 1914 and 1917 von Klebelsberg served his country as an artillery officer, and in 1918 as a war geologist. The aforementioned book was published in Innsbruck in 1922 after von Klebelsberg had joined the staff of the University as Privatdozent and Assistant to Professor Josef Blaas in 1919 and as Ausserordentlicher Professor and Head of the Geologische Institut in 1921. In 1925 von Klebelsberg was appointed Ordentlicher Professor of Geology and Palaeontology.

Under the leadership of Professor von Klebelsberg the Geologische Institut in Innsbruck became a famous school of Alpine geology. With numerous students and scientific collaborators a new and systematic geological survey of the Dolomites and of other parts of the Tyrol was performed, leading to his next book *Geologischer Führer durch die Südtiroler Dolomiten*, published in 1928, and finally to the significant volume *Geologie von Tirol*, published in 1935. After the death of Eduard Brückner in 1927, von Klebelsberg, as "a worthy successor", took over the editorship of the *Zeitschrift für Gletscherkunde*, beginning with Bd. 16, and continuing until the cessation in 1942 of what was at that time the sole international periodical devoted to glaciology. Now von Klebelsberg specialized even more in glacial geology, devoting much of his time to original field work not only in the Alps but also in the mountains of southern Spain, Italy and Greece. In 1948 and 1949 the two volumes of the *Handbuch der Gletscherkunde und Glazialgeologie* were published in Vienna, no doubt von Klebelsberg's massive masterpiece, dedicated to the memory of Albert Heim and Albrecht Penck, and meant in his own words "as a contribution in the German language towards new international community". "In it the latest knowledge and research are brought together in two volumes, and are illustrated and discussed in masterly fashion", wrote R. Streiff-Becker in his review in this *Journal* (Vol. 1, No. 6, 1949, p. 343-44). In 1949, after having overcome many difficulties, von Klebelsberg was able to revive the *Zeitschrift* under the title *Zeitschrift für Gletscherkunde und Glazialgeologie*. Gerald Seligman, in reviewing the first issue (in this *Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 7, 1950, p. 397), wrote "We congratulate Professor von Klebelsberg on this courageous revival of his work which is bound soon to recover its former high stature". This was indeed the case, until in the last years, because of von Klebelsberg's illness, intervals between single issues became progressively longer. It remained his "Zeitschrift", until he handed it over, a few months before his death, to his "first and most eminent disciple" Professor Hans Kinzl. By forty years of thoughtful editorship von Klebelsberg rendered an invaluable service to the fast-growing international community of glaciologists.

Glaciology was but a part of Professor von Klebelsberg's many-sided activities. He served the University of Innsbruck as Rector Magnificus in 1933-34, and again between 1942 and 1945. His strong personality, combined with an unswervingly upright character, and his diplomatic skill saved the University from the clutches of politics during those critical years. He was a member of the Council of Deutscher und Österreichischer Alpenverein from 1920, and acted as its last freely elected chairman from 1934 to 1938. In this capacity, von Klebelsberg promoted scientific research (i) in connection with mountaineering expeditions, e.g. Hans Kinzl's work in the Cordillera Blanca, (ii) by editing and writing for the Alpenverein's *Jahrbuch*, and (iii) by organizing the yearly measurements of variations of glaciers in the Austrian Alps. He regularly summarized and published the collected data, and submitted them to the International Commission of Snow and Ice for inclusion in Professor P.-L. Mercanton's reports on variations of glaciers. As a member of the Council of the Museum Ferdinandeum in Innsbruck from 1920, he was editor of the important scientific *Veröffentlichungen*. Professor von Klebelsberg founded and edited the

publication of *Schlern-Schriften*, devoted mainly to the history and nature of his native region, the South Tyrol. His autobiographical notes "Innsbrucker Erinnerungen 1902–1952" were published as No. 100 of *Schlern-Schriften* in 1953. From the bibliography included therein it becomes obvious how prolific a writer von Klebelsberg was, having published an estimated 7000 pages of print.

Professor von Klebelsberg was a member of the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften from 1942, of the Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften from 1942, and of the Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina from 1956. He was a corresponding member of the Geograficheskoye Obshchestvo SSSR (Leningrad) from 1932, an honorary member of the Naturwissenschaftlich-Medizinische Verein in Innsbruck from 1934, of the Geographische Gesellschaft in München from 1936 and of the Verein für Erdkunde zu Dresden from 1938. He received many other honours, including the Gustav Nachtigal Medal of the Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin in 1928 and the Franz von Wieser Medal of the Museum Ferdinandeum in Innsbruck in 1934. In 1936 an honorary doctorate was conferred on him by the University of Heidelberg.

Professor von Klebelsberg was an inspiring academic teacher giving much encouragement to young people, a much admired orator, and a scientist of exemplary diligence. His influence on the cultural life of the Tyrol was profound, reaching far beyond his profession. There are many, including the present writer, who owe a great debt of gratitude to Professor von Klebelsberg. The memory of this true nobleman will be lasting, not only amongst glaciologists who have lost one of their best.

HERFRIED HOINKES