

## **DR. FRANZ HODES 1906 - 1992 - OBITUARY -**

**By Helmut Burkhardt**

Dr. Franz Hodes died on April 19th, 1992 in Frankfurt-on-Main after a long and serious illness. All his life he kept faith with his home town Frankfurt-on-Main. Here he was born on October 2nd, 1906, passed his school-leaving examination and studied geography, chemistry, mathematics and physics at the still young university. In 1932 he graduated and on February 27th, 1933 he received the doctorate degree with a thesis on "The floods in the Elbe-Oder region 1901-1925").

Franz Hodes soon decided to join the higher library service; for admission he had to undergo a training at the City Library in Frankfurt-on-Main and at the State Library in Berlin and last not least a career examination in October 1934. He first served in the Rothschild Library, then library for newer languages and music and today separate department of the City and University Library Frankfurt-on-Main. On 1st June, 1940 Franz Hodes was appointed a Bibliotheksrat (entrance grade for the higher public library service). From July 1942 to August 1945 were war service and captivity.

In August 1945, Franz Hodes returned back to his old and new department in the City and University Library where he served till February 1947. In those days Professor Dr. H. W. Eppelsheimer was head, both of the City and University Library in Frankfurt-on-Main and of the Senckenberg Library belonging to the university which after breakdown had been attached to the city of Frankfurt-on-Main. Eppelsheimer promoted Franz Hodes as deputy head of the Senckenberg Library. On April 1st, 1947, he took over the management of the Senckenberg Library under the supervisory control of Eppelsheimer.

The return of the Senckenberg Library from reserve stacks in Mitwitz in Upper Franconia and other evacuation places necessitated by World-War II, the gradual reconstruction of the library building in the Senckenberg complex adjoining the Senckenberg Museum and the gradual provision of the library holdings for general use as well as the reopening of inter-library lending within the bizon and beyond the then zonal boundaries fall in that time. The few, thin reports dating back to this time and the reports of older colleagues hardly allow to have an idea of the difficulties they had to contend with. The building was roofless, the upper

floores burnt out and fallen in, only the wet basement stacks and the ground floor were usable to a certain extent. Franz Hodes went at the reconstruction of "his" library, the reincorporation into the general supply of literature and the collaboration of librarians in various associations with spirit of a pioneer and vitality.

In 1957, Franz Hodes' up to that time straight and successful career as a librarian took another turn after he and Eppelsheimer had contrary conceptions on how the Senckenberg Library should be managed and developed, namely as independent library or as department of the City and University Library. Franz Hodes pleaded independence which to a certain extent was finally accepted in the arrangement on the Senckenberg Library in 1972/73. For Franz Hodes the differences with Eppelsheimer had the consequence that in 1957 the later medical historian Professor Dr. G. Mann was entrusted with the management and that he was made a head of a division in the Senckenberg Library.

In this function Franz Hodes retired as Bibliotheksoberrat (senior grade for the higher public library service) on October 10th, 1971.

This didn't, however, finish Franz Hodes' activities as a librarian. Furthermore, he trained young librarians as secondary lecturer and took part in practice-accompanied lessons up to the middle of the 70s. For decades he taught young book-sellers.

Of incestimable importance to whole generations of researchers and, hitherto, not well-known is, however, one field of Franz Hodes' untiring efforts: he, along with the oculist Dr. Thiel (†) from Frankfurt-on-Main, made the whole Senckenbergian archives accessible to science.

Only those who know the nearly illegible handwriting of Johann Christian Senckenberg can estimate the work hidden behind. In addition to the lists of contents of approximately 700 folders with archivalia he provided a personal and correspondence index and a list of places of the archivalia. The documents registered cover the time from the middle of the 17th century to 1912. Due to this work the archives are accessible to historical research and particularly serve the pietism research in the moment. To complete the work at the Senckenberg archives was Franz Hodes' special concern and reason for pride and appreciation.

Under his numerous publications as librarian one paper written with E. Berninger on the early days of the Senckenberg Library is to give special prominence to: "Ad Bibliothecam Joh. Christian Senckenberg", Frankfurt-On-Main 1967. For the first time this paper (as introduction to a book display) also opened the non-professionals' eyes on the treasures of the Senckenberg Library.

As long as it was granted to Franz Hodes he visited the Senckenberg Library, worked there and was concerned about the development of the library. He particularly felt obliged to the Senckenberg Library. The development of the library after 1970 essentially agreed with his ideas. He had wished its development into the central biological library.

But not only his activities for the Senckenberg Library are noteworthy. Franz Hodes contributed greatly to the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der technisch-wissenschaftlichen Bibliotheken* (Working Group of Technical and Scientific Libraries), later renamed *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Spezialbibliotheken - ASpB* (Working Group of Special Libraries). After World War II he supported the activities to make the library holdings saved from war utilizable for post-war Germany. The "Verzeichnis von Zeitschriftenbeständen und Serien aus den Gebieten Technik, Naturwissenschaften, Medizin, Wirtschafts-, Rechts- und Sozialwissenschaften" or "TWZ" (List of Serials in the fields of technique, life sciences, medicine, economic sciences, jurisprudence and social sciences) first published in 1951 as manuscript was the main result of these efforts; it had validity and value up to the middle of the 70s. The Kekulé Library and the Senckenberg Library worked out the alphabetical register.

In 1947, Franz Hodes as head of the Senckenberg Library had been elected a member of the working group on its second meeting in Essen. For many years he was member of the Executive Committee and served as vice-chairman, treasurer and member of the advisory board. With Dr. M. Romeiss from the Batelle Institute he organized the VI Meeting of the ASpB in Frankfurt-on-Main. Franz Hodes' winning and kindly personality also contributed greatly to ties of friendship among the members of the ASpB in Frankfurt-on-Main. The ASpB thanked him for his steady action with the honorary membership.

The work at the Senckenberg archives, however, covered only one side of his unofficial work, the other was his bibliographical activities. In particular worth mentioning is the continuation of the International Bibliography of Bibliographies initiated by Hanns Bohatta and the completion of the work on the third volume of the International Bio-bibliography initiated by Max Arnim, a work increasingly engrossing Franz Hodes' attention in view of his advanced age. Franz Hodes felt great satisfaction that he succeeded to complete this work in 1987.

His geographical interests and his official activities (exchange of literature in favour of the Senckenberg Library) relate to Franz Hodes' collaboration with the *Frankfurter Geographische Gesellschaft* (Geographical Society of Frankfurt). He joined the society after its refoundation in 1947. He served as first secretary from 1961 to 1978 and later on, was made an Honorary Member. In 1986 at the 150th

anniversary of the society Franz Hoides was awarded the August-Ravenstein-Medal in recognition of his remarkable contributions to the Frankfurter Geographische Gesellschaft.

After World War II Franz Hodes also turned attention to his concern to familiarize the public with the accessibility of special bookstock and so to open up new perspectives. A most significant contribution is the first international juvenile book display in the Frankfurter Städelschen Kunstinstitut that he organized with Mrs. Jella Lepman of the publication department of the then American Headquarter. Publishers of fourteen nations participated in this book display and opened with it the door to a new, ideologized world after war.

Franz Hodes was a personality engaged civically and in private circles. He joined one of the large parties, was actively associated with his student association Badenia, for which he also wrote a history of the association and with other clubs. Till his illness he lived a very consciously organized life.

We owe Dr. Franz Hodes deep gratitude, appreciation and continuous estimation for his energy and care. We have lost a good and kind colleague who served for the Senckenberg Library, the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Spezialbibliotheken and the Frankfurter Geographische Gesellschaft far beyond the usual limits. We ever will honour his memory.

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