

# International Dictionary of Anthropologists

*Compiled by* Library-Anthropology Resource Group (LARG)

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*Kretzenbacher, Leopold*

***Kretzenbacher, Leopold.*** Folklorist. Born in Leibnitz (Austria) 13 November 1912. Kretzenbacher obtained his university degree in 1936 with a project on folk drama and began working at the Steirisches Volkskundemuseum (Styrian Folklore Museum) in

Graz in 1938. In 1939 he obtained his *Habilitation* with an investigation into Germanic myths in the epic folk poetry of Slovenia. He became a *Dozent* in 1941 and in 1943 *außerordentlicher Professor* of German folklore at the University of Graz and visiting professor of Germanistics at Zagreb. Following his release from wartime detention in 1945, he returned to his work at the Styrian Folklore Museum and served as an instructor at the University of Graz until 1961, when he was offered an academic chair at Christian Albrecht University in Kiel. In 1966 he accepted a position at the University of Munich where he remained until his rise to *emeritus* in 1978.

Kretzenbacher's conception of the comparative study of folklore should be seen as his chief accomplishment. With it he linked numerous phenomena spread over a large part of the Western world using varied methodological strategies. At the beginning of his scientific career he concerned himself principally with religious folk dramas. In due course he delineated southeastern Europe as a field of investigation and laid the groundwork for his main scientific effort in comparative folklore research. At first his publications covered the analysis of popular traditions rooted in legends and the area of religious folk culture. During his tenure in Kiel he expanded his frame of reference through investigative trips to Scandinavia and Holland and while at Munich directed his attention again to southeastern Europe. Many motifs from this region entered into works such as *Kynocephale Dämonen südosteuropäischer Volksdichtung*. For Kretzenbacher, research on legends remained a central theme, although in his overall corpus of scholarly work one also finds essays on aspects of folk law and Baroque culture. In his analyses (in which social, spatial and historical conditions were all significant) it was primarily in those regions where different culture areas intersected (such as the Balkans, where Eastern Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant and Islamic traditions were intermingled) that he made cultural diversity and its significance in the life of the common people comprehensible.

MAJOR WORKS: *Lebendiges Volksschauspiel in Steiermark* (Vienna: 1951) (= *Österreichische Volkskultur: Forschungen zur Volkskunde*, no. 6); *Santa Lucia und die Lutzelfrau: Volksglaube und Hochreligion im Spannungsfeld Mittel- und Südosteuropas* (Munich: 1959) (= *Südosteuropäische Arbeiten*, no. 53); *Heimat im Volksbarock: Kulturhistorische Wanderungen in den Südalpenländern* (Klagenfurt: 1961) (= *Buchreihe des Landesmuseums für Kärnten*, no. 8) [tr.: *Minshū barokku to kyōdo* (Nagoya: 1988)]; *Ringreiten, Rolandspiel und Kufenstechen: Sportliches Reiterbrauchtum von heute als Erbe aus abendländischer Kulturgeschichte* (Klagenfurt: 1966) (= *Buchreihe des Landesmuseums für Kärnten*, no. 20); *Kynocephale Dämonen südosteuropäischer Volksdichtung: Vergleichende Studien zu Mythen, Sagen, Maskenbräuchen um Kynocephaloi, Werwölfe und süd-slawische Pesoglavci* (Munich: 1968) (= *Beiträge zur Kenntnis Südosteuropas und des Nahen Orients*, no. 5); *Kettenkirchen in Bayern und in Österreich: Vergleichend-volkskundliche Studien zur Devotionalform der "cinctura" an Sakralobjekten als kultisches Hegen und magisches Binden* (Munich: 1973) (= *Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse*, n.F. 76); *Legende und Sozialgeschehen zwischen Mittelalter und Barock* (Vienna: 1977) (= *Sitzungsberichte der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse*, vol. 318); *Das verletzte Kultbild: Voraussetzungen, Zeitschichten und Aussagewandel eines abendländischen Legendentypus* (Munich: 1977) (= *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse*, Jahrgang 1977, Heft 1).

SOURCES: Helge Gerndt and Georg R. Schroubek, *Vergleichende Volkskunde: Bibliographie Leopold Kretzenbacher* (Munich and Würzburg: 1977); Elfriede Grabner, "Leopold Kretzenbacher zum 75. Geburtstag," *Südostdeutsches Archiv*, vol. 30/31 (1987/1988), pp. 193-196; Helge Gerndt, "Zur Bedeutung des Vergleichs in der volkskundlichen Methodik," *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, vol. 68 (1972), pp. 179-195; Eva Heller, "Volkskundler in und aus Bayern heute," *Ethnologia Bavarica*,

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Heft 14 (1985), pp. 28-29; Gerda Mohler, *Vergleichende Volkskunde: Bibliographie Leopold Kretzenbacher II* (Munich: 1989).

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*[Translation from German: Robert B. Marks Ridinger]*