



Obituary/Necrológio

Wladimir Lobato Paraense

An outstanding scientist

(★ 1914 †2012)

Professor Wladimir Lobato Paraense was born in Igarapé-Mirim, Pará, in 1914 and died in Rio de Janeiro on February 11, 2012, at the age of 97 years, at the Casa Amarela in the Manguinhos Campus of the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (FIOCRUZ). Professor Lobato graduated in medicine at the School of Medicine and Surgery of Pará (1931 to 1934) and School of Medicine of Recife (1934 to 1937), and was one of the most prominent Brazilian researchers. He began his successful career with a Specialization in Pathological Anatomy at the School of Medicine of the University of São Paulo. He joined the Oswaldo Cruz Institute (IOC) after passing the public service exam in 1942. Since the beginning, he distinguished himself as a thorough researcher and went to Belo Horizonte in 1952, for the study of the bullous dermatitis, where he stayed for 2 years in a laboratory of the School of Medicine that had an agreement with the Oswaldo Cruz Institute. He found a way to treat the condition with applying doses of penicillin which had recently been utilized by the Brazilian medical community. He returned to Belo Horizonte from Manguinhos in the beginning of 1960 to study leishmaniasis. According to Professor Lobato's reports, he would meet with Adolpho Lutz, who used to go to Belo Horizonte at the end of the year due to the high temperatures in Rio de Janeiro, to study the malacological fauna. Lutz discovered a new species of snail and



this fact leads Lobato to begin capturing snails at various bodies water courses in this city and in other ones nearby, such as Lagoa Santa. At this time, Lobato took over the coordination of the Research Center in Belo Horizonte belonging to the National Institute of Rural Endemics (INERU), that since 1968 is called Research Center *René Rachou*. Following the rigid administrative rules of President Jânio Quadros' government, Lobato demanded that various researchers must sign time logs which were located in his office. This decision caused numerous personal grievances, including the departure of researchers that moved to the Federal University of Minas Gerais.

As a consequence of his excellent malacological studies, he created the International Identification Center of Snails, with the support of the World Health Organization and the Pan American Health Organization. He traveled throughout Brazil and other countries of the American continent collecting snails. It was in the area of Malacology, which he would never abandon until his final days, that Lobato made his major scientific findings, putting in order the systematic classification of more than two dozen *Biomphalaria* species that exist in the Americas, also including the description of several new species named by him, for example the *B. amazonica* e *B. occidentalis*. With his studies being also about the biology and the relation of parasite-host, he contributed to the elucidation of various facts in the epidemiology of the Schistosomiasis. Lobato conducted these studies using simple techniques: careful observation, crossbreeding of snails, and the studies of penetration and development of miracidia from different regions with snails of different species and regions. These experiments always allied with a solid and profound knowledge of biology and genetics. The contributions in this area are enormous and made Lobato one of the main Malacologists with international recognition. After his request to leave the post he occupied, that followed the resignation of the President Jânio Quadros, he continued working at the CPqRR until 1968, when he moved to Brasília, where he was the Professor responsible for Parasitology until 1976. During that year, he took over the Vice Presidency of the FIOCRUZ, by invitation of Dr. Vinícius da Fonseca, president of the Foundation by appointment of the President Ernesto Geisel. From this date onwards, the FIOCRUZ (created in 1970) with the grouping of several research, production and education bodies, resumed the development of several activities that were in decline. The administrative collaboration of Lobato at that time was very positive, bringing in several scientists that were working in different research institutes and universities. During all these changes, the International Identification Center of Snails was always under his coordination.

From Belo Horizonte in the 1960s until his last days, Lobato Paraense was with his partner and collaborator Lygia dos Reis Correa who followed him with dedication and fondness and was highly important in the life and career of this great researcher. A lot could still be said about this important scientist, who published almost two hundred scientific works, ten chapters of books, received several awards and honors, such as the Gran Cruz of Scientific Merit from the Brazilian government, Researcher Emeritus of the National Research Council, Research Emeritus of FIOCRUZ, *Pirajá da Silva* Medals, and was professor at several national and international universities. Finally, we would like to honor and thank the scientist Professor Lobato Paraense for his contributions to research and education, that he performed so brilliantly. This is only a summary of what he left for us. His name will be forever engraved in the Brazilian science.

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