### LEO A. MAYER

Leo Aryeh Mayer was born in Stanislawow (Galicia) on January 12, 1895, and died at Jerusalem on April 6, 1959. In him, Studies in Islamic Art and Archaeology have lost one of the most universally respected and best known of their exponents. Few—even those who met him frequently and enjoyed his friend-ship—can claim that they have known him intimately. Gentle and considerate, tolerant and understanding, he was always available to those who sought his advice, but he did not encourage familiarity. Because of his retiring, almost secretive nature only the barest details of biographical interest are known. It is in his work that we must seek the man.

Mayer studied at the Universities of Lausanne, Vienna, and Berlin, and received a Ph.D. degree at Vienna for an unpublished thesis on town planning in Islam in 1917. A convinced and staunch Zionist, he emigrated to Palestine in 1921. His first appointment there was as Inspector in the Department of Antiquities of the Government of Palestine under British Mandate and he was soon promoted to be Librarian of the Department.

When the Hebrew University was founded at Jerusalem in 1929, he was first appointed Lecturer in Islamic Art and Archaeology and became the first Sir David Sassoon Professor of Near Eastern Art and Archaeology in 1932. He took an active part in the administrative work of the University and served terms as Dean of the Faculty of Arts and as Rector (1943-45). While unwavering in his strong Zionist convictions, Mayer had from the start supported all moves for an entente with the Arabs and counted many of them among his friends.

But for a few exceptions, all Mayer's published work is concerned with Islamic subjects. It is, however, for his outstanding contributions in the fields of Islamic heraldry, epig-

raphy, and numismatics, that he is likely to be best remembered.

His Saracenic heraldry (Oxford, 1933) remains the only authoritative work on the subject. He himself made the most important additions to it in his New material for Mamluk heraldry (Jerusalem, 1937) and in a number of articles in Ars Islamica (1936-37), Syria (1937), and other periodicals.

His longer contributions to Arabic epigraphy appeared in the Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities of Palestine and in the Tournal of the Palestine Oriental Society but many of his first readings are scattered over the 15 volumes of the Répertoire Chronologique d'Epigraphie Arabe which have appeared, and others will be included in future volumes. During the war years, which prevented him from traveling abroad, he worked on a companion volume to his Saracenic heraldry which he intended to call Saracenic costume, and part of this work appeared in an abbreviated form under the title Mamluk costume in 1952. In it he tried to relate the descriptions in texts with miniatures, metal works, and textiles. He had an eye for, and a tender affection for, all realia, a tendency in which we may recognize some of the influence of his teacher, I. von Karabacek.

Apart from several articles on Islamic coins, Mayer also compiled a valuable *Bibliography of Islamic numismatics*, which was first published by the Royal Asiatic Society in 1939 and later revised and enlarged by him for a second edition, which contains explanatory notes for each item, in 1954.

The last years of Mayer's life were devoted to the compilation of a corpus of Islamic craftsmen. For the sake of this huge undertaking he traveled extensively, and single-mindedly gave the project priority over all his other interests. He first expounded the plan for a series of monographs on this subject at the XXIInd International Congress of Ori-

entalists held at Istanbul in 1951. The first volume on Islamic architects and their works appeared in 1956 and was followed in the same year by a volume on Islamic astrolabists. A list of glassmakers, of whom only few names are known, was published as an article in the Israel Exploration Journal, 1954, and the volume on Islamic woodcarvers appeared in 1958. He was able to read the proofs of the volume on Islamic metal workers and their works but. alas, it appeared after his death, as did also a slender volume entitled L'Art juif en terre de l'Islam, 1959, a subject to which he intended to devote more of his time.

All Mayer's publications are provided with extensive and exhaustive bibliographies. He paid the utmost attention to detail and would often undertake a long journey for the express purpose of checking a single inscription. He was always most punctilious in acknowledging any help he might be given, no matter how trifling it might be. His interest in bibliography also found expression in the edition of the, unfortunately, short-lived Annual bibliography of Islamic art and archaeology (1935-37) which was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II. For this work he had enlisted the cooperation of a great number of scholars in many lands and laid the basis for international collaboration in this field.

Despite his frequent visits abroad, Mayer considered Terusalem his only home and insisted on returning there when he realized that his recovery from his last illness, which overtook him in Switzerland, afforded him only brief relief. In him the Hebrew University has lost an outstanding scholar, and our studies, so thinly represented, an active and devoted exponent. He was primarily concerned with the production of handbooks which others will quote. His is a lasting and solid contribution.

Among Mayer's many distinctions was the award made to him by the British Government of the O.B.E. He was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London since 1934 and of the Royal Asiatic Society since 1935, as well as Honorary President of the Israel Exploration Society.

Those who have been privileged to count themselves among his friends will remember him also as the perfect guest and the perfect host, which he was. Maver was a man of method and of firmly established habits. He always stayed at the same hotels; nearly always as near as possible to the national museums and libraries in all the capital cities of the world: frequented the same restaurants: rarely trusted the post offices to deliver mail unless it was registered. The absence from our mail of his concise matter-of-fact letters written in a beautifully calligraphic hand, the courteous and informative comments on our own work, the absence from our museums of his bearded patriarchal figure, which used to appear with such regularity each year, will long be missed by all those who knew him and were devoted to him.

D. S. RICE

# THE WORKS OF PROFESSOR L. A. MAYER

COMPILED BY H. Z. HIRSCHBERG

Books are preceded by an asterisk (\*); reviews by (R).

#### ABBREVIATIONS

AS	Annales du Service des Antiquités de
	l'Egypte.
BIES	Bulletin of the Israel Exploration Society,
	continuing:
BJPES	Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Explora-
	tion Society.

Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies. IEJ

BSOAS

Israel Exploration Journal. JEA Journal of Egyptian Archaeology. **JPOS** Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society. **JRAS** Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.

KS Kirjath Sepher.

OLZ Orientalistische Literaturzeitung.

PEQ Palestine Exploration Quarterly, continuing:

PEFQ St Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund.

QDAP The Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine.

ZDPV Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins.

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- 2. Opiumweisheit, von Dschenab Schehab ed-Din, Die Sonntagszeit. Supplement to Wiener Tageszeitung "Die Zeit," No. 5367, 2.IX, pp. 1-2.

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- 9. מערת קברים בשכונת "נחלי אחים" (See next item) Scripta, JPES I, book II, pp. 71-73, figs. 19-20.
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- 19. \*Guide to the exhibition of Moslem heraldry in Palestine, January, with a preface by John Garstang, Jerusalem, Department of Antiquities, 8 pp.
- 20. \*Guide to the temporary exhibition of crusaders' and mediaeval Christian art in Palestine, March, with a preface by John Garstang, Jerusalem, Department of Antiquities, 7 pp.
- 21. \*International Archaeological Congress in Syria and Palestine, 1926, programme Palestine section, Issued by the Department of Antiquities for Palestine, Jerusalem, Greek Convent Press, 39 pp., 4 maps. (In collaboration with R. Allen.)
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- 71. A Samaritan lamp, JPOS XVI, pp. 44-45, pl. III. (In collaboration with A. Reifenberg.)
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- 71B. Náve Zsidó Épületei, A Mult es Tö vö XXVI, pp. 300–301. (In collaboration with A. Reifenberg.)

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- 74. New material for Mamluk heraldry, JPOS XVII, pp. 52-62, pls. VI-IX.
- 75. A new heraldic emblem of the Mamluks, Ars Islamica IV, pp. 349-451, 4 figs.
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