

In Memoriam

Ahmad Mustafa Abu Hakima, an internationally known Arab scholar and Gulf expert, died from acute pneumonia on April 9, 1998 in Ottawa, Canada, at the age of 75. Abu Hakima, son of a prosperous orange grower, was born in Abbasiya in Palestine on August 28, 1923. He completed high school at the British Arab College in Jerusalem in 1944. At Cairo University, he received his B.A. honors degree in 1948 and later an M.A. in Modern Arab History and an M.A. in Islamic Art. His teaching career began in Kuwait where he resided with his family from 1953 to 1958. He taught English and Arab history and was a specially appointed tutor to the princes of the Al-Sabah ruling dynasty.

The second phase of his career started at the School of Oriental and African Studies of London University where he studied under Professor Bernard Lewis and received his Ph.D. in 1960. Abu Hakima uncovered a wealth of material on Eastern Arabia in the Library of the British Museum and the Public Record Office. His thesis, published in 1965, *The History of Eastern Arabia, 1750-1800*, dealt with the rise and development of Kuwait and Bahrain. This history, heretofore almost unknown, became a classic work. In 1960 Abu Hakima spent two years as lecturer at the University of Khartoum and then was asked by UNESCO to give his expert advice and serve as chairman of the history department at Zaria College in Northern Nigeria. By then a recognized authority on Arab history, he was invited in 1964 to join the history faculty of the University of Jordan where he taught for seven years. Meanwhile Shaikh Abdullah al-Salim Al-Sabah, ruler of Kuwait, commissioned Abu Hakima to write the official history of Kuwait. Subsequently he authored six volumes of *Tarikh al-Kuwait* (History of Kuwait), which were widely distributed.

The third phase of Abu Hakima's career began when Dr. John Badeau, former U.S. ambassador to Egypt and then director of the Middle East Institute of Columbia University, invited him to serve as guest professor in 1968 and 1969. By then Abu Hakima had seen the strategic importance of Kuwait and convinced the Kuwait government to fund a chair in Gulf History at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. In 1972 Abu Hakima was appointed to that chair in the Department of Islamic and Middle East Studies. Until his retirement in 1983, Abu Hakima lectured at many North American universities and was frequently called upon by American and Canadian, African, and Middle Eastern governments and businesses for expert advice on the Perso/Arabian Gulf region. In particular, he assisted Canadian government officials to establish the first Canadian embassy in the Gulf in Kuwait and also advised the Reagan administration on Middle Eastern affairs.

After his retirement, Abu Hakima, concerned about the rapid destruction of historical monuments in the Gulf, devoted his energies to the collection and publication of three books of historical photographs on Bahrain (1900-1936), Kuwait (1900-1936), and Qatar (1921-1950). He also completed in 1983 *The Modern History of Kuwait*, which became a valued reference during the Gulf War

of 1991. He is survived by his widow, Dr. Aida Arif Abu Hakima, six children, and eleven grandchildren.

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David Ayalon, one of the most prominent historians of medieval Islamic history in this century, died in Jerusalem on June 25, 1998, at the age of 84. Ayalon was born in Haifa in 1914. In 1933 he started his studies in Islamic Civilization, Arabic Language and Literature, and Jewish History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. After his release from volunteer service in the British army during World War II, he received his doctorate from the Hebrew University in 1946. In 1949 he was invited to establish the Department of the History of the Modern Middle East at the Hebrew University. He was a member of the department until his retirement in 1983.

Ayalon devoted his research to numerous aspects of medieval Muslim history. Most of his work related to the structure of Mamluk society and was distinguished by uncompromising attention to detail, without losing sight of the grand picture. Few scholars will dispute the fact that since his first publication on the Mamluks in 1946, he became the dean of Mamluk studies. He also worked on medieval military history; among his other achievements in this field, he provided a profound interpretation of the Mamluk refusal to introduce firearms into their army and its significance. He was also among the first scholars who devoted their attention to the significance of the Mongols in Islamic history and to their relationship with the Mamluk state.

Ayalon's studies in medieval history are well known in the international academic community. In Israel, he is equally well known as an accomplished lexicographer. Together with his long time friend and colleague Pessah Shinar, he published in 1947 a dictionary entitled *Milon 'aravi-'ivri la-lashon ha-'aravit ha-hadasha (Arabic-Hebrew Dictionary of Modern Arabic)*. This dictionary has since seen forty editions and has become an indispensable *vade mecum* of Hebrew speaking students of Arabic at all levels.

Ayalon's work brought him honor and recognition both in Israel and abroad. In 1972 he was awarded the prestigious Israel Prize and in 1975 the Rothschild Prize. He was an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society and an Honorary Member of Middle Eastern Medievalists, American Oriental Society, and American Historical Association. In 1992 he was awarded an honorary doctorate by Haifa University. Despite his illness, he continued his research until recently. His last book, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans: A Study in Power Relationship* will be published soon by Magnes Press. He is survived by his widow Myriam Rosen-Ayalon, Professor of Islamic Art and Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

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