

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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