

*At a meeting of the FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES on December 2, 2014,
the following tribute to the life and service of the late Ernst Badian
was spread upon the permanent records of the Faculty.*

ERNST BADIAN

BORN: August 8, 1925

DIED: February 1, 2011

Ernst Badian, John Moors Cabot Professor of History, Emeritus, was one of the world's most eminent ancient historians. Appointed to the Department of History in 1971, and by courtesy a voting member of the Department of the Classics in 1973, he became emeritus in 1998. Born in Vienna, he and his parents fled the mounting persecution of the Jews in 1938 and settled in New Zealand.

Badian received a B.A. with first-class honors and an M.A. from then Canterbury University College, Christchurch (University of New Zealand); he took a B.A. from Oxford University with first-class honors, and wrote his dissertation under the great Roman historian Sir Ronald Syme, two volumes of whose papers he would later edit. From the dissertation emerged his *Foreign Clientelae, 274–70 B.C.* (1958), still recognized as a classic study of how the social institution of patrons and clients shaped early Roman imperialism in and beyond Italy and molded the politics of the later Republic. This theme resulted in major studies: *Roman Imperialism in the Late Republic* (1967) and *Publicans and Sinners* (1972). Mastery of the primary sources, particularly inscriptions, and technically intricate and rigorous analysis of fragmentary prosopographical evidence characterized Badian's approach. From scrappy biographical information about many individuals, he deduced political and institutional patterns that greatly deepened our understanding of the ancient world.

After appointments at the Universities of Sheffield (1952–54) and Durham (1954–65), Badian was named Professor of Ancient History at Leeds (1965). He came to the United States as Professor of Classics and History at the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1969. Perusing the 200-plus articles, monographs, and edited volumes that he authored, one is struck by the range of his command of ancient texts. Unusually for twentieth-century ancient historians, he had a second strength in Greek history. He turned his rigorous insight to the historical roots of our knowledge of Alexander the Great, meticulously analyzing the patchy and distant historical record and the sometimes romanticized person and policies. Badian's seminal revisionist views liberated a generation of historians from the hero-

worshiping approach that was then fashionable, and sparked important work on the ancient historians who are our main informants about Alexander. He even strayed into the history of recent scholarship, offering, e.g., a bracing critique of Gibbon that remains worth reading.

As a teacher Badian was not known to tolerate fools gladly. But those who met his demanding standards received lessons remarkable for their intelligence and depth. As a colleague, his sometimes unpredictable comments at the departmental meetings that he chose to attend could leave his colleagues bemused and occasionally perplexed. Many a chair of both History and Classics found themselves engaged in intense correspondence with an extremely distinguished colleague who had perceived snubs where none was intended. His tiny figure belied the very big intellect it contained; he had an amused awareness of his striking resemblance to Trotsky. We will not soon forget his sharp features and oblique glance; stroking his goatee he would titter, quietly voice some sharp critique or remarkable insight, and then, chuckling softly to himself, scurry off to his office. Nor will any dispassionate reader fail to admire the incisive style of Badian's judgments. Pithy flashes of insight routinely challenged established opinion, as when he wrote parenthetically about the conventional wisdom concerning the jostling parvenus of the Roman Republic: "So much for a new man's patronage of other new men. . . . There was little solidarity among new men, and much competition."

With his impeccable Latin and Greek, Badian offered many a thoughtful emendation to Latin texts from Cicero to Ausonius. Beyond his extraordinarily significant historical and philological oeuvre in monographs and articles, he performed considerable service to the field of ancient history. His numerous deep and often severe book reviews sought to ensure extremely high standards for late twentieth-century classical scholarship. His self-effacing dedication to producing first-rate articles for the second and third editions of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* placed incomparable scholarship at the disposal of every student of the ancient world. And, finally, Badian helped found the Association of Ancient Historians. Broached at a meeting of historians from the universities of southern Ontario and the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1969, the Association emerged from the annual meeting held at Harvard in 1974. It continues to provide an invaluable framework for international meetings, exchange, and sociability among the nearly 800 specialists of the ancient world that it numbers today, as does the New England Ancient History Colloquium that he also founded. In 1978 Badian helped create an important publication niche, especially for rising scholars, in the *American Journal of Ancient History*, which he edited and practically even published himself out of Robinson Hall with the devoted assistance of Wendy Lurie.

Badian received the Österreichische Ehrenkreuz für Wissenschaft und Kunst and an honorary doctorate from Macquarie University, and he was awarded the accomplished scholar's usual fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Council of

Learned Societies, and the Institute for Advanced Study. His immense intellectual distinction found recognition among the learned societies of Europe and America, for he was a Fellow of the British Academy, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Numismatic Society. He was an honorary fellow of University College, Oxford, a corresponding member of the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, and the Finnish Academy of Sciences, and an honorary member of the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies (London). Beyond lectures delivered as far afield as the universities of Heidelberg and Tel Aviv, his visiting appointments included Sather Professor at Berkeley, Visiting Professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, Semple Lecturer at the University of Cincinnati, Martin Classical Lecturer at Oberlin, and Todd Lecturer at Sydney.

Professor Badian died on February 1, 2011, not long after a fall in his home. He is survived by his widow, Nathalie, two children, Hugh and Rosemary, and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernard Bailyn
Kathleen M. Coleman
Emma Dench
Christopher P. Jones
Michael McCormick, Chair