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## **Manfred Mayrhofer (1926-2011)**

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Manfred Mayrhofer (26 September 1926 - 31 October 2011) was born in Linz, Austria to Josef and Irma Mayrhofer. He is remembered as a great teacher and for his vital work the *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen*. He is survived by his wife Ingrid and his adopted daughter Elizabeth.

Mayrhofer's early years were at the mercy of the Second World War. At fifteen years of age, he started at the Linzer Humanistischen Gymnasium, which had been known in times of peace to be an excellent school. During the war, however, much of his early schooling was replaced with anti-aircraft defense training; Mayrhofer graduated a certified Luftwaffenhelfer, an “air force auxiliary,” and, in 1944, was placed in the Reich Labor Service. In 1945, he was captured by the British in Italy. Mayrhofer would later remark that during his time in Italy he used his Latin schooling to communicate with local farmers. During captivity, he became fascinated with the English of the British officers, and he was exposed to the diversity of tongues among the mercenary soldiers. Mayrhofer considered this to be the beginnings of his interest in language.

Young Mayrhofer was transferred to a U.S Occupation zone in Austria and commenced his studies at Graz that very same year. His early interests were music and poetry. In fact, one of his pieces, based on a poem by Plato, was sung on German radio by Fred Liewehr. At Graz, however, he had two teachers that interested him in historical and comparative linguistics: Leo

Jutz and Herbert Koziol. From there, he was exposed to Indo-European Studies under the tutelage of Wilhelm Brandenstein. Brandenstein, being himself an Etruscologist, encouraged Mayrhofer to study languages outside of Indo-European as well. So, in addition to Linguistics and Indo-European Studies, during his time at Graz, Mayrhofer studied Comparative Semitic. Mayrhofer received his Promotion in 1949, but he was already teaching Sanskrit for Brandenstein in 1948. His doctoral thesis was titled *Zur Restproblematik des 'Brugmann'schen Gesetzes.'* He did his Habilitation in Indo-Iranian Philology in June of 1951 writing a Habilitationsschrift in two parts: *Das dravidische Substrat im Altindischen* and *Studien zur indogermanischen Wortkunde*. In 1953, became a lecturer at Würzburg. In 1963, he became tenured professor at the University of Saarbrücken. In 1966 he took a position at the University of Vienna where he remained.

During his life he was honored many times for his research and commitment to education. Mayrhofer was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He received the Prix Ghirshman from l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres (1975) for his *Onomastica Persepolitana*. He received Kulturpreis des Landes Oberösterreich for Science (1982) and, in 1988, he won the Wilhelm Hartel Prize. In 2000, he received the Austrian Decoration for Arts and Sciences and, later the Cardinal Innitzer Prize (2004). He also received the Officer's Cross of the Finnish Order of the White Rose and the Gold Medal of Honor of the City of Vienna. He was honored with the Commander-Cross of the Dock and the Iranian Humayun medal.

Manfred Mayrhofer became a member of the Austrian Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1968, and a member of its presidency from 1970-1983. He has also been a foreign member of the Academies of Budapest, Paris, München, Warsaw, Milan, Heidelberg, Moscow, Leipzig, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Göttingen, Helsinki, and Tbilisi. He was a member of the American

Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, and a Fellow of the British Academy.

Apart from his famous *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen* (1986-2001), Manfred Mayrhofer wrote a great many works on Indo-Iranian language and culture including *Handbuch des Pali* (1951), *Die Indo-Arier im Alten Vorderasien* (1966), *Sanskrit-Grammatik mit sprachvergleichenden Erläuterungen* (1978), *Die altiranischen Namen* (1979), *Personennamen in der Ṛgveda-Samhitā. Sicheres und Zweifelhafte* (2002), *Einiges zu den Skythen, ihrer Sprache, ihrem Nachleben* (2006), and *Die Fortsetzung der indogermanischen Laryngale im Indo-Iranischen* (2005). In addition to Indology, Mayrhofer wrote on the subject of Proto-Indo-European as well: *Sanskrit und die Sprachen Alteuropas* (1982), *Indogermanische Grammatik, Band 1/2: Lautlehre* (1986), *Die Hauptprobleme der indogermanischen Lautlehre seit Bechtel* (2004), and *Indogermanistik: Über Darstellungen und Einführungen von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (2009); note also his *Ausgewählte kleine Schriften* (1979).

An obituary, with complete bibliography, was published by R. Schmitt: *Manfred Mayrhofer: Leben und Werk* (Vienna 2012). Note also Mayrhofer's website: <http://www.manfred-mayrhofer.at/index.html>.