

BIRKENMAJER Aleksander—historian of culture and science, expert in libraries, b. July 8, 1890 in Czernichów (near Kraków), d. November 30, 1967 in Warsaw, brother of Joseph.

From 1908 to 1913 he studied mathematics and physics at the Jagiellonian University. In 1929 he completed his habilitation. In 1938 he became a professor. In 1939 and 1940 he was imprisoned in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. In 1939 and against from 1945 to 1947 he was the director of the university library in Poznań, and from 1947 to 1951 he was director of the Jagiellonian Library in Kraków. From 1951 to 1960 he directed the first chair of library science in Poland. He acquired world renown primarily for his works on the history of the exact sciences, especially astronomy and optics (works concerning Henry Bate of Mechelen, Copernicus, and Witelo), and for his studies on the scientific and philosophical reception of Greek and Arab literature in medieval Latin. With K. Michalski he prepared the plan for the monumental publishing venture *Corpus philosophorum medii aevi*, realized by the Union Académique Internationale. He also studied the history of astronomy, mathematics, and the natural sciences in Poland (among other works, *Osiągnięcia duchowieństwa polskiego w zakresie nauk matematycznych i przyrodniczych* [Achievements of the Polish clergy in the mathematical and natural sciences], RF 12 (1964) n. 3, 31–43). he worked on the history of scientific and philosophical writing in close connection with the study of manuscripts and library science; he published 386 works of *Studia z historii nauki i filozofii średniowiecznej* [Studies from the history of medieval science and philosophy], in: *Études d'histoire des sciences et de la philosophie du moyen-âge*, SCop 1 (Wr 1970) also contains Birkenmajer's biography (pp. XII–XX) and bibliography (pp. XXVIII–LXXXV) put together by Alexandra Maria Birkenmajer. His *Études d'histoire des sciences en Pologne*, SCop 4 (Wr 1972) has also been published.

M. Kurdziałek, *Udział ks. Konstantego Michalskiego i Aleksandra B. w odrywaniu filozofii średniowiecznej* [The role of Fr. Konst Michalski and Aleksander Birkenmajer in discovering medieval philosophy], SPCh 1 (1966) n. 1, 83–105; idem, *Aleksander Birkenmajer (1890–1967)*, *Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki* [Quarterly of the history of science and technology] 13 (1968), 115–119; H. Barycz, *Studia Aleksandra B. nad dziejami nauki polskiej* [Aleksander Birkenmajer's studies on the history of Polish science], [no place of publication] 1974.

Marian Kurdziałek