

of the latter Society that these reached their high standard of excellence. His place will be filled with difficulty.

W. P. Y.

JOSEF RITTER VON KARABACEK

Josef Ritter von Karabaček, late Honorary Member, was born at Graz, September 20, 1845. He studied at the University of Vienna and at other academic institutions, and first made a reputation as a numismatist. Accompanying his father on a journey to Banat he used to come in with handfuls of the most varied coins, such as were current on the then Turkish-Austrian frontier. He was immensely attracted by all the types, inscriptions, and languages. Hence we find him in the second year of his university course already occupied with a numismatical work, concerning a collection placed at his disposal by a Russian lieutenant-general. This brought him into personal and professional connexion with a former ambassador at Constantinople and with distinguished Orientalists abroad. After obtaining the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Erlangen, he commenced a course of lectures on Arabic palæography at Vienna University, and in 1873 took part in the Exhibition, showing Oriental inscribed tablets, in which the Emperor took much interest. Oriental numismatics, Arabic palæography, and Islamic were the principal subjects of his varied researches. When the collection of papyri of El-Faijūm revealed unsuspected material for Arabic palæographical research between 1881 and 1883, he it was who brought this branch of Arabic learning into prominence. He did other valuable work in connexion with papyri. Meanwhile, after having refused an offer from Punjab University College at Lahore in 1873 of the highly paid position of Principal, he was appointed in 1885 Ordinary Professor of the history and sciences of the East, the duties of which he only relinquished in his 70th year, July, 1915. He was for several decades assistant editor

of the Viennese *Journal of Oriental Studies*. In 1882 the Vienna Academy of Science elected him corresponding member, and in 1888 full member. In February, 1898, he was elected provisional secretary of the Philosophical and Historical Department, and re-elected several times. In 1899 he was elected Honorary Member of the Royal Asiatic Society, which he remained until his death on October 9, 1918. He also belonged to many other foreign learned societies and bodies as corresponding or honorary member. In 1899 he was appointed "Hofrat", and soon after "Ritter" and Curator of the Court Library. In this last office he had many opportunities of giving proof of his fine artistic taste, during the planning of that institution at the commencement of this century, particularly in arranging the exhibits in the State Saloon. In scientific matters the best known are his inquiries into the origin of Oriental paper, made in conjunction with Julius Ritter von Wiesner. Karabaček and Wiesner have proved, one from the antiquarian and the other from the natural history point of view, that the invention of fibre-paper was not, as had been hitherto supposed, made by Germans and Italians at the time of the fourteenth century on European ground, but rather that the Arabs are to be credited with the invention of paper made from rags, and were already making it at the end of the eighth century. These conclusions are now to be found in all handbooks on the subject. The list of his articles and books shows how widespread was Karabaček's activity in the realm of palæography, Oriental antiquities, numismatics, and art. And this in spite of the demands on his time for committees, sittings, official speeches, and public functions. He remained in full activity up to the day of his death.
