IN MEMORIAM

BINYAMIN AMIRÀ died in January 1968 at the age of seventy-one. In his early childhood Amirà was brought from Russia to what was then the Turkish Province of Palestine, and he received his primary and secondary education in the young town of Tel-Aviv. He early became interested in mathematics and after graduating from high school he attended several European universities to obtain advanced instruction in his chosen field. His doctoral thesis on entire functions, written under the guidance of E. Landau, was an important contribution which promised well for his future as a research mathematician in complex analysis. After a brief period as Privatdozent at the University of Geneva, he followed his teacher and friend, Professor Landau, in 1925 to the newly founded Hebrew University in Jerusalem to assist him in establishing a Mathematical Institute, called the Einstein Institute of Mathematics, at this school. When Landau returned to Göttingen after a brief visiting professorship in Jerusalem, Amirà remained and devoted himself to the task of organizing and developing the Institute into a center of intensive and productive mathematical activity.

Practically single-handed he established an outstanding library and convenient facilities for research and teaching. He made it possible to attract teachers and students of good quality to the Institute and to create a relaxed and stimulating atmosphere of scientific endeavor. However, the strenuous and, indeed, hectic activity which was necessary to accomplish all this under difficult circumstances meant that he had to neglect his own research work. To appreciate the magnitude of this sacrifice, one had to know his intense desire and glowing admiration for creative mathematical thought.

He was a person who loved beauty in every form, but most in the intellectual form of mathematical creation. This feeling he conveyed to his pupils and inspired them to research and inquiry. Only his former students can appreciate his influence as teacher, helper and guide, which led them to become mathematicians on their own.

If today the mathematical life in Israel has reached a remarkable level in both quantity and quality, this is primarily the achievement of Amirà. Clearly, his chosen line of activity has paid off better for mathematics as a whole than would have an alternative decision to concentrate on individual research.

Amirà's ideal of mathematical work perhaps reflects the values of the beginning of this century, but it is still shared by many of us. Every publication should, in his opinion, be a piece of art and beauty, thought out and written with care, clarity and elegance. To help his colleagues to publish such papers, he dreamed of establishing a journal of the highest quality in make-up as well as in editorial policy. The authors should be given generous space to develop self-contained expositions of their ideas and results. The editors should go out to invite and encourage papers of value and significance. After long and often disappointing preparatory work, he finally succeeded in creating the *Journal d'Analyse Mathématique* in which he hoped to fulfill his vision. In his initial efforts to found the Journal he was delayed and frustrated by the conditions in Israel during the second world war, the war of independence of Israel and the years of austerity which followed these violent events. His strenuous activity, his numerous travels abroad, his often menial work in the actual production and distribution of his beloved Journal may have contributed to his failing health and his early death.

But the Journal lives, and we hope that it will continue to be guided by his ideals. In the life of science we need catalysts, organizers and selfless men of high vision perhaps more than narrow specialists. Amirà was the pioneer of mathematical organization, par excellence.

We all owe him a thankful memory for the help, effort and inspiration which he has given to the mathematical world.