



**IN MEMORIAM**

**MOSHE KOCHAVI**

**(1928—2008)**

Prof. Moshe Kochavi, a pivotal faculty member of Tel Aviv University's Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures and its Institute of Archaeology from their inception in 1968, and a prominent figure in the world of Israeli archaeology, died on February 4, 2008 after a lengthy illness.

Moshe Kochavi—Kuchbi to all those who knew him— was born in 1928 in Bucharest. His father Samuel Stern served as the chairperson of the Romanian Zionist movement and his mother Agatha Abeles was a champion of feminist causes. The family immigrated to Palestine when Moshe was five years old, settling first on Kibbutz Ramat David, later in the then small farming community of Raanana and finally in Tel Aviv. At the age of 19, Moshe joined Kibbutz Daphna in a military training program that would become the third battalion of the Yiftach Brigade of the Palmach—the regular fighting force of the unofficial army of the Jewish community during the British Mandate. During the War of Independence, he served as a combat medic and was wounded twice, once lightly in the battle for Safed in the Galilee and then seriously in the battle for Beit Hanoun near Gaza during Operation Yoav.

In 1949, Kochavi helped found Kibbutz Yiron on the Lebanese border. Five years later he married his youth group protégée, Nora, a talented ceramicist who would later assist him in archaeological restoration and who throughout their life together would remain his devoted companion and steadfast supporter.

In 1955, the Kochavis left the kibbutz and Moshe began studying archaeology at the Hebrew University under the tutelage of Yohanan Aharoni. He excavated with Yigael Yadin at Hazor and with Aharoni at Ramat Raḥel, and joined Aharoni in surveys in the Negev and the Judean Desert. In 1961 Kochavi began excavating independently at the Intermediate Bronze Age site of Mount Yeroḥam in the Negev Highlands—a dig that served as the basis for his doctoral thesis. In 1963, he excavated the Iron

Age site of Tell Esdar in the northern Negev and a year later began excavations at Tel Zeror in the Sharon plain in collaboration with a Japanese expedition. In the course of these excavations, Kochavi promoted an innovative excavation method, which was a combination of the Wheeler-Kenyon and the 'Israeli' methods of the time. He bequeathed his method to both his students and many of his fellow archaeologists.

Kochavi was awarded a Ph.D. from the Hebrew University for his research, 'The Settlement of the Negev in the Middle Bronze (Canaanite) I Age' (1967). Just after the Six Day War, in the framework of the 'Emergency Survey' of Judea, Samaria and the Golan, Kochavi conducted the first thorough archaeological survey of the Judean hill country. He later edited the publication of the results of this survey, titled *Judea, Samaria and the Golan: Archaeological Survey 1967–1968*. This publication provided researchers with rich and varied evidence collected from hundreds of sites; it was presented in a manner that made it possible for the first time to reach conclusions regarding the settlement history in the hill country. His own survey of the Judean hill country solved problems of biblical topography, the most prominent of which was the identification of Khirbet Rabud south of Hebron as biblical Debir. In order to support the identification Kochavi conducted salvage excavations at the site (1968–1969). The results were published in 1974 in the opening pages of the very first issue of this journal.

In 1968 Kochavi joined the Archaeology Department of Tel Aviv University where he mentored several generations of students until his retirement in 1997. He collaborated with Aharoni in establishing the university's Institute of Archaeology and twice served as its director. In the same year Kochavi joined other members of the Institute at Aharoni's excavations at Tel Beersheba and in 1970 he conducted his own excavations at Tel Malḥata in the Beer Sheba Valley. In 1972, and for 13 seasons thereafter, Kochavi headed the Aphek–Antipatris expedition—the highlight of his career as a field archaeologist. It was at this point that he began his fruitful cooperative relationship with the late Pirhiya Beck—a partnership and above all a friendship that lasted until her death in 1998. The Aphek excavations contributed decisively to the study of the urbanization and material culture of the Middle Bronze Age in the Levant, first and foremost by establishing the foundation stones for a ceramic typology, based on the stratigraphy, of the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age. The excavations also shed light on the Egyptian government system in Canaan in the Late Bronze Age and exposed a valuable collection of cuneiform tablets from the 13th century BCE.

Kochavi combined the study of archaeology with the study of geography and geographical history. He promoted a distinctive approach to archaeological research—the regional study which combined an excavation of a central site with a survey of its countryside and minor excavations of smaller sites in its vicinity.

Parallel to his work at Tel Aphek he conducted a survey of the Aphek countryside (the Rosh Ha-‘Ayin map) and headed the excavation of the important Iron Age site of ‘Izbet Şarṭah (1976–1978).

In 1989 Kochavi published *Aphek–Antipatris: Five Thousand Years of History*, a Hebrew summary of the results of the excavations at Aphek. In 2000 he co-authored with Pirhiya Beck and Esther Yadin the first excavation report, under the title, *Aphek–Antipatris I*, which focuses on finds from the Early and Middle Bronze Ages. The manuscript of the second report, *Aphek–Antipatris II*, written by Kochavi, Yuval Gadot and Esther Yadin, which deals with finds from the Late Bronze and Iron I Ages, is currently being prepared for press. The Aphek excavations served as the basis for an exhibition at the Israel Museum, ‘Aphek in Canaan: The Egyptian Governor’s Residence and Its Finds’, with a catalogue written by Kochavi.

In 1987, Kochavi, with Beck, started another regional study—the Land of Geshur Project in the Golan Heights. This project included excavations at the mounds of Tel Hadar, Tel Soreg and ‘En Gev, Rogem Hiri and the Early Bronze site of Leviah Enclosure, plus a survey of the southern Golan Heights. Scholars and students from prestigious institutions, including Cornell and Harvard Universities (USA) and Tenri University (Japan), joined in the project.

Kochavi was an inspiration to several generations of archaeologists who are currently teaching in universities in Israel or working for the Israel Antiquities Authority and other agencies related to archaeological research in Israel. Most noteworthy, Kochavi inspired some of his students—among them Yehuda Dagan, Israel Finkelstein, Rafi Frankel, Zvi Gal, Avi Ofer and Adam Zertal—to conduct large-scale surveys of some of the most important regions in Israel, especially in the hill country and the Shephelah. The ‘Kochavi tradition’ has therefore revealed the settlement history of major parts of the Land of Israel.

In addition to lecturing and researching at Tel Aviv University, Kochavi taught and conducted research at Oxford, Harvard, Tokyo, Toronto and New York Universities. He held many public positions; he served as the chairperson of the Israel Archaeological Council (1990–2000) and as a member of the Governing Council of the Israel Exploration Society.

Kochavi loved books and music and was an art enthusiast. He was a warm family man—husband, father and grandfather. Bereft when his beloved wife Nora died after half a century of devoted years together, he found comfort in the presence of Sarah Harash, his companion later in life. He left three children—Noam, Uri and Tali—and seven grandchildren.

Prof. Moshe Kochavi was 79 at the time of his death. We will remember him with warmth and affection.

*Esther Yadin*