

In Memoriam Ruth Amiran, 1914–2005



Ruth Amiran, among the pioneers of Israeli archaeology, passed away in Jerusalem on December 14, 2005.

Ruth was born in Yavne'el in the Galilee in 1914. She was one of the Hebrew University's first students of archaeology, receiving her Master's degree already in 1939. Ruth gained her early field experience in excavations at 'Ai, under the direction of Judith Marquet-Krause, and at Tel Gerisa, under the direction of E. L. Sukenik. Upon the completion of her studies, she worked in the University's Department of Archaeology and later became one of the few Jewish archaeologists to be employed by the Mandatory Department of Antiquities at the Palestine Archaeological Museum (Rockefeller Museum). In 1948 Ruth participated in excavations at Jaffa, directed by P. L. O. Guy. Upon the establishment of the Israel Department of Antiquities, she was appointed Inspector of Antiquities for the northern district and later for Jerusalem. During this period, she carried out important surveys in the Galilee, the Negev, and other areas and conducted excavations at a wide variety of sites, including Tivon, Jerusalem, Susita, Akko, Rosh Haniqra, Tel Nagila, Tel Qishyon, Small Tel Malhata, and Biqat Uvda. From 1955 to 1959, she was a member of the archaeological expedition to Tel Hazor, under the direction of Y. Yadin.

Ruth Amiran was closely associated with the Israel Museum from its inception, as a member of its planning team and as Field Archaeologist in the Museum's archaeology wing. Her extensive excavations of early Arad sponsored by the Museum, which uncovered the Early Bronze Age city at the foot of the tell, would become the pinnacle of her career. With boundless energy and patience, Ruth returned to Arad year after year, revealing section after section of the city down to the smallest

detail. Through her comprehensive research on private dwellings, the term "Arad house" was coined, and major topics such as the beginning of urbanization in Canaan, the relations between Canaan and Egypt, and the significance of the Early Bronze Age settlements in Sinai were clarified. The results of this major excavation project were published in the final reports *Early Arad I* (1978) and *Early Arad II* with Ornit Ilan (1996).

Ruth produced more than 150 scientific publications in Hebrew and English, most notably *Ancient Pottery of the Holy Land* with Pirhiya Beck and Uzza Zevulun (1963), which was translated into English and remains an essential tool for scholars of the archaeology of Israel until today. Her impressive achievements earned widespread recognition. She received the Israel Museum's Percia Schimmel Award in 1981 and the prestigious Israel Prize for Land of Israel Studies in 1982.

Ruth Amiran left an indelible mark on the archaeology of Israel. Her love of the land and tireless dedication to revealing its past remain an inspiration to those who follow in the path she helped forge.