



Tel Aviv

Journal of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/ytav20

In Memoriam: Professor Ora Negbi (1929–2024)

Ze'ev Herzog

To cite this article: Ze'ev Herzog (2024) In Memoriam: Professor Ora Negbi (1929–2024), Tel Aviv, 51:2, 161-162, DOI: [10.1080/03344355.2024.2385141](https://doi.org/10.1080/03344355.2024.2385141)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03344355.2024.2385141>



Published online: 20 Nov 2024.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 76



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

In Memoriam: Professor Ora Negbi (1929–2024)



On May 28, 2024, Professor Ora Negbi, one of the foremost Israeli researchers of interregional interactions between communities in the Levant, Anatolia, Cyprus and the Aegean, passed away.

Ora was born in 1929 in Tel Aviv to Ben-Zion and Deborah Brodetzky. Following the 1948 war, she studied archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, earning her M.A. in 1956 with a thesis on ‘Cult Vessels in the Land of Israel during the Canaanite and Israelite Periods’ and her Ph.D. in 1963 with a dissertation on ‘Canaanite Metal Figurines in Eretz Israel and Syria’, written under the supervision of Professor Nahman Avigad. Her research on the topic led to her publication of an influential monograph titled *Canaanite Gods in Metal, An Archaeological Study of Ancient Syro-Palestinian Figurines* (Tel Aviv, 1976), in which she catalogued and studied over 1,700 Late Bronze Age metal figurines representing gods and goddesses from fifty sites throughout the Levant, including a thousand from Byblos, Lebanon.

Professor Negbi was a leading faculty member at the Jacob M. Alkow Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures and at the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archeology of Tel Aviv University since its inception. She focused upon Late Bronze Age ceramics, and in particular imported ware originating from Cyprus and the Aegean, found along the coast of Israel.

Together with Professor Emily Vermeule, she participated in the Harvard University expedition to Toumba tou Skourou, Cyprus, where she observed cultural connections with the Levant. An article titled ‘Cypric Imitations of Tell el-Yahudiyeh Ware from Toumba tou Skourou’ (*AJA* 82 [1978]: 137–149) was an outcome of this research.

Her expertise also led her to direct several excavation projects throughout Israel, including the excavation of a watch tower in Giv‘at Shapira, Jerusalem (1969), and the excavation of Tel Zippor (1963–1965), co-directed by Professor Avraham Biran (Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem).

Professor Negbi’s research interests extended far beyond pottery and figurines. She published a monograph titled *The Hoards of Goldwork from Tell el-Ajjul* (Gothenburg,

1970). She studied the process of urbanisation in Cyprus in several articles, including: 'The Climax of Urban Development in Bronze Age Cyprus' (*Report of the Department of Antiquities Cyprus* [1986]: 97–121) and 'Urbanism on Late Bronze Age Cyprus: LC II in Retrospect' (*BASOR* 337 [2005]: 1–112). She dealt with metallurgical aspects of Philistine culture in 'Metalworking in the Central Jordan Valley at the Transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age' (*Eretz-Israel* 21 [1990]: 212–225). She studied in depth the cultural interconnections between the Late Minoan frescoes and the Hyksos rulers in Egypt, publishing 'The "Libyan Landscape" from Thera: A Review of Aegean Enterprises Overseas in the Late Minoan IA Period' (*JMA* 7 [1994]: 73–112).

On a personal level, I benefitted tremendously from Ora's talents in the course of our longstanding cooperation on the excavations of Tel Michal (1977–1980) and Tel Gerisa (1981–1995). She was a meticulous field supervisor, a brilliant instructor of pottery analysis, a tireless mentor for her students and a friend of mine. Our joint publication, Herzog, Z., Rapp, G. and Negbi, O., eds. 1989. *Excavations at Tel Michal, Israel* ([Publications of the Institute of Archaeology 8]. Minneapolis and Tel Aviv), serves as testimony to our successful team work.

Ora was married to the botanist Professor Moshe Negbi, who shared her interest in Minoan frescoes depicting cultivated plants. This resulted in their joint publication: Negbi, M. and Negbi, O. 2000. Domestication of the Ornamental and Aromatic Plants in the Aegean: The Case of the Madonna Lily. In: Sharrett, S., ed. *Proceedings of the First International Symposium: The Wall Paintings of Thera Vol. II*. Athens: 593–602.

When Professor Negbi chaired the Jacob M. Alkow Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures, she insisted that I teach the fundamental course on ceramic history, even though my professional interest and specialty were ancient architecture. This initiative led to the development of a teaching method of pottery typology of the Late Bronze and Iron Ages that I happily conducted for twenty years, to the benefit—I believe—of hundreds of students.

Ze'ev Herzog