



**PROFESSOR RAPHAEL KUTSCHER (1938-1989)**

*IN MEMORIAM*

Raphael Kutscher was born in Budapest, 1938, the same year his parents Yechezkel and Tova Kutscher emigrated to Israel and settled in Jerusalem. Raphael was educated in one of the best schools, Horev, which produced many scholars and intellectuals. From 1956 to 1958 Raphael served in the *Nahal*, one of the elite units of the IDF.

He began his studies at the Hebrew University in 1959, majoring in Hebrew language, Semitic linguistics as well as Assyriology. It was here in the first year of cuneiform studies that I first met Raphi, as he was called by all his friends. Under the guidance of Hayim Tadmor we read the highly interesting prism of Assurbanipal, and I profited enormously from Raphael's broad knowledge of Semitic languages.

After finishing his B.A. in Jerusalem, Raphael went to the United States to complete his studies. He studied at the Universities of Yale and Harvard, writing his dissertation under the guidance of William W. Hallo, which was later published as "Oh Angry Sea: The History of a Sumerian Congregation Lament" (1975). He also studied with Thorkild Jacobsen and Samuel N. Kramer, two of the leading figures in Sumerology. Between 1967 to 1969 he served as an Assistant Professor at Brandeis University, where he met his wife Hadar. At the end of 1969 they returned to Israel, where he began his career as a cuneiform scholar and teacher at Tel Aviv University. His expertise in Old Akkadian as well as Neo-Sumerian history and literature is evident in his publications of the following years. Some of his papers in Hebrew reflect his interest in the relationship between the Ancient Near East, especially Mesopotamia, and the Biblical World. The new field of Eblaite studies fascinated Raphael and became the focus of his interest until his death.

During his years in the Department of Archaeology and Near Eastern Cultures of Tel Aviv University, Raphael demonstrated his outstanding qualities as a scholar, teacher and friend. Several generations of archaeologists, historians and philologists have benefited from his lectures in cuneiform studies. For the students of archaeology his teaching was of additional importance as it emphasized the influence of the Mesopotamian culture on that of Syro-Palestine.

During his last years, until shortly before his untimely death, Raphael worked on the important Old Akkadian texts now at the Haifa University. The first volume of this study was published posthumously in his book *The Brockman Tablets at the University of Haifa — Royal Inscriptions*, Haifa 1989. Raphael Kutscher died on January 29, 1989, after a grave illness, leaving his wife Hadar and two children, Devir and Davida. His family, colleagues, friends and students will always remember Raphael as an exceptional person, an excellent friend, whose belief in fair play was his foremost rule. Cuneiform studies have lost a gentleman and a scholar; his friends and colleagues a devoted friend.

(Aharon Kempinski)