

Avner Raban 1937–2004



Professor Avner Raban died suddenly in London whilst on sabbatical as a visiting scholar at Wolfson College Oxford where he had been writing a book on his life's work at Caesarea.

Avner began working at Caesarea in 1969 as part of his research for a paper on Roman harbours of the Levant whilst still an undergraduate student of archaeology. Since the late 1970s Avner was a Co-Director of the sea and land excavations conducted by the Caesarea Ancient Harbour Excavations Project (CAHEP), and from 1989 until recently he was a senior partner in the Combined Caesarea Expedition (CCE). Within this project he focused on the land locked Herodian Inner Basin along with other harbour facilities exposed under water. From 1993 onwards he continued to direct the underwater work and was a Co-Director of the Land Project at Caesarea.

He received his Ph.D. from Hebrew University and taught his entire career at Haifa. He was Head of the Department for Maritime Civilisations at the Centre for Maritime Studies at the University of Haifa, now known as the Recanati Institute for Maritime Studies. He was involved in many projects and studies beyond his core work at Caesarea, and published and lectured widely on

a variety of topics within maritime archaeology. He was a keen supporter of international collaboration and encouraged multi-national participation in the underwater archaeological projects that he directed, whether this was at Caesarea or more recently as a Co-Director of the underwater excavations at Liman Tepe in Turkey. His knowledge and expertise on ancient harbours of the Mediterranean, and in particular the Levant, was exceptional, and his leadership in this discipline at the University of Haifa will be sorely missed.

Avner was a truly renaissance man; as well as being an internationally-renowned maritime archaeologist and teacher he was also a very gifted poet and artist. I know that his friend and colleague Dr Yael Arnon plans to finish his book, especially as it was within one final chapter of being completed. The importance of this work and its completion cannot be overestimated.

The archeological world, and especially maritime archaeology, has lost one of its most colourful and knowledgeable characters who will be missed by many—but his legacy, our knowledge of Caesarea, will last forever.

Christopher Brandon
London