Professor Rachel Feig Vishnia passed away on February 6th, 2015, after a long struggle with cancer. During her years of illness she continued to be active in teaching and research, and in editing *Scripta Classica Israelica* as the editor-in-chief (a post she held between 2009 and 2014, after being a co-editor during the years 2005-2008). Special care was paid by Rachel to the last volume she edited, which was dedicated to Professor Hannah Cotton upon her retirement (vol. XXXIII, 2014). At the annual conference of the Israel Society for the Promotion of Classical Studies, held at Ben Gurion University, in June 2014, Rachel made an enormous effort, hardly noticed by others, to come and present this volume herself. This was typical of her character: always proud, hard-working and rewarding to those she appreciated and loved.

Rachel Feig Vishnia’s academic interest was not always focused on ancient Rome; she started her Master’s degree on the history of the USSR, and worked in the Cummings Center for Russia and East European Studies in Tel Aviv University; but soon, following her participation in a seminar given by the late Benjamin Cohen (1921-2000), she changed direction and immersed herself in the study of one of the most obscure and fascinating periods of Roman history: the early and middle Republic. Upon completion of her Ph.D. in 1989, she joined the Department of History at Tel Aviv University, where she taught until the very end.

Her first book, *State, Society, and Popular Leaders in Mid-Republican Rome 241-167 BC* (1996), is one of her many studies on the Republic (see the articles in her list of publications), culminating in her book on elections in Rome, first published in Hebrew, and then in an English translation. The Hebrew version, *Elections, Electors and the Elected in Republican Rome* (2008), includes an annotated Hebrew translation of the letter known as *Commentariolum Petitionis*, a handbook on electioneering usually ascribed to Cicero’s brother. The translation serves as a point of reference to a lucid and comprehensive discussion of politics and society, the tension between the various governing institutions and the prominence of elections and electioneering in the political life of Republican Rome. As for the English version, *Roman Elections in the Age of Cicero* (2012), it is, to quote one critic, “a serious scholarly work … There is much of value here, and this book will doubtless (and rightly) find a permanent place in university reading lists for courses in ancient history” — as indeed it has.

Rachel had a special interest in two further subjects: the status of women in the Greco-Roman world (as we see in her articles ‘Women and Education in Ancient Rome’ and ‘The Vestal Virgins — Women outside the Family in Rome’, and in her editing a special issue of the Israeli historical quarterly *Zmanim* on Prostitutes and Prostitution in the Ancient World); and the...
scholar at the Centre Camille Jullian — Archéologie Méditerranéenne et Africaine, Université de Provence: Aix-Marseille/ Maison Méditerranéenne des Sciences de l’Homme, she presented papers on Roman history, on the history of Marseille and on funerary archaeology, and was also engaged with the subject of Jews in Roman Gallia and their funerary practices, in collaboration with French archaeologists (‘Le Sarcophage de Pompeia Iudea et Cossutius Eutycles — À propos d’une découverte récente à Arles’ and ‘A Female Carved Representation from Southern Gaul in the Light of Iconography and Epigraphy’). Sadly, her future plans in the field of Roman history — especially her research projects on the relations between Rome and Marseille, the Jews in the Roman Empire, and ancient Rome in Fellini’s movies, were not implemented due to her illness.

Rachel’s passion for Roman history had an additional facet. She rightly believed that an Israeli scholar should look not only to the academic community of one’s peers, but also to the knowledge-thirsty non-professionals who were eager to learn about ancient Rome. In contrast to many scholars, Rachel thought that at least part of her vocation was to promote classical studies and ancient history among the wider public in Israel. Hence her book and articles published in Hebrew and addressed to Hebrew readers and students, her consent to invitations to talk on the radio or television and the reviews of popular and academic books published in daily newspapers.

Rachel was a demanding teacher; she believed that academic studies were something to be taken seriously, as a means to widening one’s knowledge and acquiring methodological tools, and not as a pastime. Her students were required to attend classes, read the relevant material, and actively participate in class. Those who did so were immensely rewarded. Rachel was a dedicated, erudite teacher, generously imparting her wide and thorough knowledge to everyone who was willing to learn.

On her death, Rachel Feig Vishnia joined other prominent historians of ancient Rome who taught at the Department of History in Tel Aviv University: Benjamin Cohen, Zeev Rubin (who were both her mentors and friends), Zvi Yavetz, and Zeev Rubinsohn. Nulli secunda.

Avshalom Laniado
Rachel Zelnick-Abramovitz

List of Publications

I) Publications in English and French

1) Books:

2) Articles/Chapters in Books:
‘Caius Flaminius and the lex Metilia de fullonibus’, Athenaeum 75 (1987), 527-534.
OBITUARIES 283


A Female Carved Representation from Southern Gaul in the Ligurian Museum of Pula, 2014, 74-80 (together with V. Gaggadis-Robin).

II) Scholarly Publications in Hebrew

1) Books:

‘ב componentDidUpdate nósחיים ברטנולית זרעים ושתיה. ירושלים, 2008.

[Elections, Electors and the Elected in Republican Rome, Tel Aviv, 2008.]

2) Articles:


Compiled by Avshalom Laniado