

projects mentioned above. He was married from 1948 to Chava Goldberg (who passed away in 2015). The couple had three children and numerous grand- and great-grandchildren.

The family of Classical archaeologists and historians in Israel has lost one of its important members as well as one of its most humane representatives.

May his memory be blessed.

Moshe Fischer

### **Yechiel Max Zlattner**

1926-2014

On July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014, several weeks after his eighty-eighth birthday, Yechiel Max Zlattner, a former teacher at the Division of Ancient History of the Department of General History, University of Tel Aviv, passed away. His life, like most of his contemporaries, was shaped by the Holocaust and its aftermath.

Yechiel, the Hebrew name, which he adopted after his arrival in Israel, was born as Max Zlattner in the year 1926. He was the only son of a middle-class notary and a house-wife, who lived in the city of Košice in eastern Slovakia, at the time part of the Republic of Czechoslovakia. This city is located near the Hungarian border, a fact that had a decisive impact on his life as well as of his parents later on. Košice of the twenties and thirties had a flourishing and vibrant Jewish community, which was later entirely annihilated in the Holocaust. In the local *Gymnázium* he acquired a vast basic education, and a profound knowledge of Latin, which assisted him many years afterwards.

The peaceful life of the Jews in Košice came to an end with the dissolution of the Czechoslovakian Republic after the Munich Agreement of September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1938. A month later, in October 1938, southern and eastern Slovakia, including the city of Košice, passed over to Hungary.

Sometime later, Yechiel and his parents moved to Budapest. There, despite the persecutions of the Nazis and their Hungarian collaborating government, the three managed somehow to survive, while most of their relatives perished.

In 1944, at the age of eighteen, Yechiel was called to a compulsory labour-service in one of the work-battalions, which the fascist regime established for the Jewish men. Under the conditions of the on-going war and the anti-Jewish persecutions of the government, very few survived of those battalions. As he recounted, the young Jews who were called with him to that service were most fortunate, because they were drafted relatively late. Since in that year the Eastern (namely, the Soviet) Front was rapidly moving westward, no Jewish work-battalions could be sent eastward any more, and they were therefore stationed inside Hungary.

Moreover, Yechiel and some of his comrades were assigned to a battalion, commanded by a Hungarian army officer by the rank of a captain, who was an honest person. Hence, unlike many other such units, no recruit of that battalion suffered from persecution. Accordingly, after the War, those who formerly served under him gratefully testified in favor of their humane commander.

That period of persecution finally ended in January 1945, with the Soviet occupation of Budapest, which saved the last Jewish community in Hungary. By that time Yechiel was already released from his unit, and unwillingly became a witness of the battle on Budapest. Yet, despite the liberation of the city, the Jewish survivors had to deal with another double threat — hunger and cold. As a result of that freezing cold, his fingers lost their sensitivity.

Three years later, after the State of Israel was established in May 1948, Yechiel immigrated to the new-born state, and joined Kibbutz Tel-Yitzhak, near Netanja. After some months in the kibbutz, he was called to military service. Later on he joined the standing army, became an officer

(major), and remained there for nearly two decades. His parents arrived later, and settled down in Ramat Hasharon, near Tel-Aviv, where all the three shared the same house.

In 1968, still in uniform, and relatively late, he began his academic studies towards the degree of B.A. at the recently founded Department of General History of the young University of Tel-Aviv. There I met him two years later. As a student, he was much older than all of us: While we were in our early twenties, he was in his mid-forties. His daily conduct always reflected the well-educated mid-European gentleman, who knew several languages: German, English, Hungarian and Russian, and had a vast library at home. Unlike other students, he was always well dressed, and as a real intellectual took his studies most seriously. Apparently, for these qualities, the Founder and Head of the Department, the late Prof. Zvi Yavetz, asked him in the early seventies to join the academic staff, after he had left the army. He stayed there as a teacher of Roman History for about two decades, till his retirement in the early nineties.

In 1978 he submitted his M.A. thesis, supervised by Prof. Yavetz, on "Political Contents in Tacitus' *Dialogus de Oratoribus*". For his students, he published in 1981 the *Guide to the Study of the Classical Period*, which was reprinted in 1985. Between 1984 and 1991 he published three papers on Roman History in the Hebrew periodical *Zmanim* (Periods). In 1999, using his military experience, he published a volume in German in the series *Xenia* about Hannibal's secret service, which was called *Hannibals Geheimdienst im Zweiten Punischen Krieg*. His great interest in the Roman historian Tacitus led to the writing of his doctoral dissertation, kindly supervised again by the late Prof. Zvi Yavetz, that bore the title of "Studies in Tacitus' *Opera Minora*". Due to his failing health, that work, nearly finished, was never submitted.

Since just two of his relatives survived, and remained abroad, he had no family in Israel. Instead, some of his colleagues and students became his close family. Those who knew him will always remember his kind-hearted, generous, and learned personality.

Yitzhak Dana