

How Archaeology Is Thwarting Those Who Want to Rewrite History

The spring 2018 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review* announced the retirement of its founder, Hershel Shanks, after 43 years of service.

Mr. Shanks is an example of the impact a dedicated layman can make on the scientific, historic and religious world. Trained as a Harvard lawyer, he fell in love with biblical archaeology on a sabbatical to Jerusalem in 1973. It was Shanks who led the crusade to get the Dead Sea scrolls released by the scholars who had kept them under wraps for 50 years. He also covered the major archaeological controversies where the religious and political fault lines of the Holy Land are played out.

One of the major fault lines comes between the religious and the secular world views of scholars. The secular scholars are constantly attacking the work of earlier Christian and Jewish archaeologists, with a “minimalist” school which argues that such biblical figures as David are mythological. Another line of attack comes from Palestinians who, for political reasons, want to deny Jewish history and try to prevent archaeologists from digging up the Jewish past. There is also an occasional conflict between Jewish and Christian acceptance of findings.

While the BAR, as it is affectionately known, is a secular, not religious, publication, they do try to fairly present the issues. They gleefully reported an artifact which substantiated the existence of the “House of David,” to the chagrin of the minimalists. In their January/February 2014 issue, they published an article which proves that the site of David’s palace in Jerusalem has been found. Some years back

the BAR demolished Palestinian political arguments by proving that the very name of "Palestine" was derived from the Greek word for "wrestler", which translates into the national Hebrew name of "Israel" (He wrestles with God). In their January/February 2016 issue they exposed a *New York Times* article which falsely cast doubt on the historicity of the Jewish temples, a favorite technique of Palestinian propaganda. In the May/June 2017 issue, eminent archaeologist William G. Dever exposed the fallacies of the "minimalist" view in his article, entitled "Whom Do You Believe—the Bible or Archaeology?".

Our prayer is that secular, political and religious attacks on biblical archaeology will not be allowed to obscure the truth of God's Word. We thank Hershel Shanks for his leadership and pray that BAR and Biblical archaeologists will continue fearlessly stand up to those who want to rewrite history to suit their agendas.

And we thank the Lord that He has left us plenty of evidence to confirm the veracity of the Bible as the solid rock on which our faith can rely. {eoa}

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