



Freeing the Dead Sea Scrolls: And Other Adventures of an Archaeology Outsider

Hershel Shanks

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A world-renowned biblical archaeology scholar, Hershel Shanks is the Founder and Editor of the *Biblical Archaeology Review*. Once a successful Washington Attorney, Shanks changed careers after a trip to the Holy Land and devoted himself to the study of biblical archaeology.

When the Dead Sea Scrolls (1947-1956) were discovered, a complex tale of theft and conspiracy began in the world of biblical archaeology. Hershel Shanks, a chief protagonist in the story, spearheaded a campaign to release the scrolls to the wider scholarly community throughout the 1980s, using the *Biblical Archaeology Review* as a mouthpiece for the cause. Later Shanks' involvement greatly increased when he published reconstructed fascicles of the secret scrolls amidst much controversy. Shanks must be seen as one of the crucial factors that finally brought these vital tools of academic study, these Dead Sea Scrolls, to the wider world.

Elsewhere Shanks' vigorous defense of the authenticity of the Ossuary - which is said to have contained the bones of The Brother of Jesus - is explored in one of the book's liveliest chapters.

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