A typical academic festschrift assembles articles from a handful of scholars and publishes them in honor of the intellectual being celebrated. Because BAR is a magazine and not a 400-page edited volume, and because there were so many wanting to contribute, we decided to allow a number of individuals to offer their reflections, congratulations, and a few fun stories as a way of saying thank you to Hershel for his 43 years of service as Editor of BAR. Contributors include archaeologists, Bible scholars, longtime BAS employees (both past and present), as well as designers, photographers, and a number of others who knew Hershel, worked with him, and wanted to share a brief thought about what Hershel has meant to them and to the field of Biblical archaeology. We couldn’t possibly accommodate everyone who wanted to contribute; if we had done so, to roughly paraphrase John 21:25, “the whole world would not have room for the size of the special issue that would be published.” It is our hope that each of these reflections will give our readers a glimpse into Hershel’s life, career, and relationships with the people who made BAR so successful. So please enjoy these reflections from some of Hershel’s closest friends, and may their collective words become an inspirational, informational, and entertaining part of Hershel’s great legacy.—B.C.
A Surprising Success
Joseph Aviram
Israel Exploration Society, President

I first met Hershel 40 years ago, when he came to the Israel Exploration Society office along with Suzanne Singer (a member of his editorial staff), bringing several first issues of Biblical Archaeology Review, a humble journal in a small format. This was my first surprise. I did not know Hershel, but he told me that he was a lawyer in Washington, D.C., and that he had founded the Biblical Archaeology Society and dedicated himself to the editing of BAR.

The truth is that I did not believe that it would be a successful endeavor. I am pleased to report that I was wrong. After a short while, BAR, despite its humble beginnings, turned into a large and impressive magazine chock-full of information about the archaeological activities taking place in Israel and its environs and with an abundance of excellent color photographs. From what I heard, its distribution expanded and reached hundreds of thousands of subscribers worldwide. I was very pleased to learn that our archaeological enterprises had gained such a wide and diverse audience.

Within a short while, Hershel and I had become fast friends. Hershel came to Israel several times a year, and his first visit was always to the Israel Exploration Society. As Director of the Society, I looked forward to these visits, in which we exchanged information about what was going on in the field of Biblical archaeology. We also met every year at the annual meetings of the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) and Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) in the U.S. BAR became the primary forum for publication of our archaeological endeavors. Hershel met with excavators in Israel, visited archaeological digs, and heard all the news firsthand.

He was an ardent supporter of the international archaeological congresses that we conducted in Israel; he helped us with their financing, and, furthermore, he attracted many participants. He wanted us to continue these congresses and was prepared to continue his support. Regrettably, we were unable to do so, despite our good intentions.

Every year—and sometimes several times a year—Hershel would show up at my office, and we would talk about all the issues that at times led to heated controversy among archaeologists. I was surprised when, several months ago, I received a letter from him informing me that he was 86 years old and had decided to retire from the editing of BAR upon reaching the age of 87. Thus he would edit only four more issues. This was an utter shock to me because BAR without Hershel is inconceivable.

I have no doubt that many will be sorry to hear of Hershel’s decision to retire, for they have been eagerly awaiting the magazine and his foreword for the past 40 years. I hope that he has found a suitable editor to replace him, and that he will continue to be active behind the scenes. I trust that the readers of this special issue will find it rich, diverse, and interesting, and that it will give them a comprehensive picture of the Hershel I have had the privilege of getting to know.

Hershel was an ardent advocate of our publications and, most notably, the monumental publication of the New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land (NEAEHL). He exhorted us to publish the fifth volume, which would update the encyclopedia and provide information about all the excavations. He found donors for this purpose and was a full partner in the expenses. This endeavor was a very successful one, which gained wide distribution. In addition to the encyclopedia, we are joint partners in the publication of a popular series on excavations in Israel. To date, five books have appeared in this series, recounting the story of the excavations at Masada, the City of David, Hazor, Lachish, and Megiddo, in both Hebrew and in English.

Over the years, he never refused my requests for financing. Whenever I would turn to him with a request, he would respond, “How can I say no to Joseph Aviram?” and would always come through with donors or else would provide the funds himself in the name of the Biblical Archaeology Society.

On the occasion of my 100th birthday, he, along with Sue Laden, Publisher of the Biblical Archaeology Society, sent a generous gift to be earmarked for various endeavors of the Israel Exploration Society.

*Hershel’s last issue as Editor of BAR was the November/December 2017 issue.
Suzanne F. Singer

BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY REVIEW

just before the Shanks’s departure, we stepped into Hershel’s footsteps. Our year extended to four, during that time Hershel launched BAR and asked me to be his Jerusalem Correspondent. Oh, what a pleasure! Armed with no experience but my masthead position for this new magazine, I could rightfully claim my need to visit archaeologists at their sites.

An early opportunity occurred in Jerusalem’s Jewish Quarter, where Professor Nahman Avigad uncovered arrowheads at the base of an Israelite stone defensive tower. The arrowheads were dramatic evidence from the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem that destroyed the First Temple. Avigad was mystified and suspicious of my association with Biblical Archaeology Review, an unknown magazine. He refused to let me photograph the tower and the arrowheads. That led soon after to Hershel’s trademark: urging scholars to let the public know about their discoveries without waiting for publication in a scholarly journal.

Hershel angered some scholars because of his convictions, but he never became angry at them. He would oppose them, defending the public’s right to know, and at the same time reach out in friendship. And eventually, almost everyone he criticized, most famously those holding tight to the Dead Sea Scrolls, came to respect his unrelenting and, ultimately, successful campaign.

Each year Hershel traveled to Israel claiming doubt about how he would fill his days. Then he would begin phoning, the first always to Joseph Aviram at the Israel Exploration Society. As he heard about discoveries and about who was in the field, his days would fill with climbing around excavations, seeing friends at the École Biblique, and checking in with the directors of the Israel Museum and the Bible Lands Museum. Friday night was Shabbat dinner at my home with archaeologists.

Insatiably curious, Hershel was relentlessly searching for BAR articles. To the common question “How many pages?” Hershel would always answer, “Write what you need to say and then stop.” With facts in hand, he could prune, clarify, and ask for additions with the skill of a masterful editor. The outcome would be enticing and factual without being ponderous, embellished with photos, plans, and art.

Hershel created BAR as a hobby that became his life. Thank you, Hershel, for the opportunity to constantly learn and to aim high for every article BAR published, and for enriching the life I now live in Israel with all our family.

Partners in Adventure
Suzanne F. Singer

Biblical Archaeology Review, Contributing Editor

My Hershel story begins with his “Dear Everyone” letters arriving in our mailbox during the year he lived in Jerusalem (1972–73) with his wife Judith and two young daughters, Elizabeth and Julia. Hershel wrote about their archaeological explorations. And when in August 1973 my husband, Max, and I and our four young sons arrived in Jerusalem just before the Shanks’s departure, we

Larger Than Life
Eric H. Cline
The George Washington University

I have never lived, professionally speaking, in a world without Hershel Shanks and Biblical Archaeology Review. He began the magazine in 1975, when I was still in high school. I don’t remember when I first began subscribing, to be honest, but by the time I got to graduate school in the early ’80s, it was de rigueur to read it, albeit sometimes surreptitiously hidden inside the Philadelphia Inquirer, while the Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research (BASOR) and the American Journal of Archaeology (AJA) lay more obviously out on my desk. I still remember breathlessly reading his gossip reports on the annual ASOR meetings, with his take on the participants and their papers, both good and—even more fun and juicy—bad, with headlines like “Dever Stars at Lackluster Annual Meeting.”*** I have since sometimes found myself on the receiving end of his “zings,” and even a First Person...
column or two, but my life, and career in Biblical archaeology, would have been far less interesting without Hershel in the mix. It is also a testament to Hershel that he has a gift—a journalist’s eye, as it were—of spotting hidden nuggets within the world of arcane academic scholarship. Sifting through jargon-laden and stilted writing in scholastic journals, he winnowed wheat from chaff and brought topics, ideas, and new discoveries to a much larger audience of interested readers. Suggesting, cajoling, and occasionally even heavily reworking manuscripts by and from some of the most distinguished archaeologists and others working in the Middle East, Hershel brought the world of Biblical archaeology to life for thousands of subscribers each issue, not to mention their extended families and friends. He was, is, and shall remain larger than life, an outsized—he would say an outsider’s—impact on the field, which is summed up in this single concluding example. I still remember vividly when we were in San Antonio for the ASOR meetings in 2004; my wife's grandmother came with us. Of all the famous archaeologists, scholars, and other people who were in attendance, there was one—and only one—person whom she wanted to meet, and that was Hershel.

Hershel Shanks and Eric H. Cline

firsthand, he would volunteer at the Gezer excavations, where I was a staff member. I recall Hershel’s enthusiasm upon arrival—and his considerably less enthusiasm upon departure: “One day of digging was more than enough for me!”

Despite his lack of authentic excavation experience, Hershel has made a major contribution to the study of ancient Near Eastern archaeology, especially to the archaeology of ancient Israel and its neighbors. His aggressive iconoclastic approach, reflected in Biblical Archaeology Review, has stimulated unparalleled popular interest in archaeology and created a different kind of dialogue among academics, in which no subject was taboo and which often advanced the discussion on critical issues. This is not to say that Hershel’s approach was always “on the side of the angels.” Many of us who contributed articles to BAR had to suffer his arbitrary editing and sometimes insulting comments, although I for one always received a typed letter of apology after the fact. In one case, however, the potential damage was so egregious that Hershel even took the time to send me a handwritten letter.

Hershel’s visits to the Albright were always great fun and often sparked animated discussions. Truth be told, however, as he has gotten older, his main reason for coming to the Albright was to use the new “facilities” located off the courtyard portico. To ensure his unhindered access, Hershel was awarded a golden key, which we pray he will be using "ad me’ah ve’esrim (“to a hundred and twenty”).

No Taboos
Seymour Gitin

I first met Hershel in the early 1970s—shortly after the publication of his monograph The City of David: A Guide to Biblical Jerusalem—in the courtyard of the W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem. I was visiting Bill and Norma Dever, and our discussion centered on Hershel’s monograph. Bill suggested that since the Guide was so well written and made the archaeology of Jerusalem so appealing to a lay audience, Hershel should publish his own journal on Biblical archaeology. And so it was.

Hershel subsequently decided that in order to experience archaeology firsthand, he would volunteer at the Gezer excavations, where I was a staff member. I recall Hershel’s enthusiasm upon arrival—and his considerably less enthusiasm upon departure: “One day of digging was more than enough for me!”

Despite his lack of authentic excavation experience, Hershel has made a major contribution to the study of ancient Near Eastern archaeology, especially to the archaeology of ancient Israel and its neighbors. His aggressive iconoclastic approach, reflected in Biblical Archaeology Review, has stimulated unparalleled popular interest in archaeology and created a different kind of dialogue among academics, in which no subject was taboo and which often advanced the discussion on critical issues. This is not to say that Hershel’s approach was always “on the side of the angels.” Many of us who contributed articles to BAR had to suffer his arbitrary editing and sometimes insulting comments, although I for one always received a typed letter of apology after the fact. In one case, however, the potential damage was so egregious that Hershel even took the time to send me a handwritten letter.

Hershel’s visits to the Albright were always great fun and often sparked animated discussions. Truth be told, however, as he has gotten older, his main reason for coming to the Albright was to use the new “facilities” located off the courtyard portico. To ensure his unhindered access, Hershel was awarded a golden key, which we pray he will be using "ad me’ah ve’esrim (“to a hundred and twenty”).

Born in Our Living Room
Eric and Carol Meyers
Duke University, Professors Emeriti

We have told this story before, but it bears repeating on this special occasion celebrating Hershel’s long tenure at the helm of Biblical Archaeology Review. Our friendship with Hershel, which goes back to the early 1970s, predates the birth of BAR. And in some small way, we like to think, we had a role
in the launch of this important journal. Hershel and his family were visiting us in our Durham, North Carolina, home, and he was describing his vision of a new publication that would connect the general public with the many archaeological discoveries that were relevant to the Bible. He told us that he would call this publication a “newsletter” about archaeology and the Bible. We vigorously objected. That word seemed to denote a much more limited report than he envisioned. Our suggestion—Carol’s, actually—was that it be called a “review”: Biblical Archaeology Review. That title would not only better represent his project, but it would also provide an acronym—BAR—that would reflect his day job as an attorney at that time. Thus BAR—or at least its name—was born on our living room couch, and it has grown and prospered ever since.

Hershel’s editorship of BAR all these years has been good for Biblical studies and good for archaeology. It is hard to imagine not having Hershel write an editorial (“First Person”) on a subject about which scholars have diverse opinions. His role in highlighting the creases and divides among scholars has enlivened the field and attracted the attention of scholars as well as the general public. Noteworthy in this respect is the so-called maximalist-minimalist debate, which still has no consensus; it would hardly have been so well known and influential without the provocation and stimulation of Hershel and BAR. We hope that the new materials that emerge from excavations and are featured in BAR articles will keep the discussion going for years to come, enlightening us all in the process.

So we salute Hershel on this milestone and recall with amazement and wonder all that has happened since that day many years ago when BAR was named in our living room. We offer thanks to Hershel for being the provocateur we all need and for his willingness to endure the criticism he elicits along with many accolades, and we wish him the best in his new role as Editor Emeritus at BAR.

An Editor’s Editor
John F. Kutsko
Society of Biblical Literature, Executive Director

In the field of Biblical studies and Syro-Palestinian archaeology, Hershel Shanks is in a class by himself. He is a legal mind, an intellectual, an entrepreneur, and a scholar. His vision for the Biblical Archaeology Society required passion, commitment, and a dash—a large dash—of chutzpah. Say what scholars may, it is a mark of distinction to be published, or to be published about, in the pages of BAR. When I was a graduate student, David Noel Freedman cited in Bible Review an observation I had made in a seminar class.* While just an endnote, I felt like I had made the cover of Rolling Stone. I first met Hershel in 2010, and he exceeded my expectations: a gentleman, if not always gentle, a scholar without a Ph.D., and an editor’s editor. I prepare for conversations with him like a witness before a cross-examination. Hershel reflects the passion and purpose often drained from academics and the academy. In his ninth decade, Hershel remains hard to keep up with, but he wants us to try.

Shooting for Hershel

Zev Radovan

Bible Land Pictures

In the ’70s, I was a young photographer starting my way in archaeological photography. I was working at the Israel Museum when somebody told me that an American was looking for a photographer to do a job for him. I called the American at his hotel; his name was Hershel, and he was visiting Israel with his young family. We arranged a meeting, and he told me that he was very impressed by his trip to the City of David and would like to publish something about it. He needed some pictures and asked if I was ready to accompany him to the site for one day and do the job.

When asked how much I would charge, I said 90 lirot (about $50, a really small sum since I wanted and needed the job). “No, that is too expensive,” said Hershel (as expected). We haggled a bit; I went down to 70. Still too much. “I will let you know,” he said.

By pure chance, we met that evening in a restaurant. “Well, what about it?” I asked (being ready to reduce to 60).

“OK, then 70, let’s do it,” said Hershel.

We arranged a day to tour the City of David. That was many years after Kathleen Kenyon excavated there and many years before Yigal Shiloh started his excavation. It was a particularly hot day, and the place was nothing but a dusty hill with a few stones scattered around, the Pool of Siloam, and Hezekiah’s Tunnel, through which Hershel dragged me with water reaching to my ... Anyway we were both very excited and happy about the project.

A few months after this, in 1973, I received the book The City of David: A Guide to Biblical Jerusalem with a nice dedication by Hershel. The book received a very good review by the usually critical archaeologists and everybody else. This was Hershel’s first go at archaeology; BAR came later. And the rest is history.

Reaching the Masses

Jodi Magness

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

I am grateful for the opportunity to honor Hershel by highlighting two of his great contributions to the field of Biblical archaeology. First, through BAR, the Bible and Archaeology Fest, and other publications and events, Hershel has brought Biblical archaeology to the masses—reaching far beyond academic circles. This is important because public outreach and education are vital to the future of archaeology. Second, by using BAR as a bully pulpit in the 1980s, Hershel helped bring to an end the delayed publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls, a process that ultimately made the scrolls accessible to the wider scholarly community and the public.

Unwavering and Obstreperous

William G. Dever

University of Arizona, Professor Emeritus

I’m one of the few people who can say they knew Hershel Shanks and BAR before they both became famous. In 1972, when I was Director of the W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem, I answered a knock on the door of the Director’s residence, and a man introduced himself, saying, “I’m Hershel Shanks.”

I replied, “I’m William Dever.” So what? Perhaps Hershel thought that I should recognize the name. After all, he had published in magazines like Commentary. And, besides being an attorney in a prominent law firm, he had published a well-regarded biography of Judge Learned Hand.*

I invited Hershel in, and he told me that he was on a year’s sabbatical in Jerusalem. He had already written an account of ongoing archaeological discoveries in Jerusalem. He further informed me that he was going to launch a popular magazine to report on new discoveries that would illuminate the Bible and attract the attention of a large audience in the United States. I remember telling Hershel that no amateur could possibly understand and interpret the then-burgeoning and complex archaeological research in Israel in any sensible way. Boy, was I wrong!

Hershel’s family and ours got

acquainted, socialized, and toured some that year. I recall seeing the first, modest issue of BAR later. I disliked Hershel's penchant for controversy (somewhat refined in due time). Nevertheless, I did serve on his Editorial Board off and on, resigning several times when we differed on various issues or when I thought he was using my name to stir the pot. (One article by Hershel was titled "Dever's 'Sermon on the Mound."")

Hershel and I have argued a lot over the past 40-odd years. In retrospect, we both must have enjoyed it, and we came to respect each other for our differing but significant contributions to the enterprise that we both loved so much. What's not to like? Israel, the Bible, and archaeology!

One could point to Hershel's use of the growing BAR platform to promote various causes, such as the need to publish the Dead Sea Scrolls. His tactic was always to overdramatize the topic and try to marshal public attention to pressure scholars (which usually worked). Then he would turn to a new, perhaps even more sensational issue. I recall saying once, "Hershel, get into epistemology. That's the next big thing."

Without blinking an eye, he replied, "Ok, but what'll I use for illustrations?" Hershel has always had a great sense of humor, an appreciation for words, for pictures, and for the public's thirst for news and novelty.

Much more important than Hershel's numerous individual campaigns was his uncanny understanding of the American public's endless fascination with old-fashioned "Biblical archaeology." And that was at the very time when many of us professionals were trying to separate the two disciplines of archaeology and Biblical studies. Our purpose, of course, was to create a more serious dialogue, to move beyond the old amateur and sterile monologue. In time, we professionals accomplished our agenda, at least in part. But Hershel also accomplished his agenda. And he did it brilliantly, popularizing our complex excavations and esoteric research for a mass audience that we scholars could never have reached. Unfortunately, many professionals don't even try to do that. Simply put, Hershel and BAR have mainstreamed what is variously called "Biblical," "Syro-Palestinian," or now often "Levantine" archaeology. That must be recognized as a unique and invaluable achievement. And all along, it was Hershel's unwavering and sometimes obstreperous vision.

It is hard to imagine our two disciplines as they matured, or our enhanced understanding of the Bible, without the profound effect that BAR has had under Hershel Shanks's editorship. And I cannot imagine a successor who will put his unique stamp on the magazine as Hershel did. All I can say, as a colleague Hershel's age, is, "Until a hundred and twenty!"

**BAR, March/April 1987.

Best of Its Kind
David Ussishkin
Tel Aviv University, Professor Emeritus

I have known my good friend Hershel for 45 years—and perhaps more. We first met in Jerusalem, where as a young lawyer interested in the Bible and archaeology, Hershel spent a sabbatical
leave. I have been a loyal and proud member of BAR’s Editorial Advisory Board since issue No. 1 of Vol. 1.

Again and again through the years, I have marveled at Hershel’s achievements as BAR’s Editor. He turned a small newsletter into an established and famous magazine, the best of its kind. Significantly, it has reached large numbers of people who were never before interested in archaeology and the Bible and has turned them into enthusiastic readers, many even participating in archaeological excavations. Hershel’s energy, initiative, and gift of writing are remarkable. Though trained as a lawyer, Hershel has undoubtedly understood the discipline of Biblical archaeology and its needs and contributed to its development more than many professional archaeologists.

The following story symbolizes the success of Hershel’s lifework: In 1990, I gave a lecture on my excavations at a small university in the Midwest. The president of the university was the chairperson; he raised in his hand an issue of BAR and introduced me with the following words: “Our lecturer tonight is such an important person that he even writes articles in BAR!”

I am sending my very best wishes to Hershel on his retirement, wishing him many years of continued and pleasurable activity.

My Old Neighbor
Amnon Ben-Tor
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

I met Hershel in the early ’70s when he came to Jerusalem on what may have been a kind of sabbatical. It so happened that he rented an apartment in the same building where my family and I resided. What a coincidence! It did not take long for our common interest in archaeology to bring us together. It has thus been more than 45(!) years that we have known each other, keeping more or less in constant contact. In addition to his annual visits to Israel and mine to the United States, we usually meet on the web, or—mainly when I am asked to contribute an article—on the phone.

Since the word “Bible” is a key word in Hershel’s world, his interest is focused mainly on the First and Second Temple periods, which makes us both “Biblical archaeologists,” yet with different roles within the field. Hershel does not easily give up in an argument, nor do I, and we have had quite a few of those. So our discussions (do I need to mention the inscribed ivory pomegranate or the so-called James Ossuary?) occasionally become quite “heated.” Yet we have never gone too far, and I know that we are still friends.

In BAR Hershel did a tremendous service to archaeology, bringing the “word” to a very large and diverse public. One can only hope that after he officially “quits,” thinking that he has finally contributed enough, he will continue to stick around insofar as archaeology is concerned. I wish Hershel all the very best and a happy retirement!

P.S. Hershel, it’s been quite a while since you last visited the one and only site of Hazor! Now that you will have a lot of free time, I hope to see you there soon!

Contagious Enthusiasm
Bonnie Mullin
Biblical Archaeology Review, former Administrative Editor

After a gratifying career in biological research, I just wanted to do something stimulating that I could leave at the office at the end of the day. Seeking an enriched environment close to home drew me to answer the ad for employment at BAR. I’d always loved the Bible, but archaeology? History was my least favorite subject, and I definitely wasn’t a geography maven.

Sixteen years later, I found myself at the end of what had blossomed into an unexpected second career, thanks to working alongside the most enthusiastic octogenarian I know.

Hershel’s energy abounds in whatever he is engaged. Working with him
is like immersing yourself in a three-ring circus. Even with deadlines and details already bursting the schedule, he was never afraid to drop one more pursuit into the mix. (Oy, even if it meant staff spending an occasional weekend to accomplish it!) Whether sharing BAR article ideas from his most recent trip to Israel, raising funds for student archaeological dig scholarships, choosing BAR cover possibilities, perusing a stack of books for review, or reading the beloved letters to the editor, he’s “all-in” excited. He even makes a big deal over staff-baked homemade goodies. He’s passionate about it all. And “Wow!” (his signature exclamation), the roar of his hearty laughter—his enthusiasm is contagious.

Hershel stressed the importance of developing personal relationships. He believed that the phone has much more impact than email and encouraged us to call people, as he did, to make those connections more powerful when we were inquiring about content or following up with world-renowned archaeologists and Biblical scholars.

*Outsider* Hershel Shanks put the spotlight on the arena of Biblical archaeology through BAR. With all his controversy, he made it beautiful, educational, thought-provoking, and fun as he drove it to his audience. And he did it fearlessly with enthusiasm and passion.

He unquestionably won over this history-hating skeptic.

His “love story” with archaeology began when he visited the City of David in Jerusalem and discovered that there was no guidebook to the remains that were visible there in the 1970s. So he sat down and wrote a modest booklet on the site. Since then, Jerusalem has played a central role in his fields of interest. As I myself was (and still very much am) interested in the archaeology of Jerusalem, our paths crossed, and we have been friends.

I have known Hershel since he took his first steps into Biblical archaeology in the ’70s. He is very opinionated in every detail of archaeology, and he has managed to penetrate deeply into each of the “hot” topics experts have debated. The first thing I usually read in every issue of BAR was his First Person column, in which he expressed his personal and very interesting opinion about everything. Through the years, I have written several articles for BAR, and I have been on its Advisory Board since its inception. I had the pleasure of meeting with Hershel many times both in Israel and the U.S. I toured with him around the ancient sites of Jerusalem, where we had long conversations about the archaeology of the city. We often had disagreements, but it was always a pleasure to argue and discuss things with him. I especially remember Hershel’s visit to my home in Jerusalem in the early ’90s, when he was in the middle of his “world war” on the subject of publishing the Dead Sea Scrolls. I thought that one should honor the rights of scholars who were originally assigned to publish the scrolls. I was proven wrong, and Hershel right; as a result of his struggles, the Dead Sea Scrolls were finally fully published.

Hershel showed special interest in the Temple Mount Sifting Project directed by myself and Yitzhak (Zachi) Dvira since 2004. He visited the sifting site and also paid several visits to our lab, in which we process the finds and prepare the final scientific publication. The finds of the Sifting Project were mentioned in BAR, and the project was covered in two articles in 2016.**

Hershel’s stand on unprovenanced finds—artifacts without proper archaeological context that originate from collections, illicit digs, or the antiquities trade—is entirely different from that of most American scholars. He claims, correctly in my mind, that those finds should be published, though we are both strongly against looting, which, admittedly, is the source of many of these finds. Still, with all due reservations, one can say that the task of the archaeologist is to study and reconstruct the past from the remains of material culture, and it is our obligation to use any material that would be instrumental for that purpose. Not publishing any find that could enhance our knowledge of the past is a betrayal of scholars’ obligations.

Hershel is characterized by deep curiosity and by the ability to learn complicated subjects quickly and in depth. He immediately catches the most important elements of archaeological claims and very easily identifies the weaknesses of scholars’ arguments. Hershel is known for his clear, outspoken views on subjects debated by the scholarly world. Many scholars did not like the initial criticism, but after some years they would often silently admit he was right. His main achievement is making BAR into the most popular and most circulated Biblical archaeology magazine in the world. Many excavation volunteers had their first meeting with the subject through BAR’s pages. I even know of people who became professionals in the field of archaeology after they read an issue of BAR in their dentist’s waiting room.

Above all I cherish Hershel’s personal friendship, which I have had the pleasure of enjoying for the past five decades. I wish Hershel many more fruitful years.

World Without BAR?
Yosef Garfinkel
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The first time I met Hershel is strongly embedded in my memory. It was the last day of Professor Yigael Yadin’s excavations at Tell Beth Shean in the early summer of 1983. I was just starting my M.A. studies at the Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University, and it was a great experience to excavate with Yadin, the greatest Israeli archaeologist. Beth Shean in the Jordan Valley is characterized by its extremely hot weather, so Hershel was all sweaty from climbing up the high tell. I remember that he asked Dr. Shulamit Geva, Yadin’s senior assistant at the excavation, to write an article for Biblical Archaeology Review. Later I asked her what she would write about. She answered that it was not so simple, as BAR had a bad reputation, and it was not so good to publish there.

I remember that in these years Professor Hayim Tadmor, the great Assyriologist, mentioned BAR as a “yellow press,” a term defined as possessing “a style of reporting that emphasizes sensationalism over facts,” and one that “presents little or no legitimate well-researched news and instead uses eye-catching headlines to sell more newspapers.”

About 14 years later, at the 1997 annual ASOR meeting, the ASOR members voted to change the name of their semi-popular journal The Biblical Archaeologist to Near Eastern Archaeology. Some of the people there expressed the concern that Hershel would then change the name of Biblical Archaeology Review to The Biblical Archaeologist.

From these examples, the readers can see that in the early days of BAR, many professional archaeologists and the archaeological establishments were quite unhappy with a new and independent power in the field. Indeed they were right, as one of the main achievements of Hershel was the great crusade he made against the monopoly of a small group of scholars who controlled the unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls. Without Hershel, most of the scrolls would probably remain unpublished today.

Indeed it took Hershel a long time and much hard work to get his way into the archaeological mainstream. From a rather humble start in 1975, BAR became the main tool in transmitting archaeological discoveries and interpretations from the academic world to the general public. Today, I can’t imagine the world without BAR.
We Are All Indebted
Andrew G. Vaughn
American Schools of Oriental Research, Executive Director

“Here’s to Hershel!” That was my toast at a dinner with the editorial committee for ASOR’s Ancient Near East Today e-zine during the 2017 ASOR annual meeting.

Last year’s ASOR annual meeting was the first one that Hershel Shanks had not attended in more than four decades. In light of his absence, I felt that our committee should acknowledge him and his work during the dinner, where we were discussing ways in which ASOR could more effectively reach a public audience. Indeed, Hershel and the Biblical Archaeology Society raised high the banner for public engagement during the ‘80s and ‘90s, when some scholars were calling for a purely academic approach to Syro-Palestinian archaeology. I wanted to toast Hershel because the type of public engagement made possible by BAR has always been important to ASOR, and I thought that it was only appropriate that we recognize and thank him.

I sincerely hope that Hershel will be back with us in Denver at the 2018 annual meeting. I have seen him sitting in the front row of many lectures since I started attending the meetings during my twenties—more than 25 years ago now! He had insightful questions and stimulating observations—even when I disagreed with him strongly. We have remained friends in spite of academic disagreements about the authenticity of objects from the antiquities market (many of which I am convinced are forgeries and/or unhelpful for our reconstruction of the past). It is with gratitude and appreciation that I congratulate him on his retirement as Editor. His greatest legacy is that BAR and the Biblical Archaeology Society will continue to impact the field long after his retirement, and we are all indebted to him for his work.

Calling It Like It Is
Nava Panitz-Cohen
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

I first encountered BAR as a young student of archaeology and right away became a fan. The articles, illustrations, and particular viewpoints on a variety of topics related to Biblical archaeology were a perfect supplement to the intense academic studies I was undertaking at the Hebrew University. My first encounter with Hershel himself was indirect. My professor, Amihai Mazar, together with John Camp, wrote an article for BAR in 2000 about Tel Rehov. When the article came out, the title was different from the original, now being “Will Tel Rehov Save the United Monarchy?” Cutting to the chase, no beating around the bush, Hershel went to the core of the issue and called it like it is (was)! That, in a nutshell, is who Hershel is in my eyes.

Over the years, I contributed occasionally to BAR and, of course, continued to be an avid reader. Three years ago, I saw the headline in BAR “What Should We Do with $25,000?” Having begun, with Bob Mullins and Naama Yahalom-Mack, excavations at Tel Abel Beth Maacah and being desperately in need of funds, I applied. A while later, I received a phone call—from Hershel. “Nava, we decided to give you $10,000 donated by Wayne Shepard.” As I sputtered out my shock and sincere gratitude, Hershel cut me off. “But that’s not enough, so I called John Camp and asked him to match the sum.” John, the

*BAR, March/April 2000.

**Hershel Shanks, First Person: “What Should We Do with $25,000?” BAR, May/June 2015.
generous and supportive person he is, agreed. Thanks to this generous donation, we were able to conduct our excavation season with grand results.

Scholarly, dedicated, provocative, and a real mensch. That is how I see, and appreciate, Hershel Shanks.

Ad 120!

Making Hershel Happy

Robert Sugar
Auras Design

Almost 40 years ago I started working on BAR. As an aspiring graphic designer still in college, I had the best qualification: I was cheap. But I still thought I knew more about magazines than Hershel and his small crew, and maybe I did—but maybe only by a step. I did manage to convince him to let me redesign the magazine, the first of five redesigns we would do over the next few decades. Hershel was then, and has always been, tremendously engaged in what the magazine ought to look like, right down to the spacing of the letters. Even as I built my own firm and reputation, BAR has always hewed to Hershel's unique vision, regardless of what I insisted was the “correct” way to do things.

Many of my designers worked on BAR over the years, and all of them have found Hershel's confidence in his often-spontaneous decisions both frustrating and a challenge to meet. I have always advised them: BAR is his baby, and your job is to make him happy. Try to do that and satisfy yourself. My relationship with Hershel has always been built on a deep admiration for his single-minded curiosity in pursuing what interests him and his willingness to make a difference in a field in which he was often a disrupter.

Throughout it all, he has always maintained an almost childlike enthusiasm for the process and the product of each issue of BAR, from the initial content presentation meeting, through dummy layouts, until critiquing the printed product. BAR was my first client and continues to be my longest. Hershel and I have had our artistic tussles over the years, but I have never doubted the pleasure he takes in our working together, and I'm proud of my contributions trying to “make him happy.”

The Archaeological Evangelist

Amy-Jill Levine
Vanderbilt University

It is difficult to say no to Hershel Shanks. Much like Jesus, he has the capacity to say to otherwise busy people, “Come, follow me. I will publish your article after editing it, and your good news will receive wide distribution.”

His potential disciples sometimes demur, “I don’t do archaeology: the heat, the dust, the waking up early, I might break a nail ….”

And Hershel responds, “Take up your laptop and follow me.” And we do.

What makes Hershel's evangelism compelling is that he does not settle for the obvious. Nor does he seek to be provocative simply for the sake of provocation, despite what some “Letters to the Editor” suggest. He promotes the good news of critical Biblical scholarship that speaks not only to what ancient texts meant, but also to what they might mean today for people who look to the Bible for guidance.

Amy-Jill Levine

In 2002, when he was editing Moment magazine, Hershel asked me to do a piece on Jesus in his Jewish context. He—not I—titled the article “Jesus Who?” Helped both by the provocative title and by Hershel's judicious editing, the piece was selected for inclusion in Arthur Kurzweil's Best Jewish Writing 2003. That one essay convinced me that I could write for the general public, and it made the topic of Jesus kosher for Jews.

To keep the hechsher (kosher “seal of approval”) for putting “Jews” and “Jesus” in the same sentence in place, in 2012 Hershel invited me to contribute a piece titled “What Jews (and Christians Too) Should Know About the New Testament” for BAR.* Also that same year, he published my column “The Many Faces of the Good Samaritan—Most Wrong.”**

Hershel Shanks has introduced the New Testament to Jews and corrected the numerous, erroneous anti-Jewish teachings that come from uninformed Biblical study. He has done more than entertain and educate; he has provided the opportunity for Jews and Christians both to recognize our common history and to work against bearing false witness against each other.

*BAR, March/April 2012.
**BAR, January/February 2012.
A Man for the People
Christopher Rollston
The George Washington University

Hershel Shanks is someone I consider to be a very dear friend. During recent years, he has often written me and suggested that we have lunch at the Cosmos Club, one of the most distinguished social clubs in Washington, D.C., among whose members are some 30 Nobel Prize recipients and some 60 Pulitzer Prize recipients. And among this august membership is the founding editor of Biblical Archaeology Review, Hershel Shanks.

Hershel is certainly known to many as the Editor of BAR, and rightfully so. But he began his professional life not as an editor, but as a lawyer, trained at Harvard. Even in the practice of law, he was no ordinary lawyer. In fact, he rose to such prominence that he has argued law before the Supreme Court of the United States. However, archaeology was his true passion, so long ago he turned from law to archaeology. And we are all the beneficiaries of this fateful decision.

Of course, Hershel is not a field archaeologist; he is not an epigraphist; he is not a historian; and he is not a scholar of the Bible. But he has constantly kept his finger on the pulse of those fields and on the movers and shakers in those fields. He publishes articles by scholars in the pages of his magazine—articles that he laboriously edits for style. Sometimes too laboriously. Indeed, upon receiving Hershel’s edits on the first article I wrote for BAR, I phoned him and said that the edits were just too much and I preferred not to publish the article. He responded to me and said, “Frank Cross once said the same thing to me.” He paused and then continued, “But Frank reconsidered. So give it a couple days, look over it some more, and then let’s talk.”

I did just that. And the more I thought about the article, the more I liked his edits, and the more I came to recognize that his edits made my article more accessible and more comprehensible to the broader public. Along those lines, I am often struck by Hershel’s broad reach. To be sure, the articles in BAR are read at universities and colleges throughout North and South America, Europe, Australia, the Middle East, and Africa, but this is certainly only a small part of Hershel’s reach. I know this because at the only lumberyard in my small Michigan hometown, a learned lumberman has sometimes bent my ear about articles he has read in BAR. And at a Michigan barbershop near my ancestral home, BAR is there among the reading material on the corner table. This is emblematic of Hershel’s ability to reach a broad readership.

In short, Hershel has done a great deal to put Biblical archaeology on the map in homes and businesses throughout this country and beyond. That is not to say that I always agree with Hershel, or for that matter that he always agrees with me. We sometimes differ on substantive issues. But our friendship is deep, heartfelt, and enduring. One anecdote should suffice in this connection:

In August 2012, I wrote an article for the Huffington Post about the fact that the Hebrew Bible and Greek New Testament often marginalize women. Within a few days of the publication of that article, I found myself in deep trouble with my (now former) institution. In December of that same year, I was forced to resign after a decade of teaching at that institution. I received many letters of support and words of encouragement. They all meant, and still mean, so very much to me. And among those supportive souls was Hershel Shanks. I distinctly remember sitting at my desk one morning in October of that year when my phone rang. It was Hershel. He said, “I heard. I’m sorry. This will be all right. But you need to get out of there and find someplace else to teach.”

We chatted for a few more minutes. His words at that time are reflective of the person he is. I treasure those moments. And Hershel was right; I’m now pleased to be teaching at an institution that values rigorous academic research and writing. And, as fate would have it, I’m also now just a stone’s throw away from Hershel, as we’re both in Washington, D.C.

To be sure, some might suggest that Hershel is bluster and bombast. But I think not. I think that Hershel has a heart of gold, that he is kind, compassionate,
and considerate. Naturally, there is some chutzpah in my treasured friend Hershel. But that is at the surface level, the public persona. The essence of the man, his very nephesh, is generous, kind, and affirming. He has truly done so much good in the world. And so, to me, he will always be among my most precious friends.

Raconteur par Excellence
John Merrill
BAS Trustees, Chairman Emeritus

In his 1998 book *The Mystery and Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Hershel speculated that there might be yet further ancient documents to be discovered. I offered financial help toward that end, and so began our two-decade friendship.

Hershel’s reputation as an editor par excellence is well established, but those who have been privileged to know him personally have discovered that he is also a raconteur without parallel. His stories are a treasure of engaging details and insights, often spiced with humor.

On one occasion, Hershel and I found ourselves gazing out over the deep canyon of the Nahal Ḥever in the Judean Desert. On the far side was the entrance to the Cave of Letters, and Hershel was proposing that I accompany a team of archaeologists planning a fresh exploration of that remarkable site. Somewhat intimidated by the sheer 600-foot drop from the cave to the rocky canyon floor, I asked, “You don’t suppose they would take a chance on the sponsor falling, do you?”

Hershel thought for a moment, and his eyes twinkled with that impish quality that comes through in his autobiography. “I don’t know,” he said, “but if you did fall, it would make a great story!”

Passion vs. Pop Culture
Dorothy Resig Willette
* Biblical Archaeology Review, former Managing Editor

I’ll let you in on a little industry secret: In the world of publishing, it is the editor, not the author, who writes the title and photo captions for an article. In my eight years at BAS, this kind of writing was a significant portion of my workload.

Now I’ll let you in on a little-known fact about Hershel: He has virtually no knowledge of pop culture or popular music. It might be tempting to look at the five-decade difference in our ages and attribute this to a “generation gap,” but in my years at *BAR*, I learned that Hershel had apparently never followed popular music. He loved classical music but had no idea who Diana Ross was, didn’t know the Village People’s iconic “YMCA,” and recognized the Beatles in name only.

It was important to Hershel that we make the first line of *BAR*s (rather substantial) photo captions “grabby” to entice our readers. I made my job more interesting by thinking up pop culture references (usually song lyrics) that I could “sneak” into my writing. One of my favorite examples was in an article about the rejoining of some long-separated fragments of the Heliodoros Stela.* I started the first caption with “Reunited, and it’s understood,” a line from the 1978 Peaches and Herb hit song. The reference was lost on Hershel, but I was pleased when multiple readers wrote in to say that they had recognized the lyrics.

Although I had some fun with this, the truth is that we have all benefited from Hershel’s disinterest in pop culture. He was always much more fascinated by the life of Israelites in the tenth century B.C.E. than the trends of the 21st century C.E. Rather than listening to Top 40 radio, Hershel was publishing a lyre graffito from Megiddo in *BAR**. Pursuit of his own hobby led to careers for so many—both at BAS and in the field of Biblical archaeology. Speaking on behalf of all those who delighted in creating and in reading the pages of *BAR* and his many other publications—Hershel, thank you for sharing your passion with us.


A True Mensch

Aren Maeir
Bar-Ilan University

I first met Hershel many years ago when I was an undergraduate student at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and participated for the first time in an international archaeological conference—the first Biblical Archaeology Today conference held in Jerusalem in 1985. Even though I was a lowly student at the time, when I came up to Hershel and spoke to him, he showed interest and respect, and we had an interesting conversation about archaeology. And I believe this defines Hershel: his passion for archaeology, particularly of the “Biblical” variety; his deep love for people of all kinds and, above all, the fact that he is a true mensch—someone who makes everyone feel heard and respected.

Since then, I can recall only enjoyable interactions with Hershel. At the annual ASOR and SBL meetings, Hershel is always interested in the newest finds from the latest season, but he also does not mind hearing gossip along the way. It is simply always a pleasure to spend time with him.

But Hershel is much more than just a nice guy! I believe that his contribution to archaeology is second to none. Although he had no formal training in archaeology, the passion that has guided him for the past 40 years in the production of BAR has been of enormous importance to the field. Because of Hershel, BAR has become one of the most significant public advocates of ancient Near Eastern archaeology. It has excited many young people to become archaeologists and has encouraged many interested lay people not only to support students, but to join the excavations themselves! More so, Hershel has acquired a deep knowledge of the field and knows to ask pointed, in-depth questions, whether at the professional meetings or in private conversations.

Finally, I would like to thank Hershel for taking an active role in finding financial support for various digs. Over the years, the Tell es-Safi/Gath Archaeological Project that I direct has received substantial financial help because of Hershel.

I wish Hershel many more years of active interest in archaeology and continued participation in archaeological meetings, and I hope to have the chance to continue to schmooze with him about archaeological-related things. —Until 120!

Cataloging Jewish History

George Blumenthal
JewishHistory.com, Founder

Hershel Shanks has enriched my life in unimaginable ways. Before I started reading BAR, in 1996, I believed that the Bible was a fairytale. Now I realize that BAR is the encyclopedia of archaeological proof for Biblical events. Moreover, BAR led me to Ardon Bar Hama, with whom I digitized the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Israel Museum for Google. Hershel fulfilled the dreams of David Ben-Gurion, the founder of modern Israel and former prime minister, who wrote in two letters, “Only a people who lives in its own nation will be able to know, understand, and discover its hidden treasures,” and, “I am of the opinion that there is a great need in emphasizing and instilling the value of knowledge of the Bible among the young people so that it can impose a vibrant, creative, and demanding reality upon them and provide meaning in their everyday life.”
To see yourself as others see you can be helpful, instructive, revealing, disconcerting, and even irritating! Hershel styles himself “an archaeology outsider” in his autobiography. Although his first candid comments on archaeologists and their practices and his attempts to play one off against another riled many professionals, through the past 40 years, each has learned to value the other and benefited greatly. Hershel’s generous spirit has created a worldwide circle of friends happy to share their knowledge.

It’s a pleasure to be one of them. When my wife answers the phone and calls out, “It’s Hershel,” his cheerful voice brings encouragement—and requests!

BAR embodies the joyful energy, initiative, and enthusiasm of this “archaeology outsider,” who brought academics and their research from their ivory towers down to the street where he has made the relevance of their work for Biblical studies known.

**Scaling Ivory Towers**

**Alan Millard**

University of Liverpool, Professor Emeritus

To see yourself as others see you can be helpful, instructive, revealing, disconcerting, and even irritating! Hershel styles himself “an archaeology outsider” in his autobiography. Although his first candid comments on archaeologists and their practices and his attempts to play one off against another riled many professionals, through the past 40 years, each has learned to value the other and benefited greatly. Hershel’s generous spirit has created a worldwide circle of friends happy to share their knowledge.

It’s a pleasure to be one of them. When my wife answers the phone and calls out, “It’s Hershel,” his cheerful voice brings encouragement—and requests!

BAR embodies the joyful energy, initiative, and enthusiasm of this “archaeology outsider,” who brought academics and their research from their ivory towers down to the street where he has made the relevance of their work for Biblical studies known.

### Always at the Forefront

**Mary Joan Winn Leith**

Stonehill College

Forthieth years ago, *Biblical Archaeology Review* (vol. 1, no. 4, December 1975) published an article on the essential Biblical archaeology library. J.K. West’s recommendations set out the pantheon: William F. Albright, G. Earnest Wright, Kathleen Kenyon, James Pritchard, and Ruth Amiran. The intervening years have seen the canonical foundations of Biblical archaeology undermined and rearranged by discoveries and approaches unforeseen by 1975’s reigning authorities: We have rejected “Biblical archaeology” and then recanted; King David has been lost and (somewhat) found; Jerusalem’s ancient water system has taken on complicated dimensions; pre-Iron Age III (sixth-century B.C.E.) Israel can no longer be considered monotheistic; there was no “Conquest”; the Israelites have become Canaanites; etc.

Through all this, Hershel and BAR have covered the latest discoveries—repeatedly with the first, best pictures. Today, the abbreviation lists in scholarly publications and guides to essential archaeology reading regularly cite BAR articles and BAS publications.

Congratulations, Hershel! You dreamed, then damned the torpedoes, and went full steam ahead!

### Benefactor of the Field

**Philip J. King**

Boston College, Professor Emeritus

Hershel and I first met when I was president of ASOR more than 30 years ago. Hershel was very good to me personally, suggesting my name for various posts. He did this for everyone. I used to meet him regularly in the Middle East, especially at the American School in Jerusalem (the W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research). He made friendships happen with several people, including Leon Levy and Shelby White.

His genuine love of Biblical archaeology, love of learning, curiosity, and willingness to take risks led him to found BAR and switch careers from being a practicing lawyer.

Hershel is one of the most genuine and capable people I have had the privilege of ever knowing.
First-Class Negotiator
Bezalel Porten
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

I graduated high school in 1948, and my best friend, Eli Halpern, went to Haverford College at the same time that Hershel Shanks was there. But I only met him when I gave a talk at a D.C. synagogue in the ’70s. As one of the guests, Hershel asked me for an article for his newly established magazine, BAR—or whatever it was called then. It looked to me like a synagogue bulletin, and so I passed. Years later, when BAR became a real thing, I went to Hershel offering a piece on Aramaic papyrology. He did not bite; “it was too parochial.” But when Graham Hancock’s The Sign and the Seal (arguing that the Ark of the Covenant resided in Axum and it got there via Elephantine) appeared, he offered me a chance to review it and say whatever else I wanted on Elephantine. The year was 1994, and I was on sabbatical at Cambridge and immediately set to work on what I thought was a fine piece. Hershel freely reworked it, and I was furious. “I’m coming to Washington,” I said, “and we’ll work on the final draft together.” And so it was. The following year (1995) there appeared in BAR the negotiated settlement.*

With the forgery business heating up, Hershel ran a conference in Jerusalem in 2007, which I attended. In the past several years, I’ve had the pleasure of speaking at his Biblical Archaeology Society conference—Bible and Archaeology Fest—held the weekend before Thanksgiving each year. In 2015, he awarded me the Yigael Yadin fellowship for delivering papers at the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) and Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) conferences. It has always been a pleasure to join Hershel for a meal at these conferences, and I particularly enjoyed attending the celebration at the Israel Museum in 2014 where he was honored for 40 years of editing BAR.

The Face of BAR
André Lemaire
École Pratique des Hautes Études at the Sorbonne University, Paris

Biblical Archaeology Review has now a long road of 42 years behind it. For me, this long road has a face: its founder and Editor, Hershel Shanks. For more than 30 years, it has always been a great pleasure to meet him in congresses and colloquia in Israel, America, and Europe. He is passionate about the Bible and eager to know anything that could be connected to the Bible.

Aware that he is not himself a researcher, he is very sensitive to the public reaction to new discoveries or interpretations, and he knows how to ask good questions. At the same time, as a lawyer, he is well aware that the media can be manipulated, as was the case in 2003.** When there is debate—and as a journalist, Hershel loves debate!—he tries to have the arguments of the various positions clearly presented by the scholars themselves. To be able to broadly publicize archaeological discoveries as soon as possible, he succeeds to have personal and warm contacts with as many archaeologists as possible. Scholars may thank him for making Biblical archaeology not a small business between a few specialists but a forum open to a general audience.

Hershel, you may be proud of what you have done for Biblical archaeology.


What a Resource
Robert Deutsch
Archaeological Center, Owner

I met Hershel for the first time some 30 years ago at the late Shlomo Moussaieff’s flat in London. We immediately formed a connection, and I had the sensation that I had known him for a long time. We had a very pleasant conversation around a table filled with Lebanese food. The subject was Mr. Moussaieff’s collection of Biblical antiquities with unknown provenance and, of course, the BAR magazine.

Defending the research and publication of ancient inscribed artifacts with unknown provenance was not a popular view—and even less so today. But Hershel had no fear to declare that the issue was complicated.

Criticizing BAR as a nonacademic publication became a hobby for certain scholars, partially because of this attitude toward unprovenanced artifacts, but some harsh critics changed their minds once their own papers were published in BAR.

Hershel is very sophisticated, and the aesthetic and high quality of a paper with excellent images were his uncompromising conditions. Therefore, an article in BAR—with its worldwide distribution—became worth a hundred scholarly papers in professional journals. No serious scholar can ignore the publications in BAR, which often contain important and previously unpublished material.

I have all the BAR issues, from the first issue through the current one. Recently I went through them all, and I was amazed anew at the quality, quantity, and importance of the publications.

No question at all, Hershel was the right man in the right place at the right time. BAR is Hershel, and Hershel is BAR. I thank you.

“Be Interesting!”
Steven Fine
Yeshiva University

I first “met” Hershel as a student in the University of California, Santa Barbara, library reading BAR. Soon after, I devoured his Judaism in Stone: The Archaeology of Ancient Synagogues (1979), a book that I consult to this day. Happily, my copy is in tatters from use! The personal spirit that Hershel brought to both the magazine and this volume initiated me, a kid from a San Diego suburb, into the world of Biblical archaeology. In many ways, they were a primer and my first “textbook” in these fields.

When we actually met—at the Albright Institute in Jerusalem in the late 1980s—I felt that we were already friends. Hershel was certainly a rock star to me—a status that grew as he led the fight for the Dead Sea Scrolls. From the beginning of my career, writing on the “Talmudic House” at Katzrin (which he characteristically hyped as “Soup’s On in a Talmudic Kitchen!” on the cover of the May/June 1991 issue),* Hershel has supported my work by publishing it and challenged me to be “interesting.” Most of all, he patiently (and impatiently) taught me to write for a broad and excited audience. That was the hard part for a young academic and the gift that I carry with me every single day.

Thank you, Hershel, for the many small kindnesses that you have shown me over a lifetime.

Enormous Achievement
Amihai Mazar
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

A shelf more than 3 feet wide in my library is taken up by BAR, from the first issue—a modest, 24-page monochrome journal without ads published in 1975—to the most recent issue, a 72-page colorful magazine with rich content and various ads. In the second issue of BAR (June 1975), the founder and Editor Hershel Shanks wrote a fine article on my discoveries of the Philistine temple at Tell Qasile, made just two

years earlier.** Already then, readers reacted and asked questions.***

I soon realized the potential of this journal and, upon Hershel’s request, joined the Advisory Board of BAR. In a letter sent to me on this occasion dated August 12, 1975, Hershel wrote: “I think BAR can make a real contribution both to archaeology and to Israel. This little magazine can reach people who can be touched in no other way. And there are many thousands of them out there who will support archaeology and Israel if we only speak to them in a language they understand.”

And at the bottom of the letter he adds a question from a reader concerning the temple at Tell Qasile and instructed me how to respond to this reader. Already in this first year of BAR Hershel knew exactly what he wanted to achieve and how! And soon BAR flourished in an unexpected way.

Since 1975, each new issue of BAR is intriguing and interesting. I always found it quite amazing that a single man could establish such a journal and a host of surrounding activities: the Biblical Archaeology Society with its variety of activities like study tours, lecture series, filmed lectures, books, additional journals, cooperation in publishing books with the Israel Exploration Society, a website with online articles and commentary, and more.

Hershel recognized that attractive subjects, superb design, and excellent photographs are key to the success of a journal. He and his assistants (I cannot forget Suzanne Singer, the long-term right hand of Hershel) succeeded in locating a variety of authors, subjects, and amazing sources for illustrations. The best scholars in the field were recruited as authors, subjects of interviews, or resources for articles written by Hershel himself. I always admired and was surprised by the ability of a man without official training in the field of the Bible and archaeology to digest such a wide variety of scholarly material and bring it to the public in a clear, well written, and well illustrated way.

This is how BAR became a dominant journal in our field, bringing the message of archaeology in the Holy Land and surrounding countries to hundreds of thousands of readers worldwide. I think of the many hundreds of volunteers who arrived to archaeological excavations in Israel due to publications in BAR, scholarships given to students, support to various projects, book awards, and more.

But Hershel is not only a publisher and editor. He has his own, sometimes controversial, views on many subjects and has not stopped fighting for them in his editorials and articles. I can recall his important role in releasing the Dead Sea Scrolls to the public and several other positive campaigns. However, I also had criticisms. I thought he crossed a red line on two issues: judging scholars (something that he used to do in the early years of BAR) and promoting the collection of antiquities and the antiquities trade. These two issues led me to resign in protest from BAR’s Editorial Advisory Board, yet Hershel remained a friend, and I continued to contribute to BAR as much as I could, realizing that this journal is the best avenue to present discoveries to a wide audience. Finally, many years later, I rejoined the Advisory Board, realizing that in spite of these two issues, the accomplishments and contributions of BAR and BAS to our field have been enormous.

BAR and BAS are the achievement of one courageous, energetic, and clever person. I wish Hershel many more years of work and BAR to continue being as intriguing a magazine as it is today.

Labor of Love

Ben Witherington III
Asbury Theological Seminary

Dear Hershel, I realized this day would come, at some juncture, but I am sad to hear the news that you are retiring from BAR and BAS, or at least handing over the editorial duties to Professor Cargill.

I think this is a good choice, as he certainly is a seasoned Biblical scholar and archaeologist, but I wanted to say you deserve a lot of kudos for persevering with this labor of love for so long.

I love the magazine as well as your courage to deal with sticky and controversial issues, even at personal cost to yourself. I wish more editors were that brave. I also have personally enjoyed working with you in various ways, including on our book The Brother of Jesus and on the James Ossuary issues. I still think it’s genuine, but I guess we will never know for sure, considering its defacement by the Israel Antiquities Authority’s tests.

May the Lord bless you and keep you and make his face shine upon you in your retirement.

Ben Witherington III