

***The Biblical Archaeology Review:* child sacrifice and Isis cults**

by Carole Greene and Allen Douglas

A central role in the paradigm shift planned for Israel is being played by the 100,000-circulation magazine, *Biblical Archaeology Review* (*BAR*). Not so much a magazine as a cult-building organization centered in its associated Biblical Archaeology Society, the ostensible purpose of the *BAR* is to popularize the latest archaeological finds.

Yet, since its inception in 1975, more than one professional archaeologist has accused it of “having a hidden agenda.” In reality, its agenda is not hidden at all: Its purpose is to degrade its readership base of predominantly Christian fundamentalists and Israeli and American Jews into accepting the most perverse practices imaginable. The unstated argument goes as follows: “As this latest archaeological evidence indicates, our ancestors worshipped Isis and sacrificed their children, so why shouldn’t we?” Given the tremendous emotional content of its Biblical subject matter and the fact that, as frequent *Review* contributor Yigael Yadin says, “Israel is the only country in the world where you could fill a stadium three nights running with people to hear lectures on archaeology,” this is not an academic exercise. The *BAR* is consciously manipulating its readers into a new identity—paganism.

Hershel Shanks: the man behind the message

The founder and chief organizer for the *Review* is Washington lawyer Hershel Shanks, who moonlights as an amateur archaeologist. Shanks, whose “hidden agenda” has made *BAR* circulation mysteriously soar from 0 to 100,000 copies in a few short years, has been roundly cursed by Israeli archaeologists for some of his inflammatory coverage, particularly of the Temple Mount issue.

Shanks’s more “scholarly” work, his book *Judaism in Stone*, is explicit in displaying his Kabbalistic belief structure. As an example, Shanks relies for a crucial chapter, “Pagan Symbols in Synagogue Art—What’s a Greek God Doing in a Synagogue?” on the work of another kabbalist, Prof. Edwin R. Goodenough:

Prof. G.’s thesis is that side by side with rabbinical Judaism as reflected primarily in talmudic literature, there existed another Judaism which was antagonistic to what eventually emerged as normative orthodox Judaism. For this reason, the rabbinical literature gives

no hint of the existence of this “other” Judaism. This “other Judaism” Professor Goodenough inferred from the nature of the archaeological remains. . . .

This other Judaism was complex, mystical, salvational . . . it emphasized a *mystical union with God during life on earth through which alone salvation was possible*. . . . These “other” Jews were neither idolators nor disloyal to Judaism. To the contrary they considered themselves loyal both to the Law and the observances. Instead they *added* something—a mysticism that they superimposed upon their Jewish observances, and adopted as an integral part of their religion.

What is added here is precisely what Khomeini added to Islam: irrationality.

The drumbeat for the Temple

Since many archaeologists refuse to have anything to do with Shanks’s paganism, it leaves him oftentimes featuring an assortment of cranks and weirdos. One such crank, though a dangerous one, is fellow amateur archaeologist and Jerusalem Temple Mount Foundation member, Asher Kaufman. Following 15 years of training by Quatuor Coronati Freemasonic lodge member and British Museum trustee T. E. Allibone, Kaufman was dispatched to Israel where he began poking around the Temple Mount area soon after East Jerusalem was captured in the 1967 war.

Kaufman soon developed a new theory on where Solomon’s Temple originally stood, placing it 330 feet north of the universally accepted site now occupied by the Dome of the Rock. He based his theory in part on earlier work of the 1880s by Quatuor Coronati Lodge founding member, Sir Charles Warren (who was later fired as London police chief for covering up the Jack the Ripper murders, reportedly committed using freemasonic ritualism by a member of the royal family). Reached for comment in Windsor, Kaufman’s controller Allibone was ecstatic: “Their [the Jews] sacred shrine is no longer under the Mohammedan site. All that’s changed now. The Jew is no longer separated from the Mohammedan. For centuries we have believed that King Solomon’s Temple was built over the rock where Abraham tried to sacrifice Isaac. It is one of the most beautiful sites in the world, but

the Jew is just not allowed in. But now, if he has a place other than the Mohammedan temple and the temple is not on the same spot, the Jew and the Mohammedan are reconciled to having two different places.”

The Jerusalem Temple Mount Foundation's Terry Risenhoover was a bit more blunt: "Asher's work is a minority viewpoint within the spiritual viewpoint. Asher's work may even be subterfuge. What more clever thing could you do than locate it with seemingly solid evidence outside where it really belongs?" Though "no one believes it," insiders report that the new location has had the desired effect of upping the pressure on King Hussein of Jordan and the Moslem Religious Trust controlling the Temple Mount to allow for rebuilding. Conveniently enough, shortly before he published his new theory, Kaufman's "evidence" disappeared during the course of minor Mount area.

After finding a new location for the Temple, the *Review* is now finding the elements of ceremony used on the inside. It has published an article titled, "Probable Head of Priestly Sceptre of Solomon's Temple Found in Jerusalem." Any day now *Review* readers can expect to hear that the ashes of the sacrificed red heifers from 2,000 years ago have been found, along with the Ark of the Covenant.

Recruiting initiates

The *Review* acts as a recruiting clearinghouse for initiates into the Temple Mount plot by sponsoring its own archaeological digs in the Holy Land, and also promoting brainwashing seminars at various institutions such as Keble College at Oxford University in England. Keble is otherwise notorious for its role in sponsoring meetings of female religious orders for the KGB-sponsored nuclear-freeze movement worldwide.

Keble's parent institution, Oxford University, was the crucial center for propagating much of the "fundamentalist tractarian" movement from the 1830s on—the Oxford Movement. Oxford has functioned as the "mother" of the fundamentalist cults over the past two centuries. As Jerusalem Temple Mount Foundation official Douglas Krieger noted on the roots of fundamentalism, "That was a whole new system of theology that had been developed in England, through John Nelson Darby."

Some of the *Review's* open promotion of paganism has raised controversy even among its readership. After recently advertising a series of Isis figurines which the reader could order to put in his living room, a debate broke out in the pages of the magazine as to whether the *Review* was pushing this, or whether these were just quaint artifacts "that no one really believed in any more, anyway."

From animal sacrifice to child sacrifice

In its January/February 1984 issue, the *Biblical Archaeology Review* featured the article, "Child Sacrifice at Carthage—Religious Rite or Population Control?" The article is an apologia for the Carthaginian practice of mass infanticide. It describes Tophet, a place on the south side of ancient Jerusalem, as a place

where the Israelites sacrificed their children by fire. It may refer to the altar on which the sacrifices took place. The book of the prophet Jeremiah describes it. . . . From a comparative cultural perspective, child sacrifice, or ritual infanticide, is simply a special form of infanticide. The "non-institutional" form has appeared in Graeco-Roman society and in the Christian West with more regularity than we usually are comfortable in admitting. Unwanted or abandoned children have been subjected to exposure, drowning, starvation, strangulation, smothering, and poisoning, but the most

common and lethal way of disposing of unwanted children has been simply neglect. . . .

Infanticide was often preferable to abortion because birth order and sex selection could be taken into account for economic reasons. Infanticide was also less dangerous to the mother. What effects it had on her is another matter. This probably varied with the "cultural distance" that was established between mother and infant.

Ritual infanticide at Carthage served some of the same ends as informal infanticide did from antiquity till now in other societies. For the Carthaginians, this religious institution was immensely important. Of course, it had the overt support of the state. We feel discomfort with the ostentation of the Carthaginian cult, its special precinct, the painted urns, the inscribed monuments. *It is repulsive, but then so, too, is the way so many children in our tradition have perished in less obvious ways. Perhaps the Carthaginians would have gotten a better press in the West had they concealed their practices more subtly* [emphasis added].

The article concludes with a discussion of "Burning Babies—The Offerants and Their Professions," drawing on the experience of 25 "learned societies."