

ASOR 2001 Strategic Initiatives Retreat
Opening Statements, Friday, September 7th

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I. Opening Remarks

A. Pace Setter Talks

compiled by Joe Seger

The Emory Conference Center in Atlanta, GA was the scene of the 2001 ASOR Strategic Initiatives Retreat held from Friday evening to Sunday morning, September 7-9. A group of 60 individuals, widely representative of the ASOR leadership and member constituency, participated in the sessions. The intent of the retreat was not to focus on the immediate problems and concerns of the organization, but to project a view of ASOR three to five or more years out; to assess and discuss the longer range prospect for the organization's growth and service; and to engage new perspectives and bold visions that might serve to help ASOR set its priorities for the decade ahead. In short to help ASOR to "get a fix" on the opportunities and challenges that lie astride its path forward.

The retreat program was very successful with lively discussions and exchange of ideas. This report is presented to share with all ASOR members the remarks made at the opening session of the retreat by the Board Chairman and the President along with the "Pace Setter" comments by members of a special panel group. This will help set the stage for, and encourage, a continuing dialogue among members via the ASOR-I. Please address comments on these matters to: "Strategic Initiatives Group Discussion." Additional report updates will also be noted on the ASOR-I and posted on the ASOR web site www.asor.org. Your involvement in this dialogue is warmly encouraged.

B. ASOR's Next Phase

by P.E. MacAllister

I was released from the Air Corps in May of 1945. At the same time my father was getting the Caterpillar account and inviting me to join him, which made Indianapolis my home and introduced me to some culture shock. Part was civilian life after five years in the military and the other was exchanging Milwaukee, Wisconsin for The Hoosier Heartland. From life in a well governed city with great schools, police and fire systems, high taxes, and a clean community to what was known then as "an oval in a cornfield," a city whose heritage came out of the hills of Kentucky and Tennessee and was generally run down, disheveled, politically mangled, and decidedly untidy. But with gregarious, amicable, friendly people who had made my father extremely successful.

The war migration had taken people out of Dixie to Appalachia to where the jobs existed; the migrants settling in downtown accommodations of dubious value and condition, vacated by former residents who scooted to suburbia the minute they had money to do so. After 16 years of depression and war, empty houses, worn streets, traffic snarls, and dirt were all abundantly evident. This was not Berlin or Leningrad, but it was different than Milwaukee.

Neither Indianapolis or Milwaukee changed in the next 20 years. Point being, we don't have to change. We do have options: one is standing pat. In 1965 the best adjective to describe Indianapolis was "nondescript."

The same year a Republican businessman decided we had a better destiny than "nondescript." If we got rid of the county chairmen who controlled candidates for office and, thus, the caliber of governance. We began a two-year program to change the political complex and converted enough citizens to boot out the old chairman and put in our own guy. In 1967 a young businessman named Dick Lugar decided he wanted to run for mayor. A very long shot . . . till you heard his plans on how he wanted to change the city. We got his slated and beat the incumbent Democrat. We also opened a new chapter in history.

The change occurred through Uni-Gov, a consolidation combining over-lapping township/county/city offices so there was one department for highways, one for parks, administration, etc. Indianapolis became the county. He also articulated a vision for the city with a style so exciting everyone

wanted to be on his team. Meaning, business types who eschewed politics were now clamoring to play in his game. He created a public-private partnership that committed the city to support in the development of new institutions. A proposed Westin downtown floundered till the city agreed to a public parking garage available also for its clientele. A \$10,000,000 piece that swung the deal. The Westin went up. That type of public-private cooperation created a new Hoosier Dome, a new Circle Center Mall, a new art museum, a new baseball stadium; saw a dozen major high-rise office buildings go up; developed the downtown canal; created an urban park including a zoo, a new western art museum; created a joint university complete with 28,000 students and the NCAA headquarters. Twice all American City. Voted recently 9th Best Place to live in the United States; under 4% unemployment; only AAA Bond rating east of the Mississippi – and I could go on.

Which is far more than you care to know about my town. What's the point? It's how and why we changed from a grub to a butterfly. How? Responsible leadership, constituent support, the right agenda. The tax base hadn't changed nor our location, population, the climate. What changed was the mayor . . . with a program. . . supported by a strong council. The moral? We can become what we want to be if we have the leadership and the supportive component to get it done; if we plan wisely; make progress, don't settle for second place.

You've already made the connection.. ASOR is a product of the same dynamic. With strong leadership, an exciting program, involved membership, we could be a world class organization. The analogy is theoretical because Joe can't fire people who don't perform. His recruiting is limited to those who volunteer or who get elected and although that is sometimes brilliant, it is often pot luck. There is no tax revenue: ASOR has to raise money.

For the next phase ASOR needs to keep the Indianapolis story in mind, not because it is newBUT BECAUSE IT IS OLD! There is rarely success without strong leadership, and there is rarely strong leadership without constituent support. We have to become clearer in what we expect and where we want to go; in what we want to do. Do a long more member recruiting, declare there is a commitment implied in ASOR assignments; certainly in Board membership. As we proceed through the next couple days, we need to wonder whether we want to make ASOR a truly world class operation or not; and then decide what changes it takes to make it so; and then what role each of us has in the effectuation.

But we do not have to change. We can stand pat and play the cards we now hold. And by doing nothing, we shall have chosen a course. Let's plan here to act wisely.

C. A Herding of Cats

by Joe D. Seger

Thank you P.E. and welcome to everyone!

This I hope will be a formative and memorable event in ASOR's history. As some here will recall, a quarter of a century ago, in 1975, another such retreat was mounted under the leadership of then Vice President Ted Campbell in Stony Brook, New York. That and other mini-retreats through the turn of the century framed the issues and shaped the destiny of ASOR bringing us to this day.

In reviewing the pertinent documents during the course of preparing the ASOR Mosaic history volume, I can affirm - that while times and circumstances have changed, many of the same issues and concerns persist. But the organization has remained true to its mission, and has succeeded in many unexpected, unprecedented and extraordinary ways.

Since the start of my first term as President I've had in mind the idea of convening a retreat such as this – and others have given mention of it in the Development Committee and in other meeting sessions through the years. Our push on the Centennial and the Torch Fund campaign, along with the many ordinary (and too often extraordinary) distractions of running ASOR prevented us from giving this focus until now.

But now we are here - and the timing is most appropriate. In a little over two months the Board will be deciding on new leadership for the organization for terms to begin in July 2002. What we can accomplish in these next days will help set some guidelines and benchmarks for where and how ASOR will invest its resources – both in terms of money and people power – as we continue in our second century of activity.

There were several individuals who most recently urged us forward in this enterprise and I want to acknowledge their input. Among them are Sy Gitin and Eric Meyers, who along with B. W. Ruffner and Rudy Dornemann, formed an ad hoc consulting group to help get things on track, and especially Richard Scheuer, who provided financial support, enabling the essential participation by the overseas center directors and otherwise helping to implement the program. Regrettably Dick can not join us due to another personal commitment for this weekend – but we are most grateful for his continuing confidence and encouragement. I need of course to acknowledge also the formative and abiding leadership and support of P.E. MacAllister, not only for his encouragement in preparing for this exercise, but for, in every way, helping to keep the ASOR ship moving positively forward.

ASOR – how would you describe it, its people and its workings?? This was the question Michael O'Connor our retreat facilitator asked me when we began discussing retreat preparations. Immediately there flashed across my mind the memorable images of a recent dot.com TV commercial which features the rough life of erstwhile cow-hands out on the prairie herding - of all things - CATS. It's a tough life – goes the ad – long days, dangers of getting scratched, all the feisty critters going every which way with minds of their own – But what a great feeling of success when you can finally bring them all safely to Abilene. Now I've never been sure what exactly the point of the ad regarding e-commerce was supposed to be, but the analogy concerning ASOR works for me. Curiously enough, the main cow-poke in the ad looks a lot like P.E. and all the rest of you CATS definitely have minds of your own. Moreover, I'm confident that you can easily fill in how the rest fits.

Anyway, using that analogy I advised Michael that his job would be something like that of Clint Eastwood as Rowdy Yates, ram rod on the old Rawhide series– tasked to urge, poke, push and otherwise help to get us to “Abilene” – whatever that turns out to be. But Michael will have his own take on his role here and its time now to bring him into the picture.

Michael O'Connor's brief vitae was included in your folders and his career as an on-air announcer, radio station manager, sales manager, service training supervisor, and customer support manager are spelled out there so I won't dwell further on these credentials. But I'm happy now to turn over the reins, whips, whistles and whatever to him as facilitator for our sessions and look forward to sharing with you in what I hope will be formative sessions.

(Michael O'Connor greeted the group and proceeded to introduce the speakers on the Pace Setters Panel.)

II. Pace Setter Panels

A. The Status Quo or a New Scholarly Agenda?

By Sy Gitin

Scholarship has been at the very core of ASOR, since its founding over a hundred years ago. It is the basis of ASOR's leading role as an innovator and facilitator of archaeological research in the Middle East. To meet the needs of each generation that ASOR has served, a scholarly agenda was created. This became the motivating factor for new field projects, the creation of new research centers in the Middle East, and the training of new generations of archaeologists and other specialists in ancient Near Eastern studies. This same scholarly agenda has been the wellspring of creative ideas that have given direction to ASOR as an organization and to the program of its annual meetings, and has also been a significant influence in shaping the character of its publications and the research projects of its members. In addition, it has had a positive impact on the development of the discipline of Near Eastern archaeology as

taught in North America and as practiced in the Middle East.

Albright and his students, Glueck among them, fashioned such an agenda in the 1920s and 30s, which focused on developing the discipline of the Archaeology of Palestine, or Biblical Archaeology, and formulating its sub-fields of excavation methodology, ceramic typology, epigraphy and paleography. This agenda continued to influence every facet of ASOR well into the mid-20th century. Building upon the work of Albright, G. Ernest Wright broadened ASOR's agenda for the next generation to include plans for a center on Cyprus, the establishment of a center in Jordan, and the expansion of the Jerusalem center's program. All three became focal points of new field projects that formed the basis of major ASOR research programs. Today, in Cyprus, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian Entity, Wright's vision of the role of American archaeology continues to be a guiding force behind the scores of North American field and other research projects conducted by the last generation of Wright's students and their students. Projects including Idalion, Bab edh-Dhra', Hesban, Shechem, Taanach, the synagogue sites in the Galilee, and Gezer and Hesi were part of Wright's over-all research strategy, which covered topics from the Chalcolithic through the Classical period, and involved major historical and methodological issues. These projects were also part of Wright's plan to re-excavate old sites in order to demonstrate the value of modern field methods and interdisciplinary research, and to create a proper field environment in which to train a new generation of archaeologists.

In recent years, ASOR's focus changed after its three centers in the Middle East became independent. ASOR came to concentrate more on specific organizational programs including the promotion of scholarship through its publications and annual meetings. Under the able leadership of the current administration headed by Board Chairman P.E. MacAllister, and President Joe D. Seger and their staff, ASOR has succeeded in achieving a healthy level of organizational stability. In choosing to have this retreat, however, ASOR has recognized the need to reassess itself, as it attempts to adjust its program to meet the ever-changing needs of its constituency, as well as new developments in the discipline of Syro-Palestinian archaeology and its changing relationship to the field of ancient Near Eastern studies.

ASOR's scholarly legacy should serve as a guide for creating a new agenda, one consistent with its traditional goal of promoting academic excellence. We are an organization rooted in the past. If we have learned anything from that past, it is that ASOR has achieved its greatest periods of success when it has had a broad scholarly agenda. An agenda that reaches beyond the narrow limits of organizational requirement to address the full range of the intellectual needs of our discipline. Perhaps the main issue of this retreat is whether ASOR should continue primarily as a service provider, concentrating on maintaining and strengthening the status quo, or whether it should formulate a scholarly agenda with a new vision for the future. It would be a stimulating and energizing challenge to create such an agenda, one that would tap the real potential of our membership. From the perspective of an overseas research center, that potential is enormous as it includes the unparalleled accumulative experience and knowledge of hundreds of researchers from ASOR's 63 affiliated excavation and publication projects in seven countries in the Middle East and the Mediterranean basin. It also includes a unique array of some of the most prominent and productive scholars in ancient Near Eastern studies, from pre-history through the Islamic period. In addition, ASOR's three affiliated centers, AIAR, ACOR and CAARI provide a framework for creating across-the-border interregional programs of scholarly cooperation.

Mobilizing such resources would allow ASOR to confront some of the major issues currently affecting our discipline. For example, the dynamic of the growth of empires and their impact on shaping the civilizations of the Mediterranean basin from the Bronze Age through the Islamic period: the affect of Late Bronze palatial and surplus economic exchange systems on the creation and growth of nation-states of the eastern Mediterranean basin; the implications of the impending demise of the Agean "Dark Age;" the result of competing Phoenician and Greek expansion of trade and colonization westward across the Mediterranean; and the affect of the competing paradigms for the chronology of the first and second millennia BCE on the historiography of the Bronze and Iron Ages. These are just a few of the topics that could bring together North American, European, Cypriote, Egyptian, Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian scholars, and possibly other scholars from other countries in the Middle East and Mediterranean basin, all focusing on a specific set of problems. As part of a comprehensive research plan, such cooperative

efforts could both encourage bi-national excavation and publication projects, and bring into the field a much-needed younger generation of scholars. It is logical that such interregional research would become a focus of ASOR's annual plenary sessions and be integrated into its publication program. In building a new agenda, other programs would naturally develop that would further fulfill ASOR's potential and broaden its impact and that of its three affiliated overseas research centers on the scholarly environment of the Middle East.

Some ASOR colleagues with whom I have discussed these ideas have responded with genuine enthusiasm. Others have questioned the source of funds for such an agenda, and whether it is realistic to plan interregional projects given the on-going violence in the Middle East? As for funding, new sources will be attracted by a new agenda. The feasibility of interregional projects has already been proved by the cooperative efforts that have been established in the face of apparently insurmountable obstacles. For example, the 7th Century New-Assyrian project, planned by the Albright during the aftermath of the Gulf War, has attracted the participation of 50 scholars working in 13 countries of the Middle East and the Mediterranean basin. Another example, the History and Archaeology of Gaza project, finalized last month during the height of the current *intifada*, is a joint effort of the Albright and Al-Quds University, headed by Moain Sadek, the Director of the Department of Palestinian Antiquities in Gaza. There are other examples of such efforts, which have also succeeded based on the recognition that the mutual benefits shared by all parties outweigh political considerations.

To create and advance a new agenda ASOR would have to redirect its focus from primarily organizational concerns to one in which the emphasis is on scholarship. To accomplish this, requires a commitment of the ASOR leadership. What I, and others, hope will come out of this retreat is such a commitment.

B. ASOR's Academic Opportunities: A North American View

by Eric Meyers

The future of archaeology in the curriculum of the American University, and hence of ASOR as well, is very much tied up to the way graduate students pursue their academic specialties and how they propose to teach archaeology within the framework of academic life today. No one who has worked in the field or who has labored over the minutiae of stratigraphy or ceramic typology can deny the difficulty of conveying their subject material in the normal classroom of a college campus today. Even with websites and all sorts of new high-tech equipment it is very difficult to present students with a true sense of the field without bringing that student to an actual dig. For 2001 and probably for 2002 it is unlikely that many US students will be able to work in Israel even if there were to be a ceasefire today. I refer to politics in the region only to emphasize how uncertain the present period is and that the political instability in the region only exaggerates it. Barring any major new projects in the immediate future without a major presence in the field in Israel, and I mean 5-10 projects with staff and faculty drawn from major graduate programs, the prospects for replicating my generation look somewhat grim.

Graduate school and training are one thing but I submit they are tied intimately with to the prospects of field projects where students can gain ample field training and have access to original material that is unearthed as a result of those projects. I realize that the Albright and ACOR have good applicant pools for fellowships, though not always, and always seem to get a necessary cohort of young scholars to assemble and discuss and present their work. But it is my feeling that those endeavors are not necessarily compatible with the way graduate students need to prepare themselves to be competitive in the job market today. The tendency to overspecialize and to focus on narrow areas of archaeological competency while it may win someone a fellowship for a year's work in Jerusalem or Amman might not advance their prospects for employment very much. Let me ask how many positions in pure archaeology are there in North America today? How many of these are coming vacant in the next years? How many of the places in related disciplines such as Religion, Divinity, Near Eastern Studies, will become vacant in

the next years? For all the talk of professionalization of the field in the 1970's we have not seen a corresponding growth in jobs. Can you name five museum jobs in Near Eastern or Syro-Palestinian archaeology that have opened and been filled in the last 20 years? I think I can get up to 3 or 4. The fact remains that after all these years of strong funding and unimpeded growth, the 1960's to the present, the job market remains dismal for archaeologists, and today public funding is more limited and with the economy in slowdown private donations will surely diminish.

If we look to the larger university and place archaeology within that larger framework and examine its prospects, the picture is somewhat brighter, but that is not saying very much. I want to point out a few matters in regard to our graduate program at Duke that I think will be of help to understand better what is happening in the academy. All of my archaeology students have pursued their interest in the subject- and that goes for Carol as well- in the context of a major in another area: History of Judaism, Old Testament and ANE, or New Testament and early Christianity. Within those broad areas students have managed to study archaeology in its most technical form but also have been required to relate it to the larger cultural contexts in which their particular chronological focus has directed them. I don't think we have been unfair to the discipline of archaeology so long as we have required excellence in both archaeology and their major area or study. A large number of the Sepphoris staff and members of ASOR/SBL southern region have been involved in a program sponsored by the Wabash Foundation to integrate archaeology into the Humanities curriculum especially through Religion departments, which is the setting for most of us. So for example someone is trying to show how archaeology is absolutely essential for the study of the New Testament today, or for the study of the Second Temple, or for the study of gender in antiquity. One of our colleagues who is based in a History department has presented a survey of introductory books in Old Testament and how they help or detract from the student of ancient Near Eastern history. Insofar as these comments pertain to NE Studies almost exclusively I cannot address the situation as it pertains to CAARI and the world of classical archaeology or prehistory. I do know that in general the situations in Classics like all the humanities is dire.

In saying all of this I am suggesting that the onus of making archaeology relevant to important disciplines such as History, Religion, or Near Eastern Studies lies with us, the teachers in the field and the practitioners of the discipline. The present generation of scholars has done a pretty good job at doing this but as we plod through these next years in the academy and my generation begins to retire and drift away, we must be sure that we are replacing ourselves. At the moment I am not certain whether we can be optimistic or not. One thing I know for sure is that the study of the Bible will be here for time immemorial and so will the study of Judaism and Christianity in antiquity. Archaeology will have to become a standard part of the curricula associated with these disciplines if it is to survive. For that reason I believe that ASOR should stay associated with the SBL and endeavor to assume a greater leadership role within it. While I enjoy our separate conventions I still believe it is absolutely necessary for our welfare to keep our hand in the SBL Program and leadership. SBL and to a lesser extent the AAR is where the jobs are and where interviews for jobs are conducted and where our graduate students need to read papers. I know that this is not what we are currently doing and I know how strongly many of you feel about keeping up the tradition of a separate convention but in my opinion we need to have our conventions side-by-side with just a small overlap. As it stands now the ASOR convention requires many of us to be on the road a full week, which at the end of term is nearly impossible for most faculty who take their teaching seriously, not to mention the cost of staying in hotels and eating out for a week.

If there were a way for ASOR to help facilitate the job hiring process, to work in tandem with SBL on this, or to go out on its own and try, it would demonstrate at least the concern of the organization for cloning itself. I think we have the right DNA; all we have to do now is ensure our offspring replace us in key jobs which in turn will help create new opportunities. Academic appointments is where the real war for the future will be won. Yigael Yadin had the notion of endowing ten schools with chairs and programs in biblical archaeology before he died. He presented this idea to a group of ASOR leaders one week before he died. At that meeting he pledged his full efforts to work with ASOR and others to make such a dream become a reality. In today's dollars a chair at a research 1 university is at least 2 million dollars and a program another million or a total of 30 million dollars. Guaranteeing programs at ten major

schools might have been a dream, but I still think it could be done. We also need to do something at the smaller colleges and seminaries where the pursuit of archaeology within a much larger educational milieu is still common, but I know that turf less well than the research university setting.

The maximalist/minimalist debate has shown all of us once again how dear the subject matter of the Bible is to the public. *Archaeology Magazine* has a full double page spread on the controversy in the current issue; Bill Dever was featured in a long review in the *New York Times* a few weeks ago; and people are eager to be informed about this important debate. ASOR has an obligation to its constituency to foster enlightenment on this matter, and students in particular need to be better informed about what is at stake and what the details of the argument are. Perhaps there is a way for us to do this, even if it means cooperating with groups we normally would not, even BAS.

So, I do think the outlook for the immediate future in the academy is grim but there are ways for us to forge ahead. Chief among my priorities will be to make it possible for someone to come after me or Carol and do what Duke has been doing for more than 70 years now, beginning with the Jerusalem western wall/Robinson's Arch excavations and Gerasa excavations long ago to our work in Galilee these past 30-plus years. It will not be easy to be sure but I hope my colleagues will do the same at their universities and colleges.

C. ASOR Publications: Opportunities and Challenges

by Billie Jean Collins

If one of the exercises for non-profits is to try to view problems as opportunities, then everywhere I look in ASOR I see opportunities. But I am going to limit my comments tonight to three challenges facing Publications that I see as most critical for the long term success of the program. I am aware that there are others, and these, I am sure, will be discussed as the weekend unfolds.

1. Focus development efforts on ASOR's publications

The first issue, it will not surprise you, is that of money. ASOR's publications are proven, highly visible and tangible ventures. They come as close to supporting a sustainable non-profit publishing program as it is reasonable to expect in this day and age. They have a track record of excellence and of success. All of these things make them ripe for grant support. Yet ASOR's development efforts have all but ignored them. Together with CAP and CAMP, the publications form the heart and soul of ASOR, but are currently treated as if somehow peripheral. Our priorities in Development are focused on the wrong things. For publications, the two elements most critically in need of outside funding are the book program and NEA.

With respect to books we currently have a small endowment for the production of books, but this fund has not yet been used for this purpose. Book programs for niche market titles serving an educational purpose are very attractive to funding agencies. We need to build on our existing endowment to create a fund that will ensure that we never have to inform an author whose book has been accepted for publication in an ASOR series that we're sorry, but we forgot that we would need money in order to publish this, would you mind waiting a while? Such clumsy handling of the publishing process serves only to undermine confidence in the organization. An endowment for books would also make ASOR more competitive in attracting the best manuscripts. It is surprising, for instance, how small a share of the final excavation reports submitted for publication are submitted to ASOR.

With respect to *NEA*, the journal has stumbled along through the years with a primarily volunteer staff, its continuity, look, content, and timeliness at the mercy of a roster—albeit an elite one—of volunteer editors. Moreover, where *NEA* is concerned, ASOR is guilty of having caviar tastes on a spam budget. The journal does make money, but is expensive to produce (if done right) and its net profit cannot justify its costs to ASOR. To maintain the membership in the style to which it has become accustomed, we have no choice but to find outside sources not only to *sustain* NEA, but to allow it grow, to enhance it, to make it ever more attractive to its target audience. Most critically, NEA needs a professional permanent

managing editor to ensure continuity in the journal's content and style.

2. Establish a clear vision of ASOR's publishing mission and stick with it.

The Committee on Publications has an important task ahead of it. It must reevaluate its publishing mission, for all its publications, but in particular with respect to its books series. Do each of the series fill a need? Do they fit with ASOR's mission? Can they be tailored better to fill the needs of the membership and of ASOR as a whole? Along with this reevaluation we must do a thorough job of educating our editors about our publishing mission to ensure that only the best qualified manuscripts, and only the most commercially viable—if that is part of our vision—carry the ASOR logo.

But subsequent to this reevaluation must come the commitment to stand by our decisions. We *must* stop revisiting these issues year after year after year. We must decide on our vision, fashion the book series and journals to fulfill that mission, and then stick to our guns and give them an opportunity to work.

3. Recognize that ASOR IS a publisher

Finally, I am constantly surprised at how few people, people who should know better, realize that ASOR IS a publisher. We no longer publish through Scholars Press. We do not publish through our distributor David Brown. ASOR alone bears the editorial, financial, and production responsibility for its publications. This means that ASOR, among its other activities, is operating a real-world, real-time business. With three journals and three book series, it is a pretty substantial business as well, and the work load doesn't decrease with the circulation. The catch is that we are operating this business by committee, or rather committees. This is an unfortunate arrangement and a difficult one to change. To be an effective business, the publications operation should be run by a staff that ASOR trusts to do the job and do it well. That professional staff and the Program itself should be insulated from the ebb and flow of ASOR. Officers who have little or no experience or knowledge of publishing as a business. I am not suggesting that publications should be autonomous, but rather that there be *continuity* in how the publications are managed. This applies as much to decisions about things as basic as the pricing of books as it does to how the monies are accounted for. Changes over the past two years in the procedure for the latter have caused much misunderstanding within the membership and tremendous demoralization within the Publications Committee, and these in turn have had negative effects on the organization as a whole.

So much for current challenges. Where should we be looking to be in the future?

One goal is to see *NEA* fulfill its potential, financial of course, but also its potential to reach—and communicate archaeology to—a wider audience, in keeping with ASOR's mission. We can achieve this with outside funding that provides professionalism and continuity to the journal, that allows for visually more interesting issues, and that expands the journal to embrace the tide of technology.

Another critical goal is to make ASOR's monograph series the places that archaeologists think of first as a home for their final excavation reports. We already have the advantage of being able to offer to authors the highest possible quality production. Within the framework of our renewed mission, we must make it our business now and in the future to cultivate and encourage potential authors to ensure that the monographs we publish reflect the *full* range of ASOR activities.

Finally, through more directed development efforts and proper management, ASOR's publishing venture can become so much more than a barely self-sustainable operation. As witness the frenzy over ASOR's publications by commercial publishing houses when Scholars Press was dissolved, our potential is tremendous.

ASOR is a very self-deprecating organization. It suffers from the common Non-Profit malaise of believing that it will always be in need of money and that it is too understaffed to be effective at anything. For these reasons, it has always shied from taking the necessary leap to entrepreneurialism. In my estimation, ASOR is *afraid* of success because with success comes responsibility and I would bet that no one here deep down really believes that ASOR is capable of handling that kind of responsibility. *I'm* prepared to bet we're all wrong about that. Someone once said, Show me a man with both feet on the ground and I'll show you a man who can't get his pants on.

I think it's time to get our collective feet off the ground.

D. Dreams and Visions for the Future of ASOR Meetings and Public Opportunities

by Douglas R. Clark

An ancient Chinese proverb has it that: “Making predictions is a difficult business, especially when predicting the future.” This aphorism may be neither ancient nor Chinese in origin, but it is true, nonetheless. However, my task of laying out a future vision for ASOR’s annual meetings and public outreach is less difficult than might appear to be the case, due in large part to the huge investment of time, talent and vitality made by members of CAMP committees past and present, investments for which we are all grateful and from which we all benefit. Given our current growth statistics and success, we need not reinvent the wheel if we want to realize ongoing prosperity. A wide array of improvements and enhancements, of course, but now does not seem to be the time to make radical changes in the way we construct and conduct the basics of the annual meetings and public outreach sessions.

Before some dreams and visions for the future, my worst nightmare: attending the 2005 Annual Meeting in some destination city for retirees to find conference participants—small in number, bent in posture, venerable for old age, fossilized in appearance, oxidizing nicely and developing distinguished patinas, slow of speech, impeded in motion, happily shuffling off to the only session offered where, to talk to each other, two or three have gathered together in ASOR’s name. This would be a nightmare in which archaeologists have become the artifacts and the session a wake.

My dreams, however, would envision annual meetings and outreach endeavors which are lively, of the highest caliber, seminal, engaging, productive, intriguing, appealing, enjoyable. Of the two questions posed to us for this Pace Setter Session, this vision attempts an answer to the first one: How are we to imagine the future? The second (How do we get from here to there?) will occupy most of our attention in what follows.

My three “**R**s” for imagining and realizing a positive future for ASOR’s Annual Meeting and outreach: that what we do in our planning and execution be **Responsible**, **Relevant** and **Robust**.

To be **1) Responsible**, the programs will benefit significantly from the following:

- Exceptional planning based on a wide and active communication network which ensures commitment to deadlines and implementation schedules.
- Adequate funding to assist with expenses demanded by an expanded program and outreach activities. The capital campaign currently underway has already allowed us to fund some parts of the 2001 Annual Meeting otherwise unattainable. Money-strapped ASOR must find a way to provide more financial support if we dare to dream a brighter future.
- Quality, top-notch presentations. While most presentations ASOR members make and attend are very good (many exceptional), we have to find ways to improve overall quality. We might accomplish this with a more demanding vetting process for submissions (perhaps even necessitated by increased participation with a larger number of abstracts to fill the same number of slots now available), by more rigorous self-assessment (beyond what the session chairs now complete) and competitions like the Sean W. Dever Memorial Prize for presentations by Ph.D. candidates. The work of the Honors and Awards Committee (Harold Forshey, chair) may also contribute to a general enhancement of quality at the meetings.

To be **2) Relevant**, a moving target by anyone’s definition, our sessions and presentations should be:

- More prospective than retrospective (unlike the remarkable Roman mosaic at Volubilis, Morocco, depicting a donkey facing one direction and its rider seated backwards).
- Focused well on the varied audiences ASOR serves—academic/professional and the public, informed and otherwise.
- On top of available technology.
- Inclusive and inviting.
- Democratic and shared.

- Attentive to the more recently emphasized concerns regarding site preservation and presentation.

Although we continue experimenting with the outreach programs (Carolyn Rivers, chair), we have to find ways to maintain an energetic focus on the need for archaeologists to communicate archaeology to the public. In the future this might not only mean supporting current programs connected to the Annual Meetings, but perhaps sponsoring a kid's fair, tours and public lectures. To be **3) Robust**, perhaps the most significant of the three “**Rs**” of imagining a positive future for ASOR's meetings and programs, we have several options both internal and external:

- Building attendance at annual meetings to 700-800 in the next few years. Bigger may not always be better, but small is not a viable option, given the success of the past few years. We work with a limited audience and need to maximize what we have.
- Maintaining and enriching several aspects of the program (Eric Cline, chair) such as:
 - an opening plenary session about something sizzling on the cutting edge of research.
 - a special, stand-alone session on something significant in the long run for archaeologists working in the ANE.
 - a public session on something not necessarily sensational, but certainly of popular interest.
 - varied formats for the sessions, like more workshops, displays, hands-on presentations, high-tech demonstrations.
 - coverage in terms of:
 - geography of research (from Greece and Cyprus around the Mediterranean and Mesopotamia through the Levant to Egypt).
 - geography of presenters (from 15 countries in 2001).
 - chronology (from prehistory through modern times).
 - disciplines (from traditional approaches through all the scientific and theoretical disciplines related to modern archaeological endeavors).
 - people (old and young, female and male, biblical and non-biblical, established, senior scholars and upstart graduate students).
 - cooperative ventures with associations like SBL, AOS, AAA, AIA. The San Diego AIA Annual Meeting (2001) witnessed an extremely successful joint AIA/ASOR session on nautical archaeology and the 2002 session will see one on Galilee. As well, the Boulder ASOR meetings include a joint session (ASOR/AAA) on connectivity in antiquity.
- Extending our reach to the public through a new lecture program (Ann Killebrew, sub-committee chair), being designed now with the gracious support of the Biblical Archaeology Society in providing mailers and advertisement.
- Extending the role and influence of ASOR through associations with regional SBL/AAR societies. Currently there are six or seven active regional groups and efforts are underway to encourage at the Annual Meeting a conversation among regional leaders for everyone's benefit.

To serve the interests of ASOR, the overseas centers and committees, ancient Near Eastern scholars and the public in creative and productive fashion for the future, it will take diligent attention to ASOR programs and outreach which are Responsible, Relevant and Robust. Otherwise, our worst nightmare might come true and we may, while maintaining the ASOR acronym, need to call ourselves The Ancient Society of Orientalist Retirees.

E. Developing ASOR: Means and Membership

by Holland Hendrix

(Due to the September 11 attack in New York and distractions developing from that disruption the text of Dr. Hendrix's talk has not reached us by press time. It will be incorporated into the report via the ASOR-1 as soon as it is available.)

F. Running the Show: ASOR Operations and Governance

by Rudy Dornemann

ASOR has operated as a volunteer organization with a very small permanent staff, for more than a century. In order for ASOR to move ahead, it is critical to plan carefully for the future and to dream big dreams of what it wants to accomplish! We must also be creative and dream big dreams in the development area to fund all of our efforts. Only by realizing our dreams of financial support will we be successful in making our other dreams a reality. It is essential that we give equal time and effort to both sets of dreams, or our chosen ventures will not attain their true potential and we will not move beyond our current situation.

ASOR has traditionally lived between potential and reality, between demands for programs and demands for accountability; and between demands for more staff time and more attention to detail, as opposed to attention to priority needs and indispensable programs. It has been the role of ASOR's administrative office and officers to try to meet everyone's needs and keep everyone happy. Everyone knows the dangers of living on the edge like this, and how one is just as likely to displease as to please everyone in the process.

In the best of all worlds, we would like to see ASOR sponsor its own significant excavations that make a real difference in reconstructing the mosaic of ancient Near Eastern history and culture. As part of ASOR's mission, we would see it support the process of publication of archaeological related fieldwork in a significant way. ASOR must do more than provide advice and peer review for affiliated and sponsored projects. It must lead by example in pioneering methodologies, recording systems, models for synthesis, helping to create new technologies, new methods of producing publications, new methods of storing and preserving research data and synthetic treatments, and spearheading greater exchange of ideas. ASOR would not only affiliate with research institutes overseas, but run its own US based center to provide the physical support and community of interest that researchers require in the US to move our field into the forefront of international research.

The resources and financial support needed to produce in reality the ASOR of such a vision are quite significant but that should not stop us from dreaming the dream or working toward seeing it become a reality. A parallel challenge to conceptualizing such a dream, as we have stated at the outset, is to devote similar effort and creativity to establishing the financial structure to support it. We must all get behind the effort to expand our non-professional component of supporters, like our chairman's Circle, and expand such efforts dramatically.

Finishing on a note of reality, ASOR faces at least three plateaus in its challenge for the future. We have sketched a plateau that ASOR has not yet attained. To accomplish this would require a budget of 2 – 4 million dollars annually, a significant, well-equipped physical plant and a staff ranging from 18 to 30. This would not replace volunteer effort and individual scholarly initiative, but would create the setting in which such efforts can flourish. This third plateau is our future!

We must, as quickly as possible, leave behind the bare existence plateau that we have fallen back upon so often. At this plateau we operate at a level of \$600 – \$700,000 operating budget with a staff of about 4 and one-half, where there is not quite enough staff to keep up with the demands and to be able to do everything right. No staff member can afford to concentrate all of his or her efforts solely on administration or development or program or publications but everyone is forced to be reactive and deal with situations as they arise in an effort to try to keep ASOR's head above water. Consensus building is an essential but frustrating part of such an operation. The second plateau is one we have been striving hard to reach, but have not attained. To operate at this higher plateau would require an operating budget of \$900,000 – \$1,500,000 and a staff of 6 – 9 individuals. One person would be able to concentrate on administration, one on development, one on finances, one on programs and one on publications, with assistants available, at least part-time, in each functional area. At this level we should be able to get things done right and effectively, balance consensus with a well developed set of operations policies and

procedures, and deal successfully with many of the challenges that face ASOR.

ASOR has struggled to move from the first to the second plateau for most of its existence. Unless it can break the pattern and move to the highest plateau I have outlined, it will perpetuate for yet another century the struggle it has endured for the past century