

This is my final report to you as President of ASOR. I am pleased to report that ASOR has never been stronger financially than it is today. We have met and exceeded the five million dollar goal set for the campaign celebrating our 125th year. This success is due the generosity and hard work of our all our members including you, our Board, and our very capable staff. We are truly blessed in them and in our membership.

125 years ago twenty-one universities and seminaries founded ASOR to advance the study of the ancient Near East, primarily in “the lands of the bible”. Now ASOR has approximately 53 [consortium institutions](#), including universities, seminaries, museums, foundations, and libraries. In addition, we have more than 2,200 individual [members](#) and more than 40,000 [Friends of ASOR](#). These take our work far beyond the original scope envisioned by the founders. Today, members of the American Society of Overseas Research are conducting research from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean. A glance at this year’s program reveals topics that would have been familiar to the founders, such as *The Samaria Ostraca: A Twenty-First-Century Reappraisal*, and others that would have amazed and confounded them, such as *The Robot at the Back of the Classroom: Student Engagement and Assessment under the Shadow of Generative AI*.

ASOR’s top priority has always been supporting the work of our members. I wrote you last year that we were facing tough challenges politically and financially. These are still with us today and, if anything, tougher. Public funding for our work is shrinking; governmental barriers block the travel of too many of our members. There are colleagues who cannot be with us here in Boston because of these restrictions. Our Program Committee and staff have worked hard to provide virtual access for them. These challenges and what we as leaders can do to navigate through them successfully and ethically are once again major topics on the Board’s agenda this year.

ASOR’s mission statement

The American Society of Overseas Research (ASOR), founded in 1900, is an international organization whose mission is to initiate, encourage, and support research into, and public understanding of, the history and cultures of the Near East and wider Mediterranean, from the earliest times...

carries at its core the belief that studying the past has value, that it brings us diverse perspectives on lives lived well and not so well. The material remains, from awe inspiring monuments to the remnants of mundane daily life, remind us of the highs

and lows of human endeavor. In these troubled times we need these reminders of our common humanity more than ever.

It has been an honor to serve in the leadership of this venerable and evolving organization. I am confident I am passing it on to extraordinarily capable successors. I wish them and you all the very best.