

## ***Near Eastern Archaeology***

### Renewal of Three-Year Contract to Serve as Editor – Statement of Purpose and Goals

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1. Goals/direction of the past three years: As all are aware, *Near Eastern Archaeology* fell two years behind in early 2000 under the editorship of the two co-editors of that time. Subsequent editors of *NEA* put in many extra hours and raised substantial amounts of money to bring *NEA* up to date. *NEA* is now fully up to date. During the past decade *NEA* has filled the niche as a semi-popular peer reviewed journal that is listed as one of a small group of journals considered to be acceptable for promotion at many universities worldwide. In this role, *NEA*'s audience includes scholars, archaeologists, university/college students (undergraduate and graduate) and the educated/interested public. Scholars are willing to invest the required effort to submit articles to *NEA* as the journal counts as peer reviewed, essential for university recognition of faculty scholarship. Under my editorship, I have taken the title of the journal seriously – near eastern archaeology – with the focus on the highlights from recent archaeological fieldwork (feature article), timely debates on topics of archaeological significance (Forum), new discoveries (FieldNotes) and museum reviews (FieldNotes). During the past three years we have also published a few theme issues – Archaeology in Cyprus, Neo-Hittite sites in SE Turkey and Syria and most recently, Archaeology in Lebanon. The scope of the journal has expanded during the past few years, truly encompassing the entire ancient near east with a good combination of North American, Israeli, Jordanian, Lebanese, Turkish, European etc. contributors. In some instances, these articles represent the most significant publication that will appear for some time on an archaeological site, thus serving one of ASOR's key goals in disseminating and publishing the results from archaeological fieldwork and research. In other instances, this is the first time information has ever been published in English, thus also expanding archaeology's outreach. Many of these articles will serve as the most accessible and up-to-date description of the results of archaeological exploration in the region for years to come, continuing to generate revenue via JSTOR access. *NEA* now serves the majority of its members and constituents and has a clearly defined/targeted audience (see above).

In addition, with the help of *NEA*'s outstanding assistant editors – Jennie Ebeling, Gabriele Fassbeck, Justin Lev-Tov and Robert Schick – we have expanded *NEA*'s outreach activities via the on-line component – Dig-it-al. This has been done on a completely volunteer basis, with little assistance outside of our group.

2. Plans for the next three years: If I am approved as *NEA*'s editor for the next three years, I plan to continue the same approach outlined in point 1 – feature articles on recent archaeological excavations, surveys and fieldwork; publication of timely archaeological debates; short essays on new discoveries, museum exhibits and other related topics; and the book review section. *NEA*'s semi-popular "identity" is quite distinct from *BASOR*'s, which serves as ASOR's premiere scholarly journal. *BASOR* is more academic,

detailed and technical. In addition, it includes articles that encompass all areas of ASOR's academic reach (e.g. Bible, epigraphy, archaeology, more analytical and/or theoretically-based research etc.).

With a better representation of the ancient near east, I would like to see foreign subscriptions, ASOR memberships and participation in the Annual Meeting continue to increase. This is a key area of potential growth for ASOR. I also hope to expand Dig-it-al and its content. Now that *NEA* and *BASOR* have both a print and digital component, the transition to digital publishing will occur "naturally," as dictated by demand and financial necessity.

3. Third is your considered assessment of what additional resources, if any, or changes in process you would need to accomplish the desired goal: I work with a very dedicated and extraordinary group of archaeologists and scholars who serve as "assistant editors." Their assistance and input have been invaluable during the past three years. I would like to see a modest increase in the editor's "discretionary" fund to assist the assistant and guest editors with travel funds to the ASOR meetings. Currently the discretionary editor's budget is \$5,000.- I would like to see it increased to \$6,500.- I would also like to receive some modest website assistance from ASOR.
  
4. NEA and Public Outreach: I have been asked to comment briefly on outreach and *NEA*'s role. I am a very strong supporter of public outreach as many of you know from my past service in ASOR as well as from my current project at Tel Akko, which has a significant public outreach component. A strong public outreach program requires a well-developed infrastructure such as AIA's local societies and lecture programs. There are currently two popular archaeology magazines – *Archaeology* and *Biblical Archaeology Review*. Both are run by full time professional staffs that rely on paid professional writers to write for them. Both are experiencing declines in their subscriptions. Both require significant budgets to operate. Both have difficulties, especially *BAR*, in convincing scholars to prepare and provide materials. I do not see that there is a need or demand for a third popular archaeology magazine.

Public outreach in ASOR would be best achieved by a significantly improved website. Increasing numbers of people obtain their information via the internet and it is now more often accessed for news than print newspapers. Second, a strong infrastructure should be developed for public outreach similar to the AIA's outreach programs. All of this requires budget, individuals who are strongly committed to working year round on public outreach and an appropriate staff member to inspire, coordinate and lead these efforts.