

Initiative on the Status of Women
Report to ASOR Board of Trustees – 3 May 2014
Submitted by Beth Alpert Nakhai on behalf of the Steering Committee

1. According to a March 2014 ASOR blog by Aviva Cormier, “The Women of ASOR Map: Creating Opportunities for Networking and Mentoring within Near Eastern Archaeology,” there is continuing interest in – and use of – the interactive map of *Women in ASOR* (<http://asorblog.org/?p=7124>).
2. The response to an informal survey sent to Annual Meeting 2013 Mentoring Lunch participants indicates that people would like to see the lunch take place annually. Given the overwhelming response (60+ attendees), we will need a better venue for this in San Diego. Outcomes of the 2013 Mentoring Lunch include the desire for ongoing mentoring opportunities, and for ASOR support in job placement and professional advancement.
3. The strong interest in female mentors was heard, as well, at the *Symposium on Women in Archaeology*, held on March 29th at the University of Pennsylvania (<http://www.penn.museum/events-calendar/details/1267:women-symposium>). Two members of the Symposium steering committee, Yoko Nishimura (<http://www.sas.upenn.edu/anthropology/people/Nishimura>) and Lauren Ristvet (<http://www.sas.upenn.edu/anthropology/people/ristvet>), are also members of the ASOR Initiative. Presentations highlighted achievements by female archaeologists and the many obstacles they encounter, and disparities in funding and professional representation between men and women working in archaeology. In the course of my presentation, I highlighted the ASOR Initiative and encouraged participation in ASOR and in the Initiative among women working in the Middle East. A recent ASOR blog by Nishimura, *The “Women in Archaeology” Symposium at the University of Pennsylvania*, reports on this conference (<http://asorblog.org/?p=7248>).
4. Initiative Steering Committee members Leann Pace (<http://college.wfu.edu/religion/people/dr-leann-pace/>) and Jennie Ebeling (<http://evansville.edu/majors/archaeology/faculty.cfm>) continue their work to determine the history of women who have published and cited in *BASOR* (Pace) and *NEA* (Ebeling). The goal of this project is to determine the extent to which scholarship by women is included in ASOR publications, thereby reaching their readers. Hiring and promotion assessments increasingly use citation counts in addition to the number of publications in prestigious peer-reviewed journals.

This project is hampered by the fact that ASOR publications require last-name-first-initial (LNFI) rather than last-name-first-name (LNFN) for bibliography and citations. LNFI is standard for some professional organizations that produce citation guides, including CSE (Council of Science Editors) and APA (American Psychological Association); peer societies utilizing this format include Archaeological Institute of America. Alternately, LNFN is the citation format for MLA (Modern Language Association), Chicago Manual of Style and Turabian; peer societies utilizing this format include Society of Biblical Literature, American Anthropological Association, and Society for American Archaeology.

5. Inspired by the designation of March as *Women's History Month*, ASOR Digital Media Specialist Kaitlynn Anderson (<http://www.bu.edu/asor/news/2013/09/kaitlynn-anderson.html>) has begun posting articles about women in Near Eastern archaeology on the ASOR blog site. Several of these articles reported the results of work undertaken by myself and by others involved in the Initiative. These include: *The Female Marshalltown* by Nava Panitz-Cohen (<http://asorblog.org/?p=6936>); *Claiming Dig Fashion* by Jennie Ebeling (<http://asorblog.org/?p=7108>); *The "Women in Archaeology" Symposium at the University of Pennsylvania* by Yoko Nishimura, (<http://asorblog.org/?p=7248>); *Breaking In: Women's Representation in Archaeology* by my student Valerie Schlegel (<http://asorblog.org/?p=7096>); and *Women on ASOR's Board of Trustees*, which I wrote (<http://asorblog.org/?p=7080>).
6. Thanks to Sten LaBianca and Jeff Hudon of ASOR's Committee on Archaeological Research and Policy (CAP; <http://www.bu.edu/asor/excavations/cap.shtml>), Cynthia Rufo-McCormick at the ASOR Archive (<http://www.bu.edu/asor/archives/index.html>), and my sister Abbe Alpert (<http://www.gingersnapbakery.com/>), I have a somewhat complete – although unfortunately inconsistent – record of the heads of ASOR-affiliated digs dating back to the late 1960s. Problems include the failure of most records to distinguish between field and publication phases and the lack of consistency in reporting leadership positions. In addition, there is no mechanism to ensure that CAP records are archived within ASOR (see #7, below). Therefore, there are no CAP data for 2007-2010. In any case, I used what is available to create and analyze an extensive database covering 180 projects in 11 countries over nearly half a century. University of Arizona undergraduate Valerie Schlegel has continued to work on this material in the spring 2014 semester. Her preliminary analysis is presented in *Breaking In: Women's Representation in Archaeology* (see #5, above); a more comprehensive study, distinguishing between field and publication phases, will be complete by semester's end. Valerie and I will present these results in the session I have organized for the November 2014 meeting, entitled *Women At Work: Making One's Way In The Field Of Near Eastern Studies* (see #11, below).

7. Inasmuch as ASOR is a society dedicated to reconstructions of the past, it is problematic that critical components of its own history are so difficult to ascertain. Through *BASOR* volume 229 (1978), ASOR committees and their members, as well as Board trustees, were listed in the journal. The decision to eliminate the listing of committees and members, compounded by the lack of a mechanism to ensure that the annual records for each committee remain with ASOR as committee leadership changes, means that important information about the structure of ASOR, about its leadership, and about its inclusion of women, is no longer available.
8. My work on a project related to field safety (safety from intimidation, sexual harassment and physical violence) for those working in Near Eastern archaeology continues to progress. The project has several goals, which include: collecting data; clarifying excavation projects' legal responsibilities as they relate to the safety of their staff, volunteers, and employees while in the field; working with ASOR leadership to develop appropriate statements regarding ethics and standards for field safety; and, working with ASOR leadership and others to develop trainings to ensure that excavation directors, staff and dig participants are cognizant of their legal and ethical responsibilities and rights.

I have completed the federally mandated training required to work with human subjects (<http://orcr.arizona.edu/h spp>) and am in the process of obtaining all the requisite approvals at The University of Arizona. I expect to have the required paperwork approved by semester's end and to have the survey live by the end of the summer. At that time, I will contact ASOR membership through an email blast and through a link from the ASOR website. The field safety survey will offer the option of voluntary follow-up phone interviews. In addition, I plan for an informal "open house" during the November meeting, for those who would like to initiate or to continue any part of the discussion in person. All information received through any of these contacts will be stripped of all identifying information and informants' confidentiality will be respected.

9. I am working with members of the Society of Biblical Literature's Commission on the Status of Women in the Profession (http://www.sbl-site.org/SBLCommittees_CSWP_Activities.aspx), the American Anthropological Association's Committee on Gender Equity in Anthropology (<http://www.aaanet.org/cmtes/cogea/COGEANew.cfm>), the Society for American Archaeology's Committee on the Status of Women in Archaeology (<https://ecommerce.saa.org/saa/staticcontent/staticpages/adminDir/committeeDisplay.cfm?Committee=COMMITTEE%2FSTAS>), and the Register of Professional Archaeologists (<http://www.rpanet.org/>) on issues relating to both field safety and to gender equity.

10. I am in touch with key members of the Society for American Archaeology, which is working with other professional societies on a major project to collect information about archaeologists in the Americas. This project builds upon the work of colleagues across Europe, who have been engaged in similar studies for the past decade (<http://discovering-archaeologists.eu/>). I suggest that ASOR join in this enterprise, which will broaden our understanding of issues relating to archaeologists in general – and, from the perspective of the Initiative, to those of female archaeologists. It will have the added benefit of enabling ASOR to better engage with colleagues in North America and abroad, who are involved with field projects in parts of the world other than the Middle East.

11. I have developed a program for the November 2014 meeting entitled “Women At Work: Making One’s Way In The Field Of Near Eastern Studies.” This session, co-chaired by Initiative member Stephanie Langin-Hooper (<http://art.bgsu.edu/faculty/facultyinfo.cfm?ID=426&Title=Art%20History>), is designed to provide a forum for exploring issues relating to contemporary women working in archaeology and other sub-disciplines within Near Eastern studies. These issues include the challenges faced by professional women, women and leadership, ASOR and the gender gap, publishing and citing women in ASOR journals, and women and field safety. Participants include: Rannfrid Thelle (Past Chair of the Society of Biblical Literature's Committee for the Status of Women in the Profession; Senior Fairmount Lecturer, Wichita State University, Wichita, KS); Barbara Porter (Director, American Center of Oriental Research, Amman, Jordan); Nancy Serwint (Former director, Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute, Nicosia, Cyprus; Professor, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ); Leann Pace (Wake Forest University); Jennie Ebeling (University of Evansville); Valerie Schlegel (The University of Arizona); and myself.