

Webinar Marketing Report for the ASOR Executive Committee

The executive committee has requested a brief report to explain why the webinar project was not successful. The main reason that the webinar series was cancelled before it started was that there was not enough demand (and thus revenue) to support even a fraction of the expenses that we were incurring. This fact, combined with the technical difficulties that we were experiencing with the presentation, meant that we had to cancel the program.

Marketing

The first step was to develop the promotional material to advertise the webinar series. Steve Dana and Andy Vaughn met several times to develop an online “flyer,” and we used a 3rd party contractor for the design work. The academic content was developed by Eric and Carol Meyers.

The following outlines each major marketing push, the responses received, and the modifications that were made to the low response rates...

1. First e-mail push: AIA list on September 3, 2013 (See Exhibit A):

Through an agreement with AIA for ASOR to provide Archives consulting and work, the AIA agreed to let ASOR use its e-mail list twice (for free) to promote the webinar program. The list contains about 63,000 to 65,000 names, and AIA monitors the list to make sure that the e-mail addresses are good. The list only contains people who have agreed to receive information about non-AIA programs. All of the people have expressed an interest in archaeology.

The e-mail that was used was designed by Steve Dana’s designer from Las Vegas. The flyer was overseen by Steve Dana and Andy with the academic content coming from Eric and Carol Meyers. It was suggested by Steve that the advertisement contain all of the information needed, and it was thus detailed and long.

Highlights of the results:

- Recipients: 63,000 people
- Open rate was 13.5% (= 8,505 people)
- Total clicks 256
 - 18 of those were for CARTA
 - 48 of those went to the signup page for the webinar
 - About 5 people actually signed up for the webinar
 - About 100 people chose the free option (become a friend of ASOR)

SUMMARY = about 1/10 of 1% became a FOA and 0% signed up for the webinar

Conclusions drawn: Steve and Andy concluded that this ad would not likely work for the BAS list unless some changes were made. We thus decided to modify the advertisement for the BAS e-mail push about 8 days later (see below).

2. Second e-mail push: BAS list on September 11, 2013 (See Exhibit B):

The Biblical Archaeology Society list has about 75,000 names on it, and they are all people who have signed up to receive Bible History Daily. ASOR had to pay to use this list, and we negotiated a rate of about \$4,200 for three e-mail pushes with the ability to cancel and pay a prorated fee if the e-mail push failed. BAS agreed to run a banner ad (see Exhibit C) for \$100 for one month. The banner ad showed up when someone clicked through on an article appearing in Bible History Daily.

As a result of feedback from the first e-mail push (Sept 3), we decided to create a landing page on the ASOR website that would contain the detailed information provided in the first AIA e-mail push. The new ad for BAS would focus on getting people to sign up for the webinar. If they clicked through to the landing page, they would still have the “free” option of becoming a FOA, but the emphasis was the webinar. We also decided to require a phone number if people chose the free option so we could call them and invite them to take the webinar.

Highlights of the results:

- Recipients: about 74,000 people
- Open rate was 17.67% = (13,080 people)
- Total Unique Clicks 679
 - 105 were for CARTA
 - 596 were for the webinar
 - Note: sum is greater than unique clicks because some people clicked both links
 - About 5 people signed up for the webinar
 - A little over 100 became a Friend of ASOR

SUMMARY = about 1/10 of 1% became an FOA, and 0% signed up for the webinar

Conclusions drawn: Once again, we discovered that the webinar e-mail push did not result in enough registrations to make the program sustainable. Steve Dana called about 20 people who had signed up as a Friend of ASOR but not the webinar to find out why. Most of the people said they didn’t want to pay for a webinar. Some said that they weren’t sure about the commitment, and the price was too high without knowing the quality.

As a result of this e-mail push, Steve and Andy concluded that another e-mail push that was similar would not yield enough results. They decided that we should grow the number of Friends of ASOR and have phone numbers so that we could call them if necessary to get signups. It was thus decided to highlight *ANE Today* as a free benefit of being a Friend in the next round of pushes with AIA and BAS (see Exhibits D and E below)

3. Third e-mail push (or group) contemplated—A Pastors’ website call “Outreach”

Because we had not received the response that we had hoped for from either the AIA or BAS lists, we explored other email lists. One of the most promising was the “Outreach” website and e-mail list. This website caters to evangelical pastors and provide sermon-writing resources. It was felt that this site might have better response rate, so we explored the possibility of advertising with this list.

The prices for the Outreach site were much more expensive than the BAS list. While the number of people on the list was 2-3 times greater, the list price was about \$10,000 per e-mail for the entire list. After negotiation, it seemed likely that an e-mail to about 70,000 would cost about \$5,000. We thus wanted to make sure that it would be effective.

To that end, the Outreach sales person agreed to let ASOR run a banner ad on their website with 1,000,000 impressions for free so we could see what kind of response we received. Impressions are not e-mails, but merely an ad that appears on the Outreach website. We decided that this would give us an idea of how things might go. (See Exhibit C for a sample banner).

Results and conclusion: The banner ad encouraged people to become a Friend of ASOR for free. It was hard to tell how many signups we received as a result of the banner ad, but it was less than 50 total (and the number may have been less because we could only track signups by date and not why they signed up—some may have signed up from ASOR's Facebook page). We thus decided that it was not worth \$5,000 to send an e-mail blast out to this group.

4. Second e-mail push to the AIA list (See Exhibit D, pages 1 and 2)

Since the e-mails above did not result in signups for the webinar, it was decided to focus on building the ASOR house list, and then we could contact those people multiple times and with phone calls to get the signups needed to make the webinar sustainable. We changed our ad to make it focus on getting people to sign up for the *ANE Today*. Exhibit D shows how the ad described ANE Today and gave sample articles. We picked articles that would appeal to the AIA list and not just biblical articles.

Highlights of the results:

- Recipients: 63,000 people
- Open rate: I do not have that e-mail with the details
- Number of new FOA's = about 980 people in a week

SUMMARY = we had about a 1.5% positive response rate for people becoming a FOA

Conclusions: We were glad that we had a 1.5% response rate for the free product, but we were skeptical that this would give us a large enough pool to sell enough webinars. We thus decided that we would try something very different for the second BAS e-mail blast. We decided to try a simple ad that encouraged people to click on the *ANE Today* landing page and then sign up.

5. Second e-mail push to the BAS list (See Exhibit E)

Whereas the previous e-mails had not worked to the extent we had hoped, we decided to try a different approach. We designed a simple ad that was pleasing to the eye, and the ASOR staff (Cynthia and Kaitlynn) came up with something that they thought would work. It encouraged people to become a FOA and get the *ANE Today* for free.

Highlights of the results:

- Recipients: 75,000 people
- Open rate: I no longer have that information
- Number of new FOA's = about 940 people in a week

SUMMARY = we had a 1.3% positive response rate for people becoming a FOA

6. E-mails sent to the Friends of ASOR list and Annual Meeting efforts

E-mails to Friends of ASOR in November and December 2013 were the most successful, but they only resulted in about 12-15 registrations. We also offered registrations to the first webinar for \$4.95 to any Annual Meeting attendee, but that only resulted in five registrations (and three of those were members of the ASOR executive committee).

The following is a summary of all of the registrations that were received:

Amount	Event Fee Name	Promotion	Attendees
4.95	Single webinar Jan 12	<i>ASOR bucks</i>	5 people
19.95	Single webinar Jan 12	<i>FOA discount</i>	4 people
29.95	Single webinar Jan 12	<i>Regular price</i>	4 people
74.95	Five webinar package	<i>ASOR bucks</i>	1 person
99.95	Five webinar package	<i>Regular price</i>	25 people
		Total	39 people

Total revenue for the first webinar as of the date when it was cancelled was \$675.25. We had planned to send out several more e-mails to the Friends of ASOR, but it did not appear likely that we'd generate more than \$1,000.00 for the first webinar.

7. Reasons that the webinar was cancelled.

In retrospect we probably should have pulled the plug on the webinar earlier. However, we were trying to get one webinar completed even if it lost money so that we could learn from the process. We were not able to do that because there were technical challenges with the third-party software, and the speakers and moderators were not pleased with the software package. Inda Omerefendic spent about 15-20 hours per week on related issues to the webinar in December and early January. The final straw was that Jane Cahill West withdrew because she was unhappy with the webinar software. The cost of producing the webinars (apart from staff time) would have been about \$4,000 to \$5,000 per webinar, so we decided that we would be better served to focus on recruiting Friends of ASOR and try to sell something else (other than webinars) to generate revenue.

8. Efforts to advertise ANE Today with a special issue (See Exhibit F)

After we decided to cancel the webinar, we still wanted to build the Friends of ASOR program to at least 10,000 people. One method to accomplish this goal was to promote a special issue of the ANE Today that treated "Passover as Jesus Knew It." Susan Ackerman kindly recruited authors / contributors, and we created an in-house ad for the special issue.

The ad was circulated to the following lists:

- BAS list (complimentary because ASOR waived their annual meeting exhibit fee)
 - Sent to 75,000 people
 - About 900 signups in a week
- AIA list (complimentary through archives work traded)
 - Sent to 68,500 people
 - About 1,000 signups in a week
- Outreach / Pastors' group
 - Sent a test to about 8,000 people for \$1,000
 - Only about 40 signups in a week, so discontinued

In addition, we have created FOA "business cards" that professors can distribute in their classes. It's impossible to track how effective these cards are because signups happen over a period of time. All of our efforts have resulted in the Friends of ASOR program growing to about 8,500 people as of early September 2014.

Exhibit A–page 1: AIA Sept 3 e-mail designed by Steve Dana’s Designer

Amelie Walker <website@Archaeology.org>
 To: ASOR Executive Director <asored@bu.edu>
 Friends of ASOR Webinar Offer

September 3, 2013 3:13 PM

FRIENDS OF ASOR

**SPECIAL OFFER!
NEW WEBINAR SERIES!**

Archaeology of the Holy Lands

The American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR), the world's premier society for Near Eastern archaeology, announces the launch of an exciting new quarterly webinar series.

ASOR invites you to listen to the world's foremost archaeologists debate the topics that interest you most!

ASOR has created a new FREE membership category, the 'Friends of ASOR.' As a Friend of ASOR, you'll receive a monthly e-newsletter, *The Ancient Near East Today*, and can participate in ASOR's new quarterly webinar program developed especially for the Friends of ASOR, "Archaeology of the Holy Lands."

"I'm very excited about this new opportunity for the public at large to learn about the exciting developments and discoveries made by ASOR archaeologists in Israel, Jordan, Turkey and other near eastern countries."

-Dr. Tim Harrison, President of ASOR

Archaeology of the Holy Lands

October 13, 2013 Jerusalem in the Time of David and Solomon

Jerusalem was the capital of a large monarchic state as described in the Hebrew Bible, in the

Exhibit A—page 2: AIA Sept 3 e-mail designed by Steve Dana's Designer

Jerusalem was the capital of a large monarchic state, as described in the Hebrew Bible, in the tenth century BCE. Right? Actually, not everyone accepts this, and experts interpret the archaeological data in conflicting ways. This webinar will explore the controversies swirling around the role of Jerusalem at the beginning of the monarchic era. It will consider the relationship of archaeological discoveries to the biblical narratives about the most famous biblical kings, David and Solomon. It will also take into account the nature of the Jebusite/Canaanite city that preceded Israelite rule. Each of the panelists will prepare and narrate an eight-minute PowerPoint presentation and will participate in a concluding discussion involving questions from the audience. The conveners will introduce the subject and participants and will moderate the concluding discussion.

- January 12, 2014** **Hellenism: How It Changed the Biblical World by Making Judaism & Christianity Portable and Palatable to the West**
This webinar will explore the profound impact—on architecture and artifacts, literature, and religion—of the introduction of Greek language and culture to the East Mediterranean beginning in the late fourth century BCE.
- April 6, 2014** **Israelite Origins: Who Were the Israelites & When Did They Arrive in the Holy Land?**
This webinar will examine the different theories of ancient Israel's beginnings as a people by comparing archaeological remains from the Late Bronze II/Iron I period and the narratives of conquest and settlement in Joshua and Judges.
- July 13, 2014** **Qumran: The Dead Sea Scrolls & Do They Matter for Understanding Jesus?**
This webinar will consider how the huge number of scrolls and scroll fragments discovered at Qumran provides invaluable information about early Judaism and Christianity and the Jewish followers of Jesus.
- October 12, 2014** **Jerusalem: From Herod to Mohammed**
This webinar will look at the latest discoveries in Jerusalem as they pertain to early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The discussion will involve consideration of the political aspects of the recovery of archaeological materials from these periods.

*Dr. Eric Meyers & Dr. Carol Meyers,
Dept. of Religion, Duke University
Co-Moderators*

The Panel of Experts for the First Webinar:

Jane Cahill West, City of David Archaeological Project

*Israel Finkelstein, Department of Archaeology and
Ancient Near Eastern Civilizations, Tel Aviv University*

*Ronny Reich, Department of Archaeology,
University of Haifa*



How Can You Participate? It's Simple....

Exhibit A–page 3: AIA Sept 3 e-mail designed by Steve Dana’s Designer

Option 1 >>>

Become a Friend of ASOR, receive **The Ancient Near East Today** e-newsletter for FREE, register for the complete 2014 quarterly webinar series (four one-hour programs) and access the October 2013 webinar at no additional cost.

\$99.95

BEST DEAL
33% OFF

This is more than a 33% discount from the single program price! This option includes a FREE registration - to either ASOR's November 2013 conference in Baltimore MD, or the November 2014 conference in San Diego, CA - a \$150 value! (This offer extends only to first-time conference attendees.) GUARANTEE: If you are not satisfied after the first webinar, we will refund the unused portion of this package!

The first 100 people to register will receive a \$25 credit on any purchase from CARTA Jerusalem. Learn more at <http://store.carta-jerusalem.com/>

Option 2 >>>

Become a Friend of ASOR, receive **The Ancient Near East Today** for FREE, and register for the October 2013 webinar.

\$29.95

This option includes \$50 off a first-time registration to ASOR's November 2013 conference in Baltimore, MD. (This offer extends only to first-time conference attendees.)

Option 3 >>>

Become a Friend of ASOR now for **FREE** and receive the monthly e-newsletter, **The Ancient Near East Today**.

Don't Miss Out ... Sign Up Today!



Tim Harrison, President of ASOR and Director of the Tayinat Archaeological Project in southeast Turkey, standing beside a lion sculpture discovered at Tayinat in 2011 (Photo credit: Jennifer Jackson).

Help Me Spread The Word!

Please help ASOR by forwarding this email to any of your friends who are also interested in Near Eastern archaeology.

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To learn more about ASOR, visit our website www.asor.org
 All webinars will be archived so you can listen in live, or access them at your convenience

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Exhibit B: e-mail to BAS list on Sept 11:



The American Schools of Oriental Research, the world's premier society for Near Eastern archaeology, announces the launch of an exciting new webinar series.

These webinars, moderated by Profs. Carol and Eric Meyers of Duke University, will bring world-renowned archaeologists from the field to your desktop.

1. Jerusalem in the Time of David and Solomon *Oct. 13, 2013*

Jerusalem was the capital of a large monarchic state, as described in the Hebrew Bible, in the tenth century BCE, right? Actually, not everyone accepts this. Experts interpret the archaeological data in conflicting ways. This lecture will explore the controversies swirling around the role of Jerusalem at the beginning of the monarchic era.

2. Hellenism: How It Changed the Biblical World by Making Judaism and Christianity Portable and Palatable to the West *Jan. 12, 2014*

This lecture will explore the profound impact – on architecture and artifacts, literature, and religion – of the introduction of Greek language and culture to the East Mediterranean beginning in the late fourth century BCE.

3. Israelite Origins: Who Were the Israelites and When Did They Arrive in the Holy Land? *Apr. 6, 2014*

What do artifacts tell us about the people described in the Old Testament? Experts examine the different theories of ancient Israel's beginning as a people by comparing archaeological remains from the Late Bronze II/Iron I period and the narratives of conquest and settlement in the books of Joshua and Judges.

4. Qumran: The Dead Sea Scrolls—Do They Matter for Understanding Jesus? *Jul. 13, 2014*

How do the huge number of scrolls and scroll fragments discovered at Qumran provide invaluable information about early Judaism and Christianity, and the Jewish followers of Jesus? Dead Sea Scrolls experts discuss the implications of these texts.

5. Jerusalem: From Herod to Mohammed *Oct. 12, 2014*

This lecture will review the latest discoveries in Jerusalem as they pertain to early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The discussion will involve consideration of the political aspects of the recovery of archaeological materials from these periods.

Register now for as little as \$19.99 per webinar, and enjoy benefits like free or discounted admission to the ASOR Annual Meeting, a free subscription to *The Ancient Near East Today* e-newsletter, and a discount at carta-jerusalem.com.
Click through to learn more!



World's largest collection of Biblical maps, articles, and images. Visit www.carta-jerusalem.com

Exhibit C: Banner add that ran on the BAS website for one month. A similar banner ad ran on "Outreach" (a pastors' sermon-writing website) for one month:



The banner advertisement features a collage of three overlapping issues of the journal "The Ancient Near East Today" on the left. The central text, in a bold blue font, reads: "Become a Friend of ASOR and receive *The Ancient Near East Today* e-newsletter for FREE!". To the right of the text is the logo for "FRIENDS OF ASOR", which consists of a stylized yellow sunburst icon above the letters "ASOR" in blue, with the words "FRIENDS OF" in a smaller yellow font above "ASOR".

Exhibit D–Page 1: PDF copy of an html email that was sent to the AIA list on Sept 18, 2013:

Archaeology Magazine <website@archaeology.org>

To: Andy Vaughn

[Sample] Receive the monthly e-newsletter The Ancient Near East Today for FREE

September 18, 2013 4:04 PM



Become a Friend of ASOR for FREE and get [The ANE Today](#) delivered to your e-mail every month.

This monthly e-newsletter disseminates ideas, insights and discoveries to [Friends of ASOR](#). You can become a Friend and receive the e-newsletter for free, you only need to [register](#). The *ANE Today* appears on the third Tuesday of each month and features contributions from diverse academics, a forum featuring debates of current developments from the field, and links to news and resources. The *ANE Today* covers the entire Near East, and each issue will present discussions ranging from the state of biblical archaeology to archaeology after the Arab Spring. [Sign up today for free](#) and be a part of this community of discovery!

Register Now - FREE!

Check out these exciting articles from previous issues:

- Robert and Erin Darby, [Words in the Sand: Discovering A New Monumental Latin Inscription at 'Ayn Gharandal \(Ancient Arieldela\), Jordan](#) – The stone was huge, well over 500 pounds. It was quite a thing to witness... Then one of the workers started brushing the sand off with his hand, which we were not supposed to do! The director of the project said 'stop, stop, stop!' to him, but it was too late. But, secretly I'm glad he wiped off the sand, because for the briefest moment I saw letters in red paint!
- Robert Mullins and Nava Panitz–Cohen, [Why Dig at the Gateway to the Arameans?](#) – Abel Beth Maacah is an imposing 35–acre mound controlling one of the most strategic passes in northern Israel and has the honor of being the northernmost site in Israel (running neck–and–neck with nearby Tel Dan, but winning by a nostril). It was also ancient Israel's northern gateway to the Aramean world.
- David Ussishkin, [The So–Called "Solomonic" City–gate at Megiddo](#) – The "Solomonic" gates at Hazor, Gezer and Megiddo have long been controversial for their apparent confirmation of Biblical accounts. Here, Prof. David Ussishkin, the excavator of Lachish and Megiddo, argues that the six–chambered gate



Exhibit D–Page 2: Continuation of AIA Sept 18 e-mail blast:

structure at Megiddo cannot be dated to the 10th century and the reign of Solomon.

- Jeffrey Blakely, [The Archaeology of World War I in Palestine and the Beginning of the Modern Middle East](#) – Most Americans understand World War I in the Middle East through the epic 1962 film Lawrence of Arabia. Blakely explores how WWI shaped the region.
- Amnon Ben-Tor, [The Ceremonial Precinct in the Upper City of Hazor](#). The renewed excavations at Hazor have revealed an enormous Middle Bronze and Late Bronze Age ceremonial precinct on the Upper City. But is it a palace or a temple, and is its destruction evidence of Joshua's conquest of Canaan?
- Morag Kersel and Christina Luke, [Ten Years after Iraq: Archaeology, Archaeologists, and U.S. Foreign Relations](#) – Kersel and Luke describe working for the U.S. Department of State's Cultural Heritage Center during the month following the U.S. invasion of Iraq.
- James K. Hoffmeier, [Archaeological Field Work in Egypt After the Revolution](#). Learn from first-hand accounts about what has happened with archaeology in Egypt after the revolution.
- Hélène Sader, [Archaeology in Lebanon Today: Its Politics and Its Problems](#). Read an insider's account of the possibilities and challenges faced by archaeologists in Lebanon.
- [Archaeology News Roundup Archive](#). Each week the ASOR editorial team summarizes archaeological news from around the world. The archive of all of these weekly reports is found each month in the *ANE Today*.

Past Issues

- [September 17, 2013](#)
- [August 20, 2013](#)
- [July 23, 2013](#)
- [June 18, 2013](#)
- [May 21, 2013](#)
- [April 9, 2013](#)

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Email Marketing by


Exhibit E: E-mail blast sent out to the BAS list in early Oct 2013:



The Ancient Near East Today  **FRIENDS OF ASOR**

Current News About the Ancient Past

Become a Friend of ASOR for FREE and get *The Ancient Near East Today* delivered to your e-mail every month.

This monthly e-newsletter disseminates ideas, insights and discoveries to Friends of ASOR. You can become a Friend and receive the e-newsletter for free, you only need to register. The ANE Today appears on the third Tuesday of each month and features contributions from diverse academics, a forum featuring debates of current developments from the field, and links to news and resources. The ANE Today covers the entire Near East, and each issue will present discussions ranging from the state of biblical archaeology to archaeology after the Arab Spring. Sign up today for free and be a part of this community of discovery!

[Click Here to Learn More](#)

Exhibit F: The following ad that ran in March and April 2014 in the AIA, BAS, and pastors' lists:


FREE

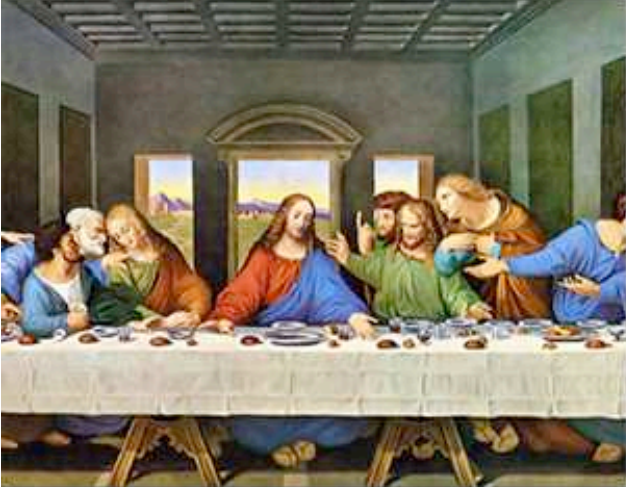
Receive the monthly e-newsletter

The Ancient Near East Today

Don't miss the April issue,

"Passover as Jesus Knew It!"






With articles by:

- Dr. Helen Bond (Edinburgh)
- Dr. James Charlesworth (Princeton)
- Dr. Adela Yarbro Collins (Yale)
- Dr. Eric Meyers (Duke)
- Dr. James Strange (South Florida)

CLICK HERE!

The Ancient Near East Today is an e-newsletter that disseminates ideas, insights and discoveries to Friends of ASOR. You can become a Friend and receive *the ANE Today* for free; you only need to register (just click on this e-mail). The e-newsletter appears on the third Tuesday of each month and features contributions from diverse academics, a forum featuring debates of current developments from the field, and links to news and resources. Each issue presents discussions ranging from the state of biblical archaeology to archaeology after the Arab Spring.





Become a Friend in April and you may win one of four \$50 gift cards!