

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE FUTURE OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ASOR BOARD
REGARDING ASOR'S ANNUAL MEETING 2021-2031**

April 2019

CONTENTS

RECOMMENDATIONS	3-9
Initial Comments	
1) The Task	
2) The ASOR Annual Meeting Is Essential for ASOR	
3) The Basis	
Recommendations	5
Unacceptable Paths	
Recommendation 1	5
Pros	
Cons	
Summary	
Recommendation 2	7
Pros	
Cons	
Summary	
APPENDICES (DATA SETS)	10-82

**Ad Hoc Committee on the Future of the Annual Meeting
RECOMMENDATIONS**

Initial Comments

1) TASK

The Ad Hoc Committee was tasked with presenting recommendations to the Board that would mitigate and/or solve the issue of the inability in some years to secure a conference hotel during the November dates of the Annual Meeting in the city that SBL has chosen. This has led to:

A) larger issues of the strategic focus and ongoing identity of ASOR – largely outside of the scope of this Committee; we do not wish to be the tail that wags the dog (but this discussion may well be the first word in a different conversation).

B) issues beyond the scope of the Committee charge related to cost benefit analyses to ASOR and future-casting of actual hotel availability, as well as the specifics of Experient’s inner workings.

2) THE ASOR ANNUAL MEETING IS ESSENTIAL FOR ASOR

A) The Annual Meeting is a key aspect of ASOR’s mission, and is attended by over 60% of ASOR members. About ½ of both 2016 and 2019 survey respondents indicated they attend every year or most years. Attendance numbers rose steadily from 600 in 2009- to about 925 in 2012, 2013 and 2014, in 2015 and 2016 attendance dropped by about 50 people (ca 4%); it is unknown to what exact factors to attribute this. In Boston in 2017 the meeting reached its current zenith of 1148, but then dropped to a pre-2012 figure of 810 in Denver, attributed by most to an issue of location (Boston unusually popular and Denver less so). Attendance figures (see Demographics in the Data Sets below) show that the AM is ‘usually’ attended by around 900 people. International attendees – specifically those from Israel – likely account for between 6 and 12% of attendance (fluctuating by as much as 50% between years), yet are presenters in as many as 50% of AM Program sessions (see Data Sets below).

B) The Program at the AM has increased in number of sessions and papers over the past decade. There was a downturn in “Bible-related” offerings between 2010 and 2012 (that corresponded in an up-tick in topics that are not) but has remained stable at 2012 levels since (“Bible-related” is defined, enumerated, and discussed in the Data Sets provided later in this Report). Survey data indicate that attendees placed their highest value on issues related to the quality of the Program (although oddly, this was not such a major factor on the Post-AM Evaluations – perhaps assumed?) and opportunity to present. Also highly valued were aspects related to networking and social gathering as well as the books. Most attendees try to stay in the ASOR hotel.

3) AHCotAM Recommendations were decided on the basis of multiple lines of inquiry and evidence – demographics past and present, survey, polling, history and mission of ASOR, future trends in ASOR. WHAT SEEMS CLEAR ARE THE FOLLOWING.

A) DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographically – from the 570 or so respondents (ca 1/3 of ASOR members) to the 2019 Survey, it seems that ASOR ‘average’ members are Field Archaeologists, centered on the eastern Mediterranean basin and Mesopotamia from 2000-100 BCE, who also work in History, Anthropology,

and Biblical Studies. Most of these ASOR members (ca 55%) have been members for 10 years or less, although about 20% have been members for over 20 years. Interestingly, members in the 1-5 years category fall mostly in line with the general trends; there does not seem to be a marked shift among these members (many, but not all, are likely Early Career Scholars).

Among ASOR members holding multiple memberships, only 3 rate above 10%. The AIA is the largest (46.8% on 2019 Survey), while SAA membership is about half that of AIA (23%). According to 2017 SBL data, around 1/3 of current ASOR members also hold SBL membership – this is consistent with the 33% response on the 2016 ASOR Survey. The percentage of this group from the 2019 ASOR Survey was 42.8% of respondents. While this group is a larger percent of this survey's sample, it is not statistically disproportionate when all responses and data are factored in. In any event, a survey cannot control who responds; those that responded are those for whom we have data – all else is sheer speculation.

B) MEETING ISSUES

i) A significant majority of respondents are in favor of the fall season (70%) and the November month (29.8% rated it “very good”, 30.6 “good”, while 26.4 felt it “doesn’t matter”).

ii) 15-20% of ASOR AM attendees are also SBL members (this includes most Israeli attendees). According to the data from the survey, approximately 60% of ASOR members do not wish to change the general time or current Host City selections (unless absolutely prohibited, and then stay as close as possible to the SBL cities) of the AM, regardless of whether or not they also attend the SBL meeting.

iii) There is also a significant segment of ASOR members (ca 37%) who do feel that one or more aspects of meeting congruent with SBL is problematic, and wish to more markedly distance the ASOR meeting from that of SBL, or at least allow for that possibility in some years – solutions include meeting on different dates or in a different season, meeting in a different city, and/or meeting with or near another society.

iv) The Host City of the AM is a factor for most Survey respondents. Seventy-five percent of respondents indicated that the Host City plays some role in their choice to attend or not (Very Important 23.9%, Usually 24.9%, Sometimes 26.4%) and yet about 63% reported they have chosen to attend every year (44.9%) or most years (17.7%). Additionally, about 27% (158/570) of responders said that proximity to another professional meeting was an important factor. Ease and cost of travel were primary concerns for city choice (ca 75% each) while local attractions (36%) and location and weather (34%) play a smaller but still significant role. Further research into this data (in the Data Sets, below) indicated that of the non-SBL affiliated respondents that rated the city location as “very important,” 46% still said that they attend the AM “almost every year” or “most years” while only 7% said that they “occasionally” or “rarely” attend. This casts some question on exactly how the importance of the host city should be understood and what net effect changing the host city would have on attendance.

v) Many ASOR members are simply are unaware of some or many of the facts pertaining to this issue – hotel booking issues, history of ASOR, history of meeting as part of the SBL, demographics of ASOR, demographics of attendance at the AM, etc. and this has led and is leading to some discord and nascent factionalism in the organization, especially surrounding the issue of the Annual Meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Three paths we cannot take:

A) The AHCotAM cannot recommend to the Board that the situation remain as it is (ie meeting outside of Denver and San Antonio) – it is clearly divisive among the members, and the current process has now alerted those who were unaware of the issues to the fact that there are issues.

B) Nor can the AHCotAM recommend that ASOR rejoin SBL – in spite of the apparent large number of Survey responses in that direction. Although the history and heritage of the AM show strong ties with the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, those ties were strained to the point of separation in the 1990's, and a motion to reunite with SBL was not accepted by the Board in 2006.

C) On the other end, the AHCotAM also cannot recommend a total severance from current meeting practice. That would deny our heritage and inconvenience by action rather than by maintaining current practice. Additionally, the data do not provide a strong warrant within ASOR membership for such a split.

Thus it falls to find a middle ground, with the knowledge that it is likely that no one will be fully satisfied (indeed many of the comments on the Survey were highly idiosyncratic, these may be found in the Data Sets below). Our hope is that we have provided below to the Board the best viable options for moving forward, from our perspective, having worked through this material over these months.

Therefore, we give the following recommendations, which should be instituted at least through 2026 and evaluated during that period to aid in future meeting logistics:

RECOMMENDATION 1

Because of the heritage of ASOR, demographic trends, and the responses of a clear majority of ASOR 2019 respondents in several categories, while also recognizing current issues,

we recommend that ASOR

continue to meet in all 5 of the cities that SBL has selected, at ASOR's November timeframe, but shift ASOR's meeting days earlier to finish the ASOR meetings by Friday at 5pm.

We note that this entails that a potentially large percentage of ASOR sleeping rooms be vacated by checkout on Friday morning, so that AAR/SBL may have the rooms for Friday night, but that meeting rooms will still be used by ASOR until Friday evening.

This comes as the majority recommendation.

We further recommend that

in the case of extreme exigency regarding bookings in the SBL cities, that every effort be made to locate the ASOR AM as geographically close and convenient to the SBL city as is appropriately and fiscally possible.

Regarding whether to begin the AM either with a Tuesday Evening Plenary or with Wednesday morning sessions (and the Plenary on Wednesday evening), the AHCotAM was split – with the Tuesday start gaining then most support. The current Program Committee chairs see no difference from their

perspective regarding when the Plenary is held, but that a Wednesday evening Plenary may take one night away from other events.

- a. Pros:
 - i. The November month was a clear choice of survey respondents.
 - ii. Keeping consistent days of the week (even if shifted) year to year is more convenient than alternating days year over year.
 - iii. By finishing on Friday evening, more hotel venues – especially downtown - should open up for ASOR, thus addressing the concern by many members that the conference be affordable. This provides an accessible and affordable variety of lodging, food, and transportation options, as well as local attractions and culture. This would also improve the experience for a large section of ASOR members complaining about the location of hotels in San Antonio and Denver
 - iv. Shifting days avoids the difficulty of scheduling papers on Friday evening-Saturday
 - v. In east coast cities a Wednesday Plenary may be better attended by west coasters
 - vi. Meeting in the SBL cities recognizes the SBL alteration of east coast, middle, west coast, which considers travel ease and cost from all parts of the US
 - vii. Members who only attend ASOR can make travel plans that avoid the holiday surcharges associated with American Thanksgiving or stay over on a Saturday.
 - viii. Meeting contiguously with SBL honors ASOR tradition
 - 1. This was the top choice for all “age groups” (except the 11-15 year group). The majority of survey respondents prefer to meet contiguously with SBL and this is attested to in a number of different questions on the survey. SBL and AIA members are very well represented in those who favored this response.
 - 2. Does the least damage to a substantial group of ASOR members who participate in SBL. Members of both ASOR and SBL can continue their current practice of attending both meetings (at times already cutting short their time at both meetings), while those who attend only ASOR are not affected.
 - 3. Avoids overlap with SBL, thus improving the coordination between the two conferences for participants who are involved in both societies, including, but not limited to, the Albright Institute and international excavation teams that need two conferences to justify the cost of travel.
 - 4. Preserves the status quo in which dual ASOR-SBL members can make significant contributions to their professional development by participating (presenting and chairing) at both meetings and at which governing boards (Albright, EBR, etc.) drawing scholars from ASOR and SBL are able to meet in person together.
 - ix. For early career scholars on the job market meeting contiguous with SBL is more than a convenient association, but essential for their professional advancement.
 - x. Book distributors don’t have to make any difficult decisions regarding meeting decisions. In fact, this might actually improve the logistics of drop shipping for some of them.
 - xi. Meeting contiguously with SBL helps SBL

1. ASOR members are vetting archaeological papers at SBL, ensuring the highest of standards with regard to archaeological ethics.
 2. ASOR members find a large “market” for our research – important for ASOR’s mission of dissemination of our results, and our research aids Bible scholars in best practices Biblical and historical interpretation
- b. Cons
- i. Shifting days may not actually solve all the hotel problems.
 1. Potentially more expensive than weekend at hotels.
 2. Risk bumping against previous weekend’s conferences, blocking bookings.
 - ii. Tuesday becomes a travel day (esp from the west coast) while some participants will need to fly in on Monday, especially for business meetings.
 1. This may lead to more extreme efforts to “edit” the conference to avoid missing more classes or other work.
 2. Perhaps hardest for junior scholars, contingent faculty who are teaching; puts them in the position of having to pay expensive airfare for shortened meeting experience. In and of itself this is not a new problem, this recommendation simply exacerbates it.
 - iii. The lack of significant change in this recommendation risks alienating the group for whom the raising of this issue has been the most important.
 - iv. Airfares may be more expensive
 - v. Locks ASOR into SBL city choices
 - vi. Travel ease and costs for non-east coast cities more of an issue for many international attendees
 - vii. The 11-15 year member group does not regard this as their top choice (although it is their second choice by a narrow margin) suggesting we might alienate folks in a group that is already or are poised to step into leadership positions in ASOR.

SUMMARY: Although we cannot prognosticate the future – most of the Committee feels that the benefits do outweigh the liabilities for this Recommendation. Simply put – this Recommendation makes for the smoothest continuation of the ASOR Annual Meeting into the future – the least inconvenience of current attendees. We cannot predict gains or losses among different attendee groups, but this risks the fewest losses among the SBL set. It does not solve all the issues and is not likely to assuage those desiring change.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Because about 37% of ASOR respondents do desire some change, especially regarding host city choice, and since the November time is popular,

we recommend that ASOR

meets in its current timeframe and in Washington DC, Boston and San Diego, but in the years wherein SBL meets in San Antonio and Denver (2021, 22, 23, 26, 29), always finds an alternative city in which to meet. This alternative city should be appealing, cost effective (travel and hotel), and easy (a travel hub), but from which transport to the SBL city is not necessarily a factor.

This comes as strong but minority recommendation.

Although not an essential aspect of the recommendation, shifting the days of the AM to end on Friday evening in all years, could well aid travel for SBL attendees and aid the Program Committee with scheduling (eliminating Saturday issues).

Pros

- It is a compromise that honors our tradition, while not conforming to it
- Gives voice to the significant minority desiring some change – may increase attendance from these people
- The November month was a clear choice of survey respondents.
- Keeping consistent days of the week (even if shifted) year to year is more convenient than alternating days year over year.
- Allows ASOR full choice of city and hotel in 5/11 years – more diversity possible
 - Meets desires of survey respondents for attractive, cost effective locations
 - Perhaps negotiate better rates and perks
 - Advantages of travel pricing from major east coast hubs to places like Denver and San Antonio for those SBL members
- Can meet Tuesday eve-Friday eve or Wednesday morn-Friday eve in all years
 - Could allow for Saturday to be a travel day for SBL members
 - May allow for better hotels in SBL cities in ‘SBL years’
 - See Recommendation 1 for more on this possible shift
- Can continue to meet Wed eve-Sat eve in all years as we are used to.
 - No change in weekday conflicts (teaching, classes, work)
 - Allows for continuation of current ‘early’ business meeting schedules
- Does not make any change at all to 6/11 years – SBL attendees are not affected in these years
- Does not necessarily preclude attendance at other Annual Meetings (AIA, SBL, MESA, etc)
- May incentivize some international members’ attendance

Cons

- Complete ASOR choice of city may result in unintended consequences – currently we blame SBL if we are unhappy – More east coast ‘hub’ cities may benefit some, but will be more of a hardship for others (SBL alternates areas of the country)
- Both SBL-related and those wishing a split are not given all they want; relatively few survey responders chose either “alternating” option for their ‘top choice’ (15.8%), nor when asked to give three 2nd tier choices (16%). Similarly, the Straw Poll results show only 17% desire some alternating.
- If Wednesday – Saturday schedule is retained
 - Saturday will still be empty as people leave the meeting.
 - Doesn’t fix the programming probably where non-Israel sessions are pushed to Saturday
 - SBL attendees would need to leave earlier on Saturday or late Friday
- Could cause scheduling issues for entities such as the Albright if such an alternating schedule is put in place
- Creates a problem for SBL attendee members and one that is potentially very expensive.

- Likely requires a choice from SBL members in some years, but attending both may be possible, especially if a Tuesday-Friday format were introduced – but see Recommendation 1 for more on such a shift.
- Likely requires a more expensive three-leg airline ticket, rather than a round-trip; or two round-trip flights
- Likely alienation of this group and subsequent downturn in attendance, and potential change to aspects of the program at least in some years and with some segments of attendees.
- Some ‘business’ sessions will be effected and may require rescheduling
- The Booksellers may not attend in the same numbers in the years we do not meet near SBL
- Access to SBL’s job fair is more difficult for Early Career Scholars in non-SBL years
- Partial loss of the SBL “market” for the dissemination of ASOR research

SUMMARY: Although we cannot prognosticate the future – some on the Committee feel that the benefits quite possibly outweigh the liabilities for this Recommendation. Simply put – this Recommendation makes possible an Annual Meeting that moves in a different direction from current practice. It is impossible to determine – even from all the data compiled in this lengthy Report - how the ASOR membership as a whole will respond to such changes. It could move the organization into exciting new directions and increased participation or it could disenfranchise ASOR’s base. It does not solve all the issues and is not likely to assuage those desiring a more traditional meeting.

DATA SETS

Committee

- Committee Charge
- Committee Membership
- Committee Calendar
- Committee Minutes
 - February 24, 2019
 - March 13, 2019
 - March 22, 2019

Annual Meeting Program Analysis 2013-2018 - Summary

Demographics

- Annual Meeting Demographics – 2009-2018
- Select Constituents' Annual Meeting Demographics 2017/2018

Membership Surveys

- 2016 ASOR AM Membership Survey
 - 2016 ASOR AM Membership Survey
 - 2016 ASOR AM Membership Survey Results
- Annual Meeting Evaluations 2013-2018
 - Summary of Pertinent Information
- 2018 Denver Meeting AM Forum Minutes
 - Swartz-Dodd minutes
- 2018 Denver Meeting AM Straw Poll
 - Poll
 - Results
- 2019 ASOR AM Membership Survey
 - 2019 ASOR AM Membership Survey
 - 2019 ASOR AM Membership Survey - Results
 - 2019 ASOR AM Membership Survey - Summary and Comparisons
 - 2019 ASOR AM Membership Survey – Preferences by Membership Length
 - 2019 ASOR AM Membership Survey – Analysis of the Importance of the Host City
 - All Comments from The 2019 Membership Survey – at the end of these data sets

Select Requested Input

- CAP Sponsored Dig Directors' Poll
- Overseas Centers
- Exhibitors & Booksellers
- Select Constituents

Additional Leadership Input

- CCC Meeting Discussion Notes (Ackerman notes, 1/19)
- Executive Committee Discussion Notes (2/19)

Previous Reports

- Preliminary Report to the Executive Committee (2/19)

COMMITTEE CHARGE from the BOARD – November 2015/Spring 2016

Ad Hoc Annual Meeting Committee:

- (i) evaluating the meetings in Atlanta (2015) and San Antonio (2016), to gauge the impact of the lack of geographical proximity to AAR/SBL and the number of ASOR members affected, and
- (ii) making recommendations about the way forward.

The committee should also consider whether ASOR should approach other organizations, such as the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) or the American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT), to assess whether these organizations are interested in participating in ASOR's Annual Meeting.

The Strategic Plan notes that possible alternatives to our current arrangement include

- (i) meeting on our own;
- (ii) meeting in conjunction with AAR/SBL on occasion (e.g., every other year); or
- (iii) meeting in conjunction with another learned society: for example, the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA), the Society for American Archaeology (SAA), the Middle East Studies Association (MESA), or the American Oriental Society (AOS).

AD HOC Committee on the Annual Meeting Membership

Name	Demography	SBL member	Career	Affiliation	Specialty	Other	Disciplines
Current							
Gary Arbino, Chair 2016-2019	Male anglo	Yes	Mid-Senior	Seminary	Field: Bronze- Hellen; Isr/Jordan		Bible and Archaeology
Kent Bramlett 2016-2019	Male anglo	Yes	Early-mid	Religious University	Field: Bronze- Hellen; Jordan	La Sierra U Archaeology Conference	Bible and Archaeology
Bill Caraher 2016-2019	Male anglo	No?	Mid	Secular University	Late Antiquity, Byzantium, Cyprus	ASOR Program Comm., AIA	History & Archaeology
Sidnie Crawford 2018-2019	Female anglo	Yes	Senior	Secular University	Text: 2 nd Temple Lit	AIAR, SBL Session Chair	"Bible" Literature & Religion
Erin Darby 2018-2019	Female anglo	Yes	Early-mid	Secular University	Field: Iron Age Israel, Roman; Jordan	SBL Session Chair	Religion, Archaeology, and Biblical Studies
Karen Rubinson 2018-2019	Female anglo	No	Senior	Secular University	Field: Bronze/Iron; S. Caucasus & Central Asia	AIA VP and involved in AIA Meeting Issues (SCS)	Pre-History & Archaeology
Eric Welch 2016-2019	Male anglo	Yes	Early	Secular University	Field: Bronze- Hellen; Israel	ASOR ECS Co-Chair	History & Archaeology
2016-2017							
Lawson Younger Jr.	Male anglo	Yes	Senior	Religious University	Text: Arameans, Iron Age	SBL Session Chair	History & Literature

AHCotAM CALENDAR of EVENTS

November 2015 – Board Mandate
Spring/Summer 2016 – Initial groundwork by Chair; ASOR/SBL conversations
Fall 2016 – Composing initial iteration of the Committee
October 2016 – First AM Membership Survey created, edited, and posted (11/2)
November 2016 – Informal discussions at the San Antonio Annual Meeting, Brief Forum at the Annual Members Meeting
January 2017 – Survey Results distributed and discussed by the Committee
-- March 2017- October 2018 – Hiatus --
Fall 2018 – Second iteration of the AHCotAM invited and composed
November 15, 2018 – Members Forum on the Future of the AM in Denver, Straw Poll taken
December 2018 – March 2019 – Data Collection and Analyses
January 2019 – Committee email discussions regarding the data, toward a Preliminary Report for the Executive Committee; Report approved by Committee
February 1-3, 2019 – Primary Report presented to the ExCom and discussed with Chair
February 2019 – Second AM Membership Survey created and edited – posted 2/14-3/2
February 27, 2019 – First Committee Conference Call – Minutes taken
March 10-15, 2019 – Second Membership Survey Results received, summarized, and analyzed
March 13, 2019 – Second Committee Conference Call – Minutes taken
March 15-20, 2019 – Collation of Committee members’ initial ‘Recommendations’
March 22, 2019 – Third Committee Conference Call
March 22-29, 2019 – Finalization and Committee Approval of Recommendations
March 30, 2019 – Recommendations Set and Sent to the ASOR President
April 5-6, 2019 – Representative of the AHCotAM meets with Executive Committee and ASOR Board to discuss the Recommendations.
April 6, 2019 – ASOR Board votes

AHCotAM Minutes

AHCotAM – Phone Conference Call – Wednesday Feb 27, 2019 9amEST

Present: GArbino, Chair; EWelch; KRubinson; EDarby; WCaraher (Excused: KBramlett; SWhite-Crawford)

Chair's Recollections and Notes

1) Some initial organizational comments by the Chair

2) A question was raised regarding the availability of more specific fiscal data concerning the AM and its “cost” to ASOR, in order to better evaluate what options are less or more fiscally viable. The general information provided from the Executive Committee (EC) minutes and a follow-up email from the President did not seem to provide “enough”. During the discussion, Bill (from his experience on the Program Committee) noted that there were plateaus to meeting size as related to cost outlay and that the current 900-1000 attendance was probably the maximum for this plateau, without jumping up to the next size level which would entail significant additional outlay for the minimal attendance beyond 1000 that we would have. Location also plays some role vis a vis size: small meetings in “expensive” but attractive locales are not a good fiscal move. It was understood that at its current size, the AM was a fiscal “loss leader” but that was acceptable, given the mission of the organization; and that a smaller meeting does cost more. So the AHCotAM should think in terms of a 900-1000 target when considering meeting attendance.

3) The question of what exactly is the AHCotAM giving to the Board was raised. Karen noted that the Board can utilize something the ANCotAM gives them or go in a completely different direction – the Board makes the decision. The Chair affirmed that and noted that the Board MUST do “something” at their April meeting and that some members of the EC wanted a single recommendation and the President wanted “ranked” choices. The AHCotAM will decide what to do – see below.

4) A question related to the data collected thus far was raised – specifically related to the comparison between two “abnormal” years Boston and Denver. This led to a longer discussion of data and data collection in general.

A) Eric reported that info from Early Career folks is anecdotal, but seems to point to an increase in graduate and undergraduate student research, attendance, and presentation. Later comments noted the importance of an intentionality by the AHCotAM toward Early Career folks as the “future” of ASOR but that current data on how specifically that would affect our discussions was unavailable for the near term. Eric will continue to work on this.

B) Would moving the days to Tues-Fri actually help? As relates to current SBL bookings, yes – it is highly likely that ASOR could get a hotel in downtown Denver and San Antonio with that arrangement, but non-SBL folks would likely need to check out on Saturday (**Editor's note: and there is the situation of the Evangelical Theology Society, ca 3000, who used that schedule and at times could NOT get hotel and conference space in some SBL cities – eg Boston, Chicago... BUT their needs are a bit different**). It was noted that Thurs-Sun is cheaper (ca 10\$/room/nite) and hotels bargain better for weekends, and most societies meet over a weekend, but if done at Thanksgiving would preclude SBL members from attending that meeting (which did not seem popular with the committee?). So the question of season and dates was discussed. Alternating between a Fall and Spring meeting was noted to be a complete non-starter. The issue of moving the meeting around within a season (eg MESA, SAA) was discussed without resolution. The concept of a Spring meeting was floated.

C) Some time was spent discussing sub-groups and how they might be affected – specifically “Israelis” and the Albright, and Early Career folks. It was reiterated that data were not solid and that for some of these there are loud voices, yet not always providing data to back up their statements. This led to the issue of the available data regarding joint SBL members as well as those whose area focuses on “Israel” – how much weight do we give to a the 15-20% of attendees who want to also go to SBL on the same ticket? Similarly, where do early career ASOR members do their job searches – since ASOR does not have a “Job Fair” what other group might be most helpful?

Or put another way – just how big of a draw is the SBL/AAR job fair to OUR members (Departments of Religion, Seminaries, Religious affiliated schools, Israeli schools)? We currently have NO data regarding this.

D) Eric said he was in process of obtaining an ASOR AM paper (2018) relating to demographics – there are actually 2 papers that might be useful (I think we were discussing the second one below). If we could get one or both of these in the next couple weeks these might shine (a bit more) light on some things:

Raz Kletter (University of Helsinki), “Who Are We? A Look at the ASOR Annual Meeting, Boston 2017.”

Steven Edwards (University of Toronto), “The Six Degrees of ASOR: A Network Analysis of Participants at the Annual Meeting.”

E) Erin pointed to her query of CAP affiliated dig directors, wherein 75% said it would make no difference to their presentation of findings at the AM if the venue/dates were modified. Most of the 25% for whom it would make a difference were those whose work was in Israel.

F) Bill made the observation that the ASOR AM “is not a place where everyone can do everything”

5) As time grew short, a suggestion was floated that perhaps we try a “days of week” modification for 2021 and maybe beyond: Tuesday-Friday for 2021 in San Antonio and 2022 in Denver – to enable a downtown hotel AND proximity to SBL, and then evaluate, comparing to 2016 San Antonio and 2018 Denver.

Ed Note: *It will likely be necessary to extend the experiment to 2023 (San Antonio) – either outside the city or modified days, because 2023 bookings must be made before data will be in for 2022. If we argue for such an experiment, we also would likely need to point to what we feel is the best course for 2024 and 2025 when we are in “good” SBL cities as a mark that we were not just considering the “bad” SBL cities. In other words, the Chair would rather not simply kick the can down the road, even if our conclusions are interim while additional data are gathered.*

6) It was noted, that while there is always “more” data, we may be reaching critical mass – additional data may not be helpful to our discussions (but we would like the 2018 paper/s).

7) The suggestion was made that our ‘recommendation’ be put in a form that gives the options with the pros and cons of each, rather than a “conclusion”. It was agreed (it seemed to the chair) that in any event we would provide to the Board the rationales supporting our deliberations – to let them see what is at stake in any viable option, but that we likely should give them our “best choice” and/or choices. (**Ed Note:** *I do not believe that giving the Board ONLY a group of options with pros and cons would be acceptable to them – this has been stated strongly by the President and affirmed by the EC.*)

Done at ca 10:10 EST.

Ed Reflections: -

i) Regarding sub-groups: *although we have only “some data” (SBL input, CAP survey, presenters’ affiliation & session “bibly-ness,” name badge affiliation counts, Centers responses, Albright statement) what is quite clear from the data and discussions is that the (vocal) sub-group for whom a change from current practice holds the greatest concern consists primarily of those whose work is either IN Israel or related to the Bible and that this group, while obviously a significant part of what ASOR has been historically and continues to be (25-50% of sessions have at least 1 Israeli paper in 2017& 18) in terms of “brand” and membership (ca 1/3 of ASOR members also held SBL memberships in 2017) that population’s attendance at the AM is likely not higher than 20% in any given year.*

ii) *What is also clear is that there is a portion of ASOR members who “rejoin” and attend when they want to present and who lapse and don’t attend when they don’t. This makes “counting” difficult. Add to that that ASOR’s*

database does not 'keep' membership numbers by year (and thus does not know how many members there were in any given year prior to 2018, much less joint SBL members) and so arguing a long-term trend is problematic. I did not hear either of the 2018 papers, so I await the data adduced in them.

iii) Finally, what seems clear as well, but somewhat mitigated by the possibility of other factors, is that venue DOES play a role – but the level of that role is very hard to quantify. More input may be derived from the Membership Survey ending tomorrow.

iv) All of this leads back to the earlier issue of 'finances' – if 900-1000 is the target, what percentage can we afford to "lose" before ASOR takes an unacceptable 'hit'? Denver's 810 was a hit, according to personal conversations... but there has never been a figure, determined by ASOR administration, of what "unacceptable" would be – because there are so many other fiscal aspects that play into the balance sheet of any given year. So perhaps we satisfy ourselves with the concept of an attendee target range (850-1050)?

v) And the follow-up to that – assuming that we will need to recommend some sort of change from current practice due to SBL/AAR's booking practices, and that that 'change' will result in some members lessening their attendance, from where do we take that 'hit' that will result in the least negative impact on the organization as a whole (and perhaps, maybe, even a positive impact)?

AHCotAM – Phone Conference Call – Wednesday March 13, 2019 9amEST

Present: GArbino (Chair), EDarby, WCaraher, SWhite-Crawford, KRubinson EWelch (Excused: KBramlett)

Chair's Recollections and Notes

- 1) Initial discussion centering around the Survey results that indicate that the November Timeframe is okay or good with the vast majority of our members.
- 2) Initial discussion regarding the "Days of the Week" and how a shift earlier or later in the week might play out – that attendees already "edit" their time at the AM was noted.
- 3) We were moved in a different and more foundational discussion regarding how our recommendations might affect the future of ASOR; the essential importance of such considerations is understood by all.
- 4) Stemming from that, we discussed the Early Career and New Members as these are reflected in the Survey. Issues included demographics, additional memberships, city choice, days of the week, job fair, etc. We will pull out from the Survey raw data spread sheet – as best as possible – the "Members 1-5 Years" category and trace those members' responses to see if trends are apparent. This was already begun during the meeting.
- 5) A question was asked regarding the Albright specifically and Israeli institutions generally and the effect of our recommendations on those entities. (**Ed Note:** *we have looked into the demographics of that subset of attendees; it is not large, but it has played a significant part in ASOR*)
- 6) It was noted that it may not be necessary to think in terms of a single hotel serving all Annual Meeting needs – a local educational institution or convention center might serve to host the sessions.

7) It was summarized that the Survey data do not support a 'broad mandate' for radically changing the current November month, nor basic week of the AM, nor generic proximity to SBL, nor 'association with' SBL in principle; but that modifications to certain aspects are necessary and that members' responses are important in assessing these possibilities. (**Ed Note:** *Even that being the case, recommendation drafts from Committee members which seek to think outside of that box will be entertained and appropriately discussed; see #8 below*)

8) It was decided that each Committee member should produce three draft recommendations with their pros and cons and send them by the end of the week to the Chair for collation.

9) These drafts will serve as the starting point for discussion for the third phone conference call next week – date and time currently being negotiated.

Call ended at 10:03EDT

AHCotAM – Phone Conference Call – Friday March 22, 2019 9amEST

Present: GArbino (Chair), EDarby, WCaraher, SWhite-Crawford, KRubinson EWelch (Excused: KBramlett)

Chair's Recollections and Notes

Each member of the Committee attending gave their top choice for recommendation (three recommendations from each member has been submitted, collated, and circulated among the membership prior to the call.)

Three of the members presented top recommendations that modified the days of the AM, while keeping both the month (November) and the city in which SBL meets.

Two members offered top recommendations that allowed for a change of city (especially from Denver and/or San Antonio) but kept the current dates and the SBL cities of Washington DC, Boston, and San Diego.

One member spoke well about modifying the days (in accord with the three members above), but declined to make a strong affirmation for just one "top" recommendation, citing both a weakness in the data and concern regarding the developing nature of ASOR as that relates to attendance at the AM.

The recommendations and the issues surrounding them were discussed. Issues centered around hotel availability (Tuesdays and Fridays) and the weakness of prognostication in that area, Experient's role, how Program may or may not be affected, the relationship of ASOR sessions to the SBL program, and whether or not a change of city is actually a viable alternative given the data.

The Chair will formulate the recommendations into a summarized document and send to committee members for review and modification. The final document (Final Recommendations with Pros and Cons of each and supporting data) is to be sent to President Susan by Friday March 29.

Meeting concluded at 10:15 (or so)

Annual Meeting Program Analysis 2013-2018

The AHCotAM undertook to examine the nature of the Program in terms of the sessions' relationships to Biblical Studies. While admittedly somewhat subjective, the same standard was applied to each year, so the trends are reliable. The resulting data show that the "Bible-ness" of Program Sessions decreased in 2010 and 2011 and has remained fairly constant since. Data prior to 2010 were not run, thus it is unknown if the decrease is the end of a slide or the totality of the decrease or the back half of a "blip" in the data.

January 29, 2018

From: Program Sub-Committee of AHCotAM
Bill Caraher and Erin Darby

RE: Rating the Bible-related content in the Annual Meeting

I. Methods

The available annual programs (2010-2013, 2015-2018) were evaluated on a session-by-session basis by Bill Caraher on a rating system from 3-0, what we affectionately call, the "Bible-ness Rating."

- 0: Not Bible-y. E.g. Hellenistic Cyprus or Neolithic Sudan
- 1: Possibly Bible-y, but not explicitly so. E.g. various panels on the Near East or Anatolia
- 2: Rather Bible-y involving periods and places typically associated with Biblical archaeology. E.g. Excavations at Megiddo or various "Tell" sites
- 3: Festschrifts, excavations at places associated with Biblical figures

A graded rating system was chosen to better mirror the complex ways content of interest to scholars in SBL-related fields has been incorporated in the program.

The results of this tabulation can be found in the Excel spreadsheet.

The program from 2017 was then evaluated independently by Erin Darby on a paper-by-paper basis to assess (1) whether a paper-by-paper rating would produce results that confirmed the session-by-session analysis; (2) whether a Syro-Palestinian archaeologist who also works in the field of Biblical Studies would produce a comparable rating.

The results of this test can be found in the Excel spreadsheet. They suggest that the two systems are sufficiently similar to confirm that the large-scale session-by-session approach used by Caraher is reliable. Differences in the data can be explained by (1) the different professional backgrounds of the analysts (though note the final results did not differ that significantly) and (2) individual papers in thematic sessions could receive a higher or lower rating than an overall session title suggests.

In general, it is likely that a Syro-Palestinian archaeologist would produce higher ratings, though not substantially so; if anything, the Caraher figures may slightly underestimate the amount of content relevant to scholars of biblical literature. For the purposes of the foregoing multi-year analysis, the Caraher figures are a helpful starting point for discussion.

II. Results

Figure 1 illustrates the Caraher data, which was originally organized by conference day (Thursday, Friday, Saturday; see Excel spreadsheet). Figure 2 (dependent on Table 1) is based on the average Bible content rating by year (combing the original Thursday, Friday, Saturday data into total rating per year). Figure 2 shows that content related to biblical literature did decrease slightly from 2010-2012 and has since remained fairly consistent.

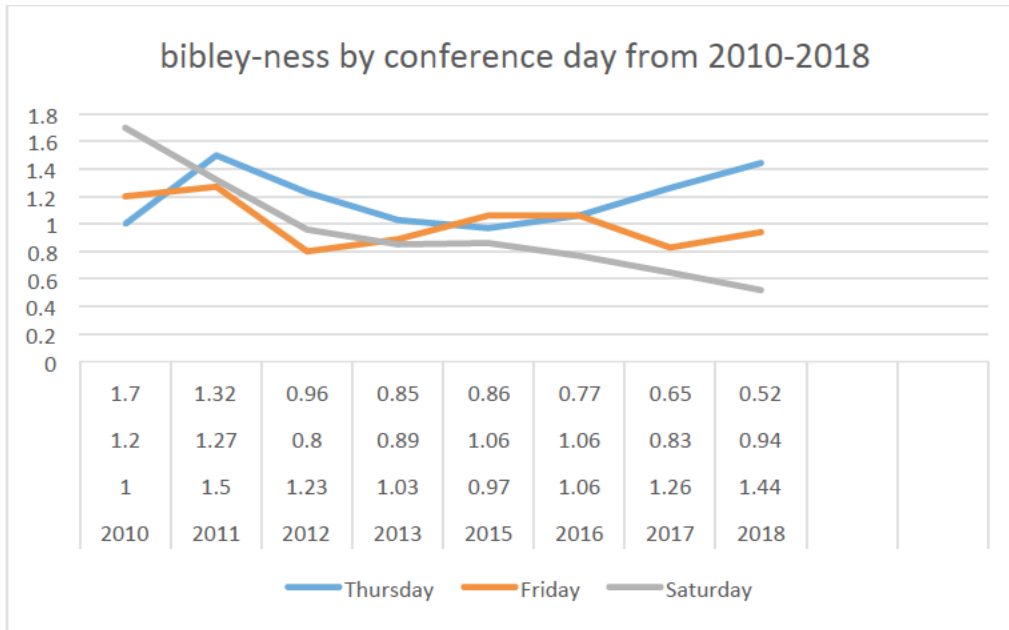


Figure 1: Caraher average bibley-ness rating per ASOR sessions at Annual Meeting from 2010-2018 (excluding 2014), arranged by conference day (see Excel spread sheet for data)

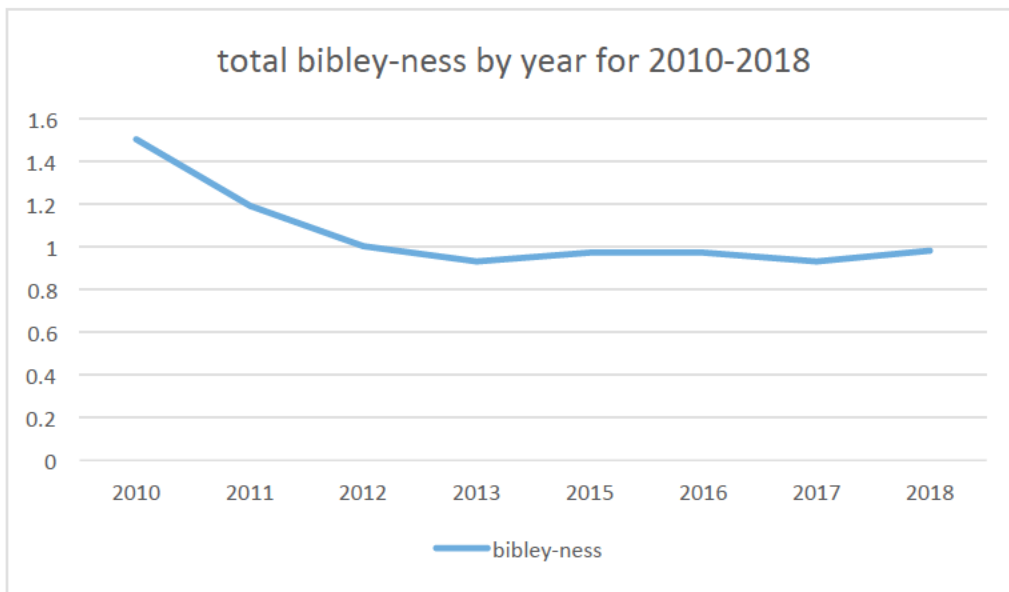


Figure 2: Caraher average bibley-ness rating of ASOR Annual Meeting from 2010-2018 (excluding 2014), arranged by year (see Table 1 for data)

Table 1: Caraher average bibley-ness rating by year from 2010-2018 (excluding 2014) for the ASOR Annual Meeting (based on Excel spread sheet)

ASOR Conference year	Caraher bibley-ness rating on scale 0-3	Number of sessions	Avg. bibley-ness rating
2010	88	59	1.5
2011	93	78	1.19
2012	88	88	1

2013	79	85	.93
2015	89	92	.97
2016	92	95	.97
2017	111	119	.93
2018	99	101	.98

Figures 3 and 4 reconfigure the data to examine what percentage of session received a 3, 2, 1, and 0 over the course of 2010-2018 (see Table 2). Arranging the data in this way allows us to subdivide the averages noted in the Excel spreadsheet, Fig. 1-2, and Table 1.

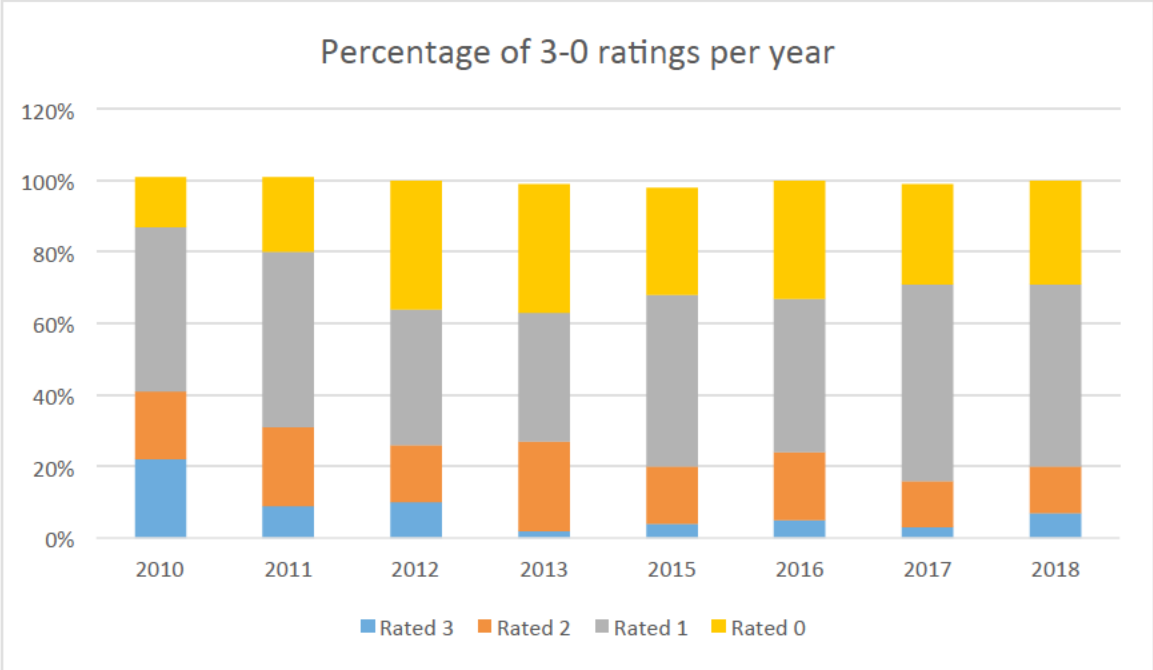


Figure 3: Rating on Caraher Bibley-ness Index from 2010-2018 (excluding 2014). See Table 2 for data

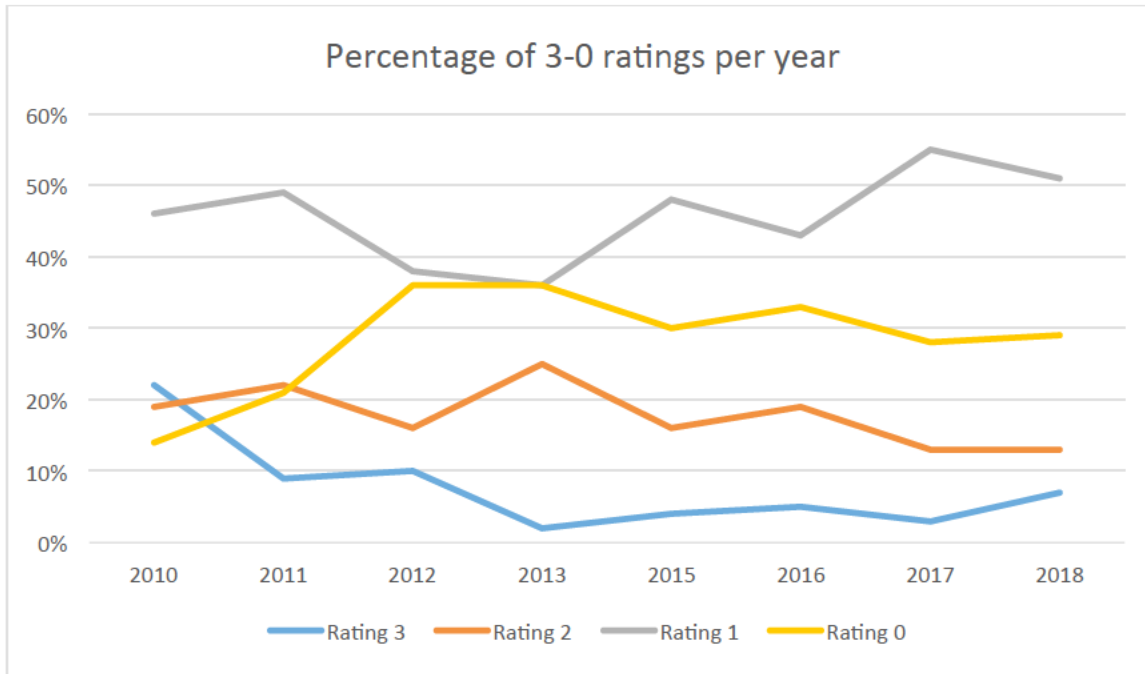


Figure 4: Rating on Caraher Bibley-ness Index from 2010-2018 (excluding 2014). See Table 2 for data

Table 2: Caraher bibley-ness rating per session by # and % from 2010-2018 (excluding 2014) based on Excel spreadsheet

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2015	2016	2017	2018
# and % of sessions rated a 3	13/59 22%	7/78 9%	9/88 10%	2/85 2%	5/92 4%	5/95 5%	4/119 3%	7/101 7%
# and % of sessions rated a 2	11/59 19%	17/78 22%	14/88 16%	21/85 25%	15/92 16%	18/95 19%	16/119 13%	13/101 13%
# and % of sessions rated a 1	27/59 46%	38/78 49%	33/88 38%	31/85 36%	44/92 48%	41/95 43%	66/119 55%	52/101 51%
# and % of sessions rated a 0	8/59 14%	16/78 21%	32/88 36%	31/85 36%	28/92 30%	31/95 33%	33/119 28%	29/101 29%

Figure 3 shows the shift in percentages of Category 3-0 sessions in the Annual Meeting program, while Figure 4 demonstrates the trajectory of each of these ratings over time. Both demonstrate that Category-3 sessions decreased significantly from 2010-2012 (confirming the data in Figs. 1-2) and have constituted a lower percentage of the program since. It is of note that within this new, lower percentage of the program, Category-3 sessions wax and wane in various years. Category-3 sessions show no sign of continuing to decrease, but rather increased slightly overall from 2013-2018.

Category-2 sessions do not show a long-term decline. They wax and wane, sometimes significantly, from year to year with no clear empirical pattern.

Category-1 sessions have also varied from year to year. Beginning in 2012, they seem to have increased gradually, occupying more of the Annual Meeting program. Category-1 sessions have always been the largest percentage of the meetings, even as far back as 2010.

Corresponding to the decrease in Category 3-sessions, Category 0-sessions increased from 2010-2012. Since that time they have either remained consistent or decreased slightly, particularly from 2013-2018.

When taken together, Figure 3 demonstrates that Category 3-1 sessions still make up the largest percentage of Annual Meeting program space. If Categories 3 and 2 are isolated, their combined percentage of the Annual Meeting has decreased from 2010-2018; but they seem to have stabilized since 2012, averaging ca. 20% of the yearly program.

While it could be argued that Category-0 sessions would be relatively unaffected by a loss of members to SBL, it is more difficult to anticipate how such a loss could impact Category-1 sessions, which are of interest to scholars of biblical literature as well as scholars of areas unrelated to SBL. Category-2 and 3 sessions would certainly be impacted by any possible loss of membership or decreased attendance at the Annual Meeting.

Demographics

Annual Meeting Demographics – 2009-2018

ASOR Meeting Demographics as Related to SBL Membership and Meeting Attendance

	2009: New Orleans	2010: Atlanta / Buckhead	2011 SF	2012 Chi	2013 Balt	2014: SD	2015: Atl	2016: San Antonio / La Quinta	2017: Boston	2018: Denver
ASOR Membership	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	1775	
Paper proposals								410	Ca 700	
Total Registrants to ASOR AM	601	685	816	921	928	936	877 (+22% from 2010)	881	1148	810
Total Indexed Participants in Program Book									843 = 73.4%	522 = 64.4%
Percentage of total ASOR members registered for the AM									64.6%	
ASOR members who also have SBL membership (Dual Membership)									Ca 586 (33% total ASOR members)	
Number of total ASOR AM registrants who have dual ASOR and SBL memberships									198/1148 (= 17.2% ASOR AM registrants)	
Number of ASOR members (who hold SBL memberships) who registered for BOTH meetings	110	137						131	161/198	
Number of Dual Membership holders who registered for the ASOR AM only									37/198 (198 – 161 = 37)	

Dual Meeting Registrants as % of total ASOR AM Registrations	18% 110/601	20% 137/685						14.8% 131/881	14% 161/1148	
ASOR members who also hold SBL memberships who registered for the SBL Meeting ONLY									ca 142 (8% ASOR total membership = 1775)	

ASOR AM Attendance Figures:

- 2009 (New Orleans): 572 register before the meeting plus 29 on-site = 601
- 2010 (Atlanta): 648 + 37 = 685
- 2011 (San Francisco): 783 + 33 = 816
- 2012 (Chicago): 867 + 54 = 921
- 2013 (Baltimore): 858 + 70 = 928
- 2014 (San Diego): 890 + 46 = 936
- 2015 (Atlanta): 844 + 33 = 877
- 2016 (San Antonio): 871 + 10 = 881
- 2017 (Boston): 1,128 + 20 = 1,148
- 2018 (Denver): 788 + 22 = 810

SBL Comparison Figures Methodology: We shared our attendee list with SBL for 2009 and 2010 and then again in 2016 and 2017. SBL then compared our attendee list using a combination of last names, first names, and, emails. I'd have to look at the specifics, but I think we decide that if two of those three were exact matches that it was the same person. We may have done either emails OR first and last names. In any case, the comparisons were made from directly examining the registration lists. Since SBL had the larger list, ASOR sent SBL our registration, and the SBL did the number crunching. We signed an agreement to destroy the spreadsheets when we were done.

SUMMARY:

In 2017 (Boston – ASOR close to SBL) abnormally high attendance:

586/1775 (33%) of ASOR members also had SBL Memberships (Dual Members).

358/586 (61%) of ASOR Members holding SBL memberships registered for one or both Annual Meetings.

This percentage is close to the number of ASOR members who attended the ASOR AM (64%) but significantly larger than and the number of SBL members who attended the SBL AM (49%).

198/358 (55%) of meeting-attending Dual Members (=198/586, 34% total Dual Members) chose to attend the ASOR AM (18% total ASOR AM reg).

Of this **161/198 (81%) registered for both** - this was 15% of the total AM registration.

And 37/198 chose ASOR only (19% of Dual Member attendees = 37/586 = 6.3% of total Dual Members) = 37 of dual members who attended either or both meetings (358) chose ASOR only.

160/358 (45% of attending dual members) = 160/586 (27% of total Dual Members) chose SBL AM over ASOR AM.

321/358 (90%) of Dual Membership attendees (= 321/586 - 55% of total Dual Members = 17% total ASOR members) attended SBL either alone or with ASOR

Executive Summary:

33% of total ASOR Members are also Members of SBL

20% (358/1775) of total ASOR Members are Dual Members who attend an Annual Meeting (ASOR, SBL, both)

18% (321/1775) of total ASOR Members are committed to attending the SBL Annual Meeting

9% of total ASOR Members already have chosen SBL AM over ASOR AM

64% of total ASOR Members attend the ASOR Annual Meeting

Select Constituents' Annual Meeting Demographics 2017/2018

Certain population subsets of Annual Meeting Attendees have attracted attention as being specifically and significantly affected by a change to the ASOR AM that causes a separation from the current meeting which precedes the SBL AM in or near the same city. The AHCotAM undertook to find the numerical significance of these groups.

Participation/Attendance from "Israeli Institutions" (Estimated Non-Duplicating Head Count)

(Hand counted from the 2017 and 2018 Program Books)

	2017	2018
Total ASOR registrants	1148	810
City	Boston	Denver
% dual membership (SBL) of ASOR AM registrants	14% = 160 registrants	Ca 15% = 120 (est based on 2009, 10, 16, 17 data)
"Israeli" Presentation in sessions	48/96 sessions = 50%	29/100 = 29%
"Israeli Institution" total Presenters /total ASOR indexed participants	843 Indexed participants 132/843= 16%	522 Indexed participants 47/522= 9%
IAA (& Gov't) Presenters	26/843 3%	8/522 1%
Non-IAA (& Gov't) "Israeli Institutions" participants	106/843 = 12.5% 106/1148 total registrants = 9%	39/522= 7.5% 39/810 total registrants = 5%
"Israeli Institutions" 2 nd author (split out in 2018 Program only)	n/a	25 total = 20 Non-IAA 5 IAA
"Israeli Institutions" Total (Indexed +2 nd)/ total attendance	106/1148 total AM registrants = 9%	39+20 59/810 total AM registrants = 7.2%
"Israeli Institutions" + IAA Total (Indexed +2 nd) / total attendance	132/1148 total AM registrants = 11.4%	47+25 72/810 total AM registrants = 8.8%
"Israeli" Approximate total attendance – assuming that most 2 nd authors attend or "trading" for non-author attendees	Ca 130 11%	Ca 70 – 9% Name badge count – 64 "Israeli" (42% of 153) so Israeli = 8% of 810 [[and 74 "Religious" and 15 Booksellers (58% of 153)]] 153 = 19%
"Israeli" registration/ participation decreased by about 50% between 2017 and 2018 (among both general and IAA participation) – IAA grants are every 2 years; City a factor?	Even allowing for ½ of dual membership registrants (80) to be "Israeli" it is unlikely that more than 80/106 Israeli attendees are SBL (too high). <i>It is highly unlikely that only ½ of the dual memberships are non-Israeli.</i>	Even allowing for ½ of dual membership registrants (60) to be "Israeli" and allowing for a 'max' of 70 "Israelis" (39+30), it is highly unlikely that 60/70 Israeli attendees are SBL (too high). <i>It is highly unlikely that only ½ of the dual memberships are non-Israeli.</i>

Conclusion: It is likely that "Israeli" ASOR AM attendance (of holders of SBL memberships) accounts for between 6 and 8 percent of Annual Meeting attendance, while total "Israeli" attendance may run between 6 and 12 percent depending on IAA grants (every 2 years only per/employee) and the host city. They present in between 30 and 50% of ASOR sessions, which is statistically high for this population's attendance figures; but speaks to a continuing focus on "Israel" in presentations (although not specifically to "Bibly-ness).

Name Badge (as of Oct 30, 2018) count – Likely SBL joint members and/or attendees

Affiliation	2017	2018	Affiliation	2017	2018
'Israeli'			Booksellers		
Albright (Israel based)	6 (11)	4 (6)	AIA	5	2
Ariel	4	2	Kornelas Pub	1	-
Askelon Coll	-	1	deGruyter	2	2
Bar Ilan	8	5	Gorgias	-	1
Ben Gurion	3	-	Baker	-	1
U Haifa	23	14	Hendrickson	2	4
HUC Jerusalem	2	1	ISD	2	2
Hebrew U	31	9	Equinox	1	-
IAA	18	2	Casemate	2	-
<i>Israel (Mus, Numis, Parks)</i>	4	2	Brill	1	1
Israel College of the Bible	-	1	Basilea	1	-
Kinneret Coll	4	1	Cornucopia	1	-
Tel Aviv	25	16	Eisenbrauns	2	-
Tel Hai Coll	-	1	Taylor & Francis	-	1
Univ of the Holy Land	-	2	Routledge	1	1
			SBL Press	1	2
			BAS	3	1
			Zondervan	1	1
Total (likely SBL)	128 (106)	61 (57)	(Others likely, UPennPress,..)	26	19
Program Book Count Estimates	130 -11%	70 -8%			
US 'Religious' Schools			US 'Religious' Schools		
Andrews	15	15	Mid-Atlantic Christian	-	1
Asbury	1	-	Moody	1	-
APU	1	1	Nashville	1	-
Bib Illustrator	2	2	Nazarene	1	-
Concordia	1	-	NO Baptist Theological Sem	2	2
Covenant Sem	-	1	Pacific School of Religion	1	1
Denver Sem	1	-	Pittsburgh Theol Sem	1	1
Dallas Theological Sem	1	-	Southwestern Bapt Theol Sem SWBTS	9	7
Emmanuel	-	1	Tandy Institute @ SWBTS	7	9
Emmaus	-	1	The Bible Seminary	1	1
Foundation for Bib Arch	1	2	Trinity U	5	11
Gateway Sem	1	1	Trinity Southwest	4	6
Gordon Conwell	-	2	VBTS	-	1
Grand Rapids	1	1	Wayland Baptist	1	1
La Sierra	12	7	Wheaton	1	1
Lubbock Christian	1	2	Yale Divinity	2	-
Methodist	1	1			
			Total: possible to likely SBL attends	76	79
			NOTE: Other SBL members certain from other affiliations, and some of these do not possess SBL membership – so a wash		

Conclusion: Likely that 208/1148 (18%) in 2017 (Boston) and 155/810 (19%) in 2018 (Denver) attendees were joint members/attendees. For 2017 SBL figures indicate that 198 ASOR AM attendees had dual membership – 17.2% - these counts are quite close. For 2017 SBL figures indicate that 161/1148 (14%) were double registered confirming the conclusion that many 'possible' joint attendees did not double register in 2017, and we may posit a similar situation in 2018. Thus it seems that about 15% of ASOR attendees are SBL joint attendees in most years. Note the dramatic decrease in 'Israeli' attendance in 2018 (Denver) accounting for most of the numerical drop; it seems that venue is important to many 'Israeli' participants (TA, Hebrew U, UHaifa).

Membership Surveys

2016 ASOR AM Membership Survey

- 1) How long have you been a member of ASOR?
1 – 1-5 years; 2 – 6-10 years; 3 – 11-15 years; 4 – 16-20 years; 5 – More than 20 years
- 2) How often do you attend the Annual Meeting?
1 – Every Year; 2 – Most Years; 3 – Some Years; 4 – Occasionally; 5 – Rarely or Never
- 3a) Did you attend the 2015 Annual Meeting in Buckhead, Georgia?
- 3b) If yes, which term in each pair best describes the VENUE LOCATION itself:
1a – Isolated; 1b – Intimate;
2a – Transportation Accessible; 2b – Transportation Difficult
3a – Near attractions and eateries; 3b – Nothing really around
4a – Positive; 4b – Negative
- 4) Are you also a member of SBL?
1 – yes; 2 – no
- 5) If “yes,” do you also generally attend SBL?
1 – yes; 2 – no
- 6) On a 1-5 scale rate the importance of meeting near, but not necessarily in the same city as, and either on the days before or after the AAR/SBL Meetings.
1 – Very Important; 2 – Somewhat important; 3 – Doesn’t Matter; 4 – Rather Not/Unimportant; 5 – Very Unimportant
- 7) On a 1-5 scale please rate the November date for the Annual Meeting:
1 – Very Good; 2 – Good; 3 – OK/Doesn’t Matter; 4 – Poor; 5 – Very Poor
- 8) If you could pick a date for the ASOR Annual Meeting, what month would it be in?
(Choose from a list of months)
- 9) Would changing the November DATES make a difference to your attendance?
1 – More likely to attend; 2 – No Difference; 3 – Less likely to attend
- 10) On a 1-5 scale please rate the Wednesday night – Saturday evening time frame of the Annual Meeting:
1 – Very Good; 2 – Good; 3 – OK/Doesn’t Matter; 4 – Poor; 5 – Very Poor
- 11) If you could pick a DAYS of the week for the ASOR AM, what would they be?
1 – Sun-Wed; 2 – Mon-Thur; 3 – Tue-Fri; 4 – Wed-Sat; 5 – Thur-Sun; 6 – Fri-Mon; 7 – Sat- Tues
- 12) Would changing the DAYS make a difference to your attendance?
1 – More likely to attend; 2 – No Difference; 3 – Less likely to attend
- 13) Would meeting with another organization make a difference/ be preferable?
1 – Very Preferable; 2 – Preferable; 3 – Doesn’t Matter; 4 – Rather Not/ Not Preferable; 5 – Very Not Preferable
- 14) If you answered 1 or 2 in Question 13, which organization?
(choose from a list: AIA, SCS, AAA,....., other)

2016 ASOR AM Membership Survey Results

As of: 1/18/2017 8:38:27 PM

1) How long have you been a member of ASOR? Answered: 236

1-5 years	76	32%
6-10 years	42	18%
11-15 years	31	13%
16-20 years	29	12%
More than 20 years	58	25%

2) How often do you attend the Annual Meeting? Answered: 236

Every year	106	45%
Most years	50	21%
Every other year	19	8%
Occasionally	39	17%
Rarely or never	22	9%

3a) Did you attend the 2015 Annual Meeting in Buckhead, Georgia? Answered: 236

Yes	No
145	91
61 %	39 %

3b) If yes, which term in each pair best describes the VENUE LOCATION itself:

Question	Num. Answered	1	2		
Intimate (1); Isolated (2)	142	78	55%	64	45%
Transportation accessible (1); Transportation difficult (2)	144	105	73%	39	27%
Near attractions and eateries (1); Nothing really around (2)	143	74	52%	69	48%
Positive (1); Negative (2)	138	92	67%	46	33%

4) Are you also a member of SBL? Answered: 236

Yes	No
75	161
32 %	68 %

4b) If yes, do you also generally attend SBL? Answered: 149

Yes	No
59	75 (#4)
40 %	79%
	60 %

5) On a scale of 1 (hi) to 5, rate the importance of meeting in general conjunction with the SBL/AAR meetings (i.e., on the days prior and in close proximity, if not the same city): Answered: 222

1	2	3	4	5	
55	25	44	24	74	
25 %	11 %	20 %	11 %	33 %	
	36%		44%		Grouping Generally Prefers & Generally Not Prefers

6) On a scale of 1 (hi) to 5, please rate the November date for the Annual Meeting: Answered: 222

1	2	3	4	5
68	56	60	31	7
31 %	25 %	27 %	14 %	3 %

7) If you could pick a date for the ASOR Annual Meeting, what month would it be in? Answered: 222

January	13	6%
February	12	5%
March	17	8%
April	12	5%
May	12	5%
June	2	1%
July	2	1%
August	3	1%
September	8	4%
October	29	13%
November	107	48%
December	5	2%

8) Would changing the November DATES make a difference to your attendance? Answered: 222

More likely to attend	49	22%
No difference	130	59%
Less likely to attend	43	19%

9) On a scale of 1 (hi) to 5, please rate the Wednesday night to Saturday evening time frame of the Annual Meeting: Answered: 222

1	2	3	4	5
65	64	71	19	3
29 %	29 %	32 %	9 %	1 %

10) If you could pick DAYS of the week for the ASOR Annual Meeting, what would they be?

Number Who Answered: 222

Sunday-Wednesday	8	4%
Monday-Thursday	8	4%
Tuesday-Friday	22	10%
Wednesday-Saturday	107	48%
Thursday-Sunday	60	27%
Friday-Monday	14	6%
Saturday-Tuesday	3	1%

11) Would changing the DAYS make a difference to your attendance? Answered: 222

More likely to attend	37	17%
No difference	157	71%
Less likely to attend	28	13%

12) On a scale of 1 (hi) to 5, would meeting with another organization make a difference/ be preferable?

Answered: 221

1	2	3	4	5
25	70	71	27	28
11 %	32 %	32 %	12 %	13 %

13) If you answered 1 or 2 in Question 12, which organization? Answered: 111

Archaeological Institute of America (AIA)	81	73%
Society for American Archaeology (SAA)	18	16%
Middle East Studies Association (MESA)	18	16%
American Oriental Society (AOS)	34	31%
Society for Classical Studies (SCS)	10	9%
Other	10	9%

Annual Meeting Evaluations 2013-2018
Summary of Pertinent Information

Raw data for the following summary is available from the ASOR Home Office; a spread sheet for each year listing the responses to the questions on the evaluation form available to attendees after each Annual Meeting. These are self-selected responses.

Looking specifically at the question “What factors influenced your decision to attend the Annual Meeting” it is clear that over the course of the past 5 years the vast majority of respondents selected “Dates of the Meeting” and/or “Location of the Meeting”. About 150 responded each year between 2013-2016 with the number dropping to about 120 in 2017 and 2018. Although difficult to be exact (because of multiple answers possible) those giving date and location as a factor ran between 70 and 80% for the period. Those responding they “Always attend” or attended because of “Previous attendance” ran about 30% for the period while “Program Content” usually reached only about 5-10%.

2018 Denver Meeting AM Forum Minutes

Secretary Swartz-Dodd minutes

Not yet submitted. The Chair was able to utilize notes taken by President Susan.

2018 Denver Meeting AM Straw Poll
Poll & Results

Roughly 15% of total attendees in Denver responded (120 responses) –these also provided comments at the Members forum.

Please rank 1-4 (1 being strongest agreement)		Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4
Stay with SBL		45	14	11	36
Prefer to meet as close as possible to SBL	15				
Prefer to meet in the same city but earlier days (Tuesday-Friday)	35				
No preference	13				
Split from SBL in terms of city but not dates		9	22	35	16
Prefer far from SBL city	5				
Prefer close enough to SBL city	23				
No preference	20				
Split from SBL (both city and dates)		44	14	12	20
Prefer to meet with another group/society	19				
Prefer to meet alone	16				
No preference	22				
Alternating Years. In Manageable years STAY with SBL (city and dates) AND in unavailable years SPLIT from SBL in terms of city, but not in terms of dates		20	32	30	7
Far from SBL	7				
"Close enough" to SBL	26				
No preference	19				

Of those who wanted to stay with SBL (both city and date), the second most popular option was alternating years and meeting "close enough" to SBL. Generally, those who ranked the first option (stay with SBL) the highest also ranked the third option (total split) the lowest. These people also had the fewest comments. They also tended to vote only ranking the first option as highest and leaving the rest of the survey blank.

Of those who ranked the second option highest (Split from SBL in terms of city but not dates), the first option (stay with SBL) was ranked the lowest. These people also wanted to split to a different city, but generally had no preference whether that city was near or far to SBL city.

Those who rated the third option (full split) the highest tended to vote the first option (stay with SBL) the lowest. Even though they ranked staying with SBL low, they would prefer earlier days of the week if ASOR stayed with SBL. They were also interested in meeting with another group/society and had a number of comments.

Those who rated the alternating year option the highest were all over the place in terms of what their second choice would be and/or which option they considered the worst.

2019 ASOR AM Membership Survey Results

1) Rank your TOP preference for future Annual Meeting logistics from among the following general options (576 responses). The Black figures show the raw data.

NOTE: people selected more than one response in some cases so the actual number of responses is 631 for 576 actual respondents. The Red numbers indicate tallies from the 631 figure

In cases where an individual selected more than one “top” choice, the Blue figures show ONLY the FIRST choice selected – all secondary and tertiary choices have been eliminated.

The Green figure in Option 1 indicates that of those who made more than one choice in this question, ONLY 4 selected Option 1 – strongly suggesting that they did not simply pick the first item they saw and then picking others. In other words, it is quite likely that Option 1 was an intentional selection for these respondents.

	WORKING IN AN SBL FRAMEWORK IN SOME FORM – 412/631 = 65.3% 394/580 = 67.9% 390/576 = 67.7%
80 (12.7%) 80 (13.8%) 76 (13.2%)	<u>ALL years: Join back up</u> with SBL
79 (12.5%) 77 (13.3%)	<u>ALL years:</u> The ASOR Meeting should continue to meet at our current timeframe (Wed-Sat, the week before Thanksgiving) and, as much as possible, meet in, or as close by as feasible to the city in which SBL meets: this is essentially what we are currently doing.
150 (23.8%) 145 (25%)	<u>ALL years:</u> The ASOR Meeting should, as much as possible, continue to meet in the city in which SBL meets (or as close by as feasible) and continue to meet the week before Thanksgiving, BUT slightly shift the current days of meeting:
31 (4.9%) 27 (4.6%)	<u>ALL years:</u> The ASOR Meeting should continue to meet at our current timeframe (Wed-Sat, the week before Thanksgiving) BUT choose its own meeting city, YET one that is reasonably close to the city in which SBL meets:
21 (3.3%) 19 (3.3%)	<u>ALTERNATING years:</u> In Manageable years (2024, 2025, 2027, 2028, 2030, 2031 – Boston, Washington DC, San Diego) The ASOR Meeting should continue to meet at our current timeframe (Wed-Sat, the week before Thanksgiving) and, as much as possible, meet in the city in which SBL meets; AND in Unavailable years (2021, 2022, 2023, 2026, 2029 - Denver, San Antonio) The ASOR Meeting should continue to meet at our current timeframe (Wed-Sat, the week before Thanksgiving) and meet as close as feasible to the city in which SBL meets. For San Antonio this likely means ‘local’ resorts, Houston, Austin, or Dallas/Ft. Worth; for Denver this likely means Denver outskirts, Grand Junction, Colorado Springs, Boulder, or Cheyenne.
51 (8.1%) 46 (7.9%)	<u>ALTERNATING years:</u> In Manageable years (2024, 2025, 2027, 2028, 2030, 2031 – Boston, Washington DC, San Diego) The ASOR Meeting should continue to meet at our current timeframe (Wed-Sat, the week before Thanksgiving) and, as much as possible, meet in the city in which SBL meets: AND in Unavailable years (2021, 2022, 2023, 2026, 2029 - Denver, San Antonio) The ASOR Meeting should continue to meet at our current timeframe (Wed-Sat, the week before Thanksgiving) BUT choose its own meeting city, possibly far from the SBL city (but perhaps getting a better hotel deal and wider range of city options).
	CUTTING TIES WITH ASOR IN SOME FORM – 203/631 = 32.2% 170/580 = 29.3% 170/576 = 29.5%
64 (10.1%) 53 (9.1%)	<u>ALL years:</u> The ASOR Meeting should continue to meet at our current timeframe (Wed-Sat, the week before Thanksgiving) BUT choose its own meeting city, possibly far from the SBL city.
34 (5.4%) 25 (4.3%)	<u>ALL years:</u> The ASOR Meeting should continue to meet the week before Thanksgiving, BUT choose its own meeting city, AND slightly shift current days of meeting:
105 (16.6%) 92 (15.9%)	<u>ALL years:</u> The ASOR Meeting should meet at a different timeframe altogether and choose a city that best meets its needs.
	2.5% 2.8%

16 separate responses	Another Option not expressed by the above: _____
	65.3+32.2+2.5 = 100% 67.9+29.3+2.8 =100%

2) From the same list of general possibilities are there options that you would see as secondarily viable? (Choose up to 3 additional options from the repeated list below; do NOT select the choice you already made in the previous question) (526 respondents) **ACTUAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES IS 978.**
PERCENTAGES HAVE BEEN ADJUSTED.

80 (8.2%)	<u>ALL years: Join back up</u> with SBL
177 (18.1%)	<u>ALL years:</u> The ASOR Meeting should continue to meet at our current timeframe (Wed-Sat, the week before Thanksgiving) and, as much as possible, meet in, or as close by as feasible to the city in which SBL meets: this is essentially what we are currently doing.
119 (12.2%)	<u>ALL years:</u> The ASOR Meeting should, as much as possible, continue to meet in the city in which SBL meets (or as close by as feasible) and continue to meet the week before Thanksgiving, BUT slightly shift the current days of meeting:
127 (12.9%)	<u>ALL years:</u> The ASOR Meeting should continue to meet at our current timeframe (Wed-Sat, the week before Thanksgiving) BUT choose its own meeting city, YET one that is reasonably close to the city in which SBL meets:
83 (8.5%)	<u>ALTERNATING years:</u> In Manageable years (2024, 2025, 2027, 2028, 2030, 2031 – Boston, Washington DC, San Diego) The ASOR Meeting should continue to meet at our current timeframe (Wed-Sat, the week before Thanksgiving) and, as much as possible, meet in the city in which SBL meets; AND in Unavailable years (2021, 2022, 2023, 2026, 2029 - Denver, San Antonio) The ASOR Meeting should continue to meet at our current timeframe (Wed-Sat, the week before Thanksgiving) and meet as close as feasible to the city in which SBL meets. For San Antonio this likely means 'local' resorts, Houston, Austin, or Dallas/Ft. Worth; for Denver this likely means Denver outskirts, Grand Junction, Colorado Springs, Boulder, or Cheyenne.
73 (7.5%)	<u>ALTERNATING years:</u> In Manageable years (2024, 2025, 2027, 2028, 2030, 2031 – Boston, Washington DC, San Diego) The ASOR Meeting should continue to meet at our current timeframe (Wed-Sat, the week before Thanksgiving) and, as much as possible, meet in the city in which SBL meets: AND in Unavailable years (2021, 2022, 2023, 2026, 2029 - Denver, San Antonio) The ASOR Meeting should continue to meet at our current timeframe (Wed-Sat, the week before Thanksgiving) BUT choose its own meeting city, possibly far from the SBL city (but perhaps getting a better hotel deal and wider range of city options).
115 (11.8%)	<u>ALL years:</u> The ASOR Meeting should continue to meet at our current timeframe (Wed-Sat, the week before Thanksgiving) BUT choose its own meeting city, possibly far from the SBL city.
104 (10.6%)	<u>ALL years:</u> The ASOR Meeting should continue to meet the week before Thanksgiving, BUT choose its own meeting city, AND slightly shift current days of meeting:
100 (10.2%)	<u>ALL years:</u> The ASOR Meeting should meet at a different timeframe altogether and choose a city that best meets its needs.

NOTE: the numbers in **RED** below indicate the responses to the same question on the 2016 Membership Survey. **Bold** items are the top responses while underlined items are significant 2nd tier responses.

3) On a 1-5 scale please rate the current November date for the Annual Meeting:

1 – Very Good;	29.8% 31%
2 – Good;	30.6 25%
3 – OK/Doesn't Matter;	26.4
4 – Poor;	10.9
5 - Very Poor	2.3

4) Would changing the November DATES make a difference to your attendance?

1 – More likely to attend;	17.6%
2 – No Difference;	60.3 59%
3 – Less likely to attend	21.9

4a) Knowing that it is not possible to alternate seasons for the meeting, if you could pick a set season for the ASOR Annual Meeting, what season would it be in?

1 – Fall (Sept, Oct, Nov);	70.3%
2 – Winter (Dec, Jan, Feb)	11.6
3 – Spring (Mar, Apr, May)	18.1

4b) Do you have a second choice of seasons?	
1 – Fall (Sept, Oct, Nov);	25.2%
2 – Winter (Dec, Jan, Feb)	33.5
3 – Spring (Mar, Apr, May)	41.2
4c) Do you prefer a specific month? November 45.8% 48% ; April 15.6 5 (none else above 8%)	
5) On a 1-5 scale please rate the Wednesday night – Saturday evening time frame of the Annual Meeting:	
1 – Very Good;	24.8% 29%
2 – Good;	32.9 29%
3 – OK/Doesn't Matter;	30.8 32%
4 – Poor;	9.7
5 - Very Poor	1.8
6) If you could pick a DAYS of the week for the ASOR AM, what would they be (starting with evening Plenary, unless stated)?	
1 – Sun-Wed;	>5%
2 – Mon-Thur;	>5
3 – Tue-Fri;	18.2
4 – Wed-Sat;	35 48%
5 – Wed morn –Fri eve;	10.3
6 – Thur -Sun;	20.1
7- Fri-Mon;	>5
8 – Sat- Tues	>5
7) Would changing the DAYS make a difference to your attendance?	
1 – More likely to attend;	21.5%
2 – No Difference;	64.1
3 – Less likely to attend	14.4
8a) How important has the location (Host City) of the Annual Meeting been to you (the Hotel is treated separately below)?	
<u>1- Very Important (always makes a difference for my attendance)</u>	<u>23.9%</u>
<u>2- Usually Important (usually makes a difference for my attendance)</u>	<u>24.9</u>
3- Somewhat Important (sometimes makes a difference for my attendance)	26.4
4- Rarely Important (rarely makes a difference for my attendance)	12.7
5- Not Important (seldom or never makes a difference for my attendance)	12.7
8b) Please rank your 3 top preferences for the following factors in choosing a Host City	
Ease of travel	421 (73.9%)
Cost of travel	438 (76.8)
Safety	50 (8,8)
Local Attractions (museums, amusements, historical sites, etc)	206 (36.1)
Functional local public transportation	125 (21.9)
Nightlife	20 (3.5)
Proximity to another professional meeting	158 (27.7)
Location and Weather	194 (34)

9) Please rank your 4 preferences for the following factors in choosing a Conference Hotel

Walking distance to diverse local restaurants (fast food to fine dining)	375 (65.8%)
Ease of local travel (Airport shuttle, local public transit)	376 (66)
Proximity to another professional meeting	138 (24.2)
Free in-room Wi-Fi	233 (40.9)
Amenities (Fitness center, newspaper)	21 (3.7)
Cost	370 (64.9)
Clean, comfortable, modern rooms	177 (31.1)
Space for receptions and special dinners	12 (4.6)
Walking distance to “downtown” and nightlife	152 (26.7)
Option for extending the stay at conference price	26 (4.6)
All session and business meeting rooms in the hotel	234 (41.1)
Free Coffee at breaks	49 (8.6)
Free snacks and coffee for business meetings	13 (2.3)

10) How long have you been a member of ASOR?

1 – 1-5 years;	32.9%	32%
2 – 6-10 years;	22.1	
3 – 11-15 years;	13.2	
4 – 16-20 years;	9.2	
5 – More than 20 years	22.5	

11) How often do you attend the ASOR Annual Meeting?

1 – Almost/Every Year;	44.9%	45%
2 – Most Years;	17.7	
3 – Some Years;	19.1	
4 – Occasionally;	10.1	
5 – Rarely or Never	8.2	

12) Are you also a member of any or all of the following (pick all that apply)

1 – AAA;	42 (8.9%)
2 – ARCE;	49 (10.4)
3 – AIA;	220 (46.8)
4 – AOS;	37 (7.9)
5 – MESA	8 (1.7)
6 – SAA;	108 (23)
7 – SBL;	201 (42.8) 32%
8 – SCS;	17 (3.6)
9 – Other _____	22 (ETS @7)

13a) If you are an SBL member, how often do you attend the **SBL** Annual Meeting?

209 respondents to 13a were SBL members; 244 were not SBL members

	Raw Total%	% of SBL respondents	
1 – Almost/Every Year;	22.5%	49%	} 79%
2 – Most Years;	6%	13%	
3 – Some Years;	9%	19%	
4 – Occasionally;	7%	15%	
5 – Rarely or Never	2%	4%	
6 – I am not an SBL member	53.9%	0%	

13b) If you are a member of other non-SBL professional organizations / learned societies, how often do you attend those Annual Meetings?

<i>1 – Almost/Every Year;</i>	<i>22.9%</i>
<i>2 – Most Years;</i>	<i>19.3</i>
<i>3 – Some Years;</i>	<i>23.1</i>
4 – Occasionally;	17
5 – Rarely or Never	17.7

14) How many professional Annual Meetings and/or Regional Meetings do you generally attend each year?

1 – 1 meeting;	27.4%
2 – 2 meetings;	50.3
3 – 3-5 meetings;	17.2
4 – more than 5 meetings	1
5- None	4.1

15) Please select your TOP 5 aspects of the ASOR Annual Meeting itself from the following list.

Receptions and ‘Social’ gatherings	278 (48.7%)
<i>Networking time and space</i>	<i>380 (66.5)</i>
Exhibitors and Booksellers	275 (48.2)
A “Job Fair”	50 (8.8)
Free Coffee at the Breaks	79 (13.8)
Time and Space for appropriate Special Events	86 (15.1)
Quality Sessions	510 (89.3)
Quality Plenary Session	137 (24)
Time and space for Business Meetings (Including Annual Member’s Meeting)	94 (16.5)
Ample opportunity to Present	281 (49.2)
Sufficient and Appropriate Presentation/Session spaces	306 (53.6)
Free time	69 (12.1)

16) If ASOR were meeting on its own, how likely would you be to book a room at the ASOR Conference Hotel when attending the ASOR AM (as opposed to trying to book a cheaper alternative in the same city)?

1 – Very likely;	50.7%
2 – Likely;	24
3 –Possibly;	16.3
4 – Not likely	9.1

17a) Would meeting ‘with’ another organization (any non-ASOR group) be preferable for you?

1 – Very Preferable;	22.7%
2 – Preferable;	21 32%
3 – Doesn’t Matter;	43.5 32%
4 – Rather Not/ Not Preferable;	8.9
5 – Very Not Preferable	3.9

17b) If ASOR (ca 1000 attendees) chose to meet ‘with’ another group (whether or not you personally prefer to) would you have a preference regarding which one?

AAA (November, ca 6000 attendees)	27 (4.9%)
ARCE (April, ca 400 attendees)	56 (10.2)
<u>AIA/SCS (1st weekend January, ca 2500 attendees)</u>	<u>118 (21.5)</u>
AOS (3 rd weekend March, ca 200 attendees)	29 (5.3)
MESA (Fall: varies -Oct, Nov, Dec, ca 2000 attendees)	20 (3.6)
SAA (April, c 4500 attendees)	59 (10.7)
SBL (Weekend before Thanksgiving, ca 4500; w/AAR ca 10,000 attendees)	213 (38.8)
None	82 (14.9)
Other _____	12

17c) Are there other groups on that list that you would choose to meet with (please list): _____

17d) If ASOR chose to meet ‘with’ another group (whether or not you personally prefer to) would you have a preference regarding what format seems best? (546 – 550 below???)

151 (27.1) Joint Meeting (share registration, meeting and hotel space, simultaneous sessions.
NOTE: this may NOT be possible with some groups, and/or ASOR may need to share fiscal benefits)

114 (20.9) Concurrent Meeting (separate registration, meet at the same time, same city, with close but separate meeting and hotel space, separate sessions at the same time in different places - attendees choose which organization’s sessions to attend)

285 (52.2) Consecutive Meeting (separate registration, meet in the same city, but immediately before or after the “other” meeting, possibly separate meeting and hotel space)

DEMOGRAPHICS

18) Which of the following BEST describe your research and/or interests among these areas that are consonant with ASOR’s mission (your top 4 only) (576)

<u>Anthropology</u>	<u>234 (40.6%)</u>
Sociology	25 (4.3)
<u>History</u>	<u>292 (50.7)</u>
Literature & Textual Studies	120 (20.8)
Art History	123 (21.4)
Culture Studies	121 (21)
Epigraphy	70 (12.2)
Historical Geography	80 (13.9)
Scientific Methodology	122 (21.2)
Field Archaeology	411 (71.6)
<u>Biblical Studies</u>	<u>236 (41)</u>
Judaism	47 (8.2)
Early Christian Studies	47 (8.2)
Islamic Studies	23 (4)
Other	18 (Egypt @5)

19) Rank the following areas of ASOR's work in terms of your own research or career focus or those aspects of ASOR's mission that most interest you (No more than 3) (572)

Field Work	488 (85.5%)
Lab Work	216 (37.8)
Textual Work Epigraphy	152 (26.6)
Textual Work Literary	181 (31.6)
Museum Work	220 (38.5)
Library Work	118 (20.6)

20) Setting aside the likelihood for overlap, rank the following geographic areas in terms of which BEST describe your research or career focus and/or interests (pick 3) (574)

Mediterranean Basin	356 (62%)
Southern Europe	33 (5.7)
Western Asia	214 (37.3)
North Africa	74 (12.9)
Central Asia	20 (3.5)
Mesopotamia	267 (46.5)
Anatolia	139 (24.2)
Eastern Mediterranean Littoral	339 (59.1)
Other	34 (8 Egypt, 5 Iran)

21) Setting aside the likelihood for overlap, rank the following timeframes in terms of which BEST describe your research or career temporal focus and/or interests (Your top 3) (570)

Before 3000BCE	99 (17.4%)
3000- 2000	225 (39.5)
2000-1200	340 (59.6)
1200-300	382 (67)
300BCE – 100CE	227 (39.8)
100-500	122 (21.4)
500-1000	57 (10)
1000-1900	32 (5.6)

2019 ASOR AM Membership Survey Summary

A copy of the numerical results themselves (Excel) is available.

About 1/3 of ASOR members took the survey. Regarding the main issue at hand, the data indicate that 60% of respondents prefer to always (or usually) meet in a way that allows for convenient attendance at the SBL annual meeting, while 37% prefer a meeting that always or sometimes does not. Further general trends may be seen in the areas of demographics, the annual meeting itself, and the desirability of meeting with other groups, and comparisons with earlier surveys.

1) Demographics

ASOR 'average' members are Field Archaeologists, centered on the eastern Mediterranean basin and Mesopotamia from 2000-100 BCE, who also work in History, Anthropology, and Biblical Studies.

Most of these ASOR members (ca 55%) have been members for 10 years or less, although about 20% have been members for over 20 years.

About 45% of ASOR members attend the Annual Meeting every year or nearly so and an additional 17% attend often – this (when combined with those attending irregularly) comports with other sources that indicate that about 64% of ASOR members generally attend the Annual Meeting.

Many ASOR members are also members of at least one other professional group – over 45% of respondents hold AIA membership and 42% (201/470) are members of SBL (this is a higher percentage than the 1/3 figure provided by SBL for joint membership); about 20% are in SAA. Over ½ of responding ASOR members attend 2 or more professional meetings/ conferences per year with over 40% attending meetings other than SBL on a regular basis. About 55% of responding ASOR members who are also SBL members (129) report they attend the SBL annual meeting on a fairly regular basis. This reportage is in line with that from SBL + ASOR 2017 statistics, which maintain that about 160 registered for both ASOR and SBL annual meetings in 2017. Additionally, the 129 figure comports with the 14-20% figure, from other sources, for the percentage of Annual Meeting attendees who are also SBL members.

2) The Annual Meeting Itself

It is clear that the vast majority of respondents are in favor of the fall season (70%) and the November month (60-86%). Which exact days are preferred showed less uniformity but Thursday and Friday were almost universal, with a shift to earlier or later in the week splitting the responses.

Seventy-five percent of respondents indicated that the Host City is important in their choice to attend or not (Very 23.9%, Usually 24.9%, Sometimes 26.4%) and yet about 63% reported they have chosen to attend every year (44.9%) or most years (17.7%). Ease and cost of travel were primary concerns for city choice (ca 75% each) while local attractions (36%) and location and weather (34%) play a smaller but still significant role.

Regarding the hotel choice, clearly the main three concerns (ca 66% each) deal with getting around (to local restaurants, the airport, public transit) and cost. Free WiFi and having all ASOR meetings in one hotel were also important factors (ca 40% each). About 75% of respondents indicate they would be at least 'likely' to book a room in an ASOR conference hotel.

In both of the above – city and hotel - it is clear that transportation and cost were the significant factors.

Expectations for the ASOR Annual Meeting itself showed that quality sessions (90%) and networking opportunities (66%) were the main reasons for attendance. Four additional expectations garnered between 48 and 53%: receptions, booksellers, opportunities to present, and a desire for sufficient and appropriate presentation spaces.

3) Meeting with others

About 43% of respondents did not feel strongly one way or the other about meeting with anyone else, even though many are also members of other groups and do attend additional meetings (see above). A similar percentage, though, would prefer to meet in some way with another group. Of the other possible groups SBL showed the largest interest (39%) and AIA the second most (21%). Two other groups were at 10%. If ASOR meets 'with' another group, over half of respondents prefer to meet separately in such a way so members can attend both meeting without having to choose between them.

4) Comparisons with Previous Surveys and Polls

2016 and 2019 Surveys

The results of this Survey comport reasonably well with the data obtained from the 2016 Survey, which had a significantly lower response rate: ca 240/1700 in 2016 and ca 580/1700 in 2019. Considering those questions that were the same between the two surveys the following data emerge.

In terms of the Meeting Month and Days, the results were almost identical, as were length of membership and frequency of attendance at ASOR AM

A lower percentage of SBL members filled out the 2016 survey, but the frequency of attendance at the SBL meeting was roughly the same as that of 2019.

Regarding whether we should meet with another group, the percentage of “Prefer” decreased in 2019 by a third while that of “Doesn’t Matter” increased by a quarter.

Comparing the 2019 Survey with the November 2018 Straw Poll data.

Given 4 general options (rather than the 9 of the 2019 Survey), 75% of Straw Poll respondents were split evenly between maintaining as close as possible a meeting connection with SBL and completely severing logistical ties with that annual meeting. The same trend is seen in the Survey, yet with a much larger percentage wanting to “stay” with SBL in some manner and about the same wanting a full split.

2018 Straw Poll Options	2018 Poll	2019 Survey Quest 1	1-5 Year Members
Meet w/ SBL, same time (or shift days) and city	37%	52% (Opts 1-3)	68%
Meet w/ SBL, same time not same city (near)	7%	4.6% (Opt 4)	--
Alternate (city near SBL + city far from SBL)	17%	11.2% (Opts 5-6)	--
Split from SBL entirely	37%	29.3% (Opts 7-9)	18%

2019 ASOR AM Membership Survey – Preferences by Membership Length

In order to try and better understand the “future” of ASOR and its Annual Meeting from the Survey data, the AHCotAM looked at the preferences of those who were members 1-5 years. Admittedly these are not all “Early Career Scholars”, but this seems to give us some rough idea. Note that the data immediately below show that the responses from the group “6-10 Years” are quite similar – thus we feel that we have seen the responding Early Career Scholars represented.

The data pulled out below concerns just the Top Four specific responses to Questions 1 and 2 among all membership lengths, to gain perspective on the 1-5 Year members. These Top 4 represent an average of 62% of All Responses for this question (38% of responses were split among the other 5 options).

	All Responses	Responses to Top 4		Shift Days – Accommodate SBL		Independent ASOR Meeting		Re-Join SBL		Keep Things the Same	
		#	% All	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1-5 years	189	129	68%	50	26.46%	34	17.99%	31	16.4%	14	7.41%
6-10 years	127	86	68%	36	28.35	23	18.11	13	10.245	14	11.02%
11-15 years	76	40	53%	11	14.47	12	15.79	8	10.53	9	11.84%
16-20 years	53	30	57%	14	26.42	4	7.55	3	5.66	9	16.98%
20+ years	129	84	65%	28	21.71	19	13.95	16	12.40	21	16.28%
		369	62%	139		92		71		67	
% All Resps	594		62%	24%		16%		12%		11%	

From this slice of the data it seems clear that 1-5 Year members, like almost every other category, prefer staying with SBL but shifting days. While the second choice of shorter term members (1-5, 6-10) – and the first choice of 11-15 folks - was a completely independent ASOR meeting, this was not the case for the longer term members.

Looking at these data as a unit (All Responses), however, it appears that most prefer to, in some fashion, remain 'with' SBL; supporting the general trend seen that about 65% of responding members (Survey and Poll) prefer to allow for at least some accommodation for meeting 'with' SBL, while a steady 35% prefer to split in some way. This is also seen in that of the stated non-SBL 1-5 year members, 30 of the 79 (38%) voted to separate in some way from the SBL (Options 6-9 on 2019 Survey Question 1):

Full Breakdown of "1-5 Year" Respondents' Survey Results

189 responses of the 594 (32%) were 1-5 year folks.

DEMOGRAPHICS of 1-5 Year Members

The 1-5 year group identify as:

Field Archaeology = 124
History = 88
Biblical Studies = 78
Anthropology = 67
Scientific Methodology = 48
Literature & Textual Studies = 43
Art History = 38
Culture Studies = 34
Early Christian Studies = 23
Epigraphy = 21
Historical Geography = 20
Judaism = 14
Islamic Studies = 12
Sociology = 11

Who work in:

Mediterranean Basin = 118
Mesopotamia = 90
Eastern Mediterranean Littoral = 87
Western Asia = 61
Anatolia = 48
North Africa = 32
Southern Europe = 10

Who study all periods:

1200 – 300 = 123
2000 – 1200 = 105
300 BCE - 100 CE = 73
3000 – 2000 = 67
100 – 500 = 44
Before 3000 BCE = 36
500 – 1000 = 18
1000 – 1900 = 11

And whose interest look like this:

Field Work = 153

Lab Work = 63

Library Work = 33

Museum Work = 76

Textual Work – Epigraphy = 51

Textual Work - Literary Studies = 64 (cf with 78 who selected Biblical Studies above)

These demographics are consistent with the general trends of the 2019 Survey.

Memberships

SBL

79 of the 189 said they were not SBL members (42%)

48 of the 189 (25%) either don't know or declined to respond (Assume NOT SBL members) – so 127/189 or 66% not SBL – this is consistent with the 2017 data obtained from SBL.

62 of the 189 said they were SBL members (33%) - consistent with the 2017 data obtained from SBL

Other memberships

AIA= 55

SAA = 26

ARCE = 21

AOS = 11

Most attend one or two meetings a year:

2 meetings = 79 (this breaks down to 25 are also SBL members, 20 who are also AIA members, 7 who are ARCE members and 5 SAA members)

1 meeting = 57 (this breaks down to 11 SBL members, 11 AIA members, and 5 ARCE members)

3-5 meeting = 33 (6 are AIA members, 5 are ARCE, AOS, or SBL members)

Attending the SBL

When asked if they are a member of the SBL members and whether they attended the SBL annual meeting 64 responded (which is not the 62 who claimed SBL membership when asked, but whatever, close enough),

37 said they attended the SBL Almost/Every Year or Most Years (58%),

21 (33%) said Occasionally or Some Years.

Meeting with any other Society

88 of the 189 (47%) said it was preferable or very preferable if ASOR met at the same place as another host city

85 of the 189 (45%) said it didn't matter

15 of the 189 (8%) said that it was not preferable or very not preferable

Of those who said it was preferable or very preferable:

52 were SBL members

23 were AIA members

11 were ARCE members

6 were AOS members

Of those who said it didn't matter:

23 were AIA members

15 were SAA members

9 were SBL members

8 were ARCE members

Attending ASOR

62 attend the ASOR meeting Almost/Every Year (33%) and 35 Most Years (19%).

Some or occasionally combined = 59 or 31%. That majority is even higher considering some of the folks maybe only attended ASOR have only been members for 1 or 2 years.

Most common priority for attending ASOR:

Quality sessions (including poster session, member initiated sessions, special sessions)163

Networking time and space = 126

Ample opportunity to present = 101

Sufficient and appropriate presentation/session spaces (including AV and WiFi) = 97

Exhibitors and booksellers = 79

Receptions and social gatherings = 79

Quality plenary address = 45

Free coffee breaks = 36

A job fair = 27

Free time = 27

Time and space for appropriate special events = 27

The most common priority for selecting a host city was

Cost of travel = 153

Ease of travel = 135

Local Attractions (museums, amusements, historical sites, etc) = 62

Location and Weather = 59

Functional local public transportation = 50

Proximity to another professional meeting = 44

Safety = 21

Nightlife = 3

The location of the host city was:

Somewhat Important (sometimes makes a difference for my attendance) = 54

Very Important (always makes a difference for my attendance) = 53

Usually Important (usually makes a difference for my attendance) = 42

Not Important (seldom or never makes a difference for my attendance) = 21

Rarely Important (rarely makes a difference for my attendance) = 16

Their most common priority for selecting a hotel was:

Cost = 137

Ease of local travel (Airport shuttle, local public transit) = 126

Walking distance to diverse local restaurants (fast food to fine dining) = 100

Free in-room Wi-Fi = 81

All session and business meeting rooms in the hotel = 64

Clean, comfortable, modern rooms = 64

Walking distance to downtown and nightlife = 47

Proximity to another professional meeting = 36

Free Coffee at breaks = 26

Related, vaguely, to that is the question of how many folks who book into the conference hotel if the ASOR meeting was stand alone:

Very likely = 60

Likely = 58

Possibly = 48

Not likely = 22

ANALYSIS of Survey Responses to the IMPORTANCE of HOST CITY

COMPARISON Between ASOR + SBL Members and ASOR Non-SBL Members

Related to BOTH

“Importance of the Host City” and “How Often Do You Attend The ASOR AM”

	Somewhat important/ Almost every	Somewhat important/ Most	Somewhat important/ Some	Somewhat important/ Occasionally	Somewhat important/ Rarely	Total
SBL	8	9	12	5	3	37/26%
Other*	56	22	17	11	2	108/74%
	Usually important/ Almost every	Usually important/ Most	Usually important/ Some	Usually important/ Occasionally	Usually important/ Rarely	
SBL	14	12	5	1	3	35/27%
Other	32	26	27	6	3	94/73%
	Very important/ Almost every	Very important/ Most	Very important/ Some	Very important/ Occasionally	Very important/ Rarely	
SBL	20	10	11	10	8	59/46%
Other	21	10	17	10	10	68/54%
SBL total	42/28%	31/35%	28/31%	16/37%	14/48%	131/33%
Other total	109/72%	58/65%	61/69%	27/63%	15/52%	270/67%
TOTAL	151	89	89	43	29	401

* Other includes all scholarly societies besides SBL as well as respondents that did not list another scholarly society besides ASOR. For respondents who listed SBL along with other societies, they are here counted only under the “SBL” category. These data omit those who said the city was “not important” or “rarely important” (see below) as well as ca. 15 respondents who did not complete either the “importance of the city” field or the “how often do you attend the ASOR AM meeting” field.

	Rarely Important	Not Important	Total
SBL	23	35	58
Other	47	37	84
Total	70	72	142

Findings & Discussion

- Of the respondents who said they attend “almost every year,” only 28% were SBL members while 72% are non-SBL affiliated, but of the respondents who said they “attend only rarely” 48% of them were SBL members. This implies that (1) non-SBL affiliated members are already very active at the ASOR AM despite its location and contiguity with SBL and that (2) ASOR has probably already lost some SBL members regardless of where/when it meets.
- The more important the city location was considered, generally, the lower the ASOR attendance from non-SBL members, but the more important the city location the higher the attendance from SBL members. This latter piece of data casts some doubt on the assumption that the perceived importance of the conference city is an accurate predictor of attendance. But it also indicates that for those not connected to SBL if a city is less desirable, they will not attend that meeting.

- For non-SBL respondents who rated the city as “very important” 29% said they attend occasionally or rarely-never, of those who rated the city as “usually important” 10% said they attend occasionally or rarely-never, and of those who rated the city as only “somewhat important” 12% said they attend occasionally or rarely-never. This demonstrates some correlation between perceived importance of city location and frequency of attendance among non-SBL affiliated members.
- For non-SBL respondents who rated the city as only somewhat important, 52% attend almost every year, for those who rated the city as usually important 34% attended almost every year, and for those who rated the city very important 30% attended every year. The shift from “usually” to “very” is less pronounced than between “somewhat” and “usually.”
- Also of note, only a small percentage of non-SBL affiliated respondents showed a correlation between a “city is very important” rating and an “occasionally or rarely attend” response (ca. 7% of non-SBL affiliated responses). A larger number said that even though they rated the city location as “very important” they still attend “almost every year” or “most years” (ca. 11% of non-SBL affiliated respondents). Put differently, of the non-SBL affiliated respondents that rated the city location as “very important,” 46% still said that they attend the AM “almost every year” or “most years.”
- The majority of non-SBL affiliated respondents rated the city as “somewhat important” and said that they attend “almost every year” or “most years” (ca. 29% of non-SBL affiliated responses). This may also imply that the location of the city is not a deal-breaker for the core non-SBL affiliated respondents.
- Of the respondents who rated location only somewhat important, only 26% were SBL members, but of the respondents who rated location as very important, 46% were SBL members. This indicates that the results of this rating are disproportionately skewed by SBL-affiliated respondents who are not likely to attend ASOR just because it meets in a “more desirable” city, particularly if that city is separate from SBL.
- More total respondents said the city was only somewhat important (145) than usually important (129) or very important (127), calling into question the city location as a primary factor in deciding on the location of the AM. 142 total respondents said the city location was either ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ important.
- Taking only non-SBL affiliates, 68 rated the location as very important, 94 as usually important, 108 as somewhat important, 47 as rarely important, and 37 as not important. The largest group rated the conference city as somewhat important (108/354 or 31% of non-SBL affiliated respondents). In comparison, ca. 24% said the city location was rarely or never important. The data from non-SBL affiliated members does suggest the city matters to them, but for the majority the city is not the sole factor and for many it is perhaps not even the most important factor for attendance.
- For the purposes of assessing the possibility that location change could grow attendance at the AM, the SBL-affiliated members are less significant because (1) they would likely meet with SBL regardless of city location and (2) would continue to meet with SBL even if ASOR met separately (note that at least 20 rated city location as “very important” and yet still attest to meeting with ASOR almost every year, despite city ‘desirability’). Additionally, it is unlikely that SBL affiliates who are not attending ASOR regularly now would choose to attend if ASOR relocated.
- If ASOR were to split from SBL AND improve the city location (at least as perceived by the respondents), then it may pick up attendance from the “some,” “occasionally,” and “rarely” columns of non-SBL affiliated members and might see a small bump of people from the “most” column who could attend more consistently. At its widest estimate this could include 30 people who rated the city “somewhat important,” 36 people who rated the city “usually important,” and 37 people who rated the city “very important” or a total of 97 respondents. However, that advantage would not accrue every year, as the “some” category already attends with some regularity. Real gains might be made in the “occasionally” and “rarely” categories, totaling 42 respondents, though even this is unsure as that number could decline from the “very important” to the “somewhat important” categories; other factors could mitigate attendance and changing the city alone may not be enough to encourage consistent participation if the city is not rated as a “very important” consideration. This potential gain, must be weighed against the potential loss of SBL-affiliated members, should ASOR no longer meet contiguously with SBL, either ca. 201 of survey respondents (from survey question 12) or the 100 from this question. Ca. 19 of the 201 and 30 of the 130 are already say they are only rarely attending, but, survey data indicates ASOR still stands to lose more than it potentially gains.

Select Requested Input
CAP Sponsored Dig Directors' Poll

February 26, 2019

RE: Preliminary Report on CAP dig directors survey

Summary

As a member of the ASOR Ad Hoc Committee on the Annual Meeting, I was charged with polling the CAP-affiliated dig directors via email with the following two questions:

- (1) If ASOR were to modify its Annual Meeting location so that it would not always be in or near the same city as the SBL Annual Meeting, would that affect your presentation at the ASOR AM of findings and results from your excavations?
- (2) If so, in what ways?

Participants were chosen based on the current list of ASOR CAP-affiliated projects, which includes 73 field or publication projects taking place in Cyprus, Ethiopia, Georgia, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Oman, Sudan, Turkey and the West Bank. The goal for the survey was to estimate the impact on ASOR affiliated projects if ASOR no longer met at the same time/place as SBL.

Preliminary Results

As of the time of this memo, 55 out of 73 projects have responded, or ca. 75% of CAP-affiliated projects. The regional breakdown of response rates is as follows:

Cyprus:	5/7
Ethiopia:	0/1
Georgia:	1/1
Iraq:	4/5
Israel:	17/21
Jordan:	21/28
Oman:	0/1
Sudan:	1/1
Turkey:	6/7
West Bank:	1/1

Of the 55 responses, 49/55 or 89% of CAP-affiliated projects **would not be affected** if ASOR no longer meets at the same time or place as SBL and 6/55 or 11% of projects **would be affected** in some way. Only directors working in Israel listed themselves as being affected by moving the Annual Meeting, but this only affected 6 out of the 17 Israel-based projects that responded, or 35% of Israel-based participants.

Of the Israel-based projects that may be affected, 2 projects noted that they may have to split staff presentations between SBL and ASOR, 2 projects noted they would need to alternate years between the two conferences, 1 noted they would prioritize SBL over ASOR, and 2 said they would probably choose SBL rather than attend ASOR. One project stated that the change would affect the participation of their dig teams as well.

Note also that 5 directors working in Israel and Jordan who said their participation in ASOR would not be affected by the change still mentioned a preference to meet at the same time and place as SBL, if possible.

The following include answers to question 2 of the survey:

- Comments by participants who **would not affected** by the change and who were in favor of meeting at a **different time or place**:
 - More likely to come if ASOR did not conflict with AAA
 - More likely to go to ASOR if not with SBL
 - Would prefer better hotel locations
 - Would prefer cheaper and more convenient venues, locations, and times
 - Program would be stronger if took place during the spring, giving more time to process data from dig seasons
 - Location is a factor
- Comments by participants who **would not affected** by the change and who were in favor of **meeting at the same time/place** as SBL:
 - The larger research group of which we are a member could be impacted because some do attend SBL
 - Would prefer to meet with SBL; participation in future ASOR meetings likely
 - Likes the option of presenting at SBL during the same conference trip
 - Could have an impact on graduate students who want to bridge both fields but sees the value of linking with AIA as well
 - Prefer maintaining time and location ties with SBL but change would not affect participation at ASOR
- Comments by those who said their participation in ASOR **would be affected** by the change:
 - Since so many in research consortium attend SBL, would want to continue presenting there. The team may split with some going to SBL and some ASOR
 - May have to alternate years if not enough conference funding but would stay committed to both societies
 - Need to couple with SBL to justify high cost of airfare; may have to move to presenting only once every 2 years at ASOR; would prioritize SBL; would affect PI's as well as dig teams
 - Would probably not attend ASOR
 - Would have to choose, probably SBL especially if AIAR stays with SBL; time and money considerations

Overseas Centers

2018 Comments Request: Overseas Directors

Of the three Directors, the one that felt that a change in Annual Meetings would most affect their constituency was **Matt of the Albright**.

1. Because the AIAR Board meets with people who attend either or both ASOR and SBL meetings, difficulties would likely result if the Board meetings could not overlap both meetings, both in attendance and membership/recruitment on the Board. Because of economics, the Director would likely need to choose to attend whichever meeting the Board chose to meet.

2. Middle Eastern (and possibly other international) attendance would be less if scholars needed to choose between meetings.

3. "The Albright promotes cross-fertilization between texts and archaeology. Some of my proudest moments as Director are when a biblical scholar tells me that they learned so much about archaeology by being a part of our multidisciplinary group of fellows and when an archaeologist expresses a new appreciation for texts for the same reason. I hear this a lot. To me the temporal and spatial relationship between the ASOR and SBL meetings in its current configuration allows for this same cross-fertilization to happen at these meetings. What a tragedy to see that severed, forcing some to choose one conference over the other."

4. If a split occurs and SBL then beefs up its archaeology offerings, more ASOR members may choose to attend SBL.

Additional Input from Sidnie White-Crawford, affirmed by JP Dessel

Yes, any change of venue and time for the Annual Meeting will have an enormous impact on the Albright, perhaps greater than any other constituency of ASOR. The Albright board is composed of both archaeologists and text scholars; most of the academic trustees are members of both ASOR and SBL, and attend both meetings.

AIAR always holds its Board meeting and associate meetings at the Annual Meeting, on the Thursday and Friday. This enables trustees to come to ASOR on Wednesday night/Thursday morning, and then move to SBL on Saturday. Even when the two meetings have been relatively far apart (e.g., Denver, San Antonio), this has worked well for us.

I can't speak for what the current leadership would want to do if there was a change in current practice, but they would have to do something in order to accommodate both our ASOR and SBL constituencies. If ASOR went to a "nearby" city but keeping the current time, that would probably work out all right. If ASOR completely changed the location and time, then some hard choices would need to be made. I think we would probably have to have a full board discussion to figure out what the best thing was for the Albright.

For the Albright, again more than any other constituent group, the history of ASOR as founded (in Jerusalem in 1900!) as the place where the study of archaeology and text in the Holy Land is combined is extremely important to our identity. If the nature of ASOR is changing, then it may be that people who will continue to be associated with the Albright (especially the textual scholars) would drop the ASOR membership.

Barbara at ACOR:

"SBL is irrelevant to me and most of my colleagues." November dates are good (and should remain consistent), and Saturday is likely important to keep (for folks who have weekday jobs). City and hotel: "best deal" is preferred – economics is an issue for international attendees.

Lindy at CAARI:

"In terms of the archaeological view, I do not believe that Cypriot archaeologists feel a close relationship with SBL but of course there are a minority of biblical scholars who work on Cyprus who do have an interest in remaining close.... I get the sense that people would like to keep the date as it is convenient [and already 'set' in calendars] for all but do very much resent being pushed to the outskirts of cities when SBL take all the hotel spaces. So, ... take the alternating years option, keep the dates as is but move to a different city when logistics require (I don't think that being in an adjacent city helps, I think that if it is a different city then people would just prefer convenient travel choices) [the chosen city should ideally be a travel hub with lots of cheap connections]."

2018/19 Comments Request: Exhibitors, Vendors, & Booksellers

Six vendors responded to a wide email request for their views on possible ASOR meeting modifications. This request included a list of the options presented at the 2018 Members Forum and Straw Poll. Of these six respondents, five said a change would make no difference to their exhibiting at the ASOR meeting. The other, speaking somewhat as an attending ASOR member, preferred alternating years, if it came to a change. One noted that an overlap of dates with SBL is inconvenient. One noted a preference for the November dates, while another suggested meeting with AAA.

+++++

Dear Gary,

Thanks for your email. I do not really have a preference in terms of whether the meeting is with SBL or not, as our books are only relevant to mainly the ASOR audience, unless there is something I don't know (always possible). That is a fairly simple answer; the fall time is fine with us, also

Best
Randi
Randi Danforth
Publications Director
Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press
University of California Los Angeles
308 Charles E. Young Drive N
PO Box 951510
Los Angeles CA 90095
tel 310 206 9384

+++++

Dear Gary and Arlene,

It does not make any difference to the AIA on whether the ASOR Meeting is held in conjunction with SBL. The time of year that ASOR has been traditionally held (the week before Thanksgiving) is convenient for me, so I'll be happy if that remains unchanged.

Thank you for asking for my opinion—hope you have very happy holidays!

Best,
Laurel
Laurel Nilsen Sparks
Lecture & Fellowship Coordinator
Archaeological Institute of America
44 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: (857) 305-9360
Lsparks@archaeological.org, www.archaeological.org
Please note new contact information!

+++++

Hi Gary,

Thanks for your message. We had heard, of course, that there were rumblings of this nature, and one or two delegates came to ask our opinion in Denver.

I can't quite believe that there's really a big problem, to be honest. I would imagine the percentage of delegates going to both ASOR and AAR/SBL is high enough that those people want to continue to come to both, even if ASOR has to be in the suburbs of the AAR/SBL venue. That percentage has to be high enough to encourage ASOR to continue to be associated with AAR/SBL, and I would think it makes sense to continue to be a separate meeting for the sake of the non-AAR/SBL delegates.

We prefer separate meetings in the same city, even if the situation is like Denver or San Antonio. For us, that's one lot of flights and we can share the burden of set-up at ASOR and breakdown at AAR/SBL without adding extra expense.

If ASOR disassociated itself from AAR/SBL and met at a separate time, we would still exhibit, but we believe there would be fewer delegates at both meetings. If there were a disassociation from AAR/SBL and ASOR met somewhere else at the same time, we would probably still come to ASOR, but it would be a strain on our resources in terms of number of staff.

And I don't think it would be a good idea to join forces with another group (ARCE or AOS, for example), simply because ASOR would probably swamp those meetings.

I hope that's useful. I'm happy to talk it over if that would be more useful.

Good wishes for the holidays,
Ian
Ian Stevens
ISD
70 Enterprise Drive, Suite 2
Bristol, CT 06010
USA
www.isdistribution.com
Tel: +1 860 584-6546
Fax: +1 860 516-4873
Skype: is.ianstevens

+++++
Gary:

I am a professor of Archaeology, and the colleague of Randall Younker, Constance Gane and Paul Gregor, at Andrews University. I have also been for almost 20 years now the liaison for Andrews University Press at ASOR. The extent of this arrangement is that I make AU Press archaeological books available at a self-serve table at the annual meeting, otherwise I attend the meetings for the same reasons as other individual ASOR members. Hence, at least at this point AU Press has a presence at the ASOR annual meeting in connection with my participation.

My preference is checked below, but since I was at the Thursday lunch time meeting in Nov. in Denver, when the future timing of the annual meeting was discussed and made the same preference then, as below, in the straw poll, you may wish to disregard the one here since Paul Ray the AU Press liaison and Paul Ray the Andrews University Professor and individual ASOR member are one and the same. In other words I would be voting twice.

Sincerely,
Paul Ray
Associate Professor of Archaeology University
Publications Director, Institute of Archaeology, Andrews University
Associate Curator, Horn Archaeological Museum, Andrews University
Liaison, Andrews University Press

+++++
Dear Gary,

Thank you for reaching out to us for our input. I've asked my colleagues to reply to you as well, so perhaps you've gotten their response.

At any rate, this is a tricky question.

I think a large portion of the ASOR attendees also go to AAR, so splitting from them completely (separate dates or separate locations) would be the wrong decision and might affect ASOR's attendance. What *is* tough is having the two meeting dates overlap. So, I would go with moving the ASOR dates up to avoid overlap. I also vote for ASOR locating to a more central location (i.e., near the AAR/SBL venue) and having the dates separate might allow the hotels to accommodate us.

I also realize that many ASOR members also want to attend AAA, as do we (the Press). I don't think there is a solution to that conundrum, other than asking AAA to change *their* dates. Unlikely. But if AAR and ASOR could get together and plan the meetings around the AAA meeting, that would be ideal.

Thanks for letting me offer my two cents.
Best wishes for the new year.
Marsha (UChicago Press)

+++++

Dear Gary,

Thanks for your message and for taking the exhibitors' opinion into account. As far as Brill is concerned, we have a large group of people that attend AAR/SBL separately from ASOR, so we are not having to change venues as some other exhibitors do. Therefore, changing the place or date to be separate from AAR/SBL does not greatly affect our attendance at ASOR. Of course, it is nice to be in the same city as some of my colleagues from Leiden, whom I don't see on a regular basis, but it is not absolutely necessary.

With kind regards,
Katie

BRILL

Katie Chin

Acquisitions Editor Ancient Near East and Jewish Studies
2 Liberty Square, 11th Floor | Boston, MA 02109
P +1 617 263 2323 x.121 | F +1 617 263 2324



In full support of sustainable Open Access, Brill offers a variety of options to publish your work in Open Access.

For more information, please visit our Brill Open [website](#) or contact brillopen@brill.com.

Select Constituents

2108/19 Comments Requests by the Chair: “Representative” Constituents

As Chair, Arbino took the liberty of soliciting input from various people that he felt either had well thought out positions or could unofficially represent certain ASOR sub-groups. Several, but not all, responded.

A few **Israelis** were contacted and respondents noted that there were different groups of “Israelis”.

1. Many of the ASOR attendees come from the IAA. These folks are allowed to apply for travel grants every other year (people that are more senior, publish a lot, or have a really special project that the IAA wants to publicize will generally be approved), and some allow their membership to lapse in the alternating years (apparently not uncommon among the ASOR membership in general – membership is dropped when not attending). Many/most of these are not members of SBL, so a change in date or meeting partner will likely not be relevant for them.

2. University connected academics comprise the second – and smaller? – group. “Were ASOR to split from SBL you might lose a few Israeli scholars, on a meeting-to-meeting basis. No one would stay away from ASOR on principle. Rather it would be contingent upon the location of the meeting and the session(s) offered. We would only lose some of the people doing Iron Age archaeology that has a biblical research component. Prehistoric, Bronze Age and even classical period scholars and students do not go to SBL. Same for those who deal with archaeological sciences and theoretical archaeology, for the most part.” One university academic strongly argued for maintaining connection to the SBL meetings, agreeing with the suggestion to move the meeting days to avoid overlap.

Generally, most Israelis prefer to travel to a convenient but “interesting” venue city with additional attractions, and some/many stay extra days to add to their trip.

In addition, one correspondent suggested alternating the ASOR AM with the ICAANE meetings to provide more international access on an every-other-year basis. He suggested bolstering the regional ASOR meetings to fill the resulting North American void.

Because **Adventists** have played a prominent role in ASOR, the Chair decided to solicit input from some in that group (as well as having an Adventist faculty member on the AHCotAM).

Although there are a few subsets of “Adventists” (West Coast/Eastern; undergrad/graduate) all seem to agree that the connection to the SBL will always be strong for this ASOR sub-group, and that given the need to choose, many would choose the SBL meeting over the ASOR one – as a place to present archaeological findings to an audience that can benefit from them in a broader sense.

NOTE: the Chair polled himself regarding **Southern Baptists** (and their 6 seminaries, several are institutional members and they are a significant presence at the AM – see above) and found a similar result, noting that many have already moved to SBL only.

Because the issue of **moving the date to Spring** has always come up, the Chair solicited input from longstanding proponents. The response of the first is summarized below.

The argument (made very cogently) is made that we are no longer “Bible connected” as we once and traditionally were. Thus the continued connection to SBL for a small percentage of ASOR membership is not warranted (other professional groups may be more appropriate to our current membership). But since there is a small but significant group of ASOR+SBL members who continue to attend the AM, we should not conflict with the SBL meetings. This would necessitate – for those who can only afford one meeting a semester – a move to spring semester. April is the best month (even if there would need to be yearly adjustments to avoid conflict with mobile religious holidays) considering weather, the possibility for staff meetings prior to upcoming field seasons, and allowing for a Spring ASOR Board meeting. It may also allow for a joint meeting with AOS, ARCE, etc. (meeting alone is good too). In addition, spring allows for the results of the previous summer to be better prepared for presentation. Finally, this move may open up “smaller towns and cities” as venues, rather than expensive larger ones.

The Chair also requested input from one who has been vocal regarding the **possibility of separating**. this person communicated the following upon weighing the considerations in a well-argued missive:

Start academic sessions on Wed morning, keeping the plenary session on Wed evening and end on Friday evening. Would this be more agreeable to SBL? In this way, we might be able to be in a downtown hotel and benefit from access to restaurants, stores and museums and all our current book exhibitors would continue to be at our meeting. Saturday could be reserved for those who want to visit local museums and art galleries or attend SBL (in this way ASOR would free up a large number of hotel and meeting rooms for SBL). PS—To meet the needs of many of our non-biblical members, we might encourage regional meetings to be more archaeology related—include visits to museums and universities where there are archaeological collections and technological advances being carried on. This may mean not meeting with the local SBL group, since their interests seem to dominate (I may not be up to date on this assessment). Hope these reflections are useful.

The Chair also asked the **current President of the AIA** to weigh in.

Very detailed responses were sent in. The Chair will present here bullet points:

- No discussions have been made with AIA about joining with them
- The AIA/SCS outcome should prove instructive for ASOR – cross-talk is healthy
- Back to back meetings is costly and prolonged; many can only afford 1-2 professional meetings a year, especially grad students and junior colleagues

- SBL's Placement Services is valuable to ASOR members who teach in Departments of Religion and Biblical Studies; even if it has become less of a factor due to the internet (e.g. conducting preliminary interviews via Skype)
- "... anyone working outside of Biblical Archaeology (e.g. paleobotany, prehistory, whatever) attends the relevant professional meetings where there are job markets (e.g. AAA, etc.)."
- "It is in our best interest – and that of the future of the field – to demonstrate archaeology's relevance and importance to [SBL]. They are the ones who formulate job descriptions and are in control of hiring new faculty. We want them to be aware of the value of including archaeology in their department's curriculum and having faculty who can offer courses in archaeology. By separating from SBL, ASOR effectively lowered archaeology's profile in the context of Religious and Biblical Studies, removing itself from the picture."
- ASOR's insistence on having its own hotel may be a "foolish decision" with a "disappointing outcome".
- "I believe it is in the best interests of a majority of ASOR's members, and the future of the field in general, to rejoin SBL. I urge ASOR to find a way to make this happen."

Finally, it should be noted that some respondents (international and North American) were particularly keen to discuss **the host city** – especially regarding attractions, restaurants, and the hotel being downtown (where the action is).

Additional ASOR Leadership Input

CCC Meeting Discussion Notes (Summarized from Ackerman notes, 12/18)

At their December 2018 meeting, the **ASOR CCC** discussed the issue.

Comments ranged from those excited that an expansion of the soul of ASOR could be made by a split to those whose students move between the two meetings and thus would be forced to choose. It was noted that the larger donors to ASOR tended to be "Bible connected" [the Chair has not verified this, but it seems logical, given that older members tend to be more well off and older members tend to be long-term members thus statistically more likely to be "Bible connected"]. Issues related to the host city's attractions (specifically "colleges" and "museums") were noted as important. Days of the week were also discussed with notice that starting on Tuesday may be problematic and that a Thursday- Sunday slot could be cheaper. One comment expressed the idea that a split from SBL would mean a gain in membership from MESA and AAA [the mechanics of this were not explained, but likely owing to the similar dates, assuming ASOR moves its dates?]. Finally, the idea was floated regarding an experimental period – splitting for a year or two and evaluating. This may not be feasible given some modification options and the needs of those signing the hotels.

It should be noted by the Chair here: As recorded, some responses indicated that membership and meeting data were not always clearly understood by members of the CCC (something the Chair has found to be much too common among ASOR membership he has had contact with).

Executive Committee Discussion Notes (2/19)

1. The Future of the Annual Meeting: Time and Place (with Gary Arbino, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Future of the Annual Meeting) (Knoblach minutes, edited for confidentiality)

- (10:17 conversation begins)
- Susan: Strategic plan 2016-2020 indicated we need an ad hoc committee to plan the future of the meeting—has to do with growth of combined SBL and AAR, and cities where these organizations meet that provide only limited options for ASOR to meet in the same city.

- Committee was formed in 2016, Gary was asked to chair.
- 2019 (San Diego) and 2020 (Boston) we are okay, but 2021 (San Antonio) is more urgent because ASOR may have no options at all, or only the option of a Marriot resort outside of town (and further outside of town than the resort we used in 2016). This is not a good option for ASOR
- Gary: Our committee is grateful to the office staff especially Cynthia for all of their help—timely and well done.
- Explained his report:
 - most information in the report is anecdotal—please be aware that if there was some slam-dunk bunch of data, the committee would have supplied it—but it doesn't exist.
 - The last section the report is very anecdotal. Not casual conversations, but anecdotal.
 - The committee has not done any deliberations on this data, so he can't speak to what the committee is thinking.
- Gary's task is to take input from EC and make it a data stream for the committee.
- Susan: in terms of timeline, we need to have a report ready for the April board meeting because we will need to make decision about San Antonio in April, and we need a report that from Gary's committee that outlines various options. Susan does not want the committee to deliver a report with an up-or-down decision.
- Ed: in reading the report he was a bit frustrated by nature of the data, and thanks Gary and the committee for getting the kind of information they provided—a lot of effort went into the report, frustrating, but ultimately impressive. It's a good starting point. Both vexing and pressing.
- Tim: what about the process? There is a certain pressing nature of this—what exactly will the committee bring to the Board in April?
- Susan: the final report is due in April, she sees it as a model of a search committee—where the ad hoc committee will give the board some (ranked) recommendations, but options, not a yes or no solution. This is not an easy issue.
- Eric suggested it makes more sense to have a stronger recommendation (not several)
- Tim: we want to “guide” the committee—this data reflects the diversity of the membership. Very delicate process—guide but not direct. Are we hoping we'll walk into April meetings with a lot of options and hope the board will reach a consensus?
- Susan: we are not looking for a long list of recommendations. We are trying to avoid a situation with one recommendation that the board votes up or down. Rather the board have 2-3 options to weigh and decide among.
- Susan: in terms of process, she invited Gary to present interim report, Gary is here to listen to what EC has to say. There are strong opinions on EC, Gary needs to hear them.
- Richard: Gary will take the info from the EC, then EC will meet before the April Board meeting
- Sharon: follow up on Tim's question: what do we want to do today? Don't want to direct, but communicate to the committee what our very serious concerns are
- Gary: Since the board has to make some decision, the committee's job is to provide the information to help the board make a decision. There are not that many main options. The straw poll committee are really the only main options. Here today to hear the views and what we should do with that.
- Sharon: do we break from the SBL or do we not?
- Eric: big issues need to get aired now.
- Eric: Three main points: 1. history of ASOR; 2. problem of Albright, 3. what would happen to our Israeli populations? Re Point 1: if we break totally from SBL, this would be a break from our storied history and an affront to many people including Eric—not sustainable for the future.
- Eric: Let us remember ASOR had a predecessor organization for 20 years—rooted around the Southern Levant and in Jerusalem. It was biblical archaeology. We have moved beyond it—but that historical core is integral to our future and our success. Let us remember that Jim Strange embraced the term Biblical Archaeology.
- Re Point 2. The Albright has given us a serious ultimatum: if we don't meet with SBL, they will leave us and go to SBL. We lost ACOR's meeting with us [NOTE: ACOR still meets with ASOR in

the fall, but not in the spring.]. This is a fight we do not need to have with the Albright. It would be self-defeating and a serious blow to the unity we have been building on for half a century

- Re Point 3. we have 50-60 Israelis coming every year—prehistory to museology—very top-notch scholars. To lose this block -- who would go to SBL -- would be problematic.
- Sharon: not recommending that we split, but would like the conversation to consider how we best serve the whole ASOR constituency. We still have a large part of our constituency that would be hurt. Would like a compromise of some sort. There is a large contingent that feels it needs to meet with SBL—can't forget about them.
- Tim: There is a “but” here—the issue of venue. We are not connected with SBL—we split a long, long time ago. We made a commitment that we would hold our meetings in the same place and the same week as SBL. The issue that is driving it right now is more pragmatic—we are not meeting with SBL. The notion of becoming reaffiliated with SBL is crazy—they do not play ball.
- Possibility of moving the days? Creatively to find the same venue same week policy work.
- Gary: interject some data: the report has the actual numbers. 15-20% attendees are also members of SBL—(2017).
- Susan: one piece of data—how depressed our attendance was in Denver this year. This means also depressed revenue.
- Jane: Is this because it was in Denver, or because it was out of downtown?
- Ed: Were SBL's number down in Denver?
- Andy: passing around some data that addresses meeting attendance of different learned societies; the data show that locations matter—bad cities mean people don't attend.
- ASOR met in Napa Valley in 1997, and this conversation has been going on for years, people are very passionate about this.
- Same conversations come up with SBL. ASOR can't find hotels in adjacent locations to SBL. We have not succeeded in a couple of years. Our compromise has a cost. In Boston, our meeting Wed to Sat costs \$10 a night more for each attendee, and we'll get a lower hotel rate still (we'd save \$30-40 per night) if we agreed to a different time still. So, the result is that 85% of our attendees are paying a premium for the minority group
- 200 that attended in Boston did not renew their membership or attend Denver—cost us 30K in revenues in membership fees, plus annual meeting registrations, and we lost 50K in revenues by going to Denver.
- Eric: There is some cheating in some circles—Finkelstein festschrift, for example. Members from SBL coming to ASOR and going to selective sessions and receptions and not registering.
- Andy: So do we ask our members to pay more for this?
- Joe: it's important to understand why we went to Napa. ASOR went to Napa because it was adjacent to SF, which is where SBL was meeting. For the first time in Napa ASOR learned who its membership was, because registration was separate from SBL for the first time. About 350 people registered for ASOR's independent meeting in Napa. It was a very successful meeting all around.
- Andy: recounts examples when SBL was able to help: when we met in San Diego in 2014, we had not been able to find hotels. Andy called John Kutsko, and he said try the San Diego Westin and Renaissance—that's where we met.
- In 2019 John recommended the Omni and Wyndham in San Antonio in 2021—ASOR has contacted the hotels several times in the past couple of months, but the hotels have declined to give a bid.
- We could go to Experient and ask them to book the hotels for us. We tried it in New Orleans in 2009. Experient got a 10% commission, but ASOR did not really get much out of it.
- Tim: up until 2008 it was a seller's market. In a tough position. After the economy—it became a buyer's market.
- Andy: it has been suggested that we ask SBL to block hotels for us. In such a case we would lose money (35K in Denver, 50K in Boston) because commissions, rebates, etc. would have gone to Experient.

- Eric: Experient is the bad guy—
- Tim: It's business
- Gary: asks a point of clarification: in 1996—there was a significant conversation about not wanting to meet with Bible people. Is that ideology still in effect today?
- Tim: there is a subtle distinction; you might hear those kinds of comments, but what drove those conversations was back then you had to become an SBL member to attend ASOR, so it was eating at a lot of colleagues. They migrated to other conferences. Still have that mix—but don't have to go through SBL to get to ASOR.
- Tim: common theme in 2007 (I think) was membership wanted control over its own meetings—create our own sense of identity. We were losing that when we got too close to SBL or letting SBL organize our meeting. The result was that ASOR members wanted their own meeting.
- Susan: the experiment we have not run (and SBL has pushed us to run) is to shift meeting back a day. We'd have to clear out of hotels by late Friday.
- Andy: has asked hotels to look at starting on earlier days. The only hotel that has said they can work with ASOR is the Marriot in San Antonio. \$199/night. Other ones have said they have sleeping rooms but no meeting space.
- Jane: if we meet in the middle in the middle of the week—it's very hard on academics and the teaching schedule.
- Susan: For San Antonio, the other viable bid is for ASOR to meet in Houston instead of outside of San Antonio at a resort.
- Andy: the only option for ASOR in San Antonio is the JW Marriot. Another option is places where people get a nonstop flight (Atlanta., Chicago). 2022 (Denver) and 2023 (San Antonio) are going to be challenging as well. Once we come back to 2024- San Diego and Boston will be doable. And Denver in 2026 and San Antonio in 2029 will probably be doable, assuming new hotels will be built.
- Ann-Marie: most reasonable answer is to consider the same city when possible, adjacent/easily accessible city when the same city is not possible (Denver, San Antonio).
- Andy: we are guaranteeing \$450-500K, hotels don't waive the penalties if we don't meet our obligations.
- Eric: make sure the Albright weighs in
- Ann-Marie: make sure all schools have a say here—not just the Albright.
- Andy: by his account, the biggest fights happened when people were not included in the conversations, so make sure everyone is included as early as possible. (It is good that Sidnie W. Crawford from the Albright board is on Gary's committee.)
- Tim: the flexibility model is more and more compelling—off years find an awesome place.
- Gary: Online poll will be coming next week, asks all kinds of demographics and other carefully crafted questions. Last two issues of News@ASOR Gary has written things saying this poll is coming.
- Results of poll will (presumably) reveal split within the organization.
- Susan: San Antonio in 2021 is our first problem. Aim for Houston (4 hours one way, ASOR could provide a bus?)
- Andy: In Denver ASOR provided a free bus to downtown, very few people used it. We have not shopped other cities with direct flights to San Antonio. Also, the state of California will not reimburse state employee trips to Texas because of gun laws and bathroom bills.
- Is it easier to get to San Antonio from Houston or from Chicago?
- Richard: what about Austin?
- Andy: has a bid from the Marriot downtown. The current bid \$239/night. It may stay there, may come down.
- Susan: shifting the meeting time to the spring is very difficult because of holidays that shift. Members like firm dates.

- Gary: currently we can't meet in San Antonio when SBL is there. Gary's committee will make a recommendation
- Susan: but the committee's real task is to recommend options for a long term solution.
- Gary: the committee will do both.

Previous Reports to ASOR Leadership

A Preliminary Report was presented to the Executive Committee (2/19) at their February Meeting. Because much of the material in that Report is either the same as that in this document, or it has been superseded, the Report will not be reproduced here.

COMMENTS FROM THE 2019 MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

Comments about the DATES of the Meeting (151 Comments)

Thanksgiving is hard.

concordance with SBL should not be an issue at all--not in this day and age!

My university will pay if I can attend both at the same time. If ASOR shifts from SBL, then I probably won't be able to attend.

i would prefer to avoid November 21 simply because it's my spouse's birthday!

In my mind the only viable option is joining back up. I do not attend ASOR precisely because attending both conferences would require missing a week of work. I don't make proposals to present because if I get accepted and they put me on the schedule on Thursday morning, then I'd have to skip SBL. Most scholars do not teach at Research 1 universities where it may be acceptable to miss an entire week of classes.

By end of April and beginning of May we are already working on site in Jordan so an ASOR meeting in the states during that time would be impossible for us. You would also be getting into other schools' graduation time periods.

the week before Easter/Passover would NOT be good

I cannot say whether a change in date would fit my schedule better; it all depends on the other specific dates proposed.

Either rejoin SBL or keep the current arrangement.

My answers above are primarily based on conflicts with and the type of arrangements for other professional society meetings.

Airfare is often SO EXPENSIVE the weekend before Thanksgiving. It is difficult for those of us who are junior scholars/on short term contracts/do not have access to institutional research funds.

I will attend whenever it is. My only problem with the week before Thanksgiving is that I often find my airfare home on Sunday much higher than it would be if the meeting were not so close to a holiday. I live in Canada, so though I'm American, the holiday does not matter to me much for scheduling - I still have to work.

Coordinate with SBL

The current dates work very well.

I suspect the fieldwork of many ASOR members is done in arid countries and therefore August/September through March/April are probably not as convenient. Moreover, a number of other large conferences are scheduled more or less during this timeframe, such as the AIA (January), AAA

(November), and EAA (May) whereby it would not perhaps be a bad idea either to team up with another annual meeting (not SBL) or organize ASOR's annual meeting over the summer time (when it's too hot to work in the NE and most universities break (perhaps July?))

Picking low season dates for flying makes it less expensive and more feasible.

Having the ASOR and SBL meetings in the same time frame and location will allow people to kill birds with one stone. This will be the most practical time wise and expense wise.

Don't overlap with other major meetings which claim many ASOR members jointly unless in same city (e.g., CAA, AAA or SAA).

Keep the week before Thanksgiving.

As a second choice of month, April would seem good.

The choice of month and city has a lot to do with weather. If it were in January I think more would go to San Diego or New Orleans than Duluth or Chicago. Just a thought.

What if it followed the annual AIA meeting?

The weather in November is mild and it's already summer where I live

If we don't reconcile with SBL, ASOR should join with CBA instead.

Yes. AIA/SCS early January

AIA/SCS meets in January, so I would encourage ASOR to stay away from winter season so to not 'compete'.

I don't like missing a day of SBL. I am effectively wasting a day of fees, and missing out on one or other conference.

SBL is only of interest to a minority of ASOR members. It should not dictate our times or places.

There are so many conflicts with the current date that it limits my ability to go to another conference. I would prefer to go to AAAs as well as ASOR, whenever possible.

The only two other feasible times would seem to be Spring Break and right after the end of the Spring Semester. It just seems easier to have the meeting at the same time as SBL or at completely different season.

Airfare and hotel rates are high around Thanksgiving, making it a financial burden for many of us so we don't come every year.

Winter break is a lot easier for those of us who must juggle teaching schedules

A large majority of ASOR participants come from abroad and the dates are in the middle of the semester, making it hard on international students to attend. The dates proximity to Thanksgiving, is irrelevant.

Stating in a question "knowing that it NOT possible to alternate seasons" takes all the merit out of the following answers, one feels as if you know it can't be changed. So why bother asking?

Some of the European (and Israeli) visitors participate at ASOR and SBL. It will not be possible to come twice a year to USA. We are in the middle of the semester and cannot stay longer outside of university.

It's really hard to travel the week before thanksgiving

Prefer current time, or one weekend earlier, but late Oct would be ok

Actually, Summer would suit me best

no other comments

In most years, I cannot attend an additional meeting other than SBL, and can only participate in ASOR if it is held together with the SBL program units. I prefer overlapping programs, and therefore would be comfortable saving money by having SBL handle the hotel and meeting space.

The problem is teaching, especially for someone like me who would come from Canada (different Thanksgiving dates). I already miss as much teaching as I possibly can, which is why overlapping completely with SBL would be much more feasible. Of course, the downside is it means that people would be pulled in many more directions while at the meeting.

Stay with the current schedule

Avoid BANE (Jan), SAA (March-April), and ICAANE (every other year, April-June)

Meeting every year before Thanksgiving makes it easier to remember. I'd prefer to start on Thursday or Friday so we could get better hotel rates and use more of the weekend to avoid missing teaching and work.

I have never attended SBL so it makes no difference to me whether they meet together or not.

Has ASOR considered joining up with AIA?

I often can't come as currently scheduled.

For purposes of travel, keep the meeting away from the winter months (although even in November, we had a snow/ice related delay leaving Denver this fall that resulted in missed flights and forced overnight stay on the way home from the meeting). I'd be reluctant to risk conference travel in December, January, February or early March.

Coming across the ocean twice a year might not work for me - so, I prefer to have SBL and ASOR in one trip.

Could we be a subgroup of SBL every other year and do our own thing alternating years?

As archaeologists, we need to have the meeting long enough before the summer dig season for us to get together with colleagues and make plans. Early fall would be best for that. It also provides enough time to get an excavation report ready. However, having it immediately prior to the SBL meetings would enable our book sellers to work out efficient displays at the ASOR meetings. If not, they might not even come. So a day or two earlier than the past dates would give us the best book displays.

Bad weather in cold cities makes Dec-Mar risky; April conflicts with SAA + ARCE.

Closer ties with the AIA

Prefer as-is, give or take a day

If we stay with SBL, try to arrange a discount for attending the two meetings

There are as many ASOR members who have commitments with other organizations, like AIA or SAA, as with SBL. The connection is historic but no longer crucial. AIA is a logical partner, since both study archaeology in overlapping regions and both are small conferences. I think trying to create a joint meeting between the two, either in our time frame or theirs, would be valuable.

For me, who lives in the Philippines and my budget is limited to go to US regularly, it's better to keep the meetings closer in time and space with the SBL's

Avoid dates of Jewish holidays

Since I travel from Europe I would have to choose between ASOR and SBL if the meetings were scheduled at very different times or locations.

As a European archaeologist, the main issue is to keep the ASOR AM meeting away from September when the larger EAA meeting takes place.

Moving meeting date 1-2 weeks earlier would make it much easier to book flights than overlapping with Thanksgiving travel season

Something needs to change!

Yes, American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting

I do not attend SBL, so I am flexible and accept separation

Winter meetings of ASOR and AIA have been seriously disrupted in the past by weather. While we may get better rates, it's a stupid gamble. Also, meeting in San Antonio the week they dredge the riverwalk was a big fail. We all want to save money, but not be penny wise and pound foolish-- if we're spending money to go somewhere, it should be worth it (i.e., a Denver hotel surrounded by highways in the middle of winter is not worth it).

I strongly believe that, for the intellectual health and relevance of ASOR, we should meet jointly or concurrently with the other professional society that has a large number of archaeologists and epigraphers who specialize in the ancient Mediterranean and Near East, i.e., the Archaeological Institute of America, which meets in early January. ASOR and AIA are highly complementary and in most

universities there are strong links between these two groups of scholars, who are either in the same department or are in closely cooperating departments (Classics, Near/Middle Eastern Studies, and Religious Studies). Insofar as ASOR no longer primarily represents biblical scholars who also do (or dabble in) field archaeology, and is no longer restricted to the Southern Levant, it should no longer meet with SBL but with a complementary archaeological society relevant to Near Eastern archaeology. Please don't meet in winter, esp if in north of USA. Flight schedules are frequently interrupted by bad weather

If you are going to break with SBL, then just break completely. Otherwise, I think it's best to keep the meeting functioning in a way to support members who attend both meetings.

Do not place the meeting in the dead of winter.

Meeting around the winter holidays, like AIA, is not a good option in my opinion.

This task is a very difficult one and I commend you for trying to tackle it!

ASOR conflicts with AAA, so ASOR preferences SBL over anthropology. And anthropology is where many people must go for job talks/interviews, so they cannot come to ASOR.

I like it as it is, I attend sbl after asor, thats the best deal for me

Should be over a long weekend so it does not conflict with existing school schedules and doesn't require loosing lecture days like our current system. There are two such holidays in winter one in Jan. and the other in Feb.

Thanksgiving travel rush is becoming more and more concentrated on the weekend before (not waiting until Wednesday as used to be the case). I think this means that return fares are higher for the Friday/Saturday of the weekend before. Sunday may be the best travel date.

Choose those dates that best fit the academic schedules so more can attend without having to cover courses or meetings to participate. Months that do not conflict with common event like opening of school, end of terms; dates that would fit well with various schedules.

It's hard to find the perfect date since everyone has demands on his or her schedule. Knowing the month, let's you plan as best as possible

Because my university does not pay for my meeting, holding the meeting joint with SBL makes it more feasible for me to attend.

Early in the week works best for me.

A big issue is limited funding and while hotels cost, travel can be a big issue, considerably more than a shared hotel room.

currently, ASOR conflicts with both the Amer Anthro Assoc and ME Studies Assoc annual meetings.

Free us from the SBL shackles! I will change everything - dates, days of the week, season - if it means that ASOR can be an independent Near Eastern archaeology conference that meets in a good venue.

The overlap day does not work due to distance between ASOR and SBL hotels.

climate and weather; how many members are attending AIA: do we steer clear of its annual meeting date?

They always overlap with American Anthropological Association's annual meeting, which is usually on the opposite coast. That is a problem for some. Could it be moved to an earlier week in November.

The dates of the ASOR conference consistently fall on the same dates as the AAA conference, which hosts archaeological papers and presenters. I am constantly having to make hard decisions about which conference to choose to attend. I tried doing both one year...I nearly came undone.

I do not want to compete with SAA (April). Fall/winter competes with AIA and AAA, but I really do not attend either of those.

May-July would conflict with fieldwork; Dec-Feb difficult for travel due to weather

Keep the schedule we have

I have only attended 2 ASOR meetings since ASOR separated its times from SBL. I cannot afford to go to both meetings when I must travel a long distance. I live in Alabama. The two ASOR meetings I attended

were both in Atlanta. I was able to use what I paid in Airfare to attend ASOR. If they are not held with the SBL I cannot afford to attend, and will not except those years it is within driving distance for me. Some consideration of ICAANE's schedule is warranted should a move to spring occur. prefer to travel before or after snow season

Comments about the DAYS of the Meeting (103 comments)

If there was more overlap with SBL, I would be more likely to attend.

Ideally it would be closer with SBL for me.

I like the general time frame, but moving it up a few days will drastically change the cost of travel for everyone as flight prices go up close to thanksgiving.

Wednesday thru Saturday allow me to miss fewer class lecture days.

These questions are hard to answer; I am not sure what days to choose unless you mean rejoining SBL as an option.

Wednesday start is difficult for teaching schedules, as it generally requires missing at least two (if not three) full days of the week.

Avoid overlap with SBL if possible

Sabbath observance should be taken into consideration.

I always find it convenient to have a few days after the meeting to decompress (e.g. get rid of my jetlag) and so just before the weekend would actually be good. However, it's not a deal-breaker for me.

Changing the dates so that the conference would take place entirely during the week would make it less likely for anyone who teaches to be able to attend

Please don't increase the number of week days given to the conference. It's hard for those of us at teaching institutions to give up any more class time.

As long as I can attend the presentations given in both groups, I am ok.

Weds thru Sat the week before Thanksgiving works the best for teaching schedules

Having an all weekday meeting may work better in terms of flights, as Sunday flights tend to be crowded with business travelers, and more expensive. Although, it may be harder for presents with young children coming along.

I think it has to start on Wednesday evening or later, otherwise folks will have to cancel more classes to make it to the meeting, which can be difficult for non-tenured faculty and grad students to negotiate.

Saturday meetings make it difficult for Sabbath observers.

Can't handle an all weekday meeting. Half weekdays and half weekends is best avoid regional SBL & end of school semesters.

The "great divorce" has made it impossible for me to attend the annual meeting.

Its fine.

I almost put Monday-Thursday simply so people could have a day to rest in between the two meetings.

This might be one of the reasons to consider moving it to a different season, conference fatigue.

Saturday means observant Jews/Adventists can't lecture. It causes a huge bias in the meeting (some sessions are almost permanently pushed to the last day, when a third of the audience has left). The

present structure encourages chairs to request free-from-Saturday slots on religious grounds; but then many of the sessions' lecturers and the same chairs travel (not by walking) on Saturday miles from the ASOR suburb to the SBL central hotel. It is not their fault but the bad timing of the meeting that includes a Saturday.

Shifting by one day seems to be the simplest solution to a very complex problem

Can't miss more weekdays, running it through Sunday means missing sessions to get home

The days of the meeting should be structured to so that attendees do not need to travel on peak travel days of Friday and Sunday. The Annual Meeting should start on a Thursday or Saturday night, with

attendees traveling home on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday. This will allow members to find more affordable and flexible travel options.

No overlap with SBL is necessary if we remain somehow tied to their time/location. Especially as ASOR has expanded the regions covered by sessions (South Caucasian, Central Asia, Arabia, etc) a problem arose where all the Levant sessions got preference for Thurs-Fri and all of the "other region" and anthropological sessions got crammed on Sat so that I and other like-minded attendees only got to see 1/3 of the papers we'd have liked to have seen. ASOR has worked on this problem and recent meetings improved in this regard, but I don't want to go back to that problem. I strongly feel that a reformatted meeting needs to be on days where every session (including all Levant/Israel/Biblical sessions) has an equal chance of being scheduled on every day.

I usually can't attend the Plenary session because I teach Thursday mornings and can't get to the host city until that evening. If the Plenary session were on Thurs. I would miss fewer classes and be able to make it.

Keeping the days pretty consistent in relation to Thanksgiving helps people remember when the ASOR meeting is each year.

Don't have it extend over more than two weekdays because I can't miss that many teaching days.

I don't like the Saturday overlap with SBL.

Again, I want to emphasize that we provide efficient times for the book sellers. In fact, having it a day or two early would mean they wouldn't have to move their displays away from our conference to SBL as early as they often do.

It's best to not overlap with SBL - the Wed AM through Friday PM would be great

Having the meeting during the week, i.e. Mon-Thu would mean cancelling/rescheduling a week's worth of classes and would make it impossible for teaching faculty to attend the meeting.

The current dates overlap with other meetings that ASOR members might be involved with-- Am Anthro Assn, Middle East Studies Assn-- so to move from our current dates would be useful to some of us, like me.

Pushing the meetings earlier in the week (e.g., Tuesday) makes it difficult for those of us who teach to take off additional classes.

This would make it easier to attend both ASOR and SBL, and probably also ease the hotel problem for ASOR.

Try keeping it away from weekends. Our lives are more than just work. Mon to Thu gives others outside North America the possibility to attend without sacrificing too much family time.

It would help me personally to move closer to Thanksgiving (like how SBL is) because it's the only time I return to the US, which might be relevant for other American scholars based abroad? But that is probably still a minority

The Friday, Saturday, and Sunday distribution of various sabbath / worship times offers a perennial scheduling challenge. Avoiding especially Friday and Saturday (for Jewish and Seventh-Day Adventist colleagues) would give the program committee a much easier job.

Shifting entirely to weekdays will limit and possibly preclude attendance for most who are teaching.

To be clear, I would continue to come to the meetings if the dates shifted, but it is likely that to attend the whole conference I would have to cancel additional days of class, and so I would probably arrive late to the meetings.

Changing the days makes a difference depending on when the days change. For example, it likely won't affect my attendance if they change to a weekend, but I won't be able to attend if I miss more weekdays due to my teaching schedule.

All scenarios have pros and cons in my opinion

The suggestion that ASOR meet earlier in the week (same city as SBL) in order to avoid overlap with SBL would work for me, but for most people it will not because they must then lose an entire week of teaching.

Changing days may make it more difficult for me to attend parts of the annual meeting, but I would still try to come. I teach up to 4 classes at a time in the fall semester, so my teaching schedule limits flexibility--a weekend meeting is necessary.

The answer to "less or more likely to depend" depends on the date chosen: it is important to me to NOT have to take much time away from my classes.

See final comments

Matching ASOR + SBL schedule makes it more possible for me to attend.

Doing ASOR-SBL back to back is already exhausting and expensive (resulting in up to 6 straight days of conferencing), so moving ASOR up one day would make me less likely to attend it or less likely to attend as much of it.

Current arrangement fits best with my teaching, which pushes lectures to the start of the week and reserves later days in the week for sections. It is therefore easier to get away to the meetings in its current arrangement.

The way it is now is fine, and I'm used to it.

See comment above; only problem is the SBL overlap day does not work.

annual meeting dates coincide with my school's t-day break enabling attendance without cancellation of classes--true for many?

Being someone who is employed full-time Monday through Friday, I hope that ASOR will continue to at least overlap one weekend day.

One week earlier in November would be better for me

If changed to only weekdays, I wouldn't be able to take that much time off teaching and would be less likely to attend if have to miss conference days

Keep the schedule we have

The current days make it easier for me to attend as a college student where I am not missing as many days of school. Also, it allows for opportunities for me to observe religious worship functions on Sundays, so the current days are nice.

Any more requirement to take another day off from classes to attend will likely impact overall attendance, and certainly limit my own ability to attend as much of the meeting.

current days mean missing fewer teaching days

Having the meeting move earlier in the week would mean more difficulties for covering classes etc. going into Sunday likely would cut into Thanksgiving

Many of my teaching responsibilities occupy Mon-Thur, and this is probably true of many other attendees. This means that, depending on travel distance, ASOR generally requires me to make arrangements for only two days of my normal teaching schedule. At the same time, I usually have Sunday available to return home and recover before starting back at work. I like this arrangement. Even though pushing the days to Thur-Sun would be better for my teaching schedule, I'd fear that so many people would be traveling on Sunday that any sessions/papers held that day would be drastically under-attended. Being scheduled on that day would be undesirable. At least having the Sunday to travel home I know that most people will still be at the meeting on Saturday.

Sometimes the AAA annual meeting

It's hard to get out of an entire week of teaching at many institutions. Having the meeting start before Wednesday night would require canceling more classes (both sessions of a Tuesday-Thursday class would likely have to be canceled, for example) and make it more difficult for many people to attend.

Moving the meeting earlier in the week (e.g. Tues-Fri or Mon-Thurs) makes attendance more difficult for those of us who teach, particularly contingent folks like myself.

I attend SBL, so for me it is a question of whether i could stay in the same hotel and just come earlier. I have no connection to SBL and since ASOR has grown in geographic scope, there are many of us who have nothing to do with the organization.

I would depend on the days selected, but missing 1.5 of the work week is okay, missing the entire work week is not possible.

Flight costs vary by day of the week. This matters, especially getting close to Thanksgiving.

The biggest issue is Friday night/Saturday taking additional days off from teaching makes it more difficult to attend

Thu-Sun is not a bad second option, but would risk attendance to Sun sessions.

If you had it earlier in the week, then if you did not plan on attending SBL, you could go home and rest the weekend, or if you planned on attending the SBL, then you could head over to there.

The choice of days may be related to the month when the meeting is held. If this is after the end of teaching, weekdays can be preferred over weekends.

Tuesday to Friday would work.

The last session is currently very unfavorable, because there are few people still at the meeting.

The Saturday sessions leave out people who keep the Sabbath

Aboid AAA -Anthropology meetings

They should coincide with the SBL days.

Weekend rates are more expensive

Too many questions if you want people to finish this.

Whatever can be done to allow SBL membership to attend only strengthens both groups.

I don't attend meetings on Saturdays, so a day shift would be helpful for me.

Comments about the HOST CITY or HOTEL (84 comments)

Eliminate Denver, opt for smaller manageable cities (New Orleans, Austin, San Antonio).

I'm a swimmer so like a hotel with a pool you can swim laps in

Choosing a hotel that is easy to get to from the airport and is near to the "downtown" of the city, or places where food can be obtained is extremely important. The location for the ASOR 2018 in Denver for example (and for that matter ASOR Boston, ASOR Atlanta) on the outskirts of the city, or substantial distance away from the airport and other venues of affordable accommodation, makes it much less likely that I will want to attend. For graduate students, junior scholars etc. the previous locations have been frankly ridiculous, and do not inspire a great confidence in the conference. ASOR ought to be its own entity and not be constrained by or following SBL in any fashion.

Our last hotel venue in Denver wasn't close to anything and made eating at the hotel too expensive for student participants.

different/cheaper cities than SBL picks

opportunity to visit archaeological or anthropology museum

the best combo I could ask for would group ASOR with the AAAs (American Anthropological Association) as opposed to SBL.

The "suburban" locations (Denver, Atlanta, for example) are difficult and sometimes quite expensive for those of us without cars, whether or not we are staying at the conference hotel.

Make it downtown, not out in the countryside!

I thought the resort where we stayed in San Antonio was really nice. While there was a wedding going on, it was otherwise a great place to have ASOR, even though we were in a different part of town than AAR / SBL.

I think the current lineup for host cities is fine. Speaking from my own point of view, I hardly stay in conference hotels because I generally find them overpriced with almost anything. It's a little bit like going to a wedding; the moment you say it's for a wedding, prices are tripled and they bring out the most expensive bottle of champagne on the menu. I've been going and staying at AirBnBs and it was great-- I got to see some of the cities, dine locally, interact with the locals, and have a nice morning walk to get to the venue. In other words, I don't really care about the venue being at a hotel, and in fact, I find it makes the event a little bland.

The location of the ASOR meetings in the middle of nowhere in San Antonio and Denver were not good. This should be avoided in the future we were basically trapped at the hotel and it's few amenities or anything

The hotel's willingness to provide inexpensive to-go meal options during the conference day is much appreciated.

We should not be trapped at a remote hotel for 4-5 days.

Avoiding Boston for it's awful weather in fall, and it's expensive hotels, seems smart. Also Atlanta is awful due to leaving public transportation.

No, but thank you for all of the work you are putting into this.

Hub cities that are easy to get to are ideal. And conference hotels near cheaper hotel options are best for students attending the annual meeting, as opposed to the last San Antonio meeting that was far from hotels, restaurants, etc.

I think there are plenty of good city locations that have not been chosen in the past, and ASOR should branch out rather than rotating the same six or seven locations.

International hubs are significantly cheaper and easier for international scholars.

In past years the cost of the hotel comes at the expense of students and early career scholars, who cannot afford rooms at the ASOR hotel or hotels in the region. The hotel should be located in an area that can be reached with public transportation or near alternative cost-affordable housing options. I enjoy the variety of the host city, moving to a system where we attend the same city on a cycle, most likely means I will attend less often and only attend to the city/cities near me.

The walking distance is the thing, not the "nightlife"- by marrying the two together you create a bias against choosing this option. very few people come to ASOR for the nightlife, but the walking distance is important and beneficial and should not be biased in this way.

The conference hotel should be in proximity to other hotels, I can almost never afford to stay in the conference hotel and like to be able to walk to it from my accommodations.

While the host city doesn't impact whether or not I attend (I always attend), it does impact my enjoyment/impression of the meeting.

In recent years, I have not attended the ASOR meeting because of lack of convenience to the SBL annual meeting.

ASOR should be aware that the Annual Meeting is becoming increasingly popular amongst graduate students, most of whom are on very tight budgets and sometimes cannot even afford the conference prices ASOR secures. Area costs should be carefully considered against hotel features.

San Antonio and Denver (and also San Diego and Boston to a certain degree) were really unpleasant (and unaffordable) for some attendees, including me, because of the total lack of food options within walking distance. Accessibility and variety of food options should be a number 1 priority as it affects everyone in attendance.

I answered based on what I think I would do after I'm not an ASOR employee.

It is ok to have a higher-end hotel for the conference, if one can reach it relatively easily, while staying at a cheaper hotel (e.g., where the lower price includes some kind of breakfast).

Ease of access to restaurants is also important.

It's best when the conference is self-contained to 1-2 buildings, but in walking distance of food options

host cities should have museums or other resources relevant to ASOR members

The distance between the ASOR hotel and the SBL conference center is not such a big deal even when far apart in the same city, as I often move hotels anyway. If it helps keep ASOR and SBL together, it's a small price to pay to need to take public transport/Uber to get from the ASOR hotel to downtown. East coast and/or Midwest makes travel from Europe/Near East a lot (a very lot) easier than Rocky Mountain/West coast.

quick, affordable breakfast at hotels would be nice

Proximity to museums/universities with strong Near Eastern collections/programs should be guiding us. Do not choose expensive hotels in the middle of nowhere. They should be close to cheap hotels and restaurants in the downtown of airport hub cities.

The hotel room costs have become far too expensive to stay in the convention hotels.

Rating the "importance" of the city to my attendance is not appropriate in my case. ASOR is my primary conference; I will attend every year no matter where it is. But the city is very important to my enjoyment of the conference! (Personally I think we should just pick a nice place that's easily accessed and just go there every year.)

Logistics of food etc in relation to the hotel is important. San Antonio was very good. Denver was awful. Being in a city that offers a collection and/or museums that would be of interest, and institutes that could host receptions, might draw a greater attendance from international scholars.

near breweries is a plus. :)

Same schedule - work with SBL - get better venues in San Antonio and San Diego. Make sure there are better local, walkable food options. The San Antonio meeting a few years ago was disgusting and completely unmanageable.

Cost is the most important factor. As a college student, I have a restricted travel budget so proximate to affordable dining, affordable hotels, and cheap public transit is important.

Given inflation, the hotel costs have been altogether reasonable over the past 20 years.

"clean" should be a given, not a preference; snacks and coffee are nice too

Generally, I prefer the downtown hotels as they are closer to amenities and local attractions.

Access to cultural attractions of the host city (beyond dining and nightlife) is important

ASOR is too frequently located outside/on the outskirts of the host city. I would much prefer if it was downtown. This usually increases options for public transportation which can help graduate students save money. Also, the conference is occasionally in affluent neighborhoods (such as in San Antonio and in Atlanta) which increases the cost of housing for graduate students.

And free coffee for number 5

I've never stayed in the conference hotel because it's too expensive. Its amenities mean nothing to me.

The most decisive issue for me is the quality and interest of museums & local culture

I really hate when conference sessions are in multiple hotels because it limits the number of sessions that I can see. Similarly it is frustrating when ASOR has put us in locations where we are isolated and there are few dining options.

walking distance to restaurants or a downtown is great, but if not possible then there should be space in the hotel for dinners, meetups, and receptions.

Breakfast included in room price

Accessible and Affordable are key features.

Affordable and quiet areas.

proximity to other professional conferences

Needs to be close to SBL.

I have only been to 3 meetings (Baltimore, San Antonio, and Denver). I hated San Antonio's resort location and chose to stay in downtown Denver rather than be isolated again. Personally I think having a

venue closer to downtown (and other hotel options) is really important. I intend to attend San Diego as well.

I think it works better for social interaction and the smoothness of the meeting if it is not in an isolated resort, e.g. San Antonio last time felt awkward

Maybe it's the SBL's fault, but why are the next 11 years are there only 5 host cities? Didn't we used to meet in other cities? Ones that were sometimes easier for some people to reach?

kosher option will be appreciable

The conference should propose an economic alternative for hotels in a reasonable distance from the conference to allow more students to participate

It is very difficult for international members who don't rent a car to stay in a hotel outside the city center/downtown (as last Denver location was)!

Smaller is better

I have been to 3 ASOR conferences and have never stayed in the host hotel, as a young scholar I simply can't afford it. If it were easier to find others to room with I would but so far there has been no luck on that front, so I've stayed in a Motel 6, a hostel, and a AirBnB

More choices above

Fitness center, coffee breaks, and comfortable rooms are all important.

Seriously, free wifi should be a non starter, absolute requirement for a 4 day conference of academics (many of whom are in the middle of teaching and had to cancel classes) giving papers.

Airline flight hub cities are convenient

As a young scholar who has only recently graduated with my Ph.D., the combined price of ASOR hotels and travel from airports to said hotels has been a major problem for me. I have not been able to find tenure-track work so am pretty strapped for cash. While I make it a priority to get to ASOR and save money over the year, I do believe cost, especially considering transportation from very distant airports the past few years, is discouraging other young scholars from coming. Perhaps an early career member/grad student member roommate-matching service could reduce cost of hotel stays. But moreover, please take distance from airports/ease of public transportation into account picking cities!

Comments about the meetings of OTHER ORGANIZATIONS (67 comments)

They are as costly as ASOR meetings. More well attended.

I find AIA meetings too impersonal and hoity-toity

AIA is huge and overwhelming. I prefer the size and intimacy of ASOR

Not sure how to answer this.

Having an approximate but standard date and varying the location is what almost all of them do and seems to be a method that works well.

SBL too big. I resigned and don't attend.

Ones I like to attend are usually associated with SBL

Attend ICAAME and ICHAJ abroad

Many AAR / SBL members feel the meeting is somewhat vast and disorienting at times. When I visit ASOR, I appreciate how it feels more localized in a single location.

They are better; the hotels are almost always better,

No.

Hate January meetings in cold cities. ASOR is my fave. Sometimes go to other conferences because of professional responsibilities

It would be nice to work out SBL & ASOR (possibly also ETS)

Long-term, I want to be able to go to AAAs.

International meetings with less formality are a good option.

I enjoy the smaller ones, like ASOR and CBA, but SBL is an essential for me, and that makes ASOR more difficult if not held together with the SBL.

The AAA/CASCA usually meets the same weekend as ASOR, which is a problem for anthropologists and archaeological archaeologists who attend ASOR.

SBL is a must because of various commitments. After that, it's a crapshoot with timing and locations of other meetings.

The meetings of other organizations are much more enjoyable because they obtain better, more accessible locations than ASOR does. But ASOR is doing a good job of supporting high quality sessions, which is why I still attend even when the location and hotel are quite grim and I have to eat in the same expensive, mediocre quality hotel restaurant/bar for 4 nights in a row.

If ASOR moved it's season for the annual meeting, it would likely conflict with another meeting that I wanted to attend.

Every fifth year we have an international meeting with all societies.

They often schedule all of the material culture sessions at the same time instead of spreading them out.

If ASOR joins with SBL, they should make sure that the ASOR sessions are evenly spread across the program.

They are a good support for my teaching of the Bible, Ancient History and Archaeology

I regularly attend ICAANE, which meets every other year in April at a European location.

I think the AOS is a good choice. It is a small organization/meeting and there is overlap of interests for some ASOR folks.

ICAANE is in April every second year. Please do not schedule ASOR/ICAANE at the same time

Most are in March-April and I wouldn't be able to go to another spring conference if the ASOR time frame is switched.

I usually attend 2-3 meetings per year.

ASOR can coordinate with AIA or SAA and approach archaeologists not philologists

The smaller size of ASOR (even though its gotten larger) is preferable to the gigantic conferences like AAA, SBL, and AIA

Some conferences build in museum or university visits (as ASOR has done on occasion-Chicago, Boston), provide coffee and snacks at all breaks and may serve lunch (recruit outside sponsors to cover these costs)

Professional and church related events usually in cities with convenient travel and located near to offices serving the program, near by hotels, good local transport, reasonable hotels.

There are too many meetings already in the Spring, I hope ASOR will stay in the fall or shift to Winter (ideally in January, before my spring semester starts).

As I noted above, the ASOR/AAA booking conflict is a perennial challenge for me. Ideally for me, these two conferences would meet on different dates.

I am very interested in archaeology, but the SBL provides a much wider range of what I need as a professional. When the two met together it was the best of both worlds, but as I have already stated, created problems for me when ASOR separated from SBL

The AIA would be a great candidate for joining up with; however their early January meeting slot is ridiculous.

consider joint meetings? with SAA or AIA????

Smaller is better, with fewer parallel sessions, so that attendees can actually share an intellectual and social experience.

ASOR remains my preferred meeting

They make more of an effort to engage with the resources of the host city

AIA/SCS is unfortunately timed to cut into everyone's winter holiday travels – many people are visiting family over the holidays and may have to cut those visits short.

Yup--if affordable not of the same quality or utility as nat/internat professional ones -- ie not really worthwhile, given that workplace no longer offers anywhere near adequate financial support for most faculty to attend meetings. Also, meetings of a diff. rank not as informative or useful at the informal level .

Organised tours

They have been in more central locations where it is easier to travel to the location or find nearby food. In Europe

Eventhough I am not an SBL member, many of my regular roommates for conferences are.

They are organized when classes are not in session.

A meeting like BANEA is much more enjoyable because of the smaller size

My institutional funding only covers one conference. However, I am able to use this to cover both SBL and ASOR. Separating the two conferences by scheduling ASOR at a separate location and/or in a different time would force me to decide between the two conferences. Because of SBL's size, the large number of scholars and publishers/editors, I would be drawn toward SBL.

I do think ASOR has a very well organized session schedule (unlike SAA) and easy to use app-been ahead of the curve of many larger organizations in that respect.

yes, I think spacing out ASOR and SAA into different academic quarters/semesters is key to welcoming a more diverse and dynamic collegial attendance on behalf of the archaeologists. (this is not a concern, if joint/concurrent meeting with SAA is an option, as implied below)

As an "independent researcher" I have to wait for meetings to come closer to me to be able to afford to attend. I took a chance and attended an ICAANE meeting a few years ago and only just paid off the credit card debt. Not falling for that again.

European meetings are easier and cheaper to attend

I will say that comparably, I've never had to worry about other annual meetings being in resort hotels without easy public transport/access to the city, like ASOR 2017 in San Antonio. But, I also have not done the e.g. SAAs in Hawaii, which also puts a considerable demand on attendees.

AIA's is inconvenient right after New Year and start of term

Comments about the CONFERENCE HOTEL (78 comments)

Need to be affordable. More and more of us are surviving on diminishing stipends.

Location I stay depends on if I have people with which to split the room cost.

needs a spacious and friendly bar for meeting folk

I have never stayed at the conference hotel. I have always looked for cheaper, convenient options.

I would love to be able to support ASOR by booking at the conference hotel, and I do so when it is affordable. But often it is simply out of reach if one doesn't want to share a room with more than one roommate.

Cost is definitely a factor; please arrange for possibility of shared rooms

It would be good to have additional discounted prices for students to encourage them to stay at the conference hotel

I understand any large event needs space to host its visitors, and that it's difficult to find an affordable venue for such a large number of people. I also understand that not everyone would like to book their own accommodations and would very much prefer to have it booked/arranged for them and that price is less of an issue to them for the convenience of being able to essentially sleep at the venue.

Regardless, conference hotels are a bit boring/bland when it comes to the experience of what should be such an exciting event! Perhaps there are alternatives to explore: cruiseboats, resorts ... ?

Needs to be in a good central location in the city

Hostels are a great option.

It is ideal to stay at the conference hotel, but oftentimes they are not affordable. After Texas and Baltimore, I no longer plan to attend if meeting is in a crap hotel or in a hotel that is out in the sticks. I have a job, I don't need this. Love San Diego, Chicago, and Boston Please seek affordable hotels. I am coming from Australia... costs are high. expensive

I can't usually afford it, even at the group rate.

I generally despise conference hotels, and whenever possible book in more comfortable, quieter, homier settings (like AirB&B).

It would depend on the price. Adjuncts are often at a disadvantage because they no longer have fellow grad students to share rooms with and their pay rate is low.

My decision to stay at the conference hotel is motivated ENTIRELY by the cost of the hotel and has nothing to do with whether or not ASOR meets at the same time as another organization. If ASOR meeting alone results in cheaper hotel prices, I will stay at the conference hotel, if not, I will book a cheaper alternative.

Better food options needed in the location!

The cost of the hotel room is normally double from other surrounding hotels and does not include breakfast.

For me the most important factor is ensuring that there is good meeting room space (i.e., space for the breakout sessions and business meetings).

see above: I might book another hotel - so far, I only once (2005, Philly) stayed at the ASOR conference hotel.

It should be as affordable as possible, keeping in mind that most young people there are 1) on a very tight budget, and 2) in attendance in hopes of helping their careers. Conference travel is a huge investment, especially in this job market.

As long as the ASOR room rate remains affordable I would stay exclusively at the conference hotel.

It does not have to be a traditional "hotel". As long as it is easily reached by public transportation, why not go for something a bit different? I would far prefer proximity to some walking trails than any nightlife.

It depends on the time ASOR wants to start sessions; at the moment, I would guess the start time of around 8:20am is made on the assumption that attendees are staying in the conference hotel. SBL does 9, as they know that people are coming in from a bunch of different hotels.

To reduce cost, why does it have to be a hotel .. can it not be a university/college

I'm an ECS with little to no conference funding so I would want a discounted rate and to not spent a ton of money on amenities such as wifi or on things such as travel to and from the airport or being in an area where I would have few options other than to eat or drink at the hotel cafes/restaurants, which can be fast but really expensive

I appreciate when the hotel offers quick and cheap lunch options.

Free wifi is no longer an option (but a requirement!) for professional meetings, I would argue.

I never book conference hotel. It is always outrageously expensive.

I always prefer to stay in the conference hotel, so it needs sufficient space and reasonable costs.

I attend annual meetings for other conferences every year. I almost always book at the conference hotel.

No to hotels like in San Antonio and Denver please!!!!

I hate the outskirts-of-town noplac hotels. (But I recognize that these may be more affordable to the organization, or to individuals who aren't TT professors like myself.)

Needs adequate food facilities either in the hotel or nearby. A good business center is important.

Swimming pool would be nice.

Conference hotels tend to have very limited and overpriced options in terms of dining. While I don't mind staying at a conference hotel if it is updated and clean, it helps to be within walking distance of food stores, restaurants, and bars, and not be limited to what the hotel has to offer.

clean - good wifi - proximity to inexpensive places to purchase food and to eat out

Cost is more of a factor on if I stay in the conference hotel than anything else.

I would prefer to book the conference hotel, but have selected "Not likely" because I will not be attending if ASOR does not meet with SBL. The only exception would be in a town close enough for me to drive so I could transfer my air expenses to hotel (2 hotels) costs.

the cost of the conference hotel should be comparable to that of alternatives

With regards to booking likelihood, particularly if meeting on its own means a reduction of Hotel price.

The main issue for ASOR ECS members is that the conference hotel is often priced out of a range that they can afford which means overfilling a room or finding other options elsewhere

depends on price of asor hotel...is it reasonable compared to nearby ones?

They're all so dull and inhuman.

A clean hotel with continental breakfast provided is preferred.

Less isolated is better

So handy for presenters to be in the same hotel as the conference room!

Even with the discount, it is often an expensive option.

I think we need to make sure, to the extent possible, that people not in positions of academic privilege (e.g., grad students, adjuncts, etc.) can afford to attend the meeting – this is an issue of economic justice.

The cost is often a lot for students.

Conference hotels are too expensive for many of us - we have to go elsewhere.

I generally try to stay at the conference hotel unless it is full or unreasonably expensive, or both.

If it were separate from SBL I would not be likely to attend.

Being in isolated resorts outside of town like San Antonio was very limiting and difficult for students who couldn't afford the hotel

Free wifi would be good to because my Canadian phone doesn't work in the US without Wi-Fi. It's hard to pay for hundreds of dollars of data/text.

As cheap as possible.

It really depends. I might stay at the hotel if it was located conveniently to downtown, but not if it was exorbitant compared to other options.

they are usually expensive, but conference spaces have been good

Would love to see a cheaper hotel price, especially if I have to fly as well.

I've also tried saving money by staying in a different hotel and while I save money, I find I miss out on much of the socializing and networking. I really prefer it therefore, when the conference hotel is affordable (or I can gather several grad students to share a room).

You should find the cheapest in the area that you can still have conference rooms in

I always book a room at the conference hotel

Smaller, less expensive

Some free time to socialize with others. Also, please, not super expensive food and drink.

It's always way too expensive

Spa/gym

This question is too binary--either one expenses a trip as a write-off, or one does not. If not, and an early career or grad/undergrad student, what would you do? This is a silly question. Let me ask you this.

How's your retirement picture looking at the moment? I would recommend asking, instead of this vague asking, "Will you be able to afford the ASOR hotel and/or write-off the expenses for the trip, or not?"

That would be far more practical and direct, and perhaps quantify what it is you are after.

Comments about OTHER GROUPS you would choose to meet with (76 + 66 comments)

SAA

AOS

AIA

no

AAA

No

SBL

None

ARCE

MESA

SAS

No given their dates.

Nope

As President of the AIA, I don't understand how you can present the AIA as an option (above) to ASOR members without having first consulted with the AIA to see if this is an option on our part!!!

AAR

AAA, SAA, AIA; I'm unfamiliar with AOS but that timing might work.

Aia-scs

AAA, AIA, ARCE

aos

AIA

AOS and MESA

AAA, SAA

ARCE; AHA (not on list, but should be)

Prefer it stay as is or separate

arce

AAA, MESA, SAA

No!

None of the other groups would really make a difference for me.

Better for ASOR to meet when it currently does. Joining with a non-SBL group would mean being away from classes over a week. Please consider this

None, unless those groups would decide to join ASOR at our time of year.

SAA or AAA

SAA, ARCE

AIA, AOS, AAA, ARCE

ARCE makes sense but that meeting often conflicts with SAA or AAPA that I attend.

ETS

SBL, AIA or AOS would all be useful.

Keep the current set-up

ARCE, AIA

AIA/SCS

AAA, SAA, MESA

AIA or MESA

I've never been to any of the others, and probably never will.

RAC/TRAC

SAA, AAA
AIA, ARCE, SAA
American Historical Soc
AIA, ARCE
APA
SAA or AIA
SBL, MESA
SBL, ARCE
ARCE, AOS, MESA

If this means 'joining back up' with SBL, not preferable. If it means meeting close to SBL time and place (as we are doing now), definitely preferable.

it would be chaotic. AIA meets with SCS and there is minimal interaction.

Nope

If meeting with a smaller group (e.g., AOS) it seems like a joint meeting might be a good idea. With larger meetings (such as the AAAs) I'd suggest consecutive or concurrent meetings.

Keep with SBL

I would not want to organize with another organization if it meant changing the dates

For those of us that are young professionals, it is difficult, and not feasible to limit ourselves only to ASOR. With the job market the way it is, we need to be able to network and develop a professional presence in another area, for many that is SBL. With time and money considerations, having the conferences close and possible under a single trip is the most feasible.

Consecutive with a day or so of overlap???

Concurrent meetings are not ideal since attendees have to choose between sessions to attend.

We don't need SBL

Do not prefer to have it concurrently as I present at both and have different session I'd like to attend.

Joint or concurrent

During my working career I could only afford (time & cost) ONE meeting

I checked off "Consecutive Meeting" but I really don't care that much.

ASOR has a history of combining "text and tell" in the best tradition of Albright and Glueck. Meeting with the SBL annually is the best way to hold biblicists and textual scholars accountable to the realia of archaeology. In my opinion, meeting together with the leading biblical society of North America helps fulfill ASOR's mission more than meeting separately. The joint meetings provided some of the only times biblicists would have opportunity to interact with pure archaeologists, and is an important moment for both disciplines in a truly interdisciplinary bonhomie.

I like that ASOR is separate as many of the other meetings are too gigantic.

Ideally, two consecutive meetings with separate registration but the same hotel space.

I don't think it would be a good idea to meet with another group. AAA is problematic for many archaeologists as there really is no real field archaeology and definitely no epigraphy at that meeting and the other anthropologists are anti-archaeology. The SAA meeting format is something ASOR definitely should avoid--papers are 15 minutes including set up and sitting down, so really more like 12 minutes--with no discussion. I still come to ASOR because of the discussion and the longer paper time slots, which allow for real interaction that does not happen at SAA. AIA meets at an absolutely terrible time of year--beginning of winter term for some people, often in a location where people get snowed in--I would not attend if ASOR joined AIA.

I would want ASOR to ensure that our preferences were not an afterthought for the planning of the meeting. I would want ASOR to be able to have a major say or the primary say in the planning rather than have to accept what another organization preferred.

I think meeting with AOS (at least the ANE part of it) would be great because many of the same people attend both conferences and it gets expensive to go to both.

Did you ever consider meeting outside of the USA?

Please do not follow AIA to the holidays or January.

I would really prefer ASOR to meet in the same city and at the same time as MESA.

see above

Why not have an international meeting in the Middle East so that local researchers can actually join ASOR meetings, and let the American and European researchers travel. The travel costs and current restrictions for ME researchers is likely to high, leading to considerable biases in the program of who can and who cannot attend. Be more inclusive for this group of scholars.

I strongly support meeting with AIA/SCS.

this would depend on how big the other conference is. If really big, then consecutive, if small (like AOS or ARCE) then concurrent

If the group is not enormous, I would prefer our own registration but the same hotel, so I can also attend some of their lectures.

ASOR is an idea size in its current format. A larger meeting with another group would lose its excellent networking and social aspects.

Consecutive should not mean having to hold ASOR during the week. My number 1 concern is the making sure that emerging scholars can present and they are often confined by teaching requirements during the week and lose money when they take days off.

Cutting from SBL is more important to me than meeting with another group.

Joint best with a small group (good idea with AOS); consecutive with a large group.

getting around to all the interesting sessions is already problematic. concurrent meeting would be more so plus probable expansion of meeting sites

if it is going to be the same time as AAA every year then at least put it in the same city so we can try to go to both sometimes.

More often than not I would find it more difficult to meet concurrently with one of the other meetings that matter to me. I prefer separate meetings spread across the calendar.

ARCE and AIA are the viable alternatives. However, ARCE's dates put it in competition with ICAANE every other year.

Aia should be kept separate. Fear that aia will accept even fewer ane papers on grounds that we can present at asor.

from my perspective, AOS is the only one that shares ASOR's interests

Honestly, I'm leaning towards a preference of meeting separately. As an ECS member, I cannot afford to stay in town for the whole ASOR-SBL block so I have to choose which I attend anyway. I can see the rationale for sticking together (for those who can afford to attend both, factoring in travel, it is actually cheaper), but I also see benefits (e.g., not preparing for two conferences at once) of spreading them out. Any such option is really impractical since it would either distend the amount of one's time in the conference(s) beyond what anyone can afford or tolerate, or multiply the number of sessions one would unavoidably miss to the point that there's no sense going to the meeting at all.

I feel like there is a lot of overlap between ASOR and AIA and ARCE, especially when it comes to younger scholars, and combining the meetings would certainly be convenient.

Partnering with a relatively small conference with needs similar to those of ASOR would benefit both groups

Concurrent meetings sound like a recipe for scheduling disaster, especially for people who present at both conferences.

This is a difficult call, in that meeting with AAA (or AIA, SAA or MESA) would make it less expensive for me to attend those meetings, but would also pose some of the same problems we have meeting with SBL currently.

None

theoretically I'd like the days not to conflict, but be in the same hotel. Practically, I'd probably be more likely to attend a session or two if they were concurrent.

I like that ASOR itself is a smaller meeting, so I have a chance to see more diverse sessions and meet new people. In many ways I prefer it to AIA's because of the smaller setting

Some of these groups regularly meet in more expensive or less accessible locations, which would impact my attendance.

It's too big as it is.

I strongly favor joining SBL in an official capacity. However, my second choice would be re-aligning with AOS during their spring/March meeting.

I will probably never be able to afford to pay for ASOR's annual meeting if it is not joint with another conference

Since ASOR is continually growing, it doesn't make sense to take a step back and become a "little sister" to a larger organization. I think it makes more sense to step out of SBL's shadow and possibly take a smaller, struggling conference (like AOS or ARCE) under our wing.

I like the idea.

Do not do concurrent meetings as that would defeat the purpose

I'd rather see a combination - separate meeting and hotel space, but everyone welcome at both.

The joint / consecutive meeting options depend on the number of attendees and sessions and the feasibility of scheduling. A joint meeting is a real opportunity for two organizations with similar visions and missions to closely collaborate – academically but maybe also regarding fundraising, heritage preservation etc.

Honestly it seems more complicated, but I can understand why logistically it might make sense.

No strong preference. Would like ASOR's identity to be clear.

Since the split from SBL, I have been less likely to attend either ASOR or SBL. Two conferences in one week is simply too great an investment of time and money.

Additional Comments (90 comments)

please keep the cost down and make it affordable to all.

Lumping the entire span prior to 3000 BCE, more than one million years, into a single period, while other short spans, such as 100-500 CE, are essentially treated equivalently, reveals a problematic research bias. There is a huge difference between Paleolithic, Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age societies, certainly greater than the differences within the Classical era.

More science and technology sessions would be appreciated as well as not scheduling similar themes at the same time

I would like to see ASOR sever ties with SBL. (I would also like ASOR to change its name!)

please recognize that our shared interests with SBL decline every day

I am on a limited research/travel budget and heavy teaching load. Buying one airplane ticket and missing one chunk of class sessions before Thanksgiving is ideal.

I already sent you a long message with my input about this.

am also interested in china

Middle Eastern archaeology is not the main thrust of my professional work.

Try not to expand the meeting with too many concurrent sessions.

I do not go to SBL and have nothing to do with Biblical studies, so having a meeting in any relation to SBL means nothing to me.

Keep cost to participant in mind

I appreciate ASOR, its committed leadership, and the people it brings together.

Drop the "Oriental!"

Thank you for taking our thoughts into consideration.

Optional Sunday excursions/visits

Thanks for doing this.

I love the number of sessions we have and options to choose from, from sometimes the volume of session options is overwhelming.

Thanks for your effort for the future of ASOR!

Membership and annual meeting fee are way too expensive!

Thank you for raising this question. It's been very frustrating to have to miss the meeting in the last several years because of the split with SBL.

Separating, at least partially from SBL, would greatly benefit ASOR and make the meeting better and more affordable for graduate students/early career scholars. ASOR getting constantly pushed out of the downtown area to more expensive hotels (often more expensive than necessary for the size of the conference) is annoying, to say the least.

Thank you.

1. Would be better to decide the main issue first (follow SBL; follow SBL only when not pushed outside the center; separate but keep close in place/time; separate completely), leaving the other points to a later decision. 2. Saturday should be avoided, it causes a nasty bias (pushing some sessions almost permanently to the last day, while many of those who get a fine spot on the first day travel on Saturday-not by foot- to the SBL) and also causes a headache to the organizers (would be more equal and easy to organize with less requests about 'conflicts').

I live in Europe and am unable to attend any USA meetings.

Thank you for your efforts in this difficult task!

I know this is a very difficult process. I absolutely do not want to go to more "satellite" hotels such as we did in San Antonio and in Denver. I have no objection to staying with SBL but the "reabsorption" option is not appealing and would likely cause me to tail off my attendance. I love the separation and ability to see/mingle with just ASOR folk. If SBL could somehow free up just one hotel in the city center of places like SA and Denver (and elsewhere) that is the best solution. Clearly this can't be done....so I think the "alternating" option is best....but please do not limit to 20-25 miles. Make it an interesting and accessible city...people who wish to transfer to SBL can get there via transport of some sort (maybe ASOR and SBL could team up and provide transport vans?). Just one last thought....why no Chicago? Would MUCH prefer Chicago over Denver.

Denver and San Diego are BOTH western towns. Denver is Not in the midwest!

I am now retired and attendance at any meetings is contingent on time, cost & my wife's interest in going with me

I think I am a minority vote, but I would much prefer ASOR meet jointly with SBL. I attended the ASOR annual meeting several years in a row (I think from about 2004-2011 or so), and gave a paper one year, but have not attended at all or for only a session or two briefly in recent years. I miss ASOR because I am not an archaeologist, and need the meeting to keep me current.

Thanks for your work on this.

Please NO Job fair at ASOR. Ever.

The choice of some plenary speakers recently (especially in Denver and in San Antonio) has been truly poor. ASOR needs to choose plenary speakers known for dynamic lecturing styles who can engage a large audience and use a range of images to illustrate their points. A non academic friend attended the

plenary address with me in Denver because she thought the topic interesting, and I have to say that I was embarrassed for ASOR and for our field at that event.

My biggest concern is that ASOR be able to maintain oversight and control of our annual meeting so that we are not lost in a larger meeting that is run by another organization. We have developed the Annual Meeting into a professional event that showcases ASOR and our work, and I would hate to see that lost by joining with another (larger?) organization.

My work is broader than the four areas mentioned above and with more overlap with ASOR than I could indicate.

Now that I am retired I am not able to come to half the meetings.

This is a very nicely designed survey; thank you for laying out the options so clearly

What is the current thinking about regional meetings outside the US? I would be interested (Australia - NZ).

In terms of ASOR's area and work of most interest, I would also add here "heritage studies" and "theory" — I guess this may fall under "library work" but I think it's a weird way of phrasing this.

I don't like the narrow focus of the previous question on time frames. There is nothing that takes into consideration contemporary field/museum work.

Thank you for your efforts!

Thank you for your hard work on this new chapter in ASOR's evolution!

Current setting work well. Whatever decision is made re SBL, need to ensure that ASOR continues to be held in a major city with good airport, international flight connections, and airport transfer systems (public transport is preferable)

Meeting on the outskirts of San Antonio and Denver have felt isolating. It would be much better to be near the center of a city.

Please arrange annual meetings independent of any other organization, time it within a pleasant spring month (for ease of travel) and located in an airport-hub city (for low cost of travel), close to its downtown (so that people have many options for other accommodation such as airbnb and local restaurants).

Yes,,stop scheduling so many session at the same time. Be more selective, and try to set up a review of proposed sessions.

Thank you!

Appreciate field work, though I am no longer in the field, so it is great to see others at work in various sites; also interpretation of written or transcribed material which reflect on the activities of various digs For purely financial reasons it is more feasible for me to attend ASOR and SBL concurrently. Thank you. My current attendance at professional meetings in general is limited as a retiree due to a lack of financial support; the best I can do is one a year.

Some sessions, in particular the plenaries, have become overly politicized. A policy should be adopted of keeping content to the academic subjects of the conference and leaving modern politics out of it.

If we can swing it on our own financially, I think we should continue without being affiliated with any other organization.

"ASOR's work" above is missing Publication as an option? I used to enjoy the annual meeting, but I can't look my son in the eyes now, knowing what the world may be like for him if climate change is not brought under control, and in good conscience continue to attend these meetings anymore.

Thank you for working through all this stuff. I don't envy you, but am grateful.

Thank you for your efforts on our behalf!!!

Keep the schedule as is. Figure out how to arrange better hotel settings.

Caution should be taken in the consideration of student members preferences, at the cost of long-term established members and their institutions; these are after all folks trying to get jobs. At that point in their career they are certainly concerned about costs (though ostensibly this is supposed to be a short-

term concern, just like attending school). However, if changes are made to meeting times and locations that impact the very people likely to be extending jobs to student members, the entire effort will be in vain. Unfortunately, I get the sense that the "overwhelming" voice of the jobless masses of students now attending ASOR crowd out the sound reason of established members of the discipline. I say this from experience, having heard some poorly thought out complaints of my own graduate students over the years. Beware of unintended consequences!

Consider having AIC represented at the Annual Meeting, though a booth or organizing a session on conservation each year.

make spousal registration much more reasonable--it's way too expensive; also, make it the same price whether early or on site--sometimes it's just too difficult for spouses to make early decisions on attendance! Also, since there is a retirement membership rate, why not a retired registration rate? Last time I attended, there were 10 parallel sessions at almost all times. This meant no one could possibly attend more than about 1/10th of the conference, and that only if one needed virtually no break or refreshment. The result is that attendees hardly have any shared experience of the conference but whatever brief moments they can snatch in the hallway when not sequestered inside sessions or running between them. This hardly promotes the putative purposes of the meeting -- people have to steal time from the conference to confer.

The Annual Meetings are a highlight in my academic calendar. I always look forward to them. I have not attended SBL in the past, and I understand there is a complex relationship between both organizations and its members. However, I do appreciate attending the Annual Meeting when it's in a great city, and in a good hotel that's centrally located. It makes the expense (which is out of pocket my case, as I have no conference or travel funds at my disposal) much more palatable. That may appear selfish on my part, but I wanted to be honest. If I'm spending good money to fly to a distant city, it's preferable that I can enjoy that city in addition to the conference itself. It seems like being tied to SBL has not helped in that regard. ASOR can and should stand on its own. ASOR may lose some attendees if it detaches itself from SBL, but I think participation would still be quite healthy. Go for it!

Really enjoyed Denver meeting for opportunities to meet with friends and discuss future projects; wish we had been closer to downtown for a few more dinner and food options. The cafe in the hotel was very handy.

Thanks. Do consider N. Calif locations.

I hope that if a decision is made based on this survey that favorable consideration is given to the financial impacts on early career scholars and graduate students, who must attend multiple conferences which are fantastically expensive but have the least amount of institutional financial support to do so. I can't even get any support from my (Ivy League research institution) unless I present a paper, and even then they cap the reimbursement amount at \$500.

Thank you for all your work.

I am very involved with both ASOR and SBL. I also work at a small university with very limited funding for conferences. I can attend both ASOR and SBL because they are the same week and the same city.

Thanks for working to keep ASOR viable and vibrant!

Although I don't consider myself ASOR's core demographic, it has been the most profitable meetings for me to attend in terms of research outcomes. I have had two major research projects (with grant funding from Nat Geo and NSF) as a direct result of relationships made at ASOR, not to mention other beneficial professional relationships develop. It's the perfect size and some great people.

thank you for all your time and work for facilitating us all to participate in decision-making about the annual meeting.

I miss being able to go to ASOR meetings. The time and the location continue to thwart my plans.

I understand that many of the basic choices given above are mutually exclusive and might also split the ASOR community in two camps. The idea of alternating venues (once preceding SBL, once with ARCE,

AIA etc.) might be an alternative but is practically difficult to realize as this would put some meetings only half a year apart and others 1.5. It is probably essential to base a decision on precise figures resulting from this survey – should ASOR lose half of its attendance due to moving away from SBL, it is probably not worth pursuing. ASOR could then build partnerships with sister organizations such as ARCE through discounted memberships, joint projects, and maybe also the continuation of board meetings held at the same time.

Perhaps should include 'cultural heritage studies' as a growing category relevant to the field.

This survey is a fine idea

My site goes from 2200 BCE to 700 CE.

Personally, it seems most of my own issues with the ASOR meeting (resort hotels without good ease of transport) are a result of its direct reliance on when SBL meets, which I have no connection with. I know this is a difficult challenge for the organization and I appreciate everyone's careful thought and efforts on this.

It may be of interest to others to engage with the ICAANE meeting in Europe - of course, it would not be possible to have ASOR in Europe, but I know that ICAANE has considered venues in the US. Perhaps offering a one-time joint meeting somewhere in the US would be of benefit to scholarly communities on both sides of the Atlantic?

The ASOR meeting is one of the places to share research and learn about new developments, meeting and discussion with colleagues in archaeology of the Near East. However the high travel cost and timing during the fall did not allow me to attend in a regular basis. I hope the conclusion of this survey will somehow alternate the timing to a better one.

Please do not change the current arrangement (city affiliation w/SBL, timing).

It should meet jointly with SBL.

You'd have more participation if you went back to Biblical Archaeology

Thanks for trying to gather hard data. Good luck. The meeting is worth it.

Dear Gary and AHCotAM members, I have reflected on the issues concerning the Annual meeting for two decades. At this stage, I am sure that you know all the issues involved: 1) Growth in membership 2) Many members dig in areas not directly linked to the history of Ancient Israel during Iron Age II (Georgia, Turkey, Cyprus, Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, Iran) 3) Many dig sites from Paleol–Bronze Age and Persian–Ottoman periods with no links to Biblical Studies 4) These members would prefer to meet in cities with great museum collections 5) Many of us prefer to be in the downtown, rather than on the fringe with no nearby restaurants or other places of interest. On the Other hand: a) Some biblical studies and history of Israel specialists do attend ASOR and SBL b) Members coming from Europe and Israel only want to make one trip to North America c) Center cities with direct flights from South America, Europe, the Near East and Asia are most useful for our foreign members (Denver is not necessarily one of those cities and lower attendance is evident) Things to consider: 1) The book display is an important feature of the ASOR meetings and some discussion with book dealers in Denver made it clear that they would not come to ASOR if it were separate from SBL. Only the larger publishers would come. 2) I am sure there are other considerations—distance from airport, food availability, holidays, etc. that the committee has considered. My only new thought is one I mentioned previously to Gary--Start academic sessions on Wed morning, keeping the plenary session on Wed evening and end on Friday evening. Would this be more agreeable to SBL? In this way, we might be able to be in a downtown hotel and benefit from access to restaurants, stores and museums and all our current book exhibitors would continue to be at our meeting. Saturday could be reserved for those who want to visit local museums and art galleries or attend SBL (in this way ASOR would free up a large number of hotel and meeting rooms for SBL. PS—To meet the needs of many of our non-biblical members, we might encourage regional meetings to be more archaeology related—include visits to museums and universities where there are archaeological

collections and technological advances being carried on. This may mean not meeting with the local SBL group, since their interests seem to dominate (I may not be up to date on this assessment). Hope these reflections are useful. Michele Daviau

Dear Gary, Thank you for all of the time and careful attention that you spent putting this survey together. I wish that I could be of more help. However, as you may know, I am a member primarily because of Jim. Although, I have many friends in the organization, I started coming to conferences with Jim. I am not an archaeologist, although I have spent many years helping out on various digs. I will continue to support ASOR in any way that I can, because it has become very important to me, not only because of Jim, but because I have three archaeologists in my family. When and where we meet will not affect my attendance. I will always be there if at all possible. I really do not have any opinions other than the one box, which I checked. You and your committee have an ominous job ahead of you. I wish you well. All the best, Carolyn Strange