

I am happy to report to you once again that ASOR is in good health—financially, intellectually, and creatively. Andy Vaughn has presented our positions in detail in his Executive Director’s report. I only touch upon the highlights here. Despite the 2022 bear market our endowment investments are down only slightly, and our funds available for operations are at an all-time high. For the third year in a row our membership hit a new high. We have now successfully delivered three Annual meetings on at least partially virtual platforms. After the Covid hiatus our fieldwork teams are back in the trenches, and with the addition of Maarav to our journals our publication profile has expanded. We are moving forward in our on-line efforts, with a new editor for Ancient Near East Today and a popular webinar series. We are also moving ahead with initiatives on reducing our carbon footprint and making our work more inclusive of previously underrepresented groups. Our CHI work is thriving, as testified to by successful federal grants.

There are challenges, to be sure. The current economic uncertainties are daunting and require careful monitoring of our finances. Running essentially two consecutive Annual Meetings each year, one virtual and one in person, strains the staff, the Program Committee, and the membership. We must continue to look for ways to reduce this stress while maintaining the quality of the content and optimizing the inclusivity that virtual platforms provide. We need balance the competing goods of reducing our contributions to climate caused degradation of cultural heritage against equitably serving all are members, wherever they live. How the post-covid landscape will settle and how it will affect the ways we do business is yet to be seen. This changing situation requires constant recalibration. I am confident, however, that ASOR will endure and continue to grow stronger.

What is the “secret sauce” of ASOR’s success? I see one main ingredient. This is the engagement of our members. It is manifested in many ways--from the over 400 volunteers who staff and lead the working committees (including you members of the Board of Trustees) that make ASOR run, to their submission, presentation, and publication of stimulating papers, webinars, articles, and books, to their generous donations to all our programs. We are seen as an organization that gets important things done. Our members reward us with hard work and generous donations. An able and hard-working staff with a “can do” attitude under Andy Vaughn’s adept leadership as Executive Director supports the members’ programs and see that they are brought to fruition.

In closing, I repeat the good news: ASOR is healthy, financially and intellectually, and moving forward on many fronts. Many thanks to all who make this happen.