



To: The ASOR Board of Trustees  
From: The Committee on the ASOR Policy on Professional Conduct (Susan Ackerman [Chair]; Joe Greene; Carol Meyers)  
Date: December 2020  
Subject: Recent Activity Regarding the ASOR Policy on Professional Conduct

According to the "Introduction" to the ASOR Policy on Professional Conduct, the Board subcommittee charged with oversight of the Policy (Susan Ackerman [Chair]; Joe Greene; Carol Meyers) is "empowered to record concerns and to bring forward for discussion to ASOR's Board of Trustees any action that may contravene the guidelines contained in this policy."

We write, therefore, to report that we did identify a policy violation that took place during the recent Virtual Annual Meeting: to wit, a paper that reported on "research that has been undertaken in occupied territory and its contiguous waters as defined by customary international law" (in this case, a small-scale excavation in the West Bank) but was not signaled as reporting on such research in advance by the paper presenter.

More specifically, the abstract submission system used by ASOR asks potential paper presenters, when submitting abstracts during the "Call for Papers," to indicate—using checkboxes—whether their paper includes research from an occupied territory as defined in the paragraph just above. If so, the paper is sent for extra scrutiny to the Program Committee Co-Chairs, who seek to determine (as the ASOR Policy on Professional Conduct requires) whether the "research is required strictly to safeguard, record or preserve the archaeological heritage of the occupied territory," or whether "permission of the competent national authorities of the occupied territory has been obtained by the researcher." Typically, if either of these conditions is met, the Program Committee allows the paper to be considered for including in the Annual Meeting program.

In the case in question, it was determined—by questions that Susan Ackerman (after consultations with President Sharon Herbert and the Program Committee Co-Chairs Helen Dixon and Allison Thomason) posed to the paper presenter during the on-line discussion—that the excavation had been permitted as salvage by the Staff Archaeological Officer in the Civil Administration of Judea and Samaria. The excavation thus did meet the standards set by the ASOR Policy, and, had the Program Committee Co-Chairs vetted the abstract, they presumably would have allowed the paper to be considered for inclusion in the Annual Meeting program.

In short, the issue here is not an unallowable presentation of excavation materials; it is a failure to disclose. The Policy on Professional Conduct has thereby recommended to the Program Committee (i) that the paper presenter be cautioned that such disclosure is expected in the future; (ii) that the co-chairs of the session in which the paper appeared be reminded of the ASOR Policy's requirements and urged to ensure that adherence to the Policy will be the norm in their session going forward; and (iii) that all session chairs be reminded annually of the requirements of the ASOR Policy on Professional Conduct and enjoined to ensure that the papers in their session meet the Policy's requirements.