

## Very Preliminary ASOR 2021-2025 Strategic Plan Draft (3-1-21)

Preamble and Background—much of this not intended for final version

For the past 5 years (2016-2020) ASOR has been operating successfully under a 5 year plan worked out by a Strategic Task Force led by then President Susan Ackerman in 2015, and approved by the Board of Trustees in April 2016. That plan presented 8 goals, 4 of which the task force considered enhancement of existing key program areas—1. the Annual Meeting; 2. Publications; 3. ASOR's International Affiliations; 4. Supporting our members work both in the form of increased fellowships, and enhanced in-house resources for archaeological research. The second four goals represented new initiatives that focused on supporting ASOR's broadening programs and increasingly diverse membership. These included fostering the next generation of scholars, increasing and better serving both our professional international members and the interested public, and finally, developing a more robust program of cultural preservation and protection.

Periodic strategic planning is a valuable exercise that promotes reflection on and reevaluation of an organization's goals and priorities. It was this mind that in February of 2020 ASOR's Executive Committee spent a day assessing the progress made on the 2016-2020 strategic plan and considered whether these goals still reflected and served the priorities laid out in our expanded mission statement as developed between 2010 and 2015:

*The American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR), founded in 1900, is an international organization whose mission is to initiate, encourage, and support research into, and public understanding of, the history and cultures of the Near East and wider Mediterranean, from the earliest times, by:*

- *Fostering original research, exploration, and archaeological fieldwork;*
- *Encouraging scholarship in the region's languages, texts, traditions, and histories;*
- *Disseminating research results and conclusions in a timely manner, through a robust publication program, annual meeting, and other venues;*
- *Adhering to the highest ethical standards of scholarship and public discourse;*
- *Upholding the highest academic standards in interdisciplinary research and teaching;*
- *Promoting educational opportunities for undergraduates and graduates in institutions of higher education around the world;*
- *Developing engaging programs of outreach for the general public;*
- *Supporting and participating in efforts to protect, preserve, and present to the public the historic and cultural heritage of the Near East and the wider Mediterranean and to raise awareness of its degradation.*

The EC agreed that the 2016-2020 goals remained central to ASOR's mission and that we had made significant progress toward their accomplishment, but, as always, there remained more to be done. In light of this, and of major changing circumstances not foreseen in the 2016-2020 plan (see below), we discussed whether we needed a completely new strategic plan or a revision of the current plan and who—the EC? the CCC, a new task force?-- should produce the new or revised document. The EC recommended that the President form a committee consisting of 3 members of the EC, 3 members of the CCC, and 3 members of the Board of Trustees. They stressed the importance of feedback from multiple membership sources, and agreed that the planning process should be a major item on the April 2020 Board of Trustees' meeting agenda.

Then came Covid 19. We regrouped and rethought in April and May. With circumstances changing on an almost daily basis and no realistic sense of what the post pandemic landscape would be like, it did not seem to be the time for new long-term initiatives. On the other hand, we did need to respond to and deal responsibly with the changing circumstances. We decided that the CCC should meet over the summer and with input from the standing committees begin to craft a revised version of the 2016-2020 plan, taking into account both the pre-Covid and Covid events. These events include:

### **PRECOVID**

1. Purchase and move to Strange Center (2019)
2. PROFESSIONAL Web site (a work in progress 2015 to present)
3. Changing CHI funding
4. Journal Publications move to UCP (2019)
5. Expansion of full membership privileges to international members---CAP affiliation (2015)

### **DURING COVID**

6. New name (2020/21)
7. VAM format of AM (2020)

8. Expanded emphasis on DEI, social equity, and cultural identity in academia and beyond (2020/21)

9. PPE loan (s)

10. Move of all meetings to zoom format

11. Cutbacks in University budgets: Contraction of Institutional memberships and members research funds

### **POST COVID ????????**

At the end of January 2021 the CCC produced and discussed a very preliminary outline of a revised strategic plan for 2021-2025. The following is S. C. Herbert's revision and reorganization of that document.

This draft identifies 6 key areas of activity that remain central ASOR's mission and outlines actions for enhancement in each area. These areas combine some of the goals of the original plan—for instance internationalization and nurturing the next generation appear under the diversity goal here. Some pieces have been shamelessly lifted verbatim from the 2016-2020 plan; they were good then and remain so now. Others reflect our changed circumstances and the invaluable CCC input.

The two most obvious changes from the 2016-2020 plan are integration of aspirational and programmatic goals into a single section and, more striking, the elevation DEI to a Key Program Area (Area 3) . The latter is a response to the massive social equity movement that began in the spring of 2020, the consequent intensification of university diversity programs, and the growing demands of a large segment of our membership to be a positive part of this movement. That said, learned societies are not designed to effect social change, nor are they natural agents of such change. DEI appears nowhere in ASOR’s mission statement, and therefore does not fit naturally in a list of ASOR’s activities. While diversity was a repeated theme in the 2016-2020 plan, indeed Part II of that plan is titled **Serving ASOR’s Diverse Membership, that plan presumed an already diverse membership with an emphasis on greater internationalization and nurturing our early career members. The current DEI initiative foregrounds an effort to bring BIPOC communities into ASOR. This effort began before spring of 2020 with the push to change ASOR’s name. As we all know, it is not universally welcomed by our membership.**

## **Part I. Strengthening ASOR’s Key Program Areas**

### **Area 1: The Annual Meeting**

**Our goals: Conduct an exceptional, broadly attended and widely accessible professional meeting dedicated to scholarship on the history and cultures of West Asia and the Greater Mediterranean Basin**

#### **Actions**

##### **1A. Promote the Highest Quality Content in the Academic Program**

The current quality of the academic program is already high. Applications to present papers exceed the number of sessions available, with the result that only the best papers are accepted. Maintaining a healthy number of sessions for paper presentations will guarantee that the quality of this aspect of the academic program continues. To further guarantee this, the Program Committee will regularly review the Annual Meeting’s “ASOR-Sponsored Sessions,” to make certain they continue to represent ASOR members’ primary areas of scholarly interest and engagement. Session chairs will continue to recruit paper presenters whose contributions will enhance the quality of the academic program and develop new directions as appropriate. The Program Committee and sessions chairs will encourage submissions and participation from scholars representing diverse perspectives in support of ASOR’s strategic initiative regarding diversity, equity and inclusion. We will also continue to productively disseminate members’ research at the Annual Meeting

through mechanisms other than papers--poster presentations, roundtable discussions, and similar events—and develop mechanisms to archive these at our Alexandria office. In addition, to encourage attendance and dialogue the ASOR staff will follow the model of other learned societies and enhance the co-curricular component of the Annual Meeting program by offering museum visits, networking opportunities for various interest groups, movie events, and similar activities.

**1B. Increase participation and attendance from international participants from regions of ASOR's academic interests and ensure equitable, inclusive, and diverse participation in the Annual Meeting.**

Due to COVID 19 travel restrictions in 2020 ASOR's Annual Meeting was held in an entirely virtual format. This improved access significantly for our international participants and others for whom travel is prohibitive in cost. In addition, the virtual platform offered more time for discussion and digestion of papers. The advantages of the virtual format were so great that we now plan to incorporate some sort of virtual component in all upcoming Annual Meetings. In 2021 we will hold in person and virtual meetings one month apart in November and December for a single registration fee. Depending on the success of that venture we will test other models of virtual and in person integration in following years. ASOR will continue to reach out to government entities and non-profit organizations to increase participation in the Annual Meeting for scholars from the MENA regions. We will promote scholarship programs for registration costs and travel.

ASOR recognizes that diversity and equity among participants and attendees of its programs is paramount. Equally important is recruitment of a diverse and inclusive community of scholars into ASOR-related professions. Therefore, ASOR will seek ways to improve recruitment for participation of people from diverse social and economic backgrounds into related fields. The Annual Meeting is a showcase of ASOR activities. Therefore, ASOR will expand existing fellowship programs and continue to develop new ones for Annual Meeting attendance for students and scholars from diverse social groups and economic circumstances. Together with Early Career Scholars and PC Committees we will provide mentorship for new attendees. We will also work to make our more affordable virtual platform an intellectually robust and value-added component of the Annual Meeting.

**1C. Increase Meeting Revenue**

Ensuring the academic rigor of sessions and workshops is the top priority in planning the Annual Meeting. Considerations regarding the meeting's affordability, especially for scholars who might struggle financially to attend (e.g., junior scholars, international scholars, non tenure-track scholars, independent scholars, alternate career members, retirees, etc), are a priority as well. Thus, the Annual Meeting is not necessarily financially self-sustaining. Nonetheless, if the Society is to survive to fulfill its other missions, cost effectiveness must be a consideration.

With these considerations in mind, the ASOR leadership and staff will explore and implement strategies for increasing Annual Meeting revenue: for example, growing Annual Meeting attendance in ways that enhance the meeting's quality by bringing in papers beyond the geographic regions and chronological periods in which ASOR members traditionally have worked (BA and IA Levant) to reflect the wider range of research practiced by current members (central Asia, the western Mediterranean, Byzantine and Islamic archaeology). Attendance could also be enhanced by increasing conceptual categories for standing and member-organized sessions (for example, expanding sessions devoted to museums and collections that meet ASOR's standards of professional conduct). Finally, ASOR will continue to develop virtual elements that enhance and broaden participation in future Annual Meetings.

Location and timing are other important drivers of attendance at the Annual Meeting. For ASOR these choices are complicated by the desire of many of our members to meet together with SBL, which we have traditionally done to mutual benefit. Recent scheduling difficulties have caused ASOR to re-evaluate the time and location of the Annual Meeting for the next several years. A poll of membership and other constituents revealed substantial support for continued connection with the SBL, but uncovered insurmountable logistical difficulties with a joint venture in some venues chosen by SBL. Consequently, in 2019 the ASOR Board of Trustees voted to continue to schedule the Annual Meetings generally at the SBL's and ASOR's traditional time (Wednesday-Saturday before the week of Thanksgiving) and to meet in the same city as SBL when hotel and conference facilities allow. However, in years in which the facilities in the same city do not provide financially reasonable or effective accommodations, ASOR will seek another city for its Annual Meeting. This choice should be based on convenience related to international travel hubs, as well as local attractions that would appeal to the academic attendees at the Annual Meeting (such as museums, cultural heritage sites, reception venues, etc.). The Program Committee and ASOR Staff will identify and work closely with local organizing committees to arrange special events and visits for attendees between sessions or in the evenings.

#### **1D. Work Toward a Carbon Neutral Annual Meeting**

The preservation of cultural heritage is central to ASOR's mission. Climate degradation poses serious threats to cultural monuments in the form of air pollution, fire, and flooding. Travel to the Annual Meeting produces significant carbon emissions—an average of .89 tons of metric tons per year per attendee (Stephans and Hermann 2019). Therefore, ASOR will explore ways to mitigate these carbon emissions. Strategies include: 1. Meeting in central, hub cities; 2. Moving sections of the program, such as posters, to a virtual only format; 3. Offering incentives for sustainable travel options (train, car pools); 4. instituting a carbon offset fee with registration.

## **Area 2: Cultural Heritage**

**Our Goals: Participate energetically in efforts to protect, preserve, and present to the public all aspects of the cultural heritage of W Asia and the Greater Mediterranean Basin and to promote engagement with and understanding of the cultural heritage.**

### **Actions**

#### **2A. Protect and Preserve Cultural Heritage**

ASOR recognizes that the protection and preservation of the cultural heritage of its region(s) of study is at the core of its mission and an area of profound interest to its membership. ASOR through its Cultural Heritage Initiatives Program, with the oversight of its Cultural Heritage Committee, will continue to participate in both large-scale and smaller-scale governmental and non-governmental projects to protect, preserve, and promote awareness about all aspects of the cultural heritage of W Asia and the Greater Mediterranean Basin, provided such projects are appropriate, effective, financially viable, and can be managed within the resource structure of the organization. ASOR also commits to encourage complementary initiatives and efforts by its members.

#### **2B. Promote Site Preservation, Documentation, and Presentation**

ASOR seeks to use its membership and host-country facilities and contacts to develop resources and programs for site preservation, documentation, and presentation. ASOR commits to promote activities to encourage public engagement with, and advocacy for, the cultural heritage of the regions. Museums provide important resources for the preservation of cultural heritage and particularly effective venues for raising public awareness of cultural heritage. They are the way most of the general public access cultural heritage both of their own regions and others'. ASOR Will strive to learn from and contribute to the museum programming of its constituencies.

## **Area 3: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

**Our Goals: Reaching out to and including diverse communities in our activities in meaningful and sustainable ways; promoting intersectional diversity with inclusion and equality for BIPOC, International, LGBT and other underserved communities.**

## **Actions**

### **3A. Increase membership from BIPOC communities**

ASOR was founded in 1900 by a small group of North American university and seminary scholars, predominantly white and male, focused on studying the Bible in its home territory. Over its 120 years of existence ASOR has expanded its areas of study and its membership. Despite this expansion ASOR remains, as were its founders, a predominantly white organization. We can tally our members of color on a single page. We have made progress on some diversity issues in the recent past. Our gender balance has improved markedly; our international membership has grown, and our foreign members now have full status; we have worked to empower our early career scholars. Supporting the latter two groups were goals of our 2016-2020 Strategic Plan. Recruiting Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) to our membership was not a priority then. It must be now. We have formed a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task force to identify systemic barriers to greater inclusion and to study and recommend methods to achieve greater BIPOC membership and participation in ASOR.

### **3B. Present a Public Face More Representative of ASOR's Expanded Mission and Diverse Membership**

In 1920 ASOR filed incorporation papers in Washington DC with the name American Schools of Oriental Research. This was a change from its original name of American School of Oriental Research and reflected plans to expand from the original single research school in Jerusalem. Today ASOR is affiliated with research centers in Amman, Jerusalem, and Nicosia. Our members conduct research from the Western Mediterranean to Afghanistan and from the Caucasus to the Sudan. The name as framed in 1920 no longer reflects the breadth and diversity of our work. Moreover, the term Oriental is misleading at best and offensive at worst. In 2020 the Board of Trustees, following a poll of the full membership, voted to change the name to the American Society of Overseas Research. In the coming years ASOR will develop tag lines and branding materials to better explicate the breadth of our activities.

### **3C. Continue to Build Stronger Relationships with Overseas Research Centers**



ASOR assigns high priority to enhancing its relationships with its affiliated ORCs in Cyprus, Israel, and Jordan (CAARI, AIAR, and ACOR). It will seek to further normalize the use of the centers for Early Career Scholars during graduate school by encouraging the use of the Annual Meeting to facilitate contact and networking between Early Career Scholars and the international centers and providing access to center directors, fellows, and alumni through tables in the exhibition hall and receptions that are open and promoted to Early Career Scholars. We will also explore the establishment ASOR sponsored programming (annual lecture or symposium) at each center.

ASOR also seeks to develop stronger relationships with ORCs located in other regions where ASOR members work: for example, the American Academic Research Institute in Iraq (TAARII), the American Academy in Rome (AAR), the American Institute for Maghrib Studies (AIMS), the American Institute for Yemeni Studies (AIYS), the American Institute of Iranian Studies (AIrS), the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE), the American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT), the American Research Institute of the South Caucasus (ARISC), the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (ASCSA), and the Palestinian American Research Center (PARC).

Facilitating relationships with these ORCs—especially if paired with posting information about them on the ASOR website—would inform ASOR members about the resources of these various centers, as well as informing the ORCs about each other’s resources as they relate to ASOR.

### **3C. Establish More Overseas Committees**

ASOR seeks to expand its formal organizational ties in regions and countries beyond those with affiliated and non-affiliated ORCs (e.g., Sicily, Lebanon, and Libya) by establishing overseas committees within its governance structure, analogous to the already extant Baghdad Committee, Saudi Arabia Committee, and Damascus Committee. These overseas committees could especially help develop programming for relevant sessions at the ASOR Annual Meeting.

### **3D. Enhance Efforts to Secure the Success of the Next Generation**

The threats to programs dedicated to the study of West Asia and the wider Mediterranean in contemporary institutions of higher education affect most profoundly and alarmingly the career prospects of scholars within these programs, especially the scholars of the next generation. ASOR is thus committed to doing all it can to advance the careers of these scholars.

For example, in addition to raising funding support to help these scholars participate in ASOR’s Annual Meeting (above), ASOR will look for ways to increase the involvement of graduate students and early career scholars in the Annual Meeting as part of their training

and development as academics. In particular, ASOR will explore ways of enhancing graduate students' and early career scholars' engagement in modes of research presentations (poster presentations, roundtable discussions) that are emerging alongside traditional paper presentations (above).

ASOR will also increase the number of junior scholars who serve as session chairs, perhaps pairing them with more established chairs to increase mentoring and networking opportunities. ASOR also stands ready to support its early career scholars at their home institutions by, for example, writing in support of junior faculty members' reappointment and tenure cases.

At the same time, ASOR recognizes that faculty positions in institutions of higher education are no longer as likely a career option for scholars in West Asian and wider Mediterranean studies. ASOR thus seeks opportunities to support the professional development of scholars who may not pursue, or who are no longer pursuing, a career as a faculty member in an institution of higher education. ASOR will present programming on various career tracks at its Annual Meeting: for example, NGOs, government agencies, IT, consulting, cultural resource management, museum work, and publishing and journalism.

ASOR will also invest in strategic partnerships that benefit its early career scholars and membership as a whole by providing training and opportunities for enhanced credentials. For example, webinars on pedagogy and educational technology, as well as training from partners such as the Council on Undergraduate Research and Forum on Education Abroad. ASOR will also explore using its various publications as venues for discussing careers outside the academy.

Finally, ASOR recognizes that the "next generation" includes not just current graduate students and recently minted Ph.D.'s, but undergraduates and K-12 students. As part of its expanded outreach programs (below), ASOR aims to build on the very successful teacher educational workshops that have been held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting to develop resources that individual members and regional societies can use in other contexts: for example, to reach out to local K-12 schools. Excavation scholarships are the primary way ASOR reaches out to undergraduates (as well as graduate students). ASOR will increase its engagement with those students by increasing excavation fellowship award amounts and by cultivating a fellowship "alumni" community.

#### **Area No. 4: Publications**

**Our Goals: Produce a High Quality, Widely-read Spectrum of Publications; Enhance ASOR's monograph publishing program and develop new publishing venues appropriate to the twenty-first century.**

## **Actions**

### **4 A. Expand the Monograph Publication Program**

ASOR reaffirms its historic commitment to monograph publishing, as this investment in knowledge production and knowledge dissemination is an important service ASOR provides to its members and to our discipline. As part of this commitment and investment, ASOR will continue to publish three monograph series—the Annual of ASOR (AASOR), the Archaeological Reports Series (ARS), and the *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* Supplement Series—and will seek to resume publishing the ASOR Books Series. We recognize the need to clearly articulate the missions of *ARS*, and the *Annual*, and identify new priorities in the monograph publication program.

In order to facilitate members' publication efforts, ASOR will seek funding for grants to subsidize subventions for members who publish in ASOR's monograph series. The Board has recently agreed to use revenue generated by the ASOR Books Series as seed money for this subvention fund.

### **4 B. Exploit New Frontiers in Publishing, including Digital Publication**

ASOR recognizes that digital publications will be a key element of ASOR's publication strategy moving forward. In order to facilitate this we plan to:

1. Enact and help facilitate others to follow the guidelines set out in the ASOR Digital Media Policies for ASOR Publications.
2. Enhance our monograph series through increasing their digital (e-book) presence as well as their inclusion in aggregate library holdings. We will also explore ways to make our back catalogue of monographs available in digital format, whether as a money-making venture or open access.
3. Articulate an open access statement that respects the rights of authors, the value of the work of publishers, and acknowledges the systemic inequalities that lead to differential access to scholarly work.
4. Work with our journal vendors to increasingly use digital support platforms to move material more suitable for an online presence there.
5. Increase the interoperability between the digital *Levantine Ceramics Project* and other ASOR publications.
6. Increase the number of color pages in JCS and the monograph series by identifying cost-saving methods to do so.

#### **4C. Situate our publications to appeal to a wider audience by:**

1. Increasing the archaeological content of *JCS*, without undermining *BASOR*.
2. Helping NEA find a greater audience beyond ASOR's membership.
3. Increasing the publicity surrounding ANE Today in order to attract more subscribers and, concomitantly, more ASOR members.

#### **4D. Address the *BASOR* and *JCS* Backlogs**

Both *JCS* and *BASOR* have developed significant backlogs of submitted articles in recent years. This prompts authors to take excellent articles to other journals. We will explore the possibilities of expanding the number of pages or issues in both journals as well as considering a supplementary *BASOR* series.

#### **4E. Increase the Diversity of our Editorial Boards**

### **Area 5: Public Outreach**

Our Goals: Expand our outreach efforts to, and engagement with, the general public.

#### **Actions**

##### **5A. Strengthen Current and Future Outreach Efforts**

Public service and outreach are central to ASOR's mission. Our Board of Trustees proudly includes trustees whose professional expertise lies elsewhere than West Asia and wider Mediterranean but also play key roles in ASOR's leadership. In addition, all ASOR programs are open to the public, and our members regularly make themselves available to serve the public through lectures, advising, and other activities. Moreover, ASOR offers several online and print publications designed specifically to address the general public's interests in the ancient Near East and wider Mediterranean world.

ASOR is committed to expanding its outreach efforts. For example, ASOR should explore creating a "consumer-friendly" outreach program to be held in conjunction with its Annual Meeting. Because outreach often happens at the local level, we also aim to make resources

available—especially digital resources—for ASOR members to use in their own communities (e.g., in local schools). ASOR should in addition explore ways in which it could form partnerships to enhance its outreach efforts: for example, partnerships with media outlets or partnerships with digital resource developers.

ASOR also intends to increase membership in the “Friends of ASOR” program by offering those members additional opportunities to engage with ASOR’s people and programs. In 2020 we launched a successful webinar series in conjunction with Friends of ASOR that is meeting with great success.

## **Area 6 Supporting the Work of our Members**

**Our Goals: Increase the fellowships, grants, and other forms of support available to individual ASOR members and to the faculty, students, and staff of institutional member schools. Foster cross generational and cross community mentorship opportunities. Champion the fields in which ASOR members work.**

### **Actions**

#### **6A. Assess Membership Benefits for the Twenty-First Century**

ASOR thrives because of its dedicated individual and institutional members, whom ASOR strives to support by providing them with tangible benefits. Historically, these benefits have included subscriptions to ASOR journals. Now, given the ready access many ASOR members have to electronic resources such as JSTOR, and even more so in a world of Open Access, this benefit is no longer as attractive. ASOR must thus identify and provide new and different membership benefits to sustain and grow its individual and institutional membership base, including significant new fellowships and grants and more on-line resources as described in the sections below

#### **6B. Fund More Fieldwork and Fieldwork-Related Research Grants**

ASOR has excelled in developing fellowship funds that support students engaging in archaeological fieldwork and related activities. Since 2007, ASOR has awarded more than \$850,000 to 670 researchers and students with mini-grants for scholarly research, annual meeting travel, excavation projects, and dig scholarships through our grant programs, which now contain over \$1,082, 030 in endowments. Excavation is expensive, and with reduced federal support in recent years ASOR needs to raise more funds to support its

members' field work. These funds can serve to facilitate key yet discrete activities in projects: for example, funds to purchase a special piece of equipment, to pay the fees for otherwise unfunded laboratory tests, or to cover the cost of hiring a particular specialist. The Shepard Urgent Action Grants, inaugurated in April 2020 with an endowment of \$\*\*, marks an important step in this program. From the Shepard endowment ASOR will be able to award two to four grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000 to excavation projects to carry out emergency conservation or stabilization activities at archaeological sites in the wider Mediterranean and Middle Eastern regions.

ASOR also seeks to raise funds for grants to support archaeological fieldwork in other ways: for example, grants for subsidizing publication subventions, especially for ASOR monographs (above); grants that help subsidize pre-publication work; and grants demonstrating ASOR's commitment to the communities and countries in which ASOR members work by supporting fieldwork projects that engage surrounding communities or otherwise enhance ASOR's engagement with local or national interests. ASOR has been particularly successful recently in working with the USDOS to carry out educational cultural heritage projects in Libya. ASOR's increased commitment to cultural heritage protection and preservation also suggests the development of other grants to protect and preserve sites that are at risk.

#### **6C. Create Other Fellowships and Grants that Support ASOR Members**

ASOR seeks to raise funds for fellowships and grants to support the work of its members in areas beyond fieldwork-related projects, such as (i) "travel to collections" grants (e.g., funding to conduct work in museum collections; fellowships to work in the ASOR archives); (ii) grants to support travel to and registration for the Annual Meeting, especially for junior scholars and international scholars, as well as for non-tenure-track scholars, independent scholars, and similar scholars who otherwise lack the funds to attend; and (iii) grants to support publication of non-fieldwork related scholarship (e.g., publications in the reinvigorated ASOR Books monograph series).

#### **6D. Create Fellowships to Recruit and Nurture Members from BIPOC and other underserved communities.**

ASOR received a \$150,000 challenge gift in 2021 that will serve as the cornerstone of a targeted campaign to raise \$250,000 to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within our research community. ASOR plans to use \$200,000 from this campaign to establish a permanent endowment that will generate \$10,000 per year to support research scholarships, internships, and travel fellowships dedicated to BIPOC students. These fellowships will be a foundation for future efforts and will be a tangible sign of ASOR's commitment to long-term change.

### **6E. Develop In-House Resources in Support of Archaeological Fieldwork**

To encourage the proper archiving of fieldwork records, and to meet the challenge of digital archiving and data recording, ASOR will work to develop and promulgate standards for archiving documentary records in all forms. In order that these archives be of maximal use, and maximally accessible, ASOR will also develop a database documenting the location of fieldwork records, especially the records of ASOR-affiliated projects.

In addition, ASOR will develop web resources to facilitate the work of fieldwork projects by, for example, providing a place for directors to list fieldwork projects that are looking for volunteers, or by providing directors with advice on best practices about running a field school and about the increasingly important issue of site curation (including long-term site preservation and public presentation). ASOR's website will also provide links to the guidelines and regulations of various Departments of Antiquities that are available on the Internet.

ASOR's web resources will also serve all ASOR members and the members of "Friends of ASOR" by functioning as a clearinghouse for information about archaeological fieldwork in the Near East and wider Mediterranean world.

### **6F. Champion the Study of the Near East and Wider Mediterranean**

ASOR is acutely aware that in contemporary institutions of higher education, programs dedicated to the study of West Asia and the Greater Mediterranean Basin increasingly find themselves under threat. The budgetary constraints and travel restrictions brought on by the 2020/2021 COVID Pandemic have exacerbated an already alarming decline in the support of humanistic disciplines. Now, more than ever, ASOR must serve as a strong advocate on behalf of academic colleagues whose departments face cuts by their institutions' administrations.

ASOR will also seek to promote the study of West Asia and the Greater Mediterranean Basin by regularly and consistently engaging the national humanities community. For example, ASOR will work with the National Humanities Alliance to advocate on behalf of the field of our field and to assert the overall value of the humanities.

ASOR will in addition increase its involvement in public advocacy in the federal and international arena: for example, by speaking out in support of (i) continued or increased NSF funding available to the social sciences (and so to archaeology); (ii) continued or increased funding for the ECA grants that help support ASOR's affiliated ORCs; and (iii) continued or increased NEH funding available for humanities research. ASOR also will speak out, as appropriate, about funding decisions that negatively affect our mission: for example, the recent NEH decision to cease funding overseas summer institutes and seminars.

In undertaking these efforts, ASOR will seek to work together with other organizations that share these same goals: for example, scholarly organizations such as the AIA, SAA, MESA, AOS, and SBL and like-minded federations such as CAORC. ASOR will also seek to work with individual scholars whose interests intersect with those of ASOR: for example, ASOR will seek to engage cultural resource specialists in discussions about ASOR's work to safeguard and preserve cultural heritage.

## **Part II Infrastructure to Support Programs (to be fleshed out with Andy and staff and facilities committee)**

### **Develop Strange Center to best serve our various programs**

#### **Staff Development**

#### **Improve Office Data Management Systems**

### **Conclusion**

Firmly grounded in its long-standing mission and distinguished history, ASOR continues to aim ever higher. Indeed, this Strategic Plan propels ASOR on a trajectory that is both wider in the scope of its research and programs and more intentionally focused on supporting its increasingly diverse members. Over the next five years, as ASOR works to strengthen its key programs the organization will enhance its long-standing position as a premier international learned society dedicated to examining, understanding, presenting, and preserving the history and cultural heritage of SW Asia and the Greater Mediterranean Basin. Through the ongoing participation and committed support of members, friends, and enthusiasts, ASOR will carry out this vision to dig deeper and reach higher.