

Honors and Awards Committee Report

Lynn Welton, chair

November 16, 2021

The Honors and Awards Committee thanks Lawson Younger, a long-time member of the committee who is completing his second term at the end of 2021. The committee will thus be looking for one new Cross sub-committee member for 2022. Announcements requesting nominations will be made in forthcoming *ASOR News* emails.

Committee member Mahri Leonard-Fleckman is completing her first term on the committee at the end of 2021 and has agreed to stay on for a second term. The Honors and Awards Committee also welcomed three new members who began terms at the beginning of 2021: Ra'anana Boustan, Jessie DeGrado and Mehrnoush Soroush. Boustan and DeGrado serve on the Cross sub-committee, while Soroush serves on the Wright sub-committee. This represented an increase in the total committee size, from seven total members to nine total members, adding one additional member to each of the Cross and Wright sub-committees for a total of four individuals plus the Chair.

The committee last year instituted a new award, the Student Paper Award, which was awarded for the first time during the 2020 Virtual Annual Meeting. The description of the award is as follows:

This award is conferred upon the author(s) of a paper presented during the Annual Meeting that conveys the results of a study about ancient Near Eastern and wider Mediterranean societies in a clear, understandable and convincing fashion. The first author and presenter of the paper must be a registered student at the time of presentation in order to be eligible for consideration for this award.

The increase in committee size permitted the reorganization of the committee into two additional sub-committees that consider nominees for the Joy Ungerleider Poster Award and Student Paper Award respectively. To ensure full representation of the range of ASOR's interests on these sub-committees, each is composed of two members from each of the Cross and Wright sub-committees, plus the committee Chair.

In 2021, the committee received a total of 15 nominations across all of its service awards. For consideration for its book awards in 2021, the committee received 20 nominations for the Frank Moore Cross Award. We also received 25 nominations for 20 books (some books were nominated more than once) for the G. Ernest Wright Award, and 14 nominations for 11 books for the Nancy Lapp Popular Book Award. 22 posters are being/were considered for the Joy Ungerleider poster award. The committee also considered 9 candidates for the new Student Paper Award.

The 2020 awardees selected by the committee will receive their awards in dual ceremonies, one to be held at the Members' Meeting at the in-person component of the Annual Meeting in Chicago, and a second to be held in the Virtual Members' Meeting on December 8. The list of awardees will be made available after the Members' Meeting on Friday, November 19. Each of the awardees will be featured in upcoming issues of *ASOR News*.

DEI Considerations

In response to the report prepared by ASOR's DEI taskforce, Honors and Awards committee members were solicited for discussion on ways in which we might improve the diversity of our awards nominees and recipients.

The main challenge for the Honors & Awards committee with regard to DEI is in encouraging greater numbers of nominations, as winners can necessarily only be selected if they are nominated. This has been a longstanding issue, but particularly affects the diversity of award recipients because there are biases in the groups that tend to nominate themselves and/or their colleagues for awards. Marginalized and under-represented groups are less likely to consider nominating themselves or others. Many members of ASOR likely have never even considered nominating someone for an award, and we need to find ways of decreasing this sense of inertia and encouraging a wider pool from within the broader ASOR membership to nominate their peers.

Currently, fieldwork and publication are the primary kinds of activities (other than those directly related to service to ASOR) for which ASOR recognizes its members. One avenue for increasing the diversity and inclusivity of ASOR's awards would be to expand the kinds of activities for which ASOR rewards its members, by considering rewarding alternative kinds of service to the field that tend to be under-recognized. Thus, some proposed new possible awards include those for mentoring and community engagement, activities which often remain under-recognized. This would also be a good avenue for drawing attention to the amazing work many individuals do in mentoring scholars from under-represented groups, and in engaging with communities both at home and abroad. Discussion of the creation of these awards is slated for the Honors and Awards committee's meeting this month.

The committee also voted this year to institute, on an *ad hoc* basis, when an appropriate candidate is identified, a book award for junior/early career scholars. These individuals can sometimes lose out in book awards to more senior scholars who draw on many years of experience, but are also paradoxically also far more likely to benefit from book award recognition in terms of its impact on their careers. For 2021, the committee is in fact very pleased to say that it did not need to bestow this award on anyone—both the Wright and Lapp award winners are pre-tenure early career scholars.

Finally, the committee is working to create evaluation rubrics for as many of its awards as possible, to ensure that the selection criteria are transparent and fair. This year, committee

member Pinar Durgun created a rubric that was used for evaluation of the Joy Ungerleider Poster Award nominees. The criteria used in this rubric were posted on ASOR's website, along with the instructions for poster submission, so that individuals submitting their posters for nomination knew how they would be evaluated. The committee is currently in the process of creating similar rubrics for the Student Paper Award and the P.E. MacAllister Field Archaeology Award.