

ASOR Cultural Heritage Committee Annual Report, 2022-2023

The Cultural Heritage Committee had a very productive year and is very pleased to see the level of engagement of ASOR members in cultural heritage issues as well as successful grants that are establishing ASOR as a very visible presence in cultural heritage projects in the MENA region.

The Committee has been active in writing letters and asking members to write letters in support of bilateral agreements about the illegal importation of antiquities, under the MoU with the U.S. government. in Libya, Northern Macedonia and Uzbekistan. We monitor all of the MoUs that are scheduled by CPAC, and note that often there is not much turn-around time to get letters in or sign up to be speakers at the meetings.

For the 2022 Annual Meeting, Evans and Fred Winter organized a panel “Cultural Heritage, Contested Heritage” [i.e. sites of contested heritage, ideas of the place of the international community in the definition and meaning of “World Heritage” in light of contemporary nationalism], with Katharina Schmidt, C. Brian Rose, Lindy Crewe, Pearce Paul Creaseman, Maryvelma O’Neill, Chandler Collins, and Tim Harrison.

In May 2022 we delivered to Sharon Herbert the Committee’s advice on signing advocacy to advance the protection and preservation of cultural heritage. This initiative was undertaken at the request of Sharon.

For the 2023 Annual Meeting, Fred Winter has organized the panel, “Giving it Back? Repatriation and the Ownership of Antiquity”

We continue to work on integrating the efforts of the Cultural Heritage Initiatives and the Cultural Heritage Committee. Andy Vaughn has been working with several members of the committee to assess grant-writing opportunities and drafts of proposals. This subcommittee was expanded recently and looks forward to working more closely with Andy and the proposed new CHI liaison. The Committee as a whole discussed the proposed administrative position for the CHI, as Andy prepares a job search committee. In response to the issues raised within that meeting, the Committee sent a statement to the Board suggesting that they use unrestricted funds in 2025 for cultural heritage initiatives.

DEI initiatives: the Cultural Heritage Committee reserves one slot for an Early Career Scholar (currently unoccupied) and endeavors to have three members from outside the US and Canada within its membership (currently, Israel, Iraq, Libya, Ukraine).

Respectfully submitted,



Jane DeRose Evans, Chair, Cultural Heritage Committee