

Curatorial training for Iraq Museum staff, July 11th–August 12th 2006

In the summer of 2006 two curators from the Iraq Museum in Baghdad, Mr Mehdi Ali Rahim and Mr Ibrahim Hasan Faraj, joined the British Museum's International Curatorial Training Programme. This is an annual programme which developed from the training of curators from Egypt in 2004 and 2005 and has grown to include curators from different countries which are prioritised in the British Museum's international strategy. See ([link to the International Curatorial Programme on the BM website](#))

In 2006 15 curators were invited from 6 countries: Sudan, Egypt, China, South Africa, Ethiopia and Iraq. The group of 15 curators were all based at the British Museum for four weeks followed by a week in one of four partner institutions in Britain (hosting 4–6 of the curators each). During their weeks at the British Museum 50% of the visiting curators time was spent attending training sessions as a group, and for the remaining 50% their training program was organised by the relevant host department.

The joint training included training on:

- Different aspects of museum exhibitions, including design, project management, delivery and also preparations and procedures of loan exhibitions.
- Interpretation including assessing visitor experience of galleries
- Conservation and Scientific research
- Portable Antiquities Scheme, and the *Treasure Act*
- Museum security
- Fund-raising (Development Trust)
- Education (Schools and Lifelong Learning)
- Photography
- Publications and merchandising (BM Company)

During their time organised by the Ancient Near East department the two Iraqi curators Mehdi and Ibrahim were given a variety of talks and presentations by members of staff including:

- Departmental collections and storage, especially regarding the collections from Iraq and in particular the cuneiform tablets
- Gallery displays issues and loan exhibitions preparations
- Study room procedures and practises and departmental research projects
- Inventory and registrations of the collections and the museum database
- The Mesopotamia civilization website and other Iraq related research resources
- Issues relating to current Iraqi cultural heritage problems

They also spent a day in Cambridge and visited and had talks at the Fitzwilliam museum.

Their last week was spent having training sessions at the National Museum and Galleries of Wales which included visits to various museums (the Roman Legionary Museum, St Fagan's Museum of Welsh Life and the National Waterfront Museum), learning about archaeology in Cardiff, and also attending the Eisteddfod (National Cultural Festival of Wales).

It is intended that two more Iraqi curators will participate in the international Curatorial Training Programme in June–July 2007.