

## **FINAL REPORT**

### **The British Museum ITP 2019**

**Ioan Oprea, conservator, National Museum of The Union Alba Iulia, RO.**

It is a privilege to work and visit a museum which is one of the best from our time.

We didn't invent a time machine (yet), but luckily our forebears invented museums and these magnificent 'temples of time' can take us nearly anywhere in the time and space of our planet for our personal and community use. History will remember us for having this privilege and will judge us if we used it well or badly. I strongly believe the ITP will be mentioned among



the good things from what this privilege means; this is why I see it as very difficult to write a final report for an experience that was much more than six weeks. Physically it is finished, yes, but the echo of this period will last forever in my life and my career because it has perfected my perception about time, past, patrimony, partnerships, museum friends and colleagues, the importance of a professional network and our duty to the world.

Thinking about all of this and about this amazing chance to have been on the ITP 2019, I will be always grateful and thankful to The British Museum and The Marie-Louise von

Motesiczky Charitable Trust, my sponsor, who made this dream tangible for me for six weeks. I am also honoured to address special thanks to the people who were always present and helpful in any matter during this period and without which the programme would not have been so amazing. My thoughts of gratitude goes for the ITP team: Claire Messenger, Manager International Training Programme; Mohamed Mokhtar, Senior Fellow 2019; Emily Shaw, Coordinator and George Peckham, Assistant; to Ross Thomas, Curator, Greece and Rome and, not least, for Andrea Martin, Exhibition and Interpretation Manager, The Collection: Art and Archaeology in Lincolnshire, Dawn Heywood, Collections Access Officer, The Collection: Art and Archaeology in Lincolnshire and Clare Pickersgill, Keeper of the University of Nottingham Museum, my hosts during the 10 day partnership period.



I am very thankful for the walk on Hadrian's Wall, to see “the end of the Roman world in Britannia” as it was one of my “to do things” in life. I also had the fantastic chance to be guided by Tony Willmott, who I only knew before from his publications. This visit has already started a future collaboration and I plan to extend my activity on Hadrian's Wall as this connection was established in the ancient times by the Romans and Dacians, a link between the



English patrimony and Romanian patrimony.

The ITP 2019 period was my first time in The British Museum but also in the UK. I imagined a visit to the UK at some point, but never in such a fantastic context, never behind the interface offered for visitors. So, having this inside tour made me more determinate to follow my big, big dream: to build an ancient Roman museum with a reservation around it, so the visitors can really go back in ancient times and live in it for a day or even for a year. A living museum; the fund raising session was a very useful turning point to make my project in reality in the near future. The ITP period meant even more for me; it made me more careful in all the details that make up a museum, it provided me with new perspectives on museum life and new technological solutions to extend the life of the artefacts and, most important for our visitors, new ideas for design and display in order to become more attractive and to fulfil their ultimate purpose: to be a learning resource. The ITP provided me with more knowledge and an experience that I could only have imagined and it's a unique thing to be able to share this with people from so many corners of the world. The global network, the people and their professional knowledge and simply their way of being helped me, and I think others as well, to get a better understanding of what patrimony means across the world. How we work in the museum and how we deal with our collections, and very importantly how we address both the local public and the world-wide visitors. Either we feel it or not, but the world is changing and we have to be prepared for it. The ITP is taking this step into the future by creating this global network and I feel we are now part of a virtual "museum of the world for the world" – and what a great thing this is.

When I stepped into the ITP sessions I was mostly interested in the paper and paintings conservation and the Roman collections. Since I am only a junior conservator, these sessions were and will be very useful for me since I learned about the main risks in conservation and the solutions provided by preventative conservation. For instance how to avoid pests, moths or insects with minimum risks. I also found it very useful to see the storage methods, the lighting and dehumidification methods, freezing and quarantine; not least, I've learned more about the loans of this type of artefacts and their ways of transport from one place to another.

Visiting Lincoln and Nottingham was just amazing from this point of view; I was lucky to see the famous "Magna Carta" and learn about its safe preservation conditions – an interesting session provided in the museum The Collection: Art and Archaeology in Lincolnshire. Then

Nottingham with University of Nottingham Museum was again just amazing because I had the chance to see one of the biggest collections of documents and books in the UK, with more than three millions pieces. I believe me and my other three colleagues from Kurdistan, Sudan and Myanmar were very lucky for having two partners instead of only one during the ten days Partner placement.

In the matter of conservation as a whole, the BM's World Conservation and Exhibition Centre will remain the main reference for me for combining new non-invasive technologies for the conservation of collections and artefacts. The sessions here were useful and I learned more about the materials used in the conservation procedures and also in the mounting for display. The staff were great all the time and allowed us to take material samples, photos and their contact details for future collaboration, projects and conservation solutions.

During my six weeks on the ITP I looked at the BM, probably, as the ancient Romans from the provinces looked at Rome and then, back home in distant lands, they tried to imitate it, to copy it and perfect their cities after the "sacred model." The British Museum holds this position in the museum world and being on the ITP it's our honourable duty to copy its best museum practice and share them with others as well. Among the many things I learned and saw in the BM, I particularly enjoyed some of the activities like "Object in Focus" and working in a totally new department. For me it was the Coins and Medals Department. A very challenging task and a very interesting concept of how to create an exhibition with one artefact. I will definitely copy this in my museum with some small changes and adapted it to our local profile and interests.

The ITP is a creative programme and this has enriched my own creativity, skills and it provided me with new exhibition ideas. It had also made me dream for a bigger and modern centre of research and conservation, not only for our museum needs but also for the local community. I hope I will get the necessary equipment to digitalise all this work for future colleagues and visitors. I do hope to stay in touch with the BM conservation centre, as well as with Lincoln and Nottingham, since this activity is vital for the museum in general.

I am very grateful to the ITP for these amazing six weeks, for all the contacts provided, for all the new chances, collaborations and projects in the future, for opening new perspectives in the museology field and in my career. I am thankful for this sustainable network and I do hope we will reunite in other projects, exhibitions or conferences. Many thanks for all the people in the BM who provided sessions and shared their experience with us - I still have a lot of pages to read with the information

I noted during their sessions and will do my best to share them with my colleagues in the museum very soon as everyone is interested in “what I did in the BM”.

To my ITP colleagues, may Clio, the muse of history, reunite us in work in the future.



I wish you all bright careers and success in all your museum activities.