

## ITP 2021 FINAL REPORT

by

Emrah KAHRAMAN

The Department of Greece and Rome in the British Museum

National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI, Partner Placement in the UK)

The ITP, which I was accepted for in 2020, was postponed several times due to the global epidemic and was completed in the first half of 2022 within the framework of the current programme. Therefore, for me, the ITP can be defined as a broad learning and sharing process covering the years 2020-2022. In addition, the ITP involved all the experiences I had while in the UK, beyond the sessions we attended at the British Museum and NMNI.

I believe that as a multi-layered learning programme, including the online modules, the ITP contributed to my personal and professional development and experiences in many ways. Firstly, it was very important to be able to see the difference between the main principles of museology in Turkey and the United Kingdom, which directly determine what we do in our museums. In this sense, being able to see and understand these principles in both the British Museum and the Ulster Museums in Northern Ireland was one of the most important parts of the programme.

Participating in the programme is an important privilege that very few colleagues in the museum sector can achieve. This opportunity also provides a sense of self-confidence as it makes you feel a sense of being chosen. During my undergraduate education, I learnt a lot about the history of the British Museum before visiting or getting detailed information about museums in the world and even in Turkey. Being able to be in the British Museum, which has been a milestone goal throughout my career, even for a short time, shows that the steps I have taken are in the right direction. I hope to take advantage of both educational and professional opportunities in the United Kingdom, if possible, in the years to come.

It is essential to categorize what I learnt from the ITP, which is a very wide range of information, to be more understandable. In this context, firstly, I can say that the experiences I gained from the Department of Greece and Rome in the British Museum are eye-opening. It was quite remarkable that there was a "collection care" unit in the department alongside the curators, to maintain the division of work in a more organized way. Such a division of the work

in the department is one of the most essential issues to be implemented into the collection, in order to produce more creative work in the museum I work for. Besides this, the fact that the curators were involved in an archaeological project alongside museum work was inspiring, triggering my desire to do the same thing personally. I think that periodically taking part in longer-term studies contributes to increasing the knowledge and experience of collections.

One of the most important parts of the programme for me was the focus on organization of storage during the departmental days and the experience of how huge stone objects were preserved in the storage. The examples at the British Museum have been very influential in shaping my thoughts on how storage, which is a global problem in museology, could be in ideal order. I think that the storage system I have seen in the United Kingdom will be very useful during the renovation works on the storage of the museum I am working in during the current period.

The Ulster Museum in Belfast provided me with a very productive process in terms of having museums with different concepts, thanks to the programme prepared for me by the staff there. The Ulster Folk Museum and the Ulster American Folk Park were very impressive and instructive as they are open-air museums of a kind I have never seen before. In recent years, very intense work has been carried out for such projects in Turkey. In order to be able to take part in such a museum project in Turkey in the coming years, I attach great importance to seeing examples in Northern Ireland and being in contact with the curators of these exhibitions. The educational programme for children at the Ulster Museum was the most diverse I have ever experienced. I can interpret that making copies of various objects with very similar materials is a very effective method for children to perceive objects. Although I do not work directly on children's education myself, I plan to convey my impressions and contacts at the Ulster Museum to my colleagues working on the education of children.

Also, another important issue was the archaeological conference I attended in Belfast, which increased my knowledge of Irish archaeology. I learnt about many professional issues such as excavation systems and documentation methods in the sessions that I could only attend on the first day through the ITP calendar.

In addition to the departmental work, many sessions we attended allowed us to acquire new knowledge and skills directly. The activities that we performed by dividing into groups are among the works that I am most personally satisfied with. First of all, the activities that emphasize the power and importance of teamwork with colleagues from different geographies and different fields helped to understand the quality of the team spirit potential that we have in

ourselves. In addition, observing the outstanding aspects of our teammates or colleagues in different groups is an indirect source of inspiration. Therefore, the “Object in focus” project and “Museum Project Day” sessions are amongst the topics that I will place at the focal point of the ITP. Especially the Object in focus, which reminded me of the importance and power of production and imagination that I will need in my professional and personal life.

There are very clear differences between museum activities in Turkey and the United Kingdom. These differences can also determine the areas we focus on from a professional point of view. The organization of the photography studio and the criteria of collection management at the British Museum has many advantages within the scope of activities such as documenting, recording, and storing the artefacts, which are going to be useful for the museums in Turkey whose collections are increasing every year thanks to archaeological excavations. Naturally, these systems need to be properly integrated into the structure of museums in Turkey. In this regard, it can be said that the main barriers to the implementation of the practices in the museum where I work are the schematic differences in museum activities and, accordingly, the general scheme of museum departments.

After the on-site programme, I care about the network within the framework of the ITP regarding the issues that I can learn from and contribute to with colleagues and museums globally through the ITP. In this context, when needed, I intend to contribute to the sessions to be organized by ITP in the future, either remotely or on-site, and I would like to convey my personal and professional work and experiences to my colleagues across the world through the ITP. During the on-site programme, we were able to closely follow the importance of social media in communicating what we did as a group and the progress of the ITP 2021 to our colleagues. Therefore, it is one of my basic expectations to keep communication sustainable by following current developments through the ITP's social media accounts. The ITP team informs us via e-mail, offering various possibilities for us to stay in touch.

As a result, it is not necessarily easy or reasonable to initiate change as an individual. I plan to categorize the diary, notes, photographs and documents which I collected in the UK, to share with my colleagues and institution. It is among my possible plans to create a roadmap for the implementation of the practices I mentioned through one-on-one interviews with my colleagues who are experts in their fields. Similarly, I am planning to communicate with my supervisors at the museum where I work, to convey the subjects that I can contribute to thanks to the experiences I have gained in the United Kingdom, and to convey my desire to participate in the projects planned for the future.

Special thanks to the ITP Team and all the staff of the British Museum who helped us attend the ITP and did so much for our comfort while we were in the United Kingdom. I would like to thank the NMNI staff for hosting us very kindly in Northern Ireland, not only for the professional opportunities but also for organizing social activities so that we could get to know this wonderful city closely. Although I did not have the opportunity to meet face-to-face due to the pandemic conditions, I would like to express my gratitude to the Pears Foundation officials, who provided great support in achieving this wonderful experience and provided all kinds of support.

Emrah KAHRAMAN

Istanbul, May 2022



The Selfie after the session.



While presenting the Museum of London at the “Museum Day” session in the Board Room.





Get some rest in Cambridge.



At the Ulster American Folk Park with Shamrocks.





In front of the unbelievable “Stonehenge”.



The Belfast Team.