

IRAQ CULTURAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE



THE GETTY CONSERVATION INSTITUTE

WORLD MONUMENTS FUND

Media Inquiries

For World Monuments Fund

Holly Evarts
646-424-9594
hevarts@wmf.org

For Getty Conservation Institute

John Giurini
(310)440-6573
jgiurini@getty.edu

WORLD MONUMENTS FUND AND GETTY CONSERVATION INSTITUTE TRAINING COURSE HELD IN JORDAN IS COMPLETED

GCI-WMF Iraq Cultural Heritage Conservation Initiative delivers course in site database compilation and field assessment of Iraq's heritage sites' condition using state of the art equipment. UNESCO provided funding for course equipment and organization

January 5, 2005, New York City and Los Angeles—**GCI-WMF Iraq Cultural Heritage Conservation Initiative** completed the first training course entirely dedicated to the inventory and rapid assessment of archaeological and historic sites of Iraq, and to the delivery of, and training in the compilation of the first module of the database that will manage the site inventory at the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH) of Iraq. The course was provided to 16 employees of the SBAH and was held in Amman, Jordan, from November 19 to December 19 on the premises of the UNESCO office in Amman, and of ACOR (the American Center of Oriental Research). Field work was conducted on the Amman Citadel and other historic and archaeological sites in the Amman area, thanks to the generous assistance of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan. In the wake of the relentless, and continuing, looting of Iraqi archaeological sites, the GCI – WMF – SBAH decided to focus training on techniques, methodologies, and tools for accurately locating sites, recording their condition, and developing a national computer-based register or inventory.

UNESCO sponsored the course with a grant to WMF, and donated most of the technical equipment for which training was provided. This included Total Stations, used in the mapping and survey of sites and monuments and for preparing accurate plans of their current status; GPS (Global Positioning System) units, for precisely locating sites and allowing the transfer of coordinate information to the Geographic Information System of sites now in preparation; and laser distance meters, to quickly measure buildings and archaeological structures. GCI and WMF (the latter with funds from the J.M. Kaplan Fund and the National Endowment of Humanities) donated digital cameras for monitoring condition and activities at sites and monuments in Iraq, and other technical equipment and software to allow the production of digital models of the sites.

The course was conducted in modules, to allow the SBAH participants to be trained in their area of expertise, and to develop a team approach encouraging the integration of site recording, documentation, and assessment.

- Module 1 was dedicated to site reconnaissance, which included techniques in site and building description.
- Module 2 covered site conditions and threats. Both these modules included theoretical lectures and practical field work.
- Module 3 dealt with documentation and recording techniques and tools, including equipment training.
- Module 4 was provided to staff who will enter and validate the information from the field on the current status of sites, and will run the database and GIS development.

At the end of the course, the Iraq SBAH team was able to initiate a process of verification of the information in the archive of SBAH and plan future work on inventory and assessment of site conditions, completing documentation where it is missing, and adding new information where required.

GCI and WMF enjoyed the participation and support of numerous organizations and individuals: English Heritage, the organization in charge of protection of cultural heritage properties in England, sent their metric survey team to deliver the course in the use of the total station. The U.S. National Park Service sent the Cultural and Natural Resources Manager of the Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument in New Mexico to teach a module on hazards and threats. Numerous Jordanian and international experts, some of Iraqi origin, participated in the teaching and field activities.

GCI and WMF will continue to organize and deliver courses in conjunction with the further development of the database and site inventory in preparation, and to allow the staff of SBAH to be in charge of the challenging task of collecting and managing information on tens of thousands of sites and historic monuments in the country.

The **Getty Conservation Institute**, a program of the J. Paul Getty Trust, works internationally to advance conservation and to enhance and encourage the preservation and understanding of the visual arts in all of their dimensions—objects, collections, architecture, and sites. The Institute serves the conservation community through scientific research, education and training, field projects, and the dissemination of the results of both its own work and the work of others in the field. In all its endeavors, the Institute is committed to addressing unanswered questions and promoting the highest possible standards of conservation practice.

The **World Monuments Fund**, an international organization with headquarters in New York City, is the foremost private, nonprofit organization devoted to onsite conservation of monuments and sites worldwide. Since its founding in 1965, WMF has achieved an unmatched record of successful international conservation projects in more than eighty countries. The organization brings together public and private support to implement comprehensive conservation efforts. These include project planning, field surveys, fieldwork, on-site training in the building crafts, advocacy, and the development of long-term strategies for the protection of monuments and sites.