

# Protecting the Past: Towards a Better Future with Cultural Heritage

A 2-day conference bringing together national and international experts to explore new approaches to monitor, protect and preserve the cultural heritage of Iraq and the Iraqi Kurdistan.

## Press Release

Sunday, Oct 31, 2016 - Sulaimani (KRG), Iraq: The first day of the international conference, "[Protecting the Past: Towards a Better Future with Cultural Heritage](#)", commenced this morning at The American University of Iraq, Sulaimani (AUIS), with opening speeches by Mala Awat and Qais Hussain Rasheed from the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and Iraqi State Board of Antiquities respectively.

The conference, jointly organized by the [AUIS Center for Archaeology and Cultural Heritage \(CACHE\)](#), the University of Oxford [Endangered Archaeology in the Middle East & North Africa \(EAMENA\) project](#), and the [University of Sulaimani](#), aims to draw upon the experience of projects and approaches that have been successful throughout the wider Middle East in protecting local heritage.

In his keynote speech, Robert Bewley, director of EAMENA, discussed future strategies for the project with specific reference to Iraq. Other speakers discussed the impact of similar projects, such as the [ASOR](#) and [SHIRIN](#) initiatives, to safeguard the cultural heritage in the region as well as the #CultureUnderAttack project by Washington based Antiquities Coalition. Local officials and practitioners discussed their own experiences of challenges facing cultural heritage in Iraq and practical approaches by the international community that can make the greatest difference on the ground.

On the second day, the panels will discuss new approaches as well as local capacity building efforts. Part of the day will focus on destruction of heritage in Mosul, culminating in an open session discussing the future of Mosul by displaced archaeologists.

This conference has been made possible with the generous support of our partners, including the [European Union Delegation to Iraq](#), [The Barakat Trust](#), and [The Gerald Averay Wainwright Averay Fund](#).

More information on the conference, speakers and the program can be found at [www.protectingthepast.com](http://www.protectingthepast.com). Follow us on Facebook [@auiofficial](#) and on Twitter [@aui\\_news](#) for latest updates, photos, videos and podcasts from the event.

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