

## Taras Shevchenko at the British Library: Mapping and linking our collections

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<b>Supervisor</b>	Katya Rogatchevskaia, Lead East European Curator (primary supervisor) & Jody Butterworth, Endangered Archives Programme Curator
<b>Department, Location</b>	European & Americas Collections - St Pancras, London
<b>Start date/timeframe</b>	Any time from May 2019.
<b>Duration</b>	<b>3 months</b> (or part-time equivalent).
<b>Remote-working</b>	After an initial period of office-based training, there is the potential to work from home for 2-3 days per week, if required.
<b>Context for placement</b>	
<p>Based within the Library's European and Americas Collections team, this placement project is focused on enhancing the discoverability and accessibility of our digitised collection of printed books relating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ukrainian poet, writer and artist Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861). The project aims to map and link this digitised content in relation to physical books about Shevchenko that are also in the Library's collection.</p> <p>The Library's <b>physical</b> collection of books relating to Shevchenko is comprised of ca 1000 volumes, including rare first editions and collections (e.g., the 1840 and 1860 editions of <i>Kobzar</i>). This material can be located using the Library's main catalogue, <i>Explore</i>.</p> <p>The <b>digitised</b> content is the product of a 2013 project undertaken as part of the Endangered Archives Programme (EAP) – a grants giving programme, funded by Arcadia and administered by the British Library, which aims to preserve archival material from around the world that is in danger of destruction, neglect or physical deterioration. This project (<a href="#">EAP657</a>) digitised archival content and printed books relating to Shevchenko that is held in private archives and public institutions in Ukraine and which was deemed to be at risk of deterioration. This resulted in a total of 60,000 images, copies of which have since been deposited at the British Library.</p> <p>At present, of this digitised content, only the archival materials are discoverable via the Library catalogues (<i>Explore Archives and Manuscripts</i>). The digitised printed books remain largely 'hidden', in large part due to the fact that the accompanying metadata is not in a standardised format.</p> <p>The Library therefore currently has both physical and digitised collections of printed books relating to Shevchenko, but it is not clear how the two collections relate to each other and how much overlap there is across the two collections.</p> <p>The aim of this placement is to enhance and standardise the metadata for the digitised collection, enhance metadata for the print collection as and when required, and in so doing to enable that content to be made accessible to researchers via <i>Explore</i>. The aim is also to enhance the catalogue records for the Library's physical collection, inserting links to any corresponding, related or complementary digital content. This will mean that researchers have enhanced, joined-up access to the full breadth of the Library's collections of materials relating to Shevchenko, both physical and digital.</p>	
<b>Expected tasks and outcomes</b>	
<p>The placement project as summarised above will entail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-referencing the collection of digitised printed books related to Shevchenko (from EAP657) against the Library's physical holdings in order to identify and map where there is overlap</li> <li>• Undertaking bibliographic research in order to be able to update records of the digitised items according to British Library standards. (At the moment, many of the titles are translated into English, so they have to be recorded in the original language according to the</li> </ul>	

uniformed rules applied in Anglo-American cataloguing.)

- Correcting any anomalies within the EAP records and, where necessary, adding the titles in the original script along with a Library of Congress transliteration
- Examining the Library's physical holdings in person and, where appropriate, undertaking additional bibliographic research to enhance the catalogue metadata of these items
- Working with Library staff to link the records and make the digital collection searchable and accessible through *Explore*
- Recording the process of linking the physical and digital collections so as to be able to provide feedback to Library staff and, towards the end of the placement, make recommendations for future projects of this nature

Alongside this core bibliographic and cataloguing activity, the placement student will be encouraged to blog about the project via the Library's social media accounts and the *European Studies* blog. It would also be possible to promote the Shevchenko collections by creating a collection guide of this collection for the Library's website.

#### **Training and experience expected to be gained by student through the placement**

This placement provides an opportunity to have a unique inside view of how libraries and archives organise their holdings, to explore the problems of digital preservation and accessibility of digital resources, and to examine the relationship and interplay between traditional and digital library environments.

At the start of the placement, the student will receive an introduction to the European and Americas Department and curatorial activities, as well as to the Endangered Archives Programme. Training will be provided on using and understanding Library catalogues and metadata standards, including searching on the internal cataloguing system (Aleph). The student will be shown how to set up and structure an Excel cataloguing template for the new or enhanced metadata created by the project so that this can subsequently be converted into Aleph fields. Job shadowing opportunities with the Library's cataloguing and metadata processing teams, as well as with other curators in the European & Americas collections could be arranged if this is of interest.

The placement will provide valuable experience of cataloguing theory and practice, as well as enabling the student to develop and apply transferable skills in areas such as project management and digital humanities. Creating website content and blog posts provide an opportunity to reach a large public audience and gain experience in writing for a mainly non-academic readership. The placement will also provide an enriched understanding of the Library's collections across different formats and of the role of its curatorial and cataloguing teams.

During the placement, the student will have access to all appropriate training and events offered by the Library, such as the talks and workshops offered in the Library's 'Digital Scholarship' and '21st Century Curators' staff training programmes. There will also be opportunities to network with other research fellows, collaborative doctoral researchers and placement students working across different areas of the organisation.

#### **Required knowledge and skills**

This placement requires good knowledge of Ukrainian (reading and writing) and a working knowledge of Russian or another Cyrillic-based Slavonic language.

This is a training and development opportunity open to current PhD students only. It is not intended to lead to a permanent post at the Library. Please note that the Library is unable to provide a stipend for PhD research placements. Applicants must obtain the support of their PhD supervisor in advance and, as part of their process, consult their HEI to ascertain what funding is available to support them.

Application deadline: 5pm on Monday, **18 February 2019**. Information on how to apply is available on our website: <https://www.bl.uk/news/2019/january/phd-research-placements-2019>