

Displaced Persons (DP) Camp Publications in the British Library

Reference: 2022-EA-DP

Supervisor(s)	Dr Katie McElvanney (Curator Slavonic & East European Collections)
Team and department	European Studies team European, Americas & Oceania Collections, London (St Pancras)
Start date/timeframe	Earliest start: June 2022 Latest end date: March 2023
Duration	3 months (or part-time equivalent)
Part time/Full time	Full time or part time Minimum days/week if undertaken part time: 2
Location and working arrangements	Can be offered as a hybrid placement At least 2 days a week on site (London, St Pancras) for a full-time placement or 1 day a week on site for a part-time placement

Context and nature of placement project

This placement will be hosted by the European, Americas & Oceania Collections. The department makes materials from the histories and cultures of these areas accessible for a wide range of audiences through providing metadata and interpretation, and by showcasing collection items via exhibitions, digital content and research papers.

The British Library holds a number of rare books, journals and newspapers published in and around Displaced Persons (DP) Camps in Europe (predominantly Germany and Austria) between 1945 and 1955. The languages of these publications include Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, Yiddish and Belarusian. Many are written and/or illustrated by prominent writers and artists, and contain stamps and other information key to understanding the activities, networks and governance of the camps and DP/émigré communities.

The metadata for these items is inconsistent and, in many cases, minimal. Focusing on the Ukrainian-language titles, the main purpose of the placement is to enhance the catalogue records for these items in order to improve access to the collection. In addition, the student will have the opportunity to research and promote the items through blog posts and social media, and to identify potential links with other institutions holding related collections.

The placement will provide a hands-on introduction to the activities of a major research library and cultural organisation, with a particular focus on cataloguing, collection management, and public engagement. In undertaking the placement project, the student will have the opportunity to consult and work with colleagues across a range of collection areas and roles.

Supervised by Dr Katie McElvanney, Curator of Slavonic and East European Collections, the placement will sit within the European, Americas and Oceania Department. Alongside weekly meetings, pastoral support, and regular training opportunities, the student will benefit from being part of a welcoming and supportive wider team, which includes a number of PhD researchers.

Tasks and outcomes

The primary focus of this placement will be to enhance the metadata for the Library's Ukrainian DP camp publications in order to improve access to the collection.

Typical tasks will include:

- Enhancing and standardising metadata for Ukrainian DP camp publications already identified using an Excel template, to include adding or correcting the original Cyrillic and transliterated titles, subject headings, and copy specific information.
- Identifying particularly rare items that may be suitable for digitisation.
- Flagging any items needing conservation.
- Promoting the collection and project via the [European studies blog](#) and Twitter.

Additional optional tasks, depending on the student's areas of interest, may include:

- Identifying, researching, and promoting DP camp publications in other languages (e.g. Russian, Polish, Belarusian) held by the Library.

Expected outcomes:

- A minimum of 100 enhanced catalogue records, which can be uploaded to the Library's catalogue.
- Two European Studies blog posts relating to the placement and collection.
- A staff talk on the project and the student's specific research interests within the placement.

Training and development opportunities

PhD placement students are welcome to access a wide range of workshops, talks and training available at the Library. Supervisors will offer advice on which opportunities may be of particular relevance. Depending on availability, these wider training opportunities may include, for example, the Digital Scholarship Training Programme, Cultural Property Training, Research Roundtables, Business & IP Centre workshops and staff talks.

In addition, this particular PhD placement will provide:

- Weekly supervision meetings to discuss progress and training/pastoral needs (fortnightly if part-time).
- A hands-on introduction to the activities of a major research library and cultural organisation, with a particular focus on cataloguing, collection management and public engagement.
- The opportunity to manage a short-term project with regular and defined outcomes.
- The chance to liaise with different audiences and stakeholders within and outside the institution, through meetings, presentations, blogs, and other publications.

Required knowledge and skills

All applicants will be expected to demonstrate the following:

- Ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing, internally and externally.
- Working knowledge of Microsoft Office applications and online meeting tools.
- Ability to follow instructions and policies, in particular with regard to Health & Safety and the safe use of collections.
- Ability to work effectively with others while also completing tasks independently.
- Clear reasons for applying to a specific placement and good understanding of the project purpose.

In addition, this specific placement project requires the following:

- A good reading knowledge of Ukrainian is essential.
- Knowledge of another Slavonic language (Russian, Belarusian, Polish) is desirable.

Application deadline: **Friday 25 February 2022 (5 pm)**

Eligibility criteria, funding information and details of how to apply are available on the British Library website: <https://www.bl.uk/research-collaboration/doctoral-research/british-library-phd-placement-scheme>