

# Contextualising a digital photographic archive of Siberian Indigenous peoples

Reference: 2022-EA-SIB

<b>Supervisor(s)</b>	Dr Ekaterina Rogatchevskaia (Lead Curator, Slavonic and East European Collections )
<b>Team and department</b>	European Studies team; European, Americas & Oceania Collections
<b>Start date/timeframe</b>	Earliest start: October 2022 Latest end date: March 2023
<b>Duration</b>	<b>3 months</b> (or part-time equivalent)
<b>Part time/Full time</b>	Full time or part time Minimum days/week if undertaken part time: 2.5
<b>Location and working arrangements</b>	Can be offered as hybrid placement (remote with some visits to London, St Pancras)  Minimum 1 day per week on site (London, St Pancras) if part-time or 2 days per week on site (London, St Pancras) if full time
<b>Context and nature of placement project</b>	
<p>This placement will be hosted by the European, Americas &amp; 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 for researchers and learners, and by showcasing collection items via physical exhibition displays, social media and research papers. We work together with other departments to widen our digital offer to researchers and the general public all over the world.</p> <p>This placement will focus on exploring the collection of photographs created as part of the <a href="#">Endangered Archives Programme (EAP)</a> project <i>Digitising the photographic archive of southern Siberian indigenous peoples</i>. This project successfully digitised, archived and distributed 3,672 glass plate negatives collected over a period of time during ethnographical expeditions in South Siberia in the late 19th and first half of the 20th century. Work was conducted in four regional archives (Irkutsk, Minusinsk, Yekaterinburg State Archive and Yekaterinburg Writer's Archive). These photographs are now accessible via our online catalogue: <a href="https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP016">https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP016</a></p> <p>The placement will focus on research into this digitised collection and other resources in the British Library related to indigenous peoples of Siberia, in order to contextualise the photographic archive. The placement will also consider some of the issues connected with Russian language metadata supplied with the collection.</p> <p>The placement will be supervised by Ekaterina Rogatchevskaia, Lead Curator of Slavonic and East European Collections. 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 systems. Supervision will include regular meetings and catch-ups.</p>	

## Tasks and outcomes

The primary focus of this placement will be to undertake research to help contextualise and promote the collection of photographs of Southern Siberian Indigenous peoples.

The main tasks include:

- Undertaking research into the collection and identifying a range of other resources that can support research in this field.
- Promoting the collection and the project via the [European Studies blog](#) and Twitter.
- Reviewing Russian language metadata associated with the collection, identifying mistakes and outdated terminology that might no longer be appropriate today; suggesting ways of improving image descriptions to engage critically with colonial perspectives and ensure respectful and ethical engagement with the peoples and culture represented in the collection.

Additional optional activities, depending on the student's interests, could include:

- Engaging with professional networks (making new network connections and following existing ones, e.g. with specialists at the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge) and communities of volunteers (e.g. via Zooniverse) to learn more about the subjects of the images.
- Developing and suggesting new approaches for engaging with networks and the wider community to promote the collection.

Expected outcomes:

- A collection guide on the British Library resources on the Indigenous peoples of Siberia.
- At least one European Studies blog post sharing insights from the placement relating to the collection of photographs.
- An internal talk on the project and 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 opportunities to:

- Experience 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.
- Meet colleagues from other collection areas/departments, which may include for example a brief introduction to the activities of the Endangered Archives Programme.
- Network with research fellows, collaborative doctoral researchers and placement students working within the host department and across different areas of the organisation.
- Manage a small project and apply research outcomes to practical solutions.
- Work creatively to promote a collection and develop networks with different stakeholders.

## 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:

- Good knowledge of the Russian language.
- Interest in and ability to quickly acquire a degree of basic knowledge of Siberia and its peoples.

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

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>