Theme: Exploring and enhancing the British Library's Turkic-language collections

The British Library's Collections contain over 16,000 printed items in Turkic languages. Nearly 5,000 of these publications are in the Turkic languages of the former Soviet Union and China – ranging from Gagauz in the west to Uighur and Yakut in the east. They represent a valuable but underutilized grouping of works reflecting two centuries of intellectual, cultural and political developments among the Turkic peoples of Eurasia. As the British Library engages with stakeholders interested in, or hailing from, the Turkic world, these unique resources will be of considerable importance as a basis for dialogue and cooperation.

This fellowship will assist the British Library in cataloguing, conserving and publicising its collections of Turkic printed materials, while also adding to extant knowledge about the nature and extent of publishing in Turkic languages throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. It will involve working with a number of different departments across the organization – including Asian and African Studies, European and American Collections and the Metadata Team – in order to determine best practices for the creation of bibliographic data, its display and its dissemination through the Library's various channels of communication. Training on the metadata creation, storage and display systems at the British Library will be provided at an early stage in the Fellowship, and frequent consultation with the Metadata team will ensure that the incumbent's education in the Library's metadata systems is a continuous and dynamic process. The successful candidate will thereby assist the Library in developing its treatment of both the form and the content of Turkic publications by investigating improvements to the systems for cataloguing and conserving such materials, as well as producing original content on the history of the items themselves.

This fellowship is open to candidates from: Azerbaijan, China, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The specific regional focus of the fellowship will take account of the successful applicant's interests and language skills.

Key Responsibilities:
• Creation of metadata for uncatalogued materials in a format suitable for upload to the online catalogue.
• Research and consultation with colleagues across the Library in order to identify and share best practice in the systems for cataloguing and conservation of said materials (transliteration, typology, binding, storage, etc.).
• Research into the general history of Turkic publications and collections held at other institutions, in order to contextualize the British Library's holdings.
• Organization of a forum for the sharing of information and best practices regarding Turkic materials with domestic and international partners.

Deliverables:
• Catalogue records of materials in the collection.
• An overview of the materials held by the British Library, whether in catalogue form or as a collection guide.
• Blog posts and/or papers regarding notable aspects of the Library's collections.
• A best practices report summarizing the most efficient means for the management of said collection items, along with recommendations for changes or enhancements.
• An event intended to bring together stakeholders, peers and colleagues in order to share best practices in the field.

Skills and experience to be gained:
• Staff-level access to unique British Library collections and research resources
• Practical 'hands-on' training in metadata systems, cataloguing processes and bibliographic standards
• Experience in disseminating project outcomes and in engaging different audiences through various communication channels
• Opportunities to apply language skills to support the strategic needs of a major research library

- Experience in the planning and organising of stakeholder events
- Networking opportunities with British Library colleagues and external stakeholders
- Opportunities to attend wide-ranging suite of British Library training courses, professional development workshops and staff talks

Candidate requirements:
- Degree or equivalent in a subject relevant to the history of the Turkic world and/or Turkic literature and culture and/or librarianship
- Excellent written and spoken English and at least one of the Turkic languages. Knowledge of Russian, Persian or Arabic is an asset
- At least one year of experience working with databases and/or metadata creation and/or in a library or archive
- Interest in digital and data-driven innovation
- Excellent attention to detail
- Good oral and written communication skills
- Strong computer skills