**AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) studentship – Navigating Networks and Developing Practice: People and Biography in the British Museum Collection Database** with the University of Reading and the British Museum

**Start date**: 1st October 2024

**Application Deadline:** 10 June 2024

*Interviews will take place on 10 July 2024 (online)*

The University of Reading, and the British Museum are pleased to announce the availability of a fully funded doctoral studentship from October 2024 under the AHRC's [Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships (CDP) scheme](#)

Using the British Museum database of individuals connected with the Museum's collections, this project explores the history, challenges and potential of documenting people in museum databases.

This project will be jointly supervised by Professor Rachel Mairs and Dr Victoria Donnellan and the student will be expected to spend time at both the University of Reading and the British Museum, as well as becoming part of the wider cohort of CDP funded students across the UK.

The studentship can be held either full or part-time.

Students should have a Master's Degree in a relevant subject or be able to demonstrate equivalent experience in a professional setting.

The studentship is open to both home and international applicants.

**Project Overview**

Museums and museum documentation are oriented around objects. But museums also need to document, research and tell stories about the people who made, found, owned or exchanged objects. This project explores the history, challenges and potential of documenting people in museum databases.

Shared challenges include the variable quality and coverage of legacy data about people, and the limitations of current data structures, shaped by years of cataloguing practice, both paper-based and digital. Museum databases are not neutral: their structures, emphases and silences perpetuate inequalities and ways of thinking that may be discriminatory, colonial and exclusionary. There is enormous potential to enrich data, address legacy terminology, increase representation, and mobilize person records as powerful connectors between people, objects, places, events and documentary evidence.

The British Museum Person Authority is the key research resource for this project, containing over 200,000 records for people connected with the museum's objects. The student will research and critique the BM's historic and contemporary practice, relating to cataloguing people. They will develop new best practice, while enriching knowledge of the networks of people connected with the museum's archaeological collections. The student will identify a suitable set of person records to use as a case study, within the supervisors' expertise (archaeology of the Classical Mediterranean world, Middle East, Central and South Asia). This BM case study will make important contributions to wider practice. The student will relate it to current research and evolving practice in the GLAM (Galleries, Libraries,

Archives and Museums) sector and wider digital landscape and will develop and disseminate recommendations for cataloguing people.

The project will provide the researcher with a strong foundation for a career in museums and/or archaeological research, combining subject-related research with extensive practical experience in digital cataloguing.

**Research questions include:**

· How has the British Museum evolved its strategy for documenting the biographies and networks of people surrounding its collection? And how does that relate to wider sectoral practice?
· How do users of the British Museum collection database experience and navigate data relating to people? What problems do they perceive and what changes do they want to see?
· How can people and the connections and relationships between them, and between people and other data (e.g. places or themes), be better recorded and made more retrievable in the British Museum database?
· What are the implications of this work, both for future research and for cataloguing practice in the wider sector?

**Research with the British Museum**

This research studentship is one allocated to the British Museum by the AHRC to support the work of the British Museum. The successful student will be expected to spend a substantial period of time carrying out research and gaining relevant experience at the main British Museum site in London as part of the studentship.

**Details of Award**

CDP doctoral training grants fund full-time studentships for 4 years or part-time equivalent up to a maximum of 8 years.

The award covers tuition fees up to the value of the full-time home UKRI rate for PhD degrees. The **Research Councils UK Indicative Fee Level for 2024/2025 is £4,786.** The University of Reading will waive the difference between what the AHRC provide to the university for tuition and the charge made by the university for tuition fees for international students.

The award makes a contribution towards living expenses for all students both home and international students. For the academic year 2024/2025 this will be £20,837. This is based on the UKRI National Minimum Doctoral Stipend for 2024/2025 which is £19,237, plus a CDP maintenance payment of £600/year plus a London allowance of £1000/year because the British Museum is based in London.

The student is also eligible to receive an additional travel and related expenses grant during the course of the project courtesy of the British Museum worth up to £1,500 per year for 4 years.

The successful candidate will be eligible to participate in events organised for all Collaborative Doctoral Partnership students, who are registered with different universities and studying with cultural and heritage organisations across the UK. They will also have access to a range of career development and research training opportunities including the Doctoral Collections-Based Research Programme at the University of Reading.

**Eligibility**

· This studentship is open to both Home and International applicants.

· To be classed as a home student, candidates must meet the following criteria:

   o Be a UK National (meeting residency requirements), or
   o Have settled status, or
   o Have pre-settled status (meeting residency requirements), or
   o Have indefinite leave to remain or enter

Further guidance can be found [on the UKRI website](#)

· Home and International students are both eligible to receive the full award for maintenance, and both will have all fees covered.

· We want to encourage the widest range of potential students to study for a CDP studentship and are committed to welcoming students from different backgrounds to apply. We particularly welcome applications from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds as they are currently underrepresented at this level in this area.

· Applicants should ideally have or expect to receive a relevant Masters-level qualification in a relevant subject (including, but not limited to, archaeology, Classics, museum studies or history), or be able to demonstrate equivalent experience in a professional setting.
   - International applicants will need to meet the [University's minimum English requirements](#)

· Applicants must be able to demonstrate an interest in the museums sector and potential and enthusiasm for developing skills more widely in related areas.

· As a collaborative award, students will be expected to spend time at both the University of Reading and the British Museum.

Please note that all applicants must meet the [UKRI terms and conditions for funding](#).

**Project details and how to apply**

Applicants should submit an application for a 'PhD in Classics' via the [University's online application system](#). When prompted to upload a research proposal, applicants should instead submit a statement of no more than 1,000 words, explaining how their background, interests and qualifications make them suitable for the studentship, and what specific areas or themes they would pursue if awarded the studentship.  The latter might include time periods, geographical areas or particular categories of individual represented in the collections database.

When asked about the source of funding, please enter the reference DRC24-045.

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