

Endangered Archives Programme (British Library)

ENDANGERED ARCHIVES PROGRAMME

Coming in October 2004

In pursuit of their general aim to support fundamental research into important issues in the humanities and social sciences, the Trustees of the Lisbet Rausing Charitable Fund have decided to sponsor a Programme focusing on the preservation and copying of important but vulnerable archives throughout the world.

The Programme is administered by the British Library and applications will be considered by an International Panel of historians and archivists.

The Programme will achieve its objectives principally by making a number of grants to individual researchers to locate relevant collections, wherever possible to arrange their transfer to a suitable local archival home, and to deliver copies into the international research domain via the British Library. Pilot projects may also be funded. Grants will be made each year and will vary in amount, but a guideline maximum of £50,000 for a full project, and £10,000 for a pilot project, is envisaged.

It will also make available - to overseas archivists and librarians only - bursaries for professional attachments at the British Library to foster better archival standards in cataloguing, preservation, etc., and thereby to assist the process of safeguarding other such collections locally in the future.

The aim is to safeguard archival material relating to societies usually at an early stage of development i.e. its normal focus will be on the period of a society's history before 'modernisation' or 'industrialisation' had generated institutional and record-keeping structures for the systematic preservation of historical records, very broadly defined. The relevant time period will therefore mostly vary according to the society with which we deal. The Programme will be completely open as to theme and regional interest, although it will normally, but not invariably, be concerned with non-western societies.

For the purposes of the Programme, archives will be interpreted widely to embrace not only rare printed sources (books, serials, newspapers, ephemera, etc.) and manuscripts in any language, but also visual materials

(drawings, paintings, prints, posters, photographs, etc.), audio or video recordings, digital data, and even other objects and artefacts - but normally only where they are found in association with a documentary archive. In all cases, the validity of archival materials for inclusion in the Programme will be assessed by their relevance as source materials for the pre-industrial stage of a society's history.

The Fund does not offer grants to support the 'normal' activities of an archive, although the Programme may offer support for such items as costs directly related to the acceptance of relocated material.

Further information about the timetable, criteria, eligibility and procedures will be announced on the Programme's website at www.bl.uk/angeredarchives in October.

Preliminary enquiries or expressions of interest may be addressed now to eap@bl.uk.

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Reference:

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