

The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC)
announces an Informal Talk

by

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Invention of Scripts and Their Beginnings

Writing must rank among mankind's highest achievements. Yet the factors that enabled its invention independently in different parts of the world have never been subject to an analysis from a multidisciplinary and comparative perspective that encompasses both deciphered and undeciphered scripts. This talk considers the world's first instances of writing, including the earliest in Europe, through the lens of archaeology, anthropology, cultural evolution, visual cognition and decipherment strategies. It will focus on original inventions, all of which are image-based, from Mesopotamia, Egypt, Mesoamerica and China, and other debated cases. The objective is to characterize their conception in terms of visual cognition (why are signs shaped as they are?), archaeological setting (what are the contextual preconditions, why does writing emerge when it does, and only four times in history?), application of use (what are its initial purposes?), and language notation (what are the paths to registering sound?).

Wednesday, 31 January 2018 at 11 am
Room 2002, CSMC