

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

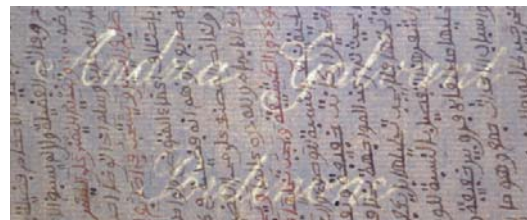
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**New Strategies in Using Watermarks to Date Sub-Saharan Islamic  
Manuscripts**

The paper used in all but a handful of surviving Sub-Saharan manuscripts in Arabic script is European in origin. The majority of these manuscripts are undated. From the beginning of European paper production watermarks have been used to indicate a paper's origin. For several centuries these watermarks have been used to date and authenticate manuscripts by matching a watermark found in an undated manuscript with an identical watermark found in a dated source, usually European, or sometimes Ottoman. Because very few of the watermarks found in Sub-Saharan manuscripts appear in these European and Ottoman sources, this approach has to date been of limited use.

Using recent field research on Northern Nigerian manuscripts, this paper will explore how a holistic interdisciplinary approach combining traditional techniques with those of technical material cultural analysis and historical archaeology can provide mill source and dating information for these Sub-Saharan watermarks with examples of these strategies permitting identification of the mills that produced previously unidentified watermarks such as *CL*, *SSB* and *Cartiere Prealpina Intra (Italia)*; correction of the *BG* misattribution; and permitted the development of a chronology for Galvani mill papers.



**April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2014 at 2 pm – Room 0001**

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