

The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC)

announces a Public Lecture

by

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Bamum Scripts and Archives Project
Archives du Palais des Rois Bamum (Foumban)**



Bamum Manuscript Traditions of Cameroon, with Comparative Notes on the Vai and Mende Script Traditions of Liberia and Sierra Leone

The Bamum script tradition of Cameroon dates to the end of the nineteenth century and is one of several, possibly related, script innovations to emerge in west and west equatorial Africa dating from the first part of the nineteenth century through to the middle of the twentieth century.

The Bamum script tradition – in its most widely used variant a syllabary known as “A-ka-u-ku” which includes an associated number writing system – has been employed for the transcription of the conventional spoken language of the Bamum (Shūpamom) as well as an artificial spoken language known as Shūmom. The lecture will focus on the visual features and material aspects of Bamum manuscripts and script variants. It will relate linguistic properties and contexts for the use of the script. Finally, the lecture will examine how the Bamum script tradition features comparatively in the history of script innovation, usage, and manuscript production in the wider geographical context of west and west equatorial Africa, for example among the Vai (Liberia) and Mende (Sierra Leone).

January 9th, 2014 at 6 pm

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