African Studies PhD scholarship (Arabic sources for West African History, West African manuscripts in the British Library)

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The **Department of African Studies and Anthropology (/schools/historycultures/departments/dasa/index.aspx)** (incorporating the Centre of West African Studies) at the University of Birmingham and the British Library are pleased to announce a three-year scholarship for students commencing their MPhil/PhD in African Studies in **September 2013**.

The scholarship is attached to an AHRC funded Collaborative Doctoral Partnership awarded to the British Library for research and cataloguing related to its collection of West African Arabic manuscripts and its forthcoming exhibition: 'West Africa: Cultures of the Word'. The successful applicant will receive (at UK/EU rate) full tuition fees and maintenance funding (£13,726 for 2013/14, increasing annually), plus associated expenses (£550 yearly maintenance payment from AHRC; up to £1,000 per annum from the British Library to cover travel and related costs).

The doctoral project

The successful applicant will be expected to pursue doctoral research on West African history with a focus on the Central Sahel region (Hausa, Tuareg, Fulani, and Kanuri languages/societies). While several possible lines of investigation could be pursued, a critical study of sources produced in the 18th, 19th, or early 20th century has the potential to shed light on the Islamic pluralism that characterises this region. This opens up a wide field of enquiry. We welcome proposals focusing on any aspect of the social, political, religious, or economic history of the Central Sahel, based also on a critical analysis of relevant Arabic sources. Part of the student's research will concentrate on the study of Arabic sources from the British Library's West African manuscripts and, possibly, archival collections in Niger and Nigeria.

Supervision arrangements and professional experience

This studentship offers a collaborative supervisory team that brings together two specialists from the University of Birmingham, **Dr Benedetta Rossi (/staff/profiles/dasa/rossi.aspx)**, Lecturer in West African Studies, and **Dr Anissa Daoudi (/staff/profiles/cml/daoudi-anissa.aspx)**, Arabic Language Coordinator at the Centre of Modern Languages, with the Curator for African Studies at the British Library, Dr Marion Wallace. The selected applicant will profit from the resources and networks of both partner institutions, becoming a full participant in the lively African Studies research community at Birmingham, while also gaining first-hand professional experience of curatorial work at the British Library in London, including cataloguing and exhibitions work, and possibly making video/audio recordings in West Africa. The student will be allocated office space in the Library and be able to participate in the Library's rich programme of public events, study days and student seminars, and to disseminate their research findings to academic and non-academic audiences. In the longer term, the blend of academic research and curatorial work should considerably enhance employment-related skills, while inspiring a project with considerable potential for knowledge exchange and public impact.

Qualifications

While supervision and training in Arabic language will be available at the Department of Modern Languages (Arabic division) of the University of Birmingham, a minimum qualification for the successful candidate will be proficiency in reading Arabic. Applicants should provide copies of language certificates or other proof of having received training in Arabic (preferably Classical Arabic) with their application. Interest or expertise in relevant disciplines, for example the history or anthropology of West Africa, or knowledge of West African languages and/or French, will also be an asset. Applicants must be UK or EU residents and meet the normal entry requirements for the **MPhil/PhD in African Studies (/postgraduate/courses/research/cwas/african-studies.aspx)**.

How to apply

The closing date had now passed.

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