

Boston University

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Mandinka Ajami and Arabic Manuscripts of Casamance Senegal

WARC Digitization Workshop 2018

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Daily steps in getting ready to photograph manuscripts

<https://hdl.handle.net/2144/27114>

Boston University

EAP 1042 Project: Basic Daily Steps in Getting Ready to Photograph Manuscripts

1. Setup tripod with horizontal bar at 90 degree angle. Use a bag with water bottles or other heavy items as a counterbalance to keep tripod from tipping over
2. Camera setup
 - a. Remove lens cap and hot shoe cover.
 - i. If shooting indoors: Attach smaller inner ring of macro flash ring
3. Place camera on tripod
 - a. Attach remote shutter release cable
 - b. On hot shoe:
 - i. Attach spirit level cube and adjust to make sure camera is facing straight down.
 - c. If lighting is too dark (indoors): Attach Macro Flash Ring to lens and hot shoe
4. Setup manuscripts on sheet / board (use the camera viewfinder to make sure they are straight)
5. Place QP card below the manuscript (centered)
6. Use zoom lens or adjust tripod to make sure manuscript page takes up most of the frame and that QP card is completely visible (not cut off on either side).
7. Testing the camera settings before shooting a collection to make sure images appear sharp and not over or under exposed (detailed instructions [here](#)).
 - a. Preset WB using the blank white card. (only once for each collection)
 - b. Test ISO (anything between 100-640 if not in a studio setting)
 - c. Aperture (fstop): Anything from f8 to f22, but be sure that page edges are sharp and not just the text.
 - d. As fstop gets smaller (e.g. f22) shutter speed should be slower to allow more light into the shot
 - e. Review sharpness/focus of the overall image by clicking on Zoom-In button
 - i. Adjust manual focus
 - ii. Click on Zoom-out button when all text and edges appear in focus
8. Photograph each manuscript in the order organized by the owner. Systematically photograph each part of the manuscript from front cover to back cover (incl. Blank pages)
9. For each manuscript make a video with the questionnaire and repeat previous steps until all manuscripts have been digitized.

Checklist for Night Before Each Fieldwork Trip

- Make sure batteries are fully charged: both camera batteries and rechargeable flash ring batteries.
- Memory card is empty and in camera and all photos from previous day have been backed up and converted to TIFF format on laptop
- Pack up all of the following equipment to bring with you to :
 - Nikon D5300 camera w/ lens
 - Memory card is in camera and extra memory card is in camera bag
 - Shutter release
 - Backup 18-55mm camera lens
 - Battery is fully charged and in Camera
 - Backup camera battery (fully charged)
 - Backup rechargeable batteries (x8) for flash ring (fully charged)
 - Flash ring + backup flash ring
 - Spirit level
 - Photography background sheet (black tablecloth or black backing board)
 - White balance cards (white, grey, black)
 - QP Tiffen (color balance card)
 - Water bottles and fruit bag (counterbalance for tripod)
 - Black sheet for background
 - Tripod in separate bag
 - Box w/ Panasonic microphone