



Universität Hamburg

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CENTRE FOR THE
STUDY OF
MANUSCRIPT
CULTURES

Call for Papers (doctoral students):

International Conference

'Standardisation of Written Artefacts in East Asia'

Hamburg, 17–19 August 2022

A sequel to the 2021 conference 'Variants/Variance – Text, Form and Material' at National Taiwan University, which centred around aspects of variance in written artefacts, 'Standardisation of Written Artefacts in East Asia' shifts the perspective to the 'other side of the coin' and investigates pre-modern practices of regulation, unification, and standardisation in the production of written artefacts.

Understanding 'standard' broadly as an explicit or implicit (e.g., legal vs. customary) rule that governs the creation of written artefacts, the conference aims at approaching the topic diachronically – from the ancient to the modern period – and across East Asian cultures, focusing on artefacts bearing Chinese writing. Shedding light on the various forms and functions of standards as well as the socio-political, economic, cultural, and other settings that give rise to (or impede) them, we seek to unravel the complex dynamics in the creation and evolution of standards. Among the questions we propose to address are: How did standards come into existence and what were the practical needs behind them? Did they embrace and institutionalise former habitual practices, or were they purposefully modelled against them by an authority? Who were the agents in the formulation of standards, and how were they implemented, enforced and maintained? What new developments in writing techniques and practices did they trigger? What differences can we note between privately and officially produced artefacts? The contributions will explore a wide range of written artefacts, ranging from documents on bamboo or wood, to inscriptions on stone or bronze to manuscripts on paper, and address these and other questions pertaining to the standardisation of written artefacts in East Asia.

The conference is co-organised by the Department of Chinese Literature, National Taiwan University and the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC) at the University of Hamburg. It will take place from 17 to 19 August 2022 in Hamburg, with an optional excursion to the Turfan Studies project in Berlin on 16 August 2022. Conference languages will be English and Chinese.

To complement papers by senior scholars, we invite proposals for individual papers by doctoral students addressing any of the topics outlined above. To apply, please submit your paper proposal (up to 500 words) and a short bio (up to 150 words) in English to both thies.staack@uni-hamburg.de and ondrej.skrabal@uni-hamburg.de by **15 May 2022**. Applicants will be notified of acceptance by 31 May. The accommodation and travel costs will be defrayed by the CSMC.