

# Preface

This volume goes back to a conference which we held in February 2022.<sup>1</sup> The initial idea for the conference was developed in 2018 when we were planning the third and concluding funding period (2019–2023) of the Collaborative Research Centre (CRC) 933 “Material Text Cultures” (*Sonderforschungsbereich 933 “Materiale Textkulturen”*), a cooperation of Heidelberg University and the Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg. The idea was to bring together scholars within the CRC studying the ‘fringes’ of non-typographic cultures and the transition periods in which printing technologies were introduced in different societies. Thanks to the generous funding of the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG), four projects of the CRC could closely collaborate and discuss questions of manuscript and print in Jewish and Christian Europe as well as Japan between about 1400 and 1800. These discussions laid the groundwork for the conference and this volume.

The CRC, which has been funded by the DFG since 2011, examines texts written on different materials, for instance on pillars, amulets, and scrolls, on papyri, parchment, and paper. Thereby the focus lies on the specific materiality, the evoked presence of the inscribed artifacts and the written texts themselves. The case studies investigate a variety of questions: How and under which circumstances were these artifacts produced? In which spatial arrangements were they located? Who had access to them? How and in which contexts were they used? These questions are of great analytical importance because writing, script-bearing artifacts, and related practices are bound by an irrevocable mutual connection that has a huge explanatory power for the understanding of the transmitted texts and their cultural surroundings. The CRC mostly examines artifacts from cultures in which means of mass production for written texts were unknown or unavailable.<sup>2</sup> However, the last funding period also focuses on periods of transformation. The aim is to better understand how and if means of mass production of texts change their materiality, which brings us to the core of the volume’s topic.

Two other traits of the CRC are of great importance to the design of this volume. On the one hand, the CRC fosters interdisciplinary research and discussions. On the other hand, it studies different regions and cultures with a comparative approach. Within the research center, our four projects closely collaborated to study how the materiality of texts changed in the period between about 1400 and 1800 by focusing on Europe and Japan. For the volume, this interdisciplinary and transregional scope was broadened by further case studies from outside the CRC.

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the pandemic the conference materialized as an online event, where the precirculated chapters of this volume were discussed. A brief report of the conference can be found here <https://sfb933.hypotheses.org/3065> (07/04/2022).

<sup>2</sup> This paragraph is based on “Goals & Central Ideas” of the CRC 933, which can be found online <https://www.materiale-textkulturen.org/article.php?s=2> (06/04/2022). On the establishment and history of the CRC 933: Hilgert/Lieb 2015, 7–16. Cf. for the methods of the CRC: Hilgert 2010; Hilgert 2016.

The principal investigators (*Projektleiterinnen und -leiter*) and research associates (*wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiter und Mitarbeiterinnen*) of all four projects jointly organized the conference as well as contributed papers and responses or chaired sessions during the conference. Because all four projects come from different disciplines within the research center, they are briefly introduced in the following in the order of their project number.<sup>3</sup>

The project A06 “The Paper Revolution in Late Mediaeval Europe. Comparative Investigations into Changing Technologies and Culture in ‘Social Space’” is led by the historian and medievalist Bernd Schneidmüller. This project examines the historically important change of technology and culture in late medieval Europe by focusing on the “paper revolution”. Key foci are the development, proliferation, and differentiation of paper-use.<sup>4</sup> The two former research associates Carla Meyer-Schlenkrich (now Münster) and Paul Schweitzer-Martin (now Munich) contributed a joint chapter on the *Koelthoffsche Chronik* (1499) for this volume.

Hanna Liss’s project B04 “The Masora of the Hebrew Bible in its Various Material Properties” studies the material changes of this key religious text by focusing on incunabula, early prints, and related manuscripts. It investigates the reception and significance of the Masora and analyzes the various actors involved in book production as well as their altered social fields. It also explores the philological consequences that have come about with the printing of books and the establishment of a standardized Masora, which are relevant to this day.<sup>5</sup> As research associate Federico dal Bo has worked extensively on questions of the history and theory of ‘text’ and enriched our discussions on the subject. In Heidelberg, Jewish Studies is situated at its own institution. Among others, the Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg and Heidelberg University closely collaborate through the joint CRC.

While the first two projects focus on the 14th to 16th century, Sylvia Brockstieger’s project B13 “The Order of Knowledge and Biographical Writing. Calculated Handwriting in Printed Books of the Early Modern Period” covers much of the early modern period from the 16th to the early 18th century. As a research associate, Rebecca Hirt is focusing on calendrical writing,<sup>6</sup> while the project overall draws attention to the interaction of handwriting and print within early modern books. Just recently, Sylvia Brockstieger and Rebecca Hirt published an edited volume on ‘Handwriting in Print’.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> More information and recent publications of the projects can be found here: <https://www.materiale-textkulturen.org/subprojects.php> (07/04/2022).

<sup>4</sup> A summary of the project and preliminary results can be found in Schneidmüller/Schweitzer-Martin 2020. Key publications: Meyer/Schultz/Schneidmüller 2015; Schultz 2018; Meyer-Schlenkrich 2018; Schweitzer-Martin 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Key publications of the project: Liss 2021; Leipziger 2021; Krauß/Leipziger/Schücking-Jungblut 2020; Petzold 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Hirt 2023a; further key publications: Brockstieger 2020; Brockstieger 2021a; Brockstieger 2021b; Hirt 2023b.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Brockstieger/Hirt 2023.

Melanie Trede from the Department of East Asian History of Art is conducting the project B14 “Interactive Materialities: Interrelationships between the Written/Painted and the Printed in Japan of the Long 17th Century” with Radu Leca as a research associate. This subproject examines the field of tension between illustrated manuscripts and printed media in 17th century Japan. It studies the shifting meanings of the material presence of text-bearing artifacts in the liminal phase of emerging commercial print production accompanied by continuing manuscript production.<sup>8</sup> Radu Leca (now Hong Kong) wrote the chapter “The Media Trajectory of Kano Naganobu’s *Merry-making under Cherry and Aronia Blossoms*” for this volume.

We were grateful to find further scholars from Heidelberg and beyond who were willing to engage with questions concerning the relationship of manuscript and print, thereby broadening the volume’s scope regarding temporality, spatiality, and the variety of studied text genres. In addition, the conference and the discussions were enriched by two public keynote lectures. Katrin Kogman-Appel (Münster) spoke on “The Passover Haggadah: Material Change in an Age of Media Change”. This lecture highlighted how even a highly stable text can change its materiality over time and how enlightening it can be to study the specific context of use. Peter Kornicki’s (Cambridge, UK) lecture “Book Production and the Choice of Technologies in Pre-modern Japan” showed that xylographic printing had great importance in cultural circles outside of Europe and that especially in Japan typography did not necessarily prevail, particularly due to the lack of flexibility in layout and ability to integrate illustrations.

Finally, we want to thank all the organizers and participants for their contributions and enthusiastically engaging in this project. Rebecca Hirt, Radu Leca, and Samuel Sugerman helped us with the editing process and provided translations. Nicolai Dollt patiently undertook the copy editing. We are grateful for the DFG’s funding and the support of the CRC’s board. Last, we want to thank the editorial board for accepting this volume in the series “Materiale Textkulturen”.

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Sylvia Brockstieger & Paul Schweitzer-Martin

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<sup>8</sup> Recent publications: Leca 2022; Trede 2021.