

## CONFERENCE

### THE MATERIALITY AND EFFICACY OF AKSARA. SITUATING BALINESE SCRIPTURAL PRACTICES

January 30 - February 1, 2014  
Institut für Ethnologie, Universität Heidelberg

This conference aims to explore traditional uses of writing on the Indonesian island of Bali with a special emphasis on the power and efficacy attributed to Balinese script. Our approach will be at once interdisciplinary and comparative, bringing together regional-experts working both in Bali and other parts of South and Southeast Asia. Scholars have long recognized a certain gap between modern western practices of philological interpretation and those of the Javano-Balinese textual tradition. We wish to ask what, if any, impact recognition of this gap should have on our conception of the text.

Of what relevance, for example, are the uses to which Balinese script has been put in the context of ceremonial rites? Does it matter that many of the manuscripts on which we work were, and often are, thought to be 'alive' by those who have produced and made use of them? What ideas of materiality, power and agency are at work in the production and preservation of palm-leaf manuscripts, inscribed amulets and other script-bearing ritual instruments? In asking these questions we are not simply interested in attending to material – such as palm leaves, copper plates and the like – as an inert substrate for the text and its script. Rather we aim to examine indigenous ideas of materiality with an eye to their implications for critical scholarship. It is in this latter connection that we are especially interested in comparison with uses of script and writing in India and Java, but also in mainland Southeast Asia.

## ORGANIZERS

Sonderforschungsbereich 933  
Materiale Textkulturen. Materialität und Präsenz des  
Geschriebenen in non-typographischen Gesellschaften

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SONDERFORSCHUNGSBEREICH 933

MATERIALE  
TEXTKULTUREN



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Sonderforschungsbereich 933 an der Universität Heidelberg, gefördert von der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft. Kooperationspartner: Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg



**Materiale Textkulturen**  
Materialität und Präsenz des Geschriebenen  
in non-typographischen Gesellschaften

## PROGRAM

Thursday, January 30

	Arrivals
19 <sup>00</sup>	Dinner

Friday, January 31

9 <sup>00</sup>	Coffee
9 <sup>30</sup>	Annette Hornbacher Opening address

### Session 1

10 <sup>00</sup>	Richard Fox <i>Discussant: Daud Ali</i>	The Meaning of Life, or How to Do Things with Letters
	Margaret Wiener <i>Discussant: Helen Creese</i>	Lettered Actors: Animacy and Ontologies
12 <sup>30</sup>	Lunch	

### Session 2

13 <sup>30</sup>	Helen Creese <i>Discussant: Hedi Hinzler</i>	Im-Materiality—Where Have All the Aksara Gone?
	Tom Patton <i>Discussant: Andrea Aciri</i>	From Palm-leaf Manuscripts to Popular Magazines: Burmese Buddhist Sacred Diagrams in the 21st Century
16 <sup>00</sup>	Coffee Break	

### Session 3

16 <sup>30</sup>	Tom Hunter <i>Discussant: Richard Fox</i>	The Medium is the Message: Chirographic Figures from Aksara Cytaka to Miyasa
19 <sup>30</sup>	Dinner	

Saturday, February 1

### Session 1

9 <sup>30</sup>	Daud Ali <i>Discussant: Tom Hunter, read by Richard Fox</i>	Speech Acts and Magical Sounds: Power and the Technology of Writing in early Indonesia
10 <sup>45</sup>	Coffee Break	

### Session 2

11 <sup>15</sup>	Hedi Hinzler <i>Discussant: Anette Hornbacher</i>	Visible and Invisible Script Used at Consecrations of Buildings in Bali
12 <sup>30</sup>	Lunch	

### Session 3

13 <sup>30</sup>	Andrea Aciri <i>Discussant: Tom Patton</i>	Mātrkānyāsa ('Imposition of the Syllabary') in the South Asian and Javano-Balinese traditions
	Annette Hornbacher <i>Discussant: Margaret Wiener</i>	'Representation' or 'Presence'? Relations Between Text, Script and Power in Balinese Ritual
16 <sup>00</sup>	Coffee Break	
16 <sup>30</sup>	Chaired by Richard Fox	Closing Roundtable
	Dinner on own	

All sessions will take place in the Besprechungszimmer of the Institut für Ethnologie (Albert-Ueberle-Straße 3-5, 69120 Heidelberg).

