The International Center for the Study of Ancient Text Cultures, hosted at Renmin University of China, develops new perspectives and research opportunities for the study of all aspects of ancient textuality both in China and globally. International and comparative in outlook, it aims to create international research exchanges and collaborations for doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows, junior faculty, and senior scholars.

The Center embraces the detailed study of ancient texts—both transmitted and discovered—alongside the development of new methodological approaches and theoretical perspectives. Located at Renmin University and networking with major institutions in Beijing and across China, the Center’s core is focused on Chinese antiquity. At the same time, the Center aims to engage in cross-cultural, transnational research, integrating the study of ancient Chinese textuality with that of other ancient cultures from around the world. We explicitly encourage, and are eager to facilitate, exchanges on multiple levels across disciplines and civilizations.

The Center is designed as a global interface for the meeting of three new developments in the humanities and social sciences:

- the dramatic increase in newly discovered Chinese manuscripts and inscriptions over the past decades, which has led the study of Chinese antiquity to unprecedented heights, depth, and breadth at institutions both within and beyond China;
- the emergence of new, global research interests in the comparative study of antiquity, internationally manifest in a number of recently established research centers but also visible in the rapidly growing Chinese academic interest in the ancient world of the Mediterranean and other civilizations;
- the new global interest in manuscript studies, philology, history of the book, materiality of text, and related subjects that study textual cultures through multiple perspectives and disciplinary approaches.

Toward its goals of integrating these developments in a new research environment, and of creating a new global community of scholars for the study of ancient text cultures, the Center will include the following components:

- a suite of academic and administrative offices within the School of Classics at Renmin University to accommodate visiting students and scholars from China and around the world, together with the staff to support them;
- a research library for the primary texts of antiquity and their research publications from around the world and in multiple languages;
• seminar rooms and lecture halls;
• fully funded programs for short- and long-term visiting doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows, young researchers, and distinguished visiting professors from around the world;
• biannual weeklong teaching workshops for Chinese and international Ph.D. students;
• regular lectures by local and visiting researchers;
• research conferences both small and large in scope.

The new Center has been recognized as an ambitious idea whose time has come. It is supported by multiple units within Renmin University, including the central administration, The School of Liberal Arts, and The School of Classics. Additional funding will be provided by the Chinese Government and the Confucius Institute Headquarters.

The Center will be directed by Professor Martin Kern of Princeton University and, as associate director, Professor Xu Jianwei of Renmin University. The directors will be further assisted by an international Academic Advisory Board.