



Friday, Nov 29
2-5pm
IAAW, room 315

DHARMA & partners:

Language Registers and Communication Strategies as Reflected in Premodern South Asian Inscriptions

2pm (s.t.)

Introduction and book launch: “Self-Representation and Presentation of Others in Indic Epigraphical Writing”

Annette Schmiedchen (HU)

2:10–3pm

How come the oldest Indian inscriptions aren’t in Sanskrit?

Dániel Balogh (HU)

3:15–4pm

The Role of Multiple Registers in Inscriptions from Early Medieval Karnataka

Samana Gururaja (HU)

4:15–5pm

Interpreting and Adapting in Colonial Context: a 14th-Century Copper-Plate Charter from Goa and its 16th-Century Portuguese Translation

Roger Lee de Jesus (IberLAND, Leibniz University Hannover) & Annette Schmiedchen (HU)

Contributors and Abstracts

Prof. Dr. Annette Schmiedchen



Dr. Annette Schmiedchen is one of the Principal Investigators of the ERC Synergy project DHARMA, being responsible for task-force B (From Deccan to Arakan), based at IAAW. She is an Indologist and a specialist of premodern Indian history and Sanskrit epigraphy. She has a Master and PhD in Indology from Humboldt University and received her Habilitation degree in Indology from Martin Luther University at Halle-Wittenberg. She has focussed on editing the inscriptional corpora of the Maitraka and Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasties of Western and Central India, studied religious patronage and its legitimization function in Buddhist, Hindu and Jaina contexts, and done research in a previous intercultural ERC project on medieval foundations and endowments.

Dr. Dániel Balogh



Dr. Dániel Balogh is a researcher of task-force B of the ERC DHARMA project based in Berlin since 2019. He is a Sanskritist with a philological background and a current specialisation in epigraphy. He acquired his university diploma in Indology at ELTE, Budapest (2004). He defended his PhD in Classical Antiquities (Sanskrit) at the same university in 2015. He has worked for the Clay Sanskrit Library as an editorial assistant. Before joining DHARMA, he was a postdoc at the British Museum in the ERC Synergy project Asia Beyond Boundaries, working on inscriptions of North India and the Gupta period, with a focus on the Aulikara dynasty. In the ERC DHARMA project, he deals with Sanskrit epigraphic material relevant to the project and works on the digitisation of such material.

How come the oldest Indian inscriptions aren't in Sanskrit?

In the middle of the second century of the Common Era, a courtier of King Rudradāman had an ornately poetic Sanskrit text engraved on a boulder in Western India. Nothing strange about that, because after all, India's classical literary language is Sanskrit, right? Well, not quite: earlier inscriptions are in "Prakrit" languages, which then disappear gradually from the record, and linguistically more archaic Sanskrit replaces them completely by the fifth century or so. Is this course of events really paradoxical, then? This talk will investigate the dynamic sociolinguistic interrelations between Sanskrit(s), Prakrit(s) and so-called Hybrid Sanskrit(s) in the early centuries of the Common Era.

Dr. Samana Gururaja



Dr. Samana Gururaja joined the DHARMA task-force B in December 2021, with a focus on Kannada inscriptions, specifically on those of the royal dynasty of the Kalyāṇa Cālukyas. She has a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania. Her research focuses on the political implications of filial networks generated by marriage among ruling families and their subordinates in early medieval South India, with a specific focus on the Hoysala dynasty. Her general research interests include the study of inscriptions and courtly literature, expanding notions of rulership and the royal family, and the role of women in constructing filial and political networks.

The Role of Multiple Registers in Inscriptions from Early Medieval Karnataka

Tenth to fourteenth-century inscriptions from the Kannada-speaking region of South India often contain sections in both Kannada and Sanskrit. This presentation explores how these inscriptions employed the different registers for different sections of the composition, taking into consideration questions of local power, political ambition, and intended audience.

Dr. Roger Lee de Jesus



Dr. Roger Lee de Jesus is a postdoctoral researcher of the ERC project IberLAND, hosted at Leibniz University Hannover. He holds a PhD in History (2021), with a thesis on the role of the governor D. João de Castro in the construction of the Portuguese Estado da Índia (1545–1548). His MA (2012) in Early Modern History (University of Coimbra) was a case study on the second siege to the Portuguese fortress of Diu (1546), in India. He is interested in the history of the Portuguese Empire and its presence in Asia from political, social, economic-financial and military perspective, especially in the implementation and adaptation of European institutions and warfare (16th-17th centuries). He is the co-founder of the Portuguese podcast Falando de História.

Interpreting and Adapting in Colonial Context: a 14th-Century Copper-Plate Charter from Goa and its 16th-Century Portuguese Translation (together with Annette Schmiedchen)

It is a well-known fact that thousands of premodern Sanskrit inscriptions engraved on stone or copper must have existed once, and that large numbers of these epigraphs are preserved still today. Many such inscriptions, especially so-called copper-plate charters, record royal endowments for religious beneficiaries. But very often any documentary evidence about the later history of these grants and the religious institutions mentioned therein is entirely lacking and thus their further destiny remains completely in the dark. This paper will present an interesting exception to this general tendency: a Sanskrit copper-plate charter of the Vijayanagara period from Goa dated 1391 and its translation into Portuguese by local Brahmins from 1532, which sheds interesting light on the manner how traditional Indian religious and economic concepts were rendered for the Portuguese colonial administration.