Dharma Project Final Conference—Abstracts

Tamil Inscriptions encoded by the DHARMA project – Emmanuel Francis (CNRS, CESAH, Paris)

The Tamil corpus—that is, inscriptions from Tamil Nadu written primarily in two languages (Tamil and/or Sanskrit)—is one of the largest of premodern South Asia and Southeast Asia with approximately 35,000 recorded inscriptions. To date, a little more than 10 % of this corpus (3,700 Tamil inscriptions and 300 inscriptions) is available in the online DHARMALEKHA database.

This presentation is a progress report on the encoding of Tamil inscriptions in the framework of the DHARMA project. It will outline the types of editions currently available —newly revised editions or digital conversions of previously published ones—and discuss prospects for expanding this online corpus in the footsteps of the DHARMA project.

Becoming Māṇikkavācakar: The canonisation of a Tamil Śaiva saint– Renato Dávalos (CNRS, CESAH, Paris)

From the late Pallavas to the early Vijayanagara period, numerous festivals and ritual occasions in the Tamil country were accompanied by the public recitation of devotional Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava texts, mostly devotional hymns. Despite the density of epigraphic attestations, there is still no comprehensive account of how hymn performance was embedded in temple worship as a socially organised, managed, and materially sustained public practice.

The present paper will attempt to provide a general overview of the extant evidence for how public recitation became institutionally anchored. This will be achieved by detailing the textual repertoires, the ritual settings in which it was performed, the agents involved (from specialised groups of reciters to local elites sponsoring performance), and the material arrangements that secured its regular enactment. On this basis, a provisional chronology of the adoption and promotion of this practice will be suggested, in order to elucidate how different political actors incorporated hymns into the economic, administrative, and ritual regimes of religious institutions.

When monasteries dictate temple worship. A study of the monastic network around Cīrkāḻi from the 12th century to the present day. – Uthaya Veluppillai (INALCO, Paris)
The edition of the Cīrkāḻi corpus has enabled a monographic study of this 'great' local temple associated with the Tamil bhakti tradition. Its inclusion in the DHARMA project has provided an opportunity to explore in greater depth the interactions between the various religious institutions at this site in a limited micro-region of the Kāvēri delta. This presentation will return to three elements that illustrate the evolution of the interdependent relationships between temples and monasteries: the institutionalisation of Tamil bhakti literature, the patronage of manuscript worship, and the cultic and administrative management of the Dharmapuram monastery since the 16th century.

From the Kaveri Delta to the Deep South: The institutional reach of the Tiruvāvaṭuturai ātīṉam (17th-18th centuries) – Margherita Trento (EHESS, Paris)
The Tiruvāvaṭuturai ātīṉam, a Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta monastery founded in the late 15th or early 16th century, is located in the Kaveri delta region. Yet, as its name also suggests, this institution stands at the head of a regional network of temples and branch monasteries that developed gradually over time. Certainly by the 19th century, as U.Vē. Cāmināṭaiyar's autobiography shows, the ātīṉam owned and administered temples as far south as Avudayarkoil (in present-day Pudukkottai district) and Tirunelveli. It further operated through numerous branch maṭams, particularly in the southernmost districts of Tamil Nadu. Some of these branches, such as the Īśāna maṭam(s) in Papanasam, played a particularly important role in the 17th and 18th centuries, when they hosted some of the institution's most prominent poet-scholars. In this presentation, I examine the regional network shaped by the ātīṉam with particular attention to its branch maṭams, based on the epigraphical evidence concerning their establishment and maintenance, and on literary sources attesting to the scholarly networks they sustained

History of the Ulakaḷanta Perumāḷ Temple in Kanchipuram through its Inscriptions — Yunheng Xu (University of Heidelberg).
This paper explores the development of the divyadesam Ūrakam into the modern Ulakaḷanta Perumāḷ Temple based on my fieldwork this year.

The temple now houses four divyadesams and features more than 20 complete pre-colonial inscriptions: 14 reported by the epigraphists and at least 6 incomplete unreported Chola ones. These materials, read along side literary sources, elucidate the aspects of the temple history. This case study demonstrates remarkable continuity in the temple and the town geography since the time of the Cholas. The temple once enjoyed a certain degree of continuity in its administration despite political unrest, while the city boundaries recorded in 13th-century inscriptions align closely with its modern layout. Furthermore, the temple had only few structural additions since theVijayanagara, whereas its later development occurred in the elaboration of the associatedlegends.Historically, the temple first received a few donations from the court of the Pallavasand the earlier Chola kings. They were the first establishers of shrines and their surroundings. Inscriptions on the 1st prākāra wall attest to individual shrines in addition to the main one standing in town centre (Tiru ūrakattu niṉṟaruḷiya...), prior to Kulottunga I's visits andreconstruction. The potential presence of other enshrined forms of Viṣṇus makes one question the common hypothesis of the relocation of divyadesams from elsewhere to Kanchipuram. When the Cholas weakened, inscriptions in Kanchipuram reflect a complicated mixture of different dynasties within a short period of time. Nevertheless, the temple was resilient to political unrest some extent, as the same priests and donors took care of the charities through decades. This age of instability between the prime of the Cholas and the establishment of the Vijayanagara provided opportunity for minor authorities to assert their agency to preserve legacy left by the former kings. Later inscriptions in the 16th and 17th centuries from the Vaiṣṇavas shrines provide new insights on mythological development that remains relevant today. They documented more elaborate understandings of the deities, which might have been popularized by the writings of the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas. The theological ideas are still celebrated in the modern belief systems through the literary sources.

Appraisal of 6 years of research in Mahasthangarh (Bangladesh) and its surroundings – Coline Lefrancq (CNRS, Paris—UMR 7041 ArScAn), Vincent Lefèvre (Prof. Sorbonne Université—UMR 8150 Centre André Chastel, dir. mission Mahasthan), Yohan Chabot (GéoArchéon, CNRS, Paris—UMR 8591 LGP)

This presentation aims at highlighting the main archaeological and paleoenvironmental results achieved by the French-Bangladeshi archaeological mission of Mahasthangarh during these past 6 years. It will be divided into three parts:
-The first one will be dedicated to the excavations conducted within the citadel of Mahasthangarh: both the end of the third program SEB (Southeast of Bairaghi Bhita temples) and the start of the fourth program SWQ&NWQ, which focuses on exploring the western part of the intramuros site.
-The second one will be devoted to the exploration/survey of the peri-urban sites in order to update the ancient published maps and to better understand the links between the citadel and its hinterland.
-The third one will focus on the paleoenvironnemental study that has been relaunched in 2022 by Yohan Chabot. Using geomorphological and cartographic approaches, it seeks to understand the interactions between the Karatoya River and the human occupation of the site and its surroundings over the long term.

An interdisciplinary project on Narttamalai (South India) – Valérie Gillet (EFEO, Paris), Yohan Chabot (GéoArchéon, CNRS, Paris—UMR 8591 LGP), Coline Lefrancq (CNRS, Paris—UMR 7041 ArScAn)
In the course of the Dharma project and thanks to its funding, the team working on the site of Mahasthangarh (Coline Lefrancq and Vincent Lefèvre) introduced a geomorphological aspect in their research, with the work of Yohan Chabot. Encountering a member of the task force A, Valérie Gillet, they decided to join to apply a similar methodology to a site in Tamil Nadu, Narttamalai. Although the two sites have different environmental settings (a wetland in an alluvial delta for Mahasthangarh and a semi-arid zone for Narttamalai), similar questions arise that a pluridisciplinary approach, combining epigraphy, history, archaeology and geomorphology, may contribute to answer. This presentation will focus on the preliminary results of our research conducted on the site of Narttamalai and its surroundings. With the Dharma funding, three fieldworks in Narttamalai in which Valérie Gillet, Coline Lefrancq and Yohan Chabot participated have taken place in 2023, 2024 and 2025 enabling the team to fathom the main questions of this project. It will focus on determining the changes the environment has undergone during this period and how it impacted human societies: environmental changes and their influence on river dynamics, agrarian systems, landscape transformation, development and evolution of human

settlements; the establishment of hydraulic and water management infrastructures; and finally, human strategies of adaptation to these changes. This combination led to the development of agricultural production, social diversification and trading networks. To attempt answering those questions, the team will compare and interpret written sources (primarily epigraphy), material evidence from archaeological surveys and excavations (if possible), and environmental data.

Hermits at the margins? Rethinking eremitic presence in ancient Cambodia (7th–13th centuries) – Chloé Chollet (EPHE-PSL/EFEO, Paris)

Between the 7th and the 13th centuries, the Śaiva and Buddhist hermits of ancient Cambodia established themselves in rock hermitages arranged on hills, where archaeological remains and, in some cases, inscriptions can still be found today. Their settlement reflects a significant spatial choice: to leave the ordered world of the sruk, as termed in Old Khmer, and withdraw deliberately into the forested space – the vrai – perceived as untamed and situated at the margins of inhabited centers. Yet this marginality was only relative. Hermitages were frequently located in the immediate periphery of carefully selected sacred sites, revealing a deliberate integration into the sacred geography of the territory. Rather than representing a simple withdrawal from social life, Khmer eremitism thus emerged as a specific mode of presence within the territorial framework of ancient Cambodia. The hermits were distinct religious actors, whose settlements, rock-cut installations, and inscriptions attest to sustained interactions with political, social, and religious spheres. By combining the study of archaeological remains with epigraphic sources, it becomes possible to reconsider their position within the religious and territorial landscape of ancient Cambodia, as well as the ways in which they appropriated the forested environment.

This paper will examine several examples of such interactions brought to light through the course of my doctoral research.

The First *Brahmadeya*s: Property and State Formation in the Early Medieval Deccan – Mekhola Gomes (Amherst College)

This paper focuses on the relationship between institutions of property and state formation in the early medieval Deccan (250–550 CE). Through a focus on the inscriptional corpus of the Early Kadamba domain, I outline the earliest history of the institution of *brahmadeya* as a relationship of property. The history of the *brahmadeya* is central to

understanding several historical processes including agrarian expansion, the development of brahmanical religion, and state formation in early medieval South Asia. Historians have highlighted transformations in *brahmadeya* property, particularly between the 6th and 12th centuries in southern India. Yet interpretations of *brahmadeya* and its relationship to state formation still work with a monolithic understanding of the institution. This paper locates the first *brahmadeyas* under the Early Kadamba rulers of the western Deccan and argues that the earliest history of the *brahmadeya* clarifies the formation of new social hierarchies in early medieval South Asia.

The *Dharmasetu* Reversal from Buddhism to Viṣṇuism : Mapping the Use of the Compound *dharmasetu* in Epigraphic and Purāṇic Sources – Amandine Wattelier-Bricout (CNRS, CESAH, Paris)

Among the exhortative stanzas concluding land grants, the appeal to successors relies on Buddhist arguments, proclaiming in particular that the *dharma* is a bridge (*dharmasetu*) common for all kings. The earliest epigraphic evidence of the compound *dharmasetu* is found in grants issued by kings promoting Mahāyāna Buddhism and ruling in peripheral regions, such as Nepal, Cambodia, Java. Subsequently, the appeal to successors referring to *dharmasetu* is quoted throughout the Indian subcontinent in donations of all faiths. The last chapters of *Dharmāraṇyakhaṇḍa*, which form part to the *Skandapurāṇa*, depict the quest of Brahmins who have been dispossessed by a heretical king (Jain or Buddhist) and who, thanks to the *dharmasetu* argument, not only manage to regain their property but also to convert this impious king to the Vaiṣṇava faith. This paper will trace the spread of the *dharmasetu* argument, examining how a Buddhist argument could become a proselytising tool in favour of Viṣṇuism in *Dharmāraṇyakhaṇḍa*. Through mapping instances of the *dharmasetu* compound in epigraphic sources from South and Southeast Asia and by cross-referencing these with purāṇic sources, the paper will provide new insights into the potential historicity of this purāṇic narrative, as well as hypotheses regarding its dating.

Early Female Ascetics of the Tamil Country: An Epigraphical and Archeological Exploration – Charlotte Schmid (EFEO, Paris)

In the Tamil country, four Tamil Brāhmī epigraphs — a specific form of the Brāhmī script that records the earliest epigraphically attested forms of Classical Tamil — shed light on the association between ascetic practices, patronage, and women. Two of these inscriptions, classified as "Early Tamil Brāhmī" (2nd c. BCE-1st CE) by the prominent scholar I. Mahadevan, stand alongside three others from the "Late Tamil Brāhmī" period (2nd-4th c.). These significant records are found across four sites: Aḷakarmalai, Cittaṉṉavācal, Pukaḷur, and Nēkaṉūrpaṭṭi, all of which served as places of residence or reception for Jaina ascetics. The epigraphs not only highlight the early participation of women in ascetic practices in the Tamil region but also bring to mind Kavunti, the Jaina nun who is a central character in the *Cilappatikāram*, a major Tamil narrative poem from around the fifth century CE. The fate of Kavunti in this poem, combined with later commemorative inscriptions from the 4th and 5th centuries, prompts further questions about the purpose of these ascetic sites. Specifically, it raises queries concerning the rock-cut beds found within the caves – some of which bear inscriptions that account for no less than a third of the entire early Tamiḻ Brāhmī corpus.

A "Tamil Monastery" in Magadha? Remarks on Kurkihār in the Pāla Period – Vincent Tournier (LMU Munich)

Scholars have long observed the markedly cosmopolitan character of the Buddhist monasteries of Magadha. This phenomenon is well documented from around the 6th century onward and is especially prominent during the Pāla period. At a time when patronage was declining in other parts of the subcontinent, monks from distant regions travelled to reside in the richly endowed monasteries and major centres of learning in eastern India. Among them, monks from southern India were particularly well represented. Like their counterparts from other regions, they appear to have favoured certain institutions. From the 9th century onward, inscribed sculptures discovered at Kurkihār—or executed in the distinctive Kurkihār style—provide especially abundant evidence for the presence of southern monks. On this basis, Claudine Bautze-Picron (2014: 17) has remarked that "[m]ore than at any other site ... monks originating from South India lived in Kurkihar." Building on this assessment, the present paper introduces additional epigraphic evidence documenting the activities of monks from Tamiḻakam, Āndhra, and Kerala. It will examine the extent to which Kurkihār can be understood as a monastic centre defined primarily by the regional origins of its residents, and advance a hypothesis concerning the historical factors that gave rise to this situation.

On Pūrṇa and Candana: Buddhism, Fragrant Substances, and Networks of Exchange – Pia Brancaccio (L'Orientale, Naples)

The paper focuses on the Buddhist story of Pūrṇa and the Sandalwood Vihāra and traces its diffusion into maritime Asia. It argues that the image of the sandalwood monastery became a widely recognized motif not simply for symbolic reasons, but because it reflected real patterns of circulation tied to the sandalwood trade. As Sandalwood moved along maritime routes in Southeast Asia, the story traveled with it, gaining resonance in regions where the material itself was known, valued, and exchanged. By following both the narrative and the commodity, the paper shows how religious imagination and economic networks reinforced each other, helping to popularize the topos of the Sandalwood Vihāra across a broad geographic area.

THE PROGRESS OF BRIN (NATIONAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION AGENCY) AND EFEO EPIGRAPHIC COLLABORATION DURING THE DHARMA PROJECT — Titi Surti Nastiti (BRIN) and Arlo Griffiths (EFEO, Jakarta)

Research collaboration between the Indonesian Puslit Arkenas (since 2019 absorbed into BRIN) and EFEO has been established since 1976. Collaboration in Epigraphy began in 2000 at the initiative of Daniel Perret (EFEO) and Machi Suhadi (Puslit Arkenas) who had the idea to create a catalog of 'Classical' Nusantara inscriptions, meaning inscriptions of pre-IslamicMaritime Southeast Asia. The program began in 2002, involving three researchers: Daniel Perret, Machi Suhadi and Richadiana Kartakusuma (Puslit Arkenas), later joined by Titi Surti Nastiti (Puslit Arkenas), Hasan Djafar (University of Indonesia) and Arlo Griffiths (EFEO). In 2014, it was decided to abandon the previous idea of a printed publication and to strive instead for an online publication the cataloging program, which would be named the Online Inventory of Ancient Nusantara Epigraphy, or Inventaris Daring Epigrafi Nusantara Kuno indonesian (IDENK). A first batch of 329 entries, almost exclusively concerning inscriptions of Sumatra, was released in 2021 via the newly created website idenk.net. When Arlo Griffiths was posted back in Jakarta in 2022, an intensive new phase of collaboration was launched together with Titi Surti Nastiti, involving repeated epigraphic surveys in Central and East Java, making use of funding available from the DHARMA project. The purpose of these surveys was to control and expand the

records previously compiled by Daniel Perret and others for these parts of Java, which form the epigraphic epicenter of Indonesia. During altogether six fieldtrips, tens of thousands photographs and hundreds of photogrammetries were produced for inscriptions, mainly by Adeline Levivier (EFEO) but also by Hedwi Prihatmoko (BRIN), both in situ and in public or private collections. Our team has so far published three books reporting on surveys undertaken in 2022 and 2023, while further volumes concerning fieldwork in 2024 and 2025 are currently being finalized for publication. In this presentation, we aim to give an overview of the work accomplished between 2022 and 2025, and the way it relates to the aims of the DHARMA project.

Tracing Territorial Boundaries in Ancient Bali through Inscriptions from the 9th to 14th Century—Hedwi Prihatmoko (EPHE-PSL–BRIN)
This paper examines territorial boundaries in ancient Bali through Balinese inscriptions dating from the 9 th to the 14 th century. It uses at least forty inscriptions that mention boundary descriptions. By tracing these place names and boundary markers, the study aims to provide a preliminary understanding of how territorial space was recognised and managed within the ancient Balinese kingdom. Rather than treating inscriptions merely as administrative records, this paper approaches them as sources for reconstructing historical geography and spatial organisation. References to territorial boundaries often use natural features as markers. This paper also addresses other traceable old villages mentioned in the Balinese inscriptions in order to understand the relationships between villages during the medieval Balinese period. This study argues that Balinese inscriptions preserve valuable evidence for understanding the development of territoriality in ancient Bali. Although they do not offer a systematic map of the kingdom, their toponymic data may help us understand the social dynamics surrounding territorial issues.

Retrospective overview of the DHARMA visual data management – Adeline Levivier (EFEO, Paris)
This presentation will offer a retrospective overview of seven years of visual data management within the ERC-funded DHARMA project, which comes to an end this year. As Visual Data Manager, I will take stock of the work accomplished throughout the project's lifetime, providing a concrete picture of the volume and variety of image resources generated.

In order to provide comprehensive epigraphic visual documentation, my work focused on two complementary approaches: direct documentation of inscriptions in the field through dedicated fieldwork missions, as well as the documentation of estampage collections. Both photography and photogrammetric reconstructions were employed throughout this process.

This presentation will walk through the full workflow — from image capture and production, through archiving, to online publication — reflecting on the processes and tools that shaped our practice over the years. The dissemination pipeline ultimately leads to two platforms: Nakala for research data hosting, and CND3D for three-dimensional content. Beyond the technical aspects, this talk aims to give project members a clear sense of the scale of what has been produced and shared, and to open a discussion on the legacy this visual corpus leaves for future researchers.

What have we learned from our study of the Brahmaśambhu's *Naimittikriyānusandhāna*, part of the earliest surviving Śaiva manual of rites (dated 938 CE) ? — Dominic Goodall (EFEO, Pondicherry)

As their principal contribution to the DHARMA project, the Pondicherry team pledged to produce an edition and translation of the part of Brahmaśambhu's tenth-century manual treating rituals pertaining to special events, such as initiations, inaugurations, deaths and death-anniversaries. The choice was motivated by the realisation that the text here and there makes statements about communal monastic life and thus would be liable to throw light on the central questions of the project.

Alexis Sanderson kindly provided his transcription of four fifths of the unique surviving palm-leaf MS, kept in Calcutta, and editions of the five chapters were undertaken respectively by 1) Nina Mirnig (construction of the guru's house), 2) R. Sathyanarayanan (preparations and incubation before initiation), 3) Dominic Goodall (initiations), 4) S.A.S. Sarma (consecrations), 5) Judit Törzsök (funerary and post-mortuary rites). In our weekly reading sessions over the last years we have nearly completed a first-draft translation of the whole (one should bear in mind that Brunner's study of Somaśambhu's famous eleventh-century *paddhati*, which is of comparable length to the portion we undertook and had already been edited twice from different bodies of manuscript evidence, took nearly four decades, appearing in 1963, 1968, 1977, and 1998), and it is time to take stock of what we have learned from

this rich and stylishly written Sanskrit text. Amidst the welter of fascinating ritual detail, one striking finding is that large passages of the text appear to have been adopted and adapted into the most famous of the South Indian Temple Āgamas, the *Kāmika*.

Difficulties and Unsolved Problems—Editing the *Vṛṣasārasaṃgraha* – Csaba Kiss (L'Orientale, Naples)
As the editing process of the *Vṛṣasārasaṃgraha*—an enigmatic text of the Śivadharma corpus—comes to a close, I will briefly summarise my findings about the text and then concentrate on unresolved problems of language, provenance, and interpretation, as well as on more general questions concerning the difficulties of producing a critical edition of an 8th-10th-century Sanskrit text.

Memorializing Bhoja at Dhar – Andrew Ollett (University of Chicago), Saarthak Singh (EFEO, Paris)
One of the very few examples of literary Prakrit used in stone inscriptions is a series of inscriptions from Dhar that memorialize the Paramāra king Bhōja in verse. These inscriptions have been known since the early twentieth century, when a few of them were discovered in the Kamal Maula mosque. Some compositions have been recovered more or less in their entirety (including two hundred-verse poems about the tortoise that supports the earth), but other fragmentary compositions have received much less attention, and recently dozens of previously-unpublished fragments have been documented in the course of ongoing restoration work (and ongoing legal controversies) in and around Dhar. This presentation will give an overview of the material and ask (a) how we might understand these fragments in light of their architectural context; (b) what the relationship between the inscriptions might be, including their relationship with other well-known literary inscriptions produced at Dhar; (c) and what the purpose of this inscriptional program might have been.

The Laws of Manu in Java and Bali (Project Status Report) – Timothy Lubin (Washington & Lee University)
The legal history of Southeast Asia commenced with the introduction of writing, documents, and texts of Indian origin. The Sanskrit *Mānava Dharmaśāstra* and more generally the idea of Svāyambhuva Manu as legendary king and divine lawgiver played a central role in this from the start. Over the course of the DHARMA Project, Arlo Griffiths and I have

been editing and translating the so-called *Svayambhu*, an Old Javanese rendering of chapter 8 of that work, as well as studying it in the broader context of Old Javanese legal literature, most of which remains unpublished and largely unknown. This year, the project is in its final phase as we revise and polish the edition and translation, and prepare the introductory study, which details the arrival and appropriation of the Sanskrit religious lawbook in Java, and the subsequent development of Old Javanese legal literature in Java and Bali. The presentation will provide an overview of our findings.

Some Śaiva Sermons in the Old Javanese Pārthayajña—On True and False Ascetics – Andrea Acri (EPHE-PSL, Paris)
The *kakavin Pārthayajña,* retelling the episode from the *Mahābhārata* which recounts Arjuna's ascetic journey to Mount Indrakīla in search of divine favour, is replete with descriptions of hermitages where the protagonist encounters various male and female ascetics, as well as divine beings, who impart him philosophical lessons. As such, the poem is a source of information about Śaivism in 14th-century East Java, and especially about various categories of ascetic practitioners and their doctrinal and philosophical tenets. Some sermons delivered by prominent ascetics, besides imparting mystical lessons on how to free the mind from impurity, contain critical references to charlatans posing as men of religions to seek personal gains, or negative depictions of external asceticism as opposed to internalised meditative practice and self-cultivation. My paper will present a selection of passages drawn from the *Pārthayajña*—a critical edition and translation of which is being finalised by Peter Worsley and myself—and frame them against the background of the history and development of Śaivism in Java.

The Precarious Past in Premodern Java – Wayan Jarrah Sastrawan (The Australian National University, Canberra)
The practice of history in premodern Java was profoundly influenced by precarious conditions of textual production and preservation: fragile manuscripts perished in the tropical environment, archival records were scattered far afield, and historical memories faded over many generations. In this talk, I examine how Javanese societies between the fifth and fifteenth centuries CE responded with distinctive strategies to record and transmit knowledge of the past. Drawing on a range of epigraphical and manuscript sources, including many studied through the DHARMA project, I provide a detailed account of diverse forms of

history making in premodern Java, reconstructing a dynamic culture in which written and nonwritten modes of transmission coexisted and intersected. By situating these practices within broader discussions of global historiography, I show how Javanese historical practice can illuminate the diversity of ways that societies have developed different ways of preserving and remembering the past.

Evidence for Grammatical Schools from South Indian Inscriptions — Victor D'Avella (University of Oxford)

Preceptors and Pupils on the Stage: Hermitage, Hierarchy, and Pedagogy in Classical Indian Drama – Csaba Dezső (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest)

Classical Sanskrit drama deploys the *guru-śiṣya* relation as an active dramatic resource for articulating authority and social hierarchy, to comic or pathetic effect. This paper examines scenes from classical Indian plays in which teachers and disciples appear together on stage or in which the *āśrama* setting functions as a site of pedagogical authority. Three modes emerge: the hermitage-as-household, the parodic inversion, and the supporting scene (*viṣkambhaka*). Across these texts the *guru-śiṣya* dyad operates as a semiotic structure that concentrates or redistributes authority within a scene.

How a *parama-māheśvara* King Endows a Jain Temple: The Peddāpurappāḍu Charters of Viṣṇuvardhana II – Dániel Balogh (Humboldt University, Berlin)

Three sets of copper plates discovered at the village of Peddāpurappāḍu around 1983 provide the earliest direct evidence for the patronage of Jainism by kings of the Eastern Cālukya dynasty of Veṅgī. Issued by Viṣṇuvardhana II (ca. 673–682 CE), the three charters concern grants to a single temple headed by Ācārya Kanakanandi of the Vṛkṣamūla Yāpanīya gaṇa. The texts, previously only published at a low standard, have now been reedited from photos of the originals, allowing the clarification of many doubts and vague points while raising intriguing new questions. Who was Bhaṭṭāraka Mañcirāja, the apparent founder of this temple? Why did a Jain temple receive royal grants from a king who elsewhere styles himself parama-māheśvara? Then again, how is it that the dynasty's earliest known copper charter to a "Hindu" temple is later by at least a century? In providing for the future of a "heretical" religious institution,

did the kings of Veṅgī provide for their own future alliances?

From Sanskrit to Portuguese: The Life and Afterlife of a 14th-Century Copper-Plate Charter in 16th-Century Goa – Annette Schmiedchen (Humboldt University, Berlin), Roger Lee de Jesus (Leibniz University, Hannover)

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.

Humā fields and royal territory: land endowments and agricultural conceptions in Campā – Salomé Pichon (EFEO, Paris)

In Campā, most donations made to temples consist of rice fields. Designated in inscriptions as *humā*, these cultivated lands receive detailed descriptions that shed light on ancient agricultural conceptions. Notably, while the foundation of sanctuaries could be undertaken by dignitaries, the accompanying donations of fields were exclusively a royal prerogative. This paper aims to analyze the different levels of "provisions" reflected in these donations: those related to agricultural yields, as well as those concerning the organization and long-term sustainability of the kingdom's territory.

Revisiting Attimabbe and the Idioms of Jaina Lay Devotion – Samana Gururaja (Humboldt University, Berlin)

At the DHARMA midterm workshop in March, 2022 I presented preliminary research on Attimabbe, a Jaina woman from Northern

Karnataka who patronised the construction of several Jaina temples, as well as the production of manuscripts in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. My initial investigation of secondary literature and examination of the Lakkundi inscription of 1007 revealed that the composite portrait of Attimabbe as presented in scholarship was constructed from inscriptions and *campu* texts in Old Kannada. At the time, I could only provide references to these additional sources, as well as the many instances of Jaina laywomen invoking Attimabbe as a paragon of female piety in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Since then, I have been able to investigate the additional sources — including the first chapter of the *campu* text, *Ajitapurāṇa* and several ancillary inscriptions — which reveal that Attimabbe's position as an exemplar for lay female piety was no coincidence but a deliberate construction of a distinct identity for Jaina laywomen that incorporated religion, ideal wifehood and motherhood, and proximity to political power.

Reading Sūḍi through Inscriptions: Exploring Power, Social Orders, and Sacred Networks - Antonella Santoro (L'Orientale, Naples)

Sūḍi was a significant administrative and religious centre under Western Cālukya rule. It explores the intersection of temple architecture, royal authority, social organisation, and Śaiva institutional networks between the tenth and twelve centuries. This paper gives particular attention to the epigraphic evidence which highlights the role of the regent princess Akkādevī, sister of Vikramāditya V (1008–15) and Jayasiṁha II (1015–42), and reveals the existence of a highly structured institutional framework centred on the temple. The paper focuses especially on the social categories attested in the inscriptions, and considers how these categories were incorporated into the organisation of temple life. It also examines the recurring presence of Kālāmukha preceptors, whose appearance in the records suggests a wider network connecting Sūḍi with other important Śaiva centres, such as Ablūr and Balligavi.

On mending cracks and splits: further remarks on *khaṇḍa-sphuṭita-saṁskāra* and the Śivadharma — Florinda De Simini (L'Orientale, Naples)

This presentation explores the historical and institutional interactions between early organized Śaivism and Buddhism through the study of the early attestations of a specific administrative formula, *khaṇḍa-sphuṭita-saṁskāra* (or its variants), the 'restoration of cracked and split [parts of a building].' According to previous research, this formula has demonstrably Buddhist origins, appearing in early Buddhist Sanskrit and Pāli literature on the management and maintenance of stūpas and vihāras. The presence of this compound in chapter four of the *Śivadharmaśāstra* likely represents its earliest non-Buddhist literary occurrence, signaling the Śaiva community's adoption of established administrative jargon to attract patronage. The presentation will trace the epigraphic evolution of this formula from 5th-century Gupta grants to the 7th-century Licchavi inscriptions of Nepal and the Pāṇḍava grants of Dakṣiṇa Kosala, and put these in conversation with the composition and spread of early Śivadharma literature.