

Joint Research Group

Manuscriptology and Digital Humanities

Workshop on Manuscriptology

**Monday 13.07.2026
and Tuesday 14.07.2026**

**Room 130.00.02
and Zoom (Hybrid Workshop)**

Across two days, the Workshop on Manuscriptology brings together specialists from Paris, Austin and Heidelberg (namely Manasicha Akepiyapornchai, Manik Bajracharya, Jonas Buchholz, Daniele Cuneo, Rajan Khatiwoda, Nicole Merkel and Jérôme Petit - in alphabetical order), to explore South Asian manuscripts as both physical objects and living texts, spanning palaeography, calendrics, critical editing, conservation, and state of the art digital tools currently reshaping the field.

The workshop is organized in seven thematic sessions on Monday 13.07.2026 (10:00 - 16:00) and on Tuesday 14.07.2026 (10:00 - 16:30) and offers participants - including students of all levels - a rare chance to learn directly from leading scholars, to engage with the latest questions, and to follow the life of texts from palm leaf to critical edition and digital tools — all while joining an open conversation about the methods and challenges that animate the field of Manuscript Studies today.

Participation in the workshop is strongly recommended for those attending the seminar "Digital Editing of Sanskrit Texts". All sessions will be held in English.

For the detailed Programme and individual topics, please visit:

<https://backend.sai.uni-heidelberg.de/en/documents/manuscriptology-workshop-programme/download>



For Online Participation:

Meetings' CHAT LINK:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/jc/88279461959>

JOIN ZOOM MEETING:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88279461959?pwd=1A3El8bEMjGkvQ3qS0ah5Xx2ablFVe.1>



Meeting ID: 882 7946 1959
Passcode: 818119

Manuscriptology and Digital Humanities Joint Research Group

Workshop on Manuscriptology

13–14 July 2026

Room 130.00.02 / Zoom (Hybrid)

Programme

Monday, 13 July 2026

MORNING · SESSION I · 60 MINUTES

Authority on paper, palm leaf, and stone: An introduction to diplomatics in Nepalese documents

10:00 –
11:00

Manik Bajracharya & Rajan Khatiwoda

Nepalese administrative documents, whether inscribed on paper, palm leaf or occasionally on stone, follow rich and formalised diplomatic traditions. This interactive workshop introduces the foundational methods of diplomatics with a focus on the formal features, authenticating elements, and textual conventions found in Nepalese documents.

Short break · 11:00 – 11:15

MORNING · SESSION II · 60 MINUTES

A Nepalese Renaissance, 14th–17th century: The Outline of a Current and Future Project

11:15 –
12:15

Daniele Cuneo

My presentation outlines the “Nepalese Renaissance” (14th–17th centuries), a period of intense cultural and intellectual activity at the Malla courts, with particular attention to its rich but still largely unpublished manuscript traditions. It focuses especially on literary productions, in particular Rāma-centered dramas used to articulate and legitimize royal authority. A central part of the discussion is devoted to Māṇikya, a paradigmatic intellectual figure active under Jayasthiti Malla (1382–1395), whose Sanskrit and Newar writings arguably mark the beginning of the ‘literarization’ of Newar culture and language. The presentation concludes with a 17th-century illuminated manuscript, used to illustrate the relationship between courtly literary culture and the formation of royal *Bildung*.

Lunch break · 12:15 – 13:30

AFTERNOON · SESSION · 2 HOURS

Reading Praise: Dhyāna and Māhātmya Verses in 18th-Century Devanāgarī Manuscripts

13:30 –
15:30

Jérôme Petit

Colophons and prefatory verses occupy the margins of scholarly editions, yet they encode rich devotional, literary, and social meaning. In this practical reading session, participants decipher short Sanskrit poems in Devanāgarī script from eighteenth-century manuscripts — *dhyāna* verses evoking the form of a deity and *māhātmya* stanzas celebrating the salvific power of a text. Three works are treated: the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Adhyātmārāmāyaṇa*, and the *Bhagavadgītā*. The session proceeds by guided close reading, building confidence with the script alongside sensitivity to genre. No prior palaeographical experience is assumed.

Discussion & questions · 15:30 – 16:00

Tuesday, 14 July 2026

MORNING · SESSION I · 2 HOURS

Dating Manuscripts: Colophon Dates, *Pañcāṅga*, and the Structures of Time in Indian Documents

Jérôme Petit

**10:00 –
12:00**

A manuscript date is rarely a simple number. This session trains participants to read and interpret chronological data embedded in colophons — era systems, lunar calendar elements, and the technical vocabulary of Indian timekeeping. Selected colophons are read alongside extracts from eighteenth-century *pañcāṅga* (almanacs), allowing participants to understand not only how to convert a date but also what the almanac meant to its compilers and users as a social and ritual document. Horoscope colophons, which preserve dates of exceptional precision, are also examined.

Short break · 12:00 – 12:15

MORNING · SESSION II · 45 MINUTES

Manuscripts of South Indian temple legends: textual witnesses and cultural objects

Jonas Buchholz

**12:15 –
13:00**

This presentation focuses on the corpus of manuscripts of South Indian *sthalamāhātmya* and *talapurāṇam* texts edited by the “Hindu Temple Legends in South India” project. The first part provides an overview of the manuscript corpus and the methods employed by the project in working with it. The second part examines what a study of the manuscripts can tell us about the circulation and cultural uses of the texts that they contain.

Lunch break · 13:00 – 14:00

AFTERNOON · SESSION I · 60 MINUTES

Secrecy and Sacredness of the Siamese Grantha Manuscripts

Manasicha Akepiyapornchai

**14:00 –
15:00**

This talk focuses on the Siamese Grantha manuscripts of Thai Brahmins, exploring the main problems embedded in and surrounding this understudied corpus, namely its secrecy and corruption. In addition, it examines the influence and transformation of South Indian Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava devotional traditions within the texts of this corpus.

Short break · 15:00 – 15:15

AFTERNOON · SESSION II · 45 MINUTES

Automated Text Recognition for South Asian Scripts – Use Case: Devanagari

**15:15 –
16:00**

Nicole Merkel

Since 2018, FID South Asia at Heidelberg University has been using Transkribus for text recognition of works printed in Devanagari script from the Naval Kishore Press collection at the CATS Library. The presentation focuses on the practical challenges and potential (workaround) solutions in our project.

Wrap-up & General Discussion

**16:00 –
16:30**

A brief closing session bringing together the themes of both days: from physical document and palaeography, through calendrics and dating, to digital transcription, multi-witness editing, and collection access. All participants are invited to reflect on shared methodological questions.

For Online Participation:

Join Zoom Meeting

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