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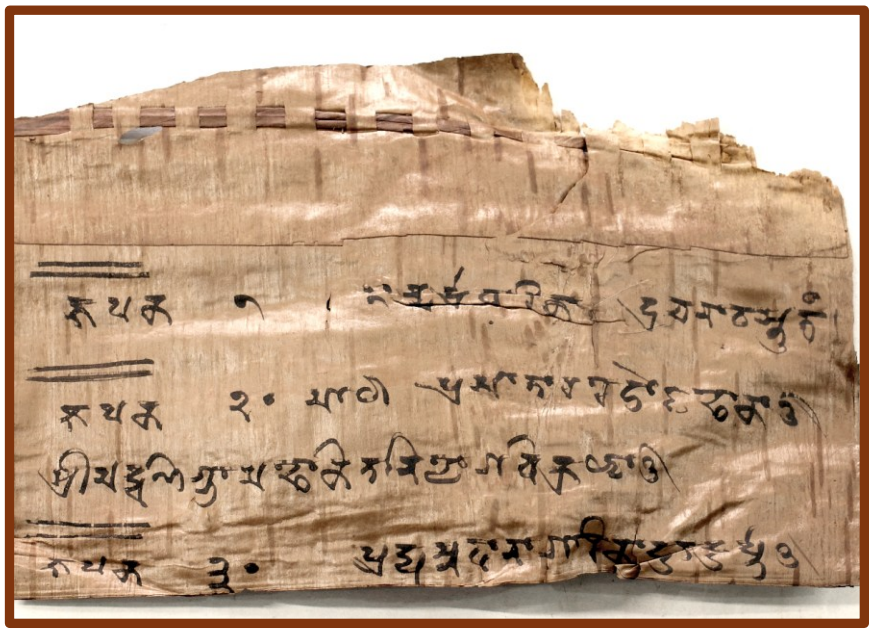
SAI
SOUTH ASIA INSTITUTE
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF SOUTH ASIA

UNIVERSITÄT HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT SEIT 1386

Joint Research Group

Manuscriptology and Digital Humanities

Proto-Śāradā Project:
Documenting a 7th-Century Administrative Archive from Northwestern India



09:15-10:45 Hrs
(CET Germany)

= 13:45-15:15 (IST India)
= 17:15-18:45 (JST Japan)

Friday 18.12.2026

Meeting's Link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85088149247?pwd=pHfkMsOnMzNb2N9FG19wPyW7WaRkRQ.1

Meeting ID: 85088149247
Passcode: pothi

Pre-modern Indian administrative documents are exceptionally rare. The Proto-Śāradā Project addresses this historical gap through the study of a 7th-century archive from Punjab, comprising birch-bark manuscripts and clay bullae held in the Jehan Zaib Collection (Leeds, UK), complemented by recently discovered related materials from Pakistan.

This paper presents preliminary insights into these unique administrative letters, financial ledgers, and original document seals. We first survey the textual content, introducing new lexical items from the sphere of ancient economics and administration.

We then explore the palaeography of the documents relative to contemporary local inscriptions while outlining updates to the Indoskript 3.0 platform. Lastly, we evaluate several novel manuscript formats that disrupt conventional codicological categories, proposing strategies to accommodate their unique physical structures within Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) cataloguing standards.

Speakers: Prof. Dr. **Ingo Strauch** (Université de Lausanne), Junior Professor Dr. **Kathrin Holz** (Universität Würzburg), and Dr. **Camillo Formigatti** (Universität Würzburg).

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