**Śāstric Rules and Customary Norms in Epigraphic Records of South Asian Property Deeds and Disputes**

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Although Sanskrit Śāstras urge the recognition of customary norms observed in particular regions (*deśa*) and within particular castes (*jāti*), guilds (*śreṇi*), and families (*kula*), particular examples are rarely mentioned (with just a couple of exceptions). Inscriptions on metal and stone, and (later) palm-leaf documents, offer a large (if idiosyncratic) body of source material that often provides a glimpse of the operation of law “on the ground.” The records, coming from all over India (especially numerous in the South) and much of Southeast Asia, are some of our best chances to customary norms being applied, especially where the record concerns non-Brahmin groups. On the other hand, even in non-Sanskrit records, categories and concepts seemingly derived from Śāstric discourse are apt to get invoked. This presentation will begin by briefly reviewing the Śāstric views on property, and will then turn to a range of documentary records arising from grants or decisions, with the aim of indicating the diversity of property law across time and space, as well as the persistent if selective appeal to jurisprudential concepts that were developed in Dharmaśāstra. The final section will assess the feasibility of inferring customary principles of land rights from the sparse surviving records.