The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC) cordially invites you to an informal talk by

Professor Dr Bhavani Raman (Toronto)

"Artifact, Memory, Practice: The Chancery and Archive"

What light can chancery practices shed on the construction of official archives? In my talk I will explore a specific set of chancery practices: Tamil palm-leaf revenue recordkeeping of South India within a multilingual textual ecology to understand the relationship between the chancery and the archive. Till the mid nineteenth century in the Tamil speaking regions of India, recordkeeping—documents and deeds on palm-leaf—was controlled by accountants, kanakkupillais. To control these powerful mediators of revenue, legal convention and commerce, British colonial recordkeeping and chancery practices in Madras drew on an array of techniques, language experts and media technologies. I will foreground how the material and spatial struggle over recordkeeping entailed all manner of interventions which sought to separate text-artifact and its circulation from the embodied presence of the Tamil recordkeeper. These interventions sought to create new contexts for records and generated enduring epistemic conundrums and concerns that have shaped the trajectory of modern archival logics in colonial and postcolonial societies.

Friday, 5 February 2021, 02:00 pm (CET)
Zoom-Meeting