

The Reading Circle in FRIM 2026

What is the Reading Circle?

To do good Historical Musicology, one needs a formidable list of skills: musical, historical and textual. And if one wants to go beyond printed texts, they will require some degree of text-critical and philological expertise. This means learning to use print and manuscript material, to constitute a reliable reading of the text, preparing an edition, and translating the text precisely. It is only with a reliable edition and a rigorous translation that further interpretations can be built.

This can seem like a tall order, regardless of how many years of experience one has. One doesn't have to dive down the deep end of linguistic and philological pool, certainly not by themselves. One of the ways to make the experience less stressful, and the end-product better, is to organize a reading circle with the materials one is editing or translating. The Reading circle is simply an exercise where people gather - either in person or online, and take turns reading, translating and annotating a text. The reading circle is meant to be collaborative, not competitive, and **participants can choose to be active (or not)** in the translation exercise. Participating in the reading circle doesn't mean one is compelled to translate; one can learn a great deal by being an auditor in such sessions.

We hope you find this model interesting, and take it forward, even after the conference.

What Does One Do in the Reading Circle?

The idea behind this session is to 'workshop' the idea of the reading circle for FRIM. We've chosen a selection from the *Gītavinōda* chapter from Sōmēśvara's *Rājamānasōllāsa* for this time. Here's [a folder](#) with a transcript of the Kannada Edition [thanks to Prof Arati Rao], and a pdf of the Baroda edition of the *Rājamānasōllāsa* [thanks to Prof N. Ramanathan].

We could aim to read the first 30 verses; the goal is to be thorough, and to take everyone along, rather than to cover ground. This is the format we will follow:

- a. We will read the verses in advance and note textual problems,
- b. We will take turns translating one verse each, followed by annotations and comments from the rest of room (and the zoom)

c. We will finalize the text and translation of the verse based on the collective understanding, and add any annotations.

d. Repeat the cycle for another verse, and another, till we run out of time.