

might be taking place when Muslims and Muslim societies engage with predominantly non-Muslim peoples and practices. He discusses influence on and in, appropriation and diffusion. Consideration is given to other paradigms such as transculturation, transplanting, hybridity, polygenesis, intersection and grafting. But crosspollination is the answer because “I relish its metaphorical appeal, its promise of insight but not at the expense of a specific commitment to consequence . . . I also hope that it will include ‘more than the maker . . . at the time knew’, though some may judge that ‘crosspollinations’ is more parsimonious than my aspirations for it”. From time to time he lets his passion for the Arab Muslim world show through, and not least when he is discussing the brilliant Arab response to Greek learning. ‘Crosspollinations’, he reminds us, “is not a theory but an approach, one which provides a vision of Islam considerably at variance to some versions of Islam currently prevalent. It is a vision of a crosspollinatory and crosspollinated Islam, standing between Antiquity and Medieval Europe, an open, dynamic and vibrant system which thrived on, and pulsated with diversity”. All scholars addressing issues of cultural interaction will benefit from consulting this essay. The book as a whole, moreover, for this and other essays should go on to the undergraduate bibliographies of those reading medieval Islamic and European history.

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VISUALIZING SPACE IN BANARAS: IMAGES, MAPS, AND THE PRACTICE OF REPRESENTATION. Edited by MARTIN GAENZLE AND JÖRG GENGNAGEL. pp. 358. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006.
 doi:10.1017/S1356186308009504

Banaras. The name alone conjures at once an image in the mind’s eye, a panorama of temple towers and broad steps rising steeply from the river bank, facing the flat plain on the opposing shore, over whose rim the sun rises. The visitor might glimpse this view – depicted so often by artists – while entering the city by crossing the northern bridge, or study it more carefully from a slowly rowed boat. But there may also be a lurking sense that behind the façade of the familiar waterfront lies only muddle. To the casual visitor the city seems to have no clear layout or plan, only a maze of congested winding lanes, punctuated by irregular market places. The crumbling stucco balconies of once fine mansions hint at a more orderly past. But to the pilgrim (as even the visitor may be dimly aware) the city appears very differently: as a ritually organised space. The pilgrim sees a collection of shrines, not heaped randomly but laid out in logical relation to each other; and he or she carries a mental map of the routes between them, a different picture of Banaras that can be made real as a *tirtha patha*.

Some such thoughts, about how different kinds of people imagine and depict space in Banaras, seem to have been the starting point for this volume. Its chapters are based on papers presented at an international conference held in Heidelberg in 2002. Not all of the contributors address the core conference issues directly, and despite the best efforts of the editors in the Introduction to bring everyone to order, some sections diverge widely from the themes signalled by the book’s title and subtitle. But if the net result is less coherent it is no less interesting for being a set of digressions, and the book makes an original contribution to the already large corpus of scholarly writing on India’s best known holy city.

Closest to the announced topic are the chapter by Hans Bakker on the Avimuktaksetra – a circumambulation of the sacred zone – as described in the Skandapurana and other sources, and Axel Michael’s analysis of two late-nineteenth century printed maps indicating the locations of shrines. Both chapters are brief and technical rather than discursive, but they complement each other as

studies of word and image respectively. Among other things, Bakker shows how the cremation *ghat* at Manikarnika, at once polluting and sacred, came to be included within the ambit of the circumambulation. He illustrates his argument with modern maps, over which the sacred geometry is plotted a little uncomfortably. So it is useful here to turn to the mandalic imagery of the conceptual maps discussed by Michaels. Dealing with profound issues, both these chapters indicate fruitful areas for further study. Their themes are combined and taken forward in the chapter by Jörg Gengnagel, through a case study of a nineteenth-century dispute about the correct way to perform a particular procession.

Three chapters deal with devotion to specific groups of deities: Ravi Singh and Rana Singh discuss the city's myriad goddess cults; Annette Wilke shows how the Nine Durga concept functions within the Banaras landscape; while Sunthar Visuvalingam and Elizabeth Chevalier-Visuvalingam consider the worship of Bhairava, the city's guardian.

Sumathi Ramaswamy's richly detailed chapter considers the city's Bharat Mata temple, built in 1927. Visited more by tourists than by pilgrims, this temple is famous for housing no *murti* but only a huge relief map of the subcontinent carved in marble and covering the entire floor. She ponders why the founders omitted the iconic image of Bharat Mata herself from a temple dedicated in her name, and aims to answer the question "by considering the contentious survival of Hindu modes of worship within India's tortured modernity". (p. 178) It is not fully clear whether this route is the same as saying what she reveals elsewhere in the chapter: that the now well-known image of Bharat Mata was neither long established nor widely recognised in 1927; that the principal patron, Shiva Prasad Gupta, had turned against idol worship under the influence of the Arya Samaj; and that both he and Gandhi (who helped inaugurate the temple) hoped that it could provide a focus for nationalist sentiment for Indians of all religions, including Muslims. Reason enough. Ramaswamy's discussion of the association between the map and the female figure, though taking off from recent work by others, adds some perceptive insights.

Niels Gutschow opens the section on 'Images' with a discussion of selected panoramas, or views of the city's waterfront. Wisely avoiding any attempt to be comprehensive, he ignores some of the well known images by famous artists, and chooses instead a handful which usefully includes some of the early European views and some little known Indian paintings from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These Indian images adopt the same rolling (rather than single-point) perspective, so that the curve of the river bank is flattened out and each part is given equal focus, while at the same time displaying a shift from scenic to sacred interests.

Some more European images of the *ghats* are discussed in the next chapter by Joachim K. Bautze. After briefly noting some early prints including James Prinsep's, the focus moves towards photographs and other printed images derived from them, with discussions particularly of the work of Samuel Bourne and Louis Rousselet. Unlike Gutschow, Bautze is less concerned to explore what their images can tell us about how artists saw Banaras than to get certain facts straight. We learn that Bourne took two similar but separate views of Aurangzeb's mosque at different times, but labelled them both number '1168', perhaps because the first glass negative broke and had to be replaced (pp. 216–218). Crown Prince Wilhelm of Prussia mistakenly labelled one of his own photographs of the city's so-called golden temple as having been taken in Delhi (pp. 221–222). These are things which might otherwise have escaped remark from historians; but through notes and references more extensive than the text, they are here established beyond further question.

The third and final chapter of the 'Images' section, by Sandria B. Freitag, is the most ambitious. Noting that "the Banaras with which we are familiar is almost entirely a construction (both literally and figuratively) of the 18th century" (p. 242), Freitag contrasts the perception of the city with that of two other equally distinctive but very different Indian cities of the same period, namely Jaipur and Lucknow. The discussion of Jaipur concentrates on "the visualization of a city through production and

consumption of its regional arts and crafts”, (p. 237) – which is to say – how a public sense of Jaipur rests on what it manufactures and sells. In the case of Lucknow, the city’s distinct identity is said to be centred around the festival of Muharram and the visual culture (including architecture) associated with it. The essay offers a thought-provoking perspective, though the claim that these visualisations of cities are aspects “of the emergence of modernity” is insufficiently argued.

That the ‘normative’ spaces of idealised images or models of a city can be in tension with “the lived-in place of everyday experience” (p. 17) is a point to emerge especially from the section entitled ‘Social Practice and Everyday Life’ which contains some more anthropological essays. It opens with Nita Kumar’s study of the perception of space on various levels – home, neighbourhood and nation – by schoolchildren. Stefan Schütte discusses networking among the *dhobis* (washermen) of Banaras, members of a small caste group that is widely dispersed through the city. Martin Gaenzle focuses on Nepali residents and visitors and the parts of the city of particular significance to them.

The last chapter of the collection, by Vasudha Dalmia, is a work of literary criticism, a reading of Prem Chand’s novel *Sevasadan* (1918). Set against the backdrop of social change in Banaras in the early twentieth century, it tells the story of a neglected Brahman wife who chooses to become a courtesan, a position which she perceives as attracting greater social regard. Though her role model in this choice indeed commands a traditional measure of respect, the heroine makes her move at a time when such long-entrenched attitudes are under attack from zealous social reformers. The political debate about whether the courtesans should be removed from the city centre however, turns in the end less on moral than on communal concerns. In a thoroughly engaging analysis of its plot and principal characters, Dalmia reveals both the novel’s satirical edge and the insight it provides into the social and political life of the city’s elite at a moment in history.

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THE TRIUMPH OF MODERNISM: INDIA’S ARTISTS AND THE AVANT-GARDE 1922–1947. By PARTHA MITTER. pp. 271, London, Reaktion Books, 2007.
doi:10.1017/S1356186308009516

There is a conundrum familiar to historians of modern art that is often dubbed ‘Picasso and the Africans’. How is it, one asks, that Picasso’s adaptations of African sculpture are generally seen as brilliantly inventive and original, while any assimilation of European modernism by African or Asian artists is often derided as derivative? Does the seeming double standard reflect nothing deeper than a continuing prejudice of the sort that was common in the colonial era? Partha Mitter’s engrossing new book goes some way towards addressing this issue in relation to painting in late colonial India.

The quarter-century preceding Independence in 1947 was a rich period for Indian art, laying the foundations for the various scene we find today. It was marked by Indian artists’ adoption of some of the diverse modes of the western avant-garde, as seen in the poetic cubism of Gaganendranath Tagore and various versions of primitivism, from the naïve watercolours of Sunayani Devi and the pastoralist idylls of Amrita Sher-Gil, to the untutored introspective visions of Rabindranath Tagore. An obsession with the local tribal people amongst artists of the Santiniketan School was carried forward to fashion the distinctive primitive idiom of Jamini Roy.

All of these artists have been written about before, though mostly individually and in Indian publications and exhibition catalogues that are not readily available to the general reader. Mitter’s well-illustrated survey, *The Triumph of Modernism*, contains brilliant essays on each of them and brings