

Nor are the editors' arguments always entirely convincing. On p.7 for instance they claim that "the dilemma of Afghanistan has not so much been one of the parochial intransigence of a region frozen in its traditionalism as one of a region exposed to so escalating a flow of ideologies across its borders as to weaken every attempt at state formation". Far more critical would seem to have been for example the extent of foreign interference, including the flows of weaponry, military expertise, soldiers and irregular fighters. Or, to take another example, *Afghanistan in Ink* suggests that Afghanistan has not been a country remote from world events and frozen in time. But to this day Afghan society does remain in some important respects unmodernised. Take literacy for instance; as Mills points out in Chapter 10, female literacy remains below twenty percent even in urban areas.

Nevertheless *Afghanistan in Ink* has a great deal going for it. It approaches twentieth and early-twenty-first century Afghan history from a new angle and reveals hitherto often neglected aspects of the country's cultural development. In doing so it opens up new and rewarding perspectives, and readers will find much to interest them. hugh.beattie@open.ac.uk

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ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN LADAKH. By Erberto Lo Bue. pp. 440. Leiden, Brill, 2014.
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Ladakh has been called the "crossroads of high Asia" (J. Rizvi, 1983). The area centred on the Upper Indus Valley has served as a thoroughfare for goods, armies and cultural influences since pre-historic times, forming a crucial bridge between the Subcontinent, Xinjiang and the Tibetan Plateau. In a remarkable paradox, Ladakh combines extreme remoteness and inaccessibility with openness and connectivity. More recently, India's stand-off with China in the Himalayas and the disputed border with Pakistan have put an end to Ladakh's traditional rôle as a crossroads of cultures but new infrastructure, in the form of air travel and the Leh-Manali-Highway has kept the area open to the outside world. In 1974, Ladakh was re-opened to foreign visitors, and studies in all aspects of local culture have since resumed while still standing on the shoulders of the pioneers of the colonial age, from W. Moorcroft (1767–1825), to the scholars of the Moravian Mission in Leh (A. H. Francke, 1870–1930) and the European researchers of the inter-War period, in particular G. Tucci (1894–1984).

Modern research into Ladakhi culture is characterised by two notions that are abundantly in evidence in this book, i.e. an inter-disciplinary approach and attention to questions of heritage preservation. These points are particularly emphasised by J. Bray in his introduction, as the author calls for serious linguistic studies to accompany art-historical and archaeological work and draws the reader's attention to the manifold threats faced by the built environment in Ladakh in our time. The seventeen contributions in this volume, drawn from the biennial IALS symposia between 2007 and 2011, are listed in chronological order, which establishes a type of narrative despite the wide range of subjects. The individual articles fall into three categories: little-known subjects, often in remote areas, 'classics' of Ladakhi (art-) history that have been re-visited and subjects with a direct relevance to the present.

The study of Ladakhi rock art may still be in its infancy, yet T. L. Thsangpa's article on ancient petroglyphs reveals a range of styles and regional and inter-regional connections which point to Kashmir, Northern Pakistan, Central Asia and Central Tibet. While a full art-historical narrative is still contingent on further field work and a more reliable chronological framework, the artistic sophistication of the depiction of animals in motion at Domkhar (Lower Ladakh) and Tangtse (Northeastern Ladakh),

with their links with Scythian and early Chinese art powerfully demonstrates the relevance of this subject. Rock art also forms the most significant body of evidence for early Buddhist penetration into Ladakh. Phuntsog Dorjay's piece on early Buddhist rock art, based on extensive field work (2001–2008), goes beyond the documentation of well-known major works, like the Maitreya image at Mulbek or the bodhisattva figures at Dras. The artistic sources of these rock-carved sculptures are found in Kashmir rather than in Tibet, with Kashmir also providing the only, relatively, reliable reference to the dating of the sculptures between the ninth and eleventh centuries.

N. and K. Howard put the monuments and history of the Gya Valley in Eastern Ladakh on the map – impressive remnants of fortified structures and vast stūpa fields – and make a point for classing them as second in the region only to those between Shey and Ranbirpur for the period following the Second Diffusion of Buddhism in the eleventh century. The complex was established by an important line of local rulers of royal descent who became extinct only at the end of the nineteenth century. The castle and mosque at Chigtan in the Purig region of Western Ladakh is another example of an abandoned architectural complex that has been studied little so far. Khan, Bray, Devers and Vernier identify five stages of construction in the castle and its associated forts, with a striking mixture of influences that point towards Baltistan as well as Central Ladakh during various eras particularly the seventeenth century. The adjacent mosque with its extant woodcarvings is an important survival of the Tibeto-Himalayan type in view of the rapid disappearance of these buildings in our time.

The systematic study of chörtens (*mchod-rten*) in Ladakh, has had a long tradition that goes back to Tucci (1932) and continues with Kozics's stūpa project (2005). The article by Devers, Bruneau and Vernier uses the typological approach developed by K. Howard in 1995 to analyse ten painted chörtens of unknown date: the most instructive type is the 'kakani' or entrance chörten through which the visitor may pass and obtain a view of the interior of the stūpa, the latter often decorated with murals. The examples at Nyoma and Shera stand out with depictions of the Life of the Buddha and a 'drinking scene'. Kozics's study of a single, multi-storeyed chörten at Nyarma, thus far ignored by modern scholars, expands on the stūpa theme and demonstrates the existence of an alternative architectural type, probably in the late eleventh or early twelfth centuries, that used stone corbel vaults rather than the timber lantern ceilings known from Alchi. It is shown that this type of roofing necessitated a different configuration of the iconography of the paintings on the interior walls.

The second diffusion of Buddhism which was dominated by the activities of the great translator, Rinchen Zangpo (CE 958–1055), produced the artistic and architectural monuments of the Alchi enclosure (*chos-'khor*), the high point of Ladakhi art-history. Denwood re-visits the question of the dating of the Sumtsek Temple which has received a great deal of attention since the days of Snellgrove and Skorupski (1977). The author aims to refute Goepfner & Goncar's late dating of the temple by showing that the late twelfth and early thirteenth-century Drigungpa personages, depicted on the second floor of the temple, go back to later changes to the murals, for the purpose of claiming Alchi for the Drigung Order. Given the central position that the Alchi Sumtsek holds in the context of Ladakhi art-history, this discussion can be seen as crucial to the evaluation of most Ladakhi art of the Second Diffusion and beyond.

One of the most renowned scenes among the artistic treasures of Alchi, the 'Drinking Scene' at Dukhang, stands as a perfect symbol of the theme of this book. Alafouzo shows the myriad influences at work, in terms of the typology of the scene (connected with pre-Islamic nomad traditions), the costumes and the physiognomies of the figures: a meeting of Tibetan (female figures) and Central Asian (male figures) types and styles which display influences from areas as diverse as Mongolia, Sassanian Persia and Pāla Bengal.

Poell challenges the primacy of Kashmiri influences on the art of the Second Diffusion by pointing out the impact of post-Gupta sculpture on the woodcarvings of Lachuse Temple, a little-known site in Western Ladakh: the carvings include remnants of a tripartite façade and verandah in addition to

carved interior features. The presence of artistic sources other than Kashmiri is notably different from the group around the Alchi Sumtsek, Sumda and Mangyu temples and may necessitate a re-evaluation of the orientation of some of the art of the Second Diffusion.

The change in cultural and artistic outlook in Ladakh that came with the arrival of the Gelug Order in the fifteenth century is studied by Bellini with regard to the iconography of the re-painting of the Gönkhang of Spituk Monastery. The paintings whose style shows influences of Tibetan Gelugpa centres are dated by the author to the time of Tsong-kha-pa's (1357–1419) visit to Ladakh. However, the vast majority of murals which adorn Ladakh's active monasteries today date from the period following the Dogra conquest (1834–42). One such example is the Avalokiteśvara (*Chenrezig*) Temple at Lamayuru which was built and decorated in the middle of the nineteenth century. Blancke's article on the Lamayuru murals (by an unknown master) concentrates on the remarkable attempt to illustrate the intermediate states between reincarnations (as described in the Tibetan "Book of the Dead") in pictorial form to make this content accessible to the common people. In a similar way, Lunardo's article on the murals in the New Dukhang of Spituk Monastery, painted by the renowned artist Tshe-ring-dbang-'dus in the 1970s, focuses on the iconographic peculiarities of the composition. The depiction of the visualised 'field of merit' (*tshogs-zhing*) shows several deviations from the traditional types that cannot be explained with reference to literature. In any case, both cases of modern wall-paintings show a readiness to engage with iconographic models in a creative and imaginative way and demonstrate the presence of a living Buddhist tradition in Ladakh.

It is easy to see the changes that have swept over Ladakh since its opening to foreign tourism as constituting primarily a threat to the region's art and architecture (e.g. the *cause célèbre* of the new Khalatse bridge). On the other hand, positive examples of the involvement of outside organisations are equally abundant, none more so than the case of Old Leh, a fortuitous and rare survival of a Tibeto-Himalayan city which has undergone successively abandonment and partial regeneration, as the contribution by Alexander and Catanese describes. Apart from high-profile projects like the restoration of the Sangkar House, Sharif Masjid or the wall-paintings of the Red Maitreya Temple, the efforts of grassroots initiatives to retain Old Leh as a living urban space are of enormous importance. In his overview of current conservation projects, Harrison points out the danger of the old town turning into a "museum quarter and tourist honeypot" and cites, at the other end of the spectrum, the shocking example of Hemis Monastery's ruthless treatment of its historic fabric. The almost complete destruction of an entrance chörten at Zangla in Lower Zaskar in a misguided 'restoration' campaign by the Italian Stūpa Project, which is highlighted by Devers, Bruneau and Vernier, shows the danger that Ladakhi monuments face from perhaps unexpected quarters.

The need for systematic study and scientific analysis to underpin restoration and conservation work is stressed in Feiglstorfer's article on techniques in earthen architecture. Based on the chemical analysis of soil samples, the author explores local variations in the use of earth compounds in construction. In spite of its often extremely simple appearance, Ladakhi vernacular architecture proves to be ingenious in adapting its methods to local conditions.

No example of Ladakhi material culture that is covered in this book, demonstrates the fragility of the region's heritage better than the Kesar paintings of Bray's contribution. If it had not been for the curiosity and intervention of foreigners in Leh c.1900 who studied and recorded the murals of the Kesar saga in the house of the Kalon, the existence of secular mural paintings and their connection with an Eastern Tibetan version of the saga would never have been known.

Outside intervention has always been a hallmark of Ladakhi history and culture. While the many foreign NGOs are in danger of stepping on each other's toes (Harrison), some old trade patterns have survived and adapted to the modern age. Ahmed describes the trade in silk brocade: from the seventeenth century silk weavers from Benares started to compete with the Chinese, chiefly on price. Instead of ruining their business, the political upheavals of the twentieth century strengthened

the position of the Indian weavers whose products are still to be found in the Leh bazaar and in many monasteries. The phenomenon of Indian weavers copying Chinese silk brocade for Ladakhi monasteries can be seen as a powerful symbol of the cross-cultural transmissions to which this volume is dedicated. alex@lumleykoller.com

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THE MAHATMA AND THE DOCTOR THE UNTOLD STORY OF DR PRANJIVAN MEHTA, GANDHI'S GREATEST FRIEND AND BENEFACTOR 1864–1932. By S. R. MEHROTRA. pp xi, 660. Mumbai, Vakils, Feffer and Simons Pvt Ltd, 2014
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It is fascinating the way a previously obscure figure in the Gandhi story belatedly takes centre stage. Previous biographies usually pick up on a Dr Mehta greeting Gandhi at the Victoria hotel in London 29th September 1888, Gandhi still in summer flannels and in his admiration for Dr Mehta's top hot fluffing it up the wrong way. Dr Mehta was but a bit player, the highly Anglicised Indian instructing the gauche Gandhi how to assimilate to Victorian London. It took Ramachandra Guha in his recent biography to show that, to the contrary, Dr Mehta became Gandhi's closest Indian friend and indispensable as a patron, indeed he draws a parallel with Friedrich Engels as patron and disciple of Karl Marx. Now comes Professor Mehrotra's labour of love, a compendium volume of a brief biography and a compilation of Dr Mehta's leading publications. And Dr Mehta's great-grand-nephew, Arun Mehta is its publisher. Possibly all along Mehta's central presence should have been obvious in the light of his being one of the three represented as the Reader in dialogue with Gandhi as the Editor in Gandhi's seminal text, *Hind Swaraj*. Anthony Parel adds Shamji Krishnavarma and V D Savarkar as the other two. The text is added to this volume. Here is a case study of the way in which the guru-disciple roles become reversed, Dr Mehta's instruction in British mores giving way to Gandhi's in Hindu values, and of course one of Gandhi's central ambitions was to win over the Anglicised Indian to an alternative Indian vision.

Born 27 February 1864, Kathiawadi and Jain, educated in Rajkot, trained as a doctor in the Grant Medical School, Bombay and then at the Free University in Brussels, with a doctorate in surgery, at the same time qualifying as a lawyer in the Middle temple, (so in London to greet Gandhi), a highly successful professional career seems to have been his for the asking and he was indeed appointed Chief Medical Officer to Idar state in 1895, but he gave all this up to emigrate to Rangoon in 1899. Not enough is said here of a common admiration with Gandhi for the Jain jeweller and guru figure Raychandbhai but this seems to have been the reason why Gandhi and Mehta became close friends in Bombay in 1891. He had opened a jewellery shop in 14 Mogul street, Rangoon in 1895. Was this in his blood as a Jain? I suspect a determining influence was his visiting Gandhi in Durban in 1898 and experiencing racism first hand: "I was not in Cape Town for more than two hours before they made me feel that I was in a place where the colour of the skin counted for everything and man for nothing." (quoted p. 375) When Mehta died 3 August 1932 after prolonged ill health, Gandhi wrote: "I had no greater friend than Doctor in the whole world and for me he is still alive". (quoted p. 194)

It is now clear that Gandhi's whole satyagraha project would have been impossible without Mehta's financial support. Gandhi kept in touch with Mehta, visiting him in Rangoon December 1901. Mehta was active in the Congress cause and became President of the Burma Provincial Congress Committee