

reformers and government officials, and he frequently takes it to signify Ahl al-Qur'an influence on those other figures. Yet the fact that people sometimes expressed doubts about the authenticity of inconvenient hadith reports or even sought to take the Qur'an as the ultimate source of their reformist ideals does not necessarily mean that they were influenced by the work specifically of the Ahl al-Qur'an. Likewise, it is easy to exaggerate the influence of Ghulam Ahmad Parwez on the policies of President Ayub Khan. Ayub Khan was, indeed, in contact with Parwez, as Qasmi shows in drawing on some hitherto neglected archives; and the two men agreed in their vision of a Muslim state that was unencumbered in its modernizing reform by the 'ulama and their scholastic tradition. Yet such views are standard fare in Islamic modernism everywhere. While Ayub Khan sought religious support for his policies wherever he could find it, and Parwez clearly saw an opportunity to expand the Ahl al-Qur'an influence through official patronage, it does not follow that Parwez's influence loomed larger than anyone else's in guiding Ayub Khan's unsuccessful effort to take on the Pakistani 'ulama.

If the nature and scope of the influence the Ahl al-Qur'an were able to project on others remains rather unclear, so does the question of whom to count among the Ahl al-Qur'an. Ahmad-ud-din Amritsari's view that people of different faiths could agree on certain universals, best expressed by the Qur'an, without having to renounce their particular faiths, has notable affinities with those of Ubayd Allah Sindhi (d. 1944) as well as Abu'l-Kalam Azad (d. 1958), yet neither Sindhi nor Azad is usually thought to have belonged to the Ahl al-Qur'an. Conversely, there is insufficient reason to think that the rather more discriminating attitude Ja'far Phulwarwi (d. 1982) took towards hadith as compared to many others among the 'ulama puts him, as Qasmi suggests, somewhere in the Ahl al-Qur'an camp. But if he was not quite a part of that group, then the suggestion that such 'ulama helped broaden the Ahl al-Qur'an's reformist reach becomes correspondingly weaker. On another note, it is not quite clear how to think of the Ahl al-Qur'an in relation to the Ahl-i Hadith. Qasmi argues against those who have seen the Ahl al-Qur'an as emerging from within Ahl-i Hadith circles. His point that there is a wider milieu in which the rise of the Ahl al-Qur'an ought to be placed is well taken, yet his own evidence continues to point to the importance of the Ahl-i Hadith in the immediate surroundings of several Ahl al-Qur'an intellectuals. Despite such uncertainties, however, this is an important contribution not only towards a better understanding of the Ahl al-Qur'an but also to the study of Islam in modern South Asia.

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NAVINA NAJAT HAIDAR and MARIKA SARDAR (eds):

Sultans of the South: Arts of India's Deccan Courts, 1323–1687.

(The Metropolitan Museum of Art Symposia.) xiv, 322 pp. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art (distributed by Yale University Press), 2011. \$50. ISBN 978 1 58839 438 5.

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Sultans of the South is an exceptionally rich collection of essays on the arts of the Muslim courts of the Deccan (central India) during the medieval and early modern periods. With its publication, the study of Islamic art in the Deccan comes to full maturity after two other recent contributions: *Silent Splendour: Palaces of the*

Deccan, 14th–19th Centuries, ed. Helen Philon (which I reviewed in *BSOAS* 74/2) and *Garden and Landscape Practices in Precolonial India: Histories from the Deccan*, ed. Daud Ali and Emma J. Flatt (reviewed by George Michell in *BSOAS* 75/3). The volume hosts eighteen essays, many of which were presented at the international symposium “The Art of India’s Deccan Sultans”, convened at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2008. The essays are carefully framed and contextualized in a preface (by Navina N. Haidar), a historical introduction (by Richard M. Eaton), and a postscript (by Kurt Behrendt). They are arranged into four sections: painting and literary traditions; carpets, textiles, and trade; architecture, fortifications, and arms; and the Ibrahim Rawza (the tomb of Ibrahim Adil Shah II (r. 1580–1627), arguably the region’s most impressive funerary complex). In the first section, Robert Skelton sheds additional light on the Deccani sojourn of Farrukh Beg – a painter who found employment in turn with members of the Safavid and Mughal family, and in Deccani as well as Mughal court ateliers; Navina N. Haidar discusses the *Kitāb-i Nauras* – a key literary text produced at the court of Ibrahim II; Deborah Hutton presents the illustrations (and peculiar visual conventions) of the *Pem Nem*, a romance with mystical overtones originating in the same court milieu; John Seyller discusses Deccani elements in early Pahari painting, showing how the circulation of Deccani works and artists affected other pictorial schools of India; Ali A. Husain engages with the garden aesthetic found in a poetic praise of Ibrahim II; Phillip B. Wagoner further fleshes out the figure of the intellectual and patron Amin Khan (a Golconda nobleman he had previously discussed in *Garden and Landscape Practices*); and Michael Barry suggests a link between the iconography of certain demonic figures and a section in Nizami’s *Khamisa* – one of the great classics of Persian literature. In the second section, Steven Cohen breaks new ground by outlining criteria for the identification of Deccani carpets (often confused with north Indian or Iranian ones of the same period); Yumiko Kamada convincingly establishes a Deccani provenance for a series of embroidered designs previously thought to come from Gujarat; Marika Sardar reconstructs the appearance of a once-huge textile wall ornament, whose surviving fragments are dispersed in various collections; and John Guy discusses a painted textile (*kalamkāri*) originating in a Nayak milieu, decorated with amorous/religious dalliances. In the third section, Richard M. Eaton discusses the early (north Indian) conquerors’ attitude towards Deccani temples; Helen Philon suggests that the Solah Khamba, a mosque within the palace compound in Bidar, was in fact originally a ceremonial hall; Klaus Rötzer presents an impressive technical discussion of fortifications and gunpowder; and Robert Elgood discusses Deccani swords in their complex relationship to European imports. The fourth and last section is devoted entirely to the Ibrahim Rawza (as explained in the preface, this section was originally conceived as an independent volume), with George Michell discussing Indic themes in its decoration, Bruce Wannell focusing on its epigraphic programme, and Wannell and Abdullah Ghouchani presenting the inscriptions in detail.

Many of the essays take individual works of art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art as their point of departure. The crisp, compact yet scholarly and informative formulation of the essays, combined with the plethora of full-colour illustrations (an average of more than two per page), makes the volume appealing and intriguing. The choice to present previously unpublished materials in full – including the epigraphic cycle of the Ibrahim Rawza and all of the *Pem Nem*’s thirty-four illustrations – certainly deserves praise, though some of the pictures are inevitably small.

If a limit can be envisaged at all, it is in the very variety of subjects and the authors’ equally varied backgrounds: the history and society of the Deccan are well in focus in some essays, while others are purely art-historical inquiries. Not all of the essays

speak to one another, or resonate with a common theme. Even without the incorporation of the section on the Ibrahim Rawza, the volume – reflecting a persistent problem in Deccani art studies – displays a bias towards Bijapur during the great yet brief florescence patronized by Ibrahim Adil Shah II. The focus on the Muslim courts (the “Sultans” of the title) additionally results in a complete exclusion of the visual culture produced at the court of Vijayanagara (a few more words could have been expended explaining this choice). After a due mention in Eaton’s impeccable historical outline, Vijayanagara is only sporadically referenced in other essays; consequently, Guy’s discussion of an embroidered textile produced in Nayaka milieus comes rather abruptly and surprisingly: the Nayakas (Vijayanagara’s successors) are not even included in the “List of rulers” appended to the volume.

This said, having attended the symposium, I cannot but congratulate the editors for assembling such an impressive collection of essays in print, greatly enhancing their academic significance. This is a volume every scholar interested in the arts and literature of India and Islam, in military history, textile history, or the Indian Ocean trade, should peruse.

Laura E. Parodi

JOHANNES BRONKHORST:

Buddhism in the Shadow of Brahmanism.

viii, 293 pp. (Handbook of Oriental Studies.) Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011. €119. ISBN 978 90 04 20140 8.

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This book is concerned with Buddhism and Brahmanism over the *longue durée*. By Brahmanism Johannes Bronkhorst means the socio-cultural complex represented by *brāhmaṇas*, the knowledge-holders of the Sanskrit tradition. Bronkhorst’s contention is that Brahmanism emerged triumphant in its encounter with Buddhism because *brāhmaṇas* were able to provide the rulers of South and South-East Asia with ritual protection and advice in matters of statecraft. Although Buddhists had much to offer in terms of philosophy, debate and renunciation, *brāhmaṇas* were the acknowledged masters of pragmatic affairs and this was the historical key to their eventual supremacy.

The book is divided into three substantial chapters, each developing particular themes and touching on a wealth of detail, but all organized to demonstrate and advance the author’s main thesis. Setting the stage in chapter 1, the author summarizes and extends arguments published in his *Greater Magadha: Studies in the Culture of Early India* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). He then turns, in chapter 2, to the question of the new Brahmanism, that is the Brahmanism which emerged in the early centuries of the common era and which was distinct from the ancient Vedic tradition. Bronkhorst develops his arguments in a fluent and accessible style, displaying a magisterial command of the literature. Those who know him as an inventively provocative contributor to the religious history of South Asia will not be disappointed with his approach here, parrying as he does with various scholars as he proceeds, most notably with Sheldon Pollock whose views on Sanskrit he regards – quite rightly – as wrong-headed. Chapter 3 is the longest (pp. 99–230) and turns to the interaction between Buddhism and Brahmanism. Bronkhorst’s angle of approach is again Sanskrit. He thus deals with the emergence of Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit and the reasons why Buddhists felt obliged to compose new literatures in Sanskrit and develop an increasingly Brahmanized