

close reading of specific sites or icons, as scholars such as Daud Ali, Padma Kaimal, Michael Rabe and Leslie Orr have conducted for the culture of the Tamil region studied by this book. The many surprising absences in the survey of existing literature reinforce the sense that the author does not have a firm grasp of the field of study. Though completed in 2011, only one source cited in the book dates later than 2000; a more thorough revision of the thesis from which this emerged would have been merited. This is disappointing as the author has travelled extensively, read widely and attempted to synthesize a wealth of material in to a readable account of the development of Hindu sculpture in south India.

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JÖRG GENGNAGEL:

Visualized Texts: Sacred Spaces, Spatial Texts and the Religious Cartography of Banaras.

341 pp. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2011. ISBN 978 3 447 05732 5. €52.

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The book under review is an outcome of the Vārāṇasī Research Project (VRP) at the South Asia Institute, Ruprecht-Karls-University Heidelberg and represents another work on the religious topography of Vārāṇasī. In contrast to earlier, more text-based, contributions to the subject, the core of Gengnagel's book deals with fairly recent cartographic representations of India's most sacred city.

The book is divided into five chapters, the first of which gives an introduction and a survey of available cartographic material on Vārāṇasī. Chapter 2 summarizes textual sources on the city's sacred topography focusing on accounts of the several different processions prescribed in later manuscripts. Chapter 3 presents a case study of a nineteenth-century conflict concerning the correct course of one of these processions, the "*pañcakrośīyātrā*". These three chapters serve as preliminaries for the central topic of the book, the representation of Vārāṇasī's sacred space in maps (chapter 4). Chapter 5 contains the author's conclusions. The two final chapters extend over 120 pages. The remaining 150 pages consist of colour plates, extensive appendixes, a bibliography and an index.

Starting in his introduction with the broad theme of South Asian cartography as a largely neglected field of research, the author narrows the scope of his book to "visualizations of space as represented by various kinds of maps" of Vārāṇasī. Gengnagel classifies the VRP's material into five categories: pictorial maps, printed maps, charts, panoramic views and topographical maps (p. 16). A sixth category, illustrations of the sacred topography of Vārāṇasī found in manuscripts, is mentioned in passing (pp. 19 f.) but omitted here. The core of the book, contained in chapter 4, is concerned with two specimens of the first two categories. The chosen examples comprise two "pictorial maps" representing coloured paintings on paper or cloth, probably from Rājasthān, as well as two early "printed maps", i.e. lithographs from Vārāṇasī from the second half of the nineteenth century. These maps are the subject of detailed descriptions accompanied by a number of line drawings and plates. Everyone who has studied similar materials will immediately recognize the time and effort involved in the preliminary work required to write these chapters: the first map alone, "Stylized map of Vārāṇasī", contains about 300 objects (shrines,

tanks, idols, etc.), many with inscriptions, which have been described and – as far as possible – identified by members of the VRP. Further (c. 450) objects are found in the second map, “Pilgrims in Banaras”, and still more (over 1,250) on the fourth, “Kāśīdarppaṇa”, which is described and illustrated in less detail in the book because the VRP has created an interactive application on a website specially set up for this purpose: see www.benares.uni-hd.de, frequently referred to in 4.4. These references (e.g. p. 176, n. 91: “For references see the list given in the pop up-window S513.”) require the reader simultaneously to consult the website in order to comprehend them fully. The same applies to the introduction to the web application given on pp. 162 ff.

Unfortunately, the book calls for an “interactive” reader in more ways than one. Many of the internal references to the maps reproduced are incorrect. Cross-references to other passages in the book uniformly give rather inaccurate chapter/sub-chapter numbers instead of precise page numbers (most uselessly in chapter 2.2., p. 34, n. 34: “See chapter 2.2.”). This considerably complicates locating the items referenced. Some references contain non-existent plate numbers or non-existent sub-chapters, or incorrect footnotes.

Despite these irritating flaws, both reproduction and description of the maps, particularly the two painted ones, are valuable and quite well done. The combination of colour reproductions, indexed line drawings and corresponding lists of objects depicted, which serve as legends to the complex paintings, make these beautiful works of art easily comprehensible and usable. In contrast, sub-chapter (4.4) on the important lithograph “Kāśīdarppaṇa” (Gengnagel uniformly cites the title as “Kāśīdarppaṇa” although the original has a double “p”) lacks any detailed description, which is found on the VRP’s website. Here the author discourses instead on more general features such as the map’s title, orientation, and textual content. In this part of the book we find some unfortunate interpretations. The most surprising is Gengnagel’s somewhat conflicting interpretation of what he calls the “outer circle”, represented by two circular lines on the map (p. 169). Obviously Gengnagel interprets both circles as representations of two distinctive procession paths, which is corroborated by a statement on page 181: “[...] as marked by the double circular line that represents the small and large Pañcakrośīyātrā [...]”. This interpretation is incorrect. The two circles depict nothing but two sides of a single road. It is stunning that this simple fact escaped Gengnagel (although he initially made the correct observation) and instead opts for an improbable explanation of which he himself seems to be little convinced. There are other examples of sometimes ambiguous, questionable, interpretations: for instance, Gengnagel’s explanation of the relation between legends inscribed on the map and their original sources (p. 176) or his remarks on the inclusion of “profane” buildings in the maps (see especially pp. 183 and 192), where one could well contest Gengnagel’s views.

Some statements reveal a certain lack of accuracy, for instance when Gengnagel speaks on p. 181 of “King Bhoṃsalā of Nāḡpur”. Of course “Bhoṃslā” is the name of a clan and not of the respective “king” whose name was Rāghojī (II). Completely unclear is Gengnagel’s remark (p. 81): “It is likely, also clear evidence is lacking, that Aīśvaryaḡaurī and Gaurīśaṅkara refer to the same goddess”. Gaurīśaṅkara is a (masculine) proper name of Śiva and hence can hardly refer to a goddess.

The book repeatedly gives the impression that it represents a compilation of heterogeneous texts prepared at different times and finally pulled together into a single volume. This becomes apparent, for example, when the author (p. 16) states that “three coloured, painted maps are presented and studied here for the first time”, while, in fact, the book contains a study of only two such maps. Or see p. 162, n. 72 which erroneously refers to a “fn. 6” which in the book is actually fn. 77.

Moreover, a version of chapter 3 was published independently by Gengnagel in 2006. This genesis of the book may partly explain the confused internal references, although this problem as well as a fair number of typos and inconsistencies such as the somewhat arbitrary transliteration/transcription of Hindi passages (compare, for instance, p. 165: “[...] *devatāom aur tīrthom ke nāma aur stānom sahita* [...]” with p. 59: “*Pañcakrośī ke mārg kā vicār*”) or the conflicting date given for the composition of the Tristhalīsetu (mid-16th cent. on p. 40, but mid-17th cent. on p. 43) could easily have been corrected by proper proof-reading. That, however, has apparently not even been done by the author. This reflects a general problematic trend in (scientific) publishing, i.e. that many publishers have abolished in-house editing services and now leave all of the work up to the authors themselves – a procedure which is, as the book under review once again shows, highly error-prone and questionable.

Despite all these shortcomings, the book also has its merits. These lie in the minute description and analysis of the two “pictorial” maps, which, along with the extensive appendixes, represent an exhaustive presentation and guide to the early visual representation of the sacred space of Vārāṇasī and the different processions or *yātrās* undertaken by the pilgrims. Likewise interesting and valuable is the account of the impact of British surveying on traditional Hindu reckoning of sacred space given in chapter 3. In essence one may state that the parts of the book concerned with description and analysis (i.e. the larger portion of it), are generally reliable and precise, whereas those containing the author’s own interpretations must be read with care.

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HENRI SCHILDT:

The Traditional Kerala Manor: Architecture of a South Indian Catuḥśāla House.

(Institut Français de Pondichéry and Ecole Française D’Extrême Orient, Collection Indologie 117.) xiv, 473 pp. Pondicherry: All India Press, 2012. ISBN (IFP) 978 81 8470 189 0. ISBN (EFEO) 978 2 85539 126 7. doi:10.1017/S0041977X13000736

This book’s aim is to describe a particular variety of manor house found in Kerala, known as *catuḥśāla* in Sanskrit and *nalukettu* in Malayalam. These palatial, four-winged mansions were constructed for *Namputiri* Brahmin families, but they were also used by Kerala’s Ksatriya ruling class. Schildt examines data from three sources. First, he looks at the houses themselves, describing the criteria they had to meet for inclusion in this study, and the data he gathered on them. Second, he looks at recent anthropological research on the the families who inhabit these houses and their socio-ritual use of space. Third, he looks at Sanskrit texts on building and construction, and tries to reconcile *Sastric* principles with the practical dimensions of the Kerala *catuḥśāla* house.

Schildt’s field data were gathered from thirty-two manor houses that met his research criteria, which were size, historical importance, an undisturbed location and continuous habitation by one family. The oldest houses considered were probably built around 500 years ago. Schildt documents these houses though drawings, photographs and measured plans. The 436 black-and-white plates at the back of the