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The Space of the Child

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Parlier-Renault's willingness to investigate these and other sculptural representations of the various regions and periods of southern Indian art may be singled out perhaps as the most innovative aspect of the volume as a whole. By focusing on both successive and simultaneous art traditions the author is also in a good position to discriminate between local traditions and external influences. Thus, for example, in her discussion of the carvings on the Pattadakal temples she draws attention to sculptural themes intrinsic to the Deccan, such as Shiva spearing the demon Andhaka, and Vishnu appearing in his boar incarnation as Varaha. These images, she argues, are to be distinguished from mythological topics that derive from the Tamil art of the Pallavas, such as Shiva in dancing posture, or the same god appearing miraculously out of the flaming linga. She brings to a close this particular section with a summary of iconographic forms common to both Chalukya and Pallava art. Elsewhere, as in her account of the Pattadakal carvings, the author draws attention to what she describes as "conflict" and "reconciliation", by pointing out the matching and mingling of iconographic traditions linked with opposing cults of Shiva and Vishnu.

While Parlier-Renault may not be the first to offer insights into the iconographic fundamentals of Pallava, Chalukya and Rashtrakuta art, her analytical discussions go a lot further than those of previous scholars. Her conclusions should be of considerable interest to historians of religion since it is these visual manifestations of popular belief that underpin any understanding of the evolution of Hinduism during these centuries. Nor are these the only art historical problems to be tackled by the author. In her account of the multitude of carvings on the Ellora Kailasatha she offers an overall chronology for the carvings, suggesting a span of some 70 years, from the 750s to the 820s. However, like others before her, she points out that the architecture and sculpture of this colossal monument are profoundly indebted to those at Pattadakal.

One limitation of Parlier-Renault's approach that needs to be acknowledged here is that nowhere is there any consideration of the lively narrative friezes and accessory figural themes that adorn basements and beams, column shafts and brackets, doorways and ceiling panels. This is to be regretted since some of these monuments, especially those at Pattadakal, are extremely richly endowed with this type of accessory imagery. This shortcoming, however, in no way detracts from the overall value of her study, which is to be recommended as by far the most detailed introduction to the subject. The volume concludes with an extensive, up-to-date bibliography and an iconographic glossary, but there is no index.

George Michell

MARTIN GAENZLE and JÖRG GENGNAGEL (eds):

Visualizing Space in Banaras: Images, Maps, and the Practice of Representation.

358 pp. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006. €48. ISBN 3 447 05187 6.

NIELS GUTSCHOW:

Benares, The Sacred Landscape of Vārāṇasī.

498 pp. Stuttgart: Edition Axel Menges, 2006. £89. ISBN 393668104X.

As one of the holiest sites of Hindu India, Banaras (Kashi, Varanasi) has a prestigious history dating back to ancient times. While the city's religious

beliefs and practices have attracted considerable academic attention, scholars have only recently begun to direct their attention to the physical fabric of the city, and the way in which this is represented in diagrams and maps. The results of their investigations are admirably demonstrated in the two volumes under review here.

The first of these volumes, a compilation of fourteen articles including contributions by the two editors, Martin Gaenzle and Jörg Gengnagel, offers an instructive overview of the new research on Banaras. The first section deals with aspects of the city's sacred topography. Here the focus is on the built environment and its role in ritual practices, both in the present and the past. Hans Bakker deals with the origin and early development of the Avimuktakṣtra, the ritual "centre" of Banaras circumambulated daily by thousands of pilgrims, as visualized in the *Skandapurāṇa* dating from the sixth century. The article by Ravi S. Singh and Rana P. B. Singh examines the cultural, symbolic, mythical and spatial significance of the goddesses who receive worship in Banaras, including the popular and ever powerful Yogiṇīs. Annette Wilke singles out the Nine Durgās, investigating their spatial distribution in a triangular scheme, with the *yoni* of Durgā projected on to the cityscape. As the guardian of Banaras, Bhairava plays a special role in the urban pantheon of the city. Sunthar Visuvalingam and Elizabeth Chalié-Visuvalingam focus on the Lat Bhairo (Bhairava column) and adjacent "maternity" well that receive worship from both Hindus and Muslims. As the authors point out, the site of these cults on the outskirts of the city has in recent years witnessed both syncretistic harmony and violent conflict.

The second set of articles is concerned with the cartographic representation of the city's topography. Bridging the gap between religious and scientific modes of recording sacred space, "pilgrim maps" of Banaras have become a legitimate subject of enquiry in their own right, as is demonstrated by Axel Michaels in his article. Jörg Gengnagel's contribution focuses on the Pañcakrośīyātra, the pilgrimage path that encircles Banaras, the actual route of which was contested by the city's administrators and magistrates in the nineteenth century. That a map can serve political agendas is argued by Sumathi Ramaswamy, who discusses the map of India "enshrined" in the Bharata Mata Mandir of 1936 in Banaras.

That imagery is an important adjunct to map making is the topic of the third set of articles in Gaenzle and Gengnagel's volume. Paintings, drawings and photographs of Banaras all contribute to the representation of the city, whether it is for a traditional pilgrim, colonial servant or modern tourist. Niels Gutschow examines the genre of urban panoramas, particularly views of Banaras as seen from the Ganga, the earliest example of which appears to be that of Joseph Tieffenthaler published in 1780. Joachim Karl Bautze directs the reader's attention to paintings and photographs of Banaras, many of them river views, pointing out the difficulties in providing such data with precise dates. Sandria Freitag concentrates on the sociological aspect of images of Banaras within the context of urban identity, cultural production and religious activities.

The volume concludes with articles that examine the processes of appropriation, negotiation and contestation between different communities of Banaras. Nita Kumar investigates the everyday spatial experience of the city, and indeed of the country as a whole, from the perspective of a typical urban child. Everyday space is also the topic of Stefan Schütte's contribution, which deals with the city's *dhobīs* (washermen). Combining geographical and anthropological approaches, the author delineates the multiple social layers of

this small caste group in various urban localities. Martin Gaenszle concentrates on the special significance that Banaras has had for Nepalis, whether pilgrims, students, merchants or refugees. Nepalis have taken over particular locations by building temples and bathing *ghats*. The last article, by Vasudha Dalmia, deals with the tradition of dancing girls, courtesans and prostitutes associated with the Dalmandi quarter. These women were an integral part of Banaras society until the end of the nineteenth century when their traditions came under attack by reformist activists. However, their memory is kept alive by the ongoing popularity of Premchand's novel *Sevasadan* (1918).

After this wide-ranging demonstration of scholarly interest in Banaras it is something of a relief to turn to the single author volume of Niels Gutschow, especially as this is extravagantly illustrated with a large number of beautiful photographs, many of them large and in colour, as well as specially prepared maps, diagrams and architectural drawings. These unique images of the city's localities, buildings and sculptures include previously unpublished panoramas, pilgrim maps and early engravings and photographs.

In his introductory chapter Gutschow identifies Banaras both as an urban "place" with a specific history, and as an imagined mythical "construct". Among the photographs included here are several of sculptures dating back more than 1,000 years, still in worship. Further demonstrations of the city's antiquity are the sectional drawings of buildings showing *līṅga* shrines set many metres below present-day street level. The author then proceeds to discuss a number of "picture maps" of the city, beginning with two eighteenth-century painted cloths in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and National Museum, New Delhi. Gutschow analyses these by means of explanatory diagrams illustrating how the different layers of sacred space within the city are represented. He then applies the same diagnostic approach to a number of printed maps of Banaras of more recent date. Throughout these discussions the author juxtaposes details from painted and printed maps with present-day photographs. The chapter concludes with a notice of maps of India as objects of worship, such as that venerated in the Bharata Mata Mandir.

From these graphic images Gutschow moves on to the "built maps" of Banaras in architecture and art. His first case study is the Pañcakrośī Mandir, a temple with relief depictions of all the spots on the Pañcakrośīyātra, as well as other sites in and around the city. He then compares this temple to the Kṛṣṇa Degaḥ in Patan, Nepal, which visualizes Banaras through 108 miniature, relief *līṅgas*. He continues by considering temple compounds in Banaras as miniature sacred landscapes, since they incorporate multiple votive objects that relate to sacred places elsewhere in the city.

In the next part of his book Gutschow investigates the sacred territories around Banaras, especially that defined by the Pañcakrośīyātra. After considering the problem of "correct" and "incorrect" routes, he describes and illustrates all the major points along this thoroughfare. He then moves on to the inner circumambulatory routes of Banaras, the Avimkutayātrā and Antargrōhayātrā, as described in ancient texts and also as realized in actual pilgrimage today. All of these routes are explained through diagrammatic maps and photographs of shrines and votive objects.

The section that follows shows how individual sites in Banaras refer to places beyond the city: thus, the Cārdhām, or four "corners" of India; the Dvā daśajyotirlīṅgas, or twelve *līṅgas* of light; and the Saptapuri, or seven sacred cities. After this Gutschow considers groups of shrines or clusters of votive *līṅgas* that in his opinion define a "grammar of sanctification" within the city.

As previously, these notions are supported by explanatory diagrams and copious photographs.

The volume concludes with a survey of historical panoramas, both painted and photographic, dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These are supplemented by an annotated, present-day record of the city's riverfront, and a selection of topographical maps dating from the Colonial period. An exhaustive index brings this remarkable volume to a close. A more thorough and visually convincing account of the city's sacred space could hardly be imagined. The volume should serve as a benchmark for any future investigation of other sacred cities in India.

George Michell

EBBA KOCH:

The Complete Taj Mahal and the Riverfront Gardens of Agra.

288 pp. London: Thames and Hudson, 2006. £39.95. ISBN 0 500 342091.

For such a well-known and visited monument it seems remarkable that it has taken until 2006 for a dedicated and thorough study of the Taj Mahal in Agra, northern India, to be published. The publication of this lucid examination of the entire building complex in its urban setting marks a major advance in our understanding of one of the world's greatest monuments. No one is better placed to write such a book, for Ebba Koch is well known for her extensive research and publication on the arts of the Mughal dynasty spanning three decades, that include *Mughal Architecture* (Munich, 1991) and *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology* (New Delhi, 2001).

Whilst the focus may be on a single building, this is also a rich and accessible account of the Mughal dynasty and the role of the arts in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Islamic India. The Taj Mahal is often considered to be only a single monument, a domed mausoleum raised on a terrace with four minarets within a formal garden. Koch expands this limited vision to consider not only the whole complex of tomb, garden and bazaar but also its wider urban context within the city of Agra. Striking is the emphasis placed by Koch upon Agra as a riverfront city, the Taj Mahal being only one in a whole series of gardens and garden tombs which, together with the huge and imposing fort, dominated the approach to the city on the river Yamuna. The decline in the river's water level, the neglect of most of the seventeenth-century gardens and the expansion of the city to its present population of 1.2 million has changed the approach to the Taj. By reconstructing the riverine urban environment of Agra, the Taj Mahal is now seen as the most monumental and ideal expression of the idea of the riverfront garden in northern India.

The Mughals' funerary architecture – not only the Taj, but also the imperial mausolea of Shahjahan's predecessors in Lahore, Delhi and Sikandra near Agra – is one of their great contributions to world architecture. Officially completed in 1643, the Taj Mahal was designed as a monumental mausoleum to Mumtaz Mahal, the beloved wife of Shahjahan who died aged 38 in 1631, an earthly replica of her house in the gardens of Paradise. The Taj Mahal also expresses the core principles of Shahjahani architecture, including geometrical planning, symmetry, hierarchy, selective use of naturalism and symbolism. Koch carefully elucidates these principles through close attention to the