

the best discussion in the book, Chowdhury demonstrates that the appeal of such a figure was not easily reducible to loyalism or to masculine self-assertion. On the whole, though, this text is often more at ease in rehearsing rather than extending the received wisdom on the gendered struggles of *bhadralok* masculinity. It is not always fully inattentive to questions of genre and form, their modes of address, and their often discrepant and incalculable implications. Thus the author is content to read a variety of forms—journalism, satire and mock-epic, historical narrative, and religio-national icons—as documents of an anticolonial impetus that dared not speak its name. Such an assertion does little to illuminate the powerfully affective and even erotic investment of the *bhadralok* in the self-image of abjection or unworthiness. Nor does it tell us much about the convergent, conflicting, or interlocking sex-gender systems of Victorian Britain and colonial Bengal that were surely debated and recast in this project. And in the absence of any consideration of the ways in which women, lower castes, and even Anglo-Indian subjects were solicited by this discourse or responded to it, it is none too easy to speculate on its aspirations towards hegemony. Nonetheless, Chowdhury's text does inaugurate in some of its detail some of the more difficult questions about the gendering of colonial Bengal; it is not entirely surprising that many of the questions it broaches demand further investigation.

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Temple Architecture and Sculpture of the Nolambas: Ninth–Tenth Centuries. By ANDREW L. COHEN. Delhi: Manohar, 1998. 151 pp. \$26.00 (cloth).

This monograph is a detailed and trustworthy investigation of twenty-one Hindu temples built of stone and brick in the central highlands of southern India. That region, where the modern states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu now converge, was the homeland of the Nolamba dynasty whose authority was circumscribed by their more powerful neighbors, the Cholas, Pallavas, Chalukyas, and Rashtrakutas. Previous scholarship has framed art of the Nolamba region as a weak provincial echo of art sponsored by the mightier dynasties around them, and by the Cholas in particular. Embedded in this view, of which C. Sivaramamurti and K. V. Soundara Rajan have been vocal proponents, are the groundless assumptions that kings were the only significant patrons of temple architecture; that royal patrons, especially those who were good warriors, were directly involved in decisions about temple design; and that artistic influence accompanied political subjugation.

Andrew Cohen wisely rejects this view and devotes his introductory chapter to exposing the theoretical flaws behind it. He weakens the case for Chola influence on Nolamba art by citing Burton Stein's evidence against a centralized Chola state. Cohen builds on Nicholas Dirks's observation that peripheral regions can be influential. He notes Ronald Inden's remarks about the complexity of human agency involved in temple patronage, and Pramod Chandra's case for the irrelevance of dynastic labels to most Indic art. In his willingness to apply to the study of Indic art these revisions of Indic history paradigms, Cohen makes a worthy contribution. These revisions should reshape our thinking about the production of art throughout the subcontinent, helping us beyond still prevalent assumptions that kings patronized all major works of art and that shifting patterns of political dominance were the primary cause of changes in art styles.

Cohen studies the form of monuments in the Nolambas' kingdom in chapters 3–5, demonstrating that they have indeed a distinctive style. Their forms share little with temples built during the same years in the Chola homeland, nor are they simply a pastiche of shapes deployed in other neighboring regions. But if these temples are not “Chola” in style, must they be “Nolamba”? Cohen acknowledges that few temples “have irrecusable Nolamba royal sponsorship of construction” (p. 30). Given such tenuous links between dynasty and temple construction, I would suggest applying the critique of dynastic nomenclature here, too, and calling these the temples and style of the Nolamba *region* rather than of the Nolambas themselves.

This book makes a number of welcome contributions to the history of Indic art. The only other recent study of temples in the Nolamba region is a section in volume 1.2 of *The Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture*. Few have studied these temples because they are so difficult to reach. The temples are far from urban centers and along unusually poor roads, as I learned in following even his less ambitious footsteps this winter. Reaching them took hours, sometimes days; at several sites, Cohen spent nights on the temple floor. Many monuments have fallen into disuse, become entangled with thorns or enclosed within private fields, and lost to the memory of local residents. Though art historical fieldwork in India is often strenuous, these sites demand especially persistent efforts of those who would research them.

Cohen's extensive technical descriptions of temple forms are important contributions as they correct errors in the *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture* and make these remote monuments available for comparative studies. His map (p. 134), though oddly captioned, reveals intriguing patterns of the temples' geographic distribution by pulling together regions the *Encyclopaedia* divides among several maps. He amplifies our understanding of several sites by reintegrating the sculptural fragments now dispersed in museums in Chennai, Bangalore, and Mysore into his discussions of the temples they once adorned. Cohen is also to be commended for his energy in collecting and checking inscriptions. The illustrations are disappointingly blurry, a reminder that we are lucky to have this book at all given publishers' current reluctance to invest in Indic art history. Readers can at any rate find good photographs of many of these temples published in the *Encyclopaedia* and Cohen's articles (*Artibus Asiae* 1992, 1997).

Cohen's intrepid fieldwork and ambitious study of theory provide a provocative survey of monuments that are important, understudied, and difficult to reach. I would recommend this book for any library supporting undergraduate or graduate research on Indian art.

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Gender and Genre in the Folklore of Middle India. By JOYCE BURKHALTER FLUECKIGER. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996. xiii, 351 pp. \$19.95 (paper).

Flueckiger's *Gender and Genre in the Folklore of Middle India* examines a wide range of Chhattisgarhi folklore genres, focusing on their interconnections and contextually shifting social meanings. A child of missionary parents, Flueckiger spent the early years of her life in Chhattisgarh and is able to converse fluently in the local dialects. When she returned years later to investigate regional variants of the Ramayana, her