

elision—to think of the Mattamayuras as rivals, albeit of a different stripe, for command of the laity and its spiritual-political imagination.

The book overall is also a demonstration of how much remains to be done in the scholarship on South Asia, particularly in terms of overcoming preconceived boundaries such as those between temples and monasteries, discussed earlier, and the transition into the period of Islamic political ascendancy in northern and north-central India from the last decade of the twelfth century. Precisely the spiritual-political power of the Mattamayuras led to their longevity, evidenced in the continuation of some form of ascetic life at Kadwaha (Gopaksetra) into the early fourteenth century, well beyond the rise of Islamic rulerships (pp. 241–45). However, this very site saw the addition of a mosque sometime in the later 1300s, which the author interprets as an indication of its conversion into an Islamicate *ribāṭ*, “a fortress set up on the outskirts of an empire . . . to provide a safe place of respite for holy warriors, travelers, and traders” (p. 241). Again, this proposed functional leap for the Kadwaha monastery seems abrupt, given the presence of renunciants there only a few decades earlier, and premature in light of the available evidence. In the end, what happened to the Mattamayuras? Were the remaining followers absorbed into this new *ribāṭ* as “holy warriors” themselves, did they join other orders, or did they abandon asceticism altogether?

Such lingering questions, particularly with regard to the larger process of Islamic political ascendancy in India, are not to be leveled at this work alone. Their very presence indicates the need for new methodologies and, perhaps, new premises for investigation if more subtle answers are to be found. Indeed, the inspiration of such further lines of inquiry and changes in methodology is a commendable aspect of the work.

ALKA PATEL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE

Epic Tales from Ancient India: Paintings from the San Diego Museum of Art. Edited by MARIKA SARDAR. San Diego: SAN DIEGO MUSEUM OF ART, 2016. Pp. 164. \$45. [Distr. by Yale Univ. Press.]

Edited by former curator Marika Sardar, *Epic Tales from Ancient India: Paintings from the San Diego Museum of Art* is a catalogue that accompanies a traveling exhibition of the same name. Following stints at the Princeton University Art Museum and the Blanton Museum of Art in Austin, the show’s final installation was in San Diego beginning March 2018. The catalogue is one in a series of San Diego Museum of Art (SDMA) publications that highlight the bequest of Edwin Binney, 3rd, heir to the Crayola Crayon fortune.¹ Over a twenty-eight year period, Binney amassed a collection in excess of 1400 South Asian paintings. Binney was notorious for his desire to construct an encyclopedic collection that encompassed examples from every school of Indian painting, spanned centuries of artistic production, and reflected the cultural and religious diversity of the subcontinent. Though his primary goal was to assemble a comprehensive collection, Binney was also able to acquire many works of extremely high quality.² The San Diego Museum of Art received the majority of Binney’s South Asian

1. Amina Okada, *Power and Desire: Indian Miniatures from the San Diego Museum of Art, Edwin Binney 3rd Collection* (San Diego: San Diego Museum of Art, 2002); B. N. Goswamy and Caron Smith, *Domains of Wonder: Selected Masterworks of Indian Painting* (San Diego: San Diego Museum of Art, 2005); Sonya Rhie Quintanilla, *Visiones de la India: Pinturas del Sur de Asia del San Diego Museum of Art* (San Diego: San Diego Museum of Art, 2012). Prior to the bequest, two catalogues highlighting Binney’s Mughal, Deccani, and Rajput acquisitions were published: Edward Binney, *Persian and Indian Miniatures from the Collection of Edward Binney, 3rd* (Portland: Portland Art Museum, 1962); and W. G. Archer, *Rajput Miniatures from the Collection of Edward Binney, 3rd* (Portland: Portland Art Museum, 1968).

2. Terence McInerney, “On Collecting Indian Miniature Paintings: Twentieth-Century Issues and Personalities,” in *Intimate Worlds: Indian Paintings from the Alvin O. Bellak Collection*, ed. Darielle Mason (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2001), 8, 11; Goswamy and Smith, 6; Quintanilla, 24.

manuscript and album illustrations following his death, in a bequest of 1986. The selection of paintings catalogued in the newest SDMA catalogue is representative of the collection's breadth and depth: spanning the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, examples of Mughal, Rajasthani, Pahari, Deccani, and southern Indian painting are interspersed throughout the book.

Whereas many Indian painting catalogues group works in a way that would appeal to the connoisseur, ordering them chronologically and geographically in accordance with long-established art historical taxonomies, Sardar's organization of *Epic Tales from Ancient India* emphasizes narrative, an approach that is likely to have a broader appeal. Though all of the paintings discussed are single folios excerpted from their original manuscripts and painted series, Sardar explains that the catalogue's narrative emphasis was intended, in part, to help the reader and museum audience imagine each painting's original format and intimate viewing experience. The organization of the volume thus foregrounds the act of storytelling that was the initial intent of patrons and artists, as Sardar explains in her introductory essay, "Indian Paintings and the Art of Storytelling." Sardar also describes various workshop structures, artistic practices, and approaches to creating narrative illustration. Monoscentic and continuous narration are discussed, as well as the various techniques painters developed to draw attention to key moments in a plot, highlight complex exegetical aspects of a text, or make ancient stories feel relevant to a contemporary viewer.

The narrative framework Sardar sketches out in her introduction is echoed in the structure of the remainder of the catalogue. Essays on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (by Neeraja Poddar), *Rāmāyaṇa* (by Sardar), *Rāgamālā* (by Sardar), examples of Persian-language literature (by Qamar Adamjee), and *Shāhnāma* (by Alka Patel) are followed by short descriptions of specific illustrations from manuscripts of the text. Catalogue entries typically begin with a summary of the events depicted, drawing attention to the act of storytelling. While the dominant narrative focus is likely more engaging and comprehensible to a non-expert, the inclusion of detailed information about patronage, date and place of production, workshop structure, artistic technique, and materials at the end of individual entries makes this catalogue an important source of knowledge for scholars of South Asian painting as well. Within each section Sardar has wisely chosen to arrange paintings in the order they would appear in an illustrated manuscript, disregarding temporarily their varied dates and places of production. An exception to this mode of organization, however, can be found in the entries immediately following Sardar's introductory essay. Rather than foregrounding the stories pictured, several of these ten short essays focus on various painting techniques, including the use of pounces and the traditional process of making pigments. Moreover, this group of entries is not comprised of illustrated folios from copies of a single narrative. Instead, paintings from copies of the *Gīta Govinda*, *Mahābhārata*, *Harivaṃsa*, and other texts are grouped here seemingly because they do not illustrate one of the narratives discussed in greater detail in the remaining essays.

After outlining the division between *śruti* and *smṛti* texts (which include the *Vedas* and *Purāṇas*, respectively), Neeraja Poddar's essay "Incarnations of the *Bhāgavata*" discusses the *Bhāgavata* as the product of a strong oral tradition that predates literary and illustrated versions of the narrative. As Poddar explains, the text's multiple narrators and "nested narrative" structure, characterized by "layers of dialogues within dialogues," are the result of centuries of oral transmission of the stories of Viṣṇu's *avatāras* compiled in the pages of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Given Kṛṣṇa's status as one of the most beloved Hindu deities, illustrated copies of the *Bhāgavata* often include more paintings detailing events from his life. Poddar's essay focuses primarily on Kṛṣṇa imagery in illustrated copies of the *Bhāgavata* as well as other texts that feature stories of the blue-skinned god's childhood or status as an ideal lover. Because surviving illustrations of Kṛṣṇa do not predate the sixteenth century, Poddar looks to sculptural depictions of *Bhāgavata* narratives as a source for painted imagery.

The subsequent two essays, "The *Ramayana* and Other Tales of Rama" and "Stories of Music, Love, and the Seasons: *Ragamala* Paintings," are both authored by Sardar. In the first of these, Sardar provides a synopsis of the *kāṇḍas* (books) that comprise Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* and an overview of regional variants of the text, which include versions by poets Kampaṇ and Tulsidās as well as Persian translations. After listing several well-known illustrated copies, Sardar examines the history of Rāma imagery beginning with sculptural depictions at temples that predate the earliest surviving *Rāmāyaṇa* manuscript paintings. In addition to including *Rāmāyaṇa* illustrations in her essay, Sardar considers

images of Rāma and Sītā incorporated into other painted manuscripts such as the *Balagopālastuti* and the *Mahābhārata*.

Sardar's essay on *Rāgamālā* paintings begins with a brief history of music treatises that predate the oldest surviving *Rāgamālā* imagery. Sardar explains that *rāgas* (musical modes) are each associated with particular *rasas* (emotions), times of day, and seasons. Taking up the practice of gendering major and minor musical modes from medieval theoretical texts, *Rāgamālā* series group melodies into family units by associating male *rāgas* and female *rāginīs*. In *Rāgamālā* sets, each melody is assigned a personified form. Beginning with iconic images of single figures and later developing into broad narrative scenes, Sardar traces the shifting typology of *Rāgamālā* imagery. She also points to an interesting irony in the history of *Rāgamālā* illustration: though improvisation is central to the performance of traditional Indian music, the images associated with *rāgas* became increasingly codified as the genre gained popularity. Sardar attributes this increased interest in *Rāgamālā* painting to the "prevailing notion that the knowledge of music was an important social skill" as well as key thematic and visual parallels with other popular literature of the time, including the *Rasikapriyā*, *Bārāmāsa*, and *Vasanta Vilāsa*. Despite the consistency of *Rāgamālā* imagery, different systems of classification existed in the Punjab Hills, Rajasthan, and the Deccan, an important point that Sardar includes in her essay.

The final section of the catalogue includes Qamar Adamjee's "Persian-Language Literature in India" and a short essay entitled "The *Shahnama* in India" by Alka Patel. Beginning in the eleventh century with waves of migration from Iran and Central Asia, Persian was introduced at courts and *madrasas* on the subcontinent. Adamjee wisely notes the danger in generalizing about South Asia's Persian literary history, given the many local and regional traditions that contributed to this body of work. Though she acknowledges the impossibility of a comprehensive list of Persian-Language literature in India, Adamjee provides a succinct overview of many significant writers and texts associated with the Ghaznavids, Ghurids, Delhi Sultans, and Mughals. In addition to royal commissions of Persian-language manuscripts, Adamjee also identifies important sources of non-elite patronage. The essay gives the reader a good sense of the variety of literary genres written or translated into Persian in South Asia as well as the importance of texts imported from Iran. Adamjee also describes novel "hybrid literary genres," written in vernacular languages using Persian script, that developed as a result of India's linguistic and cultural diversity. Paintings of the *Razmnāma* (a Persian translation of the *Mahābhārata*), *Bāburnāma* (a historical text about the first Mughal ruler), and *Chandāyana* (a Sufi romance) are among those catalogued. Patel's essay and entries on the *Shāhnāma* include a discussion of the origins and central narratives of Firdausi's text.

In *Epic Tales from Ancient India*, many works from the Binney collection are compiled and catalogued alongside high-quality images. Though select information from written inscriptions is referenced in several of the entries, photographs of these textual additions would have been a welcomed addition and would add to the documentary nature of the publication. Despite this omission, the information provided succinctly and clearly in essays and catalogue entries as well as the significance of the Binney collection make *Epic Tales from Ancient India* an important contribution to the field of South Asian art history.

KRISTA GULBRANSEN
WHITMAN COLLEGE

The Brahmāyāmalatantra or Picumata, vol. II: The Religious Observances and Sexual Rituals of the Tantric Practitioner: Chapters 3, 21, and 45. A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation. By CSABA KISS. Collection Indologie, vol. 130, Early Tantra Series, vol. 3. Pondicherry: INSTITUT FRANÇAIS DE PONDICHÉRY/ÉCOLE FRANÇAISE D'EXTRÊME-ORIENT; HAMBURG: ASIEN-AFIKA-INSTITUT, UNIVERSITÄT HAMBURG, 2015. Pp. 373. €32, Rs. 750.

Considered by many to be the "grail" of early Hindu tantric studies, the *Brahmāyāmalatantra* (BraYā), very likely the earliest of the Bhairava Tantras (p. 13), has been largely inaccessible to schol-