

As with most edited volumes of this sort, some of the contributions are of lesser quality than others, and some, while excellent all on their own, seem of lesser relevance to the “project” of both volumes overall. I would suggest that readers have a look at Richard Davis’s “Afterword” first, just to get a sense of precisely what is at stake, and then read Kaimal, Cane, Orr, Gillet, Francis, and Veluppillai: these articles are particularly fine, and the last three are methodologically important. I would certainly assign them to advanced students to give them a sense of why “being there” is so crucial to research, and why only readings of texts can never be enough.

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Shifting Stones, Shaping the Past: Sculpture from the Buddhist Stūpas of Andhra Pradesh. By CATHERINE BECKER. Oxford: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2015. Pp. xxiv + 321, 108 illustr. \$35 (paper).

For historians of South Asian and Buddhist art, Amaravati is one of the most renowned places in India. In the period from around 200 BCE to 250 CE, architects and artisans constructed an extraordinary Buddhist edifice generously adorned with remarkable figural sculpture, as the center of a large monastic institution. Some 500 pieces of Amaravati sculpture remain, together with 300 inscriptions, making Amaravati the richest source for early Buddhist art and epigraphy in southern India. Along with Bharhut, Sanchi, Mathura, and Sarnath, Amaravati stands as one of the preeminent sources of early Buddhist sculptural art.

Yet the physical site of Amaravati may now evoke great melancholy. In *Shifting Stones, Shaping the Past*, Catherine Becker recounts her first visit to Amaravati in 2001. “For an art history student familiar with the site’s spectacular remains,” she recalls, “the state of the stūpa was bleak indeed” (p. 2). A modest sloping grass mound was surrounded by a ring of modern bricks, intended to simulate the drum of the ancient monument. For the most part, the actual stūpa was elsewhere. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, and escalating during the early nineteenth century under British colonial rule, the great stūpa of Amaravati was systematically looted. Local rulers, treasure hunters, and colonial officials all contributed their share to its destruction and dispersal. The abundant sculptural remains were carted off to Masulipatan, Calcutta, and Madras. A large number of the detached limestone panels made their way to London, known as the “Elliot Marbles” (intended no doubt to compete with the famous Elgin Marbles), where after languishing for a year in the open on a wharf in Southwark and then in a forgotten Whitehall storehouse, they eventually became part of the permanent collection of the British Museum. They currently hold court in the Asahi Shimbun Gallery, as the stars of the museum’s South Asian collection. Other Amaravati sculptures remaining in Madras, in the Government Museum, were embedded in a concrete wall, which damaged the pieces irreparably. They have since been pried out of the concrete frames and form one of the most valuable of the museum exhibitions. (Akira Shimada narrates much of this tragic story of archeological deconstruction in his 2013 book, *Early Buddhist Architecture in Context*, pp. 3–11.)

“How must this stūpa have appeared in its heyday?” Becker asks herself, remembering the sadness of her first encounter at the denuded site. In the early centuries CE it would have been the most extraordinary of the many Buddhist devotional sites of southern India. Yet because of the looting of the site and the failure to make adequate records at the time, it is not altogether possible to reconstruct just how that original structure might have appeared. Starting in the mid-nineteenth century, archeologists and art historians devoted great efforts to reimagine the actual shape of the stūpa and to establish a chronology of the sculptural remnants. But the objects themselves, of course, stubbornly remain in Chennai, London, and other museum collections around the world.

In some respects, however, Amaravati may be coming back to life. Catherine Becker’s book not only examines the original sculptural materials of the great stūpa, but also looks at efforts in the last several decades to promote and to ritually enliven Amaravati. She examines a collection of brochures

and promotional materials aimed at promoting Amaravati and other ancient Buddhist sites in Andhra Pradesh as places where a “mystical and transformative version of the past is still present and accessible” (p. 22). And she also provides a fascinating account of the 2006 Kalachakra ceremony held at Amaravati and presided over by the Dalai Lama. Abruptly, the stūpa was brought back to life. “The humble Amaravati stūpa that I first encountered in 2001 was unexpectedly transformed into an active site of worship, receiving offerings and witnessing numerous devotional acts” (p. 6).

Becker organizes her study of Amaravati into five case-studies. Two of these deal with ancient materials, and three concern themselves with modern phenomena. Becker is interested in the human tendency to attribute agency to sites and objects (p. 1), and in this wide-ranging study she is able to demonstrate both ancient and modern manifestations of this tendency.

The first two chapters provide new interpretive approaches to the study of the Buddhist sculptural remains of Amaravati. Much of the scholarly literature on Amaravati has centered on issues of chronology and iconographical identification, and Becker makes good use of this material without getting bogged down in those long-standing debates. Instead, she poses new questions: how do the recurrent depictions of stūpas on Amaravati stūpa function? Becker call these “meta-stūpas,” since they function not only as decorative motifs, but also as visual guides for pilgrims. The meta-stūpas depict devotional activities surrounding stūpas. This insight enables Becker to make use of Andy Rotman’s important analysis of the role of *prasada* in Buddhist *avadāna* texts, in his *Thus I Have Seen: Visualizing Faith in Early Indian Buddhism* (2009). Becker adapts this persuasively to the visual texts provided by the meta-stūpas offered in the sculptural programs of classical Buddhist art.

Her second chapter builds on this by taking up the issue of visual narration. This has been much discussed within South Asian art history recently, but here too Becker has some new insights to add. Following on Robert Brown’s emphasis on the stūpa as a whole, meant for worship more than iconographical “reading,” Becker is highly sensitive to the totality of the monument and its cumulative effect of making the Buddha fully manifest. Most interesting in this chapter is her discussion of the “Man-in-the-Well” narrative, a common narrative form that appears in numerous Andhra Buddhist sculptures. She argues that this story is inset visually into other scenes, which act as a “meta-narration” or depiction of the circumstances in which this story might be narrated. Adapting an idea from the literary critic Gerard Genette, Becker reflects on how the narration itself might function in Buddhist pedagogy. She suggests that meta-narratives might themselves lead to a self-reflexive awareness on the part of a Buddhist audience, by which the Buddha’s continuing presence is paired with a realization of the continuing relevance of his teachings.

With the third chapter, the author makes a quick leap across time into the late twentieth century. The first big example, and it is a very big one, is a colossal standing Buddha image erected in Hyderabad in the last decade of the twentieth century. It belongs to a new Indian passion, during this period, for ever-larger free-standing images of gods and political heroes, and it reflects a variety of political and cultural agendas. Becker does a good job of reviewing the various debates and issues that surrounded this colossal Buddha. But probably the most interesting issue here, and one that most clearly links the chapter back to the earlier ones, is the ontological question of the giant statue’s animate character. Becker does a fine job of thinking through this question, citing appropriate theoretical positions (David Freedberg, Alfred Gell, W. J. T. Mitchell) to push her own reflections on this slippery issue.

The final two chapters deal still more forcefully with modern ways in which ancient archeological sites like Amaravati may be re-enlivened in the present. Chapter four deals with the attempts of state tourist agencies to promote Buddhist-oriented tourism in Andhra Pradesh. The focus here is on a series of tourist brochures. Becker gives an extended semiotic analysis of these documents, in chronological order, to demonstrate the shifting (and often dissimulating) strategies of the use of Buddhist remains in cultural tourism. I found the final chapter, on a 2006 Kalachakra ceremony performed by the Dalai Lama, to be a more interesting and also more encouraging example. The effort of the Dalai Lama and his Tibetan followers reflects a desire to renew Buddhism and Buddhist pilgrimage in Andhra, not so much centered around a recreation of the past as a reinvigoration of Buddhism in the present and future.

Efforts to find ways to re-enliven Amaravati did not end with the 2006 Kalachakra, however. In an epilogue, Becker surveys a recent project of the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation to create a new Buddhist theme park, which will include at its center a full-scale replica of the great stūpa

of Amaravati. It will feature modern replications in concrete of some of the ancient stone sculptures now in Chennai and London. The park will be a “pan-Buddhist” space, showcasing replicas of Buddhist shrines from around the world. We cannot know exactly how this new effort will end up, since changing state politics and funding shifts may well detour the plans.

It would be easy, Becker observes, to dismiss these new productions as modern tourist kitsch, but she takes a more charitable perspective. She is “sympathetic to the desire to make these sites accessible and engaging to visitors from across India and the world” (p. 282). Whether or not one agrees with this view, the modern developments around Amaravati and other sites of ancient Indian Buddhism are certainly worthy of the kind of scholarly attention Becker gives them. In *Shifting Stones, Shaping the Past*, Catherine Becker has provided us with valuable materials to reflect on the ways humans have chosen to animate Buddhist places of devotion, both ancient and modern.

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Iranisches Personennamenbuch, vol. 2: *Mitteliranische Namen*, fasc. 1: *Iranische Personennamen in manichäischer Überlieferung*. By IRIS COLDITZ. Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, vol. 889. Vienna: VERLAG DER ÖSTERREICHISCHEN AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN, 2018. Pp. 716.

This impressive collection, according to section 1 “Allgemeines” (pp. 5–6) and section 2 on the source material (pp. 6–15), contains all Middle Persian, Parthian, Sogdian, Bactrian, and New Persian proper names found in Manichean manuscripts, including figures in narratives from the Manichean myth, except names of demons. It also includes outdated, alternative, and “ghost” names in earlier editions. For the sake of completeness, non-Iranian names have also been included. The names are culled from “ca. 4700 text fragments” (p. 6), discovered at various sites [ancient temples] in the Turfan oasis in northeastern Xinjiang, but currently dispersed among almost a dozen collections in Europe and Asia. The texts date from the time of the domination of the Uigurs (744–840 and 866–1368), by the end of which Manicheism had long since ceded its supremacy to Buddhism (beginning of the eleventh century), with only small Manichean groups surviving into the thirteenth century; it is assumed, however, that many of the Middle Persian and Parthian manuscripts were copies of manuscripts from the third–sixth centuries (p. 7). A few dates are found in manuscripts from the eighth, ninth, and eleventh centuries (p. 8 n. 6). All the manuscripts in the Berlin Turfan collection have been included (<http://turfan.bbaw.de/dta/index.html>), but from other collections only those published. From the *Nebenüberlieferung*, texts in several non-Iranian languages were mined.

Names of gods and demons are, surprisingly, not included other than when *part* of proper names, which leaves out the entire Manichean pantheon and pandemonium.¹

Section 3 (pp. 16–18) reviews preliminary work and the state of scholarship involving numerous scholars, highlighting the work of Werner Sundermann.

Section 4 (pp. 18–31) deals with proper names in Iranian Manichean texts: the problems of assigning names to a specific language (4.1), subdivided into Iranian names (4.1.1); hybrid names (4.1.2): names with elements from several Iranian languages (4.1.2.1) and with Iranian and non-Iranian elements (4.1.2.2), e.g., *Aryāmān-radn* with *radn* < Old Indic *ratna-* ‘jewel’; and non-Iranian names (4.1.3): mostly old Turkic and Semitic, some Indic.

Section 5 contains subsections on the forms of the names: names with one component (5.1), two components (5.2), divided into types of compounds according to the Indic classification (5.2.1, 5.2.2);

1. I take this opportunity to make known two additions to the pandemonium found in M8280/R/i/1–6/ right column (from the *Book of Giants*), where the two archons (usually called Šaklōn and Pēsūs) are called [*Dāw]it and Halaʔit (to be read thus, rather than Sundermann’s [1973: 76] *J(š)t hl(c)yt*). The two are known as Daveithai and Eleleth in the Sethian creation myth (*Apocryphon of John*); see, e.g., King 2006: 87.