note of their recent construction. This extensive habitat, integrating ground level commercial shops with dwellings on the upper stories, was built on land where previously the Khan al-Hinna, the little known Khan al-Busut, the Khan al-Sabil, the Khan al-Qahwa, the Khan al-Nuhas, and the Khan al-Qutni (whose remaining facade was preserved in the new construction) had once stood. Volait’s contribution is a fitting and symbolic end to the work of this study group, which labored a decade in bringing this integrated set of studies to completion, for it tells the story of how traditional collective economic structures situated in the very heart of Cairo’s traditional commercial center were replaced by completely modern constructions in the middle of the present century and how these new structures were integrated into the life of the old quarter.

The director of this multi-year project, the theme leaders, and the individual authors are to be congratulated for successfully integrating their individual projects into a coherent and useful collection and for maintaining consistently high standards of scholarship. These stimulating and informative essays offer clear examples of contemporary French scholarly interests and methodologies.

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1) Readers interested in continuing these themes might wish to consult Nelly Hanna, Habiter au Caire: la maison moyenne et ses habitants aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, Cairo: Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale du Caire, 1991.

2) See Shari’a Court Records, Shahr al-‘Aqari (Cairo), al-Bab al-‘Ali series, 5 Rabi’ II, 1181.


The Preface of the book at issue boldly declares that, “The present volume starts from the premise that all theories, past and present, about the cult of Jagannatha are open to question” (p. xi). A fresh investigation into the cult of Jagannatha that takes into account all available material and moulds that into a coherent picture of the temple’s past and present is certainly a laudable initiative, but a bold one, since hardly any other temple in India has been subject to so much study by such a wide range of scholars as the Jagannatha temple in Puri. Among these studies those of the Orissa Research Project deserve special mention.

This project, in which scholars of three German and three Indian universities cooperated, has resulted in several monographs dealing with aspects of the cultural history of Orissa and its focal point, the Jagannatha temple in Puri, as well as in a joint publication under the title The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa which appeared in 1978. It is a systematic attempt to come to grips with the bewildering complexity of the phenomenon of the sacred centre by focusing the attention of various specialists on the same object. A single scholar, who assesses the outcome of this combined effort, and uses the evidence that has been amassed to construct a new, comprehensive theory, thus faces a formidable task (Kulke’s Orissa. A Comprehensive and Classified Bibliography comprises 391 pages compared to 5 pages of bibliography in Starza’s study). It is to be feared that Dr Starza was not fully equal to this task, notwithstanding the long time he has devoted to it.

The book under review is based on the author’s doctoral thesis, defended at the University of Amsterdam in 1983, which again goes back to the author’s unpublished Oxford B. Litt. thesis of 1969. It is evident that parts of the book were written at different periods and were never really updated. This not only appears from the remarkable out-of-date Foreword by

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D.C. Sircar (written ten years before the publication of the book!), but also from references to the literature. For instance, Dr Starza refers to a Purusottamamahatyama assigned to a Vis-

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\textit{\textbf{nurahasya}} in a manuscript kept in the University of Heidelberg (p. 9), without mentioning that this text has been critically edited and evaluated by Ulrich Schneider in 1984 (\textit{Der Holzgott und die Brahmanen}, Wiesbaden 1984, 2 vols.), a contribution to the subject evidentely never consulted by the author.

Dr Starza investigates the two major categories of historical sources of the Jagannâtha cult and its history, the texts and the art-historical evidence. Chapter two of the book deals with the architecture and sculpture of the Jagannâtha temple. The author’s investigation is hindered by the same two factors that limited earlier research, viz. the inaccessibility of the interior of the temple for non-Hindus and the thick layers of white-wash that cover its exterior. The removal of the plaster was in progress during the author’s (short) visit to Puri, which provided a better view of some parts of the temple, but obscured others by extensive scaffolding. Regarding the architecture of the temple Dr Starza does not add much to already existing descriptions such as that of T.E. Donaldson (\textit{Hindu Temple Art of Orissa} Part I, 403-407), to which no reference is made in this context. Dr Starza might have qualified his remark to the effect that the building of the temple “was completed shortly before or after its founder died,” i.e. c. A.D. 1150 (p. 18), if he had consulted Donaldson on this point. To compensate for the hindrances put in the way of the researcher the author has collected existing photographs, among which some unpublished ones provided by the India Office Library. Thanks to these photographs, which, like all of the book, are beautifully produced, Dr Starza is able to contribute to our knowledge of the sculptures of the Jagannâtha temple.

The other art-historical evidence analysed by the author are the Puri paintings of Jagannâtha. In an excursus in chapter three the author describes a beautiful 17th-century Puri cloth in the Victoria and Albert Museum, on which he also recently published an article (\textit{A Seventeenth Century Ritual Pata from the Jagannatha Temple, Puri}, in: South Asian Studies 9 (1993), 47-60), and compares it with other Puri paintings. Although interesting in itself, it does not become clear how this relatively late evidence contributes to our knowledge of the origin of Jagannâtha and its cult, towards which the last three chapters of the book are geared.

One of the results of the Orissa Project was the establishment of the tribal origin of the Jagannâtha icons. Against this view Dr Starza argues that the origin of the three wooden images may be sought in “orthodox” Hindu traditions and that “the conceptual and iconographic basis for the Puri triad is found in the motif of Brahma, Visnu and Mahesvara emerging from Para Siva, and in the symbol of the \textit{ekamukhalina} (Sadasiva/Purusottama)” (p. 135).

Another line of thought that crops up in the book repeatedly (though rather incoherently) is that the rites of renewal of the Jagannâtha icons are “derived from perfectly orthodox sraddha (funerary) rites in memory of a deceased brahma.” (p. 90). In the same vein is the author’s conclusion (p. 79), that “the great Car Festival held for seven days on the bank of the Indradyumna Lake in a \textit{mandapa} to which the Puri icons are brought would originally have commemorated the death ceremony performed by the Eastern Gangas in memory of Codaganga, the founder of the Jagannatha temple. The Indradyumna Lake is still associated with ritual bathing and the offering of funeral cakes.” The arguments advanced for this interesting hypothesis, however, are rather flimsy. In all Mâhâtyas of Indian holy places that I know of, \textit{tirthas} are recommended for performing \textit{sraddha} ceremonies, which are often said to surpass in effectiveness a \textit{sraddha} sacrifice in Gaya. And neither does the argument that the \textit{Purusottamamahatyama} in the \textit{Brahmapurâna} connects the wooden icons with an \textit{aśvamedha} sacrifice performed by king Indradyumna carry much weight. The author refers twice (pp. 79 and 127) to a verse found in several texts (quoted from Kane’s \textit{History of Dharmaśāstra} IV, 652f. and 539), in which the having of many sons is recommended in order that one at least may perform a \textit{sraddha} in Gaya, or an \textit{aśvamedha} or an \textit{vr̥sotsarga} ceremony. From this verse the author deduces “that the term \textit{aśvamedha} was often (sic) used simply to mean a death ceremony” (p. 79). Such statements should be substantiated by a scrutiny of