The symbolic representation of space and its various niches, either in line drawings or cosmic design, has not been prominent in the history of indigenous Indian cartography. Of course, there has been a tradition of representing the spatial location of areas and sites in an archetypal manner, or as conceived in the cognitive process that suited the requirements of religious practices and functioning that took place at a site or within a territory. However, this is a narrow view, such as prompted Leo Bagrow in his authoritative History of Cartography to write that “India had no cartography to speak of”, and that “no one in India seems to have been interested in cartography”.\(^1\) Having thus inferred that “Indians were quite unaware of cartography, and similarly uninterested in rectifying that supposed deficiency, Bagrow devoted only half a page to Indian cartography in his history, and indeed most histories of cartography have been similarly predisposed”.\(^2\) The pioneering researches by Joseph Schwartzberg affirm that Indian scholars in the ancient past placed more emphasis on astronomy, geometry and other branches of mathematics, and the remarkably creative exuberance of Indian culture, but less on the linear representation of their knowledge of spatiality, and codification of places and attributes of nature.\(^3\) In this regard, British naïveté has been recognised, along with either negligence or unawareness resulting in not perceiving indigenous maps and cosmographic representations.\(^4\)

Richard Gombrich provocingly stated that “the most discouraging feature of traditional Indian cosmology is not its fantastic and uncritical character, but its complexity”.\(^5\) In the study of the archetypical frame of indigenous cartography in the work under review this very ‘complexity’ is taken as the reference point to explain the sacrality, spatiality, and temporality of the religious landscape (sacredscapes and faithscapes). The author is familiar with the hard fact that the study of the history of South Asian cartography has long been interpreted based on Western cartographic traditions. Maps of the South Asian subcontinent were assumed to have been produced by foreigners — not by South Asians themselves. Maps actually produced in South Asia were neglected as a category in their own right, thereby supporting Schwartzberg’s assertion that “the study of the history of [South Asian] cartography is still in its infancy”.\(^6\) (see p. 9). Inspired to aim at a “deconstruction of the

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\(^6\) Schwartzberg (note 3 above): 295.
map” on the lines of the late John B. Harley, Gengnagel has taken up the challenge to broaden the perspectives on cartography in general, and non-Western cartography in particular — as illustrated by the case of several pictograms, cosmograms, lithograms, archetypal indigenous representations of sacred space and landscapes —, and has attempted to widen the path of critical human geography, where geographic visualisation has bridged the way from the so-called single accurate topographical map (as in the West) to a view which emphasises the importance of multiple perspectives and multiple maps: in other words, to perceive and study maps as social constructions within the purview of setting, context and practices, and above all their archetypal and religious connotations.

This work is one of the resultant volumes of the interdisciplinary project “Visualized Texts — Religious Maps and Divination Charts” at Heidelberg University (Germany), headed by Axel Michaels, and collaborated upon by several other scholars, including the present reviewer; it was funded by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) during the years 2000–2002 (see p. 14). The author has advanced much farther and produced this pioneering volume on indigenous cartography, using theories of deconstruction and decodification of meaning.

To study religious (indigenous/archetypal) maps within the sacred space of Banaras (Varanasi) it is necessary to consider various dimensions like textual narration, ritual practice adhered to including procession routes, representation design and overview of correspondences, and meanings imposed and their deconstruction. In varying degrees and at different levels Gengnagel has successfully analysed these attributes and contents, and their spatial transposition.

In the introduction the author has credited Schwartzberg, who has listed five “map-like” views of Banaras, and Gole for reproducing four maps of the city. Here he has missed to cite the reviewer who already in the 1980s published and analysed such maps in geographical contexts; however, the references are given in the bibliography (p. 332) and examined in different contexts in the book. Of course Gengnagel is right to claim that he is the first to study the pictorial maps (three coloured, painted maps) of the 18th and early 19th centuries, which are presented and studied here for the first time in detail, and also the unpublished 18th century stylised map of Varanasi (no. 111, Plate 4). He has rationally classified the befitting cartographic representation into five categories, viz. pictorial maps, printed maps, charts, panoramic views, and topographical maps (p. 16), though he should also have mentioned another category, i.e. cognitive or mental maps, which have already been discussed in the case of Banaras taking in view the varying typology of cartographic representation, exemplified with twelve such representations. The author clearly orients his study “to highlight specific aspects of these representations of spatiality, in the context of

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8 Schwartzberg (note 3 above): 489–491.


ritual and textual practice, by looking at examples of the religious cartography of Banaras from the 18th and 19th centuries” (p. 21).

In the purview of the above, the subject matters are arranged into five chapters: “Introduction” with “Survey of the Collected Cartographic Material”, “Kāśīkhaṇḍota — Kāśi in Texts”, “Kāśiyāṭrā — Maps and Processions in Banaras”, “Kāśidarśana — Kāśi in Maps”, and “Conclusion”. Their discussions are further supported by three appendices, bibliography and index at the end, and with detailed contents, acknowledgements, list of illustrations, and abbreviations at the beginning (pp. 5–12). The short introduction (pp. 13-21) presents a brief overview of the subject matter, highlights the selected works in historical, thematic and local contexts, and presents the motivation for a tour de passage of the cartographic art of Banaras.

The aspects of visualisation in the form of maps and representations of sacred spaces of Banaras are discussed in the Kāśīkhaṇḍota-chapter within the context of the discourse on the sacredness of pilgrimage sites, fords, rivers and places (pp. 23–53). Emphasis is laid only on the mythological and Purānic literatures, especially on the historicity and variety of texts and the sacred places mentioned therein. No attempt has been made to compare and see the ground realities of locations of sacred sites, despite Hans Bakker having already paved the path for such an interdisciplinary approach. More care is taken to analyse philology, phonetics and cross-textual citations. While Gengnagel is right to point out that there is no known Sanskriti textual source with a detailed description of the Avimuktayāṭrā (p. 32), of course the sacred territory surrounding the Avimuktalinga is mentioned. He rightly supports the idea that the Kāśīkhaṇḍa is indeed wide-ranging in its contents, covering an all-India to local frame of spatial references, but the lack of contemporary maps and their links to the above Yātrā is made it difficult to arrive at some positive interrelationships. Additionally, the most

popularly cited map, the Kāśidarpana by Kālāśānāth Sukal dated 1876, has been analysed in reference to the interrelatedness of text and map (pp. 50–53; see p. 214), though it would have been better to have had the original map (as on p. 214) and the corresponding contemporary topographical map side-by-side, with a commentary on interrelatedness and correspondences, as attempted by the present reviewer.14

Similarly, in the following chapter maps and processions (also pilgrimage routes) in Banaras are narrated with a focus on the characteristics of pilgrimages as described in the texts. There is a detailed case study of the Paṇcakroṣīyāṭrā, but again lacking critical examination of earlier works in which topographical and contemporary maps and architectural designs were given prominence. Gengnagel has successfully narrated the story of ‘Bhāratendu’ Hariśacandra who in 1872 took the lead in correcting the Paṇcakroṣīyāṭrā route in its western part (pp. 58–72); this most appealing debate reflects upon new information, and presents a good example of interdisciplinary approaches, use of topographical maps and also the issue of spatial location and correspondences. Based on the rigorous exercise of critical appraisal of texts and field-based observations and mapping, he justifiably concludes: “It is the pilgrims’ spatial practice that creates and defines sacred spaces” (p. 72).

The next chapter elucidates in detail the vivid dimensions of the four maps and their contextuality with reference to society, culture, history and religious practices. The first map, the stylised map of Varanasi in which the central part of Banaras is represented in the middle, within a rectangular structure recording the Viśvanātha temple as the centre of the east-west axis and representing Avimuktaśetra (“the territory of ‘Never Forsaken by Śiva’”), dates approximately from the late 18th century. Tracing the basic structure, further the comparison and enlargement of other micro-units, detailing the central part, detailing various circumambulations and pilgrimage routes at different levels of independence and superimposition, the outer circle and delineation of 65 sacred spaces and


shrines along the Pañcakroṣyātrā are catalogued systematically allotting code numbers, with cross-comparison with the temples existing within this territory (pp. 97–104). This is followed by further analysis in terms of visualising centrality. The second part of the pictorial map refers to “Pilgrims in Banaras”, covering four circumambulations in the sequential order from inner to outer, and schematically designed to analyse the routes, locations of Vināyakas (Gaṇeṣas), pilgrim and animal co-existence, riverfront panorama, Yoginis, and details and encoding of inscriptions (pp. 117–148).

The Saptapurīyātrā map (1873) is explained in terms of historicity, changes in copying, structure, locating places and decoding inscriptions, and links to mythological literature (pp. 149–161). The one version analysed, with schematic drawing (without inscriptions), and the other version in colour (p. 213), are different, and the author has missed showing the full view of the version he has discussed in detail. This reviewer, after having guided the author in his field studies, subsequently worked further and in 2002 published, for the first time, the map referred to; since it is missing from the present book, the reader is urged to consult it in the publication of the reviewer, to obtain an idea of the original map studied by Gengnagel. This original was prepared in Banaras in 1873 under the aegis of Jaṅgabahāḍur Singh. The deconstruction of the designs, sketches and inscriptions on the map are beautifully catalogued (pp. 155–157); however, since the original design has not been taken as a whole for the interpretation of the landscape, attributes of nature, symbols of garden and trees, mango groves, and the prevalence of banana plants are completely missed (compare the original figure and the version used by the author). It is also not acceptable that the name of the patron of the map, Jaṅgabahāḍur Singh, is not only anglicised as Jang Bahadur Singh, but cited frequently by the author as “Bahadur Singh” (e.g. on p. 157).

One should also keep in mind that in the Hindu religious traditions it is common to change the status of the local shrine or images in the course of time from local to universal, commonly by superimposing the name of a pan-Indian or well established divinity. Thus the family level feminine guardian of Jaṅgabahāḍur Singh in the garden at Chitaipur, named Ayutabhuja-devi, was upgraded to Durgādevi. The author’s claim that this was his “discovery” (cf. p. 154) should be taken as hyperbolic self-praise.

Another map, the “Mirror of Kāśī” (Kāśidarpana) of 1876, with inscriptions linked to more than 1250 names of temples, gods, goddesses and places, is worked out in detail, inter alia utilising the reviewer’s publications that also reproduced and analysed this map.¹⁷ The discussion on this map is a critical appraisal and summary of the earlier works published by the author and mostly collaborated on with the team members of the project “Visualized Texts” mentioned above. Within the ambit of scale, framing, centrality, selection, and spatiality of sacred space, this map was earlier studied and a model frame developed by the reviewer, who gives spatial perspectives of 96 Śāktis, 8 Bhai- ravas, 8 Durgās, 8 Vināyakas, 8 Dikpālas, and 24 Vētālas (as given in the Kāśikhaṇḍa of Skandapuruṣa 72) on the outer circle delineating the Great Pañcakroṣī (sometimes called Caurāśikroṣī) route that delimits the Kāśikṣetras.¹⁸ Though this study is cited in the bibliography, it is in no way critically examined or used for cross-referencing (see p. 168 note 85, 169). The issues of cardinality, alignment and correspondences in terms of sacrality, and the spatial location are, thus, not given due emphasis; rather, cataloguing and deciphering of places and shrines are given prominence, which results in a limited scope of application and exposition of this map. One should remember that this (and similar maps) do not have correct directional or cardinal orientations because they represent mental or perceived images in the light of religious texts, continuity of traditions and faith systems. Such maps should also be compared with the topographical maps with regard to the degree of correspondences, and real practices of pilgrimage in space and time.

The comment that preparation of a detailed mapping of the pilgrimage to the inner sanctum (antargṛha-), together with comparison of Prinsep’s map (cf. p. 212) will be of great help,

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disregards the publication of the map of the Antargṛha and detailed listing of the sacred places and shrines on this route.\textsuperscript{19} Though listed in the bibliography (p. 332), these sources are neither credited nor cited and examined in the text. It is, though, good to note that the author is in accord with the statement by Talwar and Krishna\textsuperscript{20} (cf. p.184) that such maps are the frame of an “open space” of archetypal representation that helps pilgrims to obtain an auspicious glimpse (\textit{daršana}-) even without physically walking to the locus. In this way these maps are also a frame of a cosmogram wherein the macrocosm and mesocosm are reduced to the level of the microcosm. This in itself is a great contribution by the author.

Based on rigorous analysis of many maps, charts and cosmograms, and their links to a variety of literatures, Gengnagel has justifiably concluded that (p. 187)

\begin{quote}
Banaras has become a symbol of sacred spatiality whose reach extends far beyond the physical borders of India and South Asia. It attempts to both incorporate all other Indian sacred sites, and to transcend its own boundaries by being accessible in other parts of India as well.
\end{quote}

The idea that such maps are a cultural production, therefore to be used as a heritage resource, is a noble idea in the arena of preservation and evaluation of historical artefacts. In the same vein as propounded by Ramaswamy,\textsuperscript{21} the author further succeeds in substantiating his statement that (p. 193)

\begin{quote}
the visualized space is not empty or desocialized, there is no abstract territory but a ‘lived territory’. The imaginative act that aims at a visualization of spatial texts is therefore based on the continued spatial practice of both the inhabitants and the pilgrims visiting the city.
\end{quote}

The book is a pioneering and landmark product which successfully paves the path to understand “indigenous maps” as cultural productions through the processes of sacrality of space and time, representation of signs and symbols, and above all their codifications of meanings and religious practices in pilgrimage systems. The plates are lucid, marvellous, clear and legible. The appendices provide details of religious and topographical maps, followed by pilgrimage and procession routes and associated sacred places and shrines. The three appendices along with the supporting bibliography are a great merit of this book. Though no work can be considered as the last word, and perfect in all ways, this book nevertheless presents many fresh visions and opens new challenges to be taken up by historical and cultural geographers interested in the study of sacredscapes and religious and cosmic cartography. There are some slips in indexing, misspelt words or half-spelled names; surprisingly too, the index does not cite authors referred to. Such slips are irritating, but in no way negate the quality and merit of this work. I congratulate the author for the noble task he has accomplished for the study of Indian culture.


\textsuperscript{20} Kay Talwar, Kalyan Krishna: \textit{Indian Pigment Paintings on Cloth.} (Historic Textiles of India at the Calico Museum, Ahmedabad 3.) Ahmedabad: Calico Museum of Textiles 1979, p. 184.