
Editor's Foreword

We are delighted to publish this collection of articles on the world of the Paramāra dynasty, edited by Dr Michael Willis FRAS of the British Museum. Between 2006–10 Dr Willis led an Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded project in collaboration with the Department of History at SOAS and the Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff, entitled 'The Indian Temple: Production, Place and Patronage'. This project examined how Indian temples were designed, built and patronised and explored the social and economic role played by temples in medieval India. The project formed the backdrop for the articles which are brought together in this special issue.

Our last special issue 'Romanisation in Comparative Perspective', edited by Dr Ilker Aytürk and published in January 2010, followed in the tradition of some of the Journal's most significant achievements in the field of oriental languages, namely decipherment, romanisation and the reconstruction of archaic pronunciation.

Dr Willis's special issue is equally relevant to the history and activities of our Society. It is the outcome of an international seminar 'History of the Paramāras' that took place at the Society's building in Stephenson Way in July 2009. The seminar brought forward new discoveries but also showed how modern scholarship relates to subjects originally explored by one of the Society's founder members Lieut.-Col James Tod. Lectures and papers at the seminar discussed, among other things, the copper-plate inscriptions that Tod came across two hundred years ago in India, and which form part of the Society's collections now held at the British Museum. I am delighted to see these copper-plates illustrated and contextualised in this special issue. Tod's landmark work, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1820), has been both lauded and ridiculed, but as a current member of the Society Dr Giles Tillotson has written, "it cannot in good conscience be ignored" (*James Tod's Rajasthan: the historian and his collections*, Mumbai, 2007). In this special issue, Dr Willis and his contributors extend the discussion and debates about the Paramāras and their contemporaries that were begun more than a century ago. In the process, the papers unveil new controversies and matters of conscience, including the political complexion of scholarship in the late nineteenth century and twentieth century. This collection leaves little doubt that the Royal Asiatic Society and its *Journal* continue to play a vital role in the understanding of India and its history.

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