certain areas which are bilingual today, as they were in the past; for example, the Kannada and Telugu zones.

From a brief introductory chapter setting out the plan of the book the author proceeds in ch. ii, 'Historical framework' to give a broad outline of the political history of the principal ruling dynasties.

Chapters iii and iv are concerned with temple architecture in Southern India. The first is devoted to temples in the Kannada and Telugu zones and the second to those in the Tamil zone. This separation is based on historical and geographical considerations. In both chapters the material is arranged chronologically.

Forts and palaces form the subject of ch. v. Michell analyses the formal and technical features derived from the architecture of Sultanate Deccan and demonstrates convincingly that the 'Islamic' appearance of royal structures is deceptive. In fact, the design of pavilions, bath-houses, stables and watchtowers is entirely original. The integration of various building types and ornamentation is an achievement of the Vijayanagara artists.

Chapter vi is devoted to a survey of sculptures in stone and metal. Not all sculpted works are necessarily of religious inspiration. In this period narrative sculptures flourished as is seen in the epic and Puranic carvings embellishing temple walls and enclosures. Further innovative features of this time are the appearance of royal themes and the portraits of rulers with their families and attendants. An emphasis on martial imagery, exemplified by mounted riders and rearing mythical beasts, also brought new features to the decoration of halls and the piers of temple corridors. Smaller sculpted objects such as miniature bronzes, ivory figurines, relief panels and steel standards and weapons are also included in the survey.

Paintings on ceilings and walls, on cotton scrolls and hangings, on paper manuscripts and albums and on a wide range of portable items constitute the subject of ch. vii. In spite of the wide range of locations and media, there is a remarkable consistency in the choice of subjects. The depictions of local legends are of great importance. Here too, as in sculpture, there are quite a number of illustrations of royal life. This is a significant change to the traditional repertoire.

Chapter viii is the epilogue drawing attention to common developments to Southern Indian architecture, sculpture and painting. Three distinctive stylistic tendencies: revivalism, innovation and integration coalescing with unifying themes, are shown to be a determining factor, contributing to the distinctive artistic identity of the epoch.

While Michell is aware of the extensive literature on the subject and considers the work of other scholars, his research reveals much that is new in the understanding and interpretation of the Southern Indian artistic tradition. The originality of the book is evident throughout and especially in the descriptions of many previously undocumented monuments.

Michell has produced an original and outstanding study which will be of lasting worth. Both the scholar and the student will find this book to be of considerable value and appeal.

A. L. DALLAPICCOLA

LAWRENCE A. BABB and SUSAN S. WADLEY (ed.): *Media and the transformation of religion in South Asia*. ix, 298 pp. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995. £34.95 (paper £15.95).

Despite the quite varied media discussed in this book, its editors have ensured an unusual unity of purpose which greatly enhances the value of the collection as a whole. Not only do all the authors address quite directly the topic of the title, they also show (or have been persuaded to show) evidence of having encountered each other's contributions during the composition process. While Lawrence Babb's introduction tends to overplay the ground-breaking originality of some of the contributions (bibliographical references to Tapati Guha-Thakurta in the first paper, for example, testify to earlier work in this particular area), the book makes a welcome and valuable contribution to a vitally important subject.

The first four papers are grouped under the title 'Printed images' and introduced (as are all three sections of the book) by Susan Wadley. H. Daniel Smith's paper, 'Impact of "God Posters" on Hindus and their devotional traditions', usefully contextualizes the role of popular art from the point of view of production, distribution and usage, though the primary concentration on this *mise-en-scène* is rather at the expense of any real analysis of the iconography of the posters themselves: we are told that 'there has been a sustained concern for the production of *bhakta* images for more than a millennium' (p. 43), but the paper does not venture a diachronic analysis. A tighter focus is achieved by Stephen R. Inglis in his paper, 'Suitable for framing: the work of a modern master', by concentrating on the painter C. Kondiah Raju (1898–1976). Inglis skilfully reveals the successive influences which underlie the paintings of an artist whose own influence on Indian religious art was second only to that of Ravi Varma; and in a discussion which runs in parallel to H. Daniel Smith's concept of 'omniprax pūjā', Inglis shows how the emergence of a 'national aesthetic' is a key element in 'the "Pan-Hinduism" that develops as Indians become increasingly mobile within their own country and find themselves part of regionally diverse Hindu communities abroad' (p. 67).

Frances Pritchett's 'The world of *Amar Chitra Katha*' deftly introduces this phenomenally successful comic-book projection of 'the cultural heritage of India'. Pritchett analyses such factors as readers' preference, and editorial forbearance and diplomacy, in the selection of narratives for inclusion in the series, and while concluding that 'all things considered, the influence of the series is undoubtedly constructive' and leads to 'a strong, positive sense of India as a multicultural nation in which [readers] can all work together' (p. 105), she

raps knuckles for the short shrift given to certain groups (specifically Muslims, and women) and notes that the series 'can and should do much better' (p. 104). Her list of 'inexplicable' omissions from the series wrongly includes Gandhi and Nehru, who feature as numbers 416 and 436 respectively in copies to hand.

J. S. Hawley's article on 'The saints subdued: domestic virtue and national integration in *Amar Chitra Katha*' usefully complements (and rarely contradicts) Pritchett's paper, analysing the comic-book manipulation of hagiographies of six devotees (Mīrābāī, Nānak, Kabīr, Tulsī, Sūr, Ravidās—the same sextet as is featured in Hawley's 1988 study *Songs of the saints of India*, a book not mentioned here but whose illustrations themselves recall the *Amar Chitra Katha* atelier).

The second section of the book is on 'Audio recordings'. Regula Burckhardt Qureshi writes on 'Recorded sound and religious music: the case of Qawwālī' with characteristic authority, her discussion abounding with a variety of insights that put this paper into a class of its own. Though here (as throughout the book) one might wish that space had been found for original texts to accompany translations, the examples chosen address directly the overall theme of the volume while also comprising a succinct history of Qawwālī in its own right. In the accompanying paper 'On cassette rather than live: religious music in India today', Scott L. Marcus offers some useful perspectives on territory marked out authoritatively by Peter Manuel's groundbreaking *Cassette culture* (1993; revd in *BSOAS*, 58/3, 1995, 587), though without reference to this earlier study.

The final batch of essays has the title 'Visual Media'. In a rather poorly edited article, Steve Derné explores 'Market forces at work: religious themes in commercial Hindi films' from a variety of perspectives, including that of audience reaction; his main focus is a selection of films from 1986, in which he analyses religious themes as a component of formulaic composition. The broad sweep of the paper is detrimental to clarity of focus and there are many points in the interpretation of attitudes reported by Derné's informants (who incidentally are made to speak an awkward translationese) which call for more concentrated debate.

The apparently sardonic tone of Philip Lutgendorf's title, 'All in the (Raghu) family: a video epic in cultural context', is belied by an excellent paper which offers a heart-felt apologia for Ramanand Sagar's famously popular television version of the Ramayana. On ground made very much his own through earlier work, Lutgendorf presents a well-argued case for the legitimacy of Sagar's version of the epic in the face of widespread criticism from 'urban intellectuals' anxious about the loss of vitality in a 'folk culture' that they do not themselves patronize in any case. Lutgendorf feels that the dangers of cultural homogenization to which we are alerted by such scholars as Romila Thapar tend to be alarmist, and that the extension of the epic into a modern medium is not such a dramatic transformation as might generally be supposed.

The collection ends on a high note with John T. Little's excellent paper 'Video vacana: Swadhyaya and sacred tapes'; alliterative exuberance having been exhausted in the title itself, what follows is a most perceptive and engaging account of the use of the video medium for the proselytizing of the Swadhyaya movement begun in the 1950s by Pandurang V. Athavale Shastri, 'popularly known as Dada'. Little sees in this process the forerunner of a trend in which oral tradition is given a new lease of life by a new technological medium.

The papers are mostly judiciously edited, though some authors are given too much freedom to state the obvious (for example in definitions of 'chromolithography' (p. 6) and 'lamination' (p. 25). Scott Marcus's reference to Kishori Amonkar's 'Meer Bhajans' (p. 184) presumably intends 'Meera Bhajans' (unless religious syncretism is more advanced than commonly realized). The index has a few typographical gremlins, misspelling the name 'Bachchan', but otherwise is a useful guide to a useful book.

RUPERT SNELL

SARA DICKEY: *Cinema and the urban poor in South India*. (Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology.) xiv, 213 pp. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1993. £30, $49.95.

When MGR [M.G. Ramachandran], Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and star of the Tamil cinema, died in 1987, widespread hysteria seized that part of South India. Two million people attended his funeral at which his leading lady, Jayalalitha, now his political successor, had to be dragged from his corpse, and 31 griefstricken fans committed suicide. A temple has been built to him as a deity. The bond between fan and star is evidently close; but what explains the intensity of the relationship? A small but growing number of studies of Indian cinema, India's largest form of cultural production, have appeared in recent years. Most are concerned with the history of cinema, cinema and politics, or cinema and social psychology. Dickey's study, an ethnography of cinemagoing in the city of Madurai, Tamil Nadu, is a welcome addition to this literature.

Dickey's field-work was conducted in Madurai in 1985–87. The book which contains her findings is divided into three parts. The first is an introduction to class as the dominant factor in social organization; an important and often ignored issue in South Asian culture. Her description of the nature of the urban poor is useful although this term must remain somewhat vague. The second part is a general study of Tamil cinema. This is the weakest section of the book. Her historical analysis of cinema is thin, and the author acknowledges that it is mostly drawn from secondary sources. Her analysis of a few films is executed purely in terms of her interpretation of their narratives. The most interesting section is the third part. Dickey demonstrates the connections that exist between the class base of film makers and