Horstmann, Monika, *Der Zusammenhalt der Welt. Religiöse Herrschaftslegitimation und Religionspolitik Mahārājā Savāī Jaisinghs (1700–1743)*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009; xiv, 399 pp; bibliography, maps, illustrations, index. ISBN: 978-3-447-05840-7.

In the last decades, religious politics and theological disputes in North Indian Hindu kingdoms in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the role of religious communities in that much fragmented political landscape have increasingly attracted scholarly interest. This resulted in important and even foundational studies in this rather neglected phase of the history of Indian and especially Hindu religions. Most prominent are perhaps Catherine Clementin-Ohja's book on the conflicts between Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava communities (*Le trident sur le palace*; 1999) and her subsequent studies of disputes between Vaiṣṇava groups competing for royal patronage; William Pinch's two books on *Peasant and Monks in British India* (1999) and on *Warrior Ascetics* (2005) as well as Monika Horstmann's monograph on the history of the deity Govinddevjī's migration from Vrindavan to the capital of the Kachvāha dynasty and King Savāī Jaisingh (*In Favour of Govinddevji*; 1999). The focus on the different religious communities enhances our historical understanding of this epoch by unfolding the theological concerns of religious experts who were connected to the ruling dynasty.

The present book is a further highly welcome contribution in this field of study as well as to a number of publications dealing with issues of "religious legitimation" of (royal) power in different historical and regional contexts in India. The first six chapters of

Horstmann's book deal with "religious politics" and theological disputes; a long seventh chapter contains the edition and complete German translation of two theological treatises and three theological statements. The book begins with an outline of the historical background of the Kachvāha dynasty and the self-perception of King Savāi Jaisingh. This is followed by an introduction into the religious issues that were dealt with in the theological treatises composed at the request of the king. The author then turns to an analysis of the political motives that incited Jaisingh's engagement in religious matters. Partly emulating the successful self-representation of the famous Maratha king Śivājī as the new ideal Hindu king who would bring about a "Hindu renaissance" at the end of an "age of darkness", Jaisingh not only endorsed Vedic rituals, but also the propagation of a "Vedic Viṣṇuism". The peculiar constellation at the court of Jaisingh led to the production of theological treatises expressing the interest in a revitalized Vedic ritual tradition with a strong emphasis on obeying the rules of *dharma* (correct behaviour; social and ritual duties) detailed in the Brahmanical law-books. This is explored by tracing the biography and religious orientation of important religious figures and by embedding them in a larger framework of intra- and inter-communal disputes. The tensions between the different branches of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are the topic of the third chapter of the book, which draws in most parts on the studies of De, Cakrabarty, and Haberman and offers as pointed out by the author "nothing new for experts in Gauḍīya theology" (p. 59, n. 39). Yet, these well known disputes gain additional significance when put in the context of court politics as done by Horstmann. This constellation gains shape in the figure of Kṛṣṇadeva Bhaṭṭācārya, a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theologian, who received an endowment from the king and played an important role in a dispute between different fractions from 1718 onwards. In the course of this conflict, Kṛṣṇadeva Bhaṭṭācārya authored three theological treatises, one of which, *Karmavivṛti*, is edited and translated in the seventh chapter. This text establishes a doctrinal framework to be followed by all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

Jaisingh's engagement with the Vaiṣṇava order was not limited to settling theological disputes, he also intended to revitalize the Vedic foundation of his kingship. In so doing, he ordered that ritual practices peculiar to the Vaiṣṇava communities had to be in accordance with the

ritual prescriptions ordained in Vedic and Dharmaśāstra texts. The Vedic tradition was represented by a small groups of Brahmins still practising Vedic *śrauta* rituals and by what is, rather cryptically, referred to as “milieu smārta” Brahmins (what kind of “milieu” is meant?), who observe the worship of a group of five deities (*pañcāyatana*). Their notions gained a normative status as Vaiṣṇava ritual practices based on the authoritative scriptures of the individual *sampradāyas* had now to be mediated with Vedic rituals in order to turn them into practices of “Vedic Vaiṣṇavas”. An example of how this was brought about is the case when the observance of *ekādaśī*, the Vaiṣṇava fasting day par excellence, coincides with the performance of the Vedic ancestral rite of *śrāddha* which demands a ritual meal. Therefore an “ordo for the Vaiṣṇavas”, thus the title of chapter four, had to be created which was done at the order of the king by his court theologian Harekr̥ṣṇa Mīśra, a Brahmin from Kaṇṇāṭaka (spelled variously Hari- or Harekr̥ṣṇa; deciding on one spelling as done in the index would have been helpful in the main text as well). He authored a ritual manual called *Vaidikavaiṣṇavācāra* which is edited and translated in chapter seven.

King Jaisingh’s attempts not only to decide on certain theological issues, but also to define what a Vaiṣṇava is supposed to be are interpreted as being part of a larger project of a “Vedic renaissance”. This is testified in the performance of at least two Vedic “horse sacrifices” (*aśvamedha*) that are applauded by panegyrics and discussed in chapter 5. Whether the ritual actually included the killing of a horse remains unclear and the opinion of the author is inconclusive at this point (p. 181) reflecting the uncertainty of the available sources. It would have been worthwhile to contextualize in greater detail the author’s view that Jaisingh and the Maharashtrian Brahmins at his court intended to surpass Śivāji’s coronation as the Hindu king. Such contextualization should include a comparison of the Vedic model of restoration with forms of legitimation based on the *bhakti* model of the legitimacy as formulated, for instance, in the *Bhagavadgītā*. Here, the king functions as representative of the highest god or goddess and is at the same time a *bhakta*. Such comparisons could shed further light at the connection between Jaisingh’s horse sacrifice(s) and the worship of Kalkin, the last and future embodiment (*avatāra*) of the god Viṣṇu. The Kalki cult and its

relationship to the cult of Varadarāja is briefly discussed at the end of chapter five. This corroborates the importance of this other field of Jaisingh's religious politics that connects him not only again with Śivājī and his cult of the (royal) goddess Bhavānī, but also to neighbouring kings in Rajasthan and Gujarat. An inclusion of this connection between *bhakti* and the role of an *avatāra* would have further substantiated the arguments put forward by Horstmann, especially with regard to that aspect of Jaisingh's policy which is considered to be the central concern of his kingship and gives the book its title: "Der Zusammenhalt der Welt" (coherence of the world). This is a translation of Skt. *lokasaṃgraha*, a compound used in *Bhagavadgītā* 3.20 in order to postulate the necessity of performing one's ritual and social duties. In this connection the king is turned into the model of this type of action. When the concept is made the subject of a short, concluding sixth chapter, the use of this idea in the texts discussed is, unfortunately, not commented upon. An explanation of the place of this concept in the *Bhagavadgītā* and its exposition of the role of the king in a theology mediating Vedic rituals, ascetic ideas of liberation and the new doctrine of *bhakti* would have helped understanding why this expression is regarded as being the essence of Jaisingh's political programme.

The final chapter (title "Textanhang") offers an edition and German translation of two of the theological treatises studied before, *Karmavivṛti* and *Vaidikavaiṣṇavācāra*, as well as the edition of three statements made by members of the Gauḍīya Sampradāya in the course of the theological dispute discussed in chapter three. The *Karmavivṛti* is preceded by a summary of content which is very helpful for a first orientation (a similar introduction would have been highly welcome for the *Vaidikavaiṣṇavācāra* as well). Both texts largely consist of quotations from other texts, which are traced meticulously by the author. The translation is excellent with only few renderings inviting reconsideration, for instance, *yogakṣema* (BhG 9.22) rendered "Stabilität ihres Yogas" in this connection rather means "acquisition and sustenance" (see also the use of *niryogakṣema* in BhG 2.45 as something one should strive for). Therefore the expression should be rendered with "I bring goods" (pointing to the royal function of the god; see also Arthaśāstra 1.5.1) which also suits the context of the citation in the *Karmavivṛti* that deals with the

healing, worldly power of Bhagavān (god). The translation of *taṭastha-bhakti* with “liminale bhakti” calls for explanation for those who are not experts in the theological classifications of the Pāñcarātra traditions dealt with here (this applies also to the “liminaler Körper” at p. 127). Some instances of odd German in the main text should be corrected in a future edition of the book, for instance on p. 133 when Brahmins are said to “beobachten” in their daily practice the rituals for the five deities (see also p.143 about recommending “die Beobachtung” of Śivarātri; other instances p. 204, 205 etc.).

The monograph is a great achievement and will prove indispensable for all studying this epoch, topics related to the religious legitimization of power as well as the history of Vaiṣṇava orders. The author does not only offer new textual sources perfectly edited and translated, but also gives important insights in the complexity of discourses and constellations of making religious politics in an age of religious pluralism. At the very end of the study, Monika Horstmann points out that another study is called for that explores the views of those not directly participating in the religious discourse initiated by the Savāi Jaisingh. Only then it would be possible to draw a complete picture of the whole situation. While this seems too much of an understatement at the end of this intriguing in-depth study, it can only be hoped that this call for another volume is answered by Monika Horstmann in the near future.

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