

Bishnupur Terracotta Temples and the Representation of Elephants as Panel Work: An Evaluation

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ABSTRACT

Bishnupur, the medieval temple town in West Bengal has the concentration of a large group of terracotta temples that were constructed during the Malla regime in adherence to the new religious ideology of Vaisihnavism. The present paper will focus on the terracotta ornamentation of the temples and highlight the different depiction of elephants, sometimes singularly and sometimes in a herd on the temple friezes. The association of such depictions with Vaishnava texts is also found to be very much interesting which would help to place the entire study into a contextual framework. The paper further aims to draw parallels from other temples of the same period in order to generate a comparative study of the aforementioned depictions.

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