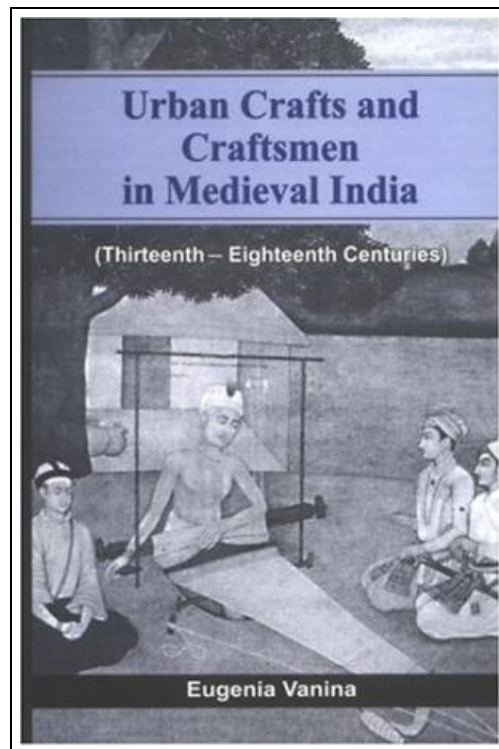


Urban Crafts and Craftsmen in Medieval India (Thirteenth-Eighteenth Centuries)



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Reviews

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Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, India, 2004. Cloth. Book Condition: New. Dust Jacket Condition: New. First Edition. Urban Crafts and Craftsmen in Medieval India (Thirteenth-Eighteenth Centuries) discusses the development of non-agricultural production in pre-colonial cities. The author's purpose is twofold: firstly, to analyse the technological, organizational and social evolution of urban crafts in medieval India along with the economic and socio-political atmosphere in which this sphere of production existed and, secondly, to compare the above-mentioned processes with their counterparts in other medieval societies, especially the better known European ones, and thus ascertain the level that India had achieved in this sphere by the beginning of colonial era. Research material collected from various types of sources allows the author to critically re-assess the established notions of medieval Indian crafts as artistically exquisite but technologically backward and organizationally primitive. Comparative study of "stagnant" medieval Indian crafts vis-à-vis "progressive" European ones makes it possible to realize that in some industries or technological operations India did really lag behind, on others it was ahead, but all in all the level of technology and organization achieved by urban industries of medieval India was approximately equal to what Europe had during the craft and even early stage of manufactory period. As far as general socio-political conditions are concerned, this juxtaposition, however, is not wholly favourable for India. No study of medieval crafts will be adequate if the researcher concentrates exclusively on technology, forms of organization and economic relations, but forgets the people who were involved in these activities. Bearing this in mind the author undertakes the reconstruction of medieval craftsman's socio-psychological profile and tries to denote the main features of his world outlook. The book may be of interest to the scholars and students of medieval Indian history, especially in economic, social and cultural...

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