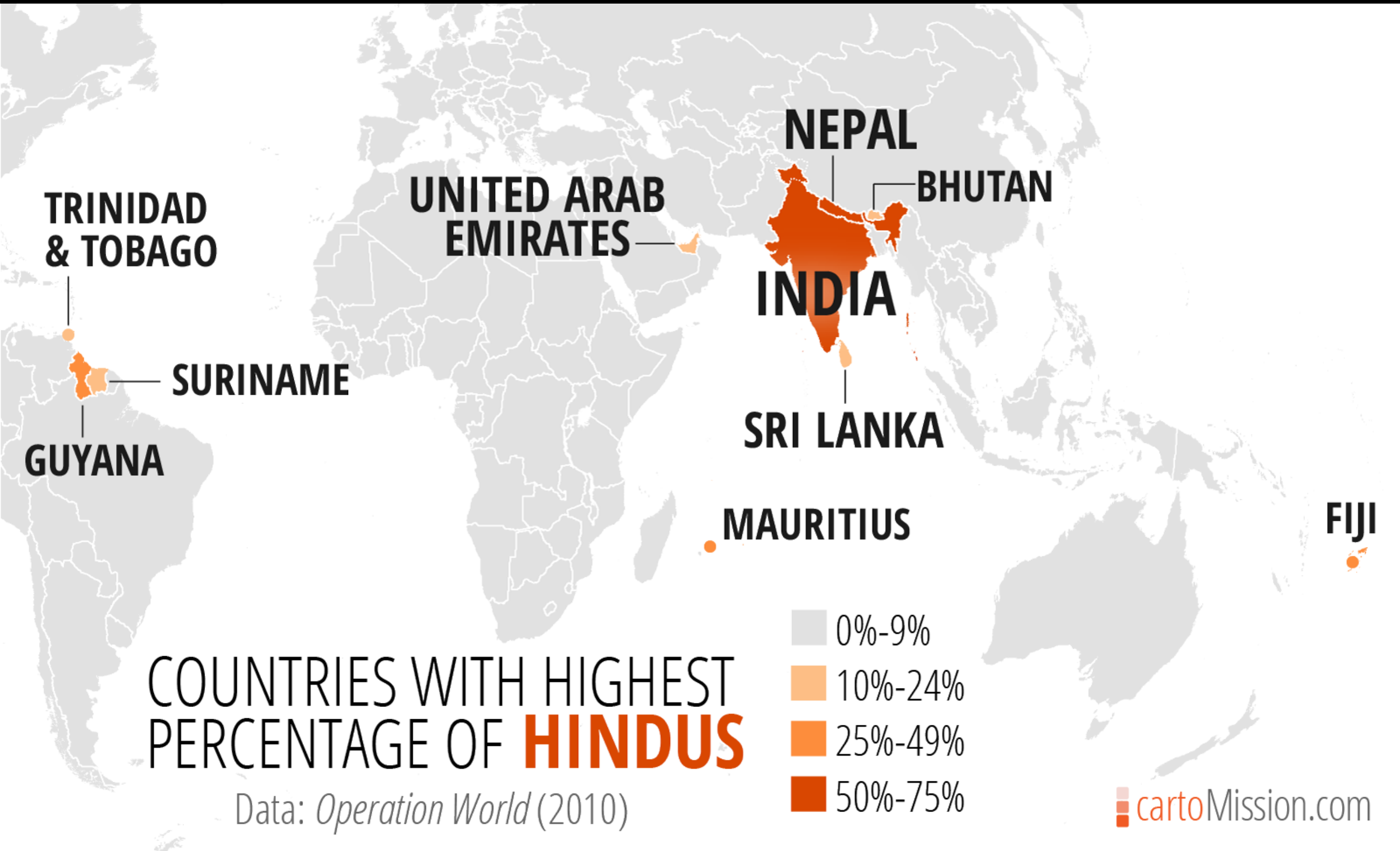
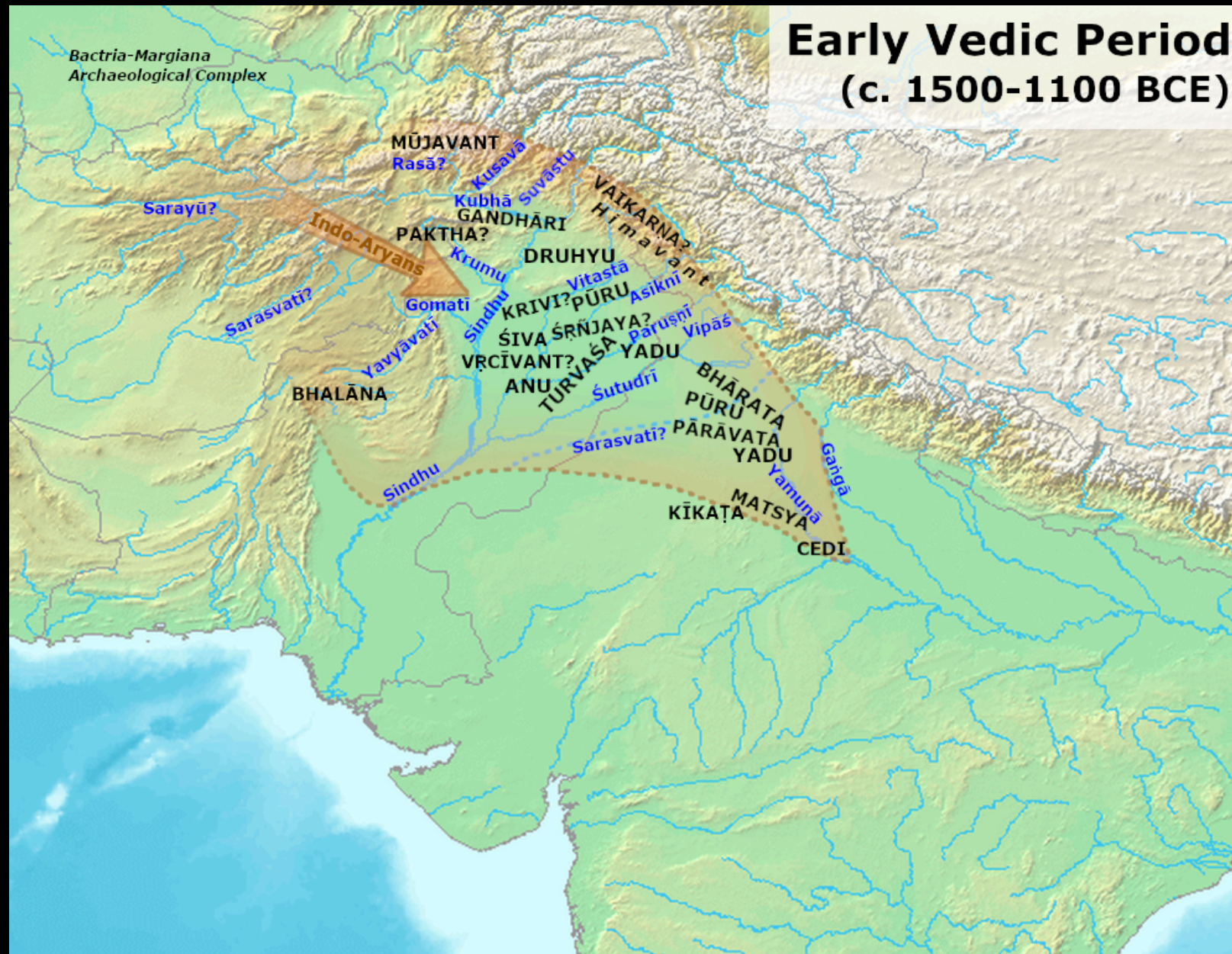


THE PLACE OF ART IN MUSEUMS (II)

HINDU ART AND ARCHITECTURE

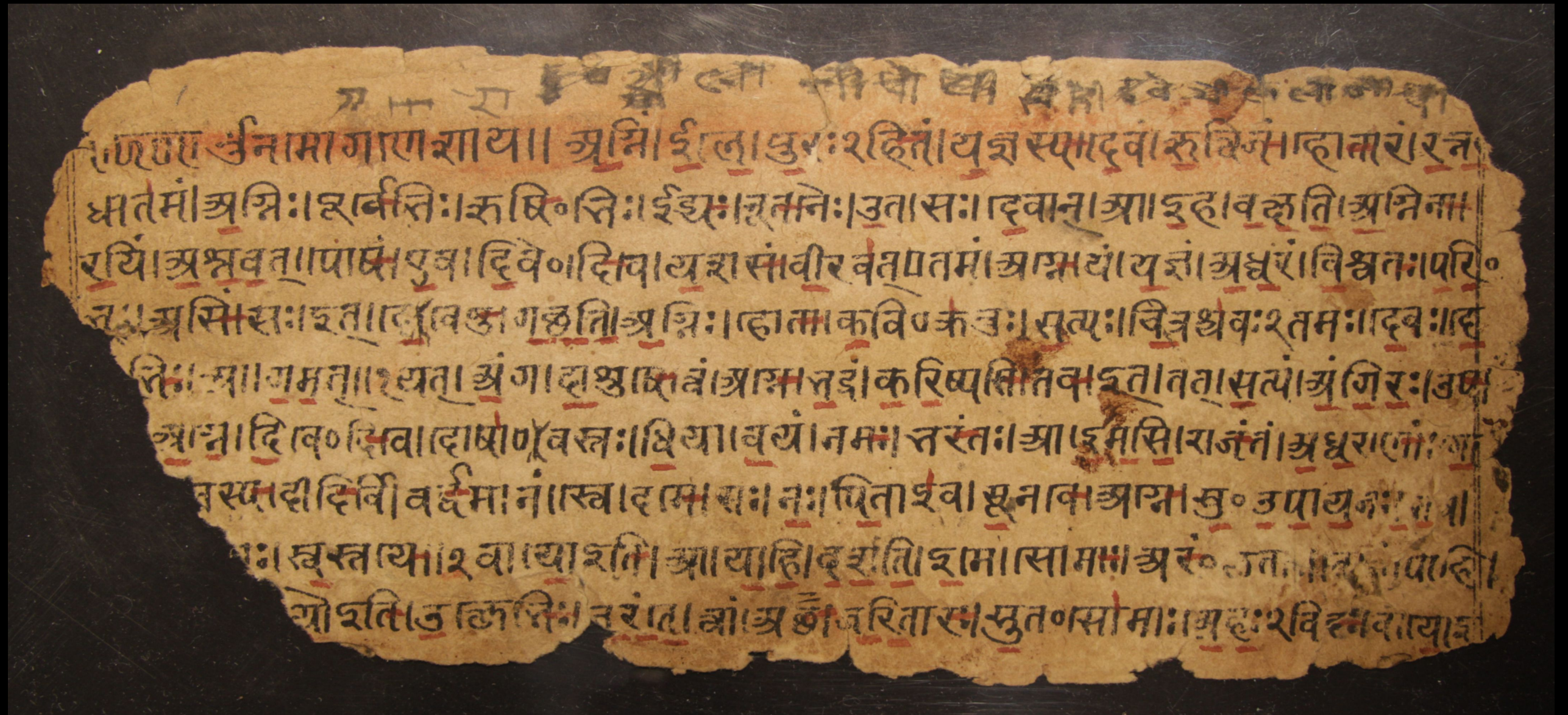


THE ORIGINS OF HINDUISM



- ▶ No single founder
- ▶ Between 1800 and 1200 BCE, Indo-European people called Aryans arrived in the Indian subcontinent and brought sacred hymns known as **Vedas** composed in the ancient Sanskrit language

Manuscript: refers to a document which is hand-written. Illustrated manuscripts are supplemented with decorative borders and miniature paintings to illustrate the text



Rig Veda — Padapātha
c. 1497-1735 BCE
(British Library)

THE POLYTHEISTIC IMAGINATION

Monotheism: the worship of a single God

Polytheism: the worship of multiple Gods

Henotheism: worship of a single, supreme god without denying the existence of other lower deities



The Hindu Gods Vishnu,
Shiva, and Brahma
Black schists
10th century (LACMA)

Symbols in Hindu sculpture

Symbolism: The representation of intangible concepts or ideas through a pictorial form

Animals as *Vahanas* (vehicles):
spiritual force that carries the deity



Multiple limbs: indicating the
god's power and ability)



Lotus flower: symbol of purity,
beauty, prosperity

The Idealised Form in Hinduism



Standing Parvati
c. first quarter of the 10th century
Indian (Tamil Nadu)

The Idealised Form in Hinduism

mudras used to express mood and meaning

Mudras: symbolic gesture of the hands and fingers used in dance or worship, and often depicted in sculptures and paintings

torso resembles "*damaru*" (drum held by the god Shiva)

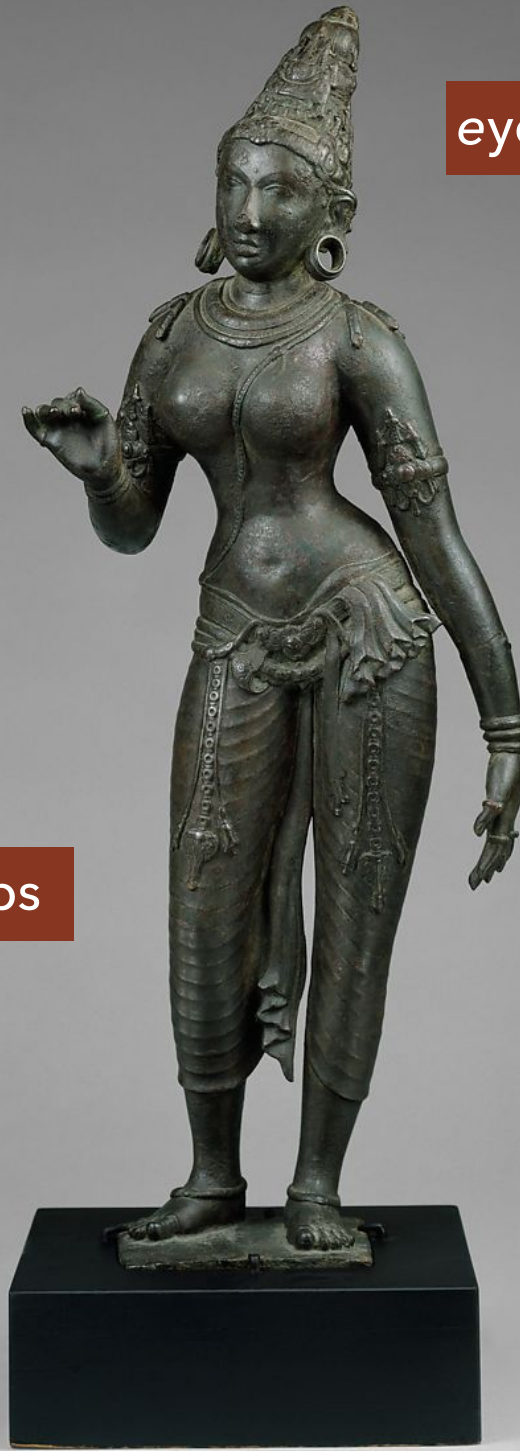
narrow waist and broad hips

Contrapposto: posing of the human figure in which the weight of the body is thrown to one foot to create a counterbalance of the body about its central axis

eyes resemble lotus petal or fish shape

round breasts

elongated arms to resemble slender bamboo shoots



Standing Parvati
c. first quarter of the 10th century
Indian (Tamil Nadu)

Brahma the Creator

- ▶ Four faces which look in four directions represent his omniscience (state of knowing everything)



Seated Brahma
Bronze
late 12th-early 13th century
Cambodia
(Walters Art Museum)

Vishnu the Preserver

- ▶ Maintains the functioning of the universe
- ▶ Protector: represented with symbols like weapons



Vishnu
10th-11th century
India
(Met Museum)

Shiva the Destroyer

- ▶ Agent who brings all things to an end (not in a negative sense, but so a new cycle of life can begin again)
- ▶ Identified by the third eye on his forehead: symbolises all knowing nature



Shiva as Lord of Dance (Nataraja)
ca. 11th century
India
Bronze
(Met Museum)

Devis (Goddesses)



- ▶ This sculpture depicts the warrior goddess Durga, celebrated as the supreme protectress of devotees
- ▶ Goddesses held different functions (individual goddesses for wisdom, wealth etc.)
- ▶ Deities are frequently portrayed with multiple arms- multiplicity of arms emphasizes the immense power of the deity and ability to perform several feats at the same time

Hindu Temple Architecture

- ▶ Hindu sculpture is inextricably linked to temple architecture (where the sculptures in museums were taken from)
- ▶ Architectural style varies based on region
- ▶ The inner chamber will hold the main deity, while niches on the exterior will depict various incarnations of the God, or images from mythology (Shiva with his family, different battles etc.)

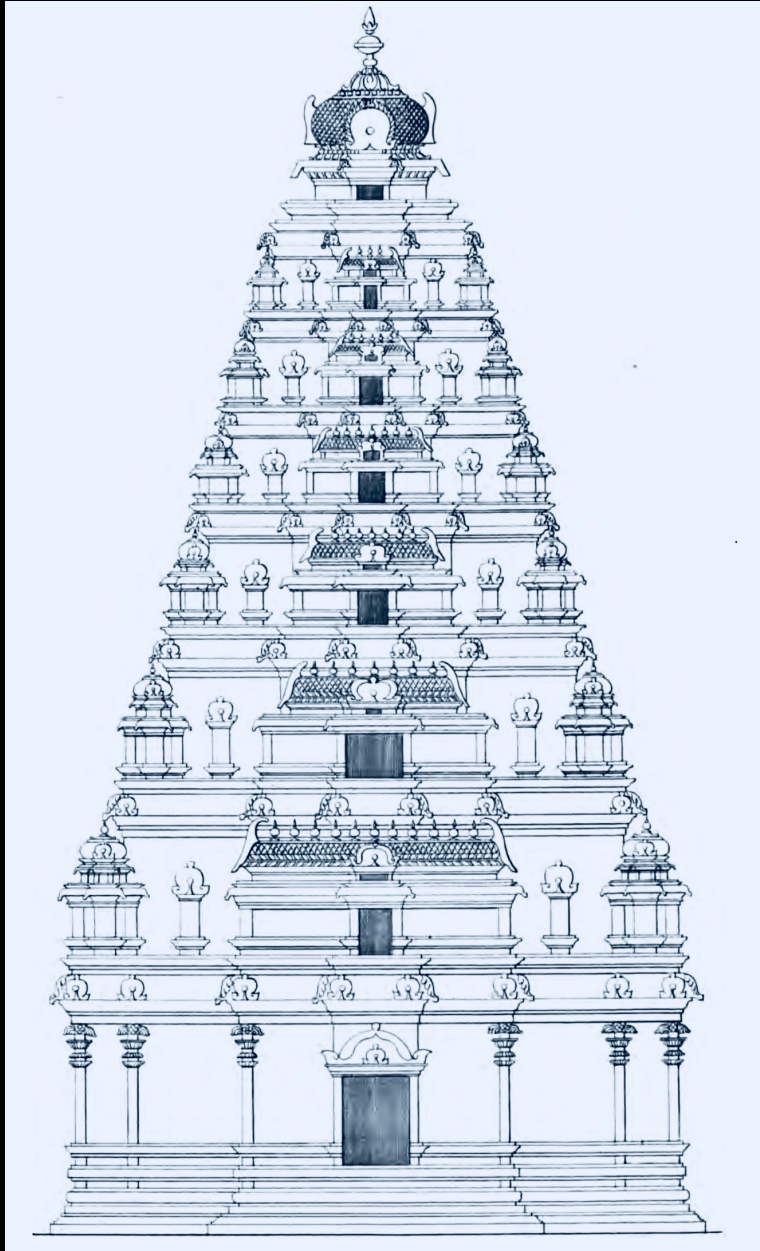


- ▶ Relief sculpture: method in which the sculpted pieces are bonded to a solid background of the same material.
- ▶ Frieze: a broad horizontal band of sculpted or painted decoration, especially on a wall near the ceiling

Relief carvings on the exterior of temples

South India: Dravidian Style Temple

- ▶ Pyramidal shape, pillared halls, porches known as mandaps for worship



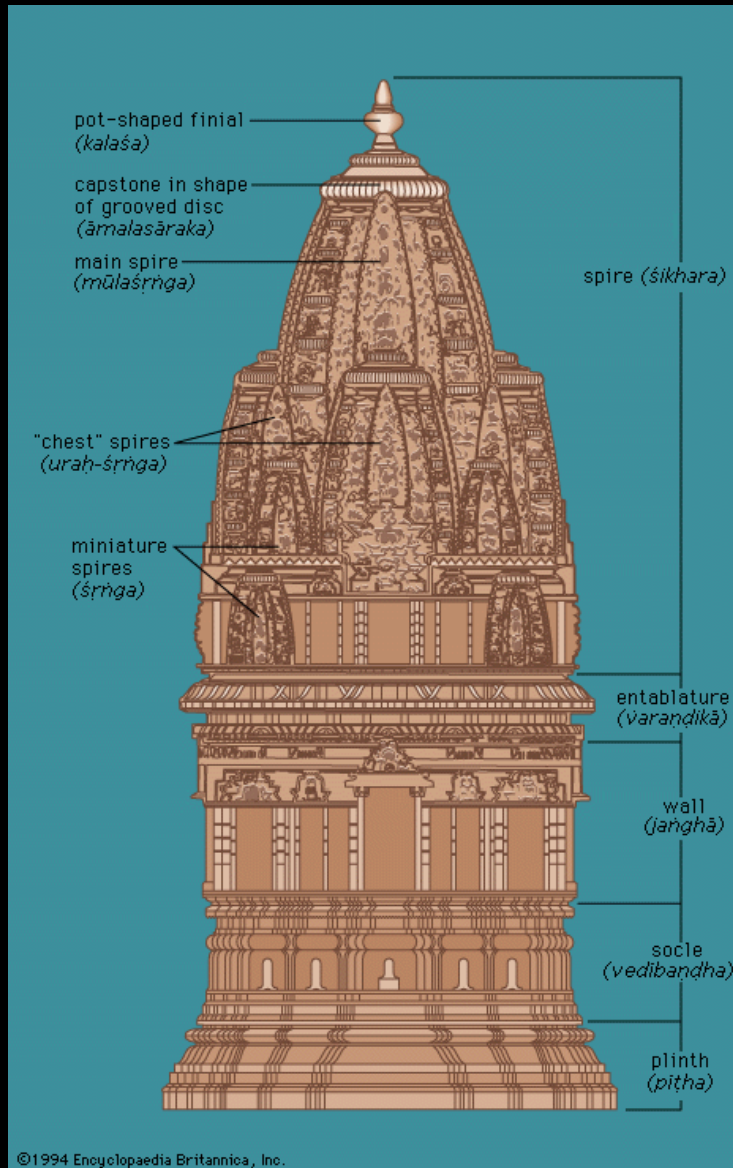
Design of a typical
Dravidian style temple



Brihadeeswara Temple
Tamil Nadu, India
c. 1003-1010 CE

North India: Nagara Style Temple

- ▶ Curvilinear spire on top known as shikara, emphasis on vertical lines (described as a curvilinear beehive shape)



Design of a typical
Nagara style temple

Khajuraho
Madhya Pradesh, India
c. 885-1050 CE

THE UBIQUITOUS IMAGES OF GOD



Photographs of street shrines in India





"Any piece of stone on which he put *kunkum* became God for the peasant. What mattered was his faith, not the stone." -Anantha Murthy

- ▶ **Idol:** an image or representation of a god used as an object of worship
- ▶ **Idolatry:** the worship of idols
- ▶ **Murti:** (literally means embodiment or form) Sanskrit term for an image or statue that is the embodiment or manifestation of a deity
- ▶ **Avatar:** the material appearance or incarnation of a deity on earth



Pillared Temple Hall, about 1560, made in India, 1919-714

IMAGES OF GOD IN THE MUSEUM



The previous museum director discovered it at a temple, and it was given to the museum on the condition that it will not be used only for display; its ritual function will be performed as well.

On Mondays the staff gathers in front of the sculpture/idol and a coconut is broken and distributed.

Ritual Monday *pooja* performed for a mid-6th century Shiva sculpture at the CSMVS museum, Mumbai, India

The Problem of the “Art” object



- ▶ Is the designation of “art” valid here?
- ▶ How does the terminology we use (sculpture versus idol, artefact versus artwork) affect our perception of the object?
- ▶ Does the context of its display change its purpose?
- ▶ How do we address the “soul of the object” when displayed in a museum exhibition?

GLOSSARY

- ▶ **Manuscript:** refers to a document which is hand-written. Illustrated manuscripts are supplemented with decorative borders and miniature paintings to illustrate the text
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- ▶ **Idol:** an image or representation of a god used as an object of worship
- ▶ **Idolatry:** the worship of idols
- ▶ **Murti:** The sculpture of the deity that is worshipped
- ▶ **Garbagriha** ("womb chamber"): central sanctum that houses the deity
- ▶ **Mandapa:** the columned hall where devotees gather for prayer