

Preface

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VERNACULAR *Victoria: The Queen in the Languages of South Asia* began life as an international online colloquium hosted by the Department of English at Ashoka University, Haryana, in collaboration with the Department of English at the University of Hyderabad (India). Participants were invited to give papers based on an archive of vernacular eulogies, addresses, memorials, and biographies collected by Miles Taylor during the course of research for his book *Empress: Queen Victoria and India* (Yale University Press, 2018). Following the colloquium of April 26–27, 2021, further commissions were undertaken as the editors broadened the scope of the project.

In the journey from archive to event to publication, we have incurred several debts of gratitude. We are grateful to Professor Malabika Sarkar, the then vice-chancellor of Ashoka University, for supporting our event. Thanks as well to Indira Chowdhury and Harish Trivedi, who gave keynotes at the colloquium. In the final stages of preparation we have relied heavily on the expert copyediting of Madhubrata Bhattacharyya. We have also received patient assistance and understanding from the editorial team at *Victorian Literature and Culture*, without which we would not have reached the finishing line.

Our project, like many others, has been produced under the shadow of the pandemic. One of our distinguished contributors, the Tamil literary scholar A. R. Venkatachalapathy, fell ill and was unable to join the volume as planned. Sadly, Professor Swapan Chakravorty, one of the keynote speakers at the colloquium, passed away in September 2021. His endeavors during his long professional career, particularly as director general of the National Library of India at Alipore in Kolkata and as curator of the Victoria Memorial Hall, ensured that many of the vernacular sources explored in this volume have survived and been made available to modern readers.

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