

Picturing India's "Land of Kings" Between the Mughal and British Empires:  
Topographical Imaginings of Udaipur and its Environs

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**PICTURING INDIA'S "LAND OF KINGS"**  
**BETWEEN THE MUGHAL AND BRITISH EMPIRES:**  
**TOPOGRAPHICAL IMAGININGS OF UDAIPUR AND ITS ENVIRONS**

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**Abstract**

Eighteenth-century paintings depicting the courtly culture of Udaipur have been widely described as iconic images representing the decadent "voluptuous inactivity" of Indian princes within idyllic palaces. More recently, scholars have interpreted such paintings as royal portraits constituting meaningful assertions of political and cultural power. Yet scholars have overlooked a topographical genre of painting in which Udaipur artists not only portrayed the ruler's face but also captured the charisma of Udaipur's urban space. This dissertation examines the means by which artists pictured Udaipur and its environs for multiple patrons and mixed audiences, thereby constructing the city's memory and mapping diverse territorial claims of regional kings, courtly elites, and merchants, as well as religious institutions and the emergent British Empire. Central to this account is a corpus of large-scale paintings, scrolls, drawings, and maps made in a time period of transitions in

northwestern India, marked by several new courtly and non-courtly alliances, between the decentralization of the Mughal Empire in the early 1700s and the proclamation of British rule at the Ajmer Durbar in 1832. I argue that itinerant artists practiced their arts literally and metaphorically in between empires, and thus formulated their subjective, and, at times, subversive interpretations of urbanity, territoriality, and history as they circulated among various domains. By tracing the critical role played by artistic practices in the British Political Agent James Tod's political and historical creation of "Rajasthan"—the land of kings—this dissertation challenges the dominant narrative that has mediated this region's architecture, landscape, and history.

Separate chapters are devoted to shifts in artistic practice, from the painting of genealogical and poetic manuscripts to large-scale topographical paintings, relating them to tropes of praise, pleasure, and commemoration in the court's literary culture, mediation of urban memory, emergent forms of mapping, and spatial practices of processions. Udaipur's artists like Ghasi, who was also a "native" artist-assistant to Tod, the region's first British colonial agent, rendered Tod's explorations in the form of courtly processions while also adapting drafted architectural drawings for the depiction of Udaipur's princely domains. I compare the works of Ghasi and Tod, among several others, with those of artists working for the Jain religious and mercantile community. These little-studied paintings

suggest the paradigmatic ways in which local artists reevaluated established pictorial genres and tropes for the purpose of mapping environs in relation to the emerging presence of the British Empire and reconfiguration of regional polities, religious sects, and mercantile communities.

The visualization of South Asia's urban environs has largely been understood through the lens of the nineteenth-century British colonial archive of images and maps. Systematic studies of alternate imaginings found in contemporaneous pre-colonial Indian art have been all but absent. Addressing this lacuna, this dissertation cumulatively highlights a largely unknown visual archive of images of pre-colonial Indian cities to examine how both Indian and British artists imagined their urban environs for varied patrons. It contributes to a growing body of scholarship on the importance of affect in understanding epistemic practices and the nature of political, cultural, and artistic transitions in the long eighteenth century in the Indian subcontinent.

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#### 4. BETWEEN IDIOMS OF PRAISE AND DECLINE: INTERPRETING GHASI'S ARTISTIC PRACTICE AND TRAVELS

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*for Papa  
and for Baba*



## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. *Spectacle of India's "Land of Kings"*

... Nothing but marble enters into their composition; columns, baths, reservoirs, fountains, all are of this material, often inlaid with mosaics, and the uniformity pleasingly diversified by the light passing through glass of every hue. The apartments are decorated with historical paintings in water-colours... [the] walls, both here and in the grand palace, contain many medallions in considerable relief, in gypsum, portraying the principal historical events of the family, from early periods even to the marriage pomp of the present Rana... Here they listened to the tales of the bard, and slept off their noonday opiate amidst the cool breezes of the lake, wafting delicious odours from myriads of the lotus-flower which covered the surface of the waters; and as the fumes of the potion evaporated, they opened their eyes on a landscape to which even its inspirations could frame an equal: the broad waters of the Peshola...opened on to the pass of the gigantic Aravulli, the field of the exploits of their forefathers. *Amid such scenes did the Seesodia princes and chieftains recreate during two generations, exchanging the din of arms for voluptuous inactivity.*<sup>1</sup>

Paintings provide a fascinating insight into royal life... more importantly, such works visually articulate notions of kingship; the nimbus that surrounds the Maharana's head indicating his royal status. Similarly, the dress and jewellery which adorned a ruler and the trappings that surrounded him are works of great intrinsic beauty and worth; yet more fundamentally, they are symbolic of the power, position and identity of the ruler. The vision of a king viewed in all his splendour...<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, or The Central and Western Rajput States of India*, I:433–434. Emphasis mine.

<sup>2</sup> Jackson and Jaffer, *Maharaja : the Splendour of India's Royal Courts*, 14.

Art historians have often employed James Tod's descriptions of Indian princes immersed in "voluptuous inactivity" as if they were faithful and accurate accounts of large-scale Udaipur paintings which depicted royalty within Udaipur's palaces. James Tod, the first British colonial agent based in Udaipur (1799-1822), however, offered brief remarks on regional paintings alongside his lengthy evocative description of the city's lake environs and its lake-palaces of Jagnivas and Jagmandir (Ill.1.1, 1.2). In traveling, administering, and studying the subcontinent's northwestern region, Tod created "Rajasthan" as the quintessential "land (*sthāna*) of kings (*rajas*)" inhabited by Rajputs (sons of kings), albeit characterized as Indian princes, not kings. He sees the Sisodia Rajputs of the Mewar court who ruled from Udaipur as the foremost Indian princes who epitomized Hindu kingship and valor and who had taken in the seventeenth and eighteenth century to hedonism. More recently, curators of the "Maharaja" exhibition in London in 2009 saw such painted works as symbolic in nature—as representing the political and cultural powers of Indian princes. The lenses of splendor and spectacle dominate. Such conceptions based in direct and subtle ways on Tod's 1829 narratives incisively shape the public imaginary of Rajasthan's eighteenth century art. Most often the complex connections between Britain's imperial past, representation, and historiography are elided in the global museum space.

Eighteenth and nineteenth century artists hailing from Udaipur were consumed by making pictures of their place (Ill.1.3). They pictured the rulers of the Udaipur court within spectacular settings of the lakes and lake-palaces and the architectural and urban environs of the city. In the early eighteenth century, artists in the Udaipur court workshop shifted their attention from making smaller genealogical and poetic manuscripts to paintings on a larger-scale, three to five feet long, which portrayed the rulers enacting their authority within courtly settings. Udaipur artists not only portrayed the ruler's face but also captured the charisma of Udaipur's urban space. Yet very little attention has been paid to the topographical aspects of Udaipur paintings, aspects which relate visions of kingship to specific places and specific times.

The (imagined) spectacular nature of the royal events as mediated in large-scale Udaipur paintings has led scholars to refer to such works as a distinct genre of “*tamasha* paintings.”<sup>3</sup> *Tamāśā* may be approximately translated as “spectacle,” and based on the context and tone of its use, the word may suggest a staged and performative component or the sense of an action that is somewhat hollow, extravagant, and not meaningful. The only

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<sup>3</sup> Andrew Topsfield's conceptualization of the paintings made in the workshops of Udaipur rulers Sangram Singh as “the great *tamasha*” and Jagat Singh II as “the *tamasha* continues” follow too closely Tod's historiography. This framework is actually antithetical to the insights on continuities and discontinuities in pictorial concerns that Topsfield incisively brings in his comprehensive survey of Udaipur court painting. Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*.

known Udaipur work for which the inscription on the back of the painting states that the picture describes a *tamāsā* is a painting that depicts the Udaipur ruler Sangram Singh (r. 1710-1734) and his entourage processing in boats to admire the celebrations of the annual festival of Gangaur, c. 1715-20 (Ill. 1.3, 78.75 x 78.75 cm).<sup>4</sup> Here, the inscription specifically refers to the painter’s depiction of a spectacle of fireworks on the banks of the Lake Pichola on a dark moonlit night.<sup>5</sup> There is no doubt that spectacular events featuring animal fights, processions, fireworks, and musical performances were held at all Rajput and Mughal courts, and they were indeed meant to dazzle audiences. However, the exclusive focus on spectacle and royal portraits marginalizes Udaipur painters’ diverse aesthetic and historical concerns. It aligns Udaipur paintings with Orientalist narratives of meaningless princely excess and nationalist lament of South Asia’s courtly past.

This dissertation shifts our attention from spectacle, symbolism, and royal portraiture to place-making—from “what” is represented to “how” Udaipur painters

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<sup>4</sup> Topsfield, *The City Palace Museum, Udaipur : Paintings of Mewar Court Life*, 23. In another instance, a scribal entry, in the Udaipur Court painting inventory from 1891, notes a painting as depicting a spectacle or entertainment of boars organized by Udaipur king Jagat Singh II (*tamāso karāyo*). This inventory is in the Rajasthan State Archives (Udaipur branch). I am extremely grateful to Molly Aitken for sharing her copy as I was unable to access the original.

<sup>5</sup> Photograph of complete inscription in Appendix 2. *Ibid.*, 155. In the thirteen-line inscription the scribe notes the painter’s depiction of a *tamāsā* and the Udaipur king’s act of admiration from his vantage point. He also gives us the names of the other nobles, court officials, and musicians who accompany the ruler (*gangaura rō tamāsō dekhe nāv birājyā*).

imagined kingly worlds and beyond in distinctly place-centric ways. They created a range of imaginings of their locales in a variety of idioms that participated in forging urban imaginaries, historical memories, and aesthetic taste for mixed audiences while connecting spheres of art, politics, and knowledge. Moreover, Udaipur's painters and poets served multiple patrons—both courtly and non-courtly. I address a corpus of paintings, scrolls, drawings, and maps made by Udaipur's artists largely between the decentralization of the Mughal Empire in the early 1700s and the British proclamation of the Rajputana Agency in 1832, a change that ushered an early assertion of territorial power by the emergent British Empire in the northwest of India.<sup>6</sup> An examination of the intersections between place-making and panegyrics within the art and literature of eighteenth-and-nineteenth century South Asia allows us to expand our understanding of the art of place in this time period, which is generally thought to be deeply inflected by symbols of decline.

Udaipur painters' artistic practices challenge us to rethink the history of key aesthetic and epistemic themes that underlay representations of topography, place, and landscape in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Although scholars have contextualized

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<sup>6</sup> The decisive shift from British East India Company to the British Crown that takes place in 1857. However, as discussed below, by the 1830s a dominant colonial economy was operating.

the meanings assigned to pre-colonial Indian monuments in British art and histories,<sup>7</sup> investigations into how contemporaneous regional Indian art and literary-historical works presented places have been largely absent. The archives traversed in this project contribute in paradigmatic ways to this lacunae and the questions I ask converse with the current reorientation of the long eighteenth century in South Asia—the time period following the decentralization of the Mughal empire after Aurangzeb’s death in 1707 and preceding the establishment of a centralized British empire in 1857, or at least until the 1830s when forms of colonial economy and colonial modernity gain ground. What has been consistently challenged is the direct correlation invoked in the past between political-economic decline and cultural-artistic decline in the subcontinent.<sup>8</sup> One important impetus lies in questioning the inter-related arrival of (European) modernity, science, and knowledge with the establishment of the British Empire, a change largely framed as inevitable and imperative in British accounts. This questioning responds to calls to “provincialize” Europe, conceptually

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<sup>7</sup> Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories : Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India*; Quilley et al., *William Hodges, 1744-1797 : the Art of Exploration*.

<sup>8</sup> Four recent volumes explore specifically the question of transitions and hybridity of genres and cultural practices in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century South Asia. Avcioglu and Flood, “Introduction”; *Indo-Muslim Cultures in Transition*; Markovits, Pouchepadass, and Subrahmanyam, *Society and Circulation: Mobile People and Itinerant Cultures in South Asia, 1750-1950*; Aquil and Chatterjee, *History in the Vernacular*.

and epistemologically, as an overarching entity in defining history and modernity.<sup>9</sup>

Discussions of the beginning of an “early modern epoch” underscores that the time particularly between c. 1500 and 1800 was characterized by long-distance travel and circulation of people and things, the making so as to say of the global.<sup>10</sup> Thus modernity (as seen through markers like historical consciousness, self-fashioning, travel narratives, and rise of the individual) in Europe was not shaped by exclusions, but by connections. Others instead suggest the greater importance of “articulating India into a world of historical synchrony, not into a world [of] conceptual symmetry”.<sup>11</sup> Sheldon Pollock questions “why the newness of the early modern world” should be the same everywhere; for him, regional practices suggest “simultaneity” in modernity across Asia that could include both continuities and discontinuities with “premodernity.”<sup>12</sup> To draw a clear distinction between the early modern and the colonial modern in the long eighteenth century allows us to explore the multiplicity of artistic practices emerging from the networks traversed by

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<sup>9</sup> Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*; Equally at stake in the re-focus is to draw distinctions from the mid-and-late nineteenth century colonial encounters, resistance, and modernity and any scholarly suggestions that refer to “Orientalism,” as Edward Said formulated, in sweeping and not historically grounded ways. Said, *Orientalism*.

<sup>10</sup> Subrahmanyam, “Connected Histories.”

<sup>11</sup> Pollock, “Is There an Indian Intellectual History?,” 536.

<sup>12</sup> Pollock, “Pretextures of Time,” 381.

Udaipur painters. British colonial agents and antiquarians believed that their surveys produced the first scientifically accurate maps and aesthetically impressive visual records of South Asia's cities and architecture. This dissertation explores the fault lines of this claim embedded in the politics of empire and contemporaneous European thought that privileged specific notions of art, landscape, and maps. Udaipur painters make picturing place as a key tool for making art and histories, an early modern phenomena that confronts colonial visions of place, history, and knowledge.

Udaipur's place-makers—its painters and poets—employed visual and literary practices as critical affective means to praise patrons and places in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Udaipur painters sought to picture the feeling or emotion (*bhāva*) of a place. In building the emotive content of a place in a work of art they populated their works not only with people and things but also combined shifting viewpoints to depict space, drawing on the suggestive power that a familiar place held for its audiences. The materiality of large paintings and long scrolls also impacted the viewing of such affective representations of place. Audiences likely saw only specific portions of the objects and represented place at a time. This mode of place-making—on behalf of the makers and the audiences—constitute an act of imagining, what Keith Basso calls, “place-worlds.” He writes, “[place-worlds] are a particular universe of objects and events wherein portions of the past



are brought into being. Place-worlds are summoned into existence through the power of imagination and the poetics of narration, through acts of retrospective world-building...”<sup>13</sup>

Basso emphasizes both the role of affect and agency of place makers and consumers in drawing together—in selective ways—spatial precincts, social identities and relations, and histories into the making of place-worlds. The depictions of place discussed in this project show us how the relation between affect and space is given form on paper. I trace the representational and compositional choices for depicting space that painters chose to privilege; the combination of place, people and things that they insist upon; and the circulating paintings from the past and the present that they cite within new paintings. Thus the focus on place-making within Udaipur painting makes unfamiliar the vignettes of Udaipur’s spaces seen as repetitive. It forces us to deliberate both the investment of Udaipur’s named and unnamed painters in employing affect to picture places and their agency and acts of imagining that bring such place-centric visions into being. We will see how they employ the *bhāva* of a place in the long eighteenth century to motivate sentiments of desire, praise, and abundance for and in Udaipur. Visual objects, in turn, could have persuaded and created on their own terms an urban imaginary of Udaipur for its

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<sup>13</sup> Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, 5. I am also drawing upon Sumathy Ramaswamy’s understanding of Basso which I discuss below.

audiences—especially when they were encountered along with other objects that connected, compared, and reinforced such place-centric visions.

The key change that sets the questioning for this project is pictorial and the key framework adopted in exploring the picturing of place-centric art is its emphatic circulation by Udaipur painters across genres and objects between the spheres of courts, bazaars, religious travels, and the British Company. Given the alarming absence of contemporaneous writing that deliberates on such place-centric art, as is the case for landscape or chorography in the West, I explore related regional literary culture. It attests that intellectual thinking on this thematic was rich, even though it was not theorized and written into a separate easily translatable genre. Hitherto unexamined poetry that circulated in the same cultural milieu among courtly and non-courtly audiences shows a striking intersection in intellectual, aesthetic, and historical concerns. Poets intertwine *bhāva* of place with descriptions of the materiality and visuality of things and people. These sources allow us to expand current thinking related to place-making in critical ways, including addressing the issue of consumption of pictures of places. This mode of framing the question that focuses on the art of place in both early modern and early colonial South Asia and includes objects beyond the courtly worlds and perspectives from regional literary culture on visualizing places is entirely new.

The chapters that follow begin the discussion by exploring conceptions of place-making found in early modern eighteenth century courtly arts. Chapters two and three explore topographical paintings made at the Udaipur court, showing how they constituted a sociability, politics, and culture around the visualization of the city and its architecture. Chapters four and five turn to the work of Udaipur painters that establish connections between Rajput courts, British East India Company, temples and pilgrimage spaces, and bazaars and between diverse pictorial genres that visualize places in early colonial India. The following section of this chapter briefly introduces the concepts that have been employed to describe eighteenth century place-centric paintings and explores some of the theoretical approaches that I adopt for examining this change. The next section selectively charts the contours of the time period between the Mughal and British Empires from the perspective of political and cultural changes at the Udaipur court. The concluding section of this chapter turns to the conceptual potential of exploring place-centric painted visions through the lens of circulation. It draws our attention to the entangled nature of people, things, and artistic practice across spheres that have been most often kept separate in scholarly work. Each section of this introductory chapter concludes with a brief summary of related dissertation chapters. All chapters draw upon the fields of art history, literature, cultural history, geography, colonial studies, and religious studies. They engage with

questions crucial to all of these disciplines, regarding the ways that artists, scribes, and poets presented historical and intellectual views on place-making before and during the proliferation of European forms of art and knowledge in South Asia.

### ***1.2. Topographical Images and Changing Pictorial Concerns in Udaipur***

To a large extent, to view the painting depicting the “portrait” of Sangram Singh admiring the spectacle of celebrations of Gangaur from his seat in the boat is to unpack its de-centered composition (Ill. 1.3). This painting captures the pictorial shift in Udaipur court painting in the early years of the eighteenth century. It is divided midway into a brightly-colored lower register which is filled with people and the profiles of white-colored houses, an urbanscape busy with temples’ spires where groups of women teem around the goddess. The painter visualizes groups of women worshipping an icon of the Goddess Gauri, which is taken to the lakeside for ablutions and accompanied by performances of song and dance. Men, women, and children are shown lined up on the streets to view the procession of the Goddess, and a vignette of the king and his courtiers on a royal boat is depicted three times to denote the movement of the royal entourage in the lake. The king is easy to identify because of a gold nimbus painted around his head. In the dark-hued upper register of the painting, the artist has skillfully employed chiaroscuro to render the night view. Here is the

lake with the royal barges and the town on its opposite shore. Parts of the painting are selectively brightened by the artist through his use of gold paint for the fireworks and a white-colored wash that conveys an effect of lit-up wall surfaces. Our gaze is thus drawn to the king's barge, a small octagonal platform and a group of people playing with fireworks, and to the architecture of a building which is rendered in considerable detail compared to the rest of the houses, primarily clusters of smaller residences.

Even this brief exploration of one painting, demonstrates that painters reveled in picturing Udaipur's lake environs and festivities as much as in portraying Udaipur's king and courtly audiences as they admired the ambience of their city. How does the picturing of place transform portraiture—compositionally, ontologically, and materially? How do pictorial experiments in depicting settings—or the “context” of the royal portraits,<sup>14</sup> which is one way how scholars have referred to the vignettes of cityscapes, buildings, and landscapes in these large-scale Udaipur paintings—radically change the visuality of Udaipur paintings? In turn, how do we understand the picturing of place as a pictorial concern that

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<sup>14</sup> To resist the dominant view of large-scale Udaipur paintings as evidence of princely hedonism, Vishakha Desai refers to them as “contextual portraits,” which I discuss in greater detail in chapters two and three. See, Desai, “Timeless Symbols: Royal Portraits from Rajasthan 17th-19th Centuries.”

demonstrates a set of intellectual engagements with questions of imagination, vision, and  
visuality in the early modern South Asian world?<sup>15</sup>

It is not that Udaipur court painting in which painters combined depictions of  
people and places has been ignored by scholars.<sup>16</sup> Firstly, the assumption that the place-  
centric forms in Udaipur painting come from the architectural object has marginalized our  
efforts to understand the painter's act of framing an architecture through a process of  
making choices.<sup>17</sup> Secondly, the implications of such compositional innovations for mapping  
changing pictorial priorities, genres, and visual thinking in the early eighteenth century  
have tended to be subsumed within debates preoccupied with artists' fidelity to mimesis in  
depicting architecture and their (in)ability to employ perspective for rendering spaces that  
are readable to the modern eye. There has not been a focused questioning of the formal  
strategies which Udaipur's artists at the turn of the seventeenth century employed—  
alongside portraiture—to make the picturing of settings an equally substantive subject.

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<sup>15</sup> Shifts in intellectual thinking on vision, visuality, and imagination in relation to pictorial shifts  
seen within Dutch and Baroque Painting in the early modern period, and in relation to the coming  
of photography as seen in later time periods dominantly focused on artistic practices in Europe, has  
received considerable attention. Foster, "Preface."

<sup>16</sup> Topsfield, "City Palace and Lake Palaces: Architecture and Court Life in Udaipur Painting."

<sup>17</sup> David Roxburg has addressed the tendency "to privilege the reconstruction of an archaeology of  
buildings" in relation to the visual imagining of cities of Muslim pilgrimage within pilgrimage  
certificates. Roxburgh, "Pilgrimage City."

Most scholars have compared several examples of Rajput painting directly with settings depicted within Mughal portraiture. Indeed as Milo Beach notes, “earlier Rajput works were not concerned with material documentation of the expressiveness of empty space – these were Mughal contributions to the arts of sixteenth- and seventeenth- century India.”<sup>18</sup>

While artists and paintings made at Mughal and Rajput courts circulated and artists engaged in many pictorial conversations all along the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, yet, most often scholars have located the visual worlds of the Mughals and Rajputs at opposite ends of a spectrum: the (Islamic) Mughals as historically and naturalistically oriented while the (Hindu) Rajputs as poetically and metaphorically oriented.<sup>19</sup> Molly Aitken has problematized Mughal-Rajput dichotomies and reconceptualized the painted worlds in early modern South Asia.<sup>20</sup> By drawing upon several works made in Udaipur and other early modern Rajasthani courts from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, as well as Mughal paintings, Aitken seeks to cumulatively shift the negative bias in historiography against Rajput painting, especially in terms of artists’

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<sup>18</sup> Beach notes how paintings made by artists in Kota, Bikaner, and Mandi adapt background scenes from the Mughal *Padshahnama* in the seventeenth century. Beach, “The Padshahnama and Mughal Historical Manuscripts,” 144.

<sup>19</sup> For example, see Losty, Jeremiah P, “Indian Painting from 1500 to 1575.”

<sup>20</sup> Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*.

supposed inability to employ conventions of illusionism in comparison to their European and Mughal counterparts. Aitken privileges pictorial encounters, continuities, and discontinuities between Mewar and Mughal paintings, and asserts that the agency and decision-making capacity of artists with regard to forms may not always directly “reflect” political choices. This dissertation is part of developing resistance to such tendencies.

Udaipur painters emerge at the forefront in the early eighteenth century in establishing the taste for paintings that combine affect and chorography even though regional cartographic practices participated in the transformation of place-centric paintings. In planar views included within Udaipur court paintings, and in the combination of elevation views within several plans made at the neighboring Jaipur court, we see several instances of citation of representational techniques for depicting place across pictures made as maps and those made to privilege royal portraiture. By the seventeenth century, artists, mapmakers, and royal patrons at the Jaipur court established a prominent cartographic workshop. Jaipur’s Kacchwaha Rajput rajas commissioned the making of maps of other towns and prominent urban routes in northern India and actively collected maps as well.<sup>21</sup> Jaipur king Sawai Jai Singh II’s building of Jaipur in 1727, and his shifting of the

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<sup>21</sup> These include a wide variety of route maps, military maps, maps depicting forts and palaces, pilgrimage maps, maps associated with purchasing lands, and construction drawings of individual buildings and gardens. In fact the earliest maps date to Man Singh I’s reign (1589-1614), a general of



capital from Amber fort to the new city, is represented in the collection by several maps and plans of Amber and Jaipur. Circulation of mapping practices by artists in late Mughal Delhi, Lucknow, and Jodhpur is also established by the similarity in the pictorial conventions employed at Jaipur to depict architectural and topographical vignettes.<sup>22</sup> Debra Diamond has shown the purposefulness of formal strategies adopted by later Jodhpur artists as they combined planar map vignettes of temple spaces with courtly portraits that depicted royal visits to devotional places, and likely also alluded to picture-viewing devotional practices at the court (Ill. 1.4, 1.5). The 1708 political and marital alliance between the courts of Udaipur and Jaipur was keenly commemorated in paintings and it ushered in exchange of gifts and paintings, travels of painters with their patrons, and a series of diplomatic and personal meetings between Udaipur ruler Sangram Singh and Jaipur ruler Sawai Jai Singh II.<sup>23</sup> Yet, it appears that the larger Udaipur paintings did not

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much prominence in Akbar's army. Gole, *Indian Maps and Plans: From Earliest Times to the Advent of European Surveys*; Bahura and Singh, *Catalogue of Historical Documents in Kapad-Dwara Jaipur, Maps and Plans*.

<sup>22</sup> Diamond, "The Cartography of Power: Mapping Genres in Jodhpur Painting"; Dadlani, Chanchal, "The 'Palais Indiens' Collection of 1774: Representing Mughal Architecture in Late Eighteenth-Century India"; Sharma, Yuthika, "From Miniatures to Monuments: Picturing Shah Alam's Delhi (1771-1806)."

<sup>23</sup> Udaipur and Jaipur kings used this Rajput marriage alliance between Jai Singh and Sangram Singh's sister to forge a united front against the Mughals. See, Taft, "Honor and Alliance: Reconsidering Mughal-Rajput Marriages"; Aitken has charted this exchange between the two courts

circulate as gifts outside the Udaipur court, as the smaller portraits and group portraits from Udaipur had. On the one hand, no inscription on the back of a place-centric Udaipur painting defines it as a map or a cartographic image (*taraha*), the classification employed at Jaipur. On the other hand, no such inscription related to the maps at Jaipur, or even the paintings from Jodhpur and Delhi, articulates the depiction of a place in terms of depicting the *bhāva* of a place. Thus, while it is very likely that maps and painters trained in map-making would have traveled to other places,<sup>24</sup> it also appears that painters and patrons at Udaipur made a conscious choice to make large-scale paintings that combined portraiture with place-centric imaginings, and that they were fully aware of cartography as a distinct practice in the neighboring Jaipur court.

The critique of perspectivalism and associated Cartesian vision as constitutive elements that produce pictures of “real” and “absolute” space is not new. Several scholars have argued that Cartesian vision renders the concept of space as geometrically isotropic

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and how it allows us to think about the ontology of Rajput portraits in the eighteenth century. Aitken, “Portraits, Gift Giving and The Rajput Alliance of 1708”; Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 136–141.

<sup>24</sup> For instance, in the Jaipur records of the *potikhāna* we find the mention of painters (*citerā*) like Dipa (within inventory records for dates very close to each other) as someone who made maps (*tarah*) as well as portraits (*surat*). It also appears that mapmakers were classified as “*gajdhar ro citerā*,” meaning painters of architecture. However, documentary evidence available thus far has not established the circulation of painters who specialized in drawing architecture or making maps from Jaipur to Udaipur.

and the eye as singular, and that logic of such a gaze led to “withdrawal of painters’ emotional entanglement with the objects depicted in geometricized space.”<sup>25</sup> Geographers, for their part, have been interested in this discussion, as Denis Cosgrove highlights, as a means to question the assumed absolute relation between modernity and Cartesian notions of space.<sup>26</sup> Cosgrove writes, “[Space] is contingent upon the specific objects and processes through which it is constructed and observed. Questions of space become epistemological rather than ontological.”<sup>27</sup> Cosgrove also draws our attention to the distinction between geography, cartography and chorography made in the Alexandrine geographer and mapmaker Claudius Ptolemy’s book *The Geography* written in the second century, which continued to stimulate the interest and to shape the ideas of geographers and map-makers globally until present times. Cosgrove defines chorography in relation to geography and chronology as follows,

Conventionally the claim that geography acts as the eye of history allocated Clio’s other eye to *chronology*, the division of historical time into an event-determined narrative. Chronology, recursively, was paralleled with *chorography*, which denoted a

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<sup>25</sup> Jay, “Scopic Regimes of Modernity,” 6–8. Martin Jay builds his ideas by synthesizing the critiques of Cartesian Perspectivalism by several scholars like Norman Bryson, while underscoring that this model of vision was not uniformly coercive and several painters contested its logic. Also see, Elkins, *The Poetics of Perspective*.

<sup>26</sup> Cosgrove, “Landscape and Landschaft.”

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

specific scale of geographical study...Ptolemy made a vital and much debated distinction between geography and chorography, one that, under the guise of different terminology, remains significant in contemporary spatial theory. Geography, he claimed, was the description of the earth's surface as a whole and of its major features (land, seas, continents, mountain ranges, cities, nations, etc)...Chorography, on the other hand, concerned specific regions or locales understood without necessary relation to any larger spatial (geographical) frame. The role of chorography was to understand and represent the unique character of individual places.<sup>28</sup>

I draw attention to the distinctions between chronology, chorography, landscape, geography, and cartography not for describing place-centric artistic practices in early modern northern India. Rather I seek to highlight that Udaipur court painters conceptualize *bhāva* of a place as comprising all these modes of spatial depiction. They depict powerfully within the same pictorial space the temporality of people moving through a landscape by repetition of portraits, combine elevations and planar views of architecture and gardens, and render map-like views of the broader topographical environs. Chapter two locates experiments by Udaipur's court artists in the context of north Indian painting and engages with current historiography on depiction of settings. It will show that at the turn of the seventeenth century, picturing the *bhāva* of a place was as important to Udaipur painters as depicting likenesses of their rulers. In absence of texts that deliberate on pictorial categories such as the *bhāva* of a place, I argue for further investigation of how

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 59–60, original emphasis.

Udaipur painters formally paint the *bhāva* of a place, and for unpacking of ideas which combine landscape and chorography with panegyrics. Closer attention to the adaptation of the genre of portraiture and spatial settings by Udaipur artists in large-scale eighteenth century paintings shows us that when artists expanded the size of their paintings and the scope of their painted subjects, they transformed the genre of portraiture itself. So transformed, the portrait genre was part of a newly-forged pictorial approach to visualization of the ambience of spatial settings, one which emphasized the affective experiences that dominated spatial encounters within Udaipur's palaces and urban environs. Via the examination of a key Udaipur painting, one of the first that features a palace at a larger scale, *Ambient feeling of the Kota palaces*, c. 1700, chapter two demonstrates how not all paintings depicting a place began with perceptual imagination of related architecture—that pictorial experiments with spatial representation could have begun as a response to other paintings, thus allowing us to explore painters' views on the spatial depiction of the feeling of places by tracing the pictorial choices they made.

### **1.3. Udaipur Court Between Mughal and British Empires**

Udaipur court, marginal as it may seem in the overall politics of empires in the subcontinent, swelled in both the Mughal and the British imaginaries. Alliances with Rajput

leaders were prominent successes for the Mughals and one of the primary supporting pillars for expansion of the Mughal Empire.<sup>29</sup> The signing of a Mughal-Mewar treaty in 1615, which brought Mewar's Maharana Amar Singh I (r.1597-1620) into their circle of authority, was a big victory for the Mughals, one widely commemorated in texts and pictures.<sup>30</sup> The fact of Mewar remaining independent of the Mughals for several years longer than the other Rajput courts informs a major theme in Tod's writings as well. He gave utmost importance to Mewar's ancient "Hindu" past and how it strongly resisted all foreign Muslim invasions.<sup>31</sup> It was Mewar that became the cornerstone for how Tod presented the other regions in northwestern India within the *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1829, 1832). For decades, Tod's views elevated Mewar court's princely status within the history of the British Empire, (and they continue to do so through the present day).<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> The Mughals used various forms, such as marriage (*sāgā*) and notions of brotherhood (*bhai-bandh*) to incorporate the Rajputs within their construction of imperial authority in North India. Zeigler, "Rajput Loyalties During the Mughal Period."

<sup>30</sup> Sharma, *Mewar and the Mughal Emperors (1526-1707 A.D.)*, 120. For instance the Mughal prince Khurram's successful campaign at Mewar is given an important place within Shah Jahan's painted *Padshahnama* manuscript. See chapter five, Ill.5.14.

<sup>31</sup> Jason Freitag has argued that Tod's own Scottish identity plays an important role in his construction of Rajputs as a martial and valorous race. Cynthia Talbot, on the other hand has shown that Mewar's own historians had already crafted narratives promoting their ancient Hindu past. Freitag, *Serving Empire, Serving Nation : James Tod and the Rajputs of Rajasthan*. Chapter two.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. See Introduction; Ramusack, "Tourism and Icons: The Packaging of the Princely States of Rajasthan."

Yet, in the 130-odd year period between the Mughal and British empires, from the early 1700s to the mid 1830s, Udaipur kings were less focused on self-fashioning themselves based on their past and more on holding their local courtly world together in their city. The works of poets and painters constituted Udaipur city itself as a compelling place—compelling in the present, not only because of a remembered past or a longed for future—where Udaipur’s courtly community collectively partook in pleasures and admired the beauty of its lake environs and architecture. Mewar’s art and architectural patronage in the seventeenth century underwrote Sisodia attempts to assert their “superiority” over the Mughals and Rajputs (like the Kacchwahas at Amber).<sup>33</sup> Jennifer Joffee argues that Udaipur ruler Raj Singh’s (r. 1652-1680) patronage of historical manuscripts, art, and architecture—especially as integrated at the public site of the Rajsamand Lake—alludes to a contemporaneous building project, the AnaSagar Lake at Ajmer, under the direction of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan. Cynthia Talbot has noted that “although the writing of genealogies, martial tales and the like had been going on for some centuries, the seventeenth century witnessed an outpouring of historiographic literature at Rajput

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<sup>33</sup> Joffee, “Art, Architecture and Politics in Mewar, 1628-1710,” chapter four; Also see, Losty, *The Ramayana: Love and Valour in India’s Great Epic: The Mewar Ramayana Manuscripts*; Joffee contrasts the Mewar case with the Amber case where cross-cultural aesthetic codes employed in the sub-imperial patronage of temples and mosques by Raja Man Singh (r. 1589-1614) of Amber fulfilled dual objectives—his own kingly power and that of the Mughal emperor Akbar. Asher, “The Architecture of Raja Man Singh: A Study of Sub-Imperial Patronage.”

courts.”<sup>34</sup> This emphasis seen within prose narratives and poetry in Rajasthan was shaped by the “context of growing insistence on noble descent and competition among rival groups in service to the Mughal Empire,” where particular groups felt the need to demonstrate their connection to an illustrious past and dynastic history.<sup>35</sup> In the case of painting, Aitken has alerted us that just because seventeenth century Mewar paintings usually “look” very different from Mughal paintings, each has come to be characterized largely in oppositional terms. Udaipur court painters, Aitken argues, made purposeful, deliberate choices in adapting Mughal conventions as per the affective demands made by pictorial genres like poetic and epic manuscripts.<sup>36</sup> That patrons and painters decided to engage with genealogy, ancient history and small painted manuscripts in limited ways at the turn of the eighteenth century,<sup>37</sup> and that they gave considerable importance to picturing the *bhāva* of palaces

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<sup>34</sup> Muhaṇota Naiṇasī, *Muṃhatā Naiṇasīrī Khyāta*; Talbot, “Becoming Turk the Rajput Way,” 215; Some court commissions in the first half of the eighteenth century continue this interest in vamshavali, most forcefully seen in the painted scrolls made around 1730-40s. Talbot, “The Mewar Court’s Construction of History.”

<sup>35</sup> Talbot, “Becoming Turk the Rajput Way,” 218.

<sup>36</sup> Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 64–69.

<sup>37</sup> We do not know of any important genealogical poems from Sangram Singh’s reign; however we two genealogical scrolls that combine narrative and image which were made during Sangram Singh’s reign, c. 1730-40. Talbot, “The Mewar Court’s Construction of History.”



within Udaipur city and to portraying contemporary courtly audiences, is then even more significant.

Udaipur with its lime-washed white palaces overlooking the lakes of the city, established as Mewar court's capital around 1559,<sup>38</sup> evokes the imaginary of an oasis within the dry and desert landscape of northwestern India. It has captured the gaze of visitors across the world for at least the last three centuries. Udaipur city was geographically and topographically different from Chitorgarh, the former capital of the Mewar court—in the ways in which it has been memorialized, and in the naming of the place itself (Ill.1.6, 1.7). The walls and crenellations of the fort at Chitor rise from the rocky terrain and encompass a long elliptical area of eleven square miles that includes several temples, devotional shrines, commemorative towers, and courtly pavilions and is densely covered with trees, vegetation, and bodies of water.<sup>39</sup> Accounts of battles launched by “Muslim” kings from Alauddin Khilji, the fourteenth century Sultan of Delhi, to Akbar, the Mughal Emperor in the sixteenth

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<sup>38</sup> Tillotson suggests that there is no firm evidence on the city's founding in 1559 as asserted in most sources. Lake Pichola and a small settlement existed since the fourteenth century. Oldest parts of the palace date from 1567. Nonetheless the city's name is associated with Maharana Udai Singh (d.1572). Tillotson, *The Rajput Palaces : the Development of an Architectural Style, 1450-1750*, 88.

<sup>39</sup> The early history of the making of this fortified landscape is not all that clear. A branch of the Guhila kings of Mewar region possibly seized the fort in the early thirteenth century. Later mid-fourteenth century Sisodia kings from Rana Kumbha to Jain merchants commissioned several other palaces and temples. Kapur, *State Formation in Rajasthan*.

century, fashioned Chitor as an iconic “Hindu” fort.<sup>40</sup> By contrast, Udaipur’s founders imagined the place as a city (*pur*) and not a fort (*garh*). Udaipur’s early eighteenth century artists were the first ones to draw on their experience of admiring the visuality of their city. They made the depictions of its architecture a pictorial tool for praising their patrons and—I contend—for praising their place.

The formation of new political communities in Udaipur over the course of the eighteenth century now increasingly depended on the king’s relations with regional Rajput kings—and even more so upon his ties to Rajput and non-Rajput elites who populated his daily court.<sup>41</sup> Politically, we know that new networks like the 1708 alliance between the Udaipur, Amber, and Jodhpur rulers were directly related to renewed claims over regional territories against the struggles over authority after Aurangzeb’s death in 1707. Rajput rulers of Udaipur, Jaipur, and Jodhpur came together again in 1734 at Hurda (near Ajmer) to

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<sup>40</sup> Tod describes Chitor as a melancholic place in ruins in his travel narratives from 1822, and aligns dominant court narratives of the “Hindu” Mewaris fighting battles against various “Muslim” kings with its physical landscape and architecture. Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajast’han, or the Central and Western Rajpoot States of India*, 2:610; Mughal painters of the Akbarnama, too, imagined women inside the fort immolating themselves on wooden pyres, performing an act of jauhar; when the fort was attacked by emperor Akbar in 1568. Stronge, *Painting for the Mughal Emperor : the Art of the Book 1560-1660*. Udaipur court painters re-appropriate Chitor’s fortified landscape in genealogical scrolls made between 1730 and 1740.

<sup>41</sup> Rosalind O’Hanlon has suggested that holding their communities together perhaps was even more important than holding on to land for declaring territories in early modern South Asia. O’Hanlon, “Cultural Pluralism, Empire and the State in Early Modern South Asia A Review Essay,” 368.

form a political alliance against Marathas who were looking to expand their authority after the Mughals.<sup>42</sup> The position of *thākurs* and *rāwats*, as Rajput (and sometimes non-Rajput) estate holders in Mewar, was linked to their king at Udaipur through complex kin-based and political relationships and their estate lands (*thikānā*)<sup>43</sup> can be understood as smaller kingdoms in their own right.<sup>44</sup> The first document that organizes a class hierarchy within Mewar's *thikanas* lists the seating arrangement of the *thakurs* in the court during the reign of Jai Singh (r. 1680-1698).<sup>45</sup> Udaipur Maharana Amar Singh II (r. 1698-1710) at the turn of the eighteenth century further institutionalized the status of various *thikanas* by

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<sup>42</sup> For a summary see, Hooja, *A History of Rajasthan*, 660–661.

<sup>43</sup> Hereafter, for ease of reading I spell *thikānā* as *thikana*, *thākur* as *thakur*, and *rāwat* as *rawat*. Also I do not italicize *thakur* if I am using it as a title in reference to particular individuals.

<sup>44</sup> On the issue of terminology of eighteenth century landed elites, Taft writes, “There is no single appropriate term for the Rajputs who held estates. Thakur (lord), which frequently appears in the literature and is used here, could be used to refer to any Rajput, whether or not a landholder, and conversely estates were also assigned to non-Rajputs. Thikanedar, the holder of a thikana, (estate) is accurate but is not common in the literature...[the] Persian terms *sardar* (noble) and *jagirdar* (holder of a jagir) were also in local usage. “Nobles“ and ‘chiefs’ appear in British literature, although the British used ‘chief’ to refer to either a thakur or a ruling prince, and it is necessary to determine from context which was intended.” Taft, “Rajas and Thakurs in Rajputana: The Case of Bikaner,” 253; Also see, Taft, “The Origins of the Shekhavat Thikanas of Jaipur”; Sahai, *Politics of Patronage and Protest: The State, Society, and Artisans in Early Modern Rajasthan*; Saxena, *Rajput Nobility*; Peabody, *Hindu Kingship and Polity in Precolonial India*.

<sup>45</sup> This seating chart from Jai Singh's reign is in the private collection of the Purohit family of Udaipur, who served as the principal administrator for court ceremonies. *Rājasthāna Ke Ṭhikānoṃ Evaṃ Gharānoṃ Kī Purālekhīya Sāmagrī*, 95–97.

introducing a hierarchy of first, second, and third class *thikanas* based on each clan's ancestral services to the Mewar Court.<sup>46</sup> Sacrifices made by a clan's forefathers in "protecting" Mewar's sovereignty in several conflicts, including those with the Mughals in the sixteenth century, were employed by each *thikana* to formulate their status, genealogy, history, and identity. The official status of several of Mewar's *thikanas* and the power each individual wielded at the Udaipur court changed constantly over the course of the eighteenth century.

Aesthetic practices played a key part in creating deep affective bonds between Udaipur kings and their *thakurs*. Udaipur painters at work in the eighteenth century gave importance to portraits of this courtly community, thus mediating a "unity" that constituted Rajput courts.<sup>47</sup> *Thakurs* of the 1730s-40s, for their part, had begun to build their own forts and palaces in their independent territorial domains (*thikanas*) within the boundaries of Mewar, and in such construction they patronized painters and poets, as most strongly seen in the Mewar *thikana* Deogarh's establishment of a painting workshop.<sup>48</sup> Thus *thakurs*, quite apart from kings, employed cultural practices on their own terms to challenge

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<sup>46</sup> He grouped into sixteen first class *thikanas* (solah), thirty-two second class *thikanas* (battisa), and third class *thikanas* (gol). *Mevāra Ṭhikānoṃ Ke Abhilekha*.

<sup>47</sup> Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 123–124.

<sup>48</sup> For example, see, Beach, *Rajasthani Painters Bagta and Chokha*.

Udaipur court's centrality. They were both key consumers and participants along with kings in royal palaces and gardens. By all means *thakurs* like those from the Dodia clan in mid-eighteenth century Udaipur, discussed in chapter three, participated fully in the shaping of courtly gatherings where aesthetic and political conversations took place and in constructing their own sprawling palatial residences within the city of Udaipur.<sup>49</sup> Thus they played a key role in how these conversations changed over the course of the eighteenth century, a topic that requires further research, especially as the colonial modern perceptions of early modern courts in the late eighteenth- and nineteenth- century were rather different and derogatory.

Lament of princely pleasures always found a place in eighteenth and nineteenth century British writing and it evoked vivid images of eighteenth century princely decline. Pleasure, however, constituted an imperative early modern courtly practice that fused ideas of aesthetics and politics. Kings and *thakurs* and painters and poets at the mid-eighteenth century Udaipur court invest in pleasure from diverse perspectives in diverse media. The idea of pleasure as a key tenet of ideal kingship gains momentum in mid-eighteenth century Udaipur when Maharana Jagat Singh II (r. 1734-1751) constructs the Jagnivas palace (1743-46) in the middle of Lake Pichola (Ill.1.8). Jagat Singh II's court poet Nandram composed

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<sup>49</sup> Dodia *thakurs* were awarded land grants by the Udaipur king Jagat Singh II in 1740 which made them into a first class *thikana*, but they became a second class *thikana* in 1855.

*Jagvilās*, a 405-verses long poem that commemorates the inauguration of the lake-palace and circumscribes the lake-palace as a place for the practice of courtly pleasures. Painters visualize the *bhāva* of the Jagnivas lake-palace in pictures that establish a relationship between place-making, pleasure, and panegyrics. Chapter three opens up this corpus of paintings that portray Jagat Singh II at Jagnivas to new interpretations by viewing them in association with the hitherto unpublished poetry of the *Jagvilāsa* that allows us to explore historically grounded ideas on what constituted courtly pleasures. Courtly communities engaged in acts of connoisseurship over the exchange of material things and the appreciation of architecture, painting, and food. Poets and painters imagine the king and his *thakurs* bonding in peculiarly affective ways that inextricably aligns the practices of pleasure with assertions of power.

This important history of the solidification of mid-eighteenth century political networks is revealed only when we shift our attention to the intersection between place-making, aesthetics, and affect. The rise in historical studies over the past two decades, beyond the strictly political history of early modern and eighteenth century South Asia, has given way to exploring aesthetic and cultural practices.<sup>50</sup> Such works, in the case of Rajput

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<sup>50</sup> New studies differ from earlier approaches that studied “princely states” by beginning with British accounts and by focusing exclusively on politics and imperial policies. Ramusack, *The Princes*

histories, by Ramya Sreenivasan, Cynthia Talbot, and Norbert Peabody, question the standard periodization of times and sources into modern and traditional and consider the making of historical memories, rather than thinking of history and memory or colonial and regional practices in opposition or isolation.<sup>51</sup> Particularly the work of Allison Busch and Katherine Butler Schofield (nee Brown) draws upon scholarship from early medieval courtly culture and aesthetics to explore the role of cross-culturation in motivating affective idioms like music and poetry in early modern India.<sup>52</sup> These insights into the making of communities and knowledge that does not separate aesthetics from historical concerns inform how my project addresses transitions in place-making in the time period between the Mughal and British empires.

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*of India in the Twilight of Empire*; Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and Their States*; Copland, *The British Raj and the Indian Princes*; Copland, *The Princes of India in the Endgame of Empire, 1917-1947*.

<sup>51</sup> Sreenivasan, *The Many Lives of a Rajput Queen : Heroic Past in India c. 1500-1900*; Talbot, “The Mewar Court’s Construction of History”; Talbot, “Becoming Turk the Rajput Way”; Peabody, *Hindu Kingship and Polity in Precolonial India*.

<sup>52</sup> Busch, *Poetry of Kings*; Schofield, “Sense and Sensibility: The Domain of Pleasure and the Place of Music in Mughal Society”; Ali, *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India*.; Apart from Busch and Schofield several scholars have shown that questions of aesthetics are equally important from addressing historical concerns. For instance, see Asher, “The Architecture of Raja Man Singh: A Study of Sub-Imperial Patronage”; Asher and Talbot, *India before Europe*; Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*; Nair, *Mysore Modern*. All of these scholars have noted here have shown that spatial markers of new national boundaries of regional states and ideas of associated singular cultural practices and languages are also not always sufficient for addressing early modern sources.

As individual thakurs become more and more powerful in the early colonial period, Tod, who became the colonial agent at Udaipur in 1817, came to view them as responsible for Mewar's ruination in the eighteenth century, a view which supported his belief that the chief purpose of the British was to "protect" and "restore" the power of the Udaipur ruler Bhim Singh (r. 1778-1829).<sup>53</sup> The time period from 1760s to 1820s certainly saw a decline in Udaipur court's revenues, travels of artists to other regional *thikanas* like Deogarh, and perhaps a very palpable sense of a crisis on behalf of Udaipur kings. What this decline meant for praising the king's portrait by means of picturing the beauty and pleasures his city offered remains to be explored further.<sup>54</sup> Recent research has amply shown that in late Mughal Delhi political and economic crisis did not equate with cultural decline.<sup>55</sup> In fact the pursuit of pleasure at Mohammad Shah's court at Delhi (1719-1748) enabled a lively

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<sup>53</sup> Freitag, *Serving Empire, Serving Nation : James Tod and the Rajputs of Rajasthan* chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>54</sup> Preliminary research into paintings depicting Udaipur ruler Ari Singh (r.1761-1773) at the lake-palaces of Jagmandir and Jagnivas suggests the continuing currency of pictorial ideas related to pleasure in the nineteenth century. Further research on Bhim Singh's commissioning of floor to ceiling wall paintings in the palatial room known as the Chitram ki Burj will be key given that the paintings combine chorography and processions and that the court's scribes extensively record Bhim Singh's processions into the city in the daily diaries. The scope of this dissertation and limitations posed by the fact the paintings in the Chitram ki Burj are covered with glass restricts my forays into this question.

<sup>55</sup> For example, see Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India*; Dalrymple and Sharma, *Princes and Painters in Mughal Delhi, 1707-1857*.



conversation across the arts among painters, poets, and intellectuals.<sup>56</sup> In the case of Udaipur as we shift our attention to the time period between 1815s and 1830s, we shall see how Udaipur painters in circulating across domains of the court, company, and bazaar reinvented representational idioms to envision place-worlds that counter decline in visually emphatic ways.

#### **1.4. *Establishing Connections Between Courts, Company, Temples, and Bazaars: Artistic Agency and Circulating Knowledge and Genres***

The archives that I bring together from the spaces of the court, British East India Company, bazaars, and pilgrimage trails and devotional spaces allow us to connect and compare Udaipur painters' innovations as they employed the *bhāva* of place to multiple ends. On their circulatory paths, Udaipur painters mediated between diverse patrons and audiences, historical memory and poetic metaphors, and affective ways of constructing territoriality and so-called cartographic means of declaring boundaries within European maps. Tracing circulation, mobility, and networks of people and intellectual practices has become an important area of inquiry in the re-thinking of historical narratives, the production of

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<sup>56</sup> Dalrymple and Sharma, *Princes and Painters in Mughal Delhi, 1707-1857*, 4–6.

knowledge, and the making of objects and monuments in early modern South Asia.<sup>57</sup> Kapil Raj, for instance, underscores that tracing the circulation of people, knowledge, and things in multiple directions is central to any grasp of the development in botanical and mapping practices between 1700s-1900s and to trace the dynamics of the multiple power brokers, commercial, and religious interests that populated this time and space.<sup>58</sup> On the one hand, the lens of “circulation” enables us to trace the agencies of Indian actors whose practices shaped European pursuits of ways to “know” the subcontinent. On the other hand, a focus on circulation of people and things allows us to trace associations between practices that may otherwise remain locked up in their hermetic domains. Udaipur painters between the 1820s and 1830s made key adaptations in place-making through their extended conversation with Tod’s project, using depiction of places to praise Udaipur’s rulers, but they also developed pictorial innovations in visual-textual genres like Jain invitation letters which were emerging from the space of religious travels and bazaars that aimed to praise

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<sup>57</sup> Circulation is proposed as the conceptual framework for understanding cultural encounters by taking into account mobility, flows, travels of people, and exchange of ideas in both directions across Asia and Europe. Authors also frame “circulation” as a paradigm that allows to counter an imaginary of unchanging and static India; also through specific cases it allows us to “link different parts of the subcontinent to one another and the subcontinent as a whole to the wider world.” See, Markovits, Pouchepadass, and Subrahmanyam, *Society and Circulation: Mobile People and Itinerant Cultures in South Asia, 1750-1950*.

<sup>58</sup> Raj, *Relocating Modern Science* Raj’s insights on map-making practices in eighteenth century South Asia are discussed in further detail in chapter four.

the urban life and wealth of a city. I do not interpret the visual connections that we see in terms of an “influence” of court styles rather I see them as an instance where artistic agency can be discerned. In these case-studies we find dynamics that illuminate decisions made by individuals—what they chose to include from within genres and what they chose to introduce into these traditions. Udaipur painter Ghasi’s oeuvre represented the shifts in the artistic imagining of architectural and urban space and negotiations in territorial power between 1817-1835. As he circulated, and as his work circulated, Ghasi forged critical conversations on the theme of picturing place, both within the world of Udaipur court’s visual culture of large-scale topographical paintings and between the visual and political worlds of the Udaipur court and the British company. Ghasi worked for the Udaipur rulers Bhim Singh and Jawan Singh (r.1828-1838), and for Tod, as his artist assistant. On the one hand, Ghasi employed the trope of depicting processions from court paintings to picture Tod’s diplomatic encounters; on the other, he adapted his painting skills to make architectural drawings for Tod’s documentation projects. Ghasi’s stylistic preferences toward precise outlines in composing Udaipur court paintings have been interpreted as evidence of degraded artistic skills. Chapter four proposes instead that Ghasi’s works provide a rare vantage point from which to widen our understanding of changing artistic practices and attitudes toward conventions of drawing, mapping, and recording

architectural sites in the early nineteenth century. After Tod leaves Udaipur, the painter circulates back to Jawan Singh's courts and travels with the king to the 1832 Ajmer durbar and further pilgrimage journeys to temples in northern India. Along these paths Ghasi realigned the *bhāva* of the place and royal portraiture with temple spaces and devotional journeys beyond Udaipur. I show how the pictorial choices seen in these paintings assert Jawan Singh's power in the wake of emergent British authority and against narratives of princely hedonism and political decline.

A focus on affect and place-making shifts how we examine large-scale paintings produced within eighteenth century courts and enable us to write slightly different histories of representation of place, space, and landscape in South Asia. It also shifts our view on the diversity of historical memories and territorialities that were crafted in the long eighteenth century. Finally, this focus also shifts the limited conversations we have had thus far between courtly arts and bazaar arts in eighteenth and early nineteenth century South Asia. Little-studied painted paper scrolls known as *vijñaptipatras* are objects that employ visual and textual means to praise towns and cities. Translated literally as "invitation-letters," such paper scrolls were addressed to eminent Jain monks who led extremely mobile lives and who set up their interim religious domains year after year in

different towns during the monsoon season.<sup>59</sup> *Vijñaptipatras* invert the dialectic between praising kings and portraying places. Such elaborate scrolls were made first and foremost to praise places. They portray kings as one among other power brokers that contributed to the depicted urban locale's vibrancy. Chapter five explores a 72-foot long and 11-inch wide painted *vijñaptipatra* sent by the regional merchants and the ruler of Udaipur in 1830 to the prominent Jain monk Jinharsh Suri. Udaipur's painters of 1830s with their deep investment in the art of place explore and extend the established genre of *vijñaptipatra* in multiple ways. The scroll includes a vision that imagines the territorial domain of the invited monk as equal to the domain of the British residents in the city of Udaipur. The object decisively projects a view of the city flourishing with an abundance of diverse things, markets, and people rather than a princely principality in decline. The aesthetic parallels in the scroll painter's vision and contemporaneous city poetry composed by Jain monk-poets allows us to explore the consumption of such urban imaginaries especially as they circulated among broader audiences in the space of bazaars and religious travels.<sup>60</sup> The unnamed Udaipur painter can also be seen as extensively reevaluating aspects of Udaipur court painting. He

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<sup>59</sup>Hirananda Sastri has noted that the custom of sending such epistolary scrolls originated in the idea of repentance and the members of the community performing pious deeds during the holy days of the *pariyushana*. Śastri, *Ancient Vijñaptipatras*, 3.

<sup>60</sup> A recent volume looks at the role of pilgrimage as a channel for circulation of popular ideas in early modern and colonial South Asia. Pauwels, *Patronage and Popularisation, Pilgrimage and Procession*.

offers new ways of approaching the relations between depicting processions and depicting a chorography, between picturing the *bhāva* of a place and mapping a place, and between praising a king in place-centric ways and praising a place itself.

My examination of the Udaipur scroll of 1830 is the ground for the generation of a paradigm for a new art history of praise and place. This paradigm acknowledges how Udaipur artists were continuously reinventing their practices as they circulated in and across domains of court, bazaars, religious travels, and the British East India Company. In such complex visualization of flourishing places and shifting territorialities I find a counterpoint to decadence which cannot be overlooked as we rethink the history of the long eighteenth century between empires. Udaipur's itinerant artists can be seen as practicing their craft "in between empires"—literally, visually, and metaphorically. They formulated their subjective, and, at times, even radical interpretations of power and place through processes of circulation. The local artists of Udaipur advanced early modern elements of place-making in new hybrid directions as colonial modern representational idioms assert their presence in domains of art, history, and knowledge in the subcontinent. Their works thus offer rich archives for asking questions of the long eighteenth century that dissolve the teleology of the arrival of Western models and annihilation of regional practices.

Basso argues, “we are the place-worlds we imagine.”<sup>61</sup> Sumathi Ramaswamy alerts us that accessing narratives of place-making in the modern world “cannot ignore the colonization of imagination itself.”<sup>62</sup> She adds, “to amend Basso, we *are* the place-worlds we are compelled to imagine with languages and conceptual tools that may not be of our own making and are frequently alien to our being.”<sup>63</sup> The attempt then to understand diverse aesthetic acts of place-making is crucial—these acts’ contemporaneity raises historical and epistemic questions that displace dominant place-worlds. This dissertation engages Tod’s place-world from the perspectives of Udaipur’s other place-makers, who came before him, who traveled with him, and who countered his vision with their deep investment in bringing affect to bear on place-making and marking territories. It underscores the role of material things and visual arts in contributing to the analytic of affect in writing histories of early modern and colonial South Asia. A micro history of Udaipur painters’ art suggests ambitious intentions.

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<sup>61</sup> Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, 7.

<sup>62</sup> Ramaswamy, *The Lost Land of Lemuria*, 5.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* original emphasis.

## Chapter 2

### AMBIENCE OF COURTLY ENVIRONS: ADAPTING SETTINGS, CONTEXTS, AND PORTRAITS

#### 2.1. *Bhāva: Picturing the Feeling of a Place*

“*Kotā melā ro bhāva*,” translated as “the feeling or emotion of Kota palaces,” is the inscription on the reverse of a painting completed by unknown artists in c. 1700 that depicts the expansive courtly environs of a palatial complex and the miniaturized portrait of a ruler (Ill. 2.1).<sup>64</sup> The artist evokes the palatial environs as a conglomerate of courtyards, gardens, and buildings where a variety of persons pursue their different activities. The spaces are pictured as a sensuous phantasmagoria, replete with visual spectacle: men bursting firecrackers, acrobats entertaining crowds, and candle-lit gardens drenched in moonlight. One is enticed to imagine the sweet smell of the flowers and the sounds of men playing the drums under a canopy at the palace entrance while women musicians and dancers perform for courtly audiences. Besides the dazzling gold-colored halo that draws one to closely look at the image it bestows, a viewer is captivated by the myriad vantage points the artist sets up to present a complex and busy picture of a courtly world. Viewed in this context, assuming that the inscription was written after the painting was complete, it is

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<sup>64</sup> National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Accession No. AS 68-1980



worth considering that the scribe—most likely one of the first viewers of the painting after the artists in the workshop—interpreted the painting as depicting a picture of the royal palace and *not* a royal portrait. He has not identified any personalities or noted the date of the painting; rather the scribe saw the painting as a picture that described the *bhāva* or the ambient feeling or emotion of the Kota palaces.

Made on a nearly square handmade paper with opaque watercolor (measuring 48.2 x 43.8 cm) this painting does not appear to belong to the pictorial context of a manuscript or an album. This is no miniature to be held by its viewer in a single hand. It is large compared to both poetic or epic manuscripts produced at Rajput courts like Udaipur in the seventeenth century or contemporaneous Mughal album folios. Such a painting would have demanded that court staff hold it up vertically so that connoisseurs might look closely at the painting—or else an audience would have hunched over the painting as it rested on the floor or a low-lying table. This painting suggests a completeness and a finished quality; however the artist's framing of the composition along the left, right, and bottom edges of the paper elicits a desire to see more, to continue beyond the boundaries of the red border. The juxtaposition of a bird's eye view of the courtyard space composed along an oblique axis in the centre of the painting with a quadripartite garden space composed by diagonal lines and with planimetric and sectional elevation views of smaller courtyard spaces in the

bottom half of the painting demands that the viewer continuously negotiates the differing agglutinated vantage points. One's eyes move in and out of the pictorial spaces created by the white walls. This bedazzlement urges us to think if the artist has composed his imaginary from looking and studying painted pictures of the Kota palaces or drawn upon his memories from observing the architecture of the Kota palaces. Perhaps such picturing of a place invited both makers and audiences to draw on their own memories and attachments that recalled mental images of the palace and circulating paintings, or a combination of both. We can only imagine how such a contemplative process would be heightened if a group of connoisseurs were to view the painting as a collective.

*Ambient feeling of the Kota palaces*, the title by which I will refer to this painting, is currently dated to c.1700 on stylistic grounds. Andrew Topsfield sees this painting as possibly the “first large-scale Udaipur architectural subject on paper.”<sup>65</sup> Others have called this painting “an Indian large-scale map combining different perspectives of the royal palace of Kotah, Rajasthan, together with the Rajah, his court and subjects.”<sup>66</sup> The palette (comprising bright and opaque white, sap green, red, and yellow pigments, applied without

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<sup>65</sup> Topsfield, “City Palace and Lake Palaces: Architecture and Court Life in Udaipur Painting.” Scholars have referred to it by other titles which do not directly refer to the inscription on the reverse. I shall discuss this issue in further detail below.

<sup>66</sup> Schwartzberg, “Diwali In India.”

any shading or texture), the delicate black outlines delineating the architecture, and the artist's distinct attention to juxtaposition of a series of views and view points, locate this painting securely within the court workshop at Udaipur. The notations on the reverse of this painting include inventory numbers like those used for several paintings catalogued in the Udaipur royal workshop, and further attest that at some point the painting officially entered the Udaipur court's painting stores.<sup>67</sup> Several Udaipur court paintings in this time period suggest that a group of artists might have collaborated on several works in this collection; such collaboration is textually asserted in the inscriptions from the 1730s.

*Ambient feeling of the Kota palaces*, however, appears to be the work of a single unnamed artist. That this painting could be one of the early examples in which an Udaipur artist experimented with expanding the size of paintings; that it depicts the architectural and

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<sup>67</sup> Inventory numbers behind the *Ambient feeling of the Kota palaces*: 15/125. Cost (*kīmat*) of the painting is noted as Rupees 90. Andrew Topsfield has systematically compiled the notations behind several Udaipur court paintings to arrive at a sense of the prevalent cataloguing system. Per his compilation, the classificatory number 15 refers to pictures of Rajput rulers, other than those hailing from Udaipur, which matches with the number behind the Kota palaces painting. Topsfield also notes that the red numbers noted behind several paintings perhaps correspond to a listing exercise undertaken during Udaipur ruler Maharana Fateh Singh's reign (1884-1930). During this time period the painting stores are referred to as *Jotdān* (box/ store of light) in a variety of historical documents versus simply as stores (*ori*) in earlier documents. Udaipur." Additionally, Molly Aitken has noted that three inventories were made of the Udaipur palace collection in the late nineteenth century, of which the notations from two are seen behind the paintings. She further notes that the numbers in the third inventory in the format of an Udaipur court register (*bahi*), dated 1891, in the collection of the Rajasthan State Archives-Udaipur Branch, do not match the numbers and classifications noted behind the paintings. Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 302, fn 61,62.

urban environs of a palace; that it adapts the Mughal-styles of a painting made at the Kota court painting workshop in incisive ways; and that the picture presents an instance when the scribe asserts one possible framework of reception make this work quadruply remarkable, and compel that it be read as a depiction of the *bhāva* of the Kota palaces.

The grounds for such a reading can be found in tantalizing pictorial details within another painting depicting the Kota Palaces, this one most likely made by artists in Kota itself, another early modern court in Rajasthan, and currently in the collection of the Rijksmuseum (Ill. 2.2).<sup>68</sup> Within a vertically-oriented sheet of paper, measuring 45.9 x 29.5 cm, the Kota artist has depicted a ruler within courtly environs drawn from an imaginary elevated viewpoint that looks into the palace courtyards. The Udaipur artist transformed this Kota picture by changing the position and angle of the elevated viewing point and by juxtaposing varying representational conventions like planimetric views and elevations, and yet he alludes to the Rijksmuseum painting by specifically citing several figures (for example the two acrobats in the front courtyard and the water thrower) and by borrowing pictorial vignettes of miniaturized trees, clusters of houses, and an elephant, drawn in fine lines in the atmospheric background of the Kota painting. Not surprisingly, however,

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<sup>68</sup> Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Accession no. RP-1993-277. I am grateful to Robert Skelton and Malini Roy for sharing their images of this painting, and Anna Slaczka, Curator of South Asian Art at the Rijksmuseum, for providing high-resolution images.

several modern scholars may see this conjunction of spatial effects as a “problem”—as evidence that Udaipur artists of this period were still learning pictorial models for depicting space.<sup>69</sup> Thus the Udaipur painting may be described, in Norman Bryson’s terms, as a work by a painter who could neither present a picture that perceived the world correctly as an “Essential Copy” nor produce an accurate copy of the original painting upon which his work was based.<sup>70</sup>

One of the chief aims of the recent exhibition “Indian Master Painters from 1100-1900” was to search for individual artists through inscriptions and attributions based on stylistic continuities.<sup>71</sup> Milo. C. Beach, Eberhard Fischer, and B.N. Goswamy, the curators of this exhibition and scholars who have shaped the discussion on Indian Painting in the past three decades, argue that a combination of new research that has discovered the names of several artists and analyzed stylistic continuities allows us to chart the history of Indian

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<sup>69</sup> For instance, it is not clear to me why this painting is not included in the category of related works in the recent compilation of Udaipur paintings made in tinted *nim kalam* as well as full-colored mode in this time period. See, Glynn, Catherine, “The ‘Stipple Master’.”; Molly Aitken offers an alternate way of studying the combination of styles and spatial compartments by Indian painters, most often seen as “problems” and “failures,” by exploring how such pictorial practices functioned in meaningful ways. Aitken, “Parataxis and the Practice of Reuse, from Mughal Margins to Mīr Kalān Khān.” I discuss this approach and other contemporaneous works in detail below.

<sup>70</sup> Bryson problematizes that a painting can only belong to the “domain of perception” and the assumptions of a “natural attitude” that come with it. Bryson, *Vision and Painting*, 6.

<sup>71</sup> Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, *Masters of Indian Painting*.

painting as per the practice of individual master painters and style-groups championed by masters. They seek to extend a cataloging model that has thus far privileged courts and patrons because biographical information on individual Indian artists is scant. My focus here will be on another way to think of artistic agency of an Udaipur artist in the early eighteenth century, even in the absence of a specific artist's name. I employ stylistic grouping more for the purpose of highlighting the making of a new genre of large-scale paintings that depict people and places rather than assigning authorship. We see that pictorial conversations between painters and paintings can allow us to also ask questions on intellectual thinking on a variety of painted subjects, which, like artist biographies, was not discussed in texts, but can be gleaned by carefully interpreting artists' engagement with circulating paintings. I propose that the *Ambient feeling of the Kota palaces* is a response painting, but I resist its relegation to any aesthetic category of "failure," for its pictorial adaptations and translations offer us a much-needed window onto some of the intellectual thinking on imagining space and depicting place, perspective and realism, and mimesis and portraiture at the turn of the eighteenth century in Udaipur. This mediation between paintings constitutes an act of agency on the part of the Udaipur artist.

This chapter seeks to locate the kinds of pictorial interpretations forged in the *Ambient feeling of the Kota palaces*, along with drawing upon several paintings made at the

Mughal, Udaipur, and Bundi-Kota courts between 1670s-1710s, to consider how Udaipur artists combined their visions of a place with depicting likeness of their rulers, thereby cumulatively transforming the painted genres and innovating new place-centric imaginaries. The distinction drawn between portraying the ruler and the place is not textually asserted in the inscriptions on the reverse of all paintings, as it was in the *Ambient feeling of the Kota palaces*. However, for the painters at the Udaipur court, picturing the palaces and urban environs of their city was a pictorial priority from the beginning of the eighteenth century and their exploration of dialogue between the setting and royal subject provided a keen space of experimentation and innovation. In the first part of this chapter I will engage with select examples from Mughal and Rajput paintings to address the history of depiction of settings in early modern Indian painting and how scholars have treated this pictorial concern. I focus on this thematic especially in light of the experiments undertaken by artists who worked for the Udaipur ruler Amar Singh II (ruled at Rajnagar 1670, at Udaipur 1698-1710). Aitken places questions regarding the ontology of poetic manuscripts and portraits, their function and circulation within Rajput court cultures, and the formal content and styles of paintings, their citation and adaptation across pictures, at the centre of her inquiry. Her discussion is not limited to deciphering narrative, styles, chronology, represented personalities, and authorship, in order to organize a art historical narrative in

relation to an overarching linear progression of historical events. Like Molly Aitken, I am attentive to what she calls the “intelligence” of traditions and conventions which is revealed in the adaptations and choices made by Indian painters. These visual and pictorial decisions framed an act of agency even if we cannot ascertain intentionality. I pursue my thesis closely in conversation with Aitken because she has expanded the domain of questioning in Indian Painting, and because she has done so by making Udaipur court painting pursued between the seventeenth and nineteenth century as a key cornerstone for her broader discussions.

Bharata was the first Indian scholar who discussed the role of *bhāva*, or emotion, in works of art, mainly drama and literature, in relation to *rasa* or the taste of aesthetic works in his foundational *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Science of Drama) written in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century. Sheldon Pollock notes that analogies “from the sense of taste” are drawn “on the grounds both of the physicality of emotion—it is something we feel, not something we think—and of the blending of ingredients that complex tastes and aesthetic moods both evince.”<sup>72</sup> Pollock

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<sup>72</sup> Bharata laid down eight rasas in this treatise (Pollock notes that the ninth rasa was added later), which include, love, mirth, wonder, tranquility, anger, courage, compassion, fear, and disgust. On emotions, Pollock further notes, “The basic ingredient is called a “stable“ or primary emotion (*sthāyibhāvas*), such as desire in the case of the erotic rasa, to which are added “underlying factors“ (*ālambana/vibhāvas*) such as the beloved, “stimulant factors“ (*uddīpana/vibhāvas*) such as a moonlit night or swinging earrings, “transitory feelings“ (*vyabhicāri/bhāvas*) such as longing or worry or shame, and “physical reactions“ (*anubhāvas*) such as perspiring or weeping. A stable emotion, when



reads Kashmiri thinkers like Ānanda.vārdhana (fl. 850) as leading a shift toward reception in theorizing literature (*kāvya*). Their “new understanding of *kāvya* as meaning-without-saying (*dhvani*, aesthetic suggestion or implication),” depended upon their demonstrations of “how the meaning of the work as a whole resides in an emotional content (*rasa*) that can be communicated only by suggestion.”<sup>73</sup> This theorization of feelings and experiences was not directly concerned with how viewers responded to emotions articulated within material works of art, made on paper or painted on walls of palaces and temples. Though art historians have related *rasa* to various painted subjects, especially painted poetic manuscripts, a one-to-one mapping may not be possible to establish in all examples. Yet Aitken gives us evidence, ranging from inscriptions on the backs of Udaipur paintings that employ *bhāva* to denote the artists’ picturing of the feeling of a place, time, or person within paintings depicting courtly life, to poetic assertions of *bhāva* within devotional and literary texts that circulated in early modern Rajput courts.<sup>74</sup> Memories and affective visions share a

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fully “developed” or “matured” by these factors, transforms into a *rasa*. Pollock, “Introduction,” 2009, xxx. Bharata Muni, *Nāṭyaśāstra, with the Commentary of Abhinavagupta*.

<sup>73</sup> Pollock, “Sanskrit Literary Culture from the Inside Out,” 44.

<sup>74</sup> Aitken evaluates B.N. Goswamy’s attempt in a 1986 exhibition, *Essence of Indian Art*, to organize objects that aimed to incite aesthetic emotions in stages for viewers, Aitken ultimately argues that “*rasa* was not the singular aim of painting, nor were the mechanics of *rasa* theory its means, but *rasa*, as an idea about art, was current within the intellectual culture of paintings, and paintings were, like all the other arts in South Asia, fundamentally designed to move viewers to experience

relationship that defies systematic organization, a key character which she sees across pictures that sought to picture a feeling. She further employs this material to expand how we can think about *bhāva*, *rasa* and *rasikās* (connoisseurs who were able to taste *rasa*) in relation to reception and ontology of Rajput court paintings.

As we move from performative and literary realms to pictorial realms, it is key to recognize that the change in materiality and genres demands that we explore how painters defined questions of feeling and emotive content in their artistic practice in very particular ways.<sup>75</sup> In exploring changing visual and thematic concerns within Udaipur painting, I recognize that it may not be possible to discern a comprehensive map of painters' intellectual concerns. It is also not possible to ascertain that painters identified themselves as "intellectuals" among a wider group of people (like poets and scholars) at early modern courts, even though we can trace some of their deliberations on representation and realism

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feelings." She also argues that "*bhava*" connects pictures to "mental and imagined" spaces and times rather than "theatrical scenes" that always operate in relation to imperatives of illusionism. For further details see, Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 50–55.

<sup>75</sup> In a recent publication, by examining how various Sanskrit traditions deal with *rasa*, Pollock has shown that "seeing" *rasa*, theorized in relation to the performance of literature as drama, in comparison to "hearing" *rasa*, theorized in relation to the performance of literature as poetry, led to varying categorizations of types of *rasas* and their constituent emotional content. He highlights that Sanskrit intellectuals paradigmatically placed the differing relationship of *rasa* to various senses and various performative media. Pollock thus argues that the epistemological scope of our understanding of this theory needs to be expanded and shifts in materiality cannot be underplayed. Pollock, "From *Rasa* Seen to *Rasa* Heard."

(and their respective limits) within the realm of pictorial practices.<sup>76</sup> Udaipur paintings especially made at the turn of the seventeenth century exhibit experimentation in representational strategies for picturing places, which as we shall see in this chapter and chapter three, shape the thinking and knowledge of a place and craft its memory. Parsing out these formal approaches adopted for picturing the *bhāva* of a place lays the ground for exploring (in the following chapter) how the political economy of *pleasure* (*vilāsa*) is employed in endeavors of place-making and crafting urban imaginaries, histories, and cultures of connoisseurship in mid-eighteenth century Udaipur. Against this artistic and historiographic background, the *Ambient feeling of the Kota palaces* makes a compelling case-study for exploring how Udaipur artists painted the *bhāva* of a place. First I wish to understand the mediation involved when an artist sees one painting as a means to making a distinctly different painting. To see such mediation as “pleasing naïve spontaneity” or claim it as non-utilitarian map where “the action spoke for itself” does not recognize the dynamic pictorial experimentations that are bending the boundaries of image-making in the Udaipur

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<sup>76</sup> This objective of tracing spatial thinking within the visual and literary realms relates to the question of intellectual histories in the early modern time period. Sheldon Pollock has eloquently described the use of characterizing this time period (approximately 1500-1800) as an early modern era “simply in the sense of a threshold” so that we may evaluate different ways in which historical, individual, and critical sensibilities were in play before these epistemic categories were dominantly and exclusively related to European ideals as hallmarks of a Western modernity. See this discussion in this dissertation’s introductory chapter as well. Pollock, “Introduction,” 2011.

workshop at this time.<sup>77</sup> Secondly, this example allows us to propose possible ways of theorizing Udaipur artists' historical stances on the art historical categories of mimesis, perspective, and portraiture in the early eighteenth century. An exploration of artists' interests in picturing *bhāva*, in this case to particularly trace a drastic shift that occurred in the eighteenth century in the thematic of depicting places within paintings, will allow us to think how artists built the emotive content of a place in a work of art. Especially as painters turn their gaze to their city's architecture and geography, we see how they choose to communicate the picture of their place through juxtaposing spatial effects and representational conventions. This approach formulates a multivalent vocabulary that enables picturing the ambient feeling and emotion of a place often integrally, but not solely, related to royal portraiture. It also employs juxtapositions to constitute a mode of aesthetic suggestion which demands cognitive leaps from its viewers as it produces spatial knowledge of particular places and times.

## ***2.2 Settings in Late Seventeenth-and-Early Eighteenth Century Mughal and Rajput***

### ***Paintings***

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<sup>77</sup> Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 135; Schwartzberg, "Diwali In India."

The architecture of the forts and palaces of South Asia has been the subject of several paintings made by eighteenth century European artists. In contrast, what do we know about regional artists' depictions of courtly settings, landscapes, and cities in Indian paintings at the turn of the century? We often credit artists and intellectuals operating at the Mughal court for bringing both portraiture and illustrated historical accounts to the Indian subcontinent.<sup>78</sup> A related artistic interest in realism within Mughal pictures and a scholarly concern with how Indian artists adapt to challenges posed by “naturalistic” elements and styles seen within Persianate or European sources has framed most commentaries on settings. Ebba Koch has shown that artists at the Mughal court deployed architectural vignettes to make imperial portraits of Shah Jahan in the seventeenth century folios in the Windsor *Padshahnama*. Koch finds two kinds of pictures: “*jharoka*” portraits, and depictions of historical events and processions that incorporated outdoor scenes, forts, and landscapes.<sup>79</sup> According to Koch, Shah Jahan’s artists initially depicted a windowed setting of a raised seat within a canopied roof to denote a realistic *jharoka*; ultimately the motif was

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<sup>78</sup> Earlier examples from sculpture and painting in South India challenge this assumption. Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 113.

<sup>79</sup> Koch, “The Hierarchical Principles of Shah-Jahani Painting.” Additionally, scholars have noted the importance of the *Padshahnama* folios in relation to painting of portraits at Rajput courts in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Several important Rajput kings and personalities who collectively forged the Rajput and Mughal worlds in several interconnected ways are also depicted in the folios.

systematized as a standard icon of imperial authority (Ill. 2.3).<sup>80</sup> For all of Shah Jahan's building of exquisite *darbar* halls, his artists focus solely on the *jharoka* and none of the other architecture patronized by him. They preferred to cite from pictorial precedents rather than architectural ones. Vignettes of forts and palaces related to specific historical events of battles, drawn in the top half of the painting, Koch argues, were most likely based on views seen in European geographical prints, drawings, and paintings that had circulated at the Mughal court since the 1580s (Ill. 2.4).<sup>81</sup> Even though Koch shows that Mughal artists engaged with European sources on selective terms and combined spatial vignettes in order to make paintings that served the emperor's ideological program, she insists on understanding the paintings through a lens that privileges illusionism.<sup>82</sup> Gregory Minissale

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<sup>80</sup> Koch writes, "The *jharoka* paintings were executed by several artists but all based their *darbar* scenes on the same compositional formula. The Emperor appears in a central position in the *jharoka*, a raised seat projecting from a gallery in the back wall of the audience hall, sheltered by a cupola, in front of which is hung a canopy: below him his nobles are assembled in two groups facing each other. This basic scheme, the architecture of which was modeled on the actual architecture of the palaces in the capital cities of Agra and Lahore – could vary in its details to accommodate the peculiarities of a specific place, period, or event." Koch, "The Hierarchical Principles of Shah-Jahani Painting," 133.

<sup>81</sup> For example, see the folios depicting Azam Khan capturing Fort Dharur, Seize of Qandahar, Capture of the Fort of Hoogly, Siege of Daulatabad, Capture of Orccha, and the Surrender of the Fort at Udgir. Also, at the level of minutiae, the rendering of the ground using stippled lines for a hillock scheme, Koch suggests are allusions to models seen in sixteenth century European pictorial maps. Koch, "The Hierarchical Principles of Shah-Jahani Painting."

has pointed out questions of diversity of painterly techniques and artistic approaches to non-illusionism or mimesis in the *Padshahnama* or Mughal painting in general have been marginalized in this sub-discourse. He argues that the overt scholarly “insistence on privileging naturalism (realistic portraiture and ‘proper’ perspective)” and a desire to see the paintings as “effective records of historical events,” has ignored that pictorial elements especially by Shah Jahan’s time “point to a deliberately *anti-illusionistic* aesthetic.”<sup>83</sup>

The mid-seventeenth century Mughal artists who made the *Padshahnama* folios were not only interested in simply citing vignettes from circulating European engravings as seen in several earlier paintings made by artists in Akbar’s atelier. The artist Basawan, working

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<sup>82</sup> For example, planar renderings of the profiles of elevations and roofs of settlements within a fort or palace complex in muted browns, buffs, and pinks dominate many of the paintings. They exhibit pointed juxtapositions of painterly choices and representational techniques, however, how Mughal artists made such choices and transformed circulating pictures or city views has not been explored. In responding to Koch, Aitken also notes that she is not sure if the “combination of two- and three-dimensional effects... was deemed problematic by the Mughals, even in Shah Jahan’s time... Illusionist tufts of grass, spatial effects in a group of buildings, a goat reproduced down to every tangible hair were secondary to this symbolic dimension of forms. Allusions to Persian painting required the inclusion of significant planar and decorative elements that worked against a naturalistic totality. Therefore, though the picture plane contained naturalism, it was never a complete illusion of nature.” Aitken, “Parataxis and the Practice of Reuse, from Mughal Margins to Mīr Kalān Khān,” 89.

<sup>83</sup> Minissale, *Images of Thought*, xxv–xxvi; 30–36 (original emphasis). It is important to keep in mind that both Koch and Beach are alert to the constructed nature of this manuscript and its paintings. Beach, in particular, notes that the artists of the *Padshahnama* folios created paintings for this historical chronicle by accessing a variety of sources from existing paintings, historical archives, sketches and illustrations made on site, to their own memory and imagination. Beach, “The *Padshahnama* and Mughal Historical Manuscripts,” 122.

in Akbar's court, for instance, has been widely seen as a "pioneer in responding to and absorbing new pictorial devices from European art; naturalistic portraiture, atmospheric perspective, and [adopting] a painterly approach to landscape."<sup>84</sup> In a manuscript leaf from the Mughal court at Lahore, titled, "The Sufi Abu'l Abbas rebukes the vain dervish" (1595, ascribed to Basawan), the artist not only cites the vignette of a city from European prints in the background, but also employs a pavilion setting to frame the key narrative (Ill. 2.5).<sup>85</sup> Basawan layers the composition with a conglomeration of pavilions, doorways, columns, steps, terraces, showing his mastery over creating a rich pictorial experience where the viewer can follow how one space leads into the other. He further appears to take pleasure in rendering details like the niches on the surface of the walls of pavilions that animate the spatial effects in this painting. The carefully composed painted rectangle with the calligraphy heightens a sense of what the artist wishes to reveal or conceal. This compartmentalization of the calligraphy on the one hand puts it in parallel with the artist's composition of the pavilion where the narrative is pictured. On the other hand, this very frontal elevation view of the pavilion may be interpreted as an echo of the flatter elevation

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<sup>84</sup> Beach, Milo Cleveland, "Indian Painting from 1575 to 1650," 111.

<sup>85</sup> I am grateful to Molly Aitken and Sylvia Houghteling for the discussions we had while examining this painting in the exhibition, *Wonder of the Age: Master Painters from India, 1100-1900* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY.



views of pavilions that several artists painted to frame iconic scenes and narratives within pre-Mughal poetic manuscripts.

Even a brief discussion of Baswan's painting and the *Padshahnama* highlights the need to problematize positions that assume a progression towards European models or illusionism as a mark of development of artistic skill, and therefore implicitly and explicitly accept the dominance of the technique of perspectival drawing to render a space as readable. Though it is beyond the scope of the current discussion, much scholarly work remains to be done to systematically understand how artists at the Mughal court engaged with the thematic of spatial depiction. Within this historiography, for the most part, works made at Rajput courts—where artists selectively adapted from Mughal and European paintings and juxtaposed representational space to suggest different temporal realms or spatial experience—are considered as lagging behind or slow to make forays into portraiture, historical manuscripts, and other depictions of real-looking settings.<sup>86</sup> In treating the widely known painted leaves of the Chunar Ragamala, made by artists trained

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<sup>86</sup> Milo Beach has also noted a relation between architectural depictions in the *Padshahnama* and a series of Mandi paintings. He writes, “skill at depicting grand imperial spaces in which small-scale figures convincingly enact court ceremonials, and for which a ground-plan could easily be made, is a result of Mughal interest in historical and spatial recording. Earlier Rajput works were not concerned with material documentation or the expressiveness of empty space – these were Mughal contributions to the arts of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century India.” Beach, “The *Padshahnama* and Mughal Historical Manuscripts,” 126.

at the Mughal workshop for their Hada Rajput patrons at the related courts at Chunar and Bundi, for example, scholars relate the depiction of architecture in this poetic manuscript to contemporaneous Mughalaī idioms (Ill. 2.6). In his otherwise excellent essay that charts such pictorial interactions and circulation of patrons and artists in the mid-seventeenth century, Milo Beach terms their depiction of architecture as “spatially convincing,” thus implying that artists who were not trained in Mughal painting styles would employ spatial representational models which not only were “simplified forms” but also less advanced in their rendering of “real” space.<sup>87</sup>

Aitken has sought to renegotiate a discourse that terms the interaction of Mughal and Rajput painting as a “confrontation between naturalistic and abstracting sensibility” by way of several pointed and cumulative case-studies.<sup>88</sup> One of them specifically draws upon the visualization of landscapes within devotional and poetic manuscripts made at the Rajput courts at Udaipur and Bikaner in the seventeenth century.<sup>89</sup> For instance, in a

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<sup>87</sup> Beach, Milo Cleveland, “The Masters of the Chunar Ragamala and the Hada Master,” 294–295.

<sup>88</sup> Aitken builds upon Vishakha Desai’s work that seeks to problematize the framework of Mughal “influence” in analyzing Rajput paintings by looking at paintings and politics in seventeenth century Mewar and Bikaner. Desai proposes that we think about agency of artists by showing instances of selective adaptation. Desai, “Painting and Politics in Seventeenth-Century North India.” On devotional and illustrated manuscripts not about everyday life but idealized archetypes see Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, Chapter One.

painted page from the *Bhāgavata Purāna* devotional manuscript (ca. 1665), the Udaipur artist Sahabdin depicts the idealized Hindu god-lover Krishna and his consort Radha within the red-colored space of a lush bower (Ill. 2.7). On the right, the artist paints an equally resplendent landscape with trees colored in different hues of greens, reds, oranges, and browns. Within this space, Radha's companion (*sakhī*), who waits upon the couple, looks away to the other side, suggesting that she is guarding and giving privacy to the lovers. The *sakhī*'s gaze in being away from the lovers creates two distinct spaces of contemplation for the viewer; it also extends the space on the right, making it seem larger and deeper than the physical size of the page. About such idealized garden spaces where poetic visions of unions are depicted, Aitken writes, “[The] thicket where Radha awaits Krishna, known in Hindu devotional language as the *kunj*, is a curiously artificial arch with a yellow and red interior. It is not a makeshift resting place in the jungle but the *kunj* of devotional imagination, a sacred, shrine like space where it is forever spring.” She further proposes the significance of formal strategies of mixing and reuse of painted elements and styles within several

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<sup>89</sup> Aitken writes, “descriptions of meaning in Indian painting have typically ended with narrative and iconography.” She argues that questions related to conscious pictorial choices made by Rajasthani court painters have not been asked except for a few studies, “instead, questions of choice and motivation have been elided by a notion of tradition, which has presupposed that Rajasthani court painters painted the way they did because they belonged to a culture that deeply valued the past and because their past dictated these established forms.” Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 2.

examples of north Indian painting as kind of “parataxis.”<sup>90</sup> She argues that the “tolerance of compartments” within Rajput and Mughal paintings was an appealing formal strategy where divisions and juxtapositions often contribute to the “essence of the story” and “[they] were not mere features of settings at the service of illusionism or European style naturalism.” Both this chapter and chapter three consider how Udaipur artists employed paratactic practices in combining not only distinct styles but also spatial conventions like planar, elevation, and isotropic perspective views with portraiture, and the interpretive possibilities these juxtapositions offer for analyzing the picturing the *bhāva* of a place.

How do the pictures of painted settings change when we shift our attention to portraiture at Rajput courts in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century? Artists at the Bikaner, Bundi-Kota,<sup>91</sup> Amber, and Marwar courts were the first to make portraits based on

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<sup>90</sup> Aitken explores pictorial parataxis within Hindu poetic and devotional manuscripts to Mughal albums made in the seventeenth century, in order to explore the compositional precedents and practice of reuse that can help interpret the stylistic and compositional eclecticism seen in the Mughal artist Mīr Kalan Khān’s eighteenth century paintings. She also compares paratactic practices to *khichrī*, an Indian culinary term that is employed as a metaphor for borrowing and mixing in vernacular literary practices of the eighteenth century. Aitken, “Parataxis and the practice of reuse, from Mughal margins to Mīr Kalān Khān.”

<sup>91</sup> Kota was originally part of the Bundi state and was independently established in 1631. Art Historians have found it useful to think through the development of painting at both these centers in a related way due to several artistic, political, and familial connections. Beach, Milo Cleveland, “The Masters of the Chunar Ragamala and the Hada Master.” Aitken also discusses the Kota/Bundi idiom in relation to thinking about “styles as expressions of allegiance” and/or “signature of workshop or collection of workshops.” Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 102.

Mughalaī idioms.<sup>92</sup> This pictorial interest is often attributed to the circulation of several artists, patrons, and audiences between these Rajput courts and the various peripatetic courts of the Mughals.<sup>93</sup> A portrait of Rao Jagat Singh at Kota in a garden shows that artists at Bundi-Kota experimented with the picturing of settings within royal portraits as early as ca. 1660 (Ill.2.8). The artist has carefully painted the ruler’s face, and he is equally interested in centralizing the seated royal figure within the planar depiction of the water channels and quadripartite divisions in a garden space. Here, too, the trees and flowers are painted in elevation views and the artist negotiates the pictorial space between the ruler’s throne and the garden by painting an opaque white circle. This striking circle demarcates the space of the ruler at the physical center of the page; the composition blurs the boundary between a background and foreground by completely eliminating the horizon line which is often seen in Mughal imperial portraits. Catherine Glynn describes a similar painting, made at the court of Jodhpur in c. 1670, which depicts Maharaja Jaswant Singh I at a Music Performance.

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<sup>92</sup> Desai, “Timeless Symbols: Royal Portraits from Rajasthan 17th-19th Centuries.”

<sup>93</sup> Portraits of Rajput kings and nobles participated in two spheres of authority: firstly, when Mughal emperors commissioned likenesses of Rajput nobles and kings who entered into service at the imperial court, and, secondly, Rajput rulers, especially in the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, commissioned their own portraits where artists pictured them as independent rulers. For an excellent discussion on how painters, scribes, and poets engaged with the genre of portraiture at Rajput courts, as well as how portraits—intrinsically related to the styles in which they were painted—functioned as gifts, see Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, Chapter three.

This depiction of Jaswant Singh within a “visual garden” is perhaps inspired by the development of the Maharaja’s taste for building cosmopolitan gardens in interaction with Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (Ill.2.9).<sup>94</sup> In both the Kota and Jodhpur examples, the artists have employed the defining physical features of a Mughal garden to compose a portrait which integrates background and foreground and thus to draw us poignantly to the metaphoric meanings of pleasure, life, and paradise that such gardens evoked.<sup>95</sup> The artists’ choices allude to a complex set of visual, poetic, and architectural markers, and their compositions engage the thematic of picturing landscapes centrally in relation to portraiture.

Udaipur artists employed similar compositions of garden settings to make portraits of Amar Singh II. Two portraits in particular, one featuring the ruler in the company of ladies in a garden (c. 1698-1705), and another in which he is shown playing the spring festival of colors (*phāg*) with his sixteen nobles in a garden (c. 1708-10), have been noted for

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<sup>94</sup> In this example the artist divides the portrait into three registers: the bed of flowers and fountain on the lower register, a platform depicted in a planar view that is divided into two parts by a water stream with the ruler seated on one side against the backdrop of the elevation of a pavilion and the women performers on the other side, together make the middle register; and, the upper register is constituted by lush trees and dark grey monsoon clouds where the Jodhpur artist also merges the horizon line indicating the boundary of the garden space. See, *Ibid.* Chapter 3. Also, artists at the connected court of Nagaur in the first half of the eighteenth century were also invested in picturing their rulers within settings of pleasure gardens, which I discuss further in chapter three.

<sup>95</sup> Arthur M. Sackler Gallery (Smithsonian Institution), *The Mughal Garden*.

how the painter employs the planar view of the four-part garden to centralize the royal portrait (Ill. 2.10, 2.11).<sup>96</sup> In the former, the artist alludes to re-use of the format and composition of the above-discussed Kota painting; however he introduces a horizon by rendering a line of trees in the style of landscapes of the *kunj* we have seen in the above-discussed *Bhāgvata Purāna* leaf.<sup>97</sup> In the latter example, which is much larger (47 x 40.5 cm), comparable in size and its squarish format to the *Ambient feeling of Kota palaces*, the artist has brilliantly evoked the ambience of the festival by highlighting the red powder against the contrasting hues of green that animate the lush garden. The overflowing fountain and water channel that axially align with the ruler's portrait further attests to the painter employment of all aspects of the depicted landscape environs—the tiny red flowers that coalesce as a pattern, the central square platform, the entrance doorways, the red tent—to focus attention on the ruler's portrait. I have pored over this well-known example to highlight that the picturing in this painting suggests an idealized garden space which participates in the same topoi used in above-discussed examples to create the royal

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<sup>96</sup> Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur: Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 128–137; Glynn, Catherine, “The ‘Stipple Master’,” 524–526.

<sup>97</sup> The size of the three portraits is also comparable, though it is key to note that the Udaipur example is a little larger in size. Portrait of Rao Jagat Singh of Kota, 27.7 x 17.7 cm; Portrait of Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur, 26.8 x 17.4 cm; Portrait of Maharana Amar Singh II of Udaipur with a group of ladies, 33.3 x 29.8 cm. Also, further research will reveal if this particular Udaipur painting has an inscription on the reverse.

portrait. Indeed this painting is in conversation with those paintings. Yet it is also one of the earliest known paintings to bear a copious inscription beginning with the name of the place that is pictured in the painting—“Maharana Amar Singhji is playing *phāg* in the pavilion of the garden of Sarbat Vilas.” The scribe also noted the names of all the courtiers and musicians (*kalāvant*) and the positions of the two unnamed poets (*cāran*, who sung royal histories and praises).<sup>98</sup> When engaging with the architecture and urban environs of their city in the years to come, Udaipur’s court painters take up exactly this dialectic between illusionism and panegyrics within place-making.<sup>99</sup> Scribes’ inscriptions, in some cases, echo possible pictorial arguments, and, in others, operate within their own realm of conventions.<sup>100</sup>

Apart from innovating such compositions for smaller-sized portraits, artists at Bundi-Kota were deeply interested in celebrating the kingship and power of the Hada rulers

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<sup>98</sup> *śrī. bādī sarabata bilāsa re darīkhānai śrī mārāṇā amar sīghjī phāga khele hai.* For complete inscription, see, Topsfield and National Gallery of Victoria, *Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria*, 62.

<sup>99</sup> Aitken explores this question for reframing the Mughal-Rajput encounter. She argues that often artists were not rejecting Mughal art, but rather “the degree of compromise between nature and artifice found in Mughal art, for they embraced a more highly restricted representation of nature and sought for more exaggerated stylized effects.” Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 41.

<sup>100</sup> For instance in the 1891 Udaipur Painting Inventory, at several instances one sees that that the scribe, in describing paintings, notes the names of specific palaces or pavilions within palaces where the ruler’s portrait is pictured.



in larger paintings on paper which depicted hunts and elephant fights as well as in murals that adorned palace walls. The hunt scene depicting Rao Ram Singh I of Kota at Makundgarh (who is identified on the basis of an inscription, c. 1690, sized 33.5 x 26.8 cm) is one of the early examples featuring the immediacy of a royal hunt (Ill. 2.12). The artist (whom Milo Beach calls the Kota master A)<sup>101</sup> is simply not interested in centralizing Ram Singh's portrait or the dominant scene of action of the tiger uprooting and eating a tree in the forest. We see the vignette of a palace on the far right corner, which signals the forest landscape as located outside of a built fortified space. The artist employs undulating rocks and hills to literally create the boundaries and distance between the two domains. Similarly he skillfully renders various layers of flora and fauna that both merge in the picture to give a sense of the thickness of the forest and individually emerge in other parts as if to give evidence of the artist's expertise in using a combination of fine outlines (*nim kalam*) with opaque layers of paint. The paintings pictorially conceptualize this forest space as of equal if not greater interest than the ruler's portrait as a subject of painterly exploration. While this painting quite easily entices its viewers to explore the hidden details and variegated layers of the forest, scholars have too often focused exclusively on identifying the portrait of the

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<sup>101</sup> Beach notes the new ways and styles the artist employs in depicting the foliage of trees to convey the density of the forest as well as to bring attention to the ruler's face and body. He studies the formal content of the work for grouping Kota paintings into a stylistic group and mapping shifts in the workshop tradition. Beach, Milo Cleveland, "Masters of Early Kota Painting."

ruler as a means of placing the painting within a chronology of its production. In this single-minded definition of the content of the painting as a portrait, the possibility to understand the painters' interest in envisioning multiple subjects, encompassing royal kings and expanded landscapes and thus forging integrated images and memories of people and place, has been lost.

The juxtaposition of spatial effects and topoi, seen in several paintings made at Mughal and Rajput courts, was a pictorial strategy that Udaipur artists continued to favor and adapt as they innovated new compositions for picturing Amar Singh II. In picturing a hunt scene on a horizontal page (33.5 x 45.5 cm), one Udaipur artist chose to depict, in the lower register, Amar Singh II riding a horse twice to denote the action of the ruler releasing the hunting crane, and, in the upper register, he depicts the broader rural environs (ill.2.13).<sup>102</sup> Gigantic flying cranes depicted throughout the painting visually connect both registers and assert their centrality to the picture. The artist has imagined types of landscapes: an oblique view of a land being ploughed, a bird's eye view of a water stream flowing from the hills, a thin strip of water with jagged edges beyond the hills, a settled

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<sup>102</sup> Another painting featuring Amar Singh II is noteworthy because the scribe lists the three different portraits in the inscription behind the painting in the same sequence as the artist combines the three different actions. The artist divides a vertical page (40 x 21 cm) into three equal parts: first, where the ruler is seated in a hall with cusped arches, second, where he is shown swimming in a water tank mixed with saffron, and third, where he is walking through a rose garden. Topsfield, *Indian Paintings and Drawings from the Collection of Howard Hodgkin*, 60–61.

cluster of houses around which women are shown tending to young children and bringing water, a devotional shrine next to a tree. While this background of a complex landscape appears to be the background for the complete painting, it is also apparent that the artist has located the ruler's portrait against a separate blue ground that echoes the horizon line and blue sky at the upper edge of the painting. The setting is visualized as layers that are stacked on top of each other in contrasting colors, and through it the artist urges his audiences to contemplate the pictorial, spatial, and thematic connections between these layers in the process of looking at the painting.

Vishaka Desai coined the term “contextual portraits” as a meaningful way to describe such paintings that sought to depict rulers within realistic spatial and temporal contexts.<sup>103</sup> Expanding on this concept, Aitken has explored how artists were simultaneously interested in new ways to depict rulers in settings that suggest real times and places and in courtly panegyrics that drove such paintings toward portraiture and kept

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<sup>103</sup> Desai explored this term largely in association with several eighteenth century Udaipur paintings like the above-discussed example of the painting depicting Amar Singh II with his sixteen nobles in a garden. However, not many scholars, apart from Aitken's recent interventions, have sought to critically engage with the ideas encapsulated in this term. Desai, “Timeless Symbols: Royal Portraits from Rajasthan 17th-19th Centuries,” 322.

them from being straightforward visual documents.<sup>104</sup> She abandons the narratives of “royal pastimes” that have all too often accompanied the interpretation of such paintings and draws our attention to how often scribes emphasize a ruler’s activities in the inscriptions behind several Udaipur court paintings. Such joint visual and textual articulations echoed the keen interest of poets and scribes at Rajput courts in codifying enactment of the ruler’s activities within contemporaneous daily court dairies and literary poems. Interestingly, Aitken’s principal example, a late mid-eighteenth century Udaipur painting, Jagat Singh II hawking for cranes (d. 1744, 68 x 73 cm), also features a royal hunt (Ill. 2.14).<sup>105</sup> The miniaturized figure of the king is depicted multiple times across a series of juxtaposed landscape settings such as a cultivated patch, some rolling hills, a cluster of houses, and a flat ground on which the royal camp dines. About the “decentered and dispersed compositions” seen in this painting and in several others, Aitken argues that “structurally, these works owe a debt to the decentered internal frames of earlier manuscript illustration, except that they drop the obvious internal frames employed in manuscripts to retain only a

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<sup>104</sup> Aitken writes, “when [artists] pictured important events, they almost always pictured the people to whom the events happened, not the happening itself.” Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 119.

<sup>105</sup> Unfortunately, the inscription behind this painting is not currently available to scholars. The artists and date have been ascribed per a previous catalogue entry that does not give us more details. Kossak, *Indian Court Painting, 16th-19th Century*, 90.

peripatetic arrangement of scenes.”<sup>106</sup> She proposes to call this “peculiar mix of abstraction and naturalism” as “denotive naturalism,” a pictorial strategy “qualitatively different from the illusionism of Mughal painting.”<sup>107</sup> This kind of naturalism, Aitken suggests, operated within multiple overlapping realms of memory and idealization that paralleled contemporaneous literary practices which artists employed along with their allusions to mapping practices in order to create in such paintings the feeling of a time and place. Ultimately, Aitken argues that the visuality of such seemingly unorganized compositions constitutes a picture of the *bhāva* of a place and time which seeks to connect to the “capacity of memory” of its viewers.

The “*bhāva*” in paintings of Mewar court life would have been very different from the *bhāva* or mood of a manuscript like Sahibdin’s, which was designed to correlate with a text dedicated to the *shringara* rasa (erotic emotion). Rasa (aesthetic emotion) depends on the individuals in an audience forgetting themselves and becoming one in their experience of a transcendent, universal feeling, but the *bhāva* (emotion) in these images of court life, by contrast, depended on viewers’ particular knowledge of local people, places, and events. The *bhāva* of Nahar Magra, for instance, could be keenly felt only by those who had hunted there and who could add to the details in the painting their memories of the place. What is effective in such a painting, what makes it real, is how it connects to and arouses a sense of the place—or event—in its spectators.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 127.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 54–55.

By situating the question of space and the pictorial tools deployed to render space at the center of above-discussed court paintings we start seeing how Indian painters employed place-centric compositions to transform the ontology of portraits. Depicting hunts and outdoor gardens as landscape settings enabled Udaipur artists to establish genealogical connections with idealized landscapes of devotional and poetic manuscripts. However, the peculiarities of a “naturalism” that combines map-like sensibilities, royal panegyrics, and stylization, which painters made into a distinct feature within Udaipur’s large-scale paintings and portraits that take the city and its architecture as subjects of affection need to be evaluated further. Within Udaipur court paintings that employ chorography,<sup>109</sup> we see how the courtyards and architecture of individual palace buildings and the urban spaces, lakes, and hills of the city set the parameters for compositional innovations. I turn to some of the earliest large-scale paintings depicting the palaces and cityscapes of Udaipur in the concluding section of this chapter. Exploring the overlaps between courtly panegyrics and chorography of Udaipur city demands that we tease out further nuances and augment our understanding of contextual portraits and the dynamics of picturing the *bhāva* of a palace. It is for this purpose that the Udaipur artist’s interpretations in the *Ambient feeling of the*

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<sup>109</sup> Cosgrove, “Landscape and Landschaft,” 59–60, original emphasis. See chapter one for Cosgrove’s articulation of chorography.

*Kota palaces* offer a critical lens. Before finally turning to it, let us briefly consider Udaipur court artists' experiments in depicting settings within portraits of Amar Singh II, made around 1690-1710s in tinted *siyah kalam* (*nīm kalam*), that were being undertaken when this painting was made.

Several portraits of Amar Singh II made by the artist whom Catherine Glynn has called “the Stipple Master” have been noted for the artist’s genius for tiny details, the novelty of his style, his minimalistic palette, and his relatively strong investment in the genre of portraiture.<sup>110</sup> Amar Singh II is depicted performing acts of devotion, riding a horse, and in outdoor and garden settings with a group of ladies. For our purposes it is key to note that in the process of establishing new styles and genres in *nīm kalam*, Amar Singh II’s artists—such as the Stipple Master—ushered in a taste for finely drafted architectural vignettes at Udaipur. In several equestrian portraits of Amar Singh II, for example, we see drawings of temples, gardens, clustered houses and trees, and building complexes in the

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<sup>110</sup> Glynn has asserted that the Stipple Master was already working for Amar Singh II at Bundi, where he lived as a prince in his maternal home after rebelling against his father Jai Singh. See, Glynn, Catherine, “The ‘Stipple Master’,” 519. Both Glynn and Topsfield agree that this kind of style appeared early in Amar Singh II’s reign by 1700 based on an elephant portrait that bears this date. See *Ibid.*, 521; Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 123. Aitken also notes the reasons that lead us to believe that the Stipple Master was trained elsewhere, perhaps Bikaner or the Deccan. Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 105–106.

background (Ill.2.15, 2.16).<sup>111</sup> It is difficult to ascertain if these vignettes, cited across several portraits, suggest a particular place or a type of place that was important to the ruler portrayed as riding a marching horse; perhaps the vignettes allude to royal journeys (*sawāri*). In another well-known painting, titled, *Amar Singh II at a Picture Galley Outside of Rajnagar* (c. 1707-08, 47.9 x 37.8 cm), the Stipple Master employs the garden setting to compose the portraits of the ruler and his companions (Ill.2.17). The artist shifts the composition to the right hand side, however he highlights the axial symmetry of the garden space in drawing the planar view of the water tank and four-part garden beds which he combines with elevation views of the entrance doorways, fountains, and trees. Extremely fine lines are used to render the portraits; however sketchy lines are used to delineate the architectural elements, especially in the rendering of the screens. This painting makes us ponder about the painter's process of making the picture: did one painter compose the overall design and render the architecture and another painter focused on rendering the portraits? Or did the artists not consider it important to render the architecture in exacting lines in a painting that invites the viewer to relish the detailed stippling that animates such portraits? For these reasons, it remains unclear to me if a group of artists collaborated to

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<sup>111</sup> Andrew Topsfield suggests that Udaipur artists innovated this regional variant of a stippled grisaille manner by selectively adapting Mughal and Deccani painting. See, Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 124.



produce this painting or the Stipple Master, as an individual artist, deliberately employed two different styles of drawing.

Andrew Topsfield has shown that several portraits of Amar Singh II focus on depicting the king as the ideal hero (*nāyaka*). These emulations of the poetics of *śringāra rasa*, include one painting which carries related verses that “bear out the theme of aesthetic and sensuous delight in a garden setting.”<sup>112</sup> Certainly painters exhibit “freshness of observation,”<sup>113</sup> beautifully captured in another painting by the ‘Stipple Master’ of Amar Singh II and showing his patron worshiping at the Eklingji temple that housed the family deity of the Mewar rulers (Ill. 2.18). The painter renders the elevation profile of the temple *shikhara* in delicate outlines in *nim kalam* and highlights the divine icon of the four-faced Shiva lingam with the use of shading and gold pigment. Historical audiences would have immediately recognized the temple site and ritual. The image would have been equally seen as a portrait of Amar Singh II that draws upon the devotional space of this important temple which Mewar rulers employed to construct their kingship as one in service of Eklingji and the people of Mewar. The artist pictures the architecture to heighten this relationship between the place of worship, royal portrait, and power. The composition

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 132–134.

structures our gaze and focuses it on the devotional space almost as if to replicate the act of devotion in the viewer's seeing of the painting. It is only upon sustained examination that we take pleasure, perhaps like the artist, in locating the several monkeys that populate the roof of the temple and surrounding environs and appreciating the balanced hues of red, green, brown, and grey that are used to render the elephants, horses, and trees, depicted outside the boundary of the temple complex. This corpus of *nim kalam* paintings shows that Udaipur artists induced a dialectical relation between imagining architectural spaces to picture ideals of kingship and depicting particular royal palaces and gardens, which were then inhabited, as a thematic full of pictorial possibilities. Irrespective of the fact whether scribes noted the names of specific places and building in related inscriptions of paintings, notions of Udaipur paintings as "documents" of court life can be problematized if we consider how a pictorial description of details is itself employed as a *topoi* in the service of crafting historical imaginaries of people and places.

This discussion of a few well-known examples from the Udaipur court workshop and the broader canon is by no means exhaustive. I have deliberated on the formal strategies employed by artists to depict settings often at the expense of discussing portraiture, chronology, and attribution. Most often this aspect of the pictures is treated in a self-evident manner in the current literature. Often adapting the work of Bundi-Kota models,

Udaipur artists emerged at the forefront in eighteenth and nineteenth century South Asia in employing architectural renderings of their city and the surrounding environs, thereby transforming portraiture. The above-discussed *Bhāgvata Purāna* painted leaf represents one among the many examples of poetic and devotional manuscripts made at the Udaipur court which continued to be made alongside larger topographical paintings and portraits by Udaipur artists over the course of the eighteenth century (Ill. 2.7). Its lush landscape, subject matter, stylization, and size (24.4 x 19.8 cm) gives us a very palpable sense of the kind of transformations Udaipur artists make in all aspects of the picture—ranging from its materiality and visuality to its ontology—when they set themselves up to paint subject matters populated by likenesses of people and places within large-scale paintings. The framing of selective sites in service of courtly portraiture and panegyrics can be fully explored only after we attempt to understand that along with portraiture Udaipur artists were exploring how they could picture the *bhāva* of a place. I argue that the *Ambient feeling of the Kota palaces* is a key response painting that urges us to consider “feeling of a place” as a operative category that may enable us to further nuance our approach to thinking about the picturing of “contexts,” and, in turn, re-consider the limits and usefulness of the term “contextual portraits.” When Udaipur artists engage in depicting a place, they adopt paratactic approaches in juxtaposing representational conventions because, firstly, they

expect their viewers to building on artistic suggestions and complete the picture of a place in their mind recalling their own memories, and, secondly, perhaps painters realize that any kind of representation would always be partial. The artist, at best, will be able to convey the context from his own affective ways of recalling a space or time, necessarily always subjective by nature. I am not proposing that painters were necessarily well-versed in theories of aesthetics and emotions, nevertheless the kind of continuously moving vision which is pictorially articulated in Udaipur paintings puts the burden of interpretation on its viewers. Compositions operate in the realm of suggestion and thus demonstrate a deep understanding of poetics of place-making.

### ***2.3 Translating and Adapting Settings (and Portraits) in the “Ambient Feeling of the Kota Palaces,” c. 1700***

Scholars have drawn connections between the “*Ambient feeling of the Kota palaces*” made in c. 1700 by an artist in an Udaipur idiom (Ill. 2.1), another painting depicting Kota palaces made by a Kota artist (Rijksmuseum painting, Ill. 2.2), an engraving made by Bernard Picart based on the Rijksmuseum painting (Ill. 2.19), extant murals in the Kota palaces (Ill. 2.20), and the architecture of the palaces as they stand today, primarily for the purpose of dating and

identifying the miniaturized portrait of the royal figure.<sup>114</sup> Preoccupation with questions of chronology has led to interpreting these varied material depictions as contiguous. If we trace how the *Ambient feeling of the Kota palaces* and the Rijksmuseum painting might be related through the circulations of people and paintings across the networks of Rajput kings and European merchants and collectors, we can establish the provenance of the Rijksmuseum painting, and, in turn, understand how the Udaipur artist's version centrally frames the question of pictorial response and translation.

Joachim Bautze has identified the depicted courtyard where a royal figure with a golden halo is seated in all the versions as the Chattar Mahal palace at Kota. According to Bautze, at least one of the murals depicting the Chattar Mahal and the Kota court can be dated to 1701, based on an inscription which has unfortunately faded away.<sup>115</sup> This mural and the Rijksmuseum painting share a viewpoint and an oblique orientation for depiction of

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<sup>114</sup> Topsfield initially assigned a date of 1690 to this painting, which Bautze has revised as 1700 based on the identification of the ruler as Rao Ram Singh of Kota whose reign begins in April 1696. The date of 1700 aligns with the networks I am tracing, however dating based on the portrait of the ruler is not my chief occupation here, especially because the artist of *Ambient Feeling of the Kota Palaces* prioritizes depicting the palaces over carefully delineating the ruler's face. Bautze, "Amsterdam and the Earliest Published Kota Painting," 82–83.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.; It is difficult to date or obtain further information on the Kota murals at this point. Beach dates the mural largely to 1780, although he notes that the Chattar Mahal ones might belong to an earlier time period. See, Beach, *Rajput Painting at Bundi and Kota*, 42–43. I am grateful to Molly Aitken for sharing her photographs of murals from Kota which enabled me to find a picture of the mural Bautze discusses.

the central courtyard (Ill. 2.20, Ill. 2.2). However, in spite of these shared elements, the Rijksmuseum painting looks rather different. The mural comprises a horizontally oriented composition in contrast to vertical composition of the painting, and its difference is further enhanced by the artist's inclusion of detailed views of adjoining courtyards, buildings, gardens, and fort walls. Perhaps due to these pictorial differences, Bautze suggests that it is difficult to affirm if the Rijksmuseum painting was made in Kota. He proposes that it is an Udaipur copy of yet another unknown painting of the Kota palaces made at the Kota workshop. In terms of its color palette, style, and format, however, this painting doesn't conform to the kind of paintings being made by Udaipur artists in the early eighteenth century. Its pictorial elements have more in common with a set of drawings in the collection of the Rao Madho Singh Trust Museum in the Kota fort, which was produced by artists in the court painting workshop at Kota.<sup>116</sup> These drawings feature forts, battles, and detailed architectural environs. Collectively they reveal an interest among Kota artists in topographical rendering and use of fine lines to detail architectural vignettes. Stuart Cary Welch has attributed the drawings to the artist Sheikh Taju, based on a depiction of the siege of a fort, where the artist's name is clearly written next to the sketch (Ill. 2.21).<sup>117</sup> The

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<sup>116</sup> Welch, *Gods, Kings, and Tigers : the Art of Kotah*. See Plate numbers 17,23,38.

<sup>117</sup> Welch, "Kotah's Lively Patrons and Artists," 30–34.

artist pays special attention to delineating the concentric layout of the fort walls from an elevated viewpoint. Other sketches, like one that employs a bird's eye view of a fort to study its undulating layout, and another which Welch saw as an artist's fantastical imagining of a siege of a fort located at the very top of a tall narrow rock, exhibit an artistic interest in exploring built spaces from an elevated view point (Ill. 2.22, 2.23). The former sketch is particularly interesting in how the depiction of the fort walls and pictorial suggestion of clusters of houses and temples relates to the depiction of urban environs in the lower half of the Rijksmuseum painting. The vertical format and size of the latter sketch depicting the siege of a fort (43 x 30.9 cm) is similar to the Rijksmuseum painting, and the artist's use of a pale yellow and blue-grey wash tones echo with Rijksmuseum painting's color palette; both of these aspects of the work are otherwise difficult to locate in relation to other court styles. Most importantly, the above-discussed Kota sketches resonate with the Rijksmuseum painting in the terms of the sense of pictorial busy-ness and the density of lines that animate the drawing, the size and scale of architectural walls and buildings, and the artist's attentiveness to detail in rendering minute figures and spatial elements.<sup>118</sup> I am therefore

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<sup>118</sup> Apart from the above-discussed drawing that bears his name another major inscribed work is a double processional portrait of the Kota Maharao Durjan Sal and Maharana Jagat Singh II of Udaipur carried in a palanquin, where the scribe has noted that the painting was gifted by the artist Sheikh Taju. In my research I also found another hitherto unnoticed painting of Jagat Singh II pictured in the Dilkushal Mahal at Udaipur, in the collection of the Albert Hall Museum at Jaipur, where the

hesitant to consider the Rijksmuseum painting as a rendering of a Kota painting in an Udaipur idiom, as Bautze has suggested, exclusively based on the stippled vignettes of the trees, moon, and hills which he relates to the artistic practice at Udaipur in the workshop of Amar Singh II. It is quite possible that the Kota artist of the Rijksmuseum Kota painting is making sophisticated allusions to other courtly styles and conventions from Rajasthan or the Deccan region.

The engraving titled, *Vue et Description du Palais du Grand Mogol, de ses Divertissements, de ses Femmes etc etc*, is based on the Rijksmuseum Kota painting and the engraver closely reproduced most details from the painting (Ill.2.19). It was published in 1719 in the fifth volume of Picart's *Atlas Historique* published by Chatelain at Amsterdam in the section on the genealogy of Mughal Emperors.<sup>119</sup> Chatelain notes that this engraving and several other

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inscription notes Sheikh Taju as the artist (*kalamī cīterā*). Welch also notes that the double portrait which may be related to the Hurda conference held in 1734, might have been originally made by a Mewar artist and Sheikh Taju seems to have copied it perhaps a portrait-gift. He also believed that Sheikh Taju sketched the drawings depicting Aurangzeb in durbar settings, currently in the Kota collections. Welch has thus proposed that Sheikh Taju was an imperial artist who trained at the Mughal workshop and perhaps also at Deccan, and traveled to Kota. It is also significant to note that some scholars believed that the Rijksmuseum painting originated in Golconda or that Deccani connections are seen in the artistic style of the painting. Due to these inscriptions, and Sheikh Taju's rendering of both Udaipur rulers as well as topographical and architectural environs, I intend to do further research on his travels in the future. Current evidence points to Sheikh Taju's travels in the 1720-30s, and I hope to investigate this link further. Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Chatelain and Gueudeville, *Atlas Historique: Ou, Nouvelle Introduction à L'histoire, à La Chronologie & à La Geographie Ancienne & Moderne, Représentée Dans de Nouvelles Cartes, Où L'on Remarque L'établissement*



illustrations in the account of the Mughal empire were based on the collection of Cone Abate Giovanni Antonio Baldini (1654-1725).<sup>120</sup> In his research on Oriental art collections in Italy, R W Lightbown has shown that Picart must have made this engraving in 1715, in Amsterdam, even though it was not published until 1719. Additionally, Lightbown suggests that Baldini acquired many of his collections in Amsterdam between 1710 and 1713.<sup>121</sup> This possibility, for our current purposes, provides an important connection to Udaipur.

We don't know much regarding Baldini's collecting networks, however we do know of the Dutch embassy of J.J. Ketelaar that visited Udaipur in 1711. Several depictions of Ketelaar and the Dutch ambassadors have been included in paintings made at Udaipur, and

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*Des États & Empires Du Monde, Leur Durée, Leur Chûte & Leurs Differens Gouvernemens ; La Chronologie Des Consuls Romains, Des Papes, Des Empereurs, Des Rois & Des Princes, &c., Qui Ont Été Depuis Le Commencement Du Monde, Jusqu'à Présent, et La Généalogie Des Maisons Souveraines de l'Europe*, 5:114, Plate number 41.; In fact, Bautze begins his article with this engraving and one of the chief aims of his study is to re-identify the subject of this engraving and disassociate from its incorrect Mughal labeling in the Picart volumes. Therefore he seeks to show the relation between this engraving, the Rijksmuseum painting, Kota murals, and the *Ambient Feeling of Kota Palaces*, in order to identify the engraving as depicting a Kota ruler. Analysing this engraving and the Rijksmuseum painting together poses another case of pictorial translations where the engraver for example interprets the elephants drawn on either side of the red doorway on the outer wall of the central courtyard as geese. However, interpreting this set of pictorial translations taking into account the context of Picart's broader ambitions in this book and the other engravings and maps of Mughal India that comprise this section is currently beyond the scope of this chapter and the subject of a separate project. Bautze, "Amsterdam and the Earliest Published Kota Painting."

<sup>120</sup> Lightbown, "Oriental Art and the Orient in Late Renaissance and Baroque Italy," 267.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 266.

this meeting, as Andrew Topsfield has shown, triggered the Udaipur court workshop to make paintings on the thematic of foreigners (*firangi*) as well as several paintings and palaces from Udaipur exhibit the use of Dutch porcelain and tiles.<sup>122</sup> Alas, neither correspondence nor inscriptions that document the exchange of gifts or paintings between the two parties have been found to date. Nevertheless, given the timing of the visit of the Ketelaar's embassy to Udaipur in 1711, Baldini's focus on collecting Indian paintings in Amsterdam between 1710-13, and Picart's making of the engraving in 1715, it is highly likely that the Rijksmuseum painting which found its way into Amsterdam was circulating in the Udaipur court workshop at some point between 1700 and 1711.<sup>123</sup> Given the familial ties between the two Rajput courts at this time, several paintings and artists circulated between

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<sup>122</sup> The embassy's visit has been pictorially commemorated within large-scale cloth paintings we are not sure if these were gifted to the embassy or if they found their way later into collections in Amsterdam. The two paintings in the collection of the Victoria and Albert museum in London are believed to have traveled to the United Kingdom with James Tod in 1822. The provenance and route of travel of another painting in a private collection in Amsterdam is not known. Bautze and Galerie Saundarya Lahari., *Indian Miniature Paintings, c. 1590 - c. 1850.*; Topsfield, "Ketelaar's Embassy and the Farangi Theme in the Art of Udaipur."

<sup>123</sup> Recently, there has also been passing speculation if the Picart's engraving has been based on the painting or if the painting has been based on the engraving. This is difficult to ascertain, however, given that we have murals in Kota depicting the same subject, and the very possible situation that the Rijksmuseum painting came to the Netherlands via Udaipur, I believe that the engraving was made after the painting and not vice versa. Roy, *50 x India : de 50 Mooiste Miniaturen van Het Rijksmuseum = the 50 Most Beautiful Miniatures from the Rijksmuseum*, 102.

Bundi-Kota and Udaipur.<sup>124</sup> Even before Amar Singh II stayed at Bundi, paintings from the Hara court found their way into the Udaipur collection, and scholars have identified Udaipur artist's adaptations of Bundi-Kota models and styles in portraits of Amar Singh's grandfather, Raj Singh.<sup>125</sup> Many have held that the impetus for Udaipur artist's interest in expanding the scale of paintings on paper or cloth and depicting architecture came from murals in Kota palaces, and Amar Singh II of Udaipur has been thought to have acquired a taste for such courtly subjects while staying at Kota.<sup>126</sup> The circulations that I have briefly outlined, when seen alongside the departures undertaken by the Udaipur artist in making

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<sup>124</sup> The mother of Amar Singh II of Udaipur was a Bundi princess, and the young prince stayed in Bundi around 1691 following a fight with father Jai Singh. Upon his return to Udaipur, Amar Singh II resided at Rajnagar near the Rajsamand Lake for a few years where he held an independent court. Topsfield suggests that he patronized painting here, possibly attracting artists from Udaipur, Bundi and Kota. Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 116–119.

<sup>125</sup> Catherine Glynn has noted that one of the earliest paintings portraying Amar Singh II as a prince (as noted in the inscription) hunting boars in a forest is modeled after a Bundi example. Glynn, Catherine, "The 'Stipple Master'," 520; Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 121. Some of the examples, discussed in the previous section, show that artists, audiences, and paintings circulated between Bundi-Kota and Udaipur at the turn of the century.

<sup>126</sup> Some of the earliest examples murals in the Badal Mahal palace at Bundi, currently dated to c. 1610–20, and early murals in the Kota palace, currently dated to c. 1700 exhibit perhaps the first large format horizontal pictures, where painters, in the process of painting on palace walls, make the architectural space a subject for exploration. Several historians have therefore suggested that Bundi-Kota murals lay the ground for artistic experiments on paper paintings in a larger format especially in the inception of this genre at Udaipur. It has been difficult to explore this connection of Kota murals to Udaipur painting within the dissertation, however I hope to follow up on this proposed link in the future.

his version of the Rijksmuseum painting in creating the *Ambient feeling of Kota palaces*, make it possible, plausible even, that this painting constituted a response picture and that it exhibits an artist's adaptation and exploration of pictorial tools to render spatial settings. I am proposing here a plausible, yet fictional, account of a possible way in which this image was constructed. The formal departures can be understood only if we take the time to analyze the Udaipur painter's decisions, thereby warranting such reconstructions of the image-making process.

The Udaipur artist transformed the picture presented in the Rijksmuseum Kota painting in at least three significant ways: Firstly, the Udaipur artist chose to change the viewing point for picturing the central courtyard and surrounding buildings, albeit alluding to the oblique axis that dominates the composition in the Rijksmuseum painting (Ill.2.24 (details)).<sup>127</sup> He presents us with a frontal view of the palace wall, next to which the ruler is portrayed in a profile view, drawn approximately in the physical center of the paper. The artist thus alters, with respect to the Rijksmuseum painting, how a beholder may encounter this imagery, for in the Udaipur painting one's vision might be oriented literally from the

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<sup>127</sup> In another painting made by Amar Singh II's painters, discussed above, we see that oblique views are inserted within planar depiction of a garden in extremely pointed ways (Ill. 2.10). In an otherwise planar view of the water channels only the central channel is highlighted by use of oblique lines, which formally correspond to the isotropic view of the symmetric pavilions on either end of the garden and the octagonal platform where the ruler is seated with a lady.

left hand corner to look at the ruler and his palace. The portrait of the ruler itself is closely drawn on the basis of the posture and facial modeling and features of the royal figure that is seen in the Rijksmuseum painting.<sup>128</sup> The Udaipur artist also cites the figures of various women that inhabit the central courtyard in the Rijksmuseum painting, though he adjusts their positions per his adapted composition, and he carefully includes all the figural groups, ranging from the whisk (*chowri*) bearers, musicians, connoisseurs in the audience, to the individual lady who salutes the king. It is possible that this central palatial space was the first part of the painting to be composed. There is an insistent pull towards this oblique framing of the courtyard and the dazzling gold pigment that the artist uses for coloring the halo and seat of the ruler. It is from here that one's eye moves to unravel the rest of the complex composition in the *Ambient feeling of the Kota palaces*.

We see that the artist has literally elongated the painted space occupied by the gardens and water tank lined with lit lamps. Thus he represents some aspects of the landscape in greater detail, and yet chooses to eliminate others, like the carpet that covers the small pavilion within the water tank. Likewise, he adds a red cloth canopy supported on

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<sup>128</sup>The portraits made by both the Kota and Udaipur and Kota artists also recall two smaller Udaipur portraits of the Mughal emperor Jahangir with his attendants, often to the Mewar master Sahabdin. The artist of the current painting under consideration follows a similar model of rendering a ruler seated in the same profile pose with one of his legs folded, wearing a delicate white jama and a set of pearl strings. Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 65; Losty, *The Ramayana: Love and Valour in India's Great Epic: The Mewar Ramayana Manuscripts*, 9.

slender gold-colored vertical supports and a line of lamps with rising flames in gold and red along and within the water tank, elements completely absent in the Rijksmuseum painting. Even as he introduces these new details, the Udaipur artist carefully alludes to every pavilion and detail within the terrace of the building next to the royal figure, and squashes and elongates the architecture as seems fit to him. These adaptations and citations become apparent to us upon closely looking at both the paintings in relation to each other; thus our seeing makes visible the kind of “looking” the Udaipur artist engaged in.<sup>129</sup> The deliberate shifting of the viewing point by the Udaipur artist is metaphorical and substantive at the same time, in that it enacts the processes of other artists of the period who looked at circulating paintings made at different courts. We begin to see the *Ambient feeling of Kota palaces* not as an exercise in mimesis related to the architecture of Kota palaces—which the artist of this painting may or may not have seen—but rather as an exploration of diverse ways to render a place, and especially the *bhāva* of a place.

Secondly, the Udaipur artist has employed a heterogeneous set of conventions to render the Kota palaces. On the lower left hand corner, he depicts the smaller courtyards in a planimetric view combined with sectional elevations of select walls of surrounding

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<sup>129</sup> Christopher Wood conceptualizes “seeing” and “making” art as active and enterprising processes, “more than a mere passive reception of impressions.” Wood, “‘Curious Pictures’ and the Art of Description,” 342.

buildings, a convention which is not employed by the Kota artist in the Rijksmuseum painting (Ill.2.25 (details)). The artist has carefully imagined the plan of the depicted space from the bird's-eye view of these interlinked courtyards that is drawn in the Rijksmuseum painting. Now, if we shift our gaze to the upper left hand side of the painting, we see that in depicting the courtyard which adjoins the central courtyard, the artist employs a point of view consistent with that he used to depict the central courtyard which features the seated Kota ruler (Ill.2.26 (details)). The continuity in the angle of the lines enables a modern viewer's eye to wander comfortably and to look for detailed delineations of people and architecture. The artist, however, decides to depict the four-part garden, seen on the left hand side of the painting, by introducing another set of strong diagonal lines not exactly parallel to the centrally depicted courtyard (Ill.2.27 (details)). Given his alteration of the orientation of the view presented in the Rijksmuseum painting, the Udaipur artist had to devise different solutions to render the horizon line where the building juts out in an unresolved manner, further emphasizing the hard line that demarcates the foreground and background (Ill.2.28 (details)). The contrasting colors and elimination of the fortification walls and the representation of the settlements on the outside further enhance this distinction between the two paintings. Albeit it is key to note that the roundish horizon line may be alluding to the circular fort wall we see on the edge of the Rijksmuseum painting.

The exigencies of pictorial space dictate such choices, and the artist likely sought to enhance the cohesiveness of the finished picture by adhering to the palaces. Because the Udaipur artist juxtaposes several different viewing points, diagonal lines, and representational conventions on all sides of the central courtyard in this painting, a viewer continuously reorients his vision in relation to the represented space. This painting urges us to deliberate the affect the artist achieves by means of such parataxis that demand a viewer to make cognitive leaps by parsing out planar and isometric views. Pictorial strategies such as these will go on to become one of the hallmarks of large-scale topographical Udaipur paintings in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

Thirdly, let us turn to the Udaipur artist's approach to style in painting the *Ambient feeling of the Kota palaces*; the ways in which he layers the interpretation of representational conventions and view points with a distinct Udaipur stamp (*chāp*), which may be translated as style or a set of markers that visually associate a group of paintings to each other. Aitken has sought to establish the historical awareness of style and show that the “concept of style is not an anachronistic imposition on Rajasthan court painting” by historians who have studied this corpus over the course of the twentieth century.<sup>130</sup> She writes,

There is no simple form-meaning relationship to be derived from the social and political situations of styles. Instead, one might describe this situation as a mine of

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<sup>130</sup> Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 59.



meaning, from which significance was sometimes elevated to become part of the content of a work of art. The question we therefore need to ask ourselves, in specific instances, is not what style meant—for evidently styles were rich with meaningful associations—but whether a painter in a particular painting put any of the potential meanings of a style into explicit play.<sup>131</sup>

The palette of whites, reds, and greens seen in the *Ambient feeling of the Kota palaces* starkly contrasts with the green-yellows and dark blue hues seen in the Rijksmuseum painting, and attach it to a painting workshop in Udaipur. The artist's minimal use of lines for shading the architecture and a preference for applying gouache in a flatter way translates the Kota painting into a space of stylistic familiarity that further firmly locates it within an Udaipuri idiom. In rendering the sky, unlike the Kota artist's use of several fine lines and array of dark colors ranging from shades of grays, cobalt blues, and mauve mixed with streaks of red and gold that create a textured effect, the Udaipur artist uses a monochromatic grey-blue wash. Within this background the Udaipur artist engages with the delicately painted vignettes of a mountainous topography and a body of water, a cluster of tiny houses, a chained elephant, and the moon. Several of these elements become visible to us only upon closely examining the Rijksmuseum painting under magnification, which highlights that the Udaipur artist studied the former painting carefully. We see that he chose to paint these details in a deliberate Udaipur palette and style, and in several cases solely hinted to traces

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 103.

that cannot be easily seen with the naked eye. For instance, the cluster of tiny houses and trees alludes to the original painting as well as to similar vignettes seen in the background of contemporaneous portraits of Amar Singh II made by the Stipple Master (Ill.2.15). The hills painted in flesh and mauve-gray tones with a lake that merges with its surroundings on the upper left hand side of the painting further exhibit that the artist transformed elements from the original painting in sharply reasoned ways (Ill.2.29 (details)). On the one hand, the Udaipur artist places this vignette behind the palace buildings, based on their relative position in the Rijksmuseum painting, taking into account that he has changed the orientation of the palace. The Udaipur artist too suggests that there might be people swimming in the lake; he highlights the boats in a gold arch which are merely brush strokes in a darker shade in Kota artist's rendition. However, he completely eliminates a key portrait of the Kota ruler with a group of ladies that is almost hidden in the depiction of a round tent next to this body of water, perhaps because he does not find a way to incorporate this kind of royal portrait within the Udaipur stylistic idiom.<sup>132</sup> On the other hand, the overlapping round lines with subtle distinctions of shade and color that

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<sup>132</sup> The Udaipur artist has also possibly eliminated the Kota artist's depiction of the ruler seated on a platform in the outer courtyard next to the scene of the fighting elephants. He appears to have interpreted the pavilion where the royal figure is seated in the Rijksmuseum painting as a hexagonal pavilion and hints at the presence of a standing royal figure by his use of a prominent gold-colored turban. However, this pictorial move by the artist remains unclear to me.

characterize this hilly terrain is an echo of the rendering of a monsoon cloud as it hangs above the pavilion in a portrait of Raj Singh (c. 1670) made at the Udaipur workshop (Ill.2.30).<sup>133</sup> Additionally, the significantly enlarged, chained elephant from the Kota artist's version becomes a visible figure that visually relates to the various elephant figures in the foreground. Another fairly large painting which features the Udaipur ruler Raj Singh attending an elephant fight (c. 1670-75 (44.5 x 49 cm) relates to the *Ambient feeling of the Kota Palaces* in terms of its thematic use of compositional details, including a crowd of small court personnel who stage the elephant fight, the figure types like the water-bearer and a woman peeking from the door, who are seen in the latter example, and most significantly, because the size of these two paintings is very comparable (Ill. 2.31).<sup>134</sup> These similarities urge us to consider that the Udaipur artist has turned to several precedents which asserted their pictorial weight on the stylistic choices he made. Even the delicate stars painted by the Udaipur artist in a uniform pattern on the complex background of this work emphatically connect it to the painting of the night sky seen in the above-discussed *Gita Govinda* leaf (Ill. 2.7).

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<sup>133</sup> Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 111–112.

<sup>134</sup> Since we don't have many comparable examples from Raj Singh's painting atelier, scholars have dated this painting and all of Raj Singh's portraits based on one dated example as well as noted the unusually large size of this painting in view of later pictorial developments at Udaipur. It seems highly unlikely that this painting featuring Raj Singh was made posthumously. *Ibid.*, 112.

Aitken has argued that Udaipur ruler Amar Singh's portraits, especially the ones in *nīm kalam*, are a "lesson in the deliberateness of style," explaining, for example, how the same official or iconic profile with the "handlebar" moustache that characterized the Maharana is repeated by the Stipple Master. The artist of the *Ambient feeling of the Kota palaces*, too, has cleverly painted a single inconspicuous figure with a very deliberate Amar Singh-styled face and a distinctive moustache; he stands as if nudged towards the right hand side border of the picture, next to the platform, beside several seated soldiers, (Ill.2.1 (detail)). This figure holds, under one arm, a dagger with a gold colored handle and a cross bar that is seen in several portraits depicting Amar Singh II; his other fist is clenched tight. This position in the painting points us to a later portrait of Udaipur ruler Ari Singh in the *Citrasālī* (c. 1765) where the Udaipur artist Bakhta has inserted his self-portrait in a similar fashion at the very left edge of the painting (Ill.2.32).<sup>135</sup> Bakhta is identified in the inscription and he has self-identified himself as an artist by painting a rolled up paper in one of his fists. No such markers of a self-portrait of an artist animate the standing figure in *Ambient feeling of the Kota palaces*. However, the only face that gazes back at us—the one so

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<sup>135</sup> National Gallery of Victoria, Accession No.AS183-1980. For complete inscription see, Topsfield, *Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria*, 118–119.

assertively linked to an Amar Singh II—styled portrait, forcefully brings “the potential meanings of a style into explicit play.”<sup>136</sup>

The discussion thus far has artificially kept the picturing of people and place separate in order to understand the transformation of spatial effects. However, rich allusions to the figures painted in the Rijksmuseum painting allow us to see the *Ambient feeling of the Kota palaces* through another series of associations and departures established by the Udaipur artist. Several specific figures and animals from the Rijksmuseum painting are featured in the Udaipur version: In the outer courtyard we see the group of three elephants, a person holding the leopard by the red leash, some acrobats, a water thrower, several antelopes, and so forth (Ill.2.28 (details)). The artist adds to this festive gathering of people figures like the two men who burst sparkling crackers and the detail of a woman peeking through the prominent red gateway. One of the most striking ways the Udaipur artist exhibits his investment in imagining the ambience of the spaces he pictures is seen in his depiction of a dancing Krishna figure in the one of the courtyards, which suggests the presence of a devotional space or small temple within the palace (Ill.2.26 (details)). The Udaipur artist could be building upon a very faint suggestion of a figural icon of a deity in a gold brush stroke, seen within the corresponding rendition of this space in the

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<sup>136</sup> Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 59.

Rijksmuseum painting, or he could be picturing his subjective interpretation of how this temple courtyard was used, based on an act of imagination or his vivid recollection, or possibly a combination of the two.

Let us revisit the inscription on the verso of the painting, “*Kota melā ro bhāva.*”

Scholars have translated “*melā*” as festival or carnival, based on what the word commonly means within modern Hindi language (Ill. 2.33). The brightly painted lamps and bursting firecrackers has led to titling the painting as “Diwali Celebrations at Kota,”<sup>137</sup> a plausible translation given the nature of festive activities depicted in the painting. However, several entries in Udaipur’s court records from the nineteenth century and the 1891 Udaipur Painting Inventory show that “*melā*” is the word used for “palaces.”<sup>138</sup> I have leaned towards translating this inscription as “the ambient feeling of the Kota ‘palaces’” rather than festive activities. This linguistic difference underscores a very fine distinction. Perhaps it does not impact our understanding of the painting radically in terms of tracing the Udaipur artist’s concern for deciphering approaches towards rendering space or for innovating new subject-setting relationships within the genre of portraiture. But seen in the light of the artist’s concern with parsing out formal approaches to depicting the palatial

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<sup>137</sup> Topsfield, *Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria*, 57.

<sup>138</sup> I think this confusion is a result of modern Hindi using “*mehlā*” as the word for palaces, where as the regional dialect emphasizes the nasal pronunciation and eliminates the character (*ha*).

environs, the scribe's titling of the painting—not as a portrait, but rather as a picture that captures feeling, specifically the feeling of palaces—acquires an enhanced valence. So titled, the work implies a visual investment in both depicting a place to expand approaches to portraiture as well as an audience that perceived artistic suggestions to look at other aspects that constituted painting. The new details introduced by the Udaipur artist, such as the dancing Krishna figure and several miniaturized figures which denote the courtly staff, exhibit the artist's keenness to suggest how these spaces might have functioned, and how it might have felt to inhabit them. It is likely that, from an artist's perspective, such pictorial deliberations were easier to ponder in the absence of a demand to make a personality-oriented portrait. The ruler portrayed in this case perhaps didn't matter much to the scribe, the Udaipur court, and perhaps also to the artist.

There is an additional inscription behind the painting that simply states "*Kotā ro*," meaning "of Kota." Perhaps together these two inscriptions are indicative that an Udaipur artist was making this painting for his own exploration, comprising an instance of experimentation and study; a picture that was perhaps not made on a ruler's behest. Such a picture could be constituted, in whole or part, by a reflective series of choices which are given priority, especially in this time period, in order to forge pictorial conventions to depict the courtly environs within larger paintings made in Udaipur. In pursuit of such a

painting the artist consciously adapts the Rijksmuseum painting to such an extent that we must interpret the transformed composition as framing a commentary on a series of artistic choices and techniques. The Udaipur artist established connections through citations and allusions, and at the same time opened a window into his processes of looking and making. The act of mediation between his looking and his making is given material form in the *Ambient feeling of the Kota palaces*.

***Asserting the Feeling of a Place: Rethinking “Contextual Portraits”***

A painting such as *Ambient Feeling of the Kota Palaces* is not easily locatable within the canon of Indian Painting, especially if one looks at it as not only a royal portrait, but also a picture of a place. The pictorial translations at play in this painting can be placed within a genealogy of adaptations and circulations of pictures, artists, patrons, and audiences within the Rajput and Mughal courtly worlds of early modern South Asia, and yet the peculiar and emphatic choices seen in this example, and in several other large-scale Udaipur paintings from this time period, are not necessarily fully traceable.

Udaipur artists at the turn of the century were not exploring a divide between nature and culture, and neither is the divide between setting and portrait of interest to them. The search for a divide would be an imposition that draws from landscape paintings



that come in the later years.<sup>139</sup> It would be productive to think, beyond the scope of this current chapter, of the trajectories of landscape and place within broader visual and literary culture in South Asia at different times, beyond Udaipur and Rajasthan, when place is asserted over constructions of genealogy and portraiture. In making palatial and urban settings a subject worth exploring, Udaipur painters rather show us that an engagement with this thematic must include narrative elements. While the setting may be seen in service of portraiture in some of these paintings, one wonders if artists—in their attempts to innovate a new thematic focus—employed portraiture in service of settings. Painters from c. 1700 engaged in picturing the chorography of the city at an unprecedented scale and combined concerns of mapping and describing architectural details, and yet their

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<sup>139</sup> For example, when Christopher Wood proposes the radicality of Altdorfer in innovating the independent landscape, he does not think that the artist attempts to create an exclusion of nature from culture, “but rather the divide [is] between setting and subject.” In the case of Mughal and Rajput painting traditions in the subcontinent it is clear that an explicit divide between subject and setting is not set up. Wood underscores the need to recognize the open-endedness of Altdorfer’s invention without the historiographic and historical baggage of conception of later landscape painting in the West related to ideas of loss of nature by modernization and urbanism. See, Wood, *Albrecht Altdorfer and the Origins of Landscape*, 23–25. Similarly, Denis Cosgrove relates painted chorographies in early modern Europe to the German term “landschaft,” which encompassed the idea of landscape as a legal and territorial entity constituted by polity rather than size of land. Cosgrove highlight this distinction in order to trace varying meanings of landscape and historical processes by which it came to be dominantly understood as something “scenic and pictorial,” in relation to landscape painting, which itself shares deep connections with landowners’ expanding property rights, estate surveys and mapping. For our purpose, it is key to note that this shift also overtly emphasized the idea of picturing landscape independently, marginalizing people or stories. Cosgrove, “Landscape and Landschaft.”

imaginaries were in conversation with the genre of portraiture, and that was palpable to patrons and audiences. The combination of depicting likeness of personalities and likeness of places affects the stability of portraits. When artists explored subjects—including people and place—for description they generate a compelling quality about it. If picturing Udaipur's palaces provided one of the impetuses for artists to make larger paintings, such pictures that took the city's architecture as its object of description also generated the image and memory of the city as an admirable place. The insertion of the portrait privileged the position of the royal beholder as the one commanding his control over the setting and introduced temporality within this spatial imaginary.<sup>140</sup> Portraiture might be the aspect that mattered most to the patrons, yet thinking about the process of how artists went about collating the visual material for some of these paintings forces us to acknowledge that other aspects—visuality and spatial knowledge, the design of the city and its architecture, and the circulation of images within paintings and conventions of pictorial representations within maps—also played key roles in shaping the Udaipur painter's vision and choices. We must keep this in mind as we re-think the category of “contextual portraits” and the limitations

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<sup>140</sup> Aitken has reformulated Desai's notion that timelessness was one of the characteristics that imbued portrayal of ideal kingship within contextual portraits. Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 121.

or visual conditioning “portraiture” brings into play, and when we re-explore the interpretive possibilities offered by large-scale Udaipur paintings.

What we have learned in examining Udaipur artists’ approach to the depiction the *bhāva* of a place is not restricted to works on paper, and may be used to interpret some of the earliest large-scale paintings of Udaipur and its palaces made on cloth (c.1700-1710). Experiments in size and format in the early eighteenth century primarily changed the visuality of Udaipur paintings, and thereby the nature of viewers’ corporeal engagement with them. Large-scale paintings—about two meters in length and one meter high—were distinct from Mughal miniatures or Rajput devotional manuscripts even though artists employed some of the same technical ways to make them. This physical change in the size of the paintings, along with the juxtaposition of points of view and conventions of depicting space and miniaturization of bodies in relation to choreography and topography, certainly set up additional expectations on the part of artists and for their courtly audiences and connoisseurs. However, we have been unable to locate any documents thus far that record such changed modalities of looking or historical viewers’ response to expansion of the pictorial frame. Debra Diamond has shown how later artists working for Jodhpur ruler Vijai Singh (r. 1752-93) “transformed intimate depictions of royal pastimes into visions of heavenly palaces and landscapes for divine *lila* (play)” within manuscripts of

unprecedented size, which she calls monumental manuscripts.<sup>141</sup> She suggest that this dramatic size “invite(d) an immersive experience into Krishna’s enchanting world” and may have been developed as a result of the Vijai Singh’s participation in the “larger devotional movement known as bhakti, which promoted a direct engagement with an accessible god.”<sup>142</sup> At various times and spaces in the course of the eighteenth century when artists took the step to materially expand their sheets of paper, perhaps they also saw it as a possible tool to extend the scope and transform the associations constituted in established genres.<sup>143</sup> In a striking Udaipur painting made in c. 1700, the makers have pasted two almost

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<sup>141</sup> Diamond notes that one hundred and fifty-six large folios from four monumental manuscripts measuring approximately 46 x 122 cm were produced for Vijai Singh. She writes, “Created between 1765 and 1830, the paintings are the folios of ten illustrated manuscripts... Large paintings were produced in a number of Rajput ateliers, but oversize manuscripts are an innovation of the Jodhpur atelier. Due to their unprecedented scale, they stand out among the many illustrated texts from the Rajput courts of north India.” Monumental manuscripts from Vijai Singh’s reign were accompanied by verses that promised salvation to the listeners. Subjects of some of these manuscripts assert that they might have played a pedagogical role at the court. Diamond therefore proposes that courtly audiences might have experienced these manuscripts within collective and performative settings. The comparatively wider red and yellow borders, which are also found in Udaipur paintings, she suggests, perhaps functioned as protective boundaries for the central image when courtly staff held up the paintings. Diamond, Debra, “Maharaja Vijai Singh and the Epic Landscape, 1752-93.” 42-46.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>143</sup> Kota paintings depicting elephant fights, which have been studied for the artists’ skill in picturing the immediacy of the action, precise details, use of a *nim kalam* palette, also exhibit that painters expanded the size of paintings in c. 1610-30 to depict a new subject matter that focused solely on combat scenes.

equal sheets of paper to create a larger horizontal sheet, measuring 90.8 by 52.1 centimeter (Ill. 2.34). The composition of the pavilion which frames the courtly space in which is depicted the portraits of the Udaipur ruler Amar Singh II seated with his son prince Sangram Singh and two other nobles, each meticulously labeled, suggests an affinity with smaller horizontal manuscripts. The depiction of the horses, elephants, and the court's soldiers in a circular arrangement on the right hand side of the painting further encloses the outdoor space. Similarly the flat green ground against which the various men, dancers, and couples are rendered suggests an embedding of an older manuscript-based compositional arrangement within a larger format painting.<sup>144</sup> Udaipur painters did not repeat such a compositional design in making other contemporaneous paintings; it may be that the making of this painting constitutes a transitory moment with regard to the expansion in the size of paintings in the workshop.

In the earliest large-scale paintings on cloth that feature Udaipur's environs (measuring approximately 1 to 1.2 meters in length), the composition of the Eastern façade of the palace suggests a meaningful alignment of the shape of the painting and the shape of

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<sup>144</sup> I am extremely grateful to Yana Van Dyke, Associate Conservator in the Sherman Fairchild Center for Works of Art on Paper in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, who took the time to discuss the making of this painting with me. She also showed that there is significant overpainting, which may have been done as late as 1970s when the painting may have left the Udaipur Royal Collection.

the buildings (Ill. 2.35, 2.36, 2.37).<sup>145</sup> Perhaps this parallel also provided an impetus, among other possible antecedents, for artists to expand the size of the paintings at this scale. The palatial spaces, what we now collectively refer to as the Mardana Mahal (Men's Palace), are constituted by agglutinated individual courtyards, roofs, and terraces. This contiguity of these palaces' façades facing the east is one of an array of impressive spatial and pictorial experience offered in such works. For instance, one of the cloth-paintings depicting multiple scenes of animal fights and a group of people including the Udaipur ruler Amar Singh II and several courtiers watching this staged event, shows that the setting—the elevation of the palace façade—dominates the horizontal painting. The painters have employed the elevation to divide the green foreground denoting the courtyard in front of the palace from the background of the blue sky (Ill. 2.35).<sup>146</sup> From the inscriptions on the fronts of these cloth paintings we know that the royal portrait, the spectacle of the animal

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<sup>145</sup> Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 134. It is also key to note that large-scale portraits of earlier Udaipur rulers (Maharana Karan Singh and Maharana Jai Singh) had already been made a couple of decades ago. Topsfield has dated the earliest example to c. 1670. *Ibid.*, 137–138, footnotes 9 and 31.

<sup>146</sup> In each of the three cloth paintings, as well as paintings made on these models in the later years, artists adopt different solutions to paint the walls (punctuated with prominent *chattris* and projecting balconies) of the Amar Vilas Mahal where they turn on the right hand edge of the façade; they either incorporate the building's three dimensionality within the elevation by rendering the balconies and pavilions in an oblique view or employ oblique lines to suggest the turn, while basically extending the planar elevation drawing. As seen in various paintings, on this edge of the façade, artists also choose to offer a view into smaller courtyard spaces through the juxtaposition of a bird's eye view or a planar and elevation view.

fights, and the names of elephants and horses mattered to contemporaneous audiences. It is therefore curious that another painting of the period which features a similar pictorial vision and composition does not include a royal portrait (Ill. 2.36).<sup>147</sup> This painting's exception forces us to consider the moment when Udaipur painters conceived that such a depiction could be offered—in court—as a complete picture.

A third large-scale painting further inverts the balance between portraiture and chorography even though it features a royal portrait of Amar Singh II seated in the audience hall for upper class nobles (*sabhā śīromanī kā darīkhānā*) along with all the visual accouterments of the figures of the fan bearer and courtiers (Ill. 2.37). Here the artist's vision expands beyond the elevation view of the Eastern facade to the lakes, hills, and city environs which constitute a substantial half-part of the painting. The painter composes the view of the façade from a fish-eye viewing point; he presents the outer courtyard of the Manek Chowk, as is also seen in the cloth painting discussed above, from the bird's eye viewpoint; and he stretches the width of the hall where the ruler is seated in order to compose the royal group and to draw the attention of a viewer to the royal portrait (Ill. 2.37 (details)). Yet this painting simply does not allow its audience a singular focus on the royal

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<sup>147</sup> An inscription stating the cost (*kīmat*) of rupees one hundred and fifty suggest that the painting was most likely a complete picture. Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 134.

party. We perceive and engage its shifts in viewpoints more acutely compared to the other paintings because the composition includes topographical vignettes beyond the boundary walls of the palace and its outer courtyard. We ponder the planar thinness of elevation of the façade which is accentuated by black outlines employed to render the architectural details as well as the exaggerated oblique lines that delineate the northern walls of the Amar Vilas Mahal. The sweeping mountains, lakes, water streams, and bursting clouds enable us to imagine the view from the terrace of the palaces. Whatever conventions the artist has also met, he has brought the various depicted and imagined views and viewing points into conversation in his painting. At the bottom of the painting, the planar elevations of houses in brown and buff hues combined with the isometric views of temples, gateways, and larger buildings in white to suggest deliberate juxtapositions and to highlight the importance and scale of specific precincts and the diverse representational conventions that constitute this picture. The painting is full of citations from other contemporaneous paintings. For example, the miniaturized elephant drawn next to the water stream in its particular composition along the profile of hills and vignettes of small houses echoes parts of the background depicted in the *Ambient Feeling of the Kota Palaces*. Therefore, on the one hand, we are drawn to look at the multiple depictions of the elephant and the courtly staff that chases him across the courtyard, and to decipher that the repetition denotes the action



within the staged spectacle. On the other hand, we are constantly unraveling a setting bursting with minute illusionary details. In this painting the makers blur the boundaries between foreground and background, and setting and subject; the dark grey-black clouds with paint strokes depicting pouring rain literally flow into the silvery-grey lakes and streams; the temporal depiction of a spectacle unfolding is matched by the immediacy we sense of a city being overtaken by the rain coming from the direction of the mountains; and the portrayal of figures populating the painting is overtaken by the tiny depictions of spatial elements that constitute the cityscape.

In paintings like the above-discussed picturing of Udaipur city and its court and the *Ambient feeling of Kota palaces*, Udaipur painters completely let go of any idea that the eye constitutes a static, singular, and monocular vision. Their strategies call to mind Martin Jay's comparisons of models of perspectival vision and descriptive vision with Baroque vision in eighteenth century. Of the latter, Jay writes, that "[What it] holds up to nature is not the flat reflecting glass... but rather the anamorphosistic mirror, either concave or convex, that distorts the visual image... In fact, because of its greater awareness of that materiality... baroque visual experience has a strongly tactile or haptic quality, which prevents it from turning into the absolute ocularcentrism of its Cartesian perspectivalist

rival.”<sup>148</sup> It is clear that there was a complex understanding of perception of space in play amongst Udaipur artists even as they were beginning to look at their city as an object of affection. Eighteenth century Udaipur painters can be seen as formulating an “art of description,” associated with the effect of the “real” that oscillates between topoi constituting kingship and representational conventions of depicting a place in copious detail. In explaining seventeenth century Dutch pictures, Svetlana Alpers argues that the Dutch painters presented their pictures as describing the world rather than imitating it.<sup>149</sup> The artist’s eye, she notes, operates as a microscope and a telescope at the same time. Christopher Wood however reminds us that description, too, “is a highly abstract and formalized procedure... [It] disfigures its object...”<sup>150</sup> He suggest that the dialectic that this

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<sup>148</sup> Jay, “Scopic Regimes of Modernity,” 16–17.

<sup>149</sup> Alpers shows that several pictorial aims that Dutch artists decide to pursue were already implicit in geography and that it is problematic that modern historians see maps and pictures as two different things in a world where such boundaries would have been puzzling. She argues for a model of an “art of description” to rectify the historiographic bias towards Italian art and the strong narrative aims of Southern European painting. Alpers, *The Art of Describing : Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*.

<sup>150</sup> Wood, “‘Curious Pictures’ and the Art of Description,” 335. Wood also notes, “Finally, a representation built out of tiny units appears more reliably linked to physical reality than broader, more generalized depictions. This puts descriptive painting in favorable analogy to writing, which also represents by means of atomic particles (letters or words). This notional atomism is the justification for calling pictures ‘descriptions’ in the first place. Actually, the distinction between description and depiction on the basis of internal structure is fallacious, for each unit of a description is still a description and therefore no less conventional than the whole. But there is a

topoi of detail sets up with technique needs to be opened up to questioning. Most scholars of Indian painting have understood the depiction of a place only through a lens offered by Panofsky. In this view skilled artists were either able to incorporate perspective or they are incapable artists because they choose to privilege anti-perspectival vision. This is particularly problematic as it has undercut our grasp of the agency of artists who called into effect the “real” or the “imaginary” or both in a combined form, even when recognized as a strategy, and thus has led to few scholarly explorations of the particularities of such visualizations. The pictorial strategy of juxtaposition that we see in Udaipur court painting at the turn of the eighteenth century exhibits an acceptance of the limits of representing a particular place; and, at the same time, we see that painters are actively seeking to extend ways of engaging with a descriptive, cartographic, and portrait-oriented vision. Painters engaged with *bhāva* of a place as a conceptual, affective category, and they made it and their choices visible and sharable by juxtaposing genres, representational conventions, and knowledge of architecture of courtly and urban environs.

Such a poetics of place-making in which paratactic practices dominate implies a high degree of artistic self-awareness. That our straightforward archival record on visual

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successful illusion of accuracy, since small depictions are less disturbingly conventional than large ones. Tiny depictions seem to approach the status of true and natural one-to-one representations. The illusion of accuracy results from a kind of calculus, or repeated subdividing, of the visible data. (In another terminology, description is digital while depiction is analog.” Ibid., 331.

thinking around the *bhāva* of a place has been so silent about self-awareness and choice-making may indicate how much there is to discover and to say about contemporaneous thinking on realism and combining categories of art, knowledge, and history. A non-fixated vision and spatial feeling that impressed the makers' minds dominate the painting. The planar view is thus the preferred modality to represent a garden space whose overall layout structured one's passage through the space. A similar logic may have applied to the depiction of smaller ancillary courtyards that constituted Udaipur's palace complex unlike the elevation of the Eastern façade which structured majority of the spatial memories of the larger Manek Chowk courtyard it faced. It may not be possible to trace exactly which painting at the Udaipur court represents the origin of this pictorial interest in depicting the feeling of a place, but the answer to that question may not be that important. What is crucial is that several Udaipur artists chose to explore this interest in a number of innovative ways which transformed the dominant genre of portraiture and the visuality and ontology of paintings, thus framing a substantive visual and intellectual deliberation on chorography at the turn of the eighteenth century. When an Udaipur artist pursued active acts of "seeing" and "making" in the response picture *Ambient feeling of the Kota palaces*, his eyes pursued the world of Kota palaces not to merely replicate it, but to "make a world" from his place at Udaipur where conventions and an ontological understanding of depicting

the feeling of the worlds of Rajput palaces already comprised a significant interest among artists in the court workshop.

*Ambient feeling of Kota palaces* is offered to the world as a painting that presents a complete picture constituted by deliberate choices, a picture that anticipates how Udaipur artists in the years to come negotiate picturing the feeling of a place and portraits. The historiographical emphases on portraiture and narrative within Mughal painting and the discourses on the independent landscape within later British painting have prevented scholars from seeing the spectacular innovations by Udaipur artists depicting place at the turn of the century. I have sought to recover the open-endedness of these innovations. This exploration of pictorial responses and translations at play in this painting may provide grounds for us to examine pictures that generate ideas about the nature of Udaipur as a city through the lens of multiple ontological categories beyond portraiture and temporal concerns. Udaipur artists made key decisions in executing almost every painting, whether the choice was to produce a city fabric in all its complexity, for example, or whether it was to highlight important buildings or the spatial elements within buildings. Such choice-making is the evidence by which we might re-constitute acts of idealization, imagination, and memorialization on the part of an artist.

## Chapter 3

### PRAISING PATRONS/PORTRAYING PLACES: WORLDS OF PLEASURE AND POWER IN MID-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY UDAIPUR COURT

#### 3.1. *Prince's "Voluptuous Inactivity"*

In depicting the Jagnivas lake-palace, court artists *Sukha* and *Syaji* compose its courtyards, verandas, terraces, and pavilions from a bird's eye view to depict a self-contained world floating in the lake (ill. 3.1).<sup>151</sup> They paint the portrait of the Udaipur ruler Jagat Singh II four times: He is shown shooting fishes with his male companions, walking towards a group of ladies in one of the courtyards depicted in the upper part of the painting, watching dancers performing the dance of cow girls around the blue-god Krishna (*rasa mandala*) who are accompanied by musicians playing a variety of instruments, and enjoying an intimate music and dance performance with the same group of ladies on the terrace, where the entire audience—even the king—is depicted with hands raised in the same gesture made by the dancers. The lake-palace is pictured as the luxurious setting where Jagat Singh II partakes in the pleasures of hearing music and seeing dance, experiencing sensual delights in the company of his female companions. In the inscription on the back of this painting

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<sup>151</sup> Howard Hodgkin Collection (Lent to Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford), Accession No. LI118.24.

indicates its date (1751), the names of the artists (*Sukha* and *Syaji*), and that the painting is a picture (*pāno*) of the likeness (*surat*) of “māhārājadhīrāja māharāna jagat singh” and the feeling or emotion (*bhāva*) of Jagnivas palace (Ill. 3.2). The painting demonstrates how mid-eighteenth century Udaipur artists and poets at the Mewar court turned to envisioning their ruler enjoying dance and music performances in the company of assemblies of men (and sometimes women) held at the city’s new, impressive lake palace, Jagnivas, built in 1746 on Jagat Singh II’s orders. Such portraits of rulers immersed in pleasures and not the politics of diplomacy within a *darbar* setting offered an aesthetic domain full of pictorial possibilities. Painters such as *Sukha* and *Syaji* thereby constructed the image of Udaipur as a city of lake-palaces where the worlds of pleasure and power came together.

To date, however, such paintings have been almost exclusively related to colonial topoi and narratives of princely hedonism. They have been seen as images that embodied the time and space of mid-eighteenth century India, which British officers and explorers saw as the zenith of political and cultural decline in the subcontinent. Even a cursory reading of exhibitions catalogues accompanying paintings featuring Udaipur’s lake-palaces and rulers reveals that a vocabulary of “princely pastimes” and “entertainment” is

dominant and overtakes any visual or historical analyses.<sup>152</sup> British Political Agent James Tod's writing describing the lake palaces of Udaipur is proposed as the definitive lens through which we must see these paintings. For instance, in describing the above painting and other examples depicting Jagat Singh II and the Jagnivas palace, Andrew Topsfield writes,

By Jagat Singh's time Mewar had entered a long period of decline under the domination of the Marathas, whose demands of tribute would eventually bring the country to ruin. This course of events did not deter the genial, hedonistic Jagat Singh from expending huge sums (in Tod's phrase) "in embellishing the islets of the Pichola." He and his impoverished successors must also have drawn comfort in adversity from contemplating the court artists' spirited records of these creations and the agreeable pastimes for which they were used. There are from Jagat Singh's time elements of escapism and later, nostalgia in the development of the grandiose architectural painting genre at Udaipur.<sup>153</sup>

While such paintings have been interpreted as a constituting (in Topsfield's terms) a "striking sub-genre" wherein patrons and painters celebrate "Jagat Singh's favorite architectural achievement, the island palace of Jagnivas," their representative role has been

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<sup>152</sup> For example, see, Kossak, *Indian Court Painting, 16th-19th Century*, 116; An exception is presented in the discussion of paintings made at the Rajput court of Nagaur between 1729-1750 that engage the thematic of courtly pleasures. Glynn and Diamond emphasize that patrons and painters were driven to visualize plentiful, luxurious visions of gardens and palaces to contrast the courtly world from the surrounding desert. Glynn, Catherine, "Rathore and Mughal Interactions: Artistic Development at the Nagaur Court, 1600-1751"; Diamond et al., *Garden & Cosmos : the Royal Paintings of Jodhpur*, 71-97.

<sup>153</sup> Topsfield, "City Palace and Lake Palaces: Architecture and Court Life in Udaipur Painting," 54; Also see, where Topsfield directly employs excerpts from Tod to characterize the painting. Topsfield, *Indian Paintings and Drawings from the Collection of Howard Hodgkin*, 98.



staunchly underscored as images that constituted “a revealing record of the private hours of this escapist Rana,” showing how an Indian prince “would disport with his companions in the sultry summer months.”<sup>154</sup> A similar view is adopted in architecture histories that investigate the role of palaces and forts in courtly life.<sup>155</sup>

In the *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1829,32), Tod proclaimed Udaipur as a romantic spot distinct from ruins.<sup>156</sup> Chapter one opened with Tod’s evocative writing on the lake-palaces of Jagmandir and Jagnivas, where we saw that his description of the materiality of marble columns and pavilions and the expanse of the lake and Aravalli hills

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<sup>154</sup> Topsfield, *Indian Paintings and Drawings from the Collection of Howard Hodgkin*, 98–101.

<sup>155</sup> In discussing the royal palaces of India, George Michell writes about a typology of pleasure pavilions in the following way: “Royal architecture had to provide suitable settings for private pleasures where monarchs could meet their queens and concubines. Miniature paintings executed at the Mughal and Rajput courts give a good idea of the erotic life of the court. An often repeated scene shows the royal figure at night accompanied by one or more female consorts seated in an upper pavilion of the palace, or living on a terrace beneath an awning. Cushions are spread out and there are cups for wine and other intoxicating drinks, as well as trays filled with fruits and sweetmeats... Because of its matchless setting overlooking Lake Pichola, the City Palace at Udaipur illustrates to perfection the Rajput ideal of courtly delight... Further diversions for the Udaipur court were boating trips to garden palaces on islands in the lake.” Michell and Martinelli, *The Royal Palaces of India*, 56–58.

<sup>156</sup> For instance, Tod writes, “ We had our palace in the city, our cutter on the lake, our villa in the woods, our fairy-islands in the waters; streams to angle in, deer to shoot, much, in short, to please the eye and gratify the taste:--yet did *ennui* intrude, and all panted to escape from the “happy valley,” to see what was in the world beyond the mountains.” Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, or The Central and Western Rajput States of India*, 1920, III:1825.

culminates in an image of the “voluptuous inactivity” of two generations of Mewar kings.<sup>157</sup> The backdrop for almost all constructions of Udaipur’s landscape is lake Pichola, and Tod’s gaze fixed on the settings of the palaces around the lake. Art and architecture histories freely borrow words like enjoyment, diversion, and erotic life from Tod’s history. More importantly, in employing these words and Tod’s narratives, current scholarship has often circulated an ahistorical and anachronistic understanding of the role of courtly spaces and practices of pleasure. The over-saturated use of such ideas of decadence has thus shaped the dominant understanding of the material culture and architecture of early modern Indian courts far beyond Udaipur.

Several early modern literary practices, like the above-discussed visual practices, have been subjected to similar narratives of decline because they emerged in the decades preceding colonialism. In discussing Indian courtly literature in classical Hindi (*rīti*) of early modern Rajput courts, Allison Busch points that this “discomfort with courtliness” stems not only from not only from a “persistence of colonial-period paradigms” but also from the fact that this “subject matter was irrelevant for the needs of the nation.”<sup>158</sup> She writes,

In a post-courtly world, it is not easy to find the right vocabulary and analytical models for discussing courts and court culture... Some of the very structures and

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<sup>157</sup> Chapter One, 1.1

<sup>158</sup> Busch, *Poetry of Kings*, 11–17.

associations built into the English language disclose a deep ambivalence about courtliness... courtliness is positively valued in terms such as politesse, civility, and elegance, but simultaneously conjures up an entirely different semantic range, whose synonyms include flattery, obsequiousness, and sycophancy. A similar uneasiness surrounds the idea of luxury, which arguably one of defining attributes of courtly life. Whereas a few glosses, such as splendor, affluence, pleasure, and elegance, are positive, most are not only blatantly negative, but even outright judgmental: excessiveness, indulgence, self-indulgence, hedonism, sybaritism, immoderation, and intemperance.<sup>159</sup>

Busch has engaged with *rīti* literature on its own terms, investigating how *rīti* poets chose to adapt Sanskrit classicism within courtly Hindi literature, which she writes “prove[s] to be not so much traditional as newly and deliberately created in response to early modern conditions—those of Indian courtly intellectuals writing in Brajbhasha [classical Hindi] from 1600-1850.”<sup>160</sup> The elaborateness and numerous versions of royal portraits imagined within settings of lake palaces, as Busch describes for *rīti* literature, evoke conservatism in scholarly studies in Hindi and English as well as within popular domains of tourism and heritage. Eurocentric and colonial-period narratives of decline and meaningless excess are pervasive. They obscure the possibility of investigating multivalent dimensions of such paintings that were important for courtly communities and they inhibit exploration of how contemporaneous sociality and aesthetic and historical ideas—especially related to the

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 15.

realm of pleasure—were forged. This chapter engages with both the historiographic position stated by Busch and the ideas from the literary culture of courtly North India Busch investigates to understand the intersections between aesthetics and historical memory. It explores the literary and visual culture of mid-eighteenth century Udaipur court, when painters and poets focused their gaze on the Jagnivas lake-palace and presented a place- and pleasure-centric vision in their practice that combined concerns of historicity, sociality, spatiality, and aesthetics.

In exploring poetic and devotional manuscripts painted at Rajput courts in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, Molly Aitken has argued that painters engaged poetic ideas and ideals by creating painted forms rich in allusions, and that visual and literary practices were meant to illicit emotions and interpretation, not mimesis.<sup>161</sup> This chapter raises the question, how do we examine a set of mid-eighteenth century large-scale paintings made at the Udaipur court that do not directly seek to establish a connection with literary practices on the painted page, yet demonstrate compelling parallels with panegyric topoi employed within courtly poetry that commemorated the building of the Jagnivas palace by Maharana Jagat Singh II. Udaipur's court-poet Nandram describes the inauguration of the Jagnivas palace and portrays practices that constituted Jagat Singh's

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<sup>161</sup> Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*. See Chapter One.

kingship and courtly space in a 405-verse long poem *Jagvilās*, hitherto neither transcribed nor translated.<sup>162</sup> *Jagvilās* may be translated as the “world of pleasure” or “Jagat Singh’s delights” or the “delights and pleasures offered by Jagnivas,” or perhaps this title was cleverly coined by the poet to suggest a combination of all these three meanings. The following section of this chapter explores the constitution of courtly pleasure in mid-eighteenth century Udaipur. *Jagvilās* allows us to consider how “*vilāsa*,” meaning delight, pleasure, and/or enjoyment, was imagined as a courtly practice, how it was performed within the architectural environs of the Jagnivas palace, and how poets employed *vilāsa* for praising kings and crafting historical memories of the social and intellectual worlds that kings inhabited.

Having discussed the terms for thinking about pleasure in the mid-eighteenth century through the lens offered by Udaipur courtly literature, we will then examine a corpus of paintings that feature Jagat Singh II and his courtly community and Jagnivas.

Pictorial experiments by Udaipur painters before 1740s lay the ground for later artists to

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<sup>162</sup> I am indebted to Dr. Prem Rajpurohit for contributing generously his time and expertise to transcribing the manuscript copy of the *Jagvilās* poem that I obtained from the Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute, Udaipur. Accession no. 2216. I am also very grateful to Allison Busch for kindly correcting several of my translations. Many of the verses still remain illusive, and I hope to continue to unravel this poetry. This manuscript was copied in 1821 under the direction of Udaipur prince Jawan Singh. The colophon of the poem does not state when the poem was composed, however all the important dates and times relating to the building of Jagnivas palace to its inauguration are noted. Thus we can safely assume that this poem was composed c. 1746 after the Jagnivas palace was inaugurated.

draw upon the visuality of their changing city and its lake-palaces. In chapter two, we saw how the painters working in Udaipur ruler Amar Singh II's workshop turn to the eastern elevation of the Udaipur palaces to innovate new compositions and scale of topographic painting. More than three decades before the Jagnivas lake-palace was built and imagined in paintings and poems, Udaipur's court painters by the 1720s had already pictured the rulers and citizens of the city appreciating the beauty of the lake environs of Udaipur.<sup>163</sup> Court painters adapted and cited from the first set of large-scale cloth paintings made in c.1700, as discussed in chapter two, that feature the palace environs of Udaipur, over the course of the eighteenth century in large-scale painting made of paper. By repeating the composition of the palace façade facing the eastern direction and the courtyard of the Manek Chowk in several paintings, Sangram Singh's artists further establish this vignette as an iconic feature of Udaipur court paintings. Also, by c. 1720, Udaipur painters cited this vignette of Udaipur palaces as a pictorial reference to attach the broader landscape, within which the ruler is shown hunting and visiting temples, to the city's vicinity (Ill. 3.3). In this painting, the decentered non-systematicity of the composition, the juxtaposition of bird's eye view of the lake flowing into an expanded landscape with the elevation view of the temple and of the palaces in the city, and the portrait of the ruler which was repeated multiple times to depict

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<sup>163</sup> See Chapter One, Ill. 1.1.

the enactment of his activities across the picture—all constitute visual features most often not applauded by art historians.<sup>164</sup> Such paintings, made on paper, were smaller in size than the cloth paintings made at the turn of the century by Amar Singh II's artists; they include busier compositions, where the painters' imaginary of the place draws us to dwell on his description of spatial details surrounding the portraits more than the portraits themselves, a pictorial aspect which the scribe nonetheless privileges in his inscription. Several such paintings show that in the first quarter of the eighteenth century Udaipur painters experimented with new compositions that took the geographical and urban environs around the city's lakes as a subject of exploration, thus furthering their ideas on picturing the feeling (*bhāva*) of a place in relation to portraiture. Painters and poets in the court of Jagat Singh II, take a special interest in combining a picture of the *bhāva* of a place with topoi of pleasure, in addition to including topoi of detail and description. In so doing they focus on Jagnivas as a place for pleasure and thereby also offer a view into the aesthetic and social worlds of the Mewar court within which paintings and poetry featuring the Jagnivas lake-palace operated.

The last section of this chapter reflects upon questions raised in chapter two regarding Udaipur painters' approach to picturing place integrally related to portraiture by

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<sup>164</sup> For example see, Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 148–149.

way of a set of lake-palace paintings that make architecture an independent subject of exploration. In looking again at the power of mimesis of sixteenth-century German works of Hans Holbein through the lens offered by contemporary artists' engagement with mimesis, Keith Moxey asks "where does the agency of the mimetic image lie?"<sup>165</sup> He notes "the impulse towards representational verisimilitude serves to endow objects with 'secondary agency.'"<sup>166</sup> The case of Udaipur paintings suggests that painters combined panegyric idioms, topoi of pleasure, portraiture, and a concern with mimesis in depicting place. Of course, concerns with mimesis in eighteenth-century Udaipur were distinct in form and tenor from concerns in sixteenth-century Germany. Yet, Udaipur paintings in their combination of paratactic approaches show that the secondary agency or the enhanced power of such paintings—the affective registers within which such paintings operated—can be assessed only if we address how the integration of topoi of detail and pleasure and panegyrics effects the visuality of the image.

As it opens further avenues into what paintings combining pleasure, place, and portraiture probably "did," the concluding section also explores the social world of the Udaipur court in the mid-eighteenth century from an alternate perspective, one presented

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<sup>165</sup> Moxey, "Mimesis and Iconoclasm."

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.



through the visual and architectural practices connected with Thakur Sirdar Singh. He was one of the powerful nobles in the court of Jagat Singh II and his brother-in-law, who features in almost all paintings depicting the ruler. Sirdar Singh patronized art and architecture, both of which were connected to the building of the Jagnivas palace. The tenth verse (*chappay*) of the *Jagvilās* tells us that Maharana Jagat Singh II assigned Thakur Sirdar Singh the task to hire the best of the craftsmen and architects (*gajdhar*) to build the Jagnivas palace and that it was completed in a time span of thirty-five months. The verses announce that the king wished to proclaim with a big bang (*baḍo ganja muharata so batāo*) the invitation to all gentlemen (*sajjan*) for the inauguration event of Jagnivas. Over the course of the eighteenth century, with the change in the consolidated nature of Mughal authority, new forms of political reconfigurations and cultural practices shaped courtly societies.<sup>167</sup> The network of Rajput kings, estate holders (*thakurs*), and courtly elites became integral for the enactment of kingly authority and asserting a court's territorial boundaries beyond the court's urban center.<sup>168</sup> The vantage point offered by Sirdar Singh allows us to see the mid-eighteenth century courtly society that populated the Jagnivas palace and Mewar's

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<sup>167</sup> Rajput-Mughal alliances have been subject to much study, however, less attention has been paid to how the Rajputs created their loyalty networks with other elite and non-elite groups through affective modes and cultural practices. Zeigler, "Rajput Loyalties During the Mughal Period."

<sup>168</sup> For a brief introduction to the political hierarchy of *thakurs* at the Udaipur court in Chapter One, 29-30.

expanding social world of regional thakurs who asserted—often like smaller kings—their power inside and outside the court and city of Udaipur. This discussion will thereby expand the pictorial trajectories for Udaipur paintings featuring Jagnivas as a space for affective bonding and expand our perspective on the role of aesthetics and practices giving pleasure in early modern courtly societies.

I propose that the corpus of paintings discussed in this chapter brings picturing place and royal praise into inventive pictorial dialogues, enabling us to think about the political economy of pleasure (*vilāsa*) in the mid-eighteenth century. How was pleasure practiced and employed to create an imaginary of the Udaipur court and city at this time? Gardens are central spaces where ideas of pleasure and aesthetics were located in a wide variety of literary texts that ideate on court cultures in pre-Mughal and Mughal South Asia. Most scholarly attention has been paid to Mughal gardens—real sites and related representations in paintings, memoirs, chronicles, and poems—to explore the paradisiacal Islamic garden and its currency in the region. Daud Ali’s exploration of the relationship between early Indian “garden culture”<sup>169</sup> and pleasure, has expanded our historical

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<sup>169</sup> Daud Ali and Emma Flatt employ “garden culture” based on the conception of the term by Craig Clunas. They write, “Clunas makes a powerful and persuasive argument for considering both the contemporary writings about and paintings of gardens as consciously constructed representations rather than unstructured mines of information that mirror some authentic reality. Interrogating a wide range of contemporary visual and textual sources from the perspectives of economic, literary,

perspective and underscored how physical places for pleasure shaped mental imaginaries of pleasure as well as how imagined cosmic garden domains were projected onto real garden spaces. Largely based on textual sources from the Gupta period and early Buddhist sites and archaeological evidence from fifth-century monastic gardens at the site of Sigiriya, Ali takes into account urban shifts and highlights the descriptions of types of gardens, of plants, flowers and fruits, and of horticulture knowledge. He also shows that gardens were imagined as constructed spaces and they were ideologically related to ideas of “properly lived worldly” life by kings that included “proper enjoyments.”<sup>170</sup> Ali writes,

“... unlike imaginary or utopian worlds, gardens were also *actual* places commonly experienced by men and women of elite society. In this sense, they were very tangible places—places which required great material expenditure and labourious care. This dual character of the garden—as a common architectural feature in elite households on the one hand, and a place where both this and other-worldly felicitous were imagined on the other, suggests that the garden conformed more closely to

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social, cultural and political history, he demonstrates the complex, dynamic and multifaceted nature of what he terms ‘garden culture’; that intersecting network of discursive practices which surround the idea of the garden, in Ming China.” Ali and Flatt, “Introduction,” 5.

<sup>170</sup> On the one hand, Ali seeks to problematize the singular study of Mughal gardens related to Islamic ideas of pleasure in the subcontinent, and, on the other hand, he seeks to disassociate gardens from ahistorical and romantic associations with “fertility cults in ancient India or a Romantic integration of man and nature emblematic of pre-modern man.” He notes that such ideas have been largely propagated because contemporary scholars have access to very fragmentary evidence of built garden spaces from early courtly societies. Ali, “Gardens in Early Indian Court Life.” In a new edited volume, Daud Ali and Emma Flatt have examined the role of gardens and their relation to ideas of pleasure, aesthetics, and knowledge (ranging from botanical and horticultural to astronomical concerns) in the court cultures from the Deccan region. I bring up several essays from this volume in the discussion below. Ali and Flatt, *Garden and Landscape Practices in Precolonial India*.

what Michel Foucault called ‘heterotopias’—real spaces which both operationalized and articulated collective and individual desires.”<sup>171</sup>

Addressing the subject of pleasure in relation to Mughal history and early modern courtly society in India, closer in time and space to when the Jagnivas palace was built and the *Jagvilās* poem was composed, Katherine Butler Schofield has highlighted that the theoretical problem is not just related to the shadows of Orientalist and post-Enlightenment narratives, but is also related to how we translate literary words related to joy and enjoyment as “merely pleasure.”<sup>172</sup> Schofield explores inter-cultural ideas of pleasure forged in Indo-Persian literature and seeks to open up the hermetic scholarly domains of cultural and artistic practices in the Mughal world. In locating the centrality of such practices to politics and social life, Schofield considers the place of Hindustani music in Mughal elite society and shows us that the “Mughals did carve out a circumscribed space for the pursuit of pleasure that was fully commensurate with—indeed, necessary to sustain—their idea of a balanced government; government of the self, of social relations and of the state.”<sup>173</sup> Pleasure, she

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<sup>171</sup> Ali, “Gardens in Early Indian Court Life,” 225.

<sup>172</sup> Schofield, “Sense and Sensibility: The Domain of Pleasure and the Place of Music in Mughal Society.” I borrow heavily upon Schofield’s essay in this paragraph.

<sup>173</sup> Schofield gives us the examples from seventeenth century treatise on Hindustani music and explores the semantics of words (like *zauq* and *lazzat*) that define the purpose of music as the

adds, relates to examining “the cultivation of the emotions, particularly joy, love and longing, and the five senses, through specific aesthetic practices that additionally engage the intellect, in which the aim, experiential transcendence, is largely an end in itself, even if it needs to be justified as a means to a higher end, such as consolidating friendship, expressing devotion to God, or restoring physical and mental health.”<sup>174</sup>

The interrelated role of cultures of pleasure and gardens and of connoisseurship linking poetry, music, and painting with the forging of shifting political networks, the formation of social lives and ethical selves, and the production of knowledge and histories are instrumental to the questions I probe in this chapter. How did paintings and poetry codify the Jagnivas lake-palace as a place for practice of pleasure and politics at the Udaipur court? The poetry of *Jagvilās* and paintings featuring Jagat Singh II at Jagnivas bring to the

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“arousal of feelings of tenderness and sympathy in the heart of the listener.” She interprets multiple alignments between Persianate concepts of pleasure and joy and taste and flavor related to the performance and listening of Hindustani music and the cultivation of one’s emotions and feelings found within Persianate prescriptive texts on ethics and proper governance (*akhlaq*). She finds a similar alignment in concepts of joy and cultivation of emotions within the discussion on aesthetic theories of *rasa* and *bhava* and the ethical performance of ideal kingship in Shastric Sanskrit texts from early medieval Indian courts. Deeper spiritual meanings related to the love and joy in seeking the divine within seventeenth century songs, emerging from the worlds of Islamicate Sufism and Hindu Vaisnavite sects, further layered the complexity of meanings associated with pleasure. Schofield thus argues that “we misunderstand a range of Mughal ideologies and values, and misread a number of Mughal texts particularly historical chronicles, not to mention missing much of what made life meaningful for Mughal men and women, if we do not address directly the proper place of pleasure in Mughal society.” *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 8–9.

forefront that the Jagnivas lake-palace was imagined as a heterotopia—as a circumscribed space for pleasure that included the cultivation of the senses of sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch through the spatial beauty of the palace’s locale and its architecture, and the enjoyment of poetry, music, dance, food, and wine in the companionship of (mostly) powerful men who appreciated such material delights within the courtly environs of this lake-palace. Once they are disengaged from the colonial topoi of pleasure and decline, such pictures of the Jagnivas lake-palace are legible as important statements in an ontology of painting that imagined a “world of pleasure (*Jagvilās*)” in the mid-eighteenth century. This ontology situates Udaipur as a place to be admired at the intersection of networks of powerful connoisseurs who employed kingly panegyrics to craft impressive memories of a court, king, and city.

### **3.2. *Jagvilās: World of Pleasure***

*Jagvilās*, the 405-verse long poem composed by the court poet Nandram and dedicated to Maharana Jagat Singh II, commemorates the inauguration of the Jagnivas palace in Udaipur. The poet fashions himself as singing the praises of Jagat Singh in the introductory couplet (*dohā*), and he addresses the ruler by the poetic epithet “*jagatesa*” through the poem. This term Jagat, meaning the world, is connected to *īśa*, meaning god, exalts the Udaipur ruler

and expands the name and domain of the king from Udaipur to the world.<sup>175</sup> Similarly the repeated pairing of the similar-sounding words *jasa*, meaning fame, and *jagatesa*, makes praise of Jagat Singh into an important leitmotif in the poem. The following verses describe the king's commissioning of the building of Jagnivas and the associated ceremonies that mark the initiation; the extensive celebrations that take place when the palace is inaugurated; the beauty and royal stature of Jagat Singh by means of established poetic tropes from early modern Rajput court poetry; the boat procession (*sawāri*) in the lake Pichola that takes the royal party to the Jagnivas palace on the day of its inauguration, April 22 1746; the festivities, food and music enjoyed by the thakurs and poets in attendance; and the visit of the royal women and princes from the queen's palace on the day following the opening of the palace. The intersection between topoi of place, pleasure, and praise make *Jagvilās* an important work which brings panegyrics and the ideas of composing court histories in poetic forms into sharp focus. The use of the Jagnivas palace as a key spatial connector in the poem makes emphatic the poet Nandram's imagining of the architecture and courtly ambience of this lake-palace as a focus in itself. It also calls attention to his

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<sup>175</sup> For example, Udaipur ruler Jagat Singh I (r. 1628-1652), also named the deity of Vishnu in the Jagdish temple as Jagannath Ray, "meaning Lord of the World" after his own name. Jennifer Joffee argues that this act of naming stated in the inscriptions above the deity, along with various aspects of the building project commissioned by Jagat Singh I, participated in reinforcing Mewar's power, politics, and image in relation to the contemporaneous building projects of the Mughals and Rajput Kachhwaha rulers of Jaipur. Joffee, "Art, Architecture and Politics in Mewar, 1628-1710," 93.

employment of the building and the inauguration of the lake-palace as key spatial and temporal lenses through which to see the portrait of Udaipur king Jagat Singh II and by which to craft the historical memories of mid-eighteenth century Udaipur.

“*Vilāsa*” has largely been employed pejoratively by art historians and historians writing in English and Hindi. Their characterizations of Jagat Singh II as a “*vilāsī*,” presented him as a king solely immersed in amusements related to women and wine.<sup>176</sup> In earlier literary texts like *Jaisinghvilāsa* (n.d.) and *Rājvilāsa* (1689), composed in Sanskrit and Brajbhasha by Udaipur’s court poets, “*vilāsa*” is used in the title of historical poems.<sup>177</sup> Yet these poems explore themes of royal praise and portraiture by privileging genealogy, an issue that I address in greater detail below, and do not in fact engage the theme of *vilāsa* as enjoyment or delights of a specific place and time, an emphasis seen in the *Jagvilās*.

Similarly we know of other treatises written in Sanskrit and Brajbhasha whose titles include the term “*vilāsa*,” and which thereby suggest meanings related to delights of a person or a theme. For instance, Busch has translated the title of Braj poet Chintamani Tripathi’s work *Rasvilās* (1630s) as “Play of Rasa.” This work explores the theory of Rasa and the poet sings

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<sup>176</sup> For example, See, Ojhā, *Udayapura Rājya Kā Itihāsa*, 2.641.

<sup>177</sup> *Jaisinghvilās* (n.d.) is composed in Sanskrit by Ranchod Bhatta and *Rājvilās* (1689) is composed in Brajbhasha by Man Kavi. Both were collected by Tod and manuscript copied in the nineteenth century for him are available in the collections of the Royal Asiatic Society. I am grateful to Rima Hooja for sharing her annotated bibliography on these works.



praises of emperor Shah Jahan.<sup>178</sup> In exploring the worlds of early modern Rajput courts in north India, scholars have brought to our attention court literature written in poetic registers of Brajbhasha, which exhibits a keen interest in combining panegyrics and royal portraiture with allusions to historical times and places as well as an investment in the classicism from Sanskrit poetry and the topoi of devotional love found in Radha-Krishna imagery of Bhakti poetry.<sup>179</sup> In the *Jagvilās* we have poetry that commemorates Jagnivas palace as a place that was from its inception, through its design and building phases, intended to dazzle. We hear of Jagat Singh and the courtly community taking delight in a range of things. The poetry renders the idea of taking and providing pleasure as one of the

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<sup>178</sup> Busch translates another Braj treatise, Lallulal's courtly work *Sabhāvilās* (1828) as "Delight of the assembly and a Sanskrit treatise *Ānandvilās* on Vedānta, composed by Jaswant Singh, the Maharaja of Marwar, "exhibit[s] a metaphysical bend," though I am unsure how "*vilāsa*" is integrated in the latter work. On a broader level, it remains unclear to me if in all cases authors made this choice in coining the title to suggest engagement with a specific genre or subject classified as "*vilāsa*." Busch, *Poetry of Kings*, 153–154; 206; 177. More recently, I am grateful to Busch for bringing to my attention the example of a Braj *praśasti* (praise) from the *Kavīndrakalpalatā* of Kavindracharya Sarasvati, a Maharashtrian pandit who attended the court of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan and praises the emperor and his new capital of Shahjahanbad. In this poem, one of the verses (no. 92) introduces the idea of the king living with all the pleasures (*vilasata saba sukh jīti*). I hope to explore this source further in the future. See, Busch, "Brajbhasha Praśasti." For more on this poet see, Busch, *Poetry of Kings*, 152–153.

<sup>179</sup> On combination of *bhakti* themes within courtly poetry, for example, see, Pauwels, "Romancing Rādhā"; Pauwels, "Two 'Gardens of Love': Raskhān's Prem Vātikā and Nāgridās' Ísk-Caman."

ideals of kingship. It locates delight and pleasure specifically as practiced at the Jagnivas lake-palace.<sup>180</sup>

“*Vilāsa*” was incorporated in the naming the gardens built within palaces (*mahal*) and around pavilions (*darīkhānā*) in Udaipur, relating this terminology specifically to pleasure-gardens at the Mewar court. In a painting depicting Udaipur ruler Amar Singh II playing the festival of colors with his sixteen nobles in a garden (c. 1708-10), discussed in chapter two, we saw that the scribes identify the depicted idealized lush green garden as a particular place, the garden (*bāḍī*) of “Sarabat bilās” (Ill. 2.11). The prominent garden-courtyard in the Udaipur palace, the Amar Vilas Mahal (built by Amar Singh II, r. 1698-1710), was and is commonly called as the Badi Mahal—meaning the garden (*bāḍī*)-palace(*mahal*)—a type of space that is included in almost all courtly palaces in early modern northern India (Ill. 3.4). Jennifer Joffee and Fairchild Ruggles interpret the design of the garden-palace of the Amar Vilas Mahal as an example of cross-cultural design where craftsmen combined elements that allude to earlier examples of both Rajput and Mughal

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<sup>180</sup> Further research may highlight the prescriptive texts on kingship and ethics that were in circulation at the Udaipur court that possibly offered thinking on the role of pleasure and connoisseurship, which may allow us to explore in further detail the topoi employed for building a portrait of Jagat Singh I in *Jagvilās*.

gardens.<sup>181</sup> They suggest that the cross-axial layout of the pool within the Badi Mahal would not have been necessarily read as a vision of an Islamic paradise, but “as a sacred grove and tank associated with the Hindu deities such as Rama and Sita.”<sup>182</sup> In fact, the elaborate coinage of the original name of this garden-palace, built by Amar Singh II at the highest level of the hill, as the “Shivprasana Amar Vilas Mahal” suggests even more specifically how courtly patrons and architects associated the garden-palace with idealized landscapes.<sup>183</sup> This nomenclature metaphorically relates the garden-palace to the joys (*prasana*) of (or that make) Lord Shiva’s abode, and identifies his abode as a place for the patron Maharana Amar Singh II’s joys and pleasures (*vilāsa*).

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<sup>181</sup> The authors suggest that the grid-type square flower and plant beds surrounded by walkways relates to other Rajput gardens like the dense orchards in the Orchha palace and the central water basin in the Bārī Mahal relates to the classic Mughal *chahar bagh*. Ruggles and Joffee, “Rajput Gardens and Landscape,” 278–280.

<sup>182</sup> In studying gardens commissioned by Rajput kings, Joffee and Ruggles have shown that while forms of Mughal gardens were freely borrowed in gardens made in Rajput palaces, “meaning did not necessarily accompany a form that moved from one context to the other.” Although it has always been assumed that the design, architectural details and metaphors of paradise associated with Mughal gardens provided the basis for the development of gardens within Rajput palaces, Rajput gardens like the Maunbari gardens at the Amber fort point to the transmission of garden design in the opposite direction as well, from Rajput to Mughal courts. Similarity in architectural details and the sending of craftsmen from Amber to the Mughal court at Agra in 1637 establish that garden designs circulated in both directions. Because the precise date of the construction of Maunbari gardens has not been known it has often been assumed that it was based on Mughal models like *Anguri bagh* rather than the other way around. *Ibid.*, 271–172.

<sup>183</sup> Śyāmaladāsa, *Vīravīnoda*, 2. 790.

The first instance in the *Jagvilās* when the idea of *vilāsa* is evoked corresponds to the poet's visualization of the courtly gathering within the Shivprasana Amar Vilas Mahal.

Having introduced the historical moment related to the conception of Jagnivas and having described rituals that mark the beginning of its construction, Nandram focuses his gaze on the day of the inauguration (*muharata*) itself, beginning with Jagat Singh getting dressed, arriving at his throne, offering his prayers to various deities, listening to devotional songs (*kīrtana*), and giving various kinds of charity (*dāna*). All these activities were performed in the garden-courtyard of the Amar Vilas Mahal. The poet describes the king's enjoyments, including the appreciation of paintings and of food, after he has described the king's enactment of various tenets of idealized kingship, like giving charity, offering prayers, and listening to scriptures. The texts of this set of five *chands*, below, give us a sense of how the poet interweaves joys and tastes in speaking about the king and his nobles (*rājātarānā*) enjoying a variety of foods together.

*chand padharī (45)*

*apkariya citrasala anūpa*

*ati sukhada sarasa tin mahi sarūpa*

*taha kavita tripada citrām kīna*

*jihi dekhi thakita mana hota līna*

You have made a unique room of paintings

The pictures inside are beautiful and give a lot of joy

Where poetry and paintings are made (?)

After seeing them the tired/charmed mind becomes calm

(46)

*jei jei vilāsa apkariya tāma  
 tei tei sucitra lakhi gama gama  
 tinke prakāra saba kahata sāra  
 keteka dina na pāve na pāra*

You partake in all kinds of pleasures  
 We try writing about all them in beautiful and varied ways  
 So many types how does one summarize?  
 We may try saying for days and still not complete them all

(47)

*tihi gera madhi rājatrāna  
 jānou ki īsa kailasa ra thāna  
 parihāra sadi bhojana maṅgāya  
 āgyā pramāna āne sutāya*

Here assembled in the center are the rajas and ranas (thakurs)  
 Seems like the place of Lord Kailash  
 Pure foods were called (?)  
 They were brought as per the orders (?)

(48)

*saba sūbhāṭa awara sewaka samāja  
 beṭhari pankti agdhariya bāja  
 vidhi vidhi prakāra paruse pravīna  
 ṣatrasa savāda nita prati navīna*

Here are all the groups of pundits and helpers  
 Sitting in a line with the low stool in front<sup>184</sup>  
 Various kinds of new foods are served  
 Eight types of tastes and new flavors are made everyday

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<sup>184</sup> Bāja refers to bājauṭ, the low wooden stools that are kept in front of a person sitting on the floor for placing his plate.

(49)

*prabhu dai sakala āgya sutāma  
sira nāya sabhi kīne pranāma  
saba sanga sanga sukha sau sucāva  
bhojan kariya mana sudha bhāva*

Per the permission of his holiness  
Everyone bowed his head with respect  
Everyone shares together the joy and excitement (excited desires?)  
While eating the meal a pure feeling pervades the mind

These verses dwell on types of pleasures that a ruler may enjoy, and how a poet seeks to write a variety of compositions to describe them. Nandram compares the picture of this group seated together to the sacred abode of Lord Shiva's Mount Kailasha. The spatial metaphor also conjures a landscape of high mountains, and thus is apt for the built space where the courtly gathering is imagined, the Amar Vilas Mahal, which wraps around a central garden-courtyard located at the highest point on the hill where the Udaipur palaces were sited. This simile also connects Jagat Singh's court to its family deity Eklingji, a form of Shiva, incorporated by Mewar kings, poets and painters in various divine legitimization claims.<sup>185</sup> That the *chand* on types of *vilāsa* (no. 46) follows how the king appreciates

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<sup>185</sup> Including other strategies of territorial expansion that took place in the fourteenth century, Kapur argues the ideological support or legitimization of Mewar's early Guhila clans draw from the regional cult of Ekalingaji on a strong Pasupata base, which evolves in this period into the royal epithet of Eklinganjasevaka (Maharanas of Mewar serving the state as Divan of Ekalinga). Kapur, *State Formation in Rajasthan*, 280–286.

paintings and painted rooms (*citrasālā*) (no. 45), and is followed by the poets' evocation of the Udaipur ruler and his thakurs sitting together enjoying a variety of delicacies (no. 47), is a compelling use of juxtaposition that bodies forth thinking about material practices and aesthetics.<sup>186</sup> Concepts of taste (*rasa*) based on culinary associations inform Indian aesthetic theories in various texts, discussed briefly in Chapter two; however, we have few examples that imagine the appreciation of edible and painted delights in such located contexts. The pleasure felt from looking at paintings and tasting food is imagined as leading to the experience of emotions of calmness and wholesomeness. The words *vilāsa* (delights/ pleasures/ enjoyment) and *sukha* (joy) are employed by Nandram in myriad ways when he transitions us into the space of the Jagnivas palace itself. The basis for creation of this circumscribed palace for pleasure in the middle of the Lake Pichola is spatially, temporally, and ritually located in the garden-palace (Bari Mahal) of the Amar Vilas Mahal *before* the Udaipur court proceeds to the newly built space of pleasure.

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<sup>186</sup> Aitken considers parataxis in north Indian painting ranging from seventeenth century Hindu poetic and devotional manuscripts to Mughal albums, in order to explore the compositional precedents and practice of reuse that can help interpret the stylistic and compositional eclecticism seen in the Mughal artist Mīr Kalan Khān's eighteenth century paintings. She also compares paratactic practices to the metaphor of *khichrī*, an Indian culinary term that is employed as a metaphor for borrowing and mixing in eighteenth century literary practices. Aitken, "Parataxis and the Practice of Reuse, from Mughal Margins to Mīr Kalān Khān."

In order to fully understand how royal praise, pleasures, and the place of Jagnivas are integrated in the *Jagvilās*, even before the poet transports us to the lake-palace, let us examine how Nandram incorporates aesthetic topoi of kingly praise and city praise that saturated historical-literary genres in Rajput courtly literature. Having paid homage to the Lord of auspicious beginnings, Ganesh, and to the Goddess of Learning, Saraswati, in the opening verses, the poet introduces Udaipur by way of praising its location within the mountains and the glow and vibrancy that adorns this city that receives the first rays of the Sun. He says,

*dohā (4)*

*udaygirī sama udaipura bhāna mano jagrāna  
sahasa kirana samteja tana sobhita sarasa samāna*

Udaipur is like the sunrise mountain, Jagrān (Jagat Singh) is its Sun  
His body is radiant as 1000 sunrays

*gāhā (5)*

*jasa jagatesa ananto kavi ika rasna kahan lagi kahihī  
sesa sahasa dive jiha nita prati kahatpāra naha pāī*

The fame of Jagates is limitless, what can a poet say with his single tongue  
Sheshanaga with his 1000 tongues cannot reach the end, even if he speaks continuously

*dohā (6)*

*kavi mukha ika gungāna bahuta bārno yatha banāye  
jalsāgara purana subhara kyona gāgara su samāye*

The poet has one mouth the virtues and praises are numerous, may try to describe them but  
The ocean of water fills the entire Universe, why(how?) can it be contained in a pot?



Nandram similes echo the geographical environs of the city, combining praise for Jagat Singh with metaphors that evoke the expanse of the lake environs of Udaipur.<sup>187</sup> In these opening verses the poet keeps double meanings on praise and beauty of the city and of the ruler in continuous play. Similar descriptions of cities (*nagaravarṇana*) as beautiful architectural and cultural spaces were common in both Sanskrit and Braj courtly literature and classical norms for such descriptions were codified.<sup>188</sup> We also know of several seventeenth-century examples of Rajput literature where poets have paid much attention to “local inflections” in relation to specific courts and cities.<sup>189</sup> The Orchha court poet Keshavdas’ description of an ideal setting of a garden that is followed by the description of a “real-life garden in accompanying example verse—the garden of his student, the courtesan Pravin Ray” is particularly instructive.<sup>190</sup> Busch suggests that the poet’s emphasis was

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<sup>187</sup> It is also worth noting that the name of the city—“Udaipur”—meaning the city (pur) of the rising (Udai) Sun exhibits that the founders of the city incorporated the theme of the locale of the place in the naming of the city itself.

<sup>188</sup> Busch, *Poetry of Kings*, 181.

<sup>189</sup> Busch gives us few examples from texts related to Bundi, Orrcha, and Shahjahanabad *ibid.*, 148–151;181;191–192.

<sup>190</sup> Busch brings this example to the fore in discussing basic principles of aesthetics in classical Indian literature and related approaches found within *rīti* poetry, description of beautiful settings being one of the topics for which literary theorists often laid out precise codes. She writes, “Keshavdas, for instance suggested: A garden should be enticing. Mention the hanging vines,

ultimately on stirring the *bhāva* or feelings and emotions one might feel in real and ideal places alike, rather than on a desire to achieve verisimilitude. Further research may reveal pertinent connections with the *Jagvilās*<sup>191</sup>; for now, it certainly appears that Nandram may have been unique in employing the topoi of *nagaravarṇana* and of *vilāsa* for commemorative and historical purposes related to the building of a specific palace—the Jagnivas lake-palace.

Nandram shifts the attention from royal pleasures (practiced in the Shiv Prasana Amar Vilas Mahal discussed above) to royal praise by composing verses praising the body. He employs the classical trope of *sikh-nakh* (head-to-toe description), which were widely employed to idealize and praise kingly beauty within Rajput court literature, to comprehensively describe in thirteen verses Jagat Singh and the ornaments that adorned him.<sup>192</sup> Yet, the poet's introduction of this literary topoi connects it with the poem's focus on Jagnivas lake-palace: we are told that the king realizes that the auspicious time for the

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beautiful trees and flowers, the sweet cooing of cuckoos and peacocks, the bees buzzing all around." *ibid.*, 72–73.

<sup>191</sup> For instance, Pauwels has brought to our attention on the basis of research in Kishangarh's royal collections that the Udaipur king Ari Singh (r. 1761–73) composed the poem *Rasik-Camana* in response to the poem *Ísk-Camana* composed by Kishangarh king Savant Singh who wrote under the pen name Nagaridas. Pauwels, "Literary Moments of Exchange in the 18th Century: The New Urdu Vogue Meets Krishna Bhakti," 80.

<sup>192</sup> Both Sanskrit and Braj poets employed this kind of a stylized description as "a common means of intensifying the erotic mood" to portray the *nāyikā* especially within *śṛṅgāra* (erotic) poetry. Busch, *Poetry of Kings*, 70.

inauguration ceremony may pass, and thus he orders his attendants to bring out his special clothes and jewels.

Nandram shifts easily from bodily praise to material praise of things that would have added grandeur to Jagat Singh's court, composing several cantos (comprising verses in the *chand* meter each concluded by a *dohā*) describing elephants and horses, drums (*nagāre*) and trumpets (*śahnāī*), and umbrellas (*chatara*) and palanquins (*pālki*).<sup>193</sup> Succeeding verses visualize the royal procession traveling towards the city's lakefront, with Jagat Singh stopping on the way to offer homage to the Jagannath Ray deity in the Jagannath temple located outside the palace gates as well as to the community of pundits who served as priests at the Udaipur court, residing in the neighborhood (*mohallā*) of the Paliwal community (*jāti*). The poet's praise for the shininess, beauty, color, and sound of material things which constitute the procession transitions to praise for the beauty of Jagat Singh II in the marching procession. In multiple verses the poet embeds the idea of the citizens of Udaipur seeing the procession and being captivated by it visually, their eyes filled and then their hearts filled with emotions (*bhāva*) of admiration.<sup>194</sup> The connection of such panegyric

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<sup>193</sup> Verses 55-109

<sup>194</sup> Here is an example of a *chand* (125) that juxtaposes a vision of a city immersed in admiration; the poet emphasis on a particular place where the crowd expands refers to the neighborhood of the Paliwal pundits where Jagat Singh II disembarks for *darshan*, a scene evoked in the previous *dohā*:

writing on material things—the very elements that constituted the kingly procession of Jagat Singh—suggests yet again a desire to locate the literary topoi of praise of people and things in relation to the inauguration of the new lake-palace and the progression of Jagat Singh’s court towards the space and time of this climactic event.

The *Jagvilās* evokes the present time of the here and now in Udaipur at multiple instances. Nandram’s combination of aesthetic and documentary concerns employs the details of Jagat Singh’s court as much as classical tropes of bodily and material panegyry to create a historical narrative in the poem.<sup>195</sup> This poet’s distinct investment in the contemporaneity of the Udaipur court is significant in light of how the Mewar court’s relationship to its ancient past framed several visual and literary practices commissioned by Udaipur’s rulers. Seventeenth-century literary texts composed at the Mewar court formulate a concentrated interest in composing a *vamshavali*. The Udaipur court poet Ranchoda Bhatta composed an extensive genealogy in the introductory cantos of the

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*tihi tā naranārīna bhīra badey, manau sīhara peya phulwāri banī*  
*sabke cita dekhana ko sarase, sukha ke subha meha tahāna barase*

At that place the crowd of the men-women expands, like there is bed of flowers laid in the city  
 Everyone’s hearts are eager to see, auspicious clouds of joy fall here

<sup>195</sup> Sawai Pratap Singh of Jaipur (r.1778-1803) composed the Braj poem *Pratāp Prakāsa* that describes and praises the daily courtly activities of his own court. A comparison between this poem and *Jagvilās* in the future may prove fruitful. Bangha, “Courtly and Religious Communities as Centers of Literary Activity in Eighteenth-Century India: Anandghan’s Contacts with the Princely Court of Kishengarh-Rupnagar and with the Math of the Nimbarkar Smapraday in Salemabad,” 313–314.

*Rajpraśastī*, a Sanskrit poem inscribed on twenty-five stone slabs along the shores of the Rajsamand Lake, the most ambitious building project commissioned by the Udaipur ruler Raj Singh (r. 1652-1680), completed in 1680 to provide relief aid and water for Mewar citizens inflected by extreme drought conditions.<sup>196</sup> Several other literary works, like the *Rājvilās* (1689) and *Rājprakās* (1661), composed in a combination of Brajbhasha and regional Rajasthani dialects, highlight the central interest at this time in detailing the genealogy of the Sisodia rulers. Cynthia Talbot sees the aim of such texts as “[documenting] a succession of kings, one after another, going as far back as possible... [which] demonstrated the age-old authority of a royal lineage and thereby conferred it with the legitimacy to rule in the present.”<sup>197</sup> Apart from the verses that recount the Sisodia genealogy, Joffee notes that the poem describes the details of the seven-day consecration ceremony held on the lake, gifts given by the Udaipur ruler to member of his court, and acts of charity and

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<sup>196</sup> Joffee explores the various historical manuscripts commissioned by Raj Singh based on historian G.N. Sharma’s publications in relation to the ruler’s related patronage of art and architecture. Joffee, “Art, Architecture and Politics in Mewar, 1628-1710,” 104–108; Also see, Hooja, *A History of Rajasthan*, 621–623; For a summary of *Rājvilāsa* and *Rājprakāśa*, see Bhāṭī, *Mevāra Ke Aitihāsika Granthom Kā Sarvekshana*, 2–3.

<sup>197</sup> Talbot, “The Mewar Court’s Construction of History,” 18.

circumambulating the lake performed on the site.<sup>198</sup> Such acts, Joffe argues, establish a connection of the Udaipur kings with an idealized Hindu Vedic notion of kingship and invoke comparison to specific commemorative and devotional practices of Mughal kings, which in turn had alluded to Mughal victories over Mewar kings at the Chitor fort.

*Jagvilās*, like the *Rajpraśastī*, also commemorates the inauguration of an important building commissioned by an Udaipur ruler. But the relationship of the Udaipur court to its past, whether expressed in terms of the ruling family's lineage or tales of its heroic valor, is not recounted in this poem. Rather the history of Mewar-Mughal relations is specifically employed to locate the Jagnivas palace geographically and perhaps to allude to a history of this royal commission. When Nandram tells us in the eighth verse (chappay) that Jagat Singh selected the site for building Jagnivas between Jagmandir and another lake pavilion, he notes that the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, given refuge in Udaipur, had lived in the Jagmandir lake-palace, where he built works with good thinking (*vivek*) and knowledge of prescribed ways (*savidhi*). Thus Jagat Singh's desire to build the most impressive lake-palace may reflect his interest in shifting the dominance of Jagmandir in the Pichola Lake. Such a comparison, however, need not suggest Mewar-Mughal competition; the poet may instead

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<sup>198</sup> For an account of the collective patronage by Raj Singh of historical manuscripts, art and architecture, especially as they are integrated at the public site of the Rajsamand lake, see, Joffe, "Art, Architecture and Politics in Mewar, 1628-1710," chapter four.

allude to a popular story that one often hears through texts and oral narratives, even though it is not commemorated in the *Jaḡvilās*. According to this lore, Jagat Singh II decided to build the Jagnivas palace on the occasion of his father Sangram Singh denying him permission to visit the Jagmandir palace and mocking him with a challenge to build his own lake-palace to fulfill his desires.<sup>199</sup> Not only are the topoi of genealogy and past history absent from this poem, the Mughals are not perceived as a threat, and we see no particular investment in fashioning Udaipur rulers as divine-kings representing the Hindu solar race. While Nandram's composition of daily court rituals of prayer and charity<sup>200</sup> may be interpreted as establishing links to idealized kingship, we encounter such topoi of idealization in a range of realms. The poetry ultimately emphasizes pleasure more than Vedic ritual and valor; connoisseurship of good food and music within the present environs of the Jagnivas lake-palace more than genealogy that invokes a space and time of the past; and a contemporary courtly society comprising intelligent and brave thakurs, powerful regional men connected to Mewar, more than the court's negotiations with the imperial Mughals in the past.

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<sup>199</sup> Śyāmaladāsa, *Vīravīnoda*, 3.1233.

<sup>200</sup> For instance, even when we are told about the prayers and charity performed at a daily basis, the verses keenly note the names of the various deities and the pandits who read the scriptures (*veda* and *mantrā*) at the court.

Within the first ten verses of the *Jagvilās*, the power of Jagat Singh II is expressed in his ability to gather Mewar's thakurs at the Jagnivas lake-palace, which he hopes would captivate everyone's hearts. Two verses synoptically assemble the shift in the poet's gaze to subjects that matter the most through the poetry—the city of Udaipur and the building of the Jagnivas lake-palace and the praise of Jagat Singh II and his courtly community.

Nandram writes,

*chappay (7)*

*ika samaya dīvana maujdariyāva nāva madhi  
rājata sakala samāj rūparati su bidhi bidhi  
ita jalmandira nirakhī sarasa sundara sarsāje  
uta jagmandir jōti dhara sārī sirtāje  
duhunbīca gera sarasī sarasa yātai yeha puni kijīye  
saba dikhe jīte mohe jagata āpa yekhimana rijye*

Once upon a time, [while] enjoying a boat ride in the lake  
All of his companions (courtly society) looked splendid  
Here he sees the Jalmandir, [it stands] very beautifully  
There are the lights of the Jagmandir, crown of the entire lake/earth (?)  
The land in between is the best of the best, therefore people act like this (?)  
All who see it have their heart captivated, when Jagat Singh sees he too is delighted

*chappay (10)*

*taba ṭhakura sirdāra singha nija nikṭa bulāye  
sabey subudhi vyohāra tahan kahi kahi samukāye  
jite gajdhara sarasa kāmkaraka saba syāne  
te vidyā gunpūra silpsāstra saha jāne  
tina soju hukuma śrī mukha taha kahata sabae vahcita dhariya  
sirdāra singha tina ati subudhi vividha vividha rachna kariya*



Then Jagat Singh calls thakur Sirdar Singh near him.

[Who is] the most intelligent and sophisticated (well-mannered?), smiling to himself while talking to him

All the best architects, all the intelligent workers

[Those] with virtuosity of training and knowledge of architecture-science treatise.

He (Jagat Singh) gave these orders to him (Sirdar Singh) from his auspicious mouth, and he (Sirdar Singh) took it to heart

He, Sirdar Singh, with very good thinking makes a variety of creations/buildings

The king's admiration of the beauty of the lake and existing lake-palaces in Udaipur,

asserted in the company of courtly society constituted by intelligent men, and the king's

access to the most skilled builders and craftsmen to build the new palace of Jagnivas,

characterize Jagat Singh as a sophisticated ruler. Beyond the space and visuality of the

Jagnivas palace and the portrayal of Jagat Singh which shape the poet's imaginary,

Nandram expands on themes related to the role of courtly society and connoisseurship,

intertwining them with ideas about pleasure and praise. Nandram gives us details of

members of Udaipur court, including the names of powerful thakurs and skilled craftsmen.

Several verses are devoted to the act of ceremonial gift-giving by Jagat Singh II to all the

thakurs, and these enumerate the names of individual thakurs and their clans and offer

details of the gifts they have received on the occasion, whether horses, gems, gold, or

robes.<sup>201</sup> The Braj poetry of *Jagvilās* is then as much shaped by the current politics of the local courtiers at Udaipur as it is by an aesthetic and literary interest in topoi of pleasure and praise.<sup>202</sup> Aesthetic and political imperatives constitute each other equally in both directions.

Claiming that he is writing an eyewitness account, Nandram evokes an ambience where musicians (*bhagatana* and *kalāvanta*) sing auspicious songs and poets give blessings to Jagat Singh II. The Udaipur ruler is an ideal king who maintains the honor of Hindus, rules per the Shastric principles, performs many acts of charity, patronizes poets, and partakes in pleasures like the Sun-god Indra. The section on gift-giving re-emphasizes *Jagvilās* as a historical-political work, and notes that poets are the first members in this courtly community to receive the gifts from the king—they are given precedence even over the

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<sup>201</sup> Verses nos. 151-175. We are told that a person named Hari Kisan from the court's office (*daftar*) documented the details of all the presents that were distributed.

<sup>202</sup> Busch explains the “new importance” of “historical” genres in the Braj literary milieu as a poetic innovation that drew upon an awareness of the traditions of Indo-Persian *tārīkh* (royal chronicle) and narrative poetry in various local dialects of Rajasthani. She suggests that creative poetic visions of local sovereignty were equally important to assert in the Mughal imperial system where Rajput kings played a key role and wished to commemorate it within new registers of language, poetry, and genre. Busch, *Poetry of Kings*, 88–90. Also see, Chapter five that focuses on Rajput literature and self-fashioning. In approaching literary-historical narratives of the Rajput queen Padmini, Sreenivasan emphasizes evaluating how narratives evoke “distinctive versions of a remembered past in a particular historical moment” that may be less about aesthetic standards of poetics and more shaped by immediate concerns of politics. Sreenivasan, *The Many Lives of a Rajput Queen : Heroic Past in India c. 1500-1900*, 67–68; chapter three.

thakurs. Nandram squarely connects the singing of praises and the gifts one receives in a verse, saying, “like the variety [of the gifts], the poet creates a variety of praises (*tinke vividha prakāra so, kahata banāya bakhāna*).” On another instance we are told that the king’s pace of giving gifts compares with the pace at which the water flows in the lakes and with the endless virtues the king possesses, and that a poet cannot comprehensively summarize any of these subjects. Nandram’s interweaving and theorizing of the connections he sees between giving gifts (*dāna*) and singing (*gāna*) praises (*mahimā*) and virtues (*guna*) of kings always alludes to the place of poets at the Udaipur court.<sup>203</sup>

It is possible that court poets and bards (*charan*) were also key consumers of painted place-centric imaginaries seen in eighteenth century topographical paintings made at the Udaipur court, and that the combined focus on praise and place that we see in the *Jagvilās* was shaped by Nandram’s exposure, not only to circulating Brajbhasha poetic visions, but perhaps also to painted visions that were in circulation at Udaipur. Topsfield has brought to light one key painting that depicts Sangram Singh receiving the poet Kaviraj Jagannath and an artist, possibly the Udaipur painter Jairam (Ill. 3.5). This painting, made in 1726, is the

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<sup>203</sup> Nandram authored the poem *Ākhetvarṇana* on the theme of hunting and royal portraiture that G.N. Sharma notes was composed during the reign of Jagat Singh (1734-1751). Future research on this work may reveal further clues on Nandram’s biography as well as highlight how the poet explores and employs royal hunts—another important facet of kingly virtue—to weave the relationship between panegyrics, kingship, and history in literary works of this time period. Sharma, *A Bibliography of Mediaeval Rajasthan, Social & Cultural*, 86.

first page of the series titled *Sundarśringār* (Beautiful (Erotic) Adornments?), where both the poet and the painter are pictured as holding a page of writing and a painted page in one hand. As Topsfield notes, the inscription suggests that the poet may be the supervisor of the manuscript, and the verse drawn on the depicted painted page praises the Rana (Sangram Singh) as he “who understands with sweet discrimination (*sarasa vicara*) the joyous appreciation of pictures,” both texts thus indicate an inter-twining of arts.<sup>204</sup> While court poets turned to a spatial lens focused on Udaipur city and its palaces to imagine their portrayals of Jagat Singh II and his court in the mid-eighteenth century, Udaipur’s court painters had already established a place-centric vision in portraits focused on a king’s new architectural commissions and their employment of spatial topoi of idealized gardens and the expanding Udaipur city. If Udaipur court painters imagined Amar Singh II and contemporaneous Kota rulers in several court paintings within garden spaces, where the compositions and inscriptions together sought to evoke a metaphorical garden space and particular gardens in the palace and city of the king, then it was Sangram Singh’s painters who innovated an imaginary which invited their patrons and audiences to shift their gazes

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<sup>204</sup> Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 147–148; 175 note 41, 42. We do not know of any important genealogical poems from Sangram Singh’s reign; however we know of the two genealogical scrolls that combine narrative and image which were made during Sangram Singh’s reign, thus making them another key specimens of material culture which demonstrate the collaboration and interaction among court bards, poets and painters.

to the city's lake-pavilions. In a small-sized vertical portrait (Ill. 3.6, dimensions unknown), Sangram Singh is pictured with his courtiers in a lake-pavilion, and as Topsfield notes, here “the emphasis begins to be as much on the topographical setting as on the central figure of the Rana, framed within a triple-arched *chatri*.”<sup>205</sup> The vignette of the townscape and isometric view of the Mohan Mandir lake-pavilion seen in the background of this portrait privileges an intimate setting in the foreground that is also seen within large-scale paintings. In the next section I will discuss paintings that imagine Sangram Singh within the environs of the Jagmandir lake-palace and deliberate on the multiple models which were at the disposal of Jagat Singh II's artists when they created a new sub-genre of topographical paintings, one focused on the Jagnivas and the beauty of its garden-courtyards.

If the title of *Jagvilās*, on the one hand, connects the poem to earlier literary compositions at the Udaipur court that seek to render a royal portrait by enumerating *vilāsa* as the delights of a king, then, on the other hand, the title of the poem becomes meaningfully layered when we hear Nandram expanding on *vilāsa* as pleasure and joy (*sukha*) aligned with connoisseurship and with the bringing together of courtly communities. *Vilāsa* is thereby constituted as a complex literary topoi and courtly practice

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 153. I am currently unable to access the inscription behind this painting.

that includes both—enjoyment *and* power. Such literary and panegyric narratives that shaped the memory of the Jagnivas lake-palace in mid-eighteenth century Udaipur make a strong case for disassociating the palace and its imaginary from Tod’s narratives of a pleasure-palace as a domain of frivolous pastimes.<sup>206</sup> Modern historians have privileged Tod’s writings largely because of their popular Orientalist appeal, and because, as an English-language source, written within a more familiar genre of history and travel literature, the language employed and the experiences depicted is easier to access and translate. Indeed, paintings depicting pleasurable practices can be very deceptive. They lend themselves to be read as portraits of decadence, indulgence, and triviality—an interpretation that has acquired much valence over the past two centuries. Yet such narratives have concealed other interpretations of Jagnivas paintings which I explore in the next section—interpretations that are enabled when we listen to the contemporaneous poetry of the *Jagvilās* and how it conjures Jagnivas as place-world where pleasure, praise, and politics were intertwined.

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<sup>206</sup> In interpreting Hindavi Sūfi romances, Aditya Behl makes a strong case for “[learning] to listen to the text from within its contexts of reception, to understand the genre as a strategy for fashioning both self and society in its political and spiritual contexts of production, and to interpret its archetypal motifs both historically and in relation to a distinctive narrative and spiritual agenda.” Behl, *The Magic Doe*, 38.

### 3.3. *Picturing Pleasure, Place, and Portraits*

One of the most striking uses of a palace pavilion by the lakeside, specifically identified by the scribe on the back of the painting as the Jagmandir's windowed pavilion (*gokhrā*) of the palace made of twelve stones (*bāraha bhātā ro mahal*), may be seen in a portrait depicting Udaipur ruler Sangram Singh and the Jaipur ruler Jai Singh (Ill. 3.7, Ill. 3.8. c. 1728, 50.2 x 43.1 cm). The painter, thought to be the Udaipur artist Jairam, employs the pavilion to enclose portraits of the two kings and their courtiers; Topsfield describes this device as a “symmetrical frame...for the supper party, complemented by the ordered rhythm of cypresses and other trees behind and the presence of fish and a benign crocodile in the foreground.”<sup>207</sup> The iconicity of the picture is indeed enhanced by its depiction of a night sky consisting of a central moon and stars painted in a uniform pattern, echoing the vision of idealized moonlit landscapes seen within painted leaves of devotional manuscripts.<sup>208</sup>

This group portrait is quite distinct from another painting attributed to Jairam that depicts the two kings and their entourage in a camp setting (Ill. 3.9. c. 1732, 40.5 x 45.5 cm),<sup>209</sup> and also from a contemporaneous formal portrait of the two kings painted in the idiom of a

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<sup>207</sup> Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 161.

<sup>208</sup> Portraits of Amar Singh II also employed this pictorial strategy especially when they visualized the king and his courtiers inhabiting gardens. See Ill.2.7 and Ill.2.11.

<sup>209</sup> Topsfield, *Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria*, 81.

Mughal album page at Amber/Jaipur (Ill. 3.10. 1732, image size: 25.9 x 18.1 cm).<sup>210</sup> Each of these paintings commemorates some aspect of diplomatic meetings of the two kings that took place between 1728 and 1734, and culminated in an alliance between the three Rajput courts of Udaipur, Jaipur, and Jodhpur that forged a combined front against the Marathas.<sup>211</sup>

Seen in a diplomatic context, wherein group portraits by each court's painters, though in distinctive yet connected regional genres and styles, featured the two Rajput kings and helped to craft pictorial memories of key political negotiations, Jairam's choice to employ the spatial setting of the lake-palace in Udaipur in such a formal portrait is significant.<sup>212</sup>

Jairam depicts the kings and their courtly communities partaking in the collective enjoyment of food and wine in Jagmandir at a time when the negotiation of political networks between the two courts was paramount. His careful delineation of the architectural details of the lake pavilion, the dresses made from sumptuous textiles worn by the kings, and the delicacies being cooked and offered—each move seems to prefigure the

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<sup>210</sup> Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Accession no. M.2001.24

<sup>211</sup> Since 1708 there were several personal and courtly exchanges between Udaipur and Jaipur as a marriage alliance was forged between the two Rajput courts when Sangram Singh's sister was married to Jai Singh. For the role that gift giving and portraiture played in the 1708 alliance between the courts of Mewar, Amber (later Jaipur) and Marwar, see, Aitken, "Portraits, Gift Giving and The Rajput Alliance of 1708"

<sup>212</sup> Aitken notes that the 1891 inventory of the Mewar royal collection also describes one of the paintings related to the 1708 alliance as "the three rulers meeting by the lake." *ibid.*, 359.



evocation of Jagmandir in Nandram's poem, two decades later, as a court where powerful men and connoisseurs gather.

Udaipur court painters portrayed Sangram Singh within the environs of Jagmandir in several paintings that depict this lake-palace in its entirety, thereby creating a profound association between the ruler's portrait and this lake-palace's imaginary. In a painting, currently dated to c. 1720, for instance, the painter and the scribe suggest that the key concern was picturing the feeding of crocodiles at the Jagmandir palace (Ill. 3.11. 50 x 46.2 cm).<sup>213</sup> The painters emphasize the garden courtyard of the Kunwarpada Mahal (Prince's Palace) and expanded gardens on the rear by the use of an oblique axis and by enlarging the size of the key pavilion, in which they have portrayed Sangram Singh and his courtiers. The compositional emphasis on the Kunwarpada ka Mahal in this case associates Sangram Singh directly with the building and gardens in the Jagmandir palace that he expanded during his reign.<sup>214</sup> In front of this pavilion we see a group of crocodiles painted at a gigantic, highly

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<sup>213</sup> National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Accession No. AS88-1980. Also see, Topsfield, *Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria*, 70.

<sup>214</sup> The Gol Mahal (circular palace) is the most iconic and recognizable building in the Jagmandir lake-palace and I discuss its depictions in the last section of this chapter. This building has also been given the most importance within paintings depicting Jagmandir. Popular lore and modern histories note that the Mughal prince Khurram, before he became emperor Shah Jahan, built the Gol Mahal or at least a part of the building when Maharana Karan Singh gave him refuge at the Jagmandir in Udaipur. Khurram is also thought to have lived in the Gol Mahal. In my research thus far *Jaqvilās* appears to be the first literary-historical source that associates Shah Jahan with Jagmandir. On the

manipulated scale. Such play with scale and the vividness of the depiction of the lizards exemplify Udaipur artists' continued interest in laying equal emphases on "non-portrait" parts of royal portraits, emphases which suggest relations between their depictions of the royal figure and the feeling or emotion of a place. These emphases forge the pictorial pathways by which courtly communities recalled places or associated with them.

Makers of portraits of Sangram Singh and architectural vignettes of the lake-palace of Jagmandir had multiple models to choose from in creating a new sub-genre of paintings focusing on the Jagnivas. A thematic continuity can be seen between the picturing of the two lake-palaces; the pictorial strategies employed to visualize Jagnivas as a place for the practice of pleasures, however, are distinct. We know of five paintings that imagine Jagat Singh II in the spatial environs of the Jagnivas palace. Three of these paintings depict the feeling of interiority of a single courtyard space which surrounds the king's portrait, which

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chronology in which the various palaces in the Jagmandir lake-palace complex were built, see, Khara and Mansukhani, *The City Within a City - Volume I Jagmandir on Lake Pichola*. Similarly two other paintings depict Sangram Singh in the environs of the Jagmandir lake-palace complex. One of them (60.9 x 52.5 cm), in the collection of the Kunwar Sangram Singh Museum, is related in the composition of the architecture to the above-discussed painting. Another painting (size unknown) is unusual painting because the lake-palace is oriented vertically, a composition that is not repeated in any other paintings depicting the subject. It appears that there is no depiction of a royal portrait in this painting, however, in the left hand side of the painting is trimmed off in the reproduction and there are hints of a royal barge with the king in this part of the painting as we can see a small group of musicians and attendants. I have not been able to examine personally. This painting, which Topsfield notes belongs to the Mewar Royal Collection, promises to be a fruitful avenue for further research. See, *Ibid.*, 108;137. Also see, Topsfield, "Jagmandir and the Other Royal Palaces in Udaipur Painting."

is itself surrounded by men and women, musicians, and performers connected to his court.<sup>215</sup> The painting *Jagat Singh II at a pool at Jagnivas with his ladies* (1751), ascribed to the painter Jairam, depicts the landscaped courtyard constituted by lotus-shaped planter beds interspersed with water pools in a planar view, such that we almost perceive the garden as a painted pattern (dimensions unknown; Ill. 3.12). This pattern-like spatial vignette surrounds the king's body on three sides, thus bringing the royal portrait into central focus. The king is also set off by a group of standing ladies. Arched verandahs and pavilions mark the boundary of the painting and the central landscaped courtyard: the use of diagonal lines gives depth to the elevation of the pavilion on the upper edge of the pool and the depiction of a bright red carpet accentuates the central axis of the painting. Jairam's use of oblique projection for the verandahs depicted on the right hand side further contains the central space; the pavilion depicted on the lower edge of the painting, projecting outward from the courtyard, is aligned with the central axis. Viewers can see royal portraits related to various idealized facets of kingship—the king as shooting fishes in the lake, the king as the consummate lover in the pool, and the king as the connoisseur of music, listening to a performance by the seated ladies. A similar approach is adopted by painters Jiva and Jugarsi

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<sup>215</sup> Paintings discussed below have been published in various writings by Topsfield. My interpretations build upon his work where he chiefly attributes artists, collates the inscriptions and dates, and identifies the portraits within the paintings. Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 183–187.

in another painting that depicts Jagat Singh II listening to music in a different courtyard of the Jagnivas palace (Ill. 3.13). In this case, the ruler is depicted as walking towards the courtyard in the company of nobles in his court, and as seated below a canopied throne set up in the garden space, where he listens to female musicians seated at the outer edge of the courtyard on the right hand side of the painting.<sup>216</sup> Painters' use of oblique lines to depict the arched wall on the left hand side of the painting and the uniformly paved paths and miniaturized trees in the courtyard reinforces a world of the Jagnivas palace through the visualization of a single space within the lake-palace complex. Similar pictorial strategies are at work in a third painting, titled, *Jagat Singh II bathing with his nobles*, made possibly by the painter Jairam around the same time (c. 1746-51), which depicts yet another courtyard and pool, this one built at the outer edges of the lake palace-complex (Ill. 3.14). The painter has masterfully combined a planar view of the grey-colored pool with elevations of walls and entranceways, and offers oblique projections of arcaded spaces to depict the surrounding verandahs, which are framed by a grey-colored band on the left hand side edge of the painting that denotes the Lake Pichola. Here again, the painter's focus is on the

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<sup>216</sup> The painters also depict a third royal portrait, whom Topsfield identifies as Jagat Singh's son Ari Singh, as shooting fish from a pavilion on the edge of the courtyard facing the lake, strikingly similar in composition, to Jairam's painting discussed-above. Ibid., 209. footnote no. 26.

interiority of the lake-palace—its impressive courtyards, pools, and gardens—and how that interiority frames the portrait of Jagat Singh.

We hear of a parallel emphasis in the verses of the *Jaḡvilās* that visualize Jagat Singh II immersed in the lake-palace's various courtyard spaces—enjoying and admiring them one at a time—when the royal party arrives at the new palace for its inauguration on April 22, 1746. Nandram's spatial tour begins with the striking garden-courtyard space, depicted in the above-discussed painting, in front of the Bado Mahal (Ill. 3.15). The poet credits its exquisiteness to a craftsman named Dilaram and introduces the palace thus:

*dohā* (178)

*baḍo mahala tāki suḍiga rachnā rachi sukāma  
bārī sarasa sarūpmaya dilārāma tihi nāma*

Bado Mahal its [spatial?] character [way?], a work crafted with good workmanship  
Beautiful garden with elegant forms, Dilaram is his [craftsmen's] name

*chand gītikā* (179)

*sabtina bado mahala taha kahu puraba disa so banī  
dilārāma bāriya kāma bhāriya rūpa besa banī dhanī  
ika hoja bīca anūpa rājata dekhate sukha pāvhi  
rastāna men nala haī ghane gulkyāri hai susuhāvani*

The Bado (biggest) Mahal is here, which is made on the eastern side  
Dilaram has done beautiful work, the overall forms are well-made  
There is a unique tank in the middle that looks resplendent, one derives joy from seeing it  
There are fountains through the path, several planters of roses are the most beautiful

Having described the specific design and architectural elements of the palace and courtyard of the Bado Mahal, Nandram idealizes this space as Braj *kunj* on earth—the delightful gardens in the land of Braj where the blue-God Krishna resided.<sup>217</sup> This kind of a literary move that layers the particularities of the Jagnivas palace with the idealized place of Braj is parallel to the painterly choices of Udaipur artists. Painters, too, as seen in the above examples, combined vignettes of particularly rendered architecture of the Jagnivas palace with vignettes of trees from the idealized landscapes seen in devotional manuscripts depicting the delights of Krishna and Radha (Ill. 3. 12(detail), Ill. 3.13 (detail a), Ill.3.16, Ill. 3.16 (detail)). The equal-sized small palm and tall cypress trees in elevation format lend uniformity to the painted picture, just as Amar Singh II's painters had sought to depict his portrait with the his sixteen nobles within a garden setting (Ill. 2.11). The juxtaposition of the difference in scale and the difference in representational modes—elevation view of miniaturized trees and planimetric view of comparatively gigantic courtyard spaces—accentuates both the painterly emphasis on the particularity of architectural elements and on the stylistic continuity and implied landscape metaphors across pictorial genres. This is not to suggest a one-to-one correspondence between the poetry and the paintings. Rather

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<sup>217</sup> Yet another set of eight verses further elaborate on the splendor of the Bado Mahal—beautifully built turrets and pavilions, painted walls and windows decorated with multi-colored glass, and unique gardens with water channels and fountains.

intersections in both the poet's and the painters' visions—in their employment of the Jagnivas palace as a heterotopia, in their investment in picturing the feeling of the lake-palace—illuminate complimentary mediations of pleasure and place. Both employ topoi of description and detail as well as idealization as panegyric strategies for picturing royal portraiture and place. Practices in both painting and poetry thus create compelling imaginaries of the world of Jagnivas for their patrons; perhaps these practices simultaneously reinforced each other by virtue of rich allusions within immediate mediums.

On another instance in the *Jaḡvilās*, we hear that time had passed—and it was time for the king to get dressed and adorned for his gathering with the thakurs of the court, and time for him to proceed to the sitting hall (*darikhānā*) of another courtyard in the Jagnivas. In this passage individual *dohās* praise each thakur of the Mewar court, stating the hierarchy of his clan, and in some cases the poet gives us the exact place and direction where a particular thakur was seated. In some cases key character traits of individuals (their astute intelligence, for example, or their impressive bravery) are selectively described. The color and beauty of the costumes and jewelry donned by the men of the

court is praised for the delight and sophistication they bring to the gathering.<sup>218</sup> Having evoked a picture of this seated gathering, we hear details about the range of food that is enjoyed by all present members. Nandram's praise for the menu includes all possible tastes from the whole world: dishes of fish, goat, and deer prepared in a variety of ways; sweets from *laḍu* to *ghewara* and fruits such as watermelons, oranges, and lemons; sweet breads served with milk; numerous kinds of rice and grain, and numerous kinds of *khicṛis* (a stew of lentil and rice). If the poem overwhelms with its evocations of the flavors of the offered foods, its verses equally evoke how their aroma of food overwhelms the spaces of Jagnivas palace. It is impossible to resist imagining the ambience of a party where the scent of buttermilk and milk mixed with *miśrī* (crystallized sugar) spreads to all the spaces in the Jagnivas palace. From noting the satisfaction of the senses triggered by the food, the poet moves to praise for the mesmerizing beauty and visuality of the Jagnivas palace itself, lit up as it is by candles in the night and filled with the smells of flowers and the sounds and sights of music and dance. Nandram's verses alerts us to his presence in the audience, and he says that it would take a poet with the intelligence of Pundit Vyas to write about the ambience

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<sup>218</sup> For example, when we hear about Rawat Lal Singh, who is stated to be the son of Kesari Singh and grandson of Jani Singh, Nandram tells us that he received the land of Bhansror. The poet devotes several verses to enumerating other nobles, apart from regional thakurs, like we hear of Sundaram who belonged to the Paliwal clan and Bhawanidas who belonged to the Pancholi clan, thus emphasizing associations of castes and occupations (*jāti*).



and beauty of this occasion. Thus his images of the king and his courtly community are artistically layered with images of shared consumption and enjoyment of material things and the consequent sensorial affects. These material practices of exchange and appreciation of things cements a bond between the king and his courtly community, and the poets at Udaipur saw themselves as key agents in cataloguing such exchange, characterizing its social practices, and telling its history through the lens of panegyrics within literary works.

The painting depicting Jagat Singh II bathing with his nobles speaks to a parallel pictorial imagining of this courtly community. Here bonds of shared experience are formed during a pool party in the intimate circumscribed spaces of pleasure within the Jagnivas (Ill. 3.14 (detail a)). The painter achieves a striking descriptive emphasis in rendering the bodies of the men sitting in leisurely poses, and juxtaposing these bodies with the swimming figures and with the king and with his courtly staff, which is busy preparing delicacies. The effects achieved are especially strong in comparison to the composed centrality of the royal portrait in the pool with ladies of the court (Ill. 3.14(detail a)). To paint in such detail images of the courtly staff engaged in cooking, cleaning, and taking care of pragmatic arrangements for their royal patrons is to use space of the palace to make room for a vision of the work involved in creating a “world of pleasure” in the Jagnivas. Both the poetic and painted images gesture towards evocation of the feelings of intimacy that may have been

possible in this world of Jagnivas in the middle of lake Pichola, feelings of intimacy between the people in attendance and the place itself, feelings that could be recalled by them upon seeing or hearing such poetic images. One of the key histories crafted here is thus about the solidification of eighteenth century political networks of Jagat Singh II through acts of connoisseurship and the collective enjoyment and appreciation of things in the intimate space of the Jagnivas. In these works, based upon gatherings such as the ones described here, the tastes of Udaipur's courtly community itself were being forged, as was the power of the king and the power of the other members of this courtly society who partook of such pleasures not only as individuals, but also as a collective.

Topoi of pleasure frame one of the sub-sections in the *Jagvilās*, where Nandram incorporated the word *sukha* (joy or pleasure) in describing the Jagnivas palace in each of the nearly thirty verses.<sup>219</sup> Let us attend to three exemplary *dohās*: the first of which transitions us from the palaces in the Eastern wing to the spaces in the Western wing of the lake-palace, while the latter two belong to a section of five *dohās* that deliberate on the idea of *sukha* itself.

*dohā* (194)

*sukha barkhata harkhata hai sabai gāyana gāta gāna*  
*moja barkhata megha sama saba saũ rījhata rāna*

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<sup>219</sup> Verses 176-204.

Pleasure rains down and delights, singers sing songs  
 Clouds of joy burst forth, and the rana (king) is pleased with all this

*dohā (204)*

*sabhi ṭhōra dekhata taha bhaye jāna traya bhāna*  
*bade mahala madhi āya kai sukha so rājata rāna*

Having seen all the spaces there, became known as three Suns (?)<sup>220</sup>  
 After coming to the Bada Mahal, the rana (king) rules with joy

*dohā (207)*

*sabhi sanga sukha men taha sukha ko sāgara pāya*  
*hāsa vilāsa vinoda men ghari chāra su bihāya*

Everyone is enjoying together here, one finds an ocean of joy  
 Between the laughter, joy, and pleasure, the clock passed four *ghari* (units of time)

Such lines' dual emphases on aesthetic pleasure derived from appreciating the beauty of the palace and the notion of a king asserting his rule or kingship with joy (*sukha so*) is expanded when Nandram includes other poetic metaphors that play on the theme of *sukha*, like the ocean of joy (*sukha ko sāgara*) and the collective of people who partake in joys and pleasures in this place (*sabhi sukha men tahā*). Thus in speaking and listening to the poetry we encounter a layered and expansive composition on ideas of pleasure, especially as experienced by a the king collectively with members of his court through a range of practices and conversations that, in the poet's words, led to humorous, joyful, and love-

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<sup>220</sup> The second part of the this line remains illusive for now.

filled emotions (*hāsa vilāsa vinoda*). Conceptually this brief meditation on pleasure performs two key tasks. First, it transitions us from the preceding verses on spatial description that employ *sukha* to denote the joy derived from experiencing the beauty of the palace to a thematic deliberation on pleasure connected to the king's rulership and court. Nandram suggests it would take him days to describe the Bado Mahal and yet he would be unable to do justice to the beauty of the palace. The poet also uses this ploy to shift his gaze to evoke the spatial splendor of the other palaces like the Dilkhush Mahal and Khush Mahal in the Jagnivas. The names of both the palaces with garden-courtyards in the Jagnivas lake-palace complex incorporate the idea that they were spaces that brought joy (*khuśi*) to the heart (*dil*). Second, these lines' immersive focus on *sukha* evocatively transitions us to the subsequent verses, discussed above, that imagine the courtly gathering of Jagat Singh II with all of Udaipur's thakurs where they collectively partake in pleasures derived from specific material practices (for example, listening to music, watching dance performances, to ingesting a variety of food and drink).

Both paintings and poetry construct an image of Jagnivas as a palace built to give pleasure, with a ruler, Jagat Singh II, who arrives to rule specifically "with joy." In them Jagat Singh performs practices of pleasure that both constitute and are constituted by architecture, visual culture and literature. Another of the five paintings that depict Jagat

Singh II in relation to the Jagnivas alludes to such a moment of arrival of the royal party at the lake-palace (Ill. 3. 17). In this vertical composition we see an oblique view of the pavilions and balconies by the lakeside and a portrait of the king seated with important members of his court in the royal barge. The painter has emphasized the depicted terrace: a bright red carpet covers its floor and an empty royal throne with a red canopy sits on it. This terrace, too, is bounded pictorially on the left hand side by a boundary wall, depicted in an oblique view which projects onto the planimetric view of the terrace. The balcony of the terrace can be seen as composed in an all-too-awkward angle compared to the view of the exterior façade of the palace; yet its angular directionality insistently points to the royal throne in the Jagnivas palace, which awaits the king and will upon his arrival be transformed into an essential site of Jagat Singh's world of pleasure.

The painting featuring Jagat Singh II at Jagnivas with which I opened this chapter—it was identified by the scribe both as a likeness of Jagat Singh and as a depiction of the *bhāva* of Jagnivas—stands out among the other Jagnivas paintings (Ill. 3.1). Painters *Sukha* and *Syaji* chose to compose the portrait of Jagat Singh enjoying a variety of pleasurable activities in the variety of courtyards of the lake-palace. These spaces are depicted using in a bird's eye view, but an elevation view of the setting of hills and the Vaidyanath Mahadeva temple in the upper part of the painting is painted on a smaller scale that indicates its

distance from in Jagnivas in real life. On one level, this painting participates in a conversation with above-discussed paintings, in which artists employed the spatial design of a single courtyard or garden to frame or enclose the pictorial plane, and thus it reinforces an imaginary of the sensorial delights attached to the Jagnivas palace, ones which depict Jagat Singh enjoyment of one space at a time. Its distinctive pictorial framework depicting a conglomeration of courtyards brings together a picturing of the various spaces of the lake-palace and the repetition of the figure of Jagat Singh II brings together the various enjoyments the king experienced listening to music, watching the dance of the *rasa mandala*, and shooting fish in the company of courtly men in the different spaces of the lake-palace. But on another level, the painters' depictions of the *rasa mandala* and the temple are notably different from other works featuring Jagat Singh II at Jagnivas, not only because the painters chose to compose the round-dance in the central courtyard within the picture (3.1 (detail b)) and because they chose to juxtapose a different representational technique for the Shiva temple (3.1 (detail a)), but also because these vignettes expand the imaginary of the Jagnivas lake-palace beyond its own walls. What's more, both of these crucial and distinctive pictorial elements are in conversation with other key paintings depicting Jagat Singh II and developing devotional themes within architectural settings beyond lake-palaces. In a painting that imagines Jagat Singh's visit to

the lake-side Vaidyanath Mahadeva temple in a more “devotional” register, for example, the Udaipur king and a group of courtly men are visualized meeting Lord Shiva (Ill.3.18).<sup>221</sup>

This moment of devotion is not imagined through ritual acts of the king offering his homage through material things to an sculpted icon of Shiva; rather this encounter is heightened by the painter’s depiction of Lord Shiva in an anthropomorphic form, and by his addition of celestial beings in the sky that bless this meeting with the king. The setting of the trees and mountains attached to the architectural form of the temple and abundant lotus flowers in the lake painted in flatter modes and in contrasting colors looks distinct from the vignettes of Udaipur’s topographical environs that we have seen in several paintings discussed thus far, and due to this distinctness in painterly style we perceive this picture as more iconic than mimetic. It is all the more striking, then, to encounter the depiction of Shiva’s domain in another Udaipur court painting, currently dated to c. 1740, as a pavilion in the middle of a lake-like body of water which is surrounded by hills and replete with lotuses (Ill. 3.19). We must recall the Badi Mahal (garden-palace) in the palace-complex on the banks of lake Pichola, originally named as the Shivaprasana Amar Vilas Mahal, evokes the metaphor of Shiva’s joys and happiness to describe the splendor of this

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<sup>221</sup> Topsfield, *Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria*, 83. The portrait is not very clear and at various times it has been identified as Sangram Singh II or Jagat Singh II. I have leaned towards the latter.

architectural spaces and its king's pleasures, and how in the *Jagvilāsa* the Badi Mahal was also recast as a place associated with Shiva's joys. Similarly, when we see Jagat Singh watching the round-dance of Krishna in the courtyard of the Jagnivas palace, we are reminded of a set of paintings where Udaipur painters engage the thematic of the performance of Krishna's *raslīlā* at Jagat Singh's court and the poetic metaphors of Jagnivas lake-palace as akin to Krishna's idealized land of Braj (Ill. 3.20, 3.21).<sup>222</sup> Thus the painter's picturing of the *bhāva* of the Jagnivas included an investment in suggesting not only the ambient feeling and emotion of the lake-palace as a place of pleasure, showing its audience Jagat Singh participating in a range of joyful activities, but in the power of such pictures to suggest to courtly audiences multi-layered notions of Jagnivas being the ultimate place for pleasure—a place as powerful, perhaps, as Shiva's abode and Krishna's land. That painters imagined Shiva's land and his joys by gesturing to the form of Udaipur's lake-pavilions then alludes to the adoption of metaphors of places for pleasure in both directions—the earthly realm of Udaipur could be transposed to the devotional realm, and the devotional realm be invoked to layer the imaginary of the Jagnivas palace.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> Topsfield, "Udaipur Paintings of the Raslila."

<sup>223</sup> Diamond shows us that mid-eighteenth century works by Jodhpur's court artists present a striking parallel as painters employ the "Nagaur palette and its aesthetic delight" to transform "intimate depictions of royal pastimes into visions of heavenly palaces and landscapes for [depicting



It is difficult to ascertain if the five paintings discussed above were made as a set. (Topsfield has been able to ascertain that the paintings depicting the *raslīlā* were made in the 1740s by painters working in Jagat Singh's court workshop.<sup>224</sup>) The inventory numbers behind two of the Jagnivas paintings are consecutive, which may or may not imply simple contiguity in the production of the paintings.<sup>225</sup> Yet such numerical evidence certainly suggests that when court clerks catalogued the painting in the nineteenth century, they saw them as belonging in proximity to each other. Even though the paintings are of different sizes and are made by different painters, they evoke connections not only because they feature the same ruler, but also because they as a collective they thematize the place

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Krishna's] divine *līlā* (play)." Diamond, Debra, "Maharaja Vijai Singh and the Epic Landscape, 1752-93," 21; Specifically, a Jodhpur painting depicting Rama and Sita's idyllic realm of Ayodhya from a *Ramcharitmanas* monumental manuscript (c. 1775, 60.9 x 128.2 cm) exhibits the use of "the aesthetic of a water palace" from Nagaur paintings. Diamond et al., *Garden & Cosmos : the Royal Paintings of Jodhpur*, 134.

<sup>224</sup> Apart from the common theme and similarity in composition, Topsfield ascertains this based on the Jotdan numbers behind the paintings which are consecutive (Mewar royal inventory numbers). Topsfield, "Udaipur Paintings of the Raslila," 59. footnote no. 2.

<sup>225</sup> A third painting that depicts Jagat Singh II hunting in lake Pichola from a boat that depicts the lake and surrounding land that carries a consecutive inventory number as well. Also, the Udaipur painting inventory from 1891 states a painting titled "*Jagnivas ro bhāva*" has an inventory number of 259 and was priced at rupees 150.00 which in all likelihood could be referring to the painting that opened this chapter (Ill. 3.1; LI118.24). Inventory numbers behind paintings two of the Jagnivas paintings are J I/257 (Ill.3.17; RVI1831) and J I/258 (Ill.3.14; 1990:624). Additionally, as we see three of the paintings share the date of November 1751 (Karttik *badi*7, vs 1708), which indicates a posthumous date as Jagat Singh died in June 1751. See, Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 209. footnote nos. 21, 23, 24, 25, 26.

and pleasures of Jagnivas. The painters' compositions focus on depicting the royal portrait and the *bhāva* of Jagnivas constituted by the pleasures offered by the intimate spaces of the palace. The image of the ideal king that emerges from their efforts is an ideal of a consummate lover and a seeker of all the pleasures and beauties his kingdom offered, including the art and architecture commissioned by him. For the king and his circle of courtly audiences—the patrons of court paintings and literature—the cultivation of a shared taste for such painted visions, and of parallel poetic visions with expressed similar tastes, forged affective bonds with the ruler, and his city, and with each other. We imagine the Jagnivas palace one courtyard at a time. The poem *Jaḡvilās* highlights that—and how closely—pleasure and power were aligned in mid-eighteenth century Udaipur. Both pleasure and power are forged through the affective material domains of music, poetry, and food within the environs of the Jagnivas lake-palace, a place that actively shapes the space for the cultivation of friendship through the sharing and enjoyment of sensorial delights. Kingliness is embodied not only in the bodily praise of the king Jagat Singh in an isolated manner, but also in describing how the king's social bonds were cemented through the exchange of gifts and the development of a connoisseurship of food, music, and dance, collectively experience at the Jagnivas palace. These paintings and the verses of the Nandram's poem have affixed the imaginary of the Jagnivas lake-palace, and, more broadly,

the imaginary of Udaipur as a lake-city, to portraits of Jagat Singh II. In the years to come, this imaginary of Udaipur is circulated across paintings that feature other Udaipur kings.<sup>226</sup>

Participation in such an artistic political economy of pleasure would not require radical inventiveness, but the making of images of Udaipur kings that were attached to the cultural landscape and place-world of Jagnivas would be absolutely pertinent.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> I discuss in chapter five this milieu of praising Udaipur as a charismatic landscape—especially as it emerges from the space of the market and religious travels—forged by the city’s artists and poets within practices that focused on not just the courtly space and the ruler, but the city itself.

<sup>227</sup> Painters continued to make topographical paintings featuring Udaipur rulers within lake-palaces. Two works, both made in 1767, both featuring Udaipur king Ari Singh at the Jagnivas and Jagmandir exhibit that painters composed them as response pictures to the earlier court paintings. Their composition, color palette, and the contiguous inventory numbers behind the paintings give us reasons to think that they were most likely conceived together and intended as a set. In the early years of the nineteenth century, the Udaipur painter Chokha, altered the view point of a painting featuring Bhim Singh in the Jagnivas lake palace and layering the composition with his unique stylistic stamp (*chāp*) of stouter figures accompanied by a picturing of a stubbier garden-courtyard. The Udaipur artist Ghasi, whose works are discussed in chapter four, similarly introduced his preference of for sharp and precise architectural outlines and chose continuity in composition as seen in his picturing of a centralized portrait of the ruler Jawan Singh within the environs of the lotus pool of the Jagnivas palace. While some of these stylistic and compositional continuities have been noted, painters’ repetition of this subject has been seen either as a lack of creativity or more strongly as evidence for continuing hedonistic behavior of Udaipur rulers in the nineteenth century. However, a re-alignment of these lake-palaces and associated paintings with ideas of pleasure as a social practice for establishing a courtly domain of power, allows us to see the continuing currency of pictorial ideas related to pleasure and place in the nineteenth century. For the above-discussed paintings, see Topsfield, “City Palace and Lake Palaces: Architecture and Court Life in Udaipur Painting.”

### 3.4. *Building a P(a)lace for Pleasure and Powerful Connoisseurs*

Towards the end of the poem a set of eighteen verses evokes the visit of the wives and sons of Jagat Singh II to the Jagnivas palace, along with courtesans and courtly staff from the Queen's palace (*rāni vāsni*), just one day after the official inauguration ceremony. A short sub-section on *sukha*, discussed above, urges us to imagine a time, characterized as particularly beautiful and pleasurable (*sundara sukhada*), when a group of female friends (*jhund sahelina āya*) gather around Jagat Singh II and attract him with their beauty. Yet, in listening to the *Jagvilās* and examining paintings featuring Jagnivas, for the most part we are not continually invited to imagine Jagat Singh II enjoying the company of vivacious women, a fact that runs counter to an overarching idea that historians have used to describe spaces and paintings of lake-palaces. Instead we are urged to imagine acts of friendship that form bonds between and among powerful men. These acts include gift-giving, admiring the architecture of the city of Udaipur, and partaking in the pleasures derived from consuming a variety of food and music and dance performances in the space of the Jagnivas palace. Thus the feeling attached to the Jagnivas lake-palace is one of an intimate space for the practice of courtly pleasures and forging of networks of power. Courtly audiences could have discussed paintings depicting such worlds of pleasure in multiple ways, and their choices would be contingent upon their company and its views and

the social relations and aesthetic sensibilities shared with fellow-connoisseurs. The aesthetic tastes of such courtly audiences were in turn indeed shaped by courtly paintings and poetry. In these shaping processes painters and poets formulated an image of the Udaipur ruler and an image of Udaipur as a lake-city *par excellence* where the palaces built as domains of pleasure served imperative purposes.

In this concluding section I will take up two inter-related issues. First, I will consider the relationship between picturing the feeling of place and circulation of architectural knowledge independent of portraiture, an issue that I first touched on in chapter two. The intersection between historical ideas and poetic tropes necessitates that we explore the question of panegyrics and historical facts as inextricably integrated in courtly literature. Similarly the complex intersection woven by Udaipur painters between portraiture, panegyrics, and spatial representation demands that we tread with care any urge to situate topographical paintings within the domain of perceptualism or as “pictorial evidence” alongside anachronistic narratives of Udaipur court life. Even so three significant Udaipur paintings make the Jagmandir lake-palace an independent subject of exploration in c.1740 and analysis of these works compels us to think critically about the artists’ choice not to include a royal portrait in the composition (Ill. 3.22, 3.23, 3.24). Following a discussion of this set of paintings we will use the vantage point offered by the Mewar thakur and patron

of paintings and architecture Sirdar Singh to consider how pleasure and power are brought to the forefront by the Jagnivas paintings and the poetry of *Jagvilās*. Almost two hundred verses in the *Jagvilās* are devoted to constituting the mid-century political networks of regional thakurs of Mewar and how these participate in defining the courtly space in Udaipur and the power of Jagat Singh. Indeed, we encounter verses that describe the details of how Jagat Singh gave gifts to the thakurs immediately after the king arrived at the new lake-palace with his entourage at the planned, auspicious time. We have heard the tenth verse in *Jagvilās* that gives importance to the role played by Sirdar Singh in the building of Jagnivas, and how Jagat Singh II considers him to be an astute and capable person for spearheading this important project. The paintings featuring the pleasure-worlds of the Jagnivas and more generally Udaipur rulers in the mid-eighteenth century feature several other such powerful thakurs, each of whom can be identified both by the scribe's inscriptions and across paintings by the artist's careful rendering of his portrait (Ill. 3.13 (detail b), 3.14 (detail b)). Sirdar Singh is always seen occupying a position immediately next to Jagat Singh II, and in some cases he is seen riding the elephant along with the ruler (Ill. 3.26).<sup>228</sup> Analysis of an independent portrait of Sirdar Singh will enable us to see the Jagnivas

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<sup>228</sup> The inscription at the front of the portrait names both Jagat Singh and Sirdar Singh Dodia. See, Topsfield, *Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria*, 98.

palace—and its poetic and painted imaginaries—from an alternate position, from the world of Udaipur’s powerful connoisseurs and thakurs.

Three particular paintings c. 1740 which feature Jagmandir—the lake-palace that was associated with Sangram Singh, the father of Jagat Singh II—are so strongly parallel we must consider the likelihood that they are specifically related works (Ill. 3.22, 3.23, 3.24). It is even possible that all three were painted in 1743,<sup>229</sup> when Jagat Singh II directed Sirdar Singh to build the Jagnivas palace. Each of these three works depicts buildings and gardens located within a lake in a similar color palette and painted style. Their almost identical vertical length (41cm, 43.8 cm and 44 cm) enables us to see that the scale at which painters’ drew the buildings is tightly aligned. A dark grey band with feather-like white brush strokes at the bottom of each painting denotes the lake and its waters, in which we see depicted fishes, crocodiles, and a red boat with boatmen. These paintings’ blue skies (painted in a flat mode), tall cypresses, palm trees, and stubby trees (all painted in the same style and elevation view), are equally contiguous. These shared elements function as visual citations that connect the three paintings.

It is easy to draw parallels between the two paintings which feature elevation views, from two different directions, of the Gol Mahal, the circular dome-roofed building with a

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<sup>229</sup> This painting, and the other two, has been assigned various dates, ranging from c. 1730 to c. 1780.

rectangular-shaped built form attached at one end, located in the Jagmandir lake-palace complex. (Ill. 3.22 and Ill. 3.23).<sup>230</sup> One painting depicts the elevation of the building as seen from the eastern side (Ill. 3.22)<sup>231</sup>; the painter has strived to emphasize the building's circularity and the circular pavilions that project from the enclosed rooms on the first and second floors. He also paints details of the Persian wheel by which water was pulled up the turrets of this building; a rectangular tank of water along the elevation perhaps denotes this action or a storage tank embedded in this wall. The corresponding painting depicts the elevation of the façade of Gol Mahal that one encounters upon entering the largest courtyard in the island complex from the north (Ill. 3.23).<sup>232</sup> The linearity of the composition and extraordinary length of the painting corresponds to the Jagmandir palace-complex, for the length of its East-West axis is almost twice that of its length along its North-South axis. The composition includes an elevation of the arched wall and the open pavilion (*darīkhānā*) at the outer edge of the courtyard, the glimmering gold colored arches of which draw our attention. The painter also includes the pavilions and turrets that mark the boundary of the

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<sup>230</sup> Refer to the plan of the Jagmandir lake-palace complex (Ill. 3.25), included here to provide clarity on the orientation of the depicted elevations in the paintings. Also on the significance of the Gol Mahal, see fn. 65.

<sup>231</sup> National Museum, New Delhi Accession No. 57.75/52. Daljeet, Mathur, and Shah, *Fragrance in Colour : Indian Miniature Paintings from the Collection of the National Museum, New Delhi*, 82.

<sup>232</sup> Khandalavala, *A Collector's Dream*, 132.



neighboring courtyard of the Kunwarpada ka Mahal (Prince's palace). Both of these similar paintings exhibit the use of angular lines to emphasize the three-dimensionality of some of the buildings, and the latter includes planar view of a garden space in the foreground. Seen together, the paintings offer views of the Jagmandir palace from several different directions. Both privilege the representational format of an elevation drawing.

The third member of this set of related paintings has been described either as a picture of a different lake-palace in Udaipur or of the Jagnivas palace at some earlier, less-elaborated stage of the island-complex well before its completion in 1746 (Ill. 3.24).<sup>233</sup> The building depicted here is not easily recognizable; however, the painting style, color palette, and composition in a combination of planar and elevation views are clearly similar. On the left hand side of the painting, we see a depiction of the layout of smaller buildings, and in the foreground we find a depiction of the layout of a larger garden space in front of an elevation of a building. It has not been possible to remove the frames and read the inscriptions behind the other two paintings<sup>234</sup> in the set, but an inscription on the back of this third painting provides us with critical information and clarity. One inscription, most

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<sup>233</sup> Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Accession No. 1995.79. Welch and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York N.Y.), *India : Art and Culture, 1300-1900*, 377; Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 209. footnote no. 22.

<sup>234</sup> For an image of this inscription, I am extremely grateful to Dr Mika Natif, Assistant Curator of Islamic and Later South Asian Art, at the Sackler museum at Harvard University.

likely from the time the painting was made, labels it as a “picture of Jagmandir from the other side” (*jagmandir rī āthamṇī bāju rō pano*). Another inscription (along the edge of the paper written in a different handwriting) notes the name of the king Jagat Singh (*mahārānājī śrī jagatsingh jī*). Close and patient inspection makes it clear that the painting represents the buildings in the Jagmandir lake-palace as seen from the opposite end of the Prince’s palace, a view that is not easily discernible due to the absence of the recognizable Gol Mahal. From a pictorial perspective, the maker’s aim was to provide only a representation of the palace from the west, and thus to frame a unidirectional view in spite of his combination of representational idioms of planar and elevation formats.

This set of paintings collectively shows us that at a certain point in mid-eighteenth century Udaipur, painters made Jagmandir an independent subject of exploration. Each composition emphasizes the details of the buildings and views the complex from three directions. In the literary-historical memory presented in the *Jagvilās*, we know that the beauty of the Jagmandir lake-palace served as a benchmark against which Jagat Singh II imagined the Jagnivas lake-palace he would see built and appreciated. Thus it is possible that this set of paintings of Jagmandir was commissioned in 1743, when it was decided that the Jagnivas lake-palace would be built. Together these paintings mediate the design and details of the architecture of the place, while at the same time they constitute Jagmandir as

an ideal lake-palace in the context of the new lake-palace of Jagnivas that was yet to be built. It is possible to conjecture that these paintings constitute a study of Jagmandir as an architectural edifice in itself—as a monument that was admired. The use of fine grey lines to denote the depth of building surfaces and the gold and red for windows reminds us of the mastery of architectural rendering seen in the Udaipur painter Jairam's works, including other works related to Jagnivas, Jagmandir, and the *Raslila* series discussed above. It is quite likely that Jairam or other artists in his circle made this set. Works ascribed and/or currently attributed to Jairam evince his keen interest the picturing of places in Udaipur court painting. He could have taken his knowledge of depicting architecture in multiple directions, and further research into his biography and travels should prove fruitful. This set of paintings may thus emerge from a moment when Udaipur painters began to put their skills in architectural drawing and topographical imagination to uses that did not include royal portraiture. This departure constitutes a case in point: even though the combination of chorography and portraiture was the preferred mode of topographical imagining when connecting places and territories in eighteenth century Udaipur court painting, painters circulated their knowledge about a place in other genres if and when there was a demand for it.<sup>235</sup> This set of paintings also constitutes an important precursor to works by another

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<sup>235</sup> This kind of a circulation of place-centric representation without the portrait of a ruler within

Udaipur court painter, Ghasi, which respond to similar pictorial demands expressed by the British agent James Tod in 1820s. In chapter four we will examine how Ghasi's architectural drawings for temples both engaged and evaded Tod's demands.

I have attempted to problematize the isolated linking of lake-palace paintings and large-scale topographical paintings with perceptualism and ahistorical narratives that see the paintings as straightforward reflections or representations of reality of time, place, and people. The most problematic consequence of such linking, in Norman Bryson's words, is "the bracketing-out of the constitutive role of the social formation in producing the codes of recognition which the image activates."<sup>236</sup> Bryson writes,

Recognition of a mimesis is portrayed, in other words, as taking place in a cultural void. The less the culture (academism) intervenes, the more lifelike the image: remove 'projection' from the world, and the world will reveal its luminous essence. At the end of the process of falsification, an image will be produced that will contain no false information: what is not false must be true; and true universally, since the false accretion of culture will have to be discarded. Reduced to a rudimentary

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early modern Indian painted genres that represent architecture has most recently been noted in the case of a collection commissioned by French military officer Jean-Baptiste Gentil in late-Mughal India. Dadlani has carefully traced the visual heterogeneity of the resultant image and the artistic agency of painters who adopt and adapt from wide ranging genres from Mughal paintings, French architectural drawings, and maps made in the Jaipur cartography workshops images that sought to create a Mughal legacy through architectural representation, thus seeking to effect "reality" rather than reflect "reality." I return to this case-study in Chapter four as well while discussing Ghasi's adaptations. For now, it is critical to note that Udaipur painters give us evidence of these kind of pictorial departures even before the mid-eighteenth century. Dadlani, Chanchal, "The 'Palais Indiens' Collection of 1774: Representing Mughal Architecture in Late Eighteenth-Century India."

<sup>236</sup> Bryson, *Vision and Painting*, 43.

cognitive apparatus, both viewer and painter are abstracted from the practical and public sphere where alone the codes of recognition operate, to become in the end disembodied retinal reflectors, photosensitive machines...<sup>237</sup>

It emerges that it was important for painters and patrons to find ways to picture their knowledge of a place. However, unless we trace the connections of topographical paintings—whether they include or are independent of portraiture—with a series of courtly and pictorial panegyrics and literary-historical associations, the purposefulness of the forms and genres they explore will elude us. Moreover, if we consider the “presentational” roles of the poetry of *Jaḡvilās* and of the corpus of paintings associating Jagat Singh II with the pleasures and *bhāva* of Jagnivas, and allow what we know of these roles to complicate what we know about the “representational” roles of such works,<sup>238</sup> we cannot overlook that these courtly practices were expected to elicit emotional reactions and to aid in sociality.

This new and more complex understanding of how the Jagnivas lake-palace was imagined in poetry and paintings is a tool for rethinking its functions even more generally.

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>238</sup> In considering how a pictorial focus on the “effect of the real” enhances a picture’s agency to make imaginaries in the mind of audiences rather than reflect “reality” Moxey draws a useful distinction between the “presentational” and “representational” role of pictures. He writes, “...in its representational capacity to record and thus interpret experience in a such a way as to trigger involuntary memory; in its presentational power to create an entirely new experience – a substitute for the ‘real’ thing; or in its ability to do both simultaneously?” Moxey, “Mimesis and Iconoclasm,” 54.

Reconsideration of the lake-palace's function as a palace for pleasure, for example, offers us a way to reflect on the term "contextual portraits."<sup>239</sup> Here I draw upon Bruno Latour and his critique of default positions that turn to social context to trace causes.<sup>240</sup> Latour urges us to focus on associations between humans and non-humans, the material domain of things and objects that shapes any notion of reality in relation to each other. The inscriptions behind paintings or the modes in which paintings were titled in the Udaipur painting inventory of 1891 claim that the king and members of his court are pictured at a particular place (and sometimes time) or note that the paintings depict the *bhāva* of a place along with the likeness (*sūrat*) of the king. Yet the painters' juxtapositions of representational techniques and viewing points constantly reminds us that the nature of verisimilitude is not immediately assumed and that an acknowledgement of the representational role of the picture is kept in play.<sup>241</sup> Painters' picturing of Jagnivas as the place for pleasure, of the

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<sup>239</sup> As discussed, at some length in chapter two, contextual portraits has been used to describe the genre of large-scale Udaipur paintings that feature royal portraits enacting their authority within spatial and urban environs. See Chapter two, particularly page nos. 63-66.

<sup>240</sup> He writes, for instance, "...there exists a social 'context' in which non-social activities take place; it is a specific domain of reality; it can be used as a specific type of causality to account for the residual aspects that other domains...since ordinary agents are always 'inside' a social world that encompasses them, they can at best be 'informants' about this world and, at worst, be blinded to its full existence..." Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 3-4.

<sup>241</sup> For instance, a concept of truthfulness and lifelikeness is an important value for town and topographical views from 1500s in Italy, France and elsewhere. Nuti, "The Perspective Plan in the

people with whom pleasure was practiced, and of the material things that constituted such practices—all the elements that constitute what we call the “contextual”—shape the portrait of Jagat Singh II as much as his portrait shapes them. Thus the emphasis in the paintings and the inscriptions is at least as associational as it is contextual. The use of the term contextual assumes a given social context that is reflected the paintings rather than possibly shaped by paintings. It also assumes that the painters’ depiction of context pictorially was and is self-explanatory largely by the way of kingly portraiture.

As we think of the world in which these Jagnivas paintings operated and the codes of recognition they employed and created, let us finally turn to a view offered by a painting featuring Sirdar Singh. This painting will take us into the world of the powerful courtly nobles who were members of the community of connoisseurs that inhabited Jagnivas palace and surrounded Jagat Singh II. Thakur Sirdar Singh Dodia, who had earned the role of ‘protecting’ Mewar kings in battles, was rewarded with important land grants by Jagat Singh II in 1738.<sup>242</sup> For his part, Sirdar Singh enhanced and transformed his status at the

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Sixteenth Century”; for a discussion of “city portraits” in Roman contexts see, Maier, “Francesco Rosselli’s Lost View of Rome: An Urban Icon and Its Progeny.” I have not found a single instance in the case of Udaipur painting where the scribe has made a claim for the “likeness (*sūrat*)” of a place.

<sup>242</sup> The history of Dodies clan was written in verse form between 1855 and 1876 in the *Dīpaṅga-kula-prakāśa* which commemorated the clan’s founder *Dīpaṅga*. In 1855, after Sardar Singh’s grandson succeeded in regaining control of the Sardargarh fort, Mewar raja Swarup Singh proclaimed

Udaipur court by building expansive palaces on his newly acquired lands, both inside the city of Udaipur and on its frontiers within the boundaries of Mewar. The thakurs of Sardargarh claim their origin from the Dodia clan founded by Deipank who came from the Sind at the northwestern frontiers in present-day Pakistan. The relationship of the Dodia clan to Mewar was established in 1303 when Dodia Jaskaran came to the aid of Mewar king Ratan Singh.<sup>243</sup> In 1387 his son Dhaval Dodia was given a land grant (*jagir*) on account of an important defense of the Udaipur ruler Lakha's mother by Rao Dodia. At this time the Dodias earned the right of personal protection of the Mewar kings in battle. Dodia lore holds that ten continuous generations of the clan leaders from the fourteenth century to the mid-eighteenth century died protecting Mewar kings in various battles against the Mughals. In most cases, the succeeding Dodia clan leader was granted land in recognition of their ancestor's sacrifices. However, the literature from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century thus far has not revealed much evidence of territorial establishments

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Sardargarh as a second class *thikana* of Mewar. Following Sardargarh's reincorporation within Mewar's *thikanas* in 1855, raja Shambhu Singh during his visit to the fort, commissioned Kayamdan, father of Kaviraj Shymaldaas to write the history of the Dodias in recognition of their significant services to the Mewar court. Based on court records detailing Kaviraj Shyamaldas's years of service at the Mewar court, Brijmohan Jawalia suggests that Shyamaldas completed most parts of this composition after his father's death in 1870. I use this primary source and history of the Dodias recounted in Syāmaladāsa's *Vīravinoda* to present aspects of Dodia clan's history in brief. Future research on this source is planned. *Dadhivāriyā, Dīpaṅga-kula-prakāśa*.

<sup>243</sup> Śyāmaladāsa, *Vīravinoda*, 214.



by the Dodias prior to 1738. As it emerges, in the 1730s the status of the Dodias as belonging to the first tier of thakurs within the Udaipur's hierarchy was not only defined by their sacrifices and patterns of land ownership but also upon their relationship with Udaipur's royal family. It is well known that marital alliances have played a central role in defining Rajput-Mughal politics and that they have been equally decisive in politics and decisions over successions within the Rajput courts.<sup>244</sup> And indeed Jagat Singh and Sirdar Singh Dodia were both married to sisters who were princesses of the court of Idar in Gujarat. Jagat Singh II and Sirdar Singh were thus closely related by marriage when Sirdar Singh began to make his presence felt in the Udaipur court, as we infer from our attention to the above-noted painted courtly portraits. Clearly Jagat Singh II sought to strengthen Sirdar Singh's presence at the Udaipur court, when in 1738, he awarded the thakur the estate land, *thikana* of Lawa, 58 miles north of Udaipur just beyond the Rajsamand Lake, and added the additional reward of prime land on the banks of Lake Pichola in Udaipur, outside the walled city, perhaps the first such gift of its kind.

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<sup>244</sup> Frances Taft discusses the role of Mughal-Rajput marriages in sixteenth and seventeenth century political formations on both the Mughal side and in the various Rajputana capitals of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Mewar. She argues that rajas at the Mewar court strongly disapproved of Mewar-Mughal marriage alliances and saw it as means to uphold the Rajput ideal. Taft, "Honor and Alliance: Reconsidering Mughal-Rajput Marriages."

Indeed thakurs operated as “small kings” in their estate lands. Often they followed royal ceremonials as prescribed at Udaipur, bending them per their own needs and choices, while they created new spaces for patronage of arts and music where circulating artists might experiment more freely and thus change—from the frontiers of Mewar—the taste of connoisseurs at the center. Scholars have amply shown that the Udaipur court painter Bakhta, and his son Chokha, changed the direction of Udaipur painting in the last quarter of the eighteenth century by adapting innovations in painting styles and genres that they formulated while working for the Mewar thakurs in another regional *thikana* Deogarh.<sup>245</sup> Sirdar Singh immediately built a fort (*garh*) in Lava, laying its foundation in the year of the gift and overseeing its completion in 1743 (Ill. 3.27, 3.28).<sup>246</sup> Jagat Singh II was invited to the opening ceremony of the fort and he named the fort—Sirdar-*garh*. The fort was designed in a precise rectangular form with two tiers of high-rising fortification walls, and it stands as an impressive monument against the undulating hilly landscape. Sirdar Singh also constructed the Dodia *haveli*, a complex of garden-courtyards and palatial rooms, which sprawls over 40,000 square meters on the land on the bank of Lake Pichola (Ill. 3.29, 3.30).

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<sup>245</sup> Beach, *Rajasthani Painters Bagta and Chokha*; Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*. Chapter five.

<sup>246</sup> Śyāmaladāsa, *Vīravinoda*, 1929.

Most of the other *havelis* in Udaipur at this time were located within the walled city.<sup>247</sup> The architecture of Sirdar Singh's fort and courtyard mansion referenced typological spaces like the Badi Mahal (garden-palace; known as the Shivprasana Amar Vilas Mahal) and its spatial planning is similar to the layout of the women's quarters in the Udaipur palace. The Udaipur king Jagat Singh II must have been impressed by the fort and the residential mansion built by Sirdar Singh; we know that Sirdar Singh's intelligence was praised in the *Jagvilās*, and that he was awarded responsibility for building the Jagnivas lake-palace in 1743, the year that the thakur completed building in his own independent estate lands. Man Singh Dodia, the contemporary living patriarch of the Dodia clan, claims that the same architects and craftsmen who were responsible for the design and building of Sirdargarh and the Dodia haveli designed the Jagnivas lake-palace as well. The scope of this chapter has

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<sup>247</sup> In defining the meaning of *haveli*, Shikha Jain argues that *havelis* are mansions or a dwelling type where political networks played a key role. She writes that they must be studied "by identifying the original owner and his official status under the ruler. These were medieval mansions belonging to nobles who served Rajput rulers, clearly demarcating themselves from the houses of the subordinates and common people." Jain makes this argument against previous definitions of a *haveli* as courtyard houses based purely on identification of a spatial form. She divides *havelis* into types based on ownership and caste by Rajput thakurs, Hindu traders, Muslim nobles, Brahmins and so on. Such an exercise in typology and analysis of design principles deals with extensive and painstaking documentation of *haveli* as a dwelling type is useful, however caste based spatial divisions without taking into account historic specificities can be limiting. The role of the design and function of each spatial precinct can be fully explored only if micro-histories of a particular act of building is questioned by locating motivations in particular time and place. For details see, Shikha Jain, "Introducing the Place, Patrons, and the Archetype" in *Havelis: A Living Tradition of Rajasthan*, (Gurgaon, Shubhi Publications, 2004), 13-36.

not permitted an examination of the architecture of the Jagnivas lake-palace itself, or a discussion of how the design of this lake-palace operated at the nexus of a similar network of architectural landmarks including the Sirdargarh haveli and the Sirdargarh fort of the Dodia thakurs. We have focused on the ideational worlds within which the imaginary of this landmark lake-palace was conjured. Nonetheless, a brief exploration of the garden courtyards of the Sirdargarh haveli and fort offers promising grounds that spatial analysis of these sites alongside Jagnivas will displace simplistic accounts of Udaipur's foremost lake-palace as a self-contained spatial entity associated with decadent princely pursuits.

Dodia Haveli's prominent location on the banks of lake Pichola opposite the lake-palace suggests the power and prestige of Sirdar Singh. A topographical painting that depicts an elaborate procession of the Udaipur king Ari Singh, c.1762-65, also depicts the city of Udaipur beyond the palace complex (Ill. 3.31).<sup>248</sup> This painting is a rich site at which to explore the painters' combination of the picturing of the *bhāva* of the city at a miniaturized scale with the picturing of a gigantic procession, and for their attention to individual portraits. But here I simply gesture to a few small but pertinent details. The chorography of the city captures how the Dodia haveli provides a rare vantage point for the

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<sup>248</sup> This painting in the Mewar Royal Collections is presently not published in any catalogs, and the inscription remains to be investigated. I am grateful to Dr. Andrew Topsfield for sharing a digital image.

admiration of the Lake Pichola and Udaipur's architecture. The painters selectively highlight only specific buildings (presumably those of highest importance to patrons and courtly audiences), apart from the elevation of the Eastern façade of the main palace: they highlight the elevation of the Jagannath Ray temple along the main street (Ill.3.31 (detail a)), depict the complete layout of the lake-palaces of the Jagnivas and Jagmandir by combining a bird's eye view with flipped out planimetric and elevation views, and, in a similar representational idiom, highlight the complete complex of the Dodia haveli which reveals the layout of its various courtyards and terraces (Ill.3.31 (detail b)). The Dodia haveli seen in the upper part of the painting is embedded in the relationship of viewing Udaipur's seat of authority from a vantage point in the city of Udaipur that was privileged. It could of course be that building of Sirdar Singh's palatial domain— located on the lake banks on the other side of Jagat Singh II's palace, and constituted by garden-courtyards—possibly played a substantive role in the commission and design of the Jagnivas palace. The sight of the Jagnivas lake-palace from Dodia haveli—which is itself a conglomerate of garden courtyards and pavilions, though it does not belong to the king himself—is featured in paintings, and it suggests a powerful alignment of a typology of a space of pleasure with the unique local geography of the city.

The independent portrait of the Sirdar Singh entices (Ill. 3.32).<sup>249</sup> The thakur is shown offering his prayers to a four-faced *lingā* icon of Shiva, that recalls the Mewar court's dynastic deity of Eklingji, in the presence of his sons within a lakeside pavilion overlooking a garden-courtyard. We can compare this painting to two portraits of Jagat Singh II where the king is shown offering prayers in a similar bare-chested attire (Ill. 3.33, 3.34).<sup>250</sup> It is important that Sirdar Singh is depicted independently of the Udaipur king and yet in a similar act of devotion. That he is seen performing this act of devotion in what is most likely his own lakeside residence, a courtyard house (*haveli*) he built in 1743, is equally striking.

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<sup>249</sup> Asian Art Museum, San Francisco (Accession No. B84D2). I still have to translate and the verse (*kavita*) on the front of the painting. In short it appears to praise "Sirdar" and the number on the page is "2" indicating that the painting is part of a series. In making note of the decline in manuscript illustrations in Jagat Singh II's court, Topsfield notes that only two dated illustrated series are known thus far. One of them was commissioned by thakur Sirdar Singh in 1740 and is ascribed to the painter Shahji (who is most likely the same Syaji who painted the Jagnivas painting with which this chapter opened (Ill.3.1)). Of this manuscript to which the current painting depicting Sirdar Singh appears to belong, apparently there are two more vertical pages in a London private collection. One of them gives the date, name of the artist, patron, and numbering on the folio suggests that there might have been 31 paintings in this illustrated manuscript. Future research remains to be done in this direction. Singh may reveal further details. Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 208. footnote 13.

<sup>250</sup> I am grateful to Cathy Benkaim for sharing an image of the painting in her collection (which does not have an inscription on the back). Another similar painting is in the collection of the Albert Hall museum, Jaipur. While the portrait of this painting also suggests that it may depict Jagat Singh II, the inscription on the back notes that this was a portrait of Sangram Singh and that the painting was gifted by the painter Sheikh Taju. If indeed this refers to the Kota painter, active in the 1720s-40s, to whom Stuart Cary Welch has attributed several drawings of forts and palaces. Ibid., 187-188; Welch, *Gods, Kings, and Tigers : the Art of Kotah*.

Against the terrain of political-spatial shifts in mid-eighteenth century Udaipur, this portrayal of Sirdar Singh within his own garden-palace is an important pictorial, architectural, and ideational precedent to the paintings that made Jagnivas as an ideal site for the practice of courtly pleasures and politics.

The building of Jagnivas and its subsequent imagination as a heterotopia within paintings and poetry was a watershed moment in mid-eighteenth century artistic and intellectual life. The paintings considered in this chapter have in the past been regarded as inward looking in the extreme. They have been read as inward looking with regard to how painters constructed them as portraits of kings surrounded by the views of individual courtyards and spaces inside the Jagnivas lake-palace, and with regard to how scholars have construed them as representations of a building and a king, and thus pictures of individual excess and decline. I have argued that while these paintings make the Jagnivas palace into a very particular place for practice of pleasure, we can interpret these paintings soundly only if we read them as interrelated with a wide range of sources, from paintings and poetry to networks of architectural landmarks, and a broadly conceived courtly audience including specific patrons like the Udaipur king Jagat Singh II and other powerful members of courtly society like thakur Sirdar Singh. While interrelated pictorial and poetic accounts stress the singularly wondrous and extraordinary nature of this lake-palace, Jagnivas is inextricably

linked to wider locales and architecture outside of the Lake Pichola and the city of Udaipur. Certainly Jagat Singh's artists combined topoi of pleasure and royal praise to picture the specific *bhāva* of Jagnivas palace. But doing so they forged ideas about this space and Udaipur courtly culture within the broader realms of aesthetics and politics. Topographical paintings such as the ones I have discussed must have expanded the spatial literacy of their audiences; yet exploration of the dialectic between topoi and perception which artists straddled reminds us of the possible gaps between pictures and praxis, gaps which cannot be reduced to interpretations determined by causality that twentieth century historians have invoked as they drew upon early nineteenth century histories in order, they hoped, to illuminate a mid-eighteenth century world. To imagine this palace as a place-world inhabited by the Udaipur ruler and his court constituted an extremely calculated imagining of statecraft, which, in turn, circulated the image of Udaipur as a city of lakes and palaces, a pleasurable and charismatic place enjoyed by powerful connoisseurs. The paintings, poetry, and architecture discussed here enticed audiences through all possible affective means, and each medium powerfully created the Jagnivas lake-palace as a place where Jagat Singh's overlapping worlds of *vilāsa*—and power—came together as meaningfully and seamlessly integrated.



## Chapter 4

### BETWEEN IDIOMS OF PRAISE AND DECLINE: INTERPRETING GHASI'S ARTISTIC PRACTICE AND TRAVELS

#### 4.1. *Court Artist/Native Artist*

Between 1820 and 1834, an artist from Udaipur named Ghasi painted under the patronage of two Maharanas and one British agent. In the early years of the nineteenth century, Ghasi painted smaller portraits of Bhim Singh, mounted on a horse accompanied by his entourage of men and hunting dogs, poised in a procession (*sawāri*) (Ill. 4.1; c. 1820, 34.2 x 24.8 cm).<sup>251</sup> But by around 1834-35, Ghasi also painted the Udaipur ruler Jawan Singh in several large-scale cloth and paper paintings, picturing him within expansive architectural environs of temples, palaces, and camps (Ill. 4.2; approximately 134 x 95 cm).<sup>252</sup> Ghasi also made several small and several large drawings of the elevations and architectural details of temples in fine watercolor outlines on watermarked European paper when he traveled along with Colonel James Tod, the first Political Agent of the British East India Company in Rajasthan,

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<sup>251</sup> The Royal Asiatic Society, Tod Collection (Accession number: 063.027). Head and Royal Asiatic Society, *Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings, Engravings and Busts in the Collection of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 159.

<sup>252</sup> Mewar Royal Collection. Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 247–249. Fig 221a, 221b.

who was based in Udaipur from 1799 to 1821 (Ill. 4.3. 1822. 43.5 x 29 cm).<sup>253</sup> Ghasi also employed the pictorial topoi of processions from Udaipur court paintings to portray Tod and his diplomatic encounters with Bhim Singh at the Udaipur court (Ill. 4.4. c. 1820. 66 x 100 cm).<sup>254</sup> As he traveled through northwestern India, Tod assigned his artists the task to document the architecture of the places he visited. Tod's assistant agent Patrick Waugh served as the (amateur) British artist for Tod's expeditions, and Ghasi served as the "native" artist on Tod's team. Tod and his image-makers ultimately framed this region—historically, politically, and cartographically—as "Rajasthan" or the "land of rajas," whom Tod saw as Indian princes, not kings. Within his history of Indian princes, written in the two volumes of the *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*<sup>255</sup> (published originally by Smith Elder in 1829 and 1832) Tod also included several engravings based on his artists' works. After the departure of the British agent, Ghasi took the visual vocabulary he had used to render Rajasthan's temple architecture for a British eye and adapted it for imagining and praising the place-worlds and travels of his royal patrons of Udaipur.

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<sup>253</sup> The Royal Asiatic Society, Tod Collection (Accession number: 063.027). Head and Royal Asiatic Society, *Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings, Engravings and Busts in the Collection of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 120.

<sup>254</sup> City Palace Museum, Udaipur. Topsfield, *The City Palace Museum, Udaipur : Paintings of Mewar Court Life*, 70.

<sup>255</sup> Hereafter, I will be referring to the publication *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* as *Annals*.

It is not the case that Ghasi's drawings or paintings are unknown to scholars. They exist in several collections like the Royal Asiatic Society-London, Victoria & Albert Museum, British Library, Brooklyn Museum, and the City Palace Museum-Udaipur. Scholars have acknowledged him as an artist who made pictures for his patrons at the Udaipur court and for Tod, making the connection between the two spheres primarily for the purpose of attribution.<sup>256</sup> What has never been considered, however, is what this translation in two directions, between court and company, accomplished for restoring Ghasi's agency. This chapter shall track the kinds of visual innovations and meanings his practices articulated in a period of political and artistic transitions in India.

On the one hand, we will explore the archive of Ghasi's works and travels—across the Udaipur court and British East India Company—to examine how the painter depicts place in relation to demands of royal portraiture and scientific documentation, between idioms of praise and decline. On the other hand, we will present Ghasi's intellectual engagement against the background of Tod's intellectual engagement with the geography, landscape, and architecture of northwestern India. Tod, for his part, through the visual

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<sup>256</sup> Topsfield brings attention to two ascribed works on Ghasi. One painting, depicts Bhim Singh at a hunting picnic, dated to 1825, notes that Ghasi was given an award of a gold bracelet for his work. Another painting, ascribed to Ghasi (though not dated but from the same time around 1825), depicts Jawan Singh as a prince seated on a swing bed in a courtly setting. Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 234–238.

works of his diverse groups of artist-assistants, employed rhetorical literary tropes popular in eighteenth and nineteenth century European travel writing and bardic stories and literature which circulated in the regional courts of Rajasthan to shape his deep concerns about historicity of northwestern India.<sup>257</sup> Our examination of this double movement between Ghasi's and Tod's endeavors of place-making will bring the question of picturing place and its relationship to the making of knowledge and power in sharp focus. It is an issue which the archive presented in this chapter allows us to examine from both a comparative and connected perspective, and thus to engage with the many transitions at play early decades of the nineteenth century when political authority, visual practices and definitions of art and knowledge were being adapted in multiple directions by and for multiple communities.<sup>258</sup>

If chapter three explored how Udaipur painters in the mid-eighteenth century aligned Udaipur's spatial imaginary with power through an engagement with topoi and

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<sup>257</sup> D'Souza, "Tod as an Observer of Landscape in Rajasthan"; Talbot, "Recovering the Heroic History of Rajasthan: Tod and the Prithviraj Raso."

<sup>258</sup> Three volumes explore specifically the question of transitions, hybridity, and possibility of exploring both connected and comparative histories for artistic and cultural practices in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century South Asia. They build upon Sanjay Subrahmanyam's proposition that evaluating both connected histories and comparative histories between Asia and Europe in the early modern era is key for rethinking this time period and global geographies. Avcioğlu and Flood, "Introduction"; *Indo-Muslim Cultures in Transition*; Markovits, Pouchepadass, and Subrahmanyam, *Society and Circulation: Mobile People and Itinerant Cultures in South Asia, 1750-1950*; Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories."

practices of pleasure, thereby associating the *bhāva* of the place with desire and enjoyment, then the current chapter will show that Ghasi realigned the *bhāva* of the place and royal portraiture with temple spaces and devotional journeys of Udaipur ruler Jawan Singh as means to assert his power in the wake of British colonization and against narratives of princely hedonism and political decline. Ghasi forged critical conversations on the theme of picturing place, both within the world of Udaipur court's visual culture of large-scale topographical paintings and between the visual and political worlds of the Udaipur court and the British company. The travels of Ghasi and his circulation of visual practices across pictorial genres and political domains highlight, in Finbarr B. Flood's words, "the relationship between strategies of translation associated with the circulation of objects and processes of *transculturation*."<sup>259</sup> The multidirectional nature of exchange seen in Ghasi's work asserts a notion of transculturation which acknowledges that "cultural formations are always already hybrid and in process, so that translation is a dynamic activity that takes place both *between* and *within* cultural codes, forms, and practices."<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval Hindu-Muslim Encounter*, 9. Original emphasis. Flood builds upon the term transculturation by anthropologist Fernando Ortiz that looks at questions of transformation and translation within zones of cross-cultural contact by giving centrality to material practices and objects.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid. Original emphasis.

Ghasi's works have been often interpreted as evidence of artistic decline in Udaipur court painting. This prejudice comes as a corollary to Tod's construction of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century in Udaipur (and the South Asian subcontinent in general) as a period of political decline. Scholars working in this vein have often highlighted Tod's description of Ghasi as "a native artist (who labours at Udaipur for the same daily pay as a tailor, carpenter, or any other artisan)" and his dismissive opinion of Ghasi's understanding of linear perspective as akin to the artist's status within the Udaipur court.<sup>261</sup> Ghasi's stylistic preference toward drawing precise outlines within Udaipur court paintings has been described as lending a kind of stiffness to his paintings. Andrew Topsfield has related this formal quality to Ghasi's training as a draftsman under Tod, and more potently, to the supposed degradation of the dynamic quality, as he terms it as a loss of a "vitality" seen within earlier examples of Udaipur court painting.<sup>262</sup> Topsfield certainly recognizes virtues of Ghasi's skill in making "detailed delineations" of architecture for Tod and for the

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<sup>261</sup> James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, or The Central and Western Rajput States of India*, 1920, I:1755, 1819; For instance see, Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 235; Topsfield, "Tod's Collection of Rajasthani Paintings," 23.

<sup>262</sup> Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 234–238.

Udaipur court, but he does not necessarily regard him as someone who was able to take the court tradition in an innovative direction.<sup>263</sup>

Recent scholarly work has applauded compositions of portraits and royal hunts by Udaipur artists Bakhta and his son Chokha, who was Ghasi's contemporary at Udaipur for a few years, for a kind of freshness and innovation they bring to Udaipur court painting.<sup>264</sup> In traveling and painting between the court workshops at Udaipur and Devgarh, one of Mewar's fiefdoms, Bakhta and Chokha experimented and combined pictorial models and artistic styles developed at other Rajasthani courts.<sup>265</sup> In contrast, Ghasi's depictions of architecture across pictorial genres of architectural drawing and large-scale Udaipur court paintings have not been considered with regard to the innovations Ghasi's circulatory paths brought to his practice. In other words, Ghasi is constituted in Dipesh Chakrabarty's words

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<sup>263</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>264</sup> Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, Chapter 8; Beach, *Rajasthani Painters Bagta and Chokha*; Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, Chapter 5.

<sup>265</sup> In discussing how Chokha develops pictures that engage the shringara (erotic or amorous) rasa (taste or mood), Aitken writes that the artist's stule "intended specifically to overwhelm the senses," and thus "significantly changed the character of Mewar painting." Based on a careful interpretation of Chokha's formal choices, Aitken argues "Cholha painted in response not only to earlier Mewar painting but also to the amorous Krishna imagery of Kota, Bundi, and Kishangarh." Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 211 and Chapter 5.

as a distinct figure of “lack” and “inadequacy.”<sup>266</sup> Ghasi (and his works’) transitional status is seen as one which neither embodies Indian tradition (as in Udaipur court painting) adequately and nor meets European standards (of painting or architecture drawing). This chapter attempts to look and read against this figure of lack, and arrives at multiple instances where Ghasi’s artistic agency and innovation shapes imperative visions for Udaipur court painting and politics in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Within the longer history of depicting place at the Udaipur court, Ghasi’s artistic practices, especially after Tod’s departure in 1822, open up a critical space to think comparatively about how Tod co-opted Ghasi’s drawings within a narrative of ruination, and then, more provocatively, to rethink how Ghasi employed the vocabulary of drawing architecture within idioms of praise to imagine a picture of stability and power for Udaipur’s rulers.

In the past two decades, scholars of South Asia across disciplinary boundaries have been critically re-thinking and re-conceptualizing the history of the long eighteenth century, prior to the declaration of British Empire in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>267</sup> Part of

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<sup>266</sup> Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, 35–40.

<sup>267</sup> By tracing the role and work of Indian intellectuals including “native” assistants and artists who feature within the accounts and collections of British Political Agents and Antiquarians like Tod’s contemporary Colin Mackenzie based in Madras, Scholars like Nicholas Dirks, Phil Wagoner, and Thomas Trautmann have sought to shift the debates on the production of knowledge and history by not only British agents but equally Indian assistants.



this project has been to trace the work of Indian intellectuals and to bring to light the pivotal role of “native” assistants in the making of Orientalist knowledge, and part has been to explore the enmeshed nature of diverse intellectual histories and historical genres that proliferated before and during the colonial period. One of the encounters that scholars have fruitfully drawn upon is documented in the reams of correspondence and personal accounts that give us details about the nature of the interaction between Tod’s contemporary Colin Mackenzie and his assistants in Madras.<sup>268</sup> Within visual endeavors, for instance, Henry Noltie has brought our attention to the works of Indian artists Rungiah and Govindoo and how these shaped the corpus of botanical drawings and knowledge produced by the British East India Company surgeon-botanist Robert Wright between 1826 and 1853.<sup>269</sup> In the exhibition, *Adapting the Eye: An Archive of the British in India, 1770-1830* (2011), Holly Shaffer has excavated the practice of the artist Gangram Tambat, and highlighted his critical role in the making of British watercolors and drawings of architectural sites represented in collections of Sir Charles Warre Malet, British East India Company Resident in Poona between 1785 and

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<sup>268</sup> An edited volume comprehensively brings together research on the Mackenzie Collection. Trautmann, *The Madras School of Orientalism: Producing Knowledge in Colonial South India*; In distinguishing Tod from Colin Mackenzie, Jason Freitag notes that since the *Annals* were published within Tod’s lifetime which enables us to excavate his structuring of knowledge and history in particular ways. Freitag, *Serving Empire, Serving Nation : James Tod and the Rajputs of Rajasthan* Introduction.

<sup>269</sup> Noltie, *Robert Wight and the Botanical Drawings of Rungiah & Govindoo*.

1798 and the British artist James Wales projects.<sup>270</sup> Building upon this interest in tracing artistic agency in the context of cross-cultural encounters in the early years of explorations and imperial projects undertaken by British East India Company officials, I suggest that Ghasi's paintings and drawings allow us to consider the agency of native assistants and artists from a visual perspective—that in spite of the lack of written sources acknowledging his work, the visual archive of Ghasi's work enables us to think critically about Ghasi's travels, rather than to focus exclusively on Tod's travels.

In exploring Tod's making of Rajasthan's history and his collecting practices,<sup>271</sup> this chapter addresses questions of agency, spatial knowledge, and topographical imagining from multiple vantage points. Since we really do not know much about Ghasi's artistic practice prior to 1820, excavating the multiple and intersecting ways in which Tod and his assistants constituted the places of Rajasthan proves fruitful on two accounts. First, we see

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<sup>270</sup> Shaffer and Yale Center for British Art, *Adapting the Eye*; Dadlani, Chanchal, "The 'Palais Indiens' Collection of 1774: Representing Mughal Architecture in Late Eighteenth-Century India"; Sharma, Yuthika, "From Miniatures to Monuments: Picturing Shah Alam's Delhi (1771-1806)". Both Dadlani and Sharma's work raises critical questions on the circulation of artists in Late Mughal Delhi between Indian and European patrons. Both draw attention to how painters' use of topographical and architectural representation across painted genres and mapping practices. I flag parallels and departures of Ghasi's case against their nuanced arguments on visual hybridity and artistic agency in the eighteenth century.

<sup>271</sup> Tod deposited this complete collection in the archives the Royal Asiatic Society at London, where he served as the first librarian of this institution. See, Head and Royal Asiatic Society, *Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings, Engravings and Busts in the Collection of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 107–122; 154–163.

the multi-layered practices that informed Tod's endeavors and how Tod possibly engaged with a diverse archive of visual works to craft his urban imaginary of Rajasthan. Second, we get a sense of the kind of conversations and visual modalities of place-making that Ghasi encounters in his travels with Tod and the comparative role Ghasi's pictures perform inside and outside Tod's *Annals*. Before I turn to the work of Tod's assistants, particularly his artist-assistants, I show, in the following section of this chapter, how Tod employs geography within his introductory essay to lay the ground for audiences to see and use his visual cartographic map of Rajasthan. The geographical and spatial aspect of Tod's opening essay has been relatively marginalized in understanding how Tod employs this section, not only to lay the framework for his writing of the history of the region in the chapters that follow in the *Annals*, but also to focus his readers' gaze on Mewar and Udaipur. Tod's dual emphasis on rhetorical strategies and empirical information on his process of mapping also allows us to fully understand the multi-layered character of the co-production of spatial knowledge by Tod and his assistants. In writing the *Annals*, Tod's approach differs substantively and rhetorically when he is interpreting and employing regional historical sources rather than the visual and cartographic sources he encountered and collected.

Against this context of co-production of knowledge by Ghasi, Waugh, Tod, and several other named and unnamed "native assistants," the last section of this chapter

discusses Ghasi's travels and works produced at the Udaipur court after Tod's departure in 1822. Attending to the large-scale court paintings depicting various temples and the Indo-British durbar held in 1832 at Ajmer, I argue that Ghasi seeks to reinvent the intersecting topoi of place-making and praise in Udaipur painting by circulating imagery across devotional, colonial, and courtly pictures. He adapts representational conventions of planar and elevation views to create new combinations that reference earlier innovations in Udaipur court painting and lay emphasis on the representational mode of the elevation drawing that Ghasi had come to value in his travels across the contact zones between the Udaipur court and East India Company officers. The artistic practices of Ghasi and his circle of artists<sup>272</sup> thus allow us to chart at least some of the changing pictorial and historical concerns within the genres of place-making and portraiture against shifting political and territorial relations in northwestern India in the early nineteenth century. If Tod ultimately co-opted Ghasi's drawings within a narrative of decline, then it is illuminating to see how Ghasi circulates his hybrid practice on picturing places within idioms of praise, especially in

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<sup>272</sup> Here I use "circle of artists" to alert us to the problematic of authorship and attribution to which Aitken has drawn our attention in excavation Chokha's artistic agency and choices. She writes, "Art historians agree that attribution is a sketchy business, and so I would treat an attribution to Chokha as something of a conceit." Chokha "becomes a placeholder for a certain level of skill, ambition, and imagination...The arguments put forward in this chapter hold just as well if the paintings described as "Chokha's" (by my conceit of authorship) were the product of a circle of artist, because the agenda proposed as Chokha's is an entirely impersonal one." Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 272–273.

the early 1830s. The potency of the artist's formal choices can be understood only if we engage the associations he conjures across the networks of court and company. The place-worlds Ghasi created circulated between paintings that audiences saw as pictures of decline and praise. Ghasi's pictorial translations of architectural drawing in various genres expose the distinct epistemic and ontological meanings his pictures make.

#### **4.2. Mapping Geography, Writing History in the Annals**

The laborious research, in the course of which these data were accumulated, commenced in 1806, when the author was attached to the embassy sent, at the close of the Mahratta wars, to the court of Scindhia. The chieftain's army was then in Mewar, at that period almost a *terra incognita*, the position of whose two capitals, Udaipur and Chitor, in the best existing maps, was precisely reversed; that is, Chitor was inserted S.E. of Udaipur instead of S.N.S, a proof of the scanty knowledge possessed at that period.

In other respects there was almost a total blank. In the maps prior to 1806 nearly all the western and central States of Rajasthan will be found wanting. It had been imagined, but a little time before, that the rivers had a southerly course into the Nerbudda; a notion corrected by the father of Indian geography, the distinguished Rennell.

The blank the author filled up; and in 1814, for the first time, the geography of Rajasthan was put into combined form and presented to the Marquess of Hastings, on the eve of a general war, when the labour of ten years was amply rewarded by its becoming in part of the foundation of that illustrious commander's plans of the campaign. It is a duty owing to himself to state that every map, without exception, printed since this period has its foundation, as regards Central and Western India, in the labours of the author.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, or The Central and Western Rajput States of India*, 1920, I:3.

Tod's essay the "Geography of Rajasthan" which opens the volume one of the *Annals* sets the physical framework for his historical narrative that follows; it is also a compelling self-presentation of the author as an active producer of cartographic knowledge.<sup>274</sup> Asserting himself as a pioneer in Rajasthan, Tod describes surveying as his "favorite project." All the coordinates—political, historical, spatial, and territorial—that collectively framed his intellectual endeavors are covered in the three crafted paragraphs, excerpted above, from the sub-section "history of geographical surveys." We see that Tod notes discrepancies in previous maps; brings the reader's focus onto Mewar and its capitals of Udaipur and Chitor; connects his work to James Rennell whose map of India was celebrated amongst British antiquarians and East India Company officials at this time<sup>275</sup>; and, finally, claims authorship and responsibility for the mapping (and history) of Central and Western India which was hitherto "almost a total blank." Tod divides the geographical essay into seventeen short sub-sections, each of which details an aspect of Central and Western India's terrain and

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<sup>274</sup> The *Annals* were originally published in two volumes, each composed of eleven books. For details on the relation between the structure of the books and the construction of history in the volumes see, Freitag, *Serving Empire, Serving Nation : James Tod and the Rajputs of Rajasthan* Chapter five.

<sup>275</sup> Rennell, *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan; or The Mogul Empire*.

includes a description of the land's mineral resources, agricultural produce, and climate.<sup>276</sup>

This essay, as Jason Freitag notes, in “both substance and rhetoric is presented in the mode of science.”<sup>277</sup> Tod's skills as an engineer led to the first commission he received for surveying an “ancient canal” in Delhi in 1801, soon after his arrival from England in Bengal in March 1799 for his first posting in the Second European Regiment at Calcutta, where he was appointed a Lieutenant in the Fourteenth Native Infantry. Most studies have noted that his engineering training aided Tod in his mapping project and Tod was the conduit by which a court painter like Ghasi would have received training in architectural drafting. Let us then see in some detail how Tod creates a map of a region that he identifies as a “*terra incognita*”—a map which Tod presents as a printed foldout in the first volume of the *Annals* and which he titled “Map of Rajasthan or Rajwara Embracing the Rajpoot Principalities of Central & Western India By J. Tod. M.R.A.S. Lieu Colonel Bengal Establishment”(Ill. 4.5).

Tod's early surveys were made alongside British military operations, and he completed them with the assistance of several survey teams. In the section on the “author's

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<sup>276</sup> The sections are as follows: Boundaries of Rajasthan; The States of Rājputāna; History of Geographical Surveys; The Author's Surveys; Survey Parties; The Author's Map-1814; Physiography of Rājputāna; The Aravalli Range; Views from the Aravalli Hills; Geology of the Aravallis; The Patār Plateau; The Mountain System of Central India; The Chambal River; The Western Desert; The Luni River; The Mirage; The Desert

<sup>277</sup> Freitag, *Serving Empire, Serving Nation : James Tod and the Rajputs of Rajasthan*, 34–36.

surveys” within his geographical essay, Tod writes about the several routes he traversed along with the British embassies and about the separate journeys he undertook alongside the British army and “ambulatory court.” The British army was engaged in multiple military actions against the Marathas at this time, seizing forts and negotiating large tracts of land and people. On the one hand, Tod seeks to create a narrative which enlists places, rivers, valleys, and routes that constituted the survey, thus amplifying the accompanying visual map. On the other hand, Tod keenly includes key nuggets of information which rhetorically assert his expertise and his role in the production of “new” knowledge.<sup>278</sup> Tod attests to his penchant for accuracy on multiple occasions, giving evidence of crosschecking his own work<sup>279</sup> and most of the work completed by his “survey parties.” For Tod, accuracy was imperative. Not only was this map presented to the Marquess of Hastings, “on the eve of a general war,” but also, according to Tod, “copies of [his] map on a reduced scale were sent to all the divisions of the armies in the field” to assist them in fighting the Marathas in

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<sup>278</sup> James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, or The Central and Western Rajput States of India*, 1920, I:4–9.

<sup>279</sup> For instance, Tod notes how he is able to return to almost precise locations of the itinerant British camp with the aid of his own surveys. He writes, “From Oodipoor the subsequent march of the army with which we moved led past the celebrated Cheetore, and through the centre of Malwa, crossing in detail all the grand streams flowing from the Vindhya, till we halted for a season on the Boondelkhund frontier at Kemlassa. In this journey of seven hundred miles I twice crossed the lines of route of the former embassy, and was gratified to find my first attempts generally coincide with their established points.”



1817. When copies circulated back in Europe, Tod claims that “portions were introduced into every recent map of India.” Such descriptions transition us to Tod’s brief discussion of the map itself, where he seeks to further convince his audience that “after having laid down these varied lines in the outline described, “ he was “determined to check and confirm its accuracy by recommencing the survey on a new plan, viz. trigonometrically.”<sup>280</sup>

Mathew Edney has argued that British mapping can be studied as “the creation of a legitimating conception of empire, of political and territorial hegemony, mapped out in a scientific and rational construction of space.”<sup>281</sup> He further notes that the British in India promoted the ideal of systematic mapping of the great triangular survey to create an imperial space, which could be a controllable and manageable place to rule.<sup>282</sup> Tod, too, sought to convey that he employed scientific methods and systematization to produce his map as an important geographical (and visual) artifact. This map constituted not only the

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<sup>280</sup> Tod elaborates as follows, “Thus, in a few years, I had filled several volumes with lines of route throughout this space; and having many frontier and intermediate points, the positions of which were fixed, a general outline of the result was constructed, wherein all this information was laid down. I speak more particularly of the western states, as the central portion, or that watered by the Chumbul and its tributary streams, whether from the elevated Aravulli on the west, or from the Vindhya mountains on the south, has been personally surveyed and measured in every direction, with an accuracy sufficient for every political or military purpose, until the grand trigonometric survey from the peninsula shall be extended throughout India.”

<sup>281</sup> Edney considers mapping as a process and seeks to build upon J.B. Harley’s emphasis on the study of the map as an artifact. Harley, “Deconstructing the Map,” 4.

<sup>282</sup> Edney, “The Patronage of Science and the Creation of Imperial Space,” 64.

routes of the British military, but also produced, for the use and consumption of Tod's British officers, a vision of Rajasthan—the land of Indian Princes—as a graspable and tangible unit in Northwestern India.

To make the *terra incognita* more accessible, Tod introduces another important rhetorical trope by placing the reader on the peaks of Aravalli hills and on to of Mount Abu, as well as on top of several forts like Chitorgarh and Kumbhalgarh. These bird's eye views for imagining Rajasthan were always provided from locations within the boundaries of Mewar. This trope dominates Tod's writing through the next set of sub-sections, which are focused on the Aravalli ranges. In this long section that I have excerpted below, for instance, we see how Tod takes up the “physiognomy of the region” by calling his reader to orient his vision multiple times. Tod writes,

Let me place the reader on the highest peak of the insulated Aboo, 'the saint's pinnacle,' as it is termed, and guide his eye in a survey over this wide expanse, from the 'blue waters' of the Indus west, to the 'withy-covered' Bétwa on the east. From this, the most elevated spot in Hindust'han, over-looking by fifteen hundred feet the Aravulli mountains, his eye descends to the plains of Medpát (the classic term for Méwar), whose chief streams flowing from the base of the Aravulli, join the Béris and Bunas, and are prevented from uniting with the Chumbul only by the Pat-ár or plateau of Central India.

Ascending this plateau near the celebrated Cheetore, let the eye deviate slightly from the direct eastern line, and pursue the only practicable path by Ruttungurh, and Singolli, to Kotah... To render this more distinct, I present a profile of the tract described from Aboo to Kotra on the Bétwa: from Aboo to Chumbul, the result of barometrical measurement, and from the latter to the Bétwa from my

general observations of the irregularities of the surface. The result is, that the Bétwa at Kotra is one thousand feet above the sea level, and one thousand lower than the city and valley of Oodipoor, which again is on the same level with *the base* of Aboo, two thousand feet above the sea. This line, the general direction of which is but a short distance from the tropic, is about six geographic degrees in length: yet is this small space highly diversified, both in its inhabitants and the production of the soil, whether hidden or revealed.<sup>283</sup>

Tod's prose gives the reader a visual image of moving from plateaus at Chitor and through valleys in Udaipur, and he makes Mewar central to the geography of Rajasthan and of Hindustan. His description of places and lands surrounding the Aravalli hills also includes a detailed account of natural resources of minerals, stones and metals, such as garnet, amethystine quartz, and rock crystal, thereby linking mines to the royal power of a few princely states.<sup>284</sup> Tod employs a combination of rhetorical literary tropes with scientific ones. For example, he enumerates barometric measurements from sea levels at every point, and reinforces the sense of his text's comprehensive scientific approach by the inclusion of an engraved sketch of a section of the terrain that illustrates his narrative (Ill. 4.6).<sup>285</sup> In this process, Tod sketches the location of fortresses, lakes, wheel carriage tracks, and so on; his view of such manmade urban features and territorial markers of boundaries as parts of the

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<sup>283</sup> James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, or The Central and Western Rajput States of India*, 1920, I:9–10.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*, I:12.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*

natural landscape, however, privileges a military perspective, and relegates the to the status of barriers.<sup>286</sup> Tod employs the bird's eye view to render the deserts of Rajasthan in contrasting ways. He writes, "Let the reader again take post on Aboo, by which he may be saved a painful journey over the *Thul...*"<sup>287</sup> His projection of the journey through the desert as an uncomfortable one which very likely corresponds to the experience of Tod and his soldiers underwrites his failure to give details on the specific resources of the desert; thus he characterizes this large part of northwestern India as unproductive and peripheral.

In Tod's *Annals*, history follows cartography. His writing on geography is a visual journey that creates the boundaries for the various sub-regions of the princely States within Rajasthan.<sup>288</sup> Jason Freitag has argued that Tod's historical writing operated in the

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<sup>286</sup> For example, in another instance, he writes, "Guiding the eye along the chain, several fortresses are observed on the pinnacles guarding the passes on either side, while numerous rills descend, pouring over the declivities, seeking their devious exit between the projecting ribs of the mountain." *Ibid.*, I:13.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, I:19.

<sup>288</sup> The *Annals* are divided into historical accounts on the following princely States that comprised Rajputana: Mewar (Oodipoor or Udaipur), Marwar (Jodhpoor), Bikaner and Kishengarh, Kotah and Bundi (Harouti), Amber (Jeipoor with its branches), Jesselmer (the Indian desert to the valley of the Indus). The state of Mewar and its capital city Udaipur receive the most attention, and states of Jaipur and Bikaner receive the least in the annals. In the move from ideas on physical geography to comparative tables on racial geography of Rajputana, Tod's emphasis is on the continuation of a scientific project. The *Annals* also include twenty-one chapters of 'Personal narrative' by the author in the format of a travel diary. This personal diary is written concurrently to the historical narrative

idiom of the itinerant bards (*charans*) of Rajasthani historiography while at the same time it was deeply engaged with the language of the Greek and Roman classics to provide a parallel storytelling framework for his European audiences.<sup>289</sup> In his combining and recombining of these sources, Tod forged the themes of ruination and restoration that dominate his *Annals*, especially the view that the past glory of the Rajputs, like that of the Greeks', had been destroyed by Islamic invasions and could be restored only by British protection. Freitag builds upon the work of earlier scholars, particularly Norbert Peabody, who problematize the scholarly impulse to see Tod's multiple discourses through the singular lens of an essentialist "Orientalist" enterprise.<sup>290</sup> Peabody argues against a tendency that homogenizes the various degrees of difference that can be discerned in Tod's social constructions of the European self and of the Rajput kings, nobility, people and history of Rajasthan. He suggests that such a "'textual attitude' toward Orientalist discourse" is further problematic because it limits how we may explore the "scope of indigenous agency under colonial rule."<sup>291</sup> This

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in the text. Tod claims a clear distinction between his personal travel narrative and the chapters on the histories of the above sub-regions of Rajasthan.

<sup>289</sup> Freitag, *Serving Empire, Serving Nation : James Tod and the Rajputs of Rajasthan*. chapter five.

<sup>290</sup> Peabody, "Tod's Rajast'han and the Boundaries of Imperial Rule in Nineteenth-Century India"; Also, see, Rudolph and Rudolph, "Writing and Reading Tod's Rajasthan: Interpreting the Text and Its Historiography."

<sup>291</sup> Peabody, "Tod's Rajast'han and the Boundaries of Imperial Rule in Nineteenth-Century India," 214

cautionary remark has indeed been meaningfully explored by historians who have evaluated the role of Tod's native assistants and of regional written and oral literary-historical genres in informing his attitudes to history and versions of the pasts recounted by Rajput kings in their genealogies and cultural practices.<sup>292</sup> However, none of the scholarly enterprises to date have examined at length how spatial thinking functions—along with temporal thinking—in Tod's writing, and how his assistants' visualizations of northwestern India's land, travel routes, architecture and landscape either informed or were elided by the author in his writing. I turn to this question in the next section.

Through his panoptic gaze Tod situates Udaipur within the Aravalli Mountains as a place with a comfortable climate and rich in natural and cultural resources.<sup>293</sup> In emphasizing his mapping methods, both rhetorical and substantive, Tod consistently highlights the towns and cities that comprised Mewar, and these are repeatedly featured in the numerous routes he enlists. The notion of Mewar as a profitable territory with a

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<sup>292</sup> For instance, Cynthia Talbot and Lawrence Babb have sought to excavate Tod's interpretations of historical poetic manuscripts and how those informed or misinformed his writing of a heroic history for the Rajputs. Talbot, "Recovering the Heroic History of Rajasthan: Tod and the Prithviraj Raso"; Talbot, "The Mewar Court's Construction of History"; Babb, "Tod and Traders."

<sup>293</sup> Tod, James. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, or, the Central and Western Rajpoot States of India*. (New Delhi: Rupa & Co, 1997) I. 13. Historians studying maps have pointed to the importance of not only making meanings of the visible in maps, but also to carefully evaluate the absences in maps. Harley and Woodward, *The History of Cartography*.

moderate climate aligns with Tod's map to create a dominance of Udaipur's image in multiple ways.<sup>294</sup> In the image of Tod's "map of Rajasthan," the visuality of the shaded hills that denote the peaks of a mountainous terrain reinforces the prominence of central Rajasthan. The over-abundance of the names of towns and cities connected by lines visually presents the intensity of attention Tod's narrative bestows on the court and region of Mewar and particularly its current capital Udaipur. In the "author's note," preceding the geographical essay as well, Tod argues for the pseudo-universality of Rajasthan's landscape, culture and historical facts by choosing the princely state of Mewar as a specimen, which could be used as a substitute for the others.<sup>295</sup> Tod's Mewar is portrayed as devoid of any foreign influence and inhabited by a race with a 'purity of descent'. Such a fiction of uniformity works in collaboration with the objective of systematic representation through the maps and establishment of control and stability over a varied socio-political space.<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> Although indebted to Harley and Edney's frameworks, Barrow argues that in the project of colonial mapping the construction of territory related to ideas of profitable territories. Barrow, *Making History, Drawing Territory: British Mapping in India, c. 1756-1905*.

<sup>295</sup> Although it is proposed to touch upon the annals of all states in this extensive tract, with their past and present condition, *those in the centre* will claim the most prominent regard; especially Mewar, which, copiously treated of, will afford a specimen, obviating the necessity of like details of the rest. James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, or The Central and Western Rajput States of India*, 1920, I:2.

<sup>296</sup> Edney argues, since imperial rule and control of the other demanded a sense of uniformity, in most cases, since the atlas was the system of representation it did not matter if surveys were done

Tod's induction of Rajasthan's pseudo-universality not only stabilizes the region as a British territory, but it also promotes Mewar and Udaipur as its stable centers.

### 4.3. Inside and Outside the Annals: Assistants' Maps, Pictures and Views

From these remote regions the best-informed native inhabitants were, by persuasion and recompense, conducted to me; and I could at all times, in the Mahratta camp at Gwalior, from 1812 to 1817, have provided a native of the valley of the Indus, the deserts of Dhar, Umrasumra, or any of the States of Rajasthan.

The precision with which Kasids and other public conveyers of letters, in countries where posts are little used, can detail the peculiarities of a long line of route, and the accuracy of their distances would scarcely be credited in Europe. I have no hesitation in asserting that if a correct estimate were obtained of the measured [6] cos of a country, a line might be laid down upon a flat surface with great exactitude. I have heard it affirmed that it was the custom of the old Hindu governments to have measurements made of the roads from town to town and that the *Abu Mahatma* contains a notice of an instrument for that purpose. Indeed, the singular coincidence between lines measured by the perambulator and the estimated distances of the natives is the best proof that the latter are deduced from some more certain method than mere computation.

I never rested satisfied with the result of one set of my parties, with the single exception of Madari's, always making the information of one a basis for the instruction of another, who went over the same ground; but with additional views and advantages, and with the aid of the natives brought successively by each, till I exhausted every field.<sup>297</sup>

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before or after the map was produced. He writes, "The final maps may not have been thoroughly accurate, but the British *believed* that they were." Edney, "The Patronage of Science and the Creation of Imperial Space," 64.

<sup>297</sup> James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, or The Central and Western Rajput States of India*, 1920, I:6–7.



One problem with studying maps in isolation is that they may conceal the personal experiences, interactions, and travels that played an important role in their creation. What kinds of knowledge of routes and mapping practices enabled the surveys led by Tod and those led by his team of “best-informed native inhabitants?” In the context of describing his own investment in exhaustive survey work and accuracy, we hear Tod acknowledge the skills of his survey parties and the knowledge of routes and distances that letter bearers (*kāsids*) possessed. He thought that the two Indian men who led his mapping efforts, Shaikh Abu-l-Barakat and Madari Lal, were extremely proficient and could penetrate territories he personally could not. Tod invokes with admiration the “old Hindu governments” recording of distances between places and catalogued in bureaucratic documents, and he the empiricist in Tod is impressed by the use of “instruments” for measuring distances about which he learned from the *Abu Mahatamyam*, a text that praised the mountainous region of the Aravalli hills around Mount Abu that formed an important node in the sacred geography and pilgrimage practices of the Jain community.<sup>298</sup>

On the ground of the existence of such embedded acknowledgements of native mapping practices within the writings of East India Company officials like James Tod and his predecessors, Kapil Raj persuades us to think in complex ways about natives as co-

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<sup>298</sup> Ibid., I:6.

constituting and co-producing knowledge about the subcontinent in early years of British military and mercantile expansion.<sup>299</sup> Raj defines his endeavor as “[re-examination of] the nature of scientific knowledge making in the globalized space of early modernity in the context of European expansion” within the specific “intercultural ‘contact zone’” where South Asian and Europeans interacted and worked together.<sup>300</sup> Thus he argues against a historiography that sees South Asia simply as a space in which “scientific European knowledge” was imposed or applied, when he writes that “South Asia was an active, although unequal, participant in an emerging world order of knowledge” through “reciprocal, albeit asymmetric, processes of circulation and negotiation.”<sup>301</sup> Raj’s exploration of the circulation and emergence of modern mapping in Great Britain and early colonial India between 1760s and 1820s points to “the 1760s, when large-scale survey work was first undertaken in India, [and yet] there was no unified detailed map of the British Isles.”<sup>302</sup> Raj suggests a kind of symmetry between Europe and South Asia in practices and related artifacts, and he underscores the link between the development of maps in relation

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<sup>299</sup> Raj, *Relocating Modern Science*.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*, 10–11.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*, 68. I am drawing heavily on chapter two in this paragraph.

to territorial expansion. Raj would bring both to the fore in his account of the making of spatial knowledge that emerged in such contact zones. We must come to grips with both the earlier maps—especially those made in the cartographic workshops at the eighteenth century Jaipur court, as discussed in Chapter one, *and* the role of South Asians like Madari Lal, Ghasi, and Gyanchandra, just to mention some of the names of later South Asians known by Tod.

To this end, one of the route maps found in Tod’s unpublished collection suggests an important example of how South Asians employed concurrent mapping practices within inter-cultural contact zones, some of which practices could have also supplied the “lines of route” that Tod’s “Map of Rajasthan” required to come into being as a cartographic artifact (ill. 4.7). This small rectangular map, measuring 27 by 17 cm, is composed of concentric rectangles with names of towns and cities and the distances between them written along the vertical and horizontal axis in all the four directions as well as along the diagonal lines that indicate the directions between north, south, east and west. Susan Gole has called similar map diagrams “charts” and she has located examples that lay towns out along the routes in each direction in relation to a particular place in the center.<sup>303</sup> A mid-seventeenth century example locates the town of Sojat, important for its religious landmarks, trading

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<sup>303</sup> Gole, *Indian Maps and Plans: From Earliest Times to the Advent of European Surveys*.

connections, and position at the center of nine forts within the boundaries of the early modern Marwar region, at its center. This map was included in the history of the region (*Mārwāra rā pargānana rī vigata*) written in 1646 by Sundarsi, brother of Marwar's foremost court historian Munhata Nainsi.<sup>304</sup> In the example found in Tod's collection, the name of a town within the central rectangle is missing, though the maker has labeled each of the directions, a practice also followed in the other examples. Travelers would have continuously rotated this sheet of paper given that the chart's makers wrote names of the towns in a radial manner along the four directions.<sup>305</sup> Along the northern direction, we see the names of cities and towns such as Ajmerghadh, Chanderi, Payag, Kalpi, Agra, Malpur, Sirohi, Nagor, and so on, the list extending up to Kumaon and Kashmir within the Himalayas. When Tod describes his journey to Agra, he notes that "with a small guard I determined through untrodden fields," and the places he lists (for instance, the cities and towns of Ajmerghadh, Chanderi, Payag, Kalpi, and Agra) match the sequence of towns

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<sup>304</sup> Ibid., 42. Gole also notes another chart made in 1941 that locates Jaipur at its center. Yet, another incomplete mid-seventeenth century chart locates the city of Ujjain at its center and the towns of Ahmedavad, Surat, etc marked along the Southern axis are almost identical to the ones found on the chart in Tod's collection. Future research on the Ujjain chart in the private collection of Acharya Ramcharan Sharma Vyakul in Jaipur will hopefully reveal further clues.

<sup>305</sup> The north points towards the bottom of the map in the orientation of the map reproduced here.

marked in the northern direction.<sup>306</sup> Within the names of places enlisted along the southern direction (for instance, Surat Ahmedavad, Vadsal, Navsari, Kankaltirth, Porbandir, and so on), names of places and corrected distances have been added. This additional information is written in a slightly different handwriting and in lighter-colored ink. Both the instances noted above suggest that this map was at least partly employed in Tod's own travels.<sup>307</sup>

This small rectangular route map could also have been provided to Tod or used by one of the several assistants and personnel who traveled with him, including *yati* Gyanchandra, the Jain monk<sup>308</sup> who served as Tod's tutor and intellectual informant, and who helped him navigate through several historical literary manuscripts, especially the *Prithviraj Raso*. Gyanchandra traveled with Tod until his departure from India, and Tod praised Gyanchandra's intellect on several occasions in the *Annals*. In this printed image,

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<sup>306</sup> James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, or The Central and Western Rajput States of India*, 1920, I:15–16.

<sup>307</sup> In the future I hope to trace Tod's travel routes as documented by him in his personal narrative at the end of the *Annals* using Geographical Information System (GIS) and juxtapose them on Tod's map of Rajasthan. Further research on such charts available in several regional collections in modern Rajasthan may also help explore the relationship between South Asian cartographic cultures and Tod's travels and map.

<sup>308</sup> In evaluating Tod's writing on Jains and traders, Lawrence Babb notes that even though Tod respectfully writes about Gyanchandra on multiple occasions, we know very little about him apart from the fact that he was a Shvetambara Jain *yati* of the Kharattaragaccha order—a mendicant who was initiated but who could also follow a worldly life. Babb suggests that “despite Tod's many years of association with a Jain *yati*, and his sincere admiration for the Jain tradition, he knew astonishingly little about Jain belief and practice.” Babb, “Tod and Traders,” 114.

based on a photograph of a painting attributed to Ghasi, we see that Gyanchandra is depicted in the powerful position of a tutor who directs Tod on his study table (Ill. 4.8).<sup>309</sup> Cynthia Talbot has noted the similarity between the appearance of the leather-bound books, discussed below, and the books on the table in this image, and she has related this image to Tod's statement, "as he [Gyanchandra] read I rapidly translated about thirty thousand stanzas."<sup>310</sup> In another painting, Ghasi pictures Tod and Gyanchandra mounted on elephants, as men of almost equal stature (Ill. 4.9).<sup>311</sup> It is interesting to note that although the two figures appear to converge midway within the composition, the artist has depicted Tod in the center of the composition. Details which mark Tod's status and authority include his slightly bigger elephant and an attendant who fans him and holds the umbrella, carefully shading Tod's body. Nonetheless Gyanchandra is portrayed as an older person of stature riding an elephant. He is shown wearing white clothes and cap, a beaded necklace,

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<sup>309</sup> The original painting is now lost and most often attributed to Ghasi. The photograph of this painting was also published in William Crooke's edition of *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1920) with the caption "Captain Tod and His Guru" Talbot, "Recovering the Heroic History of Rajasthan: Tod and the Prithviraj Raso," 104–105.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>311</sup> San Diego Museum of Art (Edward Binney 3rd Collection. Accession no. 1990.663). The inscription on the back of the painting is commemorates a procession (*sawārī*) of Captain James Tod towards Dabok from Udaipur and notes that Guru Gyanchandra accompanies the procession. Date is noted as October 9, 1822. Williams, *Kingdom of the Sun: Indian Court and Village Art from the Princely State of Mewar*, 152; Another painting, attributed to Udaipur painter Chokha, from 1817 depicts Tod riding on an elephant with his companions. Topsfield, "Tod's Collection of Rajasthani Paintings," 20.

with an umbrella in one hand and with the other hand folded in the gesture known as *gyān mudrā*, which usually symbolizes the delivery of a sermon or knowledge. This hand gesture is mirrored in the painter's depiction of Tod's hand. This mirroring is curious: it may indicate a visual echo of the respect Tod felt for Gyanchandra or perhaps Tod is seen as delivering knowledge as well. Tod notes in the *Annals* suggest his impression that the two men were intellectual equals. However it is understood, this hand gesture recasts Tod as an intellectual based on regional gestures that he required to establish himself as a credible intellectual among his local courtly and non-courtly communities. The intellectual quality of Gyanchandra's persona is further signified by the painter's depiction of a person who stands next to Gyanchandra's elephant and holds manuscripts. This figure is in strong contrast to rest of the retinue, standing next to Tod's elephant, who hold various spears and ceremonial accoutrements. Talbot has explored how Tod sought to present the historical significance of the *Prithviraj Raso* in translation in the *Annals* and beyond.<sup>312</sup> She suggests that Tod "may have been almost entirely dependent on Gyanchandra in his efforts to

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<sup>312</sup> Talbot, "Recovering the Heroic History of Rajasthan: Tod and the Prithviraj Raso," 104; In fact Cynthia Talbot asserts that "Tod's "greatest legacy is not his collection, however, but rather the research into Rajasthan's history that he carried out using the various texts and artifacts he had amassed. Unlike Mackenzie, who never attempted to analyze or even publish the manuscripts, inscriptions, and other data in possession, Tod summarized and/or translated portions of numerous chronicles obtained from the courts of Marwar, Mewar, and Jaisalmer, as well as from Jain libraries, in his magnum opus, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*." *ibid.*, 99.

understand the Raso,” and she offers evidence from Tod’s unpublished handwritten notes on the Raso within a two volume set of five large leather-bound books and the dates of Gyanchandra’s travels with Tod. Talbot ultimately argues that Tod was “probably unable to read the archaic language of the text without Gyanchandra’s help,” and bases her claim on the fact that his translation of the Raso in the published annals only departs minimally from his handwritten notes.

Tod’s collection of and attitudes toward extant visual material reveal that he adopted a rather different approach towards regional maps and other geographical sources when it is compared to his approach toward a dominant regional history like the *Prithviraj Raso*. Tod indeed noted his intention “to institute a comparison between the map and such remains of ancient geography as can be extracted from the Puranas and other Hindu authorities; which, however must be deferred to a future period...”<sup>313</sup> While he regrets that his resultant map could not be as detailed as he had initially imagined, Tod sought to extend his conceptualization of geographical practices in relation to “ancient” authorities. He therefore must have interpreted the contemporary practices of the members of his team who surveyed the “lines of route” and enabled the production of his “Map of Rajasthan” either as contiguous with his own practices and/or as not worthy of comparing or detailing

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<sup>313</sup> Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, or The Central and Western Rajput States of India*, I: 2.



further.<sup>314</sup> What remains clear is that, while Tod would have us believe that he operated in a terra incognita, Tod was not operating in a tabula rasa of either cartographic or chorographic practices, especially as he hired most of his native assistants and artists from Udaipur, where, at least since the 1690s, as we have seen in chapters two and three, visualization of architectural and urban environs had been a pictorial priority.

Few visual works found their ways into Tod's published *Annals*; most remained outside its "official history" even if they were held in Tod's collections. Nonetheless, the perspectives offered by the practices of Tod's assistants in the production of visual works draw attention to *their* particular agency. We need to take into account not only the views of Tod's intellectual assistants, who helped him to navigate literary-historical sources, but also the ways his artist-assistants saw the world and the tasks associated with representing it. It appears that Tod (along with his publishers and the engraver Edward Finden) primarily chose for publication in the *Annals* engravings which were based on Waugh's watercolors.

Most of Finden's engravings based on Waugh's works amplify his original watercolors'

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<sup>314</sup> Tod's conceptions were most likely based on the essays on historical geography written by Sir William Jones, published during this time period in the volumes of *Asiatik Researches*. Tod mentions this source on multiple occasions in his essay on the "History of Rajpoot Tribes." *Ibid.*, I:23-38. Apart from the below-discussed route map which might have been used by one of the map-makers who worked with Tod, in my current research, I have not found any other regional maps in Tod's collection. However, Tod mentions in a footnote that he expects the "meritorious artist, Mr. Walker, engraver to the East India Company, who, I trust, will be able to make a fuller use of my materials hereafter." I hope to trace this particular archive of Mr. Walker in the future which may reveal more material that was generated by Tod's team. *Ibid.*, I:2, footnote 2.

picturing of forts and palaces as isolated buildings within landscapes overtaken by vegetative growth and foliage. Such enhancement can be charted by an examination of Waugh's originals alongside the professional artist's adaptations, Finden's engraving proofs, and the final published images.<sup>315</sup> Engravings of temple sites and architectural details—based on Ghasi's works—mainly appear within Tod's "personal narrative," at the end of volume two of the *Annals*. Here we find Tod writing evocative descriptions of his travels, as in the case of a seven-page description of the natural setting of the hills, fortifications, and ruins in the Kumbhalgarh fort of Mewar region (Ill.4.10. 1820. 26 x 36.5 cm).<sup>316</sup> Tod draws primarily upon Waugh's watercolors, which employ pictorial topoi that animated his visualization of picturesque ruins: Waugh has provided him with isolated forts and palaces

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<sup>315</sup> It would be the subject for a separate paper, beyond the scope of the current chapter, to trace the engraver Finden's transformation of Waugh's watercolors into even more recognizable picturesque pictures and to locate Waugh's career as an amateur artist in Rajasthan. For now it would suffice to say that Tod's comments on Waugh's original sketches, discussed below, and my research into the various versions of Finden's engravings suggest that this focus remains a largely under-researched topic in evaluating the circulation of landscape and architectural imagery of eighteenth and nineteenth century South Asia. Scholars assume general dominance of a singular "picturesque" modality without giving importance to variations in media and role of professional artists and engravers in translating and transforming watercolors into published images that were widely disseminated. I am grateful to Gillain Forrester, Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Yale Center for British Art, for discussing with me this issue while examining several examples in their collections from this perspective.

<sup>316</sup> The Royal Asiatic Society, Tod Collections. Accession number: 037.021. Head and Royal Asiatic Society, *Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings, Engravings and Busts in the Collection of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 112; D'Souza, "Tod as an Observer of Landscape in Rajasthan."

with vegetative growth. But Waugh's works are distributed through out the two volumes as illustrations of architectural sites within the histories of Rajasthan's various princely states, and thus they are not always adjacent to the parts of Tod's text that draw upon them.

The engraving "Palace of Udaipur," which appears adjacent to the opening of the "Annals of Mewar," is not incorporated within Tod's writing at all (Ill. 4.11).<sup>317</sup> Yet for our purposes it is instructive in multiple ways. We see how in the engraving itself Finden has highlighted the reflections of Udaipur's palaces in the lake waters, carefully composed the mountains in the backdrop to highlight the horizon at the center of the engraving's horizontal axis, and created a foreground of plants and trees drawn at a comparatively larger scale to give a sense of the lake's expanse. Finden's use of these compositional tools is more apparent when we compare the engraving with Waugh's watercolor, which Tod titled more specifically on the back of the paper as, "Palace & Town Seen From the Shekargarh Eastwd" (Ill. 4.12).<sup>318</sup> Waugh, for his part, is unable to suggest the expanse of the lake or the city's reflection, as his view is overtaken by the overgrown vegetation in the foreground

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<sup>317</sup> Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajast'han, or the Central and Western Rajpoot States of India*, 1829, 1: facing page 211.

<sup>318</sup> The Royal Asiatic Society, Tod Collections. Accession number: 037.003. Oddly enough this is one of the engravings for which we do not have the intermediary professional artist's watercolor that Finden must have employed to prepare this engraving. Head and Royal Asiatic Society, *Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings, Engravings and Busts in the Collection of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 110.

and within lake Pichola, which was perhaps not as filled with water, and thus not as picturesque, as Finden imagines. In the *Annals* this watercolor is unique in its hinting at the vantage point from which the artist made a sketch of the city's lake and palaces: Waugh has included a drawing of two figures who sit on a platform on the other side, but these figures are critically eliminated from the engraving by Finden (Ill. 4.12 (detail)). It is indeed tempting to consider that the two figures depicted here in Waugh's original, one with a hat and sketchpad, the other in a turban, are Waugh's portraits of himself and of Ghasi as Tod's artist-assistants. Within the contact zone in which they deployed their different forms of expertise, as Giles Tillotson notes, both the artists were "deputed to record different aspects of the range of responses that the ruins evoked in all members of the party." Yet, it emerges that Ghasi was not invested in the pictorial possibilities presented by Waugh's artistic practice; rather he was interested in systematically drawing the architecture of the sites he visited—not from a distance—but by getting up close, recording each curve, each recess, and each projection.

Tod acknowledges native artist Ghasi's role by including Finden's engravings based on his drawings of columns, ceilings, and temple towers from buildings at the site of Chitor, Mewar's former capital fort, and from temples at the site of Baroli and Chandrawati, built in

the seventh and tenth centuries.<sup>319</sup> The engraving “detail of temple columns at Chandravati,” is embedded between Tod’s writing on festivals in the Rajput lands and does not refer to the temple site (Ill. 4.13).<sup>320</sup> This is the first instance when we see Ghasi’s works featured—and acknowledged—within the *Annals*. Tod’s collections reveal that Ghasi focused on drawing details of different types of individual columns on six individual large-scale sheets of European paper with watermark (each measuring 40.4 by 24.4 cm).<sup>321</sup> He used paint and brush in so precise a manner that these details initially appear to be drawings made in pen and ink. Ghasi drew extremely faint construction lines which symmetrically follow the curves of the foliage from the pots represented on the upper part of the column shaft. In the engraving that combined three columns based on this set of drawings, Finden

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<sup>319</sup> Ghasi traveled to these sites with Tod in November 1821, December 1822, and February 1822 towards the end of stay in the region. For an introduction to Tod’s travels and their intersection with the visual works in his collection and those published in the *Annals*, see *ibid.*, 107–122; 154–163; Also see, Tillotson, “Illustrating the *Annals*: The Architectural Views of Waugh and Ghasi.”

<sup>320</sup> Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajast’han, or the Central and Western Rajpoot States of India*, 1: facing p.574. Also reproduced in the section on Chandravati temples in volume 2 facing page 732.

<sup>321</sup> The Royal Asiatic Society, Tod Collections. Accession numbers: 037.010–37.017. Head and Royal Asiatic Society, *Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings, Engravings and Busts in the Collection of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 111.

seems to have followed Tod's instructions, to "copy," written on the backs of three of the sheets of paper."<sup>322</sup>

Several other engravings based on Ghasi's watercolors are reproduced in a section of Tod's "personal narrative" devoted to the temple sites of Barolli, Chandravati, and Chitor.<sup>323</sup> Together these engravings convey architectural knowledge about the sites in a range of representational modes. To capture the architectural grandeur of Baroli, Tod includes, for instance, an elevation of one of its temples. This image is titled "Outline of a Temple to Madeva at Barolli." The drawing by Ghasi includes details of the sculpted figures and aedicular elements that constitute the temple tower (*shikhara*), structural elements that constitute the entrance portico of the temple, and the aniconic form of a Shiva *lingam* in the temple hall; the inner sanctum is drawn in a smaller size to suggest its location at the far end of the temple (Ill.4.14).<sup>324</sup> This section of Tod's "personal narrative" also includes engravings, based on Ghasi's original, of an elevation of niches within the temples that depicts the horizontal protruding sill and the vertical columns that constitute the recesses

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<sup>322</sup> The Royal Asiatic Society, Tod Collections. Accession numbers: 037.011, 012, 013, 014 carry these instructions. *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>323</sup> James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, or The Central and Western Rajput States of India*, 1920, III:1752–1824.

<sup>324</sup> Royal Asiatic Society, London. Accession no. 037-084, 037.085. Head and Royal Asiatic Society, *Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings, Engravings and Busts in the Collection of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 115.

and projections on the temple walls and are the supports for depictions of the deities that adorn them (Ill. 4.15)<sup>325</sup>; and a second engraving of a square ceiling plan (as seen from inside) that depicts a section of the temple roof constituted by complex geometric patterns which are distributed within nesting squares that often held such sculpted ceilings together (Ill.4.16).<sup>326</sup> Ghasi appears to have made his drawings systematically: all are painted on nearly same-sized sheets of paper (in some cases two sheets of paper are pasted at the center; 40 x 29 cm; 41 x 25.5 cm), and the artist has drawn very fine lines, often taking time to highlight the sculptural depth of the stone with thin parallel lines of grey wash (Ill. 4.17, 4.18).<sup>327</sup> Tod writes, “Ghasi is now at work upon the outline of two of the remaining shrines, and has promised to give up ten days to the details of the ceiling, the columns, and the rich varied ornaments, which pencil alone can represent.”<sup>328</sup> Similarly, an elevation of the “entrance gateway at Chandravati” depicts the fine details of the animals sculpted on the

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<sup>325</sup> Accession no. for Ghasi’s drawing that form basis for the engraving, 037.087, Royal Asiatic Society, London. Ibid.

<sup>326</sup> Accession no. for Ghasi’s drawing that form basis for the engraving, 037.090, Royal Asiatic Society, London. Ibid.

<sup>327</sup> See drawings by Ghasi, titled, two niches at Barolli (Accession no. 037.154) and column in the fortress of Chitor (037.121), Royal Asiatic Society, London. Ibid., 116,120.

<sup>328</sup> James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, or The Central and Western Rajput States of India*, 1920, III:1786.

lower friezes along the plinth walls and the combination of the vegetal scrolling patterns and sculpted figures of deities that adorn the stone jambs of the temple entrance. As seen in this drawing, Ghasi's expertise in making pictures that paid careful attention to descriptive detail of how sculpture was integrated with the temple walls, demonstrates why Tod uncharacteristically surrendered to the efficacy of Ghasi's representations in his writing (Ill.4.19).<sup>329</sup>

Ghasi's engravings of Baroli are strikingly juxtaposed within the *Annals* between two engravings based on Patrick Waugh's picturesque sketches of ruined columns and temples overgrown with trees. Sketches by Waugh open and end this section on Tod's text (Ill.4.20, Ill. 4.21, Ill. 4.22, Ill. 4.23).<sup>330</sup> While collectively Ghasi's drawings convey the exemplary sculptural quality of the architecture in representational formats that privileged line drawing, and thus lent a dense two-dimensional character to these images, Waugh's watercolors seek to convey the site as a place where architectural fragments had been abandoned and isolated, left to be taken over by natural elements. Regarding these sketches, Tillotson has suggested that Tod saw Patrick Waugh's picturesque sketches and

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<sup>329</sup> Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajast'han, or the Central and Western Rajpoot States of India*, 1832, 2:734.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:705,710; Royal Asiatic Society, London (Accession nos. 037.080, 037.081, 037.092, 037.093) Head and Royal Asiatic Society, *Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings, Engravings and Busts in the Collection of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 115–116.



Ghasi's detailed drawings of the same temple sites as complementary illustrations—that Tod did not see the “poetic and archaeological” sensibilities as mutually exclusive in his writing. Tillotson notes that Tod writes “[the temple] suddenly burst upon my view from amidst the foliage that shrouded it...,” and he further notes that Tod follows up this poetic description with names of some architectural elements that constituted a temple.<sup>331</sup> Tillotson sees this narrative as a reflection of Tod's investment in “minute description,” which constitutes an “explicit attempt to complement Ghasi's drawing.” It is important to note, however, that Tod does not always make any attempt to relate the visuality of Waugh's works to the specific histories he discusses. Nor does he draw the reader's attention to the engravings in particular. It is just as important to underscore that barring Tod's direct acknowledgement of the value of Ghasi's representations of Chandravati temples, as noted above, Tod describes each of Ghasi's drawings in terms of the artist's lack of ability to capture the beauty of the site, to perfectly reproduce the sculptural details of the temples, and to employ perspective correctly.<sup>332</sup> Tod further speculates that the temples at Baroli were most likely associated to a Grecian past in the subcontinent, as it would be impossible that the regional Rajputs could afford to build anything of this highly refined nature. While this

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<sup>331</sup> Tillotson, “Illustrating the Annals: The Architectural Views of Waugh and Ghasi,” 61.

<sup>332</sup> James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, or The Central and Western Rajput States of India*, 1920, III:1819.

reflects Tod's interest in including Baroli within a broader world history of art and architecture masterpieces,<sup>333</sup> it also suggests how in the process Tod relates the artistic skills of the architects and sculptors who built the historical temples he surveyed—like Ghasi's contemporary drawings—to his narrative of steady decline and ruination in present times in northwestern India. Such unwarranted lament of a fictional decline is even more difficult to ignore in light of how Tod's writing on the sites of Baroli, Chandravati, and Chitor consistently recalls narratives of desolation and destruction of the subcontinent brought upon by the various Islamic powers<sup>334</sup>—narratives which both layer and are layered by engravings based on Waugh's works.

As we expand our inquiry into all the unpublished visual material in Tod's collections, it appears that Tod was extremely invested in making decisions about how the archive of drawings he had collected was transformed into engravings and how the engravings were inserted in the *Annals*. Tod's annotations, like "cattle to be enlarged,"<sup>335</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> Tillotson, "Illustrating the Annals: The Architectural Views of Waugh and Ghasi," 62.

<sup>334</sup> For example see James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, or The Central and Western Rajput States of India*, 1920, III:1767, 1786, 1812.

<sup>335</sup> Head and Royal Asiatic Society, *Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings, Engravings and Busts in the Collection of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 115. Accession number 037.077.

“ferry boats admirable,”<sup>336</sup> and “no boats with sails,” “omit the elephant,” and “the cupola to have more breadth than elevation,”<sup>337</sup> largely appear on sketches and watercolors that were made by Waugh, or, in some cases, by a professional artist based on Waugh’s works. Therefore, it is plausible to consider that Tod was invested in choosing, correcting, and checking the final proofs of the visuals for his book. The images within the *Annals* thus are not purely illustrative, and both Waugh’s and Ghasi’s works can be seen as having lives of their own which were not solely connected to Tod’s published points of view, which scholars have largely privileged as definitive.<sup>338</sup>

Tod’s collections include a large corpus of Ghasi’s unpublished drawings, mostly of these concerning buildings at the site of Chitor. These drawings include base moldings and columns as well elaborate temple towers, drawn in darker and thicker lines on a larger scale

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<sup>336</sup> RAS Accession number 037.007A. Both of the remarks on the sails and ferry boats are noted behind the same view by a professional British artist. This detail is not noted in the current catalogue. *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*, 112. Accession number 037.022.

<sup>338</sup> Tillotson has suggested that Tod premeditated the writing of his history before returning to Britain. While this is quite possible, I have shown above that any interpretation of how Tod used Ghasi’s and Waugh’s sketches must take into account where the visuals appear in the first edition of the printed *Annals* as well as take into account the complete corpus of unpublished drawings and paintings by Waugh and Ghasi, the professional artist’s watercolors that were commissioned for transforming the visuals into engravings, and the multiple proofs of the engravings itself.

on larger sheets of thick local paper (Ill. 4.24, Ill. 4.25),<sup>339</sup> Some also include inscriptions, very likely recorded by the painter or by accompanying scribes and assistants. There are also fairly finished drawings not reproduced in the *Annals*, such as an impressive elevation of Chitor's Brahma temple, done on European paper (Ill. 4.3).<sup>340</sup> Most likely the unpublished drawings on local paper constituted the artist's preparatory drawings of architectural elements from which he combined information to fill in details within elevations.<sup>341</sup> It is helpful to recognize Ghasi's skill in making architectural drawings, especially when evaluating the court paintings he made after Tod's departure, which I will discuss in the next section, We know that Tod was trained as a military engineer and he was engaged in drafting plans at Chitor<sup>342</sup> and at the cave sites at Dhamnar in Indore.<sup>343</sup> However, Tod is

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<sup>339</sup> Head and Royal Asiatic Society, *Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings, Engravings and Busts in the Collection of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 116–122. Accession number 037.119 ('Column in the fortress of Cheetore') and 037.171 (Sculptured frieze on a temple at Chitor).

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*, 161. Accession number 037.161. This drawing is also inscribed on the front in ink by Tod as "Temple of Brihma in Cheetore-- by Ghassi-- not engraved. This corpus appears promising for expanding my future research on how Ghasi employs temple elevations for painting large-scale Udaipur court painting, to which I shall shortly turn in the next section of this chapter.

<sup>341</sup> We find versions made in fine lines with watercolor and brush based on the rougher drawings. For instance, above discussed drawing of the molding (037.171) was copied by Ghasi in finer lines (037.172) *ibid.*, 121.

<sup>342</sup> Tod writes, "Having wandered for two or three days amongst the ruins, I commenced a regular plan of the whole, going to work trigonometrically, and laying down every temple or object that still retained a name or had any tradition attached to it. I then descended with the perambulator and

mostly interested in applying his drafting skills to large-scale mapping of sites and larger tracts and routes that constitute his map of Rajasthan. All of the published engravings and Ghasi's drawings, however, attest to a different skill set, best exemplified in his depictions of the interiors and exteriors of temple architecture in various representational formats. Ghasi's work betrays an interest in conveying the architectonics of the buildings in a comprehensive manner, and in giving attention to the structural elements, proportions of the building, and sculptural elements. Ghasi's work is invested in how the layers of architectural spaces—entrances that lead us to main hall of the temple, for example, which further lead us to the inner sanctum—may be delineated within the conventions of two-dimensional architectural drawings, particular in the format of an elevation. Ghasi's contact with Tod may have alerted him to the value of his drawing skills for other genres and for another kind of project under a new patron; however his training in drawing details of the region's architecture does not appear to have been the forte of any of Tod's team members—including Tod himself. Thus it is not surprising that within Tod's vast collections we do not find a single annotation made on Ghasi's drawings in Tod's handwriting that

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made the circuit." Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, or The Central and Western Rajput States of India*, 1920, III:1815.

<sup>343</sup> Plans from this site are available in the British Library and are attributed to Tod (Accession number WD1480-6). Head and Royal Asiatic Society, *Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings, Engravings and Busts in the Collection of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 116.

suggests any corrections. Nor do we find even a single professional artist proof based on Ghasi's architectural drawings that Finden must have used to prepare his engravings. It is highly unlikely that Finden would have prepared his engravings directly from Ghasi's fine drawings, as often there is considerable difference in scale between the drawings and the engravings. Yet, Finden's engravings, too, hardly ever depart from Ghasi's rendering. It is likely, then, that Ghasi's skills at drafting were largely based on his training as a painter in the Udaipur court painting workshop, where over the course of the eighteenth century, as seen in chapters two and three, court painters employed architectural vignettes within large-scale painting to picture Udaipur kings and the ambient feeling of their palaces and cities. Ghasi methodically used this skill to prepare detailed drawings of parts of temples so that he could produce fine elevations per the demands of his new patron's project. It is not that temple elevations are not seen in earlier Udaipur court paintings, however, as we will see below, Ghasi appears to have come to value finished elevation drawings in a new way as part of his understanding of what he thought Tod valued of his skills and knowledge. To characterize the representational modes and drawing that we see at play in Ghasi's works simply as images that represent something called European "influence,"<sup>344</sup> that operated in

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<sup>344</sup> Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 238.

a single direction, completely flattens the complexity of pictorial genres and the translation and transformation of images that is bodied forth in Tod's collections.

Taking into account Tod's full collection, we realize that Waugh and Ghasi are almost equally represented in Tod's project. Although Tod was very concerned regarding the transportation of his manuscript collections, which included eighteenth century Mewar history scrolls and the famous Mewar Ramayana now at the British Library, he largely valued these visual works as history and not art.<sup>345</sup> Tod appears to have commissioned a series of miniature portraits of Udaipur's rulers and thakurs, several of which may or may not have been made by Ghasi (Ill. 4.26, 4.27).<sup>346</sup> Even though he never engaged with them as visual images, Tod may have used these portraits as mnemonic devices, since the stories of the personalities portrayed dominate Tod's bardic histories. A single engraving based on an Udaipur-style painting depicting the "worship of the sword," most likely copied by Ghasi for Tod, is featured in the *Annals* as an illustration related to Tod's description of this ceremony, though the related caption tells us only that it was made by a "native artist" and

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<sup>345</sup> Topsfield, "Tod's Collection of Rajasthani Paintings."

<sup>346</sup> Topsfield thinks that none of these smaller portraits of Mewar's nobility were made by Ghasi. *Ibid.*, 23; Head and Royal Asiatic Society, *Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings, Engravings and Busts in the Collection of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 159.

does not specify details (Ill. 4.28, Ill. 4.29).<sup>347</sup> Seen against the pictorial context of Ghasi's affirmative presence within Tod's collections—though not within the *Annals*—the depiction of the anomalous figure of a man shown as climbing the tower in Ghasi's sketch of the elevation of the temple is rather intriguing (Ill. 4.14). Such a speculation cannot be substantiated, but it is rather enticing to interpret this figure as a self-portrait by Ghasi, of him climbing the temple tower to measure the curve of its lotus shaped molding, even though the depicted person carries a sword rather than an artist or draftsman's tools.

Nothing captures the disjunctiveness of the pictorial translations that are at play in Tod's history more fully than the impressive frontispiece that opens the original volume one of the *Annals* (Ill. 4.30). This engraving is entitled "*Maharana Bheem Sing, Prince of Oodipoor.*" It is labeled as 'drawn by Captain Waugh and engraved by E. Finden'. Bhim Singh is portrayed riding his horse and smoking his *hookah* as he embarks upon a journey (*sawāri*), accompanied by his entourage of courtiers who hold the fan with the striking sun emblem of the Mewar court. Tod's insertion of an engraving of Bhim Singh based on the painting of a native artist was not necessarily a unique act of initiating a mode of visual translation, but

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<sup>347</sup> Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajast'han, or the Central and Western Rajpoot States of India*, 1:582. This engraving is the next plate that is inserted within ten pages of the engraving featuring three columns from the temples at Chandravati where the caption notes Ghasi's name. For this engraving as well no professional artist's copy has been found within Tod's collections, thus suggesting that perhaps the engraver's proof was based on Ghasi's drawing. Head and Royal Asiatic Society, *Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings, Engravings and Busts in the Collection of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 160,111.



one does not necessarily come across large numbers of extant examples either.<sup>348</sup> This distinct depiction of Bhim Singh immediately reminds us of several portraits by Udaipur's court artists that sought to depict rulers within processional settings. One such engraving was based on a watercolor by a professional British artist (Ill.4.31), which *in turn* was drawn on as the basis of a portrait of Bhim Singh by Ghasi (Ill.4.1).<sup>349</sup> Both versions—the Udaipur portrait in gouache, and sepia watercolor—are a part of Tod's collections. The delicateness with which the faces and ground are rendered in this watercolor makes it highly unlikely that Waugh made the version rendered in Sepia. Rather this watercolor appears to be the work of a professional artist, perhaps the British artist Thomas Strothard, who worked with Edward Finden and created watercolor drawings for several engravings. In translating Ghasi's painting, the professional artist, for his part, elongates the bodies of most of the figures and attempts to give them a three-dimensional character with the use of shading and tinting and by adapting their postures to show bodies in movement (Ill. 4.1 (detail), Ill.

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<sup>348</sup> In another instance, a book published in 1800, on the siege of Srirangapatnam in Southern India the frontispiece is an engraving made by S.W. Reynolds of Tipoo Sultan. While the artist is not mentioned the caption explicitly cites that the original drawing was in the possession of the Marquis Wellesley. We see Tipoo Sultan depicted in a profile view gazing into a horizon filled with hints of smoke and dust that suggest the context of the siege of Tipoo's Srirangapatnam. It appears that the original artist may have drawn in detail his costume, jewelry, and accessories as the engraver has attempted to evoke a palpable sense of the profuseness and variety of textiles and ornamentation.

<sup>349</sup> Topsfield, "Tod's Collection of Rajasthani Paintings," 23.

4.31(detail)). He also transforms the landscape setting. He draws Bhim Singh and his entourage against a sparse background, unlike Ghasi, who attempted to create the ambiance of a moon lit sky with rolling, almost roaring monsoon clouds. Mewar's landscape of rugged earth, plants, and stones in green and gold is substituted for a tiny set of coconut trees and two human bodies or staffage in the distant background, the standard features of the picturesque landscapes from this time. This particular stylization of the northwestern India's landscape inserts Bhim Singh's procession in a very different time and space. The effect of suspension is further enhanced in Edward Finden's translation of the watercolor into an engraving. At a symbolic level, the translations at play are most strongly iterated in the British artist's and engraver's elimination of the golden halo that signals Bhim Singh's royal status within Ghasi's painting.

That Tod chose this engraving of Bhim Singh as the frontispiece of the *Annals* is metaphorical in multiple ways. Tod's use of Ghasi's painting as the basis for a frontispiece—without acknowledging him as the artist—could have been a decision that emerged in conversation with the publishers. The engraving gestures to travels and to an entourage in motion, which Tod describes in the *Annals*, but in the context of his own journey through Rajasthan. Ghasi's portraits of Tod traveling with his entourage, although larger, are very comparable in size to this portrait of Bhim Singh. Of course, using his own portrait as a

frontispiece would have been too self-aggrandizing for Tod. The pictorial translations embodied in this engraving most importantly suggest how Ghasi's agency remains but a shadow in the printed *Annals*. Ghasi emerges in whispers in some instances and is untraceable in several others.

Yet we shall see how, following Tod's departure from Rajasthan in 1822, Ghasi puts the vocabulary of architectural drawing that had Tod overlain with a narrative of decline to his own distinctive uses. Ultimately, it is not only the case that Tod used Ghasi's vision: Ghasi also used the ways of representing architecture that had currency within Tod's documentation project to make courtly portraits which praised the kingship, power, and devotional journeys of the Udaipur ruler Jawan Singh, successor to Bhim Singh.

#### ***4.4. Knowledge and Power: Ghasi's Travels and Artistic Practice at the Udaipur Court, 1820-1835***

This chapter opened with ramifying evidence from multiple images that showed how Ghasi circulated pictorial topoi and artistic skills in architectural representation across genres as he himself circulated across patronage circles and his paintings were circulating by and among various audiences. Let us turn now to key large-scale courtly paintings completed after Tod's departure, in order to examine how Ghasi and his circle of artists picture the

*bhāva* of a place for their courtly patrons. Among the court paintings made by Ghasi that we have already encountered, from the small, vertically-oriented portrait of Bhim Singh riding a horse that found its way into Tod's collections (and was adapted as an engraving into Tod's *Annals*), to the larger horizontally-oriented paintings that depict Bhim Singh meeting with Tod and depict Tod meeting with *yati* Gyanchandra. These paintings show how Ghasi cited the topoi of a procession (*sawāri*) on the move, certain aspects of his painting style, and his use of a composition likely drawn from the Udaipur painter Bakhta's picture of Bhim Singh's extensive procession to the temple site of Eklingji (Ill. 4.32).<sup>350</sup> Ghasi formulates his stylistic stamp (*chāp*) by the introduction of gold outlines on each oval cloud-like dab of olive green and black pigment that he includes to denote the grounds on which men, horses, and elephants march; this is the signature stylistic choice that scholars have used to connect several examples of Ghasi's paintings (including the work that depicts Tod and *yati* Gyanchandra riding on elephants (Ill. 4.1, 4.4, 4.9)).<sup>351</sup> To determine whether the topoi of *sawāris* played a conscious role in Ghasi's choices will require more research.<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>350</sup> Topsfield, *The City Palace Museum, Udaipur : Paintings of Mewar Court Life*, 65–67.

<sup>351</sup> Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 237.

<sup>352</sup> *Sawāris*—as processions that signified ideas of traveling from one place to another at the very best or movement across a landscape at the very least—is difficult to discern. Especially on instances when painters integrated depictions of a chorography of Udaipur with a procession, experimenting

After all, the above-noted paintings—often called equestrian portraits—also participate in a different and well-established pictorial genre in Udaipur court painting.<sup>353</sup> Even so, paintings by Ghasi that commemorate Jawan Singh’s pilgrimage journeys reveal how journeys undertaken by Ghasi with Tod and the Udaipur ruler Jawan Singh, may reflect on his artistic practices as they responded to distinct image-centric needs of his patrons and the attendant pictorial genres—especially the ways in which the painter depicts the feeling of a place c. 1830.

Two impressive paintings depict Jawan Singh’s visits to the Vishnupad temple at Gaya and another as-yet-unidentified temple complex. Both can be attributed to Ghasi and both are most likely commemorative in nature related to a long pilgrimage tour of Mathura, Vrindaban, Ayodhya, Allahabad, Benaras, and Gaya he undertook in 1833-34.<sup>354</sup> The inscription on the back of the painting depicting the Vishnupad temple suggests that it is a commemorative image; the scribe makes a note of Jawan Singh’s visit for *darshan* of Vishnu

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with either exaggerating or miniaturizing the scale of the procession vis-à-vis the scale of topography, the visualization of *sawāris* presents a rich avenue for further research.

<sup>353</sup> Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 71 Aitken also notes that “equestrian portraits always showed a ruler moving across the page with a bevy of attendants.”

<sup>354</sup> Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 246–249.

at Gaya on 23 January, 1834.<sup>355</sup> The artist centralizes the elevation of the temple shrine, and the picture is framed by a representation of the arched arcade that created a boundary for the temple courtyard (Ill.4.33 65 x 47.5 cm). In the miniaturized portrait of Jawan Singh worshipping with a priest and surrounded, in the central bay, by a group of courtiers on both sides, the king's haloed portrait is only nominally larger than the courtly nobles and laypersons, men, women and children, who surround him and who populate the temple complex. The painter's use of oblique lines that project outward from the planimetric view of the temple courtyard, on the left hand of the picture, recalls pictorial strategies adopted by Udaipur painters, as seen in chapter three, to depict the courtyards of the Jagnivas lake-palace and reinforce their interiority (Ill.3.12, 3.13). Here, by composing an entrance to the temple where it abuts the lower edge of the paper and is aligned along the central axis of the temple's elevation, a feeling of being inside the devotional precinct is attached to the image. Its boundary is marked from the outside, yet as we enter we are in space which feels open, its expanse suggested formally on the right hand side of the painting in the depiction of the grey ground extending in the opposite direction and the gaze of a lady dressed in yellow who looks in that direction as if to link the courtyard to spaces that the painter

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<sup>355</sup> Cimino, *Vita Di Corte Nel Rajasthan : Miniature Indiane Dal XVII Al XIX Secolo : [mostra]* Torino, 22 Marzo-22 Maggio 1985, Palazzo Reale, Torino, 111, 30 (v).

chose not to depict. The painter presents a select view of the temple complex and an act of devotion within a shrine that was likely of most importance to his patrons.

A second even larger painting demonstrates Ghasi's negotiation of a similar set of choices. Here Ghasi depicts Jawan Singh's visit to a larger temple complex (Ill. 4.2 approximately 140 x 95 cm).<sup>356</sup> The boundaries of the devotional precinct are set off in plan by the elevations of smaller shrines on the corners and by double-tier boundary walls with entrance gateways which run along the painting's bottom and top edges. The temples with two towers (*shikhara*) on either end and an open arcade hall with a lower ceiling in the center form the central focus. The horizontality of the façade of the main temple building is echoed in the painter's careful delineation of the two horizontal verandas with open arcades in two tiers that stack up along the length of the painting, and in his placement of two smaller temple towers at the lower register of the painting. The narrow strip of blue sky at the top edge of the paper, apart from such established conventions within Udaipur court painting, further urges us to connect the horizontal tiers as representing a progression of space from the main building to the arcade behind, and then on to a second layer of a boundary wall with an entrance and another arcade behind it. The miniature figure of Jawan Singh, depicted ten times, shows him, apart from its appearance in the

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<sup>356</sup> Painting is currently in the Mewar Royal Collection and it has not been possible to examine the painting unframed or access inscriptions.

central hall, next to multiple shrines and icons—he's in every corner of the temple complex and the painted picture. Our eyes pursue Jawan Singh's golden halo, white whisk, and red ceremonial umbrella, seeking to locate him amidst the architecture and the scores of people, and find him, in each case, accompanied by the same noble, as a figure who is painted in dark red robes. The painter's use of monochromatic hues enhances how architecture frames the royal portrait and enacts the king's devotion: in the painting discussed above, grey and blue tones denote arches of verandas and open buildings, in contrast to the white temple with its precise outlines; and, in the current painting, burnt sienna is used to depict the temple. A deep blue pigment marks the veranda-like spaces, a convention the painter applies in both paintings, linking the two uses with similarity in color palette. The painter's choice to use a shade of the burnt sienna that is a degree lighter than the deeper pigment he used to color the boundary walls speaks to the careful attention he paid to use of color, and to the formal strategies he applied as he pondered how he might evoke the feeling of the depicted devotional spaces. Most of the depicted persons, apart from the king and his courtly sidekick, wear white clothing. Their grouping, in concert with their miniature scale, exaggerates the gigantic expanse of the temple precinct. The visuality of each of these pictorial elements—form, scale, and color—embodies deliberate artistic choices and is forcefully integrated in the paintings. The details of architectural elements,



depicted with fine brushwork in one of the final layers of paint applied to the picture, surge to the front and meet our eyes as one among the many graphic qualities the two paintings present in their depiction of devotional place-worlds.

Earlier generations of Udaipur artists also visualized and commemorated royal visits to temples. One of the earliest Udaipur court paintings in the topographical genre, where the ‘Stipple Master’ renders the elevation profile of the temple *shikhara* in delicate outlines in *nim kalam* and highlights the divine icon of the four-faced Shiva lingam with the use of shading and gold pigment, was made within the first decade of the eighteenth century (Ill. 2.18). This painting, discussed in chapter two, depicts Amar Singh II at the Eklingji temple dedicated to the Shiva deity central to how the Mewar court formulated kingship myths that link its throne to divine authority. The painter chose to compose a full frontal view of the deity, which can be construed as a part-sectional view of the interior of the temple, made apparent by his depiction of the wall on the right hand side.<sup>357</sup> The boundaries of the devotional precinct are also drawn, though the inside-outside spatial relationship is set against the horizontal axis of the painting and is not in alignment with the vertical axis of the temple’s tower, as seen in Ghasi’s compositions. Observation of the details of the

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<sup>357</sup> Note that we may construe this vignette also as a part-sectional view combined with a planimetric view of the inner sanctum given that the steps leading to this space are depicted in plan format on the left hand side of Amar Singh II’s portrait.

Eklingji temple and employment of a topos of detail were at play then as they are at play now in Ghasi's picture's that engage with royal panegyrics. The pictures share a sense of playfulness, seen in the Stipple Master's rendering of the endearing monkeys that populate the roof of the temple and in Ghasi's rendering of white cows in various states of slumber. In vertically orienting the temples in his paintings along the same axis as the entrance doorways to the temple complex, however, Ghasi's paintings provide a different point of entry for the viewer, who may enter into the represented place in an imagined posture and approach which mimics the vignettes of depicted people who enter and exit at the two gateways depicted on the lower and upper edge of the painting. What Ghasi privileges here is the frontal efficacy of the representational format of an elevation and he aligns the boundary of the represented space and the boundary of the painting. Yet, there is no mere circulation of those precise elevations of temples he drew for Tod in his court paintings. The above-discussed unpublished drawing of an elevation of the Brahma temple at Chitor serves as good evidence for thinking in this direction (Ill. 4.23). Perhaps Ghasi came to value the representational format of an elevation and renderings of architectural detail in hybrid ways himself, and thus in such a work he is emulating both the court painters in the past and Tod's imaginary in the present.<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>358</sup> During my dissertation research, I was able to only glance at uncataloged large-scale drawings (in

Yet another Udaipur court painting which depicts Sangram Singh at the Eklingji temple site complicates the pictorial traditions that a painter like Ghasi may be citing and adapting even further (Ill.4.34).<sup>359</sup> In this case (c. 1725), Sangram Singh's painters convey the feeling of the devotional space via connecting it to a larger hilly landscape that includes portraits of his highness enjoying a feast with his companions (on the lower right hand side) and swimming in the water tank near the temple's. Nonetheless, the similarity of the vertical orientation of the temple complex within the painting is striking. The delineation of the elevation of the temple tower, located within the planimetric depiction of the boundary of the complex, and constituted by walls and smaller shrines, is clear (Ill.4.34(detail)). Yet we can see both a difference in emphasis on the singularity of the elevation format, and a difference in the painter's choices with regard to the conventions he might alter and/or combine. While the elevation format is privileged in the depiction of the main temple building, the painter chose to depict the three-dimensionality of smaller shrines and buildings and steps on the boundaries. What further stands apart is that here

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the collections of the Royal Asiatic Society Library) of temple elevations by Ghasi and details whose sizes echo the size of the large-scale temple paintings Ghasi made after Tod's departure. These promise to be fruitful avenue to further explore the above argument.

<sup>359</sup> Topsfield compares this painting to another painting depicting Sangram Singh's visit to temples at Nathadwara, which apparently came on the London art market in 1988. I am yet to trace this example. Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 150–151; I am grateful to Catherine Ralph Benkaim for sharing an image of the painting depicting Sangram Singh at Eklingji.

Ghasi seems to have chosen purposefully to employ drawings of temple elevations as a compositional device in the framing of the entire painting, and thereby to lend the temple and the embedded ruler's portrait a quality of iconicity. Details like the depiction of systematically-lined earthen lamps and symmetrical garlands that hang from the Vishnupad temple lend a further uniformity to the image. Ghasi's delineation of architecture, which is celebrated in discussions of Udaipur court painting as the feature by which his "hand is revealed," and which is also denigrated as evidence of the "stiffness" it brings to his compositions—a characteristic which is attributed to the "formal architectural settings in which he had become well-versed in his days as Tod's draftsmen"—is thus in no case a simple transfer of forms, genres, or skills.<sup>360</sup> The pictorial precedents found in Udaipur court painting, particularly pictures of devotional landscapes, demonstrate how when Ghasi provided Tod with elevation drawings of temples, he was adapting his artistic skills and his knowledge of a corpus of Udaipur court painting. These same pictorial precedents contradict the view that reiterates Ghasi as receiving training in architectural drafting in a unidirectional way from Tod. In circulating back to the Udaipur court, in traveling with Jawan Singh, and in picturing the Udaipur king's devotional journeys, Ghasi *both* cites from *within* court painting traditions and cites from *within* the visuality of the

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<sup>360</sup> Ibid., 245–247.

individually-framed vertical drawings of temple elevations that he prepared for Tod. His picturing of devotional place-worlds is thus in any case a complex translation *between* idioms, one which mediates genres, styles, conventions, and architectural knowledge across Ghasi's own travels and training.

What work did Ghasi's temple paintings do for courtly audiences as they imagined a vision of Jawan Singh as attached to wider devotional and pilgrimage networks, and thus not only attached to the dynastic shrine at Eklingji or the city of Udaipur? In order to explore possible answers, we must turn to a painting that depicts the Indo-British *darbar* held at Ajmer in 1832, and to how the king and his nobility would be visually presented at this diplomatic event, a matter very likely to be a central concern of Jawan Singh's court (Ill.4.35).<sup>361</sup> This picture is a crucial case in Ghasi's critical application of his experiments in "architectural framing." But before we attend to it, let us briefly understand the political concerns that led to the holding of British India's first imperial *darbar* at Ajmer, which in turn led to palpable changes in territoriality and nature of British control in northwestern India.

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<sup>361</sup> This painting formerly belonged to the Erhenfeld Collection and now is at the Brooklyn Museum of Art (Accession no. 2002.34). Bautze, *Interaction of Cultures : Indian and Western Painting, 1780-1910: The Ehrenfeld Collection*, 158–163.

Tod's favoritism towards Mewar and his growing sphere of influence and authority in Rajputana, especially Mewar, was a bone of contention between him and his immediate superior Sir David Ochterlony, then Resident in-charge of Rajputana.<sup>362</sup> Thus, after Tod's departure, Ochterlony applauded Political Agent Captain Alexander Cobbe for reducing Mewar court's debts and getting its finances in shape.<sup>363</sup> In his letters to Ochterlony and others, Cobbe often expressed his differences with Tod's approach, especially in terms of the funds for personal and state expenditure he allocated to the Udaipur rulers. Following Ochterlony, the dynamics between Charles Metcalfe, new Delhi Resident (1825-1831), and Cobbe were equally fraught on the question of "British interference" and the "independent position of the Mewar Maharana in his State," an issue linked in complex ways to the amount of annual tribute paid by Mewar to the British Government. Michael Fisher, in tracing the changing relationship between the East India Company and Indian courts in this time period, has shown that serving the "dual role" of an agent and symbol of British

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<sup>362</sup> Freitag, *Serving Empire, Serving Nation : James Tod and the Rajputs of Rajasthan*, 38.

<sup>363</sup> Tod departed for Europe in June 1822 and handed over his responsibilities to Assistant-Agent Patrick Waugh. Cobbe took charge from Patrick Waugh on 15 April 1823, who was a Political Agent for about one year after Tod departed. In year of 1826 for a brief period Captain J. Sutherland was the officiating agent. Vashishtha, *Rajputana Agency, 1832-1858 : a Study of British Relations with the States of Rajputana During the Period with Special Emphasis on the Role of Rajputana Agency*, 15-40. I borrow heavily on Vashishtha's work on the constitution of the Rajputana Agency in this paragraph; British Library, Mss Eur F144/73 1927.

indirect rule before 1858 was never easy for British residents.<sup>364</sup> He writes that while earlier residents could be seen as “[conforming] to Indian court traditions, [by] the 1820s, they sought to reshape them.”<sup>365</sup> In fact, Metcalfe during his tenure implemented the rule that decisions regarding the authority of each princely state in Rajputana must be made in accordance with 1818 treaties established by Tod and not on a random case to case basis. However, the British in Delhi continually faced a challenge in asserting their authority over distant princely states and individual colonial agents. Thus, in part, both the Udaipur and Jaipur Agencies were abolished by October 14, 1830 (Both were merged with the Ajmer residency.) The British Government’s inability to arbitrate between the various Rajput courts when they were in conflict—its inability to assert its “paramount” role (the key tenet in the establishment of indirect British rule in princely India at that time<sup>366</sup>)—led Lord William Bentinck, Governor General at Delhi, to take a tour of Rajputana. Upon Bentinck’s

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<sup>364</sup> Fisher, “The Resident in Court Ritual, 1764-1858.”

<sup>365</sup> *Ibid.*, 452.

<sup>366</sup> British ruled the princely states through the special form of indirect rule - paramountcy. Rudolphs summarize paramountcy as follows, “Vagueness concerning the limits of power is likely to be helpful to those who exercise it. The British Government studiously avoided precision in defining paramountcy, the exercise of power over princely states. Its meaning derived from a wide variety of treaties concluded with different princes and a system of case law and precedent whose interpretation lay with the paramount power. The Butler Commission concisely summarized the deliberate ambiguity of paramountcy in 1928 when, in response to a request from the princes to define the concept, it merely stated: “Paramountcy must remain paramount.” Rudolph and Rudolph, “Rajputana Under British Paramountcy,” 139.

arrival in Ajmer on Jan 18, 1832, he commenced a month-long durbar and met with the various Rajput princes. On February 24, 1832, Bentinck instituted the Rajputana Agency, constituted by all the individual princely states, appointing Lieutenant Colonel A. Lockett, the superintendent and Political Agent at Ajmer, as its first “Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana.”

In the minds of Rajput kings and their courtly audiences, of course, Ajmer, a key pilgrimage town from the time of Mughal emperor Akbar, was centrally associated with the Mughals and the political and cultural contexts in which the Mughals and the Rajputs interacted during various Mughal durbars held there. Bentinck’s declaration of the Rajputana Agency coincided with Ajmer’s elevation to the status of a British territory while the other parts of Rajputana were still governed under “indirect” British rule. Thus by holding of the Ajmer durbar, Governor General Bentinck had put himself at the helm of the princely states—in terms of territoriality and ceremonial conduct within the space of the durbar, but also in terms of the history of the Mughals and their imperial relations with the Rajput courts. Tod’s efforts at political negotiations, land surveys, and documentation of princely genealogies, of course, had contributed not only to the eventual publication of the region’s most definitive history, but also to the proclamation of indirect British rule in



northwestern India in 1818, and, ultimately, to the holding of the Indo-British *darbar* in 1832 at Ajmer.

It appears that Ghasi traveled with Jawan Singh and his entourage from Udaipur to Ajmer. The photographs of later nineteenth century Indo-British coronation *darbars* at Delhi display how the visuality of processions and dress was employed by the British Officers and Indian Princes to assert their powers during the post-1858 era of the British Raj. Scholars have assessed the intertwined nature of photography and aesthetics in the establishment of imperial authority to understand claims of legitimacy, limits of visual authority, and strains of colonial ambivalence and mimicry.<sup>367</sup> Ghasi's large-scale composition of the *darbar*, however, marks the visualization of the emergent colonial state space within the painted medium. His painting is one of the first visual representations we have of an Indo-British *darbar* held in the subcontinent at Ajmer, far from Delhi.<sup>368</sup> In his

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<sup>367</sup> See essays in edited volume, Codell, *Power and Resistance*.

<sup>368</sup> That the first British *darbar* of this political importance was held in Ajmer and not in Delhi is of great importance as well for considering the cache of the symbolic capital of this Mughal town in the early nineteenth century for the British. In the future I will explore the 1832 *Darbar* as a separate project to think about diplomatic events and cross-cultural encounters in the early nineteenth century. This project will comprehensively examine the diplomatic correspondence on the event (a source that I briefly explore below), paintings made by other court artists apart from Ghasi who traveled to Ajmer, and writing of French traveler Victor Jacquemont who wrote an eye-witness account.; We know that painters traveled with Maharao Ram Singh of Kota as well to this *darbar* and they also made large paintings depicting the meeting of the Kota king with Bentinck. Bautze's primary thrust in this article is to relate the painters' depiction to later copies of the

painting Ghasi has depicted with care the seated officials on both sides, along with the bounteous gifts presented to Colonel Bentinck and his group (Ill.4.35 (detail)).<sup>369</sup> The artist has centralized the portraits of both the Udaipur ruler and the governor-general. These dignitaries' figures are depicted as equals, yet the painter emphasizes Jawan Singh's kingly status with a green halo—an unmistakable visual code that sets their status and authority apart for regional audiences. Ghasi has employed the red tents (*qanat*) to create an architectural frame for their depiction, which is so similar to temple compositions we have seen. The tent walls and their entrances are similar to the double-tier of boundary walls of Ghasi's picturing of temples, and the pyramid form of the central tent canopy under which the king and the Governor-General sit is akin to the temple towers. The combination of planimetric and elevation view is most distinctly evoked in the painter's picturing of horses in multiple standing postures on the upper edge of the painting. In a section that seeks to present the antechamber between the two entrances to the durbar, we see a planar view of horses fitted within individual cells. The peripatetic nature of durbars and camps held by

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painting made as murals in the Kota palace. He also relates the painting with description of the event in later histories and with the contemporaneous writing by French traveler Victor Jacquemont. Bautze, "The Ajmer Darbar of 1832 and Kota Painting."

<sup>369</sup> The gifts are also carefully rendered by the Kota artist. Ibid., 80–82; Paintings, attributed to Ghasi (dated to c. 1826), depicting Jawan Singh's father Bhim Singh in a durbar setting with British official Charles Metcalf and his entourage, within Udaipur's interior spaces of Udaipur's palaces also set a precedence for Ghasi's Ajmer durbar painting. Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 237.

the Mughal and Rajput kings had been the subject of several earlier court paintings at Udaipur and beyond. An Udaipur court painting, briefly discussed in chapter three, is a case in point. This work depicts the diplomatic meeting of Udaipur ruler Sangram Singh and Jaipur ruler Jai Singh in a camp setting (Ill.3.9). Sangram Singh's court painter also employed red tents to depict the thresholds that lead to the inner space of durbar inhabited by the kings. He, too, placed the meeting in the center of the composition and emphasized the ceremonial objects placed in front of the kings. The setting inside is more intimate compared to the picture presented of the 1832 Ajmer durbar. However, outside the boundaries of the tent, the painter conveys a very palpable sense of a broader landscape, in pictorial elements that implied itinerancy.

Ghasi's composition lays claim to the complete pictorial plane. Gone is the essential itinerant nature of diplomatic meetings held in durbars. A preliminary drawing for the 1832 Ajmer durbar painting, almost the same size, which was most likely completed on site by Ghasi or by one of the artist-assistants who might have accompanied him, shows that the drafted composition of the tent was part of the artist's original conception of this picture (Ill.4.36). The quality of line here suggests that the sketch itself was quickly drawn, but also that the artist could draw in several ways, and this particular choice gave currency to the

drafted line for producing finished paintings at the court. In this painting, Ghasi's choices give the durbar a kind of stability.

Reams of diplomatic correspondence records how the East India Company and the Udaipur court dwelled on the concern of the Udaipur court regarding "how they would be seen in the durbar?" The Udaipur court records on this correspondence, written by a court official munshi Sher Singh Mehta, in the regional dialect of Hindi, titled, "memory/record of the instructions on general protocols/behavior for the meeting (*bartāva sādā tarīko baiṭhak kī yāda*)" notes the instructions in the format of questions (*sawāla*) and answers (*jawāba*).<sup>370</sup> The first page of the document states that a copy (*nakala*) was made by munshi Chimanlalji which most likely refers to the English version of this document authored by a person of the same name. This document, titled: "Propositions submitted for the information of the Right Honorable The Governor General by Cheemane Lal Moafmed(?) on the part of the Maha Rana's proceeding to Ajmere for the purpose of meeting the Governor General," is part of the political correspondence from 1832 in the British records.<sup>371</sup> Both documents focus on the layout of the durbar and the disposition of Udaipur court officers. Sher Singh Mehta, for example, insists on details of protocol concerning how

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<sup>370</sup> Maharana Mewar Charitable Foundation, Udaipur, MS 2692. I am grateful to Ms. Seema, archivist who corrected my transcriptions and helped me in reading this document.

<sup>371</sup> National Archives of India, New Delhi, Political Correspondence, 1832, 2<sup>nd</sup> April No. 29.

Jawan Singh must be received by British officers. Most importantly, the question-answer exchange on seating instructions is pertinent to the question of what image of the Udaipur king would the durbar create? The Udaipur court, for its part, insists that European chairs must be provided for the Governor General and Jawan Singh. Sher Singh Mehta, however, insists that “the rule in the Rana’s durbar is that no Sirdar is allowed to sit on equal footing. By sitting on chairs, the dignity of the Hazoor and Sirdars are rendered equal, for which reason sitting upon chairs is on no account proper.” In the Mewari version, the words used for the notion of “rendered equal” are “*maharāna sāhiba kī aura unkī barābarī nahī dikhegī,*” that is, the equality of the Udaipur ruler and his sardars (or thakurs/ court nobles) will *not be seen* if chairs are used only for Jawan Singh and the Governor-General. The response from Bentinck’s office to this request states,

a separate elevated seat will be prepared for His Lordship and the Maharana. The Gentlemen of His Lordship Suite and the Sirdars, who may attend with the Maharana will sit in chairs on the right and left. By the arrangement the dignity of the Maharana will be preserved from the appearance of being reduced to at par with that of his Sirdars but it is the custom of the Governor General’s durbar that all who are entitled to sit shall have chairs.

This kind of anxiety about how the durbar would be visually perceived may have served as part of the impetus for Ghasi’s travels with the royal party to Ajmer, and thus for his

detailed visualization of the durbar in a cloth painting of 189 by 128 cm.<sup>372</sup> The painting shows that ultimately the Governor-General Bentinck's custom was reinstated—everyone sat on chairs. Ghasi depicts the Udaipur Maharana and British Governor-General sitting on a longer throne like seat, sharing their ceremonial seat in the durbar. Yet another painting depicting a meeting of the Udaipur ruler Jawan Singh and the Jaipur ruler Jai Singh in their own tent precincts at Ajmer while Bentinck was holding his month-long durbar, made by a Jaipur artist, depicts adherence to the custom of seating sardars on the floor, and seating their rulers against cushions on the carpet (Ill.4.37).<sup>373</sup> It is striking that the artist (which certainly does not appear to be Ghasi as the portrait of Jawan Singh is rendered in a very different style than the paintings seen thus far) in this case also aligns the boundaries of the tent with the boundaries of the painting. The floral pattern used to depict the tent was typically associated with Jaipur textiles at this time, which forcefully attaches the painting to Jaipur and the artist's picturing of the durbar to the feeling of the Jaipur's temporary domain established at Ajmer for the 1832 diplomatic meetings. Even so, both paintings

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<sup>372</sup> In writing about Jacquemont's impression of the meeting between Jawan Singh and Governor General Bentinck, Bautze also makes note of the French traveler's sense that the Udaipur ruler was unhappy with his meeting at the durbar as etiquette protocols had been violated. Bautze, *Interaction of Cultures : Indian and Western Painting, 1780-1910: The Ehrenfeld Collection*, 160–161.

<sup>373</sup> Current location unknown, however scholars think that at least two copies of the same painting exist. Bautze, "The Ajmer Darbar of 1832 and Kota Painting," 71.

embody the hierarchical nature of the gathering, so familiar from previously established codes of Mughal and Rajput painting. Those who were the closest to the king and most powerful in court were always depicted nearest to the king's body.

It is useful to recall that Ghasi's more religiously-themed paintings, in which he reinvented the use of courtly portraits within depictions of large-scale temples, were made within two years of the 1832 durbar. His exploitation of this new idiom seems to assert the authority of Udaipur rulers—in a period of waning power—by drawing upon a lexicon of religious-pilgrimage networks instead of political ones. Political correspondence between the Udaipur court and British officials at Delhi and Ajmer further suggests that Jawan Singh could have commissioned these paintings as a way to assert his power. To align the royal image with important temples and pilgrimage journeys beyond Udaipur could be understood as a deliberate, even calculated strategy—rather than as evidence of Jawan Singh's lack of interest in politics at the Udaipur court.<sup>374</sup> Jawan Singh's pilgrimage journeys were the subject of several diplomatic letters exchanged between Governor General Bentinck and Agent Lieutenant Colonel A. Lockett.<sup>375</sup> In relation to the debt of the Udaipur court and tributes paid to the British Government, discussed above, Lockett notes,

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<sup>374</sup> Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 247.

<sup>375</sup> National Archives of India, New Delhi, Political Correspondence, February 1832, No. 103

“It is the contemplation of the Rana Sahib to proceed on a pilgrimage to Giayee and Kasejee (Gya and Benares) the celebrated resorts of Hindoos for the purpose of offering family prayers in behalf of his deceased father Bheem Sing in this intention, the Rana has come to a determination to set out about the time of the approaching Duseera. The affairs of the Raja are in such a low and embarrassed state that the debt due to the Sahooars alone amount to 7 or 8 Lacs of Rupess. It is therefore hoped as the liquidation of Debt is an affair of honor that through the complacency of His Lordship’s arrangements the same will be discharged. It would be a bec[k]oning and praiseworthy act on the part of the Governor General and highly gratifying to the Maha Rana”

Since Lockett does not receive any response to the above proposition, he proposes yet again, perhaps on the urging of Jawan Singh, that the “Rana’s pilgrimage is absolutely indispensable.”<sup>376</sup> Governor General Bentinck responds that while a “qualified British Officer will be appointed to accompany him,” no support of funds could be given as that was the ruler’s own responsibility. Jawan Singh’s father Bhim Singh had died in 1828. It is possible that his request for funds to make a pilgrimage journey in February 1832, after the assembly at the Ajmer durbar, relates to his father’s death. It is equally likely that a pilgrimage journey would offer Jawan Singh opportunities to establish alternate theo-political alliances. In chapter five we will see how Jawan Singh, immediately after the abolition of the independent Udaipur agency in October 1830, attempted to the establish a similar theo-political alliance with the pilgrimage networks of Jain communities: an Udaipur painter in

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<sup>376</sup> National Archives of India, New Delhi, Political Correspondence, February 1832, No. 103



this case who creates a vision of Udaipur as charismatic place to entice powerful religious leaders to visit the city imagines that such an alliance would set up alternate domain of authority in Udaipur, practically in the shadow of the residence of Captain Alexander Cobbe, the British colonial agent for Mewar, who was based in Udaipur. Jawan Singh finally undertakes the pilgrimage journeys to Gaya, Kashi, Banaras, and Mathura in 1834-1835, and paintings commissioned by him attach his royal portrait to the temples and devotional place-worlds beyond Udaipur. Seen against such diplomatic exchanges, and the explicit concern of the Udaipur court regarding how Jawan Singh would “look” at the 1832 Ajmer durbar, the large-scale temple paintings must be read as generating a much-needed visual image of Jawan Singh, not simply as mere commemorations or reflections on “real events.” In his picturing Ghasi forcefully employs the *bhāva* of devotional place-worlds to literally and metaphorically enlarge and praise Jawan Singh’s kingship and his sphere of authority. His paintings created effective visions of his king’s power, ones that responded to the need of the hour.

In depicting Bhim Singh in the early nineteenth century, Udaipur artist Chokha drew upon images of the blue-God Krishna with Radha as idealized lovers to portray the king (Ill.4.38, 4.39).<sup>377</sup> In such paintings, the ruler’s corporeality and sexuality were praised

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<sup>377</sup> Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting* chapter five.

to imply their relationship to attributes of ideal kingship. Ghasi's experiments also recall Debra Diamond's research on paintings by Jodhpur's court artists in c. 1810, works that combined conventions of devotional pictures, pilgrimage maps, and town plans in responding to new theo-political alliances and new image-viewing modalities (Ill.1.4).<sup>378</sup>

Ghasi, for his part, turned to devotional spaces—rather than the bodies of Gods—to re-imagine court space and portraits. Yet while he miniaturized the royal portrait and bodily presence of the king, his depiction of the architecture of temples centralized his king, imbued him with stability, and praised the ritual and political practices that constituted his rule in the 1830s. Several small-sized paintings of Jawan Singh portrayed him as performing devotional acts, and, yet, another large-scale painting, attributed to Ghasi, similar in size and composition to Ghasi's 1832 Ajmer durbar painting and other temple paintings, pictures Jawan Singh within a devotional assembly at a Vaishnava recitation in the Udaipur palace courtyard of the Shivprasana Amar Vilas Mahal (Ill.4.40).<sup>379</sup> Topsfield brings to attention

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<sup>378</sup>Diamond, "The Cartography of Power: Mapping Genres in Jodhpur Painting."

<sup>379</sup> Two other paintings, which can be confidently attributed to Ghasi and his circle of artists, beyond the scope of the current chapter, will be key for future research. First, depicts Jawan Singh in a large painting on cloth, measuring 213 x 318 cm and currently dated to c. 1830, visiting a temple and holding a durbar in its vicinity. This picturing of a devotional and political space is surrounded by a vision of hills and forest landscape on all the four sides where the king is also seen hunting on multiple occasions. This painting is in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (1993.734). See, Brand, National Gallery of Australia, and National Gallery of Victoria, *The Vision of Kings*, 129. I am grateful to Carol Cains for bringing this painting to my attention and assisting in

that this painting most likely commemorates a week-long recitation of the *Bhagavat Puran* that was held in 1835, nearly a year after Jawan Singh completed his pilgrimage journeys.<sup>380</sup> Almost all earlier depictions focus on the interiority of this courtly space; however, when this work is compared to an earlier painting closest to its time, one depicting Udaipur ruler Ari Singh as he offers prayers to a Shiva *lingam* (non-anthropomorphic icon of Shiva), we see that the painter Shambu is most interested in exploring one-point perspectival vision and shadows of people and trees, elements not seen in other paintings that depict this courtyard (Ill.4.41).<sup>381</sup> Play with light in this fashion had not been taken up in any other Udaipur court paintings known thus far, perhaps indicating that visual interest was not what enticed Udaipur artists. Ghasi rather models his painting of Jawan Singh enacting his devotional ethos in this courtyard upon his own earlier temple paintings. So doing, he creates a large-scale vertical painting in which the nested squares of courtly audience, the

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arranging a brief examination of this work. Another painting, currently in a private collection in Zurich, depicts Bhim Singh in a procession that marches to the Sitla Mata temple in Udaipur. Currently dated to c. 1820-25 and measuring 52.5 x 81 cm, this painting will allow for examining Ghasi's approach to picturing the palaces and urban environs of Udaipur, yet again in association with a devotional procession. I am grateful to Dr Leng Tan for sharing a reproduction of this painting. See, Ill. 5.50. Spink, *The Sublime Image: Indian & Persian Miniatures, An Exhibition for Sale Monday 13th October to Friday 14th November 1997*, 11.

<sup>380</sup> Topsfield, *The City Palace Museum, Udaipur : Paintings of Mewar Court Life*, 81, footnote 2.

<sup>381</sup> Freer and Arthur M. Sackler Galleries of Art, Smithsonian Institution (Accession no. F11986.7). Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur : Art Under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, 207.

depicted courtyard, the planimetric view of the terrace, the pavilions, and the drafted nature of the drawing—all together reinforce the centrality of the miniaturized royal portrait. Here is the evidence of precisely how Ghasi and his circle of artists expanded the size of paintings, especially when compared to pictures that feature Bhim Singh. This expansion in size occurred first, as seen in chapter two, within Udaipur ruler Amar Singh II's workshop at the beginning of the eighteenth century, as artists forged the genre of large-scale topographical paintings which combined portraiture with depictions of the *bhāva* of a place, especially that of Udaipur city, its topographical environs, and its lake-palaces. Within several vertically-oriented paintings approximately one meter in width and a one meter and half in height, More than a century later, Ghasi visualizes the ruler, Jawan Singh, in association with the *bhāva* of visiting temples, undertaking pilgrimages, and holding of devotional assemblies within palatial courtyards.

While a focus on Ghasi's style of painting—as his preference for fine outlines—is useful in tracing the painter's circulation, an exclusive focus that looks at Ghasi's paintings in terms of characterizing his drawing conceals the painter's picture-making practices. It is in tracing Ghasi's astute use of formal strategies and color that we begin to see how he reinvents pictorial idioms or sub-genres and gain a fuller understanding of what may be

constituted as the painter's style.<sup>382</sup> We must bear in mind that the three key paintings discussed in this section are attributed to Ghasi and not ascribed to him. Paintings bearing Ghasi's name are few and far between. Until future research on painting inscriptions or court documents reveals more clues, connections between the paintings made by Ghasi and his circle of artists for the Udaipur court and the drawings Ghasi made for Tod can be mined for the purpose of attributions (albeit tentative), and, even more productively for thinking about artistic agency and the contemporaneity of distinct pictorial concerns.

In the forthcoming book, *Visual Time: The Image in History*, Keith Moxey critiques a Hegelian notion of time that still dictates the questions art historians ask of images, specifically "non-Euro-American works," that share time, yet are seen as stuck in different bounded periods of time (and space).<sup>383</sup> Moxey instead proposes that we think about contemporaneity as a temporal framework, defined as follows:

If contemporaneity is conceived as a temporal framework in which many non-synchronous forms of time jostle against one another, only the art of those times and places will be privileged that corresponds with dominant ideological paradigms.

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<sup>382</sup> Aitken speaks to the notion of a genre-style in Rajput painting based on how paintings were grouped within inventories in order to gain a better understanding of contemporaneous connoisseurs understanding of style in historical time. Thus she sees style and genre as closely related.

<sup>383</sup> Moxey writes, "Only when non-Euro-American works either manifest interests that parallel those working at the center, or more interestingly, when the periphery is a source of inspiration, that "cross-overs" are possible." Moxey, *Visual Time*, not numbered.

Such are the mechanisms that ensure the heirarchization of the events (histories) of certain locations above others. Unlike modernity, contemporaneity is both multiple and not multiple at the same time. Dominant cultures export and disseminate such temporal structures...[the] time that matters, that on which the artistic canon depends, has always favored the cultures of the powerful.<sup>384</sup>

Ghasi appears to have become an adept traveler—crisscrossing cultural-political-aesthetic domains as he criss-crossed northwestern India and beyond with both of his patrons. The painter was part of groups that encountered and imagined temples in different ways, as monuments from a historical past and as devotional places that enabled pilgrimage practices. He was also part of groups that were negotiating political power from two distinct, yet closely-enmeshed spaces. If, in Moxey's words, "synchrony, the contemporaneity of aesthetic experience, outweighs diachrony, the location of that experience in a historical continuum," then Ghasi's works suggest not artistic decline in Udaipur painting, but rather artistic agency. Ghasi's works mediate worlds, and the painter's artistic practice refracts in layered ways—rather than reflects—his embodied experience of multiple political interests and learning from multiple aesthetic and knowledge traditions. His pictures uses of hybrid idioms make statements of power for Udaipur king Jawan Singh. Whether the Udaipur king saw pilgrimage journeys and devotional recitations as acts of idealized kingship, as an escape to another world and

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<sup>384</sup> Ibid.

another place outside of Udaipur and its politics, or as a way to forge connections with broader devotional worlds and to re-establish his authority through alternate networks outside of British political circles, Ghasi and his circle of painters certainly saw devotional places and events as pictorial topoi within which to re-imagine the intersection between place-making and power-making at Udaipur.

The place-worlds Ghasi imagined and drew circulated among audiences who saw them as pictures of civilizational decline and as pictures of royal praise in the early part of the nineteenth century. Ghasi's pictorial translations of architectural drawing in two genres—engravings, published in the *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, and circulated globally as a book of authoritative history, and large-scale paintings which were likely periodically held up and shown to courtly audiences at Udaipur—argue for the distinctness of the epistemic meaning his pictures make.

## Chapter 5

### PRAISING PLACES/PORTRAYING TERRITORIES: UDAIPUR IN JAIN PAINTED INVITATION LETTERS

#### 5.1. *Circulating Pictures, Letters, and People*

In 1830, the ruler of Udaipur and a group of regional merchants jointly sent a signed painted scroll, 72 foot long and 11 inches wide, as an invitation letter, a *vijñaptipatra*, to the eminent monk of the Jain religious community, Śri Jinharsh Suri (Ill. 5.1). The merchants and Udaipur ruler requested that Jinharsh Suri spend the next monsoon season in their vibrant city. An unnamed artist, most likely hailing from the city of Udaipur and knowledgeable of the pictorial style practiced by the city's court artists, creatively mapped a principal street of Udaipur, painting the important palaces, temples, and bazaars (Ill. 5.2). The local artist depicted the bustling mercantile and urban space of the city and prolifically labeled different spatial clusters of the bazaar—the areas occupied by dyers, arms makers, utensil sellers, cloth sellers, flower sellers, and moneylenders (Ill. 5.3). Interspersed among the shops, the artist mapped several religious precincts along this central street, ranging from temples devoted to multiple deities, mosques, and Sufi shrines. He further painted an elaborate procession in the center of the scroll, comprising the Udaipur ruler Jawan Singh as well as the British Colonial Agent Alexander Cobbe, creating an unusual and innovative



dual-axis along which a viewer constantly negotiates to see and understand this scroll (Ill. 5.4, 5.5). In depicting the street and scenes with such realistic detail, the artist departed from the typical metaphorical reference to bazaars, temples, and regional courts as seen within earlier *vijñaptipatra* depicting various cities. He also purposefully adapted vignettes of the city from court painting within the painted scroll, giving broader audiences exposure to this form of picturing of the city.

A *vijñaptipatra* was made in order to encourage and facilitate travels by circulating the urban imaginary of a city as a thriving place—politically, culturally, religiously, and economically. Prominent merchants of the local Jain community hoped to entice eminent Jain monks to spend the next monsoon season (*chaumāsā*) in their town. The scribes, pundits Rukabhdas and Kushalchand, who wrote the 4-foot long invitation letter on the other end of the scroll, reveal this desire in the 1830 *vijñaptipatra*. The last three-foot section of the scroll preserves the signatures in different handwritings of more than twenty-five prominent merchants of the city of Udaipur (Ill. 5.6). The attached letter employs poetic renditions in Sanskrit and regional dialects of Gujarati and Rajasthani to eulogize the invited monk. The letter ends by emphasizing that the devotees, residents, and the Udaipur ruler were eager to welcome the eminent monk.

How was this painted invitation letter transmitted? Interestingly, the scribes apologized for the delay in sending the “painted letter (*chitralkh*),” as one of the merchants was away and his secretary (*munshi*) was on leave. They also noted that it was being sent through the Udaipur ruler’s messenger (*harkārā*). The Jain monk Jinharsh Suri was most likely residing in Bikaner when this invitation letter was sent. On the verso side of the rolled up scroll we have the evidence of a rubbed inscription that states an address in Bikaner. This gives a clue as to how the messenger carried the rolled scroll, suggesting that when the scroll was unrolled, it first presented to its audience the written letter rather than the painted letter. This scroll today belongs to the private archive of the Nahata family, which was one of the most important mercantile families in Bikaner in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.<sup>385</sup>

This story of the purpose and the arrival of the scroll raises another critical question: What happened after the scroll was received? If the aim of the makers of the scroll

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<sup>385</sup> It is unclear if Agarchand Nahata acquired this scroll at a later date or if this scroll was passed into the family collection from the time Jinharsh Suri resided in Bikaner in the 1830s. It is possible to speculate that given the social status of the Nahata merchants at that time, the esteemed monk was being hosted in Bikaner by the erstwhile Nahata family. Agarchand Nahata is very well known to scholars of Jain history, both for his broad ranging scholarship as well as for his key role in establishing the library and archive, Agarchand Nahata Jain Granthalaya in his family home at Bikaner. I am grateful to the members of the current Nahata family residing in Bikaner, especially Mr. and Mrs. Vijaychand Nahata, and the Librarian Mr. Chopra for allowing me to study this *vijñaptipatra* in detail. Susan Gole included a small photograph of this scroll in her survey on Indian Maps and Plans, which provided the basis for my preliminary research interest in *vijñaptipatras* as a pictorial genre. See, Gole, *Indian Maps and Plans: From Earliest Times to the Advent of European Surveys*.

was to praise Udaipur in order to present it as a charismatic and eminently attractive place (worthy of a visit), did the monk arrive and in effect bring change and prosperity that is projected in the pictures and the letter? We cannot answer this question in any simple way. What is interesting and instructive is that the artist of the scroll does not leave this question for the future. Instead, he incorporates his vision of Udaipur's future—as a charismatic landscape that would become even more ideal upon the Jain monk's arrival. The end of the painted part of the scroll depicts the assembly to be held by the invited leader Jinharsh Suri (Ill. 5.7). A group of elites, palanquins, and a troop of soldiers are depicted waiting upon the monk's durbar. So the artist imagined that this *vijñaptipatra* would be effective, its objective realized by the monk's arrival.

Here I am trying to suggest the need for a multifaceted reading of the *vijñaptipatra* genre. Art historians have not considered the extent to which these are visual but also profoundly social, material, and political objects that moved through space and sometimes produced transformative outcomes. We miss most of the meaning of this elaborate object if we fail to consider who commissioned it, how it was sent, what might have happened after it was received, and how the scroll's power to effect change is embedded in complex pictorial ways within the object itself. To consider such an artifact simply as an example of a Jain invitation letter or as an example of a scroll depicting how Indian painting was

practiced on the margins of court workshops in the early nineteenth century would obscure the sophisticated ways in which its patrons and makers have addressed artistic practice, modes of place-making, and the crafting of historical memory in this time period. Artists and literati, like the ones who created this scroll and offered their perspectives within such visually complex Jain cultural formations have frequently been sidelined, both by scholars who would relegate them to the margins of a Rajput, Brahmanical, or Persianate dominated historiography and by those who tend to treat the Jains as an insular community.

In this chapter, I argue that this 1830 painted invitation letter emphatically presents itself as an object that embodies multiple levels of circulation. The makers allude to objects and audiences that circulated within regional mercantile and courtly networks and within the European polity in India in the early nineteenth century, thereby enabling us to understand the creation and reception of art and history within these various domains. Scholars have utilized circulation as the conceptual framework for analyzing the flow of people and exchange of ideas within spaces of encounters, for example between Europeans and Indians in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, because the concept of circulation allows agency to work in either direction.<sup>386</sup> On the one hand, this lens of circulation enables

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<sup>386</sup> Markovits, Pouchepadass, and Subrahmanyam, *Society and Circulation: Mobile People and Itinerant Cultures in South Asia, 1750-1950*. See discussion in chapter one, 1.4. A recent edited volume draws our attention to the mobility and circulation of cultural forms, epistemic practices, and people in the

us to consider how various individuals participated in producing knowledge and creating new genres in this time period without assuming the straightforward adoption of dominant Western ideas.<sup>387</sup> And, on the other, it allows us to take into account mobility of people and ideas and to complicate exclusive, simplistic conceptions of identities such as “Hindu,” “Muslim,” or “British,” and affords a more nuanced approach to explore the materiality of cultural encounters. Above all, in recent studies there has been an attempt to complicate the notion that a “circulatory regime” was ushered into the subcontinent by Western technologies which led to change in an otherwise static environment.<sup>388</sup> The emergence of new sovereignties and the dominance of pan-Indian mercantile networks contributed to increased mobility of people and objects in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Studies of the networks and travels of pan-Indian merchants, petty traders, itinerant

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globalizing eighteenth century. Avcioglu and Flood, “Introduction.” In relation to understanding circulation of objects, images, and practices in the early medieval worlds of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Islamic world from the 9<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century, Flood advocates a notion of *transculturation* that “acknowledges that cultural formations are always already hybrid and in process, so that translation is a dynamic activity that takes place both *between* and *within* cultural codes, forms, and practices. See, Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval Hindu-Muslim Encounter*, 1–9. As discussed in chapters two and three, for an analysis of the mobility and circulation of artists, patrons, and paintings in the early modern period and how its effects our understanding of Rajput and Mughal painting, see, Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*.

<sup>387</sup> For an analysis related to map-making practices see, Raj, *Relocating Modern Science*.

<sup>388</sup> Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870*.

religious men such as *fakīrs* and *sanyāsīs*, as well as a range of mobile intellectuals, from artists and poets to performers and storytellers like *bhopās* and *madārīs*, have challenged the view that “the advent of colonialism completely modified the conditions of circulation in the subcontinent.”<sup>389</sup> *Vijñaptipatras*, I argue, are exemplary circulatory objects, operating at the nexus of the worlds and practices of all of the above constituents. I hold that the Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* (1830) specifically challenges the normative views of the production of knowledge, religious institutions, and representations of a place, and the circulatory regime of British political correspondence itself that defined the nature of the emergent British territoriality in early colonial India.<sup>390</sup>

The Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* under consideration here is a heterogeneous object that constitutes Udaipur as a flourishing and attractive place, thereby exhibiting how artists, scribes, and poets employed tropes of praise to forge alternate geographies and historical memories of place in the nineteenth century.<sup>391</sup> The choices seen within this *vijñaptipatra*

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<sup>389</sup> Markovits, Pouchepadass, and Subrahmanyam, “Introduction,” 8.

<sup>390</sup> Cort advocates a similar approach to “religious-art” objects that takes into account their visuality, textuality, and ritual based construction. See,

<sup>391</sup>In recent years, scholars have turned to regional-language sources from the sixteenth-nineteenth century to explore how historical memory was embedded in literary genres. For example see, Busch, “Hidden in Plain View”; Chatterjee, “Communities, Kings and Chronicles The Kulagranthas of Bengal”; Deshpande, *Creative Pasts*; Narayan Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanyam, *Textures of Time* :

underscore that travels during the monsoon season—aimed at the establishment of temporary sectarian Jain durbars in different towns and cities each year—provided as much an occasion for visiting and admiring new places as for envisioning them as ideal cities as well as places in relation to realpolitik. In making such choices, artists extended the semantic content of courtly and sectarian panegyric tropes employed for praising cities, subverted dominant narratives of the place, and presented their subjective interpretations of the changes in a city’s political and spatial landscape. They also created a material object that traveled from a place and embodied in various ways its connection to the represented city, thereby possessing the power to arouse feelings that could entice its receivers to undertake travels.

Christopher Bayly and Rosalind O’Hanlon have proposed that the evocation of a place as a “charismatic landscape” was a distinct landmark of early modern vernacular cultures.<sup>392</sup> Bayly, for instance, has pointed out that the formation of ideas related to nationalism and patriotism have not been explored within pre-colonial Indian States based on the assumption that courtly cultures had a weak sense of territoriality. He gives several

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*Writing History in South India, 1600-1800*; Sumathi Ramaswamy has addressed similar questions by foregrounding geographical perspectives. Ramaswamy, *The Lost Land of Lemuria*.

<sup>392</sup> O’Hanlon, “Cultural Pluralism, Empire and the State in Early Modern South Asia A Review Essay”; Bayly, *Origins of Nationality in South Asia*; Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen, and Bazaars : North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770-1870*.

examples to the contrary to show that the conception of kingship within both Indo-Muslim and Hindu courts across north and south India involved forging a strong sense of belonging, as well as sentimental ways of attaching oneself to a locale and strategies of visualizing a king's territory as a space that expanded beyond the immediate court to religious domains within broader geographies.<sup>393</sup> Similarly, O'Hanlon has underscored that evaluating how places were established as "charismatic landscapes" within early modern literary cultures can shed further light on linking such intellectual practices to the social worlds of subjects who crafted historical memories. I explore Jain cultural practices that employed the idea of a place as a charismatic landscape to show that merchants and monks engaged in wider cosmopolitan intellectual pursuits, and established a place for themselves and their city within a sophisticated web of cultural-religious-mercantile-political networks.

Indeed, on several *vijñaptipatras*, the depiction of a merchant handing over a dated scroll to a messenger suggests an artistic consciousness of the invitation letter's connectedness to the bazaar (Ill. 5.10 detail). This integral connection of *vijñpatipatras* to the space of the bazaar, along with the mixing of pictorial practices, which we will see in the Udaipur scroll, allows us to consider if such painted invitation letters might also be seen as

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<sup>393</sup>Bayly, *Origins of Nationality in South Asia*, 8–12.



what Kajri Jain calls *bazaar images*.<sup>394</sup> Writing about late nineteenth and twentieth century Indian calendar art, Jain argues that calendars emerging from the space of the colonial bazaar exhibit how subjects ranging from devotional-mythic to nationalistic were pictured and consumed within the larger public sphere. Calendar images also complicated the categories of “fine art” and “history” because their makers combined images across visual domains which were embraced by a very broad spectrum of people in India. Jain argues that such images require us to conceptualize their mass-appeal and marginality as part of our visual analysis, which is the sole approach by which the category of “bazaar art” in opposition to “fine art” becomes meaningful. She seeks to describe the “co-existing regimes of value and efficacy across which bazaar images have come to circulate in modern India, examining how the relationships between these economies have varied, in different registers, between articulation, exchange, and incommensurability.”<sup>395</sup> In other words, Jain shows us how these material objects allude to the character of the *bazaar* in colonial India as a space where domains of commerce, religiosity, and politics intersected, and where its inhabitants formulated their practices in characteristically circulatory ways that simply couldn't belong to a singular domain. I argue that *vijñaptipatras* are exactly these kinds of objects which can

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<sup>394</sup> Jain, *Gods in the Bazaar*, 15–16.

<sup>395</sup> *Ibid.*, 13–14.

be interpreted only in the interstices of various registers. They cannot be fixed. Because they circulated within popular domains, they offer us grounds to think about the aesthetic sensibilities and popular memories of a broader spectrum of people. However, we will have to keep in mind that the domain of the “popular” that *vijñaptipatras* forge is still quite distinct in terms of materiality, visual technologies, numbers, and the thematic conceptualization of public space, from the “popular” art of chromolithographed bazaar images of calendars in the following century.

This chapter is structured in four broad sections. The first charts the innovation of the genre of painted invitation letter. It will focus on the Agra *vijñaptipatra* (1610) to demonstrate that its artist presents the circulation of the scroll as a key pictorial concern. In making this argument, I will also refer to select features from several other *vijñaptipatra*, including earlier examples that depict Udaipur, to introduce questions that are not addressed by the current historiography. The second section will focus on the artist’s picturing of Udaipur in the 1830 *vijñaptipatra* and his citation, adaptation, and expansion of pictorial tropes across the domains of court painting and the genre of Jain painted invitation letters. The uniformity in the style of painting appears to suggest that one main artist might have been painting or directing this project. Of course, it is entirely possible that it was made in a workshop where various artists contributed to different aspects, such

as coloring the scroll, writing the labels that identified city precincts, drawing the outlines of the main composition and so on. However, since I have been unable to affirm with any degree of certainty the existence of this kind of a collaborative effort or to identify individual hands of various artists, I shall refer to the artist who made this scroll as a singular entity. The third section will address how historical audiences might have perceived the endeavors of place-making that we see visualized in the 1830 scroll. What were the contemporaneous cultural practices which employed the trope of praise to construct memories of Udaipur? I explore hitherto unexamined poems composed by Jain monks while visiting new cities with religious leaders after they had received *vijñaptipatra* as invitations to travel. I highlight the vernacular nature of these urban imaginings, taking a particular interest in the interrelatedness of vignettes that artists and poets employ to evoke a city within the visual and literary culture. After all, these poems and painted invitation letters circulated within the same intersecting spaces of bazaars and religious establishments of the Jains. The concluding section will argue that the 1830 scroll and topographical poems are exemplary of modern vernacular intermediary genres which claimed the space of the affective to craft the memories, image, and territory of a place. This final section raises important questions about the role of tropes of praise in conjuring a world that has largely been seen as one in decline. How is praise employed within

intellectual spheres to create the knowledge about a place, craft historical memory, and subvert dominant artistic practices? Simultaneously it also raises the possibility that painted *vijñaptipatra* may expand our understanding of not only the visual and literary practices from this time period, but also the range of material domains within which historical view points were presented and political diplomacy and territorial claims were made in colonial India.

## **5.2. The Creation of a Genre: Painter Ustā Salivahan's Vijñaptipatra, Agra, 1610**

*Vijñaptipatra* were addressed to eminent Jain monks who led extremely mobile lives.<sup>396</sup> The sending of such epistolary scrolls by the citizens of a local Jain community was an act of both piety and self-promotion, for if the invitee accepted the travel invitation, his visit would bring prestige both to the place and its citizens. Scholars of Jain history like Hirananda Śāstri, Umakant Premanand Shah, and Sridhar Andhare have compiled invaluable lists of *vijñaptipatras* which are largely spread across several private libraries

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<sup>396</sup>Hirananda Śāstri has noted that the custom of sending such epistolary scrolls originated in the idea of repentance and the members of the community performing pious deeds during the holy days of the *paryuṣaṇā*. He locates *paryuṣaṇā* at the center of the auspicious calendar in the Jain world, equivalent to the Christmas week and New Year in the Western world. The eighth day of this period marked the beginning of the Jain calendar and most letters to solicit forgiveness for one's sins were sent on this day. Śāstri, *Ancient Vijñaptipatras*, 3.

associated with Jain religious institutions in India.<sup>397</sup> Śastri focuses on the textual letters in these scrolls identifying names of important Jain monks, highlighting how the scribes employ a variety of poetic and textual descriptions in a combination of classical Sanskrit and regional languages to praise their importance. Focusing on art historical aspects, Shah and Andhare have emphasized the documentary role of *vijñaptipatra*, in terms of how they exemplify Jain mercantile patronage of painting in early modern India and how these artifacts may be studied to trace artist groups practicing in the region of Gujarat and Rajasthan. We have invitation letters dating to the fourteenth century and onwards. However, *vijñaptipatra*—as a material object in the form of a long, rolled painted scroll ending with a letter—became particularly popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>398</sup> In the beginning of a scroll, artists usually painted motifs of the pitcher, dancing figures, eight emblems including the flag, radiant Sun, or the fourteen dreams of Queen Trishala which were symbols associated with auspiciousness and prosperity within

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<sup>397</sup> See, Śastri, *Ancient Vijñaptipatras*; Balbir, *Catalogue of the Jain Manuscripts of the British Library Including the Holdings of the British Museum and the Victoria & Albert Museum*; Andhare, “Jain Monumental Painting”; Shah, *More Documents of Jaina Paintings and Gujarati Paintings of Sixteenth and Later Centuries*; Chandra and Shah, *New Documents of Jaina Painting*; Shah, *Treasures of Jaina Bhaṇḍāras*.

<sup>398</sup> Other kinds of Jain painted manuscripts have been composed in the format of a scroll. Sastri brings our attention to two early scrolls which I haven’t been able to access thus far. One, constituted the illustrated manuscript of the *Sangrahani Sutra* (1397) depicts various Hindu gods undergoing punishments in hell and it commences with icons of the *kalaśā* and other symbols similar to the icons seen in the beginning of *vijñaptipatra*. And, another one, depicting the drawings of Jain sanctuaries is dated to 1433. See, Śastri, *Ancient Vijñaptipatras*, 5–6.

the religious canon (Ill. 5.8 , 5.9).<sup>399</sup> The study of the corpus of painted *vijñaptipatra* sent over the course of the eighteenth century from the Marwari town of Sirohi has been critical in understanding the tenets of the genre (Ill. 5.10). Artists of several scrolls represent the town of Sirohi in a consistent painterly style through pictorial vignettes like those of the bazaar, a monk's assembly, laymen, and courts of regional polities. In many examples of painted scrolls, the artists, like the scribes who composed the letter, cited images from an established canon, without necessarily particularizing pictorial references to represent sites of a specific place, although most artists employed regional painting styles.<sup>400</sup> *Vijñaptipatra* artists cited the standard scenes of streets, temples, shops and so on, seen in examples from Sirohi, to suggest, by metaphor, the attractiveness and affluence of the town.

The Agra *vijñaptipatra* (1610) is an early example of a painted invitation letter in the format of a vertical scroll (284.7 x 32.2 cm) that has captured the attention of art historians for its pictorial reference to historical events (Ill. 5.11).<sup>401</sup> It has been particularly discussed

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<sup>399</sup> Within the scope of this chapter I am unable to consider how certain artists might have approached painting the iconographic emblems in selective ways.

<sup>400</sup> Andhare has emphasized that it would be wrong to presume that the pictures are realistic renderings of cities and notes, "rather, once a formula was established, it became a stereotype and was repeatedly copied, as was the case with medieval European topographical views of cities." See, Andhare, "Jain Monumental Painting," 85–86;251.

<sup>401</sup> Chandra, "Ustād Sālivāhana and the Development of Popular Mughal Style". This *vijñaptipatra* is in the collection of the Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Museum of Indology, Ahmedabad.

for the depiction of the Mughal emperor Jahangir’s proclamation (*farmān*)—issued at the request of important Jain monks—which sought to forbid the killing of animals during a period of twelve holy days on the Jain calendar (*paryushana*).<sup>402</sup> The detailed picturing of this event on a painted invitation letter sent from Agra suggests its importance in forging the Mughal court’s identity for the Jain community at large. The names of several prominent Jain merchants at Agra are noted in the letter, implying their collective role in sending this invitation to the eminent Jain monk Vijaysena Suri, who was then in residence at Devakapatan in Saurashtra (in present-day Gujarat). The letter invites him to the city of Agra, in the Mughal Empire’s northern heartland, to attend the installation ceremony for an idol created for a new temple built by the Jain merchant sāha Chandu. The scribe writing the invitation letter in this scroll, who identifies himself as the “son of sikhasā,” notes that the imperial artist Salivahan (*ustā sālīvāhana pātisāhi citrakāra*) was present at the court and has thus captured the feeling (*bhāva*) of the courtly picture at that time. Such a specific note on the name of the artist and the making of the *vijñaptipatra* is rather unusual for scrolls of this nature. The scribe also notes 1610, the same year when Jahangir issued the *farmān* in

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<sup>402</sup> Chandra notes that Jahangir issued the *farmāna* at the request of Vivekaharsha, Paramananda, Mahananda and Udayaharsha, pupils of Vijaysena Suri, Vijayadeva Suri, and Nandivijaya. Prior to Jahangir’s issuing of the petition in 1610 there was a longer history of Mughal emperors engaging with other prominent Jain monks who obtained various petitions related to forbidding animal slaughter in cities where Jains lived. *Ibid.*, 27.; Also see, Findley, “Jahangir’s Vow of Non-Violence.”

the court, as the year when the invitation letter has been written. The artist's picturing or suggestion of both these events is instructive regarding the key components that would come to define the genre of the *vijñaptipatra* in the coming centuries (Ill. 5.12). This early Agra *vijñaptipatra* allows us to see how in the early seventeenth century these artifacts were already conceived as key agents in circulating the imaginary of a place, thereby also already circulating regional painting styles and aesthetic sensibilities within broader circles.

Salivahan begins the scroll by depicting emperor Jahangir seated under a white pavilion in his court, holding a green emerald bowl, labeled as a presentation object, which was perhaps given to him by the petitioners. Portraits of Jahangir by artists in his workshop that depicted him within the setting of a "*jharoka*," that is, a window or a pavilion in an assembly hall, where the Mughal emperor was seen by the court's constituents, are rare (Ill. 5.13).<sup>403</sup>

In this instance, an inscription on the white pavilion identifies the scene as "Emperor Jahangir seated in the *jharoka* in the hall of public audience" (*jahāngīra sāhi āmkhāsa kai jharokhai baiṭhā chai*), and the emperor is surrounded by important courtiers, the ceremonial whisk holder, and his son Prince Khurram. (Ill. 5.14) In her analyses of painting in Emperor

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<sup>403</sup> Koch notes that by Shahjahan's time, almost one-third of the illustrations in the Windsor *Padshahnama* manuscript depict the emperor's portrait as a *jharoka* image, visually reinforcing the ceremonies and hierarchies that were codified in Shah Jahan's court. One well-known example from Jahangir's time is the Mughal artist Manohar's painting of the *Darbar of Jahangir*, about 1624 (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, accession number 14.644.). See, Koch, "The Hierarchical Principles of Shah-Jahani Painting," 133–34.



Jahangir's successor Shahjahan's court workshop, particularly from the Windsor manuscript of the *Padshahnama*, Ebba Koch notes that "the *jharokā-i-khāss-u-'amm* was the administrative center of the Mughal empire and the focal point of court events, where the power and pomp of the 'Great Mughal' was enacted."<sup>404</sup> Koch has argued that the repeated employment of such *jharoka* images for making imperial portraits suggests that the "*jharoka*, in reality as in painting, had become an image of the Mughal state."<sup>405</sup> The court commanded by Jahangir in this scroll's vignette is not composed of courtiers jostling for space, as seen in later *jharoka* images and group portraits; however we see that Salivahan chose to follow a somewhat central symmetry by drawing five figures in each row whose gazes either meet each other because they are placed on opposite ends or they are posed to gaze at the emperor. Most prominent are the figures of the courtier (labeled as Raja Ramdas) who holds the scroll in one hand and extends his arm towards the monk (labeled as Pandit Vivekharsh) with his other hand; both look upwards in the direction of Jahangir. In this depiction of a courtier standing above an elephant which enables him to be in a position closer to the emperor from the adjoining space (labeled as Farsat Khan Khoja), Salivahan further emphasizes that the architectural space of the *darbar* is divided into two

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<sup>404</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

levels with Jahangir seated on a higher-level platform over a series of arches. The intense systematization of the *jharoka* image and imperial portrait that employed “strict bilateral symmetry” is a shift seen in Shahjahan’s time. However, the convention of employing the architectural framework to provide vertical compositional hierarchy in portraits of courtiers who gaze upwards to see their emperor had been established by 1610, when the *Agra vijñaptipatra* was painted.

In the rest of the scroll, Salivahan employed spatial composition to reinforce the emperor’s hierarchal position and to indicate the way he is seen and approached by his audience in court, but he also carefully composed several horizontal registers to denote various kinds of urban spaces. These spatial registers appear on the scroll in the following sequence: the courtly space seen beyond the emperor’s *jharoka* which is divided into two parts (Ill. 5.15, 5.16), the gateway leading to the court (Ill. 5.17), a market place (Ill. 5.18), and the domain of the Jain monk Vijaysena Suri including the broader public space beyond it (Ill. 5.19, 5.20). It is striking that each of these registers echoes the size, proportions, and vertical format of contemporaneous Mughal manuscript paintings.<sup>406</sup> Salivahan has employed colors

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<sup>406</sup> It is interesting to see that the artists of an earlier Jain *Vasanta Vilāsā* scroll (1441), 36 feet long and 9 inches wide (1097.28 x 22.86 cm), which depicts an erotic poem is pictorially composed in alternate horizontal bands of image and texts. Each of these colored bands is comparable in size and proportions to contemporaneous Jain manuscript painting painted in a horizontal format. The Persianate vertical format of manuscript painting, as is well known, was introduced by Mughal

differently as he delineated these pictorial registers, thereby highlighting the thresholds of each of these represented spaces. For example, the personalities present in the courtly space immediately below the depiction of Jahangir are painted against the green ground; the next spatial register is colored in a pink-buff hue, whose boundaries are further marked by fence-like structures in thick red and dark brown outlines. An elephant with his mahout on the go, along with drummers, trumpeters, and flag bearers populate this latter vignette perhaps to denote a procession leaving the court. Portraits of various other figures whose difference in ethnicity and identity is marked by careful coloring of their dress and turbans are prominent in the picturing of this enclosed courtly space.<sup>407</sup> Some of these personalities—for example the Jesuit priest dressed in a blue robe and black coat and cap—are depicted as gazing towards the emperor. Others, like the Arabi and Turki gentlemen, are composed to gaze towards the marching elephant near them. As seen in several portraits of the Mughal court, here too Salivahan emphasizes the presence of several cosmopolitan audiences in

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artists in India in the sixteenth century. I am grateful to Debra Diamond and the staff of the Freer and Arthur M. Sackler Galleries of Asian Art for showing me this scroll, where this point was raised during our discussions. For more details on this scroll, see Nawab and Chanchani, “The Art of Gujarat Patronized by the Jains and Its History.”

<sup>407</sup> Chandra has identified these various personalities like a Turki and an Arabi, based on the inscriptions written on the scroll and details of their dress, and others as possibly representing the Italian priest Corsi and William Hawkins, based on contemporaneous listing in the *Tūzuk-i-Jahāngīrī* of foreigners present in Jahangir’s court around this time. Chandra, “Ustād Sālivāhana and the Development of Popular Mughal Style,” 31.

attendance at Jahangir's court, and, in constructing this picture of the Mughal court, he has also underscored the Jains as key constituents.

Among the countless other carefully composed pictorial elements from Mughal painting that characterize the authority of Jahangir and his court as a conglomeration of specific historical personalities, Salivahan intriguingly paints the European who is seen wearing red baggy trousers (Ill. 5.15). This figure removes his red hat—a gesture of respect—and faces outwards in three-quarters profile so that his gaze directly meets our gaze. His observer status in the court has been emphasized by means of his posture; he's someone taking note of the historical importance of the events unfolding before him. These emphases on historicity and the presence of diverse powers in a city, themes that emerge in this invitation letter, preoccupy the makers of several other scrolls, which we will continue to probe through this chapter.

Though the depiction of the *farman* so robustly occupies the artist's imagination in the Agra *vijñaptipatra*, it is to the textual part of this invitation we now must turn. In all likelihood, the writing followed Salivahan's painting of the scroll.<sup>408</sup> Thus the scribe is likely

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<sup>408</sup> The scribe writes, "... śri pātisāhaji farmāna 2 karī danā: te śripajusaṇa āv śrijī nu ramdāsaji āgai hui gudaraṇa hukama dīā dhandhorā divāyā pāriurvār sārāi dīn 12 amārī vartāi: jīṇa vel śrijī hukama dīnā tīṇā velā darikhānā jud thā śrijī jharokhai baiṭhā thā rājā ramdāsaji āgai thā tīnā pāchhai farmāna likha: pan: vivekahar (śa) tīnā pāchhai amārī āsarī vinatī kī śri pātisāhaji hukam dīnā tatkālī tīnā velā: jīsā darikhānā judasu tīnā samanā ye lekha māh sarab likh chhai usatā sālīvāhaṇa pātisāhī chittakāra chhai teṇa tīṇa samai

one of the scroll's first close readers, and thus among the first to note that Jahangir issued the *farmān* in the presence of the courtier Ramdas, and that the emperor's orders were proclaimed by the beating of the drums. His inscription captures the details of the court when this event took place, down to where people stood. Most important is the scribe's claims that the imperial artist Salivahan was present when this event took place, and that he has conveyed in the painted picture a faithful sense of the *bhāva* or the feeling of the moment the drums sounded.<sup>409</sup> He emphasizes that the receiver (Vijaysena Suri), will be able to imagine this picture of the court after seeing the letter. In other words, the scribe sees the pictures as constituent parts of the letter, not as mere illustrations. Moreover, he expects the viewers to see the paintings and perceive this momentous event. The scribe frames Salivahan's agency so forcefully, repeatedly mentioning his name as someone who sends his personal compliments to the Jain monk, that scribe and artist figure as collaborators in the creation of this *vijñaptipatra*. Within the context of the invitation letter, the depicted connection of the city and court at Agra and the Jain community is given key importance—the Mughal court is not here seen as the sole locus of its emperor's body and authority.

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*dekh chhai isāhī ina chitta mā he bhāva rākh chhai su lekh dekh prīchhajo: ustā sālivāhana vandaṇā vinavī chāi prachhajo...*"

<sup>409</sup> The scribe also noted that "I wrote this letter in accordance with the layout of the assembly in front of me"

Perhaps this letter's scribe has also written all of the copious labels and annotated descriptions on the paintings and taken pains to identify the important personalities and their actions, further evincing his interest in establishing the historicity of this scroll.

The gateway (labeled as *pol*) that leads us to the courtly space discussed above is painted in a striking red color, a painterly gesture toward the red sandstone of the Agra fort, which enhances the pictorial function of this motif as an entrance to Jahangir's court. Outside this gateway, Salivahan has depicted, in single-point perspective, a series of pillars with a roof, suggesting a central street with arcades of shops on either side. The scribe has responded to the varying size of these two arcades, labeling one as a market and the other as a big market (*bazāra and boḍo bazāra*). Along with the presence of men carrying palanquins and elephants, we see the artist's careful presentation of two monks near the center, with one of them carrying the rolled scroll of the invitation letter. The monks are flanked by two men who are identified by as Jain merchants or members of the lay community (*śrāvaka*): this group will collectively deliver the scroll to the Jain monk Vijaysena Suri. In picturing a vignette of the market populated by Jain merchants as the instrumental space through which the scroll circulates between where the *farmān* was issued (Mughal court) and the site of its receipt (Jain monk's durbar), Salivahan expands the imaginary of the city of Agra beyond the Mughal court to the world of commerce from

where the Jains claimed their power and connection to both the city and the Mughals. In the *vijñaptipatras* made all across north-western India in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, we will see that the depiction of the market populated with merchants working in various kinds of shops is a primary iconographic tenet of the genre, yet here the idea is merely suggested by the small vignette in this scroll.

Salivahan concludes the paintings in the scroll by imagining the domain of the Jain monk Vijaysena Suri to whom the letter is addressed (Ill. 5.12). The monk is depicted as sitting under a blue and gold umbrella within a pavilion along with another attending monk.

Pandit Vivekharsh is shown unrolling the *farmān* and displaying it to the monk. The second monk, identified as Pandit Udayharsh in the paintings and the textual letter, and who is also seen in the bazaar vignette, stands behind Vivekharsh holding the pundit's walking stick.

He is accompanied by another person wearing a Mughal-style turban and dress, who is most likely a court attendant. A rolled up scroll is painted on the attendant's head which implies

his role as a messenger.<sup>410</sup> The artist, for his part, has underscored not only the scroll's

importance as a historical artifact which depicts the issuing of Jahangir's *farmān*, but also

imagines the circulation of the scroll to the domain of the recipient. Here depictions of

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<sup>410</sup> The sharp facial features and a beard that distinguish this attendant's portrait, however, do not resemble any of the ancillary figures that are painted in the rest of the scroll. Sālivāhana, in fact doesn't necessarily exactly repeat the portraits of merchants, or even those of the court personnel of the security department (*kōtwala*), or the drummers that we see in the bazaar vignette.

spatial registers beyond the Mughal court pictorially signal the carrying of the *farmān* from the space of the imperial court, through the markets, to the space where the Jain monk Vijaysena Suri holds his assembly.

Scholars of Indian painting have briefly commented on the role of *vijnpatipatras* as evidence of circulation of artists and painting styles. For example, Pramod Chandra is primarily interested in connecting the Agra scroll and Salivahan's painterly style with other paintings that are considered examples of a "popular Mughal style."<sup>411</sup> Indeed, Chandra recognizes that *vijñaptipatra* related to Agra, such as this one, might have circulated the style of the painting master, "Ustad" Salivahan, to other courts on the peripheries.

However, Molly Aitken has recently pointed out that the Agra *vijñaptipatra*'s scribe referred to Salivahan as an *ustā* and not an *ustād* (master).<sup>412</sup> *Ustā* is the family name of an important family of painters in Bikaner, and Aitken explores their role in forging and circulating

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<sup>411</sup> Chandra is skeptical about the appropriateness of the term "popular Mughal," and employs it to describe it as a style that "took on various aspects and forms, some close to the parent style, some apparently removed from it, but both of them heavily dependent on it. Being produced in large numbers, Popular Mughal paintings naturally received greater circulation in the country and took a leading part in the emergence of the typically Rajasthani styles, particularly during the period A.D., 1610-1624 when its strength was great and to which dates the important works of Sālivāhana also belong." Chandra connects the Agra *vijñaptipatra* to other paintings and manuscripts that can be ascribed or attributed to Sālivāhana, in order to consider Agra as a center for popular Mughal painting. Chandra, "Ustād Sālivāhana and the Development of Popular Mughal Style," 25.

<sup>412</sup> Aitken, "The Laud Ragamala and the Origins of Rajput Painting (Or, More Tales Of The Old Boy's Network)". Hereafter I spell the family name *Ustā* as *Usta*.



Mughal pictorial conventions and aesthetics across north and northwestern India. Similarly Sridhar Andhare has noted the role of another community of Bikaner and Jodhpur-based artists, the Mathens, in making the corpus of paintings commissioned by Jain communities.<sup>413</sup> He suggests that the Mathens were part of the community of Jain monks who were ordained due to misconduct, and, therefore, many of them became traveling scribes, copiers of manuscripts, as well as artists, who worked for Jain monks, merchants, and even laymen across different cities.<sup>414</sup> He speculates that this group kept on hand scrolls on which was already depicted a standard first part comprising religious icons, on which they would depict motifs and scenes related to a particular city based on the commission.<sup>415</sup>

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<sup>413</sup> Andhare, “A Dated Śālibhadra Chaupāi and the Mathen Painters of Bikaner”; Śarmā, *Matheraṇa Kalama*.

<sup>414</sup> On the basis of the colophon of a single manuscript Śālibhadra Chaupāi Andhare argues that Mathens functioned both as scribes and artists and may be seen as the primary makers and copiers of Jain manuscripts and painted *vijñaptipatra* all across Northwestern and Western India. He suggests that the artist of this manuscript most likely belonged to the Mathen clan, even though the colophon only mentions “*likhītam*” which implies the identity of the scribe of the manuscript and not the artist. At least in the case of contemporaneous courtly works, the identity of the artist is articulated by the use of the term “*chīterā*.” I hope to investigate this point in the future. Andhare, “A Dated Śālibhadra Chaupāi and the Mathen Painters of Bikaner.”

<sup>415</sup> Personal Communication, March 18, 2010, Ahmedabad. In addition, I would like to highlight vertical Islamic rolls from the Abbasid period related to Hajj pilgrimages which have been studied as material culture that was used for talismanic purposes, to commemorate undertaken journeys. Artists used wood blocks to make the borders of these scrolls as well as the standard vignettes of Mecca and Jerusalem, thereby exhibiting an adoption of mass production as early as the mid-thirteenth century. In the case of Jain *vijñaptipatra*, I haven’t found the similar use of mass

Andhare argues that the artistic style adapted by the Mathen artists was “raw and unrefined” compared to contemporaneous paintings made by artists from the Usta clan for the Bikaner court, whose pictorial style nevertheless inflected the Mathen artists’ aesthetics. Such hierarchical and derogatory interpretations of the stylistic choices of the Mathens and Ustas have aided in relegating painted *vijñaptipatra* to the margins of scholarly inquiry. Yet Jain illustrated manuscripts and painted *vijñaptipatra* undoubtedly allow us to deliberate on the meaningful choices artists made while working for non-courtly patrons, selectively citing from courtly painting styles, and thereby formulating the taste of broader audiences, as well as providing an insight into the reception of court painting in early modern South Asia. In my analysis of the 1830 Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* in the next section, we shall see that this no mere question of a nebulous influence of courtly painting styles. In these artifacts it is not only painting styles that circulate, but also historical memories, urban imaginaries of places, and complex instances of material culture that participate across several inter-cultural and political practices.

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production technologies. Though it is quite possible that given the time it took to prepare a scroll artists might have made a choice to prepare customized scrolls or adhere to standardized scenes. I am grateful to Barry Flood for bringing this parallel practice of Islamic pilgrimage scrolls to my attention and I hope to research any possible connections with Jain pilgrimage scrolls in the near future. See, Aksoy and Millstein, “A Collection of Thirteenth-Century Illustrated Hajj Certificates.”

In several examples of *vijñaptipatra* sent from places in Rajasthan and Gujarat, artists not only depicted emergent power-brokers in a place, they particularized the depiction of towns, and consciously cited and adapted regional artistic styles from the locales to which the scrolls were sent. Most scrolls from Surat and the Port Cambay area, for example, depict a ship with the Union Jack flag and a fortified port town, suggesting the presence of British merchants and rulers (Ill. 5.21). Another late nineteenth century scroll of Jodhpur emphatically shows the domain of the influential religious sect of the Nath yogis and Jallandarnath alongside the Jains (Ill. 5.22); and yet another scroll depicting Diu in Saurashtra in 1666 includes a vignette of Dutch merchants, signaling their recent settlement in this port city (Ill. 5.23).<sup>416</sup> Even a cursory examination of the Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* sent in 1742 and 1774<sup>417</sup> demonstrates how Udaipur artists adapted pictorial

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<sup>416</sup> Śastri, *Ancient Vijñaptipatras*, 48–49; 57–59.; Ambalal, “A Vijñaptipatra Dated 1666 From Diu.”

<sup>417</sup> The Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* (1742, dimensions unknown) is in the private collection of Sarabhai family in the Calico Museum of Textiles, Ahmedabad. I have had the opportunity to examine this painted scroll very briefly and haven’t yet managed to gain access to high-resolution digital reproductions. I am therefore able to only briefly remark on the paintings depicted in this scroll. The artist appears to follow the contemporaneous Udaipur court painting style and depicts the ruler Jagat Singh within a series of courtly settings, Udaipur’s palaces and lake Pichola, bazaars, and assembly held by Jain monks. It ends with a vignette of the Udaipur ruler watching spectacles of animal fights. Further research would reveal several connections between this scroll and the Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* (1774, dimensions unknown) which is in the collection of the Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Museum of Indology, Ahmedabad (Accession No. 84M). I was able to study this *vijñaptipatra* as well in a limited way. This scroll raises some important comparative points which are addressed in the next section that focuses on the Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* (1830, 2194.6 x 27.9 cm (72

vignettes from horizontal court paintings within the vertical format of the scroll and carefully cited prevalent artistic styles and contemporary portraits of the Udaipur rulers (Ill. 5.24, Ill. 5.25). Representation of the architecture of the court was a central pictorial concern in Udaipur court painting, so it is not surprising that local artists saw Jain *vijñaptipatra* as an apt visual space in which to experiment and to extend their interest in depicting their city. The 1830 Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* exemplifies the most extensive artistic engagement of this kind that I have come across.

Scholars have claimed the Agra *vijñaptipatra* (1610) as an early, if not the earliest, example of this genre. It is, however, important to note that this scroll did not comprise an invitation for a Jain monk to travel to Agra in order to set up his interim domain for the monsoon months—the key occasion for the making and circulation of *vijñaptipatra* in the coming centuries. Rather, the several merchants who sent the Agra scroll (and whose names are noted in the letter) extended an invitation to Śri Vijaysena Suri to attend an installation ceremony within a new temple built at Agra. We are told that both the new temple and the *pratimā* (likeness) of Jina have turned out to be beautiful examples, and that

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foot by 11 inches)). While both of these earlier scrolls exhibit that Udaipur artists significantly engage in making *vijñaptipatra* into more elaborate objects compared to the examples we have of painted invitation letters depicting other cities, it is also clear that the artist of the 1830 scroll uses this genre to depict several pictorial and historical concerns in a far more innovative and extensive way.

the auspicious moment for enlivening and inaugurating this icon is scheduled during the holy time of the monsoons (*chaumāsā*) of the following year. If this scroll was indeed the first “painted” *vijñaptipatra* within which visually picturing the place’s imaginary plays a key function then it is imperative to consider whether the artist Salivahan innovated the pictorial format and key tenets of this genre in the process of publicizing an important Mughal document. The Mughal painter Keshav Das draws our attention to one such paper scroll in the depiction of a petition in a painting entitled *Akbar with Falcon Receiving Itimam Khan, while below a Poor Petitioner Is Driven Away by a Royal Guard* (1489) (Ill. 5.26). The artist’s self-representation in this picture as an emaciated figure seeks to draw the emperor’s attention to his poor state. Simultaneously Keshav Das constructs a compelling image of himself as a powerful figure, equal in size (if not slightly larger) to Akbar, who could directly reach out to the emperor standing within the liminal space of a rocky outdoor landscape and not the Mughal court. The visualization of the *farmān* in the form of a paper scroll that the artist presents, on which we see a magnified inscription in Devanagari script that gives details on the name of the artist and the subject and date of this painting, dramatically contrasts the depiction of the smaller scroll with illegible letters in a Persianate script, a petition which is being read by a court attendant. Very much like Salivahan’s Agra *vijñaptipatra* (1610), Keshav Das’s painting too rhetorically imagines the delivery of the

message while asserting the material status of historical documents that populated the Mughal court.

We are well aware of the actual existence and materiality of letters and petitions in the Mughal court.<sup>418</sup> Mughal *farmāns* were written on long slim paper scrolls with the text usually running along the shorter side, similar in composition to other letters that circulated within Jain circles, and very much like the way in which the scribe of the Agra *vijñaptipatra* writes the textual letter. It is useful to recall that both these “documents”—the Agra *vijñaptipatra* and the Mughal *farmān* issued to prohibit the killing of animals—carry the date of 1610. The reason I draw attention to the conflation between the format and materiality of the issued *farmān* and the materiality of the Agra *vijñaptipatra* itself is because, in the end, Salivahan’s pictorial emphasis on the travel of a scroll object forces us to consider if indeed he is seeking to depict the sending of the Mughal *farmān* or circulation of the painted *vijñaptipatra* itself. That is, Salivahan’s work calls special attention to its particular role as an artifact in exchange. Artists of several later *vijñaptipatra* adopt this pictorial gesture by painting the figure of a messenger (or perhaps the artist or scribe) being handed a rolled scroll, often marked with a date, by a merchant in the bazaar.<sup>419</sup> Thus many of these scrolls, including the Agra *vijñaptipatra* (1610), present what W.J.T. Mitchell

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<sup>418</sup> Findley, “Jahangir’s Vow of Non-Violence”; Commissariat, “Imperial Mughal Farmans In Gujarat.”

<sup>419</sup> Sirohi *Vijñaptipatra*, Artist Unknown, 1761, New York Public Library (Accession No. MS 26)

has called a “meta-picture” or “a picture about a picture.” Mitchell writes, “Meta-pictures stage the self-knowledge of pictures...[T]hey engage in speculation and theorizing on their own nature and history...[T]hey encourage introspection, reflection, mediations on the visual experience.”<sup>420</sup> I would suggest that the artists of *vijñaptipatra* in turn urge us to reflect on the circulatory and material nature of the scrolls they painted.

Michael Ann Holly has persuasively argued that pictures often prefigure the interpretations and the narratives that scholars present about them.<sup>421</sup> Holly pays attention to the agency of pictures, distinct from the agency of the artists who make them, in evaluating the role they play in reinforcing the selective linguistic and topological strategies that historians adopt when writing about them. For example, in analyzing Jacob Burckhardt’s history of the Renaissance world, she writes, “The geography of Renaissance painting taught Burckhardt in part how to map the Renaissance world...Burckhardt’s history, in other words, not only depicted the Renaissance but also in a sense was itself depicted by the perspectival visual logic set up in the Renaissance.”<sup>422</sup> Similarly the picture of circulation mediated in the Agra *vijñaptipatra* (1610) forces us to conceptualize

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<sup>420</sup> Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, 35–72.

<sup>421</sup> Holly, *Past Looking*.

<sup>422</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

*vijñaptipatra* as circulatory objects, and write about them as such. This visual demand made by *vijñaptipatra* also accords with the contextual history of their making. Jain merchants played key roles as negotiators and financiers within the circles of the Mughals, regional rajas, and the British East India Company. Increased wealth led to merchants' increased patronage of Jain religious institutions and associated monks and monks in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>423</sup> The scrolls depicting painted invitation letters visualize a geography of actual urban networks that was operationalized through travel and operated at the nexus of itinerant people, bazaars, and religious spaces. Artists and scribes cited images and letters from previous scrolls and court painting, thereby referencing towns and their representations that were already embedded within pilgrimage networks through the circulation of such invitations.<sup>424</sup> In other words, *vijñaptipatra* not only provide a visual

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<sup>423</sup> Hawon Ku has argued that the renewed patronage in the nineteenth century of new temples at the Jain pilgrimage site of Shatrunjaya, commissioning of several related *patās* (large-scale paintings depicting temples at the pilgrimage site), and providing temples with divine images, coincided with a rise in fortunes of the Jain mercantile community in Bombay and Ahmedabad in this time period. She suggests that these forms of patronage provided the layman with “an institutional arena in his or her religious life in which lay control [was] dominant.” See, Kim Ku, “Re-formation of Identity: The 19th-century Jain Pilgrimage Site of Shatrunjaya, Gujarat.” Similarly William Pinch has also shown that the affiliations of upwardly mobile people in the nineteenth century with religious institutions was inextricably linked to acts of identity formation and of forging communities within which their power mattered. See, Pinch, *Peasants and Monks in British India*.

<sup>424</sup> David Roxburgh has analyzed scrolls depicting sites of Islamic pilgrimage as forging a memory of places visited and making imaginary journeys to pilgrimage sites possible. Roxburgh, “Visualizing the Sites and Monuments of Islamic Pilgrimage.”



imagining of vibrant circulatory routes, but also played a material role in an embodied history of travel, pilgrimage, trade, and circulation of artifacts. Keeping this conceptualization at the center, let us now turn to the stories of circulation constituted in the 1830 Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* with which I began this chapter.

### ***5.3. Picturing Udaipur as a Charismatic Landscape***

The corpus of extravagantly long painted *vijñaptipatra* depicting Udaipur (1742, 1774, 1830), ranging from 30 to 72 feet in length, must present as much of a visual and analytical quandary for the art historian today as for the artists who visualized and created these long compositions and the historical audiences who viewed them. Artists joined together multiple sheets of paper of approximately two feet in length in order to create these scrolls. Considering even this simple step in the assembly of a *vijñaptipatra* one confronts multiple kinds of questions: Did a master artist draw the complete composition, followed by other artists from the workshop who filled colors within parts of the scroll? Or did the artist possibly paint the scroll in a continuous manner, addressing a practically manageable length of two to three feet at a time? If artists indeed worked in this manner, did the resultant painted image of a city represent an exploratory process of picturing the city that didn't include seeing or conceiving an all-encompassing cityscape as a single picture? Was the

process therefore somewhat akin to how the viewers are likely to have visually explored the scroll, looking at a limited length of the city's map and streets at a time? If we assume that its primary audiences, the Jain monks to whom the invitation was addressed, held such a scroll by themselves, it is only possible to unroll and hold two or three feet of the scroll at a time to see part of the painted composition. Any viewing, then, becomes partial. It is of course completely possible that monks or other members of the monastic community unrolled and held the scrolls and allowed the monk and other audiences to see longer stretches at one time, or that the scroll was laid out on the floor for a few sessions of detailed looking. While it is impossible to treat comprehensively the artist's depiction of a plethora of sites and people in this 72-foot long scroll, I will focus on some of the means by which he adapts established conventions and maneuvers artistic tropes, to innovate a new set of representational strategies for *vijñaptipatra*. Analysis of some of the possible ways in which historical audiences might have seen, perceived, and interpreted the Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* (1830) in the nineteenth-century world characterized by power-sharing amongst multiple polities and religious and mercantile communities, and comparing these perceptual experiences to other, contemporary performative practices that celebrated the urbanity of Udaipur, will establish how this scroll participated in several inter-visual and inter-textual domains. Like all other examples from this genre, the painted invitation letter was

commissioned with the purpose of consolidating a Jain religious community in Udaipur in the forthcoming year, and its makers exhibited an interest in showing a wide variety of religious—and non-religious—spaces. The artist persuasively presented an urban landscape intermixing universal and local images, and yet the object itself defies any notion of a complete, all-encompassing picture of a place. The *vijñaptipatra* can thus be seen as an innovative departure from the large-scale horizontal panoramas and chorographies of place that had not only become particularly popular at the Udaipur court but also had come to globally dominate the nineteenth-century visual world.

Emblems comprising the iconographic content found in the beginning of most scrolls had become conventionalized by the time the Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* under consideration here was made in 1830 (Ill. 5.27).<sup>425</sup> The artist's visualization of the city of Udaipur began with a thickly-outlined body of water filled with crocodiles, fishes and lotuses, to represent the city's Lake Pichola (Ill. 5.28). He painted outlines of mountain peaks and round dabs in shades of green to denote the crowns of treetops that populated the surrounding valley of the Aravalli hills. Representations of the elevation profiles of temple spires and pavilions, plan-metric views of steps leading to the water (*ghāt*), and bird's-eye views of city walls with

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<sup>425</sup> The artist paints the icons of the full pitcher, fire, and queen Trishala seeing the seven dreams, as seen in other scrolls, nevertheless suggesting his stylistic preference for Udaipur style painting. This is clearly evidenced in how he depicts the queen, carefully drawing her face and draping costumes as seen in prevailing examples of Udaipur court painting.

gateways, together suggest a picture of the banks of Lake Pichola located within a hilly terrain. Within the lake, the artist depicted the famous lake-palaces of Jagmandir and Jagnivas, as well as the smaller pavilion, Mohanmandir, and labeled each architectural landmark with an inscription (Ill. 5.28, 5.29). However, his depiction of neither of the Jagmandir or Jagnivas lake palace is a match with the established iconography even though he follows the convention from Udaipur court paintings of combining the planimetric view of courtyard with the elevation profiles of buildings and entrances within the palaces: as seen in chapter three, the artist might not have even studied the several court paintings depicting these lake-palaces.<sup>426</sup> Within this initial part of the scroll, the artist's most obvious citation from Udaipur court painting is the portrait of the Udaipur ruler Jawan Singh with his nobles seated in the royal, red barge which is labeled, "procession of the royal assembly within a court held in the boat" (*majlisa kī sawāri nāva kī durbāra*) (Ill. 5.30, 5.30 (detail, 3.17 (detail)). Here the artist takes the time to portray the current Udaipur ruler, Jawan Singh, though he is unable to capture the subtle differences in Jawan Singh's portrait to distinguish

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<sup>426</sup> For example, the artist's approximation in denoting the circular domed profile of the Gol Mahal within a squarish composition of plani-metric drawings is difficult to interpret as representing the layout of the palace or its general elevation profile or how its environs have been depicted in numerous eighteenth century paintings. It is possible to consider that the artist is arriving at his representation based on his experience of visiting the palace. It is equally perplexing to examine the depiction of the lake palaces in the Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* (1774) which don't match the version in contemporaneous paintings or later or earlier scrolls.

it from a portrait of the previous ruler Bhim Singh. However, it is quite possible that our artist might have been studying the portraits of Bhim Singh within court paintings and sketches from a slightly earlier period. Even in looking at this introductory painted vignette of the imaginary of Udaipur, it is evident that we are looking at a particularized depiction of this lake-city, wherein the artist is consciously adapting and citing but not reproducing vignettes from regional court painting.<sup>427</sup> The nature of the brush strokes suggests that the artist painted expediently on this paper scroll. The overall composition appears to be the work of one master artist, who has possibly also labeled the architectural precincts himself. While many of the inscriptions are not completely legible, as they are slightly rubbed due to wear and tear within the rolled up parts of this scroll, from the very beginning it is apparent that this artist is interested in presenting a picture of Udaipur that depicts and labels details of all its landmarks. This particular kind of thoroughness shows that there were stakes for the artist, and perhaps for his patrons and audiences as well, in presenting such an

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<sup>427</sup> I have argued in chapters two and three that eighteenth century artists in the Udaipur court atelier shifted their attention from making smaller-sized genealogical and poetic manuscripts to larger-scale paintings, three to five feet in length, which portrayed the rulers within spectacular architectural, urban, and landscape settings. They juxtaposed differing views—birds eye, planimetric combined with elevations, sectional elevations, and a combination of perspectival approaches—to present a distinct visualization of the city. I argued that chorography—contingent on tropes of praise that imbued courtly contexts—emerges as one of the central pictorial concerns for Udaipur artists in the eighteenth century. By tracing pictorial, spatial, and historical connections, I argue that artists visualized the city at once as a kingly panegyric, a charismatic landscape, and a map, thereby negotiating the nebulous divide between seeing and idealizing place as well as between portraying likeness of the ruler and of the city.

exhaustive vision. The handwriting seen in these labels is very different from that of the scribes who wrote the letter. These graphic labels are standard throughout the length of the painted portion of the scroll and lend it stylistic coherence. It is also clear that the artist of this 1830 invitation letter exhibits a cartographic acumen that combines various drawing conventions in order to represent individual buildings, even as it suggests the broader geography, a novel approach which is not seen in the earlier examples of invitation letters depicting Udaipur.<sup>428</sup>

The artist's portrayals of the current ruler Jawan Singh in a series of royal activities, cites the picturing of Udaipur rulers in a temporal sequence within large-scale "contextual portraits" painted at his court.<sup>429</sup> Jawan Singh is shown, for example, enjoying a boat procession with his nobles (Ill. 5.30), dining, privately, within the inner palatial domains (Ill. 5.31), performing rituals, bare-chested, at the court-temple (Ill. 5.32), and, (Ill. 5.34) presiding, as a public figure, along with his sixteen nobles, as an embodiment of the state, within the courtly space of the *bādā darīkhānā*. The scroll artist's careful selection of vignettes sought to convey the distinctive facets of idealized kingship in action at the

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<sup>428</sup> For example, even though the artists of the earlier Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* (1742, 1774) begin with a painted vignette of the lake and lake-palaces none of them seek to mark the boundaries of the lake and its environs to suggest a geographical pictorial concern.

<sup>429</sup> For a discussion of large-scale Udaipur court paintings as "contextual portraits" see chapters two and three.

Udaipur court (Ill. 3.17 (detail), 5.33, 5.36 (detail)). In so doing, the artist eulogized Udaipur as an ideal and alluring place by specifically alluding to courtly practices which combine portraiture with place-making. The local artist of an earlier Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* (1774) also paints a portrait of the contemporary ruler, Ari Singh, seated with his nobles in the Manek chowk courtyard and against the palatial backdrop. He carefully cites vignettes and a connection to the artistic style from Udaipur court painting; however he does not seek to represent either the ruler's portrait multiple times in relation to the various facets of his kingship or to connect him to the diverse courtly spaces in his palace (Ill. 5.35). In contrast, it is in the detailed and extensive depiction of palace environs—a key approach that Udaipur artists employed to constitute their pictorial vision of royal portraits and praise—that the 1830 scroll's artist reveals his facility at adapting conventions. By depicting the well-established iconic façade of the Udaipur palace, the artist has transposed a signature architectural feature of horizontally-oriented court paintings onto the narrow, vertical format of the scroll. The artist lent further force to his citations by drawing outlines to color the deep blue of the sky, which allowed him, like the court artists, to highlight the profiles, twists, and turns of domed and angular roofs. While Udaipur's court artists emphasized a visual sense of continuity in the palace façades when seen from the Manek chowk courtyard, the scroll's artist has pictorially disaggregated this view (Ill. 5.36). The artist has

ingeniously divided the horizontal palatial façade based on how the individual courtyard buildings were spatially laid out within the complex (Ill. 5.37). At the same time, he has established continuity within this segmented façade by employing a palette of red and yellow hues with black outlines and by writing inscriptions that identified various gateways and courtyards.

In addition to the palaces, the artist has rendered elevations of temple spires and has referenced the presiding deity, thereby picturing a plethora of religious precincts within Udaipur's urban space (Ill. 5.38, 5.39, 5.40). He has also labeled domains such as the “*hanumān mandir*,” “*sāji fakīr kā takīyā*,” “*dādupanthi rī jāgā*,” all of which suggest the artist's interest in mapping a wide variety of religious spaces, from Hindu temples of multiple deities, to shrines of Sufi saints, mosques, and Jain temples. The artist, however, chose to depict some precincts by combining plan and elevation views, a convention adopted with particular zest by Udaipur's court artists. By this means, for example, in the case of the “*sitlā mātā kā mandir*,” the scroll artist suggested the temple's greater scale or religious importance (Ill. 5.38 (detail)). In other cases, the artist employed this representational strategy to mark difference within his spatial typology. For example, while representing one of the temples of Shrinathji (Ill. 5.41), built often as a domestic courtyard house (*haveli*), or in mapping one of the city's mosques (Ill. 5.39 (detail)), he highlighted the courtyard and



surrounding arcades. It is equally possible that the artist employed this format based on circulating mapping practices, especially for spaces that were not associated with an established iconography in court painting. For example, in representing the women's palace of Udaipur, which has been pictured in a very limited number of court paintings, the artist chose to depict a plan view, which can be related to an eighteenth-century architectural drawing of the city's palace complex (Ill. 5.31 (detail), 5.42).<sup>430</sup> Several such instances attest to the artist's interest in conveying his knowledge and his spatial perception of the buildings he observed, in addition to displaying his aptitude for making stylistic and convention-based choices. Moreover, the artist's prolific labeling of precincts conspicuously revealed his penchant for mapping Udaipur, such that the painted invitation letter must be read as an epistemic genre that contains and expresses the artist's cartographic vision.

In composing this visual urban ethnography, the artist also sought to expand the picturing of mercantile space (Ill. 5.43). He evoked spatial clusters of types of bazaars—for example, of dyers, arms makers, utensil sellers, cloth sellers, flower sellers, money lenders, and so on (Ill. 5.44, 5.45, 5.46, 5.47). He highlighted the acts of making and selling, and delineated each individual's turban and facial features. This personalization, visible even in the smallest detail of the men's beards, perhaps suggests the relation between trades and

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<sup>430</sup>Bahura and Singh, *Catalogue of Historical Documents in Kapad-Dwara Jaipur, Maps and Plans*.

specific communities. The artist, therefore, departed from the typical metaphorical reference to a bazaar populated with men and women within *vijñaptipatra*, as seen in the above-discussed Sirohi scroll (Ill.5.10), by reinforcing the specificity of each trade and each individual.<sup>431</sup>

The artist further transformed the central street by painting an extensive formal procession traversing it, which is oriented along the horizontal axis of the scroll (Ill. 5.48, 5.48 (detail a)). He depicted a long retinue of footmen, horses, elephants, and troops, culminating in a portrayal of the ruler Jawan Singh mounted on an elephant. Further along the street, he painted another elephant with three British officers. Udaipur's current political agent, Alexander Cobbe, is shown accompanied by sepoy and Skinner's cavalry from the British Indian army (Ill. 5.49, 5.49 (detail)).<sup>432</sup> Here the artist drew upon the symbolic currency of the aesthetic trope of processions that Udaipur court artists employed

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<sup>431</sup> For example, in several Sirohi *vijñaptipatras*, as discussed above, the artists have depicted a central street with one example of types of bazaar, like a cloth seller, utensil seller, and so on. The artist of the Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* (1774) has elongated the depiction of the bazaar, however he doesn't create a central street with clusters of types of shops. Instead we see that his depiction of shops is mixed with depiction of houses that appear to denote residential neighborhoods.

<sup>432</sup> James Tod recruited soldiers from Colonel James Skinner's cavalry, who were known as yellow boys due to the color of their uniform, in his army and Alexander Cobbe increased their numbers in the army that the British agents maintained at Udaipur. Vashishtha, *Rajputana Agency, 1832-1858 : a Study of British Relations with the States of Rajputana During the Period with Special Emphasis on the Role of Rajputana Agency*, 20–22.

in this time period to construct royal portraits and commemorate practiced routine processions (Ill. 3.31). Court artists experimented with multiple scales, and, in some instances, miniaturized the chorography of Udaipur's environs, while in others, the procession itself was miniaturized (Ill. 5.50). The scroll's artist in turn embedded the horizontally-painted processions within the vertical idiom of the *vijñaptipatra*, creating a perplexing dual axis along which one could view the scroll (Ill. 5.4). His juxtaposition of these conventions situates the procession within the streets of Udaipur, as if the artist sought to illuminate the mercantile space—within which the procession was performed and upon which it relied—rather than presenting a chorography of Udaipur's palaces as a panegyric backdrop for royal or mercantile patrons.

It is important here for me to reiterate the uniqueness of this visualization of Udaipur—for procession and mercantile spaces to be combined and given equal weight was unprecedented in court painting and in *vijñaptipatra*. While Udaipur's streets had been imagined as the space for the practice of these processions, we find very few examples of court artists depicting mercantile spaces and bazaars.<sup>433</sup> An earlier example of a manuscript leaf from the Book two of the Jagat Singh *Ramayana*, the *Ayodhyākhaṇḍa* completed in 1640

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<sup>433</sup> For example, in Mewar's genealogical scroll dated around 1730-40 (Victoria and Albert Museum, Accession No. 07964/1 (IS)), we see vignettes that hint at the visualization of market space; although, it isn't yet clear to me how this particular section of the scroll relates to the telling of Mewar's history.

and attributed to the style of the Mewar master artist Sahibdin, depicts merchants decorating their shops with fine textiles and brocades and people sitting on roofs of their houses, and over temples, to secure the best view of the anticipated procession for the consecration ceremony of Rama (Ill. 5.51).<sup>434</sup> This leaf is especially striking in its formal composition of the bazaar as a horizontal row of shops, evoking the street view of shops housed within *veranda* like spaces in several Rajasthani towns and cities. The artist has, however, situated the bazaar street amidst temples—as seen in *vijñaptipatra*—specifying the presence of a Jain temple by representing an icon of the deity Mahavira. Another vertical pictorial vignette representing a bazaar scene is seen in the double page from Nusrati's *Gulshan-i-'Ishq* attributed to a Deccani court artist in Hyderabad (1710) (Ill. 5.52 and detail).<sup>435</sup> The artist's citation of the vignette from circulating *vijñaptipatra* has generated a dramatic juxtaposition of courtly space and city space.

The Udaipur scroll artist's experiments in combining pictorial idioms from courtly and sectarian contexts recall Debra Diamond's research on paintings by Jodhpur's court artists that combined conventions of devotional pictures, pilgrimage maps, and town plans,

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<sup>434</sup> Losty, *The Ramayana: Love and Valour in India's Great Epic: The Mewar Ramayana Manuscripts*, 11.

<sup>435</sup> Leach, *Paintings from India*, 244–247.

in response to new theo-political alliances and new image-viewing modalities (Ill. 1.4).<sup>436</sup>

Diamond argues that studying such artistic innovations allows us to gain insights into the “conceptual frameworks through which historical viewers interpreted court paintings.”

Such instances parallel innovations in portraiture and manuscript painting by Udaipur’s

court artists that Molly Aitken has discussed.<sup>437</sup> Most studies, however, have situated

contemporaneous painted travel invitations reductively as exemplifying painting

patronized by “Jains,” which exhibited the “influence” of courtly painting styles. Such

innovations in place-making by an artist working on the margins of a court workshop, as

seen in the 1830 Udaipur scroll, exemplify how established courtly and sectarian visual

practices were reevaluated within painted invitation letters that circulated amongst

broader audiences. A case in point are the late-nineteenth century scrolls of the Marwari

towns of Jodhpur and Merta, where artists commence the picturing of these two desert

towns with vignettes of lake palaces painted in white color, as seen in the corpus of Udaipur

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<sup>436</sup>Diamond, “The Cartography of Power: Mapping Genres in Jodhpur Painting.”

<sup>437</sup> Aitken proposes that eighteenth century Udaipur court artists responded to various pictorial conventions in picturing the verses of Sur Das, embedding idioms that aimed at portraying “real people and place” into earlier idioms of devotional painting. Early nineteenth century Udaipur artists in turn drew upon the picturing of the blue-God Krishna in order to portray the Udaipur ruler Bhim Singh. See, Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 36.

*vijñaptipatra* (Ill. 5.53, 5.54).<sup>438</sup> The artists of the later scrolls may not be citing these architectural vignettes from any of the Udaipur scrolls I have discussed thus far, yet I would suggest the fact that such vignettes are composed at the very beginning of the scroll, after the standardized Jain ritualistic icons have been composed, is evidence that by the end of the nineteenth century the image of Udaipur's lake palaces had become an iconic symbol for an attractive city and could be inserted even in the pictorial imaginary of a desert town as part of idealizing vision.

The representation of Udaipur's environs outside courtly domains and the city-walls is just as important as imagery of the city itself (Ill. 5.55 and 5.55 (detail)). In the case of the Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* of 1830, the artist has pictured such extra-urban sites as the British residency, labeled as the "Sahab's Bungalow" and the "cantonment of the foreigner (*fīrangī*)." Captain Alexander Cobbe had acquired this courtyard house in 1824 from one of Udaipur's prominent chieftains, and expanded the building into his residence. The artist carefully depicted green lawn-courtyards and the inhabitants seated in chairs, thus marking

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<sup>438</sup> *Vijñaptipatra* depicting Jodhpur, late 19<sup>th</sup> century, 844 x 31 cm, Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute, Jodhpur Branch (Accession No. 20114); *Vijñaptipatra* depicting Merta, 1861, dimensions unknown Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute, Jodhpur Branch (Accession No. 8470, Currently on exhibition at the Sardar Government Museum, Jodhpur). Currently I have been able to study these scrolls in a limited way and plan to study them in detail in the future. The artist of the Jodhpur painted invitation letter, in particular, appears to have depicted the making of crafts in a detailed way by highlighting the various tools and processing of producing a product.

differences between the lifestyles of the British agent and the Udaipur ruler. Yet, Udaipur's suburban frontiers are not dominated solely by the British presence. On the other side of the central street, in the most striking way, the artist has pictured and labeled the assembly to be held by the invited leader Jinharsh Suri (Ill. 5.56 and 5.56 (detail)). A group of elites, palanquins, and troops are depicted waiting upon both the monk's durbar and the residency. While the depiction of monks holding assemblies is common in other scrolls, in imagining this anticipated religious assembly exactly opposite the British residency, and by pictorially matching its scale, the artist presents the colonial and religious powers as two equal and competing domains of authority. In the Agra *vijñaptipatra* (1610) as well, Salivahan strikingly composed the Jain monk Vijaysena's assembly at the same scale as Jahangir's assembly in his court (Ill. 5.11, 5.12). In both the vignettes, the background is painted red, several attendees face each other and gaze upwards towards their leaders, and the leaders—political and religious—are pictured as sitting under pavilions. As I noted in the introduction to this chapter, the artist's visualization of the invited Jain monk's assembly implies his imagination that the Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* (1830) would be effective, its objective realized by the monk's arrival. Likewise here the depicted procession of the Udaipur ruler and British agent can be interpreted as proceeding towards the anticipated Jain monk's assembly.

The Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* of 1830, therefore, is simultaneously a grand representation of an ideal city, a topographical map, a picture of overlapping and relational identities, and an epistle. While there are no painted vignettes devoted to the making or viewing of the scroll by individuals or in a collective setting, we see that the artist visualizes the Jain monk's domain akin to a courtly setting. Phyllis Granoff has shown that a diverse and large community of monks, nuns, and lay people traveled together on Jain pilgrimages to holy centers and during the annual establishments of itinerant religious centers in cities from which invitations were issued.<sup>439</sup> In almost all *vijñaptipatra* we see groups of monks, men and women attending assemblies held by Jain monks as well as vignettes depicting groups of drummers and trumpeters, and this is so in this Udaipur scroll as well (Ill. 5.57). For example, a community of people including figures of merchants, men and women, nuns, and musicians are painted to suggest the demographic of the broader public space adjacent to the Jain monk's assembly and key audience who witnessed the receipt of Jahangir's proclamation in the Agra *vijñaptipatra* (1610) (Ill.5.16, 5.19, 5.20). In fact, the idea of publicly announcing Jahangir's *farmān* to a larger community is a thematic that is suggested in various ways throughout this invitation letter, for example in the depiction of musicians beating drums and cymbals and playing the trumpet. It is quite possible that this

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<sup>439</sup> Granoff and Shinohara, *Pilgrims, Patrons, and Place*.



community or several of its prominent members, apart from the invited monk, were able to see and interpret this idealized pictorial image of Udaipur.<sup>440</sup> Precisely such a prospect of wide-ranging audiences, collective patronage, the combination and adaptation of conventions and forms in the painted letter itself, and the annual circulation of several invitations, provides the basis for my understanding that *vijñaptipatra* forged an important vernacular and popular domain in the material culture of South Asia. In recent years, by challenging the old idea of the eighteenth century as a period of decline, and in making the distinction between the emergence of the “early modern” and “colonial modern” within cultural formations, especially in the early period of British rule, scholars have sought to consider the epistemic possibilities of the “vernacular” and question how historical thinking was pursued within various cultural forms.”<sup>441</sup> Raziuddin Aquil and Partha Chatterjee write, “...there is now a further possibility of exploring this period of historical possibilities of transition not teleologically predetermined by the ascendancy of the colonial modern. This could mean early modern elements were not simply erased or lost

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<sup>440</sup> It is difficult to ascertain that such a practice of showing the scroll was followed in the case of Jain painted invitation letters. However, we have many examples of contemporaneous painted scrolls in Rajasthan that were used for storytelling performances by other communities, wherein the “art” object functioned as a “cultural” prop. Pika Ghosh shows us how interpretations of narrative scrolls could change in ever instance of performance. See Jain, *Picture Showmen: Insights Into the Narrative Tradition in Indian Art*; Ghosh, “Unrolling a Narrative Scroll: Artistic Practice and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Bengal”; Ghosh, “The Story of a Storyteller’s Scroll.”

<sup>441</sup> Aquil and Chatterjee, *History in the Vernacular*, 1–24.

forever... despite being suppressed or devalued by the rise of the colonial modern, [they] continued to live a peripheral or subterranean life in the domain of the vernacular.”<sup>442</sup> The local artist of the 1830 Udaipur scroll extolled a charismatic landscape inhabited by prosperous urbanites and powerful groups, and projected a contiguous Jain landscape in relation to other religious domains throughout the length of the scroll. Employing his knowledge of the canon and style of Udaipur court painting and mapping practices in an extensive and nuanced way, the artist’s work on this scroll exemplifies how alternate regional imaginings of place-making—in the midst of emergent visual practices, bazaars, regional polities, religious institutions, and empires in the early nineteenth century—were redefined and embedded in *circulating* painted invitation letters. This remarkable multiplicity provides an avenue by which we can examine the way nineteenth-century religious movements and establishments crossed the boundaries between British and princely India—a field of inquiry that many scholars of South Asian History have noted requires more research.<sup>443</sup>

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<sup>442</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>443</sup> For example see, Bangha, “Courtly and Religious Communities as Centres of Literary Activity in Eighteenth-Century India: Anandghan’s Contacts with the Princely Court of Kishengarh-Rupnagar and with the Math of the Nimbarkar Smapraday in Salemabad”; Urban, “The Marketplace and the Temple: Economic Metaphors and Religious Meanings in the Folk Songs of Colonial Bengal”; Ramusack, “Punjab States: Maharajas and Gurudwaras: Patiala and the Sikh Community”; Saha, “The

The visual trope of processions employed by artists and poets of Udaipur for non-courtly audiences signals that broader audiences perceived royal processions as a significant ritual in visual and pictorial terms. One way of interpreting this code is to examine how its reception was connected to the occurrence of the *sawāri* as a daily ritual on the streets of Udaipur or as a festive procession on special days, which we examined in the previous chapter on Udaipur court paintings that depict a chorography of the city. The semantic content of such public spectacles and their viewing has been discussed in anthropological terms which have yielded a thick description of how the political and territorial domains of colonial rule were enacted in public performative contexts.<sup>444</sup> Note, however, that the boundaries between the performative meanings embedded in a *sawāri* as a spectacle and the pictorial representation of a *sawāri* can become rather blurred when we considering how this enactment is codified as a trope within both the daily historical “records” and “diaries” of the Udaipur court and by poets in literary poems. The former have been discussed in the previous chapter by turning to the daily administrative records of Bhim Singh’s and Jawan Singh’s court at Udaipur in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. I will discuss below the employment of processions in the topographical poems

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Movement of Bhakti Along a North-West Axis: Tracing the History of the Puṣṭimārg Between the Sixteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.”

<sup>444</sup> Cohn, “Representing Authority in Victorian India.”

composed by Jain monks and the variety of ways in which monks evoke the visuality of seeing and praising a new city during their travels in the monsoon months.

The Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* of 1830 represents another instance where the artist has cited this motif in an extensive way and extended its semantic content by composing it within the map of a street where processions were practiced and their political economy was visually formulated for broader audiences. It is difficult to assess if the artist of this scroll has elongated his depiction of the street to picture the procession or if he expanded the procession to map the street. By transforming the assumed relationship of how audiences might see and perceive the scroll, the artist sets interpretive processes into action. Monks probably unrolled the unwieldy 72 foot long scroll two to three feet at a time. As viewers slowly traversed the city of Udaipur, images of the densely populated procession attracted their gazes and continually disrupted their progress through the scroll. This would have necessitated contemporary audiences to closely view and re-view the scroll. Its materiality literally forced audiences to see the idealized domain of the palaces in the end only after they had seen multiple, inter-related domains of religiosity, commerce, and authority. The very structure of the painted invitation letter precluded engaging with the whole picture, whether as a large-scale long topographical panorama, a processional painting, a bounded cartographic map, an architectural drawing, or a picturesque view.

Rather, it constituted several pictures that stack up in the mind's eye as one unrolls it, as if to replicate traveling or walking through the city of Udaipur. The continuous disruptions signaled by the scroll, conditioned by the format of the scroll, evoke the challenges in imagining a city in flux that the 1830 invitation letter presents. The visual and analytical quandary of negotiating the pictorial idioms, axes, and double movement parallels how historical viewers and artists negotiated multiple institutions and polities. At the same time, we may read the dynamic corporeal relationship that the scroll establishes as a metaphor for the constantly shifting relationship the art historian has to the historical object.

#### ***5.4. Panegyric Echoes: Visualizing, Writing, and Singing Praises of Udaipur***

In the previous section, I argued that this 1830 Udaipur scroll embodied in its very conception multiple levels of circulation—across pictorial genres, patrons, and audiences. I explored how artists—working outside courtly domains—adapted aesthetic tropes like that of the royal procession, thereby allowing us to examine Indian painting from a defamiliarized perspective that subverts distinctions between courtly and vernacular painting. While we can infer that the artist painted the scroll in the sequence I have discussed above, it is important to consider that the recipient, Jinharsh Suri, who then resided in Bikaner, must have unrolled the scroll to first read the *vijñapti* – the invitation

letter.<sup>445</sup> The attached letter employs poetic renditions in Sanskrit, and regional dialects of Gujarati and Rajasthani to eulogize the invited monk. The valediction states that the Śvetāmbara Jain community at Kesariyāji, near Udaipur, along with the devotees, residents, and the Udaipur ruler, were eager to welcome the eminent monk. The scribes Pundits Rukhabdas and Khushalchand noted that his arrival would bring prosperity to the entire “Mewar country,” and that the day he would arrive would bring unprecedented benefaction. These verses echo the artist’s careful pictorial, if aspirational, imagining of the arrived monk, a time that is yet to come. Such gestures imbued the scroll with multiple temporalities, suggesting that the charismatic landscape of Udaipur would become an “ideal” place after the invited Jain monk’s domain was established.

In considering the *vijñaptipatras* as a genre of letter-writing and their origin within Jain circles, Sastri has explored their possible relation to other forms of Sanskrit literary practices, like older Jain epistolary writing on palm leaf manuscripts, and to the seventeenth-eighteenth century Sanskrit messenger poems (*dūtakāvya*) that referenced similar ideas of sending of invitations and messages to people in different locales.<sup>446</sup> Most

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<sup>445</sup> The location of the delivery address on this scroll and the damage to many other scrolls on the end of the letter suggests the direction in which *vijñaptipatras* were rolled.

<sup>446</sup> I am grateful to Phyllis Granoff for bringing this literature related to the *dūtakāvya* to my attention. For example, Sastri notes the very interesting case of the *Indudūta*. He writes, in form, it is

scribes in the eighteenth and nineteenth century wrote the letters within *vijñaptipatra* partly in Sanskrit and partly in a local dialect, often combining verse and prose to compose the invitation. It appears that while we have some Sanskrit treatises related to the rules and tropes for writing and decorating letters as literary compositions, there was no prescriptive text for *vijñaptipatra* per se.<sup>447</sup> Sastri speculates on the existence of such a letter-writing guide or handbook because several examples suggest that conventions for composing such letters were somewhat standardized by the eighteenth century, similar to the standardization I noted above in the painting of the opening visual icons referring to symbols of faith and prosperity in the Jain religious canon which open painted scrolls.

Within the Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* (1830) as well we see that pandits Rukhabdas and

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a “*vijñapti* or solicitation from Vinayavijaya made to his guru Vijayaprabha-suri who was dwelling at Surat. It purports to be a message sent through *Indu* or the Moon by the author at the time of the *paryushana* and thus resembles the *Meghaduta* where the lovesick Yaksha requests a *megha* or cloud to take a message to his beloved wife at *Alakapuri*, the capital town of Kubera, the god of wealth. The writer Vinayavijaya was staying at Jodhpur and describes the road from Jodhpur to Surat for the guidance of the messenger, as did the yaksha in the *Meghaduta* the way from *Ramagiri* to the said capital of Kubera.” It appears that this particular *Indudūta* manuscript is not dated, but based on the description of a pavilion in Baroda, which has a dated inscription of 1736, it appears to be an early eighteenth century copy. He underscores the importance of *dūtakāvya* for exploring the poetic imagining of geography, topography, and route maps, largely modeled on the ancient Sanskrit classic Kalidasa’s *Meghadūta*. Jinavijayamuni in *Vijnaptitriveni* notes two more letters authored by Vinayvijaya, the author of *Indudūta*, which were sent in Gujarat area and one of them is dated to 1631. See, Śastri, *Ancient Vijñaptipatras*, 5–8. Also see, Sastri, “Critical Survey of Dutakavyas.”

<sup>447</sup> Most of his insights are based on an ancient sanskrit treatise titled, *Patrakaumudi of Vararuchi*, for which Sastri doesn't provide a date. Śastri, *Ancient Vijñaptipatras*, 9–18.

Khushalchand have cited several standard laudatory epithets for the invitee and passages in Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Gujarati, and it may be possible to trace some of these to the letters compiled by Śastri, including parts of the text written in the *Agra vijñaptipatra* (1610).<sup>448</sup>

Having created this pastiche of laudatory texts, either by using a handbook or previous letters, the authors shift to writing in the local Rajasthani dialects of Mewari and Marwari, in order to convey the specificities pertaining to the current invitation to Udaipur.

One of the scribes begins this part of the letter by stating that he is writing on behalf of the entire community (*sangh*) of Udaipur, offering his sincere and humble homage to Śri Jinharsh Suri in the hopes that the tributes would be accepted. He notes that there is peace and happiness in the home of śrī Kesariyaji Maharaja, the prominent Jain *sangh* near Udaipur, and he prays that Jinharsh Suri (*śrijī mahārāja*) may always experience times of happiness, that his reputation increase and expand (*āpa moṭā hō badā hō*), and that he will always bless the city of Udaipur with his divine grace (*kṛpā dṛṣṭi*) and maintain a special relationship with the community (*sangh*) in Udaipur. Compared to many letters in other

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<sup>448</sup> I am grateful to Phyllis Granoff for helping me identify some of the introductory laudatory passages, where the scribes appear to be referring to parts of the introductory text in the *Agra vijñaptipatra* (1610). I aim to evaluate in further detail some of these textual citations related to praising the invited monk in a separate article. Granoff, "Identified."



*vijñaptipatra*, the writers don't employ many different epithets to describe Jinharsh Suri.<sup>449</sup>

However, they characterize the eagerness of the *sangh* in Udaipur to see Jinharsh Suri during the next monsoon (*chaumāsā*) by writing that the “community from here remembers you day and night as a peacock awaits the arrival of the rains.”<sup>450</sup> Having noted this collective desire, the scribes further emphasize that “very big (*mōṭā mōṭā*),” implying rich and famous, merchants await his arrival in this city.

The letter explicitly links the monk's arrival with prosperity (*lābha*) and good reputation (*mahimā*). The writers from the outset explicitly state that the arrival of śrijī Maharaja would be extremely beneficial to “Mewar country (*deś*),” beyond the city of Udaipur which is the place from which the invitation is sent.<sup>451</sup> They further elaborate that the monk's arrival will be advantageous for agricultural production, benefit the beautiful

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<sup>449</sup> The scribes address Jinharsh Suri as *śri*, *śri ji mahārāja* in most parts of the letter and formulate various forms of collective and individual respectful homage (*vaṇdanā*, *trikāl vaṇdanā*, *vaṇdanā ek sau āth vāra*), adhering to standardized tenets of letter writing within *vijñaptipatra*.

<sup>450</sup> “...Śri ji mahārāja rā sadā sukha ānanda rī ghaḍi sadā sarvadā chāhije jī āpa mōṭā ho baḍā ho udaipur na śri sanghā sāthe sadā kṛipā sdṛiṣṭī rākhavo jīnsū viśeś rakhāvsī jī atrā nu śri sanghā rātrā din smaraṇa karyō che jyon chātraka mōra rātra dina varshā ne rathe jyon śri sanghā rāta raiyā so(?) śri sanghā maṭhe kṛipā karke abke chaumāsā udaipura nu karāvsī āpre to vaḍā vaḍā śrāvaka vāta dēkha raiyā che śri sanghā māthe kṛipā pūrna kṛipā huve...”

<sup>451</sup> As discussed in previous chapters, the term Mewar denoted the larger region that was considered the territorial domain of the kings who ruled from its capital city at Udaipur. Even though by the first quarter of the eighteenth century several of the nobles and fiefs in the Mewar court ruled fairly independently, contemporaneous writers employ Mewar to refer to a spatial and historical imaginary that extends beyond the capital city.

people [of the place], bring fame to the administration, and ultimately his visit would propagate goodwill (*kalyāna*) in all spheres (*sarva bāta*).<sup>452</sup> The scribes repeatedly emphasize the benefits that will accrue should Jinhars Suri visit. They also explain about their delay in sending the letter, noting how the Maharaja's arrival would help many people to "emerge" (*udai hosī*) from a plethora of problems. It is likely that such phrases may be a way for the scribes to write their invitation requests in a variety of ways similar to the tropological phrase that implied "you may please arrive early and do not delay your trip (*āpa kṛipā karke vegā padārsī ḍīla karāvsi nahīna*)" (and repeated through the letter and in the merchants' signatures). However, in light of the possible relationship of this *vijñaptipatra* to a wider network of diplomatic letters that were circulating between the Udaipur court and the British officers at this time, which I discuss below, the scribes may also be suggesting the urgency of issues that were facing city.

Towards the end of the letter and before we see the signatures of Udaipur's merchants, the scribes recorded an apology for the delay in sending the "painted letter

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<sup>452</sup> For example, see the following passage:

"... *āchau punyā huve jinī thikāne śriji mahārāja ro paḍārno huve phēra mewāra deśa mein makī jawāro bant(?) hai(?) jinī sāmo dekhāvsi nahī dina sankāḍi(?) āya hai ghanā bhāvya jīva(?) ne samyā(?) ro lābha hosi jina śāsana(?) rī ghani mahimā hosī śri ganaghar(?) mahārāja paḍārsi jaṭe(?) sarva bāta ro kalyāna hōsi...*"

"...Good deeds happen in the places where Śriji Mahārāja proceeds. Now the production of grains has ended(?) in the Mewar country and changing times are not in sight. Days of problems are here thus ...(?) many beautiful lives would be benefited by the (this) timely opportunity, the rule(r) of this place would be famous, where ... Mahārāja would proceed. All spheres would be benefit..."

(*chitralākha*),” as Seth Joravarmalji Bapna was away and Shersingh Mehta, his secretary (*munshi*) was on leave, also noting that it was being sent through the Udaipur ruler’s messenger (*harkāra*).<sup>453</sup> The anxiety reflected in these transmission details further suggests the strategic role of this *vijñaptipatra*. Already by 1818, the British colonial agent James Tod wrote about the lack of mercantile fervor in Udaipur and he had taken it upon himself to revive the city’s mercantile activity by sending his own invitation letters to merchants. The years from 1823 onwards were particularly stressful for the Udaipur ruler Bhim Singh, and even more so for his successor, Jawan Singh, both of whom had to negotiate their own positions and financial needs with the British East India Company and the regional merchants. Yet, Tod’s successor, Colonial Agent Cobbe, depicted in the painted procession, was highly critical of his predecessor’s policies. By Oct 14, 1830, he ensured that the Udaipur Agency as well as the Jaipur Agency were abolished.<sup>454</sup> This abolition not only had implications for the political status of Udaipur as a princely state under indirect British rule, but also implied that the Udaipur rulers would not be able to directly negotiate their rights and allowances with an exclusive British Political Agent residing in Udaipur. The

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<sup>453</sup> Further research on the enlisted merchants may tell us more about the economic space of Udaipur in 1830.

<sup>454</sup> Political Correspondence, 14 October 1830, The National Archives, New Delhi; Also see, Political Correspondence, March-August 1831 which describes the termination of the letter writing offices at Udaipur and Jaipur. See British Library, IOR/F/4/1384/44168

Udaipur ruler Jawan Singh immediately sent a letter to Cobbe stating that he was “hurt” by this treatment.<sup>455</sup> It appears, therefore, that this Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* was sent exactly around the same time in 1830 with the diplomatic aim of propping up another sphere of authority in the city. This scroll therefore suggests that merchant communities who collectively commissioned such painted invitation letters not only effectively displayed their religious piety and inserted their towns into a pilgrimage economy but also reinforced their political and economic authority in the wake of British colonization. I would argue that this Jain *vijñaptipatra* is equally embedded in contemporaneous diplomatic correspondence between the British officers and the Udaipur court.

Although my archival research thus far has not yielded any information as to whether Jinharsh Suri arrived during the monsoon season of 1831, I have been able to establish that the neighborhood around the British residency was transformed into an important Jain neighborhood in 1832.<sup>456</sup> Significantly, the same merchant who played a key role in commissioning the invitation letter built a temple there, and his portrait was

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<sup>455</sup>The neighboring Jaipur Agency was also abolished at this time and both Udaipur and Jaipur were transferred to the Ajmer Agency. See, Vashishtha, *Rajputana Agency, 1832-1858 : a Study of British Relations with the States of Rajputana During the Period with Special Emphasis on the Role of Rajputana Agency*.

<sup>456</sup>Neither the English documents of the Cobbe’s agency nor the Rajasthani daily records of the court’s activities during Jawan Singh’s have revealed information on this account.

prominently painted on the entrance wall in the prevalent style of Udaipur painting (Ill. 5.58 and 5.58 (detail)).<sup>457</sup> The artist of this wall painting has painted this portrait of the merchant Joravarmal Bapna in the same style as the contemporary Udaipur ruler Jawan Singh's portrait was painted in several courtly examples and similar to that used in the scroll artist's pictorial citation of the ruler's image in the Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* (1830) (Ill. 5.48 (detail b), Ill. 5.59).

Even though the scribes most likely wrote the letter after the painted representation of Udaipur city had been completed, the scribes created a letter that cites previous letters of this kind, thereby locating it within a network of *vijñaptipatra* that imagined different towns and cities as charismatic locales. In other words, the citation of previous letters allowed the scribes to exhibit their knowledge of other invitation letters as well as embed the current letter within the established tradition; they also referenced towns that were already located within pilgrimage networks through the circulation of letters. Hirananda Sastri has noted that the custom of sending *vijñaptipatras*, practised by the Svetambara Jains, "originated in the noble idea of repentance and a determination to perform pious deeds in the future." We

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<sup>457</sup>Upon locating the British Residency in Udaipur and tracing some of the old routes around it, I found that the neighborhood, "Sethjī rī Bāri," was predominantly occupied by Jain merchants and monks in the nineteenth century. It appears that the expansion of Udaipur city in this direction, then on city's outskirts, was spurred by the building of the Jain temple by Sethji Joravarmal Bapna. The temple has been expanded and renovated in recent years however the entrance courtyard to the main shrine has been maintained as it was originally built.

have also seen that the sending of *vijñaptipatras* was associated with the notion of merit and fortune—in terms of the benefits it would bring to a place and its citizens. By highlighting these possible connections between the sending of the Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* (1830) and diplomatic conversations of the 1830s as seen within the correspondences between the British East India Company and the Udaipur court, I have underscored how the economy of *vijñaptipatra* played a central role in multiple spheres in nineteenth century India, and their significance stemmed far beyond the exclusively religious concerns of the Jain community.

In order to more fully comprehend how historical audiences might have perceived the multiple registers of place-making that we see within the elaborately conceived Udaipur *vijñaptipatra*, it is important to survey related literary and performative genres that used the trope of praise to construct memories of an urban locale. Itinerant Jain monks (*yati*) composed these *gajals*, a highly-repetitive poetic form consisting of a series of monorhymed couplets, that sought to evoke their experience of seeing new cities. The canonical form of *ghazal* is a mystical poem of love and desire for a human being, divine person, or other abstract object that dominantly included a lover intoxicated with passion. On the form of the *ghazal*, Frances Pritchett and Shamsur Rehman Faruqi write that “*ghazal* can be said to be unified: since its verses share meter, rhyme, and usually end-refrain as well, it has a

powerful symmetry and cohesion. In terms of content, however, each two-line verse is an independent, free-standing poem, making its own effect with its own internal resources.<sup>458</sup> Except for rare and special cases, there is no narrative or logical “flow” from one verse to the next; if the verses were rearranged, or one or two removed, usually the action would not even be detectable.” Khetal, a poet who identifies himself as a Jain *yati* belonging to the Kharatara Gaccha sect, composed the *Udaipur ri Gajal* in 1718.<sup>459</sup> In these couplets he evoked the beauty of the palace and court, gardens and lakes, markets and temples, and the city’s diverse communities and connoisseurs. In presenting aspects of this *gajal*, I do not intend to use the verses that evoke Udaipur as an alluring city as the passageway through which we can access the pictorial vignettes of the scroll. Yet, as we shall see, the collocation of visuality within *vijñaptipatras* and *gajals* sheds light on the cultural milieu within which these artifacts were circulated and perceived. Both were created in the context of the traveling cultures of the Jains. Both were heterogeneous cultural formations that sought to constitute a place as a charismatic landscape. The panegyric modes of such *vijñaptipatras*

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<sup>458</sup> Pritchett and Faruqi, “Lyric Poetry in Urdu: The Ghazal,” 9.

<sup>459</sup> Kavi Khetal, *Udaipur ri Gajal*, 1718, Agarchand Nahata Jain Granthālaya (Accession No. MS 7677), All translations of the poem seen in this chapter are mine. Khetal also composed *gajals* on Mewar’s former capital fort Chitor (1691) and the city of Ajmer (1730). In raising questions on how we may interpret “contextual portraits” painted by Udaipur’s artists, Molly Aitken suggests that comparing the artist’s eye to the “mind’s eye” set up in the *Udaipur ri Gajal* for example in the processional imagining of the urban space might open new avenues of research. See, Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 127–130.

and *gajals* raise multiple questions related to the negotiation of religious and worldly concerns within domains of sectarian travel and on the framing of subjective encounters with new places in canonical terms of praising a place.

Khetal's *gajals* are mixed-language poems that use dialects of Rajasthani, Brajbhasha, Awadhi, Gujarati, Punjabi, and Persian. The mixing of languages puts these *gajals* in the same field as *Rekhta*, a Persianate term for mixed Hindi-Urdu (*Khari Boli*).<sup>460</sup> *Rekhta* poetry exhibited strong connections with classical Brajbhasha literature, and it was practiced as a hybrid idiom across the circles of Islamicate Sufis, Krishna devotees, Mughals, Rajputs, and Sikhs. The large archive of *Rekhta gajals* on cities like Lahore, Calcutta, Bikaner, and Surat strongly suggests that Jain monks, too, participated in creating this multilingual literary culture that focused on crafting the regional memory of cities.<sup>461</sup> Jain participation in this poetic tradition runs counter to the vision of the Jain community as insular world and

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<sup>460</sup> See, Bangha, "Rekhta: Poetry in Mixed Language: The Emergence of Khari Boli Literature in North India"; For the relation of *Rekhta* to Urdu poetry in 18th century Delhi, see, Faruqi, "Conventions of Love, Love of Conventions: Urdu Love Poetry in the Eighteenth Century."

<sup>461</sup> My reading of these *gajals* has led me to formulate a separate research project on these various city poems, beyond the scope of this chapter, which considers their role in forging memories of places that were imbued with a sense of visuality and cross-cultural cosmopolitan literary practices within vernacular domains. Nandita Prasad Sahai has mined some *gajals* of Marwar as narratives of alternate socio-cultural histories by interpreting them as an archive of crafts and associated craftsmen in the early modern city. See, Sahai, *Politics of Patronage and Protest: The State, Society, and Artisans in Early Modern Rajasthan*.



works against scholarship that seeks to distance “Jain” *gajals* from “Muslim” *ghazals*.<sup>462</sup> I instead suggest that Jain *yati* titled these poems as *gajals*, firstly, because they created couplets based on the form of contemporaneous Indo-Persian *ghazals*, and, secondly, because they adapted literary tropes from circulating, topographical Indo-Persianate *ghazals*.<sup>463</sup> It is possible that these itinerant monk-poets thereby saw themselves as engaging in cosmopolitan dialogues with early modern poets, across the world from Turkey to Iran and Central Asia to India, who composed such city poems from the beginning of the sixteenth century and continued well into the nineteenth century.

The earliest surviving long poem on a city in the form of an independent *ghazal* dates

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<sup>462</sup> For example, in the first published compilation (1964) of these *Rekhtā gajals*, Vikram Singh Rathore views them at best as “Jain” examples associated with “Hindu” Sanskrit classical poetry describing cities (*nagarvārnana*). Rathore, *Parampara, Rajasthani Ghazal Sangrah*, vii.

<sup>463</sup> For instance, in relation to an early example of *Rekhta* written in Hindavi in a *masnawi* form, *Bikat Khānī* (1625) by author Muhammad Afzal, also known as Afzal Gopal, Imre Bangha notes that the reason for its neglect by eighteenth century Urdu poets can be that “probably before the nineteenth century ‘Hindi’ and ‘Urdu’ represented a *literary* division within Hindavi manifest in metrical forms and genres (rather than in language or script.” He further notes, “Padas, dohas or kabittas were not accepted as part of the high Urdu tradition no matter how Persianate their vocabulary. In much the same way no *ghazal* or *rubai* could be produced within the Hindi tradition even if it lacked Persianate vocabulary.” In this regard as well *Rekhta gajals*, that are produced in the seventeenth century and several examples that remain popular until the end of the nineteenth century, can be explored further to understand questions of overlaps of genres, metres, and language in North India. Bangha, “*Rekhta: Poetry in Mixed Language: The Emergence of Khari Boli Literature in North India*,” 62.

to 1404 (by the Timurid poet Sayfi of Bukhara).<sup>464</sup> Sunil Sharma has noted that by the sixteenth century, poems describing public and imperial spaces, cataloging craftsmen and professionals, as well as comparing subjective urban imaginaries of various cities came to be written about every major urban center in the Mughal, Iranian, Central Asian, and Ottoman regions. Sharma delineates the topos known as *shahrashub* within Indo-Persian city poems that sought to celebrate a place's vigor and vitality. He argues that poets employed *shahrashub* as a panegyric not to represent urban centers "realistically," but rather as a topos around which they could fuse a variety of historical, ethnographic, and spatial information. While defining the constitutive elements of *shahrashub* that described a city's beautiful buildings, gardens, inhabitants, industries, and economic vitality, Sharma also notes that poets employed this term originally as an "appellation for a beautiful beloved in a lyric poem," and also as "a short bawdy lyric addressed to a young boy who is engaged in a trade or craft and coquettishly offers his wares to the love-struck poet." In the Indo-Persian context, a poet such as Nurrudin Muhammad Zuhuri employed *shahrashub* in the *Saqinamah* (1616), a text comprised of several poetic genres to "produce a verbal panorama of the new

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<sup>464</sup> Sharma gives several examples of poems of Licani (d. 1434) about Tabriz, Vahidi (d. 1700) about Isfahan, and Sayyida (d. 1707) about Bukhara, composed sometimes as a single narrative in the *masnavi* form or as short unconnected poems. See, Sharma, "The City of Beauties in Indo-Persian Poetic Landscape."

city (*Nawshahr*) on the outskirts of Ahmadnagar.”<sup>465</sup> By way of emphasizing the hybrid nature of *shahrashub* in the Indo-Persianate literary tradition, Sharma notes a second example of Shah Jahan’s poet laureate Abu Talib Kalim Kashani, who composed a *masnavi* on Akbarabad (Agra, 1640).<sup>466</sup> In both these instances, the poets give us a literary tour of the city and present a striking engagement with the cosmopolitan nature of the city, cataloguing its people engaged in diverse crafts and recognizing the diverse ethnicities represented in the city. Sharma argues that the combination of vignettes in these poems, that interweave descriptions of the commercial vibrancy of the city with metaphorical allusions that praised the poet’s patrons, makes such city poems valuable traces of places that have otherwise “vanished from memory.” While some of the Jain monks explore homo-erotic aspects and the imaginary of the city as a beautiful woman often seen in Persianate *shahrashub*, in most instances, it appears that Jain monks like Khetal chose to compose Rekhta *gajals* because of the flexibility, breadth, and popularity of the *shahrashub* topos, in particular, offered for praising and celebrating the novelty of cities in the context of travel. Poetry, in general, offered a space to expand their gaze to subjects beyond Jain pilgrimage and religiosity. We will see that these motifs that define the *shahrashub* topos are echoed in various

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<sup>465</sup> Zuhuri was active at the Nizam Shahi and Adil Shahi courts at Ahmadnagar and Bijapur in the Deccan at this time. See, *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>466</sup> *Ibid.*

combinations and adaptations in Rekhta gajals, for example in the poetry by Kharatara Gaccha yati Jatmal Nahar who composed the *Lahore ki Gajal*, the very first known example of a Rekhta topographical poem.<sup>467</sup> The colophon does not reveal an exact date, though the poet situates this composition in relation to the Mughal emperor Jahangir's reign (1605-1627). Like Kashani's Indo-Persian Akabarabad *ghazal*, Jatmal Nahar begins by emphasizing how Lahore mesmerizes and captivates its visitors. It is also critical to note that Jain monks perceived the Indo-Persianate genre of the *ghazal* as an apt choice compared to models available within contemporaneous Sanskrit and vernacular literary traditions dedicated to pilgrimage and sacred sites. It is quite possible that Khetal's gajals were combining and adapting *nagarvarṇana* topoi from courtly poetry, discussed in chapter three, and as seen adapted in the poetry of *Jagvilās* (1746). For now I have been unable to discern if and how he

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<sup>467</sup> In the *Lahore ki Gajal*, the poet Jatmal Nahar praises the physical traits of this city and situates it within a broader geography. Along with describing the palaces, gardens, bazaars and its craftsmen and tradesmen, intellectuals ranging from mullahs to pundits in various fields, he devotes many verses to the beautiful women of the city. While the poet enumerates the temples, mosques, and shrines in the city, he doesn't give any specific importance to Jain temples. He idealizes emperor Akbar's reign by comparing it to the idea of a *rāmrajya*, and concludes by describing the imagery of paradise, flora and fauna of the beautiful gardens, on outskirts of the city. While it is currently difficult to suggest if Jatmal Nahar translated and adapted any specific Indo-Persianate gajal on Lahore into this Rekhta example, I intend to explore this question in my separate research project on Rekhta city poems. It is striking that in this example, the poet doesn't fix his gaze on the craftsmen to that extent as he is taken by describing the beautiful women of Lahore. It is indeed revealing he does not see this literary approach as being antithetical to how a Jain monk could evoke the city during his travels related pilgrimage. My interpretations are based on the manuscript copy in the Agarchand Nahata Jain Granthālaya (Accession No. MS 7674)

refracts off both of the place-centric literary topoi that were circulating in northern India, though that mediation would be enticing for exploring cross-culturation in early modern place-centric literary culture.

Khetal does, however, begin the Udaipur *gajal* by composing dedicatory verses to several deities, following established formulae in Sanskrit praise poems and alluding to panegyric tropes from regional court poetry. Although Khetal identifies himself in the colophon as a Kharatara Gaccha Jain *yati*, in the introductory couplets, he fashions himself as chanting the praises and seeking protection from the Mewar court's family deity of Eklingji, as well as the deity of Śrinathji and the Naths of Nathadwara. Udaipur rulers negotiated between these two Shaivite and Vaishnavite religious domains in the eighteenth century to build their image as the rightful rulers of Mewar. Khetal expands this list to include deities and temples in the wider Mewar region, which were worshipped by the nobility and citizens of Udaipur.<sup>468</sup> Having located Udaipur within a sacred regional geography that catered to diverse beliefs, Khetal introduces Udaipur's palaces in the following manner.

Verse 8

*śrī dīwāna kā durbāra, dīsai pola rāja dyāra*  
*khāsā urkāra khānāka, nobata ghurata nisānāka*

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<sup>468</sup> It is rather surprising that neither Mount Abu nor Kesariyāji (an important Svetāmarā Jain community near Udaipur, which is specifically mentioned in the textual letter of the Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* (1830) discussed above) are incorporated to construct this religious geography.

*The court of śrī dīwan,<sup>469</sup> the gateway and the royal doorway is seen  
The special guards, the various kinds of drums, trumpets, and hoisted flags*

Verse 9

*āgai mahala ati utanga, nava nava rāvaṭi navranga  
Jhāṅkhi khūba jharokāka, jālidhara dila jokhāka*

*The palaces are very high, there are several colored domes and pavilions  
The views from the pavilions are beautiful, pierced screens captivate one's hearts*

Khetal embeds the idea of seeing the city from various geographical and subjective positions—through the eyes of the ruler and through the eyes of both travelers and citizens of Udaipur who may admire its beauty. For example, the above couplets describe the various architectural spaces and building features as a spectator approaching the palace from the street would see them. Simultaneously, Khetal presents the view that one would be able to see of the city from within the royal spaces of the pavilions and pierced screens. In the same vein, Khetal also employs the motif of the royal procession.

Verse 20

*narpatī baiṭhkara nāvā ka, dekhata saila darīyāvāna ka  
chaka su dekhika chatrīka, palkān bīca jyuṅa putrīka*

*The ruler sits in the royal boat, he leisurely sees the lake*

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<sup>469</sup> The Udaipur rajas presented themselves as the *dīwān*, the administrative representatives, of the family deity Eklingji

*He proudly sees the various domed pavilions, as if one sees one's own sons (?)*

Khetal's imagining of vision connects the city to the Udaipur ruler's body and eyes.<sup>470</sup> He evokes the feeling of the ruler's personal pride in and affection for Udaipur, albeit intermingled with power commanded by a king who had sons to continue his lineage. The vision imagined here is not simply one of a royal viewer seeing the city as subject to his authority but as a place capable of arousing paternal pride and attachment. This vision is also one in which spectators admire royal spaces and wonder what it might mean to inhabit the vantage points from which the royal person admires the city.

Following the verses that speak of the ruler's vision and admiration, Khetal devotes several couplets to describing the elegance with which women fill and carry water along the lakefront. He takes voyeuristic pleasure in describing their walk and actions and concludes this thematic by turning to the topos in Indo-Persianate *ghazals* that imagined the city as a beautiful woman.

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<sup>470</sup> I am still speculating and trying to understand the metaphors of seeing embedded here. Perhaps Khetal does not use "between one's eyelids (*palkā bīcha*)" in a merely literal way, but as a metaphor for an imaginary seeing, when the eyes are shut and thus the lids are closed together, such that the imagined sons are the more relished as being desired-when-absent (or not yet born), as opposed to admired-when-present. Even the king, then, in this trope, has desires that are not fulfilled, and the image of Udaipur is an image that satisfies desire for what is not there (yet). I am grateful to Daniel Bosch for urging me to think more on this theme and to Allison Busch for her cautionary note if I might be over interpreting here.

## Verse 26

*kyā gulbadana hai mahirīka, nija vasa karata hai saharīka  
cīra rūpa ghāṭa parīvārika, surata dekha saba vaisārīka*

*What a rose-bodied beauty is she! One who captivates all people of the city  
Cloths, forms, lake-side steps, families (?)<sup>471</sup>, a face seen by all travelers*

Khetal praises the beauty of the city and the beauties seen along the lakefront. He also plays with the idea of the face of a city being the very façades of Udaipur’s lakefront palaces, and, in so doing, asserts his own gaze as a traveler to the city. The metaphor of the traveler also participates in the trope of “first vision”—love at first site. Through this verse, Khetal shifts from the royal gaze to the traveler’s gaze, opening the way for his observations of everyday life along the lakefront like his observations on lovers sitting by the lake—all enjoying this site and taking pleasure in spending time there.

The evocation of the bazaar was key to all Indo-Persianate *ghazals*, city descriptions (*nagarvarṇana*) in Sanskrit and Brajhasha, Rekhta *gajals*. Khetal explicitly says, “religious domains are aplenty, now please shift your gaze towards the bazaar.”<sup>472</sup> He then describes bustling shops selling sweets, perfumes, and cloth, and notes the various trading

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<sup>471</sup> This part of the couplet is rather unclear to me. I am not sure if the poet is describing the various forms and people he sees by the lake steps or trying to make a point about the beauty of people at the lake steps.

<sup>472</sup> Khetal devotes only three verses to some of the city’s temples before moving his gaze to the bazaars and does not necessarily seek to describe any of the Jain temples in particular detail.



communities, including the Jain Oswals and Maheshwaris in the mix amongst the Purohits and the Palliwals. We have seen that *vijñaptipatras*, which facilitated the travels of Jain monk-poets, also included prominent painted vignettes of various kinds of shops and religious spaces. Thus in both the *gajals* and *vijñaptipatra*, Jain identity was centrally situated in the figure of the merchant who populated the bazaar. It is important to keep in mind that *yatis* were responsible for maintaining the manuscript libraries attached to Jain temples, and John Cort has shown that often monastic collections traveled along with monk-communities.<sup>473</sup> Since the monk-poets' imaginings of new cities were formulated in the first place by the *vijñaptipatra* received as invitations to travel, these poets might have perceived evocations of a bazaar and ethnographic details within Indo-Persianate *ghazals* as a familiar topos, connected to the paintings that they knew well. This parallel trope might have provided a key impetus for their adaption of the *ghazal* form. It is equally significant to note that authors of letters in the early nineteenth-century *vijñaptipatra* of Baroda, Amodanagar, Sinor, and Channi, in turn incorporated *gajals* within the textual letter as means to praise

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<sup>473</sup> Cort, "The Jain Knowledge Warehouses: Traditional Libraries in India," 80–84. In my research thus far, I haven't come across other literary works that were authored by any of the monk-poets who composed topographical *gajals*.

the beautiful city that was visualized in the painted letter, thereby recognizing and reinforcing this thematic connection.<sup>474</sup>

Khetal ultimately frames the subject of his Udaipur *gajal* within the poem's colophon as his praise (*tārif*) for the city (*sahar*) which he wished to share with the city's connoisseurs (*gunīyana*) and worthy audiences (*lāyak jana*). Even though the poem is dedicated to the current Udaipur ruler Amar Singh II, none of its couplets evoke the idea of spectators seeing the ruler or his processions, a departure from regional court poetry. Rather, everyone is imagined in the act of admiring Udaipur. A description of Udaipur's urban layout that details architectural precincts, streets, neighborhoods, and geographical features in relation to each other, is evoked as if the poet is giving us a walking tour of the city. Khetal often urges his listeners and readers to see behind (*pāche*) or in front (*āge*) or what comes first (*prathama*), elaborating on the sequence of sites one would see and the variety of vantage points one could inhabit to appreciate various facets of the urban life and design. We have noted, for instance, that having elaborated on the Udaipur palace from the point of view of the ruler—who notes its architectural features, the front courtyard populated by elephant and horses from all over the world—Khetal shifts his gaze to the lakefront, literally

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<sup>474</sup> Apart from the employment of *gajals* in these two examples, Sastri shows us that some writers interacted with literary tropes of praise and idealizing a city in a few examples. See, Śastri, *Ancient Vijñāptipatras*, 55–61.

incorporating this shift in literary and cartographic terms. The poet employs various tropes to evoke references in his audience's mind to inter-textual and inter-visual ideas in circulation for describing cities. At the same time, he incorporates broader cartographic and spatial cues through the poem.

This sense of experiencing Udaipur's thriving neighborhoods and urbanity on foot can be further appreciated if we consider that Khetal chose to craft the memory of Mewar's former capital fort, Chitor, by similarly, emphasizing his own time and space. He begins the *Chitor ki Gajal* (1691) by eulogizing the Chitor fort, and throughout the poem he is most interested in fusing panegyric and historical ideas by describing the fortified nature of Chitor.<sup>475</sup> Khetal also constructs the urban imaginary of the Chitor fort as a structure superior to many other forts in the towns of Ajmer, Gwalior, Jaisalmer, Jhalor, Ranthambhor, Bikaner and Amber, where Rajput court cultures were still active at the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>476</sup> The context of the fort motif that permeates this *gajal*

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<sup>475</sup> For example, Khetal opens this *gajal* with the following couplet:

*“after submitting the mind to chaturbhujā (evoking strong and the broad shouldered form of Vishnu)  
[And] resolving the mind and choosing the right place (as in a site or location)  
All the sixty-four chaṭrapatī (kings of kings) desire to build the fort of Chitor”*

<sup>476</sup> Khetal also lays emphasis on Chitor's invincibility. He writes,

*“Fort Chitor is all topsy-turvy, as if it is a Lanka in the Ocean  
Off the banks of Bedachpur, [a fort] extremely deep and certainly difficult to penetrate...  
[Chitor's] crenellations are beautiful and strong; masons have built this fort with enthusiasm  
Seven gateways are located in the direction of Lanka (south), the Rawats seated here enjoy themselves”*

suggests that the poet adopted the pseudonym “Khetal,” meaning guardian of a doorway of a fort or a region at large, while writing this *gajal* in 1691. While Khetal recounts tales of heroism symbolically related to Chitor’s defeat, he celebrates the fort itself as invincible in the present. It is also noteworthy that Khetal’s *Chitor ki gajal* is the only topographical Rekhta poem marked by the complete absence of the spatial vignette of the bazaar. This suggests that Khetal neither perceived Chitor as an urban center in the late seventeenth century, nor did he seek to construct it simply as a nostalgic edifice of a glorious past, *in spite* of the fact that the Mewar rulers were forced to relocate to Udaipur in the sixteenth century. Instead, over the course of many couplets, Khetal asserted that he describes the fort as he sees it now, with his own eyes (*āṅkhu dekhā*), thereby emphasizing his own presence and his specific relation to Chitor as a site seen by a traveler. In the Chitor *gajal* Khetal’s choices with regard to adopting the tropes of nostalgia present within Indo-Persianate topographical *ghazals* was at best highly selective, suggesting that we need to look further for the other models from which he is adapting. This is also true of later Jain monk-poets. A large corpus of the Rekhta *gajals* on cities were composed when poets in the

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Additionally, Khetal persistently evokes figures like Rani Padmini, Rana Sangha, and Gora-Badal, whose stories of valor and sacrifice for Mewar had already been memorialized by this time period in several other historical-literary accounts, as traced by Ramya Sreenivasan in her exhaustive study on the Rajput queen Padmini. See, Sreenivasan, *The Many Lives of a Rajput Queen : Heroic Pasts in India c. 1500-1900*.

Indo-Persianate tradition had already shifted their preference towards *shahrashob* or lament and nostalgia in the eighteenth century. We read in these *gajals* Jain monk-poets' investment in continuing at least some parts of the *shahrashub* topos that provided a poetic form for praising and idealizing townscapes during their annual visits to new places.<sup>477</sup>

Recognizing that Rekhtā *gajals* are deeply invested in celebrating local urbanity, we must also keep in mind how Khetal not only begins the Udaipur *gajal* by situating Udaipur within a sacred geography as a way to link the city's territorial links to broader religious domains, but also, towards the end of the poem, he imagines Udaipur's territoriality in relation to the subcontinent's broader geography and the court's historical interests. He writes,

Verse 74

*dillipati su yākika, rākhata hindu ki nākika*  
*hindūstāna kī sarhada, ripudala kīna cala bala raḍya*

*More resolute than the ruler of Dilli, he keeps high the nose (pride) of the Hindus*<sup>478</sup>

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<sup>477</sup> Sunil Sharma has noted that various shifts in early modern Indo-Persianate poems on cities, and the transition from poets employing the topos of *shahrashub*, the thriving and beautiful city in the present, to *shahrashob*, dawn of the city of lament or nostalgia for the loss of the thriving city in the eighteenth century is one of the most significant one. It is highly unlikely that the Jain monk-poets were not aware of these shifts within the Indo-Persianate sphere. See, Sharma, "The City of Beauties in Indo-Persian Poetic Landscape," 77–78.

<sup>478</sup> The pride of the Hindus is an important trope seen in Rajput court poetry again pointing to the need for further research on the literary models Khetal is combining. I am grateful to Allison Busch for alerting me to this aspect of the couplet.

*[In protecting] the boundaries of Hindustan, groups of enemies have been completely slayed*

Here Khetal attempts to emphatically link Udaipur's territory and power in relation to "Dillipati,"— the ruler of Delhi or the Mughal court.<sup>479</sup> Thus the memory of Udaipur, and more broadly the Mewar court, as one that held up the pride of the "Hindus" both against and in comparison to the Mughals (often recounted through the telling of specific Mughal-Rajput conflicts) is reinscribed here and metaphorically expands Udaipur's boundaries. In the process of establishing Udaipur's regional territorial links, and by memorializing the court's role as protectors of the "boundaries of Hindustan." Khetal ingeniously conflates Udaipur with the whole of Hindustan and elides engagement with any specific memories of Mughal-Mewar interactions. After all, by the time of Khetal's writing of the Udaipur *gajal*, many of the mid-seventeenth century stories of the much-publicized Mewar submission to the Mughals were more than half a century old.<sup>480</sup>

Thus these Rekhta *gajals*, in their mixing of literary traditions and languages and articulation of subjective notions of place and history beyond religious concerns—much like

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<sup>479</sup> This particular couplet is preceded by his enumeration of various important sites built by Udaipur rulers on the outskirts of the city like the Jaisamand Lake and Chitor fort, and his re-invocation of the temples at Eklingji. The previous lines also describe how the weekly bazaars bring diverse groups of people to this family deity, and list the fiefdoms of Udaipur's court nobles.

<sup>480</sup> See Chapter one, 1.3

the painted invitation scrolls—constitute a “vernacular intermediary genre.” Francesca Orsini, has shown that such “minor traditions” can be very useful for studying how broader audiences acquired their taste for poetry and art.<sup>481</sup> Yet, the popularity of the Udaipur *gajal* is asserted by the existence of several written copies made into the end of the nineteenth century by a variety of scribes (who identify themselves as *pundits, yatis, and munis*) and who assert their affiliations to various religious establishments across Northwestern India. One of the colophons states, “this *gajal* was sung many times and written several times over.” Monks, nuns, and laypeople, who traveled together during the monsoon season, were most likely the audiences who participated in this larger sphere of oral and poetic imaginings of urban towns.<sup>482</sup> This suggests that the Udaipur *gajal* participated in the crafting of popular historical memories and mediated an affective geography of the city in early modern and early colonial India for at least one hundred and fifty years after its composition. Khetal’s poem had been in circulation for more than hundred years when the 1830 Udaipur

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<sup>481</sup> Francesca Orsini writes, “... It is true that indigenous taxonomies and quasi-histories were already developing in the eighteenth century, *before* the impact of colonial notions of literature and history...while recognizing this natural process of hierarchisation within a literary culture, it is crucial that we also consider the other genres that were current in the literary culture more broadly conceived. Often, we find, such minor or ‘intermediary’ genres provide important clues about the circulation of literary tastes among different audiences.” See, Orsini, *Before the Divide*, 11.

<sup>482</sup> On notions of collective travel during *chowmāsā* and other pilgrimage trails, see Granoff and Shinohara, *Pilgrims, Patrons, and Place*.

invitation was made and thus is useful for reconstructing the likely modes of urban imagining that conditioned the later visual tradition.

Rekhta *gajals* therefore provide a window onto the overlapping social spaces for artistic and literary culture in early modern India. They also allow us to reconsider how in both the Udaipur *vijnpatipatra* (1830) and the *Udaipur ri gajal* (1718), artists and poets forged the imaginary of the city by combining a variety of circulating aesthetic tropes with knowledge of everyday spaces and common experiences of the city. The critical sphere of orality also suggests that the circulation of literary cultures might have been facilitated by “tellings” of Indo-Persianate and Rekhta poems within urban settings and bazaars.<sup>483</sup> We also see that the poets allude to public proclamatory language and several cues on singing the praises of the urbanity of Udaipur and its citizens—magnanimous Jain merchants, for example—are sprinkled through the poem within performative registers. The memory of this *gajal*’s couplets perhaps inflected the local artist’s ways of recalling place or the viewer’s perception of how to see and interpret the scroll. A *gajal*’s couplets also function independently and are often recited in a non-fixed sequence or recalled by connoisseurs in

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<sup>483</sup> See, Francesca Orsini, “Introduction” in Orsini, *Before the Divide*, 11. I also draw upon the role of “tellings” in the circulation of multilingual literary culture in early modern north India based on the presentations by various scholars in a conference, “Tellings, Not Texts: Singing, Story Telling and Performance,” organized by Francesca Orsini. (Center for South Asian Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, June 8-10, 2009)



combinations triggered by affective associations and memories, thus paralleling the materiality of the scroll that poses conditions for interrupted viewing. As a wide variety of indigenous travelers are deeply involved, these artifacts present the potential for understanding questions of place-making, aesthetic sensibilities, notions of territoriality, and historical memory within the popular domain of bazaar economies in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The lake palaces, processions, and bazaars in the city of Udaipur, which, by 1830, had been memorialized in the colonial accounts of James Tod and Alexander Cobbe as hedonistic and evidence of Indian decline, were celebrated as thriving in the *gajals*—and in the 1830 Udaipur *vijñaptipatra*. The literary and visual records thus serve as an important counterpoint to colonial discourse.

### **5.5. “Land of Kings,” 1830: Praise, Maps, and Memories**

B.N. Goswamy opens his introduction to the corpus of Indian paintings in the Sarabhai Collection with the image of the 1774 Udaipur *vijñaptipatra*, and employs the ways we unfurl and look at a painted scroll as a metaphor for the challenges one faces in writing the history of Indian painting.

“But looking at Indian Painting as a whole is also akin to spreading an unending, embroidered scroll before oneself. There is in it such intricacy of pattern, such variety, clear passages that seem to be unconnected with what has gone before but are in fact all tied up as if through a meandering floral creeper running across the

scroll from one end to the other, that it is virtually impossible to take all of it in at the same time. All that one can do, therefore, is what one does with long scrolls: ‘read’ them in bit only, a part at a time, and savor each part before passing on to the next.

The many merits of this unhurried manner of reading this scroll, getting to know Indian painting, apart, there are seeming difficulties in writing a consistent account of the history of Indian painting, for we have here a phenomenon that is in some respects unusual.”<sup>484</sup>

He evokes the materiality of such a scroll, which lends itself to being looked at only at a “bit” or a “part” at a time, to recognize and reinforce discontinuities in one’s perception of the complete picture. Such a method of looking highlights Goswamy’s sense of the various discontinuities and silences in the historical archive—such as the lack of documents describing paintings, artists, and spaces of reception. It is an irony that this catalogue of the Sarabhai collection does not walk us through the complicated Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* in its collection.<sup>485</sup> This anomaly captures the ambiguous and fragmented approach scholars have

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<sup>484</sup> Sarabhai Foundation and Goswamy, *Indian Paintings in the Sarabhai Foundation*, 3.

<sup>485</sup> This omission on the part of the author and the Sarabhai collection is compounded by the fact that in general, most collections are ambivalent about letting researchers examine long *vijñaptipatras* in their entirety. I am still navigating permissions to study the Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* (1742) in the Sarabhai collection. Goswamy, for his part, misrecognizes in this introduction the painted *vijñaptipatra* as an “embroidered scroll.” He further proposes that “the best thing may be to approach the work of the Indian artist not in terms of authorship and dates and provenance, but in terms of the spirit which resides in them, something that can broadly be referred to as the ‘*rasa*,’ flavour or sentiment, of these works. This concern with discussing the “spirit” and quintessential essence of artistic practice in India, is a strain that persists in the field, despite of scholarly attempts to critique and problematize this inclination, an issue that I have discussed in greater detail in the Introduction to the dissertation. *Ibid.*, 3–5.

thus far adopted to introduce artifacts like *vijñaptipatra*, whose makers crossed several disciplinary boundaries to constitute complex objects. For many scholars and critics, the painting in these objects was always a notch less refined, less detailed, and less exquisite than that to be found in works produced by artists for patrons in the Mughal, Rajput, and Deccani courts. For others, such *vijñaptipatras* were marginal objects that pertained only to Jain religious history. Such artifacts have been on the margins of *art* because of a perceived lack of quality of the pictures, *and* on the margins of *history* because the pictorial record has been seen as always less reliable than the textual letters. The written word in the invitation letters has in its turn been perceived as insular and divorced from the world of history, culture and politics, a pastiche of hyperbolic idioms that pertain solely to religious circles. Yet at least some examples of such painted invitation letters, like the Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* (1830), are complex artifacts, the circulatory nature of which may force us to reconsider the boundaries between the domains of art, history, literature, and religion. My conclusion here also encapsulates the domains of objects and boundaries of pictorial genres and disciplines that I have negotiated not only in this chapter, but also in this dissertation. I have argued that this Udaipur scroll was expected to function as the carrier of an epistolary message, and to operate in an affective realm to conjure imaginaries of a place, and to make material praise of an urban space, and, additionally, that its senders hoped that such a painted letter

would be effective within the world of real politik and transform the social world of their city and its future.

I have located the unnamed Udaipur painter(s) and the monk-poet Khetal's pursuits at the interstices of several plural vernacular domains related to cultures of travel. Simultaneously, I have also argued that the complexity and embedded nature in which spatial stories are told cautions against extracting any one-to-one relationships of intentionality or translation between these various registers of imagining Udaipur. Subjective accounts of artists, poets, and scribes can be traced only by taking into account how the *vijñaptipatra* and topographical *gajals* were constitutively circulatory in nature. *Vijñaptipatras* announced forthcoming travels, while *gajals* praising places were sung in *bazaars*. The public, mobile nature of these art forms ground our understanding of the making and reception of the visual, textual, and literary images of places represented in *vijñaptipatras* within an established circulating economy of pictorial and textual letters as well as paintings and popular memories of a place.<sup>486</sup> Such a conceptualization permits us to consider the different registers of practice that I have surveyed—those of religiosity and visual culture, in addition to the mercantile practices within the spatial domain of the

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<sup>486</sup> Kajri Jain similarly insists that calendar art must be conceptualized as calendars in order study how this function defined the life of these objects, and not studied only as chromolithographs to recognize a single domain of the new technology its makers adopted. Jain, *Gods in the Bazaar*, 16.

bazaar. These objects must also be seen in light of the emergent polities in their city. They are one among disparate forms of diplomatic communication and letter-writing, while also intersecting with the oral and performative domains of multi-lingual vernacular literary cultures.

The materiality of this Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* (1830)-reinforces a dialectic picture. The placement of the letter at the end of the scroll eliminates any possibility of reading the letter while looking at the paintings. Therefore while the letter and painted vignettes, including the textual labels on the painted city precincts, operate within the realm of praising the city of Udaipur, each one cites its own set of referents, and allows recipients to engage with parts of the scroll independently. Perhaps for some viewers the visual and the textual elements supplement each other. But the painted picture does not merely illustrate the text of the written letter, rather it enhances its function and charisma. The artist of the Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* (1830) innovates as he lays claim to and expands the genre of the invitation letter as a pictorial domain for visualizing a map and chorography of the city. This expansion suggests a desire to show the image of a city—including its key bazaars, religious sites, courtly buildings, important personalities, as well as the procession of the regional ruler and British agent—in its entirety. Thus the artist would draw upon the affective value that a picture populated with endless details tends to evoke of the feeling of

the real world. On the other hand, his radical elongation of the scroll generated an object that continuously disrupts any way of seeing the whole picture of the city. Within this set of dialectics opens a space in which to reconsider what the format of a scroll of this nature—depicting a city street along the vertical axis and a procession traversing this street along the horizontal axis—means with regards to our current thinking on representation of space and place.<sup>487</sup>

The act of unfurling the scroll simulates the entering of the city from its outskirts. Michael de Certeau has critiqued the ways the city has been visualized in tautological terms by artists, mapmakers, architects, and planners.<sup>488</sup> De Certeau instead proposes that we turn to spatial practices like walking, which are performed in a city at the ground level to

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<sup>487</sup> In my future research, I intend to explore further how the materiality and format of scroll employed in the making of Jain *vijñaptipatras* may give further insight into the temporal dimensions of how audiences engaged with them. I would also like to take into account cross-cultural examples especially within the Japanese context that employ similar formats, where scholars have explored how the format impacted the kind of subject matter that were depicted as well as anticipated collective versus individual viewing of works. See, McKelway, *Capitalscapes*; McCormick, *Tosa Mitsunobu and the Small Scroll in Medieval Japan*.

<sup>488</sup> Michel de Certeau argues that artists and mapmakers, on the one hand, have privileged a picture seen from an elevated view point or constructed a place by employing the imperatives of perspectival drawing. On the other hand, architects and planners have often projected utopic concepts of the city by creating it as a “universal and anonymous subject,” organized by various classificatory systems, expected to function as a machine and the “hero of modernity.” de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 91–110.

consider what this act does for the formulation of the imaginary, memory, and subjective maps of a place. He writes,

Escaping the imaginary totalizations produced by the eye, the everyday has a certain strangeness that does not surface, or whose surface is only its upper limit, outlining itself against the visible. Within this ensemble, I shall try to locate the practices that are foreign to the “geometrical” or “geographical” space of visual, panoptic, or theoretical constructions. These practices of space refer to a specific form of *operations* (“ways of operating”), to “another spatiality” (an “anthropological,” poetic and mythic experience of space), and to an *opaque and blind* mobility characteristic of the bustling city. A *migrational*, or metaphorical, city thus slips into the clear text of the planned and readable city.<sup>489</sup>

The practice of walking constitutes a particular kind of practice of everyday life that has the power to communicate plural geographies of a city, including the weaving of memories of being in-the-place. Such recollection of memories necessarily includes subjective procedures of forgetting as well. The Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* (1830) was not a route map that directed its users to turn right or left on a street and follow a particular route to reach Udaipur, nor did its artist seek to represent a measured drawing of the city’s precincts.<sup>490</sup>

The scroll’s artist has cited the picturing of Udaipur’s palaces and processions from court commissions in meaningful ways, while simultaneously transforming the represented street

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<sup>489</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>490</sup> de Certeau reminds us that while “the operations of walking on can be traced in such a way as to transcribe their paths...surveys of routes miss what was the act itself of passing by...Itself visible, it has the effect of making invisible the operation that made it possible.” *ibid.*, 97.

from a metaphorical pictorial element that signaled a thriving city, as seen in earlier *vijñaptipatra*, to one that evokes a sense that the artist is marking the street with specificities. It recalls a sense of being in the place.

The scroll artist's picturing of Udaipur, like Khetal's conjuring of the city in the *Udaipur ri gajal*, suggests a subjective engagement that evokes everyday practices and negotiations. Both artists chose to mediate some of their intimate knowledge of the place through circulating artistic and literary practices. It may be impossible to make visible all aspects of these objects' making. At the same time, the act of looking at the traces of these practices—while unrolling the scroll itself—persuasively enlivens the sense of walking into a new city and viewing its precincts and people, allowing one's eye to pass by some in haste and assess others in detail. This painted invitation letter thus might have also sparked the memory of its viewers in multiple subjective ways. An audience familiar with the image of the city through court paintings or other *vijñaptipatras*, or through listening or reading *gajals* that praised the city, or through his or her own vivid or fragmentary recollections from traveling and walking the streets of Udaipur might have constructed the place as a palimpsest of images, maps, itineraries, and tellings of poems and stories. The experience of fragmentary images on the scroll captures their affective experience. The scroll artist may have expected viewers of his map of the city to recall their knowledge of the Udaipur,



gained from fellow travelers, the city's residents, and perhaps from institutions like guesthouses often associated with religious institutions (*serais* and *dharamsālās*) that served as halting places for pilgrims on the way to the city.

The Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* in terms of its form and content presents an opportunity to rethink how makers and audiences in nineteenth century India conceived of maps and mapping from vantage points quite different from not only from those of British colonial agents like Tod and Cobbe, but also detached from the gaze of regional rulers like Bhim Singh and Jawan Singh. The Udaipur *vijñaptipatra* (1830) must be recognized as a bazaar image that formulates a vernacular mapping practice—not only because of the translated images and mixing of pictorial tropes that we see in this scroll but also because of the senses of the street, the everyday, of a plethora of spatial stories that one encounters in it. Such cultural economies of praise for the flourishing city and circulation of its image as charismatic that circumscribed popular maps in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, not only colonial narratives of political decline and disintegration. Investigation of *vijñaptipatras* opens up an avenue to examine the *bazaar* and the views it offers on politics and on vernacular practices of place-making in this time period.

If Khetal's Udaipur *gajals* were repeatedly copied at the behest of several patrons as well as sung in the *bazaars*, then they would have been capable of forging profound

memories of belonging to a place. The poet's description of Udaipur, not only celebrates its court, markets, temples, lakes, and people, but also invokes the city's relationship to place-worlds of its past by mentioning the fort of Chitor and the Emperor Akbar. The poem is located in the present place, but is open to spaces of the past as well.

The Udaipur city in 1830 that the scroll's artist and scribe and the monk-poet Khetal imagine is a flourishing praise-worthy world worthy of circulation. It exists alongside and possibly contests Tod's and Cobbe's construction of Udaipur as a place that is declining economically, politically, culturally, and artistically. Udaipur's map is produced through practices of praise that are pictorially and poetically meaningful—like the citation of the local artistic style and the aesthetic trope of processions, and an inter-visibility and inter-textuality capable of formulating and reinforcing how broader audiences beyond the British, imagined and remembered the city and its territoriality. If Khetal's exploration of panegyric tropes enabled him to engage with cosmopolitan imaginaries of cities, to adapt cross-cultural literary idioms, and to formulate a gaze that privileged an urban subjectivity over a religious one, then the artist of the 1830 Udaipur scroll employed praise to subvert political and economic realities. Having pictorially praised Udaipur's thriving urbanity in the first 60 feet of the scroll, he paints into reality the fact that the city's suburban frontiers are not dominated solely by the British. On the opposite side of the street, he has painted

the anticipated assembly of the invited Jain leader Jinharsh Suri on a scale that matches that of the British residency, the emblem of emergent British rule, thus imbuing the scroll with multiple temporalities and asserting that the colonial and religious powers are equal and competing domains of authority in the city.

The Udaipur agency was abolished by the colonial agent Captain Alexander Cobbe a couple of months before this invitation letter was sent in 1830. This political-economic loss drives an alternate articulation of territoriality which imagines the counterfactual: that the charismatic landscape of Udaipur could become truly ideal after the invited Jain monk's domain was established. The complexity of networks across religious, political and economic spheres, and the inter-cultural nature of artifacts, points us to the irreducibility and un-intelligibility of daily practices. But such incommensurability is not a cause for denying the plurality of knowledge and the multiple experiences that inform the making of art, artifacts, history, maps, and places.

## Epilogue

### AN ART HISTORY OF PRAISE AND PLACE

An examination of the panegyric tropes of place-making within the art and literature of eighteenth-and-nineteenth century South Asia allows us to expand our understanding of the art of place in this time period, which is generally thought to be deeply inflected by symbols of decline.<sup>491</sup> I argue that, seen collectively, the practices of depicting place discussed in this dissertation examine the economy of praise as an affective strategy for the creation of alternate pictures and perceptions at this time in history. Analysis of the 1830 scroll in particular evinces that Udaipur artists were formulating and continuously re-inventing the grounds for an art history of praise and place as they circulated across the domains of the court, the bazaar, and the British East India Company. The historical popularity of painted invitation scrolls also underscores that many artists and literati employed the topoi of travel and description in the eighteenth-and-nineteenth century, even though we only recently have turned our attention to the task of interpreting texts and images created by non-European travelers and to the task of interpreting their

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<sup>491</sup> See chapter one, 1.1 and chapter four, 4.3

conceptions of place in South Asia.<sup>492</sup> The *Jagvilās* and paintings of the Jagnivas lake-palace and Ghasi's picturing of Jawan Singh in devotional place-worlds allow us to see how Udaipur's court painters responded and innovated the *bhāva* of a place to mediate both within and outside the tradition and in order to create pictures that alter courtly aesthetics and perform imperative functions in different ways per changing times and politics.

Sumathi Ramaswamy layered Keith Basso's formulation on place-worlds. She proposed a postcolonial perspective, and placed questions of power, colonization of imagination, and subversion of dominant acts of place-making and history-making at the center of our discourses. The chapters in this dissertation show that taking into account the travels of place-makers, audiences, and material objects opens us to new ways of looking at familiar imaginings in eighteenth century Udaipur painting anew. Our own interpretive travels into place-making across genres and affective practices—in this case painting, poetry, maps, letters, travelogues—hold even greater potential to open our minds to many more parallel, alternative, comparative and connected imaginings of place and time in the long eighteenth century in South Asia.

On the one hand, we see that through panegyric tropes, poets were able to engage with cosmopolitan imaginaries of cities, to adapt cross-cultural literary idioms, and to

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<sup>492</sup> Alam and Subrahmanyam, *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries, 1400-1800*.

formulate a gaze that privileged urban subjectivity over religious subjectivity in the eighteenth century. On the other hand, we see that artists employed pictorial tropes to celebrate charismatic cities and to create alternate city maps which subverted political and economic realities envisioned by British cartographers. While praise and panegyric tropes have entered into studies of the history of courtly culture in medieval India<sup>493</sup>, there has been less scholarly attention given to how the descriptive and metaphoric potential of these tropes functioned within cultural practices on the margins of court cultures in early modern and colonial India. The language and affect of praise allowed for the forging of deep sentimental bonds between a community and its object of devotion. While praise is a descriptive, and its contours can be easily become standardized, the performance and interpretation of praise may point us to nuanced subjective spaces which are in dialogue with specific cultural and historical contexts.

The concept of time in Indian History has received greater attention. Romila Thapar has suggested that two notions of time—cyclic and linear—were simultaneously valent in early India, and that their functions were different. Historical consciousness existed and “time as a metaphor for history” is understood in terms of how attitudes towards pasts

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<sup>493</sup> For example, see, Ali, *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India*.

were cultivated, how pasts were memorialized.<sup>494</sup> At one instance, Thapar shows us that within the *Purāṇas* and Buddhist and Hindu texts, “space is also projected as time”<sup>495</sup> to give the measures of units of time. She writes, “spatial descriptions of extended time are intended to suggest an infinity of time.”<sup>496</sup> Yet, the perception of space and how it came to be—which is always intrinsically related to time—mattered not only for understanding approaches to making pasts but to making places, and to locate oneself as attached to places is only a starting point from which to receive challenging questions. We have seen in each preceding chapter that both notions of place—idealized and particularized—have been simultaneously invoked and imagined. This dissertation shifted the lens to place in an attempt to start thinking about place in general from interdisciplinary perspectives focused on pictures which emerged from artists’ deep investments in imagining Udaipur. I hope that visual and literary culture from other times and places will in the future enrich and complicate this initial exploration of how painters, poets, and chroniclers cultivated place-centric visions in deeply affective and performative registers to fashion collective memories of cities and landscapes, whilst mapping shifting territorialities.

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<sup>494</sup> Thapar, *Time as a Metaphor of History*.

<sup>495</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

## **Illustrations**

Pages 368 to 501 are omitted due to copyright restrictions



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