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Living Images and the Ephemeral in Medieval Northwestern India

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Key Places:

Mahi River, a big river South of Udaipur near Jagat which separates Mewar and Malwa, Som river is a tributary of the Mahi.

Mēdapāṭa, old name for Mewar in the 10th century CE

Mewar, a Rajput Kingdom in the area that is now Udaipur in Southern Rajasthan

Malwa, a plateau South of Mewar, home of the famous city of Mandu, and a secure geographic location south of the Mahi River, closer to the Narmada River, which flows out into the Bay of Khambat in Gujarat.

Mandu, also known as Shahziabad or the "City of Joy", Capital of Sultantate where the Nimat Nama Manuscript was sponsored written and illuminated. Location of the court depicted in the paintings. This city/state is located in Malwa near the ancient city of Dhar.

Nagaur, a famous site of conflict North of Mewar, part of the Northern border region of Mewar together with Ajmer and Delhi—the Northwest and Northeast corners of the Mewar Triangle with Mandu as the Southern tip.

Rajasthan, a state in Northwestern India

Rajput Kingdom, named for someone of the Ksetrya or warrior caste, this signifies a small city/state run by a Hindu king. This person could belong to one or more sects. For example, the Maharana named Kumbha was himself a worshipper of Vishnu, but he was ruling the kingdom of Mewar on behalf of the god Shri Eklingji.

Som River, an East West river now largely dried up, that ran through several important sites to the South of the Guhila Dynasty (Aat, Jagat, Hita) on the way to Chittor Fort.

Sultanate, a name for a kindom with a Muslim ruler, could be any linguistic, ethnic, or cultural origins. The Sultan of Mandu for example was ethnically Afghan and spoke Persian and Urdu while ruling over a multi-sectarian kingdom with Muslims, Hindus, and Jains as well as several Adhivasi people such as Bhils and Meenas. For more on the Orientalist origins of the term, and why Sultanate as a category for Early Modern Northwestern India is not that useful (see Alka Patel).

Udaipur, modern capital of the Mewar region founded in the 16th century, the capital moved from Chittorgarh to Kumbhalgarh to Udaipur as a result of precarious unrest in the 15th century.

Key People and Deities:

Ādivāsi (people) – means first people, Indigenous people of India

Bhils (people) – a specific Adhivasi group who inhabit the Mewar triangle between Udaipur and Dungarpur (North-South), Jadhol and Chittorgarh (East-West).

caturmukha (four-faced liṅga) *, a special form of the god Śiva*

Guhila (clan), more than one branch was powerful in Southern Rajasthan from approximately 8th century CE to 13thcentury CE. The Sisodia dynasty claims direct descent from the Guhilas, see Stein, Hegemony of Heritage, Ritual and the Record in Stone for details.

Hammira, Rāṇā, King of Mewar who first ruled as a Sisodia from Chittorgarh. Hammira is an Islamic word for a specific grade of ruler (like a Viceroy). So Maharana Hammir Singh Mewar, is a bit like saying Great King "Viceroy" the Lionheart of Mewar region. Not exactly a specific first name like Maharana Udai Singh Mewar, who gave his first name to the city of Udaipur.

Jaita & Sons, Architects of the Kirtistambha c. 1440-1460, Chittaurgarh, Mewar

liṅga (plural), *liṅgaṃ* (singular) (a columnar form of the god Śiva (aka lingam)

Maharana Kumbha, 15th century King of Mewar

Meenas (people), an adhivasi people who live in and around Jaisamand Lake to the South of Mewar as well as near the Eklingji temple.

Pāśupata Sect of Śaivism, a specific branch of Saivism that started in Gujarat in with the saint Lakulisha, or the one who holds the club. This is the royal sect of the god of Mewar, Shri Eklingji. All Maharanas rule as "diwan" (governor/guardian) on behalf of the deity who is a manifestation of Śiva and the ruler of Mewar.

Śaivaite, an adjective to describe a sect or building dedicated to the male deity, Śiva.

Sarasvatī, a goddess of learning and the arts found in multiple temples and in the Kirttistambha tower of glory at Chittor. She is also the only figure found on the Lakulisha temple in the Guhila capital of Eklingji. There an inscription dated to 971 records a debate between Buddhists, Jains, and Pasupata Saivas (who won) and thus cemented the victory as early proof of the link between the Guhila dynasty and the god Shri Eklingji as their ruler. The Sisodia dynasty also claims this same god as the ruler of Mewar. The Maharanas rule as Diwan on His behalf.

Sisodia dynasty, the Sun dynasty who rules from Chittor under Maharana Hammira Singh Mewar and descended from the Guhila Dynasty.

Śri Ékaliṅgjī (male god), The supreme ruler of Mewar, a manifestation of Shiva.

Tatpuruṣa (the omnipresent deity), one of the directions of the 4 deities that encase the 4th storey of the Kirttistambha exterior.

Udayasimha, Rāṇā, Maharana of Mewar, founder of Udaipur.

Architectural Sites and Architectural Terms:

Aguna/Saguna – Without Form, aka formless/with form. Rup is another term for form or shape.

Ambā Mātā temple, an important 10th century goddess temple in the village of Jagat, see Stein, "The Theft of Amba Mata" in RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics (2010).

Ambikā temple, the Sanskrit name for the Amba Mata Temple in Jagat

Aparājitapṛcchā (text), an 11th century architectural manual that lists a "kirttistambha" as a tower of glory only to be built in a royal capital, see Nath for translation below:

Chittauḍgaḍh, the historical name for the fortress of Chittor

Chittōr, the common nickname of Chittauḍgaḍh, how most modern people refer to the city-state ruled by the Sisodias.

Kālikā Mātā temple, a Surya temple that predates the Sisodia dynasty at Chittor that was reconsecrated as a goddess temple to the ferocious and powerful goddess Kali. In Rajasthan, it is often Kali who guards the forts.

Kīrttistambha (Tower of Glory), built 1440-1460, by Jaita and Sons architects, this huge stone tower has a turnsquare staircase and is full of figural stone iconography on 8 floors. Not a temple per say, this architectural wonder may well be India's first visual archive, and India's first museum. See, Stein, Hegemony of Heritage Ritual and the Record in Stone, for more background on the Kirttistambha.

śilālēkha (inscription), the word for an ancient piece of writing carved into rock, often using the kutila script in the medieval period.

śilpaśāstra (shastra, aka scientific texts/manuals, dedicated to architecture), śilpa refers to architecture and śāstra is the name for a scientific manual.

saṃvat (a specific Sanskrit dating system, like AD or CE), all dates in this lecture will be in Common Era, CE, we will not cover anything dating to Before the Common Era, BCE.

vāstu (building), but also the practice of architecture and geomancy as well.

vāstupurusha mandalas, the idea that a cosmic man geomantically lies beneath a building. Probably a more modern Idea than a prevalent one in the medieval and early modern periods. The text that Stella Kramrish used to illustrate her points about this in her famous book, The Hindu Temple, has modern Gujarati written next to it. –Joanna Williams pointed this out to me. More than what is geomantically beneath these buildings is what 11th century texts can tell us about the intent of 15th century architects.

vāstuśāstra (aka *vastu shastras, vastushastra*; architectural manuals, different from Shilpa shastra. A Shilpan is an architect, so that is more of a how to and scientific exposition of architecture. A vastu shastra is more about the idea of a building and how to build something sacred.

Illuminated Manuscripts, Texts, Inscriptions:

** *Aparājitapṛcchā*, an 11th Century Shilpa Shastra architectural Manual

    ** *Nīmāt Nāmā* (text), c. 1440-1505 CE

Aparajita-prccha architectural text on Kīrttistambhas, c. 11th-century (See Nath)

1. "The Earth along with mountains and oceans which are treasure of all the worldly things and Seven Mothers should be thus represented on the Kirttistamba. []
2. "King, kalpavrksa (a time/eon tree?), ascetics, Vayu, Sun, Moon, Nksatras, Rasis and gods etc. ie all celestial phenomena should be represented suitably on the Kirttistambha"
3. There are 5 types of Kirttistambha…
"Ekacchatra is the highest Kirttistambha and it measures 109 hands in height.
THESE 5 TYPES CAN BE BUILT IN THE CAPITAL (OF A SOVEREIGN RULER)

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