Temple as Royal Abode

The Regal, the Real, and the Ideal in Fifteenth-Century Mewār

Many have written about fifteenth-century Mewār over the past century.[1] The material residue of imaginaries contrasts with the material and architectural residue still found in situ today. This chapter on Guhila dynastic history marks a moment when the Sisodia dynasty, which claimed descent from the Guhilas, could look back on a past that included more than oral history and the seeds of dynastic legitimization that their Guhila forebears had used back in the tenth century. Tenth-century inscriptions and architecture sought to legitimize the rise of the Guhilas in the vacuum of power that characterized a two-hundred-year period prior. In the fifteenth century the physical record of tenth-century production and monumentalization served to recall Guhila greatness on behalf of its successors—the Sisodias of Mewār.

This early modern period in the kingdom of Mewār was characterized by revivalism. At the fortress of Chittorgarh, carefully labeled iconography in the Kīrtistambha tower indicates an early instance of self-definition and the fear of losing heritage that gives birth to nostalgia. Long bardic inscriptions and early historical texts use the tenth-century past to deal with fifteenth-century insecurities in much the same way that twentieth- and twenty-first-century people make claims of authenticity based on fifteenth-century history to cope with rapidly changing governance and the many insecurities of the modern period.

Further art historical and sociocultural comparison with Malwa, Gujarat, Gwalior, Delhi, and Persia would illuminate more about the visual, erudite, and archival impulses that characterized polity over a large multisectarian region in the fifteenth century. Such a geographic scale of comparison, however, lies beyond the scope of this chapter. In an era of encroaching Mughal power from Delhi and sultanate power from Gujarat and Malwa, the kingdom of Mewār used culture to

produce, not just mark, its borders. In fact, there were no clear borders—just texts, buildings, images, arguments, dreams, anthologies, and the like. Recently, textual historians have mapped inscriptional data to illuminate the extent and limits of Guhila hegemony in the early stages of state formation in Mewār, Chhapa, and Vagada. Unlike the tenth century, when Guhila dynastic identity was under nego-tiation, the late medieval period was characterized by a tenuous Rājput political hold in the form of intense "cultural" production.[2]

This fifteenth-century propensity to use archival impulses and quotation in illuminated books, architectural projects, music, food, and other forms of ency-clopedia was a multisectarian form of polity that stretched across northwestern India as far as Persia in this period. For example, the illustrated *Nīmāt Nāmā* cook-book, produced at court in neighboring Malwa during the same era, references specifically Persian modes of kingship and painting styles alongside Indian and Persian foodstuffs. The recording of recipes, like the musical encyclopedia said to have been authored by Mahārāṇā Kumbhā Mewār during the same era, suggests an archival impulse—and an artistic production or expression of that archival desire—as a cornerstone of polity in this time and place.

Here I focus on the ebb and flow of architectural and inscriptional production in two different geographic locations. In Mewār the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were tumultuous times that left architectural traces of Guhila claims to power—buildings that do not directly correlate to written accounts of Rājput and Mughal histories. The mahārāṇās of Mewār sponsored temples and towers at Ekliṅgjī and at Chittorgarh during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Meanwhile, between Mewār and Vagada to the south, the region of Chhapa witnessed similar vacilla-tions between extensive patronage and cultural silence in the stone record. Are we to understand architectural absence as a corroboration of written records of threat, danger, or even defeat? Local rumor would have us believe that the Ambikā temple in Jagat was buried in sand at one point in history to protect it from destruction, but no proof or even suggestion of dates for this theory remain. The military his-tory of Ekliṅgjī, in contrast, remains quite legible from the inscriptional and artis-tic record already analyzed in detail by Tryna Lyons.[3]

This chapter fills the architectural and inscriptional silences in Jagat with the exuberant, active patronage of a multisectarian sacred center in neighboring Jāwar. In an interesting parallel to tenth-century Mēdapāṭa, where the Lakulīśa temple defined a Guhila center at Ekliṅgjī and the Ambikā temple articulated regional style on the border of Guhila territories, the fifteenth-century Mewāri architect Maṇḍana left his traces on the border as well. The successors to the Guhila lineage self-consciously defined their kingdom from the geographic location of an oscil-lating center between Ekliṅgjī/Nāgadā and Chittorgarh and left residue of Mewāri history on a border defined by the development of industry rather than the self-conscious construction of history.

The art and architectural history of fifteenth-century Mewār, Chhapa, and Vagada reveals relative silence at the twenty-first-century centers of Ekliṅgjī (Nāgadā/Ahar), and Jagat (near Jālōr, Ranthambhor, Jāwar, and Bambora). Instead, initially Jain centers in the fortress of Chittorgarh, the mines of Jāwar, and the monastery of Delwara defined the polity of the sultanate period in this region. The Śrī Ekliṅgjī temple complex and the Ambikā temple in Jagat thus form a dia-chronic relationship between the tenth and the twenty-first centuries that never-theless reveals intense periods of rupture during the very moment of tenuous state formation in the region.

The pendulum of architectural production between Ekliṅgjī and Chittorgarh, on the one hand, and Jagat and Jāwar, on the other, offer a material record of very early instances of self-conscious history making, long after the tenth-century man-ufacture of political power and foreshadowing the modern period in which the display of art in museums and in situ continues to mark territories of both geog-raphy and imagination.

BAPPA RĀWAL: MYTHICAL FOUNDER OF THE GUHILAS OF EKLIṄGJĪ

One of the most powerful icons of the Guhila/Sisodia rupture between the tenth and the fifteenth centuries is the figure of Bappa Rāwal—identified as the founder of Mewār lineage in the present but not listed as the originator of the Guhila line in tenth-century inscriptions. The aesthetic power of this somewhat obscure lin-eage debate is evident in a twentieth-century French sculptor's rendition of Bappa (fig. 3.1), housed within a structure generally attributed to the patronage of fif-teenth-century Mahārāṇā Kumbhā. This modern statue of Bappa articulates the claims of the Mahārāṇā Mewār website, where the eighth-century Bappa is linked to the eighth descendant of the Guhila line, Prince Kalbhoj. The most recent Mewār encyclopedia produced by the House of Mewār identifies Bappa with Kalbhoj and more accurately navigates the uncertainties through a description of the relationships between legend and history. There, in the same vein as Col. James Tod's versions, Bappa is described as the founder of Mewār who received spiritual instruction from the Śaiva acetic Harit Rashi.[4] Bappa became a devotee of Śrī Ekliṅgjī and was named by his spiritual teacher as the first regent of Mewār in the service of the divine ruler of Mewār, Śiva in the manifestation of Śrī Ekliṅgjī.

A painting displayed inside the mahārāṇā's private residence reveals Bappa Rāwal, hands folded in respect. His greeting is aimed at Harit Rashi, who floats above in a very literal iconographic rendition of the *haṁsa* (incorrectly translated as "swan") air vessels that are so famous in Sanskrit literature. These protoair-planes date back to the Rāmāyaṇa and the Ṁahābhārata, and it is in a similar vessel that Harit Rashi, in a white plaster sculpture, hovers over the entrance to the Śrī Ekliṅgjī temple today (fig. 3.2). One wonders, in fact, if the sculpture was

FIGURE 3.1. Bappa Rāwal, by a French sculptor, c. second half of the twentieth century, Ekliṅgjī. © Deborah Stein.

FIGURE 3.2. Modern sculpture of Harit Rashi in a Sanskritic *haṁsa* vehicle (swan boat), Śri Ekliṅgjī temple. © Deborah Stein.
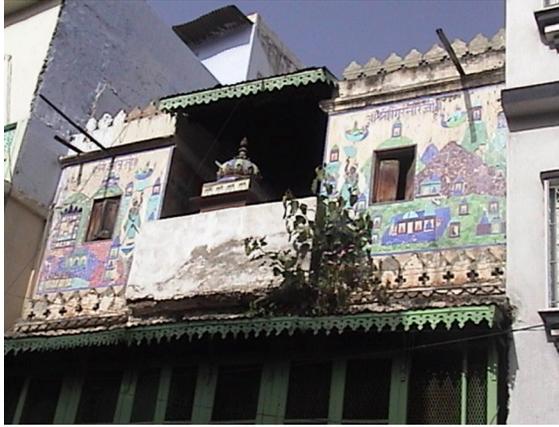
FIGURE 3.3. Harit Rashi on an exterior wall in Udaipur during Rath Yātrā. © Deborah Stein.
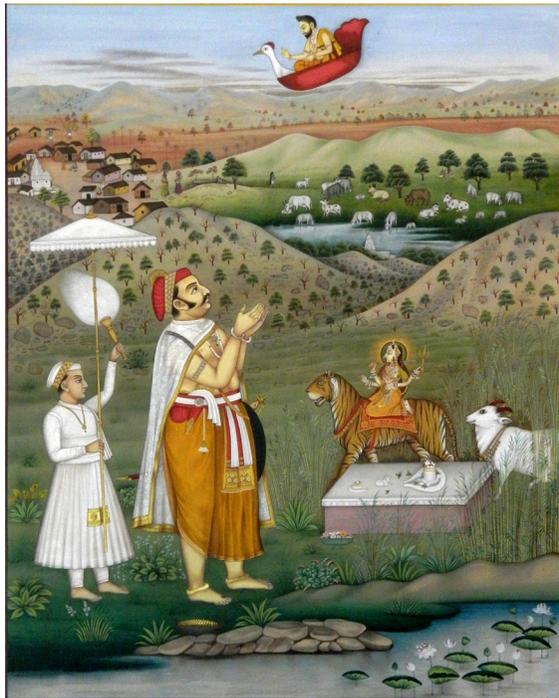
FIGURE 3.4. Painting of Harit Rashi's apparition, c. 1850–1950. Private Palace Collection (Maharana Mewar Research Institute). Photo by author. Reproduced with special permission from Śriji Arvind Singh Mewār.

copied from the painting or vice versa. During the Rath Yātrā parade in Udaipur in 2002, Harit Rashi, in his signature swan boat, greeted people in the streets from a second-floor mural (fig. 3.3) that depicts the sage's boat hovering above the temple of Ekliṅgjī (in blue) and the large brown mountain of Vindhyāvāsinī. There even appears to be the Rastrasena temple peeking out from behind the mountain atop a green peak in the distance. This street mural contrasts in style, but not in basic iconography, with one of the mahārāṇā's favorite paintings on view in his home (fig. 3.4). In this less cluttered composition, Bappa Rāwal (in yellow) clasps his hands as he looks up at the sage in the red swan boat.

Dating back to 971, the Lakulīśa temple and inscription record a debate that took place among Buddhists, Jains, and the Pāśupata-Śivas. This inscription also links for the first time the Guhila dynasty to the Pāśupata-Śivas. Line 5 of the Lakulīśa temple inscription mentions Bappa, and line 15 references Ekliṅgjī.[5] Bhandarkar assumes the 971 inscription as proof of why Bappa remains so important to the mahārāṇās of Mewār. The Atpur inscription of 977 clearly lists the early lineage of the Guhila line as (1) Guhadatta, (2) Bhoja, (3) Mahendra, (4) Naga, (5) Syeela, (6) Aparajīta, (7) Mahindra, (8) Kalbhoj (associated by some with Bappa), (9) Khoman, (10) Bhartṛpaṭṭa, (11) Singse, (12) Śri Ullut, (13) Nirvāhana, (14) Salvāhana, and (15) Śaktikumār.[6] Inscriptions within less than a decade and fewer than one hundred or two hundred kilometers of each other reveal slightly different lineages.

The myth of Bappa Rāwal found on the Mahārāṇā Mewār website does not correlate historically with tenth-century inscriptions. A lineage is set forth—one that does not list Bappa Rāwal as the progenitor of the royal line, in contrast with post-fourteenth-century records. D. C. Sircar situates the elevation of Bappa from "petty Rāwal" to "one of the greatest heroes India ever produced" in folklore as a response to status Bappa earned from "the struggle with the Mughals in the sixteenth century AD."[7] Nandini Kapur cites the seventeenth-century Hindi poetry of Girdhar Asia and the seventeenth-century history of court official Muhanot Nainsi to conclude, "What Bappa did for the thirteenth century Guhilas, Hammīra did for the fifteenth century Guhilas."[8] Whereas Bappa was the progenitor of the Sisodia line by the fifteenth century, as of the tenth century, Guhadatta was listed as the first Guhila of Mēdapāṭa (later known as Mewār).

Tryna Lyons also mentions the Bappa debate, citing the inscriptional lineages as problematic with the Bappa myth.[9] In contrast, Kapur seems to take the Kalbhoj-Bappa equivalency argument at face value—perhaps owing to her quotations of origin myths from famous seventeenth-century history and poetry. Although she seems to rely largely on Tod and Sharma and their post-1300 dynastic viewpoints as her sources for nineteenth-century Bappa adoration, her careful reliance on inscriptional data leads her to even more specific dates of rupture between the Guhila and the Sisodia lines.[10] Corroborated by Topsfield's visual history of manuscripts in this region and the work of Lyons with local bards, Kapur's argument

of a break between 1303, when Alāuddīn Khilji sacked Ekliṅgjī, and 1337, when the generically named Sisodia progenitor Hammīra takes "back" Chittorgarh, seems quite plausible and agreeably specific in relation to many older accounts.[11] This break is likely the very reason why the fifteenth-century art history of Mewār reflects an archival impulse to quote the past and an encyclopedic impulse to create the actual monuments listed in Sanskrit and vernacular architectural manuals called śilpaśāstras; whereas, before the break, the fledgling Guhilas built in new ways to legitimize their rule with stone architecture for the first time from the 950s to the 970s CE but did not seek to quote the past or build an archive—there was no strong recent past on which to build.

WHO WAS HAMMĪRA? SISODIA-GUHILA CLAIMS TO CHITTORGARH

If the Sisodia clan seems to appear suddenly when Mahārāṇā Kumbhā's grandfather ruled the kingdom of Mewār from Chittorgarh (and not the Guhila stronghold of Ekliṅgjī/Nāgadā), then where did they come from? A largely silent inscriptional record from the time after the Vindhyāvāsinī goddess temple in Ekliṅgjī to Kumbhā's grandfather in Chittorgarh suggests that perhaps a new ruling dynasty filled a political vacuum in this region from before the time of Alāuddīn Khilji's Afghan raid in 1305 to the time of Kumbhā's grandfather. In his book *Objects of Translation* Finbarr Flood alludes to these precarious origins when he points out that the name "Hammīra" simply means "a ruler." Nandini Kapur argues from what inscriptional record remains that the expansion under Rāṇā Hammīra and Rāṇā Lakha "seems to have begun the process of the annexation of Merwara."[12] There was a critical shift in state formation in the fifteenth century, where tribal areas are increasingly incorporated into the Rājput state.

Kingship officially ended with Indian independence. Today, Mewār is technically ruled by the state of Rājasthan under the nation of India. For many in Mewār, their ruler remains Śrī Ekliṅgjī, a god—and a god in need of a dīwān at that. It is in this capacity that Śriji Arvind Singh Mewār serves as mahārāṇā in the twenty-first century and the age of the modern nation-state. He and many in modern Mewār find the hegemony of their heritage in the exploits of Rāṇā Hammīra's grandson.

The grandson of this Sisodia "Hammīra" was the famous king Mahārāṇā Kumbhā, who ruled from Chittorgarh and then constructed Kumbhalgarh at the northern edges of what was Guhila dominion, or at least the area known as Mēdapāṭa, where the old tenth-century Jain temple lies at Ghāṇerāo. He moved his capital from the southeastern edges of the Chhapa/Vagada border with Mewār to the furthest point north—never once selecting the Nāgadā/Ekliṅgjī region for his capital. His daughter Ramabai in turn held the mining town of Jāwar as part of her *jagīr* (dowry) in the heart of Chhapa to the south of Mewār, halfway to the Guhila offshoot kingdom of Dūṅgarpur.

FIGURE 3.5. Pratap, Rath Yātrā parade, Udaipur, 2002. © Deborah Stein.

In contrast with his lesser-known grandfather, Kumbhā was a very active ruler, patron of the arts, author, and architectural patron. His distinction was heralded by colonial historian James Tod and by contemporary nationalist parties in India to this day. The Sisodia line eventually was known for Kumbhā's descendant Mahārāṇā Pratap, who is said to have defeated the Mughals at the Battle of Haldīghāṭī in the second half of the sixteenth century—a hundred years after Kumbhā was actively sponsoring architectural projects at Chittorgarh. Pratap's legacy has resulted in multiple visual renditions ranging from a large-scale bronze statue of him on horseback that greets the visitors at the airport, to the image carried during a Rath Yātrā parade in Udaipur in 2002 (fig. 3.5). He is recognizable by his red-trimmed blue coat, his portly and confident stance, and his profile—all of which have made his portrait infamous in several renditions from calendar art to palace paintings.

This colonial and nationalist lens of Rājput greatness has influenced our understandings and misunderstandings of some of Kumbhā's most famous monuments to this day.[13] More recent studies, such as Upendra Nath's book about Mahārāṇā Kumbhā and, in 2002, Nandini Kapur's excellent work on state formation, have begun to correct that picture.[14] Recent studies of artistic agency by Tryna Lyons provide an impressive depth of detailed data carefully culled in the field directly

from bards, as well as translated directly from inscriptions and mason marks on monuments and manuscripts alike.[15] A closer look at the architectural landscape of sultanate-era Mewār, Chhapa, and Vagada exposes just how precarious the hegemony of Guhila-Sisodia heritage was prior to the fifteenth century. The Kīrtistambha of Chittorgarh, for example, illustrates the quintessentially fifteenth-century phenomenon of reification of kingship through specifically revivalist and archival architectural projects.

One of the most impressive monuments built under Kumbhā's reign is the Kīrtistambha at Chittorgarh (fig. 3.6). Previously understood as a Jayastambha, or "Tower of Victory," the tall stone spire of Rāṇā Kumbhā's fortress remains to this day the symbol of Chittorgarh, Rājāsthan, and, consequently, a symbol of Rājput glory in India. The extensive plateau has been alternately ruled and captured for hundreds of years owing to its location in the center of a geographic triangle formed by Gujarat, Malwa, and Agra. In a long line of rulers who used architecture—and, more specifically, pillars, *stambhas,* towers, and minarets of all types—to define their dominion and to augment their power in South Asia, Kumbhā's cultural patronage far outweighs his military claims to victory. Moreover, it is exactly this tactic—the privileging of cultural hegemony over political territorial boundaries—that made it possible for this fifteenth-century ruler's legacy to acquire such an enduring form.

In contrast to the typical victory narrative, both the rich sculptural contents and the inscriptions of the nine-story interior tell a different story—a tale that could be romantically coined the making of one of India's first museums, because it is the story of a collection—and a very permanent collection at that. The combination of two features distinguishes this tower from any previous Indian monument: first, the incised labeling of each image in stone underneath; and, second, an interior turn-square staircase that permits the viewer to travel across nine different interior landings within a span of ten minutes or so.[16] The labels fix each sculpture's meaning in stone—as if it were possible to curate for posterity. The internal square helical staircase collapses the proximity of nine different gallery spaces into a single monument. Rather than travel a distance of a day or more via horse or on foot to see a variety of temple exteriors, the fifteenth-century viewer could experience these levels in intimate proximity to one another. Each level of the tower quotes prior modes of architecture and iconography to create a permanent expression of the artistic canon of the day. Even though we are inside the tower, this collection of iconographic programs quotes temple exteriors and never seems to reveal an inner icon—a crucial distinction from medieval temple iconography and architecture. All prior towers, stambhas, and even kīrtistambhas in South Asia and even western Asia relied on surface decoration of the exterior; only the Kīrtistambha had such rich interior sculptural decoration.

Affixed to the inside ceiling of the uppermost gallery, an inscription corroborates the visual evidence of collecting and the creation of a permanent canon

FIGURE 3.6. Kīrtistambha tower, c. 1440–60, Chittorgarh. © Deborah Stein.

in stone.[17] This inscription reveals a reliance on a specific scientific manual, or *śilpaśāstra*, called the *Aparājitapṛcchā*, an early medieval architectural treatise that lays out a prescription for the construction and iconographic program of kīrtistambha towers. With the inclusion of a portion of this text on the building itself, we learn that the goal of a kīrtistambha is to mark a royal capital with a

tower meant to include all worldly and celestial things. Although the śilpaśāstra text—revised and reauthored by the king himself and affixed to the monument interior—does not give a specific plan for a square helical internal staircase, nor does it give an iconographic prescription for specific programmatic placement of sculpture in protrusions and recesses of a drawn elevation, it does suggest the purpose of a kīrtistambha and the role of this specific choice of monument in King Kumbhā's worldview. The story told by Kumbhā's Kīrtistambha suggests a desire to encompass the entire cosmos within a single structure—an enticing window onto the king's own individual subjective fifteenth-century "period eye" as an architectural patron in the kingdom of Mewār at a crossroads with an increasingly complex political, ethnic, sectarian, and cultural landscape.

Constructed between 1440 and 1460, the Kīrtistambha designed and built by architect Jaita and his sons Napa and Puna visually articulates a claim to *kirtti* (glory) rather than *jaya* (victory). The glorious claim of Kumbhā's regal tower—to encompass the heavens and earth—yields some surprising results. We are left with neither a clear-cut tale of Hindu/Muslim conflict—as many historians in colonial and nationalist modes have previously assumed—nor a tale of multicultural premodern global harmony, as other postmodern historians may hope to find. Of course, no one can make a claim to a truly "authentic" history in any scholarly way, but the visual record does leave behind some important clues about the hopes and dreams of Rāṇā Kumbhā, his architects, and their revivalist claim for the cultural and dynastic place of the Sisodia branch of Rājputs in relation to their Guhila dynasty predecessors in Mewār.

How, then, can we begin to understand a royally sponsored monument that gives sculptural form and a wall label to ordinary people, such as servants (fig. 3.7), but does not depict the king? How can we think about a collection that includes the calligraphic presence of the Muslim God, Allah, and multisectarian iconographic sculpture of Hindu deities Śiva, Śakti, and Viṣṇu all under the same roof but leaves out any clear references to Jainism? Could this suggest that the multisectarian iconography reflects a specifically kshetrias, or ruler's caste, point of view? Does the Jain tower precedent preclude any need for Jain iconography, or does their lack of a godhead similar to Allah, Śiva, or Viṣṇu suggest that a saint is not part of Kumbhā's cosmos whereas his human servants, dancers, and the like remain an integral part of his world?

The iconographic collection of the tower interior delineates complex webs of relationships among a variety of belief systems, and it does so in an almost encyclopedic manner. Far from a random assemblage of imagery, the organization of these images architecturally in relation to one another suggests an archival impulse on the part of the makers. The creation of an archive suggests a desire to classify information and objects—to forge and fix relationships for future generations. As an active patron of the arts, Rāṇā Kumbhā regularly sponsored architectural projects and scholarly works. Kumbhā is credited even with important musical treatises

FIGURE 3.7. Labeled sculpture of servants in a domestic interior. Interior of Kīrtistambha tower, c. 1440–60, Chittorgarh. © Deborah Stein.

called the *Sangita-ratnakara* and *Sangita-krama-dipaka*, which also engages in an encyclopedic enterprise with a revivalist tone and an eye to fixing a contemporary view of the past in a permanent way for future generations. The fifteenth-century Kīrtistambha of Chittorgarh can be read as a permanent record of one king's curatorial eye toward the past and his political claims for the future.

INSIDE THE KĪRTISTAMBHA:
"THE PERMANENT COLLECTION"

The Kīrtistambha was built by a Vaiṣṇavaite king in a Śaivaite kingdom. Mewāris consider Śri Ekliṅgjī, a Pāśupata manifestation of the god Śiva, as their divine ruler—whereas the human mahārāṇā serves only as "dīwān," or his divine guardian. Technically speaking, one could argue that Śiva is the ruler of Mewār. As for the antiquity of this claim, an inscription on the Lakulīśa temple dated to 971 records a great debate that took place among the Buddhists, the Jains, and the Pāśupata Śaivas. This inscription establishes a link between the Guhila dynasty and the Pāśupata Śaivas, said to have been the winners of the debate. Although the inscription does not clearly delineate whether Ekliṅgjī was understood as the divine ruler of Mewār in the tenth century, it does establish Mewār as a Pāśupata kingdom. Rāṇā Kumbhā, however, clearly was a devotee of Viṣṇu. He sponsored the famous Mīrabai temple at Ekliṅgjī and even gave his own daughter the Vaiṣṇavaite name "Ramabai."[18] The Kīrtistambha tower he sponsored was also dedicated to Viṣṇu, and it is an image of Viṣṇu that first greets viewers as they enter the tower.

The program does not focus uniquely on Viṣṇu by any means. In fact, the complex iconographic program establishes complex relationships among Viṣṇu, Śiva,

and the people of Mewār. In addition, the ensemble of the sculptural program suggests more of an encyclopedic, curatorial eye toward a canon of iconographic traditions rather than a pointed sectarian journey toward any singular religious experience. The interior program includes the following general categories of sculpture:

1. Male Deities
2. Nondual Deities
3. "Muslim" and "Hindu" Deities
4. Male and Female Deities
5. Humans, Mostly Ordinary People (Nonmythic, Nonnoble, Nonclergy)
6. Goddesses
7. Open Empty Gallery
8. Sealed Empty Gallery
9. Observation Deck

In tandem with medieval North Indian architectural practices, the Kīrtistambha program engages in architectural punning and other metaphors that grow from placement and the visual interaction between sculpture, wall, and building.[19] For example, the fifth floor, halfway up the tower, is filled with carefully labeled images of ordinary people like servants, ascetics, drummers, dancers, architects, and scribes. On this level, where the people of Mewār are meticulously represented, the exterior program explicitly alludes to Śri Ekliṅgjī, the four-faced Pāśupata god of Śiva understood today to rule Mewār. Can we speculate that the planners were suggesting that this rich diversity of the human world was literally encased within a particular Śaivaite paradigm? In a second example, the nondual deities on floor 2 precede the viewer's ascension to floor 3. The first two floors of the tower are larger architecturally and serve as a base for the upper stories. Both inside and outside there is more room, so the architects were able to include thick temple facades with protrusions and recesses on the building's interior. The figures of Harihara (half Viṣṇu, half Śiva) and Ardhanārīśwara (half Śiva, half Pārvatī) directly precede the juncture between the two larger temple-within-a-temple galleries and the more narrow programmatic displays on floors above. Could the joined figures reflect an intentional pun with the joining of two parts of the building? These two examples of iconographic and architectural metaphor reflect the types of choices architects and patrons must make. The tower interior remains as a remnant of those intentions.

On entering the tower, one views a sculpture of Viṣṇu (fig. 3.8). He is easily recognized by his crater crown and holds a discus in one hand and a club in the other. Two of his arms are missing, along with a portion of his legs, yet the pedestal on which he sits seems to have all of its original form intact. A closer look reveals pitted accretions in Viṣṇu's eyes, nose, and mouth—to an extent where the flattened traces of features become barely legible. In contrast the incised crisscross

FIGURE 3.8. Sculpture of Viṣṇu, interior of Kīrtistambha tower, c. 1440–60, Chittorgarh. © Deborah Stein.

pattern of the crown remains incredibly intact, as if it had been completed yesterday. Tourists may assume "Muslim invaders"[20] attacked the sculpture. In an a priori narrative of iconoclasm a German tourist asked me during my fieldwork inside the tower, "But didn't you notice that *all* [emphasis mine] the faces have been destroyed?" During a public lecture, similar questions arose about this very first image in the tower. Could he be proof of Tod's misreading of the Ain-I-Akbari and his conviction that the tower engages in an intentional victory narrative? If so, one could project a narrative of victory and revenge onto the material cultural remains—but how much of this story derives visually from the remains at hand?

The weight of arms that extend from a bas-relief outward far from the picture plane could easily cause a large chunk of stone to fall over time. The stone had no metal reinforcements to sustain its weight over a long period. As for the face, one would imagine a marauder scenario would involve a club, a sword, or some other tool that would be used to bludgeon a "heathen" god's delicate stone face. I find it highly unlikely that someone with iconoclastic aims would delicately chip into a face leaving faded features rather than slash an image in half or chip off a chunk of nose. So the visual evidence that looks more like erosion does not support this assumed narrative. Furthermore, recent studies of looting, power, and display of sacred spoils suggests that display in the capitals of the victors or ritualized travel of icons across specific routes followed standardized practices, meant to establish overlordship and hegemony more than to express a universal iconoclastic disgust for the figural image.[21]

According to the construction date of 1440 to 1460, the sculpture would have to have been destroyed subsequently—but the next capture of Chittorgarh unfolds in the late sixteenth century, when Akbar wins the fortress in 1567. This Mughal emperor was known for a multisectarian thirst for knowledge. He built the famous kitab-khanna for his capital of Fatepur Sikri. A dyslexic who never learned to read, the powerful Indian-born emperor was an intellectual who sponsored a number of famous illustrated manuscripts. From the "Hindu" Bhagavata Purāṇa to the Persian-style homage to his own reign, the Akbarnama, the sponsored works of the Mughal emperor included rich figural imagery and some of the most impressive Indian painting ever produced.[22] Again, I find it hard to imagine his conquest of Chittorgarh as a blind attempt at in situ iconoclasm. The sculpture could not have become spolia if it still remains in situ. Moreover, Akbar's sponsorship of so many figural works as an intellectual, an art lover, and a powerful patron makes him an unlikely candidate for iconoclastic-style conquest.

Rather than confuse the tests of time with an a priori and ahistorical narrative, we can begin instead with Kumbhā and his architects as they began their impressive architectural project. Not only did their architectural manual specify the kīrtistambha tower type as dedicated to Viṣṇu, but we can imagine as a Vaiṣṇavaite, this choice would have appealed to Rāṇā Kumbhā as a patron. But was this personal deity (fig. 3.8) the icon of the royal tower? If we return to the question of placement, it does not make sense. A main icon normally resides in a sanctum. A main icon unfolds only at the end of a complex iconographic circumambulation. A main icon is housed in a sanctum and approached through a series of pavilions. This Viṣṇu, with fleshy pectorals and a sensual medieval stomach, greets the viewer but does not occupy a position where ritual respects could be paid properly. The sculpture reads more like exterior deities than like a central icon. From the famous eighth-century Śiva lingaṃ of Kalyanpur to the tenth-century icon of Śri Ekliṅgjī, most important icons are made from shiny black stone and not the same material as exterior walls. The lack of a sanctum, direct approach, scale, lack of elaborate

FIGURE 3.9. Deogarh, Madhya Pradesh. © Deborah Stein.

framing, and materials suggest that this Viṣṇu sculpture served to welcome the viewer rather than as the central icon of a singular cohesive religious narrative.

The turn-square staircase leads to a narrow circumambulatory path on the first floor, where a predictable iconographic triad of Viṣṇu, Śiva, and Brahma unfolds on three exterior walls. To fully view the large figures, one must climb back into the stone window seats and enjoy the *"achi hawai"* (pleasant breeze). From this position the walls look like a typical Gupta temple such as Deogarh,[23] where one narrative scene graces each wall without any auxiliary figures or other adornment (fig. 3.9). In monoscenic narrative this Vaiṣṇavaite story is told (fig. 3.10).[24] The walls of this first-floor temple-within-a temple gallery remain unadorned and free of typical medieval auxiliary figures. At the time when the Kīrtistambha was built,

FIGURE 3.10. Narrative scene, Nara Narayana, Gupta Era, Deogarh.
© Deborah Stein.

one would expect to find leonine *vyāla* figures, beautiful maidens, and guardians of the corners—possibly even duplicated in two registers. The singular sculptures seem to quote a past idiom, though not verbatim. In contrast with the narrative mode of display for Viṣṇu's mythology found at Deogarh, the first floor of the Kīrtistambha displays three carefully labeled deities who remain in nonnarrative, iconic poses and have typical attributes. Not only does the sculpture-to-wall relationship suggest a quotation of the Gupta period architectural style with a single deity per wall, but the deities are labeled.

Why, in fifteenth century Mewār, would anyone—architect, patron, priest, sage, servant, visitor, or drummer—need a one-word label to explain that Śiva holds a

FIGURE 3.11. Harihara (Half-Śiva/Half-Viṣṇu), interior Kīrtistambha tower, c. 1440–60, Chittorgarh. © Deborah Stein.

skull and trident? Even hundreds of years later, one need only take a course in basic iconography or read an introductory text on Indian art to know, without a label, that Śiva holds a trident and a skull, whereas Viṣṇu holds a discus and a club. Of course, for more complex iconographic representations the modern viewer might turn to Rao's *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, but the labels do not indicate an obscure manifestation of three familiar gods but rather "Viṣṇu Narayana, Mahā-Śiva, and Brahma" *tout court*.

The turn-square staircase leads to the second of two temple-within-a-temple galleries and carries the viewer five hundred years into the future. From the Gupta architectural quotation on floor 1, floor 2 reflects typical Guhila dynasty architectural style. Thickly textured with deep recesses and protrusions, and punctuated with auxiliary lion, maiden, and guardian figures, the temple wall on display could almost be dated to the second half of the tenth century, if it were not for the fifteenth-century sculptural style (fig. 3.11). The extra framing sculptures associated with the early medieval period served as *alaṅkāra* (ornamentation) but also correlated to specific placements in relation to the central icon. These were not emanations from a *vastushastra* grid, as Stella Kramrisch may have imagined. To the contrary, the auxiliary sculptures served to encode architectural technology in aesthetic terms. The figures were not part of a narrative program or a mythological relationship to the central icon. They may have served as a celestial court,[25] or

FIGURE 3.12. Interior stairwell between floors 2 and 3, Kīrtistambha tower, c. 1440–60, Chittorgarh. © Deborah Stein.

palace entourage of sorts, yet they remain a part of a strict system of architectural placement. The guardians stand at each corner of the building, apotropaically protecting the precarious seams of the building. Darielle Mason has demonstrated that the maidens and the lionine figures also correspond to specific sections of the wall.[26] The subsidiary sculptures thus correspond to subsidiary projections—the very projections and recesses that make possible the height of soaring North Indian temple spires of the medieval period.

Although the second-story temple wall does not support a spire, it does provide a thick base for upper stories. The turn-square staircase continues inside these thick walls where an inner main icon would normally be found in a temple sanctum (fig. 3.12). From this inner staircase one emerges through a doorway onto a set of three smaller galleries stacked one upon the other.

Nondual deities celebrate the juncture of the larger initial floors—where entire temple walls seem to be reproduced—with the upper galleries. The *sūtradhāra* (scribe) has carefully etched Harihara in stone at the base of a figure that sports a crown on one half of his head and an ascetic's dreadlocks on the other. Half Viṣṇu and half Śiva, Harihara carries attributes typical of Viṣṇu—such as the discus—on one side and attributes typical of Śiva—such as the trident—on the other. Harihara is not that unusual a deity, but he was rarely if ever represented on temple exteriors in the position of a main wall projection, or *bhadra*. On liminal floor 2 the reference to nonduality cannot be mistaken with the presence of Ardhanārīśwara on the

FIGURE 3.13. Ardenareśvara (Half-Śiva/Half-Pārvatī), interior
Kīrtistambha tower, c. 1440–60, Chittorgarh. © Deborah Stein.

main projection of another wall (fig. 3.13). A bilateral representation half Śiva and
half Pārvatī, the universally recognizable female breast of Pārvatī occupies half of the
body and the male pectoral of Śiva the other. Elegantly coiffed hair meets an ascet-
ic's locks, and heavy jewelry gives way to a lightweight renunciant's brahmin cord.
Nondual deities visually depict the liminal state of betwixt and between, neither fully
one thing nor the other or, alternatively, both.[27] Just as any bilingual person might
read newspapers in two languages to understand the real news lies between the
lines—often in the truthful story left partially or wholly untold in both languages—
the nondual deities reflect a philosophy about what is beyond binary categories.

FIGURE 3.14. Allah, Interior Kīrtistambha tower, c. 1440–60, Chittorgarh. © Deborah Stein.

As one emerges from the doorway of the inner staircase onto the third floor, one clasps the columns of the doorframe, ducks one's head, and stands facing westward. Right above the place on the column where one's hand would naturally clasp, the calligraphic form of Allah is carefully sculpted in relief (fig. 3.14). Above these calligraphic sculptures of the Muslim god's name, small symbols of the architectural plan of a mosque with mihrab are carved deeply into the stone. In contrast with the incised labeling of the other iconography, these verbal and symbolic elements are treated as iconographic sculpture. Looking west, toward Mecca, forced to bow one's head because of the height of the doorframe, and hands naturally clasping the sculptural calligraphy of the Muslim God's name, any person who kinesthetically navigates the stairwell inherently includes Allah in Kumbhā's world.

The fourth floor departs from the deities of the earlier levels to include a portrait of the architect and his sons, servants, and other human actors on the interior, whereas the exterior of this level is covered in Pupate Śaiva iconography encasing this representation of all of fifteenth-century human Mewār. The sixth and seventh floors build on the deities and humans of Mewār with a free departure into metaphysics. The sixth floor is populated by goddesses, sa-guna (with form), whereas the seventh floor is left empty with jati lattice windows into a gallery of nothing, nir-guna (without form). The ascent culminates, remarkably, with this abstract philosophical reference to the nonduality of form and formlessness, before transporting the viewer up the steps to the light-laden gallery of the observation deck, surrounded on all sides by elaborate lattice windows.

There are many architectural precedents for famous towers and minarets in South Asia: Ashokan columns, the Iron Pillar in Delhi, the Minaret of Jam in Afghanistan, the Qutab Minar in Delhi, and even the Jain kīrtistambha built in the same fortress as

the "Jayastambha" only a century or so prior to the one filled with sculpture built by Kumbhā. In the Maurya era these columns were inscribed with multilingual edicts that praised nonviolence from a Buddhist perspective and sought to unite the empire through a common religious perspective and state code of ethics across a very broad territory uniting most of North India. The Iron Pillar, in the same compound as the Qutab Minar built subsequently, also served a political purpose as a marker of Gupta power in tandem with a dedication to the Hindu god Viṣṇu. Both the Minaret of Jam and the Qutab Minar were Ghurid monuments in summer and winter capitals, serving as loudspeakers for the Muslim call to prayer, as well as marking these capitals with tall, regal monuments to be seen far and wide. Up close, both revel in geometric and calligraphic relief, as well as—in the case of the Afghan tower, so close to the lapis lazuli mines—incredible ceramic tile work with blue glaze.

The Jain tower in Chittorgarh, Rājāsthan, that precedes Kumbhā's Kīrtistambha follows a multisectarian patronage pattern found in other nearby cities such as Jāwar, where Jain patronage follows a mercantile success, often rooted in the exploitation of natural resources by tribal people, harnessed, financed, and traded across Jain networks, and then finally recognized, claimed, and established as royal centers by Hindu Rājput rulers and their direct noble relatives. So if we look back on this very brief history of the tower in South Asia prior to Kumbhā's Kīrtistambha, we find a multisectarian history of towers in state capitals, often inscribed with religious and/or political texts, increasingly large and impressive over time, quoted often from one dynasty to the next—even across sectarian lines. Given these commonalities, what is so special about a royal tower in the fortress of a Mewāri capital from 1440 to 1460, given that stately towers had been around North India since the Maurya Empire centuries prior and had been used across capitals on a grand scale by the Ghurids long before the Sisodias took back the fortress of Chittorgarh to turn it into a royal capital of Mewār?

Although the Qutab Minar has an internal staircase that winds circularly from a wide base to a narrow top, the Kīrtistambha is the first of its kind to have a turn-square plan without narrowing at the top. None of these precedents had an internal turn-square staircase, with the exception of the Jain Kīrtistambha in Chittorgarh (fig. 3.15). Furthermore, dark, narrow, and tiny, this internal staircase is more of a precarious stepladder that climbs steeply and blindly to the expansive 360 degree views from the top gallery across all the plains that surround the plateau on which the fortress of Chittorgarh sits relatively protected from invasion through its natural geographic features. Kumbhā's Kīrtistambha takes this technology so much further, where the turn-square staircase becomes a relatively roomy gallery winding around a central column, at times tucking itself under a story to rise to the next level. It is the first of all these famous towers to provide an inner passage lined with thematic collections of sculptural iconography in a set program. This is a radical pictorial, technical, ideological, and political invention that brought the entire cosmos into visual dialogue in an entirely new way.

FIGURE 3.15. Interior stairwell precedent, Jain Kīrtistambha tower, Chittorgarh. © Deborah Stein.

Kumbhā's Kīrtistambha collection functions as an archive, a database, and a matrix, although it may not exactly have been planned as one. The Kīrtistambha engages in a particular form of display thanks to the turn-square internal staircase. This creates a stacking of iconographic programs that can lead upward or downward. Each level can be circumambulated in two directions. This creates an architectural matrix of sorts that displays iconographic programs in relation to each other in a fixed set of nonlinear relationships, like a database or an archive. A database is a collection of information arranged for ease and speed of search and retrieval—in this case sculptural, representational, iconographic, and

philosophical information—that is normally structured and indexed for user access and review. Databases may exist in the form of physical files (folders, documents, etc.) or as digital files (which combine to form data-processing systems). In this architectural database we have both "physical files" in the sculptural forms and a "processing system" in their architectural programmatic relationships.

Meanwhile, a matrix has an even more mathematical definition as a rectangular array of numeric or algebraic quantities subject to mathematical operations, or a rectangular array of elements set out in rows and columns, used to facilitate the solution of problems, such as the transformation of coordinates. One could stretch to imagine circumambulation forward and backward in horizontal space on each floor as the rows, whereas the technical feat of the turn-square staircase exists as the columns—where viewers can travel up or down. In computer science a matrix involves computing rectangular arrays of circuit elements usually used to generate one set of signals from another. How do the signals cross in a stack of interrelated temple walls, deities, and human agents—from architect to servant? Last, a correlation matrix—a matrix giving the correlations between all pairs of data sets—suggests the tower may serve as a matrix in that it creates and encourages relationships through the juxtaposition of different sculptural data sets, sets that almost never inhabit the same structure but that usually lie a significant distance from one another.

An archive is a place or collection containing records, documents, or other materials of historical interest. It is a repository for stored memories or information. For example, the Photographic Archive of the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) is available online. Much has been written on both the archive and the photograph in relation to colonial projects in India, but Vidya Dehejia gets at the essence of the photograph itself. She argues that, "The photograph, like the footprint, is treated as an actual 'trace'—an artifact of the scene it reveals."[28] Building on Roland Barthes's idea, she explains how "we look straight through the photograph, ignoring its status as a signifier, and seeing only the signified—the image itself."[29]

What if we try to imagine a sculptural iconographic archive instead of a photographic one? Would a sculpture of a servant, a named architect, or the goddess Saraswatī act more like the signifier or the signified? To what extent does the label cast the image as a representation, as opposed to an actual deity? Can curatorial display and puja coexist today, and did these two different ways of seeing and being seen coexist in the fifteenth century, when this labeled sculpture was planned? Are the sculptural bas-reliefs that we find on the first floor of the Kīrtistambha depictions of Viṣṇu or icons of Viṣṇu? Is it a portrait of a deity we are seeing or the god himself who stares back at us? Perhaps that intersubjective question of reception lies in each individual viewer regardless of time or place. Could the multiplicity that unfolds from this unique display of iconography suggest that the text that prescribed this particular regal form of a tower to encompass the entire universe foreshadowed the

production of archives in the early medieval period when they were written, shortly after early medieval architecture had been codified in its many stone variations as it was finally committed to text and reified in its complex diversity?

Archives usually fix a set of documents in relation to one another and "kill" them by making them permanently static temporally from the moment they are archived, but in three-dimensional architectural space those relationships change. With an inner staircase directionality functions simultaneously in two registers—circumambulation on each floor forward or backward, and the juxtaposition of programs among different floors. Where else in India can you visit a tenth-century-style Mahā-Gurjara temple wall in the same building as a fifteenth-century temple wall, and then descend two flights and see a Gupta-style temple wall at the entrance? Where else do you duck your head to come up an inner staircase after seeing three five-hundred-year intervals of architectural history and iconographic programs in only two quick flights of steps—only to place your hand over the tactile, sculpturally raised, calligraphic name of Allah as you gaze out a window toward Mecca. The whole cosmos is in this fifteenth-century tower—just as is prescribed in the text for this regal architectural type, except that cosmos is not the cosmos of the eleventh-century *Aparājitapṛcchā* but rather the cosmos of multisectarian, fifteenth-century Mewār—Śaivaite, Vaiṣṇavaite, Shakta, Jain, Muslim, saguna-nirguna (that is, form and formless), both religiously and aesthetically.

Aside from the tower's immediate statement as a monumental tribute to Kumbhā's power, the inside of this building reveals a self-conscious effort to create history for the future by fixing memory. Each of the nine floors is carved with a set of sculptures, which are painstakingly labeled. One could argue anachronistically that the Kīrtistambha is India's first museum. The Kīrtistambha is India's first image archive, predating the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and the American Institute of Indian Studies' photo archives by several centuries. No matter what English label we put on the Kīrtistambha, those who created it in the fifteenth century decided the iconography could not stand alone, so text was added. Hundreds of years before photography was invented, the labeled images of the Kīrtistambha suggest archival tendencies on the part of Kumbhā, Jaita, and the other artists involved in the project.

Two particularities of Rāṇā Kumbhā's Kīrtistambha are taxonomy and the museum label. Taxonomy creates a historical progression of temple style and iconography, similar to "World Architecture" or "Global Architecture" introductory surveys. The "museum" label creates a permanent collection. Labeling of every single piece of sculptural iconography on each floor of the building, akin to, say, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, fixes its meaning, removing some of the organic nature of identification found in normal puja with living icons.

The desire to archive involves an inherent need to fix form and to make it permanent.[30] The Kīrtistambha combines the goals of an inscription and a tower, such as the infamous Ghurid combination of the Iron Pillar and the Qutab Minar in Delhi,

to produce a monument that fixes meaning in Kumbhā's era.[31] The creation of a set of prescribed definitions of form intentionally reifies their fifteenth-century meaning while simultaneously drawing on the authority lent by the history of manifest forms of divinity that grew to be so important in tenth-century Mēdapāṭa. With the move of labeling the icons in the Kīrtistambha, Kumbhā both obliterates alternative past meanings of these images, as defined by his forefathers, and erases his own existence as independent of his forefathers.

The Kīrtistambha is a death of a living past in that it fixes history rather than allowing it to change and, hence, remain alive as a ritual building. And yet the labeled deities and architectural quotations of tenth-century iconographic arrangements in the Kīrtistambha also signify a rebirth of Guhila power and ensure that the record of this period will remain for posterity. By now the colonial idea that places such as Mewār had no indigenous history, only bardic exuberance, is quite moot. A monument such as the Kīrtistambha expresses a wish to secure the definition of the previous five hundred years of history in the hopes it would be preserved in Kumbhā's terms for the next five hundred years. To some extent the project was successful: many of the ways the Sisodias define themselves and their history in the twenty-first century dates to this era.

In light of the embodied practices that characterized tenth-century ritual and iconographic programs, Kumbhā's move resonated with a historicity rooted in the demystifying quality of written language described by Benedict Anderson.[32] Although many still are not able to read the labels because of language barriers, illiteracy, or the wearing away over time of the labels themselves, the introduction of text fixes meaning by seducing the viewer to ask for the key to the meaning offered by a label. Anderson's book suggests that historicity replaces sanctity. The introduction of text allowed Kumbhā to construct the "nation" of Mewār. The difference between a literal, national model and this monarchy lies in the control of the stone text rather than in the proliferation of words in printed media. Although the Kīrtistambha does not offer an anachronistic record of a democratic nation-state, this stone tower does speak to Fredrick von Schlegel's definition of history as "the self-consciousness of a nation."[33]

On the same floor as the architect Jaita and his sons, we find a labeled portrayal of "*sevika*" (servants). It is a fascinating exception in South Asian art history to find multisectarian deities and humans of all walks of life painstakingly labeled (fig. 3.7). Filled with sculpture, this nine-story stone monument uniquely collapses the categories of archive and archaeology. Despite his prescient Freudian analysis of the archive, Derrida holds a somewhat romantic notion regarding the transparency of archaeology. He even goes so far as to describe Freud's interest in excavations as a "jouissance": "It is the nearly ecstatic instant Freud dreams of, when the very success of the dig must sign the effacement of the archivist: the origin then *speaks by itself*. The *arkhè* appears in the nude, without archive. It presents itself and comments on itself by itself. 'Stones talk!' "[34]

Problems arise when the agency of ancient stone is understood as the voice of the present. Stones do "talk"; however, their speech offers a dialogue with the present rather than the reification of nationalist discourse, as seen at Somanatha after independence, at Ayodhyā in 1992, and, more recently, in the legal disputes over the Taj Mahal.[35] Hundreds of years earlier, the stone residue of the temple wall was already in dialogue with its historical moment of making.

MAṆḌANA AND THE SOMPURĀS: THE SIGNATURE ARCHITECTURE OF THE SISODIA EMPIRE

Just as the Guhila dynasty did in the same region in the wake of Paramāra-Pratīhāra overlordship, the Sisodias used architecture and signature style to tectonically "argue" for the eternity and, hence, the implied longevity of their clan's rule. To this extent, famous architect and author Maṇḍana and the Sompurā family architectural guild held aesthetic sway in the region for hundreds of years.

Like the mahārāṇās of Mewār, the architectural guilds of Mewār seek the hegemony of heritage in the unbroken lineages of their ancestors. Indeed, Tryna Lyons's work suggests that the Sompurā guild so famously linked to modern political histories of temples at Somanatha, for example, was not the only architectural guild in town. The star architect of the day, Maṇḍana, may have enjoyed a reputation akin to that of Robert Venturi's or Frank Lloyd Wright's today; but, in fact, Maṇḍana was not responsible for the majority of famous monuments in Mewār, even though he was considered a state architect. His son, Isara, was responsible for building Kumbhā's daughter Ramabai's Viṣṇu temple in Jāwar, but it was the architect Jaita and sons that had been responsible for the construction of the regal Kīrtistambha tower in Chittorgarh.

Kumbhā's Kīrtistambha reveals fifteenth-century Sisodia aspirations, whereas Mokal's installation of a new icon at Ekliṅgjī sought to erase the rupture between the Aghaṭa/Nāgadā Guhila dynasty and the fledgling Hammīra, who captured and ruled from Chittorgarh in the second half of the fourteenth century. The fifteenth century begins with a record of repairs that signal a desire to reassert Guhila control over important religious monuments in Mēdapāṭa.[36] Mahārāṇā Mokal also sponsored the rampart on the hill above the Ekliṅgjī compound. The Shringirishi inscription of 1428 records that Mahārāṇā Mokal fought with Firoj Khan of Nagaur and Ahmad of Gujarat in two different battles and that he built the rampart at Ekliṅgjī. Recent scholarship suggests that the fifteenth-century repair of Ekliṅgjī included the installation of a new icon, another piece of evidence for fifteenth-century Sisodia political legitimation.[37]

In 1428 CE Mahārāṇā Mokal commemorated the erection of a temple to Śiva at Chittorgarh called the Samiddhēśvara temple.[38] Although the Samiddhēśvara temple exhibits a *śekharī* spire, in contrast to the Śri Ekliṅgjī temple's *latina* spire, the maṇḍapa roof of the Samiddhēśvara temple resembles the maṇḍapa roof of the

FIGURE 3.16. Ekliṅgjī temple roof, fifteenth century. © Deborah Stein.

Śri Ekliṅgjī temple, built little more than a half a century later (cf. figs. 3.16 and 3.17). According to M. A. Dhaky, the current Samiddhēśvara temple was "originally the temple of a *jina* founded by Vastupala, Prime Minister of the Vaghela [Vagada?] regent Varadhavasa of Dhavalakakka (Dhoaka) in Gujarat, sometime ca. AD 1230–1235."[39] Dhaky explains that "the temple had been restored in AD 1428 by Rāṇā Mokala," and given the architectural similarities, one imagines that restoration definitely focused on the roof in addition to a shift from Jain to Hindu sectarian affiliation.[40]

True to the formula of religious charity, lineage, and conquest, Mokal's slab of black marble invokes the blessings of Gaṇēśa, Ekliṅgjī, "the daughter of the mountain who swells on the Vindhya (Vindhyāvāsinī), and Achyuta (Viṣṇu)."[41] The lineage moves from Arisimha of the twelfth-century inscription, described above, to his descendants Hammīra, Kṣetra, Lakśasimha, and finally Mokal. Mahārāṇā Mokal's victories are extensive in the convention of true bardic exuberance. He is said to have defeated the Aṅgas, Kāmarūpas, Vaṅgas, Nishadas, Chinas, and Taruṣkas. The inscription also makes reference to Maṇḍana, the famous Sompurā architect, and to the Dashora clan of Brahmins still presiding over Ekliṅgjī in the twenty-first century. The mention of the architect Maṇḍana is significant as he was the author charged with articulating Guhila dynastic prowess in visual form.

By the time Mokal's successor, Kumbhā, took the throne, the Guhilas used architecture as well as inscriptions to create their own history intentionally, beyond the

FIGURE 3.17. Roof of the Samiddhēśvara temple, fifteenth century, Chittorgarh. © Deborah Stein.

simple lineages put forth in the tenth century.[42] Kumbhā brought Vagada under Mewāri control in V.S. 1498 (1441 CE) and forced the mahārawal of Dūṅgarpur to surrender Jāwar to Mewār and to submit Dūṅgarpur to the overlordship of Mewār.[43] This mahārāṇā was powerful enough to repair damages done to Ekliṅgjī while the Guhila clan had taken refuge from Nāgadā at Kumbhalgarh.[44]

Kumbhā is best known for two records composed during his reign: the inscription of the Kīrtistambha and the inscription at Kumbhalgarh. Akshaya Keerty Vyas attributes the contents of the two inscriptions to the Ekliṅgamāhātmyam.[45] After praising Gaṇéśa, Saraswatī, and Ekliṅgjī, the inscription continues to invoke many deities "such as [Lamboda]ra, Gajamukha, Vindhyāvāsinī, Ekliṅgjī, Pinakin, Ina, and others."[46] The text also describes many important geographical sites in Mewār, including "the range of hills naturally formed into a triangle within which is situated the temple and town of Ekliṅgjī," as well as "the goddess Vindhyāvāsinī, whose shrine is situated on the slope of the hill to the north outside the rampart around Ekliṅgjī's temple."[47] Verses 23 and 24 give a description of the history of the religious compound of Ekliṅgjī, attributing its founding to Bappa Rāwal. It was destroyed by "Taruṣkas" and later repaired by Mahārāṇā Mokal, who furnished the

FIGURE 3.18. Mahārāṇā Mokal sponsors the Bhāghelā Tālāv image of the lake, Ekliṅgjī.
© Deborah Stein.

rampart. Kumbhakarna "repaired" the ancient shrine, and Raimal is credited for the modern structure, laying the foundation and erecting a new structure. Lines 25–28 credit Bhojabhupa with the formation of Indira Sagar, the pond behind the temple.[48] Mokal is credited with the creation of Vāghelava Lake (Bhāghelā Tālāv) in memory of his brother, Bhaghasimha (fig. 3.18).[49]

   Built under Kumbhā's successor, Mahārāṇā Raimal, the construction of the Śri Ekliṅgjī temple dates to this era as well. The roof of the structure (fig. 3.16) shares much with the roof of the Samiddhēśvara temple at Chittorgarh (fig. 3.17), yet the structure of the maṇḍapa (see fig. 0.2) visually recalls the twelfth-century Deo Somnāth temple in Vagada. Whereas the Kīrtistambha makes meaning explicit by carving semantic labels under every sculpture from the servants to the architects to the gods, the architectural quotations such as those cited above are no less intentional. Sompurā masons constructed these three buildings; their desire to archive, to make permanent, and to create history in the fifteenth century is corroborated by a collection of fifteenth-century manuscripts held by an architect who claims he is the twenty-second Sompurā descendant from Maṇḍana himself.

   During the 2002 Navratri celebrations at Jagat, Manish Bharadwaj considered the possibility that the Ambikā temple may well have been the *kūldevī* shrine of his line of Sompurā masons. Whether or not the Ambikā temple had originally been conceived with this in mind, the fact that a Sompurā descendant was considering

FIGURE 3.19. Jāwar Mātā temple. © Deborah Stein.

this possibility five hundred years after his ancestor Maṇḍana first cemented the archival tendencies of the Sisodia dynasty suggests a rebirth of the Ambikā temple in that capacity for Manish Bharadwaj. Whereas the site could not remain secret, its fifteenth-century meaning for someone like Maṇḍana could well have been kept covert. During this period all eyes were turned to the mining center of Jāwar. No dated inscriptions were recorded at Jagat during this time. A *sūtradhāra* inscription at Jagat may lend credence to Mr. Bharadwaj's *kūldevī* theory.[50] Manish Bharadwaj's search for his family's *kūldevī* suggests that the Sisodias attempted to harness a regional aesthetic rhetoric that dates at least to the fifteenth century.

The Sompurā masons and royal patrons used architecture to signal Sisodia rule as the Pāśupata dīwāns of Lakulīśa, the ruler of Mēdapāṭa since the time of Naravāhana's inscription on the Lakulīśa temple in the tenth century. Drawing on architectural history, the Śri Ekliṅgjī temple establishes an aesthetic link between Chittorgarh and Ekliṅgjī. The Śri Ekliṅgjī temple claims continuity via its location and elaborate architecture. The temple's maṇḍapa roof makes the stylistic claims that the Guhila Empire stretched as far as Chittorgarh and that Ekliṅgjī is a site of similar power and fame. The location of Ekliṅgjī, just twenty-six kilometers from Udaipur, heralded the return of the Nāgadā/Ahar branch of Guhilas back to the region where they had established their hegemony initially.

The Sisodias moved back to their Nāgadā/Ahar Guhila origins with the creation of Udaipur. The city of Udaipur, the modern capital of Mewār, was named after

Rāṇā Udayasimha (1537–72 CE). They were no longer ruling from Kumbhalgarh to the north, from Chittorgarh to the southeast, or hiding out in the hilly tracts of Chhapa by Jāwar's zinc mines. The sixteenth century was nevertheless a time of precarious power and defeat at the hands of increasing expansion of the Mughal Empire. Mahārāṇā Pratap fought the Battle of Haldīghāṭī against Akbar in 1576 CE. Both sides claimed victory. One of the most important sites during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries fell in the Chhapa region that bridged the Mewār/Vagada borders.

The Jāwar Mātā temple (fig. 3.19) resembles the Ekliṅgjī temple (see fig. 0.2) and Deo Somnāth, which suggests the Guhila signature style of Sompurā architects. The single register of the main program at Jagat is doubled at the Jāwar Mātā temple. This sixteenth-century building takes on a much more complex approach to architecture. The tripartite efficacy of the sculptural program at Unwās and the rhythmic syncopation of the sculptural program at Jagat yield to the undulation of later programs. Icons stood alone. Then, beginning in the eighth century in Mahā-Māru architecture and in the tenth century in Mahā-Gurjara architecture, icons were visually framed and performatively punctuated to produce the fabric of the temple wall. Mahā-Gurjara unframed semidivinities graced the recesses and protrusions of the temple wall.[51]

By the fifteenth century CE, the fabric of the temple wall had become a dense fiber of almost continuous sculpture.[52] But the varying sizes and waxing and waning of the temple's recesses prevented the serial consumption of images one after the other.[53] Later buildings with more complex, multiregister programs force the viewer if not to repeat the viewing of the main niches then at least to vary the distance from the surface of the temple wall, thus altering both visual perception and the body's movement.[54] The outer fabric of the complex, two-storied walls may, in fact, merely reflect changes in use akin to those found across early modern India. Similar architectural changes in the maṇḍapa pavilions of seventeenth-century Bengal, for example, signaled new forms of music, dance, and performance.[55] During the fifteenth century in northern India, it is possible that the plastic skins of the temple edifices were enrobing new, more congregational forms of worship in relation to a rise of *bhakti* devotion across multiple cults beyond Krishna worshippers.

The architects and royals of fifteenth-century Mewār were only newly hegemonic, with shifting capitals, competing guilds, and sporadic campaigns. Many of the temples and centers of that time and earlier in the sultanate period were built at nondynastic industrial centers or Jain monastic centers. The mining center of Jāwar and the Jain site of Delwara both lay on routes between Īdar and Chittorgarh, though both lay in an alternate Guhila dynastic territory of Vagada. The span of the Vagada Empire in the twelfth through fourteenth centuries marked a shift to the south in territorial allegiance for the border region of Chhapa, where the villages of Jagat and Jāwar lie. At this same time the royal center of Nāgadā/Ahar—originally

a Pāśupata center—fell in and out of use altogether, while a new Sisodia dynasty from the fortress Chittorgarh, east of Ekliṅgjī, began to draw on Guhila lineage myths and architectural styles to establish (and potentially backdate) its heritage.

FIFTEENTH-CENTURY VAGADA: HISTORICAL SILENCE AT JAGAT VS. ECONOMIC BOOM IN JĀWAR

Beyond dynastic boundaries (territories often limited to the size of a fortress itself in this period), multisectarian architecture also flourished at sites of industry, such as the zinc-mining town of Jāwar. In Vagada the fifteenth-century was a time when the *mahārawals* of Dūṅgarpur repelled invasions by the shahs from Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. Mahārawal Udai Singh I helped restore Raimal to the throne of Mewār at the start of the sixteenth century and fought against Babur. At this time the Mewāri rulers were able to return southward from Kumbhalgarh and regain power over Ekliṅgjī and Nāgadā. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Chhapa, Jagat was overshadowed by Jāwar's natural resources. Guhila attempts to maintain power must have been relatively futile since no new inscriptions were recorded in Jagat during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[56] During the two-hundred-year absence in the inscriptional record at Jagat, the nearby mining town of Jāwar grew in importance. Given that the rulers of Dūṅgarpur were able to help their Guhila cousins regain territory in Mewār during the sixteenth century, they must have been fairly powerful. They could maintain power from the hilly capital but may have lost control in the thirteenth century over the abandoned capital of Vaṭpaḍrak and much of the hilly desert regions of Banaswara and Vagada, which were and still are inhabited primarily by Bhils. While Mughals and Rājputs battled in the region between Gujarati strongholds and the Guhila capitals of Dūṅgarpur and Udaipur, Chhapa may have fallen under a vacuum of power.

A relative vacuum of power in Chhapa to the south left room for the growth of a multisectarian sacred center owing to innovative industry, a wealth of natural resources, and a relatively safe tract of desert land. Jain sites prospered. The monastic complex at Delwara (also known as Keśeriyajī) and the *mānasthambha* (column of honor) at Chittorgarh are a case in point (fig. 3.20). Skelton refers to more than one surviving manuscript that can be traced specifically to this monastery in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, whereas the grandeur of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is visible in the multisectarian architecture of Jāwar.[57] According to local legend, the smelting of zinc was invented at Jāwar in the fourteenth century. This site in southern Rājāsthan today lies next to small trickles of water, but this area used to be at the confluence of great waterways. Natural resources led to a multisectarian center filled with magnificent temples and tanks. These religious monuments staged the power of those who sought to control vital industry in desert tracts of land, largely inhabited by Bhils and Meenas, both historically and in the present. The site ultimately fell under the control of the kingdom of Mewār.

FIGURE 3.20. Keśeriyajī/Rishabdeo temple, Delwara. © Deborah Stein.

In Mahārāṇā Mokal's time the Jains already had considerable influence at the site, listing their *ācāryas* (teachers) on a beam of the Parsvanath temple. While on a military expedition against some Bhils, this Mewāri leader was murdered by his uncles in the sloping tracts of the Chhapa region where Jāwar is located. At this time Kumbhā had his capital far to the north of modern-day Udaipur. His reign is celebrated for several military exploits that secured vast territories for the kingdom of Mewār. Given the extent of battles during the period, the use of zinc for weapons and the control of these mines must have been a strategy essential in the minds of both the Gujarati sultans and the rajas of Mewār and Vagada alike. Raimal's sister, Ramabai, had Jāwar as part of her *jagīr*; she sponsored temples and a stepwell at Jāwar.[58] Upstream from the *pañcaratha* (five chariots) temple and the Rama kund tank are two temples: a large temple dedicated to Jāwar Mātā in 1598 CE and a smaller Śiva temple across the river. At this time Mewār was holding out from the encroaching power of Emperor Akbar, refusing daughters in marriage and retreating from capitals to tribal areas when necessary for protection. An ancient zinc smelter is also present at the site.

Jāwar is an important record of the interaction between industry, religion, and political power in the history of southern Rājāsthan. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries northern India was being solidified into an empire with its seat at Delhi. All the other Rājput states came into alliances with Akbar and his successors. Most of these states gave daughters in marriage to the Mughal Empire. The active resistance of many of Mewār's mahārāṇās led to a need for refuge and resources. Jāwar's location in the middle of the tribal belt of the Chhapa region made it a strategic place during these difficult and violent years. These mines provided metal in the heart of hilly desert areas perfect for hiding out. It is not surprising then that this center became so essential for the many faiths that made up the eclectic religious demographics of the kingdom of Mewār. Jains, Śaivaites, Śakti worshippers, and Vaiṣṇavaites all turned toward religion as an answer to their violent times and placed their faith in the God-given resource that could preserve their kingdom's independence: zinc.

Zinc is a by-product of silver mining. Coinage and household items are just some of the uses for this noncorrosive metal. The material may have been used to make weapons and armor rust-resistant. We know from the theft of more than one thousand metal icons that the theft of deities in war would have necessitated metal replacements.[59] Jāwar could offer much to the war-torn border region of Chhapa during the unrest that characterized this period. The metals mined there could have been used to finance wars through minting coins or used to arm soldiers with weapons and armor, to produce commodities on a large scale for trade and the local economy, and to make sacred objects for replacement of stolen images.

According to carbon-14 dating, mining took place at Jāwar as early as two thousand years ago.[60] India's first isolated zinc smelter and mine was put into production under the reign of Mahārāṇā Laksh Singh Mewār (1392–97 CE).[61] Only after

1450 CE were the Chinese able to isolate zinc during the Ming dynasty.[62] At that time the Indian market for zinc was so strong that it was not exported. In fact, zinc was imported from China to keep up with the demand for brass in India.[63] This demand for silver and zinc suggests that Jāwar, with its extensive archaeological remains in Sompurā style, was of strategic importance for the control of southern Rājāsthan in the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries.

Grand architecture was often not related to any dynastic patron or even acknowledgment of an overlordship in the inscription. Gamari, Āmjhara, Chinch, the Somnāth temple near Dūṅgarpur, Āaṭ, Jagat, and Hita provide evidence of stone architectural projects dating roughly from the tenth century through the thirteenth without specific reference to a dynasty. According to what is left of the architectural record, it seems that it was the lack of a state, per se, from the tenth century to the fourteenth that gave rise to "state formation" in the fifteenth century. Even then, the "state" seems to have been little more than fortress cities such as Chittorgarh, Kumbhalgarh, or Mandu—where polity was expressed more convincingly in cultural rather than military might.

WOMEN'S DREAMS: RAMABAI AS PATRON, MĪRABAI AS SAINT, PADMINI AS QUEEN

In court, as well as beyond, women's history stands out in fifteenth-century southern Rājāsthan. This section attempts to situate many of the twenty-first century regal desires for unbroken stewardship within a fifteenth-century point of origin. To speak of women's actions is feminist history; to speak of women's words is, as well, but to speak of women as allegorical personifications strips them of their will and puts them at the service of collective fantasies, often male. Recent works by historians Meena Gaur and Ramya Sreenivasan seek to salvage the historical voices of Rājāsthani women.[64] When that is not historically possible, owing to lack of records, some have turned to a deconstruction of allegory as a powerful tool to learn more about the perception of women in early modern Rājāsthan.[65] For the purpose of this study we must limit ourselves to women as architectural patrons, women as the sources of architectural inspiration, and women as the mythical markers of places where heritage is reified.

Three famous women held relationships with the early modern built environment in Mewār, Chhapa, and Vagada—two of whom held direct relationships with Rāṇā Kumbhā. The famous poet Mīrabai inspired Rāṇā Kumbhā to construct a temple in her name at Ekliṅgjī. Rāṇā Kumbhā's daughter, Ramabai, was the patron of the beautiful stepwell and Vaiṣṇavaite temple in her name in the mining town of Jāwar. Last but not least, Padmini, who self-immolated with all of her ladies at Chittorgarh centuries before, may well be the most famous woman in Indian history. Although traces of her story remain in the multiple overlapping mythical accounts so carefully studied by Ramya Sreenivasan, the

FIGURE 3.21. The Mīrabai temple, Ekliṅgjī. © Deborah Stein.

architectural remains of her act have made Chittorgarh a site of nationalist pil-
grimage in her name.

Padmini, Mīrabai, and Ramabai each reveal the hegemony of heritage in
Rājāsthan. Here I explore the record in stone to find that whereas women held
agency as patrons and poets in the fifteenth century, prior to that time it is the tale
of a climax of rupture—the end of a lineage and its precarious escape—that holds
the most hegemonic grip on the modern imaginings of medieval Rājāsthan.

With a rooftop similar to the Śri Ekliṅgjī temple, the Mīrabai temple within the
same complex postdates the Śri Ekliṅgjī temple by less than a century (fig. 3.21).

FIGURE 3.22. Mīrabai temple, rear view, Eklíṅgjī. © Deborah Stein.

The architectural plan consists of a slightly taller version of what one might expect of a tenth-century Guhila temple from Mēdapāṭa, such as the Śivēśvara temple found just a few steps away. A one-story maṇḍapa is joined to a single-register iconographical plan around the three outer walls of the sanctum. The quintessentially fifteenth-century Sompurā roof above the maṇḍapa contrasts with the oversimplified *śikhara* (spire) when viewed from the front.

When viewed from behind, the single register appears anything but tenth-century as it bursts forth in the exuberant aediculation known to experts as *śekharī* style—a form that consists of multiple projections that can more easily be discerned in the roof than on the walls (fig. 3.22). The style of this temple and its proximity to the Śrī Eklíṅgjī temple suggest something about the desires of its
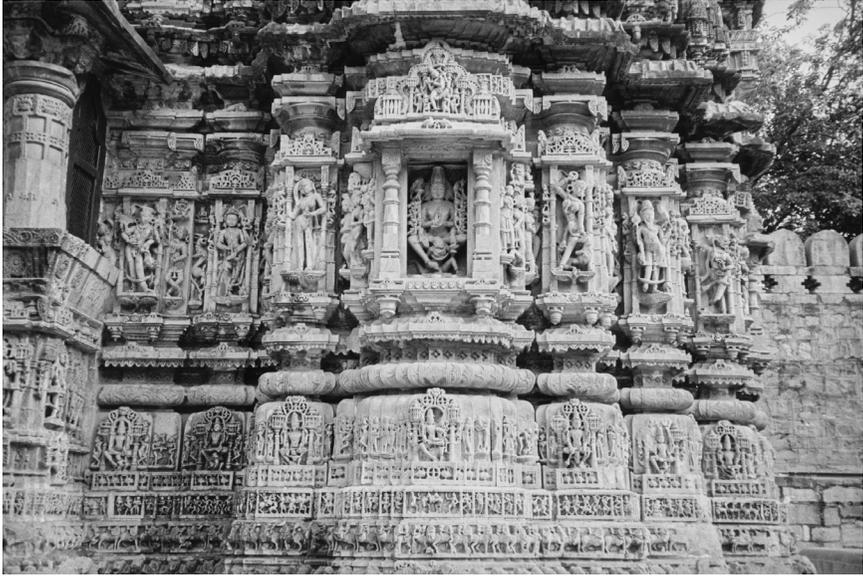
FIGURE 3.23. Viṣṇu icon, Mīrabai temple, Ekliṅgjī. © Deborah Stein.

patron. This temple, named after the saint and poet who refused to marry out of her monogamous love for Krishna, is dedicated to Viṣṇu. Unlike the Guhila temple dedicated to Viṣṇu at Īswāl, the Ramabai temple dedicated to Viṣṇu at Jāwar, and even the most famous Gupta-era Viṣṇu temple of all—the Daśāvatāra temple at Deogarh—this temple does not follow a *pañcaratha* plan. The extreme marriage of form and function between this specifically Vaiṣṇavaite architectural program of a central shrine with four corner detached subshrines suggests that a break from that convention may indicate a different form of ritual or philosophy. Why, then, was the Mīrabai temple placed so carefully next to the Śri Ekliṅgjī temple, in this style, at this time? Mīrabai was not just a Vaiṣṇavaite—she was known locally as a Mewāri Vaiṣṇavaite. Could it be that she was considered a patron saint of Mewār? If so, perhaps her temple was more about the cementing of Mewāri dynastic power than about providing an active space of Vaiṣṇavaite worship (either pañcaratha, as was common in the fifteenth century and earlier, or in a two-story congregational building with the potential space inside and out to sponsor dance rooted in increasing expression of bhakti from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries).

Many textual and religious studies scholars have translated Mīrabai's poetry and examined her life's story in great detail. Building on their work, how does one fit this specific temple into a specifically Mewāri construction of post-Kumbhā pride? In this building we find more of the origins of contemporary Sisodia dynastic aspirations than the desire to create an active theological building. Those two

FIGURE 3.24. Viṣṇu icon placement, deeply recessed, in fifteenth-century temple wall, Mīrabai temple, Ekliṅgjī. © Deborah Stein.

functions are not mutually exclusive, of course. If we look at the exterior niches, which correspond axially to the inner icon, we find three forms of Viṣṇu. In *pradakṣinā* circumambulatory order (clockwise), the second back wall iconographic representation displays twelve hands with typical Vaiṣṇavaite iconography including the discus and the conch shell (fig. 3.23). Viṣṇu's three heads are crowned by his traditional crater-shaped crown and are backed by an elaborately carved halo. He is seated in a posture of royal ease atop, one would assume, his vehicle, a *garuda*, despite the physique of a runner rather than the typical winged depiction of this magical bird.

If we step back from the temple, we see the Viṣṇu icon of the third side within a niche (fig. 3.24). If you look at the temple frontally, without moving your body, you see the icon flanked by two *surasundarī* figures (celestial maidens), who are in turn flanked by *dikpālas* (guardians of the corners)—just as one might expect in a tenth-century Mēdapāṭa region temple. In the fifteenth century the projections of the *bhadras* come much, much farther from the wall, and the sides of the niche also have sculpture at a perpendicular angle. Each surface of each protrusion has a sculptural outcropping. This changes circumambulation. Deeply enshrined icons remain in the shadows of their niches as a richly ornamental temple wall unwinds
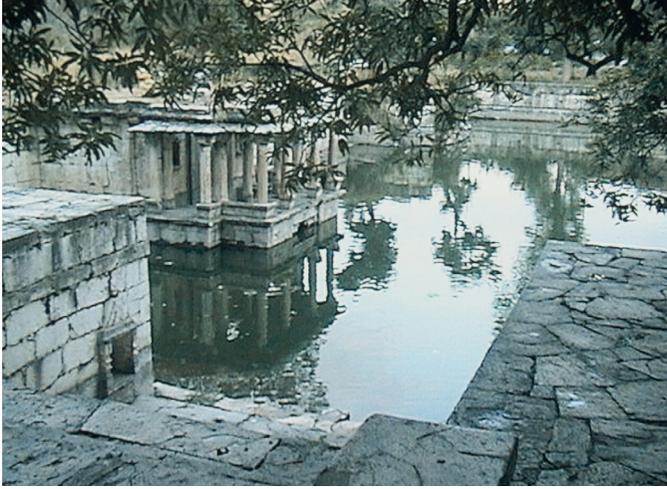
FIGURE 3.25. Ramabai temple tank, Jāwar. © Deborah Stein.

around them. Kinesthetically, this high medieval temple seems to push the viewer in a serial circular movement with three points of punctuation. As we will see in following chapters, the tenth-century temples use the guardian figures as much more than framing devices. They use those figures to manipulate the viewer's gaze to preview, view, and review the main icon. The original syncopated circumambulation, which I argue is akin to the sonic resonance of a pūjā-paddhati, gives way to serial circumambulation. This is another sign that these later temples may in some ways intentionally copy earlier architecture even while they function in a kinetic manner similar to contemporary temples and different from the tenth-century antecedents they mirror.

The temple copies aspects of tenth-century Mēdapāṭa temple programs but does not retain the kinesthetic functionalities typical of that era. As I have mentioned, the temple sits right next to the Śri Ekliṅgjī temple, as if these high medieval stone tributes to the ruler of Mewār and Mewār's female patron saint could sit side by side as revivalist tributes to Sisodia glory, envisioned as historical continuity with Guhila dynastic glory at the location where their sect, the Pāśupata-Śivas, won a theological debate in their territory five hundred years earlier.

A second temple, together with a more vernacular piece of architecture—a communal water tank—was also dedicated to Viṣṇu. This time in the form of Rameśvara, the temple's main icon pays tribute to King Kumbhā's daughter, Princess Ramabai. It was she who inherited Jāwar as part of her dowry and she who was the patron of this temple and tank (fig. 3.25). This Hindu Viṣṇu temple plan suggests links with other Viṣṇu temples to the north. The Ramanatha temple follows a pañcaratha plan similar to the tenth-century Viṣṇu temple at Īswāl and

FIGURE 3.26. Ramabai icon, Jāwar.
© Deborah Stein.

the seventeenth-century Jagannātha temple in Udaipur. Literally translated as a five-chariot temple, a pañcaratha plan consists of a main temple in the center of four smaller subshrines. This architectural pattern is generally associated with Viṣṇu, as seen in the famous Gupta-period Daśāvatāra shrine in Deogarh, Madhya Pradesh (fig. 3.9). In contrast to the majority of architectural stylistic features—where regional style trumps any sectarian orientation—the pañcaratha plan seems to span a long period and wide geographic area, possibly owing to a specific mode of Vaishnavism.

Unlike the sectarian necessities of the basic Vaiṣṇavaite pañcaratha plan, the central icon of Viṣṇu in the form of Ramanatha definitely reflects regional style and choice of materials. Black schist was a common material for medieval icons in this region (fig. 3.26). From the eighth-century four-faced Śiva liṅga of Kalyanpur to the south to the fifteenth-century gigantic Lakulīśa icon at Ekliṅgjī to the north, the highly polished, shiny black stone signals a material reserved for special icons placed within inner sanctums. In neighboring Jagat the tenth-century black icons of the goddesses Cāmuṇḍā and Mallar Mātā provide the most geographically close examples of this medieval phenomenon—a trend found in Śaiva, Śakti, and Vaishnava icons alike. The style of carving is also quite similar among these icons and differs from the fastidiously chiseled precision displayed in the ornamentation

of exterior walls. The meticulously carved sandstone, quartzite, or marble sculptures of the exterior display more elongated features than their Gupta counterparts and are characterized by a move away from volume toward a celebration of line. In contrast, the black icons of the inner sanctums in medieval Mēdapāṭa—including the Ramanatha icon of Jāwar—suggest a rudimentary folk style with an interest in basic forms rather than ornate ornamentation. And yet this "folk" style, for lack of a better term, was shared by rural and urban alike and was patronized both by those whose history remains unwritten and by nobility.

The Ramanatha icon falls in the category of icons sponsored by nobility. A female patron illuminates the political position of the Ramanatha temple within medieval Mewār since she was the daughter of the infamous Rāṇā Kumbhā. Ramabai's father was a great builder, as well, and a patron of the arts. Though the geographic area of his rule was often tiny, shifting stretches of his cultural prowess were expansive and impressive. He was obsessed with a revivalist desire to canonize the artistic feats of his lineage and to become a steward for future generations. Kumbhā wrote an erudite treatise on Indian music and the aesthetic theory of *rasa*, and he sponsored the Kumbhalgarh fort as well as the Vaishnava Kīrtistambha (mistakenly known as the Jayastambha, or Tower of Victory) at Chittorgarh.[66] The Ramanatha temple provides an important and noble female patron, a precise date, a clear geographic location, and a sectarian temple with a meaningful pañcaratha plan and an icon in situ in a single architectural example.

Perhaps the most official and important of architectural projects found at Jāwar, the Ramanatha temple, can be precisely dated thanks to a 1489 CE inscription. According to this inscription, Kumbhā's daughter sponsored the Ramanatha temple and tank since Jāwar was part of her *jagīr*.[67] Can we then envision the architectural relationship between the Ramanatha temple and Kumbhā's projects as a mirror of political relationships between kings and daughters, fathers and sons-in-law, rulers and the noble elite, women and their power as property owners—or alternatively, women as property tied to lands, holdings, and wealth? Certainly we can glean that a marital alliance established a noble Rājput presence at the site of Jāwar at the close of the fifteenth century. Whether that fact is understood as a signal of Jāwar's prominence and wealth or relative unimportance merits further investigation as we learn more about the history of gender and property in fifteenth-century Mewār.[68]

Ramabai's inscription appears at the entrance to a large tank, which adjoins the Ramanatha temple and its four subshrines. This large pool of water would have provided a state-sponsored civic space for the cool purification of water under the powerful gaze of the Ramanatha (Viṣṇu) icon.[69] Mahārāṇā Kumbhā's daughter's inscription—located at the entrance to a space designed for the congregation of the public—suggests the desire to control, celebrate, and take credit for the economic success of the zinc mining and the rich social fabric that had grown around this natural resource.[70] From the initial construction of industrial projects to the

FIGURE 3.27. Palace where the historical Rani Padmini resided within the fortress of Chittorgarh, picturesque view from within the domestic interior of the medieval palace onto a structure rebuilt in the 20th century in the middle of the lake. © Deborah Stein.

architectural phase of thanks for the rewards of that industrial endeavor, the construction of the nobly sponsored Viṣṇu temple signals the creation of communal centers of social exchange. A tank forms the heart of a village and indicates the growth and importance of the sacred center with the expansion of the zinc industry.

The third and last piece of architecture dedicated to a woman is a site of pilgrimage in person to this day (fig. 3.27).[71] The palace of the infamous Rani Padmini at Chittorgarh may be the domestic architectural remnant of one of the most potent historical events in India. Chronicled in multiple accounts over the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries, Rani Padmini is known as the Rājput queen who committed *jauhar* (ritual suicide) along with all the palace ladies rather than fall into the hands of Alāuddīn Khilji, the Sultan of Delhi. Ramya Sreenivasan has traced the trajectory of Padmini's story as it was told in 1540 and rewritten over time in different parts of India.[72] In contrast to these centuries of old bardic tales, the physical location of Alāuddīn Khilji's actual 1303 siege was the fortress of Chittorgarh. Could this "palace" next to the tank be the physical site of a *jauhar* led by Ratan Singh's wives? The palace was the residence of Rani Padmini, and not the location of the jauhar, which took place at the jauhar kund. Rani Padmini

FIGURE 3.28. J. W. Caplain, "The Water Palace of HH Rani Padmawati, Chittorgarh," Albumen print, 1865–1885 CE, Museum Archives of the Maharanas of Mewar, © MMCF, Udaipur.

is mentioned in Veer Vinod Part-1, which is the official historical chronicle of Mewar.[73] This structure, which looks significantly more modern (it was renovated in 20th century) than c. 1303, serves nevertheless as a site of pilgrimage.

The historicity of the Mewāri Queen's life in contrasts greatly with the artistic depictions subsequent to her time and produced outside of Mewār, each of which reflect above all the time and place where they were made. The bardic tale and "memory" dates historically to 1540 when Malik Mohammad Jayasi wrote the famous poem "Padmawat". In circulation during Akbar's reign, one can assume this avid patron of illuminated books and those in his karkhana workshops would have been aware of this story. Moreover, Jauhar is depicted in the Victoria and Albert Museum's *Akbar Nama* of c.1590–5 as one of the illustrations of Abu-Fazl's account of a Mughal siege of Chittorgarh in 1568, but this Mughal illuminated manuscript does not reference a time when Rani Padmini was in residence at her palace at all and, in fact, postdates the historical dates of Alāuddīn Khilji, the Sultan of Delhi by well over two centuries.[74] By the nineteenth century, when Ravi Varma was producing his famous oleographs, and writers such as Tagore and others were writing about Padmini in literature, the focus in this colonial era had

pivoted from jauhar to nationalism as evidenced in an image entitled "Padmini or Lotus Nymph"—where a female figure is transformed into an allegory of the Indian nation incarnate—her pink sari depicting a map of India in a representation that seems to resemble France's personification in Delacroix's 1830 painting of "Liberty Leading the People" more than any direct reference to the historical Rani Padmini of Mewār, her life in early medieval Chittorgarh, or her palace as pictured here in an archival albumen print from Mewār taken in c. 1865-1885 (Figure 3.28).

SELF-FASHIONING MONUMENTALITY IN THE WAKE OF DYNASTIC RUPTURE

The mid and high medieval periods in Mewār witnessed an efflorescence of self-fashioning through the construction of new monuments at old sites of numinous and political power. Heralded earlier in the thirteenth century by a shift in the Guhila origin myth, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries locate the first instances of self-fashioning through the self-conscious use of tenth-century historical monuments and inscriptions. Whereas the tenth century was a time of solidification of power and the construction of dynastic hegemony through monuments and inscriptions, the fifteenth century could build on more than the seeds of dynastic power or bits of lineage in a void of architectural evidence in stone. True monumentality came when monuments could be constructed next to buildings dating to centuries earlier. Fifteenth-century Sisodia monuments referenced tenth-century Guhila projects through an intentional spread of a new Sompurā-based dynastic style, the labeling of iconography established centuries earlier, and their location on the site of earlier buildings and inscriptions. Like thinking about thinking, these were monuments about monuments.

The impact of statehood on Ekliṅgjī and Jagat echoes this process of reification through architectural campaigns yet with references dependent more on the fifteenth-century monumentality than tenth-century remains. The ritual and politics of Ekliṅgjī today continue the tradition of inventing Mewāri identity by defining the center with monuments. It is still the royal family of Mewār who ensures that the archaeology of their family is not read merely as dead history. In the present, Ekliṅgjī serves to define postcolonial kinship most of all. Regardless of Udaipur's relationship to Delhi, either in the seventeenth or in the twenty-first century, Ekliṅgjī's role remains constant as the divine ruler of Mewār. Like many Rājput families, the descendants of Mewāri royals have turned their attentions to the hotel business, turning their royal residences into commodities for tourist consumption. As we have seen in this chapter, however, the manufacture of heritage may no longer pass for such a modern pursuit. In the fifteenth century already, with the labeling of the Kīrtistambha iconography Kumbhā and Jaita took

FIGURE 3.29. Queen Elizabeth given the tower of "Victory," twentieth century, Udaipur Palace. © Maharana of Mewar Charitable Foundation (MMCF). Reproduced by permission.

an encyclopedic approach to capturing history and freezing meaning in stone for future generations. It worked, as we can see in figure 3.29, a photograph of the presentation of a silver miniature of the tower presented to Queen Elizabeth on a royal visit to Udaipur.

The ritual and politics of Jagat today reflect an age-old struggle for power by politically disenfranchised populations on the periphery of dynasty, empire, and state. The increase of *sūtradhāra* interest in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries suggests Jagat had already taken on an art historical quality as an exemplary piece of architecture. The last inscriptions in Jagat date to the early eighteenth century. James Tod makes no mention of Jagat, nor are there any inscriptions dating from the nineteenth century onward. The next reference to Jagat is in the form of R. C. Agrawala's "discovery" in 1957 and a few 1950s photographs in the Archaeological Survey of India photography archive. In the twentieth century most of Jagat's nobles moved to Udaipur to live an urban existence, gradually transforming their court lifestyles into the hotel businesses after independence, as many powerful Rājput families have done in postcolonial India. This vacuum of power back in the village may echo the period between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when the local tribal peoples lived fairly independently and free of any clear dynastic power—Rājput, Mughal, British, or national. The difference between

these two periods is that the first left no additional residue of folk worship at the classical sites, whereas at the turn of the second millennium local Rājput, Meenas, and Bhils all seek to leave their lasting mark on the Ambikā temple at Jagat. They reclaim archaeology from its British heritage as well as from the tourist-and-art-market-driven capitalist economy.