Chapter 3: James Tod and the Recasting of Rajput History

Introduction

James Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* was published in two volumes, in 1829 and 1832. It has been described as "the most comprehensive monograph ever compiled by a British officer describing one of the leading peoples of India." It has also been recognized that "When... a new history of the Rajputs comes to be written, it must be largely based on Tod's collections..." The *Annals* has continued to occupy this place, as the first 'modern' history of the Rajputs and the region they ruled, Rajasthan.

Tod's text was valued on three distinct grounds. First, it was recommended reading for "the young [British] officer in India" seeking to familiarize himself with its people in order to rule them better (Crooke 1995, 1:xliii). Contemporaries in England applauded Tod for "completing our acquaintance with the geography as well as with the history of the west of India." This knowledge was useful in the "great extension" and "enlargement" of the East India Company's government on the subcontinent in the early nineteenth century (Anonymous 1832-a, 73).

Secondly, the *Annals* was seen as enlarging "the domain of science." By furnishing information about "a new country and a new people," Tod was discharging "some part of the great debt which our possessions and political situation in the East impose upon us in the eyes of the world" (Anonymous 1832-a, 74). The *Annals* was thus celebrated for augmenting "the treasures of European knowledge." And third, it was recognized as preserving "a record of tribal rights and privileges, of claims based on ancient tradition... of genealogies and family history which, but for Tod's careful record, might have been forgotten or misinterpreted even by the Rajputs.

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1 William Crooke, ed., introd. and notes, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan or the Central and Western Rajput States of India by Lieut.-Col. James Tod, 3 vols.,* 1920 (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1995), Introduction, 1:xlv. All citations are from this edition.
2 Anonymous, "Review of *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, or the Central and Western States of India. By Lieutenant-Colonel James Tod, late Political Resident to the Western Rajpoot States,*" *Edinburgh Review,* 56 (1832-a): 74
themselves” (Crooke 1995, l:xliv). In other words the Annals provided the Rajputs of Rajasthan with an authoritative history of themselves. Tod’s work was translated into Hindi in 1925, and has continued to be regarded by the Rajputs as a definitive primary source for their history.4

As I argue in the previous chapter, accounts of Rajput history were transformed in the late medieval period, in the context of regional Rajput consolidation. Ruling Rajput lineages used reconstructions of the past to assert rank and authority amongst themselves, and before their Mughal overlord. I have demonstrated how the Padmini story was shaped by the imperatives of such reconstruction. Tod’s narrative of Rajput history had a similar dual function. It was designed to help the East India Company in its policy towards the regional princely states. At the same time the Annals provided the Rajputs themselves with an account of the past that could be used to assert their political claims before a new external authority. Hence considerations of honour, rank and status continued to be as important as ever in the writing of Rajput history. Thus the broad themes in the history of the Padmini story continued to be the same as earlier.

In this chapter I discuss Tod’s treatment of the Padmini episode in four stages. I begin by enumerating the specific sources he cites. I go on to speculate on the nature and extent of collaboration between Tod and the Jain and bardic informants who helped him interpret his sources. Secondly, I examine how Tod’s own assumptions about the status of legend, and the relationship between myth and history, defined a loose sense of historical plausibility for him. This may have determined the shape of the Padmini narrative that he crafted out of elements selected from diverse sources. Equally, his idealization of feudal chivalry shaped his understanding of the Rajputs and their history. Tod’s understanding of human history was drawn from his European moorings, and shaped his reading of Rajasthani historical traditions. Third, I argue that these altered interpretations of the history of Mevar and the Padmini story in particular

must be understood in their historical context. Rajasthan in the early nineteenth century witnessed a conjuncture between changed historical conditions in the regional Rajput kingdoms and the expansionist policies of the East India Company. The changed historical circumstances provided the context for Tod’s political role in Mevar. Tod’s Orientalist, Romantic and post-Enlightenment assumptions simultaneously converged with as well as reinterpreted Rajasthani historical traditions. And finally I conclude this chapter by examining Tod’s account of the Padmini story itself. I begin by comparing Tod’s version with the sources he cites. This will reveal his recasting of the legend. Subsequently I concentrate on the same three narrative foci that emerged in the medieval Rajasthani versions: the relationship between king and chiefs, the status of the queen, and threats to the dominant order from various enemies.

TOD AND HIS SOURCES

Sources

Tod mentions among his sources for the history of Mevar, genealogies of the ruling family obtained “from the rolls of the bards.” In addition, he mentions “a chronological sketch, drawn up under the eye of Raja Jai Singh of Amber, with comments of some value by him, and which served as a ground-work.” Further, he speaks of “copies of such MSS. as related to his history, from the Rana’s library.”

The most important of these was the Khuman Raesa [sic], which is evidently a modern work founded upon ancient materials, tracing the genealogy to Rama, and halting at conspicuous beacons in this long line of crowned heads, particularly about the period of the Muhammadan irruption in the tenth century, the sack of Chitor by Alau-d-din in the thirteenth century, and the wars of Rana Partap with Akbar, during whose reign the work appears to have been recast.

The next in importance were the Rajvilas, in the Vraj bhakha, by Man Kabeswara; and the Rajratnakar, by Sudasheo Bhat; both written in the reign of Rana Raj Singh, the opponent of Aurangzeb; also the Jaivilas, written in the reign of Jai Singh, son of Raj Singh. They all
commence with the genealogies of the family, introductory to the military exploits of the princes whose names they bear (Crooke 1995, 1:250-51).

In addition to these sources, Tod mentions the "Mamadevi Prasistha" [sic]: "a copy of the inscriptions in the temple of 'the Mother of the Gods' at Kumbhalmer." He collected "genealogical rolls of some antiquity" from the widow of "an ancient family bard." And he procured "other rolls . . . from a priest of the Jains residing in Sandrai, in Marwar, whose ancestry had enjoyed from time immemorial the title of Guru." He also consulted the records of "Jain priests at Jawad in Malwa." Further, Tod had access to the "historical documents possessed by several chiefs." "Extracts were made from works, both Sanskrit and Persian, which incidentally mention the [Sisodia] family." To these he added "traditions or biographical anecdotes furnished in conversation by the Rana, or men of intellect among his chiefs, ministers, or bards." And he relied on "inscriptions calculated to reconcile dates." However he seems to have been unaware of Jayasi's poem, or indeed of any Sufi adaptation of the Padmavat.

As Tod describes his method of treating his sources,

every corroborating circumstance was treasured up which could be obtained by incessant research during sixteen years. The Commentaries of Babur and Jahangir, the Institutes of Akbar, original grants, public and autograph letters of the emperors of Delhi and their ministers, were made to contribute more or less (Crooke 1995, 1:250-1).

Tod does not mention accounts by European travelers in the preceding centuries. His footnotes indicate, however, that he was familiar with some of these accounts, such as Francois Bernier's Travels in the Mogul Empire. Thus Tod indicates that he derived his history of Mevar by a

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process of collation from diverse sources. He further clarifies that he checked for corroborative evidence by comparing accounts to verify the sequence of events.

**Assembling the Annals: the interpretation of local sources**

In the second stage of this argument ('The Annals Assembled'), I explore the extent to which Tod's recasting of the Padmini story may have been borrowed from the altered interpretations of his Jain, Brahmin and bardic informants. Tod’s collation of the Padmini story provides an opportunity to examine the nature of the sources available to him, his mode of access to them, and his angle of vision in reading them. In this section I examine what little information the Annals provides, about the interaction between Tod and his Rajasthani informants. I argue in the previous chapter that the exigencies of elite politics in the late-medieval Rajput kingdoms of Rajasthan produced a spate of accounts about the Rajput past, including a Jain tradition of Padmini narratives. Tod had access to both Jain and Rajput sources for his reconstruction of the Padmini story.

However, he provides little information about which texts he relied on, how they were interpreted by the Rajasthani scholars he worked with, and how much he relied on the latter's readings. The sparse evidence on these matters creates a situation familiar from other colonial attempts to assemble such knowledge about the subcontinent and its history. In this respect Tod’s collaboration with Rajasthani scholars is comparable to the efforts of Colin Mackenzie in southern India, at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As Nicholas Dirks points out:

> When local documents were collected, authority and authorship were transferred from local to colonial contexts. The different voices, agencies, and modes of authorization that were implicated in the production of the archive got lost once they inhabited the archive. Distinctions between types of texts (e.g., texts that derived from ancient authorship or the hastily transcribed remarks from a local source) ... became blurred and increasingly
dissolved at each stage of the collection, transcription, textualization, translation, and canonization of the archive.\(^6\)

Tod states that he was helped in reading his Rajasthani sources by a Jain monk Gyanchandra, who became his teacher. Tod first mentions Gyanchandra as presiding over the “body of [learned] pandits” that helped him read the genealogical lists in the Puranas from the library of the Udaipur Rana (Crooke 1995, 1:23). In addition to his widely respected scholarship, Gyanchandra is said to have “surpassed all the bards at Udaipur,” in his “skill” at “reciting poetry.” The Jain monk attributed both his extensive knowledge of Rajput history and his literary skills to his training with Zalim Singh, an uncle of Rana Bhim Singh.\(^7\) Tod acknowledges his debt to Gyanchandra, who continued to collaborate with him for ten years. “To him I owe much, for he entered into all my antiquarian pursuits with zeal” (Crooke 1995, 2:764). Tod also traveled extensively with the Jain monk, becoming the first Englishman to gain any access to the huge Jain archives at Patan (Gujarat).\(^8\) Gyanchandra seems to have read various chronicles for Tod and recounted stories from them, as the latter translated the account into English.\(^9\)

This scanty evidence makes it difficult to speculate about the extent to which Tod’s understanding of Rajput history was borrowed from his Jain teacher or bardic informants. For instance, the extent to which Tod imposed his own interpretation even as he translated with Gyanchandra’s help, remains unclear. Further, Tod speaks of his “conversation[s]” with “the Rana, or men of intellect among his chiefs, ministers, or bards.” From these conversations he

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\(^7\) Crooke 1995, 2:1077. Zalim Singh was a rival to the throne at the time of his nephew Bhim Singh’s accession, and was banished from Mevar by the latter. He died in the British district of Merwara in 1799.

\(^8\) Tod, *Travels in Western India*, 1839 (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1997) 233. Tod himself was not allowed to enter the archive, controlled by the Kharataragaccha. His guru Gyanchandra had to recite his own descent in spiritual lineage in the gaccha from the medieval Hemacharya, before he was allowed entry. He returned from the archive, and described some of its contents to Tod (who waited outside the archive). It is significant that most of the Jain monastic authors of the medieval Rajasthani Padmini narratives belonged to the Kharataragaccha.

\(^9\) Crooke 1995, 2:1017. “My old tutor and friend, the Yati Gyanchandra, who told the story while he read the chronicles as I translated them . . .”
gleaned additional information about "traditions or biographical anecdotes" (Crooke 1995, 1:250). Once again, it is unclear which traditions and anecdotes were incorporated in the Annals and which were excluded.

Tod also provides no information on how he identified his textual sources and collated them. Thus there are further questions about the nature of the archive available to him. For example, while he cites the Khumman Raso, he does not seem to have been aware of Hemratan’s earlier poem that the eighteenth-century Khumman Raso reworks. Nor does he mention the other Padmini poems in the Jain tradition. This would seem curious, in view of Tod’s long association with Gyanchandra and the fact that he specifically mentions Jain accounts among his sources for Mevar history. Moreover, copies of the Jain Padmini poems continued to be transcribed in Rajasthan into the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For example, the personal library of the Mevar Ranas at Udaipur, which Tod had access to, lists a copy of Labdodhay’s Padminicaritra, transcribed in V S. 1823 (1766 A.D.). It is possible that Tod overlooked this manuscript in his survey of the Ranas’ archives, since it is not mentioned in the collection of manuscripts he took back with him to England and deposited at the Royal Asiatic Society. But it may also be that his Jain informants did not mention the earlier Jain poems about Padmini, since the account in the Khumman Raso is closely modeled on Hemratan’s poem.

I argue in the previous chapter that political proximity between the Osval Jain elite and the Rajput state between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, produced a spate of Jain literary narratives glorifying the Rajput past. We now see that the Jain Gyanchandra attributes his extensive knowledge of literary texts and regional history to the Rajput Zalim Singh. This points

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11 For a list of the manuscripts in the Tod Collection at the Royal Asiatic Society in London, see L.D. Barnett, "Catalogue of the Tod Collection of Indian Manuscripts in the Possession of the Royal Asiatic Society," Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (June 1940):129-78. I am grateful to Cynthia Talbot and Jason Freitag for this citation and for providing me with a copy of the article.
to the continued proximity between Jain and Rajput perspectives in the nineteenth century. However, the shrinking military and economic resources of the Rajput state implied a reduced network of chiefly patronage for literary production as well.\textsuperscript{12} It was client chiefs negotiating their status in relation to the king, who had provided patronage to the Jain authors of the medieval Padmini poems. In contrast, Gyanchandra functions directly within the context of royal patronage in the early nineteenth century: he presides over an assembly of scholars in the king's court.\textsuperscript{13} As such, the Jain scholar may not necessarily have been alert to the subtle articulations of chiefly aspirations in the eighteenth-century Khumman Raso, or indeed to the implications of the divergences between Jain poem and bardic chronicles.

Independently of the information Tod provides about his sources and how he read them, the changed historical context of the early nineteenth century may suggest altered \textit{local} interpretations of Rajput history. The distinctive features of Rajput polity in the early nineteenth century were a disappearance of opportunities for military service and expansion outside the region, intensifying contests over resources and authority between chiefs and kings. These were factors that worked equally to modify the relationship between elite Rajput patriarchy and the state. I argue in this chapter that the new shape of the Padmini story, as it illuminates the relationship between king and his chiefs, and queen and kingdom, must be understood in this context. Attempts to recast the enemy against whom the Rajput order was defined and consolidated, would also have gained new urgency at this conjuncture.

\textbf{THE SHAPE OF HISTORY: EUROPEAN MOORINGS}

Before examining the altered historical context for the reinterpretation of the Padmini story, I turn to Tod's own assumptions about history and historical narrative. Romantic premises underpinned Tod's understanding of race and nationality, as also his idealization of feudalism and its chivalric order. Enlightenment and Orientalist assumptions determined his reading of universal


\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Annals}, vol. 1, p. 23
history and the place of the subcontinent in that scheme. Further, the Annals invokes emerging conventions about distinctions between 'literature' and 'history', the nature of historical evidence, and its use in the writing of history. Tod was governed by these generic boundaries in selecting specific elements from diverse sources to reconstruct Rajput history. I conclude this section by examining the impact of these premises on Tod's interpretation of Rajput history, polity and traditions.

**Overlapping contexts: Enlightenment, Romantic, Orientalist**

The Annals was clearly intended "to enlighten ... [Tod's] native country on the subject of India." In doing so, however, Tod argued that he was also extending "our stock of knowledge of the past" (Crooke 1995, 1:lxiii-iv). A contemporary review agreed that the history of India was of wider significance:

> Even if it were possible to trace, through these mythic or poetic traditions, the broader outlines of the great civil and religious revolutions of India itself ... these questions would not only be valuable to the enquirer into Indian antiquities, but of great importance to the general history of man. (Anonymous 1832-b, 5).

The quest for "the general history of man" had for its context the European Enlightenment, when the secularization of history had led to an enlargement of "historical space." The Enlightenment philosophers' quest for a universal history had led Voltaire to a polemical celebration of the Orient as a counter to the then dominant, Judaeo-Christian understanding of history. Especially significant in this Enlightenment polemic was the antiquity of the Orient, since "the Oriental nations ... were civilized when the West was still sunk in primitive barbarity." Tod reveals these Enlightenment moorings as he begins with the premise of "a nation so highly

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civilized as the Hindus, amongst whom the exact sciences flourished in perfection, by whom the fine arts, architecture, sculpture, poetry, music, were ... cultivated” (Crooke 1995, 1:lvii).

The intent, however, was not merely to fill out an aggregate of the histories of the world’s peoples. More ambitious was the attempt to find a single, common origin for all the civilizations of the world. Like many contemporary English and European scholars, Tod hoped to prove through the evidence in his Annals “the common origin of the people of the east and west” (Crooke 1995, 1:lxv). It was within this framework that he propounded a common Scythic origin for the tribes of early Europe and “the Rajpoot tribes.” And it was this pursuit of a single origin that drove Tod’s cross-cultural comparisons and analogies. “If the festivals of the old Greeks, Persians, Romans, Egyptians, and Goths could be arranged with exactness in the same form with the Indian, there would be found a striking resemblance among them.” He cites William Jones’s example, and resolves to treat the “festivals and superstitions of the Rajputs” similarly.15 “Wherever there may appear to be a fair ground for supposing an analogy with those of other nations of antiquity, I shall not hesitate to pursue it” (Crooke 1995, 2:652).

Underlying this search for the single origin of human civilizations and the comparison of ancient cultures was the conviction that there was a fundamental unity to all humankind. This did not rule out recognition of the distinct attributes of each civilization. Nineteenth-century historians critiqued Enlightenment historiography for its emphasis on “the uniformity of human nature” rather than “the wealth of human experience.” But in the Scottish Enlightenment, Hume had already argued for “a relativist conception of the past,” a suspension of judgment and a

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15 Tod’s speculations on the origin of the Rajputs and their ‘ancient’ customs reveal the influence of William Jones’ theories. Jones was the most influential and visible proponent of an ethnology that saw all human races as descended from a single origin. He was also the chief theorizer of an ‘Indo-European’ group of languages and races. See Thomas R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (New Delhi: Vistaar Publications, 1997), specially Chapters 2 and 3. I am grateful to Cynthia Talbot for pointing out the parallels with William Jones and providing the Trautmann citation.
willingness "to see other epochs from the inside." Tod begins his Annals by asserting these relativist premises:

Those who expect from a people like the Hindus a species of composition of precisely the same character as the historical works of Greece and Rome, commit the very egregious error of overlooking the peculiarities which distinguish the natives of India from all other races . . . (Crooke 1995, 1:lvii-viii).

Distinct civilizations were measured and compared, however, on the basis of a universally applicable criterion. This was the idea of historical progress. As Norbert Peabody points out:

Tod used popular contemporary understandings of historical progress and regression, as espoused by Scottish Enlightenment figures such as David Hume . . . and, particularly, the English Whig historian Henry Hallam, to rank nations differentially against a continuous gradient of advancement and perfection. 17

This idea that society moves through 'stages' of development from nomadism to high civilization, is at the root of Tod's construction of Rajput feudalism as well. As Peabody suggests, Tod situated his discussion of the issue within debates about the nature of various European states. This reflects "his inclination to see at least some aspects of India and Europe within a unified analytic field" (Peabody 1996, 197).

The analogies with European feudalism work at two levels in Tod's narrative. One, he explicitly compares the Rajput political system with its European counterpart. He takes for his model of the European feudal system, Henry Hallam's View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages. 18 More subtly and persistently, he explains the Rajput context by invoking

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16 "Would you try a Greek or Roman by the common law of England? Hear him defend himself by his own maxims, and then pronounce . . . . There are no manners so innocent or reasonable, but may be rendered odious or ridiculous, if measured by a standard, unknown to the persons.' David Hume, A Dialogue (1751), cited in Gay 1969, 2:381.
17 Norbert Peabody, "Tod's Rajast h'an and the Boundaries of Imperial Rule in Nineteenth-Century India," Modern Asian Studies, 30 (1996), 1:189
18 Henry Hallam, View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages, 2 vols., (London: John Murray, 1818).
metaphors and comparisons from the idiom of European chivalry. Tod’s *Annals* must be located within a Romantic medievalism that recuperated and celebrated medieval ballads, a medieval religion based on faith rather than reason, and the heroism of chivalric knights. Within this tradition, medieval feudalism was celebrated as a benevolent, patriarchal system of mutual respect and dependence supporting a stable, hierarchical order. Tory historians also looked to the Middle Ages as offering a model of more ordered and orderly society, bearing allegiance to Crown and to aristocratic hierarchy. A contemporary reviewer recognized this aspect of the *Annals*. He is reminded of Roland by Tod’s description of a particular Rajput prince.

Further, as Peabody indicates, Tod is located within a discourse of Romantic nationalism, in regarding distinct social groups as nations. Thus for instance he regards the Marathas as a nation, associated with a given territory and its people by common “habits and language,” and therefore exercising political power legitimately within that territory, their “proper sphere of action.” Tod’s perception of the Rajputs as a nation had several implications for his understanding of their history. As I argue in the previous chapter, by the seventeenth century the Rajputs of Rajasthan had evolved into a community excluding ‘outsiders’ through the definition of group limits by the use of kinship ties and marriage regulations. Tod took this self-perception of group identity and superimposed upon it the status of a ‘nation.’ I discuss the consequences of this shift of categories below (‘Histories old and new’).

19 Bishop Percy’s *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) was the earliest example of this rediscovery of English ballad traditions.
21 “We have room for only one characteristic incident concerning this hero of the Indian bard of chivalry. It will remind the reader of a striking passage in the Lady of the Lake, though the Fitzjames and Roderic Dhu of the Rajpoot legend carry their courtesy in the midst of their death-feud to a more extraordinary height.” Anonymous 1832-b, 25.
22 Tod subscribed to a Romantic nationalism which believed that “the highest degree of human fulfillment is achieved through the complete manifestation of one’s transcendent national identity” (emphasis added). Peabody 1996, 188.
The final strand that I wish to identify in Tod’s stance towards the literary and historical traditions of the Rajputs is Orientalism. In his distinctive brand of Orientalism, Tod stands at the convergence of Enlightenment and Romantic trends. His positive evaluation of ‘Hindu’ civilization had predecessors in the Enlightenment. As pointed out above, the definition of the Orient through its antiquity and pagan religion was instrumental in the Enlightenment philosophers’ polemics against Christianity and its theological interpretation of the world. Romanticism inherited the association of the orient with pagan mystery, and contributed its own, anti-Enlightenment polemic against reason. Thus it identified an imaginative (and imagined) Orient as a point of origin. Again, the German Romantics paved the way for subsequent European attitudes. In 1803, Friedrich Schlegel asserted that “everything, yes, everything without exception has its origin in India.” Raymond Schwab highlights Schlegel’s later declaration that “he had already begun to formulate a construct of human history based on Indic history, with special consideration of India’s religious importance. This was the upshot of his lectures on literature and world history.” 24

Tod does not necessarily regard India as the cradle of civilization. Nevertheless, he inherits these Orientalist assumptions about India as a land of pagan mystery. Thus he speaks of “the peculiarities which distinguish the natives of India from all other races, and which strongly discriminate their intellectual productions of every kind from those of the West” (Crooke 1995, 1:lviii). This “peculiarity” is the predominance of religion in every sphere of life, and especially in the realm of cultural traditions. 25 While the “Hindus” achieved great “progress to the heights of science” in antiquity, they fell prey to the “slavish fetters of the mind” inevitable in the “moral decrepitude of ancient Asia.” Thus they “lost the relish for the beauty of truth, and adopted the

25 Other East India Company officials and scholars shared these perceptions. For instance, the Orientalist “privileging of religion and the assumption of a complete native submission to its force” underpinned official discourse and policy in the run-up to the abolition of sati in 1829. See Lata Mani, Contentionous Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998) 25-32.
monstrous in their writings” (Crooke 1995, 1:30-31). Enlightenment secularist polemics against the dominance of the priests were simply transferred to reinforce Orientalist constructions of the Indian context. Thus Tod sees Hume’s description of the Saxon annalist-monks as fitting the Indian context perfectly. He merely substitutes “Brahmans” for Hume’s reference to the Saxon “monks.”

Tod’s brand of Orientalism must be distinguished, however, from two other varieties of nineteenth-century Orientalisms in India, missionary and Utilitarian. Both philosophies deprived the Orient of history. In the early nineteenth century, evangelizing missionaries explicitly encouraged in Englishmen “an attitude of contempt for the civilization they were called on to rule.”

In turn, the Utilitarian James Mill borrowed heavily from contemporary evangelical and missionary writers on India like William Ward and the Abbe Dubois. Thus, for Mill the “ancient literature” of India was “the offspring of a wild and ungoverned imagination.” It proved “the state of a rude and credulous people, whom the marvellous delights; who cannot estimate the use of a record of past events.” Tod explicitly positioned himself against this convergence of missionary and Utilitarian ideologies. He states at the beginning of his Author’s Introduction that he wishes to rectify the misconception that “India possesses no national history.” He recognizes kindred scholars in this endeavour, as he adds to “the labours of Colebrooke, Wilkins, Wilson, and others of . . . [his] countrymen” (Crooke 1995, 1:lv). Unlike Mill, he begins by applauding “a nation so highly civilized as the Hindus” (Crooke 1995, 1:lvii).

In short, two distinct trends can be discerned within East India Company policy. Mill’s The History of British India (1817) exemplified the liberal programme to emancipate India from

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26 The Saxon monks considered “the civil transactions as subservient to the ecclesiastic,” and were “strongly affected with credulity, with the love of wonder, and with a propensity to imposture.” See Crooke 1995, 1:lvii.
its own culture. In contrast, Tod's Annals stands in an older Company tradition of governance and scholarship exemplified by Warren Hastings and William Jones, with its concern to define and administer by indigenous codes of politics and law. As I argue above, this older Company tradition found support from an Orientalist understanding of India that emerged first in the Enlightenment, and developed further within Romanticism.

**Materials for history: Myth, epic, heroic poetry**

In his stance to the cultural traditions of ancient times, Tod followed the precedent set by eighteenth-century British Orientalists. The term “literature” as used by Dow, Hastings, Jones and their nineteenth-century successors, was an umbrella term for a wide range of narrative, philosophical and discursive texts. From this wide range of texts, Tod regards three genres as relevant to reconstructing the history of Indian antiquity: mythology (such as that found in the Puranas), the two epic traditions (the Ramayana and the Mahabharata) and later heroic poetry such as that of the Rajputs (for instance the Prithviraj Raso).

He regards “the heroic poems of India” as “a resource for history” (Crooke 1995, 1:lviii). However, their treatment of events and personages is distinctive: “They speak in a peculiar tongue, which required to be translated into the sober language of probability.” And as poems they are prone to “magniloquence” and “obscurity” (Crooke 1995, 1:lix). He recognizes that the bardic histories were “confined almost exclusively to the martial exploits of their heroes.” “Love and war are their favourite themes,” since they were written “for the amusement of a warlike race” (Crooke 1995, 1:lx). Still, “the works of the native bards” offer “historical evidence”: “valuable data, in facts, incidents, religious opinions, and traits of manners” (Crooke 1995, 1:lx). Thus Tod reads “the poems of Chand” as “a complete chronicle of his times,” as “heroic history” (Crooke 1995, 1:lxii, lvii).

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In keeping with the Romantic valorization of ancient bardic poetry, Tod also regards the Indic epics as "history": "we must discard the idea that the history of Rama, the Mahabharata are mere allegory: an idea supported by some, although their races, their cities, and their coins still exist."\(^{31}\) Elsewhere, he describes the Mahabharata as "the legends of Hindu antiquity", containing "traditional history" (Crooke 1995, 1:60). This reading of epic and heroic poetry was based on the assumption that "bards" were "the primitive historians of mankind" (Crooke 1995, 1:lviii). Tod argues that "before the province of history was dignified by a class of writers who made it a distinct department of literature, the functions of the bard were doubtless employed in recording real events and in commemorating real personages" (Crooke 1995, 1:lviii-lix).

Moving from epic to a consideration of the myths it deploys, Tod sees mythology as "the parent of all history." He regards these "fables of antiquity" as a key to deciphering the origins of a people’s history.\(^{32}\) Further, mythology is not only an encoded history of antiquity, in typically Romantic terms it is also contrasted against contemporary reason. "Let us not imagine that the minds of those we would reform are the seat of impurity, because in accordance with an idolatry coeval with the flood, they continue to worship mysteries opposed to our own modes of thinking" (Crooke 1995, 2:706).

This reading of Indian epic and myth as historical was by no means accepted unanimously in the period. Orientalist scholars of Persian inherited the medieval (Persian) chronicle tradition’s skepticism about the historicity of the epics. Thus Alexander Dow in his Preface to the translation of Ferishta categorically described the "Mahabarit" [sic] as "a poem,  

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\(^{31}\) Crooke 1995, 1:54. Tod argues in his defence that the entire historical record for India’s past is not yet known, and therefore that judgment about the historicity of the epics must be reserved. He was also more than eager, in the early nineteenth century context, to ever-extend inferences from the still rudimentary archaeological knowledge about the subcontinent. Subsequent historical research and archaeological excavation have failed to come up with evidence for ‘their cities, and their coins.’

\(^{32}\) Tod cites Clarke to argue that ‘by a proper attention to the vestiges of ancient superstition, we are sometimes enabled to refer a whole people to their original ancestors.’ Crooke 1995, 2:650.
and not a history." Dow was aware that Mughal scholars read the epics in the same fashion, "rather as a performance of fancy, than as an authentic account of the ancient dynasties of the Kings of India" (Dow 1973, 1:iv). And in the nineteenth century James Mill represents the most polemical instance of anti-Orientalist English scholars who continued to be skeptical of the epic and Puranic traditions' historical veracity. Mill explicitly attacked orientalists and romantics for aspiring to reconstruct India's past from native myth and legend.

In sharp contrast Tod relied heavily on the heroic poetry and poetical chronicles of the Rajputs in rewriting their history. By the time the Annals were written, Tod's views about the value of heroic poetry, epic and myth were more widely shared. For one, Tod stands within a Scottish tradition of enquiry into the culture and history of "heroic-age societies." This was the context for the extraordinary popularity of 'Ossian', the alleged third-century Gaelic poet 'translated' by James Macpherson in the 1760s. Even while scholars in England were convinced that the poems were a forgery and the creations of Macpherson himself, Ossian went through numerous editions and was translated into ten European languages over the course of the next century. 'Ossian' flourished in a context of new interest in "the distinct history of peoples", in

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35 As Marilyn Butler demonstrates, "From the mid-1730s to the 1770s the cultural history of heroic-age societies such as Homer's Greece, republican Rome and Gaelic Scotland was a leading preoccupation of Scottish academics such as Thomas Blackwell, Adam Ferguson and Hugh Blair." See Butler, "Romanticism in England," in Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich, eds. Romanticism in National Context (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 46.
36 As George Black points out, "It was assumed that as far back as the third century, in the remote Highlands and islands of Scotland, there existed a people who possessed not only noble and generous qualities of the highest type but also a strong poetic fervor which was nourished and kept aglow through the centuries down to our day. Some there were who had their doubts about the authenticity of the poems, others there were who disbeliefed, but a still greater number cling to the idea, as Gibbon puts it, that 'Fingal fought, and Ossian sang.'" Black, Macpherson's Ossian and the Ossianic Controversy: A Contribution Towards a Bibliography (New York: The New York Public Library, 1926) 8. Marilyn Butler also points out how Macpherson's endeavours were "encouraged by well-known Edinburgh professors like Adam Ferguson and Hugh Blair." Butler 1988, 44.
their "characteristic localized traditions in poetry, in historiography, in religion and in language" (Butler 1988, 46).

Secondly, Tod subscribes to post-Enlightenment, Romantic celebrations of poetry as mankind's original medium of expression. This led him to a typically Romantic formulation of the value of ancient cultures - where antiquity, pagan religion and poetry are contiguous markers of the imaginative domain, to be contrasted with reason and modernity. Tod's warning against regarding the "mysteries" of the East as "impurity," had been prefigured by the German Romantics. Herder had celebrated the supposedly pure poetry of an "organic community", to be found among peoples considered "wild" and "primitive," in the 1770s. This had involved exalting "the primitive periods when irrational elements predominated, barbarian and heroic ages, ages long distant in which language was elaborated and in which legends and myths were formed." And the Orient had been fixed as the location for both "the divine origin of language and of poetry," as well as "the origin of societies" (Schwab 1984, 209-11). Thus Goethe explained his study of the Orient: "Here I want to penetrate the first origin of human races, when they still received celestial mandates from God in terrestrial languages" (Schwab 1984, 211).

Since myth, epic and heroic poetry had been recuperated for the historical domain as proto-history, conventions were evolved to read them for historical evidence. A contemporary review of Tod begins by recognizing this fictive quality to the texts of antiquity:

In all nations poets have been the first historians . . . The annals of every race are lost in the mists of a mythic or fabulous period, in which the dimly-humanised forms of the gods, or men magnified by the uncertain haze to preter-human stature, people the long-receding and shadowy realm. Even where that is not the case, over every event, and every character, is thrown a poetic and imaginative colouring; the bard-chronicler never abandons the privilege,

37 Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan' and 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner' illustrate this trend most clearly.
38 Herder, cited in Schwab 1984, 212.
the attribute of his art; and until history has condescended to the sober march of prose, it does not restrain itself from the licence of fiction . . .

Thus in ancient mythic narrative the "truth" was perceived to be "latent," obscured by "its fictitious or allegoric veil" (Anonymous 1832-b, 1).

It was therefore within the emerging discipline of philology rather than that of history, that ancient epic and myth were comprehended as encoded historical narratives. Nineteenth-century philologists read the wide range of texts now included with the category of ancient "literature," for their historical content (see above). And, as Vinay Dharwadker points out, nineteenth-century philology was concerned "specifically with the earliest period in recorded history": "the discipline conceives of the ancient world as the source, beginning, or origin of a civilization, race, people, or nation, and hence also as the explanatory frame of reference for its entire subsequent historical development, evolution, or descent" (1993, 175). This is the logic by which Tod pushes back the history of the Rajputs beyond the point of the latter's earliest chronicles, into the Puranas and epic traditions.

Further, Romantic and philological premises merged seamlessly with Orientalist assumptions in the study of Indian antiquity. Tod asserts the distinct "character" of Indian literature, art and history, derived from "its intimate association with the religion of the people" (Crooke 1995, 1:lviii). Thus he read Indic texts in general, whether ancient or more recent, as characterized by the same degree of "obscurity." Both the Puranas and later "genealogical legends of the princes" are obscured by "mythological details, allegory, and improbable circumstances" (Crooke 1995, 1:lviii). The difficulty of recovering history from such sources is compounded by problems of transmission and reception. As Tod argues, "Doubtless the original Puranas contained much valuable historical matter; but, at present, it is difficult to separate a little pure metal from the base alloy of ignorant expounders and interpolators" (Crooke 1995, 1:30).

In opposition to a domain of literature typified by the "licence of fiction" and "poetic and imaginative colouring", Tod suggests a broad definition for history: "the relation of events in
succession, with an account of the leading incidents connecting them . . .” (Crooke 1995, 2:802).

Since the emphasis is on events and their chronology, Tod strove for reliable methods towards establishing these ends. To ascertain facts about events themselves, he sought corroborative evidence from other sources, including chronicles, documents such as official letters, and inscriptions (Crooke 1995, 1:250-51). And to establish chronology, he resorted to “comparative analysis” of various texts. (Crooke 1995, 1:42). Further, he attempted to find texts untouched by later interpolations. Thus he sought to arrive at a “satisfactory” chronological succession for the Mevar rulers, by consulting genealogies from their own library: “Those which I furnish are from the sacred genealogies in the library of a prince who claims common origin from them, and are less liable to interpolation” (Crooke 1995, 1:42). In addition to textual sources, he also regarded orally transmitted bardic couplets as reliable historical evidence. In doing so, he overlooks the difficulties of dating such oral traditions, even more subject to later interpolations and accretions.

And yet, Tod is not concerned only with disentangling the authentic history of Mevar from its “traditions” and chronicles. He argues in his discussion of poetic narratives: “Whether we have merely the fiction of the poet . . . matters but little, it is consistent with the belief of the tribe” (Crooke 1995, 1:310). In other words, the “mythological details, allegory, and improbable circumstances” that obscure Rajasthani chronicles, are significant in their own right. While such detail belongs in the realm of “wild fable”, Tod believes that even these narratives must be taken seriously. It is in such “traditions” that “the springs of . . . [Rajput] prejudices and their action” reside (Crooke 1995, 1:378). The Annals is not intended to be read only for the history of the Rajput kingdoms, it also attempts to comprehend the manners and motives of Rajputs in the present. In this Tod clearly wished to produce an account of the region that would be useful to the

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39 “These traditionary couplets, handed down from generation to generation, are the most powerful evidence of the past, and they are accordingly employed to illustrate the Khyata, or annals, of Rajputana.” Crooke 1995, 2:803-04.
East India Company in its relations with the Rajput kings. This is the strategic function that the history of the Rajputs in the Annals serves consistently.

**Histories old and new**

In my argument so far, I have suggested that Tod’s Enlightenment, Romantic and Orientalist moorings shaped his understanding of history, historical narrative, and Rajput traditions. As he confronted the narrative and historical traditions of Rajasthan, Tod’s premises overlaid those of his sources. The effect was uneven: sometimes the two sets of assumptions overlapped, and sometimes the import of Rajput traditions was fundamentally recast. Let me conclude this discussion of Tod’s intellectual moorings in the European context, by discussing the impact of Tod’s Romantic views of nationality and race, on the local traditions he encountered. I then explore the consequences of his interpretation of Indian historical genres for his collation of the Padmini story.

Tod’s understanding of nationality had significant consequences, both for his reading of the Rajput past and for the East India Company policy that he shaped. First, elite Rajput perceptions of group identity, articulated through an ideology of ‘purity of blood,’ were now transformed into a notion of ethnic identity. In the early-nineteenth-century, Romantic context, ethnicity was assumed to be inherent in a people, defining them as a nation intrinsically. Tod’s description of the Rajputs as a ‘nation’ therefore further legitimized dominant Rajput ideology. Since the medieval period, the latter had sought to claim a ‘purity of blood’ inherited from antiquity. Tod’s re-presentation of the Rajputs further strengthened these claims even while transforming them. The ruling elite of Rajasthan was now imbued with a primal and transcendent ‘national’ identity as Rajput. Thus Tod’s Romantic nationalism blinded him to the fluidity of

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40 What aided this understanding of nationality was a loosely invoked notion of ‘race’ as well. As Susan Bayly points out, the term was widely used in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It suggested shared linguistic, cultural and environmentally shaped behavioral attributes. The supposed innate attributes developed from biological evolution had not yet attached to the concept of race at this early nineteenth-century conjuncture. See Bayly, “Caste and ‘race’ in the colonial ethnography of India,” in Peter Robb, ed. *The Concept of Race in South Asia* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995) 172.
status among Rajputs both within the region in earlier centuries, as well as outside the region. Instead, he echoed the perceptions of the Rajput elite in Rajasthan, in recasting fluidity of group membership within an idiom of purity and impurity.

Secondly, the recasting of Rajputs as a nation also transformed the ‘outsiders’ whom they defined themselves against, into ‘foreigners.’ This classification into ‘indigenous’ Rajput and ‘foreigner’ invoked the nineteenth-century identification of nations and peoples with territory. Again, as I indicate in the previous chapter, late medieval Rajput kingdoms were not based on absolute territorial integrity, and saw many localities change control between various Rajput kings and chiefs, as well as between Rajputs and Mughals.41 From around the sixteenth century, however, ruling Rajput lineages in the region had begun to consolidate their authority by asserting ancient association with the lands they ruled. Tod’s Romantic premises worked to reinforce these Rajput claims, by linking their identity as a ‘nation’ to an indissoluble bond with their territories. This also led to the Company and the Rajput rulers collaborating in the 1820s and 1830s, to ruthlessly suppress rebellions by other groups within ‘Rajput’ territories, such as the Bhils and Mers.

Third, the invoking of such constructions of ethnic identity affected Tod’s understanding of his sources. It is Romantic ideas of nationhood that explain Tod’s overwhelming reliance on the historical traditions of the Rajputs themselves. The German Romantics had begun invoking the concept of a “national literature,” as a “particular national possession, as an expression of the national mind, as a means toward the nation’s self definition.”42 Early colonial scholars in India borrowed this conception in their explorations of the subcontinent’s literature (Dharwadker 1993, 167). I suggest that Tod’s overwhelming reliance on the Rajputs’ own accounts stems from such a...
conception of a Rajput literature as the authentic record of their own historical memory, expressing their distinct cultural identity.

In the previous chapter, I have already demonstrated how a new history of the Rajputs was produced in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This took place through a three-way process of mutual borrowing between emergent genres of historiography in Rajasthan, the transformation of the past in the region’s poetic narratives, and the formal histories of the Mughals in Persian. Tod seems to have been unaware of this traffic between Persian and regional sources. However, his Romantic premises are revealed in his stance to the medieval Persian sources. The Mughal chronicles are regarded only as “corroborating” evidence for the Rajputs’ own historical traditions (Crooke 1995, 1:297-98, emphasis added). Where there was a case of divergent accounts, Tod relied on the latter as a more authentic record, based on his Romantic understanding of literature as vehicle of national identity. This is particularly evident in his version of the Padmini story. Tod disregarded Alexander Dow’s translation of Ferishta’s account of the siege of Chitor, and assembles his account of Alau-d-din Khalji’s conquest exclusively from the Rajputs’ own traditions.

Philological assumptions further determined Tod’s treatment of his Rajput sources. Where the Rajput chronicles regarded received traditions and texts as authoritative, they did not necessarily distinguish between older and more recent narratives. Their notions of canonical value were constituted in a complex grid of social and aesthetic norms. These included the division between Sanskrit and the Rajasthani dialects, as well as the authority wielded by the bearers of traditions, the Carans and Bhatis. Tod takes Rajput narrative traditions, and reconstitutes their value as historical data within the premises of philology. Now, the older the provenance of a text, the more valuable it was as a record of the past.

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43 See Chapter 2 for extended discussion of these issues in medieval Rajasthan.
Adding to this was his mis-recognition of the historicity of Rajput narratives. Some seventeenth-century texts like the Rajvilas and the Amarakavyam were produced in the reigns of the rulers they take their titles from. Tod extends this assumption to the entire field, and assumes therefore that the Khumman Raso was originally produced during the ninth-century reign of Khumman, and the Prthviraj Raso similarly in the twelfth century. Having done this, he accommodates evidence of the later dates of composition for these heroic poems, by inferring repeated interpolations and additions. Thus he declares that the Khumman Raso was reworked substantially in the sixteenth century.

I have also argued above that Tod read his local sources within generic conventions for 'literature' and 'history' that were defined in Europe. The impact of these generic expectations is clear when we compare Tod’s treatment of poetic sources with his stance to genealogy and chronicle. As I demonstrate above ('The Story Collated'), Tod treated the Khumman Raso as a source for only half the story of Padmini. Since Tod’s other sources present the loss of Chitor as the final culmination of the story, he pieced together the rest of the narrative by collating from his other (genealogical and chronicle) sources. Thus he rejected the conclusion to the Padmini episode in the Khumman Raso. This suggests that Tod placed greater reliance on the royally sponsored genealogies and chronicles than on poetic narratives. Such a stance was in accordance with evolving standards for historical scholarship in contemporary Europe. To return to the Khumman Raso, Tod selected those narrative details from it, which he found repeated in the genealogical and chronicle sources. Such details he seems to have accepted as ‘historical’, while discarding the other elements of the poem as ‘fictitious.’ In focusing on the historical content of the poem thus verified, Tod does not seem to have recognized the specific purpose the poem may have sought to achieve, in concluding its account with the defeat of Alau-d-din at the hands of the heroic chiefs.

However, it must be remembered that Tod does read the Khumman Raso for its historical data. This is in line with his reading of Rajput heroic poems in general. He reads Chand Bardai’s
Prthviraj Raso as "a universal history of the period in which he wrote," invaluable as "historic . . . memoranda" (Crooke 1995, 1:297-98). Such a literal reading of the heroic poems of Rajasthan blinds Tod to the repetition of poetic tropes across narratives. For instance, the marrying of a Padmini woman is tied up with a quest motif in the Prithviraj Raso as well. From the Raso manuscripts that he was familiar with, Tod provides a rough summary in English of the "Pudmavtee Sunceah" [sic], which narrates "Prithi Raj's marrying the daughter of Bijeswar of Kumud Sikkur" in the "Sowalukh Mountains." Even more visibly, in Tod's own manuscript of the Khumman Raso, the king embarks on a successful quest to marry a Padmini woman, in an earlier canto (sambandh) narrating the reign of Khumman. In this case Padmini is the daughter of the Tuar king in the eastern kingdom (puravades) of Delhi, on the banks of the Yamuna.45

Modern distinctions between the domains of literature and historiography did not exist in medieval India. However, Rajasthani historians like Nainsi and Mughal historians like Abu’l Fazl and Badaoni did recognize distinctions between history and "tales of pure fiction and imagination" (see Chapter 2). Interestingly, Tod recognizes that the "legends of the princes" are "obscured . . . by mythological details, allegory, and improbable circumstances." However, he automatically attributes the status of legend, with a kernel of historical data, to all narratives (including heroic poetry) that positioned themselves overtly as describing the past. Medieval Indian literary and historical genres had been delimited very differently, with myth, history, tale and folk-epic frequently located in a narrative continuum rather than opposing each other.46 Tod’s Romantic and Orientalist horizons of interpretation were superimposed on these medieval Indian

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44 This summary occurs in Tod. "Translations from Cand the Bard – Prithi Raj Raso," a series of four handwritten large notebooks, uncatalogued, with unnumbered pages, in the Tod Collection at the Royal Asiatic Society, London. The notebooks suggest that Tod was working towards a translation of the Prthviraj Raso at the time of his death. The summary of the Padmavati Sankhya that I cite, is from the notebook numbered 4. Tod cites as his source ms. no. 159 (selections from the Prthviraj Raso in Braj). See Barnett 1940, 151.

45 "Khumman Raso," Tod Collection, Royal Asiatic Society: The manuscript was copied for Tod in 1819. Khumman’s quest for Padmini, folios 27a onwards; the lines cited here, folio 27a, verse 553; folio 27b, verse 560.

46 See Chapters 1 and 2 for extended discussion of this issue.
classifications of literary and historical genres. As discussed above ('Materials for history'), Tod read mythology, epic traditions and later heroic narratives as encoded history. Therefore, from a very different, nineteenth-century, European perspective, Tod also read the narrative traditions of the subcontinent within a comparable continuum of genres. The premises of the colonial scholar overlaid those of this sources, albeit unevenly.

**THE ALTERED CONTEXT**

In this section I discuss the changed historical circumstances in early nineteenth-century Rajputana. I have indicated above ('Assembling the Annals') that the changes Tod effects in the *Padmini* story must be understood in this altered local context. I begin by describing the situation of Rajput kingdoms in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. I go on to consider the political imperatives behind the East India Company's intervention in Rajputana. In the previous chapter I argued that kingship, elite patriarchy and consolidation of identity around definitions of an enemy were the crucial elements defining the shape of the *Padmini* narratives in medieval Rajasthan. I conclude this section by discussing the impact of Company policy upon these institutions and ideologies in the specific case of Mevar.

**Regional Crisis**

Under the terms of the 1818 treaty between the Rana of Mevar and the East India Company, Tod arrived at Udaipur as the Company's Political Agent in Mevar and Haraoti. He was the first British Political Agent there. The colonial authority intervened in the regional kingdoms in a historical context of weakened and crisis-ridden Rajput regimes. The East India Company intervened typically to regulate relations between the mutually warring Rajput kingdoms, and strengthen monarchical authority internally.

With the decline of the Mughal Empire the Rajput elite lost opportunities for military service in imperial armies outside Rajputana. The loss of Mughal patronage meant the end of possibilities for receiving further service grants. With the drastic shrinking of resources, this Rajput elite was now increasingly dependent on land within the region as its sole source of
wealth. Under these circumstances, contests between rulers and chiefs intensified, over control of land and rights to its income. In these conflicts over land and political power, the contradictions in Rajput polity between kings and their chieftains deepened. The chiefs’ fighting men had earlier furnished the bulk of the king’s forces. They now served the chiefs against the king (Crooke 1995, 1:182-83). Monarchs were often unable to resist powerful chieftains taking over crown lands. In 1775 the Mevar Rana appealed to the Marathas for help against a rebellious Chundawat chief who had usurped crown lands.

As M.S. Jain argues, the breakdown of the Mughal Empire aggravated contradictions between the Rajput kings and their chiefs, in a second sense as well:

The ruler no longer needed the cooperation of his nobles to defend his status at the Mughal court; the nobility no longer feared the ruler in the absence of imperial support. The former sought to model his Durbar on the Mughal pattern and assert his absolutism; the latter wanted to assert the concept of state being the joint property of the clan leaders. The conflict between the two approaches to state power raged for more than half a century till the rulers accepted the subordination of the British (1993, 10).

A third indication of sharpening conflicts over diminished resources was the noticeable increase in violent succession disputes. Many regional kingdoms including Udaipur, Jodhpur and Jaipur, were witness to these during the eighteenth century (Bhattacharya 1972, 5-6). As always succession disputes intensified factional disputes among the chiefs. The crisis in Rajput political authority led to a breakdown of law and order, and economic hardship. Tod records the flight of peasantry and a sharp decline in trade and commerce in the period before Company intervention (Crooke 1995, 1:515-16).

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Rajput troubles were aggravated by Maratha incursions in the second half of the eighteenth century. Where Rajput rulers and chiefly factions had earlier approached the Mughal emperor as arbiter in their disputes, they now appealed to the Marathas. The policy of the Maratha chiefs was such that their military help was “available to anyone who could pay for it” (Jain 1993, 10). When rulers or rival factions of chiefs failed to make the promised payments for military services rendered, the Maratha chiefs sought to realize the payments forcibly (Jain 1993, 7). They defeated the Mevar Rana’s forces in 1788. “By 1792 Mevar, already greatly denuded of wealth and territory by the Marathas, became a protectorate of Sindhia.” In return for help against the rebellious Chundawat chief mentioned above, hefty tributes were paid to Sindhia; further, he became the Rana’s regent. His deputy remained in Mevar for eight years, exacting half the agricultural income to his own revenue (Bhattacharya 1972, 16-17). In 1802, Holkar plundered the rich shrine of Nathdwara, and exacted further tribute from the Rana. The threat of exactions was ever present and frequently carried out. Even when the power of the Maratha chiefs was on the decline, they continued their raiding expeditions into Rajputana.

The rebellion of his Rajput chiefs further weakened the Rana’s authority (Bhattacharya 1972, 122). Thus in 1809, the Rana of Mevar appealed to the British for help, not only against the Marathas but also in “recovering his lands which his ‘dependents’ had ‘forcibly’ seized” (Bhattacharya 1972, 126). Crisis continued, however. By 1810, the Rajput kingdoms were under the sway of the Pathan chief Amir Khan, who collected tribute from Jodhpur, Udaipur and Jaipur.51

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49 It is important to keep in mind that with the decline of Mevar’s power during the course of the eighteenth century, the temple authorities gradually asserted greater control over all aspects of the villages under its control. The growing control over rents, trade and trade levies would have greatly expanded the wealth of the temple, making it an easy target for Holkar. See Norbert Peabody, “In Whose Turban Does the Lord Reside? The Objectification of Charisma and the Fetishism of Objects in the Hindu Kingdom of Kota,” Comparative Studies in Society and History (1991) 744.

50 In 1808, Holkar’s troops plundered Kanor and Sadri parganas near Udaipur. Bhattacharya 1972, 122.

51 Even though Amir Khan was collecting tribute from Mevar and Jaipur as Holkar’s deputy, he was appropriating it to his own use. In 1810, the Rana of Mevar was compelled to accept Amir Khan’s terms, to assign to the latter a fourth of his revenues, and to employ in his service a body of Amir Khan’s troops. Bhattacharya 1972, 130, 134.
In the last decades of the eighteenth century the British did not intervene in Rajputana. Under the treaty of Salbai in 1782, the British and Marathas agreed that “neither of the parties would afford assistance to the enemies of the other.” Thus the Marathas had free rein in the Rajput kingdoms, without having to fear British interference (Bhattacharya 1972, 20-21). In 1805, although the British had begun intervening on a limited scale in the regional Rajput kingdoms, they signed treaties of continued non-intervention with both Sindhia and Holkar. 52

By 1811 however, Company policy in Rajputana began to change. As the Company Resident in Delhi, Metcalfe, noted, “A confederation of the Rajpoot states under the protection of the British Government” had great advantages. It would connect the Bombay and Bengal territories by a territory that was the Company’s, “for all political and military purposes.” The Rajput kingdoms could also act as friendly buffers for the East India Company in any future conflict with the Marathas (Bhattacharya 1972, 138). Under treaties of subsidiary alliance with the East India Company (signed in 1817-18), Sindhia and Holkar relinquished all claims to control of territory or revenue from the Rajput kingdoms (Bhattacharya 1972, 208-10). In 1817, the Company opened negotiations with the Mevar Rana. By 1819, all the Rajput states (except Sirohi) had entered into alliance with the East India Company.

Significantly for our purposes, under these treaties the kings in Rajputana were forbidden to enter into negotiations with any third party without the consent of the British Government. Nor could they commit aggression against any one. However, the king was recognized as the absolute ruler within his dominions, where British jurisdiction would not be introduced. He would also furnish troops at the requisition of the British Government. In return for tribute, the British restored to the Mevar Rana the districts of Kumbhalmer, Raipur and Ramnagar, which had been taken from him by the Marathas. 53

52 Holkar for instance retained his possessions in Mevar, Malwa and Haraoti. Bhattacharya 1972. 76.
53 The Rana of Mevar agreed to pay one-fourth of his revenue annually as tribute for the first five years, and three-eighths after that in perpetuity. Bhattacharya 1972, 229-30, 237.
The importance of Rajputana

British intervention in Rajputana had been prompted by calculations about the Company's political, strategic and economic interests. Elsewhere Tod elaborates on the gains of this "one grand confederation" under the Company's "protecting alliance":

By this comprehensive arrangement, we placed a most powerful barrier between our territories and the strong natural frontier of India; and so long as we shall respect their established usages, and by contributing to the prosperity of the people preserve our motives from distrust, it will be a barrier impenetrable to invasion (Crooke 1995, I:547-48).

The need for barriers to defend the frontiers of India emerged in the context of Russian expansion in Central Asia. Tod refers explicitly to the possibility of "a Tatar or a Russian invasion."54 Such strategic concerns were shared by an anonymous reviewer of the Annals in the Edinburgh Review of 1830: "From its geographical character and position, Rajpootana is an outwork of India, in a quarter upon which a land invasion is most likely to burst."55

Given this recognition of the importance of the regional kingdoms, the British had to define for themselves the terms on which they would engage with the Rajputs. The knowledge gathered by an Agent of the East India Company in the Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan was geared to these political ends. Tod clearly recognized these practical uses for his knowledge of local history and geography. He records how his map of Malwa was useful to the East India Company during its campaign against the Pindaris between 1815 and 1817, and beyond: "The boundaries of the various countries in this tract were likewise defined, and it became essentially useful in the subsequent dismemberment of the Peshwa's dominions" (Crooke 1995, I:8).

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54 Crooke 1995, I:224. Also see Peabody 1996, 202, for further instances of English anxiety about Russian invasion in the 1820s and 1830s.
Grant Duff, the author of a comparable history of the Marathas, acknowledged similar political ends.\textsuperscript{56}

Similarly, the extent of British interference in the internal government of a kingdom depended on the ability of the latter to pay the required tribute to the Company. This was the context in which Tod gathered information about patterns of settlement, cultivation, and administration. Such information about resources was obviously useful in calculating the amount of tribute to be collected from each kingdom. It was also helpful in settling disputes over territory, tenure and revenue rights between kingdoms, kings and their chiefs. These were the issues on which the East India Company consistently intervened in the Rajput kingdoms, after the treaties of 1818.

As Peabody demonstrates, Tod’s recommendations on the terms of these treaties were informed by his Romantic understanding of nationality. For one, his conviction that the Rajputs possessed a transcendent national identity worked in the interests of British imperialism. By defining national identities at these regional levels within the subcontinent, Tod distinguished between the Rajputs and the Marathas. Secondly, his belief in the intrinsic bond between people and territory drove the expulsion from ‘Rajput’ territories of all ‘foreign’ groups, typically the Marathas and Pindaris. And thirdly, the nineteenth-century understanding of nation-states as territorially bounded, governed Tod’s interventions in Mevar. He saw the absence of firm territorial boundaries and absolute political loyalties as the outcome of Maratha disruptions of Rajput polity. His transfers of territory between various chiefs and princes worked to create consolidated states and “routinized” political hierarchies (Peabody 1996, 206-07).

Tod’s policy towards the Rajput kingdoms was also impelled by the history of rivalry between the Marathas and the British. To cite Peabody again, the Marathas had been the main
rivals of the Company on the subcontinent during the years of Tod’s service. He had spent the years 1817-18 enlisting Rajput logistical and military support against the Marathas. It is this hostility to the Marathas that underpins Tod’s reading of recent Rajput history. Not only did he recast the Marathas as ‘foreigners’ to be expelled from Rajasthan, he claimed that they had had a destructive impact on Rajput polity. This was doubly convenient. While Maratha presence in Rajasthan was recast as “predatory oppression,” a degraded Rajput polity could now be rescued by British paternalism (Peabody 1996, 208-09).

Tad’s other purpose in celebrating “this ancient and interesting race” in the Annals was to build a case for “the restoration of their former independence.” It was such “independence” that would ensure the “prosperity of the people” by preserving the “established usages” of the Rajput rulers. This was vital for the continued paramountcy of the British over the Rajput kingdoms. In return for such “gracious patronage” by the English king, the Rajputs would make “Your Majesty’s enemies their own” (Crooke 1995, I:v, vii). Tod’s plea for the “independence” of the Rajput kingdoms under British “patronage,” was thus directed at ensuring that the military power of the Rajputs was harnessed in support of the British, rather than against them.

In my discussion of Tod’s intellectual moorings in the European context, I have argued that Enlightenment celebrations of Oriental antiquity coalesced with Romantic nostalgia for primitive custom. Romantic endorsement of ideas of nationhood was an added ingredient in Tod’s celebration of ancient ‘nations.’ It is now clear that these intellectual convictions had their political uses. In Tod’s perception, preserving the established usages and traditions of the Rajputs was vital to guaranteeing continued Rajput support for the British Empire in India. Intellectual predilections thus converged with political agenda in giving direction to his role as the East India Company’s Agent in Mevar.

Kings, Chiefs and Company policy

The Company's role in Mevar extended well beyond its stated, formal commitment not to interfere in the kingdom's internal affairs. When Tod arrived in Udaipur, he was "enthusiastically filled with the idea of raising Meywar from the depressed condition into which she had sunk, of reconstructing her Government on its old footing, and of raising her court to the splendour it had enjoyed in the time of Sangram Singh (in the early sixteenth century)." Tod received the Governor-General's sanction for this policy: "In this actual state of the court of Oudeypore some more active interposition on your part than would be justifiable in a more wholesome condition may not only be excusable but actually indispensable for the success of the measures in view."

The Company's Political Agent thus saw strengthening of the Rana's authority as the key to restoring law and order in the kingdom. In choosing this course of action, Tod was guided by what he perceived as the traditional status of the king in the Rajput kingdoms: "Throughout Rajasthan, the character and welfare of the States depend on that of the sovereign: he is the mainspring of the system - the active power to set and keep in motion all these discordant materials" (Crooke 1995, 1:174). He saw the raging conflicts between the chiefs and their king as indicative of a crisis of traditional monarchical authority (Jain 1993, 10). Thus Tod embarked on a series of measures designed to "restore" the king's powers: powers that the latter may not have enjoyed in any stable, uncontested fashion for any length of time in the past.

The chiefs were persuaded to attend at the Rana's court in Udaipur. Tod negotiated the appeasement of their feuds. He overcame their reluctance and persuaded them to give back the lands they had usurped, from each other and from the Rana. He prepared a charter of rights and duties for the Rana and the chiefs. This Kaulnama (agreement) was signed by the Rana and all sixteen principal chiefs in May 1818. Crown lands were now restored to the Rana. Disagreements persisted between the chiefs over the return of usurped lands to each other. This resulted in the

arrangement that all such disputed lands would be turned over to the Rana’s use. The outcome was further enhancement of the Rana’s resources. In return for the Rana respecting their hereditary privileges, the chiefs agreed to perform personal service at Udaipur with the required quota of troops (Bhattacharya 1972, 242-44).

The effect of the Kaulnama was to re-define the established relations between the Rana and his chiefs. Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, the two parties had often renegotiated the terms of their mutual obligations, based on continuing assessment of their respective strengths. Mughal intervention had been consistently even-handed, with the emperors encouraging the chiefs as often as they negotiated with the Rajput kings (see previous chapter). Under the Company regime that Tod introduced, the new arrangement favoured the Rana overwhelmingly at the expense of the chiefs.

However, Tod’s efforts had limited success. The disputes between the Rana and his chiefs, regarding their service and tribute obligations to him, continued for almost a century after this Agreement of 1818. Several more attempts were made, in 1827, 1845 and 1854 for instance, to negotiate fresh settlements between the two parties.Meanwhile, as early as 1821, Tod “relaxed his control over the internal administration of Mevar,” on the instructions of his superiors in the East India Company. Chiefly disaffection with the regime instituted by the Company continued. One consequence was the support of many chiefs in the region, for the uprising of 1857.

The new British regime did not stop with regulating the chiefs, it also sought to curb royal expenditure. In 1819 Tod fixed the expense allowance for the Udaipur Rana at one thousand

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61 For instance, the chiefs of Gular and Auwa had had longstanding disputes with the ruler of Jodhpur, Takhat Singh. The Gular chief made common cause with the mutineers of the Jodhpur Legion, and the Auwa chief later joined him. However, a British enquiry subsequently held that the Auwa chief did not act as a leader of the rebels, and the Jodhpur king ultimately restored his estate to him. See Jain 1993, 55-56. Similarly in Mevar, the powerful Chundawat chief of Salumbar took advantage of the troops’ uprisings at Neemuch and Nasirabad, to reassert his demands to the Rana; he threatened to install a rival king of Mevar at Chitor. if his demands were not met within eight days. See Paliwal 1971, 34-35.
rupees daily. Tod recognizes the link between the king’s resources and patronage for the bards, as he records the custom of extravagant gifts for the bards on the occasion of elite Rajput marriages:

The Bardais are the grand recorders of fame, and the volume of precedent is always recurred to, in citing the liberality of former chiefs; while the dread of their satire . . . shuts the eyes of the chiefs to consequences, and they are only anxious to maintain the reputation of their ancestors, though fraught with future ruin . . . . Even now the Rana of Udaipur, in his season of poverty, at the recent marriage of his daughters bestowed “the gift of a lakh” on the chief bard.

Such restrictions on the king’s expenditure, coming on the heels of already straitened resources, together with the stark decline in the resources of the chiefs, eroded patronage networks for the literary castes, the Čārans and Bhāts.

At the early nineteenth-century conjuncture in which Tod gathered his material, however, these changes were still incipient. Thus at this juncture traditional bardic eulogies of Rajput kings continued to be significant. They now asserted the exalted status of the ruling lineage for a new authoritative audience that controlled access to political power, the East India Company. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, genealogies asserting antiquity and purity of descent had been directed towards negotiations of political status with the Mughal emperors. These same strategies remained relevant in the nineteenth century for the regional Rajput elite. Now the East India Company similarly sought to negotiate its relations with different Rajput rulers based on its own assessment of their past status. Thus Mevar was recognized to have claims to special

62 Gaurishankar Hirachand Ojha, Udaipur Rajya ka Itihas, 2 vols., 1928 (Jodhpur: Rajasthani Granthagar, 1994) 2:716. Large as the amount seems to us, the Rana complained of straitened circumstances as a result of this constraint.

63 Crooke 1995, 2:742. “The gift of a lakh” is a figurative expression. Tod records that the real value of the gift on this occasion was considerably lower.

64 The trend of reduced patronage for literary production continued through the nineteenth century. In 1879 the Mevar court sought to request other courts in Rajputana not to allow Čārans and Bhāts from the other states to come to Mevar during marriages among the elite. See Jain 1993, 121.
treatment from the Company, which recognized the kingdom’s past stature. It is in this context that assertions of antiquity and purity of descent as well as assertions of status based on instances of past valour, remained equally significant in bargaining for privileges with the new external authority, the East India Company.

Rajput patriarchy and the Company

We have seen in the previous chapter how Rajput rulers in the medieval period used their wives’ clansmen to counter their own ambitious clansmen and chiefs. The military resources the queen brought as part of the marriage settlement were equally useful. They added to the Rajput kings’ own resources to be used in the service of Mughal imperial expansion. I have also argued that the real political import of these marriages gave women of the Rajput elite a measure of political agency in their own right. By the end of the eighteenth century however, the military decline of the Rajput ruling lineages was pervasive. Consequently, the significance of the political alliances queens brought with them in marriage was transformed. These alliances were no longer as valuable for the political and military resources they brought. Instead, they served exclusively as markers of status, asserting the perceived rank of the two sides entering into the marriage.

The increasing disjunction between elite polygamy and state formation saw a shrinking of the political space available to queens. The distrust of queens in politics that had been a running feature of elite Rajput ideology in the medieval period (see previous chapter), could now be

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65 “With regard to the vital question of acknowledgement of British supremacy by Mewar Metcalfe [the Resident of the East India Company at Delhi] had an apprehension that there might be some objection...because of the ‘high pretensions’ of the Rana... On the ground of expediency Metcalfe was even prepared to modify the provision of British supremacy so as to avoid giving offence to the Rana’s sentiments.” Bhattacharya 1972, 217-18.

66 Thus the rulers of Jaipur and Jodhpur vied for the hand of Krishna Kumari, the daughter of Rana Bhim Singh [reigned 1778 – 1828] of Mewar. She had originally been betrothed to Raja Bhim Singh of Jodhpur, who died in 1803 before the marriage took place. Subsequently, Rana Bhim Singh of Mewar negotiated her marriage with Raja Jagat Singh of Jaipur. However, the Jodhpur ruler’s cousin Raja Man Singh who succeeded him, laid claim to the princess, arguing that it was with the house of Marwar that the Rana had negotiated the marriage with, rather than with an individual ruler. Both aspiring grooms were unwilling to give up the considerable augmentation of their social rank from marrying a princess of the pre-eminent
rearticulated to fit these changed political circumstances and perceptions. Thus Tod finds renewed relevance to all of Mevar’s history, in Chand Bardai’s warning: “Woe to the land where a minor rules or a woman bears sway!” (Crooke 1995, 1:372).

The intervention of the East India Company further intensified these trends. Company policy in Rajputana after 1818 actively encouraged the marginalization of queens from the domain of politics. Until now, queens and queen mothers had had a say in deciding matters of adoption of heirs, and had administered the state during the minority of the ruler. By 1839 they were deprived of any role in running the state administration as regents. Their influence in matters of royal adoption for purposes of succession was also reduced sharply. The income from the queens’ estates was included as khalisa (crown) revenue at Udaipur. In Jodhpur and Bikaner, a cash allowance was fixed instead for the queens in accordance with their ranks. The estates of the queens were reduced at Kota, Banswara and Karauli. Nor did the Company unilaterally impose these changes. Several rulers complained against queen mothers to the “British Political Officers who were keen to cut down their political role” (Jain 1993, 126).

Thus Rajput states and the Company worked together to marginalize the women of the Rajput elite from active politics. The Rajput kingdoms saw a real decline in their power and resources in the period. The queens however saw a correspondingly greater loss of autonomy. Mechanisms giving them a degree of autonomy earlier, such as an independent income from entitlements in land, now disappeared. This reshaped Rajput polity of the nineteenth century appropriated older patriarchal codes seamlessly. Where the medieval texts distinguished the use of political power by the queens from its abuse (see previous chapter), nineteenth-century
retellings such as Tod’s placed an ever greater emphasis on the symbolic potential of the queen’s honour instead.

The shifts are clear in Tod’s comments on one of the central institutions underpinning state formation in the medieval Rajput kingdoms: clan exogamy and polygamy among the Rajput elite. He begins by denouncing it in general terms: “Polygamy ... originated in a mistaken view of the animal economy ... [It] was general amongst all the nations of antiquity” (Crooke 1995, 2:711). Further, “Polygamy is the fertile source of evil, moral as well as physical, in the East. It is a relic of barbarism and primeval necessity, affording a proof that ancient Asia is still young in knowledge” (Crooke 1995, 1:357). Predisposed against the institution, Tod underplays its significance as the crucial mechanism by which the medieval Rajput elite consolidated their network of political alliances. Instead, he argues,

the number of queens is determined only by state necessity and the fancy of the prince. To have them equal in number to the days of the week is not unusual, while the number of handmaids is unlimited (Crooke 1995, 1:358, n.1).

He emphasizes the role of the polygamous royal household in encouraging struggles over succession and political power:

The desire of each wife, that her offspring should wear a crown, is natural; but they do not always wait the course of nature for the attainment of their wishes, and the love of power too often furnishes instruments for any deed, however base. When we see, shortly after the death of Sanga, the mother of his second son intriguing with Babur, and bribing him with the surrender of Ranthambhor and the trophy of victory, the crown of the Malwa king, to supplant the lawful heir, we can easily suppose she would not have scrupled to remove any other bar (Crooke 1995, 1:357-58).

And he recovers a glorious historical past for the Rajputs from mythology; a past voided of evils such as polygamy, in which the ancestors of the Rajputs were monogamous, as revealed by the example of Rama and Sita (Crooke 1995, 2:711).
Having thus recuperated a pristine past for the Rajputs “when Hindu customs were pure” (Crooke 1995, 2:723), Tod goes on to reinterpret the limited political agency that was available to Rajput women in the medieval period. Elite Rajput women were known by their natal clan names, and brought their natal clan status to bear in their negotiations for rank in the marital household (see previous chapter). Tod emphasizes instead that the continued affiliation of the women with their natal households engendered intrigue, and weakened the patriarchal authority of the husband:

Though the wedded fair of Rajputana clings to the husband, yet she is ever more solicitous for the honour of the house from whence she has sprung, than that into which she has been admitted; which feeling has engendered numerous quarrels (Crooke 1995, 3: 1476).

He cites the instance of the Mevar Rana’s daughter who was married to the Rajput chief of Sadri (a chiefly estate near Udaipur). The wife refuses to fetch a glass of water for her husband, considering her rank as king’s daughter to be superior to the chief’s. She is sent back to her father’s household for this disobedience, and the Rana himself placates the angry chief: “as my son-in-law, no distinction too great can be conferred: take home your wife, she will never again refuse you a cup of water” (Crooke 1995, 2:713).

Incidents such as this would not necessarily have been available to Tod in the formal chronicle accounts that he cites. They are likely to transmitted through edificatory vat, the “traditions or biographical anecdotes furnished in conversation by the Rana, or men of intellect among his chiefs, ministers, or bards” that Tod had access to (Crooke 1995, 1:250). Tod’s choice of such anecdotes points to the intensified contradictions of the early nineteenth century. Where elite polygamy had earlier been integral to Rajput state formation, political redundancy now relegated its consequences to the lesser, private domain of domestic intrigue and patriarchal insubordination. In such circumstances, the remedy is to assert with greater emphasis, the domestic schooling of the wife:

However exalted the respect of the Rajput for the fair, he nevertheless holds that
Nothing lovelier can be found
In woman, than to study household good (Crooke 1995, 2:712).

Common Enemies

I argued in the previous chapter that the tussle for regional dominance between Mevar rulers and Mughal emperors in the late medieval period saw the emergence of a distinctive Sisodia ideology. Narratives of a kingdom threatened from within and without, served to define a political and moral order focused around the king's authority and his hierarchical relations with his subjects. Mevar's past and present were now seen through such a perspective that mobilized emergent definitions of community and caste identity. Harnessed to this mobilization were re-fashioned patriarchal norms and new definitions of the enemy. The medieval Padmini narratives were implicated in the specific anxieties of Mevar politics. Thus they located threats to Rajput polity and order, in the figure of the emperor of Delhi. And this imperial authority was gradually demonized as Muslim.

As we have seen, the Sisodia ruling lineage subsequently magnified the import of its early resistance to Mughal authority. In the domain of marital alliances the Mevar kings were now laying claims to "purity" of lineage, on the basis of never having married their daughters to Mughal emperors. We have also seen how Mevar was able to impose its perspective on other Rajput lineages by the early eighteenth century. These claims to pre-eminence continued being made in the early nineteenth century, and impinged on negotiations between the East India Company and the Udaipur Rana. The Company Resident Charles Metcalfe records that the high rank of the Udaipur lineage was "generally acknowledged." He was also aware of the "high pretensions" of the Rana, from never having accepted the overlordship of "the Mahomedan Dynasty of India." Significantly, the Rana's

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68 See Taft 1994, 231. As Taft points out, Mevar had continued, however, to enter into marriages with ruling lineages that had married their daughters to the Mughals, as there were such alliances with both Bikaner and Jaisalmer. 238, n. 21.
emissaries sought to invoke the fact of this enmity in their negotiations with the Company. They suggested the inclusion of a clause in the treaty to provide that "the submission of the Rana to the Company should not be drawn into a precedent for his allegiance to the Mahomedan Dynasty." They further sought an assurance that the British government would not make the Rana over at any time to any other power (Bhattacharya 1972, 217-18). It would thus seem that the Mevar lineage continued to extract political capital out of its earlier conflict with the Mughal emperors. It would also seem that the Sisodias succeeded in recasting their clashes with imperial authority as resistance to a "Mahomedan dynasty." And Company officials accepted these claims when negotiating with the Udaipur Rana.

The causes for this acceptance lay in British perceptions of their status in India. The Mughal regime had been characterized by "neglect, oppression and religious interference" (Crooke 1995, 1:225). These were the features that had brought about its downfall. "Encroachment on their rights, and disregard to their habits and religious opinions, alienated the Rajputs, and excited the inhabitants of the south to rise against their Mogul oppressors" (Crooke 1995, 1:227). Tod holds the exigencies of the local situation as responsible for British expansion on the subcontinent: "Our position in the East has been, and continues to be, one in which conquest forces herself upon us" (Crooke 1995, 1:147). And he speaks of "our Eastern empire," as based on "our boasted superiority in all that exalts man above his fellows," and on "notions of our own peculiarly favoured destiny" (Crooke 1995, 1:146).

This sense of having replaced Mughal imperial authority consistently coloured British readings of medieval history, the period of Mughal dominance. Orientalist celebrations of Indian antiquity added another ingredient to British perceptions of the Indian past. The two strands came together to establish a distinctive construction and evaluation of ‘Hindu’ ancient and ‘Muslim’

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69 Emphasis added
medieval periods. This periodization, first employed by Mill, manifests itself in the *Annals* as well.

Tod similarly regards the ancient period as 'Hindu.' And he celebrates the Rajputs for the "greater purity" of "Hindu manners" among them (Crooke 1995, 1:572). Tod attributes this pristine state to the region's relative isolation. Mughals had been replaced by Marathas in the eighteenth century, and Tod believed that the intervention of the latter had seriously weakened the Rajput kingdoms. But as Peabody points out, Tod argued that the Marathas' "predatory" nature was not intrinsic to them. Rather, "foreign" conquest had "changed their natural habits." Shivaji was still worthy of "admiration," for having resisted the "foreign" domination of Aurangzeb. It was his descendants' presence in Rajasthan that needed to be condemned and countered (Peabody 1996, 212). The Marathas could thus be recuperated covertly into the 'Hindu' fold.

It was the Rajputs, however, who had consistently defended "the hopes of the Hindu," in heroically resisting "ages of Muhammadan bigotry and power" (Crooke 1995, 1:399, 147). This characterization of Mughal rule in medieval India allowed analogies with European perceptions of the feudal crusades. A reviewer of the *Annals* noted the similarity. "It is certainly curious that the eternal and hereditary foes, against which the Indian as well as the Christian chivalry signalized itself, should have been the Saracens" (1832-b, 19). Enmity with the "Muhammadan" therefore served to confirm the chivalry of the Rajputs, by invoking the familiar horizons of its perceived European counterpart.

Thus contemporary Sisodia representations of their conflict with the Mughals would have provided Tod with enemies already familiar to him from his European moorings. Tod's bias was intensified by his exaltation of feudal chivalry. This would have generated additional affinity to Sisodia perspectives. The result is apparent in Tod's evaluation of Rana Pratap. "He [Pratap] spurned every overture which had submission for its basis, or the degradation of uniting his family by marriage with the Tatar, though lord of countless multitudes." The proximity to Sisodia
discourse is striking, as Tod echoes here their linkage between marriage customs, ‘purity’ of
blood and resistance to the enemy. He is clearly stirred by Pratap’s resistance to Akbar,
pronouncing it worthy subject for that most exalted of feudal literary genres, a “romance”
(Crooke 1995, 1:386). And he adopts wholesale the seventeenth-century Sisodia reinterpretation
of Rajput history. Thus he described the desertion of Pratap by his Rajput allies as the “violation”
of “Hindu prejudice . . . by every prince in Rajasthan” (Crooke 1995, 1:390).

Tod reconstructed the history of Mevar from the literary and historical traditions of its
elite. It is clear from this discussion that he appropriated from the dominant ideology of the local
ruling lineage, perspectives that converged with his own European assumptions. The convergence
between Tod and his sources is clearest in their recognition of common enemies.

THE PADMINI STORY

I analyze Tod’s recasting of this story in four stages. I begin by providing Tod’s account
and then comparing it with the Jain Dalpati Vijay’s Khumman Raso and the Mevar bardic
accounts. This reveals the precise elements that Tod borrowed from his several sources.
Significant narrative choices on the part of Tod already point to the direction in which he
transformed the story. In the final three sections of this chapter, I explore the nature of Tod’s re-
reading of the Padmini story. In doing so I follow the same three foci of narrative and political
interest – the relationship between king and chiefs, the status of the queen, and threats to the
dominant Rajput order.

Tod’s Account

This is how the Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan recounts the story of Padmini70.

Lakhamsi: Lachhman Singh [bold in original] – Lakhamsi succeeded his father in S.
1331 (A.D. 1275), a memorable era in the annals, when Chitor, the repository of all that was

70 Crooke 1995, 1: 307-14. Crooke does not alter Tod’s account of the Padmini story, only modernizes
spelling and adds his notes and corrections in square brackets in the text. He also provides the page
numbers from the original 1829 edition, omitted here.
precious yet untouched of the arts of India, was stormed, sacked, and treated with remorseless barbarity by the Pathan emperor, Alau-d-din. Twice it was attacked by this subjugator of India. In the first siege it escaped spoliation, though at the price of its best defenders: that which followed is the first successful assault and capture of which we have any detailed account.

_Bhim Singh: Padmini_ – Bhimsi was the uncle of the young prince, and protector during his minority. He had espoused the daughter of Hamir Sank (Chauhan) of Ceylon, the cause of woes unnumbered to the Sesodias. Her name was Padmini, a title bestowed only on the superlatively fair, and transmitted with renown to posterity by tradition and the song of the bard. Her beauty, accomplishments, exaltation, and destruction, with other incidental circumstances, constitute the subject of one of the most popular traditions of Rajwara. The Hindu bard recognized the fair, in preference to fame and love of conquest, as the motive for the attack of Alau-d-din, who limited his demand to the possession of Padmini; though this was after a long and fruitless siege. At length he restricted his desire to a mere sight of this extraordinary beauty, and acceded to the proposal of beholding her through the medium of mirrors. Relying on the faith of the Rajput, he entered Chitor slightly guarded, and having gratified his wish, returned. The Rajput, unwilling to be outdone in confidence, accompanied the king to the foot of the fortress, amidst many complimentary excuses from his guest at the trouble he thus occasioned. It was for this that Ala risked his own safety, relying on the superior faith of the Hindu. Here he had an ambush; Bhimsi was made prisoner, hurried away to the Tatar camp, and his liberty made dependent on the surrender of Padmini.

_The Siege of Chitor_ – Despair reigned in Chitor when this fatal event was known, and it was debated whether Padmini should be resigned as a ransom for their defender. Of this she was informed, and expressed her acquiescence. Having provided wherewithal to secure her from dishonour, she communed with two chiefs of her own kin and clan of Ceylon, her uncle Gora, and his nephew Badal, who devised a scheme for the liberation of their prince without
hazarding her life or fame. Intimation was dispatched to Ala that on the day he withdrew from his trenches the fair Padmini would be sent, but in a manner befitting her own and his high station, surrounded by her females and handmaids; not only those who would accompany her to Delhi, but many others who desired to pay her this last mark of reverence. Strict commands were to be issued to prevent curiosity from violating the sanctity of female decorum and privacy. No less than seven hundred covered litters proceeded to the royal camp. In each was placed one of the bravest of the defenders of Chitor, borne by six armed soldiers disguised as litter-porters. They reached the camp. The royal tents were enclosed with *kanats* (walls of cloth); the litters were deposited, and half an hour was granted for a parting interview between the Hindu prince and his bride. They then placed their prince in a litter and returned with him, while the greater number (the supposed damsels) remained to accompany the fair to Delhi. But Ala had no intention to permit Bhimsi's return, and was becoming jealous of the long interview he enjoyed, when, instead of the prince and Padmini, the devoted band issued from their litters: but Ala was too well guarded. Pursuit was ordered, while these covered the retreat till they perished to a man. A fleet horse was in reserve for Bhimsi, on which he was placed, and in safety ascended the fort, at whose outer gate the host of Ala was encountered. The choicest of the heroes of Chitor met the assault. With Gora and Badal at their head, animated by the noblest sentiments, the deliverance of their chief and the honour of their queen, they devoted themselves to destruction, and few were the survivors of this slaughter of the flower of Mewar. For a time Ala was defeated in his object, and the havoc they had made in his ranks, joined to the dread of their determined resistance, obliged him to desist from the enterprise.

Mention has already been made of the adjuration, "by the sin of the sack of Chitor." Of these sacks they enumerate *three and a half* (italics in original). This is the 'half'; for though the city was not stormed, the best and bravest were cut off (*sakha*). It is described with great animation in the Khuman Raesa. Badal was but a stripling of twelve, but the Rajput
expects wonders from this early age. He escaped, though wounded, and a dialogue ensues between him and his uncle’s wife, who desires him to relate how her lord conducted himself ere she joins him. The stripling replies: “He was the reaper of the harvest of battle; I followed his steps as the humble gleaner of his sword. On the gory bed of honour he spread a carpet of the slain; a barbarian prince his pillow, he laid him down, and sleeps surrounded by the foe.” Again she said: “Tell me, Badal, how did my love (piyar) behave?” “Oh! Mother, how further describe his deeds when he left no foe to dread or admire him?” She smiled farewell to the boy, and adding, “My lord will chide my delay,” sprung into the flame.

Alau-d-din, having recruited his strength, returned to his object, Chitor. The annals state this to have been in S. 1346 (A.D. 1290), but Ferishta gives a date thirteen years later. They had not yet recovered the loss of so many valiant men who had sacrificed themselves for their prince’s safety, and Ala carried on his attacks more closely, and at length obtained the hill at the southern point, where he entrenched himself. They still pretend to point out his trenches; but so many have been formed by subsequent attacks that we cannot credit the assertion. The poet has found in the disastrous issue of this siege admirable materials for his song. He represents the Rana, after an arduous day, stretched on his pallet, and during a night of watchful anxiety, pondering on the means by which he might preserve from the general destruction one at least of his twelve sons; when a voice broke on his solitude, exclaiming, “Main bhukhi ho”; and raising his eyes, he saw, by the dim glare of the chiragh, advancing between the granite columns, the majestic form of the guardian goddess of Chitor. “Not satiated,” exclaimed the Rana, “though eight thousand of my kin were late an offering to thee?” “I must have regal victims; and if twelve who wear the diadem bleed not for Chitor, the land will pass from the line.” This said, she vanished.

On the morn he convened a council of his chiefs, to whom he revealed the vision of the night, which they treated as the dream of a disordered fancy. He commanded their attendance at midnight, when again the form appeared, and repeated the terms on which alone
she would remain amongst them. "Though thousands of barbarians strew the earth, what are they to me? On each day enthrone a prince. Let the kirania, the chhatra and the chamara, proclaim his sovereignty, and for three days let his decrees be supreme: on the fourth day let him meet the foe and his fate. Then only may I remain."

Whether we have merely the fiction of the poet, or whether the scene was got up to animate the spirit of resistance, matters but little, it is consistent with the belief of the tribe; and that the goddess should openly manifest her wish to retain as her tiara the battlements of Chitor on conditions so congenial to the warlike and superstitious Rajput was a gage readily taken up and fully answering the end. A generous contention arose amongst the brave brothers who should be the first victim to avert the denunciation. Arsi urged his priority of birth: he was proclaimed, the umbrella waved over his head, and on the fourth day he surrendered his short-lived honours and his life. Ajaisi, the next in birth demanded to follow; but he was the favourite son of his father, and at his request he consented to let his brothers precede him. Eleven had fallen in turn, and but one victim remained to the salvation of the city, when the Rana, calling his chiefs around him, said, "Now I devote myself for Chitor."

The Johar - But another horrible sacrifice was to precede this act of self-devotion in that horrible rite, the Johar, where the females are immolated to preserve them from pollution or captivity. The funeral pyre was lighted within the 'great subterranean retreat,' in chambers impervious to the light of day, and the defenders of Chitor beheld in procession the queens, their own wives and daughters, to the number of several thousands. The fair Padmini closed the throng, which was augmented by whatever of female beauty or youth could be tainted by

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71 Tod’s footnote: “The Author has been at the entrance of this retreat, which, according to the Khuman Raesa, conducts to a subterranean palace, but the mephitic vapours and venomous reptiles did not invite to adventure, even had official situation permitted such slight to these prejudices. The Author is the only Englishmen admitted to Chitor since the days of Herbert, who appears to have described what he saw.” Crooke 1995, 1:311
Tatar lust. They were conveyed to the cavern, and the opening closed upon them, leaving them to find security from dishonour in the devouring element.

A contest now arose between the Rana and his surviving son; but the father prevailed, and Ajaisi, in obedience to his commands, with a small band passed through the enemy’s lines, and reached Kelwara in safety. The Rana, satisfied that his line was not extinct, now prepared to follow his brave sons; and calling around him his devoted clans, for whom life had no longer any charms, they threw open the portals and descended to the plains, and with a reckless despair carried death, or met it, in the crowded ranks of Ala. The Tatar conqueror took possession of an inanimate capital, strewed with brave defenders, the smoke yet issuing from the recesses where lay consumed the once fair object of his desire; and since this devoted day the cavern has been sacred: no eye has penetrated its gloom, and superstition has placed as its guardian a huge serpent, whose ‘venomous breath’ extinguishes the light which might guide intruders to ‘the place of sacrifice.’

The Conquests of Alau-d-din — Thus fell, in A.D. 1303, this celebrated capital, in the round of conquest of Alau-d-din, one of the most vigorous and warlike sovereigns who have occupied the throne of India. In success, and in one of the means of attainment, a bigoted hypocrisy, he bore a striking resemblance to Aurangzeb; and the title of ‘Sikandar-u-Sani,’ or the second Alexander, which he assumed and impressed on his coins, was no idle vaunt. The proud Anhilwara, the ancient Dhar and Avanti, Mandor and Deogir . . . the entire Agnikula race, were overturned for ever by Ala. Jaisalmer, Gagraun, Bundi, the abodes of the Bhatti, the Khichi, and the Hara, with many of minor importance, suffered all the horrors of assault from this foe of the race, though destined again to raise their heads . . . . Ala remained in Chitor some days, admiring the grandeur of his conquest; and having committed every act of barbarity and wanton dilapidation which a bigoted zeal could suggest, overthrowing the temples and other monuments of art, he delivered the city in charge to Maldeo, the chief of Jalor, whom he had conquered and enrolled amongst his vassals. The palace of Bhim and the
fair Padmini alone appears to have escaped the wrath of Ala; it would be pleasing could we suppose any kinder sentiment suggested the exception, which enables the author of these annals to exhibit the abode of the fair of Ceylon.

_Mewar occupied by the Musalmans: The Exploit of Hamir_—Mewar was now occupied by the garrisons of Delhi, and Ajaisi had besides to contend with the mountain chiefs, amongst whom Munja Balaicha was the most formidable. . . . The Rana's sons, Sajansi and Ajamsi, though fourteen and fifteen, an age at which a Rajput ought to indicate his future character, proved of little aid in the emergence. Hamir was summoned, and accepted the feud against Munja, promising to return successfully or not at all. In a few days he was seen entering the pass of Kelwara with Munja's head at his saddle-bow. . . . Ajai 'kissed his beard,'72 and observing that fate had stamped empire on his forehead, impressed it with a tika of blood from the head of the Balaicha. This decided the fate of the sons of Ajaisi; one of whom died at Kelwara, and the other, Sajansi, who might have excited a civil war, was sent from the country.73 He departed for the Deccan, where his issue was destined to avenge some of the wrong the parent country had sustained, and eventually to overturn the monarchy of Hindustan; for Sajansi was the ancestor of Sivaji, the founder of the Satara throne, whose lineage is given in the chronicles of Mewar.74 . . .

**The story collated**

Tod follows his sources closely, but he does select which elements to omit or include from particular sources. These interpretative choices significantly transform the story in relation to the versions current in late medieval Rajasthan.

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72 Tod's footnote: "This is an idiomatic phrase; Hamir could have had no beard." Crooke 1995, 1:313
73 Tod’s footnote: "des desa." Crooke 1995, 1:314
74 Tod’s footnote: "Ajaisi, Sajansi, Dalipji, Sheoji, Bhoraji, Deoraj, Ugarsen, Mahulji, Khelaji, Jankoji, Satuji, Sambhaji, Sivaji (the founder of the Maratha nation), Sambhaji, Ramraja, usurpation of the Peshwas. The Satara throne, but for the jealousies of Udaipur, might on the imbecility of Ramraja have been replenished from Mewar. It was offered to Nathji, the grandfather of the present chief Sheodan Singh, presumptive heir of Chitor. Two noble lines were reared from princes of Chitor expelled on similar occasions; those of Sivaji and the Gorkhas of Nepal." Crooke 1995, 1:314
Where the *Khumman Raso* mentions Ratansen as the king of Chitor, Tod substitutes Lakhamsi. He follows bardic genealogies like the Sisod Vansavali on this point.\(^7\) I have pointed out in the previous chapter how several Rajasthani bardic versions made Lakhamsi the king, and cast Ratansen as his younger brother.\(^6\) In a significant departure from both Jain and bardic versions however, Tod omits all mention of Ratansen. Further, the Rajasthani bardic versions made Padmini the king's sister-in-law. In contrast, Tod makes Padmini the king's aunt. In the Annals she is the wife of Bhimsi, an uncle who ruled the kingdom as protector during Lakhamsi's minority. Tod departs from the known accounts of late medieval Rajasthan, in naming Padmini's husband Bhimsi rather than Ratansen. I have been unable to find the source for this alteration on his part.\(^7\) In tracing the succession through the sons of the king Lakhamsi, however, Tod follows the bardic versions.

Padmini is from Ceylon, as Tod renames the Singhal of his Rajasthani sources. He does not mention any journey by the prince of Chitor to Ceylon, to marry the princess. This was an element available to Tod from several of his Jain and bardic sources. Nor does he mention the quarrel over food between the king of Chitor and his chief queen, which triggered the king's quest for Padmini in the *Khumman Raso*. Further, Tod recognizes that "Padmini" is a "title" bestowed on the fairest of women. However he omits to mention the connection between the fabled island of Singhal and such beautiful Padmini women, an association stated explicitly in the *Khumman Raso*. He names Padmini's father Hamir Sank Chauhan, again following the Sisod Vansavali, and misreading its Hamir Sekh in this fashion.

\(^7\) Tod had a copy made of this late seventeenth-century genealogy of the kings of Mevar. Tod Collection, Royal Asiatic Society, ms. no. 132. Alauddin's siege of Chitor is recounted on folios 27b-28b.

\(^6\) See for instance Ranchod Bhatt's *Amarakavyam*, and the discussion of it in Chapter 2.

\(^7\) None of the texts discussed in Chapter 2 -- the *Sisod Vansavali*, the *Raval Ranaji ri Vat*, the *Amarakavyam*, the *Chitor Udaipur Patnama*, *Nainsi ri Khyat*, the *Rajvilas* or the Jain poems, mention a Bhimsi; all of them make Ratansen the husband of Padmini. And none of the sources I consulted in the archives in Rajasthan or in the Tod collection of manuscripts at the Royal Asiatic Society, had this substantial alteration.
Tad mentions cursorily the first fruitless siege of Chitor by Alau-d-din. He then recounts in one sentence, Alau-d-din’s gazing upon the queen’s reflection in a mirror. Raghav Cetan, who played such a key role in both Jain and bardic versions of medieval Rajasthan, is omitted from the Annals. Again, it would seem that Tod follows here the terse account of a short genealogy such as the Sisod Vansavali. Neither the meal nor the serving of Alau-d-din by the queen’s beautiful maids, both elements in the Khumman Raso, figure in Tod. In his account Alau-d-din’s wish to behold Padmini is gratified in a single sentence. Thus Tod omits a key element from the poetic versions of medieval Rajasthan, including the Khumman Raso. He excises the narrative maneuvers that framed the beholding of the Rajput queen by an alien gaze, in those texts.

In contrast to these omissions Tod chose to follow the Khumman Raso on Khalji’s entry into the fort. As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, this was a detail absent in many of Tod’s shorter bardic sources. However, the Khumman Raso followed earlier Rajasthani Jain versions in describing Alau-d-din’s armed escort of thirty thousand soldiers, as he entered Chitor to behold the queen and tour the fort. In contrast, Tod has Khalji enter the fort only “slightly guarded.” Tod ascribes this to his “relying on the faith of the Rajput.” In narrating Bhimsi’s escorting of Alau-d-din outside the fort, though, Tod reverts to the Khumman Raso. As in the Jain text, he attributes this to Bhimsi’s thoroughly misplaced “confidence” in his guest. Tod uses the terms “Rajput” and “Hindu” synonymously. He emphasizes in successive sentences the “faith of the Rajput” and the “superior faith of the Hindu.”

The discussion between the chiefs of Chitor about surrendering Padmini to the emperor is only mentioned in the Annals, not described. Thus unlike the Jain versions of medieval Rajasthan, Tod does not suggest any difference of opinion among the chiefs. Nor does he retain from the Khumman Raso the figure of the king’s resentful son plotting against his stepmother the queen. He follows the bardic accounts in omitting this detail. Further, Padmini does not protest against the plan to surrender her; she acquiesces quietly, only providing the “wherewithal to secure herself from dishonour.” This is in sharp contrast to the Khumman Raso and the other
medieval Jain poems. There the angry queen lamented the decline of Rajput virtue and valour, and actively mobilized support for herself. However, in retaining the planned surrender of the queen, Tod seems to follow the Khumnman Raso rather than the bardic accounts of medieval Mevar. The latter texts do not even contemplate this possibility, produced as they were under royal sponsorship (see previous chapter).

In the Annals, it is only after Padmini agrees to the surrender that she confers with Gora and Badal, who are her “own kin and clan” from Ceylon. In making the two chiefs relatives of Padmini, Tod diverges from the Khumnman Raso. The latter followed the Jain tradition in making Gora and Badal chiefs living in Mevar, who had quarreled with the king and did not owe him service or tribute. Further, shorter bardic accounts like the Sisod Vansvali omit all mention of the two chiefs. Tod’s precise source for this alteration is unclear. It may be that he had access to a longer bardic chronicle resembling the Chitor Udaipur Patnama discussed in Chapter 2. However, Tod omits the conflict between the king and his queen’s powerful kinsmen, tensions powerfully dramatized in a bardic account such as the Patnama (see previous chapter).

The account in the Annals cursorily outlines the plan to rescue the king from the emperor’s camp. Tod mentions the seven hundred litters and the half-hour parting interview between the “Hindu prince and his bride.” Badal’s role in devising the plan, Alau-d-din’s credulity and the tricking of the emperor, details elaborated with flourish in the Khumnman Raso, have all been excised. However, the shorter bardic accounts omit any mention of the palanquin-rescue. Again, it would seem that Tod selected details from the Khumnman Raso at this point, or had access to a longer bardic account that he did not name. Or the oral traditions and anecdotes that he cites as one more of his sources may have corroborated the description in the Khumnman Raso. Further, in describing the rescue Tod is at pains to emphasize Alau-d-din’s “treachery,” stating specifically that he had “no intention of letting Bhimsi return.”

Tod again shifts the emphasis in describing the battle between the imperial forces and the Rajputs led by Gora and Badal. Gora and Badal are motivated by “the noblest of sentiments”:
"the deliverance of their chief and the honour of their queen." However the outcome is foregone unlike in the Khumman Raso. The "choicest of the heroes of Chitor" have "devoted their selves to destruction," as Tod omits the epic comparisons describing the battle in Dalpati Vijay's poem. And the Khumman Raso ended with the triumph of the Rajputs. Tod's shifts of emphasis make this only a temporary reprieve, obtained at heavy cost: "the flower of Mevar" has already been slaughtered. This is the most significant alteration that Tod effects – where the Khumman Raso ended with the king's rescue and Rajput victory, the account in the Annals makes this first victory insignificant. Tod already looks forward to the ultimate sacking of the fort narrated in the other bardic accounts.

It is clear then that from this point Tod departs from the Khumman Raso, and relies exclusively on the bardic accounts. The shorter bardic accounts do not mention the patron goddess of Chitor appearing to the king in a dream and demanding a blood sacrifice of twelve kings. But a longer account such as the Patnama elaborately recounts the patron goddess's continuing relationship with the kings of Chitor, starting with Bappa Raval. The Patnama also has the goddess appearing before Ratansen and explaining the reason for her desertion of Chitor. She ascribes the flight of the gods to Alau-d-din's pollution of the fort and its sacred sites. In the Patnama however, the goddess does not demand the sacrifice of twelve sons as the price of her continuing protection. Tod's account suggests that he had access to another longer bardic account, comparable to the Patnama but not identical with it. Or again, oral, anecdotal tradition supplied him with this detail.

Tod invokes this theme again, when he describes the third siege of Chitor by Akbar. He once again refers to the contract between the "guardian goddess" and the rulers of Mevar: that she "had promised never to abandon the rock of her pride while a descendant of Bappa Rawal devoted himself to her service." And he attributes Akbar's victory to the fact that on this occasion "no regal victim appeared to appease the Cybele of Chitor . . . She fell! The charm was broken;
the mysterious tie was severed for ever which connected Chitor with perpetuity of sway to the race of Guhilot" (Crooke 1995, 1:377-78).

To return to the Padmini story, however, the Patnama seems to have been an exception to the general trend of the bardic tradition. The other bardic sources specifically mentioned the death of twelve sons of the king of Chitor in the battle against Alau-d-din. And they traced the continuity of the ruling lineage through a surviving son of Lakhamsi, rather than through Ratansen. Tod follows an account such as the Sisod Vansavali on both these details: the death of twelve sons, and the continuity of the lineage through a surviving son, Ajaisi.

Tod concludes his account of Alau-d-din’s victory by describing the destruction Alau-d-din wrought at Chitor. He sees this as a pattern repeated by Khaliji in all the kingdoms he conquered. Tod specifically invokes Khaliji’s bigoted zealotry, likening him in this respect to Aurangzeb. As I argue in the previous chapter, such demonization of the enemy was absent from seventeenth-century bardic accounts, which were produced in the context of close and continuously renegotiated relations between Rajputs and Mughals. By the end of the seventeenth century however, Mughal authority had weakened, with the growing conflict between Aurangzeb and the Rajput kings. Eighteenth-century Rajasthani chronicles reveal a more pronounced demonization of the enemy emperor of Delhi. Tod’s description of Alau-d-din’s conduct suggests that he had access to this eighteenth-century perspective, which may have overlaid its interpretation upon earlier accounts such as the Sisod Vansavali even where the latter were available to the colonial scholar.

The story recast: Kings and Chiefs

As I argue above (‘Kings, Chiefs and Company policy’), the East India Company intervened in the Rajput kingdoms to strengthen monarchical authority at the expense of the chiefs. This provides the background to Tod’s reinterpretation of Mevar history. He acknowledges his “partiality for those with whom ... [he] long resided, and with whose history ... [he was] best acquainted” (Crooke 1995, 2:807). And Tod saw the glory of Mevar in terms of
the stature of its kings, rather than the achievements of its chiefs. This slant towards the glorification of the kings was in line with the bardic chronicles that Tod read. His close association with the Rajput royal courts ensured that he had access to literary texts and chronicles with a distinct bias in favour of the ruling lineage.78 As we have seen above (‘The Story Collated’), he preferred the genealogy and chronicle accounts to the poetic accounts. By virtue of their very location, these bardic sources were predisposed to assert past and present kingly authority (see previous chapter). It is not entirely clear to what extent Tod developed his assessment of the pre-eminence of the Rajput ruler over the chiefs from his sources. It is clear however that he re-read the region’s history in line with this assumption.

Shrinking networks of chiefly patronage further decreased the space for alternative interpretations of the past within the region. The net effect was thus a consolidation of monarchical authority. This occurred both through the intervention of the East India Company, and through local reinterpretation of history in response to contemporary kingly anxieties.

In his choice of Lakhamsi rather than Ratansen as king of Chitor, Tod discards the accounts of poetic narratives such as the Khumman Raso and the Rajvilas in favour of bardic genealogies such as the Sisod Vansavali. As indicated above, such bardic accounts emerged in the seventeenth century under direct royal patronage. They were concerned with the legitimation of Rajput kingship in the region. The conventions they evolved for reconstructing the past were governed by this agenda. The bardic chronicles and genealogies made Ratansen the younger brother of the king Lakhamsi. They further traced the continuity of the lineage through the king’s surviving son. In doing so the chronicles tacitly distanced the Sisodia ruling lineage in Mevar from the dishonour of Chitor’s loss.

78 It was not only at Udaipur that Tod interacted closely with local informants under royal patronage. For his history of Marwar, Tod seems to have relied heavily on the “six metrical chronicles” of the “house” of Raja Man Singh, which the latter king personally presented to him. Crooke 1995, 2:833.
Tod's source for the omission of Ratansen and for the introduction of Bhimsi as king's uncle and Padmini's husband is unclear. However his retention of Lakhamsi as king reiterates this subtle argument in defence of the Sisodia lineage. It was not a king's wife who brought misfortune upon Chitor. The crisis that threatened Chitor was in some sense external to the ruling lineage, since Padmini's husband is now not even the king's younger brother as in many of the bardic accounts, but an uncle. Thus the king and his twelve sons die battling an enemy who threatens members of their clan, an uncle and aunt. The valour of the king and his sons lies in their defence of both fort and clan. In tracing the lineage through the survival of Lakhamsi's son, Tod again echoes the genealogies. He overlooks their vested interest in asserting the unbroken continuity of the ruling lineage, transcending especially the real disruption of Khalji's conquests.

It should be clear by now that Tod's selection of particular elements from his varied sources is itself an exercise in interpretation and modification. Perhaps the most significant transformation from the medieval sources occurs in his treatment of the chiefs. The decision of the chiefs' assembly to surrender the queen is merely mentioned in passing. The figure of the king's resentful son that figured in the Khunman Rasa has been expunged. Also excluded are the debate among the chiefs, and the role of the king's son in persuading the chiefs to surrender his stepmother to the enemy.

Secondly, Gora and Badal are made Padmini's kinsmen. There was no mention of them at all in many of the shorter bardic accounts. However the bardic Patnama makes them the queen's kinsmen, sent to Chitor for the explicit purpose of defending her. Tod's treatment of Gora and Badal effects two significant omissions. First, he does not mention the possibility of a conflict of interests between the king and his queen's clansmen. As we saw in the previous chapter, this conflict was powerfully dramatized in the Patnama where a jealous Ratansen beheads the two chiefs. Secondly, the Jain poems consistently depicted Gora and Badal as having quarreled with the king. Therefore they render neither tribute nor service to Ratansen. Tod
excludes just as firmly this possibility of conflict between the king and his own subordinate chiefs.

The late medieval Rajasthani sources, both Jain and bardic, articulated the conflicts within regional Rajput polity. Tod’s account irons out these contradictions to re-cast an internally fraught order as a stable, hierarchical polity. In Tod’s version there are no internal challenges to the king’s authority. The medieval Rajasthani texts had extolled the ideology of swamidharma as a response in the face of constant challenges to the authority of the Rajput kings. Tod read these prescriptive accounts of the normative conduct practised in the past, literally. Hence he also rereads past conflicts between kings and chiefs with the same angle of vision. He sees such conflicts as an abuse of the political order, rather than as a defining contradiction. He characterizes hostility between chiefs and their kings as an aberration: as an “occasional” expression of “turbulence” and “refractory spirit” (Crooke 1995, I:225). And he exalts the Rajput for his implicit devotion. “Gratitude with him embraces every obligation of life, and is inseparable from swamidharma, fidelity to his lord” (Crooke 1995, I:224).

This subtle loading of the dice in favour of the ‘kingly’ perspective also shapes Tod’s treatment of the rescue by Gora and Badal. He does not seem to have recognized the specific purpose the Khumman Raso achieved, by concluding its account with the victory of the chiefs. Instead, Tod perceives this rescue merely as a momentary reprieve in the inexorable movement towards tragic finale. It is that tragedy that both reasserts the heroic stature of the kings of Chitor even in defeat, and carefully traces the unbroken continuity of the ruling lineage. I argued in the previous chapter that this narrative choice of the Jain poems must be linked to their literary and historical moorings. The Jain poems articulated perceptions of chiefly valour and the status of the king strikingly at odds with the treatment of these issues in the royally sponsored bardic chronicles. In its limited use of the Khumman Raso, Tod’s recasting of the Padmi story is blind to these potential conflicts between the aspirations of rulers and chieftains in the regional Rajput
kingdoms. Thus he did not recognize the internal contradictions that had provided the context for the reconstruction of Rajput history during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The story edited: Queens old and new

Tod's ambivalence about Rajput elite polygamy similarly shapes his narrative choices in retelling the Padmini story. Thus he mentions cursorily that her father is Hamir Sank [sic] Chauhan. Once Padmini is married this becomes a redundant detail however. There is no space in the narrative where her natal lineage could have been a relevant factor. Further, I argue above that Tod borrows from the medieval chronicle tradition the strategy of distancing Padmini and her husband from the ruling line of kings. This distancing strategy has a second effect. Now that she is the wife of the king's uncle, there is also no mention of the king's polygamous household and its frictions. It will be remembered that this was a remarkably persistent element in the medieval Rajasthani versions of the story.

The literary and popular associations of Padmini women with the island of Singhal were available to Tod through the *Khumman Raso*. In omitting this detail, his account rids Padmini's natal home of all the romance connotations it had had in the Jain narratives of medieval Rajasthan. Ceylon is reduced now to a neutral geographical description of Padmini's origins. Further, while Padmini still hails from Ceylon, Tod does not mention the king's or his uncle's journey to that distant land to marry her. In the previous chapter I pointed out that the precise significance of the journey to Singhal is unclear in the Rajasthani Padmini narratives. They lacked any coherent explanation for the king's arduous journey to obtain a Padmini woman. This redundancy may have made it easier for Tod to exclude the motif from his own account.

Moreover, Tod borrows from the *Sisod Vansavali* the name of Padmini's father, as Hamir Sank [sic] Chauhan. Like the latter text, he inserts the Chitor king's marriage with Padmini into the imperatives of political consolidation between elite Rajput lineages through marital alliances. In Tod's narrative, the marriage to Padmini is therefore construed exclusively within the domain of
elite Rajput politics. The romance quest had introduced supernatural elements into the Jain narratives, such as the king's aerial journey to Singhal. Such details are excised.

Thus Padmini herself is divested of the attributes of romance heroine that she retains in the Khumman Raso and its Jain predecessors. Tod omits the catalog of her attributes drawn from the medieval erotics tradition that he found in the Khumman Raso. In doing so he treats the queen's beauty after the manner of the bardic chronicles. For Tod as for his chronicle sources, the queen's beauty is simply a conventional narrative trope. It points to the stature of the king who wedded her and does not possess any autonomous value in itself (see previous chapter).

Tod also seems to inherit from his sources their unease with the figure of the beautiful queen. I argued in the previous chapter that the queen's beauty was severely circumscribed. Jain monastic distrust of feminine beauty and elite Rajput patriarchy coalesced on this issue. They saw her beauty as the cause of political adversity. The beautiful queen was also an obstacle to Rajput kings and chiefs fulfilling their duty. Tod's retelling of the Padmini story points to these details obliquely. He retains from his medieval Rajasthani sources the causal link between Padmini's beauty and Alau-d-din's attack upon Chitor.

The Annals suggests this sort of opposition between feminine beauty and virtue more overtly in recounting the Prthviraj Chauhan – Sanyogita episode:

We see her [Sanyogita], from the moment when, rejecting the assembled princes, she threw the "garland of marriage" round the neck of her hero, the Chauhan, abandon herself to all the influences of passion... and subsequently, by her seductive charms, lulling her lover into a neglect of every princely duty. Yet when the foes of his glory and power invade India, we see the enchantress at once start from her trance of pleasure, and exchanging the softer for the sterner passions, in accents not less strong because mingled with deep affection, she conjures him, while arming him for the battle, to die for his fame, declaring that she will join him in "the mansions of the sun" (Crooke 1995, 2:725).
As I show in the previous chapter, the medieval Rajasthani narratives persistently underplayed Padmini’s beauty. In its place they affirmed an alternative, patriarchal norm of female virtue that was directed towards upholding and encouraging the pursuit of heroism by Rajput chiefs and warriors. Tod echoes this instrumentality to the Rajput woman’s virtue:

C’est aux hommes a faire des grandes choses, c’est aux femmes a les inspirer,’ is a maxim to which every Rajput cavalier would subscribe, with whom the age of chivalry is not fled, though ages of oppression have passed over him.79 [“It is for men to perform the great deeds, it is for women to inspire them” – my translation].

Tod further defines the Rajput woman’s virtue as dedicated to the defence of the warrior ethic that upheld the Rajput militaristic order. He thereby reaffirms the prescriptions of his medieval Rajasthani sources. He cites Bernier’s description of the pressure brought upon Jaswant Singh of Marwar by his wife (daughter of the Mevar Rana), not to acknowledge defeat at the hands of Aurangzeb. She threatens to immolate herself if her husband concedes defeat. With Bernier, Tod sees the episode as “a pattern of the courage of the women of that country” (Crooke 1995, 2:725). These are the grounds on which he exalts Rajput women:

Nor will the annals of any nation afford more numerous or more sublime instances of female devotion, than those of the Rajputs; and such would never have been recorded, were not the incentive likely to be revered and followed (Crooke 1995, 2:714).

Again, typically, Tod extends this “tradition” of exemplary “female devotion” backwards, into an imaginary mythological past, by citing similar instances from the Ramayana, the Uttara Rama Charitra, the Vikrama and Urvasi, and the Mudra Rakshasa (Crooke 1995, 2:714).

In collating from his sources for the Padmini story, Tod thus picks up the elements that he considered as exemplifying such a norm. By the same logic he chose to exclude tropes that he

79 “It is for men to perform the great deeds, it is for women to inspire them.” Crooke 1995, 2:709.
considered redundant to this heroic norm. Lessons about the wife's household duties may have been appropriate subject matter for domestic cautionary tales such as the one about the Sadri chief and his wife. Tod did not consider them to be relevant to heroic narratives of the defeat of a king and the loss of a kingdom. Thus Tod again chose to ignore from the *Khumman Raso* the domestic parable about the taming of the unruly queen Prabhavati, and the corresponding exaltation of Padmini for her culinary skills and domestic virtue.

It is clear that Tod's account of the Padmini story is a pared-down version collated from all the different sources that he cites. This editorial discretion represents an exercise in interpretation. Further elements are omitted from the medieval sources because they may have been considered redundant. These include the elaborate narrative devices that framed Alau-d-din's beholding of the queen. We have seen how Rajput patriarchy and its political decorum required the queen to be firmly removed from the public gaze. Thus Tod's Rajasthani sources framed this beholding of the queen by an 'alien' gaze in a variety of ways. Many of the shorter bardic accounts did not even mention Khalji's first entry into the fort, to behold the queen or to be served a meal by her. The *Khumman Raso* mentions both details, and describes Padmini's resistance to the idea of showing herself before Alau-d-din. In the Jain poem the queen attempts to deceive Khalji by having her equally beautiful maids serve the meal instead. And when the emperor does finally catch a glimpse of her, it is by accident as it were. He espies her trying to catch sight of him from behind a latticed screen in the audience hall. Tod omits these details entirely, recounting the episode in a single sentence.

On the one hand, as an observer Tod seems to have been aware of the seclusion of women in elite Rajput society. He defends the Rajput order against the common European accusation that such restrictions point to the oppression of women:

The superficial observer, who applies his own standard to the customs of all nations, laments with an affected philanthropy the degraded condition of the Hindu female, in which sentiment he would find her little disposed to join . . . Yet from the knowledge I do possess
of the freedom, the respect, the happiness, which Rajput women enjoy, I am by no means inclined to deplore their state as one of captivity . . . Of one thing we are certain, seclusion of females could only originate in a moderately advanced stage of civilization . . . (Crooke 1995, 2:710).

On the other hand, however, Tod does not seem to have comprehended the manner in which the medieval Rajasthani texts translated these norms of social intercourse into principles of aesthetic decorum. Hence his omission of all the narrative maneuvers that preserved the queen’s purdah in the local sources.

Even more significantly, Tod consistently omits from his sources the descriptions of Padmani’s resistance. In the Annals, Padmani does not protest the decision to surrender her to the enemy. Again, as we have seen, many of the bardic accounts were acutely uncomfortable with even the prospect of handing over the queen. They excluded the possibility altogether. The Jain poems including the Khumman Raso could contemplate the eventuality, but used it to constitute the queen as the voice of elite Rajput moral and political norms. Padmani laments the state of Chitor, defines the ideal Rajput conduct and virtue, and is firm in her resolve not to surrender. It was this feminine virtue that mobilized the heroic action at the center of the Jain poems.

Again, Tod seems to have applauded elsewhere, the role elite Rajput women were expected to play in upholding the ethical norms of the Rajput order. This is clear from his citing Bernier’s discussion of Jaswant Singh’s wife, and his own description of Sanyogita’s appeal to Prthviraj (see above). His omission of Padmani’s defiance from the Khumman Raso might have been for the purpose of compression alone. And yet by excluding these details Tod’s account of Padmani ends up making her the silent and symbolic pawn, around whom a kingdom was defended and lost. The figure of Padmani has been deprived of even the limited political agency she exercised in the Jain poems, or in a bardic account such as the Patnama.

As I argue above (‘The story recast: Kings and Chiefs’), Tod concludes by asserting the heroism of the king, his clan and his chiefs who embraced certain death in battle before losing the
kingdom. The tragic finale serves to enhance the stature of the ruling lineage, even in defeat. As much as the doomed, last resistance of the warriors, it is the immolation of their women that is the defining mark of Rajput heroism. In Tod’s words, “Another horrible sacrifice was to precede this act of self-devotion [by the men] in that horrible rite, the Johar, where the females are immolated to preserve them from pollution or captivity” (Crooke 1995, 1:310-11).

Tod’s description of the immolation as “horrible sacrifice” betrays a certain ambivalence that was missing in his medieval Rajasthani sources. Many of the shorter bardic chronicles and genealogies of the medieval period do not describe the jauhar, they merely mention it in one terse sentence. The custom was central to medieval definitions of Rajput identity. This can be gauged from the fact that it was common amongst emergent Rajputizing groups in medieval Hindustan (see chapter 1). Such instances point to a consensus among medieval Rajput traditions that the occurrence of jauhar was an index of their honour and glory.

Tod subscribes to this evaluation of the Rajput traditions insofar as he reads “the practice of female immolation” (whether sati or jauhar) as exemplifying “Rajput character.” The woman’s immolation upon the death of her husband confirms for him “that heroism of character inherent to the Rajputni.” “A memorable lesson,” it is an “act of faith” by which “the Sati not only makes atonement for the sins of her husband, and secures the remission of her own, but has the joyful assurance of reunion to the object whose beatitude she procures” (Crooke 1995, 2:737). Thus female immolation affords proof of the implicit devotion of Rajputs to their “conjugal duties”:

Could authority deemed divine ensure obedience to what is considered a virtue in all ages and countries, the conjugal duties of the Rajputs are comprehended in the following simple

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80 “Each son of Lakhmansi descended from the fort and fought for twelve days. On the thirteenth day they had jihar performed and the Ranas Lakhmansi and Ratansi were killed.” “Sisodiyari Khyat,” in Sakariya 1984, 1:13-14.
text: “Let mutual fidelity continue to death; this, in few words, may be considered as the supreme law between husband and wife” (Crooke 1995, 2:713).

However, the colonial scholar-administrator’s ambivalence about female immolation prevents Tod from unambiguous celebration of sati. On the one hand, he reads into the custom ‘companionsate marriage and conjugal love.’ This construction allows him to subscribe to the notion of ‘voluntary’ sati born out of such love.2 On the other hand, though, he shares with other Company officials the assumption that the custom had to be abolished. He characterizes it as “a cruel pledge of affection,” “a custom so opposed to the first law of nature.” And he recognizes the sanctioning role that “religion” and “custom” play, as much as the wife’s “affection” for her husband (Crooke 1995, 2:737-38). Tod’s treatment of sati is thus typified by this tension. His firm belief in Rajput glory implied an endorsement of the official Rajput perspective on patriarchy as well. But along with colonial administrators and scholars, he continued to be ambivalent about the custom of widow immolation.

Where Tod describes sati in terms of conjugal “devotion,” he describes jauhar differently. In the latter case, he believes that Rajput women are driven by “preservation of their honour”:

I shall touch on the yet more awful rite of Johar, when a whole tribe may become extinct, of which several instances have been recorded in the annals of the Mevar . . . . The loss of a battle, or the capture of a city, is a signal to avoid captivity and its horrors, which to the Rajputni are worse than death (Crooke 1995, 2:744).

He traces the custom to the practice of capturing the women of the side defeated in battle. And he recognizes that this was common among the Rajputs as well, in their battles with each other:

2 The phrase is Lata Mani’s, (1998, 180). Mani demonstrates how “many Europeans persisted in understanding sati in terms of a notion of conjugal love,” and how they “remained drawn, however ambivalently, to the possibility and legitimacy of ‘voluntary’ sati, and persisted in evaluating incidents they observed against this notion” (164).
It is singular that a nation so refined, so scrupulous in its ideas with regard to females, as the Rajput, should not have entered into some national compact to abandon such proof of success as the bondage of the sex (Crooke 1995, 2:744).

In other words, Tod recognizes the contradiction between Rajput professions of respect for their women and their practice in the aftermath of battle.

However he echoes official Rajput ideology, which seems to have generated support for the practice of mass female immolation by painting the enemy as Muslim. The medieval Rajasthani Padmini narratives were implicated in the specific anxieties of Mevar politics. They therefore located threats to Rajput polity and order, in the figure of the emperor of Delhi. I have also argued that among the Sisodias this imperial authority was gradually demonized as Muslim. Tod takes over these assumptions both in his understanding of the custom of jauhar, and in his specific account of the Padmini story. Thus he disregards the prevalence of the custom of taking female captives among Rajputs as well. Instead, he argues that “We can enter into the feeling and applaud the deed, which ensured the preservation of their honour by the fatal johar, when the foe was the brutalized Tatar” (Crooke 1995, 2:744). And he construes Padmini’s jauhar similarly, as enabling her to “find security from dishonour in the devouring element”:

The funeral pyre was lighted within the “great subterranean retreat,” in chambers impervious to the light of day, and the defenders of Chitor beheld in procession the queens, their own wives and daughters, to the number of several thousands. The fair Padmini closed the throng, which was augmented by whatever of female beauty or youth could be tainted by Tatar lust (Crooke 1995, 1:311).

These constructions of the conduct of enemy kings who were Muslim, may have been prevalent in eighteenth-century Mevar. It is significant though, that none of the sources Tod cites, actually mentions this as the specific explanation for Padmini’s jauhar. Instead, the medieval Rajasthani sources merely invoke the umbrella concept of Rajput honour and glory, defined around threats to queen and kingdom (see previous chapter). In his special emphasis upon Tatar

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lust, Tod would seem to share the tendency amongst East India Company officials and scholars, to read the subcontinent’s history as perennial conflict between political players defined exclusively in terms of homogenized religious identities – in other words, between ‘Hindu’ and ‘Muslim’ kings.

I argued in the previous chapter that the Padmini narratives in medieval Rajasthan mobilized norms of honourable conduct around perceptions of threat to the Rajput political hierarchy. I also argued that the threat was repeatedly directed at what was constructed as the heart of Rajput polity. This was the figure of the queen who embodied in herself the network of political alliances that defined the king’s power. In Tod’s recasting of the Padmini story, we can see the taking over of these narrative and political strategies, now overlaid with the patriarchal codes of a reshaped Rajput polity in the nineteenth century. Thus Tod betrays a greater ambivalence of the role of women in the politics of the Rajput states. He underplayed the extent to which elite Rajput women gained a degree of political autonomy in the medieval period. And he disregarded the role of political alliances through marriage in providing such power, circumscribed as it was. As we have seen (‘Rajput patriarchy and the Company’) this unease was common to Tod and contemporary elite Rajput polity. The Annals seeks to counter this by a correspondingly greater emphasis on the conjugal duty and devotion enjoined upon the Rajput woman. Thus the newly ‘domesticated’ figure of the queen now functions as the largely symbolic heart of Rajput polity. In this capacity, though, the figure of the queen continues to retain its earlier utility in the Rajput literary and historical tradition. She is still the symbolic centre against which threats to the Rajput order are directed.

The story re-coloured: Surviving Enemies

I demonstrated in the previous chapter how the Padmini narratives in medieval Rajasthan were implicated in consolidating support for the dominant Rajput order. They did so by invoking a range of threats to that order. Tod’s treatment of these issues is coloured both by the imperatives of post-Mughal Rajput polity and emerging colonial readings of Indian history.
We saw how in Tod's sources, one major threat to the order arose from doubts over the potential loyalty of chiefs to the king. And we saw how these doubts articulated a historical contradiction in the formation of the Rajput state. As I argue above, Tod's narrative of the Padmini story irons out these contradictions between monarchical ambition and chiefly assertions, to present a stable, hierarchical polity.

In the medieval traditions, a second challenge to the king's authority came from his wives. The Rajasthani Padmini narratives were centrally concerned with the pressures of elite Rajput marriages and their centrality to the political order. Tod's heightened emphasis on the Rajput woman's devotion to conjugal duty, extending beyond death as it were, works to reduce the magnitude of these contradictions as well.

In Tod's sources the figure of the king's unruly son represented the threat to king and queens from within the king's household. Such conflict was inherent in a situation where co-wives came from different natal clans and retained their natal affiliations after marriage. The Khumman Raso retained this trope in the figure of Jasvant. This son of the king persuaded the assembled chiefs of Chitor to surrender his stepmother Padmini to Alau-d-din, in exchange for the king's release. Tod omits this detail from his poetic source, choosing to rely on the shorter bardic chronicles instead. Thus, Tod's version of the Padmini story consistently obscures the fact that threats to the king's authority were inherent in the structure of the polygamous royal household in its links with the Rajput state.

Tod's attempt to smoothen out the contradictions of Rajput polity can be seen in his re-reading of medieval institutions. We saw in the previous chapter how succession disputes were again a common feature of the medieval Rajput state, given that primogeniture was never accepted as an absolute principle. Tod, however, reads the region's history from its royally sponsored chronicles, in terms of the stature of its kings. He retrospectively casts primogeniture as the norm. Thus Tod states that
The law of primogeniture prevails in all Rajput sovereignties; the rare instances in which it has been set aside, are only exceptions to the rule . . . . Custom and precedent fix the right of succession, whether to the gaddi of the State, or to a fief, in the eldest son . . . . Seniority is, in fact, a distinction pervading all ranks of life, whether in royal families or those of chieftains (Crooke 1995, 3:1370).

And Tod clings to this view, even as he himself identifies the many instances in Rajput history, when the principle was disregarded.

This proceeded from a variety of motives, sometimes merely paternal affection, sometimes incapacity in the child ‘to head fifty thousand Rathors,’ and sometimes . . . a dangerous turbulence and ever-boiling impetuosity in the individual, which despised all restraints (Crooke 1995, 2:975).

Further, he sees the connection between succession struggles and factionalism among the chiefs. However, rather than see these phenomena as the defining contradictions of medieval Rajput state formation, he sees them as a “deviation from custom.” He sees such “deviations” as “productive of the most injurious effects,” especially in the eighteenth century (Crooke 1995, 1:465-55).

Thus, whether he is interpreting the history of the medieval Rajput kingdoms in general, or recounting specific episodes such as Khalji’s conquest of Chitor, Tod’s account in the Annals works to smooth over all the contradictions internal to the medieval Rajput order. Such an interpretation was resonant with contemporary monarchical perspectives in the region. As shown above (‘The story recast’), Rajput kings in the nineteenth century attempted to assert their power against rebellious chiefs by appeals to past glory. This is the logic of Tod’s omitting the king’s son from the Padmini story. He similarly omits the dissension of the chiefs. Instead, he locates threats to the order exclusively in the figure of the ‘alien’ enemy, Alauddin Khalji the emperor of Delhi.
We have seen above how Tod's compressed narrative diminishes and reworks the significance of the king's rescue by Gora and Badal. Among the omissions here is the _Khumman Raso_ 's elaborate description of Badal's wiles in tricking the emperor. Also excluded is the _Khumman Raso_ 's account of Alau-d-din's gullibility in being deceived by the Rajput. The medieval Jain poems about Padmini mocked Alau-d-din's folly, as he was deceived by the tricks of a twelve-year-old boy. Tod retains this last detail, but omits the levity at the expense of the emperor. Further, the _Khumman Raso_ frequently refers to the "Khurasani's malice" in describing Khalji. The Jain poem does not however depict him as planning to betray the Rajput king after the queen's surrender. In contrast Tod specifically states that Khalji had no intention of releasing Bhimsi. Alau-d-din is thus a much sterner and inherently treacherous figure in the Annals account, than he is in the medieval Rajasthani accounts.

And finally, Tod explicitly defines Khalji's bigotry as manifested in his destruction of Chitor's temples and monuments. This is a detail not present in any of the Rajasthani accounts. As I indicate in the previous chapter, a bardic account of the late-Mughal period such as the _Patnama_ does deploy the tropes of purity and pollution. These were the classic strategies of narratives consolidating caste and community identities. Thus in the _Patnama_ the _mleccha_ king deliberately pollutes the sanctity of the fortress and its sacred sites. I have also suggested that eighteenth-century accounts of the Padmini story in Rajasthan resorted to demonizing the emperor of Delhi, as they cast the Mevar kings as the defenders of 'hindu dharma.' There are significant differences, however, between these accounts and Tod's transformation. Even the _Patnama_ ascribes Khalji's pollution of Chitor to his cunning and strategy, rather than to religious bigotry. Nor do any of these accounts refer to the destruction of Chitor's temples and monuments by Khalji.

Tod's omission of Raghav Cetan, the Brahmin insider who defected from the Rajput king to the Sultan of Delhi, feeds into this communalization. Tod's medieval sources recognized the complexity of patronage networks for poets and scholars. Such networks cut across formal
religious affiliations. The Jain poems as well as the bardic Patnama describe the Khurasani emperor’s generous patronage of the Brahmin scholar. Tod’s exclusion of this figure may point once again to his greater reliance on his genealogical sources. But the omission of Raghav Cetan further contributes to communalizing the Padmini story. The two sides in the conflict are now presented as more politically autonomous and socially isolated from each other, in their presumed religious identities.

While I have been unable to locate Tod’s precise source for some of the elements in his version of the Padmini story, there remains a gap between the sources Tod cites, and his own retelling. This gap is most apparent in his depiction of Khalji; I would suggest that the increased hostility to the emperor of Delhi in eighteenth-century Mevar’s interpretation of its past, is recast by Tod in terms adopted by a whole host of colonial historians of the subcontinent – where conflict between the imperial authority in Delhi and the regional kingdom over political sovereignty is recast as a conflict between two civilizations, each defined in terms of a presumed homogeneity of religious beliefs, practices and identities.

Thus Khalji’s attributes of treachery, “hypocrisy” and “bigoted zeal” all add up to manifesting themselves ultimately, in that classic colonial trope of communalism, the destruction of temples by the Muslim invader. I would therefore suggest that Tod uses such associations to fit the Padmini story into a newly emphatic, overarching account of Rajput history, as the perpetual defence of the Hindu faith and kingdoms of Rajputana against a permanent enemy, the Muslim invader. Thus he also re-reads the third sack of Chitor by Akbar, along these lines:

The tija sakha Chitor ra, or ‘third sack of Chitor’ was marked by the most illiterate atrocity, for every monument spared by Ala or Bayazid was defaced . . . Ala’s assault was comparatively harmless, as the care of the fortress was assigned to a Hindu prince; and Bayazid had little time to fulfil this part of the Mosaic law, maintained with rigid severity by the followers of Islamism (Crooke 1995, 1:382, n.1).
Akbar is now re-situated in a line of descent from other successful enemies of the Rajputs. These foes are all now believed to have defaced and demolished temples and monuments out of religious bigotry:

He was long ranked with Shihabu-d-din, Ala, and other instruments of destruction, and with every just claim; and, like these, he constructed a Mimbar [Footnote: the pulpit or platform of the Islamite preachers] for the Koran from the altars of Eklinga (Crooke 1995, 1:377).

Shyamaldas, who wrote his history of Mevar in the late nineteenth century, after consulting local sources in Rajasthan, the Mughal Persian chronicles and Tod’s Annals, refers to the arrangements (bandobast) Akbar made for the upkeep of Chitor after his victory, but does not mention any deliberate destruction of buildings (1986, 2:83). Tod’s insistence on the desecration of temples by every Muslim invader of Chitor may belong however, with the trend in late seventeenth-century and eighteenth century Mevar, by which the Sisodia lineage “consciously cultivated Mevar’s reputation as the defender of Rajput tradition and Hindu dharma.”

Thus in the eighteenth century, the defence of the kingdom was recast: not only as the fulfillment of obligations to one’s overlord (swamidharma), but as the defence of the faith (hindu dhamma).

Tod’s re-reading of Chitor’s history takes over these assumptions uncritically. Thus he shares the Mevar ruling lineage’s symbolic investment in Chitor:

There is a sanctity in the very name of Chitor, which from the earliest times secured her defenders; and now, when threatened again by ‘the barbarian,’ such the inexplicable character of the Rajput, we find the heir of Surajmarr abandoning his new capital at Deolia, to pour out the few drops which yet circulated in his veins in defence of the abode of his fathers (Crooke 1995, 1:362).

He also records the story of Chitor’s patron goddess and her condition for protecting the fort: “The guardian goddess of the Sesodias had promised never to abandon the rock of her pride

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while a descendant of Bappa Rawal devoted himself to her service” (Crooke 1995, 1:377). And he recounts the reasons for Akbar’s victory and the final loss of Chitor:

No regal victim appeared to appease the Cybele of Chitor, and win her to retain its ‘kunguras’ [turrets] as her coronet. She fell! The charm was broken; the mysterious tie was severed for ever which connected Chitor with perpetuity of sway to the race of Guhilot . . . . With Udaï Singh fled . . . that opinion, which for ages esteemed her walls the sanctuary of the race, which encircled her with a halo of glory, as the palladium of the religion and the liberties of the Rajputs (Crooke 1995, 1:378).

These parallel re-figurations of threat to the kingdom as threat to its queen, and of defence of kingdom as defence of faith, seem to have entered the realm of common wisdom by the early nineteenth century. In 1825, Bishop Heber’s Rajput informant, Thakoor Myte Motee Ram, narrated a distinctive version of the events at Chitor. As the Rajput took Heber around the fortress, he pointed out to him the structure believed to have been Padmini’s palace:

One of these [palaces], which is seated on a rock in the midst of a large pool, was pointed out as the residence of a very beautiful Rannee, whose fame induced the Emperor Acbar to demand her in marriage, and, on her father’s refusal, to lay siege to Chittore, like another Agramant, in order to win the hand of the Eastern Angelica. After a long siege he succeeded in undermining a part of the wall, on which the princess in question persuaded all her countrywomen in the garrison to retire with her and her children into this palace, where they were, at their own desire, suffocated with the smoke of fuel heaped up in the lower apartments, only two remaining alive. The garrison then sallied out on the enemy, and all died fighting desperately, neither giving nor accepting quarter. The two female survivors of the carnage were found by Acbar, and given in marriage to two of his officers. I give this story as I heard it from the Thakoor Myte Motee Ram. 84

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In this oral tradition, the earlier conqueror Alau-d-din blends seamlessly into the later conqueror Akbar. All motives for such aggression are reduced to one founding cause, desire for the queen. And the outcome is foregone, the heroic death of the defenders after the mass immolation of their women. Heber’s account suggests that these were the essential elements defining the Padmini story in Mevar by the early nineteenth century.

Conclusion

James Tod came to the study of Rajput history with intellectual equipment acquired in late eighteenth-century Europe, and politics shaped by his East India Company employment. These dual allegiances generated their own contradictions in his understanding of India. An Orientalist frame of reference resolved many of these contradictions. Meanwhile, the Rajput kingdoms of Rajasthan were grappling with crisis as post-Mughal polities in the early nineteenth century. The intervention of the Marathas had intensified the fissures inherent in the Rajput political order. Eighteenth-century Rajput interpretations of their past history had already begun to show the effect of these new pressures. Tod shaped and implemented Company policy in these changed local conditions. His readings and reinterpretations of Rajput history emerged out of his collaboration with local Jain and bardic informants. In these altered circumstances, Tod’s Orientalist, Romantic and post-Enlightenment assumptions both converged with and reinterpreted Rajasthani historical traditions. His transformation of the Padmini legend exemplifies this dynamic clearly. In his recasting of kingship, feminine virtue and threats to the Rajput order, Tod re-articulated and reaffirmed the perspectives of the Mevar ruling lineage.