Architecture and Interiors

The Rāgamālā paintings depict Architecture as one of the major elements in these miniature paintings. Number of folios depict subjects in relation to this Architecture, which in earliest times was only a pavilion and continued till the end of the 19th century but gradually took a modified version of the same. Though not always these pavillons in early Rāgamālās depicted a bed and bolsters only, certain subjects demanded them to be retained in the long run too as bed chambers and the scene was enacted in front of this chamber or pavilion on a verandah. Many times the verandah itself had the bed in the open and the scenes such as Ars Amatorial subjects were enacted here. As stated earlier, this was surrounded by a garden lattices, steps leading to a water reservoir with carved edges of the reservoir, fountains, etc. They also contained ducks, fishes and lotuses which helped in representing the subject.

Architecture was depicted as a back cloth or a part of the landscapes, the closest being a palace behind the figures or distant views of palaces or shrines, e.g., high mounds topped up with temple as observed in Bīkanerī paintings of the late 17th century A.D. and the early 18th century A.D.

Hence we have in Rāgamālā paintings depiction of simple pavillions small shrines with Śikhara, royal palaces, residential buildings, temples, in regional styles, decorative motifs, supporting the architecture, furniture and
other utilitarian and decorative objects, cushions, swings, decorated beds, engraved vessels, etc.

There is no space for Architecture in the earliest Kalpasūtra Rāgamālā [1] (Pl. 1) but a few trees, objects such as throne and the swing are observed in these pictures. Rāginiś have been depicted on swings in these pictures. Throne like seats are extremely of a simple kind as in Fig. 40.

In the Sūri Rāgamālā of Ca. 1525 A.D. [2] (Pl. 2), the architecture consists of a pavilion with a single striped dome and smaller dome like projection next to the main one. In Rāga Baṅgāḷī for the first time the pavilion has a brick wall and the dome has no stripes but curvilinear design. Sleek pillars with design, a curtain always in the pavilion tied up, a bed with carved wooden legs and one or two bolsters with black pompons on the bed are depicted. In comparison to the Kalpasūtra set the bedspread and bolsters do not have much of a textile pattern, they are either plain or the three Būndī (three dots) design (considered as Bāndhaṇī). The curtains are also plain with two or four lines at the edges.

The architecture in the Bhairavī of possibly the mid 16th century A.D. [3] Caurapaṇcāśikā style has simple architecture. A small shrine with a Śivaliṅga, slender plain pillars and a roof with battlements and a small pavilion on the roof topped by a flat dome and a golden Kalaśa, a metal bracket and a Vyāla head (composite figure of elephant and crocodile)
meant for holding a Dhvaja\(^1\) are a part of the architecture. Here though a temple, it is decorated with printed curtains and tied with strings having black tassels. The Rāginī sits on an oval mat which is in tones of blue with circles and floral motifs (Pl. 3).

In the Rāgamālā of Gujarat Ca. 1575 A.D. \([4]\) in the Bhārat Kalā Bhavan, the architecture depicted is simple and consists of only the pavilions. They have slender pillars with motifs of various kinds - geometrical and decorative, brackets, gargoyles, niches with wine glasses and wine containers, earlier flattened domes and battlement designs were observed. Sometime elaborate and decadent survival of the ancient Indian Caitya architecture window motif appears\(^2\) (Pls. 5, 6 and 7).

There is a peculiar indication of a Chhatri probably of cloth with beautiful textile patterns right above wherever the scene is taking place on the top of the Nāyaka and Nāyika or in the room right above the bed or also in Rāginī Bhairavī above the Śivaliṅga. The interior of the pavilion like other earlier Rāgamālā paintings consists of a bed with a printed fabric, bolsters and curtains. Designed fabric curtains are depicted with border patterns in Rāga Nāṭṭa giving an impression of stage. We normally find only one pavilion in a miniature painting, but in Gaurī Rāginī we find two pavilions on either sides both consisting of beds and bolsters but the

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1 In Anahilawada Paṭan, there were one thousand such Havelis during the reign of Siddharāja Jaisimha. 'Political and Cultural History of Gujarat ' Vol. IV (Gujarati), p. 252, ed. Parikh, R.C. and Shastri, H.G.

2 Krishna, Anand, 'An Early Rāgamālā Series, Ars. Orientalis, p. 369
architecture of both is different, one has a Chhatra above the bed whereas other has curtains, Rāginī Paṭamaṅjarī has also two pavilions (Fig. 41).

In Lalita Rāginī a bed is depicted in the exterior and a Chhāṭra above it, a lady is shown reclining on the bed. In the pavilion is depicted a bed. Different types of beds are observed like Mālavkaśika depicts a peculiar type (Fig. 42).

Rāga Hindola also has a peculiar kind of a Jhūlā. It is the type commonly found in Gujarat with legs too but here the legs touch the ground so it looks more like a static kind of structure. The posture of the lady on the left who seems to be swinging the Jhūlā that gives it the appearance of a swing. Here above the swing also we find the Chhatra and also on both sides right above the ladies i.e. three Chhatras or canopy in one picture. Bilāval Rāginī has niches in the above chamber which contains water jugs and lamp holder. Here also there are two pavilions on both sides. In Dīpak Rāga the pavilions consist of stepped wall on which water pots are placed while the other does not have any furniture but a huge Chhatra with a large Cāmara. In Śrī Rāga also the lady reclines in the exterior instead of in the pavilion.

In the Rāgamālā of Gujarat Ca. 16th century A.D. [5] the architecture consists of a pavilion, with a striped dome and a Kalaśa. The wall or the pillar depicted is painted in different designs. Curtains are tied by tasselled strings. A tidy simple bed is the part of the interior with a printed bed spread and a bolster.
In the Būndī Rāgamālā of Cunāra [6] 1590 A.D. architecture has always been depicted white with its white domes prominently projecting the blue sky line. The architecture has an appearance of Haveli or palace types with pavilions and domes and golden Kalaśa. They depict more dimensions in their architecture than the earlier Rāgamālas. Dadoed walls in red, elephant headed brackets and the lamp stands also shaped like the elephant head are depicted. Water reservoir with fountains beautify the foreground. The waterpots have a drapery covered on it. Niches with vases and bright red curtain tied with strings have beautiful tassels, painted floor tiles and modified furniture are depicted. Various betel leaf boxes and Surāhī are observed.

The architecture in the Cāwaṇḍ Rāgamālā [8] consists of single or two storeyed pavilions with flattened domes, small pavilions on top (one or more) sleek pillars with bracketed Chajjā. Parapet and steps to climb, niche in the wall with vases. Rāgini Sāraṅg depicts a temple with Garbhagṛha (main sanctum) having a Śikhara - Āmalaka and a Kalaśa, the Sabhā Maṇḍap (assembly hall) having a flat striped dome with a Kalaśa. The temple has a Chatri with a Dhwaja and tassels are covered with few design patterns. Wooden carved door with square panels. Bed with bolsters, betel leaf boxes and water pots are depicted.

The Manley Rāgamālā [10] has architecture occupying nearly the complete page or a larger part of the page so that the interior is observed closely. The dimension and perspective has been observed here. It has
double pavilions with battlements and small domes, slender pillars, panelled doors and tiled flooring. Furnitures are not depicted but cushions and bed are arranged on the floor. Colourful curtains and banners are present and various utensils like wine container, betel box, etc. are depicted.

In the Pāḷī Rāgamāḷā [11] Mārwār, the architecture depicted is simple and suggestive, brick pattern, battlements, arches, plenty of design patterns on the wall are depicted.

The Boston Rāgamāḷā of Ca. 1640 A.D. Mālwā II [13] has architecture in white against a blue sky with bright colours in every division of the space viz., a door, a niche, a dome, etc., each have been filled in with a flat application of pure red, deep blue, pink or yellow. The architecture normally depicted is a pavilion on one side with a number of small pavilions clustered above the roof in various small and large sizes, striped domes in tints and tones of one colour, also red or yellow were used, simple indication of colours and applying of flat bright colour wherever necessary in depths or the inside part of the monument. Niches with jugs are indicated (Pl. 18). Among furnitures in Paṭamaṇjařī, Bhairavi, Lalit, Khambāvati and others a typical kind of a crude bed covered with a drapery and very thin carved legs as in Fig. 43 are indicated. At times the drapery has tiny frills at the bottom. The design on the bed spread is usually a single leaf pattern, at times cross motifs and a single polka dot with tiny white dots encircling it form the textile pattern. We find utensils like spittoons, bowls, flower pots or vases, betel leaf boxes, etc. It is extremely odd that
just like birds and animals placed in this set, in Lalit Rāgini the bed seems to have been forcibly tried to be accommodated in the architecture hence the placing is not comfortable or practically possible (Fig. 44).

The Mālwā II Ca. 1650 A.D. [14] Rāgamālā has the uniqueness in architecture and is the greatest clue in identifying the Mālwā paintings. Double storeyed pavilions with clustered domes on tiny architectural settings are its chief characteristics. Sometimes the architecture balances one side to the left or right of the picture and at times it forms a complete horizontal band from left border to right with each colour defining each part of the monument. The exterior is normally white which stands out against the black or deep blue background. Interiors, niches, brackets, borders are all painted in different colours each time. The domed shrines have golden Kalaśa and the pyramidal roofs also have a Kalaśa. The interiors are blank sometimes small brackets to support ceiling are present. The interior is plain with a single patch of colour - no niches, no carvings, nothing on the wall except flat wash of colours. The pavilions have a bed of a peculiar kind. The bed looks heavy with the printed fabric the tasselled bedspread and the tasselled bolster and the legs look too thin to support it. They are thin and carved. The tassels are black and red and the textile pattern of the bedspread is the four petalled floral. The bedspread design is the same all through the set (Fig. 45).

The swing is also of a rare kind seen in Rāgamālā paintings. It is long elongated kind, wooden and simplified.
The Gem Palace Rāgamālā [15] Mewār Ca 1650 A.D. has its architecture with domes, Kalaśa, the zharokhas and pillars with simple brackets. Every wall is ornamented with design patterns. Windows are with decorative Jālī patterns. The dominant colours are blue, red, yellow, orange, burnt siena, green, grey, black, gold and silver. These colours have been evenly used in the whole picture frame.

Architecture of Sirōhī Rāgamālā [19] [20] depicts delicacy, small flattened domes with Kalaśa, designed walls for niches with bottles which earlier contained bottles and cups but later became a frescoe pattern with cuts for the glasses and bottles and coloured flat glasses were inserted from behind which gave an appearance of coloured bottles (Pl. 32A). Painted walls with arch designs containing floral branches and painted panels with rhythmic floral patterns are depicted.

In the Āmer Rāgamālā [23] dated 1709 A.D., palaces are depicted. Painted walls with floral designs as observed in the Āmer palace (Pl. 34A) and various other palaces are observed in this set too. Red roofs, water reservoirs with fountains, garden with lattices, bespeak of strong Mughal influences. Walls with landscapes viewed through its doors is a common characteristic of Āmer and Bikāner paintings. Here the pavilion is in the centre of the composition than at the sides as in early Rāgamālās. In fact the old method of drawing a pavilion does not change, it becomes more modified with details and perfect architecture. Rectangular divisions are formed on the walls with frescoes on it. In Māru Rāginī a European style chair is depicted which has not been observed so far. Shāh Jehān period arches,
columns and a part of the decoration though in a Rajput manner is observed. The interior walls are decorated with design of niches with coloured bottles, the earlier concept of actually niches for bottles later became a design pattern. Half rolled up curtains with floral patterns are depicted. Ámer Rāgamālā and those of Jaipur normally depict the strip of architecture as a horizontal band from left frame to the right frame of the picture, with intricate paintings on the walls suggestive of arches and rectangles are observed even today in Jaipur. In a number of pictures, the palace behind appears similar to the Ámer palace.

In the Būndī /KōṭāCa. 1775 A.D. set [29] the band of architecture unlike the Jaipur Rāgamālā though is horizontal touches from one frame to the other horizontally, but more dimension in architecture is observed (Pl. 10) Bilāval Rāgīṇī. Here the scene takes place in a small Verandah wherein three sides of the architecture try to surround the picture and obviously the frame. Exactly at the centre of the picture is a Zarokha and two on both the sides. The picture is always balanced with the architecture. The monument is two storeyed with lower one having wooden pillar, niches containing bottles and cups of coloured glass. This is a peculiar characteristic style of architecture of Būndī /Kōṭā. There is depth and dimension in the architecture, dadoed walls. Pañcama appears done by a different artist or is of different set, the wall on right between the musicians and the couple is badly drawn and cannot be taken as done by the same hand that painted Desākh and Bhairava. Furniture of special interest is
the Diwan with three frills, bolsters on bed, carpets and tiled floor patterns are observed. The Rāga Hindola the word itself speaks the Hindola meaning a Jhūlā. This Rāga is associated with spring season, a season of merriment, a season of creation, a season for love and everything is in blooms and the whole atmosphere is beautiful. This swing which is the principal object which represents this Rāga depicts the object in the centre of the composition on which are seated the Lord with his consort. Several female attendants entertain him. Peacocks proudly exhibit themselves on this swing. This object, the swing, has been represented in different manners and styles in different schools. In the Kalpasūtra Rāgamālā [1] few of the Rāginīs are depicted on swings made up by tying ropes to two trees but in case of Rāginī Madhuri and Rāginī Siṅdhu Mallāri they seem to be seated on wooden swings.

In Rāginī Madhuri, the wooden swing is tied to two trees by a rope and the swing is a fine decorative wooden board. It has legs too along with hanging arrangements of the typical kinds found in Gujarat. It is depicted with carving and geometrical designs (Fig. 46). Similarly in Rāginī Siṅdhu Mallāri the swing is not shown tied to a tree but the strings of the swing go upwards perpendicular and parallel to each other giving an indication of its grip on a ceiling of a monument. This swing is beautifully carved or rather painted (Fig. 47).

The Mārwār 17th century A.D. [26] Rāgamālā depicts a simple Hindola slightly modified than that observed in the Kalpasūtra Rāgamālā. On the top bar, is a pulley attached through which passes two chains holding
the Hindola which is quite similar to the Kalpasūtra Rāgamālā kinds. It also has four legs of probably metal (Fig. 48). A very interesting Jhula is observed in the Pāli Rāgamālā of Mārwar [11]. However, it is a painted wooden Jhula with chains and two peacocks seated on it. Ladies with musical instruments or otherwise entertain Rāga Hindola (Fig. 49).

The Mālwa II [14] of Ca. 1650 A.D. depicts in Rāga Hindola the Jhula of golden yellow, wooden and painted with scroll patterns, the outlining of this Hindola is red giving the impression of orange colour instead of yellow. The Jhula is of the same kind as earlier ones except slightly elongated. The couple sitting on it also have an odd posture (Fig. 50).

In Rāga Hindola of Amber Ca. 1709 A.D. [23] is depicted as a tall Jhula of probably painted wood having standing lotuses with large stalks and a seat with a roof and cushions. The Hindola is decorated with garlands and creates a festive mood. In this Rāga, the Nayaka is seated on this Hindola playing Vīnā while a Chourie bearer flies the flywhisk, a lady moves the swing to and fro and the other three women hold flower stalks. A group of musicians are at the foreground (Fig. 51).

Rāga Hindola of the Mewār School Ca. 1650 A.D. depicts a simplified version like the Hindola of Mārwār 17th century A.D. [15] Gem Palace Rāgamālā. It is a red plain wooden Hindola with a cushioned seat (Pl. 24). Musicians, Nāyikās and the heroine with the Nayaka are depicted in an amorous scene.

The Rāgamālā of Būndī /KōṭāCa. 1775 A.D. [29] in which Rāga Hindola
depicts a wooden red Jhulā with elephant heads at the ends, a beautiful seat with bolsters and tassel. In the picture the Nayaka is seated while beautiful women surround him and black bees hover around him perhaps around the three lotuses in his crown.