An Outline History of Miniature Paintings with Special Reference to Rāgamālā Paintings

It is generally believed that history deals with the past and is a story of war and victory of kings and monarchs. This is a very wrong concept of history. It is a story of man from the savage stage to the stage of civilization. Prof. E.H. Carr, in his Travellian lectures delivered at the Cambridge University, says, “History is an unending dialogue between the present and the past”\(^1\). In English language the word History is derived from the Greek word ‘Istoria’. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the Greek word Istoria is derived from the root Id - to know. In the Greek language the meaning of the word history is curiosity, inquiry, investigation and research\(^2\).

History of Indian art is the history of Indian people. In paintings and sculptures, culture of the Indian people is very well mirrored. In the historical chronology of Indian painting, miniature painting covers the second phase. The first one being the wall painting phase in which we find the cave paintings of Ajañṭā, Ellorā, Pithalkorā, Bāgh, Bhim Baiṭhkā, Bādāmī, Sittanvāsala, Kañherī, Tānjāvur, Brhadeśvara, Jogimārā, and a number of frescoes found in the temples and royal palaces also. The second phase begins with the manuscript illustrations which were on a narrow horizontal script of palm leaf, less than three inches wide and one foot or more in length. The palm leaf being small, extremely tiny pictures had to be painted. It consisted of Jain, Buddhist and

\(^{1}\) Carr, E.H., What is History?, p.24

\(^{2}\) Gilbert J. Garraghan, A Guide to Historical Method, p.3
Hindu manuscripts and wooden book covers. Amongst these the Kalpasūtra and the Kālīkācāryya Kathā paintings are worth mentioning. These paintings were produced in abundance in Western India. It was called the Apabhramśa\(^3\) school with a continuous history of five centuries. The most notable features of these paintings are the angular faces in three quarter profile, pointed noses, eyes protruding beyond the facial line, plenty of accessory details and simple colour schemes with red as the dominating colour, representing the earlier paintings while the later ones show a lavish use of blue and gold. Tārānāṭh, a celebrated historian of Tibet mentions a name Śrīgadāhara, a painter of Western India, who had established a new style of painting. We come across the name of this Śrīgadāhara in other evidences from which we can say that though his birth place was Mārwār, he was patronized by Śilāditya, a Maitraka ruler of Valabhi in Saurāśṭra. This Maitraka King ruled from 590 A.D. to 615 A.D. which supplies an important clue to the statement of Tibetan historian Tāranāṭh\(^4\), In Eastern India, we find palm leaf and painted wooden book covers depicting the Pāla\(^5\) school of Bengal, the subject matter of which is Buddha and his early lives (9th to 12th century A.D.). They were prepared over three centuries at the monastic centres of Bengāl and Bihār, mainly Nālandā. The influence of Pāla tradition permeated the paintings of Nepal and Tibet in North India where they survive even today and they extended to South-East Asia especially Burmā, Siām and Jāvā. Simple composition characterized by sensuous lines and subdued tones

\(^3\) According to Shri Rai Kṛṣṇadāsa, Apabhramśa is intermediate between classic and the 16th-19th century A.D. styles, as the Apabhramśa dialect occupies an intermediate position between the classical Sanskrit and the neo-regional Indian languages. As a matter of fact this definition is more to the point than its author had imagined because the development of modern Indian languages was not uniform all over India but was much uniform in North Western and Central India.

\(^4\) Raval Ravishankar; Divya Bansari Gayaka (G), Introduction, p. 5

\(^5\) Named after the Pāla rulers of the North-East Indian dynasty which largely favoured the Buddhist religion in its mystic and magical term.
reflected the feeling of intense devotion that developed in the later period of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

In the 14th century A.D., when paper was imported from Persia, it had replaced the medium of palm leaf and the size increased to a more wider dimension. Along with paper at times cloth was also used especially when there was a demand for a more larger space. A large number of Pāla paintings, Vijñaptipatras and Pichhāis are evidence to this. With the use of paper, we find Persian influence on design too in the paintings. Around the 15th century A.D., an upright format begun to appear which was like the Persian book illustration style, and was bound together in a book form instead of loose folios. Painters of the Muslim court in India also used to have the same method but the earliest of Mughal does not predate the 15th century A.D. Persian style. Along with paper came the blue pigment Lapiz Lazuli, hence the paper and the blue pigment are a landmark in the history of miniature paintings. Gold colour which came in gradually was used according to the wealth of the Patron. Early subjects were Jain and later on subjects from Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Śāktism were added. We find illustrated pictures on Bāla Gopāla Stuti, Gīta Govīnda, Bhāgyata Purāṇa, Vasaṅtavilāsa, Rasikpriyā, Amaruśataka, Laur Caṅdā, Caurapañcāśikā, the Rāgamālā and many more. The painted Vasānta Vilāsa scroll (1451 A.D.) exhibits great lyrical charm illustrating as it does the glory and joy of spring. Another manuscript, the Caurapañcāśikā, depicting the love nuances of a poet and his mistress shows the freshness of colour harmony of early Rājasthāni paintings. In the later Rājasthāni and Pahāri miniature paintings the whole gamut of human culture and emotions are woven together. The

subjects evolve around stories of love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa with deep sentiments of love expressed in various moods like union and separation. Other subjects are like Śiva and Pārvati, Bāramāśā, Nāyaka-Nāyikābhedā, Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata, Bhāgavata Purāṇa and many others.

Classical art which belonged to the Indian temple was brought out with the establishment of the Muslim rule in India in the 12th century A.D. Muslim Sultans being extremely impressed by the architecture, painting, music and dance of India, inclined to introduce the same in their courts. The Muslim rulers also brought with them their own styles of architecture, poetry, music and painting and during the course of time there was a happy blending of these foreign and the Hindu elements.

One of these subjects, the Rāgamālā painting, is a unique kind of painting in which three forms of art are woven together viz. poetry, painting and music. The idea of associating music and painting is unique to Indian art. Each Rāga of music has the powerful associations with particular moods and sentiments. The paintings revolve around this theme express the highest aesthetic sentiment.

These Rāgamālā paintings have been found and painted in various parts of the country. A unique subject with a planned iconography painted in different parts of the country in the same manner (only a slight difference in one or two iconographies) is an astonishing fact. The various centres where they were found and painted are in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Central India, Pahārī regions and Deccan. The present work being concerned with Gujarat, Rājasthān and Central India, regions where they are found or painted in these

7 Rāgamālā paintings were gifted and also given as a part of the dowry and could be the reason of its spread and popularity
three states are as follows: In Gujarat, in Ahmedabad and Radhanpur and Udaipur, (Pali) some border regions; in Rajasthan the centres were Sirohi, Marwar, Mewar, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Amer Bundi, Kotá, Bikāner, Unīrā and Mālpura. In Central India, Mālwa Orchā, Bilāspur, Rāghugarh and Dātiā.

The geographical, historical and cultural background of these regions helps in better understanding of the Rāgamālā paintings.

Gujarat:

Gujarat is situated on the West coast of India. The boundaries are defined by the Arabian sea on the West, the state of Rajasthan to the North and North-East, Madhya Pradesh to the East and Mahārāṣṭra to the South and South-East. It has also a common border with West Pakistan at the North-Western fringe adjoining the Raṇḍ of Kutch.

It earned its name from the foreign tribe Gurjaras (approximately during the thirteenth century A.D.). Earlier, Gujarat was divided into four geographical divisions: Ānarthā, Surāṣṭra, Lātā and Aparānta. During the historical period the geographical boundaries of Gujarat were changed from time to time. It was during the Solaṅkī period that Gujarat extended her boundaries upto Rajasthan and Central India. After bifurcation of the bilingual state of Bombay, Gujarat was separated on the 1st May, 1960.

The Gujarat's main land consists of river valleys of Sābarmatī, Mahī, Nar- madā and Tāpti, flowing from East to West and converging towards the Gulf of Cambay.

A few Rāgamālās are found in this region, one or two painted in the region and others assumed to have been painted here, we can say this on the basis

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8 The nationality of the Gurjar tribe is a mute point in the history of Gujarat, whether they were a foreign tribe or originally belonged to the land of Bhīlamāla, is not still clear.
of stylization and other known facts. Amongst these the oldest or the earliest found Rāgamalā of Ca. 1475 A.D. [1] formerly in the collection of Jain Ācārya Jaysimhasūri, (Pl. 1) Ahmedabad, the present whereabouts unknown consists of six labelled Rāgas and thirtysix Rāginis as border designs on left and right side of the Kalpasūtra paintings.

Another Rāgamalā Ca. 1525-70 A.D., of which the region is uncertain: Uttar Pradesh, Delhi or Rajasthan, is a transitional set from Gujarat to Rājasthāni style. It is called the Sūri Rāgamalā because it formerly belonged to Ācārya late Jain Muni Vijayendra Sūri, (Pl 2) [2] present whereabouts are unknown. A Rāginī folio depicting Bhairavī - of mid-16th century A.D. (Pl. 3) [3] in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, J.C. French collection - is an important folio of a set whose rest of the folios and its whereabouts are unknown. It belongs to the Caurapañcāsikā style.

The second Rāgamalā that we come across possibly of this region is of Ca. 1575 A.D. in Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras (Pls. 4, 5,6 and7) [4]. All the folios are intact, though no colophon is available.

The present whereabouts of this Rāgamalā is also unknown. It belongs probably to the transition period of 17th century A.D. [10]. Nine folios of this were published by Sārābhāi [5].

Yet another set which could belong to the border region of Gujarat and

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10 Khandalawala, K., ‘Leaves from Rājasthān’, Marg, Vol. IV, No.3
11 Nawab, Sārābhāi, ‘Masterpieces of Kalpasūtra Paintings
Rajasthan\textsuperscript{12} is a dated Rāgamālā of V.S. 1665 (=1608-9 A.D.) (Pl. 13) \cite{ShahUma9} of which three folios are in the Baroda Museum.

Another Rāgamālā belonging to Rādhanpur\textsuperscript{13} dated V.S. 1896 (= 1839 A.D.) (Pl. 39) \cite{ParimooRatan} is in the collection of Amit Ambalal of Ahmedabad. It consists of 84 paintings.

In a house of Rajendra Sārābhāī Nawāb situated in Shāmlā-ni-Pole, Ahmedabad, (Pl. 40) are found a few Rāga Rāginī pictures along with Dholā Māru and others painted on the walls. This building was purchased from a descendent of a Kānkrollī Vaiṣṇava sect.

Rajasthan

Rajasthan is one of the biggest states of India. The Western and the Northern boundaries are marked by the Eastern boundary of West Pakistan, the rest of the boundary in the North, East and South is marked by other states of India. In the North and North-East it is bordered by Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, in the East and the South-East by Madhya Pradesh and in the South-West by Gujarat. Right from the historical period it was controlled and ruled predominantly by Rājput princes. Locally it was known as Rajwāḍā which later came to be designated as Raet'nama and subsequently during the British period came to be known as Rājputānā. Before 1956 A.D., Rajasthan consisted of nineteen princely states and after the state reorganization act of 1956 A.D. came to be known as Rajasthan. These Rājasthānī rulers were called Rājputs. Rājputs


\textsuperscript{13} Parimoo Ratan, 'Dated Rāgamālā from Rādhanpur', JOI, Vol. XXX, No. 3-4
belonged to the martial tribe of Kṣatriyās, who are well known for their patriotism. Rajasthan is a land of deserts and dust. However, forests, hills full of trees, rivers and water reservoirs are well depicted in the paintings.

The various states of Rajasthan were ruled by a particular hereditary Rājput family and the ones who denied the throne, received a land grant\textsuperscript{14} (e.g. a Thikānā, similar to a barony) within the family domains, although they could attempt to claim domains elsewhere and set up a new state. The rulers of these states patronized painters, but by the 18th century A.D. anyone with a land and title felt it obligatory to employ painters. Hence a number of styles and substYLES were produced.

In Rajasthan the various regions where we find the schools of Rāgamālā paintings are: Sīrohī, Mārwār, Pāli, Mēwār, Jaipur, Āmer, Buṅḍī, Koṭā, Bīkāner, Mālpura and Uniāra. The political and cultural background of these states will be helpful in understanding the Rāgamālā paintings.

Udaipur

The most picturesque lake city Udaipur popularly known as the “City of Sunrise” is the largest town in Aravalli region. It is located West of Udaisāgār lake in the Aravalli depression. The city is situated at an elevation of 577 m. on the slopes of a low lying ridge overlooking the waters of Pichholā lake.

The political history of Udaipur remained disturbed with the invasions of the muslim rulers of Delhi. The rulers of Udaipur have sacrificed much for their motherland. They all belonged to the solar dynasty. They have patronized

\textsuperscript{14} Beach M. Cleveland, ‘Rajput Painting of Buṅḍī and Koṭā’, p.3.
musicians, painters and dancers in their courts. History proves that in the
beginning of the 18th century A.D., Udaipur witnessed a great epoch in the
history of Rājasthānī painting. The painters of Udaipur school were inspired
by the Vallabha sect of Vaiṣṇavism hence Kṛṣṇa theme remained important
and popular with the painters. They have depicted tender emotions of Bhakti
Śrīgāra. In the pictures of Udaipur school, incidents from the works of Bihārī
Satsai, Pañcataṅtra, Kādambarī, Prthvirājarāso, Gītagovīnda, Rasikpriyā of
Keśavdāsa, Kavipriyā, Madhumālatī, Naṭa-Damayanti and others are depicted.
Painters of Udaipur have illustrated each and every Doha of Bihārī.

All these paintings are preserved in the Saraswati Bhanḍāra, Udaipur. The
painted manuscripts preserved in these Bhanḍāras have contributed to the rich­ness of Rājasthānī culture in particular and Indian culture in general. In the
depiction of the beauty of female figure, Udaipur painters have expressed del­icate emotions of women's heart. Birds and animals, seasons and festivals of
Rajasthan in their paintings have been depicted. The synchronization of line
and colour is highly attractive and impressive.

Sirohī

Sirohī is situated on the South-West of Rajasthan. It is bounded on the
North-East and West by Jodhpur, on the South by Pālanpur, Dāntā and Iḍar;
and on the East by Udaipur. The region consists of hills and rocky ranges, the
main feature is Mount Ābu. The chiefs of Sirohī are Deora Rājputs, a branch
of the famous Chauhān clan which witnessed the last Hindu King of Ajmer,
Prthvirāja, a great patriot. The town is said to take its name from Saranwā
hill, on the Western slope of which it stands. It was built by Rao Sains Mal
about 1425 A.D. taking the place of the old capital, a little farther to the East, which was abandoned as the site was found unhealthy.  

Number of Rāgamālās from Sirohi is found scattered in various collections out of which two sets dated 1680 A.D. in the collection of Saṅgrām Sinha of Navalagarh have been discussed (Pl. 28-32) [19] [20].

Mārwār

Mārwār is a district in Rajasthan. It is a corruption of Maru-wār, classically Marusthala or Marusthān, also called Marudeśa, whence is derived the unintelligible Mardes of the early Muhammadan writers. The word means the ‘region of death’ and hence is applied to a desert. This is the description given by Abul Fazl in 1582 A.D.  

Pāli (or Mārwār Pāli)

Pāli is a district of Rajasthan with a headquarter of the same name. It is on the banks of the river Bāndī and on the Jodhpur-Bikaner railway. Pāli was held by a community of Brāhmīns in grant from the Paramāra and Parihārā Rājputs till the advent of the Rāthors from Kanauj (about 1212 A.D.) when Rao Sīāhji became its master.


An interesting set discussed here is a folk style set of Ca. 1750 in the National

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15 Imperial Gazetter of India, Vol. XXIII, p.28-37
16 Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. XVII, p. 213
Mewār

Mewār is bounded on the North by Ajmer, on the North-East by Jaipur and Bundi, on the East it touches Koṭā and an outlying district of Toṅk, but the greater part of this boundary is formed by Central India. To the South are several states belonging to either Central India or Bombay Presidency while on the West the Arāvalli Hill separate it from Sirohi and Jodhpur\(^{17}\).

The rulers of Mewār, Rāṇā Sangramśimha, Jagatśimha and Harisimha patronized painting activity and established workshops. The first known Mewār Rāgamālā is the Cāwāṇḍ Rāgamālā of 1605 A.D. (Pl. 12) [9]. 26 folios out of 42 survive among scattered collections. It is painted by the known painter Nisāradi.


Another important and extremely beautiful set in all aspects is the so called Gem Palace Rāgamālā of Mewār Ca. 1650 A.D. [15] in the National Museum, New Delhi (Pls. 21, 22, 23 and 24).

Jodhpur

Jodhpur remained an important city of political and cultural activities. The

\(^{17}\) Imperial Gazetteer of India Vol. XVII, p. 312
old city is surrounded at present by a partly broken wall. It was founded in 1458 A.D. by Rao Jodhā, the head of the Rathore clan of Rājputs. The fort is built on an isolated rock eminence and dominates the city. During the rule of various rulers of Jodhpur, poetry, painting and music were patronized. The names of the important artists are Māladeva, Yaswantsimha, Ajitasimha, Gajasimha, Abhaysimha and Mansimha. During the rule of Ajitasimha, art of painting reached its zenith. Eminent painters of the school were Bhāti Kishandāsa, Bhāti Śivdāsa and Bhāti Devadāsa.

In the first half of the 18th century A.D. paintings in Jodhpur were in the Mughal style and between 1760 and 1780 A.D., the Mughal style disappeared and Rājput elements became prominent in the paintings. They were characterized by linear rhythm and glowing colours. The change came during the rule of Bijaisimha (1753-93 A.D.). The late Jodhpur style which can be regarded as the genuine product of the state reached its climax in the reign Mansimha (1803-43 A.D.) characterized by garish colours with abundance of yellow, blue and green.

Āmer

Āmer was the capital of Kachhawāhas. It is situated at a distance of ten miles from Jaipur, the new city. Jaisimha the ‘Mirzā Rājā’ of Āmer had a distinguished position at the Mughal court serving under his long reign under three emperors Jehāngīr, Shāh Jāhan and Aurrāngzeb. The first Rāgamālā found to be ascribed to Āmer is Ca. 1640 A.D. in the Baroda Museum18, may have been painted during his reign.

18 Ca. 1640 A.D. in the Baroda Museum. Acc. No. 59-41 to 35, 12 folios surviving. It is cruder in comparison to other sets.
The only dated Rāgamālā of Āmer tradition is of 1709 A.D. [23]. All the Rāgamālās were painted in the middle of the 17th century A.D. and not later than 1709 A.D.¹⁹.

The Rāgamālās of Āmer have a different iconography from those of the Rājasthānī tradition as they are arranged in the order of Hanuman’s tradition. The Rāgamālās are described by the poet Paida, listing the class, proper time of performance and their explanation.

Sawai Jaisimha had also close association with the court of Imperial Mughals. His and also Rāmsimha’s name is often associated with patronizing art and craft. During the rule of Shāh Jāhān and Aurāngzeb, the impact was more on the paintings as Mughal artists were retrenched and had reached Rājput courts at the end of the 17th and the early 18th century A.D.

Jaipur

Jaipur is the regional centre and capital of the state, known as the pink city. The name Jaipur comes from its ruler, Jaisimha II, popularly as Sawai Jaisimha who founded it in 1727 A.D. and shifted the capital from Amber. It is located as an outlier of the Arāvallī plain. The city is surrounded on all sides except the South by rugged hills. Most of the hill tops are covered with forts and towers. Sawai Jaisimha was a great admirer of astronomy, poetry, painting and music. He invited many scholars and artists from other parts of the country and patronized them in his court. The paintings prepared during his rule had a Mughal influence. He also inspired wall paintings which are preserved today

¹⁹ Āmer dated Samvat 1766 (1709 A.D.) Art Collection, Kānkroff
in the Royal Palace of Jaipur. Art of painting reached its zenith during the
time of Pratāpsimha who ruled up to 1860 A.D. He was himself a good poet
and a connoisseur of painting. He composed devotional poems in the name
of Vṛjanidhi, which are sung even today. He belonged to the Puṣṭī sect of
Vallabha and was a fervent devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Besides Rāgamālas various
other subjects were also painted during his reign. In these paintings, red,
yellow, green, golden and silver colours are used. Some important painters of
this school were Sāhilarāma, Lālanand, Lachchamanadāsa, Hukumcānd, Muṛli,
Gaṅgābakṣa, Mannālāl and Rāmcāndra.

Besides miniature paintings, frescoes are also found near and around Jaipur
and Amber. Among the various subjects, Rāgamālas was also a subject of
interest of the fresco painters or the patrons. Large number of frescoes are
found in Galtā (Jaipur), the Āmer fort, in the Chhātris around Āmer, in Bairāta
Bhaopura, etc. Rāgamālas of Jaipur belong to the 18th and 19th century A.D.
and in comparison to other schools the quantity of sets found painted at Jaipur
is extremely high. They are in various collections and are quite monotonous
except for a few exceptions and peculiarities.

The Rāgamālā style of Jaipur was based on the Rājasthānī tradition and was
influenced by Mewār, Mārwār, Mālwā and Bikāner. The Jaipur 19th century
A.D. has a monotonous repetition of Jaipur and Amber styles.

Though a large number of sets of Jaipur are found, the only dated sets of
the 18th century A.D. is the 1765 A.D. [24] (Pl. 35) in Raṇathāṁbhhor with a
colophon of the Kedār Rāginī also mentioning the artist’s name as Soji Rām.
Hence we find a production of a large number of Rāgamālās during the period of two centuries i.e. 17th and 18th century A.D. in Jaipur, the quality of work ranging from simple folk to fine and delicate. The size, inscriptions and iconography remain the same, they were obviously not done in a single studio, the quality of work produced is a judgement to this. Groups of artists in one studio and groups of artists in another studio may be the result of this mass production. One clue to the interest in this subject and its development is that there are historical evidences that conferences of musical experts were occasionally arranged and that they functioned as standard setting institutions of Hindustani music. Saṅgītāsāra, compiled by Jaisīṃha's grandson, Mahārājā Pratāpsīṃha (1779-1804 A.D.) is the record of such a conference. The standards it produced, for Rāgamālā iconographies are a curious mixture of Rājasthānī and Amer traditions, for the painting style of Jaipur in 19th century A.D. 20 It is surprising that, the style of these Rāgamālās of Jaipur were similar and monotonous but they never effected the paintings with other subjects. The paintings found in Jaipur 19th century A.D. (early 19th century A.D. a number of Rāgamālās are found) have the figures occupying more space, and architecture and landscape is reduced to simplified and minimum detail.

Bundī

Bundī is located 39 kms. West of Koṭā. The city is situated on a narrow and picturesque gorge. These small kingdoms of Bundī and Koṭā were ruled by the cousins of different branches of the Hārā clan, offshoots of the Chauhān dynasty. The state was established during the year V.S. 1368 by Rao Devaji. 20

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20 Klaus Ebling, Rāgamālā painting, p. 96
During the reign of Chattar Sāl (1631-1659 A.D.) is found the first evidence of painting in Buṇḍī. Later on all the rulers of Buṇḍī particularly Rāmāsimha (1312 A.D.) who flourished during the year V.S. 1821 (1765 A.D.) encouraged painting, poetry and music. He himself was a great painter and encouraged painters to paint pictures on various themes. Later on various other rulers also patronized artists and contributed to enrich the fine arts of Buṇḍī. In the paintings of Buṇḍī, we observe the complete development of Rājasthānī culture. Along with various other subjects a large number of Rāgamālas were also painted in this region. These pictures reflect the rich flora and fauna of the region. Some important painters of these schools were Surajana, Ahmedali, Rāmalāl, Sedurām and Mannā.

The Cunar Rāgamāla is the earliest Buṇḍī style work dated Hizari 999 (1590-1 A.D.) [6] (Pls. 9, 10 and 10A). Though this was painted in Cunar, near Benaras, it is the earliest Buṇḍī set on which later Rāgamālas of Buṇḍī were copied. The characteristics of the Buṇḍī Rāgamālas were vertical format and the proportion of the pages, as well as the border decorations of arabesques and cartouches directly reflect Mughal practice. The majority of the artists in the Buṇḍī Kōṭā of influence copied and recopied, one set of compositions and their Rāgamālas remained virtually unchanged in layout over a period of at least 200 years.

Akbar never imposed his Islamic system on the predominantly Hindu country, but extended his inheritance by alliances with various regional Rājput leaders and in allegiance received Buṇḍī in 1569 A.D. which became until mid-18th century A.D. a leading Mughal stronghold. Surjansimha when conferred with
the title of Raoraja was gifted a residence in Benaras and in 1576 A.D. was granted the district of Cunar near Benaras as his Jagir (land allotment). His son, Bhujasiinha, (1585-1607 A.D.) succeeded him. His face can be identified in many miniature paintings and also Rāgamālas. For around two centuries, Buṇḍī Rāgamālas remained the same in its iconography and compositions. All the thirty six folios were used for copying or tracing. The tracing was done through Čārbās. This term has been explained in the 3rd chapter. Sometimes interesting effects were produced by using the Čarbas upside down wherein the picture looked very different from the original.

One of the important sets dated 1725 A.D. [25] (Pl. 36) scattered in various collections, viz., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Doriswiener, New York; Edwin Binney, III; Col. Tandon, Secunderabad; Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Calcutta; Raghuraj Simha, Ajmer, etc. were divided into small sections for sale and the whereabouts of many of them are unknown. They originally belonged to the former Thākur of Dilwārā Aksāh Simha.

A dated 1768 A.D. [28] of Kōṭā is in collection of Sarasvati Bhāndār Library, Udaipur (Pl. 36). There are 251 folios in the set and the colophon is on 249.

Another important set of Buṇḍī and Kōṭā is of Ca. 1775 A.D. [29] set spread over two museums, the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford and the National Museum, New Delhi.

Considering the history of Buṇḍī during the 18th century A.D., after 1748 A.D., there was hardly any genuine work, which can be contributed to the State and after this date the paintings were in a highly conservative style. Of the many
work traditionally ascribed to Bundi during this period, a large group can now with even greater reason be placed at Kota, while others are indisputably from Uniarā.21

Kota

Kota is located on the left bank of the Cambala river, at the junction of an alluvial flat land, drained by the Cambala, Kali, Sind and Parbatī rivers and flat sandstone plateau of Kota and Chittorgarh. The kingdom of Kota was established by King Madhavsimhaji during V.S. 1625 (1569 A.D.). He was the second son of King Ratansimha of Bundi. This has laid historians to accept common royal dynasty of Bundi and Kota. It is interesting to note here that though Kota is very near to Bundi, there is a considerable difference in its paintings. The royal rulers of Kota patronized poets, painters, musicians and dancers. In the paintings of Kota style we observe impact of Vallabha sect of Vaishnavism. Painters have painted pictures of Gonsais and their luxuries of life. Art historians say that paintings of Kota style are of lower quality but they are thousands in number, the main painters of this style are Laksminārayaṇa, Raghunātha and Govindrāma. Among the rulers of Kota Durjana Sālaṇi and Bhīmsimhaji were the great patrons of painting. Painters have depicted these royal kings offering services to Śrīnāthji. The Pichwai paintings of Kota are more popular in Rājasthānī paintings.

Though Kota was a small state it has contributed much to the Rājasthānī paintings. Kota remained an important centre of painting in the history of Rājasthānī paintings. During the span of 50 years i.e. from V.S. 1800 (1744

21 Beach M. Cleveland, 'Paintings from Bundi and Kota', p. 20
A.D.) to V.S. 1950 (1894 A.D.) it has contributed much to the art of painting. In the Kōṭā style of painting, depiction of women with her various moods is noteworthy. It is interesting to note here that various limbs and sublimbs described in the literature are depicted in the same manner in the paintings of Kōṭā style. The painters of Kōṭā styles have painted various festivals of Rajasthan particularly Holi and Diwali. They have echoed religious beliefs and practices of village folk of Kōṭā.

A Rāgamālā Ca. 1660 A.D. [16] of Kōṭā could be the first known Rāgamālā from the newly formed state of Kōṭā, formerly part of the Buṇḍī state. They are in scattered collection in India and abroad.

One of the important sets of Buṇḍī school painted at Kōṭā is dated 1768 A.D. Saṁvat 1825, Śaka 1690 in the village of Naṇḍa [28]. It is in the collection of Saraswāt Bhaṇḍār, Udaipur. It is the largest known set and consists of 251 folios, 32 folios have been missing from this set.

Uniārā

Uniārā is surrounded by Buṇḍī on the South, Kōṭā to the East, Jaipur to the North-West. It has a number of historical forts and palaces. During monsoon it gets isolated from other regions. Descendants of Uniārā family can be traced to King Udaykaraṇa of Āmer Ca. 1367-88 A.D. through his son Niwāi whose grandson Nāruji has been given the name after the clan called Nārukā; the rulers of Alwar and Uniārā. They had alliance with Mughals at an early date. The Narukas of Uniārā a smaller branch of the Kaccāwā dynasty of Amber (Jaipur) though remained close to Jaipur were independent from their parent
When the Marathas attacked Rajasthan, Uniārā and Jaipur relations became closer, between 1752 A.D. and 1755 A.D. the main aim of Marathās was to capture the Ranathāmbhor fort, hence they swept down on whole of Jaipur and burnt Uniārā. Madhāosimha, the then ruler of Jaipur, did not help Uniārā. When Kunvar Sardārsimha of Uniārā died (1777 A.D.), he left behind innumerable portraits and paintings.

During the reign of Bisensiṁha, Sardārsimha’s successor, Uniārā paintings were influenced by Jaipur style to a large extent, earlier they were related to Buṇḍī. The famous painter of Uniārā was Mira Bagas and we find a large number of portraits of Sardārsimha done by this painter. In the palace various paintings of subjects like Bāramāsā, Rāgāmālā, portraits of Viṣṇu Avatāra etc. are painted. There are also various miniature paintings on themes of Padma Purāṇa, Rāmāyaṇa, Bhāgavata Purāṇa and portraits of rulers painted in Uniārā.

In a recent exhibition arranged in February 1994 at National Museum, New Delhi, on Rāgāmālā paintings titled ‘Music in Art’ along with various other schools, certain Rāgāmālās stated as belonging to the Uniārā school were also displayed. The sets of these displayed folios have been identified by Klaus Ebling and Milo Cleveland Beach as Buṇḍī/Kōṭā. At this exhibition at one place the folios of the same set are mentioned as Uniārā and another folio of

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22 It is known by the inscribed portraits in the collection of Kunwar Sangrāmsimha of Nawalgah
23 Beach M. Cleveland, Rājput painting at Buṇḍī and Kōṭā, p. 27
24 Ebling Klaus, Rāgāmālā Painting, 103, 105
25 Milo Cleveland Beach, 'Rajput paintings of Buṇḍī and Kōṭā.'
the same set is stated as of Kota school.

Since these sets are not dated, nor they have a colophon one can not be precise. The stylization, figure types, border designs of Bundi, Kota and Uniara happen to be quite close to each other.

Bikaner

Bikaner is located beyond the extensive deposits of sand dunes in the West of the Thar desert and serves as a regional centre. The present city was founded by Rao Bikaji in 1488 A.D. after founding the former Bikaner state in 1465 A.D. The fort dominates the city which has many buildings in red and yellow sandstones.

Rulers like Raja Rajasimha, Karnasimha, Kalyanamala encouraged the art of painting. Painters have painted the Rasikpriya, illustrations on Bhakti Srngara and also Ragamala. Some important painters of this school were Ali Raza, Ruknuddin, Rahim, Ali Muhammad, Natheer, Morad and Shah Muhammad.

A Bikaner Ragamala set [32] 19th century A.D. in the Baroda museum is also been discussed here.

Malpura

Malpura is a town of Jaipur district about 55 miles South-West of Jaipur city.

The only known Ragamala found is dated 1756 A.D. [27] in scattered collections of Edwin Binney, Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Klaus Ebling’s collection, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Victoria and Albert
Central India

Central India is bounded on the North by the river Cañbal, on the East by the Jamna and the South by the Narmadā. Its Western and Eastern parts were known as Mālwā and Buñdelkhaṇḍ - the latter comprising Dāṭiā and Orchhā, the former Gwālier, Indore, Ujjain, Māṇḍu and Dhār. In the eighth century A.D. Mālwā was ruled by Rājputs, from the thirteenth to fifteenth century A.D. by Muslim Turks and from 1535 A.D. till 1561 A.D. by Paṭhlāns. From then until the eighteenth century A.D. Mughal governors held charge except when Marāṭhā plunderers established rival governments. During these centuries, the prime unit was the town or court yet due to one important circumstance, the region was destined to play a vital role in Indian painting. Lying in the centre of India, it served from 1500 A.D. onwards as a blender and originator of styles 26. The chief rivers on the banks of which various cultures flourished from the prehistoric times are: Cañbal, Beṭwā, Narmadā, Soṇa, Tāptī and Mahīnadī. The mountain ranges, rivers and thick forests along with climatic conditions were responsible for the rich flora and fauna found in this part of the country. The physical environment has also its impact on the development of the cultural pattern of this region 27.

Painted rock shelters have been found in prehistoric times in the districts of Sihore, Bhopāl, Rāisen, Hoshangābād and Sāgar. Several hundred rock shelters having interesting paintings in them and have been discovered near Bhānpurā

26 Archer, W.G., 'Central Indian Painting', p. 2
27 Bajpai, K.D., 'History and culture of Madhya Pradesh', p.1-2
in the Maṇḍasaur district and other parts of the Cambal valley. In Eastern parts of Madhya Pradesh, rock paintings have been found in the Raigarh and Ambikāpur districts.

Mālwā

Mālwā is a high level region forming the greater part of Western section of Central India which is one of the most fertile and habitable parts of the peninsula, has figured prominently in the ancient and medievalesval periods of Indian history. The name of the tract, more correct Mālava was originally the designation of a tribe which is mentioned in the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa.

The Mālava tribe inaugurated an era which has long been in use among Hindus. North of Narbada and is known as the Vikrama Saṁvat, the initial year corresponding to 57 B.C. Literary, epigraphic and numismatic sources speak much of this tribe. According to Dr. D.R. Bhaṇḍārkar, “There are three stages in their history. Their ancient location is found in the Punjab where they opposed the invading Alexander. The Greek writers knew them as Malloi. Later on they migrated to the South of Rājputānā near about the Jaipur state, for their coins have been found just over here”.

Mālwā comprises of districts of Dhar, Jhabua, Ratlām, Dewās, Indore, Ujjain, Maṇḍasore, Sihore, Shajapur, Rāisen and Vidiśā. It has three rivers, the Cambal, Beṭwā and Narmadā. To the North and North-West of this plateau are the Arāvalli hills which is the oldest mountain system on the globe. To the

29 Bhandarker, D.R., Carmichael Lectures, 1918, p. 12
South it is bounded by the Vindhyas, South of the Vindhyas and roughly parallel with them are Sātpura mountains. The Vindhyas and the Sātpuras together form the backbone of Central India. To the North-West of Mālwa are the Buṇḍī hills. The Mālwa plateau has on the Northern side approaching the Gaṅgā valley with Bundelkhand on its East and Hadauṭī (Rajasthan) on the West. In fact Buṇḍīlī, Haḍauṭī and Mālwi cultures coalesce in Vidiśā along the Beṭwā. This geographical location has contributed to the political, economic and cultural importance of Mālwa by its linking of the Western coast and its maritime trade with the Gangetic India, and even Punjab. Mālwa region was rich in its agricultural and forest products, hence it rose to importance and became a reputed cradle land of mighty kingdoms and cultural centres. Since the very early period Mālwa was considered a treasure house of poetry, fine arts, and culture as well as the seat of the legendary Vikramādityā, the celebrated ideal monarch. The paintings found in the Bāgh caves depict Buddha, Bodhisattva and scenes from Jātaka stories. In Madanpur on the ceiling of a temple of 12th century A.D. are found paintings in the Apabhraṃśā style (the Western Indian) depicting scenes from Paṇcataṭṭātra. Though Mālwa lies outside Rajasthan, it is closely connected historically and culturally with it. Mālwa’s Rāgamālā follows the Rājasthānī tradition and evidences lead us to surmise that the iconographies may have been taken from Mālwa. A number of Rāgamālās have been painted at Mālwa and amongst the earliest Mālwa that we come across is the Ca. 1600 A.D. [7] Rāgamālā. This set is scattered in various collections, viz., S.C. Welch, Bhārat Kalā Bhavan, etc. of which a few folios have been published (Pl. 11).

One of the important sets is the so-called Boston Museum Rāgamālā Ca. 1640 A.D. [13] scattered in various collections viz. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston,
Metropolitan Museum, New York, British Museum, London; Free Gallery, Wash­ington, D.C.; Cleveland Museum of Art, Detroit Institute of Art. It is an ex­tremely beautiful set (Pl. 18).

In the Bharat Kala Bhavan collection is a Ca. 1650 A.D. Mālwa([14] (Pls. 19 and 20). This is the earliest complete Rāgamālā on record, inscribed on the reverse a poem in Braj dialect. A dated set of Mālwa A 1680 A.D. [17] (Narasimhagarh) is of great importance and has been discussed by scholars continuously (Pl. 25). Yet another set of Mālwa Ca. 1680 A.D. in the Bharat Kala Bhavan [18] is the largest known set of Mālwa. It is considered as Mālwa III by scholars for convenience (Pls. 26 and 27).

Dātiā

Dātiā is in Central India, the territory is much divided by intervening parts of Gwālior and other states, the main section being bordered on the North by portions of Gwālior and the district of Jālaun; on the South by Gwālior and Jhānsi district, on the East by Samthār and Jhānsi districts, and on the West by Gwālior. Dātiā lies in the level country between the Sind and Beṭwā rivers. The Sind and its tributary the Pahūj are the only important streams. The Dātiā chiefs are Buṇdelā Rājputs of the Orcchā house. In 1626 A.D. Bīrsimha Deo of Orcchā granted Dātiā to his son Bhagwān Rao. The original territory was considerably extended both by force of arms and by grants from the Delhi emperors till the region embraced most of the country between the Caṁbal on the North and Beṭwā and Sind on the East and the West. Bhagwān Rao died in 1656 A.D. and was succeeded by his son Subhākaraṇa, who had served with distinction under the Mughal emperor in Balkh and Badakṣāna, during
the expeditions of 1646-53 A.D.

The Dātiā town is situated 16 miles from the latter place31. Klaus Ebling32 mentions a set as belonging to Dātiā Ca. 1800 A.D. [30] in private collection not mentioned. It has 22 folios of a 86 folio Rāgamālā. The back of the paintings are inscribed with verses in Braj dialect.

Dātiā mural is the earliest known Rāgamālā mural in the tempera medium. It is in Birsimha Dev's palace, Dātiā, Buṇdelkhāṇḍ. Nothing clearly remains to be identified today as it is deteriorated badly. Klaus Ebling33 has given drawings suggesting their compositions.

Raghugarh

Lālsirīnha, the son of Gharib Dāsa, a ranking noble in Akbar's court founded Raghugarh. Rājā Balabhadrasirīnha of Raghugarh was a keen patron of painting. A number of paintings are evidence to this fact. All the Rāgamālā paintings attributable to Raghugarh follow the Cūnār iconography34.

Large quantities of works are influences of Buṇdī and Kōtā. The paintings were done for the rulers but there is a possibility that they were done for other patrons of lesser courts too. It must be admitted that almost every Rājasthānī however minor had painters in its employ during same period of its history.

Large quantities of identifiable portraits prove that Rājā Balabhadrasirīnha

31 Imperial Gazettes of India, Vol. XI, p.195-199
32 Klaus Ebling, Op. Cit., p. 224
33 Ibid, p. 164
34 Beack, M.C., 'Rajput Paintings of Buṇdī and Kōtā', p. 47
of Raghugarh was an ardent patron of painting. Portraits of various other Rajās were also painted in large quantities.

Amongst the regions in Rajasthan, Jaipur, Āmer, Mewār, Mārwār and Būndī schools were producing Rāgamālās at an extremely larger scale. Indeed the earlier painted Rāgamālās are interesting, the other later ones used to be copies of these. There was a large scale production by copying and tracings (Charbās) placed the wrong way so that the figure on the right becomes on the left but a keen observer would disclose the fact.

The regions like Bikāner, Uniārā, Sirohī and Mālpura have produced some interesting sets. But the ones found belong to the 18th and 19th century A.D. of Bikāner; Uniārā late 18th century A.D., Sirohī late 17th century A.D., Mālpura middle of the 18th century A.D.

Provincial Mughal

A hybrid phenomenon caused by the cultural interaction of Rājput Hinduism and politically dominant Mughal court. A very first example of Mughal influence is observed in Cāwanḍ Rāgamālā. It is accepted that Provincial Mughal Rāgamālās were created in Āgrā where Akbar and Jahāngīr held court; Ajmer, where Jehāngīr moved the court in 1613 A.D. for four years and other provincial capitals. These miniature paintings were made by the lesser court artists or by those who had failed to make the grade and had to move out to the mediocre, patrons who were satisfied by their work in the provincial states.

The paintings were made for the Rājput courtiers and for the wealthy families
of the Mughal Rājput capitals in a court where the Rājput paintings and Provin­
cial Mughals were appreciated together. They preferred themes like Rāmāyāṇa, Mahābhārata, Rasikpriyā and Rāgamālā. The earliest of Provincial Mughal Rāgamālās is the Manley Rāgamālā Guildford, England. It is an almost com­plete set [10] (Pl. 14) and the Dātiā mural (M.P.) in the palace of Birsimhadevā who ruled in Dātiā Bundelkhand from 1602 to 1629 A.D. It is the earliest of known murals of Rāgas and Rāginiis in tempera medium.

From the above outline history of Rāgamālā paintings from Gujarat, Ra­jaṣṭhan and Central India it can be concluded that:

(i) It is an important source to construct the social and cultural history of the region.

(ii) The cultural integration between Mughal emperors and Rajput kings is echoed in these paintings because the rejected painters of the Mughal court took shelter in the Rajput States. Even the Muslim painters were patron­ised by the Rajput kings, who have depicted Nāyaka-Nāyikabheda, through the pictures of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā.

(iii) The subject of Rāgamālā paintings was very much fascinating for the mu­sicians, poets, painters and rulers.

(iv) The painters of Rāgamālā paintings have expressed and conveyed the moods of Indian music and have successfully transformed audial art into visual art of lyrical quality.