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Translating the Year 1299: On Reading Hindi, Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic in English

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Abstract

Following general reflections on the relations between global media, local and oral history, this paper addresses the paradoxical constraints imposed by language specialization, which focuses Western historians on particular regions and languages at the expense of demotic and oral cultures. Taking up the idea that translation is never an ideologically innocent act, Stein addresses the ambiguous status of English in the Indian context, both as the language of British imperial power, but also as a vehicle for challenging and "writing back" against colonial discourse. To illustrate the linguistic pitfalls that accompany research on South Asian

art, the paper investigates the relations between temple art, iconoclasm, and the zinc smelting industry in Jawar, Rajasthan.

KEYWORDS: Indian art, South Asian art history, translation, social media and art history, Google translations, zinc smelting industry, Jawar, Islamic iconoclasm, colonial discourse, Ramanatha temple, Jawar Mata temple, Somanatha icon, Rajasthan

In questioning the role of translation in art writing, Zoë Strother and Iain Boyd Whyte began a dialog with the following statement in their call for papers for CAA 2011, "The act of translation, however, is never politically innocent." Nowhere could this be truer than in South Asia, where the history of art and contemporary politics collide along linguistic, communal, sectarian lines. Increasingly, the divide between those who flit about in the realm of global capital and those who are left behind determines which stories are told, how, and why. Strother and Whyte began their dialog at the College Art Association with key scholarly questions: "What was translated when, by whom, and with what impact? To what degree did translation establish the traditional Western canon? Can translation challenge the canon? What are the benefits and dangers of the hegemony of the English language?" These questions hearken back to the heyday of subaltern studies when I was still an undergraduate at Barnard College, Columbia University. Could translation be used as a method to "write back"[1] about art, the call for papers seemed to ask?

At the same time, new technologies had changed not just the availability and quantity of translations available—global art historians now have a sense of Hegelian Chinese art history for example, with new flows of information "global" art histories seem to flow, to clash, and to be appropriated faster and more vigorously than ever before[2]—but had also changed the types of translation available to scholars . . . if we dare to look. Can we responsibly dismiss the popular, the unedited, and the oral speech sloppily drizzling out as text twenty-four hours a day? The university press monograph, hardly affordable or available anymore in the field of art history, remains the scholarly tribute to authority, to our shared vestigial bibliophilia, and to good taste, and the peer-reviewed article passes a vetted chain of expert review, but what of those unwieldy new media in which an increasing percent of the world insistently speaks? Could the scholarly call of Strother and Whyte elicit a scholarly response to new global media such as Facebook, blogs, Wikipedia?

In some ways, these new media remain outside the realm of viable academic discourse, and yet, if one keeps in mind the inheritance of folklore studies and oral history, perhaps these new media can be studied as oral speech. Must art historians of South Asia still travel to the

new state of Chhatisgarh, to anthropologically salvage the exoticized voices of those recorded only as "oral history," people largely without access to the means used to study them, or can the urban/rural divide now collapse in new ways as certain forms of internet speech open new discourses about capital, heritage, tradition, modernity, history, and personal experience? Must we choose? Can we viably do both? To ignore these real-time multi-lingual translations would be to ignore highly politicized discourses by key demographics in relation to South Asian art history, and to ignore the silence of those who do not enter this gadget-oriented dialog. The compilation of traditional academic sources for an article of mine forthcoming from *Artibus Asiae* about the medieval industrial site of Jawar, Rajasthan clashed fruitfully with this "white noise," if you will, of "oral" internet texts in real time about the past glory—"*Parampara*" in Hindi—that was Rajasthan. I will leave the story of the invention of zinc smelting and the patronage power of medieval Indian industry over royalty for this forthcoming article. Here, Strother and Whyte give me the opportunity to toy theoretically with the idea of translation, only to reveal the entwined contemporary politics of multiple modes of English speech about South Asia.

In an era where technology puts cultures and languages into juxtaposition faster than airplane travel or time zones, as fast as any blurb or tweet can be published, translations radically change the canon. South Asian art historians receive years of language training in specific languages from multiple non-European language families and still it is not enough (Figure 1). This training elicits depth, specialization, and knowledgeable expertise at the expense of the ability to deal fully with

"Hinduism"/North India	Sanskrit, Hindi, Gujarati (maybe for shilpa texts)
"Hinduism"/South India	Sanskrit, Tamil
"Buddhism"	Sanskrit, Hindi, Pali, Tibetan
"Jainism"	Sanskrit, Hindi, maybe Prakrit
"Islam"	Persian, Arabic, maybe Hindi
"Jawar Temples and Zinc Mines"	Sanskrit, Hindi, Vagari/Mewari, Persian, Arabic, Prakrit
"Early Modern"	Marathi, Telegu
"Colonial-Contemporary"	Hindi/Urdu, UK English, International English, Mumbai Hinglish, Delhi Marxist, and Academic Jargon

Figure 1
Languages that South Asianist art historians may or may not know—a table of languages and areas of specialization in South Asian art. © Deborah Stein.

the richness of the multi-sectarian material culture we study. Our very linguistic expertise as art historians may be cutting us off from a full understanding of the material remains found in South Asia. And this linguistic over-specialization is exactly what I had to surmount, when I happened upon an important unpublished cluster of temples built over a period of more than two centuries in Jawar, Rajasthan—the exact location where the smelting of zinc was invented and subsequently industrialized at the close of the fourteenth century.

South Asianist art historians are often trained to specialize in the arts of various religions and regions and these divides impact which languages we do and do not know. As a graduate student at Berkeley, I studied Sanskrit and Hindi to prepare to work on medieval North Indian Shaiva, Shakti, Vaishnava, and Jain temples—commonly lost in translation into English as "Hindu," a term coined by Greeks from the Indus river, a generic name for India in Arabic, "Al Hind," and a colonial linguistic other to "Islamic." This very linguistic "Hindu-Muslim" divide in English has lead to massive communal rioting and death since the partition of India in 1947.[3] In linguistic and methodological contrast, the scholar Finbarr Barry Flood traveled to Iran to find excerpts of a Koran from a specific historical and linguistic moment to better understand the brief flicker of the Ghurrid dynasty in Afghanistan.[4] He needed to access Persian, Arabic, and Turkish texts within very specific and changing temporal contexts in South Asia, all the while working in regions dominated by modern Farsi, three or more Afghan languages, Hindi, and Indian English. Against this rich, complex, and fraught linguistic context for South Asian art history, we must also remember the specter of colonial British power in the current dominance of English as well as the liberatory potential to seize that language and to "write back."

And within the wide range of writings about South Asian art history in India, the question of who begins to write back, how, and why represents an intensely diverse political gamut. On the one hand, somewhat to the left, scholars outside the institution create new spaces and travel from Delhi, to Baroda, to Kolkata, etc., speaking multiple Indian languages and holding English-language conferences to encourage regional scholars to curate Indian art as their own, rather than allowing foreign museums to dominate the visual discourses about Indian art.[5] On the other hand, somewhat to the right, on a Facebook page (Figure 2), the bardic tradition of Rajasthani royal history plays out in real time between poetry and academia, dancing Nagari letters, and damning the colonial past in English, all the while with the specter of royal class dominance echoing into the present post-independence democracy. Knowing the CAA translation panel was coming in early 2011, I decided to follow the Faustian fun of using an automatic translator from Google to produce a literal rendering into English of Hindi poetry used to describe a Facebook photograph of Queen Padmavati's palace. Here is an abridged version:

Ratan Singh Shekhawat's Photos - Kshatriy Yoddha

Photo 14 of 16 Back to Album · Ratan's Photos · Ratan's Profile Previous Next

यह तो रानी पद्मावती का महल है | इतिहास की बालू रेत पर किसी के पदचिन्ह उभरते हुए दिखाई दे रहे है | समय की झीनी खेह के पीछे दूर से कही आत्म-बलिदान का,उत्सर्ग की महान परम्परा का कोई कारवां आ रहा है | उस कारवां के आगे चंडी नाच रही है | तलवारों की खनखनाहट और वीरों की हुंकारे ताल दे रही है | विकराल रोद्र रूप धारण कर भी वह कितनी सुंदर है | कैसी अद्वितीय रणचंडी है | पुरातन सत्य बड़ा आ रहा है | कितना मंगलमय है | कितना सुंदर है | कितना भव्य है | हाँ ! यह रानी पद्मावती के महल है-चारों और जल से घिरे हुए पत्थरों ने रो-रो कर आंसुओ के सरोवर में गाथाओ को घेर लिया है |

दुःख दर्द और वेदना पिघल-पिघल कर पानी हो गई थी अब सुख-सुख कर फ़िर पत्थर हो रही है | जल के बिच खड़े हुए यह महल ऐसे लग रहें है,जैसे वियोगी मुमुक्ष बनकर जल समाधी के लिए तत्पर हो रहे रहे हों,अथवा सृष्टि के दर्पण में अपने सौंदर्य के पानी को मिला कर योगाभ्यास कर रहें हों |

यह रानी पद्मिनी के महल है | अतिथि-सत्कार की परम्परा को निभाने की साकार कीमतें ब्याज का तकाजा कर रही है; जिसके वर्णन से काव्य आदि कल से सरस होता रहा है,जिसके सौंदर्य के आगे देवलोक की सात्विकता बेहोश हो जाया करती थी;जिसकी खुशबू चुराकर फूल आज भी संसार में प्रसन्ता की सौरभ बरसाते है उसे भी कर्तव्य पालन की कीमत चुकानी पड़ी ? सब राख का ढेर हो गई केवल खुशबु भटक रही है-पारखियों की टोह में | क्षत्रिय होने का इतना दंड शायद ही किसी ने चुकाया हो | भोग और विलास जब सौंदर्य के परिधानों को पहन कर,मंगल कलशों को आम्र-पल्लवों से सुशोभित कर रानी पद्मिनी के महलों में आए थे,तब सती ने उन्हें लात मारकर जौहर व्रत का अनुष्ठान किया था | अपने छोटे भाई बादल को रण के लिए विदा देते हुए रानी ने पूछा था,- " मेरे छोटे सेनापति ! क्या तुम जा रहे हो ?" तब सौंदर्य के वे गर्वीले परिधान चिथड़े बनकर अपनी ही लज्जा छिपाने लगे; मंगल कलशों के आम्र पल्लव सूखी पत्तियां बन कर अपने ही विचारों की आंधी में उड़ गए;भोग और विलास लात खाकर धुल चाटने लगे | एक और उनकी दर्दभरी कराह थी और दूसरी और धू-धू करती जौहर यज्ञ की लपटों से सोलह हजार वीरांगनाओं के शरीर की समाधियाँ जल रही थी |

कर्तव्य की नित्यता धूम्र बनकर वातावरण को पवित्र और पुलकित कर रही थी और संसार की अनित्यता जल-जल कर राख का ढेर हो रही थी |

Read more: http://www.gyandarpan.com/2008/11/vairagi-chittod-3.html

स्व.श्री तन सिंह जी

Figure 2
Facebook page of a "Friend of a Friend." Public internet content.

Hindi to English Translation

> Yes! This is the palace of Queen Padmavati—surrounded by rocks and water around the crying
>
> Pain pain and anguish melt—melt water were no longer luxury—luxury tax is then stone being | bitch standing water, the water may be doing yoga | the Sati ritual of fasting did kick them Johar | farewell to his younger brother Badal Giving Movie Queen asked,—"my little captain! What are you going?" Sonderhy proud of the costumes they were duds as a hide his own shame; dry mango leaves to become a storm of his own thoughts flew; indulgence and luxury Castle washed kick started eating | and another and another had his painful groan Dhu-Dhu flames of sacrifice that sixteen thousand Virangnoan Johar's body was burned Samadhaia |
>
> Permanence of the smoke as a sacred duty to the environment and had been blithe and transience of the world water—was burning pile of ash |

This digitally translated response describes the mythical mass suicide of a queen and all the court ladies in the act of Jauhar,[6] or ritual immolation, that is said to have taken place in the building shown in the Facebook photograph.

The irony of Google's computerized literal translation, and also its strength, is how the phonics transcend the syntax so powerfully: "another and another had his painful groan Dhu-Dhu flames of sacrifice." Can you imagine how this poetic, art historical description, located so far outside the art histories known to art history, would sit on the desks of serious scholars in India or abroad? It is a quote from Tan Singh, chosen by the photographer to accompany his picture of the Queen Padmavati's palace. The description uses phonics, not lost in digital translation, to evoke the aesthetic theory of *rasa*, a powerful set of emotional triggers established for Sanskrit poetics in the seventh century by Bharata.[7] In that sense, the description "authentically" (if we loosely define "authentic" here as a poetic form true to one of the many aesthetic theories [rasa] meant to create a taxonomy of emotive responses to performance) captures what this monument has meant within a specific set of collective memory and imagination that may well post-date the thirteenth century, when the event was said to have transpired. Indeed, it dates to the bardic apogee of Mewari history writing in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Charts and maps of textual data from specific eras reveal the contrast between the modern resonance of idol looting and royal splendor and earlier evidence of industrial development and temple patronage. Whereas the regal

dynastic histories were once read onto the past, now they are contextualized within a period of several centuries, recently circumscribed to specific and later periods, rather than the bardic origin myths, which suggest the eternal reaches of time. Future research will reveal what came before the regal splendor and the tenuous ways in which medieval hegemony was established visually, rather than militarily, in Southern Rajasthan.

Let us shift now, with a case study, to the focus of my recent research for a book tentatively entitled *A Rajasthani Renaissance: Architectural Revivalism and the Political, Sectarian, and Industrial Networks of Early Modern Mewar*. As I traced industrial networks to and from the site where zinc smelting was invented in fourteenth-century Jawar, I wanted to learn more about the historical conditions in the tribal regions of Chhapan and Vagada (Southern Rajasthan) that led to the importance of the city of Jawar as an industrial, religious, and artistic center. Before zinc smelting was invented, who actually ruled the Chhapan/Vagada region, where Jawar is located? Even Wikipedia maps of the Sultanate period literally display a small "gray area" in Southern Rajasthan against the pink and red washes of Sultanate rule that cover almost the entire Indian subcontinent (Figure 3).

Though the rhetoric of "Islamic iconoclasm" was far from my mind as I looked for linkages between fluvial mapping and art historical traces of temples and zinc smelting in Jawar, the looming history of the theft of the Somanatha Shiva icon in 1299 eclipsed all English-language historical accounts of Ulugh Khan's travels from Delhi/Agra into Gujarat. There remains an interesting gap between the medieval history I was

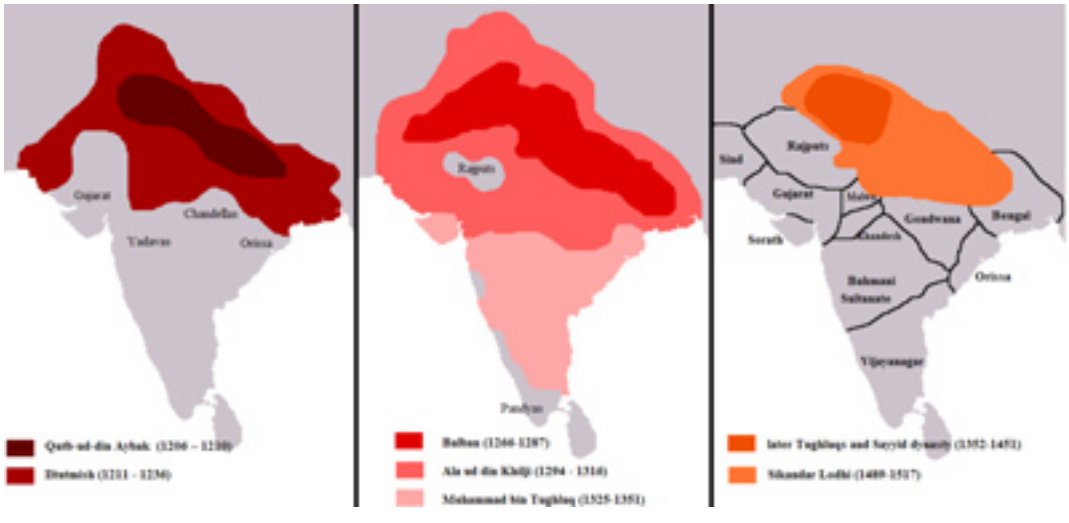

Figure 3
Wikipedia, Sultanate period map. Public internet content ("Javierfv1212" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Delhi_History_Map.png).

looking for and the modern history I found in a little-known geographical region of Southern India (Figure 4).

The famous instance of iconoclasm at Somanatha caught the attention of colonialists and nationalists alike, spurring English-language histories from the nineteenth century through the present that focused on the Islamic destruction of "idols" and the rhetoric of "Islamic iconoclasm." These texts range from the writings of James Tod in Rajasthan to the postcolonial reworking of history by Delhi Marxists such as Romila Thapar.[8] The BJP Hindu nationalist party revisits the year 1299 as evidence of Islamic abhorrence of figural form in India; whereas recent writings by art historian Finbarr Barry Flood re-contextualize the Turko-Afghan theft of icons within a paradigm of looting objects for display in the victor's capital—a practice espoused in medieval South Asia by "Hindu" and "Muslim" leaders alike.[9] Before any of these English writings about the "sack" of Somanatha by Ulugh Khan, the destruction and recovery of the Somanatha icon was written about in Hindi, Sanskrit, and Persian texts, such as the medieval Rajasthani text by Padmanabha, entitled the *Kanhadade Prabbandha*.[10] None referenced Jawar or zinc. The closest reference to the region was a rare reference to the capital of Vagada, then known as Vatpadrak.

I wanted to know about the alleged "Sack of Vatpadrak" that I had read about in an unpublished history paper of the official Dungarpur historian, Mr Purohit. Vatpadrak was another name for Baroda, but not the famous city in Gujarat, rather a small town outside of Dungarpur.[11] Vatpadrak lies on the path between Delhi/Agra to the east and Gujarat to the west, near tributaries of the Som and Mahi rivers (Figures 5 and 6). Vatpadrak, sacked at the end of the thirteenth century, was supposedly referenced in Ojha's famous *Dungarpur Rajya ka Itihasa*, a scholarly Hindi work based on hard-core epigraphy in the field but not translated

Date	Language	Textual Source Title	Availability
1950	Hindi	*Dungarpur Rajya ka Itihasa*	Gift from the late Maharwal of Dungarpur
1985	English	Craddocks Reports	Joint Research Project on Mining, Baroda
2004	English	*Somnatha: Many Voices of a History*	Penguin/Viking Press
2009	English	*Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter*	Princeton University Press

Figure 4
Table of modern textual evidence about the Jawar region and zinc. © Deborah Stein.

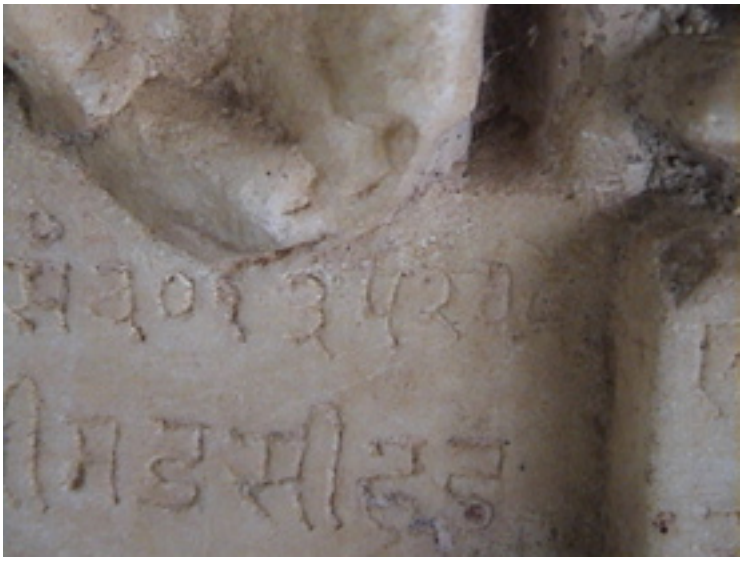

Figure 5
"Calculate this Vikram Samvat into Christian Era, and get 1295 exactly the five-year period of Ulugh Khan's expedition through Vagada to Somnathpur in Gujarat and back through Jalor, as recorded in the Kanhdade and also, modern histories…" From Vatpadrak inscription; Vatpadrak = (V/B)aroda, ancient capital of Vagada (located in Aspur Tehsil), Vagada region, southern Rajasthan. © Deborah Stein.

Figure 6
A lion pedestal in Vatpadrak (modern Baroda, Rajasthan). © Deborah Stein.

into English (Figure 7).[12] I looked in my out-of-print copy, given to me by the Maharawal of Dungarpur, and could not locate the reference so I took off with a road map and a driver to see what was there and found this broken pedestal with an inscription dated to 1295—a key date. A capital was sacked, and so?

A table of early modern sources suggests that a few references to zinc smelting and temple patronage could be salvaged from the Persian texts, whereas the vernacular Rajasthani sources tended to emphasize

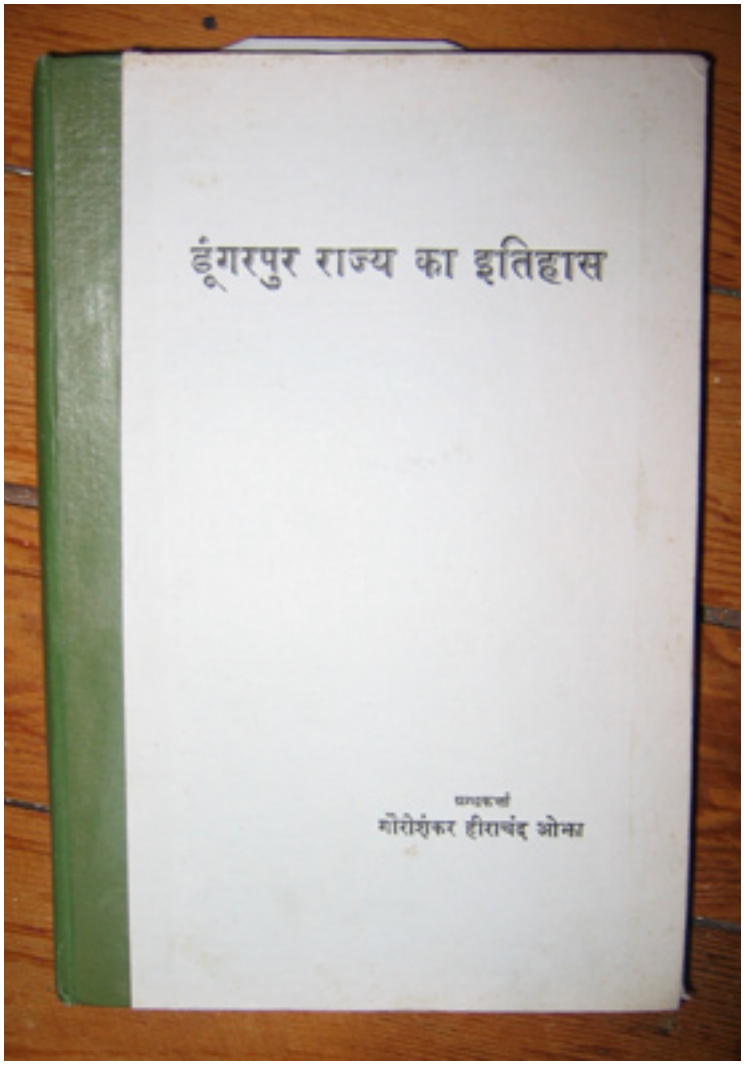

Figure 7
Photograph of *Dungarpur Rajya ka Itihasa*. © Deborah Stein.

the looting of the Somanatha icon, military victories, losses, conquests, and suffering in a war-torn region but little about zinc, industry, patronage, or areas beyond polity or with alternative polities (Figure 8). So I dug and dug and found one little line in the *Ain-I Akbari*, which proved that the Emperor Akbar's court historian, Abul Fazl 'Allami, was aware in the sixteenth century that there had been a zinc mine in Jawar.[13] And, in a Persian text of 1340, I had found a little paragraph about the incredible scarcity, and hence intense value, of zinc. Apparently, it was so rare in Persia that it was actually used as a synonym for non-existence. Hamd-Allah Mustawfi then clarifies in translation,

Date	Language	Textual Source/Title	Availability
1374	Sanskrit	*Rasaratnassamuchchaya*	Available in trans. largely in secondary sources. According to Fathi Habashi, "Discovering the Eighth Metal: A History of Zinc," "The metal was made by indirectly heating calamine with organic matter in a covered crucible fitted with a condenser." This author locates 1374 as the year that commercial zinc production begins without citing any reason or evidence for this date.
1421	Sanskrit	Shantinatha temple inscription	Inscription architecturally in-situ, Jawar, Rajasthan
c. 1450?	Rajasthani	*Kanhadad Prabandha*	English trans., New Delhi, 1991
1565	Persian	*Ain-i-Akbari*	Mentions "Zawar"/Jawar mines, English trans., 1989
1657	Rajasthani	Nainsri Kayat	"Mining and Smelting"

Figure 8
Table of early modern textual sources about the Jawar region. © Deborah Stein.

"In certain books, however, I find it stated that mines of [zinc] exist in China, where they make use of this metal as arms for war, and it gives an edge harder than iron."[14] These simple, brief references supported the visual evidence that in medieval Indian temple patronage, industrial networks (aka the people who control metal production) could trump regal power (aka a one-line inscription on a broken pedestal). I wanted, however, to move beyond my own limited linguistic expertise by adding the breadth of another scholar's resources into the mix. So I emailed Finbarr B. Flood, whose linguistic and art historical expertise leans toward Persian and Arabic accounts, complementing my Sanskrit/Hindi attempts. He then suggested the *Kanhadade Prabandha* of Padmanabha—a book in Old Rajasthani, Old Gujarati, and/or Gujara-Apabhramsha depending on who gets to name the language. Flood also suggested several excellent English-language secondary sources—none of which referenced Vatpadrak, Baroda, or Vadodara in any recognizable way. But what I found instead in most English-language texts suggested that my important historical moment—for the thirteenth-century Vagada region newly formed into a southern sub-branch of Mewar—inconceivably was somehow not important in English. It was Udaipur's Mewar that remained important in English translations.[15] It was the sack of the fortress of Rathanbore, not the industrial production of zinc and ensuing multi-sectarian temple patronage at Jawar, that mattered in modern English texts, as well as early modern texts in translation.

Whereas the medieval relationship between industry, polity, fluvial geography, and aesthetics remains elusive for the site of Jawar—roughly on the path from Delhi to Somanatha—the modern rhetoric of "Islamic iconoclasm" and its postcolonial deconstruction suggests that looting and the theft of icons in wealthy Gujarat was a more interesting story than a vacuum of political power in the thirteenth century that preceded the worldwide invention of industrial zinc-smelting technology at the dawn of the fourteenth century in the town of Jawar. There we find an art history with which to unravel South Asian art histories. Could somehow an eighth-century Muslim alchemist, with his Latin nickname "Gerber," and his romantic Italian Renaissance robes somehow solve my problem? I looked for Arabic texts in translation, but found just a line here or there to support the evidence offered by the temples themselves. It was only through industrial networks and fluvial plains that medieval visual culture often spread. Archaeological and inscriptional references remain to prove it. These are found in a sample chart of premodern sources for the same region (Figure 9).

The archaeological traces of zinc smelting and temple patronage in dialog at Jawar offer art history a non-dynastic model for periodization and a more industrialist picture of art production in medieval India. Jain merchants, bankers, industrialists, and financiers gained wealth from zinc-smelting technology and built temples first (Figure 10). In a fifty-year period the impressive temple yields an even more spectacular one, also Jain (Figure 11). This temple quotes prior architecture across a wide geographic area in very knowledgeable and intentional ways (Figure 12). Then, in 1489, about a century after the discovery of zinc smelting, a noble woman, the daughter of Maharana Kumbha himself, inherited Jawar as her *jagir* and constructed the Ramanatha Vishnu temple and tank, complete with an inscription.[16] This is where most art histories would begin, based on the time period and the location of the patron within a dynastic context. But this would miss the boat, since the temples unfold chronologically according to the law of proximity from the zinc smelters away from the temples. Clearly zinc smelting and the early Jain temples should be the starting point for Jawar, but because of modern and early modern texts in English translation, the looting of Somanatha would eclipse this history. The purely visual experience of Jawar, on the other hand, would point scholars in the direction of the largest temple still in active worship.

If one were an anthropologist or only studying goddess temples, one might miss Kumbha's daughter's Ramanatha temple altogether and only find the later and larger Jawar Mata temple too far away from the zinc retorts to notice them (Figure 13). Only through an examination of James Tod juxtaposed with a retired Rajasthani miner's English-language blog was I able to figure out that the goddess temple may actually provide the most concrete inscriptional and architectural evidence we have for the relationship between some of the most famous Jain financiers and some

Date	Language	Source Title	Details
c. 760–815	Arabic	Jabir ibn Haiyan writes the "Book of Stones." Gerber, as he was known in the West, used retorts and over 20 pieces of modern chemistry equipment. He knew of zinc but didn't know how to industrially smelt it.	One of the most famous alchemical works of the Middle Ages, known throughout medieval Europe and the Islamic world. Some attribute a whole cluster of ninth-century alchemical works to him. Like Shakespeare, the vast quantity of his work and Latin translations suggest attribution to more than one author.
1172	Sanskrit	Samanta Singh's inscription in-situ, Ambika Temple, Jagat Rajasthan. This inscription records an offshoot branch of the Mewari Guhila dynasty that went south through the Chhapan region where the Ambika temple lies, to form the Dungarpur branch of royalty in the Vagada region to the south.	Bambora, Jagat, Jawar, Jalor, and Rathanbore all lie in very close proximity to each other in the Chhapan region.
1200s	Sanskrit	*Rasarnava*, a key period text on how to smelt zinc.	English trans. from Indian in 2007, unavailable in Western libraries or online.
1295	Sanskrit/Vagari	Vatpadrak inscription, a lion pedestal found in temple rubble and kept on location in the small archaeological museum. Gives date when Vatpadrak was sacked and all the surrounding lands were laid waste. A brief and vague inscription, noted in *Dungarpur Rajya ka Itihasa*.	Vadoda (Baroda), Vagada (Rajasthan), hard to get to, previously unphotographed epigraphy in the field.
1340	Persian	Nuzhat Al-Qulub, the metal zinc is used as a metaphor for non-existence—a tribute to its scarcity in the Persian-speaking world at the time.	Trans. into English, in *Islamic Geography*, vol. 103.

Figure 9
Table showing a sample of premodern textual evidence for the Mewar/Vagada region, where Jawar is located, and the alchemy of zinc. © Deborah Stein.

Figure 10
Shantinatha Temple, *c*. 1421, Jawar, Rajasthan. © Deborah Stein.

Figure 11
Ruined Temple 3, Jawar, Rajasthan. © Deborah Stein.

Figure 12
Ramanatha Temple, Jawar, Rajasthan. © Deborah Stein.

Figure 13
Jawar Mata Temple, Jawar, Rajasthan. © Deborah Stein.

of the most important Mewari kings. In fact, the Jawar Mata temple records a relationship without which Mewar may not have been able to remain as independent as it did for as long as it did.

At the heart of that story is the archaeological trace of industry found in the zinc smelters (Figure 14). Since the smelters do not speak for themselves, only the multilingual South Asian texts of the twelfth to seventeenth centuries and the international and Indian responses of the colonial era through to the present can illuminate this art historical story on the border of two academic disciplines. The metallurgists and the art historians rarely get a chance to collaborate, just as the highbrow scholar and lowbrow internaut do not usually intertwine. Through digital texts available online, we might finally find new global solutions to problems that have been left unanswered any other way.

The "field" is on Facebook and it is writing "back" (Figure 15). But are "we," whoever that includes or doesn't, ready to listen? Or, does the answer lie instead in the translation of academic art history texts into English? Either way, how do we engage in these acts without a utopian erasure of difference that recapitulates the violence of uneven power structures? Today scholars seem to turn away from the essentialist shadows of universalizing humanism and other grand schemes back toward the translation of "the visual and sensual nature of a work of art into a linguistic formulation capable of being voiced in a discursive argument."[17] In the context of medieval South Asian art history, I might add that we remain in a perpetual diachronic dance between formalist description, social history, reception, and the present.

Figure 14
Zinc smelters, *c*. 1397, Jawar, Rajasthan. © Deborah Stein.

Figure 15
South Asian art history on Facebook. Facebook page of a "Friend of a Friend." Public internet content.

Notes

1. Bill Ashcroft, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literature* (London: Routledge, 1989); Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture,* ed. Cary Nelson and Larry Grossberg (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp. 271–313; Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978); Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: A History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977); Antonio Gramsci, "The Concept of a 'National-Popular,'" in *Selections from Cultural Writings*, ed. David Forgacs and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, trans. William Boelhower (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 206–12.
2. David Joselit *et al.*, "Roundtable: The Global Before Globalization," *October* (Summer 2010): 3–19.
3. Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 1; Tapan Basu, Pradip Datta, Sumit Sarkar, Tanika Sarkar, and Sambuddha Sen, *Khaki Shorts Saffron Flags*, ed. Tapan Basu (Delhi: Orient Longman Ltd, 1993); Pradip Datta, Tapan Basu, Sumit Sarkar, Tanika Sarkar, and Sambuddha Sen, *Tracts for the Times* (New Delhi: Orient Longman Limited, 1993); Kamal Hassan (dir./writer), *Hey Ram* (2000), a motion picture in Tamil (see http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0222012/); Aparna Sen (dir./writer), *Mr and Mrs Iyer* (2002) (see http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0329393/).
4. Finbarr Barry Flood, "From Dystopia to Utopia: Shifting Meanings of the Minaret of Jam," paper given at a symposium at Berkeley entitled Recovering Afghanistan's Past: Cultural Heritage in Context, November 15, 2008.
5. Deborah Stein, "Archival Desire: Revivalism and the Creation of Memory at the Kirttistambha of Chittorgardh," paper given at the Association of Academics, Artists, and Citizens for University Autonomy (ACUA), Baroda/Vadodara, India, 2009; Shivaji Pannikar, "Curation Theory," and the curatorial project to "curate back" from within India with a multi-regional project on curation can be found at http://www.curationtheory.com/introduction.php; Shivaji Pannikar, Parul Dave Mukherji, and Deeptha Achar (eds), *Towards a New Art History: Studies in Indian Art* (Delhi: Printworld, 2003).
6. Ramya Shreenivasan describes the history of descripts of this *jauhar* in *The Many Lives of a Rajput Queen: Heroic Pasts in India c. 1500–1900* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007).
7. *Rasa* has been essentialized as the one Indian aesthetic theory that stands in for all indigenous theory. Of course, many varieties of

nuanced indigenous theories exist alongside contemporary cutting-edge theories, which tend to be quite global. Here, with the Google translation, the phonic resonance of sound evokes the pulling of emotional triggers in a system of eight specific emotional triggers, or *rasas*, and eight specific emotional responses, or *bhavas*. This poem evokes the "horrific" *rasa*, with the sound of flames lapping up the bodies of a mass female suicide. The background of *rasa* as an aesthetic system for theater can be found in Bharata's *Natya Shastra*. In *Essence of Indian Art* (San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Asian Art Museum, 1986), B.N. Goswamy's introductory essay, "The Delight of Reason," experiments interestingly with applying this theory to the visual arts, more specifically to painting. His accompanying catalog entries take an altogether different approach from the introductory essay.

8. James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajast'han* (Calcutta: B.M. Ghosh, 1895); Peter Van Der Veer, "Ayodhya and Somnath: Eternal Shrines, Contested Histories," *Social Research*, 59, no. 1 (Spring 1992); M.A. Dhaky and H.P. Shastri, *The Riddle of the Temple of Somanatha* (Varanasi: Bharata Manisha, 1974); Romila Thapar, *Somanatha: Many Voices of a History* (New Delhi: Viking, 2004); Romila Thapar, "Somanatha: Narratives of a History," *Seminar*, 475 (March 1999); Tapati Guha-Thakurti, "Archaeology and the Monument: On Two Contentious Sites of Faith and History," in *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (New York: Columbia, 2004); Richard Davis, "Reconstructions of Somanatha," in *Lives of Indian Images* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).
9. Finbarr B. Flood, "Gifts, Idolatry, and the Political Economy," in *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 32.
10. Padmanabha, *Kanhadade Prahbandha*, trans. and intro. V.S. Bhatna (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1991); Jackson, Kumar, Shreenivasan (above), and Eaton best contextualize this era and its origins: Peter Jackson, *Studies on the Mongol Empire and Early Muslim India* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009) and *The Delhi Sultanate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Sunil Kumar, *The Emergence of the Delhi Sultanate* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007); Richard M. Eaton, *Temple Desecration and Muslim States in Medieval India* (New Delhi: Hope India Publications, 2004).
11. For a map of Dungarpur, see http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/rajasthan/districts/dungarpur.htm.
12. Gaurishankar Hirachand Ojha, *Dungarpur Rajya ka Itihasa* [History: Kingdom of Dungarpur]. First published by the author in 1936.

13. Abul Fazl 'Allami, *Ain-I Akbari*, trans. H. Blochmann, 2nd edition (New Delhi: New Imperial Book Depot, 1965), pp. 267–72.
14. Hamd-Allah Mustawfi, *The Geographical Part of the Nuzhat-Al-Qulub of Qazwin in 740 (1340)*, trans. G. Le Strange (Leyden: Brill, 1919), Section 3, p. 194.
15. For a map of Udaipur, see http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/rajasthan/districts/udaipur.htm.
16. Ramabai Jawar inscription [R.C. Agrawala, "An inscription from Javar, Rajasthan," *The Indian Historical Quarterly*, vol. XXXIV, ed. Narendrea Nath Law (Delhi: Caxton, 1998), pp. 215–25].
17. Iain Boyd Whyte and Claudia Heide, "Art History and Translation," in *Cross-cultural Art History in a Polycentered World*, special issue of the UNESCO journal *Diogène*, ed. J. Anderson, forthcoming; Jas Elsner, "Art History as Ekphrasis," *Art History*, 33, no. 12 (2010); Lawrence Venuti, "Adaptation, Translation, Critique," *Journal of Visual Culture*, 6, no. 1 (April 2007): 25–43 (http://vcu.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/6/1/25, accessed: July 25, 2007).