
Monuments to Enemies?

'Rajput' Statues in Mughal Capitals*



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Abstract

Various descriptions of the two Mughal capitals, Agra and Delhi, mention the gates of both royal forts as decorated with the statues of two warriors mounted on elephants. The list of those who had described these sculptures and reconstructed their history includes late-medieval Indian writers, European travellers to the Mughal empire, scholars from the nineteenth century onwards, authors of tourist guides; there is a popular oral narrative on them as well. The most widely spread version attributes the statues to the Rajput warriors who defended Chittor against the Mughal invasion and who were immortalised by the emperor Akbar in a sign of his recognition of their valour. This article is an attempt to 'investigate' the controversial story of a Mughal ruler glorifying his sworn enemies and to analyse historical circumstances that could be a background for such a narrative.

Keywords: Rajput statues; elephants; Mughal invasion

Introduction

Some themes catch your eye as if by chance to emerge from a trifling fact into a problem worthy of serious research. It happened thus with the topic of this article. While working on a paper on the Jesuit missions (1582–94) to the court of the Mughal emperor Akbar I was re-reading a well-known source, namely the account by Antonio de Monserrate, the historiographer of the first mission. In his detailed report on the Mughal capital at Agra, this learned Jesuit described the architecture of the royal residence, the fort that has remained up to nowadays one of the city's primary attractions, second only to the Taj Mahal in tourist

*My research on this topic began as a part of the project 'Under the Skies of South Asia', run since 2011 by the Centre for Indian Studies, Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow, Russia (initiator and head Irina Glushkova, website <http://ivran.ru/pnua>). A short Russian version was published in the first volume of the project, *Pod nebom Yuzhnoi Azii: Portret i skulptura (Under the Skies of South Asia: Portrait and Sculpture)*, (ed.) Irina Glushkova and Irina Prokofieva (Moscow, 2014), pp. 389–412. It has taken me four more years to rework the topic almost completely, accommodating newly acquired source material and focusing on different approaches to the theme. I am sincerely grateful to Irina Glushkova, Irina Prokofieva, Allison Busch, Harbans Mukhia and my anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions.

popularity. As his narrative reached the eastern gate of the citadel, Monserrate mentioned the following:

In front of the gateway are statues of two petty kings, whom Zelaldinus¹ himself shot with his own musket; these are seated on life-size statues of elephants on which the kings used to ride when alive. These statues serve both as trophies of the King's prowess, and as monuments of his military victories.²

This fragment would have hardly attracted my attention but for the note (numbered 73 in the text) by the translator of the text into English, J. S. Hoyland:³

These were the statues of Jaimal and Potta⁴ who bravely though fruitlessly resisted Akbar's siege of Chitor.⁵ Both were killed before the fort could be taken. Jaimal previously had been in command of the fort of Mirtha, which was taken by the Moghuls in the beginning of 1562. When Akbar besieged Chitor in October 1567, the cowardly Rana Uday Singh fled leaving the fort in command of Jaimal Rathor of Bednor. It was Akbar's shot from his favourite gun Sangram (Blochmann, p. 617)⁶ that killed the hero (Feb. 1568). Potta of Kailwa, who died in the gallant defence of the fort, was only a lad of 16. The conduct of Potta's mother and wife was no less heroic. After having urged on the son the need of sacrificing life for the national cause she, surpassing the Spartan mother of old, descended the rock accompanied by her daughter-in-law, fought, and illustrated her precept by example. Akbar had the statues constructed and placed in front of the gateway not as a trophy but as a mark of respect to the memory of the martyrs whose conduct he approved and considered worthy of imitation. On the shifting of the capital from Agra to New Delhi by Shah Jehan, these statues were also removed and placed at the entrance of the fortress of the capital, as it appears from the account of Bernier (Smith's Edition, p. 256).⁷ Aurangzeb however in his coquetry with iconoclasm ordered the removal of these statues.⁸

My interest grew as I found that Hoyland's version, as narrated in his commentary to Monserrate, was accepted by the subsequently published texts of various genres – from scholarly works and textbooks⁹ to tourist guides, popular literature and such like 'folk

¹This was Monserrate's version of the first element Mughal emperor's full name: Jalal ad-din Muhammad Akbar.

²A. Monserrate, *The Commentary of Father Monserrate S. J. On His Journey to the Court of Akbar*, translated by J. S. Hoyland (London, 1922), p. 35.

³J. S. Hoyland (1887–1957) was a British Quaker who came to India first as a missionary and then, up to 1928, taught English and history at Hislop College, Nagpur.

⁴Various European sources, quoted in my study, differ in transliterating the names of the Chittor warriors. Jaimal was spelled as Jemel and Jaimall. Potta is a distortion of the name Patta (in Rajasthan they also spell it as Phatta).

⁵The spelling of this city's name varies in different sources: Chitor, Chitur, Chittore, Chittor. I prefer the latter as closer to the original Cittaūd.

⁶Hoyland refers to the description of this gun in the translation of the first volume of the *Ā'īn- i Akbarī* by H. Blochmann.

⁷The reference is to F. Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire*, tr. Archibald Constable. 2nd. revised edition by Vincent A. Smith. (London and New York, 1916), p. 256.

⁸Monserrate, *The Commentary*, p. 35.

⁹For example, H. H. Dodwell (ed.), *Cambridge Shorter History of India*, II. By J. Alan, Sir T. Wolseley Haig [and] H. H. Dodwell. (New York, 1934), p. 349; J. L. Mehta, *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India*, II (Delhi, 1984), p. 231; R. Hooja, *A History of Rajasthan* (Delhi, 2006), p. 464.

discourses'.¹⁰ Some rendered the events in Hoyland's version as an established fact, others were more cautious and used expressions like 'they say'. However, significantly, hardly anybody quoted written sources to turn the 'story' into 'history'. This strengthened my suspicion that, as the Hindi proverb says, *dāl mē kuch kālā hai* ('there is a black bean in this lentil soup'). Indeed, could it be that the Mughal emperor, having stormed an enemy fortress after a long siege and heavy losses in his army, followed by a massacre of the survivors, ordered the immortalisation of his enemies in stone? In other words, could the statues of elephant-mounted warriors seen by travellers in the Mughal capitals of Agra and Delhi in reality be monuments to the Rajputs vanquished by Akbar? Moreover, if the attribution of the statues in question to Jaimal and Patta from Chittor was nothing but a 'myth', where did the myth itself come from? Who created this myth and why? My purpose was not to ascertain the 'historical truth' of the events recorded in the narrative but to research the history of the narrative itself. Personages and events from the past have a history that differs considerably from the Rankean models of 'how did it really happen'.

This history pertains to the 'life' of persons and events in 'historical memory' – in the imagination, perception, reconstructions and interpretations of the past with various purposes by subsequent generations. It deals with the functioning of historical narratives in a given societal milieu, on this or that stage of history, thus playing important roles in unfolding socio-cultural and political processes, especially in relation to the constructing (and sometimes deconstructing) of identities. "Identity", as Jorn Rüsen suggests, "is a key word in this ascription of subjectivity to history. History is a specific intellectual procedure (and its manifestation) of interpreting the past in a mode that the people of today understand their own world and their difference from others".¹¹ As defined by Peter Seixas, "memories organised as narratives include a temporal dimension, conveying an idea of origins and development, of challenges overcome, with collective protagonists and individual heroes confronting difficult conditions and threatening enemies".¹² Accordingly, the focus of this study will be on the reasons for and circumstances behind the 'social memorising' of the statues in question, as visual tribute to Jaimal and Patta of Chittor by their chivalrous enemy, Akbar.

The sculptures, as the reader will find out, had been a subject of a considerable interest to the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century specialists in medieval Indian history and arts. Lost to the present-day viewer – perhaps forever – these unique specimens of Mughal art could be discussed within the framework not of traditional art history but in relation to more recent concepts exploring the 'afterlife' of visual art objects in a given historical, socio-cultural and political milieu.¹³ On India in particular, one could name a number of seminal works on portraits, sculptures, and archaeological relics in colonial and postcolonial India as historical memory and identity markers, foci of political and aesthetic conflicts, and political

¹⁰C. H. Forbes-Lindsay, *India: Past and Present*, I (Delhi, 2002, [1903]), pp. 75, 153; R. B. Singh, *Maharana Pratap* (Delhi, 2004), p. 35; K. Schreitmüller, *India* (Ostfildern, 2009), p. 36. Same is the Wikipedia version: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jaimal_and_Patta.

¹¹J. Rüsen, *History: Narration, Interpretation, Orientation* (Oxford and New York, 2005), p. 3.

¹²P. Seixas, "Introduction", in *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, (ed.) Peter Seixas (Toronto, 2004), pp. 5–6.

¹³See in more detail, N. Mirzoeff (ed.), *The Visual Culture Reader* (New York, 2002); J. Elkins, *Visual Studies. A Sceptical Introduction* (London and New York, 2003).

symbols.¹⁴ Mughal art and architecture too have been discussed within a broader social, cultural, political and ideological framework by, among others, Ebba Koch and Som Prakash Verma.¹⁵ In his work on the early period of ‘Hindu-Muslim’ encounter, Finbarr Barry Flood used material objects such as coins, frescoes, dresses, manuscripts and monuments “to highlight the ability of artifacts to provide fresh insights and novel perspectives when treated as potentially complementary (rather than supplementary) sources of historical information”.¹⁶ This “historical information”, I might add, pertains not only to the ‘facts’ regarding the commissioning, making, ‘circulation and consumption’, etc. of a visual object, but also to its “translation”, using the term chosen by Flood himself, into the social, cultural, historical and political “languages” of the epoch of the object’s creation as well as subsequent periods of history.

Whence the idea?

To begin with, how ‘traditional’ for medieval India was the practice of commemorating historical personages in statues or other visual presentations? From where could Akbar, if Hoyland’s suggestions were correct, obtain the very idea of monuments? Not from orthodox Muslim traditions, it would seem. The Quran has no explicit prohibition against presenting living creatures by the means of visual arts, except in the verses condemning idol-worship. However, some authoritative *hadiths* do attribute to the Prophet condemnatory statements against painters and sculptors eligible for severest punishment on Judgement Day as sinful usurpers of God’s creative power.¹⁷ In medieval India, as is well known, many Hindu and Jain temples were destroyed by Muslim rulers, the reasons being, according to Richard M. Eaton, more political-symbolic (uprooting and desecrating the patron deity of a non-Muslim enemy or rebel) than iconoclastic.¹⁸ However, apart from the above-mentioned reasons, orthodox repulsion for ‘un-Islamic’ practices of sculpturing and painting living creatures could likewise provoke destruction, especially at the early stages of the ‘Muslim period’. Suffice it to mention, for instance, the temple colonnades flanking the Qutub Minar in Delhi: the faces of deities and celestial dancers ornamenting the columns bear clearly visible marks of sword strokes. In his memoirs Firuz Shah Tughlaq, the Delhi Sultan from 1351 to 1388, referred to the fact that he had strictly prohibited the decoration of clothes, vessels and other household objects with pictures of humans and animals, as well as the keeping of pictures and sculptures at home, as a great achievement and “special mercy of God”:

¹⁴For example, Partha Mitter’s classic *Much Maligned Monsters: A History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Chicago, 1977) and his subsequent *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850–1922: Occidental Orientations* (Cambridge, 1993); also R. H. Davis, *Lives of the Indian Images* (Princeton, 1997); T. Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (New York, 2004).

¹⁵E. Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology: Collected Essays* (Delhi, 2001); S. P. Verma, *Painting the Mughal Experience* (Delhi, 2005); S. P. Verma, *Interpreting Mughal Painting: Essays on Art, Society and Culture* (Delhi, 2009).

¹⁶F. B. Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval “Hindu-Muslim” Encounter* (Princeton, 2009), p. 11.

¹⁷Sculptors and painters were all designated in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, etc. by the word *muṣavvir* (‘giving form’), initially an epithet for the Creator; the usage of the term for mortals signified the abominable and sinful character of their occupation. See in more detail, T. W. Arnold, *Painting in Islam. A Study of the Place of Pictorial Art in Muslim Culture* (Oxford, 1928. A facsimile edition by Gorgias Press, 2004), pp. 5–6.

¹⁸Richard M. Eaton, “Temple Desecration and Indo-Muslim States”, *Journal of Islamic Studies* 11, 3 (2000), pp. 283–319.

with God's grace we have ordained that all pictures be destroyed and only things in concordance with Islam be manufactured; we have also ordered to demolish all stone-cut figures carved upon the walls of the buildings.¹⁹

The above-quoted fragment testifies not only to Firuz Shah's allegiance to orthodox Islam, but more importantly to the fact that, irrespective of all prohibitions, even members of the Muslim elite – the addressee of the Sultan's draconian measures – used visual presentations of living creatures to decorate clothes, buildings and household utensils. Orthodox Muslim attitudes towards the visual arts in practice proved no obstacle to the development of miniature painting in various Muslim societies including Mughal India where a school of this art had existed under various Muslim kings before Akbar,²⁰ although it was the latter who made it distinctively Indian. Akbar invited master miniaturists from Iran, employed local Muslim and Hindu painters: together they studied a number of artistic styles, including European, and this resulted in a host of masterpiece works. Akbar and his associates, the 'enlightened philosophers' from the liberal-minded Hindu and Muslim courtiers,²¹ opposed the orthodox stance on visual arts with solid arguments. As explained by Abu-l Fazl:

Bigoted followers of the letter of the law are hostile to the art of painting; but their eyes now see the truth. One day in a private party of friends, His Majesty who had conferred on several the pleasure of drawing near him, remarked, "There are many that hate painting; but such men I dislike. It appears to me as if a painter had quite peculiar means of recognizing God: for a painter in sketching anything that has life, and in devising its limbs, one after the other, must come to feel that he cannot bestow individuality upon his work, and is thus forced to think of God, the giver of life, and will thus increase in knowledge".²²

After Akbar, up to Aurangzeb, subsequent Mughal emperors not only patronised miniature painting but also loved to decorate their residences with portraits. After Akbar's death William Finch, an early seventeenth-century British traveller, visited the Lahore palace that served as royal summer residence and described a gallery of portraits depicting Mughal emperors such as Babur, Humayun, Akbar and the then ruling Jahangir, along with various court scenes.²³ However, this evidence pertains to painting and not sculptures – perhaps the former seemed more agreeable than the latter to Muslim taste.

No doubt, the artistic preferences of the Mughal court, from Akbar onwards, were influenced by Hindu traditions, especially when Akbar and his sons, followed by subsequent generations of imperial princes, established marital alliances with powerful Rajput clans. Many Rajputs joined Mughal service to act, apart from other things, as disseminators of Hindu (to put it more precisely, Rajput) influence upon the Mughal court. This influence was multi-dimensional and observable in many aspects of court culture, whether this was royal family culture, etiquette, fashions, entertainment, the means of communication with subjects, or

¹⁹*Futuhāt-i Firuz-Shahi of Sultan Firuz Shah*, (ed.) Shaikh Abdur Rashid (Aligarh, 1954), p. 11 (Persian text, my translation – E. V.).

²⁰Verma, *Painting*, p. 32.

²¹Discussed in more detail in E. Vanina, *Ideas & Society. India between the Sixteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Second edition (Delhi, 2004), pp. 67 – 81.

²²Abu-l Fazl Allami, *Ā'īn-i Akbarī*, I, translated by H. Blochmann (Delhi, 1977, reprint), p. 115.

²³W. Foster, *Early Travels in India (1583–1619)* (Oxford, 1921), pp. 162 – 164.

courtly art and architecture.²⁴ Indeed, the worship of visual renditions of deities (*mūrti*) – installed in temples and homes – has been and remains an essential part of Hindu culture and practice. And a number of scholars have researched in detail the history of technical and aesthetic development, as well as regional schools of temple sculpture.²⁵ However, of more importance for the present study is the sculpture commemorating, especially in public spaces, real persons as objects of not religious worship but social veneration and memory.

In medieval India heroes fallen in battle were immortalised in steles, columns or memorial stones known as *vīragal* or *kīrtīstambha*, in many cases decorated with symbolical presentations of the heroes and their spouse(s), especially when the latter immolated themselves on their husband's funeral pyre.²⁶ In various regions of India, there was a tradition of immortalising – in temple bas-reliefs or statues – kings and queens as builders and donors of the temple. Thus, the royal patrons of celebrated temples in Orissa, Andhra, Karnataka and Tamilnadu were presented in this fashion, including some credited with temple galleries depicting not only them but their ancestors as well. Sculptural presentations of spiritual teachers, mainly the *Bhakti* mystics, were not infrequent in the South.²⁷ Surely, these and other similar sculptures were canonised presentations not of individuals but of ideas – kingly valour and righteousness, wifely virtues and queenly beauty, as well as spiritual prowess of the saints.²⁸ Statues of this kind formed elements of temple decoration, placed in the side galleries, special niches or aisles – spaces less holy than the *sancta sanctorum* and visible to all who had access to the temple.

In medieval India portraits and sculptures of mortal men and women – kings, queens, ministers, spiritual preceptors and forefathers – were frequent elements of stories narrated in literary works. They appear as important decorations of interior spaces, especially in royal palaces and aristocratic mansions, in many cases serving as crucial elements of story in dramas, poems and prose works.²⁹ Of especial interest in this context is the *Pratimānāṭaka*, a drama by the celebrated early-medieval playwright Bhasa. In the culmination of its story Rama's brother Bharata visits a gallery in the vicinity of Ayodhya where sculptures of his ancestors, the kings of the Ikshwaku dynasty, are displayed – importantly, accessible to all visitors.³⁰ Statues erected by kings and ministers are mentioned in later sources too, for instance in the fourteenth-century *Prabandhacintāmaṇi* by the Gujarati Jain writer

²⁴Discussed in more detail by H. Mukhia, *The Mughals of India* (Malden US and Oxford UK, 2004).

²⁵For instance, S. Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture* (Delhi, 1981); G. Morley and K. Vatsyayan, *Indian Sculpture* (Delhi, 2006).

²⁶The enlightening work on this subject is S. Settar and G. S. Sontheimer (eds.), *Memorial Stones. A Study of Their Origin, Significance and Variety* (Dharwad and Heidelberg, 1982).

²⁷W. Smith, "Images of Divine Kings from the Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar", *Artibus Asiae* 51, 1/2 (1991), pp. 90 – 106; P. Kaimal, "The Problem of Portraiture in South India, circa 870-970 A.D.", *Artibus Asiae* 59, 1/2 (1999), pp. 59 – 133; P. Kaimal, "The Problem of Portraiture in South India, circa 970-1000 A.D.", *Artibus Asiae* 60, 1 (2000), pp. 139 – 179.

²⁸Discussed in more detail in D. Desai, "Social Dimensions of Art in Early India", *Social Scientist* 18, 9 – 10 (1990), p. 22; E. Vanina, *Medieval Indian Mindscapes: Space, Time, Society, Man* (Delhi, 2012), pp. 226 – 234.

²⁹Kaimal, "The Problem of Portraiture", (2000), pp. 67 – 69; P. Granoff, "Portraits, Likenesses and Looking Glasses: Some Literary and Philosophical Reflections on Representation and Art in Medieval India", in *Representation in Religion. Studies in Honor of Moshe Barasch*, (eds.) M. Barasch, J. Assmann, A. I. Baumgarten (Leiden, 2001); V. Lefevre, *Portraiture in Early India: Between Transience and Eternity* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 53 – 84.

³⁰Bhasa, *Thirteen Plays of Bhasa*, translated by A. C. Woolner and Lakshman Sarup (Delhi, 1985), p. 174 – 175. Discussed in Lefevre, *Portraiture in Early India*, pp. 72 – 76, 90 – 91.

Merutunga.³¹ A more detailed analysis of the ‘secular’ sculpture tradition in medieval India, however, would have taken my study quite far from the chosen theme. These brief remarks set out above have been necessary to ascertain that Akbar could borrow the idea of perpetuating the valiant defenders of Chittor from the Hindu and Jain tradition, both of which he knew well enough. However, no sculpture is known now, even in ruins, as part of the architectural legacy of his reign – the forts and palaces of Agra, Allahabad, Ajmer, along with his specially built residence, Fatehpur Sikri. Written sources of the epoch, as will be discussed below, are also silent on this subject.

Versions and counter-versions

Now back to Monserrate and Hoyland. The first thing that attracted my attention was the contradiction between the text and the note: Hoyland was more concerned with correcting Monserrate’s statement than commenting upon it. The Jesuit who had spent two years with Akbar’s court informed his reader that the statues in question embodied two enemies personally killed by the emperor. More importantly, the aim of constructing the statues, as formulated by Monserrate, was to glorify ‘Zelaldinus’ and his victory, rather than the vanquished enemies. One of the major sources from which Hoyland obtained his version of the events was Francois Bernier, a French doctor who had lived in Delhi during the later period of Shah Jahan’s reign and the early years of Aurangzeb’s. In one of his letters, Bernier described the Delhi Red fort built by the order of Shah Jahan:

The entrance of the fortress presents nothing remarkable except two large elephants of stone, placed at either side of one of the principal gates. On one of the elephants is seated the statue of *Jemel*, the renowned Raja of *Chitor*; on the other is the statue of *Potta*, his brother [italics in the original]. These are the brave heroes who, with their still braver mother, immortalised their names by the extraordinary resistance which they opposed to the celebrated *Ekbar*, who defended the towns besieged by that great emperor with unshaken resolution; and who, at length reduced to extremity, devoted themselves to their country, and chose either to perish with their mother in sallies against the enemy than submit to an insolent invader. It is owing to this extraordinary devotion on their part, that their enemies have thought them deserving of the statues here erected in their memory. These two large elephants, mounted by the two heroes, have an air of grandeur, and inspire me with an awe and respect which I cannot describe.³²

Thus, Bernier’s observation became a primary source for Hoyland. But the English translator of Monserrate’s account had one more source from which he had quoted but which, for reasons known only to himself, he chose to leave unmentioned. This was the *Annals and*

³¹Merutunga, *The Prabandhacintāmaṇi or Wishingstone of Narratives Composed by Merutuṅga Ācārya*, translated by C. H. Tawney. *Bibliotheca Indica*, New Series, 931 (Calcutta, 1899), pp. 158–159.

³²Bernier, *Travels*, p. 257. Almost simultaneously with Bernier, another French traveller, Jean de Thevenot, visited the Delhi Red Fort and likewise noticed the two statues of elephant-mounted warriors at the gate. He did not give any information and, in his own words, left a more detailed description to his compatriot Bernier who was more knowledgeable on the subject. See *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri. Being the Third Part of the Travels of M. de Thevenot into the Levant and the Third Part of a Voyage Round the World by Dr John Francis Gemelli Careri*, (ed.) Surendranath Sen (Delhi, 1949), pp. 59–60.

Antiquities of Rajasthan by the celebrated Scottish Orientalist Colonel James Tod (first published in two volumes, 1829 and 1832).³³

In his book Tod gave a full account on the siege of Chittor by Akbar's army and stated that "Jaimall of Badnor and Patta of Kelwa" belonged to the "sixteen superior vassals of Mewar".³⁴ He eulogised the valour and gallantry of both brave Rajputs, especially the teenage Patta and his mother (his comparison of her with Spartan women was borrowed by Hoyland almost verbatim); described Jaimal's murder by Akbar; and elaborated, in gory detail, on the massacre of the survivors by Mughal soldiers and the *jauhar* (self-immolation) of the womenfolk. This account ended with the following observation:

But the conqueror of Chitor evinced a more exalted sense, not only of the value of his conquest, but of the merits of his foes, in erecting statues to the names of Jaimall and Patta at the most conspicuous entrance of his palace in Delhi³⁵; and they retained that distinction even when Bernier was in India.³⁶

By the time of Hoyland's comment on Monserrate, the above-described version had already been established in both academic and popular discourse. Prior to the publication of Hoyland's translation, it was, for instance, narrated in the 1896 book on Agra history and architecture by Syad Muhammad Latif, who added that even after the elephant statues were moved to Delhi their previous station in Agra fort was known as the *Hāthī pol* or Elephant gates.³⁷

All the same, other specialists contested the version as suggested by Hoyland and his sources. After visiting Delhi the celebrated archaeologist Alexander Cunningham – in two publications³⁸ – provided a detailed account on the remains of the statues: demolished on the orders of Aurangzeb, they were not fully destroyed but broken to pieces and found, in a dilapidated condition, by the British in 1863 in one of the corners of the Delhi Red Fort. Charles Campbell produced another report on this subject, almost simultaneously.³⁹ Both statements provide extremely important evidence: the elephant and human figures were life-size, the former were of black marble, the latter of red sandstone with decorations

³³James Tod's life, career, and views have been analysed in the a number of high-level studies including N. Peabody, "Tod's Rajasthan and the Boundaries of Imperial Rule in the Nineteenth-Century India", *Modern Asian Studies* 36, 1 (1996), pp. 185 – 220; N. Peabody, *Hindu Kinship and Polity in Precolonial India* (Cambridge, 2003); J. Freitag, *Serving Empire, Serving Nation. James Tod and the Rajputs of Rajasthan* (Leiden and Boston, 2009).

³⁴J. Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan of the Central and Western Rajput States of India*, (ed.) William Crooke, I (Oxford, 1920), p. 380.

³⁵A mistake by Tod, as Akbar's capital was Agra, not Delhi the capital of Shah Jahan, where Bernier saw the statues. A similar mistake was made by K. Shreitmuller in Baedeker's guide: Schreitmuller, *India*, p. 361.

³⁶Tod, *Annals*, p. 382.

³⁷S. M. Latif, *Agra historical and descriptive with an account of Akbar and his court and of the modern city of Agra*. (Delhi, 1896 [reprint 2003]), p. 76. This is the name for the gates nowadays as well.

³⁸The first was in the *Journal of the Bengal Asiatic Society* I (1862–63), pp. 225–230. The second, and more detailed one, was in A. Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India. Four Reports Made During the Years 1862 – 63 – 64 – 65 by Alexander Cunningham CSI*, I (Simla, 1871).

³⁹Charles Campbell was one of those British officers who found the statue pieces. One year afterwards, he published the inventory of the findings. According to him, there were 117 fragments of elephant bodies, three human body parts, four hand fragments and one full head, apart from a host of unidentifiable minor pieces. C. Campbell, "Memorandum of the life-sized statues, lately exhumed inside the palace of Delhi", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 33 (1865), p. 159.

of white and yellow marble. Cunningham had no doubt that both⁴⁰ statues depicted Hindus “as their dresses open over the right breast”.⁴¹ Later on, another celebrity of Indian archaeology, J. H. Marshall, also published a paper on the excavated remnants of the elephant statues. Entrusted in 1903 by Lord Curzon with the task of rebuilding the statues, he inspected the available remnants and criticised the reports of his predecessors, Cunningham, Campbell and Carr, for a number of incorrect statements on the number and physical state of the fragments.⁴²

Quoting all available data on the sculptures in question, Cunningham opposed Bernier and Tod only as concerned Akbar’s motives’. In contrast, the renowned archaeologist refused to believe that Akbar, who “prided himself on having killed Jaymal with his own hand” and “assumed the title of *Ghazi* (or warrior for the faith) after putting to death with his own hand in cold blood his able, gallant, and wounded antagonist *Himu*⁴³ [italics in the original]”, could “afterwards erect statues in honour of any infidel Hindus, however noble in blood, or gallant in the field”.⁴⁴ Furthermore, Cunningham suggested:

When I recollect, also, the position that the statues occupied, one on each side of the eastern gateway of the Agra fort, I cannot help feeling that they stood, like the two horsemen at the gate of the Horse Guards in London, as sentinels at the gate of their imperial foe, to do the honour to their conqueror. Assuming this view to be correct, I can understand why Shâhjahân [diacritics in the original] removed them to Delhi to occupy the same position at the gate of his new citadel. Under the same view I can also understand why they were spared for a time by the bigoted Aurangzib. On the other hand, if we suppose with Bernier and Tod that the statues were set up in honour of the two Rajput warriors, their re-erection by Shâhjahân is to me quite incomprehensible.⁴⁵

Thus, Cunningham’s version was quite similar to that of Monserrate but which the celebrated archaeologist did not quote: the statues, according to the latter, were erected on the order of Akbar with the purpose of glorifying the emperor and humiliating his foes. Perhaps it was Cunningham with whom – without naming him – *Cambridge Shorter History of India* (1934) took dispute when it commented:

⁴⁰In his 1876 book on the archaeology and architecture of Delhi, Stephen Carr stated that, as the remains seen by him suggested, each elephant had two riders, the warrior and the driver (*mahaut*). S. Carr, *The Archaeology and Monumental Remains of Delhi* (Calcutta, 1876), pp. 221 – 223. Curiously, no source quoted in my study mentioned the drivers. On one hand, the *mahauts* could be in place if the statues presented aristocratic Rajputs. On the other, Campbell’s inventory also does not corroborate Carr’s suggestion.

⁴¹Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India. Four Reports*, pp. 227 – 230. Such a clear distinction between Hindus and Muslims with reference to the opening of their dresses over the right or left breast is doubtful.

⁴²J. H. Marshall, “Restoration of Two Elephant Statues, at the Fort of Delhi”, *Archaeological Survey of India. Annual Report. 1905–1906* (Calcutta, India, 1909), pp. 33–42.

⁴³Cunningham’s version of Hemu’s death differs from the record by Abu-l Fazl. According to the latter, when Hemu, wounded and imprisoned, was brought before Akbar and Bairam Khan, the guardian of the thirteen-year old emperor and real commander of the Mughal army during the second Panipat battle (1556), Akbar refused to kill the prisoner who was ultimately slain by Bairam Khan. See Abu-l Fazl Allami, *Akbar Nāma*, translated by H. Beveridge, II (Calcutta, 1907, reprint 2000), p. 229. In no less contradiction with historical records is the attempt by Cunningham to present Akbar as a Hindu-bashing Muslim fanatic.

⁴⁴Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India. Four Reports*, p. 220.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 230. For a similar argumentation in a modern study, see C. E. B. Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India*, I (IV) (Cambridge, 1992), p. 112.

Some have conjectured that Akbar intended to insult the dead by representing them as his doorkeepers, but this is unjust. He has enough to answer for the atrocities committed at Chitor, and he had a genuine admiration for his gallant foes.⁴⁶

One more counter-version was suggested by H. G. Keene in his *Handbook for Visitors to Delhi and Its Neighbourhood* (1882). After repeating Bernier's narrative on Jaimal and Patta, Keene quoted⁴⁷ – as an earlier and so more authoritative account – from the travelogue by William Finch who had visited Mughal India during Jahangir's reign and described the statues in question as “two *Rājāvs* in stone who were slain in the King's *Darbār* before the King's eyes, for being over-bold in speech, they selling their lives bravely, in remembrance of which they are here placed [*italics and diacritics in the original*]”.⁴⁸ In the original version of Finch's travelogue a ‘marginal note’ note was attached to this account: “It is said that they were two brothers, Rajputs, tutors to a prince, their nephew, whom the King demanded of them. They refused, and were committed; but drew on the officers, slew twelve, and at last, by multitudes oppressing, were slain, and here have elephants of stone and themselves figured”.⁴⁹ William Foster, who edited Finch's travelogue in 1921, added that “it is uncertain whether this note is by Finch or by Purchas⁵⁰, but the former seems more likely”.⁵¹ Either way, the testimony by Finch (or Purchas) was, according to Keene, more trustworthy than Bernier's account written half a century later. This version, if accepted, suggests that the statues embodied the Rajput warriors but had to do with neither Akbar nor Chittor, and instead were erected later by order of Jahangir. To strengthen his argument, Keene turned to Jahangir's memoirs.⁵²

Indeed, in his *Tuzuk-i Jahāngīrī* Akbar's successor narrated some ‘strange’ events that took place in the royal palace of Agra on 28 December 1605. Three (not two) sons of a Rajput Raja by the name of Akhairaj Kachhwaha served at Jahangir's court. The elder of the three, Abhai Ram, “had done improper acts” but the king “winked at his faults” for some time. However, when Jahangir was informed of Abhai Ram's intention to send his family away from Agra and to join the Sisodiyas (at that time hostile to both his own clan and the Mughals), the king had had to react. He suggested that some of his Rajput courtiers “become security for them” but as nobody agreed due to “their excessive turbulence and bad disposition”, the king ordered the arrest of Abhai Ram and his brothers. The brothers put up a fierce fight against the courtiers dispatched to arrest them, and were finally killed “as a warning to many”.⁵³ The episode of a palace fight, as narrated by Jahangir, hardly suggests the

⁴⁶Dodwell (ed.), *Cambridge Shorter History of India*, II, p. 350. I am grateful to Prof. Bir Good Gill from Amritsar for a convincing argument, in an oral communication: if Akbar had intended to humiliate the Chittor warriors and present them as his doorkeepers, the statues would have never been mounted on elephants, since the elephant had been for centuries associated in Indian culture with royalty, glory and honour.

⁴⁷H. G. Keene, *Handbook for Visitors to Delhi and Its Neighbourhood* (Calcutta, 1882), pp. 68–69.

⁴⁸Foster, *Early Travels*, p. 183.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

⁵⁰Samuel Purchas (1577–1626), a British writer and diplomat, continued the project, initiated by Richard Hakluyt (1552/53–1616), of collecting and publishing the notes and memoirs by European travellers to various parts of the world. Purchas was the first editor and publisher of Finch's travelogue.

⁵¹*Ibid.*

⁵²Keene, *Handbook*, pp. 69–70.

⁵³Jahangir, *The Tuzuk-i Jahāngīrī or Memoirs of Jahāngīr*, translated by Alexander Rogers, (ed.) Henry Beveridge (London, 1909), pp. 29–30.

ruler's admiration and desire to glorify the culprits. Nor did the memoirs mention any nephew whom the slain Rajputs refused to surrender. Thus, the testimony by Finch (or Purchas), put forward by Keene, turned out to be similar to the counter versions or 'red herrings' so often employed by the authors of detective stories to divert the investigation for some time from its correct path. In making his argument, Keene did not just consider Monserrate's account, published in English some forty years after Keene's *Handbook*, but he also ignored the most authoritative testimony, that of Abu-l Fazl, who in his celebrated *Ā'in-i Akbarī* described the Agra fort and mentioned briefly that "at the eastern gate are two elephants of stone with their riders graven with exquisite skill".⁵⁴ And that was all that Akbar's closest friend and biographer found necessary to relate about the statues: notably, for him, they were not – as for Finch – "two rajas" but just "two elephants of stone with their riders".

Perhaps the earlier of the hitherto known European attempts to attribute the statues to the defenders of Chittor was made in 1629–30 by the *Hindustan Chronicle*, today preserved in the Dutch Record Office (in the Hague) in two hand-written versions, one reporting on Jahangir's reign, the other being a continuation of the narrative up to the beginning of Shah Jahan's: the former was reportedly authored by the Dutch trader Pieter van den Broeke, the latter by Francisco Pelsaert.⁵⁵ The Dutch document, almost thirty years before Bernier, describes the siege of Chittor by Akbar's army and heroism of its defenders; Jaimal and Patta are merged by the Dutch narrators into one person. And, ultimately, "Akbar had the figures of Jaimal Patta and of another chief, sitting on elephants, carved in stone or plaster and, in memory of this victory, they were placed on either side of the large inner entrance of his castle at Agra".⁵⁶

This narrative is of interest as a transitional one from Monserrate to Bernier. The Dutch agree with the Portuguese missionary that the statues were intended to glorify Akbar's victory and not his adversaries. However, in the Dutch version, those whom Monserrate had styled as "petty kings" were, for the first time as hitherto known, associated with the defenders of Chittor, and this makes the Dutch narrative closer to that of Bernier. Perhaps it was from the Dutch chronicle, published in 1631 as part of de Laet's popular book *Description of India and Fragment of Indian history*, that the French doctor took his information on the Agra statues. It is difficult now to ascertain from where the Dutch authors obtained the story – it was hardly possible that they had concocted it themselves. Some popular discourse, most probably oral, could have existed.

Henry Beveridge, the renowned British Indologist and translator of Abu-l Fazl's *Akbar-Nāma*, suggested a further counter-version. As the editor and author of commentaries on the translation of *Tuzuk-i Jahāngīrī* by A. Rogers, he noted the data on two monuments erected at the order of Jahangir eleven years after the Abhai Ram episode; curiously, these statues also depicted Rajput warriors. As is well known, Jahangir, jealous of Akbar's glory, was especially proud of the fact that it was he, not Akbar, who had ultimately succeeded in subduing the rebellious Sisodiya clan. After a long resistance Amar Singh, the son of the celebrated Rana Pratap, offered allegiance to the Mughals in 1614 and, as per the

⁵⁴ Abu-l Fazl Allami, *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, II, translated by H. S. Jarrett (Delhi, 1978), p. 191.

⁵⁵ *A Contemporary Dutch Chronicle of Mughal India*, translated and edited Brij Narain M. A. and Sri Ram Sharma M. A. (Calcutta, 1957), pp. 1–4.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

established practice, sent his son Karan Singh to Jahangir's court. Karan Singh served the king faithfully and enjoyed his favours. In 1616, Jahangir, according to his memoirs, ordered "the quick-handed stone-cutters to carve full-sized figures of the Rānā and his son Karan out of marble. On this day they were completed and submitted to me. I ordered them to be taken to Agra and placed in the garden below the *jharoka* [exhibition-window] [diacritics and italics in the original]".⁵⁷

It was these statues, according to Beveridge, that Bernier saw in Delhi. In his opinion, the *tarkāb* in the Persian original, meaning 'composite' or 'complex', could be read as 'assembled', signifying that each statue comprising two 'assembled' figures – of an elephant and its rider. Beveridge even went to the extent of suggesting that "even if not originally mounted statues, may they not afterwards have been set up on the Akbar's stone elephants or on the Gwalior elephant?"⁵⁸ Beveridge's suggestion, however, added more confusion to the already intricate case. Firstly, as Beveridge himself admitted in the note to the translation of the *Tuzuk-i Jahāngīrī*,⁵⁹ Jahangir mentioned statues of marble while the remains unearthed in Delhi testified to the elephants being of marble and the riders of sandstone. Secondly, Jahangir, according to his memoirs, ordered the placement of the statues not at the gates of the fortress but in the garden inside. And, thirdly, there is no evidence that the statues of Amar Singh and his son were 'mounted' on the marble elephants previously installed by Akbar, and if that was the case, what then had happened to the 'original' riders mentioned by all witnesses including the most authoritative one, Abu-l Fazl?

There were other versions also put forward by different scholars. For instance, in the opinion of C. Campbell, the statues unearthed in Delhi had been brought by Shah Jahan from Gwalior rather than from Agra, and so had nothing to do with the Chittor heroes.⁶⁰ Beveridge too suggested Gwalior as the origin of the elephants in the 'composite' statues. J. H. Marshall and E. B. Havell strongly argued that the remains of the statues exhumed in Delhi had certainly not been the ones erected in Agra. They insisted that the size of the elephant footprints visible on the stone plinths that had housed the statues in Agra⁶¹ did not match the size of the Delhi fragments.⁶² All in all, the discussion about the elephant statues discovered in Delhi and the problem of their attribution proved rather active in late nineteenth-early twentieth-century academic discourse; new versions may also appear in future as well.⁶³

⁵⁷The *Tuzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, p. 332.

⁵⁸H. Beveridge, "The Elephant Statues of Agra and Delhi", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (July 1909), p. 743. The celebrated fortress of Gwalior had its own Elephant Gate adorned by a life-size elephant statue with a driver (*mahaut*) and a rider. Abu-l Fazl described it as one that "fills the beholder with astonishment". *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, II, p.192. This statue was mentioned by Babur and Monserrate as well. Cunningham suggested that this masterpiece was appropriated by "Muzaffar Khan, who held the fortress for 19 years, from the assession of Shah Jahan in A. D. 1628 to 1647". Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India. Four Reports*, p. 337.

⁵⁹The *Tuzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, p. 332, note 3.

⁶⁰Campbell, "Memorandum", pp.160 – 161.

⁶¹Unfortunately, it is not possible to see these footprints now in the Agra fort. The area adjacent to the Elephant gates is occupied by the garrison and, thus, not available to visitors.

⁶²Marshall, *Restoration*, p. 41; E. B. Havell, *A Hand-Book of Agra and the Taj Sikandra, Fatehpur-Sikri and the Neighbourhood* (Delhi, 1912 [reprint 2003]), pp. 40 – 41.

⁶³One of this article's anonymous reviewers suggested that in the *Tārīkh-i Alfi*, a millennial history of Islam commissioned by Akbar and completed by a group of Indo-Iranian scholars in 1592, the description of the siege of Chittor includes an episode when, after the final storm, Akbar mounted an elephant (*bar fil savār shud*) and, accompanied by his court, entered the fort, which was followed by mass slaughter (*qatl-i ām*) of the defenders [Qazi Ahmad Tatavi and Asaf Khan Qazvini, *Tārīkh-i Alfi (Tārīkh-i hazār sālah-i Islām)*, (ed.) Ghulam Reza Tabatabai

Perhaps it will now be impossible to ascertain whether the statue remains in Delhi corresponded to the sculptures described by Abu-l Fazl and European visitors to Mughal India. Nor is it possible to have a clear idea of what Bernier really saw in Delhi – copies of the Agra sculptures (what happened to their originals in that case?) or the original statues, associated or not with Jaimal and Patta of Chittor?

Telling Silence

Of more interest is another discrepancy that emerges from the data discussed above. Why was it that Akbar's contemporaries – Abu-l Fazl and Monserrate – did not associate the construction of the statues with the emperor's chivalrous attitude towards his enemies, while some decades later the Dutch travellers and Bernier (or, more precisely, those from whom these Europeans obtained their information) were sure that the sculptures in question had been built by Akbar to glorify Jaimal and Patta?

The silence of Abu-l Fazl appears to be especially suspicious. He was Akbar's biographer, friend and confidant, one of the ideologues of his reforms aimed at turning the Mughal empire into a mighty state, strongly founded upon the Mughal-Rajput union. Akbar was eulogised by Abu-l Fazl as an ideal 'perfect man', a wise, generous and merciful king, capable of pardoning his enemies and glorifying their valour. Indeed, Akbar's policy was aimed at turning the Rajputs from ever-rebellious foes into faithful vassals and 'supporting pillars' of the empire. With this purpose in mind, Akbar, and his successors in due course, entered into marital alliances with the most powerful Rajput clans and offered Rajputs high positions at the court. Against this background, the story of building monuments to the valiant Rajputs could be extremely useful for both the imperial policy and Abu-l Fazl as its ideologue and historiographer. However, neither the well-informed minister nor the observant missionary, Monserrate, mentioned the defenders of Chittor in connection with the statues. In Monserrate's record, the statues referred to a certain war and "petty kings" killed by Akbar, which makes it possible to associate the statues with Chittor, but the latter was not the only fortress where Akbar personally participated in the storming attacks. Abu-l Fazl's narrative described the statues as a decorative object and nothing else; he did not even clarify whether the sculptures had been specially built on Akbar's order or brought from some place, possibly Chittor itself.⁶⁴

Nevertheless, perhaps Abu-l Fazl, due to some reason, did not find it necessary to refer to the history of the monuments that he just briefly mentioned in one phrase, and we should turn for detailed information to other contemporary sources – primarily the official documents and chronicles narrating the story of the siege of Chittor? The *Fathī Nāma- i Chitor*,

Majd, XIII (Tehran, 1382/2002), pp. 5 – 6]. The same text features two more 'heroic' elephants who, despite being wounded, caused great destruction in the enemy ranks. This evidence made the reviewer suggest that the statues in question could have been erected in the memory of this episode and later re-interpreted. This would somehow tally with Monserrate's version of the statues glorifying Akbar himself, not his adversaries. In this case, it is unclear why the statues were two in number. Moreover, in my opinion, such monumental eulogising of a Muslim king, and in his lifetime, would be too daring even for the liberal and innovative spirit of Akbar's epoch.

⁶⁴There is an oral narrative, corroborated by no reliable written source known to me, that to commemorate his victory Akbar ordered the placement of the gate of the Chittor fort in his Agra residence courtyard. There is indeed a beautifully carved gate in the Agra fort, which guides mention as the gate from Chittor.

dated 9 March 1568, seems to be one of the earliest records on the subject.⁶⁵ Such ‘victory communiqués’ were usually sent, after major victories, to the capital, provincial centres and Indian principalities outside the Mughal realm. Apart from the *Fath Nāma-i Chitor*, the story of the Chittor siege was related in four contemporary and near contemporary chronicles, well-known to all Mughal history students: the *Akbar Nāma* by Abu-l Fazl, the *Ṭabaqāt-i Akbarī* by Nizam ud-din Ahmad, the *Tārīkh-i Akbarī* by Muhammad Arif Qandahari and, last but not least, the ‘oppositional’ *Muntakhab ut-tavārīkh* by Abd al-Qadir Badauni.⁶⁶

Differing in some details, these texts describe the Chittor campaign almost identically. The *casus belli*, according to all four, was the refusal by Rana Udai Singh Sisodiya, the ruler of Mewar, to acknowledge Mughal suzerainty. When Akbar was on a hunting expedition near the borders of Mewar, the Rana did not come to pay obeisance to the emperor, nor did he send his son with tribute, as per the existing rules.⁶⁷ Moreover, the Rana demonstratively strengthened the fortifications and garrison of Chittor. Such behaviour could be viewed by Akbar as open defiance, especially sensitive and provocative in circumstances when Mughal sovereignty over the Rajput principalities had been to a considerable extent formal, based primarily upon Mughal armed dominance and facilitated by the seemingly never-ending hostility between Rajput clans. Despite the fact that Akbar did not have a big army to hand, he invaded Mewar and besieged Chittor. Udai Singh fled the fortress and left its defence to his trusted vassals, Saindas Jaimal⁶⁸ and Udaibhan Patta. Thereafter, the *Fath Nāma-i Chitor* and the chronicles offer a detailed description of the labours and losses of the siege, the failed attempts of frontal assault and the mining of the walls (the untimely explosion of a mine caused heavy losses among the Mughal warriors), the emperor’s personal gallantry, his sniper shot that killed Jaimal,⁶⁹ the breach in the wall, the final

⁶⁵It was written, as mentioned in the text itself, in Ajmer, which Akbar visited shortly after the conquest of Chittor to pray at the grave of the venerated Sufi saint, Muin ud-din Hasan Chishti. The original of the text is preserved in Aligarh as a part of the document collection compiled by a top Mughal official, Sayid Abdul Qasim Khan Namakin. In 1972, Ishtiaq Ahmed Zilli published an English translation of the text and in 2007 its Persian original. See I.A. Zilli, “Fathnama –i Chitor, March 1568. An Annotated Translation”, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*. 33rd Session, Muzaffarpur (Delhi, 1972); I. A. Zilli, *The Mughal State and Culture 1556-1598. Selected Letters and Documents from Munshaat-i Namakin* (Delhi, 2007), pp. 55 – 61.

⁶⁶For a fresh view on the reasons of Badauni’s opposition to Akbar see Ali Anooshahr, “Mughal historians and the memory of the Islamic conquest of India”, *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 4, 3 (2006), pp. 274 – 300.

⁶⁷Abu-l Fazl narrated that one of the Rana’s sons was in the emperor’s retinue. Akbar ‘joked’ about his intention to punish Udai Singh for not paying respects; the prince took the joke seriously and fled the royal camp to inform his father about Akbar’s plan to attack Chittor. As a result, ‘jest became earnest’ and the irate Akbar attacked Chittor. Abu-l Fazl Allami, *Akbar Nāma*, II, pp. 442 – 443.

⁶⁸Jaimal belonged to Merta and was a relative of the celebrated *Bhakti* poetess Mira Bai. When the army of the Mughal viceroy of Malwa besieged Merta he managed to break through the enemy camp with a handful of warriors. His gallantry was praised even by hostile Mughal historians such as Badauni and Nizam ud-din Ahmad. Abdul-Qadir Ibn-i Muluk Shah Badaoni, *The Muntakhabu’t Tavārīkh*. II, tr. and (ed.) W. H. Lowe (Delhi, 1889 [reprint, 1972]), p. 105; Nizamuddin Ahmad, *The Ṭabaqāt-i Akbarī*. II, translated D. De (Calcutta, 1936), p. 343.

⁶⁹According to the Rajput oral histories, Jaimal was not killed but only wounded by Akbar’s shot and died later, in the final battle which he fought mounted upon the shoulders of his relative Kallaji. The latter, after Jaimal’s death, cut off his head as a sacrifice to the goddess Jagadamba (Durga). Kallaji remains a revered hero-saint in Mewar, and his devotees believe that he still protects them from various diseases. His cremation place is marked with a *chattrī* (pavilion) where *pūjā* is being held in his memory. There I bought a small collection of hymns to Kallaji by local poets; the episode of the Chittor siege is pivotal to almost every one of them [Satsangi Shriram Samarth (ed), *Śrī Kallā kāvyā suman* (Saroda, n. d.)], but, centered on Kallaji, they do not refer to the statues episode. The Kallaji cult has been discussed in detail by L. Harlan, *The Goddesses’ Henchmen. Gender in Indian Hero Worship* (New York, 2003), pp. 23 – 54.

assault, the self-immolation of the women, the bloody massacre of the survivors⁷⁰ – in other words, everything except Akbar's intention to glorify the defenders by building monuments to them.

Quite understandably, each of these texts described the Chittor siege in the tone and mood corresponding to the respective author's views and intentions. The *Fath Nāma-i Chitor* unequivocally relayed this campaign as a jihad, and its whole narrative breathes religious bigotry. It was, however, also possible that the 'victory communiqué' was written in accordance with existing canons and clichés that prescribed a certain form of expression in such documents narrating the 'Islamic conquest'. In Zilli's opinion, Indo-Muslim historiography prior to Akbar's period knew no idiom but that of jihad when describing war.⁷¹ It is likewise possible that the jihad rhetoric of the text in question corresponded to the genuine 'ideological stance' of Akbar and his court at the initial phase of his reign. This stance was, as is well known, abandoned later in favour of the strategies of Hindu-Muslim political integration in a strong centralised empire.

From the perspective of Badauni, Nizam ud-din Ahmad and especially Qandahari, the Chittor campaign was simply the war of a Muslim king against infidels. According to Qandahari, it was Satan himself that opposed Akbar in the form of Jaimal and his warriors.⁷² Abu-l Fazl, however, narrated the Chittor campaign in a different vein, as a war not for the sake of religion but for the consolidation of the state, against an insurgency of local chieftains. It was not by chance that he listed not only Muslim but also Hindu names among the warriors who had died or distinguished themselves during the siege of Chittor. Indeed, Rajputs from clans, such as the Kachhwahas, that were hostile to the Sisodiyas of Chittor and loyal to the Mughals participated in the siege.⁷³ But Abu-l Fazl, like other recorders of the event, did not mention Akbar's desire to commemorate his brave foes.

In order to listen to the other side of this story I turned to Rajput historical narratives. While I could not explore all of them, most of those available to me described the Chittor events in more or less detail, and praised the bravery of the defenders, but like their Mughal counterparts said nothing about the statues. For instance, the Sanskrit poem *Rājprāsasti mahākāvyaṇi* by Ranchod Bhatta, inscribed in 1661 upon the order of Raj Singh Sisodiya of Mewar on the stone slabs of the Rajsamand lake dam near Udaipur, narrates the history of the Sisodiyas in its fourth canto. As a member of this clan and Udai Singh's direct successor, Raj Singh would presumably have been interested in making the episode of the statues a part of the narrative. However, in the lines on Udai Singh, the bard mentioned the foundation of Udaipur but omitted Udai Singh's flight from Chittor (a shameful deed for a Rajput whatever the efforts by the bards to justify it),⁷⁴ and then briefly stated: "His [Udai

⁷⁰Zilli, *Fathnama-i Chitor*, pp. 350 – 361; Abu-l Fazl Allami, *Akbar Nāma*, II, pp. 454 – 477; Abd al-Qadir Badaoni, *The Muntakhabu't Tawāriki*, II, pp. 104 – 106; Nizamuddin Ahmad, *The Tabaqāt-i Akbarī*, II, pp. 343 – 348; Muhammad Arif Qandahari, *Tarikh-i Akbari. An Annotated Translation with Introduction by Tasneem Ahmad*. Foreword by Irfan Habib (Delhi, 1993), pp. 148 – 149.

⁷¹Zilli (ed.), *The Mughal State and Culture*, pp. 55 – 61.

⁷²Mouhammad Arif Qandahari, *Tarikh-i Akbari*, pp. 148 – 149.

⁷³It was Bhagwant Das Kachhwaha of Amber, Akbar's brother-in-law, who, according to Abu-l Fazl, explained to the emperor that the spurts of flame visible from behind the bastions of Chittor signified the *jauhar* of women and the forthcoming final sally of the defenders. Abu-l Fazl Allami. *Akbar Nāma*, II, p. 472.

⁷⁴In some Rajput narratives, Udai Singh did not escape from Chittor but was away from the fortress during the Mughal attack and had no opportunity to return.

Singh's] warriors Jaimal Rathor and Patta Sisodiya along with the hero Ishwardas⁷⁵ attained glory fighting against the Delhi ruler Akbar".⁷⁶ And that was all.

One of the forms of Rajasthani oral narratives on the past are historical songs or ballads (*gīt*) performed by professional bards. In the 1950s and 60s two multi-volume collections of such historical ballads appeared: *Prācīn Rājasthānī Gīt Saṅgrah* in twelve volumes and *Rājasthānī Vīr Gīt Saṅgrah* in four volumes. Unfortunately, the publishers did not attach any historical research or commentary worth its name to these volumes. Similar to all other oral genres, it is virtually impossible to produce historical attribution for such songs. Both collections contain ballads on the siege of Chittor and the gallantry of Jaimal and Patta. In lucid poetic style they narrate the bloody battle, Jaimal's and Patta's feats of valour and their proud refusal to surrender and thus betray their sovereign, even if the latter had abandoned Chittor – everything but the story of the statues.⁷⁷

A special case is the celebrated seventeenth-century historian Munhta (Mehta, Munhato) Nainsi from Jodhpur. In his *Khyāt*, a collection of dynastic histories of major Rajput principalities, he narrated the Chittor siege very briefly and impartially:

Padishah Akbar went against Chittor. In 1624,⁷⁸ the Rana fled. Jaimal Sisodiya,⁷⁹ Patta the son of Jaga and many others fell in the battle. In 1624 the Rana abandoned Chittor and founded Udaipur.⁸⁰

Then, quite unexpectedly, Nainsi revisited the Chittor siege in his chapter on the Hada dynasty of Bundi. In 1568–9, Akbar besieged their fortress Ranthambhor and, unlike the Chittor war, after five weeks of siege and with Bhagwant Das Kachhwaha as mediator, the ruler Surjan Rai entered into negotiations with Akbar. He ultimately surrendered, acknowledged Mughal suzerainty and received a rich fief in return.⁸¹ Describing these events, Nainsi was extremely scornful of Surjan Rai who, being Udai Singh's vassal, yielded the fort without his consent and betrayed his suzerain. Nainsi wrote with disdain:

Back to Agra, the Padishah ordered Patta Sisodiya, son of Jaga, and Jaimal, son of Viramde, mounted on the elephants, to be depicted⁸² upon the Agra gate, and to represent Surjan as a dog. Surjan was put to shame and went to Varanasi.⁸³

⁷⁵Ishwardas Chauhan, another Rajput general who had fought bravely against the Mughals in Chittor.

⁷⁶Ranchod Bhatta, *Mahākāvī Rānchod Bhaṭṭa pṛaṇītam Rājprāsastiḥ mahākāvyaṃ*. Sampādak Dā. Motilāl Menāriyā (Udaipur, 1973), p. 41. Here we find the same mistake making Delhi, not Agra, Akbar's capital. It was perhaps more natural for people in the seventeenth century and thereafter to refer to the Mughal emperors as 'Delhi rulers', not 'Agra rulers': the transfer of capital by Shah Jahan resulted, it seems, in this contamination of facts. Similarly, in folkloric jokes about Akbar and his keen-witted courtier Birbal, Akbar's capital is also Delhi.

⁷⁷In some ballads, the Chittor fort itself decries the flight of its ruler and prays to Jaimal for protection. The brave Rajput vows to die in battle but not break his fidelity to Udai Singh; Akbar, says he, will enter Chittor only after the death of all its defenders. G. L. Sharma (ed.), *Prācīn Rājasthānī Gīt Saṅgrah*. Khāṇḍ 1. (Udaipur, 1955), pp. 18–24; *Prācīn Rājasthānī Gīt Saṅgrah*. Khāṇḍ 8 (Udaipur, 1957), pp. 54–57.

⁷⁸Corresponds to 1567 CE.

⁷⁹Nainsi's mistake. Jaimal belonged to the Rathor clan.

⁸⁰Munhta Nainsi, *Munhtā Naiṅṣī rī khyāt*. Sampādak Badarīprasād Sākariyā. Khāṇḍ 1 (Jodhpur, 1960), p. 21.

⁸¹Discussed in detail by C. Talbot, "Justifying Defeat. A Rajput Perspective on the Age of Akbar", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 55, 2–3 (2012), pp. 329–368.

⁸²The verb used in the text is *māḍhiyā*, which has meanings such as 'depicted', 'decorated'. Badri Prasad Sakariyā, the editor of the *Khyāt*, in a note to this fragment, suggested the translation to modern Hindi as 'ordered to paint' (*citrī karvāye*). It means that, in the Nainsi version, Jaimal and Patta were visualised not in sculptures but in paintings. However, the verb *māḍhnā* has other meanings such as 'to wear' and, maybe more importantly for this context, 'to respect', 'to revere'. This makes it possible to translate the phrase as 'ordered to be commemorated upon the Agra gate', thus allowing to suggest that the heroes could be visualised in sculptures as well.

⁸³*Munhtā Naiṅṣī rī khyāt*, Khāṇḍ 1, p. 112.

Analysing the story of Surjan Rai, Cynthia Talbot (to whom I am obliged for bringing this important episode to light) has styled Nainsi's testimony as "anecdote" and "gossip that Nainsi found worth repeating". Indeed, as Talbot has rightly suggested, it was "counter-productive" for Akbar to insult his newly recruited vassal and officer in such a public and rude manner.⁸⁴ But for the context of this study it is important that a certain narrative on Akbar's building of statues in commemoration of his Rajput foes did exist, perhaps in oral form, to be recorded by the Dutch merchants, Nainsi, Bernier and Tod.

The statues story as compensatory narrative

The huge body of narratives on Rajput principalities' resistance (albeit not in the modern nationalist meaning) to the two waves of Muslim invasions in the twelfth-fifteenth and sixteenth-seventeenth centuries represents a mighty and tragic 'counter-epic' to the 'epic of conquest' as embodied in the chronicles of the Delhi sultanate and Mughal empire.⁸⁵ This resistance in an absolute majority of cases ended in the defeat of the Rajputs, who, given that their valour was recognised and praised even by their enemies, were ultimately powerless in the face of the more effective military organisation and tactic of both the 'Turks' and Mughals. As a result, almost all episodes of Rajput 'counter-epic' were elaborated upon by the narratives of different epochs, genres and authors as one and the same story: namely, invasion of 'Turks', siege of the fortress, final battle in which Rajput warriors display wonders of gallantry, fighting even with severed heads, the heroic death of all Rajputs, their wives' self-immolation, and the meeting of the fallen heroes and their spouses (as well as with the celestial damsels) in heaven. As Harlan has aptly observed, most of the heroes glorified and worshipped by modern Rajputs, especially in Mewar, are "much-adored losers".⁸⁶ Hence, the specificity of the Rajput martial ethos: valiant death in battle or 'departure of a hero' (*vīrgati*) was viewed as a sacrifice to the patron goddess of the hero's clan (*kuldevī*) and thus more desirable and glorious than victory itself. Only by valiant death could a warrior be 'useful in battle' (for example, the Hindi idiom for heroic death in battle, *yuddh mē kām ānā*).⁸⁷ Such an attitude worked, I would suggest, as a psychological compensation of sorts: Rajput warriors died, lost their land to the invaders but attained moral victory and glory. Going to heaven, they received a reward that compensated for, in mass consciousness, the trauma of defeat.

⁸⁴Talbot, "Justifying Defeat", p. 348.

⁸⁵Discussed in more detail in A. Ahmad, "Epic and Counter-Epic in Medieval India", *Journal of American Oriental Society* 83, 4 (1963), p. 470 – 476; R. Sreenivasan, "Alauddin Khalji Remembered: Conquest, Gender and Community in Medieval Rajput Narratives", *Studies in History* XVIII, 2 (July–December 2002), pp. 275 – 296; R. Sreenivasan, *The Many Lives of a Rajput Queen. Historic Pasts in India c. 1500 – 1900*. (Seattle, 2007), pp. 12 – 14.

⁸⁶Harlan, *The Goddesses' Henchmen*, p. 37. In distinction from other cultures where victories are celebrated while defeats are either mourned or 'forgotten', Rajasthan, as observed by Harlan, has a tradition of organising festivities in commemoration of historical catastrophes. For instance, the three episodes when Chittor was stormed (by Ala ud-din Khalji the Delhi sultan in 1303, by Bahadur Shah the sultan of Gujarat in 1535 and by Akbar in 1568) have been commemorated in Chittor since 1960s by a jovial festival with a paradoxical name *Jauhar melā* – 'the *jauhar* fair'. The Rajasthani tradition of celebrating military defeats has also been discussed by J. Kamphorst, *In Praise of Death: History and Poetry in Medieval Marwar (South Asia)* (Amsterdam, 2008).

⁸⁷Harlan, *The Goddesses' Henchmen*, pp. 19 – 25; Vanina, *Medieval Indian Mindscapes*, pp. 148 – 50.

Similar compensation was required when some Rajput clans acknowledged Mughal suzerainty and entered marital alliances with the Mughal ruling family. Starting from Bharmal Kachhwaha of Amber, they married their daughters to Mughal emperors and princes to become, according to their own old tradition, vassals of the groom's family, and thus served their in-laws on the battlefield and at the royal court. This practice did not work in reverse: no Mughal princess was ever married to a Rajput, testifying to the inequality of Mughal-Rajput power relations. However, many Rajput princes accepted this unequal union with the Mughals not only succumbing to military pressure and preferring life to the 'departure of a hero'. Contemporary political realities and mutual interests brought the Mughals and Rajputs into alliance: on the one hand, the emperors wanted to stabilise their power and needed Rajput military might and prowess, while, on the other, the Rajputs viewed Mughal power as protector from aggressive rivals, mainly hostile clans.⁸⁸

However, the very possibility of marital alliance with and service to those who from an orthodox Hindu view were nothing but barbarians seemed unacceptable to many Rajputs. The Sisodiya rulers of Chittor and Udaipur declined to acknowledge Mughal sovereignty and put up an armed fight against the empire. The Sisodiyas refused the status of Rajputs to those who had allied with Mughals; according to oral tradition, the prudent rulers of Udaipur would not share food with the Kachhwahas during friendly gatherings or political talks. Udai Singh's son Maharana Pratap Singh (1540–97) fought against Akbar to the death and did not surrender even after defeat at Haldighati (1576) by the Mughal army led by Bhagwant Das Kachhwaha and his son Man Singh.⁸⁹ But the steady Sisodiyas could not escape inter-family discord: some of Pratap's relatives served Akbar and even fought on his side in the fateful Haldighati battle, with Pratap's son, as mentioned above, later surrendering to Jahangir. The Sisodiyas served later Mughal emperors as well. All these events for many Rajputs signified a total breakdown of their traditional world, which helps to explain why they needed compensatory narratives that (to a certain extent) could provide psychological comfort to those who served the Mughals as well as those who fought them. It was important in Akbar's period and perhaps even more so in subsequent times, especially

⁸⁸The political and cultural aspects of Mughal-Rajput alliances have been researched in detail by a number of scholars. See F. H. Taft, "Honor and Alliance: Reconsidering Mughal-Rajput Marriages", in *The Idea of Rajasthan. Explorations in Regional Identity*, (eds.) K. Schomer, J. L. Erdman, D. O. Lodrick and L. T. Rudolph, II (Delhi, 1994), pp. 215 – 241; S. Gordon, *Marathas, Marauders and State Formation in the Eighteenth Century India* (Delhi, 1994), pp. 190 – 192; N. P. Ziegler, "Rajput Loyalties During the Mughal Period", in *Kingship and Authority in South Asia*, (ed.) John F. Richards (Delhi, 1998), pp. 242– 284; J. F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire. The New Cambridge History of India*. (Delhi, 2000), pp. 20 – 24; H. Mukhia, *The Mughals of India*, p. 148 – 155; R. Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 167 – 169, 170 – 175.

⁸⁹Resistance to Mughals made Maharana Pratap a cult hero of modern Hindu communalism, glorified by all its ideologues as a model of 'Hindu resistance against Muslim invaders'. Pratap's mounted statues are observable in many cities of Rajasthan, his name is given to the University of Agriculture and Technology in Udaipur and other education centres. Apart from Rajasthan, Maharana Pratap is commemorated in Delhi and dozens of other Indian cities, which he had never visited. Even Chetak, Pratap's favourite war-horse, has become a cult figure: one of the trains from Delhi to Udaipur bears its name, perhaps a singular example of a train named after a horse. In 2013, the Sony Entertainment Television of India aired a TV serial 'Maharana Pratap, A Glorious Son of India (*Bhārat ke Vīr Putra Mahārānā Pratāp*)' wherein Maharana Pratap was portrayed as a valiant Hindu patriot of India and Akbar as a cruel and vicious invader.

during the reign of Aurangzeb whose policies provoked the Rajputs, including Raj Singh Sisodiya of Mewar, to rebel against the Mughals.⁹⁰

One important study of these compensatory narratives has been carried out by B. L. Bhadani from Aligarh Muslim University. Based upon a wide range of sources, his work offers a convincing, though too brief and cursory, analysis of Rajput historical ballads and other medieval texts praising Akbar as a second Rama. These narratives compared the conflict between Akbar and Maharana Pratap to the battles of Arjuna and Karna, two equally valiant and noble Mahabharata heroes who fought, due to the adverse course of destiny, in two hostile camps. In one of the ballads Akbar, having received the news of Pratap's death, publicly mourned and eulogised the brave Rajput for his refusal to surrender.⁹¹ In another ballad, Akbar praised the valour of Ishwardas, the companion of Jaimal and Patta.⁹² Such a motif seems to be frequent in Rajput narratives outside Rajasthan as well.⁹³

In the presentations of Rajput bards Akbar emerges as a generous, brave, worthy, and, more importantly, equal (in both valour and status) antagonist of the Chittor heroes and Maharana Pratap. That was why, in Nainsi's narrative, Akbar reacted to the Chittor resistance and Ranthambhor surrender in a 'very Rajput' way. He glorified Jaimal and Patta who had fought the Mughal army to the end as valiant foes and, no less significantly, as loyal vassals of their suzerain; at the same time he put to public shame Surjan Rai who had surrendered contrary to his overlord's will. To what extent this 'anecdote' corresponded with historical truth was of little interest to the Jodhpur historian; he seemed more concerned with the task, which Talbot has styled as "justifying defeat".

Some Rajput historical narratives analysed by Ziegler straightforwardly declared the Mughals to be a branch of Rajputs.⁹⁴ A contemporary poet Narottam unhesitatingly defined Akbar's reign as a "*hendū rāj*" or Hindu state.⁹⁵ This looks similar to some North Indian *Bhakti* narratives claiming Akbar to be a Brahman yogi, Balmukund, who by mistake had swallowed a cow's hair in milk, and consequently was punished by becoming a Muslim in his subsequent birth. The sub-conscious 'memory' of his Hindu origin explained, in the view of *Bhakti* hagiographers, Akbar's extremely benevolent and reverential conversations with the *sants* (even those who in reality lived well before or after his reign).⁹⁶ All these narratives, written and oral, created the image of a king who was Muslim only 'on

⁹⁰Raj Singh's rebellion and his defeat of the punitive Mughal army made this Rajput prince popular with nineteenth-century Indian nationalist writers such as the celebrated Bengali novelist Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay whose novel on Raj Singh depicts the latter as a gallant chevalier and a freedom fighter. S. Kaviraj, *The Unhappy Consciousness: Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay and the Formation of Nationalist Discourse in India* (Delhi, 1995), p. 146.

⁹¹B. L. Bhadani, "The Profile of Akbar in Contemporary Rajasthani Literature", *Social Scientist* 20, 9–10 (1992), pp. 47–51; *Prācīn Rājasthānī Gīt Saṅgrah*. Khāṇḍ 1, pp. 6–8, 21; *Rājāsthānī Vīr Gīt Saṅgrah*. Khāṇḍ 1, pp. 145–146.

⁹²*Rājāsthānī Vīr Gīt Saṅgrah*. Khāṇḍ II, p. 167.

⁹³For example, in the *Ratnabāvani*, a historical poem by the celebrated poet Keshavdas, Akbar likewise praised his vanquished Rajput foe, Ratansen Bundela of Orcha. This has been discussed in detail in A. Busch, *Poetry of Kings. The Classical Hindi Literature of Mughal India* (New York, 2011), pp. 30–31.

⁹⁴N. P. Ziegler, *Rajput Loyalties*, p. 269.

⁹⁵Narottam, "Narottam kṛt Māncarīt-rāsau", in *Māncarītāvalī. Āmber ke suprasiddh rājā Mān Singh ke carit ke sambandhit pāc rājasthānī racnāō kā saṅkalan*, (ed.) G. N. Bahura (Jaipur, 1990), p. 160–161. I am grateful to Allison Busch for sending me the copy of this text. See also Mukhia, *The Mughals of India*, pp. 62–63; Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam in India c. 1200–1800* (Delhi, 2004), pp. 139–140.

⁹⁶K. Sangari, "Tracing Akbar. Hagiographies, Popular Narratives, Traditions and the Subject of Conversion", in *Mapping Histories. Essays presented to Revinder Kumar*, (ed.) Neera Chandhoke (Delhi, 2000), pp. 9091; E. Vanina,

the surface' but in essence exhibited the valour, generosity and piety of a good Hindu raja. There was no shame in serving this king,⁹⁷ nor in giving a daughter or sister in marriage or even in losing a battle to him – a social and cultural equal. Such an Akbar could, in an oral or written narrative, glorify his enemies, vanquished but nevertheless respected and, more importantly, not alien; he could immortalise them in mounted statues – no matter if in reality the statues had nothing to do with the Rajputs of Chittor.

Some well-known works on late medieval Indian history offer a convincing analysis of the supra-communal alliance, and to a certain extent merger, of two North Indian martial elites, the Mughals and the Rajputs.⁹⁸ They were connected by blood (some Mughal emperors, including Jahangir and Shah Jahan, had Rajput mothers), by common values, their military ethos and aristocratic lifestyle; in more than one case the members of the two groups fraternised, exchanging their turbans according to the old Rajput tradition.⁹⁹ Up to the disintegration of the Mughal empire, Mughals and Rajputs pursued the same political goals and fought the same enemies, irrespective of religious persuasion.¹⁰⁰ The legend of the Agra sculptures was, I would therefore suggest, a part of a broader narrative, which was to provide ideological, social and psychological substantiation of this unique socio-cultural and political alliance in late medieval India.

Conclusion

The remnants of the statues unearthed from Delhi became a part of the collection of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). British archaeologists tried to restore the stray pieces and to join them in a certain whole. Marshall criticised this project as resulting in a “shapeless effigy”; to fit into it, “old and finely moulded fragments” had been “ruthlessly cut and chiselled, their value being destroyed thereby for all time”.¹⁰¹ Joseph David Beglar photographed the results of this work in 1875, and both images are available in the British Library.¹⁰² One of “ruthlessly” destroyed elephants with a rider was destined to ‘travel’ a lot through Delhi: it changed location several times, being installed first in front and then

“Describing the Common, Discovering the Individual: A Study in Some Medieval Indian Biographies”, in *Mind over Matter. Essays on Mentalities in Medieval India*, (eds.) D. N. Jha and Eugenia Vanina (Delhi, 2009), p. 85.

⁹⁷In an insightful article, Allison Busch has discussed the narratives on Akbar's general and nephew Man Singh Kachhwaha, praised by contemporary writers for loyal service to the Mughals. See A. Busch, “Portrait of a Raja in Badshah's World: Amrit Rai's Biography of Man Singh”, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 55 (2012), pp. 287 – 328.

⁹⁸D. H. A. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy: the Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450–1850* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 110 – 117; Gordon, *Marathas*, pp. 191 – 192.

⁹⁹Peabody, *Hindu Kinship*, p. 32.

¹⁰⁰One of the telling examples is the story of Mughal-Rajput response to the rising Maratha power. Rajput general Mirza Raja Jai Singh Kachhwaha led Mughal armies against the Maratha hero Shivaji Bhonsle. While the nineteenth- and twentieth-century nationalist historiography viewed this as ‘treason’ by a Hindu general who had warred against his co-religionists, for contemporary narratives it was only natural that a Kachhwaha prince would fight on the side of his sovereign and, more importantly, blood-related Mughal emperor against an alien Maratha, albeit a Hindu. Discussed in more detail in J. W. Laine, *The Epic of Shivaji. Kavindra Parmananda's Śivabhārata*. A translation and study by James W. Laine in collaboration with S. S. Bahulkar (Delhi, 2001), p. 258 – 271, 313; Vanina, *Medieval Indian Mindscapes*, pp. 166 – 167.

¹⁰¹Marshall, *Restoration*, p. 36.

¹⁰²Access numbers 1003877 and 1003878. Available online at <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/photocoll/s/019ph0000001003u00878000.html>, <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/photocoll/s/019ph0000001003u00877000.html> (accessed July 2019).

at the back side of the Chandni Chowk ‘Institute’ building¹⁰³ and later on in the Queen’s Garden (now Mahatma Gandhi Park).¹⁰⁴

In 1903, at the order of Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India, two black marble copies of the elephants, modelled by British sculptor R.W. Mackenzie and chiselled by some “Indian masters”, were installed on both sides of the Delhi Gate of the Red Fort.¹⁰⁵ These copies are still there, though inaccessible to tourists.¹⁰⁶ As for the original fragments, the ASI of independent India lamentably turned out to be more indifferent to these unique specimens of sixteenth-century art than its colonial predecessor had been. The ‘Alphabetical List’ of monuments preserved by the Delhi Circle of the ASI¹⁰⁷ does not mention them. All my efforts to find the remnants or at least to learn something about them failed – the museum personnel and ASI officials whom I interviewed, polite and hospitable as they were, had no information on the subject and, in most cases, exhibited no interest in it either. One has every reason to fear that the statue installed in the Queen’s Garden may have been destroyed during the park’s renovation and building of the Mahatma Gandhi memorial at its centre.

Thus, the ‘investigation’ attempted in this article can boast of only one modest result so far: that the statues seen by Monserrate, Finch and van der Broeke in Agra and Bernier in Delhi belonged to Akbar’s time. No written Indian narrative known to me, except that of Nainsi, mentioned Akbar’s desire to immortalise the Chittor generals, Jaimal and Patta, in these sculptures. It is quite possible that the statues were constructed not in somebody’s memory but as an element of decoration, very common for temples, palaces and fortresses in India and elsewhere – perhaps Campbell had every reason to compare them with “mere effigies like ‘Gog and Magog’ in the London Guildhall”.¹⁰⁸

But whatever the real purpose of their construction, these statues were destined for a long ‘afterlife’ in the historical imagination. The process of the Mughals’ domestication in India and their alliance with Rajputs was responsible for bringing to life a narrative that turned decorative sculptures into monuments – to both the valour of Rajputs and the ‘Indian-ness’ of Mughals. Hence, the story of Jaimal and Patta being commemorated by the admiring Akbar is related by guides to the numerous tourists who visit the magnificent fort of Chittor. These tourists pass reverentially by the *chatris* of Jaimal and Patta, watch the remnants of their houses destroyed by Akbar’s artillery, and, after nightfall, enjoy a ‘sound and light show’ that

¹⁰³The ‘Institute’ was an educational building later on converted into the Delhi Town Hall. For details see J. Hosagrahar, *Indigenous Modernities. Negotiating Architecture and Urbanism* (London and New York, 2013), pp. 53–54.

¹⁰⁴This was an old Delhi park, initially known as Jahanara Bagh, built by a Mughal princess especially for women and children. In colonial times it was reconstructed and renamed, first as Company Bagh (curiously, it is under this name, not the subsequent ones, that the local residents know it now), and then as Queen’s Gardens. Only a small part of it has survived until the present day as Mahatma Gandhi Park. See J. P. Sharma, “Disciplining Delhi. The 1857 Uprising and Remodelling of the Urban Landscape”, in *Architecture and Armed Conflict. The Politics of Destruction*, (eds.) J. M. Mancini and K. Bresnahan (London and New York, 2014).

¹⁰⁵G. Sanderson and M. Shuaib, *Delhi Fort: a Guide to the Buildings and Gardens* (Delhi, 1914 [reprint, 2000]), pp. 9–10.

¹⁰⁶The Delhi gate belongs to the ‘military-administrative’ part of the Red fort, closed to tourists. I was fortunate to have a brief look at them and the elephants built on Curzon’s order thanks to the courtesy of the ASI personnel and the guards.

¹⁰⁷Available online: http://asi.nic.in/asi_monu_alphalist_delhi.asp (accessed July 2019).

¹⁰⁸Campbell, “Memorandum”, p. 160.

dramatises the storming of the fortress and the heroic feats of its defenders, culminating with Akbar's order to install the sculptures of his valiant foes at the gate of his residence. This popular narrative, like others of its kind, lives an independent life and needs no historical proof. <eug.vanina@gmail.com>

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