

methodological engagement. Despite these shortcomings, the book's approach and ambition deserve praise: the use of archaeological evidence to interrogate historical narratives in specific contexts offers a promising avenue for understanding the transition from early historic to medieval South Asia.

**Gethin Rees**  
The British Library

ROBERT ELGOOD:

*Rajput Arms and Armour: The Rathores and Their Armoury at Jodhpur Fort.*

2 volumes. 1,024 pp. New Delhi: Niyogi Books, 2017. £200.

ISBN 978 93 85285 70 7.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X18000745

The author of these magnificently produced volumes has already established himself as an indefatigable cataloguer and interpreter of Rajput armoury, as may be judged from his previous survey of the Jaipur royal collection (reviewed in *BSOAS* 79/2, 442–3). On this occasion Elgood turns his attention to the arms and armour in the Mehrangarh Museum. While the sheer size and weight of these volumes precludes their use as a practical guide for visitors to Jodhpur Fort, they testify to the author's long-standing fascination with Rajput military history. Furthermore they demonstrate his intimate knowledge of the functions, manufacturing techniques and decorative designs of some 393 weapons in what must be one of the most comprehensive assemblages of arms in India.

In his opening chapter Elgood situates the Jodhpur collection within the broad context of Rajput history and martial culture, in particular that of the Mewar kingdom. The author explains the role of weapons in the courtly rituals of the Rathores, as well as in the religious rituals and festivals of the region. He points out the courage of the Mewar soldiers, who would rather have died in battle than surrender their arms. The following chapters outline the practice of commissioning and buying arms to equip the army, even though some were reserved for ceremonial use by the maharaja. Elgood notes that steel blades in India were highly valued, and not until the eighteenth century did they come to be embellished with gold and silver inlays, a technique known as damascening. From here Elgood reviews the production of arms and martial costumes under the Rajputs, the Mughals and Sikhs, drawing on contemporary historical sources, including reports by European military officers. He continues with a discussion of arms collecting, which became popular at Indian courts in the nineteenth century, including those in Rajasthan, before concluding with the inventory records of the Jodhpur silekhana (armoury).

From these general considerations Elgood proceeds to a typological catalogue of swords, distinguishing the different categories of khandas, talwars, teghs, bughdas and kirichs, as well as Persian shamsir blades, and even swords with European or European-type blades, known accordingly as firangis, some engraved with the names of their foreign manufacturers. Analysing the blades and hilts of individual weapons, the author identifies those of Mughal origin, several of which are portrayed in contemporary miniatures. While the earliest swords in Jodhpur date back to the beginning of the seventeenth century, a larger number are assigned to the reigns of Maharaja Ajit Singh, Abhay Singh and Bakht Singh in the following

century. At this point Elgood introduces a group of khanjar and katar daggers, bhala spear-heads and farsa axes. Several of these are associated with the Bhonsles, probably because a member of this Maratha family sought refuge at Jodhpur in the middle of the eighteenth century. Sword hilts with dated inscriptions from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are treated separately.

In the second volume Elgood continues his investigation by describing the swords commissioned by the Rathores from the middle of the nineteenth century. Persian craftsmen working in India made many of the blades, while European jewellers in Delhi or Calcutta may have been responsible for some of the hilts. The following section is dedicated to Indo-European swords, reflecting the close relationship that developed between the British and Jodhpur royal families. Examples include presentation swords and sabres engraved with appropriate dedications. Blades and hilts from Delhi and other Mughal centres are common, as evidenced in the swords and daggers associated with Aurangzeb, some marked with the characteristic Mughal umbrella motif. Rajputs who accompanied the Mughals on their conquest of the Deccan brought back with them katars, daggers and spears from Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and other battle sites in peninsular India, many of which are now in the Jodhpur collection. The following chapters describe knives, daggers, clubs, goads, axes, spears, pikes, lances and crutches. They testify to the variety of weapons of remarkable quality manufactured in different centres of northern India during the nineteenth century that made their way to Jodhpur. They include numerous shields, powder-flasks, helmets and shields.

Elgood concludes his exhaustive survey with translations of a record book of a wedding at Mehrangarh that details the weapons presented on this occasion, and of an extensive treatise on the manufacture of swords by a nobleman of Persian origin at the Mughal court in Delhi in the middle of the eighteenth century. In addition, he provides transcriptions of selected records in the Jodhpur armoury. These documents are followed by calendars of currencies and weights, a general glossary, and an arms glossary of 44 pages. Together with the wide-ranging bibliography and index, this abundance of data should satisfy the most demanding readers. It is only for this reviewer to congratulate the author for his meticulous scholarship, and the publisher for his insistence on generously scaled colour illustrations, many extending across two pages.

**George Michell**

---

CENTRAL ASIA

BRANDON DOTSON and AGNIESZKA HELMAN-WAŻNY:

*Codicology, Paleography, and Orthography of Early Tibetan Documents: Methods and a Case Study.*

(Weiner Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde Heft 89.) 217 pp. Vienna: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 2016. £26. ISBN 978 3 902501 27 1. doi:10.1017/S0041977X18000605

This book is a prescriptive “case study” of some uses of methodology in the study of manuscripts in which the authors claim “innovated results-driven methods in codicology, paleography, orthography, and lexicography” (p. 15) and to “unite in a single template the most important features for identifying scribes and schools, and for