Introduction

The "Hindu" Temple in Diachronic Context

What do we see when we look at a monument, and how do we come to see what we do? Far from the innocent ravages of time, the calculated aesthetics of the Indian temple today result from the confluence of religious performance, the politics of identity formation, the tension between neoliberal and socialist preservation models, and the display, erasure, and fragmentation of the visual and material record. Architecture gives an illusion of eternal permanence only to reveal a state of perpetual flux both in meaning and in form. Through a thorough examination of two sites in southern Rājāsthan, we gain insight into a process of curating from the field whereby the erstwhile colonial institutions and socialist state compete with a variety of private initiatives for the right to construct the past and future alike. Across India, ancient sites are put back into worship, left untouched, or visited by throngs of tourists and pilgrims. A diachronic history of temples can lead us to examine how various actors claimed power and authority and shaped notions of sacred space and ritual praxis over time.

A TEMPLE COMPARISON: NEW MATERIALISM IN A RĀJĀSTHANI CASE STUDY

Chosen among the Mēdapāṭa regional cohort of temples as the two in most active worship today, the Ambikā temple in Jagat and the Śri Ekliṅgjī temple in Kailāśpurī serve as a case study of the larger pan-Indian phenomenon of putting temples "back" into use and reflect modern people's praxis in great depth. In light of their particular histories, this book proposes that we look at Indian temples in a new way, as "catalyst" agents—generative architecture that sparks a wide variety

FIGURE 0.1. Thakur of Jagat and his wife pour ghee onto a sacrificial fire with priests from Īdar, Gujarat, on the occasion of the installation (*pratiṣṭhā*) ceremonies for the installation of a new twenty-first-century goddess into the tenth-century inner sanctum of the Ambikā temple, May 2002. © Deborah Stein.

of ritual and other activity, often far from the temple itself. As an active catalyst of a wide variety of human interaction, the temple burns brightly and is never used up (fig. 0.1). Beyond a single region or sectarian origin, the idea of South Asian religious monuments as catalysts elicits new modes of art historical inquiry far beyond the buildings or sculptural iconography alone. Whether we consider the aesthetics of the Taj Mahal today, a Chola bronze of Śivanataraja in a medieval procession, or the famous Jataka scenes on the gateways of Sanci, the idea that these architectural locations are catalysts for whole bodies of diachronic and ephemeral material practices and performative praxis expands our field of inquiry as art historians. Whereas one could misconstrue the core comparison of this book as a reinforcement of a false binary between a tantric/female/rural/populist periphery and an elite/male/dynastic center, the Ambikā temple in Jagat and the Śri Ekliṅgjī temple in Kailāśpurī offer much more than a simplistic dialectic. Both sites offer a radical array of materials beyond style and stone to propose an alternative to high modernist notions of Hindu temple architecture through new materialist approaches to butter, flour, vermilion, and the primary importance of the materiality of the stone itself over its mere figuration. Rather than create a dichotomy between center and periphery in a single time frame, these sites offer multiple perspectives that vary greatly from one era to the next—at times serving as key

centers of religious and political activities and other moments fading from the historical record entirely. Without the modern performance of the puja-paddhati at Śri Ekliṅgjī, the use of mantra in the installation rites at Jagat would not have had the same clarity, nor would the relationship between the books of ritual liturgy and the ritual performance unfolding.

A postcolonial approach to the method of material culture reveals some difficult and at times incongruous ideas. For example, if objects, buildings, and materials have agency, some may argue that this power, inherent in the material world, takes away from the agency of the human agents who engage with those materials.[1] When Alfred Gell argues that agency lies in the work of art, does that mean that those who made and use it are erased? Alternately, what are the risks as an art historian of a suspension of disbelief when discussing a religious icon believed by devotees to be alive? This is where the idea of the temple as a catalyst becomes even more important. As an active agent that is never used up, material remains can spark human agents to a wide variety of actions at different points in time. Within each time period, diverse agents interact with those materials quite differently.[2] Can objects or buildings speak for themselves? No, of course, these materials cannot. People—consciously or unconsciously, both individually and collectively—leave in these materials traces of their ideas, behavior, and uses of these sites over time. Their ritual residue is the stuff of this study.

Material residue, ritual residue, stone residue, aesthetic residue, physical residue, temporal residue, and architectural residue each reflect the material traces that are left behind at religious sites intentionally and unintentionally through ritual practice. The Ambikā temple in Jagat and the Śri Ekliṅgjī temple in Kailāśpurī, as two of the most active sites of worship in southern Rājāsthan today, serve as prime examples of how religious monuments serve as catalysts for a wide variety of praxis in South Asia, often in a radius as large as two kilometers or more from the building itself, and at times in giant networks, such as the goddess network between Jāwar, Jagat, and Īdar. This triangle of sisterly geomantic relationships is documented folklore, such as the sung *Jagat Mata ki Katha* and the *Jāwar Mata ki Katha* narratives recorded on cassette tapes and sold at the village bus stand. The material remains of ritual, also referred to as ritual residue, provide physical traces of agents' actions in relation to these temples as catalysts for praxis.

Many temples and sites across India correspond to this phenomenon today, but few articulate as clear a set of diachronic histories as those found in the kingdom of Mewār. This book compares two key tenth-century sites in southern Rājāsthan to reveal very different sectarian foci and histories of religious use. The first is a temple called the Śri Ekliṅgjī temple (fig. 0.2), dedicated to the god Śiva. Today it is said that a god named Śri Ekliṅgjī has ruled the kingdom of Mewār for more than one thousand years (fig. 0.3). An inscription dated to 971 CE corroborates this idea with an early link between the ruling dynasty and the patron saint of Śri Ekliṅgjī's Śaiva sect named Lakulīśa. Dedicated to this saint, the monastic Lakulīśa temple

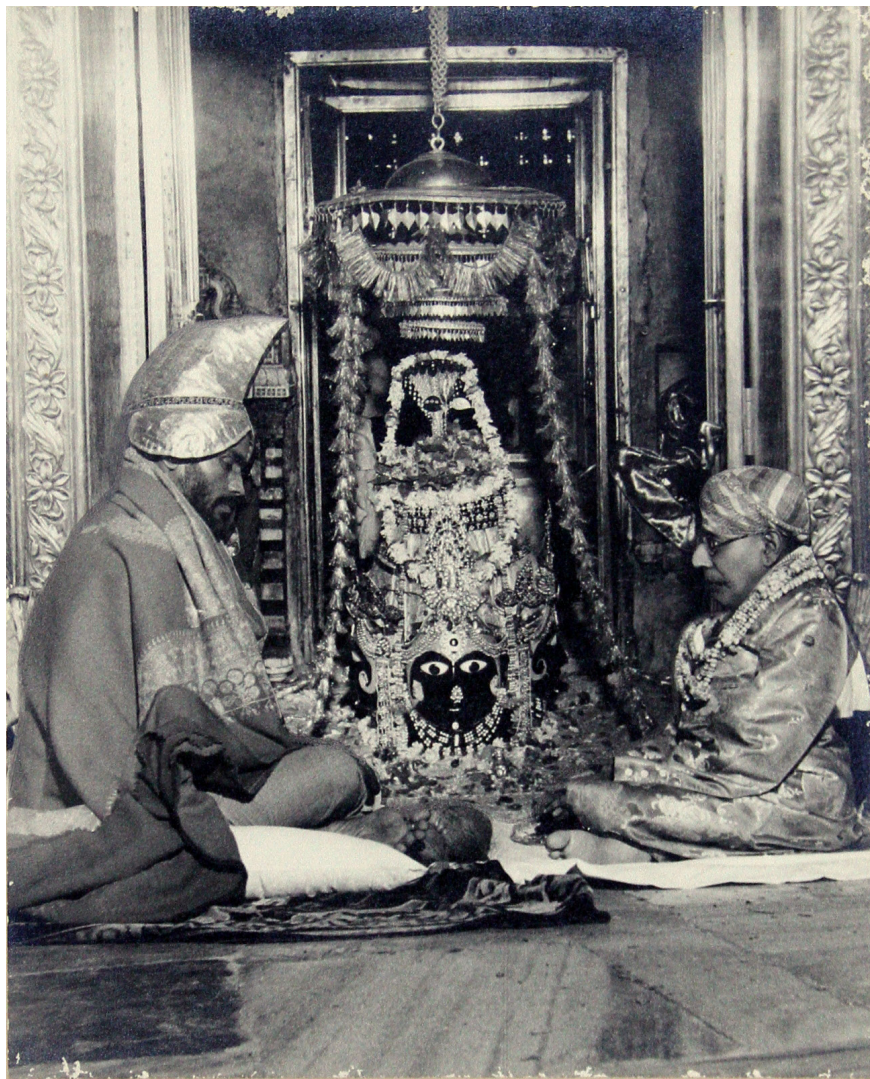FIGURE 0.2. Śri Ekliṅgjī temple. © Deborah Stein.

FIGURE 0.3. Maharana Bhupal Singh at Manorath, Eklingji Temple. Maharana Bhupal Singh at worship with the head priest in front of the deity at the Shree Eklingnath ji Temple, Kailashpuri. Devare & Co., Gelatine silver print. Printed from glass plate negative, 1935–1945 CE. Image courtesy of Museum Archives of the Maharanas of Mewar, © MMCF, Udaipur.

displays fine masonry and smooth walls to suggest the focused practice of Śaivaite gurus and ascetics and the architectural location of their intellectual exchange with Jains and Buddhists. In contrast with this imperial center of political and religious authority, the Ambikā temple in the town of Jagat is dedicated to a goddess who quells the buffalo demon to restore cosmic order. The complex figural program on the exterior walls of this goddess's temple suggests that syncretic modes of practice attempted to incorporate local religion into increasingly systematized modes of brāhmanical Hinduism for a popular audience.

Today, the mahārāṇā and the state of Rājāsthan legally contest the Ekliṅgjī temple, whereas the Ambikā temple's ownership is contested through the display of modern icons in the ancient sanctum after the icon's theft for the international art market. The Śri Ekliṅgjī temple is currently under a *longue-durée* trial between the Devasthan Department of Living Temples of the government of Rājāsthan and the Śri Ekliṅgjī Charitable Trust, set up in the 1970s after changes in tax law by the family of erstwhile mahārāṇās of Mewār to protect their Sisodia dynastic royal temple. The Ambikā temple in Jagat recently was the site of a public deity instal-lation ceremony, which could also be used legally to establish the site as a com-modified public trust. Both deities question the politics of aesthetic taste in an increasingly global era of world heritage. The aesthetics of temple administration suggest the legal arbitration of taste as a commodity and the role of praxis and agency in the field. Renovation serves as a form of religious merit—a phenom-enon witnessed during ethnographic and performance-based fieldwork but also found as early as the mid-tenth century in temple inscriptions from the Mēdapāṭa regional cohort of temples.

Each of these individual legal situations leaves these two temples as the only two out of the Mēdapāṭa regional temple cohort with specific historic time periods that seem to alternately illuminate or negate the historical and legal claims being made in the twenty-first century. On the one hand, the Ekliṅgjī temple debates seem to lead the historian to the fifteenth century as a snapshot of the Sisodia clan at the apogee of its power. The royal house, on the other hand, recently claimed an unbroken bloodline back to the eighth century, and in 2012 it began to date its lineage prior to the sixth century. The Ambikā temple inscriptional record leaves a three-hundred-year silence. This sultanate period in the Chhapa and Vagada regions where the Ambikā temple is located reveals a great efflorescence of non-dynastic activity from mining, to multisectarian temple patronage, to icon theft and warfare, to fleeting attempts to maintain (or even to establish) some form of dynastic or political hegemony. On the other historical side of the sultanate period is a time before these vast ruptures with the present.

Origins have long been privileged as the most "authentic" moments in history, so origins become pregnant with meaning. In this study the temples' origins are not a unique moment of truth but rather one of four major eras considered in relation to the histories we choose to construct in the present. The second half

of the tenth century was a time in what is now southern Rājāsthan as well as all across northern India where the fragmentation of the Paramāra and Pratīhāra Empires gave rise to an efflorescence of small kingdoms and new dynasties yearning to legitimize their newfound status through signature architectural styles and lunar or solar divine lineages. This same millennial moment witnessed a great rise in multisectarian, populist movements toward the practice of tantric religion—esoteric to initiated practitioners and unconsciously shaping society for the uninitiated. This tantric shift had a tremendous impact on temple architecture, iconography, and the kinesthetic and philosophical implications of temple sculptural programs that have only recently begun to be studied in detail. Recent breakthroughs in the textual scholarship open new avenues of research for the study of the architectural remains.

It is at the confluence of these two major millennial shifts—dynastic-political and tantric-populist—that the Mēdapāṭa regional cohort of temples was built primarily in the AD 960s and 970s. In response to new research and to the intersection of these two millennial changes, I move away from long-established dynastic categories of architecture and style to begin to experimentally map the sectarian landscape, to map east–west fluvial geographies of style (as opposed to the current northwest dynastic axis that is more commonly used), and to map traces of millennial ritual and ephemera.

GEOGRAPHY AND DEMOGRAPHICS IN THE FIELD

In the twenty-first century the fierce competition between religious use and historical preservation creates a parallel dialectic between these two sites. Increased commodification of culture makes temples, ritual, and even ideas about temples available to be bought and sold.[3] The Ambikā temple—halfway between Udaipur and Dūṅgarpur—is situated in a fairly isolated area. Politicians and erstwhile nobles banded together to draw on the numinous and martial powers of the goddess during an installation ceremony in 2002, held far from any political capital in the small village of Jagat during a ceremony that was nonetheless attended by members of the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party), government officials from the State of Rājāsthan, and members of erstwhile royalty who now live in Udaipur. True to the regal origins of the royal Ekliṅgjī temple complex, current legal debates surrounding the site suggest the continued power of archaeology for the legitimation of kingship—even after the end of monarchy as a result of Indian independence in 1947. At both sites the archaeological remains themselves become hegemonic, at the very same time in the 1990s when Guha coined the phrase "dominance without hegemony" to refer to how power was exercised by the colonial state.[4] In fact, it is no longer the bourgeois colonial elite who pretend to a hegemony that would never be theirs; the buildings themselves, as commodified objects and catalysts for praxis, allow new segments of society to stage powerful counterhegemonic

performances in and around archaeological sites. The hegemony of heritage in its unique capacity to serve as catalysts of counterhegemonic praxis simultaneously with hegemonic reification of existing power structures is not unique to these two Rājāsthani Hindu temples, nor to India or to Hinduism, nor to South Asia at large from the secular Sikh scholar's personal experience of art in the National Museum or the multisectarian ecumenical enjoyment of ritual at religious sites.[5] Indeed, the dueling hegemony of heritage to produce both hegemonic and counterhegemonic visual discourse seems to be the number one defining scopic reality of the twenty-first century—as evidenced in the politicized administration of UNESCO and the role of monuments and icons old and new in the visual rhetoric of war.

The similarities between the modern commodified lives of these two temples call into question "post"-capitalist accumulation in an era when the old clichéd dichotomy of iconoclasm and iconophilia no longer serve to define what is important about these Hindu temples. Imported largely from a colonial Protestant perspective, and employed above all at the hands of Empire, the idea of destruction or figuration as the central defining feature of an icon has all but evaporated in the South Asian context across more than one religion.[6] In fact, recent scholarship suggests that an almost Catholic interest in ritual may have provided an interesting counterpoint to that perspective historiographically when we reexamine the archives of the ASI (Archaeological Survey of India).[7] Furthermore, Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci's ideas of hegemony have served as a source of inspiration for numerous postcolonial scholars, including Edward Said and, more recently, Hamid Dabashi, among others. The idea of praxis across class and caste lines as a powerful counterpoint to colonial hegemony is borne out quite fruitfully in the tremendous scope of ritual and traditional practices (*parampara* in Hindi) that take place at these sites today.

More and more frequently in the age of "late" capitalism, ancient sites are being put back into ritual use after lying dormant for centuries.[8] The two temples that form the subject of this study have each experienced several deaths and rebirths over the past one thousand years.[9] Even so, a teleological and chronological approach to their biographies would not suffice to reveal the nuanced complexities of how their histories compete in the twenty-first century and in specific points in time (the fifteenth century, the thirteenth century, and the tenth century of their origin). One history did not blindly and developmentally lead to the next; rather, in each period various actors and agents chose to ignore and to highlight the past in different ways to make political arguments about the present. Both temples have been renovated and used for ritual during periods of time and then left dormant for various reasons before being given new "lives" again. These two sites form prime examples of how the nature of the archaeological enterprise is rapidly changing both in Rājāsthan and in the greater global context today.

Current uses of these two archaeological sites produce accumulations of ritual residue that visually record the interests of their respective patrons, makers, and

ritual participants.[10] Different groups currently lay claim to each site. A postcolonial mahārāṇā (CEO) uses his family's Śri Ekliṅgjī temple complex to solidify the continuity of the House of Mewār in the age of the nation-state in India.[11] Simultaneously, householder priests continue to lead services in the complex, while gardener caste Mali women continue to sell flower garlands at the entrance today, as is pictured in eighteenth-century frescos inside the monastery. Meanwhile, in Jagat, multiple castes actively react to the Ambikā temple today. Lower caste, habitually disenfranchised Ādivāsi groups, such as Meenas and Bhils, have slowly expanded the powerful sphere of their local goddess, Mallar Mātā, as they exercise their counterhegemonic praxis in and around the Ambikā temple today, while in daily life the temple remains largely ignored by the economic and urban elite. In the village of Jagat, it is the Ādivāsis who have reconsecrated her sister Cāmuṇḍā within the archaeological compound of the ancient Ambikā temple. This goddess—so popular in the twenty-first century that she often eclipses her sister Ambā Mātā, who is the main icon in the temple sanctum—was also incredibly popular in this region in the tenth century, when the Ambikā temple was built. At the end of this book I will focus more closely on Cāmuṇḍā and her textual and iconographic position in medieval millennial North India as an evidential response to our twenty-first-century frame. The overarching comparison between the Ambikā temple in Jagat and the Ekliṅgjī temple in Kailāśpurī illustrates how kings and nobles are not the only ones involved in praxis. Tailors and gardeners, Ādivāsi and Rajput women and men, city dwellers and countryside locals all use praxis to vie for hegemony and counterhegemonies at these ancient architectural sites. Local groups at both sites enter into dialogue with tourists, the state, and their own imagined pasts and futures through their indexical relationships to these ancient monuments.

Ekliṅgjī and Jagat share an important modern tension between history and ritual. Both sites lie at the heart of competitive contests for authenticity. When R. C. Agrawala "discovered" Jagat in the mid-twentieth century, he was interested in iconography, historical analysis of inscriptions, and the preservation of fragments for a museum.[12] In a footnote, Agrawala mentions that the entry pavilion (śubhamaṇḍapa) at another tenth-century Mēdapāṭa temple, the Pippalāda Mātā temple in the village of Unwās, "is completely mutilated," which suggests that people in the village had already undertaken drastic renovations before his article was written in 1964 (fig. 0.4).[13] From an architectural historian's perspective, one cannot glean much more information than the basics of the temple program.[14] Ongoing construction, whitewashing, and painting at the site attest, instead, to the continuing power of this goddess (figs. 0.5 and 0.6). One could imagine this "post"-capitalist accumulation practice as a form of theft from history, from the Archaeological Survey, from the state, and, hence, from the people. Or one could argue that these "drastic renovations" result from the use of modern materials to implement ancient forms of renovation as a form of religious duty to instill merit in the patron.[15]

FIGURE 0.4. Pippalāda Mātā temple in Unwās, c. 960, Mēdapāṭa region. © Deborah Stein.

FIGURE 0.5. Kṣēmaṅkarī, Pippalāda Mātā
temple, back wall, Unwās. © Deborah Stein.

FIGURE 0.6. Main icon, "Pippalāda Mātā (a folk version of Kṣēmaṅkarī?), Unwās. © Deborah Stein.

Can this praxis serve as a counterhegemonic answer to colonialism through use rather than preservation, or does this praxis indicate hegemonic Hindu nationalism with power inherited blindly from the colonial past? Furthermore, is this nationalist discourse hegemonic or counterhegemonic in relation to an increasingly privatized state resulting in increasingly privatized archaeological sites? The "complete mutilation" of the temple in Unwās lamented by R. C. Agrawala, the foremost indigenous scholar of southern Rājāsthani archaeological sites in 1964, begs new questions in the twenty-first century—an era imagined by some, in exile or in limbo, as a time when some global scholars may define their identity as "amphibious," neither Western nor non-Western but entirely more complicated than that outdated binary. "A post-nativist amphibian intellectual," according to Dabashi, "has his or her roots in the material reality that embraces both 'home' and 'exile,' a division that has in effect caused the initial intellectual labor migration."[16] From these new global perspectives, how does the hegemony of heritage reveal the specifics of "post"-capitalist accumulation of icons, buildings, and practices that radiate out from these catalysts?

Miles Glendinning, in his chapter "Heritage in the Age of Globalization: Post-1989," addresses the "instability" of the concept of "authenticity" in terms of the

FIGURE 0.7. Old and new architecture and repairs comingle at the Śri Ekliṅgjī temple complex, Kailāśpurī, Rajasthan. Photo by author, 2002. © Deborah Stein.

apogee of a conflict between the global and the local resulting in the 1994 Nara Convention in Japan. According to Glendinning, "Definitions of authenticity, after all, had underpinned all doctrinal definitions from the 1964 Charter of Venice through to the outstanding universal values and operational guidelines of the World Heritage Convention."[17] The clash of local heritage management in Japan and increasingly global attempts to standardize heritage conservation in the early 1990s highlighted the problems with policing authenticity and taste resulting in "the radically new field of intangible heritage." In a backlash against what came before, "the value attributed to any heritage object began to depend entirely on the present-day host culture." Agrawala's bemoaning of a loss of authentic architecture in 1964 may have been celebrated by others in the living buildings of the 1990s, whereas in the twenty-first century it would be interesting to find a way these two visions are not mutually exclusive so that buildings' histories are not erased and the buildings are able to serve multiple uses, including both local archaeological and religious ritual uses in the field.

Recent studies have suggested the antiquity of tracts of land largely beyond state control in the region of Chhapa, where the Ambikā temple in Jagat is found.[18] Historically, the Śri Ekliṅgjī complex (fig. 0.7) lay in the heart of ancient Mēdapāṭa, now known as Mewār (fig. 0.8). The Ambikā temple, however, has alternately been ruled from Mewār or Vagada, when it was not in a vacuum of power. Located in the village of Jagat, the Ambikā temple (fig. 0.9) is two hours' drive south of
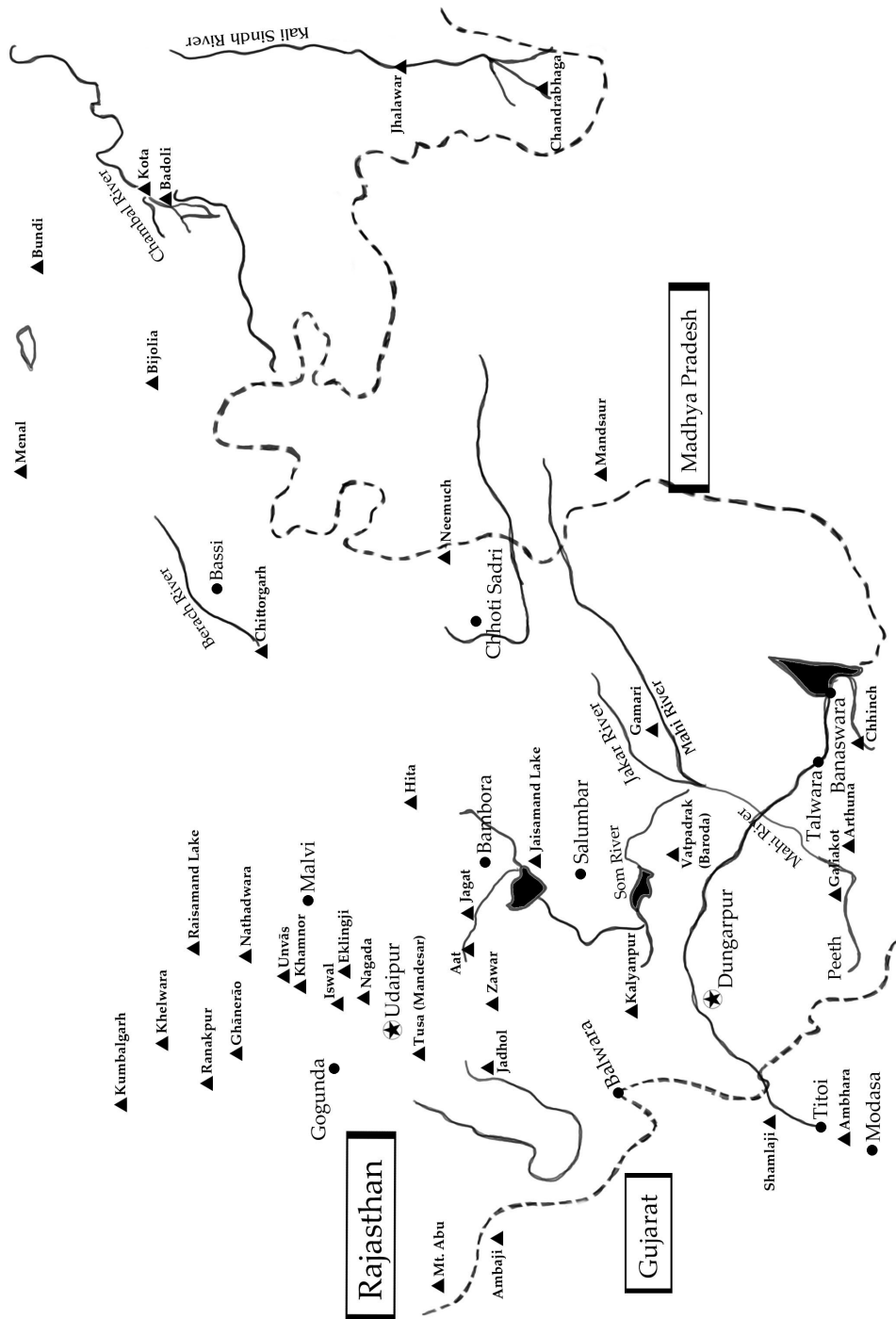
FIGURE 0.8. Map of sites in modern Mewār and Dūṅgarpur—ancient territories of Mēdapāṭa (north, near modern capital of Udaipur), Chhapa (middle Zawar [Jāwar]/Āaṭ/Jaġat), Vagada (south, near modern capital of Dūṅgarpur), and Uparamāla (northeast, from Chittorgarh to Menāl and Bijoliā).

FIGURE 0.9. Ambikā temple, c. 960, Jagat. © Deborah Stein.

the modern capital of Mewār, Udaipur. Jagat lies in a hilly region once known as Chhapa. In the thirteenth century the Guhila ruler Sāmanta Singh made Chhapa a part of the Vagada Empire when he left the Mewār throne to his brother to become the mahārawal of Vagada.[19] These two Guhila royal houses still exist today—as do intact communities and villages of Bhils, Meenas, and Rājput descendants near each of the temples in this study.

    The continuity and rupture found in the material, iconographic, stylistic, inscriptional, and kinesthetic architectural remains at these sites today help to clarify the hegemony of heritage in the twenty-first century. In discussing the nineteenth century in Britain, Hobsbawm reminds us that " 'traditions' which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented."[20] Much of what we see in the field in Rājāsthan today harks back to the Victorian era as well, when the Royal Titles Act (passed on April 27, 1876) made Victoria the empress inheritor of Mughal power.[21] Rather than attempt to specifically date each tradition we encounter at archaeological sites in southern Rājāsthan in the twenty-first century, it seems more fruitful to keep in mind a broader definition of the "invention of tradition," defined by Hobsbawm as "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past."[22]

Understanding the role of visual material sheds light on some of the violence surrounding monuments in the postcolonial era. The existing art historical literature on the temples of Mēdapāṭa falls largely on the side of architectural preservation, whereas religious studies scholars privilege ritual practice at ancient sites. Historically, an interest in visual material has led art historians to consider modern renovations as a form of destruction of the archaeological record rather than as an addition to a series of changes. Some are tempted to view practice at archaeological sites as a direct, unchanged continuation of past practices. One of the most cogent reasons to resist the rhetoric of continuity is that religious nationalism often gives rise to communal violence. Religious buildings and icons incite crowds to riot, to burn people alive.[23]

Moving beyond artistic intention does not negate the importance of the moment of making. A temple is not built by a single mind for a sole purpose; it is a collage of patron's interests, guilds' aesthetic habits and choices, and the diverse body of people who consecrate and use the site. Antiquity makes a site better adapted to modern religious activity. Continuity may exist in the same cult using a site over a thousand years, yet site use changes—a reflection of the concerns of the moment. Whether we legitimize the collection of a cult's expression as a continual chain or as a discontinuous record of rupture is largely political.

The physicality of permanent stone and ephemeral offerings tells a story that would be lost in inscriptions and texts alone. Jules Prown has defined material culture as "the study through artifacts of the beliefs—values, ideas, attitudes, and assumptions—of a particular community or society at a given time."[24] One of the most powerful possibilities of material culture lies in the attention to what is not intentional. Prown suggests we must extend our inquiry to include objects beyond art and icon. If we use the term "artifact"—not in the nineteenth-century sense of depreciation of the art of the "other" but rather as permission to include "butter" and "vermilion" alongside "stone" itself—conventional art historical cornerstones such as style can illuminate more when combined with a deeper understanding of context.

Man-made, and in this study I would argue woman-modified, objects "reflect, consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, the beliefs of individuals who made, commissioned, purchased, or used them, and by extension the beliefs of the larger society to which they belonged."[25] Material culture offers art historians a chance to expand the realm of objects within reach. Ethnographic practice no longer serves as a colonial key to oppressing the other but rather as a potentially liberating experiment in highlighting counterhegemonic praxis on the part of people whose agency was almost always ignored intersectionally owing to gender and class as well as the counterhegemonic praxis of others who experience themselves as economically empowered local stewards of culture.[26] This study examines the sacred tree alongside temple architecture, the photograph at the village bus stand alongside the original black schist goddess up the hill, and the nine kilos of flour

snowing over the four faces of Śiva on the black schist *liṅgaṃ* at Ekliṅgjī during the annual festival of Mahāśivrātri. These objects offer a wider field of inquiry both past and present to include things made and used by people who do not belong to the elite. A second goal of this study is to find ways to cull history and the present for the unintentional remnants of subjective positions, beliefs, ideas, and experiences rather than the imposition of a singular overarching historiographic frame. Whereas an inscription, a tantric text, and to some extent even a great piece of architecture attempt to control future reception for specific aims, kinetic approaches to architecture and traces of missing ephemeral elements of ritual are just a few new ways to investigate the material culture of early medieval northwestern India.

DIACHRONICITIES IN THE FIELD

A small geographical area of inquiry allows us to toy with time. The choice of a diachronic model for this study was not premeditated but rather stemmed from the material and performative data in the field. Temples that I intended to study from a uniquely historical perspective—as if a viewpoint that is hermeneutically sealed really exists—were in active use between 1998 and 2009 on all visits. The pinnacle of this contemporary use was the goddess installation, or *pratiṣṭhā*, in Jagat in May of 2002 and the theft of the goddess Ambā Mātā, which preceded this ritual.

Theoretically, diachronic models abound. Rooted in a post-1968 shift across academic disciplines, time can now be nonlinear. Historical time can look like a sine wave in trigonomic terms.[27] Time can be bardic, oral, or aural.[28] Time can be ephemeral or permanent. Time changes in different eras and regions and contexts, and these differences are political choices the historian can choose to engage with or ignore.[29] Time can move backward or forward, so for this project it felt somehow more honest as a historian of art to move backward from the present into the past. Here I seek to make the frame visible as a postcolonial act in which readers are given the information they need to reveal to themselves the histories they personally believe and why.

We have recently cemented the end of the relentless relativism of postmodernism, which seemed to suppress the existence of facts at all. Today, the relativism in this text does not negate facts. This study attempts to make the facts sing, dance, and argue with each other as they compete across four distinct time periods. There is no singular fact, but there are facts. The future lies in our ability to navigate these complex webs of facts across history from multiple perspectives to understand the politics of what we consciously and unconsciously believe and why. The conclusion of this malleable dance through time will allow the reader to navigate several sets of facts with a newfound temporal agility. Contrast this agility with colonial "dead time," whereby the "objectification of the past as a thing to seize and possess

comes as easily to the capitalist in the sphere of culture as in that of commodity production," and with living time, the opposite of an appropriation of the past, which makes "time, dead time, into a thing before grasping it by one's will."[30]

Although this study focuses on a comparison of two important sites within a key medieval area of northwestern India, the diachronic approach reveals a phenomenon on the rise in twenty-first-century India. With urbanization of rural areas, influxes of money from within and from the diaspora abroad, deregulation, and privatization, archaeological sites are increasingly being put back into religious use after centuries of dormancy. This book tracks the fantasies held in the twenty-first century and how these varied imaginings of the past lead different groups to different points in time. Whereas a modern mahārāṇā may look to the eighth and fifteenth centuries for dynastic origin myths and bardic inscriptions, Western scholars may focus on the tenth-century material remains of tantra, and nationalists may look away from this region to focus on "Islamic" iconoclasm (missing entirely in the very early records of early modern industry on a global scale).

The Guhila dynasty's patronage of stone monument building in the second half of the tenth century CE was only the beginning of an interest in using aesthetics and religion to solidify political power. An inscription at Ekliṅgjī indicates how "the site had largely fallen out of use for a few centuries before the installation of a new liṅgaṃ in 1545 CE."[31] Local legend corroborates this theory in oral history.[32] From the sixteenth century to the present, the Ambikā temple complex and the Ekliṅgjī temple complex have lent their authority to kings, to architectural guilds, to jātis (subcastes or guilds) such as tailors, to shamans, to Ādivāsis, to the ASI, and to tourists. This historical evidence supports the foundation of this project, a year of fieldwork in southern Rājāsthan in 2002.

Neighboring Gujarat cast a violent shadow over Rājāsthan in 2002 when a train returning from Ayodhyā to Godhra was set on fire and weeks of unmitigated communal riots ensued.[33] Meanwhile, the erstwhile nobility of Mewār strove to maintain a precarious balance of power at archaeological sites. Regal hegemony had disintegrated with the end of the princely states of the colonial era, the birth of the nation in the mid-twentieth century, and the rapidly changing economics of a global market economy in the twenty-first century.

My informants resisted interviews, for the most part, and instead encouraged me to participate fully in every way. Mali women graciously allowed me to join them in selling flower garlands at the entrance to Ekliṅgjī, to learn about the economy of divinity and devotion. The Rājput women of Jagat dressed me in their Rājāsthani saris, woke me at four in the morning, and taught me to prepare chapati dough ornaments for Daśamātāpūjā, or the Festival of Mother Ten (fig. 0.10). Their counterhegemonic praxis serves as a powerful counterpart to reading theory—agency is not only found in words but also in actions, or performance.

Participation by no means erased my outsider identity, however. Aside from the comic relief engendered by the creator of this serious research project, my
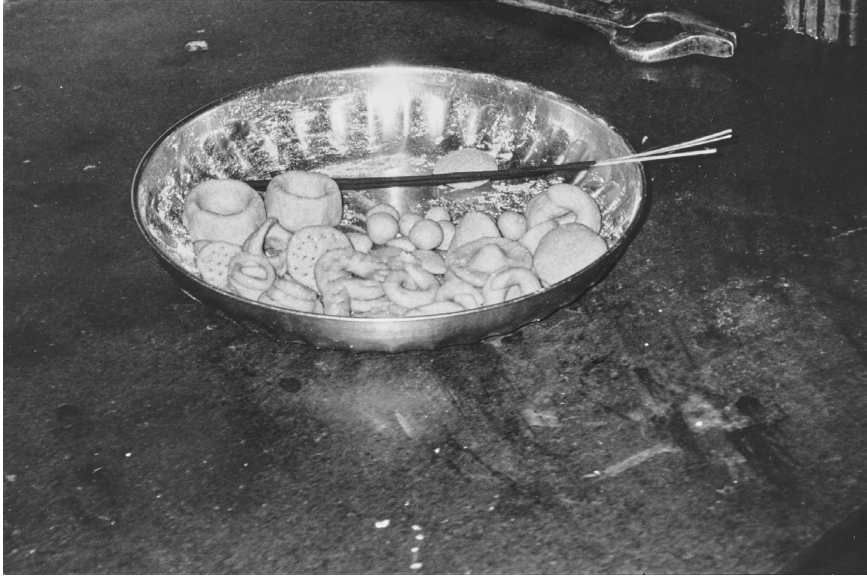
FIGURE 0.10. *Chapati* dough ornaments, 2002, Jagat. © Deborah Stein.

participation allowed me to experience the ritual through the senses in a way that discussion after the fact would preclude. This embodied approach to fieldwork created a unique source for dialogue with those who habitually performed the rites. Unlike male textual scholars, whose participation often becomes enmeshed with altering the liturgy (or even sponsoring the ritual in the case of Frits Staal),[34] my dual status as a young female and as a scholar allowed access to the worlds of children's rooftops and women's kitchens, as well as men's more public, political, and religious spheres.

Art history has conventionally dealt with the past. But many have begun to engage the study of ancient Indian art with the present in innovative ways, although few have questioned the impact of history and the present on the future of Indian patrimony. Art historians' interest in visual material makes them particularly concerned with the future of monuments and artifacts outside the protection of archives, museums, and libraries. UNESCO increasingly interfaces with local heritage groups in an effort to coordinate relevant branches of governments.[35] The urgency of these projects stems from unregulated development, theft, looting, and exponential increases in tourism. Even though the discipline of art history and international organizations such as UNESCO understand their mission as preservation, living temples complicate matters.

To preserve history is, in many ways, to kill it. This book examines the many ways in which different Indian people continue to use ancient temples to construct

FIGURE 0.11. Painting the sanctum gold, Ambikā temple, May 2002, Jagat. © Deborah Stein.

their own histories. The result is not always the preservation of a building. In fact, at times, buildings are defaced when locals decide to refresh a deity's home. The book explores this tension between preservation and use. The theoretical premises that inform any choice regarding preservation, conservation, renovation, or use directly affect the visual qualities of an ancient site in the present and in the future. If use is privileged to respect living icons in living monuments, then a tenth-century sanctum and sculpted doorframe may be painted metallic gold as part of an installation ceremony (fig. 0.11).

This trace of ritual practice permanently marks the ancient temple in the present. Just as Mahārāṇā Kumbhā's choices created the history received five hundred years later, the gold paint on the doorframe of the Ambikā temple might well color historians' understanding of the site five hundred years from now. Many groups vie for the power to control these sites. The hegemony of heritage lies in its political power to harness visual culture and performance, to define identities, and to control visual rhetoric. In the postcolonial context especially, the control of heritage is the construction of the future. The tension between a desire to preserve historic monuments in situ and the hope of reconsecrating historically sacred places is quite fierce.[36]

Through an examination of the history of renovation via ancient inscriptions and architecture, we learn that reconstruction was often considered not just legitimate but meritorious. This indigenous aesthetic clashes considerably with the ideal of romantic ruins, an idea that grew from the rise of tourism and new forms of leisure during the industrial revolution in the West. The nostalgia for the past created by the mechanization of the present has led to a great interest in archiving archaeological monuments. During the colonial era in India, the ability to take a vast subcontinent full of historic buildings and record this patrimony in two-dimensional forms such as drawings, plans, and photographs enabled a form of possession and hegemony that could be realized visually.[37] The duty to reconstruct and the need to preserve ancient monuments continue to lead to conflict. This tension manifests itself in the composite visual culture of ancient sites such as the Ambikā temple complex in Jagat and the Ekliṅgjī temple complex in Kailāśpurī. Although these buildings seem immovable, they become cultural commodities both as fragments and as a whole.[38] The hegemony of heritage in southern Rājāsthan in the twenty-first century lies in the control of these valuable commodities.

THE TEMPLE AS CATALYST

Heritage is always a construction of the present. The choice to read temples via geography rather than dynasty yields different answers to different questions. How to marry the mythic and the material through time? Current rituals look to the past for authenticity, yet, like Baudelaire's insistence on anachronistic modernity in the depiction of antiquity, we, too, are forced to recognize the palimpsest of pasts that concoct present-day heritage. Whether we are dating the royal glory of Mewār to the fifteenth century, or revealing Marxist histories of industrial development through nineteenth-century preservationist nostalgia, or investigating the potentially feminist histories of tantric immediacy and a tenth-century rise in populist belief systems, heritage engages several historic moments simultaneously.

Purportedly about the past, heritage actually engages the future. How will a building or an archaeological site look twenty, fifty, one hundred, or even one

thousand years from now? Julia Bryan-Wilson has put forth this idea of the impossibility of a universal sign on the scale of a nuclear marker, yet, in less radioactive terms, we can read the traces intentionally left for us in inscriptions of half a millennium ago.[39] These inscriptional traces tell a story of a dynasty and its regal origins in the myth of Bappa Rāwal—a myth itself only half the age of the dynasty it seeks to describe. In contrast, the material traces of the Śaiva saint Lakulīśa and early medieval tantric goddesses such as Kṣēmaṅkarī and Cāmuṇḍā reveal striking parallels with twenty-first-century ritual at archaeological sites in southern Rājāsthan. Whether a postcolonial mahārāṇā seeks to control research access to his family temple or whether a group of people in a rapidly developing tribal area of Chhapa engage in installation rituals for a stolen goddess, the material traces of history seem to supersede inscriptional evidence in the visual tales they tell of past religious and artistic practices and future aesthetic and political choices. The hegemony of heritage lies not in the past at all but in the power of people in situ to control the aesthetics of a monument—to curate the future from the field itself.