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VIDYA DEHEJIA

THE TREATMENT OF NARRATIVE IN JAGAT SINGH'S *RĀMĀYAṆA*: A PRELIMINARY STUDY

Twenty years into the reign of Rānā Jagat Singh of Mewār, his imperial workshop at Udaipur undertook the production of a lavishly illustrated *Rāmāyaṇa* manuscript of exceptional size and quality. In its ambitious scale, with separate extensive volumes for each of seven books of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, this commission exceeded in grandeur all the previous manuscripts Jagat Singh had ordered. The *Rāmāyaṇa*'s individual pages measure 23 by 39 centimeters, and the illustrations occupy the entire expansive space of the page.

It is curious that Jagat Singh undertook so monumental a commission so late in his reign.[1] J.P. Losty speaks of the importance of the *Rāmāyaṇa* for the Sesodiya Rājputs of Mewār who, like Rāma, traced their ancestry back to the Sun. He suggests that the *Rāmāyaṇa* served as a family history for the Mewār house, in the sense in which the *Tīmūrnāma* and *Genghisnāma* were family histories for the Mughals.[2] Like many other ancient rulers of India, the Rānā probably equated himself with Rāma,[3] and his rivals, in this case the Mughals, with Rāvaṇa. Yet this in itself does not explain the timing of the commission. Indeed, one would expect that if the *Rāmāyaṇa* held such great significance for Mewār, Jagat Singh would have taken it up as one of his first projects. A closer look into Mewār's history[4] suggests a possible reason for the production of the manuscript at this particular stage in Jagat Singh's reign. It was late in his rule that the Rānā decided on action that the Mughals were likely to have considered deliberate provocation. The production of a grand "family history" might have been viewed as providing a psychological buffer in the face of probable Mughal retaliation. To this issue I shall return in conclusion.

The proposed scale of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and Jagat Singh's desire to see it completed swiftly, necessitated the work of more than one artist and his workshop. The royal Udaipur workshop as it had existed thus far would seem to have been expanded, and one of the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s three artists was imported from outside the kingdom. Jagat Singh's master artist Sāhīb Dīn, who had already produced several manuscripts for the Rānā, was responsible for the paintings of two of its seven books, the second book *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* and the sixth book *Yuddhakāṇḍa*. The colophon of the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* specifies that Sāhīb Dīn painted the pictures (*sāhībadi citrakṛtam*) and that the book was completed in 1652 during the victorious reign of Jagat Singh. The *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, while not containing Sāhīb Dīn's name, is clearly a product of his workshop. Its colophon specifically states

A grant from the Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences at Columbia University enabled me to spend six weeks studying this manuscript at the India Office Library in London. I am grateful to the Library authorities, and to J.P. Losty in particular, for the generous cooperation and assistance that facilitated my extended examination of this *Rāmāyaṇa*. Losty's review of the manuscript in his *The Art of the Book in India* has proved invaluable.

1 Although it was late into his reign, Jagat Singh could have been no more than forty-four years of age.

2 J.P. Losty, "Sahib Din's Book of Battles: Rana Jagat Singh's *Yuddhakāṇḍa*," in *The Legend of Rama: Artistic Visions*, ed. Vidya Dehejia (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1994), 102.

3 Vidya Dehejia ed. *The Legend of Rama in Art* (Marg Publications, 1994) contains several essays in which monarchs have made this equation.

4 For a history of Mewār see D.R. Mankekar, *Mewar Saga. The Sisodias' Role in Indian History* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1976).

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that it was created for the personal viewing of Jagat Singh (*mahārājādhirājā mahārānā srī jagat singhijī avalokatārtha*), and that it was completed in 1650. Since Sāhīb Dīn was the senior Mewār court artist, we may assume that it was he who took the decision to paint the Ayodhyā and Battle books. A junior Mewār painter named Manohar, who had been involved in at least one other royal commission, took charge of the first (*Bālakāṇḍa*) and third (*Araṇyakāṇḍa*) books. The colophon of the *Bālakāṇḍa* specifies that Manohar was the artist and that the book was completed in 1649; the stylistically akin *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, while not specifying its artist, was completed two years later in 1651. The last book (*Uttarakāṇḍa*) of the *Rāmāyaṇa* may also be a final and hurried product of lesser members of Manohar's workshop; it was completed in 1653 for Rānā Rāj Singh, after the death of Jagat Singh. A third artist, most likely from the Deccan kingdom of Aurangabad,[5] seems to have been invited to illustrate the fourth (*Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*) and fifth (*Sundarakāṇḍa*) books. His style and his treatment of narrative is quite distinct from those of the Mewār court artists. The *Kiṣkindhā* book does not specify the name of its artist but speaks of its completion in 1653 for Rānā Rāj Singh; the *Sundarakāṇḍa* is not available in its entirety and the colophon page is missing. The text for all seven books was written by the same scribe, a certain *mahātmā* Hīrānandajī; clearly, illustrations took far longer than the task of calligraphy.

Two directors were placed in charge of this grand royal commission. Jasavantajī supervised the first three books, while Vyāsajayadeva seems to have directed the fourth to seventh books, although the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* does not mention its supervisor, and the fragmentary *Sundarakāṇḍa* lacks its colophon page. While Jasavantajī ensured that the first three volumes were taken up in sequential order (book one was completed in 1649, book two in 1650, and book three in 1651), we find that the fourth *Kiṣkindhā* and the seventh *Uttara* books, both supervised by Vyāsajayadeva, were each completed in 1653. Rānā Jagat Singh, desirous of the speedy completion of the work, seems to have entrusted the *Rāmāyaṇa* project to two supervisors who allotted the books to different artists and their workshops. The number of illustrations varies considerably from one book to the next, even when supervised by the same overseer. Jasavantajī's second book, painted by Sāhīb Dīn, contains sixty-eight paintings, while the third, executed by Manohar, contains only thirty-six. It would appear that it was the artist and not the supervisor who took decisions regarding both the choice of episodes to be portrayed and the number of illustrations a book should have.

NARRATIVE PRESENTATION

In an analysis of the structure of visual narratives, made in the context of early Indian sculpture, I identified seven distinct modes of narrative presentation and proposed names for each mode.[6] That narrative analysis is equally applicable to later sculpture and painting, including manuscripts painted for the Rājput and Mughal courts. The standard narrative practice followed by Mughal artists was to use the monoscenic mode in which each page depicts only one scene from a narrative.[7]

5 J.P. Losty *The Art of the Book in India* (London: The British Library Board, 1982), 128. Losty's comparison with the Aurangabad workshop is quite convincing. See Saryu Doshi, "An Illustrated Manuscript from Aurangabad dated 1650 AD" *Lalit Kalā* 15 (1972), 19–28.

6 For an analysis of the structure of narrative, see Vidya Dehejia, "On Modes of Narration in Early Buddhist Art," *Art Bulletin* LXXII (September 1990), 374–92.

7 The single exception that I have encountered of the repetition of the figure of the protagonist on a single page, and thus the painting of two scenes from a story in the mode of simple continuous narrative, is a murder scene in the Berlin Jahāngīr album. See

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We see the adoption of this mode, and this mode alone, in both Akbar's imperial *Rāmāyaṇa* and in the version produced for Akbar's general 'Abd al-Rahim Khān Khānan. By contrast, it was customary for Rājput court artists to make use of an entire range of narrative modes. Each of the three artists involved in the production of Jagat Singh's *Rāmāyaṇa* made use of more than one narrative mode, indicating that deliberate choices were being made. Each artist further displays distinct individual preferences in both narrative modes and in painting style. Master artist Sāhīb Dīn and his junior contemporary Manohar display certain similarities in their manner of presentation of narrative; however, major stylistic distinctions are apparent in their work. The third *Rāmāyaṇa* artist differs widely from the Mewāri court artists both in narrative presentation, and in style, scale, and color scheme.

Sāhīb Dīn's Narrative

The collaboration between artist Sāhīb Dīn and his patron Jagat Singh had commenced at the very start of the Rānā's reign with the execution of a *Rāgamālā* manuscript in 1628. By 1648, when the *Rāmāyaṇa* project was conceived twenty years later, Sāhīb Dīn had executed the paintings for several other manuscripts including a *Rasikapriyā* and a *Gitā Govinda* completed in 1629, a *Kavipriyā* executed between 1630–35, and a *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* completed in 1648. His seniority and his stature at the Mewār court were indeed established. Sāhīb Dīn appears to have left much of the early work on the *Ayodhyā* book to members of his workshop. He himself seems to have picked up the brush only with the set of pages that portray the departure into exile; he then seems to have executed the rest of the book that presents the exile in the forest. Sāhīb Dīn favored continuous narrative and the synoptic mode, but he also utilized monoscenic presentation. Occasionally he made use of conflation within pages that follow the synoptic mode. Pages produced by members of his workshop are, by contrast, less imaginative in treatment, and his artists often used architectural frames and dividers within their pages. The *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, by contrast, is of a consistently superior standard that suggests Sāhīb Dīn's own hand throughout.

A simple instance of continuous narrative is seen in folio 70 of the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* in which Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa reach their destination, the woods of Panchavaṭī, and there construct the forest hut that will serve as their home in exile (fig. 1). In continuous narrative, successive events of an episode or successive episodes of a story are depicted within the single enframed unit of the page, repeating the figure of the protagonist in the course of the depiction. Consecutive time frames are presented within a single visual field without any dividers to distinguish one time frame from the next, and the action flows "continuously" across the page; however, temporal succession and spatial movement are clearly indicated. The comprehension of continuous narrative requires awareness that multiple appearances of the protagonists indicate successive spaces in which the action occurs, as also successive moments of time. The viewer unfamiliar with such presentation may indeed find the repeated appearances of the protagonists within a single enframed setting both illogical and incoherent. To the right extreme of folio 70, Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa approach on foot (1); to the left, the two brothers construct the hut while Sītā rests (2). Both temporal and spatial succession are clear to those familiar with the narrative mode.

Michael Brand and Glenn D. Lowry, *Akbar's India: Art From the Mughal City of Victory* (New York: Asia Society Galleries, 1985), pl. 22.

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Ayodhyākāṇḍa folio 114, which portrays the reunion of Bharata and Śatrughna with Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa in their forest abode in a set of seven scenes, utilizes the continuous mode with a circular movement within the page (fig. 2). Causal and temporal sequence is clear once the viewer knows where to commence; however, the starting point is far from obvious. The first scene of folio 114 is in the rear ground, to left of center, where Rāma is centrally placed with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa seated behind him, while his brothers Bharata and Śatrughna kneel before him in greeting (1). Moving left we find Rāma, flanked by Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa, sitting before their hut with Bharata and Śatrughna seated on his knees (2). In the lower left foreground, Rāma collapses upon hearing of his father's death, while Bharata and Śatrughna attempt to support him (3). Directly to the right, the fivesome group moves along the water's edge (4). Having reached their destination, Bharata and Śatrughna stand and watch while Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, accompanied by Sītā, squat beside a mat of *darbha* grass and sprinkle water as part of the ceremonies for their dead father (5). Immediately beyond, the fivesome group walks up the hill led by Rāma with his shoulders bowed in sorrow (6). The narrative sequence ends with Rāma seated in dejection with head bowed on his hands, flanked by Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa to one side, and Bharata and Śatrughna to the other (7). Rāma, Bharata, and Śatrughna are portrayed seven times on the page, while Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa appear six times, being absent only in scene 3 of the news of the king's death. Once viewers have identified the rear center as the starting point, they must follow a counter clockwise movement[8] around the page to unravel the events.

Folio 66 of the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* is an instance of the use of the synoptic mode (fig. 3). While multiple episodes from a story are depicted within the single frame of the page itself, their temporal sequence is not clearly communicated, nor is there any consistent or formal order of presentation with regard to either causality or temporality. The multiple episodes contain the repeated figures of the protagonist. Folio 66 depicts six scenes to portray Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa bidding farewell to their charioteer Sumantra who has brought them thus far from the city of Ayodhyā, and departing on foot for their forest life in exile. The narrative commences along the upper center of the page where Lakṣmaṇa kneels on a rock by the river; from a bowl that rests beside him, he applies starch to his hair to produce the matted locks suitable for a forest dweller (1). Next, he applies the starch to Rāma's locks as Sītā watches (2). To the lower right, Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa bid farewell to Sumantra who stands beside his chariot, and to chieftain Guha who is surrounded by his attendants, one of whom holds the starch bowl that they had provided (3). The fourth scene is the river crossing, while the fifth moves back to the far right of the page where Sumantra departs in his chariot while Guha and his attendants leave on foot (5). The final scene depicted on this page is located to the lower left where Lakṣmaṇa is busy barbecueing meat on skewers, while Rāma and Sītā sit contentedly beneath a tree (6).

Topographical considerations play a distinct role in the layout of these *Rāmāyaṇa* pages. The town of Ayodhyā is visualized as located beyond the right extreme of a page while the forest of their exile is to the left. In earlier scenes, such as the set of five pages that depict the departure of Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa from Ayodhyā, the palace is seen to the right while the forest lies beyond the left extreme of the page. The story line hence demands that the basic movement, within the limits of the chosen narrative mode, is from right to left. When Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa are seen in their forest abode of Panchavaṭī, and Bharata, Śatrughna and the mothers come to visit them, the same topographical

[8] One may wonder if the counter clockwise movement was intentionally chosen because the events involved were connected with a death.

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alignment is retained. The visitors enter from the right, the direction of Ayodhyā; when Bharata departs with Rāma's sandals, he is portrayed moving from left to right across the page.

A synoptic page that conflates the figures of Rāma and Sītā is *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* folio 112 (fig. 4) that depicts the incidents that immediately precede those of folio 114 in the continuous mode examined previously (fig. 2). In conflation, the single figure of the protagonist often refers to more than one scene, rather than being repeated from scene to scene. This characteristic overlapping manner of presentation tends to further subvert temporal succession. To the far left Rāma and Sītā sit before their hut; hearing a deep rumbling in the far distance, Lakṣmaṇa departs to investigate with bow in hand (1). We see him next, commencing to climb a tall tree (2), and then perched at its top (3). From that height he sees the approaching army-like entourage that surrounds the chariot of Bharata and Śatrughna, and he returns to the hut (4) to warn Rāma of impending disaster and to suggest he seek refuge in a mountain cave. The last scene depicts Bharata and Śatrughna approaching the forest abode on foot (5). Conflation is used for the figures of Rāma and Sītā before their hut, and their single presence must be read as their participation in scenes 1, 4, and 5. Lakṣmaṇa departing to climb the tree refers to this image, as does his return after scrambling down the tree; the figures of Bharata and Śatrughna approaching the hut also refer to this single conflated image. It will be seen from folios 66 and 112 that the movement in synoptic narrative is quite unpredictable and varies considerably from one example to the next.

Of the sixty-eight painted pages in the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, fifty-one use either synoptic or continuous narrative and clearly outnumber the seventeen that use the monoscenic mode. There are, however, some splendid monoscenic pages in the latter half of the book where Sāhīb Dīn's own hand is in evidence. One such is folio 121 that depicts the council in the forest and it is filled with figures and detail (fig. 5). Monoscenic narratives center around a single, easily identifiable event that is excerpted from a story; the relation of key figures to scenic details must be unmistakeable in order to serve as signal references to the viewer. As with the continuous and synoptic modes, monoscenic narratives too rely on the prior knowledge of the viewers in a milieu in which tales were generally familiar to their audience. Occupying the upper left quarter of the page, Rāma sits before his empty hut, heading a group formed by his three mothers and Sītā; with his hand raised in the gesture of preaching, he explains to Bharata and Śatrughna who stand before him that he cannot return to Ayodhyā and must honor the terms of his father's boon. Seated before him are royal sage Vasiṣṭa, Lakṣmaṇa, and charioteer Sumantra; behind them are rows of figures, seated and standing, representing the entire royal entourage. Sages performing penance sit beside the river that flows along the bottom of the page. The combination of figures and the setting makes the episode unmistakeable.

Some of the most exciting and complex of Sāhīb Dīn's paintings are contained in the *Yuddhakāṇḍa,* which displays work of consistently superior quality. The principle of topographical placement, seen in the Ayodhyā book, is evident also in the *Yuddhakāṇḍa*. Here, the Laṅkā palace of Rāvaṇa is either placed at the right of the page or visualized beyond its right margin, while the area outside the palace, occupied by Rāma and his forces, is placed to the left. Thus, movement is from right to left when Rāvaṇa sends out his spies to estimate the size of Rāma's army; it is from left to right when the monkey forces enter the palace. In the great battle scenes, the two armies face each other from their respective geographical positions. In the set of five paintings that represent the journey back to Ayodhyā after the defeat and death of Rāvaṇa, the aerial chariot moves from the

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right, the direction of Laṅkā, towards the left which exemplifies space that belongs to Rāma and his allies.

A complex synoptic portrayal, which also makes use of conflation, is seen in *Yuddhakāṇḍa* folio 34 which presents eleven scenes relating to Indrajit binding Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa with arrows that turn into snakes (fig. 6). To the lower right of center, Rāvaṇa and his son Indrajit confer on how to defeat Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa (1), and having come up with an ingenious if deceitful plan, Indrajit leaves the palace followed by his retinue (2). The left third of the page contains the execution of the plan. From his aerial chariot, Indrajit shoots arrows that turn into snakes, and Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa lie on the ground, helplessly bound by these snakes (3). Seeing them thus (here is a minor instance of conflation), Sugrīva gives way to fear and anguish, and Vibhīṣaṇa reassures him that the heroes are not dead (4). Indrajit enters the city gates of Laṅkā (5), is admitted to Rāvaṇa's presence (6), and is given a victory embrace by him (7). A second instance of conflation is apparent in the figure of Rāvaṇa; the single ten-headed figure first receives and then embraces his son. The events of this page continue in the lower right corner where Sītā is seen alone in the Aśoka garden (8), and then confronted by *rākṣasi* Trijaṭā whom Rāvaṇa has instructed to apprise Sītā of the news (9). Following her instructions, Trijaṭā takes Sītā in the aerial chariot which we see first immediately above the palace (10), and then above the battlefield where Trijaṭā points out to Sītā the figures of the bound heroes (11). The same bound figures of scenes 1 and 2 partake also in scene 11. The rich colors and extraordinary details make this a spectacular, if challenging, page of narrative.

Folio 60 of the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* is a superb synoptic page that presents seven separate scenes to depict the battle between Lakṣmaṇa and Rāvaṇa (fig. 7). In the pages of this Battle Book, the figure of Rāvaṇa is frequently conflated so that two or more events that unfold around him make reference to a single image of the ten-headed *rākṣasa*. The figures of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are not conflated that often; perhaps it was easier to repeat their figures than that of the much larger ten-headed and multiple-armed Rāvaṇa who occupied considerable space upon a page. However, we have seen that the technique of conflation was utilized even when Rāvaṇa was not the subject. To right of center of folio 60, Rāvaṇa stands upon his chariot with lance in hand (1) attacking Lakṣmaṇa. In the next scene, Lakṣmaṇa is pierced by Rāvaṇa's weapon (2), and falls to the ground (3). Enraged Hanumān jumps onto Rāvaṇa's chariot (4) and punches him so hard that Rāvaṇa falls stunned to the chariot floor (5). Having extracted the lance that has passed through Lakṣmaṇa and into the ground (just as specified in Vālmīki's text), Hanumān helps Lakṣmaṇa off the battleground (6). In the final scene, Lakṣmaṇa rests in their camp while Hanumān speaks to Rāma (7) and offers himself as a vehicle upon which Rāma may enter the battlefield.

A third richly textured synoptic page, *Yuddhakāṇḍa* folio 178, relates the episode of Sītā's return to Rāma after Rāvaṇa's death in a total of eight scenes (fig. 8). To the right, within the palace at Laṅkā, are three scenes in which Vibhīṣaṇa and Hanumān command that Sītā should be brought to them (1), and wait for her (2) as she adorns herself (3). The rest of the story unfolds in the left of the page, outside the palace. Vibhīṣaṇa and Hanumān approach Rāma with the palanquin that holds Sītā (4). When Rāma commands Sītā to be brought to him, Vibhīṣaṇa uses his cane to chase away the monkeys who crowd around to see her (5), upon which the monkeys set up a great hue and cry. Towards the upper section of the page, Sītā steps out of the palanquin (6). Next, Rāma speaks to Sītā, telling her that her chastity is in doubt and that she may live anywhere that she chooses (7). The final scene depicts the preparation of a blazing fire which Sītā proposes to enter (8). As is often the case in Sāhīb

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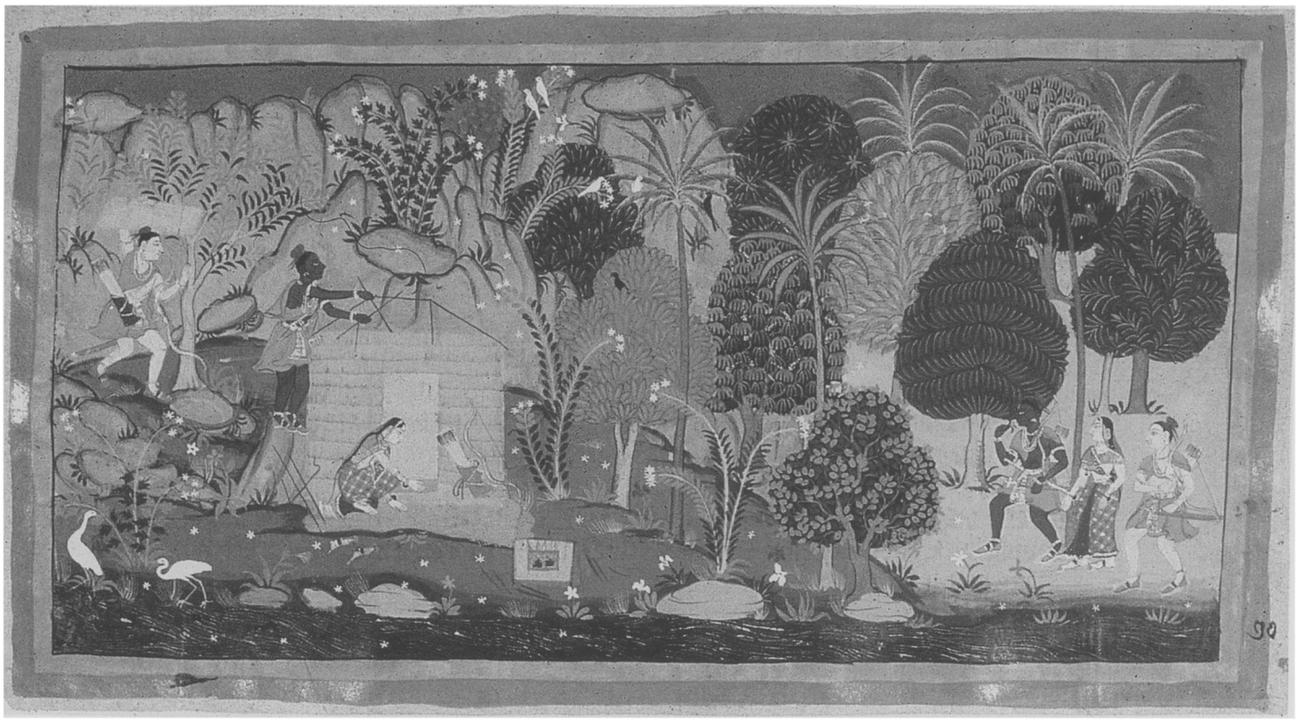


Fig. 1 Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa reach Panchavaṭī. *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* folio 70. Continuous narrative. Sāhīb Dīn.



Fig. 2 Bharata and Śatrughna visit Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa. *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* folio 114. Circular continuous narrative. Sāhīb Dīn.

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Fig. 3 Crossing the river into exile. *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* folio 66. Synoptic narrative. Sāhīb Dīn.

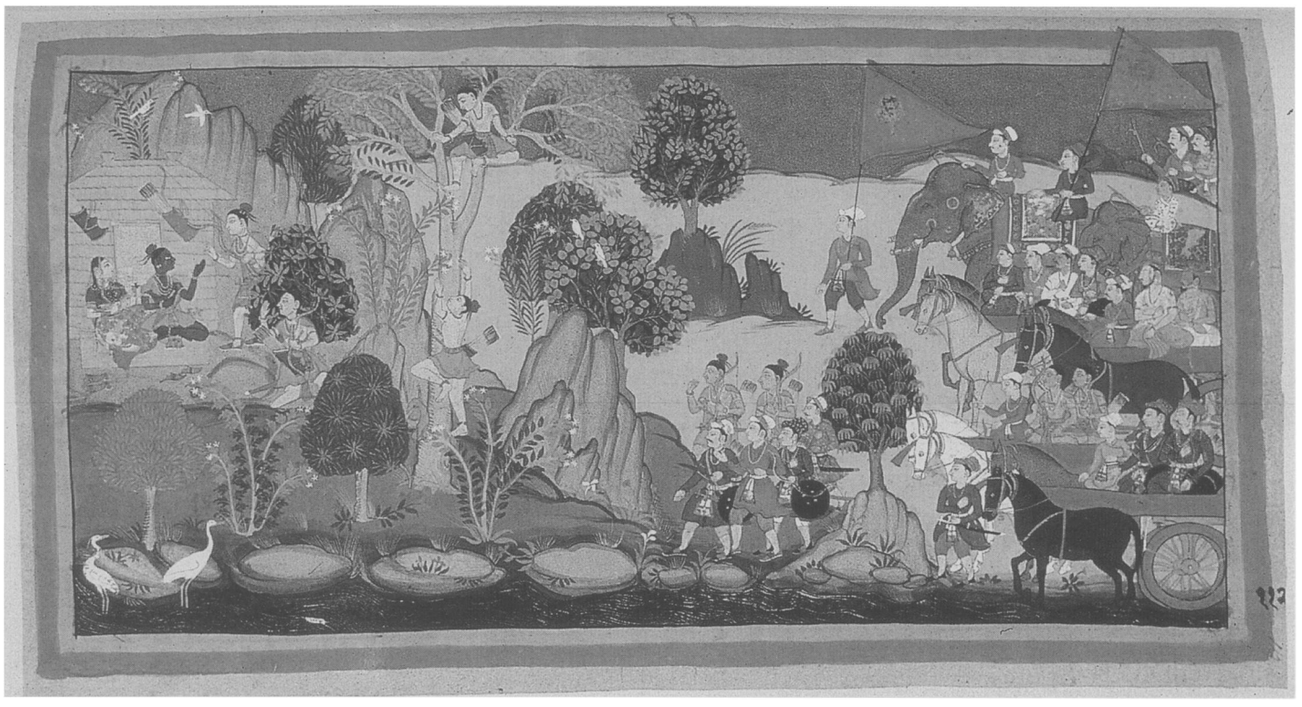


Fig. 4 Lakṣmaṇa reports the arrival of Bharata. *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* folio 112. Synoptic narrative with conflation. Sāhīb Dīn.

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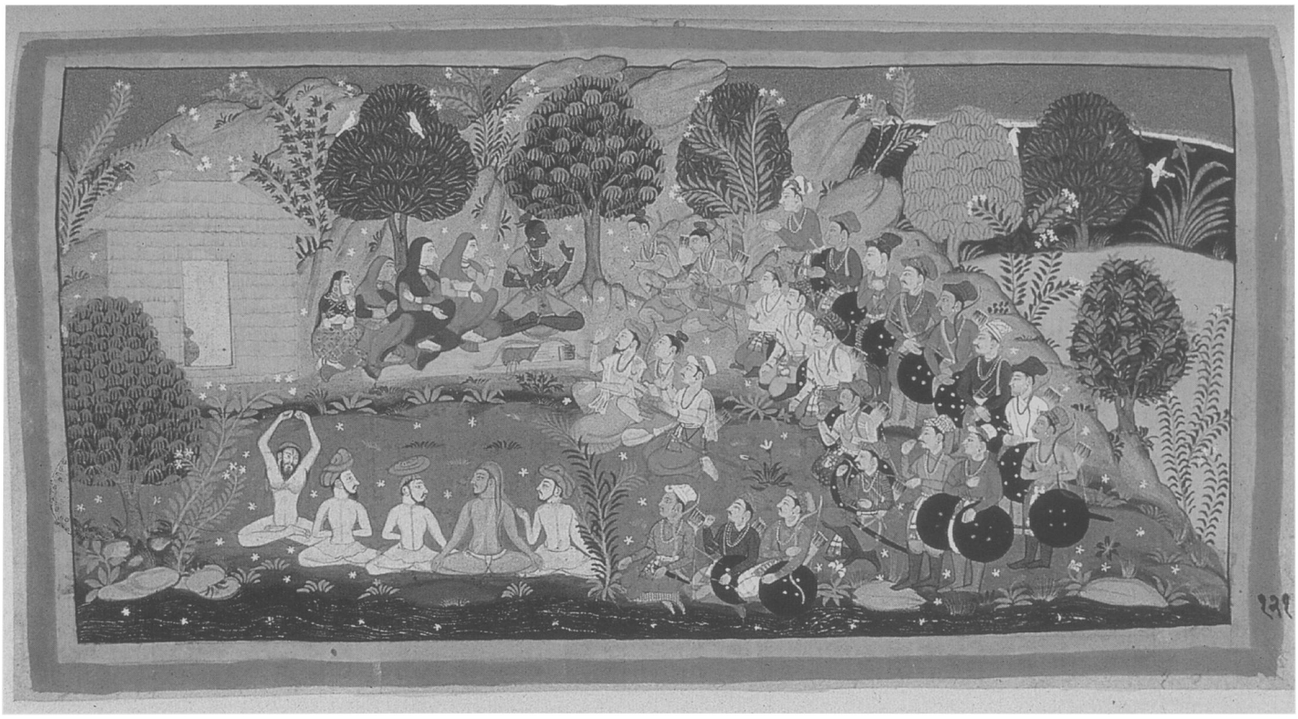


Fig. 5 The council in the forest. *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* folio 121. Monoscenic narrative. Sāhīb Dīn.



Fig. 6 Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa bound by Indrajit's snake-arrows. *Yuddhakāṇḍa* folio 34. Synoptic narrative. Sāhīb Dīn.

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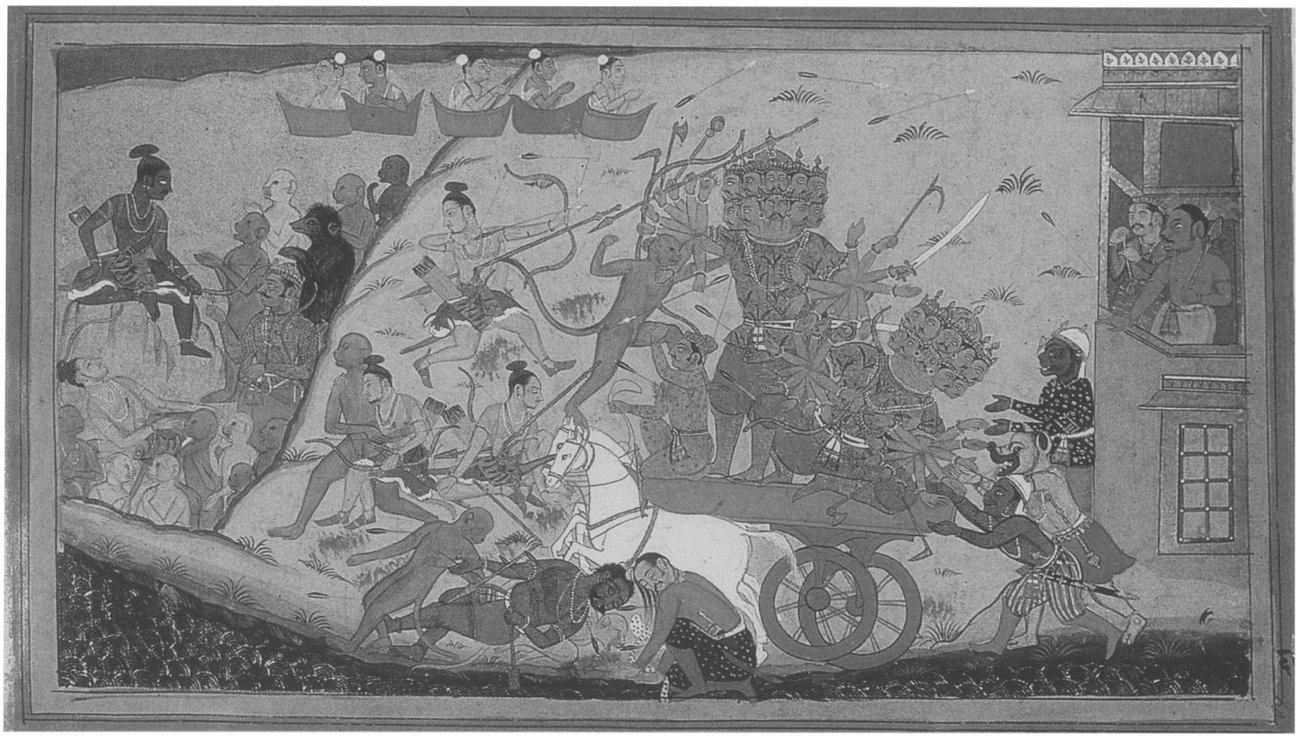


Fig. 7 Battle between Lakṣmaṇa and Rāvaṇa. *Yuddhakāṇḍa* folio 60. Synoptic narrative. Sāhīb Dīn.

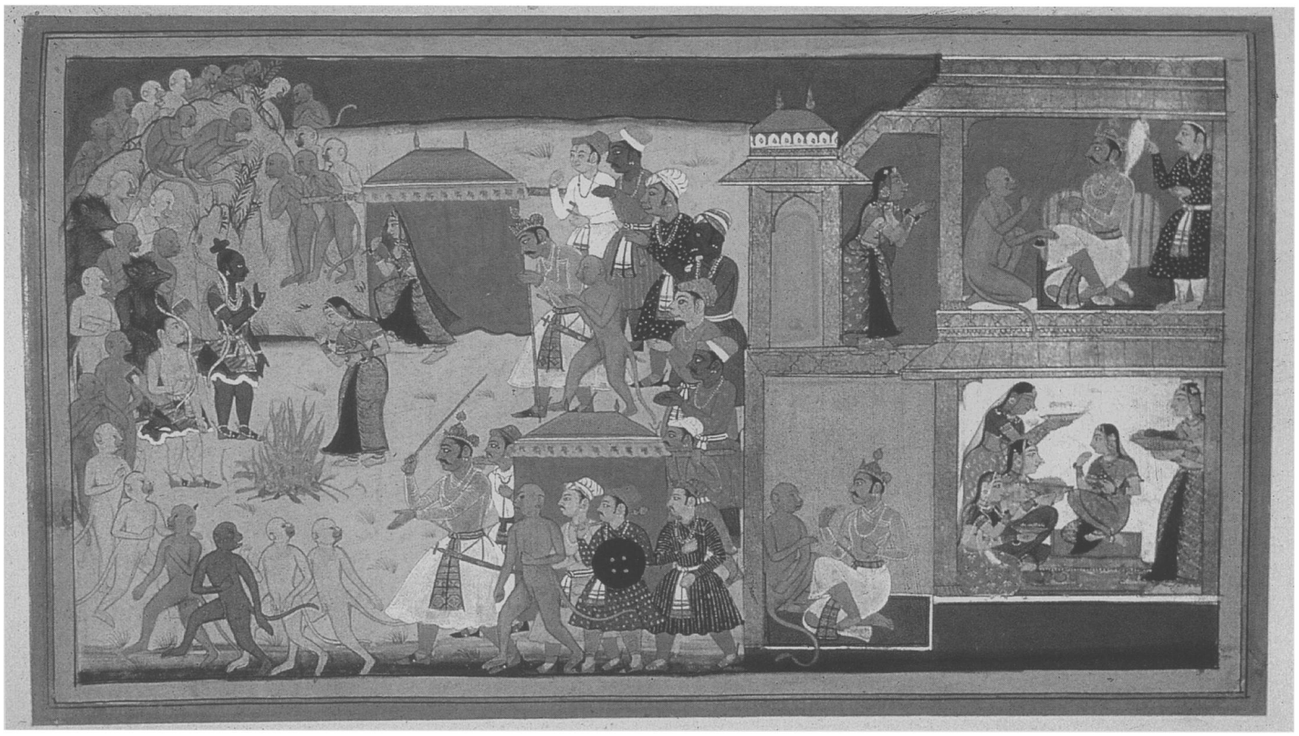


Fig. 8 Sītā's return to Rāma. *Yuddhakāṇḍa* folio 178. Synoptic narrative. Sāhīb Dīn.

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Fig. 9 Kumbhakarṇa and Sugrīva. *Yuddhakāṇḍa* folio 84. Synoptic narrative. Sāhīb Dīn.



Fig. 10 Descent of the Ganges. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* book 9, folio 24. Synoptic narrative. Sāhīb Dīn.

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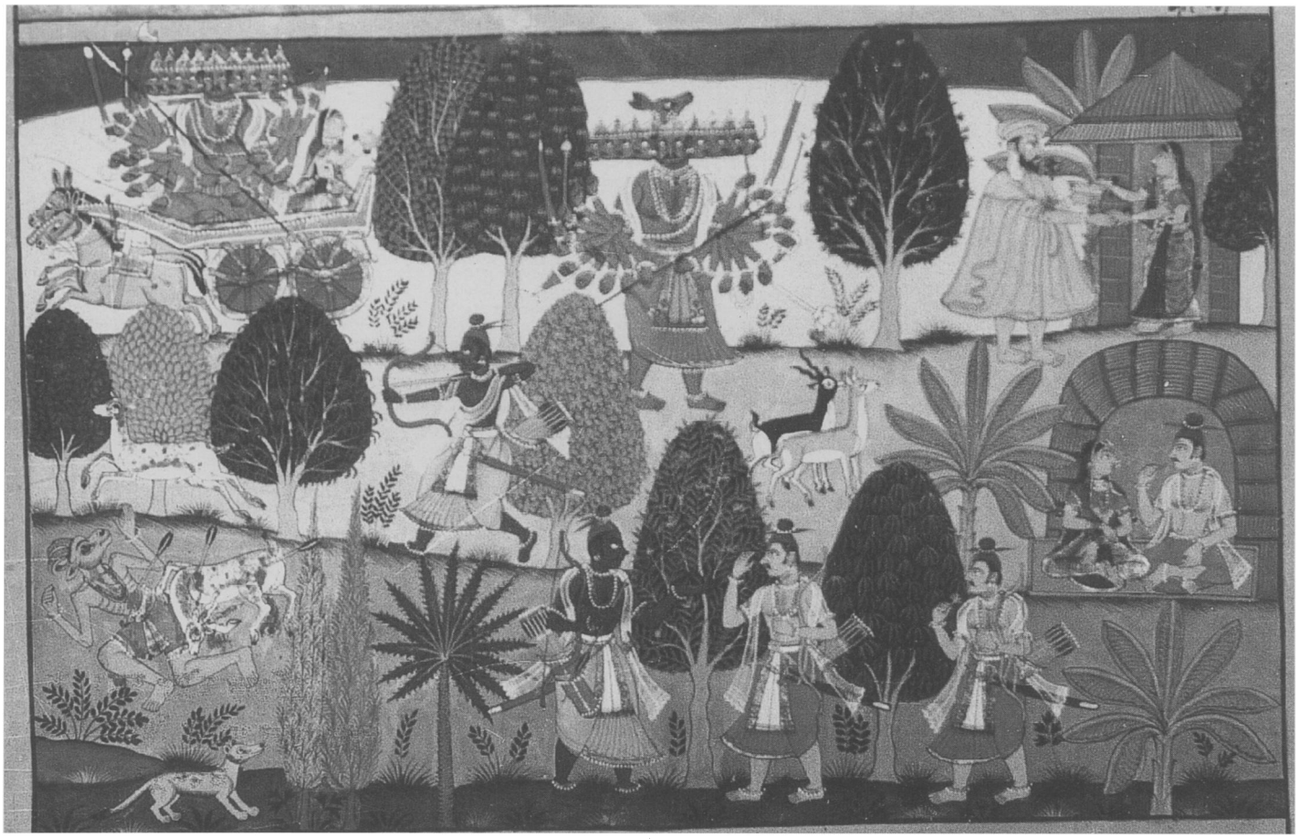
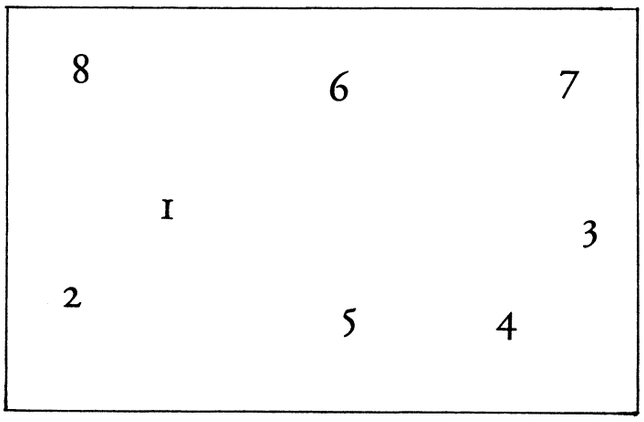


Fig. 11 The abduction of Sītā. *Araṇyakāṇḍa*. Synoptic narrative, Manohar.

Fig. 11a Sketch of Fig. 11.



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Fig. 12 Rāvaṇa battles Jaṭāyu. *Araṇyakāṇḍa*. Synoptic narrative. Manohar.

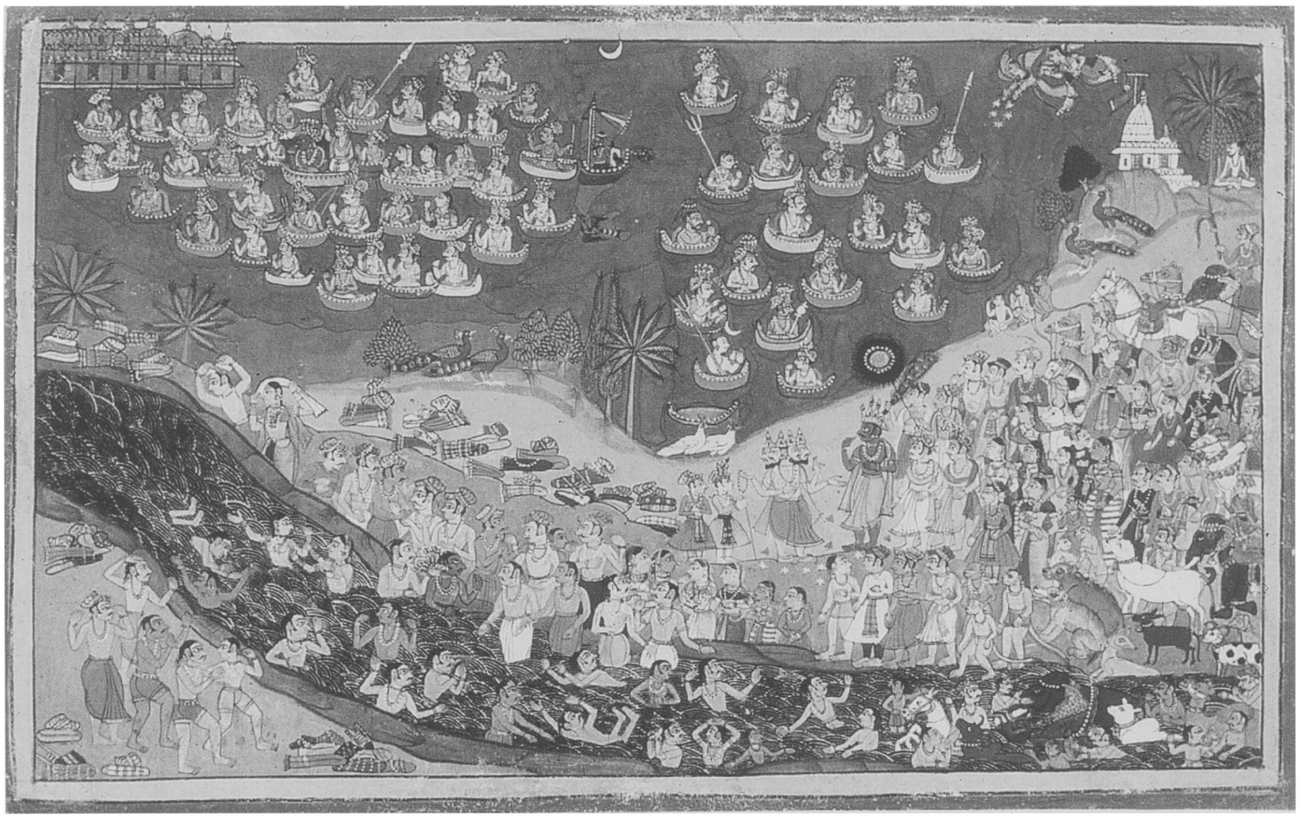


Fig. 13 Rāma and his subjects give up life on earth. *Uttarakāṇḍa*. Continuous narrative. Manohar's (?) workshop.

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Fig. 14 Sugrīva gives Sītā's bundle of jewels to Rāma. *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa* folio 9. Simple continuous narrative. Deccani-Mewār artist.

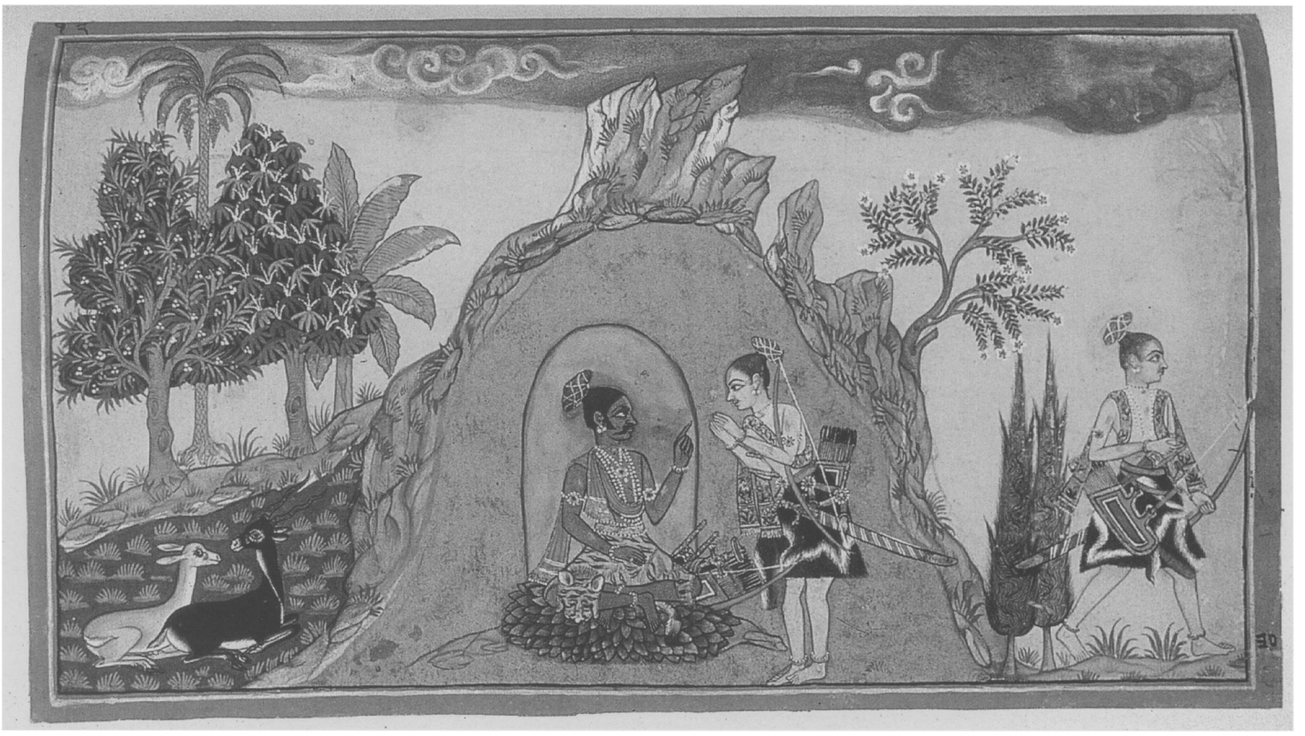


Fig. 15 Lakṣmaṇa departs on mission to Sugrīva's court. *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa* folio 30. Simple continuous narrative. Deccani-Mewār artist.

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Dīn's synoptic narratives, the technique of conflation is also used; in this instance the figures of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are portrayed just once, but participate in scenes 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8.

A somewhat simpler synoptic page is *Yuddhakāṇḍa* folio 84 that portrays five scenes pertaining to Kumbhakarṇa's encounter with monkey Sugrīva (fig. 9). The center of the page is occupied by the giant figure of Rāvaṇa's brother who consumes monkeys by the handful while he is attacked by Rāma and his allies including Sugrīva who may be recognized by the white garland around his neck (1). In a conflated presentation, the same figure of Kumbhakarṇa now has Sugrīva imprisoned under his foot (2). To the right Kumbhakarṇa returns to the palace holding Sugrīva who, however, bites off Kumbhakarṇa's nose (3). The enraged *rākṣasa* (conflated image) throws Sugrīva to the ground intending to crush him underfoot (4), but Sugrīva manages to escape over the palace wall (5).

The greater number of the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* paintings make use of the synoptic mode, although a few also utilize simple continuous narrative. Sāhīb Dīn also uses monoscenic narrative (twenty-five of ninety painted pages), particularly for certain grand battle scenes involving Kumbhakarṇa. Ten of the sixteen pages that depict the story of Rāvaṇa's giant brother make use of the monoscenic mode, positioning the giant figure, seated, standing or reclining, so that it occupies the entire height or length of a page. Other monoscenic paintings include the grand confrontation between Rāma and Rāvaṇa.

It is an interesting exercise to compare Sāhīb Dīn's marginally earlier work on the Udaipur *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, completed in 1648, with his two *Rāmāyaṇa* books, *Ayodhyā* (1650) and *Yuddha* (1653), and to see how much more visually exciting the latter are. Of the four preserved books of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, books 8 and 9 come from Sāhīb Dīn's workshop, with a single painting in each book including Sāhīb Dīn's name along the margin. Jasavant, the scribe of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, seems to have been elevated to the position of supervisor for books 1 through 3 of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The writing of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* manuscript was a complex affair that required considerable planning. The center of each page contains the text of the *Purāṇa*, written in large script, while the top and bottom of each page carry from one to five lines of the fourteenth-century commentary of Srīdhar.[9]

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is a manuscript of small size with its pages measuring well under half those of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. It is curious to note that of the fifty-three painted pages of book 8, only thirty-five are full pages, while two are half page illustrations, and sixteen occupy only a quarter page. We may assume that, as with the later *Rāmāyaṇa*, Sāhīb Dīn's workshop produced a series of painted pages, and it was left to Jasavant to copy text and commentary so that there was a correlation between text and image. However, the production of half- and quarter-painted pages is strange. Sāhīb Dīn chose to paint seven illustrations to portray the story of elephant Gajendra's rescue by Viṣṇu,[10] which is told in chapters 2, 3, and 4 of the *Purāṇa*; five are full page paintings, while two occupy half pages. These pages utilize either a simple continuous mode of narration with two scenes to a page, or the monoscenic mode. The extraordinary complexity seen in the *Rāmāyaṇa* paintings is not in evidence here. The Churning of the Ocean, concluding with the battle between gods and demons (chapters 6–10) is illustrated by ten full- and four quarter-page paintings. An occasional page is here divided into two framed halves; however each half does not necessarily contain only one episode. For instance,

[9] It is interesting to note that early printed versions produced into the early twentieth century follow the same system.

[10] The first page of this series, depicting the Citrakuṭ garden where the episode unfolds, contain the notation *citrakāra sāhībadī* along its lower margin.

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folio 2r of the churning of the ocean contains scene 1 in the left frame, but scenes 2 and 3 in the right frame. There is only one synoptic page in all of book 8, folio 79r, which tells the tale of Satyavrata Manu and the divine fish in a set of five scenes. The story occupies chapter 26 of the textual version, and Sāhīb Dīn chose to narrate it in three paintings, folios 79r (full page), 81 (full page), and 83r (half page). The number of lines of text per page varies considerably in this illustrated *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*; for instance both sides of folio 80 have only a few lines of text, and we may assume that the scribe needed to make adjustments depending on the number of painted pages.

Book 9's single signed Sāhīb Dīn page (*citratam citāro sāhabjī*), folio 24r (fig. 10), narrates the descent of the Ganges using the synoptic mode in a set of six scenes. The page is mundane in treatment, and quite inferior to anything seen in the *Rāmāyaṇa* project in which Sāhīb Dīn seems to have been truly inspired to produce his most adventurous and superior work. There are another eight synoptic pages in book 9, while the rest of the paintings, several of which are quarter-page illustrations, are monoscenic in treatment.

Manohar's Narrative

The second Mewār artist involved with the *Rāmāyaṇa* is Manohar whose name appears as artist in the colophon of the dispersed *Bālakāṇḍa* in the Prince of Wales Museum. Manohar was also the artist of the stylistically akin *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, now in the collection of the Rājasthān Oriental Research Institute at Udaipur, although its colophon does not specify its artist. On the basis of stylistic considerations, Andhare suggests that Manohar's earlier work includes a set of folios of striking quality at the end of book 11 of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, that narrate the final episodes of Kṛṣṇa's sojourn on earth.[11] As in the case of Sāhīb Dīn, so too Manohar's *Bhāgavata* pages are much less complex than his work on the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

I shall here concentrate on the *Araṇya* book which, unlike the *Bālakāṇḍa*, is a complete document. The narrative style of Manohar and his workshop displays several similarities with that of Sāhīb Dīn; yet his hand is distinct and may be distinguished as such. Manohar's tendency to divide his pages into horizontal bands, his treatment of individual figures, his manner of depicting chariots, trees and foliage, and his color scheme in which orange is much favored, all set him apart from Sāhīb Dīn within the parameters of the Mewār style. While he is a competent artist who produced some delightful pages, he is not of the calibre of Sāhīb Dīn who was undoubtedly the most distinguished of Mewār's seventeenth-century painters. Of the thirty-six painted pages of the *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, six use the mode of monoscenic narration; the rest are either synoptic (ten paintings) or continuous (twenty paintings).

A vibrant set of five pages that are most likely from the hand of Manohar himself, use the synoptic mode to narrate the abduction of Sītā, commencing with the arrival of Rāvaṇa and Mārīcha and ending with the cremation of Jaṭāyu. One folio divided broadly into three horizontal zones (fig. 11), carries eight scenes that start to the left of the central space, sweep across the lower segment and conclude in the topmost zone. Within each of these zones, however, the movement is arranged neither from left to right nor from right to left, and seems quite arbitrary, as is indicated by the sketch appended (fig. 11a). Rāma shoots at the golden deer (1) and then sees Mārīcha emerge from the creature (2). Sītā, seated in the hut with Lakṣmaṇa, requests him to go in search of Rāma (3), and Lakṣmaṇa obeys (4). Lakṣmaṇa meets Rāma returning and is confronted by bad omens (5).

[11] Sridhar Andhare, *Chronology of Mewar Paintings* (Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1987), 73.

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Meanwhile, at the top center, Rāvaṇa approaches the hermitage (6). To the right extreme he stands before Sītā in the guise of a brahmin (7), and to the extreme left, chariot-borne Rāvaṇa departs with Sītā (8). The frequency of movement back and forth across the page that is required in order to read the sequence in its correct temporal sequence is bewildering until one considers topographical placement. The safety of the hermitage is along the right extreme of the page, and the dangerous zone of Rāvaṇa and his minions is to the left, while the centre of the page is the intervening space. It is hence that seated Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa (3), as well as disguised Rāvaṇa standing before Sītā (7), are placed at the right extreme.

The same geographical logic permeates all five pages that tell this segment of the story. One folio actually has a vertical division of the page so that its left quarter is demarcated as Laṅkā (fig. 12). To the right rear, chariot-borne Rāvaṇa with Sītā is confronted by the great eagle Jaṭāyu (1). Forced to dismount, Rāvaṇa fights Jaṭāyu who destroys the chariot (2, 3). Rāvaṇa attempts to fly off with Sītā but Jaṭāyu persists in his attack (4) only to be finally destroyed. Sītā weeps over him to no avail (5), and we see her in the left segment, within the Laṅkā palace, guarded by demons (6). It is interesting to notice that Manohar has positioned airborne Rāvaṇa of scene 4 so that his numerous weapon-carrying hands straddle the orange band that divides the page, crossing over into the Laṅkā segment.

Manohar used continuous narration in several pages of the *Bālakāṇḍa*, and one such presents Daśaratha's performance of the *putreshṭi yajña*, the sacrifice to obtain sons, in four scenes. The left half of the page is devoted to the sacrifice, and Daśaratha watches as Agni rises out of the fire with the pot of potent *pāyasam* (1). Daśaratha then receives the *pāyasam* (2), walks with it towards the inner chambers (3), and gives it to his three queens (4). Manohar has used an entire series of architectural units to divide the page into box-like structures. Yet, the mode is continuous narration, although somewhat unimaginative in treatment.

Continuous narration is used to portray Rāma breaking the bow of Śiva and thus earning the right to take Sītā's hand in marriage. To the upper left we see Rāma at the court of Janaka (1). When the bow in brought in on a cart, Rāma picks it up (2), strings it (3), and aims it (4), whereupon the bow breaks and is seen lying on the ground (5). Rāma is repeated in each of four scenes. The painting of Rāma's encounter with Parāśurāma, when the marriage party is on its way back to Ayodhyā, also uses continuous narration. The left half of the page depicts the entire marriage party, while to the right are three scenes featuring Parāśurāma. A rather puny figure of Rāma with raised bow faces a gigantic Parāśurāma with a glowing sun-like halo (2). Immediately to the right we see Parāśurāma cut down to size, literally, as Rāma's arrow destroyed his accumulated yogic power (3). Finally, acknowledging Rāma's supremacy, Parāśurāma departs peaceably (4).

A splendid monoscenic page in the *Bālakāṇḍa* depicts the seige of Mithila by Sītā's disappointed suitors after Rāma had won her hand by breaking the bow of Śiva. At the center of the page Manohar has opened up the circular city to reveal its interior. Warriors on horses, elephants, in chariots and on foot surround the city. While Manohar's narrative style reveals certain similarities to Sāhīb Dīn's presentations, his pages are generally simpler and contain fewer figures.

Finally, it is necessary to address the problem of the last book of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, completed in 1653, probably by some lesser members of Manohar's workshop. This is the most heavily illustrated of the books (ninety-two painted pages) and also the most disappointing. The sense of anticlimax created by the paintings may be experienced through a consideration of the three scenes that comprise its banal and insipid last folio (fig. 13). To the right, Rāma and his subjects

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arrive at the banks of the Sarayu river (1) to be greeted by Brahmā, while a host of gods hover in the sky in their aerial chariots. To the lower left they all disrobe and enter the waters in order to give up life on earth (2). In the upper left, they rise up into the heavens in little celestial "boats" (3) and, together with the gods, move in the direction of the golden mansion at the left upper edge of the page. The page is filled with puppet-like figures, some 120 of them, and the prosaic nature of the painting, as of most others in this book, is a real let-down. The reason for the employment of a set of third-rate artists, in what started out as a magnificent royal *Rāmāyaṇa*, is curious. With Jagat Singh's death, it is possible that the manager worried about the project being abandoned and hence rushed it to conclusion by employing hack artists.

The Deccani Artist's Narrative

The Mewār-Deccani artist responsible for the *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa* (and most likely for the *Sundarakāṇḍa* of which only a few pages are available) created paintings that differ substantially from those of Sāhīb Dīn and Manohar. His color scheme which favored extensive use of a sulphuric yellow and rose pink, the size of his figures, stylistic considerations, as well as his treatment of narrative are all quite distinctive. In Sāhīb Dīn's and Manohar's pages, individual figures are small, measuring around two inches in height; even Rāma and Rāvaṇa, who are portrayed larger than the others, are at most 2 1/2 inches tall. Their pages comfortably accommodate throngs of figures without appearing overcrowded. The Deccani artist consistently favored large figures, with Rāma 4 1/2 to 5 inches tall; additionally, he chose to leave much empty space on his pages and used fewer figures even in court scenes. A Sāhīb Dīn "crowded" page, as in folio 103 of the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* that portrays Bharata and his entourage crossing a river, contains seventy-eight figures; by contrast, the busiest *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa* page, folio 43 which portrays Sugrīva and his entourage, contains forty figures. Of the thirty-one paintings produced by the Deccani artist,[12] a simplified continuous narrative is the most favored (sixteen pages), while monoscenic narrative is a close second choice (thirteen pages). The complexity of the synoptic mode was rejected by this artist in all but two pages, thus contrasting sharply with Sāhīb Dīn for whom it was a frequent, if not favorite, narrative mode.

Kiṣkindhā folio 9, painted against a rose pink ground, is typical of the abridged continuous mode of the Deccani artist who generally portrayed just two scenes on such pages (fig. 14). To the left Sugrīva retrieves the bundle of Sītā's jewels from the cave in which it had been stored (1); to the right he presents it to Rāma (2). In folio 30, the center of the page is occupied by the grotto in which Rāma has spent the rainy season awaiting the time when Sugrīva would commence the search for Sītā. Scene 1 portrays Rāma directing Lakṣmaṇa to go to Sugrīva's court and stir him into action; scene 2 to the right depicts Lakṣmaṇa departing on his mission (fig. 15). As is the general practice in the Deccani artist's pages, considerable areas of space are left devoid of figures; the page features sulphuric yellow, bright green and rose pink.

A few *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa* paintings make use of conflated narrative, and one such is folio 59 which tells the tale of Surasā who assumes the shape of a monster to test the tenacity of Hanumān as he leaps across to Laṅkā. Emerging from the waters in the center of the page is the monstrous head of Surasā . Hanumān is depicted three times: first he dives towards Surasā's gaping mouth; then he all but

[12] The book contains a total of thirty-four illustrations; however, three are by a different hand and I have omitted them from this discussion.

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disappears into it; and finally, he shoots out of it. The single demonic head partakes in three successive moments of time in which Hanumān is portrayed three times.

One of the finest of the Deccani artist's monoscenic pages is folio 49 in which Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Sugrīva are seated in a grotto, while the monkeys dispatched by Sugrīva depart leaping in all directions. The combination of figures and scenic details in the painting, which features brown, rose pink, and bright green, makes the scene unmistakeable.

Text and Image

Scribe Hīrānandajī's text is a close copy of the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa*, although the scribe frequently splits chapters into sub-sections, or *sargas*, of his own devising. For instance, he divides lengthy chapter 52 of Vālmīki's *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* into "Rāma's advice" (*Rāma sandeśa nāma sarga*), "Lakṣmaṇa's advice" (*Lakṣmaṇa sandeśa*), "Sumantra's lament" (*sumantra vilāpa*), and "the Ganges crossing" (*gangā santaranam nāma sarga*), Lines are sometimes transposed and words are substituted; for instance, *śoka* (grief) is often replaced by the synonym *dukha*, and *rūpam* (form) by *veśam*, without, of course, changing the meaning in any way. Occasionally, sections of text amounting to several lines or verses are omitted.[13] Chapter endings are indicated by text written in red ink in place of the black used for the body of the work. On completing the text of a chapter, Hīrānandajī's general practice seems to have been to continue with the next chapter in black ink, leaving a line or two vacant for the later addition of the chapter ending in red. In several sections of the *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*, the scribe seems to have forgotten to return to earlier pages to add those endings.[14] Hīrānanda was a highly competent scribe but he made occasional errors; when this happened, he merely used yellow paint to block out the text, leaving such corrected pages in place. Errors are usually those of repetition. Thus, folio 42 of the *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa* contains ten lines that are "yellowed-out"; these represent the last line of chapter 37 and the start of chapter 38. The lines are, in fact, repeated on the next page; we may assume that when Hīrānanda checked his work and realised there was a repetition, he merely used a single application of yellow paint, being unconcerned about the continued visibility of the "erased" text.

It is remarkable how closely the text of the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* keeps pace with its accompanying paintings; occasionally Hīrānanda lags a little behind the artists with his text, but he soon catches up. For instance, the picture of folio 66 (fig. 3), depicting Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa's preparation of their matted locks and the crossing of the Ganges, contains on its reverse text that relates precisely to the painting. This is the sub-section of chapter 52 entitled "Ganges crossing," which commences with Rāma telling Guha that they will live as forest dwellers and requesting starch for their matted locks (*jaṭa*). Folio 112 which portrays Lakṣmaṇa climbing a tree and sighting Bharata's entourage (fig. 4) combines the events of chapters 96, 97, and 98. Here too the textual concordance is remarkable, with the reverse of folio 112 containing the start of chapter 96. The painting of folio 114 (fig. 2) portrays the events of five chapters. It combines chapter 99 (scene 1 of Bharata and Śatrughna meeting Rāma), chapters 100, 101, and 102 (scene 2 of Rāma taking them on his lap, refusing Bharata's request to return to Ayodhyā, and news of Daśaratha's death), and chapter 103 (scenes 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 of Rāma fainting, performing rites for his father and walking back up the hill to the cottage). The text of

[13] This part of my study relies on the text of T.R. Krishnacharya and T.R. Vyasacharya, *'Srīmad Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇam* (Bombay, 1911), which was readily available in the India Office Library where the illustrated manuscripts are located.

[14] For instance, folio 6r, which contains the end of chapter 5 and the start of chapter 6, contains blank space for insertion of chapter ending.

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chapter 99 commences on folio 113 reverse and is thus directly opposite the painted page; chapter 103 that concludes the events of the painted page ends on folio 118 reverse.

In commencing the writing of the *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, it would appear that Hīrānanda picked up an entire series of painted pages and proceeded transcribing the text on their reverse until he suddenly realised that his textual version was way behind the events portrayed in the paintings.[15] He then resorted to the only feasible option. Putting aside the painted pages, he wrote on both sides of a series of plain pages until his text caught up with the next painted page. This would explain why we have sixteen double-sided text pages between folios 7 and 24. The study of this royal Mewār *Rāmāyaṇa* manuscript suggests that the paintings were produced first, and that the scribe adjusted his text to the illustrations, utilizing plain and painted pages in a judicious combination. The correlation between written and painted pages remains close in the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* after the initial lapse on the part of the scribe. The painting of folio 34, commencing with Indrajit's binding Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa with magic arrows and ending with Sītā viewing them from an aerial chariot (fig. 6) combines the events of chapters 45, 46, and 47. Chapter 45 commences two pages earlier, on folio 32, while chapter 47 in which Rāvaṇa instructs Trijaṭā to take Sītā to view the bound heroes is contained on the reverse of the painted page.

Yuddhakāṇḍa folio 178, with its eight scenes pertaining to Sītā being brought to Rāma after Rāvaṇa's death (fig. 8), similarly combines the events of three chapters, 116, 117, and 118. The first five scenes pertain to chapter 116; scene 6 refers to chapter 117 in which Rāma tells Sītā to go wheresoever she wills; and the last scene pertains to chapter 117 in which Sītā has a funeral pyre prepared. Chapter 117 with Rāma's rejection of Sītā commences on folio 177 reverse, directly opposite the painted page.

The large number of painted pages in the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* that feature Kumbhakarṇa suggests that the story was one of Sāhīb Dīn's favorite sections of the Battle Book, if not of the entire *Rāmāyaṇa*. Vālmīki's text of the Kumbhakarṇa episode unravels in the course of eight chapters, from 60 through 67. Sāhīb Dīn chose to paint as many as sixteen pages to narrate the tale (seventeen, if we include folio 62 in which Rāvaṇa's minions depart to waken his slumber-ridden giant brother). Three paintings are devoted to the process of getting Kumbhakarṇa awake and ready, five to his consultations with Rāvaṇa, and seven to details of his battle, first with the monkeys and finally with Rāma. No other section of the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* is so heavily illustrated; in fact, as we have noticed with folios 34 and 178, it is more usual to find three or more chapters combined within a single illustration. The coordination between scribe and artist in these Kumbhakarṇa pages is remarkable. Chapter 60, in which Rāvaṇa sends for Kumbhakarṇa, starts on folio 61 reverse, directly opposite its corresponding picture on folio 62 which is the first illustration pertaining to the Kumbhakarṇa series. Sixteen pictures and thirty-five text pages later, the visual and textual stories end with illustrated folio 87 and the conclusion of corresponding chapter 67 on its reverse. Chapter 67, devoted to the climactic end of the Kumbhakarṇa story, is a long one; it has no less than five paintings devoted to its depiction.

The correlation between text and image is fairly close throughout Manohar's *Araṇyakāṇḍa*.[16] Thus the page devoted to the abduction of Sītā (fig. 11) has two chapter endings on its obverse : "the vision of the golden deer," and "the killing of Mārīcha." The previous painted page, which depicts the

[15] Thus painted folio 5 combines events of chapters 30–32, but the text opposite belongs to chapter 26. Similarly, painted folio 6 combines chapters 32 through 35, but the text opposite is still chapter 26.

[16] Since the painted pages have been extracted and are stored separately, my analysis is based on a restricted sample.

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arrival of Rāvaṇa and Mārīcha who then takes the form of the golden deer has the text chapter "the arrival of Mārīcha" on its reverse. A page that depicts the killing of Virādha, in a set of two scenes, has its obverse devoted to the text heading: "the killing of Virādha." A painted page that depicts Lakṣmaṇa cutting off Śūrpanakha's nose, and her lament to Khara, has on its obverse the text chapter ending "the disfigurement of Śūrpanakha."

In the *Kiṣkindhā*, with its fewer painted pages, Hīrānanda seems to have picked up a large number of blank pages, filling them with text on both sides. The result is that the painting of folio 9, depicting Sītā's bundle of jewels being handed over to Rāma (fig. 14), comes three pages after its corresponding text (chapter 6 ends on folio 6r). Hīrānanda must soon have realised that the Deccani artist illustrating the *Kiṣkindhā* book produced a lesser number of painted pages; by folio 30, in which Rāma sends Lakṣmaṇa as his messenger to Sugrīva, the text and illustrations correspond closely.[17]

The extent to which the artists, particularly Sāhīb Dīn, followed the details narrated in Vālmīki's text is remarkable. Before embarking on a painting, it would appear that they themselves read, or had read to them, the relevant portions of the text.[18] Sāhīb Dīn was not merely aware of the story line, but was conversant with textual particulars that were relatively inconsequential for the story line. One such demonstration of Sāhīb Dīn's versatility is seen on the painting of *Yuddhakāṇḍa* folio 6 that relates to chapter 35 of Vālmīki's text. Rāvaṇa's counsellors recount the occurrence of a variety of ill omens and advise Rāvaṇa to capitulate and negotiate peace with the enemy. The artist replicates the textual details in his painting. A strip along the edge of the palace portrays the exact phenomena mentioned in the text – cats pairing with leopards, swine pairing with dogs, and cows with the asses they have brought forth. Only the viewer familiar with Vālmīki's text will appreciate the significance of the numerous minor details contained in many of Sāhīb Dīn's paintings. It is interesting to note that the colors used in a page overlap the borders. Apparently, the practice in the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* was to first set up the page with its red and yellow borders, and then to paint within the framed space.

No direct evidence exists on the time taken to complete the paintings of this Mewār imperial *Rāmāyaṇa*. We know from scribal notations that Mughal paintings took anywhere between thirty-five to sixty-eight days each.[19] However, comparisons with Mughal practice should be made with caution. Mughal pages are built up with numerous layers of color, and each layer of paint is burnished before the addition of the next layer, so that the final page is built up to a superb level of finish. In the pages of the imperial Mewār workshop, paint is applied in simple flat washes with a single final burnish. Several of the *Rāmāyaṇa* pages reveal the flaking off of paint.[20] While Losty believes that it would have taken Sāhīb Dīn two to three months per painting,[21] I would like to suggest that a week or two may have sufficed for a page.[22] On my supposition, the sixty-eight painted pages of the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, which includes pages produced by members of Sāhīb Dīn's workshop,

[17] The picture bound in place of folio 59, depicting Surasā and Hanumān, belongs to the very end of the *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa* and has its reverse correctly numbered as folio 85; it was merely bound in the wrong place.

[18] Vishakha N. Desai indicates that Mewār artists likely had the text translated for them into Dingal, the regional language of Mewār, and that the person most likely assigned this task was the court librarian who often supervised the production of an illustrated manuscript. See her "From Illustrations to Icons: The Changing Context of the *Rasikapriyā* Paintings in Mewar," Ed. B.N. Goswamy, Indian Painting: Essays in honour of Karl J. Khandalavala (New Delhi: Lalit Kala Akademi, 1995), 97–127.

[19] John Seyller, "Scribal Notes on Mughal Manuscript Illustrations," *Artibus Asiae*, 48, 3/4 (1987), 247–77.

[20] In folio 57, the white around Rāvaṇa has flaked off; in *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* folio 112, the paint around Sītā, at far left, is flaked off.

[21] J.P. Losty, *The Art of the Book in India*: 126. Losty estimates that even with two or three junior artists assisting him, Sāhīb Dīn would have taken at least ten years to complete the work.

[22] Discussions with Phillipa Vaughan proved most helpful.

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may have been completed in a year. The superbly finished *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, with ninety illustrated folio, all apparently from Sāhīb Dīn's own hand, may have taken around three years.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The colophons of the various books of the *Rāmāyaṇa* indicate that the ambitious and extensive project of producing a lavishly illustrated manuscript of this significant text was commenced soon after work on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* ended in 1648. Jasavantajī, scribe of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, was now elevated to the position of the supervisor of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Established Mewār court artist, Sāhīb Dīn, and his workshop, produced the 156 paintings in the *Ayodhyā* and Battle books over the four year period between 1648 and 1652. Manohar and his workshop seem to have completed the *Bālakāṇḍa* and *Araṇyakāṇḍa* by 1651, in a period of three years. Around 1650, a second supervisor, Vyāsajayadeva, was brought into the *Rāmāyaṇa* project. Since Sāhīb Dīn and Manohar and their workshops were fully employed, the new supervisor seems to have called upon the services of a third artist, most likely from Aurangabad, who produced paintings in a Deccani-Mewār style for the *Kiṣkindhā* and *Sundara* books. Jagat Singh's death in 1652 precluded his seeing the completion of his ambitious project; the name of his successor Rāj Singh is featured in the colophons of the *Kiṣkindhā* and *Uttara* books.

Probing into Mewār's history may enable us to understand the motivation for this imposing and monumental illustrated *Rāmāyaṇa* at this particular stage in Jagat Singh's reign. The monarch's great grandfather, Rānā Pratāp (reigned 1572–97), had spent the better part of his life in the hilly terrain of Mewār fighting against Mughal emperor Akbar's forces and successfully evading capture. His heroism became legendary, and he served as a role model for later Rājput princes and even for the heroic Maratha ruler Śivājī. Rānā Pratāp's son, Amar Singh (reigned 1597–1620), sought to maintain Mewār's independence but was forced to concede defeat after years of bitter warring and devastation. However, Amar Singh extracted from the Mughals the concession that he (and future Mewār Rānās) would be exempted from the demeaning duty of attending the Mughal court in person. This was a privilege that set the Mewār rulers distinctly apart from other Rājput monarchs. In exchange, the Mughals demanded that the ravaged fort of Chitor, the capital prior to Udaipur, would not be rebuilt.

The next Mewār ruler, Karan Singh, maintained friendly relations with the Mughals, and even took his twelve-year-old son Jagat to the imperial court. During the peaceful reigns of Karan Singh (1620–28) and Jagat Singh (1628–52), Mewār slowly returned to prosperity. Architecture flourished with the construction of palaces, temples, tanks and lakes, and the art of illustrated manuscripts received patronage, particularly under Jagat Singh. Yet, Mughal overlordship apparently continued to be a thorn in Jagat Singh's side. Towards the end of a reign that had been free from confrontations with the Mughals, Jagat Singh decided to rebuild the walls of Chitor, thus breaking the terms of his grandfather's agreement with Jahāngīr. Possibly, it was in anticipation of retaliation from Shāh Jahān that the Rānā commissioned his grandiose *Rāmāyaṇa*, setting up a Rāma-Mewār versus Rāvaṇa-Mughal metaphor, and attempting to provide a psychological buffer to the Mughal threat. Sadly, Jagat Singh died by mid 1652 after a reign of twenty-four years, and it was his son and successor Rāj Singh who witnessed the actual completion of this magnificent, richly illustrated *Rāmāyaṇa*.

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