

**WALL
PAINTINGS
OF RAJASTHAN**

BY Y. K. SHUKLA

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PREFACE

The L. D. Institute of Indology has great pleasure in publishing *Wall Paintings of Rajasthan* by Prof. Yagneshwar Shukla, a practising artist. The work contains illustrations of the selected specimens of the wall-paintings of Pundarikji's Haveli in Jaipur, Galta, Shri Devata Shridhar's Haveli in Kota, and Nagaur Fort. In all we have in this volume four line drawings, two colour prints and forty eight black-and-white prints.

In the section that follows the Notes on these reproduced paintings, Prof. Shukla has given us description of even those frescoes which are not reproduced in the volume, thus enhancing its value and importance.

In the foreword he has explained succinctly the technique of wall-painting, employed by the Rajasthani painters.

His notes on paintings bring out their salient features and offer aesthetic appreciation. It is hoped that lovers of Art of India will welcome this publication.

I extend my heart-felt thanks to Prof. Shukla for allowing us to include his work in our L. D. Series.

L. D. Institute of Indology
Ahmedabad-380009
15th April 1980

Nagin J. Shah
Director

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FOREWORD

The traditional techniques and methods of mural decoration in Rajasthan are of particular interest to the students of Indian mural painting. After Ajanta and Bagh the link of mural paintings in India is not traced sufficiently with information and data. The continuity of this tradition of the art of mural decoration, after Ajanta and Bagh, though in its very late phase, is seen in the wall paintings of Rajasthan.

The technique of painting employed in Rajasthani murals is popularly known as Jaipur Process. It is a process of painting on wet-surface of the wall-plaster. This process of painting on wet-plaster was known and practised in early times in Italy, Egypt, India, Tibet, China, Korea, Japan and other countries. The techniques employed in all these countries were of 'fresco buono' and 'fresco-secco' and 'tempera' in egg or other adhesives like glues from Babul trees or animal hides. Though the techniques were same, the results differed according to the climate, time and the mood of the artist.

In India, Rajasthan is the place where the tradition of paintings on walls is still noticed in the old fort palaces, private Havelis and temples, though at present it is deteriorated in the hands of 'chitras'. Roughly the period of these murals can be placed between two to three hundred years.

Rajasthan is an arid area. The climatic condition has helped to preserve the mural paintings in this Maru Bhumi. The murals of Bundi, Kota, Nagaur, Jaipur, Galta, Pundarikji's Haveli and other remote places in Rajasthan are remarkable and they give an insight into the art and technique of Rajasthani mural painting. Stylistically these paintings differ, but so far as the subject matter is concerned, they

evinced uniform interest. The Krishna-Lilā episodes, and legends from Ramayana, love-scenes, royal processions, hunting scenes, battle scenes, seasons and seasonal festivals, moonlit music parties on the marble terraces, secular scenes, animal fights and ladies' pastimes etc. are the main themes for the artist's brush. In this monograph the murals of the above cited places, with particular reference to an excellent nucleus of murals of the Nagaur Fort, are studied *in situ* and noted in detail—technically, stylistically and thematically. The forty-eight photographs of the murals of the sites mentioned above are reproduced here with detailed annotations and connotations in black-and-white.

Two coloured-plates and one line drawing for the Jacket of the book and some other drawings showing the detailed studies of the frescoes are also added.

The other murals which have been described in the text are not reproduced here. But they convey intrinsic charm and beauty of these delapidating and vanishing pictorial presentation

I am grateful to Mr. Kartik Shukla who accompanied me in my research tour to these historically and artistically rich places to photograph these murals.

I am also thankful to the University Grant Commission, Delhi, for awarding the most coveted Emeritus Professorship to carry out the research, when I was the Head of the Department of Painting at Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan.

I am also grateful to the L. D. Institute of Indology for publishing my dissertation on the frescoes of Rajasthan with particular reference to the Nagaur Frescoes. I am equally indebted to Dalsukhbhai Malvania and Naginbhai Shah, Adviser and Director respectively of the Institute, for their valuable suggestions regarding the fine-production and its get-up.

19, Ghosha Society,
Ahmedabad-54
15th September 1979

—Yagneshwar Shukla

NOTES ON REPRODUCED PAINTINGS

Book jacket:

This is a linear delineation of an adult lady doing her long hair. Her right hand is on the head. The left hand is holding her hair flowing gracefully on her broad hips. She has a thin waist and breast fully developed. On the whole the figure is voluptuous. The lotus eyes, nose-ring and thick and curved eyebrow give added charm to the face and the figure is a rhythmic ensemble.

Notes on line drawings

1. A charming brush-drawing of a youthful and voluptuous lady – graceful in pose showing fully developed breasts enshrouded in transparent choli accentuating their forms by the raising of her hands around her lovely head with beautiful lotus eyes. The waist and rounded hips, emphasised by the black flowing hair on her back lend an added charm to her form. The decorative shred of her hair line from the forehead enhance the beauty of the lady's face. (p. 4)
2. Krishna with Gopis, Krishna is playing his magical flute. One of the two gopis holds a flywhisk. The other holds a 'thāli' with fruits. The figures are a linear feast. (p. 7)
3. A group of three ladies is a charming linear deliniation. (p. 10)
4. Drawings of hands, faces and hairstyle are reminiscent of Ajanta frescoes. (p.13)

Notes on colour Plates

1. The colourful print is a charming example of the coloured frescoes of the Nagaur Fort, Rajasthan. It represents a 'Fudāḍi' dance prevalent in Rajasthan as well as in Gujarat. It is full of movement. The rhythmic flow of the skirts of the dancers enhance the movements of the girl. The whole composition is pleasing to the eye.
2. This is a detail from the painting in the Pundarikji's Haveli in Jaipur, Rajasthan. It depicts court ladies with their lovers sitting on a terrace. It is a love scene. The two ladies are shown lying on the steps of the terrace in a revelling mood. Their costumes are colourful and show a mixture of Rajasthani and Moghul costumes of women. This is one of the most charming frescoes of the Haveli.



Pundarikji's Haveli:

Jaipur School of mural painting. C. mid-eighteenth century A.D.

1. CELEBRATION OF THE HOLI FESTIVAL:

The symmetrical arrangement of the grouping in the picture is interesting. It is a scene of play, merry-making and gay dalliance. The two figures in the foreground, filling their syringes with coloured water from a small tank breaks the monotony of the composition. The colourful costumes are symbolic of the gaiety of the festival annually celebrated with gusto and frivolity in the whole of Rajasthan. The festival is being celebrated with dance and music played on cymbals, sārangi, veenā and tablā or pakhāvāj. Stylistically it is a Rajasthani painting executed on the wall-surface near the ceiling.

2. DETAIL:

The central group composed of a king and a queen is the personification of Krishna and Rādhā. Krishna is depicted applying 'gulāl' on Rādhā's cheeks. Rādhā is taken aback in surprise and she is trying to play the same trick on Krishna as is seen by the action of her left hand. There is movement and rhythmic flow in the gestures and the lover's eager eyes. The haloes around the heads add extra charm to the grouping of the figures.

3. LADY AND THE CHILD PLAYING WITH 'CHAKRI':

A Moghul pastime. The stylisation, the execution and the composition are the same as in the figure 4. Only the face of the child is not child-like but manly.

4. THE SWING:

King and Queen swinging together on a swing—'zulā' in the month of shrāvana. Mark the lady pushing the swing, back and forth, with natural grace and movement and the expression conveyed in her eyes. (The figure, dress, facial features and the posture are typically Gujarati). Perhaps she is envying the couple enjoying the swing. On the right side of the picture, diametrically arranged, is the group of ladies holding in their hands flowers and fans of different sizes and shapes and designs ready to fan the royal couple after their joyous ride on the swing. The lovely peacock in the top right hand corner of

the picture and the pair of cows in the foreground, on the left, act as diagonal foils to the whole composition. In the background, in the distance, is a lotus lake with pavilions and gardens with cypress trees. The treatment of the trees and the foliage in the foreground and on the banks of the lotus lake is conventional and commonplace. Composed in a geometrical vignette, the whole scene is laid out on the marble terrace with pavilions and artificial garden in the background.

5. LADY PLAYING WITH 'GAIND':

The figure is composed in harmony with the shape of the arch. She is engrossed in the play. The rotating play-balls synchronize with the movements of the lifted hands. The lines of the scarf, the petticoat and the accentuated curve of the thin waist lead to the apex of the composition and give a sense of continued movement. The execution is bold and summary.

6. LADY WITH A PEACOCK:

"Mayoor-priyā". The figure of the lady in a dancing posture with her raised right hand holding a mango blossom and the peacock to pluck it, are composed in a decorative oval shape. The flowing skirt joined with the full-sleeved blouse, the stylistically drawn curved hair-line from the forehead to the neck-line and the lotus eye are all typical of the Moghul traditions of miniature painting.

7. LADY WITH A VEENĀ AND MRIGA (BLACK BUCK):

Representation of Rāgini Todi? The lady is playing on a Veenā and the black buck is listening to the strains of music with rapt attention. The composition, stylisation and the treatment are as in the figure 5.

8. POMEGRANATE:

The tree is decoratively treated. An adaptation of a Persian motif, it is frequently used to decorate the walls and the ceilings of buildings in Rajasthan. The perfection of freehand drawing in blues and reds is remarkable.



Kota Murals

The murals of Shri Devata Shridhar's Haveli. Kota School of mural painting. C. Eighteenth to the middle of nineteenth century A.D. - a period of nearly 150 years.

9. THE THORN:

This subject is oft repeated in Rajasthani painting. She is an 'Abhisārikā', adorned with all the lady's embellishments, going to visit her lover in a tryst. The arrested movement, created by the prick of the thorn in her left foot, is very aptly suggested by the flowing skirt and lifting of the 'chundari' from the forehead. The rhythmic flow of the lines of the two arms, one removing the thorn and the other lifting the veil from the head reverberate the lines of the thin waist and the raised breast. The bent left leg cutting right across the vertical lines of the figure breaks the monotony of the composition. The lotus eye of the 'nāyikā', her hairdo, pearl necklaces, 'ghunghru' and the wristlets with coloured strings and finally the ringlet of hair flowing down from the broad forehead to the cheek are all symbolic of the Nathadwara school of painting. The Pārijāta tree in the background echoes the posture of the 'nāyikā' and continues the rhythm of the whole composition. The parrots and the peacock in the vicinity add interest to the subject matter.

10. MRIGANAYANI (DOE-EYED):

In a vertical composition, the figure of the graceful lady posed in a "tribhangi" is charming. Compare the eye of the doe with that of the lady. The beauty of the delicate torso with the curvaceous lines of the hips and the raised breasts is suggestive of the sensuous sentiments to be aroused in the beholder. A typically Rajasthani figure in all its charm and poise. The framing of the head between the raised arms with hands intertwined is a conventional method of relieving the head from the rest of the background. The tie-and-die 'bandhana' scarf with the design of flower motifs on it adds to the decorative charm of the figure. The hillocks with clumps of shrubs at the top of the picture repeat the curvilinear rhythm of the ensemble.

11. LADY PLAYING WITH 'CAKRI':

A pastime of the ladies of the zanana of the Rajput and Moghul kings. The lady is swinging the toy in an up-and-down movement and listening to its

humming sound. She is standing on her right leg and the left one is resting on the right foot, this is the traditional way in which a female figure is composed by the Rajasthani painters. The lady's dress consisting of 'chundari', a 'choli' and a 'ghāgharā' and the head ornaments of 'karnafool', 'nath', 'dāmani' and the pearl necklaces attached to the girdle at the thin waist and the bracelets, armlets and the 'ghunghru' on the feet, all enhance the picturesqueness and gaiety of the figural rendering. The flowering shrubs on both sides of the figure encircle her graceful form in an oval decorative frame. The brush work is bold and vigorous.

12. THE LOVERS' TRIO:

A vertical panel in which a group of three figures is composed. The central figure is that of Krishna clasping the two gopis of Brija round their necks in his arms. Like Vaishnavite lyrics the miniature on the wall reproduce the same genre poetry full of village simplicity, charming maidenhood and robust youth. The Mandara flowers looming large on the figures at the top of the picture create poetic and sensuous flavour.

13. RADHA'S TOILET:

Rupagarvitā. Proud of her beauty, she has completed her 'shringār' and is admiring her beauty reflected in the mirror held by her 'sakhi'. She is sitting on a 'chorang,' square seat, supported by a round and big silky pillow, stretching her arms over her head giving an attractive twist to her torso with raised bosoms. The sitting posture is typically Indian and the style of painting linear and flat. The coiffeur of the profile head is exquisite and her hair arranged and plaited is carefully brought behind her back accentuating the curvaceous line of her thin waist and rounded hips. It is interesting to note that the faces of the rest of the figures in the picture are drawn in profiles. The small peep-window in the back wall of the courtyard balances the whole composition. The undulating line created by the arrangements of the heads, hands and the upper garments of the figures act as liaison between the five charming figures of the beviés so gracefully painted by the artist.



Galta Frescoes:

Jaipur School of Painting. C. mid-eighteenth century A.D.

14. **KRISHNA RETURNING HOME WITH COW-HERDS AND MILK-MAIDS OF BRINDĀBAN:**

It is a scene of 'godhuli'. Charming in its naivete, this miniature mural creates a scene which is homely and familiar. The pleasing hillocks studded with clumps of trees in twos and threes add a lyrical note to the cattlecade. The designing is in harmony with the shape of the arched space.

15. **POLO-PLAYERS:**

Portion of the Galta lunette painted with two groups of polo players riding on horses. The actions of the galloping horses and the players are full of vivacity and nerve. The black horse breaks the monotony of the middle tones in the picture.

16. **GOPIS AS SUPPLICANTS:**

Here are the two Gopis in a supplicatory postures. One is carrying a lotus-stalk in her folded hands and the other a plate of 'tāmbula' (pānbiḍā) in her hands to be offered to their lord Krishna (not in the picture) standing under a Kadamba tree with his pet cows gazing at him. The thin wiry line with which the figures are delineated is an achievement in itself. The dark eyes anointed with 'kājal' drawn with thick and bold lines add to the beauty of the figures.

17. **RADHA IN KRISHNA'S ATTIRE:**

In the Vaishnavite cult based on the "Prem Lakshanā Bhakti", very often Krishna is depicted in Rādhā's dress and vice-versa. Here Rādhā is shown holding the fly-whisk in her right hand. The left hand is probably holding a flower. The figure in Moghul dress with 'jāmā' and the headgear are reminiscent of the beautiful Jaipur cartoons of Rādhā and Krishna in a dancing attitude as described by the late A. Coomaraswami in his memorable treatise on Rajput Painting. The robust and youthful figure is that of a 'Pragalbhā' Nāyikā.

18. **INTERIOR OF THE UPPER STOREY OF THE RAMJI MANDIR AT GALTA:**

This is the interior view of the apartment of the upper storey of the Galta Gate. The ceiling, niches, pillars and the arches are beautifully decorated with

floral motifs and Rāgini pictures. Unfortunately the miniatures which represent the revival of style are badly damaged. But whatever that is spared gives an idea of the excellent work that was done by the traditionalists of the Jaipur Gharānā. The small lunette of the polo-players is seen on the arch of the central door-way. What effect of richness, lavishness and aesthetic pleasure this beautifully painted abode would have created on the minds of the people who had lived there, remains only to be imagined now.

19. SCENES OF BAKASURA-VADHA AND NARSIMHA AVATARA:

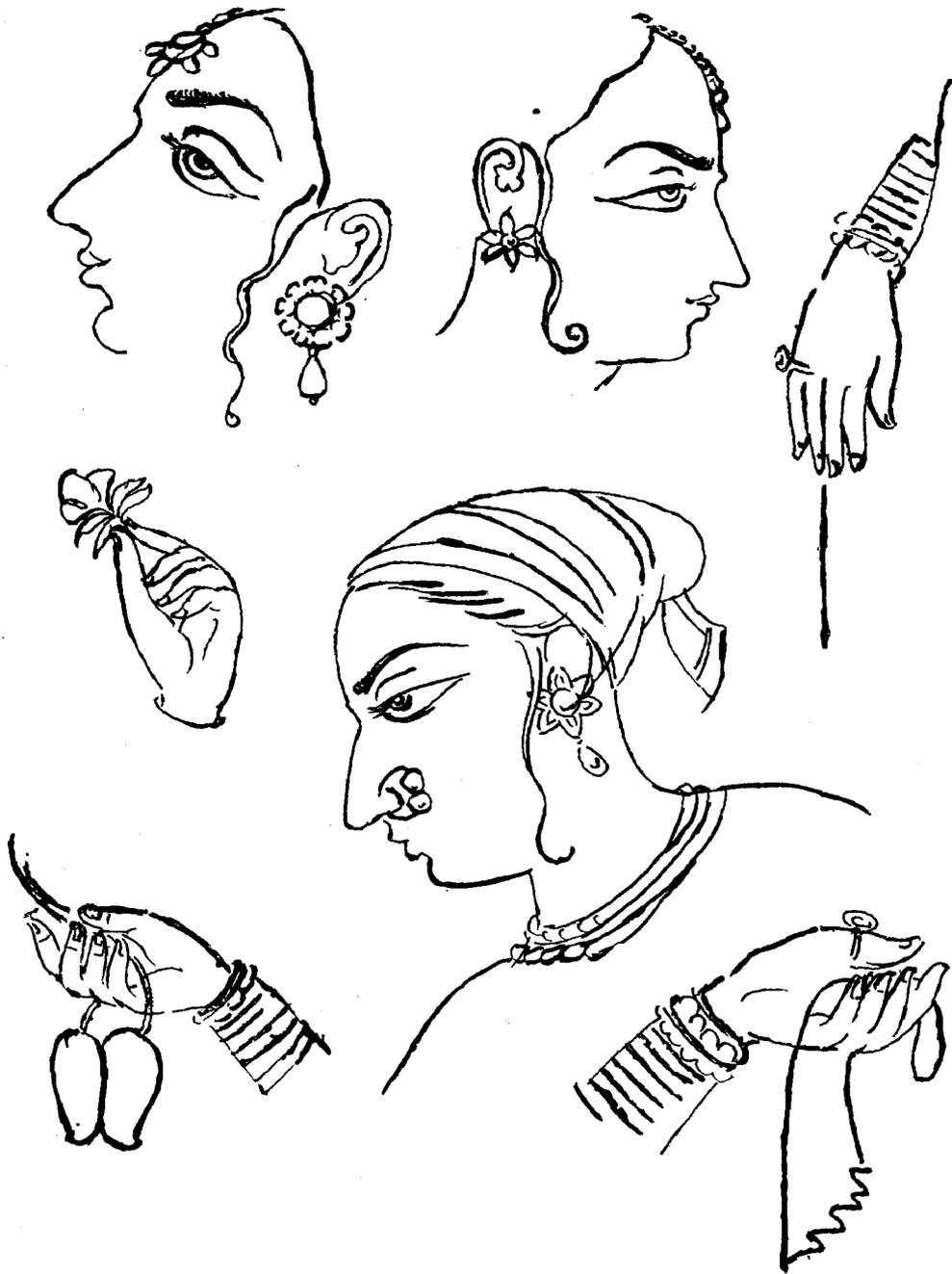
The panel is on the top portion of the main gate-way of the Ramji Mandir at Galta. The motifs of the composition are interesting in the sense that they are decoratively treated by the artist. Look at the decorative use made of the divided pillar from which the God Vishnu, in the form of half animal and half man is emerging. The rākshasa is being torn asunder on the lap of the God. Similarly, Krishna killing Bakāsura is symbolically represented by a flying bull near the frame of the panel. The designing of the Bakāsura's ten hands with all the 'āyudhas' is interesting in its pattern making.

20. KRISHNA RIDING AN ELEPHANT OF COMPOSITE FIGURES OF WOMEN:

The theme of composite figures was common in Persian as well as Indian paintings. Right from Ajanta artists (composite figures of four deers at Ajanta) to the late 19th century Moghul and Rajput miniatures, the use of such artistic device was made by the clever artisan-painters. Krishna is riding the elephant composed of Gopis and controlling the elephant's gait with a lotus goad (ankusha) which is symbolic of Krishna's love-lores that fill the pages of Indian mythological works like Bhāgavata Purāna.

21. MOTHER AND CHILD:

Portrait of an English or Dutch lady with her child. The painter must have been attracted by the dress and hat of the lady. It also reflects the influence of the Dutch or English engravings that flooded the Indian market and adorned the homes of the educated gentlemen who imitated the manners and the mode of life of the Europeans who came to India in the middle of the 19th century.



22. PORTRAIT OF A RAJPUT NOBLE:

A delineation full of character. The pose is formal and stiff. But there is strength and power in the brush-strokes. The decorative petal-shaped arch framing the portrait only makes it more archaic.

23. MOTHER FEEDING HER CHILD:

She is shown standing with her left leg resting on a stool, and on the right one balancing the weight of her whole body. In the background is a pomegranate tree with orange-red flowers decoratively treated. The arched gate through which the lady, the child sucking her left breast and the flowering tree, act as a foil to the entire composition. This is an excellent little charming fresco painted with all the command and surety of touch of the artist's brush. The summary treatment of the mother's face absorbed in motherly care and sentiments, the round and full breasts and the hands clasping the child with caress are the attainments of the painter's matured craftsmanship.

24. VINĀ VĀDINI:

The arrangement of the figure is on the same lines as in Fig. 37. There is a semblance of Moghul technique and treatment. Slight modulations of tones to give solidity and volume to the figure are visible. The flowering tree in the background is used as a good ornamental aid to throw the figure of the lady playing on a Vinā, nearer to the observer. The black buck is conspicuous by its small size vis-a-vis the tall, robust and youthful musician.

Nagaur Frescoes

Nagaur Fort. C. A.D. 17th to 18th Century.

25. LADY RINSING HER HAIR AFTER BATH:

The subject is often repeated in Rajasthani painting and sculpture. Here the lady is rinsing her hair after taking her bath in the hammam filled with translucent and scented water. The pose of the lady though a little stiff, is graceful. The disposition of the ornaments, especially the strings of white pearls on the breasts show the roundness of forms.

26. LADY WITH A PARROT:

A favourite subject of Rajasthani painters. It is painted on one of the pilasters of the zanana hall of the palace. Such full figures of women, in various

attitudes, are in abundance in Nagaur. Compare the aquiline nose of the lady with that of the 'sukanāsikā' of the parrot. Indian painters delighted in painting their women figures according to the physical similarities of the Indian birds, animals and the vegetative life. For example a woman's nose, eyes, lips, arms, thighs, feet etc. were compared respectively with parrot's nose, lotus, bimba fruits, elephant's trunk, plaintain tree, etc.

27. LADY WITH A ROSE:

Figure of a Muslim lady painted on a pilaster, holding a rose flower in her right hand, is an excellent portraiture of a graceful woman. She is depicted inhaling the fragrance and the feel of the flower. The portrait is framed under an arch of mosaic-like floral decoration. Slight use of shading, to give relief to the figure, is made by the painter.

28. LADY PLAYING WITH 'CAKRI':

This was the pastime of the ladies of the zanana. The action of the arms, the gaze and stance of the player are attractive. The undulating lines of the raised bosom accentuated by the curvilinear line of the scarf on the left shoulder and the form of the youthful figure are fine in finish and style.

29. CONFIDENTES:

Are the two women discussing their love affairs? They are in close embrace, and are discussing their private love-episodes over a cup of wine. Such scenes are often repeated on the walls of the Nagaur palace. The women, undoubtedly the ladies of the harem, are freely, and with gay abundance, engaged in the bouts of drinks and eating fruits and grapes.

30. A MOGHUL PASTIME:

On festive occasions, especially in the Moghul days, the ladies of the harem played with fire-works in the night. The birth-days of the royal celebrities and ascension to the royal thrones were usually celebrated by the arrangements of 'ādashbāji'. Here the elderly lady of the court, in company with her young daughter or a princess, is demonstrating the play of fire-works 'phulzar' in front of a small water tank. The simple but delicately finished two-figure composition with rich tonal variations is an excellent example of Rajasthani tradition of mural painting.

31. TWO LADIES PLAYING 'GAIND':

One of the pastimes of the ladies of the court. Both the ladies are engrossed in the game. They are intent upon hitting the ball in the sky with their delicate palms. One of them is also holding a 'goolchadi' in her right hand. The whole composition is alive with rhythmic movement. The contrast in rendering of the costumes of the players balances the overall effect of the mural.

32. LADIES CARRYING WINE-FLASK AND WINE-CUP:

A two-figure composition in which the two ladies, one carrying a flask of wine in her left hand and a platter in right hand, and the other about to have a sip from the wine-cup. The subject reveals the life of revelry led by the zanana ladies residing in the fortified medieval palaces, which is one of the chief features of Rajasthani architecture. Of this, Nagaur Fort is an outstanding example. At Nagaur one-figure or two-figure compositions depicting ladies in standing postures is a characteristic feature of the art of mural painting. Though the artist's palette is not very rich, the figures are well contrasted by the use of subtle tonalities of colour and precise linear statements. Framing the group under a decorative arch is the stylistic approach in the manner of designing of the Nagaur frescoes.

33. A LADY OFFERING A CAMPAKA FLOWER:

An excellent portraiture. The profile is drawn with rare command—an example of masterly draftsmanship. Linear shading to show modelling and depth at the arm-pits is effectively employed. The drawing of arms and hands, compared with that of the head, is short in proportions. The dramatis personae on the walls of Nagaur palace are all pleasure-seekers. The faces depicted are in the three-fourth, a pleasing departure from the painting of profiles. The portrayal of pencilled eye-brows and big almond eyes are the characteristics of these faces.

34. TWO COURTESANS AND A WINE-BEARER:

The frescoes on the ceilings and portions of the walls of the Zanana Mahal and the portico of the Hammam in the courtyard are noteworthy. A specimen given here is of particular interest from the point of view of headgears which are definitely of Persian origin. The style of painting is also affected

by the Persian calligraphic delineation. There is no chiaroscuro. The introduction of the three-fourth face is significant and the drawing, though wiry, precise. These frescoes definitely give us an idea of another school of mural painters at Nagaur. These fresco-pinters may be Persian who had imbibed the traditional techniques of Indian mural painting prevalent at the time in Rajasthan. The subject-matter is of drinking and pleasure-seeking.

35. THE MUSICIAN WITH TWO REVELLERS:

They are in the clouds — perhaps celestial beings of Persian imagery. Note the headgears, the serpentine forms of lightening in the clouds and the brush-strokes rapidly executed according to the traditional demands of the wet-process of painting. Curvilinear lines are employed for shading and depth. Tonal chiaroscuro is conspicuous by its absence in these depictions.

36. HEROINE WITH HER ATTENDANTS:

A charming composition, arranged in a horizontal panel. The heroine in the centre is grace personified. She is a pure dance-rhythm visualised in line and tone. As usual, she is being served with wine and betel-leaves (pān-bidas) the aroma of which can be felt and sensed. The four flowering plants in the foreground echo the female forms so deftly and fondly depicted by the artist.

37. TWO LADIES WITH PAPER-WHEELS, “CAKRI”:

Have they returned from a ‘melā’ held in the month of Shravan in a nearby village? The ‘melās’ are a common feature of life and joy for the people of Rajasthan. The locations for such medley of people are the temples and the holy places of pilgrimage. From the painting it is clearly visible how the local painters also frequented these colourful assemblage of village-folks and participated in their merry-making. The stylisation is folkish with a strong bent towards harsh but definite delineation. The ear-ornaments, the necklaces, short ‘colis’, the strapped ‘ghaghra’ and the ‘cundri’ are all typically Rajasthani objects of adorations used by women to-day. The clouds in the picture denote the rainy season when the ‘melās’ are usually held.

38. TWO LOVERS:

They are cajoling each other and offering a glass of Persian wine. One of them is having a necklace of Jasmine flowers.

39. A WINE BEARER:

It is a close-up of a lady bearing a wine cup in a platter of flowers to her lady queen. The drawing is superb. It is the portrait of a Rajasthani lady of the buxom ethnic type, bejewelled top to bottom in all the fineness of silky transparent apparels. The tightly worn 'coli' is significant of the sensuous charm and opulent and rich court life of the times. The details of 'bāju-bandh', earrings, 'nath', pearl necklace and 'kangans' and the flower motifs on the velvety skirt—are all executed with fine taste and refinement.

40. LADY ON A SWING:

A lady on a swing, against the back-ground of mango trees.

41. A WINE BEARER IN GARDEN:

Nagaur frescoes of such single figures of women with a cup and a flask of wine is symptomatic of the life lived by the women of the palaces and harems. Wine and women, it seems, has been the *sine-qua-non* of the painters of these frescoes. Is it the pictorial translation of the ideal of the Moghul princes who believed in the heaven on this earth and transformed their earthly abodes in heavenly paradise inhabited by ever young damsels, "hurries"? The strongly built figure balanced by the two flowering plants nearby suggest the blooming youth of the lady. The combination of line and tone in the picture is forceful and telling.

42. A LADY IN A GRACEFUL POSE:

A linear delineation, heightened by a few dark touches of her long hair, here and there, this charming, pliant and supple form of a lady, perhaps in a dancing attitude of the Kathak School of dance form. It is a master-piece of pure brush-drawing of great sensitivity and feeling with a tinge of colour in the bodice and the skirt, reminiscent of Chinese drawings of the Ming Dynasty.

43. ABHISĀRIKA:

Whether she is a Shuklā, Shyamā or Divā Abhisārikā, it is difficult to judge. As the back-ground is of white intonaco, it may be presumed that she is a Divā Abhisārikā. Her pose depicts the slow gait and gesture of the right hand holding the fringe of the 'cundri' which is covering her head and shielding her from the gaze of the passers-by. She is neatly attired in garments and ornaments worn

by the present-day women of Rajasthan. The black-bodice, exposing the breasts partly is a typical vogue prevalent in this part of the country. The loose and plaited 'coti', pigtail, gives a rhythmic accent to the movement of the figure.

44. GEOMETRICAL PATTERN:

A continuation of the age-old tradition right from the pre-historic geometrical patterns to the present-day decorations—mural as well as architectural seen at Nagaur and Jaisalmer. The use of parallelogram, hexagram and the six-petalled flower motif, is excellently made to create an interesting interlude in the scheme of decoration at Nagaur. The colours used are primitive red-ochre, terraverte and indigo.

45. CIRCLES AND FLOWERS:

Another example of geometric pattern wherein the use of semi-circles and a flower motif (palās) is made.

46. FLYING FIGURES:

Another beautiful piece of ceiling painting with the same motifs of birds, phoenix, parrots, attendants with wine-flasks and bunches of grapes in their hands. An excellent and pleasing contrast of darks against light back-ground.

47. BATHING AND TOILET:

In this vertical composition, the painter has pictorialised the two scenes simultaneously. In the lower portion of the fresco a princess is shown bathing in a water-pool, assisted by two maid-servants. The bathing beauty is half hidden behind a little balcony—a clever pictorial foil used by the artist to avoid the public gaze on this privacy. In the top portion of the frescoe a toilet scene is presented. The lady is doing her hair sitting on a hillock under the shade of a mango tree. She is looking at her face in a mirror held in front of her by her 'dāsi'. At her back is a 'Cāmaravāhini', a choury-bearer ready to whisk away the flies. In the background is a marble pavilion surrounded by the groves of trees, for the lady's siesta. The painting is typically Indian in narrating in traditional manner an incident of daily life.

48. MANGO-GATHERERS:

An unusual subject chosen by the artist. Perhaps he was inspired to paint this subject by the bevy of beauties surrounding a mango tree in fruition.

The greens and pinks of the flowering leaves and ripe fruits contrasted with the attractive colourful costumes of the beauties, perhaps motivated the painter to paint this earthly scene. Observe the woman who has climbed up the mango tree to pluck the fruits. The artist has created a picture out of a commonplace motif. The verticals formed by the women, tree and the distant trees accentuate the verticals of the painted panel. The winding river at the top of the picture acts as a good foil to the whole ensemble.

II

DESCRIPTION OF THE FRESCOES WHICH ARE NOT REPRODUCED

Pundarikji's Haveli

THE LADY STANDING UNDER A TREE:

She is holding the branch of the tree in her right hand and a book of verse in the left. The patches of white in the lady's costumes are the portions which were covered with gold that has been removed by the greedy hands. The style of painting and the dress is completely Moghul. The picture is framed in an archshape. In the Pundarikji's Haveli the murals are profusely decorated with gold.

LADY PERFORMING A 'KATHAK' DANCE:

She is a court dancer or a lady of the Moghul harem. Her gestures of hands betray the mood of the dance. The flow and movement of the skirt suggest the foot-movement of the dancer. The skirt is fringed with tiny bells the ringing of which add to the musical notes of the 'ghunghru'. The figure is set in a decorative oval shape.

Kota Murals

LOVERS' EMBRACE:

Scene is laid on the terrace. The lady sitting on the bed is embraced by her lover. It is an unexpected but pleasant surprise for her. The composition is arranged in a vertical shape. The elements of the picture—the bed with cushions, the terrace flanked with the blossoming plantain trees and the grouping of the two figures—closely woven together—create a sense of sensuous delight in a composite whole. The beautiful curves of the lady's back and the 'nitabma' with the hand gracefully resting on the edge of the bed are in contrast to the robust and youthful figure of her lover. The brevity of expressions combined with richness, content and powerful execution elicits sentiments of love and lyric. The hero's 'kamar-bandha' with the dagger echoes the curves of his headgear. The lines of the transparent 'angarkhā' add to the charm of the male partner.

Galta Frescoes

A ROYAL PROCESSION:

A mural in a lunette on one of the walls of a 'chatri' erected on the edge of *kund*, a spring of running water, near Galta, a religious centre of pilgrimage for Vaishnavite in the vicinity of Jaipur. The procession is headed by an infantry, chariot, camel, horse and elephant riders bearing the royal standard followed by drummers and standard bearers. Behind this group a footman is leading a fully caparisoned horse without a rider and again followed by a group of soldiers followed by the king riding in a *howdah* on a richly decorated royal elephant with a *mahāvat* in front and an attendant at the back. The king is again followed by the infantry, cavaliers, riders on elephants and camels. The whole scene of the king and his entourage is enacted on a sloping hillock against the evening glow of clouds shown on the horizon.

The very interesting feature of this mural is the fine depiction of the royal elephant, giving an idea of the continuity of the Ajanta and Moghul traditions of painting of this noble and intelligent beast. The finish and the details of this pictorial essay are excellent. The border of the lunette is designed with leafy foliage which is a little garish and recent.

VEHICLES

A panel-picture showing the type of vehicles employed by the elite and the laity for conveyance in the days when these murals were painted. Mark the bullock, camel and horsedrawn chariots besides the riders on the elephants and horses. It is a charming little panel on one of the facades of this pavillion at Galta.

DĀNA-LILA:

A miniature painting transferred to the wall surface. Though the execution is folkish in style, it has all its deliciousness of expression and movement. It is dramatic in feeling. Look at the way in which Krishna is snatching away the curd-pots of the two milk-maids trying to evade him; and also the 'gopa', the cow-boy, preventing, with his lotus-stalk stick, the two milk-maids from running away. What delicate sentiments it expresses! The two monkeys in the right-hand corner of the picture, licking the emptied curd-pots give sense of humour to the scene. The trees and bushes are traditionally treated.

A GROUP OF CAMEL-RIDERS:

Notwithstanding the weak drawing of the animals and the riders, there is animation and movement.

A ROYAL COUPLE:

A royal couple, with attendants (not shown), sitting on the terrace of a palace under a canopy. It is the portion of a damaged fresco in the upper apartment of the Ramji Mandir at Galta. Moghul influence is clearly visible. The third dimensional delineation and shading, the chief characteristics of the Moghul technique are noticeable in the drawing of the chair and the top portion of the room on the terrace.

RĀDHA AND KRISHNA POINTING AT THE CLOUDS:

Purely Rajput in style and costumes. The fresco is on the outside wall of the temple. It is damaged by the ravages of time and weather. It is full of life and colour.

MAGIC OF THE FLUTE:

This top-end portion of a lunette represents a group of Vaishnavite saints. The lower panel is replete with poetical ecstasy and charm. Krishna, the magician, has charmed and lured the 'dhenus', cows of Gokul and Brindaban by the magic of his flute. He is depicted sitting on a mound conventionally drawn. Near him is shown his cow-herd friend with folded hands. The painting is framed in arched-shape space, a shape very much in vogue with these Rajasthani painters.

A LADY CARRYING OFFERINGS IN A PLATE:

The quality of texture and free handling of the brush-strokes give a different colour to the painting. The rendering of the profile is done with great confidence. The broad, rounded, sloping and chubby forehead with short nose and the thin and expressive lips show some familiarities with the Kishangarh school of painting. The robust and the youthful figure is that of a 'pragalbhā' Nāyikā.

A MILK-MAID:

Configuration of the figure is done in the shape of a painted saracenic arch that is flanked by two other arches creating an architectonic effect. The pose is artificial. While moving forward, she has turned back to gaze at some one, following her, may be her lord. Though weak in drawing, it has its charm enhanced

by the rhythmic arrangement of her arms and the 'katimekhalā', silver girdle, dangling from one side of her decorative skirt. Does she hail from Gujarat?

THE LEOPARD WITH THE GUARD:

Composed in a painted arched shape, the group, arranged vertically and horizontally is extraordinarily quaint. The arrangement of the sprightly animal above the ground plane, cutting across the figure of the man with typical turban and moustach is intentionally done to emphasise the springiness and cunningness of the animal. The chain tied to the neck of the animal and thrown over the man's shoulder is a good device to link the figures together.

A LADY MUSICIAN:

She is perhaps a nautch-girl playing on a sarangi. The coquattishness and her glance and attitude and her fully dressed and adorned figure with moon breasts shown prominently through thin muslin bodice are the characteristics of the lady musicians and singers of the courts and darbars of the Royal families and the feudal lords. These ladies danced and sang to please their royal patrons.

LADY FONDLING HER CHILD:

An every-day scene of Indian life in the villages. The affection with which the mother is swinging the child up-and-down in the air and the suspense and fear on the child's face are noteworthy.

A 'CHOWRY-BEARER':

The note-worthy features of this mural are the arched-shape space in which the figure is painted and the cone form of the lady with her head as the apex. Much of the portion of the flowing skirt is damaged, but its form and shape are well preserved to give weight and rest to the whole mass of the form.

Nagaur Frescoes

HOLI KHELAN:

Holi is celebrated in the month of Fālgun. It is Rajasthan's chief festival of joy and dalliance. In this mural Krishna is playing Holi with his chief love Rādhā in the company of other gopis. They are throwing 'gulāl' at each other while Krishna has held Rādhā in one of his arms and at the same time is shown retaliating the other revellers. The gopi-mandal is surrounded by the group of plan-

tain trees symbolical of gopis having soft and charming thighs. The association of the idea of a flowering plantain tree with the fully developed moon bosoms of a Nava Yauvanā is suggestive (Jnāta Yauvanā) here in this tempera executed on the wall of an outer verandah of a bathing apartment for the Zanana ladies. Stylistically the painting is done in folk-style. The figures, though short statured, are full of movement and verve. There is abundance of life. The cows and the fountain in the foreground add to the liveliness of the whole scene. The central figure of Rādhā and Krishna dallying with 'gulāl'. This simple but forceful line drawing is vibrant with life and movement. There is less colour and more of brush drawing in this mural. The plantain trees with banana fruits are painted with a few sweeps of brush-strokes in pale terraverte.

GOPIS' VASTRA HARAN:

Krishna stealing the clothes of the gopis. This is the chef-d'oeuvre of the panel and it covers the central portion of the work. Krishna has stolen the clothes of the gopis bathing in the Jamuna waters and has climbed up the Kadamba tree. Beneath the tree are his pet cows. Gopis, some shown in nude and some bathing and swimming in the waters, are praying Krishna, with folded hands, to return them the clothes. The whole scene is animated. The hair knots of the supliants and the loose hair of the swimming gopis are worth noting. It gives an insight into the artist's keen observation. The treatment of the water-waves is artist's tour-de-force.

On the left side of the painting is an another scene depicting 'dadhimanthana'. It is a page taken from daily life. Krishna as a child is shown stealing 'dadhi', hiding himself behind a tree. Yashodā churning the curd is a transcription of an incident in the day-to-day life of a village milk-maid doing her morning chore.

On the right hand side of the picture is a scene in which Nanda and Yashodā are viewing the beautiful landscape from the palace 'atāri'. The peacock is an ever repeating motif in Rajasthani murals. In the lower portion of the painting is a garden scene wherein the two court ladies are reposing near a playing fountain. In the foreground the cows are shown grazing and drinking at the fountain of running water. This mural, in content and technique, is an example of unsophisticated folk-art.

KILLING OF SHANKHASURA OR MATSYAVATARA:

The work is divided into two horizontal panels. The lower one is in three vertical rectangular shapes. In the upper panel Krishna is shown as emerging out of

the big 'matsya', playing on his flute. In the pond, the devil Shankhāsura with horns is shown emerging from the conchshell. On the top portion of the panel are shown sages praying to god Krishna. The cows, eagerly running towards the divine flutist and the balconies flanked with plantain trees, are the characteristic features of the artist's repertoire. In the lower panel are painted two 'nāyikās' with their pets - peacock and the cuckoo. They are taking a stroll in the flowering plantain grove. The whole panel is bordered with the flower and leaf motif.

DECORATIVE ORNAMENTATIONS:

The panel is divided in vertical parallels in two horizontal panels. The upper panel is an example of natural plants and trees utilised as decorative elements. In this case, the flowering plantain tree is the example. In this lower panel, scenes from Ramayana, Mahabharata and Krishna's life are depicted with brush-lines in black 'syāhi'.

WOMEN BATHING IN A WATER-POOL:

In 'grishma ritu' people go to reside under the shady trees situated near a lake or a river or in wood-lands. In the mural shown here are the ladies, some nude, some semi-nude and some fully clad, bathing in a pool of cool water near a hillock overgrown with mango trees. The postures of the swimming women are varied. The swimming nude in the foreground and the one at the top of the painting, standing, and dressing her hair, are of particular interest. A lady smoking a hooka after having a refreshing bath is one of the common motifs used by the painter in such subjects. Moghuls were famous for planning such secluded gardens of delight for the zanana women. The mango trees laden with ripe fruits are symbolic of the advent of spring and bloom in nature and human life.

The arrangement of the three ladies, two completely nude, and the one smoking a hookah with a scarf on her head is of interest, from the point of view of technique and design. The verticals made by the mango trees and the standing figure is counterpoised by the horizontals made by the two sitting figures and the line of the hillock in the foreground. The contours of the sitting figures as well as the drooping lines of the nude woman dressing her hair, give sense of weight and repose to the whole scene. The ripe mango fruits, fruit pareexcellence of India, and the treatment of water-spirals near the feet of the standing nude are worth noticing for the treatment of the trees and water by Indian and oriental

painters. The fresco in its aesthetic, lyrical and idyllic appeal is in no way less charming than the bathing scenes of nudes by Picasso or Matisse.

GHUMMAR NRITYA:

This is a typically Rajasthani folk-dance. It is regularly performed by women at the time of festivals such as marriage, 'melas', 'Dipavali', 'Holi', and other auspicious occasions. The grace, movement and joie de vivre with which the painter has invested the whole composition is remarkable. The oval of movement created in the rectangular space is a masterly schematic arrangement. The fresco, a little damaged, has not lost its pristine charm.

THE TWO COMPANIONS:

These two ladies of the harem, one a Hindu and the other a Muslim, recognisable from their dress, are going together, supporting themselves on each other's shoulders, in a drunken mode which their big lotus eyes reflect, with a flask of wine and wine-cup in their hands, to a tryst. The composition is linear with an emphasis of dark patches of colour and tone on the bodice and skirt of the Hindu Rajasthani woman. The delineation of the Muslim woman shows the form with proper modulations. The Nagaur fresco painters rely more on their ability of linear delineation than on the noted values.

MORAPRIYA:

Lady with a peacock. A fresco on the wall of an open verandah of the inner courtyard of the Fort, executed rapidly in a popular folk-style. She is, it seems, giving protection to her garden-pet from the wild chase of some animals or a hunter. The brush-strokes on her check-patterned petticoat are executed in a fresh and sketchy technique, but they are executed with definite understanding of the form. The four flowering plantain trees, painted in the back-ground in a few deft strokes, is a set idiom of the artist to show a garden.

LADY PLAYING WITH A 'CAKRI':

The fresco is an interesting one in that it presents us a tribal type seen in Rajasthan. The figure looks more like a Kanjar woman in her mode of dress. The jacket of the woman, divided into two parts, the upper one covering the breasts; and the lower one the belly and the abdomen, is of particular interest. The round forehead and the sloping skull are the characteristic racial features of

this vagrant and notorious tribe. The widely spread-out skirt and the flowing and sweeping lines of the sash balanced with the lines of the stretched arms—all these lead to the apex of the figure—the head. Schematically it is a good pictorial composite of the square and the triangle.

LADY CARRYING GARLANDS OF FLOWERS:

The heroine is walking in a majestic gate. An excellent depiction of a 'navo-dhā', she is accompanied by her pets—two peacocks—to a tryst. The profile of the lady is immanent with feelings and desire. The peacock-motif pattern on her skirt is symbolic.

FESTIVAL OF SWING:

It is the rainy season. The black clouds are gathering in the sky. The peacocks, perched on the tree-tops are shrilling with delight. The month of Shrāvan has come, and the ladies are swinging on the swing. In the foreground the rivulet is gushing forth, like the youth of the ladies, from the bosom of the small hills. In the ripples of the river, the silver fish swim, like the blooming breasts of the swing girl, rhythmically swaying. It is a season of love and earthly paradise for the charming group of thirteen young damsels. The group of trees, growing vertically, are in dalliance with the participants of this festival of the season. The black roaming colourful clouds painted under the arches of the panel augment the movement of the whole scene. The mango, Ashoka and the plantain trees, the seasonal symbols, are painted with delight.

FESTIVAL OF SPRING:

Vasantāgamana. The Mugdhā ladies (ladies becoming conscious of their approaching youth) on the threshold of youth, have gathered together in a beautiful tryst enclosed by the rows of spring-time trees perched with the groups of peacocks. In the foreground is a fountain with a pavillion sheltering the youthful girls, full of lotuses and aquatic birds. In the entrance gate of this garden of delight there is an old lady guarding this secluded and private retreat. The decorative treatment and the brush-strokes employed in the trees are of peculiar interest. The painting is an excellent transcription of a Rajasthani miniature to the wall. The linear charm is superb, and the grouping of the figures in twos and threes breaks the monotony and binds the whole composition in one rhythmic whole.

A HUNTING SCENE:

A fresco on the wall of an open verandah depicting a hunting scene in which a king, with a typical headgear, participates. It is a scene in which wild elephants and deer are hunted by the hunters with spears. The wilderness of the scene is expressed by the undulating hills overgrown with wild shrubs. The palace with balconies, shown partly behind the hills, might be the rest-house for the royal hunters.

OFFERING OF WINE:

In the fresco these things are noteworthy—the headgear with the patterns of floral-motifs, the arrangement of garlands to show the busts in relief, and the use of S curves and strokes for clouds in contrast to the Persian decorative cloud-forms used by the artists in other schools of Rajput-cum-Moghul paintings at Nagaur.

FIGHTING BULLS:

The painting reminds one of the famous fighting bulls of Ajanta. But these bulls lack that vigour and forceful attitudes of the Ajanta ones. This fresco serves as a good example of the deterioration of Ajantine tradition of animal painting in the medieval times, barring a few elephant paintings of the Moghul period.

TWO ELEPHANTS WITH THEIR MAHAVATS:

This is an example of how animal motifs have been used to decorate the facades of Rajasthani buildings. The motif of Gaja and the cypress tree is perhaps symbolic of Laxmi, the Goddess of Wealth and Prosperity and that is the reason why this elephant motif is widely painted on the marriage and other auspicious occasions in this part of the country.

THE FLYING ANGEL:

Though this in painting is not in continuation of the Flying Gandharvas of Ajanta, it does remind one of the flying figures of those cave-cathedrals. That the female angel is flying in the sky, is borne out by the flying peacocks and ducks. The movement is emphasised by the flowing skirts and the sash and the flights of the birds in the opposite directions. The angel is carrying a goose or a duck in her hands. The whole composition is silhouetted against the white intonaco of the ceiling. Gold is lavishly used to give sparkle to the ceiling decorations.

THE PALM-TREE:

Like the human figure, especially of the woman, the palm-tree is decoratively used by the artist whose inborn decorative instinct had a free display in the Nagaur murals.

THE FLOWER-VASE:

The niches in the walls are beautifully filled-in by such decorative flower vases. Here the symmetrical rendering of the peacocks, the vase and the pomegranate is well organised with a decorative arch completing the rectangular space. The things in the vase-receptacle are either mangoes or conch-shells.

THE PEACOCK:

The peacock motif with plants is frequently used to fill-up the intervening spaces between the figural compositions and the architectural pilasters and arches.

THE ZANANA MAHAL:

This beautiful architectural building, an example of Rajasthani architecture comprising of decorative balconies, perforated windows and terraces, houses the charming and alluring, but fast vanishing, frescoes of the Nagaur Fort.

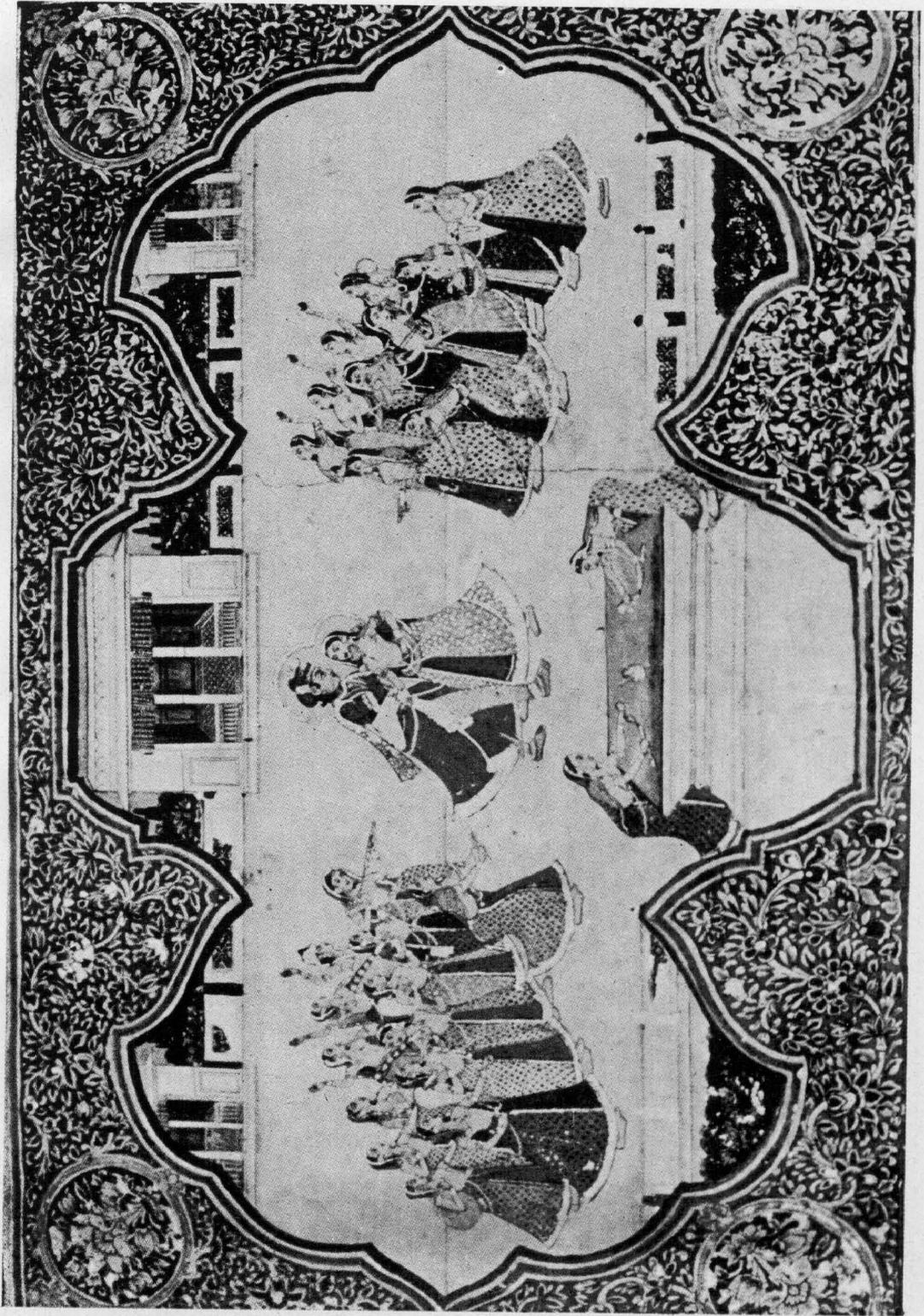
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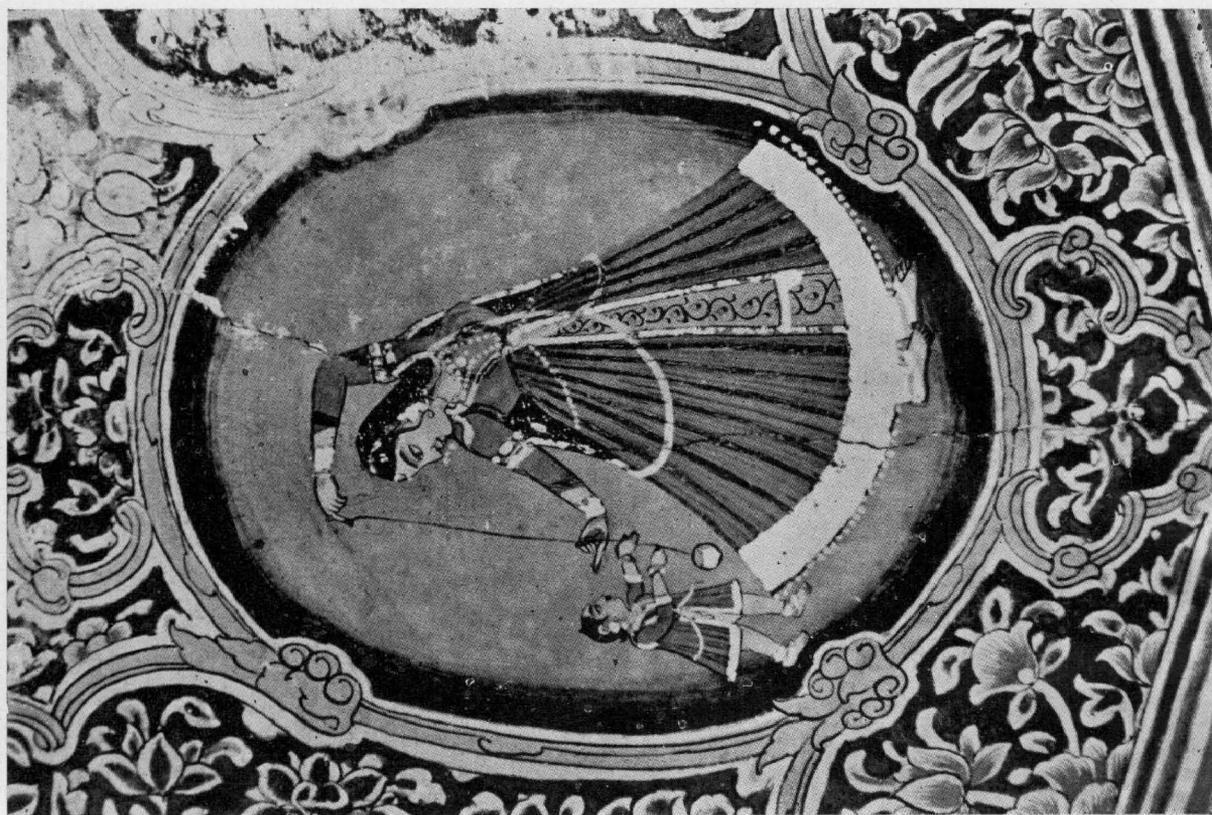
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1. Celebration of the Holi Festival.



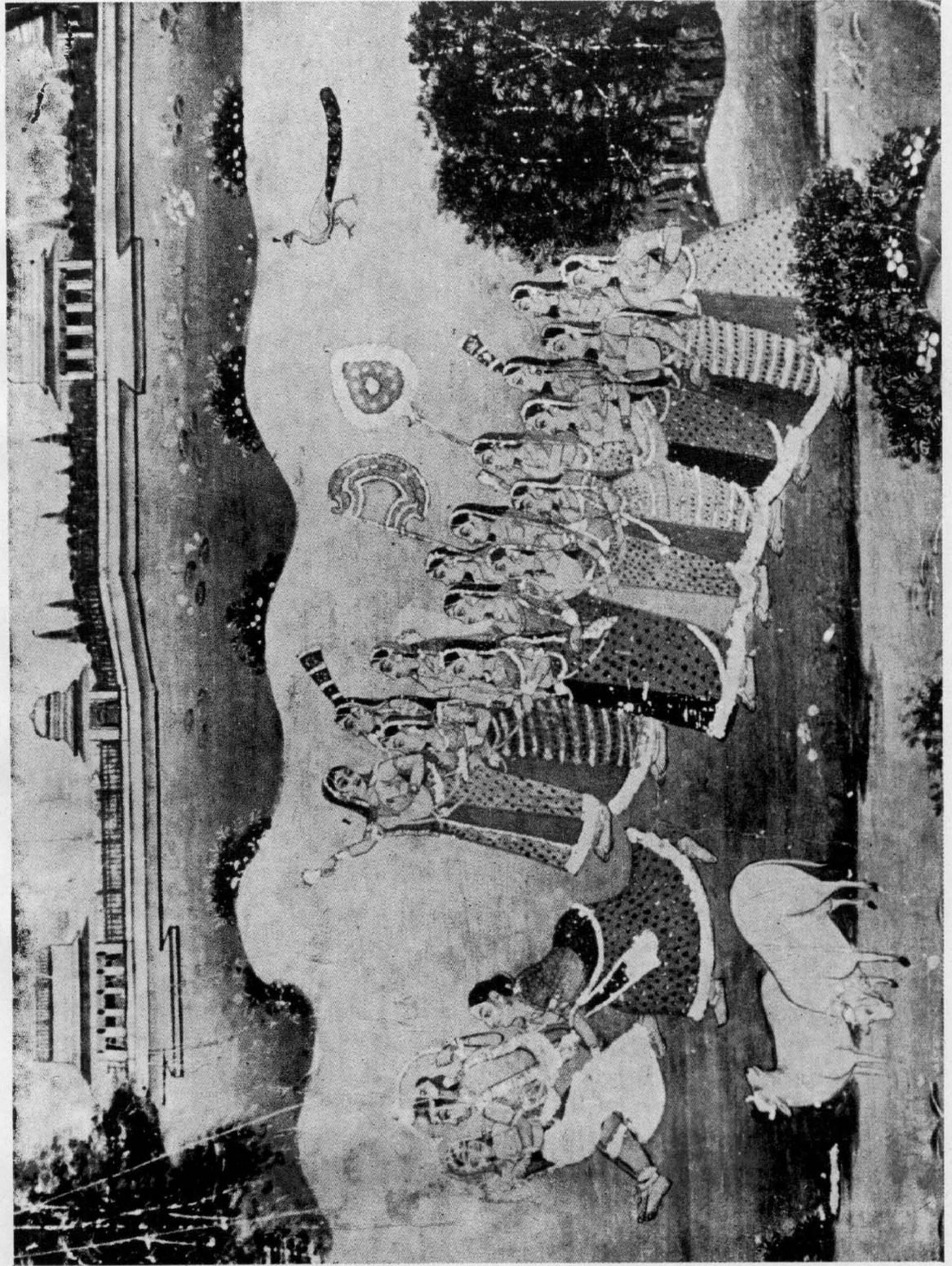


3. Lady and the Child playing with 'Cakri.'



2. Detail of Fig. No. 1.

4. The Swing, Rādhā and Krishna on Swing attended by Gopis.



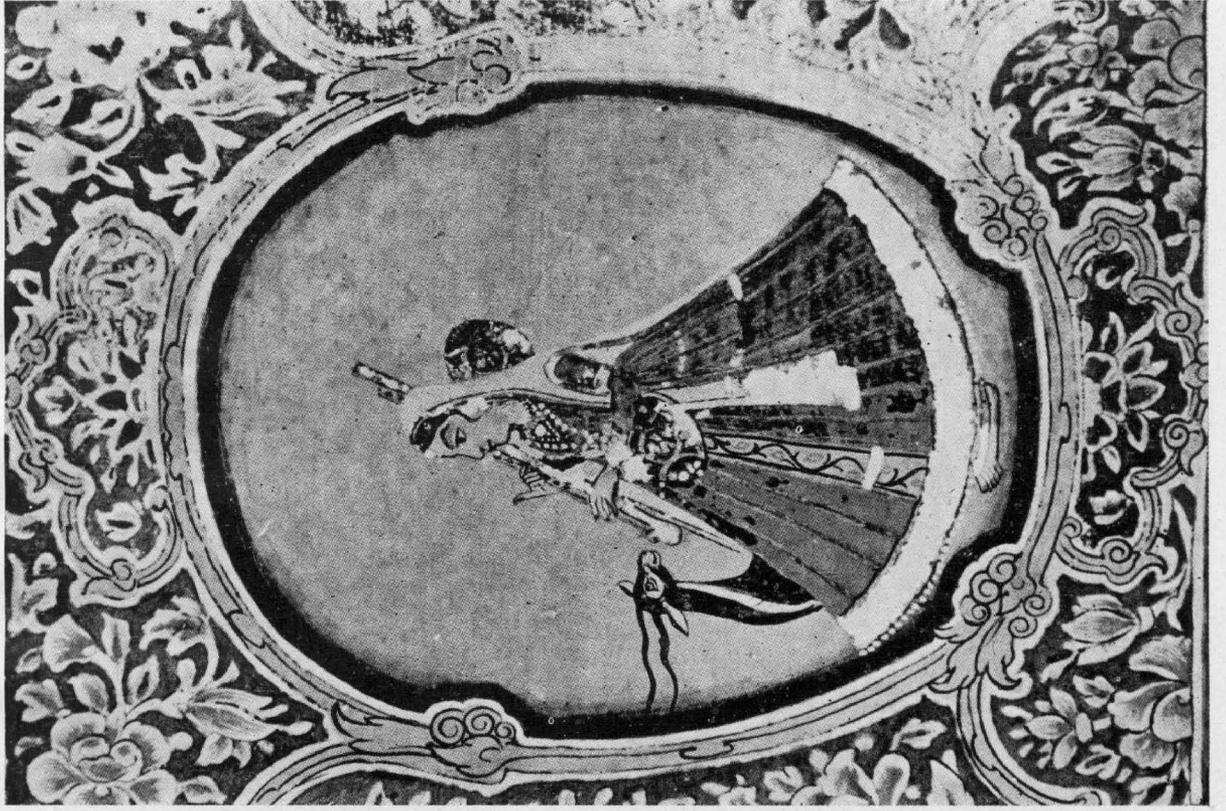


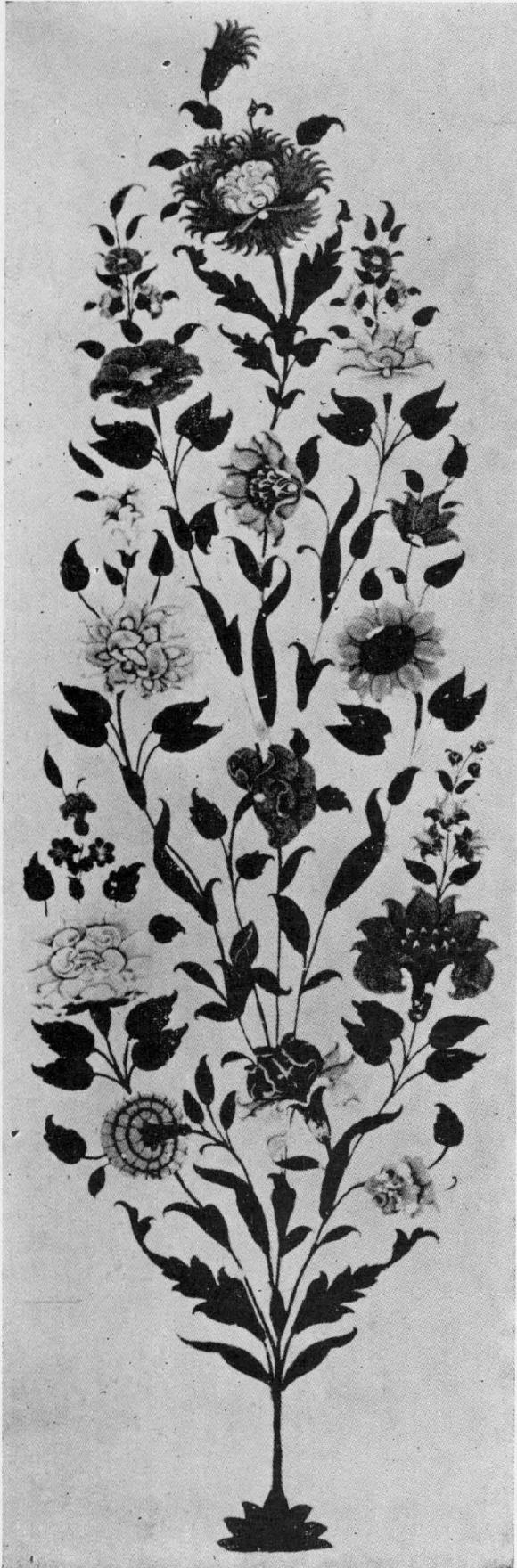
5. Lady playing with 'gains'.

6. Lady with a Peacock. "Mayoor-privā".



7. Lady with a Vecnā and Mriga (black buck).



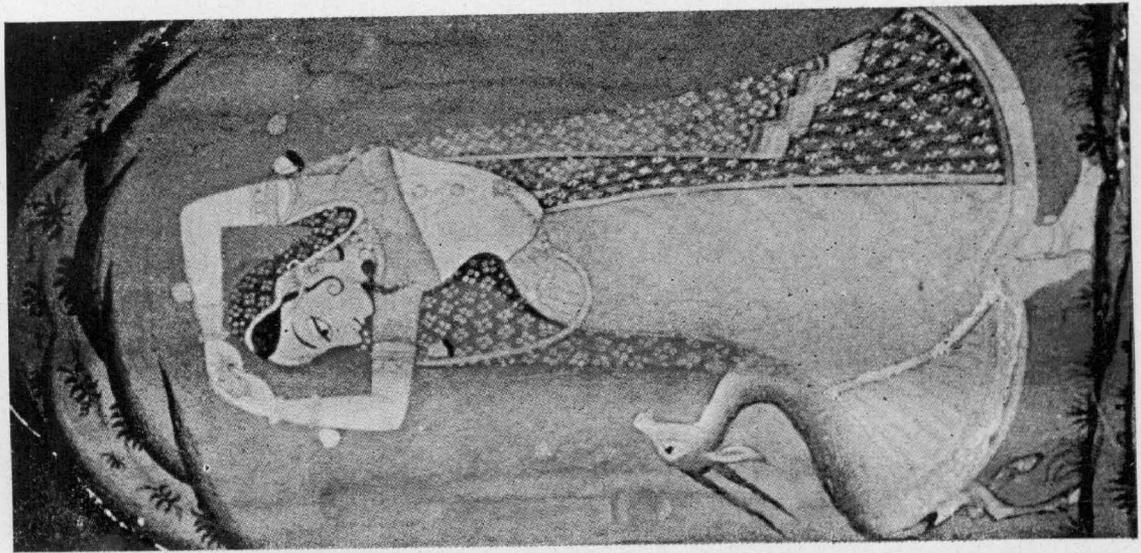


8. The Pomegranate.

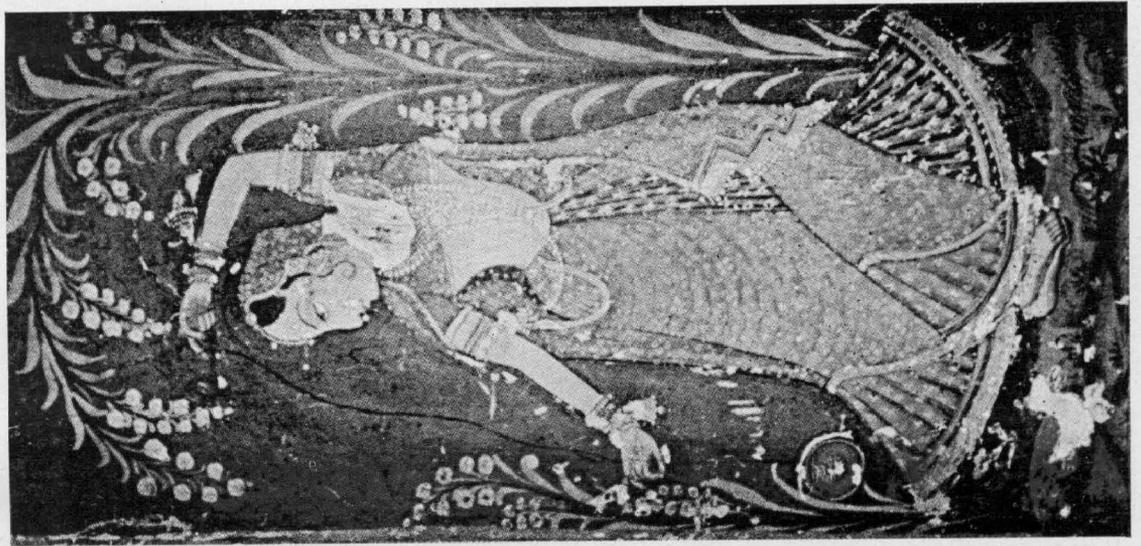
9. The Thorn.



10. Mriganayani (doe-eyed).



11. Lady playing with 'Cakri'.



12. Lovers' Trio





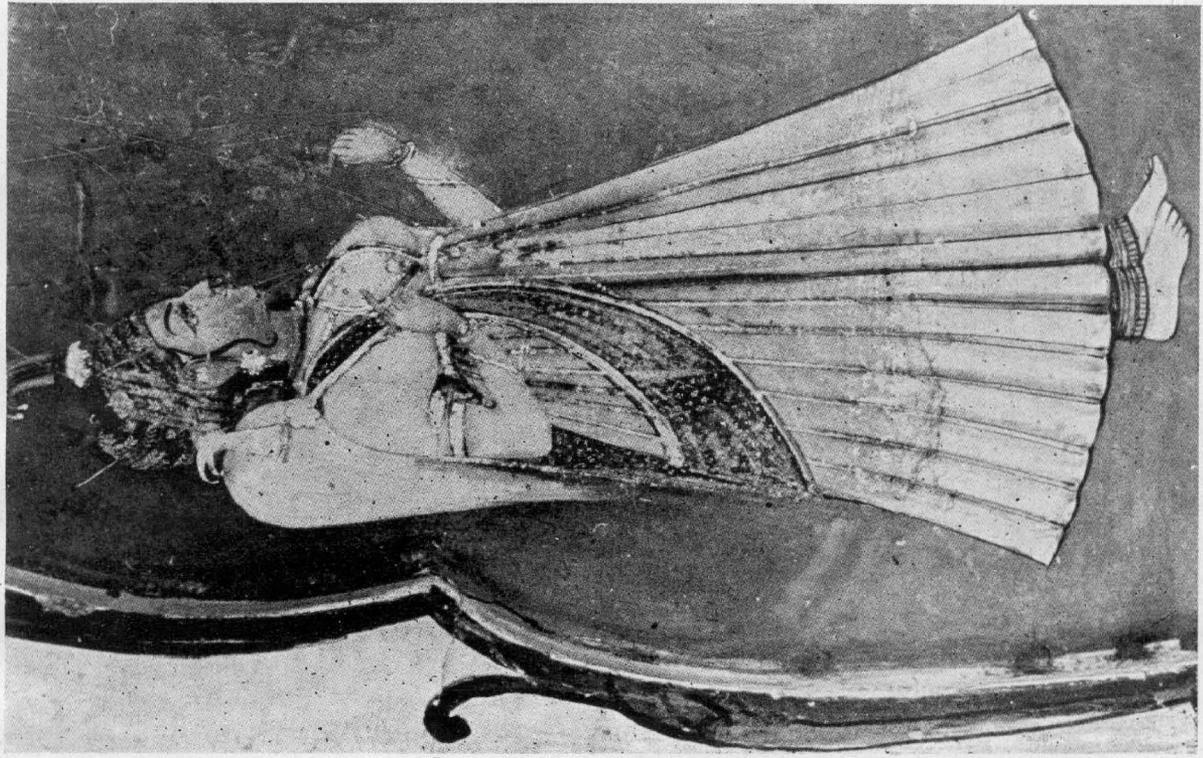
13. Rādhā's Toilet.

14. Krishna with Cows, Cowherds and Gopis.

15. Polo-players.

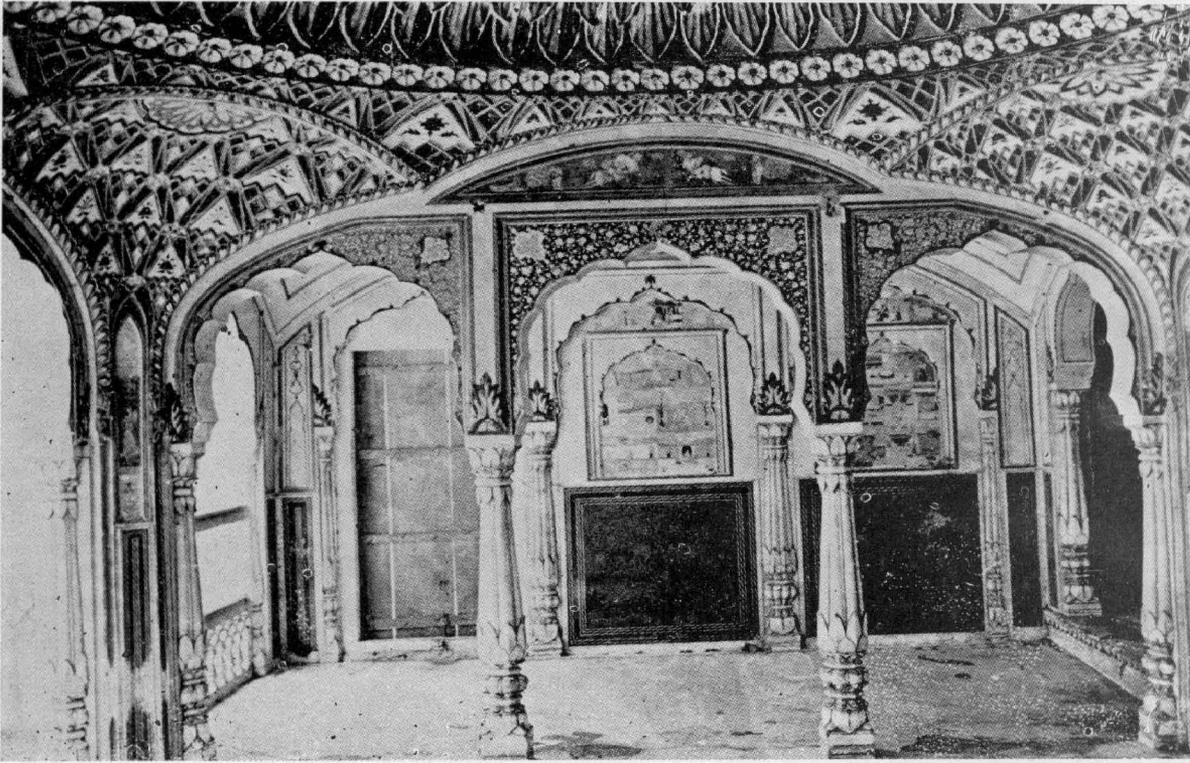


17. Rādhā in Krishna's attire.



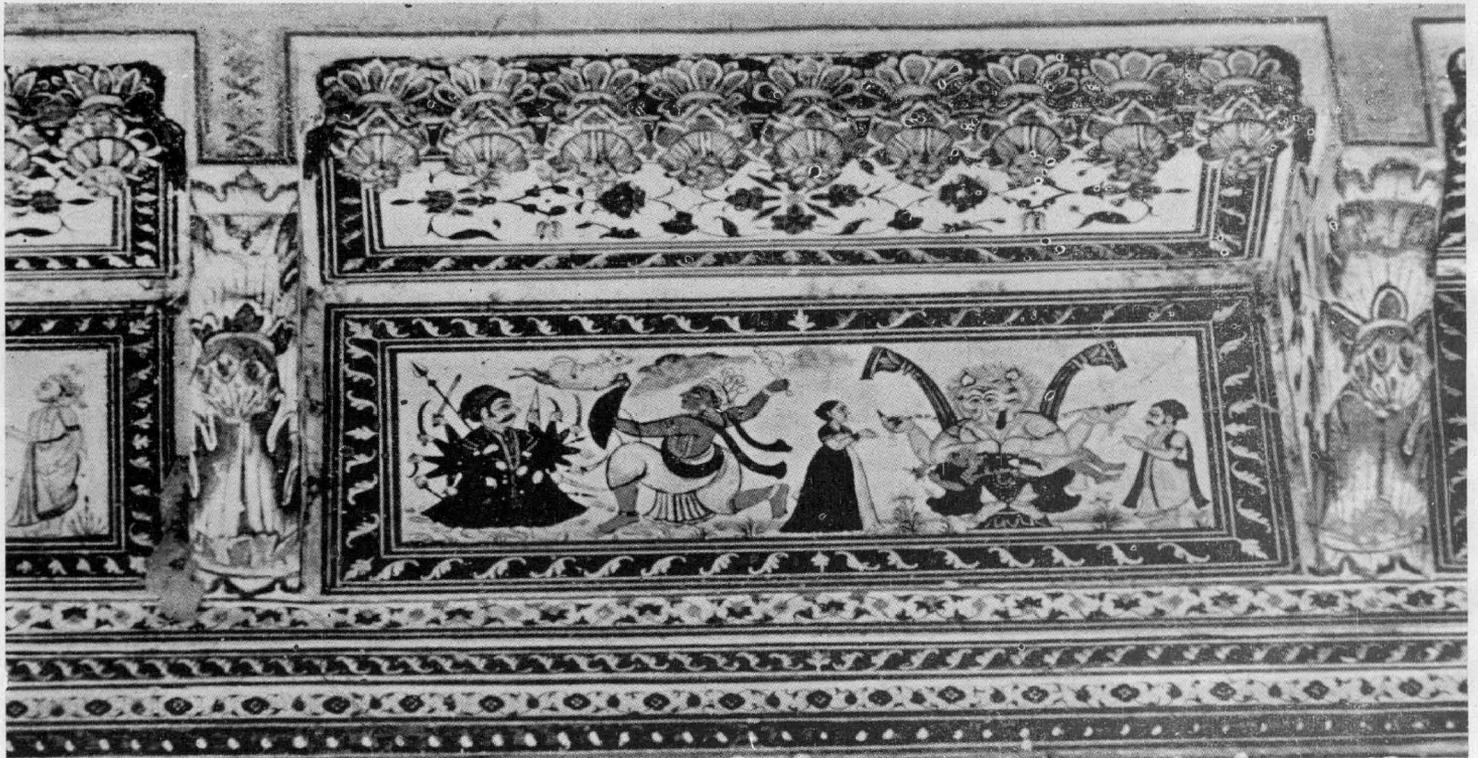
16. Gopis as Supplicants.





18. Interior of the upper story of Ramji Mandir, with its walls, niches and ceiling decorated with paintings—Galta near Jaipur

19. Scenes of Bakāsura-vadha and Narsimha Avatāra





20. Krishna Riding an Elephant Composed of ladies.

21. Marry and Child

22. Portrait of a Rajput Noble.





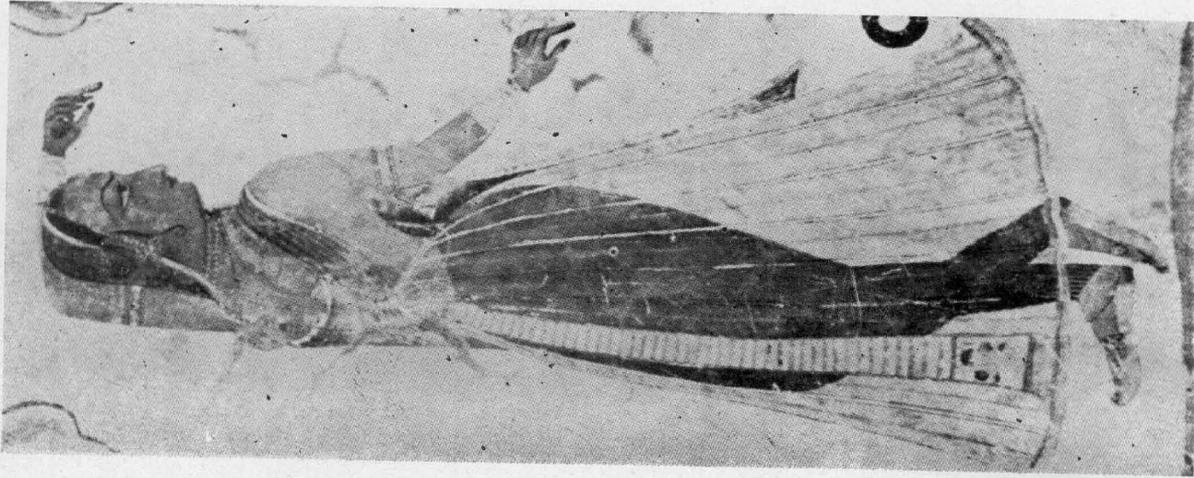
23. Mother and Child.



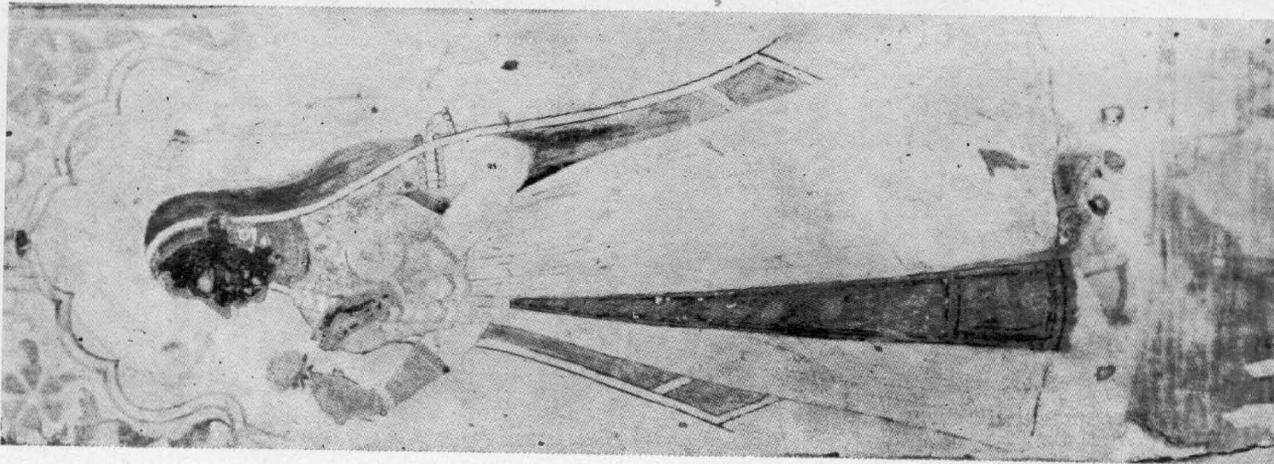
25. Lady rinsing her hair.



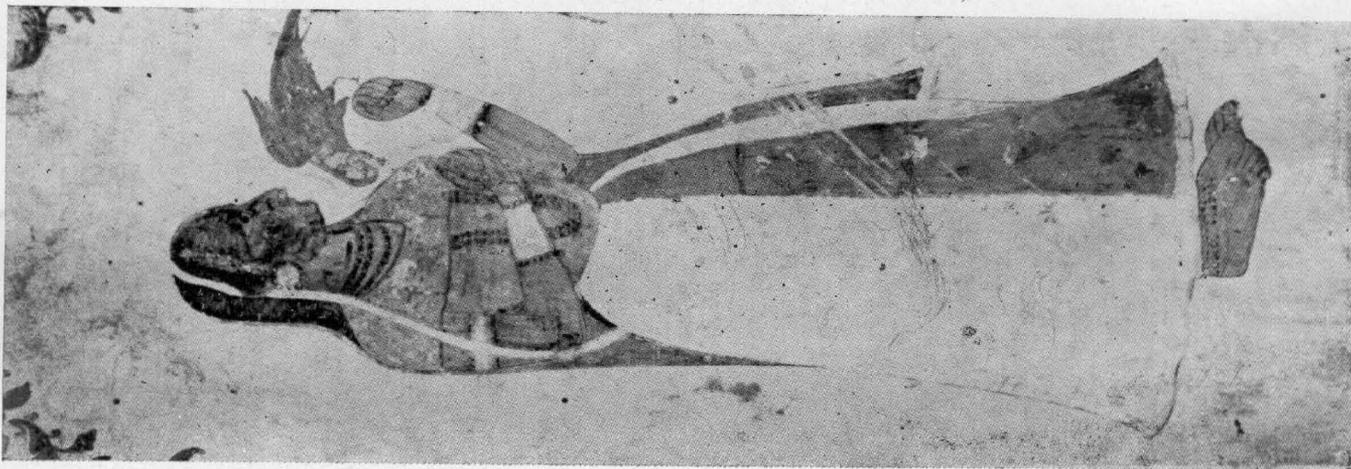
24. Vinā-vādini.



28. Lady playing with Cakri.



27. Lady with a rose flower.



26. Lady with a parrot.



29. Confidentes



30. A Moghul Pastime

31. Two Ladies playing with 'gaird.'



32. Ladies carrying wine-flask and wine cup





33. Lady offering a Campaka flower

34. Two Courtesans and a wine-bearer





35. The musician with two Revellers

36. Heroine with her attendants





37. Two ladies with paper wheels 'Cakris'



38. Two Lovers

39. A wine-bearer.



40. Lady on a Swing.





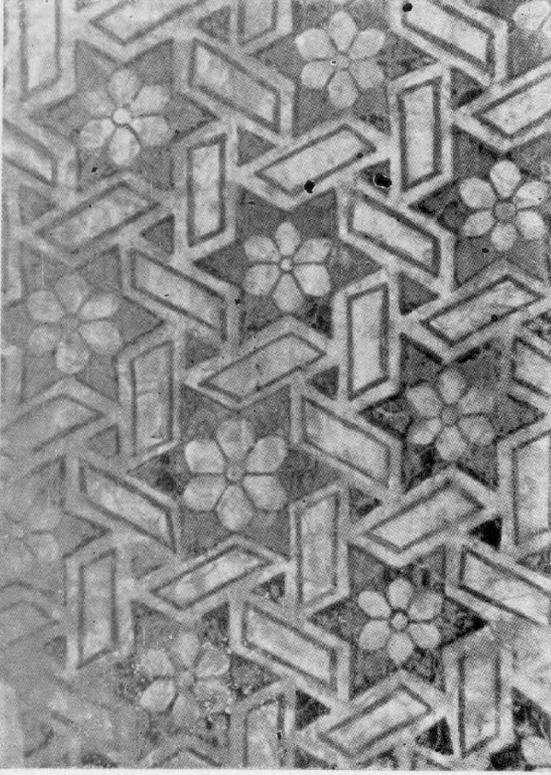
41. A wine bearer in a garden.



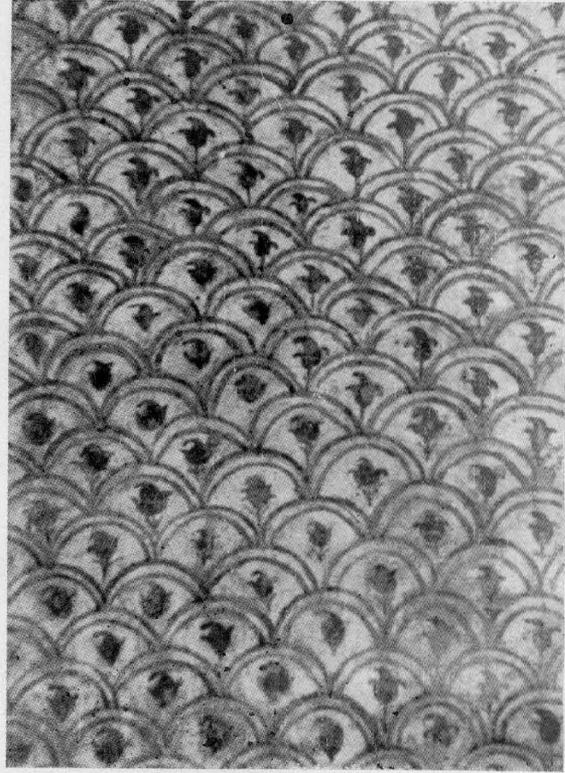
42. Lady in a graceful pose



43. Abhisārikā.



44. Geometrical Pattern



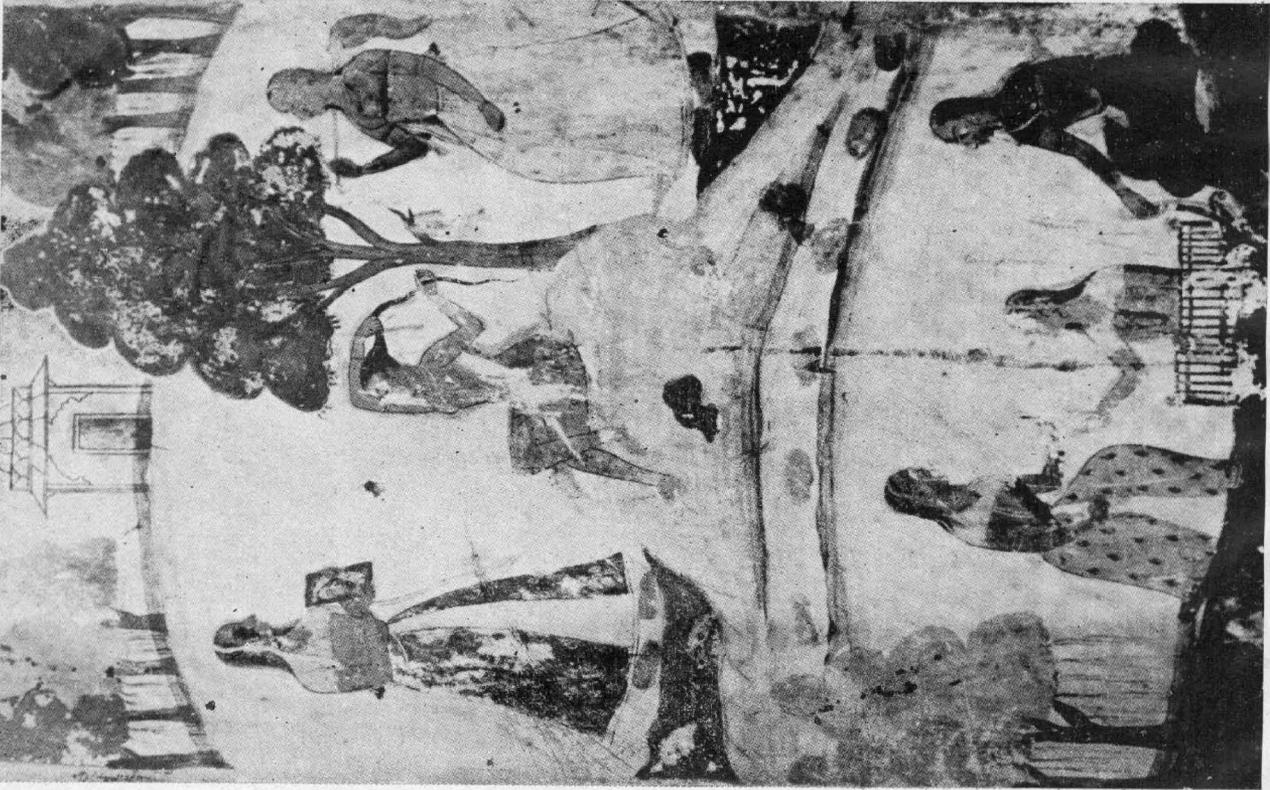
45. Circles and flower



46. Flying figures



48. Mango (fruit) gatherers.



47. Bathing and Toilet

