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**THE AMBIKĀ TEMPLE AT JAGAT**

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The Ambikā temple at Jagat in Rajasthan is attributed to the third quarter of the tenth century A.D. (inscribed V.S. 1017) (Sircar ed.1963: 102), the period corresponding with the reign of Guhila Allāṭa, son of Bhartṛpaṭṭa II. It is perhaps the best preserved of the tenth century temples from the region of Mewar and is dedicated to the worship of the goddess Ambikā-Kṣemaṅkarī. The main temple (*mūlaprāsāda*) comprises the sanctum (*garbhagrha*) and an attached closed hall (*gūḍhamanḍapa*) with the entrance oriented to the east. At some distance to the east of the main temple is a detached open hall plausibly intended as a hall for pilgrims (*āsthāna manḍapa*) – a rare instance in the temples of this region and period.<sup>1</sup> A small lustral chamber (*snāpana grha*) – once again a feature rarely encountered in this region – is situated close to the northern wall of the main temple and connects to the main temple by means of a channel for the transfer of ritualistic water, etc.<sup>2</sup> The architectonics of this temple represent the 10<sup>th</sup> century transitional phase in western Indian temple architecture from the *Mahā-Gurjara* to the *Maru-Gurjara* style (Dhaky M.A. ed. 1998: 132-200), and from the mono-spired *Latina* forms to the complex (later) medieval multi-spired *Śekharī* forms (Hardy, A. 2007: 158-159). The temple is situated within a reconstructed enclosure wall (*prākara*) of which some of the original portion on the southern side has survived. The sculptural embellishment on the walls of this temple is sumptuous in a manner not usually encountered with even in some of the important contemporaneous temples from the region such as the temple of Lakulīśa at Ekliṅgī

(the patron deity of the Guhila rulers). The *śikhara* of the *mūlaprāsāda* as well as the pyramidal roof of the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* have been completed in stone and were not intended to be of brick as was the norm in several other 10<sup>th</sup> century temples of the region. The special attention lavished upon this temple as well as the notices on the ten inscriptions show the importance of the temple and the deity dedicated here. In addition, its fine state of preservation and the wealth of sculptural detailing make it at once remarkable and interesting for study.

### **Early History of Worship at the Site (pre-10<sup>th</sup> century A.D.)**

The Ambikā temple in Jagat village, southeast of Udaipur in Rajasthan, is attributed by an inscription on one of its *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* pillars to c. 961 A.D. (Sircar, D.C. ed. 1963: 102; Agrawala, R.C 1964-65: 75). The inscription records the obeisance to Sri Amba Devī by Samvapura, son of Valluka, on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the dark half of Vaiśākha in Samvat 1017.<sup>3</sup> Importantly, it mentions the reconstruction or restoration (*punaḥ saṁskāram kartāro*) of the well, step well, lake, garden and buildings at this site for the fruition of (his) good deeds. No name of a ruler or high official (by designation) finds mention in this inscription but the repetition of the word *kartāro* at the end of the incomplete last line may point to the probable mention of the person responsible for the building of the temple. In all likelihood, one can expect Samvapura who is mentioned earlier as the builder/ restorer of the site and buildings there to be the one responsible for the (re)construction of the temple. He is referred to as '*mūlikam*' which suggests a devotee or an ascetic. More clearly, the inscription indicates the presence of an earlier structure that was either restored or completely reconstructed. No inscription of an earlier date is yet available from here and archaeological evidence as well as the evidence of style indicates that the temple as it stands today corresponds to the time period of this inscription, *viz.* the third quarter of the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D.<sup>4</sup> Complete re-construction rather than restoration of an earlier sacred structure appears to be the most likely case.

Some understanding of the nature of the earlier structure is made possible by the archaeological finds at the site. Two incomplete sets of Mātṛkā figures have been reported from here. One group, in schist stone, has been attributed stylistically to belong to the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D.<sup>5</sup> and was re-located to the Udaipur Museum (Agrawala, R.C. 1959: 63-71). This includes the sculpture of a standing Aindrī (Indrāṇī) carrying a child, with a *vajra* (thunderbolt) in her left hand; another of a standing Mātṛkā which has been identified as Brahmāṇī due to the presence of the *jaṭājūṭa* (tied matted hair) (Panniker, S. 1997: 79-93), and yet another Mātṛkā of similar material and stylistic bearing carrying a child but with the head and the attributes missing.<sup>6</sup> Also found from Jagat and of similar material and style is the lower portion of a Mahiṣāsūramardī image.<sup>7</sup> The lower portions of the goddess' garment, the buffalo-demon Mahiṣāsura as well as the trident are clearly visible. These loose sculptures are quite distinct from the sculptures on the walls of the temple as we see them today and appear on stylistic grounds to belong to about four centuries earlier than the date of construction of the present Ambikā temple at Jagat. A schist image of Umā-Maheśvara was also found from the site.<sup>8</sup> A second group was found in the precincts of the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* of the present temple and includes the seated images of goddesses,<sup>9</sup> also in schist but compositionally and stylistically different from and later than the earlier group. These have been attributed to the Pratihara period (ca. eighth or ninth century) (Dhaky M.A. ed. 1998: 161 & Plate 405). These finds along with the inscription referring to an earlier construction indicate the very likely possibility that a shrine dedicated to the worship of the goddess (Mātṛkā worship?) existed prior to reconstruction at the site of the present temple of Ambikā at Jagat and may be assigned to about the mid-sixth century A.D. on the basis of the earlier group of sculptures

### **Continuity and Nature of Worship at the Site**

The temple bears ten inscriptions spanning an approximate period of eight centuries, from Śaṁvat 1017/ A.D. 961 to Śaṁvat 1792/ A.D. 1738, and recording the worship to the goddess in this temple (Sircar, D.C. ed. 1963: 102-103; Agrawala, R. C. 1964-

65: 75-78). If we add to this the earlier archaeological evidence found from the site, and consider the fact that the temple is in worship at present, we have intermittent records (from mid-sixth century to the present) of a little over 14 centuries of worship of the female principle at this site. The earliest inscription (V.S. 1017/ A.D. 961) mentions obeisance to Ambā Devī and the re-construction of sacred structures and has already been discussed in the previous section. Besides this, three other pillar inscriptions from this temple specifically mention goddess Ambikā. Of these, one is dated V.S. 1228/ A.D. 1172 and records the king's (Mahārāja Sāmantasimha's) gift of a golden *kalaśa* to Ambikā Devī.<sup>10</sup> Another pillar inscription records the gift of a village, Raunija, in favour of the temple of goddess Ambikā in V.S. 1277/ A.D. 1221 by Mahāsāmanta Velhana during the reign of Mahārāja Sīhaḍadeva.<sup>11</sup> Yet another pillar inscription (V.S. 1306/ A.D. 1250) records the erection of a *suvarṇadaṇḍa* (golden staff) for the goddess Ambikā by (Vi)jayasimha of the Guhila varṇśa.<sup>12</sup> Guhila Allāṭa, during whose reign the temple was built, finds no mention in the temple inscriptions.<sup>13</sup> "Mahārāja" Sāmantasimha is the earliest Guhila ruler to find mention in the inscriptions on this temple. Soon after this date (A.D. 1172), the reigns of the Udaipur region were transferred to his younger brother Kumārasimha and Sāmantasimha moved to the Vāgaḍa (Dungarpur) region. "Mahārāja" Sīhaḍadeva as well as "Guhila-varṇśa Rāvaḷa" (Vi)jayasimha also belonged to the Dungarpur branch of the Guhila dynasty. The status of the Guhilas of Medapāṭa (Mewar) had dwindled to comparative insignificance during the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. under constant struggle with the Paramāras of Mālavā and the Cauḷukyas of Aṇhillapāṭana.<sup>14</sup> The rest of the inscriptions (V.S. 1143, 1724, 1744, 1792, and two undated ones) are pilgrims' records stating the rite of successful pilgrimage by devotees. One (of V.S. 1744) mentions the *saphala yātrā* (successful pilgrimage) of Rāvaḷa Wāghjī Mehta and Sighajī.

Whereas it is difficult to arrive at any precise conclusion solely on the basis of the available inscriptions, it should be pointed out that there is a gap of a little more than

400 years (from A.D. 1250 to A.D. 1668) when we have no available/ datable records of worship in this temple. Whether worship was temporarily discontinued for some of the period in these intervening centuries and for what precise reasons remains unknown but one may speculate political instability, dwindling resources or damage to the original cult icon of Kṣemaṅkarī as possible factors.<sup>15</sup>

As the red flag on the *śikhara* and the congregation of devotees in the temple precincts during a recent visit to the temple clearly indicated, the temple is still being used for worship. The principal image of the Devī presently placed in the *garbhagrha* (sanctum-sanctorum) though is not of the same date as the temple's construction and consecration but is a more recent image installed on the earlier pedestal and placed in front of the original *parikara* (image-frame). In fact, the principal image has been replaced at least twice. The one in worship now is very recent and was placed in the sanctum after the reported theft of an earlier one of medieval workmanship, as recently as A.D. 2000.<sup>16</sup> The stolen image was itself not the original consecrated image at the time of the construction of the temple but replaced at some point during the medieval times. The loss and subsequent replacement of the original cult image twice does not seem to have resulted in any loss to the sanctity of the site. The female principle, Śakti/ Devī, continues to be worshipped here in her myriad manifestations.

Early this year, during a visit to the temple precincts, a congregation of devotees had gathered to offer worship to Śītalā Mātā, the goddess of smallpox, who is both feared and worshipped by several Indians to this day even though small pox is no longer a dreaded disease in India. Although the image in the sanctum sanctorum is that of Ambikā Devī in her benevolent aspect, an image of Śītalā Mātā was in worship in the *gūḍhamanḍapa* along with the main Devī image in the sanctum. Both were bedecked in finery and loaded with sacred offerings by the worshippers, due to which it was not possible to observe the iconographic details of the images. Other modes of worship also seem to prevail alongside. According to the local people, sacrifices of blood are

still made just outside the temple precincts by some votaries, perhaps t  ntric. During field investigations in the 1960s, Dhaky and Agrawala had both individually observed that worship was prevalent in the temple during special occasions.<sup>17</sup> It has been suggested that the temple may earlier have been in charge of a t  ntric cult.

### **The Cult Image of the Dev   in the *Garbhagr  ha***

An image of Dev   found in a damaged condition in the *g  dhaman  dapa* during field survey has been identified by Dhaky as the most plausible original cult image of the Dev   (Ambik  -K  seman  kar  ) that must have belonged to the sanctum of this temple (Dhaky 1968: 117-120). The hands of the goddess as well as the portion below the torso are no longer preserved and so the image posed some problems of identification. His identification is based on the following considerations: i) the importance accorded to this aspect of the goddess on other significant parts of the temple, and ii) the relationship of the damaged image found in the *g  dhaman  dapa* to the original *parikara* and pedestal of the cult image that is still present in the *garbhagr  ha*.

In sum, the observations on the original cult image of Sarvama  gal  -K  seman  kar   are: Sarvama  gal  -K  seman  kar   is depicted at the most significant and even tutelary positions in this temple. These include the central figure in the upper stratum of the 2-tiered *garbhagr  ha* lintel, the western *p    ha-khattaka* (socle-niche) of the *m  lapr  s  da*, the southern *p    ha-khattaka* of the *g  dhaman  dapa*, and most importantly, the goddess in the central *rathik  * of the fronton of the *mukhacatu  sk  * (front porch-entrance attached to the eastern side of the closed hall). The original *p    ha* and *parikara* of the cult image are still located in the *garbhagr  ha* and a more recent image of the goddess was placed on the earlier *p    ha*.<sup>18</sup> The detail of imagery on the *parikara* frame yields some additional clues for identification. The broad figural jamb of the original *parikara* in the *garbhagr  ha* is carved with figures of Mahi    suramardin  . At the top corners of the *parikara*, placed in a miniature N  gara shrine on either side, is the image of an eight-armed goddess seated in *padm  sana*. The *tor    na*-pediment of the

*parikara* depicts six four-armed seated goddesses bearing *khadga* (sword) and *kheṭaka* (shield) in the upper arms (*yoginīs*?). The central image of the eight-armed goddess on the *parikara*-pediment is enshrined within a miniature Nāgara-shrine and holds *varada*, *khadga*, *puṣpa/padma* and *pāśa* in the four left hands, and *kheṭaka*, *ghaṇṭa*, *śūla* and *bījapūraka* in the right hands. The pedestal of the original cult image in the sanctum has two lions carved at the two corners of the pedestal. Kṣemaṅkarī is Durgā or Maḥiṣāsura-mardīnī in her benevolent aspect and her iconography includes two lions receding away from each other, below her image. Moreover the style, proportional size and material of the damaged icon correspond well with those of the original image-frame and pedestal in the sanctum. These findings suggest strongly that the temple was dedicated to Ambikā-Kṣemaṅkarī.

The forgoing identification of the original cult icon can further be substantiated by surveying the nature of goddess worship and the contemporaneous Kṣemaṅkarī images from the contiguous regions of western and central India and relating them to the damaged image found in the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* as well as to the original pedestal and image-frame present to this day in the sanctum sanctorum of the temple. Rajasthan has a long tradition of Śakti worship and Śakti was worshipped there in her various aspects such as Durgā, Cāmuṇḍā, Ambā-Kṣemaṅkarī, as well as under local names Pippadamātā, Khimelamātā, Saciyamātā, Dadhīmātā, etc. This, as well as the early presence of Tantrism in goddess worship is accounted for in archaeological and epigraphical records from the region (Agrawala, R.C. 1955: 1-12; Majumdar, P.K. 1967:92-100; Sircar, D.C. 1967:87-91). Kṣemaṅkarī is the beatific or benevolent aspect of the goddess, worshipped as the giver of good health, and finds frequent representations in the contemporaneous temple sculptures of Rajasthan as may be attested by the examples from Nimaj<sup>19</sup>, Unvas<sup>20</sup>, Osian<sup>21</sup>, Rajorgarh<sup>22</sup> and Jagat<sup>23</sup> to name some of the more important sites. She is depicted as four-armed and holds the trident, bell/lotus, rosary and water-jar in her hands. Beneath her feet, two lions, with their backs to each other, are invariably portrayed. The manner of depiction of the two

lions on the pedestal of the original cult icon at Jagat corresponds well with other contemporaneous depictions from adjacent regions. This also approximates with the āgamic iconographic prescriptions in which Kṣemaṅkarī is one of the nine forms of Durgā who is worshipped for good health (Rao, T.A.G. 1971: 342)<sup>24</sup> and tallies with Kṣemaṅkarī as described in the Aparājitaṭṭchā<sup>25</sup> and the Rūpamaṇḍana<sup>26</sup>, as well as the description of Sarvamaṅgalā in the Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa<sup>27</sup> and the Aparājitaṭṭchā<sup>28</sup>. The identification of the original cult image of the Ambikā temple at Jagat as the damaged Sarvamaṅgalā-Kṣemaṅkarī image found in the *gūḍhamāṇḍapa* of this temple is further substantiated by these observations.

At some point in the medieval period, a stone relief sculpture of Durgā in the attitude of striking at Mahiṣa replaced the original cult image of the temple. This was placed on the earlier pedestal and in front of the earlier image frame. Agrawala refers to this second cult icon as being in regular worship (Agrawala, R.C. 1964: 46) and photographs of the same are available in the archival records of the American Institute of Indian Studies at Gurgaon.<sup>29</sup> There is some lack of clarity however with regard to the presence of this second icon in the sanctum of the temple. Whereas Agrawala (1964) mentions this icon as being in regular worship and photographs of the same are available in the A.I.I.S. archives, Dhaky (1969) in his paper based on the field survey of November 1966 mentions the absence of a cult icon and there are also photographs of the empty pedestal in the *garbhagṛha*. Then again, it is not likely that there was no icon in the *garbhagṛha* during the intervening years (1966 to 2000) as per the recent recorded theft and appearance of the cult icon in the international market in 2000. This, reportedly, was followed by the placement of a marble icon of the Devī in recent times through funds generated by the efforts of the local population.<sup>30</sup> This continues to be worshipped by the local population along with other aspects of Devī.



## Iconography of the Main Images and Cult Affiliations of the Temple

The walls and interior of the temple present Ambikā-Mahiṣāsūramardīnī in her various forms, along with the associated imagery of *mātrkāś*, *apsarās*, *devāṅganās*, *vyāḷas*, *dikpālas*, *gandharvas* and *ṛṣis*, which find ordered configuration. The exterior walls (western, northern and southern) of the *bhadrās* (central offsets) of the main temple shelter images of Mahiṣāsūramardīnī within embellished and framed niches. The *karṇas* (corner offsets) harbour the *dikpālas* (directional divinities), the *pratirathas* (intermediate offsets) and *salilāntaras* (recesses) between the *karṇas* and *bhadrās* showcase *apsarās* and *devāṅganās* (celestial maidens), whereas the *salilāntaras* between the *bhadrās* and *karṇas* depict *vyāḷas*. The *bhadra* of the adjoining walls of the *gūḍhamāṇḍapa* have *jālakas*. At the level of the socle on the main temple as well as the adjoining hall, are images of goddesses within niches. The only prominent male divinities on the walls of this temple are the customary *dikpālas* at the *karṇas* (corner projections) of the main temple. At the upper level of the *jaṅghā* are pairs of figures such as *guru-śiṣya* and a couple seemingly engaged in conversation, etc. There is also a scene of *liṅga-pūjā* at this level in the *kapilī* (connecting wall) between the *garbhagrha* and the *gūḍhamāṇḍapa*.

There are five prominent images of Durgā on the walls of the main temple and the closed hall. The image of Mahiṣāsūramardīnī/ Kātyāyanī on the western *bhadra* niche of the *garbhagrha* is a striking blend of strength and grace. Assuming the dynamic *ālīḍha* stance, Devī rests the foot of her acutely bent right leg on Mahiṣa's back. Mahiṣa's decapitated head rests near the foot of Devī's stretched left leg, in fateful surrender. The sculptor has included the subtle detail of the lion's paw that leaves a mark on Mahiṣa's back during combat. The demon in his human aspect emerges from the neck of the decapitated Mahiṣa. Devī is depicted in combat with the personified demon; one of her left hands grasps the tuft of hair on his head. Not all the attributes in the hands of the eight-armed Devī are equally discernible, although one can clearly identify *khadga* (sword) and *triśūla* (trident), *cakra* (wheel) and *bāṇa* (arrow) in the

right hands and *cāpa* (bow), *ghaṇṭa* (bell) and *keśāgra* (frontal tuft of hair) in three of the left hands. The fourth attribute on the left side is unclear but may be the *pāśa* as has also been identified by Soundararajan (1963), though Agrawala (1964) identifies it as *sarpa*, which fits better on the analogy of the other images of the goddess on this temple. The lion's head surfaces from behind the buffalo-demon. The scene is placed on a *padma-pīṭha* (lotus pedestal). Though engaged in combat, Devī has a beatific expression, is adorned with ornaments and wears an elaborate *jaṭāmukuta*. This approximates well with the textual references to Kātyāyanī and Mahiṣāsūramardīnī as given in the Aparājitapṛcchā<sup>31</sup>, Rupamaṇḍana<sup>32</sup>, Śilparatna<sup>33</sup>, and some other texts. In most of these texts, however, Devī is mentioned as ten-armed.

The sculpture of Mahiṣāsūramardīnī on the southern *bhadra* niche on the sanctum's exterior wall depicts the eight-armed goddess in combat with Mahiṣāsura who is shown here only in animal form. The attributes clearly in evidence are the *triśūla* and *khaḍga* in the right hands and the *cāpa* and *ghaṇṭa* in the left hands. With the *triśūla* she strikes the buffalo-demon and with another of the right hands, she grasps the mouth of the demon. Soundararajan has mentioned *bāṇa* and *kartari hasta* in the other two right hands; he identifies two of the left hands as *abhaya-hasta* and with *kheṭaka* – but it is not likely to be so as this would have to account for five hands on the left side. As already mentioned, three attributes (*ghaṇṭa*, *cāpa*, grasping of the demon's mouth) on the left side are still clearly identifiable. The lion is visible from behind Mahiṣāsura, standing a little to his right. The deep impress of his claw on the body of the demon is symbolic of their combat. As on the western side, the entire composition is placed on a *padma pīṭha*.

The image of Mahiṣāsūramardīnī on the northern *bhadra* niche of the sanctum shows the goddess in combat with the demon Mahiṣa who is shown entirely in his anthropomorphic form and bent forward in stressful combat. The eight-armed goddess is in the *pratyālīḍha* stance with her left foot placed triumphantly over the demon's

body. She holds the *triśūla* with two of her hands; the bow and trident are in evidence and the lion peeps out from the right of the demon as is also the case in the other two sculptures of the sanctum's *bhadra* niches. This composition too is placed upon a *padma pīṭha*.

Apart from these three prominently positioned sculptures of Mahiṣāsūramardīnī on the exterior of the main temple, two other representations on the exterior of the *gūḍhamāṇḍapa* have a striking presence. Arranged asymmetrically on the *gūḍhamāṇḍapa* walls, one is carved on the south-eastern corner projection and faces south. Here, Devī is in combat with the demon, shown as a decapitated buffalo as well as in his human aspect. The attributes held in the goddess's hands are: *khadga*, *bāṇa*, *triśūla* and *vajra* in the right hands and *ghaṇṭa*, *kheṭaka*, *cāpa* and *sarpa* in the left hands. The human demon holds a *khadga* in his hands and is in the attitude of confrontation with the goddess. The lion is in his usual position. The *padma pīṭha* is missing but it may just be an aberration and not much may be read into this detail.

The other image of Mahiṣāsūramardīnī on the *gūḍhamāṇḍapa* exterior is carved on the north-eastern corner projection, facing east. It presents to the devotee/ viewer an exquisite and dynamic representation of the theme. The sinuous curves of the two bodies locked in combat complement each other, yet the towering presence of Devī at once also contrasts with the comparatively puny presence of the demon, the whole conjuring a stunning visual. The eight-armed Devī holds the *khadga*, *bāṇa* and *śaktyāyudha/vajra* in three of the left hands and *ghaṇṭa*, *cāpa* and *sarpa* in three of the right hands. The fourth hand on each side grasps the demon in confrontation, rendering futile his attempt to strike with the mace. The lion seated on his hind legs bites into the bent left knee of the demon.

The three *bhadra* offsets at the level of the *pīṭha* of the main temple harbour within niches three goddesses whose iconographic traits are mixed and thus pose problems of

identification. They have been identified as three Mātrkāś – Vaiṣṇavī to the south, Brahmāṇī to the west and Maheśī to the north by R.C. Agrawala (1964). Soundarajan has referred to the three goddesses as the “seated representations of the female principles of the trinity” (1963). The goddess in the southern bhadra niche at the *pīṭha* level is of benign countenance, wears a *kirīṭa mukuṭa*, and holds the *gadā*, *cakra*, *śaṅkha* and *akṣamālā* in her four hands. Unexplainably, she is shown seated on a *preta* mount. As per the texts, as the śakti of Viṣṇu, the expected attributes in the hands of Vaiṣṇavī are *gadā*, *cakra*, *śaṅkha*, *padma* and/or *abhaya* and *varada hastas*, and her *vāhana*, like Viṣṇu, is the Garuḍa. Even if the *akṣamālā* in place of the *padma* is taken as a relatively minor departure from the textual injunctions, the *preta* mount is indeed difficult to explain in Vaiṣṇavī’s context. The goddess at the western side in this sequence is three-headed and holds *akṣamālā*, *padma* and *kamaṇḍalu* in three of her four hands. If she is Brahmāṇī as has earlier been suggested, her lion mount is at variance with the available textual injunctions as well as with the contemporaneous representations of Brahmāṇī found in Indian sculpture. The seated goddess to the north has a trident and *akṣamālā* in two of her hands. These three goddesses perhaps are representative of some combined aspects of the Devī and it is likely that some local variant of the Devī’s exploits or some local text may have guided the sculptor in the delineation of the details. The exact identity of the goddesses remains unanswered and the assimilation of tāntric along with purāṇic features cannot be ruled out. One may observe additionally that it is perhaps significant that the goddess at the (main/most significant) western (rear) side and below the main Maḥiṣāsuramardīnī/Kātyāyanī image on the western *bhadra* of the *garbhagrha* also has a lion-mount, even though her other attributes correspond with those of Brahmāṇī.

At the level of the socle, as in the case of the sanctum, the adjoining hall (*gūḍhamaṇḍapa*) also harbours a goddess each in the exterior niches in the northern (Simhavāhinī Ambikā) and southern (Sarvamaṅgalā-Kṣemaṅkarī) directions. The corner offsets of the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* walls are sculpted with various forms of the

goddess, notable is the presence of the more malevolent forms, Cāmuṇḍā (facing south) and Caṇḍikā/ Yogeśvarī<sup>34</sup> (facing north). The superstructures of the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* and the *mukhacatuṣkī* have at the lower reaches of the *bhadrās* a set of three *rathikā*-niches, except for the corresponding (main) eastern-frontal portion that has a set of five *rathikā*-niches. These harbour different aspects of Durgā: prominently Sarvamaṅgalā-Kṣemaṅkarī in the central *rathikā* on the eastern side of the *mukhacatuṣkī* (four-pillared entry porch) and most likely Mahālakṣmī (one of the Nava-Durgās of the Aparājitapṛcchā)<sup>35</sup> in the central niche on the northern and southern sides. The corresponding position on the southern central *rathikā* of the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* superstructure shows a goddess with *khaṭvāṅga*, *triśūla* and *muṇḍa* clearly visible.<sup>36</sup> The central one on the northern side of the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* superstructure has been identified as (Durgā-) Mahalakshmi by Dhaky (Dhaky 1998: 157). Soundararajan (1964: 137-138) has also given the iconographic identification of *godhāsana* Pārvatī and Sarasvatī on the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* walls. The northern and southern wall niches in the interior of the *antarāla* bear malevolent forms of Durgā, seated as they are on corpses and holding attributes like *khaṭvāṅga*, *muṇḍa*, *damaru*, *triśūla*, etc.

The lintel of the *garbhagrha* doorframe is double-tiered, with Kṣemaṅkarī at the centre in the upper tier and Gaṇeśa correspondingly placed in the lower tier. The doorframe of the *āsthāna-maṇḍapa* also reveals important information about the iconography of the temple. Its *stambhaśākhā* depicts the Saptamātrikās with Varāhī interestingly shown holding a fish in one of her hands, probably revealing some tāntric associations. The door-lintel bears Vīrabhadra(?)/ Vīṇādhara Śiva(?) on the *lalāṭa bimba* with the *navagrahas* depicted on either side. As per the *Aparājitapṛcchā* (Mankad P.A. ed. 1950: 574-575), Vīreśa is to be made playing the *vīṇā* and in the dancing mode, and the Saptamātrikās placed between Gaṇeśa and Bhairava. In the *āsthāna-maṇḍapa* doorframe, we find the image of a *vīṇā*-playing deity at the centre of the door lintel with Gaṇeśa beneath him. The *navagrahas* are depicted on either

side of Vīreśa/Vīṇādhara Śiva, whereas the Mātrkās are carved on the *stambhaśākhā* of the doorframe.

## Discussion

The Ambikā temple at Jagat was undoubtedly well-endowed at the time of its (re)construction in c. 961 A.D. Special attention was lavished upon it – it was completed entirely in stone; it had a special lustral chamber-shrine indicating the importance of ritual at the site; it is more embellished than other surviving temples of the region belonging to this period; it included the rare presence of an *āsthāna-maṇḍapa* (audience hall) also. The temple replaced an earlier shrine also dedicated to goddess worship (probably Mātrkā worship) when the Guhilas of Medapāṭa had established themselves as rulers of the region around Ahad. The identity of Samvapura, the person responsible (in all likelihood) for its reconstruction remains unclear but there is no doubt that he was a ‘*mūlika*’ or a devotee/ascetic. No name of a royal or a noble appears in the temple inscription. There are earlier instances of some inscriptional references to Guhila rulers/nobles or their family members making endowments to the services of a deity.<sup>37</sup> We also have references from the time of Bhartṛpaṭṭa II (mid-tenth century) and stray references from the time of his son and successor, Allāṭa, in whose reign this temple was built, particularly in the region of Aghata (Ahad), which was the capital.<sup>38</sup> Inscriptions on the Jagat temple of the period from the late 12<sup>th</sup> to the mid 13<sup>th</sup> century record royal patronage from and worship by the Guhilas of Mewar as well as the Guhilas of Vāgaḍa (Dungarpur). The picture that emerges from these references is that the period between the mid-tenth and early 11<sup>th</sup> century must have been the time when patronage to temple (re)construction was first extended and subsequent periods of stability and prosperity for the Guhila branches of Medapāṭa and Vāgaḍa registered further endowments to the temple. Yet, as the history of the temple and the continuity of worship at the site indicate, this relationship of temple building and royal patronage also ties up very intensely with the role of the community and their perception of the sacredness of the site and the

temple. Political turbulence as well as the damage and theft of the cult icon(s) during the medieval and more recent periods appear to have disturbed worship at the site. However, worship here was repeatedly attempted to be rejuvenated and the wide prevalence of Devī worship (tāntric as well as purāṇic) in early medieval Rajasthan relates well with the sacredness of this site in the perception of the local community. The iconographic details on the temple reveal that Devī worship at this centre blended purāṇic and tāntric rituals, perhaps pronounced in some local text to which we have no recourse. It is difficult to accept Soundararajan's view that the nature of worship was devoid of any tāntric or "orgiastic" elements (Soundararajan, K.V. 1963: 130-140).

Within the accepted range of text-image deviations, the iconographic details are borne out by the Aparājitapṛcchā, the Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa and the Rūpamaṇḍana but certain peculiarities such as Vaiṣṇavī (?) on a *preta* mount and Brahmāṇī on a lion mount are inexplicable. No names of artists are available, though Sircar has interpreted 'Racchu' as the name of a *sūtradhāra* in one of the inscriptions (Sircar D.C. ed. 1963: 102-103).

In the northern-Indian context, during the early medieval period, inscriptional evidence indicates a close association between rulers and ascetics (Chattopadhyaya, B.D. 1993: 32-47; Willis, M 1993: 48-65) and increasing direct patronage to temples by local rulers and nobles from the post-Pratihara period (Willis, M. 1993: 48-65) – the period heralded by temples such as the one at Jagat. At the same time, grants given by persons without titles and increasing community participation in making endowments towards temples are also revealed (Willis, M. 1993: 48-65). There is also evidence to show sectarian appropriations prior to the Islamic period and these have been linked to shifts in dynastic rule by some scholars (Packert Atherton, C. 1997: 87-112).<sup>39</sup> In the case of the temple under consideration, intermittent patronage by ruling dynasties/ persons of substantial economic means, the popularity of the cult of Devī

worship at Jagat, and community perception of the centre as sacred to the female principle appears to have played an important role in maintaining the continuity of worship. This is the picture that emerges from a study of the existing evidence - archaeological, stylistic, epigraphical, iconographical and textual. Perhaps more may be known to us about the site and the temple when the accumulated debris and the foundation-remains of some structures in the courtyard of the temple are cleared and analysed.

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## Endnotes

(Diacriticals and italics to be added)

<sup>1</sup> The Khumāna-deorā at Nagada, also in the Mewar region, is itself not a temple but a sort of rest-pavillion to which a later 12<sup>th</sup> century temple was added. At Kālesvari temple at Kālesvari-ni-nāl in the Kheda district of Gujarat, a detached asthana mandapa faces the gudhamandapa. A detached asthana mandapa is also in evidence to the north-east of the temple remains at Kakoni in the far southeastern part of Rajasthan. These, along with the Jagat instance, are exceptions rather than the rule. See Dhaky ed. 1998: 147, 308, 347.

<sup>2</sup> One other instance of such a chamber, similarly situated, is met at the Trinretresvara temple near Than in Saurashtra but there it has been sealed (Dhaky ed. 1998: 162).

<sup>3</sup> Om samvat 1017 Vaisakha vadi 5// Sri Amba Devi padan/ Valluka sutta Samvapura pranamyati nityam// Vapikupatadagesu/ Udyanabhavanesu ca punah samska\_/ram kartaro/ Labhate mulikam phalam x kartaro x

<sup>4</sup> Although the inscription dated S. 1017 is not strictly a foundation inscription, it is most likely that it was inscribed on one of the pillars of the gudhamandapa soon after the construction of the temple. This inscribed date tallies with the architectural style of the temple. For a detailed analysis of its architectural style, see M.A. Dhaky ed. 1998: 132-200.

<sup>5</sup> Amongst the early Matrka sculptures from western India are those from Devnimori and Samalaji which have been dated by U.P. Shah and R.N. Mehta to the fifth century A.D. on stylistic grounds. The presence of the large plain halos and the gentle deflections of the standing Matrka figures presage the slightly later Matrka sculptures from Samalaji and Tanesar. Stylistically affiliated to these are the Matrkas found at Jagat. These have been bracketed in the time-frame ca. A.D. 540-550 by Schastok. See Panniker, S. 1997: 79-83, 92-93 and also Agrawala, R.C. 1959: 63-71.

<sup>6</sup> For the visuals of these sculptures, see Agrawala, R.C. 1959: Plate XVIII, Figs. 4-6

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Plate XXIV, Fig. 24

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. Plate XX, Fig. 10

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. Plate XXIV, Fig. 23; Plate XXIII, Fig. 19

<sup>10</sup> Samvat 1228 varikhe phalguna sudi 7 gurau Sri Ambikā Devi(vyai) Maharaja Sri Samanta Singhdevena suvarnamayakalasam pradattam Sri Samanta Singh (K)sitipatena basanyuga –yadakam pradakara caravan valikha parakrama trsi krta viravantah kampajaram ripu ca mukaga pi pragatah// suv(t?)a-rakusca pranamyaham. See Bhandarkar D.R. ed. Appendix to Epigraphia Indica 1983 (reprint): 53, Bhandarkar's List No. 354; A.R. Rajputana Museum, 1914-15, p.3; R.C. Temple, S.M. Edwardes, S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar eds. The Indian Antiquary Vol LIII: 100-102. Sircar D.C. in ASIAR on Indian Epigraphy for 1958-59 interprets the name in the last line as Sutra(dhara) Rachhu (Sircar ed. 1963: 103). Soon after this date (A.D. 1172), the reigns of the Udaipur region were transferred to his younger brother Kumarasimha and Samantasimha moved to the Vagada (Dungarpur) region.

<sup>11</sup> Om samvat 1277 varise (varse) caitra sudi 14 somadine visakhanaksatre tulavorandre vri. Sri Ambikā Devi Maharau (raval) Sri Sihadadeva rajye Mahasam- Velhanaka Rana- Raunija gramam dharma visaye Devi tadaruhakam datavyam bhatakakajohadatparam... (cf. Bhandarkar's List no. 474).

<sup>12</sup> Om Samvat 1306 varse phaguna sudi 3 Ravi dine Revati naksatre Minasthite candre Devi Ambikā suvanna danda pratithita/ Guhila van- se. Ra. Jayatasiha/ Putra Sihada pautra Vi- jayasyanghadevena/ Karapitam vatuka Vi (ja) yasihena// (cf. Bhandarkar D.R. ed. Appendix to Epigraphia Indica 1983

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(reprint): 68, Bhandarkar's List No. 474, Bhandarkar's list no. 545; A.R. Rajaputana Museum, 1914-15, p.3; Ojha, G.H. V.S. 1992: 34-36).

<sup>13</sup> The one important inscription during his reign being the Ahar Sarnesvara temple inscription which records endowments tota Visnu temple (Ray, H.C. 1973: 1169-70). The Pippalada mata temple at Unvas (inscr. A.D. 959) was also built during his time.

<sup>14</sup> For details on the dynastic history of Mewar during this period, see Ray, H.C. 1973: 1160-97.

<sup>15</sup> Guhila Jaitrasimha's reign (1213 – 1256 A.D.) saw the invasion of Nagada by the Muslim armies. This was followed by several subsequent attacks (Ray, H.C. 1973: 1160-1197). To an extent these factors may have played a role in the lack of available records. It is not known when in history the severely damaged cult icon of Kṣemaṅkarī found in the gudhamandapa of the temple was replaced by an image of Mahisasuramardini.

<sup>16</sup> "In 2000, the main icon was stolen from the ancient Ambikā temple in southern Rajasthan and sold on the international art market. For two years, locals from Jagat and the surrounding villages collected funds to install a new icon." (Quoted from Deborah Stein, "The Theft of Divinity and the Consecration of Polity at the Ambikā temple in Jagat, Rajasthan," from Abstract of paper presented at AAS Annual Meeting, April 6-9, 2006, Marriott San Francisco, South Asia Session 33 (available on internet).

<sup>17</sup> Conveyed to the author by M.A. Dhaky through personal communication on 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2007. See also Agrawala 1964: 46.

<sup>18</sup> This image too has been reported as stolen in A.D. 2000 and another image of the goddess of a very recent period has replaced it.

<sup>19</sup> The Nimajamata temple is datable to ca. early tenth century A.D. Kṣemaṅkarī is depicted on the northern wall of the gudhamandapa.

<sup>20</sup> Sarvamangala-Kṣemaṅkarī is depicted on the east bhadra niche of the prasada of the Pippaladamata temple, which is securely dated to c. 959 A.D. by an inscription.

<sup>21</sup> An eighth century image in the mandapa of the Surya temple and also one from the Saciyamata temple.

<sup>22</sup> On the southern bhadra face of the vedibandha of the mūlaprāsāda of temple no. 6 at Rajorgarh, datable to mid-tenth century A.D. is the image of a seated Kṣemaṅkarī.

<sup>23</sup> Apart from the probable cult image in the sanctum, Kṣemaṅkarī is depicted on the pitha-khattaka of the gudhamandapa. This representation of a seated Kṣemaṅkarī is very similar to the one from Rajorgarh.

<sup>24</sup> Kṣemaṅkarī as per the agamic tradition, is to be depicted with trident, lotus, water-jar and the boon granting gesture. See..

<sup>25</sup> Varam trisulam padmam ca panapatram karesu ca/ Kṣemaṅkarīti tannam ksemarogyapradayini// Appr. 222.30, p. 572.

<sup>26</sup> The description is almost the same as that in the Aparajitaprccha: Varam trisulam padmam ca panapatram kare tatha/ Kṣemaṅkarīti tade nama ksemarogyapradayini// (Durgamurti tryam from the Rupamandana as quoted in Rao, T.A.G. 1971, Appendix C, p. 107)

<sup>27</sup> Caturbahuh prakartavya simhastha Sarvamangala/ Aksasutram (pan)kajam dakse sulakundidharottare// from the Visnudhamottarapurana as quoted in Rao, T.A.G. 1971, Appendix C, p. 118.

<sup>28</sup> Aksasutram tatha vajram ghanta patram tathottamam/ Sarvamangalamangalya sarvavignavinadini// Appr. 222.34, p. 572.

<sup>29</sup> Photo-archives of the American Institute of Indian Studies, negative no. AIIS...

<sup>30</sup> See endnote 16.

<sup>31</sup> As per the description in the Aparajitaprccha (223. 6-11), Katyayani presides/ rules over the Ksatra-dharma and so the Devi worshipped by the kings. Her attributes are the sula, khadga, bana, cakra and vajra in the right hands; capa, kheta, pasa, ghanta and ankusa in the left hands. Beneath her feet is Mahisa (shown as buffalo-demon) whose decapitated head is bleeding. With a left hand, she grasps the

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ends of his (shown also as man-demon's) hair. She pierces Mahisa's heart with the sula. Her vahana (cognisance) is the lion, stationed near and above Mahisa. This is how Katyayani is to be depicted.

<sup>32</sup> As per the Rupamandana, Katyayani holds the following attributes: trisula, khadga, bana, cakra and sakti in the right hands and khetaka, pasa, ankusa, ghanta and purnacapa in the left hands. See Rao, T.A.G. 1971, Appendix C, p. 111-112.

<sup>33</sup> According to the Silparatna, the attributes of Katyayani are: trisula, khadga, bana, cakra and saktiyayudha in the right hands and khetaka, pasa, ankusa, ghanta and parasu in the left hands. See Rao, T.A.G. 1971, Appendix C, p. 109-110.

<sup>34</sup> The iconography is closest to the description of Candika in the Visnudharmottarapurana. She could also be Yogesvari. See Rao, T.A.G. 1971: 112, 125). However, since it is not known which local Devi text has guided the iconography, this can only be a plausible identification. She has been identified as Bhairavi or Yogesvari by Soundararajan (1964: 133, 137).

<sup>35</sup> The Mahalakshmi aspect of Durga is described in the Aparajitaprccha as the giver of happiness, with a naga and with varada-hasta, kheta, trisula and panapatra: Varam trisulam khetam ca panapatram karesu ca/ Nagam tatha nilakanthe Mahalakshmi sukhaprada//Aprr. 222.28, p. 572.

<sup>36</sup> Dhaky (1998:159) identifies her as Revati, one of the navadurgas of Aparajitaprccha, who is described thus: Dandam trisulam khatvagam panapatram ca bibhrati/ Revatiti tada nama sarvasantipradayini// The decapitated head in one of her hands however remains unexplained.

<sup>37</sup> For instance, the Samoli stone inscription records the construction and dedication of a temple by Jeka, a mahajana from Vatagara (Vasantagarh), during the reign of Guhila Siladitya. The Nagada stone inscription (V.S. 718/ A.D. 661) belonging to the reign of Aparajita records the building of a Visnu temple by Yasomati, the wife of Varahasimha who was chosen leader of troops by Raja Aparajita. See Ray H.C. 1973: 1164-1165.

<sup>38</sup> The Partapgarh inscription (V.S. 999/ A.D. 942) records Bhartpatta (II)'s donation of a field to the Sun god Indradityadeva (Epigraphia Indica XIV, pp. 177 Part III). Allata's Ahad stone inscription (V.S. 1008/ A.D. 951 and V.S. 1010/ A.D. 953) records the construction of a temple to Murari (Visnu) and records various endowments for its maintenance including taxes on merchants from other regions. See Ray H.C. 1973: 1169-1170.

<sup>39</sup> The author cites examples such as the Kalikamata temple (a temple to the goddess that was originally a Surya temple), and the Kumbhasyama temple (a Siva temple rededicated perhaps as early as the eighth century to the worship of Visnu). The original portions of the temples belong to the late seventh century and the early eighth century respectively.