The Journal of Asian Studies Vol. 70, No. 1 (February) 2011: 5–27.
© The Association for Asian Studies, Inc., 2011 doi:10.1017/S0021911810002998

Translating the Past: Rethinking *Rajatarangini* Narratives in Colonial India

CHITRALEKHA ZUTSHI

The status of Kalhana's poem Rajatarangini *was mediated in colonial India in part through its English translations. However, the intent of the translations has been insufficiently analyzed in the context of the interrelationship between Orientalist and nationalist projects and the historical and literary ideas that informed them. The translators of* Rajatarangini *framed the text as more than a solitary example of Indian historical writing; rather, they engaged with it on multiple levels, drawing out, debating, and rethinking the definitions of literature and history and the relative significance of and relationship between them in capturing the identity of the nation and its regions. This article examines two translations of the text—one "Orientalist" and the other "nationalist"—with the purpose of interrogating these categories, by drawing out the complex engagement between European and indigenous ideas, and the dialogue between past and present that informed their production.*

Writing of *Rajatarangini* in the introduction to his 1935 English translation of this twelfth-century Sanskrit narrative by Kalhana, R. S. Pandit described it as a "poem … of great scope, a more or less complete picture of society, in which the bloody periods of the past are delightfully relieved by delicate tales of love, by episodes of marvel and mystery and by interesting digressions which the author permits himself" ([1935] 1968, xx). This statement captures the invariable dialogue between definitions of the literary and historical, and by extension the national and regional, that lay at the heart of characterizations of *Rajatarangini* by its translators in colonial India. Scholarship on *Rajatarangini*, however, confined as it is to measuring the text against a nineteenth-century positivist definition of history as well as mining it as a historical source (e.g., Singh 2003; Thapar 1983; Yasin 1977), has rarely made note of the multiple levels at which the text's interlocutors engaged with it in nineteenth- and twentieth-century India.

As Stephen C. Berkwitz argues in his study of Sri Lankan Buddhist *vamsas*, the interpretation of a text "must necessarily consider the physical and linguistic forms in which it was expressed over the centuries" (2004, 8–9). Rather than culling *Rajatarangini*'s early twentieth-century English translations for historical

Chitralekha Zutshi (cxzuts@wm.edu) is Associate Professor of History at the College of William and Mary.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

evidence or for evidence to prove or disprove its status as the only history in Sanskrit produced in India, this article reads them as transcreations of the text—part of a long tradition of translating and continuing the narrative —to highlight the text's ability to participate in and inflect a variety of discourses at particular historical moments. In this instance, I use its translations to illustrate the interconnectedness of the Orientalist, historical, and nationalist projects in early twentieth-century India and the European and Indian ideas that informed them, in particular the relationship among literature, history, nation, and region.

Rajatarangini in Scholarship

The most widely known *Rajatarangini* (River of Kings)—and the one on which the English translations discussed here are based—is a Sanskrit narrative by Kalhana Pandit dating to 1148–49 AD.[1] It is written in verse in the Sanskrit *kavya* style and divided into eight cantos (or *tarangas*), which number close to 8,000 verses. Born at the beginning of the twelfth century, Kalhana lived through a period of great unrest in Kashmir, and he composed his narrative during a period when dynastic revolutions and the emergence of new social classes threatened the established social and political order. The text relates the history of Kashmir from its origin as a lake into the mid-twelfth century. While it is primarily concerned with the succession of kings and queens who ruled Kashmir during this period, *Rajatarangini* is replete with stories of political intrigue and loyalty, love and hate, marital bliss and adultery, religious conflict and amity, and gender equality and inequality, all of which render it a rich narrative of social, political, and cultural history.

Postcolonial scholarship on Kalhana's text derives almost entirely from a simplistic reading of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century frameworks for an analysis of the text,[2] in particular M. A. Stein's critical edition and translation, published in 1892 and 1900, respectively (Singh 2003; Thapar 1983; Yasin

[1]There is ample evidence in sources from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, primarily Persian and Urdu historical narratives of Kashmir, that at least three other *Rajataranginis* were composed in medieval Kashmir. For instance, in his early twentieth-century history of Kashmir, entitled *Mukammal Tarikh-i-Kashmir* (*A Complete History of Kashmir*, 1910), Mohammad-ud-Din Fouq, a Kashmiri Muslim from Lahore, pointed out that his sources included *Rajataranginis* by Ratnagir, Padma Mehr, Kshemendra, and Kalhana (2009, 2–3). It was the nineteenth-century Orientalists who elevated Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* above other *Rajataranginis* and historical narratives by focusing on those aspects of Kalhana's text that displayed the characteristics of a nineteenth-century history, thereby rendering it an iconic text for nationalist writers and postcolonial scholars. However, as this article demonstrates, the engagement of both Orientalist and nationalist writers with Kalhana's text was far more complex than the foregoing suggests.

[2]With the exception of a couple of more recent studies of medieval social history, which, though they utilize the contents of *Rajatarangini* as a historical source, nevertheless analyze the text as more than simply an example of an authentic history. For instance, Kumkum Roy has examined the text as a means to rethink gender relations in early India (1994, 1999; see also Rangachari

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

1977). As R. C. Majumdar stated in his essay on ideas of history in Sanskrit literature in the edited volume *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, "it is a well-known fact that with the single exception of the *Rajatarangini* (History of Kashmir) there is no historical text in Sanskrit dealing with the whole or even parts of India" (1961, 14). In his article on *Rajatarangini* in the same volume, A. L. Basham recognized that little could be added to Stein's "masterly" introduction to the translation of the text, and he went on to rehearse some of its arguments on the uniqueness of *Rajatarangini* (1961, 57–65). So well entrenched are these ideas about *Rajatarangini* that even Partha Chatterjee, in his introduction to *History in the Vernacular*, states in the opening paragraph that "[o]ther than the much cited but little read *Rajatarangini* … there is no text in Sanskrit that resembles what we take to be a historical narrative" (2008, 1).

This acceptance of the text as history has allowed, as the foregoing quotation implies, *Rajatarangini* to become a particularly valuable (and much-cited) source for the reconstruction of early and medieval Indian history. This, too, has its antecedents in readings of the nineteenth-century translations of the text, some of which saw the text as critical to establishing a narrative of India's ancient past. In a recent lecture on the historiographical tradition in medieval Kashmir, Walter Slaje made a spirited case for a sustained study of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* and its Sanskrit continuations as sources: "a mine of facts related not only to the political, but also to the cultural and religious history of Kashmir." The value of these texts as sources, for Slaje, lay not simply in the fact that they "are not only rich, but also continuous," and far superior to written historical records of Sri Lanka and Nepal, but also that "there is an undeniable and quite interesting resemblance between the medieval Kashmirian chroniclers' sense of history and European ideas of what history writing should be," which made their neglect by the Western science of history especially problematic. Slaje further argued that the Sanskrit texts were the only reliable sources for a study of Kashmir's transition to Muslim rule, as there were no reliable translations of the later Persian histories, which in any case could not be considered "independent sources," based as they were on material "digested" from the Sanskrit chronicles (2004, 5–9).

The only recent work that has attempted a more complex (albeit brief) textual analysis of *Rajatarangini* while also questioning its long-held status as a history is the pathbreaking *Textures of Time* (2001) by Velcheru Narayana Rao, David Shulman, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam. An intervention into scholarship on the modes of history writing in premodern India, *Textures* challenges the idea that South Indians did not possess a historical consciousness or produce histories in the centuries before the colonization of the region in the eighteenth

2009) and to probe Kalhana's understanding of Kashmir's geographical position in both the sacred and temporal realms (2003).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

century. It posits that they did indeed write histories and that those histories were narrated in the predominant literary mode or genre of the period and the region in which they were produced. The listeners or readers of these compositions, being sensitive to the texture of the narration, were able to distinguish between texts that narrated the past in a factual manner and had a historical intent and those that were simply literary compositions or had been composed for other purposes. While clearly introducing fascinating ideas to the study of history narration in premodern India, as the diverse critics of *Textures* have pointed out, its definition of history is not much different from the nineteenth-century positivist definition of history that it tries so hard to dislodge. In other words, in its drive to locate a historical consciousness within South Indian narratives, the book reads causality, historical intent, and several other features of nineteenth-century history within them, features that, moreover, it argues were recognizable to the audience of these narratives (Mantena 2007; Pollock 2007).

This tendency in *Textures* is particularly evident in its discussion of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, which it characterizes as a case of "mistaken identity." Arguing against those who have labeled the text a history, *Textures* states that while it might look "highly historical," *Rajatarangini* can at best be labeled "weak historiography." The reasons put forward for this charge are not that the text is narrated in poetic form or even that it combines mythic and temporal frames, but rather that the poet's descriptions of events are hyper-real, "encapsulated novellas [that] turn up regularly throughout the text," making it indistinguishable from a historical novel, as "realism by itself is no guarantee of historicity." The more damning charge against the text, however, is that it displays little understanding of causality or "at least somewhat reflective organising principle of interpretation that makes sense of the pointillistic assembling of events" (Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanyam 2001, 254–60). Thus, not only does *Textures* seem to dismiss historical fiction as a legitimate means of recording the past, it also does not explain—while distinguishing between the less historical *Rajatarangini* and the more historical South Indian *karanam* texts—why the hyper-real descriptions of events in the latter do not disqualify them as histories, or, for that matter, why the ability to detect texture does not apply to the readers and listeners of *Rajatarangini*, who, following the main argument put forward in the book, would be capable of distinguishing the hyper-real from the historical within the text.

The point that I want to make here is that for the past five decades, *Rajatarangini* has been read and interpreted as a single text produced in the twelfth century on the basis of its conformity (or lack thereof) to the European practices of history writing in the age of positivism. This has not only ignored the lives of this text in translation, but also elided the ways in which the translations themselves participated in (as they continue to do today) debates about the text's status as simultaneously a historical source, an actual history, and a piece of literature par excellence, thereby informing broader discourses about ideas and practices of history, literature, and nationalism in late colonial India.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Furthermore, much of the scholarship on the translation of Sanskrit classics into English in nineteenth- and twentieth-century India has focused on Hindu sacred texts, such as the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* (Van der Veer 1999, 2001) or Manu's *Dharmashastra* (Niranjana 1992), to illustrate that the Oriental and later national definitions of India's past were specifically Hindu. Sanskrit literature, according to Victor A. van Bijlert, "came to be utilized [by Hindu upper and middle class intellectuals] as one of the major legitimizing sources of Indian national identity constructed as Hindu identity" (1996, 349). Tejaswini Niranjana further argues in her work on the European translations of indigenous texts that these translations fixed colonized cultures and brought "into being hegemonic versions of the non-Western other," as they inserted Indian texts into Eurocentric cultural narratives (1992, 3–4, esp. chap. 2). In the slightly different colonial context of French Algeria, Abdelmajid Hannoum has argued that the translation of a fragment of Ibn Khaldun's fourteenth-century text into French as *Histoire des Berberes* transformed it into a "colonial text with colonial categories," and hence an entirely new text, by converting local knowledge into colonial knowledge (2003, 62). While there is no doubt that the English translations of *Rajatarangini* were consumed with slotting it into European categories of knowledge, particularly "history," and certainly also produced entirely new texts, the act of translation was far more complex and involved a dialogue between European and indigenous knowledge, in the process rethinking historical and nationalist ideas. Further, since *Rajatarangini* was a Sanskrit text without any specifically Hindu moorings, it could be claimed by at least some of its Indian translators as representing a secular as opposed to a Hindu past for the Indian nation.

For the purposes of this article, I will examine two English translations of *Rajatarangini:* R. S. Pandit's single-volume translation published in 1935, and M. A. Stein's two-volume translation published in 1900. My purpose in doing so is not to examine the actual contents of the translations, but rather to analyze the paratexts framing them—the forewords, prefaces, introductions, notes, and appendices—to give some sense of how the translators aimed to present the text to their readers (Genette 1997; Maclean 1991). By doing so, I suggest that the scholarship that has utilized the contents of *Rajatarangini* as a source for the history of ancient and medieval Kashmir and India, or analyzed the text for its historicity or lack thereof, has focused almost exclusively on the content of the translations of these texts while ignoring their paratexts, thereby failing to engage with why and how the translators of the text intended their audience to read them. As a result, most scholarship on *Rajatarangini* has uncritically accepted its English translations as standing in for a single twelfth-century text, which, I argue, is problematic because each of the English translations of *Rajatarangini*, as much as the Persian translations before them, intended *Rajatarangini* to be transformed through their mediation into a new, and more relevant, text for a contemporary audience. Furthermore, while it would seem

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

evident that the intent behind the two translations examined here would be radically different—one was produced by an European Indologist and the other by an Indian nationalist—I hope to point out the extent to which the two translators' ideas drew from similar sources while arriving at somewhat dissimilar conclusions about the purpose and meaning of the text.

Rajatarangini's Translations

The practice of translating and continuing *Rajatarangini* has deep roots in Kashmir. It is important to note, however, that these continuations and translations were not based simply on a single twelfth-century text authored by Kalhana, but rather on multiple manuscript copies of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* as well as *Rajatarangini*s authored by different writers in medieval Kashmir (ninth to twelfth centuries AD). Several of the translations themselves became sources for the renditions and continuations that followed, so while Kalhana's text was an important component of these historical narratives, it was but one of many.

Rajatarangini was continued in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Sanskrit by a series of authors. Its first Persian rendition also dates from the fifteenth century; it was carried out by Mulla Ahmed, the court historian of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (r. 1423–74), and brought the history forward until the time of the sultan. The Mughal emperor Akbar's biographer, Abul Fazl, noted in his history of Akbar's rule, *Ain-i-Akbari* (The Institutes of the Emperor Akbar), that when Akbar entered Kashmir after conquering it in 1586, he was presented with a book entitled *Rajatarangini* (2004, 844). So taken was Akbar by these narratives (which most likely included *Rajatarangini*s authored by Pandits Ratnagir, Padma Mehr, Kshemendra, and Kalhana and their Sanskrit continuations, as well as the earlier Persian translation of the work carried out during the rule of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin) that he ordered one of his court historians, Badauni, to render the earlier Persian translation into more idiomatic Persian and to translate the Sanskrit texts into Persian, while also completing the historical narrative. Fazl, in his section on the Kashmir *sarkar* (division) in *Ain-i-Akbari*, based his brief history of Kashmir entirely on multiple *Rajatarangini*s, including the one by Kalhana (Ali 1992, 43; Fazl 2004, 845–51; Husaini 1988, 118). The texts of various *Rajatarangini*s survived through the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries in other histories of Kashmir, such as *Baharistan-i-Shahi* (1614), *Tarikh-i-Kashmir* (1618–21), *Waqiat-i-Kashmir* (1747), and *Tarikh-i-Hasan* (1885), among others.

The earliest European to record an encounter with *Rajatarangini* was the Frenchman François Bernier, who traveled through Mughal India, including Kashmir, in the seventeenth century and noted in his travelogue that he was engaged in translating "the histories of the ancient Kings of *Kachemire*" into

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

French. It is interesting to note that the text in his possession was the early seventeenth-century Persian rendition and continuation of *Rajatarangini* entitled *Tarikh-i-Kashmir* (Bernier [1891] 1968, 393–94). The British discovered *Rajatarangini* when the first translation of *Ain-i-Akbari* was carried out by Francis Gladwin and published in Calcutta between 1783 and 1786. Although a translation of *Rajatarangini* was on the agenda of Sir William Jones, the noted Orientalist and founder of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, in the late eighteenth century (Colebrooke 1809, 294), the first partial translation of the work did not appear until 1825, when the Orientalist and Sanskritist H. H. Wilson undertook the task and published the result in a lengthy article in the Asiatic Society's journal *Asiatic Researches*, in which he introduced the idea that Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* was perhaps "the only Sanscrit composition yet discovered, to which the title of History, can with any propriety be applied" (1825, 1).

The first complete English translation of Kalhana's text in prose form was carried out by J. C. Dutt in three volumes, published in 1879, 1887, and 1898. Dutt's translation, in which he described *Rajatarangini* as "an account of a people who lived from the earliest period in a corner of India" (1879, iii), reads like a history textbook with a chronological narration of events. According to him, this translation was the best that could be accomplished as far as recording India's history was concerned, given the absence of reliable sources for the task. Heavily editing the text by expunging all mythical and marvelous stories from it, Dutt's translation was an attempt to present *Rajatarangini* as a "sober history" that fit European standards of history writing (1879, ii–iii; 1887, ii). It is interesting to note that in his review of his brother's translation, R. C. Dutt (1880) resurrected many of these stories from the translation's appendices, presenting them as folk traditions invaluable for understanding the broad themes within India's collective past. An examination of J. C. Dutt's translation alongside his brother's review of the translation reveals that in late nineteenth-century India, the nationalist definition of history as a strictly positivist undertaking based on empirically verifiable facts was already being questioned by another, equally nationalist understanding of history as a story of the people, their culture, popular traditions, and hence the way in which ordinary people related to their traditions and their past.[3]

[3]As recent scholarship has amply demonstrated, for many individuals engaged in the project of constructing the history of the Indian nation, history was much more than simply a sterile record of facts and chronologies. Instead, it was seen as an expression of the collective genius of the nation, embodied not just in historical facts, but quite as much in the folk traditions, myths, songs, and memories of its people. This led to the emergence of hybrid forms of history writing and new genres for recording the past of the collectivity, such as in historical novels, essays, travelogues, and memoirs (See Deshpande 2007, 2008; Banerjee 2006; Chatterjee 1999, 2005; Orsini 2002; Chowdhury 2001; Dalmia 2001).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Rajatarangini as National Literary Text

Let us now turn to R. S. Pandit's translation of *Rajatarangini*, published in 1935, whose paratexts reflect a multiple ideological inheritance as they seek to present the narrative as a national literary text for the consumption of an incipient national audience. Pandit had personal and political motivations for translating *Rajatarangini* into English. Married to Jawaharlal Nehru's sister and an active participant with the Nehru clan in nationalist activities, Pandit spent his many months of incarceration in colonial jails translating Sanskrit classics into English, including *Rajatarangini.* The work held special meaning, as it was carried out for his father-in-law, Motilal Nehru, who, being unacquainted with Sanskrit, had expressed his regret at being unable to read this "authentic history of the old family homeland" (Pandit 1979, 169). A lawyer by profession but an Indologist by training and inclination (he was trained in Sanskrit studies at Heidelberg University and the Sorbonne), Pandit viewed the transmission of Sanskrit literature to the people of India as critical to developing their sense of nationhood.

As a result, he was less interested in presenting *Rajatarangini* as an empirically sound record of past events than in discussing it as an exemplary piece of historical literature. That Pandit saw himself as the recipient of a collective literary heritage through the text of *Rajatarangini* is evident from the fact that he placed his translation within the longer genealogy of indigenous translations of the text, beginning with its Persian translation under Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin of Kashmir, followed by Badauni's translation under the orders of Mughal emperor Akbar, and later Persian translations in the seventeenth century, while also acknowledging previous European-language translations such as those by H. H. Wilson, A. Troyer, and M. A. Stein ([1935] 1968, xiii–xv). It is interesting that, unlike J. C. Dutt, Pandit did not dismiss the text's Persian translations as corrupt interpolations on the body of a pristine Sanskrit text.

As this indicates, Pandit's translation was located at the intersection of several ideological currents. The most striking influence, and not surprising given where Pandit had been trained, was the German Romantic-nationalist conception of literature, which Vinay Dharwadker has defined as "a complete (totalized, totalizable) expression of the "character," "spirit," or racial and cultural identity of a nation" (1993, 167). This late eighteenth-century Herderian idea had been revived in the early twentieth century in A. Berriedale Keith's *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, published in 1920, which, rather than focusing on Sanskrit literature during the earliest moment of Indian civilization through the texts of the *Vedas*, presented instead Indian civilization's best moment, encapsulated, according to Keith, in the Sanskrit *kavya.* Dharwadker argued that this led to the canonization of *kavya* as constitutive of "the permanent master-paradigm of Indian poetry, across most languages, regions and historical situations on the subcontinent as a whole" (1993, 178). According to the new Orientalists such as Keith,

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

this poetry, beginning with Kalidasa's works, reflected a certain style and produced, particularly in the period from 700 to 1200 AD, Indian literary and aesthetic theories such as the concept of *rasa* (poetic emotion), which were seen as reflecting, again in Dharwadker's words, "the deepest and most valuable "expression" of the spirit of a race, people, society, or nation, or of national character" (1993, 178–80).

Pandit's discussion of *Rajatarangini* as a historical *kavya* that encapsulated the literary heritage of the Indian nation and, more importantly, the character of its people, is squarely located in this tradition. While Pandit might have agreed with the definition of literature put forward by new Orientalists such as Keith, he was less willing to accept their definition of history, in particular the relationship between literature and history in the Indian context. This is evident in his harsh criticism of M. A. Stein's translation of *Rajatarangini* (about which more later), which Pandit claimed was overly concerned with the text's historicity rather than its literary and didactic qualities. Pandit regarded *Rajatarangini*, as much as other Sanskrit classics, as being above mere historical truth, as it embodied more universal, even eternal truths. As Rosinka Chaudhury argued in a recent essay, early twentieth-century Bengali historiography was characterized by debates between the proponents of "stony, scientific history," and those who saw history as the "life of the age." Jadunath Sarkar, the prominent Bengali historian, in his reading of Bankim's novels, argued that "the truth of historicism is limited, whereas the truth in Bankimchandra's historical novels is above the historical truth and in the realm of what is eternally true" (Chaudhury 2008, 405–6; see also Kaviraj 1995, 112–15).

In a similar spirit, Pandit launched a strident critique of the historical method employed by historians and antiquarians of India, in particular M. A. Stein, evident to him in his translation of *Rajatarangini.* While commending him on a "deep study of Kalhana's work," Pandit pointed out that Stein had missed the point of the text altogether by failing to "give an adequate conception of the work as a literary composition to readers unable to study the original." Because Stein was so focused, in Pandit's opinion, on historical facts and archeological and topographical details contained within the chronicle, in the manner of a "stony, scientific history," he ignored the poetic value of the text altogether, neglecting to translate verses in "Kavya style" or those that contained rhetorical or didactic descriptions (xv).[4] It was these verses that contained the essence of the text, as it was these verses that allowed readers not just to know their past, but also to experience it. He noted that "[a]rcheology has indeed laid bare for us the secrets of the dead past but the past eludes pursuit in the dust of antiquarianism," while the past through "Kalhana's pen-pictures … is vivified and lives again" (xix).

[4]Accordingly, Pandit's translation includes these 80-odd didactic and poetic verses that Stein's translation overlooks.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Pandit's "invitation" to the translation argued that *Rajatarangini* was a work of such "great scope" that to view it simply as a historical narrative would be to do it injustice. Instead, the narrative had the capacity to give enjoyment "as history, an epic, or a semi-tragic drama" (xx–xxi). Moreover, even as a historian, according to Pandit, Kalhana tended toward "humanistic studies and toward art rather than towards economic life … History, according to him, was not something to learn, but something to make people live and understand life" (xxx–xxxi). Kalhana's poem, Pandit pointed out, was inlaid with all eight *rasa*s or sentiments—love, merriment, pathos, wrath, courage, terror, repulsion, and marvel—which were designed "to teach the art of life" (xxi).

The notes to Pandit's actual translation of the text are worth considering here, as they, too, sought to highlight these eternal truths embodied in *Rajatarangini*, evident, for instance, from the note accompanying the translation of verse twenty-one of the poem. This lengthy note charged that the text's earlier translations exemplified "the gravity and nature of the errors occasionally committed by learned European scholars." Pandit further argued in the note that the verse had been erroneously translated to read as a statement of Kalhana's historical methodology rather than being translated correctly as a statement of moral purpose, thereby discrediting "the whole of whatever of the historical there is in the *Rajatarangini.*" So while Stein translated the verse to read, "This narrative [of mine], which is properly arranged and which resembles a medicine, is useful where the [accounts regarding the] place and time of kings are fluctuating [Lit. growing and diminishing]," Pandit's translation read, "This saga which is properly made up should be useful for kings as a stimulant or as a sedative, like a physic, according to time and place" (7–9 n. 21).

Quoting his uncle and Sanskritist S. P. Pandit's views on the subject, Pandit emphasized in the note that Kalhana's intention in this verse was not to point out that his text either did or could be used to shorten or lengthen (i.e., amend) the terms of kings as noted in earlier narratives, but rather that it was a medicine to instruct kings who were displaying arrogance because their territories were expanding or those who were suffering from grief because their power was diminishing (7 n. 21). This confirmed the points made in the invitation to the translation, in particular that Kalhana's eyes recorded the past "in the hope that centuries later their observations would enlighten distant lands, relight dead suns and set dead moons shining upon the streams and snow-clad mountains of his native land" (xvi). For Pandit, *Rajatarangini* had to be read not simply as history that could be used to correct the historical record, but rather as a work of art that encapsulated the essence of life.

Thus, the universal truths embodied in literature not only challenged the European historical method based on empirical research, but also, quite as significantly, informed the content of the past. Although Pandit set himself against the utility of the positivist historical method in uncovering the national past, his translation can still be placed in the tradition of early twentieth-century

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

secular nationalist historians of colonial India, many of them based in Allahabad—where the first edition of Pandit's translation was published—particularly in their insistence on writing a noncommunal history of the Indian nation. The historian Shafaat Ahmad Khan, for instance, argued against the communalization of medieval Indian history in his speech to the All India Modern History Congress in 1935: "It is the spirit of a common Indian nationality, basing itself on the fundamental unity of the Indian people, and having its origin in numerous forces, spiritual, intellectual and economic, which have fused various communities and classes, provinces and States into an organic whole" (quoted in Hasan 2002, 191).

Another example of a nationalist historian during this period was the Aligarh-based Mohammad Habib, who not only presented a secular view of India's past, but did so by challenging the historical and translation methods employed by colonial historians such as H. M. Eliot, whom he excoriated for presenting an entirely inaccurate picture of medieval India in the *History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, by focusing inordinately on the political activities of rulers rather than the lives and cultural activities of the people. This, according to Habib, was a result of Eliot's reliance on faulty translations of Persian histories and his failure to recognize the historical value of literary and cultural sources, such as *Masnavis* (metrical romances) and *Maktubat* (Sufi literature) ([1931] 1974, 3–32).[5]

Rajatarangini's status as a national text was established in part by the fact that it was written in Sanskrit—a language with "pan-Indian pretensions"—and could therefore be seamlessly incorporated into the Indian literary canon, but also by the fact that it was not a religious epic or code of laws, but rather a secular text, which particularly suited a secular nationalist such as Pandit. This allowed for the text to be compared to Western classical literature while also emphasizing its continued value for Indian life and civilization.[6] According to Pandit, Kalhana was, not unlike Aeschylus or Homer, "a poet of veracity and universality" (xxiii), and at the same time, "the heritage of India which has come to us through the medium of Samskrta is a living one" (xvii). Asserting the primacy, universality,

[5]There were many others who questioned the colonial historical method for providing a deficient definition of history. For instance, Yogesh Chandra Shastri, a Sanskrit scholar, argued that the *Puranas* could not be dismissed as ahistorical simply because they were poetic compositions. In fact, far from displaying a definition of causality as the mere superficial linkage of one event with another, the *Puranas* embodied a much more complex and more meaningful idea of causality. It is interesting to note that far from lauding *Rajatarangini* as the only work of Sanskrit literature that could be considered a history, Shastri instead dismissed it as a work that displayed a superficial sense of causality by presenting Kashmir's past as a chronological series of events, possibly because Kashmir was tainted by its association with the "Tartars," who had their own mode of recording the past (1908, 248–49).

[6]As Sumathi Ramaswamy has demonstrated, the report of the Sanskrit Commission set up in independent India to investigate the status of Sanskrit in the new state presented Sanskrit as a language on a par with Greek and Latin, but one that could, at the same time, lose its elite pretensions and serve as the language of the common people (1999, 369).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and continued importance of Sanskrit through a secular text allowed Pandit to perform the double act of appropriating this history of a region into the nation's collective literary heritage, thereby incorporating the region into the nation.

Pandit recognized *Rajatarangini* as "the earliest extant history of Kasmir," although only secondarily after its primary function as national literature (xix). Its historical value, therefore, rested in the universal themes to which it gave voice that cut across regions and defined the national narrative of Indian history, rather than the particularities of the history of Kashmir. Pandit's invitation stated that Kalhana "lived a free man in an independent country" and "loved his Arcadian homeland," whose natural beauty he described in great detail, and yet was free from "narrow nationalism," as his poem displayed a love for Indian mythology and folklore as well as its flora and fauna (xix, xxi–xxii, xxxi). Further, Pandit utilized the narrative of *Rajatarangini* to corroborate certain ostensible facts about ancient Indian history, particularly those that shed positive light on the history of the nation by refuting colonialist claims about its past, including its autocratic forms of government, the inequities of the caste system, and the subordination of women.

So, for instance, Pandit argued that Kalhana's poem proved that women, including royal women, in Aryan society were free from seclusion and oppression, and queens shared the throne equally with kings (xxxii–xxxiii). The origin of Sati in Aryan society, Pandit traced, through Kashmir's history, to the influence of the "Scytho-Tartars," among whom it was usual for noblemen to commit suicide at the death of their lord. Monarchy in ancient India, according to Pandit's reading of *Rajatarangini*, was elective in the early period (not unlike the city-states of Greece and Rome), gradually becoming hereditary as well as mediocre (xxxix).[7] Pandit's copious notes to the actual translation pointed out that the research of German Orientalists such as Albrecht Weber had proven the existence of elective monarchy in the Vedic period (320 n. 703). Most importantly, drawing a direct line between Kashmir's history as evident in *Rajatarangini* and the history of the putative Indian nation, he stated that, "Neither caste nor birth was, however, bar to the holding of any civil and military posts. The Domba and the Brahman were alike soldiers and indeed some of the bravest warriors, generals and expert swordsmen were Brahmans—a state of things we see repeated later during the national revival in the Maratha period" (xxxii).

Jawaharlal Nehru's foreword to the translation adds yet another interesting layer to the dialogue between region and nation in Pandit's presentation of

[7]It is worth noting that early twentieth-century Indian intellectuals, such as K. P. Jayaswal, editor of the *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, were rewriting early Indian history from the perspective of its constitutional history, describing ancient Hindu polities as republics (Jayaswal [1924] 1943). Soon after its publication in 1924, Jayaswal's book was on university syllabi across India.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Rajatarangini to its readers. Steeped as he was in the tradition of European positivism, Nehru initially appeared skeptical of the value of the text, attempting to decide whether it was history or poetry, as its claims to being the former were negated for him by its "vague and sometimes fanciful" early sections. Nevertheless, the foreword quickly warmed up to the text as presenting evidence of Kashmir's ties to India: "Kashmir had been the meeting ground of the different cultures of Asia, the western Graeco-Roman and Iranian and the eastern Mongolian, but essentially it was a part of India and the inheritor of Indo-Aryan traditions" (x). But it was to the text's descriptions of Kashmir—the region—that Nehru seemed to pay the most attention and considered most valuable, and that also appeared to destabilize the seamless incorporation of region into nation. As Nehru read Kalhana's rendition of Kashmir as "the land of the Sun god," where, among other miracles, "realizing that the land created by his father is unable to bear the heat, the hot-rayed Sun honours it by bearing himself with softness in summer" and in the evening "the daylight renders homage to the peaks of the towering mountains," the "call of the old homeland from whence we came long, long ago" stirred in him (xi). While for Nehru, history and poetry might have gone "ill together," it was their intertwining that allowed the national past to be inflected with the dreams and desires of the region.

Pandit's translation, which he admitted was not meant for "the learned fraternity," performed several functions, located as it was at the confluence of a variety of philosophical currents. Drawing on the German Romantic-nationalist definition of literature, it presented *Rajatarangini* not merely as a history, but rather as a certain genre of Sanskrit literature that embodied the essence of the Indian nation. In the process, it challenged the colonial historical method based on empirical, fact-based research, arguing that a narrative of the past devoid of imagination was not only meaningless but also unhistorical since it could not represent the higher truths that embodied the best characteristics of the national past. It was literature that gave history—particularly the history of the nation—meaning, and it was precisely Kalhana's creativity and artistic sense that prevented the text from making prejudicial and partial misrepresentations (see n. 21). Not surprisingly, it was by focusing on *Rajatarangini* as national literature in Sanskrit rather than regional history that Pandit drew the region firmly into the narrative of Indian history.[8] Although subsumed, the region was not completely erased, coming alive in Kalhana's pen pictures of Kashmir and the articulation of Nehru's palpable desire to return to his homeland.

[8]It is important to point out that the Sahitya Akademi reprinted Pandit's English translation of the text in 1968 as a "vernacular" text from Kashmir. The Akademi did not begin publishing translations of Kashmiri poetry and other Kashmiri literary narratives until the 1990s. The first Kashmiri translation of *Rajatarangini* was published in 2005 under the auspices of the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture, and Language.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Rajatarangini as Regional Historical Narrative

As stated earlier, Pandit's translation set itself against M. A. Stein's translation of *Rajatarangini* in particular, which, I would argue, was critical to establishing the contours of the text as a legitimate Sanskrit text, albeit from a particular region of the Subcontinent. Preceded by a critical edition of the text, published in 1892, Stein's two-volume translation was published in 1900. It is perhaps the most widely read and cited translation, and it continues to inform prevalent ideas of *Rajatarangini* as history because of its adherence to a chronological narrative, its author's discussion of his sources, and his objectivity, although Stein refrained from describing it as a history in his voluminous introduction to the translation, characterizing it instead as a "medieval chronicle." Stein was thus responsible for giving *Rajatarangini* physical form and legitimizing it as a historical *kavya* in Sanskrit that could take its rightful place as part of the Sanskrit canon. This is evident in Keith's discussion of the text in *A History of Sanskrit Literature* (1920, 158–72), which was based almost entirely on Stein's critical edition and translation, as well as Pandit's translation, which was not only a translation of Stein's critical edition, but also was a site for the disputation of Stein's—and by extension, also Orientalist—authority over the interpretation of Indian texts.

There is no doubt that Stein, a Hungarian educated under Orientalists and Sanskritists in Germany, Austria, and Britain, who in 1889 was appointed joint principal of Oriental College, Lahore, and registrar, University of Punjab, considered himself a strict positivist who was suspicious of all indigenous texts (Mirsky 1977; Pandita 2004; Walker 1998). He unequivocally maintained, for instance, that the best means of pursuing a study of India's Sanskrit texts by Indian students was through the medium of English, the language in which "all the best translations and editions of good Sanskrit treatises were published" (quoted in Perrill 1976, 614). In fact, he presented himself as best suited to carry out a translation of *Rajatarangini* because he had reconstituted its original text based on rigorous philological standards, a fact that could not be claimed by any earlier translations (in particular J. C. Dutt's, which Stein critiqued for, among other things, ignoring "Kashmirian sources of information"), which were based on corrupt and unreliable manuscript copies of the text, most in Devanagari script.

Stein further claimed that he was the only scholar capable of interpreting the text correctly because he had carried out several topographical and archeological expeditions of the Kashmir Valley, which allowed him to provide material evidence toward the corroboration of the "facts" within the text (Stein [1900] 1979). This was because he was distrustful of the narrative, as Kalhana displayed that peculiar characteristic of the Indian mind that "never learned to divide mythology and legendary tradition from true history" (28–29). Therefore, Stein presented *Rajatarangini* as a text that could become a repository of historical facts through his intervention as translator as he distilled fact from fiction in

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the narrative, although it is important to note that unlike J. C. Dutt, Stein retained and translated all of the "mythical" stories within the text.

While on the surface, Stein's approach to *Rajatarangini* appears radically different than Pandit's, a closer examination, interestingly, reveals that Stein's philosophical influences were not that different from Pandit's and allowed him to engage with the text not simply as a historical narrative, but also as a repository of a regional (as opposed to a national) culture. The German Romantic-nationalist conception of literature led Stein to focus on *Rajatarangini* as an embodiment of the peculiarities of the culture and literature of Kashmir and the historical sensibilities of its people. Although Stein dismissed the legendary and mythical aspects of *Rajatarangini* as evidence "that the Chronicler fully shared the naïve credulity from which they had sprung" (28), he was sensitive to the context of the text's composition and recognized that its historical value lay precisely in the Kashmiri popular traditions to which it gave voice so clearly: "there is besides in Kalhana's maxims an unmistakably Kashmirian flavor which makes them particularly interesting from a historical point of view." Further, he lauded the aesthetic qualities of Kalhana's descriptions of events as "characteristic and pregnant" and "graphic and original," particularly in their satire and irony, not as a measure of its hyperrealism and thus ahistoricity, as in the case of Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanyam in *Textures of Time*, but rather as a critical measure of the text's historical authenticity (14–38).

Stein's interaction with Kashmiri historical texts and popular traditions in order to prepare the translation of *Rajatarangini* in the case of Kashmir has to be located in the realm of colonial knowledge-production projects in a variety of regional contexts. James Tod encapsulated this project earlier in the nineteenth century in his composition of the much-celebrated *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*. As Ramya Sreenivasan has pointed out, Tod, who had a distinctly Romantic perspective on race and nationality, was concerned not simply with disentangling the history of the Rajputs from their ballads and chronicles, but quite as much with their bardic narratives and traditions for what they revealed about the identity of the Rajputs (2007, 133–34). From *Annals* thus emerged the idea of the Rajputs as a distinct nation, whose past would later be harnessed to the larger history of the Indian nation.

Two other colonial officials worth mentioning in this respect are Alexander Forbes in the case of Gujarat and Edward Gait in the case of Assam, both of whom carried out painstaking research to record the histories of these respective regions. Sarvar V. Sherry Chand and Rita Kothari have argued that Forbes's extensive use of bardic and other poetic sources toward the composition of his history of Gujarat, entitled *Ras Mala* (A Garland of Chronicles, 1856), which itself contained elements of popular narrative, history, and chronicle, indicates that he approached history writing as a work of art and a performance, and viewed chronology as only one of its many components, as "the living tradition does not exist in sequences of dates and events, but is a much larger entity"

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(2003, 78–80). Similarly, the publication of Gait's *History of Assam* in 1906 was preceded by a massive effort at collecting a variety of sources, including coins and inscriptions as well as historical documents such as *buranjis* and Assamese folklore and mythology, both of which he legitimized as useful and authentic historical sources for Assamese historiography (Saikia 2008, 147–51). These individuals produced specifically regional histories that drew on folk traditions as well as indigenous forms of recording the past.

Kashmir had been left out of the ambit of similar colonial investigations until the second half of the nineteenth century, when the Dogra State's political project of unearthing Kashmir's Aryan past through investigations into its Sanskrit manuscript literature led to its support for Orientalists such as George Buhler, who carried out a detailed survey and collection of Kashmir's manuscripts in the 1870s (including those of *Rajatarangini*) (Buhler 1877), and Stein (his student), who, wanting to make a mark on the field of Sanskrit studies by translating a Sanskrit text into English, found a text suited for his purposes in *Rajatarangini*. Stein ingratiated himself to the Dogra court, partly by cataloguing the contents of Maharaja Ranbir Singh's library of Sanskrit manuscripts, which allowed him access to hitherto inaccessible manuscripts of *Rajatarangini* and facilitated the production of the critical edition of the text, which became the basis for the later translation. The translation, in turn, became a means not so much to establish a chronology of Kashmir's past with a view to synchronizing it with Indian history, but rather to investigate Kashmir's geography, popular traditions, and history in a more connected fashion.

This task involved collecting all "the materials still left for the study of old Kasmir and its earliest records," which was of particular importance, in Stein's view, given the changes overtaking Kashmir brought on by the "rapid advance of Western influences" (xxiv). Stein's research thus attempted to establish Kashmir as a unique and separate region within the Indian Subcontinent that had "escaped those great ethnic and political changes which have from time to time swept over the largest portion of India" (366). Whereas earlier European translators of various manuscripts of *Rajatarangini*, such as H. H. Wilson, had dismissed the importance of Kashmir's history beyond its utility for the reconstruction of the narrative of India's past, for Stein, *Rajatarangini* was foremost a Kashmiri narrative that illustrated the "peculiarity" of Kashmir's "geographical position," which "explains equally that remarkable individuality which characterizes the historical development of the country and constitutes its chief interest" (132).

In fact, Stein's *Memoir on the Ancient Geography of Kasmir*, a report on his archeological tours of the valley in search of material corroboration of the facts within Kalhana's narrative, appended to his translation of *Rajatarangini*, which could be read as the most positivist paratext of the translation, creatively interwove textual, oral, and material sources to link Kashmir's geographical features to its economic, political, and linguistic history, thereby placing the region's

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

contemporary politics within its long historical trajectory. With detailed chapters on the sources of Kashmiri history and topography (including classical notices, Chinese records, Kashmiri popular traditions—which Stein found more edifying than learned tradition—Muslim notices, and other Kashmiri chronicles), its general geography (including the position and configuration of the Kashmir Valley and adjoining valleys and its ethnography), and Kashmir's political topography (including the frontiers of ancient Kashmir, the old and new capitals, and its main administrative divisions), the *Memoir* established, among other things, a continuity between Kashmir's ancient past and its present through the Sanskrit language (347–490). It thus drew the contours of Kashmir as a historical space that could later be harnessed into the service of larger regionalist and nationalist projects by individuals such as Pandit.

It is particularly striking to note the influence of indigenous Kashmiri traditions on Stein's translation and interpretation of *Rajatarangini*, especially when compared to Pandit's translation, which, though it places itself within the longer trajectory of indigenous and European translations of the text, makes almost no mention elsewhere of Persian or Kashmiri written or oral traditions, as it is based almost entirely on European classical and Orientalist sources. In Stein's case, it is clear that his interpretation of the text and its meaning for Kashmir, its literature, and history, was based on a deep study of, alongside classical and Orientalist texts, Kashmiri Sanskrit texts such as *Nilamatpurana*, Kashmiri pilgrimage manuals known as *Mahatmyas*, administrative manuals such as *Lokaprakasa*, Persian sources such as *Ain-i-Akbari* and *tarikhs* of Kashmir, and Kashmiri folk traditions, all of which led Stein to describe Kashmir as an auspicious space dotted with pilgrimage sites, endowing it with a uniquely sacred character (351–85). In the process, he also legitimized these sources as critical for understanding the geography and historiography of Kashmir. The use of a multiplicity of sources is evident in Stein's notes throughout the translation of the text, but particularly so in his notes to the verses in which Kalhana describes the land of Kashmir, its creation legend, and its pilgrimage sites (25–33n).

There is no doubt that the past that Stein established for Kashmir was a Hindu and classical one based on the primacy of the Sanskrit textual tradition. However, for him, the very existence of *Rajatarangini*, as well as the interpretation of its content, was determined by the regional context of Kashmir, its landscape and geography, and its written and oral traditions, which endowed the land not only with a history that had "a distinctly local character" (30), but also with a distinct way of recording the past. Unlike J. C. Dutt, for whom Kashmir was a remote corner of India where the Aryans first made their appearance that had produced a text that could stand in for the history of India, for Stein, *Rajatarangini* was, in fact, a regional history that was a product of and at the same time endowed Kashmir with a distinct geographical and historical identity. In a sense, then, it was Stein's assertion of Kashmir's uniqueness that Pandit resisted

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

most vociferously in his own translation, by claiming the text as a national Sanskrit *kavya* rather than a regional history, which allowed it, as well as Kashmir, to become the embodiment of the Indian civilization rather than a uniquely regional culture. This could be done by attacking Stein's historical method for focusing on historical and archeological facts rather than the deeper philosophical meanings within the text, and the further claim that this method also led to incorrect translations of the original. However, Stein's introduction discusses *Rajatarangini* as not simply a record of historical facts, but also, quite as significantly, an aspect of the tradition of historical *kavya* that cannot be adequately understood without reference to the geographical, textual and oral context of Kashmir: "Kalhana writes only for readers—or hearers—equally well-acquainted with contemporary Kasmir as he himself was" (40).

This is not to suggest, of course, that Stein did not judge *Rajatarangini* and its author on Western historical standards. The value of the text for Stein lay precisely in the fact that its author appeared to be independent of royal patronage, that he based his text on a variety of sources that he self-consciously discussed in the opening verses of the poem, and that the text thus produced presented a correct chronology of events in Kashmir's past, at least in its last five books. However, for Stein, this rendered the text valuable not only as a historical record, but quite as much a repository of the cultural essence of a distinct region of Kashmir in the present.

Conclusion

To conclude, then, I would venture to make two broadly related points regarding the English translations of *Rajatarangini* discussed here. First, the translations remind us that *Rajatarangini* cannot be interpreted as a single text from the twelfth century that displays (or fails to display) the characteristics of a history, much less a nineteenth-century history. Not only did the content of the translations create new texts of *Rajatarangini*, but more significantly for purposes of this article, by engaging with contemporary concerns over ideas of literature and history and their relationship to definitions of the Indian nation and the place of regions within it, the paratexts to the translations presented the text to their readers in a variety of ways. Because for Stein, the translation of the text was a critical aspect of knowledge production about Kashmir and thus principally a means of carrying out a thorough survey of the sources related to Kashmir's past while connecting them to its present, he presented *Rajatarangini* as a Sanskrit historical *kavya*, which, when read alongside other Kashmiri historical sources, drew a picture of Kashmir's unique geographical and historical identity. Pandit's translation, carried out specifically as a counterpoint to Stein's, on the other hand, dismissed the value of *Rajatarangini* as a regional Kashmiri historical text, offering it instead to a national audience as a Sanskrit text that embodied

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

India's literary heritage and, hence, the essential and best qualities of the Indian nation.

The second, and related point, is that while the two translations appear to be radically opposed, especially if one is labeled "Orientalist" and the other "nationalist," both point to a similar engagement with Sanskrit texts as well as to the cross-fertilization of ideas and deep interconnection between these projects. Both Stein's and Pandit's conclusions about the text were drawn from German Romantic conceptions of literature as the repository of national essences and history as a positivist discipline based on empirical research. However, while both specifically made note of Kalhana's verses in which he proclaims his impartiality and discusses his sources, they also recognized that *Rajatarangini* had to be read on a higher philosophical plane than as a mere recounting of historical facts. In fact, Pandit challenged the utility of Stein's translation on precisely this point—that it was so immersed in reading historical facts in Kalhana's narrative that it missed the universal meanings of the text—thus transforming the content of the past as well as ways of connecting with it in the present.

As I have argued, however, Stein engaged with the text as far more than a mere repository of historical facts. His wide-ranging introduction to the translation discussed *Rajatarangini* as a Sanskrit *kavya*, a historical source, as well as a chronicle of Kashmir's past, in a sense codifying the text as both Sanskrit literature and history. At the same time, his interpretation of the text in tandem with a variety of indigenous Kashmiri sources rendered Kashmir into a historical space whose past was now ripe for absorption into narratives of Indian history and literature. While it would appear that J. C. Dutt's strictly positivist late nineteenth-century translation (a lengthy discussion of which is beyond the scope of this essay) was closer to Stein's translation than to Pandit's, it is important to note that Stein specifically disagreed with Dutt's translation because it did not consider indigenous Kashmiri sources, particularly folklore, which Stein considered indispensable for a study of history, thus challenging, not unlike Pandit, the contours of history as a positivist discipline based on verifiable facts.

Both Stein's and Pandit's framing of their translations of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* embodied the features of new Orientalism as well as nationalism, even as they engaged in a critique of and dialogue with these ideas, reinventing them in the process. Thus, in using the past as "an authoritative resource" to illuminate the "habits and desires of the present," both Stein and Pandit can be described as what Simona Sawhney termed "activist readers" of *Rajatarangini* (2009, 91). In other words, while arriving at somewhat different conclusions about *Rajatarangini*, for both, the text was not simply an amalgam of facts about the past—rather its importance lay in what it could say about and how it could act on the present.

The status of *Rajatarangini* in colonial India was mediated in part through its English translations. The intent of the translations, I have argued here, has been insufficiently analyzed in the context of early twentieth-century Orientalist and

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

nationalist projects and the historical and literary ideas that informed them. The translators of *Rajatarangini* did not simply accept it as the solitary example of Indian historical writing in Sanskrit, but rather engaged with it on multiple levels, drawing out and debating for their audience, as did translators of other Sanskrit classics, the relative significance of and relationship between literature and history in capturing the identity of the nation and its constituent parts.

Acknowledgments

This article would not have been possible without the generous support of the Kluge Center at the Library of Congress, where it was first conceived and presented. Subsequent versions were presented at Harvard University, Yale University, and the University of Hyderabad. Special thanks to John Rogers, Charles Hallisey, Kumkum Chatterjee, Prachi Deshpande, and the editor and reviewers of this journal for their comments and suggestions on earlier drafts.

List of References

Ali, M. Athar. 1992. "Translations of Sanskrit Works at Akbar's Court." *Social Scientist* 20 (9–10): 38–45.

Aquil, Raziuddin, and Partha Chatterjee, eds. 2008. *History in the Vernacular*. Delhi: Permanent Black.

Banerjee, Prathama. 2006. *Politics of Time: "Primitives" and History-Writing in a Colonial Society*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Basham, A. L. 1961. "The Kashmir Chronicle." In *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, ed. C. H. Philips, 57–65. London: Oxford University Press.

Berkwitz, Stephen C. 2004. *Buddhist History in the Vernacular: The Power of the Past in Late Medieval Sri Lanka*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.

Bernier, François. [1891] 1968. *Travels in the Mogul Empire, A.D. 1656–1668*. Delhi: S. Chand.

Bijlert, Victor A. van. 1996. "Sanskrit and Hindu National Identity in Nineteenth Century Bengal." In *Ideology and Status of Sanskrit: Contributions to the History of the Sanskrit Language*, ed. Jan E. M. Houben, 347–66. Leiden: E. J. Brill.

Buhler, Georg. 1877. Detailed Report of a Tour in Search of Sanskrit MSS. Made in Kasmir, Rajputana, and Central India. *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Suppl.: 1–90.

Chand, Sarvar V. Sherry, and Rita Kothari. 2003. "Undisciplined History: The Case of *Ras Mala*." *Rethinking History* 7 (1): 69–87.

Chatterjee, Kumkum. 1999. "Discovering India: Travel, History and Identity in Late Nineteenth-and Early Twentieth-Century India." In *Invoking the Past: The Uses of History in South Asia*, ed. Daud Ali, 192–227. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

——. 2005. "The King of Controversy: History and Nation-Making in Late Colonial India." *American Historical Review* 110 (5): 1454–75.

Chatterjee, Partha. 2008. Introduction to *History in the Vernacular*, ed. Raziuddin Aquil and Partha Chatterjee. Delhi: Permanent Black.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Chaudhury, Rosinka. 2008. "History in Poetry: Nabinchandra Sen's *Palashir Yuddha* (Battle of Palashi) (1875) and the Question of Truth." In *History in the Vernacular*, ed. Raziuddin Aquil and Partha Chatterjee, 391–417. Delhi: Permanent Black.

Chowdhury, Indira. 2001. *The Frail Hero and Virile History: Gender and the Politics of Culture in Colonial Bengal*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Colebrooke, H. T. 1809. "Observations on the Sect of Jains." *Asiatic Researches* 9: 287–99.

Dalmia, Vasudha. 2001. "Vernacular Histories in Late Nineteenth-Century Banaras: Folklore, Puranas and the New Antiquarianism." *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 38 (1): 59–79.

Deshpande, Prachi. 2007. *Creative Pasts: Historical Memory and Identity in Western India, 1700–1960*. New York: Columbia University Press.

——. 2008. "The Making of an Indian Nationalist Archive: Lakshmibai, Jhansi, and 1857." *Journal of Asian Studies* 67 (3): 855–79.

Dharwadker, Vijay. 1993. "Orientalism and the Study of Indian Literatures." In *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, ed. Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer, 158–85. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Dutt, J. C. 1879. *Kings of Kashmira: Being a Translation of the Sanskrita Work Rajatarangini of Kahlana Pandita*. Vol. 1. Calcutta: self-published.

——. 1887. *Kings of Kashmira: Being a Translation of the Sanskrita Work Rajatarangini of Kahlana Pandita*. Vol. 2. New Delhi: Mittal, 1990.

——. 1898. *Kings of Kashmira: A Translation of the Sanskrita Work of Jonaraja, Shrivara and of Prajyabhatta and Shuka*. Vol. 3. New Delhi: Mittal, 1990.

Dutt, R. C. 1880. "History of Kashmira—A Contribution Towards Ancient Indian History." *Calcutta Review* 71 (141): 1–25.

Fazl, Abul. 2004. *The A'in-i Akbari*. Vol. 2. Trans. H. Blochmann. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel.

Fouq, Mohammad-ud-Din. 2009. *Mukammal Tarikh-i-Kashmir* [A complete history of Kashmir]. Trans. R. K. Bharati. Srinagar: Gulshan Books.

Genette, Gerard. 1997. *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. Trans. Jane E. Lewin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Habib, Mohammad. 1931. "An Introduction to the Study of Medieval India (a.d. 1000–1400)." In *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period: Collected Works of Professor Mohammad Habib*, vol. 1, ed. K. A. Nizami, 3–32. New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1974.

Hannoum, Abdelmajid. 2003. "Translation and the Colonial Imaginary: Ibn Khaldun Orientalist." *History and Theory* 42 (1): 61–81.

Hasan, Mushirul. 2002. "The BJP's Intellectual Agenda: Textbooks and Imagined History." *South Asia* 25 (3): 187–209.

Husaini, Syeda Bilqis Fatema. 1988. *A Critical Study of Indo-Persian Literature: During Sayyid and Lodi Period, 1414–1526*. Delhi: AISS Aey Printers.

Jayaswal, K. P. [1924] 1943. *Hindu Polity: A Constitutional History of India in Hindu Times*. 2 pts. Bangalore: Bangalore Printing and Publishing Company.

Kaviraj, Sudipta. 1995. *The Unhappy Consciousness: Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay and the Formation of Nationalist Discourse in India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Keith, A. Berriedale. 1920. *A History of Sanskrit Literature*. London: Oxford University Press.

Maclean, Marie. 1991. "Pretexts and Paratexts: The Art of the Peripheral." *New Literary History* 22 (2): 273–79.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Majumdar, R. C. 1961. "Ideas of History in Sanskrit Literature." In *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, ed. C. H. Philips, 13–28. London: Oxford University Press.

Mantena, Rama. 2007. "The Question of History in Precolonial India." *History and Theory* 46 (3): 396–408.

Mirsky, Jeannette. 1977. *Sir Aurel Stein: Archaeological Explorer*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Niranjana, Tejaswini. 1992. *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Orsini, Francesca. 2002. *The Hindi Public Sphere, 1920–1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Pandit, R. S. [1935] 1968. *Rajatarangini: The Saga of the Kings of Kasmir* New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi. [Originally published in Samskrta as *The River of Kings*].

Pandit, Vijaya Lakshmi. 1979. *The Scope of Happiness: A Personal Memoir*. New York: Crown.

Pandita, S. N. 2004. *Aurel Stein in Kashmir: The Sanskritist of Mohand Marg*. New Delhi: Om Publications.

Perrill, Jeffrey Price. 1976. "Punjab Orientalism: The Anjuman-i-Punjab and Punjab University, 1865–1888." PhD diss., University of Missouri–Columbia.

Pollock, Sheldon. 2007. "Pretextures of Time." *History and Theory* 46 (3): 364–81.

Ramaswamy, Sumathi. 1999. "Sanskrit for the Nation." *Modern Asian Studies* 33 (2): 339–81.

Rangachari, Devika. 2009. *Invisible Women, Visible Histories: Gender, Society, and Polity in North India, Seventh to Twelfth Century AD*. New Delhi: Manohar.

Rao, Velcheru Narayana, David Shulman, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam. 2001. *Textures of Time: Writing History in South India, 1600–1800*. New Delhi: Permanent Black.

Roy, Kumkum. 1994. "Defining the Household: Some Aspects of Prescription and Practice in Early India." *Social Scientist* 22 (1–2): 3–18.

——. 1999. "Turbulent Waves: Construction of Gender Relations in the *Rajatrangini* of Kalhana." *Indian History Congress Symposia Papers* 19:1–19.

——. 2003. "The Making of a Mandala: Fuzzy Frontiers of Kalhana's Kashmir." In *Negotiating India's Past: Essays in Memory of Partha Sarathi Gupta*, ed. Biswamoy Pati, Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, and T. K. Venkatasubramanian, 52–66. New Delhi: Tulika Books.

Saikia, Arupjyoti. 2008. "Gait's Way: Writing History in Early-Twentieth-Century Assam." In *History in the Vernacular*, ed. Raziuddin Aquil and Partha Chatterjee, 142–71. New Delhi: Permanent Black.

Sawhney, Simona. 2009. *The Modernity of Sanskrit*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Shastri, Yogesh Chandra. 1908. "History as Conceived by the Ancient Hindu and Other Nations." *Calcutta Review* 126 (252): 248–58.

Singh, G. P. 2003. *Ancient Indian Historiography: Sources and Interpretations*. Delhi: D. K. Publishers.

Slaje, Walter. 2004. *Medieval Kashmir and the Science of History*. Austin: South Asia Institute, University of Texas.

Sreenivasan, Ramya. 2007. *The Many Lives of a Rajput Queen*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Stein, M. A. [1900] 1979. *Kalhana's Rajatarangini: A Chronicle of the Kings of Kasmir*. 2 vols. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Thapar, Romila. 1983. "Kalhana." In *Historians of Medieval India*, ed. Mohibbul Hasan, 52–62. New Delhi: Meenakshi Prakashan.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press

VAN DER VEER, PETER. 1999. "Monumental Texts: The Critical Edition of India's National Heritage." In *Invoking the Past: The Uses of History in South Asia*, ed. Daud Ali, 134–55. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

——. 2001. *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

WALKER, ANNABEL. 1998. *Aurel Stein: Pioneer of the Silk Road*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

WILSON, H. H. 1825. "An Essay on the Hindu History of Cashmir." *Asiatic Researches* 15: 1–119.

YASIN, MADHAVI. 1977. "Kalhana and His *Rajatarangini*." *Studies of the Kashmir Council of Research* 2:18–23.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810002998 Published online by Cambridge University Press