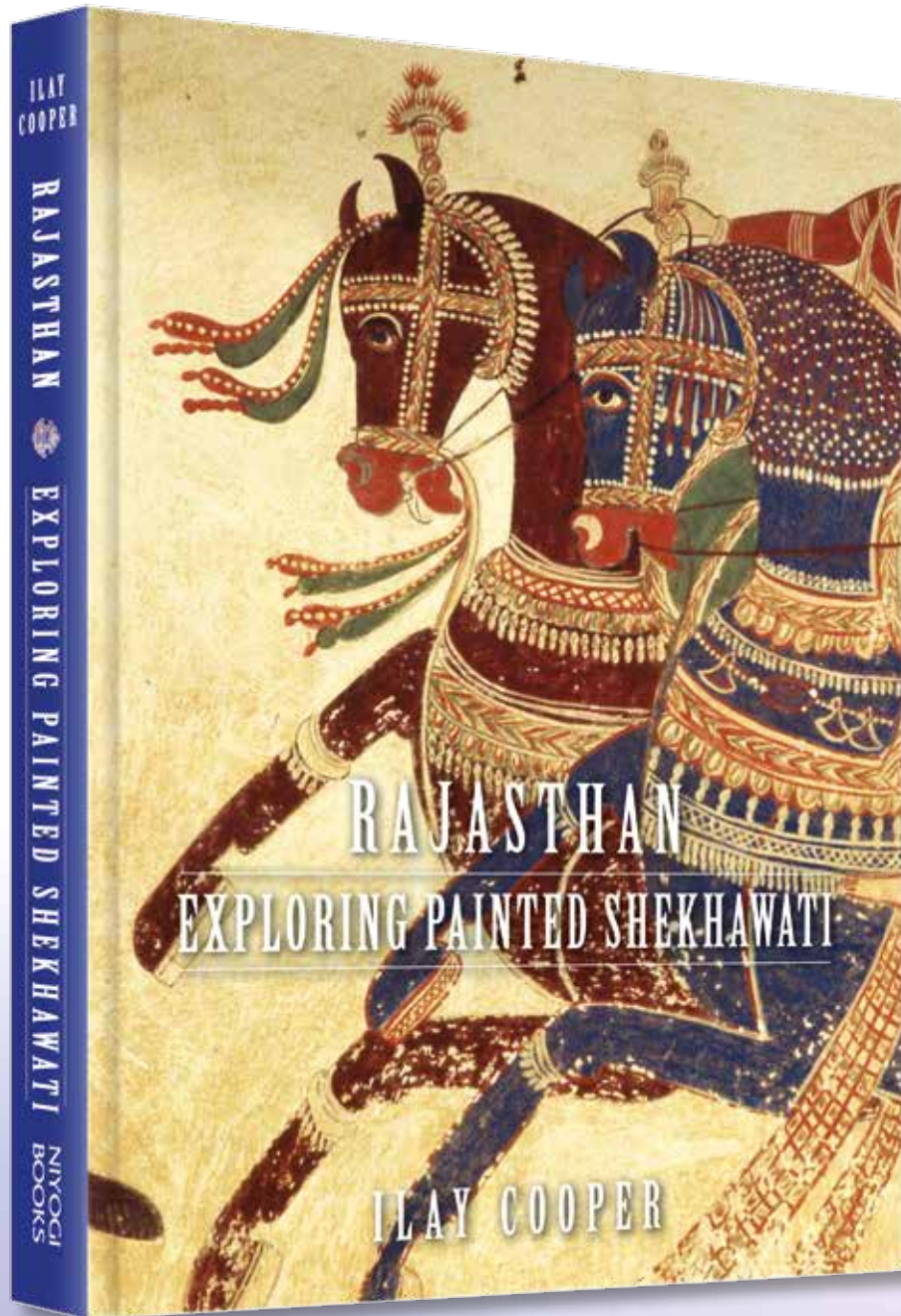


NEW TITLE March 2014  
ISBN: 978-93-83098-21-7



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RAJASTHAN

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ISBN: 978-93-83098-21-7

# EXPLORING PAINTED SHEKHAWATI

by Ilay Cooper

Size: 292 x 216mm

294pp, 150 gsm art paper (matt)

All colour

220 colour photographs, 3 maps

Hardbound with dust jacket

Cycling into rarely visited northern Rajasthan, in tiny desert towns Ilay Cooper discovers impressive buildings, their walls covered with vibrant paintings. Fascinated, he settles nearby and, exploring, finds that the main painted towns lie in the defunct administrative district of Shekhawati. After ten years studying all aspects of the paintings, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) commissions him to document the phenomenon. A local teacher, Ravindra Sharma (Rabu), assists him; together they map the painted towns and, over two-and-a-half years, describe 2,260 buildings. They travel by motorbike and their work is punctuated by adventures. Research reveals the unpublished writings and drawings of Colonel Lockett and Lieutenant Boileau, who crossed Shekhawati in 1831. After completing their project, Ilay and Rabu follow Lockett and Boileau's 180-year-old trail, recreating the past and illuminating the present.

**The unique collection of photographs of the Shekhawati region collected over forty years.**

**The fascinating wall paintings and their evolution, tracing the rising Shekhawati Marwari community who financed them.**



Author:



Raised and educated in Purbeck, in south England, Ilay Cooper graduated from London University in 1966. Between study, teaching and working in a quarry, he travelled widely in Asia, spending some thirteen years in India, mostly based in Churu, Rajasthan. His initial nine journeys between England and India were over land, by hitchhiking and buses, culminating in a motorcycle journey from Churu to Purbeck in 2000. His research in Shekhawati was funded by quarry work in England and photo-journalism in India. After documenting Shekhawati's buildings, he listed those of Diu also for INTACH. These projects were followed by a series of scholarships to study wall paintings in India and Pakistan. He has written many published articles for Indian and British periodicals, five published academic papers and five books. He has also lectured widely on South Asian murals in India, Pakistan and the UK.