

UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA

DOCTORAL THESIS

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**Material Histories and Wood-Carving:  
Fragments from Modern Punjab**

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*A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy*

*in*

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## Declaration of Authorship

I, Nadine ZUBAIR, declare that this thesis titled, “Material Histories and Wood-Carving: Fragments from Modern Punjab” and the work presented in it are my own. I confirm that:

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- Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed.
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## *Abstract*

### **Material Histories and Wood-Carving: Fragments from Modern Punjab**

Nadine ZUBAIR

In pre-colonial times, wood-carved doors, doorways, balconies and windows were essential and recognisable facets of public and domestic buildings in the Punjab. Colonial directives, however, led to significant changes both in the built landscape and in the production, consumption and meaning of wood-carving. Discerning in these changes an emphasis on fragmentation, this thesis explores the material effects of colonial-era engagements with regional arts and crafts, urban redesign, education, and public administration. It attempts to disrupt the false sense of coherence implied by the idea of a 'circuit' of culture, to grapple instead with the affordances of the fragment.

Despite their proliferation and prolonged participation within local practice, carved architectural fragments are now rarely encountered in the buildings for which they were produced. Global demand for these items has dispersed them to far-flung private collections, museums, restaurants, and houses in every occupied continent, making them uncannily familiar visual tropes with performative significance.

This project considers archival records, architectural specimens from museums and collections, Punjabi narratives, and primary and secondary historical sources as fragments, and explores their affordances in relation to the Punjab and Britain from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. By using hitherto unpublished archival material, and drawing these fragments into 'critical constellations', this thesis aims to reframe and rebalance the historical and temporal contextualisation of their production, pedagogy and consumption. It then suggests an alternative reading of fragments: as invocations of a more dynamic, mutative and transformative cultural condition.



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The mistakes and shortcomings are mine alone.





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## List of Abbreviations

<b>ASI</b>	<b>A</b> rchaeological <b>S</b> urvey of <b>I</b> ndia
<b>DPI</b>	<b>D</b> irectorate of <b>P</b> ublic <b>I</b> nstruction
<b>DSA</b>	<b>D</b> epartment of <b>S</b> cience and <b>A</b> rt
<b>JIA</b>	<b>J</b> ournal of <b>I</b> ndian <b>A</b> rt [and <b>I</b> ndustry]
<b>JJ School of Art</b>	<b>J</b> amsetji <b>J</b> eejeebhoy <b>S</b> chool of <b>A</b> rt
<b>MSA</b>	<b>M</b> ayo <b>S</b> chool of <b>A</b> rt
<b>NCA</b>	<b>N</b> ational <b>C</b> ollege of <b>A</b> rts
<b>NCAA</b>	<b>N</b> ational <b>C</b> ollege of <b>A</b> rts <b>A</b> rchives
<b>PWD</b>	<b>P</b> ublic <b>W</b> orks <b>D</b> epartment
<b>SADACC</b>	<b>S</b> outh <b>A</b> sian <b>D</b> ecorative <b>A</b> rts and <b>C</b> rafts <b>C</b> ollection



## Glossary

<i>Azadari</i>	Mourning and lamentation
<i>Baradari/Baraduri</i>	A square building or pavilion with twelve doors or arches, three on each side
<i>Bazaar</i>	Market
<i>Charpai</i>	A four-legged bed frame with jute, string or tape webbing
<i>Chaukhat</i>	Portal or door frame
<i>Chhajja</i>	An overhanging cornice or an eave over a door or window
<i>Chhatri</i>	An umbrella-shaped pavilion or turret
<i>Churel</i>	Witch and ghost
<i>Dakhl</i>	Entrance; intrusion; admission
<i>Diwan-e-aam</i>	Hall of public audience
<i>Diwan-e-khaas</i>	Hall of private audience
<i>Doab</i>	The interfluvial land between two rivers
<i>Durbar</i>	A public audience or reception as well as the hall where it is held
<i>Garba Griha</i>	Central sanctum of a temple
<i>Gharaa/Gharoli</i>	Water pot
<i>Gurdwara</i>	Sikh temple
<i>Haveli</i>	Mansion
<i>Jaali</i>	Lattice
<i>Jharoka</i>	Balcony
<i>Jinn</i>	Demons
<i>Jogi/Yogi</i>	Ascetic
<i>Lohaar</i>	Blacksmith
<i>Majha</i>	The region located at the center of the historical Punjab region, roughly from the right bank of river Beas up to the Jhelum river
<i>Maimar</i>	Mason or architect
<i>Mandir</i>	Temple
<i>Masjid</i>	Mosque
<i>Mazaar</i>	Mausoleum
<i>Mistri</i>	Craftsman or foreman
<i>Naql</i>	Transmission; transport; imitation
<i>Nath panthi</i>	Followers of Gorakh Nath and his disciples
<i>Qisse</i>	Plural for <i>qissa</i> meaning tales or narratives
<i>Ramgarhia</i>	A Sikh community of artisans
<i>Rawadari</i>	Tolerance

<i>Saanwaala</i>	knife-sharpener
<i>Samadh</i>	Tomb
<i>Sant</i>	Holy men
<i>Sehdara</i>	Triple archway; one side of a <i>Baradari</i>
<i>Shahi</i>	Royal
<i>Srngā</i>	Small corner turrets of a temple
<i>Shikhara</i>	The spire on a [Hindu] temple
<i>Tarikh/Tareekh</i>	History
<i>Tarkhan/Tarkhaan</i>	Carpenter
<i>Tazia</i>	Architectural models carried in Muharram processions
<i>Thamb</i>	Pillar
<i>Tilla</i>	Hillock

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Fragments of Wood Carved Architecture and Modern Punjab

Richly carved wooden doors, archways, fenestrations and balconies from across South Asia – Gujarat, Kashmir, Punjab, Swat, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh – are a familiar visual device, and valued all over the world. These architectural artefacts are often found in display contexts such as museums, exhibitions, restaurants, and in private houses, where they are separated from the structures and landscapes they were designed for, yet remain comprehensible in their function, workmanship and broad geographical provenance.



FIGURE 1.1: Doors for sale at a roadside near Rawalpindi. Anonymous

Architecture, like other objects in our material environment, by being familiar and following a particular functional script, recedes to the background, fades out of focus; and while remaining peripheral to our vision, determines and directs our behaviour and identity. However, when the object is removed from its functional context and released from its role in everyday life, it attains a new stature and becomes something

else. Thus, for example, a carved wooden door when it is an entrance to a house offers or denies access between domestic and public spaces, but when it is separated from the building it was designed for, it follows different scripts depending on the pathways, interactions and contexts it goes through. It may be sold to a collector who installs it in his gallery, or to an antique dealer who restores it at a workshop and sells it to an interior decorator for the Mahatama Restaurant in Paris or the Annapurna Café in Capetown. How this door now relates culturally and socially to this new environment and people, and vice versa, will be different. Furthermore, as fragments are released from the confines of spatial and temporal provenance, they can also take on the role of ornament and be re-imagined and encoded into new scripts and constructions.

The goal of this study is to explore how fragments of architecture have articulated their significance through the contextualisation and recontextualisation of their particular forms within different material, social, cultural and representational configurations. I will do this by focussing on wood carving from the Punjab – a region that now straddles India and Pakistan – and a fraught chronological period from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. This is the time when the British Empire was finally able to annexe the Sikh Kingdom of Ranjit Singh (1839), and sought to restrain it under its administration. The consequences of this event on the social, economic, political and cultural fabric of this region were profound, and can be felt to this day. For the purpose of this study, the Punjab provides a rich and multidimensional canvas upon which to trace the objects, their social and cultural encounters and their networks.

This introductory chapter will set out the background and rationale for this research, the questions that motivate it.

## **1.2 Background: The South Asian Decorative Arts and Crafts Collection (SADACC)**

Fragments of architecture from across South and East Asia on display at a site in Norwich, England – the South Asian Decorative Arts and Crafts Collection (SADACC) – motivated this PhD project. The motivation was pragmatic as the scholarship I received specified that some aspect of this collection needed to be considered, but it was also critical to my own interest in architecture, its fragments, and the performativity of their representations. In order to locate the praxis of the research that transpired from this source, I begin with a brief description of SADACC and then steer the discussion towards the broader rationale and background of this research.

The South Asia Collection in Norwich (UK) displays a spectacular array of architectural forms from South and East Asia which has been assessed as unique among other collections. The Collection is managed by the South Asian Decorative Arts and Crafts Collection (SADACC) trust, which was set up by Jeannie and Philip



Millward in 2011. An assessment of the Collection, comparing it with twenty other institutions within the United Kingdom, Europe and India that hold South Asian collections, determined that, while there were commonalities between some of the other museums' holdings and the SADACC objects, “the architectural aspect of SADACC constitutes an important resource which few museums can match.”<sup>1</sup> It notes that the larger architectural features from North West India and in particular Pakistan, such as the columns and doors, are rarely found in museum collections, and that these offer the potential for further research in the regional architectural traditions.

This “architectural aspect” of the SADACC is striking and acts on visitors’ sense of place as soon as the premises is entered from the street. This is a listed building which was designed in 1876 as a skating rink. A triple archway from Gujarat, India, abuts the boundary wall in the car park, and a large carved door flanked by stone lions forms a faux side entrance. The glass foyer has a variety of architectural items on display, and leads into the main gallery — the Rink. Approximately 6000 square feet in area, this is a large timbered hall with brick walls and balconies along three of its sides that can be accessed and serve multiple functions – office, retail and display. The ceiling, which at its highest point rises to 36 feet, is spanned by distinctive, pointed, wooden arches in a natural wood colour. (Figure 1.2)



FIGURE 1.2: The Old Skating Rink, South Asian Decorative Arts and Crafts Collection (SADACC), Norwich. SADACC.

Around eighty architectural pieces, mainly from India, but also Pakistan, Thailand and Burma, have been installed inside the Rink. These items include massive

<sup>1</sup>T. Hussain. *Assessment of the South Asian Decorative Arts and Crafts Collection, Norwich*. Norwich, 2011.

gateways, framed doors, arched columns, balconies, windows, pillars, and even a complete carved wooden portico to a Gujarati shop, as well as smaller fixtures and fragments of building components. Many of these pieces are carved in wood, usually deodar, *shisham* (rosewood) or teak, but some are stone. Some of these are twelve to fourteen feet high and equally wide. The majority of these items are embedded into the building walls – gateways and framed doorways at the ground level, and the balconies, windows and arches above them, alluding to the exterior of multi-storied buildings in cities across South Asia. (Figure 1.3) The central display area has a 12-column colonnade with an assortment of pillars from different regions. Interspersed with these larger items are windows and screens of different materials and varying sizes. All the wooden architecture has been restored to a natural finish, and a few items have remnants of colour or their metal components, iron bands, studs, nails, chains, etc.

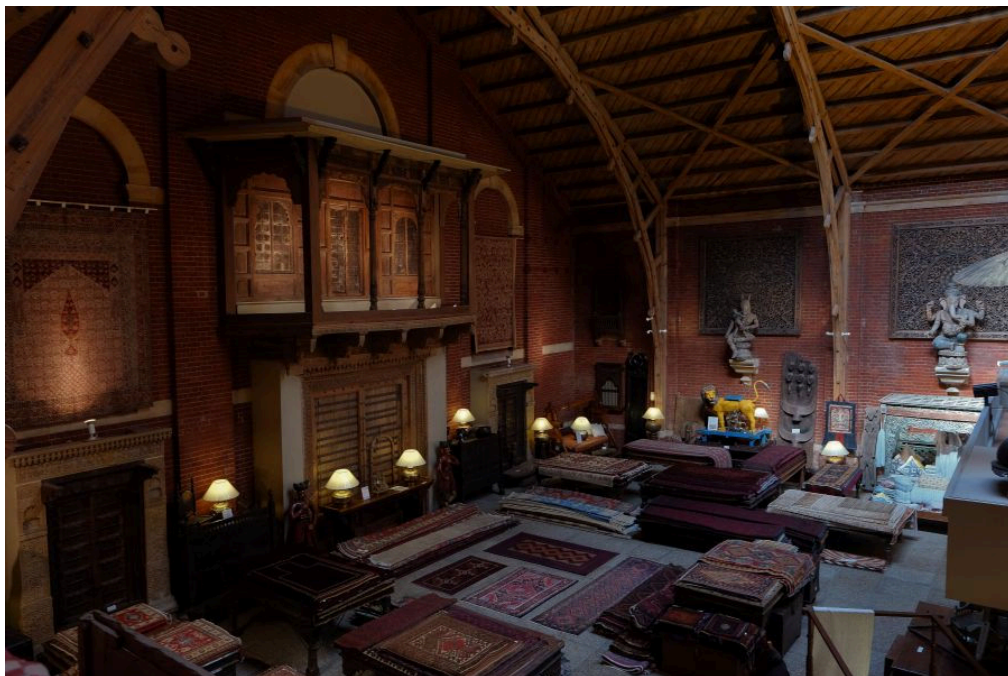


FIGURE 1.3: Architecture on Display at the South Asian Decorative Arts and Crafts Collection (SADACC), Norwich. SADACC.

Despite their immediate recognisability as components of buildings with a defined purpose, the majority of these items are functionally defunct. The doors do not move to permit or deny access; the windows and balconies high up on the walls are as inaccessible to natural light as they are to the visitors to the Rink, and the columns are free-standing without any structure to uphold. The interaction with, and viewing of, individual pieces is challenged by their scale and positioning. After making an initial statement to a visitor entering the SADACC gallery space, setting the stage as it were, these architectural pieces tend to recede into the background as the other artefacts come into focus in the foreground.

Undeniably though, the building fragments installed inside the Rink are recognisably

South Asian, and their abundance and scale perform effectively, transposing the viewer from familiar and expected spaces to a place that is anticipated and imagined as exotic and foreign. Unidentifiable in any particular geographical or regional sense, nor as any particular category of building, the effect nonetheless is of an amalgamated entity. This impression can be attributed to the dialectical relationship between the architectural plan and structure of the Rink with the fragments that have been installed within it. The interior space of this Victorian skating rink contains the exteriority of an imagined urban mosaic from pre-partition India. It is a familiar conception of a city street scene that has been turned outside in. The architecture of the Rink and the artefacts within it act performatively to construct an archetypal South Asian landscape, and the architecture performs with the visitors to create a dynamic cultural environment.

### 1.3 Spatial and Temporal Contexts: Colonial Punjab

In order to contain the stimulus afforded by the SADACC array of architecture, a set of temporal and spatial parameters was required to frame the research question and structure the project. These parameters were driven by personal reasons as well as academic determinations and logistical conditions. Thus, the Punjab was selected as the spatial locus, and the colonial period, i.e. turn of the nineteenth century with a few decades on either side, was picked as the temporal locus. This is explained below.

Based on archaeological evidence, the Punjab has been continuously occupied since c. 3000 B.C. due to its agricultural potential, and its salient location on routes between the mountain passes in the north (towards Central Asia and China), the west (towards Afghanistan and Iran) and the Indian peninsula to the east. The nomenclature ‘Punjab’ appears in texts from the sixteenth century, and derives from the Persian word *punj* = five and *ab* = waters, and signifies the land with five rivers that flow through it, including the rivers Beas, Sutlej, Ravi, Chenab, Jhelum.<sup>2</sup>

The territoriality of the Punjab, i.e. its geo-political and administrative boundaries, however, have been fluid and complex in response to the changing political and social forces that have historically controlled the area. But as the territorial boundaries have ebbed and flowed, the rivers and their *doabs* (the inter-fluvial land between the rivers) have been relatively stable. The Mughal emperor Akbar formalised the names of the *doabs* as follows:

1. *Bist-Jalandar* doab, between Beas and Sutlej rivers;
2. *Bari doab*, between Beas and Ravi;
3. *Rachna doab*, between the Ravi and the Chenab;
4. *Chaj* or *Jech doab*, between the Chenab and Jhelum, and

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<sup>2</sup>J. S. Grewal. *The Sikhs of the Punjab*. Online edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/CH0L9780521268844>, pp. 35–39.

5. *Sind-Sagar doab*, between the Jhelum and Indus.<sup>3</sup>

These names are mentioned in the “*Ain-i-Akbari*” (the Constitution of Akbar) a 16th century Persian account of Emperor Akbar’s administration written by his minister, Abu’l-Fazl ibn Mubarak.<sup>4</sup>

The Himalayan Mountains in the north contribute greatly to the soil, climate and isolation of Punjab.<sup>5</sup> Essentially, though, the Punjab is an extensive alluvial plain that slopes gently from approximately 350 metres above sea-level in the north and northeast and to about 180 metres in the southwest. The southwestern edge of the region spills into the *Rohi*, the Cholistan Desert, which meets up with the Thar Desert further south and thus into Sindh. (Figure 1.4)

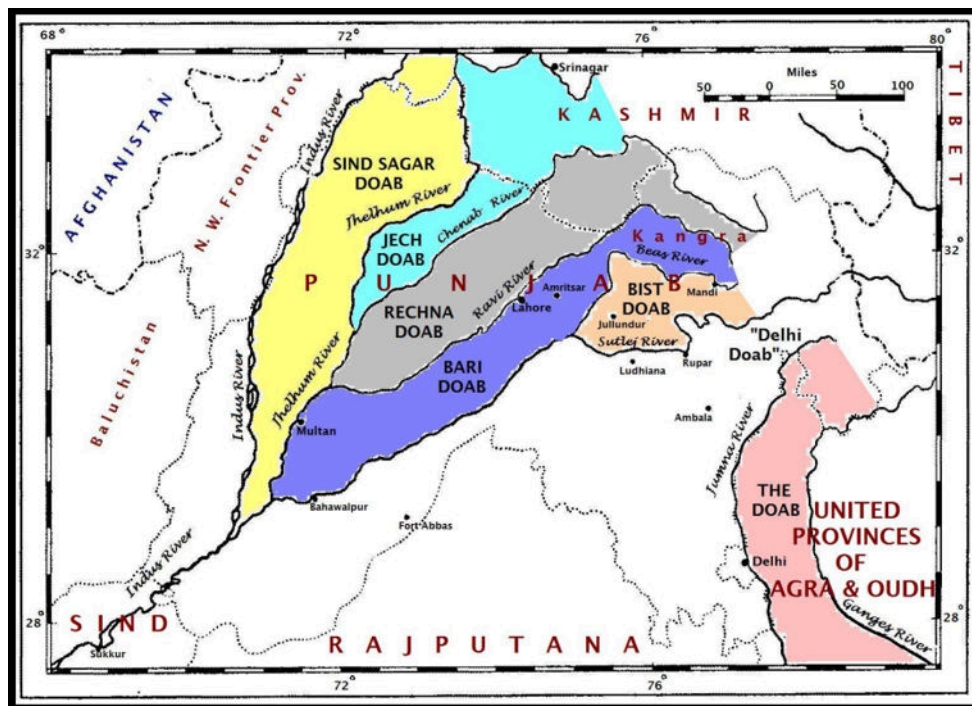


FIGURE 1.4: Map of the *Doabs* in Punjab, based on the map by O.H.G. Spate, 1947. Public Domain.

The history of the Punjab, in broadstrokes, can be written in terms of an ancient Punjab, which shared its fortunes and falls with the Indo-Iranian and Central Asian regions. This period, from the first millennium B.C.E through the first millennium A.C.E., saw the rise and fall of powers like the Mauryans, Bactrian Greeks, Kushans and Guptas, followed by the Hindu Shahis until the eventual invasions by the Ghaznavids under Sabuktigin, and later, his son Mahmud. Medieval Punjab (from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries) then saw the rule of the Muslims, including the Ghauris, the 'Slaves', the Khiljis, the Sayyids, the Lodhis, and finally, the Mughals,

<sup>3</sup>O. H. G. Spate. “Partition of the Punjab and of Bengal”. In: *The Geographical Journal* 110.4–6 (Nov. 1947), pp. 210–218.

<sup>4</sup>H.S. Jarrett. “The *Ain-i-Akbari* by Abu’l-Fazl Allami”. In: *Ain-i-Akbari*. Vol. II. Translation. Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1949, reprint 1993.

<sup>5</sup>G. S. Gosal. “Physical geography of the Punjab”. In: *JPS* 11.1 (2004), p. 20.

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whose reign started with Babur's invasion in c. 1526. By the eighteenth century, the Mughals were losing power, and the Sikh confederacies started getting stronger. They were consolidated into an extensive Sikh kingdom by Ranjit Singh by 1809, and his Punjab extended from the River Sutlej to the Khyber Pass (near Peshawar) and the Sulaiman mountains, and included Jammu and Kashmir. In 1809 Ranjit Singh signed a treaty with the British that recognised him as the sole king of the Punjab. The British annexed the Punjab shortly after his death in 1839. (Figure 1.5) During the partition of 1947 the region was brutally bifurcated into East and West Punjab, with some regions retaining their status as "princely states".<sup>6</sup>

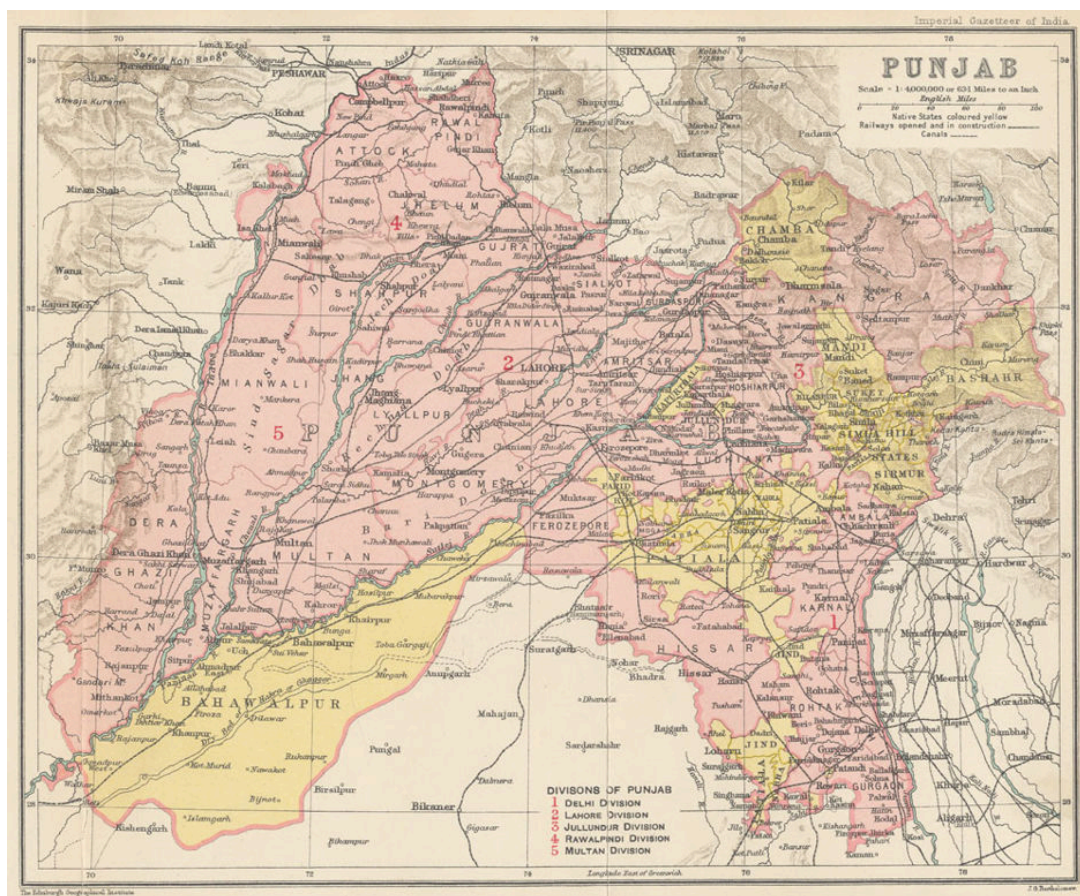


FIGURE 1.5: Map of the Punjab, 1909. Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1909, Public Domain

During the colonial period, Punjabi notions of self and community which were inextricably tied to the land, were affected and transformed. But it was colonialism's end that was traumatic and severed people from familiar places and landscapes.<sup>7</sup> The Punjab region was one of the most severely affected parts of the subcontinent when

<sup>6</sup>Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*; A. Malhotra and F. Mir. *Punjab reconsidered: History, culture, and practice*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012; T. Raychaudhuri and M. Desai I. Habib D. Kumar. *The Cambridge economic history of India Vol I*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989; Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*.

<sup>7</sup>D. Gilmartin. "Environmental history, biradari, and the making of Pakistani Punjab". In: *Punjab reconsidered: History, culture, and practice*. Ed. by A. Malhotra and F. Mir. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012.

India and Pakistan were partitioned in 1947 following the departure of the British imperialists. It is estimated that 12 million people were displaced from their ancestral homes and a million killed in the riots and violence that ensued when the border drawn by Cyril Radcliffe sliced the province along what were ascertained to be contiguous majority areas of Muslims and non-Muslims.<sup>8</sup> The approximately 553 kilometre-long border designated the western part of the province with its Muslim majority and three rivers to Pakistan, and the remainder to India. The city of Lahore is the provincial capital of the Punjab in Pakistan, and Chandigarh is the capital of the Punjab in India. This was a violent rupture when many Punjabis irrevocably lost the physical relationship with the land/place of Punjab, even though, arguably, a ‘Punjab’ would persist in their imaginaries.<sup>9</sup> (Figure 1.6)

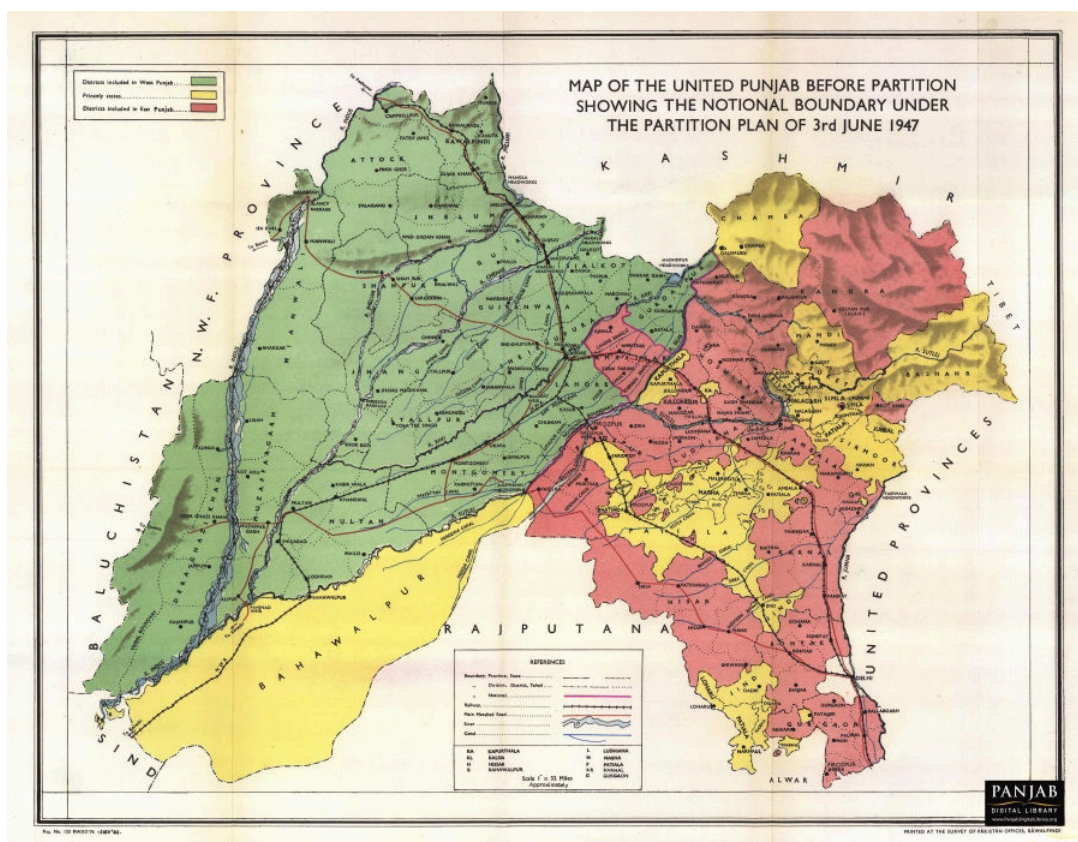


FIGURE 1.6: Map of the United Punjab Before Partition Showing the Notional Boundary Under the Partition Plan of 3 June 1947. Survey of Pakistan, Panjab Digital Library

A region with such a fresh history of being ‘bloodied and partitioned’ is a challenging domain within which to explore something so fundamentally rooted in Place as architecture.<sup>10</sup> Elementary questions such as “What is the Punjab?” “What is the

<sup>8</sup>I. Ahmed. *The Punjab bloodied, partitioned and cleansed: Unravelling the 1947 tragedy through secret British reports and first-person accounts*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2012.

<sup>9</sup>P. Virdee. *From the Ashes of 1947*. Cambridge University Press, 2018; Malhotra and Mir, *Punjab reconsidered: History, culture, and practice*.

<sup>10</sup>Ahmed, *The Punjab bloodied, partitioned and cleansed: Unravelling the 1947 tragedy through secret British reports and first-person accounts*.

architecture of the Punjab?” “What is the history of the Punjab?” become fraught with fractures and fissures. Is there a common conceptual entity called the Punjab that is rooted in history, culture and practice? Anshu Malhotra and Farina Mir have delved into the conundrum of the “nebulous geographic entity” that is the Punjab, and explained how scholars attempt to pin it down in place and time by historicizing the borders against various administrative or political entities.<sup>11</sup> For example, Ranjit Singh’s kingdom of Lahore does not map comfortably onto the geographic entity Punjab because on one hand, after 1809 it did not include areas south of the Sutlej River, but on the other hand it subsequently included parts of Jammu, Kashmir, and territories all the way to Kabul.

Another example of such remapping is British colonial Punjab itself, which included Peshawar, Leia, and Hazara at annexation in 1849, but to which Delhi and its environs were added to the province in 1858. Their assertion is that

“the Punjab has a geographical–cultural core...whether conceived as an axis connecting the major cities of Amritsar, Lahore, and Multan, or more broadly as the five doabs and the cis-Sutlej territory [the area to the south of the Sutlej river, up to Delhi], [which] corresponds to the rather stable—even if nebulous—notion of Punjab that is a subtext in discussions of the region’s territoriality.”<sup>12</sup>

Further, they introduce the notion of ‘*Punjabiyyat*’, “a loosely defined term often used to describe a sentiment of belonging or attachment to Punjab and/or the foundations of a shared, cross-religious, cross-caste, cross-class culture.”<sup>13</sup> This movement explores the importance of symbolic capital to maintain cultural forms against state efforts towards national identities. Thus, there is an emphasis on language and the literary arts, and a narrative located within a loss of identity.<sup>14</sup>

This study situates itself at the specific historical conjuncture when different forces came together, to create new terrain, literally and metaphorically around the land, its people, society and culture. This is the time span from when the British annexed the Punjab shortly after Ranjit Singh’s death in 1839, until the beginning of World War I in 1914. For the region, this was a violent moment when history shifted gears, and the terrain changed. The Punjab had expanded under the Sikh empire, and the British ambition and acquisitiveness sought to roll out its systematic administrative machinery in order to channel its wealth, maintain control, and offset the challenges faced by the growing industrialisation within Britain. The programmes to do so had tremendous impact across all sectors, changing the socio-economic and physical infrastructures, and affecting notions of identity, self, and cultural expression. The changes wrought at this time would reverberate ever more profoundly in 1947 due

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<sup>11</sup>Malhotra and Mir, *Punjab reconsidered: History, culture, and practice*.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup>A. Ayres. “Language, the Nation, and Symbolic Capital: The Case of Punjab”. In: *The Journal of Asian Studies* 67.3 (2008), 917–946.

to the fracturing and destabilisation of systems that had developed locally over the centuries.

## 1.4 Wood Carved Architecture as an Urban Vernacular Style in Colonial Punjab

As mentioned previously, the Punjab was one of the last regions that the British annexed in 1849, a few years after the death of Ranjit Singh. This was a coveted victory as Ranjit Singh controlled a powerful and wealthy kingdom that was strategically located.<sup>15</sup> The influence of prosperity also manifested in the building arts that were prolifically patronised by the wealthy and reflected in the urban milieu. Houses in urban contexts like Lahore, Bhera, Chiniot, Jhang, Multan, Amritsar, were typically constructed of locally available materials such as baked brick, mortar and wood. The brick walls were load-bearing with wooden spans between them. Wooden frames and lintels braced openings. Deodar, Rosewood, Mango or Teak were the preferred woods, but owing to scarcity and cost, were sparingly deployed in the structure. Glover cites evidence from collapsed structures in the Walled City of Lahore that reveal failed floors and ceilings due to the frugal use of wood.<sup>16</sup> Deodar was floated down the Ravi, Sutlej and Chenab rivers from Kashmir.<sup>17</sup> Ornamental wooden elements were designed into the elevations of the houses. The house plans were typically of one, two, or three rooms layered up to six storeys, with timber frames and brick and mortar infill, gravel floors and ceilings covered in tiles. The surfaces were plastered with lime and whitewashed. A raised *chaukhat* (portal) on the ground floor, and individual *jharokas* (balconies) on each level were the most widespread ornamentation device on the front elevations using intricate wood carving in foliate or geometric designs. Moulded plaster, carved brickwork and fresco painting were also employed.<sup>18</sup>(Figure 1.7)

Michael Meister explains that vernacular architecture is the architecture of a place, using available materials, built by local craftsmen and serving a community;

“its forms may identify a locale or a community. It may be called ‘traditional’ in a particular region, but new vernaculars can be born,

<sup>15</sup>S. Stronge. *The arts of the Sikh kingdoms*. London: V & A, 1999; Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*.

<sup>16</sup>W.J. Glover. *Making Lahore modern: Constructing and imagining a colonial city*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

<sup>17</sup>Baden Powell has noted that “For practical purposes it is to be remembered that forests are only specially noteworthy, when they exist where there is a possibility of floating their timber on the great rivers, or their tributaries, or when very easy carriage to such places of launching is possible ; hence forest observations and surveys are usually confined to the river valleys.” B. H. Baden-Powell. *Hand-book of the economic products of the Punjab: With a combined index and glossary of technical vernacular words*. Roorkee: Thomason Civil Engineering College Press, 1868, p. 527.

<sup>18</sup>For details on buildings and construction in the Walled City of Lahore, see Glover, *Making Lahore modern: Constructing and imagining a colonial city*; C. P. Clarke. “Some notes upon the Domestic Architecture of India”. In: *In The Journal of the Society of Arts* 31.1594 (1883), pp. 731–756; G. C. Walker. *Gazetteer of the Lahore District, 1893-94*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2006.





FIGURE 1.7: Street Scene Lahore, 1890. From the MacNabb Collection at the British Library, Photo 752/15(19)

created, defined; there are modern vernaculars in any period; and remembered ‘vernacular’ forms can act rhetorically through other modes of architecture.”<sup>19</sup>

In addition, tracing the historiography of vernacular architecture, Brown and Maudlin arrive at the position that one thing common between all vernaculars is that architects and architectural historians have typically positioned them outside what they consider ‘architecture’.<sup>20</sup> Thus, in architectural discourse, vernacular is positioned

<sup>19</sup>M. W. Meister. “Vernacular architecture and the rhetoric of re-making”. In: *Traditional and vernacular architecture: Proceedings of the seminar*. Chennai: Madras Craft Foundation, 2003, pp. 6–12, p. 9.

<sup>20</sup>R. Brown and D. Maudlin. “Concepts of Vernacular Architecture”. In: *The SAGE Handbook of Architectural Theory*. Ed. by Stephen Cairns C. Greig Crysler and Hilde Heynen. London: SAGE Publications, 2012, pp. 340–368.

“in a series of oppositions to ‘architecture’:the antiquated against the contemporary; the archaic against the modern; the traditional against the innovative. It is a conflict presented as distinctions between low culture and high culture, layman and professional, the anonymous and the authored as well as the spontaneous and the planned, the circumstantial and the conceptual and the passed-down and the designed.”<sup>21</sup>

We can therefore think of the wood carved facades of domestic structures as the vernacular ‘other’ to historical monuments, both secular and sacred, such as the Lahore Fort, Mosque of Wazir Khan, *Harmandir Sahib* (Golden Temple), Shalimar Gardens, the *Samadhi* of Ranjit Singh, and the Badshahi Mosque. In this situation, the vernacular as ‘other’ is not just traditional and old, and so in opposition to the modern and contemporary, but is ‘othered’ as every day and ordinary even in relation to the architecture of the past. Even as recently as 1995, a “living exhibition of Lahori urban domestic architectural traditions” showcasing stucco and wood carved architectural forms was designed and installed at the *Lok Virsa* (Museum of Folk heritage)in Islamabad. These facades, were created by a team of traditional craftsmen brought together by the architect Kamil Khan Mumtaz. Explaining his role in the creation of this montage, Mumtaz has said,

“Remember: we are looking here at a museum of folk heritage, and what we *facilitated* rather than designed, was a museum exhibit of and by a living craft tradition. There is no question of *nostalgia*, this is the present we’re in. All we have done is to draw attention to the fact that this tradition is alive, it is still *the* tradition for a whole category of buildings.”<sup>22</sup>

In contemporary contexts Museums and collections like the *Lok Virsa* and SADACC perform a vital but conflicting role within living traditions. While on one hand they preserve and record aspects of heritage that is fading away, on the other hand they are interrupting and fossilising the record which is the antithesis of living vernaculars.

## 1.5 A Survey of Literary Sources for Wood-Carving and Architecture from the Punjab

The literature within which to anchor material histories of wood carving and its representations spans disciplinary boundary and temporal frames. Christopher Tilley has noted the “indeterminacy”, “ambiguity”, “pluralism”, and “immanence” inherent in the study of material cultures leads to diverse, undisciplined, often “impure” cross

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<sup>21</sup>Brown and Maudlin, “Concepts of Vernacular Architecture”, p. 342.

<sup>22</sup>Kamil Khan Mumtaz quoted in Z Ansari. “A Contemporary Architectural Quest and Synthesis: Kamil Khan Mumtaz in Pakistan”. MA thesis. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1997, p. 99.

fertilisations of concepts, methods and epistemologies.<sup>23</sup> In the context of a post-colonial, post-partition framework, there are further intersections with subalternity and representation, and the asymmetry of the archive which privileges an “official” version of history that still persists. The literature coopted by this research project has borne the consequences of this eclectic unboundedness, and is presented here in summary. The material I have cited includes:

- Unpublished archival material: The record as created, compiled, classified and selected for the institutional archives of the British, within Britain and in the (Indian) colony. This includes, papers (such as applications, letters, personnel records, lists, appeals, purchase orders, invoices, receipts etc), reports and summations, pamphlets and publications, accounts and planning documents etcetera.
- Published Nineteenth century writing: This includes journals, maps, gazetteers and other compilations of ethnographic and ethnological data, including archaeological and municipal reports. Reports by local practitioners of woodcarving, and the fictional and non-fictional work by scholars who “saw the city itself as an important horizon of interpretation.”<sup>24</sup> The former generally took the form of technical manuals and guides, while the latter were printed as books, often with maps and illustrations.
- Secondary sources: Contemporary ethnographies and historical/archival research on crafts, craftsmen and architecture; explorations of changes in craft economies and the impact of colonial practices such as the art schools, museums and industrial exhibitions. I have also referenced multifaceted historical writings on Place, religion, people, art and architecture, including modern cities, shrines and other sacred spaces, and how they were represented visually, in popular culture and social media.

The bibliography at the end of the dissertation is organised accordingly.

In terms of industrial craft production, knowledge of wood carving and the visual representations of architectural fragments became encoded in the textual archive from the later part of the nineteenth century. This was done under the auspices of the colonial administration in Britain that formalised art education through the creation of a number of art schools and museums around India.<sup>25</sup> The effort to train local

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<sup>23</sup>C. Tilley. “Introduction”. In: *Handbook of material culture*. Ed. by C. Tilley et al. London: Sage, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup>Glover, *Making Lahore modern: Constructing and imagining a colonial city*, p. 185.

<sup>25</sup>See for example B. H. Baden-Powell. *Hand-book of the manufactures and arts of the Punjab: With a combined glossary and index of vernacular trades and technical terms, & c. & c.: Forming Vol II to the "Hand- book of the economic products of the Punjab."* Lahore: Punjab Printing Company, 1872; J. L. Kipling. “Indian Architecture of Today”. In: *The Journal of Indian Art* 1.3 (1886), pp. 1–5; S. M. Latif. *Lahore: Its history, architectural remains and antiquities, with an account of its modern institutions, inhabitants, their trade customs, etc.* Lahore: New Imperial Press, 1892; M. Tarapor. “John Lockwood Kipling & the arts and crafts movement in India”. In: *AA Files* 3 (1983), pp. 12–21; S. Choonara and N. O. Tarar. *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*. Lahore: National College of Arts, 2003; Gosal, “Physical geography of

artisans was made “to revive crafts now half forgotten,” by attracting students from families of artisan ‘castes’ to these art schools with subsidies.<sup>26</sup> These industrial art schools had the dubious purpose of ‘improving’ manufacture and industry as well as informing public taste.<sup>27</sup> The most detailed documentation and illustration work was carried out by the British in the district gazetteers and art journals of the late-1800s, codifying taxonomies around religious and ethnic categories.

With the print press burgeoning at this time, the Punjabi *mistri* (master craftsmen) and artisans also responded by documenting and publishing wood carving designs and methods, especially *pinjara* (literally, cage, but refers to geometric latticework) or *jaali* (lattice) motifs, in pamphlets written in the local languages. The late nineteenth century also saw a number of texts in Urdu, Persian, and English that collated and presented local histories and historiographies.<sup>28</sup> These do not directly pertain to wood carving, but contain lists and descriptions of buildings and location, and the legends and events that made them significant and memorable. Among these is the *Char Bagh-i-Panjab*, a history of the Punjab written in 1849 by Ganesh Das Wadhera at the conjuncture when the Sikh Kingdom of Lahore was being dismantled and the Punjab incorporated into British India.<sup>29</sup> In 1867, Maulvi Noor Ahmad Chishti published his research on Lahore titled *Tehqiqat-i Chishti: Tarikh-i Lahore Ka Encyclopaedia* (Chishti’s Investigations: An Encyclopaedia of Lahore’s History).<sup>30</sup> Kanhaiyalal published his *Tareekh-i Lahore* (History of Lahore) in 1871 and a companion *Tareekh-i Punjab* (History of Punjab) in 1877.<sup>31</sup> In 1884, Mufti Ghulam Sarwar’s detailed account of the cities and towns of Punjab was published under the title *Tareekh-i Makhzan-i Punjab* (History and Record of Punjab). And perhaps the most well-known and cited of the lot, Syed Muhammed Latif’s *Lahore: Its History, Architectural Remains and Antiquities: With an Account of Its Modern Institutions, Inhabitants, Their Trade, Customs, etc.* published in 1892.<sup>32</sup> These publications combine oral testimony with ethnological and historical evidence, and were typically commissioned by British administrators, such as Richard Carnac Temple (1850-1931) who also had an interest in folklore and local narratives.<sup>33</sup>

Following the written record of the 19th century, scholarship on architectural wood carving has typically been within the purview of ethnographic studies, where it is

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the Punjab”; A. Dutta. *The bureaucracy of beauty: Design in the age of its global reproducibility*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2007.

<sup>26</sup>N. O. Tarar. “From ‘primitive’ artisans to ‘modern’ craftsmen: Colonialism, culture, and art education in the late nineteenth-century Punjab”. In: *South Asian Studies* 27.2 (2011), pp. 199–219.

<sup>27</sup>Dutta, *The bureaucracy of beauty: Design in the age of its global reproducibility*.

<sup>28</sup>Glover, *Making Lahore modern: Constructing and imagining a colonial city*.

<sup>29</sup>G. D. Wadhera. *Char Bagh-i Punjab*. Amritsar: Sikh History Dept., Khalsa College, 1965.

<sup>30</sup>L. N. A. Chishti. *Tehqiqat-e Chishti: Tarikh-i Lahore Ka Encyclopaedia*. Lahore: Punjabi Adabi Academy, 1867.

<sup>31</sup>R. K. Lal. *Tareekh-e-Lahore (2015 reprint)*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1884; R. K. Lal. *Tareekh-e-Punjab (2004 reprint)*. Lahore: Majlis-e-Taraqqi-e-Adab, 1877.

<sup>32</sup>Latif, *Lahore: Its history, architectural remains and antiquities, with an account of its modern institutions, inhabitants, their trade customs, etc.*

<sup>33</sup>W.J. Glover. “Making Indian Modern Architects”. In: *Colonial frames*. Ed. by M. Rajagopalan and M. Desai. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2012, p. 100.

swept into in a broader survey of craft practices;<sup>34</sup> architectural history, where wooden elements are mentioned as constituents of representative or famous buildings,<sup>35</sup> and the history of colonial display and the Great Exhibitions, where wood carvings were popular background display devices.<sup>36</sup>

Recently, an investigation of how the city of Lahore encountered colonial urbanism has been offered by William Glover in his book ‘*Making Lahore Modern: Constructing and Imagining a Colonial City*.’<sup>37</sup> His study delves into the city as a palimpsest, tracing pre-colonial spatial arrangements from the sixteenth century to the urban plans of the colonial administration. Most significantly, he presents an evolving urban landscape by emphasising the changes in vernacular, urban, domestic architecture as recorded in the archives of the municipal and public administrative authorities, and the role played by the colonial bungalow as a site for resolving “anxieties at home” and expressing “expatriate domesticity and family values.”<sup>38</sup>

In contrast to Glover’s sketch of urban Lahore that is drawn largely from official archives, Anna Suvrova investigates the city through multi-textual imaginings of Lahore in literature that constitute what she calls ‘topophilia’, a strong sense of place that becomes intertwined with cultural or place identity. Suvrova explains how,

“[i]n topophilia, just as in the palimpsest, it is impossible to separate the outer from the inner, and to differentiate between superimposed semantic nuances and autochthonous meaning, because the latter consists of the

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<sup>34</sup>PSIC. *Crafts of the Punjab: Vol. I. Lahore*. Pakistan: Punjab Small Industries Corporation, 1986; PSIC. *Crafts and craftsmen of Punjab: Crafts of Chiniot*. Lahore: Punjab Small Industries Corporation, 2010; PSIC. *Crafts and craftsmen of Punjab VolIII: Crafts of Bhera*. Lahore: Punjab Small Industries Corporation, 1993; N. Bilgrami. *The craft traditions of Pakistan: Clay, cloth, wood, metal, stone*. Karachi: Trade Development Authority of Pakistan, 2006; S. Vandal. *Cultural expressions of South Punjab*. Lahore: THAAP, 2011; G. Niazi. *Traditional wood carving of Chiniot (Unpublished master’s thesis)*. Lahore, Pakistan: University of Punjab, 1979; M. Enzner. *Carpenters of Chiniot, Pakistan: The social economy of woodcraft and furniture production*. Berlin: Centre for Development Studies (ZELF), Inst. of Geographical Sciences, Freie Universität Berlin, 2013.

<sup>35</sup>K. K. Mumtaz. *Architecture in Pakistan*. Singapore: Concept Media, 1985; I. H. Nadiem. *Lahore, a glorious heritage*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1996; I. H. Nadiem. *Built heritage of Pakistan: A compendium of architectural legacy, important archaeological sites, historic monuments*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2002; P. Vandal and S. Vandal. *The Raj, Lahore, and Bhai Ram Singh*. Lahore: NCA Publication, 2006.

<sup>36</sup>T. Barringer and T. Flynn. *Colonialism and the object: Empire, material culture and the museum*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1998; A. S. McGowan. *Crafting the nation in colonial India*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009; T. Roy. “Consumption and craftsmanship in colonial India 1850-1950”. In: *Towards a history of consumption in South Asia*. Ed. by D. Haynes et al. India: Oxford University Press, 2010. Chap. 10, pp. 268–297; P. H. Hoffenberg. *An empire on display: English, Indian, and Australian exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001; S. Mathur. *India by design: Colonial history and cultural display*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007; P. Greenhalgh. “Fair world: A history of world’s fairs and expositions from London to Shanghai 1851-2010”. In: (2011); T. Prasch. ““A strange incongruity”: The imaginary India of the international exhibitions”. In: *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 34.5 (2012), pp. 477–491; J. Bryant and S. Weber. *John Lockwood Kipling: Arts and crafts in the Punjab and London*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017.

<sup>37</sup>Glover, *Making Lahore modern: Constructing and imagining a colonial city*.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 162.

former. Understood in such a way, the ‘text’ gets a history and ‘acquires memory’.”<sup>39</sup>

Suvrova’s develops Lahore as a city of collective memory, and constructs its modern identity using modern literary and visual references that hearken back to the writings of the nineteenth century, but can be ‘read’ in the twenty-first century, especially by those familiar with Lahore.

The architectural and urban historiography reveals a pattern of fragmentation and separation whereby the nineteenth century writing on place by local authors made subjective and genealogical claims to veracity, weighing oral histories and biographies of prominent citizens at par with official histories and records. The colonial record, which is largely what is present in the archives, offers a more bureaucratic and empirical account of places and events. Scholars working on material cultures and histories, hailing from a wide range of backgrounds, are attempting to reconcile the schisms between the archival records and the affective and phantasmagorical experiences of the Punjab, and interrogate the histories that are held up as facts.<sup>40</sup>

Against this geographic, historic and literary backdrop, I can now articulate my rationale for embarking on this project, which is to study how fragments can be assembled to understand the material histories of wood-carved fragments from the Punjab, within a broader context of change under Imperial Britain. This exercise will draw upon the literature referenced above, but also draw linkages between the different material, representational and experiential registers of architecture as it moves through iterations of production, consumption and identity formation, within architecture and as its fragments. As a “living archive of postcoloniality” this cartography of wood carved fragments is an attempt to trace a place through a recollection of its typical architectural forms.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup>A. A. Suvrova. *Lahore: Topophilia of space and place*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup>Virdee, *From the Ashes of 1947*; M. A. Asif. *A Book of Conquest: The Chachnama and Muslim Origins in South Asia*. Harvard University Press, 2016; H. Edwards. *Of Brick and Myth: The Genesis of Islamic Architecture in the Indus Valley*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2015; T. Roy. “Out of tradition: Master artisans and economic change in colonial India”. In: *The Journal of Asian Studies* 66.04 (2007), pp. 963–991; Roy, “Consumption and craftsmanship in colonial India 1850-1950”; Malhotra and Mir, *Punjab reconsidered: History, culture, and practice*; I Talbot and T.Kamran. *Colonial Lahore: A History of the City and Beyond*. London: Hurst and Company, 2016; H. A. Khan. *Artisans, sufis, shrines: Colonial architecture in nineteenth-century Punjab*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2015; Tarar, “From ‘primitive’ artisans to ‘modern’ craftsmen: Colonialism, culture, and art education in the late nineteenth-century Punjab”; F. Mir. *The social space of language: vernacular culture in British colonial Punjab (Vol. 2)*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2010; Ahmed, *The Punjab bloodied, partitioned and cleansed: Unravelling the 1947 tragedy through secret British reports and first-person accounts*, See, for example,

<sup>41</sup>A. De Angelis and C. et al. Ianniciello. “Introduction: Disruptive encounters - museums, arts and postcoloniality”. In: *The postcolonial museum: The arts of memory and the pressures of history*. Ed. by I. Chambers et al. Farnham, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014.

## 1.6 Motivation and Problematisation

Despite their resonance as a familiar and evocative style of wood carving, these predominantly urban architectural forms from the Punjab, have not received much attention. Textual recording of the means and modes of making started in the 19th century as the British administration sought to order various aspects of the colonised territories and later set up art schools.<sup>42</sup> Until recently, vernacular architectural forms, especially urban ones, have not been put through any systematic scrutiny as the scholarly emphasis has typically been on monumental structures of the Mughal era from the 16th-17th centuries and on technical manuals for their conservation and restoration.<sup>43</sup> This space of contradiction, between almost instant recognisability and virtually no authoritative texts, is significant.

Then, as discussed earlier, the ruptured history of the Punjab, with its competing colonial,<sup>44</sup> nationalistic,<sup>45</sup> and religious<sup>46</sup> priorities has resulted in a fractured, disjointed and incomplete picture of the built landscape. For example, the few extant havelis in Lahore were constructed by wealthy Sikhs associated with the court of Maharajah Ranjit Singh from c.1799-1849, and these display a distinctive 'Sikh' aesthetic, yet history and architecture have relegated this to the realm of "vulgarisation of Mughal forms" and this architecture is typically left out of the architectural historiography of west Punjab.<sup>47</sup> Two havelis attributed to Ranjit Singh and his progeny, c. 1801-1840 offer a compelling example. Whereas the haveli in Sheikhpura built by Rani Datar Kaur, one of Ranjit Singh's wives, is no more than a shell with all its wood carvings having been stripped away, and hardly any record in architectural historiography, Haveli Naunehal Singh, built for Ranjit Singh's son in Lahore, has been converted to a girl's school, conserved to some degree, and promoted as a tourist attraction.<sup>48</sup> (Figures 1.10, and 1.11)

In fact, the official historical discourse about the Punjab (and more generally, Pakistan) is scant and riddled with lacunae and ambiguities regarding the century between the last Mughal ruler and the Official British takeover, c. 1758-1849, with the historical revisionism included in school and college curricula as part of a concerted

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<sup>42</sup>Tarar, "From 'primitive' artisans to 'modern' craftsmen: Colonialism, culture, and art education in the late nineteenth-century Punjab".

<sup>43</sup>For some recent analysis of urban forms, see: Glover, *Making Lahore modern: Constructing and imagining a colonial city*; K. W. Bajwa. *Urban Pakistan: Frames for imagining and reading urbanism*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2013; Vandal and Vandal, *The Raj, Lahore, and Bhai Ram Singh*; R. Nadir. "Pashtuns in Lahore". In: *Tanqeed* 10 (Jan. 2016). URL: <https://www.tanqeed.org/2016/01/pashtuns-in-lahore/>; Talbot and T.Kamran, *Colonial Lahore: A History of the City and Beyond*.

<sup>44</sup>Tarar, "From 'primitive' artisans to 'modern' craftsmen: Colonialism, culture, and art education in the late nineteenth-century Punjab".

<sup>45</sup>S. Waraich. "Locations of longing". In: *Third Text* 25.6 (2011), pp. 699-713.

<sup>46</sup>A. Jalal. "Conjuring Pakistan: History as official imagining". In: *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 24.2014 (Apr. 1995), pp. 73-89.

<sup>47</sup>Mumtaz, *Architecture in Pakistan*.

<sup>48</sup>The Haveli of Naunehal Singh comes under the jurisdiction of the Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA), which was set up in 2012 as an autonomous body "to run the functions of the entire Walled City of Lahore." <http://walledcitylahore.gop.pk/>



FIGURE 1.8: Haveli Datar Kaur, Sheikhupura. Copyright: Aown Ali, 2012

nationalistic strategy across multiple governments since the 1970s.<sup>49</sup> Meanwhile, in her exploration of Lahore as a “location of longing,” Waraich has identified a discourse of ruins and failure [that] highlights the function of nostalgia, longing and desire in mediating relationships between history, modernity and the formation of national identities.”<sup>50</sup> A counter narrative emerges from within Sikh Studies. Here, the emphasis is typically on sacred architectural forms and the imaginaries of the land and language, and is embroiled in a Sikh historiography that took a different trajectory after partition in 1947.<sup>51</sup> However, even within this corpus of texts, wood carving receives scant attention. These literal and figurative fissures present another space for inquiry.

The lacunae are compounded by the fact that very little wooden architecture remains in situ. (Figure 1.1) Wooden objects are particularly vulnerable to climatic and cultural impacts, and demand constant maintenance in the form of layers of penetrative or surface finishes, collaged repairs, and relocation. As a result in spite of their proliferation and prolonged participation within local practice, these carved architectural pieces are now rarely encountered in the buildings for which they were

<sup>49</sup>Jalal, “Conjuring Pakistan: History as official imagining”, Ayesha Jalal has written, “the rewriting of history from an Islamic point of view, however defined, was given the highest priority by the managers of the state and has since been refined to a bureaucratic art by national research societies and central or provincial textbook boards.

<sup>50</sup>Waraich, “Locations of longing”, p. 709.

<sup>51</sup>See, for example, A. Singh. *Lost Heritage: The Sikh Legacy in Pakistan*. Nagaara Trust/Himalayan Books, 2015; H. Khalid. *Walking with Nanak*. Tranquebar Press, 2016; Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*; K. Singh. *The history of the Sikhs: Vol. 1*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1977; A. Murphy. *The Materiality of the Past: History and Representation in Sikh Tradition*. Oxford University Press, 2012.





FIGURE 1.9: Haveli Nau Nihal Singh, Lahore, c.1830–1840. Photograph in Public Domain, 2005

produced. A global demand for these items has dispersed them to private collections, museums, restaurants, and houses in every occupied continent making them familiar visual tropes with performative significance. Representations of these fragments have also begun to proliferate on social media sites on the internet, where they act as signifiers through which heritage and identity are mediated, reclaimed, or even denied.

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The fin de siècle also heralded a moment of change. Compelled by the utilitarian and discursive forces of the colonial regime, industrialization, and the emerging Arts and Crafts Movement, as the 19th century progressed, wood-carving dwindled as an architectural expression and transformed into new products and decorative

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<sup>52</sup>Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and multiple blogging sites offer a wide range of visual information about vernacular architecture and its reception. Some of these are historical photographs from the late 19th century, while others are personal travelogues and amateur photographers capturing the landscape.

expressions. Roy has summed up the changes as “an interplay between growing long-distance trade, increasing scale of production, competition between handicrafts, more wage work, greater urbanisation, and the emergence of new merchants, consumers, and sometimes producers.”<sup>53</sup> In the Punjab, these factors can be explained more specifically as follows.

The first was administrative: a massive urban and municipal reorganisation including the construction of the ‘modern’ cities with civil lines and military cantonments outside the fortifications of the androon sheher (inner city). This urban upheaval, in turn, affected building design considerations, which privileged domestic interior space management and planning along British principles of space organisation, rather than the private/public interfaces and façades that had developed locally.<sup>54</sup> Involving a drastic transfiguration of house plans and elevations, the new urban plan created a shift from wood carving *on* a building to wood carving *in* a building. (Figure 1.10) There was a greater emphasis on horizontal interior spaces, floor plans and furnishings, rather than vertically-oriented spaces with towering façades and sparse furniture, as well as the introduction of intermediary spaces between the road and house including boundary walls, and verandahs.<sup>55</sup>

The second was an economic impetus that responded to a foreign market demand for smaller articles, such as furniture, which found course via industrial exhibitions and new forms of patronage. On the supply side, the raw materials required for this also changed as timber supplies were channeled into projects like the railways and other public works.<sup>56</sup> Official records from the National College of Arts Archives spanning from 1920-26 reveal how teak planks for wooden cases for the Lahore Museum and commissioned work for the Lahore Cathedral were difficult to procure, despite repeated requests from the authorities to the Railway workshops and other private contractors, such as Spedding and Co.<sup>57</sup> The changes also affected labour, and how new government roles and institutions demanded specific training, which began to shift the impetus in the recruitment and training of ‘artisans’ based on their classification within caste categories.

<sup>53</sup>Roy, “Consumption and craftsmanship in colonial India 1850-1950”, p. 269.

<sup>54</sup>J. Hosagrahar. *Indigenous modernities: Negotiating architecture and urbanism*. London: Routledge, 2005; Glover, *Making Lahore modern: Constructing and imagining a colonial city*; A. Danyal. “Analysis of ‘Koocha Haveli Nau Nihal Singh’, The Walled City, Lahore”. In: *Journal of Research in Architecture and Planning* 17.2 (2014), pp. 39–46.

<sup>55</sup>Glover, *Making Lahore modern: Constructing and imagining a colonial city*.

<sup>56</sup>R. P. Tucker. “The British Colonial System and the Forests of the Western Himalayas, 1815–1914”. In: *Global Deforestation and the Nineteenth Century World Economy*. Ed. by R. P. Tucker and J.F. Richards. Duke University Press, 1983, 146–166; R.P.Tucker. “The Commercial Timber Economy under Two Colonial Regimes in Asia”. In: *Changing Tropical Forests: Historical Perspectives on Today’s Challenges in Asia, Australasia and Oceania*. Ed. by J. Dargavel et al. Canberra: Australian National University, 1989, 219–30.

<sup>57</sup>01-53.44B. *National College of Arts Archives*. Various pieces of communication between the Mayo School of Arts staff and private and government suppliers of wood regarding the procurement of teak planks for commissioned work. Official Documents (multiple). Lahore, Pakistan, 1920–26.



FIGURE 1.10: A carpenter making furniture, Amritsar, 1921. M.O. Williams, National Geographic Society. Published online in Sanskriti Magazine, 2013.

The third was via new forms of knowledge production and regulation and the establishment of Art Schools, especially the Mayo School of Art in Lahore in 1875 which was based on the South Kensington School model. When the Mayo School of Art was established under the supervision of John Lockwood Kipling in Lahore in 1875, certain craft categories were prioritised for attention due to their presumed vulnerability because of declining craftsmanship. At the top of the list was carpentry and woodwork, which, especially in urban contexts, had played a significant role in the building arts, but over time became known for producing objects that were European in form, but Indian in decoration.<sup>58</sup>

The image in Figure 1.11 captures the essence of the changes described above. The photograph is of a display cabinet designed and carved by Bhai Ram Singh at the Mayo School of Art in the late nineteenth century. This *chinidan* (literally, 'china holder', but used to refer to a display cabinet) carved in deodar is very interesting because it uses the morphology of architecture — cusped arches, domes, and pillars — in a miniaturised form, to indexically reference its location within modern Punjab.<sup>59</sup> These types of quasi-architectural furniture items were heavily promoted by the industrial

<sup>58</sup>A. S. McGowan. ““All that is rare characteristic or beautiful”: Design and the defense of tradition in colonial India 1851-1903.” In: *Journal of Material Culture* 10.3 (2005), pp. 263–287.

<sup>59</sup>N. Ata-ullah. “Stylistic hybridity and colonial art and design education: a wooden carved screen by Ram Singh”. In: *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum*. Ed. by

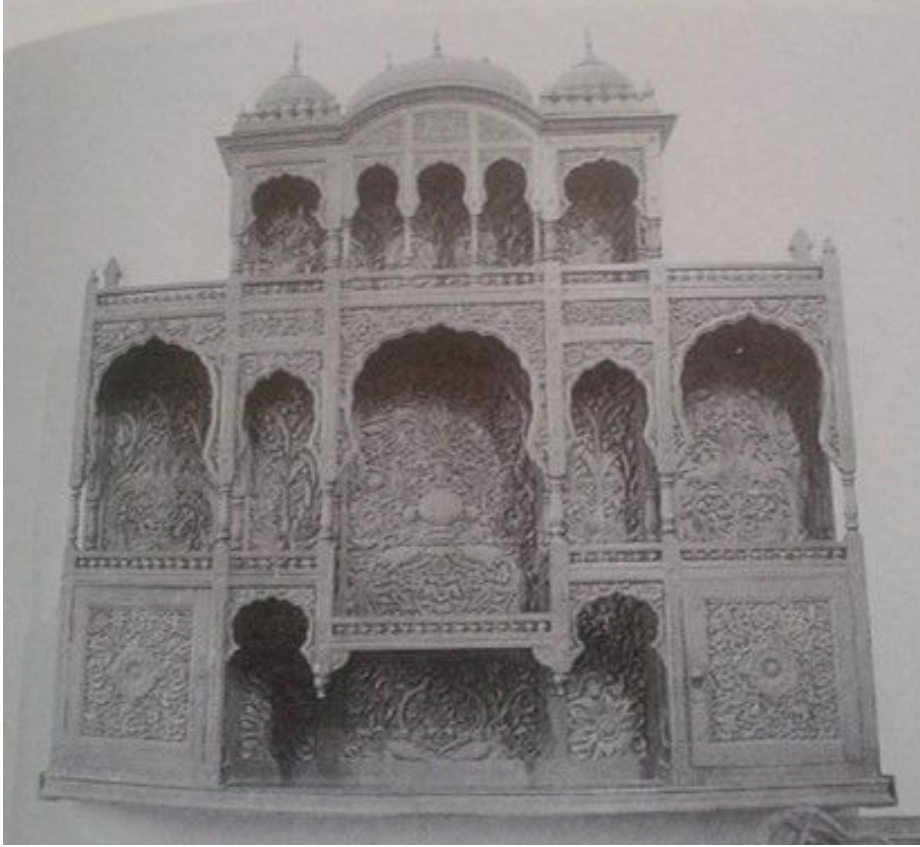


FIGURE 1.11: Carved *Chinidaan*(Display Cabinet) made by Bhai Ram Singh, National College of Arts, Lahore. Ata-Ullah, 1998

art schools, and exported abroad as well. They offer a visual tracing seen in context of the facade haveli of Naunehal Singh that was built c.1830 (Figure 1.11), and later a similar article in the Amritsar carpenters shop from Maynard Williams' 1921 photograph (Figure 1.10). The royal commission for Bagshot Park also has derivations of the *chinidan* in the corridor and above the fireplace.<sup>60</sup> Figure 1.12 taken in 1893 shows the corner shelf with the china ware on display. We shall see in subsequent chapters how these innovations were regulated and dispersed to meet the demands of the colonisers, both within the colonies and in the metropole.

This combination of factors that came to a head at the turn of the century, profoundly reverberated across the Punjab and reshaped the urban landscape of major cities and smaller towns, and interrupted modes of craft making and the economic and social networks that supported them. It is within the interstices of this landscape of knowledge that my research came about and can be located. While this project began as an attempt at recollection, a looking back through the architectural landscape and historiography, and accounting for fragments, to sketch out some sort of narrative

T. Barringer and T. Flynn. London, New York: Routledge, 1998; Vandal and Vandal, *The Raj, Lahore, and Bhai Ram Singh*.

<sup>60</sup>J. Bryant. "Kipling's Royal Commissions: Bagshot Park and Osborne". In: *John Lockwood Kipling: Arts and crafts in the Punjab and London*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017, pp. 435–467, See figures 15.2, 15.6 and 15.14 in.



FIGURE 1.12: Carved *Chinidaan*(Display Cabinet) installed above the fireplace at Bagshot Park, Surrey in 1885. The wood-carving has J.L.Kipling and Bhai Ram Singh's names carved into it. Museum of Army Chaplaincy, 1893

around what wood carving in the Punjab was and what it is now, over time it has gradually developed into something quite different. The narrative became an assemblage itself, a constellation, where fragments coalesced into moments of visualisation.

## 1.7 Framing the Research Question

My research will consider the role of wooden architectural fragments from the Punjab in a few mutually inscriptive ways:

- Firstly, as entities whose boundaries extend to encompass the broader situation in which they were made, presented and have meaning, i.e. their roots/routes and their relationships to culture, technology, geography and history;
- Secondly, as material survivors of a systematic social, cultural, historic and narrative reconfiguration under imperial and nationalistic ideologies and economies, and

- Thirdly, as objects that are performative within different spaces and contexts, and constitute collective and/or individual experience and memory.



FIGURE 1.13: A carpenter in an antique wood-working workshop in Swat, 2005. Copyright: Ghazi Ghulam Raza

The primary contribution of this effort is to foreground wood carved architectural fragments by releasing them from the epistemological confines of disciplines where they are typically confined to the background, and making them the object of the study. (Figure 1.13) This not only involves dredging up and reconstituting the material, visual, narrative, official, and digital fragments of woodcarving and their 'Punjabiyat' into a meshwork of constellations, but also requires the identification and creation conceptual frameworks that can capture and affordances and ontologies that the constellations reveal.

This study sets out to interrogate a series of questions through the following chapters:

1. What are the affordances of fragments, and how does the materiality of the fragments of woodcarving help us comprehend and challenge those affordances?
2. Responding to the provocation laid by the official colonial archives, how can the "histories suspended from received historiography" and the registers of "reverberations, crosscurrent frictions, attractions, and aversions" within and against those archival assertions be identified, acknowledged and introduced to future archives?<sup>61</sup>

<sup>61</sup>A. L. Stoler. *Along the archival grain: Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense*. Princeton University Press, 2010, p. 22.

3. What can reading “along the archival grain” through fragments tell us about the production and knowledge production, consumption and craftsmanship and the colonial systems in which they operated and participated?<sup>62</sup>
4. What would a *reconstellation* of architectural fragments look like, if their role as mediators and intermediaries was afforded?

## 1.8 Fragments as Data

As explained above, one of the challenges of studying wood carved architecture is that it has been released from the structure it was originally built for, so as such is without provenance. This detached and free-floating quality however also offers opportunities for exploration. During the period of study, archives of architecture, i.e. where specimens of wood carving were on display were observed at SADACC (Norwich), the Lahore Museum, the Lok Virsa (National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage) Museum and Campus in Islamabad, and the Pak-Turk enterprises showroom (Islamabad). A walking tour of the walled city of Lahore was conducted, as well as guided tour of Elveden Hall in Thetford. These investigations yielded interviews and visual documentation (photographs and sketches). Official archives visited include the archives of the National College of Arts (Lahore), the Lahore Museum library, the Victoria and Albert Museum (London), and the British Library. These provided detailed primary records for craftsmen, architecture, administration, drawings, non-fiction and fictional descriptions, folk tales, maps etc. Personal correspondence with scholars and architects around the world has added to this collection. Another primary source of data is my own experience as a Punjabi, and my experiential knowledge of the place, its language, music, tales and cultural references, and the potency of its icons and symbols. Secondary sources of data include documents and publication in Urdu, Punjabi and English along with images.

It also bears noting that there was data I was not able to access/acquire, and that in some instances this resulted in significant revisions to the original project plan. The most significant omission is my inability to personally visit sites in the Punjab that lie outside Lahore, Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Cities and towns like Bhera, Chiniot, Gujranwala, Eminabad/Sialkot, Multan, Uchh Sharif, Jhang etc. are the key landscapes to observe this vernacular Punjabi architecture. They not only still bear traces of this heritage, but also have seen slightly varied trajectories of change in the production and regulation of woodworking. Chiniot, e.g., is still the hub of woodworking in the Punjab, and has a vibrant furniture industry. Many of the families involved in this practice have been doing this for generations, and adapting to changing technologies and economic and social turns. I made a couple of trips to Pakistan between 2014 and 2016, but travelling outside the main cities was unfeasible due

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<sup>62</sup>Stoler, *Along the archival grain: Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense*; Roy, “Out of tradition: Master artisans and economic change in colonial India”; Roy, “Consumption and craftsmanship in colonial India 1850-1950”.

to heightened security restrictions. What this has meant for my research is that the emphasis has tilted more towards an historical and archival exploration of the architectural fragments themselves, and the networks they participated in and moved between, especially Punjab-Britain encounters.

From within the rich and varied data that I have encountered through the course of this project, a few key terms and ideas have persisted and surfaced as binding elements. These form the conceptual and analytical themes, and allow me to confront the challenges of this vast research project. From the outset I had reservations about presenting a chronologically linear narrative for my findings. This intuition was confirmed by the data I acquired, and how I was able to make sense of it. Indeed the most challenging part of the research was trying to identify the theoretical frames which would allow me to grapple with the inextricable entanglements of the historical and visual information all the while balancing an understanding gleaned from personal experience and identity with academic reckoning.

The purpose of listing this group of elements collectively is to compound their complexity and highlight their affordance as fragments. Seen individually, each item within this group can be studied within linear and stylistic historical frames, allowing some descriptive inferences. Together, however, the impact is profoundly different, whereby the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts. The fragments allow us to trace associations and consider the realms of identity and representation that feed into the practical and semiotic aspects of production and consumption. It is some of these aspects of architecture that my research explores.

## 1.9 Chapter Outline

This section explains how the research questions framed earlier in Section 1.7 of this introductory chapter will be addressed through the course of this dissertation.

Chapter 1 served as the foundation on which the research project rests. It began with a foray into the South Asia Collection in Norwich, then moved to the Punjab, introducing its land, history and its wood carved architecture within a broader landscape of the built environment. A literary review spanned the breadth of interdisciplinary scholarship and allowed me to situate my project within it and articulate the research questions.

Chapter 2 takes up the question of how to do things with fragments, and proposes a framework of affordances to stretch the possibilities for material histories. It loads ‘the fragment’ with the affordances of materiality, mobility, metonymy, mimesis, and montage, and proposes a methodology that starts with Stuart Hall’s ideas of the Circuit of Culture to propose a more Benjaminian notion of “critical constellations”.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>P. Du Gay et al. *Doing cultural studies: The story of the Sony Walkman*. Thousand Oaks, CA:: Sage, 1997; G. Gilloch. *Walter Benjamin: critical constellations*. John Wiley & Sons, 2013.



Chapter 3 considers the production of wood-carving and wood-work through the aspect of the producers of wood carving and its knowledge in the Punjab in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Responding to Ann Stoler's provocation to read "along the archival grain", this chapter approaches archives as "unquiet movements in a field of force, as restless realignments and readjustments of people and beliefs to which they are tethered, as spaces in which the senses and the affective course through the seeming abstractions of political rationalities."<sup>64</sup> I seek and identify the *tarkhan* (carpenter) in the colonial archives and trace the perturbations and mutations of these slippery caste categories, particularly in the case of the Ramgarhia Sikh community. Picking up on this strand of identity, the figure of the *tarkhan* is then explored within the context of Punjabi folklore, but still using archival sources. The tension between the colonial structures and the "the spasmodic and sustained currents of anxious labor that paper trails could not contain" is approached via the personnel records of woodworking and carpentry staff and students at the Mayo School of Art, and the nebulous category of the "artisan". This is discussed in the context of artisan genealogies, and a local tradition of urban historiography that once captured different aspects of affective and embodied knowledge.

In Chapter 4, the archival interrogation continues with an analysis of the interlacing pedagogical practices and curricula between the Department of Science and Art (DSA) in London and the Mayo School of Art (MSA) in Lahore. An unpublished architectural drawing by an MSA student, Nand Singh, for Casper Purdon Clarke at the South Kensington Museum in 1883 energises a discussion on the role of drawing and transmaterial transmission. The medium of print journals, portfolios and manuals and the parallel privileging of drawing, is cast as a site for investigating Rene Girard's idea of acquisitive mimesis.

Chapter 5 turns the lens to the metropole and considers the consumption of Punjabi wood carved architecture in Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. I consider the archival assertions and interpretations of two concurrent spaces of activity in Britain. The first situates architectural fragments within an "exhibitionary complex," of the South Kensington Museum and the Colonial and Industrial Exhibition of 1886, draws out the relevant constellation of architectural fragments, and chases their afterlives through their recontextualisations and oblivion. The second space of consumption exists in the "oriental obsession" in elite, even royal, domestic interiors, and questions whether acquisitive mimesis offers a way to continue the conversation about the epistemological anxiety that has been stirred.

Chapter 6 is a provocation that flips the proverbial cart and storms out of the archive! As a way of reinserting the social into the historiography of architectural fragments, and smearing the classificatory boundaries of religion, caste, and artisan, this chapter is an attempt to recentre the role of architecture and its fragments as intermediaries and mediators. The chapter launches from a wood carved fragment installed at the

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<sup>64</sup>Stoler, *Along the archival grain: Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense*, p. 32.

Lahore Museum. This ornate facade was ‘rescued’ during communal riots in Jhang c.1992 that erupted in response to the Babri Mosque demolition in Ayodhya. Taking the fragment back to the temple, by tracing its material and semiotic clues, I invoke the tradition of *qisse* (fictional narratives) to position the facade as an invocation to *shared* piety and devotion in the Punjab. Extending the semiotic links between architectural forms further, the chapter explores how the temple mediated the design of a nineteenth century *tazia* (the sacred totem used during Muharram processions) and endures as a shared symbol of *rawadari* (tolerance).

Chapter 7 The concluding chapter brings all the themes to a close and expresses them in terms of contributions of this research and possibilities revealed for further scrutiny.

## 1.10 Summary

This introductory chapter set out the context of wood-carved architectural fragments and their spatial and temporal location in modern Punjab. Motivating the study via the collection of architecture from the South Asia Decorative Arts and Crafts Collection (SADACC) in Norwich as expressions of fragmentation and separation, I positioned wood-carved architecture as an ‘othered’ urban vernacular form. This allowed me to situate this study within architectural historiography, and to extend and problematize both, the subject and methodology, in terms of working with fragments of architectural wood-carving. I propose that fragments allow us to trace associations and consider the realms of identity and representation that influence practical as well as semiotic aspects of material objects, including their production, regulation and consumption. The subsequent chapters explore these possibilities. A critical framework to study the affordances of wood-carved architectural fragments is developed in the next chapter.

## Chapter 2

### How to do things with Fragments: Theory and Methods

#### 2.1 Introduction: Fragments, Affordances and a Methodology

This chapter presents the theoretical underpinnings of the project. It lays out the rationale for why and how wood-carved fragments of architecture offer unique possibilities in material historiography, and introduces a variety of critical paradigms that can be used in this exploration. It is an unusual interdisciplinary inquiry that borrows from critical methods in a range of subjects from anthropology, architectural theory, literary criticism, history, visual studies and material culture.<sup>1</sup> The inbetweenness of fragments demands this diversity and disparity in approach, because they are not one thing or another but a multiplicity of things at once.<sup>2</sup> The title of this chapter is taken from two sources: John Langshaw Austin's lecture series *How to Do Things with Words* from 1955, in which he discussed the performative capacity of language, and Dorothea von Hantelmann's 2010 book *How to Do Things with Art* which considers alternative ways meaning is made in an artwork.<sup>3</sup> Like language and art, this study explores the representational and non-representational potential of fragments and how they engage with, and are engaged by, viewers as well as producers. I begin with the notion of the fragment, and how its deployment in Subaltern studies can provide a meaningful departure point for this research. I then elaborate on the term "affordance" and how it captures the potentiality of fragments, and proceed to develop the four fundamental affordances I have identified during the course of this project: Mobility, Metonymy, Mimesis, and Montage. After explaining how these affordances sustain and shape this research, I present my methodology, and

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<sup>1</sup>Du Gay et al., *Doing cultural studies: The story of the Sony Walkman*; Gilloch, *Walter Benjamin: critical constellations*; D. Maudlin and M. Vellinga. *Consuming Architecture: On the Occupation, Appropriation and Interpretation of Buildings*. London: Routledge, 2014; M. Pensky. *Melancholy Dialectics: Walter Benjamin and the Play of Mourning*. University of Massachusetts Press, 2001; Hosagrahar, *Indigenous modernities: Negotiating architecture and urbanism*; Z. R. Chaudhary. *Afterimage of empire: photography in nineteenth-century India*. U of Minnesota Press, 2012; N. Eaton. *Mimesis across empires: Artworks and networks in India, 1765-1860*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013; F. B. Flood. *Objects of translation: Material culture and medieval "Hindu-Muslim" encounter*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.

<sup>2</sup>P. Basu. *The inbetweenness of things: materializing mediation and movement between worlds*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2017.

<sup>3</sup>J. L. Austin. *How to Do Things with Words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962; D. von Hantelmann. *How to do things with art: The meaning of art's performativity*. Zurich: JRP Ringier, 2010.

justify my case for why fragments of architecture merit an entire dissertation, and how studies from the Punjab offer a compelling prospect.

## 2.2 Fragments

This is a dissertation on fragments. I have opted to use the word ‘fragment’, rather than ‘element’, when I refer to the subject of my research: wood carved components of buildings either separated or broken off from their original contexts, or appearing fractionally within unusual contexts. The dictionary tells us that that word fragment originates from the Latin ‘frangere’ which means ‘to break’. Fragment is thus defined as: “1. A small part broken off or separated from something. 1.1. An isolated or incomplete part of something.”<sup>4</sup> This covers one critical and unifying aspect of this research project, because it accurately represents the artefacts as well as the fragmented and detached spatial, historical, archival and geographical parameters within which I build my case. What I am proposing is that the affordances of these fragments – broken parts, isolated portions, interrupted contexts – lies in releasing them from being unequivocally determined by a corresponding whole, and to recognise the potential of creating new imaginaries. As broken products of disruptive situations, these fragments of architecture, through their conditions of production, circulation and reception, offer possibilities for the realisation of alternative paradigms of experiences, signification and perhaps even new subjectivities.<sup>5</sup> It is their nature as living constituents of a postcolonial condition that fragments bear, or indeed acquire, signification.

The idea of the fragment has been interrogated across disciplines and over time. This is partly due to the mutability of the term that fluctuates between the fragment being the object, or a descriptor of something else, or indeed something metaphorical, and partly due to the dispersed scholarship which generates social critique. For example, as a method, ‘fragmentation’ exists integrally within postmodernism and post-structuralism, and refers to the combining of different elements to create something new – “a fragmented subject, pulling from past and present, innovatively producing a heterogeneous product.”<sup>6</sup> Postmodern literature uses fragmentation as a device to disrupt and distort the sequence of the narrative.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the most evocative is Walter Benjamin’s engagement with modernity and a commodity society in the

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<sup>4</sup>Fragment. *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. 2018. URL: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fragment>.

<sup>5</sup>De Angelis and Ianniciello, “Introduction: Disruptive encounters - museums, arts and postcoloniality”.

<sup>6</sup>See, among others, J. Flax. *Thinking fragments: Psychoanalysis, feminism, and postmodernism in the contemporary West*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991; J. W. Wylie. “Poststructuralist theories, critical methods and experimentation.” In: *Approaches to human geography*. Ed. by S. C. Aitken and G. Valentine. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2006, pp. 298–310.

<sup>7</sup>S. Sim. *The Routledge companion to postmodernism*. Routledge, 2013; B. A. Babcock. “Feminisms/pretexts: Fragments, questions, and reflections”. In: *Anthropological Quarterly* 66.2 (1993), pp. 59–66.

Parisian arcades arrested in his unfinished *Passagenwerk*, the Arcades Project.<sup>8</sup> There is no single theory of fragments that can be applied to our wood carvings, which makes this self-referencing by/of fragments itself an exercise worth pursuing. At this point, highlighting these fragments in the context of a vernacular architecture that has been marginalised, it is pertinent to consider the notion of the fragment in Subaltern Studies.

### 2.2.1 The Notion of the Fragment in Subaltern Studies.

The notion of the fragment was an expository position within subaltern studies.<sup>9</sup> Over thirty years ago, the Subaltern Studies group developed a method of historicising resistance to capitalism by reading “against the grain” of the official colonial archives. This collective of socialist historians working on South Asia and influenced by Marx and Gramsci offered a “history from below” in order to give voice to the marginalised and voiceless in society.<sup>10</sup> Proponents believe that the experience of subaltern groups needs to be understood as a series of self-enclosed ‘fragments’ which possess their own integrity and needed to be understood on their own terms, without having to place them within larger historical narratives and processes. One of the founders of the group, the historian Gyanendra Pandey, proposed the fragment as “an appeal to an alternative perspective, or at least the possibility of another perspective,” because our discomfort with “truncated narratives and undisciplined fragments” makes us want to “appropriate and unify them in fully connected, neatly fashioned historical accounts, without any jagged edges if possible.”<sup>11</sup> For Pandey, these fragments are social, and include “the smaller religious and caste communities, tribal sections, industrial workers, activist women’s groups, all of which might be said to represent ‘minority’ cultures and practices.”<sup>12</sup> In his point of view, the ‘fragment’ is a disturbing element, “a ‘disturbance’, a contradiction . . . in the self-representation of that particular totality and those who uncritically uphold it.”<sup>13</sup> His introduction of the fragment was a way to analyse

“the historical construction of the totalities we work with, the contradictions that survive within them, the possibilities they appear to fulfil, the dreams and possibilities apparently suppressed: in a word, the fragility and instability of the ‘givens’ (the ‘meaningful totalities’) of history. . . .”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>W. Benjamin. *The Arcades Project*. Translated by R. Tiedemann, H. Eiland, K. McLaughlin, et al. Cambridge, MA, 1999.

<sup>9</sup>D. Chakrabarty. *Habitations of modernity: Essays in the wake of subaltern studies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

<sup>10</sup>V. Lal. “Subaltern Studies and Its Critics: Debates over Indian History”. In: *History and Theory* 40.1 (2001), pp. 135–148, p. x.

<sup>11</sup>G. Pandey. “In Defense of the Fragment: Writing about Hindu-Muslim Riots in India Today”. In: *Representations* 37 (1992), pp. 27–55; G. Pandey. “Voices from the edge: The struggle to write subaltern histories”. In: *Ethnos* 60.3-4 (1995), pp. 223–242, p. x.

<sup>12</sup>Pandey, “In Defense of the Fragment: Writing about Hindu-Muslim Riots in India Today”.

<sup>13</sup>Pandey, “Voices from the edge: The struggle to write subaltern histories”.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 26.

Likewise, developing on this notion of fragments within the context of the nation state, another scholar from the Subaltern Studies Group, Partha Chatterjee, wrote the well-cited “The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories,” which investigated “fragmented resistances” to a hegemonic project of nationalist modernity through a study of Bengal.<sup>15</sup>

The Subaltern Studies project has been under scrutiny and criticism, including its valorisation of the “fragmentary and episodic dimension” of subaltern subjectivity, as well as their epistemological turn towards postcolonial theory and culture, specifically literary criticism, rather than emphasising the economic base as the zone of power and contestation.<sup>16</sup> This is highlighted by the split between theory and subject, with the former residing in the global north and the latter in the global south, which has also led to tensions and splinters in the group.

What does this mean in the context of my research terrain? As I have discussed, wood carving has been marginalised, ‘othered’ as a vernacular craft in the historiography of architecture and place. Thus, within the context of architecture and built landscapes, these fragments of wood carved architecture can be potent if they are upheld as ‘disturbing elements’ and permitted to be understood on their own terms to challenge the stability and teleology of the linear, neatly fashioned historical accounts and totalities. How fragments do this is their primary affordance.

The rest of this chapter will discuss the affordances of fragments, and the method through which I have attempted to express these affordances.

### 2.3 The Affordance of Fragments

While it was easy to start gathering images and records of fragments, it was considerably harder to begin to critically analyse and read them. The challenge of studying wood carved fragments of architecture is that it is premised on a speculative interpretive method. There are always questions about their contexts – Who made it? Where was it made? Which building did it belong to? What else was there? When, how and by whom was it removed? How did it end up ‘here’? But in addition to the contexts, there are more open-ended questions about meaning and signification, the why and the wherefore of, for example, the ‘disruptions’ that are at work. As a thesis this careful assemblage of images, documents, memories and experiences of fragments once acquired, demanded not only the creation of organisational parameters to manage the ‘data’, but also a theoretical framework within which they could be investigated and evaluated. It became apparent fairly early on that a stylistic analysis

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<sup>15</sup>P. Chatterjee. *The nation and its fragments: Colonial and postcolonial histories*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1993.

<sup>16</sup>I. Roy. “Utopia in crisis? Subaltern imaginations in contemporary Bihar”. In: *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 45.4 (2015), pp. 640–659; S. Sarkar. “The decline of the subaltern in subaltern studies”. In: *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*. Ed. by V. Chaturvedi. London: Verso Books, 2012, pp. 300–323.

or an architectural history of wood carving from Punjab was not going to be a credible undertaking. The question then was what *can* I do with fragments? What is unique about fragments? What are their *affordances*?

The term ‘affordance’ is defined by the Oxford dictionary as “a property of an object or an aspect of the environment, especially relating to its potential utility, which can be inferred from visual or other perceptual signals; (more generally) a quality or utility which is readily apparent or available.”<sup>17</sup> In ecological psychology, where the term originated, affordance encapsulates two ideas: the first aspect is possibility or potentiality, and the second is its relational emphasis, i.e. the link between, as well as the disruptiveness of, the object and the subject. The phrase was coined in the 1970s by James Gibson, an American psychologist who researched the field of visual perception. Gibson used the term to convey the possibilities of action that the environment provides to the actor (human or animal), whether or not the actor is able to perceive this possibility.<sup>18</sup> According to Gibson,

“The affordance of something does not change as the need of the observer changes. The observer may or may not perceive or attend to the affordance, according to his needs, but the affordance, being invariant, is always there to be perceived. An affordance is not bestowed upon an object by a need of an observer and his act of perceiving it. The object offers what it does because it is what it is.”<sup>19</sup>

Challenging the limits of Gibson’s original theory, alternative and more nuanced approaches have been developed, but for the purpose of this project, I use the original paradigm of affordances, one that emphasises the potentiality and relational qualities of fragments.<sup>20</sup> In sum, affordances require a shift in perceptibility and that is what the thesis attempts to create.

As the material from the following chapters will reveal, the notion of the fragment is a slippery one. Fragments are difficult to read and interpret, but they also offer possibilities of engagement and moments of historical intelligibility. This then is also a dissertation about encounters - of the past, and the parts, meeting the present. This exploration of fragments is not an attempt to trace, in reverse, how certain fragments came to be, or offer historical explanations for the trajectory of a craft. It is the creation and curation of encounters between fragments and between our experiences and reflections of them in the present.

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<sup>17</sup>“affordance, n.” OED Online. Oxford University Press, June 2019. Web. 24 August 2019.

<sup>18</sup>J. J. Gibson. “The Theory of Affordances”. In: *Perceiving, Acting and Knowing*. Ed. by R. Shaw and J. Bransford. Hillsdale, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1977.

<sup>19</sup>J. J. Gibson. *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. New Jersey, USA, Lawrence Erlbaum, 1979, p. x.

<sup>20</sup>See for example P. Turner. “Affordance as context”. In: *Interacting with Computers* 17.6 (2005), pp. 787–800; D. A. Norman. *The Design of Everyday Things: Revised and Expanded Edition*. Basic Books, 2013; J.T. Sanders. “An ontology of affordances”. In: *Ecological Psychology* 9 (1997), pp. 97–112; T. A. Stoffregen. “Affordances as Properties of the Animal-Environment System”. In: *Ecological Psychology* 15.2 (2003), pp. 115–134.

To understand the potential of studying fragments, the rest of the chapter considers four affordances of fragments revealed by the collections and fragments I encountered during my research: Mobility, Metonymy, Mimesis, and Montage.<sup>21</sup> A fragment, or an assemblage of fragments may possess any or all of these, and reveal any, all, or none of them. Some of these affordances have dependencies on others, such as mimesis and mobility, while others may contradict each other and rely on dimensions of time and or space to resolve. To explore these ideas, and how they specifically relate to wood-carved architectural fragments and modern Punjab, I will proceed to discuss each of these affordances, and some of their theoretical underpinnings. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of my methodology, and the analytical choice of the Critical Constellations to work with these affordances, as key to a new understanding of the role and work of heritage studies.

### 2.3.1 Mobility

Fragments are mobile. They move across spaces and places, they travel through time, and they can transform across media and materials. Some of this mobility can be linked to their materiality, i.e. their tactile and aesthetic qualities possessed by virtue of being part of the physical world. The fact that they can be physically transported defies the fixity of roots and makes us shift our inquiry to routes, released from territorial confines within geographic borders.<sup>22</sup> In a very literal sense, with regard to wood carved fragments of architecture, this mobility is the creation, installation, removal and commerce associated with the wooden parts of a building, and all the journeys they take. Consider the following example: The South Asia Collection in Norwich, as described in the introduction, retains the records of acquisition of their wooden architectural pieces. Of interest here is one 'unlucky' specimen from the Swat Valley, a carved door decorated with inlaid glass and mica ornamentation that was acquired by Jeanie and Philip Millward in 1979 from Wajid Handicrafts in Khwazakhela in the Swat Valley.<sup>23</sup> (Figure 2.1) The catalogue entry for this piece has four photographs, including one that was taken in Laikot, Khwazakhela showing it balanced on stones and leaning against a wall, as well as a letter from Mohammed Zamin that came with the door explaining its provenance. (Figure 2.2) The letter reads:

“The door as told us by the village people having a wooden board  
Push-to writing [sic]. This door was on one fort and dismantled [sic]

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<sup>21</sup>This is not intended to be an all-encompassing list of affordances, but rather evolved from the heuristic process of trying to rationalise what was distinctive about not only the wood carved fragments I was studying, but fragments more broadly. Future research will add explore and add affordances including, potentially, Metaphor, Materiality, and Momentarity, the latter developing on Walter Benjamin's notions of the temporal shock of the dialectical image, and Eelco Runia's ideas of Presence.

<sup>22</sup>J. Clifford. *Routes: Travel and translation in the late twentieth century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.

<sup>23</sup>NWWSA.PK6. *South Asia Collection*. Print Catalogue. A letter from Friends in Madyan, Swat to the SADACC acquisition team. Norwich, UK.





FIGURE 2.1: Carved Door from the Swat Valley on Display at the Skating Rink in Norwich. South Asia Decorative Arts and Crafts Collection NWHSA:PK6



FIGURE 2.2: Carved Door balanced against a wall in Swat, photographed by the sellers in Khwazakhela, Swat. From the catalogue in the South Asia Decorative Arts and Crafts Collection NWHSA:PK6

during Muslim King of Ghazi attack. It was taken to a mosque in another village and after getting by one strong tribe brought it to Chuprial Mosque from where Siraj got it and now the unlucky door is leaving for London.”<sup>24</sup>

This example of fragment mobility illustrates the notion that fragments follow pathways or routes, and that tracing these linkages between material objects and their socio-cultural ‘lives’ can illuminate not only the artefacts, but the milieus wherein they are produced, circulated, represented and bear meaning.<sup>25</sup> In *The Social Life of Things*, Appadurai has suggested the way to understand the complex ways in which humans inscribe value in things is to follow the things themselves through space and time “for their meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories. It is only through the analysis of these trajectories that we can interpret the human transactions and calculations that enliven things.”<sup>26</sup> These trajectories or pathways, he called ‘social lives’, and objects travelling along them move between different social ‘regimes of value’, and can breach the paths set out for them. Appadurai calls such a breach a ‘diversion’.<sup>27</sup> Paths are inherently shaky, and diversions can occur at any time when an object enters a different regime of value. Appadurai’s acknowledgement of the social lives of things and his emphasis on how objects flow between these spheres of exchange was a significant shift from how objects were considered as gifts or commodities to be traded in restricted spheres of exchange.

As it moves along its trajectories, wood carved architecture, by virtue of its participation in networks of consumption and exchange, also passes through phases of commodification, i.e. the ways in which things and social relations are affected by the market.<sup>28</sup> While understanding the commodity aspect is vital, it is not necessarily sufficient for it ignores the inherent differentiation in the production, materiality and cultural relationships of these artefacts, and thus their mutative role in mediating experience and identity formation. The story of the ‘unlucky door’ from Swat at the South Asia Collection traces its journey from fort to mosque, a more powerful mosque, a shop, and a collection in London. This fragment had, and continues to have, political and commodity value, although its diversions through these various regimes of value from contexts within Swat to that in the east of England. However, we encounter the object and its past traces in its present location in Norwich, and it is in that moment of encounter where meaning is made for us. So, we can say that while mobility can be expressed as the ability to move around freely or move between different spaces—social, environmental, semiotic and material—it also implies changes in location, and it is in this context that James Clifford’s perspective on location is relevant.

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<sup>24</sup>Item entry for NWWSA:PK6, in the catalogue at the South Asia Collection.

<sup>25</sup>A. Appadurai. “Commodities and the politics of value”. In: *Interpreting objects and collections*. Routledge, 2012, pp. 88–103.

<sup>26</sup>A. Appadurai. “Putting Hierarchy in Its Place”. In: *Cultural Anthropology* 3.1 (1988), pp. 36–49. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/656307>, p. 5.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup>W. M. J. van Binsbergen and P. Geschiere. *Commodification: Things, agency, and identities (The social life of things revisited)*. Munster: Lit Verlag Munster, 2005.

Clifford considers location as “an itinerary rather than a bounded site – a series of encounters and translations.”<sup>29</sup> In his view, locations are not optional, but “imposed by historical and political circumstances,” and they are “multiple, conjunctural, and cross-cutting.”<sup>30</sup> This is significant when we try to locate fragments, and locate ourselves in relation to the fragments, especially when we consider the entangled histories of regions, like the Punjab, that grapple with modern boundaries and ‘boundedness’.<sup>31</sup>

SADACC’s acquisition by of architectural fragments from Pakistan is primarily done through preferred suppliers based in the Swat Valley. These exporters, in turn, acquire their stock from all over the country, and are also involved in refurbishments and retrofitting new carving into older pieces. The photograph in Figure 1.13 was taken at one of these workshops. In a further example of the distancing from provenance whilst retaining the commodity value of the antique, the Punjabi artefacts at SADACC were also purchased from the Swati dealers. The exporters used to send albums of photographs to describe the items, but now have online shopfronts and social media accounts where the information can be viewed from anywhere in the world.<sup>32</sup>

So alongside the fragments that are in motion there is more than the material object that travels. Very often there are photographs of these articles that are shared with the distributors, sellers, and buyers, and websites with images, details, prices – the metadata of the fragment.<sup>33</sup> Sometimes there are stories that travel with the fragment. Thus, the affordance of fragments is not just that they can physically move around, but that they are mobile between media - the wood carved pieces, their drawings and photographs connect and reference one another. The antique shops with their online shopfronts occupy an interesting space where fragments are created, collected, translated, displayed and in doing so, commodified for sale. What is the distinction between the ‘real’ fragment and its digital surrogate, and does the digitally mediated experience of fragments differ from physical experience of encountering it on the side

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<sup>29</sup>Clifford, *Routes: Travel and translation in the late twentieth century*, p. 11.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>31</sup>Flood, *Objects of translation: Material culture and medieval "Hindu-Muslim" encounter*.

<sup>32</sup>The website for the Friends Corporation explains that the enterprise was “Established in 1963, we have been in the furniture business for over 38 years. Our mission is simple, to provide you with great Handcrafted Furniture and Art Crafts, Jewellery and lots of more other cultural products at affordable prices that can be delivered anywhere in the world within 1-3 weeks.” The website has listings of items along with brief descriptions and high quality images. <http://www.friendscorporation.net/pages/about/>

<sup>33</sup>See, for example, the catalogue for Friends Corporation in Madyan, Swat <http://www.friendscorporation.net/>, or <https://www.facebook.com/swatartgallery/> or Wajid Handicrafts in Swat, whose head office is in Islamabad <http://www.wajidhandicrafts.com>. Both sell architectural fragments, many of which have been sourced from buildings all over Pakistan. Pak-Turk Furniture and Carpets in Islamabad <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Interior-Design-Studio/Pak-Turk-Carpets-furnitures-916027138452569/> and Ghazi Swat Art Gallery in Lahore <https://www.facebook.com/swatartgallery/> have Facebook pages, and they sell refurbished furniture, some of which is created from restored architectural fragments. These enterprises have large workshops, both in Islamabad and Lahore respectively, but also in Swat, which used to be the hub of wood-carved antiques, especially architectural pieces, until the Taleban thwarted travel, commerce and tourism in the region in the early 2000s.

of a road, or in a museum?<sup>34</sup>

It is this movement through overlapping and interlocking networks and cultural topographies that allows wood-carved fragments to become “objects of translation,” simultaneously moving across and within dynamic cultural formations and the unstable relationship between past and present.<sup>35</sup>

### 2.3.2 Metonymy

Fragments are metonyms. Metonymy, as a figure of speech, refers to “a thing used or regarded as a substitute for or symbol of something else.”<sup>36</sup> While prevalent as a linguistic and literary term, especially in rhetoric, metonymy is an intuitive, and rather obvious, way of thinking about fragments of architecture. The metonymy works by the contiguity between the two, the fragment and the context. Metonymy has been described by Eelco Runia as the “wilfully inappropriate transposition of a word that belongs to context 1 to context 2 where it subsequently stands out as just slightly ‘out of place’.”<sup>37</sup> As ‘displaced words’, or ‘mutata’, metonymies have the ability to connect as well as to juxtapose different contexts and different places.<sup>38</sup> It is in this way that by connecting and juxtaposing contexts, the fragment distances itself from, as well as draws attention to, both the context from which it was taken, and the context in which it was placed.

Wood carved doors, windows and archways are metonyms for the buildings and contexts from which they are taken. However, the associations are not just between the wooden fragment and any building, they are specific to some context that is derived from the viewers own notion of what such a building would look like, where it would come from, and where it is now. It is due to this direct association that semantically, the metonym operates as an index, in the substitution of cause for effect, or the evocation of a part for the whole.<sup>39</sup> The index, as explained by Charles Peirce, is when the relationship between the sign and the referent is physical, and gives the sign evidence of the referent’s existence.<sup>40</sup> Indexically, the fragment of architecture offers a place or a location, in its absence. In this way, metonymy is a metaphor for discontinuity, or, as Runia has hypothesized, “a metaphor for the entwinement of continuity and discontinuity,” which challenges the construction of continuity that representationalism has emphasized.<sup>41</sup> Being nonrepresentational,

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<sup>34</sup>Digital heritage is developing as an exciting domain within archaeology, cultural heritage and museum studies, and encompasses digital archiving, visualisation, (digital) curation, interpretation, ethics and education. This offers exciting avenues for future research on fragments, architecture and their digital mediations.

<sup>35</sup>Flood, *Objects of translation: Material culture and medieval "Hindu-Muslim" encounter*.

<sup>36</sup>"Metonymy, n." OED Online, Oxford University Press, June 2019, [www.oed.com/view/Entry/117628](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/117628). Accessed 25 August 2019.

<sup>37</sup>E. Runia. “Presence”. In: *History and Theory* 45.1 (2006), pp. 1–29, pp. 15–16.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>39</sup>G. Lakoff and M. Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

<sup>40</sup>C. S. Peirce. “Logic as semiotic: The theory of signs”. In: *The Philosophical Writings of Peirce*. Ed. by J. Buchler. New York: Dover, 1955. Chap. 7.

<sup>41</sup>Runia, “Presence”, p. 6.

metonymy refuses to reduce or comprehend meaning. Runia argues that “whereas metaphor ‘gives’ meaning, metonymy insinuates that there is an urgent need for meaning. Metaphor...weaves interrelations and makes ‘places’ habitable. Metonymy, on the other hand, disturbs places.”<sup>42</sup>

The fragment as metonym comes together most poignantly in the photographic image - the ‘photographic index,’ which, as Zahid Chaudhary explains in his book *Afterimage of Empire*, “occupies a borderland between reason and faith, certainty and the uncanny.”<sup>43</sup> Rather than limiting the rhetorical power of the image to an indexical trace of the object, the photographic index “cuts across various representational registers, since it is simultaneously a material trace, an allegorical sign, and an empty pointer that in itself cannot provide the object that it promises.”<sup>44</sup> In a photographic image, the promise of the object persists even when that object is absent. The following example of a photographic index from a street in Lahore will illustrate this metonymic affordance of the fragment.

In 1921, Maynard Owen Williams, an American photographic journalist, submitted a photograph to the *National Geographic* magazine as part of an essay of his trip through India.<sup>45</sup> (Figure 2.3) Referring to Rudyard Kipling’s, *Kim*, this full-page photograph was titled “Where Electricity Dispels the Illusion of Arabian Nights,” followed by a longer caption: “The balconies of Lahore suggest love feasts and intrigue; but the shops below are devoted to prosaic, though often eloquent, commerce, and the electric light now spies on the incognito wanderings of the modern Haroun al Raschid.”<sup>46</sup> In it, Williams has captured a street scene from inside the Walled City of Lahore. The image, notable for its vertical elevation rather than the horizontal line, shows patches of the sky and the street beneath as small triangles between towering, multi-storeyed walls bedecked with carved architectural balconies, arches and fenestrations. The patch of sky is punctuated by lines of pigeons alighting on electricity wires, while people go about their business on the ground. The eye is drawn to the ‘balconies of Lahore,’ and the wooden architecture becomes the subject, replete with its suggestions of ‘love feasts and intrigue’.<sup>47</sup>

In 2013, I first encountered Williams’ photograph of the Lahore street scene on the social media site Facebook. Several pages, group and individual, were dedicated to Lahore with titles such as ‘Lahore Explorer,’ ‘Exploring Lahore,’ ‘*Lahore ka Khoji*’ (The Seeker of Lahore), ‘*Lahore Bachao*’ (Save Lahore), ‘*Gumshuda Lahore*’ (Lost

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<sup>42</sup>E. Runia. *Moved by the Past: discontinuity and historical mutation*. Columbia University Press, 2014, p. 76.

<sup>43</sup>Chaudhary, *Afterimage of empire: photography in nineteenth-century India*, p. 42.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>45</sup>M. O. Williams. “Through the Heart of Hindustan: A Teeming Highway Extending for Fifteen Hundred Miles, from the Khyber Pass to Calcutta”. In: *National Geographic Magazine* XL.5 (Nov. 1921), pp. 433–467.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 445.

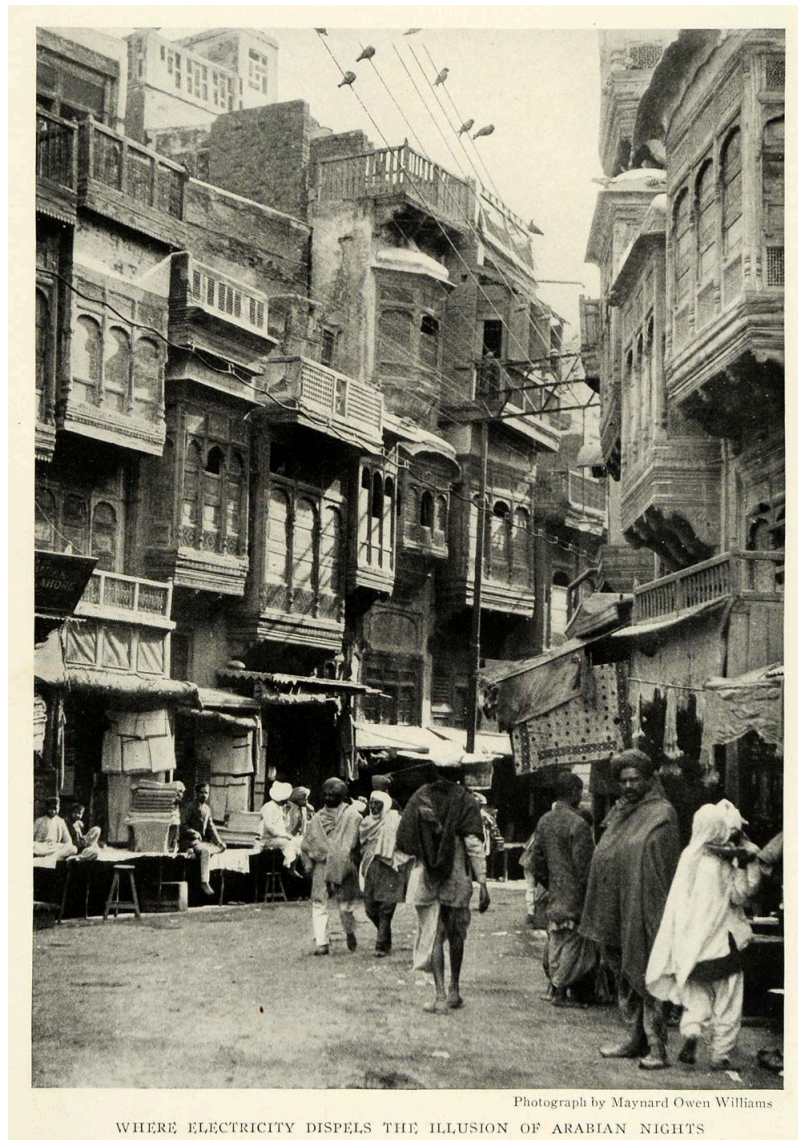


FIGURE 2.3: *Where Electricity Dispels the Illusion of Arabian Nights.*  
Maynard Owen Williams, National Geographic Archives, 1921

Lahore), etc.<sup>48</sup> Most of these sites had shared Williams' photograph and in one instance, the image had 1100 'likes' and a few hundred 'shares'. As a 'contact zone', Facebook offers community and connections between people who perhaps would never encounter one another in real life, and enables user interactions.<sup>49</sup> what was striking about the comments beneath this image was the tension between the palpability of the topophilia, the strong sense of place intertwined with cultural and place identity, against the inscrutability of the exact location of the picture. So there were comments like "If someone knows the place please share," or "*Lahore to phir lahooooooooore* [sic] *hai!*" (Lahore after all is Lahore) says another, and "That's y [I] lv Lahore" says yet another. "*Meo hsptl wala area to ni?????*" (It's not the Mayo Hospital area, is it?) is also conjectured, and then there is the inevitable "*jinne lahore nahi vekhya ohh jammeya hi nahi!*" (One who has not seen Lahore has yet to be born). These and many other comments like them seem to speak to the sense of longing for a place that doesn't exist anymore: that place signified by an archetypal view of a street with balconies.

Maynard Williams' photograph in the National Geographic was targeted at a curious and prosperous middle-class America of the 1920s. It was complicit, as Tamar Rothenberg has argued, in using romance and aesthetics as strategies of innocence within colonial and imperial arrangements.<sup>50</sup> However, almost a hundred years later, the same image of Lahore becomes a location of longing – it is '*gumshuda*': lost, and inscrutable.<sup>51</sup> It is, to quote Edward Soja, "a secret and conjectured object, filled with illusions and allusions, a space ... never able to be completely seen and understood."<sup>52</sup> As a photographic index, this images bears testimony to a material trace, but it cannot deliver the object - the street lined with wood-carved architecture in the city of Lahore, the place which nevertheless persists in its absence.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup><https://www.facebook.com/lahoreexplorer>; <https://www.facebook.com/ExploringLahore>; <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100007533633017>; <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2331683244>; <https://www.facebook.com/GumshudaLahore>.

<sup>49</sup>Mary Louise Pratt introduced the concept of the 'contact zone' to refer to "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today." M. L. Pratt. "Arts of the Contact Zone". In: *Profession* (1991), pp. 33–40, p. 34.

<sup>50</sup>T. Y. Rothenberg. *Presenting America's world: Strategies of innocence in National Geographic Magazine, 1888-1945*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007.

<sup>51</sup>Waraich, "Locations of longing".

<sup>52</sup>E. W. Soja and V. Chouinard. "Thirdspace: journeys to Los Angeles & other real & imagined places". In: *Canadian Geographer* 43.2 (1999), p. 209.

<sup>53</sup>Arjun Appadurai has cautioned against "metonymic freezing," a process of representational essentializing and "compelling configurations, configurations which, once formed, resist modification. However, while accepting Appadurai's caution, I see metonymy's role as the opposite of essentialising, and more along the lines of Runia's entwinement of time and place through the concept of 'presence' — the "unrepresented way the past is present in the present," which encompasses the simultaneousness of continuity and discontinuity that history contends with." Appadurai, "Putting Hierarchy in Its Place"; Runia, "Presence".

### 2.3.3 Mimesis

Fragments are mimetic. They have the ability to conduct, nurture and subvert mimesis, as well as extend and mutate it to shape new ways of reading histories. Mimesis as a very broad, historically laden and theoretically elusive concept, has been used to explain how the creations of humans can relate to nature and the ‘real’ world, as well as the transmissions and power relations between works of art themselves.<sup>54</sup> Michael Taussig describes the mimetic faculty as

"The nature that culture uses to create second nature, the faculty to copy, imitate, make models, explore difference, yield into and become Other. The wonder of mimesis lies in the copy drawing on the character and power of the original, to the point whereby the representation may even assume that character and that power."<sup>55</sup>

Zahid Chaudhary qualifies the process of mimesis by adding that mimesis emphasizes not only semblance and copying, but also the “sensory circuit of stimulus and response between the body and the world that is the precondition of all mimetic practices.”<sup>56</sup> The terrain of mimesis then is vast and spans multiple ontological and epistemological frames.<sup>57</sup> In the art historiography of South Asia, for instance, Parul Dave-Mukherji relocates mimetic theory (*anukaraṇa vāda*) within a sense of “Indian aesthetics” by tracing the challenges of translating *anukṛti* to mimesis and arguing that this is “not just a linguistic problem but a philosophical one.”<sup>58</sup> Similarly, Arabic and Persian traditions of mimesis in theology, as well as the visual arts and literature, have been articulated in terms of *naql* (transmission and imitation) together with *dakhl* (admission and disturbance), and these have been explored in concepts of Mughal art and architecture, as well as Punjabi and Persian painting traditions.<sup>59</sup>

How can this daunting array of mimetic affordances be entwined into the discussion of fragments and their affordances? To do this, I rely on Natasha Eaton’s excellent

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<sup>54</sup>Eaton, *Mimesis across empires: Artworks and networks in India, 1765–1860*; M. Taussig, *Mimesis and alterity: A particular history of the senses*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

<sup>55</sup>Taussig, *Mimesis and alterity: A particular history of the senses*, p. 5.

<sup>56</sup>Chaudhary, *Afterimage of empire: photography in nineteenth-century India*, p. 21.

<sup>57</sup>A. Valentini. “Ambivalence of the Notion of ‘Mimesis’: Between the Opening towards the Other and the Repetition of the Same”. In: *Aisthesis. Pratiche, linguaggi e saperi dell'estetico* 11.1 (2018), pp. 193–205.

<sup>58</sup>P. Dave-Mukherji. “Who is afraid of Mimesis? Contesting the Common Sense of Indian Aesthetics through the Theory of ‘Mimesis’ or *Anukaraṇa Vāda*”. In: *The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Indian Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*. Ed. by A. Chakrabarti. Bloomsbury Academic, 2016, pp. 71–92.

<sup>59</sup>B. N. Goswamy. *The Spirit of Indian Painting: Close Encounters with 101 Great Works 1100–1900*. Thames and Hudson, 2016; B. N. Goswamy. *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India*. Niyogi Books, 2010; M. E. Aitken. “Parataxis and the Practice of Reuse, from Mughal Margins to Mīr Kalān Khān”. In: *Archives of Asian Art* 59 (2009), pp. 81–103; E. Koch. “The Baluster Column: A European Motif in Mughal Architecture and Its Meaning”. In: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 45 (1982), pp. 251–262; N. Cattoni. “The Figure of Radha in Miniature Paintings: From the Pastoral to the Courtly, from Text to Visuality, from Polyphony to Normativity”. In: *Religion and Gender* 5.1 (2015), pp. 52–70.



insights and frame fragments as “a privileged site for mimetic encounter.”<sup>60</sup> In *Mimesis across Empires*, Natasha Eaton has challenged historiographies of painting and art based on power and knowledge by introducing the idea of “mimetic flux,” which explores a multifaceted mimesis presupposed on cultural alterity.<sup>61</sup> She develops her methodology of mimesis from the arguments of René Girard, Michael Taussig and Homi Bhabha, and critically engages with “mimetic rivalry, acquisitive mimesis, the subversive aspect of mimicry, the problems of repetition, and the ability to mime as the capacity to other.”<sup>62</sup> Her argument is that the terms “exchange” and “co-histories” are inadequate as analytical methods because they downplay the violence, hostilities, phantasmagoria and disorientations wrought by cross-cultural entanglements.<sup>63</sup> This is poignantly relevant in the context of fragments, especially the architectural fragments from the Punjab, and will be unpacked over the course of the thesis. However, it merits engaging with an example to illustrate how mimesis is an affordance of fragments.

The following is an assemblage, or a montage, of eight fragments that share similarities of form, but vary in their contexts and materials. The fragments exist in print, on display, and within disparate constructions, and have not been considered together until now. This particular cluster of fragments from the Punjab is an interesting illustration of the mimetic tensions and entanglements that were in play at the turn of the century between architecture and ornament in India and Britain. They have been organised chronologically, and I will begin by describing them before I discuss their significance.

The first image, Figure 2.4, shows the wooden interior of the 14th century shrine of Sufi Makhdoom Jahanian Jahangasht (d.1384) in Uch Sharif (Southern Punjab).<sup>64</sup> Manan Ahmed Asif has called the landscape of Uch a “sacral geography, with peaks and valleys that orient the visitor and the inhabitant to a hierarchy of shrines, graves and mausoleums.”<sup>65</sup> This sacral landscape “of Vedas intersected with Shi’a and Sunni politics,” is linked via temple pilgrim networks and Sufi networks across Iraq, Iran and India from the twelfth century onwards.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Eaton, *Mimesis across empires: Artworks and networks in India, 1765–1860*, p. 153.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup>Eaton, *Mimesis across empires: Artworks and networks in India, 1765–1860*; *Violence and mimesis*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004; Taussig, *Mimesis and alterity: A particular history of the senses*; H. Bhabha. “Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse”. In: *Discipleship: A Special Issue on Psychoanalysis* 28 (1984), pp. 125–133.

<sup>63</sup>Eaton, *Mimesis across empires: Artworks and networks in India, 1765–1860*.

<sup>64</sup>Hailing from a family of renowned sufis, Jahangasht, which translates to “world traveller”, was the grandson of Syed Jalaluddin Surkh-Posh Bukhari (d.1292). Bukhari who migrated from Bukhara to Bhakkar (Punjab) around 1232 AD was a disciple of Bahauddin Zakariya(d.1262), and belonged to the *Suhrawardiyya* sufi order. Jahangasht’s brother, Rajan Qattal (d.1424), also has a mazaar in Uch. The part of Uch where the family settled is called “Uch Bukharian”. A. Qadri. *Makhdoom Jahanian Jahangasht (Biography)*. Karachi: H. M. Syed Company, 1983.

<sup>65</sup>Asif, *A Book of Conquest: The Chachnama and Muslim Origins in South Asia*, p. 103.

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 106.



FIGURE 2.4: The Wood-Carved Interior of Shrine of Makhdoom Jahanian Jahangasht, d.1384, in Uch Sharif. Copyright: Aown Ali, 2016

Within this landscape is the shrine: a flat-roofed brick building with a large rectangular room which contains the grave of Jahanian Jahangasht, as well as other unmarked graves of disciples. The entrance is through a wooden pillared portico. The building has undergone several renovations, but contains many of the original architectural elements.<sup>67</sup> Inside, the wooden ceiling has painted ornamentation, and rows of wooden pillars, also painted, which are a mixture of new, old and remixed fragments. Of significance to this montage are the brackets that connect the pillars to the ceiling. Each pillar has four stepped brackets that are decorated, and set at 90 degrees to one another. At the end of each of the two steps there is a distinctive protruding tassel which is shaped like a bell, with the end elongated into a twisted point.

This tasselled form is repeated in the drawing shown in Figure 2.5, which is a detail of the screen for the Punjab Court at the 1886 Colonial and Industrial Exhibition. The drawing was published in the *Journal of Indian Art (JIA)* Volume I, No. 14 in August 1886.<sup>68</sup> The bracket is shown in detail with its foliated ornament and has multiple steps, each ending with the bell-shaped tassel. The description of this screen, but especially the brackets in the image is interesting because it gives the name *Akbari*, and speculates about the origin linking it with discrete time period (Akbar's

<sup>67</sup>Mumtaz, *Architecture in Pakistan*.

<sup>68</sup>The screen and the role of the fragments is discussed in Chapter 5.

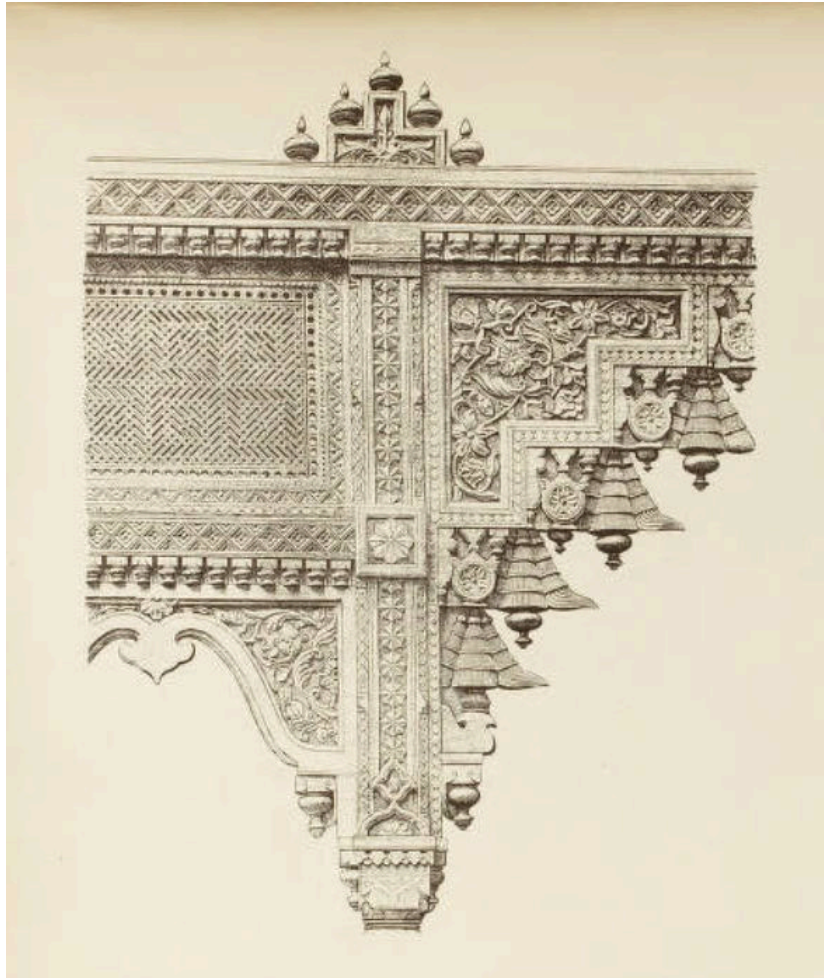


FIGURE 2.5: Drawing of the Punjab Court Screen for the Great Exhibition of 1886. *Journal of Indian Art* Volume I, No 14, 1886.

rule) rather than an aesthetic, and secondly, lists Ram Singh as one of the people associated with its making in Amritsar.<sup>69</sup>

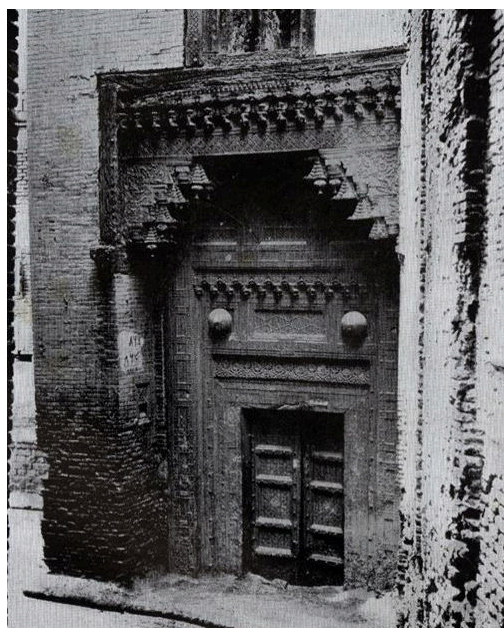


FIGURE 2.6: *Lahore: Wooden doorway of a house (16th cent)*. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture: Islamic Period*, 1956



FIGURE 2.7: *Carved Wood Door in Akbari Style From Lahore*, M1528, Lahore Museum, Lahore. Copyright: Usman Sami.

Figures 2.6 and 2.7 are photographs of a carved door from Lahore. Figure 2.6 was published by Percy Brown in his book *Indian Art: Islamic Period* in 1942. Figure 2.5 was taken by me at the Lahore Museum in 2016. The door, whose opening is quite small in relation to its carved wooden frame, has some interesting features. First, this is a two-part construction, with the door recessed back from the wall and framed by an imposing stepped archway; second, the carving, especially the large wooden knobs above the door are not commonly found in the Punjabi woodcarving lexicon; third, the stepped archway of the external frame has the same bell-shaped tassels that elongate into a point. Percy Brown labelled the photograph “Lahore: Wooden doorway of a house (16th century),” and classified it as “Ghaznavide-Saljuqian”.<sup>70</sup> Describing the

<sup>69</sup>“The end arcades—two in shisham and two in deodar—are designed in a different style, known among Punjab workmen as *Akbari*. It is doubtful whether this older type of wood-work is correctly referred to the time of Akbar: but the name serves well enough to indicate a finer and more detail fashion than is now usually followed. The square Hindu shaft and other minor details are characteristic of this style, and in older work a peculiar crispness and brightness of execution, combined sometimes with excessive minuteness, are noticeable. These ends were wrought at Amritsar by Ram Singh, Kirpa Singh, Lena Singh and others.” J. L. Kipling. “The Punjab court screen”. In: *The Journal of Indian Art* 1.14 (1886), p. 101.

<sup>70</sup>Brown’s architectural historiography relies on routes of military conquest, so he compares Multan and Lahore architecture in terms of the divergences rather than seeking convergences. This his assertion that in Multan early Islamic architecture came from Souterhn Persian, “so that this portion of India, including Multan, throughout much of its history, was inclined to be more Iranian than

door, Brown has written:

“In some of the more remote quarters of Lahore city, there are examples of a very ancient type of wooden architecture, now rapidly disappearing, certain features of which bears resemblance to the buildings of the Saljuqs of the twelfth century, although they are considerably later in date...there is much in the treatment of the timber construction of these Lahore examples that only be indigenous in origin, on the other hand the immense projecting bosses and a particular kind of pattern in the carving are clearly of *Saljuqian extraction*.”<sup>71</sup>

This door was brought to the Lahore Museum around the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, and it is currently installed in the main hallway on the left as soon as you enter from the lobby.<sup>72</sup> It’s label designates it as an “Akbari style door”.

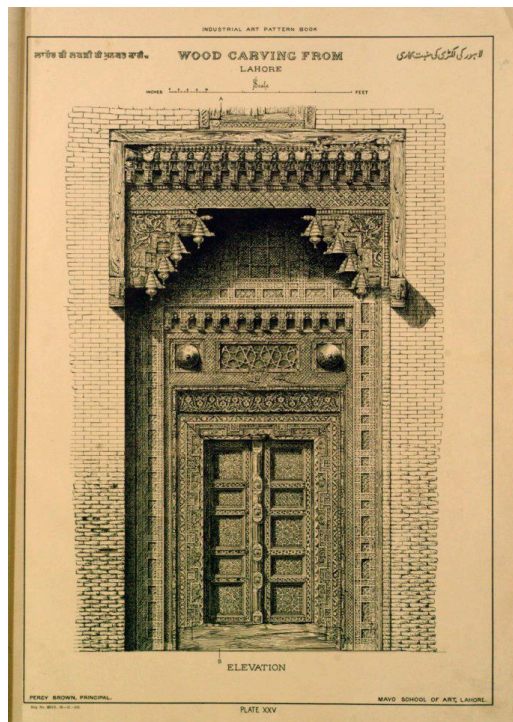


FIGURE 2.8: *Wood Carving from Lahore*. Drawing from the Industrial Art Pattern Book, c. 1900, National College of Art Archives.

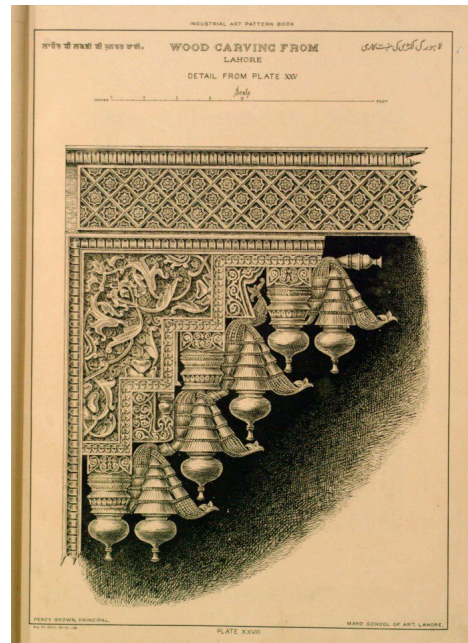


FIGURE 2.9: “Wood Carving from Lahore”. Drawing from the Industrial Art Pattern Book, c. 1900

Indian, as its arts even now plainly testify.” In contrast, he wrote, “Lahore received its Islamic influence at a later date, although not from Persia direct but through what is now the country of Afghanistan,” under Mahmud of Ghazni, from there making an inferential leap that the architecture of Lahore would have been “of much the same character as those in the parent city of Ghazni is most probable. Plate XXIV Fig. 1 P. Brown. *Indian Architecture*, 2 vols. Bombay, India: DB Taraporevala and Sons, 1942, p. 32.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>72</sup> I was not able to get any details about the acquisition from the museum catalogues, but continue to pursue the matter.

The drawings in Figures 2.8 and 2.9 are of “Woodcarving from Lahore” from the *Industrial Art Pattern Book*, from the early 20th century (c. 1900), when Percy Brown was principal of the Mayo School of Arts in Lahore. In their heading, the drawings have a title in English with translations on either side in Gurmukhi and Urdu. These drawings recreate the door mentioned above, drawn to scale in Figure 2.6, and showing the bracket in detail in Figure 2.9. Once again, we are confronted with a stepped bracket and the bell-shaped tassels, now with an intricate woven ribbon that is pulled out into the elongated point.<sup>73</sup>



FIGURE 2.10: Detail from the Durbar Hall, Osborne House, Isle of Wight. Julius Bryant, John Lockwood Kipling: *Arts and crafts in the Punjab and London*, 2017.

Figure 2.10 is a photograph of the main door at the Durbar Hall, Osborne, Isle of Wight, which was designed by Ram Singh and John Lockwood Kipling for Queen Victoria’s residence in 1890. Despite plans to have the Durbar Hall panelled in wood, it was made of plaster cast panels set between ribs of mahogany to reduce costs.<sup>74</sup> The main door is recessed, and follows the arrangement of “Old Door in Lahore City,” drawn by Mowla Buksh in the *Journal of Indian Art* Volume I, No 4. in 1884.<sup>75</sup> Above the door is the now familiar stepped bracket with bell-shaped tassels and elongated ribbon. This has been rendered in plaster following the pattern in the JIA, shown in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.11, the last fragment in this montage, is a photograph of the Durbar Hall in the Jagatjit Palace in Kapurthala, which currently serves as the library of the Sainik School.<sup>76</sup> The palace was built in 1908 by Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of the princely state of Kapurthala, and the woodcarving for the durbar hall was designed by Bhai

<sup>73</sup>The role of drawings and printed manuals in art pedagogy and regulation and the fragmentation of architectural forms is discussed in Chapter 4

<sup>74</sup>Bryant, “Kipling’s Royal Commissions: Bagshot Park and Osborne”.

<sup>75</sup>Julius Bryant has incorrectly identified this as being illustrated by Kipling in his article *ibid.*, p. 461.

<sup>76</sup>The Sainik Schools were created by the Indian Ministry of Defence in 1961, and the palace in Kapurthala serves as the campus for one of these army schools.

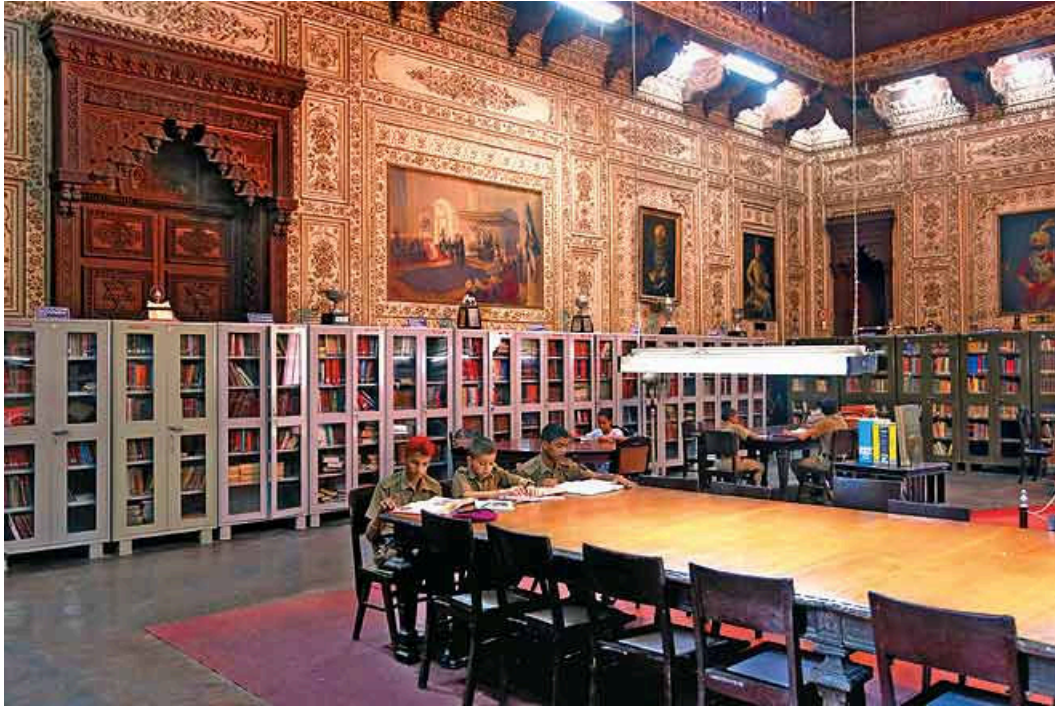


FIGURE 2.11: Interior of Durbar Hall at Jagatjit Palace, now Sainik Army School, Kapurthala. Sainik School website, Date unknown.

Ram Singh from the Mayo School of Art.<sup>77</sup> Behind the bookselves the imposing door recessed behind the frame with its stepped bracket, bell-shaped tassels and elongated ribbon can be seen. The walls are covered with fresco painting, including royal portraits.<sup>78</sup>

The purpose of listing this group of elements collectively is to compound their complexity and highlight their affordance as fragments. Seen individually, each item within this group can be studied within linear and stylistic historical frames, allowing some descriptive inferences, and perhaps even some selective linkages. Collectively, however, the impact is profoundly different, whereby the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts. What these various fragments share, beyond their architectural vocabulary expressed as a trabeated arch system with distinctive bell-shaped tassels, is a mimetic association that enables us to trace associations and regimes of value and power. This fragmented architectural form persisted within houses and mausoleums across Punjab, was inserted into colonial museums and imperial palaces, and persisted as ornament in pattern books. That the wood workers in the Punjab were familiar with these forms is not only shown by this bell-shaped tassel, but also other motifs that often appear in conjunction with these arches in the designs of Ram Singh, as

<sup>77</sup>Vandal and Vandal, *The Raj, Lahore, and Bhai Ram Singh*.

<sup>78</sup>This building is not open to the public, so there is very little recorded about this room. The image was taken from a website about the Sainik School, and has since been removed. An article in *The Tribune* dated March 29, 2017 states that large portions of the building, including the library (Durbar Hall) were closed off because the ceiling started collapsing and it was declared unsafe. <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/punjab/education/kapurthala-sainik-school-in-tatters/383817.html>

shown by the connections between the shrine in Uch Sharif, and the door in Lahore.<sup>79</sup> It would be naive to consider these examples as mimesis in terms of imitation or mimicry, because what they reveal is a rhizome of mimesis and alterity that allows us to comprehend ‘the conflict inherent in colonial mimesis and “its restless trafficking.”<sup>80</sup> Here, the promise of meaning, and with it, power, ricochets between the fragments, constructing and mirroring the other.

In contradiction, or perhaps as an ongoing instance of imperial tension that makes the colony invisible except in the mirror it offers the coloniser, as recently as 2017, Julius Bryant linked the Osborne plaster design to the JIA article, but did not pursue the connection beyond that drawing to its model in Lahore and/or even the Lahore Museum.<sup>81</sup> As if to underscore the colonial influence of this ornamentation, he added that it started a “new fashion” in India “perhaps ironically.”<sup>82</sup> The evidence from the assemblage described above makes it apparent that the plaster ornament at Osborne did not “start” anything because it was imbricated in mimetic flux. The extraction of this form as ornamentation that was deployed in Queen Victoria’s residence was a snapshot of the mimetic flux within which this carved form was implicated. “Colonial excesses and ambivalence are *productive*, Eaton asserts, “in the sense that they are mimesis of mimesis, mimesis made aware of itself—self reflexive mimesis.”<sup>83</sup> The mimetic affordances of the fragments presented in this discussion lie not just in their material capacity that persists through their mobility and metonymy, but also in the ways we think about strategies of colonisation and the rivalry, excesses and violence that were, and continue to be, involved.

### 2.3.4 Montage

Montage is the technique of producing a new composite whole from fragments of pictures, text, or music, and etymologically derives from the French word ‘monter’, meaning ‘to mount’.<sup>84</sup> “Montage is proposed purposefully as a kit designed to be assembled,” and involves the arrangement of sometimes incongruous fragments into a form that seeks coherence.<sup>85</sup> We can think of it as an inducement to *rediscover* the network of signification of fragments. However, while the terms ‘collage’, ‘montage’, and ‘assemblage’ can be used almost interchangeably, Thomas has argued that

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<sup>79</sup>A detailed enquiry into these ornamental motifs would feed usefully into the corpus on the architecture of Southern Punjab and its expressions in other forms and materials. Asif, *A Book of Conquest: The Chachnama and Muslim Origins in South Asia*; A. N. Khan. *Uchchh: History and Architecture*. Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 2001; Edwards, *Of Brick and Myth: The Genesis of Islamic Architecture in the Indus Valley*.

<sup>80</sup>Eaton, *Mimesis across empires: Artworks and networks in India, 1765–1860*, p. 193.

<sup>81</sup>Bryant, “Kipling’s Royal Commissions: Bagshot Park and Osborne”.

<sup>82</sup>This is further exemplified in examples where Bryant does not give credit to the draughtsmen for some of the drawings he references, instead referring to them as Kipling’s illustrations. *ibid.*, pp. 461–463.

<sup>83</sup>Eaton, *Mimesis across empires: Artworks and networks in India, 1765–1860*, p. 194.

<sup>84</sup>Montage. Oxford Dictionaries. Oxford University Press, n.d. Accessed online. 23 January 2018.

<sup>85</sup>J. Thomas. “Collage/Space/Montage”. In: *Collage*. Ed. by J. P. Plottel. New York: New York Literary Forum, 1983, p. 85.



“Montage postulates intersubjective communication and the transmission of meaning, but refuses the literal character of representation and the direct accessibility of its meaning.”<sup>86</sup> This is presented in contrast to the collage, which is “nothing but a mixed bag full of obviously incongruous components.”<sup>87</sup>

As an affordance of fragments, montage captures the intentionality of seeking arrangements without committing to the “literal” or inevitable character of representation or comprehensibility. There are many examples of montage in this research project, intuitively paradigmatic are the fragments that are part of collections, museums and exhibitions. So, for example, we can think of the architectural arrangements within the Skating Rink at the South Asia Collection (SADACC) in Norwich, as a montage, where the wood carved arches, doors, pillars, panels, balconies and windows have been intentionally juxtaposed within the Victorian building and the other artefacts, and dialogically relate to the visitors, both independently as parts of the montage. Curating then can be considered as a practice based in the idea of montage whereby the curators select and install works that for one or the other reason are capable of generating something (an idea, a concept, a reality) that transcends the individual works.<sup>88</sup> SADACC also offers itself as montage in a manner of “interruptedness” through its location within a Victorian building inside a “fine” English city in the twenty first century as well as its collection of objects, some which are assembled for display, and others for sale. Here, the arches from Lahore, pillars from Swat, shop facades from Gujarat and panels from Burma jostle with carpets, textiles, furniture, prints, paintings and pottery all in play for commerce within historicity, making “sudden and and infinite connections between dissimilars in an endless process of connection-making and connection-breaking.”<sup>89</sup>

Montage, as a method can be thought of as the open-ended practice of creating new objects of knowledge and reflection that did not necessarily exist prior to their juxtaposition, and that honour the “generative instability that inheres in juxtaposed elements.”<sup>90</sup> Collections and museums store discontinuity in the form of the fragments and objects, as well as their relation to the contexts within which they are displaced and reconfigured.<sup>91</sup> Fragments, thus, are “*Fremdkörper* (things that are out of place)”

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>88</sup> P. Bjerregaard. “Assembling potentials, mounting effects: Ethnographic exhibitions beyond correspondence”. In: *Transcultural Montage*. Ed. by C. Suhr and R. Willerslev. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013, pp. 243–61; P. Bjerregaard. “Dissolving objects: Museums, atmosphere and the creation of presence.” In: *Emotion, Space and Society* 15 (2015), pp. 74–81; R. Empson. “Assembling bodies: Cuts, clusters and Juxtapositions”. In: *Transcultural Montage*. Ed. by C. Suhr and R. Willerslev. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013, pp. 262–77.

<sup>89</sup> M. Taussig. *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing*. Chicago, 1987.

<sup>90</sup> S. Maclean. “All the Difference in the World: Liminality, Montage, and the Reinvention of Comparative Anthropology”. In: *Transcultural Montage*. Ed. by C. Suhr and R. Willerslev. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013, pp. 58–75.

<sup>91</sup> A. Bencard. “Presence in the museum. On Metonymies, Discontinuity and History without Stories”. In: *Museum and Society* 12.1 (2014), pp. 29–43.

as Runia has said.<sup>92</sup> They make past events present, like “fistulae,” (‘abnormal’ connections between two hollow spaces) that connect and juxtapose those events to the here and now.<sup>93</sup> Museums function as a repository of metonymies, of things out of context. This witnessing of objects as opposed to an interpretation or representing of them is a way not just of creating yet another nuance of meaning, of just a little more sense - but also of being in touch with history.<sup>94</sup>

The architectural displays at the Colonial and Industrial Exhibitions can be analysed using the rubric of the montage, that disconnects and reconnects the fragments into generative and disruptive juxtapositions. In Chapter 5, the wooden architectural display objects from the India Court at the Colonial and Industrial Exhibitions of 1886 are pulled into a montage that scrutinises their afterlives, as well as the princely patronage that financed their construction and transport within meshworks of mimetic desire and excess. The more the British colonial officials and Indian rulers competed over the same artifacts, the more these objects were valued because of the desire by the other.<sup>95</sup> However, the records of those fragments also bear testimony to the shifts in the regimes of value *after* in the aftermath of the Exhibition, as they persist and or fade away into archival oblivion. For instance, the social life of the Gwalior Gateway is one, literally and figuratively, large example of this, revealing the formidable mimetic potency its production assumed, to its present invisibility in plain sight at the V&A galleried in London.<sup>96</sup> The ambiguousness of what happened with the Regional Screens, and the ignominy of the Baroda Pigeon House, once the main landmark for the Indian Court, also point to the aftershocks that reverberate in the archive, but elude inscription into colonial history beyond micronised mentions.

Consider, as another montage, the “living exhibition of Lahori urban domestic architectural traditions” showcasing stucco and wood carved architectural forms that has been designed and installed at the *Lok Virsa* (Folk Heritage) Museum in Islamabad. (Figure 2.12) Financial circumstances notwithstanding, the design for a facade privileging architectural forms from one urban centre is problematic, but as a montage it can be used as a point of departure for what it metonymically communicates about the absence of other representational forms, and the political decisions involved.<sup>97</sup> The Lok Virsa campus is interesting because while this wall with its embedded jharokas, balconies and doors is just a backdrop, there are other fragments of architectural wood carving from other parts of Pakistan that have been

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<sup>92</sup>Runia, “Presence”, p. 17.

<sup>93</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>94</sup>H. U. Gumbrecht. *Production of presence: What meaning cannot convey*. Stanford University Press, 2004.

<sup>95</sup>Eaton, *Mimesis across empires: Artworks and networks in India, 1765–1860*, p. 153.

<sup>96</sup>D. Swallow. “Colonial Architecture, international exhibitions and official patronage of the Indian artisan”. In: *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum*. Ed. by T. Barringer and T. Flynn. London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 52–67, See also Chapter 5 in this dissertation, and Deborah Swallow’s article:

<sup>97</sup>Ansari, “A Contemporary Architectural Quest and Synthesis: Kamil Khan Mumtaz in Pakistan”, Ansari has defended this project and its designation as a “pastiche” of styles, based on interviews with the architect, Kamil Khan Mumtaz.



FIGURE 2.12: The “Living Wall” of Urban Domestic Architecture at the Lok Virsa Museum, Islamabad. Copyright: Author, 2016.

used in a variety of different ways. Some are functional, and fitted into offices, galleries and shops, while others are installed inside the museum galleries as part of the regional displays, and still others leaning against walls or freestanding in plinths for decorative purposes. While the quality and condition of these wood carvings vary, their impact is undeniable. I would argue that as much as the purpose-built exhibition wall, the montage at the Lok Virsa includes this entire corpus in service of a living tradition.

Montage is a heuristic concept that can be applied in different ways—as a theoretical and analytical model with which to make sense of the fragmented and fragmentary nature of social reality and as a practical device stirring generative juxtapositions in the anthropological altering of source materials.<sup>98</sup> It is about assembling, disassembling and reassembling fragments, and offers a way of making “present by a certain absence” the invisible ground of social life and human perception.<sup>99</sup> In Chapter 6 the fragments of the Lal Nath Temple are torn down and reassembled within sacral architectures of ascetism and lamentation and linguistic scaffoldings of folk narratives. These radical juxtapositions make it possible for us to see the “fistulae”—historical expressions of shared piety and tolerance. As an affordance of fragments, montage can be considered as a tactic or a methodology, and can be brought into the discussion

<sup>98</sup>R. Willerslev and C. Suhr. “Introduction: Montage as an Amplifier of Invisibility”. In: *Transcultural Montage*. Ed. by C. Suhr and R. Willerslev. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013, pp. 1–16.

<sup>99</sup>M. Merleau-Ponty. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Routledge, 2013.

of how this thesis uses fragments and their affordances to understand wood carved architectural histories at the turn of the century in Punjab.

## 2.4 Critical Constellations as a Methodology for Working with Fragments

This project started with large, complex questions about the performativity of architectural forms in urban contexts and their representation within collections. Understanding this material required a deconstruction, or rather, a fragmentation, of the forms in order to process their complex and unique affordances. It also demanded a conceptual reconsideration of what those fragments were, and how they could be engaged in ways that challenged teleological narratives and linear sequences through space and time. Buchli has noted that “the materiality of built forms is often assumed...unproblematically, passively containing, circumscribing, enfolding and unambiguously signifying the social relations within.”<sup>100</sup> Architecture and its forms and fragments are thus presented as being static, with the social aspects and relations happening in and around them, rather than within and through them. Furthermore, the role of visibility and textuality to render the social effect of architecture, its spaces and its fragments has much to offer, but is typically not engaged.

Initially the analytical rubrics I employed emphasised social networks and rhizomatic connections between particular items, places and individuals within cultural frameworks that pulled in economic, epistemic and semiotic considerations. Specifically, I found the Circuit of Culture a useful paradigm to not only analyse the fragments, but also to structure the information and my arguments. The Circuit of Culture, as a tool for cultural analysis was refined by British cultural theorists, predominantly Stuart Hall, in the late 1990s.<sup>101</sup> The premise is that when considering the terms of the construction and maintenance of a commodity, account needs to be taken of the interrelated processes that lead to this commoditisation. To do this, Hall and his colleague, Paul Du Gay, used the example of the Sony Walkman to articulate five ‘moments’ in the construction of meaning(s), specifically: Production, Consumption, Representation, Regulation, and Identity. These moments, or nodes, are interlinked to each of the others forming a circuit. Any one of the ‘moments’ can be chosen as a starting point as long as the entire nexus is taken into account, for each moment relies upon the others for the cultural meaning to fully emerge. This was useful as a tool to begin with, and its flexibility allowed the exploration of significance and possibilities, while accounting for complex multiple modes and relationships between these moments and the commodity in circulation.

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<sup>100</sup> V. Buchli. “Architecture and modernism”. In: *Handbook of material culture*. Ed. by C. Tilley et al. Sage, 2006, pp. 254–266, p. 260.

<sup>101</sup> Du Gay et al., *Doing cultural studies: The story of the Sony Walkman*.

However, the more I worked with the fragments, the more atomised and complex their materiality and affordances became, and the fragmentation of parts to smaller parts and then their representations started pushing against the limits of the rubric. The false sense of coherence implied by the notion of a bounded ‘circuit’ of culture pentagram confuted the potential of the fragments to release new meanings. Forcing the data into a model that was too vague soon caused it to start fragmenting under its own contradictions. For example, when considering the moment of production, the commodity itself was exposed as being mutable, for the fragment was at one instance the architectural element, at another the figure of the artisan, and at yet another a nineteenth century Persian text on urban historiography. Similarly, what was being produced was a material artefact, a reformulated identity, or perhaps even knowledge. In order to respond to the challenge of the fragments, and release the data from the closed form of the circuit a new heuristic process was required, and so this dissertation uses the notion of “constellations” as a methodology.

Walter Benjamin has written: “Ideas are to objects as constellations are to stars.”<sup>102</sup> Benjamin was concerned with the representation of ideas, and for him the configuration and interplay between the manifold of ideas was how “truth content” was revealed.<sup>103</sup> Rejecting totalities, arbitrary schemes and classifications, Benjamin’s model used the careful selection, combination and arrangement of fragments to make textual mosaics. In this methodology, a mosaic is “a pattern of finely crafted, carefully positioned fragments composed by concepts.”<sup>104</sup> It is the set of concepts which assist in the representation of the idea that “lends it actuality as a configuration. For phenomena are not incorporated in ideas. They are not contained in them.”<sup>105</sup> This patterning of fragments around concepts leads to Benjamin’s concept of the constellation. The constellation emerges as a shift in the perception of phenomena (fragments) in which a meaningful image jumps forward from the previously disparate elements such that “the phenomena are rescued from their status as phenomenal or fragmentary, without simultaneously sacrificing the phenomena in the name of the abstract concept.”<sup>106</sup> Critical constellations then, emphasise the way meaning (of texts or art works) are reconstituted and reconfigured through historical and textual censorship and exclusions, political appropriations, ideologies, as well as individual and collective memory, so that at any particular convergence of past and present, they are legible in specific ways.<sup>107</sup>

This project uses Benjamin’s formulation of critical constellations to carefully reconstitute fragments around concepts that confront the disquiet spaces of the archive

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<sup>102</sup>W. Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osbourne, London: Verso, 1985. Quoted in Gilloch, *Walter Benjamin: critical constellations*, p. 70.

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>104</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>105</sup>W. Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osbourne, London: Verso, 1985, p.34. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>106</sup>Pensky, *Melancholy Dialectics: Walter Benjamin and the Play of Mourning*, p. 70.

<sup>107</sup>Gilloch, *Walter Benjamin: critical constellations*, p. 234.

and their interpretations, and lead to new material and *transmaterial* connections and collisions between textual, visual and oral fragments. Some of the concepts around which the constellations are arranged are insights borrowed from the Circuit of Culture, including ‘production’, ‘regulation’, and ‘consumption’. These allow the “disparate” fragments to cohere in “contingent and transient” patterns.<sup>108</sup> These three constellations also conceptually bear on the idea of archives and archival fragments. The final constellation reconsiders and reconfigures the role of architecture within sacral and built landscapes. These critical constellations and their concepts are explained through the structure of my thesis as follows.

Production: Halls’ moment of production is the point at which an object or form is produced, both socially and materially, and involves the various contexts and constraints – e.g., political, social, material, and ecological – that have shaped the given object. This is the point where meanings are encoded into a cultural object. The critical constellation of production is organised around the producers— the artisans, and their identities, by drawing in archival records, oral tales, urbane historiographies and photographic depictions.

Regulation: Regulation refers to the mechanisms that control the distribution and use of a commodity. Within the circuit of culture, this moment is specifically concerned with how value and quality are controlled and adapted to commodities in motion. This can be through the imposition of rules, restrictions or even changing forms and mechanisms such as institutions, networks, procedures, modes of production, and norms. Here, the critical constellation of regulation centres around changes in art pedagogy brought about by the creation of art schools in the late nineteenth century, and the parallel privileging of drawing with the medium of print journals, portfolios and manuals as an impetus. The fragments include drawings and textual archival records of curricula and personnel from the Mayo School of Art as well as the journals produced under Imperial guidance, and by local artisan.

Consumption: Consumption is the actual procurement, acquisition, reception or use of the cultural object or commodity by individuals or groups. It is the point where the object gets bought, used, or decoded by specific individuals or collectives (such as audiences). This critical constellation considers the consumption of Punjabi wood carved architecture in Britain in two concurrent spaces of activity in Britain during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The first situates architectural fragments within an exhibitionary complex of the South Kensington Museum and the Colonial and Industrial Exhibition of 1886, while the second space exists in the oriental obsession with elite domestic interiors. The fragments in this constellation include records of the architectural fragments displayed in the exhibitions, locations and sites in Britain where Punjabi woodcarving was used, and designs and patterns to discuss ornamental schemes.

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<sup>108</sup>Gilloch, *Walter Benjamin: critical constellations*, p. 20.

Mediators and Intermediaries: The final critical constellation steps away from the archive to evaluate the role of architectural fragments and certain types of sacred building to understand how they operate within social networks in different contexts. The fragments in this critical constellation are more complex, since they have not been appraised and classified by the colonial archive in the same way as the earlier material. They include architectural fragments and their representations from ascetic contexts, textual records of *qisse* (folk narratives), and visual images and discourses of *tazia* (sacred totems).

Finally, the dissertation itself emerges as a meta-constellation, composed not only of the four ‘mosaics’ in the chapters listed above, but also incorporating the affordances of fragments and the self-referential methodology. The totality of the phenomena covered is conceptualised around the title “Material Histories and Wood-Carving: Fragments from Modern Punjab,” in the hope that the fragments and the processes of constellating them are intelligible and can elucidate the affordance of fragments.

## 2.5 Summary

This chapter critically explored the concept of fragments, and began to lay the conceptual scaffolding to creatively work with them in ways that preserve their individual integrity and their mutuality without resorting to totalities. I began by borrowing from the subaltern studies discussions of the fragment, and positioning fragments as ‘disturbing elements’, which offer their own affordances. The affordances identified here developed from the data on fragments that I had accumulated, but these four affordances—mobility, metonymy, mimesis and montage—are by no means conclusive or incontrovertible. These affordances will evolve and change, and perhaps new affordances will be added. Their purpose is not paradigmatic, but rather a way to articulate the entanglements in non-binding ways. If anything, this study of fragments illustrates the fragility of constellations as it is built on fragments of ruination, imperial debris, and connected by authorial subjectivities.<sup>109</sup>“The world is splintered into fragments, is legible only in fragments, and is representable solely through fragments,” therefore as totalising theoretical systems with their universal aims and teleological promises become untenable, we need to find ways of working with fragments.<sup>110</sup> Building on these ideas, the following chapters develop the constellations around the concepts of production, regulation, consumption, and the role of fragments as mediators and intermediaries.

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<sup>109</sup>J. L. Spear. “A South Kensington Gateway from Gwalior to Nowhere”. In: *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 48.4 (2008), pp. 911-921.

<sup>110</sup>Gilloch, *Walter Benjamin: critical constellations*, p. 237.





## Chapter 3

### The Production of Woodcarving: Artisans, Identity, Genealogy

#### 3.1 Introduction: Production and the Artisan

Within a circuit of culture, production is the point where an object or form is produced, both socially and materially within the various contexts and constraints — political, social, material, and ecological — that shape it. Production refers to making of the thing, inventing it, fabricating it, reproducing it, distributing it, marketing it, but also the work and the labour that goes into it, including the people who make, patronise, and finance it. A production-oriented narrative links the object, in this case wood carving, with the subject, the carpenters and woodcarvers, in a relationship in which the object is shaped and “encoded” by human labour and conscious intention, but one where the subject too is shaped by the materiality of the objects.<sup>1</sup> A carpenter becomes a subject through the objects, his tools and wood carvings, for as Daniel Miller has argued, “. . . social worlds are as much constituted by materiality as the other way around.”<sup>2</sup>

The ambition of this chapter is to sketch out the landscape of production of wood carved architecture within the Punjab, and consider some of these positions and how they affected change over time. In an attempt to understand the role of wood carved architecture as a cultural object, this chapter will focus on the people who were producing the wood-work, and locate them the social and cultural setting of the Punjab in the 19th and 20th centuries. The chapter will seek to answer the following question: How was wood carving produced in the Punjab in the late 19th and early 20th centuries? Who were the producers, and what were the conditions in which they were producing wood carving and its knowledge?

##### 3.1.1 Momentarity: Visual Representations of Two Punjabi Wood Carvers

The images in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 are separated by 135 years, and yet are startling in their similarities. “A Wood Carver, Simla” is a pencil and pen-and-ink drawing by John Lockwood Kipling made in a bazaar in Simla in 1870. It was published in the

<sup>1</sup>Du Gay et al., *Doing cultural studies: The story of the Sony Walkman*; W. Keane. *Subjects and Objects*. Ed. by C. Tilley et al. London: Sage, 2013.

<sup>2</sup>D. Miller. “Introduction: Why some things matter”. In: *Material Cultures* (1998).



FIGURE 3.1: *A Woodcarver, Simla, 1870*. Drawing by John Lockwood Kipling. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 0929:56/(IS).Cat70



FIGURE 3.2: Portrait of Prem Singh Dhanjal, a carpenter from Dalla Village, Ludhiana, 2005. Photograph by Mat Schencks.

first issue of the *Portfolio of Industrial Art* (1881) produced by the South Kensington Museum and published by W.H.Griggs.<sup>3</sup> The drawing depicts an anonymous turbaned wood carver carving a floral panel with a chisel and mallet. The man is seated on the ground and holds the panel with his feet. He is surrounded by tools and papers indicating patterns. Behind him is another carved panel and a shelf bearing some vessels. Kipling made the drawing in the company of John Henry Rivett-Carnac, who recalled “the excellent sketches” and the one they liked the most — “made in our company one afternoon in the Simlah bazaar of the old man carving wood.”<sup>4</sup>

In contrast, consider Figure 3.2, a photograph that I happened to come across on the online image hosting site, flickr, in 2016. The image is of a bearded, turbaned carpenter working with a chisel and mallet. He is seated on the ground and grips steady with his foot the piece of wood he is incising. The background doesn’t have any details and is cast in the shade. Matt Schencks, the photographer, has described the image as follows:

“Prem Singh Dhanjal. Ravi’s uncle who passed away at 72 years old on Monday 7th December 2009. Photo taken in November 2005 in his home workshop. Here he is cutting the slots for the joints on the leg of a *manja* (a *manja* is the traditional wooden-framed bed with the sleeping surface woven from string). At one time he and his family would make all the beds, doors and windows for the houses in their village. One of his sons continues to work as a carpenter.”<sup>5</sup>

The conjunction of the two images captures momentarity with past and present interacting with one another. Having seen Kipling’s drawing many times, encountering Schencks’ photograph is a “lightening flash,” a dialectical image that shocks and disrupts our notions of historical progress.<sup>6</sup> The similarities are startling, and it would be possible to just stop there to claim an interruptive momentarity. However, it is in the juxtaposition of the two images and their differences that our “catastrophic history” is revealed. Reading this juxtaposition, we start to see that the differences lie in the anonymity of the wood carver versus the extensive scholarship into J. L. Kipling in the drawing, but the clear identity and genealogical connections of Prem Singh Dhanjal from Dalla Village, Ludhiana, with the relative anonymity of the photographer except his name and portfolio on flickr. The shock also comes when we look at the face of the subject. We cannot really see the face of the wood carver because he is intently “carving wood,” whereas “Ravi’s uncle” looks right into the eye of the camera with no less intensity about his work. And then there are the hands.

<sup>3</sup>S. Weber. “Kipling and the Exhibitions Movement”. In: *John Lockwood Kipling: Arts and crafts in the Punjab and London*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017, pp. 205–280.

<sup>4</sup>Rivett-Carnac’s memoirs *Many Memories of Life in India at Home and Abroad* (Edinburgh: W.Blackwood and Sons, 1910), quoted in *ibid.*, p. 219.

<sup>5</sup>The image is part of Matt Schencks’ profile on flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/11119558@N07/4176904351>. He has copyright of all the images, but I received his permission to use this one for my thesis.

<sup>6</sup>Pensky, *Melancholy Dialectics: Walter Benjamin and the Play of Mourning*, p. 217.

Kipling's drawing distorted the perspective and scale, and so the wood carvers hand look small and deformed. Dhanjal's hand, a strong fist around the chisel, competes with his face for intensity.

It is in their momentarity that these two images highlight the ambiguity of colonial representation and how it participates in the creation of a narrative of the anonymous artisan caught in the production of 'tradition', while the photograph, as an index, points to traces of a particular place and person, and a web of relations between the photographer and the subject, and potentially, the subject and the viewer. The purpose of starting with these images is to visually frame the argument of the chapter, which seeks to contrast the colonial production and formalisation of the carpenter in the colonial archival record, with the affective and embodied role of the carpenter in the lived experience of the Punjab. These contrasts will become apparent through the empirical records in the gazetteers versus the social, moral and cultural roles played by the carpenter in the folk stories and social constructions of caste identity. The records of the Mayo School of Art problematise the carpenter and carpentry in the modern context of an Art School, and seek to re-entangle the woodworking staff within genealogical understandings of production.

### 3.2 The "Native Craftsmen" in Contemporary Scholarship

I begin with a survey of the literature into craftsmen and artisans under the British Empire, and how they were represented in colonial scholarship. A number of scholars have undertaken explorations of the Indian craftsman/artisan in colonial times, and how they were represented by colonial artists, historians and writers. Deepali Dewan's *The Body At Work: Colonial Art Education and the Figure of the 'Native Craftsman'* delves into the how craftsmen were represented across various media, and how that is a reflection of their ambivalence and anxieties about industrialisation.<sup>7</sup> In a similar vein, Saloni Mathur has discussed the "cult of the craftsman" as a depiction of preindustrial fantasy, and how it sustained and merged aesthetic, commercial and anthropological notions in imperial Britain, as well as nurturing a rhetoric of nationalism by Gandhi later in the twentieth century.<sup>8</sup> In a different article in her anthology, she exposes the "dynamics of objectification" in the way the native artisan is featured in the exhibitions and displays in metropolitan England in the late nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup>

The figure of the craftsman also features in writings of craft economies that trace the development of craft in the context of industrialisation, its impact on modern aesthetics and later strategies of nationalism. Abigail McGowan has connected craft production in colonial India with imperial politics, economics and culture, and used

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<sup>7</sup>D. Dewan. "The body at work: Colonial art education and the figure of the 'native craftsman.'" In: *Confronting the body: The politics of physicality in colonial and post-colonial India*. Ed. by In Ed. J. H. Mills and Sen. London: Anthem Press, 2004, pp. 118–34.

<sup>8</sup>Mathur, *India by design: Colonial history and cultural display*.

<sup>9</sup>S. Mathur. "'To Visit the Queen': On Display at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886". In: *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display*. 2007, pp. 52–79.

the presentation of artisans in craft discourse to highlight the false contradictions between artisans as resisting change and being an ossified singular category, versus their adoption of new technologies and working relationships.<sup>10</sup> In Arindam Dutta's complex inquiry into the relationship between the British colonial administration in India and taste, craft and design, he positions the artisan as "essentially a futuristic cyborg figure" who gathers up "the autochthonous, the primitive, "the feudal," the organic, the customary, the extrahistorical, the aboriginal residues circumvented or overcome by the dominant."<sup>11</sup> This artisan-cyborg resists any singular telos and can be used to analyse the many lapses of historicity.

Zooming in from a macro perspective to focussing on one particular individual, Sajida and Pervaiz Vandal have written about the architectural contributions and life story of Bhai Ram Singh (1858–1916), a Sikh carpenter, teacher and architect in Lahore. Ram Singh, who hailed from the Ramgarhia community in Amritsar, joined the Lahore School of Carpentry in 1874, and was enrolled in the newly formed Mayo School of Art in 1875.<sup>12</sup> In the first report from the founding principal of the School, John Lockwood Kipling, wrote that Ram Singh was "amongst the most promising students," adding that he gave "promise of becoming a very capable draughtsman and designer in his own craft, and will be a valuable assistant to an architect."<sup>13</sup> Bhai Ram Singh's designs defined the aesthetic for prominent buildings in the modern city of Lahore, and he was sought for elite commissions by royalty across the Punjab as well as in Britain.<sup>14</sup> Becoming more than a "valuable assistant to an architect," Ram Singh became vice-principal of the MSA in 1896, and was eventually appointed principal in 1910. He was an important figure in art education, both as a teacher and a communicator outside the MSA.<sup>15</sup>

### 3.2.1 Bhai Ram Singh and the Politics of Race at the Mayo School of Art

One aspect from Vandal and Vandal's book *The Raj, Lahore, and Bhai Ram Singh* is worth highlighting at this point. Bhai Ram Singh's journey to becoming the Principal was not easy, and was fraught with the frustration of challenging a colonial bureaucracy that had put a ceiling on the levels of achievement of local staff. After Kipling's retirement as principal in 1893, no Indian was consulted about, or considered as, his replacement. F. H. Andrews, who had been brought from England and was

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<sup>10</sup>McGowan, *Crafting the nation in colonial India*.

<sup>11</sup>Dutta, *The bureaucracy of beauty: Design in the age of its global reproducibility*, p. 233.

<sup>12</sup>Vandal and Vandal, *The Raj, Lahore, and Bhai Ram Singh*.

<sup>13</sup>Report of the Director of Public Instruction, for 1875-76, in Choonara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*, p. 33.

<sup>14</sup>Vandal and Vandal, *The Raj, Lahore, and Bhai Ram Singh*; Glover, *Making Lahore modern: Constructing and imagining a colonial city*; Talbot and T.Kamran, *Colonial Lahore: A History of the City and Beyond*. He was commissioned for work in the durbar halls of many of the princely states, including Nabha, Patiala, Kapurthala, Maler Kotla, Jammu Kashmir and Peshawar.

<sup>15</sup>Ata-ullah, "Stylistic hybridity and colonial art and design education: a wooden carved screen by Ram Singh".

officiating as principal was appointed to the role. After he went on extended leave in 1894, Ram Singh officiated as principal until 1899. In that year, in a letter to the Lieutenant Governor, Sir William Mackworth Young, he angrily wrote:

“It is on the whole, my Righteous Governor, a question of colour and not of innate worth that makes them think otherwise than that I may claim to throw myself on your benevolent attention to be confirmed in my present post...if my Master Kipling condescended now to be the Head or the Principal of the Mayo School of Art at Lahore would the post be denied to him? No! If Ram Singh, who takes after him in all the important departure of a School of Art, can, by his own choice, be considered worthy of his master’s chair, should he be sent to the dogs merely because he is a little deep complexioned?”<sup>16</sup>

Ram Singh’s letter is an expression of resistance to the claims of meritocracy, and an acknowledgement of the racism implicit in the administrative codes and procedures. What is profound about this letter is the fact that the year he wrote the letter, 1899, another Englishman, Percy Brown, was appointed to the post, and Ram Singh served as vice principal under him from 1899 to 1910. Of his 38 years with the institution, he was officially the principal for only 3 years, 1910-1913.<sup>17</sup>

Ram Singh’s biography is a meaningful introduction to this chapter, and his letter offers one of those “unquiet movements in a field of force”<sup>18</sup> The sentiments he expresses are “indices of relations of power and tracers of them.”<sup>19</sup> Ram Singh exists in the official archive through his links to the MSA, and the work he did through that institution as well as his material legacy of creation. The letter quoted above is a draft that his family has kept, and as yet it is unclear whether there is an official copy in any archive. Ram Singh’s biography is a fragment that synecdochally situates him within a changing modern Punjab.

This chapter locates the *tarkhaan* (carpenter) in the colonial archives and traces the perturbations and mutations of these slippery caste categories, particularly in the case of the Ramgarhia Sikh community. I trace shifts in the modes of production in rural and urban contexts, and how colonial modalities shaped this knowledge.<sup>20</sup> Then, I trace the historical development of the the Ramgarhia Sikh community that dominated this profession to illustrate the mutability of these classifications despite them being the basis for colonial essentialism. Picking up on this strand of identity, the figure of the *tarkhaan* (carpenter/woodcarver) is then explored in the context of

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<sup>16</sup>Draft letter from Bhai Ram Singh to the Lt. Governor Punjab through Dr. J. Sime, Director of Public Instruction, Punjab. Family papers. It is disappointing that Vandal and Vandal do not interrogate this vital source more rigorously, nor do they provide full provenance for the letter in their book. Quoted in Vandal and Vandal, *The Raj, Lahore, and Bhai Ram Singh*, pp. 239–40.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>Stoler, *Along the archival grain: Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense*, p. 32.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>20</sup>B. S. Cohn and D. Scott. *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge: The British in India*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Punjabi folklore, but still using archival sources. The tension between the colonial structures and the “the spasmodic and sustained currents of anxious labor that paper trails could not contain” is approached via the personnel records of woodworking and carpentry staff and students at the Mayo School of Art, and the nebulous category of the “artisan”.<sup>21</sup> Finally there is a discussion on producers/artisans’, identity and knowledge production in the context of spatial genealogies, urban historiography and affective and embodied knowledge, and how vital it is that we study the interstices, as well as bridges, between these various knowledge systems.

A mix of primary and secondary sources of historical and archival data fragments have been constellated to trace the producers of woodwork and its knowledge. Due to insuperable logistical considerations, fieldwork within East (India) and West (Pakistan) Punjab was not possible. Therefore, this chapter uses primary documents in institutional archives, especially the National College of Arts Archive, as “transparencies on which power relations were inscribed,” and questions how they behaved as “intricate technologies of rule.”<sup>22</sup> The fragments included here are:

- Textual, including documents (letters, applications, personnel forms, lists, etcetera), compilations (folk tales and histories), and urban historiographies;
- Visual, drawings and photographs;
- Empirical, gazetteers and reports), and
- Digital, (digitised surrogates and material sourced online.

By narrowing the focus to this class of material objects, that is, only looking at woodwork and wood carving, but expanding the scope of exploration into disparate subject domains I have been able to create linkages and combine data to articulate a fuller picture of this cultural phenomenon, comprising the communities who were involved in this practice and the issue of how they responded to changing conditions and to new systems of knowledge. and their digital surrogates

### 3.3 The Tarkhan from “Official” Sources of the British Administration

Figure 3.3 is an early representation of the *tarkhan* (carpenter), which was included with the major occupational groups, as well as castes, ascetics and other social groups illustrated in the *Tashrih al-aqam* (*an account of origins and occupations of some of the sects, castes, and tribes of India*), compiled and translated in 1825 by Colonel James Skinner (1778–1841). This compilation was an example of non-literary Persian texts written by, or under the patronage of, the British. The paintings were done by artists from Delhi whom Skinner commissioned for the album. One of the artists,

<sup>21</sup>Stoler, *Along the archival grain: Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense*, p. 36.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 20.



FIGURE 3.3: *Khati or Tarkhan, carpenter caste of the Panjab - Tashrih al-aqvam*, 1825. British Library, Public domain, f.287v - BL Add. 27255.jpg

Ghulam Ali Khan, travelled with Skinner, so these watercolor portraits are likely to be studies from life.<sup>23</sup> The painting of the carpenter shows him seated on the ground and sawing through a plank of wood that he is holding with his feet. An array of his tools is strewn around him. He is wearing a distinctive turban under which we can see a shaved head with some curls falling through, and a string of red beads around his neck. This is an early nineteenth century drawing, and is rendered in the “Company style” that was distinctive to the atelier of Ghulam Ali Khan, “the hereditary slave of the dynasty, Ghulam Ali Khan the portraitist, resident at Shahjahanabad.”<sup>24</sup>

In 1881, Denzil Ibbetson’s census report was published, and according to that the tarkhan population in the Punjab totalled 596,941. Of these 219,591 were Hindus (36.8 per cent), 113,869 were Sikh (19 per cent), and 263,478 were Muslims (44.1 per cent). The Punjabi word for carpenter is *tarkhan*. *Tarkhan* is also a *zāt*, a caste designation, a fact which has serious implications on discussion of artisan identity and communities. In the ‘*Glossary Of The Tribes And Castes Of The Punjab And North West Frontier Province – Vol III*, based on the 1881 census, Denzil Ibbetson has specified the following terms as being recorded for the carpenter:

<sup>23</sup>W. Dalrymple and R. Sharma. *Princes and Painters in Mughal Delhi, 1707-1857*. Penguin UK, 2013.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*



“*Tarkhán, Tarkhánr, Takhán, Tharkánr, Darkhán*, a carpenter, syn. *Sari Kárigar*, in Peshawar; *Barhái, Barí or Bádí, Najjár, Ghárú, Khátí (Khatí), Kárchob, Kharádí, Mistrí (or Mishtrí), Arakash, Chatrera* (or painter), *Kárigar*, and *Rámgarhia*; *Chattarsúz* or umbrella-maker; *Kamángar* or lacquerer; and *Suthár*.”<sup>25</sup>

While some of the names are variations of the words due to different dialects, other synonyms seem to cover a broad range of specific items, such as umbrella-maker, as well as very generic terms, such as *kárigar* and *mistrí* (which mean artisan or master craftsman).<sup>26</sup> Ibbetson classifies them all as “Caste No.111” under “Vagrant, Menial and Artisan Castes,” and within the caste, he lists twelve tribes of the Tarkhán by region and population as shown in Table 3.1.<sup>27</sup>

TABLE 3.1: TRIBES OF THE TARKHÁN AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION ACROSS PUNJAB DIVISIONS (FROM IBBETSON, 1911)

Tribe	Population	Divisional distribution
Jhángra	9,518	Delhi, Hissár
Dhamán	71,519	Karnál, Ambála, Jálándhar, Patiála, Nábha, Farídkot, Ferozpur
Khatti	19, 071	”
Siáwan	1,932	Jálándhar, Siálkot
Gáde	2,2091	Amritsar
Matháru	6,971	Ludhiána, Amritsar, Lahore
Netál	2,764	Hushyárpur
Janjúa	12,576	Ráwalpindi
Tháru	2,822	Gurdáspur, Siálkot
Khokhar	27,534	Lahore, Ráwalpindi, Multán
Bhatti	18,837	”
Begi Khel	2,212	Hazára

Broadly speaking, the tarkhan could participate in the economy and society in a few different ways, which were not mutually exclusive or unconnected. Artisans’ socioeconomic positions depended on their location, craft, the social status of their community and their personal links to the elite. So, for example, artisans who lived in agrarian areas were affiliated to local cultivators (landowners) and produced articles of daily use for them as well as for the other residents of the villages, such as blacksmiths, carpenters, potters and shoemakers. In urban contexts, the tarkhan were associated with workshops or ateliers that fulfilled commissions for elite patrons, domestic and religious buildings and projects, including work for the government schools and public bodies. They also worked directly in the government art and technical schools and for the administration e.g. in the Public Works Division (PWD) and railway workshops.

<sup>25</sup>D. B. Ibbetson and E. Maclagan. *Glossary of the tribes and castes of the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province*, (ed.) Rose. Lahore: Government Printing Press, 1911.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 313.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 313.

To get a sense of the social space occupied by the tarkhan, I will use two of the Punjab District Gazetteers: Shahpur District, 1897 and Ludhiana District and Malerkotla State, 1904.<sup>28</sup> These provide a patchy but instructive picture of the way artisans were employed and compensated in different parts of the province. It is patchy because the gazetteers across the districts do not contain uniform data, so this information is absent for some of the districts. I use two different gazetteers to get a broader range of information about the tarkhan. So, for example, I use the Gazetteer for Shahpur, whose eastern flank covered the Chaj Doab, and the town of Bhera, because it was (and is) well known for its wood work, and under the Sikhs had an economy that was closely linked to the timber routes through revenue arrangements linked to Kashmir.<sup>29</sup> The Gazetteer for Ludhiana, while later in date is useful for the details it offers regarding the rural tarkhan (carpenter) community and details about their wages and social position.

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The 1904 Ludhiana and Malerkotla Gazetteer offers a reasonable amount of data about the 20,994 individuals who have been listed as “tarkhān” in this district.<sup>30</sup> Some of the tarkhaan were involved in agriculture, and owned shares in several villages, but that “those who follow their hereditary occupation are to be found in nearly every village, for they are a necessary element in the agricultural community.”<sup>31</sup> With regard to social status, the tarkhaan is in the “Menials and Artisan Class” but is said to be “of very superior intellect and occupies a good social position.”<sup>32</sup> This elevated social status is expressed in terms of his relationship with the landowner (zamindar), who does not encumber his mobility and allows him to accumulate wealth that is re-invested in land.<sup>33</sup> His compensation for all the work he does gives him a fixed allowance at harvest time. These tasks include repairs of implements and making some small items like yokes, furniture, boxes, etc. For new ploughs, pitchforks, *gadd* (carts), and implements he is paid in cash, and the cultivator supplies the wood.<sup>34</sup> In the villages, according to this source, in the villages there is a lot of work at the wells (which would include Persian wheels and watering systems for fields) as well as the

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<sup>28</sup>J. Wilson. *Gazetteer of the Shahpur district*. Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1897; *Punjab District gazetteer: Ludhiana District and Malerkotla State gazetteer, 1904*. Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1907.

<sup>29</sup>Wilson, *Gazetteer of the Shahpur district*.

<sup>30</sup>*Punjab District gazetteer: Ludhiana District and Malerkotla State gazetteer, 1904*.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>33</sup>Regarding the fluid socio-economic status of the tarkhaan, the gazetteer mentions that “there are two or three famous langars or alms-houses well known throughout the country. That of Bagrian lies 40 miles south of Ludhiana and is administered by a resident family of Tarkhaans (called Bhais), who hold in jagir 2 or 3 villages in our territory and more in Patiala and the other states, besides owning a large area of land. Numbers of travelers are fed daily from the public kitchen, which is open to all comers; and about 1,000 maunds of grain are distributed to the public annually. The dera, or building, is a very extensive one. The family has always been in the habit of marrying and the son succeeds as manager. *ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*

belna (presses) where sugar cane is processed.<sup>35</sup> It is also expressly stated that

“a simple money wage is paid only in Ludhiana and the other towns. In Ludhiana masons and blacksmiths earn, if paid by the day, Rs 10 to 12 a month; and carpenters a little more, Rs 12 to 15. The rates are slightly lower in Jagraon, Raikot, etc. . . In the villages carpenters and masons, if employed by the day, get their food and 4 or 5 annas.”<sup>36</sup>

There are further details of variations between villages in the amounts of the fixed allowances of produce that the artisans receive.

In Ludhiana district, the official records state that the tarkhan population was about 3% of the total, and that there was a difference between urban and rural practice, which had to do with their social association with patrons and landowners.<sup>37</sup> This, in turn, affected the way they were compensated. Additionally, in the context of arts and manufactures, the record provides conflicting information as are told “the wood carving of the District is not important,”<sup>38</sup> despite havelis of well-to-do families having carved door frames, and specimens of which were solicited for the 1902 Durbar Exhibition in Delhi, but on the other hand “the carpenters of Ludhiana are famous for good work, and chairs tables, doors, door-frames etc. are largely made.”<sup>39</sup> This apparent contradiction is a reflection of the ambivalent status of woodwork within the colonial institutions, where it straddled being a decorative art form as “wood carving” along with its utilitarian role as “carpentry”.

### 3.3.1 Perceptions of the Tarkhan in the Journal of Indian Art

That the social and cultural environment was at a juncture for woodworkers during the fin de siècle is most starkly evident in an article published in the *Journal of Indian Art* in 1890, “Wood Manufactures in the Punjab,” by Michael F. O’Dwyer, who later served as the lieutenant governor of the Punjab.<sup>40</sup> At the time the article was written, O’Dwyer was in charge of land revenue and settlements in the Punjab. O’Dwyer commented on the changing climate for *tarkhans* that “[t]o better his position, the village *tarkhan* often migrates to seek appointment on the Railway, or settles to earn a precarious livelihood in some neighbouring town.”<sup>41</sup> He then remarked on the quality of work that “at best his work is spoiled by a certain want of finish. He exhibits a tendency to leave his work crooked in line and unfinished in joints. Work under European supervision in the Railway workshops and Public Works Department has

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>40</sup> M. F. O’Dwyer. “Wood Manufactures in the Punjab”. In: *The Journal of Indian Art* 3 (1890), pp. 34–38.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

gone some way in checking his tendency.”<sup>42</sup> Followed by an observation on changing demand and taste:

“Native demand for work of high quality is likely to continue to diminish. The Public Works Department have at least done this – they have effected an entire change in public taste. Now public taste regards the small rooms and the floridity of the old house ornamentation as remnants of its barbaric prime, and turns to the simplicity of the dāk bungalow as its model of perfection.”<sup>43</sup>

By the 1890s, the *Journal of Indian Art* had become a vital source of information around the promotion of arts and manufactures. This article is different in tone from Kipling’s 1886 article on Punjab wood carving (which O’Dwyer quotes heavily from), but together they frame and elucidate both the state of the craft, and the motivations of the colonial administration.<sup>44</sup> Later in the article, for instance, O’Dwyer wrote a detailed account of furniture “after the European fashion,” and how in Gujrat the Deputy Commissioner had successfully set up a facility manufacture different types of chairs – an article of furniture that was not traditionally used in Punjabi homes.<sup>45</sup> This essay by O’Dwyer, in fact is a catalogue of wooden items that serve the European market, and how they are dispersed around the Punjab based on the type of woodworking required. It also gives insight into the way native artisans and local places were perceived by prominent and powerful civil administrators. The plates accompanying the article include samples that by now would be familiar, including the ‘door from Bhera’, which was discussed in Chapter 4. A discussion of the role of the *Journal of Indian Art* and the impact of the drawing curriculum is also given in Chapter 4.

### 3.4 The Social Configurations of the Artisan: *Tarkhan, Zat/Jati* and the Ramgarhia Sikh

W. H. McLeod explains that the concept of caste is peculiar to the Punjab because for the bulk of the Punjabi population, caste consciousness has comparatively little to do with the concept of *varna*, but rather it is the *zāt* hierarchy upon which and individual’s status will normally depend.<sup>46</sup> Here, *zāt*, refers to the notion of *jāti*, the lineage-based, endogamous social grouping.<sup>47</sup> The role of the *jāti* as a cultural form of conceptualising and ordering the relations of identity and difference has been clarified by Partha Chatterjee who says that this *cultural* designation, not only includes caste designations, but also “caste agglomerations, tribes, race, linguistic groups, religious

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<sup>42</sup>O’Dwyer, “Wood Manufactures in the Punjab”, p. 34.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>44</sup>J. L. Kipling, “Punjab wood carving”. In: *The Journal of Indian Art* 1.4 (1886), pp. 1–3.

<sup>45</sup>O’Dwyer, “Wood Manufactures in the Punjab”, p. 35.

<sup>46</sup>W. H. McLeod. *Exploring Sikhism: Aspects of Sikh identity, culture and thought*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*

groups, nationalities and nations,” and provides a form for conceptualising relations between social groups.<sup>48</sup>

**The Rāmgarhia Sikh** Ramgarhia is a caste grouping, a “composite *zāt*”, formed by the alliance of the Sikh segments of various artisan *zāts*, such as the *tarkhan* (carpenters), the *lohaar* (blacksmith) and *raaj* (mason), although the Ramgarhia are overwhelmingly dominated by the *tarkhan*. In the eighteenth century, a generation before Ranjit Singh, there were two prominent misl leaders, Jassa Singh Kalal and Jassa Singh Thoka.<sup>49</sup> The older of the two, subsequently dropped Kalal from his name, and replaced it with Ahluwalia, while the younger one changed his name to Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, after he was given charge of the fort at Ramgarh. That is why the groups they led came to be known as the Ahluwalia and Ramgarhia misls, respectively. The original names, Kalal and Thoka, designated artisan castes, both of which were considered low in the status hierarchy of the Punjab. The Kalal (or Kalwar) caste was associated with the distillation and selling of liquor, while Thoka means carpenter and indicates a member of the tarkhan caste. The tarkhan ranked distinctively higher than the other Punjabi artisan castes, but its actual status was comparatively low, especially compared to the Jats, who were the dominant caste within the Khalsa and who were, during the eighteenth century, establishing a much wider dominance over rural Punjab. It is likely that the Jassa Singhs sought to shed the lower status associated with the occupational group and appropriate names that reflected a more exalted status earned by successful military enterprise.<sup>50</sup>

The mutability of caste groups and the complicated intermeshing of social groups that bore individual, professional and collective identity. This point is critical, especially as the British used caste and the hereditary categories of artisan to structure and administer admissions and scholarships to the art schools, especially the Mayo School of Arts in Lahore. Initially, students were sought by their artisan biradari, and their fees subsidised. But within a few decades, students were applying to be classified as ‘Artisan’ on their applications, sometimes by lineage to an engineer in the family, in order to avail the financial support offered to those castes.

### 3.5 The Figure of the Artisan in Punjabi Folklore

The study of folklore in India, Nadeem Tarar has argued, “was aimed at the invention of ‘traditional’ Indian culture,” by contrasting the ‘orality’ of Indian society for which folklore provided a historical reference with ‘literacy,’ the capacity to produce critical

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<sup>48</sup>Chatterjee, *The nation and its fragments: Colonial and postcolonial histories*, p. 189.

<sup>49</sup>“Misl” refers to the twelve sovereign military cohorts of the Sikh that arose in the Punjab during the 18th century, forming a “Sikh confederacy”. Each misl comprised soldiers whose loyalty was given to the Misl’s leader. A Misl could be composed of a few hundred to tens of thousands soldiers. In addition, misls had different classes of land tenure administration. The Ramgarhia misl was associated with Hoshiarpur and Gurdaspur districts. W. H. McLeod. “Ahluwalias and Ramgarhias: Two Sikh castes”. In: *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 4.1 (1974), pp. 78–90.

<sup>50</sup>McLeod, *Exploring Sikhism: Aspects of Sikh identity, culture and thought*.

reflection, of modern societies of Europe.”<sup>51</sup> By choosing to exclude, or indeed ignore, the tradition of manuscript production of Persian and Punjabi stories, the entire mass of oral narratives was subsumed into the ethnological category of folklore and oral tradition, thereby depriving orality of its ‘literateness’.<sup>52</sup> Tarar closely scrutinised the methods employed by Richard Carnac Temple and contextualised them within the broader colonial knowledge-creation environment, observing that the colonial strategy was predicated on the assumption that “Before Indian society could be ‘civilized’, the ‘primitive’ mind has to be read.” The legends of Punjab as textual embodiments of Punjabi history and psychology, were an integral part of Indian imagination, which, according to Temple, were “all framed on the same line, and are the outcome of the same mental habits.”<sup>53</sup> Also fragments and layers. Production of place identity and also some stuff from the old identity chapter. The tension between having to use colonial archives to make a case against them!

### 3.5.1 Social Equality and the *Janam Sākhī* with Bhai Lalo

The carpenter, features prominently in Punjabi folklore, both as a generic character embodying a particular social role, and as specific historical personalities. *Janam Sākhīs* are the hagiographical life stories of Guru Nanak that were compiled in the 16th and 17th centuries, and “persist as mediators of the historical Nanak.”<sup>54</sup> Of these, one of the most prevalent is a *janam sākhī* linked to a carpenter called Bhai Lalo. (Figure 3.4) The *sākhī* of Bhai Lalo is used to extol the virtue of honest work over greed and corruption. It proceeds thus:

*Bhai Lalo, born c. 1452 to Bhai Jagat Ram, was a carpenter in the village of Saidpur. According to the legend, Guru Nanak arrived at Eminabad, where he visited the home of hard-working Bhai Lalo. They shared Bhai Lalo’s simple food which he cooked himself in his own tiny kitchen. The next day, a wealthy government official called Malik Bhago invited Guru Nanak for a big feast. Guru Nanak refused. Malik Bhago was insulted, and angrily said ‘Why will you not come to my feast, when you are happy to eat this poor carpenter’s food?’ In response, Guru Nanak took two pieces of bread in his hands. One was rough, coarse bread from Bhai Lalo’s house, the other was fine, seasoned bread from Malik Bhago’s kitchen. Guru Nanak squeezed both pieces of bread. From Bhai Lalo’s bread came drops of milk. But from Malik Bhago’s bread trickled drops of blood. ‘You see, Malik Bhago, why I prefer Bhai Lalo’s food to yours,’ said*

<sup>51</sup>N. O. Tarar. “Towards a folklore of Punjab in the colonial period”. In: *The Journal of Germanic Mythology & Folklore* 1.4 (2006), pp. 35–69, p. 38.

<sup>52</sup>I explore the role of “qisse” (epic tales) in the Punjab in Chapter 6 in the context of architectural fragments as metaphors. An indepth study was done by Farina Mir, in Mir, *The social space of language: vernacular culture in British colonial Punjab (Vol. 2)*.

<sup>53</sup>R.C. Temple quoted by Tarar in Tarar, “Towards a folklore of Punjab in the colonial period”, p. 62.

<sup>54</sup>McLeod, *Exploring Sikhism: Aspects of Sikh identity, culture and thought*.

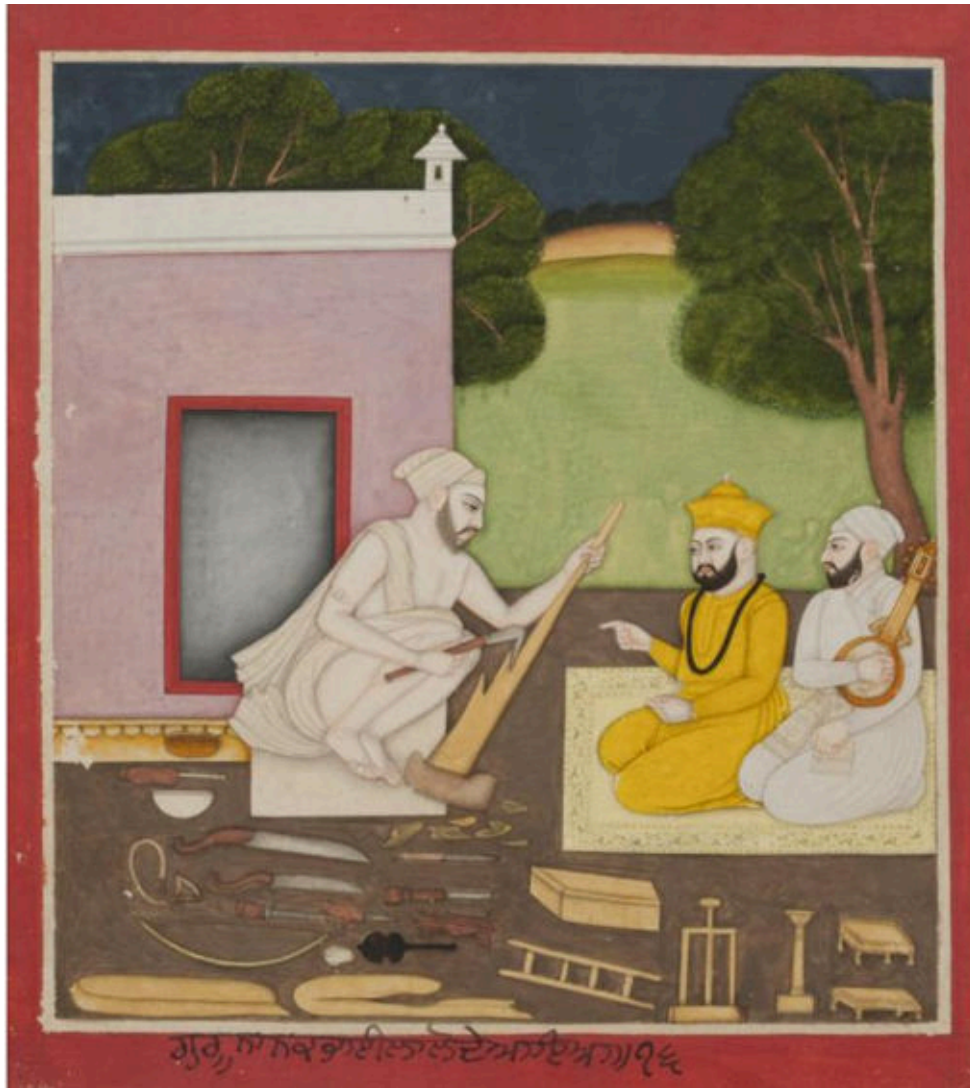


FIGURE 3.4: Guru Nanak's visit to Bhai Lalo the carpenter, from a manuscript of the Janam Sakhi (Life Stories), c.1755-1770. Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, 1998.58.14

*Guru Nanak. 'Your bread tastes good but it is earned by being cruel and greedy. Bhai Lalo's bread may be simple but it is earned by honest and truthful living, and so it tastes as sweet as milk and honey.' Then Malik Bhago understood.*<sup>55</sup>

The identification of Bhai Lalo as a carpenter is essential to the parable, and its representation in art, such as this 18th century painting from a *janam sākhi* manuscript. The painting elucidates this distinction via a detailed rendering of the carpentry tools that cover the foreground of the picture. It highlights Guru Nanak's rejection of caste hierarchies and projects his message of equality.<sup>56</sup> In her research on Sikh materialities and the production of the Sikh community as an evolving historical and social formation, Anne Murphy notes that "objects of memory...interact in complex ways with the memorialization strategies found within textual traditions."<sup>57</sup> Within the rubric of the production, this popular narrative does not appeal to historical accuracy as much as it illustrates the production of meaning through collective memory and collective memorialisation. Locating the parable in the village of Eminabad also works to encode significance to a particular geographical site, anchoring it as much to the timeless figure of Bhai Lalo, who, as a carpenter was deeply embedded in the social fabric, as it is to the sacred person of Guru Nanak.

### 3.5.2 The Artisan and Resistance: The Legend of Raja Rasalu

Even earlier than the formulation of the *janam sākhi*s, the carpenter was a character in one of the Legends of Raja Rasalu. These legends have been part of the repertoire of wandering minstrels and the folk tradition of the Punjab for centuries. In "Tales from the Punjab" compiled by F.A. Steel and R..C.Temple, this was the exception to the otherwise oral sources used, for Temple states in the introduction that

"The Adventures of Raja Rasalu was translated from the rough manuscript of a village accountant; and being current in a more or less classical form, it approaches more nearly to the conventional standards of an Indian tale."<sup>58</sup>

were compiled and published by various colonial scholars...problematise this!]. The role of the carpenter in this tale is arguably less noble, and intended to elevate the royal and heroic stature of Raja Rasalu. In summary, this is what happens:

*When he is 12 years old, Raja Rasalu, the son of Raja Salban of Sialkot and his second wife Rani Loona, decides to go to the jungle with his three*

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<sup>55</sup>Rewritten from two versions recorded by McLeod: W.H. McLeod. *Early Sikh tradition: a study of the janam-sākhi*s. Oxford University Press, 1980; W. H. McLeod. *The A to Z of Sikhism*. Vol. 45. Scarecrow Press, 2009.

<sup>56</sup>G. Kaur and R. Sharma. "Visual Translation of Guru Nanak's Philosophy by Janamsakhi Illustrators." In: *Chitrolekha International Magazine on Art & Design* 1.2 (2017).

<sup>57</sup>Murphy, *The Materiality of the Past: History and Representation in Sikh Tradition*, p. 53.

<sup>58</sup>F. A. W. Steel, J. L. Kipling, and R. C. Temple. *Tales of the Punjab: Told by the People*. London: Macmillan, 1922, p. viii.



*companions: a carpenter's son, a goldsmith's son and a parrot. Whilst in the jungle, a serpent attacks the group, but the carpenter's son kills it. Later the same night, Rasalu kills another serpent, which is larger than the previous one. The next day when they show each other the serpents they killed the night before, the carpenter's and goldsmith's sons frightened by the large serpent killed by Rasalu tell him, 'you are a raja, you can fight with such things, we are common men. If we live with you, we will be definitely killed.' Thus they convince Rasalu to let them go.*

This tale is also located in the Sialkot region in the Punjab as was the janam sākhi with Bhai Lalo. It is, in fact, further entwined with the geography of the land through the numerous references to the River Chenab. The tales of Rājā Rasālu were part of a long tradition of oral story-telling in the Punjab, and they were compiled into illustrated books by Swynnerton and Steel separately at the end of the 19th century. J. L. Kipling provided the illustrations for Steel and Temple's book, *Tales from the Punjab*.<sup>59</sup> So as the published legends enable us to discuss the role of the carpenter within the larger context of production, they also provide an opportunity to remark on the production of knowledge that the codification of these legends was involved in.

The legend of Raja Rasalu is also invoked by Hussain Ahmed Khan to contextualise marginalized communities in his historical sketch of (predominantly Muslim) artisans in medieval Punjab (from the 1300s to the 1800s), and read the expression of reluctance by the artisans as resistance and a critique of the power systems of the time.<sup>60</sup> Building on Raychauduri and Habib's assertion that the mechanisms of the Indian economy throughout this period consigned artisans to marginal socioeconomic positions, Khan offers us the voice of the subaltern artisan expressed through his allegiances, artistic expression, and a resistance to colonial modernisation efforts.<sup>61</sup> Khan explains that the way in which artisans were inscribed in local folk tales, such as Rājā Rasālu, was part of a belief system that gave meaning to various aspects of everyday life, and was embedded in the social fabric. Khan citing Peter Berger uses the term 'nomos' to describe this "combination of social relations and vision of society. . . [that] if strongly established, can foster unity and sustain social groups regardless of social and economic differences."<sup>62</sup> It is this cultural nomos that made the sufi-artisan relationship withstand the dominant political incentives of the British, and to a lesser extent, the Sikhs. Using evidence from historical records, Khan binds folklore, artisans and architecture into social constellations. He illustrates, with a study of the shrine of Suleman Taunsvi (1789-1851) in Dera Ghazi Khan, how artisans across different crafts such as carpentry, weaving, pottery, metalwork, leatherwork and textiles formed

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<sup>59</sup>C. Swynnerton. *The Adventures of the Panjāb Hero Rājā Rasālu: And Other Folk-tales of the Panjāb*. Calcutta: W. Newman & Co, 1884; Steel, Kipling, and Temple, *Tales of the Punjab: Told by the People*.

<sup>60</sup>Khan, *Artisans, sufis, shrines: Colonial architecture in nineteenth-century Punjab*.

<sup>61</sup>Hussain references Raychauduri and Habib from "The Cambridge Economic History of India Volume 1: c.1200-c.1750." Full citation is available in the references. *ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8.

collective allegiances to particular Sufi shrines that not only gave voice to, but also augmented, a Muslim identity through the creation of objects and buildings. The choice of specific materials, motifs, inscriptions and architectural style was related to patronage, artisan skills, material availability, and prevalent styles, and manifested a particular Muslim identity that was enmeshed in the living, local, political and social milieu.

### 3.5.3 The 'Magical' Skills of the Artisan: Prince Lionheart and His Three Friends

Another aspect of the artisan is their role in the occult and their ability to perform magic and charms. While this has not been the subject of too much discussion, it is briefly mentioned by Swynnerton in the glossary of his book, where he explains that “The village carpenter is responsible for all the carpentry required by the community, and, like the blacksmith, receives payment in grain at harvest according to the work done; so much from each family. He is reputed skilful in charms, and is consulted when a spell or the effects of the Evil Eye are to be cured.”<sup>63</sup>

In this phantasmagorical folk tale a brave prince, Sherdil Shahryar Shahrabad, literally, Lionheart, the Friend and Restorer of the City, and his loyal friends, a hierarchy of artisans – the *saanwaala*, (knife-sharpener), the *lohār* (blacksmith), and the *tarkhaan* (carpenter) – have a series of adventures with *jinn* (demons), *churel* (witches and ghosts) and flying palanquins.<sup>64</sup> Along the way, each of the loyal friends is left behind after being bestowed, at Prince Lionheart's behest, with a kingdom, a “most beautiful maiden as a bride,” and a barley plant, whose condition will communicate to its keeper the health of Prince Lionheart as he continues on his adventures. Later on, when the Prince is in dire straits, his loyal friends come to his rescue with their artisan skills and not only save his life, but also that of his lover, and reunite the couple. The role of the Carpenter King is to take on the guise of a woodman to enter the Palace in the guise of selling wood, and once there, to help the Princess escape by quickly fashioning a “marvelous” flying palanquin.<sup>65</sup>

This parable is noteworthy, not just for the prominent role of the artisans and how their supernatural skills are critical to the successful resolution of the tale, but also for how it represents the social associations between the Prince as patron, and the hierarchical

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<sup>63</sup>That there was much more to this assertion is indicated by a separate entry on “CHARMS, for love, revenge etc.” in the index to his book, where again he mentions the supernatural qualities that carpenters, blacksmiths and fakirs possess: “Belief in the power of charms is universal. Space forbids the mention of more than one or two. To induce love a charm is procured from a priest, a fakir, a blacksmith, or a carpenter, who writes certain cabalistic words on a piece of paper, which must be put in the lady's chamber, or under her bed. Again, if a man suspects his wife's fidelity, and would put it to the test, he writes on paper his father-in-law's and his mother-in-law's names. This charm he lays among the spent ashes of the bread-fire, and as the paper smoulders away day by day, the wife, if guilty, sickens and dies. The lucky day for putting a charm is the first Sunday of the new moon.” C. Swynnerton. *Indian nights' entertainment: or, Folk-tales from the upper Indus. With numerous illustrations by native hands*. London: E. Stock, 1892, pp. 371–72.

<sup>64</sup>I have been unable to find any local references to this parable, and what it was called.

<sup>65</sup>Steel, Kipling, and Temple, *Tales of the Punjab: Told by the People*.

relations of the three artisans to their patron as well as one another. Whereas colonial rubrics tried to inscribe the artisans within fixed and static caste designations, the reality was much more fluid and dynamic, and the artisans status within endogamous social groups was predicated on more than just the proportions of grain and produce or wages received. With reference to the the story, this referencing of social status would have been effortlessly decoded by the Punjabi audience who would have heard this tale narrated by a storyteller. In the preface to “Tales of the Punjab: told by the people,” Temple and Steele explain how they went about gathering their material for the book, and that the ice was broken by questions around the supernatural.

”When the general conversation is fairly started, inquiries are made by degrees as to how many witches there are in the village, or what cures they know for fever and the evil eye, etc. At first these are met by denials expressed in set terms, but a little patient talk will generally lead to some remarks which point the villagers’ minds in the direction required, till at last, after many persuasions, some child begins a story, others correct the details, emulation conquers shyness, and finally the story-teller is brought to the front with acclamations: for there is always a story-teller *par excellence* in every village – generally a boy.”<sup>66</sup>

Arguably, Steel’s work with Temple on these local, vernacular Punjabi tales, was also responsible for effacing political, social and economic specificities, and presenting a sanitised and essentialised narrative for her English-speaking colonial audience. Indian women and children, supposed repositories of these tales, become reduced to vehicles for a translatable and consumable heritage.<sup>67</sup>

However, despite our reliance on colonial archival sources for research, we can use these fragments to de-centre and “demystify its power by demonstrating how uneven were its effects and how plagued it was by inefficiency, confusion, contradiction, and challenge.”<sup>68</sup> We can reconstitute fragments of the archive into new ways of hearing the unheard voices of the artisans and the story-tellers. Building on the de-centring of the social construction of the tarkhaan in the gazetteers and census reports, and reading differently the way they are codified in compendia of folk tales, the following section will consider how the articulation of the carpenter within the “artisan class” as represented in the official documents of the civil administration of the British Empire also talks back with its contradictions. Using examples from the personnel files from the Mayo School of Arts in Lahore, I will illustrate the “confusion and contradiction” of artisan identity in modern Punjab, and how it played out within and outside this colonial institution.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*, p. vii.

<sup>67</sup>C. Mahn. “Literary folk: Writing popular culture in colonial Punjab, 1885–1905”. In: *Interventions*. Manchester University Press, 2017.

<sup>68</sup>D. Ghosh and D. K. Kennedy. *Decentring empire: Britain, India, and the transcolonial world*. Vol. 15. Orient Longman, 2006, p. 8.

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8.

### 3.6 Production and the Mayo School of Arts, Lahore, established 1875

In contrast to contemporary developments in art and craft in Europe, in India the dividing line between (fine) art and (folk) craft, was ideological rather than historical, and was rooted more in colonial ideologies of occupational castes than aesthetic principles.<sup>70</sup> In *The Nation and its Fragments*, Partha Chatterjee explains how caste was the one social institution that “centrally and essentially” characterised the difference between Indian society and Western society.<sup>71</sup> Within this structural framework, the peasantry became “the repositories of all those cultural presuppositions that allegedly made those societies incapable of modern self-government and hence justified the paternal authoritarianism of Western colonial role.”<sup>72</sup> Within this discourse, which distinguished between ‘art for its own sake’ and ‘art for utility’, the Indian aesthetic was bifurcated into bounded categories of ‘art’ and ‘craft’. The classification of artisans within the caste system (as the British understood it) was an important factor in the recruitment for art schools. In their mission to revive the “half-forgotten” crafts, members of various craft families were enticed to join the school with dedicated scholarships to enroll, and job placements within the bureaucratic system afterwards.<sup>73</sup> Within the institutional framework of the Mayo School of Art, this selection initially determined who the student body was comprised of, and later also who the teachers were, for in the absence of a regular supply of artisans ‘educated’ to the curriculum of the MSA, the School developed a policy to retain the best students as assistant teachers and teacher-pupils.<sup>74</sup>

Information about formative years of the MSA is primarily available through official reports and documentation in the archives at the National College of Arts, the Punjab Archives and the Archive of the Lahore Museum.<sup>75</sup> The early reports produced by the principal of the MSA for the Directorate of Public Instruction (DPI) and the departments of Industry and Agriculture provide details about the students who were at the school, the curriculum that was being developed and the projects that were commissioned.<sup>76</sup> These have been compiled and published by Sameena Choonara and Nadeem O. Tarar in the book “Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94.”<sup>77</sup> In addition to the official reports, the archival

<sup>70</sup>Tarar, “Towards a folklore of Punjab in the colonial period”.

<sup>71</sup>Chatterjee, *The nation and its fragments: Colonial and postcolonial histories*, p. 173.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>73</sup>McGowan, *Crafting the nation in colonial India*.

<sup>74</sup>Choonara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*, p. 28.

<sup>75</sup>Despite the reports being available in published form, the NCA archives catalogue does not list anything prior to 1900. Thus, for my research I have had to rely on the published versions of these reports rather than the original reports.

<sup>76</sup>Nadeem Tarar notes that “the Director of Public Instruction was usually a military man or a member of the Indian Civil Service.” Choonara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*, p. 25.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*

record of the drawings and personnel records tie the work being produced to the students who were producing them. Some of this is evident from specimen drawings that were sent to the South Kensington Museum as well as the drawings that were published in the JIA.<sup>78</sup>

In 1875, when J. L. Kipling arrived in Lahore to “organize a school of Industrial Art,” it was decided that the School of Carpentry and “any other Industrial Schools that may be established” would be brought under the control of the School of Industrial Art.<sup>79</sup> There is more about the background of the School of Carpentry in the report for 1875-76. According to this report,

“the School of carpentry at Lahore was set on foot by means of a private subscription, and there was reason to hope that it would soon become self-supporting. This expectation has not been realised. . . the school, having no capital, was necessarily maintained on a small scale, [and] it could not afford to pay much for superintendence. The want of sufficient check on the head workman resulted in peculation, and remissness in the execution of orders, which caused grave injury to the financial prospects of the school.”<sup>80</sup>

However, despite the lapses in the management of the School of Carpentry, the students, especially the “sons of artisans” were lauded for their effort and potential, including one Ram Singh, who gave “promise of becoming a very capable draughtsman and designer in his own craft,” and having a possible future as “a valuable assistant” to an architect.<sup>81</sup>

In the report for the year 1876-77, the School of Carpentry was part of the Mayo School of Industrial Art, and its 20 students held daily classes in the verandah of the Director’s office for two hours daily to learn drawing.<sup>82</sup> Under the umbrella category of “artizan”, these students were funnelled through a standard curriculum designed in London that was heavily focused on drawing. In this regard, Arindum Dutta has observed that “a single pedagogy bridged a significant unevenness between industrial worker in the metropole and traditional artisan in the colony. This bridge was affected by the DSA’s emphasis on drawing rather than on craft skills...Drawing afforded the DSA a conceptual apparatus that could grasp the commodity across different cultural contexts rather than emphasize the local idiosyncrasies of material and technology.”<sup>83</sup> This resulted in a new product for consumption - drawing. Coloured and black and white drawings became a genre in themselves, and draughtsmanship gradually became a highly sought skill as it was in high demand by the Public Works Department. In

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<sup>78</sup>This is discussed in detail in the following chapter which discusses art pedagogy and the production and codification of design and drawing principles.

<sup>79</sup>Report for 1874-75 in Choonara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*, p. 32.

<sup>80</sup>Report for 1875-76 in *ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>82</sup>Report for 1876-77 in *ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>83</sup>Dutta, *The bureaucracy of beauty: Design in the age of its global reproducibility*.

the context of (disembodied) architecture as ornament, where ornament lies at the cross roads of art and industry, these drawings were also responsible for enabling the development of grammars of ornament and design catalogues.<sup>84</sup>

### 3.6.1 Seeking and Identifying the Carpenters in the MSA Archive

The National College of Arts archives contain the non-current records of the institution. The record comprises documents from its inception in 1875, as the Mayo School of Arts, to the present time. The conservation and cataloguing of old records was part of a project that was setup to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the Institution in 2000. During this project, records were retrieved from various sources, and processed initially with the help of students, alumni and staff of the College. Later, assistance in the conservation was supported by the Punjab Archives in Lahore, the Conservation Laboratory and Lahore Museum. As a repository of the School's official record, this archive serves as institutional memory containing traces of the past. This archive is a critical resource to engage with the role of the tarkhaan within a colonial institution whose curriculum was being determined by British administrators.

The carpenter in the archive will be examined through the personnel files and records of the MSA (1900-1989). For earlier records, I have used the DPI reports in "The Official Chronicle of the Mayo School of Art".<sup>85</sup> The NCA archives have numerous personnel files for its staff from 1900-1989. Nine of these files contain details of the carpentry teachers across 970+ individual documents. These documents not only contain demographic data such as age and pay scale and previous education and qualifications, but many requests for leave along with the reasons, negotiations over pensions and the tools that were assigned.

The collective picture that emerges of this particular group of carpenters/teachers depicts a community that travelled freely within the Punjab, from Jullunder to Peshawar and from Narowal to Multan, and had familial and social networks distributed across the region.<sup>86</sup> This illustrates how the urban heart of the Majha (heartland of Punjab) stayed connected to the rest of the Punjab. In comparison to the wages mentioned in the Gazetteers, as mentioned earlier (Rs 12 – 15 per month), the starting salary for a carpentry teacher in 1906 was higher, at Rs.20 per month. These were also subject to revision as the candidates moved through the ranks from first carpentry teacher to master. There were two tracks for woodworking staff at the MSA. One was the teaching track, and the other was the "workman" track. The latter

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<sup>84</sup>Among the most well known of these are: O. Jones. *The grammar of ornament: Illustrated by examples from various styles of ornament*. London: Herbert, 1910; P. d'Avennes. *L'art Arabe: D'apres les monuments du Kaire, 1869-1877*. Paris: L'Aventurine, 1877, as well as the journals, such as the Journal of Indian Art and other Technical Manuals.

<sup>85</sup>Choonara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*.

<sup>86</sup>The personnel files contain applications for leave by the staff, often written in English and specifying reasons for the request. The names of the places mentioned here were listed in the applications made by Master Khairuddin, one of the teachers at the school, whose profile will be discussed in this chapter.

were employed to work on the commissions and projects that the School was attracting in ever increasing volume. In the Lahore Gazetteer of 1884 Lockwood Kipling noted:

“The Mayo School has had a decided influence on the carpentry as well as on other branches of manufacture, such as cotton prints, metal work etc. This is partly due to objects actually made in the school, to designs and suggestions given to bazaar craftsmen, and to its connection with exhibitions held in Paris, Melbourne, Lahore and Calcutta, for which it has acted as an agent. Its aim is to recur as much as possible to the best types of indigenous design, and to make more widely known the actual state and capabilities of the arts of the province.”<sup>87</sup>

The carpentry staff at the MSA were not passive in their professional lives, nor was the relationship of these artisans to the institution static and fixed. The ways in which they participated, made progress and represented themselves as well as their work shows that studying, teaching and working at this school, along with other satellite technical schools, reveals that in the twentieth century working at the MSA was a valid and sought-after option for woodcarvers and artisans. Master Khairuddin, who was affiliated with the school from 1915 to 1953, documents in an application how he progressed within the school over a career that spanned approximately 38 years. He lists the various roles he has served in, and what he considers as his valuable contributions to the school and his craft. The growing number of applications for posts, and the security afforded by permanent appointments to government cadres is also revealed across files in the archive. There are posts where an individual who is actively solicited by the MSA turns down the offer to move to a higher grade in a temporary post in the interest of retaining his permanent position at a different institution.

Despite the limitations of the official archive as being bureaucratic and formal, it is still possible to sketch the lives of individuals who worked there and humanise them and their contributions. As an example, the following subsection will consider the carpentry master Master Khairuddin’s bio data and selected archival notes to reveal a “modern” Punjabi artisan and teacher.<sup>88</sup>

### **3.6.2 Profile of Master Khairuddin, Head Carpentry Teacher, 1915-47**

The following information is quoted from Khairuddin’s “Application for Pension/Gratuity” in 1947.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup>Punjab Government. *Gazetteer of the Lahore District, 1883-4*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1989, p. 98.

<sup>88</sup>While the time frame for this example is later, i.e. 1915-1947, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, the archive catalogue has not listed any material prior to 1900, and thereafter the documents are scant and files incomplete. This profile allowed me to interrogate the self-representation of the individual more thoroughly.

<sup>89</sup>106.56B. *National College of Arts Archives*. Application for Pension/Gratuity. Official Document. Lahore, Pakistan, 18/12/1947.

1. Name of applicant: *M. Khair-ud-Din*
2. Father's name: *M. Ghulam Mohy-ud-Din*
3. Race, sect and caste: *Muslim (Kaiser)*
4. Residence, showing Village and Pergunnah: *Lohari Mandi Lahore*
5. Present or last employment, including name of Establishment: *Head Carpentry Teacher/Mayo School of Arts Lahore*
6. Date of beginning of Service: *1-11-1915 /1-6-1921*
7. Date of ending of Service: *30-6-1947*
8. Average Emoluments (or Pay): *Rs 143-11-3*
9. Proposed Pension: *Rs 71-13-7 1/2*
10. Date from which Pension is to commence: *1-7-1947*
11. Place of Payment: *Lohari Treasury*
12. Date of applicant's birth by Christian era: *July 1892*
13. Height: *5' - 11 1/2*
14. Marks: *A scar on the left forearm*
15. Date on which applicant applied for pension: *1-7-1947*

#### On Duties

"My duties as Head Carpentry Teacher comprise of the following:-

1. I have to teach two classes of this department, II Year and III Year.
2. I have to look after the work of two other Carpentry Teachers Viz. II and III Carpentry Masters.
3. I have also to supervise the work of two regular carpentry Workmen employed under me.
4. In addition to the above, I have also to supervise the work of the daily paid workmen employed in the order supplying section of the Department."<sup>90</sup>

#### A Self-assessment

"Ever since the Department has come under my control, the quality of work has also much improved. I have a brilliant record of services to the department and my work has always been marked by excellence and industry to which the high opinion of all the Principals under whom I have hitherto worked is a good testimony. (ix) Now in view of my long patient, laborious, industrious and meritorious services to the

<sup>90</sup>079.56B. *National College of Arts Archives*. Letter from Master Khair-ud-Din to the Principal. Official Document. Lahore, Pakistan, 1/12/1943.



institution, I beg to approach you for a long deserved, but unfortunately long denied, indulgence...”<sup>91</sup>

A corroborating letter from the principal, Mohammed Hussain (1942–1947)

“[H]e has put in 25 years of service in this school and by dint of experience and hard work is virtually occupying the post of a Head Craftsman Teacher. The designation of the post is a misnomer, as M. Khair Din supervises the different branches of work, which fall under the category of cabinet making and furniture making. He designs; he is an expert in cabinet making, veneering (an absolutely new trade) and inlaying and supervises all other allied operations required in furniture making. He is an all round [sic] craftsman and it is impossible to expect a carpenter master to perform all the duties he actually does. The fact is that the Mayo School of Arts has earned a high name for workmanship and designs in furniture and I have no hesitation in saying that this reputation is mostly due to M. Khair Din’s excellent work...If and when M. Khair Din retires, it will be perhaps necessary to engage two or three persons to perform the same number of duties which M. Khair Din performs single handed at present.”<sup>92</sup>

Re-employment after retirement: A letter from the principal, Ghulam Nabi Malik (1947–53)

“It is hereby certified that Mr. Khair-ud-din Head Carpentry Teacher retired from service on 15-7-47. He was re-employed temporarily on the same post on 5-2-48 and was discharged from the service on 11-7-48. He has again been re-employed as Head Carpentry Teacher from 18-08-48 for a period of six months or till the appointment of a permanent incumbent whichever is earlier.”<sup>93</sup>

As of 23-6-1952, no suitable candidate was found to replace Khairuddin, so permission was requested by the Principal from the Director of Industries to allow the temporary arrangement to continue.

There are two photographs of Master Khairuddin in the archive. One is a passport size head-shot (Figure 3.6), while the other one, (Figure 3.5) which was published in a centenary volume by the School in 1976 shows him sitting behind a table holding some tools, and poised to carve a piece of wood. He is wearing a turban, but also a Western waistcoat and jacket. The table has an array of tools, and behind him are panels of wood carving.<sup>94</sup> The details of this image are interesting, and signify the modern, educated artisan, the ideal that the Mayo School was aspiring to, where traditional techniques were producing modern commodities for urban consumption. The sign

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup>081.56B. *National College of Arts Archives*. Letter from the principal, Mohammed Hussain to the Director of Industries. Official Document. Lahore, Pakistan, 27/04/1944.

<sup>93</sup>127.56B. *National College of Arts Archives*. Certification of retirement for Master Khair-ud-Din from Ghulam Nabi Malik, Principal, Mayo School of Arts. Official Document. Lahore, Pakistan, 22/11/1948.

<sup>94</sup>The archivist at the National College of Arts confirmed the date and source of this image, but was not able to help me find the actual citation or publication for it. The centenary celebrations were held at the national level, and along with exhibitions and publications also saw a postal stamp issued in its honour.



FIGURE 3.5: Master Khairuddin Kaiser, c.1947. NCA Archives



FIGURE 3.6: Master Khairuddin Kaiser, *Master Khairuddin Kaiser Muallif Kitaab hazaa* c.1947. NCA Archives

in Urdu reads “*Master Khairuddin Kaiser Muallif Kitaab hazaa*,” which translates to “Master Khairuddin Kaiser Compiler of this book”. Anecdotally, a representative from the archive mentioned that Master Khairuddin published a book on carpentry the industrial schools in the 1920s, but it is not held by the college. This image makes an interesting counterpoint to the painting of the khatia (Figure 3.3) and the

photograph of the carpenter from Ludhiana (Figure 3.2).

The archival and visual portrait of Khairuddin captures the sensibility of the modern Punjabi artisan and teacher within the colonial institution, but through these fragments, we can also glimpse flashes of his movements outside the school and into his personal life. Compiling the fragmentary portraits of the local staff - students, workmen, teachers - is critical to understanding the institution against its colonial backdrop. The skewed emphasis on the British men who occupied positions of power has received considerable scrutiny, but we know relatively little about the local staff and how the Punjabi community responded to the changes and interacted with the official institutions.<sup>95</sup> There are exceptions to this, notably Bhai Ram Singh, whose contributions to the design aesthetic of modern Lahore and the 'Indian' aspects of royal British buildings have been acknowledged and recorded.<sup>96</sup> By assembling the fragments of the lives of other Punjabi wood-workers, my purpose is to release their metonymic potential through the jagged absences, gaps and silence.

### 3.6.3 Tools and Transfers: Bhai Punjab Singh, 1934

The archive also offers a glimpse into how the MSA procured wood, tools, and staff, especially for large commissions. A basic set of tools was provided to the craftsmen when they joined. While it is not clear when this practice started, some of the personnel files have lists of tools that were returned when the individual was leaving his post. The example of Punjab Singh (1934) is especially illustrative of the tools that were in use, as his personnel file has a list of 56 tools he requests as well as the 74 tools that he was given when he joined.<sup>97</sup> These lists are written in Urdu and translated into English.

This case is also interesting because Bhai Punjab Singh was hired as a temporary teacher at the MSA in September 1934 to replace Master Khairuddin, after the preferred candidate, Bhai Mohan Singh, declined the offer due to its temporary nature.<sup>98</sup> Upon the recommendation of the Inspector of Industrial Schools Punjab, that "the best carpenter in all Government Industrial Schools in the Punjab is Bhai Punjab Singh, Carpenter Master, Government Industrial School, Jullunder," the

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<sup>95</sup>Bryant and Weber, *John Lockwood Kipling: Arts and crafts in the Punjab and London*; Gosal, "Physical geography of the Punjab"; D. Dewan. "Scripting South Asia's visual past: The Journal of Indian Art and Industry and the production of knowledge in the late nineteenth century". In: *Imperial co-histories: National identities and the British and colonial press*. Ed. by J. F. Codell. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003, pp. 29–44; Barringer and Flynn, *Colonialism and the object: Empire, material culture and the museum*; T. R. Metcalf. "A tradition created: Indo-Saracenic architecture under the Raj". In: *History Today* 32.9 (1982), p. 40.

<sup>96</sup>Vandal and Vandal, *The Raj, Lahore, and Bhai Ram Singh*; Bryant, "Kipling's Royal Commissions: Bagshot Park and Osborne"; Ata-ullah, "Stylistic hybridity and colonial art and design education: a wooden carved screen by Ram Singh".

<sup>97</sup>053-060.26D. *National College of Arts Archives*. Personnel files of Bhai Punjab Singh and Bhai Pritam Singh (Temporary carpentry teachers). Official Document. Lahore, Pakistan, 1934.

<sup>98</sup>034.26D. *National College of Arts Archives*. Letter from the Director of Industries, Punjab to the Inspector of Industrial Schools, Punjab. Official Document. Lahore, Pakistan, 7/07/1934.

principal, S.N.Gupta, hired Punjab Singh.<sup>99</sup> Punjab Singh moved to Lahore from Jullunder with 15 maunds of household goods that travelled in a bullock cart at a cost of Rs 12 and 8 paisa.<sup>100</sup> In October 1934, Punjab Singh requested a transfer back to his permanent post in Jullunder stating “the post on which I have been now appointed, is a temporary one; if I continue working here here, I am afraid I will lose my permanent post.”<sup>101</sup> Gupta approved this request, but then ten days later received the request for all the tools listed above stating that without them he cannot “show any efficiency and progress in [his] work.”<sup>102</sup> Within two weeks of receiving this letter, and despite the glowing endorsement on which he was hired, and receiving the additional 56 tools requisitioned, in November 1934 Punjab Singh was transferred out from this post. The scathing letter from the principal S.N. Gupta to the Director of Industries Punjab offers a litany of reasons why Bhai Punjab Singh was a “most unsatisfactory” appointment:

“he does not understand drawings and does not know any carving work at all. During the short time he has worked he has spoiled three dressing tables...which only needed finishing up, by disregarding the drawing and putting on wrong joints. This has resulted in a good deal of loss of both material and labour. I also find he is not at all willing to accept guidance either from me or from the Works Overseer. He has recently complained about the shortage of tools both with him and with the students. It is a simple case of a bad workman quarreling with his tools. This class never had better or more tools and the work never suffered for any tools...I am afraid that if Sardar Punjab Singh is confirmed here as a Carpentry Teacher the standard of work of the II Year Class will not only go down very much but the progress and efficiency of that class will get retarded. From his service record it appears that Sardar Punjab Singh is 51 years of age and I doubt very much whether at this advanced age he will be able to pick up new things...I would like to have a very much younger man with more energy and not a person who is on the verge of retirement.”<sup>103</sup>

I have quoted this letter almost in its entirety as it offers a look at the value system through which the worker was assessed. As a fragment from the archive it highlights the skewness of the record because the carpenter cannot defend himself. For the purpose of history, Bhai Punjab Singh is recorded as an incompetent worker who is too old to adapt to what is being demanded of him, and could damage the future for

<sup>99</sup>035.26D. *National College of Arts Archives*. Letter from the Director of Industries, Punjab to S.N.Gupta, Principal, Mayo School of Arts. Official Document. Lahore, Pakistan, 16/08/1934.

<sup>100</sup>048.26D. *National College of Arts Archives*. Expense claim letter from Punjab Singh to the Principal, Mayo School of Arts. Official Document in Urdu. Lahore, Pakistan, 8/10/1934.

<sup>101</sup>050.26D. *National College of Arts Archives*. Letter from Bhai Punjab Singh to S.N.Gupta, Principal, Mayo School of Arts. Official Document. Lahore, Pakistan, 1934.

<sup>102</sup>053.26D. *National College of Arts Archives*. Letter from Bhai Punjab Singh to S.N.Gupta, Principal, Mayo School of Arts. Official Document. Lahore, Pakistan, 1934.

<sup>103</sup>061-062.26D. *National College of Arts Archives*. Letter from S.N.Gupta, Principal, Mayo School of Arts to the Director of Industries, Punjab. Official Document. Lahore, Pakistan, 1934.

his students if he is allowed to stay on. Alternatively, it may be that Bhai Punjab Singh was *not* a good carpenter and quarrelled with his tools as a way to hide his shortcomings. Regardless, contemplating these faults and splinters exposes some of the contradictions and challenges the certainties we bring to our understanding of artisans in modern history. If the purpose is to identify facts, then the lists of tools and other material requisitions can be used to ascertain how materials were procured and how much they cost.

### 3.7 Revisiting the Term “Artisan” and its Social Associations

The term “artisan” got more complicated and further removed from its underpinnings in caste groups from the time that Lockwood Kipling started the MSA in 1875 to when S. N. Gupta was principal, 1930-1942. By this time the category of “artisan” had become a misnomer and a bureaucratic category, loosening its linkages to the social and cultural fabric of the society outside the school. In the archival record at the school, it is invoked primarily for scholarship purposes.<sup>104</sup> For example there is a letter from a student requesting an adjustment of his admission status to “Artizan Student” based on his uncle’s electrical business in Calcutta, where his brother also worked, and another brother who was an engineer. A change of designation would have made him eligible for a scholarship, and the designation was granted.<sup>105</sup> (Figure 3.7) While there are scores of such requests for the period between 1929 and 1932, not all the applications forge such tenuous lineages. There are also lists of students, where their status as artizan or non-artizan is recorded, with the notation that the students who have “been declared non-artizan by the principal on 12/5/32” must have fees collected from by the end of the month.<sup>106</sup> Out of 25 carpentry students on that list, sixteen (16) are marked “Non-artizan”, and the remaining nine (9) are declared “artizan”. The decision to change the artisan designation appears to be quite arbitrary, for while the petitions of the students who had relatives working as ‘mistrees’ in the railways and canal department and other engineering posts were approved, that of the son of a weaver who is a carpentry student was not.<sup>107</sup> The fluidity of these designations is similar to the way caste classifications were mutable and were exploited for social (reputational) mobility and financial benefits, and was linked to perceptions of artisan identity.

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<sup>104</sup>The NCA archive has a whole folder with applications to the principal from students requesting that they be classified as artisans. The file Catalogue Number 71C is titled “Correspondence about Artizan and Non-Artizan, 1929 – 1932”

<sup>105</sup>061.71C. *National College of Arts Archives*. Letter from D.N.Ghosh, a student, to S.N.Gupta, Principal, Mayo School of Arts. Official Document. Lahore, Pakistan, 19/12/1931.

<sup>106</sup>084.71C. *National College of Arts Archives*. Letter. Official Document. Lahore, Pakistan, 12/05/1932.

<sup>107</sup>010.71C. *National College of Arts Archives*. Letter from Fateh Ali, a student, to S.N.Gupta, Principal, Mayo School of Arts. Official Document. Lahore, Pakistan, 13/05/1929.

To  
 The Principal,  
 Mayo School of Arts,  
Lahore.

Sir,

I beg to inform you that on April 1930 I was taken as a non Artizan student, ~~was~~, I, now, beg to request you to kindly enrol me as a Artizan Student of your School as my Uncle have got his own Electrical and other business at Bhowanipore, Calcutta and my elder brother is working there as a Fitter Moreover my another brother is a Engineer himself and doing his own Electrical and Mechanical Business at Howrah.

Thanking you in anticipation and trust that you will enable me to bear my expenses in these hard days.

I beg to remain,  
 Sir,  
 Your most obedient pupil,

*D. N. Ghosh.*  
 II year Commercial Painting class

Lahore.  
 dated the 19th Dec. 1931.

P.S.  
 I stood second and won the Government Scholarship in April 1931.

*Certified that Mr. D.N. Ghose is personally known to me and belongs to Artizan family He will be much benefited if his name be enrolled as a Artizan.*  
*S. C. Sircar A.M.E.E. Signal Eng. Dept. N. W. Railway Tanila.*

*Certified that D. N. Ghose's brother uncle are practical Artizan and his name may kindly be enrolled as a Artizan*  
*R. S. Mitter Retired Station Master N.W. Ry. Lahore 19<sup>12</sup>/<sub>31</sub>*

*Recommendation*  
*19.12.31*

*Artizan 19*

*File 1/16.*

FIGURE 3.7: Application for enrolment as an artizan from a student, D. N. Ghosh, to the principal, S. N. Gupta, 1931. NCA Archives, 061.71C

Meanwhile, as the category of the “Artizan” was getting looser, and less reflective of people who came from families involved with arts and crafts production, working at the MSA was itself becoming a way of indicating a tradition of artisan lineage. We see this repeatedly emphasised in job applications, where stating alumnus status, as well as descent from a former teacher, was aimed at strengthening the applicant’s qualifications. An example of MSA genealogy is D. S. Kapoor, an artist, art historian, art educationist, author, and former principal of the Government College of Art, Chandigarh. His website introduces him as follows:

“Art is in his blood. D S Kapoor has been a link between the two off-shoots - Mayo School of Art (now known as National College of Art, Lahore) and Government College of Art, Chandigarh. A third generation teacher serving in the college as a student, faculty and Principal, D.S. Kapoor has proudly carried forward the family legacy of art and aesthetics [sic] started by his grandfather Sunder Singh, an alumni of Mayo School of Art. Sh. Sunder Singh also later taught in the school before Partition, and then his father Sujan Singh, who, after passing out from Mayo School, taught in Government College of Art, formerly in Shimla and later in Chandigarh. His grandfather, Sujan Singh, and his father, Sunder Singh, were alumni and teachers at the MSA, but at the time of partition moved to India and became affiliated with the art school created in Shimla...”<sup>108</sup>

While this is a recent example, it emphasises the fact that alongside the institutional systems for art education, there were other, older practices through which identity and credibility were established and represented. These genealogical practices shifted to accommodate new social configurations.

The following section follows the contemporary lives of artisans who straddled roles both within the art school, but also were enmeshed within the larger social nexus of craft production. These biographies, albeit short, reveal how the identity of the artisan was tied to genealogy, community, and place, in stark contrast to the ‘official’ Mayo School records which are generally asymmetric in the flow of information, and only capture an individual’s relationship to the institution, not the community of other teachers, students, and workers.

### **3.8 The Production of (Spatial) Knowledge and Genealogy**

Genealogy can be discussed as a historical form of discourse linking past and present. In ancient Islamic culture, it was developed as a full-fledged discipline, *Ilm-ul-nasab*, to explain the relationships between Arab tribes and their place within

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<sup>108</sup>From the website of D.S.Kapoor. <http://aestheticvision.in/About.aspx>, accessed May 23, 2017

humanity.<sup>109</sup> Formally this knowledge takes the shape of recorded lineages, guides for those who maintain lineages and discourses on the principles of genealogical knowledge, but more broadly, genealogy is also embedded in many other forms of historical discourse, such as the rhetorical ways that religious and political entities use the past and real and imagined kinship relations to legitimise the social and political stature.<sup>110</sup> These include religious sects, ascetic traditions across beliefs, ruling dynasties and governing elites as well as artisans, builders, scribes and other professional agglomerations. Richard Eaton and Philip Wagoner have explored the connections between genealogical discourse and architecture in their book “Power, memory, architecture: Contested sites on India’s Deccan Plateau, 1300-1600.” They show how Chalukya rulers in the Deccan selectively employed a range of different approaches towards the monuments of their defeated predecessors, and how, through these highly selective processes of patronage, destruction, desecration, adaptation, reuse, rebuilding, or neglect in different circumstances, they were able to nurture a collective memory of power that not only existed at that moment, but projected into the future.<sup>111</sup> Likewise, Hussain Ahmed Khan has developed a case study of the shrine of Suleman Taunsvi (1789-1851), a sufi of the Chishtiya order in Taunsa, Dera Ghazi Khan, in Southern Punjab, through which he demonstrates how a particular Muslim identity was enmeshed in the living, local, political and social milieu, and expressed through the materials, aesthetic choices, and texts, as they relate to patronage and communal networks.<sup>112</sup>

Linking this back to Lahori artisans and their genealogies, it is also relevant to consider how in Lahore, in the mid-nineteenth century, non-fiction texts began to reflect on the built landscape of the urban centre and its implications for society collectively. A few texts that illustrate this include: Ganesh Das Wadhwa’s *Char Bagh-i-Punjab* which was completed in 1849, Noor Ahmed Chishti’s *Tahqiqat-i Chishti* of 1867, Latif, and Syed Muhammad Latif’s *Lahore: Its History, Architectural Remains and Antiquities* of 1892.<sup>113</sup> William Glover has proposed a new category for this genre of local urban history writing which drew upon “Indo-Islamic and Anglo-European historiographic traditions together to focus on a subject that was novel to both: a meditation on the history of urban monuments and institutions in cities undergoing rapid colonial changes.”<sup>114</sup>

*Char Bagh-i-Panjab* is a history of the Punjab written in Persian at the conjuncture

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<sup>109</sup>S. B. Savant and H. de Felipe. “Introduction”. In: *Genealogy and Knowledge in Muslim Societies: Understanding the Past*. Ed. by S. B. Savant and H. de Felipe. Edinburgh University Press, 2014, pp. 1-8.

<sup>110</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>111</sup>R. M. Eaton and P. B. Wagoner. “Power, memory, architecture: Contested sites on India’s Deccan Plateau 1300-1600”. In: (2014).

<sup>112</sup>Khan, *Artisans, sufis, shrines: Colonial architecture in nineteenth-century Punjab*.

<sup>113</sup>Wadhwa, *Char Bagh-i Punjab*; Chishti, *Tahqiqat-e Chishti: Tarikh-i Lahore Ka Encyclopaedia*; Latif, *Lahore: Its history, architectural remains and antiquities, with an account of its modern institutions, inhabitants, their trade customs, etc.*

<sup>114</sup>Glover, “Making Indian Modern Architects”.



when the Sikh Kingdom of Lahore was being dismantled and the Punjab incorporated into British India. Wadhwa's political history contains detailed descriptions of many of the towns, cities, and villages of the region and, as discovered by Farina Mir, an extensive narration of qisse (fictional epic romances) "that historically circulated in both oral and textual form."<sup>115</sup> The descriptions and the qisse were combined to represent the city. Their centrality to the original text suggests that Wadhwa thought qisse were crucial to an understanding of the Punjab and its history. These linkages between architecture, qisse, and the landscape of the Punjab is explored in Chapter Six.

Also, in contrast to urban histories compiled by the British, which drew in monuments as evidence of civilizational achievements or decline in a linear chronology of successive dynasties, Chishti's 900-page *Tahqiqat-i Chishti* linked Lahore's monuments to "a larger moral framework through claims and metaphors of genealogy."<sup>116</sup> The first half of the book presented a chronological account of the rulers of Lahore from the first millennium through till the British annexation in 1849. The second half of the book described the monuments of the city and its surroundings, compiled through his own personal observations, oral testimonies of local residents, and analyses of inscriptions on the buildings. These were not presented chronologically, but were thematically grouped to titles such as 'Gardens', 'Temples', 'Graves of Sufis and Ancients' etc., and relied heavily on 'legends' and 'hearsay' leading Glover to conclude that "Chishti's source of knowledge was both affective and embodied, deriving its authority and relevance through social relationships rather than scientific methodology."<sup>117</sup> Affective knowledge has been defined by Chris Bayly as

"knowledge which derived from the creation of moral communities within the colonial society by means of conversion, acculturation or interbreeding. Implying an understanding and sympathy for the subject, affective knowledge was gained through social participation, communal affiliation, and "inhabiting the same moral realm."<sup>118</sup>

Embodied knowledge refers to the phenomenological and experiential knowledge of the world we acquire as we move with our bodies through it. Recitation, memorisation and oral testimony were valid forms of evidence in India, but with the caveat that it comes from a reliable source. To locate a building within a tradition that linked it to known people or groups for whom it contained meaning, effectively enmeshed the spatial and genealogical proximities.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>115</sup>I use the word 'discovered' because Mir compared the English translation to the Persian version and realised that the translation had excluded all references to the qisse. F. Mir. "Genre and devotion in Punjabi popular narratives: rethinking cultural and religious syncretism". In: *Punjab Reconsidered: History, Culture, and Practice*. Ed. by A. Malhotra and F. Mir. Oxford University Press, 2012.

<sup>116</sup>Glover, *Making Lahore modern: Constructing and imagining a colonial city*, p. 186.

<sup>117</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 190.

<sup>118</sup>C. A. Bayly. *Empire and information: Intelligence gathering and social communication in India, 1780-1870*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 7.

<sup>119</sup>Glover, *Making Lahore modern: Constructing and imagining a colonial city*.



FIGURE 3.8: Ustad Miran Baksh Naqash with his students, 1910. Chughtai Archives, Lahore

As new technologies, patrons and markets were learned and negotiated, artisans such as Sher Mohammed, Miran Baksh and Chughtai operated in the overlapping domains of knowledge-making – affective, embodied and institutional.<sup>120</sup> They were able to engage with colonial systems through their institutions and media, yet could draw upon the affective and genealogical knowledge that had accumulated within their communities. This is reflected in their choice of language for communication, which varied by purpose, and their artistic output, which was experimenting with new forms as it upheld those technologies and practices that were known. As in the case of Punjabi folklore and how it was compiled into authoritative volumes, in understanding the production of arts and crafts too, the British excluded themselves from these

<sup>120</sup> Arif Chughtai has written about Ustad Miran Baksh and his *hujra* in the Wazeer Khan mosque. He notes that upon completion of the mosque, “a set-up was put in place...to take account of the future needs of repair, maintenance and changes in the mosque. The corner *hujra* inside the mosque was given by Nawab Wazeer Khan to the family of Lutuf-ullah Ahmad Muhandis. The family was to take responsibility for the mosque aesthetic requirements. The *hujra* changed hand within the family in time and in the Sikh period, it was occupied by Umar Din Naqash...[who] Din had one son, Miran Baksh. From the Chughtai Museum blog, 20/12/2013. <http://blog.chughtaimuseum.com/?p=819>

affective knowledge(s), limiting themselves to a textual and quantified understanding of the country.<sup>121</sup> Glover explains spatial relations of proximity overlapped with genealogical lines of descent in a matrix with clear centers of temporal and spatial importance. As the years progressed, and especially after the mass migrations of populations in 1947, new narratives and knowledge systems developed, for the production of knowledge is never singular nor stationary. The interactions of these knowledge systems within colonial and later nationalistic structures of power need to be included in our studies of architectural and artistic production.

### 3.9 Summary

This chapter scrutinised the archival record, and reveals the fluidity of the categories of caste and artisan, as well as the economic environment within which the tarkhan was located. Not only were these classifications in flux, but they were actively negotiated by the tarkhan. This chapter has tried to sketch out the tensions that existed between the local traditions and social configurations, and how they were interpreted and interrupted by the colonial administration. This was done by tracing associations between producers, social and cultural affordances, the routes and supplies of materials, and the mechanisms by which knowledge was (or knowledges were) produced. The production of knowledge cannot be emphasised enough. The following chapter considers the impact of colonial regulatory mechanisms, such as art education and its curricula, and print media, such as journals and textbooks, on the transmission, transformation and trajectories of wood-carved architecture in the Nineteenth century.

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<sup>121</sup>Glover, *Making Lahore modern: Constructing and imagining a colonial city*.



## Chapter 4

### Art Pedagogy and Design Transmission between London and Lahore (in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries)

#### 4.1 Introduction: The Regulations of Colonial Pedagogy and Print

The previous chapter considered the production of wood carved architecture and its knowledge. This chapter assembles a different, but related, set of archival fragments to consider how the value and quality of Punjabi wood carving was controlled, adapted, directed and distributed through the colonial art schools, museums and their related publications.<sup>1</sup> Within circuits of culture, this mediation occurs through the imposition of rules, restrictions or even changing forms and mechanisms such as institutions, networks, procedures, modes of production, and norms. More crucially, the scope of regulation expands into the semiotic realm and includes the control or adjustment of meaning, or any sort of cultural policy or politics aimed at controlling meaning. The regulation of meaning refers to the power to define the transformation, manipulation and movement of meanings.<sup>2</sup> Kenneth Thompson explains this in the following way: “Meanings regulate and organise conduct and practices—they help to set the rules, norms and conventions by which social life is ordered and governed. They are, therefore, what those who wish to govern and regulate the conduct and ideas of others seek to structure and shape.”<sup>3</sup>

This chapter explores the role of regulation within the social and spatial networks of the wood carving and carpentry landscape that can be traced between the Punjab and Britain. I will do this through an analysis of changes in pedagogy that occurred with the establishment of the Mayo School of Art in Lahore in 1875, the role of the curriculum that was based on the model of the Department of Science and Art (DSA) in London, and the system by which students from artisan families were recruited. Specifically, I discuss how the emphasis on drawing was the critical juncture at which architecture becomes ornament, with two-dimensional drawings lifting designs off the surfaces off buildings and rendering them portable across materials. This builds on

<sup>1</sup>Du Gay et al., *Doing cultural studies: The story of the Sony Walkman*.

<sup>2</sup>R. Foster. “Tracking globalization: Commodities and value in motion”. In: *Handbook of material culture*. Ed. by C. Tilley et al. London: Sage, 2006.

<sup>3</sup>K. Thompson. *Media and cultural regulation*. Vol. 6. London: SAGE Publications Limited, 1997.

a provocation proposed by Jonathon Hay that the “image” lies at the core of the category of ornament, and that

“ornament can be seen as a description not only of the design that produces a given configuration of surface, but also of the design that can be reverse-engineered out of an existing configuration of surface.”<sup>4</sup>

I therefore investigate the drawings in art journals, portfolios and technical workbooks and their role in affording mobility, mimesis and transmateriality by standardising and controlling the quality and production of various arts, specifically wood carving.

## 4.2 Art Pedagogy and the Role of the Department of Science and Arts, South Kensington

The success of the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London culminated in the founding of the Department of Science and Art (DSA) under Britain’s Board of Trade. Led by Henry Cole, the DSA was the primary bureaucratic body responsible for technical education in Britain, including devising the national curriculum for drawing and design, in addition to other related subjects.<sup>5</sup> It also prescribed and supervised the drawing curriculum at the basic school level. These subjects were taught at the several provincial Schools of Art, whose graduates would then go on to teach at schools and in officially recognised local art classes. The idea was that the students of the Schools of Art would pursue careers in artistic fields, in industry or teaching, thus increasing the collective levels of aesthetic taste among various social strata in Britain in an age beset by the tribulations of mechanisation.<sup>6</sup> Finessed over time, this system, defined by the textbook–teacher–student relationship, became the basis for a mass pedagogy that could be dispersed within Britain as well as to her colonies.

The DSA curriculum was borrowed and adapted for the colonial Art Schools in India - Madras, 1852; Calcutta, 1854; Bombay, 1857, and Lahore 1875. Textbooks, models, plaster casts, drawing materials, and other equipment from the South Kensington repository were obtained for this purpose. In addition, by the mid-1860s, these schools were also recruiting DSA graduates for their teaching positions. Among the first batch were John Lockwood Kipling, John Griffiths, and Henry Hoover Locke, all of whom became superintendents of the various schools: Griffiths and Locke of the Bombay and Calcutta institutions, while Kipling started at the Jansetjee Jeejeebhoy School of Art in Bombay in 1865, and set up the Mayo School of Art (MSA) in Lahore in 1875.<sup>7</sup> Based on these initial four schools, a number of princely states, Baroda, Hyderabad,

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<sup>4</sup>J. Hay. “The Passage of the Other: Elements for a Redefinition of Ornament”. In: *Histories of Ornament: From Global to Local*. Ed. by G. Necipoğlu and A. Payne. Princeton University Press, 2016. Chap. 5, pp. 268–297, p. 66.

<sup>5</sup>Dutta, *The bureaucracy of beauty: Design in the age of its global reproducibility*; McGowan, *Crafting the nation in colonial India*.

<sup>6</sup>Dutta, *The bureaucracy of beauty: Design in the age of its global reproducibility*.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*

Jaipur, Alvar, etcetera also set up similar institutions where art schools were coupled with museums.<sup>8</sup>

It was not long before the South Kensington pedagogic nexus in India encompassed dozens of art, industrial, and vocational schools, museums, and exhibitions, all fuelled by the contradictory mission of restoring the native artisan to their former (pre-industrial) levels of excellence whilst being able to harness their productivity within the imperial economy more efficiently.<sup>9</sup> By focussing on and strengthening the traditional and unspoiled modes of production, it was argued, native artisans could transition into the imperial economy. Within the DSA curriculum, the idea of value was embedded in relationship to the market. The annual reports submitted by the Principal of the Mayo School of Art to the Director of Public Instruction between 1874 and 1894 not only offer details about the educational systems being put in place, but they also list details of all the work carried out by the staff and students for various exhibitions and commissions, thereby revealing an understanding of the consumer market for craft-based commodities, and a strong commitment to meeting this “foreign demand”.<sup>10</sup>

However, upon closer scrutiny, the DSA’s ideal artisan was an elusive figure. Arindam Dutta, citing Norma Evenson, writes how all four of the main schools faced difficulties in drawing the right students from local artisan families, instead attracting those who aspired to government employment as drawing teachers or draftsmen.<sup>11</sup> Kipling, in his reports, also refers to “wastrels of the Educational Department” and “the type of young man who deserves to be pitied, the wazifa hunter,” who hopes to pick up “a living as a draughtsman.”<sup>12</sup> These are typically men “who have lived to twenty years, more or less, without having ever felt any inclination to attempt any form of drawing or construction, and are in fact only seeking for a piece of bread.”<sup>13</sup> Expressing incredulity that there may be divergences in the motivations of individuals who sought admission, Kipling lays out the various pathways followed by the young men after completing their courses, “in a fashion peculiar to the artisan classes.”<sup>14</sup> These include, joining the Railworks, returning to the families and their businesses, “and others to distant pasts,” where they are, unregulated, untraceable and unquantifiable.

Kipling and his DSA coterie failed to recognise the contradiction inherent in their search for the ideal artisan. The very skills and unique secrets handed down from generation to generation that they sought, also became the prime reason for their frustration: the artisans’ reluctance to perform within their pedagogical schemes and

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> McGowan, *Crafting the nation in colonial India*.

<sup>10</sup> Choonara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*.

<sup>11</sup> Dutta, *The bureaucracy of beauty: Design in the age of its global reproducibility*.

<sup>12</sup> Report on the Mayo School of Art, Lahore, for 1883-84 Choonara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*, p. 52.

<sup>13</sup> Report on the Mayo School of Art, Lahore, for 1883-84 *ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>14</sup> Report on the Mayo School of Art, Lahore, for 1883-84 *ibid.*, p. 52.

their refusal to betray their trade interests. When the Indian artisan choose to respond to prevailing market conditions by adapting to Western designs and forms, it was dismissed as mindless imitation and lack of critical ability. B.H. Baden Powell wrote

“Instead, for instance, of looking at the charming old architectural decorated forms, in doors, windows, balconies and mouldings, and gather suggestions from them for his cupboards and cabinets, the carpenter will exultingly take a woodcut from an advertising English Furniture Warehouse catalogue, and make what he thinks is a copy. The cut being rough in itself and in some sort of perspective, the workman can very imperfectly understand it, and the result of his interpretation may be seen any day in the bazaars of our large stations.”<sup>15</sup>

However, despite Kipling’s laments about “apathy and want of enterprise,” Dutta contends that out of the four art schools, Lahore’s Mayo School of Art was pedagogically the most successful model, where Kipling “routinely scouted the surrounding territories, bringing artisans to the school, and establishing direct links with various ‘craft’ centres to facilitate the collection and distribution of their products in both commercial and pedagogical arenas.”<sup>16</sup>

By 1894, colonial art pedagogy seem to have become a localised and decentralised network, with the provincial art schools serving a dual purpose: as training centres that provided museums and schools at the local level with teachers, expertise, resources, and as conduits to the imperial consumer market through metropolitan museums, exhibitions, commission work and publications.<sup>17</sup> In this way, colonial intervention facilitated the two-way traffic between the demands created by the utility of the consumer and the European market, and the codification of the techniques and traditional skills of artisanal work. This was how regulation and supervision kept a check on what was being produced so that the artisanal commodity satisfied the modes of utility in the metropole. I now go on to discuss the significance and influence of drawing as an integral aspect of the curriculum.

### 4.3 Drawing and the Art School Curriculum

The question that arises is, how did the pedagogical framework that was employed accomplish this fine balancing act, if indeed it was a balance and not a pivot that

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<sup>15</sup>B. H. Baden-Powell. “Difficulties of art manufacture”. In: *The Journal of Indian Art, 1886-1916* I.5 (1885), pp. 37–39, p. 38.

<sup>16</sup>Dutta, *The bureaucracy of beauty: Design in the age of its global reproducibility*, p. 32.

<sup>17</sup>In January 1894, an art conference was held in Lahore, which had representatives from all the Art Schools, including, among others, T. H. Hendley and E. B. Havell. The conference was presented as an opportunity to take stock of the four decades of the DSA’s influence in India at the establishment of the new Lahore Museum in the immediate aftermath of J. L. Kipling’s retirement. The proceedings of the conference are available as a report, in addition to other technical reports, questionnaires, surveys, that were appended to it. “Proceedings of the Art Conference Held in the Technical Institute at Lahore on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th of January 1894” (Calcutta: Govt. Central Printing Office, 1894)



notates change? The answer lies in the curriculum, and that it specifically put a shine on drawing. Drawing was one aspect of the curriculum that was standardised across all artisanal categories. It was deployed through a regulated set of texts and methods both in Britain, and across India, and connected the metropolitan (industrial) worker and the colonial (pre-industrial) artisan into a heterogeneous equivalence chain via a common drawing morphology.<sup>18</sup> While in the metropole the DSA's mandate was to inculcate aesthetic habits, in the colony, customary practice needed to be transcended. Drawing, guided by a set of rules and manuals, offered the unifying skill set that served to bridge these disparities. Figure 4.1 shows students practising their drawing at the MSA in 1908.

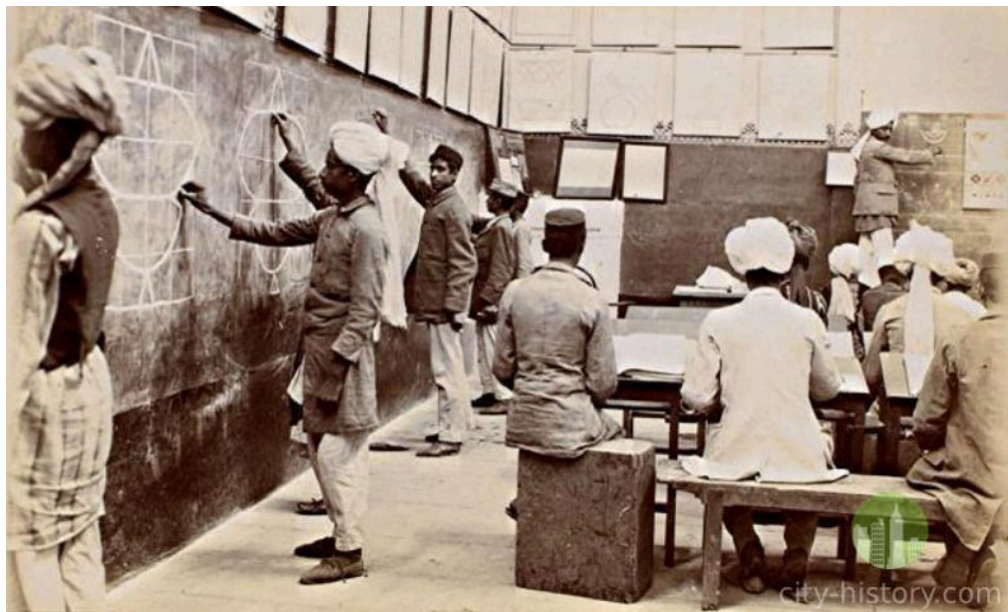


FIGURE 4.1: Elementary drawing, Mayo School of Art, 1909. Royal Commonwealth Society, Cambridge University Library, RSCPC-FISHER-06-AP-847

The archive of the MSA offers us many details of the syllabus over the years. Whereas specific details of changes in course structure, examination topics and teaching requirements are beyond the scope of this chapter, certain specificities bear inclusion to emphasise the highly regulated and set prospectus that these schools were enforcing.

#### 4.3.1 A Prospectus for the Mayo School of Art

In his report to the Director of Public Instruction for 1884-85, J. L. Kipling explained the format of the MSA, and this is presented as follows.<sup>19</sup>

The academic year ran from October 15th through July 31st, with the school day from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Students were admitted with a two month probationary

<sup>18</sup>Dutta, *The bureaucracy of beauty: Design in the age of its global reproducibility*.

<sup>19</sup>Details included as Appendix F, Report on the Mayo School of Art for 1884-85 Choonara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*, pp. 58-63.

period; the “most suitable age for admission” was 15 years, and the “sons of artisans” were most highly sought.<sup>20</sup> No tuition fees were charged, and drawing materials were supplied by the school. A few discretionary stipends were available for promising students. Admissions were encouraged from districts and towns outside Lahore, and those students received subsistence allowances from their Municipal or District Committees; in the case of the princely states, from endowments of the local Maharaja.

Elementary subjects: *All* students were expected to pass the following:

- i Blackboard demonstrations of free-hand drawing and outline from the flat
- ii Elementary geometry ((Richard Burchett’s textbook was used))
- iii Outline from the round
- iv Rudiments of the perspective ((model drawing))
  - v Light and shade from the round
  - vi Plant drawing from nature
  - vii Elementary studies of colour

After the basic courses, “more advanced and technical instruction suited to the aptitude and inclination of the students” followed. The chief subjects taught included:

- i Architectural drawing and design suitable for mistries and draughtsmen
- ii Advanced perspective
- iii Wood construction and ornamentation, wood carving, cabinet-work etc.
- iv Modelling in clay and moulding in plaster, architectural details for terra cotta, stone carving etc.
  - v Modelling from nature
  - vi Painting in oil, water-colour and distemper
  - vii Lithographic drawing
  - viii Engraving on wood and metal
  - ix Textile design, as carpet, embroideries etc.

After describing the prospectus, Kipling re-asserted that “[i]n all architectural and decorative work, the principles of oriental design are considered of first importance.”<sup>21</sup>

Figure 4.2 is a photograph of a metal working class/workshop from 1907. In the foreground young children seated on the floor are practising repouse, while the older

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<sup>20</sup>Choonara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*, p. 63.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 63.



FIGURE 4.2: Metal working Department, 1908. Mayo School of Industrial Art, Lahore. Royal Commonwealth Society, Cambridge University Library, RSCPC-FISHER-06-AP-846

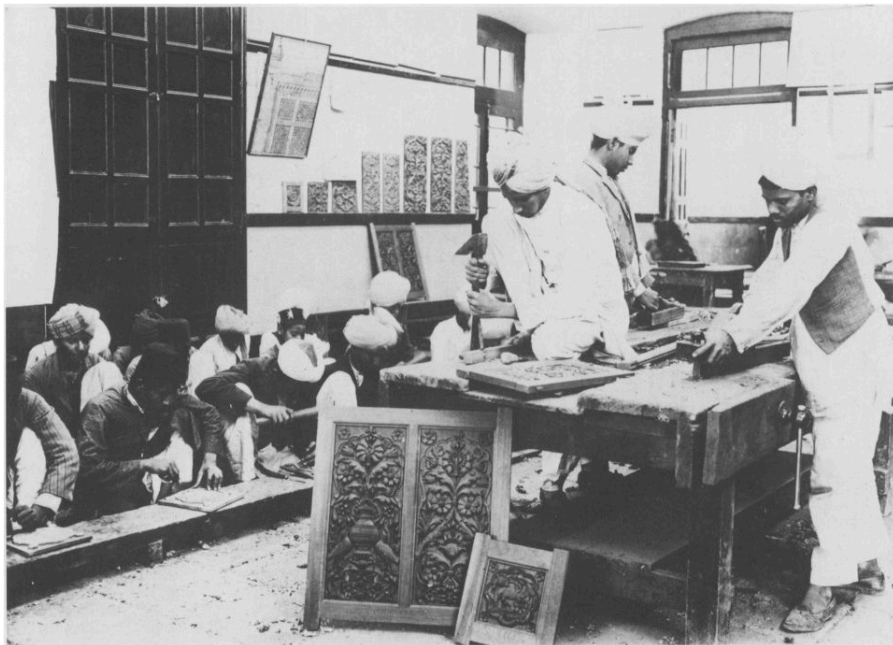


FIGURE 4.3: Wood working room, 1908. Mayo School of Industrial Art, Lahore. Royal Commonwealth Society, Cambridge University Library, RSCPC-FISHER-06-AP-844

men in the background are working on a large metal chandelier.<sup>22</sup> Figure 4.3 represents a wood carving workshop at the MSA.<sup>23</sup> The background has rows of students seated on the floor and carving small panels. The foreground has a large table where three older men are working. Two are standing and planing wood, which a third sits on the table gripping a hammer with both hands. Note similitude of the pose of the seated carpenter with the two carpenters shown in Figures 3.1 and 3.2, and the panels of wood carving with those in Master Khairuddin's photograph in Figure 3.6. Carved panels as samplers of ornament became an easy way of showcasing excellence in patterns and carving styles. The nexus of colonial museums in India, Pakistan and Britain have many examples of these.<sup>24</sup>

Drawing was formulated as an element of a general, rather than a specialist education. In both Britain and India, the argument was for a curriculum that was not confined by the requirements of any particular trade, but rather that it "constitutes the basic visual education that produces the civil and labouring subject."<sup>25</sup> Dutta quotes the principal of the J. J. School in Bombay, John Griffiths' educational policy for Bombay presidency in 1880:

"This scheme [of teaching South Kensington-style drawing] has nothing to do with Indian art, or any other art, any more than that its object is simply to train the hand to express accurately and intelligibly what the eye sees and the mind conceives; and so important is this qualification thought necessary as a basis of technical education and the general training of youths in Europe, that the teaching of drawing is considered as important as the teaching of reading and writing, and is incorporated as a compulsory subject in the [European] system of education... What is required and what should be enforced is that all who are engaged in art industries should be trained to be good draftsmen. This is absolutely the basis of all good work, and this is one of the principal functions of a School of Art, viz., to teach good craftsmanship. To expect a man to turn out a piece of art-work before he can draw is very much like expecting a child to write before he has learnt his alphabet."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>A notation on the photograph by Alfred Hugh Fisher, published by Sandra Kemp, species the chandelier as "hammered brass work" which was "now in Franco-British Exhibitions." This is also likely to be the prototype of the large copper chandelier made at the MSA, that was gifted by Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, to the Taj Mahal and installed in 1909. A brass lamp like this is still hanging in the portico at the National College of Arts in Lahore. S. Kemp. "The Appreciative Eye of a Craftsman': Kipling as Curator and Collector at the Lahore Museum, 1875-93". In: *John Lockwood Kipling: Arts and crafts in the Punjab and London*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017, pp. 435-467, p. 171.

<sup>23</sup>The notes by Fisher for this image are: "Woodworking room - punjabis. Sent from various districts and municipalities, e.g. Peshawar, Delhi, Amritsar."

<sup>24</sup>Bryant and Weber, *John Lockwood Kipling: Arts and crafts in the Punjab and London*; Choonaara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*, See, e.g., the images in.

<sup>25</sup>Dutta, *The bureaucracy of beauty: Design in the age of its global reproducibility*, p. 145.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 145-146.

Over time though, where on one hand the drawing regimen became integral to the formal art pedagogy, it also underwent change and ‘modernisation’. Different aspects within the drawing curriculum were given priority over others. This became most obvious in the examinations and how they were scored.<sup>27</sup> In 1913, the Punjab Inspector of Drawing and Educational Handwork, John Buchanan went to the Punjab as a “drawing and educational handwork” specialist to organise and develop the teaching of these subjects. After spending a year there, the Director of Public Instruction directed him “to revise the school drawing courses, and to bring them into line with modern practice.” In his 1918 pamphlet on Drawing, Buchanan wrote:

“[T]he purpose of drawing is not merely to obtain certain mechanical results on paper, nor to produce artists, but to give to the pupils a new power of expression serviceable for the ordinary needs of life. . . [D]rawing is the primary means of expression in the constructive and decorative arts . . . it promotes the close observation, muscular control, and skill of hand, which are necessary in the practice of every craft, and are the ground of intelligent appreciation and good taste . . . the study of drawing opens to the mind the wealth of human treasure that exists in the form of architecture, sculpture, painting, and leads to a keener appreciation of the beauties of nature, thus greatly increasing the pleasure and significance of life.”<sup>28</sup>

With this purpose as the guide, the pamphlet set out guidelines for the drawing curriculum as well as specifications for equipment, room conditions, tools etc.

A significant effect of the widespread and generalised emphasis on drawing was the subsequent blurring of lines between the industrial arts and engineering. In his reports to the Director of Public Instruction, Kipling increasingly invoked cooperation between technical schools and reports on the expansion of technical education and the development of technical instruction manuals ((for drawing)). He began to report on the students who ended up in engineering employment. Increasingly, more graduates were being hired by technical schools such as those set up in Amritsar, Delhi and Gurdaspur, and even further afield. This pedagogical emphasis belied the mandate for improvement of the arts and crafts. It was not until a point in the late 1920s and

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<sup>27</sup>This is based on the subjects required to pass the ‘Drawing Master’ exam between 1911 and 1922, as evidenced by the annual reports, Catalogue number 2B in the NCA archive. The changes reveal how drawing and its pedagogy were being formalised, with the teaching of drawing itself becoming a subject, and special subjects being introduced for women. So, in 1911, there were six subjects: Freehand Drawing (Marks: 75); Freehand Drawing on the Blackboard (Marks: 25); Model Drawing (Marks: 125); Model Drawing on the Blackboard (Marks: 25); Geometrical Drawing (Marks: 50); Drawing to Scale (Marks: 50). In 1921 the list of subjects that drawing masters had to pass had increased to 11, and included: Freehand Drawing on the Blackboard (Marks: 25); Model Drawing on the White Board (Marks: 25); Light and Shade Drawing (Marks: 50); Plant Drawing (Marks: 50); Plane Geometrical Drawing (Marks: 25); Solid Geometrical Drawing (Marks: 30); Perspective Drawing (Marks: 20); Decorative Design (for women) (Marks: 75); Drawing to Scale (for women) (Marks: 50); Clay Modelling (Marks: 60); Practical Demonstration in Class Teaching (Marks 100)

<sup>28</sup>J. Y. Buchanan. *Drawing and manual training in Punjab schools*. Calcutta: Superintendent Government printing, India, 1918, p. 3.

early 1930s that students began to submit applications to be classified as ‘artizans’, as individuals in that category received the government subsidy for tuition, and ‘non-artizans’ did not.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the NCA archive has in excess of 80 such applications requesting classification as artisan. An especially poignant example is the application by D. N. Ghose who appealed to be re-classified as an “artizan student” as he was wrongly taken in as a “non-artizain [sic] student,” on the grounds that his uncle had “his own Electrical and other business at Bhowanipore, Calcutta” and that his brother was “an Engineer himself and doing his own Electrical and Mechanical Business at Howrah.”<sup>29</sup> The appeal was accepted by the principal, S. N. Gupta, and he was declared an ‘artizan’.

This example illustrates how, less an half a century after the category of artisan was created and regulated by the pedagogical system in South Kensington, the local students and school administration were inured to the classification and used it as an arbitrarily enforced administrative category. The arbitrariness is highlighted in other applications, such as that made by a carpentry student, Fateh Ali, which was denied despite two of his uncles being carpenters.<sup>30</sup> A cultural metamorphosis was thereby enabled by the regulation of art pedagogy in India, from the very specific caste-based census classifications enumerated by Ibbetson in 1881 to an overarching category of artisan that even encompassed engineering businesses.

#### **4.4 A Drawing by Nand Singh for Caspar Purdon Clarke, 1882-83**

On Friday, May 25th 1883, Caspar Purdon Clarke, who had recently become keeper of the India Museum at South Kensington, read a paper at the London Society of Arts Proceedings titled: “Some Notes upon the Domestic Architecture of India.” Sir George Birdwood, Vice President of the Society, chaired that meeting. The talk was supported by a series of drawings that had been sent to South Kensington from the Mayo School of Art in Lahore. We know this because Clarke referred to these drawings in his presentation, which was published along with the ensuing commentary and statements by the Chair, in July 1883.<sup>31</sup> More specifically, they are mentioned in the 1882–83 report submitted to the Director of Public Instruction by the Principal of the School of Art in Lahore, J. L. Kipling, who wrote:

“We supplied Mr. Purdon C. Clarke, CIE, of the India Museum, South Kensington, with measured drawings to scale of two richly carved houses in Lahore with full details, and with plans of a typical native house in the Punjab, and a number of drawings of doors, gateways, and other

<sup>29</sup>NCA Archive, Catalogue Number 061.71C, dated: 0

<sup>30</sup>NCA Archive, Catalogue Number 011.71C, dated: 0

<sup>31</sup>Clarke, “Some notes upon the Domestic Architecture of India”.

details measured and drawn from existing buildings. In this work some of the youngest Sikh boys did very well indeed. The collection of about thirty drawings formed part of the illustrations to a lecture entitled: 'Some Notes on Indian Domestic Architecture'...In the discussion that ensued, the drawings were very highly spoken of as opening out a new phase of Indian Art...I know of no practice so instructive as that of studying existing architecture and ornament than by carefully drawing it."<sup>32</sup>

In this section, I describe one of the surviving drawings from the set of thirty that was sent to C. P. Clarke in London. The drawing in Figure 4.4 catalogued as IND.LOST.1356 in the archives of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, was found rolled up with other unidentified items in February 2016, when I visited the museum.<sup>33</sup> The museum was preparing for an exhibition on John Lockwood Kipling's life, and had been classifying and selecting items for that purpose. This drawing was not included in that corpus, and as such, is the first time that it has been identified and analysed to provenance and purpose.

The catalogue record for "Museum number: IND.LOST.1356" lists it as a "Drawing", with the description "Drawings, depicting Nand Singh."<sup>34</sup> There is no other information provided. It is not linked with any other drawings or artefacts, and is located in storage. The drawing is made in ink, and is quite large, approximately 3 x 2 ft. Despite water stains around the edges, the details are still clear. The subject is an intricately carved, triple archway in wood called a *sehdara*. All across the drawing are handwritten annotations of the architectural components and ornamental devices in local terminology, which include phrases in Punjabi, Persian, and Hindi/Urdu that have been transliterated into Roman letters, as well as their translations in English. A printed label in the bottom right-hand corner gives details about the drawing.

#### 4.4.1 The Rendering and Annotations of the Architrave (*Sehdara*)

Structure: This *sehdara* can be described as a rectangle, with its long side on the horizontal, which is further subdivided into three equal rectangles (whose long sides are now on the vertical). Each of the three rectangular frames contains the same structure within: a horizontal panel across the top, and a denticular or cusped arch standing on decorative pillars. The horizontal panels are divided into three latticed sections, the two on the sides are square, and the centre, a rectangle. The space between these sections is carved with patterns. The pillars are round, tapered, fluted and rest

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<sup>32</sup>Report of the Director of Public Instruction, Punjab 1882-83, in Choonara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*, p. 49.

<sup>33</sup>Thanks are due to Emma Rogers, Assistant Curator, South and South East-Asia at the V&A for her assistance in seeking and photographing the drawing.

<sup>34</sup>From the V&A online catalogue, <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O402666/drawing/>



FIGURE 4.4: Drawing by Nand Singh at the Mayo School of Arts, with annotations by John Lockwood Kipling, supplied to Caspar Purdon Clarke at the South Kensington Museum, 1883. Victoria and Albert Museum, IND.Lost.1356.



on a ‘water pot’ that is supported on a square base.<sup>35</sup> The outer pillars of the two side panels are carved so that they are half pillars that have been embedded into the overall frame, effectively linking the forms aesthetically and structurally. Each of the three archways with its spandrels, horizontal panels with lattice work, has a different and unique arrangement of foliate and geometric motifs. In its entirety, this tripartite archway has been represented in quite meticulous and balanced proportions. The fine, inked lines of this drawing capture intricate arabesques and geometric patterns, while shading in darker greys and black sets off the relief and hollow tracery in the panels. It is worth noting that some of the labels have been truncated as the edges of the drawing were cut at some point. Some of the ink has been smudged by water stains.

Text and Annotations: All over the drawing, including in the margins, there is a mesh of lines and arrows linking parts of the drawing with labels identifying the various parts of the structure. These labels are handwritten in ink, and have the local (Persian, Punjabi, or Hindi/Urdu) word for the element written in Roman letters, and sometimes underlined, next to which is an English translation, in one or more words, typically in parenthesis. It is reasonable to assert that these labels were written by J. L. Kipling himself, both on the basis of the handwriting, which I compared to many other known samples, and the purpose of the labels, which is that of translation. By offering local terms in a language that would be familiar to the community at South Kensington, Kipling was establishing logical relationships between different systems of signification and different knowledge systems, very much in line with the DSA mission of art pedagogy.<sup>36</sup> In a comment related to drawings on perspective being adapted for teaching at the School of Art, Kipling said “their instruction [is being] translated into the vernacular, or at least into *that curious mixed language, which seems to be the only resort for technical instruction.*”<sup>37</sup> In the context of regulation, this statement highlights the semiotic shifts that were brought about by structural changes taking place in art pedagogy and its transmission. The following paragraphs describe the layout of the drawing; as I describe the ornamentation, I will include the respective labels as applied on the drawing.

The exterior frame of the architrave is made up of three narrow, slightly receding bands. Each band has a different ornamental motif repeating. On three sides of this frame, there is the label: *Tañda*. On the top it reads “*Tañda* - one timber,” on the left “*Tañda* – woodcarvers’ corruption of ?”, and on the right the word only appears

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<sup>35</sup>The water pot or pitcher base, often overflowing with foliage, known as *kalasa* or *kalasha* in Sanskrit, and *gharaa* or *gharoli* in Punjabi, is one of the oldest architectural symbols in traditional Indian architecture, and is found across all sacred architectures in South Asia from the earliest times. Denoted as the vase of plenty (*purna kalasha*), the form is also common in mughal and other palatial architecture.

<sup>36</sup>I have tried to ascertain Kipling’s level of fluency in the languages of the Punjab, but there is no indication given in the archival files, nor does the extensive publication that accompanied the recent exhibition at the Victoria and Albert, Bryant, J. and S. Weber, *John Lockwood Kipling: Arts and crafts in the Punjab and London*, address this.

<sup>37</sup>Report of the Director of Public Instruction, Punjab 1884-85, in Choonara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*, Emphasis is mine.

partially. I have not been able to find any clear architectural reference to the word *Tanda*, but in Punjabi it is often used to refer to canes, i.e. the stalks of corn or reeds. It could be that Kipling was unclear about this as well, so he refers to it as the “woodcarvers’ corruption”.

In the left archway, two labels with lines pointing to the horizontal and vertical frames of the latticed sections read “*Pai gunjak* (horizontal)” and “*Khari gunjak* (upright,” respectively. The brackets left open indicate that Kipling did not have the translation for “*gunjak*”. In Punjabi, *gunjak*, refers to the hemp plant and its derivatives, so this may be a reference to the leaf motif carved in the vertical and horizontal. Above the horizontal panel, and with lines going to the latticed quadrangles, he has noted that “Framed open work is called *pinjra* or lattice work — open work perforated marble, wood is *jāli* (network).”

Another bracket marks the left spandrel from its springing line to the crown, with “*Mergol* Persian *mīhrab* (spandrel) sometimes *surahi* – vase or *kamān* bow.” The word “*mergol*” has not yielded much information, but there is a contemporary reference to *surahi* as an architectural element. Quoting a builder and woodcarver, Mistree Haji Ghulam Hussain, from Dina (near Rawalpindi) whom he interviewed in 1982, Kamil Khan Mumtaz has written:

“The *surahi* is an arch. My father tells me it is called a *surahi* because it has a hundred paths. Its curve can be drawn in a half or any other of a hundred different ways in which it can be made. But not everyone can draw it.”<sup>38</sup>

While the meaning of *surahi* is commonly associated with a particular elongated water pitcher, the word can also be a pun for “*sau-rahi*”, where *sau* means hundred, and *rahi* means path, meaning “of one hundred paths.” The genealogical referencing and wordplay used by the mistree in this brief description illustrate the semantic layers that accrue in the practice of this, or any, art form.

In the third arch there is also a note “the leading lines of ornament are called *khawanj*, the whole ornament *vél*, Persian *bél*.” *Vél* (Punjabi) and *Bél* (Persian/Urdu) means vine or creeper, and is commonly used to describe intricate interlacing foliation across the surface of various media.

Another arrow points to the ornamentation that fills in a great portion of the architrave. This is the four-petal flower within a diamond, which is an extremely popular motif in Punjabi wood carving. This motif can appear in single form to fill square or diamond shaped spaces, but is also repeating in bands and frame, as we see in this *sehdara*. The label says “*dal-gul* ornament, (bean-flower).”

<sup>38</sup>K. K. Mumtaz. “Mistree Haji Ghulam Hussain: A Conversation with a traditional building craftsman”. In: *Mimar: Architecture in Development* 10 (1983), pp. 8–13.

The next series of labels relate to the parts of the pillar, and are written on both sides, i.e. within the second and third arches. The centre arch has a bracket marking the pillar from capital to base, labelled as “*thamb* (pillar)”. This is still the commonly used term for a pillar in Punjabi. Regarding the foliation above the capital, the label reads: “this ornament is known among workmen as *shahi*.” The parts of the capital include the “*Galt* (ogee)” form, the “*gola* (round) or *gulma*,” (round) moulding, the “*jangi* (from *jangia* a very tight-fitting belt in wrestling)” which refers to the neck, and the downward “*patr* (leaves).” The segmented lines of the round pillar, are called “*pori* – (each joint of a bamboo or sugarcane is called *pori* in Punjabi ). The base in descending order has “*patr* (leaves),” a “*chipi galt*,” which probably is “*chibi*” meaning upside-down or lop-sided ogee, “*jangi*”, “*gola*” with a clarification “the two fillets on each side of the moulding are called *kanda* (thorn),” the “*ghurrali* (water vessel),” another “*galt*” and “*chaunk* (square base).” The line of ornament along the base of the architrave is “*zér-dar* (under door)...” the rest of the label cannot be read as it has been cut off.

The interview with Mistree Haji Ghulam Hussain referenced above is significant as his comments and naqsha (pattern), reveal that even as recently as 1982, many of the terms and the vocabulary that Kipling had referenced on this drawing, were still in use. Similarities are also to be found in Kipling and Hussain’s lamentations about traditional methods dying out, and newer, “industrial” methods and shortcuts resulting in a loss of quality and knowledge.

#### 4.4.2 The Label and the Draughtsman

A paper label pasted in the bottom right-hand corner of the drawing offers some clues about the drawing and who made it. At the top of the label is the title “Mayo School of Industrial Art, Lahore”. Beneath this are four separate rows, each with a printed caption and horizontal line on which the relevant information has been filled in by two different hands, as is evident from the different handwriting. The content on the label is presented as Table 4.1:

TABLE 4.1: Label for the Drawing IND.LOST.1356 by Nand Singh

Printed matter	Handwriting 1	Handwriting 2
Subject	Baraduri – wood construction – modified from an original in the Lahore Central Museum.	One side of a (inserted before, and above, the word baraduri)
Student	Nand Singh – carpenter	-
Age	20	
Time in School	18 months	
Principal	-	J. L. Kipling

We do not know too much about Nand Singh, the draughtsman, other than the details here, which present him as a 20-year-old carpenter who had been a student at the School for 18 months. The archives of the National College of Arts do not have

any material in their catalogues prior to 1900. There is, however, one mention in the Principal's Report to the Director of Public Instruction by Lockwood Kipling:

“... there are a number of men who, after a long time spent in the school, are now doing well in various capacities and applying the notions learnt here to their daily work. I may mention among these...Nand Singh, a draughtsman who has been employed in the office of the Curator of Ancient Monuments, with Muhammed Din and Takar Singh, both skilled architectural draughtsmen and colourists in the same office.”<sup>39</sup>

Nand Singh being classified as “carpenter” on the drawing and Kipling identifying him as a draughtsman in his report captures the slippage between caste and artisan categories as well as the shift in skill sets and changes to the economic opportunities that were rendered possible by attending the School of Art from more traditional forms of art production to those that were being taught here.

There are a few other interesting observations on the caption. The caption reads: “One side of a *baraduri* – wood construction – modified from an original in the Lahore Central Museum.” Now *baraduri* translates to Twelve-door (*bara* = twelve, and *duri/dari* = the possessive form for *dur*, meaning doorway), which is incorrect because a triple archway is typically referred to as a *sehdara*, 3-door (*seh* = three), so there is a correction inserted “one side of a” near the word *baraduri* to be more accurate. Clarke specifically mentioned this detail in his presentation (and paper): “The square pavilion, with three openings on each side, has given the name ‘barradarri,’ or twelve doors, to palace buildings of different proportions in all parts of India.”<sup>40</sup> The second interesting point to note is that this is a “modification from an original.” All three *sehdaras* currently on display at the Lahore Museum are morphologically similar to this drawing, but their ornamentation is different, especially in the latticed panels above the arches. From the condition of the wood, they also appear to be fairly new, although I could not verify this through the records or enquiry. (Figure 4.5

I went through many of the catalogues there, but was unable to ascertain the details about these *sehdaras*. The point is not to dissect precise modifications, but rather highlight the fact that representations of domestic architecture for South Kensington were subject to interpretation, *dakhl*, by the draughtsman. Each of the arches has a different pattern of ornamentation, so these drawings would have served as sampler of ornamental designs within particular forms, and used to represent and reproduce ‘oriental’ wood carving, especially when received with the annotations that set up a classificatory scheme for the parts of a *sehdara*.

The transfer of information about the art and architecture (and its elements) between Punjab and South Kensington through the medium of drawing increased as the School

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<sup>39</sup>Report on the Mayo School of Art, 1883-84, in Choonara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*, p. 52.

<sup>40</sup>Clarke, “Some notes upon the Domestic Architecture of India”.



FIGURE 4.5: Architraves in the Painting Gallery at the Lahore Museum, 2016. Author

of Art became more established. The Report of the Director of Public Instruction, Punjab for 1881-82 states that “The School has received much encouragement from the South Kensington Museum, and will be provided with a sum of money to be expended annually on reproductions for that institution.”<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, the report for the following year, 1882-83, explains that “it has been arranged to issue periodically illustrated papers on Indian Art, and ten large pen drawings have been made for the first paper, and will be produced in photo-lithography by the photographer to the Science and Art Department.”<sup>42</sup> Kipling’s remark express an optimism not only for the strengthening linkages between the institution, but also the reception of the drawings themselves: “I have been unofficially informed that the institution will make further requisitions upon us for reproductions of good old work in Lahore and its neighbourhood, besides objects of our own design. I know of no practice so instructive as that of studying existing architecture and ornament than by carefully drawing it.”<sup>43</sup> This quote frames the ambition of change that was taking place due to the pedagogical shifts. First, in its declaration of the limits of the operational space, “good old work in Lahore and its neighbourhood”, secondly the inclusion and parity of the “old work” with the “new objects that were being designed,” and finally the instructive privilege of drawing as a means of studying “existing architecture.”<sup>44</sup> Kipling believed that the positive reception from London “compensates...for a certain lack of merely local or Anglo-India popularity,” and thus may “excite the enthusiasm necessary for success,” and offset the “absence of spirit and alacrity in those who are capable of doing well.”<sup>45</sup>

<sup>41</sup>Report of the Director of Public Instruction, Punjab for 1881-82, in Choonara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*, p. 43.

<sup>42</sup>Report of the Director of Public Instruction, Punjab for 1882-83, in *ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>43</sup>Report of the principal, School of Art, Lahore, for 1882-83, *ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 49.

Within the broader discussion of regulation, the trajectory of structural changes brought about by this increased focus on drawing in the Art School curriculum led to a need for teaching and training materials, outlets for publishing and exhibiting the drawings, as well as opportunities for a new cadre of producers – draughtsmen. As early as 1883, Kipling had started complaining that

“many of those who attend the school look upon all work, except practice in the use of geometrical drawing instruments, which shall fit them for a place in a drawing office, as time wasted; while the object of the school as laid down from the beginning is the study of ornamental design, and the improvement and revival of industrial art, which has but little connection with the draughtsman’s work so many wish to study.”<sup>46</sup>

Often this tension between social and cultural transformation that was brought about by colonialism and the resistance to it by the people who were affected gets overlooked because we interrogate the relationships asymmetrically. The regulatory modalities of codifying, controlling and restructuring resulted in instabilities in the social and cultural systems, which led to changes in the modes of production, consumption, and had impacts on representation and identity.<sup>47</sup> The reports from the Mayo School of Art capture the contradictions that surface when the students do not respond the imposed curriculum with the same spirit, and indeed, choose to use the school “as a stepping stone merely.”<sup>48</sup>

## 4.5 The Printing Press: Journals, Technical Manuals and Portfolios

The systemised production of drawings and images was synchronous with the burgeoning of the printing press, and resulted in lavishly illustrated journals, portfolios, and publications where regional arts and manufactures were compiled for appraisal. In Britain, pattern books had been published in the eighteenth century. These typically pertained to middle-end and luxury goods industries, such as woollen and silk textiles, by British manufacturers.<sup>49</sup> However with the dispersal and preponderance of drawing as a new, generalisable media, aesthetic information could be exchanged between disparate industries, such as textiles, cabinetmaking, upholstery, and pottery, and thus claim an audience beyond the specific constituencies of individual trades.

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<sup>46</sup>Report on the Mayo School of Art, Lahore, for 1883-84, Choonara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*, p. 54.

<sup>47</sup>Cohn and Scott, *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge: The British in India*.

<sup>48</sup>Report on the Mayo School of Art, Lahore, for 1883-84, in Choonara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*, p. 55.

<sup>49</sup>A. Puetz. “Design instruction for artisans in eighteenth-century Britain”. In: *Journal of Design History* 12.3 (1999), pp. 217–239; P. Mitter. *Art and nationalism in colonial India, 1850-1922: Occidental orientations*. Cambridge University Press, 1994.

The relevance of published drawings in the context of institutional art education served the goals of the DSA to standardise and regulate aesthetic taste, both in the metropole and the colony.<sup>50</sup> Drawings in print became a powerful means of carrying aesthetic standards visually. In pedagogical contexts, these drawings were utilised not only to train students but also as reference materials offering sanctioned and approved designs for commission work. This increasingly visual medium of print had economic, social, and political ramifications: by establishing aesthetic conventions and norms that were de-contextualised from form and material, a pen and ink drawing could become the basis of any number of constructions. These architectural drawings fragment architecture to focus on ornament at the expense of context.

The earliest lithographed books in India have been dated to the third decade of the 19th century, and from the 19th century to the first decade of the 20th, there was a great expansion with hundreds of lithographic printing houses flourishing across the land.<sup>51</sup> The earliest lithographic presses provided employment for scribes, calligraphers, and illustrators, who adapted manuscript design practices, and North Indian lithographic presses contributed to the development of “cohesive lithographic aesthetics,” which included elements of European book design.<sup>52</sup> At the Mayo School of Art, lithography was introduced as a subject in the early 20th century. The school got its own printing press in 1915 and set up a new department of photolithography. Prior to this, all materials were printed in Calcutta. The earliest illustrations produced by the school included maps and plans of the city, illustrations for books for technical schools, and catalogues for the Lahore Museum. The printing was done at the Civil and Military Gazette Press.<sup>53</sup> However the school had been actively producing drawings, many of which were also printed and compiled into technical training manuals.

The quality of printing varied and served different purposes. Where on one hand basic black and white books and pamphlets with line-drawn diagrams were used as teaching texts in schools, on the other, lavish, leather-bound, coloured folios were also circulated. The purpose of these, as described in the first volume of the *Journal of Indian Art*, was as a resource “from which new generations of artisans will imbibe their ideas of art and construction.”<sup>54</sup> Among these volumes, printed by the London-based publisher W. Griggs, was the *Journal of Indian Art* that came out of the Mayo School of Art in Lahore in 16 volumes between 1883 and 1916, and the ten-volume *Jeypore Portfolio*, that came out in 1890, and was created under the supervision of

<sup>50</sup>Dutta, *The bureaucracy of beauty: Design in the age of its global reproducibility*.

<sup>51</sup>Z. Shah. “Sustaining Authority in Persian Lithographed Books: Publishers and Printing in North India, c. 1835–57”. In: *South Asian Studies* 33.2 (2017), pp. 137–148.

<sup>52</sup>U. Stark. *An Empire of Books: the Naval Kishore Press and the diffusion of the printed word in colonial India*. New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007.

<sup>53</sup>N. O. Tarar. “Chromolithography and the Mayo School of Art, Lahore (1917-1920 CE)”. in: *Mazaar, bazaar: design and visual culture in Pakistan*. Ed. by S. Zaidi. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2009. Chap. 25, pp. 244–253.

<sup>54</sup>J. L. Kipling. “Colonial and Indian Exhibition”. In: *Journal of Indian Art* I.11 (1886), pp. 77–84, p. 77.

Colonel Samuel Swinton Jacob while he was engineer to Jeypore state. In addition, there was the Technical Art Series that came out in 15 volumes between 1886 and 1903, which contained drawings and photographs from the Archaeological Survey of India collections. Collectively, these journals were vehicles through which the ideals of good design were made portable in order to reach producers and students within the metropole and all across the empire. (Figs. 3.7; 3.8)

The following sections consider the histories and impact of some of the prominent print materials that used drawing. These publications illustrate the specific way in which drawings decontextualised architectural elements from their buildings and, by rendering them mobile across different formats, advanced their shift from architecture to ornament. Their credibility lay in the selection of the ‘best’ items in that class as represented by the most exalted authorities, such as J. L. Kipling. They served pedagogical goals within the art schools as well as transmitted samples of ornament that was used trans-materially in manufactures and the industrial arts by British architects and designers.

#### 4.5.1 The Journal of Indian Art, 1883 – 1916

Contemporary with, and complementary to, the industrial exhibitions, and motivated by the agenda of education and reform, was *The Journal of Indian Art* produced by the Mayo School of Arts in Lahore, under J. L. Kipling, and published by W. Griggs in London. This publication followed its precursor, the *Journal of Design and Manufacture* which was published between 1849 and 1852 by the South Kensington Museum under Henry Cole.<sup>55</sup> Griggs produced 2000 copies of the first volume of the Journal of Indian Art in 1886, of which 1000 were distributed within England, and the rest across India. A total of 17 volumes was published until its closure in 1916 due to the war. The vision for the Journal encouraged not only photographic and reproductive innovations in order to ensure accurate and attractive illustrations, but Griggs and his editorial staff also took pushed the most current technologies to produce high quality colour chromo-and photo-lithographs and black and white illustrations, which were then bound in leather.<sup>56</sup> (Figure 4.6)

The first volume of the Journal was published in 16 sub-sections from 1883 to 1886, and had multiple articles devoted to the Exhibition. These ranged from statements by Edward C. Buck, Commissioner for the Government of India, to details in image and text of each court screen that was produced for the regional courts, as well as articles on regional specialism in pottery, metal-work, textiles, jewellery, architecture, ivory, etcetera. This publication was was “intended to be a complete series of historical

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<sup>55</sup>P. H. Hoffenberg. “Promoting Traditional Indian Art at Home and Abroad:”*The Journal of Indian Art and Industry*”, 1884-1917”. In: *Victorian Periodicals Review* 37.2 (2004), pp. 192-213.

<sup>56</sup>In 1894, in an effort to cut cost and increase readership, Thomas Hendley recommended that the JIA be renamed *Journal of Indian Art and Industry*, and would be produced as a monthly, rather than quarterly, publication, with the color illustrations included every third month. In addition, ordinary issues would be published in India, while the special ones would continue to be published in London. *ibid.*, pp. 201-2.



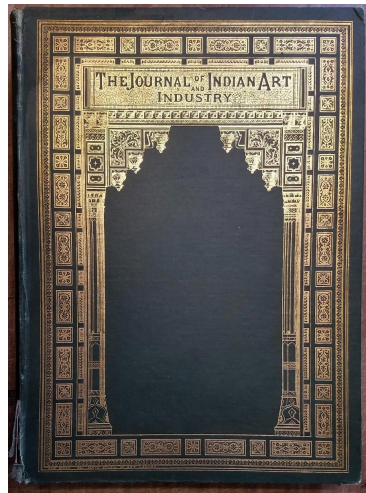


FIGURE 4.6: Architectural frames on the cover of the Journal of Indian Art and Industry. Photographed SADACC by the Author

descriptions, illustrated by typical examples of the Art Manufactures of India,” and distributed among schools and workshops in order to be a resource “from which new generations of artisans will imbibe their ideas of art and construction.”<sup>57</sup>

The Journal had a broad and diverse range of contributors, from educators in the Art Schools, like J. L. Kipling, to art critics and commentators like Sir George M. Birdwood and R. C. Temple, as well as Anglo-Indians with an interest in the commerce of Indian art wares in Britain and Europe, and Indian employees and artists such as T. N. Mukherjee and B. A. Gupte. Peter Hoffenberg has explained how the linkages between bureaucrats, managers, scholars, and an “intellectual gentry” in Britain and India at institutions including the South Kensington Museum, the Royal Society of Arts, India’s Department of Revenue and Agriculture, and the India Office in London, came together in this enterprise over a shared an interest not only in the promotion and preservation of traditional Indian design and to improve manufactures, but also “a way to encourage and publicize to the general public in Britain and elsewhere the British Raj’s extensive reorientalization during the later-Victorian and Edwardian eras.”<sup>58</sup> According to Hoffenberg, the Journal of Indian Art was “a self-conscious articulation of the links between the production, appreciation, and consumption of traditional art on one hand, and the stability of the Raj on the other.”Hoffenberg highlights the paradox inherent in the technology and mass-publication of these volumes with the content they contained and the purpose they served.<sup>59</sup>

The following example demonstrates how the Journal acted a vehicle through which the ideals of good design were made portable in order to reach producers and students within the metropole and across the empire. In JIA Volume I, No 4, Kipling wrote

<sup>57</sup> Kipling, “Colonial and Indian Exhibition”, p. 77.

<sup>58</sup> Hoffenberg, “Promoting Traditional Indian Art at Home and Abroad:”The Journal of Indian Art and Industry”, 1884-1917”, p. 194.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.

an article titled “Punjab Wood Carving.”<sup>60</sup> This article was illustrated with seven black and white plates showing different items of architecture and furniture, which covered the different points about Punjab woodworking made by Kipling, including a remarkable ‘akbari’ style door representing work “unlike any now produced,” characteristic patterns of lattice-work, and articles of furniture to which these tracery patterns have been applied.<sup>61</sup> In addition, Plate 4 in the Journal is a drawing of a wood carved “door” with the caption: “Modern Door Carved in Deodar at Bhera, Shalipur District, Punjab,” attributed to one Amir Baksh. The drawing and its caption are worthy of some attention for several reasons, not least because it is a window, and the district’s name, Shahpur, has been mis-spelt! (Figure 4.7)

The drawing of the door represents a large rectangular frame in the centre of which is a relatively small opening with two leaves or shutters. The upper portion of the structure, approximately a third of the space, is a horizontal panel with the typical *pinjara* (latticed) work, set in the centre of a series of receding bands, each carved with a different motif. The lower portion, about two-thirds of the rectangle, has a complicated arrangement where one *surahi* (cusped) arch set on foliated pillars frames a second miniaturised version of the same. Within the second archway is a rectangular band which contains the opening with the shutters. In front of the shutters (which would pull open inwards) there is a foliated arch and a latticed balustrade, clearly indicating that this arrangement could not plausibly function as a door: the opening is far too small and is blocked in front by the carved balustrade on the bottom and the ornamental arch on top.

In his discussion of this Plate, Kipling wrote:

“Plate 4 is a piece of modern work of a different kind, from Bhera, in the Shahpur district, where a large quantity of similar work is wrought in deodar. The elements of the design are Muhammadan, and the carver is of that creed; but the first impression it conveys is that the reserve and repose usually found in Muhammadan work are wanting. There is no striving for delicacy either in design or execution, the foliage is rather rudely designed and sharply cut out, mostly in a V section; but the effect of such a door when set in an expanse of brickwork is often rich and not wanting in refinement. Its price to a native used to be about Rs. 35, but since a demand has arisen prices have been raised.”<sup>62</sup>

I provide the quotation in its entirety as it illustrates the gamut of opinions around production, appreciation, and consumption referred to by Hoffenberg in his assessment of the Journal.<sup>63</sup> Kipling assigned provenance, artistic value, as well as market implications. He classified the design and carving style as ‘Muhammadan,’ by the

<sup>60</sup>Kipling, “Punjab wood carving”.

<sup>61</sup>The “akbari” door is discussed in Chapter 2, under “Mimesis”. *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>63</sup>Hoffenberg, “Promoting Traditional Indian Art at Home and Abroad:”*The Journal of Indian Art and Industry*”, 1884-1917”.

creed of the carver as well as style, thereby structuring and enforcing the codifications that are to this day so pervasive in our understanding of architecture and art from the Punjab. While Kipling calls this “a modern work of a different kind,” the drawing identifies this as a door, when clearly it is not one.

In my research on this item, I have identified several examples that typify this “modern work” in museums in India, Pakistan and Britain. They include:

- i The Albert Hall Museum in Jaipur, Accession Number 1443, N/195 (Figure 4.8);
- ii The Lahore Museum, Lahore, Accession Number: M1528 (Figure 4.9);
- iii The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Museum Number: IS.2383-1883 (Figure 4.10), and
- iv The Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow, Accession number: 1888.109.kd (Figure 4.11).

The specimen at the Albert Hall Museum, in Jaipur is labelled as a “Heavily carved wooden door, Kapurthala, Punjab, 19th century,” which also raises interesting questions about provenance and labels.<sup>64</sup> In the *Handbook to the Jeypore Museum*, Thomas Holbein Hendley has listed “a large carved wooden door from Bhera in the Punjab (1443)” in the south end of Animal Gallery along with other items of wood carving, including a carved bracket from Kapurthala (1485) and “a case of South Indian dried fishes!”<sup>65</sup> The MSA was heavily involved with the Jeypore Exhibition of 1883, with Kipling on the panel of jurors, so it is likely that this door was acquired then, and the labels are inaccurate. Or, since its facsimiles of this wood carving were being created in different sites across Punjab for commercial purposes from approved models, it could also be a later acquisition, though this is unlikely. There are numerous references to woodworking commissions going to Amritsar and Hoshiarpur carpenters and ateliers when the Mayo School of Art could not handle the volume of work.<sup>66</sup> But it is quite possible that this door became a site for nationalistic identity expressed through heritage. This is not something I can assert for certain in this context, but it would not be unheard of post-partition.

The Calcutta Exhibition was held in 1883-84, and according to the *Official Report Of The Calcutta International Exhibition, 1883-84 Vol.2*, the carved door and window from Bhera, Shahpur, were made by “Faza [sic] Din and other” and was priced at Rs 113, but was marked “*Not for Sale*”. Both Choonara and Tarar, and Bryant and Weber have published photographs of the Punjab Court at the Calcutta Exhibition,

<sup>64</sup>Obtained from the online gallery collection of the Albert Hall museum, <http://alberthalljaipur.gov.in/displaycontents/view/52>.

<sup>65</sup>T. H. Hendley. *Handbook to the Jeypore Museum*. Calcutta: Calcutta Central Press Company, Limited, 1895, p. 121.

<sup>66</sup>See for example, the reports on the Mayo School of Art for 1883-84, 1884-85, and 1885-86, in Choonara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*.

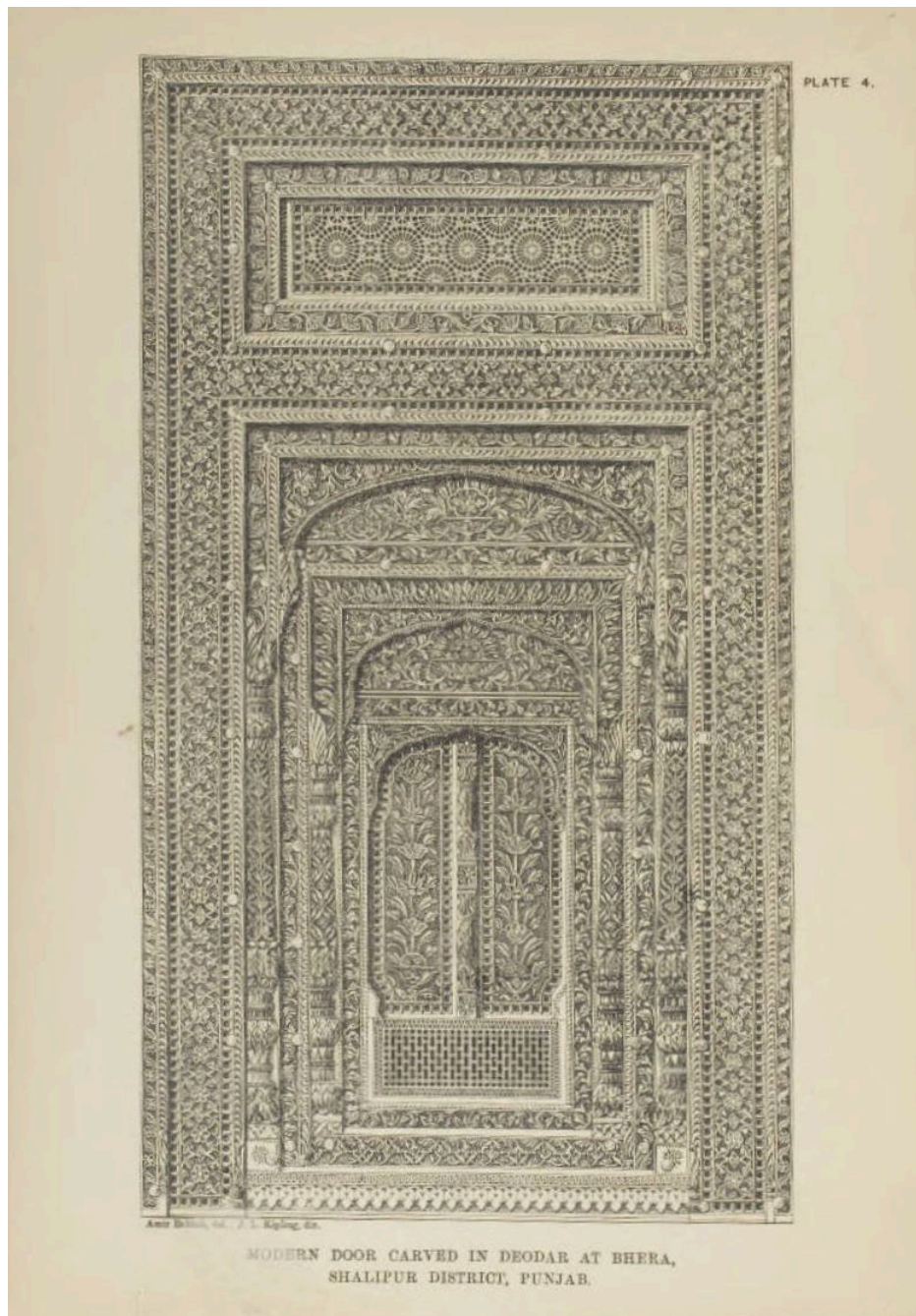


FIGURE 4.7: *Modern Door Carved in Deodar at Bhera, Shalipur District, Punjab, 1884. Journal of Indian Art Volume I, No. 4, Plate 4.*

Chapter 4. Art Pedagogy and Design Transmission between London and Lahore (in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries)

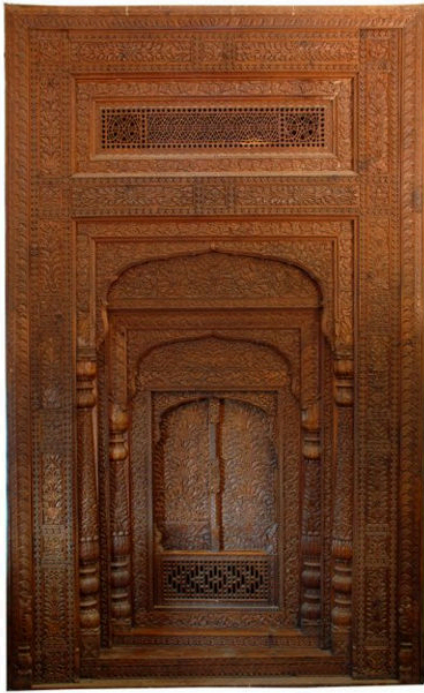


FIGURE 4.8: *Heavily carved wooden door, Kapurthala, Punjab, 19th century. Albert Hall Museum, Jaipur, 1443-N/195*



FIGURE 4.9: *Label from Museum. Lahore Museum, Lahore, M1528*

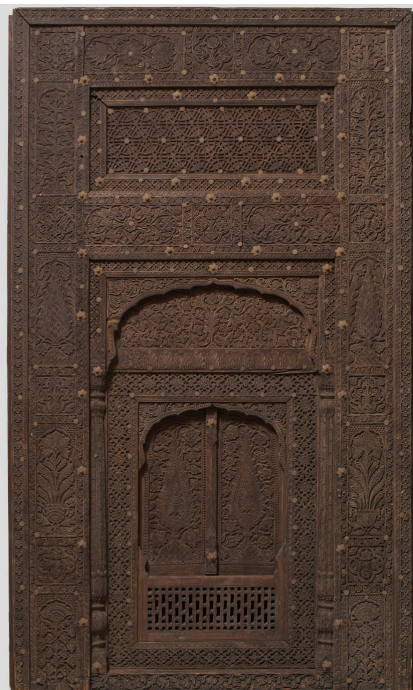


FIGURE 4.10: *Window, wood, Bheru, Shahpur, Punjab, Pakistan. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, IS.2383-1883*

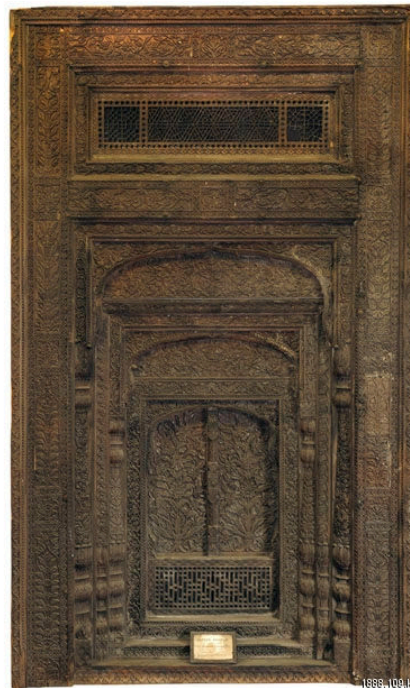


FIGURE 4.11: *Carved window of Deodar wood, from Bhera, Shahpur, c.1887-88. Glasgow Museum, 1888.109.kd.*

depicting the carved doors, however the doors in both pictures do not match! A photograph of the door made for the Calcutta Exhibition is published with the report “Calcutta International Exhibition 1883: The Punjab Court Local Committee” by B. H. Baden-Powell in Choonara and Tarar’s book.<sup>67</sup> This door matches the one at the V&A, as shown in Figure 4.10. However, an image of the Punjab Court in Susan Weber’s essay, shows different doors, and the copy of our specimen matches the one at the Lahore Museum!<sup>68</sup> The wood carvings at the Calcutta Exhibition will require further archival forensics.

Regarding the woodcarvings in Glasgow, in e-mail communication with Patricia Allan, Curator World Cultures, at the Glasgow Museum, I was able to confirm that their copy of this item was purchased at the 1888 Glasgow International Exhibition.<sup>69</sup> There is corroborating evidence from the Director’s report of 1887-88, in which Kipling records that they produced Rs.5000 worth of “collection of objects of Punjab production for the Glasgow Exhibition.”<sup>70</sup> In addition, there are references to two men from Bhera who were sent to the Glasgow International Exhibition.<sup>71</sup>

While these door have aged in varying shades of brown and conservation, they hold the original lexicon of the door-window from Bhera largely intact. There are slight variations in the ornamental details of these pieces, but the overall composition and miniaturisation is recognisable. As remarked earlier in the chapter, carved panels encouraged reproducibility of ornament not just across geographies, but also materials. This assemblage of Bhera-esque window/doors in all their ambiguity of provenance and purpose behaved like those panels. In their representation within the JIA (Figure 4.7) as well as their isolated embeddedness in museum and exhibition montages.

This particular constellation captures the metonymic inversions wrought by the relentless proliferation of one particular form of wood carving out of the MSA. As discussed in Chapter 2, these fragments indexically connect as well as juxtapose different contexts and different places. So not only are they iconically linking the familiar form to the drawing to the production in Punjab, but they are also exposing the circuits within which these architectural fragment were produced and put into circulation, including the taut nexus of people and events. Calcutta, Jaipur, Lahore,

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<sup>67</sup>Plate 29b, in Choonara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*, p. 105.

<sup>68</sup>Figure 9.52 in Weber, “Kipling and the Exhibitions Movement”, p. 245.

<sup>69</sup>Email communication took place in April 2015. Patricia Allan listed the following items from the catalogue in the Glasgow Museum:

1888.109.kd Carved window of Deodar wood, from Bhera, Shahpur. 3080 mm x 1820 mm x 255 mm, estimated weight 245 kg

1888.109.ke Carved door of Deodar wood, from Bhera, Shahpur. 3125 mm x 1810 mm x 265 mm, estimated weight 247.5 kg

1888.109.kf Carved window of Deodar wood, from Bhera, Shahpur. Large rectangular piece carved all over with relief floral and foliate designs, in centre is a domed arch with window panel and grill. Bhera, Shahpur, India. 1850 mm x 1040 mm x 200 mm, 66000 g

<sup>70</sup>Report on the Mayo Industrial School of Art, Lahore, for the year 1887-88 Choonara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*, p. 77.

<sup>71</sup>T. N. Mukharji. *Art-manufactures of India: (specially compiled for the Glasgow International Exhibition, 1888)*. Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1888.

Glasgow and South Kensington are implicated in a colonial pedagogical machinery, and its linkages with exhibitions of manufacture and industry. The role of these exhibitions will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter. The links between Lahore and Jaipur/Jeypore require further delineation, and that is presented next.

#### 4.5.2 Jeypore Portfolio of Architectural Details, 1886–1890

In 1883, an exhibition of decorative and industrial arts was held in Jaipur showcasing the work of artists and craftsmen from across India, especially emphasising artisans from Rajasthan and students from Jaipur's recently established School of Art in 1866.<sup>72</sup> This was the first exhibition to be held in India after the Great Exhibition of 1851, and coincided with the International Exhibition in Calcutta.<sup>73</sup> Both the School of Art and the exhibition resulted from the patronage of Maharaja Sawai Madho Singh II (1880–1922) following the recommendations of his surgeon, Thomas Holbein Hendley. After the exhibition, the Maharaja commissioned a large permanent museum of industrial arts in Jaipur to replace the smaller one that had been set up in 1881. This museum, the Albert Hall, was completed in 1887 by Samuel Swinton Jacob (1841-1917), and many of the original items from the exhibition were displayed, and continue to be displayed, there.<sup>74</sup>

The Jeypore Portfolio came about from the effort of Colonel Samuel Swinton Jacob, while he was engineer to Jeypore state. In the preface to this elaborate ten-volume publication, Jacob modestly asserted that it was “compiled mostly during leisure hours, chiefly from works in or near Delhi and Agra and parts of Rajputana.”<sup>75</sup> Maharaja Madho Singh II was also the patron of this project. The portfolio is a compilation of architectural drawings accumulated between 1886 and 1890 that “have all been carefully done, and have been arranged together in parts, – each sheet loose – so that different examples of architectural details may be compared and selections readily made.”<sup>76</sup> The ten volumes were arranged according to types of architectural elements, and listed in the beginning of each volume are short descriptive notes for each drawing providing the name of the building and place from where the item came. Readers are referred to other publications for “fuller descriptions”. The ten volumes have been organised into the following categories:<sup>77</sup>

Vol I: Copings and Plinths (52 Plates)

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<sup>72</sup>My use of the two different spellings for “Jaipur” and “Jeypore” is determined by whether it is referring to the historical name in colonial contexts, e.g. the Jeypore portfolio, or whether it is a reference to the city, in which case I use Jaipur.

<sup>73</sup>G. Tillotson. “The Jaipur Exhibition of 1883”. In: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 14 (2004), p. 02.

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup>Preface S. S. Jacob. *Jeypore portfolio of architectural details*. London: B. Quaritch, 1890.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, Preface.

<sup>77</sup>This information was compiled by me from the copies of the Portfolio held at the University of Cambridge. Volumes IX and X are not included in their collection.

Vol II: Pillars, Capitals and Bases (79 Plates)

Vol III: Carved Doors (66 Plates)

Vol IV: Brackets (69 Plates)

Vol V: Arches (58 Plates)

Vol VI: Balustrades (50 Plates)

Vol VII: String and Bead Patterns (64 Plates)

Vol VIII: Wall and Surface Decoration (61 Plates)

Vol IX: Dado

Vol X: Parapets

In the preface to his volumes, Jacob acknowledged the “lads” who did the drawings, and each plate credits the one or more individuals who did the drawings.<sup>78</sup> By his account, they were all natives of Jeypore, initially trained at the school of art (in Jeypore), and further educated in the office of the Executive Engineer (i.e. Jacob himself). I was able to identify at least twelve unique names of the draughtsmen across the various portfolios. J. L. Kipling also used this convention whereby the name of the person who did the drawings is written at the bottom of the plate, even for the *Journal of Indian Art*. However later publications, such as the 36-plate “*Industrial Art Pattern Book*” compiled under the Percy Brown, (principal of the MSA from 1899-1909), do not identify the artist, but ascribe the school principal for the detailed architectural drawings.<sup>79</sup>

The *Journal of Indian Art* had an article by James Burgess the year the Jeypore Portfolio was published. The article titled “Indian Architectural Details (“Jeypore Portfolio”)” appeared in *JIA* Vol 3, No. 32, where, in addition to a glowing write up about this initiative and its contributions, several of the drawings were also reproduced.<sup>80</sup> Vanicka Arora has observed that by the time Jacob compiled the Portfolio in 1890, “architectural recording and representation had developed from being an artistic enterprise to a scientific one.”<sup>81</sup> The Portfolio, even in Jacob’s introduction, was intended as a “practical” reference to the architect and artisan in the form of working drawings of these elements.<sup>82</sup> In Volume V: Arches, Jacob demonstrated how this was intended by specifically pointing to spandrel ornamentation from the ‘Tomb of Jamali’ in Delhi that he adapted for his designs for the Albert Hall Museum, with “the raised pattern coloured white on a light

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<sup>78</sup>Jacob, *Jeypore portfolio of architectural details*, Preface.

<sup>79</sup>“The *Industrial Art Pattern Book*” is a folio at the NCA archive. It is not known whether it was printed as a manual. The drawings in it are mainly of wood carved specimens in the Lahore Museum and other places in Lahore.

<sup>80</sup>J. Burgess. “Indian Architectural Details”. In: *The Journal of Indian Art* 3.32 (1886).

<sup>81</sup>V. Arora. “Samuel Swinton Jacob and the Jeypore portfolio: Issues in architectural recording”. In: *DISEGNARECON* 3.6 (2010), pp. 35–43, p. 38.

<sup>82</sup>Jacob, *Jeypore portfolio of architectural details*, Preface.



green ground [t]he effect is exceedingly good.”<sup>83</sup> He used this example to illustrate an “instance of the way in which these beautiful designs can be utilised for decoration in modern buildings.”<sup>84</sup> (Figures 4.12 and 4.13)

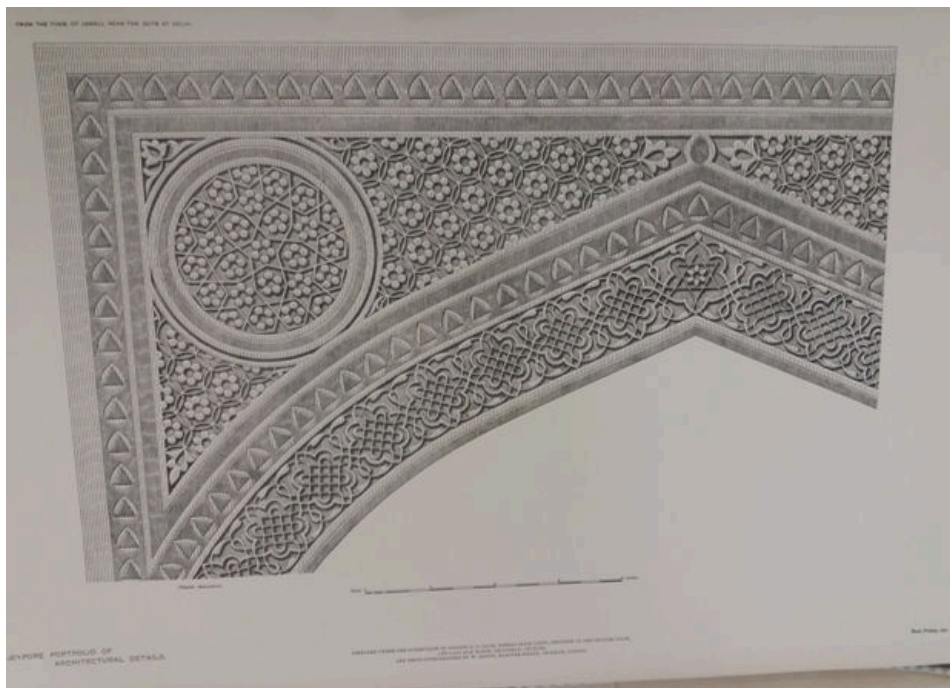


FIGURE 4.12: Drawing of the Arch Spandrels from the Tomb of Shah Jamali in the Jeypore Portfolio of Architectural Details, Volume V: Arches, 1890. Photographed at the Cambridge University Library, Rare Books

The drawings of the elements, collected, classified and compiled typologically in the Portfolio, exemplifies the fragmented transmission of an architectural lexicon. And while within Rajasthan, and perhaps further afield in India, this fragmentation would have performed metonymically, by standing in for the architecture within a social and cultural context, its purpose and reception for design purposes in Britain and the architecture of the Raj would have been something entirely different.

A set of the Jeypore Portfolio volumes is still listed in the National College of Arts library in Lahore, apparently the same one since Kipling’s time. As with other technical manuals, this portfolio too was distributed to institutions, especially the art schools, within India, and also Britain. The complete Jeypore Portfolio is hard to locate these days, and has not been digitised, perhaps due to its antique value as a rare book.<sup>85</sup> It is also curious that very little has been written about it in architectural historiography or other postcolonial explorations of knowledge-making.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>83</sup>Volume V: Arches *ibid.*

<sup>84</sup>Volume V: Arches *ibid.*

<sup>85</sup>An incomplete set of volumes sold for £2,538 at a Bonham’s auction in 2012. <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/20048/lot/2078/>

<sup>86</sup>The following are some exceptions to that: V. Prakash. “Between Copying and Creation: The Jeypore Portfolio of Architectural Details”. In: *Colonial Modernities*. Routledge, 2007, pp. 125–136; Arora, “Samuel Swinton Jacob and the Jeypore portfolio: Issues in architectural recording”; V. Arora. “Jeypore Portfolio: Revival of traditional building crafts”. In: *A special volume on Crafts of*



FIGURE 4.13: An Arch at the Albert Museum, Jaipur, illustrating the application of the Drawing in the Jeypore Portfolio of Architectural Details, Volume V, 1890. Public Domain.

#### 4.5.3 Technical Art Series of Illustrations of Indian Architectural Decorative Work (for the use of art schools and craftsmen), 1886 – 1908

The Technical Art Series is a four multi-volume series that contains reproductions of original drawings made by the Archaeological Survey of India.<sup>87</sup> The series was produced in Calcutta between 1886 and 1908. The preface to the first volume in the series explains that “the object of the series is not to provide craftsmen with working drawings, but to give them ideas which they can work up for themselves in their own way.”<sup>88</sup> Each plate has a short accompanying description, but “they are, consequently, not arranged in any sequence based on age, character, locality, or the other link of connexion, but in order of publication.”<sup>89</sup> The series also sets itself up in relation to the Jeypore Portfolio, with the acknowledgement that following the first volume, “a new series is now under issue, in which the drawings are of a simpler character and more suitable for working purposes, in accordance with the system originated by Colonel Jacob in his admirable ‘Jaipur [sic] Portfolio of Architectural Details’.”<sup>90</sup> (Figure ref/fig14c4) Note that the subsequent volumes do not have a preface and launch straight into the plates.

*India: Part II* (2010), pp. 5–10; G. Dhabhai. “Visible Histories, Invisible Contestations: Narratives of ‘Pink’ in Jaipur”. In: *Pakistan Journal of Historical Studies* 2.1 (2017), pp. 24–42.

<sup>87</sup>The British Library has four volumes that are grouped by year as follows: Volume I 1886–1892; Volume II 1886–1895; Volume III 1896–1902, and Volume IV 1903–1908

<sup>88</sup>Archaeological Survey of India ASI. “Technical Art Series of Illustrations of Indian Architectural Decorative Work”. In: vol. I. Calcutta: Survey of India Offices.

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*, Preface.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*, Preface.

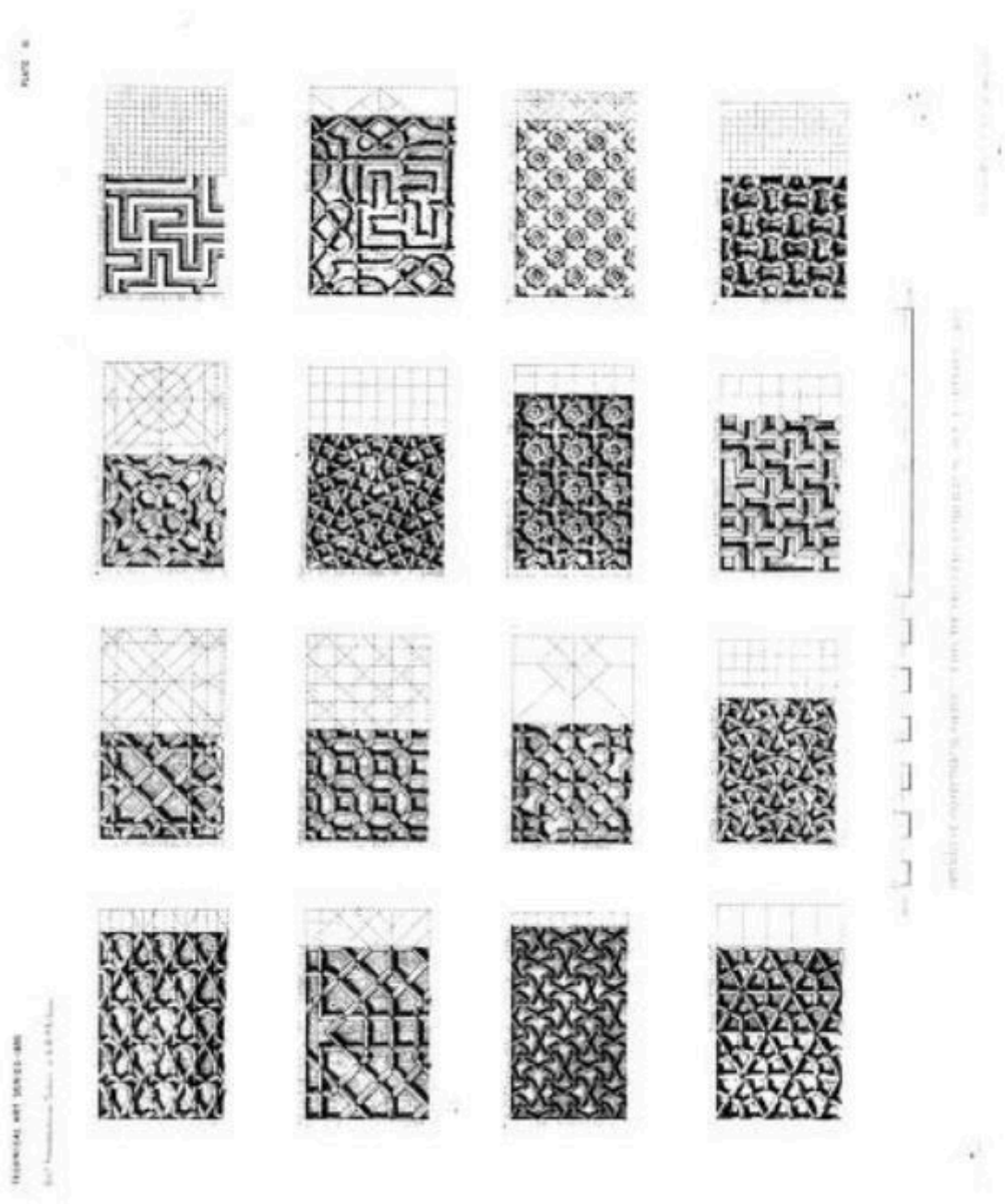


FIGURE 4.14: Plate III, *Fatehpur Sikri: Rajah Bir Bal's House. Wall Recesses, Carved Panels, and Borders*, 1895. Technical Art Series, Public Domain.

This explicit explanation of the atomisation of the architecture into “simpler” more practicable is a important insight into how architectural drawings were systematically deconstructed into their smallest components to enable them to be applied across contexts and materials. Tracing the drawings in print from the Journal of Indian Art, the Jeypore Portfolio and the Technical Art Series reveals how context was gradually stripped away from the architecture. So, for example in the earlier editions of the JIA, the drawings were sans context but there was textual commentary to give some bearings, and the architectural elements were recognisable. Then in the Jeypore Portfolio, a further disembodiment took place where first the text and image was separated, and then the parts of the building re-compiled into an admixture of colonial architectural typologies (arches, balustrades, dado, etcetera). Finally, the Technical Art Series released all connectivity, presenting a form of modular ornament to be configured without any organisational schematic. This “disintegration” is a form of violent mimesis, hostile to the social bonds and connections, and creating difference rather than similarity.<sup>91</sup> (Figs. 3.18; 3.19)

## 4.6 Technical Pattern Books Authored by Local Artisans

At this point it bears noting that as the ‘official’ colonial channels were using print technology and drawing in increasingly deconstructive modes of knowledge production and transmission, local artisans and educators were also producing information about woodcarving and design, as printing became increasingly accessible to them. In an article in the JIA in 1886, J.L.Kipling expressed his unambiguous views about such drawings and designs of “native architects, untouched by European training,” when, he asserted: “Their drawings are seldom to scale, perspectives are unknown, and details are not carefully made out, for, as the mistry superintends the work himself, he does not think it necessary to elaborate on paper parts which will be better understood when they come to be worked in situ.”<sup>92</sup>

Vibhuti Sachdev has explored four such texts in a comprehensive essay titled, “In a maze of lines: The theory of design of jaalis.”<sup>93</sup> Of the four, two texts from the 1890s are especially relevant as they deal with the geometric methods of the lattice patterns that had become iconic in Punjabi wood carving. The first of these is a Hindi book called “*Jaal Kaumudi*,” written in 1891 by Pandit Kundan Lal, and illustrated with simple diagrams. (Figure 4.15 In addition to the details on design, this book is also interesting because it is dedicated to F. S. Growse, the architect of Bulandshahr, whose work Kipling had extolled as a successful model for what new Indian architecture should become, as he lamented the lack of drawing quoted above, in his article “Indian architecture today.”

<sup>91</sup>Eaton, *Mimesis across empires: Artworks and networks in India, 1765–1860*.

<sup>92</sup>Kipling, “Indian Architecture of Today”, p. 4.

<sup>93</sup>V. Sachdev. “In a maze of lines: The theory of design of jaalis”. In: *South Asian Studies* 19.1 (2003), pp. 141–155.

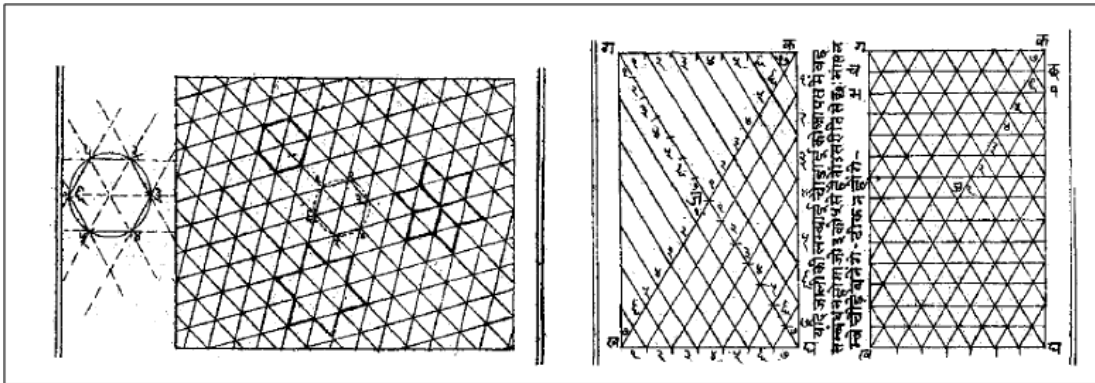


FIGURE 4.15: Instructions on Drawing Grids for Hexagons (*Chhamaas Ilaicha*), in Pandit Kundan Lal's Book, *Jaal Kaumuddi*, 1891. Vibhuti Sachdev, 2000

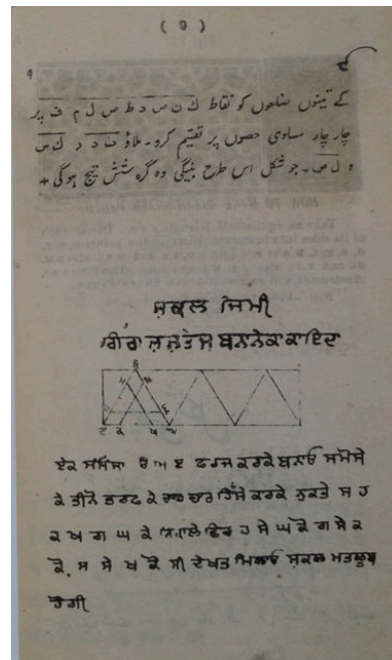
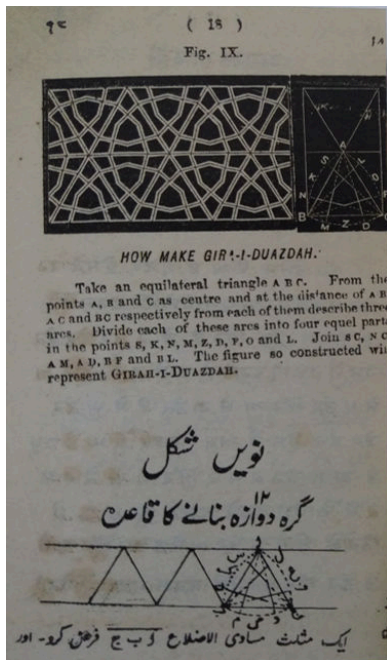


FIGURE 4.16: A Diagram from *Geometrical Patterns with Their Descriptions in English, Urdu and Gurmukhi* by Kishen Singh, Lahore. The British Library Board, Asia, Pacific & Africa 14117.a.33.

The second text, published in 1893 by a carpenter from Lahore called Kishen Singh Jandu, was called “*Geometrical Patterns with their Descriptions in English, Urdu and Gurmukhi* or Majmū’ah i namūnajāt i girah.”<sup>94</sup> It contains 25 figures, and each has instructions for creating the girih (lattice) pattern in three languages (English, Urdu and Gurmukhi), and accompanying construction diagrams with lines indicating how to draw the pattern. (Figure 4.16 Nadhra Khan has conjectured that Singh’s text was “probably inspired” by Kipling’s article in the *Journal of Indian Art*, “Punjab Wood-Carving.”<sup>95</sup> However this linkage is seriously flawed for a number of reasons; first, due to the fact that the drawings used by Kipling were actually attributed to Ram Singh, second, because Kishen Singh has almost twice the number of patterns (25) that Kipling has published (13), and most significantly, because the purpose and representation of the two is very different.<sup>96</sup> While Kipling (or rather Ram Singh) drew scaled, standardised drawings for the purpose of making them accessible to potential buyers for ordering, Kishen Singh’s patterns explained the geometric construction of each of the patterns by demonstrating how the names of these patterns are directly related to their underlying geometry. For example, patterns beginning with Shash (literally six) use an equilateral triangle as the basis, while those beginning with Aath and Hasth (literally eight) use octagons as the base in combination with other shapes.<sup>97</sup> To the contrary, Kipling in his article says that “These names are in no sense scientific, nor would they be of any use in ordering panels of tracery other than to indicate generally the kind of figure required.”<sup>98</sup>

Sachdev has asserted that the fixed form drawings that Kipling and the art schools promoted “discouraged all effort towards further innovation in the design of new patterns, resulting in a monotonous repetition of the same old patterns.”<sup>99</sup> The disembodied and arbitrary selection and publication of fragments across the various crafts, along with the use of those as templates or blueprints for further use, served to not only disassociate the design from its physical, social and cultural contexts, but also separated it from its theoretical and conceptual underpinnings.

## 4.7 From Architecture to Ornament and Acquisitive Mimesis

In 1883, John Lockwood Kipling and a group of his students from the MSA went for the Jeypore Exhibition, which they had helped plan with Thomas Hendley. While they were there, the group visited the palace at Amber:

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<sup>94</sup>Sachdev, “In a maze of lines: The theory of design of jaalis”.

<sup>95</sup>N. S. Khan. “Industrial Art Education in Colonial Punjab: Kipling’s Pedagogy and Hereditary Craftsmen”. In: *John Lockwood Kipling: Arts and crafts in the Punjab and London*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017, pp. 469–487, p. 481.

<sup>96</sup>Kipling, “Punjab wood carving”, Plate 5.

<sup>97</sup>Sachdev, “In a maze of lines: The theory of design of jaalis”, p. 147.

<sup>98</sup>Kipling, “Punjab wood carving”, p. 3.

<sup>99</sup>Sachdev, “In a maze of lines: The theory of design of jaalis”, p. 149.

“His Highness the Maharaja kindly acceded to [my] request that they may be allowed to make drawings of architectural and decorative details in the old palace at Amber... this is the first time that permission has been given to sketch in this interesting palace, which is rich in decorative details. The men made good use of their time and returned with nearly a hundred drawings and tracings of marble tracery, carving, plaster-work, perforated windows, and other details...Some of these I hope to use in future numbers of the periodical issues on Indian art.”<sup>100</sup>

While I was not able to find a record of these earlier drawings printed in the JIA or documented in the NCA archives, I have included a drawing of a particular elephant head bracket from Volume II of the *Jeypore Portfolio*.<sup>101</sup>

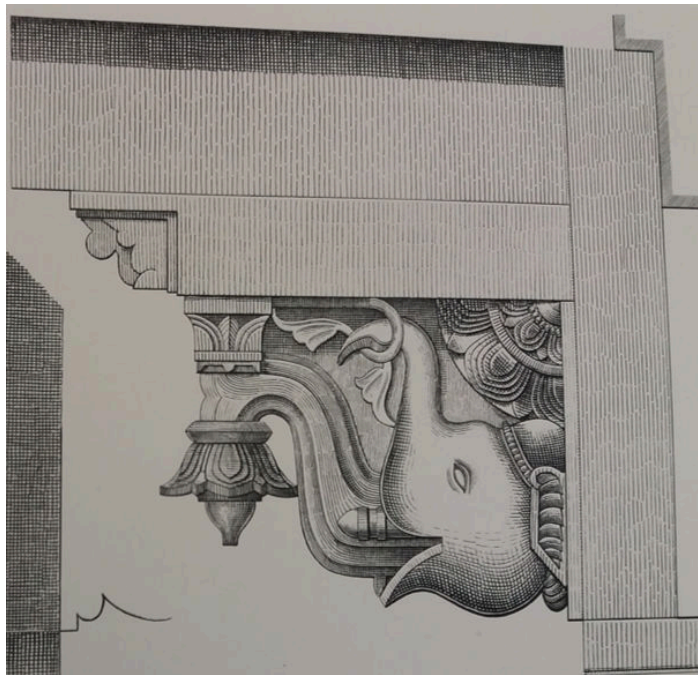


FIGURE 4.17: Drawing of the Elephant Capital in Amber in the Jeypore Portfolio, Volume II: Pillars, Capitals and Bases, 1890. Photographed at the Cambridge University Library, Rare Books, 2017

This drawing represents a distinctive carved sandstone bracket which appears on pillars in the Diwan-e-Aam (hall of public audience) court at Amber Palace. The hall, with its forty pillars, was built by Mirza Raja Jai Singh between 1631-40. The bracket consists of an elephant head raising its trunk emerging out of the pillar capital. A curved bunting that ends in a hanging, bell-shaped flower pours out of the elephant's mouth and connects to the lintel via a small trapezoidal support at its highest point. The top corner of the bracket has a quarter disc with lotus petals embossed in it. Within the arcade at the Amber palace, each one of the twenty-eight pillars has four of

<sup>100</sup>Choonara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*, Report on the Mayo School of Art, Lahore, for 1882-83, in.

<sup>101</sup>Vol II: Pillars, Capitals and Bases Jacob, *Jeypore portfolio of architectural details*.

these elephant-head brackets, and this creates a very dramatic and elaborate impact. The drawing, on the other hand, mimetically lifts the design off the stone surface, but flattens the multi-dimensional formation into two-dimensions and atomises the construction into a fragment of the whole. This fragment now affords trans-material rendering in other contexts.



FIGURE 4.18: Detail of Elephant Capital in the *Diwan-e-Aam* at Amber Palace. Copyright: www.traveladventures.org, 2019

Examples of this transmaterial mimesis from Kipling's repertoire can be found in his (unpublished) design for the cover of a book, "The Letters of Marque," by his son, Rudyard Kipling, c. 1890, which is set in Rajasthan.<sup>102</sup> (Figure 4.19)

The more famous appearance is the design that was carved by Burroughes and Watts in 1891 into the maple wood frame for the Billiards Table at Bagshot Park.<sup>103</sup> Julius Bryant, while discussing the elephant motif from Bagshot in the context of Kipling's "royal commissions" acknowledges the links with the book cover, but then desists from extending the linkages of that drawing further. In 1886, Thomas H. Hendley writing about stone carving contemplated whether the "Hindu himself is not able to produce designs of great merit that, in short, he is merely a workman who carries out the ideas of others."<sup>104</sup> In 2017, it is remarkable that the investigations of nineteenth century arts and crafts still privilege the creative contributions of the coloniser and fail to balance the representation of local producers beyond "assembly" and "workmanship."<sup>105</sup>

In *The Arcades Project* Walter Benjamin, writing on the "invisible" circulation of power said:

<sup>102</sup>The original pen-and-ink drawing is in the Wimpole Archive, University of Sussex Special Collections at The Keep, but it was published in Bryant, "Kipling's Royal Commissions: Bagshot Park and Osborne".

<sup>103</sup>Published in *ibid.*

<sup>104</sup>T. H. Hendley. "Enamelling and other Industrial Arts of Rajputana". In: *The Journal of Indian Art* 1.2 (1886), pp. 1-12, p. 9.

<sup>105</sup>Bryant, "Kipling's Royal Commissions: Bagshot Park and Osborne".



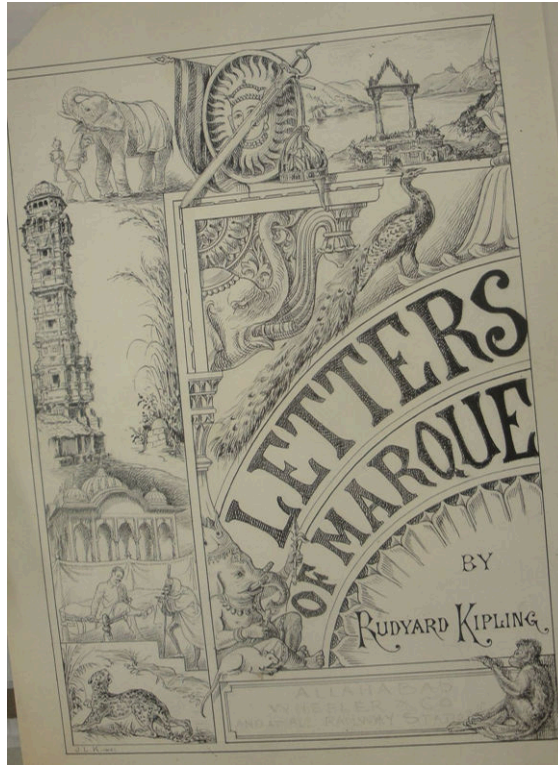


FIGURE 4.19: Cover Design for *Letters of Marque* by John Lockwood Kipling, c. 1890. Kipling Papers-Wimpole Archive, University of Sussex Special Collections at The Keep, SxMs-38/1/2/2/2/9.



FIGURE 4.20: Billiard Table Designed by John Lockwood Kipling and made by Burroughes and Watts for Bagshot Park, Surry, c. 1890. Photograph published in Bryant and Weber, 2017

“The riches thus amassed in the aerarium of civilisation henceforth appear as though identified for all time. This conception of history minimises the fact that such riches owe not only their existence but also their transmission to a constant effort of society—an effort, moreover, by which these riches are strangely altered.”<sup>106</sup>

With the limitations of ‘official’ colonial archives now well-documented, the legacies of colonial violence persist in these problematic epistemological tropes, such as, primitivism, universalism and relativism that twenty first century scholarship still upholds.<sup>107</sup> Rene Girard has used the term “acquisitive mimesis” to explain the tense relationship between mimesis on one hand, and violence and victimage on the other.<sup>108</sup> It is critical that we do not limit our conceptualisation of mimetic rivalry and violence in terms of a punctual event or a series of events that only happened in the past, but as a relation that tends to escalate limitlessly, and persists even in our time.

The accomplishments of John Lockwood Kipling and the nexus of the DSA, as regulators were two-fold: first, within the colony, through the establishment and enforcement of pedagogic systems that privileged drawing, they were able to distil, disconnect and splinter the motifs from the surfaces of architectural buildings; second, they were able to reconfigure these portable fragments and transfer them across geographical, material, and cultural boundaries. This chapter should be considered foundational for my research into trajectories of new *counter* art histories that are developing to challenge readings of colonial interventions in the visual arts, but need to be extended into “crafts” and their representation as well.<sup>109</sup> Rycroft has highlighted a critical space for interrogation here that requires a consideration of the legacies of colonial violence and “post-traumatic arts” and how these filter into, or indeed are left out of, the “intellectual registers of of post-imperial and post-colonial societies.”<sup>110</sup> Exposing the archival records of the MSA/NCA to scrutiny through this lens offers vital avenues for future research. They promise insights into the social and institutional formations, transformations and after effects of imperial tensions and colonial violence and how it was expressed in the developments, permutations and entanglements of crafts, art, artisans and artists in the Punjab.

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<sup>106</sup> Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, p. 14.

<sup>107</sup> D. J. Rycroft. “Imperial tensions: A conceptual introduction”. In: *World art and the legacies of colonial violence*. Ed. by Daniel J. R. Surrey: Ashgate, 2013.

<sup>108</sup> W. Palaver and G. Borrud. *René Girard’s Mimetic Theory*. Michigan State University Press, 2013.

<sup>109</sup> Eaton, *Mimesis across empires: Artworks and networks in India, 1765–1860*; Chaudhary, *Afterimage of empire: photography in nineteenth-century India*; T. Guha-Thakurta. *Monuments, objects, histories: Institutions of art in colonial and postcolonial India*. New York, India: Columbia University Press, 2004; M. Rajagopalan. *Building Histories: The Archival and Affective Lives of Five Monuments in Modern Delhi*. University of Chicago Press, 2016; C. Branfoot. *Portraiture in South Asia since the Mughals: Art, Representation and History*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018.

<sup>110</sup> Rycroft, “Imperial tensions: A conceptual introduction”, p. 14.

## **4.8 Summary**

This chapter set out to understand how regulatory mechanisms, such as art education and its curricula, and print media, such as journals and textbooks, contributed to the transformations of wood carved architecture during the fin de siècle, and what sort of impact that had on the communication of design ideas across boundaries. Using the examples of architectural fragments, especially those carved in wood, I traced the introduction of drawing in art school curricula and the growth of printed technical design manuals and journals. The proliferation of print materials not only led to encounters with different regional styles and a selective absorption into the repertoire, but also became a means to regulate aesthetics and what constituted ‘good’ design. Stripped of their functional roles typically on the exteriors of buildings, these ‘ornaments’ were then re-manufactured for domestic interiors such as furniture and wall decoration, within India but also in Britain. Furthermore, the portability of the ornament, and the networks of influence and collaboration implicated these designs in hostile cross-cultural networks. Continuing the heuristic exploration of the ‘official’ archival record in this light, the following chapter considers the mobility and mimesis of fragments through their consumption as commodities at the Colonial and Industrial Exhibition of 1886 in London, and how through networks of influence and power, Punjabi woodcarving found expression in the designs for the royal interiors such as Elveden Hall in Suffolk and Bagshot Park in Surrey.



## Chapter 5

### Consumption and Commodification: Colonial Exhibitions and Domestic Interiors in Britain

#### 5.1 Introduction: Linking Consumption Between Punjab and Britain

The previous chapter considered the regulation of wood carved architecture wherein wood carving, and other crafts, were subject to systems and policies within art education, and the mechanisms, specifically drawing, by which architecture became portable and ornamental. This chapter develops the concept of consumption, and how wood carving and its fragments, were commoditised and circulated within Britain in the late nineteenth century. Here, consumption is the actual reception or use of the cultural object by individuals or groups, and is the point where the object gets decoded by specific audiences.<sup>1</sup> This is different from the way in which consumption is studied in Business Studies and Economics, where the concern is with the relationships between consumers and markets, i.e. the exchange, use, and indeed, destruction of goods and services.<sup>2</sup> The difference is the emphasis on signification and the discursive potency of the meanings imbued by the producers, and the often differing conditions and circumstances under which those meanings are received and understood.<sup>3</sup> Rather than a dialectical process which pits production and consumption in endless opposition, Stuart Hall in his 1973 model, encoding/decoding, conceptualises how communities, cultures, and media constitute each other. Hall explains circulation as technological as well as hermeneutical processes through which meaning and/or ideology move into and out of discursive form.<sup>4</sup>

Architecture and its fragments, as material artefacts and semiotic systems, are also entangled in continuous circuitry that includes, but is not limited to, production and consumption. It is this movement that defies fixed and immutable narratives that makes this exercise challenging. This chapter will consider the consumption of Punjabi wood carved architecture in Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. I will consider the networks of consumption, all of which involve

<sup>1</sup>Du Gay et al., *Doing cultural studies: The story of the Sony Walkman*.

<sup>2</sup>D. Miller. "Consumption". In: *Handbook of material culture*. Ed. by C. Tilley et al. London: Sage, 2006.

<sup>3</sup>S. Hall. "Encoding/decoding". In: *Media and cultural studies: Keywords*. Ed. by M. G. Durham and D. Kellner. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

a variety of participants, who through their varied interactions with the structures, bring culturally specific values and meaning to them.<sup>5</sup> The purpose of the chapter is to look at the ways in which architecture was consumed and became meaningful as it moved along through the networks and was recontextualised and reinterpreted.

In order to relate the moment of consumption to our study of Punjabi wood carving, I consider two concurrent spaces of activity in Britain. The first consideration situates architectural fragments within the “exhibitionary complex,” as identified by Tony Bennett, and specifically explores the consumption of wood carving in Britain within the context of the South Kensington Museum and the Colonial and Industrial Exhibition of 1886.<sup>6</sup> To understand how this institution epitomised the entanglements between social patterns of cultural practices and power, the sociologist Tony Bennett developed the notion of the “exhibitionary complex.” In an essay published in 1988, Bennet explains that the exhibitionary complex consists of

“institutions... [that] were involved in the transfer of objects and bodies from the enclosed and private domains which they had been previously displayed (but to a restricted public) into progressively more open and public arenas where, through the representations to which they were subjected, they formed vehicles for inscribing and broadcasting the messages of power (but of a different type) throughout society.”<sup>7</sup>

The establishment of the South Kensington Museum in 1852 and the subsequent Colonial and Industrial Exhibition held there in 1886 had a significant impact on the trajectory of art pedagogy and the institutionalization of the arts and design, both in Britain and in its colonies, including India. Evolving out of the Department of Science and Arts, this institution not only acquired the contents of the India Museum set up by the East India Company but also set out to systematically collect, classify and curate the arts and crafts of its colonies. This was done through a bureaucratic network in Britain and in India that participated in acquiring, designing and funding objects for collections and exhibitions; arranging their displays; representing the experience; promoting, judging and awarding individuals and exemplary artefacts; and finally determining futures through the after-lives of these objects in the way they were disposed, dismantled, redeployed and recorded.

In this chapter that emphasis the role of consumption within the realm of architectural wood carving from the Punjab, I will explore the components and networks that enabled this complex. A narrow focus on the architectural aspects of the India court at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886, lets me reveal some of the disparities and disjunctions that are revealed through this enterprise. I do this by looking at some key items of architecture that are present in the South Kensington Museum,

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<sup>5</sup>Maudlin and Vellinga, *Consuming Architecture: On the Occupation, Appropriation and Interpretation of Buildings*.

<sup>6</sup>T. Bennett. “The exhibitionary complex”. In: *New formations* 4 (1988), pp. 73–102.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 74.

the Journal of Indian Art (JIA), and the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886, and how they get conscripted by principles of classification based on “nations and the supra-national constructs of empires and races.”<sup>8</sup> Considering McGowan’s argument for how a singular “Indian design,” and hence Indian nation, was shaped through the smoothing of regional variations and hybrid projects like the Gwalior Gateway, this chapter considers the mutually constitutive relationship between the metropole and the colony, and how in spite of the apparent inconsistencies inherent in their separate existences, each formed simultaneously in relation to the other, and the ways India, through her architecture, was packaged for the metropole, and how it was received/decoded.

For the second space of architectural consumption, I look at elite, especially royal, domestic interiors, and how they utilised wood carved forms and ornamentation from the Punjab to communicate imperial tastes and ambition. I will trace the development of this “oriental obsession” as it expressed itself in the architecture of elite British constructions in the 19th century, and then offer a detailed visual analysis of one site: the Billiards Room at Bagshot Park, Surrey.<sup>9</sup> This set of rooms and their furniture was designed for the Duke and Duchess of Connaught by students at the Mayo School of Art in Lahore under John Lockwood Kipling between 1884 and 1887. I will discuss the significance of this site in terms of the flows and mediations between the various actors, such as patrons, designers, families, freemasons and other social groups, in an attempt to assemble the social life of this “Indian” room.<sup>10</sup>

## 5.2 Punjabi Wood Carving and the Exhibitionary Complex

The success of the Great Exhibition in 1851 generated such a surplus that the Commissioners set up South Kensington as a museum site to enact a grander and more permanent vision of education and improvement. Prince Albert’s “metropolis of learning” was organized around the production of useful knowledge for the benefit of the nation.<sup>11</sup> With an emphasis on the practical and learning based on objects, the collections of art were always at the service of education and their role was strictly utilitarian. In contrast to our typical understanding of museum function as being the acquisition, safeguarding and utilization of a permanent collection, the South Kensington Museum was “a school that had a collection to which the public was also admitted.”<sup>12</sup> The art collection was never idle: it was collected, studied in formal

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>9</sup> J. Sweetman. *The oriental obsession: Islamic inspiration in British and American art and architecture 1500-1920*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

<sup>10</sup> Appadurai, “Putting Hierarchy in Its Place”; B. Latour. “On Recalling ANT.”. In: *The Sociological Review* 46 (1998), pp. 15–25.

<sup>11</sup> B. Robertson. “The South Kensington Museum in context: an alternative history”. In: *Museum and Society* 2.1 (2004), pp. 1–14; Hoffenberg, *An empire on display: English, Indian, and Australian exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War*.

<sup>12</sup> Robertson, “The South Kensington Museum in context: an alternative history”, p. 4.

classes by enrolled students, and expressed in public design.<sup>13</sup> It was experimental and at the forefront of knowledge in a rapidly mechanising and global world.

The India Section of the South Kensington Museum was formally opened in 1880, and occupied 9 rooms in the Eastern Galleries and a landing of the Cross Gallery.<sup>14</sup> The Museum collection included a significant portion of artefacts from the India Museum of the East India Company (founded in 1798) that were disbursed when it closed in 1879, as well as acquisitions from the various exhibitions, and collection tours around the world by its representatives. For instance, between 1874 and 1884, Caspar Purdon Clarke went to Iran, Europe, the near East and India on collecting expeditions. To give a sense of the scale of purchases, when he became Keeper of the Indian section in 1882, he went to India with £5000 and sent back more than 3000 objects including architectural pieces, sculpture, paintings, manuscripts, metalwork, jewellery and life-sized models of Indian craft workers. This is in addition to his own photographs, drawings and observations which he disbursed via talks and articles.<sup>15</sup> This was a systematic collection, classification and curation of the arts and crafts of the Indian colony, disconnected from their specific social and cultural contexts, and assembled for reimagining. As a repository of design, the South Kensington Museum became a hub for artists, architects and designers seeking “authentic” models for erudition and inspiration for projects as well as drawing practice ornament.<sup>16</sup> This was especially true in the case of architecture, where the drawings, prints and photographs were researched and appropriated in constructions across the country.<sup>17</sup>

### 5.3 Re-visiting the 19th Century Exhibitions in London

The spectacle of the Great Exhibition of 1851 held in the Joseph Paxton’s architecturally ground-breaking Crystal Palace in Hyde Park started an Exhibition frenzy that lasted till the outbreak of the war in 1914. These exhibitions took place in cities across Britain – London, Manchester, Glasgow, and Dublin – as well as across the Empire, in Calcutta, Toronto, Melbourne and Sydney, among others. These imperial and colonial exhibitions displayed ideas, images, and practices of both imperialism and nationalism.<sup>18</sup> They represented relationships between different groups, often idealised and always performed. With the greater transportation availability offered by the rail and subway systems, and coverage provided by a burgeoning press, these exhibitions attracted millions of people each time, and informed even more.<sup>19</sup> As markets for

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<sup>13</sup>Robertson, “The South Kensington Museum in context: an alternative history”, p. 8.

<sup>14</sup>From the V&A subject guide: “Guide to records in the V&A Archive relating to the India Museum and Indian objects.”

<sup>15</sup>McGowan, *Crafting the nation in colonial India*.

<sup>16</sup>Dutta, *The bureaucracy of beauty: Design in the age of its global reproducibility*.

<sup>17</sup>There are many examples of this, including John Norton’s designs for Elveden Hall in Thetford for Duleep Singh, and W.I. Chambers’ design for the ShahJahan Mosque based on drawings in d’Avenne’s *L’Art Arabe*.

<sup>18</sup>Hoffenberg, *An empire on display: English, Indian, and Australian exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War*.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*



the goods produced and displayed, they spread the reach of imported and domestic art-wares and goods to the emerging middle-class, and most significantly, shaped the aesthetics and tastes of these consumers by offering choice specimens. Carol Breckenridge has referred to this gaze “directed by detailed and rule-bound standards, styles, and classificatory protocols” as the “aesthetic gaze.”<sup>20</sup>

The 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition coincided with Queen Victoria’s jubilee, and ran for six months from May through October, attracting over five million visitors in the process.<sup>21</sup> The purpose of this exhibition, as stated by the Prince of Wales in his address was “to stimulate commerce and strengthen the bonds of union now existing in every portion of her Majesty’s Empire.”<sup>22</sup> The Queen led the opening procession, sitting through the ceremony on the gilded throne of Ranjit Singh brought to England from Lahore, after the annexation of the Punjab in 1849.<sup>23</sup> A third of the exhibition space, approximately 103,000 square feet, was dedicated to the India display. Through its scale and opulent scheme of pavilions, courts and classification, this exhibition was a carefully crafted experience designed to offer its visitors “an elaborate encounter with a timeless and traditional India from within the ‘wild, mad whirl’ of industrial modernity,” which was championed by the prominent voices of men like William Morris, John Ruskin, and George Birdwood.<sup>24</sup>

Given the impact on the socio-cultural milieu of Victorian Britain as well as her colonies, these exhibitions have received lot of academic scrutiny. This scholarship has focused on understanding Imperial Britain and her colonies through the representations of art-wares and goods represented, but also the networks of people, information and economies surrounding them.<sup>25</sup> The following portion of the chapter introduces some literature to highlight the different forms of consumption that was enabled by these Exhibitions. These include Hoffenberg’s exegesis of exhibitions as texts, that foregrounds Hall’s ideas of Encoding/Decoding; McGowan’s charting of the patterns of production and consumption at these exhibitions whose consequence was a single, coherent category of ‘Indian design’ which had implications for nationalism, and finally, Saloni Mathur’s enquiry into the ways in which the native artisan was

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<sup>20</sup>C. A. Breckenridge. “The aesthetics and politics of colonial collecting: India at world fairs”. In: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31 (1989), p. 02, p. 213.

<sup>21</sup>Hoffenberg, *An empire on display: English, Indian, and Australian exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War*.

<sup>22</sup>Quoted from the Hindu Patriot of May 10, 1886, in Mathur, *India by design: Colonial history and cultural display*, p. 57.

<sup>23</sup>F. Cundall. *Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition*. London: Published with the sanction of the Royal Commission by William Clowes & Sons, 1886.

<sup>24</sup>Mathur, *India by design: Colonial history and cultural display*.

<sup>25</sup>See, Hoffenberg, *An empire on display: English, Indian, and Australian exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War*; McGowan, ““All that is rare characteristic or beautiful”: Design and the defense of tradition in colonial India 1851-1903.”; Mathur, *India by design: Colonial history and cultural display*; Dutta, *The bureaucracy of beauty: Design in the age of its global reproducibility*; Barringer and Flynn, *Colonialism and the object: Empire, material culture and the museum*; Greenhalgh, “Fair world: A history of world’s fairs and expositions from London to Shanghai 1851-2010”; Breckenridge, “The aesthetics and politics of colonial collecting: India at world fairs”.

showcased at these exhibitions as part of the experience of an idealised pre-modern past, essential and timeless.

### 5.3.1 Exhibitions as Texts

In his book *An Empire on Display* Peter Hoffenberg discusses the English, Indian, and Australian exhibitions as social texts that were created to be read by visitors. The experience of the creators and visitors to exhibitions combined to create an interpretive community, with the commissioners in the role of authors and the public as readers. Through a micro-level case studies and macro-level abstractions that span across time and place, he offers study of exhibition culture over those sixty years from the Great Exhibition of 1851 to the Festival of Empire Exhibition of 1911.<sup>26</sup> Hoffenberg considers the contexts of these Exhibitions through their organizational bureaucracy, “the Exhibition Wallahs”, the market economy of the empire, the taxonomical and display strategies, and the management of the visitor’s experience. This book offers a useful framing of the intricate organisational webs that developed around these exhibitions, and was relevant to understanding how the pragmatic and logistical aspects of the Exhibitions worked, such financing, accounting, transportation and infrastructure.

### 5.3.2 Exhibitions and the Emergence of ‘Indian Design’

In her 2005 article, “All That is Rare, Characteristic or Beautiful: Design and the Defense of Tradition in Colonial India, 1851-1903,” Abigail McGowan offers a compelling interplay of the dynamics of production and consumption in a time of flux.<sup>27</sup> She traces the emergence of a single category of art called ‘Indian Design’ in two stages. The first, starting with the Great Exhibition of 1851, was where the essentials of Indian design were delineated as being specifically the “sophisticated use of colour and ornament.”<sup>28</sup> The second stage was marked by developments in artisanal production and consumption within India and is characterized by the idea of Indian artefacts being “recognizably *not* European.”<sup>29</sup> She argues that due to the changes in economic and cultural demands, by forces such as art schools, art journals and global exhibitions, the response of artisans (producers) and local consumers was not aligned with the British strategy of combining traditionally ‘pure’ Indian ornamentation to western forms. And so whereas the westernization of local preferences and practices was seen as the contamination of a pure, authentically Indian artistic expression, it was actually the insistence on static traditional design that was the direct effect of cosmopolitanism and globalization. These themes are delved into in greater detail in her book *Crafting the Nation in Colonial India*, where she also explores the “cult of

<sup>26</sup>Hoffenberg, *An empire on display: English, Indian, and Australian exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War*.

<sup>27</sup>McGowan, “All that is rare characteristic or beautiful”: Design and the defense of tradition in colonial India 1851-1903.”

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 264.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 269.

the craftsman” in colonial India and Britain, and how this “politics of crafts” manifests in Gandhi’s nationalistic movement after 1920.<sup>30</sup>



FIGURE 5.1: “Woodcarvers (Courtyard of Indian Palace).” “Colonial Indian Exhibition: The Indian Empire.” *Illustrated London News* 17 July 1886: 84. Courtesy of the Bowdoin College Library, Brunswick, Maine

### 5.3.3 Exhibitions and the Native Artisan

Saloni Mathur, in her essay “To Visit the Queen: On Display at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886” in her book “India By Design” complements Hoffenberg and McGowan’s sweeping narrative to hone in one aspect of the 1886 Exhibition: the “ethnological display of native artisans.”<sup>31</sup> And although she too is interested in the creation of meaning through the historical conditions of these cultural displays, her investigation focuses on the prison inmates and homeless Indian peasants in London who were put on show as working artisans in the forecourt of the ‘Indian Palace’ at the exhibition. (Figure 5.1) She ironically observes that “the skills of craft production [on display]... were likely to have been learned through the industrializing processes of prison reform rather than through the ancient, timeless practices of the village.”<sup>32</sup> This incongruous identity of the traditional artisan is further highlighted by the fact that the Indian Palace was designed by Caspar Purdon Clarke, Keeper of the Indian Collection at the South Kensington Museum, and carved by carpenters brought from Bhera, Punjab. Despite being in London, these two carpenters, Muhammed Buksh and Muhammed Juma, were not among the thirty four individuals ‘displayed’ at the exhibition.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> McGowan, *Crafting the nation in colonial India*.

<sup>31</sup> Mathur, ““To Visit the Queen”: On Display at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886”.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>33</sup> J. R. Royle. “Report on the Indian Section of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886”. In: *London: William Clowes and Sons, Limited, 1887*.

### 5.3.4 The Exhibition in Print

Contemporary with, and complementary to, the exhibitions, and motivated by the agenda of education and reform was the *Journal of Indian Art* produced by the Mayo School of Arts in Lahore, under J.L. Kipling, and published by W. Griggs in London. This journal was launched two years prior to the Exhibition of 1886 with the primary objective of being educational.<sup>34</sup> Its first volume which was published in 16 sub-sections from 1883 to 1886 had multiple articles devoted to the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886. These ranged from statements by Edward C. Buck, Commissioner for the Government of India to details, in image and text, of each court screen that was produced for the regional courts.<sup>35</sup> It was distributed among schools and workshops in order to be a resource “from which new generations of artisans will imbibe their ideas of art and construction.”<sup>36</sup> The Journal was brought within the scheme of the Indian sections of the Exhibition “to commence what is intended to be a complete series of historical descriptions, illustrated by typical examples of the Art Manufactures of India.”<sup>37</sup> To support the effort of the Exhibition, several subsections of the first volume were dedicated to details of the planning and submissions from the different regions. A significant portion of this coverage was devoted to the various regional screens that were to frame the entrance to their respective art ware courts. *The Journal of Indian Art* was one of many publications that came out during and after the exhibition. Other publications that were produced specifically for this event include the *Colonial and Indian Exhibition. Empire of India Catalogue* (1886); *Report of the Royal Commission for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition* by J. R. Royle (1887); *Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition* by F. Cundall (1886); *Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886. Official Catalogue*; “The Colonial and Indian Exhibition.” *Art Journal* (Dec. 1886): Supplemental section.<sup>38</sup>

The preceding section highlights the various ways by which the Colonial and Indian Exhibition fed the consumer in Victorian Britain. The following section will illustrate some of these points through an examination of the architectural fragments that were on display, and how they fed into the themes discussed above.

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<sup>34</sup>Hoffenberg, “Promoting Traditional Indian Art at Home and Abroad:”*The Journal of Indian Art and Industry*, 1884-1917”.

<sup>35</sup>These articles are found from the JIA Vol I No. 6 (April 1885) through till the last JIA Vol I No.16 (October 1886). In addition, this volume also has details of the Jeypore Exhibition of 1883 (Vol I No. 5).

<sup>36</sup>Volume I, No. 11 of the JIA, published in May 1886 was a “Special Exhibition Series” *The Journal of Indian Art*. Vol. I. 1-16. W. Griggs & sons, 1886, p. 11.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>38</sup>T. Wardell. *Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886. Empire of India. Special catalogue of exhibits by the Government of India and Private Exhibitors*. London: William Clowes & Sons, Ltd., 1886; Royle, “Report on the Indian Section of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886”; Cundall, *Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition*; Royal Commission. *Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886: Official Catalogue*. London: William Clowes & Sons, Ltd., 1886; “The Colonial and Indian Exhibition”. In: *Art Journal* Supplemental section.1-32 (Dec. 1886).

## 5.4 A Constellation of Fragments of ‘Indian’ Architecture at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886

The Indian section at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition was an enormous and spectacular display, covering about 103,000 square feet of space, which was five times the size of the Indian Pavilion at the 1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition, and cost in excess of £22,000, which was divided as follows: the Indian Government paid £10,000, Royal Commission £3,000, Bombay Exhibition Grant £6,850 and the Royal Commission Screen Grant £2,500.<sup>39</sup> Deemed inadequate for the scale of the enterprise, further funding and sponsorship was received from the “native Princes and gentleman of India,” and grants made by various local Governments in India from their provincial funds.<sup>40</sup> The architectural display in this pavilion had been coordinated by Caspar Purdon Clarke, honorary architect for the exhibition, and Keeper of the Indian collection at the South Kensington Museum. This architectural assemblage offers hitherto unexplored material for understanding the dynamic forces, sometimes intersecting and sometimes conflicting that were at play, and their bearing on the trajectories of development of architectural design in the metropole and the colony. Specifically, this alludes to regional nuance and patronage in India on one hand versus a hybridised amalgamation of a unitary Indian design on the other. I will consider some of the architectural pieces to highlight this point.

The entire South Gallery of the Museum was given to the Indian pavilion, which was accessed through the imposing stone-carved ‘Gwalior Gateway’ from Exhibition Road. Frank Cundall has described the Indian pavilion as being divided into five parts:

- i The Central Court with art ware and fabrics (except silk);
- ii The South Court with the “Imperial economic collections;
- iii The North Court with private exhibits and tea and coffee industries;
- iv The East Arcade and Vestibule with geographical and military collections of the Government departments; and
- v The Palace and forecourt (bazaar) with the silk collection and art industries of India outside the Durbar Hall.<sup>41</sup>

The main entrance through the Gwalior Gateway led into the forecourt of the Indian Palace which was set up like a *bazaar* (marketplace). This court was connected to the Central Court, which was subdivided into 14 sections to represent the provinces and

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<sup>39</sup>The Bombay Exhibition was planned for 1886-87, and the sum of £6850 was allocated for collections for it, but the exhibition was ‘abandoned’, so the money was channelled to this one. Royle, “Report on the Indian Section of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886”.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, This aspect of the financing is significant and has been overlooked by most of the dominant literature on the exhibition. It needs further scrutiny, but will be briefly further on in the essay.

<sup>41</sup>Cundall, *Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition*.

states.<sup>42</sup> Each court was entered through a specially designed screen, and within the court. This chapter looks at some of the architectural pieces that were built into the Central Court and the Palace and its forecourt, in order to highlight how the melange of forms was brought together to represent the idea of an imagined India.

### 5.4.1 The Gwalior Gateway

The first architectural item is the seventy-ton, 'hybrid' Gwalior Gateway that held an "admirable" position in the Exhibition grounds directly facing the medieval entrance of Old London. Here it enabled "visitors to contrast the different architectural treatment of buildings used for similar purposes under feudal Governments in East and West."<sup>43</sup> This stone-carved behemoth was the contribution of a persistent Major J. B. Keith, the Curator of the Monuments of Central India, who persuaded Maharaja Jayajirao Scindia to finance his project that promoted Indian stone carving as an export industry and supported starving artisans.<sup>44</sup> To these ends he "mixed Hindu and Muslim motifs of different periods and employed workers across faiths."<sup>45</sup> Major Keith worked within a presumption of Indian cultural decadence, as promoted by James Fergusson, and believed that "we have to go backward rather than forward to reach it in a state of pristine excellence," while insisting that the gateway was nevertheless superior and less expensive than its modern English counterpart, the stonework of the new Law Courts.<sup>46</sup> In the same way that the other artisans who created the other screens and gateways in the Exhibition were instructed by the Royal Commission to use as many traditional patterns as they could in the interest, paradoxically, of authenticity, the Gwalior Gateway also interpreted a Gwalior style that surrendered to a hybridised Indian design.

Before it was reassembled in South Kensington, the central portion of the Gwalior Gateway had been part of the 1883 Calcutta International Exposition. Whereas monumental gateways in India would have marked the passage from public to royal grounds, the Gwalior Gateway was a liminal space that served as the entrance from a London street to the courtyard of C. Purdon Clarke's eclectic creation, the "typical Royal Residence in feudal India."<sup>47</sup> Deborah Swallow has detailed C. P. Clarke's backing role in the creation of the Gwalior Gate and its arrival at South Kensington for the 1886 exhibition. She quotes Purdon Clarke's reminiscences about the Gateway:

[The stone gateway] was the outcome of my visit to Gwalior in 1881.

When stopping at the Fort I was shown by Major Keith, the Assistant in

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<sup>42</sup>These included Rajputana, Central India, Bombay and Baroda, Bengal, with Nepal, the North-West Provinces and Oudh, the Punjab, Kashmir, the Central Provinces, Assam, Burma, Madras, Mysore, Coorg and Hyderabad. Cundall, *Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition*.

<sup>43</sup>"Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886 - Notes." In Vol I, No.8. *The Journal of Indian Art*, p. 63.

<sup>44</sup>Swallow, "Colonial Architecture, international exhibitions and official patronage of the Indian artisan".

<sup>45</sup>Spear, "A South Kensington Gateway from Gwalior to Nowhere", p. 913.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 913.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 914.

Central India to the Curator of Ancient Monuments, some very beautiful stonework in old Gwalior and, upon being informed by him that he had men who could execute work of equal merit, I left a commission with him to copy a section of one of the tombs – that of Khan Dowra Khan. Major Keith put the work in hand and shortly after my return to England the work arrived. Not long afterwards I received a letter from Major Keith informing me that the Maharajah Scindia had upon his recommendation requested him to prepare a magnificent gateway for presentation to the SK Museum.”<sup>48</sup>

This recollection demonstrates the processes and negotiations around acquisition and patronage between metropole and the colonies. As the representative for the South Kensington Museum and the exhibition, Clarke was despatched to collect noteworthy samples of traditional design, and as an architect he selected one such piece, but Major Keith and the Maharajah had their own mediations and agendas, and so they insisted upon an even more monumental specimen to show the stone carving of Gwalior. As Swallow shows through her article, Major Keith was not only concerned with the representation of Gwalior, but also had a moral concern with the plunder of historical remains and a preference for copies and supporting local artisans. To quote Major Keith, the Gwalior Gateway was proposed for the Calcutta exhibition as a “piece of representative stone carving...not the copy of a conventionalised entrance...but an eclectic piece of work.”<sup>49</sup> (4.3)

#### 5.4.2 The Jeypore Gateway

The Jeypore Gateway formed the entrance to the Central Court of art wares. This gateway was surmounted by a platform surrounded by a balustrade, in the centre of which a domed “kiosk” was set up as the *nakar-khana* (drum house). Cundall quotes from a guide to the Jeypore Court that “the timber necessary for constructing the Jeypore Gateway was cut and joined in Bombay, and then brought to Jeypore, where the Shekhawati carpenters enriched it by carving, without unnecessary European interference.”<sup>50</sup> But given the rigorous scheme of the Indian pavilion, Cundall thought it necessary to clarify that “theoretically it should have been a ‘tripolia,’ or gate of three arches, but the necessities of the exhibition have compelled its construction in its present form.”<sup>51</sup> It can be inferred from this that the “European interference” is only interference if it pertains to the ornamentation of these pieces. The form was dictated by a greater purpose – the plan for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition. Again, the instructions for the carvers were that “as great a variety of patterns was to be employed as possible; the ornament was to be purely Indian and no attempt was

<sup>48</sup>Correspondence between Clarke and Sir John Donnelly in 1897 from the V&A nominal file, Gwalior Gateway. Quoted in Swallow, “Colonial Architecture, international exhibitions and official patronage of the Indian artisan”, p. 58.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>50</sup>Cundall, *Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition*, p. 21.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 22.

to me made to work on other than the traditional lines.”<sup>52</sup> The ornamental carving was augmented by a scheme of carved symbols and quotations that evoked the lords of Jeypore, Rajput royalty, the emperor Akbar and mimetically sutured it into the British imperial realm, the message supported by banners and flags.

### 5.4.3 The Baroda Pigeon House

This lofty and elaborately carved structure was contributed by the Gaekwar of Baroda.<sup>53</sup> The Pigeon House was 24 feet tall and it was a mass of miniaturised architectural forms, and intricately carved animals, birds and flowers. The creation of the Pigeon House was overseen by Mr Griffiths of Bombay School of Art and engineer Proctor Sims. In *Art-Manufacturers of India*, published in 1888, T. N. Mukharji of the India Museum, Calcutta stated that “Bombay wood-carving as applied to architecture” was best exemplified by the Baroda Pigeon House in the entire Colonial and Indian Exhibition.<sup>54</sup> However, “for the sake of convenience” it was moved from the Bombay court and placed in the centre of the south gallery where it was “a useful landmark” that told the visitors where the turning to the central courts was.<sup>55</sup> The four smaller pigeon-houses (chaubutara) designed to be arranged around its base were left in the Bombay court. The carving is a conglomeration of designs from houses in Surat. I highlight this piece to show how the regional forms, yet again, were subsumed by the greater scheme of the exhibition, at the cost of losing their regional identity.

### 5.4.4 The Regional Screens

The carved architraves that lined the Central Court and led into each of the regional courts, perhaps best capture the tension and ambivalence between regionality and Indianness. Made from wood, stone carving, inlay work or plaster, each of these architraves carried architectural styles and ornamental motifs that were selected to embody the distilled aesthetic essence of the area it originated from. The construction of these screens was also a demonstration of the negotiations and politics of the rulers whose regions were being depicted. The *Journal of Indian Art* recorded these screens over its series in Volume I, which was produced in 1886 to coincide with the exhibition, once again revealing its pedagogical ethos as well as its membership within the bureaucratic meshwork of Imperial Britain.<sup>56</sup> John Lockwood Kipling, who worked on several of these screens, and reported on all of them remarked that “it is satisfactory to know that this plan has rendered possible the imitation with great closeness of the architectural style prevailing in India, which confines the richest part of the carving to

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<sup>52</sup>Cundall, *Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition*, p. 22.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup>Mukharji, *Art-manufactures of India: (specially compiled for the Glasgow International Exhibition, 1888)*.

<sup>55</sup>Royle, “Report on the Indian Section of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886”, p. 30.

<sup>56</sup>*The Journal of Indian Art*.



the arches of doorways and verandah balustrades.”<sup>57</sup> The arrangement and installation of the screens was done by C. P. Clarke.<sup>58</sup>

Regional variation and specificity were integral to the production and patronage within India, even making their way into print (such as the JIA) but this nuance is obscured in the way India was consumed in the metropole. This emphasises the fact that the regional classification and categorisation was contained within an overarching, composite, unitary Indian character that is reflected in the amalgamation of emblematic forms of Indian architecture.<sup>59</sup> The tension between these two representations sets up a dialectic between the production of these items within specific local settings and their representation and consumption in a different milieu. The two being concomitant via networks of people and their economic, political and social necessities. Stylistically, though, each regional screen was designed as a stylistic montage, which bears traces of the social and political interactions that went into its making. Within the Indian court at the Exhibition in London, the collection of screens metonymically constitute a regional montage under the banner of a unifying India, but within each screen, the regional variation is a *local* montage which carries the traditions and politics of the contributors and craftsmen.

In terms of the exhibition layout, each court was entered through “its distinctive screen”, or rather, decorative archways made from wood or stone carving, inlay work or plaster. These archways did not hamper the passage of visitors yet formed a “convenient framework to the Courts containing the exhibits of each Province and Native State.” All the screens were about 10 feet high, but their widths varied by the space in the court that was allocated to the province. John Lockwood Kipling, who worked on several of these screens, and reported on all of them, remarked that “it is satisfactory to know that this plan has rendered possible the imitation with great closeness of the architectural style prevailing in India, which confines the richest part of the carving to the arches of doorways and verandah balustrades.”

The screens were made in India, and financed in part by the Royal Commission and the Princely states. According to Royle’s report of 1887, the total cost of the screens, including freight, was Rs.105,481, 12a. 6p., of which approximately a third, i.e. Rs. 33,989, 5a. 5p., was paid by Royal Commission. The budget had allocated £2500 for the screens from the Royal Commission. This means that a much greater burden of the cost was lifted by the local coffers. Arguably regional variation and specificity were integral to the production and patronage within India, even making their way into print (such as the JIA), but this nuance is obscured in the metropole. Despite the proclivity for classification and categorisation, a composite, unitary Indian character that overarches regional variance is reflected in the emblematic constructions of the Indian Palace/Durbar, the Gwalior Gateway and the overall set up of the India display.

<sup>57</sup>Kipling, “Colonial and Indian Exhibition”, p. 78.

<sup>58</sup>Royle, “Report on the Indian Section of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886”.

<sup>59</sup>McGowan, ““All that is rare characteristic or beautiful”: Design and the defense of tradition in colonial India 1851-1903.”

The Bombay Screen: The Bombay screen was carved in teak wood, and its general design was conceived by the Superintendent of the Bombay School of Art, Mr. Griffiths. The screen led to the space shared by Bombay, Baroda and Cutch. The screen consisted of two lengths, each 80 feet long, with eight 10-foot wide bays each. They also had four ends, each 12 feet wide. The height was 10 feet. In his report on the Bombay Screen in the *Journal of Indian Art*, Kipling has detailed the division of costs and effort. This record shows that the Royal Commission had only allocated Rs. 4,500, so the Bombay Committee applied to some of the native princes, who replied with a combined influx of Rs. 7,000. The Thakur of Bhavnagar: Rs. 4000; Rao of Cutch: Rs. 2000; and the Nawab of Junagadh: Rs. 1700. Furthermore, the designs selected for the screens were also regionally specific, with portions that were based on “sections from well-known mosques in Ahmedabad, viz: Mahafiz Khan, Shapur, Dastur Khan, and Rani Sipri,” while the details for the Baroda screens were taken “from various houses in Surat.” The point to note is that even at this screen-level, the granular level of specificity and representation gets subsumed into one “Bombay Screen”.

The Punjab Screen: The Punjab screen, which was of similar size to the Bombay screen, with two longer 100-foot arcades and four end arcades that were 12ft 6 inches each, was also a collage of different styles and woods made by different carpenters in different cities. One of the longer arcades was wrought in shisham by a family of carpenters in Udoki. According to Kipling’s rather convoluted explanation, “the proportion of the parts is according to the received canons of today as derived from Moghal architecture,” but “the spandrils or mihrabs owing to the conditions involved in the sizes specified on the sketch plan furnished as a guide, are somewhat insignificant in their proportions.” He goes on claim that “there are numerous examples of precisely this form, both in old and modern work.”

The horizontal panels were in the characteristic “framed geometric lattices (not perforated), known as pinjira.” One set of these horizontal panels, made in Bassi Ghulam Hussain near Hoshiarpur, is shisham wood inlaid with ivory. The other long arcade was made by various carpenters in Lahore from deodar (Himalayan cedar). The four end arcades, two in shisham and two in deodar, were carved in Amritsar in the older Akbari style, characterised by a square “Hindu” shaft and “a peculiar crispness and brightness of execution, combined sometimes with excessive minuteness.”

Like the Bombay Screen, a lot of regional specificity is involved in the design of the various architraves in the Punjab screen as well. What is striking here is that due to Kipling’s own direct involvement with this commission, he emphasises the educational aspects of the design, such as the motifs, stylistic variation, and the reasons for why deodar is preferred, but he does not give details of the cost nor from where the ornamentation is sourced. This could be taken as an indication of the status of wood carving in the Punjab more generally, or a reflection of his understanding of what was worth reporting to his consumers. In Royle’s report, he has commented that “the

Punjab collection was in most respects particularly adapted to the requirements of the English market, consisting as it did in great part of ornamental pottery, koftgari, arms, carpets and carvings, all of which were suitable for use in ordinary houses, the result being that the greater part sold readily at a good profit..." Since the bulk of items for this court were provided by the Mayo School of Art in Lahore, it can be reasonably stated that Kipling understood the demand of his market, and that market was what the carved screens were intended to communicate with.

Similar reports with varying levels of detail are available for the other courts as well. The two examples used here show how precise and particular the designs of the screens were in their inception and execution, however from their reporting to their construction in London, this granularity is shaded out. Furthermore, the fate of these screens is also lost. Royle reports how "an uncertainty prevailed up to the last" as to whether the screens should be retained as an assemblage for future display at the South Kensington Museum, and that when the decision was taken, it was too late to make any reasonable profit from them despite the fact that "any of the smaller screens would have realised good process." Thus, only a few were retained for the Imperial Institute, and the majority sold by auction. The amount realised was £2180 10s of which £1362 10s 10d. "was for portions bought out of the Royal Commission grant" and the remaining £817 19s 2d. was credited between all the provincial accounts. The significant contributions from local rulers and local governments were classified as "gifts".

These wood carved architectural fragments on display in various contexts participate in the construction of place identity. As architectural elements deployed in buildings, these objects can be framed within conventional commodity networks that can be studied in the ways they are produced, distributed and consumed, but these fragments are also products of disruptions, and as such their conditions of production, consumption and representation, offer the potential for alternative signification and perhaps even a new subjectivity. The Princely states' contributions, mediated by British administrators, were in service to the imperial economy as much as they were about the preservation of local power. In terms of semantic transmission and communication, the regional specificity of these engravings may have communicated an overall sense of oriental splendour to their British audience, but it was also part of the ritual power parity negotiations between the princely states within the Empire.

### **The Princely States and Regional Identity Politics**

The princely states represented a continuity of traditional state formation in South Asia and remained autonomous rulers with substantial authority within their states until 1948. There were sixteen princely states in the Punjab. Table 5.1 lists the states and which side of they border they ended up after the partition in 1947.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>B. N. Ramusack. *The Indian princes and their states*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

TABLE 5.1: THE PRINCELY STATES POST-PARTITION

State	Location after 1947
Bahawalpur	Punjab, Pakistan
Bilaspur	Himachal Pradesh, India
Faridkot	Punjab, India
Jind	Punjab and Haryana, India
Kalsia	Haryana, India
Kangra	Himachal Pradesh, India
Kapurthala	Punjab, India
Loharu State	Haryana, India
Malerkotla	Punjab, India
Mandi	Himachal Pradesh, India
Nabha	Punjab, India
Patiala	Punjab, India
Sirmur	Himachal Pradesh, India
Suket Surendernagar	Himachal Pradesh, India
Siba	Himachal Pradesh, India
Tehri Garhwal	Uttarakhand, India

After 1858, while their power in defence, external affairs, and communications was restrained by the British Raj, the princes continued to

“taxed their subjects, allocated state revenues, had full criminal and civil judicial powers, maintained internal law and order to varying degrees, patronised traditional and modern cultural activities and institutions, and synthesised elements of rajadharma or indigenous kingly behaviour with those of British models.”<sup>61</sup>

Cultural patronage was a crucial affirmation of kingly honour and legitimacy, and often conferred a semi-divine status on the prince.<sup>62</sup> The ritual significance of these rulers as participants and subjects at the lavish viceregal durbars, tours, and royal coronation ceremonies also entwined complex identity constructs and identifications. Under royal patronage a tradition of architectural synthesis, and artistic excellence as signifiers of authority had strong precedents across the region and beyond.<sup>63</sup> The patronage of grand architectural projects was a public display of both the memory of a prestigious lineage, as well the ability to assume that power and take it forward.<sup>64</sup>

‘Regional identity’ is “an interpretation of the process through which a region becomes institutionalized, a process consisting of the production of territorial boundaries,

<sup>61</sup>Ramusack, *The Indian princes and their states*, p. 2.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>63</sup>Catherine Asher and Giles Tillotson have pointed out examples in Rajput palaces where the royal constructions incorporated Mughal elements. J. C. Aggarwal and S. P. Agrawal. *Modern History of Punjab: A Look Back Into Ancient Peaceful Punjab*. Vol. 37. Concept Publishing Company, 1992; G. Tillotson. *The Rajput palaces: the development of an architectural style, 1450-1750*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

<sup>64</sup>Eaton and Wagoner, “Power, memory, architecture: Contested sites on India’s Deccan Plateau 1300-1600”.

symbolism and institutions.”<sup>65</sup> This process at once gives rise to, and is conditioned by, the discourses, practices and rituals that draw on boundaries, symbols and institutional practices. This notion of regional identity is inextricably tied to the tensions that come through in the architectural patronage of the princely states. Thomas Metcalf in his study of the development of Indo-Saracenic architecture has commented on this dichotomous role that the Indian princes played, where on one hand they were genealogically tied to traditional styles and local forms, but as aspiring elites within the colonial regime, they also had to signal power and aesthetics within a changing symbolic system which drew from Britain and Europe.<sup>66</sup> As an expression of the tensions, local buildings demonstrate both architectural vocabularies, local as well as foreign. So, for example, where the religious shrines, mausoleums, temples and gurdwaras were commissioned and designed according to traditional (local) principles for local populations, several of the new palaces were rendered as Palladian country homes or French chateaus, and designed by European architects.<sup>67</sup> In his research on the Shrine of Taunsvi near Dera Ismail Khan, Hussain Ahmed Khan has demonstrated the dual patronage of the Nawab of Bahawalpur state, who persisted in patronising traditional craftsmen for religious and symbolic architecture despite designing his residence in a very European style.<sup>68</sup> The princely patronage of architecture reflects mimetic flux in its ambiguous political and aesthetic engagement with the imperial cultural hegemony, and their responses assert local and regional power relations as much as they do colonial and global ones.

In the late nineteenth century, princely systems of patronage had to respond to Imperial schemes of art education, new cultural markets, and the commodification of approved indigenous arts and crafts. These responses took on various forms that had social reverberations for the artisans and their communities. As has been shown in Chapter 4 on Regulation, the formalisation of art education through the creation of art and vocational schools had a dubious impact on traditional craft practice. The princely states were drawn into this nexus and were sponsors of students, and were solicited for funds by John Lockwood Kipling for industrial exhibitions. This source of funding and support for the Great Exhibitions has rarely been remarked on. Not only did the local princes make significant monetary contributions to the Great Colonial and Industrial Exhibition of 1886, but the channelling of funds to the regional screens within a larger pan-Indian architectural display was itself symbolic in the way the various players were trying to assert place identities. The Bombay screens and the

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<sup>65</sup>A. Paasi. “Region and place: regional identity in question”. In: *Progress in Human Geography* 27.4 (2003), pp. 475–485, p. 476.

<sup>66</sup>Metcalf, “A tradition created: Indo-Saracenic architecture under the Raj”, Of Indo-Saracenic architecture, Metcalf says that it is “Indian in appearance but Western in function.” This style of architecture, also known as Indo-Gothic, was promoted by colonial architects in the late 19th century in British India. It was a melange of elements from local and regional architecture combined with Gothic revival and Neo-Classical styles fashionable in Victorian Britain. The structures built in this style were predominantly civic and municipal structures, grand public buildings, such as railway stations, clock towers, and courthouses, colleges and town halls.

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup>Khan, *Artisans, sufis, shrines: Colonial architecture in nineteenth-century Punjab*.

Punjab screens from the Exhibition as exemplars of this representation, demonstrate how local and regional identity, as expressed in the minutiae of architectural variation, is eventually subsumed into a greater 'Indian' identity within the Imperial coda.

J. R. Royle of the India Office was appointed assistant secretary to the Royal Commission in charge of the India Section. In his report in 1887, he detailed the administrative structures, costs and expenditures, as well as the disposal of the collections when the Exhibition ended.<sup>69</sup> The Exhibition was open for 164 days, and was visited by over five and half million people.<sup>70</sup> The cost, in excess of £22,000, was divided as follows:

- Indian Government: £10,000,
- The Royal Commission: £3,000,
- Bombay Exhibition Grant: £6,850, and
- Royal Commission Screen Grant £2,500.<sup>71</sup>

Deemed insufficient for the scale of the enterprise, further funding and sponsorship was received from the "native Princes and gentleman of India," and grants were made by various local Governments in India from their provincial funds. The architectural display in this pavilion had been coordinated by Caspar Purdon Clarke, honorary architect for the exhibition, and Keeper of the Indian Collection at the South Kensington Museum. This architectural assemblage offers hitherto unexplored material to understand the dynamic forces, sometimes intersecting and sometimes conflicting, that were at play, and their bearing on the trajectories of architectural design in the metropole and the colony. It allows for the exploration of how regional nuance and patronage in India on one hand, versus a hybridised amalgamation of a unitary Indian design on the other, can be a site for the formation of place identity through mimetic flux.

#### 5.4.5 "A Most Remarkable Object" - The Durbar Hall at the Colonial and Industrial Exhibition

The Indian Palace at the exhibition was "most happily and skilfully carried out" by Caspar Purdon Clarke, who was the 'honorary architect' of the exhibition.<sup>72</sup> Clarke conceived the idea of "erecting a typical Indian Royal residence with its Durbar Hall and a forecourt, which was surrounded by small shops, in which numerous artisans who were brought over from India... daily plied their trades under the eyes of the public."<sup>73</sup> This was to demonstrate to the British public "the manner in which the native artisans performed their daily work in India in former times as dependents

<sup>69</sup>Royle, "Report on the Indian Section of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886".

<sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*, The Bombay Exhibition was planned for 1886-87, and the sum of £6850 was allocated for collections for it, but the exhibition was 'abandoned', so the money was channelled to this one.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 88.

of the various princes and minor chieftans.”<sup>74</sup> The native worker within the rubric of an imagined Indian palace in the heart of London was a powerful spectacle. The concern with making this “an attractive and picturesque display” being paramount meant that the high cost was overlooked.<sup>75</sup> The structure was built of a mixture of woods, including pine, teak, deodar (Himalayan cedar), and shisham (Rosewood).<sup>76</sup>

Set in the centre of the Indian Court, the Durbar Hall was approached by a staircase and entered on the east side by a triple arched opening. The room was rectangular, with the walls on the long sides divided into five bays, and on the short sides into three bays, by arched piers. These recesses contained glass windows, and, above, a line of “arched heads” carried a bracketed and arched cornice. The entire surface was carved with intricate ornamentation, and “although the foliated arches at the heads of the thirteen recessed windows bear the same outline, yet the ornamentation of every bay differs from the rest, so rich is the fund of design possessed by these native craftsmen.”<sup>77</sup> Elements such as the dal gul (bean flower) show up magnified and looking like familiar gothic quatre foils within diamonds. Also, while the lower level used decorative elements that are recognisably Punjabi, the upstairs ornamentation follows a different lexicon, with many humanoid, anthropoid and animal faces carved into the brackets. The upper storey of the Durbar Hall was used for official receptions by the Prince of Wales.<sup>78</sup>

The wood carving for the palace was done over nine months between 1885 and 1886 by Muhammed Buksh and Muhammed Juma, two carpenters from Bhera, whose names are immortalised in the carving.<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, the designs use standard Punjabi conventions, as described in the context of a *sehdara* (triple arch way) that was drawn by Nand Singh for Purdon Clarke. In a recent study of the *sehdara* at the Durbar Hall in Hastings, Diana Wilkins has identified this arch as being one of the end arches of the of the Punjab Court Screen that was made under the supervision of Kipling, either in Lahore or Udoki, for the for the 1886 Exhibition.<sup>80</sup> We also know that this triple arch from Lahore was among other items acquired by Lord Brassey after the Exhibition along with a door from Saharanpur, panels of pinjra work, and other carvings from Tibet, Bombay and South India.<sup>81</sup>

And this is where we encounter a challenge in terms of the design of the structure. Our understanding has been built on the current version of the Durbar Hall as it

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>75</sup> “From a financial point of view this venture did not prove a success, not because the wares manufactured by the artists were not appreciated, but because the recovery of the cost of the undertaking was throughout considered of less importance than the making of an attractive and picturesque display. A large quantity of the goods manufactured on the spot were readily sold, and orders for fresh goods were constantly received.” *ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>76</sup> Cundall, *Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition*.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>78</sup> Royle, “Report on the Indian Section of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886”.

<sup>79</sup> Cundall, *Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition*.

<sup>80</sup> D. Wilkins. “Lockwood Kipling and Ram Singh: Their roles in the creation of the triple arch at Hastings Museum”. MA thesis. University of Sussex, UK. (Shared privately), 2016.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

exists within the Hastings Museum from 1931. However, this is the second time the structure was retro-fitted into a space. The first time was in 1889 when Lord Brassey purchased the Hall and had it put into his residence on Park Land in London where he and his wife, Annie Brassey were establishing a museum to display the collections they had acquired on their travels. Within the context of the social lives of objects, it seems fitting that a structure that was conceived as an archetype and derived from an amalgamation of forms lives through permutations of those forms. So while the concept of the *darbar* was taken from India as an emblem of imperial power to serve as a ceremonial gathering place within royal courts, Purdon Clarke's imagined palace over time has moved from the imperial exhibitionary complex to a most public space where weddings and playgroups take place.

The role of architectural fragments during the Exhibition serves to illustrate the various ways in which these items were consumed as texts, sites of production and bearers of 'Indian design. But what happened to them after the Exhibition closed? How did these fragments persist, and what does that mean in terms of the exhibitionary complex? The following section attempts to answer these questions first by tracing the afterlives of some of these specific fragments mentioned above, and second by exploring how wood carving, especially from the Punjab, as an architectural form became part of elite domestic buildings in Britain.

## 5.5 The After-lives of Architectural Fragments from the Great Exhibition

The Colonial and Industrial Exhibition was open for 164 days.<sup>82</sup> After it closed, the officials were tasked with returning items that were loaned, selling/auctioning items that remained, and disposing of the larger items that were part of the display, such as the gateways and screens. Royle has published a detailed account of these from the Indian Court by region.<sup>83</sup> However the decisions for how these transactions were handled was linked to the revenues earned and the cost of freight to return them to their production site. We therefore have a widely variable account of what was returned, auctioned, presented to museums (South Kensington as well as others such as the Imperial Institute), which is not consistent across categories. In addition, the idea for an Imperial Institute originated in the late 1870s as a permanent Empire museum or exhibition in London. The Indian Museum was opened at South Kensington in 1880. After the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, the Imperial Institute was set up in 1888 to hold and apply the property and assets that were contributed by private citizens from across the Empire.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>Royle, "Report on the Indian Section of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886".

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup>*Annual Report for the Imperial Institute, 1893*. Issued under orders of the Executive Committee, London



In Walter Benjamin's dialectical thinking, 'afterlife' refers to the process of disintegration and ruination in which the object emerges from earlier contexts having shed some of its original features but with new accretions upon it, whereby the "pure but deceptive surfaces of the object are eroded."<sup>85</sup> Obsolescence, then, can be considered as a critical counterpoint which can yield historical understanding. Benjamin observed:

"Historical 'understanding' is to be grasped, in principle, as an after-life [*Nachleben*] of that which is understood; and what has been recognised in the analysis of the 'afterlife of works,' in the analysis of 'fame,' is therefore to be considered the foundation of history in general."<sup>86</sup>

Afterlives therefore bring into conjunction ruination and the reconfiguration of the past in the present. The past is not something that is fixed and final, and Benjamin posits that the endless reconstructions of afterlives is the only way to break away from teleological and ossifying linear narratives of history.<sup>87</sup> With regard to the architectural items at the Exhibition, the following journeys of some of these items after the Exhibition reveal how meaning was reconstituted and reconfigured, and that the legibility and assessment of the fragments and their value was specific to different historical moments.

A report of the Imperial Institute for 1893 states that "the elaborately carved Baroda Pigeon House, the property of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, occupies the centre of this building."<sup>88</sup> The building referred to was India Section in the new Imperial Institute premises that was inaugurated in 1893. It is possible that the Jeypore gateway also ended up at the Imperial Institute. This assumption is based on the fact that in 1926, the Jeypore Gateway and the Baroda Pigeon House were presented to the Hove Museum by Sir William Furse, who was the director of the Imperial Institute in South Kensington, and looking to modernise the building.<sup>89</sup> A blog by the Hove Museum mentions that the Pigeon House was removed in 1959 and "quietly disposed of."<sup>90</sup>

Deborah Swallow has given us the most detailed account of the installation and subsequent "walling-up" of the Gwalior gate within the museum premises in South Kensington.<sup>91</sup> Tracing the reticence of the South Kensington Museum as well as the Imperial Institute to take ownership of the "beastly thing," from the late 1880s through 1899 a missing paper trail eventually leads to the installation of the gate within the Western Court of the museum although the Indian section was itself housed elsewhere.

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<sup>85</sup>Gilloch, *Walter Benjamin: critical constellations*, p. 4.

<sup>86</sup>Translation of Walter Benjamin's "Convolute N (On the Theory of Knowledge. Theory of Progress)" from *The Arcades Project* quoted in *ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 224–225.

<sup>88</sup>*Annual Report for the Imperial Institute, 1893*. Issued under orders of the Executive Committee, London

<sup>89</sup>J. Middleton. *Hove Museum*. Blogpost, 2002. URL: <http://hovehistory.blogspot.co.uk/2015/05/hove-museum.html>.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup>Swallow, "Colonial Architecture, international exhibitions and official patronage of the Indian artisan".

In 1955, the gate, was walled over so as not to detract from the Raphael cartoons on display within the gallery.<sup>92</sup> The gateway is still there, but invisible.

The Durbar Hall made its way to its current location in the Hastings Museum and Art Gallery via the Brassey Museum, Park Lane, London. The Durbar Hall was acquired by Lord Brassey who was one of the commissioners, and the structure fabricated for the Brassey home in Park Lane under the supervision of Purdon Clarke.<sup>93</sup> As a very recognisable emblem of the exhibition, the placing of this structure within the Brassey's personal museum signals a social context of mobility and the prestige of travel in the Victorian age. The Hall and its contents were presented to the Hastings museum by the son of Lord and Annie Brassey, and a separate extension was built to accommodate them.<sup>94</sup> These days the Durbar hall at the Hastings Museum is one the most popular wedding venues in Hastings, and also hosts toddler playgroups.

These afterlives show how the assemblage of Indianness that was on display 1886 was gradually fragmented and dispersed to smaller spaces and even concealed. As performative objects, these particular architectural fragments still bore traces of their role in the Imperial exhibitionary complex, but over the decades these traces have been re-consumed, reinterpreted and renegotiated. A notion of India that was designed for consumption in the Imperial metropole also became encoded into the architecture in Britain. This was driven by the intersecting roles of certain people who were part of this larger cultural complex. The following section will scrutinise the role of one such person who was at the centre of this extremely tight network of influence between London and the Punjab – Caspar Purdon Clarke. By positioning Clarke as the pivot between the exhibitionary complex and the 'oriental' obsession with architecture, I will demonstrate how certain forms of Indian architecture, such as wood carving from the Punjab, were absorbed into the repertoire of Victorian building in elite houses.

### 5.5.1 Caspar Purdon Clarke, The Honorary Architect (1846 – 1911)

In 1888, T. N. Mukherji extolled the contributions of certain British administrators in ensuring the "prosperity — and in some cases even their very existence" of crafts and "the able and learned way in which they have been brought to the notice of the European public."<sup>95</sup> He specifically mentioned Baden Powell and J.L. Kipling in the Punjab, Frederick S. Growse and John Henry Rivett Carnac in the North-western provinces, Thomas H. Hendley in Rajputana, Dr. George Bidie in Madras, and John Griffiths in Bombay. In addition, there were three men whose involvement applied to "India in general," they included Sir George Birdwood, Sir Edward Buck, and Caspar

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<sup>92</sup>Swallow, "Colonial Architecture, international exhibitions and official patronage of the Indian artisan", p. 64.

<sup>93</sup>Royle, "Report on the Indian Section of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition 1886".

<sup>94</sup>Wilkins, "Lockwood Kipling and Ram Singh: Their roles in the creation of the triple arch at Hastings Museum".

<sup>95</sup>Mukharji, *Art-manufactures of India: (specially compiled for the Glasgow International Exhibition, 1888)*, p. 286.

Purdon Clarke.<sup>96</sup> These names are not surprising, as they were the civil administrators who were directing the art schools and museums, and were also publishing monographs and in the *Journal of Indian Art*. It was a tightly knit circle. However, despite their prominence at the time, one name among these has received scant scrutiny in the literature on nineteenth century collecting and art pedagogy. I refer here to Caspar Purdon Clarke, whose name frequently appears in association with the South Kensington Museum's collections, as well as architectural design projects and lectures.

Despite his active and prolific career, Clarke does not appear to be as well-documented in the archive through his letters and papers as some of his contemporaries such as J. L. Kipling.<sup>97</sup> Clarke has appeared in many articles and books that deal with various aspects of collecting for the South Kensington Museum, including a recent publication by Moya Carey focussing on his role in collecting Persian objects for the South Kensington Museum.<sup>98</sup> He is also referenced in relation to his building designs. We have a basic biography, and I will outline that before discussing why Clarke is so key in this discussion on the consumption of wood carving from the Punjab.

Trained as an architect at the National Art Training Schools at South Kensington between 1862 and 1865, C. P. Clarke joined the works department of the South Kensington Museum in 1867. His work involved much travel, and in some of his initial trips he visited Venice, Florence, Rome, and Alexandria.<sup>99</sup> In London, he organized and ran evening art classes while simultaneously practicing as an architect. Between 1874 and 1876 he was HM superintendent of works for consular buildings in Tehran, Iran.<sup>100</sup> Following that stint, in 1879 he went on purchasing tours to Turkey, Syria, and Greece.<sup>101</sup> While in Damascus, he was commissioned to buy tiles for Frederic Leighton's oriental hall.<sup>102</sup> In 1880, when the collections of the India Museum of the East India Company were transferred to the South Kensington Museum, Clarke was assigned as the special commissioner in India, and in 1883 he became the keeper of the Indian museum at South Kensington.

Prior to that, in 1882 Clarke was sent to India with a budget of £3000 to buy objects for the museum's Indian collections. He was given an official designation,

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<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 286.

<sup>97</sup> See, Bryant and Weber, *John Lockwood Kipling: Arts and crafts in the Punjab and London*.

<sup>98</sup> M. Carey. *Persian art: Collecting the arts of Iran for the V&A*. London: V&A, 2018; McGowan, *Crafting the nation in colonial India*; S. Ashmore. "Caspar Purdon Clarke and the South Kensington Museum: textile networks between Britain and India 1850-1890". In: *Networks of Design: Proceedings of the 2008 Annual International Conference of the Design History Society (UK)*. ed. by V. Minton F. Hackney J. Glynne. Universal-Publishers. Boca Raton, Fla, 2009, pp. 140-146; Swallow, "Colonial Architecture, international exhibitions and official patronage of the Indian artisan"; Hoffenberg, "Promoting Traditional Indian Art at Home and Abroad:"*The Journal of Indian Art and Industry*", 1884-1917".

<sup>99</sup> Ashmore, "Caspar Purdon Clarke and the South Kensington Museum: textile networks between Britain and India 1850-1890".

<sup>100</sup> Carey, *Persian art: Collecting the arts of Iran for the V&A*.

<sup>101</sup> L. Sorensen. *Clarke, Caspar Purdon, Sir*. Retrieved March 21, 2015. URL: <http://www.arthistorians.info/clarke>.

<sup>102</sup> Ashmore, "Caspar Purdon Clarke and the South Kensington Museum: textile networks between Britain and India 1850-1890".

letters of introduction and even a special diplomatic uniform.<sup>103</sup> Clarke was away for almost a year, and travelled through most of the major centres in India as well as meeting with civil administrators and establishing a network of contacts. He sent more than 300 cases of goods back to South Kensington, containing over 3400 objects including architectural pieces, sculpture, paintings, manuscripts, metalwork, jewellery and sixteen life-sized models of Indian craft workers. He also purchased over 700 Indian textiles many of which were displayed at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition. For these services, he was awarded a Companionship of the Order of the Indian Empire, CIE, and a hundred guineas.<sup>104</sup> He worked his way up the ranks, becoming keeper of art collections at the South Kensington Museum in 1892, the assistant director a year later in 1893, and finally, director in 1896, a position he held until 1905. He was knighted in 1902. In 1905 he was persuaded to go to New York as the director of the Metropolitan Museum, but he had to resign due to ill-health after five years.<sup>105</sup> He died in 1911.

Clarke was a Freemason as well as a Freeman of the City of London.<sup>106</sup> He was not a prolific writer, but was known as an expert in his field.<sup>107</sup> Among his designs is the Indian Palace for the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition, as well as the 1887 refit for the Palace in Lord Brassey's Museum in Park Lane, London; Cotherstone church, Durham (1876); Alexandra House, Kensington (1886); the National School of Cookery, South Kensington (1887), and Elveden Hall, Suffolk (1894).<sup>108</sup> In addition, Kipling mentions him in connection with the work at Bagshot Park, and also expresses a preference for Clarke to design the Lahore Museum.<sup>109</sup>

This brief snapshot of a very illustrious career reveals the many areas Clarke was involved with and had influence. His architectural activity makes him significant for not only was he an 'expert' in the arts and crafts of various countries, he was actively

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<sup>103</sup>R. Head. "Indian crafts and western design from the seventeenth century to the present". In: *RSA Journal* 136.5378 (1988), pp. 116–131.

<sup>104</sup>Ashmore, "Caspar Purdon Clarke and the South Kensington Museum: textile networks between Britain and India 1850-1890".

<sup>105</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup>The archives of the Lodge Quatuor Coronati 2076 have an article by Clarke in volume 6 (1893) of their *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, titled "The Tracing Board". More significantly, the first volume of the publication from 1888 specifies his name in the list of people who propose to join the Lodge Quatuor Coronati 2076 at the meeting on 8th November 1888, further specifying that Clarke was "initiated in Lodge Urban, No. 1196 in 1877."

<sup>107</sup>Among his publications are the following: Clarke, "Some notes upon the Domestic Architecture of India"; C. P. Clarke. "The Tracing Board in Modern Oriental and Medieval Operative Masonry". In: *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum: Transactions of the Lodge Quatuor Coronati*. 2076.104 (1893); C. P. Clarke. "Street Architecture of India". In: *Journal of the Society of Arts* 32.1650 (1884), pp. 779–90; C. P. Clarke. "Moghul Art in the India Museum". In: *Transactions of the Royal Institute of British Architects* 4 (1888), pp. 10–11; C. P. Clarke. "Modern Indian Art". In: *Journal of the Society of Arts* XXXVIII (1890), pp. 511–21; C. P. Clarke. "Abolish Fees at Art Museums". In: *Brush and Pencil* 18.5 (1906), pp. 192–93; C. P. Clarke. "Still the Hoi Polloi, Bon Ton and Metropolitan Are Daft on European Art". In: *Brush and Pencil* 19.3 (1906), pp. 99–109; C. P. Clarke. "A Pedestal of the Platform of the Peacock Throne". In: *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 3.10 (1908), pp. 182–83.

<sup>108</sup>Sorensen, *Clarke, Caspar Purdon, Sir*, Compiled from various sources.

<sup>109</sup>Choonara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*.

involved in translating those forms in designs for his clients in Britain. He ensured a certain authenticity in the designs because he was directly able to reference the sources and contexts, either through his own experience or through the accumulation of knowledge gained by his encounters with the arts and crafts from the various places. His talks, later published in journals, record his engagement with ‘Street Architecture of India’ and ‘Domestic architecture of India’ – broad overarching talks that span the subcontinent through some representative sampling of his determination.<sup>110</sup> As mentioned earlier, he was involved in reconceptualising a ‘typical’ Indian Palace for the 1886 Exhibition, and then getting it fitted for the Brassey Museum.

## 5.6 Elveden Hall: Punjabi architecture Re-imagined

Another building that Purdon Clarke is associated with, and one that would merit from greater scholarly scrutiny is Elveden Hall in Thetford. This country estate was purchased by Duleep Singh, the exiled Maharaja of the Lahore in 1863, and was sold after his death to the 1st Earl of Iveagh in 1893.<sup>111</sup> The main house underwent a series of refurbishments through the course of its occupation, but what is of relevance to our discussion is the eminence of Indian ornamentation only on the interior, and the high stature that was signified by the deployment of such ornament. The most detailed account of Elveden Hall is by Clive Aslet in Volume VII of the lush multi-volume set by the auction house Christie’s that was published to list the details of the property of the Earl of Iveagh when it was to be auctioned in 1984.<sup>112</sup> The following account is taken from this book.

Duleep Singh bought the Elveden Estate in 1863, and sought to rebuild the country house in an Italian style, with the interior reimagined as an Indian palace. John Norton, the architect selected by Duleep Singh for his country home in Suffolk, was “instructed to decorate the interior with pure Indian ornament.”<sup>113</sup> The building work, carried out by W. Cubitt and Co. was based on detailed designs that Norton prepared after consulting “Bourne’s photographs, objects in the India Museum, and details obtained from a collection of native water-colour drawings, brought by the prince from Lahore and elsewhere.”<sup>114</sup> Most of the rooms were “encrusted with Indian ornament,” that was executed in plaster, however none of the colour remains as the entire space - including walls, ceilings, and bannisters - was painted white when it changed hands. Traces of red on the staircase balustrade, and fragments of mirror

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<sup>110</sup>Clarke, “Some notes upon the Domestic Architecture of India”; Clarke, “Street Architecture of India”.

<sup>111</sup>For details on Duleep Singh and his history at Elveden, see P. Bance. *Sovereign, Squire & Rebel: Maharajah Duleep Singh & the Heirs of a Lost Kingdom*. Coronet House, 2009.

<sup>112</sup>C. Aslet. “A History of Elveden”. In: *Elveden Hall, Thetford, Norfolk*. Vol. 7. Christie, Manson & Woods, 1984, The set comprises: Vol. I: Pictures, Prints and Drawings, Vol. II: Furniture, Vol. III: Tapestries, Textiles and Carpets, Vol. IV: European and Oriental Ceramics, Vol. V: Silver, Vol. VI: Books, Vol. VII: History of Elveden by Clive Aslet.

<sup>113</sup>Quoted in Christies Catalogue for Elveden from *The Builder* of November 17, 1871

<sup>114</sup>*Ibid.*

on the ceiling have shown through the chipped paint. Duleep Singh also referenced Indian carving in the furniture, with carved chair backs and fringed upholstery.<sup>115</sup>

Duleep Singh left Elveden in 1886, and following his death in 1893 it was sold Edward Cecil Guinness, who would become the 1st Earl of Iveagh. In 1899, the architect William Young was commissioned to expand the house, who died shortly after completing the plans for Elveden. His son Clyde took over the work, working with the original plans, and in co-operation with Sir Caspar Purdon Clarke who received 5% of the commission. The plan expanded the house by mirroring the original construction, and linking the two portions with an elaborate Indian hall made in white Carrarra marble that rose to the full double-storey height of the building.<sup>116</sup> Clarke explained that this construction was “to reproduce, in England, the best examples of Moghul Architecture.”<sup>117</sup> Clarke shared with Young, drawings from the Museum collections and the “magnificent work on Indian architectural details” in the Jeypore Portfolio of Architectural Details in twelve volumes produced by Samuel Swinton Jacob between 1890 and 1913. In addition, he arranged “type pieces” of columns to be sent to renowned stone carvers, Farmer and Brindley of Westminster, who were carving all the pieces for the Hall. Aslet has described the layout of the Indian Hall:

“The form of a cross with an apse with five pairs of French windows opening onto the south-facing terrace. Around three sides runs a gallery, supported on arches at the north and pairs of coupled columns to the east and west. Four arches spring from the first-floor level to carry the great dome. The inner face of the dome is covered with a lozenge pattern, encrusted with stylised flowers and vases; at the top is a lantern, which is lit from the sides rather than above at Purdon Clarke’s suggestion. The pendentives required special thought, as in India “the lines do not follow the sides of an Octagon,” advised Purdon Clarke. The pattern of concentric bands was possibly suggested by the Dilwara Temple on Mount Abu, of which there is a photograph in the albums. The cusping to the underside of the arches, flowing like great ribbons of marble, may have been inspired by Dewan I Khas. It was again Purdon Clarke who proposed that it should be pierced rather than solid.”<sup>118</sup>

Clive Aslet had access to a considerable amount of communication between the architects and the Guinness family regarding his design choices. He has quoted Purdon Clarke extensively, and has also referenced photographic albums that directly influenced the design.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Aslet, “A History of Elveden”.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> In private communication with Mr. Aslet as well as representatives from Elveden Hall, including the Arthur Edward Rory Guinness, who is the 4th Earl of Iveagh, I was unable to get any verification about the existence of these documents, nor access to the estate’s archives. In addition, while I was given a tour of the estate in 2016, a privilege since the site is closed to the public, I was requested

Nortons designs for Duleep Singh and Clarke's creations for the Iveagh family at Elveden place it at a site for mimetic encounter that invokes mimesis in relation to colonialism, alterity and conflict. Taussig has suggested that to mime, and mime well is the capacity to Other.<sup>120</sup> Girard questions the destabilisation of the status of art following mimetic excess. For Duleep Singh, Norton's designs, a montage created by compiling specimens from the South Kensington, placed him within the elite *in Britain* who were increasingly creating 'oriental' spaces within their homes, and who would be able to decode the royal splendor that he commissioned at Elveden. Duleep Singh gave 'authenticity' through his claim to the Punjab throne. The Iveagh family, on the other hand, derived value from their association with Duleep Singh, and so their Durbar Hall required authentication through their choice of materials and designs—a choice that was validated by Purdon Clarke's expertise and first hand engagement with Indian palatial forms. This mimetic entanglement expresses mimetic desire differently through these spaces within Elveden Hall, and opens up possibilities for engaging with mimesis as expressed through architectural ornamentation.

Having drawn the links from the Exhibition through the design of C. P. Clarke to elite domestic interiors, I broaden this discussion to explore the context of this 'oriental obsession' with architecture, and how it played out in Britain in the fin de siècle.

## 5.7 The 'Oriental Obsession' in Architecture

This section traces the connections between 'oriental' architecture that was used in wealthy homes in Victorian Britain and how individuals, groups and objects in Britain and India mediated the reception of Punjabi woodwork in Britain. Using Arjun Appadurai's concept of 'regimes of value' from "The Social Lives of Things," I will start by offering a broad survey of how the Victorian oriental obsession expressed itself in the architecture of elite British homes in the 19th century, then follow with a detailed visual analysis of one site: the Billiards Room at Bagshot Park, Surrey.<sup>121</sup> This set of rooms and their furniture was designed for the Duke and Duchess of Connaught by students at the Mayo School of Art in Lahore under John Lockwood Kipling between 1884 and 1887. Finally I will discuss the significance of this site in terms of the flows and mediations between the various actors, such as patrons, designers, families, freemasons and other social groups, in an attempt to assemble the social life of this "Indian" room.

It is vital that I clarify my use of the term 'oriental' at the outset. My use of the term 'oriental' in this section is not an East-West binary, but combines the 'othering'

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not to publish any details or share any images. In terms of afterlives of architecture, Elveden Hall too is concealed and subject to the owners' discretion for access. What this means for the history of Duleep Singh (who is buried there alongside his wife) and the Sikh community more generally, is a challenging conundrum.

<sup>120</sup>Taussig, *Mimesis and alterity: A particular history of the senses*.

<sup>121</sup>A. Appadurai. *The social life of things: Commodities in cultural perspective*. Cambridge University Press, 1988.

in Edward Said's "Orientalism" with a temporally specific cultural cross-referencing and technical liberation that was prevalent in the arts and architecture in nineteenth century Britain.<sup>122</sup> The term is charged with the response of an (imperial) West to the social and cultural difference that was encountered in the colonies, power asymmetry notwithstanding. It encompasses both, the ambivalence towards semiotics and context, as well as the enthusiastic adoption, appropriation, and mimesis of forms and techniques derived from materials such as metalware, textiles, and architectural ornament that global economies exposed. These encounters produced new cultural references within their new settings because of new mediators and mediations, such as the use of domes, arches, minarets, and glazed tiles within classical or Gothic buildings.<sup>123</sup>

The 'oriental' aesthetics of Victorian buildings and domestic interiors have been the subject of many studies that emphasise the splendour and exoticism that marked certain domestic spaces of the aristocracy and the wealthier classes.<sup>124</sup> The intricate display of ornament derived from architecture of Persian, Turkish, Moorish, and Indian origin is inevitably discussed in terms of a resistance to industrialisation and mass production, and linked with matters of taste and discernment and the opulence that the Great Exhibition of 1851 celebrated.<sup>125</sup> This usage of Islamic/Indian architectural ornament in the late-nineteenth and early- twentieth centuries in Britain and America has also been associated with leisure and relaxation, and ties in economically with the rise of the middle-class and greater disposable income.<sup>126</sup> Examples of such ornamentation are found applied to restaurants, railway stations, exhibition halls, and the newly emerging cafes, smoking rooms and public baths.<sup>127</sup>

This Victorian obsession with oriental design was not without precedent. In the second half of the eighteenth century the East India Company expanded into politics as well as trade in India, and by securing trading concessions and administrative rights in the region, increased the influx of wealth into Britain. The fortunes made in the East India Company combined with the exposure to the different and elaborate constructions inspired innovation in the design of houses and their interiors.

Sezincote House, Gloucestershire: Sezincote House was designed between 1805 and 1807 by Samuel P. Cockerell for his brothers who had amassed a fortune in India. The

<sup>122</sup>E. W. Said. *Orientalism: Western conceptions of the orient*. 1978. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978.

<sup>123</sup>As seen, for example, in William Burgess' designs for the 3rd Marquess of Bute in Cardiff Castle.

<sup>124</sup>J. M. MacKenzie. *Orientalism: History, theory and the arts*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995; McGowan, *Crafting the nation in colonial India*; J. M. MacKenzie. *The Victorian vision: Inventing new Britain*. London: V & A Publications, 2001; Sweetman, *The oriental obsession: Islamic inspiration in British and American art and architecture 1500-1920*; Barringer and Flynn, *Colonialism and the object: Empire, material culture and the museum*.

<sup>125</sup>MacKenzie, *The Victorian vision: Inventing new Britain*.

<sup>126</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup>A. Kumar. *Across the seven seas: Indian travellers' tales from the past*. UK: Hachette, 2015.



house was designed in the “Rajasthani Mogul style,” replete with minarets, peacock-tail windows, jali-work railings and pavilions.<sup>128</sup> The artist Thomas Daniell who had spent ten years in India making aquatints, watercolours and oils of Indian buildings and landscapes using a ‘camera obscura’ that were relied upon for their “accuracy and reliability” was also involved with the design.<sup>129</sup>

Brighton Pavilion, Brighton: Inspired by Sezincote, but now more well-known, is the Royal Pavilion at Brighton, built by George the IV between 1808 and 1823. This was one of the first major buildings in Europe built in the Indian style and was designed by the architect John Nash. Nash was also inspired by *Oriental Scenery* by Thomas and William Daniell (1795-1808).<sup>130</sup> In addition to the domed and decorated Indian exterior, the interior was an extravagant homage to chinoiserie, with an exaggerated use of oriental motifs in all the rooms in silk, lacquer, bamboo and porcelain. Many royal palaces in Europe had a room or a building with a chinoiserie interior, and by the 1750s a Chinese bedroom and dressing room were considered the height of fashion.<sup>131</sup> It was in this tradition of elite residential design that Duleep Singh had his country mansion built at Elveden, Suffolk on a design by John Norton in 1863, as discussed previously in this chapter.

Shah Jahan Mosque, Woking: Serving a different purpose, but marking a distinct architectural conjuncture in the British landscape is the Shah Jahan Mosque in Woking. Built in 1889, it was the first purpose-built mosque constructed in northern Europe. It was built by Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner (1840-1899), the architect was W. I. Chambers.<sup>132</sup> Chambers’ design was based on drawings in d’Avenne’s *L’Art Arabe*, lent by the India Office, as well as from details of other mosques.<sup>133</sup> Built in Bath and Bargate stone, Woking’s Shah Jahan Mosque has an “onion dome on delicate rubble walls, with a decorative three-part frontispiece in blue and gold, as pretty as the Brighton pavilion.”<sup>134</sup> This is not just a decorative building, though. It is exactly oriented towards Mecca, thanks to the services of a sea-captain who visited the site and took bearings.<sup>135</sup> The mosque continues to serve the local Muslim community, and

<sup>128</sup>H. De Almeida and G. H. Gilpin. *Indian Renaissance: British romantic art and the prospect of India* (Vol. 9). Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2006.

<sup>129</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup>MacKenzie, *The Victorian vision: Inventing new Britain*.

<sup>131</sup>MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, theory and the arts*.

<sup>132</sup>Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner (1840-1899) was a Hungarian-/Jewish-born linguist, orientalist, and educationist who studied in Constantinople, Malta and King’s College, London, where he was made Professor of Arabic with Mohammedan Law at the age of twenty-one. He became a naturalised British citizen in 1862, and in 1864 he took up an appointment as Principal of the Government College in Lahore. He spent the next fifteen years in India, founding schools, literary societies, and journals, and recording many unknown languages — he was said to have known fifty languages by the time he died. After returning to England, he set up an Oriental Institute at Woking, and he planned to build a synagogue, church, Hindu temple and mosque for the students. The land for the mosque was funded by the Nizam of Hyderabad, and the mosque was built with a donation from the Begum Shah Jahan of Bhopal. Only the mosque and church were built before he died. I. Nairn, N. Pevsner, and B. Cherry. *The buildings of England: Surrey. 2nd edition*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971.

<sup>133</sup>d’Avennes, *L’art Arabe: D’apres les monuments du Kaire, 1869-1877*.

<sup>134</sup>Nairn, Pevsner, and Cherry, *The buildings of England: Surrey. 2nd edition*.

<sup>135</sup>*Ibid.*

in 2018 it was listed as a Grade I heritage site by government, marking it within the history of historic British monuments. It is worth noting that purpose-built structures for the Hindu, Sikh, and Buddhist practitioners did not arrive until fairly late in the 20th century.

Also emerging in England during the nineteenth century was the Seaside town, exemplified by towns like Brighton, Eastbourne and St. Leonards on Sea. Within reach of London, yet at “the edge of the land,” this unique experience was heightened by a “fantasy architecture designed to transport users to alternative worlds.”<sup>136</sup> From piers to bandstands, seafront shelters, pavilions, winter gardens, theatres and concert halls, a “wildly syncretic Orientalism” became a defining characteristic of many of these seaside towns. And although there was no dominant architectural style, a “seaside Orientalism”, signified by a “protean style, and related exotic design motifs including the palm” became a recognisable architectural lexicon.<sup>137</sup>

These examples demonstrate that there are different and quite distinct types of ‘oriental’ architectures on display. On one hand there are the ‘protean’ structures that are innovating and borrowing from a body of now-recognisable ornamental forms and use on their exterior forms. These buildings intentionally signal foreignness within the built British landscape. Another category includes elite homes whose exteriors are architecturally recognisable within an English spatial, temporal and cultural landscape. These buildings then offer an interior space that is decoratively foreign. These constructions make an impact due to their juxtaposition into a recognisably English architecture, and by doing so are moderated into visual tropes that carry significance. These spaces are linked with social practices of having gendered spaces and the acceptability of smoking, but there are examples where the oriental room is neither. Here design exists to express the patron and artists’ identities as artist, traveller, and eclectic.

Leighton House, Holland park, London: The Arab Hall at Leighton House in Holland Park, London is probably the most famous example of this elite architecture. This room was designed and built for Frederic Leighton by his friend George Aitchison in 1877-9. Leighton built this room “for the sake of something beautiful to look at once in a while.”<sup>138</sup> The decorative structure was a costly undertaking designed to house his collection of tiles and ceramics from Damascus and Persia. It was modelled on a 12th-century palace called La Zisa at Palermo in Sicily. The mosaics and marbles and skilled craftsmen were all sourced in London, and the gold mosaic frieze was made up in Venice and shipped to the site in sections. As mentioned earlier, Purdon Clarke was also commissioned to acquire tiles from Damascus for this Hall.

<sup>136</sup>F. Gray. *Designing the seaside: Architecture, society and nature*. Islington: Reaktion Books, 2006, p. 91.

<sup>137</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>138</sup>Sweetman, *The oriental obsession: Islamic inspiration in British and American art and architecture 1500-1920*.

In addition to Leighton House, there was a confluence of artists' houses in Holland Park, London. This subculture of artists and their homes had a profound impact on the development of the Aesthetic and the Arts and Crafts movements.<sup>139</sup> This is significant in terms of the associations between individuals and the interiors of houses, many of which were collaborative artworks. Of particular interest is the work of William Burges, the builder and "the most dazzling exponent of the High Victorian Dream."<sup>140</sup> The 'High Victorian Dream' refers to a return to medievalism as an instrument of salvation, and Burges' interiors especially those done for the Marquis of Bute in Cardiff and the Worcester Chapel in Oxford are an elaborate eclectic expression of this style.<sup>141</sup> The Arab Room at Cardiff Castle has a profuse array of oriental architectural ornament. Both Frederic Leighton and William Burges were influenced by Prisse D'Avennes' elaborate catalogue of Egyptian ornament, *L'Art Arabe D'Après les Monuments du Caire*, that came out in 1877.<sup>142</sup>

All the examples of oriental architecture cited above were designed by British architects, and with the exception of Elveden Hall and the Shah Jahan Mosque, for British patrons. Sometimes the designers and/or patrons would have travelled to one or more of the countries referenced, but typically the orientalisering took place within a distinctly British building that was predicated on climatic needs and the aesthetic predilections of the patron. From the Rajasthani moghul building at Sezincote to Leighton House's Arab Hall in Holland Park, London, the creation of the oriental style involved the architect/designer cherry-picking ornamental elements to fit into their interpretation of the space that would benefit the home owner's status as gentleman, collector, artist and professional. In the "Arab Hall", for instance, Persian tiles and Islamic calligraphy from Sukkur, Sindh (Pakistan) have pride of place surrounded by tiles from Damascus, Iznik ware and bespoke tiles by William de Morgan. The montages of oriental ornament that carried prestige value in these homes had less to do with the mimetic relation with the colony than it did with other wealthy Britons. It was a self-reflexive mimesis, that built on prior mimetic desire, one that perhaps was a more direct mimicry and appropriation of grandeur.

As the predilection for such oriental spaces grew as a measure of prestige, it was inevitable that the royal homes would also consider ways of responding to it. In 1883, Queen Victoria's newly married son, Arthur, visited India with his new wife. Whilst there, they commissioned a Billiard room for their new home in Bagshot Park, Surrey, which would be panelled with wood carving from the Punjab. The following

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<sup>139</sup>See, C. Dakers. *The Holland Park circle: Artists and Victorian society*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999; C. Gere. *Artistic circles: Design & decoration in the aesthetic movement*. London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 2010.

<sup>140</sup>J. M. Crook, M. Axon, and V. Glenn. "National Museum of Wales, & Victoria and Albert Museum. (1981)". In: *The Strange genius of William Burges, "art-architect"* (), pp. 1827-1881.

<sup>141</sup>Crook, Axon, and Glenn, "National Museum of Wales, & Victoria and Albert Museum. (1981)"; S. E. Gillingham. *Encountering Burges: Reflections on the art and architecture of the chapel at Worcester College, Oxford*. London: Third Millennium, 2009.

<sup>142</sup>P. Banas. "The Orientalist Book Industry 1840-80: Prisse d'Avennes, Systems of Borrowing and Reuse, and the Marketing of Egypt". PhD thesis. Art History: Binghamton University, 2016.

section explores the Billiards room to understand the ways in which architecture from the distant Punjab was consumed in a place of leisure in Surrey. An analysis of the imagery deployed in the ornamentation, and deliberations on the people involved in the creation of the room help us to fill in the circuit of culture within which the Billiards room was produced, consumed and represented.

## 5.8 Bagshot Park, Surrey

The ornate wood-carved billiards room in Surrey is pivotal because it is the first site where an architectural scheme for the décor of a British house was developed with direct input from India and her artisans from the Punjab, albeit mediated by a British representative of the Empire. When the Duke of Connaught asked Lockwood Kipling to design this room for his new house in Surrey, the designs that were produced by Kipling and his students were approved and managed by the Duchess of Connaught, carved in the Punjab, then transported back to England for installation.<sup>143</sup> The creation of this architectural space required a level of mediation and inventiveness that would not only turn a building ‘outside-in’ by taking a predominantly exterior design indoors and translating it into an interior decorative scheme, but it also needed to communicate with the English person through the semiotics of its materiality and ornament.

Bagshot Park is a royal residence located near Bagshot, a village in Surrey, approximately 11 miles north-west of Guildford. The original Bagshot Lodge was built between 1631 and 1633 for King Charles I. It underwent several alterations under several owners, until it was eventually demolished in 1877-78. A new building with 120 rooms was completed in 1879 by the orders of Queen Victoria for her son Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught and Strathearn upon his marriage to Princess Louise Margaret of Prussia. From 1880 this was their principal residence, until his death in 1942. During World War 2, the house was the regimental headquarters and depot of the Royal Army Chaplains’ Department. They vacated the building shortly before the Earl and Countess of Wessex took over the tenancy from the Crown in 1998. Bagshot Park has remained Crown property and its occupants have been tenants.<sup>144</sup>

The Indian billiard room wing at Bagshot Park was conceived as a room and a corridor carved throughout in wood, which was to inspire the more famous Durbar Room at Queen Victoria’s Osborne House on the Isle of Wight.<sup>145</sup> This billiard room came about as a result of a visit to India by the Duke and Duchess of Connaught in autumn

<sup>143</sup>Bryant, “Kipling’s Royal Commissions: Bagshot Park and Osborne”.

<sup>144</sup>National Audit Office (United Kingdom). *The Crown Estate Property Leases with the Royal Family*. Report, 2005. URL: [https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2005/04/royal\\_property\\_leases.pdf](https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2005/04/royal_property_leases.pdf) Retrieved September 2015..

<sup>145</sup>Bryant, “Kipling’s Royal Commissions: Bagshot Park and Osborne”, “After luncheon Arthur and Louischen showed me their new Billiard Room, which is full of things they have brought from India, and is extremely pretty. A narrow circular corridor leads to it.” Quoted from Queen Victoria’s diary, 1885.

1883, where Arthur was commanding the Meerut Division of the Indian Army.<sup>146</sup> In December 1883, they were introduced to John Lockwood Kipling at the opening of the Jaipur Exhibition. Lockwood Kipling, was the Principal of the Mayo School of Art at Lahore at the time, had come to Jaipur with a few of his students to represent the wares of the Punjab region.<sup>147</sup> Subsequently, the Duke and Duchess sought Kipling's advice on collecting brassware, and then in 1884 they visited Lahore and the School of Art.<sup>148</sup> There they may have also seen the work in progress for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition held at Crystal Palace in 1886. So it came to be that "the most important piece of original design" for the Mayo School – the wood carved lining of the billiards room and its furniture – was carried out under the supervision of J. L. Kipling and Ram Singh in Lahore between 1885 and 1887.<sup>149</sup>

In the annual report of the MSA for 1884-85, Kipling delineated the roles of various people in the project.<sup>150</sup> The designs and drawings were mainly done by Kipling and Ram Singh, and the actual carving was not carried out at the school, but was contracted out "to a carpenter at Amritsar who works under the direction of Ram Singh."<sup>151</sup> The students were involved with the designs and carving on "some of the choicer panels etc."<sup>152</sup> In addition to the wood carving, items of furniture "in keeping with the rest" were also designed in the school. Ram Singh is commemorated in the room on a panel on one side over the south fireplace with the caption: "Ram Singh. Master, Mayo School of Art 1885-1887," and Kipling is on the other side with a caption: "Lahore, J. L. Kipling. Principal, Mayo School of Art 1885-1887."<sup>153</sup>

In 1888, the various panels and pieces were shipped to England where they were installed in the prepared walls and ceilings by a team of carpenters, including Muhammed Baksh and Muhummed Juma from Bhera, Punjab. These two carpenters had been commissioned to work on the Durbar Hall for the Exhibition in 1886, and were also involved with the Glasgow Exhibition in 1888.<sup>154</sup> It has been reported that the Indian craftsmen lived in the grounds of Bagshot Park for two years as they completed their task of assembling the panels in this room.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>146</sup>J. Flanders. *A circle of sisters: Alice Kipling, Georgiana Burne-Jones, Agnes Poynter and Louisa Baldwin*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2001.

<sup>147</sup>Tillotson, "The Jaipur Exhibition of 1883".

<sup>148</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup>Report of the Director of Public Instruction, Punjab 1884-85 Choonara and Tarar, *Official chronicle of Mayo School of Art: Formative years under J. L. Kipling 1874-94*.

<sup>150</sup>Report of the Principal, Mayo School of Art, Lahore 1884-85 *ibid.*

<sup>151</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup>Bryant, "Kipling's Royal Commissions: Bagshot Park and Osborne".

<sup>154</sup>This is published in Vandal & Vandal (2006), but whether in fact they were the same carpenters has yet to be confirmed. Vandal and Vandal, *The Raj, Lahore, and Bhai Ram Singh*.

<sup>155</sup>G. C. Crew. *Bagshot park: Surrey the Royal Army Chaplains' Department Centre: an account of the house and park, formerly the Seat of the Duke of Connaught and now by courtesy of H.M. the Queen the Royal Army Chaplains' Department Centre, and a description of the Army Chaplains' Museum and Memorial Chapel*. Bagshot: Museum of the Royal Army Chaplains' Dept, 1986; Flanders, *A circle of sisters: Alice Kipling, Georgiana Burne-Jones, Agnes Poynter and Louisa Baldwin*.

The Billiard room apartment consists of a smoking room, a hallway and the main room. The walls are covered by 241 deodar panels, each one carved in profusion with a unique design. The ceiling, also of wood, is covered in geometric forms, some of which are in-filled with foliage. The coving has a series of ornamental brackets that join up with pilasters that reach the floor. These pilasters are intersected at the dado level by a decorative dado rail that circumscribes the room at approximately shoulder height. All the brackets, door panels, door jambs, window mouldings, decorative jharokas and skirting are richly carved. Above the corner fireplace, the mantelpiece rises in an elaborate multi-tiered arrangement of receding, miniature, arched balconies in the 'bukharcha' style, surmounted by a jharoka whose finial almost touches the ceiling.<sup>156</sup> The inside of the fireplace is tiled with blue and green Iznik style ceramic tiles, but it is not clear when these were put in. The carved designs include flowers, trees, animals and Indian royal symbols like the fly whisk, water-pipe (hookah) and treasure vase. The flowers include roses, daffodils, tulips, carnations and iris, while the trees include the chinaar (oriental plane tree), palm, willow and mango. There are many different types of birds and animals, both Indian and English, in elaborate compositions. There is also a panel with Ganesh, the elephant god of good fortune. The imagery that was incorporated was managed to the smallest detail by the Duke and Duchess.<sup>157</sup>

The corridor leading to the room also has a geometrically patterned ceiling, carved skirting, decorative brackets over the windows, and a series of *chinidaan* (china cabinet) lining the walls on either side. The Duchess wanted ceiling of the smoking room to be carved like the temples at Mount Abu in Rajasthan.<sup>158</sup> A drawing of this recessed octagonal ceiling from the Mayo School archives is published in Vandal and Vandal's book, and appears to have been implemented with a few minor changes.<sup>159</sup>

In true Victorian style, the Billiards room presents an eclectic montage of motifs and ornament. This room is unique for its use of wood, a costly material, and more importantly, for the fact that it was made in the colony rather than designed and constructed in England. However, even though the provenance is the Punjab, due to educational ethos at the Mayo School of Art and J. L. Kipling's interpretative position, it is an interesting amalgamation of Punjabi and Moghul forms combined with motifs from the catalogues of the designer William Morris. The carving techniques also vary due to the intermingling of carpenters from Amritsar and England. So, even though the billiards table was designed by Kipling (or Ram Singh) it was produced by the

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<sup>156</sup>This follows the typical *chinidaan* (china cabinet) that was being produced in Punjab at the time.

<sup>157</sup>For details on the panels and correspondence from the Duke and Duchess to J. L. Kipling, Queen Victoria and the comptroller of the Duke of Connaught's household, Howard Elphinstone, see Bryant's 2017 essay. This essay offers details about the property not previously recorded as it is occupied by members of the royal family and therefore is not open to the public. The photographs with this essay also offer new insights into the ornamentation scheme of the wood carving. Bryant, "Kipling's Royal Commissions: Bagshot Park and Osborne".

<sup>158</sup>The Jain Dilwara complex near Mount Abu has five magnificently carved marble temples. These temples were built between the 11th and 13th centuries AD and are world famous for their stunning use of marble.

<sup>159</sup>Vandal and Vandal, *The Raj, Lahore, and Bhai Ram Singh*.

British firm Burroughs and Watts. The choice of wood and the technique of carving the relief are clearly distinguishable. In addition the structural constructions that were carried out were designed to fit into the design of an English house, and so the archway and covings with their combination of Indian motifs but English technique yield a rather different ornament.

One way to consider the dialogical mediation by ornament is to consider the associations and social linkages of the creators and the perceived recipients. In the case of the Billiards room, an analysis of the visual schema has enabled me to identify two potent circles of interaction. The first is the Holland Park Circle, which was discussed earlier in the context of a group of philosophically aligned ‘celebrity’ artists whose homes and lives were embedded in their art and its reception. The second is the Freemason Brotherhood. This is a smaller clique, but influence and power wielded by them was significant. Via a visual analysis of some of the designs in the billiards room, I will illustrate the mediation of ornament in the assembling of these social networks.

Certain design motifs are quite universal, but in specific cultural contexts accumulate symbolic depth. One of these forms is the diamonds with the quatrefoil. This motif can be traced in many different art traditions, but in sheer prolificacy and magnification can be readily identified with Gothic and Gothic-Revival architecture.<sup>160</sup> So, within the cultural frame of Victorian architecture and its medieval nostalgia, prominent bands of this motif on the billiards table when placed alongside carvings of elephant heads are a cross-cultural mediation. Similarly, ceilings with geometric panels are found in the Punjab, especially in religious or elite buildings, but also have precedence in English homes. The recognisably Islamic geometric pattern centred on the eight-point star and octagon is called the “*aath-barah*” (Eight-Twelve) in Punjabi, and is shown by Kipling in his article “Punjab Wood Carving”.<sup>161</sup> The pattern of this ceiling is also found in the portico of the Lahore Museum. The celestial ceiling too is found across cultures. Ram Singh would have seen it in Lahore at Ranjit Singh’s samadh, and Amritsar at the *Harmandir Sahib* (Golden Temple).

The lattice pattern on the ceiling at Bagshot Park is in the *aath-barah* form, but the face carved in the sun is not an Indian one! This face is closer to the sun symbol that is found on the apron of the grand master of the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE).<sup>162</sup> This is meaningful because even though the Duke of Connaught was not initiated into the top position of grandmaster until 1901, which was much after the Bagshot Park commission, he was active in his role within the masonic fraternity when he travelled in to the colonies an official capacity. This role of freemasonry as

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<sup>160</sup>G. Shalunts, Y. Haxhimusa, and R. Sablatnig. “Classification of gothic and baroque architectural elements”. In: *2012 19th International Conference on Systems, Signals and Image Processing (IWSSIP)*. IEEE, 2012, pp. 316–319.

<sup>161</sup>Kipling, “Punjab wood carving”.

<sup>162</sup>The sun motif was repeated on the ceiling of the Masonic Peace Memorial in London that was built by the Duke of Connaught in his capacity as the Grand Master in 1926.

a 'civil religion' and how it served the imperial project by fostering an interracial, multireligious and intercultural brotherhood is a vital factor in the participation of certain key actors.<sup>163</sup> The banner under which many different belief systems could be unified had to itself appeal universally. Thus, artists and designers especially those involved with cultural and aesthetic interlocution were sought.

Architectural ornament lent itself to a role in bearing the message with its implicit links to buildings, builders and symbolism. William Burges was one such architect and designer whose association with the masonic brotherhood was expressed in his eclectic and elaborate design schemes. His design for Worcester chapel at Oxford is a visual discourse of masonic values expressed as a decorative scheme.<sup>164</sup> Another significant person who was also involved with Punjabi architectural decoration was Caspar Purdon Clarke. Clarke's senior role within the South Kensington establishment in conjunction with his travelling and design activities for the elite has been discussed earlier.

We know from Kipling's report that some of the "choicer panels" for the billiards room were given to the carpentry students at the Mayo School. It is not possible to ascertain the association of each panel with its designer, nor do I have access to each panel's details. However, working with a sample it is quite possible to demonstrate the origins of some of the eclectic themes and iconography that is depicted. These range from identifiably Indian motifs that are typically associated with royalty and leisure, such as the fly whisk, surahi, wine or water pitcher, and water pipe and animals and birds such as the elephant, peacock, and parrots. Also Punjabi is the style of the doorway around the side door, which has an arch and three pinjira panels above it. Some of the patterns on these panels are replicas of William Morris' most popular designs. Others use the tiling/pairing that the Morris tiles and wallpaper are renowned for. These designs include among others, well known ones like Brer Rabbit, Strawberry Thief, William de Morgan's parrot tile (for William Morris), and the four birds book cover designed by Philip Webb for the cover of Morris' book "Volsunga Saga. The Story of the Volsungs & Niblungs with Certain Songs from the Elder Edda."

One way to consider the translation and mediation at the Billiards Room at Bagshot is that it is a relation that does not transport causality, but "induces two mediators into coexisting."<sup>165</sup> To establish the social life of the Billiards Room, we would need to pull together the social flows and multiple mediators into "traceable associations." These 'networks' or flows of mediation, imply encounters and translations and with that

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<sup>163</sup>V. Fozdar. "That Grand Primeval and Fundamental Religion: The transformation of freemasonry into a British imperial cult". In: *Journal of World History* 22.3 (2011), pp. 493–525; P. Chopra. *A joint enterprise: Indian elites and the making of British Bombay*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

<sup>164</sup>Gillingham, *Encountering Burges: Reflections on the art and architecture of the chapel at Worcester College, Oxford*.

<sup>165</sup>B. Latour. *Reassembling the social: An introduction to actor-network-theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 33.



mobility and transformation, reflexively implicating human and non-human actors. By this reckoning, the mediators are not only the key individuals like Arthur of Connaught and Lockwood Kipling and their social circuit, but as bearers of affordances, this would also mean the fragments of architecture as well.

## **5.9 Summary**

This chapter explored how Punjabi woodcarving was consumed in nineteenth century Britain, by considering two spaces of activity. The first was in the context of the South Kensington Museum and the Colonial and Industrial Exhibition of 1886, where the entanglements between cultural practices and power can be traced in the social lives of carved wooden architectural fragments that were designed, financed and displayed at the exhibitions, as well as their afterlives, and the processes of disintegration and ruination from which the objects emerged from their earlier contexts with new accretions, and eroded surfaces. The second space of consumption was in elite, especially royal, domestic interiors. Tracing this 'oriental obsession' as it expressed itself in the architecture of wealthy British homes in the 19th century, I explored the notion of a self-reflexive mimesis through the forms of the wood-carving, and how ornament performed as a form of acquisitive mimesis and rivalry. The last section was a detailed analysis of the wood carved ornamentation at Bagshot Park, eliciting questions of mediation and flows, and how fragments can be used to trace networks of associations between people and objects. The following chapter delves deeper into these ideas by using Actor-Network theory to constellate, translate and vitalise the performative character of fragments, buildings and their relations to consider architecture and its fragments in radical ways.



## Chapter 6

### Architectural Fragments as Intermediaries and Mediators

#### 6.1 Introduction: Tracing Associations

In the previous chapters, my investigation of wood-carved architecture was located within the ethnographic space of colonial archives, and used their conventions to explore the slippages and distance between “those normative, imposed categories of social difference” and the fluid lived social experiences that affected production, regulation, and consumption.<sup>1</sup> This chapter in order to explore these possibilities, uses concepts from Actor Network Theory (ANT) to weave a web of relations between the human and non-human entities using the affordance of architectural fragments as a way into the historical context. Actor-Network theory (ANT) deals with the ways people and objects come together to create the social, which consists of things like culture and knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Espoused by Bruno Latour, John Law and Michel Callon, in this framework, people and objects associate with one another and it is through these associations that different kinds of knowledge about the world are created. The fundamental aim of ANT is to explore how networks are built, assembled, and maintained to achieve a specific objective.<sup>3</sup> It insists upon the performative capacity of non-human (object) participation, which means that the relations it maps are “simultaneously material (between things) and semiotic (between concepts).”<sup>4</sup> John Law has defined ANT as:

“...a disparate family of material-semiotic tools, sensibilities and methods of analysis that treat everything in the social and natural worlds as a continuously generated effect of the webs of relations within which they are located. It assumes that nothing has reality or form outside the enactment of those relations. Its studies explore and characterise the webs and the practices that carry them.”<sup>5</sup>

Intermediaries are a fundamental aspect of ANT. The notion of intermediary covers diverse and heterogeneous materials, and refers to anything that circulates between actors and helps to define the relation between them. A script is a typical situation,

<sup>1</sup>Stoler, *Along the archival grain: Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense*.

<sup>2</sup>Latour, *Reassembling the social: An introduction to actor-network-theory*.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>J. Law. “Actor network theory and material semiotics”. In: *The new Blackwell companion to social theory* (2009), pp. 141–158.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

a sequence of actions, and intermediaries follow their scripts in predictable and regular ways. Bruno Latour explains that “when objects have receded into the background for good, it is always possible—but more difficult—to bring them back to light by using archives, documents, memoirs, museum collections, etc., to artificially produce, through historians’ accounts, the state of crisis in which. . . [they] were born.”<sup>6</sup> Mediators, on the other hand, do not follow a regular script. They are unpredictable, and often transforms the scripts of those who interact with it. “Objects, by the very nature of their connections with humans, quickly shift from being mediators to being intermediaries, counting for one or nothing, no matter how internally complicated they might be. This is why specific tricks have to be invented to make them talk, that is, to offer descriptions of themselves, to produce scripts of what they are making others—humans or non-humans—do.”<sup>7</sup>

The notions of intermediaries and mediators provide a very useful way to consider how architecture and its fragments perform in various contexts. As such, in returning to ‘representation,’ we also become attentive to how representation and mediation might inform a re-evaluation of the CoC. As recognisable objects with assigned functional scripts, architectural fragments such as doors and arches can interact with buildings and humans as intermediaries. Yet when they are stripped from those buildings, perhaps embedded into museums, displayed for sale on the side of the road, or virtually encountered via social media, they can become mediators with their own scripts and performative powers. They can, in fact, be scripted into new networks as well. Latour suggests that ANT transforms the social “from what was a surface, a territory, a province of reality, into a circulation.”<sup>8</sup> It allows us to consider the social in terms of “a movement, a displacement, a transformation, a translation, an enrolment,” and, resisting essential differences, it vitalises the performative character of objects as well as their relations.<sup>9</sup> This sense of continuous circulation and translation allows us to consider architecture and its fragments as networks themselves.

This chapter, then, takes these ideas from ANT and reads the wooden facade of a Nath temple which is on display at the Lahore Museum. By contextualising this fragment back to the location from where it was removed, the building of the Nathdwara (Nath temple) and the city of Jhang, I trace associations with Punjabi fictional narratives in order to see how architectural fragments can represent notions of shared piety and devotion.<sup>10</sup> The second part of the chapter explores how this temple mediated the design of a sacred totem which is still in circulation, and a functioning symbol of rawadari (tolerance) in the practice of Shi’a Islam in Jhang even today.

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<sup>6</sup>Latour, *Reassembling the social: An introduction to actor-network-theory*, p. 81.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>8</sup>Latour, “On Recalling ANT.”, p. 0.

<sup>9</sup>Latour, *Reassembling the social: An introduction to actor-network-theory*, pp. 64–65.

<sup>10</sup>F. Mir. “Genre and devotion in Punjabi popular narratives: rethinking cultural and religious syncretism”. In: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 48.3 (2006), pp. 727–758.

## 6.2 Reading Narratives in Architectural Fragments: The Facade of the Lal Nath Temple in Jhang

The Lahore Museum has several architectural elements that have “temple of Baba Lal Nath” listed as their provenance. These include the range of typical elements such as doors, arches (*seh dara*), *jharokas* and one elaborate facade. In this section, I will consider these fragments on display, and trace their historical, social and cultural associations. The temple of Lal Nath has some innovative and unusual features which allow me to challenge the classification of sacred architectural forms into fixed religious categories - Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Muslim etcetera. However, rather than trying to rebuild the Lal Nath temple morphologically, i.e. through its form and structure, the analysis I offer uses the material-semiotic rubric of Actor-Network Theory to assemble the social. Using the metaphor of Punjabi popular narratives (*qisse*) and Farina Mir’s analysis of the nineteenth century text “*Char Bagh-i-Panjab*,” I explore the performativity of architecture as a device for understanding the social nature of architecture. I demonstrate how this fluidity persists in the ritual production of an Islamic totem, the *tazia*, which are architectural models carried as visible and symbolic representations of mourning and mausolea during in the Shi’a rites of Muharram.



FIGURE 6.1: Display of Architectural fragments in the General Gallery, Lahore Museum. Author’s photograph, 2016.

### 6.2.1 Fragments of the Nath Temple at the Lahore Museum

When I visited the Lahore Museum in 2016, I was given access to the catalogue, from which I noted fifteen items were recorded as having come from the temple of Lal Nath. These include two balconies, two *seh daras*, five items classified as “window”,

“jharoka”, “ventilator”, five items classified as “door”, “doorway”, “entrance”, and “door-window”, and one facade.<sup>11</sup> Many of these were on display in the General Gallery of the museum. The most prominent among these is a large, carved, wooden facade (Catalogue number 1838/1166) which was originally part of the main entrance to the museum. The massive structure is rectangular in shape with two side panels on either side. These are an arrangement of square and rectangular insets with *jaali* (lattice) and foliate carving, and a receding set of cusped double arches springing off carved pilasters. The central panel, which occupies approximately three-fourths of the area comprises of a curvilinear, scalloped eave on which twenty one urn-shaped sculptures have been lined. This arch frames three smaller arches which have the same type of curvilinear, scalloped eave on which rests a flattened dome. This facade is remarkable for its three-dimensional effect. Indeed, it is temple architecture rendered in wood. (Figs. 6.1; 6.2)



FIGURE 6.2: Facade of the Lal Nath temple in the General Gallery, Lahore Museum. Author's photograph, 2016.

This wood carving exhibits some of the classic features that came to be associated with the Sikh period in the 18th and early nineteenth century, as represented both in domestic as well as sacred buildings in the Punjab.<sup>12</sup> The example of Indian domestic

<sup>11</sup>The following is a list of catalogue entries for these pieces: 1831/1164 - Wooden balcony - From Baba Lal Nath temple

1832/1165 - Wooden balcony - - do -

1837/1163 - Jharoka - From the temple of Baba Lal Nath, Jhang City

1838/1166 - Wooden facad [sic] - From Jhang. Originally fixed at the main entrance of a temple

1839/1169 - Wooden door [sic] window - Domical top of three windows from the temple of Baba Lal Nath

1840/ Misc 1162 - Wooden Entrance - Baba Lal Nath temple

1841/ Misc 1162/A - Wooden doorway - do -

1842/ Misc 1170 - Wooden carved door - do -

1843/ Misc 1168 - Wooden door - do -

1844/ Misc 1167 - Wooden window - do -

1845/ Misc 1173 - Wooden ventilator - do -

1846/ Misc 1174 - Wooden ventilator - do -

1847/ Misc 1172 - Wooden ventilator - do -

1850/ Misc 1160 - Wooden seh-dara - From temple of Baba Lal Nath (contemporary painting gallery)

1851/ Misc 1161 - Wooden seh-dara - do -

<sup>12</sup>Mumtaz, *Architecture in Pakistan*.

architecture published by Lockwood de Forest in 1885 depicts a similar arrangement on a facade in Lahore, although that is not entirely made of wood and operates within the painted stucco curvilinear eave. The haveli of Naunehal Singh in Lahore is another example.<sup>13</sup> A haveli in Eminabad, a historically prominent city near Sialkot, showcases many of these features as well, including in wood.<sup>14</sup> In sacred contexts, the most obvious example is the Harmandir Sahib (Golden temple) from c. 1764 in Amritsar, but numerous other gurdwaras and samadhis across the region as well.<sup>15</sup> These examples, and there are many others as well, were rendered in brick, stucco and wood, and confirm a vocabulary of articulation that was in vogue in the 18th century and perhaps earlier.

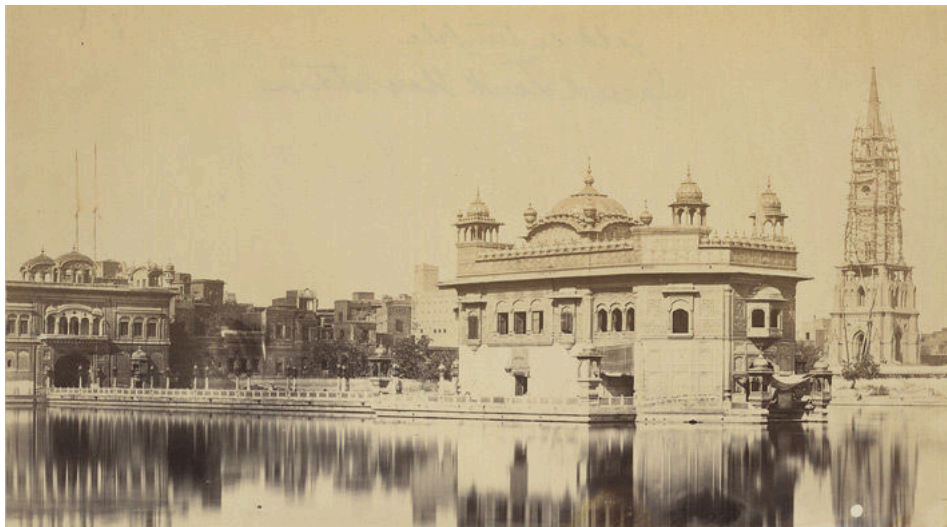


FIGURE 6.3: Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) in Amritsar photographed in the 1860s. The Gothic Clock Tower under construction in the background was completed in 1874, and demolished 70 years later. Crofton Collection: ‘*Topographical and architectural views mostly in India,*’ British Library, Public Domain.

The remaining architectural fragments from this assemblage are harder to discern and hence describe.<sup>16</sup> It would not be surprising that the temple facade was richly ornamented, but with the information I have so far, it is not possible to categorically confirm, or deny, the veracity of the provenance for all the wood carved fragments ascribed to the temple. However, the goal of this chapter is to discuss how architectural fragments can offer new ways of tracing and understanding how architecture may have performed. Actor-Network Theory tells us that every object is a network just as it

<sup>13</sup> cite

<sup>14</sup>S. Rashid. *Gujranwala, the glory that was*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1992.

<sup>15</sup>Stronge, *The arts of the Sikh kingdoms*; G. S. Randhir. *Sikh shrines in India*. Publications Division Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, 1990; Z. A. Kalhor. “Hindu and Sikh Architecture in Islamabad and Rawalpindi”. In: *Journal of Asian Civilizations* 33.1 (2010), p. 88.

<sup>16</sup>The General Gallery of the Lahore museum has the wooden architecture embedded into the wall above the display cabinets, which makes it very difficult to observe the carving and details closely. In addition, during my visit in 2016, there were exhibition panels set up for a temporary exhibit, whose height interrupted a clear line of vision to most of these items. Thus, while I cannot describe these architectural pieces in too much detail, I can reasonably assert that judging by the condition and the variation between the items on display, they are probably not all from this temple.

is also imbricated in broader ‘social’ networks. So, rather than try to empirically classify these wood carved fragments to reinsert them into the structure of the Lal Nath temple, I want to use to examine them as mediators, to prepare a point of departure that allows us to explore the social and cultural topologies of this region.

### 6.2.2 Situating the Lal Nath Temple in Jhang

I did not start by considering this route to understand the temple fragments. In fact, I was initially quite preoccupied with establishing taxonomies out of the cultural flows that I was attempting to capture and distil. It was in this light that I began seeking some historical facts about the Nath temple in Jhang, and, as habituated, I began with the 1883-84 District Gazetteer of Jhang.<sup>17</sup> There I acquired some information about the area, and the first clues to the temple. However the ‘official’ records did not yield much information, so my scrutiny had to contend with other sources of local knowledge, such as folk narratives and extant practices, and it is through all these entanglements that the Temple of Lal Nath and its wood carved fragments will be represented.

The Gazetteer states that in the 1862, the twin towns of Jhang and Maghiana, which were two miles apart became the joint municipal headquarters of Jhang District.<sup>18</sup> They were located in the Chaj Doab, between the Rivers Chenab and Jhelum. Jhang was the older of the two cities, and was founded in the 15th century by Mal Khan. It was destroyed by the Chenab River and then rebuilt c. 1688 by “a sanyasi fakir, Lāl Nath.”<sup>19</sup> In 1805, the area was brought under Sikh control by Ranjit Singh. The city’s “Nath-ka-mandir” is mentioned as the “finest building in town,” and that Shamsheer Nath, a descendant of the founder Lal Nath, “now dwells in the temple.”<sup>20</sup> The Gazetteer mentions that Maghiana was a “pretty village” a few decades ago, and “has no history.”<sup>21</sup> Over the next couple of paragraphs, the Gazetteer delineates the administrative changes and transportation linkages brought about by the British that now render Maghiana’s location “favourable”, with roads connecting it to commercial centres such as Dera Ismail Khan in the West, Pakpattan via Kamalia in the South East, and Shahpur in the North. And, just like that, “with no transit and but little indigenous trade,” Jhang ceases “to be a place of any importance.”<sup>22</sup> The role of the Gazetteers for establishing “official” histories, and how they persist in historical accounts cannot be underestimated. However, they were produced within colonial administrative preconditions and, despite their authority, an empirical rubric must be assiduously, and critically employed.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Punjab Government. *Gazetteer Of The Jhang District, 1883-84*. Lahore: Arya Press, 1884.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>23</sup> Roy, “Consumption and craftsmanship in colonial India 1850-1950”.



Thereafter, despite considerable searching, I was not able to get any more details about the Nath temple in Jhang except that this temple is also known as “Nathdwara” (gateway to Nath). In desperation, I reached out on social media, and there was introduced to a resident of Jhang, Veer Shuaib Raza, who is an assistant professor of horticulture at Ghazi University in Dera Ghazi Khan, and an amateur photographer and historian. Raza was able to give details about the condition of the temple and shared some his images of the temple, but did not have a lot of background on this building either. At this point I began to examine the visual record that I had, in order to develop a material-semiotic reading of the temple’s morphology.<sup>24</sup> What follows is a brief description of what currently remains of the Lal Nath temple in Jhang.



FIGURE 6.4: Lal Nath temple in Jhang. Veer Shuaib Raza, 2012, Public Domain.

The temple has been encroached on all sides by new construction, and only the main chamber and spire survive. It is a brick building covered with a thick layer of stucco which has been moulded into ornamental forms across the entire surface. The most distinctive feature of this temple is that instead of a conventional spire and crowning features, known as a shikhara, a large dome and finial top the building. The dome

<sup>24</sup>Law, “Actor network theory and material semiotics”.

transitions from a stylised octagonal drum over the square shikhara. The shikhara comprises a central panel with nested arches, and *srnga*, miniaturised spires, on the four corners of the tower as well as growing out of from the pillars of the largest central arch. On some of the sides the central arch has an opening, possibly marking the spot where wood carved elements, possibly *jharokas*, were attached.<sup>25</sup> The eight *srnga* contain mini arches set above stucco *jharokas*. Some of these contain votive figures, while others show floral fresco painting.

The surface ornamentation that remains consists of figural (human and animal), celestial, and floral forms, some of which were moulded into the stucco, whilst others were cut into the brick work. There are also remnants of fresco painting, which indicate that the surface used to be coloured, and contained even more imagery. The images of the temple also reveal the places from where the original carvings were removed, for example where the original doors were replaced by rudimentary replacements. At present there are new constructions encroaching upon the building, and all that remains is the central sanctuary (*garba griha*) with the shikhara and dome, but there is no doubt that the temple had ancillary buildings at the ground level, and based on the tradition of decorative portals in the region, wood carving would have been part of the ornamentation. In terms of symbols, the most obvious marker that this is a temple for the Nath panthis (followers of Gorakh Nath and his disciples) is the figure of a seated yogi that appears in the centre at the base of the dome on all four sides. The figure is cross legged and the arms are resting on a t-shaped meditation stick.<sup>26</sup>



FIGURE 6.5: Meditating *jogi* in front of the dome of the Lal Nath temple in Jhang. Copyright: Veer Shuaib Raza, 2012

<sup>25</sup>Veer Shuaib Raza explained how difficult it was to photograph the building due to the high encroachments on the sides. He was not able to gain access to the interior, but managed to get some detailed shots from neighbouring rooftops.

<sup>26</sup>The representation of the deity with the meditation stick is found in various contemporary Nath contexts, including Baba Balak Nath, in Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh

### 6.2.3 Domed Temples and *Samadhis*

As symbolic models of the cosmos, Hindu temples communicate through their form.<sup>27</sup> The design of a Hindu temple is a “symmetrical, self-repeating structure derived from central beliefs, myths, cardinality and mathematical principles.”<sup>28</sup> The morphology of the temple communicates these meanings indexically and symbolically.<sup>29</sup> Domes, whilst integral to the interior layout of the temple and the structure of the shikhara, are not commonly articulated on the exterior of Hindu temples. The decision, therefore, to use a dome as the crowning element is significant, and deserves some investigation. In addition, the juxtaposition of the pointed-roof *srnga* with the main dome is also unusual, and may signify distinct panth possibilities.<sup>30</sup> Specifically, whether this architectural heterogeneity alludes to religious pluralism needs to be investigated within the nineteenth century Nath tradition. The presence of sacred, domed buildings that defy strict classifications within the rubric of fixed Hindu, Sikh, Muslim architectural orders, needs to be studied within a broader local culture of ascetism.

James Mallinson, for example has written about the North Indian Nath traditions that were linked to the tradition of holy men (*sant*) who “believed in a formless, unconditioned god,” and were known for their “theological openness,” and a “disdain for the purity laws adhered to by more orthodox Hindu ascetics,” principles which allowed them to mix freely with people from other religions.<sup>31</sup> The networks of these ascetics, which can be traced through the *qisse*, but also through traces in the material and structural landscape allow us to ‘read’ architectural fragments and their morphological signification beyond functional and aesthetic properties in order to situate them within social and cultural circuits.<sup>32</sup>

In the architectural historiography of the Punjab the use of domes and their symbolism is typically associated with Islamic and Sikh sacred construction.<sup>33</sup> These

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<sup>27</sup>M. W. Meister. “Geometry and Measure in Indian Temple Plans: Rectangular Temples”. In: *Artibus Asiae*. 44.4 (1983), pp. 266–296.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 0.

<sup>29</sup>A. Hardy. “The Temple Architecture of India”. In: *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 68.2 (2009), pp. 267–268; M. W. Meister. “Mandala and practice in Nagara architecture in North India”. In: *Journal of the American oriental society* (1979), pp. 204–219; M. W. Meister. “Measurement and proportion in Hindu temple architecture”. In: *Interdisciplinary science reviews* 10.3 (1985), pp. 248–258; M. W. Meister. “On the development of a morphology for a symbolic architecture: India”. In: *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 12.1 (1986), pp. 33–50.

<sup>30</sup>Highlighted by Michael Meister in an email discussion in 2017.

<sup>31</sup>J. Mallinson. *Yogic Identities: Tradition and Transformation*. Article written in the context of an exhibition, Yoga: The Art of Transformation at the Freer Sackler Gallery, Washington, D.C, 2014.

<sup>32</sup>The *qissa* (plural *qisse*) in the Punjab, has historically referred to the epic-length verse romances that circulated in the region. It is also sometimes used to refer to the genre. The literary form of the *qissa* derives from Arab and Persian traditions.

<sup>33</sup>Mumtaz, *Architecture in Pakistan*; R. Hillenbrand. *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function and Meaning*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999; S. Kavuri-Bauer. *Monumental matters: The power, subjectivity, and space of India’s Mughal architecture*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011; P. Nuttgens. “The Story of Architecture”. In: Hong Kong: Phaidon Press Limited, 1997; Kalhor, “Hindu and Sikh Architecture in Islamabad and Rawalpindi”; S. Stronge. “Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Artistic Patronage at the Sikh Court”. In: *South Asian Studies* 22.1 (2006), pp. 89–101;

sacred sites include mosques and mausoleums for the former, and *gurdwaras* and *samadhi* (shrines) for the latter. Older, domed architectural forms also include the Buddhist stupas and the sacred complexes around them.<sup>34</sup> However, there are other Hindu temples with domes in the Punjab as well, including a temple at Massan, near Jhang City, and another one in Dera Ghazi Khan.<sup>35</sup> [use the stupa...and Snodgrass/meister on domes and introduce the notion of samadhi as a meditative state and an architectural form. The word samādhi literally means “putting together” and is often translated as “integration” or “absorption” snodgrass page 280 for definition of samadhi in purana and buddhism).Also distinguish between samadh and samadhi...ranjit singh’s samadh in lahore as architecture...his state of awakening or enlightenment is his samadhi...gurus etc have samadhis...Samādhi, also called samāpatti, in Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism and yogic schools refers to a state of meditative consciousness.] Additionally, there are buildings that are grouped together as samadhis. These are square or octagonal structures surmounted with domes, with frescoes that depict figures from the Sikh and Hindu pantheon. One such example has been discussed by Zulfiqar Kalhoro in the Potohar as an “unidentified samadhi at Kot Fateh Khan,” which he describes as follows: “To the east of Samadhi of Than Singh is anonymous octagonal samadhi noted for its paintings representing Hindu and Sikh mythologies.”<sup>36</sup> A similar set of paintings is described in the (domed) Gor Khatri temple in Peshawar, which has been published by Ibrahim Shah and dated to the first quarter of the 19th century.<sup>37</sup> A group of single-celled *samadhis* with fresco paintings has also been recorded at Kot Ramdas, near Gujranwala.<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps one of the best known sites is located near Jhelum, and known as Tilla Jogian (Hill of the Jogis). This site has a long and multi-layered history that is linked through official records and local narratives all the back through the millennia. From the 16th century until partition (1947), Tilla Jogian, also known in historical records as “Balnath Tilla” and “Gorakhnath Tilla”, was generally recognized as the headquarters of the Naths.<sup>39</sup> This site, which was a monastery, is strewn with small domed cells and is linked with Guru Gorakhnath, and later his disciple Bal Nath.

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K. S. Chahal, S. Dua, and S. Singh. “Architectural Evolution of Gurdwaras: An Overview”. In: *IUP Journal of Architecture* 4.1 (2012), pp. 7–32.

<sup>34</sup>N. Zubair. “Gandhara Architecture and Its Representation”. MA thesis. South Asia Regional Studies, University of Pennsylvania, 1997; A. Snodgrass. *The Symbolism of the Stupa*. Studies on Southeast Asia. Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1985; A. K. Coomaraswamy. *Essays in early Indian architecture*. Oxford University Press, 1992.

<sup>35</sup>Temples with domes, often identified with tantric and Shaivite traditions, are found across India. In Uttar Pradesh, where there is a significant Nath presence, the Medhak Mandir in Oel, is a domed temple built on the back of a stone frog.

<sup>36</sup>Z. A. Kalhoro. “Samadhi Architecture in Potohar, Punjab (Pakistan)”. In: *Chitrolekha International Magazine on Art and Design* 6.2 (2016), pp. 2–10, p. 0.

<sup>37</sup>I. Shah. “Hindu Iconography in the Gor Khatri Temple (Peshawar): Sacred Imagery Painted in the Saiva Shrine”. In: *South Asian Studies* 32.2 (2016), pp. 185–198.

<sup>38</sup>A. U. Baig. *Kot Ramdas, the Ruins of the Gurdwara and Grave of Muslim Saint in Sikh Smadi*. Blog. 2017. URL: <http://aliusmanbaig.blogspot.com/2018/02/kot-ramdas-ruins-of-gurdwara-grave-of.html>.

<sup>39</sup>J. Mallinson. “Nath Sampradaya”. In: *Jacobsen*. Ed. by A. Knut et al. Brill Encyclopedia of Hinduism Vol. 3. Leiden: Brill, 2011, pp. 407–428; S. Rashid. *Jhelum: City of the Vitasta*.

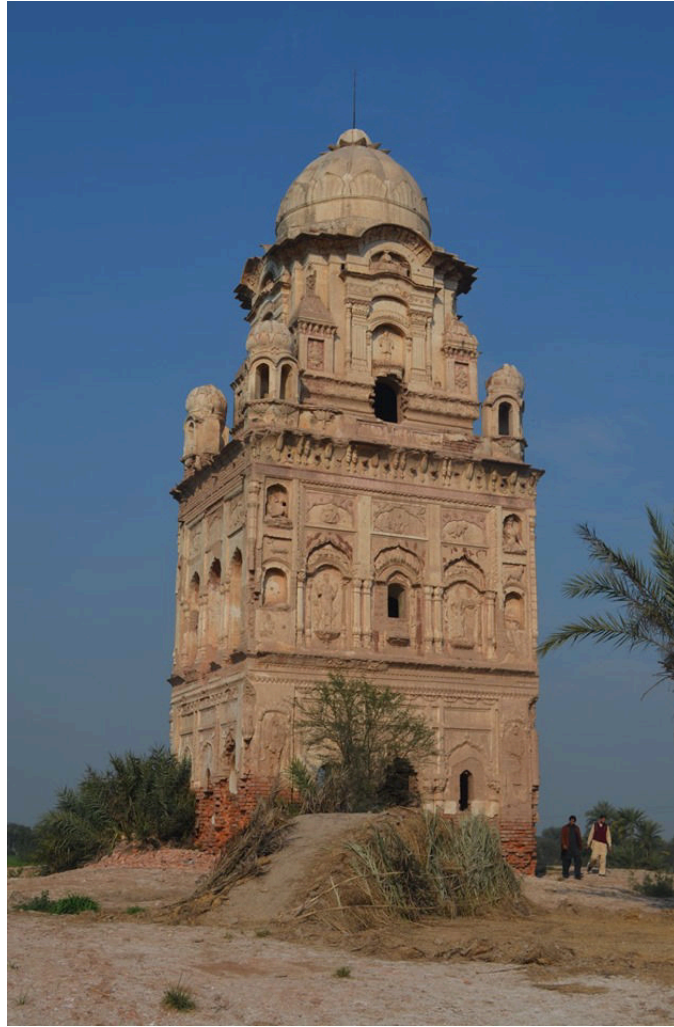


FIGURE 6.6: Massan temple, located across the Chenab River, outside Jhang. Copyright: Abdul Rehman, Public Domain.

It was the hub of jogi (ascetic) pilgrimage, and features in the memoirs of the mughal emperors, Akbar (c. 1581) and Jehangir (c.1607).<sup>40</sup> Tilla Jogian persists through narratives and ballads including that of Puran Bhagat and the later, the 17th century “Heer Ranjha”, the most popular ballad in the Punjab. (Figs. 6.14 – 6.17)

The association of the hut with the ascetic, and the hut within the form of the temple, has an established place in architectural scholarship.<sup>41</sup> My own research on architecture and its representation from the Gandhara region found similar patterns in Buddhist buildings and sculpture.<sup>42</sup> Kazi Ashraf has asserted that the architecture of the hut “consistently presents a polysemy, a source of proliferated representations

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Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2005; S. K. Hasan. *Pakistan: Its ancient Hindu temples and shrines*. Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, Centre of Excellence, Quaid-i-Azam University, 2008.

<sup>40</sup> Hardy, “The Temple Architecture of India”; Coomaraswamy, *Essays in early Indian architecture*; K. K. Ashraf. *The Hermit’s Hut: Architecture and Asceticism in India*. University of Hawai’i Press, 2013.

<sup>42</sup>Zubair, “Gandhara Architecture and Its Representation”.



FIGURE 6.7: Single-celled *samadhi* at Kot Fateh Khan, Potohar Valley. Zulfiqar Kalhoro, 2016.



FIGURE 6.8: Meditation cells at Tilla Jogian, Jehlum District. Inderjeet Singh, 2015.

and interpretations.”<sup>43</sup> From the double-domed *gandhakuti* (fragrant hut) of the Gandharan ascetic, to later monasteries and temples, the form and symbolism of the ascetics hut remains a potent motivator. For example, whilst tracing the architectural form of the ascetic’s hut, Ashraf notes that “the ascetic dwelling is not so much about the pragmatics of shelter, which it fundamentally is, but about the conundrum of the ethics and goals of renunciation.”<sup>44</sup> The use of domed structures to signify the architecture of asceticism, especially as employed by the Nath panthis (followers of Gorakh Nath and his disciples) is an area that can be explored within this greater theme of the architecture of asceticism, and offers some exciting opportunities for

<sup>43</sup>K. K. Ashraf. “The Aesthetical Paradox of the Hermit’s Hut”. In: *The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Indian Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*. Ed. by Arindam Chakrabarti. London, New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Chap. 13, pp. 269–295, p. 0.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 276.

future research.<sup>45</sup>



FIGURE 6.9: A representation of the Nath jogis at Gor Khatri, Peshawar, “The yogis at Gurkhattri from *Vaki’at-i Baburi* by Gobind, c. 1590-93. The British Library, Or.3714,f.197r

#### 6.2.4 Asceticism, Mobility and the *Nath Panthis* in the Punjab

So far I have sketched some of the material and semiotic aspects of the Lal Nath temple as expressed in its morphology. Within a context of circulating narratives, I am now able to situate this temple within the broader Nath ascetic tradition. Along with the dome, this is assertion is supported by the iconography on the temple, especially the prominent placement of the jogi (ascetic) in the centre of the shikhara where the dome starts. This cross-legged figure with his arms resting on the meditation stick has been commonly associated with Gorkhnath as well as his disciple Balak Nath.<sup>46</sup> The Nath are a Shaivite tradition within Hinduism, and within the numerous ascetic traditions

<sup>45</sup>See, for example, Sears’ book on medieval temples, T. I. Sears. *Worldly gurus and spiritual kings: Architecture and asceticism in medieval India*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014.

<sup>46</sup>These include: Sidh Baba Balak Nath Temple in Himachal Pradesh;

are one of the oldest.<sup>47</sup> They are the followers of the ascetic Gorakhnath, also known as Goraksanātha, and are associated with the formalisation of hatha yoga.<sup>48</sup> They are known as *Yogi* (from their practice of yoga), *Gorakhnathi* (followers of Gorakhnath), and *Kanphata* (split-eared, from their practice of having the cartilage of their ears split and inserted with earrings as a rite of confirmation to the order).<sup>49</sup> The Nath also had a large settled householder tradition in parallel to its monastic groups. Hansen records how during the late 18th century, the community of Nath yogis “gained an unusual degree of political and economic clout in the absence of a strong central authority...[and] were heavily involved as mercenaries and traded, lent money, and owned property.”<sup>50</sup>

George W. Briggs, whose 1938 book “Gorakhnath and the Kanphata Yogis” remains one of the most comprehensive English sources on the subject, shows the linkages between the Nath communities and their encounters with Buddhist, Jain, Vaishnivite and Islamic traditions.<sup>51</sup> Briggs has written accounts about the wealthy Nath complexes across many regions, including the Punjab, and especially the Chaj doab. There were also encounters with the colonial administrators that affected the Nath. Before the 18th century they were known as Jogi or Yogi, but the 1881 census reclassification of yogi/jogi as “low status caste,” in response to which the community began to use the alternate term ‘Nath’ to identify itself. The fluidity of these labels challenges the empiricism of the census reports, so the reliance of statistical indicators may not yield the most useful information for the role played by the Nath in Punjab. This is similar to what happened with caste classifications of the artisans, and how they were fluid.

In terms of mobility, it is important to note that ascetics between pilgrimage sites and monastic centres, and their reputation in 18th and 19th society not only as “curers, magicians and masters of the occult,” but also “singers, musicians and popular entertainers.”<sup>52</sup> In fact, some of the prominent texts recorded by Richard Carnac Temple in “Legends of the Punjab” in the 1870s are based on Nath lore, including the “Adventures of Raja Rasulu,” which was introduced in Chapter 3.<sup>53</sup> Tracing the associations between ascetics, their mobility, and (certain) architectural forms, enables us to represent a counter-map of the Punjab where the social power structures are challenged in order to not only represent historically marginalised communities, but also show the coeval plurality of religious practices in nineteenth century Punjab.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>47</sup>G. W. Briggs. *Gorakhnath and the Kanphata Yogis*, 1938. Delhi: Reprint Motilal Banarsidass, 1973.

<sup>48</sup>Gorakh or Gorakhnāth is the Hindi and vernacular name, while Gorakṣa or Gorakṣanātha is his Sanskrit name. From Mallinson, *Yogic Identities: Tradition and Transformation*.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>50</sup>K. Hansen. *Grounds for play: The nautanki theatre of north India*. University of California Press, 1991, p. 0.

<sup>51</sup>Briggs, *Gorakhnath and the Kanphata Yogis*, 1938.

<sup>52</sup>Hansen, *Grounds for play: The nautanki theatre of north India*.

<sup>53</sup>Steel, Kipling, and Temple, *Tales of the Punjab: Told by the People*.

<sup>54</sup>N. L. Peluso. “Whose Woods are These? Counter-Mapping Forest Territories in Kalimantan, Indonesia”. In: *Antipode* 4.27 (1995), pp. 383–406.



The next section considers the circulation of narratives that inscribes the landscape with the Nath presence in the Punjab. The Nath were bearers as well transmitters of their beliefs and practices. Tracing the shifting circuits of culture that they participated in allows us to register and document how information travelled and was communicated and received – i.e. represented across space and time.

### 6.3 Facades as Invocations: A Discussion on Qisse and Architectural Historiography

This section progresses the discussion on the relevance of architectural fragments by using Farina Mir's insights into the role of *qisse* as a mirror on Punjabi society in the nineteenth century.<sup>55</sup> It is my contention that like the *qisse*, architecture and its fragments have the power to transform experience and ontologies.<sup>56</sup> Specifically, the presence of 'anomalous' structures, like the temple of Lal Nath, that architectural historiography has struggled to explain, can offer a way of blurring the classificatory boundaries and recentering social networks into our understanding of the Punjab. These are structures that for lack of rigour or perhaps ideological reasons get classified as 'hybrid', and require a new material-semiotic intervention.<sup>57</sup> I attempt to perform this intervention into the social and cultural networks of the temple by considering Mir's thesis on *qisse*, and how the facade of the temple works like the invocation in the *qisse* ballads. This can offer ways of understanding how sacred architecture can act as a mediator and translator in communicating notions of "shared piety," which Mir has explained as "a sphere of religiosity and devotion that cut across the boundaries that distinguished Punjab's major religious traditions."<sup>58</sup>

The *qissa* (plural *qisse*) in the Punjab, has historically referred to the epic-length verse romances that circulated in the region. They were originally performed by wandering performers, including the jogis, but were also written down, and published in print. The literary form of the *qissa* derives from Arab and Persian traditions, and while some of those tales also persist, many of the Punjabi *qisse* originated locally, and are situated in the local landscape and embedded in local social relations.<sup>59</sup> One of the oldest and best-known of these folk narratives is of particular relevance to Jhang and

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<sup>55</sup>Mir, "Genre and devotion in Punjabi popular narratives: rethinking cultural and religious syncretism"; Mir, *The social space of language: vernacular culture in British colonial Punjab (Vol. 2)*.

<sup>56</sup>Mir, "Genre and devotion in Punjabi popular narratives: rethinking cultural and religious syncretism".

<sup>57</sup>In Mumtaz's book "Architecture in Pakistan" there is, e.g. a gurdwara with a "tall shikhara tower, characteristic of Hindu temples." This temple was destroyed in the 1990s in retaliation to the Babri Masjid debacle. As an architectural historian, Mumtaz does not discuss this anomaly. Similarly, there are domed cells across the Punjab that get lumped into this esoteric category of 'samadhi'. While samadhi primarily refer to Sikh shrines (as separate from the temples, i.e. gurdwaras), the iconography and purpose of these buildings has not been investigated, especially outside the rubric of Sikh architecture.

<sup>58</sup>Mir, "Genre and devotion in Punjabi popular narratives: rethinking cultural and religious syncretism", p. 748.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*

the Nath community – the qissa of the lovers Heer and Ranjha. Numerous versions of this qissa were produced over four centuries (16th – 20th), but the best known version is the Heer of Waris Shah (c. 1766).<sup>60</sup> This ballad is set around the River Chenab, as Heer belongs to the Sial clan in Jhang, and Ranjha from Takht Hazara, approximately 150 km upstream. Through a series of events, Ranjha ends up in Jhang and that is where the romance takes place. However Heer is married off by her family to someone else. A bereft Ranjha wanders off and ends up at Tilla Jogian, 300 km away, where he renounces the world and is initiated as a jogi. Eventually he ends up back in Jhang, where he reunites with Heer, only have her poisoned by her treacherous uncle. Ranjha also kills himself. The two are buried side by side in a mausoleum in Jhang.<sup>61</sup>

In order to understand the role of narratives and how they can be deployed in our understanding of how architectural fragments perform, I once again pick up on the book *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*. To briefly recap, the *Char Bagh-i-Punjab* was written by a government administrator, Ganesh Das Vadera, and even though the manuscript was completed in 1849, it wasn't published until 1965. The book, written in Persian, presents a detailed history of the Punjab focusing on the Sikh empire, along with different aspects of political, social, cultural and religious life.<sup>62</sup> Farina Mir stimulates her research on the qisse of Punjab by explaining how a third of Wadhera's book is spent on recounting popular Punjabi narratives, demonstrating how fundamental they are to understanding the Punjab and its social and cultural history.<sup>63</sup> She also exposes how its (partial) English translation by Grewal and Banga in 1975 excludes all mention of these qisse.<sup>64</sup> It is also relevant to our understanding of the construction of cultural geography how the qisse were excluded from the historical records, except to be compiled into compendia for reference, such as the effort undertaken by Steele and Temple, that Kipling contributed to as the illustrator.<sup>65</sup>

Quoting Max Weber, Ann Stoler has made the argument that “bureaucracies excise those domains that they cannot measure.”<sup>65</sup> Within the “taxonomic state” tasked with

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<sup>60</sup>Mir, “Genre and devotion in Punjabi popular narratives: rethinking cultural and religious syncretism”.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup>Since the book is in Persian, and has not been fully translated, I am only able to use secondary sources to discuss it. These include the article by Farina Mir, but also the editorial preface to the 1965 publication by Kirpal Singh. Singh offers his interpretations of the text, but also a detailed explanation of how this manuscript was produced. The published copy was compiled by comparing three different versions of the surviving manuscripts, including a copy from the India Office Library in London, which was “Sent to the Imperial Exhibition at Paris for work of Art and Industry by the Punjab committee at Lahore,” and was dedicated to Richard Temple (1826-1902), then secretary to the commissioner of Gujrat. The colophon of this manuscript notes that “the calligraphy of this copy was completed on the 4th of August 1854 by Abdul Samad Shah of village Sok, District Gujrat.” A “very old and worm eaten” copy signed by the author and dated to 1855 is used as the primary document. The introduction provides interesting insights into the production and circulation of manuscripts, and offers possibilities for further investigation. Wadhera, *Char Bagh-i Punjab*, Preface iii–iv.

<sup>63</sup>Mir, “Genre and devotion in Punjabi popular narratives: rethinking cultural and religious syncretism”.

<sup>64</sup>J. S. Grewal and I. Banga. *Early Nineteenth Century Panjab: from Ganesh Das's Chār Bāgh-i-Panjāb*. Amritsar: Department of History, Guru Nanak University, 1975.

<sup>65</sup>Stoler, *Along the archival grain: Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense*, p. 39.

setting out categories, this meant a calibration of sympathies and attachments, and producing and harnessing those sentiments in ways “that would make sense of those distinctions and make them work.”<sup>66</sup> We see this evident in the contrast between Wadhera’s tenacious insistence on the inclusion of the qisse in his description of the Punjab, with a travelogue written by John Lockwood Kipling and T.H. Thornton in 1860 that reveals the attitude of the colonial administration to these narratives.<sup>67</sup> Even though Kipling and Thornton embellished their text with fragments of local idioms and verses, both transliterated into roman letters and translation into English, these insertions appear unrelated to each other and lack any consistent theme or location. As introductions to the vernacular language in a document written in English “to meet demands for information on the part of travellers whose number is yearly increasing,” these snippets seem rather to be tacked on to demonstrate the authors’ proficiency rather than provide any meaningful understanding of the language or the place.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, referring to the songs and qisse, the authors’ write:

“The newspapers and printed book have not yet shaken the hold of oral and chanted tradition and legend on the popular mind. Wearisome in its repetitions, effeminate and languorous in its tone, when not positively indecent according to European standards, and deficient in true lyric force and energy...it has the merit of reflecting the minds of the people with great fidelity.”<sup>69</sup>

And thus, this literary form that persisted for millennia was dismissed, and the qisse suppressed, dismissed and “excised” to persist as alternative, even ‘primitive’ discourse. The nineteenth century texts that described the topology of Lahore and the Punjab no longer invoked the qisse.<sup>70</sup>

A most startling elucidation of the nineteenth century changes in the historical writing of places has been done by C. M. Naim, in his comparison of two versions of Syed Ahmed Khan’s book about the history of Delhi, titled ‘*Asar-al-Sanadid*’ (The Remnant Signs of Ancient Heroes).<sup>71</sup> The first of these, published in 1847, was written in Urdu, and was a “conglomerate” of three parts: a brief history of Delhi; an illustrated guide to the monuments of Delhi and its surrounding area, and a memoir of the notable people of the time, with samples of their writings. The second book was published in 1854. It was also written in Urdu, but had second title in English, “*Asar-oos-Sunnadeed, A History of Old and New Rules, or Governments, and of Old and New Buildings in the District of Delhi,*” and an English preface. This

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>67</sup> J. L. Kipling and T. H. Thornton. *Lahore as it was: Travelogue, 1860*. Lahore: National College of Arts, 2002.

<sup>68</sup> Preface *ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>70</sup> Chishti, *Tehqiqat-e Chishti: Tarikh-i Lahore Ka Encyclopaedia*; Lal, *Tareekh-e-Punjab (2004 reprint)*; Lal, *Tareekh-e-Lahore (2015 reprint)*; Latif, *Lahore: Its history, architectural remains and antiquities, with an account of its modern institutions, inhabitants, their trade customs, etc.*

<sup>71</sup> C. M. Naim. “Syed Ahmad and His Two Books Called ‘Asar-al-Sanadid’”. In: *Modern Asian Studies* 45.3 (2011), pp. 669–708.

version focussed on the history of new and old governments, rather than being a chronicle of kings, and more significantly, defined the spatial boundaries of the history according to the new “administrative idiom, ‘the district of Delhi’ (zila’ dihli), and not as Shahjahanabad, ‘Dar-al-Khilafa,’ or just plain Dihli or Dilli.”<sup>72</sup> From a close reading of the texts and its historiography Naim finds that in the earlier version, Syed Ahmed Khan wanted to present Delhi to his readers “primarily on his own terms, a Delhi that was inseparable from his own lived experience.”<sup>73</sup> His new book, on the other hand, was abbreviated, and contained dry factual descriptions to reflect “the presumed preferences of its hoped-for English translators.”<sup>74</sup> It was written under the guiding principle of chronology, “the same as in English books of history,” whereas the organizing principle in the earlier version was space.<sup>75</sup>

While not directly pertaining to the Punjab, Naim’s research clearly illustrates the shift in emphasis of historical writing within a span of seven years, where “the joyous spirit of a participant observer is...replaced by the dry-as-dust tones of a detached historian.”<sup>76</sup> This was predicated in part by demands of the (perceived) readership, but also empiricist trends in historical scholarship. In this case Khan embodied the shift in two versions of his own work, reflecting the “restless realignments and readjustments of people and beliefs to which they are tethered...and ascribed as social interpretations, as indices of relations of power and tracers of them.”<sup>77</sup> The affective space that Khan relinquished in his writing was mirrored in other writings on place as well, most notably Grewal and Banga’s translation of the Char Bagh-i-Punjab, which left out all mention of the *qisse*. In the following section I revisit the *qisse* and the notion of shared piety, and explore what that means for our wood-carved fragments from the Lal Nath temple.

### 6.3.1 *Qisse*, Shared Piety and the Architectural Fragments from the Temple of Lal Nath

The narrative of Heer Ranjha is relevant to our discussion of architectural fragments for several reasons. First, supporting the representation of the Punjab in Char Bagh-i-Punjab, it lays out the fundamental linkages between Jhang and Tilla Jogian as routes of pilgrimage, demonstrating how sites are connected experientially and epistemologically. These routes can be the basis of spatial and historical ‘counter-mapping,’ that is, using multiple local sources of knowledge to understand cultural and physical space. Secondly, the form of the *qissa* and its discussion by Mir, offers a metaphor for understanding the transmission and signification of wood carved fragments and architectural signification. Mir explains that *qisse* add a regional and non-sectarian perspective to our understanding of late nineteenth-century debates

<sup>72</sup>Naim, “Syed Ahmad and His Two Books Called ‘Asar-al-Sanadid’”, p. 26.

<sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 699.

<sup>77</sup>Stoler, *Along the archival grain: Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense*, pp. 32–33.

about the definition of piety. According to her, “Punjabi qisse provide evidence that Punjabis shared notions of pious behaviour irrespective of their affiliations to different religions,” and that those representations “do not map comfortably onto contemporary notions of discrete religious communities.”<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, Mir asserts that this shared piety and devotion should not be interpreted as a ‘syncretic’ practice, but rather understood as constituting “a parallel, alternative spiritual practice” that was accessible to all of Punjab’s inhabitants.<sup>79</sup> Qisse illustrate the multiplicity of religious practices in which Punjabis participated, a fact that has been attenuated, if not entirely overlooked, in late nineteenth-century histories and historiographies, which emphasised the differences and discord between religious communities.

Applying these insights to the mediatory role played by building facades and their articulations offers provocative extension possibilities for research into the Nath temple, both as the building in Jhang, and as a conceptual form of ascetic architecture in the Punjab. The Lal Nath temple creates a mixed architectural metaphor by combining identifiable religious aspects, domes that are identified as predominantly Islamic and Sikh, alongside the *srnga*, which evoke the traditional Hindu temple, together with the regional wood carved elements, which do not overtly signal any sacred affiliation. This lexicon represents the ways in which meanings are encoded within buildings. It also highlights how, over time, meanings change or get sedimented beneath layers of forgotten and marginalised histories. ANT enables us to manoeuvre within these networks of associations and trace the relations between seemingly disparate sets of signification. The domed construction on a temple switches between acting as a mediator and an intermediary, as does the wood carved facade in the Lahore Museum. The switching of roles between mediator and intermediary, is challenging as it represents a constant state of uncertainty and perpetual motion, which whilst difficult to articulate, is perhaps more accurately ‘social’. The exercise of locating of architectural fragments as actors within circuits of culture relieves that particular fragment or the building from bearing an essential meaning, but rather links it within a chain of associations which are imbued within collective social and cultural memory.

The Lal Nath temple as an ascetic site of shared piety is a compelling narrative, and one that was reached by plunging through the materiality of a wooden facade on display at the Lahore Museum, to exploring it as an actor within a network of social and cultural relations. To further demonstrate how this notion of shared piety and *rawadari* (tolerance) persists in Jhang, I turn to another expression of wood carving – the *tazia*. As mentioned earlier, these visible and symbolic representations of mourning and mausolea, are architectural models carried as sacred totems during the Shi’a rites in the Islamic month of Muharram. The following section presents how the multivalent form and significance of the Lal Nath temple endures in one of Jhang City’s processional *tazia* to this day.

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<sup>78</sup>Mir, “Genre and devotion in Punjabi popular narratives: rethinking cultural and religious syncretism”, p. 730.

<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 748.

## 6.4 Tazia and Temples: An Example of *Rawadari* from Jhang

The martyrdom at Karbala of the prophet Muhammed's grandson, Hussain, in 680 A.C.E. is commemorated by a series of practices and rituals across the Middle East and South Asia. These remembrances generally take place in the first ten days of the Islamic month of Muharram, and, in South Asia, collectively the practices are called *azadari*.<sup>80</sup> A prominent aspect of *azadari* are the rituals surrounding the *tazia*, a three-dimensional representation of Hussain's bier or shrine, which is borne in the Muharram processions. These rituals are referred to as *taziadari*. Whilst expressions of the *taziadari* are regionally varied, and predominantly led by the Shi'a community, they have symbolic significance, and received (and continue to receive) patronage from across the religious and social spectrum.<sup>81</sup>

In the Punjab, the production of the *tazia* and their participation in the Muharram processions are linked with community identity and serve to strengthen social bonds. These elaborate, highly ornate, multi-storeyed structures, often several metres tall are often named for the neighbourhoods or communities that sponsor and build them, e.g. the '*Loharran wala tazia*' (Blacksmith's *tazia*) in Chiniot, or the '*Ustadaan wala tazia*' (Teachers' *tazia*) and '*Shagirdaan wala tazia*' (Students' *tazia*) in Multan.<sup>82</sup> In his analysis of fieldwork done in Chiniot, Ghulam Abbas represents the *tazia* and *taziadari* in terms of the production and consumption of the object and its rituals. Abbas observes how "artists take the work very seriously and consider it sacred; some even perform ablutions before starting."<sup>83</sup> That many of these *tazia* artists do not belong to the Shi'a sect of Islam, and the rites around the Muharram procession are familiar to many Hindu traditions such as the Ganesh Chaturthi, touches on the notion of shared piety and *rawadari* (tolerance).

In his book "The Tazia of Chiniot," Ghulam Abbas delves into the morphological, social and cultural constructions of the *tazia* to reveal their relationship to architecture, communities, and practice.<sup>84</sup> Not surprisingly, the families associated with of woodworking are also responsible for the construction of the *tazia*. His research is built on extensive fieldwork across sites in Pakistan, and his findings open up exciting avenues of analysis and further investigation. However, the strand that is relevant to the discussion of the temple facade in Jhang deals with his discussion on form, and his scrutiny of the links between *tazia* and Hindu temples. Abbas shows how *tazia* follow two broad conventions of construction. The first follows the form of a generic Islamic shrine, with a square base, dome and four corner minarets. Abbas traces the development of this form to the *zarikh*, an indexical reference to the

<sup>80</sup>G. Abbas. *Tazias of Chiniot*. Lahore: Tarikh Publications, 2007.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 12–29.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*



FIGURE 6.10: The *tazia* procession in Chiniot. Ghulam Abbas, 2007

mausoleum of Imam Hussain.<sup>85</sup> The second form is that of a Hindu temple. These are the monumental *tazia* that dominate the *azadari* totem. The following section briefly explains the structural parts of these *tazia*, and how they relate to the architectural morphology of Hindu temples.



FIGURE 6.11: The preparation of the *tazia* before the Muharram procession, Chiniot. Associated Press of Pakistan, APP38-18, 2018

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10–11.

### 6.4.1 The Morphology of the Lal Nath Temple and the *Shah Jamal wala Tazia*

*Tazia* are typically made of wood, and assembled in modular form from hundreds of carved pieces that are arranged into receding tiers as they ascend (Figure 6.13). The base is called the '*takht*', and is typically a hollow cube which is set on a four-legged frame called a '*charpai*'. In the centre of the *takht* is the '*darwaza*', door. The middle level has the tiers, each of which is called a '*manzil*'. *Tazia* have either two or four *manzils*. Each *manzil* has two sub-storeys that are separated by balustrades, '*raunce*' or *katehra*, with the lower sub-storey arranged with arcades, '*dalan*', and doorways, '*deorhi*', and the upper sub-storey indicated by *jharokas* and stairs. The centre of each *manzil* is crowned by a large ornate arch called a '*taj*', crown. The uppermost portion of the *tazia* is comprised of the '*palki*' (drum), '*saiwan*' (umbrella or dome), and the '*chan-tara*' (crescent and star finial).<sup>86</sup> (Figure 6.12)



FIGURE 6.12: *Shah Jamal wala Tazia* in the Muharram procession, Jhang. Ghulam Abbas, 2007.

<sup>86</sup>Abbas obtained the terminology in his interviews and apprenticeship with the Pirjah family in Chiniot. His account is illustrated with diagrams and detailed elevations specifying the components. Abbas, *Tazias of Chiniot*, pp. 29–35.



Of significance in Abbas' record of the *tazia* and their architectural lexicon is a drawing that he has appended to the back of the book. This is a scaled drawing derived from the designs by Elahi Baksh Pirjah in Chiniot, dated to c.1936-37. This drawing is reminiscent of the drawing by Nand Singh in the way that each part is numbered and has a label. However the label is provided in Punjabi, in the shahmukhi script, but offers a roman transliteration. No translations are added to the drawing, but a glossary of terms is provided in the book. What is apparent from the drawing and the description above, is that the morphological lexicon of *tazia* derives from architecture, and is expressed in miniature.

The *tazia* that follow the temple form are found across the Punjab and the ones from Jhang are "strikingly similar" to the ones in Chiniot.<sup>87</sup> The oldest *tazia* in Jhang the "*Shah Jamal wala tazia*", also known as "*Asim wala tazia*", was built by Baba Shah Jamal in the late 19th century.<sup>88</sup> This *tazia* is a big model of the Lal Nath temple. The structure was originally composed of four storeys, but only two have survived, including the dome set atop an octagonal drum, and the proliferation of arches and archways, both of which mimetically reference a local tradition of sacred architecture.<sup>89</sup> Abbas has illustrated the interactional mimesis between the *tazia* and

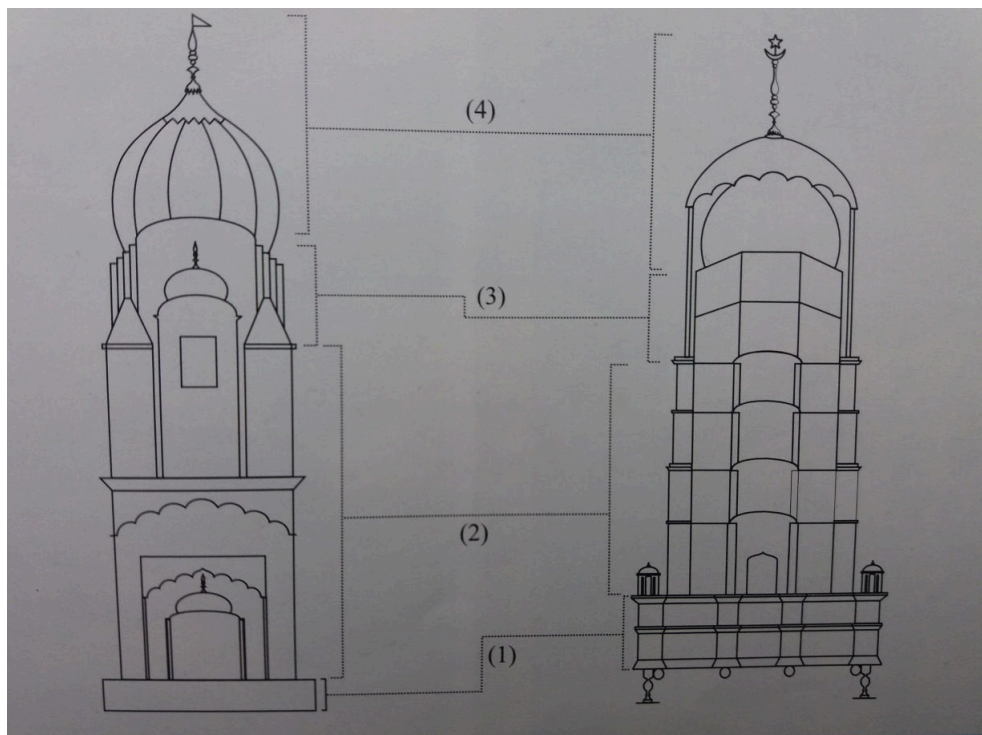


FIGURE 6.13: Drawing of the Lal Nath Temple and the *Shah Jamal wala Tazia*, Jhang. Ghulam Abbas, 2007.

the temple using an illustration of an Orissan temple by Percy Brown published in his 1942 book "Indian Architecture".<sup>90</sup> While this specific example is a tenuous comparison

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Brown, *Indian Architecture*, 2 vols.

due to the geographical and historical distance, and a more rigorous comparison could be developed using the general North Indian temple forms rather than a specific Orissan model, his basic premise endures. In Figure 6.13, the structure of the Lal Nath temple (left) is juxtaposed with the structure of the *Shah Jamal wala Tazia* (right), and various sections mapped between the two to highlight the correspondence between the two forms. Observe the parts of the temple:

- 1 *Pista*, the platform;
- 2 *Bada*, the lowest portion, a square base to house the deity;
- 3 *Chhapara*, the middle portion, which is the tower, and
- 4 *Gummas*, *amalaka*, *kalasha*, the upper portion consisting of the dome and finial.<sup>91</sup>

The similarities further extend to the vertical bands of ornament, which include the line of arches in the centre of each face of the tower as well as the miniaturised turrets along the four corners, as shown in Figure 6.12. These ornamental arcades recall the facade of the temple at the Lahore Museum.

This interlude with the *tazia* can now be linked back to our discussion about Jhang and the temple of Lal Nath. Abbas has recorded that the Jhang city corpus demonstrates the two types of *tazia*, i.e. the Sufi shrine and the Hindu temple. There are three *tazia* of the former type, which are modelled on the mausoleum of the sufi Shah Kabir, which is also located in Jhang City, and seven that follow the temple morphology. It is also worth noting that the Lal Nath temple and the shrine of Shah Kabir are situated less than a kilometre away from each other in the centre of Jhang City and both lie on the route of the Shia processions during Muharram.

Throughout his presentation of *tazia* in his book, Abbas makes reference to the concept of “*rawadari*” implying tolerance, “good neighbourliness, of sharing together, and joint ownership of the sacral place of the people of the land.”<sup>92</sup> The term also encompasses “respect for others, their differences,” and valorises “fellow feelings and social contacts” including participation in religious ceremonies.<sup>93</sup> All the while, Abbas emphasises how *rawadari* exists within a “deeply religious,” rather than secular, socio-cultural context.<sup>94</sup> This resonates with Mir’s notion of shared piety in the context of sufi veneration. The *Shah Jamal wala tazia*, designed as a refrain of the Lal Nath temple, and through the rites of its production and veneration, represents a vital aspect of the social and cultural fabric of the Punjab. This pluralism is not reflected in the colonial archives, which include the Museums, even as they currently operate.

<sup>91</sup> Abbas, *Tazias of Chiniot*, pp. 30–31.

<sup>92</sup> Abbas quoting Akbar Naqvi from an unpublished lecture given at SOAS in April 2000. *ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

## 6.5 Fragments, Love, Resistance

This final vignette, revisits the architectural traces and *qisse* to consider how we can stretch what it means to “do things with fragments.” By picking up the same fragments from the Punjab - peculiar domed buildings and traditions of timeless love in the *qisse* - can we read this constellation to express not just shared piety and tolerance, but also resistance and love?



FIGURE 6.14: The shrine with the tombs of Heer and Ranjha in Jhang.  
Umar Jamshed, Public Domain, 2016

The absence of agentic, or any histories of women in archival production is stark, and continues to critically stretch the scope of the archive.<sup>95</sup> Likewise, architectural historiography is asymmetrically gendered towards male voices, both in its creation and the records. Anjali Arondikar has asked “How does one think through the current privileged lexicon of erasure, silence, and recovery, within a colonial context...?”<sup>96</sup> In response, I present two mausoleums in the Punjab. The first selection, obvious in the context of our engagement with *qisse* in Southern Punjab, is Heer Ranjha’s mausoleum, *Darbar Aashiq Sadiq Maai Heer o Miyan Ranjha* (The tomb of true lovers Heer and Ranjha), which is located outside Jhang. (Figure 6.14) Both the lovers are buried together in one tomb in a simple square structure with a dome and small turrets at the four corners. The tombstone has a date of 1471 AD (876 according to the Hijri calendar). The current tiled building appears to have undergone several reconstructions. This shrine is ‘alive’ and pulls in many devotees, those seeking love,

<sup>95</sup>P. Virdee. “Remembering partition: women, oral histories and the Partition of 1947”. In: *Oral History* (2013), pp. 49–62.

<sup>96</sup>A. Arondekar. “Without a Trace: Sexuality and the Colonial Archive”. In: *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14.1 (2005), pp. 10–27, p. 12.

marriage, children, or ease from worries. The annual *urs* (death anniversary) occurs during the Islamic month of Muharram.

To exercise the idea of domed temples as sites of resistance, consider the image in (Figure 6.15). The photograph shows the debris of a domed building along the lines of the Lal Nath temple. This building no longer exists.<sup>97</sup> This is a mausoleum to the love of Piro Preman and Gulab Das built in the 19th century.



FIGURE 6.15: “The shrine of Piro Piraman and Ghulab Das. They wanted to be buried together, like the legendary lovers Heer-Ranjha.” Photograph by Haroon Khalid, 2017

Piro Preman (Piro the lover), 1832-1872, was one of the earliest women whose Punjabi poetry, a collection titled *Ik sau sath* (One hundred and Sixty), was available in print.<sup>98</sup> *Ik sau sath* refers to the number of *kafis* (classical form of rhyming sufi poetry), that were compiled. Piro was a Muslim who renounced her religion and joined the *nastik* (atheist) poet Guru Gulab Das (1809-1873) as a devotee in his Gulabdasi sect in Chathianwala near Kasur.<sup>99</sup> An offshoot of the Sikh Udasi (ascetic) tradition, the

<sup>97</sup>Haroon Khalid writes that “The shrine was there, in a dilapidated state, taking its last breath, when I visited the village in 2011. A couple of years later, the last physical evidence of Piro Preman and Ghulab Das disappeared from the land of its origin.” H. Khalid. “Piro Preman, the Punjabi Sufi poet who pushed the boundaries of sexuality with her verses”. In: *Scroll.in* (Sept. 2017). URL: <https://scroll.in/article/852281/piro-preman-the-punjabi-sufi-poet-who-pushed-the-boundaries-of-sexuality-with-her-verses>.

<sup>98</sup>M. Awan. “The feminine metaphor”. In: *The News on Sunday* (2015).

<sup>99</sup>A. Malhotra. “Bhakti and the Gendered Self: A Courtesan and a Consort in Mid Nineteenth Century Punjab”. In: *Modern Asian Studies* 46.6 (2012), 1506–1539.

Gulabdasis flouted caste norms and the sect was open to all, Hindus and Muslims, which is often cited as the reason why Piro, a Muslim prostitute, could find acceptance there as a consort of Gulab Das. Piro's poems were autobiographical, feminist, rebellious, bold and forceful, and rejected religious establishments, social structures and caste relations.<sup>100</sup> Like Heer-Ranjha, Piro and Gulab Das were buried in a joint tomb, in this case inside this domed, temple-shrine in the village of Chathianwala. Their resistance and rebellion, ascetism and love took place during a particular period of political uncertainty after Maharaja Ranjit Singh's death, and the occupation by the British.

Heer-Ranjha, Piro-Gulab Das and their architectural and literary traces reinscribe love and resistance in the historical landscape of the Punjab. Whilst architecturally they express the two forms that we see in the Jhang tazias: the Sufi shrine, and the (domed) Hindu temple, as a paradigm, they offer critical new ways of approaching these narratives that wrest their way out of the arbitrary categories and asymmetrical power relations that have become arrested in Punjabi histories and archives. As alternative social imaginings they can not only challenge familiar social phenomenon and elucidate new readings of them, but they can also introduce new subjectivities and push us into unfamiliar and exciting domains.

## 6.6 Summary

Having read against the colonial archives to seek remnants of the artisans voice, and plumbed the cracks that appear in the colonial administration's efforts at pedagogical regulation and acquisitive mimesis, this chapter approached architectural fragments through their movements, displacements, transformations, and translations, in order to vitalise their performative character and their relations. Using the facade and fragments of the Lal Nath temple in the Lahore Museum as an invocation, I negotiated the unusual structure of a Shaivite temple in Jhang, traversed the Punjab landscape on the contours of *qisse*, and read the morphological and semiotic systems of the *tazia*, to understand how shared piety and *rawadari* was intrinsically part of life in the Punjab in the nineteenth century, and how this used to be reflected in the local histories of place, but gradually was excised. As a final provocation, I introduced the mausolea of Heer-Ranjha and Piro-Gulab Das and their architectural and literary traces to re-inscribe women, love, and resistance in the historical landscape of the Punjab. The motivation was not to identify some 'authentic' origin for the wood carving, but to demonstrate how fragments are mobile, mimetic and dialectics that are simultaneously material and semiotic. Rather than thinking of them as "synchronic products of a finished event," these fragments are "constantly (re)produced by a potentially open-ended series of displacements and interpretations mediated and

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<sup>100</sup>A. Malhotra. *Piro and the Gulabdasis: Gender, Sect, and Society in Punjab*. Oxford University Press, 2017; Awan, "The feminine metaphor".

negotiated by multiple chains of actors and agents in specific contexts.”<sup>101</sup> In future constellations of fragments, the readings could become ever-widening, expansive and re-forming. The next chapter is the conclusion.

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<sup>101</sup>F. B. Flood. “Lost In Translation: Architecture, Taxonomy, and the Eastern “Turks””. In: *Muqarnas* 24 (2007), pp. 79–116.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusion

#### 7.1 In Pursuit of Fragments and their Affordances: Contributions and Futures

The aim of this project was multifold. It sought a conceptual and methodological means to work with architectural fragments of wood carving from a particular spatial and temporal juncture. The goal was ambitious because it began with an ever-growing mass of fragments from multiple sources, without conceptual containers in place to organise them. Accounting for the materiality of the fragments was also challenging because while the object of consideration was “architectural wood carving from the Punjab,” much of what were being compiled as data were the images, texts, archives, experiences, mediations, identities and semiotics that they produce, and not the woodwork itself. The mobility, portability and mutability of fragments also had to be accounted for. This could not be a study in stasis and fixity, because that would fail to capture the lives, tensions and constellations that were crystallised within the fragments as well as their forms. The fragment is a marker, a trace, not an outcome.

Some of the epistemological challenges came from the multi/inter/trans-disciplinary nature of the project, which resist circumscriptions of established subject areas. Architecture, architectural theory and historiography grappled with history and economics, art history and linguistics, visual studies and sociology, critical theory, ethnography and semiotics. At times the concepts employed to understand the fragments were almost as fragmentary and fragmented as the objects they were trying to comprehend and apprehend.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, where on the one hand the terrain was ever expanding, on the other, the capacity to respond was constricted by limitations on travel and access to sites and archives.

The contributions of this project are its response to these various provocations.

The first was an acknowledgement of the need for a question that asks what the affordances of fragments are, and how the fragments of woodcarving from the Punjab help us comprehend and challenge those affordances. This was addressed creatively, and alliteratively, by identifying four affordances from within the corpus of fragments accumulated: Mobility, Metonymy, Mimesis, and Montage. A further three were tentatively explored, but failed to gain succor from the material that was present.

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<sup>1</sup>Rycroft, “Imperial tensions: A conceptual introduction”.

These include: Materiality, Metaphor and Momentarity, and they will continue to be explored in future studies. What also emerged from the crystallisation of these ideas is a way of writing about the fragments that can be intelligible without unnecessary essentialism and distortions. This is the Benjaminian notion of “critical constellations,” which is predicated on the potency of fragments, and which seeks to draw them in through the magnetism of relevant and related concepts. So, rather than thinking of this as a movement *out* of the fragment, it is a movement of fragments *towards* a concept which holds them in a gravitational field to which they relate with relative force.

The broad concepts that hold Punjabi wood fragments include ‘production’, ‘regulation,’ ‘consumption’, and ‘mediation’. The chapters in this dissertation are organised around these four areas, but consider them from particular and specific vantage points. Production, for example, is concerned with the role of the producer — the artisan/*tarkhan*— within a changing social and economic milieu. ‘Regulation’ pulls in fragments to elucidate the administrative tactics of the imperial and industrialising British in the formation and management of schools of art and industry, as well as how drawing emerged as a strategy of intentional fragmentation. There is melancholy in fragments that responds to ‘consumption’, which is articulated through their lives and afterlives as part of the Colonial and Industrial Exhibition of 1886, and which pulls the ornamental aspects of the fragments into social circuits, typically elite, in powerful expressions of mimetic desire and acquisitive mimesis.<sup>2</sup> The concept of ‘mediation’ binds the final set of errant fragments, bringing wood carving, domed sacral architecture, ascetics and the legends of lost lovers in close proximity.

The second response aims to follow Ann Stoler along the archival grain to test how the “histories suspended from received historiography” can be released, and how to identify, acknowledge and introduce to future archives, the registers of “reverberations, crosscurrent frictions, attractions, and aversions” within and against those archival assertions.<sup>3</sup> This is attempted by looking into NCA’s archival material with an eye to finding the pieces that don’t-quite-fit into tidy categorisations—Khairuddin posing as the modern carpenter-writer, and Ram Singh, the model protege, railing against colonial racism. It was also tested by creating montages of fragments: a “door from Bhera” that is everywhere except in Bhera, or a trabeated arch with bell-shaped tassels that generates a flash of recognisability and familiarity between Queen Victoria’s home on the Isle of Wight and the shrine of a 14th century *sufi* from Uch Sharif.

Third, this research answers what reading “along the archival grain” through fragments can tell us about their production and knowledge production, consumption and craftsmanship, and about the colonial systems in which they operated and participated. The methodology of critical constellations and their illumination by the

<sup>2</sup>Eaton, *Mimesis across empires: Artworks and networks in India, 1765–1860*.

<sup>3</sup>Stoler, *Along the archival grain: Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense*, p. 22.



fragments reveals the cracks, splinters and patch-ups that history and historiography fail to mention, such as the mutability of categories like caste, religion and artisan; the colonial promotion and nurture of indigenous art and craft forms; the limits of terms like 'hybridity', 'exchange' and 'appropriation' when discussing how ideas and art forms travel. The self-identification of the MSA students as artisans, and the institution's acceptance of it, inverts the very basis on which students were sought: genetic proclivity. There are also parallel worlds that the archive does not hold, the lives of artists outside their 'day jobs'. Sometimes the curtain shifts to reveal a glimpse of Ustad Miran Bakhsh playing his sitar in the *hujra* of Wazir Khan mosque, which then becomes a living space, enlivening the kaleidoscopic drawings that won MSA students so many awards.

Finally, this research *reconstellates* the role of architectural fragments as mediators and intermediaries, and allows the facade of a *Nāth* temple to build a constellation around itself in a visible entanglement of buildings, stories, totems and people that express place in terms of notions of tolerance and shared piety. This, then, is not a history of the wood carving, and it is not a social or art historical venture into constructions and forms; it will not comply readily nor sit comfortably within the parameters of any particular subject. The process of constellation breaks things, and carries the disturbance out of the archive (or the museum) and into the landscape—not of the past, but as it persists in the present.

This is what the contributions of this project are. This is what I suggest we do with fragments.

Insights gained from this project have opened new areas of enquiry for me. The most significant one that is nascent in this study, is to extend and develop the affordances of fragments, and to consider new ones such as materiality, metaphor and momentarity. Materiality and the subject-object tensions it reveals, as well as *transmateriality* as an affordance that builds on mobility and metonymy, are extremely relevant to fragments. Metaphor also has both dialogic and dialectic potential with the other affordances, especially as a counterpoint to metonymy. Where metonymy is by association, metaphor is by substitution. The theoretical literature on both these ideas is robust and can engage well with fragments. Momentarity in particular, however, has immense potential, and things (and their study) can get very exciting and innovative indeed. While the notions of "dialectical images" and "the monad" have become a popular critical apparatus in visual culture studies, they have not yet made their way into material culture and material histories, particularly those related to South Asia.<sup>4</sup> This is a gap that I would seek to address in my future research.

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<sup>4</sup>"The dialectical image is critically interruptive in the same way that the "historical object" in historical materialism is. Both are monads (self-contained units) that serve to break up smooth, capitalistic conceptions of time by a sudden shock of juxtaposition. This interruptive shock, which gives us necessary distance for critical interruption, allows us to take the dialectical image "out of context" and examine it: Present and past illuminate one another in a "constellation with the Now." Pensky, *Melancholy Dialectics: Walter Benjamin and the Play of Mourning*.

Another area that has opened up is an exploration of South Asian ontologies that not only consider place and place-making, but also concepts such as mimesis in painting, poetry and Mughal architecture. *Char Bagh-e-Punjab*, the urban historiography of Ganesh Das Wadhera, is a key motivator for the latter. This research study thus serves as a scaffolding upon which notions of *Anukṛti* in Sanskrit, and *Naql/Dakhl* in Arabic and Persian, can engage with mimesis as we know it.<sup>5</sup> In particular, what these mean in the context of material histories and fragments of wood carving is an area that holds a lot of promise.

The NCA archival material remains a very rich source of material and can be mined further to read ‘along the grain’ for conjunctures between art/craft/fine art and artisans/artists. While the current research looks at a particular period in time, the archival material is relevant not only in the fin de siècle, but also in the years before and after partition. The history of the institution has yet to be written; in fact, this research study has revealed that we are only just scratching, or carving, the surface.

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<sup>5</sup>Dave-Mukherji, “Who is afraid of Mimesis? Contesting the Common Sense of Indian Aesthetics through the Theory of ‘Mimesis’ or *Anukaraṇa Vāda*”; Aitken, “Parataxis and the Practice of Reuse, from Mughal Margins to Mīr Kalān Khān”.

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