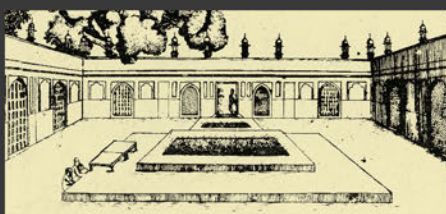


# BUILDING HISTORIES



THE ARCHIVAL  
AND AFFECTIVE  
LIVES OF FIVE  
MONUMENTS IN  
MODERN DELHI

Mrinalini Rajagopalan

SOUTH ASIA ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES

## BUILDING HISTORIES

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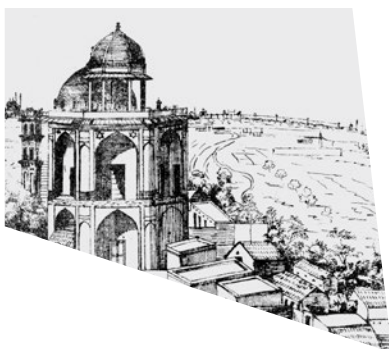
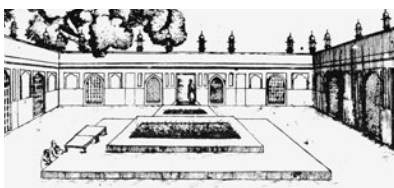
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**Mrinalini Rajagopalan**

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*For my mother  
Who taught me the power of words, work, and determination*

*For my father  
Who gave me his love for buildings, cities, and other kinds of beauty*

*and for Berkeley  
Where all the magic in the world comes to rest  
ever so gently*



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## Acknowledgments

On a particularly sweltering April day in 2000, I checked my e-mail in an Internet café in Ahmedabad to find out that I had been accepted into the MS (architecture) program at Berkeley. Elated as I was, little did I know how dramatically and delightfully my life was about to change. My master's at Berkeley led to a PhD, several postdoctoral fellowships, and my current tenure-track position. My first and deepest thanks, then, is to the scholar who sent that e-mail, my dissertation advisor, Nezar AlSayyad. He recognized my intellectual potential well before I did myself and has encouraged me every step of the way since. My other mentors at Berkeley, Greig Crysler, Mia Fuller, and Ananya Roy, have set the gold standard for scholarship and modeled what it truly means to live a life of the mind. I was lucky to be a teaching assistant for Kathleen James-Chakraborty's and Stephen Tobrin's architectural history classes and was mesmerized by the passion and imagination that they brought to a room of 250 undergraduates. I think of these Berkeley professors as my Jedi masters—paving intellectual paths unknown and crossing treacherous waters of discourse for the rest of us to follow. There is hardly a day that goes by when a silent thanks to one or more of them does not cross my lips.

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*Pittsburgh*



# Abbreviations

## Publications

*ILN*      *Illustrated London News*

## Libraries and Archival Collections

|      |                                                                     |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CCA  | Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal                          |
| CCO  | Chief Commissioner's Office (Delhi Archives)                        |
| DCO  | Delhi Commissioner's Office (Delhi Archives)                        |
| IOR  | India Office Records, The British Library, London                   |
| MAA  | Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge, UK |
| NAI  | National Archives of India, Delhi                                   |
| OIOC | Oriental and India Office Collections, The British Library, London  |
| RIBA | Royal Institute of British Architects (V&A), London                 |
| V&A  | Victoria and Albert Museum, London                                  |

## Organizations

|        |                                                                  |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ASD    | Archaeological Society of Delhi (1847–1854)                      |
| ASI    | Archaeological Survey of India (1861–present)                    |
| BJP    | Bharatiya Janata Party                                           |
| DDA    | Delhi Development Authority                                      |
| JMMC   | Jama Masjid Managing Committee                                   |
| RSS    | Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh                                      |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| VHP    | Vishwa Hindu Parishad                                            |



## **Note on Transliteration**

Readers will note that I have stayed away from the use of diacritical marks in the transliteration of Urdu, Hindi, and Sanskrit words. This is to aid readers in word searches using the standard English keyboard. The names of monuments (Jama Masjid, as opposed to Jam'i Masjid) follows the common spellings used at the sites and in maps of Delhi.



# **The Modern Lives of Medieval Monuments between Archive and Affect**

In July 2012, Delhi's newspapers reported that the ruined foundations of the Akbarabadi Masjid were discovered during routine excavation work. Built in 1650 by a wife of the Mughal Emperor Shahjahan, the mosque had been demolished by the British military following the Indian Rebellion of 1857 as part of their larger scheme of vengeful destruction. The news of the excavations came less than a year after New Delhi—a portion of the city built between 1911 and 1931 as the capital of British India—was designated as a protected heritage zone of national importance. Meanwhile, the primary institution of heritage management, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), that is responsible for the care of the Akbarabadi Masjid's ruins and the nomination of New Delhi to national heritage status is itself a legacy of British colonialism in India.<sup>1</sup> The heritage of postcolonial India, it would seem, remains deeply enmeshed in its colonial past.

The current record of architectural monuments in Delhi, published by the ASI lists approximately 1,500 historic structures built between the eleventh and twentieth centuries. Like other classificatory matrices of the modern world, the catalog is presented as a set of self-evident truths about the discourse that it represents—in this case the historic built environment of India's capital city. The process by which the heritage sites were chosen remains opaque. The brief histories of each monument listed in the catalog appear as uncontested and universally accepted. Most importantly the authors and arbiters of Delhi's past, and their individual proclivities and prejudices, remain cloaked behind the bureaucratic facade of the ASI. This book serves to bring a critical perspective to the modern history of the making of Delhi's historic architecture. It complicates the supposedly seamless and uncontested process by which Delhi's built heritage received and currently maintains the status of "monument." Indeed, this book shows that the architectural gravitas of monuments and their sturdy histories often belie a perpetual crisis of meanings and mask a volatile realm of sociopolitical relations.

## **The Monument between Archive and Affect**

The central mission of this book is to offer a more capacious history of the monument, one that extends beyond a purely formalist reading of it as a product of a particular aesthetic style, the motivations of a patron or designer, or as a marker of a singular moment in history. In doing

so it reveals the subjective biases and prejudices that motivated the choice of monuments in preservation programs; the selective process by which certain histories of Delhi were canonized through its monuments while others were redacted out of memory; and most importantly it looks at the continuous production of historic symbolism and the cultural appropriations of these monuments outside of their state-sanctioned and institutionally regulated meanings.

More specifically this book traces the modern lives, from the mid-nineteenth century to the late twentieth century, of five Islamic monuments of Delhi, originally built between the twelfth and seventeenth centuries. The five monuments under consideration are the Red Fort; a Sufi shrine by the name of Rasul Numa Dargah; the Jama Masjid (Friday Mosque); the Purana Qila; and the Qutb complex. (See Plate 1 for the geo-spatial relation between New Delhi, Delhi, and the five monuments under discussion in this book.) Each chapter of the book charts the shifting nature of one monument at the intersection of state policies of preservation and the various appropriations of the monument by non-state actors, such as religious communities, politically savvy citizens, local leaders, informal users, petty businessmen, tourists, and nationalists of varying affiliations. A diachronic examination of the five monuments reveals their unexpected co-optations at various moments, which created other unofficial, albeit exigent, histories for them. These histories overflowed, interrupted, and sometimes hijacked the formal and institutional representations of the monuments as object markers of a singular period, as reflecting the tastes of a particular patron, or as illustrating a particular phase in the evolution of Indian architecture.

State-led projects of preservation, by the colonial government and later the nation-state, have sought to fix monuments within a rigid archive of India's past, even as the unexpected uses and symbolic repurposing of these monuments by non-state actors imbued them with the powerful affects of anxiety, trauma, disobedience, or shame, thereby threatening the archival narratives authored by the state. The utility of monuments to convey affective values of imperial power or religious morality was also realized by the colonial and national state in order to further their respective agendas. In the latter case, affect was often written into the institutionalized archival histories of monuments, thus blurring the lines between the two. It is at this intersection of archival representations and affective appropriations of the monument that this book submits new conceptual histories of the Indian monument.

While the state-controlled apparatus of preservation sought to fix the meanings of the monument within a rigid set of historical notations—that is, the archive of heritage sites—the affect or emotive quotient created around these monuments through unexpected appropriations recreated them in new ways. Equally, the colonial as well as the national state inserted affect into the archival histories of monuments on several occasions. In other words, although the institutionalized histories of monuments often carried with them aspects of emotive sentimentality, these histories presented themselves as reliable and entirely objective archival truths. Rather than being distinctive or dichotomous, archival truths and affective framings were mutually constitutive vectors in the making of modern monuments.

I rely on Michel Foucault's definition of the archive as a modern bureaucracy that exercises monopoly over various systems of knowledge as well as Jacques Derrida's conceptualization of the same, which he defines as a system of knowledge that is guarded by select personalities or *archons*.<sup>2</sup> Both Foucault and Derrida see the archive as a modern regime of truth located at the center of power and acquiring an institutional sacredness, which in turn

defines the limits of the discourse that it represents. The articulation of affect, meanwhile, is borrowed from the cultural theorist Sara Ahmed, who argues that affect is an emotive economy, where emotions are not simply private sentiments that exist within confined worlds, but rather move within and through several bodies—both human and non-human.<sup>3</sup> In Ahmed's words, "Affect is what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connection between ideas, values, and objects."<sup>4</sup> Affect is contingent upon circumstances, authored by multiple agents, and shifts according to the exigencies of time and place. Affect is also unpredictable and slippery, in that it appears and disappears unbidden. It may be argued then that, given its fleeting ephemerality, affect has little stability compared to the archive, which is both situated and sturdy, created and managed as it is for posterity. Yet, it is precisely this numinous quality of affect, its potential to manifest impetuously and disappear just as quickly that threatens the presumed sturdiness of the archive. Although affect exists in spaces and objects and as an economy of sentiments that resists recording or even reproduction, it threatens to implore the very stable representations of time and place that the archive lays claim to.

Established as a colonial project, institutionalized preservation in India sought to continue the work of other imperial missions of archiving that allowed the colonizer to both "know" and "possess" the colony. The cataloging of people, cultural customs, flora, fauna, geological features, etc., undertaken by the colonial apparatus set the stage as well as the essential rubrics for the objectification of architectural objects within a larger schema of colonial knowledge. Nicholas Dirks has brought attention to the early documentation of architectural objects that began with the first systematic surveys of India.<sup>5</sup> Conducted between 1799 and 1809, and supervised by Colin Mackenzie, the Great Mysore Survey was one of the first visual archives of India—documenting as it did the cultures, languages, geological features, natural resources, and architectural monuments of the subcontinent. Architectural historian James Fergusson acknowledged the contributions of Mackenzie's survey to the study of Indian architecture when he wrote, "Colin Mackenzie . . . drew everything he found of any architectural importance, and was the most industrious and successful collector of drawings and manuscripts that India has ever known."<sup>6</sup> This is a clear illustration of Foucault as well as Derrida's definition of the archive. Fergusson believed that because a monument appeared in Mackenzie's survey it must have architectural importance. Equally, architecture that fell outside the purview of Mackenzie's survey was deemed to be lacking in architectural import. The archive thus not only set the parameters for establishing architectural value, but it was also guarded by *archons*, like Fergusson, once it was put in place.

Early catalogs of architectural monuments in India also functioned as archives in another way. They provided the raw data from which colonial authorities extrapolated India's past. Like his friend and close collaborator Alexander Cunningham, Fergusson believed in the colonial mission of preservation and its urgent nature in India where ancient buildings were especially prone to decay and vandalism. In addition he argued that although Indian architecture had never reached the artistic quality of Rome or the moral zenith of Greek civilization, it revealed important ethnological data about the "races" that made up India, who Fergusson believed had changed little over time.<sup>7</sup> The modern project of preservation thus essentially positioned the monument as a reliable document of the past and a purveyor of historical facts. As objects carrying inscriptions and epigraphs, monuments were capable of delivering empirical truths that could be deciphered by the colonial expert.

Fergusson's "activation" of architectural monuments as documents of the past brings to mind Foucault's exegesis on the modern making of history:

History in its traditional form, undertook to "memorize" the *monuments* of the past, transform them into *documents*, and lend speech to those traces which, in themselves, are often not verbal, or which say in silence something other than what they actually say; in our time, history is that which transforms documents into monuments.<sup>8</sup>

Foucault's definition of the archive does not simply refer to the entire mass of texts and documents that belong to a single discursive formation (such as the discourse of Indian heritage and the monument created by colonialism in mid-nineteenth-century India) but rather stands more conceptually as the "law of what can be said" or the "system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events."<sup>9</sup> Hence, his sardonic assessment that modern bureaucracies have now turned documents into monuments, where the former now assert themselves as incontrovertible truths, simply due to their inclusion in the archive. In comparison, Derrida's definition of the archive begins with the Greek etymology of the term, which reveals the juridical and legal bases of the archive. Deriving from the Greek *arkhe*, which translates as commandment, the *arkhe* is further defined by a sense of location or place, in that it is: "*there* where men and gods command, *there* where authority, social order are exercised, *in this place* from which *order* is given."<sup>10</sup> Derrida's definition of the archive is both spatially located as well embodied, the authority of the archive or the means to interpret it is held by *archons*—that is, it is in their home, in that place which is their house (*arkheionas*) that official documents are filed and it is they who guard access to the archive. Unlike Foucault's disembodied, placeless, and entirely discursive definition of the archive, where it is the texts that speak and set the regime of truth, Derrida's brings together embodied authority (the *archon*) as well as the site of interpretation (*arkheionas*) as imperative to the understanding of the archive.

Foucault's, as well as Derrida's, conceptualization of the archive as a product of modern bureaucracy is particularly productive in my analysis of preservation. In an uncanny reversal of Foucault's submission that modern bureaucracies turned documents into monuments, in colonial India *monuments* were turned into *documents*. Since Indian histories were considered less than reliable and often little more than hagiographies or folklore, colonial experts privileged historic architectural objects as the only stable documents from which they could cull data regarding India's past. Preserving the monument for its potential to reveal historical facts fixed it within a rigid set of meanings as well as functions. Colonial preservation turned the monument into the bearer of specific truths regarding India's past. In addition the colonial and later national bureaucrat, in the form of the archaeologist or architectural historian, took on the role of the *archon*. He became the primary selector of the monuments that made up this archive but also the sole interlocutor of its history as well as zealous guardian of its contemporary meanings.

If the archive appears as a rigid system of bureaucratic policies that forecloses any interactions with or appropriations of the monument by non-state actors, how is it possible to include the agency of other, less powerful, individuals in a revisionist history of the

monument? Despite the persistent continuity between colonial and postcolonial systems of preservation, where might the moments of departure from such institutional histories be found? What kinds of voices have the potential to subvert the triumphant and seemingly omnipotent bureaucracy of monument making? For this it is necessary to look outside the centers of power at the subtle strategies used by colonial subjects as well as citizens of independent India to create parallel worlds of meaning around the monument. Indeed, the destabilization of the archival histories of the monument can only be understood by an examination of the affective meanings that the monument accrues at various points in its life.

Greggory Siegworth and Melissa Gregg have argued that affect is borne and managed in a state of *in-betweenness*—a field of responses, intensities, and emotional charges that pass between bodies whether these are human, non-human, objects, abstractions, etc. Affect is more than simply emotion or reason, but is often the motivation for either emotive or intellectual response. The bodies that are central to the transmission and accumulation of affect are not defined so much by their “objectness” (i.e., their formal qualities) but their ability to co-participate in the transmission and maintenance of affect.<sup>11</sup> Sara Ahmed has taken this submission further in her exegesis on affective economies by positing that emotional responses to land, geography, or an abstract definition of nation are not confined to the personal space of an individual but rather created and managed through larger economies of representation, rhetoric, and circulation. Ahmed uses the example of the “hate” that white nationalists feel for immigrants or outsiders or the “love” that they feel for their homeland as an economy of sentiments that acquires its own capital through circulation and concomitant social reproduction. Like Siegworth and Gregg, Ahmed privileges the role of bodies in these affective economies, arguing that affect attaches itself to bodies creating a “stickiness” of meanings and attributes around them, which in turn empowers these bodies with particular forms of agency. In Ahmed’s submission, these bodies need not be human and may in fact be inanimate objects (such as flags, or maps) or abstractions (such as the body of a nation, the “health” of which is threatened by the “invasion” of immigrants).<sup>12</sup>

In the context of South Asia, affect has been most productively theorized by anthropologist Purnima Mankekar. In her analysis of transnational Indian media and its reception by diasporic and domestic communities, she exposes the affective ecologies of images, tastes, and sentimentalities signifying “Indianness.” From the rich sensoria of Indian products available at Indian grocery stores in the San Francisco Bay Area to the emotive syntax of masculinity and femininity in Indian television shows, Mankekar reveals the rich traffic of affect between things, places, time, and people.<sup>13</sup>

The central premise of this book that Indian monuments were made between archive and affect may be illustrated by the following example. In 1949, Mr. Shankar Prasad, a public servant requested that the Indian government decommission certain statues, monuments, and plaques that commemorated the British conquest of India. He specifically called for the removal of the statue of Brigadier John Nicholson—the British officer who had made the first breach in the walls of Shahjahanabad during the Rebellion of 1857 and in doing so had turned the tide of the battle in the favor of British troops. Nicholson died shortly after the siege of Delhi and was buried near the Kashmiri Gate. The British military commemorated his bravery via a heroic statue soon after. In addition to the removal of Nicholson’s statue, Mr. Prasad also asked that the epitaph on the Mutiny Memorial on the Ridge in Delhi

honoring the European dead be altered. The Ministry of Home Affairs not only turned down Prasad's request, but also issued a stern warning to all governments in the country that the memorials to fallen British soldiers should not be tampered with in any way.<sup>14</sup>

The Ministry justified their decision on three counts. First, they argued that, Prasad's petition notwithstanding, there had been no noticeable public agitation regarding monuments to British individuals. They feared that setting a precedent of removing or altering 1857 memorials might only create unnecessary controversy. Second, they argued that the "British are very sensitive about monuments of their dead people and are likely to take serious offence at the demolition of monuments erected in memory of their fallen soldiers." Third and perhaps most curiously, the letter stated that "so far as the victories of the British are a historical fact, the memorials might serve as reminders of our own weakness in the past and might serve as a good historical lesson to those who see them"<sup>15</sup>

This exchange is a startling reminder of the persistence of colonial framings of history even in the wake of decolonization.<sup>16</sup> It starkly illustrates Foucault's notion of the archive as one that establishes the "law of what can be said." In this sense the archive of preservation cannot accommodate a critique of colonial power and continues to censor such impulses long after the colonizers have departed. The example also shows how the meanings regarding monumentality are strictly guarded by the *archon*. Although the *archon* is now an Indian official, the sanctity of the colonial word is maintained and perpetuated in postcolonial India. Yet these official histories are not outside of the inflection of affect. Indeed, just as the British monument for John Nicholson was meant to evoke the emotive qualities of masculine courage, patriotic duty, and the melancholy of his martyrdom in the viewer; the postcolonial *archon* hoped that the monument would serve as a cautionary warning to viewers in independent India by evoking the shame of past weaknesses.

Since the establishment of the ASI in 1861, colonial as well as postcolonial authorities have seemingly controlled the fate of monuments in Delhi (and other parts of India), dictating how they should be used, writing their official histories, deciding what must be remembered and forgotten about them, articulating their aesthetic value, and even regulating the nature and extent of their affective charges. In other words, the *archon* assumed the role of the sole arbiter of the monument's meanings. But this control by the state over the monument has never been complete. It has been continually interrupted, appropriated, and challenged by a host of actors with multiple interests and varying motivations. More importantly, these appropriations of the monument are often unexpected and while many operate in the realm of the unofficial they have the power to topple the carefully curated archival histories of monuments. The histories of the five monuments that follow are always contingent and never stable, polyphonous rather than monologic, and temporally dynamic rather than static.

## Modern Bureaucracies of Preservation

The history of institutionalized preservation in India begins with the establishment of the ASI in 1861 by the British government of India. Alexander Cunningham, a British officer of the Royal Engineers and dilettante antiquarian, had pleaded the colonial government to establish an office dedicated to the protection of Indian heritage.<sup>17</sup> He argued that while the

mission of preservation was no doubt important in every part of the world, its urgency was greater in India for three reasons. First, the material objects of antiquity needed to be especially saved in India where written histories were either scarce or unreliable. Cunningham, and his contemporaries, regarded Indian histories as little more than sycophantic biographies of erstwhile sovereigns or fanciful constructions of the past that could hardly be distinguished from myths. Antique objects, particularly ancient buildings bearing inscriptions, on the other hand could, if deciphered by the right interlocutors, provide accurate historical information regarding India's past.

Second, colonial administrators pointed to the ignorance and lethargy of Indians toward their own heritage, and argued that preservation in India needed to be conducted systematically via an institutionalized body of experts and administered at the government level. Cunningham's claims found much appreciation with Viceroy Curzon (viceroyship: 1899–1905) who agreed that while the “public” in Western countries could be entrusted with caring for their local heritage, Indians had neither the foresight nor the facility to protect their objects of antiquity.<sup>18</sup> Curzon went on to draft and implement the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act (AMPA) in 1904—a document that continues to serve as the foundation for India's preservation policies to this day.

The third and most important justification for the establishment of a preservation body in India, according to Cunningham, was his belief that the colonial government had a duty to protect India's monuments as a service to its colonized subjects. Thus, Cunningham, and later Curzon, saw preservation as the public mission of an enlightened government toward its governed. The establishment of the ASI in the nineteenth century, however, was a radical departure from over a century of looting, pilferage, and at times deliberate destruction of historic structures on the part of the British government.<sup>19</sup> While it is unclear if the establishment of the ASI was a form of institutionalized atonement for a previous history that included destruction, vandalism, and pilferage of Indian antiquities, nineteenth-century preservation was undoubtedly a strategy by which the colonial government fashioned itself as the benevolent and rational steward of Indian cultural heritage and by extension of India itself.<sup>20</sup>

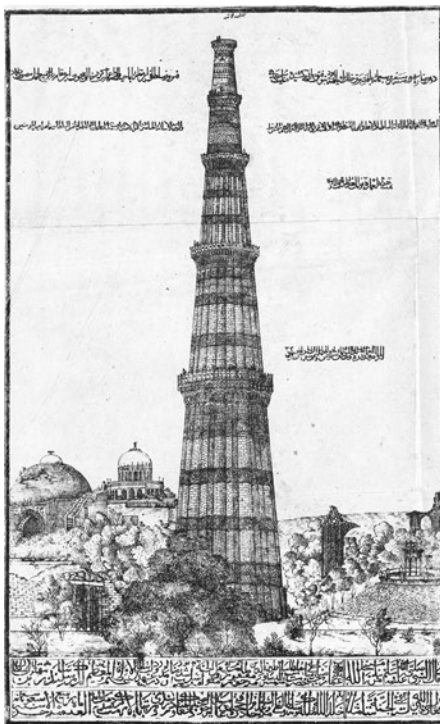
Of the many fictions advanced and maintained by the colonial bureaucracy in India, was the notion that preservation was a project initiated by the British Empire. In fact, indigenous methods and examples of preservation in India before the establishment of the ASI were numerous and varied. Despite the claims of colonial administrators that objects and buildings of antiquity languished without proper attention before the establishment of the ASI, there is sufficient proof to show that monuments received funds for repair and restoration from rulers, noblemen and women, wealthy elites, and even local communities. The following is a small selection of examples of preservation in and around Delhi in the precolonial era. In 1368–69 when the Qutb Minar was struck by lightning, Firoz Shah Tughlaq ensured its repair and restoration.<sup>21</sup> In 1809 the Hindu ruler of Gwalior, Daulat Rao Sindhia, issued an edict to prevent the pillaging of stones from the Arhai din ka Jhonpra, a twelfth-century mosque, in Ajmer.<sup>22</sup> That a Hindu king like Sindhia was not hesitant to preserve the Arhai din ka Jhonpra, a mosque built from Hindu and Jain fragments, illustrates that architectural monuments were valued for their historical and aesthetic qualities and across religious lines. During the height of the 1857 Rebellion, the Mughal Emperor

Bahadur Shah Zafar issued a proclamation preventing agriculture in the area immediately surrounding the Qutb Minar.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to imperial decrees, monuments were also preserved and maintained by the rituals of patronage and visitation that linked them to the ruling powers. For example, the annual “pilgrimage” that Bahadur Shah Zafar made to the tomb of the Sufi saint Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki in the village of Mehrauli (now in South Delhi) was one way in which the structure was maintained and protected from vandalism. Bahadur Shah Zafar’s decision to be buried near this Sufi saint, whom he considered his *pir* (spiritual leader), although never realized, would have also ensured that tomb’s upkeep far beyond his own lifetime. Although the establishment of the ASI in 1861 undoubtedly introduced a bureaucracy that standardized the definition of the monument as well as the policies of preservation in India, these did not, however, originate within a vacuum of awareness toward monuments. Indeed the ASI often co-opted indigenous knowledge to create the discourse of heritage. In other words, even as it sought to deny the agency of Indians in preservation, the colonial archive of India’s heritage is replete with the knowledge, bodies, and practices of the colonized population.

Just as indigenous practices of architectural preservation predated the colonial institutionalization of the same, the beginnings of a discourse on archaeology and monuments in Delhi specifically, also predated the establishment of the ASI. The origins of the latter can be traced back to 1847, which saw the establishment of the short-lived Archaeological Society of Delhi (ASD) as well as the publication of Syed Ahmad Khan’s *Asar-us-Sanadid*—the first comprehensive catalog of Delhi’s historic architecture, written in Urdu and featuring lengthy descriptions of the city’s monuments and their conditions. The ASD was founded by a group of Delhi’s European residents that included Sir Theophilus Metcalfe, British Resident at Delhi, who served as the Chair of the society for its short-lived tenure of seven years. The members of the society were dilettantes with historical interests, and while many had private collections of antiquities most had little to no training in the disciplines of architectural history or archaeology. Before it was prematurely disbanded in 1854 the society spent its time gathering historical texts (with the expectation of eventually establishing a library); collecting antique coins and other historical objects with the intention of charting an accurate chronology of Delhi’s emperors; and employing the Drawing Master of the Delhi College to produce measured drawings of some of Delhi’s monuments.<sup>24</sup> By posturing as experts of Indian antiquities and with their exclusive European membership the ASD foreshadowed at a local level the larger institution of the ASI in significant ways.

One Indian who was held in admiration by members of the ASD was the Delhi intellectual Syed Ahmad. The society praised his objective brilliance and scientific skills, which they considered a rare temper in other Indians and his epigraphic research was often cited by the members. Yet he was only inducted into it as a member in 1852, five years after his comprehensive history of Delhi’s monuments, the *Asar-us-Sanadid* (*Traces of Noblemen*) was published.<sup>25</sup> The first edition (1847) of this Urdu catalog featured textual descriptions of over one hundred monuments accompanied by wood cut illustrations. The city’s Hindu and Sikh architecture was documented alongside its rich Islamic heritage to provide a thorough survey of the city’s monuments. Syed Ahmad’s book was largely produced for a European audience eager to know about Indian history and its antique material culture and may have even more specifically been produced for the ASD itself.<sup>26</sup>



**FIG. 1.1.** Drawing of the Qutb Minar from Syed Ahmad Khan's *Asar-us-Sanadid* (1847 ed.). Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

The *Asar-us-Sanadid* departed drastically from previous histories of Delhi in that it deliberately aligned architectural and sovereign genealogies together. In fact, Syed Ahmad traced the shifts in the successive empires that ruled Delhi through the various architectural remnants left behind in the landscape. His assertion that Delhi's landscape was a series of imperial capitals that stretched from contemporary times to a prehistorical past was a seductive framework that made its way into the ASI's early histories of Delhi as well as the narratives that surrounded the building of New Delhi in the early twentieth century. Even the visual representations of certain monuments such as the Qutb Minar displayed the continuous building activity by Islamic emperors in Delhi. Syed Ahmad cites the various inscriptions attributing the building and restoration of Qutb Minar's individual stories to various rulers starting with Iltutmish in the thirteenth century to Sikandar Shah Lodhi in the sixteenth century and arranges these around the figure of the minaret.<sup>27</sup> In this way the Qutb Minar was portrayed as a historical document providing empirical proof of the imperial genealogy of Delhi. More than any other example, Syed Ahmad's *Asar-us-Sanadid* proves that architecture *as* history was not a colonial invention that emerged in an Indian intellectual vacuum. There were in fact deep philosophical reckonings with the built environment as early as 1847.

As the first architectural archive of Delhi, the *Asar-us-Sanadid* forged a deliberate and sturdy link between two powerful modalities: architecture and imperial authority.<sup>28</sup> It was the first archive of Delhi's architectural heritage and despite the reluctance of colonial archaeologists to recognize it as such they depended on it greatly to create their own archival knowledge of Delhi's monuments. In this book, I have included Syed Ahmad's histories of

the five monuments under consideration for a couple of reasons. First, it serves to overturn the colonial assumption that their own histories were entirely separate from unreliable Indian histories, when in fact there was considerable dialogue and exchange between the two. Second, it shows that from the very beginning the histories of monuments operated in a space defined by objective or archival knowledge as well as affective symbolisms of the past. As the foundational text for the taxonomy of Delhi's monuments, the *Asar-us-Sanadid*, set many of the archival truths as well some of the affective potential of Delhi's monuments into motion in the mid-nineteenth century.

With the establishment of the ASI in 1861 the documentation and preservation of Indian heritage sites gained steady momentum across the subcontinent. In Delhi, preservation took on an unexpected urgency with the 1911 proclamation that the capital of British India would be moved from Calcutta to Delhi. The new capital designed by Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker would accommodate the massive infrastructure of imperial administration and take its place as the modern successor to the various Islamic imperial capitals built in Delhi from the twelfth to the seventeenth century. Delhi's monuments were thus set into a new archive symbolizing imperial power, which started in antiquity and ended in the modern world with British New Delhi. On a more pragmatic level, the moment of 1911 also led to the first bureaucratic enumeration of Delhi's monuments and the articulation of their value. A wave of land acquisitions for the site of New Delhi followed the 1911 announcement of the building of the new capital and in order to protect and evaluate the extent of the several hundreds of historic monuments in the city, the ASI conducted an extensive survey of ancient buildings in Delhi. The listing was first published in 1916 and titled *List of Mohammadan and Hindu Monuments, Delhi Province*.<sup>29</sup> This was the first institutionalized archive of monuments in Delhi and differed from Syed Ahmad's history of the city's monuments because it was presented as an objective identification, enumeration, and description of the city's monuments based only their historical or aesthetic value. This archive also arranged Delhi's monuments in a hierarchy of value listing them in descending order of importance as Class I, II, and III sites. With minor changes, the ASI's 1916 listing of monuments continues to be the authoritative archive of Delhi's built heritage to the present day.

The ASI's taxonomy of Delhi's monuments marks a significant departure from Syed Ahmad's histories of the same. It may be related to Derrida's definition of "archontic power" which is described as

the archontic power, which also gathers the functions of unification, of identification, of classification, must be paired with what we will call the power of consignation. By consignation, we do not only mean, in the ordinary sense of the word, the act of assigning residence or of entrusting so as to put into reserve (to consign, to deposit) in a place and on a substrate, but here the act of consigning through gathering together signs. . . . Consignation aims to coordinate a single corpus, in a system or a synchrony, in which all the elements articulate the unity of an ideal configuration.<sup>30</sup>

In other words, even as the colonial archive identified, classified, and unified Delhi's heritage, it also placed it within an idealized order or synchronous system that exerted an

irrefutable logic over its disparate pieces. Once arranged in this order every separate piece of the archive further perpetuated the regime set by its own classificatory system, or rather the singular archival document carried with it the archontic power of its larger representational matrix. As Derrida argues, the archive is thus both institutive as well as constitutive, in that it institutes the law through which it inscribes itself as well as the authority to constitute such law. The 1916 archive of Delhi's heritage created by the ASI both laid down the definition of monument and established its limits. The archive cataloged even as it contained the city's monuments; it identified the object markers of the city's antique past while simultaneously regulating the histories of these monuments.

If colonial preservation set in place a rigid taxonomy of heritage as well as defined its limits and agents of authority, the passing of the baton from colonial authority to sovereign nation-state did little to recalibrate the cult of the monument. The "ignorant" Indian colonial subject was replaced by new "others," or as Partha Chatterjee has called them, fragments that challenged the fiction of the homogenous nation unified under a common consciousness.<sup>31</sup> More specifically, independent India defined its own modernity in the same vein as the departed colonizers, protecting the monuments of the nation-state from refugees, squatters, and other subalterns who were seen as a threat to either the ontological or epistemological nature of the monument. Positioning themselves as the new *archons*, Indian administrators continued to perpetuate the separation between the history of the monument (as a rarefied realm of scholarly expertise) and the history, or perhaps lack thereof, of the Indian citizen (who was perceived as belonging to an atavistic or at the very least ahistorical realm). The continuity between the colonial and postcolonial is pointed out less to suggest a facile causality between the two modalities, but as a means to exert pressure on both in their hegemonic construction of history. As Dipesh Chakrabarty has argued, "In unraveling the necessary entanglement of history—a disciplined and institutionally regulated form of collective memory—with the grand narratives of rights, citizenship, the nation-state, and public and private spheres, one cannot but problematize 'India' at the same time as one dismantles 'Europe.'"<sup>32</sup> In terms of cultural history too, the monuments so indisputably ensconced within the lexicon of Indian heritage perpetuate the fictions and fractures of the contemporary nation-state.

The colonial impulses of preservation were thus absorbed into the archival tendencies of the nation-state in 1947 with few changes. Indeed, the lack of debate as to the taxonomies used by the British (arranged around ethno-religious categories such as Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Islamic, etc.) or more fundamentally the definition of the monument is profoundly shocking. In 1951 the ASI issued the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Declaration of National Importance) Act, which essentially reiterated the original Ancient Monuments Preservation Act passed by Viceroy Curzon in 1904. Subsequent changes to archaeological policy have sought to expand the corpus of Indian monuments through more discoveries and nominations of structures as heritage sites, but the essential taxonomies and assumptions that operate via preservation continue to reproduce colonial constructions of India's past.

The modern project of preservation as it played out in India has been particularly intent on managing the interaction of the "public" or the layman with the objects of the past. Programs led by the independent nation-state of India as well as the colonial government sought to protect the monument first and foremost from the general public who were seen

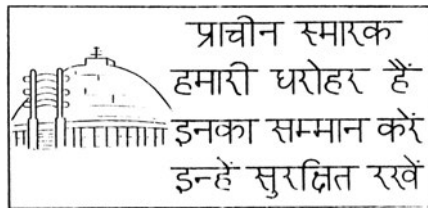


FIG. 1.2. A postal obliteration stamp bearing the slogan for the 1964 UNESCO Campaign for International Monuments.

as threats, by way of impending vandalism, benign neglect, or acts of willful destruction, to the monument. For example, in 1964, as part of UNESCO's Campaign for International Monuments, the Government of India launched several programs to raise the general public's awareness regarding India's built heritage, which included radio broadcasts, generating publicity about Indian monuments through posters and news notices, organizing tourist programs at several heritage sites, issuing commemorative stamps featuring India's monuments, and organizing exhibitions related to monuments at the national museums across the country.<sup>33</sup> The Films Division Board of India was asked to consider the production of documentaries that would stress public cooperation in the preservation of monuments, by emphasizing the damage caused to Indian heritage due to careless acts such as graffiti, the theft of inlaid stones at various sites, and littering around monuments. A. Ghosh, Director of the ASI, broadcast a public service message along the same lines, and expressly asked to make the address in English as well as several regional languages, claiming that "the persons who *should* be interested in this campaign would be more likely to listen to programmes in Indian languages"<sup>34</sup> [emphasis added]. The injunction made it clear that those who spoke in Indian vernaculars (as opposed to English) were most in need of education regarding the proper decorum toward monuments.

In his national radio broadcast on November 2, 1964, Ghosh outlined the imminent threats posed to Indian heritage by rapid urbanization and the vagaries of climate in addition to the damage done to Indian monuments by an imagined delinquent public, who either vandalized monuments due to religious bigotry or quarried them for building material.<sup>35</sup> He stressed the urgent nature for the public to educate themselves about monuments and asked that they assume a posture of reverence toward their heritage. He ended his speech by invoking the declarative slogan adopted by India for the UNESCO Campaign of Historical Monuments: "Monuments are our Heritage. Respect them—Preserve them."<sup>36</sup>

Ghosh's perception of the common Indian citizen as posing an imminent threat to the country's heritage echoed, almost verbatim, another plea made almost a century earlier by one of the first Indian archaeologists in the ASI. Babu Rajendralal Mitra had argued for the preservation of Indian heritage in 1874 thus:

There are in different parts of India—scattered in isolated places, away from human habitation, and generally amidst jungles—many ancient monuments so completely demolished that they can no longer be fully described, and some of them lie buried under the rubbish of ages. To the people of their neighbourhood they serve as quarries for building materials, in removing which, sculptures and inscribed stones of much importance to the antiquarian are ruthlessly destroyed, or converted into building stones or domestic utensils. . . . As the ruins in question are themselves no longer of any value, and it is economically advantageous that their materials should be utilised, the proper course would be to rescue from them such inscriptions and sculptures as may be thought interesting to archaeologists, and deposit them in a Public Museum.<sup>37</sup>

Both Ghosh in 1964 and Mitra in 1874 betray the anxiety of errant users—whose emotions, needs, or desires would alter and endanger the monument. These unpredictable affects (religious bigotry, economic necessity, or creative alteration) could only be managed by strictly regulating the connection between user and monument, or in the more extreme case as Mitra suggested by moving the valuable pieces of the monument to a museum—yet another manifestation of the modern archive.

Although, the ASI had recognized the importance of preserving monuments in situ, and within their original contexts by the 1960s, rather than transferring them to museums as artifacts that could be studied by the educated antiquarian, there are significant similarities between the 1874 and 1964 stance of the ASI toward the “public” and their contact with the objects of antiquity. Preservation policy in colonial as well as postcolonial India was not only about creating an archive but also regulating the behavior of the public and the meanings of the monument as much as possible. The state official acting as *archon* maintained control over the symbolic meanings of the monument as well as managed the posture and attitude of the viewer toward the monument.<sup>38</sup> It might even be argued that whether steered by the colonial government or the independent nation-state preservation was as much about saving Indian monuments from Indians as it was about preserving it on their behalf. Thus, preservation was also about ridding the monument of potentially troublesome inhabitants; instead its users were to assume a particular posture and attitude toward the monument in order to fully understand its gravitas. Preservation policy therefore was and continues to be a system of regulation that manages the histories of monuments as well as prescribes the behavior of the viewer as he comes into contact with the monument.

By the late twentieth century, Indian monuments were also caught between somewhat contradictory vectors of global importance and nationalist appropriation. As part of UNESCO’s mandate to preserve certain monuments as universal heritage, two sites in Delhi, the Qutb complex and Humayun’s Tomb, were listed as World Heritage Monuments in 1993. In 2007 Delhi’s third monument, the Red Fort, was nominated as a World Heritage Monument. As a secular nation-state India has had little trouble celebrating the built heritage of its capital, which was almost entirely Islamic in origins. Yet this secular agenda has also met increasing resistance from an emerging Hindu nationalism, which has grown stronger since the last decades of the twentieth century. Delhi’s surfeit of Islamic built

heritage is deeply vexing to the Hindutva movement, which seeks to reclaim India as a geography defined solely by Hindu culture and history.<sup>39</sup> Such parochial reframings of nation and history are frequently played out on the bodies of monuments in India's capital city. It is in this shifting historical field of colonial framings, secular as well as religious nationalisms, and universal mandates of heritage preservation that I narrate the modern lives of five medieval monuments in Delhi.

## **Toward an Expanded Definition of the Monument**

At the heart of this book is an interrogation and recalibration of the modern definition of the monument—particularly as it was created by European theories and policies of preservation in the nineteenth century. The nineteenth-century institutionalization of preservation across Europe, North America, and large parts of the colonized world including India, was one that privileged a singular history of the monument, positioning it as an authentic object marker of a particular moment, event, personality, or artistic style of the past.<sup>40</sup> In 1903, the art historian Alois Riegl was asked to create a policy document for the protection of monuments in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. As part of that task Riegl wrote an essay titled “The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin,” which went on to become a monument in its own right, defining as it did the push for preservation at the turn of the last century.<sup>41</sup> Riegl's counterparts in the nineteenth-century project of preservation included thinkers and architects such as William Morris and John Ruskin in England, Camille Boito in Italy, Viollet-le-Duc in France, and citizen activists such as Ann Pamela Cunningham in America, who was most famous for championing the preservation of George Washington's residence at Mt. Vernon. These men and women realized that rapid urbanization and industrialization of the nineteenth century was destroying the historic urban fabric of their cities. Preservation, the project of conserving objects of a remote past, was thus borne out of an ineluctably modern moment and its concomitant anxieties. Whether it was the interventionist policies of Viollet-le-Duc who sought to restore monuments to an idealized state that encapsulated the artistic period to which they belonged (even if they had never existed in this state originally) or William Morris who led the “anti-scrape” preservation movement in England (thus called due to its abhorrence of any modern form of restoration to antique monuments) the modern project of preservation sought to “fix” the monument within a past that was defined in contrast to the present. In other words, preservation brought about a temporal caesura that divorced the monument from its contemporary context.

The “past” that was meant to be evoked by these monuments was variously defined and serviced disparate contemporary concerns. For example, in France preservation was part of a national campaign that sought to illustrate the nation's evolution from past to present via architectural style. Historic monuments thus marked a primitive but necessary cultural stage that France had passed through in order to advance as a civilization. As Kevin Murphy has shown in the case of Viollet-le-Duc's imaginative reconstruction of the Church of Sainte Madelaine at Vézelay, the national appropriation of France's monuments in order to recreate them as signifiers of particular artistic periods often clashed with local concerns and ritualistic practices.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless it was the state-defined version of the past that prevailed when

Viollet-le-Duc reconstructed the church with its various elements showing a neat aesthetic progression from the Romanesque to the Gothic.

In her influential book, *The Invention of the Historic Monument*, Françoise Choay has shown that the identification of monuments as authentic documents of an irretrievable past and the subsequent project of preserving them emerged in early modern Europe.<sup>43</sup> In particular Choay credits the emergence of the historic monument to the rise of print culture in the sixteenth century when the printed word began to document events and personalities, usurping this function of recording from architectural monuments. As such, then the modern cult of historic monuments and their conservation marked a rupture between medieval conceptualizations of memorials as monuments built to commemorate military victories, record the histories of important personages, etc., to the construction of historic monuments as unique markers of a particular historical spirit.<sup>44</sup> Preserving the historic monument ensured that it would survive as a marker of another kind that when arranged along linear timelines could demonstrate civilizational progress and artistic evolution. In marking a profound difference between premodern monuments and modern historic monuments, Choay says that the former is “a deliberate (*gewolte*) creation whose purpose is established a priori and at the outset, while the historic monument is not initially desired (*ungewolte*) and created as such, it is constituted a posteriori by the converging gazes of the historian and the amateur, who choose it from the mass of existing edifices, of which monuments constitute only a small part.”<sup>45</sup>

While it may be tempting to position early preservation in India as simply a mirror of similar processes in nineteenth-century England, there were in fact significant discontinuities in the tone as well as policies taken toward monuments in England and India. First, institutionalized preservation was begun in colonial India earlier and at a more comprehensive scale than it was in Britain. Second, while monuments in Britain were preserved to enhance their emotive potential, particularly that of nationalistic belonging, the approach to monuments in India was to preserve them such that Indians would see them only as inert objects from a distant past.

Preservation in nineteenth-century England was heavily influenced by John Ruskin's notions of the sublime as well as his aversion to the commercialization of contemporary arts and crafts brought on by mass production.<sup>46</sup> Ruskin's call to arms was as much a denouncement of the aggressive restorations that the government of France had recently championed as it was a rejection of the industrial and mass-produced aesthetic that was currently on display at the Great Exhibition of 1851 at the Crystal Palace. Ruskin and his collaborator William Morris (founder of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in 1877) promoted the preservation of historic monuments, particularly medieval and Gothic buildings, which they idealized as remnants of a morally superior society. Contrary to the French and American policies of preservation that favored a higher degree of intervention and often complete restoration, English preservation echoed contemporary Romanticism and its attitudes toward landscape and the architectural ruin, which were both imbued with sublime affect. In Ruskin's estimation, “if every one of us, who knows what food for the human heart there is in the great works of elder time, could indeed see with his own eyes their progressive ruin,” it would lead to a greater appreciation of heritage as well as a rejection of the crass commercial arts and crafts that had recently flooded the European markets.<sup>47</sup>

If the cult of the monument was bound up with national histories and a linear sense of time in England the same was not true in the colonial context. Monuments were not meant to be signifiers of sovereign nations, and most especially not under colonial conditions. Indian monuments were preserved such that they represented discrete moments and polities of the past—the latter presumed by the colonizer to have remained unchanged over a period of time. Thus, the cult of monuments in nineteenth-century India positioned them in a very different temporal space from their European counterparts—as mute historic objects with neither the potential to create an economy of sentiments within the present nor the power to impact the future. Rather than being a simple projection of metropolitan norms of preservation from England to the margins of empire, heritage management in the Indian colony required a strenuous denial of the affective potential of the monument. If Victorian England romanticized the ruin for its ability to inspire national sentiment and an attachment to the place, that same affect when produced in the colony would only imperil the very foundations of empire. The intense regulation of the meanings of the Indian monument may explain why the ASI (established 1861) preceded a corollary governmental body of preservation in England (the National Trust established 1895) by several decades.<sup>48</sup>

Returning to Choay's submission that the modern monument was invented by the converging gazes of the historian and amateur, in the colonial context the bureaucracy of preservation also aimed to negate or at the very least repress the contemporary lives and affective potential of the monument, particularly for the Indian subject. Yet as the five case studies in this book show, these monuments were continuously at the center of contemporary and urgent resignifications that pressured their stagnant understanding as objects of an antique past and constantly pulled them into the present. David Lowenthal has argued that preservation sought to make the past a foreign country, and, while this was certainly the mission of archival histories, the affective appropriation of monuments made them all too familiar reminders of the here and now.<sup>49</sup> A key objective of this book then is to offer an expanded history of the monument that accommodates the multiple frissons between the monument as a static representation of the past and its continuous mutations in various historical presents.

I explore this expanded history of the monument in two ways: First, I use the quotidian appropriations and popular articulations of the monument to subvert the authorial claim of institutions and experts over archival histories of these monuments. In other words, I deliberately blur the distinction between historian and amateur (Choay's categories) to suggest that both participants made equally pressing claims to monuments and helped shape their histories, sometimes through affect and other times via the archive. Indeed, by emphasizing the voices, actions, and motivations of the "lay person," I illustrate the complex histories of the monument that the apparatus of preservation was either unable or unwilling to accommodate. In addition, I acknowledge the deeply subjective and affective histories embedded within the institutionalized histories of monuments, thereby unraveling the claims to scientific objectivity made by archival knowledge. Second, by offering micro-histories of each monument that oscillate between multiple moments and span the colonial and postcolonial periods, I eschew both linear and singular histories of the monument. By privileging locality and space over abstract temporalities, I reveal that the monument was made anew through multiple appropriations. Thus, single monuments were the generator of plural and polyphonous histories rather than passive vessels of a remote past. In essence, then,

a new conceptualization of the monument suggests a temporal dynamism, as well as the role of multiple authors in its invention. I seek to displace the *archon* as the sole steward of monumental histories, even as I challenge the temporal caesura of the monument brought about by preservation.

## The Discourse of Building Histories

This book is located at the intersection of two discourses: the first, is architectural history, and particularly the rich scholarship on monuments and preservation history. The second is the field of modern South Asian art history, particularly the scholarship that interrogates the colonial framings of Indian art and architectural objects. Recent scholarship on the cultural and political dynamics of architectural preservation has also served as a departure point for much of the analysis conducted in the following pages.

The nineteenth-century project of preservation forwarded the master-narratives of modern history, such as the celebration of masculine public figures and spaces, the genius of artistic production, and the privileging of grand monuments. In the past few decades critical scholarship has questioned the absence of subalterns, women, laboring bodies, and vernacular spaces in modern preservation. In the context of the United States, for example, the work of Daniel Bluestone has been fundamental in correcting the absence of African-American histories and African-American contributions within official histories of place. Bluestone has argued that the project of preservation in early twentieth-century Chicago sought to emphasize the built landscape of the bourgeois public and their spaces, thus leaving out the more complex yet equally interesting history of racial cosmopolitanism and architectural innovation.<sup>50</sup> Likewise, Dolores Hayden's work on Los Angeles and its hidden histories calls for a recalibration of preservation that would include landscapes of labor, migration, and community histories and thereby create a vastly richer portrait of the past. Hayden has argued for a non-monumental attitude toward preservation, emphasizing the cultural value of landscapes over the aesthetic or historic quotient of singular objects in the built environment.<sup>51</sup> In a similar vein Max Page has charted the manner in which preservation debates in twentieth-century New York were integral to designs of new urban development.<sup>52</sup> These texts question the elite perspectives that have guided preservation policies in various North American contexts. This book echoes their pleas for more inclusive, as well as more nuanced, histories of architectural objects and urban landscapes.

The employ of preservation in order to advance the project of colonialism has also received a great deal of attention in various disciplines. Gwendolyn Wright and Paul Rabinow have both shown how preserving the traditions of the colonized in French North Africa and Indochina was essential to the framing of French modernity at the metropole and in the *outré mer*.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, Medina Lasansky has shown how Italy's Fascist regime consciously revived Renaissance traditions and creatively restored early modern architectural monuments as part of their modern imperial project. There the idealized recreation of Italian Renaissance architecture and urbanism in the early twentieth century, allowed the Fascist government to fashion itself as the modern counterpart of the Roman Empire.<sup>54</sup> The role of preservation in relegating colonized societies to a traditional built environment, thereby

denying them a coeval position alongside the colonizer within modernity, has been amply illustrated in contexts such as Cairo. Nezar AlSayyad, Nasser Rabbat, and Irene Bierman have shown that nineteenth-century French preservation bodies, such as the Comité de Conservation, effectively medievalized Cairo through its policies of conservation, dislocating entire urban regions and monuments to a distant and romanticized past as imagined by the French colonizer.<sup>55</sup> This book continues the examination of colonial power in determining and defining the heritage of colonized populations; however, it seeks to give colonial subjects a stronger role in the shaping of that discourse.

The exigent issues raised by the histories of preservation have been echoed in another body of critical debate regarding single monuments and their shifting meanings through time. Robert Nelson's reception history of the Hagia Sophia traces its nineteenth-century remaking as a modern monument via discourses forwarded by archaeologists, aristocrats, poets, and art historians, all of which converged to transform it from a religious icon to a historic monument.<sup>56</sup> Romila Thapar has traced a similar historiography for the temple at Somanatha in western India. Thapar's history of the Somanatha stretches from the medieval to the modern period, emphasizing the enduring symbolic and political contestations over this particular monument.<sup>57</sup> More recently Deborah Cherry has brought together a range of essays that explore the afterlives of monuments in South Asia and their startling reincarnations in the modern era.<sup>58</sup> This book extends the existing critical debate around monumental and preservation history by illustrating the limits of preservation policy and the role of elites in defining modern monuments.

This book also participates in the robust discussions that pressure the legacy of colonial categories of art and architectural objects, particularly as they pertain to the South Asian context. Richard Davis has shown that Indian art objects such as automata, religious sculptures, ancient buildings (and sometimes merely traces of them), survive in various manifestations beyond their originally intended productions and contexts. The afterlives of these objects are always authored by an array of multiple agents each appropriating them for a particular end and thereby reinventing them as well.<sup>59</sup> A similar exegesis has been made by Barry Flood for medieval objects that were susceptible to a process of "translation" as they passed between Hindu and Muslim polities in medieval South Asia. Flood shows that the mobility of material culture such as coins, clothing, frescoes, and monumental architecture generated a surfeit of meanings according to time and place.<sup>60</sup>

The impact of European colonialism in the calcification, display, and reproduction of Indian art and architecture has been borne out in the work of scholars such as Tapati Guha-Thakurta and Saloni Mathur. The former has demonstrated the manner in which Indian art objects, ranging from sculptures, monuments, and even the landscape of India as represented in painting, gained new purchase as cultural commodities of the colony. The modern circulation of these Indian art objects provided an avenue for European colonizers and Indian elites, to author as well as possess Indian history in a new way.<sup>61</sup> Saloni Mathur has argued that the modern construction of the "Indian" in Indian art was a profoundly global project spanning colonial exhibitions, the industrial mass-manufacture of Indian textiles and motifs, the pressures of the late twentieth-century art market, and the self-fashioning of Indian nationalists eager to appropriate the aesthetic realm as their domain. Rather than conveying a self-evident ontology of meanings, then, Mathur submits that the Indian art

object was constructed at the intersection of Indian and European global encounters and therefore profoundly impacted by the power differentials of colonialism as well.<sup>62</sup> More recently Zahid Chaudhary has explored the affective quotient of colonial photography in India. He argues that early European photographs of colonial subjects operated as much more than simply documentation, but rather cathected sensory desires of morality, shame, and sexual curiosity onto the surface of the photographic object itself.<sup>63</sup>

The book at hand owes an intellectual debt in various ways to each of the aforementioned texts. I have sought to bring together, as well as extend, these critical debates within preservation history and theory, and studies of South Asian material culture. In addition to this larger mission, however, this book offers a sustained focus on locality and place by emphasizing the changing lives of five monuments within a single city over a century. I provide a range of perspectives from that of the expert to more vernacular voices that have yet to be considered as true “makers” of history. By tracing the lives of five monuments across colonial and postcolonial moments, this book also reveals the continuities as well as departures of hegemonic institutions across this purported historic rupture. I suggest that we see monuments as temporally mobile and culturally mutable objects that repeatedly escape or overflow their archival definitions through the sheer force of affect.

## Arrangements and Rearrangements

Each chapter in this book is arranged around a single monument in Delhi and traces a diachronic history that spans the mid-nineteenth to the late twentieth century. The five monuments and chapters in order of appearance are: the Red Fort (built 1639–48), a Sufi shrine by the name of Rasul Numa Dargah (built 1691–92), the Jama Masjid (built 1650), the Purana Qila (built 1533–42), and the Qutb complex (built between 1192 and 1316). Rather than offering a chronologically linear history that moves from the colonial past to the postcolonial present for each monument, the following chapters emphasize those moments when institutional narratives and policies collided with informal practices of commemoration or preservation. Therefore, each chapter begins with a paradigmatic “moment” in the life of the monument and moves backward as well as forward in time to chart its historical permutations. This method of historical arrangement reveals the symbolic multiplicity of the monument over a period of time, created as it were within the shifting modalities of state-controlled archives as well as affective appropriations by proletariat actors.

The first chapter on the Red Fort begins with its visual publicity in the metropolitan press during and after the Rebellion of 1857 when Delhi came into high relief in the minds of British audiences outside India. Print culture, photography, travel guides, and visual ephemera such as postcards worked to preserve and commemorate the sites of the Rebellion to audiences at the imperial metropole and the Red Fort accrued an affective aura related to British sacrifice, heroism, as well as the barbaric violence of Indian rebels. After the Rebellion was suppressed, the Red Fort underwent a radical transformation from the seat of the erstwhile Mughal Empire to a British military camp. Even during its life as a military garrison, however, visual technologies such as photography and engravings continued to commemorate the Red Fort as a locus of British trauma and loss. Later still, with

the establishment of the ASI, the fort (or at least those parts of it not under military control) was turned into a heritage site, and Indians were encouraged to visit the monument and engage with it as an object of history. As an increasing number of Indians visited the fort, however, the colonial government had to contend with its history as a stronghold of the Indian rebels during 1857. In 1918, the colonial government made the decision to erase any mention of 1857 (particularly the humiliating losses suffered there by the British troops) from the public histories advertised on the site. By juxtaposing the commemoration of 1857 for a metropolitan audience with the redaction of that same history for an Indian audience in 1918, this chapter reveals the colonial anxieties that shaped the Red Fort's archival history.

The second chapter focuses on a little-known Sufi shrine (*dargah*) of Hazrat Rasul Numa (located off of Panchkuian Road in contemporary New Delhi) and begins in 1918 when the local caretakers of this shrine launched a campaign to save the gardens and graveyards around the *dargah* from expropriation by the British. The Rasul Numa Dargah was located in the area slated for the building of New Delhi, and like many minor monuments in the area the colonial government had argued that, although the building itself could be saved, the gardens and graveyards around the monument would pose an unsanitary as well as unsightly anomaly within the modern city. In response to the expropriation, the local community advocated for their monument and its surroundings as historically significant. Through elaborately detailed maps and articulate genealogies, the caretakers of the *dargah* located the various structures in the sacred complex and argued for the preservation of the compound as a whole. This community's efforts to protect the Rasul Numa Dargah, resembled many other protests around the city where priests and caretakers of more modest religious and historic structures were fending off rampant expropriation by the colonial government. This chapter vividly illustrates the polyphonous histories of space and monuments generated at the zenith of the preservation movement in Delhi. It also overturns the colonial perception of Indians as culturally uneducated and lacking the will to preserve their monuments, which was a major justification for the colonial project of preservation. Indeed, it shows that the colonial archive had to accommodate local indigenous articulations of preservation despite the former's strenuous denial that such existed at all.

The third chapter on the Jama Masjid begins in 1932 when Hindus and Muslims used the mosque as a site of anticolonial demonstrations. As one of the few spaces in the city that fell outside British surveillance, the Jama Masjid offered a practical arena for nationalist groups to congregate and express their demands for self-determination. Beyond this pragmatic aspect, however, the use of the Jama Masjid as a space where Indian sovereignty was articulated revived its similar use as a site of anticolonial expression in 1857 and thus re-presented it as an imminent threat to colonial power. Later in 1947, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad delivered a speech of patriotic duty and loyalty to a Muslim audience in the courtyard of the Jama Masjid. The repeated use of Delhi's grandest mosque as a politically charged space outside of state control created an affective aura of sovereignty and autonomy around it. Slipping from its colonial definition as a purely Islamic space of religious congregation or a passive monument of the Mughal past, the Jama Masjid became vitally charged with the politics of the present and the future promise of a sovereign nation.

The fourth chapter begins with the use of the Purana Qila as a refugee camp for sixty thousand persons during the Partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. The fort built in the

sixteenth century by Mughal Emperor Humayun and expanded by Afghan ruler Sher Shah Suri had been protected by the ASI since the nineteenth century. During the chaos of Partition, however, many of Delhi's larger monuments were used as refugee camps. Unexpectedly, then, the Purana Qila became embroiled in the origins of postcolonial India and Delhi as the capital of a newly independent nation. This, however, was not the only origin story of a nation associated with the Purana Qila. The myth of Purana Qila as the site of the Indraprastha, the capital of the mythic Pandava Empire described in the Hindu epic *Mahabharata*, had been romanticized in nineteenth-century colonial literature and further inscribed upon the landscape with the design of New Delhi in 1911. Following its use as a refugee camp in 1947, the ASI began excavations to discover the mythical city of Indraprastha which archaeologists believed was hidden beneath the structure of the Purana Qila. Although the excavations conducted between the 1950s and 1960s did not reveal any evidence of an ancient Hindu city, the myth of Indraprastha as the *ur*-Delhi continues to be perpetuated at the site of Purana Qila. Thus, either unexpectedly or as part of various colonial and national campaigns, the Purana Qila was enmeshed within various origin narratives of Delhi as well as India at large.

The fifth and final chapter begins with protests outside the Qutb complex in 2000 by Hindutva supporters who wished to conduct a purification ceremony for Hindu idols that they claimed were "trapped" in the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque. The mosque built between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries is constructed from reused Hindu and Jain temple fragments and the 2000 protests were only the most recent manifestation of long-standing debates regarding the history of Islamic iconoclasm on the site. Indeed, during the late nineteenth century the Qutb complex had furnished examples of Hindu as well as Islamic art, which were displayed at exhibitions in imperial London as isolated fragments rather than parts of a single context. The colonial fragmentation of the Hindu and Islamic elements of the Qutb complex precluded the possibility of speaking of the complex as a syncretic whole. The colonial insistence on reading the appearance of Hindu elements in a mosque as a sign of religious violence and Islamic iconoclasm rather than syncretism has been echoed by Hindu nationalists who seek to redeem the imagined trauma of the medieval past within the current moment. Meanwhile, the Qutb complex has also been a sturdy symbol of independent and secular India's heritage and since its nomination as a World Heritage Monument in 1993 has been recognized as "universal" patrimony. Even as it oscillates between its identity as a monument of religious violence and communal trauma or a national and global icon, the modern history of the Qutb complex has been contoured by its state determined archival framings as well as various religious affects.

I conclude this book with a brief reflection upon some contemporary debates around Delhi's heritage. On the one hand, this includes the creation of new "heritage zones" dedicated to Hindu kings such as Prithviraj Chauhan in South Delhi. Like the recent visual insertion of the Maratha warrior Shivaji into the landscape of Bombay, Prithviraj Chauhan is commemorated in Delhi as a proto-nationalist who resisted the medieval Islamic conquest of north India. The state-sanctioned effort to inscribe a Hindu heritage within Delhi points to the cultural discomfort with a capital city that is overwhelmingly Islamic in its architectural heritage. My conclusion also gestures toward the 2011 listing of colonial New Delhi as a nationally protected heritage zone only eighty years after it was completed. That

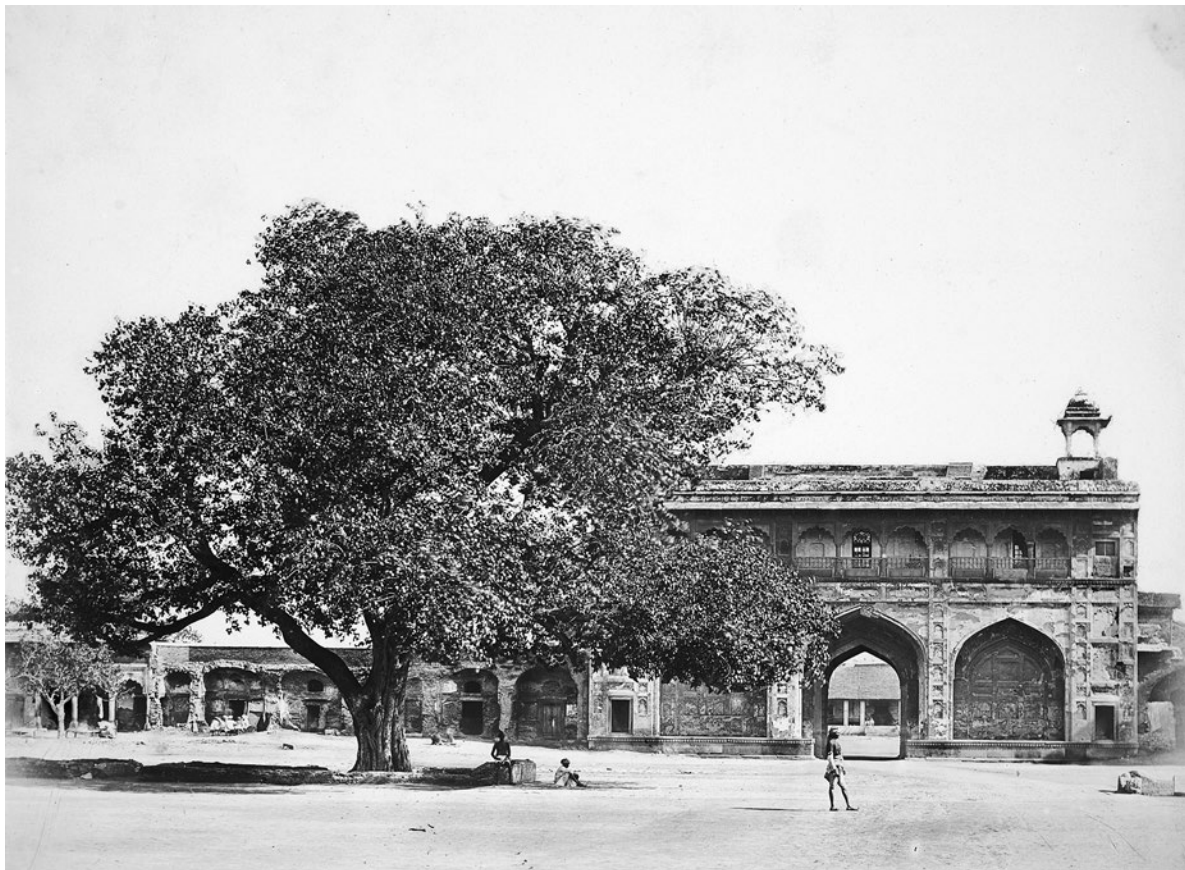
the listing of New Delhi as a heritage zone ignored the long-standing complaints by Delhi residents who were still awaiting remuneration for their expropriated properties, illustrates once again the regulatory nature of the preservation archive and the epistemic violence that it inflicts by silencing some voices and privileging others. More importantly both examples bring to mind the enduring contestations over Delhi's past, the multiplicity of voices in the articulation of history despite institutional efforts to marginalize them, and the persistent appropriation and resignification of monuments by various actors and agents.

A brief note on the choice of these five monuments is in order here. Those familiar with Delhi might ask what justifies the choice of the Red Fort, the Rasul Numa Dargah, the Jama Masjid, the Purana Qila, and the Qutb complex as emblematic of Delhi. They might even ask why other well-known monuments of Delhi, such as the Jantar Mantar or Humayun's Tomb, are conspicuously absent in this book. The first reason for the choice of the monuments is pragmatic and pertains to the archives that supplied the primary data for this book—the Delhi Archives, the National Archives of India (NAI), and the archives of the ASI (now located at the NAI). The material sourced in each of these institutions revealed fascinating and alternative histories of the five monuments listed here that precipitated a rethinking of each of them as well as Delhi's heritage as a whole. For example, the passionate pleas made by the local community to save the Rasul Numa Dargah and its continued meticulous upkeep by the same impoverished community, warranted a place in this book—perhaps even in lieu of the more famous World Heritage Monument of Humayun's Tomb. In highlighting the struggles of the local community to save their monument from planned obsolescence (as the British intended), examples like the Rasul Numa Dargah call into question the very legitimacy of the heritage canon. Are the monuments that deserve the label of Indian heritage or Delhi's heritage those that are grand and imposing in scale (such as Humayun's Tomb) or those that local communities fought passionately to preserve like the Rasul Numa Dargah? A similar question can be forwarded for the canonical histories that are presented for each monument. Should the Jama Masjid be preserved simply due to its aesthetic value as a fine example of Mughal architecture or should its archival history also reference the role that it played in staging anticolonial protests and forging Hindu-Muslim unity? It is these subversions of assumed historical importance provoked by the five monuments that guided their choice.

In addition, the arrangement of these monuments in a nonlinear and synthetic timeline—the Red Fort soon after the Rebellion of 1857; the Rasul Numa Dargah during the building of New Delhi in the 1920s; the Jama Masjid in the 1930s during the height of the nationalist movement; the Purana Qila in 1947 at the moment of Partition; and the Qutb complex caught in the millennial politics of Hindutva in 2000—allowed for the creation of an alternate historical canvas situated outside of the monument's origins, original patrons, or even their stylistic qualities. Instead this synthetic chronology privileges those moments when the monument was enmeshed within the social and political landscape of modern Delhi, generating unexpected meanings and symbolisms. The chronological recasting of these monuments from 1857 to 2000 is also meant to challenge the static conceptualization of the monument's history as perpetuated by preservation. Rather, it suggests that alongside aesthetic and historical value, the affective power of the monument comes from its ability to have contemporary currency and symbolic import for local communities. Each chapter

opens with a brief vignette of a pivotal moment in the life of the monument. It then moves backward and forward from this moment to chart the multiple modern histories of these medieval monuments. The five opening vignettes are deliberately written in the present tense to convey the monument's affective potential during these important, albeit fleeting, moments. The tone of the vignettes also captures some of my original excitement at discovering archival documents, newspaper articles, and photographs that revealed unexpected histories of these monuments.

The five chapters that follow provide *histories of buildings* even as they reveal the continuous *building of histories* at these five sites. The separation between a monument's history and the history of the colonial subject or Indian citizen; the gulf between archive and affect; or the chasm between the Archimedean position of the expert vs. the quotidian desires of the layperson, was not only fictitious but also unsustainable. Indeed, the histories of the monument found in the following chapters continually subvert these distinctions to reveal their persistent entanglements and overlap in the modern construction of the medieval monument. A similar coup is attempted with the temporal definition of the architectural monument as a signifier of a singular historical period. The historical trajectory suggested by the opening vignette in each of the following chapters—Red Fort (1857); Rasul Numa Dargah (1918); the Jama Masjid (1932); Purana Qila (1947); and the Quwwat-ul-Islam (2000)—should be read as a critique of the historical timeline so beholden to both colonial and nationalist historians of India passing from medieval darkness to modern Enlightenment. In sum, with these five case studies *Building Histories* seeks to redefine the architectural monument as not simply a static repository of the past but also as a site from which multiple histories were and continue to be generated. Alongside the institutional histories of the monument that are safeguarded in the archive are the unpredictable, messy, and vibrant histories of affect that give the monument new lives. This book then is ultimately a plea to recognize the fictions of the archive alongside the immediacy of affect for a more capacious history of the Indian monument.



**FIG. 1.1.** Felice Beato, "View of the Courtyard of the Red Fort, Delhi," 1858 (PH 1988.0380.025. Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/ Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal).

## 1857: Red Fort

**A young photographer** named Felice Beato travels to India to record the aftermath of the first large anticolonial rebellion, the Sepoy Mutiny. His photograph of the Naubat Khana, a ceremonial gateway of the Red Fort, identifies the site as the location of a murder of two hundred Englishmen and women by Indian mutineers. The seventeenth-century fort, until recently the seat of the Mughal Empire, had been a stronghold of Indian rebels during the uprising. When the British military finally stormed the Red Fort on September 20, 1857, the battle turned in their favor. The Indian rebellion was crushed; the Mughal emperor exiled to Burma; and a vast majority of Indians evacuated from the walled city of Delhi. By the time Beato arrives in Delhi, the Red Fort has been looted and several structures within the fort demolished to build a large barracks for the British military. Delhi's other Mughal monuments have also been vandalized or torn down by British troops as a sign of vengeance toward rebellious Indians. Back in England, however, people are eager to own "relics" of the Mutiny and memorabilia that marks the sites and spaces of British victory and martyrdom. If one could not afford to travel to Mutiny sites that were so poignantly described in new guidebooks to Delhi, one could at least make the trip to Leicester Square to see the Mutiny panorama, own a photograph or album of Mutiny sites, or peruse the rich images and textual reportage of the Mutiny in the *Illustrated London News*.

In 1918, seventy years after Beato's visit to Delhi, J. A. Page, an officer of the preservation department, is given the task of preparing historical notices for the Red Fort, now a protected monument. King George V's announcement that New Delhi will be built as the capital of British India during the Durbar of 1911 is paralleled by a campaign to increase Indian visitors to the city's historic monuments. The colonial government sought to "educate" the Indian layman about his past and began attaching historical notices to protected monuments to aid in this mission. In his histories, Page enthusiastically recites Beato's claim about Indian rebels callously butchering English men and women at the Naubat Khana in 1857. When the Chief Commissioner of Delhi receives Page's historical briefs for approval, he quickly redacts all details pertaining to the Mutiny from the public notices. In a strongly worded warning to Page he notes that while he is not averse to preserving Mutiny "relics," he cannot allow this sort of information to be publicized to the largely Indian audience that now frequents the monument. The preservation of the Red Fort thus goes hand in hand with its physical and epistemic destruction.



## Mutiny, Memory, Monument

The western part of the courtyard that leads to the Hall of Audience has a very large gate that rises to meet the skies. Adorned with several hundred alcoves, which give great pleasure to the viewer, the music of kettledrums sounds day and night from the gate at the appointed time. All the pain and anguish in the world disappears upon hearing the sound of these drums. Beast and bird, man and spirit, the meek and the brave, rejoice when they hear the musical invitation of these drums. The noble and courageous draw life breath from its sound, while their enemies flee in terror from the same. Made entirely of red sandstone, and topped with four beautiful domes, this structure in the Red Fort is known as the Naubat Khana.<sup>1</sup>

Written only ten years before Felice Beato took his photograph of the Naubat Khana, Syed Ahmad Khan describes an entirely different ambience for the same monument. Syed Ahmad's description is as full of life, music, and vitality as Beato's photograph is of silence, death, and mourning. By the end of the nineteenth century, when the colonial project of preservation had gained momentum, British administrators preserved the Naubat Khana and sought to bring back some of its past grandeur and glory, which had all been destroyed after 1857. Oscillating between splendor and desolation; Mughal imperial power and British martyrdom; pompous ceremony and mere utility; preservation and destruction, the Naubat Khana was continually remade through representations, commodities, and most importantly histories from 1847 to 1918. It is in the aftermath of the 1857 Mutiny that I look at the transformation of the Red Fort from a center of Mughal imperial sovereignty, to a space of British loss and trauma, to its reuse as a military camp for the British army, and finally to its reinvention as a historic monument.

The Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 refers to the first widespread uprising by Indians against British imperial forces, which at the time included officers of the British Crown as well as agents of the East India Company. British authorities employed sizeable armies of Indian soldiers (known as sepoys—an Anglicization of the Hindi and Urdu *sipahi* for soldier), who were the initiators of the rebellion. Early accounts of the Mutiny, written from a colonial vantage, defined it as an unruly and most importantly unwarranted uprising by Indians against their

rational European masters. The sepoys were said to be disgruntled with their wages and working conditions as well as the expanding proselytizing missions that developed alongside the English East India Company's rule in India. The Mutiny was thus initially read as a means for Indians to gain economic leverage and religious freedom. More recently, postcolonial scholars and revisionist historians have suggested that the events of 1857 be referred to as the First War of Indian Independence. Stressing that the uprising was a strategically organized mobilization that spread quickly across the Gangetic plain and drew support from people of various classes and religious affiliations, this new body of scholarship argues that the 1857 Rebellion was primarily a battle for Indian national sovereignty. I adopt historian Ram Guha's submission that the 1857 Rebellion was much more than an unruly uprising by disgruntled employees of the East India Company, yet considerably less than a self-consciously motivated search for Indian sovereignty.<sup>2</sup>

In this particular chapter I deliberately refer to the 1857 Rebellion as the Mutiny for two reasons. First, the central arguments of the chapter emerge from representations produced by colonial agents of the Red Fort and its historical associations with 1857. The Mutiny of 1857 was a source of enduring anxiety to the British long after the rebellion was quelled. The fear of another uprising was managed through representational devices (such as photography) as well as by altering the physical and symbolic landscapes of Delhi so as to tame the memory of rebellion. Second, since the colonial records and sources used here refer to the 1857 uprising as the Mutiny, I have continued to use the term more as a shorthand and to maintain consistency. My own use of the term, however, should be seen neither as a sanctioning of imperial historiographies nor as a dismissal of the claims to sovereignty (nationalistic or otherwise) that were undoubtedly being made by the so-called mutineers. In fact, as this chapter and others that follow illustrate, even the most vociferous or cavalier denouncements of the uprising by colonial agents were fraught with the realization that imperial power was imminently precarious and susceptible to collapse. Outside of this chapter, everywhere else in this book I refer to the uprising as the Rebellion of 1857.

Starting with the moment of the Mutiny, this chapter traces the nineteenth-century life of the Red Fort as it emerged at the intersection of two different archival impulses—one at the metropole that appropriated the monument as a site of British victory, valor, and martyrdom; and another in India where the Red Fort was first subject to rampant destruction and later preserved as an object marker of erstwhile Mughal glory and Delhi's imperial history. These carefully curated archival representations were, however, unexpectedly interrupted by affective memories relating to Indian political mobilization and British humiliation, which colonial agents strenuously scrubbed from the Red Fort's history, especially as the monument was frequented by Indian visitors in the twentieth century. The Red Fort thus became a site of physical and symbolic preservation as well as destruction from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries.

Historians have argued that the Mutiny was not simply located in the moment of 1857 but persisted as memory, anxiety, narrative, and image for Indians as well as metropolitan constituents.<sup>3</sup> This chapter looks at the manner in which surplus histories generated by the Mutiny of 1857, profoundly impacted the narrative and visual framing of the Red Fort in Delhi as well as in the imperial metropole. 1857 also dramatically shaped the administrative infrastructure and bureaucratic policies of the colonial state, which were primed to detect as

well as tame the appearance of unruly or rebellious Indian bodies.<sup>4</sup> Institutionalized preservation, too, operated within the changed nature of colonial governance after the Mutiny and access to the Red Fort's past as well as its present was subject to colonial regulation and scrutiny.

The chapter is divided into three sections; the first of which focuses on the representations of the Red Fort, during and following the Mutiny, that were created for the consumption of metropolitan audiences. Photography, the panorama, and illustrated newsmagazines were relatively new technologies that helped audiences in Britain comprehend and manage the sites and scenes of the Mutiny. Through these new technologies metropolitan audiences cathected with distant and often unknown sites such as the Red Fort that gained sudden and urgent visibility during the Mutiny. The Red Fort thus entered an imperial visual archive of Mutiny sites and became a locus for the projection of various imperial affects such as mourning, anxiety, horror, and indignation.

The second section of the chapter focuses on the looting and destruction of a large part of the Red Fort complex in the wake of the Mutiny. Once the British army "possessed" the Red Fort it reassigned values to the erstwhile seat of the Mughal Empire by looting, vandalizing, and destroying large parts of the fort complex. Here again, the affective projections of British rage and revenge onto the body of the Red Fort were paralleled by a recalibration of the Red Fort's function from the seat of the Mughal Empire to a center of British surveillance and military control. The final section of the chapter looks at the enforcement of preservation policies on to the Red Fort in the late nineteenth century. As part of the colonial agenda of preserving India's antiquities and built heritage, the Red Fort was remade as a historical monument for the Indian as well as for European consumption in the late nineteenth century. In preserving the Red Fort colonial administrators sought to recapture the aesthetic glory that had been stripped from the site during its Mutiny, even as they deliberately redacted its associations with the 1857 uprising. Preservation and redaction or indeed outright destruction were thus not only parallel vectors in the modern life of the Red Fort, but in fact mutually constitutive in the recreation of the monument from the mid-nineteenth to the twentieth centuries.

## **The Red Fort in the Metropolitan Imaginary**

The Naubat Khana marked a ceremonial entry to the political epicenter of Mughal Delhi—that is, the Red Fort. The seventeenth-century fort complex (which included audience halls, administrative structures, residences, and pleasure pavilions) overlooks the river Yamuna and crowns the eastern end of the walled city of Shahjahanabad built by the Mughal Emperor Shahjahan. A main commercial and residential street called the Chandni Chowk led away from the Naubat Khana to the Lahore Gate of the walled city. Off the Chandni Chowk is the Jama Masjid—the imperial mosque where the Mughal emperor attended Friday prayers. Sovereign power, patronage, piety, and emporia were closely intertwined and represented in the built landscape of Shahjahanabad. (See Plate 2 for the spatial layout of Shahjahanabad and the Red Fort in relation to its surrounding context.) Mughal emperors that succeeded Shahjahan continued to add to the walled city and the Red Fort further

calcifying its importance as the punctum of empire. By the nineteenth century the waning power of the Mughals and a series of urban raids by Persian Emperor Nadir Shah (1739) and the Marathas (1757) had robbed the Red Fort of its seventeenth-century opulence. It continued, however, to retain its symbolic associations with Mughal sovereignty even if only through performative practices such as the beating of the drums in the Naubat Khana that announced the passage of the Mughal emperor into and out of the fort.

The year 1857 marked a turning point for the visibility of Delhi and for its many Mughal monuments in the metropolitan imagination but especially so for the Red Fort. Formerly depicted in picturesque aquatints or as an isolated object at the center of miniatures produced for officers of the East India Company, the Red Fort was now the subject of new visual technologies that had mass appeal and therefore served to document Mutiny sites for a broad public. From the outbreak of the Rebellion until many decades after, the Red Fort was a recurring motif in illustrated newspapers, panoramas, and photographs. Through these new visual technologies, images of the Red Fort entered many more English living rooms and became intelligible to much wider polities than the aquatints had previously. More importantly, the illustrated newspaper, the panorama, and photography departed from the picturesque tradition by presenting images as factual documentary in order to create an immediate impact on the viewer. Unlike the picturesque views of the past, which invited melancholy contemplation, the more popular representations of the Red Fort would allow viewers to “know” the colony in its minutiae and thereby exert a degree of control over it.

## The Illustrated News Magazine

Although the Mutiny began in Meerut (70 kms northeast of Delhi) in early May 1857, it was not until July 1857 that the first reports of it appeared in the *Illustrated London News*. Highlighting the swiftness and efficiency with which the British were combatting rebellious Indians, reportage of the Mutiny continued well into the early months of 1858, past the British siege of Delhi in September 1857. In addition to providing reports of the battle on the ground, contemporary journalism aimed to assuage the fears of the British public about their government’s ability to manage a colony as unwieldy as India. In terms of content, the newsmagazine’s articles ranged from providing information about various battalions, the successes of military campaigns, and the supposed savagery of the mutineers (especially against English women and children), to mirroring the sentiments of an indignant English public, who demanded swift punitive action against the Indian rebels. Reportage of the Mutiny worked within contemporary prejudices and anxieties of Indian barbarism and savagery. Don Randall has examined the blurring of boundaries between fact and fiction in the British press during the Mutiny, and concluded that the considerable delay in receiving news from India, combined with prevailing discourses of Oriental barbarism, led to inflated reports in the *Illustrated London News* and other journals.<sup>5</sup> For example, gory rumors of Indian sepoys raping English women and young girls gained considerable purchase as truth. Other vignettes illustrating the exceptional cruelty of Indian mutineers (such as the bayoneting of English infants) although never substantiated by later investigations, nevertheless seeped into the metropolitan imagination and were repeated as true incidents long after they had been debunked.<sup>6</sup>

Early reports of the Mutiny in the *Illustrated London News* were often accompanied by images of the sites within which the rebellion was unfolding, and an overwhelming percentage of these, usually engravings, published alongside articles on the Mutiny were images of Delhi. Still many of these were of the city's buildings, and particularly its monumental Mughal architecture. For example, on July 11, 1857 (about eight weeks after the outbreak of the Rebellion), the newsmagazine published obituaries of two officers, Lieutenant Willoughby and Colonel Finnis, killed at Delhi and Meerut, respectively. Accompanying the portraits of the men was an image titled "The Mosque of Roshun-a-Dowlah, and Part of the Principal Street of Delhi."<sup>7</sup> A small article above the image noted that while waiting for news from Delhi, the newsmagazine had decided to present illustrations and information about the imperial capital. A week later a more lavish spread that spanned four pages chronicled the events of the Mutiny and featured five engravings of various monuments in Delhi.<sup>8</sup> The images of the architectural monuments in Delhi did not match the somber tone of the article, which detailed the profound anxieties generated by an uprising that had taken the British in India entirely by surprise. Take, for instance, these words from the opening paragraph of the text:

The news from India is of the gravest character. The revolt has not been suppressed; the mutiny has extended to several regiments which were not affected at the date of the previous mail; there have been lost to our arms no fewer than 28,000 men, who are either in open rebellion against our authority or have dispersed and returned to their homes; and Delhi, the headquarter of the rebels, after remaining a month in their possession is still theirs.<sup>9</sup>

Delhi, which was still in the "possession" of the Indian rebels, could, however, be contained within the gaze of the metropolitan reader through the images offered by the newsmagazine.

The early descriptions of Delhi in the *Illustrated London News* demonstrate the unfamiliarity of British audiences with specific landscapes of India at this time. Errors in place names and misidentification of monuments were rife in these early reports. For example, the aforementioned article identified Safdarjung's Tomb and the Jama Masjid in Delhi as "Sudjer Jung's Tomb" and "the Jumna Masjid," respectively.<sup>10</sup> Other pictorial and textual descriptions of Delhi's architecture were similarly subjective and fanciful. For example, an engraving of the "Hall of Justice" (most probably the Diwan-i-Am in the Red Fort in Delhi) showed a modest building with five squat enclosed arches and four short towers topped with conical domes—a rendering that bore little resemblance to the original. The building was also shown in a desolate, almost pastoral landscape, surrounded by trees, when it was in fact located within a larger palace complex, which was itself set within a densely built city.<sup>11</sup> While such renderings bore little resemblance to the original architectural objects, or were often inaccurately identified, they served as visual anchors for detailed textual descriptions of the state of affairs in India; the condition of British troops; or British strategies to suppress the uprising. The images of Delhi's monuments in the *Illustrated London News* did important work by allowing the viewer to imaginatively enter this part of the British Empire and gain control over its unfamiliar landscape during a time when imperial control was thwarted. The year 1857 was thus an important turning point in perceptions of

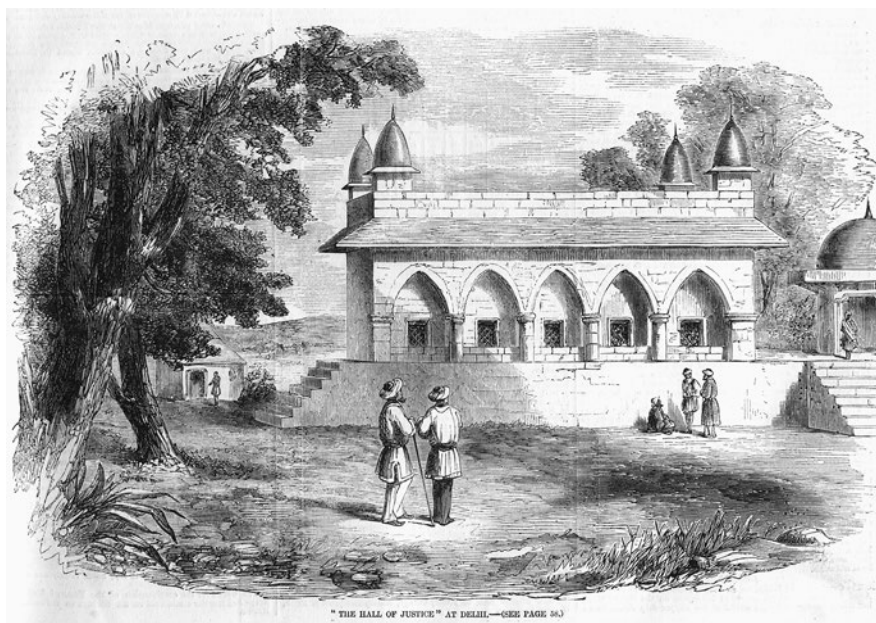


FIG. 1.2. "The Hall of Justice at Delhi" from the *Illustrated London News*, July 18, 1857, p. 49.

the city of Delhi. Due to various representational technologies, the Mughal capital came into high relief in the British imagination precisely at the moment that imperial power was threatened. Images of the city thus served as a mechanism through which the uncertainties and anxieties of empire could be assuaged at the metropole even if they could not be so easily managed in the colony itself.

These early fanciful visual descriptions of Delhi soon gave way to an entirely different kind of depiction around September 1857, presumably due to the availability of news through the telegraph. By September 1857 the *Illustrated London News* began publishing military diagrams to illustrate the strategies being utilized by British troops in their siege, such as the position of the British troops and their ability to target the walled city of Shah-jahanabad. Unlike earlier illustrations of Delhi's Mughal monuments which emphasized a glorious history; in these later depictions the city was reduced to a military diagram—a fortified enclave whose walls presented a considerable challenge to the British army. The diagrams were often accompanied by day-to-day accounts (pieced together from correspondences, diaries, and telegrams) of the movement of military columns; the status of troop reinforcements and rations; the level of British casualties; the retribution meted out to the mutineers for their insolence and defiance; key decisions by generals and brigadiers in the field; and individual acts of courage. The entries also strived to convey firsthand the drama and uncertainties of the battlefield, as observed by eye witnesses. Take, for example, the following full-page entry that presented a correspondent's report of the events at Delhi:

July 15—Hordes of hostile cavalry had been pouring out of Delhi—that veritable Pandemonium—and the Lahore gate was vomiting forth its legions of infantry. Pandy<sup>12</sup> was determined, it was said, to do or die. . . . Seventy

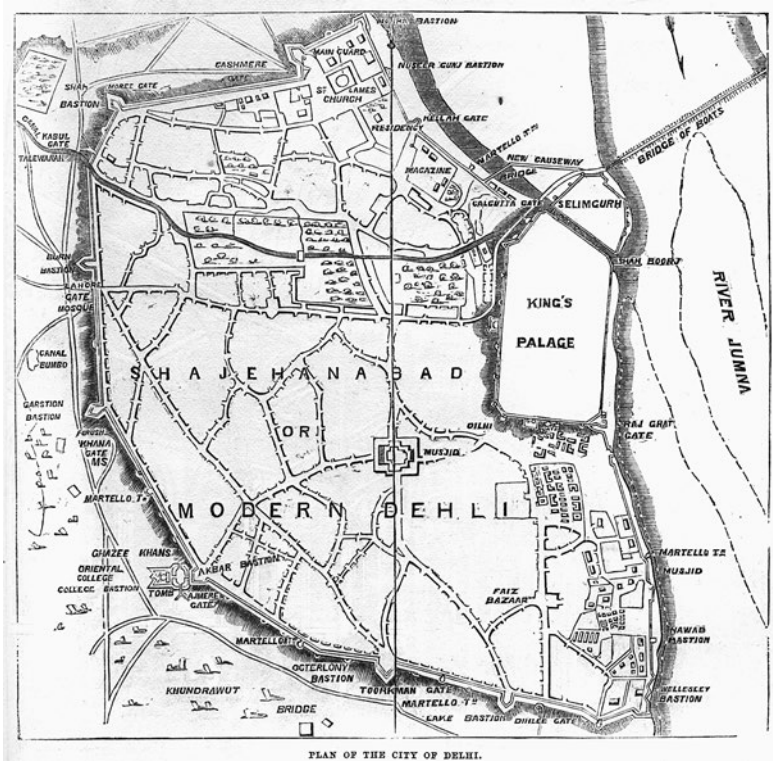


FIG. 1.3. "Plan of the City of Delhi" from the *Illustrated London News*, September 5, 1857, p. 251.

guns are now mounted on the city wall, as opposed to our fifteen; and of these upwards of forty are concentrated on our right attack. . . . The few days of dry and fine weather which we have had have stayed for a while the advance of cholera, and this morning's returns are blank, but the heavy losses of the past few days are rendering our position very precarious, and we anxiously look for Sir H. Wheeler with his reinforcements. A few more weeks of this work unaided, and our position will become untenable, and retreat, under our circumstances, should be written "defeat," and would involve entire discomfiture. We must gird up our loins and rest confidently where our trust is—in the only Giver of all good.<sup>13</sup>

Appearing in print in London two weeks before the decisive capture of Delhi, articles such as this conveyed the precarious prospects of British victory, but also apprised the reader of sacrifices made by the British army and provided justification for its often brutal actions on the battlefield. The account was accompanied by a plan of the city showing the Red Fort, the Jama Masjid, and the fortified walls of Shahjahanabad, which pointed out the position of each of its gates. The diagrammatic map, thus, made legible to British audiences that which had been described as "veritable pandemonium" in the accompanying text. The sense of control that was impossible to achieve on the battlefield in Delhi could nevertheless be had by the metropolitan reader looking at the simplified military diagram in London.

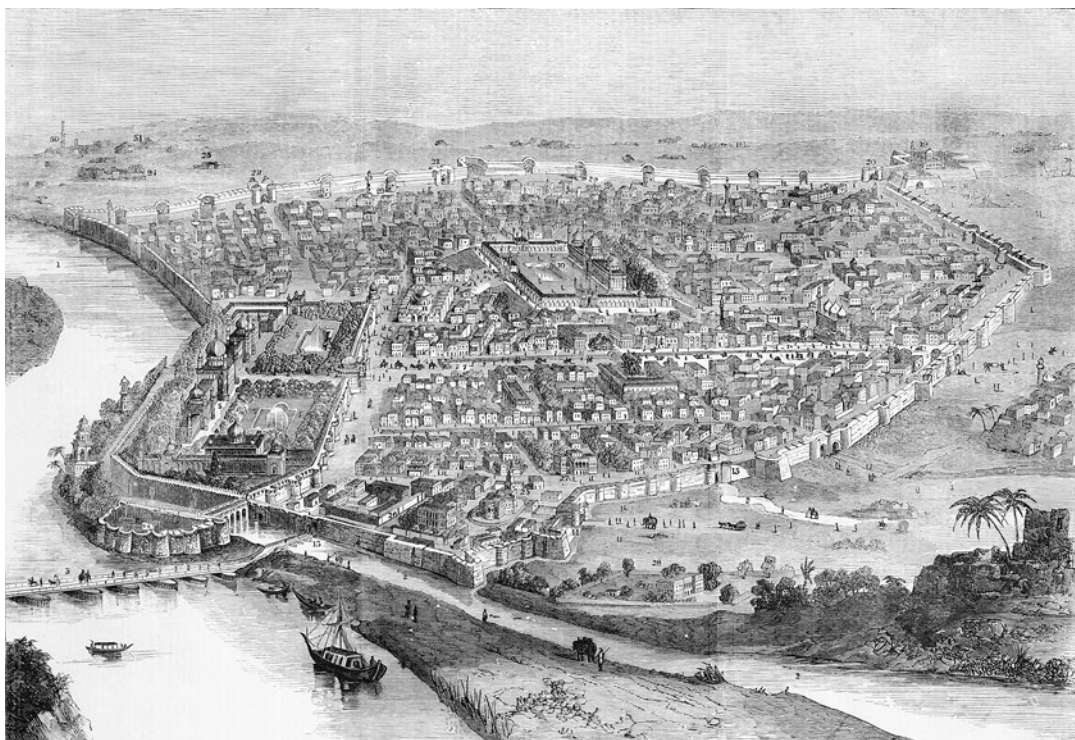


FIG. 1.4. "Aerial View of the Red Fort" from the *Illustrated London News*, January 16, 1858, n.p.

Reportage of the Mutiny continued well into 1858 and not surprisingly became more confident after the British gained control of the Red Fort on September 20, 1857, even as the Rebellion continued in other parts of India such as Awadh. By the end of the year Mutiny news was dedicated either to obituaries of fallen soldiers and stories commending the injured or it aimed to reassure indignant English audiences that the Indian rebels were being duly punished (mostly by hanging) for their insolence. On January 16, 1858, the *Illustrated London News* offered a generous supplement dedicated to the Mutiny and the largest image featured in it was that of the Red Fort, now occupied and controlled by the British military. This panoramic aerial view of the Red Fort stood in contrast to other images in the supplement that showed the looting and destruction of Delhi following the September siege. Captioned "The City of Delhi before the Siege," the image was by no means an accurate depiction of the Red Fort complex but rather another imaginative reconstruction of the palace grounds, which in reality were dense with individual houses and pavilions and differently laid out than what was represented in the image. The implied neatness of the Red Fort, its opulence marked by the two large fountains with ample water sprays and the lushness of gardens shown in the newsmagazine, however, placed the viewer in a sturdy position of control as well as ownership.<sup>14</sup> The British military occupation of the Red Fort led to its representation as an object of luxurious beauty and aesthetic value rather than a factual portrayal of its pillaged and dilapidated state. The Red Fort had been captured as prize on the battleground and could now be owned by the English reading public as well.

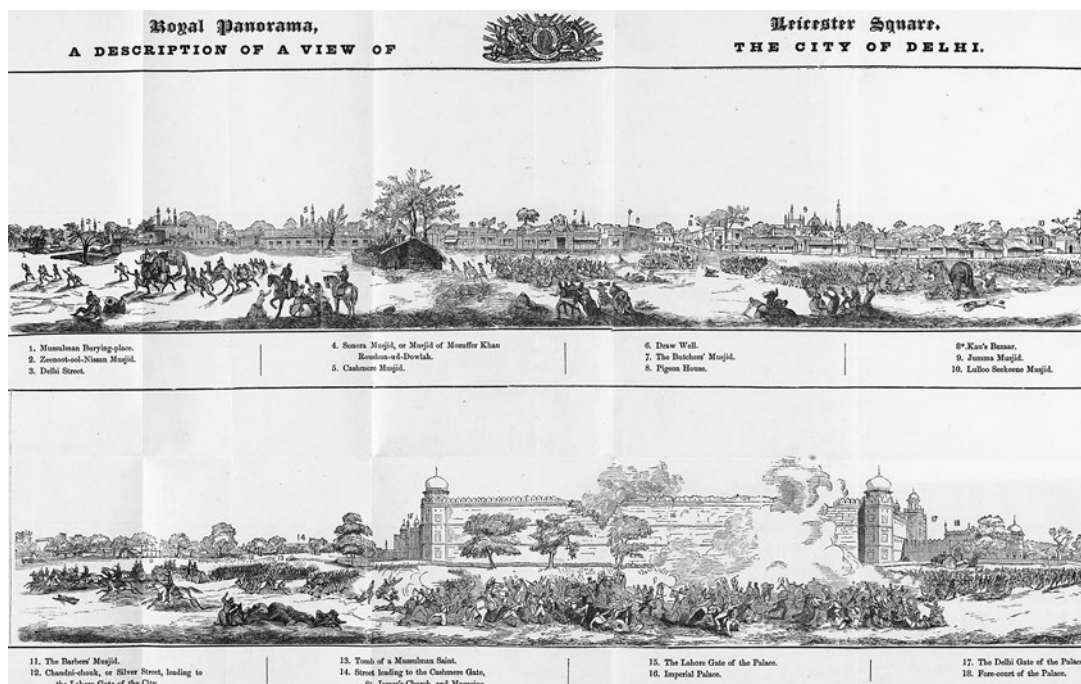
The illustrated newsmagazine turned the walled city of Delhi into a portable object and created new contexts for its consumption. The image of the Red Fort entered the domestic spaces of Victorian Britain, to become an object gazed upon by a British family eager to consume “facts” about the Indian Mutiny. The metropolitan audience could know Delhi through these images, while still maintaining control over it. The images provided in the illustrated press would soon be joined by other specular technologies like the panorama that had mass appeal to metropolitan audiences eager to experience the Mutiny and its spaces at an intimate scale.

## The Panorama

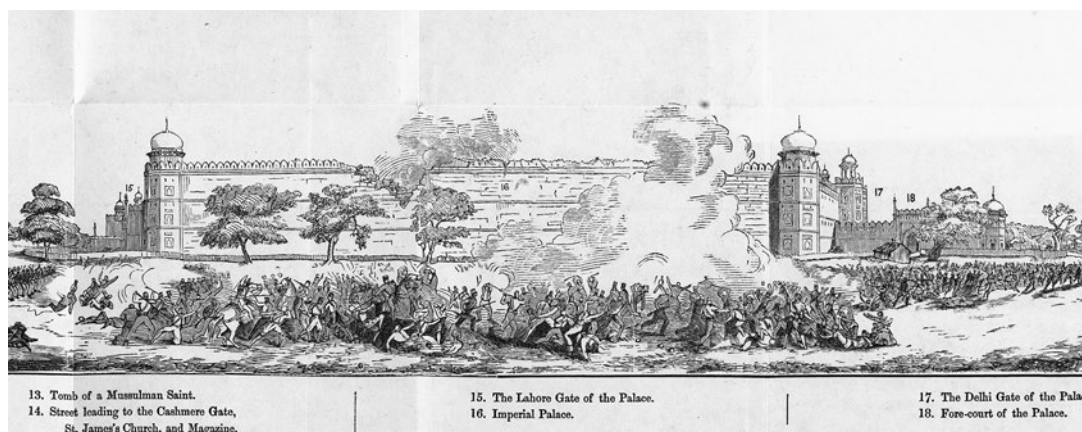
Writing in reference to colonial collecting, Carol Breckenridge has traced the visual technologies through which the representation of India in Victorian England unfolded alongside increasing political and economic domination.<sup>15</sup> She argued that late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century technologies like panoramas, world’s fairs, photography, and the illustrated newspaper contracted the distance between the Victorian individual and distant geographies by offering visceral experiences such that the metropolitan viewer could vicariously participate in the “political and military domestication of India.”<sup>16</sup> The panorama, in particular, was associated with British victories in India (and elsewhere), beginning in 1800 with the two-hundred-foot-long painting *The Taking of Seringapatnam*. Conceived and displayed as a semicircular inhabitable image, the painting depicted the defeat of the formidable southern Indian ruler Tipu Sultan by the East India Company in 1799. Panoramas, exhibited in Leicester Square, were eagerly consumed by British audiences, who praised their ability to deliver them to heretofore inaccessible cities and battle sites.

The panorama of 1858, titled “Description of a view of the city of Delhi, with an action between Her Majesty’s troops and the revolted Sepoys,” was produced by its proprietors, Robert Burford and H. C. Selous, and shown to eager crowds at Leicester Square.<sup>17</sup> The objective of the panorama was to represent Delhi as a major site of the Mutiny. Scenes of conflict between the British military and Indian sepoys were framed against its most important monuments and spaces, such as the Red Fort, the Jama Masjid, and Chandni Chowk. A visitor to the panorama at Leicester Square would have found himself closest to the warring bodies of Indian sepoys and British soldiers, immersed in the heat of battle against the backdrop of Delhi’s most important monuments. The most intense and detailed of the continuous battle scenes was reserved for the Red Fort and spanned the entire length of the fort walls. The panorama thus allowed the English viewer to participate in the “political and military domestication of India” while also situating the Red Fort at the very center of that real and rhetorical conquest.

The new visual archive generated by the Mutiny was accompanied by historical details of the sites and spaces of the Rebellion written from the perspective of the British imperial subject. The text accompanying the panorama provided a brief history of the city, starting from its supposed founding in 300 BCE by the Hindu King Raja Delu, through its Islamic imperial past, to the present.<sup>18</sup> While the bulk of the text was dedicated to explaining the actions of the British military in Delhi from May 1857 through the capture of the Red Fort



**FIG. 1.5.** Sketch of the panorama from Robert Burford and Henry Selous, *Description of a View of the City of Delhi, with an Action between Her Majesty's Troops and the Revolted Sepoys: Now Exhibiting at the Panorama, Leicester Square* (London: W. J. Golburn, 1858). Yale Center for British Art, Yale University.



**FIG. 1.6.** Detail of the panorama. Yale Center for British Art, Yale University.

on September 20, it was interwoven with the description of fourteen urban sites and monuments marked on the panorama, which mixed historical information with contemporary details. The first historical descriptions of Delhi and the Red Fort that were available to a mass audience in England were generated precisely at the time that the city had been conquered and subjugated by the British military. The British triumph during the Mutiny had also entitled the victor to author Delhi's history and its image for a wider audience. As mentioned

in the introduction, the archive is always accompanied by the figure of the *archon* or the savant who guarded access to its meanings and interpretation. The *archon* who emerged in the wake of the Mutiny was a new British colonial agent—convinced of his military strength as well as his knowledge of India. Access to Delhi's past, especially during the Mutiny, would from this point on be zealously guarded by this figure.

## Photographing Delhi as a Site of the Mutiny

The advent of new visual technologies in the mid-nineteenth century caused the panorama to lose popularity as a mode for consuming the peripheries of empire.<sup>19</sup> In particular, the invention of photography in 1839 contributed to the obsolescence of other forms of visual media. The photograph could not only depict spaces that a panorama could not adequately capture, but its portability and reproducibility made it easier to consume, and it facilitated individual proprietorship over events and places in a more intimate way.

By the summer of 1858 when Felice Beato arrived in Delhi and began to photograph Mutiny sites, the last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, had been dethroned and exiled to Burma. His two sons had been captured and killed by the British the previous year. Meanwhile, the city of Delhi itself had undergone massive transformations: the British military had expelled most of the Indians from the city, and while some Hindu residents of Delhi were allowed back by 1858, the majority Muslim population, who were seen as the primary instigators of the Rebellion, remained outside the city walls. Beato's Delhi, then, was something of a ghost town, animated mostly by ruined buildings acting as the mnemonic devices for the bloody events of the Mutiny. Beato's photographs provide evidence of the manner in which Delhi's architecture played both witness to and victim of the Mutiny.<sup>20</sup>

The trope of the Indian monument as ruin was a persistent motif in European representations of Indian landscapes. Indeed, scholars have remarked on the emphatic depictions of monuments as ruins (often even when monuments were in good repair) as a colonial strategy of picturing India as a once glorious civilization that had since fallen into decay. Unlike the use of the picturesque in England where it was employed to evoke connections to the landscape and foster a deeper sense of nationalism, the use of the picturesque by colonial agents rendered the Indian landscape both exotic yet familiar.<sup>21</sup> The ruin offered by Beato's photographs, however, departs significantly from the melancholic landscapes that prevail in representations of Indian monuments such as those produced by the uncle and nephew team of artists Thomas and William Daniell. As opposed to the soft tones of Daniells' aquatints, Beato's photographs maximize shadows and reveal the details of every battle scar left behind by cannons and gunpowder. Pockmarked facades, crumbling walls, and eerily desolate courtyards were the motifs that constantly reappeared in his photographs of Delhi. The ruins pictured in Beato's photographs were not meant to transport the audience to a remote or exotic past, rather they were meant to keep alive a visceral violence against the colonized subject, who had dared to rebel against their European masters.<sup>22</sup>

By the time of their production Beato's photographs were working within a visual idiom of the Mutiny that had been established by the illustrated newsmagazine and the panorama. If the newsmagazine had created a familiarity with the spaces of Delhi and the panorama

had offered an intimate experience of the spaces of the Mutiny, the photographs produced by Beato and others circulated much more as mementos of individual loss, grief, or courage. Beato often added captions to his photographs to direct the affects of his implied audience in the imperial metropole. For example, in his photograph of the Naubat Khana, mentioned in the opening vignette of this chapter, it is hard to tell what precisely the object of contemplation is. (See fig. 1.1.) Positioned as it is in the background the Naubat Khana does not seem to be the primary object of Beato's gaze, which is mostly taken up by the large tree in the foreground of the image. Indeed as the caption suggests it is the tree that is the true monument as well as memorial here, for "under this tree the massacre of 200 Europeans took place." Photography was one way in which the European dead in the colonies could be memorialized, yet in doing so the photograph also turned the Naubat Khana into a locus of metropolitan grief and mourning.

Beato's single line caption about the massacre of two hundred Europeans was from that moment on serially reproduced so that the Naubat Khana was associated with the brutality of Indian rebels as well as the death of Europeans. While Beato exaggerated the number of Europeans that had been killed by the Indian rebels (the number was closer to fifty), his conjecture was probably read as fact by virtue of its proximity to a photograph that provided "documentary" evidence of Mutiny sites.

Beato's photographs accompanied other visual technologies mobilized around the Mutiny for the consumption of British audiences. A slew of other photographers such as Samuel Bourne; Robert Tytler and his wife, Harriet Tytler; and Thomas Rust produced photographic records of the Mutiny for sale and circulation in Britain. These images worked in tandem with the illustrated press of the time as well as specular experiences such as the panorama to offer Delhi as a knowable entity to metropolitan audiences. The sites of Delhi acquired an affective thickening through these representations, being cast as the locus of metropolitan attention, be it mourning or anger. Later in the chapter, I will return to the site of the Naubat Khana to illustrate how the memory of British trauma was managed when the Red Fort was reinvented as a historic monument and trafficked by a largely Indian public.

Three visual technologies—photography, the illustrated newsmagazine, and the panorama—each reproduced the Red Fort (as well as other monuments of Delhi) as a site of British loss or victory. In privileging the crises of the Mutiny as the main narrative and context within which these monuments could be understood this new archive also erased the historical associations between the monument and Mughal imperial sovereignty. For example, it was impossible to know by looking at Beato's photographs that the Naubat Khana was the gateway through which only the Mughal emperor or princes could have passed while mounted on horseback. And as they did so, especially to attend prayers at the Jama Masjid, musicians would have feted their passage into and out of the Red Fort. An often repeated anecdote of a time before 1857 was the arrogance of Mr. Francis Hawkins who when he served as British Resident at Delhi, dared to pass through the Naubat Khana without dismounting his horse and entering on foot as all other courtiers, ambassadors, and noblemen were required to. The offense was interpreted as a slight to the emperor and cost Hawkins his position as Resident.<sup>23</sup> Needless to say these performative acts of power and rituals of sovereignty were all but wiped out in 1857. Beato's photographs, however, were not meant to educate the metropolitan viewer of that rich history. Instead his photograph was meant as a

memorial to the English who had been mercilessly killed by the Indian mutineers. Even as a realistic document of the monument, however, Beato's photograph belied the fact that at this time the Naubat Khana was being used as the makeshift quarters of the British military and several months of looting had reduced the Red Fort to a mere shadow of its former self.

## **"The Kafir in the Palace of the Mogul"**

If photography, the panorama, and the illustrated newsmagazine sought to preserve the memory of the Mutiny at the metropole and invite affective engagements with distant sites, the prevailing ambience in Delhi immediately following the Mutiny was that of vengeful destruction. Looting, imagined and real destruction, and the utilitarian conversion of the former Mughal emperor's residence into a military camp significantly altered the symbolic as well as physical landscape of the Red Fort. Even as photographs, and other visual relics helped preserve the memory of the Mutiny at the metropole; in India the traces of rebellious bodies and the uprising was met with wrathful erasure. Although the two processes were formally distinct from one another, preservation and destruction were both ways for the colonizer to appropriate Delhi and reinscribe its fragments within an affective memory of the Mutiny.

### Looting

If the visual documentation of the Mutiny was one way in which metropolitan audiences consumed the city of Delhi, another avenue of "owning" the city was through the practice of looting. Almost immediately after the Red Fort was captured, "pieces" of it were traded as commodities on the open market. The same supplement that featured the bird's eye view of the Red Fort before the "siege" carried an engraving titled "Delhi after the Siege: Looted House within the Palace Walls."<sup>24</sup> Unlike the more fanciful reconstruction of the fort before the siege, the latter engraving offered a more realistic image of the fabric of the Red Fort, with several houses and pavilions destroyed in the wake of the British military's occupation of the palace grounds. The foreground of the engraving is littered with broken vases, overturned furniture, and open yet empty crates, which seem to signal the thoroughness with which British soldiers had ransacked the house. Most importantly, as a visual opposite to the "Delhi before the Siege" engraving, this image of the looted house shows the disorder and desolation that the British military had wreaked on the bodies and buildings of Delhi.

Historians like James Hevia have illustrated that British armies in India, Southeast Asia, and China were often paid for their military services through the loot that they could amass from the wealthy palaces, mansions, and forts in these regions.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, the etymology of the English word "loot" can be traced to the original Hindi term (*lūt*) for thievery or pillage; and while it was first appeared in English dictionaries as early as 1788, it was only during the First Opium War (1841), the Crimean War (1854–55) and the Indian Mutiny (1857–58) that the term became commonly accepted and understood in England.<sup>26</sup>

British troops had maintained their morale through the long hot summer days of 1857 by dreaming of the riches that would be theirs for the taking if they could lay siege to Delhi.

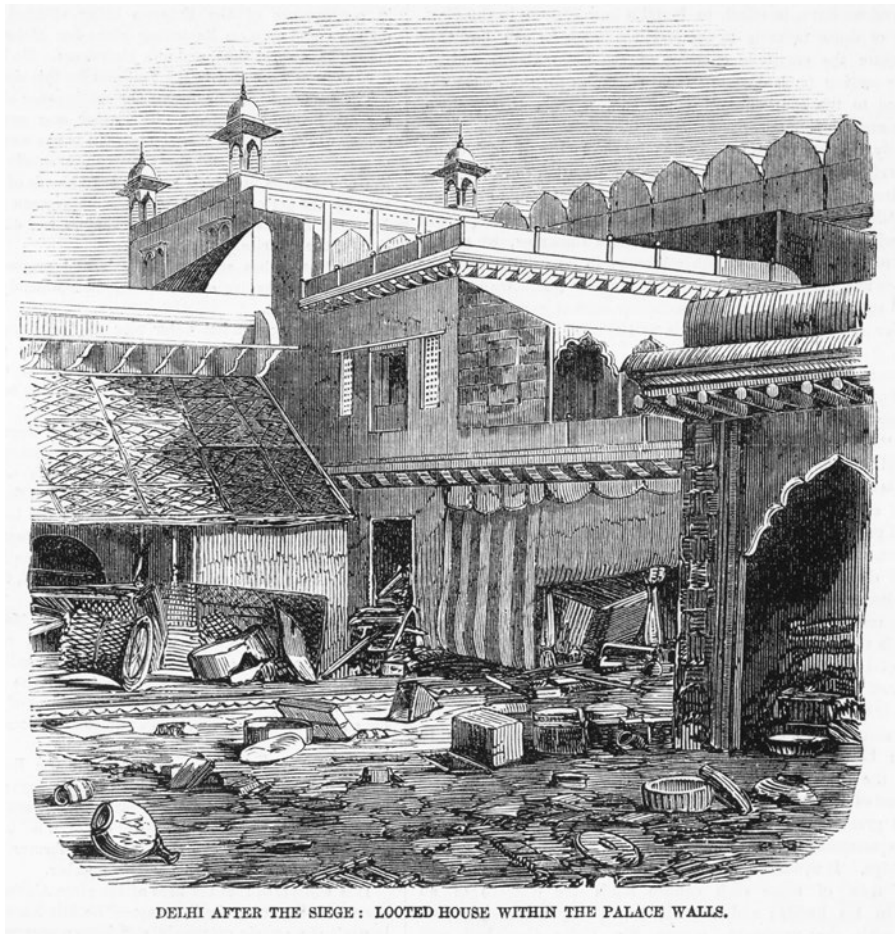


FIG. 1.7. "Delhi after the Siege" in the *Illustrated London News*, January 16, 1858, n.p.

Once the British military entered the Red Fort, soldiers, officers, and others almost immediately appropriated valuables from the palace in one way or another. Consider the following description by an eyewitness:

The troops poured through into the sacred Palace, seizing eagerly on whatever they could find, tramping in their wartorn and filthy uniforms into the splendours of the throne-room, admiring the marble baths, sitting on the Mogul's own throne, turning over the delicate fabrics and jewellery in their powder-blackened hands, breaking open caskets, laughing and joking both over the victory and over the vanquished . . . Anson found a little drawer full of trinkets and elegantly made trifles, which he persuaded himself would be just the thing for his young children. Hope Grant and Brigadier Showers, with equally innocent faces, regarded carved sandalwood necklaces and illuminated Persian books. About the harem there still lingered the heavy, subtle perfume of attar, proof even

against the stench which rose from the ruined city outside. In his wanderings Anson was surprised to find a pair of forceps, which he also pocketed with a practical view to home dentistry in the future.<sup>27</sup>

As this memoir indicates, the British triumph at capturing the Red Fort, which was unexpected to say the least (elsewhere in the same memoir a British general's exclamation upon seizing the Red Fort is quoted: "The more I see of the strength of the place the more I am astonished at our success") was trumped by the excess of riches that were now for the victor's taking.<sup>28</sup> More importantly the performative act of sitting on the Mughal emperor's throne as well as the taking of trinkets and jewelry were equivalent and interchangeable acts of appropriation by the victor.

The most famous example of looting from the Red Fort is that of the in-laid marble panel depicting Orpheus that was taken by Colonel (later Sir) John Jones who sold it and other similar panels from the Red Fort for five hundred sterling to the British government. These were later deposited in the South Kensington Museum and in 1902 Viceroy Curzon ordered that they be replaced in the Diwan-i-Khas.<sup>29</sup> Other types of pillage included the stripping of the gilded copper roofs of the Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque), Mussaman Burj, and the Diwan-i-Khas.<sup>30</sup> Major W. S. R. Hodson on capturing the last Mughal emperor of Delhi and turning him over to his superiors was told to "keep any of the King's weapons he fancied" as a reward.<sup>31</sup> Two *talwars* (swords) taken by Major Hodson eventually found their way into metropolitan collections that memorialized the Mutiny.<sup>32</sup>

The early abandon with which items were looted from the Red Fort soon gave way to the more systematic and orderly collection of goods for the Prize Agency. Although looting was a structuralized form of recompense in the British military, the British army also made a substantial difference between plunder and prize.<sup>33</sup> While senior officers deliberately turned a blind eye to looting immediately after victory perhaps thinking it was necessary to reward their troops in some way; plunder for individual gain was in fact a crime punishable by hanging. A week after the Red Fort was occupied by the British military, the appointed Prize Agents began the "orderly" expropriation of objects from the fort and the shops and residences of the city to gather valuables and place it in a common stock that would be auctioned and the proceeds redistributed. Thus, while plunder suggested a bacchanalian and frenzied system of pillage where greed trumped military order and hierarchy, prize was a systematic method of gathering valuable items from the defeated enemy, making it over to a Prize Agency who would appraise and inventory the total amount of goods and then apportion it out according to the ranks of military personnel who had taken part in the offensive. Needless to say European officers were entitled to more than Indian soldiers, if the latter could claim anything at all. In this way the Prize Agency maintained and reproduced strict hierarchies within the military system.<sup>34</sup>

In his memoir James Leasor states that the final "amount in the Agents' hands was estimated as worth some half or three-quarters of a million sterling; and this was only a fraction of what could have been discovered or what had already been spirited away."<sup>35</sup> Indeed, as Leasor says elsewhere, the fact that so many British soldiers were able to buy their discharge out of the military upon returning home could only be attributed to the wealth that they had accumulated by looting in India. Similarly, he notes how shops in English towns

where soldiers of the Delhi Force were later stationed soon overflowed with “Oriental” jewelry.<sup>36</sup> The conversion of such “pieces” of the Red Fort and its surroundings into tradeable commodities profoundly recalibrated the symbolic and functional meaning of the Red Fort inserting it into a British order of signification and exchange.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, in addition to their value as tradeable commodities; looted objects also became fetish objects, taking on the affective power of trauma or loss from the Mutiny. Even as looting plucked objects from their original contexts, truncating their links to Mughal imperial power and sovereignty, it also recast them as relics of the Mutiny—objects that were charged with the affect of rebellious Indians or the exuberance of British victory.

## Imagined Destruction

In 1858 the *Calcutta Review* published the following poem titled “Delhi” by a certain Mary A. Leslie:

Rase her to the ground,—palace and tower  
White marble mosque and gorgeous sepulchre,—  
And let silence of the massacre  
Evermore as a cloud upon her lower,  
So that the traveller in some future hour  
May say, ‘here are the whereabouts of her,  
Once India’s Empress, whose high name could stir  
A thousand memories with enchantress power.  
She lies a desolation, for she filled  
Her houses with our slain, and took delight  
In women’s tortured wailings.<sup>38</sup>

Leslie’s hyberbolic fantasy of razing Delhi to the ground hinges of course on a previous imaginary of the city as architecturally rich with palace, tower, white marble mosque and gorgeous sepulchre—an image that was no doubt fed by the various visual productions of India from the picturesque aquatints produced by the Daniells’ to the more current images that had been in the *Illustrated London News*, the panorama, or photographs of Delhi. Indeed, if the Mughal Empire had left a magnificent city as its legacy, then Leslie imagines the British Empire’s destruction of it as equally spectacular.

As Gautam Chakravarty has remarked, the image of a ruined India previously fetishized in Victorian painting, travel literature, and poetry was renewed in the wake of the Mutiny. Except that in the changed circumstances of imperial power, “the pleasure of ruins was however entwined with a call for chastisement, for it was now the British who would batter an imperial city into a ruin to create the artifact on which turned the aesthetic of the ruin.”<sup>39</sup> Indeed, Leslie’s revanchist fantasies were not limited to simply erasing Delhi *in toto*, but in fact relied on the ruins to carry with them the affects of massacre and Englishwomen’s tortured wailings. The monuments that once enchanted and delighted European senses would now be reduced to desolation to speak of the horror of Indian savagery and British trauma.

To this end Leslie even anticipates the figure of the Mutiny tourist, the British traveler who would increasingly frequent India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Indeed, by the late nineteenth century there was scarcely a guidebook to Delhi that did not devote an entire section to the Mutiny sites of the city, urging English travelers to make contact with the sites where British soldiers had fallen or triumphed during the Mutiny.<sup>40</sup>

Leslie's call to arms did not unfortunately remain a matter of literary rhetoric and was mirrored in other more serious suggestions offered by British officers and bureaucrats. Spectacular proposals of destruction included the suggestion to blow up the walls of Shah-jahanabad, an idea that was supposedly stalled for the pragmatic reason that the requisite amount of gunpowder could not be spared to carry out the demolition.<sup>41</sup> Other vengeful schemes of retribution included Charles Trevelyan's suggestion that the Red Fort be destroyed and replaced by a "Fort Victoria"; or the proposal by Parliamentarian Egerton that the Jama Masjid be demolished echoing others who demanded the same as well as the replacement of the city's main mosque with a Christian cathedral. Indeed, up until April 1858, the Government of India was undecided whether to maintain the walled city of Shah-jahanabad or raze it to the ground entirely and replace it with a new city.<sup>42</sup>

One particularly revealing fantasy of destruction and appropriation was the proposal made by Lady Canning (wife of Viceroy Canning [viceroyship: 1856–1862]) to tear down the Red Fort and ship parts of it back to England. In a letter she said,

I am afraid most of the Palace at Delhi must be pulled down, for example's sake. . . . C. [in reference to Viceroy Canning] is going to employ [Dr. Murray of Agra] to photograph all that is to be demolished. I want any transportable parts of the Great Mogul's Palace to go to London. It would have a grand effect, and they could be floated down the Jumna in the rains with ease.<sup>43</sup>

Lady Canning's words provide insight into the twinned vectors of preservation as well as destruction that were at work in several imperial fantasies following the Mutiny. While she argues that the Red Fort must be torn down as an example to the Indian population and as a final sign of the humiliation of the Mughal Empire, she is also keen to preserve the Red Fort as a relic by way of photography and the display of the monument's fragments as curiosities in England.

While, thankfully, many of these proposed schemes of destruction remained imaginary, the Public Works Department did clear a five-hundred-yard cordon between the fort and the Jama Masjid destroying several houses, shops, gardens, and other structures. (See fig. 3.4 for a comparison of the city before and after the demolitions.) This was a move that would significantly alter the relations between the Red Fort and its vicinity by marooning it within a large and vapid area devoid of social or cultural context. The houses of the elites that had occupied a pride of place outside the walls of the fort were demolished so that military traffic could enter and exit the fort easily. The vibrancy of Delhi's main commercial artery, the Chandni Chowk (which led off of a main axis of the Red Fort) was no more. The shops and residences had been ransacked first by the looters and then the Prize Agents. Later the Prize Agents sold the houses back to Indians wishing to come back to the city, arguing that the latter were in fact paying for the privilege of finding more loot in the houses. The

shabbiness and desolation of the Red Fort thus spilled outside of its walls to envelope the surroundings just as its splendor once had. A guidebook by A. Harcourt summed it up thus: “The Chandnee Chouk is no longer what it was. . . . To the lover of the picturesque this may seem to be a pity—in an artistic point of view it is; but the British residents of Delhi probably feel more certain of their lives, now that the off-scourings of Bahadoor Shah’s court are no longer at large.”<sup>44</sup>

The loss of the picturesque pleasures of the Chandni Chowk was a small price to pay for the security of the British officers who were now the primary citizens of Delhi. Even in the deepest conviction that Delhi’s landscape had to be destroyed as a punishment to Indians, however, Harcourt’s words betray his nostalgia for the picturesque city that the British had so callously destroyed. In later years, this longing for an opulent and graceful city would become even stronger as British residents of Delhi sought to replace what they had willfully destroyed themselves in 1857. Lady Canning’s suggestion to demolish the Red Fort but preserve it for the pleasure and amusement of English men and women was a prescient insight into the future life of the Red Fort during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

## From Imperial Court to Military Garrison

If the time during and immediately following the Mutiny was marked by wanton destruction (both real and imagined) and rapacious looting, by late 1859 and certainly by 1860 the decisions of the British government were motivated by the pragmatic needs of housing a large number of troops within the Red Fort and maximizing its potential as a military fortification. Early acts of destruction, such as the blowing up of the Lahore Gate of the fort by Lt. Home on September 20, 1857, were followed in later years by smaller (yet equally marring) acts of reuse whereby the fort complex was entirely reconfigured from a site of Mughal sovereignty and courtly culture to a military camp that functioned as little more than a crude garrison within a largely deserted city.

For months, indeed years, after the British army’s capture of the Red Fort in late September 1857, several structures bore the brunt of the army’s wrath and were repurposed to service their daily needs. Pavilions, like the Mussaman Burj, that looked out over the river Yamuna and provided leisure spaces for the Mughal emperor had their domes stripped of their gilded copper coverings and eventually destroyed.<sup>45</sup> The dome of the Mussaman Burj was later reconstructed by the ASI in reinforced concrete but other pavilions, like the Shah Burj, the dome of which was destroyed in 1857, was left in dilapidation. A house inside the Red Fort where Bahadur Shah Zafar was confined was destroyed in its entirety.<sup>46</sup> [See Plate 3 for a schematic diagram of structures in the Red Fort demolished by the British army and the new utilitarian structures built within the fort.]

By the 1860s the Public Works Department was relying heavily on the revenue that came in from the sale of properties as well as the sale of materials from the demolished properties outside the fort’s walls. The Indian residents of Delhi could only claim compensation from the proceeds of the sales of their confiscated property if they could prove, beyond the shadow of any doubt, that they had not taken part in the Mutiny in any way or had done so only in collaboration with British forces. The strategy proved to be a most effective way of

accumulating government revenue as well as reconfiguring the geography of the Red Fort and its surroundings. For example, in a letter dated June 3, 1860, the colonial government gave the Public Works Department in Delhi the authority to demolish a number of houses around the residence of a certain Ahmed Alee Khan. The letter states that while the compensation owed to the residents of the property would have ordinarily amounted to a handsome 15,386 rupees, the payments could be entirely avoided in this case as “disloyal owners will not be entitled to compensation.”<sup>47</sup>

The costs of clearing the previously mentioned cordon between the Chandni Chowk and the Jama Masjid to facilitate the movement of military traffic to and from the fort, meanwhile, was entirely covered by the “award of confiscated houses and the sale of materials” obtained during their demolition.<sup>48</sup> Although the actual properties within the walls of the Red Fort could not be auctioned off for security reasons, there is little reason to doubt that the materials from demolished buildings within the fort also served as profitable sources of revenue. Like the objects of loot whose value was now assessed by the vagaries of the market economy, the Red Fort too became enmeshed within the capitalist circuits of accumulation. A secondary effect of the clearances and compensations was the creation of a new terrain of master and loyalist in and around the Red Fort. For example, in clearing the five-hundred-yard cordon around the fort, the only structures spared demolition were Hindu or Jain temples. Non-Muslim residents of Delhi were seen as being loyal to the British side during the Mutiny and this was one of the many concessions for their perceived support. Thus, the preservation of structures belonging to loyalists and the destruction of other structures belonging to those who did not side with the British further reinforced the abrogation of the Mughal Empire with British military power. In the past Mughal elites and nobles who showed loyalty to the emperor, such as the aforementioned Ahmed Alee Khan, had had the privilege of living in and around the Red Fort. That privilege was now granted exclusively to those who aligned themselves with the new regime in the Red Fort.

While destruction and the sale of materials from demolition were one way in which the physical and symbolic environment of the Red Fort was altered, a more profound shift came with the change of function to a military camp. Although the British army had moved into the Red Fort right after its capture in the Mutiny, by the 1860s the accommodation of several hundreds of troops within the Red Fort called for more orderly and permanent arrangements. In a general scheme for the arrangement of army personnel within the Red Fort, Captain C. W. Hutchinson proposed using the southern half of the fort complex for the accommodation of troops while the northern half would be reserved for officer’s quarters and the guards of various departments.<sup>49</sup> Hutchinson’s proposed use of the Red Fort complex echoed its spatial layout during Mughal times when the northern half of the complex was reserved for the use of the emperor, his harem and his immediate family, while the southern portion was used by court functionaries and distant relatives along with servants’ quarters.

Other aspects of Hutchinson’s proposal included the removal of a major street that ran north from the Delhi Gate, and the demolition of the arcades (noted as being in a shattered and ruinous condition) between the Lahore Gate and the Diwan-i-Am (Hall of Public Audience). A brief mention was made about preserving those buildings that were deemed to have architectural or historical value and officers of the Public Works Department were asked to err on the side of caution when carrying out the demolitions. The Diwan-i-Am was



FIG. 1.8. A Mughal pavilion and the military barracks built by the British in the Red Fort, 2005. Photo by author.

to be converted into a garrison hospital and while it was noted that precautions should be taken to not “injure the beautiful interior of this building” this caveat was not “to interfere with the erection or enlargement of such external verandahs as may be necessary for the accommodation of the sick.”<sup>50</sup>

The Diwan-i-Khas (Hall of Special Audience) was to be cleared of the verandahs that had been built as extensions to it, which were seen as disfiguring and the structure was to be restored to as close its former state as possible. A marble trellis that had been removed from the hall and lay in the Executive Engineer’s yard was to be re-erected in its original place. But these were the extent of the restorations, for the proposal argued that the original “expensive artistic embellishments” could not be renewed. The buildings along the river Yamuna were deemed to have “little architectural interest” and they were suggested for the accommodation of the troops. Again the proposal stated that any fragments of artistic work in the buildings were to be removed and stored elsewhere especially if the new use of the building was likely to cause them damage.<sup>51</sup>

Surveillance of the city via the Red Fort was imperative and heavy artillery was to be installed on the barbicans of the two great gateways, in order to command the walled city of Delhi and the Jama Masjid. It was agreed that guns also needed to be installed at one or two other points in the fort to better control those parts of the walled city that were not in view from the gateways.<sup>52</sup> Perhaps the most tragic intervention of all was the demolition of the *hamams* (bathhouses), pavilions, arcades, and gardens that constituted the built fabric of the Red Fort to make way for several large barracks built in a functionalist Victorian aesthetic.

Although Captain Hutchinson’s scheme for the conversion of the Red Fort into a military garrison made minor concessions toward protecting structures like the Diwan-i-Khas or the

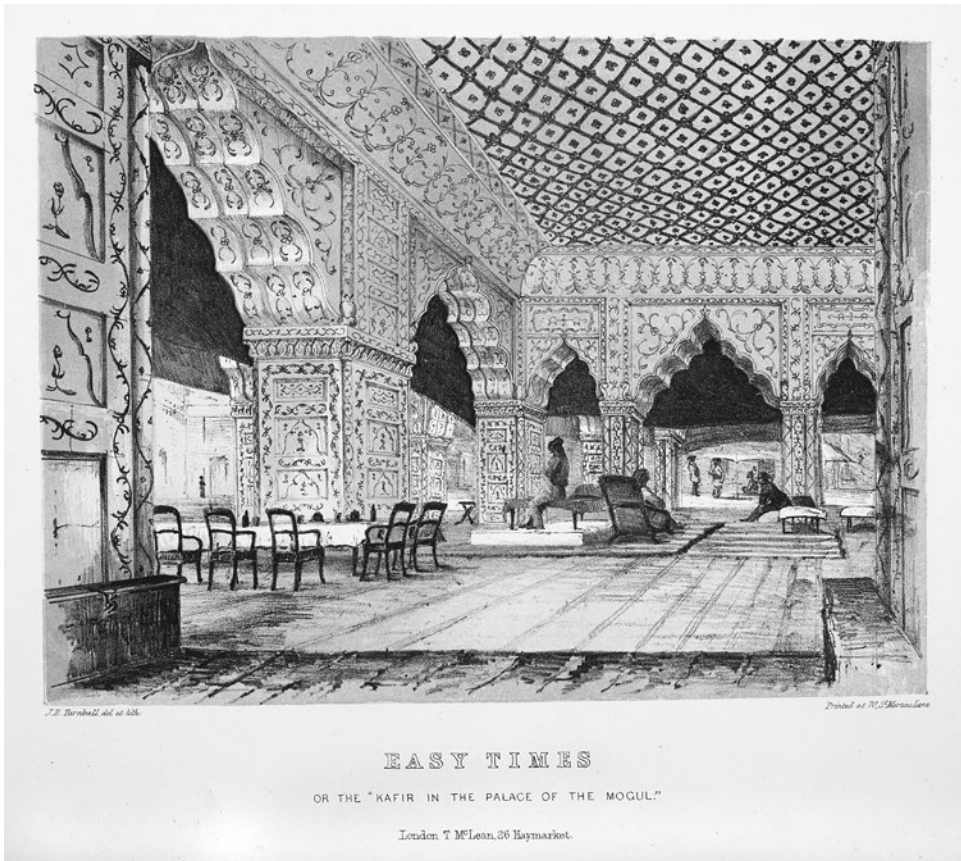
interior of the Diwan-i-Am, his primary goal (and that of the Public Works Department) was the efficient use of the fort in accommodating the British army and maximizing its potential to surveil the city around it. To ensure the “sanitary” nature of the military accommodations it was suggested that all of the Mughal structures’ marble exteriors as well as interiors receive a thick coat of whitewash—a decision that would later appall antiquarians like Alexander Cunningham who would visit the fort only five years after Hutchinson’s scheme was carried out.

In the years after the Mutiny the condition of the Red Fort quickly deteriorated from its use for military accommodation. The Chatta Bazaar was used to sell supplies for the army officers living in the fort; the Diwan-i-Am became an open-air lounge for soldiers; the Naubat Khana turned into the staff sergeant’s quarters; the Rang Mahal served as the mess lounge for officers; and the Mumtaz Mahal pavilion was first used as a military prison and later as a sergeant’s mess and its marble walls were defaced by prisoner’s incisions. By 1911 its original roof and awnings no longer existed and walls, sinks, and cisterns had been added to the structure. Many coats of whitewash had been applied to the original walls that had been decorated with glass inlay and paintings. The Mussaman Burj was possibly used as a barracks post-1857 and the Shah Burj’s marble arches were bricked up to provide a temporary military office. The chamber behind it (originally designed to lift water up from the river) was converted into an armoury shop. The Zafar Mahal was turned into a swimming pool for the British officers and wash houses and urinals were placed in front of Sawan and Bhadon pavilions.<sup>53</sup>

The change in ambience of the Red Fort from a place of imperial pomp and ceremony to a military camp can perhaps best be summed up by the final sketch that appeared in a folio of fourteen illustrations produced by John Robertson Turnbull in 1858.<sup>54</sup> Turnbull had served as aide-de-camp to General Wilson who had led the siege at Delhi and painted the watercolor illustrations as a tribute for the latter. The illustrations serve as a visual essay of the siege, recording the major offensives and important vantages of the Mutiny.<sup>55</sup> The final illustration depicts a group of British soldiers relaxing in the Diwan-i-Khas of the Red Fort. Titled “Easy Times or the ‘Kafir in the Palace of the Mogul’” the scene depicted is one of leisure.<sup>56</sup> Turnbull renders the splendid marble inlay work of the Diwan-i-Khas and its intricately carved ceiling with careful detail. But the formal opulence of the hall is offset by the presence of a dining table, some chairs (presumably belonging to General Wilson who was using the hall as his military headquarters), a single armchair, and several *charpoi* (low beds) with soldiers sitting or sleeping on them. In the narrative accompanying the image Turnbull spoke of the relief that his colleagues and he experienced at the end of the siege; how some of them had occupied the “gilded chairs of the Mogul” and smoked cheroots with their feet propped up on the marble trellis of the Diwan-i-Am, savoring their victory and celebrating the end of a tiring and uncertain battle. Most importantly, the sense of relief and self-assuredness came, as the title of this image suggests, from the *kafir* (unbeliever) now being the rightful owner of the Mughal palace.

## The Red Fort as Backdrop for Spectacle and Preservation

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the Red Fort would come under the larger mandate of preservation institutionalized by the ASI in 1861. On cursory examination,



**FIG. 1.9.** “Easy Times: Kafir in the Palace of the Mogul” by John Robertson Turnbull, 1858. © The British Library Board, Shelfmark: 1261e.31/14.

preservation seemed like a sudden and radical departure from the earlier modes of destruction and appropriation that had defined the interactions between British authorities and the Red Fort. Indeed, it may even be argued that preservation was a form of institutionalized atonement by colonial authorities for the dilapidation of the Red Fort largely caused by them in the aftermath of the Mutiny. Although, the end of the nineteenth century was marked by a distinct nostalgia for the past glory and visual opulence of the Red Fort, preservation was yet another way for the colonizer to appropriate and regulate the past as well as present of the Red Fort, especially as it became more accessible to an Indian public.

### Early Efforts at Preservation in the Red Fort

The transformation of the Red Fort into a military barracks was so dramatic as well as tragic that when Cunningham visited it in 1865 he was moved to write a strongly worded complaint to the Chief Commissioner’s Office. He said, “Inside the palace of the Mogal Emperors the traveller will now search in vain for the celebrated buildings of Shah Jahan,

which have been the admiration of the world for upwards of two centuries.”<sup>57</sup> Cunningham reports that although the interior of the Diwan-i-Khas had been spared extensive damage (due to its temporary use as a museum), its exterior was exceptionally marred with the addition of thatched verandahs—an unfortunate remnant of its past function as a barracks. The interior of the Diwan-i-Am, on the other hand, which was still in use as a barracks, had received a thick coating of whitewash, from which Cunningham turned “away in vexation and disgust.”<sup>58</sup> The few mosaics in the Diwan-i-Am that had managed to survive the pillage of 1857 were also covered with the same whitewash. The dome of the Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque) within the fort complex was in a precarious state, as Prize Agents had stripped its gilt covering in 1857, exposing the soft brick infrastructure to the elements. The dome had crumbled away and rainwater had begun to damage the plaster ceiling inside the mosque.

Cunningham’s pleas for the safeguard of structures seems to have fallen on deaf ears and very little was accomplished by way of restoration for the next decade at least. Eleven years later, James Fergusson’s 1876 book, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, featured a report on the state of the Red Fort that was a veritable echo of Cunningham’s words.

Of the public parts of the palace, all that now exists is the entrance hall, the *naubat khana*, the *diwan-i-am*, the *diwan-i-khas*, and the *rang mahal*—now used as a mess-room—and one or two small pavilions. These are the gems of the palace, it is true; but without the courts and corridors connecting them they lose all their meaning, and more than half their beauty. Being now situated in the middle of a British barrack-yard, they look like precious stones torn from their setting in some exquisite piece of oriental jeweller’s work and set at random in a bed of the commonest plaster.<sup>59</sup>

Barely a decade or two after the Mutiny, Fergusson and Cunningham had begun to mourn the loss of the Red Fort’s architectural continuity and its opulent grandeur. What remained before them was not only a shabby ruin, but also the clear hand of the British in creating that devastation. While Fergusson’s and Cunningham’s lamentations seem to have made little impact in terms of restoration, the real impetus for tidying up the Red Fort (if not preserving it) came in 1877 when the complex was used for the first Delhi Durbar. Held to welcome Edward VII, Prince of Wales to Delhi, the Durbar called for a ball to be held in the Diwan-i-Khas in the Prince’s honor. In 1903, another Durbar was held to commemorate the coronation of Edward VII and the Duke of Connaught’s visit to India. Finally in 1911, during the visit of King George V and the proclamation of the change in the imperial capital from Calcutta to Delhi, the king and queen gave audience from the Red Fort, where a garden party was also held in honor of the visiting regents.<sup>60</sup> By the early twentieth century and following a series of such durbars, British colonial agents pined for the extravagance that had once defined the Mughal palace of the past. The earliest impulses of preservation in the Red Fort were therefore fraught with the yearning to return affect—the emotive qualities of aesthetic sensuality, pomp, splendor, and even decadence—to a hollow monument that presented itself as little more than a military barracks.

The long-term interest in preserving the fort began in 1882, when H. H. Cole, Curator of Ancient Monuments, produced a first schedule of the restoration works to be carried out

in various monuments in Delhi and most especially in the Red Fort. His proposal included the restoration of mosaics in the Diwan-i-Am; repairs to the Bhadon pavilion (which had up until that point been used as a gymnasium); restoration of the Hayat Baksh gardens (and the removal of a military road that cut through it); strengthening of the roof of the Diwan-i-Khas and a repainting of its ceiling according to the original design. Cole's attempts at restoring the Red Fort, however, still had to accommodate the requirements of military personnel and as such his scheme was only marginally concerned with remaining faithful to the original design or layout of the complex. For instance at the request of the Military Works Department, Cole designed a balcony for the officers' quarters in the upper story of the Lahore gate of the Delhi fort, justifying his intervention by claiming that his design was "in harmony with the architectural style of the surroundings."<sup>61</sup>

If Cole had tried to accommodate the needs of the military personnel in the complex in his preservation efforts, by the early twentieth century the military had come to be seen as something of a hindrance to a more vigorous mandate of preservation. In 1902 under the directorship of John Marshall, the ASI demanded that a portion of the Red Fort complex be made over to them entirely and protected from "further molestation" by the military.<sup>62</sup> Like others before him, Marshall's incentive was the impending visit of the Duke of Connaught and the Durbar of the following year. Marshall's scheme, however, was the first comprehensive preservation plan for what was left of the Mughal Red Fort.

Marshall described his attitude toward preservation as "historical value is gone when [the monument's] authenticity is destroyed . . . our first duty is not to renew them but to preserve them" and articulated a desire to remake the Red Fort in ways that would recover its authentic ambience and color. Thus, although restorations or additions to the fort were only allowed under the most exceptional circumstances, Marshall believed that details of Mughal monuments (such as mosaics, *jali* screens, inlaid calligraphy, etc.) could be reconstructed as per their originals as these were living traditions and craftsmen were still available to execute these repairs faithfully.<sup>63</sup> Similarly while referring to the reconstruction of Mughal gardens, Marshall suggested that it was sufficient to keep the essential character of the original, but that modern horticultural means and elements (ex: lawns) should be added so that the gardens could appeal to the contemporary tastes of the audience who were most likely to frequent it. Anisha Shekhar Mukherji has argued that despite Marshall making clear his preference for preservation rather than restoration, the actual policy followed in the Red Fort was the latter, which may have been due to his hope that future kings and/or viceroys would use it as an official venue.<sup>64</sup> Marshall's scheme of restoration was thus heavily focused on recreating the Red Fort as a site of imperial pomp and ceremony that gestured toward its Mughal past, but one that would still provide enjoyment and sensual pleasure to European audiences.

In sum the lamentations of Fergusson and Cunningham regarding the condition of the Red Fort and Marshall's scheme for restoration were based upon a desire to displace the fort to a distant past defined by Orientalist fantasies—a past that was alive with Mughal aesthetics while at the same time entirely devoid of Mughal political agency or power. Meanwhile, preservation also sought to erase as quickly as possible the more immediate and shameful memory of British destruction in the Red Fort following the Mutiny. These impulses to separate the Red Fort from its associations with both the Mughal court, a recent political

contender of the British Empire, as well as the memory of the Mutiny, while maintaining its cosmetic grandeur of Orientalist excess would only gain impetus in the coming decades.

## Reinventing the Red Fort as a Public Monument

In 1913 the ASI began a comprehensive inventory of Delhi's monuments and also turned its attention toward generating public interest for the city's monuments. As discussed in the introduction institutionalized preservation in nineteenth-century India was fundamentally conceptualized around a philistine colonized subject, the Indian "layman," who was considered both uneducated as well as lethargic about his heritage. Preservation was meant to function as heuristic: encouraging Indians to actively inhabit spaces of their own past, and enabling an understanding of the monument as a relic of distant history while also promoting the use of monuments as everyday spaces of public intervention and leisure. This required making historic sites accessible and inviting to the public while also presenting them as didactic environments to the students, soldiers, and tourists who were visiting in larger numbers every year. However, in excavating the history of Delhi and making it more tangible and accessible to the public, the ASI was faced with several unanticipated problems. For example, how should the bodies and inclinations of the visitors to historic sites be controlled, so as to not inhibit them but also protect the monuments? How could Indians be educated to see monuments as symbols of their history and therefore warranting a certain gravitas in terms of observation and understanding? These questions were particularly important in the case of the Red Fort that had steadily become an important tourist destination as well as public space within the city in the early twentieth century.

The strenuous efforts of the ASI to draw in and educate the "layman" about important sites like the Red Fort can be seen by the impressive sales of publications such as the *Guide to the Delhi Fort*, which sold at the entrance to the monument.<sup>65</sup> Between 1915 and 1930, more than 2,050 copies of the guide were sold, amounting to about 137 copies a year.<sup>66</sup> The guide sold for the first six years at six rupees per copy and later (in 1919) at eight rupees. Although this was a substantial price to pay for a guidebook, the Deputy Commissioner's office often could not keep up with the demand for the publication. In 1919, Maulvi Zafar Hasan, the Assistant Superintendent of the ASI, also translated and printed the guide in Urdu, proving that there was enough demand from a vernacular population for such publications.<sup>67</sup>

As part of their efforts of creating awareness around Indian heritage, the ASI also allowed school and college students free access to the Red Fort. The Deputy Commissioner's Office in Delhi granted a large number of students free entry each week in order to foster their direct engagement with the historical past through monuments.<sup>68</sup> Free passes were also given to soldiers in uniform (both Indian and British) and special provisions were made for those visitors who wanted to sketch within the precincts of the fort. The Government extended itself in every way to encourage visitors to these historic monuments often forfeiting any revenue that could be gained from select groups of visitors and on some occasions even refunding the principals and headmasters for the tickets that they had purchased.

Records pertaining to ticket sales indicate that following the Delhi Durbar of 1911, a large volume of visitors passed through the Red Fort everyday. At two annas per ticket (in 1922

## **NOTICE.**

### **PROTECTED MONUMENT.**

**Any damage to or disfigurement of this monument is punishable, under the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act VII of 1904, with fine which may extend to five thousand Rupees or with imprisonment which may extend to three months or both.**

Delhi } C. A. BARRON,  
24th April 1911. } Collector of Delhi.

**FIG. 1.10.** Notice of fines for defacing protected monuments, 1911. Delhi Archives, DCO, file no. 46/1923.

the price of entry was increased to four annas or a quarter of a rupee), the price of entry was reasonable and after the ASI had landscaped the area around the monuments, the residents of Delhi frequented the fort as a space of leisure and relaxation. If the sale of tickets between 1921 and 1925 can be taken as an estimate then it seems that the fort received an average of one hundred thousand *paying* visitors every year, or close to 275 visitors per day.<sup>69</sup> Some years like 1920—when the Duke of Connaught visited, and the following year when the Prince of Wales visited—understandably had a much larger turnout of visitors.<sup>70</sup>

The sheer volume of visitors to the Red Fort raised several practical questions pertaining to the regulation of their movements and behavior. Public notices affixed to the entry of monuments listed the rules and regulations to be followed within protected monuments and one notice from 1911 indicated the hefty fines associated with vandalism or defacement. Meanwhile, certain spaces within the compound of the Red Fort called for special regulations. For example, in 1921 there was a reference to the proprietary measures to be taken by non-Muslims when entering the Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque) so as to comply with Islamic rules of conduct.<sup>71</sup> Colonial authorities who worried that visitors were using the historic monuments as leisure spaces rather than appreciating them as historic monuments, asked that “visitors are requested not to pick or break the flowers, pick the mosaics, scribble on, or damage the walls, threaten, or wrangle with the Indian Staff placed on duty at the entrance gate, Pearl Mosque and other buildings to see the Fort Gardens and Historical Buildings protected.”<sup>72</sup> By 1927 the list of taboo activities included walking onto the lawns of the fort gardens.

As the years progressed the rules of entry and public conduct in the fort became stricter and the ASI’s negotiations with the Military Department who continued to be housed within

the fort complex became increasingly fraught. A debate as to what must be done regarding the heavy traffic of soldiers who frequented the fort (due to their privilege of free entry provided they were in military uniform) and whose hobnail boots were causing considerable damage to the marble surfaces of several historic buildings is a good indication of the tensions between the two competing colonial agendas (preservation and military presence) that were housed within the Red Fort.<sup>73</sup>

Even as it granted Indians access to their own monuments colonial preservation policies aimed to regulate and monitor the Indian body as it came in contact with their heritage. The rules regarding conduct and decorum not only created a specific type of interaction between viewer and monument, but also established the former as passive recipient of history and the latter as mute object of the past. The historic monument could now only be inhabited by Indians in a manner prescribed either by the British military or the ASI. Meanwhile, the colonial agent held the power to frame the gaze and posture of the Indian subject toward his own monument.

### Between “Mutiny Relic” and Public Monument

As part of their mandate to increase traffic to Delhi’s monuments, colonial authorities were also invested in displaying monuments such that visitors could learn about India’s history. In 1918, in a series of conversations between the Chief Commissioner of Delhi and the ASI it was decided that the historic monuments of the city should be fixed with descriptive notices that gave a brief explanation of the history of the monument. The task of writing the notices regarding these was entrusted to J. A. Page, a young employee of the ASI, whose enthusiasm for Delhi’s history translated into lengthy historical descriptions of the city’s monuments. To this end, Page designed a free-standing wooden case for the historical information arguing that “I must say that, personally, I do not much like the idea of attaching notices direct to the walls of an old building—to me it is so suggestive of an advertisement; whereas a stand gives more the idea of an “exhibit,” which I think is more appropriate.” That Page wanted to create an ambience evocative of a museum or an “exhibition” is an insight into the heavily mediated connections between the viewer and the monument brought about by preservation policy in the early twentieth century.<sup>74</sup>

While Page believed that the rest of Delhi’s monuments would only need a simple listing of dates and main historical events, the Red Fort, he argued should receive a more detailed historical notice so that “the visitor [may] be able to visualize its appearance and characteristics in past days.”<sup>75</sup> The original historical brief written by Page mentioned the role that the Red Fort played during the Mutiny several times. For example, he pointed out that the Lahore Gate (the west entrance) of the fort was “the scene of the murder of a party of Englishmen and ladies, including Mr. S. Fraser, Commissioner, Delhi,” in 1857 and that the courtyard of the Naubat Khana was where, “during the mutiny some fifty English men, women and children, imprisoned in the Fort, were butchered by the Mutineers.”<sup>76</sup> Once completed Page submitted his historical briefs to the Chief Commissioner as well as Sir John Marshall, Director of the ASI, for approval. Both men were quick to edit Page’s copy erasing almost all references to 1857. In a strongly worded warning to Page, William Hailey,

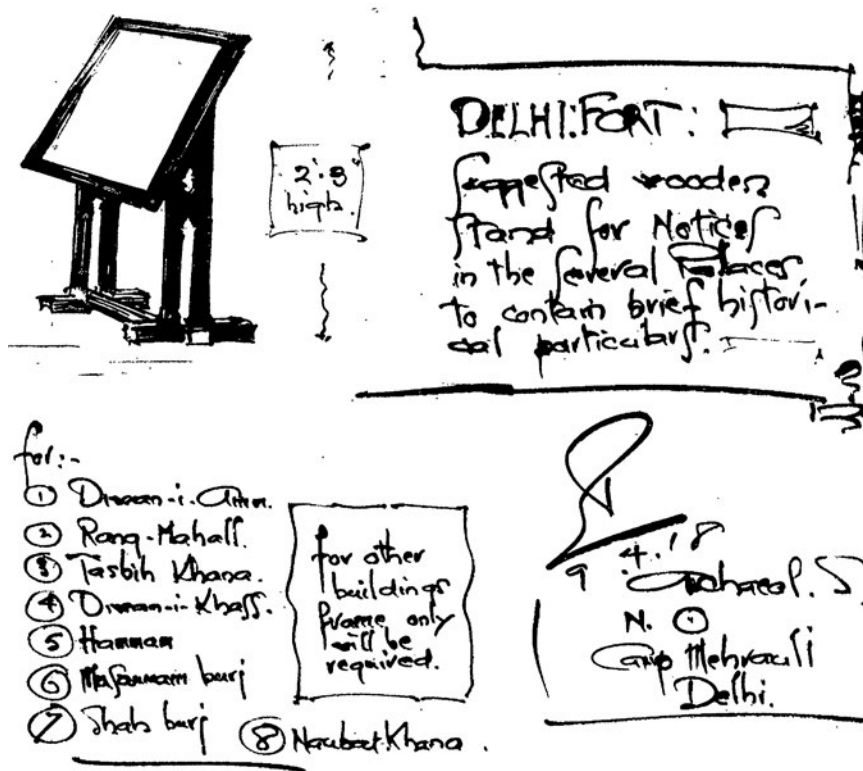


FIG. 1.11. Historical stands for the Red Fort, designed by J. A. Page. Delhi Archives, CCO, Education, 1918, file no. 187 (2).

the Chief Commissioner at the time, said that “I myself do not greatly care for recording the massacre of the Mutiny. It is better to let these matters rest in the records.” Hailey wrote separately and in a softer tone to John Marshall explaining that “I am not very anxious for instance to place on permanent record some of the facts about massacres of Europeans. *I am all for preserving Mutiny relics*, but not for publishing details of this sort”<sup>77</sup> [emphasis added]. That Hailey made the differentiation between a Mutiny relic meant for European audiences and the potential for Indian monuments to invoke the memory of the Mutiny is a startling reminder of the regulation of the Indian monument through policies of colonial preservation.

Annabel Jane Wharton has defined the relic as “a sign of previous power, real or imagined. It promises to put that power back to work. A relic is a fragment that evokes a lost fullness. It is a part that allows the embrace of an absent whole. It is the living piece of a dead object.”<sup>78</sup> By redacting information related to the Mutiny from the Red Fort’s history, Hailey truncated the possibility that the fort could work as a Mutiny relic and ensured that its power could not be put “back to work.” Indeed, publishing the details of the Mutiny at the Red Fort was charged with the colonial anxiety that the monument could be activated with the memory of Indian agency and sovereignty. Such potential had to be quickly annulled especially given the increasing

numbers of Indians who were frequenting the Red Fort. Preservation would ensure that the Red Fort would be read only as an inert relic of the abrogated Mughal Empire and not as a charged relic of the more recent Mutiny.

The Naubat Khana that Page had described as the site where “fifty English men, women and children, imprisoned in the Fort, were butchered by the Mutineers” was the same structure that Beato had memorialized in the exact same manner through his photograph and its accompanying caption only sixty years earlier. Although it is not clear if Page was making a conscious reference to Beato’s photograph, it is safe to say that by 1918 such details of the Mutiny had seeped into the memory of the metropolitan audience and indeed travelers to Delhi were often led to Mutiny sites by guidebooks that offered similar historical information. Other kinds of Mutiny memorabilia that circulated at the metropole also carried with them the affective power of relics, reminding their owners of the sons, fathers, brothers, or lovers who had fought and died in India during 1857. And yet, the Chief Commissioner’s reactions to Page suggest the inherent danger in offering similar relics of remembrance to a growing audience of Indian visitors, heretofore considered “laymen” possessing only the haziest knowledge of their own history. It was, after all, one thing for a family in England to purchase one of Beato’s photographs and see the site where a loved one might have died at the hands of a ruthless Indian mutineer or for a British visitor to the South Kensington Museum to look at a dagger that once belonged to the last emperor of the Mughal Empire. It was, however, quite another thing for an Indian to stand at the entrance to the inner court of the Red Fort and realize that British victory in 1857 was neither effortless nor fated. The possibility that Indian visitors to the Red Fort might have understood the monument for what it truly was—a historical center of Mughal sovereign power for close to two hundred years and a stronghold of Indian rebels in 1857—was too risky an imaginary for the colonial government to allow.

Correspondence from 1939 regarding the publication of a Hindi-language guide to the Red Fort continued the colonial government’s policy of silence toward the Mutiny. In this case, the Indian translator appointed to write the Hindi-language guide, a certain Chakra Dhar Hans, made the decision to omit all references to the Mutiny in the vernacular language guide. He explained his decision to the ASI thus:

I may be permitted to invite your attention to certain passages relating to the incidents connected with the Mutiny. The book in English was primarily written for foreign tourists, the case with the Hindi translation will be different. This book, will be used here by the Indians and considering the trend of public opinion, as revealed by a recent debate in the Central Assembly, is not in favour of giving undue prominence to the more painful and humiliating details about the Mutiny.<sup>79</sup>

Although in this case the decision to redact any information pertaining to the Mutiny and its association with the Red Fort came from an Indian, it bears noting that eighty years after the event, the Red Fort was still seen as having the capacity to activate memories of Indian political activism and anticolonial struggle. Once again the bureaucracy of preservation would censor those histories that threatened the narrative of the British Empire as a historical inevitability.

## Monument and Museum

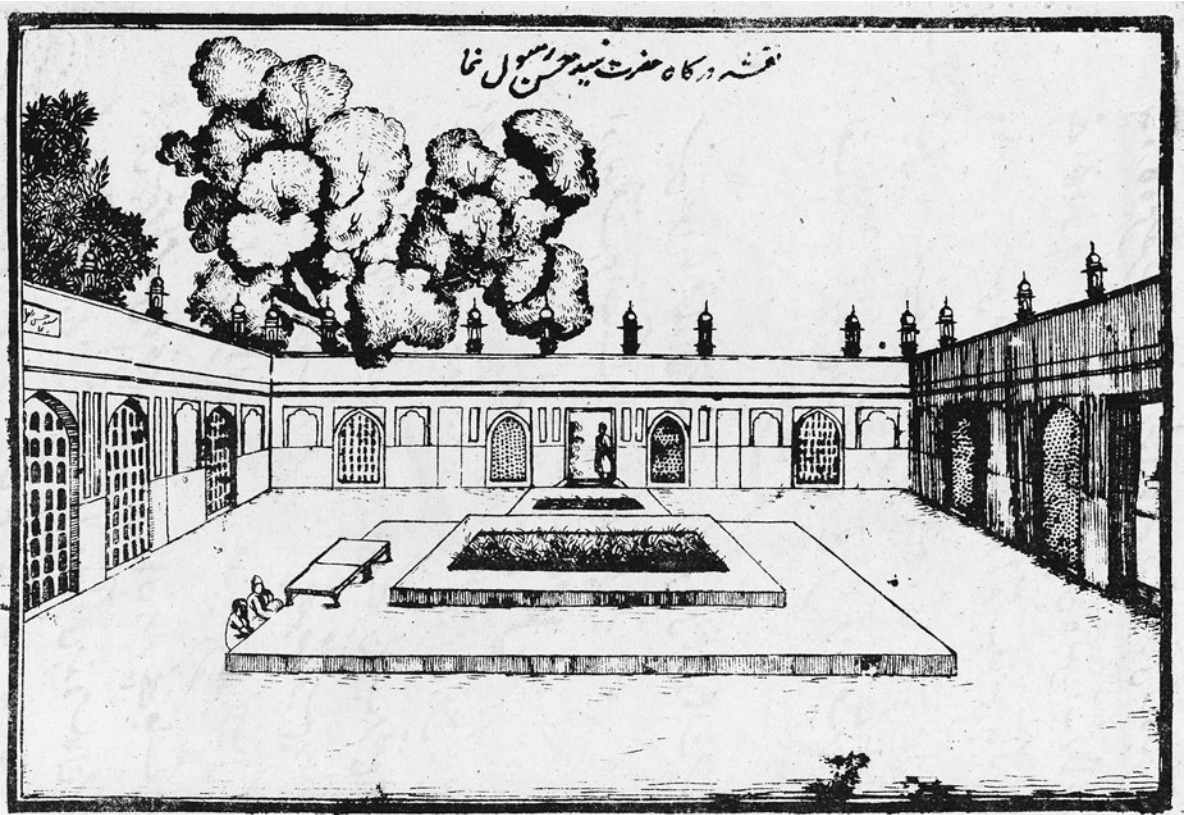
In 1906 the Naubat Khana was turned into a museum that exhibited the history and culture of the Mughal dynasty. The exhibits included framed portraits of Mughal emperors from Babur to Bahadur Shah Zafar, a coat from the imperial wardrobe, jewelry belonging to the last queen of Delhi, coins of the emperors, a Mughal prayer carpet, etc. Donations to the museum increased as the date of the 1911 Durbar and the visit of King George V neared. For example, the Nawab of Pataudi presented several weapons (a *zaghnaul*, a *teghae bardhwani*, and a bow with twelve arrows) to the museum and specifically asked that these weapons be displayed and accompanied by the following caption: “On loan from the Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan, Chief of Pataudi. These arms were used by his grandfather in the Mutiny *on behalf of the British Govt*”<sup>80</sup> [emphasis added]. The use of the Naubat Khana as a museum that displayed weapons used by British collaborators in crushing the Mutiny was perhaps the final nail in the coffin of the Red Fort. Stripped entirely of its associations with Mughal sovereignty and Indian political agency, the Naubat Khana was recoded as a site for the display of Indian loyalty in service of the British Empire in 1857. Preserving the Red Fort had become a colonial strategy of managing imperial anxieties of the Mutiny and allowed the colonial government to separate themselves from their own shameful histories of looting and destruction.

The transformation of the Red Fort following 1857 did not merely entail its conversion from the seat of the Mughal Empire to the center of colonial military power in India. The fort also became the object of varied yet mutually constitutive processes of preservation and destruction that either brought the affect of the Mutiny into high relief or suppressed it entirely. At the metropole photographs, illustrated newsmagazines, and the panorama worked to preserve the affect of death, martyrdom, “Oriental savagery”, and British retribution as it had taken place in and around the Red Fort. Meanwhile, on the ground in Delhi itself fantasies of total destruction were accompanied by very real acts of vandalism that served as the physical evidence of British anger and revanchism. Institutionalized preservation as it unfolded in the late nineteenth century was only a late manifestation of British interaction with the Red Fort and sought to recover the lost grandeur of the Mughal palace even as it controlled the meanings and interactions between Indian audiences and the monument.

It was not until the 1990s (almost 150 years after the Mutiny and several decades after decolonization) that there began to be a recognition that the Red Fort had played in the events of 1857 as well as the Indian independence movement. Two museums, the Swatantra Senani (Freedom Fighters) Museum and the Swatantra Sangram (Freedom Struggle) Museum, were opened at or near the Red Fort in the mid-1990s. A daily sound and light show (in English and Hindi) also provides rich vignettes of the anticolonial struggles that spanned the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries. The Naubat Khana itself is now the Indian War Memorial Museum. While these events and museums are commendable additions to the Red Fort, their narratives of Indian agency operate within distinct didactic and performative spaces. For example, explanations of the Indian independence movement at the Swatantra Sangram Museum have little relation to the plaques at structures like the Diwan-i-Am or the Naubat Khana, which continue to provide excerpted histories of the structures isolated to their Mughal past. In 2007, the Red Fort was nominated a UNESCO World Heritage

Site and the monument's "outstanding universal value" was based on the fort being a fine representation of Mughal architecture, on its innovative planning and garden design, and its history as a symbol of power from the seventeenth century to the present day. Meanwhile, the document remains silent about the vast scale of destruction wrought by the British military on the Red Fort following the Mutiny of 1857.

While the British may have controlled the means of historical representation in the Red Fort, such that they were able to swiftly redact inconvenient truths from its official histories, this was certainly not the case for other monuments in the city where the agency of Indians manifested itself in unexpected ways. The following chapters will address the manner in which some monuments in Delhi were activated as sites of protest and became the loci for indigenous articulations of history, which the colonial authorities had no choice but to confront.



**FIG. 2.1.** Drawing of the Rasul Numa Dargah from Syed Ahmad Khan's *Asar-us-Sanadid* (1847 ed.). Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

## 1918: Rasul Numa Dargah

**The building of New Delhi**—the official capital of the British Indian Empire—is underway. Unlike the rest of Delhi, which is dotted with historic monuments or antiquated sites, colonial administrators consider Raisina Hill, the site chosen for new capital, a *tabula rasa*. Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker, the designers of the new imperial capital, are pleased that although the site offers views of Delhi's monuments at a distance, it is unencumbered by ancient sites that might disrupt the orderliness of their master plan. The British government begins acquiring land for the new city, which will span more than forty thousand hectares, almost immediately after King George V makes the declaration regarding New Delhi during the Delhi Durbar in 1911. In order to beat land speculation and circumvent public auctions, colonial officers work swiftly, often marking several small structures with minor historical importance, for expropriation. What the colonial authorities see as minor monuments or superfluous annexes to monuments, however, the local communities see as historically important structures and landscapes. The slated expropriations spark a wave of protest and negotiations by Indians who articulate the historical value of their sites in order to protect them. The protests prompt the colonial government to conduct the first comprehensive heritage survey, which documents and ranks all monuments of historic value in Delhi.

In 1918, a graveyard and garden attached to a small Sufi shrine called the Rasul Numa Dargah comes under the land acquisition project. While the colonial government wishes to preserve the seventeenth-century monument of the *dargah* it is less keen to save the “eyesore” of the graveyard, which will be located in the middle of New Delhi. When the caretakers of the *dargah* are approached with compensation for the garden and graveyard, they refuse to accept the colonial distinction between the graveyard as a merely utilitarian space and the *dargah* as a monument worthy of preservation. Instead they petition the government with a series of maps that articulate the historical quotient of each section of the complex, arguing that the monument, its subsidiary graves, and gardens should be included in the survey of Delhi's heritage that is being prepared by the colonial government.

As land acquisitions continue, the critique of the colonial government by Delhi residents shifts from negotiation and strategy to strident critique and public protests. As more minor monuments or ancillary structures such as caretaker's quarters and gardens come under expropriation, the communities affected by these appropriations articulate their own definition of heritage, often by way of vocal public protests. As a result, the archive of Delhi's heritage, so far the exclusive domain of the colonial expert, reluctantly makes room for these indigenous articulations of historical meaning. The colonial imagination of New Delhi as a *tabula rasa* is interrupted by the undeniable presence of Indian histories, voices, and monuments.



## Interrupting the Archive: Indigenous Voices and Colonial Hegemony

This is the dargah of Hazrat Syed Hasan Rasul Numa, a most distinguished holy man and prophet of his time. His legacy is so famous that it leaves my own description of him wanting in every way. His glory and piety was such that the Prophet (peace be upon him) would reveal himself to each of Rasul Numa's disciples. It is due to this esteemed benediction that he received the appellation of Rasul Numa or Revealer of the Prophet. His final resting place is not below the earth but in heaven. At the head of his tombstone is the following engraving: "Hasan Rasul Numa, distinguished descendent of Husain, the second Owais Qarani and the third Hasnain."<sup>1</sup>

The above description of Syed Hasan Rasul Numa's *dargah*<sup>2</sup> appeared alongside a drawing of the monument, in Syed Ahmad Khan's first edition of the *Asar-us-Sanadid* in 1847. That Syed Ahmad made room for both a description as well as image of the monument in his survey gives some indication as to the regard with which he and others of the city held the monument. The Rasul Numa Dargah drops out of mention, however, in the second edition of the *Asar-us-Sanadid* published in 1854, which Syed Ahmad made more "scientific" for his European audience. This first instance of the marginalization of the Rasul Numa Dargah in the archival heritage of Delhi would be repeated through its life in the twentieth century. A second instance and more immediate threat to the Rasul Numa Dargah came in 1918, when colonial authorities labeled it an unsightly intrusion into the landscape of New Delhi and earmarked its gardens and graveyard for appropriation. The local community countered these colonial claims with their own articulations of the historic importance of the *dargah* and its surroundings.

The negotiations between colonial authorities and Indians regarding the historic value of the Rasul Numa Dargah raises two salient issues that will be explored in this chapter. The first is the passionate advocacy of historic spaces and landscapes made by Indian actors and agents. As discussed in the introduction, colonial preservation was premised on the colonial fiction that Indians had little regard for their heritage either due to lack of knowledge or due to lethargy. Colonial stewardship of Indian monuments was thus all the more urgent given the perceived malaise of Indians toward their own heritage and the earliest justification for a centralized bureaucracy of preservation was the need for the colonizer to

save India's architectural antiquities from Indians themselves. Yet these colonial narratives of Indian apathy toward their own heritage were dramatically interrupted by examples such as the Rasul Numa Dargah where local communities fought to preserve sites that they saw as rich in history and tradition. The indigenous articulations of historical value also reveal the variety of tactics and rhetorical strategies that Indians used to contest colonial policies of expropriation. These ranged from savvy appropriations of colonial definitions of heritage to strident denouncements that squarely blamed the colonial government for destroying Delhi's built heritage.

The examples of the Rasul Numa Dargah and other monuments I discuss in this chapter beg a revision of the notion that preservation in modern India was fashioned and shaped entirely by colonial agents. Such a reckoning is particularly important considering that the historiography of preservation in the "Western" world has celebrated the grassroots movements and individual actors who sought patronage or publicity for monuments to save them from ruin. The intervention made by the American Ann Pamela Cunningham to save Mt. Vernon (the estate of George Washington) from imminent ruin in the nineteenth century is perhaps the most often cited example of this type of advocacy.<sup>3</sup> Similarly the discourse of preservation in England is often credited to the Society of Antiquaries, a group of lettered men who raised awareness about British antiquities, and later to intellectuals such as William Morris and John Ruskin, who championed architectural conservation as a bulwark against industrialization.<sup>4</sup> In a colonial context such as India, however, their counterparts are often missing or have been erased out of the collective memory of heritage debates. Although early preservationists included educated Indians such as Babu Rajendralal Mitra, the average "lay Indian" was seen, by the colonizers, as ill-educated and disinclined to either invest in or protect his own heritage. Indeed, the common Indian man or woman was seen as one of two major threats to preservation, the other being the hot and humid climate of the subcontinent. Yet, as this chapter shows, there were many robust examples of grassroots activism regarding preservation in Delhi in the early twentieth century. The first goal of this chapter, then, is to illuminate the vast range of agents, actors, and the polyphonous debates that shaped heritage in twentieth-century Delhi primarily through the case of the Rasul Numa Dargah, but also through several other monuments in the city.

The second goal of this chapter is to situate the history of colonial preservation within a larger context of urban development and speculative economies. Despite colonial rhetoric to the contrary, the cultural project of preservation did not exist or operate outside the circuits of capitalist accumulation. The construction of New Delhi impacted the definition and calcification of Delhi's heritage in two fundamental ways. First, the fate of monuments often hinged on their proximity to New Delhi and their potential to "interfere" with the pristine vision of the new master-planned city. Indeed the British government had chosen the site of Raisina Hill for New Delhi, believing it to be free of any major monuments that would need to be saved. Minor monuments, it was thought, could be either bought over from local custodians or allowed to fall into benign neglect. Colonial land-grabbing thus marginalized indigenous forms of commemoration as well as historical sites as it converted minor monuments into tradeable commodities. Second, the ASI conducted the first official survey of Delhi's monuments in the wake of protests around the expropriation of a minor monument in 1913.<sup>5</sup> The identification and cataloging of Delhi's monuments by the colonial government

came about as a result of indigenous efforts to resist colonial expropriation of their historic sites and spaces. In other words, Delhi's first official heritage archive was borne out of a profound confrontation between colonial and local articulations of architectural value and meaning, rather than a purely colonial impulse of cultural benefaction.

The official catalog of Delhi's heritage (started in 1913 and published in 1916) not only identified and ranked monuments in terms of its relative importance, but also presented definitive histories for each heritage structure, thereby creating an archive that served as a mechanism of colonial control.<sup>6</sup> This official compendium of heritage established the definition of the monument as well as the parameters on which its historic value could be assessed. In as much as the colonial archive of Delhi's heritage was an "objective" catalog of the city's monuments it was also a means to silence and censor any further articulations of heritage by Indians themselves. Michel Foucault had defined the archive as not just the entire mass of texts and documents that belong to a single discursive formation, but in fact a discourse that constitutes the "law of what can be said" or the "system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events."<sup>7</sup> The colonial bureaucracy of preservation instituted a system in which specific monuments appeared as "unique events" in a larger chronology of India's civilizational past. The singular history of the architectural monument was reinforced by the apparatus of preservation. Even as Delhi's monuments gained a new form of legitimacy, their reverence as heritage icons also reinscribed the power of the archive as a discourse. This archive of heritage cannot, however, be understood outside of its own historical context—that is, a moment marked by indigenous voices and protests around the colonial threat toward many of Delhi's smaller monuments.

This chapter is divided into three sections that trace a chronology from the earliest protest over a minor monument and the beginnings of the heritage archive in 1913; to the period around 1918, where the Rasul Numa Dargah stands as the example of protracted negotiations between colonial authorities and Indian agents; and finally to a later period in the mid-1920s when protests surrounding colonial expropriations became more vocal, strident, and also took on larger public dimensions than they had had before. The first section of the chapter looks at the nature and extent of land acquisitions that followed the imperial declaration of the building of New Delhi in 1911 and its impact on the "value" of historic monuments in Delhi. It also investigates the circumstances of indigenous protest under which the ASI was prompted to conduct the first official survey of Delhi's heritage.

The second section of the chapter speaks to the colonial refashioning of Delhi's landscape, partly through the building of New Delhi and partly through the reconsolidation of Delhi's past imperial cities. In order to insert themselves into Delhi's heritage of imperial builders, colonial architects and archaeologists favored and increased the intelligibility of monuments that could be precisely associated with the major Islamic empires of the past. On the one hand, monuments, like the Rasul Numa Dargah that did not service this colonial imaginary of successive imperial cities, were marginalized in the heritage discourse created by the ASI. On the other hand, some Indians were savvy enough to appropriate colonial parameters of historical value to gain legitimacy for their minor monuments and insert them into the emerging canon of Delhi's heritage.

The third and final section of the chapter looks at vocal protests by Indians critiquing the increasingly rampant expropriations of property and the high-handed attitude of the colonial

authorities toward the minor monuments of Delhi. These protests once again give a glimpse into the stakes that indigenous agents held in their own historic spaces and the lengths they were willing to go to in order to preserve them. It also reveals the specific strategies through which Indians pressured or challenged colonial hegemony over the discourse of heritage in the early twentieth century.

## Creating and Contesting the Heritage Archive of Delhi

In 1913 an appointee of the ASI, Maulvi Zafar Hasan traveled across Delhi to identify and catalog every monument of historical value in the city. Although Zafar Hasan was a life-long resident of Delhi and had the ability to read Urdu and Persian, it took him over two years to complete this task. Hasan's heroic efforts resulted in a catalog of four volumes published by the ASI between 1916 and 1922 under the title *List of Mohammadan and Hindu Monuments, Delhi Province*. The ASI's survey of the city's monuments was presented as the first "objective" and comprehensive catalog of Delhi's historical fabric and continues to be the definitive classification of the city's heritage till today. Yet the context within which this heritage archive emerged reveals the unruly histories and charged atmosphere that necessitated its creation.

### The Value of Land and the Value of Historic Monuments

Only a few days after the 1911 Durbar, the Government of India imposed the Land Acquisitions Act of 1894<sup>8</sup> in order to expropriate land for the new capital as well as the several auxiliary functions that were to be housed in Delhi, such as the cantonment and Civil Lines. Land was to be acquired as swiftly as possible in order to beat speculation sparked by the announcement of the change in capital. The following quote illustrates the general anxiety that prevailed in the colonial office and the understanding that the longer it took to acquire land in Delhi, the more it would cost the government:

The Governor General in Council is unable to lay too much stress upon the necessity for dealing promptly throughout with this important matter, and in particular the provisional notification of all lands which must be acquired. . . . It is doubtless within the knowledge of the Government of the Punjab that speculation in land in the neighborhood of Delhi has already begun, and consequently that every day's delay will result in enhanced prices.<sup>9</sup>

The ambitious project of New Delhi was launched at a time when the British Crown was suffering financial stringency itself. By the late nineteenth century, China was producing almost as much opium as it exported and the loss of revenue from this once thriving trade had hurt the Crown's purse. Viceroy Curzon's partitioning of Bengal in 1905 and the reconsolidation of it only six years later in 1911 had cost a massive outlay of monies and further

impacted the imperial economy. Meanwhile, the original budget of four million sterling, estimated for building New Delhi had to be recalculated almost immediately and increased continuously until it reached a final figure of 9.5 million sterling.<sup>10</sup> The lack of confidence over the empire's financial prowess translated into a land acquisitions strategy that was based on acquiring as much land as quickly and surreptitiously as possible. Publicity regarding land acquisitions was to be kept to a minimum, for fear that this too might fuel speculation; and acquisitions officers were asked to approach land owners individually and broker deals privately, in order to circumvent public auctions and bidding wars.<sup>11</sup>

The choice of Raisina Hill as the site for New Delhi too was motivated by several pragmatic concerns such as the perceived availability of "open" or "unclaimed" land that could be quickly and effortlessly acquired by the colonial government. Consider, for example, this justification made in the first report regarding the choice of a site for the building of New Delhi in 1913:

The site is not manworn. The monuments and remains of older Delhis, while they add to the attractions of the view from the site, lie in the lower land outside or to the east of the site itself. Thus a free hand is gained in developing the site and the *ground is not cumbered with monuments and tombs needing reverent treatment . . .* The site itself contains good points for the effective location of buildings of all characters and sizes, *and offers opportunities of securing good views of the historical and archaeological remains of the ancient cities.*<sup>12</sup> [emphasis added]

Such was the early colonial imaginary of Raisina Hill—a classic tabula rasa that, while offering a favorable vantage for views to ancient monuments, was itself free of any such historic structures that warranted special consideration from the creators of New Delhi. This imaginary of a historically vacant site awaiting colonial definition, was also accompanied by the imperial perception of Delhi as a politically vapid city. Indeed, a primary motivation for establishing an imperial capital in Delhi was the growing nationalism incubating in Calcutta, the former administrative center of the British government in India. There, a small but vocal group of Indian intellectuals had begun to make their demands for self-rule heard. Delhi on the other hand, was perceived to be a politically impotent city whose residents had been silenced into submission after the collapse of the Mughal Empire and the Rebellion of 1857.<sup>13</sup> These imaginaries of physical emptiness as well as political anemia went hand in hand, reinforcing the colonial fantasy that the British would have a "free hand" in creating as well as managing their empire more effectively at New Delhi. Such assumptions would be duly challenged as land acquisitions started in 1911.

The scale of land acquisitions was massive and covered an area much larger than what was needed to build New Delhi. (See Plate 4 to see the urban area slated for immediate land acquisition in 1912.) The proposition of acquiring land was followed by a debate regarding the proper means of compensation to the owners of land, but more importantly how the value of land occupied by historic and religious monuments should be assessed. After some deliberation the Land Acquisitions Office concluded that because temples, mosques, and *dargahs* were endowed properties for the use of the public, they would lose

their purpose once acquired by the government and their function as religious places would cease.<sup>14</sup> In other words, by acquiring a religious structure the colonial government would essentially negate the value of its endowment. A related difficulty was that of ascertaining the “market value” of these sites. Should the “owners,” when such a group could be identified, be compensated only for the land or the monument as well? If the latter how could the value of a religious and often historic structure be determined in monetary terms? As one colonial officer asked: “The question is have these objects as temples, mosques, and *dargahs* any market value? They are not the things that come into the market but still they have their use to the villagers in providing them with a place of worship.”<sup>15</sup> Eventually it was decided that the “owners” of religious structures would only receive compensation for the land on which such properties sat. For many modest religious sites such orders of expropriation and compensation were the first step toward either demolition or planned obsolescence. Land acquisition in twentieth-century Delhi thus created a paradoxical relationship between historic monuments and monetary value. On the one hand, the colonial government deemed that several religious monuments in Delhi had no monetary worth. On the other hand, this decision came at a time when a vast area of the city was being surveyed and parceled into exchangeable commodities. This was clearly a system that disproportionately benefited the colonial government rather than the Indian residents of Delhi.

As non-movable properties (and therefore different from loot or objects of antiquity) the fate of many monuments was determined by their proximity to the new capital and the redevelopment potential of their associated lands. A particularly insidious consequence of land acquisition policy was that monuments, defined narrowly as a single building or a neatly bounded complex of buildings, became separated in form, function, and symbolism from their larger cultural contexts. The communities that had grown around and maintained these smaller monuments were often displaced, thus pushing the monuments into a state of benign neglect and ruin. For example, in discussing the Lal Bangla, a monument that contained the tombs of Emperor Humayun’s queen and Alamgir II’s queen Lal Kunwar, the Land Acquisitions Office noted that several surrounding tombs had already been demolished to make way for the Okhla Canal which ran through the building. The officer noted that although the monument contained historically significant graves it could be demolished if needed especially considering the lack of community in the area to protest such action.<sup>16</sup> In another part of the same urban area the local community wanted to maintain a large number of graves that they venerated. Here too, the land acquisitions officer advised the expropriation of all graves except one that was the grave of *pir bahin* (spiritual sister) of Nizam-ud-din Auliya (a prominent fourteenth-century Sufi saint). The officer suggested that the graves once acquired “could be left as they are and allowed to fall into ruins”—a strategy that would clearly absolve the colonial government of any responsibility in destroying the graves and eventually allow them to build anew on the property.<sup>17</sup> Land acquisitions thus profoundly altered the historical value of Delhi’s smaller monuments, reinscribing them within colonial parameters of monetary worth and propertied capital.<sup>18</sup> More importantly, the fate and posterity of many of the city’s “minor” monuments was about to be determined by the capitalist enterprise of acquiring land as expediently and cheaply as possible for New Delhi.

## The Rakabganj Protest and the Origins of Delhi's Heritage Archive

The example of the Rakabganj Gurudwara<sup>19</sup> is perhaps the most iconic in terms of a local custodian emphatically protecting the meaning, value, and grounds of a monument that was threatened by colonial land acquisitions. Its importance cannot be overstated as it was the protest surrounding this Sikh temple that prompted the 1913 heritage listing of Delhi.<sup>20</sup> The proposed expropriation of the gardens around the Rakabganj Gurudwara was the most common of its kind in terms of land acquisitions and bore similarities to the later case of the Rasul Numa Dargah. Although the *gurudwara* was located centrally within the area planned for New Delhi, the main religious structure was not under any threat of demolition. However, the colonial authorities were keen to acquire the garden surrounding the temple, especially considering that the *gurudwara* was situated very close to the proposed Vice-Regal lodge. The acquisition of the garden was seen as the only way to deal with the potential “nuisance” caused by the Sikh devotees who used the outdoor space frequently for memorial services and devotional gatherings. In addition to expropriating the garden the Land Acquisitions Office suggested measures for containing the *gurudwara*, visually as well as physically, from the larger environment of New Delhi. They proposed that “a road could be made up to [the temple] with ornamental walls etc. so that people could only go to it and return and not be able to spread themselves out.”<sup>21</sup>

In 1913 the Land Acquisitions Office informed the *mahant*<sup>22</sup> of the Rakabganj Gurudwara that although the main structure would not be acquired, the small garden adjoining it would be expropriated for the new capital. The *mahant* wrote at once to government officials pleading against the confiscation of the garden. Underlining that the garden had as much religious and historical significance as the temple (the latter was built on the cremation site of Guru Tegh Bahadur Singh, one of the main spiritual leaders of the Sikh religion) he claimed that the garden was constructed during the time of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in the seventeenth century with money donated by the Maharaja of Patiala.<sup>23</sup> Ignoring his petition the government planned to proceed with the acquisition of the garden, leaving behind only the *dharmshala*<sup>24</sup> as a concession to his claims; however, officials were quick to warn that that too would be confiscated if it were put to “obnoxious uses” which would not be tolerated due to the proximity of the *gurudwara* to New Delhi. When government workers began erecting boundary pillars and fencing off the garden that was to be acquired, the *mahant* put up physical resistance and prevented the workers from completing their task. After several futile attempts by the colonial government to offer monetary compensation for the land around the *gurudwara* the Land Acquisitions Office eventually backed down in their claims to the space.<sup>25</sup>

The grounds on which the *mahant* contested the appropriation of the garden are perhaps the most valuable piece of this puzzle as they provide insight into the types of claims made for other monuments in Delhi at this time including the Rasul Numa Dargah. The claim made by the *mahant* was based neither on his individual nor his extended community's rights to the land and its religious importance but on very specific historical articulations, which included the invocation of Mughal emperors such as Aurangzeb and other Indian rulers such as the Maharaja of Patiala, and their association to the *gurudwara*. In other words, the *mahant* logically argued that if the colonial government had decided to save

the structure of the *gurudwara* itself based on historical parameters then surely the gardens too qualified as worthy of preservation.<sup>26</sup>

It was the protest against the confiscation of land belonging to the Rakabganj Gurudwara that propelled the ASI to employ Zafar Hasan in the compilation of a list of ancient monuments that would establish their historic “authenticity” and precisely demarcate the geographical extent of historic monuments and their attendant spaces. Zafar Hasan’s efforts described each historic building by date, style, builder or patron, and location, and also provided translations of inscriptions when applicable. A brief account of the monument’s current state of repair was also included, which made the catalog prescriptive in terms of future interventions. Historical descriptions for each monument were kept to a bare minimum and were mostly gleaned from epigraphic information taken from the monuments themselves. Monuments were also ranked (as Class I, Class II, or Class III monuments) in terms of their historical import.

The selection, documentation, and arrangement of Delhi’s monuments in the catalog created a fixed archive of the city’s heritage, determining the attention that each monument would receive from that moment on. It also delimited the monument’s historical as well physical qualities into a rigid set of meanings determined by the colonizer. This archive both legitimated the monument while also truncating future possibilities of redefinition or multiple historical meanings for a single structure. To return to Jacques Derrida’s definition of the archive discussed in the introduction to this book, the creation of Delhi’s heritage listing also empowered the colonial government as its sole gatekeepers.<sup>27</sup> Although Zafar Hasan was the primary author of this archive (and himself relied heavily on Syed Ahmad’s *Asar-us-Sanadid* for much historical information), the ASI became the true *archon* of Delhi’s heritage, regulating which monuments deserved preservation and to what degree. The archon also managed the monument’s meanings, while silencing indigenous articulations of the same. The colonial monopoly over the definition of the archive was, however, a precarious one. It would be continually interrupted and manipulated by a range of Indian actors and agents even as the bureaucracy of preservation tightened its control over Delhi’s heritage. The ultimate, if begrudging, evidence of the colonial government’s recognition of the larger compound of the Rakabganj Gurudwara appears in Zafar Hasan’s list of Delhi monuments. Here he states that the *mahant* was able to furnish a *firman* (royal decree) issued by Emperor Shah Alam II (r. 1759–1806) in 1787 for a grant of land to build gardens and rest houses for the use of Sikh mendicants and travelers.<sup>28</sup> The colonial archive thus had to accommodate, albeit reluctantly, the voice of the Indian agent who had equal or greater stakes in preserving his monument.

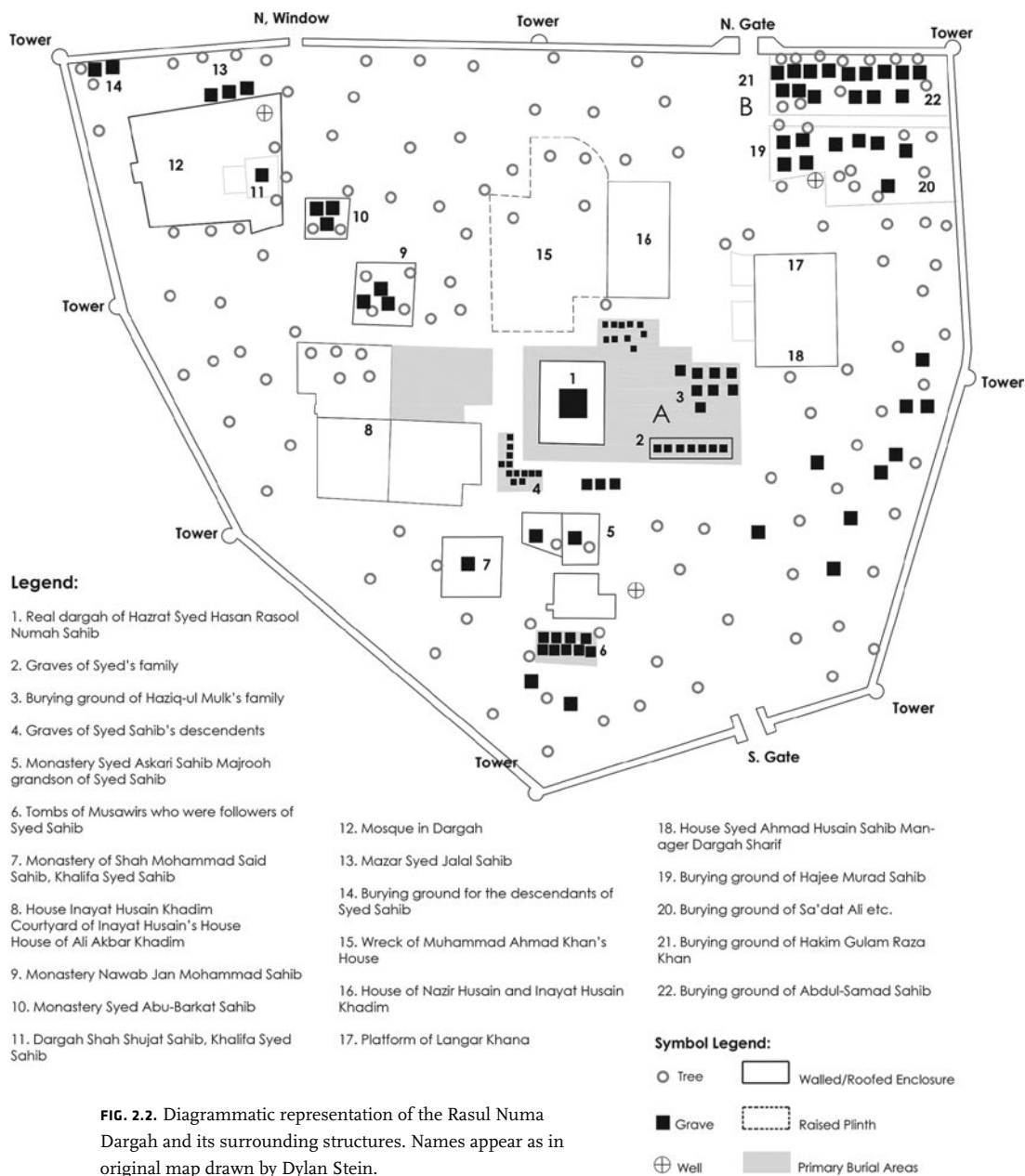
### The Rasul Numa Dargah: Interrupting the Archive

Like the case of the Rakabganj Gurudwara, the case for expropriating the land around the Rasul Numa Dargah seemed to be motivated largely by aesthetic considerations or at the very least a need to cordon off what were seen as messy religious functions from the pristine new capital that was being anticipated. When J. Addison, the Special Land Acquisitions Officer, visited in 1918 he had stated that the *dargah* itself was “not a bad building—except for its surroundings” the latter which included two residential houses, one old mosque, three wells, and several other graves.<sup>29</sup> In terms of historical value Addison recognized that Rasul

Numa had lived during the reign of Aurangzeb and was a “Fakir (Darvesh) of some repute.” Despite these acknowledgments of antiquity Addison was vehement about the dilapidated condition of the grounds and other structures that surrounded the main *dargah* and offered the opinion that “I do not think that the owner will ever repair the place which will always remain an eyesore.”<sup>30</sup> More importantly the land occupied by many of the dilapidated structures of the *dargah* was in the course of main roads plotted for New Delhi, which would have to be deflected to maintain the *dargah* in its entirety. Residences of the administrators and bureaucrats of the new capital would eventually abut the compound of the *dargah*. Addison’s recommendation was as follows: “The best solution would be to leave the Dargah only, which is a small place and could be made quite decent. This would not interfere so much with building. The next best solution would be to leave the Dargah and the adjoining Chabutra on the West, on which are buried some Rais’ ancestors.”<sup>31</sup> As with the Rakabganj Gurudwara, it was suggested that the *dargah* and the *chabutra* be enclosed within newly built walls that would allow visitors only one point of entry and exit.

Three weeks after the Chief Commissioner of Delhi gave Addison the permission to acquire everything besides the main shrine and *chabutra* of the Rasul Numa Dargah, his office received a letter from H. M. Ajmal Khan who claimed to be a direct descendant of one of Syed Hasan Rasul Numa’s disciples.<sup>32</sup> The letter was accompanied by two detailed plans: one of the *dargah* of Rasul Numa and the other of an adjoining *dargah* of Hazrat Shah Pir Banbasi. (See Plates 5, 6 & 7 for a reproduction of the hand-drawn watercolor plans submitted by Ajmal Khan for each of these monuments.) Pir Banbasi had also been a disciple of Rasul Numa and had been buried near his spiritual mentor following traditional norms of Sufi burial. Over the years Pir Banbasi had become revered as a saint himself and his own followers chose to be buried near him, leading to an infinitely expanding geography of commemoration. In addition Ajmal Khan identified the following graves within the compound of the first *dargah*: that of his grandfather, father, mother, and two elder brothers (on the area marked A in fig. 2.2). An adjoining plot of land housed the graves of other family members (area marked B in fig. 2.2) and an additional part of the complex was reserved for future graves of those who could trace their genealogy back to the original Rasul Numa. The maps represented the entire area as hallowed land with trees, graves, wells, and a mosque, such that it was hard to identify the difference between landscape and monument. It was also apparent from the map and the description of the site that these were commemorative geographies that would continue to expand in the future. Indeed, the memory of the original Sufi saint was meant to be kept alive through consecutive burials that would extend infinitely in time—a prospect that was deeply troubling to the colonial government who were intent on limiting such funerary practices as well as the territorial expansion of graveyards, especially in the area designated for the new capital.<sup>33</sup>

After mapping very precisely the number of graves and their relation to one another, Ajmal Khan went on to say that Rasul Numa’s *dargah* was not only revered locally but across India and internationally. He noted that a direct descendent of the Rasul Numa now served as an aide-de-camp to the Nizam of Hyderabad, and that the latter had visited the *dargah* during the Durbar of 1911 and offered one thousand rupees for its upkeep.<sup>34</sup> In addition Indian rulers, such as the Begum Sahiba (dowager queen) of Bhopal and other Muslim princes and chiefs, who held Rasul Numa in great regard, frequently visited and paid their respects at the *dargah*. While Ajmal Khan’s petition was written as a plea, he strategically invoked



**FIG. 2.2.** Diagrammatic representation of the Rasul Numa Dargah and its surrounding structures. Names appear as in original map drawn by Dylan Stein.

connections of Indian imperial patronage in order to emphasize the importance of the *dargah* outside of its merely local significance. It was also not inconsequential that the two Indian rulers invoked in the petition—the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Begum Sahiba of Bhopal—although supporters of the British government had nevertheless been successful in maintaining autonomous power outside of colonial rule. Ajmal Khan and his fellow petitioners were perhaps cautioning the colonial government to maintain cordial relations and good will with their powerful Indian allies even as anticolonial sentiment was gaining ground in India.

Although the nature of protest that surrounded the Rasul Numa Dargah was not as visceral as that which accompanied the Rakabganj Gurudwara, both instances provide proof of the ingenious strategies of resistance employed by local actors against colonial intrusions. It is particularly useful to note how property that was reduced to an exchangeable commodity by the colonial government was counter-represented by local actors as historical assets that were worthy of preservation. As the colonial government had decided that historical monuments were in fact inalienable property and therefore had no “market value”; this was a way for indigenous agents to subvert calls for expropriation. In addition, the deliberate invocation of continuing forms of patronage from Indian rulers (the Maharaja of Patiala or the Nizam of Hyderabad) at these monuments was a reminder to the colonial government that the community that revered these sites extended far beyond the merely local and seemingly powerless agents associated with them. Most importantly the protests staged by the communities around these historical and religious sites interrupted the colonial fantasy of New Delhi as a *tabula rasa*—devoid of either “physical hindrances” or a politically active community that would present little obstacle to the imposition of perfect colonial order. By staking their claims to space, Indians asserted their own articulations of heritage and historical value within the landscape of Delhi.

The persistent efforts of the custodians of the Rasul Numa Dargah paid off in that it was included in the second edition of the heritage listing of Delhi along with its extended garden and affiliated graves. Other minor monuments of Delhi, however, did not have the good fortune of either the Rakabganj Gurudwara or the Rasul Numa Dargah. Many were subject to outright expropriation despite similar protests from the owners and their immediate community. Such was the case with one *kerbala*, near the Safdarjung tomb where Shia Muslims worshipped and gathered every year to build and sell *tazias*, particularly during the annual festival of Muharram.<sup>35</sup> Despite the Shia community’s protest that the *kerbala* was a sacred and historic space, colonial authorities eventually confiscated that land for the new capital.<sup>36</sup>

The previous chapter showed how the Red Fort was subject to colonial redaction, destruction, and preservation in equal measure following the Rebellion of 1857. The building of New Delhi in the early twentieth century precipitated more twinned processes of erasure and conservation. The colonial invention of the heritage archive was a result of the protests around one minor monument threatened by expropriation, but it created a bureaucratic armature that essentially foreclosed the indigenous articulations of historical value or merit. Yet, as the case of Rasul Numa Dargah and other examples show, Indian subjects emerged as active interlocutors of Delhi’s heritage archive—interlocutors who interrupted colonial hegemony over defining the Indian monument.

## Colonial Imaginaries and the Remaking of Delhi’s Landscape

If land acquisitions were a major impact on Delhi’s heritage, another was the manipulation of the city’s landscape to bolster the narrative of the British Empire as the modern successor of the many glorious Islamic empires that had preceded it. Indeed, New Delhi was envisioned as the modern addendum to the several Islamic imperial capitals built between the twelfth and seventeenth centuries. Edwin Lutyens’s master plan of the new city calcified this

imperial genealogy from premodern and Islamic to contemporary and European. Indian monuments that were not considered the most spectacular examples of previous imperial periods were severely marginalized in this new spatial mapping of power.

## The “Seven Cities” of Delhi

The historiography of Delhi as a compendium of seven imperial cities (with New Delhi being the eighth) was a long-standing conceit that had been perpetuated by popular myth and through various texts. Indeed, as early as the fourteenth-century Arab philosopher Ibn Batuta (who served as a Magistrate in Delhi) remarked on the four Delhis of his time (Qila Rai Pithora, Siri, Tughlaqabad, and Jahanpanah), albeit noting that these once separate cities had merged into one.<sup>37</sup> European travelers such as William Finch who visited Delhi in the early seventeenth century also commented on a series of forts and cities built by various emperors. In the mid-nineteenth century, however, this idea passed quickly from popular exposition into the quasi-scientific space of architectural history and archaeology.

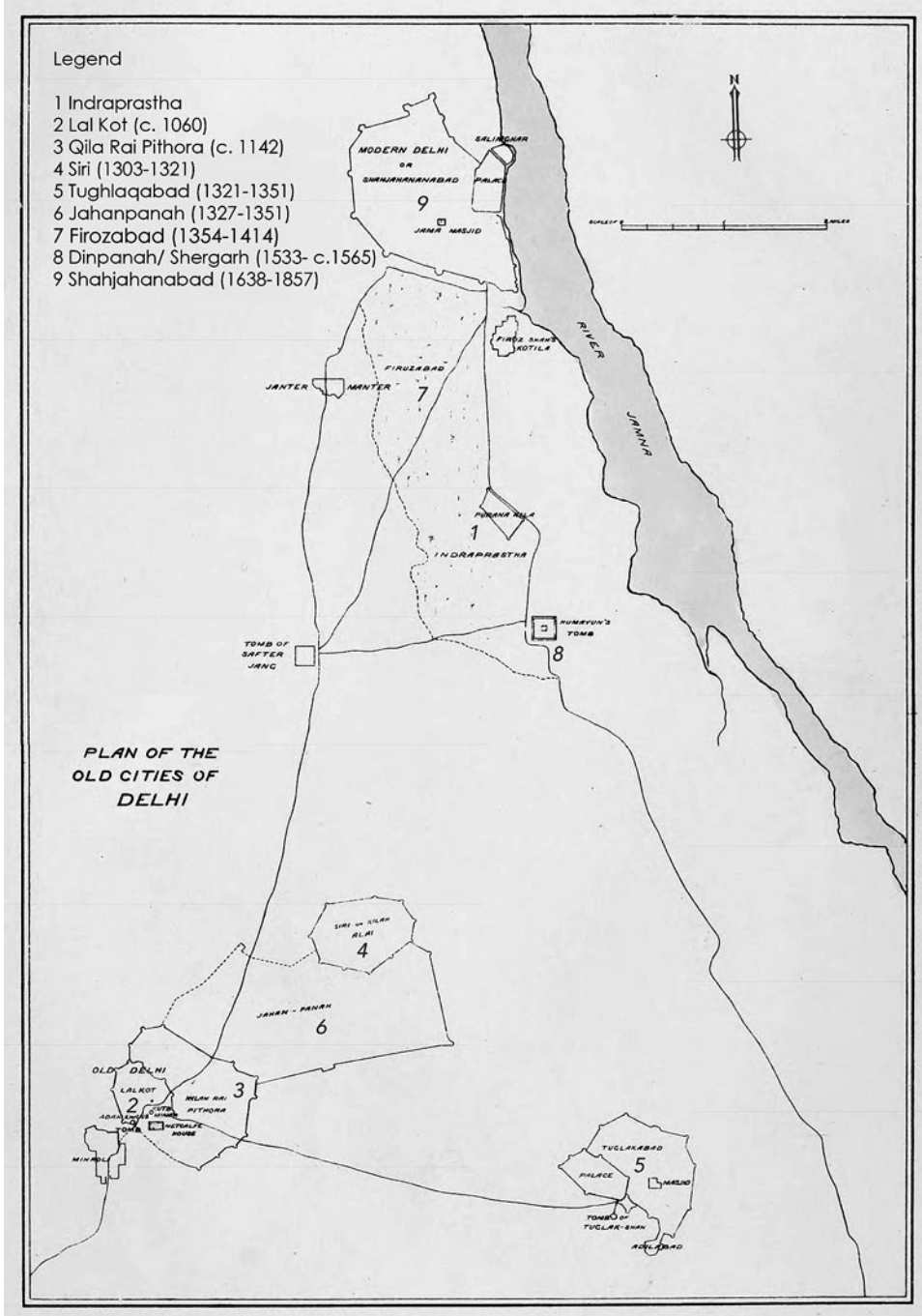
The second edition of Syed Ahmad’s *Asar-us-Sanadid* (1854) consisted of an extended genealogy spanning thirty-six pages and chronicling the various built contributions of Delhi’s emperors from antiquity to the present.<sup>38</sup> Similarly Alexander Cunningham identified seven imperial cities of Delhi that had been built between the eleventh and the seventeenth centuries in his first archaeological reports. Cunningham had distilled these from Syed Ahmad’s much longer genealogy of imperial capitals but only included those cities that had left sufficient material culture behind in terms of ruins. Although he was able to demarcate the limits of some of the older cities for which boundaries remained extant (such as Siri and Qila Rai Pithora) Cunningham admitted the difficulty of precisely mapping other cities such as Dinpanah or Firozabad, whose borders were no longer discernable in the modern period.<sup>39</sup>

Even if the reality of the seven cities of Delhi was difficult to comprehend in material form, the myth of these sequential cities of Delhi gained considerable traction in institutional as well as popular understandings of the city in the late nineteenth century. Cunningham’s claims that modern Delhi was a palimpsest of various imperial urban centers, was serially reproduced in archaeological reports that followed; in guidebooks on the city; and in urban histories written for a popular audience.<sup>40</sup> A 1906 guidebook titled *The Seven Cities of Delhi* began by comparing the imperial layers of the city to that of Rome: where the latter had seven historic hills, Delhi had seven imperial cities.<sup>41</sup> Each textual repetition of the seven cities calcified the history of Delhi as a progression of bounded cities that were clearly associated with imperial power. Despite the lack of material evidence to sustain such a claim, the narrative of the seven cities of Delhi nevertheless lodged itself deeper into the archive with every iteration of the idea.

The late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century mapping of Delhi as a series of walled cities each corresponding to a specific period in Islamic history was similar to colonial interventions in other parts of the world. Historian Shirine Hamadeh has made a compelling argument about how the European imaginary of Islamic walled cities led to the modern recreation of medieval walls as anachronistic fabrications. The walled cities of French colonized

| Cities                                                                                     | Emperors (Dynasty) and<br>Original Builders                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Dates Built and Used                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Scale and Other Particularities                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FIRST CITY<br>Lal Kot (fort),<br>Qila Rai Pithora,<br>and first Islamic<br>center at Delhi | Lal Kot built by Anang Pal (Tomar) (r. 1051–1081). Qila Rai Pithora built by Prithviraj (Chauhan) (r. 1169–91). Various Muslim Sultanate rulers: including Mohammad Ghori (r. 1193–1206); Qutb-ud-din Aibak (r. 1206–10); Iltutmish (r. 1210–1235); Balban (r. 1265–87); Kaiqubad (r. 1287–90). | Lal Kot built 1060. Qila Rai Pithora built ca. 1142 (Syed Ahmad Khan) or ca. 1180 (Cunningham). The city was taken over by Turko-Islamic rulers in 1191 and served as their imperial base for the next century until Siri was built.                | Qila Rai Pithora was built abutting Lal Kot and together the outer circuit of the walls ran three and three-quarter miles. The Qutb Minar and Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque (ch. 5) are located here.   |
| SECOND CITY<br>Siri                                                                        | Ala-ud-din Khilji (r. 1295–1315)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Begun in 1303 and remained in use until 1321                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Built in the shape of an oval with seven gateways. In the sixteenth century Sher Shah Suri (see sixth city) sourced building material from Siri to build his own city, thus reducing it to ruin. |
| THIRD CITY<br>Tughlaqabad                                                                  | Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq (r. 1320–24)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Begun in 1321 and remained in use until 1351                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Built in the shape of a half hexagon, the outer walls ran approximately four miles.                                                                                                              |
| FOURTH CITY<br>Jahanpanah                                                                  | Muhammad bin Tughlaq (r. 1324–51)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Begun in 1327 and remained in use until 1351                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Partially walled city built to protect the suburbs that had grown outside the walls of Qila Rai Pithora and Siri.                                                                                |
| FIFTH CITY<br>Firozabad                                                                    | Firoz Shah Tughlaq (r. 1351–88)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Begun in 1354 and in use until 1414                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Walled city said to have a population of 150,000 at its height. The fort of Kotla Firoz Shah is located here.                                                                                    |
| SIXTH CITY<br>Dinpanah/<br>Shergarh                                                        | Humayun (Mughal) (r. 1530–39 and 1555–56)<br>Sher Shah Suri (r. 1539–55)                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Begun in 1533 by Humayun and expanded by Sher Shah during his reign. The city remained in use until the end of Humayun's reign when his son and successor, Akbar, relocated the capital to Agra.                                                    | Fortified cities enclosed by walls, which ran approximately nine miles in circumference. The Purana Qila (ch. 4) is located here.                                                                |
| SEVENTH CITY<br>Shahjahanabad                                                              | Shahjahan (Mughal) (r. 1628–58) and various other Mughal emperors including Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707) and Bahadur Shah Zafar (r. 1837–1857)                                                                                                                                                      | Built between 1638 and 1648. Served continuously as the Mughal capital until the British siege in 1857. While several Mughal emperors after Shahjahan added monuments within the walled city, the city's boundaries were barely changed after 1648. | The city has twelve walls and a glacis and the outer circumference of it ran five and a half miles. The Red Fort (ch. 1) and Jama Masjid (ch. 3) are located within the walls of this city.      |

Information in the table compiled from Syed Ahmad Khan, *Asar-us-Sanadiid*, 2nd ed. (1854; repr. Delhi: Urdu Academy, 1990); Cunningham, "Four Reports Made During the Years 1862–63–64–65" (Varanasi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1862–65); Henry Hardy Cole, *Architecture of Ancient Delhi: Especially the Buildings around the Kutb Minar* (London: Arundel Society, 1872).



**FIG. 2.3.** Imperial cities of Delhi redrawn from Henry Hardy Cole, *Architecture of Ancient Delhi: Especially the Buildings around the Kutb Minar* (London: Arundel Society, 1872). Drawn by Chris Hazel.

North Africa were thus “preserved” as bounded enclaves that had remained static over time, in order to match Oriental fantasies of Islamic urbanism.<sup>42</sup> Similarly Janet Abu-Lughod has argued that the essentialization of the Islamic city as a walled and bounded space was a product of nineteenth-century European notions of a traditionally static and unchanging Orient.<sup>43</sup> A similar process can be traced with the preservation of Shahjahanabad, the largest and most recently built walled city of Delhi. Following the 1857 Rebellion the walls of Shahjahanabad were deliberately made more porous in order to aid military access into and out of the city.<sup>44</sup> As the preservation movement gathered momentum in Delhi, however, considerable efforts were made to preserve the walls of the old city and in some cases rebuild the very same gates and walls that had been destroyed in 1857. While Shahjahanabad’s walls were fairly easy to reconstruct, other older “cities” of Delhi like Dinpanah existed mostly as cartographic projections and quickly became conflated with singular monuments (such as the Purana Qila for Dinpanah) that acted as notional markers for cities that were now entirely in ruins. Nevertheless the myth of a series of Islamic imperial capitals awaiting their modern terminus, by way of New Delhi, became a sturdy motif in the archival representations of the city’s past as well as its geographical present by the early twentieth century.

This notion of an imperial genealogy as manifested by a series of capital cities was to gather further impetus with Lutyens’s and Baker’s design for New Delhi. Lutyens in particular was eager that the new capital should make specific connections to the older cities of Delhi. The choice of Raisina Hill as the site of New Delhi was based in part on the favorable vantage it provided of the historical and archaeological remains of Delhi’s ancient cities. To this end Lutyens specifically designed major axes leading from the Viceroy’s Palace (where the British Viceroy of India would reside) toward Purana Qila, which he believed to be Indraprastha—the mythical capital mentioned in the Hindu epic the *Mahabharata*. In doing so Lutyens deliberately connected the contemporary center of imperial power to the “the site of the oldest of all the Delhis.” An additional axis ran from the Viceroy’s Palace to the walled city of Shahjahanabad, built by Emperor Shahjahan in the seventeenth century, which also served as the seat of the last Mughal emperor who was ousted by the British in 1857. The seduction of understanding New Delhi as the terminus of such a powerful urban genealogy was expressed by Lutyens, when he said, “Right and left the roadways go and weld into one the empire of today with the empires of the past and unite Government with the business and lives of its people.”<sup>45</sup> Delhi’s older cities (both imagined and real) thus symbolically punctuated a contemporary landscape of imperial power and prestige.

The deliberate appropriation and reinscription of Delhi’s historic cities was a strategy of the colonial government to insert itself into a genealogy of imperial power. This stake to a particular urban patrimony—an imperial inheritance of sorts—found its historical terminus with New Delhi. Such a strategy of claiming historical space was not entirely different from that used by the petitioners of the Rasul Numa Dargah. Both parties articulated historical and geographical patrimonies that could be proved through genealogy. Petitioners such as Ajmal Khan whose family occupied one of the four houses on the premises of the *dargah* were not only caretakers of the shrine, a vocation they considered an inherited privilege, but they also believed in their right to reside on the premises due to their ancestral associations with the primary disciple of Rasul Numa. The imminent expropriation of their houses was thus seen as a geographical as well as historical dispossession. It bears noting

that while most colonial archaeologists and historians had vociferously denigrated indigenous Indian histories as fanciful and little more than hagiographies of the patrons who had commissioned them, the preservation efforts that accompanied the building of New Delhi were motivated by the British Empire's own mythology of imperial power in India and their rightful place within such a historical arc.

The serialization of Delhi's history into seven or more imperial cities placed monuments such as the Rasul Numa Dargah, which existed physically outside of them or had very little historical associations with such, in a vulnerable position. Often their fate hung on the appraisals by bureaucrats such as the Land Acquisitions Officer J. Addison and on parameters such as the likelihood of the building becoming a "potential nuisance" to New Delhi. In order to insert themselves into the colonial imaginary of Delhi as defined by imperial cities, smaller shrines like the Rasul Numa Dargah made pointed references to the patronage of Mughal kings or claimed imperial associations that would grant them historical legitimacy in the eyes of the colonial authorities. For instance, in one of the many petitions made by the descendants of the Syed Hasan Rasul Numa, they pressed that the *dargah* was in fact built during the reign of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb who had much reverence for the Sufi saint.<sup>46</sup> As evidence for their claims they drew the attention of the colonial authorities to a tablet over Rasul Numa's tomb that marked the date of his death as 22nd Shaban 1103 Hijri (i.e., 1691–92), which would indeed have made Rasul Numa a contemporary of Emperor Aurangzeb. The same letter also mentioned that the wider enclosure of the *dargah* also contained tombs of several descendants and members of the Mughal royal family, although it was not specified who these were.

Nile Green has suggested that Sufi shrines were the spatial anchors of communities of memory that were historically connected to spiritual leaders. "Architecture, narrative, and the blessed person" came together at Sufi shrines to "form the living historical presence of a city of stories."<sup>47</sup> Ritual performance (which included the tradition of continued burials) and narrative commemoration was key to the definition of a Sufi shrine as a sacred space. Narratives linking Sufi saints with Mughal imperial patrons, although a longstanding motif of Sufi commemoration in India, acquired renewed potential as it allowed petitioners of the Rasul Numa Dargah to imbue their landscape with a monumentality and sense of history that would align with colonial expectations of the same. The appropriation of the colonial imaginary of Delhi's genealogy points to the ingenuity of indigenous actors as they staked claims to their spaces of heritage.

## Isolating Monuments as Singular Objects in Delhi

The separation of smaller monuments from their wider communities and landscapes profoundly changed long-standing historical geographies that linked several monuments with one another. As mentioned before, *dargahs* functioned as centers of expanding memorial geographies as Islamic kings, queens, and other nobles often chose to be buried near a Sufi *pir* who they considered their spiritual leader, even if the latter had lived several centuries before the royal personality themselves. By being buried near a Sufi *pir* the dead and their family accrued spiritual merit. *Dargahs* were thus embedded within larger associative geographies

and worked like spiritual nodes bearing meaningful adjacencies to the imperial tombs that surrounded them. For example, the Mughal Emperor Humayun's tomb was built adjacent to Nizam-ud-din Auliya's *dargah*, which itself contains the tomb of the Mughal princess Begum Jahanara and the tomb of the renowned fourteenth-century poet Amir Khusrau; with emperor, princess, and poet all considering Nizam-ud-din Auliya their spiritual leader. Similarly, Mughal Emperors Shah Alam II and Akbar Shah II were interred within the *dargah* of Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki. Had he not been exiled to Rangoon by the British in 1857 and died there, the last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, would also have been buried near the *dargah* of Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki.

The master plan of New Delhi gave little consideration to these associations *between* sets of monuments and the continuity of larger spiritual topographies was dramatically disrupted by the imposition of Lutyens's design of the new city onto this landscape. The perpetuation of the myth of the imperial cities worked alongside a European notion of monumentality that emphasized the aesthetic singularity of a historic structure and foreclosed the possibility of preserving larger geographies of monuments that were connected to one another largely through bonds of affect. The new roads divided what were once cohesive geographies, such as Humayun's Tomb from Nizam-ud-din Auliya's *dargah*, which made the symbolic connections between monuments impossible to read and understand in terms of historical citation. Now set within a choreographed landscape, Delhi's more important monuments anticipated the gaze of a lettered elite capable of appreciating their historical and aesthetic value over the commemorative rituals that had defined their geographies for several centuries. By 1912 it had become clear that if Delhi's monuments were to survive within the new imperial city, they could only do so only as sanitized spaces of quiet contemplation and as objects of the "distantiated gaze" that Françoise Choay argues was fundamental to the modern invention of the historic monument.<sup>48</sup> Again, colonial preservation went hand in hand with the destruction, or at least the significant alteration of the meanings and connections, by which Indians articulated historical value.

In addition to the isolation of monuments from one another was the colonial practice of converting monuments into garden follies. Perhaps the most trenchant example of this was the transformation of a group of fifteenth-century tombs in central Delhi into a landscape of liesure. By 1912, a thriving urban village had grown around these tombs of the Lodhi dynasty that ruled Delhi between 1451 and 1526. Squatters had taken over a mosque in the tomb complex and the gateway leading up to it. The ASI evicted the villagers from the premises in 1914 and the "squalid huts surrounding [the tombs were] removed" in order to create a garden complex.<sup>49</sup> Following the evictions the Lodhi tombs were "repaired" and set within a manicured landscape of lawn grass and pathways that led visitors up to and around the tombs and the mosque on leisurely strolls through the gardens. By the early twentieth century the Lodhi gardens were a central space of leisure in the city—mimicking at a miniature scale the British countryside where one might chance upon a ruin or a folly set in a picturesque landscape.

Jyoti Sharma has identified the period from 1918 to the early 1930s (precisely the time that New Delhi was being constructed) as that of marked "horticultural improvement" of several historic burial complexes and funerary sites, including Hauz Khas, the Khairpur Necropolis, and the tombs of Emperor Humayun and Nawab Safdarjung. Sharma notes



FIG. 2.4. The Rasul Numa Dargah circa 1920 (Delhi, vol. 3, 1916–20, PD 3818, ASI Photo Archive).

that the “preservation” of the last monument (the late-Mughal tomb of Nawab Safdarjung who served as minister to the Mughal Emperor Ahmad Shah) came at the cost of a dramatic reordering of its surrounding landscape to increase its utility to European visitors as well as Indian elites who were cultivating a more “Westernized” sensibility toward their urban environments. The transformation of Nawab Safdarjung’s tomb from a funerary complex to a public park happened at the intersection of two vectors of urban planning and design. The first was the incorporation of historic monuments and gardens into the vistas and axes of the master plan of Delhi and the second was the colonial anxiety of urban overcrowding and fear of tropical diseases, which precipitated the creation of parks and other open spaces within the city.<sup>50</sup>

Perhaps due to their awareness of the kinds of evictions as well as reclamations going on in other parts of the city, the petitioners of the Rasul Numa Dargah admitted in their letters to the colonial government that the *dargah* was in need of upkeep and beautification. They agreed with the opinion of J. Addison that in its present state of dilapidation the *dargah* and its gardens could not “harmonise with the artistic structure of the new capital.”<sup>51</sup> As a solution the petitioners suggested the following two options for improvement: first, that the site due to its historic value be listed as a protected monument under the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act. This would require the government to provide at least some funds for the upkeep of the *dargah*. As an alternative the petitioners requested that they should be given sufficient time to gather funds themselves that could be applied toward the beautification of the gardens and the *dargah*.

Such negotiations make it clear that although the custodians of the Rasul Numa Dargah were willing to make cosmetic improvements to the structure and its surroundings; they

remained insistent that the practice of burial should go on in order to maintain the historical continuity of the site. The clash between definitions of the monument espoused by the colonial authorities and Indian agents becomes apparent again here, with the former focusing on the unaesthetic nature of the building or its relative lack of historical value and indigenous actors articulating authenticity as the continuation of commemorative traditions and the salvation accrued by members of their community from being buried next to their saint. On the one hand, the persistent effort of the petitioners to reinscribe their site with historical value as well as recreate them aesthetically so that they might be saved from expropriation was successful in that the *dargah* as well as its related graves were included in the later edition of Zafar Hasan's catalog of ancient monuments in Delhi. On the other hand, the implementation of the master plan of New Delhi also separated Pir Banbasi's *dargah* from the complex of the Rasul Numa Dargah with a broad road (now known as Panchkuian Road) such that the connections between the two monuments were no longer readable.

If colonial bureaucrats had created the archive of Delhi's heritage in order to monopolize control over the definition of the Indian monument, indigenous actors such as the custodians of the Rasul Numa Dargah had found a way to maneuver their way into the archive and find a place for their own histories within it. Indigenous agency, however, should not be romanticized as being equivalent—in power, enfranchisement, or institutional fiat—to colonial hegemony. If Syed Ahmad had included the Rasul Numa Dargah in the first edition of the *Asar-us-Sanadid* in 1847, he had also removed it in the second 1854 edition, quite possibly in deference to the expectations of his colonial patrons. Later, when the custodians of the *dargah* successfully inserted their monument into Zafar Hasan's archive of the city's heritage, it still came at the cost of separating Pir Banbasi's *dargah* from the larger complex of the Rasul Numa Dargah. Colonial power over the archive may not have been complete; however, Indian agents were far from equal participants in the creation of the archive.

The confrontation or negotiation between Indian agent and colonial *archon*, who Derida defines as the savant gatekeeper of the archive vested with the authority of its interpretation, exposed the former to be an educated and savvy interlocutor of Indian heritage.<sup>52</sup> The case of the Rasul Numa Dargah and the protests around other minor monuments in the city were doubly profound because they overturned colonial assumptions of Indians as lethargic about their built heritage and disinterested in preservation. It was not simply that Indian agents had shown their ability to interrupt and coauthor the archive of Delhi's heritage; they had also challenged the position of the colonial *archon* as the sole interpreter of that archive.

## Monuments as the Catalysts of Anticolonial Critique

One reason that the Rasul Numa Dargah received immediate attention from the colonial authorities and an ultimately favorable decision of preservation might have had to do with a signature campaign that the petitioners launched among the Muslims of the city. This campaign not only publicized the intended expropriation of the gardens surrounding the *dargah* (thus frustrating the colonial government's strategy of shrouding land acquisitions in secrecy), but it also made clear that the acquisition of the land would be understood as a violation of the religious sentiments of the Muslim community of Delhi.<sup>53</sup> In this instance, the

custodians of the *dargah* were taking advantage of the discrepancy between two colonial policies: the Religious Endowment Act of 1863 and the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act (AMPA) of 1904. While the earlier act had ensured that the British government would not interfere or manage religious aspects of any Indian community, the latter sought to preserve all historically important monuments, many of which were also religious structures still in use. In terms of preservation this often meant that “living monuments,” such as the Rasul Numa Dargah, that were still used for various sumptuary rituals and traditions, were caught within a liminal space of policy interpretation. While the AMPA placed the stewardship of these monuments within the hands of preservation bureaucrats such as the ASI, the Religious Endowment Act ensured that various religious trusts (such as the Anjuman Moyed-ul-Islam, an independent committee of Muslims, which managed several mosques in Delhi) were free to use and manage their spaces as they saw fit with no interference from the colonial government. The two policies created quite a bit of confusion when they were implemented simultaneously on the ground. In cases such as the Rasul Numa Dargah (and many other monuments), the bureaucratic gap between the AMPA and the Religious Endowment Act allowed Indian agents to launch a counter-narrative of preservation and interrupt the colonial monopoly over the definition of heritage. And while the colonial government had quickly “pacified” the community around the Rasul Numa Dargah by exempting the structure and its surroundings from acquisition, the years following that case saw even more vociferous protests from various Muslim communities who believed that by continuing the acquisition of minor monuments, the colonial government was violating their own concession toward Indian religious autonomy.

## Land-Grabbing and Preservation

As previous sections have noted, the Land Acquisitions Office was unclear about how to judge the “market value” of historic and religious monuments in order to determine the compensation due to landowners. Further complications in terms of acquisition and control were also presented by the AMPA, which ensured autonomy in the management of religious structures that were still in use. According to Section 10 of the AMPA, a “secular” monument or a religious structure not in use could be compulsorily purchased by the government if the owners were perceived as not maintaining the structure properly or in a way that was compromising its historical and aesthetical value. Religious monuments that continued to be in use were, however, exempt from this clause of compulsory purchase or appropriation. The power of the colonial government to notify a religious structure as a historic monument was also limited in that their jurisdiction often stopped at the level of making recommendations as to how the structure should be maintained. It was up to the custodians of the religious structures to either adopt these recommendations or ignore them altogether.<sup>54</sup> This caveat was a concession to the Religious Endowments Act of 1863, where the colonial government had assured Indian religious communities that they would have autonomy over their religious practices as well as spaces. Indeed, the colonial government was particularly eager to stay within the stipulations of the Religious Endowments Act and in order to avoid conflicts of interest over the functioning of mosques, temples,

*gurudwaras*, etc., had turned the management of these structures to committees run by members of the religious communities themselves.<sup>55</sup> In the case of religious structures that were also listed as historic monuments, the ASI's proposals of renovation or restoration had to be passed by the managing committee of the respective monument. The question of who the true stewards of the property were and who had the right to decide its form as well as meanings in perpetuity, was thus caught in a knotty tangle between the ambiguities of the AMPA and the Religious Endowments Act.<sup>56</sup>

As land acquisitions for New Delhi gained momentum in the 1920s the number of petitions regarding the expropriation of "minor" monuments continued to increase and their tone quickly changed from an earlier position of pleading and negotiation with colonial authorities to strident critique. If the expropriation of surrounding gardens was the most common type of land acquisition in this period, the second type of expropriation was the recommended destruction of caretaker's quarters attached to small religious monuments. The Land Acquisitions Office continued to dismiss many cases from the latter category by arguing that such petitioners were mere squatters who had little claim to the properties and were using the excuse of religious and historical importance as a mechanism of land-grabbing. The reaction of colonial authorities toward these appeals raises two salient points. First, colonial bureaucrats framed the claims submitted by Indians regarding the historic value of their spaces as motivated by the latter's greed for land. Yet, the land acquisitions carried out by the colonial government between 1912 and the late 1920s were possibly the biggest land-grab in the history of Delhi. Colonial authorities, however, projected land-grabbing onto local claimants who wished to retain their spaces of historic value. Second, the building of New Delhi was also the first large-scale effort at zoning which mandated the separation of functions, such as residential properties and historic monuments and graveyards from the commercial and administrative center of the city. Zoning altered the relations between surrounding communities and monuments often endangering the livelihoods or provision of shelter that were associated with the upkeep of the monuments. These types of expropriations caused much furor among local communities in Delhi and sparked a series of protests across the city, precipitating public denouncements of colonial authority.

Evidence of the increasingly vocal protests around the acquisition of minor monuments can be found in a 1923 order sent by the Deputy Commissioner's Office to the Jama Masjid Managing Committee (JMMC)—administrator of the largest and most powerful mosque in Delhi. The order asked that the JMMC should by way of public announcement put to rest rumors that the colonial government had intentions of demolishing or expropriating small mosques in the city. The order also asked that the committee emphasize the fact that the colonial government had in fact expended large sums of money on the preservation and care of mosques in Delhi.<sup>57</sup> The committee complied with the orders and posted notices in the Jama Masjid and other smaller mosques around the city stating that the government had no intention of expropriating mosques, etc. However, in an unexpected turn of events the Muslim population of the city, taking umbrage at the colonial government's claims, retaliated by posting counter-notices at these mosques. These counter-notices stated that even if the government could be pardoned for unintentionally taking over mosques in the city, Delhi's Muslims were unconvinced of the colonial government's claims of contributing to the maintenance of the city's mosques. The counter-notices went on to accuse the colonial

government for often obstructing the preservation and restoration work that Muslim residents had carried out on their own volition and using their own funds.<sup>58</sup> Only five years had passed since the more cooperative tone of the Rasul Numa Dargah petition, yet the Muslims of Delhi were becoming more agitated and had begun to articulate publicly their displeasure with the actions of the colonial government.

Later the same year, even before this swell of anger could die down, another case of expropriation brought still more negative publicity to the colonial government. Part of a small mosque, Masjid Gharib Shah, was slated for expropriation and possible demolition to make way for the railway lines being laid for New Delhi. The extent of demolition was considered minor by the colonial authorities and included part of the entrance to the mosque and a caretaker's room that was attached to the outer walls of the mosque.<sup>59</sup> While they could not stop Muslims from congregating for prayer there, the colonial government also wanted to regulate the number of persons who gathered at the mosque due to its proximity to the railway station. Fearful of agitating the Muslim community again, the government handed over the administration of the mosque to a body called the Anjuman Moyed-ul-Islam, who in exchange for the governance of the mosque agreed to regulate its traffic and supervise the building of a new caretaker's quarters and entrance wall. While this was an impressive strategy, it did not work as expected in terms of thwarting public outcry.

In January 1924, approximately three thousand people gathered near the Masjid Gharib Shah to protest the slated expropriations and demolitions. The strength of the group was impressive considering the small size and relative obscurity of the mosque. Several noted religious personalities of Delhi (various imams and Islamic clerics) delivered impassioned speeches where they labeled the actions of the colonial government as both intrusive as well as oppressive. In these speeches the Masjid Gharib Shah was repeatedly compared to the Baitullah (the Kaaba at Mecca) and it was argued that Muslims considered all mosques equal in value and whether large or small mosques represented hallowed ground and as such could not be demolished.

During their speeches Muslim scholars repeatedly referred to the Religious Endowments Act of 1863, reminding the government of its pledge to protect the rights of Muslims, as well as other communities, and to allow worship at mosques and temples without any interference. One Islamic cleric noted that by realigning the railway tracks the colonial government could easily protect the Masjid Gharib Shah and its surrounding structures, yet the government was too callous to make such concessions.<sup>60</sup> The protests ended on a clear warning to the government that every part of the Masjid Gharib Shah, and other mosques, was sacred and any related demolition counted as a gross misuse of colonial power as well as an insult to the Muslim community.

Through the following year, the colonial government repeatedly made monetary offers to buy over the modest caretaker's quarters of the Masjid Gharib Shah and even proposed building a new room for the caretaker on the other side of the premises at their own expense. However, the new plans were repeatedly rejected on the premise that all parts of the mosque were sacred and therefore could not be demolished and rebuilt.<sup>61</sup> The protestors also argued that the mosque properties were classified as *waqf* land and therefore belonged to no single person as such and could not be compensated in monetary terms either.<sup>62</sup> That Masjid Gharib Shah continues to stand today, albeit precariously, adjoining a platform of

the New Delhi Railway Station, is a testament to the success of these grassroots efforts to save it from destruction.<sup>63</sup>

The numerous protests around ownership and stewardship that followed in the wake of the land acquisitions of the early twentieth century in Delhi led the ASI to create a separate, albeit informal, category known as “living monuments.” This definition encompassed religious monuments that were in continued use and signaled the ambiguous space of interpretation created by the discrepancies between the AMPA of 1904 and the Religious Endowment Act of 1863. The contrary nature of these two policies continually vexed colonial authorities as they dealt with enduring cultural traditions and rituals of commemoration at living monuments as well as sites like the Rasul Numa Dargah whose historic vibrancy rested upon the ability to expand ad infinitum. Yet, it was precisely the ambiguity of these policies that allowed indigenous actors a space from which to launch their critiques against the colonial government and advocate for the survival of their monuments. In doing so they often seized the archival logic of their colonial masters turning the rhetoric of historicity and cultural stewardship back against the colonial government.

## The Rasul Numa Dargah Today

The 2008 edition of Delhi’s ancient monuments list, catalogs the Rasul Numa Dargah as a Class III monument—that is, monuments that do not warrant preservation either due to their advanced state of decay or relative unimportance. These monuments were not only considered “historically unimportant” by the colonial authorities, they also posed a hindrance to the grand urban infrastructure that was developing around them at the time of documentation. In addition, the following caveat appears for a Class III monument: “Because a building is put into Class III, on account of its very dilapidated condition, it does not follow that there should be any unseemly haste in converting it into road metal. It may still be a monument of interest as long as it keeps together.”<sup>64</sup> Coded into this language was the foregone conclusion that Class III monuments would one day become little more than road metal and the thinly veiled hope that benign neglect would hasten their ruin. Indeed, without a policy of care or sufficient funds for upkeep the demise of most Class III monuments was inevitable. Thus, the archive of heritage did not only classify those monuments that were worthy of preservation it also set in place the perfect conditions for several minor monuments to fall into neglect and eventual obscurity.

Despite the bureaucratic prejudice against the Rasul Numa Dargah it continues to survive today, resisting both imperial and postcolonial visions of urban development. Pir Banbasi’s *dargah* also survives as an independent monument, although it is not under the aegis of the ASI. A visitor who happens to stumble upon one or both of these monuments would fail to recognize their historical continuities and the importance of their proximity to one another—the fact that Pir Banbasi had the privilege of being buried next to his spiritual mentor, Syed Hasan Rasul Numa. A sizeable urban village, *basti*, continues to thrive around the Rasul Numa Dargah and its main graves. It is heartening to note that the *dargah* and its main enclosure continue to be cared for by the community that lives around it. Indeed, the three main tombs are in pristine condition and better kept than many Class II or even some Class I monuments

**FIG. 2.5.** Exterior of the Rasul Numa Dargah, 2009. Photo by author.



**FIG. 2.6.** Interior of the Rasul Numa Dargah, 2009. Photo by author.



that are within the purview of the ASI—this despite the fact that the community that maintains the *dargah* is of modest means and is constantly facing the threat of eviction from the city government, who see them as little more than squatters occupying valuable real estate in the urban center. Many of the residents will proudly narrate their genealogical links to either Syed Hasan Rasul Numa or his main disciple in the same manner that Ajmal Khan did in his petition to the colonial government in 1918. They also boast of the large *urs*<sup>65</sup> that still takes place every year where *tazias* leave from Rasul Numa's *dargah* and travel to Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki's *dargah* in south Delhi. While, on the one hand, it is heartening to know that the Rasul Numa Dargah and Pir Banbasi's *dargah* survived the axe of the Land Acquisitions Office in 1918, it is equally disappointing to recognize that both still occupy a precarious (if entirely invisible) position within the larger narrative of Delhi's heritage. Those who take care of and maintain the *dargah* continue to face the threat of eviction from urban developers eager to expropriate the *dargah* and reduce the land around it to an exchangeable commodity.

The twentieth-century construction of Delhi's heritage archive was a contingent and precarious project. The emergence of this archive as a response to impassioned and articulate protests around the Rakabganj Gurudwara illuminates both the colonial desire to monopolize the articulations of Delhi's heritage and the failure of that colonial hubris. As Ann Stoler remarks, the colonial production of the "rules of classification was an unruly and piecemeal venture at best. Nor [was] there much that [was] hegemonic about how those taxonomies worked on the ground."<sup>66</sup> Indeed, the contestations and negotiations regarding

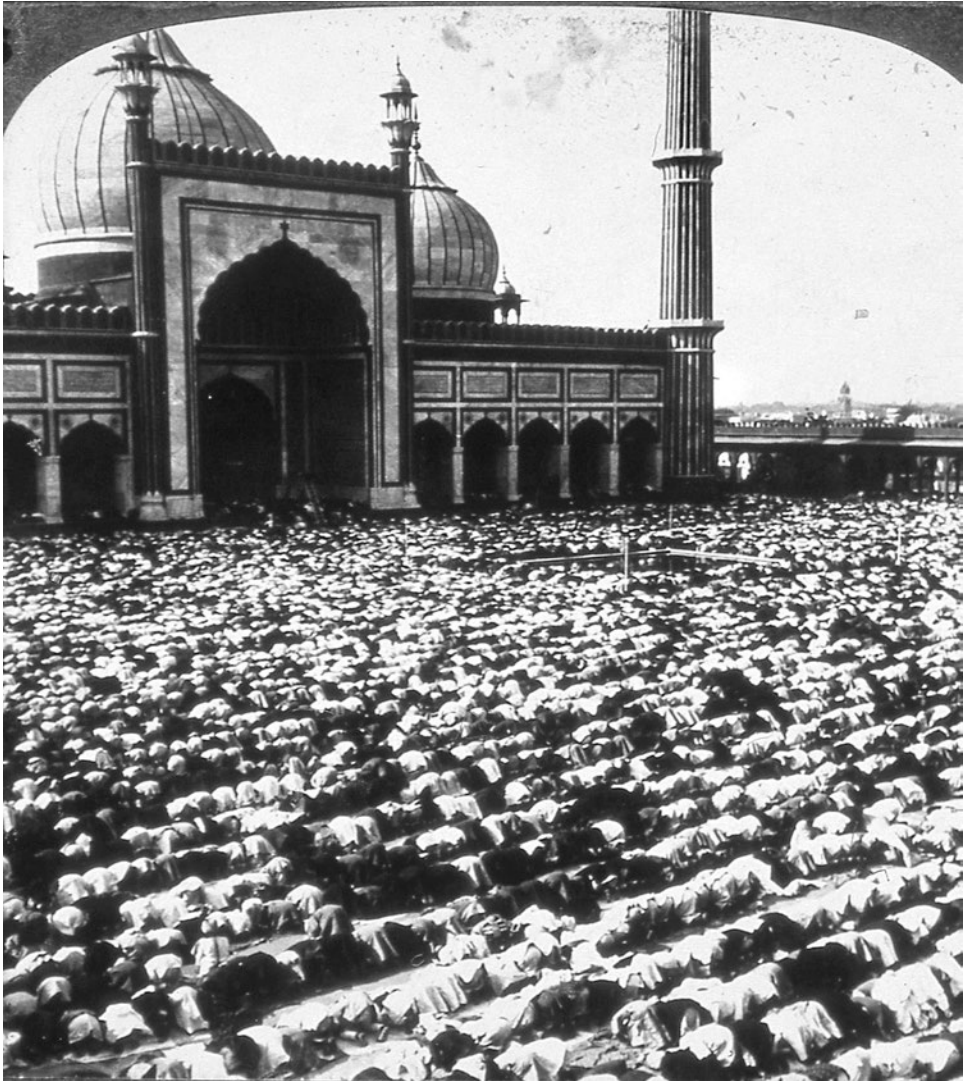


**FIG. 2.7.** Pir Banbasi's *dargah*, 2009.  
Photo by author.

Delhi's heritage that arose in the early twentieth century, overturned the colonial ambitions of sole authorship of the preservation discourse. Instead the neatness of the archive was repeatedly interrupted, distorted, and reordered by a variety of actors who had previously been assumed as ignorant or lethargic about their heritage.

The creation of Delhi's heritage archive was also accompanied by a historical narrative as conceptualized by the colonial government. As the case of the Rasul Numa Dargah shows, the bureaucracy of preservation created "major" histories (and monuments) and "minor" histories (and monuments) in ways that serviced imperial mythologies of the British Empire as the modern successor to Indian empires. Monuments and sites that could not be placed within the genealogy of imperial succession were marginalized within the heritage archive, their classification as Class III monuments belying the colonial prejudices that accompanied such a taxonomical assignation. The bureaucratic apparatus of documenting Delhi's heritage therefore also created the conditions for monuments to survive in posterity or disappear due to benign or deliberate neglect. However, to quote Ann Stoler again, "minor histories" cannot be dismissed as merely inconsequential; rather they might be thought of as a critical space, which brings attention to the "structures of feeling and force that in 'major' histories might be otherwise displaced."<sup>67</sup> It was precisely these structures of feeling and force, the passionate advocacy of Delhi's "minor" monuments that irrupted the sterile precision of the archive and in doing so created a critical space of debate within its crevices.

In imagining the site for New Delhi as a geographical tabula rasa the colonial government had also emptied it of its political potential and historical consciousness. Indeed, as the site for the city built to represent the British Empire, it was assumed that the colonizer would have the prerogative to make the first marks on this site and to shape it to his will. But these cartographic imaginaries were rudely punctured by the active and vocal demands around the preservation of "minor" monuments. Similarly the imagined malaise of Indians toward their heritage was shattered over and over again by sometime diplomatic and other times emphatic demands for preservation. Soon after the case of the Rasul Numa Dargah the colonial government would eventually realize that Delhi's monuments could easily become the catalysts as well as the forums for very public battles regarding space, stewardship, and the right to define heritage. The next chapter continues in a similar vein tracing the appropriation of the Jama Masjid by Indian nationalists to launch their calls for decolonization.



**FIG. 3.1.** "Jumma Musjid (Friday Mosque)" Stereoscopic image by Underwood and Underwood c. 1930. © The British Library Board, Shelfmark Photo 181/76.

## 1932: Jama Masjid

**A charismatic young man**, Barakat Ullah, delivers an impassioned speech from the pulpit of the Jama Masjid. The seventeenth-century mosque built by the Mughal Emperor Shahjahan is the largest mosque in Delhi and can hold twenty thousand men in its central courtyard. Barakat Ullah's speech follows the sermon delivered after the Friday prayer, but he aims to inspire more than simply religious piety in his audience. Instead he asks the three thousand men gathered in the mosque to unite and overthrow the tyrannical British government under whose yoke they continue to live. He asks if his brothers are ready to join the civil disobedience movement being led by nationalists like Gandhi. Are they ready to sacrifice their lives for India and "live in the world like a free nation"? Yes! Yes! the audience shouts.

Meanwhile, the Chief Commissioner of Delhi anxiously registers the growing frequency of this type of anticolonial protests in the Jama Masjid. Although the colonial government has regulated that the mosques of Delhi should not be used for political activity and requires Hindus to obtain special permission to enter the city's mosques; Hindus and Muslims are increasingly gathering in large mosques such as the Jama Masjid to rally support for the anticolonial movement. The Chief Commissioner laments that the protests are not happening in a "public" space such as the city streets where police and armored vehicles stand ready to crush any form of "seditious" activity. He recalls the 1857 Rebellion, when the mosques of Delhi became incubators for anticolonial expression and political dissent and expresses concern that the "days of the Mutiny have come again." He is unable, however, to police or surveil the mosques, as they are religious spaces where Indians have the right to congregate.

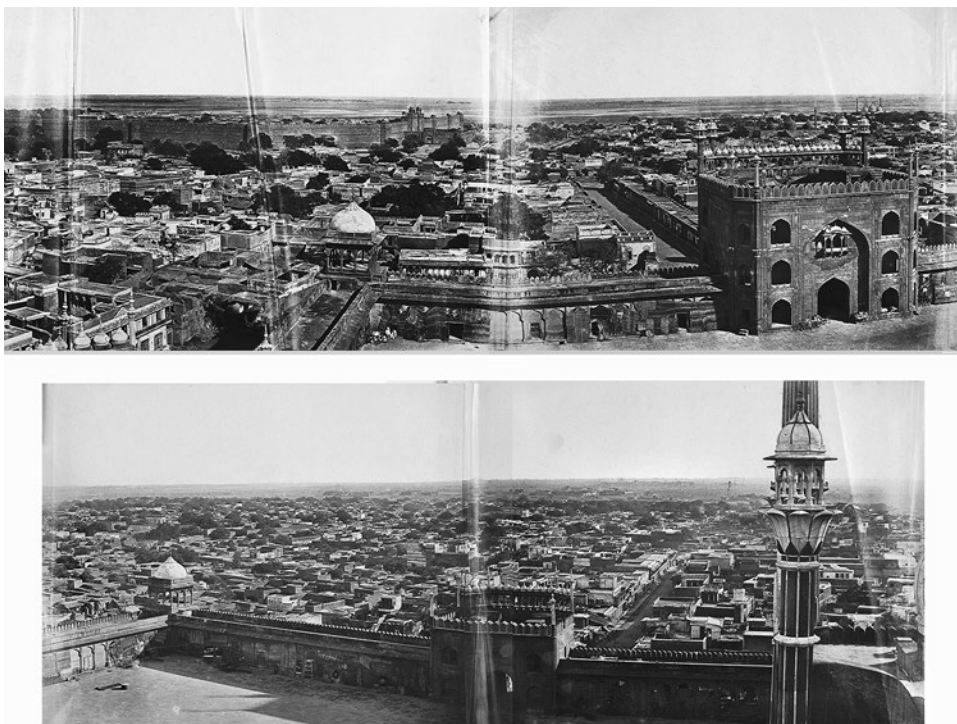
In 1947, a few months after India receives independence, another charismatic political orator speaks from the same pulpit in the Jama Masjid that Barakat Ullah spoke from in 1932. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad—public intellectual, nationalist, and independent India's first Minister of Education—addresses a large crowd of Muslim men after Friday prayers. Maulana Azad implores his fellow Muslims to recognize India as their true homeland and resist the urge to leave for Pakistan. Even as the Muslims of Delhi deal with the continuing violence and dispossession of the Partition, Maulana Azad points out the rich legacy of Islamic culture and the audience's patrimony evident in their surroundings. He says: "The minarets of the Jama Masjid want to ask you a question. Have you forgotten the glorious history mentioned in your chronicles?" His words are meant to remind his fellow Muslims of their immutable claims to Delhi as well as independent India. Like Barakat Ullah and others before him, Azad activates the Jama Masjid as a space of the nation—dreams of a modern, secular, and independent nation-state are thus forged in the courtyard of Delhi's grandest mosque.



## A Menacing Mosque Reveals the Limits of Colonial Power

While he was in Delhi photographing the aftermath of the 1857 Rebellion, Felice Beato took a panorama of the walled city from the northern minaret of the Jama Masjid. At the time, the British government had confiscated all mosques in the city and Beato's photograph shows the desolate courtyard of the Jama Masjid, which was also in the custody of the British military. The panorama survives as an important record of Delhi's urban density, broken only by the scale of two large structures—the eastern and main gateway of the Jama Masjid and the ramparts of the Red Fort. Shortly after Beato's photograph was taken the British military destroyed much of the fabric between the Jama Masjid, clearing an open area between the two structures. Beato's photograph is also, however, a record of an unusual moment when a European was able to exert total and complete surveillance over the city. Indeed, Beato's vantage from the top of the Jama Masjid and his ability to capture the walled city within his camera's frame, was only possible at the moment when colonial power had been enforced in its most brutal form.

Before 1857 and after 1862 when the Jama Masjid was returned to the Muslims of Delhi, the mosque would continually subvert colonial surveillance and repeatedly challenge the totality of colonial power. The monument that enabled Beato to claim an uninterrupted panorama of the city would in the early twentieth century become one of the few urban spaces that the colonial government could neither control nor manage. It would also become the space where Indian nationalism and anticolonial sentiment was repeatedly expressed much to the chagrin of colonial administrators and bureaucrats. After 1947, when India became independent, Indian leaders also appropriated the Jama Masjid as a symbolic podium from which to press the secular promise of the new nation-state. This chapter looks at the manner in which the Jama Masjid was used as a political space for expressing colonial critique and secular nationalism from 1919 until 1947. Each one of these appropriations by anticolonial demonstrators and nationalist leaders was an unexpected yet potent mobilization of the monument that would cause it to slip out of its archival definitions as a purely religious space, inhabited exclusively by Muslims, or as an aesthetic referent to a glorious but abrogated Mughal sovereignty. Instead, through the twentieth century the Jama Masjid would be seized as a political space that enabled Hindu and Muslim collaboration; as a historic structure with commercial potential; and as a monument energized by the potential of radical change in the contemporary moment. In tracing the multiple claims laid to the Jama



**FIG. 3.2.** Felice Beato, “Panorama of Delhi Taken from Jumna Masjid,” 1858. Wellcome Library nos. 33496i, 33500i, 33501i, and 33502i.

Masjid and its various appropriations this chapter reveals the competing personalities of the monument during its modern life; its capacity to expose the limits of colonial power and control; and its role in fomenting Indian anticolonial dissent.

To describe the Jama Masjid at the intersection of these various anxieties and activations is to essentially recognize it as more than simply an inert object onto which various agents projected their aspirations or simply a convenient space for anticolonial protest. Instead I employ and extend Jane Bennett’s definition of the non-human object that carries with it agentic force and the capability of action. Writing from the perspective of political ecology Bennett challenges the dichotomy between things that are ordinarily perceived as lifeless or without agency, what she calls “dull matter,” and humans who are typically defined by dynamic energies and life forces, which she refers to as “vibrant life” and argues that the former category of objects in fact frequently act as quasi-agents with tendencies and energies of their own to become “vibrant matter.” As Bennett argues, “organic and inorganic bodies, natural and cultural objects . . . *all* are affective”<sup>1</sup> [emphasis in original].

To apply Bennett’s theoretical framework of “vibrant matter” to the Jama Masjid is to understand it as more than simply a mute relic of Delhi’s past but rather as an object that continually unleashed its agency, acting as a political catalyst, a capitalist agent, or an advocate for Indian nationalism. The affective history of Delhi’s premier mosque shows the various ways in which the non-human object of the Jama Masjid colluded with, interrupted, punctured, generated, channeled, or compounded human sensibilities such as the colonial

anxiety of revolt, local entrepreneurial energies, Indian aspirations for self-rule, and the eager embrace of independent India's secularism. This affective history reveals the limits of archival histories as well as the limits of colonial power.

The chapter is divided into three parts each of which address one particular "affective tendency" of the Jama Masjid. The first section focuses on the anticolonial demonstrations that took place in the courtyard of the Jama Masjid in 1932. The colonial anxieties that were expressed about this use of the mosque centered on the inability of the government to exercise surveillance over it as they could other spaces within the city. This first section illustrates the manner in which the Jama Masjid became a catalyst for various colonial discomforts when it emerged as a threat to colonial control. The second section focuses on the ability of the Jama Masjid to expand beyond its definition as an aesthetic object through its ability to generate economic profit. Although colonial histories privileged the Jama Masjid as an example of fine Mughal architecture, it also operated as a contemporary space of commerce and economic exchange. As such it was a thriving agent within a larger system of economic power and social transactions rather than a passive object of historic reverence. In the final section of the chapter, the Jama Masjid creates a microcosm of the not-yet realized Indian nation-state by incubating sovereignty and self-determination. In 1947 when the independent nation-state was realized, the mosque "spoke" to its congregation of national unity and patriotic duty. To understand the Jama Masjid as a political insurgent; as an agent of enterprise; or as a cocreator of Indian nationalism is to acknowledge the embodied energies that were generated within and via the monument. More importantly these embodied energies reveal those vibrant and unruly affects that the archive tried, yet failed to contain.

### **Jama Masjid as an Insurgent**

The description of the Jama Masjid in Maulvi Zafar Hasan's 1916 ASI catalog of monuments notes the date and patron of the building along with detailed translations of the Arabic inscriptions on the arches and the original intended function of the mosque's elements such as the eastern gateway as the ceremonial entrance for the exclusive use of the Mughal emperor. The religious importance and aesthetic beauty of the Jama Masjid, however, did not exist outside of the Mughal political authority located at the Red Fort. The symbolic value of the Jama Masjid was made clear by its sheer size, its proximity to the Red Fort, the similarity of visual vocabulary between the two structures, and the ritual visitation by the Mughal emperor for Friday prayers. Located just off the busy commercial axes of Chandni Chowk and although surrounded by several other mosques (each of which had their own particular connections to imperial and noble patronage) the Jama Masjid was and remains an iconic monument of Delhi's Islamic community. (See Plate 2 for a diagram of the geographical position and relation of the Jama Masjid vis-à-vis the Red Fort and other monuments in Shahjahanabad.)

In the 1930s, however, the colonial authorities began to perceive the Jama Masjid in more sinister terms. In 1932 the Chief Commissioner's Office in Delhi reported on the gathering of three thousand Muslim men in the Jama Masjid to participate in a series of anticolonial speeches delivered by members of an Islamic nationalist party called the Jamiat-Ulema.<sup>2</sup> As

described in the introductory vignette to this chapter, the speeches were fiery and included blasphemous denouncements of the colonial government. Concerned by the nature of the speeches as well as the strength of the gathering the Deputy Commissioner expressed alarm and described the speeches as “flagrantly seditious” and “disloyal” in nature. He reported that the speakers in their attacks on the Government “did not even refrain from the foulest abuse of His Majesty the King-Emperor.”<sup>3</sup> He further noted that the Jama Masjid had been used quite frequently for this type of anticolonial gathering and suggested that the Chief Commissioner find a way to put an end to the use of the mosque for seditious speeches at once.

The event and the sentiments expressed regarding the use of the Jama Masjid for anti-colonial activities brings into focus three aspects that are entirely unrecorded in the archival descriptions of the same monument. The first was the vexed combination of the visibility of the Jama Masjid as the central and most powerful mosque in Delhi alongside the inability of the colonial government to police activities within it. The Jama Masjid enjoyed a cultural intelligibility in the city of Delhi and was also widely regarded across India as the symbolic node of Islamic power. Yet this visual and symbolic power of the Jama Masjid went along with the frustration of the colonial gaze and its limited ability to surveil the mosque much less control the activities within it. The Jama Masjid’s affective potential thrived in a liminal space that was at once outside colonial control, yet rooted in Delhi’s collective consciousness as an important symbol of Indian sovereignty and self-determination. The second part of this section looks at the mosque as activating the memories of the 1857 Rebellion and thereby becoming a specter of anticolonial revolt. Here the history of the mosque turned it from a passive object of antiquity to a contemporary agent of radical transformation, especially during the years between 1919 and the early 1930s when public space in Delhi was increasingly militarized and brutally policed. The Jama Masjid was not simply a convenient space for nationalist demonstrations, rather each protest calcified the memory of anticolonial resistance and activated the mosque as a threat to colonial authority.

### “Evil Misuse of a Famous Building”

One issue that was stressed repeatedly in the correspondence that went back and forth about the use of the Jama Masjid as a setting for seditious speeches was the inability of the colonial government to either exercise surveillance over it or police it adequately. For example, the correspondence states that if the same speeches had been given in a *public* space, the speakers could have been easily arrested and prosecuted for seditious activity. As it stood, however, the speeches had taken place within a religious space and the colonial authorities had to rely on second-hand sources to confirm the content of the speeches. Further, although the Jama Masjid could not be defined as “public” in the true sense of the word, it was also far from obscure or inconspicuous. The courtyard of the mosque (approximately 250 feet by 220 feet or 72 yards by 82 yards) can hold well over twenty thousand men during Friday prayers and speeches would have carried utmost urgency when given there rather than any other mosque in the city.<sup>4</sup> The mosque was well attended during Friday prayers—indeed, many of Delhi’s Muslims made a special effort to pray at the Jama Masjid on Friday and those making anticolonial speeches were therefore assured a large audience. As the “Shahi

Masjid” or the imperial mosque of Delhi, the Mughal emperor had until recently recited the *khutba* (a public prayer that might also include sermons, injunctions, or commands) during the Friday noon prayer. Even with the abrogation of the Mughal Empire the tradition of orality in the Jama Masjid was carried on by imams and other Muslim elites. In other words, although the Jama Masjid could not have fit the definition of public space as colonial administrators would have articulated such, its capacity to hold a large majority of the public was not something the colonial government could dismiss easily. Indeed, the sheer scale of the mosque as well as its symbolic associations with Indian religious and political autonomy greatly vexed colonial authorities.

The use of the Jama Masjid for seditious speeches in the 1930s was particularly audacious considering the recent history of Delhi’s mosques. Following the 1857 Rebellion the colonial government confiscated mosques in Shahjahanabad, as these were seen as the main centers of political agitation. Muslims were also barred from congregating in mosques at this time. As mentioned in chapter 1, not only was Shahjahanabad emptied of most of its residents but massive schemes of demolition and clearances were also mobilized. Many mosques, including the Jama Masjid were used by the British military as temporary garrisons or to provide basic services to soldiers. Delhi Muslims submitted their first petition (in the form of a *fatwa* or religious edict) requesting access to the Jama Masjid in 1860—one year after they were allowed back into the walled city. A lack of consensus, however, between the Wahabi and Hanafi communities on the composition of a managing committee delayed the mosque’s transfer until 1862 when a committee headed by Mirza Ilahi Bux and other respected Muslims of Delhi (many of whom were sympathetic to the British government) was put in charge of the mosque.<sup>5</sup>

The decision to return Delhi’s mosques to the city’s Muslims was, however, far from unanimous. The Deputy Commissioner of Delhi himself vigorously opposed the idea, arguing that the “mosque would be a focus of sedition . . . as it had always been considered a religious appanage of the paramount power in India—a position it could not longer occupy.”<sup>6</sup> The Deputy Commissioner was not alone in his anxiety and others agreed with his position that barring Muslims from using Delhi’s mosques would serve as a clear advertisement of colonial power. As one British official said regarding the return of the Jama Masjid and the adjoining *idgah*,<sup>7</sup> “Let us keep them as tokens of our displeasure towards the blinded fanatics.”<sup>8</sup> In 1862, however, the Jama Masjid was nevertheless restored to the Muslim public as a gesture of good will and placed under the supervision of the Jama Masjid Managing Committee (JMMC), with the understanding that the latter was to follow strict rules regarding the use of the mosque as well as supervise conduct within it.

The rules included the stationing of guards at each gate of the mosque; the posting of English and Urdu notices to tourists and devotees regarding acceptable behavior; the stipulation that only the guardians of the mosque would be allowed to remain in the premises at night; and the regulation that “non-Muslim Asiatics” (i.e., Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and other non-Muslim Indians) would need prior written permission from the JMMC or the Deputy Commissioner to enter the Jama Masjid. Europeans entering the mosque for nonreligious reasons such as tourism or administration, however, did not require such authorization from the JMMC or the Deputy Commissioner’s Office. In other words, the colonial government closely controlled the bodies entering the mosque and actively thwarted the entry

of non-Muslims into the Jama Masjid. Indeed the regulations laid down by the colonial government dictated the use of the mosque as a space of either touristic consumption or religious prostration. Most importantly, the JMMC was required to report any incidents of seditious tendency that were “likely to lead to a breach of the peace.”<sup>9</sup> The committee signed an *ikrarnama* (official agreement) with the Deputy Commissioner’s Office in Delhi agreeing to the conditions laid out by the latter and consented that “no act shall be committed inside the Mosque which may tend to show contempt of, or disloyalty to, Government. Should, however, any such thing take place, and which may be beyond our power to check or control, we shall bring it to the notice of the Deputy Commissioner.”<sup>10</sup>

The British government’s belief that the use of Delhi’s mosques for political purposes could be curtailed by a few official policies appears naïve especially considering the long history of the city’s mosques as centers of political and philosophical debate. Indeed, the Jama Masjid had been used for political discussion and cross-religious discourse for several decades before the twentieth century and there is ample proof that many other mosques of Delhi had been sites for philosophical and political commentary. For example, in 1850 a Wahabi leader by the name of Wilayat Ali had delivered theosophical lectures in many of Delhi’s mosques. Inter-religious debates between Islamic and Christian clergy were held in the Jama Masjid in the 1850s and in the early 1890s the Fatehpuri Masjid had been the site of regular philosophical debates between Bishop Lefroy and Sharf-ul-Haq—an Islamic theologian.<sup>11</sup> In other words, mosques were spaces of philosophical discussion and political oration, and the larger Muslim, if not Indian, community understood the mosque as a public sphere of commentary and discourse, even if the colonial government chose to deny or remain ignorant of such forums.<sup>12</sup>

The 1932 anticolonial speeches in the Jama Masjid also revealed the limits of power exercised by colonial as well as Indian authorities over the mosque. The agreement by which Delhi’s mosques had been returned to the Muslims clearly stated that these spaces were to be used solely for religious purposes and more specifically could not be used for political activities. It was the responsibility of each mosque’s managing committee to make sure that such did not happen. The JMMC claimed repeatedly, however, that they neither had prior knowledge of “seditious” meetings nor any control over these political and anticolonial activities, which they argued were the work of a few mischief makers rather than representative of the committee’s inclinations or indeed that of the larger Muslim community in Delhi. Arguing that they were helpless to stop the use of the mosque for political activity the JMMC requested the assistance of the colonial government to police the space. The power of the colonial government in this regard, however, was also severely limited.

The use of military force or even the presence of unarmed representatives of the British government in the Jama Masjid would have been interpreted as highly disrespectful to the Indian Muslim community and an infringement of their religious rights. More specifically, the British government was beholden to the Religious Endowments Act of 1863, which granted autonomy to all religious groups without any interference from the government. Even as the JMMC and colonial officials passed the responsibility of monitoring activities within the mosque back and forth to one another the Chief Commissioner of Delhi implored: “It is the duty not only of the Jama Masjid Committee but of all good Mahomedans in Delhi to evolve a remedy, and that soon. For it is manifest that the present *evil misuse of a*

*famous building*, not only sacred to those professing the Musalman faith but also the admiration and pride of all Delhi communities alike, cannot be tolerated indefinitely”<sup>13</sup> [emphasis added]. The Chief Commissioner’s appraisal of the situation noted the status of the Jama Masjid and its symbolic legibility to the Islamic community of Delhi and to a larger regional, and potentially national, consciousness.

Shortly after the 1932 speeches, rumors began to circulate among the Muslim community in Delhi that the colonial government was planning to interfere with religious services in the Jama Masjid, monitor the congregation, and perhaps even close the mosque to prayer once again. Although the British government had no such plans they were obliged to send out a press communiqué squelching these rumors and assuring the Muslim public that no actions would be taken that would hurt the latter’s religious sentiments. The press notice repeated the words from the closed communication that had passed between the colonial government and the JMMC by asserting that the former was simply “preventing such *misuse of the famous building*, not only sacred to those holding the Mohammedan faith, but also the *admiration and pride of all Delhi communities alike*”<sup>14</sup> [emphasis added]. These descriptions of the Jama Masjid make it clear that the colonial government understood the monument as being famous and admired by Indians as well as having a menacing or “evil” aspect to it, when put to political use. At the heart of colonial anxiety were these overlapping affects of the Jama Masjid and their ability to ripple out with a momentum of their own. The affective potential of the Jama Masjid to operate as a recognized symbol of Islamic power was understood as an active threat to colonial power. It was at this moment of colonial reckoning that the monument ceased to be a static vessel of history and became “vibrant matter” capable of inciting insurgency.

## Public Space and the Haunting of 1857

The colonial anxieties unleashed by the politicization of the Jama Masjid in 1932 were exacerbated by the memory of 1857 and the British government’s belief that that uprising had been fomented in Delhi’s mosques. Following the 1857 Rebellion colonial suspicions of revolt were projected equally on Muslim bodies as well as Islamic spaces, such as the Jama Masjid. For example, in 1858, during the prosecution of Indians connected with the Rebellion it was suggested that Mir Ahmed, the Imam Sahib (Chief Cleric) of the Jama Masjid be charged with treason. The charge, if proven, was punishable by hanging. The colonial judge, however, found little evidence to indict the imam with aiding or abetting the Rebellion. Instead it was discovered that another Islamic cleric had used the premises of the Jama Masjid to preach a “crusade against the infidels”; but the report noted, with relief, that he had been killed by British troops when they entered the city in September 1857.<sup>15</sup> The only connection between Mir Ahmed and the guilty imam (besides their religious affiliation) was the Jama Masjid. Muslim bodies and Islamic monuments were thus twinned together and imagined as equally capable of anticolonial revolt.

That the anxiety of another rebellion against British rule persisted in the colonial imaginary of Delhi more than half a century after 1857, is borne out by the words of H. C. Fanshawe, the Chief Commissioner of Delhi who noted the following in 1911:

Delhi is not an ordinary place. It has been the capital of India for a thousand years nearly, and all eyes in India still turn to it, especially Muhammadan eyes. A serious outbreak of violence in any other city in India is bad enough and may have more than local effects; but a serious outbreak in Delhi would, I venture to believe, *at once give rise to the idea that the days of 1857 had come again*. As Delhi is still the centre of India, so is the old Moghul palace [the Red Fort], with the adjoining great mosque [the Jama Masjid], the centre of Delhi, and I think it is of great political importance that the people of Delhi should see our garrison in the fort and should know that the city is at the mercy of the guns in front of the Lahore Gate. The population of Delhi has a strong turbulent element, and the recollections of the mutiny are fresh in their minds. As long as the guns of the fort are pointing down the Chandni Chauk, they remain quiet, but once remove those guns and the temptation to lawlessness and outbreak will be irresistible.<sup>16</sup> [emphasis added]

In Fanshawe's mind Delhi's Muslim population remained untrustworthy and had the potential to incite yet another widespread rebellion. Fanshawe also acknowledges the affective power of monuments such as the Red Fort and the Jama Masjid to revive the memory of 1857. The remedy to this threat was to continue the naked display of colonial power, through the visibility of military personnel and arms to the public of Delhi. The reconsolidation of colonial power in Delhi following 1857 meant increasing military contingents and positioning them in various parts of the city as a prophylactic against further anticolonial rebellion. While this may have been easily accomplished in monuments such as the Red Fort, which was entirely under the jurisdiction of the British government, the same level of colonial control could not be exercised over the Jama Masjid.

Following the 1911 pronouncement that a new capital of British India would be established in Delhi, colonial authorities became increasingly concerned with the pattern of petty politicians and indigenous groups congregating in mosques for nonreligious reasons. Records from 1936 state, with no little regret, that in 1912 when a cleric by the name of Maulana Mohammad Ali had made seditious speeches in the Jama Masjid, "unfortunately no action" had been taken by the colonial government so that now "encouraged by the non intervention of the Government" various groups had taken control of the mosque using it repeatedly for this type of activity.<sup>17</sup> That was the same year that a bomb had been hurled at Viceroy Hardinge during his visit to Shahjahanabad, challenging the colonial perception that Delhi was a less politically active city than Calcutta. Indeed, a growing hostility toward colonial power was palpable in the city as early as 1911 and its main arena of expression was within the mosques of the city.

Given the long history and reputation of political use that Delhi's mosques had it seems odd that the colonial government should have been surprised that these traditions had not only continued but were in fact occurring with some frequency. The tone of the correspondence pertaining to the issue reveals, however, that colonial anxiety was based on two relatively new aspects of the same enduring tradition of political orality. First, since 1911 the colonial government had increasingly become the prime target of critique in these speeches.

As the twentieth century advanced Indian nationalism manifested itself clearly and strongly in Delhi through civil disobedience strategies of marches, sit-ins, and mass picketing. The British government passed the Rowlatt Act in 1919 in response to the increasing public demonstrations by Indian nationalists. The act vested colonial authorities with the power to declare a state of emergency in cities; to arrest and imprison persons suspected of terrorism without trial; to increase censorship of the press; and conduct juryless trials for those charged with “revolutionary activities.” While the Rowlatt Act itself had been repealed in 1922, by the 1930s the growing support for decolonization had made it difficult for the British government to dismiss the large-scale ramifications of seditious speeches as merely the incendiary politics of a small minority.

A second aspect of colonial anxiety regarding these speeches was related to the spatial practicalities of surveillance. Following the Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919<sup>18</sup> the colonial government had increased their control over Shahjahanabad and by the mid-1930s the colonial government was considering the use of armored cars, machine guns, tear gas, and aircraft surveillance and patrol in order to maintain disciplinary control over Delhi.<sup>19</sup> Stephen Legg has shown that the fear of civil disobedience movements spreading quickly from Delhi, if they were not contained, even led the government to simulate responses to scenarios where ‘fanatic Mohammadians’ were imagined leaving the Jama Masjid and the Fatehpuri Masjid to beat Europeans to death. Hindus and Sikhs joined the seditious Muslims and the revolt quickly spread north to the Civil Lines and south to New Delhi. In this imagined scenario of urban revolt, the colonial government responded by dispatching military troops to protect the government offices in New Delhi, but even so the “impossibility of outwitting the revolutionaries in Old Delhi was admitted because they worked ‘on internal lines of communication.’”<sup>20</sup>

The colonial yearning for panoptical control coupled with the knowledge of its impossibility was perhaps most vividly brought home with the repeated use of the Jama Masjid as a space for political protest. While colonial power and surveillance could be, and indeed was, often carried to its most brutal extreme in the streets and town squares of Delhi—that is, the truly public spaces of the city—it also met its limits at the gates of the Jama Masjid. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Religious Endowment Act of 1863 granted autonomy to all religious structures and the property around them without interference from any colonial authorities. Originally implemented to divest the British government from maintaining religious endowments (either financially or in terms of administration) the act handed over the management of temples, mosques, and churches to committees made up of members representing the specific religious communities. Although the act did not explicitly bar the British government from monitoring the activities within religious spaces, they could only do so by proxy of the managing committees in charge of these sites. In the case of the Jama Masjid, for example, the JMMC had to approve and implement all decisions made by the colonial government regarding the mosque, further limiting the latter’s ability to enact total control over the space.

Meanwhile, the position of the JMMC was also precarious, as their integrity was severely compromised in the eyes of the rest of the Muslim community who saw them as loyalists to the colonial government. Indeed, throughout the 1920s and 1930s the JMMC repeatedly condemned the anticolonial demonstrations that took place within the mosque, continually

professing their allegiance to the British government. Often, the committee represented themselves as helpless bystanders to the “inappropriate” use of the mosque by dissident elements who they claimed had taken over the mosque by force. Other times the JMMC gently reminded the colonial authorities that it would be unwise to restrict the use of the mosque exclusively for religious purposes as the Muslim population of Delhi had on several occasions gathered at the Jama Masjid to show their support of the colonial government. These included: a gathering during the 1877 Durbar when Queen Victoria was crowned as Empress of India where Muslims expressed loyalty to the British Crown; meetings held in praise of Queen Victoria on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee (1887) and Diamond Jubilee (1897); a mourning meeting on the passing of Queen Victoria (1901); a congratulatory meeting on the occasion of the Coronation of King George V (1910); a large gathering of Muslim clergy who offered prayers for the long life and continued prosperity of King George V during the Delhi Durbar (1911); and a number of enthusiastic meetings held during the various phases of the Boer War, during which the mosque was illuminated twice, once at the relief of Ladysmith and the next at the fall of Pretoria (1900).<sup>21</sup> In enumerating the use of the mosque for nonreligious meetings where the colonial government was feted and supported, the JMMC pointed out that the mosque had on several occasions been an ally of colonial power.

It is difficult to know whether the JMMC was employing a deliberate strategy of ignorance regarding the use of the mosque for anticolonial demonstrations or whether their claims of helplessness were in fact earnest. In either case, the repeated appropriation of the Jama Masjid for anticolonial demonstrations brings to light the limits of both the JMMC as well as the colonial government when it came to controlling the space of the mosque. For example, a report submitted by the committee to the Delhi authorities regarding a meeting held in the mosque on the night of July 14, 1939, noted that a group of Ahrars<sup>22</sup> had entered the precincts of the mosque late at night and held a meeting until 3 a.m. the next morning. The same group returned two weeks later at 11 p.m., when the mosque was closed, and pressured the guardsmen to open the gates. When they were denied entry into the mosque the Ahrars entered surreptitiously through the unguarded southern gate and let in hundreds of others into the mosque. A similar meeting was held the very next day by the same group and all three incidents were reported to the Delhi authorities by the JMMC alerting the former that the mosque had been used to deliver speeches that tended to a “breach of peace.” In their report the committee presented the activities as a “criminal trespass” and sought the help of the Chief Commissioner’s Office to prevent what they termed as “unlawful activities” within the mosque.<sup>23</sup>

The correspondence went back and forth between the colonial authorities and the JMMC, with both parties agreeing that the regulations regarding the mosque had been violated and that the political activities of dissenting groups like the Ahrars and the Jamiat-Ulema had to be stopped. Neither party, however, was willing to assume responsibility for enforcing the relevant policies. The colonial government placed the onus of policing the mosque on the JMMC while the latter pleaded that they were powerless to stop the so-called “unlawful” activities that were going on in the mosque. The report brought home to the colonial government the limits of their power over the Jama Masjid and their impotence in containing seditious activities within these spaces. The frustration of the colonial authorities

over the matter is revealed in a confidential letter written by the Deputy Commissioner to the Chief Commissioner. Placing the blame squarely on the JMMC, the Deputy Commissioner said,

The Managing Committee has never really functioned properly. If we show too much readiness to help, and sponsor [police] cases on their behalf, the Imam and others will stand back and give unsatisfactory evidence as they have done on occasions in the past. It will be the case of a troublesome baby having been handed over to us. By way of example we could not be expected to step in and arrest say 1000 Ahrars who had entered the Mosque! It is not practical politics to support the proposition that we can stop the mosque being used for political purposes. This would cause furore and land us in unnecessary trouble at a time when we least want it.<sup>24</sup>

What is to be made of the visceral frustration expressed by the colonial authorities in this letter? In addition to recognizing that colonial hegemony was less than total and in fact rendered moot through these active and urgent contestations of colonial power, there was also the realization that the Jama Masjid simply could not be policed like other spaces in Delhi. The inability of the JMMC to monitor the space of the mosque simply mirrored the powerlessness of the colonial authorities to do the same.

It is within this constantly shifting field of affective relations that the Jama Masjid slipped out of its definition as a merely passive religious space to become an agent of political expression and a threat to colonial order. At the end of his letter to the Chief Commissioner the Deputy Commissioner meekly suggested that if the JMMC were to inform the Police Superintendent about large political gatherings in the mosque as they were happening, the authorities would consider arresting the protestors *as they left* the premises of the mosque. In other words, colonial power could be exercised just as soon as the protestors entered the “public” domain controlled by the British government, but on no account would the police or representatives of the Chief Commissioner’s Office enter the precincts of the mosque to make arrests.<sup>25</sup>

The opportunities afforded to the Indian public by the Jama Masjid can be understood more clearly by comparison to a large nationalist demonstration held in the truly public area in and around Chandni Chowk during the same period. On May 5, 1930, supporters of the Indian National Congress and *satyagrahis* led a civil disobedience march through the streets of Shahjahanabad pledging support for Gandhi who was at the beach at Dandi, Gujarat for the salt march.<sup>26</sup> Several thousands took part in the protest and anticolonial speeches were delivered in front of government buildings such as the Treasury, Police Office, District Magistrate’s Office, etc. A few arrests were made on this first day of the demonstration.<sup>27</sup> On May 6, following news of Gandhi’s arrest, the *satyagrahis* organized a public strike as well as large procession through the streets of Shahjahanabad. The protestors picketed the entrances to the civil and criminal courts thereby blocking magistrates, clerks, and pleaders from entering the court. More police and military personnel were deployed to join the already robust force that had been stationed around the city and armored cars were called

in to break up the protest. When physical altercations broke out between British officers and Indian demonstrators, the police opened fire and killed four Indians including two Congress workers. The following day when the Congress leaders tried to carry the bodies of their dead colleagues through the streets of Delhi, they were informed that all those participating in public processions would be arrested and prosecuted with criminal charges. The police also scuttled the preparations for another demonstration by breaking up groups that had gathered in the walled city. The bodies of the two Congress workers were thus carried in quiet haste to the cremation grounds in small groups that only consisted of their relatives.<sup>28</sup>

The severe enforcement of colonial power through the use of brute force in this “public” realm contrasts radically with the limits of that same power in the Jama Masjid. Given the heavy policing of the public areas of the city during the 1930s, it is not surprising that the Jama Masjid became a political shelter and safe haven for the expression of national sovereignty. The use of the Jama Masjid as a space for political rallies, however, was not merely a pragmatic solution to the growing “disciplining of Delhi” by the colonial government in the 1930s.<sup>29</sup> It also drew upon the long-standing memories and practices of the Jama Masjid as a space of colonial critique and Indian political autonomy. Meanwhile, the role of the Jama Masjid in the 1857 Rebellion was reactivated with every similar use of it in the twentieth century. The affective values of revolt, rebellion, and the haunting specter of colonial collapse became mobilized via the Jama Masjid, making it a truly insurgent monument in the 1930s.

The web of affect created by the memory of 1857; the agency of anticolonial protestors in the 1930s; the Jama Masjid; the colonial desire to police the mosque as well as the related frustration of not being able to do so; and the largely ineffective bureaucracy of the JMMC can best be defined by Jane Bennett’s term of heterogenous assemblage—that is, *ad hoc* groupings of human subjects and non-human subjects, and inert objects that come together to exert a particular kind of agency. The concept of heterogenous assemblages calls for a recalibration of agency from that exercised solely by human individuals or collectives to agency that is distributed across an “ontologically diverse field.”<sup>30</sup> To return to the example of the Jama Masjid, when Friday prayers continued in an uncontroversial or predictable manner, the heterogenous assemblage of mosque, Indian political agency, the memory of 1857, and colonial anxiety was inert. However, with each scenario of anticolonial protest this particular heterogenous assemblage was activated such that the Jama Masjid appeared as a menace to colonial power. In other words, the affect of potential rebellion turned the Jama Masjid into vibrant matter even as it came into contact with politically charged Indian bodies; colonial anxieties; and the brute force of the British military outside the walls of the mosque.

## **Jama Masjid as an Agent of Enterprise**

The political activation of the Jama Masjid was only one type of appropriation that subverted the colonial definition of the monument as a primarily religious space with historic import. The ASI had listed the Jama Masjid as a Class I monument, which due to its “archaeological value ought to be maintained in permanent good repair.”<sup>31</sup> As with the other monuments of Delhi, preservation meant “fixing” the monument as a relic of the past, or making changes that would only enhance its aesthetic and historic qualities. Here again, however, the powers

of the colonial government were limited as all aesthetic changes suggested either by the ASI or the Delhi government had to be approved by the JMMC. The quotidian use of the mosque and its various nonreligious facets such as the provision of retail space or social services meant that the physical contours of the mosque were in constant flux as shops and other auxiliary functions were added to its exterior. Often it seemed that the JMMC encouraged such entrepreneurial provisions of the monument over its beautification. The ASI's efforts to preserve the Jama Masjid as a pristine historical object with neat boundaries were continually thwarted as the monument perpetually transformed to accommodate more profane functions within it. Colonial authorities were frequently discomfited by the ability of the Jama Masjid to thrive as a viable commercial entity and generate income and revenue. Thus, even as Indian nationalists appropriated the mosque for reasons of political expression, other claimants appeared to inhabit the mosque in ways that were also beyond the control of the colonial government.

### "The King's Pulpit in the *Shahi* Mosque"

In 1911 as part of the Durbar celebrations King George V and the Empress visited the city of Delhi and toured the many historical monuments of the city, including the Jama Masjid. The visiting regents noted that the *mukkabir*<sup>32</sup> in the central courtyard of the Jama Masjid, apart from being rendered in a late-Mughal baroque architectural style and therefore aesthetically incompatible with the rest of the seventeenth-century mosque, was also in bad repair. Considering that the Jama Masjid was the largest mosque in the city and among the grandest mosques in India, the king and queen decided that it deserved to have a beautiful pulpit, and granted the JMMC two hundred sterling for the same. The Deputy Commissioner of Delhi assigned the task of designing the pulpit to Gordon Sanderson, at the ASI, adding with a flourish: "Here is a job after your own heart! Think of the joys of being able to go down to posterity as the man who built the pulpit of the Jama Masjid! The king's pulpit in the Shahi [Royal] Mosque!!! Will you make an estimate for a real good work with plenty of marble on?"<sup>33</sup>

Even as Sanderson hurried to his task, the JMMC received the idea with less enthusiasm. Instead of beautifying the pulpit, the Imam Sahib of the mosque suggested a more practical use of the recent donation. He proposed that the money be used to acquire "landed property" in the vicinity of the mosque, which could be rented out to indigent Muslims for use as grain shops. This would afford the tenants a livelihood while also allowing the mosque to recover some money for its own upkeep from the rent. The JMMC offered to place a plaque over the shops acknowledging that the resources to build them had come from the king.<sup>34</sup>

The strategy of appending commercial spaces to a religious building as suggested by the JMMC was a long-standing urban tradition. As Stephen Dale has pointed out in the case of mosques built as part of larger imperial complexes in Safavid Isfahan, Ottoman Istanbul, and Mughal Delhi, religious buildings were merely one piece of larger institutional, royal, and commercial complexes which featured hospitals, schools, palaces and residences of the nobility, and various kinds of shops and bazaars.<sup>35</sup> The Jama Masjid, itself was originally

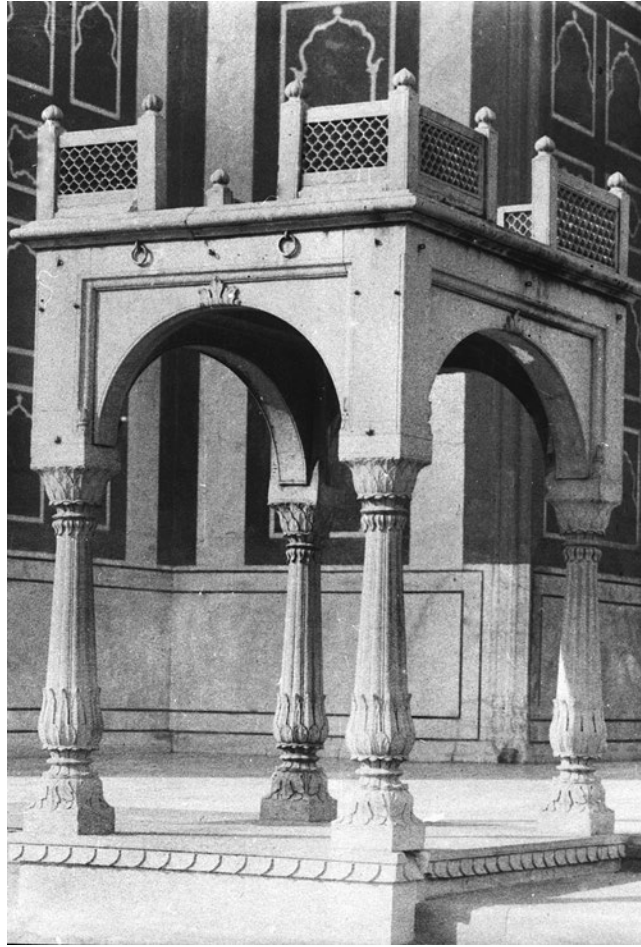


FIG. 3.3. Original *mukkabir* in the Jama Masjid, 1914–15 (Delhi, 1914–15, PD 3651, ASI Photo Archive).

designed at the intersection of four commercial avenues that radiated out from it. These were the Khass Bazaar, Khilhih Bazaar, Chauri Bazaar, and Bazaar Chitli Qabr.<sup>36</sup> In his description of the southern gate of the Jama Masjid (leading to the Bazaar Chitli Qabr), Syed Ahmad described the various tradesmen on the steps of the mosque and made special mention of the delicious *faluda*<sup>37</sup> and kebabs sold there.<sup>38</sup> The elegant Chandni Chowk (Moonlit Street), a grand thoroughfare that ran on the east-west axis toward the Lahore Gate of the Red Fort, was also only a few steps away from the Jama Masjid. During the seventeenth century, the Chandni Chowk housed approximately 1,500 shops that sold a variety of goods including silver jewelry, spices, textiles, and sweets. Although by the mid-nineteenth century the population pressures of Shahjahanabad had led to the construction of several residences on these once commercial streets, petty businesses and wholesalers continued to thrive in the areas in and around the Jama Masjid and do so till today.

Commerce was also built into the fundamental constitution of mosques and other religious institutions in the Islamic world, as mosques, religious schools, hospitals, etc., were

neither public nor private property but rather functioned as *awqaf*<sup>39</sup> or religious endowments. Usually beginning with a large pool of money provided by a royal patron or noble person that was replenished by the revenue generated by the various commercial enterprises attached to them, the *awqaf* helped remunerate those who worked at the institutions such as the imam of the mosques, but also provided surplus capital which could be invested in adjoining properties that would in turn generate further income for the *waqf*.<sup>40</sup> This is a system of property management and income generation that mosques and temples follow till today in India, where ancillary spaces are leased to small businessmen who sell religious articles such as prayer mats and books, perfume, flowers for worship, grain, etc. The monies acquired from the rent are put toward compensating the caretakers and spiritual heads of the religious institution and are used for the temple or mosque's maintenance. While the nature of *awqaf* properties will be dealt with in detail in the following section, it suffices to say here that the priorities of the colonial government and that of the JMMC were quite contrary to one another. Even as the colonial government saw the beautification of the mosque as most necessary the committee was more intent on providing services to the Islamic community of Delhi, thereby expanding the purview of the mosque's influence through economic clout, and more pragmatically generating revenue for itself.<sup>41</sup>

Discussion of rebuilding the pulpit in the Jama Masjid limped on for a few years without resolution and was revived in 1917 when Lady Chelmsford (wife of then Viceroy Chelmsford) visited the mosque during her tour to Delhi. She remarked that although the pulpit itself was not unseemly it deserved to have a more ornate access to it than the shabby and makeshift wooden ladder that led up to it.<sup>42</sup> She suggested that a more permanent and aesthetic staircase be designed for the pulpit. Once again an official of the ASI was asked to prepare drawings for an ornate stair that would provide access to the pulpit, but yet again the JMMC balked when it came time to execute the work order. This time, however, they raised the objection made in 1911 that the style of the existing pulpit was incongruous with the larger seventeenth-century Mughal aesthetic of the Jama Masjid. The committee therefore suggested either not constructing the staircase at all or redoing both the staircase and the pulpit at a substantially higher cost. The matter was eventually put to rest but not before the Deputy Commissioner registered his frustration thus:

[The Committee's] reply really means that they do not want to be bothered with any improvement. The existing Mukabar and the old wooden steps are quite good enough for them as they do not take any pride in the mosque—at least no pride which takes the form of energy. I think the best thing to do is to drop the matter and file the plans. They may come in useful later if some younger Mohammedans ever get on to the Jama Masjid Committee.<sup>43</sup>

The Commissioner's accusation that the JMMC did not care for the upkeep of the mosque was quite untrue. Indeed, soon after the Jama Masjid was handed back to the Muslims of Delhi in 1862, wealthy Muslim patrons and nobles had donated funds to replenish the endowment of the mosque. In 1886 the Nawab of Rampur made a large grant in the sum of 155,000 rupees to the Jama Masjid. The money was used to carry out repairs in the mosque



**FIG. 3.4.** *Mukkabir* installed in 1928 in the courtyard of the Jama Masjid, 2014.  
Photo by author.

spanning several years.<sup>44</sup> Similarly a donation of one hundred thousand rupees from the Nizam of Hyderabad made in 1928 was used for repairs and maintenance.<sup>45</sup> Years after the royal and viceregal visits, a new *mukkabir* was indeed built in 1928, with a donation provided by Chowdhury Shafi Ali Khan of Rohtak district, Punjab.<sup>46</sup> It appears, then, that the JMMC's prevarication about the *mukkabir* in 1911 and 1917 was either because they did not want to advertise British patronage so clearly within the courtyard of the mosque or perhaps because they believed that the British donors would be more amenable to alternative use of the offered funds.

Accusations for not maintaining the Jama Masjid were also leveraged by Delhi Muslims against the colonial government. An example already mentioned in chapter 2 bears repeating here to illustrate how the critique of the colonial government as not caring enough for

historic mosques in Delhi was also voiced within the space of the Jama Masjid. In 1923 as land acquisition for New Delhi was at its peak the colonial government asked the JMMC to put to rest rumors that the former was intending to demolish or expropriate mosques. The JMMC was asked to issue a public announcement, which highlighted the colonial government's considerable efforts to preserve and care for mosques in Delhi. The notice was meant to allay the fears of the Muslim community and allow the land acquisitions to proceed without interference from the local residents.<sup>47</sup> The committee complied with the orders and posted notices in the Jama Masjid as well as other smaller mosques around the city to this end. The Muslims of Delhi, however, took umbrage at the colonial government's claims and retaliated by posting counter-notices at these mosques, which refuted the government's assertions that they had contributed to the upkeep of the mosques in the city. Some notices reversed the rhetoric of irresponsibility and squarely accused the colonial government of obstructing the preservation and restoration of mosques carried out by the Muslim residents of the city.<sup>48</sup> The counter-notices asked that in the future the government devote time and money toward the upkeep of mosques in the city, and if they were unable to do so, should not object to caretakers living on the mosque premises. Lastly they asked that the government stop raising objections to Muslims using historic mosques for daily prayer and worship. This critique and its articulation in the space of the Jama Masjid makes it clear that the Islamic community of Delhi resisted colonial interventions into the mosque and sought to demarcate the mosque as an autonomous space in more ways than one.

The inability of the colonial government to assert themselves via a new pulpit in the Jama Masjid also brings into sharp relief the colonial perception of the Jama Masjid as an aesthetic object devoid of political energy. It is a startling reminder that the British government was either unaware or unwilling to concede the indigenous agency vested in monuments such as the Jama Masjid and the role that they had played in the political consciousness of Indians. Thus, in 1911 even as the Deputy Commissioner expressed delight that the ASI would have the opportunity to redesign the "King's pulpit of the Shahi [Royal] Mosque" there was little recognition of the sovereign power that had been so integral to that pulpit for more than three hundred years. To the Muslims of Delhi, however, the pulpit was not merely an object of art or inert sculptural element to be redesigned such that it could harmonize with the broader aesthetic of the Jama Masjid. It carried with it a rich symbolism of imperial power, articulations of political sovereignty, and most importantly indigenous agency. Indeed, this was the same pulpit that would be seized over and over again in the articulation of political sovereignty by both Hindu and Muslim speakers demanding decolonization. Its reduction to a mere aesthetic object indicates the colonial government's willful ignorance of the complex field of meanings within which the Jama Masjid was enmeshed.

## Sacred and Profane

The colonial imaginary of the Jama Masjid as a singular object of aesthetic contemplation and delight was further interrupted by its use for profane and quotidian activities. The clearing of land around the Jama Masjid started soon after the British military took over Shah-jahanabad in 1857. Although the clearances were motivated, as in other colonial contexts, to



**FIG. 3.5.** Left: Thomas Rust, “View of Delhi Showing Part of the Jumma Masjid Complex,” 1870–1880 (PH 1980: 1018: 001, Collection Centre Canadien d’Architecture/ Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal). Right: Felice Beato, “Panorama of Delhi taken from the Jumna Masjid,” 1858. Wellcome Library no. 334961.

facilitate access for military vehicles and troops and to maintain better surveillance over the area, the demolitions resulted in a geography where monuments like the Jama Masjid were isolated within an austere landscape. As H. C. Fanshawe remarked: “The external effect [of the Jama Masjid] has been unconsciously enhanced by the clearances of 1857. The lofty basement is built round an outcrop of Aravalli rock, as the mosque of Omar is built over the so-called rock of Abraham in Jerusalem.”<sup>49</sup>

While Fanshawe appreciated the inadvertent visual effects that the clearances of 1857 had on the Jama Masjid, these had also precipitated a sudden change in socio-spatial relations that had long determined the flow of revenue, patronage, and the sustenance of institutions like the Jama Masjid. First, the loss of the Mughal emperor as patron (and indeed supreme caretaker or *mutawalli*) of the *waqf* had placed the religious endowment in jeopardy. Although by the mid-nineteenth century the Mughal emperor had as little economic capital as he did political clout, it was now incumbent upon elected bodies such as the JMMC to carry out the responsibility of managing the *waqf* and ensuring its financial and well as social security. Second, with the destruction of much of the city’s fabric and the general chaos that followed in the wake of 1857, long-standing dynamics between religious and secular domains; the social and cultural connections between mosques and their immediate geographies; and the interdependence between mosques and their communities were thrown into disarray. As Delhi’s mosques were returned to the Muslim community in the late nineteenth century, the new managing committees tried to reinvent their sociopolitical networks and expand the mosque’s sphere of influence beyond the physical boundaries of the monument itself.

As with the case of the Rasul Numa Dargah discussed in the previous chapter, the colonial government was keen to contain activities associated with each religious structure within its walls. In the case of larger and well-reputed mosques their zones of influence were not simply a matter of inconvenience but also a threat to colonial control. For example, in 1916 when the Chief Commissioner noted that the use of the Zinat-ul-Masjid as a European bakery was an offence to “devout Mohammedans” of Delhi and asked that it be returned to the Muslims; the Deputy Commissioner argued that the Military Department

would object to religious services being resumed at the mosque given its proximity to the military cantonments.<sup>50</sup> Other mosques such as the Qudsia Bagh Masjid, which was situated in a Mughal garden had been converted to a European resort, and British officials argued that resuming religious services there would disrupt the leisure activities of visiting tourists.<sup>51</sup> The return of mosques was thus accompanied by a colonial anxiety as to their religious and political affect spreading outward and influencing their surroundings.

Alongside the Muslims of Delhi who expressed chagrin at the repurposing of mosques as bakeries or resorts, the ASI also struggled with other branches of the colonial government, especially the Military Department, over the damage caused to Delhi's historic mosques used for purposes other than prayer. One example of this friction between different colonial departments can be found in the frequent complaints made by the ASI that military personnel were scratching the marble floors of certain mosques (such as the Moti Masjid in the Red Fort complex) with their hobnail boots. At several mosques it was advised that soldiers and other non-Muslim visitors wear over-shoes to protect the flooring of these historic monuments.<sup>52</sup> In sum, the changes to mosque management following 1857 were fraught with debates regarding their uses and proprietorship, with several parties claiming the right to define the rules of conduct pertaining to them.

In addition to these complications the management of *awqaf* properties had also become a contested issue in early twentieth-century Delhi. During the Mughal era *awqaf* were presumed to be under the supreme authority of the Mughal emperor who acted as the *de jure* supervisor of the funds and properties. *Waqf* funds and revenues were only to be expended in strict accordance with Sharia law. With the power vacuum left in the wake of 1857, and the change in government from one where "church" and "state" were indistinguishable from one another to a government that not only espoused a strict distinction between the two but also abdicated control over religious spaces, the administration of *awqaf* became less clear. Other changes in the administration of *awqaf* particularly as they related to the management of mosques were brought on by the decreasing relevance of the mosque as a center of learning and education.

A letter of complaint filed by a disgruntled Muslim of Delhi in 1921 expresses the concerns of the Muslim community regarding the management of *awqaf* properties in the post-Mughal era. The author of the letter noted that in the past once a large mosque was built along with a small number of shops for its upkeep, it would inevitably draw the attention of an *alim* (religious scholar) who would begin to conduct prayers in the mosque and eventually attract students interested in the study of theology as well as Arabic and Persian.<sup>53</sup> Most of the revenue for the mosque would thus be generated not by rental income but rather from the status of the mosque as a school and a center of learning. The *alim* would also serve as the *mutawalli* (caretaker and manager of the *waqf* funds) and his use of the funds in compliance with Sharia law would be informally monitored by the emperor's representatives and by the community around him who would likely regard him as a spiritual and intellectual leader. The reputation of a just and devout *alim* would attract further endowments by way of public charity and large donations from Muslim elites. Conversely a corrupt *alim* would be censured by public opinion and quickly lose social capital and subsequently financial support. The letter of complaint lamented the loss of such social and cultural controls in the early twentieth century. The demand for theological study had been replaced with a

more “modern” and university-based curriculum even as the study of Persian and Arabic (the mainstays of a *madrassa*-education) had become obsolete. Meanwhile, the status of the *alim* had been reduced to that of a petty businessman who was eager to rent out the shops around the mosque to the highest bidder. The mismanagement of *waqf* funds was also rife as there were few checks on the manner in which the money was spent. Some *mutawallis* were eager to let their mosques fall into decline simply to invoke the sympathy of donors and prompt them to make large endowments, which were again used for purposes other than what was in accordance with Sharia law. The letter ended with a plea by the author for the colonial government to consider a supra-committee (made up of British administrators as well as leaders of the Delhi Muslim community) that would oversee the management of *waqf* properties in Delhi. The British government, however, remained ambivalent about this request, being loathe to manage religious endowments for fear that their involvement in these religious domains would be perceived by Indians as imperious domination.

The 1921 letter of complaint is informative in two ways: first it provides an insight into the radical repositioning of mosques with regard to their political and cultural position with Delhi. What was once a complex geography defined not just by its religious function but also its cultural capital as the engine for Islamic scholarship and community had now been reduced to an ambiguous system increasingly marked by land-grabbing and petty commercial concerns. With the dissolution of the Mughal Empire and its attendant system of patronage, *awqaf* properties were reinventing themselves and their strategies of influence. Commerce was clearly one method by which new realms of influence could be established. Second, the letter demonstrates the pressures on the colonial government to assume responsibilities related to religious spaces and practices despite their insistence on being outside such domains. Although the 1863 Religious Endowment Act had provided autonomy to religious communities in India it was often difficult for the colonial government to ascertain what constituted purely religious space and what constituted civic or public zones. For example, the areas around monuments, such as the large steps leading from Bazaar Chitli Qabr to the southern gateway of the Jama Masjid or the four-meter ring around the outer walls of the mosque were “grey zones,” multivalent spaces without clear boundaries of ownership or management, which left them open to claims from a diverse set of actors.

The nature of what was public, commercial, or religious space and how these limits and boundaries were defined were repeatedly contested during the 1920s with both colonial and Indian agents laying claims to the Jama Masjid and the area around it. For example, in 1919 the Military Department had petitioned the Delhi Commissioner to use a portion of the grounds in front of the Jama Masjid (the inappropriately named Champ de Mars) for commercial purposes. While the grounds were owned by the Military Department, the area was defined as public grounds by the Chief Commissioner’s Office, which meant it could not be used for commercial purposes. The Commissioner’s Office declined the petition arguing that the area should be used solely for public recreation adding that leasing parts of the grounds in front of Jama Masjid, although profitable, would be akin to commercializing the noted public spaces of London such as Hyde Park or St. James’ Park.<sup>54</sup>

By 1923, however, it appears that the Military Department had succeeded in leasing parts of the grounds to a variety of businesses. The competition from the Military Department as landlord led the Jama Masjid to suffer a loss in revenue from the rentals in the same area,

which they originally had a monopoly on. After protracted negotiations between the JMMC and the Military Department, a deal was reached where the JMMC leased the space from the latter for a fixed annual rent, and then acting as subcontractor leased the spaces to individual tenants.<sup>55</sup> Beyond the pragmatic reason of increasing their revenue, it is also possible that the JMMC was trying to maintain its influence and reassert its authority over the area immediately outside the Jama Masjid. Without the patronage of the Mughal emperor or other benefactors, the JMMC must have been eager to build up a network of tenants and grantees in order to reinforce its social and political capital alongside its religious importance.

With the building of New Delhi, the government applied more and more pressure on the JMMC to clear the area around the Jama Masjid of shops and stalls. For example, in 1917 the government proposed laying a road in front of the gateways and shops in order to make the area look more “sightly” and to prevent water collecting in front of the entrance to the mosque. The costs of these kinds of repairs were borne by the colonial government; however, as mentioned before, the approval of the JMMC was always required to carry out the work. Also every time such maintenance was carried out it led to some dispute as to the boundaries of the Jama Masjid and to what extent the control of the various parties extended.<sup>56</sup> The enterprising qualities of the Jama Masjid, albeit different in nature from its activation as a political space, were no less threatening to the colonial government. The ability of the mosque to generate income and operate within a realm of economic autonomy was simply another stark reminder to the colonial government of their limited power.

To understand the Jama Masjid as an economic agent I return to Bennett’s definition of heterogenous assemblage “which owes its agentic capacity to the vitality of materials that constitute it.”<sup>57</sup> For example, in her analysis of the 2003 North American power blackout that left fifty million persons without electricity, Bennett looks at the heterogenous assemblage of the electric grid, international border politics, urban infrastructures, dependent human bodies, and profit motives of corporations. In her words: “The electric grid, by blacking out, lit up quite a lot” including the dilapidated state of public utilities in urban North America and the law-abidingness of New Yorkers waiting several days for basic services to resume.<sup>58</sup> Similarly the repeated inability of the colonial government to control the nonreligious attributes of the Jama Masjid, advertised the autonomy of the mosque in startling ways. It reminded the colonial government that it was only one, and possibly inconsequential, claimant to the mosque alongside the JMMC, several petty businessmen and traders, and the larger Muslim public of Delhi. Not only was colonial power limited in this framework, it was also in the minority of interests which were rudderless by the JMMC as well as the immediate community of commercial actors. Most importantly, the agency of the Jama Masjid to generate economic revenue signaled its reemergence as more than a simply religious sphere in the urban context of Delhi. In other words, the commercial energy of the Jama Masjid coupled with its political agency to fully reveal the limits of colonial power.

## **Jama Masjid as Nation-Space**

Even as colonial bureaucrats, visiting European regents, and preservationists fretted over the appropriate aesthetics of the Jama Masjid, the courtyard and the main pulpit of the mosque

became enmeshed in an insurgent politics that signaled the rising tide of Indian nationalism and urgent calls for decolonization. The colonial administration registered with anxiety the burgeoning of a civil society among its subject population; the growing unity of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs over the cause of decolonization; and the persistent demands for national sovereignty. That such public consciousness was fomented and expressed within the unexpected space of a mosque—a space that had until then been exclusively associated with the religious identity of Islam—surprised and alarmed the colonial government. Hindu protestors repeatedly joined their Muslim counterparts in the Jama Masjid to show solidarity with the nationalist movement. Other times, Muslim speakers twinned the objectives of Islamic morality and Indian independence so closely together that the two were virtually indistinguishable from one another. The Jama Masjid was used to express nationalist aspirations, particularly the ideology of secularism, even after India received independence in 1947. As the Jama Masjid slipped out of its singular definition as a historic monument through its indigenous appropriation as political arena, it also slipped out of its definition as a purely Islamic monument to become a space where Hindus and Muslims came together to articulate their visions of an independent nation-state.

### The Mosque as Crucible for the Sovereign Nation

One of the revised rules regarding the conduct within the Jama Masjid passed by the colonial authorities in 1886 was the ban on the entry of Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains (referred to as “non-Muslim Asiatics”) into the mosque, unless they had permission to do so from the Deputy Commissioner of Delhi or the JMMC.<sup>59</sup> It is safe to assume that this particular clause was devised to protect the Jama Masjid (and other mosques) from becoming a site of communal tension between Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims—a common occurrence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>60</sup> Seeing themselves as the rational mediators between various religious groups, the colonial authorities sought to separate the communities as far as possible in order to avoid the escalation of inter-religious violence particularly around the area of the Red Fort. That the mosque would be used to express solidarity between these religious groups and become a symbol of their combined resistance against colonialism caught the British government by surprise and prompted a reassessment of the Jama Masjid as an exclusively Islamic space.

Examples of the mosque being used as a space of collusion between Hindus and Muslims are many. For instance, on March 30, 1919, a civil disobedience strike was held in Delhi to protest the passing of the Rowlatt Act. In response to the escalating tenor of the protests, the British military opened fire on the demonstrators and killed ten *satyagrahis* in Shahjahanabad.<sup>61</sup> The following Friday, Hindus and Muslims gathered in the Jama Masjid to offer prayers to the dead. Swami Shraddanand, a popular Hindu leader and member of the Arya Samaj,<sup>62</sup> addressed the congregation from the pulpit of the mosque and spoke about the “martyrdom” of the ten dead “freedom fighters.”<sup>63</sup> On April 4, another Hindu leader by the name of Munshi Ram addressed a large audience in the Jama Masjid and then led part of the crowd to the hospital to visit those wounded by the British military.<sup>64</sup> A few days later large meetings were held in three sites around the Jama Masjid—at Edward Park; at

the residence of a Muslim family (named Ansari) in the Daryaganj neighborhood; and at the Fatehpuri Masjid.

These incidents were recorded in the Chief Commissioner's reports regarding the growing civil disobedience movement in Delhi and the presence of Hindus in the prominent mosques of the city was always mentioned as an exceptional matter of note. In 1927, when riots broke out in the city and several shops owned by Hindus were looted by Muslim youth; the imam of the mosque offered prayers and apologies to the Hindus of Delhi. Donations were also collected from the congregation to compensate those Hindus who had lost property and goods.<sup>65</sup> Such acts of solidarity between Hindus and Muslims caused concern to the British officials who expressed alarm over the growing collaboration between the two groups. In response to the anxieties of the colonial government the JMMC often argued that Muslim protestors had "forced" their Hindu counterparts to attend these rallies against the latter's free will.<sup>66</sup> These pacifications offered by the JMMC were meant to reinforce the colonial belief that Hindus and Muslims were antagonistic groups who would neither unite under a common cause, nor congregate in each other's religious spaces unless forced to do so under duress. Yet there exists ample evidence to suggest that Hindus had been welcomed within the central courtyard of the Jama Masjid and expressed solidarity with Muslims on several occasions.

To construct the collusion between the Hindus and Muslims in the Jama Masjid as a celebratory narrative of communal affinity or to suggest that the differences between these two groups had dissolved under the banner of Indian nationalism, however, would be a disingenuous representation of the religiously volatile milieu of Delhi in the early twentieth century. Starting in the early 1900s and well after the moment of Partition in 1947, the rift between Hindus and Muslims had grown larger. Simmering religious tensions had often escalated into riots in Delhi. Equally divisive were the internal fissures within Hindu and Muslim communities that continued to grow even as the nationalist movement gained ground. Broadly, Hindus were split between those who pledged allegiance to the Arya Samaj (the reformist Hindu group) and the more orthodox Sanatan Dharm sect of the Hindu community. Similarly, the Muslim constituency of Delhi was divided along the lines of the Jamiat-Ulema, the Khilafatist, and the Deoband School (which included the Ahrars).<sup>67</sup> As mentioned before, the members of the JMMC were seen by other Muslims (such as the Ahrars and the followers of the Deoband School) as little more than colonial sycophants. And yet, and perhaps especially given this climate of communal frictions, it surprised the colonial government that Hindus had been allowed access into the Jama Masjid to express their anticolonial solidarity with Muslims within the space of the mosque.

The appropriation of the Jama Masjid by Hindus and Muslims as a deliberate space of protest and arena to express their agency overturned these assumed religious antagonisms for brief moments in time. As tenuous and fraught as such alliances were, their larger impending ramifications were not lost on the colonial government. Further, the Jama Masjid was not simply a passive or convenient stage for such exhibitions of Indian nationalism. It was in fact the vehicle through which Indian sovereignty was expressed and activated. The "Shahi" pulpit that King George V and later Lady Chelmsford had seen as woefully inadequate for the grandeur of the Jama Masjid became the very platform from which Munshi Ram and Swami Shraddhanand were articulating demands for self-determination alongside their Muslim counterparts like Barakat Ullah.

## The Jama Masjid “Speaks”

Even when Hindus and Sikhs were not physically present in the political congregations in the Jama Masjid, the rhetoric of speeches in the Jama Masjid often combined the causes of nationalist realization alongside Islamic identity. The sturdiness of the Jama Masjid as an enduring symbol of Islamic culture at the political center of India and the future of a modern nation-state free from the oppression of colonialism were syncopated in the oratory poetics of speeches given in the Jama Masjid. Here I return to analyze in greater detail the rhetorical strategies employed by Barakat Ullah, the young Muslim nationalist, in 1932 and compare it to a speech delivered by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, India’s first Minister of Education, in 1947. I argue that in both these instances the Jama Masjid “spoke” the rhetoric of Indian nationalism alongside that of Islamic piety and patrimony.

During the 1932 demonstration, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, an audience of three thousand men, organized by the Jamiat-Ulema, met in the courtyard of the Jama Masjid. The first person to take the stage was M. Ahmad Ullah who reminded his Muslim audience of their continuous history of sovereignty and that as a people they could not be slave to anyone. It was thus the duty of the young men gathered in the mosque to break the bonds of servility that had been placed upon them by the colonizers in order to live in the “world like a free nation.”<sup>68</sup> The longest and most passionate speech of the afternoon, however, was delivered by Barakat Ullah, a student from the Deoband School, in a *sawaal-jawaab* (question-answer) oratory style. Calling attention to the moral inferiority of the colonial government, Barakat Ullah asked his audience if there had ever been a prostitute’s quarter in Delhi before the British presence. The audience responded: “Never!” More questions followed, each one more provocative than the next, such as his query to the audience as to whether they wanted to be ruled by a “fornicator and scoundrel”; or whether his audience could accept being ruled by European masters whose morality was such that they had no trouble sharing their wives with other men? To each of these questions the audience replied: “Never! Never!!”

On the one hand Barakat Ullah’s condemnation of the British as immoral, dishonest, and promoting behaviors that were in flagrant violation of Sharia law was a predictable strategy given the settings and his audience. On the other hand the invocation of Islamic morality was quickly followed by a prescription for self-reliance and resistance along the lines advocated by Gandhi and the Indian National Congress. He advised the audience to “achieve freedom soon and wear *khaddar*.”<sup>69</sup> *Khaddar* or *khadi* was the homespun cotton cloth that Gandhi had encouraged all Indians to make and wear as a protest against the British taxation of Indian goods and as a means of self-reliance. When Barakat Ullah asked the audience whether they were prepared to wear *khaddar*, they replied in the affirmative. When he asked those who were prepared to wear *khaddar* to raise their hands, approximately 1,500 persons or half the gathering did so and said that they would only buy and use *swadeshi* (Indian manufactured) goods. Barakat Ullah then pressed the need for the resistance to be nonviolent (another overt reference to Gandhi’s *satyagraha* movement) and concluded by saying that the love of Islam shared by all pious Muslims would help them “destroy the oppressive Government.”<sup>70</sup>

Barakat Ullah’s speech brought together Islamic piety and contemporary tenets of Indian nationalism as virtually indistinguishable and inseparable from one another. Further Islamic

identity was linked to sovereignty and resistance against domination and the Jama Masjid had become the locus to express both. The content of speeches such as that given by Barakat Ullah made the political temperament of a large majority of Indian subjects very clear and signaled the espousal of decolonization among diverse groups of Indians. The frustration that colonial authorities experienced at the growing political consciousness of Indians in Delhi can be found in this statement made by H. C. Beadon, District Magistrate of Delhi:

It will I imagine be readily recognised that before the Durbar Delhi was a simple *mofussil* [provincial] town, with little knowledge of politics, with no political agitators beyond a few anarchists whose machinations were circumscribed after the Delhi-Lahore conspiracy trial, with no indigenous press and with no special aspirations. (The wealthier of the citizens are mostly men who are wholesale dealers in cloth, iron, paper, apparel, oil-man stores, hardware, etc., which are distributed all over Northern India and the lower classes are these who perform humbler duties and who are dependent on the traders). Since Delhi became the Capital all this has changed, for the place has been flooded with agitators and politicians from all parts of India and has been the scene of countless political demonstrations and meetings.<sup>71</sup>

While there was some truth in the assertion that young nationalists (like Barakat Ullah) and politicians may have come from other parts of India to Delhi, Beadon's claims that Delhi had neither an indigenous press nor a politically active community before the Durbar was disingenuous. It could also hardly be claimed that Delhi was an apolitical space or a simple *mofussil* town prior to 1911. Yet, such were the colonial fantasies projected onto a landscape imagined to be populated by docile bodies and inert monuments. The appropriation of the Jama Masjid as a space of anticolonial demonstrations rudely interrupted this colonial fiction of Delhi as a simple *mofussil* town.

The Jama Masjid did not cease to act as vibrant matter once the goal of decolonization was achieved in 1947. Indeed, this ability of the monument to echo nationalistic aspirations was manifested once again when the charismatic politician Maulana Abul Kalam Azad took the pulpit during Friday prayers at the Jama Masjid on October 23, 1947. At the time India was less than three-months-old as an independent nation. Azad had been a tireless advocate for Indian Muslims and equally vociferous opponent of the Partition. Indeed, he had seen the division of the subcontinent as a travesty stoked by political factionalism rather than an accurate representation of Hindu-Muslim relations in the country. Yet, as he gave his speech in the Jama Masjid, Delhi was caught in the violent throes of Partition; millions of refugees poured into the city while million others fled their homes in the opposite direction. Azad implored the Muslims of Delhi to stay on in India reassuring them that it was indeed their homeland. His speech was purposefully theatrical and sermon-like—designed to provoke nationalist belonging and cultural pride within the thousands of Muslim men who had gathered for Friday prayers at the mosque.

Azad began his speech by invoking the Jama Masjid as an enduring symbol of Islamic strength and implying that for Muslims to leave India for Pakistan would be cowardly. He

reminded his audience that they had gathered in the courtyard of Emperor Shahjahan's historic mosque, from where he had addressed similar crowds many times before. With these oratorical moves, Azad placed himself as well as his Muslim audience within the enduring and glorious Islamic history of Delhi. The precariousness that many Muslims undoubtedly felt during the days of Partition was thus juxtaposed against the sturdy history of Islamic Delhi. Azad championed that history as he said with dramatic flair:

The minarets of the Jama Masjid want to ask you a question. Have you forgotten the glorious history mentioned in your chronicles? Was it not only yesterday, that your *kafilay* (caravans) stopped on the banks of the river Yamuna to perform *wuzu* (Islamic ablutions undertaken before prayer)? Today, you are afraid of living here! Remember, Delhi has been nurtured with your blood. Brothers—seek to transform yourselves! Today, your fear is as misplaced as your jubilation was yesterday.<sup>72</sup>

Many Delhi Muslims feared they would be persecuted as a religious minority in independent India, and it was this anxiety that Azad referred to in his speech. Meanwhile, the misplaced jubilation that Azad referred to was the celebration of Pakistan as a separate Islamic state by those Muslims who had supported the Partition. Azad's rhetorical strategy activated the Jama Masjid as a moral interrogator of his audience and as a witness to their past as well as future actions. The same minarets that had enabled Felice Beato to surveil Delhi in the aftermath of the 1857 Rebellion were now animated as stewards of a Muslim population that once again found itself on the verge of displacement. Azad referenced Delhi's enduring Islamic history to inscribe the Muslims more firmly into the city's soil and by extension the nation-space of India. The invocation of Muslim caravans performing *wuzu* on the banks of the Yamuna was perhaps deliberately ambiguous in its historical specificity. Was Azad referring to the original migration of Muslims into the subcontinent in the twelfth century or was he consoling those Muslim refugees, who had recently arrived penniless and desperate in caravans, that they were still part of a long and glorious history of Islamic migration to Delhi? Similarly was the blood spilt by Muslims for Delhi a reference to the violence of Partition or was it meant to invoke the Islamic empires that had risen and fallen over the course of several centuries in Delhi? Azad reminded his audience that the "incredible craftsmanship" of the Jama Masjid that surrounded them was a "relic" left behind by their predecessors: that they should strive to be worthy inheritors of such a rich patrimony. Delivered from the central pulpit of the Jama Masjid, Azad's speech sought to inspire a confident nationalism rooted within the secular promise of independent India as much as it allowed Muslims to rightfully claim their historical position within this new nation-state. Once again then, the pulpit of the Jama Masjid became activated with the vibrant articulations of Islamic identity and Indian sovereignty, the one hardly distinguishable from the other.<sup>73</sup>

Today a visitor to the Jama Masjid may not notice a small gate off the street that leads to the main eastern entrance of the mosque. It leads to serene garden enclosure that contains Azad's grave. The modest marble grave etched with his name, is covered with a minimalist concrete canopy designed by the modernist architect Habib Rahman. A commemorative plaque at the entrance to the grave describes Azad as a leader of the Indian nationalist



**FIG. 3.6.** Jama Masjid seen through the canopy over the grave of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, 2014. Photo by author.

movement, a firm believer in his own faith as well as in modern India's secular promise to hold all citizens in equal regard, regardless of their religious identity. Standing at Azad's grave looking west, one sees the minarets of the Jama Masjid looming in the near distance. At the entrance to the mosque itself, though, there is no plaque telling visitors of the role that the Jama Masjid played in the anticolonial struggle. While a standard ASI notice reminds visitors that they are entering a nationally protected monument, forgotten is the history of the Jama Masjid in creating that very nation.

By arguing for the Jama Masjid as a vocal participant, indeed cocreator, of the secular nation-state I do not mean to anthropomorphize the monument or bestow it with human qualities.<sup>74</sup> In her recent exegesis on the agentic power of architecture Annabel Jane Wharton has argued that to see buildings as murderous, addictive, or deceitful does not equal a

reenchantment of these objects. Rather she argues that “architectural agents, like the more mobile bodies with which they collaborate make social space and contribute to its ethical valence.”<sup>75</sup> Similarly, to understand the Jama Masjid’s ability to “speak” is to cast it as an orator, activated by nationalism or anticolonial longing, but only so long as it operated within a larger energetic field of agents that included human impulses, memories of the past, and bureaucratic expectations of behavior and conduct. To this end the Jama Masjid can be seen as a collaborator within the Indian nationalist movement, an entity capable of political collusion yet also impossible to indict for such trespass.

## **The Enduring Agency of the Jama Masjid**

On October 12, 2001, shortly after the 9/11 attacks, I sat in a friend’s house in Ramallah, Palestine. As I glanced over my morning cup of tea to the Arabic newspaper she was reading, I recognized the image of a familiar monument on the front page. I was looking at the Jama Masjid in Delhi but convinced that I was mistaken—for what would an image of an Indian mosque be doing in an Arabic daily circulated in the West Bank—I asked my friend to read the caption accompanying the image to me.<sup>76</sup> She confirmed that it was indeed the Jama Masjid in Delhi. The photograph showed a sea of Muslim men congregated in the courtyard of the mosque for their Friday prayer, which had been followed by protests of the recent US bombing of Afghanistan. More than a thousand men raised their hands to the sky as a sign that they condemned the actions of the US government. In addition to showing solidarity for Muslims in Afghanistan and protesting the US military strikes, the demonstrations were also a critique of India’s enthusiastic support for US actions in Afghanistan. The 2001 protests within the Jama Masjid in Delhi happened under the jurisdiction of Syed Ahmed Bukhari—one of India’s most well-known Muslim clerics and Imam Sahib of the Jama Masjid.

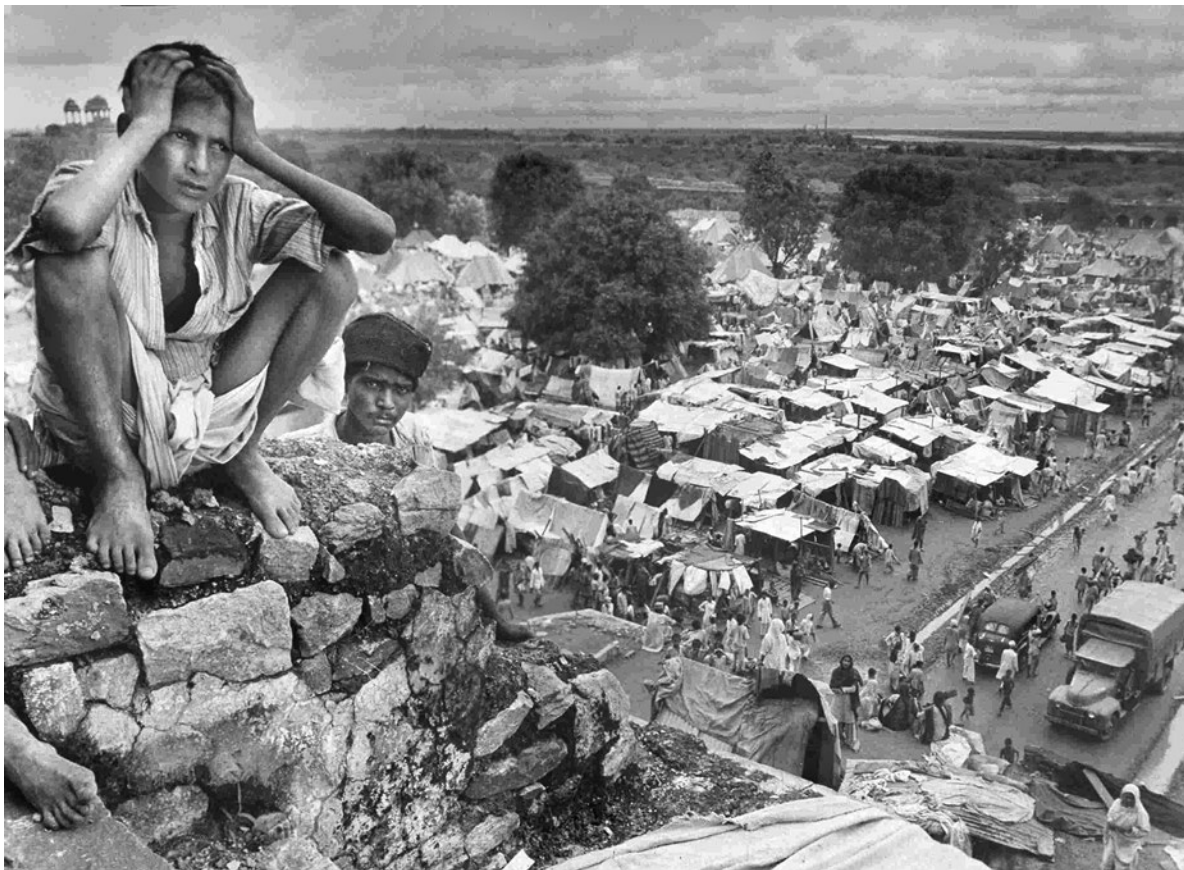
Bukhari’s initial plan for the protest had been to lead a public demonstration from the Jama Masjid to the US Embassy in New Delhi. However, he was denied the permission by state authorities to do so. Furthermore, the Indian government mobilized both the police and paramilitary forces to form a cordon around the US embassy in order to protect the premises. Having thus been denied access to the public sphere of Delhi by government authorities, Imam Bukhari decided to use the Jama Masjid to register his own as well as the protests of the larger Muslim community. Meanwhile, the Delhi police deployed five hundred personnel in riot gear around the immediate vicinity of the mosque, frisked Muslims as they entered the mosque for prayer, and closed commercial establishments in the area to safeguard private property in the event of riots. Legitimate public dissent was thus colored with the idiom of religious fervor and potential lawlessness. The marginalization of Islamic space as well as Muslim protest also revealed quite clearly the anxieties felt by the Indian government over this minority community’s agency. The Jama Masjid had once again become the congregational space of protest against a hegemonic order, except in 2001 the object of critique was not the colonial government but the secular nation-state of India.<sup>77</sup>

The use of the Jama Masjid in 2001 as an autonomous political space outside of the control of the state is only the most recent example of the enduring agency of the mosque.

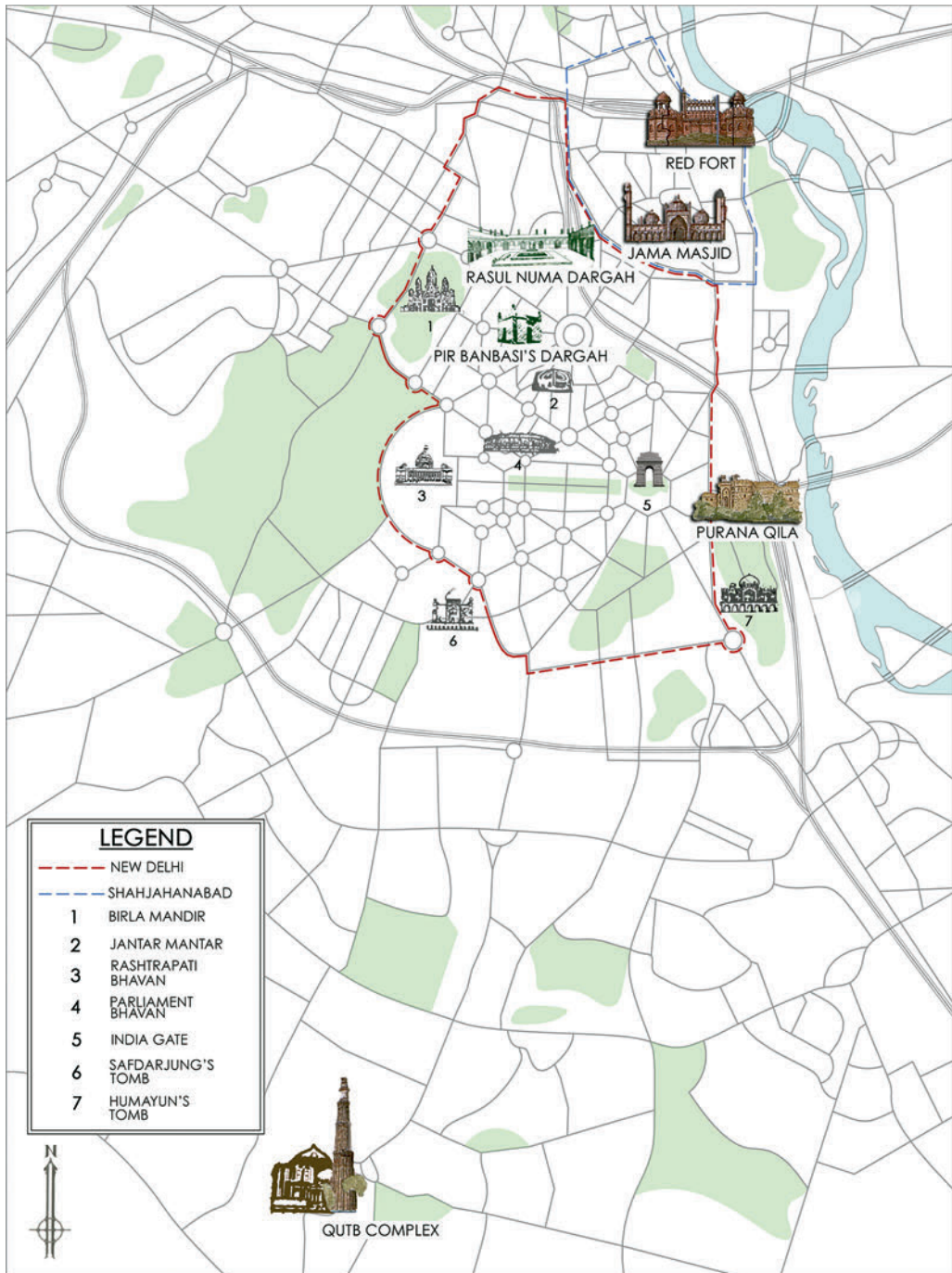
As this chapter has shown, throughout the twentieth century the Jama Masjid defied its official role as a historic space used only for religious prostration. Instead it emerged again and again as an active political space where urgent demands for self-sovereignty and autonomy were voiced. In the past, it has also been a space for Hindus and Muslims to unite under the banner of decolonization; while more recently it has been the space where Indian Muslims have displayed solidarity with the larger global *umma*. In a more quotidian, albeit no less threatening way, the Jama Masjid was also a vehicle of autonomous economic generation outside of the colonial state's control. The colonial government's desire to preserve the Jama Masjid as a passive aesthetic monument that signified the grandeur of the Mughal past was overturned repeatedly by the monument's urgent activations as a political space as well as its stealthy and quotidian appropriations as an organ of commerce. If the Jama Masjid's political appropriation punctured the colonial imaginary of total control at very precise moments in the early twentieth century, the battle to contain the commercial aspects of the Jama Masjid was an additional reminder of how colonial power could be frustrated in the management of the mosque. In the postcolonial period, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's activation of the mosque to remind Indian Muslims of their rightful and historical claims to Delhi, revitalized the monument's agency within an heterogeneous assemblage of human and non-human energies.

The goal of this chapter has been to present the Jama Masjid as more than a space that is activated through the human agency or human actors. It is also more than simply a liminal space that represents minority politics at a given time. Instead, it positions the Jama Masjid as an actant itself, pressuring the state (both colonial as well as independent nation-state); exhibiting autonomy; and "speaking" as a sovereign object. These are forces that cannot be entirely controlled by humans nor are they entirely predictable. Indeed, the enduring quality of the mosque as manifesting its own agency illustrates that the Jama Masjid continues to be today, as it was in the past, "vibrant matter" that refuses to be subject to the hegemony of state apparatuses—whether colonial or national.

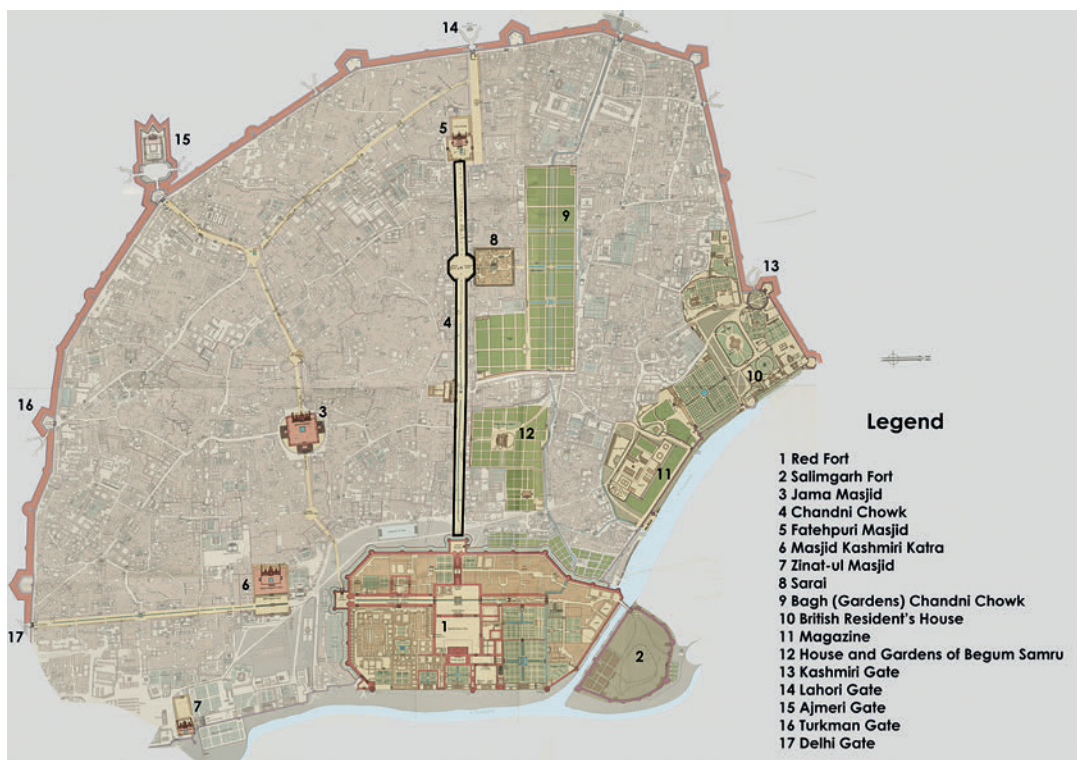
As a theory of political ecology, however, Jane Bennett's exegesis of vibrant matter does not take into account the historical contexts within which individual actants exist. Indeed, her non-human actants: electric power grids, edible matter, or metal exist outside of historical consciousness and are understood primarily in relation to the other actants in their assemblages. In the case of the Jama Masjid, however, I argue that the monument's agency cannot be understood outside of its own history. Rather than creating a teleological understanding of the Jama Masjid's agency as increasing linearly with every appropriation of it as a political or commercial space outside of state control; I argue that each deliberate manipulation of the function or symbolism of the Jama Masjid created an alternative yet immediate history for the monument. In other words, every unexpected use of the mosque, made colonial and later national authorities aware of the potential of the Jama Masjid to revitalize memories of past rebellions and made vivid the precariousness of colonial power. As discussed in chapter 1, the colonial authorities had been able to assert complete control over the physical form as well as the history of the Red Fort following the 1857 Rebellion. By the 1920s their control over the landscape of Delhi had been variously tested in the arena of smaller monuments. By the 1930s, the Jama Masjid had made the limits of colonial control clear, forecasting the end of empire.



**FIG. 4.1.** Margaret Bourke-White, "Young Refugee in Delhi," 1947. Getty Images.

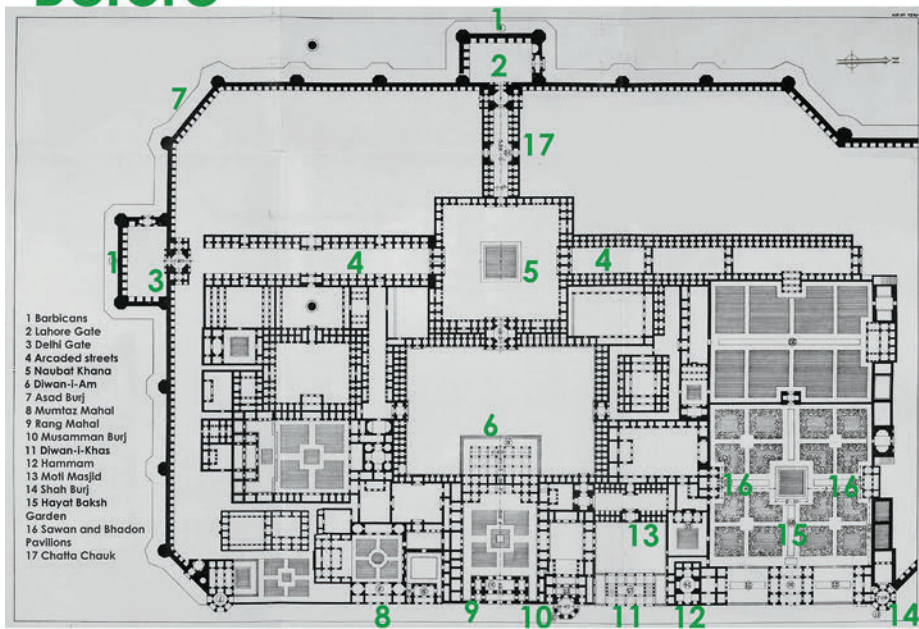


**PLATE 1.** Map showing the location of the main monuments under discussion in the book. Drawn by Grae Prickett.

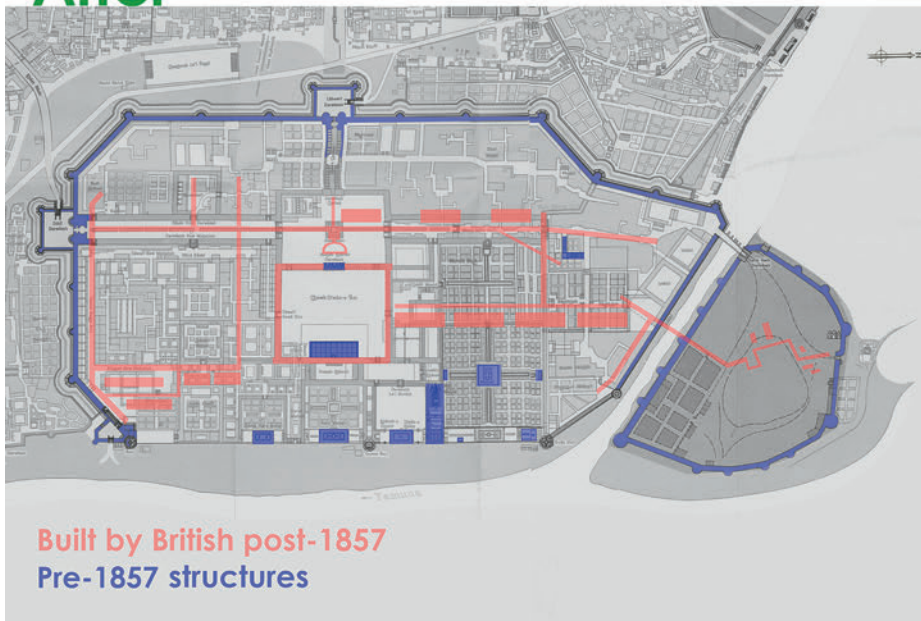


**PLATE 2.** Shahjahanabad and its important monuments. Map redrawn by Dylan Stein from Eckart Ehlers and Thomas Krafft, eds., *Shahjahanabad/ Old Delhi: Tradition and Colonial Change* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993).

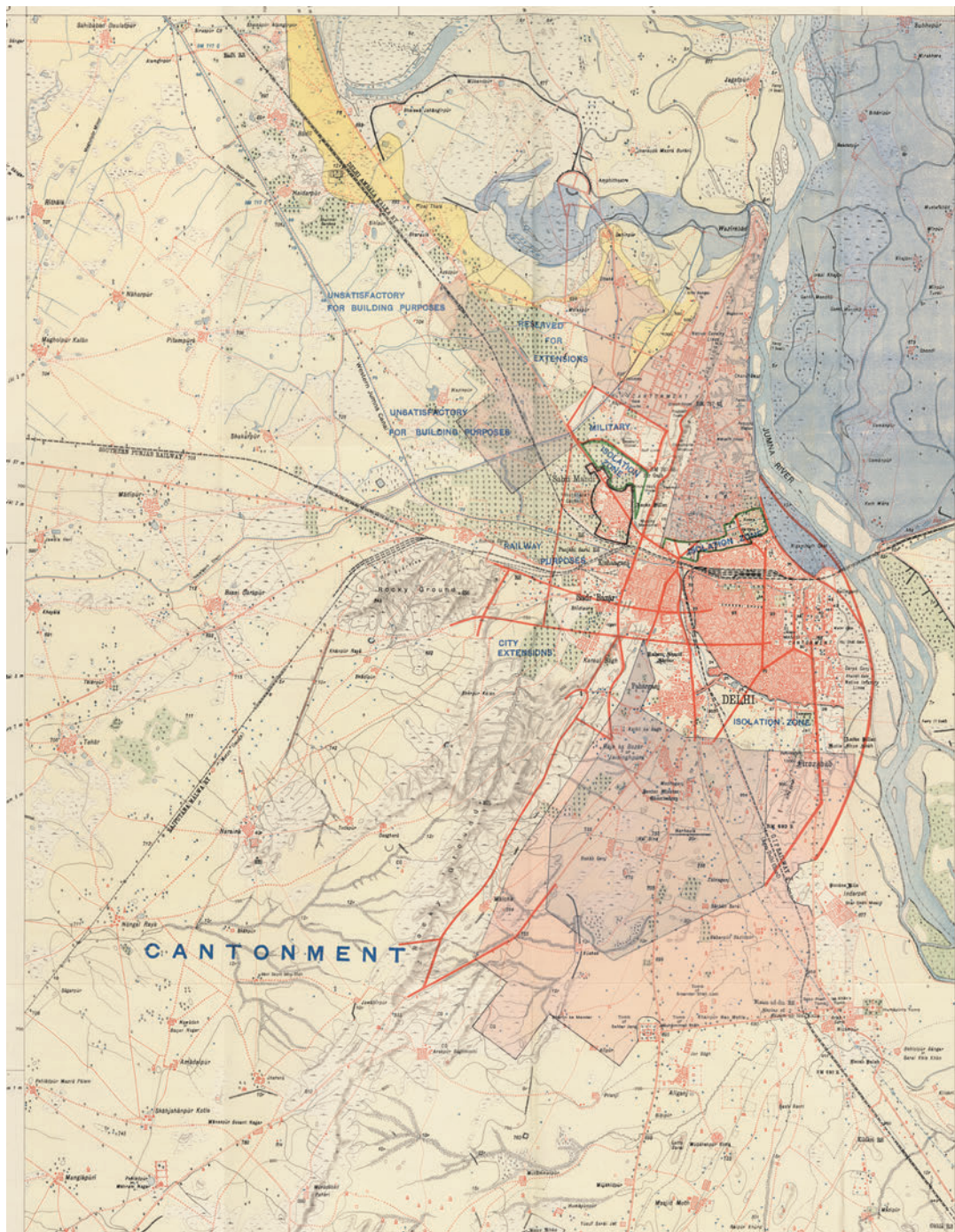
# Before



# After

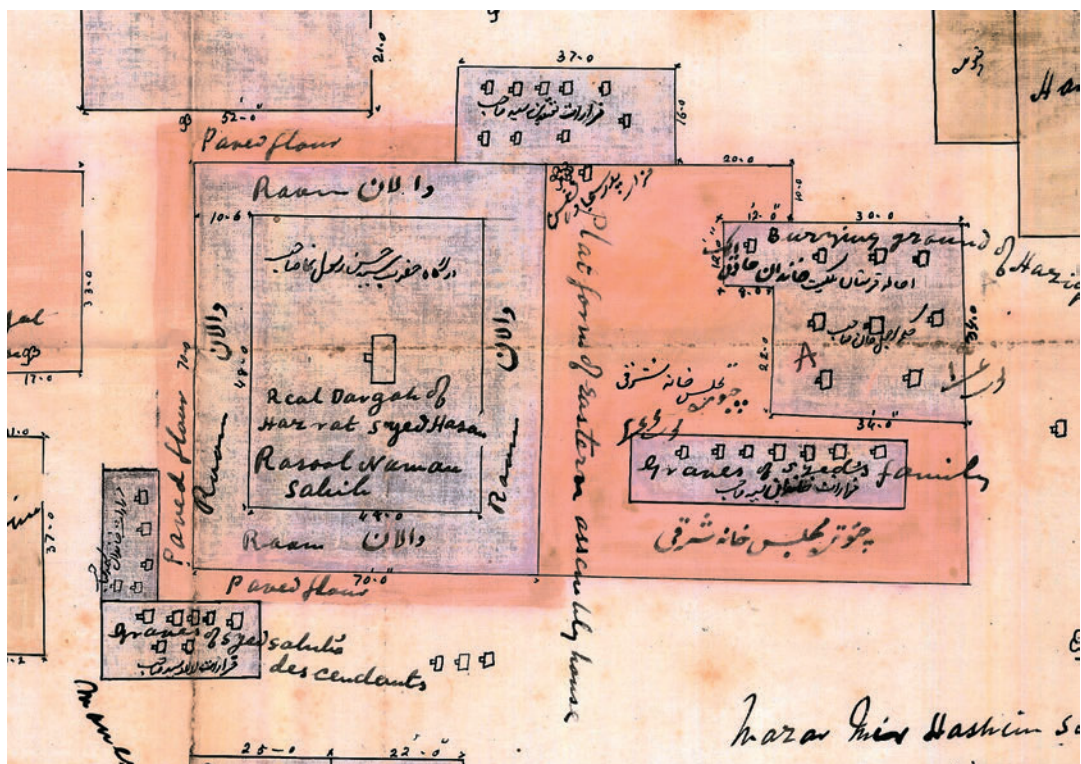


**PLATE 3.** Diagrammatic representation of structures demolished and built by the British Military in the Red Fort after 1857. Plans redrawn by Dylan Stein from Ehlers and Krafft, *Shahjahanabad*; and James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (London: John Murray, 1876).



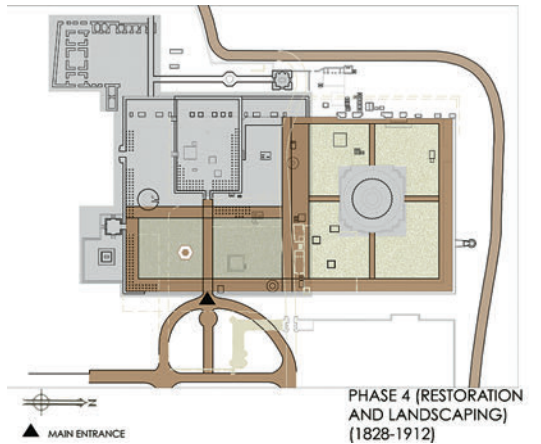
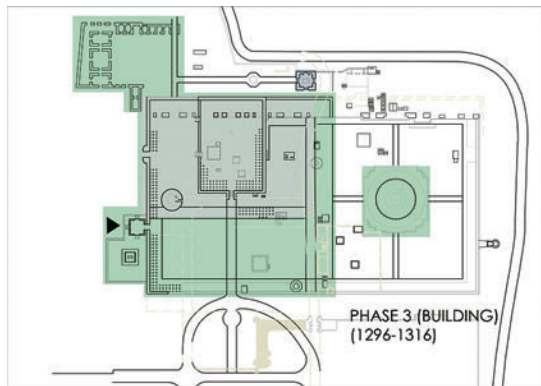
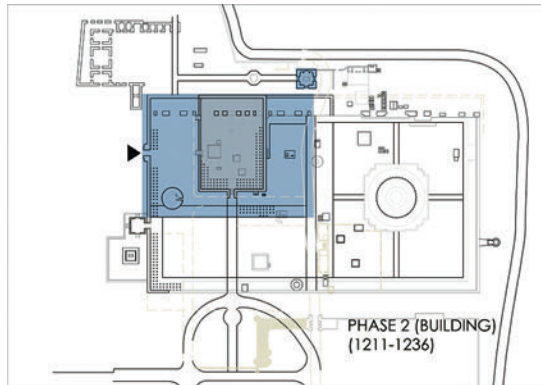
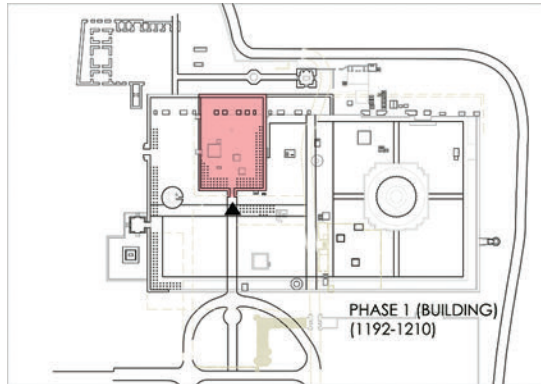
**PLATE 4.** Areas slated for immediate land acquisitions colored in pink. Excerpted from "Delhi and Its Vicinity, 1912." © The British Library Board, Shelf Mark: F 111/ 436 Folio No.: 127.



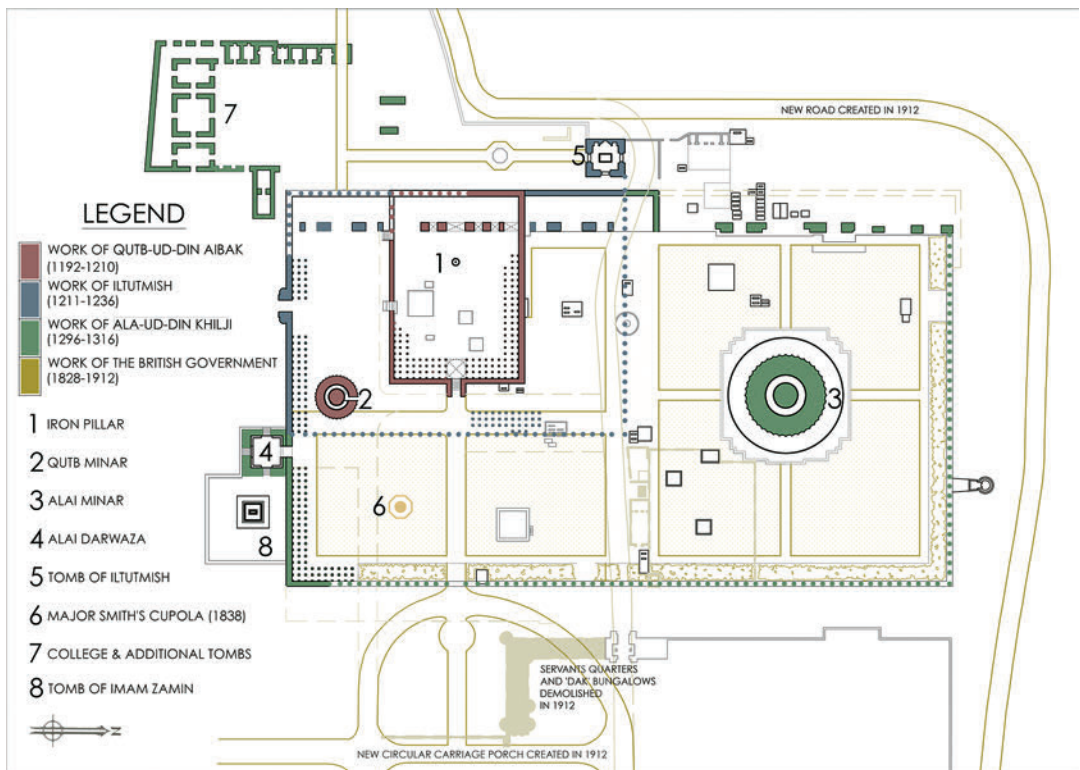


**PLATE 6.** Detail of the Rasul Numa Dargah from the watercolor map submitted by H. M. Ajmal Khan to the Chief Commissioner's Office. Delhi Archives, CCO, Revenue and Agriculture, 1918, pt. B, file no. 81.





**PLATE 8.** Site plan of the Qutb complex showing main phases of building and restoration.  
Drawn by Chris Hazel and Grae Prickett.



**PLATE 9.** Diagrammatic representation of the sequential expansion of the Qutb complex.  
 Drawn by Chris Hazel.



## 1948: Purana Qila

**American photographer** Margaret Bourke-White is in India to document the end of British colonial rule in the subcontinent and capture the jubilation of national independence for *Life* magazine. Alongside the euphoric celebrations of the birth of two new nation-states, she also finds and cannot help but record the horrific violence, dispossession, and despair caused by Partition. One photograph shows a refugee boy perched atop some ruins. It is not known whether this boy is Hindu or Muslim. It is not known which of the two new nation-states he claims as his own. It is not known if he will even survive the harsh winter of 1947. What is known from the photograph, however, is that the ruins that he sits on are of the Purana Qila. Built in the sixteenth century by Humayun, the first Mughal emperor of Delhi, and later added to by the Suri rulers, the Purana Qila has been a protected monument for several decades. In the chaos of the Partition, however, the Indian government resorts to using Delhi's monuments as refugee camps. Between sixty thousand and eighty thousand refugees are corralled in the Purana Qila in 1947 and the monument unexpectedly becomes entangled in the messy origins of independent India.

Meanwhile, another origin narrative has been attached to the Purana Qila for more than a century. An urban legend has it that the fort stands atop Indraprastha—the imperial capital of the noble Pandava kings mentioned in the Hindu epic the *Mahabharata*. In his designs for New Delhi, Edwin Lutyens creates an axis from the Purana Qila or Indraprastha, which he understands to be the most ancient layer of Delhi to the Viceroy's Palace, linking the empires of the past to the empire of the present. Nineteen hundred residents who live within the fort complex are evicted and the monument is cleaned up so that it may serve as a visual terminus of one of the main axes in Lutyens's plan.

A few years after the last of the sixty thousand refugees leave the Purana Qila in 1948, Indian archaeologists begin excavations at the monument in the hopes of discovering Indraprastha. Motivated by the descriptions in the *Mahabharata*, Indian archaeologists hope to discover a grand urban center that will serve as the Hindu progenitor to the several Islamic cities in Delhi that have followed since. The excavations, however, are futile and yield no evidence of the grand imperial capital that archaeologists imagine to be the ancient origins of Delhi. Yet the myth of Indraprastha prevails, perpetuated in the official histories of the Purana Qila and Delhi at large. Either through the careful choreography of urban design and archaeological excavation or the unexpected appropriations of refugee bodies the Purana Qila has been enmeshed in the origins of Delhi and the nation-state at large.



## The Many Origins of Partitioned Nations, Cities, and Monuments

The following pages contain a description and history of every object of archaeological or monumental interest in, or about, Shahjahanabad or Modern Delhi: beginning with the site of the semi-mythical Indra-prastha, the capital of Yudhishtira, which dates back to the year 1450 B.C., and concluding with the tomb of the Emperor Akbar II, who died in the year 1837 A.D.<sup>1</sup>

The Aryan invaders who entered India from the steppes of southern Russia and central Asia in the second millennium B.C., had a capital named *Indraprastha*, which tradition and archaeology have identified with Delhi. Dating from about 1000 B.C., or roughly contemporaneous with King David, the epic *Mahabharata* recounts in couplets the war between the Kauravas from Hastinapura on the Ganges and their hated first cousins the Pandavas, whose capital lay some eighty miles southwest at Indraprastha.<sup>2</sup> [emphasis added]

These two origin stories for Delhi written a century apart replicate the myth of Delhi's origins as the imperial capital mentioned in the Hindu epic *Mahabharata*. The 2011 Eicher Map of Delhi locates Indraprastha at the sixteenth-century Islamic monument of the Purana Qila (literally, "Old Fort"), adding further cartographic credence to this essentially folkloric legend.<sup>3</sup> Despite concerted efforts by archaeologists in the postcolonial period to find evidence for Indraprastha, there is no material proof to suggest that the Purana Qila was once the site of an ancient Hindu city.<sup>4</sup> Yet the myth of Indraprastha endures and has gradually been calcified as archival truth through its mention in archaeological reports, museums, and maps.

If the Purana Qila has over time become steadily associated with Indraprastha and the foundation myth that Delhi had its origins in a Hindu city, it also became unexpectedly embedded in another originary narrative when independent India came into being in 1947. Consider, for example, this description of the sixteenth-century fort by Anis Qidwai, a social worker who serviced the very large refugee camp set up in the Purana Qila during Partition:

The camp's filth, slush and malodours were intolerable. The hospital was positioned on elevated ground; while this ensured greater security, the space was also used to store rations, medicine and other supplies. This

was also where food was cooked; in the enclosed courtyard next to the store were the two stoves on which khichdi [rice and lentil porridge] was cooked and milk boiled. To the right was a tent always full of hospital staff, midwives, helpers, cooks and of course, spectators. . . . From the hospital, one had a vantage view of the entire camp. As far as the eye could see, tents and tin-roofed shelters were crowded together. In their midst was a ceaseless traffic of naked children, dishevelled women, bare-headed girls and men burning in defiance and humiliation.<sup>5</sup>

The traumatic foundation of the independent nation-state in 1947 has been all but redacted from the contemporary history of the Purana Qila. In this chapter I investigate the role of modern archaeology in gradually, albeit deliberately, calcifying the myth of Indraprastha as the ancient origins of Delhi. Over a period of 150 years various colonial and national bureaucracies archived the Purana Qila as the site of Indraprastha, by reactivating a popular myth and placing it within a regime of historical truth. However, even as Indraprastha came to stand for the ancient origins of Delhi, the Purana Qila became embedded within other beginnings such as the building of New Delhi and the Partition of India. This chapter, thereby, brings attention to carefully curated strategies as well as unexpected appropriations through which the Purana Qila became enmeshed in the origin-narratives of Delhi and India (modern and ancient) at large. The archival narratives of this monument emphasized the history of Delhi as a series of imperial cities stretching back to the second millennium of the previous era. The affective appropriations of the monument, meanwhile, were more problematic as they reflected the macabre violence and dispossession that accompanied the birth of India as an independent nation-state. Oscillating between these multiple and indeed contrary origin narratives is the Purana Qila itself—a sixteenth-century Islamic monument that inaugurated three centuries of Mughal imperial rule with Delhi as its capital.

Recent critical scholarship on nineteenth-century archaeology has illuminated the modern quest for origins—be they civilizational, imperial, or national. For example, Magnus Bernhardsson has argued that the archaeological excavation of ancient Mesopotamia was motivated by the desire of British colonialists to illustrate the progress of civilization through time, thereby justifying the civilizing mission of colonialism itself. Later, however, modern Iraqi nationalists (both the Hashemite King Faysal as well as the Baathist Saddam Hussein) based the cultural and political superiority of contemporary Iraq on these colonial narratives.<sup>6</sup> In her compelling study of Arthur Evans's excavations and fanciful reconstructions at Knossos, Cathy Gere has argued that the "uncovering" of ancient civilizations acted as a panacea for the ennui of modernity especially in the wake of World War I. Gere illustrates that Evans's framing of Minoan civilization as matriarchal, pacifist, and spiritually rather than militarily inclined (and his deliberate recreation of archaeological sites to illustrate such a cultural bent) was motivated by the widespread disillusionment with Enlightenment rationalism prevalent among intellectuals at the time. The nineteenth-century archaeological search for Western civilization's origins was therefore guided by an intense anxiety of the current moment and a desire to renew or at the very least renarrate modern civilization as well.<sup>7</sup>

If the search for European civilization's origins in both Eastern (Mesopotamia) as well as Western (Knossos) locales served the imperial missions of the nineteenth century; modern

archaeology has also been a key instrument in the manufacture of national pasts. Penny Edwards has shown that in the case of modern Cambodia, Angkor Wat became an omnipotent civilizational symbol that seamlessly linked the ancient Khmer nation of the past with the postcolonial nation-state. Ironically, this interpretation of Cambodia's national origins was derived from French Orientalist perceptions of Angkor culture as static and unchanging as well as colonial archaeology's contributions to those perceptions.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Nadia Abu El-Haj has shown that archaeology supplied the evidentiary proof of modern Israel's origin myth, where the establishment of the nation-state went alongside a state-institutionalized bureaucracy as well as a popularization of archaeology that fashioned Israel as the modern manifestation of an ethnically distinct premodern civilization.<sup>9</sup>

The desire to locate Delhi's origins in an ancient Hindu past, too, was motivated by imperialist and nationalist fantasies of robust ancient civilizations flowing seamlessly into India's modernity. The myth of Indraprastha carried particular purchase for the colonial state as it stretched Delhi's already impressive genealogy of powerful urban empires from the medieval period further back into antiquity. For postcolonial and post-Partition India, Indraprastha held the hope of a capital city that could compare with the Indus Valley cities in terms of grandeur and antiquity. Its seduction was also based on the promise of an essentially Hindu foundation to the various Islamic and European layers of Delhi that had followed in the medieval and modern periods.

This chapter is divided into three thematic sections that move back and forth between colonial and post-independent India. The first section, "From Myth to History" follows the serial reproduction of Indraprastha as the *ur*-city of Delhi from the first urban histories and archaeological records to the present day. The repeated invocation of the origins of Delhi as an ancient Hindu city pulled this urban legend from the realm of popular belief into one of scholarly discourse and created an archival genealogy for the city that moved its origins far back in history. This first section also argues that the repeated textual invocation of Indraprastha grew alongside the persistent absence of any archaeological or material evidence until it eventually became calcified as a regime of truth.

The second section, "Bodies and Buildings," looks at the appropriation and circulation of various bodies in and around the Purana Qila. With the building of New Delhi in the twentieth century, the notion of Indraprastha was given further purchase in Lutyens's designs for the new city and in the representations of the British regent as the rightful successor of the previous Hindu and Muslim empires that had gone before. If the symbolic "inhabitation" of the Purana Qila by the British emperor was one manner in which bodies were aligned with the monument, another was the persistent appearance of the subaltern body, by way of the fort's use for informal housing and internment and refugee camps through the first half of the twentieth century. These bodies continually interrupted the grand visions of the Purana Qila as a monumental edifice by occupying the monument in the most quotidian and mundane manner. In effect the latter appropriations of the Purana Qila were the most threatening to its symbolic stability and required that the traces of subaltern bodies be vigorously scrubbed from the archival histories of the monument.

The third and final part of the chapter, "Stones, Stories, and Science," focuses on the archaeological search to uncover empirical proof of Indraprastha in the post-independence period. Motivated by an emerging ideology of Hindutva (the movement to define India

as a Hindu nation) archaeologists of independent India employed science to validate the existence of Indraprastha. Their project was made all the more urgent given that India's prevailing originary narrative, of a civilization that had begun in the glorious cities of the Indus Valley, had recently been altered with the Partition of India and Pakistan. Mohenjodaro and Harappa—the two cities that stood as the apotheoses of India's origins—were now squarely located within the borders of Pakistan. Archaeologists in post-Partition India set out to fill the lacuna that resulted from a loss of Indus Valley cities with their excavations of Indraprastha and several other Mahabharata and Ramayana sites. The modern life of the Purana Qila has thus been shaped by various appropriations and unexpected entanglements with the imagined and real beginnings of Delhi.

## From Myth to History

Two assertions regarding the origins of Delhi gradually turned from myth to history during the long century that spanned between 1847 and the 1950s. The first was the submission by experts (historians and archaeologists) as well as nonexperts (authors of tourist guides) that Delhi's origins were based in an ancient city called Indraprastha and the second was that the sixteenth-century fort of Purana Qila stood atop the ancient but invisible Indraprastha. Both these claims were ossified and gained increasing currency with each repetition over a century marked by dramatic shifts in the political, urban, and cultural constitution of the subcontinent. As this section will show, the myth of Indraprastha and its conflation with the site of Purana Qila gained traction because of its consistent appearance within the space of academic and bureaucratic knowledge. In other words, it was the repeated invocation of Indraprastha by *archons* and their insertion of it within Delhi's archive that calcified it as a reality. Today, most contemporary histories of Delhi make an obligatory nod to Indraprastha as the *ur-Delhi*—even if only acknowledging it as a myth. This section looks at the modern historiography of Indraprastha, particularly its translocation from a space of myth and popular legend to a space of history.

## Reviving Indraprastha in the Nineteenth Century

The claim that Emperor Humayun knowingly built his fort on the remnants of Indraprastha gained considerable momentum during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with the rise of Indology and colonial archaeology. Yet, Indraprastha was not entirely a colonial invention. Three biographies survive from Humayun's contemporaries: one written by court official Jouher which makes only passing reference to Humayun's building activities; the second written by his half-sister Gulbadan Begum mentions the building of Humayun's capital Dinpanah but does not refer to Indraprastha; and a third written by courtier Khwand Amir refers to the building of Dinpanah but not to Indraprastha.<sup>10</sup> The earliest reference to Purana Qila being built atop of Indraprastha comes from the sixteenth century *Ain-i-Akbari*, by Abu Fazl the court historian of the Emperor Akbar (Humayun's son and successor).<sup>11</sup> This textual reference seems not to have endured except as the faintest

trace of historic rumor by the nineteenth century. It would only be a matter of time, however, before the Purana Qila was identified as the superstructure under which the mythical Indraprastha lay buried.

Scholarly interest in Indraprastha emerged in the late eighteenth century when Indologist Sir William Jones made a presentation to the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Jones maintained that ancient Iran had once been home to a powerful Hindu monarchy that had migrated to India to establish imperial centers at the Indian cities of Ayodhya and Indraprastha.<sup>12</sup> Jones did not specify a location for Indraprastha in his submission. The articulation of Indraprastha as Delhi's origins appears more deliberately in the second edition of Syed Ahmad Khan's *Asar-us-Sanadid* (1854).<sup>13</sup> Syed Ahmad added an entire chapter to the second edition of his book where he presented a chronology of the various cities and imperial forts that made up the historical layers of the contemporary city. Compared to the first edition, which had presented an ecumenical arrangement of the various monuments of Delhi, the second edition organized the archaeological remains of Delhi within a teleology of urban building that stretched as far back as the second millennium of the previous era. Syed Ahmad identified the origins of Delhi as a grand city built by the Pandava King Yudhishtira as described in the Hindu epic the *Mahabharata*.<sup>14</sup> He said,

Due to the enmity between King Duryodhana of Hastinapur and King Yudhistir, the latter established a new city called Indrapat, which later became famous as the city of Delhi. When the two kings met for battle at Kurukshetra, the history of which is recounted in the *Mahabharata*, King Yudhishtir emerged victorious. It is for this reason, that King Yudhishtir is considered the first ruler of Delhi.<sup>15</sup>

Syed Ahmad also claimed that while Yudhishtira established Indraprastha in 1450 BCE he continued to rule from his imperial capital of Hastinapur; and it was only in 1212 BCE that Raja Dushtavana moved his capital from Hastinapur (due to the rise in the level of the Ganga) to Indraprastha. While noting that contemporary Delhi is the modern manifestation of Indraprastha Syed Ahmad did not identify any extant material remains of the ancient city. He also did not suggest a precise location for the city (Dehli) built by Raja Delu in 326 BCE. Indeed the earliest built environment that Syed Ahmad identified with any geographic specificity was a fort built by Anangpal Tomar (Tanwar) in 676 on the western banks of the Yamuna. He pointed out that the Tomar fort was later rebuilt by the Mughal Emperor Humayun in the early sixteenth century when he was building Dinpanah. The Suri Emperor Sher Shah, who briefly ousted Humayun from rule, also added to it, when he ruled Delhi between 1540 and 1545. Syed Ahmad's historic description of this seventh-century Tomar fort located it in the same spot as the Purana Qila.<sup>16</sup> In sum, although Syed Ahmad claimed Indraprastha as the origins of medieval and modern Delhi, he did not identify the Purana Qila with Indraprastha, but rather with a fort built by a Hindu king in the seventh century.

Syed Ahmed's extensive genealogy of Delhi and its association of sovereign empires from the second millennium of the previous era to the nineteenth century must be understood within the contemporary context of European imperialism and the disdain with which Europeans viewed Indian histories. To counter the charge of Indian histories being

little more than myth, Syed Ahmad revised the second edition of his book to appear scientifically accurate as well as chronologically precise.<sup>17</sup> He cited other Indian texts along with the *Mahabharata* as a basis for his history of Delhi, including the Old Testament, the *Shahjahan Nama*, the records of the Archaeological Society of Bengal, and the *Ain-i-Akbari*.<sup>18</sup> Syed Ahmad's chronological enumeration of the multiple empires that ruled Delhi and the vestiges of those empires on the landscape of Delhi continued for thirty-six pages in the *Asar-us-Sanadid* stretching from Indraprastha in the second millennium of the earlier era to modern Delhi in 1853 CE.<sup>19</sup> With this urban genealogy Syed Ahmad calcified two popular beliefs that would impact the textual narration of Delhi's history for a century and a half to come. The first was the notion that Delhi's origins were located in a mythical Hindu imperial city. Despite the fact that the pre-Islamic material culture of Delhi could only be traced back to modest ruins left behind by the Chauhan and Tomar kings of the region (from the seventh to the tenth century), Syed Ahmad now insisted on a much earlier and grander Hindu origins for Delhi. The second belief that the *Asar-us-Sanadid* helped calcify, was that Delhi's modern landscape was in fact a series of cities each associated with an empire and particular sovereign personality. The publication of Syed Ahmad's book was the first step in bringing urban lore into a quasi-scientific realm and imbuing it with historical gravitas.

What motivated Syed Ahmad to locate Delhi's origins within a remote and mythic Hindu past? This might be understood less within its literal claims and more within the context of the audience from whom he was seeking recognition as well as approval. As a devout modern Muslim it might have been easier for Syed Ahmad to stress the Islamic origins for the city, not least because there was plenty of evidence to suggest that Delhi's continuous occupation and transition from a garrison town to urban settlement began with medieval Islamic rule in India. Yet he insisted that the Sultanate rulers of the twelfth century had come almost three millennia after the mythical Pandava kings who had built Indraprastha. One reason that Syed Ahmad stressed the narrative of Indraprastha as the original Delhi, may have been to impress his largely European audience with his intimate knowledge of Indian texts and scholarship. C. M. Naim has argued that by dedicating the first version of the *Asar-us-Sanadid* to Theophilus Metcalfe, Syed Ahmad tried to gain membership to the exclusively European Archaeological Society of Delhi (ASD).<sup>20</sup> Although the second edition of the book was written the year that Syed Ahmad was inducted into the society, his ability to offer a history that included both European sources (such as the Old Testament) as well as Indian sources (such as the *Shahjahan Nama* and the *Mahabharata*) was impressive and earned him respect from European antiquarians in the ASD. In other words, he was able to leverage his strategic position as a "native" intellectual in order to gain inclusion within a society that had only recently and begrudgingly allowed him membership.<sup>21</sup>

The European audience that Syed Ahmad was writing for, were also eagerly constructing India's past as a narrative of the rise and fall of various empires. In order to find the material evidence that would substantiate this narrative, the ASD and other antiquarian organizations such as the Royal Asiatic Society collected coins, deciphered inscriptions, and sponsored translations of Sanskrit and Persian texts. For instance, the records of the ASD indicate that in 1847 H. M. Elliot (historian and author of *The History of India, As Told by its Own Historians* [1877]) specifically advised the society to "send some of your antiquarians to

find out *when* Delhi succeeded to Indraprestha?”<sup>22</sup> Elliot noted that historians who traveled in India between 300 BCE and 1000, such as Arrian, Fabian, and Al-Beruni had mentioned neither Indraprastha nor Delhi in their chronicles. Yet rather than abandon Indraprastha to the realm of legend, Elliot proposed that the city must have simply been referred to by another name. His advice to the ASD continued:

Arrian notices Mathura, by precisely the same name it bears now, yet no mention of Delhi. Fabian, A.D. 400, must, on his way from Kabul to Mathura, have passed through Delhi, if it existed, and yet no mention of it. Mahmood about A.D. 1000 sacked Mathura, Meerut, and Muhabun, and yet no mention of Delhi. Set some man, who won't stick at etymological difficulties, to enquire, if it may not be the Cleisobaras of Arrian, which like Mathura was on the Jumna and inhabited by the Suraseni? Tod considers Butteser to be Cleisobaras, but we must search for some remnant of a similar name. Kailaspoor appears to be the most probable Indian word of which the Greek is a corruption, and there is no great difference between Indra and Kailas:—the regent of the Heavens, and the favourite haunt of the Gods.<sup>23</sup>

From Cleisobaras to Kailaspoor to Indraprastha, Elliot was insistent that Delhi's Hindu origins find a place within the archive. As Elliot had laid down the gauntlet of finding Indraprastha, Syed Ahmad duly obliged his and others' curiosity when he read a paper at a meeting of the ASD on October 7, 1852. In this presentation, Syed Ahmad claimed to have discovered bricks from the “Pandu age” (or the Pandava Empire) from an excavation at Hastinapur. He dated the bricks very precisely to 2607 BCE which he pointed out was 950 years after the life of Yudhishtira, the Pandava king that was credited with building Indraprastha. Nevertheless, he remarked that the occurrence of similar bricks (in terms of material and dimensions) in and around the city of Delhi duly confirm the existence of Indraprastha. The society seems to have been impressed by Syed Ahmad's method of extrapolation and “accuracy,” and the Secretary praised his abilities while noticing that few of his Muslim contemporaries could equal such scientific inclination.<sup>24</sup> The following year, in the last journal published by the ASD the origins of Delhi were described thus:

About the time of the Mahabharata, Yoodishtira built, or inhabited, a town on the banks of the Jumna, which was afterwards known by the name of Indraprestha. This town, some time after the conclusion of that war—probably about the end of the 12th century B.C.—became the capital of the leading state in Northern India, but had greatly declined in importance probably in the 7th, but certainly before the middle of the 4th century B.C. . . . In the 3rd or 4th century A.D., it was temporarily restored to some importance, and there reigned in it a powerful Raja of the name of Dhara, who was likely a usurper. It speedily again declined till about 782 of our era, when the Tuar family removed their capital from Oujain to Indraprestha (Inderput), not improbably from an earthquake having

injured the former city. Shortly afterwards the town of Inderput was generally known by the name of Delhi, which was a flourishing and powerful state, with several populous dependencies, in the time of Mahmood of Ghuznee.<sup>25</sup>

By 1854, then, the origins of Delhi as Indraprastha had gone from being a literary conceit to archaeological fact.<sup>26</sup> The seduction of locating Delhi's origins within a remote yet glorious past had proved too much to resist, for Indian as well as European intellectuals.

By describing the ancient and imperial origins of Delhi, Syed Ahmad lent further credence to the colonial framing of Indian history where Hindu and Buddhist culture denoted an ancient past; Islamic intervention denoted the medieval period; and European arrival was seen as the beginnings of modernity. Indraprastha therefore provided the missing piece of Delhi's historical trajectory. Since Syed Ahmad believed that the colonial government was bestowed with a scientific temper and objective rationality that Indians (particularly Muslims) could benefit from, it is also entirely possible that he presented a history of his beloved city such that British colonialism seemed like the inevitable contemporary terminus to Delhi's rich lineage of Hindu and Islamic empires.<sup>27</sup> For the British literati, meanwhile, Delhi's historical layers and its antiquity stood in stark contrast to the presidency towns of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, which had been largely built by Europeans. Indraprastha, on the contrary, fed the Orientalist imaginaries of ancient India and Delhi's enduring place within it.

Kumkum Chatterjee has argued that Indian historians, who wrote Persian histories for Europeans in precolonial India, did so to align themselves strategically with emergent political powers. Persian histories were also a means of "self-representation" for the authors who saw themselves as the "custodians of the empire."<sup>28</sup> While Chatterjee refers to the late eighteenth-century world of eastern India, her argument resonates with Syed Ahmad's strategy of presenting Delhi as an unbroken chain of sovereign power. Not only was he fashioning an archive for Delhi based on its imperial history, he was positioning himself as the *archon* who had the unique ability to translate and guard that imperial history. Extending Chatterjee's submission further, it can also be argued that the construction of Delhi's history as a series of imperial capitals, allowed British colonialists to insert themselves into a teleology of sovereign power. The construction of Delhi's archive thus went hand in hand with the self-fashioning of *archons*.

## Locating Indraprastha

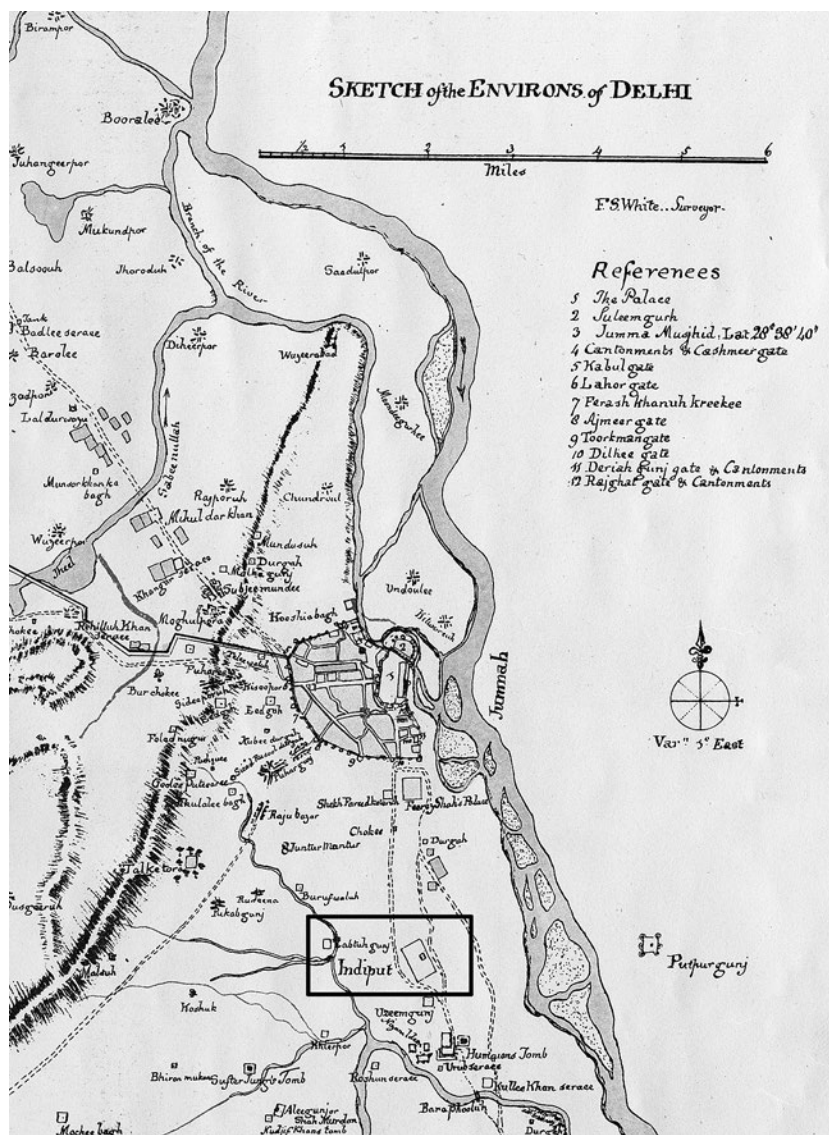
Syed Ahmad's genealogy of Delhi as an unbroken series of imperial capitals stretching from antiquity to the present set the tone for other experts who carried such assertions and assumptions into the fields of archaeology and history. In Cunningham's first archaeological reports (1862 to 1865) he consolidated the claims made by Syed Ahmad about Indraprastha as a capital built by Yudhishtira (the eldest Pandava brother as mentioned in the *Mahabharata*) and dated its existence to the late fifteenth century of the previous era. Unlike Syed Ahmad though, who was loathe to pinpoint the exact location of Indraprastha in the contemporary geography of Delhi, Cunningham claimed that the ancient city was located

at the same site as the Purana Qila of contemporary times. This marked a significant shift in the discourse around Indraprastha as it became associated with a tangible geography and a specific monument. Cunningham corroborated his own claim via deductions made from the *Bhagvata Purana*, the *Vishnu Purana*, and the *Mahabharata*.<sup>29</sup> His description of Indraprastha included the following details:

The name of Indraprastha is still preserved in that of Indrapat, a small fort, which is also known by the name of *Purāna Kila* or the “old fort.” This place was repaired by the emperor Humāyun, who changed its name to *Din-pānah*; but none, save the educated Musalmāns ever make use of this name, as the common people invariable call it either Indrapat or *Purāna Kila*. In its present form, this place is altogether a Muhammadan structure; and I do not believe that there now exists even a single carved stone of the original city of Yudhisthira.<sup>30</sup>

Cunningham’s location of Indraprastha seems to have been based on an 1807 survey map of Delhi, which showed a small urban village by the name of Indiput located in the vicinity of the Purana Qila. The historical context under which this map was produced is unknown and so it is difficult to ascertain when the village acquired its name; that is, if it was named after the prevailing folklore of the time; or if the urban legend of Indraprastha grew around the village’s name. Syed Ahmad had also noted the village of Indrapat in his description of the Purana Qila in the 1847 edition of the *Asar-us-Sanadid*, but had explicitly stated that the residents of the village could say nothing about its origins except for the fact that it was very old.<sup>31</sup> In his recognition of the Purana Qila as Indraprastha, Cunningham also had to contend with the profound absence of any tectonic signs of the ancient city. As he could not find “a single carved stone of” Indraprastha he referenced the city only as a preamble to the antiquity of Delhi quickly moving on to extant archaeological remains from eleventh-century pre-Islamic and later medieval Islamic Delhi. Indeed, when he visited Delhi in 1865 and found the Purana Qila in disrepair, he pleaded its preservation due to its value as a “Pathan”<sup>32</sup> monument and an important example of Islamic architecture, rather than its association with ancient history or Hindu antiquity.

The Purana Qila occupies an important position in the history of Delhi, marking the precarious beginnings of the Mughal Empire as well as its eventual sturdy establishment. The political as well as architectural landscape of Delhi would change radically over the four hundred years after it was built, and the Purana Qila might be seen as a talisman for the flourishing of Mughal rule in Delhi if not all of India. The fort was begun in 1533 by the second Mughal emperor, Humayun, and was the center of the citadel called Dinpanah. Humayun may have chosen the site of the fort purely for pragmatic reasons such as its elevation and proximity to the river, which acted as a natural moat. In 1540 Afghan Sher Shah Suri deposed Humayun and appropriated the Purana Qila. Sher Shah and his successor Salim Shah greatly expanded the fort, strengthened its walls and towers, and deepened its moat.<sup>33</sup> The fort complex has within it a mosque (Qila-i-Kohna Masjid) and an octagonal pavilion (Sher Mandal) which scholars conjecture may have been used as a library and or observatory.



**FIG. 4.2.** Image after an 1807 survey map of Delhi printed by the ASI. Indraprastha (labeled Indiput) is marked with the box.

Humayun won back his Indian territories in 1555 and established himself as the emperor of northwestern India once again with his seat at the expanded Purana Qila. However, he died only one year later, legend has it by running down the stairs of the Sher Mandal as he hurried to answer the call for evening prayers. Thus, while Cunningham identified the Purana Qila with Indraprastha, it was the former's place within the realm of Islamic rule and architecture in the subcontinent that was of utmost importance to the ASI in the early years of their research and documentation. The position of the Purana Qila in the history of material culture and architectural heritage was made all the more important in the dearth of monuments left behind by Humayun's father Babur, the first Mughal emperor of India.



**FIG. 4.3.** John Edward Saché, "View of the Purana Qila," 1865–1880 (PH 1981: 0589; 036 Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/ Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal).



**FIG. 4.4.** Drawing of the Sher Mandal from Syed Ahmad Khan's *Asar-us-Sanadid* (1847 ed.). Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Although the ASI perpetuated the myth of Indraprastha as the origins of Delhi in its reports no efforts were made to find material evidence for the city in either the late nineteenth century or the early twentieth century. There may have been several reasons for this. The first being that in the initial decades of the ASI, almost all efforts were directed toward the documentation and preservation of existing sites rather than excavation. Indeed, large-scale excavations were only taken up in the first decade of the twentieth century when a younger generation of archaeologists such as Mortimer Wheeler and John Marshall were spurred to excavate Indus Valley sites. Another reason that the ASI made little effort to find material evidence for Indraprastha may have been related to Cunningham's partiality toward Buddhist sites and monuments. As Trautmann and Sinopoli have argued, Cunningham was highly motivated to locate and preserve the key sites of Buddhism mentioned in the fifth and seventh century chronicles of Chinese pilgrims to India, which he considered the earliest extant records that could be trusted in terms of historical accuracy. In contrast, he believed that vernacular Indian texts provided little by way of historical information that could warrant archaeological excavations or field surveys.<sup>34</sup> Thus, archaeological attempts to locate Indraprastha and find its material geography would only happen a century later in postcolonial India. From its first official invocation as the origin of Delhi in 1853, however, the myth of Indraprastha would be repeated over and over again until it gained an archival stability that was hard to question.

## The Textual Serialization of Indraprastha

The repeated invocations of Indraprastha in various historical and popular accounts of the city created an affective aura of pre-Islamic and specifically Hindu antiquity around a sixteenth-century Islamic monument. Literary descriptions of the ancient Hindu capital were laden with a sensual urgency as if to make up for the lack of its physical evidence. Nineteenth-century guidebooks to the city such as H. G. Keene's travel guide to Delhi, described Indraprastha in rich detail and located it at the site of the Purana Qila.<sup>35</sup> Another guidebook from the same period dated the ancient city to 2000 BCE, founded by King Yudhishtira of the Pandava dynasty, and ruled by thirty generations of his successors. The author of this travel guide lamented the lack of visible traces of Indraprastha blaming the absence on the later Muslim rule of the subcontinent and possible iconoclasm.<sup>36</sup>

The rhetorical trend of identifying Delhi's beginnings with Indraprastha continues to find purchase in contemporary histories of the city, giving it more archival weight with every textual repetition. By way of contemporary examples, consider the following quotations from various histories of Delhi: "The legendary Pandavas (circa 1450 BCE.) *are said to have* founded the earliest known capital of Indraprastha."<sup>37</sup> "*It is said* that Purana Qila actually stands over the ruins of the city of Indraprastha referred to in the Mahabharata and there is some evidence to support this from recent excavations."<sup>38</sup> "Delhi has a hoary past dating back to the times of the Mahabharata when it was known as 'Indraprastha' (*it is said* to have had its beginnings in 1450 B.C.)."<sup>39</sup> "The history of Delhi does not begin with the Afghan incursion. The history of Delhi dates to at least 1000 B.C. . . . Purana Qila *is supposed to be* the site of the famous ancient city of Indraprastha, mentioned in the epic of Mahabharata."<sup>40</sup>

“The beginnings of large-scale architecture in the region of Delhi *perhaps date back to* Indraprastha, the capital of the five Pandava brothers who jointly ruled ancient India. This city, as recorded in the great epic, Mahabharata, existed more than three thousand years ago and *is popularly believed* to have existed next to the Yamuna’s older course, at the site of the Purana Qila, a sixteenth-century citadel still existing in modern-day Delhi”<sup>41</sup> [emphasis added in all quotes]. While each of these authors is quick to point out the conjectural nature of such claims, the serial repetition of Indraprastha in historical texts blurs the boundaries between affective longings and archival truths.

If the preceding examples are problematic in that they employ the *Mahabharata* as a historical text upon which to base the evidence of Indraprastha, even more worrying is the definitive claim of Indraprastha as ancient Delhi that appears in recent archaeological texts. Take, for example, the following quote: “History has witnessed Delhi as the capital-city of many kingdoms and empires. The foundation of the city as Indraprastha during the period of Mahabharata war is well known.”<sup>42</sup> Even those historians and archaeologists who recognize the speciousness of the myth are loathe to begin a history of the city with a more recent date based on sound archaeological evidence. They mention Indraprastha as the antique origins of the city even if only as a popular sentiment but one nevertheless worthy of invoking with regards to Delhi’s origins. For example, one historian claims, “In the epic days of the Mahabharata the capital of the Pandavas was Indraprastha. There is no direct evidence to connect Indraprastha with Delhi, but a good deal of circumstantial probability.”<sup>43</sup> Yet another historian claims: “In popular imagination, however, Delhi is connected with Indraprastha, the fabled city of the Pandavas. There is no direct evidence to verify this connection. Yet its epic drama, as recited in the *Mahabharata*, is linked to the site of the Purana Qila.”<sup>44</sup>

The serial reproduction of Indraprastha via the historical writings of various experts has calcified it as a sturdy foundation myth regarding the origins of Delhi. I use the term “expert” here as an invocation of Timothy Mitchell’s exegesis on modern bureaucracies and the “rule of experts” engendered by them. Mitchell illustrates that modern “science” abstracted the world into a series of axiomatic binaries (nature vs. technology; representation vs. reality; history vs. folklore; antiquity vs. modernity; etc.) in order to rationalize the bureaucracies through which complex socio-cultural systems were managed. These abstractions once put in place, however, translated the fundamentally subjective and relative assumptions upon which they were based into inflexible truths. At the heart of these modern systems of knowing the world was the bureaucrat himself—a modern subject defined by his position as the infallible interlocutor of rational and scientifically ordered schema.<sup>45</sup> In the context of Delhi, early historians like Syed Ahmad and archaeologists like Cunningham occupied this very space of bureaucratic knowledge. While Syed Ahmed and Cunningham both had varied motivations for referencing the antique history of Indraprastha, its textual perpetuation for over 150 years has calcified this foundation myth as an empirical truth. The very mention of it in bureaucratic “spaces” (history books, archaeological reports, and later the museum) has lent scientific gravitas to the existence of Indraprastha such that it has now become entrenched in the narrative imaginary of Delhi. Indeed, modern bureaucracies blurred the boundaries between reality and representation, science and myth, history and folklore, precisely at the moment (the nineteenth century) and through the processes (archaeology) that claimed the incontrovertible divide between these opposing modalities.

## Bodies and Buildings

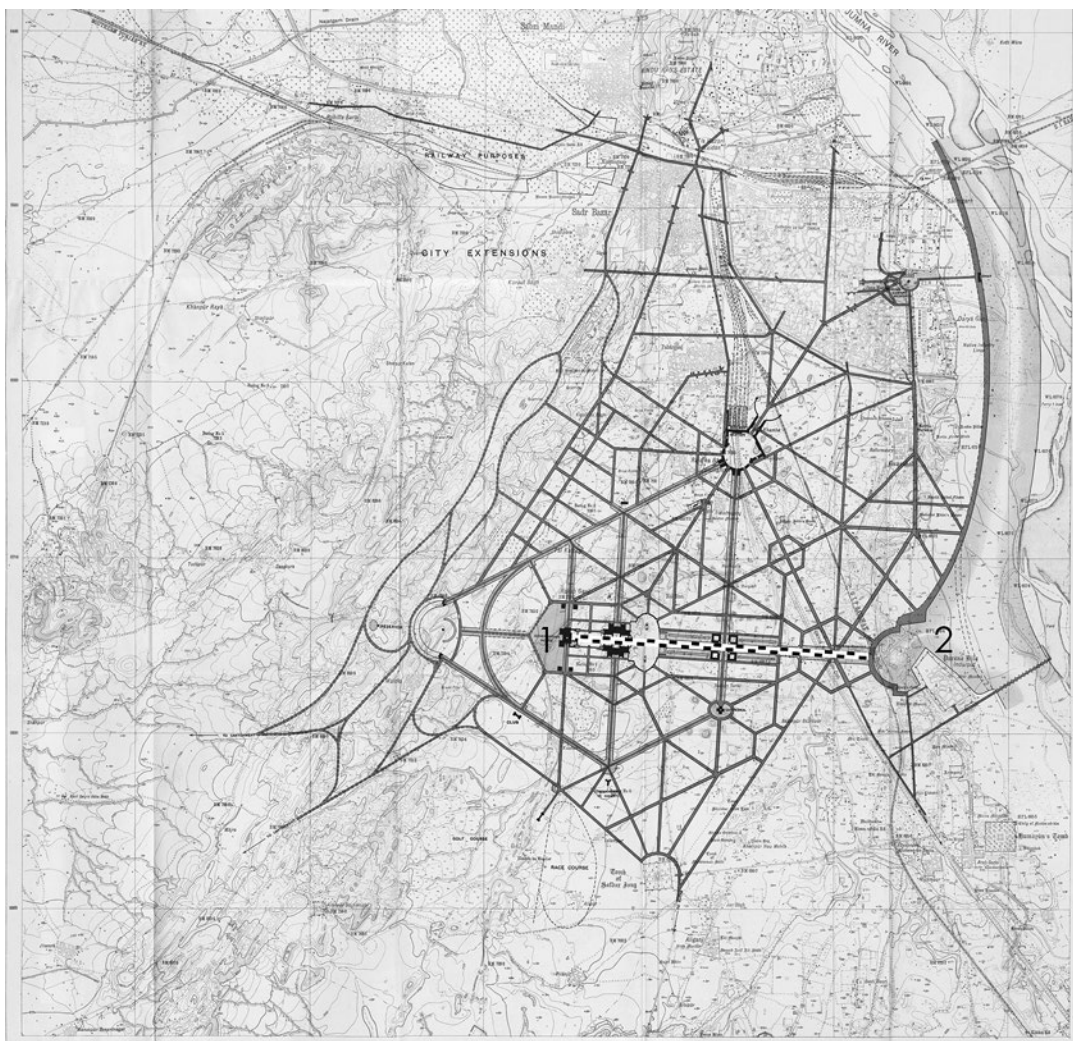
Even as the myth of Indraprastha was steadily calcified within literary spaces, the physical monument of the Purana Qila became the locus of several different “inhabitations” during the twentieth century. Some of these appropriations were deliberate and meant to represent Delhi as an urban center of enduring imperial power. Others, however, were unexpected and forcefully interrupted the imperial nostalgias that had been projected onto the Purana Qila. Twentieth-century Delhi was the canvas upon which various definitive projects of modernity, such as large-scale urban design, the formation of nation-states, and mass migrations were writ large. At the intersection of each of these monumental reshapings of Delhi and individual bodies caught in the various drifts of history was the Purana Qila—sometimes acting as mere shelter and other times as a phantasmal backdrop for imperial hubris. A reflection on the affective transactions between human agents and the Purana Qila reveals the many ways in which some of these bodies boosted the archival mythos of Indraprastha, while others unraveled it.

### The Colonial Regent and Indraprastha

When Delhi was proposed as the new capital of the British Empire, Viceroy Hardinge claimed that the city’s enduring imperial history from ancient Indraprastha to Mughal Shahjahanabad, would find favor with Hindus and Muslims alike.<sup>46</sup> As ground was broken for the new capital, colonial planners fantasized about New Delhi assuming its rightful place alongside the several imperial cities that had come before it. The site for the new capital was chosen keeping in mind the view it would afford to Shahjahanabad as well as the view of Purana Qila, which by the early twentieth century had come to represent medieval Islamic India as well as ancient Indraprastha.<sup>47</sup>

Lutyens’s early designs for New Delhi capitalized on the Purana Qila as a terminus of one of the many grand axes that characterized the city’s master plan. His initial designs called for a dramatic showcasing of the Purana Qila by reinstating the moat that would capture the monument’s reflection with the water and thereby increase the monumentality of its facade. The master plan for the new capital placed the Viceroy’s Palace and the Purana Qila at two ends of a major axis known as the Kingsway. The 1913 Report of the Delhi Town Planning Committee described Lutyens’s design thus:

Looking from the eastern end of the forum where the broad avenue enters the Governmental centre and where the great stairways are set, the view is towards the east. The height and mass of the Secretariats, with the dominating influence of Government House and the Council Chamber behind them to the west, look towards *Indrapat, the site of the oldest of all the Delhis*; It was on this too that Shahjahan faced the Delhi gate of the Fort and the Delhi gate of Shahjahanabad. Right and left the roadways go and *weld into one the empire of today with the empires of the past* and unite Government with the business and lives of its people.<sup>48</sup> [emphasis added]



**FIG. 4.5.** 1: Viceroy's Palace, 2: Purana Qila, dashed line: Kingsway. Edwin Lutyens's early master plan for New Delhi, excerpted from "Delhi 1912." © The British Library Board, Shelfmark: F 111/436 Folio No. 151.

Lutyens's plan for New Delhi thus inscribed Indraprastha into the emerging landscape of Delhi in the early twentieth century bringing it from textual description to a tangible urban parterre. The literary poesis regarding the ancient origins of the city would now be represented in the built form of Delhi even as Lutyens's design firmly installed the Purana Qila as Indraprastha. Most importantly Lutyens's master plan was accompanied by a very particular imagined relation between the body of the British sovereign and the body of the Purana Qila. The anticipated gaze of the British Viceroy commanding vantage over ancient Delhis from the most recent imperial addition was particularly seductive to the colonial imagination, as it allowed British regents to insert themselves into a genealogy of empires and imperial building that stretched back almost 2,500 years. In other words, by appropriating the Purana Qila as the capital of a remote and entirely manufactured Hindu empire,

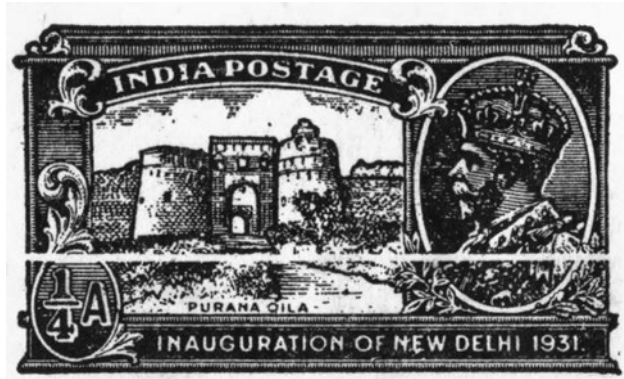


FIG. 4.6. Stamp of the Purana Qila, first in the series “Inauguration of New Delhi,” 1931.

British colonialists could justify their own position in India as well as the building of New Delhi (a very controversial project) as the modern and inevitable terminus to a lineage of imperial capitals that stretched back to early antiquity. The master plan of New Delhi was, at least in part, about making this urban genealogy of imperial power legible via the built environment.

Through the long process of building New Delhi, Lutyens’s original design was compromised on many fronts, including an adjustment of the axis that ran between the Viceroy’s Palace and Purana Qila. Hebert Baker expressed frustration that the view from the Viceroy’s Palace toward Purana Qila or Indraprastha had been compromised by several careless decisions on the part of contractors and government officials who cared little for the details of Lutyens’s design. For example, in 1914 he complained that an eighty-foot tree had been planted between the Viceroy’s Palace and Purana Qila such that it obstructed a clear view of the “big sweep of Indrapat.” On other occasions Baker pushed to elevate the Viceroy’s Palace so that it could “embrace about seven hundred yards of Indrapat, the quality of which, as to view consists in the horizontal length of old city wall.”<sup>49</sup> Indeed, as mentioned previously, Lutyens’s design had been organized around an imagined imperial posture where the British Viceroy could look upon the Purana Qila mimicking the stance of the Mughal emperor approximately four centuries prior. In these colonial articulations of design as well as history, the gaze was always imagined in a uni-directional sense, as in the Viceroy looking at the Purana Qila in order to see themselves as the modern reflections of the ancient and medieval emperors that had gone before them. The possibility of an Indian subject being able to occupy the Purana Qila and returning the gaze toward the Viceroy’s Palace was unimaginable to architects of New Delhi as well as the imperial agents for whom the new city was being designed. In other words, New Delhi redefined the Purana Qila and the rest of the city as bowing to the imperial power housed in the Viceroy’s Palace.

In 1931 when New Delhi was completed after several extensions to the original schedule and many changes to Lutyens’s original plans, the British government released a series of stamps celebrating its inauguration. The six stamps, ranging from a quarter anna<sup>50</sup> to one rupee, each showed King George V framed in profile alongside the new monuments of



FIG. 4.7. Stamp series “Inauguration of New Delhi,” 1931.

Delhi such as the Secretariat, the War Memorial Arch, the Viceroy’s Palace, and the Council House. The only historic monument not designed as part of Lutyens’s Delhi featured on the stamps was the Purana Qila. It was also the first in the series of six stamps or the quarter anna stamp.<sup>51</sup> Although labeled as the Purana Qila, here the monument was clearly standing in as the “first city” of Delhi—Indraprastha. This representation further calcified the genealogical relation between the Purana Qila and the body of the British regent. King George’s portrait, which appears in profile on the stamp, ensured that he cast his sovereign gaze on the monument that signified the origins of Delhi and stood as a predecessor to contemporary New Delhi. The current emperor of British India thus performatively inserted himself into the history of past imperial builders. The four other stamps of the series follow the same pattern as the quarter anna stamp with the profile of King George arranged to the right of the stamp and looking upon the monuments of New Delhi. The final and highest denomination stamp, however, departs from this arrangement, framing the same profile of King George between the Dominion Columns with the Secretariat in the background. In this final representation the British emperor, who was never resident in Delhi, symbolically inhabited Delhi in the same way that the Mughal Emperor Shahjahan would have occupied the center of Shahjahanabad.

### The Subaltern Body Interrupts the Imperial Imaginary of Indraprastha

The robust imaginary of Indraprastha promoted by Lutyens and Baker in the early twentieth century clashed rather dramatically with the reality of conditions at the Purana Qila. A fairly large cluster of dwellings had grown within the ramparts of the fort complex over time and many monuments within the larger compound of the Purana Qila were in a state of disrepair. As early as 1862 Cunningham mentioned that the Purana Qila was filled with “hovels” and “native huts.”<sup>52</sup> Fifteen years earlier, Syed Ahmad had also commented on the urban village of Indrapat near the Purana Qila; however, in contrast to Cunningham he referred to the inhabitants as *zamindar* (landowners) and the village as a *mouza* (tax-paying urban



FIG. 4.8. "View Before Demolition of Modern Houses in Baburpura" (P.16063.HRG, MAA, University of Cambridge).

settlement).<sup>53</sup> By the early twentieth century, however, the village of Indrapat was seen as a nuisance and ASI officials frequently complained that the residents were using spaces in the historic fort as storehouses. One colonial administrator who was in charge of acquiring land for New Delhi prompted his subordinates: "You had better buy Indrapat Abadi (that is, Indrapat village) as quickly as possible."<sup>54</sup> Residents of this village were in fact tax-paying property owners as opposed to squatters, as Cunningham had initially suggested, and the houses that they had built within the Purana Qila were of *pucca* construction (i.e., built out of bricks and mortar and therefore more permanent than simply shacks or informal settlements).<sup>55</sup>

In 1913 the Government of Delhi, encouraged by the ASI, evicted 1,900 residents and demolished well over a hundred houses built inside the Purana Qila in order to restore the fort as an archaeologically protected site.<sup>56</sup> On the one hand it seems shocking that the village of Indrapat, which had for so long provided the popular memory and vernacular proof of Indraprastha was essentially cleared away in order to monumentalize the Purana Qila. On the other hand, it appears that by this time Purana Qila's identification with Indraprastha had become so sturdy that it no longer needed the modest village of Indrapat in order to support its claims to historical accuracy. Indeed, it may even be argued that the vernacular untidiness of modern Indrapat had to be cleared away in order for the lavish imaginary of ancient Indraprastha to flourish unbridled.

After removing the “untidy village” of Indiput, the ASI began conservation on the main walls of the Purana Qila by clearing the debris that had accumulated around the bastions and parapets of the fort. A new approach was also created to the Talaqi Gate of the fort so that the latter’s main access to the fort now corresponded more directly with Lutyens’s emerging master plan. One version of Lutyens’s plan for New Delhi also proposed an ornamental lake between the Purana Qila and the Kingsway as a means to dramatize the facade of the fort and make it comparable to the scale of New Delhi’s buildings.<sup>57</sup> Although that scheme was not realized, these intentions illustrate the ways in which the views toward the fort as well as its physicality was altered so that it could better serve as the monumental terminus of Lutyens’s Kingsway.

Despite the ASI’s aggressive efforts to maintain the Purana Qila as an archaeologically pristine site, it would continue for a large part of the twentieth century to be plagued with the specter of unwelcome bodies in the form of informal squatters, refugees, and internees. During World War II several monuments, such as the Purana Qila, Arab Sarai, Safdarjung’s Tomb and Humayun’s Tomb were considered as possible venues for military recruiting camps and also as shelters in case of an air attack on the city.<sup>58</sup> The colonial government particularly favored the Purana Qila due to its “pleasant” qualities and the ASI seemingly approved the use of the northern part of the fort as a recruiting camp, as long as the general public could still have unrestricted access to the fort for tourism, and to the Qila-i-Kohna mosque and a small Hindu temple that had been built on the premises of the fort.<sup>59</sup>

The Chief Commissioner also suggested the possible use of the Purana Qila either as a temporary jail or for the housing of evacuees in case of an air raid due to the following advantages: the fort’s proximity to the New Delhi railway station; its easy accessibility by wide roads (especially after the access had been built from Mathura road in 1912); the existing supply of water at the fort; and most importantly the fact that there were only few entrances and exits to the fort compound which translated into the need for fewer guards and better surveillance of the internees.<sup>60</sup> In 1942, shortly after these recommendations were made, the Purana Qila was in fact used to intern Japanese prisoners, mostly families from Singapore.<sup>61</sup> As part of their negotiations to repatriate the internees, the Japanese government complained that the basic needs of their citizens were not being met, and asked the British government to provide the internees with better-quality water and adequate heating during the winter months.<sup>62</sup> Several of the internees also suffered from malaria and dysentery. Meanwhile, the ASI complained that the Japanese internees were lighting bonfires inside the structures of the Purana Qila in order to keep themselves warm and damaging the protected monument with their daily ablutions.

From the early twentieth century onward, then, the Purana Qila was alternatively claimed by imperial visions and more profane appropriations. If on the one hand the monument represented the mythical Hindu origins of Delhi as well as the early decades of Mughal history in India it also unexpectedly came to shelter those bodies marginalized by empire, war, and displacement. The restoration of the monument to a mute object of history meant the clearing away the bodies of villagers, refugees, and internees who had the potential to “pollute” its pristine associations with past and current sovereigns. The affect brought by these bodies—often precarious and appearing at moments of crisis—punctured the careful construction of the Purana Qila as a signifier of Delhi’s imperial origins and had

to be redacted out of the monument. But before this could happen the Purana Qila would be inhabited one last time by tens of thousands of subaltern bodies in a spectacular moment of crisis—a moment that would also mark the birth of independent India.

## From Monument to Refugee Camp

New Delhi was inaugurated in 1931—twenty years after King George V proclaimed the building of a new capital for British India—during the last gasp of empire. As discussed in the previous chapter, by the 1930s Indian nationalism in its various forms had swept the subcontinent and decolonization seemed inevitable by the early 1940s. Indeed, the grand facades of New Delhi might have survived only as Potemkin villages of imperial hubris had they not been occupied by the officials and assumed as ornaments of independent India as soon as British colonizers departed. The jubilation that accompanied the birth of India and Pakistan as independent nation-states in 1947 was also accompanied by the horror of Partition. Ten million persons crossed new international borders looking for safe haven in new homelands that were entirely foreign to them. While some moved voluntarily, many fled from fear and many more were driven out due to their religious or ethnic affiliations. More than 1.5 million people died in the exchange of populations between the two countries; 750,000 women were raped, and or abducted, and or forcibly converted to another religion.<sup>63</sup>

The moment of 1947 was a moment when much more than simply nations were partitioned. Historians have since analyzed it as the illogical descent into classification when memories, histories, families, national loyalties, human bodies, female honor, property, and possessions were all divided into the rigid orders of Hindu, Sikh, or Muslim.<sup>64</sup> Partition was that extraordinary moment of violence where survival was predicated upon belonging, or appearing to belong, to the right taxonomical category at the right time. For example, a common story that is narrated by those who made the treacherous journey from Delhi to Lahore or vice-versa during Partition is that of adopting visible traditions to ensure their survival. Thus, Muslim women leaving Delhi often took on visible markings of Hinduism such as wearing *sindur*<sup>65</sup> to avoid rape and abduction during the journey.<sup>66</sup>

The scene at Delhi, which had in one dramatic moment passed from being the capital of the British Indian Empire to that of independent India, was just as chaotic as the rest of the country. Refugees moved in and out of the massive camps that had been set up in the city and even those long-term residents who had no intention of leaving the city for Pakistan often took shelter in refugee camps to escape the violence on the streets. Food, medicine, and other necessities were scarce and neither social service organizations nor the interim government could keep up with the increasing volume of refugees that poured into Delhi everyday.<sup>67</sup>

It was amid this chaos that the American photographer, Margaret Bourke-White took her photograph of the young refugee boy at the Purana Qila, which housed close to eighty thousand persons in 1947.<sup>68</sup> During the chaos of Partition, the Indian government had turned many of Delhi's monuments into vast camps for incoming refugees the largest of which were based in the Purana Qila and Humayun's Tomb.<sup>69</sup> Bourke-White's photograph illustrates the precarious nature of life at this moment in India against a backdrop of makeshift

tents and a foreground of ruined walls. The wholeness of the boy's body is contrasted by the truncated torso of the man to his left, who defiantly returns the gaze of the viewer, and the disjointed foot of another person to his right. (See fig. 4.1.) At a substantial drop from where the refugee boy and the two other men are perched, are seen the tops of tents, set up to provide food and medical aid to the refugees in the camp. Bourke-White's decision to render the loosely arranged stones in the foreground in sharp focus and to choose a vantage that emphasized the elevation of these three bodies from the main refugee camp below heightens the instability of their precarious perch. Have the three men escaped from the chaos of the camps or are they resisting their inevitable descent into it? Does their separation from the desperate crowds milling below symbolize the dislocation of exile? Or is their stance as individuals to be read as a defiance of the dehumanization of the Partition? If New Delhi had been designed as a platform from which the British Viceroy could cast his nostalgic gaze at the Purana Qila, Bourke-White's camera lens had unexpectedly captured the subaltern body returning a recalcitrant gaze from the Purana Qila.

At the moment when India emerged as independent nation-state the Purana Qila slipped from being a marker of ancient glory to become a locus of the trauma of national dismemberment and enduring violence. If nineteenth-century archaeologists (like Cunningham) and colonial administrators (like Lutyens) had inscribed the Purana Qila into one originary narrative of Delhi, the use of the Purana Qila as a refugee camp in 1947 imbricated it, albeit unexpectedly, within another originary moment of Delhi as the capital of an independent nation-state. This moment of origin, however, was fraught with the trauma of the Partition and the desolation of the refugee body. Most importantly, the immediacy of these bodily affects such as disease, dislocation, and emaciation unraveled the ASI's carefully curated definition of a monument. In the years that followed the ASI would exert strenuous energy in ridding the Purana Qila of the traces of refugee bodies as well as the history of Partition.

### "Cleaning" Up the Purana Qila

The Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation's decision to use Delhi's monuments as refugee camps was one that irked the ASI and they quickly began to despair about the various forms of pollution caused by the refugees to the monuments.<sup>70</sup> Complaints by the ASI of Humayun's Tomb, Purana Qila, Safdarjung's Tomb, Arab Sarai, Kotla Firoz Shah, and Pir Ghaib, all of which were being used as refugee camps, included the defiling of monuments by their use for daily rituals and ablutions as well as the visual conspicuousness of the refugee body in the precinct of the monuments.<sup>71</sup> For example, one emphatic complaint was that refugees were often found sleeping on *charpois* (cots made from bamboo and choir rope) in the Qila-i-Kohna mosque inside the Purana Qila, which was disconcerting to visitors. Other letters of complaint written to the ASI (and published in the national newspapers) pointed out that refugees were using the protected structures as urinals or scribbling on the walls of monuments and asked that the ASI put an end to such unsavory activities especially since more tourists were visiting India every year.<sup>72</sup> Although most of the refugees were rehabilitated from the Purana Qila by 1951, a small group continued to stay in the camp long after. Throughout this duration the ASI insisted that monuments should be used and perceived

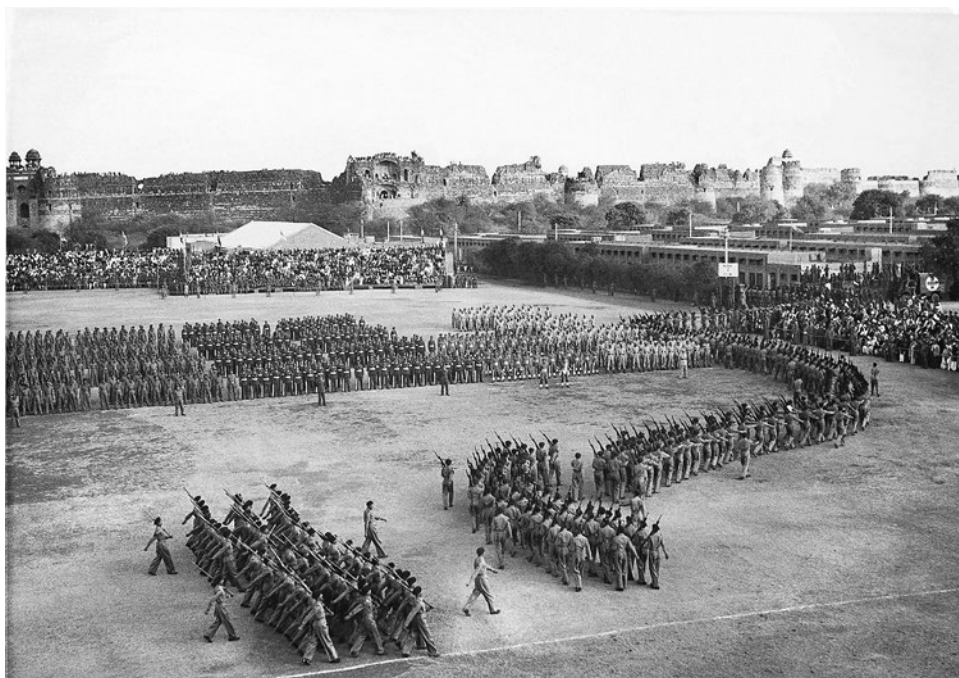
only as spaces of history and aesthetics untouched by the profanity of everyday life. One administrator from the Ministry of Education expressed his chagrin thus:

As the Capital of India, Delhi attracts a large number of visitors from inside and outside India and I shudder to think what impressions of our Government or our people they will take away with them when our '*protected monuments*,' the *reputed beauty spots* are so little protected and so shabbily kept. But apart from this, there is a more serious apprehension. The monuments themselves may be vitally damaged by the refugees for they use the places without care and discrimination.<sup>73</sup> [emphasis added]

The clash between the ASI and the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation, with the latter building barracks and giving over monuments to refugees, and the former trying to protect the monuments and offering them as tourist sites, was never truly resolved. Indeed, the struggle to maintain the protected monuments as sites of beauty and history and their immediate utility as shelter for masses of displaced persons led to protracted negotiations on both sides.<sup>74</sup> Where the ASI saw the traces of everyday life from the refugees (like cooking, sleeping, and defecating) as polluting national heritage, the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation only saw the use of protected monuments as refugee camps as a practical solution and indeed a humanitarian response to the massive influx of displaced persons.<sup>75</sup>

The liminality of the Purana Qila—caught as it was between purely aesthetic or historical framings and as a temporary domicile for displaced persons at the moment when the modern nation-state of India was coming into being—was further vexed when communal riots erupted between refugees in these camps. Suggestions were even forwarded to divide the refugee camps along religious lines such that Hindu refugees would be housed in a camp at Safdarjung's Tomb and Muslim refugees in the Purana Qila and Humayun's Tomb in order to avoid religious conflict. This plan, however, was not followed by the government.<sup>76</sup> In the wake of these tensions and conflicts, leaders like Gandhi, visited and delivered speeches in the Purana Qila pleading the refugees to model a religious tolerance that was befitting of the new nation-state.<sup>77</sup>

By 1951 most of the refugees had been evacuated from the Purana Qila and a photo of the monument taken by another woman photographer showed it in an entirely different light from Bourke-White's rendition of the same four years earlier. A photograph by Homai Vyarawalla showed the Indian army rehearsing for India's first Republic Day parade in the grounds adjacent to the Purana Qila. In comparison to the disheveled and precarious refugee bodies in Bourke-White's photograph, here the bodies are arranged in neat phalanxes, the potential unruliness of the individual subsumed within the logic of an orderly collective. Vyarawalla's rendition of the Purana Qila as a majestic and sturdy backdrop to the impending celebrations of the new republic also stands in sharp contrast to Bourke-White's framing of the Purana Qila as little more than ruined heap of stones. Here again, at the moment that India was celebrating its identity as an independent nation-state, the Purana Qila entered the modern nation's originary narrative. Its position within a secular nation and the celebrations over its new constitution, however, belied the messy and traumatic histories that had only recently gone before.



**FIG. 4.9.** Homai Vyarawalla, “The First Republic Day Parade at the Ground Where the National Stadium Stands Today with the Purana Quila in the Background. 26th January, 1950” (HV Archive, The Alkazi Collection of Photography).

## **Stones, Stories, and Science**

From the nineteenth-century sedimentation of the myth of Indraprastha and its conflation with the Purana Qila to its multiple and unexpected appropriations via imperial as well as subaltern actors in the twentieth century, the Purana Qila would eventually become enmeshed in the politics of an emergent Hindu nationalism. In the 1950s the ASI began excavations to find empirical proof of Indraprastha—attempting to discover the mythical city via the science of archaeology. This was not simply a search to corroborate the ancient Hindu origins of Delhi, but part of a larger project to find a new and unique origin story for the independent and post-Partition nation as a whole. Along with the violence to property, human bodies, and family, Partition had dealt a cadastral caesura to India’s prevailing foundation narrative. The two great cities of the Indus Valley Civilization had been lost to Pakistan, which made it imperative to reimagine and secure a new originary mythos for India. Indraprastha held out the seductive possibility that India’s Hindu foundations could perhaps be discovered beneath India’s capital city.

### **Postcolonial India’s Search for Indraprastha**

In 1913 the ASI had discovered a number of bricks dating to the Gupta period (fourth to the seventh century) around the area of the Purana Qila. Although this suggested that the

area around the Purana Qila might have been inhabited prior to the Islamic period of the sixteenth century, it did not motivate archaeologists to carry out excavations on the site.<sup>78</sup> It was only in 1954, seven years after India's independence, that the ASI conducted the first excavation of the site at Purana Qila, under the supervision of archaeologist B. B. Lal. The annual report of the ASI states that the excavation was conducted with the specific purpose of determining if the Purana Qila "was identifiable with Indraprastha of old."<sup>79</sup> This first excavation of the site led to the discovery of ceramic potsherds identified as Painted Grey Ware (PGW). PGW is dated to approximately 1000 BCE. The report also stated that the excavations revealed fragments of Northern Black Polished Ware (NBP) from around the sixth century BCE, when houses were "constructed of kiln-burnt bricks and terracotta ring-wells were used for soakage of refuse water."<sup>80</sup> Material culture from the second century BCE when the region was under the rulers of Mathura; from the first century related to the Yaudheyas; and from the second to third centuries under the Kushans, was also revealed via the excavations. The 1954 report remains silent on whether these findings can in fact corroborate the existence of a settlement named Indraprastha.

In this first report Lal did argue, however, that PGW fragments provided scientific evidence that the site could be dated to the "Epic Age"—a phrase that he had coined to define a period approximately between 1500 and 1000 BCE—thus named due to its associations with the literary production of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. PGW has occupied a controversial position in Indian archaeology, in no small part due to Lal's linking of the ceramic ware to the cultural and historical milieu of the Hindu epics. It was first identified at excavations around the city of Ahichchatra but much expanded in Lal's reports of excavations carried out in Hastinapur and other sites associated with the *Mahabharata* between 1954 and 1955.<sup>81</sup> Irfan Habib has argued that the identification of PGW at these "Mahabharata sites," (often as isolated specimens rather than continuous cultural horizons) has led to a circular logic where excavated PGW was seen as empirical evidence to corroborate the sites and places mentioned in the *Mahabharata*.<sup>82</sup> Indeed as Habib points out Lal's controversial methodology of using PGW to prove the existence of Mahabharata sites even warranted a warning from the Director General of the ASI, A. Ghosh, who made this comment about the Hastinapur excavations:

A word of caution is necessary, lest the impression is left on the unwary reader that the Hastinapura excavation has yielded archaeological evidence about the truth of the story of the *Mahabharata* and that here at last is the recognition by 'official archaeology' of the truth embodied in Indian traditional literature. Such a conclusion would be unwarranted . . . caution is necessary that fancy does not fly ahead of facts.<sup>83</sup>

More than a decade later in 1969, Lal returned to the Purana Qila site to continue his previous excavations there.<sup>84</sup> The three trial trenches from the 1954 excavation were expanded to determine the correct sequence of occupation on the site. This excavation revealed continuous layers of material culture beginning in the third century BCE, and the overwhelming evidence gathered during the excavation was from this period onward. In this report PGW findings were not mentioned. The report of the following year claims that the excavations



**FIG. 4.10.** General View of the Excavated Trenches, Purana Qila (Delhi, vol. 19, 1951, PQ 1/70, ASI Photo Archive).

on the site continued with a specific objective to “expose the pre-Mauryan strata (i.e., prior to 300 BCE) including the regular horizon of the Painted Grey Ware” but the report concedes that the excavations failed to “yield the regular cultural horizon of the Painted Grey Ware.”<sup>85</sup> In other words, the PGW fragments that had been discovered in 1954–55 had simply been isolated fragments as opposed to an unbroken archaeological layer and thus disqualified the claim that the site was in continuous existence around 1000 BCE.

The excavations conducted at the Purana Qila in the postcolonial period illustrate the enduring seduction of Indraprastha and the specific expectations of Indian archaeologists in finding a spectacular ancient Hindu city beneath the medieval Islamic fort. For, if archaeologists were merely seeking to uncover a pre-Islamic past for the Purana Qila or even Delhi at large, they would have been satisfied by the interesting material culture from circa

300 BCE revealed at the site. This included a series of hearths, a crude drainage system, houses of mud-brick and large terracotta ring wells. These discoveries proved that as early as the fourth century of the previous era the site of Purana Qila was inhabited and that in all probability a quasi-urban settlement existed there. However, this archaeological evidence seems to not have sated the expectations for a mythical Hindu city—one that would compare in size and grandeur to all the urban and architectural constructions that had followed in later Islamic periods.

For archaeologists like Lal, the quest to discover Ramayana and Mahabharata sites was motivated by the textual excess with which these mythical places were described in the Hindu epics. For example, in his autobiography, H. D. Sankalia, an authority on modern archaeology in independent India and contemporary of Lal, said: “From a very early age I also developed an intense love for the stories of our epics—the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharatha*—and the *Puranas* particularly the *Bhagvata* [*Purana*]. . . . Thus was created a desire to know our past. . . . These stories moulded my attitude to life.”<sup>86</sup> Later in the same text he continues, “The only way to introduce some realism into our epic and Puranic studies and beliefs is by excavating the sites mentioned in the epics and *Puranas*.”<sup>87</sup> Sankalia, thus, saw Hindu epics and religious texts as means to gain intimacy with a remote Hindu past and yet there was an urgent need to “introduce realism” into these epics by using scientific means of verification and by producing empirical proof of their histories.

The lack of any evidence to prove the existence of urban culture on the site of the Purana Qila from the first millennium of the previous era must have been doubly disappointing to those Indian archaeologists who had placed their faith in the description of Indraprastha in the *Mahabharata*. Even considering the hyperbole of the epic genre, the description of Indraprastha in the *Mahabharata* was spectacular and rhetorically ornate. Built by the demon-architect Maya for the noble Pandavas, Indraprastha was a wonder of the world and the object of envy for their unscrupulous cousins the Kauravas. Consider this contemporary translation from the *Mahabharata*:

[Maya] built a peerless hall, celestial, beautiful, studded with precious stones, which became famous in the three worlds. . . . The hall, which had solid golden pillars, great king, measured ten thousand cubits in circumference. Radiant and divine, it had a superb color like the fire, or the sun, or the moon. . . . Made with the best materials, garlanded with gem-encrusted walls, filled with precious stones and treasures, it was built well by that Viśwakarman.<sup>88</sup> . . . King Yudhisthira made his entrance into the hall, and the lord of men fed ten thousand Brahmins with rice boiled in sugared milk, clarified butter, delicious honey, roots and fruit, and gave them new clothes and many kinds of garlands. The king gave each of them a thousand cows, and the sounds of the Blessing of the Day seemed to touch heaven. . . . When he had thus paid homage to the hall, the Pandava disported himself in his lovely palace with his brothers, like Indra in his heaven.<sup>89</sup>

Literary descriptions of Indraprastha brought together the material grandeur of the city (golden pillars, gem-encrusted walls, etc.) with Hindu morality and nobility (the feeding of

Brahmins, the likeness of King Yudhishtira to Indra—lord of the heavens) in a seamless narrative. Such was the imaginary of an ancient city that archaeologists sought to uncover as they excavated the Purana Qila. Yet archaeology had failed to provide the evidence of this spectacular city—the Hindu Atlantis buried under the many layers of Delhi’s Islamic urban fabric.

Scholars of the colonial condition have argued that the process of defining India as a nation during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was rooted within an exercise of scientific determinism that would reinscribe Indian culture and history as unique and far superior to that of its colonizers.<sup>90</sup> Much of the long eighteenth century was thus dedicated to the search for and compilation of Hindu traditions, ancient texts, and philosophies to identify an original “Hindu science upon which an Indian universality could stand.”<sup>91</sup> Once articulated as such, this Hindu science was easily co-opted by the modern nation of India. Indian modernity was thus filtered through the “truth” of a Hindu past, the undisputed glory of which would not only legitimate the demand for sovereignty but also shepherd it through its transition into its postcolonial existence. The idea of modern India as naturally evolving from a universal albeit remote Hindu past, forged as it may have been as an anti-colonial and nationalist ideal, has perhaps been realized in its most macabre and troubling form through the discipline of Indian archaeology. The employ of purportedly scientific means to shore up foundation myths of India as an originally Hindu nation may have begun in the late nineteenth century as a means for a colonized subject population to claim an autonomous space within modernity for themselves and yet by the postcolonial era it had been seized as a project with profoundly chauvinistic agendas.

### “Partition’s Loss Made Good”

The strenuous search for Mahabharata and Ramayana sites by archaeologists in the post-colonial period can be better understood within the wider context of Partition and more specifically the unexpected loss of major Indus Valley sites to Pakistan. The archaeological discovery of the Indus Valley Civilization had been a colonial project and a fairly recent one given that the excavation of Mohenjodaro and Harappa, the two paradigmatic cities of the Indus, had taken place between 1921 and 1924. The discovery of the Indus Civilization and the concomitant excitement it generated, was contemporary with other European projects of archaeology such as Heinrich Schliemann’s discovery of Troy and Arthur Evans’s work on the Minoan civilization.<sup>92</sup> Other sensational archaeological “discoveries” of the same decade related to ancient civilizations in Egypt and the Near East that included the opening of Tutankhamen’s tomb in the Valley of Kings in November 1922, finds of a library of cuneiform tablets and a palace from Kish in February 1924, and the excavation of royal cemeteries in the Ur of Chaldees in 1926.<sup>93</sup>

The archaeological discovery of the Indus Valley sites dramatically rearranged India’s protohistory and its foundation narratives. Further, this conceptualization of India’s past had come about quite close to the moment of decolonization, namely when John Marshall, Director of the ASI, excavated Mohenjodaro and Harappa in the early 1920s. Marshall described the affective impact of these discoveries when he said: “Indians have always been

justly proud of their age-old civilisation, and believing that this civilisation was as ancient as any in Asia, they have long been hoping that Archaeology would discover definite monumental evidence to justify their belief. This hope has now been fulfilled.”<sup>94</sup> Another renowned archaeologist of colonial India, Mortimer Wheeler said: “Discoveries by Sir John Marshall and his colleagues after 1921 gave to India something approaching *an additional two thousand years of prehistory*, and to the world the largest of its three most ancient civilizations”<sup>95</sup> [emphasis added]. In other words, in the early twentieth century archaeology had provided the material proof of India’s civilizational supremacy and its unparalleled claims to antiquity.

The discovery of the Indus Valley cities did more than simply extend the historical timeline of India by two millennia and place it on par with other ancient cultures of the world. Indeed, it located India’s origins within a technologically advanced, proto-urban, and culturally sophisticated milieu. Mohenjodaro and Harappa impressed the archaeologist and layperson alike with their architecturally marvelous citadels, superb town planning, and advanced urban infrastructure such as drainage and sewage.<sup>96</sup> India’s origins were suddenly not just arousing in its sophistication, offering as it did proof of such scientific accomplishments from the past, the origin of Indian civilization was also unmistakably urban. In Wheeler’s words, “civilization, in a minimum sense of the term, is the art of living in towns, with all that the condition implies in respect of social skills and discipline.”<sup>97</sup> There were perhaps few examples more evocative than Mohenjodaro and Harappa to prove this idiom of civilization.

Such was the prevailing view of India’s origins even as independence and Partition unfolded simultaneously in 1947. The narrative of India’s origins as residing in spectacular cities such as Harappa and Mohenjodaro was soon truncated by the violence of Partition and the sheer tyranny of international borders, which placed the two major Indus Valley cities squarely within Pakistan’s borders. If India’s origins were imagined as embedded within the building of grand and glorious cities how could this foundational myth be reconciled with the reality of a postcolonial nation-state with newly redrawn borders? Not only did Mohenjodaro and Harappa, the two paradigmatic and grandest cities of the Indus civilization, belong to Pakistan after 1947 but there was also the division of material culture from the Indus sites (seals, sculptures, jewelry) in “equitable” portions between India and Pakistan. As Nayanjot Lahiri has shown, the clinical arithmetic of equally apportioning the Indus collections even led archaeologists to compromise the integrity of certain artifacts, such as that of a carnelian necklace and a waistband, by cutting them into two halves, one each for Pakistan and India.<sup>98</sup>

Partition also precipitated a new ambivalence toward the foundational narrative of India as having its origins in the Indus Valley Civilization. In a 1964 book on the current state of archaeology in India, Lal wrote:

It is the Harappa Culture, better known as the Indus Civilization, that marks the apogee of the protohistoric Indian civilization. Partition took away practically all the sites of the Civilization from India, including, of course, the two famous ones, viz. Harappa and Mohenjo-daro. This, however, did not dishearten Indian archaeologists who have since discovered

over a hundred sites, flung far across the Indian subcontinent—from Rupar in Panjab on the north to Bhagatrav in Gujarat on the south, and up to Alamgirpur in Uttar Pradesh on the east.<sup>99</sup>

The text, which appears under a subtitle called “Partition’s Loss Made Good,” makes little effort to conceal the trauma dealt by Partition to the cartographic vision of India and its attendant origin narrative. It was perhaps an unbearable geographical irony for archaeologists like Lal and Sankalia that the two cities, which bore the imprimatur of India’s origins were now within the borders of Pakistan. Partition had made it impossible to narrate the protohistory of India, or indeed the beginnings of Indian civilization, without referring to sites outside the geo-body of the new nation-state.<sup>100</sup> Although Lal ended on a hopeful note that new Indus sites had been found within the post-1947 borders of India, the triumph of these discoveries was sobered by the realization that modest sites like Rupar, Bhagatrav, and Alamgir cannot match the spectacular urbanism of Mohenjodaro and Harappa. What was needed then was a recalibration of the originary narrative so that it would better respond to the modern geography of the new nation-state.

It was this historical wound rendered by Partition that archaeologists sought to fill in the 1960s and by finding evidence for alternative national origins that would match the grandeur of the Indus Valley Civilization and be uniquely Indian and separate from that of Pakistan. Indeed in his book, Lal called for a reevaluation of the Indus Valley Civilization as it had been formerly conceived with its epicenter in the twin urban centers of Mohenjodaro and Harappa and named after the river Indus (now also in Pakistan). On the basis of the fact that new sites showing characteristics of the Indus Valley Civilization had been excavated along the banks of the Ganges in modern India, Lal proposed rethinking the “appropriateness of the very nomenclature, viz. the ‘Indus’ Civilization.”<sup>101</sup>

Among other chasms, Partition left a large cultural loss in its wake and Indian archaeologists responded by recalibrating the origin narratives of India that they had inherited from their colonial predecessors such as Mortimer Wheeler and John Marshall. India’s recent assignation as one of the oldest civilizations of the world demanded material proof of prehistoric origins and spectacular ancient cultures. The concerted efforts on the part of archaeologists to locate the origins of India in Hindu traditions, was part of that mission and the Purana Qila became the locus of modern yearnings for new foundational myths.<sup>102</sup>

## Conclusion

A comprehensive listing of Delhi’s heritage, which updates Maulvi Zafar Hasan’s 1916 survey of Delhi’s monuments, produced by the nongovernmental heritage body INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art, Culture, and Heritage) identifies the Purana Qila interchangeably as Indraprastha.<sup>103</sup> This is also true for the Eicher Map of Delhi, which is considered the most comprehensive street map of the city. While the Eicher and INTACH maps are not official government documents, they enjoy the credibility of being objective and scientific representations of the city. Meanwhile, the 2008 reprinting of ASI’s original listing of Delhi’s heritage gives a two-page description of Indraprastha as coterminous with Purana



FIG. 4.11. General View of the Excavated Trenches, Purana Qila (Delhi, vol. 19, 1951, PQ 1/71, ASI Photo Archive).

Qila and detailing its history as laid out in the *Mahabharata*.<sup>104</sup> Despite the lack of evidence to prove the existence of Indraprastha its myth continues and has become a cartographic truth through maps such as these. The affective projection of Indraprastha is thus finally presented as archival fact, calcified by the bureaucracies of mapping and heritage listings.

More insidious is the mischief wrought at the Purana Qila itself, where a museum established by the ASI narrates the history of the site and the origins of Delhi thus:

Around 1450 B.C. a forested area on the right bank of the river Yamuna was chosen as the site for Indraprastha by Yudhishtar the eldest of the five Pandava brothers, the heroes of the great Hindu epic, the *Mahabharata*. Little is known about the origins of Indraprastha or the reasons for its decline and destruction. Archaeological excavations confirm the existence of city life around the first millennia before Christ, and the area between Feroze Shah Kotla and the Humayun's tomb is the probable site of this city. It is said that after Indraprastha faded a new city called Dilli was founded around 57 B.C.E. by Raja Delu King of Kanauj.<sup>105</sup>

This origin narrative of Delhi mirrors in significant ways the claims made by Syed Ahmad in his 1854 book. However, here the contemporary imaginary of Delhi with its roots in an ancient and noble Hindu empire is supported on the scientific crutches of archaeological evidence and displayed within a museum—that modern space of rational historical knowledge.

The story of Delhi's beginnings might have stayed the same for more than 150 years, but the technologies through which they are sustained are now radically different.

A photograph taken in 1974 poignantly illustrates the crises of meanings that the Purana Qila remains enmeshed in. In the foreground of the photograph are the excavations trenches dug during the search for Indraprastha. In the middle ground is the Sher Mandal, the library or observatory built by Sher Shah Suri in the sixteenth century. In the background Delhi appears as the modernist vision espoused by India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru where concrete buildings stand in an orderly phalanx while factories spew smoke from their chimneys. The photograph juxtaposes Delhi's Islamic traditions—the Sher Mandal—with the aspirations of postcolonial India marching toward modernity. And yet the gash of the excavation trenches in the foreground of the photograph tells a different story. It serves as a reminder that the rich traditions of Islamic urbanism and building were somehow insufficient to serve as the origins for modern Delhi. They speak of the urgent belief that below the six centuries of Delhi's Islamic heritage was a hidden Hindu city that would serve as the authentic civilizational bedrock that prefigured all other cultural strata. Most of all the trenches dug deep and with no little desperation into the grounds of the Purana Qila seem to be a product of the violence of Partition itself—a frenzied attempt to excavate Hindu origins for Delhi and by extension for India itself. The enduring insistence that Indraprastha and Purana Qila are the same is more than simply the historical manipulation of origins by the colonial state as well as the nation-state. Instead it speaks to the violent reinscription of Delhi's origins as Hindu—a violence born out of the anxiety that Delhi may not have Hindu origins at all.



**FIG. 5.1.** Samuel Bourne, "View of the Arched Screen Façade of the Quwwat-ul Islam Mosque and the Iron Pillar," 1863–1870 (PH 1985. 0546, Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/ Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal).

## 2000: Qutb Complex

**A group of Hindu men** gather outside the Qutb complex in Delhi demanding access to the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque within. Built by Delhi's earliest Islamic rulers between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, a large part of the mosque is made up of fragments from Hindu and Jain structures. Indeed, on this November day in 2000 the protestors claim that the medieval Sultanate kings who built the mosque, destroyed twenty-seven Hindu temples in order to assert their Muslim domination over the indigenous Hindus of the subcontinent. They seek now, to recover the original temples with a purification ceremony that will liberate the Hindu idols "trapped" within the mosque. The protestors are part of the Hindutva movement—a religious nationalism which seeks to redefine India as a Hindu homeland and demote the nation's religious minorities, especially Muslims, to second-class status.

The Qutb complex, meanwhile, is also a nationally protected monument and occupies a sturdy place within the repertoire of modern India's religiously diverse architectural heritage. In addition to the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque the complex is also home to the Qutb Minar—a 238-foot-tall stone minaret of the mosque, richly carved with Islamic calligraphy, built in 1202—and the fifth-century Iron Pillar, which although of Hindu provenance, was relocated by the Islamic rulers of Delhi and placed within the center of the mosque's courtyard. The Qutb Minar in particular has become iconic of Delhi's rich architectural heritage. The complex receives thousands of domestic and international tourists every day and has been recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1992. This most recent nomination regards the monument as "universal heritage of all mankind."

On that November day in 2000 the Hindutva protestors are refused entry into the Qutb complex and several are arrested by the police. The narrative of the destruction of twenty-seven Hindu temples espoused by the Hindutva protestors, however, is far from fantasy and echoes claims made by nineteenth-century colonial archaeologists that the Qutb complex resulted from a violent destruction of Hindu architecture at the hands of "barbarous and idol-hating" Muslims in the twelfth century. Meanwhile, the current UNESCO description of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque says that it was built "from materials reused from some twenty Brahman temples." The Qutb complex, thus oscillates between its iconic status as nation's trophy as well as site of historic trauma. The apparatus of preservation has so far been able to safeguard the Qutb complex from contemporary iconoclasms, but its histories continue to resemble a battleground.



## Secular Nations and Specters of Iconoclasm

A thousand craftsmen worked to create the original temple of Rai Pithora that once stood where the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque now stands. The columns of this temple were intricately carved with creepers, vines, and flowers. Some were also ornamented with human or animal sculptures. The injunctions of Islam caused such a change in the hearts of people that wherever these figures were found on any columns, beams, walls, or prayer niches, they were defaced. The heads of some figures were chopped off; the noses of others were cut away; and still others were blinded. The distressed figures would no longer serve as objects of worship. The defaced idols from the original temple of the Rai Pithora in the Quwwat-ul-Islam can still be seen today and serve as a reminder of that once holy and respected monument.<sup>1</sup>

Syed Ahmad Khan's 1847 account of the visceral rage that accompanied the defacement of idolatrous images in the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque was one of the first archival descriptions of the monument. 150 years later, when a hundred Hindu men gathered outside the mosque to hold a ritual Hindu ceremony to "liberate" the gods trapped in the mosque, they invoked both the archival memory as well affective charge surrounding the history of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque.<sup>2</sup> The condition of the monument, however, had changed dramatically between 1847 and 2000. While Syed Ahmad had marveled at the size and grandeur of the mosque, he had also lamented its poor upkeep and its tragic state of ruin. Indeed, he compared the precarious condition of the monument's structural stones to the loose teeth of an aged woman—likely to fall at any minute. In contrast, when the Hindu protestors gathered outside the Quwwat-ul-Islam, the monument had been recognized as a World Heritage Site for the past eight years and had received protection from the colonial and nation-state for more than a century. Its grounds were now well manicured and its structural integrity had been restored so that it was no longer in danger of collapsing. Preservation had been able to ensure the physical durability of the monument, even if its symbolic sturdiness had been increasingly tested over time.

The Quwwat-ul-Islam is one of the earliest mosques built in northern India still extant in the country. It was begun by the first Turko-Afghan rulers of Delhi in 1192 and continually

expanded by successive Islamic sovereigns in later centuries. The earliest parts of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque were largely constructed from the fragments of Hindu or Jain structures. In particular the columns that make up the mosque's courtyard are richly ornamented with animal and human forms. There is also some evidence that the mosque sits on the original base of a pre-Islamic structure. The larger complex of the mosque includes several other structures of aesthetic and historical importance such as: the minaret of the Qutb Minar (1202–1368), the pre-Islamic Iron Pillar (fourth century) which was relocated to the courtyard of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque in the thirteenth century; the tomb of Emperor Iltutmish (1235); an incomplete minaret built by Emperor Ala-ud-din Khilji (1311); the Alai Darwaza (1310–11); the tomb of Imam Zamin (1537–38); and additional graves and colleges. In this chapter I will be referring to the two individual structures of the main Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque and its minaret the Qutb Minar. While referring to both these monuments together or the larger complex that they exist in, I shall use the term “Qutb complex.” (See site plan on Plate 8 and diagram on Plate 9 for the layout of the Qutb complex and the history of building activity on the site.)

The November 2000 demonstration outside the Qutb complex was organized by the VHP (the Vishwa Hindu Parishad) and its affiliate organization the Bajrang Dal, whose representatives demanded the right to pray within the mosque complex as well as to hold a Hindu purification ceremony (*dev-mukti yagna*) in order to “liberate” the Hindu idols that they claimed were “trapped” in the mosque.<sup>3</sup> Citing archaeological knowledge that the building of the mosque was accompanied by the destruction of twenty-seven Hindu and Jain temples, more than seven hundred years ago, the protestors demanded the right to now redeem this trauma of the distant past within the present moment.

In the tussle that ensued between the protestors and the civil authorities, the latter were able to prevent the demonstrators from entering the Qutb complex and several protestors were arrested and imprisoned. This averted the inflammation of already fragile relations between Hindus and Muslims and the possibility of a large-scale riot. While the authorities were able to defuse the situation on this occasion, the incident raised important questions regarding a nation and its representative monuments. What exactly is it about the physical form of the Qutb complex that has given it this Janusian identity—of being both national trophy for India and a site that evokes memories of Hindu trauma at the hands of medieval Muslim rulers? As one of only three World Heritage Monuments in Delhi,<sup>4</sup> a monument of national pride, and a fine example of early Islamic architecture in the country, the Qutb complex brings in a handsome revenue for Delhi. Yet the celebrations around the aesthetic beauty of the Qutb complex, its historic import as a monument that marked the introduction of Islamic architecture into the subcontinent, and the efforts to codify it as heritage that is of “outstanding value to humanity” exist alongside a profound ambivalence toward its possibly iconoclastic origins.<sup>5</sup> This is a monument from where defaced sculptures of Hindu gods and goddesses frequently tumble, and from which plaster falls away during restoration work to reveal figural representations of animals and birds, that in all probability belonged to a faith other than that of the Muslim patrons of the mosque.

How does secular India narrate the past of this national monument as a site of iconoclasm and historical violence? What role did colonial archaeology play in the calcification of myths regarding the incontrovertible divide between Islamic and Hindu aesthetic modalities and their purportedly violent encounter as represented in the Qutb complex? Finally

how has colonial knowledge regarding the Qutb complex been appropriated by an emergent Hindu nationalism in recent decades? This chapter tackles these questions by tracing the modern historiography and representation of the Qutb complex as a site of iconoclasm as well as its celebration as one of India's most iconic monuments.

The chapter is divided into three broad sections. The first focuses on colonial debates regarding the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque in particular. Like many other monuments of Delhi, it acquired a particular visibility in the mid- to late nineteenth century when histories and archaeological reports of Delhi created particular bureaucracies of knowledge around it. These early surveys and reports of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque showed that while representative aspects of medieval Hindu as well as medieval Islamic art could be found in the same monument, the two cultural systems were nevertheless antithetical to one another. Thus, even as the monument was studied, documented, and parts of it displayed in museums during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it was fragmented into its Hindu and Islamic elements, the juxtaposition of which was always assumed to be a result of violent Islamic iconoclasm.

The second part of this chapter focuses on the Qutb Minar and the difference in the way that its modern life has unfolded as opposed to the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque. In particular it focuses on the manner in which colonial narratives have been folded into the official rhetoric of secular India as well as appropriated by a growing Hindutva polity who seek to reclaim the Qutb Minar as an essentially Hindu monument. The secular appropriation of the Qutb Minar as a national symbol as well as its appropriation by Hindutva ideology developed in tandem as part of India's postcolonial history. The third section of the chapter positions the Hindutva appropriations of the Qutb complex within a context of international attention due to its listing as a World Heritage Monument as well as its transformation in the 1980s from an unused mosque to a "living monument." This final section thus suggests that the inscription of the Qutb complex as a World Heritage Monument of "universal" importance might be understood as a strategy to insulate it against increasingly ethnic and religious appropriations such as those advanced by Hindu nationalists.

Several art historians have debated the obvious evidence of iconoclasm in the Qutb complex and the medieval context of reuse as well as destruction for which religious difference was only one of many motivations.<sup>6</sup> While indebted to this body of work, this chapter focuses on the nineteenth- and twentieth-century articulations of reuse and its overwhelming representation as iconoclasm. More specifically it traces the manner in which the Qutb complex became associated with Islamic iconoclasm in various forms of discourse from the mid-nineteenth century onward. In tracing this history I claim that there are significant echoes between the narratives of colonial archaeology, that of secular India, as well as an emergent Hindu nationalism. Even as archival histories have upheld the Qutb complex as an early example of Islamic architecture in the subcontinent they have created an affect of violence around the monument's origins. The archival history of the Qutb complex is thereby syncopated with the specter of religious violence toward bodies as well as buildings. In the case of the Qutb complex then, archive and affect exist in dialogic tension; intensifying as they come in contact with one another. In colonial and national archaeology as well as popular and religious revivalist narratives the Qutb complex has been framed as the site of traumatic reckonings between Islamic "invaders" and their Hindu "victims." Yet, this affective thickening has happened alongside and often via the archival consolidation of the

Qutb complex as a fine example of both Hindu as well as Islamic architecture and a symbol of India's glorious cultural history.

In his exegesis of iconoclasm, Bruno Latour has looked at the deep ambivalence caused by the simultaneity of destruction and preservation of icons around the world.<sup>7</sup> He introduces the concept of iconoclasm with the example of a fire that threatened to destroy the Shroud of Turin in 1997. Latour's exemplary image is not that of the Shroud of Turin per se but that of Italian firemen breaking the thick protective glass casing built around the Shroud to guard it from over-zealous devotees who had they been allowed near it, might have rent it into numerous little shreds and carried them away as relics. The image caught on film is fraught with all kinds of imminent dangers. There is the immediate urgency of destruction (of the protective casing) in order to save the Shroud in posterity; there is the imminent anxiety that the fire might engulf and destroy the Shroud entirely, leaving the video of the firemen attempting to save it as the last relic of the object itself; and there is of course the irony that the very sturdy protective apparatus around the Shroud may end up being the very cause of its ultimate destruction. This brings Latour to the following articulation of iconoclasm:

*Iconoclasm* is when we know what is happening in the act of breaking and what the motivations for what appears as a clear project of destruction are; *iconoclasm*, on the other hand, is when one does not know, one hesitates, one is troubled by an action for which there is no way to know, without further inquiry, whether it is destructive or constructive.<sup>8</sup>

The concept of iconoclasm provides a productive frame of analysis for the protests around the Qutb complex in November 2000, as it raises similar questions regarding the dialogic nature of destruction and preservation and the often-blurred boundaries between the two. On the one hand, the Hindutva protestors were engaged in a symbolic iconoclasm—the recovery of the Qutb complex from its primary associations as a historic mosque, a nationally protected monument, and an icon of Indo-Islamic heritage, to a space defined by Hindu ritual practice. In other words, even as they sought to destroy the Islamic symbolism of the Qutb complex, they hoped to recover and thereby reestablish its integrity as a Hindu object. On the other hand, the police and ASI authorities struggled to preserve the meaning and use of the Qutb complex as defined by the mandate of secular India and UNESCO. The insulation of the Qutb complex from Hindu reclamations might thus be seen as a preservation of the liberal ideologies of modern nation-states alongside the universalizing logic of World Heritage Sites. It is at this stormy intersection of the contrary vectors of destruction and preservation that the Qutb complex becomes the object of iconoclasm.

## **Colonial Narratives of the Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque**

Nineteenth-century colonial archaeology framed the Islamic destruction of images as a Muslim pathology driven by the taboos of figural representation in Islam. Although scholars have strenuously argued that various factors may have contributed to the practice of medieval reuse and each instance was particular to the diverse contexts in which reuse and

iconoclasm occurred, the notion of Islamic culture as antithetical to the depiction of images is an enduring one and can be seen most immediately in the contemporary destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan in 2001 or the controversy following the depiction of the Prophet Mohammad in Danish newspapers in 2005.<sup>9</sup> In the case of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque, however, the interpretation of reuse as violent Islamic iconoclasm can be definitively traced to the late nineteenth-century colonial discourse around the monument.

The name of the mosque Quwwat-ul-Islam (Might of Islam) has lent much credence to the belief that the structure depicted a triumphant Islam abrogating Hindu culture and religion in the medieval period. Historian Sunil Kumar, however, has argued that the mosque was originally built and referred to as the Jam'i (Friday) mosque of Delhi. By the thirteenth century Delhi as a city had acquired the moniker of *qubba al-Islam* (The Dome or Sanctuary of Islam), which may have been echoed in the mosque's name. More importantly the rising popularity of Sufi leaders such as Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki and Nizam-ud-din Auliya in the fourteenth century, and their outspoken critique of the Muslim clergy who aligned themselves with emperors, might have prompted orthodox Muslim rulers like Ala-ud-din Khilji to rename the mosque as Quwwat-ul-Islam in order to reassert their piety as well power against more populist Sufi leaders.<sup>10</sup> In other words, and as Kumar has shown, the name Quwwat-ul-Islam emerged from a historical antagonism between Sunni Islam and Sufism, rather than a Hindu-Muslim divide.

Despite its controversial history and its current purchase to Hindutva ideology, in this chapter I use the name Quwwat-ul-Islam for two reasons. The first, since the mid-nineteenth century it is the most commonly used reference for the mosque. In the *Asar-us-Sanadid* (1847 and 1854 eds.) Syed Ahmad refers to the mosque as Masjid Quwwat-ul-Islam. Cunningham's archaeological reports made between 1862–1865 are an exception in that he prefers Jama Masjid or the Kutb-ul Islam Mosque (Mosque of the Pole Star of the Islam).<sup>11</sup> J. A. Page's *A Guide to the Qutb* (1927) and the 1992 UNESCO nomination of the Qutb monuments refer to it as the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque and the World Heritage plaques and literature provided on site also refer to it as such.<sup>12</sup> The second reason for retaining the name of Quwwat-ul-Islam is because this chapter illustrates the manner in which iconoclastic violence became the primary lens through which both colonial archaeologists as well as Hindutva proponents viewed the mosque. The historical name of Quwwat-ul-Islam thus carried tremendous purchase for various sets of actors in modern India, particularly those who were invested in highlighting the antagonism between Hindus and Muslims. By using this name for the mosque, I follow the rhetorical strategy used in chapter 1 on the Red Fort where I deliberately appropriate the term "Mutiny" to show how the colonial anxiety of insurgency became coded within popular as well as governmental responses to 1857. My use of the name Quwwat-ul-Islam is therefore meant to highlight the narrative and visual strategies through which iconoclasm became embedded in the musculature of the monument and perpetuated in its popular reception during its modern life.

## Islamic Reuse as Iconoclastic Pathology

Scholars, historians, and archaeologists vociferously debated the origins of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque in the nineteenth century. As mentioned in the opening quote, Syed Ahmad

had discussed the defacement of idols in the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque as only one response (of many) that the medieval Muslims had toward the fragments of the temple of Rai Pithora. Indeed, Syed Ahmad suggested that iconoclasm came as something of an afterthought to the medieval Muslims and it was certainly not their primary motivation for the destruction of the temple. In his view although medieval Muslims undoubtedly destroyed Hindu temples as part of their political conquest of the region, in the case of the Quwwat-ul-Islam, temple fragments had been reused for two reasons. The first was that the temple fragments displayed a high-level of craftsmanship and the second was that reusing the temple fragments to create the mosque would definitively proclaim the establishment of Islamic rule in north India.<sup>13</sup> Thus, although Syed Ahmad recognized the political motivations to both destroy and to reuse parts of the temple to advertise the power of the new Muslim rulers of the region, he positioned the defacement of idols as a subsidiary intent and outcome of the larger goal of Islamic military expansion. The colonial writing of history would, however, depart from this explanation and emphasize iconoclasm as the primary intent behind the building of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque.

Alexander Cunningham's first archaeological reports (1862–65) featured an extensive description of the Qutb Minar as well as the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque.<sup>14</sup> A substantial section of the report was dedicated to arguing submissions made by Syed Ahmad in the *Asar-us-Sanadid* as well as those made by architectural historian James Fergusson of the Qutb complex. Cunningham deliberately fashioned himself as more knowledgeable than both of his contemporaries and his evidence as being more scientific. Archaeological facts presented by Cunningham about the monuments were, however, combined with overt references to the affective temperament of the first Islamic conquerors of Delhi, such as their "rapacious" nature or their "hatred" toward idols. By incorporating such emotional charges into the "scientific" framework of an archaeological report, Cunningham was able to present these assumptions of Muslim pathology as objective truths regarding the past.

A central leitmotif that runs through the archaeological reports is that of iconoclasm as an organic predisposition of the Muslim conquerors of Delhi. This assumption resulted in the outright rejection of productive reuse in favor of destructive iconoclasm to explain the appearance of Hindu and Jain fragments in the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque. Cunningham disagreed with Fergusson's claims, made in his *Handbook of Architecture* (1855), that an extant Hindu palace was appropriated en masse by the Muslim rulers and expanded upon into its contemporary version as a mosque.<sup>15</sup> Fergusson conceded that this made the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque an exceptionally rare example as Muslims were naturally inclined to destroy existing Hindu structures and build anew rather than resorting to architectural conversion. In refutation of Fergusson's argument, Cunningham was convinced that precisely twenty-seven Hindu temples had been destroyed and reused in the composition of the mosque. As evidence he relied on an inscription on the eastern gateway to the mosque, which stated that "the materials [to build the mosque] were obtained from the demolition of 27 idolatrous temples, each of which had cost the sum of 20 lakhs of Diliāls."<sup>16</sup> Fergusson had been unaware of this inscription at the time that he submitted his own thesis about the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque. While Cunningham espoused a different position from Fergusson regarding the origins of the Hindu pillars in the medieval mosque, both men nevertheless based their arguments on the cultural proclivities of Muslim rulers and their vengeful motivations at large.

Cunningham then went on to comment on the meticulous and harmonious recombination of the Hindu and Jain fragments to create the central courtyard of the mosque. Here too, however, he was unable to assign different motivations to the Muslim creators of the monument. He said: “The general effect of these large rows of made-up columns is certainly rich and pleasing; but this effect is due to the kindly hand of time, which has almost entirely removed the coating of plaster with which the whole of these beautifully sculptured pillars were once *barbarously covered by the idol-hating Musalmāns*”<sup>17</sup> [emphasis added]. Instead of reading the careful salvage and rearrangement of Hindu pillars in a “rich and pleasing” composition as an example of productive reuse and syncretism Cunningham attributed this to an inadvertent outcome of time and nature. This point regarding the harmonious arrangement of the Hindu pillars in a twelfth-century Islamic mosque will be expanded further in a later section; however, it is important to note here Cunningham’s repeated emphasis on the emotional motivations that propelled medieval Muslims to willfully destroy Hindu architecture and art.

Other examples of Cunningham’s bias include his analysis of the materials of the Iron Pillar—that is, to ascertain if it was made of a bronze alloy or iron. He eventually decided that it could only be made of the latter material as “a *bronze* pillar would have never escaped the rapacity of the Muhammadan conquerors.”<sup>18</sup> By naturalizing iconoclasm as a response that was embedded in the very psyche of India’s medieval Muslims Cunningham positioned the violent erasure of Hindu architecture as the precursor to the flourishing of Islamic architecture in the subcontinent. More importantly, that such commentary appeared in the earliest archaeological reports of India bestowed them with a scholarly authority while couching their severely prejudicial claims within the rhetoric of expertise.

The scholarship of Cunningham, Fergusson, and to a degree even that of Syed Ahmad, fore-fronted Islamic iconoclasm to explain the architecture of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque. Their words created an aura of historic violence around the monument. To use Sara Ahmed’s concept of “affective stickiness,” the mosque acquired an emotional charge that invoked Islamic wrath, the mutilation of Hindu monuments as well as persons, and the brutal appropriation of existing material culture in the creation of a glorious, albeit tainted, architecture.<sup>19</sup> Archaeological facts regarding the destruction of twenty-seven temples embedded the specter of Islamic violence and concomitant Hindu trauma firmly within the archival understanding of the monument. The affect around reuse, articulated solely as iconoclasm, thus came to be calcified in the colonial archive.

## Displaying the Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque at the Metropole

A key component of the nineteenth-century documentation of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque was the separation of its Hindu and Islamic elements as parts of two distinct cultural and aesthetic systems. Colonial modalities of classification underscored Hindu art and architecture as an autochthonous system “native” to India, while its Islamic counterpart was framed as a foreign influence that had entered the subcontinent in the twelfth century. As one of the earliest Indian monuments showing both Hindu and Islamic detailing, the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque was documented as a sum of its various parts—representations that only perpetuated the incontrovertible divide between Hindu and Islamic architecture.



**FIG. 5.2.** “Topographical Drawing of Two Styles of Indian Decoration on Unidentified Buildings Near to the Kotub Minar, c. 1820” (SB 80/ 8[4] RIBA Library Photographs Collection). Top panel labeled “Hindoo” and lower panels labeled “Mahommedan.”

An early example of this separation can be seen in a set of drawings made by an unknown draftsman who identified two styles of Indian decoration in the mosque. Three decorative panels are shown: the first one identified as “Hindoo” is a heavily ornate panel of floral designs and suggestion of an anthropomorphic form. The second panel marked “Mohammedan” shows a combination of floral design and Arabic calligraphy while the third panel also marked “Mahommedan” shows geometric and floral design. The insistence on categorizing the panels separately is particularly surprising given their relative similarity in terms of scale, technique, and even the commonality of some motifs between the “Hindoo” and

“Mohammedan” panels. The draftsman’s choice to represent “Hindu ornamentation” that does not feature overt animal or human form (of which there are several examples in the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque) also seems to force the difference between Hindu and Islamic aesthetic traditions found within the same structure.

Close to a century after these drawings were made, the allegedly incontrovertible divide between Hindu art and Islamic art at the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque was expressed thus in the ASI’s official guide to the Qutb (1927):

[When] it came to the building of the great frontal screen, the Hindu craftsman was set to work upon *alien arabesque designs and strange Naskh characters* that must be woven in among his own sinuous patterns to frame a pointed arch—a feature again *foreign to the whole tradition* of trabeate Hindu construction. . . . [The] serpentine tendrils and undulating leaves [of the great screen] are the work of the Hindu, who had developed these identical forms in his temples through generations of usage. The disposition of these foliated bands in the design of the façade is, on the other hand, characteristically Saracenic in motif, and reveals at once the relation between the Muhammadan constructor directing affairs and the Hindu artisan, on whose interpretation of his ideas he was dependent for the carrying out of his designs.<sup>20</sup> [emphasis added]

J. A. Page, the author of the guide, stressed the differences in building technology, namely that of arcuate built forms such as the pointed arch of the Islamic building traditions vs. the traditional trabeate forms of Hindu architecture; as well as the difference in aesthetics, namely the Islamic ornamentation of calligraphic reliefs vs. the sinuous floral motifs indicative of Hindu craftsmanship. Page, further asserts that the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque was the product of a Hindu artisanal body, which is to say that even those reliefs and architectural forms that can be identified as Islamic (he uses the now obsolete term “Saracenic”) were in effect produced by “native” Hindu artists. And while he admits that the intersection of Hindu and Islamic aesthetic influences produced a “happy enough” result, it is accompanied by the implication that Hindu artists were working in a submissive relation to Islamic contractors.<sup>21</sup> Once again, the juxtaposition of Islamic and pre-Islamic (Hindu and Jain) elements in the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque was explained via Islamic domination over Hindu bodies and the appropriation of their artistic labor by Muslims.

The colonial approach of isolating the Hindu and Islamic elements of the Qutb complex and classifying each part according to “aesthetic type” rather than creating a separate category of monuments that showed evidence of both artistic traditions carried over to early archaeological practices as well. From its very inception the ASI followed a strict taxonomy where Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, and Islamic structures were classified separately. Overlaps were permissible between Buddhist, Jain, and Hindu material culture, but Islam remained separate from these other more “indigenous” artistic and architectural systems. ASI officials often identified and separated Hindu elements from Muslim features in a single structure, as shown by an early slide of a monument in Krishnagiri in southern India. Here the trabeate post and lintel substructure is categorized as “Hindu” while the arcuate superstructure

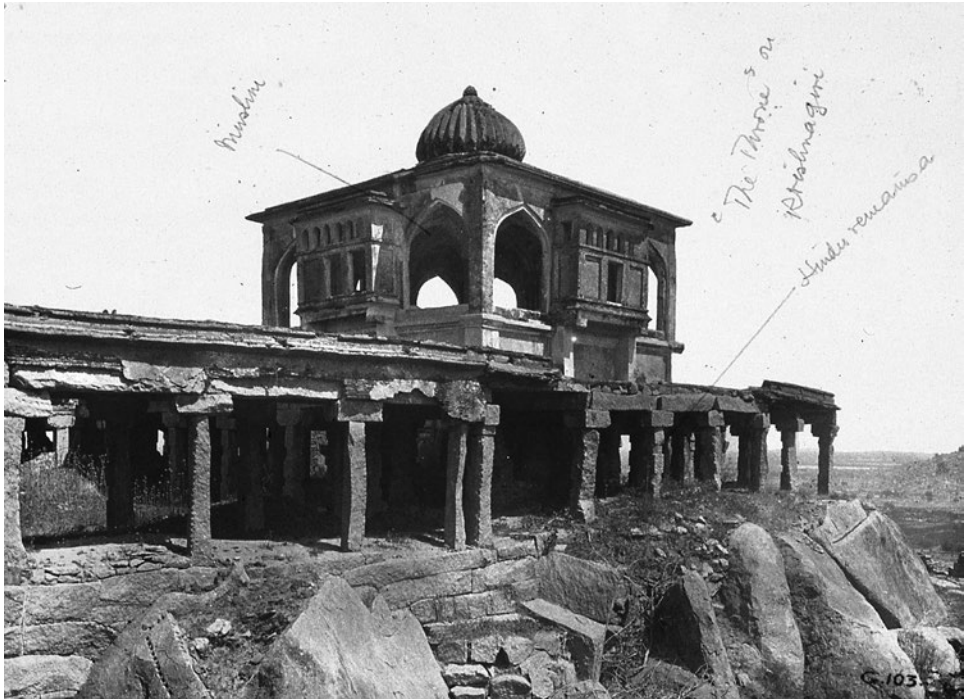


FIG. 5.3. ASI, "Slide of Krishnagiri, c. 1906–1907". © The British Library Board, Shelfmark: Photo 3/2, 64.

is labeled as "Muslim." This strategy of classification parsed single monuments into their Hindu, Buddhist, or Jain, and Islamic components, with each element accorded a specific cultural and religious value that superseded its understanding as a whole. Monuments such as the Quwwat-ul-Islam thus became a sum total of parts, each to be understood in isolation rather than as components of a larger historical site.

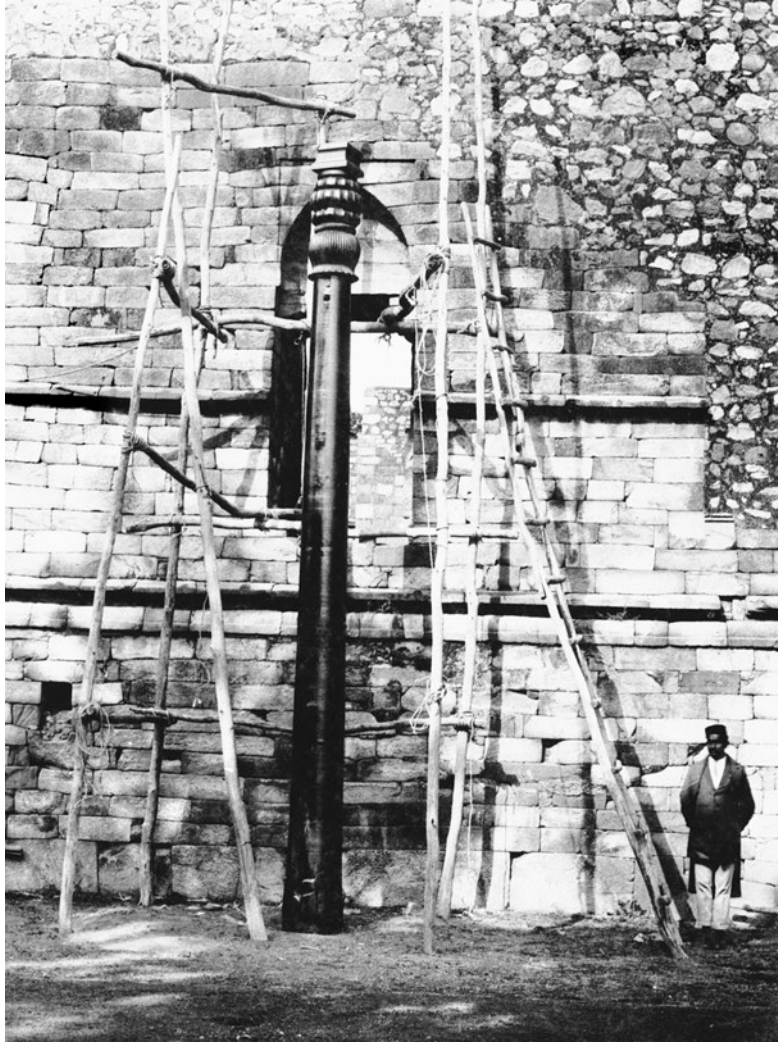
The perceived distinctions between Hindu and Islamic art gained further purchase through the exhibitionary modalities of the late-nineteenth century. In 1871 the South Kensington Museum (now the V&A) in London commissioned a series of plaster casts to be exhibited as part of the London International Exhibition. H. H. Cole was put in charge of obtaining plaster casts from India. It was decided that Buddhist architecture would be best illustrated by the eastern gateway of the Sanchi Tope; Hindu architecture by the pillars in the courtyard of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque; early Islamic art of the subcontinent would be represented by calligraphic inscriptions on the Qutb Minar and the Alai Darwaza; and finally Mughal architecture by casts taken of the main palace at Fatehpur Sikhari. In this highly distilled schema of representation the Quwwat-ul-Islam was the only structure to provide evidence of both Hindu as well as Islamic architecture. It is unclear as to why the pillars in the Qutb complex were chosen as representative of Hindu art and it is certainly not improbable that convenience dictated its choice over other Hindu architecture that may have required additional travel and increased expense. Indeed, Cole was operating under a tight budget and might have decided to maximize labor and resources by obtaining casts of Hindu and early Islamic architecture from one site. It is important to note, however, that at this crucial



FIG. 5.4. "South Kensington Museum Cast Court, 1873" (Museum No.: 73:678, V&A).

moment when iconic examples of Indian architecture were displayed at the metropole, the Quwwat-ul-Islam provided paradigmatic examples for Hindu as well as Islamic aesthetic traditions. An 1872 photograph of the courtyard of the South Kensington Museum shows the plaster cast of a "Hindu" column from the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque erected behind a cast of the Iron Pillar. Additional plaster casts of column capitals are also seen arranged on the floor of the museum. The photograph indicates poignantly the manner in which the "Hindu" and "Islamic" parts of a single monument were plucked from a common context and displayed separately at the imperial metropole as discrete and unrelated objects.<sup>22</sup>

Another example of the manner in which colonial exhibitionary modes calcified the separation between Hindu and Islamic elements in the Qutb complex relates to the Iron Pillar in the central quadrangle of the mosque. The Iron Pillar predates the mosque by several centuries and bears Sanskrit inscriptions from the fourth century, which refer to the heroism of



**FIG. 5.5.** Wooden Replica of Iron Pillar at the Qutb complex (Delhi, vol. 6, 1922–23, 4567, ASI Photo Archive).

the Hindu ruler Chandragupta II. The Iron Pillar is also something of a technological feat, as it has resisted rusting over the centuries, though exposed to the elements. Archaeologists concur that the pillar was relocated from its original site to the courtyard of the mosque and placed on axis with the main *mihrab* during the time of Sultanate ruler Shams-ud-din Iltutmish (r. 1211–36). Finbarr B. Flood has argued that the relocation and prominent display of the Iron Pillar was a strategy of the earliest Muslim rulers of India to show continuity with the sovereign powers that preceded them.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, the re-erection of “Hindu” victory pillars in the courtyards of medieval mosques is not uncommon in and around Delhi.<sup>24</sup>

Colonial archaeology not only classified the Iron Pillar as Hindu but also interpreted it as a singular object symbolizing ancient Hindu skill and technological prowess. In 1924 a wooden replica of it traveled to England to be displayed at the British Empire Exhibition.<sup>25</sup>

The ASI reports related to the reproduction states that “care was taken that the replica should be an exact copy of the original and to this end the Gupta inscription and other details were faithfully reproduced,” in the facsimile of the pillar.<sup>26</sup> The mode of display through which the pillar circulated as a symbol of Hindu antiquity outside the Islamic context to which it belonged, further stressed the divide between Quwwat-ul-Islam’s Hindu and Islamic elements and the pillar’s historicity was measured only in terms of its significance as a Hindu object—an identity divorced from its central and prominent position within one of the earliest mosques built in India.

The separation of Hindu and Islamic typologies in the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque is also borne out by Cunningham’s deciphering of the medieval mason marks on the various column shafts, bases, and capitals, which had been numbered to facilitate their painstaking rearrangement in the mosque. Cunningham discovered that a total of fifteen column shafts, thirteen bases, seven capitals, and thirteen different parts of the entablature were rearranged in precise ways to build the cloister of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque. His analysis revealed a laborious process of collection and recomposition that the Muslim patrons undertook in order to create the mosque in Delhi. Indeed, Cunningham remarked on the care with which the Islamic builders assembled the pillars of the cloister when he said:

Every single pillar is made up of *two* separate Hindu shafts, placed one above the other; and as these shafts are of many various sizes, the required height is obtained by the insertion of other pieces between the shorter shafts. In one instance in the north cloister there is a pillar made up of no less than three shafts of exactly the same pattern, piled one over the other.<sup>27</sup>

Despite this evidence of careful reuse, Cunningham was unwilling to concede that the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque owed its origins to more than indiscriminate iconoclasm.<sup>28</sup> Yet, if the motivation of the Islamic rulers was to destroy the Hindu heritage of Delhi and abrogate it with Islamic cultural systems, what accounted for such careful salvage and the reorganization of the destroyed monuments? Indeed, some elements of the pillars were even newly manufactured to match the style and compositional aesthetics of the reused material.<sup>29</sup> While there was undoubtedly evidence of iconoclasm such as the defacement of statues and animal figures, this sat besides the prominent and thoughtful display of the non-Islamic elements in the central courtyard of the mosque. Colonial narratives, however, stressed unrestrained and vengeful destruction as the true motivations for the construction of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque.

Cunningham’s discovery of the process by which Hindu columns were cataloged and rearranged to create the main courtyard of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque illuminates the manner in which preservation was appropriated as the sole domain of the colonizer. As argued in the introduction to this book preservation was a key strategy of colonial self-fashioning in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The discourse and bureaucracy of preservation established colonizers as inherently distinct from their imperial predecessors who they claimed as either being prone to iconoclasm or indifferent to the heritage of religions other than their own. For example, when making his case for the institution of the Ancient

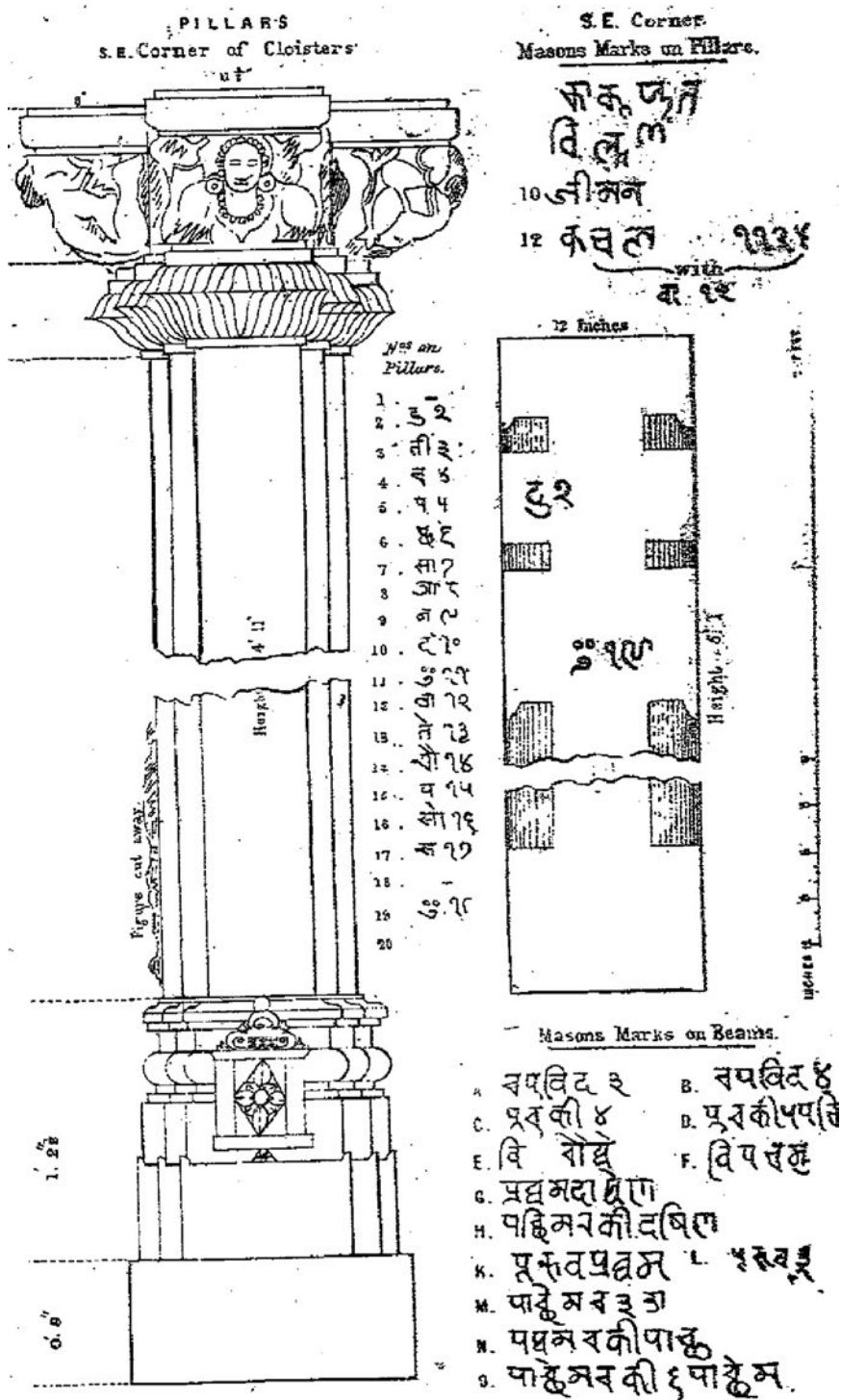


FIG. 5.6. After Alexander Cunningham's drawing of the composition of pillars in the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque, in "Four Reports Made during the Years 1862-63-64-65," ed. Archaeological Survey of India (Varanasi, 1862-1865).

Monuments Protection Act in the early twentieth century, Viceroy Curzon stressed the need for preservation as a colonial obligation of liberal governance. He asserted that while India's previous rulers, the Hindus, Muslims, Rajputs and Sikhs, had engaged in iconoclasm and destruction as a legitimate means of announcing their own power, the era of European colonialism would be markedly different for "reason" would prevent Europeans from desecrating or defiling any monument, based on religious or ethnic biases. He said:

Every, or nearly every successive religion that has permeated or overswept this country has vindicated its own fervour at the expense of the rival whom it had dethroned. . . . Dynasties did not spare their own members, nor religions their own shrines. If a capital or fort or sanctuary was not completed in the life-time of the builder, there was small chance of it being finished, there was a very fair chance of it being despoiled, by his successor and heir. . . . The British Government are fortunately exempt from any such promptings, either of religious fanaticism, of restless vanity, or of dynastic and personal pride. But in proportion as they have been unassailed by such temptations, so is their responsibility the greater for inaugurating a new era and for displaying that tolerant and enlightened respect to the treasures of all, which is one of the main lessons that the returning West has been able to teach to the East.<sup>30</sup>

Even as they saw themselves as the rightful successors of India's past empires, British colonial agents also sought to distinguish themselves from their imperial predecessors in very specific ways. By displacing iconoclasm as a non-European and premodern phenomenon, the British government foreclosed the possibilities of indigenous preservation that may have existed prior to European intervention in India. In doing so they appropriated the domain of preservation entirely for themselves. For example, Cunningham might have easily argued that the painstaking collection, cataloging, and artful rearrangement of Hindu *spolia* in the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque was a method of premodern preservation, whereby the columns were reused and therefore conserved for posterity. The relocation of the Iron Pillar to the courtyard of the mosque, too, might have been read as an impulse of conservation on the part of the medieval Muslim rulers.

The prevailing definition of preservation as an essentially European liberal project, however, foreclosed this as a possibility even if the processes of collecting, cataloging, rearranging, and displaying antiquities employed by the medieval Islamic and modern European imperial regimes were startlingly similar. If the salvaging of Indian heritage from decay and vandalism and recontextualizing it in a museum in London was one means of preservation in the modern world, could the same not have been said about the meticulous care with which the Hindu fragments had been rearranged in the grandest mosque established by Islamic rulers in north India? The careful copy and deliberate display of various elements of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque at the South Kensington Museum bore a striking similarity to the assembly and curated arrangement of the Hindu pillars in the cloister of the same mosque in the twelfth century by Islamic rulers. Similarly the display of the facsimiles of the Iron Pillar at imperial exhibitions in 1872 and 1924 echoed the medieval display of the

Iron Pillar in a mosque built by India's earliest Islamic emperors.<sup>31</sup> The Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque, it would appear, had provided trophies for medieval as well as modern empires to display. Framed as an essential antagonism by colonial agents, however, Islamic iconoclasm proved a useful contrapuntal history to European modernity and the liberal largesse of the colonial government.

Although colonial administrators stressed Islamic iconoclasm in their metropolitan displays and archaeological reports, they seemed less certain about the policies regarding the public exposition of iconoclasm in India. The ASI's policy concerning recovered *spolia* and monuments exhibiting *spolia* was unclear and there was an institutional ambivalence in advertising the history of iconoclasm within the public domain. With tensions between Hindu and Muslim populations on the rise in early twentieth-century Delhi, it is not improbable that colonial administrators adopted a deliberate silence about iconoclasm in order to avoid the possibility of sparking religious violence.

The undecided stance of the colonial government toward objects and monuments of *spolia* is illuminated by the following example. In 1926, the ASI found three marble carvings of Jain *tirthankaras*<sup>32</sup> while carrying out repairs and maintenance at the Purana Qila complex. The ASI reports of that year state that attempts to look for a larger superstructure and signs of a preexisting temple to which the sculptures might have originally belonged yielded nothing. As soon as the Jain community of Delhi heard of the findings they approached the ASI, asking that the sculptures be handed over to them for worship. On receiving the sculptures, the Jain community expressed its gratitude by presenting the ASI's Museum of Archaeology with a painting of the court of Akbar Shah II.<sup>33</sup> The incident indicates that the colonial authorities saw the Purana Qila (built by an Islamic ruler) and the Jain sculptures as aesthetically and culturally distinct entities that needed to be placed in separate domains. Additionally, the possibility of religious violence erupting from the public knowledge of Jain idols being discovered from an Islamic site was defused by recontextualizing the idols within a temple. In other cases Hindu and Jain fragments found at Islamic monuments including the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque were transferred to the "neutral" and secular space of a museum.<sup>34</sup>

The silence around iconoclasm especially its articulation in situ is readily seen in the absence of a clear policy toward the care and management of Hindu elements recovered from the Qutb complex. As the ASI's restoration and conservation of the complex began in the late-nineteenth century, various sculptures and figural ornamentation tumbled out of both mosque and minaret. The recovery of objects such as the headless image of a Nandi Bull (associated in Hindu mythology with the God Shiva), an intricately carved sculpture of Vishnu, and a stone carving of a Jain *thirthankara* carved with Qoranic inscriptions on the reverse, has continued well into the late twentieth century. When found the sculptures have either been cleaned up and left on the premises of the complex without interpretive plaques or guides, or recontextualized at the National Museum at Delhi. The colonial ambivalence about Hindu and Jain fragments recovered from the Qutb complex was later adopted by the postcolonial state which has continued to treat Hindu and Muslim material culture as disparate objects that are to be understood only within their respective religious and aesthetic domains. Without a clear cultural policy or nuanced historical interpretation of the juxtaposition of Hindu and Islamic objects within sites such as the Qutb complex, the postcolonial



**FIG. 5.7.** Reused panel from Qutb complex showing Jain iconography on one side and Qoranic inscriptions on the other (Delhi, vol. 4, 1919–21, I-65 and I-66, ASI Photo Archive).

nation perpetuates the colonial silence as well as anxieties surrounding the history of reuse in medieval monuments.

The strategies employed to represent and preserve the various parts of the Quwwat-ul-Islam do more than reveal the conceits upon which colonial histories of the subcontinent were framed. They also point to the colonial framing of reuse and appropriation, which made it impossible to narrate the history of medieval South Asia without implying a violent clash between Hindu and Muslim cultural systems. Contrary to the presumed overlap between Hindu and Jain, or Hindu and Buddhist cultures, Hindu and Muslim histories were locked in an antagonistic relationship that escaped any synergistic or symbiotic explanation. Even as the colonial archaeologist took an ostensibly rational, objective, and apolitical stance toward the monument, his gaze fetishized each element as separate from the others, to be

evaluated as *either* Hindu or Islamic rather than Hindu *and* Islamic. By parsing the monument into discrete Hindu and Muslim parts, the colonial system of categorization presented it as a bricolage that had resulted from a violent collision between cultural systems, rather than a carefully curated and composite whole.

## Secular and Hindu Nationalist Appropriations of the Qutb Minar

If colonial framings of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque focused on its value as a compendium of distinct Hindu and Islamic elements; the postcolonial approach to the Qutb complex has overwhelmingly centered on the Qutb Minar as an isolated object of beauty and historicity. While secular India has serially reproduced the Qutb Minar as an icon of the nation-state's architectural heritage, Hindutva supporters have sought to appropriate this particular structure as being essentially Hindu and simply masquerading as an Islamic object. In both the secular as well as Hindutva oriented approaches, the Qutb Minar is deliberately isolated from its larger Islamic context and identity as the minaret of a mosque. Instead it operates as a singular object of aesthetic and historical value.

This section extends the claim made by historian Sunil Kumar who has analyzed the separate national reactions to the Qutb Minar and the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque. In his exegesis he speaks of the former as eliciting awe and respect from its viewers. While the identity of the minaret as an Islamic monument cannot be ignored it is also appreciated as a technological and aesthetic feat. Meanwhile, the national reaction to the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque is fraught with tension due to the obvious traces of iconoclasm embedded within its physical makeup.<sup>35</sup> Here I look at the manner in which the Qutb Minar was "secularized" as well as "Hinduized" by diverse nationalisms each claiming it as an essentially Indian icon.

### Islamic Iconoclasm and the Hindutva Agenda

The debates surrounding the Qutb complex in postcolonial India have been marked by both reverence and censure. In particular the post-independence movement saw a vocal insistence by Hindutva groups who saw the monument as historic evidence of Islamic violence against Hindus. While some highlighted the history of the larger Qutb complex as a site of Hindu martyrdom and violent oppression at the hands of Islamic rulers, others pressed bold claims that the Qutb Minar was in fact a Hindu structure. If on the one hand the immediate post-independence era was guided by a strong sense of secular liberalism upheld by leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru (India's first Prime Minister), others such as Vallabhbhai Patel (India's first Home Minister) were willing to face the wrath of secularists such as Nehru in rebuilding Hindu sites associated with Islamic iconoclasm.

Two other examples that provide a context for the Hindutva appropriation of the Qutb Minar are the temple at Somanatha and the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya. The Ghaznavid ruler Mahmud sacked the Shiva temple at Somanatha, Gujarat in 1026. Romila Thapar and Richard Davis have shown how Hindu and Muslim poets, writers, and balladeers narrated that event well into the fourteenth century, each iteration necessarily colored by the politics of

the author. For example, if the Islamic representations of the event stressed the dedication of Mahmud to orthodox Sunni Islam, Hindu narratives of the same focused on the heroic patriotism of the Hindus who repeatedly risked their lives defending the temple. The story of the “sack of Somanatha” also found purchase with early colonial agents, at least one of whom sought to redress the historical “insult” done to an indigenous Hindu polity by foreign Islamic forces. In 1841, Governor General Ellenborough asked British troops returning from a failed military campaign in the region of present-day Afghanistan to stop at Mahmud’s tomb in Ghazni. He believed that the medieval gates to Mahmud’s tomb had originally belonged to the temple at Somanatha and had been taken by the Muslim ruler as trophies of his campaign. Ellenborough brought these medieval trophies back and replaced them at Somanatha in a grand ceremony, thereby establishing the British government as the just avenger of historical insults and modern arbiters of Hindu-Muslim conflict.<sup>36</sup> Later, however, the gates were found to be of Islamic provenance and Ellenborough’s conviction that they were originally part of the temple of Somanatha was revealed to be invalid.<sup>37</sup>

Almost a century later in 1937 a politician K. M. Munshi wrote a novel titled *Jaya Somanatha*, which replicated Ellenborough’s invocation of Mahmud of Ghazni’s destruction of the Somanatha as a historical wound inflicted upon the Hindu community.<sup>38</sup> At this time the temple at Somanatha was derelict and had long ceased to be a place of either pilgrimage or worship. Munshi’s agenda to rebuild a new temple and revive Somanatha as a center of Hindu pilgrimage, was supported by Vallabhbhai Patel, who began championing the cause soon after India received independence in 1947. When the rebuilding of the temple began in 1950, however, a curious decision was made to clear the ruins of the original temple from the site. Munshi believed that Mahmud of Ghazni (and more generally Islamic rulers that conquered northern India shortly thereafter) had succeeded in pillaging the temple due to the factionalism that prevailed between Hindu rulers at the time. Erasing the remnants of the destroyed temple was thus a symbolic erasure of this historically fractured Hindu community.<sup>39</sup> The Hindu revivalist claims surrounding Somanatha received more publicity in 1990 when it became the site from where the VHP and BJP started their *rath-yatra*<sup>40</sup> around the nation that culminated in the destruction of the Babri Masjid in 1992.

The Babri Masjid is another site that has been appropriated by the Hindutva supporters in order to further their claims of Islamic violence against an indigenous Hindu population. Like Somanatha, Hindutva agitations around the Babri Masjid gained momentum in the period immediately following Indian independence. The Babri mosque located in the city of Ayodhya dates to the sixteenth century and was built by a courtier of the first Mughal emperor, Babur. Hindu claims that the mosque was built atop a temple that marked the birthplace of their deity Rama surfaced in the mid-nineteenth century. The colonial government dealt with the issue by separating spaces of worship for Hindus and Muslims within the mosque precinct. Hindu and Islamic religious practice continued side by side, until 1949, when an idol of the Hindu deity Rama was surreptitiously installed in the mosque. Following this, the Indian government closed the mosque denying entry to both Hindus and Muslims. In February 1986, giving into increasing pressure from the Hindu community, the government began to admit Hindu devotees into the mosque in order to conduct worship there alongside Muslims.<sup>41</sup>

On December 6, 1992, supporters of the Ramjanmabhoomi (literally, “the birth place of Rama”) movement gathered at the Babri Masjid and attempted to tear down the mosque

demanding that a Hindu temple be built in its place. A previous protest organized in 1984 by Hindu-nationalist groups such as the VHP, the RSS, and numerous Hindu religious organizations had claimed to “liberate” the birthplace of the Hindu deity Rama. The dramatic call to arms of the Hindu right was based upon the urgent need to free Rama from his “Muslim jail.”<sup>42</sup> The protestors also issued a list of Islamic monuments in India, which they claimed were originally Hindu and had been destroyed by Muslim rulers and armies. Although the rhetoric of “liberation” was identical to that later used by the protestors outside the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque in 2000, in 1984 the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque did not figure within the list of Hindu sites presented by the Hindu religious organizations.

While the Hindutva mobilizations around sites such as the Babri Masjid and Somanatha reached their most terrifying manifestation in the late 1980s and 1990s; the reclamation of these and other spaces of Islamic iconoclasm have a longer trajectory in Hindu nationalist politics.<sup>43</sup> Starting in 1947, the Hindu Mahasabha (the umbrella association of Hindu nationalist organizations) published a newsmagazine titled the *Organiser*. As per the agenda of the Mahasabha, this newsmagazine was committed to upholding a national identity for India based on an essentially Hindu identity. Among its regular articles and editorials, the *Organiser* featured a weekly column known as “Holy Bharat” that enumerated and described the historical landscape of the new nation-state. The weekly article featured detailed descriptions of various Hindu temples (some explained as wondrous feats of technology and architectural innovation, while others were described as profoundly rooted within a sacred landscape); civic institutions such as Nalanda (a seventh-century Buddhist center of learning); forts such as the one at Chittor; as well as urban centers renowned for their architectural achievements, such as Vijayanagara and Takshila.

The “Holy Bharat” articles mapped a young and newly independent nation based on a surfeit of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain cultural sites. Thus, while a Hindu temple in the northern-most state of Kashmir might have been architecturally dissimilar to its counterpart in southern India, the reader’s curiosity was aroused about places that were distant and often inaccessible to them. The articles also gathered Hindu architecture as part of a national geography that aligned seamlessly with the new political borders of India. One theme that runs through the essays of “Holy Bharat” is the deliberate conflation of Hindu identity and the built environment of the nation-state. Thus, Muslims (and less frequently Christians) appear in this historic and geographical tableau only as iconoclasts, destroying and erasing the magnificent monuments that Hindu hands have built. No reference is made to Islamic monuments as being part of the Indian architectural pantheon of heritage. Islamic iconoclasm is highlighted alongside the trope of Hindus as a superior race of builders and architects. The articles emphasize contemporary India’s cultural superiority as vested in a particular Hindu subjectivity marked by scientific temper, technological prowess, and aesthetic skill. In contrast, Islamic iconoclasm is related not only to the destruction of Hindu monuments but often indistinguishable from the violence perpetuated on Hindu bodies in the past. For example, the sack of the Somanatha temple in the eleventh century is described thus in a 1955 “Holy Bharat” essay:

It was on January 6, 1026, that Mahmud invested the fort of Somnath, which was in charge of King Mandalika. According to early Muslim

chronicles the defenders fought with unabated heroism. 50,000 Hindu warriors laid down their lives in defence of their beloved shrine before Mahmud captured the fort, entered the temple sanctified by centuries of devotion, broke the *linga* [the symbol of Shiva] to pieces, looted the temple and burnt it to the ground. . . . But the shrine rose again and again and even the repetition of Mahmud's vandalism by Allaud-din Khilji, and later by Aurangzeb's generals could not extinguish its eternal life. . . . *Somanath was the shrine beloved of Bharat*. . . . An ancient race subconsciously felt that it was Somnath, which connected it with the past and the present.<sup>44</sup>

In this description the author traces a history of continuous Islamic iconoclasm from the eleventh to the seventeenth centuries from Mahmud of Ghazni to Aurangzeb, thus framing six centuries of Islamic rule in India through the lens of iconoclasm.<sup>45</sup> Equally, the enduring determination of the Hindus to rebuild the shrine several times over, places the most recent rebuilding of the temple in the 1950s within a historical arc of Hindu resistance against Islamic violence.

While the discourse of Hindutva is motivated by vectors other than those of the discipline of archaeology, some overlap can also be detected between the two realms in their articulations of Islamic reuse. For example, the claims of the author cited above, echo the words of Page in his 1927 *Guide to the Qutb*, where he argued that “shallow corbelled *domes taken bodily* from some wrecked Hindu shrine” [emphasis added] were used to create the colonnades of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque. The same, Page argued, was true of figural reliefs and sculptures, which the Muslims mutilated or hid with “a covering of plaster; sometimes built face inward into the wall and the back inscribed with verses from the Holy Quran.”<sup>46</sup> While it is unclear whether the contributors of “Holy Bharat” essays were cognizant of Cunningham's, Fergusson's, or Page's arguments about the Qutb complex, both discourses created an affective aura which suggested that beneath the veneer of Islamic vandalism lurked an essentially Hindu monument. Hindutva advocates, however, went further in their claims that the mutilation of one corpus (that of the monument) also signaled the mutilation of the Hindu nation's body.

Tapati Guha-Thakurta has argued that “historical monuments live their modern lives primarily as images. They survive and resonate in popular public memory as a body of readily available, reproducible imagery” and that the nineteenth-century project of producing monuments also meant that they had to be “rendered into an effective and replicable copy for a variety of official, scholarly, and public uses.”<sup>47</sup> Indeed it might be argued that it is not only the visual life of a monument that is ensured through reproduction but its affective quotient that is heightened through apparatuses of display and transmission. The Hindu Mahasabha used print culture to create an alternative imaginary of the geography of India through its monuments. The “Holy Bharat” columns recreated the modern geo-body of India by marking it with ancient Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain sites and the absence of Islamic architecture in the columns spoke of the latter's violence as well as foreignness.<sup>48</sup> The “Holy Bharat” essays suggested that India was an autochthonous yet fragile Hindu nation that was nearly annihilated by the intrusion of Islam and continued to live in the latter's threatening shadow.

## The Qutb Minar as an Icon for “Hindu” India and Secular India

The collective imagination of postcolonial India’s built heritage, albeit profoundly influenced by colonial archaeology, was also a product of the publicity that Indian monuments received after independence. As signifiers of a modern and secular nation-state, Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, and Islamic monuments entered the representational canvas of India through various mechanisms. To repeat Guha-Thakurta’s claim that the enduring import of a monument is based primarily on the transmission of its images: as such postage stamps, school textbooks, the staging of national celebrations and commemorations, and state-controlled print culture, all serve to reinforce certain monuments as part of the modern nation-state’s iconography. The serial reproduction of the monument in the public sphere legitimates it as a historical entity and secures it within the nation’s visual archive.

Following independence, the Qutb Minar (alongside other monuments) was quickly appropriated to create modern India’s historic iconography. For example, one of the first series of national stamps issued by the independent Government of India in 1949 was dedicated to the major archaeological sites of the new nation-state and not surprisingly the Qutb Minar featured as one of these.<sup>49</sup> On the stamp the Qutb Minar is depicted as a singular monument in a pastoral setting—a representational conceit that belies its surrounding context and its function as the minaret of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque. Through its modern life, the import of the Qutb Minar as a monument of national status has never been questioned. It features in school textbooks as an icon of India’s Islamic architecture, hosts annual music and cultural festivals, and receives hundreds of domestic and international visitors everyday. When it was designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1993, its importance as an aesthetic and historic icon was validated beyond the boundaries of the nation-state, while continuing to serve as an icon of India’s glorious past. Most recently the Qutb Minar appears (again as an isolated monument) on the tokens and cards of the Delhi Metro, indicative of Delhi’s urban-branding strategy where the city’s heritage and contemporary infrastructure exist in close proximity and thrive together.

As a singular icon, divorced from its larger mosque context, the Qutb Minar has also held purchase for Hindu nationalists who have claimed that it is a Hindu, not Islamic, structure at its core. It should be noted here that these reclamations apply only to the minaret of the Qutb Minar and do not extend to the mosque complex or its affiliated buildings such as tombs, and colleges. Consider, for example, an early claim made in the *Organiser* that the building of the Qutb Minar was not started by Qutb-ud-din Aibak—the slave-general of Mohammad Ghori, who was left in charge of the province in the late twelfth century—but by the Hindu ruler, Prithviraj Chauhan for his daughter Bela.<sup>50</sup> This particular notion is also advanced in several English and Hindi textbooks as well as popular narratives regarding the Qutb Minar.<sup>51</sup> The twelfth-century Hindu ruler Prithviraj Chauhan (along with Shivaji, a seventeenth-century Maratha ruler of western India and Rani Jhansibai, a nineteenth-century female ruler in central India) was a frequent figure in the pages of the *Organiser* and was represented as a proto-nationalist who died defending India from Islamic “invasion.” The patriotism of these figures was thus also linked to concepts of Hindu morality and duty shown in the defense of their “Hindu homeland.” By identifying the patron of the Qutb Minar as Prithviraj Chauhan the article asserts that Delhi had a vibrant Hindu past before

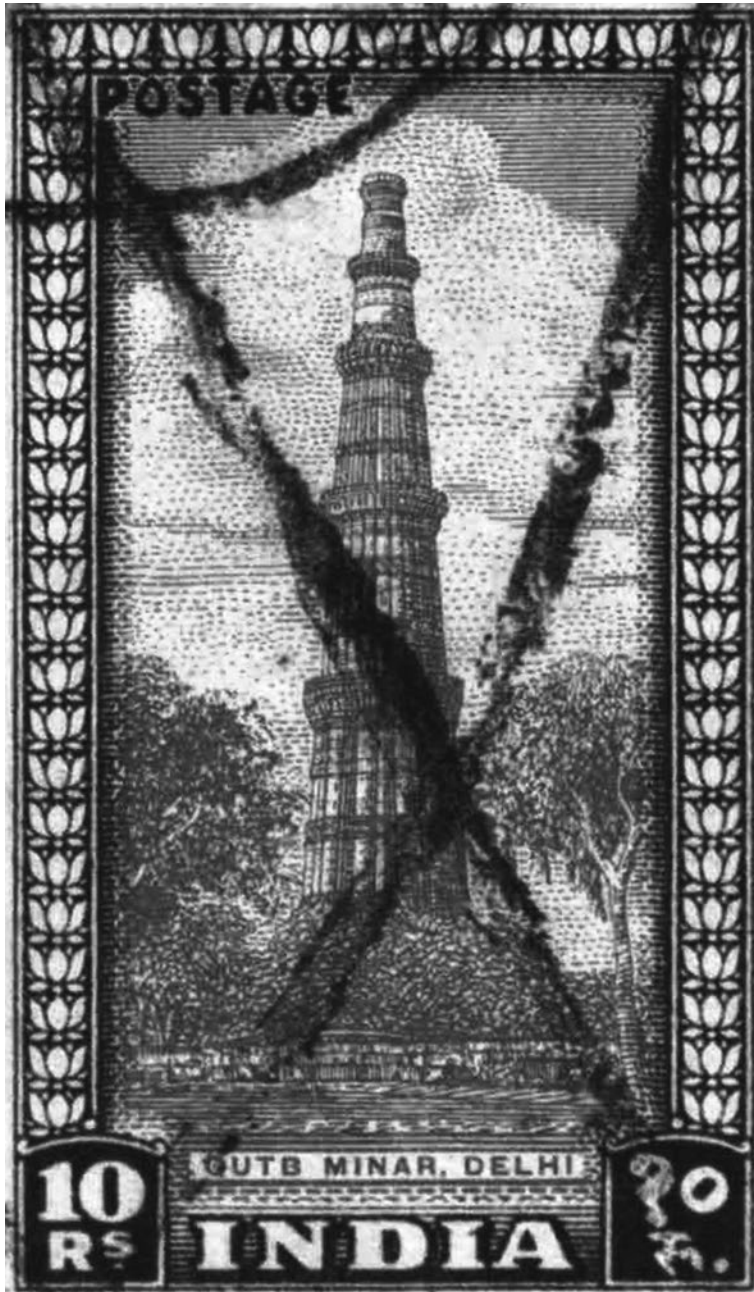


FIG. 5.8. Stamp of the Qutb Minar from the "Archaeological Series," 1948.

Islamic rule even as it appropriates one of secular India's most celebrated structures as a Hindu monument. The article also claimed that the Qutb Minar was originally called Yamuna Stambh as it offered Bela a view of the river Yamuna and that the surroundings of the minaret were in fact palace fragments from this past Hindu geography. Most provocatively the article submitted that the present condition of the minaret, particularly the inscription

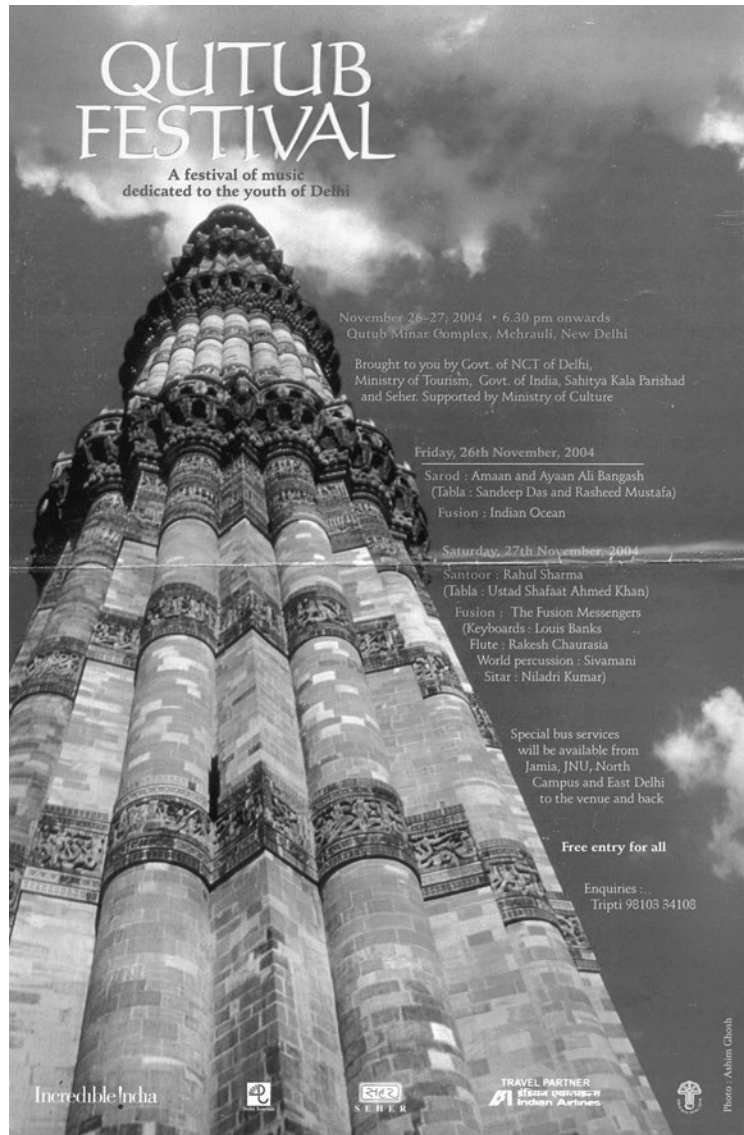


FIG. 5.9. Poster for the Qutb Music festival, 2005.

of the Qoranic verses on its facade, was a result of the “disfigurement” that it suffered at the hands of Aibak and his army.

In another article published in the *Organiser* in 1954, the building of the Qutb Minar was attributed to another Hindu ruler, Visal Deva.<sup>52</sup> Among the several reasons advanced by the author to support the theory of the minaret as a Hindu structure were: the ambiguous position of the minaret with respect to the mosque and the lack of epigraphic references on the actual structure crediting Islamic rulers with the conception and commencement of the building of the structure.<sup>53</sup> In contrast to these “scholars,” though, the author of the 1954 article aims to prove that while the minaret may have been expanded or added onto by

Islamic rulers; it was not started by them and what appears to be Islamic architecture is simply the effect of an outer facade that was built around an existing Hindu minaret. To quote:

In 1199 A.D. . . . Muslims were too insecure to conceive, plan and execute a tower, the like of which the world has not seen. . . . To believe that the murdering, looting, slave monarchs—each conspiring against all—could have planned and executed it in the course of six years (1193–1199) is just not possible. Indeed there are quite a few inscriptions, which have been maliciously defaced beyond legibility. These are unintelligible. It only stands to reason that these inscriptions gave the name of its pre-Muslim builder, the details of his victory and the date of its commencement.<sup>54</sup>

Arguments maintaining that the Qutb Minar was originally a Hindu structure that was converted via violence into an Islamic monument mirror the prevalent belief that the Muslims of modern India were also a result of forced conversions and that the original kernel of Indian citizenry—whether outwardly Christian or Muslim—continues to be Hindu. The recovery of this authentic inner Hindu core (whether of the human body or the cultural artifact) is central to the political and cultural project of Hindutva.<sup>55</sup> This can be detected in a speech given by Atal Behari Vajpayee in 1961, titled, “We are not One Because we are Citizens of the Same State, but it is Because we are One that India is One State.”<sup>56</sup> At the time, Vajpayee was a young Turk of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), the cultural wing of the Hindu Mahasabha. A few decades later, he would become Prime Minister of India and was in power during the 2002 pogrom against Muslims in the western state of Gujarat.

In his 1961 speech, a young Vajpayee argued for a pan-Indian identity rooted in a common Hindu past. To support this thesis he claimed that the Muslims and Christians of India were in fact an original Hindu community who had been “forcibly converted” to other religions. Although these “converts” considered themselves Muslims or Christians, the core of their original identity remained essentially Hindu. In other words, modern Muslim and Christian religious identities were simply an outer, superficial layer that concealed a Hindu autochthon. In his own words, “The Muslims and Christians did not come from outside India. Their ancestors were Hindus. By changing religion one does not change one’s nationality or culture.”<sup>57</sup> Vajpayee further asserted that the “minority” communities of India, specifically the Muslims and the Christians, had deliberately cut themselves off from a common national identity “and [from the] traditions, mores and manners, which bind the people here to this land itself. So much so, that they refused to accept Rama and Krishna [Hindu deities] as their ancestors and kept themselves aloof from the traditional festivals.”<sup>58</sup> In order to bring the minority populations back into the fold of a unified Indian community, Vajpayee argued that Indian history must not be taught as distinct “Hindu, Muslim and British periods,” but rather in a manner that stressed the cultural continuity of the nation from the ancient past to the contemporary present.

While the rejection of history divided along these periods may be seen as a critique of the colonial framing of Indian history, Vajpayee was more perturbed that the periodization of India’s past had allowed Muslims to take pride in the “vandalism” of Islamic rulers such as Mahmud of Ghazni, Mohammad Ghori, and Aurangzeb.<sup>59</sup> He claimed that to emphasize the

roles of these historical figures in Indian history was to misrepresent the Indian Muslim of today who deserved the nation's "sympathy and consideration for having become a victim of history while the rest of society looked on helplessly." Elements of Vajpayee's speech resonated with the "Holy Bharat" essay on the Qutb Minar, which argued that the original Hindu structure had been "defaced" by a later Islamic veneer. More importantly, it echoed the idea that the advent of Islam in India was marked by the violent conversion of autochthonous Hindu bodies as well as Hindu monuments. Whether it was the recovery of the Muslim body or the body of the Qutb Minar as essentially Hindu, the trope of forcible conversion allowed for Hindutva agents to recalibrate the historical core of modern India as Hindu.

Sites like the Babri Masjid, Somanatha, and the Qutb complex acquired increased visibility as well as purchase as the ideological program of Hindutva gained momentum in the late twentieth century. It can be broadly argued that all three sites conform to the grand narratives of Islamic iconoclasm and the destruction of Hindu heritage as representative of Islamic wrath against an indigenous Hindu population. More precisely the similarity between the three cases presented here lies in the progression of history offered by them: the past as defined by the destruction of Hindu spaces by Muslims; the present as defined by the urgency of corrective action by which these spaces might be recovered; which in turn offers the seduction of a future India where Hinduism regains an uncontested and triumphant position. The demands made by the Hindu right regarding these spaces, thus seek to overturn the secularism of India and to do so by bringing attention to those sites and monuments that represent Hindu-Muslim antagonism. A fundamental objective of Hindutva ideology is to reinscribe the national geography of India as a Hindu homeland. By either destroying the body of the Islamic monument or by fundamentally destroying its dominant set of symbolic meanings, Hindutva thus commits a modern version of iconoclasm as well.

There is, however, a crucial difference between the Hindutva appropriation of the Qutb complex and that of the temple at Somanatha and the Babri Masjid. While the historic quotient of the Babri Masjid was never in question and it was protected by the ASI, it could not claim status as a "national" monument of any regard. Indeed, the Babri Masjid entered into the collective imagination of the nation-state most forcefully precisely at the moment of its attempted destruction. The televisual spectacle of frenzied Hindutva supporters clambering up the dome of the mosque to plant a saffron flag (a Hindu symbol) on its finial, has since been read as encompassing both the crises of secularism in postcolonial India as well as the audacious assertion of Hindutva politics in the public domain.<sup>60</sup> While the Somanatha temple received a lot of attention at certain moments in the colonial as well as postcolonial period, it too had mediocre impact as a monument of national significance until the *rath-yatra* of 1990. Thus, with the Babri Masjid as well as Somanatha, Hindutva mobilization has urged either the total erasure or destruction of these structures and their replacement with Hindu architecture. In the case of the Babri Masjid, a contemporary iconoclasm was seen as the legitimate response to medieval iconoclasm, while as mentioned before in the case of the Somanatha the existing ruins of the temple were cleared away in order to erase what were seen as signs of Hindu weakness in the past.

In the case of the Qutb complex, however, the rhetoric of contemporary reclamation trumps that of destruction. The Hindutva project at the Qutb complex focuses on appropriating or renaming the site as a temple rather than a mosque, or a Hindu victory tower as

opposed to Islamic minaret. Indeed, the one other monument that Hindutva agents have claimed to recover as Hindu has been the Taj Mahal, which they claim has been misidentified as an Islamic mausoleum. Like the Hindu reclaimings of the Qutb Minar in popular “revisionist” histories, claims to the Taj Mahal are also most vociferously made in the books authored by Hindutva advocates such as P. N. Oak as well as in media forums such as blogs and electronic news magazines.<sup>61</sup> While the Taj Mahal may be better known than the Qutb Minar, it appears that the Hindutva reclamation of both monuments is one based on a symbolic recovery rather than physical destruction.

The difference between the Hindutva appropriation of the Quwwat-ul-Islam as a Hindu temple and the Qutb Minar as a Hindu victory tower, also brings to mind Sunil Kumar’s submission that the former monument evokes the specter of Islamic domination and Hindu subjugation; whereas the latter monument evokes awe from its spectator.<sup>62</sup> The eagerness of Hindutva proponents to appropriate the Qutb Minar as a Hindu monument, while wanting to convert the Quwwat-ul-Islam into a Hindu temple emerges from two fundamentally opposite framings of the monuments. Unlike in the case of Somanatha and the Babri Masjid the body of the Qutb Minar (its iconicity) in particular is left intact and unviolated. What is attacked and recalibrated is its Islamic symbolism. What is also left intact in Hindutva reclaimations of the Qutb Minar is its legibility as a national icon. The recovery of the Qutb Minar as a Hindu object might be understood as an epistemic iconoclasm—a deliberate erasure of its Islamic past—a violence that nonetheless does not challenge its sturdy position as an icon of national status.

## **World Heritage Monument or Congregational Mosque?**

In 1993 the Qutb complex was nominated as a World Heritage Monument. The elevation of the Qutb complex’s importance to global levels and its increased value as a tourist destination coincided with claims by Delhi’s Muslims who wished to use the mosque for daily religious congregation and prayer. This section looks at the late twentieth-century history of the Qutb complex as it was recast by new archival framings such as a site of universal patrimony and a parallel process whereby its religious function was reactivated. The fraught contestations over the Qutb complex beg a comparison to the Sultan Garhi—another medieval monument in Delhi also rebuilt from fragments of Hindu and Jain structures. Despite the similarity between the two monuments, however, the Sultan Garhi has not been subject to the same reclamations that the Qutb complex has. By the late twentieth century then, the iconic position of the Qutb complex was recalibrated again by international mandates of preservation and the confessional needs of Delhi’s Muslims.

### **The Qutb Complex as Universal Heritage**

The current description of the the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites describes it as a twelfth-century structure built out of “materials reused from some 20 Brahman temples.”<sup>63</sup> It later replaces the term “Brahman” with “Hindu” and “Jain,”

and also remarks that the mosque and the Qutb Minar together represent a fine example of Indo-Islamic architecture. In 1992 when India presented its World Heritage nomination for the Qutb complex it justified its choice thus:

The rust-free Iron Pillar is standing testimony to the metallurgical skill of the *ancient Indians*, while the Quwwatu'l-Islam mosque is the earliest *extant mosque* in northern India. Qutb Minar is the most unique monument of the ensemble—an *architecturally eloquent*, visually arresting, and well-preserved lofty minaret.<sup>64</sup> [emphasis added]

Arguing that the Qutb complex needed to be preserved in its entirety, the Indian committee to UNESCO articulated the unique aspects of the site as discrete elements with specific import within the larger compound. The Iron Pillar was described as a technological achievement of ancient Indians (reinforcing India as a historical and ancient nation), while the value of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque focused mainly on its religious import, since it is one of the earliest mosques still extant in India. The Qutb Minar's value, meanwhile, pertained to its architectural beauty.

If the continuities between the late twentieth-century globalization of preservation and the earlier stages of colonial as well as national preservation are apparent (such as the parsing of a single monument into its distinct parts), it is also interesting to note the differences between them. For instance, while the Indian petition to consider the Qutb complex for World Heritage Site status, notes that the complex was built “using the demolished remains of Hindu temples”; unlike colonial histories it does not speculate on either the agent or the circumstances that might have led to such destruction. The colonial dichotomy between Hindu and Muslim is now replaced with a dichotomy of Indian and Islamic, with the former representative of a national or precolonial state identity, while the latter signifies a purely religious affiliation. The final UNESCO nomination stressed the “national” as well as the “religious” importance of the Qutb complex equally and somewhat indistinguishably from one another as the site was nominated under Criterion IV of the UNESCO charter of World Heritage Sites. It was described thus: “The religious and funerary buildings in the Qutb Minar complex represent an outstanding example of the architectural and artistic achievements of early Islamic India.”<sup>65</sup> Here “Islam” is a term that further qualifies India but in keeping with the secular rhetoric of the ASI and the nation-state at large, it is possible to include both terms in the articulation of the Qutb complex's importance.

The global recognition of the Qutb complex as a World Heritage Site was contemporaneous with India's economic liberalization program, which began in 1991. Among the many dramatic changes brought about by substantial economic deregulation was an increase in international and domestic tourism. The same period was also, however, marked by the rise of a chauvinist Hindu nationalism; the vandalism of heritage sites such as the Babri Masjid; and the renaming of India's major metropolises, for example Bombay in a Hindu vernacular to Mumbai. The timing of Qutb Complex's UNESCO nomination appears to be tied to the protective mantle offered by the 1964 Venice Charter of preservation which was created in reaction to the destruction of heritage due to ethnic, national, and cultural conflict, especially during the two World Wars. In 1972 UNESCO established policies to ensure the

protection of cultural properties around the world through the World Heritage Convention by declaring certain sites as the collective patrimony of all mankind and therefore deserving worldwide attention as well as universal safeguarding.

In her study of the relocation of the temples at Abu Simbel, Lucia Allais has shown that the universal rhetoric of “saving” the ancient temples was deeply imbricated within Egypt’s triumphant posture as an independent republic that had forged political alliances with other non-aligned nations. In other words, the act of relocating the Abu Simbel temples to protect it as global patrimony was inevitably shaped by national and regional politics.<sup>66</sup> Similarly, the universal recognition of the Qutb Complex as a World Heritage Monument cannot be seen outside of the contemporary political climate of India in the late twentieth century. The nomination of the Qutb complex came at a crucial moment when India’s secularism was profoundly threatened and heritage monuments such as the Babri Masjid were falling prey to revanchist religiosities. The World Heritage nomination may, therefore, have been a way to insulate the Qutb Minar against similar physical destruction, by codifying it as universal rather than simply national heritage. Indeed, between 1992 (marked by the vandalism of the Babri Masjid) and 2004 (the date that the BJP-led government was replaced by the Congress-led government in India)<sup>67</sup> only two Islamic monuments—the Qutb complex and Humayun’s Tomb—received World Heritage status and both were in the nation’s capital, Delhi.<sup>68</sup>

## From Monument to Mosque

The identification of the Qutb complex as a World Heritage Site came alongside increasing demands from Delhi’s Muslims that historic mosques be made accessible for prayer and congregation. When the ASI took custody of the Qutb complex in the late nineteenth century, it was rarely used as a mosque and had no congregation to speak of. After the end of the Mughal Empire and the beginning of the British Empire, the Qutb complex was codified as a monument of architectural and historical import rather than a religious space. The last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, had provided a measure of publicity to the Qutb Minar and its surroundings; however, this was due to its proximity to the *dargah* of the Sufi saint Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki rather than the congregational use of the mosque itself.

After independence as well, the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque was at a distance from the new housing and commercial developments of post-Partition New Delhi and its importance as an archaeological site continued to outweigh its religious utility as a mosque. For example, in 1962, a Muslim lawyer by the name of Ahmad Buksh wrote a letter of complaint to the ASI about tourists entering the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque wearing shoes. He asked that the ASI put a stop to the practice as Indian Muslims held the mosque in high regard and would no doubt be offended by it. The ASI responded that the Quwwat-ul-Islam was not a “living” mosque anymore, as it had ceased to be used for reasons of worship and was mostly in ruins. Therefore the enforcement of rules regarding footwear in its precincts was meaningless and could not be carried out.<sup>69</sup>

The decades following decolonization were marked by the creation of several housing projects for refugees and emigrés from Pakistan and the exponential growth of an urban population that continually stretched the city limits further south of New Delhi. By the



**FIG. 5.10.** Samuel Bourne, “View of a Colonnade, Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque Complex, Delhi” (PH 1982. 0432.056, Canadian Centre for Architecture).

mid-1970s, the growing Muslim community of Delhi began to assert its confessional right to enter and pray in several historic mosques of the city that were also ASI protected sites. At the time, historic mosques were governed by rules such as the payment of entrance fees and opening times that did not always accord with Islamic observance. For example, while the protected monuments opened at sunrise allowing Muslims to gather for the first prayer of the day, closing promptly at sundown often did not allow them to complete the mandated final prayer. The Muslims of Delhi also saw the imposition of the entrance fees to these sites as unfair to their religious needs. In the early 1990s, hundreds of Indian Muslims took to the streets of Delhi claiming their rights to pray in historic mosques when needed and to do so without having to pay entrance fees. When their demands were ignored, Muslims sometimes forced their way into ASI-protected monuments, which led to skirmishes between them and ASI officials.<sup>70</sup> Many historic mosques, such as those at Safdarjung’s tomb and at the Kotla Firoz Shah, have since been opened for worship, and a small group of Muslims continues to gather for their daily first prayer at the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque. Yet there has been little change in ASI’s publicly advertised policy regarding these monuments. The rules and regulations posted by the ASI at the entrances to all historic monuments do not acknowledge in any form that they may also be religious spaces of worship. Public notices do not advise whether or not Muslim visitors are subject to the standard entrance fee,

although the ASI has agreed that it will not charge practicing Muslims entering mosques during prayer time.<sup>71</sup>

In other words, the ASI remains ambivalent about its position on the religious value of the monuments, making religious congregation an informal activity that takes place outside the building's primary definition as a historic monument. Equally, the ASI's lack of clearly defined policy regarding the religious function of structures such as the Quwwat-ul-Islam has opened a space in which the members of the Hindu right can assert their own right to pray in mosques constructed with *spolia* from Hindu temples. Indeed, during the protests of November 2000, the agitators demanded the right to worship in the Quwwat-ul-Islam on the grounds that the Muslim community had been allowed to do the same. While not suggesting a causal connection between the stance of the ASI and the protests by Hindu nationalists, it bears emphasizing that the postcolonial construction of the Qutb complex as an icon of secular India as well as universal value (as defined by UNESCO) has evolved alongside equally emphatic reclaimings by Hindu and Islamic constituencies alike.

### The Case of Sultan Garhi

Located less than five miles from the Qutb complex is another medieval monument also protected by the ASI. Built by the Sultanate ruler Shams-ud-din Iltutmish as a funerary complex for his son Nasir-ud-din Mahmud between 1231–32, the complex contains a modest mosque in addition to numerous graves. Like the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque, Sultan Ghari clearly shows that it was built with the fragments of non-Islamic structures. Fragments in the Sultan Ghari show figural ornamentation, such as sculptured animal forms, alongside rich Islamic calligraphic detail. Yet to describe the Sultan Ghari and its construction is to acknowledge that the monument is a hasty arrangement of pieces reused from various other structures and crowned by a corbelled dome. Unlike the Quwwat-ul-Islam complex, in which the *spolia* have been arranged in a systematic and easily readable whole, the fluted columns in the courtyard of the Sultan Ghari clash with its conical dome, and its irregular marble facing indicates an architectural composition quite contrary to the delicate framing and aesthetic harmony that is so apparent in the Qutb complex. While the *mihrab* of the Sultan Ghari mosque is richly carved with Islamic calligraphy, the marble cladding elsewhere in the monument clashes heavily with courses of crude bricks. Simply put, Sultan Ghari fails to impress the common visitor on precisely the same counts that the Qutb complex succeeds: scale, symmetry, articulation of detail, technological achievement, and the evidence of continuous building activity around it for several centuries following its origins.

The twentieth-century life of Sultan Ghari has been marked by a couple of incidents of defacements and iconoclasms. In 1925 several tombs and graves at Sultan Garhi were desecrated. The ASI found that the four unmarked graves (two of men, one of a woman, and another of a child) in the subterranean tomb chamber were all vandalized, but the culprits were never identified. The desecration greatly angered the community living around the monument who venerated the tombs of Sufi saints located nearby. The ASI duly reconstructed the tombs the same year.<sup>72</sup> In her essay on the impact of the subcontinent's partition on India's cultural property Nayanjot Lahiri has brought attention to the violent



FIG. 5.11. Delhi: Sultan Garhi's Tomb (Delhi, vol. 4, 947/ 63, ASI Photo Archive).

defacement of several Indo-Islamic monuments, including the Sultan Ghari, in Delhi. She notes that in 1947 numerous graves outside of the walled enclosure of Sultan Ghari were defaced and the four main graves within the crypt (the same ones that had been rebuilt by the ASI in 1925) had been demolished. In addition those responsible for the monument's defacement had intended to convert Sultan Ghari into a Hindu temple by installing an idol of a Hindu deity there. However, the authorities stepped in and closed off access to the monument before this could occur.<sup>73</sup>

Although Sultan Ghari was declared an ancient monument early on by the ASI and continues to be a protected monument, today the structure languishes under an overgrowth of weeds and brambles that obscure the path leading up to it.<sup>74</sup> It receives few visitors except for the committed archaeologist, student of history, or a visitor from the local community that continues to worship the tombs there. Curiously, even as the Hindutva reclamation of the Qutb complex has become more shrill since the 1990s, Hindu nationalists have paid little attention to the Sultan Ghari in the contemporary moment. Its violent defacements in 1925 and 1947, notwithstanding, there has been little effort to recoup the latter monument as a site of Hindu history or trauma. Why has a monument, so similar in makeup to the Qutb complex, languished unnoticed while the latter has come to occupy a central position in the Hindutva imagination of the nation's past? I argue that it is precisely the position of the Qutb complex as a national symbol that makes it susceptible to this type of communal contestation. The nature of the protest that took place outside the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque in November 2000 makes clear that the reclaiming of the Qutb Minar as an essentially Hindu monument was also the appropriation of an Indian national icon as essentially Hindu. In



**FIG. 5.12.** Charles Shepherd, “View Inside the Tomb of Iltutmish, Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque Complex, Delhi” (PH 1983.0094.023, Collection Centre Canadien d’Architecture/ Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal).

other words, the reclamation of the Qutb complex has more to do with the modern lives of both monuments than with their medieval origins.

The Sultan Garhi and the Qutb complex were both classified in the colonial and later national archive of heritage as Class I(a) monuments, yet they do not occupy an equal position within that archive. As we have seen the Qutb complex was not only documented within the colony as an example of Indian antiquity, but also reproduced and displayed at the heart

of empire. This process was further calcified in the postcolonial period where nationalist imagery (of both the secular nation as well as resurgent Hindu nationalism) appropriated the monument as essential to the conceptualization of India's past. Institutionalized preservation as well as parallel ideologies (like Hindutva) turned the Qutb complex from a monument into an icon. This was substantially less so for monuments such as Sultan Garhi, the importance of which was limited to local veneration or the bureaucracy of preservation.

Equally, the construction of India's heritage archive was also accompanied by the sedimentation of affect around certain structures such as the Qutb complex. From Cunningham's assertions of Islamic iconoclasm, to the appearance of the Qutb Minar on the first national stamps in 1948, to recent protests outside the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque in 2000, the Qutb complex has become an affective geography of violence, trauma, and patriotic duty. Once again the same cannot be said for Sultan Garhi, which has been immune from these larger emotive cathexes of revivalist movements as well as nationalist longings. While the defacement of the graves at Sultan Garhi in 1925 and 1947 cannot be disregarded, they were also symptomatic of a more regional and localized politics of vandalism precipitated by ethnic frictions. As such they differ significantly from the more ambitious nationalist politics at play in the bids to recast the Quwwat-ul-Islam as a Hindu temple and to reclaim the Qutb Minar as a Hindu structure. In other words, although the Sultan Garhi and the Qutb complex occupy a similar place within the archive of India's heritage; the affective charge that has accrued around each monument is dramatically different.

## Iconoclasm and a Revanchist Monument

Thus we can define an *iconoclasm* as what happens where is uncertainty about the exact role of the hand at work in the production of a mediator. Is it a hand with a hammer ready to expose, to denounce, to debunk, to show up, to disappoint, to disenchant, to dispel one's illusions, to let the air out? Or is it, on the contrary, a cautious and careful hand, palm turned as if to catch, to elicit, to educe, to welcome, to generate, to entertain, to maintain, to collect truth and sanctity?<sup>75</sup>

To return to the concept of iconoclasm as defined by Bruno Latour and position the modern case of the Qutb complex as an example of it; if the medieval origins of this monument have been mired in a debate regarding the iconoclasm of Islamic rulers against Hindu material culture, I argue that the colonial and postcolonial histories of the Qutb complex can be better understood as an example of iconoclasm. The efforts of ASI officials and police trying to keep Hindutva protestors from entering the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque and reclaiming it as a Hindu temple parallels that of Italian firemen breaking down the glass case that protects the Shroud of Turin in order to save it from the fire. As with the latter case, it is impossible to know if the actions of the VHP protestors who wished to revere the site of the Qutb complex via Hindu religious ceremonies would in fact destroy its present integrity completely. A recouping such as the one attempted by the Hindutva followers of using the mosque as a site of ritual worship and the "activation" of the Hindu idols would fundamentally invalidate

it as a site of Islamic religious congregation and worship. But the struggle of the police and the ASI officials to protect the Qutb complex from a Hindu reclamation, also denotes the frenzy to maintain the site as an icon of secular India—the sturdiness of which notion would also be irrevocably shaken should the *dev-mukti yagna* be allowed to take place. To repeat Latour's words then, the Qutb complex represents iconoclasm because "one does not know, one hesitates, one is troubled by an action for which there is no way to know, without further inquiry, whether it is destructive or constructive."<sup>76</sup>

The construction of the Qutb was profoundly inflected by the ideological positions of the colonial as well as national state, and later by the mandate of global institutions such as UNESCO. Colonial archaeologists brought their own prejudicial interpretations of Islamic iconoclasm and the irreconcilable clash between Hindu and Islamic cultural systems to the classification and representation of the Qutb complex. In postcolonial India, the Qutb complex has been feted as a symbol of the secular nation-state, the liberal nature of which is seen as being capacious enough to accommodate, perhaps even defuse, the affect of iconoclastic violence from the past. Similarly the iconicity of the Qutb complex as a site of global heritage defined by universal principles of valuation betrays similar assumptions regarding the objectivity by which the monument was chosen to be a World Heritage Site. In its modern life the Qutb complex thus endures as both an object of iconophilia as well as subject of iconoclasm. It also continues to oscillate between an economy of archival knowledge as well as an economy of affective charges.

A month after the November 2000 protests, and after the arrested agitators had been released on bail, the VHP issued a final ultimatum to the ASI. They demanded once again that they be allowed into the mosque to conduct prayers and complete the *dev-mukti yagna*, and recited the fact that twenty-seven Hindu and Jain temples had been destroyed and their debris utilized in the building of the Quwwat-ul-Islam. The VHP gave the ASI until the end of January 2001 to agree to their conditions and finally threatened to organize a nation-wide protest if their demands were not met.<sup>77</sup> Although the VHP's threat was not carried out, this final gauntlet illuminates the intricate nature of the *iconoclasm* of the Qutb complex: bringing together colonial knowledge; institutional authority; the affect of violence; the memorialization of perceived historic trauma; and the fragile nature of secularism in contemporary India. At the center of these colliding vectors is the monument with its surplus of meanings. The Qutb complex continues to stand today, receiving thousands of visitors and enduring as a symbol of India's rich heritage. Its enduring physical sturdiness, however, belies its symbolic and iconic slipperiness; the crises of meanings that has continually enveloped its modern life; and its precarious medieval history which serves as the engine for modern iconoclasm.



## Making New Monuments

When and why does a building become a monument? Who authors its history and accords it a place in the archive of a nation, city, or peoples? Why do some monuments embed themselves so firmly within the collective consciousness of communities, becoming the stuff of urban legends, nostalgic yearnings, or revanchist fantasies, while others languish unnoticed despite their important histories? What kind of historical lexicon must we imagine to accommodate the many voices, bodies, tempers, and desires that continually make and remake the monument? In what language must we write and dream to fully capture the numinous histories of a single monument? This book has presented a critical reckoning with these questions by arguing that architectural monuments are made in the space between archive and affect, the one hardly distinguishable from the other.

The corpus of Delhi's monuments, meanwhile, continues to expand dynamically, absorbing more objects into its heritage archive and making room for new affects. A heritage map shows the city's body studded with a surfeit of monuments with little room for more additions. (See Plate 10 for a reinterpretation of an ASI heritage map of Delhi.) Yet, new monuments continue to appear, staking specific claims to Delhi's vibrant past. In 2000 the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) began construction of a new public park in the South Delhi neighborhood of Saket. The park was demarcated by ruined walls, which the ASI had protected for some time as remnants of various medieval structures built between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. Over time and with the continuous expansion of Delhi, these ruins were threatened by encroachment due to their proximity to the Press Enclave Road and from squatters who had built their shanties against the medieval walls. It stood to reason that the DDA and the ASI were now creating the public park so that they could better protect the monumental walls. It became clear quickly, however, that a more creative interpretation of the site was at hand. At the center of the public park was a small museum and information center topped with a large equestrian statue of Prithviraj Chauhan (also known as Rai Pithora)—the last Hindu ruler of Delhi who was ousted by Sultanate kings in the twelfth century. Due to its large size the statue could be seen from a considerable distance and presented an impressive silhouette in the skyline of the area. The representation of Prithviraj Chauhan, poised with bow and arrow astride a rearing horse, mimicked the style of other statues of Hindu rulers, such as Shivaji and Rani Jhansibai that starting in the 1990s, have become common urban fixtures in Bombay and Agra.



FIG. C.1. Qila Rai Pithora Museum and Park, New Delhi, 2005. Photo by author.

The Qila Rai Pithora Park was the brainchild of Jagmohan, the Minister of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation, who presented a motion in the Lok Sabha (Lower House of the Indian Parliament) in December 2000, seeking permission to build a commemorative monument to the last Hindu king of Delhi. Prithviraj Chauhan built the twelfth-century fort of Qila Rai Pithora and possibly also the temples that provided the fragments for the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque. His defeat at the hands of Delhi's first Muslim rulers inaugurated several centuries of Islamic rule over the subcontinent. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Hindutva narratives of Indian history have reclaimed figures such as Prithviraj Chauhan and Shivaji (a seventeenth-century ruler of the Deccan) as proto-nationalist Hindu heroes who defied and defended Islamic armies to their death.<sup>1</sup> Such representations of medieval Hindu kings carry within them overt connotations of courage, honor, and nobility, and stand in contrast to their Islamic counterparts motivated by greed or religious dogma.

Minister Jagmohan—a member of the BJP, the political party which was then in power and allied with the broader Hindutva cause—envisioned the monument as having a didactic role in that it would broadcast the importance of Prithviraj Chauhan to the citizens of Delhi as well as the rest of India. The ramparts that Jagmohan identified as the structural remnants of Qila Rai Pithora, were in fact rebuilt by Sultanate rulers (like Ala-ud-din Khilji), who added to, or built on top of the structures they found as part of their conquest of the region.<sup>2</sup> When Jagmohan proposed this project, the extant ramparts of Qila Rai Pithora had been under the care of the ASI for well over seventy years, and Jagmohan's project to rebuild and reuse the walls was seen as vandalism of a protected heritage site. As such, the ASI initially opposed the project and deemed it an encroachment upon protected land as



**FIG. C.2.** Qila Rai Pithora Museum and Park, New Delhi, 2005.  
Photo by author.

well as monuments.<sup>3</sup> Eventually, however, the DDA prevailed and the ground for the park was broken in 2000.<sup>4</sup> On the floor of the Lok Sabha, Jagmohan justified the building of the Qila Rai Pithora Park and Museum thus:

I wish to make it clear that the Government attach great importance to the project and development of Qila Rai Pithora complex, which was conceived by it in November, 1999. It was inaugurated by Union Home Minister, Shri L.K. Advani.

Located at the most strategic part on the Aravali range at the entrance to Delhi, the Qila was witness to many ups and downs of the history of India. It was built with thick rubble stone and was also known as ‘Lal Kot,’ which, in fact, is the first city of Delhi.

Qila Rai Pithora/ Lal Kot constitutes an inspiring saga of our past. Here, history speaks through bricks and battered stones; heritage stares in our eyes through heavy but broken and sunken walls; and herein can also be heard the voices emanating from our past omissions, when we did not fully remember that if we were not cohesive and concerned, then things could go wrong, despite the great and glorious strands of our culture and civilisation.

The project has two basic objectives in view. First, to preserve, protect and strengthen our architectural and cultural legacy. Secondly, to weave history and heritage in the new urban fabric that is being presently spun in Delhi and to develop a large park around the Qila Rai Pithora/ Lal Kot

complex and create a glorious backdrop of Rajput style of garden that it deserves. It would attract *lakhs* [hundreds of thousands] of people from all over the country, particularly the youth and acquaint them with the great acts of valor of our leaders.

An equestrian statue of Samrat [King] Prithviraj Chauhan, 18 feet high, mounted on a four feet high pedestal, is being set up at the terrace of the Conservation Centre, which is a part of the overall development of the complex. This complex would also serve as a vast area of community green for a large population of low and middle-income group living in the neighborhood.<sup>5</sup>

The Qila Rai Pithora Park and Museum was completed in 2010 and is now used regularly by neighborhood residents, picnickers, and joggers. Despite the ASI's initial protest of the repurposing of the site and the medieval ruins in such a dramatic manner, the park now resembles other ASI protected sites in the city. Informational plaques made of red sandstone carry maps of the original Qila Rai Pithora and point out the main historic monuments within and around the complex. The medieval ruins that were once identified as being a mix of pre-Islamic, Sultanate, and Tughlaq are now labeled exclusively as Delhi's Hindu heritage.

The aggressive reclamation of ruined walls as the remnants of an ancient Hindu empire in the twenty-first century echoes many of the modern processes through which Delhi's monuments have been remade. First, the creation of the Qila Rai Pithora brings to mind the anxious longing to recover a Hindu heritage for Delhi and the fanciful appropriations of the city's monuments to reflect this imagined Hindu past. Second, it illustrates the continuing seduction of Delhi's imperial history and its mirroring in contemporary sovereignties. In other words, the Qila Rai Pithora forges connections between a glorious medieval Hindu empire and the contemporary Hindu nation, in much the same way that the British Empire inserted itself into a monumental genealogy of Hindu and Islamic imperial capitals. Third, it brings into relief the supreme mutability of the monument itself and its truly vexed relationship to histories—histories of the past and present, as well as imagined histories of the future. Like the other monuments explored in this book, the Qila Rai Pithora Park is constructed at the intersection of nostalgias for an irretrievable Hindu past, the contemporary rejection of India's secular mandate, and the projection of a future nation that is a Hindu homeland.

By tracing the complex lives of five historic monuments in Delhi, I have shown that the archives created by the state and its *archons* that allegedly exist in the rarefied realm of documents and bureaucracies, fact and objectivity are rarely separate from affects that thrive in the space of unpredictability, sentiment, emotions, and memories. Indeed, the chapters in this book have shown that these two modalities are far from distinct and frequently bleed into and shape one another—the declarative order of the archive proving an effective foil for the affective prejudices buried within it; and the urgency of affect often catalyzing archival histories and establishing them as sanctioned truths. The modern monument oscillates between these two, never made of simply one or the other, but rather always at the intersection of both. The histories of the five monuments presented here also prove that if the archive encompasses both objective knowledge and prejudicial opinion and various positions in between, affect can range from the truly celebratory to the potentially terrorizing. Speaking

in the context of affect in urban spaces, Nigel Thrift has argued that affective practice is not always “nice and cuddly” and is often used to further terrifying political agendas.<sup>6</sup> Thus, while the affect of revolt in the Jama Masjid posed the potential to overthrow colonial domination; the affect of iconoclasm in the Qutb complex carried with it the possibility of further marginalizing Delhi’s Muslim community. Similarly the recent Qila Rai Pithora Park and Museum asserts the affective charge of a militaristic Hindu identity seeking to avenge past Islamic domination, even as it reinvents the archival definition of the medieval ruins around it.

The broader disciplinary agenda of this book has been to demonstrate that the histories of monuments are never fixed, and to argue that this axiom of monument’s histories as static and unchanging is yet another fiction of modernity that needs to be dismantled. Indeed, the nineteenth-century project of preservation—conceived in the European milieu and imported to the colonies—was a regulatory, even disciplinary, mode of containing monuments and their ability to generate surplus histories and uses. As the past itself was lost to the contemporary observer and could never be retrieved, it was incumbent upon the monument to remain a sacred and immutable relic of that past. Preservation was thus a way to contain the history and interpretation of the monument within parameters of meaning and use. Yet modernity’s attempt at fixing the monument within temporal and symbolic parameters was repeatedly thwarted by its serial mutation and transformation through unexpected uses and alternative histories.

With its focus on monuments in Delhi, this book also begs a critical reconsideration of the bureaucracy of preservation in India; its origins in the colonial moment; its institutionalization and implementation via European ideals and experts; and in the legacy of partitioned heritage in the postcolonial nation-state. The five chapters bring to light the various ways in which the classification of monuments and their regulation, which began in colonial India, survive through to the postcolonial present and do so with daunting authority. The taxonomies, classification, and assumptions underlying the colonial selection of monuments have thus survived unchallenged into the present. More problematically the colonial affects buried in the archive, such as the framing of Islamic iconoclasm and the history of Delhi as an unbroken genealogy of empires, have found new purchase in revanchist nationalisms in contemporary India.

The three main threads that run through this book—the making of monuments between affect and archive; the uncanny agility of monuments to shape-shift in terms of their symbolism, history, and uses; and the continuing specter of colonial frames of heritage in postcolonial India—can be illustrated by a final example, that is the 2011 nomination of New Delhi as a protected monument. One hundred years after King George V proclaimed his intent to build a new capital city for British India, independent India designated Edwin Lutyens’s and Herbert Baker’s New Delhi, a protected heritage zone. Supporters of the nomination argued that it would finally ensure the integrity of Lutyens’s master plan and save the city from further erosion due to new urban developments. Meanwhile, critics of the decision pointed out that New Delhi was barely eighty years old (as it was only inaugurated in 1931) and that several other monuments, more historic than New Delhi, were in urgent need of preservation. The government’s decision came amid the remaking of Delhi to host the XIX Commonwealth Games in 2010 and the ongoing construction of its Metro Rail system. As part of New Delhi’s centennial commemoration, museums and cultural institutions also sought to revive the sense of majesty surrounding the 1911 proclamation through exhibitions of photography and other historic displays. The scale and pace of construction

in 2011 combined with a surge in imperial nostalgia to create conditions mirroring those that had attended the proclamation by King George V in 1911.

New Delhi's historic symbolism, however, has changed radically in the one hundred years since its inception. Originally built to express colonial power and as an administrative node for the British Indian Empire, New Delhi was repurposed as the seat of independent India in 1947. By 2011 its Indo-Saracenic architecture (intended to demonstrate continuity between India's Mughal past and colonial modernity) as well as the many bungalows that once housed colonial officials were clearly understood to be the heritage of a sovereign nation-state, thus aligning India's entry into modernity with the colonial project.<sup>7</sup>

Independent India's inheritance of the colonial capital of New Delhi in 1947 was far from seamless, however. Many elements of the imperial city had to be replaced, renamed, or assigned entirely new meanings following decolonization. For example, the India Gate, an archway built to memorialize the tens of thousands of Indians who fought in service of the British Empire, was repurposed to shelter a flame that now pays homage to Indian soldiers. A stylized canopy across from the India Gate, which once housed a statue of King George V, now stands empty as officials and political leaders debate whether a statue of Gandhi would be an appropriate successor to the British regent. The Viceroy's Palace is now the residence of the Indian President and Indian bureaucrats reside in bungalows originally meant to accommodate colonial officers.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the postcolonial repurposing of New Delhi from imperial center to the capital of an independent nation-state, its recent insertion into the archive of Indian heritage continues to perpetuate colonial myths and fictions. For example, the postcolonial celebration of New Delhi as a heritage zone privileges Lutyens and Baker as the city's primary authors, while the many Indian contractors, laborers, and engineers who contributed to building it, not to mention the hundreds of Indians who were displaced to make way for it, have been excised from its heritage narrative. The specter of colonialism thus continues to haunt, if not direct, representations of India's past, even in the contemporary moment.

The example of the 2011 preservation of New Delhi has been raised here less as a definitive endpoint to the debates regarding monuments raised by this book; but rather as another reminder of the slippery symbolism of the modern monument. Created by India's colonizers to memorialize particular imperial affects and to establish specific archival "truths" regarding England's place in the long genealogy of India's empires, New Delhi is now a national monument protected by the mandate of preservation. The five monuments in this book began their modern lives as part of a colonial taxonomy; were remade by various Indian and European agents for disparate ends; were absorbed into the national canon of heritage; and continue to occupy a particularly vexed position within the growing demands for a Hindu homeland. The affective and archival lives of the Red Fort, the Rasul Numa Dargah, the Jama Masjid, Purana Qila, and the Qutb complex are coterminous with their present and equally entangled in imaginaries of various futures. Now the Qila Rai Pithora and New Delhi have taken their place in the archive of Delhi's heritage. Like the other five monuments examined in this book their insertion into the heritage rubric has not been outside of contemporary anxieties and desires to lay claims to the past of the Delhi. Like the other five monuments in this book, they too will exist perpetually in the space made by archive and affect.

## Introduction

- 1 In this book I use the term “Delhi” for the compendium of several urban centers built between the eleventh and twentieth centuries, now collectively known as the National Capital Territory and which includes nine districts. New Delhi, built by the British government, is one of those nine districts and is surrounded by older as well as more recent urban developments.
- 2 See Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2002); Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
- 3 Sara Ahmed, “Affective Economies,” *Social Text* 79 (2004).
- 4 Sara Ahmed, “Happy Objects,” in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Siegworth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 29.
- 5 Nicholas Dirks, “Guiltless Spoliations: Picturesque Beauty, Colonial Knowledge, and Colin Mackenzie’s Survey of India,” in *Perceptions of South Asia’s Visual Past*, ed. Catherine B. Asher and Thomas R. Metcalfe (New Delhi: Oxford and IBH Publishing, 1994).
- 6 James Fergusson cited in *ibid.*, 215.
- 7 James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, vol. 2 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1899).
- 8 Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 7.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 129.
- 10 Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 1.
- 11 Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Siegworth, eds., *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).
- 12 Ahmed, “Affective Economies,” 129–30.
- 13 Purnima Mankekar, *Unsettling India: Affect, Temporality, Transnationality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).
- 14 Delhi Archives, CCO, Confidential, 1949, file no. 163/ 49-C.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 2.
- 16 The Nicholson statue was eventually removed from Delhi and sent to his native Ireland. The epitaph of the Mutiny Memorial was also revised to refer to the Indian “mutineers” as martyrs, and the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny changed to the First War of Indian Independence as some revisionist historians now refer to it.

- 17 For more on the history of preservation in India and the inception of the Archaeological Survey of India, see Dilip K. Chakrabarti, *A History of Indian Archaeology from the Beginning to 1947* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1988); Upinder Singh, *The Discovery of Ancient India: Early Archaeologists and the Beginnings of Archaeology* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004).
- 18 Curzon pointed out that, unlike India, the conservation of monuments in European nations was ensured by an educated population and wealthy patrons who brought publicity to endangered heritage and thus saved them from falling into ruin. Further, he claimed that Indian antiquities were often in inaccessible locales, vulnerable to the ravages of a tropical climate, quickly growing flora, and a “local and ignorant population” who were prone to mining building materials from existing monuments. OIOC, Mss Eur F 112 487, 4.
- 19 For more on the history of European looting in India, see Richard Davis, “Three Styles in Looting India,” *History and Anthropology* 6:4 (1994).
- 20 There is no doubt that British administrators in the late nineteenth century were well aware and possibly even embarrassed of the complicity of their colleagues in destroying some of India’s built heritage. Viceroy Curzon himself had called attention to the mischief of former British administrators in quarrying precious marbles and frescos from Indian monuments in his 1904 speech as he urged his contemporaries to take a more conservative approach toward India’s antiquities. George Nathaniel Curzon, *Lord Curzon in India: Being a Selection from His Speeches as Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1898–1905* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1906).
- 21 Maulvi Zafar Hasan, J. A. Page, and R. C. Agarwal, *Monuments of Delhi: Lasting Splendour of the Great Mughals and Others*, vols. 1–4 (New Delhi: Aryan, 1916–1922 [2008]).
- 22 Finbarr B. Flood, “Lost in Translation: Architecture, Taxonomy and the Eastern ‘Turks,’” *Muqarnas* 24 (2007).
- 23 S. M. Azizuddin Husain, *1857 Revisited: Based on Persian and Urdu Documents* (New Delhi: Kanishka, 2007).
- 24 The ASD understood its work as being of a scientific nature and as such carrying on the work of other contemporary “scientific institutions,” such as the Asiatic Society of Bengal, as well as the Society of Antiquaries in Britain. The resemblances between the ASD and the methods employed by the Society of Antiquaries of London are remarkable in that both were invested in identifying, dating, and arranging objects of material culture within a strict historical arc that stretched from antiquity to the present. In this schema, monuments entered into a larger compendium of artifacts such as coins, quotidian objects of domestic use, tools, texts, and inscriptions. In other words, architecture was evaluated along the same lines of historic value and import as an antique coin or ancient tool. For more on the practice and evolution of the Society of Antiquaries, see Society of Antiquaries, ed., *Making History: Antiquaries in Britain, 1707–2007* (London: Royal Academy of the Arts, 2007).
- 25 Syed Ahmad Khan, *Asar-us-Sanadid*, 1st ed. (Delhi: Matb’a Sayyid al-Akhbār, 1847).
- 26 C. M. Naim has rightly made the claim that by dedicating the first edition of the book to Thomas Metcalfe, Syed Ahmad may have been trying to gain his admiration and thereby facilitating his own membership to the ASD. Although Syed Ahmad was inducted into the society in 1852, Thomas Metcalfe never acknowledged the *Asar-us-Sanadid* and there seems to have been little regard for the immense research that Syed Ahmad carried out for the book. See C. M. Naim, “Syed Ahmad and His Two Books Called ‘Asar-al-Sanadid,’” *Modern Asian Studies* 45:3 (2011). See also, Christian W. Troll, “A Note on an Early Topographical Work of Sayyid Ahmad Khan: Āṣār al-Ṣanādīd,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, no. 2 (1972): 137–39.

- 27 The Qutb Minar was in fact started by Qutb-ud-din Aibak in the early thirteenth century; however, Syed Ahmad Khan dates its beginnings to the reign of Iltutmish a few decades later.
- 28 The Urdu term *sanadid* may be translated as princes, chiefs, lords, noblemen, calamities, misfortunes, dangers, great or formidable events. The term can, therefore, either refer to embodied personalities or dramatic events that merit historical attention. The term *asar* encompasses a broad range of meanings including footprints, vestiges, tracks, traces, marks, signs, tokens, remains, relics, monuments, or memorials, effects, impressions, indications of state or condition, promises, symptoms, sayings or traditions of Mohammad, and the origins or foundation (of a building). John T. Platts, *A Dictionary of Urdu, Classical Hindi and English* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960).
- 29 Maulvi Zafar Hasan, *List of Mohammadan and Hindu Monuments, Delhi Province*, vols. 1-4 (Calcutta: Government of India Press, 1916-22). Current reprints of the listing are found under Zafar Hasan et al., *Monuments of Delhi*.
- 30 Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 3.
- 31 Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995).
- 32 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 43.
- 33 NAI, ASI, 1964, file no. 13/5/1/64-M/ Monuments, vol. 1.
- 34 Ibid., 113.
- 35 NAI, ASI, 1964, file no. 13/5/1/64-M/ Monuments, vol. 2, n.p.
- 36 Ibid. The Hindi translation of the slogan was “*Pracheen smarak hamari dharohar hain. Inka samman karein—inhein surakshit rakhein*.” The slogans were printed in English as well as Hindi on posters, advertising materials and also on a special obliteration mark produced by the post office to mark the UNESCO Campaign.
- 37 NAI, Home, 1874, public/ progs. no. 18, November/ Part A, n.p.
- 38 A recent book that has commendably reinserted the “public” within histories of preservation in India is Santhi Kavuri-Bauer, *Monumental Matters: The Power, Subjectivity, and Space of India’s Mughal Architecture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011). Another valuable treatment of everyday tactics, public imagination, and subaltern voices in the urban arena can be found in Swati Chattopadhyay, *Unlearning the City: Infrastructure in a New Optical Field* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2012).
- 39 Hindu nationalism emerged in the early twentieth century when articulations of decolonization were combined with the project of defining India as a Hindu homeland. While the movement lost momentum following India’s independence in 1947 (largely due to the assassination of Gandhi by Nathuram Godse, an advocate of Hindu nationalism), by the 1980s it had recovered its place in mainstream politics. For a history of Hindu nationalism, see Thomas Blom Hansen, *Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).
- 40 For modern histories of preservation in the European and Western world, see Jukka Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2004). For preservation history in the United States, see Max Page and Randall Mason, *Giving Preservation a History: Histories of Historic Preservation in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Daniel Bluestone, *Buildings, Landscapes, and Memory: Case Studies in Historic Preservation* (New York: Norton, 2011). For a history of modern preservation in India, see Singh, *Discovery of Ancient India*; Thomas R. Trautmann and Carla M. Sinopoli, “In the Beginning Was the Word: Excavating

- the Relations between History and Archaeology in South Asia,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 45: 4 (2002); Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: A History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
- 41 Alois Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origins,” *Oppositions* 25 ([1903] 1982). Robert Nelson and Margaret Olin have noted that although Riegl’s policy was never actualized, his accompanying essay had a profound impact in the practice as well as discipline of historic preservation. See “Introduction” to *Monuments and Memory, Made and Unmade*, ed. Robert S. Nelson and Margaret Olin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).
- 42 Kevin D. Murphy, *Memory and Modernity: Viollet-le-Duc at Vézelay* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000).
- 43 Françoise Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
- 44 Ibid. A fine history of the rise of state-led preservation policies in Renaissance Europe can be found in David Karmon, *The Ruin of the Eternal City: Antiquity and Preservation in Renaissance Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- 45 Choay, *Invention of the Historic Monument*, 13.
- 46 The most passionate articulation of Ruskin’s negative reaction to the industrialization of arts and crafts can be found in John Ruskin, “The Opening of the Crystal Palace: Considered in Some of Its Relations to the Prospects of Art” (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1854).
- 47 Ruskin, “Opening of the Crystal Palace,” 18.
- 48 Diane Barthel, “Historic Preservation: A Comparative Analyses,” *Sociological Forum* 4: 1 (1989). The establishment of the National Trust in England was preceded by several informal bodies run by citizen’s groups, such as the Commons Preservation Society (established 1865) and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (established 1877). Even with the case of informal preservation bodies in England, though, India seems to have led the way with the Archaeological Society of Delhi established in 1847 and the ASI in 1861. The early experiments with institutionalized preservation in India echoes Anthony King’s submission regarding urban planning in the colonies, which he argues served as the “laboratories” for large-scale design schemes that would have been difficult to realize in the heart of empire due to the power of the public commons. See Anthony D. King, *Colonial Urban Development: Culture, Social Power and Environment* (London: Routledge, 1976).
- 49 David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
- 50 Daniel Bluestone, “Chicago’s Mecca Flat Blues,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 57: 4 (1998).
- 51 Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).
- 52 Max Page, *The Creative Destruction of New York 1900–1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).
- 53 Gwendolyn Wright, “Tradition in the Service of Modernity: Architecture and Urbanism in French Colonial Policy,” *Journal of Modern History* 59: 2 (1987); Paul Rabinow, *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989).
- 54 Medina Lasansky, *The Renaissance Perfected: Architecture, Spectacle, and Tourism in Fascist Italy* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004).
- 55 Nezar AlSayyad, Irene Bierman, and Nasser Rabat, eds., *Making Cairo Medieval* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2005).

- 56 Robert S. Nelson, *Hagia Sophia, 1850–1950: Holy Wisdom Modern Monument* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).
- 57 Romila Thapar, *Somanatha: The Many Voices of a History* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2004).
- 58 Deborah Cherry, *The Afterlives of Monuments* (London: Routledge, 2014).
- 59 Richard Davis, *Lives of Indian Images* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).
- 60 Finbarr B. Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval “Hindu-Muslim” Encounter* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).
- 61 Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).
- 62 Saloni Mathur, *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).
- 63 Zahid Chaudhary, *Afterimage of Empire: Photography in Nineteenth-Century India* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

## Chapter One

- 1 Syed Ahmad Khan, *Asar-us-Sanadid* (1847), 1st ed., pt. 2, 10. The epigraph is excerpted and translated from the description of the Naubat Khana as it appears in Syed Ahmad’s text, where he refers to the structure as Naqqar Khana—a combination of the terms *naqqar* (sounding of drums) and *kharkhana* (workshop or, in this case, atelier). Although both terms, Naubat Khana and Naqqar Khana, are valid with reference to this monument, I will use the former term throughout the chapter to maintain continuity.
- 2 Ram Guha, *Makers of Modern India* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011). For a compilation of the various interpretations of the Mutiny, see Ainslee Embree, *1857 in India: Mutiny or War of Independence?* (Boston: Heath Publishing Ltd, 1963); Pramod K. Nayar, ed., *The Penguin 1857 Reader* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2007). For a historiography of the idea of the Mutiny and its place in the British and Indian imagination, see Peter Robb, “On the Rebellion of 1857: A Brief History of an Idea”; Biswamoy Pati, “Historians and Historiography: Situation 1857,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 42: 19 (2007). For a contemporary debate about the Mutiny between British and Indian scholars, see the polemic written by Dr. W. W. Hunter and the response by Syed Ahmad in 1858, in *Our Indian Musalmans: Are They Bound in Conscience to Rebel against the Queen?* (Trubner and Co., 1858 [1871]); Syed Ahmad Khan, *The Causes of the Indian Revolt* (Delhi: Medical Hall Press, 1873).
- 3 Kim A. Wagner, “‘Treading Upon Fires’: The ‘Mutiny-Motif’ and Colonial Anxieties in British India,” *Past and Present* 218 (2013); Don Randall, “Autumn 1857: The Making of the Indian ‘Mutiny,’” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 31: 1 (2003); Michael Fisher, “Multiple Meanings of 1857 for Indians in Britain,” and Aishwarya Lakshmi, “The Mutiny Novel: Creating the Domestic Body of the Empire,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 42: 19 (2007); Chaudhary, *Afterimage of Empire*; Narayani Gupta, “Pictorializing the ‘Mutiny’ of 1857,” in *Traces of India: Photography, Architecture, and the Politics of Representation, 1850–1900*, ed. Maria Antonella Pelizzari (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003).
- 4 Historical treatments of the replacement of Company rule with Crown rule in the wake of the 1857 uprising and the administrative changes brought about by institutionalized colonialism include the following: Thomas R. Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt: India, 1857–1870* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964); C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence*

- Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).
- 5 Randall observes that mail arriving via sea would have taken three months to reach England, and news traveling by the fastest technology of the time, the telegraph, would have taken at least six weeks, and been limited to only brief messages, leaving plenty of room for interpretation as well as embellishment. Don Randall, “Autumn 1857: The Making of the Indian ‘Mutiny,’” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 31: 1 (2003).
  - 6 Ibid.
  - 7 *ILN*, July 11, 1857, 36.
  - 8 The images (in order of appearance) were “‘The Hall of Justice at Delhi’; ‘Lahore Gate of the Palace at Delhi—From a Photograph’; ‘Sudjer Jung’s [sic] Mausoleum in Delhi—From a Photograph’; ‘Bridge at Delhi Leading to the Palace of the Mogul, from the Agra Road’; ‘The Jumna [sic] Masjid of Delhi—From a Photograph.’” See *ILN*, July 18, 1857, 55–58.
  - 9 Ibid., 49.
  - 10 Ibid., 56–57.
  - 11 Ibid., 49.
  - 12 The term “pandy” (also written as “pandie” or “pandee”) was a colloquialism for a rebellious Indian soldier at the time of the Mutiny. It seems to have been a corruption of the Hindu caste-denomination *pandey*, of which many members were sepoys. The Hobson-Jobson dictionary of colloquial Anglo-Indian words maintains that since the first two “mutineers” happened to be *pandeyes*, their names may have been corrupted and used as a euphemism for all rebellious Indians. See Henry Yule and A. C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive* (London: John Murray, 1903).
  - 13 *ILN*, Sept 5, 1857, 251.
  - 14 For a broader treatment of panoramas published in the *ILN*, see Leonard de Vries, *Panorama 1842–1865: The World of the Early Victorians as Seen through the Eyes of the Illustrated London News* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969).
  - 15 Carol A. Breckenridge, “The Aesthetics and Politics of Colonial Collecting: India at World’s Fairs,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31: 2 (1989).
  - 16 Ibid., 199.
  - 17 The team of Robert Burford and H. C. Selous were prolific in staging panoramas such as this one. Burford, himself, had more than seventy-five panoramas to his name. The following are some of the other themes and sites about which Burford and Selous displayed panoramas in Leicester Square: The City and Lake of Geneva (1827); the City of Milan (1832); the City of Lima (1836); Bay Islands, New Zealand (1840); the City of Kabul (1842); the Ruins of the Temples of Baalbec (1844); View of Constantinople (1846); The City of Canton as it Appeared after the Bombardment and Assault of December 28 and 29, 1857 (1859). Even from this brief list it is apparent that the urban was a popular topic of illustration for the panorama.
  - 18 Robert Burford and Henry Selous, *Description of a View of the City of Delhi, with an Action between Her Majesty’s Troops and the Revolted Sepoys: Now Exhibiting at the Panorama, Leicester Square* (London: W. J. Golburn, 1858).
  - 19 Although the staging of panoramas such as that of Delhi during the Mutiny continued well into the latter half of the nineteenth century; according to Breckenridge, the discourse and

means of representing India changed dramatically with the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851. To briefly summarize this rupture, she identified early nineteenth-century modes (such as panoramas) as being derived from the wonder and awe associated with collections such as the “cabinet of curiosities.” These were often eclectic assortments of objects chosen mostly for their peculiarity or as signs of cultural otherness. The 1851 exhibition, on the other hand, explicated the world (and Britain’s central place within it) through a careful arrangement of objects and artifacts. Thus, the world exhibitions moved away from the model of ad hoc collections to one of choreography—where material culture served to narrate larger themes of empire, nation, and colony. Breckenridge, “Colonial Collecting.”

- 20 For a compilation of Beato’s photographs of Delhi’s Mutiny sites arranged in album form, see Jim Masselos and Narayani Gupta, *Beato’s Delhi 1857, 1957* (New Delhi: Ravi Dayal, 2000).
- 21 James Ackerman, “The Photographic Picturesque,” *Artibus et Historiae* 24, no. 48 (2003); Nicholas Dirks, “Guiltless Spoliations”; Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories*.
- 22 Perhaps the best-known example of the use of photography to document the retribution meted out to rebellious Indians, is Beato’s decision to exhume skeletons and arrange them artfully against the Sikandarabagh Palace in Lucknow. An extensive analysis of this photograph can be found in Zahid Chaudhary, “Phantasmagoric Aesthetics: Colonial Violence and the Management of Perception,” *Cultural Critique* 59 (Winter 2005).
- 23 Carr Stephens, *Archaeology and the Monumental Remains of Delhi* (Allahabad, India: Kitab Mahal, 1876 [1967]).
- 24 *ILN*, Jan 16, 1858.
- 25 James Hevia, *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003). I would like to thank Colin MacWhirter at the Canadian Center for Architecture for alerting me to James Hevia’s scholarship on the history of looting.
- 26 Yule and Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*; Hevia, *English Lessons*.
- 27 James Leasor, *The Red Fort: The Story of the Indian Mutiny of 1857* (New York: Reynal & Company, 1956), 359.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 348.
- 29 Anisha Shekhar Mukherji, *The Red Fort of Shahjahanabad* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003).
- 30 *Ibid.*; Nayanjot Lahiri, “Commemorating and Remembering 1857: The Revolt in Delhi and Its Afterlife,” *World Archaeology* 35: 1 (2003).
- 31 Leasor, *Red Fort*, 352.
- 32 Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge*.
- 33 Davis, “Three Styles in Looting India.”
- 34 *Ibid.*
- 35 Leasor, *Red Fort*, 364.
- 36 *Ibid.*
- 37 It should be noted here that looting was not a practice exclusive to European armies. Indeed, through its history Delhi had been sacked and looted by various non-European militaries such as that of the Persian Nadir Shah in 1739 and the Marathas in 1757. The particularity of European looting in the mid-nineteenth century was the institutionalization and sanctioning of the practice by the nascent colonial state. Looting also stood in stark contrast to the pendency of colonial preservation that followed a few years later.

- 38 Mary A. Leslie, “Delhi,” as cited in Gautam Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny and the British Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 105–6.
- 39 Ibid., 106.
- 40 H. G. Keene, *A Hand-book for Visitors to Delhi and Its Neighbourhood* (Calcutta: Thacker and Spink, 1882); W. S. Caine, *Picturesque India: A Handbook for European Travellers* (London: G. Routledge, 1891); A. Harcourt, *The New Guide to Delhi* (Lahore: Victoria Press, 1873).
- 41 *Report on the Administration of the Delhi Crown Lands* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1910), 42. The author of the report cites a letter: letter no. 44, dated February 11, 1858, from the Executive Engineer, Delhi to the Chief Engineer, N. W. P., Agra.
- 42 Narayani Gupta, *Delhi between Two Empires, 1803–1931: Society, Government and Urban Growth* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981).
- 43 Lady Canning cited in Leason, *Red Fort*, 369.
- 44 Harcourt, *New Guide to Delhi*, 21.
- 45 The Mussaman Burj is also known as the Saman Burj.
- 46 Mukherji, *Red Fort*; Masselos and Gupta, *Beato’s Delhi*.
- 47 Delhi Archives, CCO, June 3, 1860, box no. 5, file no. 68.
- 48 Delhi Archives, CCO, May 2, 1860, box no. 5, file no. 63.
- 49 Delhi Archives, CCO, June 3, 1860, box no. 5, file no. 68.
- 50 Ibid., n.p.
- 51 Ibid., n.p.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Mukherji, *Red Fort*.
- 54 J. R. Turnbull, “Sketches Taken at Delhi” [folio] IOR, 1261.e.31.
- 55 Titles of the illustrations in Turnbull’s folio, in order of appearance, are The British Camp from the Left; The General’s Tent; The Ridge; Delhi from the Flagstaff; The Flagstaff Tower; Hindu Rao’s House; General Barnard’s Grave; The Mound Battery; The Subzee Munde from the Mound; The Subzee Munde Pickets; Breach in the Curtain, Cashmere Bastion; Breach in the Curtain, Water Bastion; Lahore Gate of the Palace; and Easy Times.
- 56 The term *kafir*, meaning “nonbeliever,” is a term used by Muslims to refer to non-Muslims or those who do not accept the *shahada*—the Islamic declaration of faith.
- 57 Delhi Archives, CCO, Residency Records, May 24, 1865, file no. 19, 1.
- 58 Ibid., 2.
- 59 James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (London: John Murray, 1876), 594.
- 60 Sudeshna Guha, ed., *The Marshall Albums: Photography and Archaeology* (New Delhi: Mapin and the Alkazi Collection of Photography, 2010); Julie F. Codell, ed., *Power and Resistance: The Delhi Coronation Durbars, 1877, 1903, 1911* (Ahmedabad, India: Mapin 2012); Robert Grant Irving, *Indian Summer: Lutyens, Baker, and Imperial Delhi* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981).
- 61 Henry Hardy Cole, *The Preservation of National Monuments: Second Report of the Curator of Ancient Monuments in India for the Year 1882–83* (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, India, 1883), 3.
- 62 NAI, ASI, 1902, November, sl. no. 19, file no. 129.
- 63 Marshall strongly believed that the same concession of recreating architectural details could not be made for Hindu or Buddhist architecture as the sculptural or craft traditions of these

- building types had long become extinct and therefore any modern interventions would have been unfaithful.
- 64 Mukherji, *Red Fort*. The increased attention toward the preservation of the Red Fort can be seen by reports that claimed that the money spent on restoration work in the Red Fort between 1900 and 1913 was 7.5 times the amount spent between 1883 and 1899. See Cole, *Preservation of National Monuments*.
- 65 Gordon Sanderson, *Delhi Fort: A Guide to the Buildings and Gardens* (Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1914 [1937]).
- 66 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1915, file no. 31.
- 67 Delhi Archives, CCO, 1921, file no. 109.
- 68 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1914, file no. 45. This file contains hundreds of letters requesting free entry into the precincts of the fort—a privilege that was enjoyed by many school students, hospital patients, and soldiers from 1914 onward. It is also interesting to note that the petitions for free entry (which were always obliged) ranged from prestigious institutions such as the Mayo College, Ajmer, to more modest government schools in rural provinces of the country. However, in 1925 when Maulvi Zafar Hasan took over the Archaeological Department of the fort, he revoked the privileges afforded to school students saying that the cost of entrance was minimal (at two annas or an eighth of a rupee per ticket) and that students could well afford to pay it.
- 69 This figure does not include all of those groups—such as students, soldiers and government officials of Delhi who were issued free passes to enter the monuments; thus, one hundred thousand visitors is a conservative figure by all accounts.
- 70 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1921, file no. 41.
- 71 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1921, file no. 44.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 Delhi Archives, CCO, LSG/ Archaeology, 1940, file no. 18 (17).
- 74 Page's suggestions were turned down by the Chief Commissioner who preferred the more inconspicuous option of wall-mounted plaques. The historical notices were published in Hindi, Urdu, and English, once again giving an indication as to the mixed groups of people that visited the fort. It is interesting to note, however, that today the notices at the Red Fort are very similar to those originally proposed by Page, as in they are cement and stone stands that present the monument as an “exhibitionary” complex.
- 75 Delhi Archives, CCO, Education, 1918, pt. B, file no. 187 (2), 4.
- 76 Ibid.
- 77 Ibid., 1–2.
- 78 Annabel Jane Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem: Relics, Replicas, Theme Parks* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 9.
- 79 NAI, ASI, 1939, file no. 960, 1. It is not clear exactly which debate in the Central Legislative Assembly Chakra Dhar Hans is referring to. It may be simply the vocal demands made by representatives of the Indian National Congress for decolonization and self-determination. Or, he may have been referring to debates that took place between 1936 and 1939 concerning the use of Indian troops by the British military to suppress the Arab revolt in Palestine. Indian Muslims frequently expressed their solidarity with Palestinians and condemned the British government's actions in the Assembly.
- 80 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1903, file no. 9 (letter dated Feb 20, 1911).

## Chapter Two

- 1 Syed Ahmad, *Asar-us-Sanadid* (1847), 1st ed., pt. 1, 232.
- 2 A *dargah* refers to a complex of tombs that has grown around the central grave of a venerated Sufi mystic or spiritual guide, referred to his followers as a *pir*. Most of Delhi's *dargahs* (or at least the central graves that they contain) can be traced back to the spread of Sufism in the subcontinent from the twelfth century onward. Besides in Delhi, prominent *dargahs* can be found in Ajmer, Agra, Lucknow, and Hyderabad in present-day India. For the history of Sufism in South Asia, see Malfūzāt-i-Naqshbandiyya, *Sufis and Soldiers in Awrangzeb's Deccan*, trans. Simon Digby (Oxford University Press, 2001). For the architecture of Sufi shrines in North Africa and the Near East, see Sheila S. Blair, "Sufi Saints and Shrine Architecture in the Early Fourteenth Century," *Muqarnas* 7 (1990). On Sufi shrines in India, see Mumtaz Currim and George Michell, eds., *Dargahs: Abodes of the Saints* (Mumbai: Marg, 2004). The transregional impact of one Sufi saint and the replication of his south Indian Sufi *dargah* in Southeast Asia has been elegantly discussed in Catherine B. Asher, "The Sufi Shrines of Shahul Hamid in India and Southeast Asia," *Artibus Asiae* 69: 2 (2009).
- 3 For a critical assessment of the intervention of Ann Pamela Cunningham and the manner in which this moment has been calcified as the definitive moment of historic preservation in the United States, see Jean Lee, "Historical Memory, Sectional Strife and the American Mecca: Mt Vernon, 1783–1853," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 109: 3 (2001); the introduction to Page and Mason, *Giving Preservation a History*.
- 4 Society of Antiquaries, ed., *Making History*; Chris Miele, ed., *From William Morris: Building Conservation and the Arts and Crafts Cult of Authenticity, 1877–1939* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005).
- 5 The ASI published the original listing compiled by Maulvi Zafar Hasan in four volumes as *List of Mohammadan and Hindu Buildings, Delhi Province* between 1916 and 1922. A contemporary edition of the listing is Zafar Hasan et al., *Monuments of Delhi*.
- 6 Note that although Syed Ahmad had already produced a comprehensive survey of Delhi's monuments in 1847 and then in 1854, ASI's listing carried with it the weight of governmental fiat and therefore also functioned as a policy document in determining which monuments would receive funds and attention and which ones would be allowed to lapse into benign neglect.
- 7 Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 129.
- 8 The Land Acquisitions Act was first put in place in 1824 and empowered the British Presidency at Fort William, Calcutta, to expropriate immovable property for the purposes of public buildings. The Act stated that all owners of expropriated lands should be compensated at a reasonable rate. In 1857 the law was revised such that it could be applied to the whole of British India. In 1894 the Act was amended such that it vested local governments with the authority to expropriate private land for public purposes and for these same local governments to decide the amount of fair compensation to be provided to the owner of the property. The 1894 Act continues to be the major legal armature for land acquisitions in India today. For a full reproduction of the original act, see T. V. Sanjiva Row, "The Land Acquisitions Act, 1894" (Chennai: M. E. Press, 1907).
- 9 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1911, file no. 11.
- 10 Irving, *Indian Summer*.
- 11 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1911, file no. 11.

- 12 “Final Report of the Delhi Town Planning Committee” Regarding the Selected Site. With plan and two maps. Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty (His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1913).
- 13 Similar to the imaginary of Raisina Hill as a tabula rasa, the lack of an indigenous political community in Delhi was a colonial projection rather than reality. Although the British government had actively disenfranchised the Muslims of the city after 1857 and promoted Hindu and Jain loyalists into positions of power, by the early 1900s there were signs of growing political and nationalist awareness across these religious communities in Delhi. The British population had by that time, however, separated themselves both physically (in the Civil Lines and the new cantonment on the ridge) as well as socially from the Indian residents of the city such that they were able to ignore the rising tide of political activism. For more on this see Gupta, *Delhi between Two Empires*. Ayesha Jalal has shown that by 1913, anticolonial sentiments in Delhi were gaining ground and the seeds for what would later become the Khilafat movement (a pro-Muslim nationalist movement) would become apparent during this time. Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (London: Routledge, 2000).
- 14 To date religious communities hold their temples, mosques, and other religious structures as endowments. These endowments exist outside of state taxation as well as market economics and cannot be sold, leased, or owned in title by individuals. Islamic endowments are referred to as *awqaf* [plural] (*waqf* [sing.]). For a more detailed explanation of *awqaf*, see chapter 3.
- 15 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1912, file no. 15, 98.
- 16 Despite the colonial officer’s ambivalence toward the Lal Bangla it seems that at least some of the structures were left standing. The extant structures are now being preserved by a Delhi NGO called Heritage Conservators.
- 17 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1912, file no. 15, 82.
- 18 Another correspondence from 1912 regarding land acquisitions classified monuments into the following three categories in decreasing importance: ancient monuments of historic interest; religious buildings now in use of more than local repute; and specially sacred tombs and temples. Regarding the last category the Deputy Commissioner remarked: “The returns which I have received show many other tombs, local masjids [mosques] and temples, but these are of local interest only, so I presume that once the landowners have been bought out and there are no residents in the villages their demolition will be feasible.” Delhi Archives, DCO, 1912, file no. 44.
- 19 A *gurudwara* is a temple of the Sikh faith.
- 20 Ratish Nanda, *Delhi: The Built Heritage; A Listing* (Delhi: Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, 1999).
- 21 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1912, file no. 15, 86.
- 22 *Mahant* can be translated as both priest and caretaker of the *gurudwara*.
- 23 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1913, file no. 13.
- 24 *Dharamshala* is a traveler’s guest house mainly for the use of visiting pilgrims.
- 25 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1913, file no. 13.
- 26 The contestation over the annexes to the Rakabganj Gurudwara was similar to the case of mosque in Kanpur that unfolded later in the same year. At first thought to be little more than an area for bathing and ablutions, the colonial government had gone ahead with the demolition of a part of the mosque. Between twenty and thirty Indians were killed or injured in the

- protests that followed. The incident was taken up by the Urdu, and later Hindi and Bengali press, and elevated to a matter of national discussion, by various notable Muslims who used the demolition of the mosque to critique the tyranny of the colonial government. Spencer Lavan, "The Kanpur Mosque Incident of 1913: The North Indian Muslim Press and Its Reaction to Community Crisis," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 42: 2 (1974).
- 27 Derrida, *Archive Fever*.
- 28 Zafar Hasan et al., *Monuments of Delhi*, 229.
- 29 Delhi Archives, CCO, Revenue and Agriculture, 1918, pt. B, file no. 81, 2.
- 30 Ibid., 3.
- 31 Ibid., 3. A *chabutra* refers to a raised dais or platform often outside a main building (such as a house or a temple) and marking the site as revered. In this case it housed the graves of nobles (referred to as *rais* here).
- 32 Ibid. Ajmal Khan traces his associations to the Rasul Numa in the following way: "One of my ancestors by name Hakim Wasil Khan was a disciple of the said Syed Hasan Rasul Numa, who was averse to marriage but at the earnest inducement of the Saint he consented to marry and by the union sprang up the family to which I have the honour to belong." Ibid., 7. By tracing his family's roots back to a disciple of the Rasul Numa, Ajmal Khan lays a powerful claim to the shrine as his patrimony.
- 33 The British reaction to Indian rituals and spaces of burial was similar to other colonial contexts such as Egypt where the French Comité de Conservation des Monument de l'Art Arabe actively championed the removal of historic burial grounds from medieval Cairo even as they sought to preserve the latter's historic fabric. European anxieties toward urban cemeteries were related to largely unsubstantiated concerns regarding sanitation, encroachment (which impaired the legibility of the cemetery structures as "monuments"), and the custom of sequential burials, which made it difficult to contain the cemeteries as such. The strategy followed by the Comité in Egypt of cordoning off cemeteries and "'freeing' the monuments from their urban surroundings" was almost identical and contemporary to that pursued by the ASI in Delhi. For more on the work of the Comité in Egypt, see May al-Ibrashy, "The Cemeteries of Cairo and the *Comité de Conservation*," in AlSayyad et al., *Making Cairo Medieval*, 241.
- 34 Delhi Archives, CCO, Revenue and Agriculture, 1918, pt. B, file no. 81.
- 35 A *kerbala* is a geographical simulation of the original battlefield of Kerbala (modern-day Iraq) where Hussein, the grandson of the prophet Muhammad, was martyred. Shia communities build and maintain these sacred spaces and commemorate the death of Hussein every year during Muharram. During the festival Shia Muslims build *tazias* (a portable wooden representation of the grave of Hussein) and carry it on their backs in a procession to the *kerbala*.
- 36 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1912, file no. 15.
- 37 Alexander Cunningham, "Four Reports Made During the Years 1862–63–64–65" (Varanasi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1862–1865), 133.
- 38 Syed Ahmad, *Asar-us-Sanadid*, 2nd ed. (1854; repr. Delhi Urdu Academy, 1990), pt. 1, 7–48.
- 39 Cunningham, "Four Reports", Plate 35, 132.
- 40 Carr Stephen, *The Archaeology and Monumental Remains of Delhi* (Calcutta: Thacker and Spink, 1876); A. Harcourt, *The New Guide to Delhi* (Lahore: Victoria Press 1873); H. G. Keene, *A Handbook for Visitors to Delhi and Its Neighborhood* (Calcutta: Thacker and Spink, 1882); H. H. Cole, *Architecture of Ancient Delhi: Especially the Buildings Around the Kutb Minar* (London: Arundel Society, 1872); H. C. Fanshawe, *Delhi Past and Present* (London: John Murray, 1902).

- 41 Gordon Hearn, *The Seven Cities of Delhi* (London: W. Thacker & Co., 1906).
- 42 Shirine Hamadeh, "Creating the Traditional City: A French Project," in *Forms of Dominance: On the Architecture and Urbanism of the Colonial Enterprise*, ed. Nezar AlSayyad (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1992).
- 43 Janet Abu-Lughod, "The Islamic City: Historic Myth, Islamic Essence and Contemporary Relevance," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19: 2 (1987). Further evidence of the manner in which French and British preservation authorities calcified the "walled city" of Cairo can be found in AlSayyad et al., *Making Cairo Medieval*. Paula Sanders has extended the argument that "medieval" Cairo was in fact a nineteenth-century European project by illustrating the impact of the ASI and the translation of British experience of preservation in India to Egypt. See Paula Sanders, *Creating Medieval Cairo: Empire, Religion, and Architectural Preservation in Nineteenth-Century Egypt* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2008). A further example is the nineteenth-century French project of reconstructing the souk of Fez in a "medieval" grammar, despite the wishes of the Moroccan shopkeepers and residents of the area who wished to modernize the market and its surroundings. See Stacey Holden, "The Legacy of French Colonialism: Preservation in Morocco's Fez Medina," *Association for Preservation Technology Bulletin* 39: 4 (2008).
- 44 Stephen Legg, *Spaces of Colonialism: Delhi's Urban Governmentalities* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2007); Gupta, *Delhi between Two Empires*; Masselos and Gupta, *Beato's Delhi*.
- 45 "Final Report of the Delhi Town Planning Committee," 5.
- 46 Catherine Asher has pointed out that the *dargah* was built ten years after Aurangzeb departed Delhi for the Deccan. Thus, although built during his reign, it was probably only tangentially linked to his personal patronage. Catherine B. Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), vol. 1, 274.
- 47 Nile Green, *Making Space: Sufis and Settlers in Early Modern India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012), 264.
- 48 Choay, *Invention of the Historic Monument*.
- 49 NAI, ASI, 1936, file no. 157.
- 50 Jyoti P. Sharma, "The British Treatment of Historic Gardens in the Indian Subcontinent: The Transformation of Delhi's Nawab Safdarjung's Tomb Complex from a Funerary Garden into a Public Park," *Garden History* 35: 2 (2007).
- 51 Delhi Archives, CCO, Revenue and Agriculture, 1918, pt. B, file no. 81.
- 52 Derrida, *Archive Fever*.
- 53 Delhi Archives, CCO, Revenue and Agriculture, 1918, pt. B, file no. 81.
- 54 See exchange between Gordon Sanderson and John Marshall about the limits of the ASI in matters of religious monuments that were still in use in NAI, ASI, 1916, file no. 149/sl. nos. 1–38.
- 55 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1912, file no. 15. A correspondence from the Special Land Acquisitions Office quotes the following from the Religious Endowment Act 20 of 1863: "Except as provided by this Act it shall not be lawful for any Govt. of India or for any officer of any Govt. in his official character to undertake or resume the superintendence of any land or other property granted for the support of or otherwise belonging to any mosque, temple or other religious establishment or take any part in the management or appropriation of any endowment made for the maintenance of any such mosque, temple, or other establishment or to nominate or appoint any trustee or manager or superintendent thereof or to *be in any way concerned* therewith" [emphasis in original], 94.

- 56 Tapati Guha-Thakurta has also explored the friction between the AMPA and the Religious Endowment Act at the Mahaboddhi temple in eastern India. Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories*.
- 57 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1923, file no. 34.
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 References were also made to other religious communities in India who had fought similar religious persecution in the past. Among the examples cited as comparable to the Masjid Gharib Shah, were a temple in Paharganj saved by the Hindus from demolition, Jawaharlal Nehru's protest against and subsequent victory over the colonial government who had denied Hindus access to bathing ghats in Allahabad, and the Sikh victory in the Gurdwara Rakabganj case. Delhi Archives, DCO, 1923, file no. 34.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 *Waqf* properties are land endowments held in perpetuity by a religious trust. The 1863 Religious Endowment Act stipulated that all religious properties would be held by committees representative of the religious groups, which would face no interference from the colonial government. Clearly the petitioners and protestors were reminding the colonial authorities of these policies as a way of pushing back against their demands.
- 63 Although the historicity of Masjid Gharib Shah was never in question, following the protests it too was included in the second edition of the ASI listing of Delhi's built heritage. Like the Rasul Numa Dargah it is listed as a Class III monument, and identified as being of the later Mughal style (i.e., built between the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century). See Zafar Hasan et al., *Monuments of Delhi*.
- 64 Ibid., n.p. The original definition of these classifications can be found in Resolution 48, Department of Education, Archaeology and Epigraphy, February 21, 1919. Neither the language of defining various classes of monuments nor their parameters have changed since that date.
- 65 An *urs* is an annual celebration marking the death anniversary of a Muslim (usually Sufi or Shia) spiritual leader.
- 66 Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 1.
- 67 Ibid., 7.

## Chapter Three

- 1 Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), xii.
- 2 NAI, Home, Political, 1932, file no. 30/138.
- 3 Ibid., 20.
- 4 In terms of scale the central courtyard of the Jama Masjid (5,904 sq. yards) is a little less than the total area of an American football field (6,360 sq. yards).
- 5 Gupta, *Delhi between Two Empires*.
- 6 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1936, file no. 2.
- 7 An *idgah* is a semi-enclosed area used for offering prayers during Ramadan and other religious occasions.

- 8 A. A. Roberts cited in Gupta, *Delhi between Two Empires*, 27. Roberts was a British official who had lived and worked in Delhi since the 1840s.
- 9 An excerpt from letter no. 59, dated February 18, 1860, from the Deputy Commissioner of Delhi to the Commissioner Delhi Division as it appears in Delhi Archives, DCO, 1936, file no. 2.
- 10 Agreement executed by the JMMC on November 26, 1862. Its English translation can be found in *ibid.*
- 11 Gupta, *Delhi between Two Empires*.
- 12 Narayani Gupta has argued that after the handover of the Jama Masjid to the JMMC in 1862, the Fatehpuri Masjid overtook the former as a site of political expression for Indians as the JMMC was seen as loyalist to the British government. *Ibid.* However, as this chapter shows, the Jama Masjid was used for political expression frequently through the twentieth century and often without consideration for the loyalties or the authority of the JMMC.
- 13 NAI, Home, Political, 1932, file no. 30/138, 21.
- 14 Reproduction of the press communiqué can be found in *ibid.*, 22. The same was also published in a newspaper titled *Leader* (Allahabad) on September 2, 1932, under the heading “Political Meetings in Juma Masjid: Government Attitude Explained” n.p.
- 15 NAI, Central Indian Agency, Indore Letter Receipts, 1859, prog. no. 1709.
- 16 NAI, Home, Political, 1911, March, pt. B, file nos. 34–36.
- 17 NAI, Home, Political, 1936, file no. 143/36, 11.
- 18 The Rowlatt Satyagraha was a nation-wide protest led by Gandhi against the Rowlatt Act which called for the closing of businesses, the boycott of British made or taxed goods, and the withdrawal of Indian workers from British schools, administrative offices, and the military and civil services. The term *satyagraha* (literally meaning “insistence on truth”) was the fundamental philosophy underlying Gandhi’s nonviolent resistance and the term quickly became the moniker for the civil disobedience movement led by Indian nationalists against the colonial government. *Satyagrahi* was the term applied to a supporter of Gandhi’s anticolonial resistance movement.
- 19 Legg, *Spaces of Colonialism*.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 110–11.
- 21 This information comes from a letter written in 1913 by the members of the JMMC to the Deputy Commissioner’s Office in response to the latter’s orders that the Jama Masjid was being used for political meetings. The letter can be found in Delhi Archives, DCO, 1860, file no. 11.
- 22 The Majlis-i-Ahrar was a conservative Islamic party with roots in the Sunni Deoband school in present-day Bihar. They were organized as a separate party in 1931 and remained active in the Punjab and were mostly known for their incendiary speeches against the British government. They also framed themselves in opposition to the more mainstream Khilafat movement, which was also Muslim and anticolonial but did not espouse the same twinning of nationalist struggle and Islamic religious identity that the Ahrar movement did. For more on the Majlis-i-Ahrar, see Samina Awan, *Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam: A Socio-Political Study* (Lahore: Oxford University Press, 2010); Sana Haroon, “The Deobandi Islam in the North-West Frontier Province and Its Implications in Colonial India and Pakistan,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 18: 1 (2008).
- 23 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1939, file no. 21. Due to the uneven nature of the colonial archive it is very difficult to determine why exactly so many anticolonial demonstrators chose to meet in the Jama Masjid. A possible pragmatic reason was that the mosque offered a large enough space; a ready-made audience after Friday prayers; and protection from colonial surveillance. Another reason may have been that the religious space lent further authority to the political actions of

- the anticolonial demonstrations. Without archival evidence it is, however, difficult to ascertain exactly what the motivations of these political agents were as they gathered in the Jama Masjid.
- 24 Extract of a confidential memo written by the Deputy Commissioner of Delhi on September 28, 1939. Delhi Archives, DCO, 1939, file no. 21.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Indian salt was one of the basic commodities that the British levied heavy taxes on. Gandhi led the protests to Dandi and along with other *satyagrahis* made salt from sea-water there. The strategy was part of his ideology of self-reliance, where Indians were asked to manufacture common goods, such as salt and cotton (which were taxed by the British) themselves.
- 27 NAI, Home, Political, 1930, file no. 256-I.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Legg, *Spaces of Colonialism*.
- 30 Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 23.
- 31 Zafar Hasan et al., *Monuments of Delhi*, n.p.
- 32 A *mukkabir* is a pulpit raised on a plinth within the central courtyard of the mosque. Mostly used by the Mughal emperors during daily religious services, they were later also used by clerics of the mosque to deliver speeches or sermons.
- 33 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1914, file no. 3.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Stephen F. Dale, "Empires and Emporia: Palace, Mosque, Market, and Tomb in Istanbul, Isfahan, Agra, and Delhi," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 53: 1/2 (2010).
- 36 Eckart Ehlers and Thomas Krafft, eds., *Shahjahanabad/ Old Delhi: Tradition and Colonial Change* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993).
- 37 *Faluda* is a type of cold dessert made of vermicelli, rose syrup, and milk.
- 38 Syed Ahmad, *Asar-us-Sanadid* (1847), 1st ed., pt. 3, 18.
- 39 The Arabic/ Urdu terms *awqaf* (plural); *waqf* (singular) refer into endowments held in trust by a religious authority and the expenditure or use of which complies with Shariat or Islamic law. For a historical analysis of *awqaf*, see Gregory C. Kozlowski, "Imperial Authority, Benefactions and Endowments (Awqaf) in Mughal India," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 38: 3 (1995).
- 40 Dale, "Empires and Emporia."
- 41 Although the ASI vehemently opposed the JMMC strategy of using the royal funds in order to acquire landed property around the mosque which could be leased out in order to generate income for the committee, there is enough evidence that the ASI themselves rented out stalls in many noted monuments and recovered rent monies from them. See Delhi Archives, DCO, 1922, file no. 45, which states that Messrs's Mirza and Sons would be permitted to put up a stall selling photos and postcards within the colonnades of the fourteenth-century extension to the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque and pay rent of 150 rupees per annum to the ASI. The proprietors are, however, warned that they must keep the area clean and not harass the visitors who frequented the monument. Later in 1926, the rent space was put out to tender, and fetched a handsome annual rent of 250 rupees for the ASI.
- 42 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1914, file no. 3.
- 43 Ibid. Unfortunately none of the ASI drawings for the redesigned pulpit in the Jama Masjid can be traced. Their designs, however, would undoubtedly reveal more about the colonial perceptions of the Jama Masjid as a purely aesthetic and historically static space.

- 44 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1886, file no. 2. H. C. Fanshawe says that the Nawab of Rampur made a donation of one hundred thousand rupees and a smaller donation was made by the Nawab of Bhawalpur during the 1880s. See Fanshawe, *Delhi Past and Present*, 48.
- 45 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1928, file no. 25. The global importance of the mosque and its intelligibility as a sovereign Islamic space is borne out by the fact that it has continued to receive donations from Muslim royalty and elites around the world. For example, in 1955 during his state visit to India, King Saud of Saudi Arabia donated a large Czech-made chandelier to the Jama Masjid. It still hangs in the central prayer hall of the mosque. In 2006, the king of Saudi Arabia offered millions of dollars to repair the minarets of the Jama Masjid, which had been damaged in an earthquake the previous year.
- 46 This *mukkabir* (with an inscription noting its donor and date of installation) continues to stand in front of the main *mihrab* of the Jama Masjid to this day.
- 47 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1923, file no. 34.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Fanshawe, *Delhi Past and Present*, 44 (footnote 1).
- 50 Correspondence from 1874 regarding mosques in Delhi can be found in Delhi Archives, DCO, 1917, file no. 4. For example, the Fatehpuri Masjid, which terminated the axis of the Chandni Chowk, was confiscated and later sold to Lala Chunna Mal, a prominent Hindu banker of Delhi, and the Akbarabadi Masjid was entirely demolished in 1857. Examples of mosques used for purposes other than religious congregation included the Kahtika Masjid in Paharganj, which was leased to contractors who used it to store grass; Kali mosque near Turkman gate, which had been leased out to Muslim silk spinners; and the Telis Masjid which was government property and used as a poor house.
- 51 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1917, file no. 4.
- 52 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1921, file no. 44, and later mentioned in Delhi Archives, CCO, LSG, 1940, file no. F18 (17). Narayani Gupta has sketched a tragi-comic incident regarding the use of “over-shoes” in the Jama Masjid. In the 1890s Viceroy Curzon had ordered Europeans visiting the mosque to wear overshoes as a sign of respect to the Muslim community. Curzon saw this as a happy compromise that would allow Europeans to enjoy the monument while also accommodating the religious feelings of Muslims. The Muslim community, however, did not share Curzon’s perspective and their feelings about the matter were made clear in 1903 when a group of Muslim shoe sellers pelted British soldiers with footwear in the vicinity of the Jama Masjid. Gupta, *Delhi between Two Empires*, 127.
- 53 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1921, file no. 1. Mohammad Azmatullah (Honorary Secretary) filed this complaint on behalf of the Delhi Muslim Association.
- 54 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1919, file no. 66.
- 55 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1923, file no. 14.
- 56 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1917, file no. 2.
- 57 Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 34–35.
- 58 Ibid., 36.
- 59 Copy of the revised rules regarding the use of Delhi mosques as stated on January 1, 1900, can be found in Delhi Archives, DCO, 1936, file no. 2.
- 60 The late 1800s (when most of the mosques were handed back to the Muslims of Delhi and rules regarding the use of Delhi mosques were drafted) were fraught with tension between the Hindu and Muslim communities. Many of the tensions were related to Muslim demands to

- perform the obligatory animal slaughter on major Islamic holy days such as Eid. Minor skirmishes as well as large scale riots continued to break out during this decade with the Hindus retaliating by leading their religious processions in front of the Jama Masjid and playing music in front of the city's mosques during prayer time.
- 61 It is important to place on record here the names of those who died and the causes of their death: Ram Kishan (age 22) died April 6 or 7 from septic poisoning caused by two gunshot wounds; Ram Singh (age 28) died April 3 from bullet wounds in abdomen. The following eight men died on March 30: Gopi Nath (age 30) from internal hemorrhage and shock due to two gunshot wounds; Abdul Ghani (age 25) due to hemorrhage from bayonet wounds; Mohammad Din due to hemorrhage from a bullet passing through his body causing internal injuries; Ram Chand due to hemorrhage from perforation in the intestines; an unidentified Muslim (age 45) from a fractured skull, probably caused by bullet fired at close range; Ram Lal (age 33) from an internal injury due to a shot through the body; Radha Saran (age 22) from a bullet wound in brain; Hashmat Ullah from gunshots. NAI, Home, Political, 1919, file nos. 452–53. Only two weeks after this incident, General Dwyer would open fire on another nonviolent protest at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar killing close to one thousand Indian men and women. That incident would later be noted as a turning point for the Indian nationalist struggle and the beginning of the end of colonial rule in India. The names of those killed in Delhi is thus doubly important to record as part of that larger anticolonial struggle.
- 62 The Arya Samaj was a nineteenth-century Hindu movement that sought to reform many of the aspects of orthodox Hinduism such as child marriage, widow burning, etc. By the twentieth century, along with its mission to modernize Hinduism, the Arya Samaj had adopted a strong anticolonial mandate as well.
- 63 Delhi Archives, CCO, Home, 1919, pt. B, file no. 92, April 137–38; May 202–3; September 75–76.
- 64 NAI, Home, Political, 1919, file nos. 452–53.
- 65 NAI, Home, Political, 1927, file no. 11/30. The apology was also published in a newspaper. See the extract regarding the Abdul Rashid incident in *Pioneer*, December 4, 1927, n.p.
- 66 See the report filed by the JMMC regarding the meeting held in the mosque on July 14, 1939, by a group of Ahrars where “in spite of protest ‘Hindus’ were made to join the meeting by entering the mosque forcibly” in Delhi Archives, DCO, 1939, file no. 21.
- 67 For a detailed discussion of the fractures within the Islamic nationalists, see Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*. For a similarly nuanced discussion of Hindu as well as Sikh politics in early twentieth-century North India, see Neeti Nair, *Changing Homelands: Hindu Politics and the Partition of India* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).
- 68 NAI, Home, Political, 1932, file no. 30/138, 37.
- 69 Ibid.
- 70 Ibid.
- 71 NAI, Home, Political, 1919, file nos. 452–53.
- 72 Translated from the original Urdu. A transcript of the speech has been published as “Dhilli ke Musalmanon se khutab” in Abulkalam Azad, *India's Maulana Abul Kalam Azad* (New Delhi: Indian Council for Cultural Relations, 1990), Urdu vol., 231–36.
- 73 A precedent and counter-example to Azad's speech can be found in 1940 when the Muslim League articulated their demands for a separate state for Indian Muslims. This call for the nation-state that would eventually become Pakistan was made at the grounds between the Badshahi (Royal) Mosque and the Mughal Fort in Lahore. See Saleema Waraich, “Locations of

- Longing: The Ruins of Old Lahore,” *Third Text* 25: 6 (2011). Clearly the Jama Masjid of Delhi was not the only monument that begat such practices of political orality.
- 74 Here I depart from Alfred Gell’s notion of the art object as a social agent and operating within a network of relations. See Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998).
- 75 Annabel Jane Wharton, *Architectural Agents: The Delusional, Abusive, Addictive Lives of Buildings* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 211.
- 76 The image appeared on the front page of the *Al-Quds* daily newspaper, October 12, 2001.
- 77 Hilal Ahmed has also shown how the Jama Masjid functioned as a space for state critique in 1987, when the imam of the mosque officially closed it to protest the closing of the Babri Masjid. See Hilal Ahmed, “Mosque as Monument: The Afterlives of Jama Masjid and the Political Memories of a Royal Muslim Past,” *South Asian Studies* 29: 1 (2013).

## Chapter Four

- 1 Carr, *Monumental Remains of Delhi*, iii.
- 2 Irving, *Indian Summer*, 1–2.
- 3 Eicher maps are the most comprehensive city maps available in India. Although produced by a corporation rather than a governmental agency, the Delhi Tourism Board recommends the Eicher maps as the most reliable street maps of the city.
- 4 In this chapter Indraprastha appears in various spellings as Indrapat, Indiput, Indraprestha, etc. I have maintained the variations of the name when they appear in quotes by others.
- 5 Anis Kidwai, *In Freedom’s Shade*, trans. Ayesha Kidwai (New Delhi: Penguin, 2011), 40.
- 6 Magnus T. Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past: Archaeology and Nation Building in Modern Iraq* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).
- 7 Cathy Gere, *Knossos and the Prophets of Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).
- 8 Penny Edwards, *Cambodge: The Cultivation of a Nation, 1860–1945* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007).
- 9 Nadia Abu El-Haj, *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self Fashioning in Israeli Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).
- 10 Gulbadan Begum, *The History of Humāyūn (Humāyūn-Nāmā)*, trans. Annette Beveridge (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1902); Jouher, *Tezkereh al Vakiāt; or, Private Memoirs of the Moghul Emperor Humāyūn*, trans. Major Charles Stewart (London: Oriental Translation Fund, 1832); Khwānd ‘Amīr, *Qānūn-i-Humayūni* (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1940).
- 11 See vol. 2 of Abu Fazl Allami, *Ain-i Akbari*, trans. H. Blochmann & H. S. Jarrett (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1873–1907), 188.
- 12 O. P. Kejariwal, *The Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Discovery of India’s Past* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988).
- 13 Some fleeting references to Indraprastha can also be found in sources such as William Daniell, Hobart Caunter, and Thomas Bacon, *The Oriental Annual, Or Scenes in India* (London: C. Tilt, 1835), where Indraprastha is referred to as the “Sanskrit [sic] name” of Delhi.
- 14 The Hindu epic *Mahabharata* (the world’s longest epic poem) is a morality tale based on the battle between warring cousins, the Kauravas and the Pandavas. In the epic, the latter represent a superior moral force and eventually triumph over the corrupt Kauravas. The association of

- Delhi with Indraprastha, is thus also the implication of it being the imperial center of a Hindu empire associated with moral superiority and righteousness. As Thomas Trautmann points out, the epic gained purchase in various moments in history for its representations of model kingship and idealized sovereign power. Thomas Trautmann, *India: Brief History of a Civilization* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011). For a modern and historical reading of the *Mahabharata*, see Barend A. van Nooten, *Mahābhārata attributed to Kṛṣṇa Dvaipayana Vyasa* (New York: Twayne, 1971); John D. Smith, ed., *The Mahābhārata* (London: Penguin, 2009); V. S. Sukthankar, S. K. Belvalkar, and P. L. Vaidya, eds., *The Mahābhārata for the First Time Critically Edited* (Pune: Bhandarkar Oriental Institute, 1933–66).
- 15 Syed Ahmad, *Asar-us-Sanadid* (1854), 2nd ed., 5.
  - 16 There is a discrepancy between the first and second edition of the *Asar-us-Sanadid* in the historic characters and dates associated with the Purana Qila. In the first edition Syed Ahmad states that Anandpal had built a fort there at the current location of the Purana Qila in 383 (440 Bikram Samvat). Although the dates of the fort and the patron of the first fort are identified differently in the first edition, Syed Ahmad does not associate the Purana Qila with Indraprastha in either the first or the second edition of the *Asar-us-Sanadid*. See Syed Ahmad, *Asar-us-Sanadid* (1847), 1st ed., pt. 1, 110, for the description of the Purana Qila.
  - 17 David Lelyveld has illustrated the dramatic differences between the form and organization of the two editions of the *Asar-us-Sanadid*, which provide proof that Syed Ahmad catered to a European audience who had a deep distrust of Indian histories. David Lelyveld, “Sauda Sulaf: Urdu in the Two Versions of Sayyid Ahmad Khan’s Asaru’s-Sanadid,” *Annual of Urdu Studies* 26 (2011).
  - 18 For a full list of the sources used by Syed Ahmad in the second edition of the *Asar-us-Sanadid*, see Monica Juneja, ed., *Architecture in Medieval India: Forms, Contexts, Histories* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001), 111.
  - 19 Syed Ahmad, *Asar-us-Sanadid* (1854), 2nd ed., pt. 1, 7-48.
  - 20 Naim, “Syed Ahmad and His Two Books.”
  - 21 For an exegesis on the production of knowledge by colonial agents as well as indigenous actors in colonial India, see Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge*; C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). For a treatment of the same idea with specific reference to archaeology see chapter 3, “Interlocuting Texts and Monuments: The Coming of Age of the ‘Native’ Scholar,” in Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories*.
  - 22 *Journal of the Archaeological Society of Delhi* (Delhi, 1850), v.
  - 23 *Ibid.*, v.
  - 24 *Journal of the Archaeological Society of Delhi* (Delhi, 1853), 49.
  - 25 *Ibid.*, 56.
  - 26 Note that although Syed Ahmad had initially “dated” Indraprastha to ca. 3500 BCE, the ASD proposed a later date of 1200 BCE for the same. It is not clear why this discrepancy existed as the members of the ASD had been convinced of Syed Ahmad’s presentation of “bricks from Hastinapur.”
  - 27 For more on Syed Ahmad and his intellectual investment in British colonialism as the path for India to modernize, see Guha, *Makers of Modern India*.
  - 28 Kumkum Chatterjee, “History as Self-Representation: The Recasting of a Political Tradition in Late Eighteenth-Century Eastern India,” *Modern Asian Studies* 32: 4 (1998), 931.

- 29 Cunningham, "Four Reports."
- 30 Ibid., 136.
- 31 Syed Ahmad, *Asar-us-Sanadid*, 110.
- 32 The term *Pathan* was used in reference to Central Asian ethnic groups and an Islamic cultural period that spanned the late thirteenth and mid-sixteenth century. The now obsolete term was applied to the architectural works of Tughlaq, Lodhi, and Suri rulers (from the region that is modern-day Afghanistan) and the early Mughals such as Babur and Humayun, which showed distinct influences from Central Asia in terms of building technology as well as aesthetics.
- 33 Zafar Hasan et al., *Monuments of Delhi*, vol. 2, 86–87.
- 34 Thomas R. Trautmann and Carla M. Sinopoli, "In the Beginning Was the Word: Excavating the Relations between History and Archaeology in South Asia," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 45: 4 (2002).
- 35 Keene, *Hand-book for Visitors to Delhi*.
- 36 Caine, *Picturesque India*.
- 37 S. M. Chadha, "Mapping Delhi," in *The Idea of Delhi*, ed. Romi Khosla (Mumbai: Marg, 2005), 97.
- 38 Sarah Sainty, *Lost Monuments of Delhi* (Delhi: Harper Collins, 1997), 94.
- 39 Vijay Goel, *Delhi: The Emperor's City* (New Delhi: Roli Press, 2003), 15.
- 40 R. Balasubramaniam, *The World Heritage Complex of the Qutb* (Delhi: Aryan, 2005), 1.
- 41 Mukherji, *Red Fort*, 45.
- 42 B. R. Mani, *Delhi: Threshold of the Orient, Studies in Archaeological Investigations* (New Delhi: Aryan, 1997), 1.
- 43 Percival Spear, *Delhi: A Historical Sketch* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1945), 28.
- 44 R. E. Frykenberg, ed., *Delhi through the Ages: Selected Essays in Urban History, Culture, and Society* (London: Oxford University Press, 2002), 6.
- 45 Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).
- 46 Irving, *Indian Summer*, 27.
- 47 "First, Second and Final Report of the Delhi Town Planning Committee, by His Majesty's Stationery Office" (1913).
- 48 Ibid., 5.
- 49 RIBA/ BAH/2/1/11 and RIBA/ BAH/2/1/1.
- 50 An anna was a sixteenth of an Indian rupee. This monetary denomination is now obsolete.
- 51 The stamps of the series were: Purana Qila (quarter anna); War Memorial Arch (now known as the India Gate) (half anna); Council House (now the Indian Parliament House or *Sansad Bhavan*) (one anna); Viceroy's House (now the Residence of the Indian President or *Rashtrapati Bhawan*) (two annas); Government of India Secretariat (now the Central Secretariat or *Kendriya Sachivalaya*) (three annas); Dominion Columns framing a profile of King George V with the Secretariat in the background (one rupee).
- 52 Cunningham, "Four Reports," 222.
- 53 Syed Ahmad, *Asar-us-Sanadid*.
- 54 Delhi Archives, DCO, 1912, file no. 27.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 According to government reports of the year: "An allotment of Rs. 33,256 was made for work at Purana Qila, where extensive operations were carried out comprising the removal of an undesirable modern collection of huts inside the walls and the repair of a portion of the circuit

- of the walls and of the gateways.” *Report on the Administration of Delhi Province for the Year 1913–1914* (Delhi: Superintending Government Printing, India, 1914), 6–7. The number of residents evicted from the Purana Qila in 1913 is mentioned in Zafar Hasan et al., *Monuments of Delhi*, vol. 2, 91.
- 57 Irving, *Indian Summer*; Narayani Gupta, “Kingsway to Rajpath: The Democratization of Lutyens’ Central Vista,” in *Perceptions of South Asia’s Visual Past*, ed. Catherine B. Asher and Thomas R. Metcalf (New Delhi: Oxford & IBH Publishing, 1994).
- 58 NAI, Education, Forests and Lands, 1941, file nos. 5–12. In each of these cases the Director General of the ASI seemed happy to provide permission for the use of the monuments in these unorthodox ways. Indeed, in 1941, it was the Governor General’s office that overturned the ASI’s permission to house the military recruiting camp in the Purana Qila on the basis that the monument should be kept open to the public as an archaeological site even during the war.
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 NAI, External Affairs, War, 1942, prog. no. 6 (12) W 1942 (B); NAI, Finance, War, 1942, prog. no. 6 (76)-W. These records suggest that more than two thousand internees were interned in the Purana Qila over a period of one year.
- 62 NAI, External Affairs, War, 1942, prog. no. 30 (18)-W (Secret).
- 63 Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Ritu Menon and Kamala Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in Indian Partition* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998); Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).
- 64 Suvir Kaul, ed., *The Partitions of Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001).
- 65 *Sindur* is the vermilion powder that married Hindu women wear in their hair parting.
- 66 Gyan Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
- 67 Ravinder Kaur, *Since 1947: Partition Narratives among Punjabi Migrants of Delhi* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- 68 The exact number of refugees accommodated in the Purana Qila is unknown. Contemporary newspaper reports recorded between ninety thousand and one hundred thousand refugees housed in Purana Qila and 62,000 refugees in Humayun’s Tomb in 1947. See “Purana Qila Camp May be Closed,” *Hindustan Times*, Wednesday October 22, 1947, 3; “Purana Qila Camp Closed/ Refugees Return Home,” *Hindustan Times*, Friday October 24, 1947, 3. It should also be mentioned here that despite the reports that the refugee camp was closed in 1947, a small portion of refugees in fact continued to live within the fort for several years to come.
- 69 For a more detailed exegesis on the use of monuments, in Delhi and other parts of northern India, as refugee camps during the Partition, see Nayanjot Lahiri, “Partitioning the Past: India’s Archaeological Heritage after Independence,” in *Appropriating the Past: Philosophical Perspectives on the Practice of Archaeology*, ed. Geoffrey Scarre and Robin Cunningham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
- 70 The Indian Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation’s decision to use Delhi’s monuments as refugee camps in 1947 may have been motivated by the fact that large monuments were often supplied with water and electric services. In addition, monuments with well-defined compounds and high walls could be used effectively to corral and manage the refugees. The precedent of

using monuments as refugee camps or internment spaces prior to independence may also have prompted the Indian government to continue their use as such in 1947.

- 71 NAI, ASI, 1948, file no. 15B/8.
- 72 NAI, ASI, 1952, file no. 15B/19.
- 73 NAI, ASI, 1948, file no. 15 B/8.
- 74 Aditi Chandra, "Potential of the Un-Exchangeable Monument: Delhi's Purana Qila, in the Time of Partition, c. 1947–63," *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* 2: 1 (2012).
- 75 Lahiri, "Partitioning the Past." Another frequent complaint raised by the ASI was the possibility that refugees might steal the antiquities stored in these monuments. Some of the storehouses were looted or vandalized by the refugees, which added to the ASI's anxiety that this might become a more frequent occurrence. As Nayanjot Lahiri has remarked, it was not only persons who were displaced and rendered stateless by Partition, but that the heritage of colonial India too had to be divided along the lines of Pakistan and India. Ibid. Even when antiquities were partitioned expeditiously, decisions as to where they could be housed were often delayed, leading to several collections being stored until museums could be built to take them in. Thus, refugee bodies and objects of antiquity functioned similarly in that they were both debris from Partition suspended in liminal states of belonging and domicile.
- 76 NAI, ASI, 1948, file no. 15 B/8. It should be noted that although the refugees at the Purana Qila and the Humayun's Tomb were overwhelmingly Muslim, this happened as a result of Muslim refugees voluntarily seeking shelter with one another rather than a design of segregation by the government.
- 77 Kavuri-Bauer, *Monumental Matters*.
- 78 *Report on the Administration of Delhi Province for the Year 1913–1914* (Delhi: Superintending Government Printing, India, 1914)
- 79 A. Ghosh, ed. "Indian Archaeology: A Review" (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1954–55), 13.
- 80 Ibid., 14.
- 81 B. B. Lal, "Excavations at Hastinapura and Other Explorations," *Ancient India: Bulletin of the Archaeological Survey of India 1954–55*, nos. 10–11 (1955); B. B. Lal, "Mahabharata and Archaeology," in *Mahabharata: Myth and Reality*, ed. S. P. Gupta and K. S. Ramachandran (Delhi: Agam Prakashan, 1976).
- 82 Irfan Habib, "Unreason and Archaeology: The 'Painted Grey Ware' and Beyond," *Social Scientist* 25, no. 1/2 (1997).
- 83 Ghosh cited in *ibid.*, 24.
- 84 B. B. Lal, "Indian Archaeology: A Review" (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1969–70).
- 85 M. N. Deshpande, "Indian Archaeology: A Review" (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1970–71), 8.
- 86 H. D. Sankalia, *Born for Archaeology: An Autobiography* (New Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation, 1978), 5.
- 87 Ibid., 79.
- 88 Viśwakarma may be translated as architect of the universe or founder of all arts. J. A. B. van Buitenen's translation of the *Mahabharata* from where the quote is taken translates the term as god-architect, explaining that although Maya was an *asura* (demon) his formidable talents as an artist and builder allowed him to use the title of Viśwakarma in reference to himself.

- 89 J. A. B. van Buitenen, *The Mahābhārata* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), vol 2: The Book of the Assembly Hall, 36–37.
- 90 Gyan Prakash, *Another Reason: Science and the Imagination of Modern India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).
- 91 Ibid., 9
- 92 Nayanjot Lahiri, *Finding Forgotten Cities: How the Indus Civilization Was Discovered* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2005).
- 93 Sudeshna Guha, “Negotiating Evidence: History, Archaeology and the Indus Valley Civilisation,” *Modern Asian Studies* 39: 2 (2005).
- 94 John Marshall cited in Lahiri, *Finding Forgotten Cities*, 2.
- 95 Mortimer Wheeler, *Civilizations of the Indus Valley and Beyond* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1966), 11.
- 96 Ibid. For a comprehensive analysis of Indus Valley Civilization, especially its urban culture, see Rita Wright, *The Ancient Indus: Urbanism, Economy, and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- 97 Wheeler, *Civilizations of the Indus Valley*, 9.
- 98 Lahiri, “Partitioning the Past.”
- 99 B. B. Lal, *Indian Archaeology since Independence* (New Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1964), 17.
- 100 Here I borrow Thongchai Winichakul’s concept of the geo-body as a spatial and imagined representation of the modern nation-state. Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1994).
- 101 Ibid., 17.
- 102 It has been noted by Romila Thapar that in 1975, the question of finding the precise dates for the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* became a public debate in India—one that found its way to the front pages of daily newspapers in India for several consecutive months at a time. Romila Thapar, “Differing Views,” in *Mahabharata: Myth and Reality*, ed. S. P. Gupta and K. S. Ramachandran (Delhi: Agam Prakashan, 1976), 166–76.
- 103 Nanda, *Delhi: The Built Heritage*.
- 104 Zafar Hasan et al., *Monuments of Delhi*.
- 105 This text is transcribed from a panel displayed in the museum and seen during a visit in 2009.

## Chapter Five

- 1 Syed Ahmad, *Asar-us-Sanadid* (1847), 1st ed., pt. 1, 127. Due to the style of Urdu used by Syed Ahmad, it is difficult to tell who the agent of the destruction was—whether it was the Islamic rulers or later Muslim converts.
- 2 This event was widely reported in the English language dailies as well as the vernacular press. For examples of reportage in English newspapers, see “Bajrang Dal to hold yajna,” *Hindustan Times*, Nov 14, 2000, 3; “VHP Tries to Perform Yagna at Qutab,” *Pioneer*, Nov 15, 2000, 3; “VHP Bid to Perform ‘Yajna’ Near Qutb Failed,” *Hindu*, Nov 15, 2000, 1. For coverage in the vernacular newspapers, see “Qutb Minar ke nikat devmukti yagna” in *Punjab Kesri*, Nov 15, 2000, 7 [Hindi]; “Devmukti yagna karne ke prayas mein VIHIP ke karyakarta giraftar” in *Nav Bharat Times*, Nov. 15, 2000, 5 [Hindi]; “Pooja karne pahunche VIHIP va Bajrang Dal ke 78 karyakarta giraftar, riha,” in *Dainik Jagaran*, Nov. 15, 2000, 5 [Hindi]. It should also be noted that the two thousand

protests by Hindu agitators outside the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque was preceded by a similar one in 1995.

- 3 The Vishwa Hindu Parishad is a political and cultural organization that represents Hindu nationalist ideology. Hindu nationalism is represented in the public domain by the Sangh Parivar, which is made up of three separate but ideologically united organizations: the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). The Sangh Parivar has described the VHP as its socio-cultural wing, the BJP as its political wing, and the RSS as its organizational wing. The Sangh Parivar also defines its goals as the establishment of the India as a Hindu homeland. For more on the historical rise of Hindu nationalism in India, see Tapan Basu and et al., *Khakhi Shorts, Saffron Flags: The Critique of the Hindu Right* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1993).
- 4 At the time of the protests, the Qutb complex was one of only two World Heritage Monuments in Delhi, the other being Humayun's Tomb. Both were listed as World Heritage Monuments in 1992. In 2007 the Red Fort (the monument under discussion in chapter 1) was listed as a World Heritage Monument as well.
- 5 Such is the definition of World Heritage as advanced by the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage adopted by UNESCO in 1972. <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf> (accessed June 5, 2015).
- 6 Finbarr B. Flood, "Refiguring Iconoclasm in the Early Indian Mosque," in *Negating the Image: Case Studies in Iconoclasm*, ed. Anne MacLanan and Jeffrey Johnson (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005); Richard M. Eaton, "Temple Desecration and Indo-Muslim States," in *Beyond Turk and Hindu: Rethinking Religious Identity in Islamicate South Asia*, ed. David Gilmartin and Bruce Lawrence (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000); Alka Patel, "The Historiography of Reuse in South Asia," *Archives of Asian Art* 59 (2009).
- 7 Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel, eds., *Iconoclasm: Beyond the Image Wars in Science, Religion, and Art* (Karlsruhe, Germany: ZKM Center for Art and Media; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).
- 8 Ibid., 14.
- 9 Finbarr B. Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009); Alka Patel, *Building Communities in Gujarat: Architecture and Society during the Twelfth through Fourteenth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).
- 10 Sunil Kumar, "Qutb and Modern Memory," in *The Present in Delhi's Pasts* (New Delhi: Three Essays Press, 2002).
- 11 Jama Masjid would have been an anachronistic moniker to use for the mosque after the fourteenth-century Friday mosque built by Firoz Shah Tughlaq and certainly by the time that Cunningham was writing when the term would have applied to the seventeenth-century Jama Masjid of Shahjahanabad.
- 12 It should be noted, however, that the emergence of the name Quwwat-ul-Islam was neither a colonial invention nor related to the much later twentieth-century phenomenon of Hindutva. Thus, while colonial archaeologists and proponents of Hindutva capitalized on the incendiary nature of the mosque's name, neither was responsible for its creation.
- 13 Syed Ahmad, *Asar-us-Sanadid* (1847), 1st ed.
- 14 Cunningham, "Four Reports."
- 15 James Fergusson, *The Illustrated Handbook of Architecture: Being a Concise and Popular Account of the Different Styles of Architecture Prevailing in All Ages and All Countries* (London: John Murray, 1855).

- 16 Cunningham, "Four Reports," 175. The inscription on the eastern gateway of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque has been translated as "This fort was conquered and this congregational mosque built in the months of the year 587 [Gregorian dates: 1191–92] by the amir, the great general, commander of the army, Pole of the World and Religion, the *amīr-ul-umarā* Aibek *sultānī* (that is, slave of the sultan) may God strengthen his helpers. [The materials of] twenty-seven idol temples (*but-khāna*), on each idol temple two million *diliwāls* had been spent, were used in this mosque. May God the Great and Glorious have mercy on that slave who prays for the faith of the good builder." Joseph Horowitz, *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica* (Calcutta, 1911–12). Also see Flood's interpretation of the rhetorical devices used in the inscription that argue against a literal reading of the inscription in Finbarr B. Flood, "Appropriation as Inscription: Making History in the First Friday Mosque of Delhi," in *Reuse Value: Spolia and Appropriation in Art and Architecture from Constantine to Sherrie Levine*, ed. Richard Brilliant and Dale Kinney (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing 2011).
- 17 Cunningham, "Four Reports," 177.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 170.
- 19 Sara Ahmed, "Affective Economies."
- 20 J. A. Page, *A Guide to the Qutb, Delhi*, ed. Archaeological Survey of India (Calcutta: Government of India, Central Publication Branch, 1927), 9–10.
- 21 *Ibid.*
- 22 The fragmentation of the Qutb complex into its constituent parts and their subsequent display at the British imperial metropole has previously been treated in Maria Antonella Pellizzari, "From Stone to Paper: Photographs of Architecture and the Traces of History," in *Traces of India*, ed. Pellizzari. See also Flood, "Appropriation as Inscription." For more on the politics of imperial collecting and museums as prime centers of colonial power and culture, see Breckenridge, "Colonial Collecting."
- 23 Flood, "Appropriation as Inscription."
- 24 Another striking case of this kind of reuse is the Ashokan pillar erected in the courtyard of the Friday mosque in Kotla Firoz Shah in Delhi in the fourteenth century by the Islamic regent Firoz Shah Tughlaq. For more regarding reuse of Indian pillars in Sultanate and Ghurid Delhi, see Finbarr B. Flood, "Pillars, Palimpsests, and Princely Practices: Translating the past in Sultanate Delhi," *Res: Journal of Anthropology and Aesthetics* 43 (Spring 2003). Flood has suggested that this kind of reuse was probably less to show Muslim triumph over a subjugated Hindu population, but rather Muslim rulers continuing an existing tradition of reuse that had been in place by non-Muslim rulers of the region.
- 25 As seen in fig. 5.6, a plaster cast of the Iron Pillar was also displayed during the 1872 Imperial Exhibition held at the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert) in London. In 1924, however, the wooden replica of the Iron Pillar was displayed in the Palace of Industry at the British Empire Exhibition.
- 26 "Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India," in *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1926).
- 27 Cunningham, "Four Reports," 176.
- 28 For instance, in her outstanding exegesis on reuse in India, art historian Alka Patel has offered multiple rationales (beyond iconoclasm) for the presence of "Hindu" or Jain fragments in twelfth-century Islamic architecture. Within these she includes a theory of pragmatism, where building materials from abandoned or dilapidated buildings (a common condition in the

- seismically prone parts of northern India) were reused to economize on architectural materials and labor. See Patel, *Building Communities in Gujarat*.
- 29 Flood, "Appropriation as Inscription."
- 30 OIOC, Mss Eur F 112 487, 6–7.
- 31 For an analysis of imperial collections and their display at the South Kensington Museum, see Partha Mitter and Craig Clunas, "The Empire of Things: Engagement with the Orient," in *A Grand Design: The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum*, ed. Malcolm Baker and Brenda Richardson (Baltimore, MD: Baltimore Museum of Art, 1997).
- 32 Jains believe that twenty-four *tirthankaras* (teachers) have upheld the religious philosophy of Jainism through time. Mahavira (who lived in sixth-century India) is considered the last of the twenty-four Jain *tirthankaras*.
- 33 "Archaeological Survey of India: Annual Report," in *Archaeological Survey of India: Annual Report*, ed. H. Hargreaves (New Delhi, 1926–27 [1990]). The ASI report also claims that the images were inscribed and dated to be from the seventeenth century (giving the Hindu date of Vikram Samvat 1671 or 1614 AD) but were found to be of "no iconographical or historic interest."
- 34 For a more extensive analysis of how colonial administrators placed religious artifacts in museums, thus turning them from objects of "cult value" into objects of "exhibition" value see the introduction in Richard Davis, *Lives of Indian Images*. For a broader debate on the secularization of religious objects as well as the *practices associated* with them via their placement in museums, see Saloni Mathur and Kavita Singh, eds., *No Spitting, No Touching, No Praying: The Museum in South Asia* (New Delhi: Routledge India, 2015).
- 35 Kumar, "Qutb and Modern Memory."
- 36 Davis, *Lives of Indian Images*; Romila Thapar, *Somanatha: The Many Voices of a History* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2004).
- 37 Today the "gates of Somanatha" languish at the Agra Fort accompanied by an explanation of the chain of errors that led Ellenborough to cart them away from Ghazni.
- 38 K. M. Munshi, *Jaya Somanatha* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1976).
- 39 Thapar, *Somanatha*.
- 40 The *rath-yatra* (literally, "pilgrimage by chariot") was a modern reenactment of the Hindu god Rama's journey across the subcontinent. Led by the Hindu nationalist leader L. K. Advani, the *rath-yatra* left a trail of communal violence in its wake. It was also a grand performative gesture of reterritorializing India as a Hindu homeland. For an analysis of the spatial and territorial strategies used to reshape India as a Hindu homeland, see Satish Deshpande, "Communalising the Nation-Space: Notes on Spatial Strategies of Hindutva," *Economic and Political Weekly* 30: 50 (1995).
- 41 For a detailed description of Hindu-Muslim frictions at the site of the mosque between 1947 and 1986, see Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). A brief gloss on Ayodhya and its centrality within the ideology of Hindutva can also be found in Christophe Jaffrelot, ed., *Hindu Nationalism: A Reader* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).
- 42 Peter van der Veer, "God Must be Liberated! A Hindu Liberation Movement in Ayodhya," *Modern Asian Studies* 21: 2 (1987), 293.
- 43 Archaeology (and the ASI as a government institution) played a definitive hand in the calcification of communal assertions to Ayodhya, often manufacturing "scientific" evidence in the shoring up of Hindutva claims that the ruins of a temple dedicated to the Hindu deity Rama

- had been found below the Babri Masjid. For more on this see D. Mandal, *Ayodhya: Archaeology after Excavation* (New Delhi: Tulika, 2007).
- 44 “Somnath: The Shrine Eternal,” *Hindu Organiser*, May 23, 1955.
- 45 For a nuanced analysis of the historical accounts of Islamic iconoclasm and Somanatha, see Thapar, *Somanatha*. For example, she points out that while Aurangzeb did issue an order in the mid-seventeenth century to destroy the temple at Somanatha and convert it to a mosque, it appears that his orders were not in fact carried out. This led to him reissuing these orders in 1706 just before his death, and although some additions were made in the form of minarets and domes, these were hardly of the scale or careful quality at the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque. Thapar notes that if the accounts of Islamic destruction of the site have become inflated through the centuries, so have accounts of the temples “Hindu” rebuilding, which found few patrons in the centuries leading up to the initiatives undertaken post-independence.
- 46 Page, *Guide to the Qutb*, 9.
- 47 Tapati Guha-Thakurta, “The Compulsions of Visual Representation in Colonial India,” in *Traces of India: Photography, Architecture, and the Politics of Representation, 1850–1900*, ed. Maria Antonella Pellizzari (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003).
- 48 Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*.
- 49 The other sites featured in the archaeological stamp series of 1948 were a carved relief from the Ajanta caves, the Konarak Horse, Trimurti sculpture at Elephanta caves, Bodhisattva statue, Bodhi Gaya Temple, Sanchi Stupa East Gate, Lingaraja temple at Bhuvanesvara, Gol Gumbad Bijapur, Khandarya Mahadeva Temple, Golden Temple Amritsar, Victory Tower Chittorgarh, Red Fort, Delhi, Taj Mahal Agra, Shatrunjaya Temple Palitana, Pitalkhora Yaksha, and the Kalibangan Seal.
- 50 *Organiser*, July 31, 1947, 10.
- 51 A few examples of such claims can be seen in Gopal Vinayak Godse, *Qutub Minar is Vishnu Dhvaj: The Lotus based Vishnudhwaja on the basis of the Vastu Shastra/ A Scientific Study* (Delhi: Surya Bharti Prakashan, 1997); D. S. Trivedi, *Visnudhwaja or Qutub Minar* (Varanasi, India: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1962). Popular conceptions of the “Hindu” patrons and origins of the Qutub Minar have also been reproduced in recent coffee-table books on Delhi such as Charles Lewis and Karoki Lewis, *Mehrauli: A View from the Qutb* (New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2002).
- 52 Kanwar Sain, “Who Built Qutab Minar?,” *Organiser*, August 15, 1954.
- 53 This claim is not factually true as there are several epigraphs on the Qutub Minar possibly attributing the building of the first storey to Qutub-ud-din Aibak, clearly attributing patronage of top storeys to Iltutmish (r. 1211–36), and later additions and repairs to Firoz Shah Tughlaq and Bahlol Lodhi. For a reliable translation of all epigraphs and inscriptions on the Qutub Minar, see Zafar Hasan et al., *Monuments of Delhi*, 3–7.
- 54 Sain, “Who Built Qutab Minar?”
- 55 For more on the debate regarding Hindus and their conversion to Islam and Christianity, see Jaffrelot, *Hindu Nationalism*. Also see essays on conversion and Hindutva by Gauri Viswanathan (“Literacy and Conversion in the Discourse of Hindu Nationalism,” 333–55) and Sumit Sarkar (“Christian Conversions, Hindutva, and Secularism,” 356–68), in *The Crisis of Secularism in India*, ed. Anuradha Dingwaney Needham and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007). The most recent manifestation of recovering Hindus from Christianity and Islam are the *ghar-vaapsi* (literally, “return home”) ceremonies conducted by

- the RSS and the VHP since 2014, where non-Hindus (largely Muslims but also a fair number of Christians) are brought back into the fold of Hinduism through a conversion ceremony.
- 56 Atal Behari Vajpayee, "We Are Not One Because We Are Citizens of the Same State, But It Is Because We Are One that India Is One State," *Organiser*, October 9, 1961.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Vajpayee's choice of Islamic rulers is telling as the three emperors he mentions are those remembered as consummate iconoclasts through Indian history. The destruction and mutilation of the Somanatha temple has been attributed to Mahmud of Ghazni. Mohammad Ghori, who conquered Delhi in the late twelfth century, appointed slave kings who laid the foundation for Sultanate rule in northern India as well as the flourishing of Islam in the subcontinent for several centuries after. The Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque was begun by Mohammad Ghori's slave-king Qutb-ud-din Aibak. Finally, Aurangzeb, orthodox Sunni and Mughal emperor of seventeenth-century India, persists in India's collective memory as having destroyed several Hindu temples and sites of worship including issuing orders to do the same at Somanatha. That Vajpayee chooses to focus on the iconoclasts of Islam and ignore the well-known cosmopolitanism of other Mughal emperors, such as Humayun, Akbar, or Shahjahan, reveals the propagation of the myth of Islam as a community defined by the willful destruction of Hindu architecture and society.
- 60 Arvind Rajagopal, "Ram Janmabhoomi, Consumer Identity and Image-Based Politics," *Economic and Political Weekly* 29: 27 (July, 1994); Tapan Raychaudhuri, "Shadows of the Swastika: Historical Perspectives on the Politics of Hindu Communalism," *Modern Asian Studies* 34: 2 (2000).
- 61 Catherine B. Asher, "Multiple Memories: Lives of the Taj Mahal," in *Crossing Cultures: Conflict, Migration and Convergence: The Proceedings of the 32nd International Congress of the History of Art*, ed. Jaynie Anderson (Carlton, Australia: Miegunyah Press, 2009).
- 62 Kumar, "Qutb and Modern Memory."
- 63 "Qutb Minar and Its Monuments, Delhi" from the UNESCO World Heritage Site website. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/233> (accessed March 23, 2013).
- 64 Qutb Minar UNESCO nomination. Published on the UNESCO World Heritage Site website: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/233> (accessed March 23, 2013).
- 65 "Qutb Minar and its Monuments, Delhi" from the UNESCO World Heritage Site website. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/233> (accessed March 23, 2013).
- 66 Lucia Allais, "Integrities: The Salvage of Abu Simbel," *Grey Room* 50 (2013).
- 67 The BJP-led government has been more sympathetic (and often-times vocally supportive) of the Hindutva cause. The Congress-led government, on the other hand, has traditionally run on a platform of secularism promising to uphold the constitutional rights of minorities in India.
- 68 Two other Islamic monuments in India were submitted for consideration as World Heritage Sites during this period and at the time of this writing both are still on the tentative list for nomination. They were the Golconda Fort (1998) and Tomb of Sher Shah Suri at Sasaram (1998). Neither of these monuments carry the controversial histories of iconoclasm as seen with the Qutb Minar, the temple at Somanatha, or the Babri Masjid. See the UNESCO website at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/in> (accessed March 23, 2013).
- 69 NAI, ASI, 1962, file no: 5/1/NWC/14/62/Monuments.
- 70 See, for example, "Devotees Barge into Protected Mosque," *Times of India*, March 4, 1991; "Prayers at Safdarjung Disallowed," *National Herald*, March 5, 1991; "Crowd Breaks Open Jami Masjid Lock," *Indian Express*, March 19, 1991.

- 71 Howayda al-Harithy has explored the clash between UNESCO's definition of universal cultural heritage and the everyday needs of local communities in her research on Tripoli, Lebanon. See Howayda al-Harithy, "[Reframing] 'World Heritage,'" *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 17: 1 (2005). Another provocative comparison can be made between the reactivation of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque as a space of worship and the ongoing battle in Turkey by Islamic groups to reclaim the nation's three Hagia Sofias as functioning mosques rather than touristic spaces. See the work of Tuğba Tanyeri-Erdemir for more on this.
- 72 See the ASI Report for the years 1925–26. Maulvi Zafar Hasan, "Desecration of Sultan Ghari's Tomb at Delhi," in *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India*, ed. J. F. Blakiston (Delhi, 1925–26 [1990]).
- 73 Nayanjot Lahiri, "Partitioning the Past."
- 74 The ASI defines Class I monuments as "those monuments which from their present condition and historical or archaeological value ought to be maintained in permanent good repair." And further defines Class I(a) monuments as "monuments in the possession or charge of Government, or in respect of which Government must undertake the cost of all measures of conservation." Zafar Hasan et al., *Monuments of Delhi*, n.p.
- 75 Latour and Weibel, *Iconoclasm*, 18.
- 76 Ibid., 14.
- 77 "Masjid mein puja karne ki anumati na di to aandolan," *Dainik Jagaran*, December 15, 2000, 5.

## Epilogue

- 1 Prithviraj Chauhan defeated Mohammad Ghori in battle in 1191 when the latter made his first incursion into the subcontinent. In benevolence Prithviraj Chauhan, however, is said to have pardoned and freed the captured Islamic king. Mohammad Ghori returned in 1192 with an even larger army to defeat and kill Prithviraj Chauhan and establish Islamic rule in northern India. Although celebrated as a Hindu patriot, Prithviraj Chauhan occupies an ambiguous position in the Hindutva historical narrative. On the one hand, his decision to free Mohammad Ghori has been framed as a mark of Hindu valor and generosity. On the other hand, his failure to flex military muscle has been framed as the cause of the end of Hindu empires and the rise of Islamic rule in northern India.
- 2 There is archaeological evidence that while the base structure of the smaller Lal Kot and the larger Qila Rai Pithora was built during the time of the Tomar kings of Delhi and Prithviraj Chauhan, much of what is visible today was constructed during the time of Ala-ud-din Khilji in the early fourteenth century. The ASI heritage listing says this about the ruined walls: "Muslim chronicles of India aver that Ala-ud-din Khilji repaired and fortified the walls of Raipithura's city after the invasion of the Mongols in the year 1303 . . . and this statement receives support from the structural remains discovered." Maulvi Zafar Hasan cited in R. B. Dikshit, "The Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India 1936–37" (repr. Delhi: Swati, 1990).
- 3 Several newspapers reported the antagonism between the ASI and the DDA on this issue. See "High Court Issues Notices to ASI, DDA, Delhi Police," *Statesman*, June 15, 2001, 4; "ASI Opposes DDA Center at Saket," *Times of India* (New Delhi edition), June 21, 2001, 2.
- 4 A plaque on the site mentions that ground was broken for the Qila Rai Pithora Park and Museum in mid-2000. Since Jagmohan's petition to the Lok Sabha was made in late 2000, the

hearing appears to have come about in response to the ASI's objection to the heritage site being reused in this way.

- 5 See Lok Sabha, "Synopsis of Debates (Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)," December 22, 2000.
- 6 Nigel Thrift, "Intensities of Feeling: Towards a Spatial Politics of Affect," *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 86: 1 (2004), 58.
- 7 The continuities and disjunctures in the history of New Delhi over a century have been explored in Nayanjot Lahiri, "A Capital Century," *Caravan: A Journal of Politics and Culture*, 2011.
- 8 Gupta, "Kingsway to Rajpath."



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