

LOST IN TRANSLATION: ARCHITECTURE, TAXONOMY, AND THE EASTERN “TURKS”

As far as Anatolia is concerned, whatever the neologism one chooses to describe the cultural experience of the Muslim Turks in the region, whether transplantation, osmosis, diffusion, or acculturation, the most widespread and on-going process was one of translation.

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No less than the emergent Turkic polities of medieval Anatolia, the Ghaznavid and Ghurid sultanates of Afghanistan and northern India and the Delhi sultanate that followed in their wake were—indeed, are—caught between multiple worlds. Generally identified as Turks regardless of their ethnic origins, the Persianized elites of Ghazna, Delhi, and other centers negotiated between the diverse cultures of a wider Islamic world to the west and those of their north Indian territories to the east (fig. 1). Comparisons between Turkic expansion into Anatolia and into India during the eleventh, twelfth, and early thirteenth centuries are common. In both cases the impact of these expansions has been evaluated along a continuum ranging from the diffusion of Persian as a court language to the cultural disjunctions arising from what has frequently been depicted as a “clash of civilizations.”²

For example, in an article entitled *The Islamic Frontier in the East*, published in 1974, the historian J. F. Richards compared the encounter between “two radically different civilizations, Islamic and Hindu/Buddhist,” with the encounter between Muslim and Christian civilizations, invoking Paul Wittek’s *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (1938) as a potential model for conceptualizing the eastern frontier of the Islamic world.³ To accompany his article, Richards provided a chronological table of confrontations between “Hindu” and “Muslim” armies, defining the religious identity of the aggressor in each case. Wittek may not have been the only historian of Anatolia that Richards had in mind, for the table is curiously reminiscent of one that Speros Vryonis Jr. had provided in his *Decline of Medieval Hellenism* three years earlier, an alphabet of confron-

tation in which *P* stands for pillaged, *X* for sacked or destroyed, *E* for enslaved, *M* for massacred, and so forth.⁴ Both endeavors exemplify what Barbara Metcalf has dubbed the “vertical fallacy,” the deployment of taxonomies in which premodern identities are equated with sectarian affiliation, reducing complex processes of transcultural encounter to linear tabulations of historical events.⁵

In both regions, narratives of Turkic despoliation and the disjunction arising from it have often been articulated around architectural monuments. Despite continuities in workshop practices, the reuse of architectural elements in Rum Seljuk and early Ottoman mosques on the one hand, and in Ghurid and early Sultanate mosques on the other, has often been read as an appropriation that constituted a language of power and domination wielded by the conquering Turks.⁶ A common preference for a stone medium in Anatolia and India and the hegemony of the central Islamic lands in modern art-historical discourse have given rise to a widespread assumption that Rum Seljuk and early Sultanate monuments attempt (with varying degrees of success) to replicate the brick forms of Persianate architecture using regional idioms, media, and techniques. In other words, the process of negotiation referred to above is not only manifest in the medieval architecture of Anatolia and South Asia but also replicated in its inscription into colonial, nationalist, and postcolonial art histories.

The first brief descriptions of Ghaznavid architecture in Afghanistan were published in the early decades of the nineteenth century, appearing contemporaneously with the earliest studies on the Umayyad, Mamluk, and Nasrid architecture of the southern Mediterranean.⁷ This coincidence reflects the increased possibilities for first-hand observation of medieval Islamic monuments afforded by European colonial adventures in both regions. Although rarely noted, the inception of scholarship on Ghaznavid architecture is directly related to the opportunities and interest generated by the First

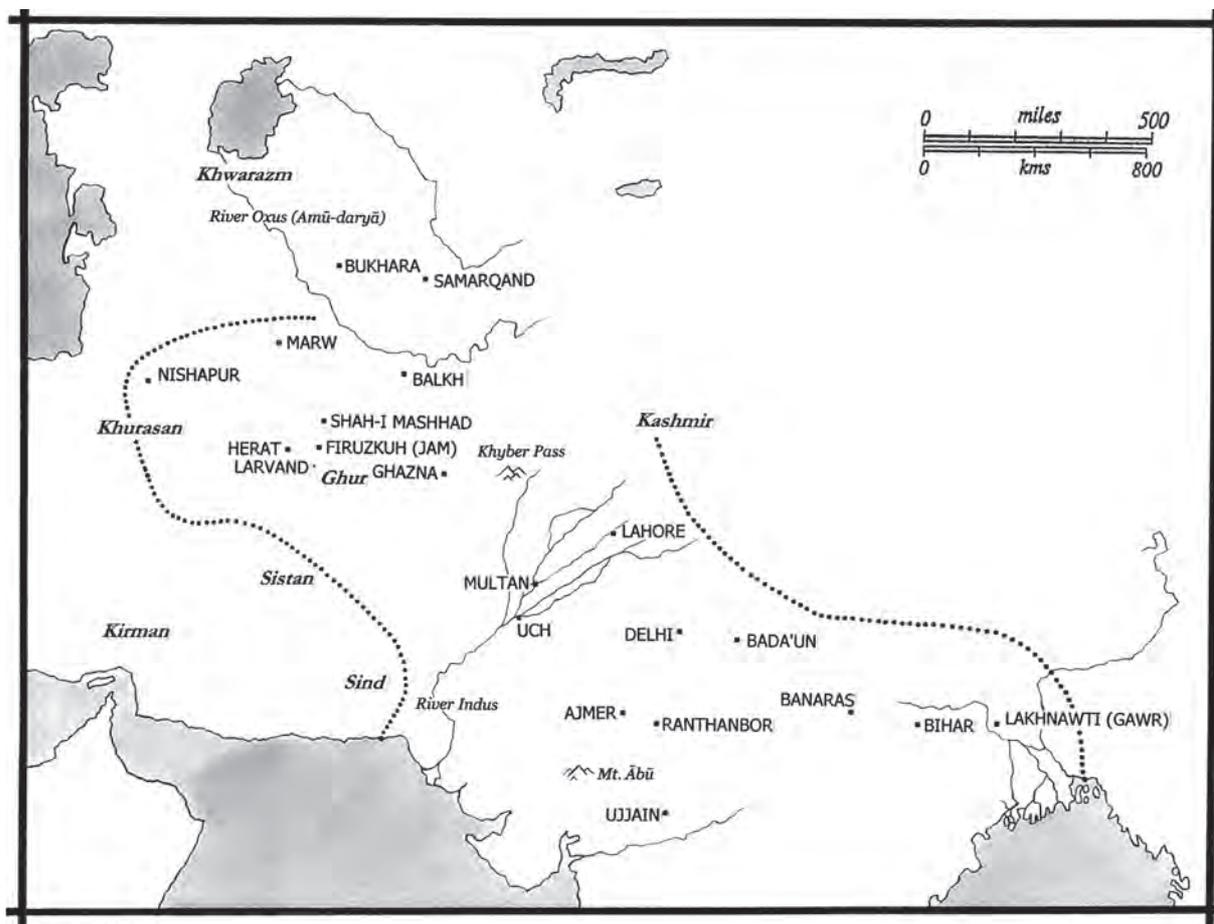


Fig. 1. Map showing the approximate extent of the Ghurid sultanate with the principal sites marked. (Drawn by Max Schneider)

Anglo-Afghan War (1839–42).⁸ The British invasion of Afghanistan spawned what appears to be the earliest study of Ghaznavid epigraphy, including the first published readings of the inscriptions on the celebrated minarets of Ghazna (fig. 2).⁹ This appeared in the wake of the controversial “Gates of Somnath” incident of 1842, in which the wooden doors from the tomb of the most (in)famous scion of the Ghaznavid dynasty, Sultan Mahmud b. Sebuktigin (r. 388–421/998–1030), were carried back to India at the behest of the governor-general, Lord Ellenborough (figs. 3–4). The looting of the tomb reflected contemporary belief that its doors had been seized by the Turks from the temple at Somnath in Gujarat when the site was raided by Ghaznavid armies in 1025, a belief that the presence of Arabic texts in Kufic script did little to mitigate.¹⁰

In a dispatch to the British general in charge of the forces in Afghanistan, Ellenborough wrote,

You will bring away from the tomb of Mahmud of Ghuznee his club, which hangs over it; and you will bring away the Gates of his tomb, which are the gates of the temple of Somnauth. These will be the just trophies of your successful march.¹¹

Although it could not be found in 1842, the *durbash*, or mace, of Mahmud, often described as an Oriental counterpart for Excalibur, was believed to be the instrument with which the sultan smashed the idol of Somnath during his attack on the temple.

The origins of belief in the existence and associations of gates and mace are unclear, but contemporary speeches given in the House of Commons suggest

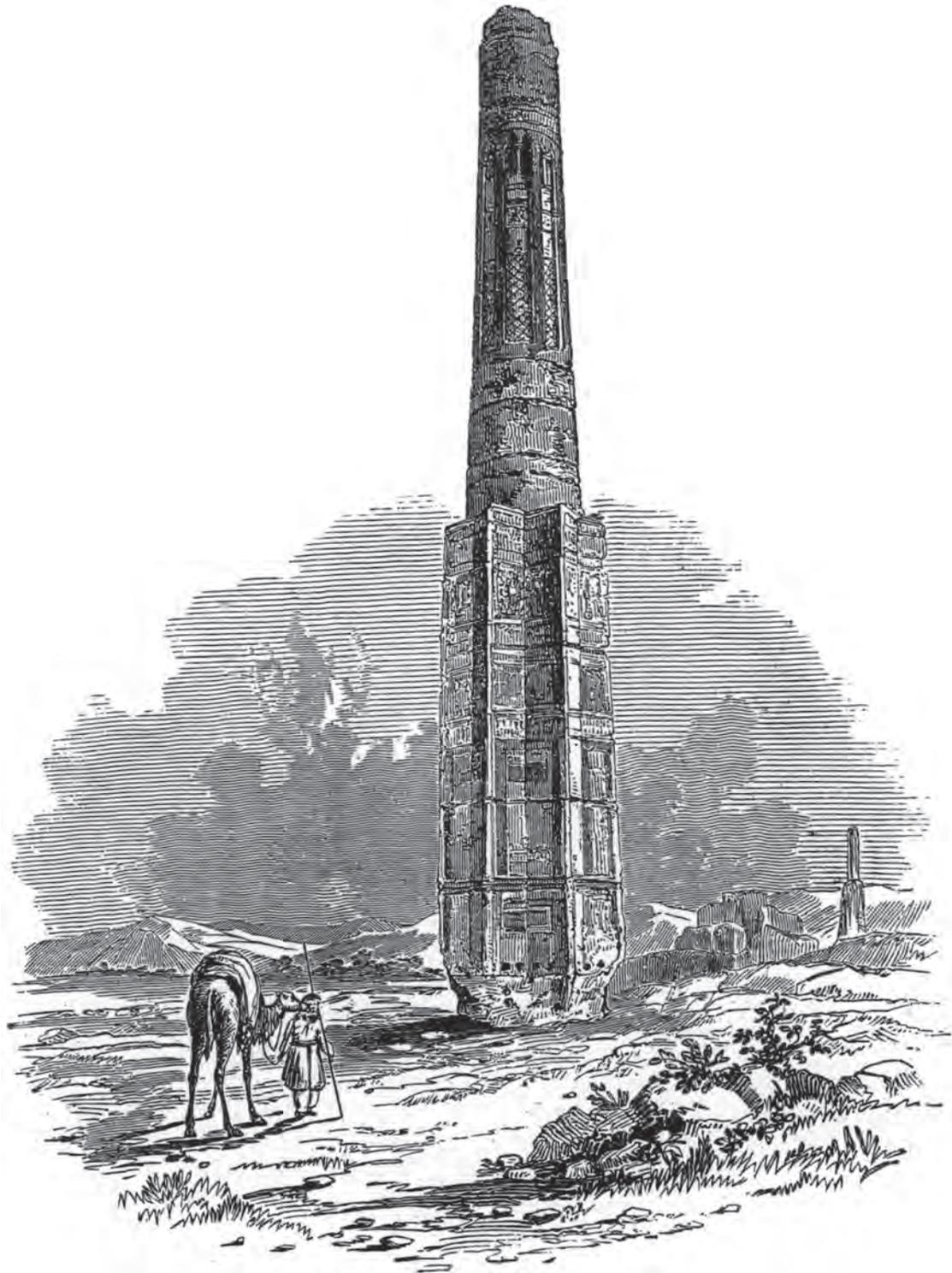


Fig. 2. The minaret of Mas'ud III at Ghazna. (After Godfrey T. Vigne, *A Personal Narrative of a Visit to Ghazni, Kabul and Afghanistan* [London, 1840], 127)

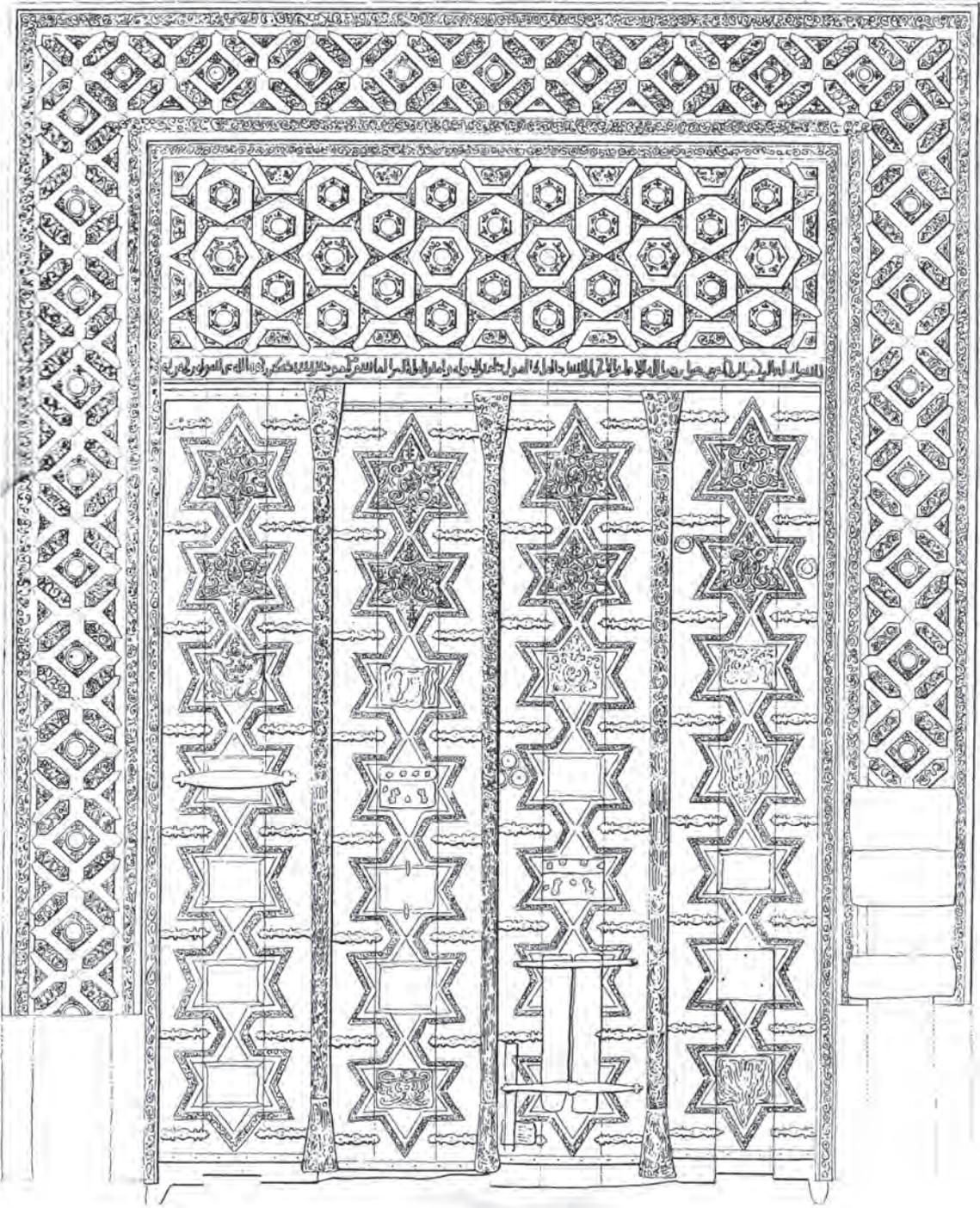


Fig. 3. The “Gates of Somnath,” from a sketch published in 1843. (After Edward Sanders, C. Blood, John Studdart, and C. F. North, “Documents Relating to the Gates of Somnath; Forwarded to the Society by the Government of India,” *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 12, 1 [1843], pl. 1)



Fig. 4. The tomb of Mahmud ibn Sebuktigin at Ghazna, with its gates still in place. (After James Rattray, *Scenery, Inhabitants and Costumes of Afghaunistan* [London, 1847–48], pl. 10. Courtesy of Yale Center of British Art, Paul Mellon Collection)

that the idiosyncratic episode was inspired by popular traditions regarding the tomb and its contents. In addition, the British may have been trying to outdo an old rival, the powerful Sikh ruler of the Punjab, Ranjit Singh (d. 1839), who reportedly had demanded the gates from the deposed ruler of Afghanistan as the price of providing him with refuge a decade or so earlier.¹² Belief in the existence of the mace may also have been fueled by the burgeoning British scholarship on Indo-Persian texts in the decades before the First Anglo-Afghan War. Neither mace nor gates appear in any account of Mahmud’s raid on Somnath in the first three centuries after it occurred; the detail of Mahmud’s mace seems to have been first introduced in the sixteenth century by the Deccani historian Firishta. In the last decades of the eighteenth century, Firishta’s

history had been published in an English translation that was widely read, and a definitive translation had appeared only a decade before the Somnath expedition took place.¹³ This translation is invoked in at least one account of Ghazna published at the time of the Anglo-Afghan War, and is likely to have been familiar to the scholarly looters of 1842.¹⁴

The objects looted from Ghazna were not simply trophies of notional British conquests, however. On the contrary, their identification as “Muslim” booty seized from India was central to the role afforded them within an elaborate spectacle, for Ellenborough planned a ritual presentation to the “Hindu” populace and their restoration to a temple that no longer existed. The Governor-General’s intentions were heralded in a proclamation issued in Hindi, Persian,

and English in which Ellenborough contrasted the miseries of “former times” with the colonial present, declaring that

The insult of eight hundred years is at last avenged. The gates of the temple of Somnauth, so long the memorial of your humiliation, are become the proudest record of your national glory; the proof of your superiority in arms over nations beyond the Indus.¹⁵

A Manichaean vision of precolonial history was thus mobilized around and materialized in medieval monuments, which consequently emerged as sites for the construction and (re)negotiation of a dyadic past. Especially after the Mutiny of 1857, this contrast between the arbitrary violence of Muslim rule and the rational benevolence of British administration was often articulated around figurations of a golden “Hindu” past subject to “Muslim” rupture.¹⁶ The theme surfaces in the preface to the first volume of Elliot and Dowson’s *History of India*, a seminal compendium of translated medieval Arabic and Persian sources published in 1867, the *raison d’être* of which is given as follows:

They will make our native subjects more sensible of the immense advantages accruing to them under the mildness and equity of our rule. If instruction were sought for from them, we should be spared the rash declarations respecting Muhammadan India, which are frequently made by persons not otherwise ignorant...The few glimpses we have, even among the short Extracts in this single volume, of Hindús slain for disputing with Muhammadans, of general prohibitions against processions, worship, and ablutions, and of other intolerant measures, of idols mutilated, of temples razed, of forcible conversions and marriages, of proscriptions and confiscations, of murders and massacres, and of the sensuality and drunkenness of the tyrants who enjoined them, show us that this picture is not overcharged, and it is much to be regretted that we are left to draw it for ourselves from out the mass of ordinary occurrences, recorded by writers who seem to sympathize with no virtues, and to abhor no vices.¹⁷

Medieval Arabic and Persian accounts of looting and temple desecration by Ghaznavid and Ghurid sultans found apparent validation in the first mosques erected after the rapid eastward expansion of the Shansabanid sultanate of Ghur in central Afghanistan at the end of the twelfth century. The mosques were constructed from a *mélange* of newly carved and reused materials, some of it garnered from earlier temples. Consequently, these too could serve on occasion to manifest a colonial largesse articulated around the

theme of historical rupture. In October 1870, less than three decades after the Somnath episode, the Viceroy of India, Lord Mayo, held a *darbar* in the western Indian city of Ajmir in Rajasthan to commemorate the foundation of an elite college bearing his name. As part of the festivities, elaborately carved stone pillars were taken from the Arhai-din-ka-Jhonpra Mosque, built in the former capital of the Chauhan rajasthan after their defeat by the Shansabanid sultans of Ghur in 588 (1192) (fig. 5).¹⁸ The pillars, which had been reused in the construction of the mosque, were now used to fashion a triumphal arch under which the viceroy and the local Rajput chiefs were intended to march in procession. Ironically, the removal of pillars from the Ajmir mosque to honor the viceroy and his guests flew in the face of a notice affixed to the mosque in 1809 by Daulat Rao Sindhia, the Maharaja of Gwalior, forbidding the quarrying of stone from the site, a precocious example of architectural conservation well in advance of the earliest British legislation on the subject.¹⁹

The “Gates of Somnath” episode is generally seen as an isolated event, an idiosyncratic adventure of Ellenborough’s conceiving. However, in its espousal of an interventionist and self-consciously politicized framework for understanding medieval architecture, the gesture was unique only in the negative publicity that it attracted. Both Ellenborough’s theatrical manipulation of Ghaznavid marquetry and Lord Mayo’s appropriation of Chauhan masonry are part of more extensive nineteenth-century experiments with rituals designed to represent British colonial authority to Indian subjects.²⁰ The integration of pillars believed to have been purloined from destroyed Hindu and Jain temples into a victory arch recalls earlier suggestions that the Gates of Somnath should be set within a triumphal arch to be erected in front of the Governor-General’s palace in Calcutta.²¹ In both cases, the monuments appear as *de jure* or *de facto* commemorations of British mastery over the Indian past, an endeavor to which textual translation, military adventurism, and colonial aspirations were equally instrumental.

The utility of medieval monuments as sites for the construction and negotiation of historical memory and meaning was directly related to the roles ascribed to them within colonial histories and art histories. However, despite later British incursions into Afghanistan, the geographic divisions and political boundaries of empire determined the limits of early scholarship, with a consequent emphasis on the more accessible



Fig. 5. The Arhai-din-ka-Jhonpra Mosque at Ajmir. (Author's photo)

Indian monuments at the expense of those in the Afghan “homelands” of the Ghaznavids and Ghurids. The resulting lacuna was noted in 1876 by the architectural historian James Fergusson, in a passage with depressingly contemporary resonances:

Though centuries of misrule have weighed on this country since the time of the Ghaznavides, it is scarcely probable that all traces of their magnificence have passed away; but till their cities are examined and photographed by some one competent to discriminate between what is good or bad, or old or new, we must be content merely to indicate the position of the style, leaving this chapter to be written when the requisite information shall have been obtained. In the meanwhile it is satisfactory to know that between Herat and the Indus there do exist a sufficient number of monuments to enable us to connect the styles of the West with those of the East. They have been casually described by travellers, but not in such a manner as to render them available for our purposes; and in the unsettled state of the country it may be some time yet before their elucidation can be accomplished.”²²

The mediating role that Fergusson ascribes to the Afghan monuments—their potential to bridge the gap between the styles of East and West—reflects their liminality not only in a geographic sense but also within the rigid taxonomies that Fergusson (dubbed by contemporaries “a Linnaeus to Indian architecture”) was constructing for the nascent discourse of South Asian architectural history. Within these taxonomies, style was invariably correlated to race (broadly conceived to include ethnicity, religious affiliation, caste, and even occupation) and tethered to a principle of purity underwritten by the endogamous character of Indian society.²³ Represented by the modalities of temple and mosque, Indic and Islamic (or “Hindu” and “Muslim”) architectural traditions were seen as not only distinct but also antipathetic and incommensurate; as the current entry on al-Hind in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* explains, idol-temples “were not only anathema to Islam but were its direct antithesis.”²⁴ In colonial and postcolonial architectural history mosque and temple came to function as mutually antithetical

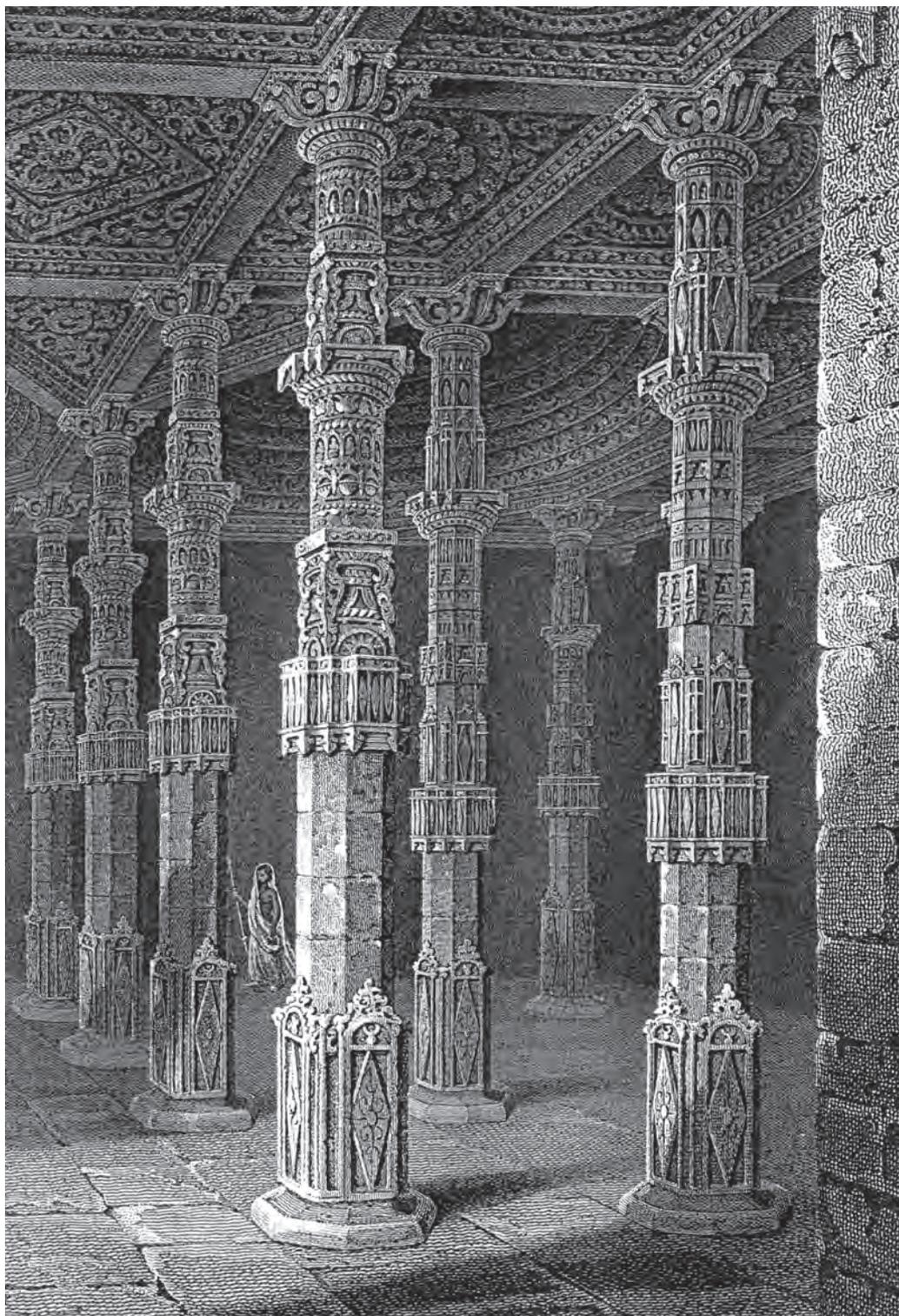


Fig. 6. Engraving of the Ajmir mosque accompanying Tod's description. (After James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajast'han or, the Central and Western Rajpoot States of India* 2 vols. [London, 1829], 1:778)



Fig. 7. Qutb Mosque, Delhi. General view of *riwāq* with reused columns. (Author’s photo)

metonymies not only for religious identities or cultural predispositions but for divergent “racial” characteristics—the clarity, openness and intelligibility of the mosque embodying the realist, formalist “mind of the Muslim,” in contrast to the mysterious domain of the temple, its “introspective, complex and indeterminate” nature indexing the idealist, rhythmic “mind of the Hindu.”²⁵

These tropes are already present in the earliest discussion of any Ghaznavid or Ghurid monument by a European scholar, James Tod’s 1829 analysis of the Arhai-din-ka-Jhonpra mosque at Ajmir (from which the pillars for Lord Mayo’s triumphal arch were later garnered) in his *Annals and Antiquities of Rajast’han* (fig. 6).²⁶ This was followed three years later by a substantial account of the Qutb Mosque in Delhi (1192 onwards; figs. 7, 11–12) by Walter Ewer published in *Asiatic Researches*, the journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal.²⁷ The monuments at Ajmir and Delhi were preeminent among a number of mosques built after the conquest of north India in the 1190s by the Shansabanid sultans of Ghur. Both were considerably enlarged and remodeled in the 1220s by the Delhi sultan Iltutmish, a former member of the *bandagān-i*

khāṣṣ, the elite mamluks of the Ghurid sultans, who appear with greater frequency in the foundation texts of the early monuments than do their Shansabanid masters.

Writing about the Ajmir mosque only three decades after Abbé Gregoire popularized the use of the term “vandal” to stigmatize the iconoclasts of the French Revolution, Tod condemns the “Goths and Vandals of Rajasthan”, admonishing his reader:

Let us bless rather than execrate the hand, though it be that of a Turk, which has spared, from whatever motive, one of the most perfect, as well as the most ancient, monuments of Hindu architecture.²⁸

The Turk to whom Tod refers is a stock figure of early Indo-Islamic historiography, a composite *mélange* of Ghaznavid raider, Ghurid mamluk (both of whom were indeed ethnic Turks), and the *Turushka* of medieval Sanskrit texts. The latter was an ethnic term that functioned as a generic denotation for Muslims, a testament to the coincidence between the experience of Islam and Turks during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.²⁹

The oppositional sense of this identity is common



Fig. 8. Main gateway of the Arhai-din-ka-Jhonpra Mosque at Ajmir. (Author's photo)

to medieval Persian texts, where the contrast between Turk and Hindu is standard,³⁰ but it is notably absent from medieval Arabic and Persian descriptions of the early monuments. With a single exception these ignore the reuse of architectural materials and instead emphasize as their most culturally significant elements the extensive inscriptions that the mosques bear.³¹ Tod's discussion of the Ajmir mosque thus marks a significant watershed in the nature and tone of writing on early Indo-Islamic architecture, projecting oppositional identities onto medieval monuments and inaugurating the oft-repeated notion that these monuments not only are the products of iconoclastic vandals, but also that they constitute "disjointed memorials of two distinct and distant eras: that of the independent Hindu, and that of the conquering Muhammadan."³²

Contrasting the gate of the mosque (composed of newly carved elements: fig. 8) with its prayer hall (constructed from reused columns: fig. 6), Tod draws from the repertoire of classicizing imagery that both informed and structured colonial responses to the remains of South Asia's past:

The mind, after all retires dissatisfied: with me it might be from association. Even the gateway, however elegant, is unsuitable to the genius of the place. Separately considered, they are each magnificent; together, it is as if a modern sculptor were (like our actors of the last age) to adorn the head of Cato with a peruke. I left this precious relic, with a malediction upon all the spoilers of art—whether the Thane who pillaged Minerva's portico at Athens, or the Turk who dilapidated the Jain temple at Ajmer.³³

In its graphic epitome of both dissimulation and dissonance, this remarkable figuration of a Roman portrait bust capped with an eighteenth-century actor's wig invokes an iconography of incongruity deeply rooted in contemporary discourses on Indian hybridity. Fortunately or not, the image conjured here is that of the quintessential figure of Indian hybridity, the Nabob, a turban perched precariously on his bald pate (figs. 9–10).³⁴

As the nineteenth century progressed, the colonial project of reading difference was increasingly dependent upon a fundamental distinction between Hindu and Muslim. Consequently, nineteenth-century ethnographers were often at pains to emphasize the absence of "the disturbing element of crossing" in the objects and subjects of their study.³⁵ Conversely, in the master narratives of colonial history, the destructive effects of racial hybridity or miscegenation are indexed by the

mixing of forms or idioms in material culture.³⁶ Writing in 1870, Lord Napier decries the mixing of Hindu, Mussulman, and European styles in India, since Mussulman is "a perfect style, which can only be debased by alliance."³⁷ Inflecting similar sentiments with a different meaning, S. D. Sharma's 1937 history of Islam in India attributes the decline of the Ghaznavid sultanate that dominated the eastern Islamic lands and parts of northwest India between 1000 and 1150 to a heady mix of architectural hybridity, transculturation, and sexual intermingling:

Indian architects suggested some of the motifs that Indian artisans forcibly carried off to Ghazni executed for their Muslim masters; Indian captives that were taken in their thousands served to breed enervating habits among the restless and energetic Turks, Afghans, Arabs and Persians who formed the population of Ghazni; and lastly, Indian women abducted and enslaved also in large numbers sapped the vigour of their ravishers and contributed to their downfall.³⁸

The negative evaluation of the mixing of architectural forms found here and in Tod's pioneering work inflected the representations of most subsequent commentators, for whom the early Indo-Islamic monuments were (like the Nabob) a kind of duck-rabbit—an improbable, unstable, and unsatisfactory hybrid cobbled together from mutually incommensurate traditions.

As a consequence, the identity and importance of the Indo-Ghurid and early sultanate monuments as an architectural corpus straddling both cultural and national frontiers have been perpetually in doubt. Writing in 1959, the Pakistani scholar Muhammad Chaghatai noted of the Qutb Mosque in Delhi, "How much precisely this Indo-Islamic art owes to India and how much to Islam remains a controversial point."³⁹ The nature of the controversy is eloquently articulated in Doğan Kuban's *Muslim Religious Architecture* (1985):

In its variety, the richness of its materials, its inventiveness in decoration, and the quality of its execution Indian architecture in the Muslim period is an incomparable expression of artistic imagination. But owing to its syncretism it must be acknowledged as the least Islamic of the great Muslim architectural styles. To such an extent were its regional developments always influenced by local traditions.⁴⁰

The linkage between hybridity and cultural decline that is such a marked feature of colonial art history survives in modern surveys of Islamic art, which gener-



Fig. 9. Caricature by James Gillray of Warren Hastings, the governor-general of the East India Company, as a Nabob, 1786. British Museum, London. (London, BM 6955 ©The Trustees of the British Museum)



Fig. 10. Detail of fig. 9.

ally terminate around 1800, before the emergence of European-inspired cultural forms that were excoriated by nineteenth-century art historians.⁴¹ The ability of "mixed" cultural forms to disturb the taxonomic categories upon which the broader canon of Islamic art has traditionally depended is reflected in the omission of early Indo-Islamic monuments from a number of major surveys of Islamic art and architecture, including surveys of Ghaznavid and Ghurid architecture.⁴² Even the relevance of these structures to the history of Indo-Islamic architecture has been questioned within a teleology that sees them (like the mule and other hybrid creatures) as "false starts" in an evolutionary process that culminates (somewhat predictably) with the glories of Mughal architecture.⁴³

It has frequently been noted that notions of hybridity or syncretism depend upon a concept of "pure" styles, the promotion of which often has an underlying ideological agenda.⁴⁴ In evaluations of "hybridity" or "syncretism" in Indo-Turkic monuments, the relative value afforded indigenous and "alien" elements or the weight ascribed to the agency of Turkic patron and Hindu mason has generally depended on the aesthetic predispositions, disciplinary affiliations, and political proclivities of the writer. The resulting fragmentation is apparent in Tod's seminal discussion of the Ajmir mosque, in which he distinguishes the work of the "Vandal architect" from "the more noble production of the Hindu."

Conversely, Islamicists have tended to emphasize and valorize those formal features of the mosques familiar from the central Islamic lands, with the result that Iranian monuments have provided the touchstone against which the medieval architecture of both Anatolia and India have been measured, as we shall see below. The lack of empathy with or interest in the indigenous contribution to early Islamic architecture in South Asia may also be rooted in a general sentiment expressed by K. A. C. Creswell, the pioneering doyen of Islamic architectural history, in a letter of application addressed to the Archaeological Survey of India in 1914:

But there is one fact I must be perfectly frank about. All my interests and sympathies are with Muhammadan architecture, which makes a peculiar and special appeal to me beyond any other style; whereas the Hindu spirit and genius is a thing in which I have neither part nor understanding, and were my work to lie in that direction it would inevitably lack that keenness and driving force which only comes of a labour of love.⁴⁵

Although rarely expressed with equal candor, similar sentiments often permeated the work of later Islamicists—one reason why these monuments have generally received a more favorable reception from scholars conversant with medieval temple architecture than from historians of the mosque.

This differential reception is apparent in the metaphors employed to explain the heterogeneous affinities of the early mosques. Thus, while Michael Meister suggests that the negotiations that shaped the Arhaidin-ka-Jhonpra Mosque at Ajmir and the Qutb Mosque at Delhi might be conceptualized in terms of "permeability through a membrane," Doğan Kuban observes that the Ajmir mosque shows "how the developing Muslim style was being penetrated by the Indian tradition."⁴⁶ The sexual overtones of this kind of metaphor are ultimately rooted in the biological models of hybridity referred to above and in concomitant anxieties about miscegenation.

These divergent emphases are particularly marked in the reception of the arcaded screen added to the prayer hall of the Delhi mosque in 594 (1198) (fig. 11), which has been the site of unseemly tussles over the question of identity. In the first (1987) edition of Etinghausen and Grabar's *The Art and Architecture of Islam: 650–1250*, for example, the central arch of the screen is depicted as a lithic rendering of "a very Iranian iwan arch," reflecting a widespread assumption that it represents a "rude and powerful expression" of Iranian arcuate brick forms in the trabeate idiom and stone medium favored in north India.⁴⁷ Two years earlier, however, Michael Willis had noted, "The screen at Delhi is not so much an example of Islamic art, but of Indian art put to Islamic usage, just as the remains at Bhārhut and Sānchī are not Buddhist art, but Indian art in the service of the Buddhist faith."⁴⁸

The tensions between these positions reflect the dominance of two basic interpretive paradigms, one "indigenizing" (these buildings are essentially adaptations of indigenous forms and idioms), the other "foreignizing" (these buildings witness a domestic inscription of alien forms).⁴⁹ Of the two, the indigenizing paradigm is the older, associated with colonial scholarship from its inception. In a lecture on the study of Indian architecture delivered in London in 1866, for example, James Fergusson espoused a contemporary perception of Islam as a culturally amorphous empty vessel devoid of any distinctive architectural styles, but capable of assimilating those of the cultures it engulfed:



Fig. 11. Qutb Mosque, Delhi. Screen added to the prayer hall facade in 1198. (Author's photo)

Wherever the Muslims went they introduced no style of their own, but employed the native people to build their mosques for them; and this accounted for the fact that some of the most beautiful Mahomedan buildings in India were purely Hindoo from first to last.⁵⁰

Consequently, it was the Hindu mason who deserved the credit for whatever aesthetic merit could be found in the monuments, not the usurping Turkic patron. A report on the Qutb Mosque in Delhi by the British archaeologist Alexander Cunningham, published in the 1860s, explains that, “on *à priori* grounds we should expect this want of appreciation of *truthful* ornamentation among the Muhammadans, a barbarous and warlike people...[who]...have not produced any structure which commands admiration independent of mere beauty of ornament (for which the Hindu workmen deserve credit).”⁵¹

Temple desecration and reuse of materials notwithstanding, an emphasis on continuity led to a lively debate about whether or not the Qutb Mosque and even the adjacent Qutb Minar (fig. 12) were in fact converted Hindu structures. Rejected in Ewer's 1832 account of the mosque, the latter idea was championed in Sayyid Ahmad Khan's *Āsārussanādīd*, an Urdu account of Delhi's monumental architecture published in 1847 and in a revised edition in 1854.⁵² In the 1870s

the question led to a very public contretemps between J. D. Beglar, an engineer commissioned by the newly formed Archaeological Survey of India to survey the site, and Alexander Cunningham, its first director, with the former being forced publicly to recant his affirmation of the mosque's Hindu origins.⁵³ In his original report, Beglar reprised the theme of dissimulation, with even the foundation texts of the mosque proving the falsity of their own claims:

I have shown in a manner that cannot be shaken by any number of lying inscriptions, that this great beautiful structure is essentially Hindu in design, altered to a greater or lesser extent by the Muhammadan conquerors, who could perceive neither the beauty of the whole, nor the harmony of the parts, but deliberately did their best to hide the signs of the Hindu origin of the structure by building in, covering up, whitewashing and plastering, destroying parts and building them up according to their own crude and barbarous notions, and crowned the whole by inserting in the true style of oriental exaggeration in their inscriptions, that they built the structure!⁵⁴

The epistemes of colonialist historiography survived into the twentieth century. They are apparent, for example, in the work of Ernest Binfield Havell, English principal of the Calcutta Art School in the first decades of the twentieth century and champion of a fiercely



Fig. 12. The Qutb Minar, Delhi. (Author's photo)

nationalistic version of Indian architectural history. According to Havell, the Indian mosque was an adaptation of the temple to Muslim ritual and consequently lacked any Iranian or Central Asian contribution.⁵⁵ In the post-independence period, nationalist scholars such as D. S. Trivedi ignored both the epigraphic evidence and the criticisms of his contemporaries, asserting that the lower stories of the Qutb Minar were the remains of a Hindu observatory built in 280 BC.⁵⁶ A recent, more benign incarnation of the same idea (albeit one that also marginalizes the agency and contribution of Muslim patrons) emphasizes that Indo-Ghurid mosques were not the sole preserve of those who worshipped within them, but rather that “in a sense [they] ‘belonged to’ their creators as well.”⁵⁷

When it comes to narratives emphasizing cultural purity, there is but a short step from colonialism to ultranationalism. Recently, the wheel has come full circle in a particularly sinister way, with Indian religious nationalists denying the existence of any “Islamic” architecture in South Asia and depicting the Qutb Mosque, the Red Fort of Delhi, and the Taj Mahal as converted Hindu buildings that should be restored to their “rightful” use. Within these narratives, the Qutb Mosque is the temple of Rai Pithora, the last Chauhan raja of Delhi, awaiting recovery or “reconversion” (fig. 13).⁵⁸ Based on a construction of medieval history heavily inflected by the values of the modern nation-state and shaped by an idea of racial and religious purity, these “restorative” aspirations are deeply rooted in the tropes of colonial-era scholarship. Seen in this light, the demolition in 1992 of the Baburi Mosque at Ayodhya (described by V. S. Naipaul, the recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature for 2001, as “an act of historical balance”) is the logical progeny of Ellenborough’s attempt 150 years earlier to despoil the despoiler.⁵⁹

In later-nineteenth-century publications, however, this view of the Muslim patron as a kind of stylistic cuckoo appropriating the work of others was mitigated by a conceptual and genealogical distinction between form and ornament that further complicated the question of architectural identity. Writing in 1876, for example, James Fergusson emphasized the historical value of the Indo-Ghurid mosques “and their ethnographic importance as bringing out the leading characteristics of the two races in so distinct and marked a manner.”⁶⁰ These general sentiments are firmly rooted in the work of earlier antiquarians such as Tod but also reflect an ethnographic turn in colonial architectural



Fig. 13. Modern postcard of the Qutb Mosque, identified as “Rai Pithora Temple.”

history after 1860, with which Fergusson himself was closely associated.⁶¹ Contradicting Fergusson’s previous assertions that the early mosques were the product of “pure Hindoo” artistry, this ethnographic mode necessitated a more complex approach to questions of form and style. Discussing the Qutb Mosque, for example, Fergusson explained to his readers that “to understand the architecture, it is necessary to bear in mind that all the pillars are of Hindû, and all the walls of Muhammadan, architecture.”⁶²

The space opened by this distinction permitted the emergence of a second interpretive paradigm, one that emphasized the formal affinities of these mosques with the monuments of the eastern Islamic world, despite their inevitable concessions to the Indian environment. Thus, although Fergusson raised the possibility that the distinctive flanged forms of the Qutb Minar in Delhi derived from the Bhumija temples of central India, he was also the first to identify the minarets at Ghazna or the Seljuk minarets of Khurasan as possible sources of the Delhi *minār*, an idea that was to become canonical in twentieth-century scholarship.⁶³ The suggestion of Afghan or Khurasani affinities was to find fierce critics among later indigenist zealots

such as Havell and Trivedi, both of whom argued that Ghaznavid architecture represented a western extension of an indigenous Indian tradition, and that the Ghazna minarets were products of Hindu craftsmen carried west by Sultan Mahmud.⁶⁴

Despite such nationalist criticisms, the radical re-orientation (or occidentation) implied by Fergusson’s suggestion gained momentum in the early decades of the twentieth century, with the increasing availability of publications on the medieval architecture of Afghanistan and the central Islamic lands.⁶⁵ Samuel Flury’s epigraphic study of the Ghazna monuments in 1925, *A Survey of Persian Art* in 1938, the journal *Athār-é Īrān* after 1936, and the journal *Afghanistan* after 1946 were among the key publications that broadened the available range of comparanda.⁶⁶ From the 1950s onwards a slew of publications expanded the canon of Ghaznavid and Ghurid architecture, bringing the palaces at Lashkari Bazaar, the minaret at Jam, and the various remains of Ghazna within the scholarly purview and finally putting to rest the idea that one of the minarets in the latter city was built by Sultan Mahmud ibn Sebuktigin.⁶⁷

These developments coincided with the rise of the

disciplinary study of Islamic Art, and a consequent shift away from the positing of generic "Islamic" archetypes and analogues in favor of more specific sources. Increasingly, Ghaznavid and Ghurid monuments came to be included within classificatory schemes organized along ethnic and/or regional lines, as "Iranian" or "Turkic" art. In *A Survey of Persian Art*, for example, the Ghaznavid and Ghurid monuments known in 1938 were subsumed into Eric Schroeder's survey of Seljuk architecture, with Afghanistan accommodated as a region of Khurasan, which was afforded a central role in the narrative of Seljuk art. According to this narrative, the brick style championed in Ghaznavid architecture was adopted and generalized in the monuments of the Seljuks.⁶⁸

By the 1960s, scholars such as Ernst Kühnel could include Afghanistan and India in survey texts as eastern outposts of Iranian Seljuk art, asserting confidently that "both the prelude and the post-lude of the Seljuk epoch are to be sought in Muslim India."⁶⁹ The implication of an Indian contribution to Seljuk style echoes Schroeder's observation in the *Survey* that the ancestry of any Indian elements in Seljuk architecture should be sought in Ghazna.⁷⁰ Both suggestions are made in passing and appear to be based on a priori reasoning rather than empirical evidence; it is not until the Ghurid conquest of north India in the 1190s that Indic elements appear in Afghan architecture with any regularity.⁷¹

Despite the posited relationship to Iranian or Turkic architecture, the Indian monuments of the eastern Turks remained on the periphery both conceptually and geographically, their treatment more circumspect than that of their Iranian or Central Asian counterparts. In Oktay Aslanapa's *Turkish Art and Architecture* (1971), for example, the four centuries accommodated under the rubric *Turkish Art in India* occupy just a single page, in contrast to the ten pages each allotted to the Ghaznavids and Qarakhanids.⁷² Kühnel's observations on the early Indian monuments illuminates this reticence: the monuments "corresponded basically to Seljuk trends in art" although "with strict qualifications" since they were inflected by an "individuality" located "in the necessity of taking into account the peculiarities of Indian landscape."⁷³ Similarly, for the Pakistani scholar Muhammad Chagatai the early mosques represented an "Indianised form" of Seljuk architecture.⁷⁴

A minority of scholars believed that the disjunction between brick and stone media pointed to more far-

flung sources than Seljuk Iran. In the *Islamic* volume of his two-volume *Indian Architecture* (1942–44), Percy Brown saw the Indo-Ghurid monuments as inspired by contemporary Seljuk architecture, "a cultural and creative current of considerable significance" that "was obviously finding its way to Delhi." It was not to the brick monuments of Seljuk Iran that he looked for the source of this current, however—indeed, given the publication of *A Survey of Persian Art* six years earlier, it is odd that these are not even mentioned—but to Seljuk Anatolia. Brown's short paean to the Seljuk architecture of Anatolia addressed the perceived hybridity of both Anatolian and Indian monuments. Posing the question of "how these relatively uncivilized desert people in the course of so short a period were able to develop a building art of such excellence," Brown cited two causal factors: the liberating absence of established architectural conventions among the nomadic Turks, and their adoption of Roman masonry techniques, a winning combination of "the imaginative vision of the Asiatic" with "the scientific ingenuity of the Latin."⁷⁵

This notion evokes the "empty vessel" trope associated with the indigenizing paradigms of nineteenth-century colonial historians but inflects it with a strong racial flavor. The "imaginative vision of the Asiatic" is clearly related to the marked architectural sensibilities that nineteenth-century racial theories ascribed to "Turanians" (among whom the Turks were numbered). These had featured prominently in James Fergusson's discussion of the mosques at Ajmir and Delhi and their Turkic patrons: "A nation of soldiers equipped for conquest, they had brought with them neither artists nor architects, but, like other nations of Turanian origins, they had strong architectural instincts."⁷⁶

It is of course this *mentalité* that is common to the builders of both Anatolian and Indian monuments. In each case, the realization of an inherent flair for form and design rooted in the racial heritage of the Turks was contingent upon particular environmental and geographic factors: "Latin" forms and techniques on the one hand and "Hindu" idioms and materials on the other. Variations on the theme persisted well into the twentieth century. According to Havell, all of Indo-Islamic architecture bore the "distinct impression of the soil to which it belongs," while a 1926 monograph on the Qutb Mosque explains that the mosque reflects a combination of "geography and racial influences," manifest, for example, in the arched screen of

its prayer hall, on which Hindu ornament is deployed according to “Saracenic” sensibility.⁷⁷

In an article published in 1947, three years after *Indian Architecture*, Brown went further, positing not the common roots of Rum Seljuk and Sultanate architecture, but the transmission of Seljuk style from Anatolia to India, both regions in which stone was the dominant medium. Subverting the central role afforded Iranian Seljuk architecture in traditional narratives, this radical refiguration of architectural historiography left the problem of Rum Seljuk style transiting through the central Islamic lands, where a brick medium was predominant. Again, a combination of environmental determinism and racial essence came to the rescue. Through “the application of racial temperament” manifest in a peculiarly Persian aptitude for the adaptive use of ductile and tractable materials (witnessed, for example, in Persian carpets), the medieval architecture of Iran was figured as a derivation from Anatolian Seljuk tradition, albeit one that manifested “an independent trend.”⁷⁸ The argument was in many ways ingenious, imbuing style with an autonomous identity, and thus obviating the need to explain how or why masons from the Rum Seljuk lands ended up in Delhi. Despite the rather vague circumstances of its arrival in India, “Saljuqian influence” was destined to play a decisive role in Indo-Islamic architecture, for it is only in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that Brown sees it giving way to the “influence of the national architecture of Persia.”

Although they represented an idiosyncratic strand in scholarship, Brown’s ideas were not without issue. In a paper presented to the twenty-second Congress of Orientalists in Istanbul in 1951, G. Le Play-Brown asserted that the roots of the alien (that is, non-Indian) elements in Sultanate architecture lay in the urban centers of Seljuk Anatolia, specifically those of Konya, whose denizens made their way to Delhi, bringing with them the “influence of the Konya school.”⁷⁹ Play-Brown asked rhetorically how the characteristics of (Rum) Seljuk art could have made their way to Delhi, concluding conveniently that the answer to the question would require extensive investigation that lay beyond the scope of his short submission.

Although expressed by a minority, these ideas exerted some influence on the work of post-independence South Asian scholars. Writing in 1966, for example, the Pakistani scholar Momtazur Rahman Tarafdar compared the conical stone dome over the mihrab of Sultan Ghari (fig. 14), the funerary madrasa built in

627 (1229) for the son of the Delhi sultan Iltutmish, with the conical domes of Seljuk Anatolia (fig. 15), referring his reader to Percy Brown for a further treatment of “the process of transmission of Saljūk influence to India.”⁸⁰

Although usually articulated in terms of a contemporary parallel rather than a direct source, the Anatolian analogy has in fact been a fairly consistent strand in scholarship on Indo-Ghurid and early Sultanate architecture. In the first edition of Ettinghausen and Grabar’s *Art and Architecture of Islam*, for example, the encounter between Islamic form and Indic media and technique is described as resulting in an architecture “which, within the Islamic fold, remained more consistently original than in any other province or at any other time, except perhaps in Ottoman Turkey.”⁸¹ For the majority of scholars, analogies between the Anatolian and Indian monuments derived neither from the migration of Rum Seljuk masons nor from analogous encounters with non-Islamic cultures, but from a common status as epigonous reflections of contemporary Iranian mosques. Evaluating the relationship between Anatolian and Iranian Seljuk architecture in 1982, for example, Howard Crane wrote:

Thus, in Anatolia we have a situation which is in many ways curiously analogous to that at the other end of the Islamic world at this moment, namely early Sultanate India where, as in Asia Minor, a Muslim power was establishing its sway over a pre-existing indigenous, non-Muslim cultural tradition...As with the Saljūqs of Rūm, the familiarity of these Sultanate elites with Islamic high culture was through the agency of Iran. Yet the architecture they created in these lands newly annexed to the Islamic world was markedly distinct from prototypes in Central Asia and on the Iranian plateau. Hence, although the pointed arch is introduced into the subcontinent at this moment, it was actually built by Indian craftsmen working for Muslim patrons using the traditional Indian technique of corbelling rather than the self-buttressing construction of the true arch. Similarly, while an attempt is made to translate vegetal stuccoes into stone, the individual motifs on close inspection have a distinctly indigenous, Indian feeling and appearance to them, as if the craftsmen who carved them had never actually seen the Iranian stuccoes they were intended to replicate.

As in Anatolia, then, we have a situation in which patrons and craftsmen *attempted* to give expression to Iranian architectural ideas and values but were as often as not *overwhelmed* by the power of local practices and traditions as well as by environmental and practical considerations relating to building materials and climate.⁸²



Fig. 14. Conical mihrab dome, Sultan Ghari funerary complex, Delhi, 1229. (Author's photo)



Fig. 15. View of Konya, showing the Alaeddin mosque and the tomb of Kilic Arslan II (d. 1192). (After J. H. Löytved, *Konya: Inschriften der seldschukischen Bauten* [Berlin, 1907], 21)

The trope of translation and transumption employed here first appears in nineteenth-century evaluations of Indo-Islamic architecture, but over the past few decades it has been deployed with increasing frequency to explain the perceived idiosyncrasies of Indo-Ghurid architecture.⁸⁴ Thus, the Ghurid mosque at Ajmir is said to demonstrate “the translation of Iranian architecture into Indian stone,” or an “attempt to transplant the Saljuq architectural style to northern India.”⁸⁴

The sense of struggle associated with these attempts (a term itself redolent of failure) to replicate the signifiers of a normative Iranian architecture represents another commonality in scholarship on Anatolia and India. In both cases the purity of the assumed Persianate source is seen to be diluted by a domestic inscription, overwhelmed by a process of acculturation stemming from local cultural and environmental conditions, and resulting in the emergence of a *vernacular* version of Seljuk architecture:

The architecture of this Turkish-dominated period is not eclectic: instead it is obsessed with imposing an aesthetic that carried comforting meaning for the conquerors. The attempt to replicate the familiar from back home is

overriding: it ignores north India’s established building types and twists indigenous architectural techniques to accommodate it. The resulting torque is obvious, but not surprising. Without such mimetic references the Sultanate would have appeared adrift in an all too new and unfamiliar land.⁸⁵

With the mosque “back home” figured as not only chronologically or ontologically anterior but also culturally prior, architectural difference is manifest as cultural value. The consequent emphasis on translation as traduction is common to many accounts of the Ajmir and Delhi mosques.

Evaluations of the arcaded screens added to the prayer hall facades of the Delhi and Ajmir mosques in 1198 and ca. 1229 respectively (figs. 5 and 11) index the relative value afforded Islamic and Indic forms and idioms within this process of translation. In his 1829 publication on the mosque, Tod noted that the Ajmir screen was the work “of Ghorian sultans, who evidently made use of native architects,” explaining to his reader that “after confessing and admiring the taste of the Vandal architect, we passed under the arch to examine the more noble production of the Hindu.”⁸⁶



Fig. 16. Great mosque of Gunabad, Khurasan, early thirteenth century. Courtyard facade. (Author's photo)

Conversely, fifty years later, Fergusson waxed lyrical about the Delhi screen (with its “Islamic” forms and “Hindu” decoration), going so far as to claim that its carvings surpassed not only those of Hagia Sophia, but also the decorations of any monument in Cairo or Persia, Spain or Syria.⁸⁷

Twentieth-century scholarship took it as axiomatic that the *raison d'être* of both screens lay in the need to veil the “Hindu” appearance of the earlier prayer halls that lay behind them. Writing of the Qutb Mosque in *The Cambridge History of India* (1928), the director of the Archaeological Survey of India, Sir John Marshall, explains:

Seen from within or without, the building, as originally designed, presented an essentially Hindu appearance. ...A design so alien to their own traditions was hardly likely to satisfy the sentiments of the Muhammadans, and within two years of its completion (i.e. in 1198 A.D.) an arched screen of characteristically Muhammadan design was thrown across the whole front of the prayer chamber...⁸⁸

Echoing Tod's account of a century earlier, the juxtaposition is deemed to be incongruous and inappropriate, the screen

...too obviously an after-thought, not an integral, organic part of the structure; too vast and over-powering to harmonise with the relatively low colonnades of the courtyard, and still more out of keeping with the slight elegant pillars of the hall behind.

Most accounts of the mosques take it for granted that the arches of the screens were deployed both as generic signs of Islam and as specific evocations of the courtyard arcades and brick *iwāns* of Khurasani mosques (fig. 16).⁸⁹ Indeed, the pointed arch was described by one nineteenth-century commentator as having “a sacred significance in Mahomedan ritual,” and was considered sufficiently synonymous with Islamic architectural style to serve as the principal diagnostic device in the chronological taxonomy developed in the 1860s by James Cunningham and reiterated frequently thereafter (fig. 17).⁹⁰ However, the ability of arcuate Persian forms to function as talismans against the threat of acculturation was qualified by a dependence on Indian masons working in

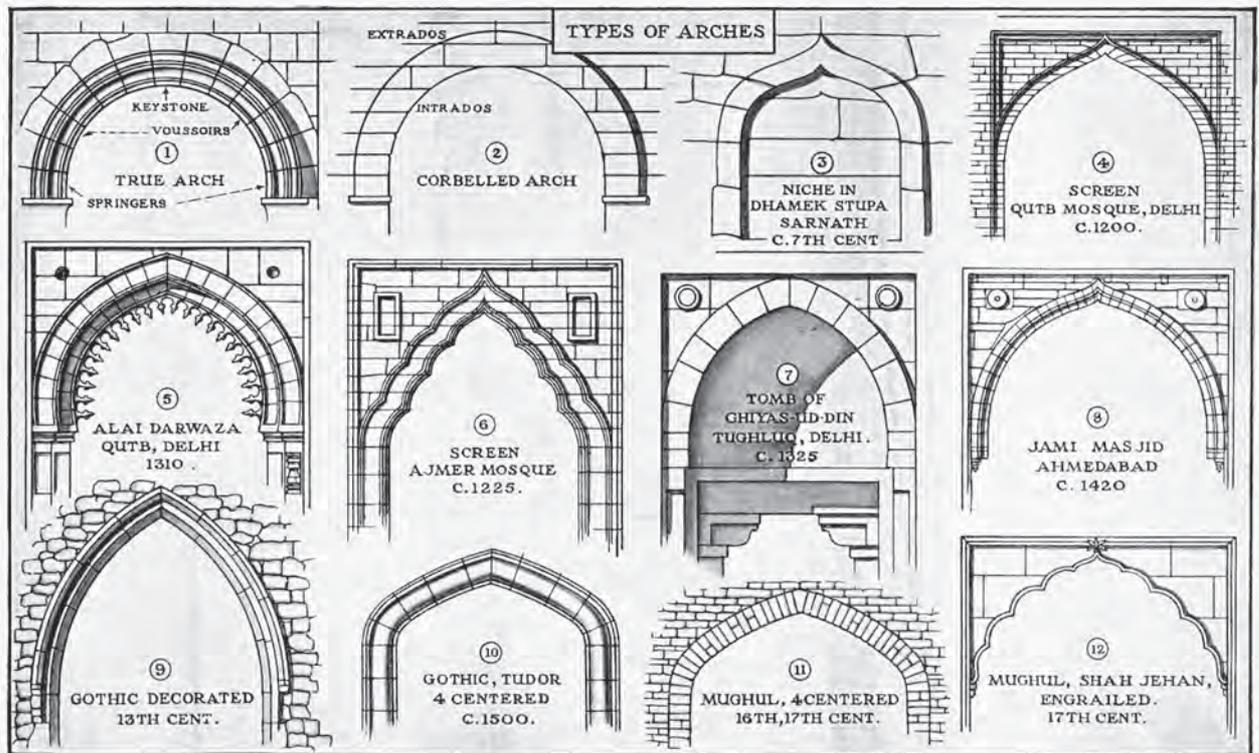


Fig. 17. Diagnostic sketch of arch types (after Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture [The Islamic Period]* [Bombay, 1944], pl. 4)

a stone medium and trabeate idiom that produced corbelled arches (fig. 18). Consequently, the success of the undertaking was variously evaluated as rendering an “entirely Seljuk” look to the mosques or evoking in them a “superficial imitation” of the *iwān* facades found in Seljuk mosques.⁹¹ Emphasizing the superficies or surface, such evaluations provide an implicit contrast with Eric Schroeder’s characterization of Seljuk architecture in *A Survey of Persian Art* as an “honest” style that revealed a “constitutional liking for strong and sincere forms” executed in a brick medium that reveals rather than obscures structure.⁹² While the Seljuk architecture of Iran was “virile, austere, and rational, strong enough to bear opulent stucco decoration without loss of primitive energy,” its Indian variant was dissimulating and dissonant, its structural logic occluded and overwhelmed by a profusion of baroque stone ornament.⁹³

Notions of dissemblance or dissimulation find their most explicit expression in the inevitable contrast (still *de rigueur* in any contemporary survey of Islamic art) between the true (voussoired or four-centered)

arch of the assumed Persianate originals and the corbelled (sometimes referred to as “false”) arches of the screens at Ajmir and Delhi. Just as the screen has itself been the site of a struggle over Indic or Islamic identity, so the arches that are its distinguishing features have been represented as touchstones of either cultural alterity or permeability.⁹⁴ In his history of Ajmir (1941), for example, Har Bilas Sarda argues that the arches of the Ajmir screen “were not only constructed by Hindu masons but are of Hindu origin.” Following earlier commentators such as Tod and Havell, Sarda goes on to claim a “Hindu” origin for the arch form in general, citing Tod’s speculation that the roots of the “Saracenic” arch (typified by those found in the Alhambra) were more likely to lie with the “wealthy and scientific Hindu” rather than the “roving Bedouin of the desert.”⁹⁵

Other commentators had little sympathy with this bid to claim an Indian origin for what was widely regarded as a quintessential signifier of Islamic identity. On the contrary, the corbelled arches of Indian workmanship were seen as decidedly inferior versions of



Fig. 18. Qutb Mosque, Delhi. Detail of *qibla* screen showing corbeled arch. (Author's photo)

the real thing. As early as 1826, the deficiencies of the Hindu vis-à-vis the perfection of Persian arches and vaults were among the qualities that featured in a damning critique of “Hindu” culture by the British Utilitarian James Mill.⁹⁶ The primitive and rudimentary character of the corbeled arch was to be a consistent strand in scholarship of the following century, exemplified by Percy Brown's remarks on the Delhi screen:

Had there been an Islamic master-builder present, it is highly improbable that he would have sanctioned these arches being put together on such a principle. For some centuries before this date, masons in all countries under Moslem rule had employed the true arch, inherited from the Romans [via the Sasanians and Parthians], with its radiating voussoirs, but here the rudimentary system of corbelling out the arch was used.⁹⁷

From the inception of modern scholarship, these monuments have thus been implicated in a double masquerade, the nature of which lies in the eye of the beholder. In the indigenist paradigms favored in colonial scholarship (and its more recent neo-nationalist progeny) the Turkic patron is figured as a kind of decorator crab building a house of prayer from a bricolage of purloined forms and materials, none the products of his own labor. Islamicists, by con-

trast, have generally espoused an evaluation that takes us back to the image of Cato and his wig, figuring the screens at Ajmir and Delhi (and their associated mosques) as a double dissimulation, a veneer masking the alien qualities of Indian craftsmanship with a weak and false approximation of strong and true Seljuk formal values.

The dichotomy is deeply rooted in the taxonomic structures and disciplinary divisions discussed at the outset, within which Khurasani (and even Afghan) monuments are figured as individual expressions of a monolithic “Iranian” (and often specifically “Seljuk”) architectural culture reduced to a corpus of significant forms that circulate eastwards. Obscuring the distinction between the materialization of architectural form and its conceptualization on the one hand, and between form and idiom on the other, this reduction takes no account of regional variation and its significance. In particular, the relegation of 150 years of Ghaznavid architecture to a walk-on part as the precursor of a reified high Seljuk style has occluded from analysis features that are *not* standard in the medieval Seljuk architecture of Iran, rendering opaque the innovative character of Ghaznavid and Ghurid monuments and their significant legacy to Indo-Islamic architecture.

More than three decades ago, Muhammad Mujeeb bemoaned the search for borrowed elements in the Qutb Mosque and the ways in which it detracted from aesthetic appreciation and empirical analysis of the mosque itself.⁹⁸ Underlining the point, the presence of several unusual formal features in the Delhi mosque has gone unnoticed and unremarked despite scholarly fixation with the various ways in which the Indo-Ghurid mosques diverge from a postulated Seljuk norm. These include the two domed mezzanine chambers at its southeastern and northeastern corners (fig. 19).⁹⁹ No comment has been made on the possible function of these elevated chambers, but early mosques in south India were provided with loft spaces and upper chambers that housed madrasas.¹⁰⁰ These mezzanine structures may therefore have served an analogous function, with the Qutb mosque combining the functions of *jāmiʿ masjid* and madrasa before the construction of a dedicated madrasa in Delhi. Indeed, it is tempting to see them as housing adherents of the Shafiʿi and Hanafi *madhhabs* to which the Ghurid sultans subscribed, and whose presence in Delhi is documented in the decades following construction of the mosque.¹⁰¹

Equally significant for its potential to provide insights into the social organization of space within the Qutb Mosque is the small, elevated cuboid chamber, measuring roughly 6 meters a side, located in the northwestern sector of its prayer hall (figs. 19–20). A structure of similar form and dimensions recurs in the Chauvasi Khamba Mosque at Kaman in Rajasthan (figs. 21–22), another of the mosques built after the eastward expansion of the Ghurid sultanate, and in the mosque now known as the Ukha Mandir at Bayana, datable to the first decades of the thirteenth century.¹⁰² In all cases, the mezzanine enclosures about the north walls of the mosques and were probably once screened with stone lattices. Those at Delhi and Kaman were provided with private entrances distinguished by the massing of richly figural sculpture among which elephants and lions—common signifiers of royalty within the discourses of Indic and Persianate kingship—feature prominently (figs. 23–27).¹⁰³ The selection of these carvings implies a translation not only of materials but also of meaning.

Although these chambers are an innovation absent from earlier mosques in South Asia, they have either been ignored in discussions of Indo-Ghurid architecture or misidentified as *zenānas*, or women’s galleries.¹⁰⁴ They perpetuate, however, a feature first

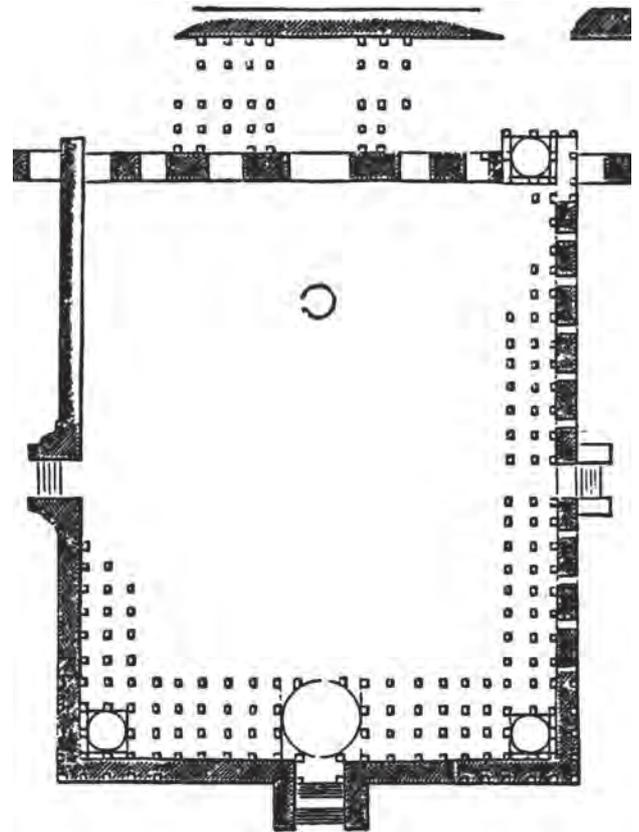


Fig. 19. Qutb Mosque, Delhi. Plan showing the location of the domed upper chambers, including the *muluk khāna* to the north of the prayer hall (top right). (After James Fergusson, *A History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, 2 vols. [London, 1910], 2:200)

encountered in the ʿArus al-Falak, the Friday Mosque built by Sultan Mahmud ibn Sebuktegin in his capital of Ghazna around 408–9 (1018–19). Like the majority of Ghaznavid monuments, the mosque is no longer extant but is instead known through an extensive eyewitness account preserved in the *Tārīkh al-Yamīnī* of al-ʿUtbi (d. ca. 1031). The feature in question was elevated, cubical, distinguished by its decoration, and provided with a private entrance leading to the adjacent palace:

The sultan set apart for his personal retinue a chamber (*bayt*) in the prayer hall, looking out over it, cubical (*mukaʿab*) in construction, spacious, with regular corners and sides, and provided with a floor and dado (*izār*) of marble which had weighed heavily on the backs [of the beasts] that bore it from the land of Nishapur...A route



Fig. 20. Remains of the *mulūk khāna*, viewed from the courtyard. Qutb Mosque, Delhi. (Author's photo)

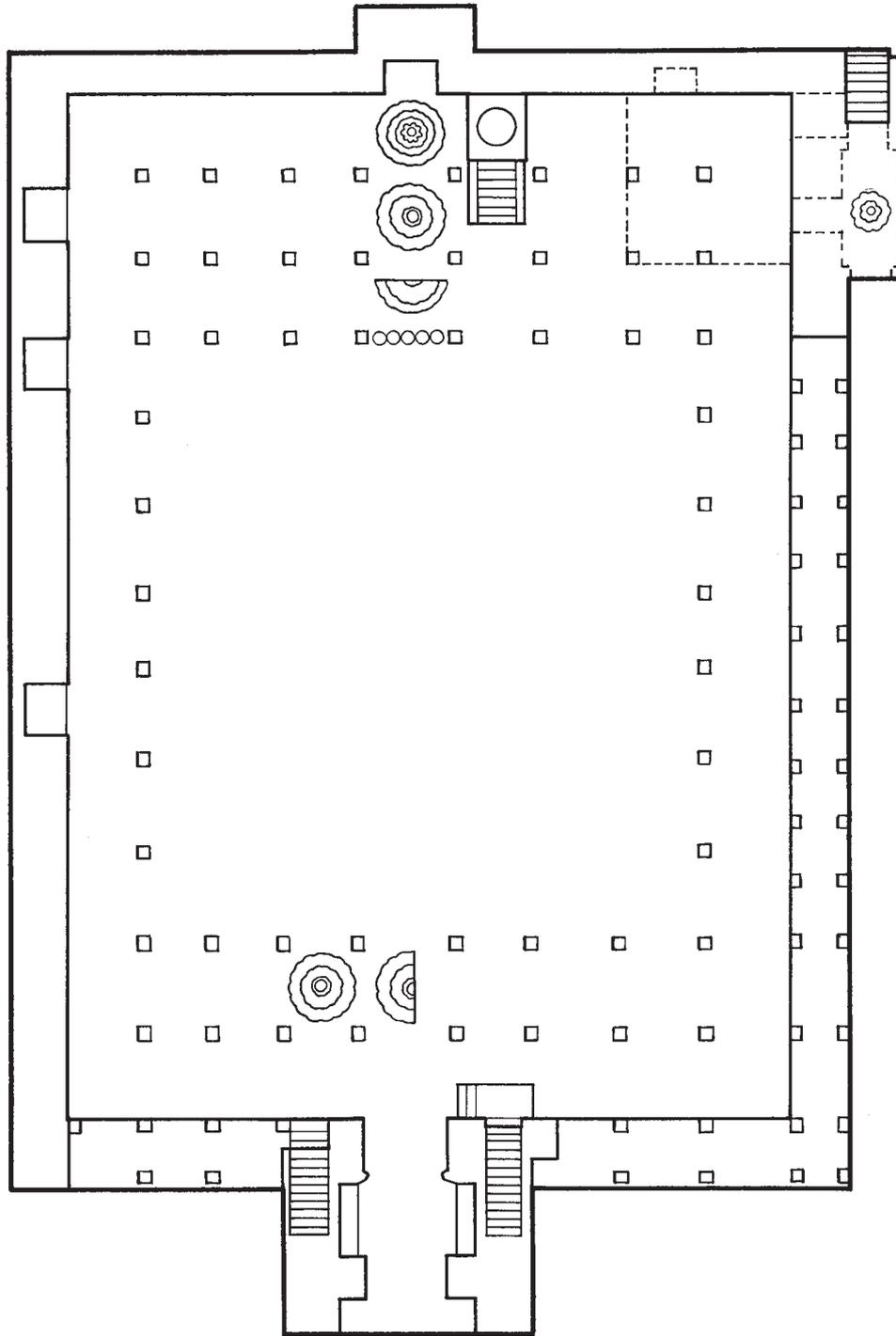


Fig. 21. Chaurasi Khamba Mosque, Kaman, Rajasthan. Plan showing the position of the *mulūk khāna* and its exterior entrance (top right). (Redrawn with additions after Mehrdad Shokoohy and Natalie H. Shokoohy, "The Architecture of Baha al-Din Tughrul in the Region of Bayana, Rajasthan," *Muqarnas* 4 [1987]: fig. 2)



Fig. 22. Chaurasi Khamba Mosque, stepped approach to the *mulūk khāna*. (Author’s photo)

was cut through from the royal palace to the chamber that I have described, giving access to it with security from the indignity of prying eyes or the interference of men either virtuous or vicious. Thus the sultan could ride to this chamber with complete dignity and peace of mind in order to perform his prescribed religious duties and claim his wages and reward for them.¹⁰⁵

In al-‘Utbi’s description this *bayt* is distinguished etymologically and spatially from the *maqṣūra*, which held the *ghulāms* of the sultan, and which was located between the *bayt* and the *qibla*. Interestingly, the location suggests that in contemporary eastern usage the term *maqṣūra* (which elsewhere referred to a royal box) was identical with the *ḥaram*, the open space of the prayer hall itself.¹⁰⁶

Since the only Ghurid mosque that survives in Af-



Fig. 23. Chaurasi Khamba Mosque, detail of *mulūk khāna* doorway. (Author’s photo)

ghanistan is the Friday Mosque of Herat (and this in substantially altered form), it is difficult to trace the subsequent history of this *bayt*.¹⁰⁷ However, excavation of the Friday Mosque at Lashkari Bazaar in southern Afghanistan revealed that at the northwestern end of the prayer hall (that is, in precisely the same location as the royal box in the Chaurasi Kambha Mosque at Kaman) a rectangular area two bays long, measuring roughly 10 by 20 meters, had been walled off from the space of the prayer hall (fig. 28). The date of the mosque is problematic: it appears to have been constructed in the eleventh century and then remodeled under the Ghurids in the second half of the twelfth.¹⁰⁸ The mode of construction led the mosque’s excavators to believe that the curtain walls screening this chamber belonged to a post-Ghurid renovation; even if this



Fig. 24. Chaurasi Khambha Mosque, detail of *mulūk khāna* threshold showing lion. (Author's photo)

was so, they may well have marked a division of space associated with the mosque since its inception.

Despite the paucity of extant evidence for this feature in medieval Afghan mosques, its subsequent appearance in both Delhi and Kaman suggests that it was adopted in the Ghurid mosques of Afghanistan. In contrast to the mosques of the Iranian world, on which it left little trace, this royal chamber was to enjoy a long history in the mosques of South Asia, referred to in later Indo-Persian texts as a *mulūk khāna* (royal chamber) and in Bengal as the *takht-i shāhī* (royal platform). Subsequent appearances occur in the royal mosques at Begampuri in Delhi (ca. 1343), and Pandua in Bengal (1374).¹⁰⁹

In the analyses discussed above, an ideal Khurasani mosque, a kind of Platonic form of Persian-ness, serves as a transcendental signified within a concept of translation as mimesis, a one-to-one carrying-over or substitution between the elements of alien Hindu and familiar Muslim “languages” (or vice versa).¹¹⁰ The mimetic paradigm of translation measures success by fidelity of reproduction, assuming the panoptic vision of the modern art historian furnished with abundant comparanda rather than the more circumscribed view of the twelfth-century patron.¹¹¹ This perspective invariably privileges putative originary works, with the inevitable consequence that the mosques at Ajmir, Delhi, and elsewhere are represented either as derogations

of the material temple or derivative reiterations of an ideal Persian mosque.

Since the *mulūk khāna* is not integral to that mosque, its presence and significance have largely been ignored. The perpetuation of this feature in Indo-Ghurid mosques, and in many later Indian congregational mosques, thus points to the limits of both “indigenizing” and “foreignizing” paradigms as historically conceived, while recalling Walter Benjamin’s conception of translation as a process that permits the “living-on” of a source text even in its absence.¹¹² As Benjamin also reminds us, the relationship between target and source is not one of original and copy, for translation is a process characterized by “continua of transformation, not abstract ideas of identity and similarity.”¹¹³ Building on the insight, poststructuralist theorists have rejected the idea that difference is ever pure, that translation entails the export of pure signifieds between languages; instead, Jacques Derrida and others posit a notion of translation as “*transformation*: a regulated transformation of one language by another, of one text by another.”¹¹⁴ Similarly, in his work on hermeneutics, the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer has argued that any translation is not a reproduction of an original, but a recreation: an interpretation rather than a reiteration.¹¹⁵

Although developed in relation to texts, these modes of conceptualizing translation provide alternative mod-



Fig. 25. Qutb Mosque, Delhi, general view of the exterior entrance to the *mulūk khāna*. (Author's photo)

els for evaluating the hermeneutical and physical displacements that shaped the first mosques in centers such as Ajmir and Delhi. They would, for example, shift the emphasis from the priority of architectural forms

to the contingencies of cultural practice, so that the consumption of preexisting architectural forms might be seen as a dynamic form of production rather than a deficient form of reproduction.¹¹⁶ In this way, the



Fig. 26. Qutb Mosque, Delhi, entrance to the *muluk khana*. (Author's photo)



Fig. 27. Qutb Mosque, Delhi, reused lion carvings on the threshold of the *mulūk khāna*. (Author’s photo)

mosques might be viewed not as synchronic products of a finished event, but as constantly (re)produced by a potentially open-ended series of displacements and interpretations mediated and negotiated by multiple chains of actors and agents in specific contexts. This approach replaces a backward-oriented (and often ideologically charged) source-mongering with a more forward-looking emphasis on innovation and mediation, while acknowledging a dialectical relationship between region and transregion, continuity and discontinuity, past and present that is plainly relevant to the forms and meanings of the monuments.¹¹⁷

This way of approaching the mosques requires a re-evaluation of the ways in which the agents and modes of mediation have been conceptualized in traditional historiography. For one thing, despite the consistent assertion that Indo-Ghurid mosques replicate the formal values of a reified Seljuk mosque, the mechanisms and contexts of transmission are rarely addressed in detail, if at all. At various points, illustrated Qur’ans, depictions of mosques, and pattern books have all been mooted, although it seems far more likely that the relationship to Afghan and Iranian mosques is the product of verbal transmission rather than graphic notation.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, scholarship on medi-

eval Anatolia and India has usually assumed a contrast between nomadic Turkic patrons and a reservoir of sedentary Christian or Hindu masons. Indeed, in many of the analyses cited above the contrast between the mobility of the Turks, with their innate flair for architecture, and the fixity of those who built their monuments is central to the role of the former as promoters of “Roman” or “Hindu” architectural traditions deeply rooted in the environment or soil of the conquered lands.

However, a number of what appear as anomalies within the master narratives of traditional historiography point to the recalcitrant nature of men and materials—their refusal to remain on either side of the hyphen dividing “Indo” and “Islamic,” “Turk” and “Hindu”—calling into question this emphasis on the local and locales. Examples include the importation of (wooden?) beams or columns (*judhūʿ*) from Sind and al-Hind for the Friday Mosque of Ghazna, built by Sultan Mahmud in 1018, or the employment of a peripatetic craftsman from the land of the Turks (*Turush-kadesha*) to gild a parasol (*chatr*) on a Shiva temple built by King Kalasha, the Hindu ruler of the Kashmir Valley, between 1063 and 1089.¹¹⁹ More important, there is now abundant evidence indicating that

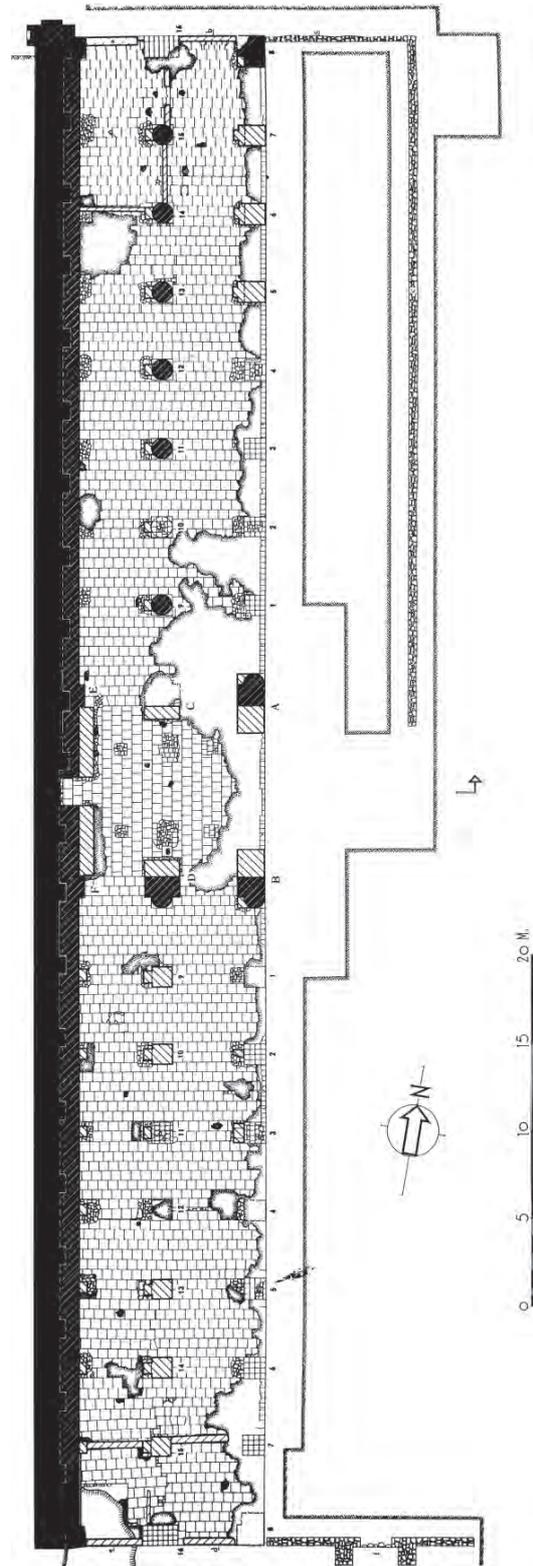


Fig. 28. Lashkari Bazaar, plan of the Friday mosque as excavated. (After Daniel Schlumberger and Janine Sourdell-Thomine, *Lashkari Bazaar: Une résidence royale ghaznévide et ghorida*, 2 vols. [Paris, 1978], 1B:pl. 23)

Indic, possibly Jain, stonemasons from the region of Rajasthan and northern Gujarat were active in southern and eastern Afghanistan in the last decade of the twelfth century, during the period when the Indo-Ghurid mosques in Ajmir, Delhi, and other Indian centers were under construction. In fact, certain features of the Ghurid mosques in India are only comprehensible as the products of north Indian stonemasons who had worked for Muslim patrons in Afghanistan and returned eastwards in the wake of the Ghurid conquest.¹²⁰

In other words, the processes of transmission and translation witnessed in the mosques at Ajmir, Delhi, and elsewhere are considerably more complex than is suggested by the traditional scenario of a transumption between self-contained Iranian and Indic architectural traditions or a negotiation between mobile Turkic *ghulāms* and sedentary Indic masons. The mobility of forms, idioms, and masons raises significant questions about architectural reception and aesthetic taste at the end of the twelfth century, questions that necessitate not merely a reevaluation of Indian mosques or architectural taxonomies, but nothing less than a reconceptualization of medieval South Asian cultural geography.

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NOTES

1. Yorgos Dedes, *The Battalname, an Ottoman Frontier Epic Wundertale*, Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures 33 (Cambridge, MA, 1996), 35.
2. See, for example, Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 2, *The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Period* (Chicago and London, 1977), 275–79; Richard W. Bulliett, *Islam: The View from the Edge* (New York, 1994), 151.
3. J. F. Richards, "The Islamic Frontier in the East: Expansion into South Asia," *South Asia* 4 (1974): 91.
4. Speros Vryonis, Jr., *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley, 1971), 166–67.
5. Barbara D. Metcalf, "Too Little, Too Much: Reflections on Muslims in the History of India," *Journal of Asian Studies* 54 (1995): 959.
6. For continuities in workshop practice, see Vryonis, *Decline*, 235–37; Robert Ousterhout, "Ethnic Identity and Cultural Appropriation in Early Ottoman Architecture," *Muqarnas* 12 (1995): 48–62.
7. See, for example, Girault de Prangey, *Souvenirs de Grenade et de l'Alhambra: Monuments arabes et moresques de Cordoue, Séville et Grenade dessinés et mesurés en 1832 et 1833* (Paris, 1837); Pascal-Xavier Coste, *Architecture arabe, ou, Monuments du Kaire mesurés et dessinés de 1818 à 1826* (Paris, 1839); Girault de Prangey, *Essai sur l'architecture des Arabes et des Mores, en Espagne, en Sicile, et en Barbarie* (Paris, 1841).
8. At least nine short descriptions of Ghazna and its monuments (some illustrated) were published in the 1830s and 1840s, compared to two for the remainder of the century: Warwick Ball, *Archaeological Gazetteer of Afghanistan*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1982), 1:106. Among these see, for example, Godfrey T. Vigne, *A Personal Narrative of a Visit to Ghazni, Kabul and Afghanistan* (London, 1840), 128–30; R. H. Kennedy, *Narrative of the Campaign of the Army of the Indus in Sind and Kauboul in 1838–9*, 2 vols. (London, 1840), 2:59–60; Keith A. Jackson, *Views in Afghanistan, etc., from Sketches Taken during the Campaign of the Army of the Indus* (London, 1842), 11–12; Charles Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys in Baluchistan, Afghanistan and the Panjab*, 3 vols. (London, 1842), 2:219–22.
9. Edward Sanders, C. Blood, John Studdart, and C. F. North, "Documents Relating to the Gates of Somnath; Forwarded to the Society by the Government of India," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 12, 1 (1843): 73–78. For the inscriptions on the minarets see J. A. Rawlinson, appendix to "The Gates of Somnath," *Asiatic Journal* (1844): 50–52. See also S. Flury, "Das Schriftband an der Türe des Mahmūd von Ghazna (998–1031)," *Der Islam* 8 (1918): 214–27.
10. Muhammad Nāzim, *The Life and Times of Sultān Mahmūd of Ghazna* (New Delhi, 1971 [1931]), 209–24.
11. *Speeches in the House of Lords 1843, 28 February 1843–24 March 1843*, *Hansard* 67 (1843): March 9th, 1843, 533. See also Edward Law, Lord of Ellenborough, *History of the Indian Administration of Lord Ellenborough in his Correspondence with the Duke of Wellington*, ed. Lord Colchester (London, 1874), 52.
12. *Hansard* 67 (1843): March 9th, 1843, 540–41; Romila Thapar, *Somanatha: The Many Voices of a History* (Delhi, 2001), 173–74.
13. John Briggs, tr., *History of the Rule of the Mahomedan Power in India through the Year A.D. 1612*, Translated from the Original Persian of Mahomed Kasim Ferishta, 4 vols. (London, 1829), 1:43. See also Richard H. Davis, "Memories of Broken Idols," in Irene A. Biermann, ed., *The Experience of Islamic Art in the Margins of Islam* (Reading, UK, 2005), 151–52. For other references to the mace see R. Karkaria, "Mahmud of Ghazni and the Gates of Somnath," *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 19 (1895–97): 147–48. On the figure of Mahmud in modern historiography see Peter Hardy, "Mahmud of Ghazna and the Historians," *Journal of the Punjab University Historical Society* 14 (1962): 1–36.
14. Vigne, *Personal Narrative*, 129.
15. Cited in John William Kaye, *History of the War in Afghanistan*, 2 vols. (London, 1851), 2:650. For a strident critique of Ellenborough's actions, which were not well received in the metropole, see Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The Miscellaneous Writings and Speeches of Lord Macaulay* (London, 1871), 630–41; Richard Davis, *Lives of Indian Images* (Princeton, 1997), 197–209.
16. Finbarr B. Flood, "Signs of Violence: Colonial Ethnographies and Indo-Islamic Monuments," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art* 5, 2 (2004): 33–38; Amalendu Misra, *Identity*

- and *Religious Foundations of Anti-Islamism in India* (New Delhi, 2004), 206–13.
17. H. M. Elliot and John Dowson, *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, vol. 1 (Delhi, 1990 [1867]), xxi.
 18. James Fergusson, *A History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (London, 1876), 513n; Har Bilas Sardar, *Ajmer: Historical and Descriptive* (Ajmer, 1941), 221–23.
 19. Sardar, *Ajmer*, 71. The Mayo durbar was followed between 1875 and 1878 by a campaign of restoration to the mosque: Anon., “Restoration Work in Ajmir,” *Archaeological Survey of India Reports* (1902–3): 80–81.
 20. Bernard S. Cohn, “Representing Authority in Victorian India,” in J. Hobsbawm and T. Rangars, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, UK, 1983), 165–210.
 21. *Hansard* 67 (1843): March 9th, 1843, 522.
 22. Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, 497.
 23. Discussing Rickman’s *Attempt to Discriminate the Styles of Architecture in England* (1817) and its emphasis on style as a means of establishing architectural chronology, Fergusson writes that “owing to its perfect originality and freedom from all foreign admixture or influence, I believe these principles, so universally adopted in this country, are even more applicable to the Indian styles than to the European”: *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, xii. See also Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, *The New Cambridge History of India*, vol. 3, no. 4 (New Delhi, 1998 [1994]), 89–90; Flood, “Signs of Violence,” 28.
 24. J. Burton-Page, s.v. “Hind,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition* (henceforth *EI2*) (Leiden, 1950–2004).
 25. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (The Islamic Period)* (Bombay, 1944), 1.
 26. James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, or, the Central and Western Rajpoot States of India*, 2 vols. (London, 1829–32), 1:778–82.
 27. Walter Ewer, “An Account of the Inscriptions on the *Cootub Minar*, and on the Ruins in Its Vicinity,” *Asiatic Researches* 14 (1832), 480–89.
 28. Tod, *Annals*, 609. For the history of the term see Dario Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution* (London and New Haven, 1997), 18, 35–36.
 29. André Wink, “India and Central Asia: The Coming of the Turks in the Eleventh Century,” in A. W. van den Hoek, D. H. A. Kolff, and M. S. Oort, eds., *Ritual, State, and History in South Asia: Essays in Honour of J. C. Heesterman* (Leiden, 1992), 747–73; Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya, *Representing the Other? Sanskrit Sources and the Muslims: Eighth to Fourteenth Century* (New Delhi, 1998), 40–43.
 30. Annemarie Schimmel, “Turk and Hindu: A Poetical Image and Its Application to Historical Fact,” in Speros Vryonis Jr., ed., *Islam and Cultural Change in the Middle Ages* (Wiesbaden, 1975), 107–26. For a recent reevaluation of these oppositional categories see David Gilmartin and Bruce B. Lawrence, eds., *Beyond Turk and Hindu: Rethinking Religious Identities in Islamicate South Asia* (Gainesville, 2000).
 31. Of the four extensive thirteenth- and fourteenth-century descriptions of the mosque that survive, the sole exception is the earliest, the *Tāj al-Ma’āthir* (begun ca. 602/1205–6), which refers to the golden domes of the idol temples (*qub-bahā-yi zārīn-i but-khāna*) formerly associated with the site: Tāj al-Din Ḥasan b. Nizāmi Nishāpūrī, *Tāj al-Ma’āthir*, British Library, India Office Library, ms. 15 (Ethé no. 210), fol. 114b; Syed Hasan Askari, “Taj-ul-Maasir of Hasan Nizami,” *Patna University Journal* 18, 3 (1963): 72; Bhagwat Saroop, tr., *Tajud Din Hasan Nizami’s Taj ul Ma’āthir (The Crown of Glorious Deeds)* (Delhi, 1998), 142.
 32. Tod, *Annals*, 1:778.
 33. Tod, *Annals*, 1:782. On the way in which European classicism inflected representations of the South Asian past see Finbarr Barry Flood, “Lingas in Latin: Classicism and Censorship in Colonial Translation,” paper delivered to the Annual Symposium of the American Council for Southern Asian Art, Peabody Museum, Salem, MA, May 2004.
 34. Finbarr Barry Flood, “Correct Delineations and Promiscuous Outlines: Envisioning India at the Trial of Warren Hastings,” *Art History* 29, 1 (2006): 54–55, figs. 2.3–2.4.
 35. Nicholas B. Dirks, “Reading Culture: Anthropology and the Textualization of India,” in E. V. Daniel and J. Peck, eds., *Culture/Contexture* (Berkeley, 1996), 292; Flood, “Signs of Violence,” 28–30.
 36. For the broader European context see Nancy Stepan, “Biological Degeneration: Races and Proper Places,” in *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress*, ed. J. Edward Chamberlain and Sander L. Gilman (New York, 1985), 97–120; Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London and New York, 1995).
 37. Lord Napier, “Modern Architecture in India,” *The Builder* 28 (1870): 722.
 38. S. D. Sharma, *The Crescent in India* (Bombay, 1937), 63.
 39. Muhammad Abdullah Chagatai, “Turkish Architectural Ornament in Indo-Pakistani Architecture,” *First International Congress of Turkish Art, Ankara, 19th–24th October, 1959* (Ankara, 1961), 75.
 40. Doğan Kuban, *Muslim Religious Architecture*, pt. 2: *Development of Religious Architecture in Later Periods* (Leiden, 1985), 15.
 41. Finbarr Barry Flood, “From the Prophet to Postmodernism? New World Orders and the End of Islamic Art,” in Elizabeth Mansfield, ed., *Making Art History* (New York, forthcoming), 31–53.
 42. For example, David Talbot Rice, *Islamic Art* (London, 1975); Robert Irwin, *Islamic Art in Context: Art, Architecture, and the Literary World* (New York, 1997); Robert Hillenbrand, “The Architecture of the Ghaznavids and Ghurids,” in *Studies in Honour of Clifford Edmund Bosworth*, ed. Carole Hillenbrand, vol. 2, *The Sultan’s Turret: Studies in Persian and Turkish Culture* (Leiden, 2000), 124–206.
 43. Robert Hillenbrand, “Political Symbolism in Early Indo-Islamic Mosque Architecture: The Case of Ajmir,” *Iran* 26 (1988): 105.
 44. Peter Draper, “English with a French Accent: Architectural *Franglais* in Late-Twelfth-Century England?” in *Architecture and Language: Constructing Identity in European Architecture c. 1000–c. 1650*, ed. Georgia Clarke and Paul Crossley (Cambridge, UK, 2000), 33. See also Tony K. Stewart and Carl W. Ernst, “Syncretism,” in *South Asian Folklore: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Peter J. Claus and Margaret Mills (New York, 2003), 586–88.
 45. Cited in R. W. Hamilton, “Keppel Archibald Cameron Creswell,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* 60 (1974): 6. Reprinted in *Muqarnas* 8 (1991): 130.

46. Michael Meister, "Indian Islam's Lotus Throne: Kaman and Khatu Kalan," in *Islam and Indian Regions*, ed. Ann Libera Dallapiccola and Stephanie Zingel-Avé Lallemand (Stuttgart, 1993), 445–52; idem, "The Membrane of Tolerance—Middle and Modern India," in *Art and the Integral Vision: A Volume of Essays in Felicitation of Kapila Vatsyayan*, ed. B. N. Saraswati, S. C. Malik, and Madhu Khanna (New Delhi, 1994), 289–98; Kuban, *Muslim Religious Architecture*, pt. 2, 15.
47. Richard Ettinghausen and Oleg Grabar, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 650–1250* (New York, 1987), 291, 293. For further discussion of the screen see below.
48. Michael D. Willis, "An Eighth Century Mihrāb in Gwalior," *Artibus Asiae* 46, 3 (1985): 244–45. On the indigenous affinities of the Ajmir mosque and its screens see Michael Meister, "The Two-and-a-Half-Day Mosque," *Oriental Art* 18 (1972): 57–63.
49. My terminology reflects that used by S. C. Misra, "Indigenization and Islamization in Muslim Society in India," *Transactions of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study* 6 (1971): 361–71.
50. James Fergusson, *On the Study of Indian Architecture* (Delhi, 1977 [1866]), 32. For later elaborations of the indigenist paradigm see E. B. Havell, *Indian Architecture: Its Psychology, Structure, and History from the First Muhammedan Invasion to the Present Day* (London, 1913), 42–44.
51. Alexander Cunningham, *Four Reports Made During the Years 1862–63–64–65*, Archaeological Survey of India Reports 1 (Delhi, 1994 [1871]), 177. Emphasis mine.
52. Ewer, "Account of the Inscriptions," 485; Sayyid Ahmad Khān, *Āsārussanādīd (Āthār al-Sanādīd)* (Delhi, 1847 and 1854), translated by M. Garcin de Tassy as "Descriptions des monuments de Dehli en 1852 d'après le texte Hindustani de Saïyid Ahmad Khan," *Journal Asiatique* (Aug.–Sept. 1860): 238–50. For an English calque see R. Nath, *Monuments of Delhi: Historical Survey* (New Delhi, 1979), xviii–xix. See also R. Nath, "The Qutb Minār of Delhi and Its Symbolism (1200–1215)," *Studies in Medieval Indian Architecture* (New Delhi, 1995), 1–17.
53. J. D. Beglar and Alexander Cunningham, "Preface," in *Archaeological Survey of India: Report for the Year 1871–72* (Varanasi, 1966 [1873]), i–xvii.
54. J. D. Beglar, "Report on Dehli," in *Archaeological Survey of India: Report for the Year 1871–72*, 45.
55. E. B. Havell, *The Ancient and Medieval Architecture of India: A Study of Indo-Aryan Civilisation* (New Delhi, 1972 [1915]), 218; Osman Jamal, "E. B. Havell: The Art and Politics of Indianness," *Third Text* 39 (1997): 3–20; Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (New York, 2004), 155–56.
56. D. S. Trivedi, "Vishnudhvaja or Kutub Minar," *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 40 (1960): 241–61. See also Mohammad Yasin, "Origins and Authorship of Qutb Minar," *Journal of Indian History* 54 (1976): 399–405.
57. Alka A. Patel, "Towards Alternative Receptions of Ghurid Architecture in Northern India (Late Twelfth–Early Thirteenth Century CE)," *Archives of Asian Art* 54 (2001): 40; idem, "Islamic Architecture of Western India (Mid-12th–14th Centuries): Continuities and Interpretations" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2000), 30–31; idem, *Building Communities in Gujarat: Architecture and Society during the Twelfth through Fourteenth Centuries* (Leiden, 2004), 8–11.
58. Sita Ram Goel, *Hindu Temples: What Happened to Them?* (New Delhi, 1991), especially 232–33; Davis, "Memories of Broken Idols," 137–40. The dyadic vision of precolonial Indian history championed in colonial narratives was already adopted by some nineteenth-century Indian nationalists, who contrasted the darkness of "Muslim" rule with the light of British governance: Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Delhi, 1997), 94. On the way in which scholarship is implicated in contemporary political developments see Barbara D. Metcalf, "Presidential Address: Too Little, Too Much: Reflections on Muslims in the History of India," *Journal of Asian Studies* 54 (1995): 95.
59. Aman Khanna, "Among the Believers," *Outlook India*, Feb. 27, 2004. Available at www.outlookindia.com
60. Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, 214.
61. Flood, "Signs of Violence," 22–28.
62. Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, 501.
63. With characteristic enthusiasm, Fergusson declared that while the Qutb Minar found a formal comparison in Giotto's campanile in Florence, the Florentine structure "wants that poetry of design and exquisite finish of detail which marks every moulding of the minār": *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, 506. Descriptions of Khurasani minarets were available in contemporary travelers' accounts of eastern Iran and Central Asia: e.g., Nicolai Khanikov, *Mémoire sur la partie méridionale de l'Asie Centrale* (Paris, 1861), 134.
64. Havell, *Indian Architecture*, 11, 41; Trivedi, "Vishnudhvaja."
65. Havell, *Indian Architecture*, 3, 192; idem, *Ancient and Medieval Architecture*, viii.
66. See, for example, Oskar von Niedermayer, *Afghanistan* (Leipzig, 1924); Samuel Flury, "Le décor épigraphique des monuments de Ghazna," *Syria* 6 (1925): 61–90; Arthur Upham Pope, "The Mosque at Qal'a-i-Bist," *Bulletin of the American Institute for Persian Art and Archaeology* 4, 1 (1935): 7–11; Y. A. Godard, "L'inscription du minaret de Mas'ūd III a Ghazna," *Āthār-é Īrān: Annales du Service Archéologique de l'Īrān* 1, 2 (1936): 367–69.
67. Among the most important publications are Daniel Schlumberger, "Le palais ghaznévide de Lashkari Bazar," *Syria* 29 (1952): 251–70; Janine Sourd-Thomine, "Deux minarets Seljoukides en Afghanistan," *Syria* 30 (1953): 108–36; Ahmad 'Ali Kohzad, "Firoz Koh," *Afghanistan* 12, 4 (1957): 31–34; André Maricq and Gaston Wiet, *Le minaret de Djām: La découverte de la capitale des sultans Ghourides XIIe–XIIIe siècles*, Mémoires de la Délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan, vol. 16 (Paris, 1959); Umberto Scerrato, "The First Two Excavation Campaigns at Ghazni, 1957–1958," *East and West*, n.s., 10 (1959): 22–55.
68. Eric Schroeder, "The Seljūq Period," in *A Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present*, ed. Arthur Upham Pope and Phyllis Ackermann, 18 vols. (Ashiya, 1981 [1938]), 3:983–84. In the same volume see Arthur Upham Pope, "Introduction," 911–12. The centrality of Khurasan to the development of Seljuk architecture is a shibboleth of subsequent Islamic architectural history: see Oleg Grabar, "The Visual Arts, 1050–1350," *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol.

- 5, *The Seljuq and Mongol Periods* (Cambridge, 1968), 348.
68. Ernst Kühnel, *Islamic Art and Architecture*, tr. Katherine Watson (London, 1966), 95.
70. Schroeder, "Seljūq Period," 982. See also Aslanapa's suggestion that the monumental *maqṣūra* dome characteristic of Seljuk mosques in Iran has its origins in Ghaznavid mosques such as that in the palace at Lashkari Bazaar: Oktay Aslanapa, *Turkish Art and Architecture* (New York, 1971), 56–57.
71. Alessio Bombaci, "Les Turcs et l'art Ghaznavide," in *First International Congress of Turkish Art, Ankara*, 67.
72. Aslanapa, *Turkish Art and Architecture*, 55–62, 64.
73. Kühnel, *Islamic Art and Architecture*, 95–96.
74. Chagatai, "Turkish Architectural Ornaments," 76.
75. Brown, *Indian Architecture (The Islamic Period)*, 6–7.
76. Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, 197; see also Thomas R. Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* (Berkeley, 1989), 30–31.
77. Havell, *Indian Architecture*, 51; J. A. Page, *An Historical Memoir on the Qutb: Delhi*, Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, no. 22 (Calcutta, 1926), 2n, 9–10. For the distinction between imported form and indigenous decoration see also Fritz Lehmann, "Architecture of the Early Sultanate Period and the Nature of the Muslim State in India," *Indica* 15, 1 (1978): 25.
78. Percy Brown, "Early Indo-Islamic Art and Its Relation to the Art of the Seljuks and of Iran," *Indo-Iranica* 2, 2 (1947): 2–3.
79. G. Le Play-Brown, "De l'influence de l'art turc seljoucide dans les monuments islamiques de l'Inde du Nord," *Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Congress of Orientalists, Istanbul, 13th to 22nd September 1951* (Leiden, 1957), vol. 2, 639.
80. Momtazur Rahman Tarafdar, "Some Aspects of the Mamlūk Buildings and Their Influence on the Architecture of the Succeeding Periods," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan* 11 (1966): 52–53. For Sultan Ghari see S. A. A. Naqvi, "Sultān Ghārī, Delhi," *Ancient India* 3 (1947): 4–10. It has been suggested that the madrasa, whose form is anomalous among extant early sultanate monuments, replicates a classical or classicizing style from regions to the west, described perhaps by a traveler to Delhi: Anthony Welch and Howard Crane, "The Tughluqs: Master Builders of the Delhi Sultanate," *Muqarnas* 1 (1983), 154.
81. Ettinghausen and Grabar, *Art and Architecture of Islam 650–1250*, 293.
82. Howard Crane, "Anatolian Saljūq Architecture and Its Links to Saljūq Iran," in *The Art of the Saljūqs in Iran and Anatolia: Proceedings of a Symposium Held in Edinburgh in 1982*, ed. Robert Hillenbrand (Costa Mesa, 1994), 267. Emphasis mine.
83. Anon., "Saracenic Architecture in India," *The Builder* (August 26, 1876): 822.
84. Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar, *Islamic Art and Its Decoration AD 800–1500* (London, 1967), 76; Hillenbrand, "Political Symbolism," 115.
85. Anthony Welch, "Architectural Patronage and the Past: the Tughluq Sultans of India," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 314.
86. Tod, *Annals*, 1:779.
87. Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, 499–500.
88. John Marshall, "The Monuments of Muslim India," in Wolseley Haig, ed., *Cambridge History of India*, vol. 3: *Turks and Afghans* (Cambridge, 1928), 576; Hillenbrand, "Political Symbolism," 110, 112.
89. Tsukinowa Tokifusa, "The Influence of Seljuk Architecture on the Earliest Mosques of the Delhi Sultanate Found in India," *Acta Asiatica* 43 (1982): 57–59; Barbara Brend, *Islamic Art* (Cambridge, MA, 1991), 204; Catherine B. Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* (Cambridge, 1992), 4; Mehrdad Shokoohy, *The Dictionary of Art*, (New York, 1996), vol. 15, 339.
90. Anon., "Saracenic Architecture in India," 823; Beglar, "Report on Dehli," in *Archaeological Survey of India: Report for the Year 1871–1872*, 87.
91. Aslanapa, *Turkish Art and Architecture*, 64.
92. Schroeder, "Seljūq Period," 985–86.
93. Pope, "Introduction," *Survey of Persian Art*, 3:912. As Briggs notes, "it is the profuseness of the decoration in early Hindu temples that tends to obscure their structural features and thus make them difficult for a European critic to analyse dispassionately": Martin Briggs, "Muslim Architecture in India," in *A Cultural History of India*, ed. A. L. Basham (New Delhi, 1975), 312. The emphasis in twentieth-century scholarship on the concealment of form is at odds with earlier evaluations that emphasized the "constructive truthfulness" of Indo-Islamic architecture: Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision*, 36, 38.
94. For the latter interpretation see Sunil Kumar, "The Emergence of the Delhi Sultanate, 588–685/1192–1286" (PhD diss., Duke University, 1992), 89.
95. Sarda, *Ajmer*, 72–73; Tod, *Annals*, 611; Havell, *Indian Architecture*, 4–5.
96. James Mill, *The History of British India*, 5th ed., 10 vols. (London, 1858), 2:10–11. This resonates with a broader Orientalist critique in which racial and environmental factors conspired to effect an Indian inability to produce anything but deficient copies of a reality constituted according to Western canons: Ronald Inden, "Orientalist Constructions of India," *Modern Asian Studies* 20, 3 (1986): 441.
97. Brown *Indian Architecture (The Islamic Period)*, 11. See also John Terry, *The Charm of Indo-Islamic Architecture: An Introduction to the Northern Phase* (London, 1955), 7.
98. M. Mujeeb, "The Qutub Complex as a Social Document," in idem, *Islamic Influence on Indian Society* (Meerut, 1972), 115.
99. Page, *Memoir*, 8.
100. Mehrdad Shokoohy, *Muslim Architecture of South India: The Sultanate of Ma'bar and the Traditions of the Maritime Settlers on the Malabar and Coromandel Coasts [Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Goa]* (London and New York, 2003), 235.
101. Minhāj-i Sirāj Jūzjāni, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāsirī*, 2 vols., ed. Abdul Hayy Habibi (Kabul, 1963–64), 1:461.
102. Mehrdad Shokoohy and Natalie H. Shokoohy, "The Architecture of Baha al-Din Tughhrul in the Region of Bayana, Rajasthan," *Muqarnas* 4 (1987): 125.
103. For a discussion see Finbarr Barry Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and 'Hindu-Muslim' Encounter, 800–1250* (Princeton, forthcoming), chap. 6.
104. Page, *Historical Memoir*, 8; J. Burton-Page, s.v. "Dihli," *EI2*. For other occurrences see Mehrdad Shokoohy and Nata-

- lie H. Shokoohy, *Hişār-i Firūza: Sultanate and Early Mughal Architecture in the District of Hisar, India* (London, 1988), 33–37; Meister, "Indian Islam's Throne," 449. For a general discussion of the feature and its possible functions see Muhammad Abdul Qadir, "The So-called Ladies' Gallery in the Early Mosques of Bangladesh," *Journal of the Varendra Research Museum* 7 (1981–82): 161–72. The history of the women's gallery remains to be written, but its existence in the mosques of the central Islamic lands is attested to by thirteenth-century manuscript paintings such as those in the illustrated copies of the *Maqamat* of al-Hariri produced in Iraq.
105. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Jabbār al-'Utbi, *al-Tārīkh al-Yamīnī*, printed in the margin of Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Manīnī, *al-Fath al-wahabī 'alā tārīkh Abī Naṣr al-'Utbi*, 2 vols. (Bulaq, 1869), 2:296–97. For an early-thirteenth-century Persian translation in which the Arabic term *bayt* is glossed as *khāna* see Abū 'l-Sharaf Nāṣih b. Zafar al-Jurfādiqānī, *Tarjuma-yi Tārīkh-i Yamīnī*, ed., Ja'far Sha'ār (Tehran, 2037/1978), 387–88. I am very grateful to Everett Rowson for allowing me to use his translation of the Arabic text, which is taken from the bilingual edition that he is currently publishing. To date, the sole published English translation is that of James Reynolds, *The Kitab-i-Yamini* (London, 1858), 462–67, but see also Alessio Bombaci, "La 'Sposa del Cielo,'" in *A Francesco Gabrieli: Studi orientalistici offerti nel sessantesimo compleanno dei suoi colleghi e discepoli* (Rome, 1964), 25–26, 32.
 106. This suggestion finds support in a fourteenth-century description of 'Ala al-Din Khalji's extension of the Qutb Mosque complex, in which he is said to have added a fourth *maqṣūra* to the existing three (that is, the original prayer hall and the two added on either side as part of the enlargements undertaken by Sultan Iltutmish around 1229): Amīr Khusraw Dihlawī, *Khazā'in al-Futūḥ*, ed. Mohammed Wahid Mirza (Calcutta, 1953), 23.
 107. For the Herat Mosque see Ruedi Stuckert, "Die Grosse Moschee und das Mausoleum des Ghiyāt ud-Dīn in Herat," *Afghanistan Journal* 7, 1 (1980): 3–5; B. Glatzer, "Das Mausoleum und die Moschee des Ghoriden Ghiyāth ud-Dīn in Herat," *Afghanistan Journal* 7, 1 (1980): 6–22.
 108. Daniel Schlumberger, "La grande mosquée de Lashkari Bazar," *Afghanistan* 7, 1 (1952): 1–4; Daniel Schlumberger and Janine Sourdel-Thomine, *Lashkari Bazar: Une résidence royale ghasnévide et ghoride*, Mémoires de la Délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan, vol. 18 (Paris, 1978), 1A, 67–69; 1B, 54–57; pls. 23, 93c, 95e–f.
 109. Sikandar b. Muḥammad, *Mīrāt-i Sikandarī*, ed. S. C. Misra and M. L. Rahman (Baroda, 1961), 38; Wheeler M. Thackston, tr., *The Jahangirnāma: Memoirs of Jahangir, Emperor of India* (Oxford and Washington, DC, 1999), 245; Shamsuddin Ahmad, "An Outline of Muslim Architecture in Bengal," in *Studies in Indian Culture: Dr. Ghulam Yazdani Commemoration Volume* (Hyderabad, 1966), 113–14; Welch and Crane, "Tughluqs," 130. In certain respects, the feature recalls the *hünkar mahfili*, the elevated royal tribune found in Ottoman royal mosques from the late fifteenth century onwards: Aptullah Kuran, "The Evolution of the Sultan's Pavilion in Ottoman Imperial Mosques," *Islamic Art* 4 (1990–91): 281–300.
 110. For a preliminary discussion see Finbarr Barry Flood, "Refiguring Iconoclasm in the Early Indian Mosque," in *Negating the Image: Case Studies in Iconoclasm*, ed. Anne McClanan and Jeff Johnson (Aldershot, 2005), 27–29. The potential of translation theory for conceptualizing textual production in medieval and early modern South Asia has been explored by Tony K. Stewart, "In Search of Equivalence: Conceiving Hindu-Muslim Encounter through Translation Theory," *History of Religions* 40, 3 (2001): 260–87.
 111. On comparanda and their role in determining relationships to putative originals see Ian MacKenzie, "Gadamer's Hermeneutics and the Uses of Forgery," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 45, 1 (1986): 41.
 112. Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in *Illuminations*, tr. Harry Zohn (London, 1992), 71–72.
 113. Walter Benjamin, "On Language as Such and the Language of Man," in idem, *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, tr. Edmund Jephcott (New York, 1978), 325.
 114. Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, tr. Alan Bass (Chicago, 1981), 20.
 115. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York, 1995), 384–87.
 116. In addition to the writings on translation cited above, I am indebted here to Roger Chartier, "Culture as Appropriation: Popular Culture Uses in Early Modern France," in *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Steven L. Kaplan (Berlin, 1984), 234.
 117. See Ruth Evans on Homi Bhabha's concept of translation and its relevance to premodern cultural production in idem, "Translating Past Cultures?" *The Medieval Translator* 4 (1994), 32. For empirical readings of the Qutb Mosque in Delhi that emphasize this dialectic between continuity and discontinuity as well as the idea of the mosque as a space of mediation, see Sunil Kumar, "Qutb and Modern Memory," in *The Partitions of Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of Memory*, ed. Suvir Kaul (New Delhi, 2001), especially 144–48, 157–62; Monica Juneja, "Spaces of Encounter and Plurality: Looking at Architecture in Pre-Colonial North India," in *Religious Pluralism in South Asia and Europe*, ed. Jamal Malik and Helmut Reifeld (New Delhi, 2005), 245–67.
 118. Havell, *Indian Architecture*, 47; Meister, "Indian Islam's Lotus Throne," 450; Patel, *Islamic Architecture of Western India*, 212–13. See also Jonathan M. Bloom, "On the Transmission of Designs in Early Islamic Architecture," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 21–28.
 119. al-'Utbi, *Al-Tārīkh al-Yamīnī*, 2:292. In the Persian translation, the term is glossed by *dirakht* (tree): al-Jurfādiqānī, *Tarjuma-yi Tārīkh-i Yamīnī*, 387. For the Turkic gilder see M. Aurel Stein, *Kalhana's Rājataranginī: A Chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir*, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1892), 1:311, ll. 7.528–7.531.
 120. Finbarr Barry Flood, "Ghūrid Architecture in the Indus Valley: The Tomb of Shaykh Sādan Shahid," *Ars Orientalis* 31 (2001): 153–54; idem, *Objects of Translation*, chap. 6.

