

The Production and Reproduction of a Monument: The Many Lives of the Sanchi *Stupa*

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This essay considers the many lives of the ancient Buddhist *stupa* complex at Sanchi, tracing its transformations from a disused ruin and a site of ravage and pilferage to one of the best-preserved standing *stupa* complexes of antiquity. It engages with nineteenth-century histories of Sanchi's passage from discovered and excavated relic to portable object and image, exploring some of the processes of its imaging, replication, display, and documentation that preceded and paralleled the intense spurt of photography at the site, highlighting the tightening institutional grip of the colonial state and the intensification of the practices of archaeological repair, conservation, and care, culminating in the 'Marshall era'. Contending claims for control and custody attended the politics of the possession and resacralization of the site, intensifying the vortex of secular and sacred, archaeological and devotional consecrations that accompanied Sanchi's transition from a colonial to a national monument. In conclusion, Sanchi's travels and afterlives are explored as a secular architectural form and consecrated religious monument, within and outside the nation, in postcolonial and contemporary times.

Keywords: monument; museum; replica; Buddhism; colonial archaeology; images

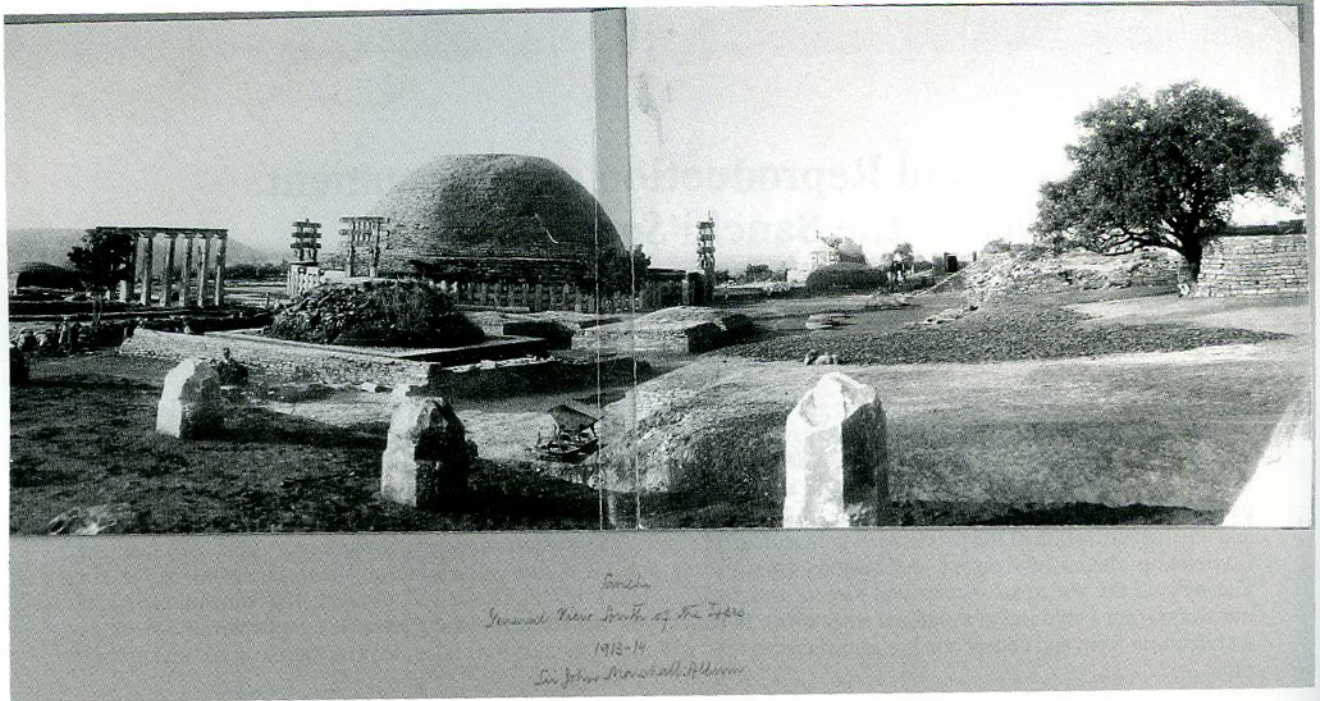
Situated on the small hillock of Sanchi amidst the Vindhya mountain range, 46 kilometres from the state capital of Bhopal in the state of Madhya Pradesh, is a cluster of structures of an ancient Buddhist *stupa* complex dating from the third century BCE. The guidebook of the Archaeological Survey of India presents Sanchi as unique in 'having the most perfect and well-preserved *stupas* anywhere in India'.¹ The consecration of this *stupa* complex under the Mauryan emperor Asoka harks back to the years of the institutional foundations of Buddhism, when the building of such structures and the geographical distribution of these sacred relics across the empire and Sri Lanka played a crucial role in the state-sponsored propagation of the faith.² The monumental function of these structures can be well dated back to these ancient times. But if we were to take a different modern notion of the 'monument', then it is in colonial India, in the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, that we witness a new monumental metamorphosis of this ancient Buddhist site. The birth of the monument is then tied up with a distinctly imperial history of the remaking of the ancient pasts of modern India.

The transformation of Sanchi from a disused ruin and a site of ravage and pilferage to one of the best-preserved standing *stupa* complexes of antiquity was the proud achievement of the Director-General of Indian archaeology, Sir John Hubert Marshall

(Figures 1, 2). It was in the course of Marshall's operations, from 1912 to 1918, that the complex took on much of its current-day appearance – when, to quote Marshall, 'one and all the monuments [were put] into as thorough and lasting state of repair as possible', and one of the country's earliest site museums was set up at Sanchi, where all the 'movable antiquities' (sculptures, architectural fragments, and inscriptions) from the site were collected, arranged, and catalogued.³ Sanchi occupies a central place in the triumphalist claims of colonial Indian archaeology, which could boast of its own 'Marshall era': a time of spectacular reconstructions of the country's decaying archaeological sites.⁴

This essay looks back from the vantage point of the celebrated 'Marshall era' to a series of earlier moments that mark out the colonial biography of Sanchi. These moments, I argue, reveal a far more fractured encounter with modernity and a more muddled history in the transition of the site from ruin to monument than there is room for in the standard narratives of the authoritative remaking of the ancient site by the institutions and expertise of modern archaeology.⁵ The first section of the essay engages with these nineteenth-century histories of Sanchi's passage from discovered and excavated relic to portable object and image, exploring some of the processes of imaging, replication, display and documentation that preceded and paralleled the intense spurt of photography at the site. My idea of the 'many lives' of

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1. 'Sanchi, General View south of the Topes, 1913-1914'. Photograph from the John Marshall album. Courtesy of Alkazi Collection of Photography, New Delhi.

this monumental complex is built around its off-site careers as object and image in different exhibitions, museums, and scholarly compendia. These, in turn, contributed to a growing monumentalization of the structures on site under the tightening institutional grip of the colonial state and the intensification of the practices of archaeological repair, conservation, and care, culminating in the 'Marshall era.' The next section briefly revisits the history of the site in this era to critically open up some of the implications of Marshall's archaeological project by considering other claimants for control and custody and other players in the politics of the possession and resacralization of the site in the same and subsequent decades. In doing so, I wish to underline the competing semantic layers in the restitution of the 'true' pasts of Sanchi, and the new vortex of secular and sacred, archaeological and devotional consecrations that attended its transition from a colonial to a national monument. In the final section I touch on some of Sanchi's travels and afterlives, as a secular architectural form and consecrated religious monument, within and outside the nation, in postcolonial and contemporary times. From the middle years of the nineteenth century into the present, we see the aura of the *in situ* monument continuously refracted by its portability and reproducibility as form, image, and copy in changing locations to serve different commemorative functions.

The ravage of discovery

'The main injury to Sanchi', it is now widely argued, 'was caused by the vandalism of modern excavators'.⁶ Highlighted with increasing intensity in all later histories of Sanchi, this point of view is ingrained even in the successive accounts of nineteenth-century British surveyors of the site. What it highlights is the general nature of early colonial archaeological explorations, where 'collateral damage' appeared to be an inevitable fallout of the imperatives of antiquarian curiosity and collecting where narratives of native disinterest and misuse of ancient stones could nonetheless be effectively invoked to offset the correctness and the legitimacy of the white man's intrusions. On many counts, the *stupa* complex at Sanchi was far more fortunate than its period counterparts at Bharhut in the Nagod district of the Central Provinces and at Amaravati in the Guntur district of the Madras Presidency. It did not suffer the kind of large-scale removal of its sculpted stones and railing pillars, as much by the local populace as by colonial officials, which, in the other cases, rendered impossible the preservation of the remains on-site and made for their reassembled, reconstructed existence within the museums of the empire.⁷ At Sanchi, what the first British explorers initially encountered were two remarkably well-preserved *stupas*, one large and the other smaller, alongside an intact outer railing and three still-erect elaborately sculpted gateways around the main edifice.⁸



2. View of the Great Stupa, after the restoration of the berm railing, 1918–19, Sanchi. Silver gelatin print, reproduced in the Annual Report of the Director General of Archaeology for the year 1918–19, Plate VII. Courtesy of Alkazi Collection of Photography, New Delhi.

In 1819, Captain Edward Fell of the 10th Native Infantry – one of the period's growing breed of army officials-turned-Orientalist scholars, to whom is attributed the first modern-day account of Sanchi – described with awe the size and sturdiness of the great hemispherical dome, 'to all appearance solid', its outer mortar coating still in 'perfect preservation' except in one or two places where it had been washed away by rain.⁹ Ironically, it was the very existence of such a preserved dome that now exposed the Great *Stupa* and its smaller pair to the new archaeological assault of being 'opened up'. Opening up these 'topes' (as they were called), by driving a shaft through the top towards the centre of the hemisphere to reach the inner chambers and ferret out the reliquary sacred caskets, would become the specialized pastime of travelling antiquarians in British India. By the middle years of the nineteenth century it had emerged as a particular forte of the pioneering field-archaeologist Alexander Cunningham,¹⁰ who had first performed this operation at the Dhamek *stupa* at Sarnath in 1834, and then, it is said, with greater effect at the main *stupa* at Sanchi, during his intensive exploration of the site with Lt. Col. F. C. Maisey in the early months of 1851. What

seems to have been at issue within the early annals of archaeology in India was less the 'correctness' of such a venture than the expertise and care with which it could be carried out.

What Captain Fell had stopped short of executing (despite his great curiosity and speculation about the internal construction of this massive stone mound) was undertaken a few years later, in 1822, by another amateur explorer, T. H. Maddock, the political agent of the princely state of Bhopal, along with his assistant Captain Johnson. As commented in all accounts, it was the distinctly inexpert nature of Maddock and Johnson's operations – whereby they drove shafts into the body of the *stupa* from the top and the sides, without succeeding in reaching the centre – which led to large structural breaches in the brick-work and half-destroyed the domes that Captain Fell had seen standing in 'perfect repair' only a few years earlier.¹¹ Three decades later, the claimed scientificity and success of Alexander Cunningham's renewed opening of the Sanchi *stupas* has also remained a matter of contention within the archaeological discipline and its historians.¹²

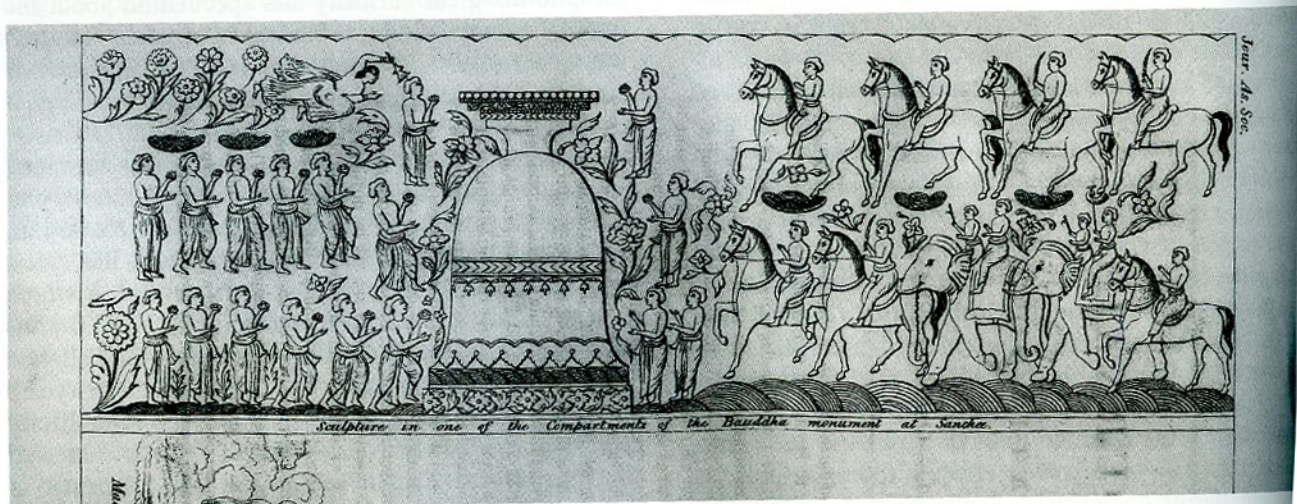
At the time, the end results, it seems, amply justified the operations. By penetrating the hidden depths of the mounds and retrieving from within the glazed-black inscribed reliquary caskets, Cunningham was able to identify the names of several Buddhist monks whose remains were buried within the cluster of *stupas* in this Bhilsa region, establishing the existence at the site of the funerary relics of two of Buddha's foremost disciples, Sariputra and Mahamogalana. Emboldened by the success of this 'opening' and the rich historical data it yielded, and driven by his zeal to uncover India's ancient Buddhist past, Cunningham, in his book, *The Bhilsa Topes* (1854), impressed upon the Court of Directors of the Company the need for 'the employment of a competent officer to open the numerous Topes which still exist in North and South Bahar, and to draw up a report on all the Buddhist remains of Kapila and Kusinagara, of Vaishali and Rajagriha, which were the principal scenes of Sakyas' labours'.¹³

Such a statement would serve as one of the founding directives behind the setting up of the country's first Archaeological Survey in 1861 under the direction of Cunningham, paving the way for the increasing priority of material remains over textual records as 'sources' for India's lost histories. And it is broadly this narrative of excavations and discoveries that has continued to prevail in the story of the progressive unfolding of archaeology in colonial India, even as later officials and scholars have berated Cunningham for failing to repair the structural breaches he made on the body of the *stupas*, and for his personal aggrandisement and careless dispersal of many of the 'treasures' he had extracted from them. These continuous arrogations of credit and blame, during different periods of explorations and conservation, come to us now as an integral part of the archaeological making and remaking of monuments in British India.

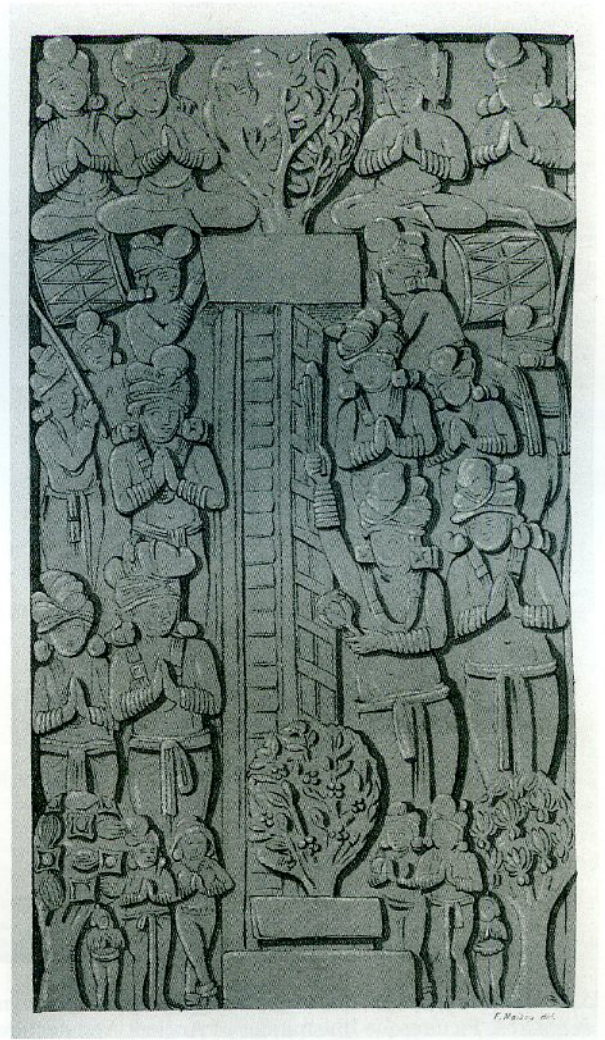
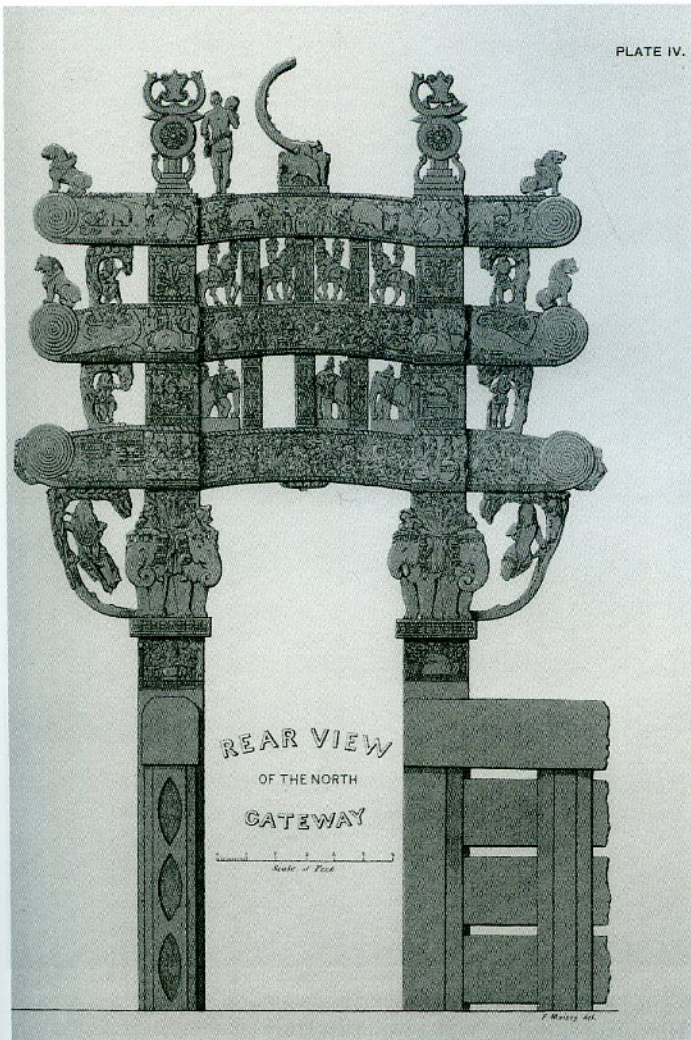
The production of images

If throughout this period the urge to dig, break open, and collect was a driving force, so too was the will to visually preserve what was seen and unearthed. The act of copying would become a primary way of arresting decay, countering damage, and documenting structures for posterity.¹⁴ Sanchi in the early and mid-nineteenth century offers itself as one such key site of imaging and copying, even as its monuments suffered some of the most obvious effects of 'destruction through excavation'.¹⁵ Captain Fell's report of 1819 provides one of the earliest samples of an ethnographic scrutiny of Sanchi's famous legacy of the gateway sculptures – descriptions and measurements of all the various human and animal types who adorned the lintels, pillars, and cornices, along with the details of postures, gestures, drapery, head-dress, and scenes of ritual ceremonies and worship. Lamenting his 'want of sufficient ability in the art of drawing to do justice to the highly finished style of the sculptures', the only image that accompanied his article was a crude 'native drawing' of a sculpted panel depicting the worship of a *stupa* by tiered rows of figures (Figure 3).¹⁶

The mid-century brought with it a spurt of textual description and documentation of the site, first in an account by J. D. Cunningham, an army engineer who was then Political Agent in the Bhopal Durbar, and then in the publication in 1854 of the book, *The Bhilsa Topes*, by his famous brother Alexander Cunningham. For all the damage that his excavations entailed, Cunningham, it is acknowledged, did an exemplary service in documenting his finds in this first of his scholarly monographs, providing 'the first systematic exposition of the character, sculpture, and inscriptional wealth of the *stupas*'.¹⁷ Side by side with Cunningham's textual labours appeared twenty-three finely-engraved line drawings, which



3. Sculpted frieze, Sanchi. Engraved drawing, reproduced in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 3 (1834), Plate XXVII.



4. Frederick Charles Maisey

a) Rear view of the full standing structure of the northern gateway, Sanchi.

b) Sculpted panel with ladder signifying Buddha's descent from heaven, Sanchi.

Coloured lithographs from F. C. Maisey, *Sanchi and its Remains* (London: Keagan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1892), Plates IV, IX.

move between the diagrammatic and pictorial – taking us from the lay-out of the site and architectural elevations of the structures to representations of the sculpted figures and scenes of the gateways, all the principal relic caskets, and the different symbols of the Buddhist faith that were to be found in the Sanchi sculptures.¹⁸

More than Cunningham, it was his assistant, Lieutenant Frederick Charles Maisey, who carried the main onus of visual documentation during their extensive survey of the site in 1851. Acting on a deputation from the Company's Court of Directors, Maisey's attention was focused on the gateway 'bas reliefs', which he laboriously recorded through drawing, copying entire gateways, pillars, and balustrades alongside individual sculpted panels. Four decades later, in 1892, Maisey's drawing of the sculptures would appear as tinted

lithographs in a book containing a full description of all 'the ancient buildings, sculptures, and inscriptions at Sanchi'. Much of the documentary worth of this book, however, would be overshadowed by the author's controversial argument about the evidence he had garnered on 'the comparatively modern date of the Buddhism of Gotama or Sakya Muni'.¹⁹ In a period that saw a large outpouring of European scholarship on Buddhism in ancient India, Maisey's views were quickly dismissed as ill-founded – motivated, as Cunningham pointed out, only by 'the pious wish to prove that Christianity was prior to Buddhism', even as Cunningham acknowledged the author's intimate acquaintance with the Sanchi *stupas* and recommended the numerous plates of the book 'as they give very faithful copies of the sculptures on a large scale' (Figures 4a, 4b).²⁰ These images wrought by



5. James Fergusson, 'Ruins of the Black Pagoda of Konarak'. Lithograph prepared by T. C. Dibdin from his on-site sketch. From Fergusson, *Picturesque Illustrations of Ancient Architecture in Hindostan* (London: J. Hogarth, 1848).

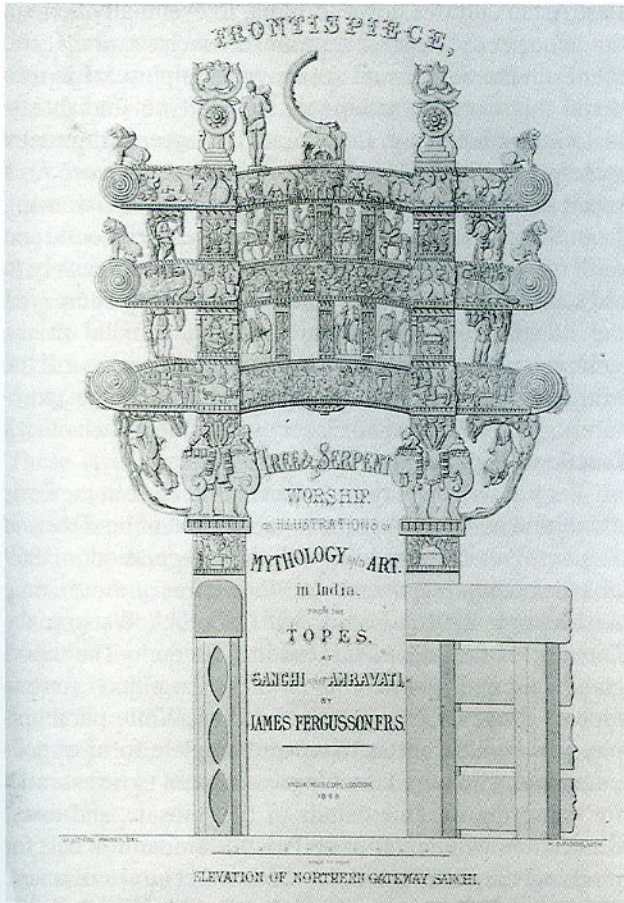
Maisey stand as the first in a long line of the visual imaging of the gateway sculptures of Sanchi, presaging their modern life as the most photographed objects of ancient Indian art.

From the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century – from travelling artists like William Hodges or the Daniells to antiquarians and collectors like Richard Gough and Colin Mackenzie down to the architectural scholar James Fergusson – a growing premium was placed on the site drawing of ancient monuments that could then be embellished and developed into a coloured engraving or lithograph (Figure 5). In an age of rapidly changing printing technologies, engraving and lithographs opened up a range of reproductive possibilities, feeding into the production of the first photographic images of ancient structures. One of the gateways of Sanchi found its way as one such finely-wrought lithographed image into the head of Fergusson's early work, *Picturesque Illustrations of Ancient Architecture of Hindostan* (1848), to mark the antiquity and grand

beginnings of Indian architecture (Figure 6). It was the only monument in the book that Fergusson had not seen and drawn first-hand, but he vouched for the correctness of the image by comparing it with Colin Mackenzie's drawing of the structure in the course of the latter's extensive survey and documentation.²¹ Already by the mid-nineteenth century, the Mackenzie drawings gathered in the India Museum in London were serving as an off-location archive of images on Indian antiquities for scholars in London. In the 1860s, the Maisey drawings of the Sanchi sculptures, which by then had travelled to London to be stored in the library of the India Office, would fulfil a similar and even larger need for Fergusson.

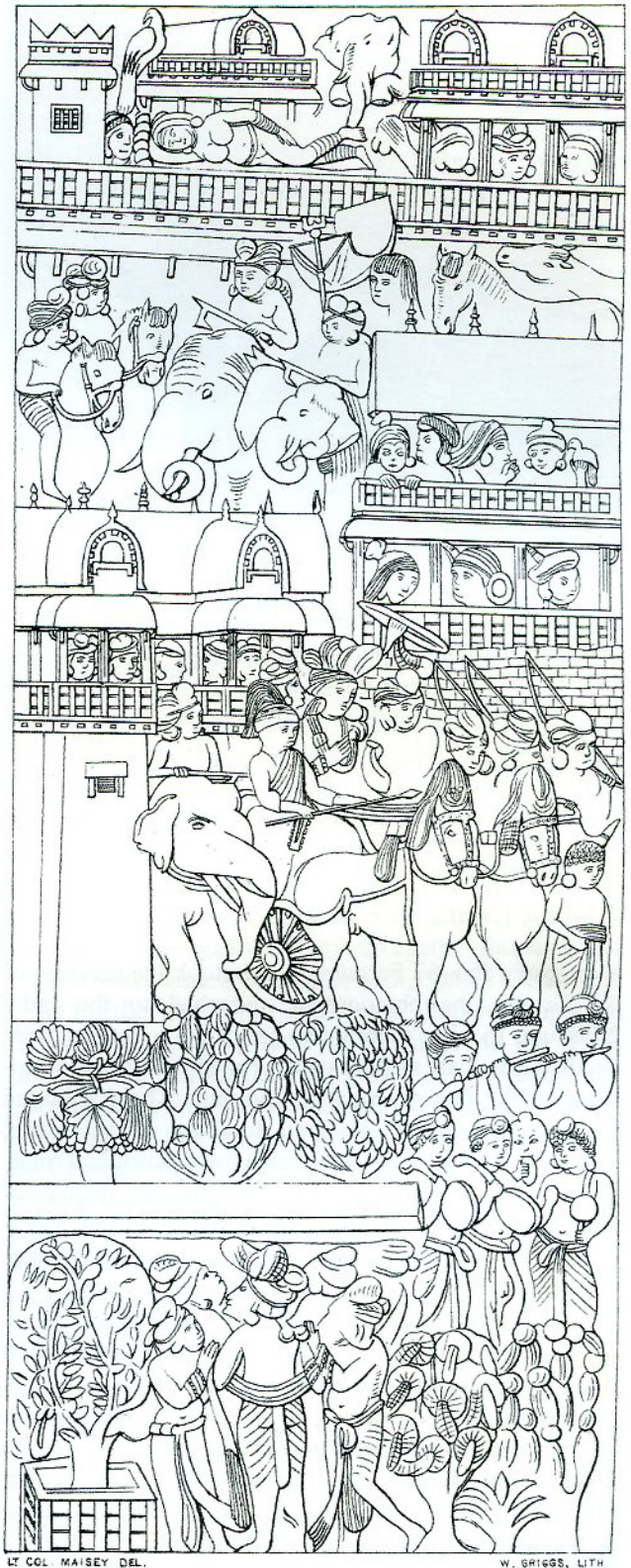
It was in a display and a publication spearheaded by Fergusson that the monuments of Sanchi would embark on a new global career as images. The occasion was the Paris International Exhibition of 1867, for which Fergusson was working on presenting a display of photographs and plaster casts of Indian architecture and sculpture. This is when, in the course of his search for ideal

SANCHI.



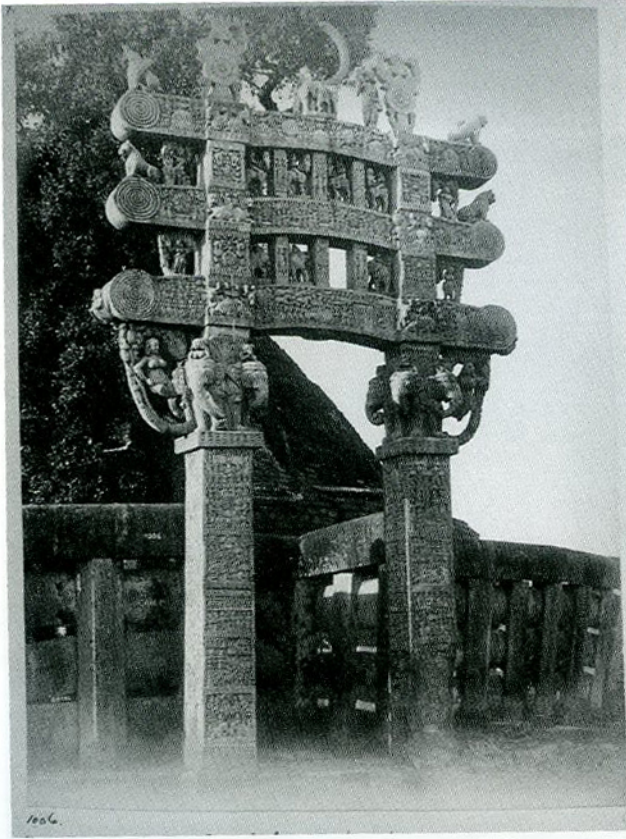
6. A Sanchi gateway. Lithographed drawing. Used as frontispiece, first in Fergusson, *Picturesque Illustrations of Ancient Architecture in Hindostan*, and later in Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship* (London: India Museum, W.H. Allen, 1868).

architectural specimens in the collections of the India Museum at Fife House in London, he came upon a large hoard of limestone sculptures from the *stupa* site of Amaravati, which had been lying abandoned for years then, first in the dockyards, then in the rear coach houses of Fife House, ever since their shipment to London in the mid-1850s.²² It is ironic to juxtapose this notorious history of the dispersal and neglect of the Amaravati ‘marbles’ in Madras and in London with the careful storage in the same years of the drawings of Mackenzie and Maisey in the India Museum and the India Office. The visual record had a need and a status that had, at times, even transcended the fate of the original. This anomaly was now fast resolved – even as the potentials of the new technology of photography were mobilised in the process of the institutional reclaiming of the Amaravati sculptures. Between Sanchi and Amaravati, we see one of the earliest on- and off-site deployments of photography in the staging of archaeological scholarship and museum displays. While the photographer Linnaeus Tripe was commissioned to photograph the sculptural panels of Amaravati in the Madras Museum in 1858,²³ in the



BUDDHIST BAS RELIEF.

7. Frederick Charles Maisey. Sculpted panel showing Queen Maya's dream, Prince Siddhartha's departure from Kapilavastu, and worship at the Bodhi tree, Sanchi. Lithograph of drawing, used in Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship*, Plate XXXIII.



8. James Waterhouse. Northern Gateway of the Great Stupa at Sanchi. Used in Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship* Courtesy of the British Library, London.

winter of 1866–67 Fergusson undertook the services of W. Griggs, the photographer attached to the India Museum, to have a complete set of photographs made on the same scale as the panels as an aid for the reassembling of the fragments in the museum. These enlarged photographs and lithographed drawings of Amaravati, alongside a few select specimens of the original ‘marbles’, found pride of place in Fergusson’s display of Indian architecture at the Paris exhibition, and occasioned the publication of an entire volume on these sculptures.²⁴

Fergusson’s discovery at the same time of the album of Maisey drawings in the India Office and his acquisition of a set of photographs of Sanchi taken by Lieutenant Waterhouse, R. A. (to date, the earliest photographs of the site), would also ensure for Sanchi a place in the same display and volume. Identified as the older of the two ‘Topes’, Sanchi would now be placed prior to Amaravati in the line of antiquity and the chain of excellence of India’s early Buddhist art.²⁵ That Fergusson’s richly-illustrated volume on the Sanchi and the Amaravati sculptures carried the title *Tree and Serpent Worship*, and that it contained a large section tracing such rituals

of worship though the ancient Western European and East Asian cultures down to India, to eventually hone in on the specific representations of such symbols and scenes in the Sanchi and Amaravati sculptures, has rendered this work something of an oddity in Indian art-historical scholarship. In its time, however, it augured a widespread mode of reading sculptures as evidence for a racial and ethnological history of ancient India, drawing from them clues to the appearance, dress, customs, and faith of the people of the period. And it was precisely to aid such modes of reading that the details and accuracy of the imaging of the sculptures became crucial in the volume, with Maisey’s lithographed drawings of the sculptures and Waterhouse’s photographs of the structures brought together to closely supplement each other’s functions (Figures 7, 8).²⁶

Fergusson’s display on Indian architecture at the Paris exhibition and the subsequent publication of his *Tree and Serpent Worship* coincided with the presentation in 1869 of an elaborate *Report on the Illustration of the Archaic Architecture of Hindostan*, by J. Forbes Watson, the Director of the India Museum in London.²⁷ The report elaborated on the suitability of particular objects for one type of illustration as against another. While photography was singled out as the most complete form of documentation, coloured drawings were seen to be essential for capturing the fine details of tile, mosaic, and inlaid decoration, while moulds and casts were seen as best for marking the different styles of architectural ornament. The key concerns were with truth and precision, the detail and the whole. Each illustration was to stand as a source of complete and accurate knowledge on the represented object, and each was to be linked with the other within a historical sequence and series.²⁸ The end product was to be an ordered and classified visual archive – the kind of panoptic archive that had become germane to the modern discipline of art history.²⁹

From his distant base in England, Fergusson had a special investment in the rigour and thoroughness of this illustrative project – in the availability of a comprehensive photographic archive on India’s monumental heritage which he could rely on as his prime resource in the processing of a pan-Indian history. Already by the 1860s he claimed to have amassed over five hundred photographs of India’s architectural sites, selections from which he placed on display at the Paris International Exposition.³⁰ The Art Library of the South Kensington Museum also seemed to have had a similar stock of photographs, from which two hundred were exhibited at the Society of Arts on the occasion of Fergusson’s lecture *On the Study of Indian Architecture*.³¹ It is from this collection that he published in 1869 the first handy compendium of fifteen photographs as *Illustration of Various Styles of Indian Architecture*, once again featuring a photograph of a Sanchi gateway as the inaugural point of this history.³²

Travels of the gateway

The same years saw a far more spectacular encounter of British museum-goers with the Sanchi monument. In the summer of 1870, a full-size plaster cast model of the eastern gateway of the Great *Stupa* arrived in the Liverpool docks, for display in the South Kensington Museum. The monumentality of this cast would play a significant role in the designing of the special Architectural Courts of the museum in the early 1870s. In a photograph of 1872 we see the gateway installed amidst other architectural facades from India, 33 feet high, looming towards the sky-light of the arched ceiling, dwarfing the other cast of a corbelled pillar from the Diwani-i-Khas building of Fatehpur Sikri (Figure 9). These Architectural Courts, with their plaster casts of great works of architecture and art from across the world, were meant to overwhelm the visitor with the sheer physical size of the exhibits, and the technical prowess that had gone into their making. The Sanchi gateway stood here as the grandest symbol of the distant Indian empire, of imperial custodianship of India's ancient architectural heritage, rivalling in its antiquity and artistry the casts of famous Western objects like the Trajan column from Imperial Rome or Michelangelo's David from Renaissance Florence in the adjoining courts.³³

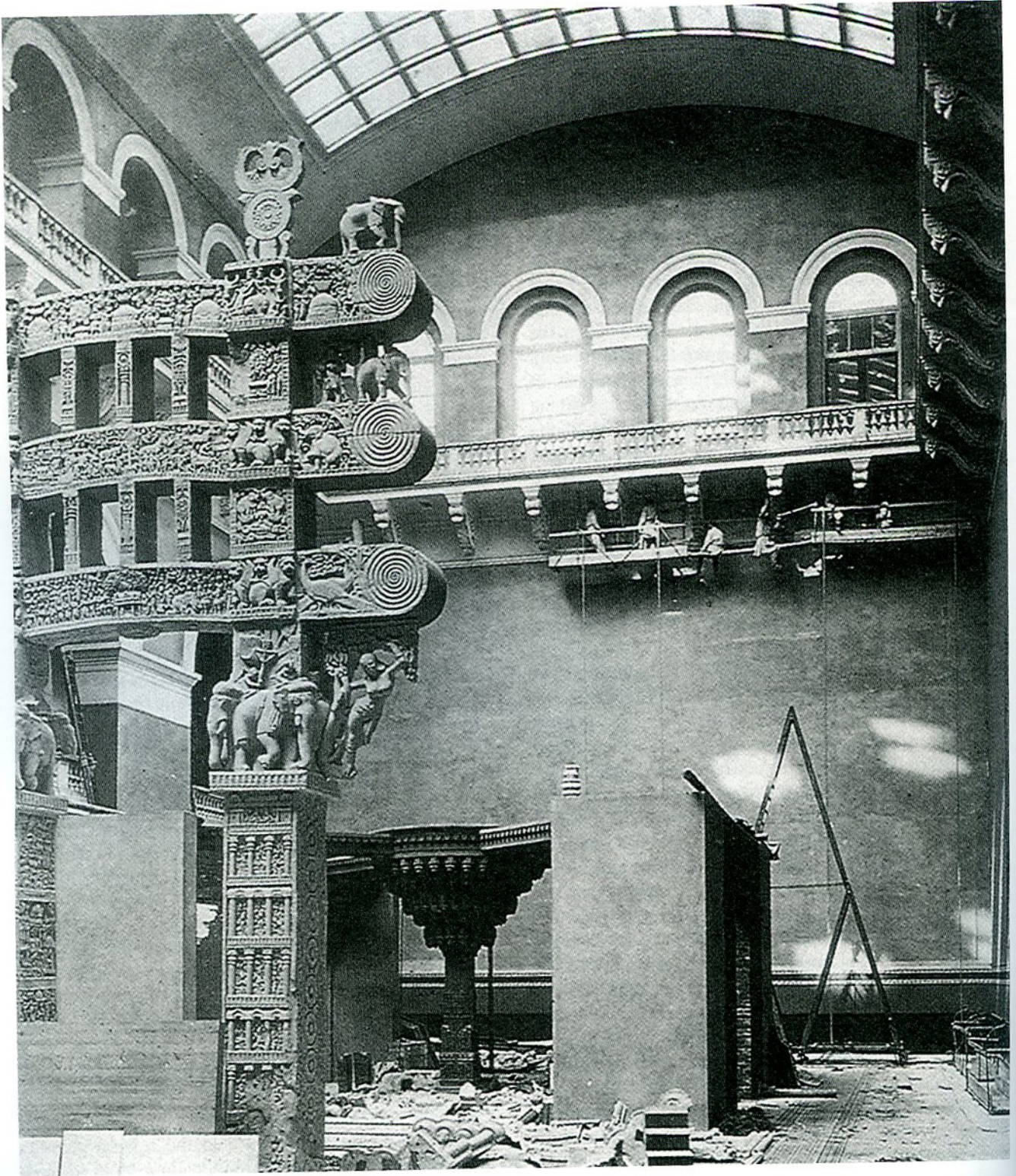
The formation of these grand Architectural Courts at South Kensington had been facilitated by a pan-European imperial monarchical convention, signed during the Paris International Exhibition of 1867, in which fifteen reigning princes agreed to promote the reproduction (through casts, electrotypes, and photographs) of art and architectural works from all over the world for museums in Europe. The knowledge of such monuments, it was believed, was 'essential to the progress of art', and with the advance in reproductive technologies that cause could now be fulfilled in Europe 'without the slightest damage to the originals'.³⁴ The colony in India offered a wealth of ancient artistic traditions for the elucidation of the West, with the Sanchi gateway now proclaiming as much the antiquity of that tradition as the magnitude of the empire that had taken charge of its discovery and dissemination. The prestige of this particular architectural cast at South Kensington in that period is borne out by the commissioning of several replicas of this piece for transportation to museums in Edinburgh, Paris, and Berlin, and display at the London International Exhibition of 1871.

It was a matter of immense good fortune for the site that what came to travel was only this marvel of a physical replica and not the original gateways. For, in the prior decades, some of the empire's archaeologists and officials had seriously pushed for the removal to London of two of the actual gateways (the ones still fully standing and in near perfect condition) in the prime interests of their

safekeeping. Concerned about the rampant pilferage and dispersal of excavated treasures from sites, Cunningham during his excavation at Sanchi in 1851 appealed to the Court of Directors to arrange for proper vigilance for all the antiquities on site. At the same time, he also unhesitatingly recommended the transportation of the two still-standing northern and eastern gateways of the Great *Stupa* to the British Museum, 'where they would form the most striking objects in a Hall of Indian Antiquities'. The value and appeal of these sculpted gateways in London, he believed, would be greatly enhanced by the account contained of them in his book, while 'their removal to England would ensure the preservation and availability for study to future scholars.'³⁵ In 1853 H. M. Durand, political agent at the Bhopal Durbar, narrowed the proposal to the removal of one rather than two of the two standing gateways, with the suggestion that Sikander Begum, ruler of Bhopal, be persuaded to make this offer of the grandest of archaeological 'gifts' to Queen Victoria. What stalled the offer was the unavailability of the kind of expertise needed for the dismantling and shipment of so many tonnes of stone without destroying the structure and its carvings. Even in this inglorious act of robbing Sanchi of one of her gateways, the Court of Directors paradoxically held high the need for utmost care in this process of removal to prevent any further damage to the structure and to the main *stupa*. By the time arrangements were complete to conduct the job with the requisite care, the rebellions of 1857 intervened, giving the gateway a fresh lease of life on site.³⁶

Ten years later, the proposal for the travel abroad of the same eastern gateway came up again – this time as a request that came from the French Consul General in India for the 'gift' of the gateway to Emperor Napoleon III, who wished to have it installed at the Paris International Exhibition of 1867. The Begum of Bhopal, however, felt that the British Museum had the first claims to the structure, if it was to travel at all. That the Begum's renewed offer was now turned down by the colonial authorities, most forcefully by the viceroy himself, was a clear sign of the period's growing emphasis on *in situ* conservation of monuments and its mounting programmes for the preparation of plaster casts, drawings, and photographs of objects for museum collections. 'It would be an act of vandalism', it was declared, 'little creditable to the British government, to let the gateway go either to London or Paris'.³⁷ So the eastern gateway stayed where it was, with elaborate plans afoot for constructing its exact three-dimensional replica for display at the South Kensington Architectural Courts.

The details of the official correspondence concerning this mammoth casting operation at Sanchi bear ample testimony to the urgency and importance attached to it.³⁸ An entire cargo containing 28 tonnes of plaster of paris and gelatine was carried by the Peninsular and



9. Plaster cast of the Eastern Gateway of the Sanchi Stupa in the Architectural Court of the South Kensington Museum, London, c. 1872–73. Albumen print. Courtesy of The Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA), Montreal. Reproduced from Pelizzari, *Traces of India: Photography, Architecture and the Politics of Representation* (Montreal: CCA, 2003).

Oriental Steam Navigation Company from London to Calcutta, along with eighty-eight special boxes lined in tin, so that the casts could be retained in them for

transportation to England. The material was then carried across by bullock cart to the site for the execution of the casts. Although the plan was to produce three separate



10. Charles Shepherd. Casting operations in process, under the supervision of H. H. Cole, at the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque complex, Delhi, c. 1870. Albumen print. Courtesy of The Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA), Montreal. Reproduced from Pelizzari, *Traces of India*.

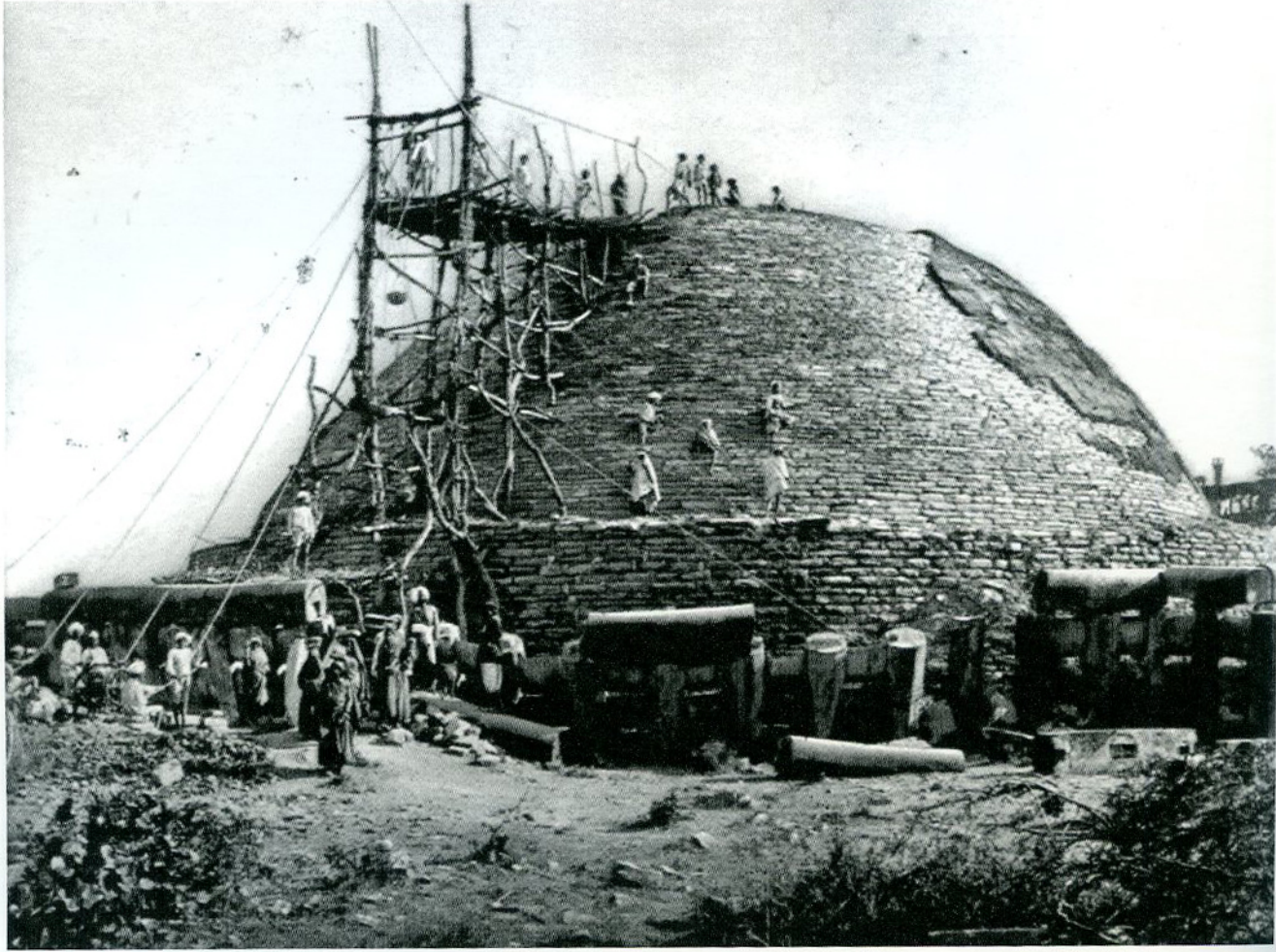
casts of the structure (for museums in London, Paris, and Berlin), it was found eventually to be more time and cost effective to produce one perfect cast in around fifty small parts, a job that itself took four months to complete, between December 1869 and March 1870. What was called the 'parent cast' was then packed, in all its parts, in the tins in which they were moulded, and shipped to England, where the pieces were laboriously assembled to recreate the standing edifice. And it was from this master replica that further copies were prepared at South Kensington for Paris and Berlin.³⁹

Supervising the entire project was Lieutenant Henry Hardy Cole of the Royal Engineers. Son of Sir Henry Cole, Superintendent of the South Kensington Museum, trained in London in different techniques of plaster cast modelling, Cole was then functioning in India as a key agent in the procuring of drawings, photographs, and casts of Indian architecture for his father's museum. In the same year that he worked at Sanchi, he would also extend his modelling operations to the carved pillars of the Qutb mosque at

Delhi and of the Ibadat Khana in the Diwan-i-Khas at Fatehpur Sikri.⁴⁰ A rare photograph from the Qutb site vividly enacts such theatres of cast making, with Cole standing in commend, directing the preparation of moulds by local workers (Figure 10). Even as he prepared the plaster cast at Sanchi, Cole also worked on a set of detailed drawings of the carvings of all the four gateways, which were lithographed and stored in the India Museum, and also had a full set of photographs made of the subjects of the gateway sculptures from the cast that was installed at South Kensington.⁴¹ In the imperial museum complex, drawings, casts, and photographs can be seen as forming a close-knit ensemble of ordered knowledge of Indian art and architecture.

Conservation and the new photographic regime

Lieutenant H. H. Cole in India would not only act as a central conduit in the forming of this multi-media



11. *Lala Deen Dayal. Filling in the breach in the Great Dome, Sanchi, c. 1882. Albumen print. The British Library, Microfiche Collection (ASIO), Fiche 43, 1416. Courtesy of the British Library, London.*

imperial archive of images of India's monumental heritage. He would also initiate a new wave of *in situ* archaeological conservation of historic buildings, leading to his appointment in 1880 to the new office of the Curator of Ancient Monuments in India. Between 1880 and 1884 he would tour the length and breadth of the country in much the same way as James Fergusson or Alexander Cunningham, identifying for each season a territorial belt and all the architectural monuments in that zone to be examined, described, and documented. Cunningham's surveys and reports would find a worthy parallel in the reports, drawings, and photographic albums generated by Cole during his brief tenure in this office.⁴² What emerges as central in Cole's project is once more the exercise of visual imaging and the production of the perfect copy. It was H. H. Cole's special charge to make each drawing, plan, or plate a register of the current physical state of the monument under survey, and a pointer to the kind of renovations to be undertaken on each. Most important of all, each image was to become a

collectible and reproducible resource – something that could be possessed and distributed among art schools and museums in India and abroad, while maintaining the monuments on site.

The arrival of Lt. H. H. Cole at Sanchi in 1869–70 had already augured the next phase in the rebirth of the site: a phase where the imperatives of copying and replication would go hand in hand with the first systematic efforts at the restoration of fallen and semi-destroyed structures. One of the first repairs to be undertaken was the clearing of debris and vegetation and the filling in of the breach in the dome of the Great *Stupa* (Figure 11).⁴³ The work was done under the supervision of Austin Mears, Superintendent of Public Works at Bhopal, who congratulated himself on a job so well done that the *stupa*, he declared, could now stand 'another 2000 years as it had hitherto done till wrecked by blundering archaeologists'.⁴⁴ But this phase of work, too, ended up with its own share of destructions and errors. The clearance of around 60 feet of space around the ground balustrade of

this main monument, and the charting out of a road leading to it, resulted in the displacement of several smaller *in situ* stupas. And, thereafter, when the pillars and architraves of the crumbled southern and western gateways were restored by Major J. B. Keith, Cole's assistant in the Central Provinces, mistakes would creep in the front-to-back positioning of some of the fallen lintels of the southern gateway. Even when these errors did become apparent, the possibilities of reversing and repositioning these lintels were negated for fear of causing renewed destruction.⁴⁵ Notwithstanding these flaws, there was no denying the achievements of this first phase of conservation activity that saw the renovation of the Great *Stupa* and *Stupas* 2 and 3, as well as the reconstruction of all the collapsed gateways around these structures. Cole's tenure also saw an all-out commitment to *in situ* conservation and a resistance to the removal of any objects and structures from the site.⁴⁶

Let us also consider, at this point, the photographic legacies of these years of repair and conservation. Sanchi's passage to camera images would have its full-fledged beginnings in the 1880s, when both the documentary value of drawings and the exhibitionary value of plaster casts came to be superseded by the importance of

the photograph. As H. H. Cole set into motion his countrywide programme of the photographing of historic sites and structures, it was an Indian photographer, Lala Deen Dayal of Indore, who was commissioned to cover the operations at Sanchi. The most prominent of the nineteenth-century 'native' entrants into the new photographic profession, Deen Dayal, by the early 1880s, had begun working for British officials in central India, even as he enjoyed the full patronage of the Indore Darbar and the Nizam's Court and was opening up his own commercial studios in Indore, Bombay, and Hyderabad. His photographic repertoire of these years – royal portraits, state ceremonials, official events, landscape and architectural views – easily rivalled that of his European peers.⁴⁷ His photographs of Sanchi were taken around 1882 when he worked with Sir Lepel Griffin on an extensive photographic tour of the architecture of the region, contributing eighty-nine photographs to the volume Griffin published in 1886 entitled *Famous Monuments of Central India*. The Deen Dayal views of Sanchi would also feature in the architectural photograph folios that were brought out in 1884–85 by Cole's office as the final product and documentation of its labours. As we see at Sanchi, the photographs bear witness to the activities



12. Lala Deen Dayal. Fallen antiquities at the site, 'Lions at the South Gate, Sanchi Tope'. Autotype print. Reproduced from Lepel Griffin, *Famous Monuments of Central India, Illustrated by a Series of Eighty Nine Photographs in Permanent Autotype* (London: The Autotype Company, 1886), Plate XVII.

of repair and restoration, taking us stage by stage through the filling in of the breach of the great dome, the clearing of jungles, the assemblage of scattered pillars and stone fragments, and the rebuilding of the gateways, tracing the transformation of the ruin into a remade monument (Figures 11, 12).⁴⁸

Over the next two decades, a growing corpus of photographs of Sanchi would accumulate within museum holdings in India and London as part of the empire's expanding image archive of Indian art and architecture. The Deen Dayal images would be absorbed within this pool, blending with many others, often of unknown authorship, of the same and subsequent period. And this resource pool would circulate through the publication of a series of photographic albums on India's ancient monuments and sculptures. One of the most magnificent of these, published in 1896 by the photo-engraving firm of William Griggs of London, was the two-volume album *The Ancient Monuments, Temples and Sculptures of India*, in which each plate was selected and introduced by James Burgess, who succeeded Cunningham as the head of the Archaeological Survey of India.⁴⁹ In the Burgess volume, from the scattered and disaggregated sculptures of the Bharhut site, photographed on site prior to their removal to the Indian Museum (Figure 13),⁵⁰ we are taken to the preserved Sanchi *stupa* site of broadly the same period and shown the integrated effects of similar sculptural ensembles on the Sanchi gateways (Figure 14).⁵¹

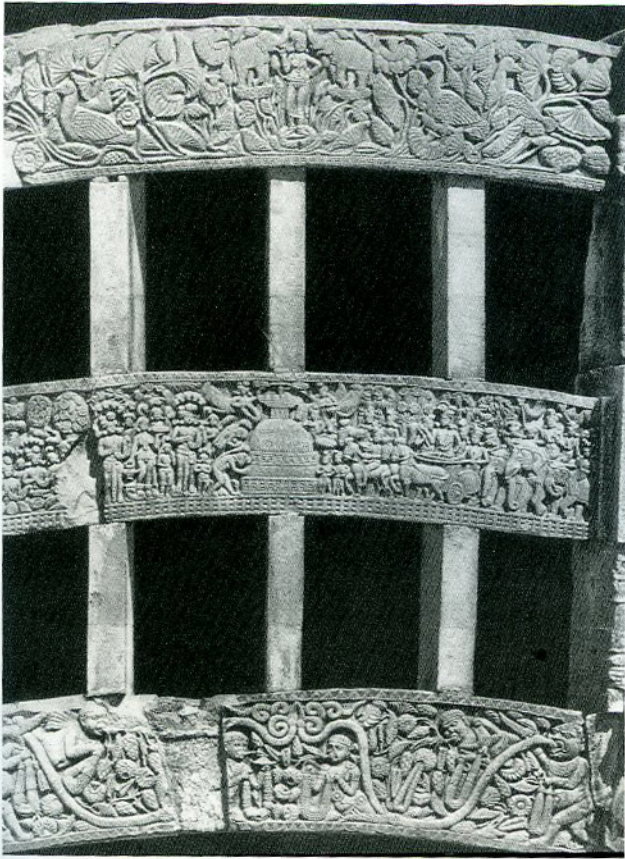


13. *Fragment of the eastern gateway of the Bharhut Stupa, photographed on site by J. D. Beglar, before its removal to the Indian Museum, Calcutta. Albumen print. Reproduced in Burgess, The Ancient Monuments, Temples and Sculptures of India (London: W. Griggs, 1897).*



14. *Reconstructed southern gateway of the Great Stupa, Sanchi, c. 1880s. Albumen print. Reproduced in Burgess, The Ancient Monuments, Temples and Sculptures of India, Plate 50.*

Even as the site on the hill would be opened out to reveal a large cluster of structures, it was the Great *Stupa*, and particularly its four sculpted gateways, which continued to monopolise all photographic attention. There is a dramatic move in these photographs from whole structures to a micro-study of sculpted details, with the lens moving from grand panoramic views of the full gateways, seen from different directions, to close in on the intricacies of the individual sculpted panels. The monument thus comes to be compressed more and more into sculpture and into a set of carved reliefs on Buddhist legend and history (Figure 15). It is in photographs that Sanchi's gateway sculptures could present itself before museum viewers and scholars as a 'veritable picture Bible of Buddhism'. The term was Fergusson's and it fed directly into the Victorian fascination with Buddhism, its doctrines and its symbols, and, most of all, with the life and miracles of its founder.⁵² It is from this period that considerations of both 'religion' and 'art' began to finely blend in the photographic careers of Sanchi. The orchestrated interest that the Sanchi reliefs aroused in the legends, iconography, and religious symbols of early Buddhism came to be integrally linked to the consecration of their status as some of the finest examples of ancient Buddhist art in India.⁵³ Photographic scrutiny and juxtaposition would now



15. Details of three panels of narrative sculptures and ornamentation on the lintels of the railing pillars of a Sanchi gateway. Albumen print, c. 1890. Later reproduced in Marshall and Foucher, *The Monuments of Sanchi* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1940), vol. II.

allow for a stylistic evaluation of these Sanchi sculptures vis-à-vis the earlier Mauryan art of the pillar capitals, the near contemporary art of Bharhut, and the subsequent art of Amaravati, Gandhara, and Mathura of the early Christian era, underlining the distinctly 'indigenous' quality of Sanchi's art as against the Persepolitan influences on the Mauryan pillar capitals or the Graeco-Roman lineages of the Gandhara sculptures.

The 'triumph' of restoration and reclaims

The longer story about the iconographic and artistic scholarship that evolved around the sculptures of Sanchi is outside the scope of this paper. The beginnings of the twentieth century can be seen to mark the crowning years in the modern life of the site and its relics. The high tide of imperial conservation policies, during the viceroyalty of Lord Curzon (1899–1905), culminated in the definitive phase of clearance, excavation, and restoration of Sanchi's monuments under Sir John Marshall. It is hard

not to go along with the linear, triumphalist tenor of this final phase of the archaeological biography of Sanchi. Marshall's rebuilding of the site now positions itself within a long line of consecrations and desecrations.⁵⁴ The original brick *stupa*, attributed to Emperor Asoka, had been partially destroyed following the fall of the Mauryan empire, to be encased in stone, rebuilt, and enlarged under the later Sunga kings during the second century BCE, and thereafter adorned with its four gateways during Satavahana rule between the first centuries BCE and CE. This core complex then came to be surrounded by other *stupas*, *chaitya-grihas*, and large seated statues of Buddha during the Gupta and post-Gupta periods of continued Buddhist worship at the site. Periodically expanded and embellished over these years, then abandoned but nonetheless preserved in its entirety through the medieval era, the hill site of Sanchi, we know, had suffered its worst damages with the onset of the modern era in the hands of 'faulty British explorers and excavators'. Marshall's extensive operations come as a final restorative balm on the site, rescuing it from decades of decay and vandalism.

What this master archaeologist succeeded in doing was to infuse the remade monument with the aura and aesthetics of the 'ruin', making the dead relic in the present far more 'beautiful' in modern eyes than the worshipped, living *stupa* of the past. Marshall writes:

Its form was the same as it is today. Only its colouring was different, and how different! Instead of the present sombre greys and blacks, the dome was probably glaringly white, with swags around it perhaps picked out in colours, while the balustrades and, later on, the railings were red. The umbrellas on the summit may have been red or possibly gilded, as they often were in later times [...] Age, indeed, has been kind to this stupa as it has been to the fabrics of our own great cathedrals, now all grey and discoloured, but once covered in whitewash which few [...] would now care to see restored.⁵⁵

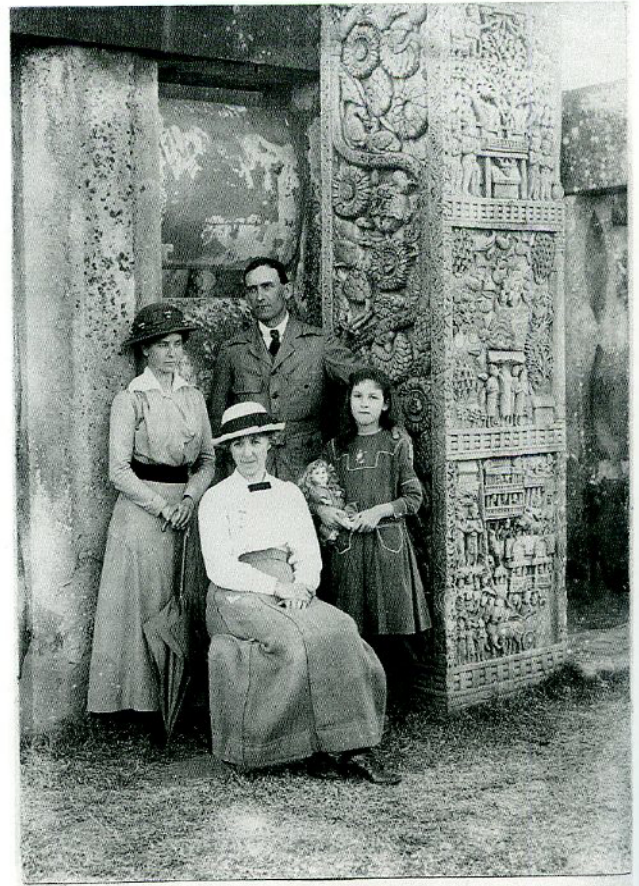
So, the Great *Stupa* and its gateways were now made to gleam in the pure lustre of age and the mellowed, weathered tones of the antique stone that stood as the silent witness of its past glory. The aestheticised monument also became the site for a complete recovery of its history.

Marshall's greatest achievement, as he reports, was an uncovering of the full cluster of earlier and later buildings and all scattered objects on the site, leaving nothing invisible, known, or unclassified. Equally important was his setting up of the site museum at Sanchi, which now became a crucial appendage of his exhaustive archaeological combing of the terrain. All loose and dispersed fragments that could not be preserved on site were moved to the museum, whose catalogue lays out the structure of display and grouping of these objects in the main courtyard and inner halls, according to the criteria

of size, historical periods, and artistic value.⁵⁶ Complete and comprehensive knowledge was the order of the day – of a kind that, Marshall hoped, would allow no further pilferage or erroneous interpretations. The field operations found their inevitable follow-up in a new body of publications on Sanchi, all of which carried the seal of Marshall's authority. His first *Guide to Sanchi* of 1918 was intended as a slim handy volume for the lay public, laying out in brief the topography, history, and full structural complex of the site, while honing in, as always, on the gateways of the Great *Stupa* and on the iconography, technique, and style of their sculptures.⁵⁷ The fuller version of this *Guide* appeared several years later, in 1940, in the form of a richly-photographed three-volume monograph, *The Monuments of Sanchi*, that Marshall authored along with Alfred Foucher and N. G. Majumdar.⁵⁸

Such a volume takes to a peak the photographic invocation of the monument, especially the detailing of the gateway sculptures, with the photographs now coming out of the consolidated image archive of the Archaeological Survey of India. Let us end our survey of colonial visual representations of Sanchi with a different order of photographs of the saviour at the site. One enacts an intimate family tableau, with Marshall posing with his wife and daughter (among others) against a sculpted pillar of the eastern gateway; the other carries more obvious signs of imperial regalia, where the family sits at the site camp at Sanchi with liveried attendants and elephants with howdahs provided by the Bhopal Darbar (Figures 16, 17). This would seem a fitting end to this phase of the modern biography of Sanchi: a phase that is sealed by the authoritative interventions of the imperial archaeological project, where the exigencies of excavation, conservation, and photographic documentation reach a high crescendo. Marshall, no doubt, would have firmly held on to this point of ending. But, in retrospect, this grand finale of Sanchi's story also emerges as the moment when the colonial history of the monument begins to run into a parallel overlapping trajectory of the consecration of the monument as both an Indian national and a world Buddhist inheritance. Some of these contending claims and identities can be seen to surface in the very years of Marshall's magisterial reclamation and renovation of the site, often (paradoxically) as the very result of the intensity and efficacy of his activities.

Marshall's relationship with the evolving structures of Indian scholarly or institutional authorities was never an easy one. It is hardly surprising that his great work *The Monuments of Sanchi* was grounded on a clear hierarchy between Western and Indian scholarly expertise. While Marshall divided between himself and Alfred Foucher (the French scholar of Buddhist art) the archaeological and art-historical pronouncements on Sanchi, naming themselves as the authors of the book, the Indian in the team, N. G. Mazumdar (Marshall's assistant and



Sanchi.

16. Sir John Marshall, with his wife, daughter, and her governess at the eastern gateway of the Great Stupa, Sanchi, c. 1912–18. Silver gelatin print. Courtesy of Alkazi Collection of Photography, New Delhi.

colleague in the Archaeological Survey of India) was relegated to the lesser role of deciphering and translating the inscriptions. Through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, there would be a long history of such orchestrations of difference in the status and content of Western and Indian scholarship. By the time we arrive at the 'Marshall era', the lines of divide and distinction would have to be more urgently negotiated. In a period that saw the growing Indianization of the archaeological and museums profession in India, the privileging of imperial institutional and scholarly authority would have its fresh imperatives.⁵⁹ Where the writing of the museum catalogue was concerned, Marshall could quite easily delegate the task to his trusted excavation assistant, Maulavi Muhammad Habib, and to a team of Indian scholars who worked under his close tutelage – just as he could also reserve the epigraphic study of Sanchi for his junior in the Archaeological Survey.



17. Sir John Marshall as the guest of the Bhopal Durbar, with wife, children, and retinue of Indian attendants, Sanchi archaeological camp, c. 1912–18. Silver gelatin print. Courtesy of Alkazi Collection of Photography, New Delhi.

With his scholarly and professional authority firmly sealed, for Marshall, it seems, the more powerful competing claims for rival authority at Sanchi would come from an altogether different quarter – from the Begum of Bhopal in whose dominion stood this much-treasured archaeological monument. Nayanjot Lahiri's study has critically examined the undercurrent of resistance and counter-claims of the local royalty that Marshall had to contend with throughout his activities at the site.⁶⁰ It seems that the Bhopal Durbar's long-standing pride in this 'most wonderful ancient building' that graced its territory came most sharply to the fore when, in 1905, the Archaeological Survey under Marshall had first raised questions about the competence and legitimacy of its custody of this monument.⁶¹ The question had then been framed in the most insidious religious terms. It had been suggested that the monuments were inadequately cared for by the 'Muslim' *chowkidars*, appointed by the 'Muslim' ruling dynasty of Bhopal,

and that the job of superintendence would be far better handled by the new Buddhist watch-dog body of the Mahabodhi Society.

The battle between the Mahabodhi Society and the Shaivite Giri proprietors over the reclamation of the Buddhist shrine at Bodh Gaya was then at its zenith.⁶² Increasingly frustrated and curbed in its claims on Bodh Gaya, the Mahabodhi Society would over the early twentieth century shift the focus of its reconsecration endeavours to other Indian Buddhist sites like Sarnath in the United Provinces and Sanchi in the state of Bhopal. Refusing to forfeit the custody of Sanchi to this international Buddhist mission, or even to the administrative machinations of the colonial state, Nawab Sultan Jahan, Begum of Bhopal, had forcefully reasserted her state's rights to the conservation and protection of the site, keeping the claims of the Mahabodhi Society firmly at bay. In the next decades, it was the Bhopal Durbar which hosted the Director-General's and

his family's stay at Sanchi, arranged for the labour and logistics of the Survey's operations, and entirely financed the construction of the Sanchi Museum and Marshall's new publications on the site. The importance of the Begum's support and custodial authority is reflected across Marshall's photographs at Sanchi (as in Figure 17) and across his publications on the site, the largest of which was dedicated to the memory of his gracious patron.

It was as a part of its new possessive strategies that the Bhopal Durbar also initiated, in 1919–20, the first moves with the colonial government for the return to Sanchi of the reliquary caskets that had been expropriated by Cunningham and Maisey way back in the 1850s and had later found their way to the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museums in London. As with the Bodhi Gaya temple, with Sanchi too, archaeological restoration became the occasion for the religious resanctification of the site by a newly-forged international Buddhist community. During the 1920s and 30s we find the London mission of the Mahabodhi Society engaged in persistent negotiations with the authorities of the Victoria and Albert Museum for the repatriation of the funerary relics of Sanchi, which the museum had purchased from Maisey's granddaughter as late as 1921.

In her study of the saga of the return of the Sanchi relics, Saloni Mathur has shown how the 'historical' and 'sacred' value of these objects came to sharply pitted against each other, as did the discourses of museum custodianship vis-à-vis those of devotional rights.⁶³ This came to be foregrounded in the way the directors of both the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum staunchly opposed the demand for the repatriation of museum objects, regardless of their prior sacred histories, on the fear that 'once the trickle has started, it may well become a flood', arguing that to establish such a precedent would endanger the very sanctity of the museum as an institution. The refusal to let go of their cherished collection took on a further edge when these museum officials later conceded to the return to the Mahabodhi Society of the bone fragments, but insisted on retaining the ornate reliquary caskets for their historical and artistic importance. The prerogatives of colonial archaeology and museums had to be self-righteously asserted against the Mahabodhi Society's naming of the relics in their possession as 'stolen property', and a counter stand made about the Western museum as the site where these objects were preserved and displayed with greatest 'respect'. This acrimonious debate raised a series of critical questions about what could be legitimately retained as museum 'property' and what constituted the museum practices of commemoration and respect. It thus brought on the impassioned statement of Eric Maclagan, Director of

the Victoria and Albert Museum, in 1939 that 'it is a tribute to Buddhist civilization that we wish to have such objects in our Museums': a point that the Buddhists stubbornly failed to see.⁶⁴

The matter remained in abeyance until 1939–40, from which time unfolded a new international climate of 'relic-diplomacy' that saw the museum authorities in London and the Archaeological Survey of India handing over several excavated *stupa* relics to the Mahabodhi Society in Calcutta and Sarnath.⁶⁵ The Bhopal government once again pushed hard to assert its ownership rights over those of the Mahabodhi Society over the repatriated relics, arguing with the colonial authorities for the return of the original caskets from the British Museum to the Sanchi Museum 'which is unquestionably the most suitable place for them'.⁶⁶ At the same time, the Mahabodhi Society continued its campaign for the housing of the returned relics in the new *vihara* building that they were beginning to construct in the premises of the ancient *stupa* site. The war intervened, the end of which saw the impending demise of the British Empire in India, the dissolving of the Bhopal Durbar, and the transfer of the colonial archaeological establishment to new Indian authorities. At the symbolic cusp of India's Independence, in 1948, a set of relics, not of the Great *Stupa* but of the neighbouring site of Satdhara (enshrined in their original caskets), began their long-deferred journey out of the museums of London, travelling first to Ceylon, and then touring Calcutta, Burma, Nepal, and Ladakh, to end their holy trek at Sanchi in 1952 – where they came to be placed not in the archaeological site museum but in the new Chetiyagiri Vihara that was built for this purpose by the Mahabodhi Society on land donated by the local government.

Sanchi's modern archaeological biography can be seen to come full circle at this point, with imperial custodianship giving way to a new institutionalised regime of both national possession and international Buddhist worship. Even as the independent nation-state invested its patriotic rhetoric on the return of these relics to Indian soil, the original natal grounds of Buddhism, its more critical strategy lay in firmly keeping apart the 'archaeological' and 'religious' identities of Sanchi, resolving the contending proprietorial claims of both the Bhopal royalty and the Mahabodhi Society by retaining the new centre of Buddhist worship within the spatial parameters and territorial jurisdictions of the site but thrusting it to the margins of the concerns of the Archaeological Survey of India.⁶⁷ What remained undiminished was the primacy of Sanchi's aesthetic and historical stature: a stature that could effectively contain and override its parallel contemporary life as a reinvented devotional shrine. Marshall's Sanchi had undergone its successful metamorphosis into an Indian national monument.



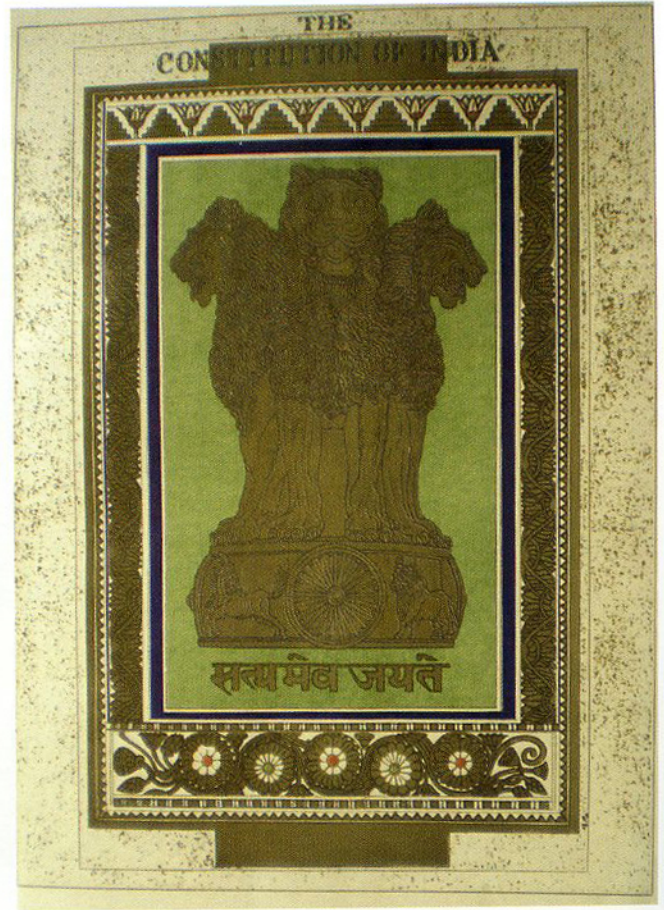
18. *The Sanchi-style dome and balustrade atop the Doric-order forecourt colonnade of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi. Reproduced from Aman Nath, *Dome over India: Rashtrapati Bhavan* (New Delhi: India Book House, 2002), p. 52.*

Postcolonial journeys, within and beyond the nation

In post-Independence India, the site and its structures have remained in the firm, uncontested custody of the central Directorate and the Bhopal circle of the Archaeological Survey of India, with the most recent excavations conducted in the 1990s, laying bare new buried structural foundations, artefacts, and clusters of votive *stupas* from the earlier and later histories of building activity at the site. Enlisted as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1989, Sanchi has been rendered into a thriving national and international tourist destination, in keeping with Madhya Pradesh's rising profile and advances in tourism. Sanchi seems to have especially benefited from its location in a state that has on offer an

unparalleled feast of India's art and architectural heritage, from the prehistoric rock art of Bhimbhetka to the early medieval temples of Khajuraho and the later medieval Rajput forts and palaces of Gwalior, Orchha, or Mandu, alongside some of the nation's most innovative new contemporary art and tribal art complexes that were established at Bharat Bhavan in Bhopal in the 1980s. As the advertising jingle of the state tourism department invites you to explore and experience Madhya Pradesh as the 'heart of India', Sanchi is given its unique position in this pristine territorial and historical core of the nation.

At the same time, notwithstanding the sanctity of the original site, what we also encounter is a continuous propensity of Sanchi to circulate as an architectural prototype



19. a) and b) The Mauryan lion capital in the main hall of the Sarnath Museum. Photograph, c. 1918. Courtesy of Archaeological Survey of India. It later featured as the symbol and logo of the Republic of India on the title page of *The Constitution of the Republic of India, special facsimile edition*, illustrated by Nandalal Bose and the artists of Kala Bhavan, Santiniketan (New Delhi: Government of India, 1950).

and replica, as loose remakes or as dispersed fragmented forms of hemispherical domes, pinnacles, balustrade railings, and sculpted gateways. From its colonial to its contemporary history, Sanchi's monumental career, it can be shown, has always revolved around the portability and reproducibility of its form in myriad public venues and architectural settings. The accumulative trends of archaeological, art historical, and religious reconsecration that annotated the twentieth-century histories of the site have enabled it to lead a curious mixture of secular and sacred 'afterlives' and to serve a variety of functions of display and commemoration. In this last section, I wish to briefly gesture towards some of the ways in which the monument has repeatedly lent itself to copying and reproduction, within varying registers of authenticity and citations of the original. If Sanchi (with its best preserved *stupa* complex of antiquity) could render itself into an exemplary model of the nation's ancient architecture, sculpture, and Buddhist civilization, the model, in its wide dispersal, would turn increasingly elastic and eclectic, often leaving the original far behind in its wake.

The travels of Sanchi's architectural form finds one of its first, most spectacular manifestations in the building of the late imperial monument of the Viceroy's House in the 1920s in the transferred capital of the empire in New Delhi. Scholars have long laboured to decode the enigmatic architectural riddle of Edwin Lutyens' neo-classical monument, to see 'how Palladio meets the Buddha in the central dome of this imperial "pile", as Gandhi called it', making up the arrogance of what Herbert Barker, Lutyens' prime collaborator in the building of New Delhi, termed 'the lord sahib's dome' (Figure 18).⁶⁸ Urged by Viceroy Hardinge to accommodate symbols of India's architectural past, this classicist architect of empire slid over the entire Mughal and Hindu past to hone in on the neat spherical mound and balustrade railing of the Sanchi stupa, which he lifted with aplomb and placed atop the semicircle pillared colonnade of the Government House, uniting the many subtle differences of the styles he grafted on to this edifice. Referring to the 'Sanchi grille', 'one of these wonderful Asoka's rails built around Buddha's shrine', as what he



20. and 21. Hemispherical dome and balustrade railing of the M. P. Birla Planetarium, Calcutta, the oldest in India, established in 1962.

admired 'most of all of India's work', Lutyens, like John Marshall, also took special pride in proclaiming that this 'shrine itself is a restoration *built by the British*'.⁶⁹ So, it was as a restored and sanctified British archaeological monument that the Great Stupa of Sanchi lent her form to this symbolic building (soon to be redesignated as the Rashtrapati Bhavan) to serve as the symbolic 'Dome over India' in the country's transition from colonial rule to Independence.

Buddhist architectural and sculptural motifs would take on a new currency as national symbols in an independent India, which needed to steer clear of the legacy of both the Hindu and Islamic religious architecture of the country to seek out instead the inheritance of an ancient, dead, and symbolically pure faith. A new official national culture could feed on a long history of colonial and nationalist obsession with the perceived purity, grandeur, and antiquity of India's ancient Buddhist art, architecture, and faith to mine it for a secular symbolic vocabulary for the present. While the Mauryan pillar capitals, with their

animal figures and inverted lotus base, provided a choice non-religious political motif that became the official logo of the Republic, the iconography of the Buddhist wheel (*Dharma Chakra*) or of *stupa* architecture, also of the same proven Mauryan pedigree, could be as effectively plucked out of its past devotional contexts and transformed into the sacred symbols of the secular nation (Figures 19a, 19b). It is in this context that the see the archetypal flat hemispherical mound of the Sanchi stupa – with its berm, winding balustrade railing, and crowning *harmika* and pinnacle – becoming a favoured 'classical' architectural form across official and non-official public buildings.

Taking two key instances, let me pursue this travelling architectural form of the Sanchi stupa into its curious new incarnations, as first a 'Birla monument' in the Calcutta of the 1960s and then as one of a transforming set of Dalit 'Mayawati Monuments' in contemporary Lucknow.⁷⁰ In the one case, we can track the travels of the architectural template of the *stupa* into the speckled



20. and 21. (Continued).

marble building of the Birla Planetarium of Calcutta, conceived almost on the same scale as the Great Sanchi *Stupa*, embellished with lotus designs, with the gleaming white hemispherical dome (with its balustrade railing) serving here as the ideal structure that opens up within into the wonder of the interior convex dome of the open skies (Figures 20, 21). The oldest and largest of India's planetariums, this Calcutta institution was opened in 1963, following, we are told, only by a few years the inception of a planetarium in London. Founded and funded by M. P. Birla, it was inaugurated by none other than India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, on an acre of land given by the West Bengal government in one of the most prominent locations of the city, opposite the open greens of the Victoria Memorial and the Maidan. Ancient Indian architectural form stands merged here with an exemplary institution of modern science.⁷¹ If the Birla Planetarium signalled the young nation's advances in the Astronomical and Planetary Sciences, it also marked the powerful alliance of private industrial entrepreneurship (as of the great business family of the

Birlas) and public philanthropy with governmental enterprise.

To jump from sites such as these to the expansive and monumental architectural complexes erected in contemporary Lucknow during the late 1990s and 2000s by Uttar Pradesh's high-profile and controversial Dalit chief minister, Mayawati (the most important figure today of the nation's spreading wave of backward caste Dalit politics) is to take a vast leap across time and contexts.⁷² It is to swing at a wide angle from the developmental nation-building visions of the 1960s (from the India of the Nehrus and Birlas) to the dramatically transformed political constituencies of the lower classes and castes of the present and the flamboyant style of Dalit identity politics that has kept Mayawati's Lucknow perpetually at the forefront of national news. It is also to be pitted from a certain ideology and architectural aesthetics of the national-secular (of which, I would argue, the early Birla institutions of schools, science museums, or temples of the 1940s, '50s and '60s offer a dominant prototype) into the resurgence of a Buddhist religious and



22. *The Ambedkar Udyan at Lucknow as it stood in 2006. Photograph. Courtesy of Suryanandini Sinha.*

cultural identity among Indian Dalits, following the lead of their founder figure, B. R. Ambedkar, in the course of which references to Buddhist architectural forms of the past would loosely and increasingly infiltrate the new sculptural and architectural vocabulary of Dalit monuments.⁷³ Mayawati's Lucknow offers a prime locale of these radically altered political and architectural dispensations of today's India. Earlier notions of public work and benefaction also stand rudely overturned here. As against the avowed magnanimity of social and educational purpose and civic-mindedness of the Birla ventures, we have now the allegations of the gross wastage of governmental funds that have gone into the continuous building and rebuilding of Mayawati's mega architectural projects, which she keeps countering with her own logic of the public spectacular value of her constructions for her Dalit following.⁷⁴

From the Birla to the Mayawati building complexes, we can keep emphasising the contrasts that separate out these two very different orders of deployments of Sanchi's

monumental architectural form, in their public effects, ideologies, and intentions. At Lucknow, the citations of the original monument become wilfully loose and random. For a political leader who has made a point of not converting to Buddhism (unlike most Ambedkarite Dalits), Mayawati's Ambedkar Udyan (continually rebuilt and lately renamed as the Ambedkar Samajik Parivartan Sthal) can take whatever liberties it wants with the ready-to-replicate model of the Sanchi Stupa. A cumulative, pyramidal cluster of *stupa*-like domes, fabricated in pink and crimson polished stone and tiles, with richly ornamented facades, has now expanded into the form of Rajasthani fort and palace architecture, with *stupa* domes turning into *chhatris* in terraced pavilions (Figures 22–24). The main purpose of such complexes is to house vast crowds and even bigger and growing numbers of statues of Ambedkar and other Dalit leaders. If the *stupa*-like design of the Birla Planetarium today commands little public interest – the form here, we may say, has been rendered entirely subservient to the public life of the



23. and 24. Decorated wall façade and the open courtyards of the now renamed Ambedkar Samajik Parivartan Sthal, Lucknow, 2009. Photograph. Courtesy of Suryanandini Sinha.

building – the historical architectural references of the Lucknow Ambedkar memorial complex, by contrast, scream out for attention, in a site that is intended to be one of popular spectacle and commemoration.

These snippets of contemporary building histories bring us to another case of the travelling ‘afterlife’ of the Sanchi *Stupa*. The model, in this instance, journeys all the way to a distant Buddhist monastic site of Luoyang in the Henan province of central China, where it becomes a symbol of official cultural exchange and diplomatic goodwill between the Indian and Chinese governments. The site is that of the now-extinct Baima Si (White Horse) temple, the oldest Buddhist monastery on Chinese soil dating back to the first century CE, where the legend goes that two Indian Buddhist monks arrived on white horses carrying the sacred texts. The building of a full scale Sanchi-style *stupa* on this site is intended to commemorate the coming of Buddhism from India to China (Figure 25). First conceived of during a China

visit of Indian Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, in June 2003, the project moved rapidly apace from 2006 under the supervision of a committee at New Delhi headed by the scholar-bureaucrat Dr. Kapila Vatsyana.⁷⁵ This new shrine, the official documents emphasize, is not intended to be an exact replica of the Sanchi *Stupa*. It is the product of a design of a modern architectural firm of New Delhi, of Akshya Jain and Raka Chakravorty, that had to meet the approval of the committee and was modified by Dr. Vatsyana from a historical and aesthetic perspective. Likewise, the image of the Buddha placed inside the *stupa* (a copy of a sculpture of a *Dhyani* Buddha from Sarnath) is a similar modern fabrication, produced by another Delhi-based professional firm called Icons India (Figure 26). As with all remakes, this official ‘gift’ of the Indian nation makes no bones about its share of modern improvisations.

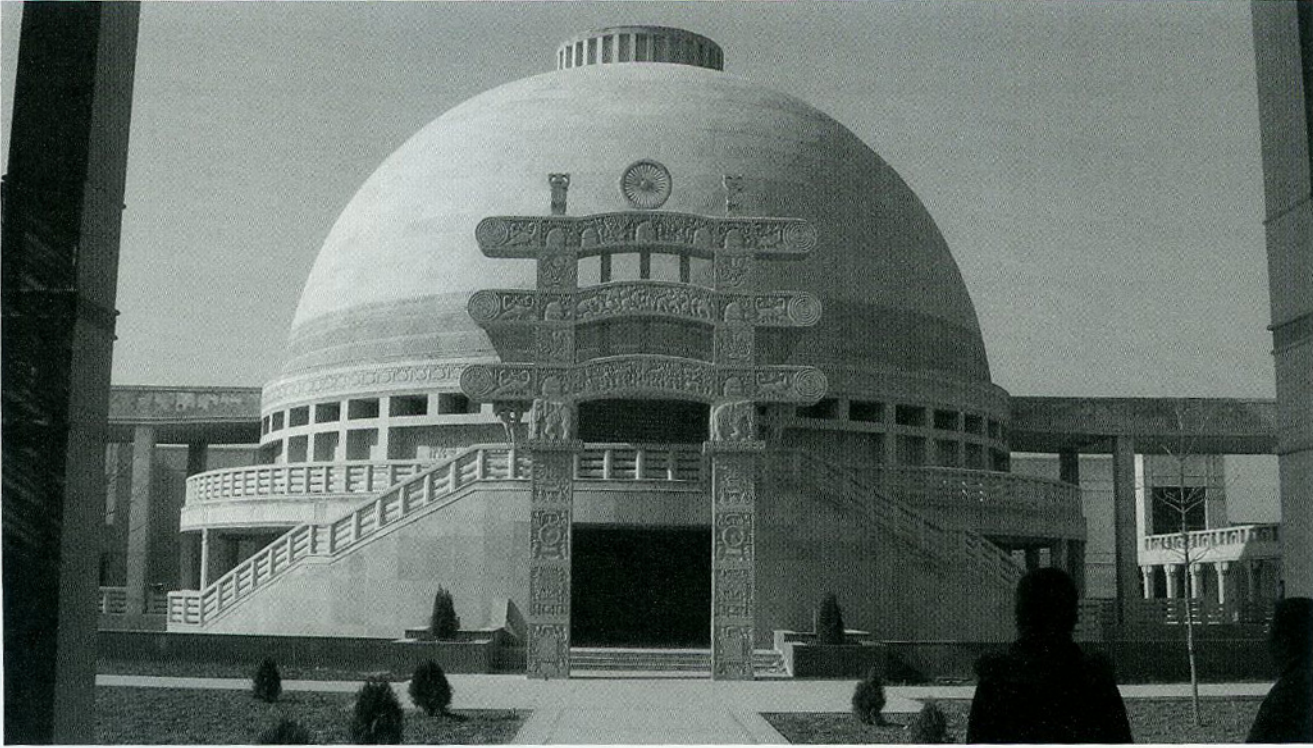
As at the Lucknow Ambedkar Udyan, the material used for the building is pink Dholpur stone transported



23. and 24. (Continued).

from Rajasthan – a loose approximation of the buff sandstone of the original structure at Sanchi – a stone now widely used for all contemporary look-alikes of north Indian temples that have come up in various parts of India. The workmen assigned to the task were drawn from a pool of stone-carvers from Rajasthan and Orissa who are able to faithfully replicate the architectural designs and carvings of *stupa* gateways and temple walls in keeping with the steady demands for such current refabrications.⁷⁶ And the *stupa* dome, ever serviceable for different functions, is made to accommodate here an interior hall in the style of the latter-day form of Buddhist *viharas* (monastic residences) and *chaityas* (congregation halls), with an example of a Buddha image of the classical ‘Gupta school’, post-dating by several centuries the original *stupa* and gateway structures at Sanchi. All of these changes may be read as creative licenses, which do not deviate from the broad ambit of India’s ancient Buddhist history and do not detract from the overall religious sanctity of this transported monument.

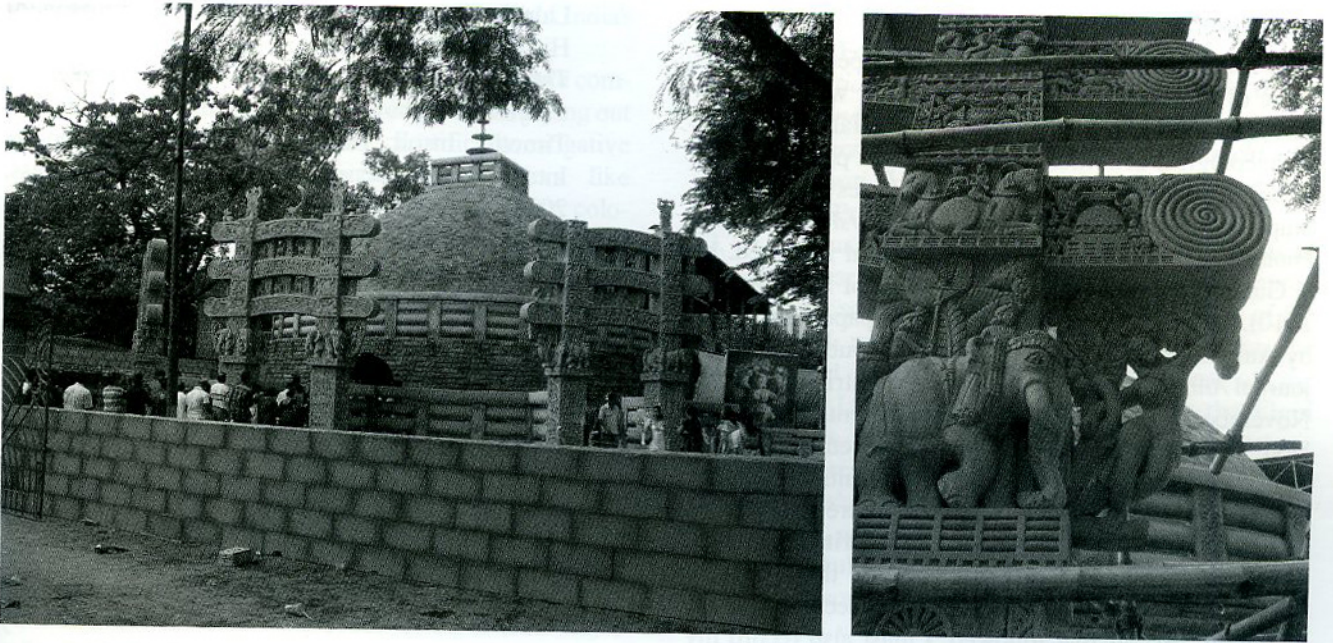
The Luoyang monument, I would say, marks the apotheosis of Sanchi’s multifaceted career as a copy and replica. We have come a long way from the time of the giant plaster cast that had to be laboriously wrought from the body of the monument on site to be multiplied and reassembled at new sites of display in Western museums to times when the Public Works Department of the Lucknow Development Authority or modern architectural firms in New Delhi can produce their free remakes of Sanchi as fully autochthonous structures. What singles out this remake is the way its replication of architectural form goes hand in hand with its consecration as a religious edifice. Whereas the original site houses the ‘dead’, though laboriously restored, archaeological ruin, the living shrine resides in the translocated copy, where (as in the cases of myriad replicas of Hindu temples sprouting all over the country, or copies of the Bodhi tree and the Bodhi Gaya railing pillars appearing across South East Asian Buddhist sites) the sacrality of the master-structure can be transferred far across space



25. *The model of Sanchi Stupa at Luoyang, China, designed by the New Delhi architectural firm of M/s Akshaya Jain and Raka Chakravorty. Photograph. Courtesy of Ashis Chakrabarti.*



26. *A copy of a Sarnath Buddha inside the Sanchi Stupa at Luoyang, China, fabricated by a New Delhi firm, Icons India. Photograph. Courtesy of Ashis Chakrabarti.*



27. a) and b) *The Sanchi Stupa at the Jodhpur Park Durga Puja, designed and executed by Dipak Ghosh and his team. Thermocol, ply, and plaster replica. Calcutta, 2011. The full structure and details of a sculpted pillar under construction.* Photographs: Courtesy of the author.

and time. In contrast to the perfected aesthetics of the ruin that Marshall took pains to preserve at the original complex, the Luoyang copy stands unabashedly and shinningly new. Intended to offset the neighbouring ruins of Buddhist grottoes and decapitated rock-hewn Buddhas of Luoyang, the new 'gift' from India is also poised to reverse the past histories of the ravage and neglect of China's archaeological treasures in the hands of Western 'cave raiders' and Cultural Revolution ideologues, and restore the site into a new devotional centre of world Buddhism.⁷⁷ Mocking the decayed sanctity of the original, the self-brandishing newness of Luoyang's Sanchi Stupa foregrounds the conceit of the copy and its ability to eke out lives that lie far in excess of what it simulates.

I will conclude with a contrasting example of another contemporary copy of Sanchi – one that catapults us from distant China back home to a neighbourhood park in Kolkata, one that supplants the demands of religious sanctifications with those of pure spectatorship, one that takes us from the reified entity of the monument to what we may call the 'post-monument'. A product also of months of labour and intricate workmanship, this ply and thermocol remake of the *Stupa*, by a local designer and his team (Figures 27a, 27b), is one of many such spectacular tableaux of replicas of historic architecture and archaeological sites, folk art villages, and modern installation art that sprout across the streets of Calcutta during the week-long Durga Puja festival.⁷⁸ This is when the entire city turns into an exhibitionary site – a space of

popular touring and imaginary journeys in space and time.⁷⁹ This is where this remake of Sanchi took its place as one of the star attractions of the city's Durga Puja tours of 2011. For all its monumentality and the designer's pride in the authenticity of the reconstruction (especially the sculptural details of the gateways), the copy here is built to be destroyed – to be dismantled at the end of the week's festivities, its parts and material recycled for other pavilions.

Throughout its modern biography, we have seen how each phase of Sanchi's passage to documentary image, portable object, or reproducible architectural style opened it up to a range of scholarly, devotional, public and exhibitionary uses, but where one set of values seldom effaced the others. What made a Buddhist *stupa* complex of antiquity so amenable to the modern epistemology of a 'monument'? What propelled its extraordinary careers of replication, reuse, and travels? And, what determined the ease with which it negotiated its competing and concurrent status as archaeological relic and reinvented shrine, art historical object, public civic architecture, or popular spectacle? There are no easy answers to these questions, or to the conundrum: when did Sanchi's life as a monument begin and end, and from when can we start unravelling its many afterlives? The intermingling of colonial, national, and postcolonial histories makes impossible the sifting out of lives from afterlives, the original from the proliferating copies, the permanent monument from the ephemeral remake.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Like the monument it discusses, this paper has had its share of multiple versions and travels. It was first conceived in 2005 for a volume on Sir J. H. Marshall and his archaeological activities in India, and the paper came to be published much later as 'The Many Lives of the Sanchi Stupa in Colonial India', in *The Marshall Albums: Photography and Archaeology in Colonial India*, ed. by S. Guha (New Delhi: Alkazi Collection of Photography, 2010). A French translation of the same paper (translated by Aurelien Berra) was simultaneously published in the journal *Annales* (special issue on 'Art et Patrimoine', 65.6, November-December 2010). This present longer version, including the final section, was presented as a keynote address at the 'Afterlives of Monuments' conference in London in April 2010 and as the Andrew C. Ritchie Memorial lecture at the Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven in November 2011. My sincere thanks to the organisers and audiences of both these lectures for the lively discussions that followed. I must also record my special thanks to Deborah Cherry for her patience and perseverance with accommodating my paper in this journal issue.

NOTES

1. *Sanchi* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, World Heritage Series, 2003), p. 8. *Stupas*, as in well-known in Indian architectural history, are commemorative funerary mounds, built as solid brick and stone encasements of the corporeal relics of Buddha and his disciples.
2. Asoka is said to have opened up seven of the eight original *stupas* erected over the bodily relics of Buddha and to have distributed these relics over several new *stupas* he had constructed in different parts of his empire and in Sri Lanka. Debala Mitra, *Sanchi*, 7th edn (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 2001), p. 5.
3. Sir John Hubert Marshall and Alfred Foucher, *The Monuments of Sanchi*, 3 vols (Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1940; repr. New Delhi: Swati Publications, 1983), vol. I, p. 9.
4. The term 'Marshall era' refers to the tenure of Sir John Hubert Marshall as the Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India, from 1902–28, and its recognition as the period of the greatest advancement in the field of scientific restoration and conservation of archaeological sites in British India. See e.g. Sourindranath Roy, *The Story of Indian Archaeology, 1784–1947* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1961), pp. 90–113. A more specific reference is to the usage of the term by Nayanjot Lahiri in the context of the archaeological remaking of Sanchi: Nayanjot Lahiri, 'From Ruin to Restoration: The Modern History of Sanchi', in *Belief in the Past, The Proceedings of the 2002 Manchester Conference on Archaeology and Religion*, ed. by Timothy Insoll, British Archaeological Reports International Series (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2004), pp. 99–114. This essay owes a great deal to the research and insights of this important article.
5. A similar point is made by Nayanjot Lahiri about the 'tumultuous and messy modern history' of Sanchi, of which the 'jagged edges get lost when the prism through which it is viewed remains limited to the story of Marshall's engagement'. See *ibid.*, p. 99.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
7. Sanchi stood in striking contrast to the sites of Amaravati and Bharhut, where no standing *stupa* structures had survived and from which sculpted panels, pillars, and railings had travelled far and wide, to be retrieved over the nineteenth century for museums in Madras, London, and Calcutta. See Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), pp. 63–70.
8. The two possibly earliest accounts of the site, by Edward Fell, Captain in the 10th Native Infantry, in 1819, and by J. D. Cunningham, army-engineer serving as Political Agent at Bhopal, in 1847 (see below for full citations of these accounts) refer only to two *stupas* on the hill site, with the second of these monuments said to contain no sculptures or gateways. The existence of 'No. 3 Tope', along with a large cluster of Topes in the vicinity – at Satdhara, Bhojpur, and Andher – is first registered in Alexander Cunningham's account of 1854.
9. Captain E. Fell, *Description of an Ancient and Remarkable Monument near Bhilsa* (Hasingabad: [n. pub.], 31 January 1819). Later published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 3 (1834), p. 490.
10. This process of the 'opening up' of 'topes' by Cunningham is described at length in Dilip K. Chakrabarty, *A History of Indian Archaeology, from the Beginnings to 1947* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1988), pp. 37–38, 63.
11. This sense of the destructive excavation attempts of the amateur explorers, Johnson and Maddock, first comes through in Cunningham's account of the site: J. D. Cunningham, 'Notes on the Antiquities of the Districts within the Bhopal Agency', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, XVI, no. VIII, new series (August 1847), 745–46. The criticism would thereafter be repeated in all subsequent reports on excavations at the site, from Cunningham through Marshall to Nayanjot Lahiri. It also features

- prominently in the Archaeological Survey of India's booklet: Mitra, p. 11.
12. While scholars like Dilip K. Chakrabarti have commended Cunningham's work at Sanchi as laying out the parameters of the new 'scientific' investigative techniques of field archaeology, others like Nayanjot Lahiri, quoting the accounts of later colonial official and scholars, are strongly critical of the kinds of structural damage that Cunningham inflicted on the body of the main *stupa*, and of the way he dispersed and appropriated the relics he unearthed from the site. Lahiri, p. 101.
 13. Alexander Cunningham, *The Bhilsa Topes or Buddhist Monuments of Central India* (London: Elder & Co., Bombay: Smith, Taylor & Co., 1854), pp. x–xi.
 14. The importance of image-making, particularly of photography, in the colonial archaeological project and in the production of scholarship on India's art and architectural history has emerged as a major field of study, laying open for scrutiny the vast nineteenth-century photographic archive of India's ancient sites and monuments. A landmark publication on this theme came out of a travelling exhibition of early photographs of Indian architecture in the collection of the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA), Montreal: *Traces of India: Photography, Architecture and the Politics of Representation*, ed. by Maria Antonella Pelizzari (Montreal: CCA, 2003).
 15. Lahiri, p. 100.
 16. Fell, pp. 481, 491–92, 494.
 17. Lahiri, p. 101.
 18. Cunningham, *The Bhilsa Topes*, Plates I–XXXIII.
 19. Maisey set out to argue the following: firstly, that the great *Stupa* at Sanchi, while undoubtedly old, was a pre-Buddhist structure associated with cults of tree and serpent worship, and that it was later transformed into a Buddhist reliquary mound sometime around the Christian era; secondly, that Buddhism itself dated not from the sixth century BCE but from about the first century BCE; and thirdly, that there was not sufficient proof to relate 'Devanamapiya' of the pillar edicts with emperor Asoka, nor the religion the edicts referred to with the Buddhism of Sakya Muni. See Frederick Charles Maisey, *Sanchi and its Remains* (London: Keagan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1892), Introduction by Alexander Cunningham, pp. x–xi.
 20. *Ibid.*, p. xv.
 21. James Fergusson, *Picturesque Illustrations of Ancient Architecture in Hindostan* (London: J. Hogarth, 1848), pp. 21–22.
 22. This is recounted by James Fergusson in his book on the Sanchi and Amaravati sculptures that grew out of the research and plan for the exhibition: James Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship; or Illustrations of Mythology and Art in India in the First and Fourth Centuries after Christ from the Sculptures of the Buddhist Topes at Sanchi and Amaravati* (London: India Museum, W. H. Allen, 1868), Preface, pp. iii–iv.
 23. Linnaeus Tripe's album of 1858 of photographs of the Amaravati sculptures, with each slab measured along a scale and photographed on the floor of the Central museum, Madras, is preserved in the Oriental and India Office Collections of the British Library, London. Analogous to the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum, these limestone sculptures were then referred to as the 'Elliot Marbles', after Walter Elliot, Commissioner of Guntur, who had excavated the site and despatched these sculptures to Madras in 1845.
 24. Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship*, Preface, p. iv.
 25. *Ibid.*, p. v.
 26. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
 27. J. Forbes Watson, *Report on the Illustration of the Archaic Architecture of India*, Archaeological Survey of India (London: India Museum, 1869).
 28. Guha-Thakurta, pp. 23–24.
 29. Donald Preziosi, *Rethinking Art History: Meditations on a Coy Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), offers the most powerful formulations on the 'panoptic' archive and sway of the discipline of art history.
 30. Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship*, Preface, p. iv.
 31. James Fergusson, *On the Study of Indian Architecture: A Lecture Delivered to the Society of Arts, London nineteenth December 1866* (London: Science and Art Dept., South Kensington Museum, 1867).
 32. James Fergusson, *Illustration of Various Styles of Indian Architecture: A Series of Fifteen Photographs of Some of the Most Important Buildings in India Erected Between B.C. 250 and A.D. 1830* (London: Science and Art Dept., South Kensington Museum, 1869).
 33. On the setting up of these Architectural Courts as a new imperial project, see Tim Barringer, 'The South Kensington Museum and the Colonial Project', in *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum*, ed. by Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 17–21.
 34. 'Convention for Promoting Universally Reproductions of Works of Art for the Benefit of Museums of all Countries', signed at the Paris Exhibition of 1867 by the princes, crown princes, dukes, and archdukes of Great Britain and Ireland, Prussia, Hesse, Saxony, France, Belgium, Russia, Sweden and Norway, Italy, Austria,

- and Denmark, Government of India, Home Department Proceedings, Archaeology Branch, 1869–70, pp. 7–8.
35. Cunningham, *The Bhilsa Topes*, Preface, p. xi.
 36. Discussed, using the official archival correspondence from the Proceedings of the Foreign Department, Government of India of 1856–57, in Lahiri, pp. 102–03.
 37. Note by John Stratchey, 16 June 1868, Government of India, Proceedings of the Foreign Department, A, Nos. 59–61 – quoted in Lahiri, p. 102.
 38. Report by H. H. Cole, Superintendent, Archaeological Survey, N.W.P., India, to the Under-Secretary of State for India, India Office, dated London, 24 August 1869, Government of India, Home Department Proceedings, Archaeology Branch, 1869–70, pp. 2–4.
 39. *Art Journal*, London (1870), pp. 65–66; *Art Journal*, London (1871), pp. 65–68.
 40. Report by H. H. Cole to A. O. Hume, Officiating Secretary to the Government of India, dated Jubbulpore, 21 December 1870, with a full table of expenses of the casting operations at Sanchi, Delhi and Futtchepore Sikri, Government of India, Home Department Proceedings, Archaeology Branch, 31 December 1870, Nos. 21–25.
 41. *Ibid.*, No. 24.
 42. Major H. H. Cole, *Reports of the Curator of Ancient Monuments in India* (Calcutta: Office of the Curator of Ancient Monuments in India, 1885), Parts I–III for the years 1881–84; Major H. H. Cole, *Preservation of National Monuments in India* (Simla: Government Central Branch Press, 1884–85), Photographic Albums, vols I and II.
 43. Cole, *Reports of the Curator of Ancient Monuments in India*, Part II, Second Report for the Year 1882–83, with special attention to the ‘disrepair and neglect of important monuments, in the use and charge of native princes and communities’, pp. 1–4.
 44. Quoted in Lahiri, p. 105.
 45. *Ibid.* The reversed lintels with the wrong sequencing of the sculptures are reproduced, with an explanation of the history of the erroneous reconstruction, in Marshall and Foucher, II, Plate 10.
 46. Thus, for instance, despite Cunningham’s recommendation for the removal of Sanchi’s Asokan pillar capital to the Indian Museum, Calcutta (which would thereafter acquire other such Asokan pillar capitals from Bihar), this most ancient of structures remained on location, to be later reinstalled in the new site museum set up here by Marshall. Under Cole’s tenure, a comprehensive statement of the priorities of *in situ* conservation was provided by his colleague, Major J. B. Keith, Archaeological Survey, North Western Provinces, India, dated 14 October 1885, Government of India, Home Department Proceedings, Archaeology and the Conservation of Ancient Monuments, November 1885, Nos. 1–3.
 47. On Deen Dayal’s career and work of this period, see Christopher Pinney, *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 82–85.
 48. Along with the earliest photographs of Sanchi taken by J. Waterhouse in 1862–63, Lala Deen Dayal’s photographs of Sanchi, one set taken in the early 1880s during the beginnings of Cole’s restoration activities at the site, and a later set of the restored gateways, taken on 5 November 1895, are now stored on microfiche as part of the comprehensive photographic collection of the Archaeological Survey of India. These Sanchi photographs are part of the earliest India Office Series, covering 16 volume of photographs taken from the mid-1850s to the 1890s: ASI Microfiche Collection, Fiche 42, 1296–97, 1301–22, 1413–27.
 49. *India: Photographs and Drawings of Historical Buildings – One Hundred Plates Reproduced by W. Griggs from the Collection of the Late Office of the Curator of Ancient Monuments in India* (London: W. Griggs, 1896); James Burgess, *The Ancient Monuments, Temples and Sculptures of India, Illustrated in a Series of Reproductions of Photographs in the India Office, Calcutta Museum and Other Collections* (London: W. Griggs, 1897).
 50. See *ibid.*, Plates 5–32 (on Bharhut), 35–53 (on Sanchi).
 51. *Sanchi and the Seven Pagodas of Mahabalipuram* (Calcutta: Johnston and Hoffman, Photographers and Publishers, [n.d.]) (album of 61 mounted photographs).
 52. A seminal work on this theme is Philip C. Almond, *The British Discovery of Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
 53. While Fergusson’s pioneering *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (London: John Murray, 1876) first proclaimed Sanchi’s architectural and artistic excellence as a high point in his story of the inverted evolution of Indian art, the consecration of Sanchi’s sculptural art would come in the early twentieth century with the new wave of Orientalist valorization of India’s ‘fine arts’ of sculpture and painting in books like E. B. Havell, *Indian Sculpture and Painting* (London: John Murray, 1908); A. K. Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* (London: W. Hiersmann, 1927); and Ludwig Bachofer, *Early Indian Sculpture*, 2 vols (Paris: Pegasus, 1929).
 54. Marshall and Foucher, vol. I, pp. 7–9, 36–40.
 55. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

56. *Catalogue of the Museum of Archaeology at Sanchi, Bhopal State*, ed. by Maulavi Muhammad Habib, Pandit Ramchandra Kak, and Ramaprasad Chanda, Archaeological Survey of India (Calcutta: Superintendent, Government Printing, 1922). An appendix in the catalogue even provides us with a listing and tentative dating of undisplayed objects stored in the godown of the museum, and those still lying around the site, identifying the particular location of each.
57. Sir John Hubert Marshall, *A Guide to Sanchi* (Calcutta: Superintendent, Government Printing, 1918).
58. Marshall's *Guide to Sanchi* of 1918 saw itself as a prelude to this larger publication that was said then to be already in preparation. By the time of the eventual publication of this three-volume book, one of its contributing authors was no more. The Bengali archaeologist N. G. Majumdar, who contributed to the epigraphic analysis of Sanchi's inscriptions in the third volume of the book, died prematurely in 1938 during excavations at Sind. N. G. Majumdar was inducted from the Varendra Research Society into the ASI by Marshall in the 1920s, and he worked closely with Marshall during his excavations at Mohenjodaro between 1922 and 1927, thereafter moving on to excavating several other Indus sites. Majumdar's collaborative work with Marshall on Sanchi was probably accomplished during these same years.
59. This issue has been explored in different contexts in chapters 3 and 4 of my book, *Monuments, Objects, Histories*.
60. Lahiri, pp. 107–12, raises this significant theme of the role of the women rulers of Bhopal in the archaeological conservation of Sanchi.
61. This sense of pride and custody over this ancient monument in its domain comes through in the first translated account we have of the history and territory of the Bhopal kingdom – Her Highness, Nawab Shahjahan, Begum of Bhopal, *Taj-Ul Iqbal Tarikh Bhopal or The History of Bhopal*, trans. by H. C. Barstow of the Bengal Civil Service (Calcutta: Thacker Spink and Co., 1876), pp. 219–21.
62. The Mahabodhi Society was founded in 1891, under the initiatives of the Victorian Orientalist Sir Edwin Arnold and the Sinhalese Buddhist monk Anagarika Dharmapala. Its main cause was to reclaim the site and temple of Bodh Gaya in Bihar (the place of Buddha's enlightenment) from the proprietorship of the Hindu Shaivite sect and its conversion into a new holiest of holy centres of world Buddhism. The Society set up its first office in Calcutta, and soon afterwards in Bodh Gaya, and would thereafter proceed in spreading its branches from Ceylon across Buddhist sites in India to London. On the prolonged and unsuccessful battle of the Mahabodhi Society for the custody of Bodh Gaya, my main source has been Alan Michael Trevitihick, *A Jerusalem of the Buddhists in British India, 1874–1979*, (doctoral thesis, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University, 1988); Guha-Thakurta, pp. 281–98.
63. Saloni Mathur, *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), chapter 5, 'A Parable of Postcolonial Return: Museums and the Discourse of Restitution'.
64. *Ibid.*, pp. 146–55.
65. For instance, the acquisition from the Archaeological Survey of India of the funerary relics of the excavated sites of Taxila and Nagarajunakonda made for the consecration of the new *vihara* that the Mahabodhi Society built at Sarnath in 1932 in the last years of Anagarika Dharmapala, who had by then made Sarnath his main base. See *History of the Mulagandha Kuty Vihara, Sarnath*, ed. by Kahawatte Siri Sumedho Thero (Sarnath: Varanasi, 2006). My thanks to Sraman Mukherjee for sharing this material with me.
66. Quoted in Lahiri, p. 111.
67. It is hardly surprising that the new Chetiya-giri Vihara remains obscured from all the Archaeological Survey of India's guide books on Sanchi. It finds a passing mention in one of the latest guide books of 2003, less as a suggested place of visit so much as to certify the historical point that the caskets it houses are possibly the original ones of Buddha's two foremost disciples, Sariputra and Mahamogalana, which were once encased within *Stupa 2* at Satdhara.
68. Cited in Aman Nath, *Dome over India: Rashtrapati Bhavan* (Mumbai: India Book House, 2002), pp. 11, 58 (a detailed biography of this single architectural complex). Edwin Lutyens' and Herbert Baker's late imperial classicist architectural style and its fusion with Indian ornamental and stylistic elements in the making of New Delhi found its great champion at that time in the British architectural critic, Robert Byron. Robert Byron, 'New Delhi', *Architectural Review*, 69 (January 1931). For a detailed discussion of the debate around Lutyens' imperial architectural style, see Robert Grant Irving, *Indian Summer: Lutyens, Baker and Imperial Delhi* (New Haven: Yale University Press; Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981); Norma Evenson, 'The Long Debate', in Norma Evenson, *The Indian Metropolis: A View Towards*

- the West* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 104–09.
69. The statement is said to have been recorded in Edwin Lutyens' architectural drawings and personal correspondence on the building of the Government House, even as Lutyens has generally been seen as reticent in acknowledging his incorporation of Indian architectural elements and ornamental design in his design of the buildings of New Delhi. *The Work of the English Architect, Edwin Lutyens, 1869–1944*, Exhibition Catalogue (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1981); Mary Lutyens, *Edwin Lutyens* (London: John Murray, 1980). Cited in Nath, p. 54.
 70. These case studies coincided with the themes of two of the excellent graduate student presentations at the 'Afterlives of Monuments' conference, from which this journal issue has emerged – Sneha Raghavan's paper, 'Notes on Memorialising the Nation: Gandhi and Birla' and Suryanandini Sinha's paper, 'Monumental Mayawati: Anticipating Afterlives'.
 71. Unlike the much-discussed deployment of the Sanchi-style dome in Lutyens' architectural scheme of the Government House, New Delhi of 1929, there is no available published material on the architect or the choice of architectural style in the building of this first and largest planetarium by the Birlas in Calcutta during 1962–63.
A subject that is waiting to be researched is the way many of these first national institutions of modern science pointedly take on historic Indian architectural styles for their buildings. A wonderful case is the Bose Institute of Calcutta, set up in 1917, which its founder Jagadish Chandra Bose dedicated to the nation 'not just as a laboratory but as a temple', where the building and its gate carries ornate decorations and carvings drawn from medieval Indian temple and palace architecture.
 72. Mayawati, as the leader of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), which came to powerfully mobilise Dalit electoral vote-banks and cultural pride in Uttar Pradesh (UP), has dominated the political scene of this largest, most populous state of India over the past two decades. The BSP came to power four times in UP – in 1995, 1997, 2002, and 2007 – forming strategic, though short-lived, alliances with other parties like the Samajwadi Party and the Congress or Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), each time with Mayawati as Chief Minister. Mayawati's last tenure as Chief Minister of UP ended in 2012 with Akhilesh Yadav of the Samajwadi Party taking over the reins. For more on Mayawati, see Ajoy Bose, *Behenji – A Political Biography of Mayawati* (New Delhi: Penguin/Viking, 2008).
 73. This theme has been explored in a rich body of recent scholarship, e.g. Gary Tartakov, 'Art and Identity: Rise of a Buddhist Imagery', *Art Journal*, 49.4 (Winter 1990); Nicolas Jaoul, 'Learning the Use of Symbolic Means: Dalits, Ambedkar statues and the State in Uttar Pradesh', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 40 (2006); Anupama Rao, *The Caste Question: Dalits and the Politics of Modern India* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009).
 74. My discussion of Mayawati's architectural and sculptural projects has drawn heavily on the article by Kajri Jain, 'The Handbag that Exploded: Mayawati's Monuments and the Aesthetics of Democracy in Post-Reform India', in *New Cultural Histories of India: Materiality and Practices*, ed. by Partha Chatterjee, Tapati Guha-Thakurta, and Bodhisattva Kar (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, forthcoming). I am also indebted to the conference paper of Suryanandini Sinha ('Monumental Mayawati') and the photographs of the Lucknow public memorial sites that she shared with me.
 75. The implementation of the project was entrusted to the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, on the Indian side, and to the Luoyang Municipal People's Government, on the Chinese side. Working under an Advisory Committee, headed by Dr Kapila Vatsyana, the Indian contributions have been: (i) the provision of structural architectural drawings, with details of decoration, by a professional firm of architects; (ii) a fully fabricated Buddha image; (iii) Indian stone material (finished, semi-finished, and crude) for exterior cladding of the structure; (iv) the full cost of construction. The main responsibilities of the Chinese side were to provide the land, handle tenders and the financial and technical monitoring of the project, and bear the costs of local transportation of material and additional on-site expenses. All information and photographs on the making of the Sanchi Stupa in China have been procured through the generous assistance of Mr Ashis Chakrabarti, a senior journalist with *The Telegraph*, Calcutta, who spent a year, between March 2008 and January 2009, on a journalistic assignment in China.
 76. An Indian stone supplier, M/s Mangla Exports, provided all the stone for the construction, and also secured stone craftsmen from Rajasthan and Orissa who have experience in doing temple architectural work.
 77. The words were said by Chakrabarti to be those of a Chinese monk at Baima Si who referred to the damage of these rock sculptures at Luoyang, Datong, and Dunhuang.

78. This dismountable model in thermocol, ply, and plaster was the work of the Puja designer Dipak Ghosh and his team, which specialises in such architectural replica production for the festival, producing over the years carefully-researched and intricately-carved copies of the historic temples of Orissa or Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthani forts and palaces, the wooden palace architecture of

Padmnabhapuram, Kerala, and the Newari architecture of Nepal. In 2011 Dipak Ghosh completed ten years of his work on architectural replicas in this festival field.

79. This is one of the themes I explore in a book I am completing on the subject, tentatively titled *In the Name of the Goddess: The Durga Pujas of Contemporary Kolkata*.