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PRESERVATION OF NATIONAL MONUMENTS,

RAJPUTANA.

MOUNT ABU.

AJMIR.

JAIPUR.

ULWAR.

5TH JUNE 1881.

PRELIMINARY REPORT BY
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COMMISSIONER OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONUMENTS IN INDIA.

Illustrated by Eight Rough Sketches.



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LIST OF ROUGH SKETCHES

(Zincographed at the Intelligence Branch of the Quarter Master
General's Office, Simla).

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N.B.—The sketches are from photographs.

is a small altar, on which is placed a crossed-legged figure of Parswanatha. Each group of four columns has either a vaulted or a flat roof. The whole is of pure white marble, every column, dome and altar varying in form and ornament, the richness and delicacy of execution being indescribable. Crossing the pavement in front of the entrance, the mandapam or porch before the sanctuary is reached.

In this the carved columns with their struts and the domed ceiling are covered with flowing and graceful foliated sculpture and by figure subjects from mythology, in which the Brahminic and Jain emblems are curiously blended. The builder has here again testified his gratitude to the propitiated Hindus who gave up their site, by enshrining their goddess Bhavani in the south-west corner of the quadrangle.

4. On leaving the enclosure, one passes to a square chamber with a number of columns supporting a low roof, in which is an equestrian statue of Vimala Sah surrounded by ten elephants and riders. A good deal of damage has been done to the figures, and is said to have been the work of the iconoclast Aurangzib, who is answerable for the destruction of so many temples throughout India.

5. *Repairs to this building are carried on periodically by the Jains, but they are done clumsily. In order to strengthen broken lintels, spanning elaborately-carved pillars, uncouth masonry arches have been in many cases built up between, thus covering large portions of the delicate sculptures with bricks and mortar! This could be remedied by removing the arches and by supporting the stone beams from above with iron joists, and by bolting them together. Many of the damaged carvings have been treated with plaster of Paris! All this might be removed.*

Mount Abu.

Vimala Sah Temple.

Repairs.

Temple of Tejpala and Vastupala.

6. The design and arrangement of this shrine are on the model of the preceding, which, however, it surpasses as a whole.

It has greater dignity, the fluted columns supporting the mandapam being loftier, and the vaulted interior being fully equal to that in the other in richness of sculpture, and superior in the execution, which is freer and in better taste. All the marble is most delicately chiselled. The surrounding cloisters have a profuse variety of ceilings, some with handsome processional bas-reliefs. At the end of the quadrangle is a fine gallery containing elephants and large bas-reliefs of Tejpala

Temple of Tejpala and Vastupala.

**Mount Abu.****Temple of Tejpala and Vastupala.**

and others. In the centre is a model of a temple under a small dome, together with black stone figures of Jaina Tirthankars. *Repairs are executed, but the sculptured marble requires cleansing in the dome of the porch.*

Bamsa Sah's Temple.*Bamsa Sah's Temple.*

7. This has a handsome entrance, and the sanctuary contains a large brazen image of Parisnath. There is a good deal of unnecessary filling up with bricks and mortar between arches, which might be removed.

Sumak Sah's Temple.*Sumak Sah's Temple.*

8. This is said to be the oldest building. The porch or mandapam has a fine dome, and the entrance to the sanctuary is elaborately carved, but dirty.

9. *Plans and detailed illustrations will be prepared of all the Dilwarra buildings; meanwhile it will be important to arrange for the cleaning and other remedies here recommended, and to obtain an estimate of cost.*

A J M I R.**Ajmir.**

10. The foundation of Ajmir is attributed to the Chohan Prince Ajaypál in the first century of our era.

It is built in a lovely valley, and bounded on the north side by the fine lake "Ana Sagur," which is entirely surrounded by hills, and on the west by the lofty Taragarh with its fortress. The town is enclosed by ramparts, built by the Emperor Jehangir, the walls of which communicate with the citadel of Taragarh. Colonel Tod in his *Rajasthan* says—"Ajmir has been too long the haunt of Moghals and Pathans, the Goths and Vandals of Rajasthan, to afford much scope to the antiquary." It has, however, one ancient building in the "Arhai-din-ka-Jhopra," or shed of "*two and a half days*," which was constructed out of a prostrated Jain temple by Altamsh in A.D. 1236. General Cunningham believes that most of the buildings which furnished materials for the erection of the great mosque must have been prepared and carved during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

The Arhai-din-ka-Jhopra.

11. The appearance of the old ruin is very picturesque, and the whole of the face of the mosque is covered with a net-work of sculptures. The interior pillars are not so irregularly placed one above the



other as in the converted mosques at the Kutb, in Malwa and in Ahmedabad; but, as Fergusson says, "if they were taken down by the Muhammadans, they certainly have been re-erected exactly as they were originally designed to stand."

12. The pillars have greater height than those at the Kutb, and are more elegant in their sculptures and general appearance.

13. The attention of the Agent to the Governor General in Rajputana was first drawn by the Government of India in June 1874 to the ruined state of the building.

14. An estimate was submitted in May 1875, and sanctioned in August of that year. The resetting of the arches of the façade, fresh paving, setting up columns, repairs to the roof, and the renewal of a dome in the south wing were completed. A further estimate for repairs was sanctioned in April 1878.

15. Fortunately a proposal to pull down the entrance to the mosque enclosure was put a stop to by the Agent to the Governor General (then Mr. A. C. Lyall), and the Commissioner of Ajmir (Mr. L. Saunders).

16. *It now remains to clean the sculptures of the mosque, which can be done with strong soap and water or with a solution of soda. Hard brushes made of bambú beaten out at one end will remove ordinary crustation, but hard pieces of plaster or dirt should be carefully removed with an iron point. One dome to the south of the mosque is still open and admits rain; and as many of the pieces of masonry are in existence, I strongly recommend restoration. It will be necessary to have estimates framed of the cost of these measures.*

The Daolat Bagh.

The beauty of the lake "Ana Sagur" made it a favourite resort of the Moghal Emperors, and the valley became filled with their palaces and gardens. "One of the most beautiful," says Rousselet, "is the Daolat Bagh, or Garden of Splendour," which was built in the sixteenth century by the Emperor Jehangir, and now serves as the abode of the Commissioner. Elegant marble pavilions stand on the very edge of the lake and command the incomparable view of the town, and the mountain is reflected as in a crystal mirror. The garden itself is of great extent, and full of venerable trees, beneath whose shade the haughty Jehangir received the Ambassador of an English Sovereign.

Ajmir.

The Arhai-din-ka-Jhopra.

The Daolat Bagh.

**Ajmir.****The Daolat Bagh.**

18. Colonel Tod in 1829 writes :—

“The gardens erected on the embankment of the lake must have been a pleasant abode for the ‘King of the World,’ whilst his Lieutenants were carrying on the war against the Rana; but the imperial residence of marble in which he received the submissions of that prince, through his grandson, and the first Ambassador sent by England to the Mogul, are now going fast into decay. The walks on which His Majesty last paraded in the State coach sent by our James the First are now overgrown with shrubs” (see Tod’s *Rajasthan*).

Condition of the buildings.

19. One of the pavilions with marble pillars is used as a library, another as a municipal meeting-room; *but the architecture is so spoilt by enclosing walls, that it is difficult to realise what the buildings were like. I think all should be opened out and repaired. The buildings might still be used for sitting in, and if fitted with suitable purdahs would be more agreeable as places of meeting than they are now. Their present treatment I consider distinctly vandalistic.* Estimates for the measures suggested will be necessary.

*Ajmir Town Buildings.***Bazaar buildings.**

20. Ajmir possesses beautiful bazaar buildings with much material for an artist and architect; I propose later on to send some draftsmen to make drawings of ornamental details of the best specimens of Rajput art.

Shrine of Khoja Syad.

21. The shrine of Khoja Syad at the extremity of a long bazaar which runs from one end of the town to the other is a great court paved with white polished marble and filled with buildings, tombs, mosques, and the mausoleum of the Syud occupies the centre. The saint was born in the year 1132 A.D., and was the first missionary of the Koran to Ajmir. Jehangir in 1610 A.D. built the mausoleum to his memory—drawings of this and the older surrounding buildings would be of value.

Illustrations required.

JAIPUR.**Jaipur.**

22. The parent city of the present Jaipur State was founded by one Dhola Ram in A.D. 967, when he and his Kachhwaha Rajputs conquered Amber from the Minas, and transferred their capital from Kho to Amber. In A.D. 1580 the Raja Man Singh began the present palace, uniting it with the feudal stronghold of the first rulers, portions of whose buildings may

be still seen behind the zenana. About A.D. 1630 the Raja Jai Singh I. added the "Jess Mandar," the Diwan-i-Khas, and several other palaces, enclosing the whole within a fortified wall. He also made the lake of Tal Koutara by crossing the ravine with a bund, on which he planted gardens and erected pavilions. In A.D. 1699 Sowai Jai Singh II. constructed the fine Ganes Gateway, but the position of Amber, with its inaccessibility and want of room for enlargement, led to the removal of the capital, and in A.D. 1728 Sowai Singh founded the modern city of Jaipur.

Jaipur.

Amber.

23. On the occasion of my visit, Major Jacob kindly accompanied me to Amber and showed me over the palace. The approach from Jeypore is most picturesque : gardens, ruined palaces, and buildings line the road, which passes up the valley formed by the Kali Kho Mountains and, ascending over the ridge, winds down to the vale of Amber and to the Tal Koutara Lake. The Amber Palace is about one hundred feet above the water level, and from the upper plateau a grand view is obtained of the old town-buildings, which fill up the north-east part of the valley. "Nothing," says Fergusson, "can be more picturesque than the way in which the palace grows, as it were, out of a rocky base, or reflects itself in the mirror of the deep lake at its base ; and nothing can be happier than the mode in which the principal apartments are arranged so as to afford views over the lake and the country beyond." An excellent description of the various palace buildings is given in Chapter XX of Rousselet's *India and its Native Princes*, but a further and more detailed account is better reserved until I have, with the Maharaja's consent, completely surveyed the place.

Amber Palace.

24. The Diwan-i-Khas is a singularly handsome building. Its outer row of columns is of red sandstone finely sculptured, but the *on dit* is, that to appease the jealousy of the Emperor Jehangir, the carvings were covered with stucco, the removal of which would be in becoming taste and an act of mercy.

Diwan-i-Khas.

25. Passing through the beautiful Ganes Gate the private gardens of the palace are entered. On the left hand side is the fine pavilion of the Jess Mandar, the exterior of which is of white marble ornamented with bas-reliefs. The interior is divided into three apartments surrounded by a verandah, and the walls are covered with beautiful mosaics and inlaid work. The *shish* or minor work is most elaborate and sparkling, and its application to the

**Jaipur.****Amber Palace.**

Moorish pendentives of the ceilings is strikingly clever. *The upper pavilions are also tastefully decorated, and have some beautiful wooden doors, which should be repaired and not allowed to fall into ruin.*

26. The pavilion over the Ganes Gate has also doors worthy of preservation. On the other side of the garden are several palace buildings, with the remains of coloured mural decorations and doors of inlaid ivory and sandalwood. *The whole of these relics of mediæval art should, as far as possible, be rescued from neglect.* In one apartment the walls are painted in frescoe, with representations of Benares, Muttra, and Bindraban. These are unique of their kind, and furnish some evidence of the original designs of buildings that have since fallen to ruin. I here discovered the Temple of Govind Deva at Bindraban, the restoration of which has excited so much speculation as to the form of its roof. *The frescoes should be carefully freed of dirt and dust, and covered with a hard transparent varnish such as used for pictures. All the beautiful marquetry doors that remain in the palace should, as far as possible, be preserved in situ, or else placed in those apartments to which visitors are allowed access.*

27. *The woodwork should be repaired and kept from cracking by careful dry rubbing with vegetable oil.*

Jaipur Modern Town.

28. The modern town of Jaipur is surrounded by high walls and laid out with regularity. It is remarkable for the wideness of its streets, and from east to west is over two miles in length; in breadth it is about one and a quarter miles. The buildings which line the principal streets have considerable pretensions to architectural effect, but the Maharaja's palace, with its pleasure gardens occupying one-seventh of the whole area of the walled city, contains the most remarkable monuments.

29. Some of the older buildings of Jai Singh's time are quaintly decorated with coloured tiles, and together with the wonderful astronomical observatory are well worthy of being preserved from destruction.

30. The more modern *shish* or mirror decorations of the various pavilions, although brilliant and effective, do not compare with the older work at Amber for elegance and refinement in design. It seems, indeed, a pity that the wealth of Indian decorative art is not employed throughout the palace in place of the third rate devices of English upholstery.

31. During my visit to the palace I had the advantage of seeing the armoury, conducted by Dr. Hendley, and I hope that he will succeed in the proposal to rearrange the beautiful arms, so as to be well seen, and in carrying out the project for the formation of a museum of Indian art in Jaipur.

Jaipur.

Palace.

32. There are in the palace a large number of beautiful objects that seem uncared for and undervalued, from which a nucleus could be formed of an invaluable collection.

Palace collections.

33. Some fine old carpets which I saw heaped in the palace stores were in danger of being cut up and sent to England. I understand they date back as early as the time of Akbar. Fortunately Colonel Beynon recognised their value in time, and it is to be hoped that they will be allowed by the Maharaja to serve as patterns for the weavers of this country instead of for the looms of Kidderminster.

Palace carpets.

U L W A R.

34. Ulwar is said to have been first mentioned by Ferishtah, who alludes to a Rajput of Ulwar contending with the Ajmir Rajputs in A.D. 1195. The city has several buildings of note, although not of great antiquity. The palace, built by Banni Singh, is a picturesque specimen of Rajput architecture, and is in parts worthy of illustration.

Ulwar.

Palace

worthy of illustration.

35. M. Rousselet says of the palace :—
 "The interior of the palace is very simple and ornamented with great taste, with the exception of a few apartments furnished in the European style, where are collected a heterogenous mass of furniture and other articles from our manufactories, which are the admiration of the natives. The architect's plan for doing without stairs is an excellent one, particularly in this enervating country. The palace has as many as three or four stories, all of which, reached by means of gently-inclined corridors, prevent the ascent from being fatiguing ; and, like most of the palaces in India, it contains a *shish* mahal or chamber of crystals, in which are aggregated all the richest of decorations and mosaics. There is a great difference between modern art and the wonderful architecture of Amber, or even of Rajgarh ; but still the decorations here are extremely artistic and of indescribable wealth and richness."

**Ulwar.****Mausoleum of Baktawar Singh.**

36. The mausoleum of Baktawar Singh is a handsome domed building of white marble, and resembles the chuttries at Goverdhun built by the Bhurtpur Chiefs in the last century. The Hindus adopted the idea of enshrining the ashes of their dead from the tomb-building Moslems, and the "chuttries" of Rajputana are often handsome and skilful specimens of architecture. *The Baktawar Singh building is certainly worthy of illustration by plans and details, and merits preservative measures.*

Illustrations wanted.

Fateh Jhang's Tomb.

37. Not far distant from the Ulwar Railway Station is a fine Mussalman tomb dating A.D. 1547, known as Fateh Jhang's. It is singular in construction, having a set of three ranges of open colonnades, one above the other, surrounding a lofty square apartment with a handsome dome. *The masonry walls are covered with plaster, decorated in parts with handsome incised ornaments, and with coloured tiles. The enclosure requires cleaning out, and the trees, whose roots are destroying the terraces of the tomb and its adjacent mosque, should be removed.*

38. *The windows of the tomb have been closed with masonry, and the interior chamber is thereby darkened. They should be opened out, and to prevent the ingress of bats, a wire-gauge screen fitted to each opening. The vegetation on the roof and dome should also be removed.*

Khan Khana.

39. There is a somewhat similar building at Ulwar called the Khan Khana, but it remains unfinished.

Palace Library.

40. Banni Singh was a patron of art, and employed skilled artisans and painters in his palace. His library was stocked at great cost, and a splendidly illuminated copy of the *Gullistan* is valued at Rs. 50,000. This book was lent by the present Maharaja to the Exhibition of Native Art held at Simla in 1879, and its leather embossed and gilt binding, executed in the Ulwar Palace, excited very great admiration. It seems a pity that this art of binding should not be more extensively cultivated at Ulwar.

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