

THE JOURNAL OF INDIAN ART

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The Journal of Indian Art.



THE ARTS AND MANUFACTURES OF AJMERE-MERWARRA.

BY

SURGEON-MAJOR T. HOLBEIN HENDLEY, M.R.A.S. AND M.A.S.B.

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LAPIDARIES' WORK. MINERAL RESOURCES.—There used to be a moderate trade in garnets, which are found in small quantities near Kekri and other places in Ajmere ; but of late the extensive working in Jeypore territory of mines, which yield far better and larger stones, has almost extinguished the industry.

Mica is found in the district, but not at present of sufficiently good quality or size to be worth exportation.

Mr. Hacket, of the Geological Survey of India, in a paper on the useful minerals of the Aravali region (*Records, Geological Survey of India*, Vol. XIII. Part 4, 1880) notes the existence of the following minerals in or near Ajmere :—

COPPER.—Gugra, 4 miles N.N.E. of Ajmere.
Rajgarh, 10 miles S. of Ajmere.
Rajaura, near the above.

GALENA.—Taragarh Hill, Ajmere.
Ganeshpura, 30 miles south of Ajmere.

IRON. — Near the Jail, Ajmere.

Of these, the copper and iron do not appear to have given important results, but the lead mines at the base of the Taragarh hill, overlooking the town, yielded large quantities of the mineral, which were sold to the Ajmere magazine. The lead is of good quality, but there is now no local demand, and it cannot be sold at as cheap a rate as the English article.

Good building materials abound throughout the district, and stone is used for many purposes for which wood employed in other places. Timber is scarce, the country having been denuded of trees, it is said, in Mahratta times. From the above account, it does not appear likely that the mineral resources of the district or its wood will prove of much industrial art value beyond the Province.

LEATHER MANUFACTURES.—Beyond the indigenous wants of the people, nothing of importance is made from leather, except, perhaps, the *jamdānis*, or portmanteaux of native pattern of red and green leather, which are in some repute.

TEXTILES.—A report on Cloth-stamping and Dyeing in Beawar appears in No. XVII (January, 1887) of the *Journal of Indian Art*. It was written by Captain C. W. Ravenshaw, the Assistant Commissioner. Beawar is the most important town in Merwarra, and the chief mart of the cotton trade. It was built by Colonel Dixon in 1835, and soon became a thriving place, owing to its position between Marwar and Meywar.

The cloth stampers and dyers came from towns in Marwar ; their industry cannot, therefore, with strict accuracy, be said to be a speciality of Beawar ; nevertheless, as their ancestors migrated on account of the superior trade facilities and protection afforded by British officials, the credit of developing the industry must be assigned to their new *locale*. Captain Ravenshaw's paper thoroughly exhausts this branch of the subject. The reader is, therefore, referred to it for full particulars, and in this place attention will only be drawn to some special points connected with the subject. Captain Ravenshaw states that the coarser cloths for stamping come from Jeypore, Rajgurh in Ulwar, Rewari in the Delhi district, and Bhurtpur. The finer textiles are English, or from Bombay. This observation is important, and coincides with what is observed throughout Northern India. Only the coarser local cloths, on account of their cheapness and strength, can hold their own in the market.

English cloth, until recently, was much liked and sold well, but of late, owing to some extent to its higher cost, but mainly on account of the large quantities of heavily sized goods that have found their way to this country, the Bombay manufactures are displacing it. Everywhere, however, the cry is that the local industries are decaying, but still the last to put out their hands to prevent them from doing so are the people themselves, who prefer the novelty, variety, and superior fineness of machine-made goods, as well as the cheapness, to the perhaps more durable, but certainly more coarse, productions of their native land. It is only where caste or family custom prescribes the use of dress from a certain place, or of a special colour and quality ; or where the refined taste of Europeans, who can see beauty in hand-made work and design, lead to a fair demand, that an Indian textile industry can survive. Fortunately, in some cases, the European manufacturer has not yet learned the subtle harmony of colour which will please all eyes, and is not always sufficiently astute to limit the supply of a particular pattern or style to a given market ; but he is rapidly even acquiring this special knowledge and experience, which must eventually drive his opponents completely from the field. Some time since, the agents of a

noted firm, to which an authority attributes the ruin of many textile industries in Persia, flooded the bazars of certain Rajput capitals with piece goods of unrivalled cheapness and perfection as regards mechanical design, but their sales were small. They found, in fact, that their goods were too perfect, the patterns were too much alike, every rose was like its neighbour, every leaf had its counterpart a few inches distant from it. The cloth was good, but the ground lacked a suitable colour, the *couleur d'ivoire*, which local taste required. Specialists were sent to the spot, the defects were discovered, chemists were set to work to discover a chemical which would serve instead of the stream which gave the chintzes their peculiar and admired hue; printing blocks and rollers were deliberately defaced and patterns blurred, and now the Indian purchaser cannot distinguish the real article from the counterfeit one. Of course, the local industry is perishing, and cannot revive.

The designs are printed with wooden stamps, which are cut in Marwar. It is curious that in many other places such stamps or blocks are made by outsiders. In Jeypore, those used in printing the Sanganir cloths are made by the descendants of men who came many generations ago from Multan. They are Shiahs of Persian descent—a very significant fact, as it indicates the probable origin of much of the finer cloth printing work in Northern India. After all, the design rests with the painter, who sells it to the merchant, who delivers it to the carpenter or turner to introduce on blocks; or the latter purchases it directly from the artists, and then supplies the cloth-stamper and dyer. Reference is made to the peculiar virtue of the water of certain places in determining the purity and permanence of the colours. To this point sufficient attention has already been drawn, Captain Ravenshaw adds that the Chhipas, or print stampers and dyers, are not popular amongst their neighbours, as they injure the water supply. Their district is offensive, and in it disease often arises.

These remarks hardly accord with those of a well-known author, who writes that the Indian handicraftsmen "have polluted no rivers, deformed no pleasing prospects, nor poisoned any air." The fact is, the dyer is a nuisance to everyone near him. Some of his proceedings are of the most filthy description, and as they are carried on in the open air, it is not to be wondered at that his neighbours avoid him. Full particulars are given in the above paper of the composition of the dyes, and of the technical processes of manufacture.

In the Exhibition Catalogue the following divisions are made of this subject:—*Cotton Manufactures*.—Plain Cloth; Cotton Printing; Printing in fugitive colours; Woollen Cloths. The compiler observes that cotton is extensively grown in the district, and is largely exported to Bombay.

*The following articles are made in Ajmere:—

1.—*Pagris* or turbans, usually 13 yards long by 10 inches wide. The rural population use the coarse country-made kinds, but the better class wear those which are made of English thread, carefully and artistically coloured, or interwoven with gold at the ends. Some of the patterns are very beautiful.

2.—*Takri* or *Rezu*. Stiff white cloths made from native thread, and used for garments by the peasantry, as well as for calico printing, bed covers, and floor cloths. The thread is inferior to that made in the Punjab.

3.—*Saptah*. A kind of coarse muslin made from English thread. The Manchester and Bombay muslins have, however, almost completely superseded this cloth.

4.—*Khes*. As the threads of the weft are entwined alternately with those of the warps, the pattern becomes a diagonal one. It is made by *Kuli* weavers from Bhurtpore and other places, and is chiefly used for sheets or *chadars*, but only by the lower classes, as the thread is coarse.

5.—*Dhoti* cloth. A variety of the *takri* or *reza* cloth, used for the waist or loin cloth by people of the better class. The English and the Bombay goods have, however, displaced the local as well as the Dacca article formerly in use.

6.—*Susi*. This is a narrower cotton fabric used only by Mahomedan women for making trousers; it is distinguished by having stripes lengthwise down the piece of a different colour from the groundwork. The commoner patterns are dark blue with white stripes or blue with red stripes. The fabric is plain woven. The native fabrics are not so conspicuous for regularity of workmanship or softness and fineness of texture as they are for durability.

7.—*Charkhana*. This is also a kind of check *susi*, the varieties being black and white check or red or blue. It is superior in make to the ordinary *susi*.

Towels, table linen, and certain other cloths are made in the Ajmere Jail. Advantage was taken some time since of the presence of a dyer from Kishengarh, who became an inmate of the jail, to employ him in teaching others the mode of preparing country *reza* cloths dyed red with the root of the *Al* (*Morinda Citrifolia*). These fabrics are stamped with patterns in a black or dark colour, and are very popular amongst the rural inhabitants of Kishengarh and Ajmere.

COTTON PRINTING.—The *takri* cloth is largely used for the purpose of printing. The cotton prints of Ajmere are far inferior to those of Jeypore, both in purity and brilliancy of dyes. The favourite colour is dark red, the main ingredients used being *al* and *manjit* (*Rubia cordifolia*). The dyeing is effected by dipping the cloth in a boiling solution of the dyes. Varieties of colours are also obtained by the combined use of indigo and turmeric; the colours are generally permanent. Calico printing is done without dipping the cloth in any colouring solution. The cloth is stamped and stretched on wooden blocks, on which the floral patterns project in strong relief. They are charged with colour and then pressed down on the cloth. The bed covers and printed floor cloths of Nayanagar or Bewar are the best in the district.†

* Notes abridged from the Catalogue.

† An illustration is given (No. 20) to show how the stamps are applied.

TRANSIENT COLOURS.—The principal ingredients used by the dyers of Ajmere are safflower, turmeric, and indigo. These colours are particularly remarkable for their excellence, and are much prized throughout Rajputana. Native cloth is seldom used, as it is too coarse for colouring purposes; the cloth in common use is English muslin. The varieties of these colours are:—*Kaledar orhni*, *pancha*, *kesarani pila dhanak*. The design slightly varies in each case, but is almost the same, the ground being coloured black, red, yellow, or azure blue, with striped or spotted border, and the field is covered with imitations of plaintain fruit surrounded by small squares of various colours.

The trade in coloured cloth and red *pagris* is largely carried on in Ajmere. The people of Marwar and surrounding native States depend on the dyers of Ajmere for their requirements. The annual exports are put at four lakhs. The *chunries* worn by females are spotted sheets or cloths, with a pattern made by tying up tight little knots, so that when the whole is dyed these parts remain uncoloured. Printing in gold and silver leaf is also common in this district.

WOOLLEN CLOTH.—There is not much to report on this head. No great care is taken of the wool, which in this district is coarser than the Punjab wool, and all that is woven from it is blanketing, generally coarse and hard. The Todgarh blankets are the best of the whole. In certain parts of the district, *saries* are made of wool, which are used mostly by Ját women. They are woven by the Balae weavers, who are met with in almost every village in this district.

Throughout Rajputana, cloths coloured with fugitive dyes are very popular. It is the custom for both sexes of Hindus to wear turbans and dresses of different colours at different seasons or festivals. For example, on the fifth day of the bright half of *Mágh* (the Basant Panchami, or festival of Spring), garments of a light pink or yellow hue with red spots are worn. On the day of Gangauri, a form of the goddess Parvati, much revered by Rajput women, the dresses are dyed red with safflower (*Carthamus Tinctorius*). In the hot season the lighter tints are preferred, and in winter the darker ones. In Jeypore, married women use fugitive colours and lac bracelets; while widows are obliged to wear cocoa-nut bracelets and cloths dyed with permanent colours. In Malwa and some parts of Rajputana, as in Oodeypore and Marwar, married women sometimes wear ivory or cocoa-nut bracelets, the latter ornamented with gold or silver, and, as a rule, the widows do not use ornaments at all. It is very economical to employ transient colours, and the temptation to do so is the stronger because so many of them are very beautiful unless long exposed to the sun. The dyes are washed out, and new ones applied with the greatest ease, at very trifling expense. Under these circumstances, moreover, it is not to be wondered at that the *naya rang*, or aniline, finds many purchasers, as it yields brilliant colours at cheap rates.

The *chunnies* or *chunries*—cloths dyed in dotted patterns by means of knotting—are very popular in Rajputana. The ingenious processes by which they are produced are fully described in Part XV. of the *Journal of Indian Art*. It is, therefore, unnecessary to repeat what has been written there on the subject.

Printing in gold or silver leaf on thin textiles is done throughout Rajputana. Ajmere has rather a reputation for the use of cheap false metal for this purpose. The leaf is applied in bands round the edges, or the stamped pattern on the cloth is re-done over the printed design in metal, which is made to adhere by means of a kind of gum. At marriages and the feasts in country gardens, which all classes are so fond of attending, it is almost *de rigueur* to wear garments richly adorned with bands of the precious metals, which may be either in the form of lace sewn on the fabric, or be merely stamped on the cloth.

The following data, taken from the Indian Census Report of 1881, will be of interest:—

EXTRACT FROM LIST OF OCCUPATIONS OF MALES IN AJMERE.

Artists 28	Woollen Cloth Manufacturers ... 32	Jute Manufacturers... .. 63
Engravers 1	Blanket Manufacturers (includes Shepherds) ... 3573	Comb Makers 66
Scientific Persons 43	Silk Dealers 38	Lac Dealers 557
Toy Makers 5	Shawl Weavers 1	Horn and Ivory Workers ... 18
Goldsmiths 10	Cotton Manufacturers 626	Leather Workers 1876
Sword and Bayonet Makers ... 45	Cotton Dealers 714	Wood Turners 28
Masons 1411	Calico Dyers 137	Glass Manufacturers 41
Carpenters 192	Trimming Makers 16	Goldsmiths, &c. 1383
Dye Colour Makers 1477	Mat Makers 18	Tin Plate Workers 49
Firework Makers 9		Brass Workers 195

The area of Ajmere and Merwarra is 2711 square miles, and the district is somewhat larger than Devonshire, while its population is 400 less than that of Derbyshire. The total population is 460,722, with a density of 8 less than Switzerland, or 170 to the square mile. It is distributed as follows:—

MALES.	FEMALES.	HINDUS.	MUSSALMANS.
248,844.	211,878.	376,029.	57,809.

It is evident from the list of occupations, and perhaps as much from the omissions as the entries in it, that the higher art industries are not much practised in Ajmere. Under these circumstances, the devotion of a monograph to the description of art work in the district may by some be considered unnecessary, but a moment's re-

flection will show that there are many small arts carried on in Rajputana, which may be most fitly noticed in a review of the work done in its most central division, which is the seat of the paramount power, and the winter head-quarters of its principal official representative, the Agent to the Governor General and Chief Commissioner.

It is impossible to state, of many of the art industries of India, that they had their origin in the place in which they now attain their chief development. As a rule, the accident of patronage has alone determined the home of such industries, and it is only by careful study of their history, and that of the men who are engaged in them, and still more of the style of their ornamentation and workmanship, that any clue to their birth and growth can be obtained.

When the Moghul emperors spent a large portion of their time at Ajmere, most of the arts now practised at the courts of the different chiefs of Rajputana were, in all probability, confined to the capital, or, at least, the best artists and workmen resided there, and these almost to a certainty came with the court from Delhi or Agra, and to Delhi, Agra, or Ajmere they would all return, if the greatest art patron and ruling sovereign still resided there. The above reasons are quite sufficient for using Ajmere as a peg on which to hang a number of remarks on the minor arts of Rajputana.

Jeypore, April, 1888.

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APPENDIX.

PARTICULARS REGARDING DIFFERENT QUALITIES OF MARBLE AVAILABLE IN THE VICINITY OF AJMERE.

Name of Quarry.	Sample No.	Weight per c. ft.	Price, rough dressed per c. ft. at Ajmere.		Cost of Sawing, per sq. ft.	Cost of polishing per sq. ft.	Maximum sizes available.	Used for	Examples of use in Ajmere.
			<i>md.srs.</i>	<i>R. a.</i>					
Bassi	6, 7, 8.	2 10	2 4	<i>a. p.</i> 10 0	<i>R. a.</i> 1 4	5' × 2' × 1½'	{ Floors, fire-places, tomb-stones, paper-weights, &c. }	Mayo College, Church Cemetery.	
Kayampura	4 and 5.	2 10	2 4	10 0	1 4	10' × 3' × 3'	{ Floors, <i>Chhujas</i> or drip stones, brackets, arches, fire-places, tomb-stones, &c. }	Mayo College, Church Cemetery, Railway Station, Dowla Bāgh, Workshops, Baradari, and General Offices, Railway.	
Khajur ki Chouki	3.	2 12	2 8	14 0	1 4	8' × 3' × 1½'	{ Floors, cornices, tomb stones, fire-places, &c. }	Mayo College, Cemetery Church.	
Jāmun	1 and 2.	2 10	2 4	10 0	1 4	6' × 3' × 2'	{ Floors, pillars, arches, brackets, lintels, <i>chhujas</i> , parapet, fire-places, tomb-stones, paper-weights, &c. }	Mayo College, Church Cemetery, General Office Railway, Baradari, Railway Station, Workshops, &c.	

(Signed) R. MITRA, Asst. Engineer, Ajmere Subdivision.

TRUE COPY.

(Signed) D. JOSCELYN, Executive Engineer, Ajmere Provl. Divn.

AJMERE TEXTILES.

Number.	Name.	Length.	Width.	Value of Piece.	Remarks.
1	Reza	40 6	1 7	1 3	No longer made at Ajmere.
2	Saptah	8 8	2 2	1 2	
3	Khes	12 7*	2 9*	1 4	
4	Dhoti Jora (pr.)*	20 9	1 8	1 0	Cotton thread obtained from Bombay, and stuff made at Ajmere.
5	Susi (old pattern)	21 4	1 9	1 0	
6	Susi (old pattern)	15 6	1 9	1 0	
7	Susi (new pattern)	16 2	1 9	1 0	
8	Susi (new pattern)	15 9	1 8	1 0	
9	Susi (new pattern)	15 5	1 8	1 0	
10	Susi (new pattern)	15 1	1 9	1 0	
11	Susi (new pattern)	16 5	1 8	1 0	
12	Charkhana				

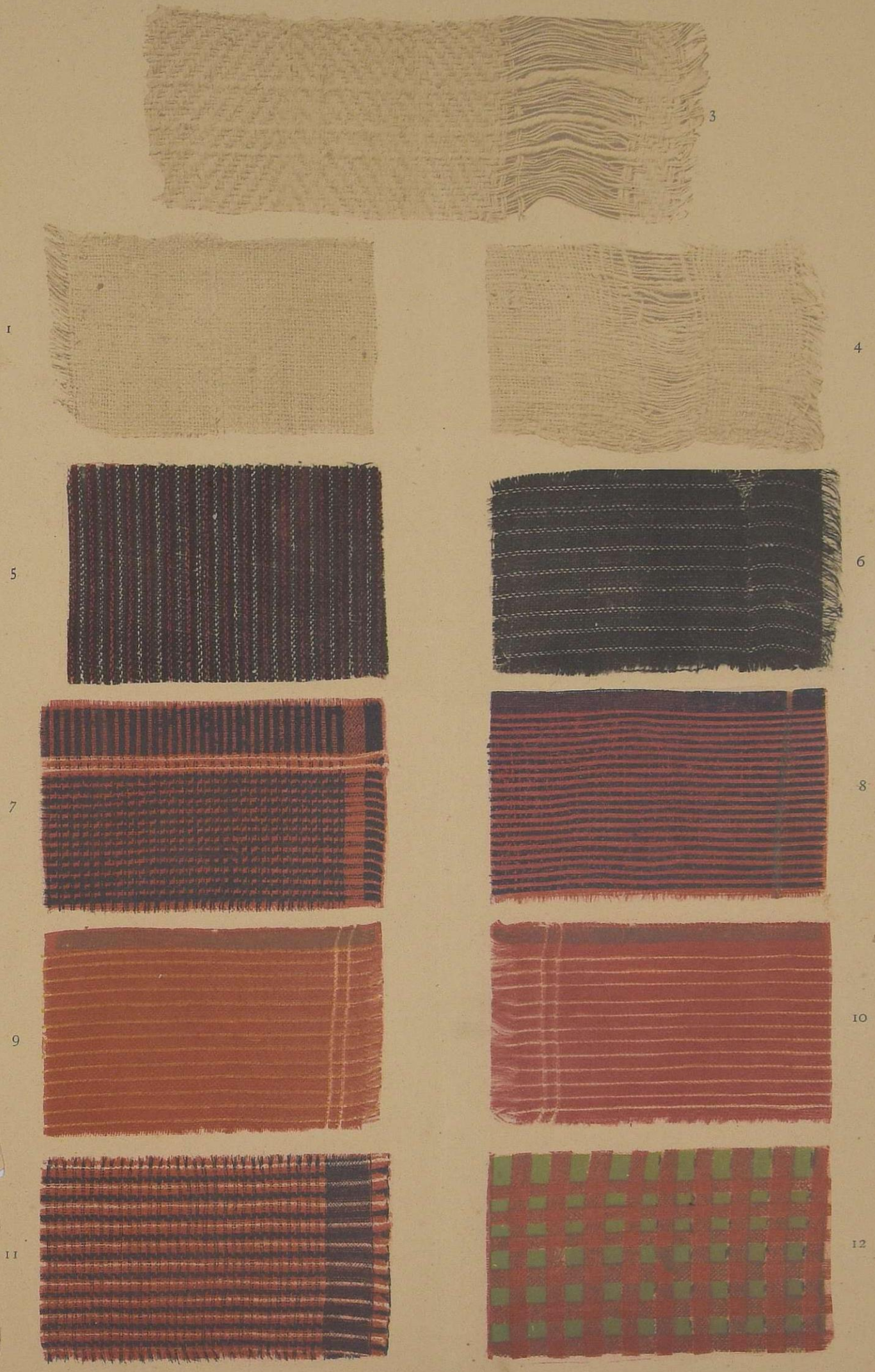
* Each piece.

NOTES ON THE DURGAH AT AJMERE.

The first buildings at the Durgah were erected in the time of Shamsh-u-din Altamsh. Akbar built the Akbari Musjid, and presented to the shrine the great drums and brass lamp, besides other articles, which he took at Cheetore, the capital of Meywar, in A.D. 1568. The lamp is shown in one of the illustrations, and the drums are still in use. Akbar also endowed the shrine, and showed his faith in the powers of the saint by walking from Agra to Ajmere, in order that by this act of adoration he might be blessed with a son. The birth of Jehangir is attributed to this pilgrimage. The route taken by the emperor was marked by masonry pillars, many of which are still in existence. Shah Jehan also built a mosque at the Durgah.

Some parts of these buildings are enriched with tiles in various colours, such as are found in similar public edifices at Lahore, Agra, and Mandu. The shrine of the saint contains his tomb, which is surrounded by a rail of silver open tracery. The *Kadims*, or servants, would not allow a minute examination of the interior. One of the principal doorways has an archway of curious foils. Suspended from the top are a number of ostrich eggs, and on the sides are fastened frames containing inscriptions. Near the inner gate are two huge cauldrons, in which are cooked huge quantities of food whenever a rich devotee is prepared to pay for the materials. The food—to which a holy character, something like the *Maha Prasad* of the Hindus, is attached—is much valued by the poorer Mahomedans. The looting of the *deg*, or emptying of the pot, as it is termed, is a sight to be remembered. There are two such cauldrons, the greater and the lesser *deg*.

Behind the Durgah there is a wonderful cleft in the natural rock, which generally contains a considerable quantity of water, which is used by the townspeople. Descent to the bottom is obtained by many flights of steps. Altogether, the Durgah is, unquestionably, one of the most curious places in India.



NO. 14.—CLOTHS OF LOCAL MANUFACTURE. (See Appendix). AJMERE.

1.—Reza. 3.—Khes. 4.—Dhoti Jora. 5.—Susi. 6.—Susi.



NO. 15.—WOMAN'S VEIL (KALEDAR ORHNI) FROM AJMERE.



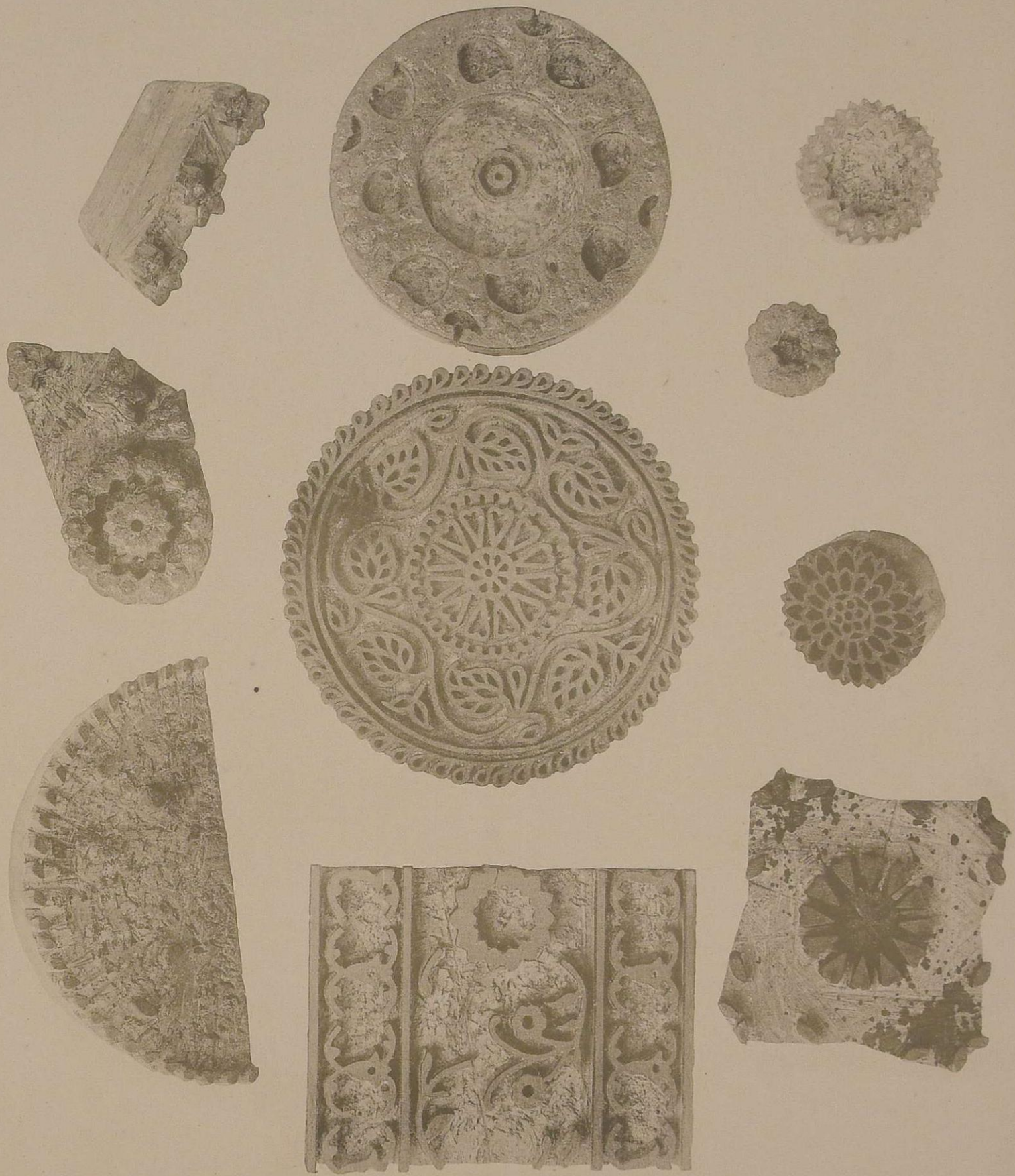
NO. 16.—WOMAN'S VEIL (POMCHA) FROM AJMERE.



NO. 17.—WOMAN'S VEIL (KESARANI FILA) FROM AJMERE.



NO. 18.—WOMAN'S VEIL (DHANAK) FROM AJMERE.



NO. 19.—WOODEN STAMPS OR BLOCKS FOR PRINTING.



4.—Complete pattern.

3.—Yellow block added.

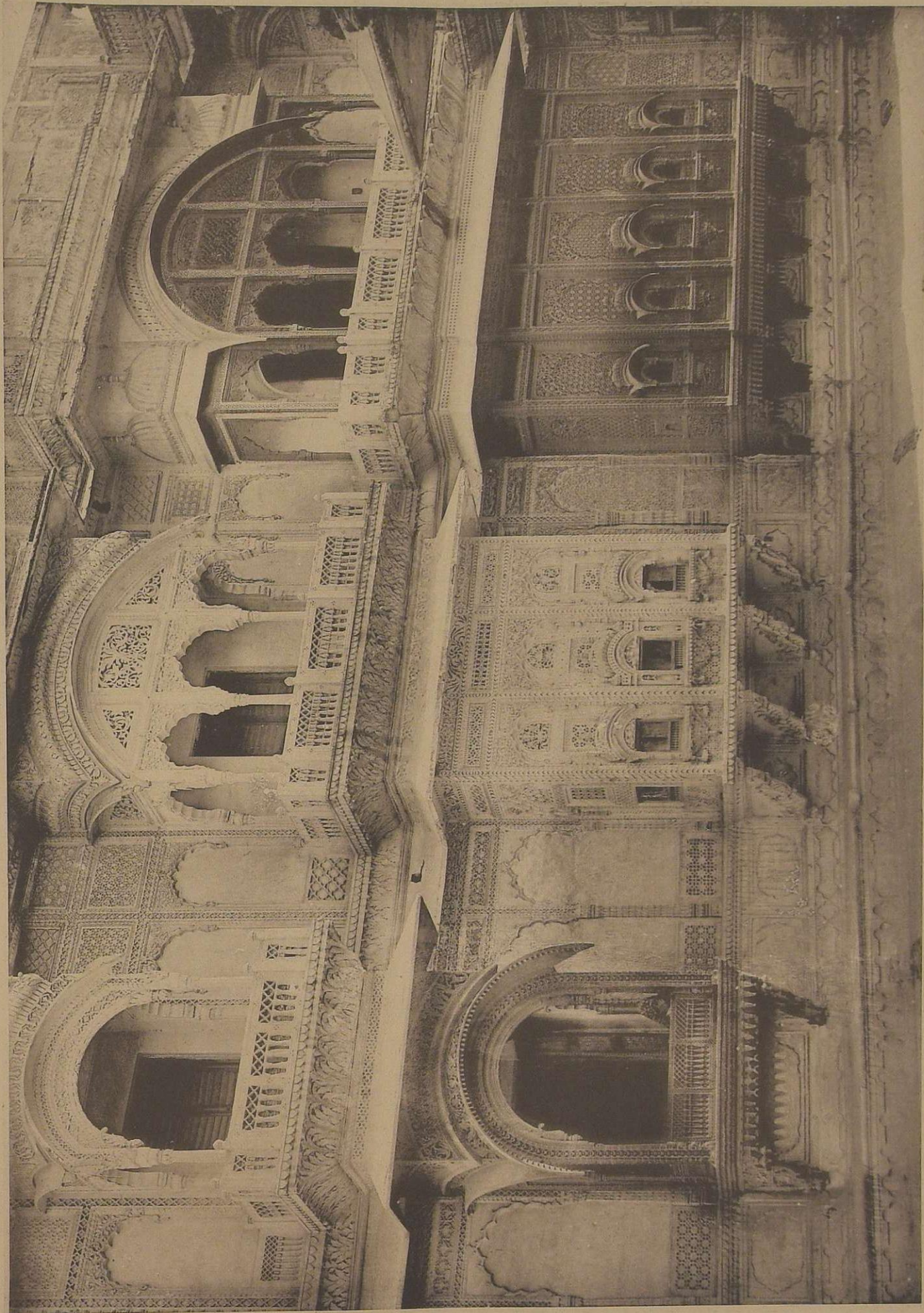
2.—Red block added.

1.—Outline.

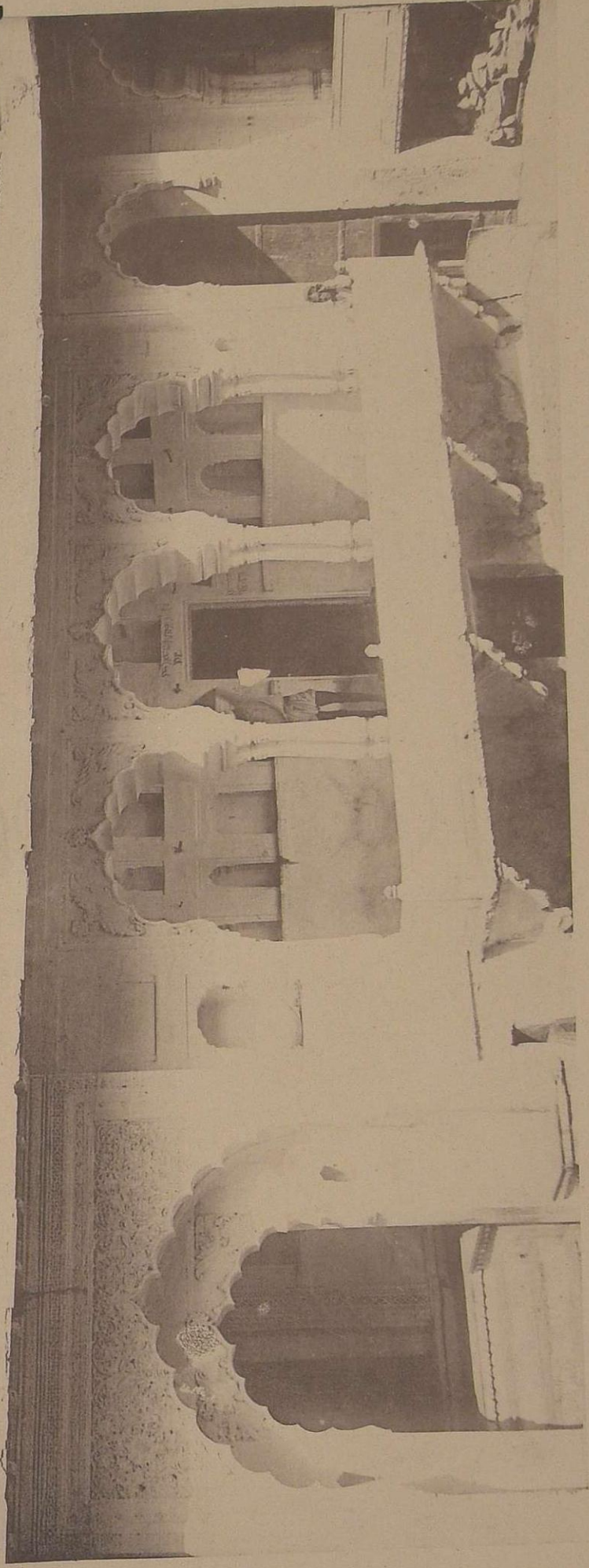
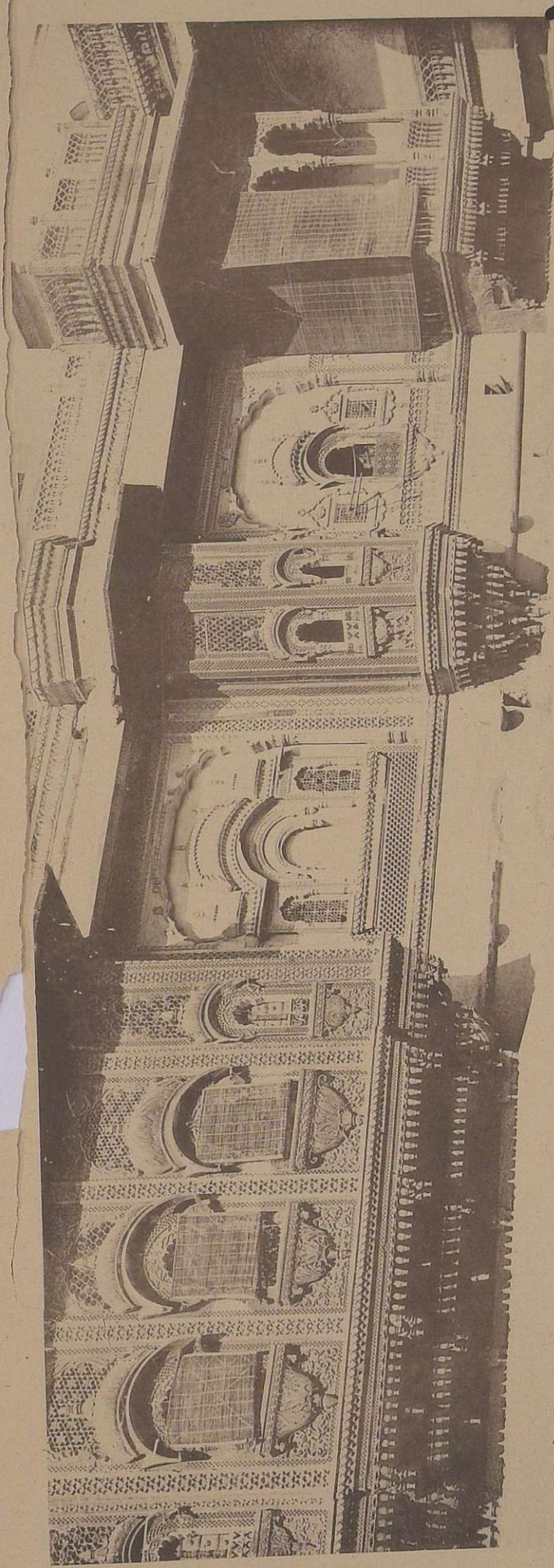
NO. 20.—STAMPED CLOTH TO ILLUSTRATE THE MODE OF MAKING FLOORCLOTHS, FROM AJMERE.



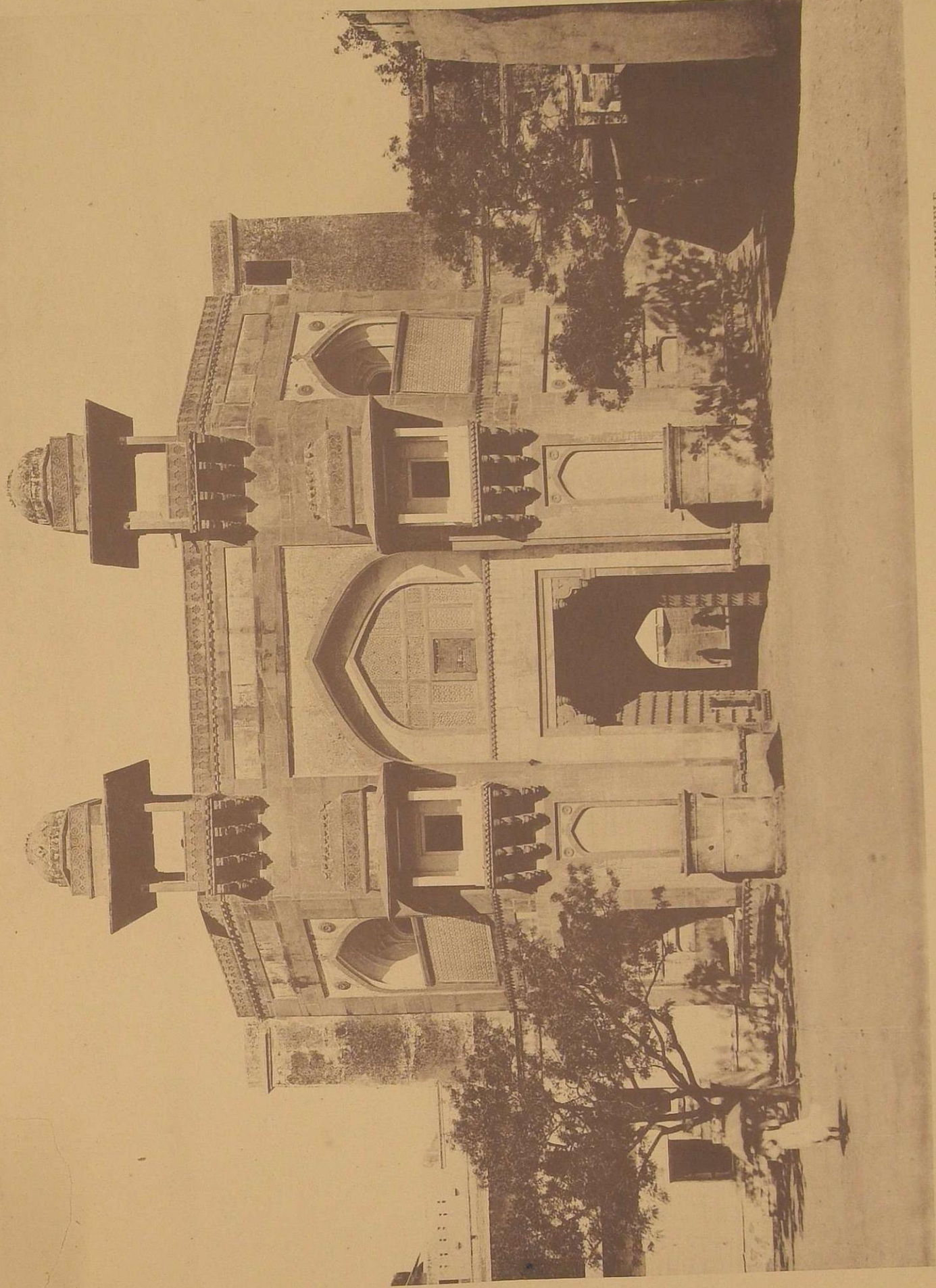
NO. 21.—TURBAN DYED WITH A PATTERN OF MANY COLOURS (LAHRIYA). AJMERE.



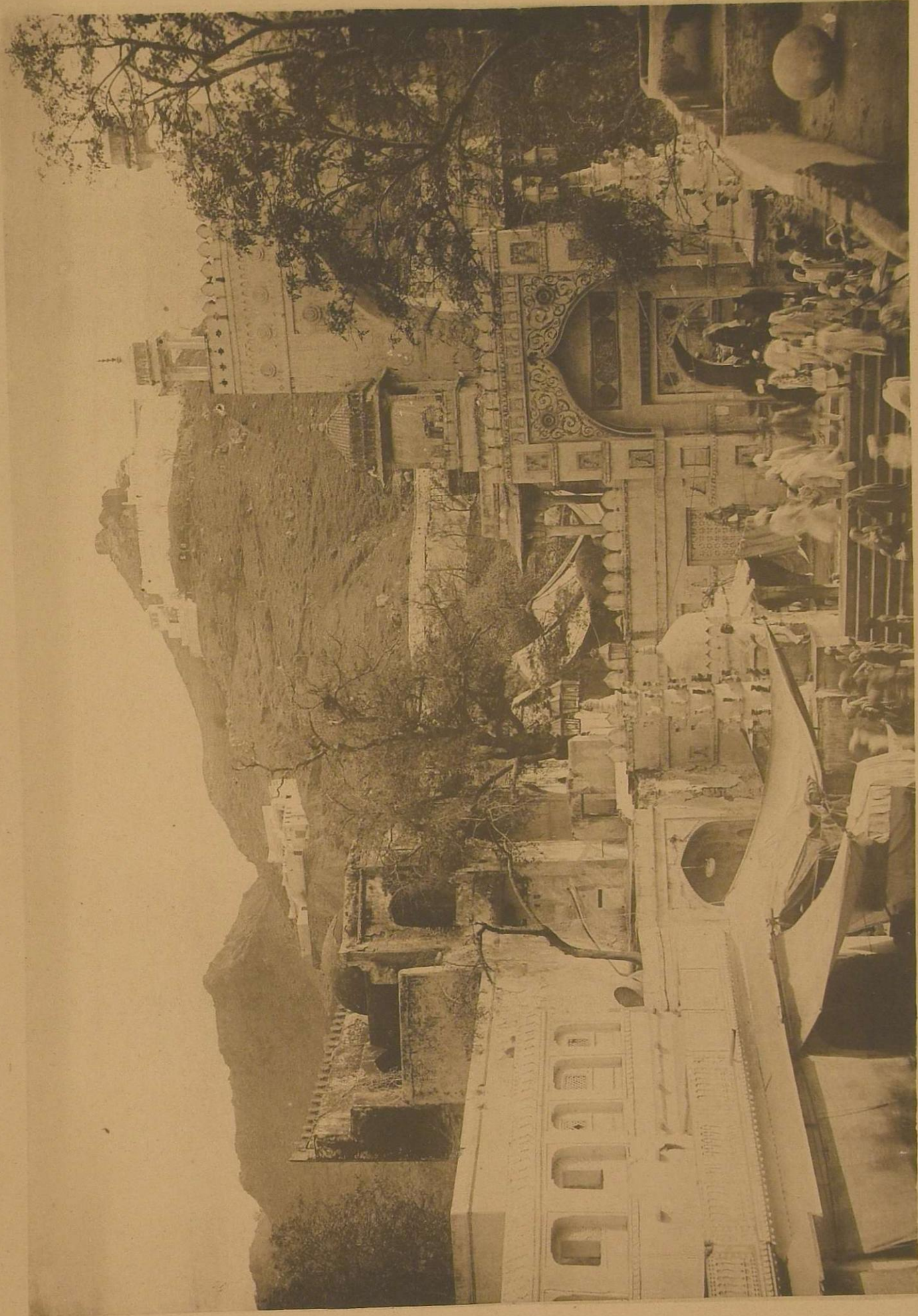
NO. 22.—HOUSE OF THE PATWAN SETH, FROM THE STREET. AJMERE.



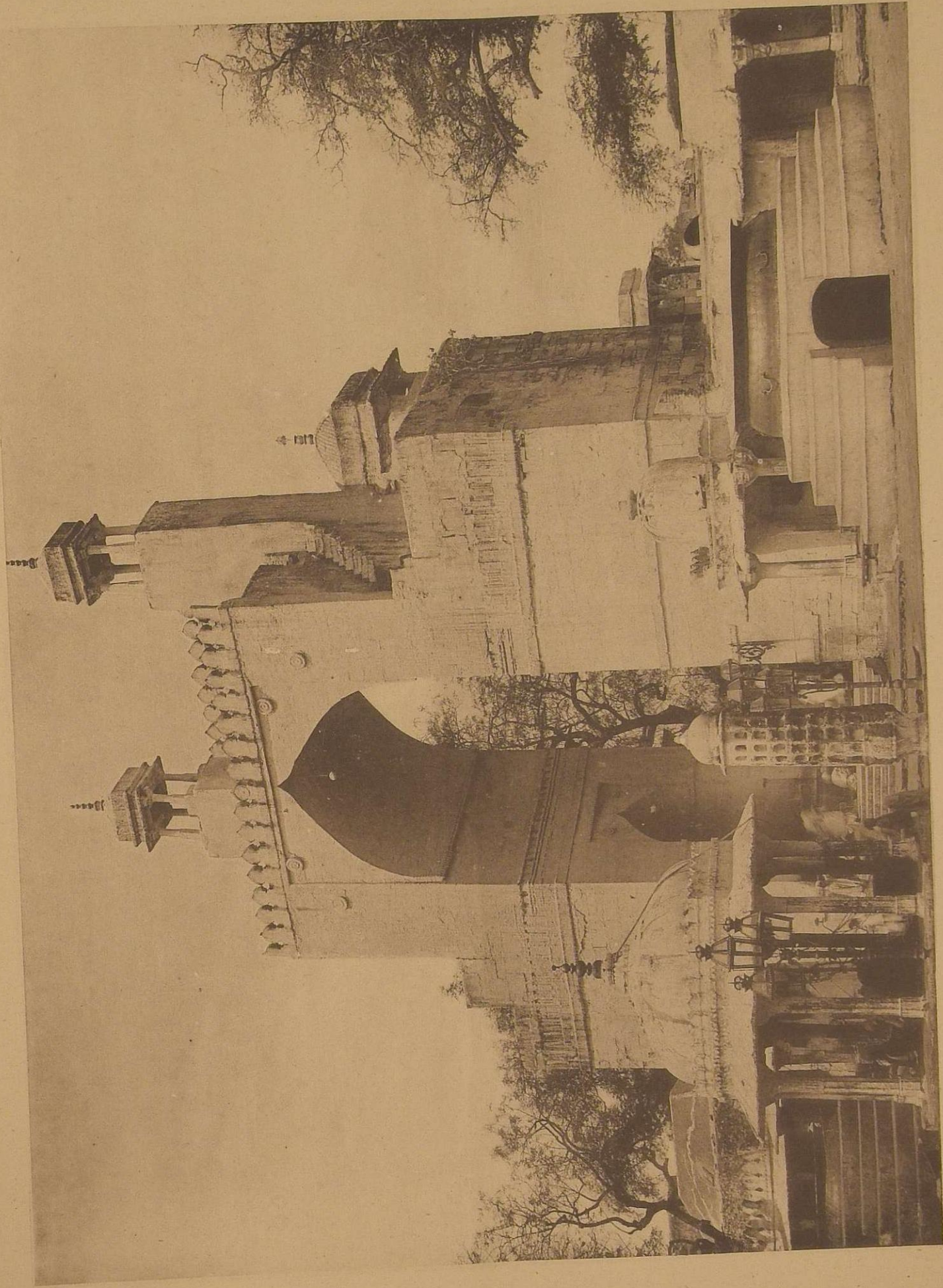
NO. 23.—CARVED BALCONIES, PATWAN SETH'S HOUSE. AJMERE.



NO. 24.—GATE OF THE AJMERE FORT, AT THE WINDOW OF WHICH THE EMPEROR JEHANGIR USED TO SHOW HIMSELF.
(Sir T. Roe's Memoirs.)



NO. 25.—ENTRANCE TO THE DURGAH. AJMERE.



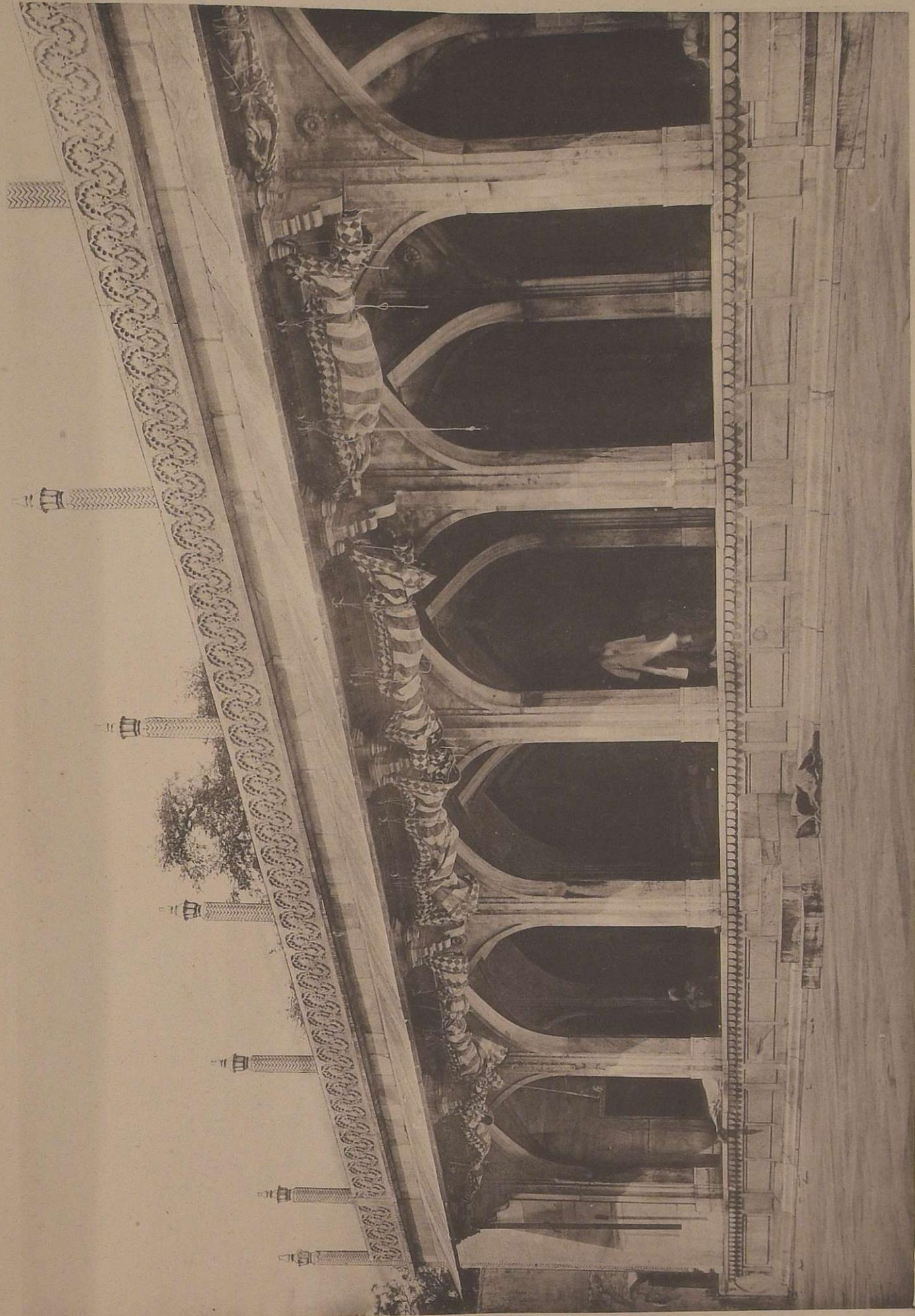
NO. 26.—INNER GATE OF THE DURGAH, WITH THE TWO DEGS OR CAULDRONS, AND THE BRASS LAMP FROM CHEETORE, AJMERE.



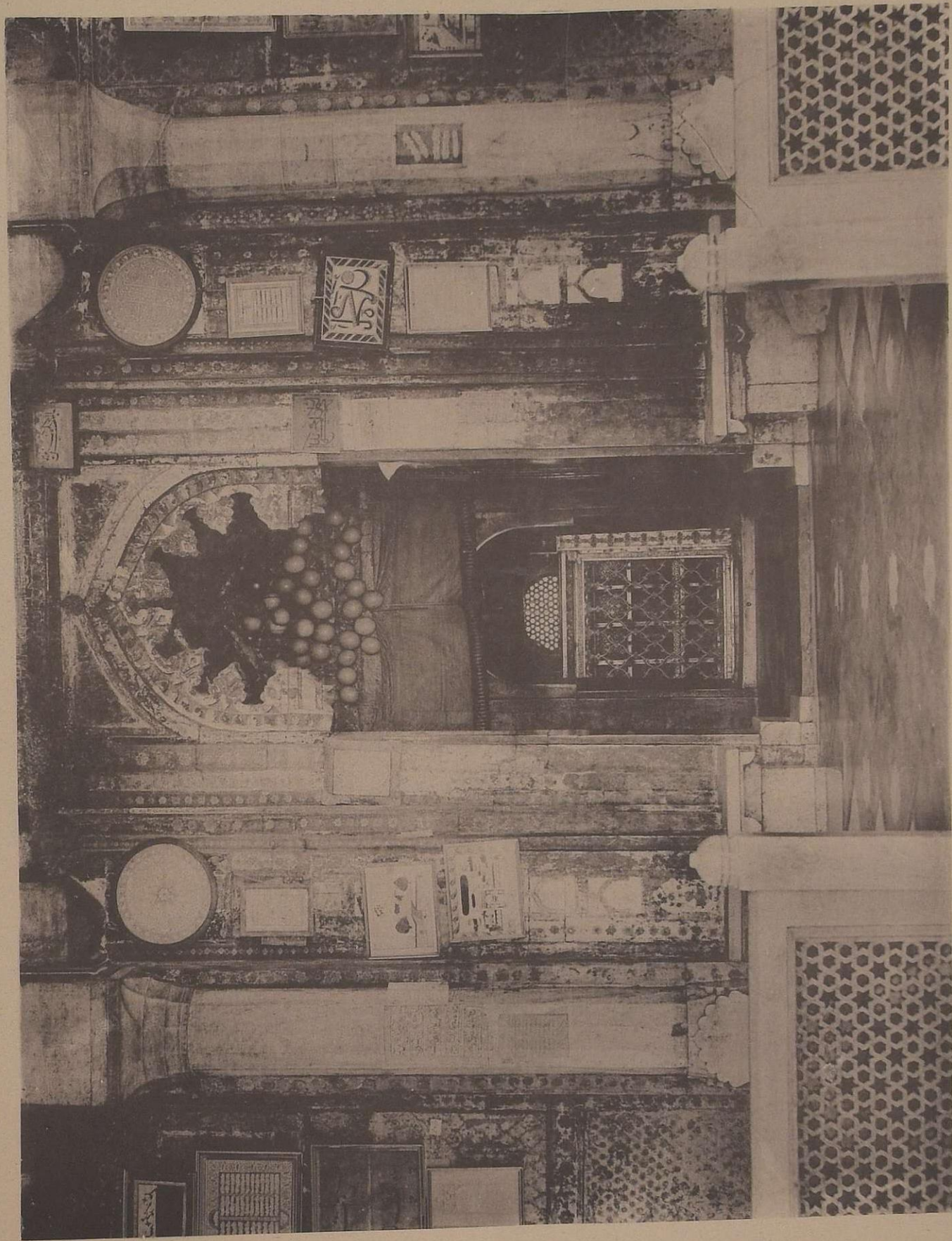
NO. 27.—GATE OF THE AKBARI MUSJID DURGAH. AJMERE.



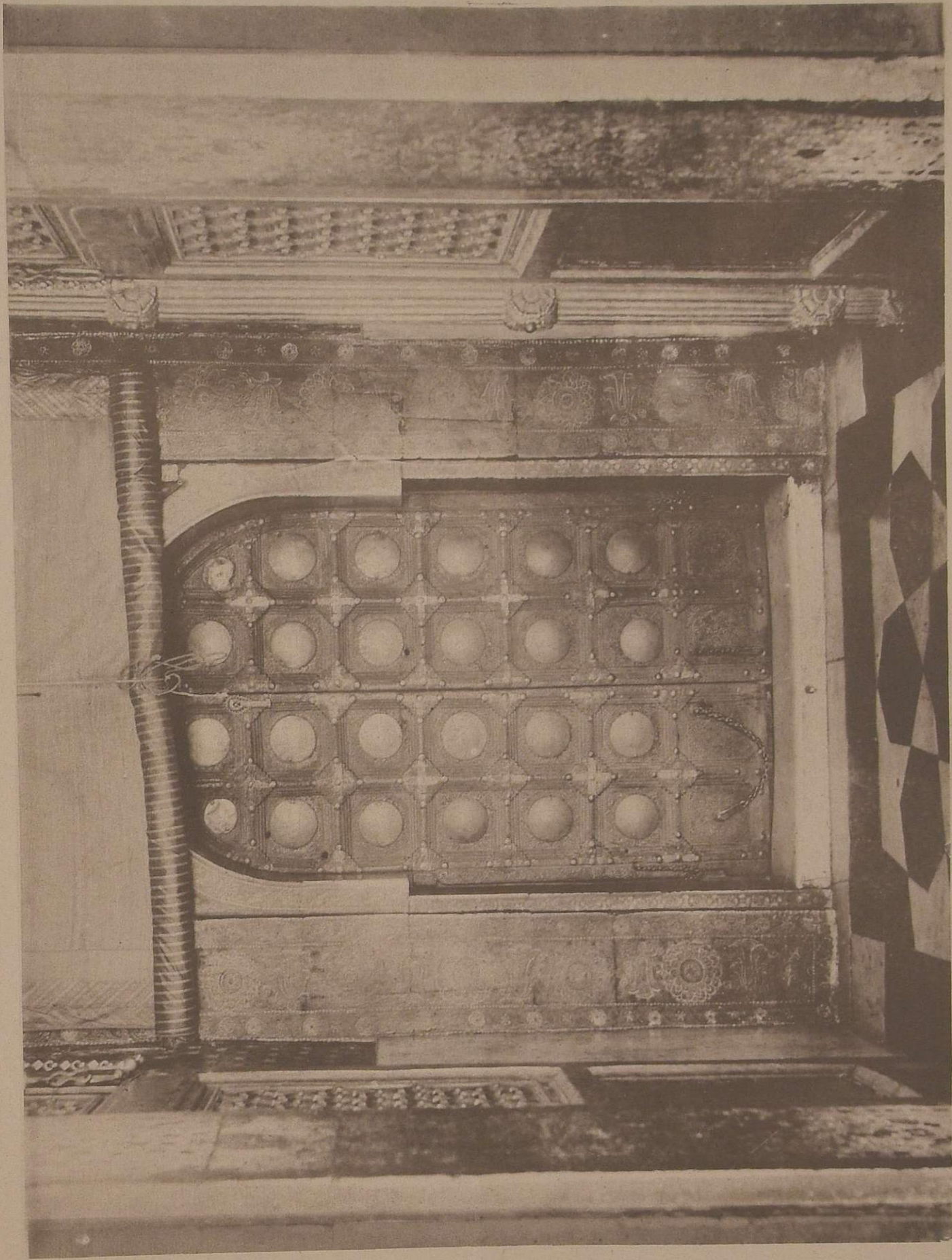
NO. 28.—AKBARI MUSJID IN THE DURGAH. AJMERE.



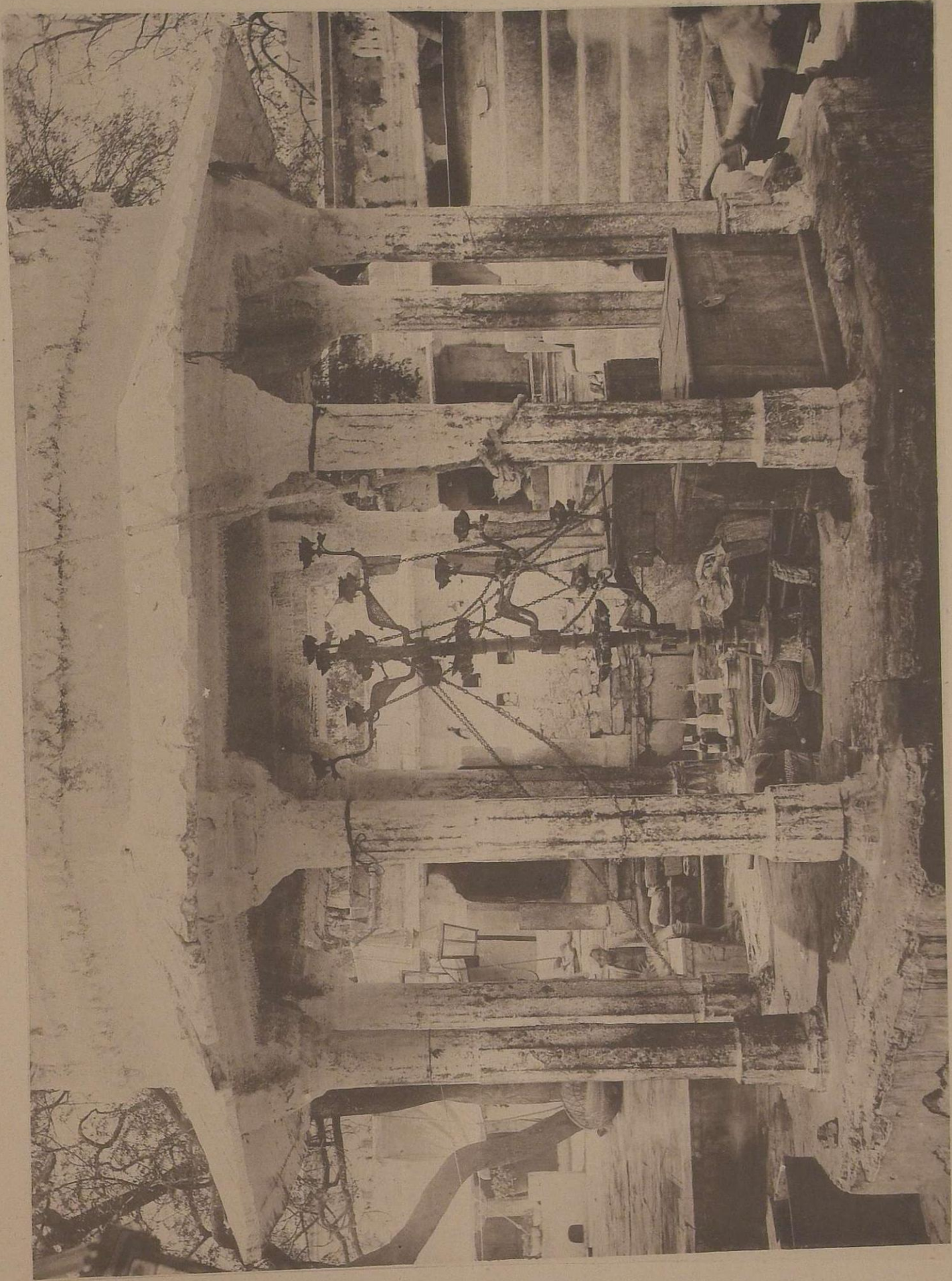
NO. 29.—MOSQUE OF SHAH JEHAN, IN THE DURGAH, AJMERE.



NO. 30.—PRINCIPAL ENTRANCE TO THE SHRINE OR TOMB OF MOIYUD-DIN CHISTI, OR THE KWAJI SAHIB. AJMERE.
(The inner shrine is of silver.)



NO. 31.—OLD SANDALWOOD DOORS OF THE TOMB OF SHEIKH MOYUD-DIN CHISTI. AJMEER.



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