



Vanicka Arora

A conservation architect, working in India at the Development and Research Organisation for Nature, Arts and Heritage (DRONAH). Completed her MSc in Conservation of Historic Buildings at the University of Bath in 2009, where she graduated at the top of her class. She is presently also a visiting faculty member at Sushant School of Art and Architecture, Gurgaon.

Samuel Swinton Jacob e il Jeypore Portfolio: considerazioni sulla documentazione in architettura. *Samuel Swinton Jacob and the Jeypore Portfolio: issues in Architectural Recording.*

Il saggio [i] illustra l'opera di Sir Samuel Swinton Jacob, una figura rilevante dell'epoca coloniale, che fu profondamente coinvolto, come architetto, nel revival dell'architettura tradizionale indiana nello Stato di Jeypore (ora Jaipur) durante il primo periodo del XIX secolo. In particolare il focus è sul Catalogo dei dettagli architettonici di Jeypore che è costituito dalla raccolta di una serie di rilievi compiuti dallo stesso Jacob.

Il saggio esamina il contesto in cui il Catalogo è stato prodotto e la sua influenza sulle costruzioni tradizionali. Inoltre si evidenzia l'evoluzione del concetto di documentazione in India e le sue implicazioni culturali.

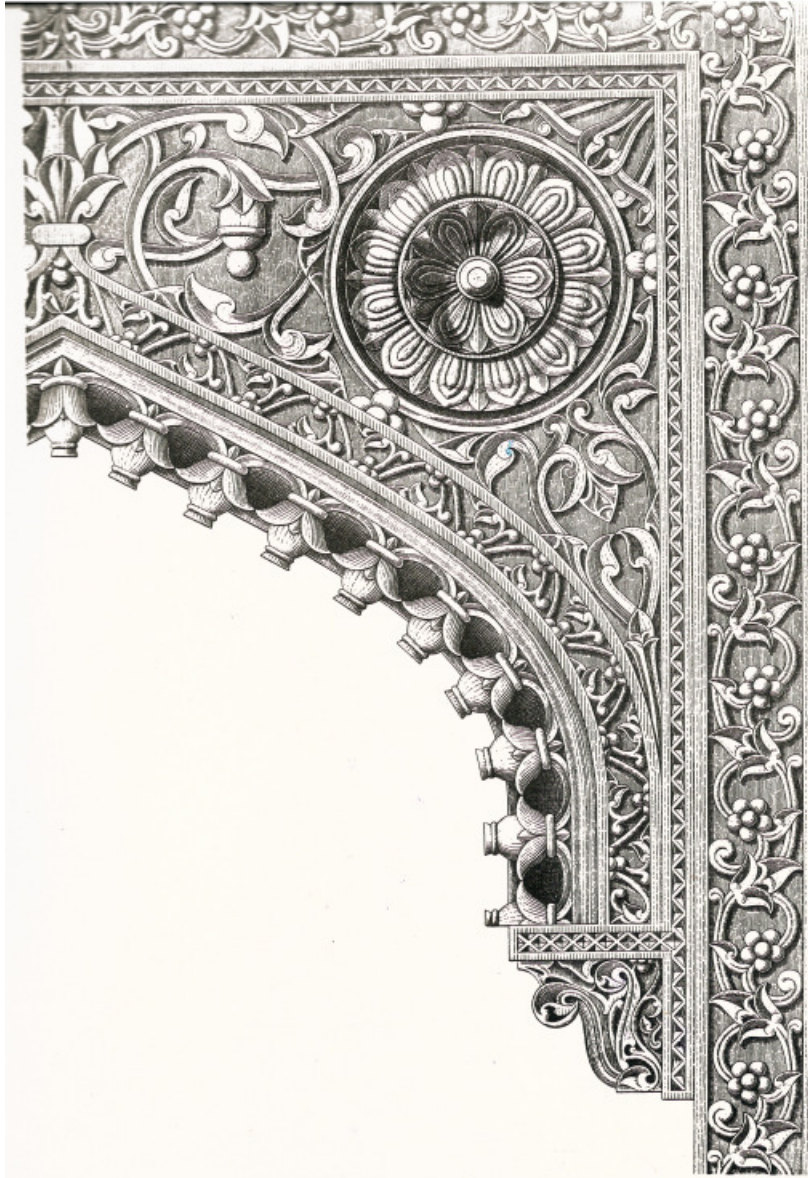
This paper [i] explores the work of Sir Samuel Swinton Jacob, a prominent colonial architect in India who was intricately involved in the revival of traditional building crafts in Jeypore state (now Jaipur) in the early nineteenth century. In particular, the focus is on the 'Jeypore Portfolio of Architectural Details', which was a collection of architectural details from various historic buildings compiled as a record by Jacob.

The paper examines the context of the Portfolio as well as the impact it had on the local crafts. It also looks at the evolution of architectural documentation in India and its general implications.

[i] Questo saggio è un estratto della tesi di Master di Vanicka Arora.

[i] This paper is an excerpt from Vanicka Arora Masters dissertation.

1. Architectural detail from the Jeypore Portfolio.



The building crafts of India represent an enduring cultural tradition and have come to be regarded as a unique resource of “living” heritage. Thus, the preservation and revival of this tradition is presently a fundamental principle underpinning architectural conservation philosophy in the country[1]. The idea of “reviving” indigenous crafts has persisted since the mid-nineteenth century, having its origins in the Indic version of the Arts and Crafts Movement[2] and popularised in colonial India by several prominent British architects, art historians and scholars. This paper explores in detail the work of Sir Samuel Swinton Jacob, one of the chief proponents of the building crafts in Jaipur. The subject under scrutiny is the *Jeypore Portfolio of Architectural Details*, an encyclopaedic collection of details, compiled by him at the turn of the nineteenth century.

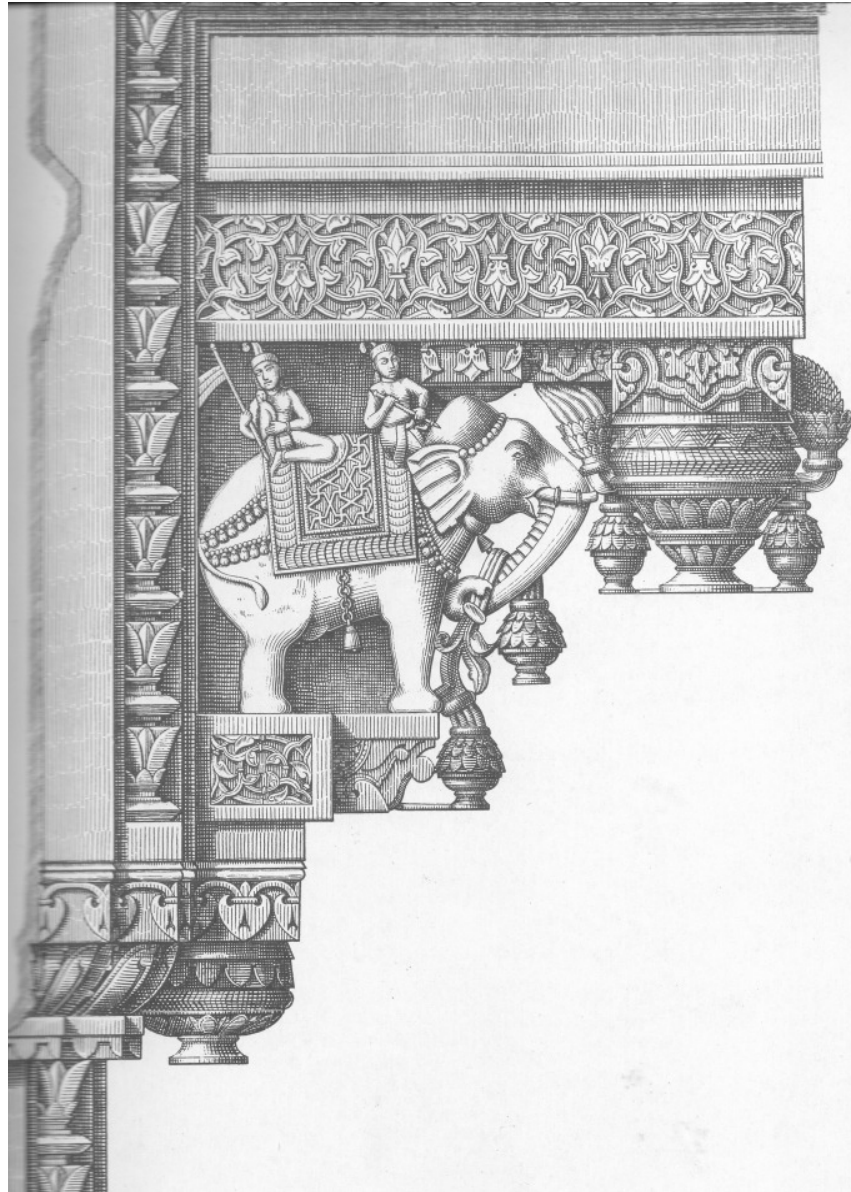
The *Portfolio* was to serve as a record of the architectural heritage of the erstwhile Jeypore State and the north-west region of Rajasthan. As a record, it would “rescue (such) designs from oblivion and give them new life”[3]. In itself, the concept of architectural recording had evolved significantly in India, from the artistic renderings of eighteenth century English travellers to the establishment of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), which had undertaken extensive surveys in order to document Indian antiquities and architecture. However, Jacob dismissed these records as “archaeological” rather than “practical”. The *Portfolio* is placed within the context of architectural documentation in India and the idea of a “practical” record is discussed.

The objective is to use the *Portfolio* as an example in order to better understand some of the basic issues involved in the conservation and revival of building crafts. Additionally, it is anticipated that a critical evaluation of Jacob’s work, as representative of the colonial approach to the Indian architectural tradition will help illustrate the complexity involved in applying new methods, in the case of the *Portfolio*, architectural drawing; to pre-existing traditions. Furthermore, the architectural record, and its continued significance in conservation practice in the country is questioned in light of the observations made with regards to the *Portfolio*.

BACKGROUND

Jacob is generally regarded as one of the chief proponents of the revival of building crafts in Jaipur, in addition to his reputation as a leading exponent of the "Indo-Saracenic" style. His work was a critical response to the extensive campaign of construction of buildings and civil services initiated by the British during the nineteenth century through the introduction of the Public Works Department (PWD). According to Jacob, the architectural works being carried out by the Department were "mundane, standardised and unsympathetic to Oriental architecture" and were steeped in "stereotyped conventionalities"[4]. The compilation of the *Portfolio* was an endeavour to address these stereotypes.

Jacob was deeply influenced by the Rajput and Mughal architectural styles[5]. His fascination centred on the ornamental details of historic buildings of these styles, his view being, that though the buildings themselves had been "designed to meet the requirements of an age that (had) passed"[6]; the elements could be incorporated successfully in modern buildings. The *Portfolio* was thus intended as a "practical" reference to the architect and artisan in the form of "working drawings" of these elements[7]. At the same time, Jacob was heavily influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement which had gained considerable popularity in England. His continual efforts to train the craftsmen in Jaipur, through the Jaipur School of Arts, and through the Jaipur State Public Works Department was motivated by the same principles that formed the basis of the Arts and Crafts philosophy, though there is no direct reference by him to either the Movement or to the works of its most prominent thinkers, Ruskin and Morris.[8] Despite the fact that the body of his work in the PWD was diminutive in comparison with the overall scale of work accomplished by the Department in the country, it was by no means inconsequential in its impact. His reputation as "the most accomplished of all exponents of the Indo-Saracenic style"[9] endured well into the twentieth century. He built extensively within Jaipur, in a career that spanned over three decades, and was responsible for the design of several projects within Rajasthan as well as elsewhere. By the turn



2. Bracket Detail from the Jeypore Portfolio.

of the century, his reputation as an architect his knowledge of Indo-Saracenic details was considered so formidable that he was invited to act in advisory capacity to Lutyens for the design of the Imperial Capital of New Delhi.[10]

The *Jeypore Portfolio* has been examined in some detail by post-colonial scholars and art historians in the context of its impact on the craft processes in Jaipur, and the aspect of it being a reference for architectural details. However, the fact that Jacob intended the *Portfolio* to serve as a record, as much as a reference, has generally been overlooked in these studies. In the reports of the JSPWD, Jacob included the compilation of the drawings of the *Portfolio* as separate from the rest of the working drawings being produced under his supervision. In fact, the initial plates prepared in his office were listed under the category of "Archaeological Drawings"[11].

In the Preface, he pointed out that though several attempts had been made to document the architecture in India, through various forms of representation, by individuals as well as institutions, these endeavours were scholarly rather than practical. His contention was that none of these records offered any insight into the rich and varied architectural details that existed in the buildings of India. Furthermore, he observed that no sustained effort had been made to provide a compilation of details which would be of "practical use" to the architect and artisan, thus subtly commenting on the academic nature of records produced by the Archaeological Survey of India at the time. Thus, Jacob intended to address the gap between archaeological recording and architectural practice, by providing a record which would serve a 'practical' purpose.

From the Picturesque to the Precise: Architectural recording and representation of Indian architecture by the British

The *Portfolio* was compiled by Jacob at a time when architectural recording and representation had developed from being an artistic enterprise to a scientific one. From the eighteenth century picturesque landscapes of the British traveller, to the precisely drawn plans and elevations of ancient monuments by the ASI, the nature of recording in India had significantly evolved by the

late nineteenth century. The relationship between architectural recording and perception was a reciprocal one, with one informing the other.

The Picturesque Landscape

The British fascination with the "exotic" and "picturesque" aspects of the Indian landscape was almost as old as its earliest attempts at colonisation. In fact, several post-colonial theorists concur that the artistic representations of India by the British reflect the colonial ideologies of the artists in how they perceived India and how they chose to depict it[12]. The general perception of India as the land of the exotic and untamed natives was supported by the earliest representations of the country by British travellers and artists, through visual and literary records. Amongst the most influential work was that of famous duo Thomas Daniell and his nephew William Daniell. The Daniells travelled extensively throughout India, over a period of several years in various expeditions in the latter half of the eighteenth century. They produced a prodigious amount of work in an assortment of media, ranging from engraved aquatints to oils on canvas to sketches and drawings. Though certainly not the first, their work was central to the widespread popularity of the "picturesque landscape" of India[13].

An artist, whose work was perhaps equally significant, though largely overshadowed in comparison with the enduring popularity of the Daniells, was the work of William Hodges. He was the first professional landscape artist from England to visit India, and apart from his extensive artistic depictions, he authored "*A Dissertation on the Prototypes of architecture: Hindoo, Moorish and Gothic*" towards the end of the eighteenth century. His artistic representations combined with his theoretical work were influential in shaping the general perception of Indian architecture and the decorative arts[14]. In Rajasthan, it was the work of Col. James Tod that was by far the most extensive and the most influential in shaping the general perception of the social and political aspects of the Rajputana states till the twentieth century. Having travelled across the length and breadth of Rajasthan, he compiled the encyclopaedic *Annals and An-*

tiquities of Rajasthan in the early nineteenth century. His posthumously published *Travels in Western India* was an account of his journey from Rajasthan to Bombay. Accompanied by the pencil illustrations of Mrs. Col. William Hunter Blair, it presented a similar perspective of architecture, at once romantic and brooding, steeped in the 'mystique of the Orient' thus reiterating the representation of architecture as established by Hodges and the Daniells.

History of Indian and Eastern Architecture: Fergusson's account of Indian architecture and its impact on the Portfolio

Whether successful or not, it seems well worth while that an attempt should be made to interest the Public in Indian Architectural art; first, because the artist and architect will certainly acquire broader and more varied views of their art by its study than they can acquire from any other source. More than this, any one who masters the subject sufficiently to be able to understand their art in its best and highest forms, will rise from the study with a kindlier feeling towards the nations of India, and a higher – certainly a correcter (sic) – appreciation of their social status than could be obtained from their literature, or from anything that now exists in their anomalous social and political position. [15] (As quoted in the Preface to the Jeypore Portfolio of Architectural Details) Fergusson's view that the study of historical architecture in India would significantly contribute to the understanding of Indian society and culture was shared by several British scholars who were studying traditional Indian architecture. His *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, an encyclopaedic volume which was one of the first sustained efforts at documentation in India was considered an authoritative account of Indian architecture for several decades. It has only recently come into extensive questioning regarding its content and analysis. In his documentation, Fergusson emphasised that his "assertions (were) not speculative fancies, but deductions from facts"[16]. He remained critical of the work of his contemporaries who had pursued their investigations in books and drawn their 'inferences from written authorities' who were not contemporary with the events with

which they attempted to relate. Fergusson contended that his sources were irrefutable since they were derived from the 'imperishable records' which were permanent representations, free from 'falsification and alteration.' His disdain for the ancient texts on architecture and history is evident in his claim that the "chisels of her (India's) sculptors... (were) immeasurably more to be trusted than the pens of her authors".

In the revised edition of the book, Fergusson remarked that though he had modified and revised his views on a number of issues, his general classification of Indian architecture and his understanding of the principles which governed it were intact. His claim was that he had established a "stable basis" for Indian architecture enabling it "to take its true position among other great styles"[17]. His analysis of Indian architecture lacked any reference to the ancient treatise and texts on the subject, due to his innate disdain for the Indian 'pen'. The lack of reference to any verbal accounts suggests that he was either unaware of or dismissive of the verbal traditions of India as well. Additionally, though he had compiled an extensive collection of drawings and sketches of the buildings he had studied; increasingly he came to rely on photography since -

Photographs tell their (the buildings) story far more clearly than any form of words that could be devised.... (forming) by far the most perfect and satisfactory illustration of the ancient architecture of India which has yet been presented to the public.[18]

Like several other scholars who commented on the subject of Indian architecture, his opinion was split between admiring the 'originality' of the 'living arts' of India and deriding the chaos and lack of 'higher intellectual purpose' in her buildings[19]. The description and evaluation by Fergusson was clearly an important influence in shaping Jacob's initial perceptions of Indian buildings. Fergusson's sentiments on Indian architecture as exuding an "exuberance of fancy, a lavishness of labour and an elaboration of detail"[20], is echoed in Jacob's opinions as expressed in the *Portfolio*.

*The Archaeological Survey of India
During the one hundred years of British dominion*

in India, the Government had done little or nothing towards the preservation of its ancient monuments, which, in the total absence of any written history, form the only reliable source of information as to the early condition of the country... Some of these monuments... are daily suffering from the effects of time, and.... must soon disappear altogether, unless preserved by accurate drawings and faithful descriptions of the archaeologists.[21]

Toward the end of 1861, Alexander Cunningham submitted a memorandum to the Governor-general, stressing on the urgent need to undertake a systematic investigation of the ancient monuments of India. This memorandum led to the formation of the Archaeological Survey of India being established with the aim to provide an accurate description, illustrated by plans, measurements, drawings and photographs and copies of inscriptions of such remains as deserve notice, with the history of them so far as may be traceable and a record of the traditions that are retained regarding them.[22]

The ASI's key emphasis was on providing an accurate description of the ancient monuments, and pursue their investigations into the subject of Indian architecture in a systematic and scientific manner. Unlike Fergusson, whose central focus was on classifying and defining Indian architecture, often based entirely on his personal observations; the ASI under Cunningham was concerned primarily with conducting an extensive survey of the ancient monuments on site. Both approaches were to have a significant bearing on the *Portfolio*, which attempted not only to classify and define the architectural details, through its organisation but also serve as an extensive record.

From the Precise to the Practical The Portfolio as a Record

According to Jacob, many of the patterns in the historic buildings of Jaipur and its surrounding areas were 'scarcely recognisable' and were in imminent danger of decay and damage, beyond the extent of repair. The *Portfolio*, by recording these patterns would "rescue them from oblivion" and "give them new life".

The suggestion that a record of the ornamental patterns could somehow provide 'new life' to



3. Column detail from Swinton Jacob's building inspired from existing architectural details in Jeypore and Amber.-

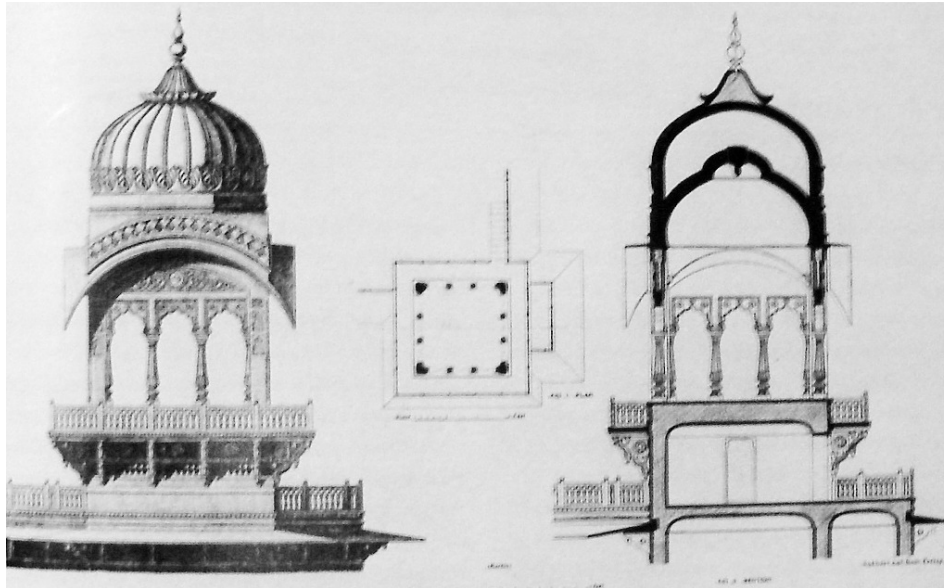
them could be interpreted at several levels. The fairly direct assumption that one makes is that Jacob, like Cunningham felt that even though the architectural details were likely to disintegrate over time, a record would ensure its scholarly survival, and through academia it would continue as part of Indian architectural history. The second possibility would be that Jacob was implying that the records might later be used to restore or repair the damaged details. After all there were several instances of Jacob carrying out repair, maintenance and restoration of existing structures in Jaipur, including the old palaces and forts, during his tenure in the JSPWD. However, it is also likely that Jacob was not referring to the actual details themselves, but the decorative patterns or design of the details, which could be used again, by the architects and artisans referring to his work, in new buildings, thus giving the pattern a new life in another form. This would set apart his record from the rest of the documentations, by giving it an immediate 'practical' use.

In the second edition to the *Portfolio*, this sentiment was further elaborated, through Jacob's admission that the *Portfolio* had been compiled with the "hope that the drawings may help those who may be called upon to design buildings in the future, and who wish to profit by the past" [23]. Therefore, the compilation of architectural details from historic buildings would be useful not only academically, as part of the architectural history, but be useful in the actual process of building.

Thus, the *Portfolio* marked a significant departure in the nature and purpose of architectural recording of Indian architecture by the British. In many ways, the *Portfolio* resembles the kind of records produced by the ASI. The drawings are to a graphical imperial scale, and have been rendered in ink, in order to denote shade and shadow. A brief description of most of the buildings has been provided at the beginning of each volume, in the manner of the ASI, giving details about the location and date of the building, along with an introduction. There are no attempts to explain either the geometry of the details, or the joinery, or provide any three-dimensional views, either as perspectives or as axonometric projections. Thus, as an archaeo-



4a. *Chatri* detail from the Albert Hall designed and executed by Samuel Swinton Jacob.



4b. Chatri detail later recorded in the Jeypore Portfolio of Architectural Details.

logical record, Jacob's *Portfolio* conforms to a fair extent, with the standard of the Archaeological Survey. It differs in two key aspects, the first being scale, since Jacob was only concerned with the details themselves, and the second being in the Fergusson like approach to classify and define Indian architecture.

The Issues of Recording and Representation

Despite valiant efforts at approaching architectural recording in a scientific and practical manner, the *Portfolio* like its precedents in the field of architectural recording and representation reflected the inherent bias of its compiler. The very selection of details, and more importantly the omission of certain details are indicative of Jacob's personal perceptions. For example, though many details in the *Portfolio* have been sourced from Agra and Fatehpur Sikri, the Taj Mahal and the Red Fort are conspicuous

precisely because so little attention is paid to them. Why were the grandest examples of Mughal architecture left out of the *Portfolio*? If the purpose of the *Portfolio* was to take advantage of the architectural wealth which existed in the country, why were the most opulent of examples not included? It is probable that Jacob wanted to avoid using the most formidable of architectural expressions due to the inevitable comparisons that would follow their usage. It is also possible that Jacob's personal view was these examples exhibited the 'meaningless exuberance of detail' that he warned the users of the *Portfolio* against.

He also used the *Portfolio*, especially in the second edition to promote his own work. By including several details from his buildings, like the *chatri* detail, as well as the *jharkha* details from the Albert Hall, he was projecting his own work as an exemplar of the *Portfolio*. Considering that

by the time the second edition was published, Jacob was no longer a practicing architect; the *Portfolio* was his best chance at endorsing his ideas. After all, details from his buildings did not need a 'new life', they were already a consequence of the *Portfolio*, and additionally since they had been prepared as working drawings, they were in fact, already recorded.

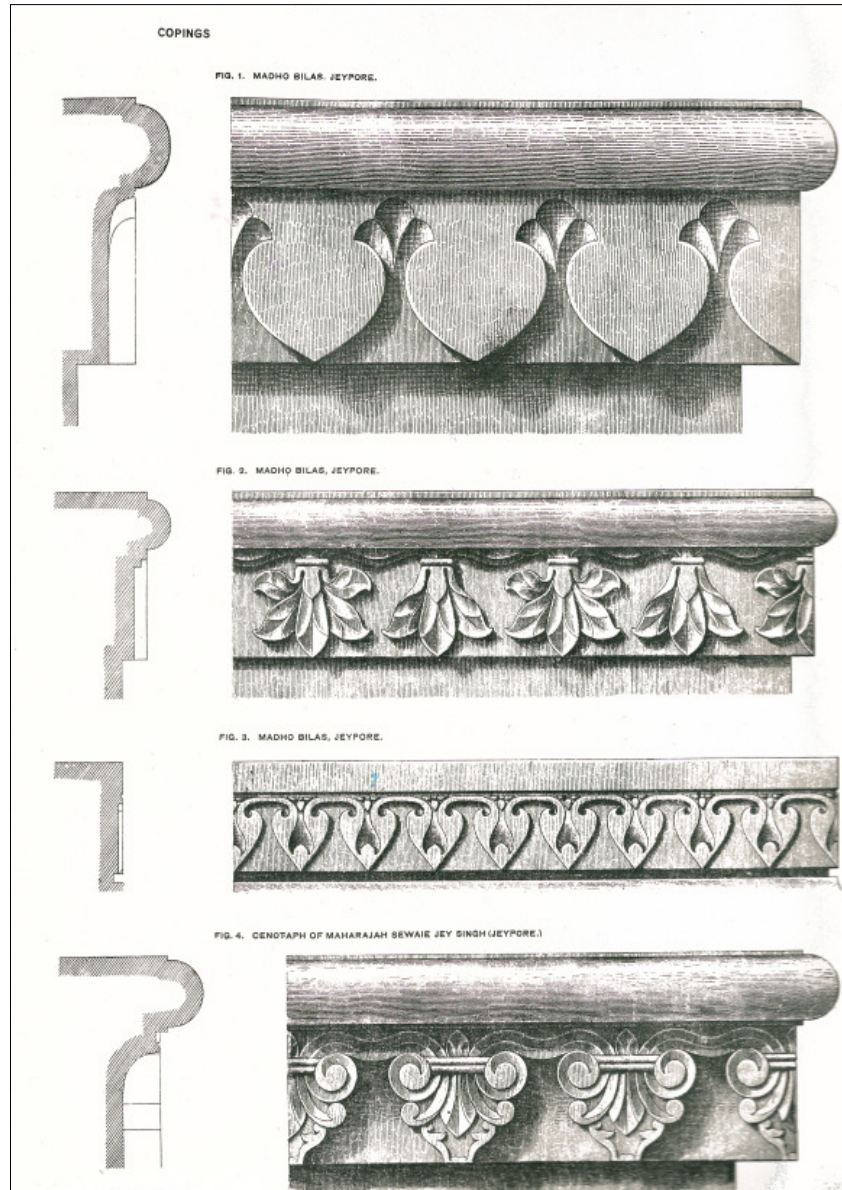
CONCLUSION

In 1996, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) ratified the Principles for the Recording of Monument, Groups of Buildings and Site with the following manifesto: *As the cultural heritage is a unique expression of human achievement; and as this cultural heritage is continuously at risk; and as recording is one of the principal ways available to give meaning, understanding, definition and recognition of the values of the cultural heritage; and as the responsibility for conserving and maintaining the cultural heritage rests not only with the owners but also with conservation specialists and the professionals, managers, politicians and administrators working at all levels of government, and with the public; and as article 16 of the Charter of Venice requires, it is essential that responsible organisations and individuals record the nature of the cultural heritage*[24].

Several of the principles stated in this text echo Jacob's intentions in the context of the Jeypore *Portfolio*; chiefly the perception that "recording" can "give meaning" to built heritage or "rescue it from oblivion"[25]. The continuing emphasis on architectural recording, as central to the process of conservation is an approach which needs re-examining. It is surprising that though there is extensive dialogue regarding the conservation philosophies which should be adopted in India which are more appropriate to its historic traditions and cultural context[26], the approach towards architectural recording remains unchanged since the ASI's first surveys.

The *Portfolio* is still revered as a standard of architectural recording, among the engineers and draftsmen of Jaipur. Recent attempts have been made to replicate the *Portfolio*, as references for the regions of Mewar and Marwar in Rajasthan[27]. The objectives have shifted;

from using the Portfolio as a reference for new buildings, it is now used exclusively as a reference for craftsmen working on conservation projects. But the principle behind the new *Portfolios* has remained static since Jacob's time. An architectural drawing is a representation, not only of the measures and scale of a building, but also of its composition, style and aesthetics. Architectural records, in order to serve a "practical" use need to be approached in the same manner as the building practitioners approached the building. An academic approach towards recording, akin to the *Jeypore Portfolio* persists in conservation practices today. The method may have improved, through technology, in accuracy, but architectural records continue to reduce buildings into drawings giving little indication of the methods or principles, which form the conceptual basis of the buildings in question. Written descriptions of the methods and practice are limited in their usage, often the craftsman who is working on site may be unfamiliar with the concept of referring to written instructions. Thus, drawings acquire a far greater significance than the written record in actual practice. Therefore, it is critical that the accepted approach of architectural drawing for the purposes of record be re-examined for its practical use to the craftsman. In India, the intangible aspects of heritage have been equally, if not more important as the tangible. However, the conservation of this intangible, living heritage continues to be a challenge, not least because of its inherent complexity. The tradition of building in the country has been fluid, assimilating changes and growing through them, and to perceive this tradition selectively, is to reduce and stereotype it. It is this perception, or the lack thereof, which is the primary reason why the Portfolio, along with Jacob's other attempts, was unsuccessful in reviving Jaipur's craft tradition and which continues to restrict conservation attempts today. Unless this persisting parallax is addressed, the preservation and revival of traditional crafts will remain academic, and eventually end up, like the Portfolio did, "as a museum record, and nothing more" [28].



5. Coping details from the Jeypore Portfolio.

NOTE

[1] The INTACH *Charter for the Conservation for the Unprotected Architectural Heritage and Sites in India* (2004) emphasises on the need for conserving the "living" heritage of India. In particular, it recognises the "unique resource of the 'living' heritage of Master Builders / *Sthapatis* / *Sompuras* / *Raj Mistris* who continue to build and care for buildings following traditions of their ancestors". INTACH, (2004), p.1

[2] Scholars are divided over the issue of whether the "Indian Crafts Revival" was directly linked to the Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain. According to Tillotson, the revivalists "were responding to a crisis in India more than to a fashion at home" Tillotson, G. (1989), p.63. On the other hand Metcalf asserts a direct link between the Victorian crafts revival in Britain, to the revival of crafts in India. Metcalf, T.R (1989), p.88

[3] Ibid, preface.

[4] Jacob, S.S. (1890), preface

[5] The Indo-Sarcenic style was closely linked with the Mughal and Rajput styles, which were regarded as a successfully converging the "Hindu" and "Islamic" styles .See Metcalf, T.R. (1989), pp.85-102

[6] Ibid, preface.

[7] Ibid, preface.

[8] In the case of Jacob, the connection may be seen as an implicit one, since his approaches were remarkably similar to fellow Arts and Crafts enthusiasts.

[9] Davies, P. (1985), p.203

[10] Lutyens was reportedly disdainful of Jacob's work, and generically to the Indo-Saracenic style calling it "silvery Hindu-Moghul stuff". See Metcalf (1989), p.138

[11] JSPWD Report (1889), p.5

[12] Mitter, P.(1977) also Tillotson, G.H.R. (2000) also Thakurta, T.G. (2004)

[13] See Archer, M. (1980),

[14] See Tillotson, G.H.R (2000),

[15] Fergusson, J. and Burgess, J. (1910) p. 5

[16] Fergusson, J. (1910), p.x

[17] Fergusson, J. (1910), p.

[18] Fergusson, J. "One Hundred Stereoscopic Illustrations as quoted in Thakurta Tapati Guha, (2004)

[19] For example Ruskin in the Two Paths

[20]

[21] Col. A. Cunningham, Bengal Engineer, to the Governor General , Lord Canning, p.3

[22] As quoted in Cleere, H.(ed) (),B.K.Thapar, p.64

[23] Jacob, S.S (1913), preface

[24] ICOMOS

[25]

[26] The INTACH Charter in 2004

[27] Discussion with Mr. P.K.Jain of the Amber Development and Authority

[28] Jacob, S.S (1913), preface

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