

Review Article:
From 1947 Partition to the Long Partition:
An Arduous Journey

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Amritjit Singh, Nalini Iyer, and Rahul K. Gairola, Eds. *Revisiting India's Partition: New Essays on Memory, Culture, and Politics*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016. Hyderabad and New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2016.

In the last three decades the Indian Partition of 1947, a marginalized footnote in imperial and national histories, has attracted significant academic and media attention, beginning with the publication of Urvashi Butalia's pathbreaking book *The Other Side of Silence* (2000), which documented the oral histories of female Partition survivors. Butalia's rich archival work has since been complemented and supplemented by sociologists, literary and film scholars, historians, and political scientists who turned to literary and cinematic texts, testimonies, stories and other sources to revisit one of the most traumatic events in South Asia's history. Together, these studies have thrown new light on the events of 1947, recovering memories of Partition that supplement, modify, and interrogate official histories of the nation, and creating alternative narratives based on the stories of ordinary people. Early research that exclusively engaged with Punjabi Hindu and Sikh communities affected by Partition was critiqued as a unified discourse, overlooking the specificity of different partition experiences. This critique was put forth in particular by scholars of the eastern Partition in Bengal. Subsequently, more studies emerged to deconstruct the binaries of the Partition-in-the-west and Partition-in-the-east. This body of research incorporates fragmented memories from both sides of the border and reveals the two partitions as differentiated not only by gender but also by ethnicity, class, and caste. Despite the emergence of a

virtual scholarly industry on Partition, the archive still remains incomplete with certain regions, groups and genres absent or under-represented. The recognition that many more stories of Partition 1947 need to be recovered before they are lost forever, with the fast-dwindling generation of Partition survivors, has led to a number of archival and other initiatives in the seventieth year of Partition. *Revisiting India's Partition: New Essays on Memory, Culture and Politics*, edited by Amritjit Singh, Nalini Iyer, and Rahul K. Gairola, is a timely reminder of the 1947 Partition of India, filling several lacunae and expanding the growing field of Partition Studies.

This magisterial volume is comprehensive in its spatial, temporal, and theoretical coverage of the multiple meanings and dimensions of Partition. Its wide angle lens pans from west to east to provide vignettes from both regions and zooms in to focus on particular cities, neighborhoods, classes, castes and ethnicities, even as it moves vertically to incorporate areas in the North, Northeast and South. Additionally, it borrows the cross-genre frame of new archival research to include fiction, testimonies, oral histories, memoirs, and ethnographic research from several border nations including Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar (Burma). The book also breaks new ground through its engagement with the many Partitions prior to and after 1947. With the scope of the essays stretching to include the social, economic, cultural and economic effects of Partition on both those who directly experienced it and those who did not, the anthology promises to set a new direction in Partition research, which has often focused only on the psychological trauma faced by direct witnesses and survivors.

The volume offers original insights into the effects of the Long Partition, including new essays on both canonical and more contemporary writers who have grappled with Partition in English and other Indian languages, from both sides of the border. The essays employ a variety of theoretical approaches, ranging from traditional literary and psychoanalytic theory to eco-criticism and digital humanities to examine fictional and non-fictional works that promise to add a new understanding to the literary, cinematic, testimonial, and popular cultural representations of Partition. All the essays are extraordinary in some way: in their engagement with uncharted dimensions of canonical fiction, their bringing to light of new writers who were not directly involved with documenting the Partition trauma, or in their movement into new territories such as graphic narratives. Essays that engage with under-researched regions, writers, and genres, such as those by Nandita Bhavnani, Ilyas Chattha, Nazia Akhtar, Babyrani Yumnam, Amit Baishya, and Rahul K. Gairola, are particularly useful in

opening up new areas within Partition Studies.

Revisiting India's Partition is divided into five sections. The Introduction begins with a quotation from Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*, problematizing the idea of political borders itself, a concept that has created deep fissures in the collective memories of India's diverse communities and has brought nationality into conflict with belonging. The editors expertly engage with fictional, testimonial, historical, and critical texts to offer a succinct but informed summary and analysis of Partition 1947, before zeroing in on disturbing questions that have remained unanswered in Partition Studies. Building on the work of Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, Urvashi Butalia, Mushirul Hasan, Alok Bhalla, Ayesha Jalal and others, the three editors convincingly argue that traces of Partition are still visible in the everyday lives of ordinary people on both sides of the border and beyond, as is illustrated through the carefully selected essays that follow. Although the editors make no original arguments other than that of Partition's continuing impact, their comparative perspective on Partition sets a new direction in Partition Studies. The Introduction expands spatially, alluding to other partitions around the globe, and temporally, tracing the aftereffects of the fissiparous violence of Partition 1947 in the 1971 Partition of Pakistan, 1984 anti-Sikh riots, the destruction of the Babri Masjid in 1992, the 1993 and 2009 Bombay blasts, and the 2002 Godhara riots (to name a few)—all events that drove deep wedges between nations, ethnic groups, and caste communities.

The first section, "Approaches to Partition," promises to make an important contribution to theoretical concepts that may be productively employed in analysing the Partition and its effects. Exploring the relationship between forgetting and remembering in the formation of a nation's collective memory, Radhika Mohanram invokes trauma theory and Derrida's notion of the ghost and hauntology to trace Partition's spectre in Indian democracy. She argues that Partition is crucial to the understanding of democracy, citizenship, and nationality in India. Mohanram's sophisticated deployment of a wide array of theorists and her transnational sweep, which juxtaposes Partition 1947 with other Partitions and instances of ethnic violence, make a compelling case for using critical theory for historical analysis. Jasbir Jain deconstructs the category of refugee and its Urdu translation *mohajir* to explore the meaning of home, dislocation, homecoming and belonging in relation to Heidegger's notion of dwelling. Through her close analysis of dislocated figures in select works of Urdu fiction, including Sadat Hasan Manto, Intizar Husain, Sorayya Khan, Attia Hussain, Munawwar Rana, and Asghar Wajahat, writers who are "at home" neither in their old homes nor in

their new ones, Jain plays on the failed promise of homecoming for refugees. However, Jain sells herself short by not following the origins of the term *mohajir*, which she traces in the Islamic notion of *hijrat*, with its suggestion of a religious mission. Deploying the Foucauldian notion of who can and who cannot speak, Barret Watten's idea of non-narratives and Adrienne Rich's concept of the cartographies of silence, Parvinder Mehta turns to explore the possibilities of silence as a presence, a yet unuttered discourse that has been *denied* or *delayed* narrative space within available paradigms. In a rich analysis that incorporates complex theoretical postulations into a detailed reading of "Lajwanti," *Khamosh Pani* and *What the Body Remembers*, Mehta explores the idea of silence as its own language that inscribes female experience through absence, non-utterance, and enforced silence. The final essay of the first section is innovative in drawing on research in Digital Humanities, proposing digital humanities as a method for enhancing understandings of imperialism, nationalism, and Partition to offer a critique of transnational capitalism through Partition's digital afterlife. Gairola offers an astute critique of digital advertisements circulated on social media that cannibalize the Partition generation's nostalgia for lost homes and friends, hawking Coca Cola or Google with utopian visions of uniting nations and friends.

The three essays in Part II of the book ("Nations and Narrations") complicate the idea of the nation through testimonial and fictional accounts that interrogate the myth of a unified nation. Proposing memoirs and testimonies as minor genres that can provide alternative accounts of the nation, Tarun Saint examines memoirs of both female and male public figures from both sides of the border to demonstrate that personal memories can indeed serve as socio-political documents, disrupting grand narratives of the nation. Saint compares Anis Kidwai's *In Freedom's Shade*, Kamlaben Patel's *Torn From the Roots*, Prakash Tandon's *Punjabi Century*, Fikr Taunsvi's *The Sixth River: A Diary of 1947*, and Abdul Rahman Siddiqi's *Smoke Without Fire: Portraits of Pre-Partition Delhi*, concluding that while these women's testimonies illustrate the transcendence of personal suffering through public service, men's memoirs offer an objective, even satirical, glimpse into vicarious participation in violence. The two essays by Debali Mukherjee-Leonard and Amrita Ghosh critique the narrative of the nation from the perspective of gender and caste, offering illuminating readings of Bengali fiction and the writings of Amitav Ghosh. Mukherjee-Leonard investigates the transformation of Bengali female subjectivity after Partition through the entry of young women into wage labor in Bengal, showing that while such work empowered women, they were unable to find individual fulfillment through

wage labor or within the domestic realm. Examining the female protagonists Nirupama (in Dibyendu Palit's *Maachh*) and Neeta (in Shaktipada Rajguru's *Meghe Dhaka Tara*), she contrasts the sacrificing breadwinners created by these male writers with Jyotirmoyee Devi's emancipated Sutara, suggesting that women's incorporation into wage labor could also be liberating. Amrita Ghosh applies Agamben's idea of *homo sacer* to the marginalized Dalit refugees of Morichjhapi, proposing Sunderbans as a heterotopia that challenged statist ideologies and the Morichjhapi's dalits as interrogating the state's containment of populations in the straitjacket of religion and caste.

The four essays in Part III corroborate the editors' claims of extending the scope of Partition Studies by including hitherto uncharted territories. Sindh has been largely unrepresented in Partition Studies, despite Karachi's transformation into a city of *mohajirs* after Partition. Nandita Bhavnani modifies the perception of the Partition of Sindh as witnessing no or little violence in view of its unique Sufi lineage, arguing that intimidation, discrimination and other forms of violence are no less significant than physical violence. She makes an important contribution to the analysis of the pathology of violence by corroborating the view that the motivators for violence were not only sectarian but also economic, and that the control of key government positions, trade and property by minority Hindus made them the objects of hostility from the Muslim majority. This was aggravated by the arrival of *mohajirs* whose interest in occupying refugee property caused the September 47 violence and drove Hindus to leave Sindh. Ilyas Chattha's essay traces the unfinished business of the conflict in Kashmir back to the history of Hindu-Muslim relations under Jammu & Kashmir's Hindu rulers, drawing on original sources to elucidate the motivators of the localized acts of violence and ethnic cleansing in the months leading up to Partition. Chattha attributes the production of refugees to acts of communal violence orchestrated in the service of nation-building on both sides of the border. Linking the violence against Muslims in Jammu to the arrival of Hindu and Sikh refugees who crossed the border from Rawalpindi and other adjoining regions, he argues that these refugee populations have played a central role in defining the ongoing crisis in Jammu & Kashmir. Babyrani Yumnam brings a new region, the Northeastern Frontier, into the ambit of Partition Studies. Asserting that both colonial and postcolonial mapmaking produced the northeast as a marginalized space, she argues that these colonial frontiers and national borders closed the porous boundaries of the northeast and its pre-colonial connections with China, Myanmar, Bhutan, Tibet and Bangladesh. Showing how the northeast was constructed as an isolated region through

political and territorial fault lines of the new nation, and calling attention to the borders within the northeast that have facilitated colonial and national administrative control, Yumnam enumerates the effects of Partition on a region that was not actually touched by the Radcliffe line. Amit Baishya's essay calls attention to the marginalized narrative of Indian refugees forced to flee Burma in the wake of the Japanese occupation disengages the discourse of forced migration from Partition. Baishya too adopts an eco-critical approach to investigate the notion of the human in *Jangam*, an Assamese novel by Debendranath Acharya that documents the movement of Indian refugees against the backdrop of the fratricidal divide between Burmese and Indian villagers with the emergence of Burmese nationalism.

Part IV of the volume provides perspectives on the impact of Partition on Pakistan and Bangladesh by both creative writers and critics, establishing the volume as one of the few transnational studies of Partition. Amber Fatima Riaz examines Jinnah's two-nation theory to suggest that the utopian vision of a unified Pakistan was hampered by its diverse ethnic, religious and linguistic communities. Largely summarizing existing literature on the two-nation theory, she suggests that the notion of a unified Muslim community underpinning Jinnah's nation and Zia ul Haq's Islamic nation is refuted by the deep regional chasms within Pakistan's diverse Muslim communities. Masood A. Raja's essay contests the official two-nation theory that represents Muslims as separate from Hindus and identifies with a pan-Islamic formation through tracing the cosmopolitanism of Pakistan in undivided India. Instead of high cultural texts that promote Pakistani nationalist ideologies, he turns to *Baazigar*, a very long novel by Shakeel Aadil Zada (serialized in a pulp magazine) that deals with the relationship between a young Muslim man, a Buddhist woman from Tibet, and a Hindu petty criminal with whom he forms a strong bond. Supplementing and complementing Riaz's political analysis is poet Kaiser Haq's impressionist essay, which provides a sweeping view of the rift between West and East Pakistan that eventually led to the formation of Bangladesh; he locates the 1971 Partition within the history of Bengal's many Partitions beginning in 1905. Drawing on his own experience during the 1971 fight for independence, Haq testifies to the fragmentation of the Bengali speech community through communal tensions within India and the wars between India and Pakistan, which drove Hindus in East Bengal or Bangladesh to migrate to West Bengal. The following essay by Md. Rezaul Haque highlights the distinctions between representations of Partition in the writings of Muslim and Hindu writers in Bangladesh. The Muslim writers'

works poignantly capture the trauma of displaced middle-class and lower middle-class Muslim refugees in East Bengal whose travails both mirror and contrast with those of Bengali Hindu refugees. Tasneem Shahnaaz and Amritjit Singh's essay on Intizar Husain examines the intertextuality of Husain's fiction with ancient Hindu and Buddhist texts such as the *Mahabharata*, the *Jatakas*, and the *Panchatantra*, showing how Husain views as deeply intertwined subcontinental history and identity.

The final section of the volume, "Partitions Within," sets a new direction in Partition Studies by examining the aftereffects of Partition in regions that have been considered disconnected from the trauma of 1947. Jeremy A. Rinker's essay foregrounds the city of Banaras, pivotal to Hindu religious identity, to argue that considering Partition 1947 is critical to overcoming modern identity-based conflicts in Banaras that have been perceived as free of communal tension. Rinker proposes a counterview of Banaras as a seat of communal identity formation and multicultural peace building. Tracing modern torture practices back to Partition violence, Rinker demonstrates their continuity in state-centric assertions of biopower against marginalised others, including both the Muslim weaving communities and a low-caste group called Musahars who inhabit the outskirts of Banaras. Nazia Akhtar's revisiting of Neelkanth's Telugu story, "Durga," masterfully links the construction of Hindutva ideologies to Neelkanth's extrapolation of the Partition in communal tensions in Hyderabad, through a Sikh refugee incarnation of the goddess who rises to defend the Hindu women against the Razakar violence of the late 1940's. Akhtar demonstrates that Neelkanth's mapping of an essentialized Muslim other onto the Razakar community has conflated Hyderabad's multiple Muslim communities. In fact, Akhtar's essay reinforces a point the editors make in their Introduction, arguing that the Muslim population in India has been negatively affected by the majoritarian tendency to homogenize Muslim populations within the national borders and beyond. The concluding essay by Nalini Iyer examines Balachandra Rajan's *The Dark Dancer*, R. K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma*, and Lalithambika Anterjanam's *A Leaf in the Whirlwind* to refute the widely-held belief that the South remained completely unaffected by Partition 1947. Iyer's argument that writers from the South were able to empathize with Partition survivors without having experienced Partition directly contradicts the received notion that experience entitles a writer to a privileged knowledge.

Conceptually, as the editors openly acknowledge in their Introduction, *Revisiting India's Partition* is heavily indebted to Vazira Zamindar's notion of the

Long Partition in her influential book *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (2007), and draws quite frequently on Amitav Ghosh's fiction (*The Shadow Lines*, *The Glass Palace*, *The Hungry Tide*, and so on) to illustrate its theoretical contribution to the idea of borders, boundaries, and marginalities. Zamindar's metaphor of the Long Partition undoubtedly scaffolds the editors' central argument that Partition was not a one-time event, but that its tremors continue to be felt in the eruption of communal tensions; in the marginalization and alienation of certain ethnicities, classes and castes; in interregional imbalances and international relations; and in the development of particular cities and regions. This central notion of the Long Partition also facilitates the temporal organization of disparate essays that may at first glance appear remotely connected to Partition 1947. In fact, the anthology corroborates Zamindar's idea of the Long Partition through providing concrete case studies that effectively demonstrate how seven decades after 1947, the Partition continues to affect and shape the political, economic, socio-cultural, and psychological life of individuals, cities, and communities, even those that did not witness or experience Partition directly.

Daniel Michon. *Archaeology and Religion in Early Northwest India: History, Theory, Practice.* Delhi: Routledge, 2015. 288 pp. \$160.

In *Archaeology and Religion in Early Northwest India*, Daniel Michon contributes to scholarly understandings of the material culture and early history of the Punjab. This book is a valuable archaeological and historiographical study of Indian religions in historical periods from approximately the fourth century BCE to the early centuries of the Common Era. A major concern of the author is to apply critical methodological and theoretical frameworks to the study and practice of archaeology in the northwestern Indian subcontinent in both India and Pakistan. Specific case studies intended to “highlight the agency of the inhabitants of early historic Punjab in the creation of their material world” (3) enhance current knowledge of ancient coins, religious rituals, and archives of archaeological material from Taxila to Sanghol.

In addition to a brief summary introduction and a conclusion with suggestions for future directions, the work is divided into three parts. The first section of the book (“History”) focuses on antiquarian interest and archaeological excavations in the Punjab from colonial to modern periods. In the second section, “Theory and Method,” the author critiques models that have shaped approaches to historical archaeology, religions, and human agency. Part three, on “Practice,” consists of three case studies of early Kuṣāṇa numismatics, dicing and oracular gambling at the site of Sirkap in Taxila, as well as archaeological archives for excavations at Sanghol. The geographical scope of the Punjab is defined as territories west of the Indus River, east of the seasonal course of the Ghaggar river-system, north of the Thar desert, and south of the Sivalik foothills.

The first two chapters on history and historiography provide a very good overview of antiquarianism and archaeology in the Punjab. In the first chapter (“From Antiquarianism to Scientific Antiquarianism”), Michon argues that “two spirits of inquiry” underlying antiquarian and modern archaeological investigations “are not as distinct as one would like to imagine” (15). While early antiquarianism in the Punjab (from c. 1600 to 1840) tended to be motivated by a search for Alexander of Macedon and traces of Greek civilization, British control of the Punjab after 1840 coincided with a transition to a more “scientific” antiquarian search for the Buddha by James Prinsep (d. 1840), Alexander Cunningham (who established the Archaeological Survey of India in 1861), and other prominent figures. Appendix 1.1 with a “list of officers who led excavations and the sites they excavated” (41) is missing from the publication, and there is

surprisingly no mention of Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner (1840-1899), whose antiquarian interest in Gandharan sculpture stimulated interest in archaeological sites in ancient Gandhara and the Punjab.

The second chapter ("Archaeology") demonstrates how colonial and neo-colonial biases and alternative nationalist agendas both employ a "Culture-History" approach, in which archaeology is used "to identify discrete units rather than universals" (48). Michon elaborates upon linked tendencies to functionally ascribe cultural change to environmental and other conditions, to emphasize socio-cultural structures rather than human agency, and to tie race theories to hypotheses of diffusion and migration. As he points out, the "habit of mind," characteristic of British colonial archaeology in South Asia, to identify cultural development with external rather than internal factors "no doubt stemmed from an understanding of Indian culture as passive an inert" (61). Amidst an excursus on the intellectual genealogy of colonial archaeology (with copious references to a boom in secondary literature) and the history of archaeology in Pakistani and Indian Punjab since 1947 (63-88), there is useful information about excavations and publications of sites from the historical period outside of Taxila and Sanghol, but the survey is not exhaustive since recent work by Michael Meister (2010) and Pakistani collaborators on Hindu temple architecture in the Salt Range is not included. Unfortunately, with these exceptions and the special case of Gandhāran archaeology in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province (administered separately from Punjab), archaeology of the historical period has tended to be neglected in Pakistan and northwestern India, with few extensive publications aside from brief notices in *Indian Archaeology—A Review* to attest accomplishments over the past fifty to seventy years.

A central focus of *Archaeology and Religion in Early Northwest India* is a succinct treatment of "Contemporary Theory and the Archaeology of Religion" in the third chapter (Part II). Here and throughout the book, Michon challenges the idea that material evidence from archaeology is merely a "handmaiden" (86) to textual evidence by arguing that both texts and material culture serve as "external symbolic storage" (154) since "material objects are seen to carry symbolic meanings" (155). In calling for more emphasis on human agency rather than uncritical acceptance of culture as an independent force that "does things" (91), Michon aims to demonstrate that "innovation in both methodology and theory does not necessarily have to be in opposition to culture-history" (94). His point that the standard categories of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain identity tend to obscure the recognition and interpretation of local traditions in the archaeology of religion

is important to bear in mind. While such meta-critiques are well intended, practical applications to archaeology in the field are best illustrated with examples from case studies, which are elaborated in Part III, "Practice."

The first of three case studies is a careful numismatic analysis of pre-imperial Kuṣāṇa coinage from c. 145 BCE to c. 110 CE. In Chapter 4, "Minting Identity and Hegemony," Michon bases his argument that unnamed Yuezhi predecessors and early Kuṣāṇa rulers such as Kujula Kadphises deliberately used multi-religious symbolism to gain legitimation as powerful figures in northwestern India strictly on their issue of coins. A more holistic and comprehensive approach incorporating inscriptions, literary references (compiled in Falk 2015), and archaeological evidence of material culture would enhance the interpretation of Kuṣāṇa religious and political motivations. Aside from alleged Indian Śuṅga inscriptions and a brief reference to the Rabatak Bactrian inscription from northern Afghanistan, epigraphy is not sufficiently utilized to justify complex chronological and geographical frameworks. It is unclear how the territorial extent of the distribution of Yuezhi and early Kuṣāṇa coin issues has been determined. Here, as elsewhere in the book, detailed maps along with higher quality images of coins would be helpful. These shortcomings do not invalidate the general pattern in which imitations and overstrikes of coins illustrate how the Yuezhi and early Kuṣāṇas (as well as their Parthian, Indo-Scythian, and local Apraca and Oḍi contemporary rulers) chose to associate themselves with religious symbols circulating within the milieu of the northwestern borderlands. However, while it is certainly correct to avoid taking religious images and legends on coins at face value as a "profession of faith," the conclusion that "All the religious imagery, most commonly in the form of deities, was used to confer sovereignty and power to the issuer of coins" (151) overstates monocausal political motives by denying the religious agency of rulers and officials who minted coins, recorded donations in their inscriptions, and had Buddhist and other shrines built throughout regions of the Punjab and northwestern India.

Chapter 5, "Dicing and Oracular Gambling at Sirkap," is a very strong original contribution to the study of archaeology and religious ritual. Michon builds on John Marshall's publications of archaeological excavations at Taxila from 1913-1934 by reading between the lines and classification scheme of the final three-volume report (published in 1951) to develop methods for inferring religious ritual activity in the material record. He argues that dice found with archaeological assemblages at several locations in the urban context of Sirkap were not only playthings (as Marshall assumed), but probably had religious

functions. In addition to supporting the interpretation that dice were likely used for oracular gambling with analysis of copper utensils, images of figures such as Hārītī (depicted on the book's cover), a miniature stūpa model and reliquary casket, and other materials excavated together with the dice, the archaeological evidence is combined with textual evidence referring to ritual gambling and prognostication in Buddhist literature and the *Mahābhārata* (David Shulman's seminal article on "*Devana* and *Daiva*" could be added to the references given on pp. 183-4, notes 64-67). Additional sources of support are available in the visual culture of South Asian Buddhist art, including a fine depiction of the episode of the Vidhurapaṇḍita-Jātaka (in which the minister Vidhura is lost in a dicing match by the Kuru king to the Yakṣa Puṇṇaka) in the recently published Kanaganahalli excavation report (Poonacha 2011, 258-262, plate LXXIXb; Nakanishi and von Hinüber 2014, 89, no. II.1.12) as well as other images of this narrative at Bharhut, Amaravati, and Ajanta (Schlingloff 2013, vol. 1, 165-173, no. 37).

The third case study (Chapter 6: "The Archive at Sanghol") is a site history of excavations at Sanghol, located between Chandigarh and Ludhiana in the Indian Punjab state. After Taxila, Sanghol is the most prominent archaeological site with early historic material in the Punjab, and is most famous for the discovery of 117 sculptures on railing pillars found alongside a stūpa and quickly published in 1985 by S.P. Gupta. Michon points out that a "holistic understanding" (206) of Sanghol's thirteen sites excavated in thirteen seasons from 1968 onwards remains a desideratum. He pieces together materials for reconstructing site plans and models of stūpas and monasteries at two of these sites (SGL-5 and SGL-11) from archives stored in four different locations. With greater access and more intensive archival investigation, there are tantalizing hints that more can be gleaned by further investigations of the archaeological contexts for not only the Kuṣāṇa-period railing pillar sculptures, but also a stucco relief of a Jātaka sculpture (indicated in trench CY-5), a soapstone lid of a reliquary casket with a Kharoṣṭhī inscription (fig. 6.8d; see also Baums 2012, p. 248, no. 49 and [Corpus of Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions, no. 239](#)), and a "religious ritual assemblage" (fig. 6.11) with dice, terracotta lamp fragments, and pendants (perhaps amulets).

Michon offers suggestions for further research in "A Brief Look Ahead" (236-240). These suggestions include a synchronic study of coins from sites at Taxila and Sanghol, three-dimensional modeling of built environments at Sirkap (<http://www.virtualsirkap.com/>) and digitization and organization of archaeological archives throughout Punjab (it is heartening that the Lahore Museum is already taking steps to make digital archives of its massive holdings of

Gandharan art in its reserve collection freely available: <http://www.lahoremuseum.gov.pk/node/152>).

The fresh and critical perspectives on historical period archaeology and the history of religion in the Punjab and more broadly early Northwest India offered by Daniel Michon in *Archaeology and Religion in Early Northwest India: History, Theory, Practice* are quite welcome. Readers with interests in South Asian material culture, religious ritual and symbolism, Buddhist architecture, and Kuṣāṇa numismatics will find much to engage their attention in this well-written analytical study. The author's pleas for more access to archived materials, timely and through publications of results of excavations from historical period sites in Punjab, and openness to thinking about methodological and theoretical issues are well worth heeding.

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Balwant Singh Dhillon. *Rajasthani Documents on Banda Singh Bahadur*. Amritsar: Singh Brothers, 2016. 319 pages. INR 495.

Primarily, this is a source book on documents available in Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner. These are reports written by "a rare breed of *vakils*" (present day diplomats), who represented the Rajput chiefs at the Mughal court. These accounts pertain to Banda Singh, his military campaigns, and his constant bid to seek support of the Rajput chiefs against the Mughal Empire. Dr. Dhillon's observation is that these sources hold considerable historical value for understanding the political, military, and administrative acumen of Banda Singh. Unlike the contemporary Mughal chronicles, the Rajasthani documents are "free from sectarian bias" and thus shed light on Sikh-Rajput relations during the second decade of the 18th century. Dr. Dhillon's study and analysis of these documents unfold Rajasthani perspectives on the Sikh struggle against the Mughal Empire under the stewardship of Banda Singh. They "bear testimony to the fact that Banda Singh Bahadur desired to forge an alliance with the Rajput Rajas with a view to break off from the Mughal yoke," and divulge the nature and extent of the Sikh uprising.

The book consists of 319 pages, of which pages 79-182 contain Dr. Dhillon's translation into English of the 67 original documents that appear on pages 185-276. Even a quick look at these documents shows that the earliest known

document, *Arzdasht* from Pancholi Jagjiwan Das to Maharaja Jai Singh n. 195 (serial n. 1), is dated Magh *vadi* 2, 1767, i.e. December 26, 1710 CE, while the last document given in the book, *Vakil* Report n. 282 (serial n. 67) is dated Bhadav Sudi 11, 1772, i.e. August 29, 1715 CE. Thus, these documents primarily cover the period of about six years from 1710 to 1715 CE, which turns out to be the most crucial phase of Sikh history: the Sikh struggle carried out by Banda Singh Bahadur, the most trusted and able leader of the Sikhs after the death of Guru Gobind Singh.

In order to highlight more comprehensively the historical value of these documents, Dr. Dhillon has devoted ten pages (pp. 66-76), exclusively on the basis of this category of evidence, to the statesmanship of Banda Singh Bahadur, which he feels so far has not received adequate attention at the hands of scholars (75). He writes, “an examination of Rajasthani documents reveals that Banda Singh Bahadur was not only a military commander but also an astute statesman” (67). His observation is that “Banda Singh Bahadur desired to capitalize upon the discontentment that was simmering in the Rajputana” (68). Moreover, he states that these documents confirm that “soon after the occupation of Sarhind, Banda Singh Bahadur had opened his communication channels with the Rajput chiefs of Amber and Jodhpur” (68). Some of these documents also show that “the Mughals had put a lot of pressure on the Raja of Nahan to arrest [Banda].”

The chronology, subject matter, origin and nature of the documents form an integral part of the text, and are likely to prove immensely helpful to scholars of Banda Singh Bahadur. The English translations of the documents will definitely help those who do not know Rajasthani language. The Biographical Index, Glossary, select specimens of the documents as well as the Bibliography all definitely enhance the value of this work as a source book on Banda Singh Bahadur. The study under review ventures into an amazing category of source material that has remained unexplored for studying Sikh history.

This work is undoubtedly the result of Dr. Dhillon’s hard labor and his quest for the collection of contemporary archival sources on the life and legacy of Banda Singh Bahadur. Prior to this work he brought out a source book on the Persian sources on Banda Singh Bahadur entitled *Banda Singh Bahadur: Farsi Sarot* (2011). By performing this arduous scholarship over the past few years, Dr. Dhillon has brought to light fresh evidence in the Rajasthani and Persian sources, which may impel and help modern researchers and historians to re-frame their inquiry. This volume opens up new vistas in our understanding of the nature of Banda Singh Bahadur’s mission and contribution to Sikh and Punjabi history in particular and

Indian history of the early 18th century in general.

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William Dalrymple and Anita Anand. *Kohinoor: The Story of the World's Most Infamous Diamond*. New Delhi: Juggernaut Books, 2016. 239 pp. INR 499.

John Keay. *The Tartan Turban: In Search of Alexander Gardner*. London, Kashi House, 2017. 324 pp. £25.

These two books share a common mission: to offer compelling narratives that attempt to clear the fog of mystery surrounding two controversial historical subjects. William Dalrymple and Anita Anand's history of the 'Kohinoor' diamond is a well-researched history that endeavors to piece together and set out the available facts regarding the origins and past ownership of this legendary jewel. John Keay's fascinating biography chronicles the life of the notorious nineteenth-century adventurer and mercenary, Alexander Gardner.

Gardner, like the Kohinoor diamond, passed a considerable part of his life in the service of Central and South Asian rulers, and regularly switched sides when his master encountered death or defeat in battle. In the case of both the infamous man and the diamond, reliable sources that document their origins and early travels are hard to come by. In their respective works, Anand and Dalrymple and Keay and the researchers at Kashi House (for somewhat unusually, Keay wrote *The Tartan Turban* based on the findings of his publishers) have gone to tremendous lengths to uncover insightful material that sheds new light on the journeys of the diamond and the adventurer, as well as thoughtfully reinterpreting existing narratives, in order to debunk several longstanding myths surrounding their fascinating subjects.

The Kohinoor diamond arrived at Lahore, the capital of Maharajah Ranjit Singh's empire, in 1813. At the time, it was in the possession of the deposed Afghan ruler, Shah Shuja who, as Dalrymple vividly narrates (with the help of firsthand Afghan and Punjabi eyewitness accounts), was rather coercively forced to hand over the gem to the Maharajah. Alexander Gardner would not find his way to Lahore until 1832, but would similarly end up there after his Afghan master, Prince Habibullah, had suffered defeat at the hands of his kinsman, namely Dost Mahomed Khan, who was also the enemy of Shah Shuja and Ranjit Singh by that point.

Through a detailed narration of the changing geo-political circumstances that formed the backdrop of Gardner's peregrinations, and the even longer journey made by the Kohinoor, the two books provide ample testimony to the competitive and rapidly-evolving world of the Punjab and the neighboring territories of Central Asia. They paint a picture of the often-volatile circumstances in which new leaders and dynasties could rise to power, in a region where the job of ruling entailed considerable toil and risk, but could bring with it fabulous wealth. As John Keay describes, Gardner himself was most likely actuated by a desire to emulate the successes of diverse men who had made their fortunes in post-Mughal Punjab, both those of native origin, like Ranjit Singh, and free-booting foreign mercenaries such as George Thomas, who established himself as the notorious "Tipperary Rajah" and ruled over parts of Haryana. As Dalrymple and Anand argue, it was Maharajah Ranjit Singh who truly converted the Kohinoor diamond into an important symbol of sovereignty in this period, as he formed part of a generation of self-made rulers with pretensions to royalty and an active interest in re-making older models of monarchical culture to legitimize their newfound authority.

Aside from these considerations, Dalrymple and Anand's *Kohinoor* does not offer any significantly new evidence about Punjabi history. The second half of the volume, written by Anand, offers a detailed and at times poignant narrative of the circumstances in which Maharajah Duleep Singh was deposed from his throne and then effectively re-educated in exile, eventually becoming embittered with his British "guardians" and launching a rebellion to re-claim both the Kohinoor and the Punjab from them. This story has already been told in Anand's earlier biography of one of Duleep Singh's daughters, Princess Sophia (*Sophia: Princess, Suffragette, Revolutionary*—reviewed by myself in Volume 21 of this journal), as well as in other books about the Maharajah's life, especially Peter Bance's beautifully-illustrated volume, *Sovereign, Squire and Rebel*. However, those with an interest in the British afterlife of the Kohinoor will find Anand's narrative a fascinating and well-researched read.

Interestingly, the accounts offered by Anand and Keay about the final years of the Sikh Raj in Punjab, particularly as regards the leadership and character of Maharani Jind Kaur, are starkly different. While Anand puts forth an emotive portrayal of Jind Kaur as the rebel queen and devoted mother, Keay's depiction of the Maharani's career is largely negative. He brings to light new documentation about the brutal treatment of a Brahmin servant of the Lahore Durbar, one "Jodha Ram" or "Jodha Misr," who fell foul of the Maharani's disreputable brother and

minister, Jawahir Singh. Keay describes how under Jawahir Singh's orders (which he suggests, though does not definitively state, were sanctioned by Jind Kaur), Gardner was forced on pain of death to mutilate the Brahmin by cutting off his nose and ears. Such horrific corporal punishments were indeed commonly handed down during the reign of Maharajah Ranjit Singh and afterwards, though as Keay acknowledges, they were deemed by the cultural logic of the time to be more lenient and merciful than the taking of life. Keay heads into more shaky ground in his presentation of some of the more unfavorable aspects of Punjabi dynastic rule, drawing rather uncritically on some of the more gossipy colonial accounts of the Punjabi rulers and their courtly life. This results in an unfortunate tendency to Orientalize and stereotype figures such as Ranjit Singh and Jind Kaur as notoriously debauched individuals. A more balanced use of colonial and Punjabi sources (which are widely available in translation) would have been preferable here, in order to place Gardner within the more nuanced political and cultural picture of the Sikh Empire that scholars such as J.S. Grewal, Susan Stronge and Louis Fenech have developed.

All in all, the two books make for entertaining reading and certainly provide timely and challenging contributions to ongoing popular debates about the legacies of empire and geopolitics in South and Central Asia.

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Kiyotaka Sato. *The Life Story of Mr. Ram Krishan (Prashar): A Hindu in Coventry from Punjab, India*. Tokyo: Tosui Shobo Publishers (Research Centre for the History of Religious and Cultural Diversity, Meiji University, Tokyo), 2016. 143 pp. ¥ 3,500.

The Life Story of Mr. Ram Krishan by Kiyotaka Sato is an important book that tells the life story of a first generation Hindu Punjabi who migrated to the UK, settling in Coventry. Ram Krishan has had a rich and varied life, living through the Second World War and the Partition of India and moving to the UK when migration from the Indian sub-continent was beginning.

Scholarship on the experience of South Asian migrants is rich in a diversity of fields including South Asian studies, Sociology, Cultural Studies and Anthropology, but standard research findings employ only excerpts from interviews. To have the full life story, the oral history, is more rare and is

invaluable because of its authenticity and its unique communication of the ebb and flow of real life. Studies often refer to a number of different experiences of migration, picking out individual voices for attention, or referring to collective views. To have a real, named person who has been invited to look back on the whole of his life and recall the significance of aspects of change and transition, is unparalleled.

Born in Salkia in 1931, Krishan spent the early part of his life in Kolkata before moving to Nawanshahr in the Punjab in 1941 as a result of the upheaval of the Second World War. At school Krishan developed his love for languages, especially Sanskrit and Hindi. He progressed this interest in his undergraduate studies at Radhakrishnan Arya College in 1952, where he was the editor of the Hindi section of the college magazine. His decision to move to England in 1954 was not undertaken lightly and he travelled by ship with a friend, Raj Kumar Sharada, who had contacts in Coventry. Life in England was not as anticipated and Krishan and his compatriots met with racism in all areas of their life, from work to housing. Their alienation and isolation were exacerbated by overcrowding as well as the lack of familiar comforts such as Indian food. As time went on and more migrants arrived, amenities catering to the Indian community were introduced, as were religious and cultural groups. Krishan conveys the challenges involved with leaving his homeland, which for many was only meant to be a temporary relocation to send money back home before returning. The reality was that many migrants stayed, married, started families and laid roots for future generations.

The chronology is infused with reflections and memories, witty and serious anecdotes, and thick descriptions of daily religious rituals like *puja* and *darshan* at the temple as well as local customs like washing and eating mangos. The ambivalence felt by Indians at the end of the war, oppressed by British rule, is revealing. Particularly poignant is the impact of the Partition on everyday harmonious relationships caused by newfound religious divisions. Krishan describes the dual transformation of the exit of Muslim friends and neighbors to Pakistan and, simultaneously, the movement of Hindu refugees into India, who came with very little. The tensions and turbulence caused by Partition is one of the most powerful aspects of the book. This may be because it is often conceived as an event rather than a process that affected the Indian sub-continent for many years to come.

Krishan's contribution to community life in Coventry needs to be underscored. He was a co-founder and active member of a number of

organizations in Coventry including the Indian Cultural and Welfare Society and the Multi-Faith Forum, and is a life member of the Hindu Temple Society.

A touching part of the book is the testimony of Eleanor Nesbitt, Krishan's wife and Emeritus Professor at the University of Warwick. Krishan and Nesbitt were brought together by their shared passion for Indian culture, languages and travel. They have in different but related ways worked towards enriching understanding of manifold aspects of the Indian diaspora in Britain.

This book is part of the second series of *Memory and Narrative* biographies. Series one, published in 2010, focused on the experiences of migrants living in Leicester, while Series Two expands the scope beyond Leicester. The life story of Ram Krishan adds to the rich archive of stories of minority religious and cultural communities including Sikh, Jewish, Latvian and Caribbean. If Krishan's story is representative of the series, it testifies to the varied journeys that brought people to the UK. Krishan's story is important for many reasons. It conveys migration from the vantage point of the agent. Sato deftly absents himself from the narrative, allowing Krishan's words and ideas to shape the narrative, and reappears only in the endnotes, which provide useful historical contextualization. The presence of photographs from the family and cultural archives makes the narrative more vivid, as we view significant people from the journey, past and present. Many migrant tales are framed in terms of the insider-outsider perspective, but here we have the struggles an outsider trying to integrate into British society, to better the lives of his family, his community and inter-faith communities within Coventry. Krishan's passion for Hindi and his culture are evident in the lasting contributions he has made in his local Coventry, but also further afield. Krishan's children now have children of their own, and as the generations progress it becomes more important to preserve the legacy of the early migrants, those who were faced with the most difficult decision to start afresh in a new country and culture.

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Ishmeet Kaur. *Texting the Scripture: Sri Guru Granth Sahib and the Visionary Poetics of Patrick White.* Goa: CinnamonTeal, 2016. 179 pp. INR 1699.

Ishmeet Kaur's doctoral research, which she presents in her fourth book, *Texting the Scripture: Sri Guru Granth Sahib and the Visionary Poetics of Patrick White*, is an

effort to find common ground between literature, philosophy and spirituality across cultures and time. Bill Ashcroft's Foreword sets the tone by locating the work in what he calls the "post secular age in literary scholarship," because, as he says, it "enters that space in which literature and religion overlap; the space in which the religious dimension of the literary text and the literary strategies of the religious text interact and support each other." With a very wide sweep it seeks to encompass texts from various spaces, times, genres, and discursive zones. The *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* enjoys the status of a "received" text, the product of divine intervention and inspiration, and incorporates multiple voices ranging from the Sikh Gurus, their predecessors like Sheikh Farid, and contemporaries like Rahim and Kabir, incorporating works from Hindu, Muslim, Bhakti and Sufi traditions. Kaur brings all this into conversation with a very human voice, an author as we understand the term in a post-industrial society in which authorship is a matter of entitlement and identity, writing in a near post-industrial genre—the novel. Patrick White, the 20th-century Nobel Prize-winning Australian novelist seems quite distant from the Sikh scriptures. And yet Kaur explores areas of commonality that bring these diverse literary worlds within a single umbrella of Experience.

As Kaur points out in her Preface, religion has been associated with literature since antiquity and the earliest "texts" as we call them in modernist and postmodernist discourse are religious texts: The Bible, Ramayana, Bhagavad Gita, and Quran, to name a few. The tradition of religious poetry in particular has continued into the post-war world of T. S. Eliot's "Four Quartets" and Yeats' elaborate linking of the "poetic" experience with the metaphysical, spiritual and the philosophical traditions of Ireland. Of course, a simplistic recounting of parallelisms in the two discourses would have led to inane and superficial comparisons; but Kaur is careful to ground her study in the basic concepts that bring *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* and the novels of Patrick White close to each other.

Sikhism, in its initial stages, flourished contemporaneously with the Bhakti movement, which may be considered as either a revolt against the excessive ritualism of Hinduism in the Middle Ages, or as an assimilative movement that succeeded in bringing the finest elements of extant religions together. Either way, it goes against the grain of the set practices of the time, though it is also rooted strongly in its times. It is essentially an awakening of people by inviting them to re-explore their inner, spiritual selves. Patrick White, too, strikes a questioning note with regard to contemporary Australian society; by virtue of his British upbringing he is able to provide new "outsider" perspectives on a society and

literature that to a large extent follows western precedents in terms of vision, substance and style. Challenging norms has always been integral to what lives on as great literature.

Some of the major philosophic concerns that Kaur's analysis covers are central to the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. She takes up a study of the major novels of White—*Riders in the Chariot*, *The Aunt's Story*, *The Eye of the Storm*, *The Living and the Dead*, *The Prodigal Son*, *The Solid Mandala*, *The Tree of Man*, *The Vivisector*, and *Voss*, primarily—and brings these concepts to bear upon the aspects and vision that go into the making of his oeuvre. She first explores the apparent dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual worlds, Manmukh (the transient, physical and material) and Gurmukh (the eternal, spiritual and abstract), as well as the human aspiration for enlightenment and liberation from the cycle of birth and death. She explores White's thirteen novels in the light of this theme of enlightenment and the human aspiration for divine grace. Secondly, she engages with the idea that suffering is redemptive and that death, though painful, is the logical culmination of life. Thirdly, Kaur explores the representations of the mandala (a central symbol of circularity and wholeness in Indian philosophy) in the Sikh scriptures and in White's novels. Finally, she takes up an analysis of the other symbols and images that appear in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* and the rhythmic and poetic essence and principle in White's novels.

Kaur makes quite clear that she is not interested in merely finding parallels between the two discourses she has taken up for study. Though a kind of parallelism is bound to be part of the analysis, her task is much larger and more ambitious. Given the kind of violence that has erupted in the world and the kind of aggressiveness, arrogance and destructiveness that have enveloped life in the 20th and 21st centuries, she argues that a return to the values of spirituality and philosophical enquiry will show the way out of this abyss. She relates the vision of White to the Sikh scriptures in that in his work, "more than the physical and outward existence, much emphasis is laid on the inner consciousness of the human beings" and "spirituality takes prominence over the trivial/mundane." As Ashcroft, whom she cites, says, "It is in this revelation in which White attempts to translate the universal abstractions of religion into the material locality of a particular sacred." White's novels therefore are viewed as translating the divine and abstract philosophic vision of the Sikh Scriptures in terms of its relevance in the real, material lives of men and women.

Particularly interesting is Kaur's take on one of the core concepts in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*: that suffering is inevitable, painful and redemptive. Suffering

purifies and ennobles. Therefore it is important to welcome it: "Fareed, anxiety is my bed, pain is my mattress, and the pain of separation is my blanket and quilt," she cites. She says, it is significant that the epigraph for White's *Happy Valley* is, "It is impossible to do away with the law of suffering, which is the one indispensable condition of our being. Progress is to be measured by the amount of suffering undergone..." (Mahatma Gandhi). Mary Hare, in *Riders in the Chariot*, declares "Eventually I shall discover what is in the center, if enough of me is peeled away." Or in *Voss*, "Dying is creation. The body creates fresh forms, the soul inspires by its manner of leaving the body, and passes into other souls." About death, which again is seen as inevitable and a part of the cycle of life, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is poetically evocative: "The wind merges into the wind. The light blends into the light. The dust becomes one with the dust."

The extensive study on the concepts of mandala in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* and White's novels in Chapter III of the book is embedded in Hindu philosophical systems, and Kaur also relates it to Jung's archetypes and his idea of the unconscious self. Chakras, which are seen as the source of spiritual energy, embrace the cycle of life and death, and the seven chakras located at specific points along the spine are centers of physical and spiritual attributes, with the seventh chakra being the seat of knowledge and *samskara*. Resonant with Jungian overtones, in novels like *Riders in the Chariot* and *The Solid Mandala* and *Voss*, mandala images become "the moving force" that touches the deepest religious and introspective chords in the characters and readers. Related to the mandala are the abiding images that contribute to the rich visual and tactile texture of both *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* and White's fiction: the journey as quest, chariot, sun, moon, stars, landscape, trees, earth, fire, water, air, which rise above their immediate contexts to emerge as symbols and metaphors.

While it is true that the entire discussion is contextualized within the religio-spiritual worldview of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, and that White's novels are explored textually in the light of this given worldview, what Kaur has actually tried to do is to point to an essential commonality and universality in the face of divergent cultural practices and beliefs. A strong, timely and relevant message, indeed, for the divisive times in which we live. "All people are created with the same clay, God has designed all pots in different forms" (quoted Kaur p. 27, Trans. Darshan Singh).

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