Monuments as Body Archives

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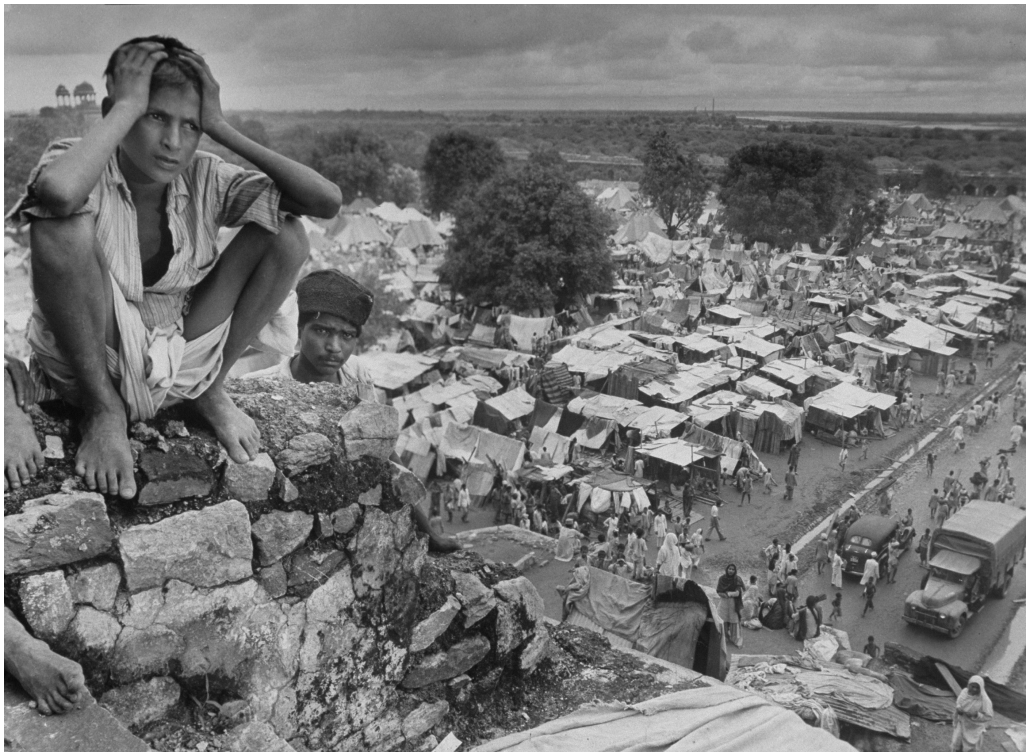
Body Traces

In September 1947, Delhi's sixteenth-century Mughal Purana Qila (Old Fort) was transformed into a Partition refugee camp. It first housed Muslim refugees and then Hindu and Sikh refugees, who disrupted the picturesque tourist monument. The latter refused to leave despite exhortations by the State, and by 1963 the last remaining refugees – approximately 4,000 – were forcibly evicted.[1] While Margaret Bourke-White's photographs have visually archived refugee presence at this monument, today any trace of their physical habitation and protracted resistance against the State are missing from the site. Their narratives remain absent from the Purana Qila's current museological archive, the onsite Archaeological Museum or the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) tourist signage.



Margaret Bourke-White, *Purana Qila Refugee Camp, November 3, 1947*, courtesy of The LIFE Picture Collection/Shutterstock

[1] Files 15B/5/49/1949, 15B/19/52/1952, 15B/21/53-G/1953 and 15B/16/56-M/1956–57, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Record Room, New Delhi. File 5/1947, Deputy Commissioner's (DC) Office, Department of Delhi Archives, New Delhi; see also 'Old Fort Squatters Evicted to an Empty Field: Delhi Authorities turn 4,000 into Refugees for Second Time', *The Times*, London, 11 November 1963, p 9

Margaret Bourke-White, *Refugees on top of Sher Shah Sur's sixteenth century Qala-i Kuhna mosque, Purana Qila* (November 1947), which was transformed into a school for refugee children, courtesy of The LIFE Picture Collection/Shutterstock

On 4 July 2018, Therese Patricia Okoumou climbed the Statue of Liberty in New York harbour to protest US immigration policies, forcing a shutdown of the monument and resulting in the removal of 4,500 tourists.[2] Okoumou used her body to claim the space of a national monument that symbolises inclusivity to challenge the State's exclusionary policies that were leading to the forced separation of parents and children at the US's southern border. To achieve this, she disrupted tourism, the form of experiencing monuments that the State authorises.

On 31 October 2018, Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, inaugurated the colossal, 598-foot sculpture of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel (1875–1950), a leader of India's struggle for independence and its first Home Minister. Called the Statue of Unity, it signals the strength of India as a global power. Built on an island close to the Narmada River dam in Gujarat, the advertising compared it to the Statue of Liberty, the Spring Temple Buddha in Zhaocun, China, and Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro. The day before the inauguration, approximately three hundred activists, many of them *Adivasi* farmers,[3] gathered to voice their opposition to this monument, as the sculpture and the proposed development of a 'tourism hot spot' around itwould displace them from their lands and reduce their access to water.[4] Their voices opposing

[2] See Rick Rojas, 'Statue of Liberty Climber Upends Holiday for Thousands', *The New York Times*, 4 July 2018, accessed July 2018 www.nytimes.com/2018/07/04/nyregion/statue-of-liberty-protester-july-4.html

[3] *Adivasi* can be translated as 'first inhabitants'; it is also used to refer to tribal communities

[4] See Aarefa Johri, 'Statue of Unity tourism zone will displace us from our lands': Why Adivasis protested Modi event', *Scroll.in*, 1 November 2018, accessed February 2019 https://scroll.in/article/900473/drowned-dreams-why-nearly-300-adivasis-were-detained-before-modi-could-unveil-the-statue-of-unity

a national symbol, like Patricia Okoumou's body and the Partition refugees, highlight the tenuousness of the public monument as a signifier of an inclusive nation.

Body Archives

In general, art historical writing on the public monument has approached these sites from the perspective of style, function and meaning as it relates to the first periods of construction. Recent scholars have examined the afterlives or later context of monuments.[5] They focus on macro and micro interventions by human actors to these sites but tend not to connect embodied actions to the physicality of the space or how spatial transformations could restrict types of being and behaviours. While both approaches to studying public monuments are valuable, the earlier one focuses on the object while the more recent approach moves away from traditional object studies to arrive at alternate, non-elite histories. Margaret Olin and Robert Nelson, for example, define the monument 'less by what it looks like than by what it does'.[6] I propose that what a monument looks like – that is, its form – is integral to what it does. Importantly, the monument's form must be made more capacious to include intangibles such as embodiments and presences. Indeed, even the absence of people who formed a part of the inhabitation of the site must be examined as part of the form. After all, form is constituted not only by what is present but is also determined by what is excluded. Doing this reveals valuable knowledge regarding non-elite histories.

Intangible, human, embodied actions as well as tangible, objects, monuments, should be understood as valid containers and creators of information, much like the institutional archive. Neither of these store documents and official files as a traditional institutional archive might. But the human and the monument body – made of blood, limbs, aspirations, desires, bricks, stones, plants and land – bear traces of actions and events that have passed upon or been created by them. The imprint that human actions leave on the monument, whether visibly remembered or not, and the trigger that the monument's physical design and location has on human actions, can illuminate marginalised histories that do not find a clear, legible voice in the institutional archive. Traditionally, this institutional archive is considered to be a building that stores written or visual documents, or the documents themselves are referred to as the archive. Achille Mbembe explains that the term 'archives' refers first to a building, a symbol of a public institution, which is one of the organs of the State and also a collection of documents that is kept

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5 See Santhi Kavuri-Bauer, *Monumental Matters: The Power, Subjectivity and Space of India's Mughal Architecture*, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 2011; Mrinalini Rajagopalan, *Building Histories: The Archival and Affective Lives of Five Monuments in Modern Delhi*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2016; Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Post-colonial India*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2004; Margaret Olin and Robert Nelson, eds, *Monuments and Memory, Made and Unmade*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2003; Deborah Cherry, ed, *Afterlives of Monuments*, Routledge, Oxford, 2014

6 Margaret Olin and Robert Nelson, eds, *Monuments and Memory, Made and Unmade*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2003, p 7

in this building.[7] For the scholar examining them, a group of monuments could also be called an archive – in the sense of a set of materials that have been collated together for study.

Considering the archive to be an arm of the State, Mbembe explains: 'we often forget that not all documents are destined to be archives. In any given cultural system, only some documents fulfil the criteria of "archivability"… whatever criteria are used at the time of coding, classification and distribution, these procedures are simply a matter of *creating order*'.[8] Mbembe calls the archive 'primarily a product of judgment, the result of the exercise of a specific power and authority, which involves placing certain documents in an archive at the same time as others are discarded'.[9] In fact, this process of selection and order is central to the State's archive as it works hard to *cull any disorder* while it also aims to 'reassemble [these] traces'[10] of the dead so that they may not, if left to their own devices, 'acquire a life of their own'.[11] In archiving the dead in careful, ordered ways they are 'fundamentally… formally prohibited from stirring up disorder in the present'.[12] Mbembe also argues that the State tries various ways to anaesthetise or destroy the archive because, ironically, it both needs it and is threatened by it. Therefore, the State must control the archive's narrative.[13]

What then, of those forms, beings and events, and the emotions that don't make it to the institutional archive at all, or lie hidden within, covered under the strength of majoritarian narratives? And what if we were to pry open the order of the archive and expose the hidden debris of spatial transformations, human bodies and moments of vocal and subtle protest at the monument that are invisible or rendered naturalised? What if we juxtaposed previously unconnected pieces of archival debris to shine a light on a new way of apprehending the monument? In following this method of placing unfamiliar elements together, what disorders, hidden by the State, would be unearthed? What if the traces of the dead acquire a disorderly life of their own? The archive and the public monument become sites of resistance when we expand what can be constituted within them, make them mutable and by highlighting unfamiliar presences as much as by voicing absences.

Embodied actions and physical transformations have not typically been part of the description of traditional institutional archives. Paul Ricoeur, for example, in differentiating between testimony and archive, writes that: 'the moment of the archive is the moment of the entry into writing of the historiographical operation. Testimony is by origin oral. It is listened to, heard. The archive is written. It is read, consulted. In archives, the professional historian is the

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7 See Achille Mbembe, 'The Power of the Archive and its Limits', in *Refiguring the Archive*, Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris et al, eds, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, Boston and London, 2002, p 19

8 Ibid, pp 19–20, emphasis added

9 Ibid, p 20

10 Ibid, p 22

11 See ibid, p 22

12 Ibid, p 22

13 See ibid, pp 23–24

reader.'[14] But of course, the archive can assume many non-written forms. Ricoeur describes archaeological objects, including 'remains of buildings' that are open to historical observations, as 'unwritten testimonies'.[15] However, historical monuments and their remnants have indeed been considered archives by scholars, for whom they are materials of study.

In Ricoeur's description, the human body is not considered a repository or an archive of what has passed on or over it. But strikingly, when historians write about traumatic periods, such as the Holocaust or the India–Pakistan Partition, it is to oral histories and survivor memories – often also recorded as traces on their bodies – that they turn. Past events, painful or not, are held, expressed and embodied in survivor bodies via scars, wounds, lost limbs, aches, and simply by their mode of being in the world. Aanchal Malhotra's study of intimate, portable objects that were carried across the border during the Partition takes such an approach. These everyday objects are memory repositories; as garments, jewellery, prayer books, kitchen utensils, they speak about the bodies that wore, used and read those objects.[16] The cover images of both editions of Malhotra's first book show bodies with objects – either an older lady wearing a piece of jewellery, or wrinkled hands holding cherished clothing. The second book, which collects interviews with those who have undergone the Partition and those who are its inter-generational receivers, also shows hands – wrinkled and young – holding fragile black-and-white family photos on the cover.[17] Furrowed foreheads and creased hands speak of a life of experience and struggle. Bodies hold traces – sometimes visible through wrinkles, creases, expressions, clothes, and in representations, and sometimes invisible through emotions.

Could the public monument also be an archive in the way in which it, too, holds traces and debris – either through physical and spatial transformations, diverse iconoclasms and human actions therein? Although not alive and breathing in the way a human body is, the monument, as a physical entity, has a similar capacity to absorb and hold the experiences and transformations wrought upon it. Monuments, besides being the archive of scholars that study them, can be archives in yet another sense – in that their public and spatial existence over time leads to an accumulation of layered information, like debris, on their surfaces. Much like bodies, a variety of knowledge forms come to rest in these spaces. These pieces of knowledge can be seen overtly via signage, tourist booklets, tour guide narratives and museum displays. They also appear, subtly, through landscape design shaping access and the experience and visuality of the site, as well as souvenirs and films, and public discourse about their histories. These traces can also be seen covertly via disruptive interactions between various actors at the site and moments

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[14] Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting,* Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, trans, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2004, p 166

[15] Ibid p 170

[16] See Aanchal Malhotra, *Remnants of Partition: 21 Objects from a Continent Divided*, Hurst & Company, London, 2019; for the cover photos of this book, see: https://www.hurstpublishers.com/book/remnants-of-partition/ and https://harpercollins.co.in/product/remnants-of-a-separation/

[17] See Aanchal Malhotra, *In the Language of Remembering: The Inheritance of the Partition*, Harper Collins, Delhi, India, 2022; for the cover image, see: https://harpercollins.co.in/product/in-the-language-of-remembering/

of protest when non-elites break rules or occupy the monument as non-tourist subjects, or when the monument itself acts contrary to expectations. Monuments, then, are not only archives in a sense of materials of study, but, according to newer definitions of archives in performance, literary and urban studies, are also body-like and city-like archives.

The American poet Caroline Randall Williams, writing about the destruction of confederate statues in the American south, says that if we are seeking to protect confederate monuments as part of historical heritage, we need only look to her body as a monument. She calls out her light skin as a black person in the present-day US, a result of the sexual violence of white plantation owners on black slave women, as a monument to the trauma historically suffered by her community.[18] Her body, as a container of generational grief and a physical marker of inherited violence, becomes a monument to the historical suffering of African Americans. The public discourse surrounding confederate statues is one of valorisation for one group, while for others, who still feel the inter-generational traumatic impact of slavery today, these public monuments hide their pain, which, according to them, is more effectively monumentalised by their very bodies. While Williams suggests that the destroyed confederate statues can be replaced by looking towards bodies such as hers, this example also reveals the intimate relationship between the living, human body and the stone monument. In the way in which a body can be a container of what it has experienced, so, too, can the public monument be a repository that holds traces of action on it. The human body can take the shape of an archive speaking of inter-generational trauma. And the monument can claim to be a living and mutable being, especially when its definition is expanded to include spatial transformations and diverse manners of occupying these sites.

In their introduction to *The Sentient Archive: Bodies Performance and Memory,* Bill Bissell and Linda Caruso Haviland ask us to consider the body as an archive – as a repository of memories, movements and knowledge, and as sites where pain and joy are felt, seen and heard. They explain:

> the archive throughout most of Western history has alluded to material objects: important documents and records intended for long-term retention, as well as the sites constructed in which to hold them. The body's mortality has disqualified it from consideration as an archive, in either sense of the word. Today our notion of the archive is changing, and scholars, curators, and artists understand the body as a cognitive system that draws on its own experiences and memories. [19]

[18] See Caroline Randall Williams, 'You Want a Confederate Monument? My Body is a Confederate Monument', in *The New York Times*, 26 June 2020, accessed March 2021 www.nytimes.com/2020/06/26/opinion/confederate-monuments-racism.html

[19] Bill Bissel and Linda Caruso Havilland, eds, *The Sentient Archive: Bodies, Performance, and Memory*, Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, Connecticut, 2018, p xv

Expanding the definition of the archive, they ask:

> What would it mean to say that the body is an archive? What sort of investigations or practices might facilitate the archiving of bodied acts or events, as well as their potential for retrieval and re-enactment? What is being stored, retrieved, or transmitted, and what or who shapes the body in storing or recovering its knowledge? [20]

In response, they say:

> imagining the body as an archive necessitates rethinking the meaning of both 'body' and 'archive.' It requires a radical openness to the possibility that knowledge can be both legible and embodied, that it is not only accessed through texts, but also generated and understood through physical states and actions. [21]

In the institutional archive, knowledge about the public monument is almost always textual or object-based. These forms of knowledge could represent marginalised figures but often not in their own voice. Radical openness to the possibility that physical embodiments can be a source of archival information will animate the marginalised who were once present at the monument but are now absent from it.

In making the archive more capacious by including bodies, we can pose Jacques Derrida's question about where the archive starts. In a review of Derrida's *Archive Fever* (1995), Brien Brothman says that Derrida asks:

> where can the outside – archiving – be said to commence, with the unconscious, the conscious psyche, the furrowed brow, the wrinkled skin, the nervous tic, the utterance? Is the inscription written on paper simply the most visible, outermost layer of a 'foliaceous stratification' of the archives? Where does archiving or inscribing begin? [22]

Archiving as inscribing allows us to move beyond the written word. It allows us to explore the markings on monuments and the movement of bodies and spatial transformation around monuments as places that hold archival knowledge. For Derrida, this questioning is about how 'external signs are surface traces of that which lies buried and forgotten, yet indelibly registered and preserved, in the interior memory, in the subconscious'.[23] For us, considering the body and monument as archives means going deeper into archival layers, validating the traces of pain on

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[20] Ibid, p xv

[21] Ibid, p 1

[22] Brien Brothman, 'Jacques Derrida*, Archive Fever*: A Freudian Impression', book review in *Archivaria*, no 43, February 1997, pp 189–192, p 190

[23] Ibid, pp 190

bodies, acknowledging the removal of the marginalised from monuments, and noticing their absence from the museological and touristic archive. This methodology marks the invisible as indelibly present at the monument and makes visible transformations that have been so naturalised that they are rendered indiscernible as change.

Akin to Bissel and Havilland, but writing about the cityscape, Michael Sheringham outlines how we might understand urban space as archival space. Sheringham argues that even though the status of the city-as-archive has been contested by some, urban space can still be interpreted archivally. He understands space as a palimpsest wherein 'layer upon layer of compacted material[s]', linguistic, experiential and physical, are stored and interact with each other.[24] The vision of the city as archive works through an interaction of inner (subjective) and outer topographies and the interplay of a variety of 'archival strata', which include literary and cultural allusions, creatures, objects, images and designed spaces.[25] Much like Derrida's 'foliaceous stratification,' which, as the phrase implies, are thin, leaf-like layers deposited in the subconscious, Sheringham understands the city as layered space with archival strata. In these palimpsestic deposits, literary characters participate in a type of 'archival journeying' that takes us 'back and forth between past and present via thought processes that, however, subjective, never lose track of material traces'.[26]

Through literary analysis, Sheringham shows that familiar cityscapes can be reconfigured by seeing them as 'repositories of written traces enshrined in topographies'.[27] Following Michel de Certeau's work on how traces of everyday life are 'inscribed in the urban environment in unofficial and often socially subversive ways',[28] Sheringham writes vividly about literary characters wandering through the city as a way to seek and unearth its hidden dimensions. During these meanderings, he reflects upon the 'city's capacity to release ghosts harboured in its monuments'.[29] Analysing W G Sebald's *Austerlitz*, he speaks of the narrator's nocturnal wanderings in London and Paris and stresses that the character is compelled to burn his notes for a book on architectural history and instead takes to nightly urban peregrinations. This rejection of the written and instead enacting a physical act, Sheringham suggests, is one of resistance against the 'amnesia' of 'official manifestation[s]' of the archive. The institutional archive is characterised as that which has a persistent 'urge to break with everything which still has some living connection to the past'.[30] Instead, the living, palpable, tactile past was found

[24] See Michael Sheringham, 'Archiving', in Matthew Beaumont and Gregory Dart, eds, *Restless Cities*, Verso, New York, 2010, p 4

[25] See ibid, p 9

[26] Ibid, pp 9–10

[27] Ibid, p 7

[28] See Charles Forsdick, 'Monuments, Memorials, Museums: Slavery Commemoration and the Search for Alternative Archival Spaces', in *Francosphères*, vol 3, no 1, Liverpool University Press, January 2014, p 87; see also Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Steven Randall, trans, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1984

[29] Michael Sheringham, 'Archiving', op cit, p 9

[30] Ibid, p 9

through the interaction of interior memory and outer built environments and not only in official archival documents.

Taking guidance from this scholarship, I ask: could the monument, like the body and the city, also accumulate layers of sedimented embodiments and spatial transformations that sit in its crevices as forms of knowledge, albeit lost to the tangible, documentary evidence in the institutional archive? If knowledge is not just written and textually legible but also embodied and interred within bodies and built spaces, could the monument also become a living archive of dynamic and intangible forms of being and knowledge production? Could this embodied living archive, like Sheringham's layered city of ghosts, also challenge the amnesia of the institutional, State archive? Sheringham explains that exposing 'the hidden histories of familiar monuments is to defamiliarize the city we thought we knew, and to wrench us out of the present, into an intermediate zone of overlapping timescales'.[31] By voicing the hitherto shrouded history of Partition refugees in the familiar sixteenth-century Purana Qila, we destabilise the site's museological and touristic timescale and transport ourselves into the disorderly margins absent from the site.

Conventionally, an archive is meant to store information through a tangible and permanent collection of items. This mode of perceiving the archival world as only tangible would necessitate that bodies and events must be permanently remembered through a monument's signage or museum to be legitimately considered a part of the site's archive. Therefore, the transient and resistant bodies of the Partition refugees, *adivasis* and Patricia Okoumou remain absent from the authorised archive of the monuments. There is no signage or museum recollecting their actions. In fact, the State may actively suppress the voices and actions of these individuals. Their absence in the monument's museological archive is therefore unavailable to visitors today. When made present, the marginalised figures reveal the incompleteness of the monument's current archive. The institutional archive supports State authority and its project of nation building, and masquerades as an all-embracing, all-knowing repository. The nation-building project requires the telling of only those stories that support the State's majoritarian narrative. If these marginal bodies shape narratives that do not fit or are resistant to the powers that be, then they slip through the cracks. The monument, like the nation, is akin to the archive that can only recollect through forgetting.[32]

Re-illuminating Purana Qila's Archive

Such erasures can be seen at the onsite Archaeological Museum at the Purana Qila in Delhi. This was set up in 1973, after the late 1960s/early 1970s ASI excavations at the site, and houses

[31] Ibid, p 9

[32] See an interview with Jacques Derrida during a seminar hosted by the University of Witwatersrand in August 1998, quoted in Verne Harris, 'A Shaft of Darkness: Derrida in the Archive', in Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris et al, eds, *Refiguring the Archive*, op cit, pp 64–68

Entrance to the onsite Archaeological Museum at the Purana Qila, Delhi, photo by the author, 2018

the antiquities found therein – mainly terracotta and porcelain pottery, jewellery, coins and small sculpture. Large, back-lit reproductions of photographs depicting the excavations are also included along with detailed wall text. These explain the history of the many cities of Delhi, the Purana Qila and its monuments, the ancient names of Delhi, pre-historic Delhi, and descriptions of the archaeological objects and house layouts discovered in the fort's excavated layers, which are associated with chronological dynastic periods. Strikingly, it also includes descriptions of excavations at Delhi's other historical sites and houses antiquities not found within the Purana Qila's precincts. Instead, these come from Delhi and its environs, and date from the Neolithic to about the fifteenth century CE. The museum is located inside a portion of the Qila's arched and colonnaded arcade, one of the very spaces that became home for the Partition refugees.[33] This portion of the colonnaded arcade has been walled off from the outside and includes a modern door, air conditioning, lighting, wood flooring and whitewashed walls and ceilings that cover the monument's older form. Small parts of the ceiling stucco, carving and squinching have not been whitewashed in order to showcase the sixteenth-century aesthetics of the building. But, in whitewashing and in covering most of the walls with object cases and museum wall texts, a large portion of the sixteenth-century building and the twentieth-century presence of refugee habitation – perhaps marked by cooking fires and other forms of daily life – remain hidden.

Based on the museum wall text and the monument's entrance signage, the overarching theme is to frame the Purana Qila's location as the exact site of the mythic Indraprastha from the Mahabharata epic. Indeed, the museum includes a geographical map of the Indic region

[33] For the use of colonnaded arcades as refugee living areas, see: File 1DL/33/58M, ASI, Record Room, New Delhi

The interior of the Archaeological Museum at the Purana Qila, Delhi, photos by the author, 2018

The interior of the Archaeological Museum at the Purana Qila, Delhi, photo by the author, 2018

marking out the regions and places mentioned in the Mahabharata. Although the museum wall text mentions Indraprastha, Indarpat, or Indapatta, as names used in Buddhist texts, the connection specifically to the Purana Qila is tenuous. Describing the ASI excavations, the wall text outlines that although a pre-Mauryan layer was excavated, they 'failed to find the regular cultural horizon of painted grayware', which the ASI typically dates to 1000 BCE and associates with the Mahabharata.[34] While a larger geographical region might have been connected with Indraprastha, it is the Purana Qila itself which is marked as such in the museum wall text and monument signage.[35] There is a heightened insistence on the 'antiquity and continuity'[36] of the urban settlements in the Purana Qila – of which the search for Indraprastha also forms a part. The separation of each archaeological strata into chronological eras – namely Prehistoric, Mauryan, Sunga, Kushan, Gupta, Post-Gupta, Rajput, Sultanate and Mughal periods – through excavation photos, object cases and wall text emphasises both antiquity and continuity.

34 'Purana Qila: An Introduction', 'Delhi: The City of Cities' and 'Historical Background of Delhi', Wall Label Texts, Archaeological Museum, Purana Qila, Delhi; what associates painted grayware to Mahabharata is not explained in the wall text and is taken for granted

35 'Purana Qila: An Introduction', Wall Label Text, Archaeological Museum, Purana Qila, Delhi; for detail on the political implications of ASI excavations at the Purana Qila and the search for Indraprastha, see Mrinalini Rajagopalan, '1948: Purana Qila: The Many Origins of Partitioned Nations, Cities, and Monuments', in Mrinalini Rajagopalan, *Building Histories: The Archival and Affective Lives of Five Monuments in Modern Delhi*, op cit, pp 119–151

36 'Purana Qila: An Introduction', 'Delhi: The City of Cities' and 'Historical Background of Delhi', Wall Label Texts, Archaeological Museum, Purana Qila, Delhi

Objects tell the history of this site until the seventeenth century, while the wall text explains the history of Delhi until 1857, and a brief reference is made to the modern village of Indarpat, which existed inside the Purana Qila until the beginning of the twentieth century.[37] The story of how that village was demolished and evacuated by colonial authorities is not outlined.[38]

Here, the history of the Purana Qila, via the sources that the museological archive finds legitimate, ends. The transformation of the Purana Qila into a refugee camp during the India–Pakistan Partition is absent from this narrative, and so is the use of this monument as a Japanese internment camp during World War II.[39] These significant moments are missing from the signage either inside the museum or in the monument's grounds. On the one hand, sculpture and architectural fragments unrelated to the Purana Qila, but found elsewhere in Delhi, are found relevant to the fort's onsite museum without any precise reason.[40] But, on the other, the habitation of the Purana Qila itself by refugees, which should be relevant for an on-site museum, is missing. This is striking, since the museum claims to narrate the various *layers of habitation* at this monument – of which the refugee camp was one. Human habitation is traced back to ca 1000 BCE, but the strata of human habitation during the refugee occupation of the site from 1947–1963 eludes this detailed knowledge-making. The fort's museological archive makes present objects that are not related to the site but absents histories, such as its use as a Partition refugee camp, that are related to the site.

The museum's texts use archaeological terminology such as 'layers' and 'strata', and the signage at the fort's entrance gateway uses technical art historical terms for architectural forms. For a moment, let's imagine how this monument's archive could be expanded should the photos of Purana Qila refugees, taken by Margaret Bourke-White, also form part of an exhibit that detailed their resistance and challenges? How would the fort be envisioned, if the art-historical-term-heavy signage at the gateway also included a description of the young, forlorn refugee boy atop the ramparts of this gate? This would mean revealing a time when the nation-state was not cohesive, when it was weakened by division and violence. It would also mean revealing the long-drawn-out process through which the refugees were evicted and how the State was unsuccessful at finding suitable, alternate housing for thousands.

Importantly, knowledge about the Purana Qila as Partition refugee camp remains in embodied form – one that must be accessed through a radical commitment towards deciphering bodily actions and resistance in the text of official, archival documents. While the Purana Qila's

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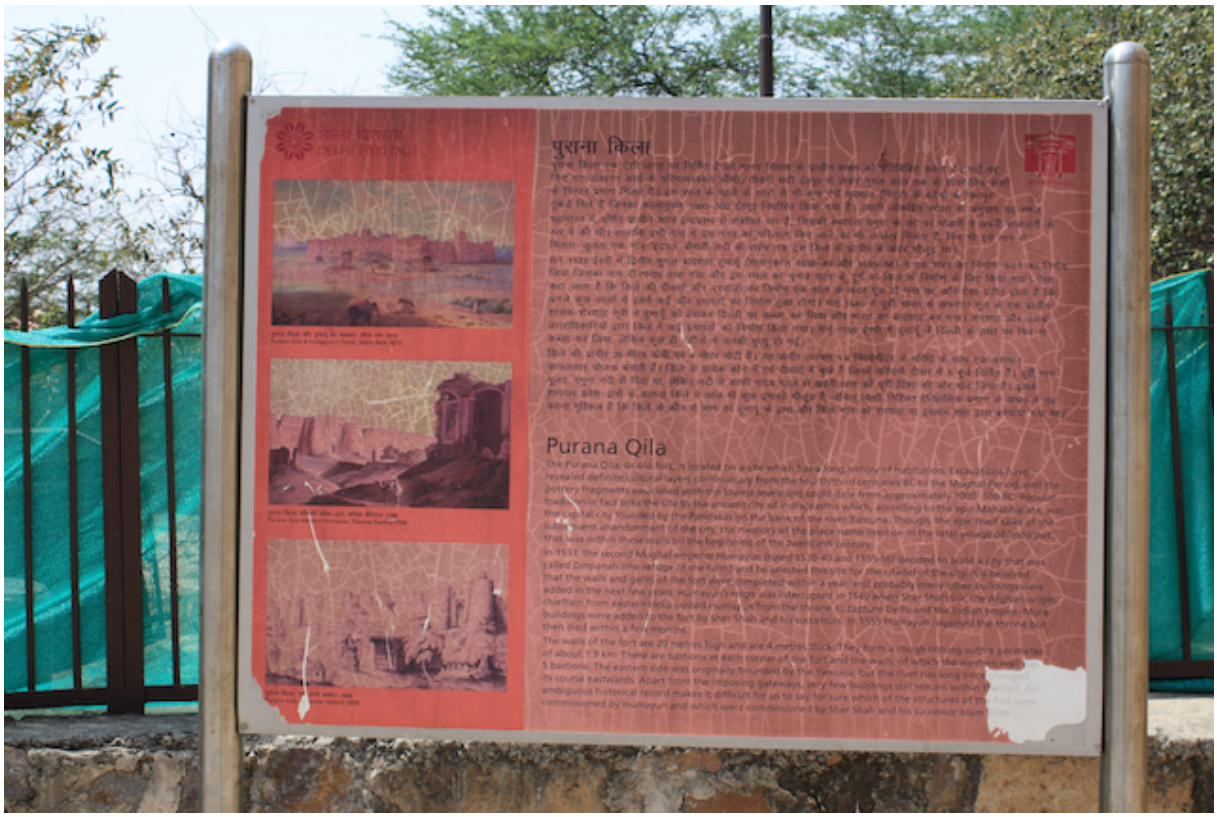
37 'Purana Qila: An Introduction', 'Delhi: The City of Cities' and 'Historical Background of Delhi', Wall Label Texts, Archaeological Museum, Purana Qila, Delhi

38 File 11/1908/Deputy Commissioner's Office/Department of Delhi Archives

39 See Aditi Chandra, 'Potential of the "Un-exchangeable Monument": Delhi's Purana Qila, in the time of Partition, c 1947–63', in *International Journal of Islamic Architecture*, vol 2, no 1, pp 101–123; for the Japanese internment camp, see Mrinalini Rajagopalan, '1948: Purana Qila: The Many Origins of Partitioned Nations, Cities', op cit, p 139

40 'Purana Qila: An Introduction', Wall Label Text, Archaeological Museum, Purana Qila, Delhi



Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) signage, Purana Qila, Delhi, photo by the author, 2018

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) signage, Bada Darwaza, Purana Qila, Delhi, photo by the author, 2018

institutional archive,[41] in the form of correspondence between city and ASI officials, does contain information about the fort's use as a refugee camp, the exchanges revolve around how to clear the monument of refugees. The discussion is not from the refugee perspective. The voices, bodies and actions of the refugees lie hidden under the weight of official points of view. Furthermore, this archive is not accessible to the tourist via news media, monument signage or tourist guidebooks. It has, so far, only been available to the researcher keen enough to navigate the institutional archives.

The refugees *live* in the institutional archive as irksome figures for the authorities whose sole concern is the aesthetics of the monument. I use the word *live* to stress the mutability of perspectives towards the refugees, for, in their stance to not leave the Purana Qila, the refugees can be read as challengers of State authority.[42] However, labelling refugees as resistant bodies does not fit the narrative of a strong nation supported by its beautiful monuments with their continuous lineage of antiquity. Conversely, evicting the refugees, which the ASI desired, would also reveal the State to be inhumane. Therefore, the refugees remain absent from the site's museological and touristic archive. So, too, it is unlikely that Patricia Okoumou's resistance at the Statue of Liberty or the *Adivasis* protest at the Statue of Unity will find a place in the official archives as both events disrupt the narrative of equality, accessibility and unity that these public monuments espouse on behalf of the nation.

The Purana Qila was acquired for tourism after Indrapat village, inside the fort, was evicted and levelled between 1908–13 by the colonial authorities. A wide-open space remained inside the fort, punctuated by two remaining sixteenth-century structures: Sher Mandal (an octagonal pavilion) and the Qila-i Kuhna Mosque. A space of daily living providing livelihood was replaced with green grass and undulating pathways for tourists.[43] With this spatial transformation, the Purana Qila became a 'proper' monument with ordered touristic activity. The Purana Qila, the Statue of Liberty and the Statue of Unity are symbols of cohesive nations with glorious pasts and united futures. The fort, by virtue of being an erstwhile capital with supposed mythic origins, and the statues, by symbolising equality, assimilation and strength, bolster the nation. The statues, on account of their height and solitary locations, can be seen from a long distance away. Both are also situated close to bodies of water, which enhances their aesthetic appeal. The Purana Qila became interconnected with its environs in the 1920s–1930s because the heart of the new colonial capital of Delhi was built proximate to this monument to include a view of the fort as a terminal point from the Viceroy's new residence.[44] Like the two

[41] Here, the institutional archive refers to the Delhi State Archives, the National Archives of India and the Record Room of the Archaeological Survey of India (the files from the third repository are now in the National Archives)

[42] See Aditi Chandra, 'Potential of the "Un-exchangeable Monument": Delhi's Purana Qila, in the time of Partition, c 1947-63' op cit, pp 101–123

[43] File 11/1908/Deputy Commissioner's Office/Department of Delhi Archives

[44] See Mrinalini Rajagopalan, '1948: Purana Qila: The Many Origins of Partitioned Nations, Cities', op cit, pp 134–137

Postcard of the Purana Qila, Delhi: a long-distance view of the fort's main entrance with approach way, ca early-to-mid-20th century, showing no evidence of a lake, printed in Austria, collection of the author

View of the lake around the Purana Qila, Delhi, being used for boating by tourists in 2007, photo by the author

statues, water has been used to beautify the fort via a man-made lake. As the early twentieth-century postcard shows, there was no water body in front of the Purana Qila. It was initially requested in 1914 by Viceroy Lord Hardinge to enhance the fort's touristic appeal but was eventually only constructed by the 1970s.[45] This lake was then used by tourists for boating. In 2018, it was revamped with fountains, but with a depth of only two metres, it is no longer open for boating. Instead, a tree-lined promenade now edges the lake and includes a 'viewing gallery' from where visitors can see the 'best sights of the ramparts of the 16th-century fort', which is lit up at dusk.[46] The ever-changing space in and around the fort and the resistance of the refugees are as much a part of the fort's mutable, living archive as the monument signage and museum wall text are part of its museological archive. Although it took until after independence to create the lake, the hope of this picturesque addition dates to the construction of the new colonial capital. At this time, evictions, road widening and the creation of grassed landscapes also took place in and around the Purana Qila.

View of the revamped lake at Purana Qila, Delhi, showing viewing pavilion and walking pathways on both sides, March 2023, photo by Saumya Chandra

[45] For Hardinge's request, see File 215/Education/1914, Chief Commissioner's Office, Department of Delhi Archives, New Delhi; for the 1970s lake, see Parvez Sultan, 'Delhi's Purana Quila lake set to get a makeover, renovation underway', *Hindustan Times*, 3 June 2018, accessed January 2022 www.hindustantimes.com/delhi-news/delhi-s-purana-quila-lake-set-to-get-a-makeover-renovation-underway/story-J0iUxKjlzOH7OIJX7c4AjP.html

[46] See Pallavi Pasricha, 'Delhi's Purana Qila Lake is back, but without the boats', *Condé Nast Traveller*, 5 October 2018 www.cntraveller.in/story/delhis-purana-qila-lake-is-back-but-without-the-boats/, accessed July 2021

View of the revamped lake at Purana Qila, Delhi, showing walking pathway and fountain bases (although these were not switched on when this photograph was taken), March 2023, photo by Ajay Dytha

Tourists exchanged their wealth and their ordered bodies for scopic, physical and knowledge-generating pleasure, and left. The refugees, however, refused to follow this pattern, wherein using the monument as a camp meant that they must also, like the tourists, leave it at some point. Instead, they stayed, and even started a Residents Welfare Association.[47] Unlike tourism, the refugees' economic activities, such as running a school and selling wares for their livelihood, did not result in filling the State's coffers. Therefore, in September 1947, refugee bodies became archives of disruption against the State, irking the visiting tourists – but later were to remain hidden in the museum and the monument signage. Conversely, tourist bodies became archives that conformed to and validated the State's definition of the monument and could physically occupy the site as the intended audience of the museological archive. While the camp was officially approved in the early days of violence following Partition, the ASI found itself in protracted negotiations with the refugees and the Relief & Rehabilitation ministry about the continued use of the monument. The refugees resisted by either engaging in acts to support their livelihood, such as running a school and shops, or simply refusing to move out unless acceptable alternative housing was provided.[48]

[47] See 'Old Fort Squatters Evicted to an Empty Field: Delhi Authorities turn 4,000 into Refugees for Second Time', op cit, p 9

[48] Files 15B/5/49/1949, 15B/19/52/1952, 15B/21/53-G/1953 and 15B/16/56-M/1956–57, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Record Room, New Delhi. File 5/1947, Deputy Commissioner's (DC) Office, Department of Delhi Archives, New Delhi

The anthropologist James C Scott suggests that every act of domination must necessarily be followed by an act of resistance. He explains that acts of resistance need not be manifested through loud, openly knowable forms of protest, but, rather, might show up through what he calls 'hidden transcripts'.[49] Given the legal and economic or physical power of those in control, the resistance of subordinate groups often takes the shape of fugitive political behaviour and insubordination in daily life.[50] These hidden transcripts – that is, the refugee actions, behaviour and presence – must serve as a key source for understanding this buried moment of Purana Qila's history. They form an alternate, hidden archive of the Purana Qila that has not endured in the public eye. Conversely, the museological and archaeological mode through which the Purana Qila has been defined is the publicly-known archive of the monument. In this public mode, the State can choose to make present or absent certain narratives. Scott describes the 'public transcript' as expressions of power by the dominant and sometimes also the visible expressions of resistance by the subordinated. He sees the 'public transcript' as being manifested in 'gestures, architecture, ritual actions, public ceremonies, texts, and any other actions in which the powerful may portray their domination as they wish… [which]… taken together represent the dominant elite's self-flattering portrait' or 'how they would like things to appear'.[51] The State's public transcript is absorbed and replicated by tourists at the monument. Indeed, in the early 1950s, when a few thousand refugees still resided in the Purana Qila and were refusing to move out, a tourist wrote a letter of complaint to the editor of a national newspaper protesting the refugee use of the fort because it had made his leisurely visit to the site uncomfortable.[52] This is an example of a public transcript that received national media space. The refugee perspective on this complaint stays hidden until we read between the lines of the official voice that only values the tourist view and is not able to see the ethics of supporting the displaced. The State remains frustrated at the refugees' refusal to move out and their constant demand for affordable and suitable alternate housing. In these official frustrations can be seen the 'hidden transcript' of the refugee protest. While refugee actions as hidden transcripts challenge the State, the tourist shapes an archive via the public transcript that is in line with the State's expectations. The potential, therefore, of the refugee body as an archive of the monument is in its surreptitious questioning of power. Conversely, the limit of tourists, at least elite ones, is their unquestioning behaviour.

Writing about the erasure of Belgium's colonial atrocities in the Congo from museums, Adam Hochschild explains that, 'textbooks can be revised, but historic sites, monuments, and collections that memorialize ugly pasts aren't so easily changed'.[53] The Purana Qila, the Statue

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[49] See James C Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, and London, 1990, pp 6–10

[50] See Ibid, pp 1–17

[51] Ibid, p 4

[52] File 15B/19/52/1952, ASI, Record Room, New Delhi (the *Hindustan Times* article is attached to a letter in the ASI file)

[53] Adam Hochschild, 'The Fight to Decolonize the Museum', *The Atlantic*, January/February 2020, accessed March 2021 www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/01/when-museums-have-ugly-pasts/603133/

of Liberty and the Statue of Unity are not containers of brutality like the Belgian museums and their relation to Central Africa. However, there is a resemblance. Just as the violence on the Congolese is excised from the Belgian museums, so, too, the Partition refugees, immigration policy protestors such as Patricia Okoumou and the *Adivasi* resistors remain absent from the museological or institutional archives of these monuments. So, how might the narratives of the monument, which Hochschild says are hard to change, indeed change?

The monument can be unearthed as a challenger of the nation-state's imagined cohesiveness when it is examined as a living body archive – a mutable repository of embodied interactions, intimately linked to landscape transformations associated with it, and not just as an isolated building. This expansive monument includes the land surrounding it, the additions, destructions, occupations, resistances, evictions and protests that are carried out within it. While archival documents do speak of refugees in the Purana Qila, the official voice is solely concerned with removing the displaced rather than seriously working on solutions. Examining the monument as a living body archive honours marginalised refugee bodies whose voices are absent from the institutional and museological archive. This approach also calls for an understanding that the living body archive is an everchanging, living aesthetic site that can receive, store and transmit embodied, intangible information and 'hidden transcripts'.

Partition refugee bodies are a living archive bubbling under the surface of the monument. They are an ignored layer of the Purana Qila that archaeology has not traced or acknowledged. They are the dead who have not had an opportunity to speak publicly and whose trauma remains unprocessed. They are the dead whose trauma remains unprocessed. They remain as resilient, living presences under the surface, threatening to leak out through the cracks to destabilise the streamlined museum narrative and the picturesque monument created by the colonial and postcolonial State. Marking refugee bodies as living archives is also a question of method. To acknowledge their absence is the first step in locating them and their actions as the not-so-easily visible, hidden transcripts. This acknowledgment comes through paying attention to the resistant voices lurking in the official archive. What would it be like to see the premodern history of the Purana Qila along with the markings of its refugee habitation on the site's walls? What courage would it take to walk with those who did not see this site as a palace, fort, a mythic city or even a monument, but simply in its barest form, as shelter? Thus, refugee and other resistant bodies defamiliarise the monument that is thought of as fully known.

Aditi Chandra teaches art history at the University of California, Merced and specialises in the Islamic world, with a focus on South Asia. Her research shows how, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, physical transformations and subaltern actors disrupting statist narratives rendered the monument unruly even as the State attempted to order it. Her book *Unruly Monuments: Disrupting the State at Delhi's Islamic Architecture* is forthcoming with Cambridge University Press. She is co-editor (with Vinita Chandra) of *Nations and its Margins: Re-thinking Community* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019). She has curated exhibitions showcasing colonial visual travel ephemera.