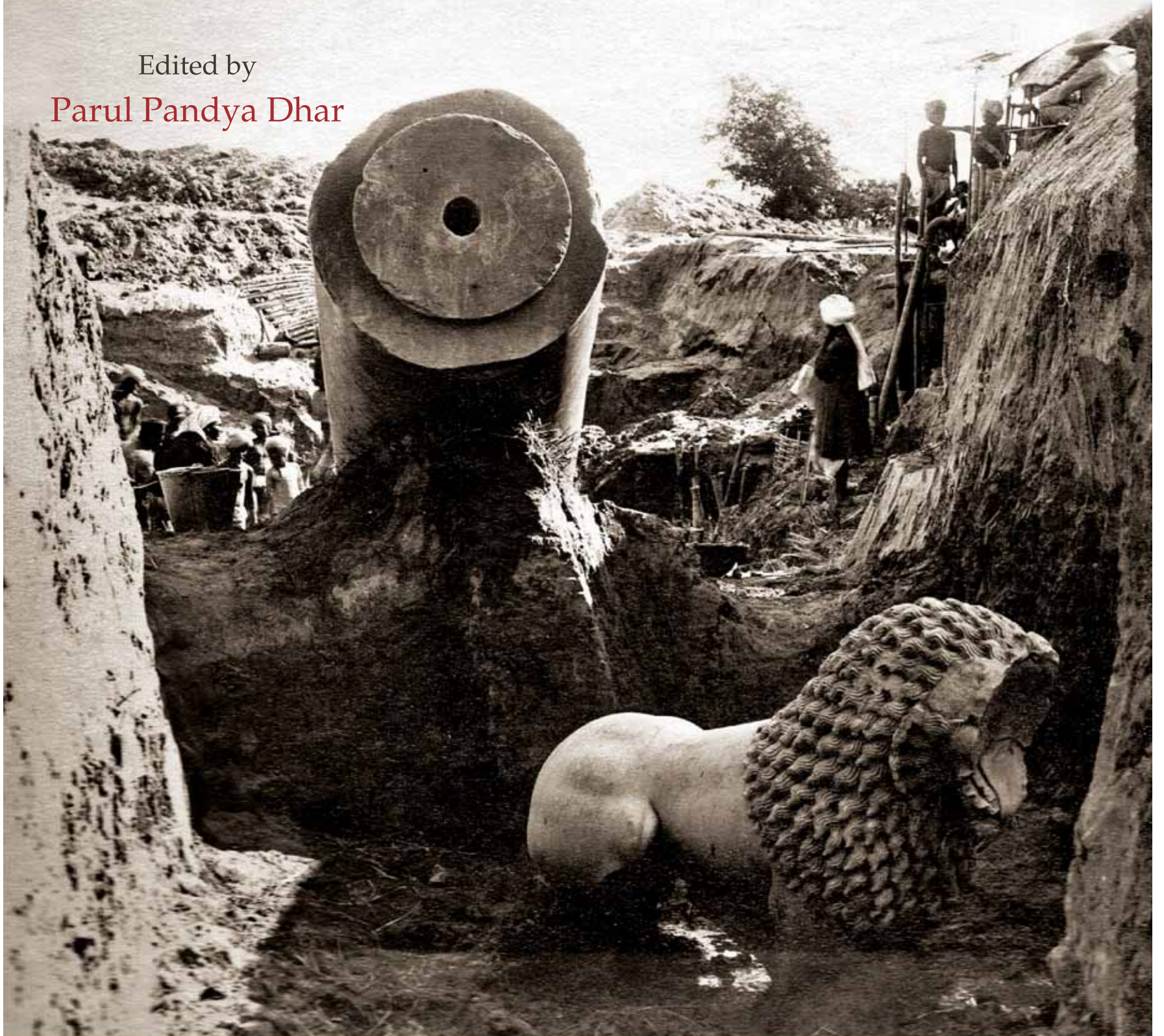# INDIAN ART HISTORY

Changing Perspectives

Edited by

Parul Pandya Dhar

The shaping of the disciplinary practice of art history in the Indian context has been a fascinating process and brings to the fore a range of viewpoints, issues, debates, and methods. Changing perspectives and approaches in academic writings on the visual arts of ancient and medieval India form the focus of this collection of insightful essays.

A critical introduction to the historiography of Indian art sets the stage for and contextualizes the different scholarly contributions on the circumstances, individuals, initiatives, and methods that have determined the course of Indian art history from colonial times to the present. The spectrum of key art historical concerns addressed in this volume include studies in form, style, textual interpretations, iconography, symbolism, representation, connoisseurship, artists, patrons, gendered readings, and the inter-relationships of art history with archaeology, visual archives, and history.

Based on the papers presented at a Seminar, "Historiography of Indian Art: Emergent Methodological Concerns," organized by the National Museum Institute, New Delhi, this book is enriched by the contributions of some scholars who have played a seminal role in establishing art history's disciplinary orientations in the Indian context, and by those who offer more recent perspectives on the subject. Lucid and informative, this is an indispensable resource for all those engaged with the history and historiography of ancient and medieval Indian art in universities and museums across the globe, and will also be of interest to the general reader.

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A History of Art History

The Indian Context

Parul Pandya Dhar

The study of ancient and medieval Indian art and architecture emerged as a nascent pursuit about two centuries ago.[1] In the late eighteenth and through a major part of the nineteenth century, it grew out of a keen and unrelenting interest in Indian antiquities – as curiosities, as admirable 'handicrafts,' as mysterious 'monstrosities,' and above all, as 'artefacts' or sources of past histories of a country then colonized by the British.[2] These objectives set the tone for and determined the methods adopted in the study of Indian archaeology and art history during the nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth century. Despite the marked colonial bias, this period is crucial to the formal inception and institution-alization of art history in India.

Art and the Interpretation of India's Past
Survey, Documentation, Archiving

The potential of the visual artefact in compre-hending India's past was well-appreciated by the British antiquarians of the nineteenth century, even as steps were being taken during the period to understand Indian history and culture through written records.[3] The setting up of the Asiatic Society (of Bengal) in 1784 by William Jones had institutionalized the study of India's past. For Jones, however, the remains of architecture and sculpture were mere "monuments of antiquity and not specimens of art, which seemed to share their origins with the arts of Africa."[4] At the same time, he lamented the loss of *śilpa śāstras*, the treatises, which he felt may have contained important information on traditional Indian arts and manufactures. In fact, it was as 'handicraft' or 'manufacture' that Indian art first evoked British interest.[5] Art and architectural remains

received some attention as part of the regional surveys undertaken to understand the geography, history, customs, languages, literature, and folklore of a people. Important work emerged from individual initiatives such as those of Colin Mackenzie (1754–1821).[6] Working with a team of draftsmen and learned Indians or *puṇḍits*[7], Mackenzie acquired translations of inscriptions and manuscripts and had detailed maps and drawings of some southern Indian sites prepared. His efforts at documenting the Amaravati *stūpa* and site are of particular art historical significance (Howes 2010). Several traditional Indian scholars played an important part in the colonial project of recovering India's past but were usually assigned subordinate roles.

The study of written sources to interpret varied aspects of cultural history, however, remained more or less detached from the object- or monument-centric approach to Indian art and architectural history. Descriptions of ancient and medieval Indian monuments had been part of the travelogues of European travellers during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Visual records of India's built heritage and landscape found representation in the aquatints and paintings of artists such as William Hodges (1744–1787) and the Daniells (1795–1808). Picturesque views of Indian monuments in ruins, or those covered in dense forests of prolonged neglect, were favourite subjects that were painted, published, and displayed at exhibitions in Europe. The 'Picturesque' as a style of visual representation lent itself well to conjure the mystery, beauty, and romance of India's past and to project the contrast of her impoverished present.[8]

These early attempts acquired rigour and greater scientific basis from the mid nineteenth century. The most significant contribution of the period lay in the method of extensive survey, documentation, archiving, and reporting. All through, the image as aquatint, drawing, plaster cast, lithograph, stereoscope, diorama, and finally, photograph was sought after, painstakingly prepared, archived, and commented upon (Guha-Thakurta 2004:3-42). The incipient stages of the photographic juncture in the colonial history of Indian art are addressed as a photo-essay in this Volume by Joachim Bautze. Bautze discusses rare photographs, now in a private collection, taken from the Delhi Fort during the time of the mutiny of 1857, and correlates these with a diary maintained by Lady Coopland, a Britisher who spent almost five months and a half taking refuge inside the Delhi Fort during the mutiny. Bautze then uses another sequence of photographs taken from the fort of Agra in 1902 to weave a contextual visual narrative of the monuments of medieval Agra as understood by the British in early twentieth century. Seen together, the two photo-narratives offer important insights into British reception of and their disposition towards the monuments of the preceding Mughal era. In doing so, the intersections of these monuments as symbols of appropriation, power, strategy, control, and 'empire,' with the intended purposes and aesthetics of the monuments at the time of their making, are brought to the fore. Bautze thus convincingly demonstrates important cross-overs between issues of spectatorship, ideology, and aesthetics in art historical studies.

The visual had thus become an important tool of analysis for cultural interpretation and historical reconstruction during the British colonial period. Despite the biases and drawbacks, this image-centric approach did have its advantages and left a lasting legacy in the scientific documentation of artefacts, archival and museum collections and display, and knowledge dissemination systems in art historical and museum studies. Yet, this was also the period that witnessed the apathetic loss of India's material heritage and the mass exodus of art remains from India into the hands of private collectors and museums abroad.

Establishing Art Historical Constructs in Colonial India

Form, Style, Provenance, Period

Among those who pioneered a methodological study of Indian architecture, James Fergusson (1808–1886) is well-known for his systematic study of Indian architectural history and Alexander Cunningham (1814–1893) is remembered for laying the foundations of Indian archaeology. Both believed in the superiority of Western aesthetics, techniques, and canons, and categorized the material remains of India's past within colonial constructs. Attempts by some Indian scholars such as Ram Raz (1790–1830) and Rajendralala Mitra (1822–1891) to interpret Indian art history in the context of its specific cultural matrix and to engage with its textual and regional coordinates did not find many takers until much later. Ram Raz was in fact the first to study Indian monuments in relation to indigenous architectural texts and the living tradition of architect-sculptors. His works are recorded in the posthumously published *Essay on the Architecture of the Hindus* (Raz 1834; P. Chandra 1983: 9-11; U. Singh 2004: 308-312).

The shared genesis of the modern disciplines of archaeology and art history in nineteenth century India and the circumstances and motivations that determined the early framework of Indian art history are discussed in this Volume by Upinder Singh and Gautam Sengupta. In her contribution, "Archaeologists and Architectural Scholars in Nineteenth Century India," Singh draws attention to little-known aspects of Cunningham's important contributions to Indian art and architectural history. In doing so, she also focuses on the place accorded to art historical issues in the activities of the Archaeological Survey of India during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Cunningham is better known for his emphasis on excavations, field and archival documentation systems, and for prioritizing inscriptional and numismatic data

over the evidence of art and architecture. Yet, for Cunningham the scope of archaeology was very broad, and included many different aspects that could help to illuminate the study of the past.[9] He documented and wrote about a large corpus of monuments in his capacity as Archaeological Surveyor (1861-1865) and as the first Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India (1871–1885). Singh's intensely researched work reveals insightful details about subtle shifts in Cunningham's contextual understandings of early Buddhist sculpture and architecture. These can be detected in his observations on the art remains at Bhilsa Topes, Bharhut, and Bodhgaya – all Buddhist sites on the trail of the Chinese traveller, Xuan Zang, whose writings held a special fascination for him. The gradual emergence of disciplinary boundaries between archaeology and architectural history in an atmosphere of conflicting interests, ideologies, political motivations and priorities, and the academic debates that were symptomatic of the larger preoccupations of the period are revisited and candidly analysed by Singh.[10]

Distinct in approach from Cunningham, James Fergusson, with a clear focus on architectural history, attempted to understand Indian architecture in a global context and through the comparative method.[11] This is apparent in his *History of Architecture in All Countries* (1867) and *Historical Enquiry into the True Principles of Beauty in Art, especially with reference to Architecture* (1849). His passion for arriving at general principles, processes, criteria, and canons of architecture through extensive surveys and illustrated records has rarely been matched. He documented and attempted to 'read' the monument to its last detail, treating it as a 'fixed' and hence the most reliable source of cultural interpretation. His focus was on the artistic and technical processes of its making, and on the period and region styles. He did not consult texts and inscriptions, yet he evinced interest in Indian mythology and religion, as is evident in his *Tree and Serpent Worship...* (1868). Although culture-specific and textured readings of Indian architecture were alien to him, his observations convinced him of the integrity and rationale of

ancient and medieval Indian architectural forms and ornament. According to him, Egyptian, Classical Greek, and Indian architecture represented 'true' styles as opposed to the 'imitative' styles seen during the revival of the Classical and the Gothic in Europe. Fergusson's macro surveys and comparative approach were full of insights. Lithographs, drawings, and finally photographs [Figs. 1.1-1.3] greatly aided in generating more precise documentation – far beyond what the 'picturesque' aquatints and sketches of William Hodges and the Daniells of the preceding century had achieved.

But beyond his empathy for Indian architecture, Fergusson was an avowed believer of the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon *vis-a-vis* the Asian. He adopted racial (Aryan – non-Aryan) and religious (Buddhist–Hindu–Jain–Muhammadan) classifications for art periods and styles, which have had a persistent presence in Indian art historical discourse. He was also convinced of the progressive degeneration of Indian art, the best being represented by ancient (Buddhist) art. The yardstick for judgement was always 'Western' and the cultural context of the monument was in many ways lost to him. Fergusson's approach was continued by his successors, James Burgess, Henry Cousens, Alexander Rea, A.H. Longhurst, and Percy Brown, to name some of the notable architectural historians (P. Chandra 1975: 1-39). It may be recalled here that in categorizing Indian art and architecture, Cunningham had adopted a time-based classification, terming the periods as 'Indo-Grecian,' 'Indo-Scythian,' and 'Indo-Sassanian' that none-the-less reflected his prejudice about the derivative nature of Indian art (P. Chandra 1983: 22-23).

As mentioned earlier, the most glaring omission in much of the Orientalist writings was the neglect of Indian texts and contexts in interpreting Indian art and architecture. This had resulted in some odd and obviously incorrect speculations about the origins and derivations of Indian architectural forms, such as the 'origin' of the Indian temple from the Buddhist *stūpa* (P. Chandra 1975:16). Among the architectural

historians whose methods were more or less in line with those of Fergusson, Henry Cousens, who came in contact with some Gujarati artisans during his field surveys, had demonstrated an interest in understanding the traditional basis of Indian architecture (Burgess and Cousens 1903: 21-28). Unfortunately, he did not pursue this approach further. Babu Rajendralala Mitra (1822–1891), a nineteenth century Indian scholar educated in the West, whose writings hold a special place in the early decades of Indian art history, was an important voice in the Nationalist understandings of Indian art. His unique position in Indian art historiography forms the subject of Gautam Sengupta's contribution, "Rajendralala Mitra and the Formative Years of Indian Art History." Sengupta gives an in-depth reading of the ambivalences and dilemmas noticed in the writings of this Indian contemporary of Cunningham and Fergusson. While Rajendralala Mitra contested the hegemony of European scholarship, his training and hence understanding of Indian art were grounded in Western terms of reference and Greco-Roman standards or canons. At the same time, his acute awareness of the regional context of Eastern Indian artistic manifestations, as seen in his works on the antiquities of Orissa and Bodhgaya, helped in underlining the 'region' in relation to the 'nation' as an important construct in the study of Indian art and architecture. [Figs. 1.2 and 1.3].[12]

While focusing on Alexander Cunningham and Rajendralala Mitra respectively in their contributions to this Volume, Upinder Singh and Gautam Sengupta have touched upon several larger issues pertinent to the formative years of Indian art history – the intimately allied nature of the disciplines of history, archaeology, and art history; the political compulsions of academic research in the colonial period; issues concerning the 'region' versus the 'nation;' the conflict between ideology and training of the early 'native' scholar; Western assumptions of the derivative nature and gradual decay of Indian art; and the differing academic priorities and ideological tensions between Alexander Cunningham, James Fergusson, Rajendralala

Mitra, Jas Burgess, J.D.M. Beglar, and others. The debates and differences between 'Orientalist' and 'Nationalist' ideological moorings as exemplified by Fergusson's disputes with and accusations against Rajendralala Mitra, steeped in racial overtones, are well-known in colonial art historiography (Fergusson 1970, reprint of 1884). At a less obvious level, tensions arising from the politics of disciplinary priorities and personal ambitions prevailed amongst the Orientalists too, as is demonstrated in U. Singh's paper through a careful reading of Beglar's personal remarks on a copy of Fergusson's book of 1884. In a larger context, it reveals the academic politics that shaped the relative institutional importance accorded to archaeology *vis-a-vis* art and architectural history.

Even though Fergusson, Burgess, and other contemporary architectural historians had paid attention to 'form' and 'style' in Indian architecture, Indian sculpture and painting did not gain favour as 'fine art' until the early decades of the twentieth century and were considered useful mainly as visual records of the ('debased') customs, manners, religious beliefs, and other aspects of India's past. Indian sculpture was viewed through the lens of a classical Western standard epitomized by the Greek arts of antiquity. The lack of 'realism' or 'naturalism,' the absence of a sense of perspective and proportion, the many heads and multiple arms of divinities, animal-headed gods, explicitly sexual scenes on temple walls, and such other representations evoked several derogatory responses to Indian art (Mitter 1977). While figural sculpture was severely criticized, abstract patterns and architectural ornament were rated highly as representing the finest traditions in handicrafts, meant to be carefully documented and emulated in British industrial design and manufacture.

Beyond these observations on the general characteristics of Indian art, there was little by way of a systematic stylistic analysis of Indian sculpture. A. Foucher (*L' Art Greco-Bouddhique du Gandhara*, 1905, 1918, 1923) evolved a methodological basis for the stylistic study of

Gandhara sculptures, several of which were not inscribed or dated.[13] It is no surprise that Gandharan art should have been among the first to have received detailed attention [Figs. 1.4 and 1.5]. Colonial conviction in the Greco-Roman affiliations of all that was the earliest and best in Indian art was only strengthened by the continued excavations in the 'north-western frontier provinces' during John Marshall's time as Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India. Gandharan art remains excavated at sites such as Taxila served to reaffirm the idea of India's long-standing debt to the culture of the Occident. Foucher employed visual criteria and identified cross-cultural influences systematically, and at times correlated these with other available historical records to arrive at broad categories of classification. Using these devices, he evolved a model for the chronological development of Gandharan sculpture and its obvious debt to Greco-Roman art. Where dated examples were unavailable, style became an important tool of analysis in working out the development of Gandharan sculpture. Categories of classification were guided by visual considerations in the main, with some recourse to texts. Foucher also postulated the Greek origins of the Buddha image, which was to be counter-argued by Coomaraswamy subsequently (Coomaraswamy 1927b). Much later, Foucher's stylistic analyses of Gandharan art was carried further and refined in a detailed and important study by Lolita Nehru (1990). The study of Gandharan art has since been the subject of several important research projects, books, and exhibitions.[14]

Ludwig Bachhofer (*Early Indian Sculpture,* 1929) used his training with Heinrich Wölfflin in the Austrian-German school of *Kunstgeschichte* to analyze the stylistic development of Indian sculpture. Bachhofer provided a rigorous framework of stylistic analysis, which included details of individual forms and overall composition. While he was trained in Western art history, he was also sensitive to the distinctiveness of Indian art. His analysis of Indian sculpture from Bharhut, Sanchi, and Amaravati reveals keen insights, even if one

encounters generalizations, such as the attempt to fit the sequence of development in sculpture from Bharhut to Sanchi to Amaravati in accordance with a universal inner logic of stylistic development (P. Chandra 1983: 74-79).

In sum, art historical methods of formalistic and stylistic analyses as well as historical and cultural interpretations of art were attempted but were often entrenched in colonial constructs of race and religion or categorized to emphasize the derivative nature of Indian art. The biological model of the origins, growth, and decay of a style was chronologically inverted in the case of India – the best being the most ancient (Buddhist) and of derivative (Indo-Grecian) character. Despite the undeniable significance of these pioneering works, and some attempts at interpreting Indian art and architecture on its own terms, several significant issues remained largely unaddressed.

The Search for 'Origins' and 'Meaning'

The nationalist response to colonial prejudices translated as a quest for researching the origins, rationale, 'inner meaning,' and above all, the 'Indian-ness' of Indian art. The aesthetic appreciation of Indian art, beyond its usefulness as a visual document of Indian history, was also in evidence. To meet these objectives, methodological approaches came to be rooted at first in symbolism, iconography, and iconology. This in turn led to a concerted engagement with texts during the first half of the twentieth century. The search for meaning required an understanding of cultural contexts – myth, religion, literature, the language of gesture and posture, technical treatises, literary texts, and local culture. To the Western mind, this knowledge seemed more remote and difficult to cultivate than to apply the already evolved Western art historical methods to an interpretation of form and style. Even so, the essential 'Indian-ness' of Indian art was also advocated strongly by some European scholars such as E.B. Havell (1861–1934), Heinrich Zimmer (1890–1943), and Stella Kramrisch (1896–1993).[15]

Ananda K. Coomaraswamy (1877–1947) was at the forefront of 'Nationalist' responses to

'Orientalist' constructions of Indian art history during the colonial period.[16] He placed the text-image relationship at the centre of his relentless investigations into the roots and rationale of India's artistic past. He sourced Vedic and post-Vedic texts, Buddhist and Jaina literature, treatises on art and architecture, varied genres of Indian literary writings, as also a few epigraphic and numismatic sources to marshal evidence towards his objectives. The etymology and semantics of indigenous art and architectural terms interested him as a source for understanding the symbolic and functional basis of the vocabulary of art. He engaged with inter-relationships between the creation, form, function, and symbolism of Indian art, harnessing a range of sources – textual and visual – in an attempt to free it from colonial prejudices. A shared substratum of ideas and beliefs in an essentially Asian cultural matrix (Coomaraswamy 1927a), and the notion of 'Greater India'(now outdated and revised but which was an integral part of the nationalist historiography) found a strong proponent in him. Some of his writings also follow the comparative method, positing the Orient and the Occident as theoretical binaries in evolving comparative categories for analysis.

Coomaraswamy approached the study of traditional Indian architecture from the historical-technical as well as from the metaphysical and theoretical viewpoints (Wagoner 1999). He correlated textual, epigraphic, and visual sources, in particular the narrative reliefs of early Indian sculpture at Bharhut, Sanchi, and Amaravati to arrive at the earliest available evidence of the beginnings of Indian architecture and to analyze its subsequent development (Meister ed. 1992). Equally or even more so, he was concerned with the metaphysical, religious, and symbolic underpinnings of Indian art and architecture (Meister ed. 1995). His relentless search for the non-derivative or 'original' nature of Indian art is typified in the debate on the Indian origin of the Buddha image, where he also establishes its development from early Indian *yakṣa* prototypes, as a counterpoint to Foucher's thesis that accorded an exclusive Gandharan (and hence Greco-Roman) derivation to the Buddha image (Coomaraswamy 1927b).

Though Coomaraswamy's method took count of the visual-empirical alongside textual evidence, his interest in the visual did not extend to an analysis of the form or style of Indian art *per se*. To him, the formal or representational in art was of interest in so far as it signified an inner meaning that almost always reverberated with a spiritual quality. At the same time, he was also interested in the functional and technical processes that shaped the vocabulary of art and architecture. In the process, he combined and corroborated evidence from a cross-section of sources to construct a strong defence of India's art. The range of subjects which he wrote on and the issues he raised continue to form the basis upon which art historians have built newer directions of research.

Two noted Indologists, Stella Kramrisch (1896–1993) and Heinrich Zimmer (1890–1943), shared with Ananda Coomaraswamy a deep empathy for the origins, meanings, and motivations of Indian art. Yet there are noticeable differences in their orientations and perspectives, which may have resulted from differences in training. As Ratan Parimoo points out in his contribution to this Volume, "Stella Kramrisch's Approach to Indian Art History," while Kramrisch and Zimmer were trained in the Austrian-German School of *Kunstgeschichte*, Coomaraswamy's academic environment traversed English, American, and French circles. Parimoo emphasizes lesser known aspects of this 'Nationalist' period of Indian art history by drawing attention to the close interaction between Indian art studies and Austrian-German academia, in particular the Vienna School of Art History. He details the influence of philosophers and art historians such as G.W.F. Hegel, Alois Riegl, Heinrich Wölfflin, Hildebrandt, Josef Stryzowgski, and Max Dvorak on Kramrisch's writings. Parimoo draws an important distinction between the attitudes and motivations of British writers (with exceptions, such as E.B. Havell) who could not escape the biases of a colonizer, and those trained in the German academic

milieu, whose writings reveal far greater empathy for Indian philosophy, myth, religion, and art.

When discussing Indian sculpture and painting, Kramrisch's sensitive prose approaches poetry in a sense that echoes the intrinsic qualities of the art she elucidates. Sculpting with words in an inimitable style, she was to a great extent successful in claiming the long-denied status of 'fine art' for Indian sculpture, painting, and architecture.[17] As different from the writings of Coomaraswamy, for whom the 'outer' form of art was a means to approach the beauty and purpose of its inner meaning, Kramrisch also verbalized the undeniable artistic merit of Indian art and the relationship of the 'outer' form and style of Indian art with its 'internal' processes – metaphysical, ritualistic, and aesthetic. Towards these aims, she brought to bear her training in the methods of the Vienna school of *Kunstgeschichte* as well as a detailed study of some Indian scriptures and treatises. Through Hegelian readings *(zeitgeist)* and by drawing Indian parallels with his interpretation of the 'Classic' in Greek sculpture, she attempted to bridge the 'spirit' and 'form' chasm in Indian art. The specific treatment of space and time in the arts of India, especially its bearing on human anatomy, perspective, proportion, and the relationship of humans to nature in art, were addressed by Kramrisch and also by Zimmer (1933).

Heinrich Zimmer's writings, accessible in English mainly through posthumous publications edited by Joseph Campbell, reveal an emphasis on the inter-relationships between myth, religion, philosophy, and art.[18] Influenced by the Indian ideal of German Romanticism, Zimmer, a student of Heinrich Lüders, was also part of the paradigm shift in German academia during the first half of the twentieth century, from Positivism to (Hegelian) *Geistesgechichte*. C.G. Jung's works in the field of psychology (myth and dreams) also influenced him greatly. These factors led him to think laterally and evolve a cross-disciplinary approach to Indology which transcended the mechanical nature of philological practice embodied by his predecessors, and he

aspired to draw attention to an essentially Indian 'world-view' as reflected in Indian art. His method was primarily ahistorical; chronological and regional variations were hardly of concern to him, nor were issues of origins and antiquity. He was interested in the 'perennial' myths, symbols, and forms of Indian art, as also the notion of 'eternal space and time' which he felt India embodied. Never having set foot on Indian soil, he imagined India through Tāntric and Purāṇic texts and through Indian sculptures in museums abroad. In *Kunstform und Yoga* (1926), his primary focus was on "metaphysical meanings and instrumentality of Indian images as meditational devices'' (Linda 1994: 131).

Image, Text, and the Living Tradition
Terminology, Formal Analysis, Textual Criticism, and the Artistic Canon

The process of 'discovery' of India's material and artistic heritage may be said to have been at its peak in the early decades of the twentieth century. With the expanding activities of the Archaeological Survey of India, the corpus of art remains from different parts of the country was steadily increasing. Texts and treatises relating to art and architecture were being discovered and edited; a few of these were also translated. This increase in the corpus of art remains and related texts naturally led to more focused studies in text-image correspondences with respect to iconography, iconometry, terminology, principles of architecture, and canons of painting.

Text-Image Studies in Architecture: The regional and cultural contexts of architecture, its origins, forms, function, and significance, and the methodology of relating the empirical evidence of monuments to texts, inscriptions, and the living tradition of architects and sculptors, gained momentum in the second and third quarters of the twentieth century. In delayed pursuance of Ram Raz's early initiatives, more regional architectural texts were uncovered and scholars like Manmohan Ganguli, N.K. Bose, P.K. Acharya, and N.V. Mallaya took up the task of interpreting texts, often in association with local traditional practitioners.[19] The realization that

European terminology was inadequate for explaining the specific character and nuances of Indian architecture led Manmohan Ganguli (1912) to correlate local architectural terms used by Orissan artisans with extant monuments. N.K. Bose (1932) also focused on Orissan architecture in relation to its regional textual tradition (*Bhubanapradīpa*) and the living tradition of artisans. P.K. Acharya (1927) on the other hand, concentrated primarily on the compilation, editing, and translating of texts and terms without correlating these to practice. Such an approach resulted in several misinterpretations, as critiqued by Coomaraswamy, who also wrote on Indian architectural terms (1928) almost in response to Acharya's exclusive focus on textual data. N.V. Mallaya *(Tantrasamuccaya)*, Narmadashankar Sompura *(Śilparatnākara)*, Jagannath Ambaram *(Bṛhad-śilpaśāstra)*, Bhagwandas Jain *(Vāstusāraprakaraṇa)*, and some others considerably enhanced the corpus available for relating text to practice in Indian architectural studies (P. Chandra 1975: 30-39). Stella Kramrisch (1946) interpreted the rapidly expanding corpus of traditional textual knowledge on Indian architecture in the light of Hindu metaphysical concepts to study the meaning and symbolism of the Hindu Temple.

An integrated approach to the analysis of texts in relation to temple architecture gained considerable momentum, most notably in the writings of K.R. Srinivasan (1964), M.A. Dhaky and M.W. Meister (Dhaky 1961; *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture (EITA)* 1983 – forthcoming), and also Bruno Dagens (Dagens ed. 1994). In particular, M.A. Dhaky's incisive readings have been based on a life time of intense field work, thorough and scientific analysis and correlation of architectural practice with its textual basis, and a simultaneous understanding of the living tradition of architect-sculptors, particularly the Sompura family of architects and sculptors from Gujarat. From Ram Raz to Dhaky, then, the usage of ethnographic parallels has also not been missing from the process of resurrecting the technical and terminological rationale of Indian temple architecture. The efforts of M.A. Dhaky, Pramod Chandra, M.W. Meister, and

some others resulted in the *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture (EITA)* project, which was conceived as early as 1967 and saw the publication of its first volume on the early temple architecture of South India in 1983. With contributions by architectural historians such as K.V. Soundararajan, G. Mitchell, and others, led by M.A. Dhaky's and M.W. Meister's contributions and editorship, the *EITA* volumes have achieved the most significant just as onerous task of arriving at an authentic technical vocabulary for temple architecture that doesn't merely meet a nomenclatural obligation in defining the components of Indian temples but, importantly, also addresses the structural, symbolic, and functional origins and meanings of the terms and their usage in practice. In doing so, it provides a sound basis for understanding the formalistic and stylistic development of Indian temples. With the final publication of the annotated and illustrated glossary Volume (Dhaky, *EITA,* forthcoming), fundamental research on the formal logic, terminology, and morphology of Indian temple architecture as also a comprehensive stylistic analysis of the regional and sub-regional variations will have been achieved to a considerable extent. The resultant debate on terminology – its validity and indispensability (or the lack of it) in articulating the specific characteristics of a monument – has been a continuing one in Indian architectural studies. Strict adherence to *śāstric* terminology[20] and the organization of sections and chapters based on dynastic labels have led to some criticism of the *EITA*'s invaluable contributions from limited quarters. The dynastic labels are in fact just a convenient expedient to group monuments; the various chapters of the *EITA* volumes reveal a keen understanding of the regional and sub-regional basis of style.[21]

Text-based Studies in Iconography and Symbolism: Given the mis-readings of Indian figural sculpture, in particular of religious iconic imagery, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Mitter 1977), the first obvious and fundamental need was to arrive at culture-specific readings of the meanings embedded in Indian images as these may have

been understood at the time of their production. Sourcing these meanings at first meant correlating the visual codes of ancient icons with iconographic texts dealing in the visualization of deities. Studies in Indian iconography *(pratimā-lakṣaṇa)* and iconology *(pratimā-vijñāna)* thus had remained focused initially on identifications, terminology, and classifications arrived at through intense and meticulous text-image studies, specifically in relation to the plethora of religious imagery, classified in accordance with their varied *sthānas* (body positions), *āyudhas* (attributes and weapons), *āsanas* (stances), *mudrās* (postures), *hastas* (hand gestures), *pāda-bhedas* (leg positions), colours, etc. T.A. Gopinath Rao's expansive research, *Elements of Hindu Iconography* (1914) still remains a standard reference on the subject. Gopinath Rao drew from a cross-section of ancient and medieval compendia – *śāstras, saṃgrahas, purāṇas, āgamas*, and *tantras* – and related these to the images of Hindu deities. Benoytosh Bhattacharya (1924) explicated Buddhist iconography by drawing exhaustive references from important texts on Buddhist iconography such as the *Sādhanamālā* and *Niṣpannayogāvalī* and also critically edited these texts. The works of Coomaraswamy, N.K. Bhattasali (1929), and J.N. Banerjea (1941) are also noteworthy contributions to studies in the iconography of Indian images. V.S. Agrawala's prolific writings on the symbolism of recurrent Indian art motifs and metaphysical concepts in the Vedic and post-Vedic texts still remain an important source of reference.[22]

B.C. Bhattacharya (1974), and thereafter Jyotindra Jain and Eberhard Fischer (1978) have made important contributions to studies in Jaina iconography. The most exhaustive work undertaken thus far on the subject of Jaina iconography is by Umakant P. Shah (*Jaina Rūpamaṇḍana*, 1987).[23] Lokesh Chandra's monumental fifteen-volume *Dictionary of Buddhist Iconography* (1999–2005) has now become a fundamental and irreplaceable source for scholars of Buddhist art. C. Sivaramamurti considerably extended the domain of textual references for interpreting iconography to include non-canonical literature, especially

classical Sanskrit poetry, and also epigraphic evidence, as may be observed in his detailed study, *Naṭarāja in Art, Thought and Literature* (1974). More recently, Gudrun Bühnemann (2000-2001) has contributed an intensive and detailed study, *The Iconography of Hindu Tantric Deities*, arriving at classifications based on canonical religious texts. These fundamental researches, which often required the unravelling of complex imagery and puzzling inconsistencies between text and image, have paved the way for more comprehensive approaches to the interpretation of the icon in Indian art. The Heidelberg Seminar on *Shastric Traditions in Indian Arts* (Dahmen-Dallapiccola eds. 1989) had focused on a range of problematic issues and methods in correlating text to practice in the case of ancient Indian art forms.

Canons of Indian Painting: Perhaps no other Indian text on art has warranted and received as much scholarly attention from art historians as the *Citrasūtra* of the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*[24] (c. sixth-seventh century CE) – the *Nāṭyaśāstra* having been a subject of as much if not greater enquiry, but mainly among aestheticians and performing art historians. This disjuncture is in itself telling – an issue to which we shall return shortly.

The earliest edition of the *Citrasūtra* was published in 1912 and the earliest art historical interpretations of key concepts and canons given in the third *khaṇḍa* of the *Citrasūtra* were by S. Kramrisch (1924) and A. Coomaraswamy (1932, 1956). The creative process in ancient Indian art was understood by Coomaraswamy as the visualization of form through meditative internalization *(yoga)* and its subsequent realization by the artist in accordance with aesthetic and iconometric injunctions. It was in this light that he explained specific cultural connotations of the canons of Indian art as given in the *Citrasūtra* and interpreted artistic criteria such as *sādṛśya* ('similitude'), *pramāṇa* (proportion), *rūpabhedāḥ* (differentiations or typologies of form), *varṇikābhaṅga* (colour-differentiation), *bhāva* (emotional disposition), and *lāvaṇya yojanam* (gracefulness in composition)

– the six limbs of traditional Indian painting (*ṣaḍaṅga*) to explicate a theory of Indian art. Kramrisch had discussed these artistic criteria with greater detailing of pictorial modes and conventions; Priyabala Shah (1958), a Sanskritist, took the understanding of the text much further in terms of textual criticism, by adding and interpreting on the basis of six additional manuscripts. C. Sivaramamurti (1978) brought to the interpretation of the text, the totality of his understanding of the Indian artistic tradition, particularly of classical Sanskrit literature and contemporaneous painting traditions. Parul Dave Mukherji (1998) included two additional manuscripts and re-examined the textual interpretations of her predecessors, against the backdrop of her readings of the colonial, nationalist, and post-colonial interventions in the interpretation of this ancient text, by looking at key terms such as *sādṛśya, satya,* and *anukṛti* and their bearing on the issue of 'naturalism' in Indian art. Such re-assessments, in so far as these are based on a re-examination of primary source materials and in the light of newly discovered manuscripts, are pertinent and part of a continuous process of knowledge generation in academic discourse. In the same vein, future scholarship expectedly will continue to decode current motivations and add fresher interpretations, thereby further enriching our understanding of the past. Perhaps of even greater consequence are some fundamental issues which arise in relation to the interpretation of key terms and concepts in art.

Interpretation of key art terms in theory and practice: Three basic issues seem to arise in relation to the interpretation of key art terms. First, given that the objective is to understand the concepts and principles of art practice, the interpretation of key art terms cannot be divorced from the way these have been expressed in the contemporaneous art practices of a given culture. Second, the meanings of key terms as interpreted through the study of a particular text cannot be viewed in isolation and need to be seen in the light of parallel interpretations from other texts (and at times, also inscriptions) belonging to the same culture. When the same key concepts and

terms (and its variants) are repeatedly articulated in a given cultural context in texts belonging to different regions and periods, the mediations of time and space and the resultant shifts in meaning must be understood through a simultaneous viewing of its usage in different texts and contexts – including the examples seen in corresponding art practices. Third, given the close affinities between the various traditional Indian art forms, many of the artistic criteria and key art terms are shared between visual and performing arts. Despite the specific techniques and methods that characterize different artistic genres, the interpretation of key art terms in visual arts (eg. sculpture and painting), often cannot remain limited to treatises on *citra* and *śilpa* alone: the *Nāṭyaśāstra* offers a clear example (as do the poetic treatises or *alaṁkāra śāstras*) of the need to integrate shared artistic criteria and key art terms explicated in texts on Indian aesthetics, poetics, and the performing arts with the specific visual art treatises to arrive at more comprehensive understandings.

Interdependence of the arts in text and practice: The *Kalāmūlaśāstra* and the *Kalātattvakośa* series of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in New Delhi, under the general editorship of Kapila Vatsyayan, has been focusing systematically on the implications and meanings of key concepts and terms in traditional Indian visual and performing arts as found in a range of texts – from the Brāhmaṇas and Śrauta Sūtras, through the Purāṇic and Upaniṣadic literature, to the specific art treatises and their translation into a vocabulary for the arts. One may also mention here the contribution made by the tomes on *Concepts of Space* (1991) and *Concepts of Time* (1996) edited by Kapila Vatsyayan. Her continued emphasis on the inter-dependence of the ancient Indian art forms finds elucidation in this Volume through her essay, "The Discipline of Art History: Its Multidimensional Nature." Among other art historians of note, B.N. Goswamy (1986) has approached the moods and sentiments depicted in Indian miniature painting in relation to the *rasa*-theory and *nāyikā-bhedas* (types of heroines) of the aesthetic and poetic traditions. Some other

obvious areas where the visual and performance modes correspond directly are the Rāgamālā paintings and Indian music; and the *karaṇas* (cadences of movement) depicted in Indian dance and sculpture. Beyond these obvious correspondences, there are subtler inter-relations between ritual practices, narratives, music, dance, theatre, sculpture, architecture, and painting. Relatively very few studies have focused on these aspects thus far.

Art and Society

Social Dimensions of Indian Art

The over-arching emphasis on the abstract, conceptual, and aesthetic basis of Indian art had to find a balance in understanding the more humanistic and social forces at work in determining its means, methods, and motivations. Colonial misrepresentations of Indian art had for long been critiqued by Nationalists who rose in its defence and in doing so, reiterated the 'other-worldliness' of Indian art, often to the exclusion of more practical and earthy concerns. Niharranjan Ray's important contributions to the study of early Indian art (Ray 1945) favoured the sociological method as a corrective, though he also believed that the processes of art could not always be explained by the socio-economic forces at work.[25] In *An Approach to Indian Art* (1974), he emphasized the need to move away from a perspective that constantly felt the need to defend Indian art forms on the basis of their religious and metaphysical content. Ray's focus was on establishing for Indian art a firm humanistic, artistic, and social basis. As regards the sources for art interpretation, he advocated an approach that needed to remain anchored to archaeology (Ray 1945: vii-viii) and questioned the skewed reliance on certain kinds of textual sources to the exclusion of other texts.[26]

Ancient and Medieval Indian Artists: Identity, Organization, Patronage, Migrations, and Connoisseurship

The social context of art and the role of the artist, patron, and public had not completely eluded the attentions of earlier writers such as Coomaraswamy (1909) or Kramrisch (1956), although it can be said to have received summary treatment from them. Coomaraswamy's early writings on the Indian craftsman (1909) were largely ethnographic in nature, based on living craft traditions as practised in pre-colonial and pre-industrial India and Sri Lanka. His chief motivation for doing so was the immediate threat to traditional systems of craft education, patronage, and sustenance patterns, caused by colonial interventions. He categorized the craftsman as the village artisan, the urban artisan who was a member of a guild, and those artisans who were in service of a king, chieftain, or religious institution. In trying to understand the means and motivations of the pre-colonial craftsman, he also included stray textual and inscriptional references to craft-guilds and craft-education in ancient India. Four and a half decades later, Kramrisch (1956) discussed the ancient Indian artist in a brief paper. Her sources included some references from the ancient and medieval art treatises and a couple of medieval northern Indian inscriptions. Through these, she commented upon the artist and patron in ancient and medieval Indian societies – their systems of remuneration, skill versus inherited vocation, and their class or caste basis. Issues of artistic judgement and aspiration were treated at the metaphysical and psychological levels through references to a few Śāstric and Vedic passages. The issue of the anonymity versus identity of the ancient Indian artist was discussed briefly but given an 'other-worldly' explanation.

The artists' identity, role, status, organization, and migrations in relation to patrons and society were pursued since the mid-sixties and seventies of the preceding century. Notable and path-breaking works in this field are by S. Settar for southern Indian and ancient Indian artists (1973, 1992, and 2003), R.N. Misra (1975 and 2009) for ancient and medieval northern Indian artists, and B.N. Goswamy (1968, 1970, and 1992) for the miniature painters of medieval northern Indian hill states. The assumed anonymity of the ancient Indian artist and its explanations couched in the metaphysical were brought to critical examination by these scholars, who detailed

approaches for the study of pre-modern Indian artists and highlighted several exceptions by pointing to the careers and journeys of those artists who had left their signatures on their creations. [Fig. 1.6].

S. Settar subjects the theme of the artisan-artist in Mauryan and post-Mauryan India to a thorough scrutiny in his paper, "Early Indian Artists (c. 300 BCE – 200 CE)," in the present Volume. Settar had earlier established a methodology for studying the signatures of Later Chalukyan and Hoysala artists, their itinerary, status, patronage, organization and consequent implications on the architectural and sculptural styles, by interpreting inscriptional data recorded in archaeological reports, and correlating it with the empirical evidence of monuments and sculptures (Settar 1973 and 1992).[27] He had also catalogued the careers of artists working on minor art objects such as hero stones (Settar and Sontheimer eds. 1982: 313 – 346). His more recent work has been on early Indian artisans (Settar 2003). In this Volume, Settar takes his research on artisans and scribe-engravers of the Ashokan times further, to also include post-Mauryan sculptors and other categories of artisan-craftsmen. His approach moves away from earlier trends of archaeological reporting, iconographic descriptions, and textual interpretations in Indian art historical studies to highlight the importance of inscriptional evidence as an invaluable tool in art historical interpretation in ways that go well beyond the obsessive preoccupation with chronology. By analysing the use of script and language used circumstantially by artisans, he establishes the linguistic and geographical identities of the migrating artists from the North-western regions of the Mauryan Empire to the Gangetic Valley on the one hand and to the Deccan-Karnataka region on the other. The vast corpus of Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions catalogued by H. Lüders and S. Konow is tapped for the first time and employed judiciously for a study of artists in Mauryan and post-Mauryan India. This is then painstakingly correlated with information from various sources ranging from copper seals to textual references about wood carvers, ivory

carvers, smiths, carpenters, and sculptors in the *jātakas,* to reveal the signatures, careers, journeys, specializations, and creations of the earliest recorded artists and artisans in Indian history.

R.N. Misra's contribution to the present Volume, titled "Ancient Indian Artists: Organizations in Lieu of Guilds," focuses on the nature of artists' organizations or collectives in ancient and early medieval India. Misra draws a distinction between the guild-like organizations (*śreṇīs*) of artisan groups practising occupations such as pottery, carpentry, weaving, and smithy, and the loose collectives or cadres of artists (sculptors and architects). His research indicates that in the case of ancient and early medieval sculptors and architects, artists' cadres *(eg. sūtradhāra, vijñānika, śilpī,* and *rūpakāra),* rather than their guilds (*śreṇīs*), clans, family, or *gharānās,*[28] seem to emerge prominently in their organizational set-up and in professional activity. At the same time, he also points to the blurred boundaries between the artist and craftsman in ancient India. One may add here that different art or craft specializations in ancient India were also at times open to cross-overs (eg. ivory carver or carpenter as sculptor; coppersmith as bronze image caster). Drawing from researches by other scholars on Later Chalukyan and Hoysala period artists (Settar 1973 and 1992; Narasimhamurthy 1985) and correlating it with his own substantial work in relation to northern Indian artists (Misra 1975), Misra suggests that hierarchy (eg. master and apprentice), varying levels of expertise within the group, and the work-driven itinerant nature of the artists often precluded any long-lasting professional guild-like formations, despite gifts of livestock (and rarely, also of land) to some artists. In his paper, Misra has judiciously used inscriptional data and textual references to highlight the available references to various types of collectives in the Indian context, their hierarchical organization, and mobility within the cadres of artists.

The researches of Settar and Misra indicate intense competition, rivalries, and claims of supremacy among artists in search of prestige and patrons – a scenario at variance with

Coomaraswamy's (1909: 8) and Kramrisch's (1956: 338) earlier generalizations about the assured livelihood of the artist-craftsman in ancient India. The writings of S. Settar, R.N. Misra, and B.N. Goswamy (who scanned medieval pilgrims' records in the possession of priests)[29] have vastly improved our understanding of the (not-so-anonymous) creators of Indian art and highlighted the human element in art creation.

The related issues of 'art versus craft' and '*desī* (folk) versus *mārgī* (classical)' have also received some attention during the course of research on artist-artisans and on the processes of art production. One may mention here the very rewarding ethnographic study of the Viśvakarmīs or the Pāñcalas (five groups of artisan-craftsmen) of South India by Jan Brouwer (1995). Detailed studies on communities of artists situated near pilgrimage centres, such as Nathadwara in Rajasthan (Lyons 2004) have also been forthcoming. For medieval Indian painting traditions, there is a far greater mention of names of artists and several art historians have now discussed the names of master-artists in relation to issues of connoisseurship.

Gendered Readings

Issues of spectatorship and representation in a gendered context have been marginalized in Indian art history. This relates not just to modes of representation of the female in art but also to the male body and to eroticism and sexuality – and their relationship to 'agency,' patronage, and power. The plethora of depictions of female forms has in fact invited ample attention, but primarily in terms of stereotypes and ideals of feminine beauty in ancient Indian literature and art.

Gendered issues of spectatorship and representation were first addressed by Vidya Dehejia (Dehejia ed. 1997: 1-21), who drew attention to methodological concerns in the Indian context. Dehejia questioned the rationale of applying Western feminist critiques, given that much of ancient Indian art is encountered in a sacred context. Specific issues of 'gaze,'

'representation,' 'agency,' women artists, male sexuality,[30] spectatorship and femininity[31] in the Indian context were discussed. The presence, rationale, context, and function of erotic sculptures on religious monuments have been treated at length by Devangana Desai (Desai 1985). Desai examined a range of empirical material on erotic representations in art from the third century BCE to the fifteenth century CE, and pointed to a variety of themes and objectives pertaining to the erotic in Indian sculpture. The subject of erotic metaphors and puns in visual art has also been detailed by her. Non-sacred erotic art, such as that seen in early Indian terracotta, offers yet another fascinating area of research in Indian art history, as does the explicit imagery of Tantra paintings. More recently, the subject of gender in Harappan art is also being seriously examined through interdisciplinary approaches at the crossroads of archaeology, anthropology, and art (Clark 2003). Despite some new writings and fresh insights, the subject of gender, sexuality, and erotica in Indian art is still a relatively unexplored field.

In her contribution to this Volume, "Gender in Early Indian Art: Tradition, Methodology, and Problematic," Seema Bawa addresses the "gender neutral" stance in mainstream Indian art historical studies. Bawa traces the historiography and ideologies of gender and art in ancient India and situates her enquiries in the larger context of the feminist historiography of the ancient period. In discussing a methodology for the study of gender in early Indian art, Bawa advocates an approach that is grounded, "not in Euro-centric or post-modernist paradigms, but in available historical and cultural sources located in the early historical tradition," ... [which] "when used constructively would seek a balance between both the material and metaphysical aspects ..." Bawa also discusses the terminology used in gender studies – 'sex,' 'gender,' 'gaze,' and 'posture', before exemplifying her approach to the problematic through two sculptures – one from Bharhut and the other from Amaravati – which she chooses as case studies.

Studies in Indian Temple Architecture

Form, Style, Meaning, Patronage, Ritual, Ornament

The Architectural Survey of Temples was established within the Archaeological Survey in 1955-56, with Krishna Deva in charge of North India and K.R. Srinivasan responsible for South India. The objectives of the Architectural Survey of Temples were to fine tune the earlier efforts [Figs. 1.7 and 1.8] with regard to "the evolution and regional characterizations" of temples through "extensive fieldwork and intensive examination of the data collected therefrom." In order to "avoid duplication of work" and the setting up of a separate organization for "iconographic survey," the original scope of the project was enlarged to include the study of iconography.[32]

With Krishna Deva, K.R. Srinivasan, M.A. Dhaky, K.V. Soundararajan, S.R. Balasubrahmanyam, S.K. Saraswati, R.D. Banerji, Debala Mitra, Thomas Donaldson, D.R. Das and some others, the study of the history of Indian temple architecture on a regional and chronological basis came of its own. The past five decades or so have been witness to a range of perspectives from which the Indian temple has been studied by art and architectural historians, moving beyond archaeological reporting, surveys, and documentation. These include the study of new material, formalistic and stylistic analyses, chronological reassessments, ritualistic studies, iconological considerations, issues of patronage and power, artists and artisans, a revaluation of temple aesthetics, and the shaping of regional and cultural identities. With the availability of these writings and the increased access to archival visual sources, there is now far greater scope for the historian of Indian architecture to arrive at methodological frameworks and comparative analytical approaches in the study of architectural form, ornament, semiotics, and other aspects.

The formal logic of the temple, its origins, region and period styles, terminology, typology, and classifications have been most comprehensively

detailed in the monumental *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture (EITA)* volumes under the editorship of M.A. Dhaky and M.W. Meister.[33] Dhaky's method in addressing the regional and sub-regional basis of architectural style is perhaps seen at its best in his perceptive and incisive analysis of the Maru-Gurjara architecture of Western India (Dhaky 1961, 1975). His acute attention to visual detail, intimate familiarity with an overwhelming range of monuments, easy acquaintance with the textual tradition, and a critical, scientific analysis of empirical data is in full evidence here. The complex processes of the emergence of the 'Maru-Gurjara' style of Western Indian architecture from its antecedents – the 'Mahā-Maru' and 'Mahā-Gurjara' sub-styles have been detailed by him. For throwing light on the regional particularities within the Gupta-dominated 'Empire' and 'Province(s),' Joanna G. William's research on the art and architecture of northern India during the period of Gupta dominance merits special mention (Williams 1982). Some scholars have now discussed the role of polity in determining artistic choice (Cohen 1997).[34] In another context, peregrinations of artists and its impact on architectural style has also been established (Settar 1992: 83-143). All these have an important bearing on evolving frameworks to interpret the constituents and determinants of style in Indian architecture.

The study of architectural ornament of the Indian temple has not received its due, especially when compared with the enormous literature on the subject in European art history. 'Ornamental' motifs of South Indian temples had earlier been meticulously classified by the French art historian, G. Jouveau-Dubreuil (1917). But a more comprehensive treatment of specific architectural elements and motifs, which approaches these as a function of their cultural context and their aesthetic and symbolic relationship to the structure in question, emerges much later in Indian art historical studies. These may be seen in the analysis of traceries and ceilings by Dhaky and also, in the present author's work on arched portals or *toraṇas* in Indian and Southeast Asian architecture (Nanavati and Dhaky 1963; Dhaky

2005; Dhar 2010). Among other approaches to the structure and ornament of the Indian temple, Adam Hardy sees a process of transformation and growth (in space and through time) "embodied in forms of temples which are imbued with an overwhelming sense of centrifugal movement" (Hardy 1995: 3-15). His work indicates that the processes of emergence, expansion, and rhythmic proliferation in Indian temples reveal striking parallels with the complex rhythmic compositions of individual temples, each of the two processes in turn being rooted in a particular world-view. Gerard Foekema has approached "Indian architectural articulation" as a unique and ingenious tradition in which the architectural components that decorate Indian temples form patterns with the "morphology of shrines imitating a composition of smaller shrines" (Foekema 2003).

R. Nagaswamy's writings have for long discussed the relationship of religious beliefs, metaphysical concepts, and ritual practices with regard to southern Indian temple art and architecture (Nagaswamy 1983, 2010). Devangana Desai's work on the Khajuraho temples (Desai 1996) focuses on the rationale of arrangement of temple imagery as a function of specific religious doctrines, ritualistic practices, and the socio-political factors that determine its making. Michael Willis (2009) has looked at intersections of the archaeology and politics of ritual with the religious landscape and architecture in Gupta India. Crispin Branfoot has emphasized the architectural and ritualistic context of imagery for the late medieval temples of southern India (Branfoot 2007). Among other studies on the theme of ritual and temple architecture, Anna Slaczka (2007) has detailed the significance of three important temple consecration rituals as observed in available archaeological data and as elaborated in the southern Indian architectural treatise, the *Kāśyapaśilpa*.

Site-specific historiographical studies and a reassessment of earlier writings have been undertaken by Gary Tartakov for the Durga Temple at Aihole (Tartakov 1997). The Vijayanagara Research Project, with George

Michell and John Fritz in association with some other scholars, has been bringing out a series of extremely useful publications on the mapping, archaeology and art of the monuments built during the period of Vijayanagara rule in South India (eg., Michell and Wagoner 2001).[35] Numerous region-specific studies of temples have emerged in the recent decades.

Few art historians have engaged with socio-political histories of the temple; this subject is more often detailed by historians, who focus on issues of legitimation and power, and are less inclined to investigate the details of temple art and architecture for purposes of their analyses. Of late, collaborative and interdisciplinary efforts spanning art history, religious studies, anthropology, archaeology, and history have resulted in very welcome directions of research in temple studies (Babb, Cort, and Meister 2008; Ray ed. 2009).[36] Catherine Asher, well known for her work on the architecture of the Mughals, has done important work on the changing state of some high medieval temples in relation to issues such as patronage and preferences (C. Asher 2001). Alka Patel's work on Western Indian architecture suggests a corrective to the prevalent disjuncture between the discourses of Islamic architecture and Hindu (temple) architecture of South Asia (Patel 2004).[37] In a recent publication, Michael W. Meister has explored the fascinating subject of Hindu temples in Pakistan (Meister 2010).[38] [Fig. 1.8].

Studies in Indian Painting and Sculpture

Style, Connoisseurship, Iconography, Narrative, Representation, and Spectatorship

Studies in Indian painting had remained focused initially on the paintings of Ajanta and Mughal paintings.[39] The earliest interest in Mughal paintings was with reference to 'European influence.' Ajanta paintings evoked interest for their aesthetic qualities, narrative content, and modes of narration. The diversity of paintings belonging to other styles and regions, notably the South Indian mural paintings and manuscript traditions, Rajasthani and Pahari miniatures, paintings of the Western and Eastern Indian

manuscript traditions, and Ladakhi paintings received attention relatively late. Coomaraswamy (1916) had earlier discussed the non-Mughal traditions of northern Indian miniature painting under the head ''Rajput'' Painting. While Kramrisch was the first to write on the fragmentary remains of mural paintings at Badami in the Deccan, C. Sivaramamurti (1968) provided a comprehensive analysis of the early medieval and medieval mural painting tradition of southern India. Moti Chandra and Karl Khandalavala (Khandalavala and Chandra 1969), Pramod Chandra (1976), Anand Krishna (1973), and B.N. Goswamy (1992) have contributed immensely to studies in the style, connoisseur-ship, and context of non-Mughal traditions of Northern Indian miniature paintings. Further approaches to the study of Indian paintings – as visual sources of socio-cultural histories and religious and imperial ideologies (Koch 2001), and studies concerned with the means and motivations of the paintings, have followed.

Studies in the Paintings of Ajanta: The shifts in perceptions of Ajanta paintings since their accidental discovery by John Smith in 1819 to the present are detailed by Mandira Sharma in her essay, ''Disquisitions on the Paintings of Ajanta,'' in this Volume. Given their fragile state of conservation, Robert Gill, John Griffiths, and Lady Herringham had successively engaged artists to prepare detailed copies of the paintings (Asit Kumar Haldar and Nandlal Bose too had participated in this process). The aesthetic qualities of these paintings, their distinctive stylistic traits, pictorial conventions, and content – Buddhist *jātakas*, details about ancient Indian life and customs, decorative patterns, and foreign elements – evoked interest. Studies in the narrative art of Ajanta, however, were limited to general identifications of the subject matter and minutiae of dress, costumes, and ornaments. As concerns the important issue of the modes and devices of narration, this remained confined to a few general observations. Griffiths, for example, had been bewildered by the repeated delineation of the chief protagonists of an episode or story in a sequential narrative, and Lady Herringham, though revealing a better understanding of the

method of continuous narration and the use of pictorial conventions to connect one episode with another, did not take the issue much further. The next stage is to be seen in the works of Ghulam Yazdani, which include photographic documentation, inscriptional notices, detailed identification of subject-matter, intricacies of technique and ornamentation, and a concerted effort at evolving a chronological framework for the development of the art of painting at Ajanta. A Ghosh 's *Ajanta Murals*, with contributions by Ingrid Aall, M.N. Deshpande and B.B. Lal, carried these lines of investigation further. The need for a more comprehensive analysis of the style of these paintings in the context of Ajanta's sculpture and cave architecture, and in the light of treatises on painting (*Citrasūtra*), was felt. M.K. Dhavalikar's work focused on material culture as visualized in Ajanta paintings. Dieter Schlingloff's intensive research on Ajanta paintings led to a revision in the identification and interpretation of several *jātaka* narratives as well as the identity of hitherto unidentified panels and a discussion on modes of narration (Schlingloff 1987). Monika Zin has, in the recent years, also followed Schlingloff's approach and more recently has extended her understanding of the art of Ajanta to an interpretation of some Central Asian paintings on the Silk Route. Walter Spink holds a unique place in Ajanta's historiography, having devoted his energies almost completely to an intense research spanning decades, on a detailed and painstaking unravelling of the relative and absolute chronology, the political and historical backdrop, and the inter-related nature of developments in the architecture, sculpture and paintings of the Ajanta caves. Spink's micro-studies on Ajanta reveal the importance of a contextual regional and local focus in Indian art historical research.[40]

The Regional Focus in Indian Art History: Critical shifts in the objectives and approaches of scholars engaged in region-based art histories are discussed in my paper, "Understanding 'Jaina Art' of Karnataka: Shifting Perspectives," in this Volume. The choice of a regional focus and 'Jaina art' seeks to underscore the significance of area-specific studies and the importance of regional

language sources and other local contexts in art historical research, while also highlighting the larger framework within which these need to be located. Such an attempt is guided by the conviction that while the 'comparative,' pan-Indian,' 'cross-cultural,' and 'global' in art historical studies are doubtless of importance, these need to move hand-in-hand with in-depth and fundamental empirical research set within 'local' frameworks. It is well understood that art affiliated to Jainism or 'Jaina art' does not exist in isolation and is part of a larger artistic, historical, and cultural milieu. Yet, the specific beliefs and practices of Jainism, patronage given to Jainism in Karnataka, associated texts and iconography, articulation of architectural space in relation to ritualistic requirements, and such other concerns do necessitate a special focus on 'Jaina art'. Such a focus is clearly distinct in its objectives and methods from the colonial legacy of seggregating periods and art styles on the basis of religion. The various sub-themes discussed in the paper include shifts in scholarly understandings of the well-known Jaina site of Śravaṇa Beḷgoḷa, developments in stylistic and iconographic studies in regional and national contexts, usage of regional literature as a source for Jaina art, studies in Digambara Jaina paintings, and the inclusion of 'minor objects' such as ritual death memorials in the domain of Jaina art. The last mentioned sub-theme highlights an interdisciplinary approach that brought together studies in Jaina philosophy, history, religion, and art. This is followed by a discussion of more recent approaches on the subject of Jaina art. The paper thus traces a long and rich history from the days of archaeological reporting by B.L. Rice and R. Narasimhachar, to the art historical and interdisciplinary inquiries of S. Settar, M.A. Dhaky, H. Nagarajaiah, S. Doshi, R. Del Bontà, J. Hegewald, and some others.[41]

Further Interpretations of the Icon and Image: A few of the fresh approaches to interpretations of iconic imagery during the past two to three decades deserve special mention. The importance of early cultic imagery in stone, terracotta, and other media in understanding developments in religious cults and shrines has been demonstrated by more recent studies (Ahuja 2001; Singh 2004a). The issue of 'multiplicity' in religious iconic imagery has been studied at length by T.S. Maxwell (1988), and also by Doris M. Srinivasan (1997). In the realm of ritual texts, ritual practice, and iconography, Richard Davis' work, *Ritual in an Oscillating Universe* (1991) has forged new directions, while the ethno-archaeology of ritual and art practice has found representation in the writings of Jan Brouwer (1995).

J.M. Rosenfeld's very early and path breaking work (Rosenfeld 1967) on the subject of royal portraiture of the Kushanas (and the portrayal of other Kushana period images) was based on a range of evidence that brought together the study of stone sculptures, coins, and other sources of history to investigate issues of style, iconography, chronology, and cross-cultural influence in Kushana art. Several other studies in Indian sculpture, on the themes of personification, allegory and portraiture have since received the art historians' attentions.[42] Another very early and novel approach to the study of form and style in Indian sculpture can be seen in Klaus Bruhn's *The Jina-images of Deogarh* (1969). Bruhn devised categories of classification ('types,' 'systems,' 'attributes,' and 'form-principles') to analyse a representative group of Jina-images from Deogarh in terms of style and iconography. Within these categories, he explored the complex range of image-text or art-literature relationships in Jina and Jaina iconography and style.[43] An analysis of Indian sculptures in compositional and spatial terms by Alice Boner (1962) and a modern approach to the study of form in Indian sculpture by Carmel Berkson (2000) have added newer dimensions to the study of ancient Indian sculpture.[44]

Interpretations of iconographic traits and of the symbolism of Indian motifs have often been approached ahistorically, as though 'perennial' and unchanging in meaning across periods and regions. There is a need to bring to greater focus the specific historical contexts and associated shifts in meaning in interpreting symbols and motifs in Indian art. Iconography, in the

conventional sense, had involved the study, description, classification, and interpretation of an icon (often religious) by sourcing and correlating textual sources with the evidence of the icon (*pratimā-lakṣaṇa*). In a broader sense, iconography, iconology and studies related to meaning in an image or icon have now come to encompass a more comprehensive interpretation of the visual codes and visual content of an image, so as to unravel its many-layered meanings and inter-relations. Further, it is now well-accepted that meaning can also be read through the formal properties of an image, so that form and style become interpretative tools for meaning in an image, thus blurring the boundaries between the formal and contextual approaches.[45]

Interpretations of Narrative Art: Detailed and nuanced readings of narrative modes in Indian painting and sculpture were pursued only in the later decades of the twentieth century. Ratan Parimoo has analyzed specific *jātaka* narratives in Ajanta paintings from semiological and stylistic perspectives by evolving comparative frameworks with narrations in literary texts and with renditions in early Indian sculpture, such as at Bharhut and Amaravati (Parimoo 1991). Dieter Schlingloff (1987) and Vidya Dehejia (1997) have furthered our understanding of narrative modes, the former with a greater focus on Ajanta paintings and the latter in the context of narrative sculptures and paintings of the Indian Buddhist tradition. Dehejia proposes seven types of narrative modes noticed in ancient Indian Buddhist art (sculpture and paintings) based on the devices and pictorial conventions employed by the artist to express a single or multiple point(s) of interest in a Buddhist narrative, and the ways in which spatial and temporal constructs are understood and delineated in a given composition. Such an investigation is a pioneering effort that greatly enhances scholarship on the visual narratives of India. Just as significant are the writings of John and Susan Huntington on iconic and narrative Buddhist art.[46]

The sophisticated tradition of simultaneous narration in Indian literary genres (particularly

Sanskrit poetry), employment of poetic figures, and transference of literary modes in visual narrative art has been explored by Michael Rabe (2001) through an investigation of the expansive seventh century narrative relief sculpture at Mamallapuram in Tamil Nadu, which is a simultaneous narration of the 'Descent of the Ganges' and 'Arjuna's Penance.' The simultaneity of visual narration and the translation and adaptation of poetic figures such as *śleṣa* and *virodhābhāsa* in visual terms reveal an intimate understanding of the sculptor with prevalent poetic traditions. Rabe's work also underlines the need for further studies to interpret the subtleties and distinctiveness of Indian narrative art and also its relationships to narrative modes in the literary, performance, and visual arts across cultures. With regard to the classical traditions, a sophisticated vocabulary of gestures, postures, movement, and communication in the performing arts (*nāṭya* and *nṛtya*) – with detailed and codified uses (*viniyogas)* for the hand gestures, postures and positions (*hastas, mudrās* and *sthānas)*, modes of movement or gaits (*cāri)*, and cadences of movement (*karaṇas)* – shares many features in common with the plastic arts of ancient and early medieval India. An understanding of this shared vocabulary thus has the potential to aid and enhance the study of meaning and modes of communication in narrative art and to yield significant insights into the development of a theory of the narrative in the Indian context. Popular and folk narrative traditions such as the *paṭa* paintings and the *phaḍs* reveal long-standing correspondences between Indian visual and performance narrations. Jyotindra Jain's edited work on the picture showmen is an important contribution to the field of Indian narrative traditions (J. Jain, ed. 1998). The narrative mode – be it visual, literary, or performative – can also be an important source for the historian.

Foundations for Art Historical Research and Some Fundamental Concerns: Christian Luczanits in his paper, "Approaches to Historic Indian and Indo-Tibetan Sculpture," in this Volume, discusses fundamental issues that have an important bearing on future directions of

Indian art historical research. Remaining firmly rooted in ground realities, Luczanits raises issues in relation to the foundations for art historical research, expansion of research base, conceptual frameworks, application of research methods, and the potential for unique South Asian contributions to art historical methods. As Luczanits emphasizes, the issue of actual or physical access to the art object(s) is a fundamental one, and has a direct bearing on research, a close examination of 'visual criteria' in art being an indispensible tool of analysis for the art historian.[47] In addition to factors such as style, dimensions, period, and provenance; other physical traits and technical processes involved in the making of an art work such as the details of materials and techniques used, colours and pigments, and traces of restoration, repainting or other attempts at conservation during different points in the life of an art work have the potential to reveal much information about the textured histories that can be sourced from it. Given that India is a country with a rich and long history of living art traditions, and that the 'religion, art, and society' nexus is continually reaffirmed (at least in relation to pre-Modern art), issues of recreation or restoration (*jīrṇoddhāra, punaḥ saṁskāra)* of 'religious art' can hardly be ignored in art historical interpretations. The situation is complicated further by the de-contextualized viewing of art objects, without recourse to the 'archaeology of art' – for example, the site from where it comes, the monument to which it belonged, its specific location within the structure, or the exact context and condition in which it was found during excavations. The extent to which such data is accurately accessible determines the degree to which an art work may be seen in the context of its time of production and attempted to be 'read' for what it may have meant then.[48] In his paper, Luczanits also questions certain tenacious assumptions that under-grid current understandings about the development of Indian sculpture, such as the issue of 'aniconism' in Buddhist art and of 'Gupta classicism,' asserting the need for a revisionist approach. He further makes brief yet pertinent observations on the need to address under-

utilized potential in arriving at methodological and theoretical frameworks for some aspects of Indian sculpture through a contextual reading of the visual with the textual (eg, the semiotics of multivalent symbols in Indian art, narrative art, etc), which ''could contribute distinctive perspectives on more recently developed art historical methodologies.''

Rethinking the Historiography of Mughal Paintings: The persistence of Western frames of reference and the issue of 'European influence' in Mughal art historiography finds nuanced treatment in this Volume through Ursula Weekes' paper, ''Rethinking the Historiography of Imperial Mughal Painting and its Encounters with Europe.'' The biased reception of Mughal art in the accounts of Jesuit missionaries during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, notably a lack of empathy for its specific symbolism, iconography, and cultural context, and their preoccupation with European influences as a means of legitimizing the cultural superiority of the colonizer fits in well with the overall trends observed in the early reception of much of Indian art during the colonial period. Since then, and through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, primary sources for the study of Mughal painting were largely restricted to Latin, Portuguese, Dutch, and English accounts, notably travelogues, journals, memoirs, and such other historical records. References to abstract and figural forms, art styles, processes of artistic creation, issues of connoisseurship, and the identity of artists in texts from within the Mughal court, such as the *Ain-i-Akbarī* and *Tuzuk-i-Jahāngīrī*, even though limited, assume greater significance in this context. As Weekes points out, in the absence of specific treatises on painting, the importance of including other sources for understanding the art of the period such as popular romances, poetry, Sufi texts, and some Persian writings needs to be stressed. Also, as the writings of Ebba Koch and some others bear out, the 'style' as much as 'subject-matter' of the image or visual is an important hermeneutic tool for understanding varied aspects of the period's history, such as courtly culture or imperial ideology (Koch 2001).

An important methodological issue relates to 'connoisseurship' in Mughal art. The prevalence of 'collaborative' paintings authored by more than a single artist was not uncommon in Mughal India and can often be seen alongside art works by individual artists. This, according to Weekes, is in contrast to Renaissance Europe, where such a practice was rare. The perception of the artist-genius in Renaissance Europe is of course very different from the notion of the artist in pre-Modern India. In the Mughal context, however, the fact that individual artists autographed their works indicates that perhaps a master-artist was in control even in the case of those paintings which were collaborative efforts. What is more, antecedents for the practice of artists attesting their art works can also be located in earlier Indian traditions. Collaborative works by artists, signatures of individual artists, as well as the tradition of cadres and collectives of artists have now been well-established in the case of early and early medieval Indian art, as the papers by S. Settar and R.N. Misra in this Volume amply testify. In the realm of miniature paintings, B.N. Goswamy's writings on itinerant artists and art styles have successfully established 'family' as the basis of style (Goswamy 1968; Goswamy and Fischer 1992). This is just one instance where the historiography of Mughal art has suffered due to the relative neglect of its relationship with Indian antecedents and with contemporaneous miniature painting styles. The last mentioned has been addressed in the works of a few scholars such as Pramod Chandra (1976) and Anand Krishna (1973). A greater involvement of scholarship well-acquainted with pre-Mughal Indian art practice and theory as well as the varied primary sources of Mughal cultural history mentioned earlier could offer a corrective to current approaches. A related issue is that of accessibility to collections, which continues to impact research. While the methods and means of acquiring Mughal art collections by Western museums and private collectors in the past is beyond the scope of this Introduction, its repercussions on the historiography of Mughal art definitely deserve attention. Since a majority of the best Mughal paintings are in collections abroad, a substantial contribution to scholarship on the subject continues to be from scholars who have easy access to collections in Western museums.[49]

In her meticulously researched paper, Weekes has brought into the ambit of discussion, the most recent research on the subject of Mughal art historiography and its contacts with Europe.

The Digital Turn: Folios or leaves of paintings belonging to a single manuscript are often scattered in different museums and private collections. This complicates the contextual study of a manuscript, or an in-depth understanding of the 'archaeology of the book' alongside the 'art of the book.' Digital technology has extended the frontiers of access and knowledge, and digital re-assembling of scattered folios of a single manuscript or variants of a manuscript in different libraries and museums is now possible. For Western manuscripts, such a procedure is being carried out in some Western universities and collaborative ventures such as the Digital Humanities initiative of the Universitas 21 network are already engaged in these efforts.[50] Tracing the provenance of an isolated folio on the basis of technical and other details through comparisons with other folios in different collections is also possible through this approach. Such a methodology could vastly enrich the present state of research on Indian miniature and manuscript traditions. The impact of digital technology or the 'digital turn' in art history is, in fact, one that will continue to have substantial repercussions on its object-domain, scope, and methodologies.

The Past in the Present: Understanding the formal and contextual details of an object or art form at the time of its production, albeit through the filter of the present, continues to be of fundamental importance to the historian of art. At the same time, the construction of newer meanings and contexts for an ancient or medieval icon, object, or monument, and changes in its reception over time are valid lines of inquiry which have begun to engage the art historian of today, opening relatively new vistas of research

at the cross-roads of art history, anthropology, sociology, and related fields of knowledge. One may cite as an example, *The Lives of Indian Images*, by Richard Davis (1999). Not restricting himself either to original intent and understandings (such as for a religious icon belonging to a temple), or to meanings generated in varied current locations (eg, a museum or an international art market), Davis has also explored the mediations in the 'intermediate' life of the image between 'then' and 'now' (such as the complex issues involved in the politics of 'appropriations' and 'return' of religious (art) objects in medieval India). Between its function as a religious icon, its appropriation as a symbol of power, its 'return,' 're-establish-ment,' or 'repatriation' as a symbol of cultural identity, and its commoditization in an art market – the interest in the image as 'art' from the ancient to the modern times, perhaps also needs to be re-addressed by the art historian. A related area of enquiry is the changing role of museums and museum related sites in relation to religious and political identities (Guha-Thakurta 2004; Mathur and Singh 2007).

Archaeology, History, and Art History
Reviewing Inter-relationships

Pre-historic art has remained marginalized from mainstream Indian art historical discourse since the time of its 'discovery' in the last decades of the nineteenth century and even after V.S. Wakankar's spectacular find of the pre-historic rock paintings at Bhimbetka in 1957. However, pre-historic Indian rock art has had a presence in South Asian archaeological research (eg., Bednarik 2002), refreshingly so with an increasing emphasis on a contextual study of the content, site, location, and ethno-archaeological aspects concerning the paintings (Boivin 2004). However, art historical interpretations of the rock paintings remain limited, barring a few writings (Erwin Neumayer 1983, 1993). Similar is the treatment of Harappan art and architecture [Fig. 1.9], with newer and inter-disciplinary approaches emerging largely from outside mainstream art history writings (Clark 2003). A plausible explanation lies in the difficulty faced

by the art historian in arriving at a continuous narrative of Indian art from the pre- and proto-historic periods to the art of the historic period. Also, the absence of associated written records renders interpretation difficult, unlike the art history of the historical period. The difficult question of what constitutes the object-domain of 'art' versus 'craft' and other aspects of material culture further complicates the issue. M.K. Dhavalikar proposes correctives to arrive at anchored and less speculative understandings of the motives and meanings of proto-historic art in his paper, "Text and Context: Harappan Art in Archaeological Perspective." His surmise is that Harappan art can be viewed in the light of more recent advances made in archaeological method and theory, which emphasize cultural processes and a contextual approach to the interpretation of archaeological materials. Dhavalikar goes on to demonstrate the usefulness of some of these approaches in interpreting select examples of Harappan art and architecture, such as 'Śākambharī,' 'Paśupati seal,' and mythological motifs on Cemetery-H pottery ('peacock-and-human' motif). [51]

"Questioning Art History: Locating Religious Identities," by Himanshu Prabha Ray in this Volume, raises methodological concerns in studying the history of Indian religious monuments. Ray argues in favour of situating these within the matrix of religious identity as understood from the religious archaeology of the concerned site(s). Commenting on the continuation of colonial and 'neo-colonial' prejudices in such studies, she advocates a re-structuring of the discipline to accommodate local, national, and Asian contexts in the archaeology and art history of religious architecture in India. Drawing examples from the writings of Fergusson, Burgess, and Cousens, and also from more recent scholarship, she highlights the manner in which colonial constructs in Indian architectural history have instilled the notion of a linear succession of the origins and decline of religions – Buddhist, Jain, and Hindu – as antagonistic to each other, with co-existence being ruled out. Ray garners evidence from a range of recent writings on the archaeology of

religion and from ethno-history, which provide a more cohesive picture of co-existence as compared to the confrontational and antagonistic relationship between religions and the dynamics of religious transformations projected even in some recent writings on the social history of religious architecture. She also questions the colonial legacy of an object-centred approach in Indian art history, which has more often than not, remained divorced from its Asian moorings. She stresses the importance of interpreting Indian art and architecture in the context of an Asian cultural milieu which brings together the shared histories of Asian art forms [Fig. 1.10]. This is a rich and rarely exploited direction for research, the importance of which can hardly be emphasized enough, and one which very few historians of Indian art have addressed seriously thus far, with notable exceptions (Lokesh Chandra; S. Sahai 1976 and 2007; P. Pal 1997).[52] While the 'Greater India' concept is much outdated and has appropriately been given up, this has not been replaced by an adequate number of newer initiatives on the part of Indian art historians.

From its shared beginnings with archaeology in the nineteenth century, art history gradually evolved into an independent disciplinary practice in India. This very maturing of the discipline and its ever expanding scope and object-domain has led it engage with concerns that tie up yet again and variously so with Archaeology, History, Anthropology, Art Conservation, Archival and Museum Studies, as also other specialized areas of research such as Film, Theatre, and Performance Studies. The emergence of visual culture as an important branch of study and the potential of art and visual culture in history writing, for example, a subject of much research in the West, is only gradually beginning to make its presence felt in the Indian context.[53]

The issues, methods, and trends discussed in this introductory essay, and those detailed in the various scholarly contributions to this Volume, are selective and representative. The concerns addressed here relate to various stages of artistic creation, representation, and reception, and to a range of themes belonging to the ancient and medieval periods. These include key art historical concerns of form, style, connoisseurship, iconography, patronage, artists, gender and other social contexts, display, representation, reception, and other readings of art and architecture. Even as the object-domain of art history continually expands and its basic assumptions are re-examined, Indian art history is poised to keep pace with global trends.[54] Yet at all times, the art historian's 'eye' for visual detail and empathy for art continue to be of prime importance. There still remain a staggering range of themes, fundamental issues, key concepts, and theoretical and methodological formulations, which await the focused attentions of the historian of Indian art. Indian art historical practice may perhaps best be viewed as an ever-evolving continuum of issues, perspectives, and methods, and not so much as a dichotomy between ''new,'' and by implication, ''old'' art history. The thrust forward is as vital as is the need for reflection and familiarity – intimate familiarity with the objects of art history and their contexts and processes, nuanced readings of the varied sources, sharpening of the tools of analysis, reflection on earlier methods and histories, analysis of newer evidence, and a renewed engagement with the many layered perspectives and approaches.

Endnotes

1 This introductory essay addresses a range of issues and approaches observed in Indian art historical practice. It discusses some representative writings on the subject and situates the various contributions to this Volume in a larger historiographical context. The scope is limited to the history of ancient and medieval Indian art and architecture.

2 For a detailed and lucid account of the history of European reactions to Indian art, see Mitter 1977.

3 From the late eighteenth century, for example, the process of translation of Sanskrit manuscripts in the collection of the East India Company had commenced. Another major breakthrough was the decipherment of the Ashokan Brāhmī script by James Prinsep in 1837, which had a significant bearing on understanding ancient Indian history and art.

4 "The remains of architecture and sculpture in India, which I mention here as mere monuments of antiquity, not as specimens of ancient art, seem to prove an early connection between this country and Africa... and all these indubitable facts may induce no ill-grounded opinion, that Ethiopia and Hindustan were peopled or colonized by the same extraordinary race..." He was appreciative of the structure and refinement of the Sanskrit language though, and even compared it favourably with Greek and Latin, while pointing to similarities and proposing a common origin for the three: "The Sanskrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists..." Source: "Sir William Jones, The Third Anniversary Discourse, on the Hindus, Delivered 2 February, 1786," in *The Works of Sir William Jones,* vol. I, London: Robinson and Evans, 1799, pp. 19-34, as given in Lehmann, Winfred P., 1967. *A Reader in Nineteenth Century Historical Indo-European Linguistics,* Indiana University Press, pp. 7-20, accessed on 2/1/2010 at http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/lrc/books/read01.html

5 Ibid. "It is unfortunate, that the *Śilpī Śāstra,* or collection of treatises on arts and manufactures, which must have contained a treasure of useful information on dying, painting, and metallurgy, has been so long neglected, that few, if any, traces of it are to be found..."

6 MacKenzie was a Scotsman who had joined the East India Company and went on to become the first Surveyor-General of India in 1815.

7 This association of MacKenzie with *puṇḍits* or traditional 'native' scholarship began sometime after 1796, and seems to have since fed his enquiries, as per his letter to Sir Alexander Johnston in 1817, reproduced in Wilson 1828, Vol. I, pp. iii-iv: "...It was only after my return from the expedition to Ceylon in 1796, that accident rather than design... threw in my way those means that I have since unceasingly pursued...of penetrating beyond the common surface of the Antiquities, the History and the Institutions of the South of India. The connexion then formed with one person, a native and a Brahmin (the lamented C.V. Boria, a Brahmin, then almost a youth, of the quickest genius and disposition...) was the first step of my introduction into the portal of Indian knowledge; devoid of any knowledge of the languages myself..."

8 The 'picturesque' as a style of painting developed in England and Wales and was brought to India in the works of the eighteenth century British artists. For an interpretation of the 'picturesque' within the broader framework of colonial knowledge, with special reference to William Hodges' paintings of Indian landscapes and architecture, see Tillotson 2000.

9 For details on Alexander Cunningham's approach to Indian archaeology and his role in the discovery of India's past, see U. Singh 2004.

10 For references to Cunningham's works, see Upinder Singh's paper, "Archaeologists and Architectural Scholars in Nineteenth Century India," in this Volume.

11 For more details and further references about Fergusson's writings and methods, see P. Chandra 1975: 1-39; Guha-Thakurta 2004: 3-42.

12 For references to Rajendralala Mitra's works, see Gautam Sengupta's paper, "Rajendralala Mitra and the Formative Years of Indian Art History,"in the present Volume.

13 See Chandra 1983, for details.

14 See, for example, the exhibition catalogue, *Gandhara: The Buddhist Heritage of Pakistan,* compiled by Christian Luczanits (2008).

[15] For select references to the works of Havell, Zimmer and Kramrisch, see Bibliography at the end of this essay.

[16] For a bibliography of Coomaraswamy's writings, see Crouch, ed. 2002.

[17] For a biographical essay and select writings of Stella Kramrisch, see Miller 1994.

[18] See "Selected Bibliography of Zimmer's Works," in Zimmer (1984: 261-267).

[19] For further details concerning text-based studies in Indian temple architecture, see Chandra 1975: 24-29.

[20] The rationale for using culture-specific terminology has been addressed by the editors of the series in the Preface of some of the *EITA* Volumes.

[21] Dhaky's monograph on the "Chronology of the Solaṅkī Temples of Gujarat" (1961), for example, where he compares temples within the same political domain showing distinctly discernible regional stylistic variations, states this clearly, even though he employs the nomenclature "Solaṅkī temples" as a convenient label: "Since kings do not create a style in India, but being important patrons, give powerful impetus to the continuation and development of the style, the true makers of the style being the architects and sculptors themselves, the denomination Solaṅkī is a convenient label only" (Dhaky 1961: 2).

[22] A bibliography of the works of Prof. V.S.Agrawala can be accessed at http://ignca.nic.in/ bibva010.htm.

[23] For a bibliography of U.P. Shah's works, see R.T. Vyas ed. 1995.

[24] Another important ancient text on Indian painting, the *Citralakṣaṇa* of Nagnajit, of which the German edition based on the Tibetan Tanjur, was edited by Berthold Laufer (1913), has been translated and introduced in English in the context of the practice of Indian painting and iconography by B.N. Goswamy and Anna L. Dallapiccola (1976).

[25] "... Whilst recognizing the identity and integrity of this art existing independently from other sociological phenomena, my aim is to correlate it with the latter... My main preoccupation is therefore not only to study the character of form and technique ... but also to study the causes and circumstances that conditioned the life of this art. Frankly, my method is sociological. I have

therefore taken into consideration the current tastes and preferences, individual and collective, the social background, the political circumstances, the trend of thought, ethnic components, root forms, traditions, influences, history of technique, etc, to elucidate the coming into being of what we call Maurya and Śuṅga art..." (Ray 1945: p. vii, Preface)

[26] One of his contentions was that the selection of primarily religious texts to study the culture of ancient India was in itself arbitrary, and that the "processes and principles of *lokayātrā* or concrete mundane existence as laid down in the *Dharmasūtras* and *Dharmaśāstras*, the *Nītiśāstras* and *Kāmasūtras*, *Arthaśāstras* and *Cikitsā-śāstras*, for example, were documents of Indian life and thought of as much importance as the Vedas, Brahmanas, Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita" (Ray 1974: 20). One may add here that while religion, philosophy, society, economy, and politics – all act upon art – these do not, by themselves or together, comprise all that is art.

[27] See also, Asher and Ghai eds. 1985, for studies drawing connections between epigraphy and art.

[28] It would be interesting to see this alongside B.N. Goswamy's research on 'family' as the basis of style (Goswamy 1968).

[29] See for example, B.N. Goswamy 1968, 1970 and 1992 (with Fischer).

[30] Vishakha Desai, "Reflections on the History and Historiography of Male Sexuality in Early Indian Art," in Dehejia ed. 1997: 42-55.

[31] Molly E. Aitken, "Spectatorship and Femininity in Kangra Style Painting," in Dehejia ed. 1997: 82-101.

[32] The phrases in quotes are taken from Ghosh's Preface to K.R. Srinivasan (1964).

[33] See the earlier section on "Text-Image Studies in Architecture," in this Introduction.

[34] Cohen (1997: 17, 2ff): "For convenience I retain dynastic names for periods and, although I discuss the modes of artistic representations regionally, I believe dynastic polity contributes to artistic formations." Also Cohen (1997: 23): "Hence I agree with those who advocate the study of style or idiom regionally, but I do not believe that a regional artistic essence exists which can be explained separately from the complex agencies which dialectically compose regional polity."

[35] For a complete list of these publications, see,

http://www.vijayanagara.org/HTML/
Publications.html

[36] A collaborative project between Cardiff University, the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and The British Museum, "The Indian Temple: Production, Place, Patronage," which is ongoing since 2006, with Adam Hardy (Cardiff), Michael Willis (British Museum) and Daud Ali (SOAS) as the chief collaborators, follows an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the Indian temple. See http://www.prasada.org.uk/ for details.

[37] Several significant works on Sultanate and Mughal architecture, most notably by R. Nath and Catherine Asher, as also city architecture, forts and palaces, and water architecture (notably the works of Giles Tillotson , George Michell, and Jutta Jain) have enriched the scope of research writings in Indian architectural history. It has unfortunately not been possible to discuss these here due to limitations of space.

[38] For more details on the Historiography of Indian temples, see P. Chandra 1975 and Dhar 2009.

[39] For a detailed discussion on this early phase, see P. Chandra 1983: 83-112.

[40] References to the works of scholars cited in this paragraph are listed at the end of Mandira Sharma's paper in this Volume, "Disquisitions on the Paintings of Ajanta."

[41] References to the works of scholars cited in this paragraph are listed at the end of my paper in this Volume, "Understanding 'Jaina Art' of Karnataka: Shifting Perspectives." Though not specific to Karnataka, it would also be pertinent here to mention a recent paper on methodological issues by John Cort, which discusses the importance of Jaina art and material culture in the study of Jaina religious history (Cort 1996).

[42] The issue of portraiture in south Indian sculpture, for example, has received attention from T.G. Aruvamuthan and Padma Kaimal.

[43] For more details, see under the sub-head, "Image and Iconography: The Pan-Indian Context," in my paper, "Understanding 'Jaina Art' of Karnataka: Changing Perspectives," in this Volume.

[44] Style in Indian sculpture as approached by Stella Kramrisch has been detailed in Ratan Parimoo's paper in this Volume, "Stella Kramrisch's Approach to Indian Art History."

[45] For methodological approaches and a discussion of key terms in Western art history, see Preziosi 1998, and Nelson and Schiff eds. 2003.

[46] For a very useful list of publications by John C. Huntington, see the following web link: http://huntingtonarchive.osu.edu/resources/JCHPublications.html . Several of the papers are also accessible online at this site.

[47] See also Luczanits 2004.

[48] As regards archaeological excavations, the option of international collaborations for Indian sites is not a long term solution to the prevailing problems faced in implementing projects. India does have the human, scientific, and technological wherewithal. However, implementation procedures are severely wanting for various reasons. More research initiatives in science and technology need to be channelized to enhance research in the humanities in India and their precise and careful implementation needs to be ensured to cope with the changing face of research in social sciences and humanities, including disciplines like art history. It is pertinent to highlight these seemingly practical issues as they directly impact methodology.

[49] For references to the works of scholars engaged with Mughal art history, notably A.K. Das, Ziya-ud-din Desai, Barbara Schmitz, Ebba Koch, Richard Ettinghausen, Milo Beach, Gavin Bailey, Rosemary Crill, Susan Stronge, Andrew Topsfield, John Seyller, S.K. Verma, and some others, see the Bibliography at the end of Ursula Weekes' paper, "Rethinking the Historiography of Imperial Mughal Painting and its Encounters with Europe," in this Volume.

[50] More details may be accessed through the Universitas 21 webpage, http://www.universitas21.com/.

[51] The interpretation of the 'Paśupati seal,' however, continues to remain debatable since Marshall's time. It has been variously interpreted as 'proto-Śiva,' 'yogic deity,' and 'archetypal mother.' The interpretation of mythological motifs on Cemetery H pottery on the basis of ideas of death and after-life in the Vedas also cannot escape the limitations of speculation.

[52] Some historians of South and Southeast Asian art, from Europe however, are engaged in fruitful research on the subject. For example, the Indology and Indian Art History scholars from Germany, notably T.S. Maxwell, Adalbert Gail, and Claudine Bautze-Picron are doing significant work on the

art and architecture of South and Southeast Asian
countries.

[53] The use of images and visual narratives in history
writing, and the issues and debates around it, is
an established branch of investigation in the West.
See, for example, Haskell 1993 and Burke 2001.
Mainstream history writing in India rarely
engages seriously with art or visual culture, with
rare exceptions (see, U. Singh 2008 and M. Juneja
ed. 2001, in the case of ancient and medieval
Indian history writing respectively).

[54] For an overview of issues, approaches, and trends
in Western art history, see Preziosi (1989 and
1998); See also Nelson and Shiff eds., 2003. Global
concerns in art historical studies are rapidly
building bridges across cultures to examine key
issues and concepts in art history.

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