# Bombay Meri Jaan
Heritage Buildings Should Not Be Privatised

By Darryl D'Monte

Mumbaikars are faced with a familiar dilemma when one shows foreign visitors around: Once you're done with the Gateway of India, what is there left to see? Mumbai, conventional wisdom dictates, isn't a historical city like Delhi or Kolkata, but is caught up in the quotidian pursuit of Mammon. It takes the recent coronation by UNESCO of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (CST) as a World Heritage Site to remind us that this is untrue.

The listing of CST is all the more deserving because, unlike the 25 other World Heritage award-winners in the country — with the exception of the churches of Goa and the Darjeeling Railway — the site is in functional use. There must be no railway station in the world, with possible exceptions in China, where 3.5 million passengers stream in and out everyday.

Unknown to most Mumbaikars, CST — which old-timers still refer to as Victoria Terminus or VT — is the finest example of Indo-British and tropical Gothic architecture. Christopher W London, a British architectural historian, has published an illustrated book titled *Bombay Gothic* two years ago. To meet UNESCO's exacting preconditions, the Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage (INTACH) documented CST's attributes for the Central Railway. It points out that the 1888 building, which has received worldwide appreciation for its ornamental arches, its spires and domes, and above all, its fabulous richness of figurative and animal sculpture, has the dignity of a cathedral.
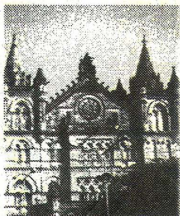
That stately comparison may come as somewhat of a shock to anyone catching the 5.33 p.m. fast train to Thane. VT drew its inspiration from St Pancras in London, completed only a few years earlier, but Colin Cunningham, another British architectural historian who is comparing the mills of Manchester with those in Mumbai and Ahmedabad, believes it is a finer building. He recently noted that the UNESCO award was almost one up on the UK, where the Palace of Westminster is the only single building from the 19th century listed as a World Heritage Site. CST is arguably the grandest railway station in the world, other contenders including Penn Central in Philadelphia and Gare d'Orsay in Paris.

CST doesn't represent a stand-alone site but an entire ensemble of 13 other buildings in what conservationists refer to as the Esplanade precinct. They only come to life when they are lit up at night, after citizens have gone home. Soon after Bartle Frere, who had earlier christened Bombay the *urbs prima* in Indis, became governor in 1862, he pulled down the Fort walls and commissioned 14 buildings to express the aspirations of the "wealthiest and most dynamic of Indian cities", as INTACH puts it. In contrast to the classical revival style of Calcutta and Madras, this represented a new image. Bombay was experiencing a boom, thanks to the American civil war which witnessed a huge demand for Indian cotton. Coincidentally, UNESCO recognition comes precisely when the Maharashtra government is projecting Mumbai as a world class city.

The Urban Development Research Institute, INTACH and other architects and historians are documenting the edifices in this ensemble, which include the university, high court and municipal corporation. UNESCO, in fact, is more partial to clusters of buildings which represent creative genius and an interchange of human values — the latter embodied in the fusion of British and Indian styles, characterised by the sculpted Lion and Tiger guarding the CST entrance. It may be only a few years before this entire precinct is accorded World Heritage status, with all the precautions, like a ban on crass alterations and the creation of buffer zones.

Awareness of the city's heritage, as indeed of monuments throughout the country, is restricted to the cognoscenti. Some experts even believe that the only way to preserve monuments is to keep people (especially perpetrators of graffiti!) out. Actually, the converse is true. Ignorance of one's heritage is the surest way to condemn it to obliteration. No one should re-erect, metaphorically, the Fort walls in Mumbai to keep the natives out, once again. It is only when people become aware of what they possess that they will treasure it. During the 150th (sesquicentennial) anniversary of this newspaper, the exhibition of contemporary art within CST drove this home convincingly.

Unfortunately, the public is prevented from viewing the best features of the station. There are 1,800 railway staffers with 400 visitors a day, which is three times its carrying capacity. However, there is no reason why the Central Railway cannot open sections of the administrative building to guided tours in the evenings and on holidays. At Elephanta, Mumbai's only other World Heritage Site, only a third of the nine lakh annual visitors to the island see the caves; the rest picnic. Managing all sites in the country to make them accessible will publicise them most effectively.

This also applies to developments in and around sites. Marine Drive is about to get a Rs 30 crore facelift but only few are aware of what is in store for Mumbai's prominent landmark — an art deco precinct. In all such schemes, the public should be informed of developments. Failure to do so will amount to privatising heritage, where a few take decisions. Heritage property should exist in the public realm because it symbolises the wealth and pride of the people.

Source: Jehangir Sorabjee

The Naming of Colonial Bombay's City Divisions, 1800-1918

Fig. 1.7 Unveiling of the statue of the Prince of Wales in 1879, which popularly came to be known as "Kala Ghoda." (Photograph of drawing, BDLS.)

A recent newspaper article in Bombay, now known officially as Mumbai, drew attention to the growing agitation against the proposal to change the name of a circle named after an Indian. These name changes were accelerated while the Shiv Sena, a regional and Hindu fundamentalist party, controlled the city.[1] A Shiv Sena corporator alleged that the Khodadad Circle at Dadar was named after an "Afghani" God and should be changed to Swami Samarth Chowk. By "Afghani" God, one can read Muslim—a community the Shiv Sena is vehemently opposed to. This suggestion angered local residents who pointed out that this prominent circle was named after a resident of the city, Khodadad Irani, who was a member of the minority Irani Zoroastrian community. The opposition Congress party corporator representing Dadar, remarked, "roads and streets having Indian names cannot be changed,"[2] although most of the English names in the city have been changed. In this city of great regional, linguistic, and religious diversity, there has been growing opposition to the aggressive attempts by the Shiva Sena to recast the city as a Hindu and Maharashtrian place through the act of renaming. While it is disquieting, if one takes the long historical view, these attempts are just one more layer in the city's long history of renaming.

The act of naming/renaming can be an assertion of ownership over an area. Not simply an act of aggression, it is also a way of interpreting a name, a statue, a building, a space in one's own cultural terms. I shall examine this phenomenon in Bombay between 1800-1918, from both the Indian as well as British points of view. However, neither perspective is exclusive. More accurately, I will look at the interaction between these two perspectives. Alternate mappings of the city's divisions show us the very different ways in which people interpret, imagine, and experience the city. I argue that the British primarily viewed the city along racial lines, leading to a fairly superficial understanding and experience of the city. In contrast, Indians read and experienced the city in more complex ways. Their mapping of the city included religious buildings, water tanks, statues, markets and other localities inhabited by Bombay's diverse populations. In the final analysis, Indians and the British required access to local knowledge in order to understand and control the city. However, as the ruling power, it was the British authorities whose acquisition of this local knowledge could be used most fully for the purposes of control—both of knowledge and of the actual city.

Naming And Renaming As An Act Of Possession: The British Version

The British viewed the city in terms of colour and settlement pattern. By this I mean that in their eyes the Indians lived in what they called the **"native town"** or **"black town,"** characterized by high-density population, buildings, bazaars, and networks of streets. The Europeans lived in the "European quarter," or beyond the bazaars in the suburbs, in spacious bungalows surrounded by gardens. These were areas of low density with a high proportion of European residents. **This reading of the city's divisions reflected British attempts to simplify Bombay's vast complexity.**

Fort, Black Town, Suburbs: The Separation of Races

Constructed between 1715 and 1743, the Fort formed the nucleus of colonial settlement in Bombay well after the fort walls were torn down after 1862. The Fort was itself divided into two sections along racial lines (Figs. 1.1, 1.2): the British lived in the South and the Indians, of the predominantly wealthy class, lived in the North. James Mackenzie Maclean (1835-1906), editor of the *Bombay Gazette* and member of the municipal corporation, referred in his Bombay guide to South Fort as the "European quarter" and North Fort as "the native bazaar, chiefly occupied by Parsees."[3] In the center of the Fort, dividing the two parts, lay the Bombay Green, a dusty expanse surrounded by major colonial institutions. This racial division did not occur naturally. In 1772, the Government issued an order prohibiting anyone but a European from building south of Church Street, forcing the natives who resided there to build new houses outside the Fort walls and to the north of it.[4]

It appears that Indians resided in the Fort from the very beginning since new areas were allotted for building outside the Fort in 1746 and Europeans and Indians were encouraged to build outside the walls. In 1750, some of the well-known houses outside the Fort and occupied by Europeans included the Villa Nuova at Mahim, owned by Thomas Whitehall, the old Mark House in Mazagaon, rented to Thomas Byfield by the Government in 1750[5] and the Governor's house at Parel, a former Portuguese place of worship and monastery confiscated from the Jesuits in 1720. Governor Hornby was the first to reside there between 1771-1780.[6] In 1750 and much earlier, there "must have been many residences, country houses of rich Portuguese and others at Mazagon."[7] British military officers had lived in Colaba in huts and tents and it was only in the last quarter of the eighteenth century that a military cantonment was formally established in Colaba.[8] However, it is difficult to say whether Europeans settled outside the Fort in large numbers before 1750. It is likely that the occupation by the Governor of his house in Parel from 1771 onwards, encouraged Europeans to move there. By 1852, one observer commented that "a few English families prefer residing in the fort, for the greater convenience it offers in the vicinity to the offices," implying that most resided outside the fort by then. At this time, Malabar Hill was still comparatively undeveloped, as the Governor's bungalow at Malabar Point is referred to as "a rural retreat."[9]

By 1787, encroachments in the Fort had become so numerous that a committee had been appointed to study the private houses erected by the Indians. Shop projections were considered as being encroachments. Other matters examined were the width of streets, height of buildings, and the placement of goods on the green or any open area of the town.[10] In 1803, a fire devastated a third of the Fort, which forced the British to carry out some long planned changes in the city. By 1750 a new town was coming into existence north of the Fort walls, but it was only after 1803 that a native town came up in that area.[11] The significance of the fire lies in the expansion of a *native town* beyond the fort walls.

S. M. Edwardes, former police and municipal commissioner of Bombay, the compiler of the three Gazetteers of Bombay, and author of several books on Bombay, remarked that the government had long desired the development of a *"black town"* similar to that which existed in Madras.

"It must probably appear," they [the government] wrote, "under every point of view preferable to allot a space in the oarts[12] adjoining the fort and esplanade for the erection of a black town such as at Madras; or gradually to effect such a separation between the town and fortifications, as exists at Calcutta."[13]

This new town was referred to as the Black Town for many years, and was later known as *the Native Town*. In 1838, to an anonymous contributor to the *Asiatic Journal* it appeared to be a "busy, bustling, but dirty quarter:"

> The Black Town, as it is called, spreads its innumerable habitations, amidst a wood of coco-nut trees-a curious busy, bustling, but dirty quarter, swarming with men and the inferior animals, and presenting every variety of character that the whole of Asia can produce.[14]

In 1880, Maclean referred to this area as the *Native Town* but it is not clear when that term first came in use.[15] Delineating the boundaries of the native town, Maclean stated that it was situated north of the Fort beyond the Esplanade, and extended up to Grant Road, which formed its northern limit. Beyond this lay the *northern suburbs* of Tardeo, Byculla, Mazagaon, and Parel, where "the European element of the population is again prominent."[16] Malabar Hill lay to the west and by the end of the nineteenth century became the most popular place of residence for rich Indians and Europeans. Maclean used the word *suburbs* in 1880, but Marianne Postans used the word as early as 1838. Postans, the wife of Captain Postans and married later to a missionary named Young, authored several books on western India. Referring to the range of vehicles found in Bombay, she observed, "an hour's drive from the port to the suburbs, will exhibit a curious variety of taste."[17] However, while Maclean used the word suburbs often, this may be the only time that Postans did so in her description of Bombay.

Writing of the year 1838, Postans noted that within the Fort were two large bazaars: the China bazaar and the Thieves bazaar. However the "three great bazaars" were located beyond the Esplanade, and the Europeans, she observed, lived beyond the bazaars. During the summer months many Bombay residents erected temporary bungalows on the Esplanade. These were taken down at the onset of the monsoons, and the European residents moved to more "substantial dwellings [that] are to be found either within the fort, or at Girgaum, Byculla, Chintz Poogly, and other places beyond the bazaars, where European residents have erected groups of pucka built, and handsome houses, with excellent gardens and offices attached." Pucka means built of stone and mortar.[18]

For the Europeans, the "native town" was an area where "the European element" was not prominent. However, it was also descriptive of "a dirty quarter" of extremely high densities, narrow streets, and bazaars in contrast to the areas of low density, bungalows, and gardens occupied by the Europeans and Indian elite in the suburbs. Figures 1.1 and 1.2 of Bombay show the comparative densities. Separated from the Fort by the Esplanade, the native town, stretched like a dense band, from east to west, across the island.

The British division of the city along racial lines limited the ways in which they could imagine and experience the city. While most of them lived in the *suburbs*, the majority of the Indian population lived in what they referred to as *"the native town."* The latter itself contained a number of the city's divisions, varied in nature in terms of activity and religious identity, however, most of the British saw it as a city division in itself. The *native town* seemed like one vast bazaar punctuated by a few representative public buildings, such as a temple, a mosque, a rest house, or an animal asylum, that were highlighted in tourist guides of the city. It was a place for excursions—a visit to the bazaars, a place to view native crowds or native festivals. Hence the British were unable to know, read or experience the complexity of large parts of Bombay except at a fairly superficial level.

Malabar Hill and the Politics of Naming

Malabar Hill became the prime residential area of the British as well as the Indian elite in the 1860s and especially after the 1880s when the British were forced to move away from Byculla and Parel as a result of the growth of industry in the area. In the example of the Malabar Hill area of Bombay one can see both the renaming of an entire area as well the anglicization of Indian words. Drawing on Paul Carter's work on the naming of the Australian landscape by the British where, often, aboriginal words were used, I argue that these Indian names were used by the British to map out and control the landscape of Bombay.[19] The naming practices of the Malabar Hill area are particularly interesting, since British residents competed for control of the hill with devotees and residents of two ancient sacred Hindu shrines.

James Douglas (1826-1904), a broker in the exchange business in Bombay for 30 years and author of numerous books on Bombay discussed the origin of Cumballa Hill, which is one section of the chain of hills known as Malabar Hill.[20] Samuel T. Sheppard, a historian of Bombay and editor of the newspaper the *Times of India*, produced a slim volume on Bombay's place names referred to extensively in this chapter.[21] Sheppard offers two different interpretations for the etymology of Cumballa. The first is from Sir James Macnabb Campbell (1847-1903), who argued that, "Kambala Hill apparently the grove of *Kambal* or *Kamal* also called *shimti*, Odina wodier."[22] Sheppard dismissed this claim, since there was no local tree whose name even remotely resembled this. He turned to Rao Bahadur P. B. Joshi:

> In my opinion the correct name of the hill is *Khambala* and not *Cumballa*. Among the old residents the hill is known as Khambala tekdi or hill. The hill is close to the Gowalia Tank where the Gowalas or cowherds of Bombay brought the cattle of the locality for drinking water. The hill was a jungle and as in course of time a number of *khambs* came to be fixed there, the place was called *Khambalaya* or Khambala that is an abode or locality of khambs. Now what were these

khambs? Anyone well acquainted with the folklore and religious observances of the old lower class Bombay Hindu would tell you that these khambs were abodes or resting places for the temple ghosts of certain dead ancestors.[23]

Non-English-speaking natives often amused the British with their Indian pronunciations of English words.[24] However, the British also mispronounced Indian names transforming them into English-sounding words, particularly in the localities where the British lived. For the most part the British had to adopt the names given by Indians to an area and in these cases they renamed the area through their distinctive pronunciations. The anglicization of "Khambala" to "Cumballa," owing to the inability of the British to pronounce the consonant "kh," is similar to the substitution of "Byculla," a *suburb* in Bombay occupied by the British, for "Bhayakhala," because of the difficulty in pronouncing "bh" and "kh." "Chintz Poogly," mentioned in an earlier quote from Mrs. Postans, is actually "Chinchpokli" which means Tamarind Dell (Marathi: *chinch*, tamarind; Marathi: *pokli*, dell). The Marathi pronunciation of chinch is close to *chintz*, but it is difficult to approximate *pokli* in English.

The meaning or correct pronunciation of these words hardly seemed to matter to the British. As Paul Carter stated, "whether correct or not, the names, transcribed, fixed in maps and narratives, made sense."[25] Carter argued that any aboriginal word, or rather, any sound helped early travelers and explorers to map out the Australian landscape. The boundaries of an area could be best verified by using local names. Similarly, the Indian words or sounds had served their purpose in the mapping of Bombay by the British. The search for the correct pronunciation and meaning of the word "Cumballa" had nothing to do with replacing it with the correct word or restoring the *khambs* to the locality, but had everything to do with authority. By writing a book on Bombay place-names, Sheppard would become the authority on this subject. While native informants were used to locate the meaning of Cumballa, the authority for this name rested with Sheppard who asked them for the meaning, locating the name "within the rhetorical ambit of a white geo-historical discourse." It is he who "decides whether or not this name will be preserved; and if it is preserved, it is because it has the authority of a quotation."[26]

In the case of "Cumballa," the first result of the anglicization of its name was the erasure of its old name and original meaning. By 1917 the elite residents of this area had monopolized the hill and had probably built their houses where the *khambs* of the lower classes once stood. The older generation knew it by the name of "Khambala tekdi" (Marathi: *tekdi*, hill), but it seemed that the next generation did not know it by that name. The second result was that while "Cumballa Hill" did not mean anything in English, it resembled an English sound, which then became the correct or accepted way of pronouncing the word.

Thus, in certain circles, including the anglicized native elite, "Cumballa" and "Byculla" became the accepted way of pronouncing these names. This is one of the ways by which the British renamed this area.[27]

But Cumballa Hill was only a part of Malabar Hill whose name Douglas derived. The naming of Malabar Hill is rather arbitrary, as the Malabar Coast is much further south of Bombay.

> The earliest notice we have of Malabar Hill under this name is by Fryer in 1673, *i.e.*, eleven years only after we put in an appearance on the Island of Bombay. But why Malabar? The coast of Malabar does not begin until you proceed as far south as Coorg. We suspect that Fryer himself gives us its derivation in describing the tank at the end of it, when he says that it was to bathe in it "the Malabars, visit it most for," a place of pilgrimage in fact, to which came people of the coasts south of Bombay, who were then all lumped together under the generic name of "Malabars." Hence Malabar Hill.[28]

Malabar Hill was not the oldest name of the area and was the site of one of Bombay's holiest Hindu shrines, the Walkeshwar temple. Douglas remarked that this prominent headland was noticed early on by geographers and in a map of the coastal areas in 1583 it was marked as "Cape Bombaim," but its earliest name was "Walkeshwar."[29]

The Walkeshwar temple was situated at the tip of the Malabar Hill, next to the Government House, one of the most important symbols of colonial rule; the residence of the Governor was juxtaposed with a venerated shrine and sacred spot. Steps led down from the main road to the Banganga tank around which numerous temples, including this one, and *dharamshalas* or pilgrim rest houses, and residences were grouped forming the village of Walkeshwar. This was a place of great sanctity. During the rule of the Silhara kings (810 to 1260 A. D.), they named the place Srigundi/ Shri-gundi (Telegu: *gunde*; Tamil: *kundi*; a hole, pit or hollow) which was said to mean "Lucky Stone" on account of a rock on the cliff of an unusual shape like the *yoni*, or the symbol of female power. This spot and the temple soon became a landmark on the island and an important place of pilgrimage for people of the Konkan kingdom, carving out the oldest road in the area. Pilgrims passing through the Shri-Gundi believed themselves to be regenerated. While the oldest name of the area was "Srigundi," some years later the brahmans attached to the shrine a story connecting it to an ancient legend, which gave it the name of Walkeshwar, the name of the locality.[30] Later the British named the tip of the headland, marked by the rocky cliff, Malabar Point (Fig. 1.3).

For the name of "Walkeshwar," the brahmans adopted the local history of the sanctuary which related to an old legend and

appropriated a "low tradition" into "high tradition." Dr. J. Gerson Da Cunha (1842-1900), a well-known Orientalist and a physician by profession who had moved from Goa to settle in Bombay and later wrote a history of Bombay, derived the etymology of "Walkeshwar". According to Da Cunha, "Walukesvara, now called Malabar Hill, is derived from two words of Sanskrit origin- (vâluka) which 'means sand,' and (isvara) 'lord;' hence Wâlukesevara signifies 'lord of sand.'"[31]

Da Cunha referred to a Mr. Yashvant Phondba Nayak Danaita who had read the old Sanskrit manuscript, the *Wâlukeshvara Mahâtmya*, or the greatness of Walukesvara, which contained the legend of this temple or the brahminical version. According to the legend, Lord Rama, the hero of the epic *Ramayana*, while on his way to Sri Lanka to rescue his wife Sita who had been kidnapped by Ravana, halted with his brother Lakshmana at the place now called Walukesvara and made a *lingam* out of sand here. Rama's *lingam* was placed in a temple and jumped into the sea after sighting the first *Mlechchas* or foreign invaders.[32]

If the Walkeshwar temple complex and Government House marked one end of the elite Malabar and Cumballa Hills, the Mahalakshmi temple, west of Breach Candy marked the other end (Fig. 1.4). In interesting ways, both temples, amongst the most important in Bombay, incorporate Muslim, Portuguese, and British rule into their myths. **The foundation myths of these temples allow us to reimagine parts of Bombay as sacred space, witness to events that took place eons ago. Walkeshwar,** for example, was a place where Lord Rama stopped on his way to Sri Lanka. Of course, other places also make similar claims.

The name "Mahalakshmi" is derived from *maha*, which means great, and *lakshmi*, representing prosperity, so it means "great prosperity."[33] The story connected to the foundation of the temple made the claim that Hindu goddesses actually helped the British. When the Muslims first came to Bombay in the fourteenth century the three goddesses who resided in Vari/Worli jumped into the sea to avoid desecration. From 1680 onwards, the British were involved in unsuccessful attempts to join Bombay to Worli with an embankment. Fortunately, Ramji Sivaji, a contractor, had a dream one night. In this dream, the three goddesses expressed a desire to come back to dry land, indicating that this would result in the successful building of the embankment. Ramji cast a net and pulled them ashore and then told the authorities of the preceding events. The British authorities presented the land to the goddesses, and the two islands were joined.[34] The *City Gazetteer* added that "the proximity of the shrine of Mama Hajiyani (Mother Pilgrim) has given rise to a saying that under British rule Mama and Mahalakshmi have joined hands, or in other words that the old animosity between Musalman saints and Hindu gods has disappeared."[35] While the Hindus claimed that their goddess helped the British bridge the gap between two islands, there also seems to be the claim that the British bridged the gap between Hindus and Muslims. One suspects that the latter claim is entirely British in its origin.

The Malabar-Cumballa Hill area has been called different names by the British government and municipality. In 1864, the *Times* observed that the sub-divisions *(areas)* of Bombay defined in that year by H.E. [His Excellency], the Governor in Council mentioned "Breach Candy" and "Malabar Hill,"[38] which correspond with the sections we have been discussing. Da Cunha gives a slightly confused explanation for Breach Candy, which is the breach between the southern ridge of the Malabar Hill and the northern ridge of the Cumballa Hill. The term *breach* has been used in Bombay since the middle of the eighteenth century and "Candy" is the British substitution for the Indian word *khind* or pass. This conclusion is derived from a
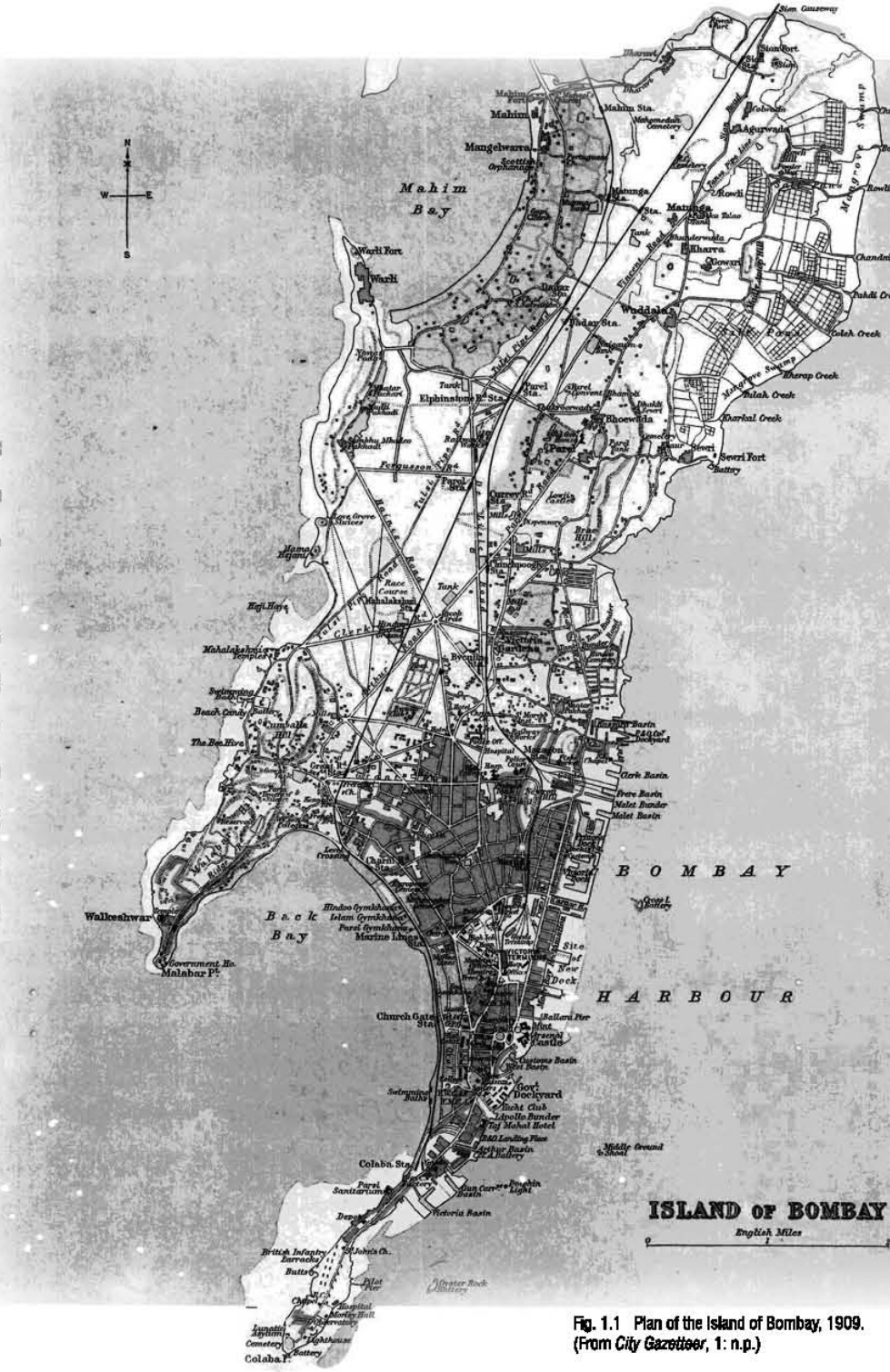
similar substitution of "Ganesh Candy," in the city of Pune, for "Ganesh Khind" by Sir James Mackintosh in 1804.[37] In 1865, the newly founded Municipality divided the city into a number of wards, which were further subdivided into *sections*, to facilitate assessments for the purpose of taxation. The Malabar Hill Ward (No. 8) consisted of the *sections* of Walkeshwar and Mahalakshmi. By 1872, a further re-distribution of areas had occurred and D Division/Ward D contained the *sections* of Chowpatty, Walkeshwar, and Mahalakshmi."[38] Even as late as 1917, the Municipality listed Walkeshwar and Mahalakshmi and not Malabar Hill and Cumballa Hill respectively, as the name of these *sections* in Ward D.[39] Yet, in 1909, in a a government publication, we see that Malabar Hill and Cumballa Hill were prominently marked on the map as if they were official sections of the city (Fig. 1.2).

Municipal divisions and designations notwithstanding, the Europeans continued to refer to these localities as Malabar Hill and Cumballa Hill, and Breach Candy remained an important area. Sir Edwin Arnold, a journalist and former resident of Bombay, on his return to India after more than twenty years, refers to the "bungalow-dotted heights of Malabar Hill."[40] W. S. Caine (1842-1900), an English politician with an interest in India, wrote a handbook for European travelers in which he recommends that: [41]

> when a drive is being taken to Malabar Hill some morning or evening, it will be well worth while to see the Walkeshwar Temple and Tank....There is a group of temples at Breach Candy also well worth seeing. [42]

Thus, Caine assumed that "Walkeshwar" referred to the temple and tank, and was part of "Malabar Hill." It is interesting to note that "Breach Candy," not "Mahalakshmi" was the location referred to for a group of temples. Even later, in 1905-1906, Sidney Low, a journalist of the London *Standard* accompanying the Prince and Princess of Wales on their tour to India, called the area "Malabar Hill" and "Cumballa Hill" even though by this time the English were being eased out of the area by rich natives. Indians living in crowded localities were killed in large numbers during the plague that first hit Bombay in 1896. In contrast, the English in their "roomy compounds" escaped the worst. Rich Indians, noticing this, moved in large numbers to these areas. As they owned most of the land and had more money the English were forced to leave.[43] Low observed:

> The result is that to-day the English bungalows on Malabar Hill and Cumballa Hill may almost be counted on the fingers. Nearly all the finest houses are occupied by natives, who live there in great style. [44]

For the British, in their daily usage, it was important to substitute the names "Malabar Hill" and "Cumballa Hill" for "Walkeshwar" and "Mahalakshmi." The latter were not derived from the names of trees or practices that no longer existed but were based on actively used sacred spaces that attracted ascetics and devotees on a daily basis and in greater numbers during special festive occasions. The Hindus, in this case, indulged in practices such as processions that belonged to the world of the "native town," which the British wanted to keep at arm's length. It was one thing to go to the native town to witness the processions at the time of Muhurram, as many westerners did, and quite another experience to have them at your doorstep.[45] Even westernized Indians used and continue to use the names "Malabar Hill" and "Cumballa Hill."[46] **These names were not just the name of geographical features in the city's divisions but came to symbolize a fashionable address and a certain way of life of the British and the Indian upper class that lived on the "bungalow-dotted" heights.** The names "Malabar Hill" and "Cumballa Hill" acted as boundaries confining the names, worlds and practices of

Fig. 1.1 Plan of the Island of Bombay, 1909. (From *City Gazetteer*, 1: n.p.)

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"Walkeshwar" and "Mahalakshmi" to its edges and extremities.

The Indian Version

Indians also substituted English names for Indian names. This is particularly evident in and around the Fort divisions of the city where the Fort, its gates, the open space in the center and the major institutions grouped around it, were given Indian names. Through this process of naming, the Indians translated these spaces and structures and made them their own.

There was not one Indian version of the naming of the city. Bombay had a very diverse population and many languages were spoken here. In 1901, the five dominant languages on the island of Bombay were Marathi, Gujarati, Hindustani, Cutchi and English.[47] Additionally, there is often more than one way of spelling an Indian word in English which accounts for the multiple spellings of some words.

Indian Names for the City of the British

The origin of the word Bombay was a contentious issue between the Hindus and Portuguese. In 1852, an observer noted that the native word for the town was "Moombay," and originated from their goddess "Bomba, or Momba Devi"(*devi*: goddess). The Portuguese on the other hand claimed that the island was named Bombay after their first governor who while commenting on the beauty and safety of the harbour described it as "Bom Bahia" (Portuguese: good bay).[48]

The Fort was built on the former island of Bombay, and for many people in 1874, the Fort was Bombay. According to Da Cunha "the natives living in Kulaba, Walukesvara, and Mazaganw say even in our time, from a traditional habit, that they are 'going to Bombay,' meaning the Fort, which to a modern writer would probably appear absurd."[49]

Sir Dinshaw Wacha, a Parsi and a prominent citizen of Bombay, penned an important memoir of Bombay from the native perspective. In the nineteenth century a large number of Parsis lived in North Fort and Wacha points to many names that were used to describe the Fort in the 1850s and later but were almost forgotten by 1914-15. Indians knew the Fort as "Kote"(Sanskrit: fort) or "Killa"(Persian and Arabic: fort). Surrounded by a "Chur"(probably Sanskrit: moat) with the gates closed at night, the "Kote" defined the Fort as a boundary as well as what lay within, while "Kotebahar" or "Bharkote" (Sanskrit: *bhar/bahar*, outside, without) was the area that lay outside the "Kote."[50] "Kote" and "baharkote," was also a way of imagining the city by dividing it into these two basic subdivisions. Another Parsi, Dr. Jal F. Bulsara, refers to Parsi religious buildings "in the city in and around the Fort or 'Kote and Baharcote' area."[51] This quote, from 1973, shows that a memory of these terms continued to exist in recent times. It is possible that Parsis most commonly used these terms, but one cannot prove this on the basis of available evidence.

Beyond the Fort lay the Esplanade or the *maidan* (Persian: open field, plain or battlefield), the former being the name of a separate division of the city. In the *City Gazetteer* it is observed that "the Esplanade section, as the name implies, is the modern representative of the old *maidan*, in which according to Fryer buffaloes and cows grazed."[52] The term *maidan* persisted and parts of the Esplanade are now called Azad (meaning "free") *maidan* and Cross *maidan*.

The Indians had their own names for the three gates of the Fort. Church Gate and Churchgate Street were named after the St. Thomas Cathedral of the Protestants, the most prominent building around the Bombay Green. Churchgate was also later the name given to a Station and the surrounding locality. The Indians called this gate the "Powun-Chukkee Gate" (Sanskrit: *powun/povan* wind; Sanskrit: *chukkee*, mill), thereby displacing "Church" as the term of reference. It was so called because around the late eighteenth century a windmill used to stand there, and the name also came to stand for certain experience of everyday life. Dr. Jivanji Jamsetji Modi, a Parsi resident of Bombay, recounted that when he was young, "to go to the povanchaki meant to go out of the gate for an airing."[53]

At the center of the Fort lay the Green, known by various names among disparate groups of people (Fig. 1.5). By 1863, a circle of buildings had been built surrounding it, and it was renamed the "Elphinstone Circle." In the mid-nineteenth century it was a popular recreation ground for Parsi boys and girls who lived in the Fort. These Gujarati-speaking children called this playground *chakri* (Gujarati: circle) because it was circular.[54] The bullock drivers called Elphinstone Circle *"Amliagal,"*(Gujarati: *amli*, tamarind; Gujurati: *agal*, in front of) or "in front of the tamarind." This was named after the old tamarind tree located to the northeast of the Cathedral.[55] Note that different languages used in Bombay were reflected in names: tamarind is "chinch" in Marathi and "amli" in Gujarati. The former was used in naming "Chinchpokli" and the latter in "Amliagal."

Wacha pointed out that the Town Hall and the Cathedral fronting the Green were the two most important buildings in the Fort, referred to as *"Tondal"* and *"Deval"* (Marathi: temple) respectively. *Tondal* was the Indian pronunciation of Town Hall,[56] while *"Deval,"* was a corruption of the word *"devalaya"*(Sanskrit: temple). The word *"Deval/Dewal"* is more commonly used in Marathi. Seeing the Cathedral as a "deval" was a way for the Indians to interpret this Christian institution in their own cultural terms and make it their own.[57]

The Indians reinterpreted the statues placed by the British in the city. An early one, that of Marquis Cornwallis placed in the Elphinstone Circle, was seen as a shrine and referred to as *"Chota Dewal,"* (Hindi, Marathi: *chota*, small) or "small temple," a reference that contrasted it to the Cathedral it fronted. The natives worshipped it, much to the consternation of the British.

> There is a very fine monument, in the Elphinstone Circle, to Cornwallis. Go when you will, you will see flowers placed on the open book, or garlands on the figures. This is not a new custom. In 1825 it was thought by the natives to be a place of religious worship, and they called it *Chota Dewal*. Government tried to stop this, and issued some vernacular notices that it was a mistake. But it was of no use, for when these feelings take possession of the natives they are not easily eradicated.[58]

Statues of a secular or non-religious nature were new phenomena in the urban environment in India. It is hardly surprising that these figures were interpreted as Gods. However, while they continued to fascinate the Indian public, Douglas's prediction that the natives would do "pooja" or worship the equestrian statue of the Prince of Wales was not fulfilled. Instead, in an informal way, the horse rather than the prince gave its name to a locality.

> The apotheosis of Englishmen by natives of India is a curious subject….I am certain the natives will be doing pooja to Sir Albert Sassoon's equestrian statue of the Prince of Wales in another generation. Look at that statue almost any time of the day you like, and you will see a group gazing at it. They are much exercised to understand why the Queen's statue is white (marble) and the Prince's black (bronze).[59]

The statue was unveiled in 1879 in a prominent site at the junction of Rampart Row and Forbes Street, the boundary of South Fort (Fig. 1.6) and was removed to Victoria Gardens (now the Veermata Jijabai Bhonsle Udyan) in 1965, when various statues placed in the city by the British were vandalized.[60] Nevertheless, the area still continues to be known by the colloquial name of the statue, "Kala Ghoda," which translates as "Black Horse." There is now an annual "Kala Ghoda Arts Festival," and in 1999 it included an event called the Kala Ghoda heritage walk through the "Kala Ghoda neighbourhood."[61] There were few statues of royalty in Bombay in the period under consideration and undoubtedly the British wanted the Indians to be impressed by this likeness of their prince. The name "Kala Ghoda," however, indicates the fascination of the Indians with the colour of the statue and the horse, but not with its royal association, something, which is completely ignored in the act of naming.

Conflicts Over Names and the Power of Imagined Localities

Indians imagined the city in much more complex ways than the British, where the "native town" was not a large undifferentiated single city division to them, but consisted of sections each with its own individuality. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, for example, dancing girls were to be found in Khetwadi and prostitutes in Kamathipura.[62] Tanks, temples, shrines, statues and mosques punctuated the entire landscape of Bombay and were used to describe a neighbourhood thereby forming an alternative framework for understanding the city to that of the official divisions of the city. Gamdevi, for example, was the neighbourhood around the temple of Gamdevi. In Bombay, names persist as memories of a past that may no longer exist. For example, the name of water tanks, given to localities persists even though the tanks were filled in over 80 years ago: one can still direct a taxi-driver in Bombay to take one to C. P. Tank even though the Cowasji Patel Tank has been filled in years ago.

Large numbers of people from various communities, especially from the adjacent regions of Maharashtra and Gujarat, migrated to Bombay after the British assumed control of the island in 1661. The British government's promise of religious freedom of worship and protection of trade were important reasons for these migrations. People from a particular caste, sect, community or region tended to live close to each other in the city. Belonging to comparable income and status groups and generally engaging in similar trades or occupations, they tended to cluster together partially for business reasons. Also, since no one caste always dominated a particular trade, castes or communities following similar trades lived together in the same or adjacent areas.[63]

Areas such as these often acted as "homelands" in the city for an immigrant community and continued to do so long after they ceased to inhabit the locality. Edwardes remarked that "the Bene-Israel owned their Samuel Street and Israel Moholla."[64] During my fieldwork in Bombay, I found that while the Bene-Israelis no longer live there, many continue to meet at their synagogue on Samuel Street, the oldest in the city. They told me about Israel *moholla*, a quarter occupied by the Bene-Israels, and a book of their history contains photographs and comments on streets in this area named after Bene-Israelis.[65]

Another such group of immigrants was the Bhattias, Hindus who came from the region of Gujarat and played a prominent role in the commerce of the city. Wacha outlined the sector of North Fort, which was known as "Bhattia Wad,"where the wealthy Bhattias resided in the second half of the nineteenth century.[66] *Wad*, in Marathi, means a hedge, an enclosure, a ward, or a quarter in town.[67] Bhattia Wad cannot be located on a colonial map.

What is important here is that an immigrant community constructs its own quarter in the city, which is at least partially imagined into being. Without physical structures such as walls and gates, they construct the boundaries of

their quarter. This construction is no less real or powerful because it does not receive official recognition. This is seen in the case of the "Bhattia Bag,"(Persian: *bag/bagh/baug*, garden), whose official name was Bazar Street Garden. Wacha refers to "the 'Bhattia Bag' in Fort Street, so called because all along its south the Bhattia population greatly preponderated when the so called 'bag' was built in the later part of the sixties."[68]

Following Gayatri Spivak's lead, "measuring *silences*" in the data in colonial records is part of the method I have used in this chapter and the case of Bhattia Bagh is one example of this method.[69] It seems that "Bhattia Bag" was the unofficial name of the garden and one that the authorities were finally forced to acknowledge. The Municipal Report for Bombay of 1914-15 stated that "the work of relaying out the Bazar Gate Garden (Bhattia Bag) was commenced in the year under report."[70] Earlier Municipal Reports referred to this as the Bazar Gate Garden, but it seemed that the Government was acknowledging its unofficial name only to change it to something entirely new. The Municipal Report of 1916-17 reporting on the garden

Fig. 1.3 View of Malabar Point, 1852. (From Life in Bombay, and the Neighbouring Out-Stations [London: Richard Bentley, 1852], facing p. 248.) ▼

observed that "the Bhatia Baug garden (now named the "Victoria Square") turf was laid and the center group of palms has been planted."[71]

It is interesting to note that Sheppard made an entry for "Bhattia Bagh" in his *Place-Names* but failed to mention that Bazar Gate Garden was its earlier official name, suggesting that it was more commonly known as the former. Sheppard quoted the *Times of India*, May 1917, which said that the square was obviously named after the Victoria Terminus, the grand Victorian Gothic Railway Terminus, and "is one of the boundaries of the area thus rechristened." The *Times* then adds a criticism and a warning:

> The Corporation cannot in any case be accused of coming to a decision without due consideration of the various names suggested. They have deliberately swept away the name of a quarter which is smaller in size than in historic interest, and, as our Calcutta correspondent pointed out in a letter which we published yesterday, it often happens that the name of a quarter or district is not attached to any street and is thus in danger of being obliterated.[72]
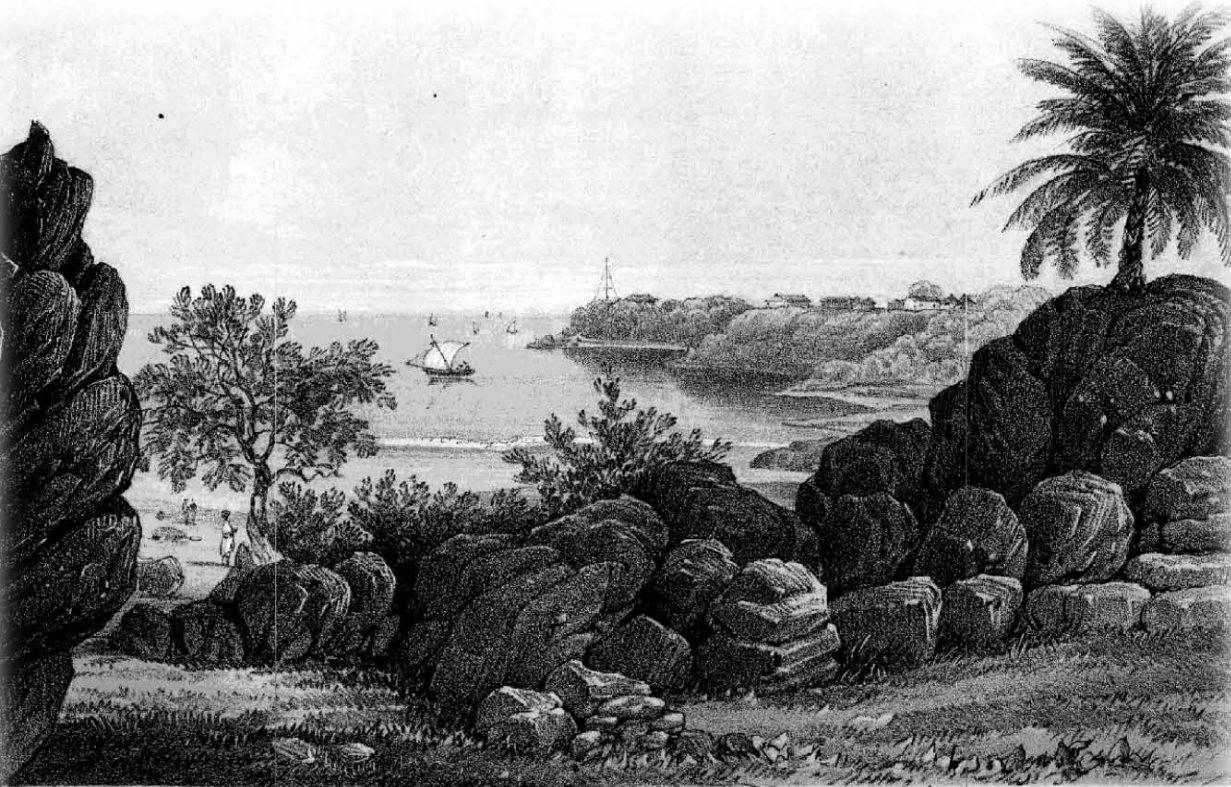
Fig. 1.6 View from the Town Hall of the Elphinstone Circle ▶ and surrounding buildings, 1880. Note the spire of the St. Thomas Cathedral on the left side. (Photograph, BDLS.)

Perhaps the Bhattias were aware of the danger of losing the name of their quarter with the loss of Bhattia Bagh. In 1913 the Bhatia Mitra Mandal, a community organization, protested against the decision of the Municipal Corporation to rename the garden. According to Mangala Purandare, in response to their protest, the Corporation decided against renaming the garden.[73] However, this account is not entirely accurate because in 1917 the garden was "rechristened "and named Victoria Square. Thus, it is more accurate to say that the government reversed its decision. In the Collector's Map of 1926, the garden is named *Bhattia Bagh*.[74]

In Bombay, the case of *Bhattia Bagh* was one of the few disputes over names. Perhaps this was because, official names notwithstanding, various sections of the public knew these areas by other names and their map of Bombay and its divisions would read quite differently from that of the Municipality. Names are sometimes like keys to a map and one needs access to this specialized knowledge to read the city differently. Knowledge of the name *"Bhattiawad,"* for example, enables one to re-imagine divisions and boundaries, to read the area, to look for local institutions of the Bhattias that structure their locality. In North Fort, these included a place of worship used by some other Hindu groups as well: named the Shri Govardhannathji ni Haveli, built in approximately 1892 on Modi Street; and a temporary

hospital: the Bhatia Plague Hospital on Mint Road, established after the plague epidemic struck Bombay in 1896.[75]

Dealing With "Hereditary Homes"
The native residents of Bombay had their secrets, and there were worlds in Bombay that one could not penetrate without knowledge of those secrets, but the colonial police force, charged with the responsibility of understanding and controlling the city, were forced to understand and acknowledge these alternative names and worlds of Bombay. In his history of the Bombay city police, S. M. Edwardes describes the annual Muhurram celebration between 1909-1916 when he was police commissioner. For many years the celebrations had often resulted in bloodshed. The *moholla* was the central organizing unit, and each *moholla* raised money to build and decorate their own *tazia* and *tabut*.[76] Quoting Edwardes:

> Attached to each *tabut*, and accompanying it whenever it was carried out in procession, was a *toli* or band of attendants....In some cases these *tolis* had been gradually allowed to assume a gigantic size, as for example, that of the Julhai weavers of Ripon Road (Madanpura), which comprised from two to three thousand men, all armed with *lathis* tipped with brass or lead.[77] Similarly the notorious Rangari

The word *moholla*, used by Edwardes, comes from the Persian *mahalla*, which means a street, ward, or quarter of a town.[79] Most of these mohollas were also identified with a specific community, such as the Halai Memon community with the Halai Memon moholla. The conflicts were also between mohollas or communities. Here, Edwardes gives the precise location of certain mohollas, that is, he matched the official and unofficial names: Abdul Rehman Street was an important street which has many sections that were known to Indians by different names, one of which was the Rangari moholla or street of dyers.[80] Madanpura was named after Madan, or Madoo, a Muslim of the Julhai or weaver caste, which congregated here in the sector bordering Ripon Roads.[81] In the municipal reports, Kolsa moholla, for example is called Kolsa street,[82] but in official records, however, such as the list of names of streets in the Municipal reports, one cannot find any mention of Halai Memon moholla.[83] If it was not a street but a quarter like Bhattia Wad, we may never know the location and boundaries of the mohalla.

Civil servants such as S.M. Edwardes, who administered the city-through the government, and institutions such as the municipal corporation, the military, the police, and Bombay Port Trust- had a more complex picture of the city than most European observers, as can be seen in the example of the police.

Community or caste leaders were an important link between the colonial government and their communities. As early as 1672, Gerald Aungier, an important early Governor of Bombay, established *panchayats* or caste-councils for the communities of Bombay.[84] Leading men of the community were elected to the panchayat, which regulated the activities of castes: they settled internal disputes, ran the internal government of their caste or community, framed rules of conduct to be observed by caste members. Many castes also had a headman or several headmen.[85] These headmen were influential in their community and also represented their community's concerns to the government in case of a dispute or a petition. In the collection of census data S.M. Edwardes had to make an appeal to the headman of some "well-known communities" as well as other "private gentlemen possessing local influence," to act as mediators between the census staff and the local populations.[86]

Some British officials such as S.M. Edwardes, were sympathetic to the local communities or to some section of it and in some cases, they interceded with the government on behalf of a community. However, the colonial regime allowed very little opposition from within its ranks to its policies and plans. These points are well illustrated in the example of the City of Bombay Improvement Trust, Scheme No. XXXVII: Sandhurst Road to Crawfort Market Road Street Scheme, involving the construction of a one-hundred foot wide road between these two points on the eastern side of the city. The Improvement Trust was created with the aim of improving the city, especially its sanitation, after the bubonic plague first struck Bombay in 1896. On 19 June 1911, a delegation of thirty leaders of the Memons, a Sunni Muslim community, visited James Orr, President, City of Bombay Improvement Trust, and asked him to reconsider the scheme in light of the hardships it would impose on the Memon community. One-sixth of this scheme lay in the Memon quarter, known as Memonwada. The acquisition of property would result in the break up of some *jamaats* [assembly of the community], interfering in a custom that required members of a jamaat to live close to each other like members of a family.[87] A small group of Memon leaders also visited S. M. Edwardes, who was the police commissioner at this time. While declaring himself "strongly in favour" of the road scheme to this delegation, he was also sympathetic to their concerns and promised to intercede on their behalf with the government. He admitted to the government that he had "no "locus standi" to intercede in this matter, but despite the fact that the Memons were "queer people," and had given him "trouble at times—e.g. at the Muharram," he could not "help liking them."
      The proposed road scheme, he stated, had caused "considerable resentment among the Memons, through the heart of whose hereditary home (in Bombay) the road is to run." Familiar with the social customs of the Memon community, Edwardes also took the "unusual step" of sending an official report to the Government outlining the history and social customs of the Memon community and their institutions and way of life in Memonwada. If displaced, he wanted to ensure that every attempt would be made to resettle community members so as to recreate the family and communal life that would be lost.[88]

This scheme generated considerable controversy and attracted wide public attention, many sections of the public being against the scheme entirely. In a speech, Orr, the author of the scheme, admitted that it was not until after the scheme was publicized that he became aware of the number of Memons who would be affected by it. He was struck by the "peculiar hardships" that the Memons would suffer by taking part of their quarter because of their "peculiar social customs," and in order to mitigate these hardships he had decided to look more carefully into the matter. However, he found the situation to be less serious than had presented by the Memons. About 10,000 Memons lived in the Memon quarter through which the road ran and *only* [emphasis added] about a quarter of this population, or approximately 2,500 would be displaced. Land could be found adjacent to the present Memon quarter to resettle those displaced. Orr concluded that from the sanitary improvement of their quarter and acquisition of adjacent land "much good may come out of the evil" for the Memons.[89]

The government's arguments and point of view soon persuaded Edwardes of the correctness of its position, but he was sensitive to the fact that the road was to run through "the heart" of the Memons' "hereditary home (in Bombay)" and continued to urge the government to do their best for the community. While there was a wide spectrum of colonial British attitudes toward the Indians, Edwardes was arguably amongst those most sympathetic to them: he affectionately referred to the Memons as "queer people," while another colonial official characterized them as "ignorant Bohras [a group of Shia Muslims] and Memons, whose agitation is mainly due to self interest."[90] In this case, government officials were dealing with a complex situation in Bombay where someone or the other would be affected by this road. Orr, in contrast to Edwardes, while making public protestations of concern for preserving the Memons way of life, had no understanding of this hereditary home or interest in maintaining the integrity of Memonwada. He wanted his wide road and most significantly, this scheme was more economical than other alternatives. Making use of census data he found that the "represented area" affected by the scheme, though known as Memonwada, had few Memons living in it and the "Memon quarter proper" lay to the south of Memonwada, a fact he used to further his own argument in favour of this scheme.[91] And this solution was cheaper than the others, but would affect no one community as this scheme did, in such a brutal fashion.

Encounters Between Old And New City Divisions

The British acquired a group of islands from the Portuguese in 1661, which they joined together through dams and expanded through reclamations over the following centuries to form the island of Bombay (Fig. 1.5). A series of causeways and dams breached the gap between the islands and the land between them was reclaimed over time. At the same time the island was further expanded by a succession of reclamations along its shores, especially on the east from Colaba to Sewri. The Hornby Vellard bridged the great breach between Mahalakshmi and Worli, the most important of these breaches. William Hornby, Governor of Bombay between 1771 and 1784, is said to have constructed this Vellard, though work on bridging this gap had begun at the end of the seventeenth century. Once this Vellard was completed, the central parts of the island and the "Flats," as this area was called, began to be reclaimed, a process that continued during the nineteenth century. Even as late as 1850, the whole land intersected by Clerk road to Mahalakshmi was a swamp for most of the year. A plan of Bombay for the years 1812-16 shows the area "inundated in the monsoon," as it is marked on the plan (Fig. 1.8). Construction on Colaba Causeway began in 1835 linking the southern island of Colaba to the island of Bombay.[92]

These islands, with their fishing villages, temples, trees, creeks and hills, have given names to city divisions that are used to this day. By 1673, while Gerald Aungier was the English governor of Bombay, the seven islands had become four: they were (1) Colaba or Old Woman's Island, (2) the palm grove of Bombay, Mazagon, Parel, Matunga, Sion and Dharavi, (3) Mahim and (4) Worli or Varli (Fig. 1.5).[93] Parts of these islands were flooded periodically by the sea, leading eighteenth and early nineteenth century accounts of Bombay by English writers to focus mainly on Colaba, the Fort, the Esplanade, Malabar Hill, Mazagaon, Parel, Mahim and Varli. Occasional references were also made to villages such as Sion, Sewri and Walkeshwar, which later had administrative divisions of the city named after them. Apart from the Fort, Malabar Hill, reclamations, and road names, the colonial regime used Indian, and not European, names for the city's divisions.[94]

In the old terminology of the colonial authorities, Bombay, in 1727 was comprised of two towns: Bombay and Mahim, and eight *villages*: Mazagaon, Varli, Parel, Vadala, Naigam, Matunga, Dharavi and Colaba, seven *hamlets*: two under Vadala, two under Dharavi and three under Parel. It also had five Koli *quarters*, Kolis being fisherfolk and the earliest inhabitants of these islands.[95] The town is also known as *kasba*, which is an Arabic word that indicates the chief town of the district,[96] as can be seen from this quote from the eighteenth century: "the estimated rental of the town or Kasba of Bombay was Xs. 30,424."[97] The term the "island of Bombay" referred to the island formed by joining the original seven islands. Bombay is often described by the terms "town" and "island." Even the census report for Bombay, for example, that of 1901, was of "Bombay (Town and Island)." **However, the three volume set of** *The Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island*, **compiled by Edwardes and published in 1909 and 1910, finally replaced the word** *town by city.*

The term *town* has often been used for naming parts of Bombay. In 1775, for the traveler by the name of Parsons, "the town of Bombay" was the area within the Fort of Bombay. In the same year, Forbes, the author of "Oriental Memoirs" refers to "Black Town" within the fortress, which contained bazaars.[98] While Parsons equated the urbanized part of Bombay, which was the Fort, as *town*, Forbes referred to a division within the Fort as a separate *town*. In the eighteenth century an area called "Madagascar Town" developed as a short-lived slaves quarter on the shores of Back Bay. Slaves were imported from Madagascar from about 1736 and this trade continued for about 40 years.[99] We know that especially after 1803, *a black town* or *native town* developed beyond the Esplanade. Edwardes, on the other hand, used the term "town" to indicate rapidly expanding urbanization: "Not only in the Fort was the face of the land undergoing change. The town was creeping gradually over the reclaimed higher grounds, westward along

Back Bay, and northward to Byculla, so that by 1835 it became imperative to construct new communications." [100]

In 1864, the *Times* observed that in that year H.E. [His Excellency], the Governor in Council outlined the limits of Bombay as: "The Island of Bombay, and Colaba and Old Woman's Island,' and sub-divided them into the following areas: Colaba, Fort, Mandvi and Bunders, Bhuleshwar, Breach Candy, Malabar Hill, Kamathipura, Mazagon Mount, Chinchpokli, Worli, Mahim Woods and Matunga." [101] In 1865, after the foundation of the municipality, the Municipal Commissioner divided the city into ten wards, Mandvi and Umarkhadi and the area surrounding them were called "The Old Town" and the area extending from it to Byculla were known as "The New Town." [102] It is not clear whether the population used these terms. To further complicate matters, what was once "New Bombay"- the area of stately buildings lining the grand boulevard stretching between Elphinstone College and Treacher & Co.'s buildings that was created after the fort walls were torn down in the 1860s, was to be called "Frere-town." [103] Frere-town was named after Sir Bartle Frere, the influential governor of Bombay who conceived and began this scheme.

As the town crept across the landscape of Bombay, from south to north and from east to west, it encountered, enveloped or bypassed older village settlements. Cavel, in the center of the island was one such village (Fig. 1.5). Located on the northern side of the Esplanade this village once spread over the whole area, which was, by the late nineteenth century, divided by Kalbadevi Road into Cavel proper and old Hanuman Lane. Kolis, who were converted to Roman Catholicism by the Portuguese, once occupied Cavel almost entirely. Cavel was thought to be a corruption by the Portuguese of Kol-war or Koli hamlet, [104] or a corruption of the Portuguese word *capela*, chapel. Sheppard added that even in 1917, the Goans, a community from the area of Goa that was under Portuguese rule, associated Cavel with the church known as the "Cavel Church." This church was known as the "Nossa Senhora de Saude" (Our Lady of Health) and was built as a family church in 1794 or earlier. The native name for the locality of Cavel Street was—"Gaewadi," *gae* means cow and as cow is feminine gender, *wadi* was used, which is the feminine noun for *wada* or quarter. Sheppard opined that this name was used because beef was sold here and in 1917, one or two shops selling beef still existed in the locality. The other explanation he offered was that cows were kept here. [105]

The correct meaning of the word Cavel is not important. What is significant is that two competing and intertwined histories were attached to the name—that of the Kolis on the one hand

and that of the Portuguese and Catholic Church, on the other. Since *Gae* means cow in Hindi, Gujarati and Marathi, the term Gaewadi may have been used by a variety of communities. However, I would read the name as a comment on the beef selling and eating practices of a group by a non-beef eating group, such as the Hindus. Gerson da Cunha, a Goan, visited Cavel for the first time in 1860. At that time it was the heart of the Roman Catholic community of the island that received annual additions to its numbers as immigrants came from Bassein, Salsette, Daman and Goa. In Bombay, they served as clerks and domestic servants. [106] In the early twentieth century, a government publication said "the Goanese and Native Christians are firmly attached to Cavel, the old home of some of the earliest converts to Roman Catholicism." [107] But this was not entirely true. Da Cunha, writing at the end of the nineteenth century noted with regret, "Cavel, once the seat of the Christian converts of the Portuguese, has long been invaded, and, now almost entirely, occupied, through the sheer force of wealth, by the Vanias." Vanias are Hindus belonging to the caste most associated with business. But it was not just the vanias, but also the Bhattias, another powerful community associated with business, who moved into the area in large numbers displacing the kolis and Roman Catholics, who da
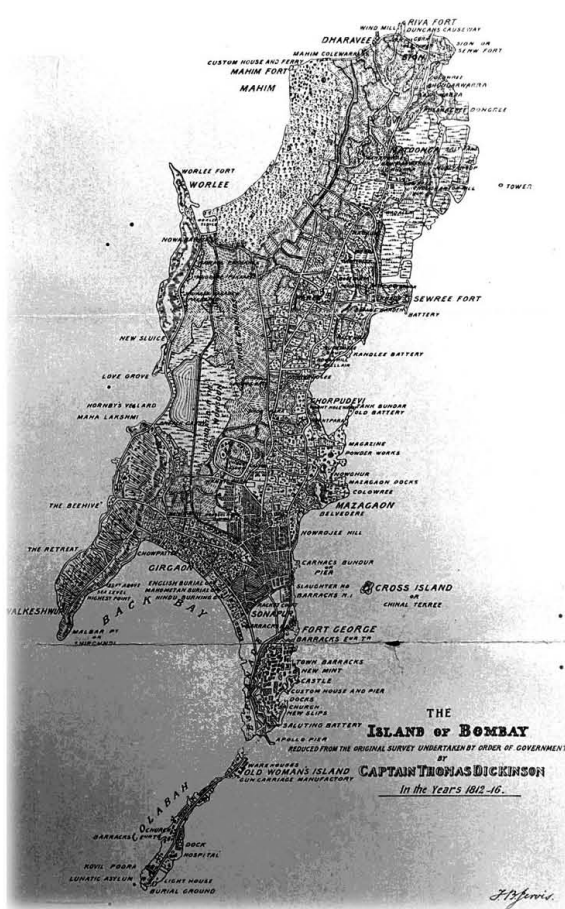

Fig. 1.5 A Reconstructed Plan of Bombay as it appeared in 1710. (From John Burnell *Bombay in the Days of Queen Anne: Being an Account of the Settlement* [London: printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1933], facing p. 90.)

Fig. 1.8 Captain Thomas Dickinson's Plan of the Island of Bombay, 1812-16. (From *City Gazetteer*, 2: n.p.)

Cunha referred to as "the oldest rural gentry of Bombay." We have already seen that the Bhattias would, in 1913, agitate over the naming of "Bhattia Bagh." Here, however, they helped in the transformation of the landscape as the small, airy villas with their gardens and crosses were replaced by a landscape of massive tenement buildings that were dark and airless. [108]

Cavel was bypassed a long time ago. In 1872 when the Municipality further divided *wards* into *sections*, Cavel was split between B Ward and C Ward, between the sections of Dhobi Talao and Market. [109] Over time it was squeezed between the two great thoroughfares: the Kalbadevi Road and Girgaum Road, and the historic area of Cavel is thought to lie in the Dhobi Talao section. "Market" signified the three cloth markets that were located in the area of that *section*, but it perhaps signaled to "the oldest rural gentry of Bombay," that money and markets were the reigning gods of this island and they would have to make way for them.

Conclusion

In 1909, the government began the implementation of a policy that was to influence the future development of the city for the next twenty years. The western shores were to be reserved for the wealthy classes. [110] The effects of this policy are all too evident today as the western and eastern shores of the city are divided along class lines.

While the government had the power to name and demarcate the city's officially sanctioned divisions, the city's residents, both British and Indian, organized the city in other ways. The way they imagined the city's divisions was intimately tied to their experience and knowledge of the city. The British have described the city in innumerable accounts but the prejudices of the prevailing colonial culture restricted their engagement with the city. Through their alternative ways of understanding the city, using a framework that included temples, churches and mosques, tanks, statues and neighbourhoods, the Indians displayed a sense of ownership, an intimate knowledge of their city and played a creative role in its naming. Not part of the official discourse, these names, and hence divisions could be ephemeral—forgotten, ignored or renamed by the authorities. The power and authority of the colonial government and the British inhabitants over the system of knowledge ensured that their chosen names survived. Yet ordinary Indians, who "gazed" at the statue of the Kala Ghoda, have left us a legacy of their names and divisions of the city through the power of imagination, daily usage and memory.

1 See Dipankar Gupta, *Nativism in a Metropolis: The Shiv Sena in Bombay* (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1982), 39-69 for information on the origins of the Shiv Sena movement. The Shiv Sena movement officially started in Bombay in 1966 under the charismatic leadership of the cartoonist Bal Thackeray. In the late 50s, Thackeray began his own cartoon weekly, *Marmik*, which he used for the propogation of his ideology, specifically highlighting the point that Maharashtrians were being deprived of jobs and economic opportunities in Maharashtra by non-Mahashtrian immigrants to the city. Initially targeting South Indians, it subsequently attacked migrants from other states and also Muslims. Shiv Sena means the army of Shivaji, the famous warrior king of seventeenth century Maharashtra. The unilingual state of Maharashtra with Bombay as its capital was established in 1960 after a five-year struggle. It was carved out of a state composed of the two linguistic regions of Maharashtra and Gujarat.

2 Nauzer Bharucha, "Move to rename Khodadad Circle shocks residents," *Times of India* (Mumbai), 27 March 1998, p. 1.

3 James Mackenzie Maclean, *A Guide to Bombay: Historical, Statistical, and Descriptive*, 5ᵗʰ ed. (Bombay: "Bombay Gazette" Steam Press, 1880), 224-25.

4 *The Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island*, 3 vols., compiled by S. M. Edwardes, (Bombay: Times Press, 1909-10), 2 (1909):120 (hereafter cited as *City Gazetteer*).

5 *City Gazetteer*, 2: 110-112.

6 *Handbook of the Bombay Presidency With an Account of Bombay City*, 2ⁿᵈ ed. (London: John Murray, 1881), 138.

7 James Douglas, *A Book of Bombay* (Bombay: Bombay Gazette Steam Press, 1883), 178.

8 Meera Kosambi, *Bombay in Transition: The Growth and Social Ecology of a Colonial City, 1880-1980* (Stockholm, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1986), 43.

9 *Life in Bombay, and the Neighbouring Out-Stations* (London: Richard Bentley, 1852), 243, 248.

10 S. M. Edwardes, *Census of India 1901*, vol. 10, *Bombay (Town & Island)*, part 4, *History* (Bombay: "Times of India" Press, 1901), 103-104 (hereafter cited as *Census 1901*, vol. 10, pt. 4).

11 Douglas, *A Book*, 183; *City Gazetteer*, 2: 111.

12 Oart means "a coconut garden," and is a corruption of the Portuguese word "orta" or "horta." Oart is a word that is used in western India. For more on this subject, see Samuel T. Sheppard, *Bombay Place-Names and Street-Names. An Excursion into the By-Ways of the History of Bombay City* (Bombay: The Times Press, 1917), 12.

13 Edwardes, *Census 1901*, vol. 10, pt. 4: 104.

14 Ibid., 117, quoting an anonymous writer in the *Asiatic Journal*, May-August, 1838.

15 Maclean, *Guide to Bombay* (1880), 243.

16 Ibid., 251.

17 Mrs. Postans [Marianne Young, second name], *Western India in 1838*, 2 vols. (London: Saunders and Otley, 1839), 1: 12.

18 Ibid., 1: 14, 25, 48-49.

19 See Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

20 R. P. Karkaria, ed., *The Charm of Bombay: An Anthology of Writings in Praise of the First City in India* (Bombay: D. B. Taraporevala, Sons & Co., 1915), 572-73; James Douglas, *Round About Bombay* (Bombay: The Gazette Steam Press, 1886), 65-66.

21 Sheppard started this project out of a curiosity to discover why so many roads in Bombay had used English surnames. He freely admits to borrowing from the writings of some authors, whom he names, and asking various learned persons for their opinion, including Rao Bahadur P. B. Joshi. Joshi also contributed material to the Bombay City Gazetteers and did the research on the Hindu period in the Census Report, which chronicled the history of Bombay. Joshi was a Hindu belonging to the brahmin caste, but no more is known about him except that the British rewarded him for his services with the title "Rao Bahadur." R. P. Karkaria, editor of an anthology of writings on Bombay entitled *The Charm of Bombay*, also assisted Sheppard by visiting many streets when the origin of their names was in doubt. Sheppard explained that his method was that when there was only one theory of the origin of a name, he did not name the

source. Only when there were two or more conflicting authorities, did he give their names. See Sheppard, *Bombay Place*, preface; See *City Gazetteer*, 1: preface, i-iii; Edwardes, *Census 1901*, vol. 10, pt. 4: introductory note.

22 Sir Joseph Macnabb Campbell, *Bombay Gazetteer*, vol. 26, part 3, (publication information unknown), 595 quoted in Sheppard, *Bombay Place*, 55. Campbell's compilation of materials on Bombay can be found in *Bombay Gazetteer*, vol. 26, pts. 1-3.

23 Joshi quoted in Sheppard, *Bombay Place*, 55.

24 For comments on this, see Mrs. Postans, *Western India*, 1:141-142.

25 Carter, *The Road*, 329.

26 Ibid., 328.

27 The British also renamed cities in a similar manner: the city of Pune, in western India, was called Poona.

28 Douglas, *Round About*, 65-66. Douglas is referring to John Fryer, *A New Account of East-India and Persia, in Eight Letters. Being Nine Years of Travels, Begun in 1672. And Finished in 1681* (London: Chiswell, 1698).

29 Douglas, *Round About*, 67.

30 Edwardes, *Census 1901*, vol. 10, pt. 4: 8

31 Dr. J. Gerson da Cunha, "Words and Places in and About Bombay," *Indian Antiquary* 3 (1874): 247.

32 Da Cunha, "Words," 247-248.

33 Dr. J. Gerson da Cunha, *The Origin of Bombay* (1900; reprint, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1993), 56

34 da Cunha, *Origin*, 56.

35 *City Gazetteer*, 3 (1910): 356-357.

36 Quoted in Edwardes, *Census 1901*, vol. 10, pt. 4: 134.

37 Da Cunha, *Origin*, 57-58, referring to Sir James Mackintosh, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir James Mackintosh*, edited by his son, Robert James Mackintosh (London: E. Moxon, 1835).

38 Edwardes, *Census 1901*, vol. 10, pt. 4: 134.

39 *Administration Report of the Municipal Commissioner for the City of Bombay for the Year 1917-18* (Bombay: Times Press, 1918), 125-133 (hereafter cited as *ARMCB*).

40 Edwin Arnold, *India Revisited* (London: Trubner & Co., 1886), 54.

41 Karkaria, *Charm*, 564-565.

42 W. S. Caine, *Picturesque India: A Handbook for European Travellers* (London: George Routledge & Sons Ltd., 1890), 12-13.

43 Sidney Low, *A Vision of India: As Seen During the Tour of the Prince and Princess of Wales* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1907), 33-34.

44 Ibid., 34.

45 Muhurram is the annual festival of mourning observed mainly by Shia Muslims, though in many parts of India in the nineteenth century, including Bombay, Sunni Muslims and Hindus also participated in the processions. It commemorates the assassination of Imam Husain, younger grandson of Prophet Mahommed, and his band of followers by the forces of Yezued at Karbala.

46 See, for example, Sir Dinshaw. E. Wacha, *Shells from the Sands of Bombay: Being My Recollections and Reminiscences, 1860-1875* (Bombay: K. T. Anklesaria, 1920).

47 S. M. Edwardes, *Census of India 1901*, vol. 11, *Bombay (Town & Island)*, part 5, *Report* (Bombay: "Times of India" Press, 1901), 38-41 (hereafter cited as *Census 1901*, vol. 11, pt. 5). Marathi, Gujarati, Hindustani and Cutchi are Indo-Aryan languages and have many words in common, though there might be differences in pronounciation. Additionally, words have been borrowed and incorporated into these languages from Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic. All my Indian sources are in English and unless they point out which group used a particular name, it is not always possible to do so on the basis of the name itself, as they may be common to all the above mentioned languages.

48 *Life in Bombay*, 9.

49 Da Cunha, "Words," 294.

50 Wacha, *Shells*, 3-5.

51 Dr. Jal F. Bulsara, "Parsis the Most Urbanised Community on Earth," in *The B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital, 1912-1972*, edited by M.D. Petit et al. (Bombay: Editorial Board of the B. D. Petit Parsi General Hospital Executive Committee, 1973), 26-29.

52 *City Gazetteer*, 1: 33-34

53 Sheppard, *Bombay Place*, 47-48.

54 Wacha, *Shells*, 149.

55 Sheppard, *Bombay Place*, 62-63, quoting Campbell, 3: 595.

56 Wacha, *Shells*, 148.

57 This continues. While doing fieldwork in Bombay between 1998-99, a synagogue on Tantanpura Street, in a predominantly Muslim area, was referred to as "Israeli Masjid," or the mosque of the Israelis/Jews.

58 James Douglas, *Glimpses of Old Bombay and Western India* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co., 1900), 16.

59 Douglas, *Glimpses*, 15-16.

60 Maclean, *Guide to Bombay* (1880), 202.

61 Sameera Khan, "City's heritage gains ground, tile by tile," *Times of India* (Mumbai), 12 February 1999, p. 3; and Gunvanthi Balaram, "City's footloose get a walkie-talkie on local history," *Times of India* (Mumbai), 14 February 1999, p. 3.

62 Edwardes, *Census 1901*, vol. 10, pt. 4: 152.

63 J. C. Masselos, *Towards Nationalism: Group Affiliations and the Politics of Public Associations in Nineteenth Century Western India* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1974), 8.

64 Edwardes, *Census 1901*, vol. 10, pt. 4: 152.

65 *The Religious and Cultural Heritage of the Beni-Israels of India* (Bombay: "Gate of Mercy" Synagogue, 1984), 53-54.

66 Wacha, *Shells*, 426.

67 Sheppard, *Bombay Place*, 12 n.

68 Wacha, *Shells*, 426-427.

69 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, edited by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 66-111.

70 *ARMCB, 1914 15*: 219.

71 *ARMCB, 1916-17*: 14.

72 Sheppard, *Bombay Place*, 34, quoting *The Times of India*, May 1917.

73 Mangala Purandare, "A Case Study of the Bhatia Community (A History)" (Ph.D. diss., University of Mumbai, 1997), 136.

74 Collector's Map of Bombay, 1926, Maharashtra State Archive (henceforth MSA).

75 Field research notes; Sir James McNabb Campbell (Chairman), *Report of the Plague Commission Appointed by Government Resolution No. 1204/720P, on the Plague in Bombay, for the Period Extending from 1 July 1897 to the 30 April 1898* (Bombay: "Times of India" Steam Press, 1898), 143-144.

76 The *tazia* and *tabut* represent the tomb and coffin of Imam Husain.

77 A *lathi* is a stick, a cudgel, or a club.

78 S. M. Edwardes, *The Bombay City Police: A Historical Sketch, 1672-1916* (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), 182.

79 Sheppard, *Bombay Place*, 11.

80 Ibid., 16.

81 Ibid., 94.

82 See *ARMCB, 1917-18*: 125-133.

83 Ibid., 125-133.

84 *City Gazetteer*, 2: 61

85 Masselos, *Towards Nationalism*, 9-10.

86 Edwardes, *Census 1901*, vol. 11, pt. 5: 2-3.

87 James P. Orr to Sir George Clerk, 22 June 1911, and interview with Memons regarding Scheme 37, 19 June 1911, MSA, General Department (hereafter referred to as GD), 1912, vol. 45, compilation no. 531 pt.1: 31-33, 35-37.

88 S. M. Edwardes to L. Robertson, 3 July 1911, MSA, GD, 1912, vol. 45, compilation no. 531 pt.1: 47-51, and S. M. Edwardes to Secretary to Government, No. 6180/6, 1 July 1911, in MSA, GD, 1912, vol. 45, compilation no. 531 pt.1: 55-63.

89 "Mr. Orr's Speech in the Bombay Corporation Debate on 16 and 20 November," in *Selections from the Bombay Corporation's Proceedings and Debate on the City of Bombay Improvement Trust's Sandhurst Road to Crawford Market Street Scheme* (Bombay: Times Press, 1911), 1, 50.

90 Demi-official correspondence responding to the governor's comments, 2 July 1911, MSA, GD, 1912, vol. 45, compilation no. 531 pt.1: 45.

91 James Orr to L. Robertson, 4 July 1911, 5 July 1911, and 6 August 1911 with enclosures, MSA, GD, 1912, vol. 45, compilation no. 531 pt.1: 75-89, 113.

92 *City Gazetteer*, 1: 65-68; Samuel T. Sheppard, *Bombay* (Bombay: Times of India Press, 1932), 74-75.

93 *City Gazetteer*, 2: 65.

94 It should be noted that in contrast, as Maratha power was crushed in 1818 and the British acquired vast new territories in Western India, large parts of the *less populated* landscape in the Bombay Presidency were given English names. These included hills and viewing points in locales where the English spent a considerable amount of time recovering from the ill effects of the Bombay climate or avoiding the worst of it. Mahabaleshwar, a "sanitary station" and since sometime in the nineteenth century after 1828 the seat of the government of the Bombay Presidency for several months of the year, had a landscape dotted with English names such as: Elphinstone Point, Kate's Point, Saddle Hill, and Malcolm Hill. See *Life in Bombay*, 65-112.

95 *City Gazetteer*, 1: 30. Edwardes in *Census 1901*, vol. 10, pt. 4: 75 says there were six great Koliwadas in Bombay.

96 Meera Kosambi, *Bombay in Transition*, 31.

97 Edwardes, *Census 1901*, vol. 10, pt. 4: 75.

98 *City Gazetteer*, 2: 121-123.

99 Sheppard, *Bombay*, 121.

100 Edwardes, *Census 1901*, vol. 10, pt. 4: 115.

101 Quoted in Edwardes, *Census 1901*, vol. 10, pt. 4: 134.

102 *City Gazetteer*, 1: 30-31.

103 Dinshaw E. Wacha, A *Financial Chapter in the History of Bombay City* (Bombay: Commercial Press, 1910), 77.

104 Da Cunha, *Origin*, 7

105 Sheppard, *Bombay Place*, 43; Da Cunha, *Origin*, 8.

106 Da Cunha, *Origin*, 7-8.

107 *City Gazetteer*, 1: 200.

108 Da Cunha, *Origin*, 8; *City Gazetteer*, 1: 200.

109 City Gazetteer, 1: 31. From Da Cunha's description it seems that Cavel included the area of old Hanuman lane which lay beyond the eastern side of Kalbadevi Road, in the Market section.

110 *Report on the Development Plan for Greater Bombay 1964* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1964), xxviii.
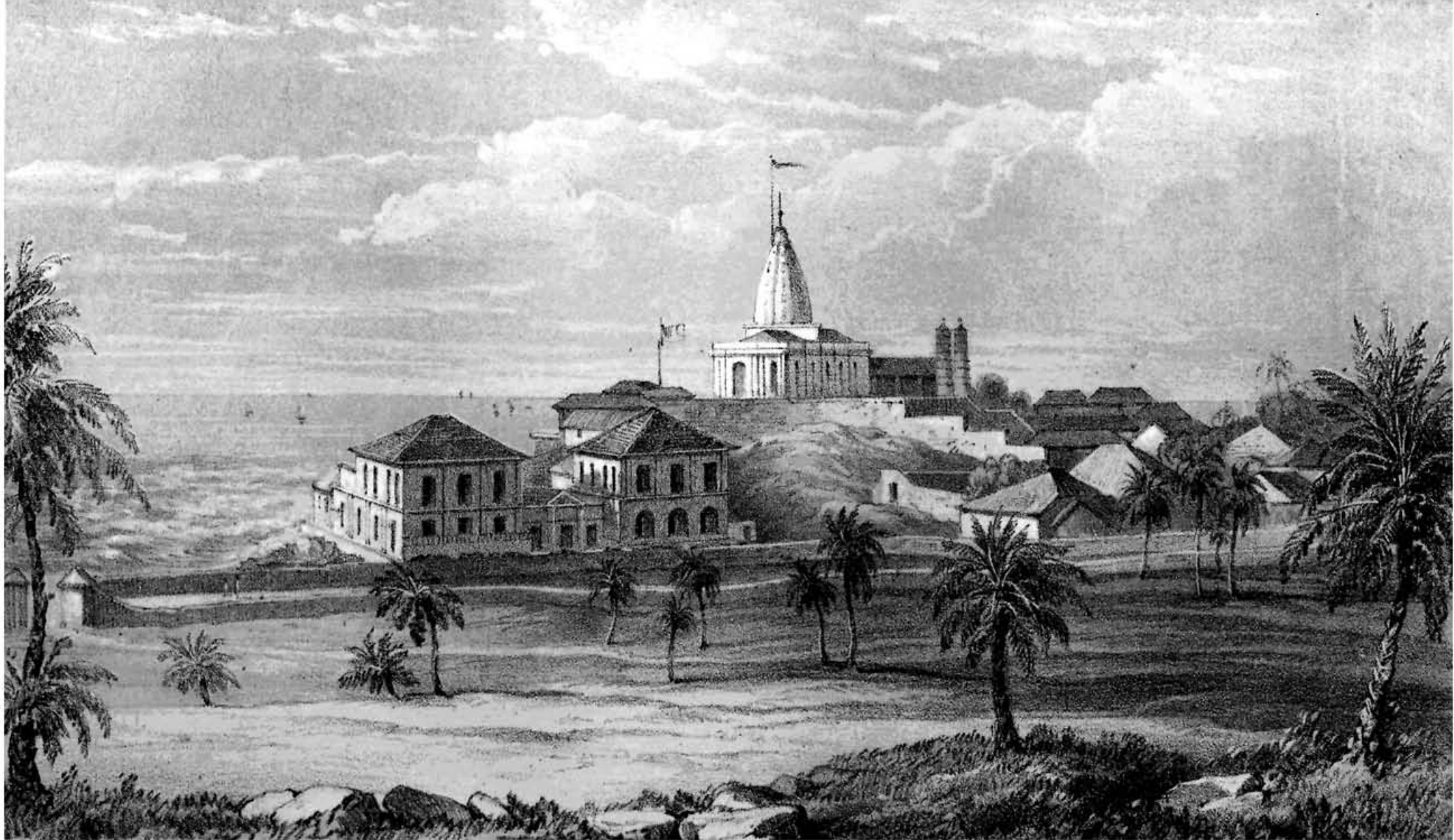
Fig. 1.4 View of the Mahalakshmi Temple, 1852. (From *Life in Bombay, and the Neighbouring Out-Stations* [London: Richard Bentley, 1852], facing p. 38.)