

## IS THERE EUROPEAN ELEMENT IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TAJ MAHAL, AGRA?

IT is not exactly known to us, when and how the claim was made that the Taj was designed by foreign architects—Geronimo Veroneo or Austin de Bordeaux and that the Pietra Dura decoration of the Taj was imported from overseas. I deal with these points separately :—

### GERONIMO VERONEO

The claim of a Venetian, Geronimo Veroneo to be considered as the architect of the Taj has often been urged. Though the claim has already been unanimously repudiated by the experts, it is worthwhile to examine the question in the light of original documents. The only contemporary source which mentions Veroneo by name is the Travels of Fray Sebastian Manrique, a Spanish monk of the Augustinian Order, who visited Agra in 1641 A.D. He says :—

“ These two mausoleums . . . . . the tomb of Akbar, as the first and oldest . . . . . The other, the mausoleum, the work, as I remarked, of the Emperor Corrombo,<sup>1</sup> dedicated to the unhappy memory of his chief and most beloved wife and Begoma, stands at the opposite end of the town. At this time it was still incomplete, the greater part of it remaining to be done, according to the plan drawn up and discussed, and I will, therefore, only deal with so much of it as was then finished. This consisted of a handsome, lofty, quadrangular wall of hewn stone, of a reddish hue, the wall well proportioned as to the height. The summit of the wall is crowned with strong spikes made of the same stone, instead of the usual battlements. At the four corners of the great wall stood four palaces, built of great and handsome blocks of white marble, which had been brought there from over forty leagues away, for the erection of these edifices. Some of these blocks, which I met on the way, when visiting Biana City, were of such unusual size and length that they drew the sweat of many a

1. The Emperor Shahjahan was known as Prince Khurram before he became Emperor, and Manrique has used the title Khurram, then current as Corrombo, for Shahjahan.

powerful team of oxen and fierce-looking horned buffaloes, which were dragging enormous, strongly made wagons, in teams of twenty or thirty animals.

" This great wall embraces a huge square-shaped enclosure, in the centre of which rose a vast, lofty, circular structure, from the middle of which this famous Geometer, by drawing equal lines, constructed a perfect circle, with less trouble than Archimedes of Syracuse. This circular building is, moreover, made of glittering white marble.

" On this building, as well as other works, a thousand men were usually engaged, overseers, officials, and workmen ; of this number some were occupied in laying out ingenious gardens, others planting shady groves and ornamental avenues ; while the rest were making roads and receptacles for the crystal waters, without which their labour could not be carried out.

" The architect of these works was a Venetian by name Geronimo Veroneo, who had come to this part in a Portuguese ship and died in the city of Laor just before I reached it.

" The Emperor Corrombo paid him a very high salary, but he is said to have been so careless in money matters that when he died Father Joseph de Castro, a Lombardy man of the Society of Jesus, found that the money he left was far less than was expected. Fame, the swift conveyer of good and evil news, had spread the story that the Emperor summoned him and informed him that he desired to erect a great sumptuous tomb of his dead wife, and he was required to draw up some design for this, for the Emperor's inspection.

" The architect Veroneo carried out this order, and within a few days proved the great skill he had in his art by producing several models of the most beautiful architecture.

" He pleased the ruler in respect of the designs, but, in his barbaric pride and arrogance, His Majesty was displeased with him owing to his low estimates, and it is said, that, becoming angry, he told Veroneo to spend three crore of rupees, that is three hundred lakhs, and to inform him when it was expended. This is so large a sum as to overawe one. If, however, as they used to say, the tomb had to be covered with gold plates as had been done with the funeral urn which already held the remains of this Agarene Empress, such heavy expenditure was not surprising<sup>1</sup> . . . . ."

From the above quotation, besides the mention of the name of Geronimo Veroneo as the architect of the Taj, we find that Father Manrique was an eye-witness of the Taj in the course of construction, on which thousands of people were employed as workmen, who were experts in their respective occupations, and that slabs of stones were acquired from Biana for the building. It is an admitted fact that Father Manrique has recorded the story, as told by Father Joseph de Castro at Lahore, who was the executor of this unknown Italian, but that the account has never

1. Travels of Fray Sebastian Manrique 1629-1643 A.D. Hakluyt Society Publication 1927, vol. II. pp. 167-174.

been supported or corroborated by any other evidence. If we rely upon it we can easily decide in favour of the Venetian architect, but the idealism embodied in the Taj, which is quite Saracenic makes one reluctant to accept this conclusion.

Since the Mughal Empire was established in India under the great Akbar, many European travellers visited this country on different missions, either as representatives of their respective governments or of their own accord, simply on pleasure trips. Such visits were very common in the days of Jahangir especially, after Sir T. Roe came to his court as an envoy of James I, after which English factories were established at different Indian seaports in 1613. But the Portuguese whose chief station was Goa were forerunners as far as these seafaring adventures were concerned.

All this shows that India at that time had a sufficient number of Europeans, of different nationalities busily engaged in different occupations. The Portuguese had set up a great centre in Bengal. One can still find their Bandel Church<sup>1</sup> at Hugli founded in 1599 in the days of Akbar. Moreover, history records that Portuguese missions, hostile in character towards Indians at that time, were responsible for a great upheaval in 1632, during the early part of the reign of Shahjahan.

It therefore seems pertinent to look into the political affairs of the Mughal Court, especially in relation to the foreign Europeans. Now it is curious that all the persons mentioned above in the account of Fray Sebastian, viz Veroneo, De Castro and Sebastian himself, were prominently involved in the great Portuguese upheaval in those days, which is most aptly discussed by Sir Edward Maclagan in his great work *The Jesuits and the Great Mughal*.

The trouble at Hugli was not due primarily to a religious quarrel. The local Governors had put no obstacles in the way of the Portuguese and had paid due respect to the Catholic priesthood. The *Frangis* made slaves of large numbers of Mughal subjects and these slaves were converted to Christianity. Bernier says that they made more Christians in twelve months than all the missionaries in India could do in ten years. The Portuguese in Hugli not only dealt in these slaves but also maintained a fanatic attitude towards non-Christians in their own settlement. The Augustinians and to a lesser degree the Jesuits, exercised powerful influence there. No mendicant was allowed in the settlement; no call to prayers was permitted; and the minor heirs of deceased men of property were enslaved and baptised. The religious aspects of the case were, however, of minor importance, and there was a good deal more to justify the punishment of the Portuguese of Hugli.

“The settlement at Hugli was practically independent, not only of the Moghul Court, but also of the Portuguese Viceroy at Goa. It had been

1. I have visited this place and the Church of Bandel, whose entrance bears the date, 1599, of its founda-



founded by Tavares<sup>1</sup> in the latter part of the 16th century and had flourished exceedingly as an entrepôt for trade at the expense of the older Moghul port at Satgaon. The local shipping was harassed, the *Frangis* and their slave-trade were encouraged, and the king of Arakan was supported against the Moghuls. An incident occurred when Moghul women of note (including, according to Manucci; two slave girls of Queen Mumtaz Mahal herself)<sup>2</sup> were kidnapped and the opposition of the local Moghul Governor to the settlement was fostered by fugitive Portuguese malcontents. The little oligarchy in Hugli had exaggerated ideas of its own importance and neglected to conciliate the Moghul power. . . . . A peremptory *firman* was issued to Qasim Khan, the Subedar at Dacca, requiring him to take immediate steps to exterminate it. Father Cabral writes that he and Father Simon Figueredo saw the *firman* at Dacca and that due warning was given from other quarters to the Portuguese authorities at Hugli, but in vain. A formidable armament both by land and water was organised by the Subedar; its destination was concealed and suddenly on June 26th, 1632, the Moghul army appeared within a league of Hugli, supported by a Moghul fleet further down the river. According to Shah-jahan himself the army, including followers, numbered 70,000 and the fleet was composed of 500 vessels.

“Kasim Khan and Bahadur Khan brought with them Christian prisoners, male and female, young and old, with idols of their worship to the presence of the faith-defending Emperor. He ordered that the principles of Islam should be explained to them and that they should be called upon to adopt it. A few appreciated the honour offered to them and received allowance, but the majority rejected the proposal. Those were distributed among the Amirs for imprisonment.

“Negotiations for the release of prisoners were opened with Goa. Father Francisco was sent to discuss terms with the Portuguese Viceroy. Meanwhile after the first outburst of persecution, permission was given to the Father to move about freely in Agra. Interest was exercised at court by one Shah Allaud Din, who gave security for Christians in the beginning of 1635, and an Armenian (doubtless Mirza Zul Qarnain), and money was provided by the Venetian Jeronimo Veroneo by means of which many of the prisoners were released and settled in Agra. The same privilege was subsequently granted to the remaining prisoners on the condition that Father Antonio returned to prison as security until negotiations with Goa were complete. At that the Father forthwith connived at the escape of the prisoners in question from Agra; he was detained in prison, and in spite of two attempts to escape he remained there for nine years until released by the efforts of Fray Manrique. Energetic efforts were made by the Mughal officials to locate the treasure of their friend, Mirza Zul

1. Same Tavares who went to Akbar's Court in 1577; vide *Jesuits and Great Mughal* p. 117.

2. *Storia do Mogar*, Vol. I. p. 176 Catron. His. Gen. de l'Empire du Mughal 1795 p. 156 goes so far to say that two of the queen's daughters had been converted to Christianity.

Qarnain. Father de Castro who had just returned with the Mirza from the Eastern Provinces was so severely beaten as to become one sore from waist to head. In the meantime, however, the interior of the church was rudely dismantled and the Jesuits were prohibited from proselytising among the Muslims. They were turned out of their college and took refuge in a serai. Orders were even issued from the court requiring their expulsion to Goa, and it was only by the intervention of Asaf Khan that these orders were rescinded. Father de Castro followed the king's camp for five months with a petition for reinstatement, and a written *firman* was ultimately received on December 9 in 1635. The leading Italian was Angelo Gradenigo and his companions were Bernardino, a physician, and Jeronimo Veroneo the jeweller. The Italian Veroneo, who died in Lahore in 1640 and Father de Castro who died in 1646 were both transferred to Agra.<sup>1</sup>

According to this account Veroneo was not an architect but a jeweller by profession. He was also at Hugli in 1632 even before the upheaval. He reached Agra along with other prisoners whom Qasim Khan had brought with him from Hugli. Veroneo spent a large sum of money as ransom<sup>2</sup> to release certain members of the Portuguese Mission who were imprisoned after the siege of Hugli, and shortly after he left for Lahore, where he died in 1640 and his body was removed to Agra for burial. In Padre Santos Chapel close to Hassing's tomb, there is the tomb of Geronimo Veroneo. It is, indeed, perfectly reasonable to suppose that he who designed the Taj should find a resting place within the precincts of that city, if not within the Taj's enclosure. But if the Mughal court, or his co-religionists could do him the honour of burial at Agra, the city of the Taj, 'it might be expected that they would inscribe a line to the effect that here lies Jeronimo Veroneo, the master architect of the Taj.' But the present inscription :—

" AQVI. IAZ. JERONIMO VERONEO FALECEO EM LAHOR 2. D. AGASTO DE 1640 " <sup>3</sup> on the tomb does not mention his connection with the Taj. When the epitaph on Colonel Hassing's tomb, which is very close to Veroneo's, mentions the important events of his life, what objection could there have been to record in stone that he really had been the architect of the Taj. I accept for the sake of argument the allegation that the Indian historians of the Mughal period did not like to associate the name of Veroneo with the design of the Taj in contemporary records ; but what could have been the reason that prevented Father de Castro

1. *The Jesuits and The Great Mughal* by Sir Edward Maclagan 1932, pp. 100-104 ; Elliot-Dawson Vol. VII ; and *Badshahnama* Vol. I. p. 534.

2. One here objects that the man who had ransomed Portuguese prisoners was one Hieronimo Veroneo, a compatriot of M. Manucci, hence he cannot be the same person who had designed the Taj, *The Architecture of the Taj and its Architect* by S. C. Mukerjee, Indian Historical Quarterly Dec. 1933, and *Storia do Mogor* Vol. I. p. 183.

3. List of Christian Tombs and Monuments in U. P. by E. A. Blunt, pp. 41, 58-59.

or members of different Christian Missions at Agra from inscribing a line that Veroneo designed the Taj?

Moreover, one may ask how is it possible that Shah Jahan asked one of the rebellious enemies of the Mughals to design the building of the tomb of his dearest wife, whose two slave girls had been kidnapped by them? In the light of all these circumstances, it is very easy to come to the conclusion that it is quite a baseless story and it is impossible to believe that a foreigner of such category could have been employed by the Emperor himself in designing the Taj, which was to become one of the wonders of the world.

Peter Mundy received a visit from Heronimo Veroneo at the English house, Agra, between Jan. 3rd and 6th of 1630/31. He mentions him again as a Venetian and a goldsmith in Shāhjahān's pay, together with others in 1632-33.<sup>1</sup> He says:—

“On the 25th of February 1632 we set out from Agra in the morning, accompanied with Mr. John Robinson, Italian Signor Jeronimo (Veroneo), an Italian Signor Tristan and Martin, a Dutchman and having sat awhile by a tank a mile without the city the accustomed place of parting, we took our leave of each other, they returning to Agra, I on my journey. That evening we came to Fattapor (Fatehpur Sikri).”

Sir R. C. Temple in the introduction to Peter Mundy's journey makes the following comment<sup>2</sup>:—

“Relation XV deal principally with Agra and its neighbourhood. The city in Mundy's time was very populous by reason of the great Mughal keeping his court here, and contained a considerable number of Europeans. Among these was Jeronimo Veroneo, a Venetian and a goldsmith, for whom Manrique claims the honour of designing the great Mausoleum known as the Taj Mahal. It is noteworthy, however, that though this building was in course of construction while Mundy was in residence at Agra, and though Veroneo was personally known to him, yet he says nothing of the Italian's connection with the work. Had Veroneo really been the architect, it is unlikely that so accurate a chronicler as Mundy would have failed to mention it. He saw the work going on with excessive labour and cost and prosecuted with extraordinary diligence. The solid gold rail around the tomb (afterwards replaced by the network of marble) was already complete by 1632 and Shahjahan had founded a suburb to provide a revenue for the upkeep of the Mausoleum, and had caused hills to be made level so that they might not hinder the prospect of it. These details are of special interest, as we have no other account of the Taj by an English traveller of this date.”

This, I think, is quite sufficient for the refutation of Manrique's statement regarding Veroneo being the architect of the Taj.

Apart from all this, there were fortunately a good number of European

1. *Travels of Peter Mundy*, Vol. II. p. 65.

2. Introduction to the *Travels of Peter Mundy* Vol. II. p. VI.



travellers who visited Agra during the days of Shahjahan and observed the Taj with care. They have left records of their minute observations but give not the slightest indication that its construction was ever shared by a European architect or designer. Tavernier says :—" Of all the tombs at Agra, that of the wife of Shahjahan is the most splendid. He purposely made it near the Tasim can (The Taj Ganj known as Tasimakan) where all foreigners came, so that the whole world should see and admire its magnificence. The Tasimakan is a large bazar, consisting of six large courts all surrounded with porticoes, under which are chambers for the use of merchants, and an enormous quantity of cotton is sold there. The tomb of this Begam, or Queen, is at the end of the town by the side of the river in a large square surrounded by walls. . . . . There is a dome above, which is scarcely less magnificent than that of Val de Grace at Paris. It is covered within and without with white marble, the centre being of brick. Under this dome there is an empty dome, for the Begam is interred under a vault beneath the first platform. The same changes which are made below in this subterranean place are made above and around the tomb, for from time to time they change the carpet, chandeliers, and other ornaments of that kind, and there are always some Mullahs to pray. *I witnessed the commencement and accomplishment of this great work, on which twenty-two years have been spent, during which twenty thousand men worked incessantly ; this is sufficient to enable one to realise that the cost of it has been enormous. It is said that the scaffoldings alone cost more than the entire work, because from want of wood, they as well as the supports of arches had all to be made of brick, this has entailed much labour and heavy expenditure. Shahjahan began to build his own tomb on the other side of the river, but the war with his sons interrupted his plan, and Aurangzeb, who reigns at present, is not disposed to complete it. A eunuch is in command of 2,000 men who guard both the tomb of the Begam and that of Tasimakan.*"

Thévenot<sup>1</sup> says :—" This monument is sufficient to show that the Indians are not ignorant of architecture, and though the style appears curious to Europeans it is in good taste, and though it is different from Greek or other ancient art, one can say that it is very fine."

Dom Mathews reached Agra on Feb. 1st 1651 and was received by Father Botelho, who was then in charge of the Mission. We gather from Botelho incidentally that Dom Mathews, in an outburst of artistic discernment, declared that though he had travelled in France, Spain and Rome, he had never seen anything so beautiful as the Taj Mahal then recently completed at Agra.<sup>2</sup>

From these opinions of various contemporary European writers we arrive at a definite decision that there is not the least cause to think that the Taj could ever have been designed by Veroneo.

1. *The Travels of Thévenot* p. 22.

2. *Akbar and the Jesuits* (1926) pp. 160, 172.

Apart from all this I jot down two opinions of modern experts on the subject, explicitly contradicting the attribution of the design of the Taj to Veroneo. Sir John Marshall says :—" This apocryphal story about the building of the Taj, which is unhesitatingly accepted year after year by the troops of visitors to India, seems to have originated with Father Manrique. He tells us that Father de Castro of Lahore had recounted to him how a certain Geronimo Veroneo, a Venetian, had been commissioned by Shahjahan to design a tomb for the Empress, that Veroneo obeyed and in a few days produced various models of very fine architecture, showing all the skill of his art, also that, having contented his Majesty in this, he displeased him according to his barbarous and arrogant pride by the modesty of his estimates ; further that growing angry he ordered him to spend three krores and to let him know where they were spent. The wild improbabilities involved in this account, which, be it noted, is uncorroborated by any other evidence and directly contradicted by the testimony of native writings, have been sufficiently exposed by Mr. E. B. Havell in an admirable article in the *19th Century and After*, and there is no need for me to analyse it again. Let me add, however, a point which has escaped Mr. Havell's notice, that Geronimo Veroneo's grave exists to this day in the Roman Catholic cemetery at Agra and that the date of his death given thereon does not agree with the date given by Father Manrique's account —another proof of the unreliability of the latter."<sup>1</sup>

In replying to Father Hosten's arguments in favour of Veroneo, Lt. Colonel. E. E. Luard says<sup>2</sup> :—

" He was not an architect to start with and great skill was required to erect an edifice such as the Taj. On the other hand, he was a jeweller and designer with a knowledge of decoration . . . . ."

#### AUSTIN DE BORDEAUX.

Another name, that of a Frenchman Austin de Bordeaux, is also suggested as the designer of the Taj. Lt.-Colonel Sleeman is the first person who is responsible for mentioning his name in his *Rambles and Recollections*.<sup>3</sup> He says :—" This magnificent building and the palaces at Agra and Delhi were, I believe, designed by Austin de Bordeaux, a Frenchman of great talent and merit, on whose ability and integrity the

1. *Archaeological Survey of India Report* 1904-5, pp. 1-2 ; and *19th Century and After*, June 1903, *The Taj and Its Designers* by E. B. Havell.

2. Notes on the *Travels of Father Manrique*. Last Note to page 173, both Father Hosten and Luard jointly translated Manrique's *Travels* into English with necessary notes. Father Hosten wrote an article *Who built the Taj?* in the *Journal of Proceedings of the Asiatic Society, Bengal*, 1910 pp. 281-288 in which he specially based his findings on Manrique's words as quoted above from his *Travels*.

3. *Rambles and Recollections* ed. 1844 Vol. II. pp. 34-35-275-6, Sleeman says about the Orpheus of the *Diwān-i-'Ām*, Delhi :—

" This I have no doubt was intended by Austin de Bordeaux for himself."



Emperor placed much reliance. He was called by the natives Oostan Eeseau, *Nadir-ol-Asar* 'the wonder of the age' and for his office of *Naksha Naweas*, or plan drawer, he received a regular salary of one thousand rupees a month, with occasional presents that made his income very large. He had finished the palaces of Delhi and the Mausoleum and palaces of Agra; and was engaged in designing a silver ceiling for one of the galleries in the latter, when he was sent by the Emperor to settle some affairs of great importance at Goa. He died at Cochin on his way back; and is supposed to have been poisoned by the Portuguese, who were extremely jealous of his influence at Court. He left a son by a native wife called Mohammed Shureef, who was employed as an architect on a salary of five hundred rupees a month, and who became, as I conclude from his name, a Mussulman. The death of Austin de Bordeaux, and wars between his sons, prevented the completion of these magnificent works."

But we are very fortunate to possess four letters written by Austin de Bordeaux himself from India to his friends overseas, and now preserved in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris. Three of them were written from Lahore on various dates, viz., 20th January 1620; 26th and 27th April, 1626; and the fourth from Chaul near Bombay on 9th March 1632. From the relevant extracts of these letters given below, it is perfectly clear that he had not the least connection with the construction of the Taj, but made a throne for the Emperor Jahangir. He used to sign his name as "Austin Honarmand"—a Persian title which Jahangir had given him and which means 'the skilful.'

Extract from his first letter:—

"I have been in this country (India) eight years. I took service, with this king Jehangir (the Great Mughal) I made him a royal throne in which there are several millions pieces of gold and of silver and several other inventions such as cutting diamonds of 100 carats, in ten days. It is impossible to realise the magnificent characteristics of this king and I shall mention only three of them, his large diamonds, his large balas<sup>1</sup> of rubies, of which he alone has more of these than all the men in the world; . . . I am married and I have a child of two years. . . ."

Extract from his 2nd letter:—

"Among other things I was expert at counterfeiting precious stones, but as my age increased my ambition increased also, and in order to obtain public esteem it was necessary for me to render some remarkable service to my king and lord. . . . I have prepared a design for the construction of a royal throne for the king on which he sits once a year for nine days (Nouroz)<sup>2</sup> when the sun enters the sign of Ram, when their year commences. This throne is supported by four lions weighing 150 quintals of silver covered with beaten gold leaf and the canopy is supported by twelve

1. Balas, a kind of ruby or rather a rose red spinel, vide Hobson-Jobson (1903) p. 52.

2. Here Austin is mistaken in understanding Nouroz as nine days instead of the New Year's day which was specially celebrated.

columns in which there are ten thousand ounces of enamelled gold. The canopy, which is in the form of a dome, has been covered by me with four thousand of my artificial stones.<sup>1</sup>

Extract from the third letter :—

“The king my last master (Jahangir), knowing that I had some knowledge of all arts wished to employ me in making Engines of wars to the prejudice of the Deccanis.....”

Extract from the fourth letter :—

“I have employed these two years at Agra in making plans for a new throne which the king (Shahjahan) had ordered before he left for the Deccan. The king had required that two hundred times a hundred thousand livres should be spent on this throne in gold, diamond, rubies, pearls and emeralds. But I do not think he will ever have the benefit of it.... I have left Burhanpur where the king's court now is and am going to Goa on business and should return in two months' time to fetch my wife and one child, who is left to me from the affliction about which I have written to you.”

Jahangir has recounted in his Memoirs almost the same incident showing that Austin was really honoured by him on the construction of a throne and the Emperor conferred upon him the title of Hunarmand as he signs his name—Austin Hunarmand—which is apparent from his letters.

The *Tozak* runs thus :—“Among the offerings of that Madār-us-Saltana there was a throne of gold and silver, much ornamented and decorated, the supporters of which were in the form of tigers..... This throne has been made by a skilful European of the name Hunarmand who had no rival in the arts of a goldsmith and a jeweller and in all sorts of craftsmanship (Hunarmandi). He made it well and I gave him this name. .... The Hunarmand, the European, who had made the jewelled throne was presented with three hundred darb, a house and an elephant.”

Further we find from Austin's words that he was preparing another throne for Shahjahan of which there is no mention in the Persian histories of Shahjahan's period, but the well-known traveller, Tavernier, has thrown some light on it in this respect too. He says :—“Shahjahan had intended to cover the arch of the great pavilion gallery which is on the right with silver, and a Frenchman named Augustin of Bordeaux was to have done the work. But the Great Mughal seeing there was no one in his kingdom who was capable to be sent to Goa to negotiate an affair with the Portuguese, the work was not done, for, as the ability of Augustin was feared, he was poisoned on his return from Cochin.<sup>2</sup>”

1. The date of this letter is 1626. Hence it is clear that it should not be taken as the Peacock throne. As to the construction of the Peacock throne, we find mention of it in 1041 (A.D. 1634) in the contemporary histories of Shahjahan for instance, see : ‘*Amal-i-Şāleḥ* : pp. 85-92 Vol. III.

2. Tavernier's *Travels*, Ball's Edition Vol. II. p. 108.

Austin has also been mentioned by many other European who had either met him or had seen him at Agra, such as Von Paster and others. In short, it is quite manifest from all accounts, that he was not an architect and never practised this branch of art. Lt.-Col. Sleeman has not only attributed to him the designership of the Taj but has also entangled his son in it, whom he had named Muhammad Sharif, without any authority. From Austin's own account noted above we gather that his son, whose actual name is not known, was hardly twelve years old when the Taj was about to be founded at Agra.

I should add here that the MSS. which are not authentic contain mention of a good many names of craftsmen who were supposed to have worked on the building of the Taj. Therein we find two names *Isa-Nadir-ul-Asar* and his son Muhammad Sharif whom Lt.-Col. Sleeman has evidently confounded with "Oostan Easeau" (*Austin de Bordeaux*) and his son Muhammad Sharif. Practically Austin had nothing to do with any building during the reign of the Mughal kings. Sleeman has also mentioned that buildings at Delhi were also erected by Austin. It must be remembered that Shahjahan founded New Delhi-*Shahjahanabad* in 1048 H. (A.D. 1638) that is, seven years after the death of Austin. And it is quite clear that Jahangir had not built any such building at Delhi as could be attributed to Austin de Bordeaux.

M. ABDULLA CHUGHTAI.