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CROSS COMPARISON: COMPARISONS ACROSS ARCHITECTURAL DISPLAYS OF COLONIAL POWER

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When I first began to research nineteenth-century colonial state architecture in Goa, comparing the architecture of Portuguese and British India was part of my original work plan. Currently (as in the nineteenth century), Goan people frequently make comparisons between Estado da India [Portuguese India] and the British Raj, and undoubtedly this is one reason I decided to consider this comparison. However, soon after starting my work, I concluded that a systematic traditional comparison of the state architecture of Portuguese and British India was not feasible. There were several reasons for this. Fundamental differences existed between the two colonial administrative systems, meaning that their respective public buildings were different in nature. Furthermore, the relationship between architecture and power in these two empires during the nineteenth century also seemed too different to allow for any form of proper architectural comparison. The main reason for this was that Portugal and Britain were in two different imperial cycles: whereas Estado da India had been in decline for some time, in British India this was the period when the Raj became firmly established.

Some time later, while reflecting on this during a talk at Goldsmiths (University of London), I stated that I had arrived at a hypothesis that would
allow a comparison of the architectures of Portuguese and British India involving comparison across time, using a realigned timeline to match periods when the relationship between architecture and colonial power was similar. In other words, this meant times when architecture was used to affirm and establish colonial power, and when specific types of buildings became symbolic representations of the empires that had built them. Which buildings would therefore best represent the Portuguese and British empires in India and their power relations?

The Portuguese empire hinged on trade and profit, but was inseparable from religion. Religion and religious conversion were essential to Portugal’s control over Estado da India. Even today, churches are the key architectural reference when it comes to discussing the Portuguese presence in India, or the Portuguese presence in the world. Established first as a diocese, Goa became an archdiocese in the mid-sixteenth century, with a jurisdiction that stretched from the east coast of Africa to China and Japan. The cathedral in the city of Goa was the home of the archbishop of all Catholics in the Orient, and therefore the most important and representative building of the Portuguese empire in that part of the world.

The British Raj was based on trade and profit, but was also inseparable from technology – especially the railway, as this was fundamental to Britain’s ability to control the Indian subcontinent. Eventually, every Indian was more or less forcibly ‘converted’ to technology – the religion of the nineteenth century. It is not by chance that one of the main ideological pillars of Gandhi’s movement was the return to manufacturing and pre-British rural life, or that he protested against British technology.

Bombay (Mumbai) was not the capital of British India, but was one of the most important presidencies, along with Calcutta (Kolkata), and Madras (Chennai). However, the opening of the Suez Canal (1869) established Bombay as the main point of entry to India. By 1872, rail links to the hinterland and the major cities in the territory confirmed the status of Bombay as the centre of modern India, even if it was not its political heart. Not surprisingly, therefore, the Victoria Terminus (VT, or Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus as it is now known) is considered by many as ‘the central building of the entire British Empire – the building which expresses most properly the meaning of an imperial climax’ (Morris and Winchester 2005: 133).
Consequently, if these two buildings – the Cathedral in the old city of Goa (the sixteenth-century capital of the Estado da India) and the Victoria Terminus in Bombay – were the buildings most representative of the imperial powers that had built them, comparison appeared feasible. However, in practice, would such a comparison reveal that both had a similar aim – of displaying imperial power – and that both were designed to fulfil that same purpose? Would it reveal common ground in terms of the relationship between architecture and power in the two empires by displaying similar characteristics?

Challenged to think about the practical problems arising from this comparison, this chapter represents my personal path through the paradox described by Fox and Gingrich in the introduction to Anthropology, by Comparison:

A familiar paradox currently haunts attitudes towards comparison […] If considered from afar, comparison seems to be the fundamental research tool it always has been, so self-evident that some scholars may not regard it as worthy of closer examination. But when comparison is exposed to close examination, a contradictory intellectual reaction often comes into play, and comparison appears not simple and self-evident but rather as a topic and a method impossible to think about, dissolving into dozens of other issues, pieces and fragments (2002:1).

This chapter begins by analysing how the comparative method has been used in architectural history, reviewing key authors in its historiography. The second part returns to India to explain my hypothesis and choices for establishing a comparison between two things I had thought could not be compared. Subsequently, the buildings are compared in order to analyse the various contexts in which similarities can be identified, and to explore the difficulties of the comparative act in practice.

In examining and exploring the process of comparison, I aim to show that although comparison is a widely used practice in architectural history, its full potential is not exploited as much as it could be if more time were spent reflecting on such practices and engaging with them more creatively. In addition, this chapter aims to contribute towards understanding the role of architecture in
establishing empires, showing that its importance and characteristics are similar in distinctive empires in time and history, such as in the Portuguese and the British empires. It suggests that the role of architecture in history (and in particular in the history of empires) could be better understood by comparing across building types, empires, countries, or communities, and across time. ‘Comparing across’ shows that architecture, societies, cultures, and powers are entangled, and can reveal some of the many different effects. While intending to reveal another perspective on the comparative act, it also emphasises that overall, there is nothing simple, linear, or banal about the practical making of comparisons.

THE ‘COMPARATIVE METHOD’ IN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

Comparison is a method common to the interconnected fields of architecture, art history, and architectural history. Although it is assumed to be a fundamental research tool, in practice architectural historians do not, nowadays, seem very interested in reflecting on it. Comparison thus seems to be both everywhere and nowhere, ranging from systematic comparisons to visual descriptions, and it is unsurprising that, as in other disciplines, a multitude of practices have emerged. This section aims to provide a brief overview of the history of comparison in architectural history: as it will demonstrate, the main purpose of using comparison in this field has been to compare buildings that have similar formal, stylistic, or typological characteristics. In addition, it will examine how architectural history deals with the problem of time, especially since this was one of the first questions that emerged when I began to think about the comparison I was working with.

The comparative method in architectural history has its roots in the restructuring of the French schools at the end of the eighteenth century, when it shifted towards a more technical approach to teaching that was more rational and less attached to the Beaux-Arts. Jean-Nicholas-Louis Durand (1760–1834) – teacher from 1795 and later director of the architecture course at the Polytechnic School
in Paris – was one of the most important figures in this movement. Durand’s search for a systematic approach to architecture is best seen in his *Summary of Architecture Lessons Given to the Royal Polytechnic School* (1802). However, he had already applied this systematic method to history in his *Survey and Parallel of all Buildings, Ancient and Modern, Remarkable for their Beauty, Size, or Singularity, Drawn on the Same Scale* (Durand 1799).

Prior to Durand, Fischer von Erlach, in *A Plan of Civil and Historical Architecture* (1725), had already used images where different buildings of the same type were visually compared. Von Erlach’s book is considered by many to be the first book on architecture to use the comparative approach. However, his goal was to produce a survey of monuments rather than a comparative study (von Erlach 1725: Preface). Although he does display images side by side, he does not explicitly compare them in the accompanying text. He uses building types (e.g. Roman triumphal arches, Roman temples, Chinese bridges, and Greek temples) or building elements from a specific period or region (e.g. doors from temples in Syria). Similarly, J.D. Leroy in *The Ruins of the Most Beautiful Monuments of Greece* (1770) juxtaposes plans of temples drawn on the same scale. Although this process of creating visual parallels (i.e. juxtaposing buildings or parts of buildings of the same kind – used by both Leroy and Fisher Von Erlach) was much closer to the process of classification used in the natural sciences than a systematic practice of comparison (Madrazo 1994: 12–13), they were nevertheless important predecessors to Durand’s works.

Durand’s comparative purpose is clearly expressed in the title of his book, *Survey and Parallel of All Buildings of All Types*, and was reinforced in a letter reproduced in the first volume of the 1799 edition. In the letter, Durand states that he had found a way of deepening his knowledge by comparing, which meant comparing buildings of the same kind and drawing them on the same scale. For him, this was the easiest and most useful form of comparison. He describes a systematic typological method which involves using buildings of the same ‘kind’ and drawing them in ‘parallèle’ (i.e. in parallel or side by side on the same scale). Comprising two volumes (the first containing the text and the second the drawings), Durand uses comparison in both, albeit sometimes different, ways. For example, in the comparative visual tables (examples of which
are shown above), Greek and Roman architecture is usually separated, while in the text, Greek and Roman temples are compared. Moreover, in the comparative drawings, Greek constructions are presented side by side with those of the Egyptians, Indians, and Turks (in a table of tombs, for example). Again, in the introductory text to the volume of drawings, Durand reiterates his view on how comparisons should be made by selecting the same kind of buildings and drawing them on the same scale – adding that they were juxtaposed according to their degree of similarity.

The practice of defining buildings as ‘the same kind’ might be debatable, and it is difficult nowadays to understand the use of ‘public building’ as a type as Durand does\textsuperscript{11} when he presents town halls and courts side by side (Table 17), or hospices, lazarettos, caravanserais,\textsuperscript{12} and cemeteries (Table 30). In the first example, Durand explained in the text that for him, town halls and courts are used for the same purpose, meaning they have the same function – public service (1799: 23). In the second example, Durand establishes the relationship between the buildings in terms of form (1799: 38). Likewise, the definition of a ‘global history’ of architecture used by Durand and the way in which he

\textbf{FIG. 3.1} Triumphal Arches (comparing by building type), J.N.L. Durand, 1799\textsuperscript{9}.
separates East and West is controversial today, to say the least. Nevertheless, the point here is that Durand compares buildings where he can find common grounds for comparison based on form, function, or both, even if the relationship is not always finely balanced. It is in this way that this comparative practice relates to my hypothesis.

As Madrazo points out, throughout the ninety comparative tables Durand ascertains the role of design in architectural history, or what would nowadays be called ‘research by design’ (1994: 12). Following Durand’s work, comparing buildings of the same type by juxtaposing them on the same scale became established as the systematic undisputed method of comparison (which is well recognised within the discipline, but used without serious reflection).

However, it was only at the end of the nineteenth century and in the early years of the twentieth century that the comparative method appeared as a recognisable and explicit methodological approach. It was also when architectural history emerged as a modern discipline. The History of Architecture on the Comparative Method by Banister Fletcher and Banister F. Fletcher (first published in 1896) was the key reference in the English-speaking world and is still the book that immediately comes to mind today when referring to the comparative method in the history of architecture. Like Durand’s work, the Fletchers’ book is an attempt to produce a global architectural history. Although its reception has varied greatly over the years, the book has been revised twenty times and has expanded considerably since it was first published.

The Fletchers’ comparative method gradually moved away from textual explanations to more visual comparisons, and illustrations became more important and occupied more space in the later editions. The principles of the first editions were maintained: analysing and contrasting the most basic elements of buildings – plans, walls, openings, roofs, columns, decorations, and so on – both textually and according to their design, by drawing the different elements side by side. Although drawings were not always presented on the same scale, the presence of a graphic scale still ensured that systematic comparison by design was possible.

In the fourth edition (published in 1901), the book was divided into historical (Western) and non-historical (non-Western) architecture, although
no direct comparisons were made. In each section, comparisons were made between buildings of the same type and style from the same country. In the non-Western section, comparisons were also made between the basic constructive components of the buildings with ornament, and in particular were compared with respect to design, including comparisons of Chinese and Japanese ornament (or the form of arches). Sometimes the focus was narrowed down to comparisons between different works by the same author (as in the case of the Renaissance examples by Palladio), where the building types were mixed – presenting drawings of the Basilica and the Villa Capra Vicenza alongside each other. Although this is an exception in the book and Fletcher does not compare the buildings or their parts textually, he does provide an insight into comparison across building types, establishing authorship as the common ground. The extraordinary survival of Fletcher’s book as a key text up to the present day is not directly related to its comparative method. Rather, it is, above all, related to the attempt to produce a global history of architecture and to the quantity and quality of the illustrations, which cover a vast range of buildings. Furthermore, the discussions and the controversy surrounding the work of the Fletchers (see Çelik 2003; McKean 2006; Nalbantoğlu 1998) hardly ever centre on the way in which comparison is used, making it seem as if this does not merit serious debate.

Heinrich Wölfflin’s methods and principles were an essential contribution towards systematising architectural history and establishing it as a modern historical field (Kultermann 1996: 241–246; Leach 2010: 1–2, 23–25, 36–40, 44–48). Wölfflin’s Principles of Art History defined five principles through contrast, as seen in the following chapter titles: Linear and Painterly; Plane and Recession; Closed and Open Form; Multiplicity and Unity; Clearness and Unclearness (1950 (1915)). By contrasting and comparing, and presenting images side by side in his lectures and books, he created the basis for formal comparison in art history. Despite the fact that over the years architectural history and art history have progressively diverged (Payne 1999; Jones 1981; Jarzombek 1999), the methodology and formal comparison, in particular, are still very evident in architectural history today.

In the age of the Modern Movement, the typological approach to architecture
was dismissed. At that time, the history of architecture was concerned with key individual buildings, not method. These buildings were unique examples of art (Oechslin 1986: 38), and the early historians of the Modern Movement, such as Pevsner (1936), Kaufmann (1933), or Hitchcock (1929, 1932, 1958), rarely engaged with comparison explicitly. However, since they emerged from the German tradition of art history (with the exception of Hitchcock), they did use photographs to create more implicit forms of comparison. These were presented side by side to show the formal relationships between buildings or other constructions.

During the 1950s and 1960s, a new generation of architectural historians (i.e. architects-historians) emerged, changing the scene of the discipline into a more complex theatre. By 1970, when the great masters of the Modern Movement had disappeared, method, typological approach (Madrazo 1994: 23), comparison, and global history emerged once again.16

All these examples indicate the enduring presence of comparison in architectural history through a wide range of practices which emphasise the importance of visualisation in either formal or more systematic comparison. They also show that the use of comparison in the history of architecture (whether it be buildings, parts of buildings, or just form) generally signifies comparing ‘like to like’. It is a process that rarely involves discussion, since it is considered ‘simple to the point of banality’ (Venturi, Izenour, and Brown 2000 (1977): 114).

One important exception to the work of the historians of the Modern Movement17 was Giedion’s *Space, Time and Architecture* (1941).18 Comparison is very evident in the book and is assumed to be an essential process for studying architecture (Giedion 1968: xiii). Despite the fact that Giedion considered architecture to be a complex organism – emphasising that it is not only a question of style, form, or social and economic context, but that architecture has an existence of its own – Tournikiotis has stressed that Giedion’s comparisons were also based only on visual similarities between constructions which he labelled ‘visual descriptions’ (Giedion 1968: 24–25; Tournikiotis 1999: 48). For example, in the fifth edition of his book, published in 1967, Giedion compares a Neolithic gravestone with le Corbusier’s Ronchamp Tower (Fig. 3.2), presenting photographs of each right next to each other.
Tournikiotis’ critical comment on this famous comparison is that it
relies solely on a morphological likeness […] There is no other connection,
either social or technical, capable of linking works so different from one
another and so distant from one another in time (1999:48).

Tournikiotis does not consider form in isolation to be a crucial aspect of
comparison, thereby challenging the interest in visual/formal analysis alone
in architectural history.

*Space, Time and Architecture* is nonetheless important for the particular way
it deals with time. Since realigning a timeline means, in practice, to compare
across time, one of the first questions I had was how architectural history
approaches time. A conventional, chronological, or historical account is generally concerned with the same ‘architectural period’ or ‘style’, which may involve relatively short or longer periods of time, but always in reference to clearly defined periods. Nevertheless, there are many cases in which time is used differently. For example, working with a building type (like Durand) or a specific building element (like Fletcher) normally implies much longer periods of time. Giedion’s importance to the debate on the theme of time and architecture is undisputable. For him, history is dynamic and continuous: ‘The past cannot be disentangled either from the present or the future […] [They] are all part of a single, irreducible process’ (Tournikiotis 1999: 45). Time is what Giedion calls ‘the eternal present’ (1968: xix–xx), and this consequently poses no problem for making comparisons.

Like Giedion, Spiro Kostof is one of the most important and pioneering authors of architectural history. Engaging in a cultural history of architecture, Kostof does not compare architecture in different cultural contexts, but uses similar items from the same chronological period and cultural region. In his opinion, comparison across time is not very useful, and he argues that much better results can be achieved by comparing buildings built at the same time and across geographies (Kostof 2003 (1959): 9–38). However, breaking with the usual historical practice, he displaces architects from their ‘chronological time’ in order to maintain the study of a particular place (Kostof 2003: 10). This means that the book is mostly organised by geography, and not chronologically by authors, which would be a more conservative way to do it.

Thus, I soon realised that comparing across time was not a concept alien to architectural historians, even when dealing with more conventional accounts of time than those of Giedion or Kostof. Even though my hypothesis does not displace buildings from their chronological time, it was through Kostof that I understood that studying a specific architectural context (such as place or power), while comparing across time and moving things from their original time or synchronising periods of time, should not represent a problem for architectural history.
COMPARING THE UNCOMPARABLE

This section begins by exploring the notion of imperial cycles and their relationship to architecture. Exploring this concept will explain why – given that this relationship was so different in Portuguese and British India in the nineteenth century – I initially concluded that their public architecture was ‘uncomparable’. Subsequently, it explains how, using the same concept, a hypothesis was established for comparing the architecture of these empires using two buildings as a case study; it also explains the reasons for choosing them.

It is easy to grasp the idea that empires pass through different stages in history (Bayly 2004). Although there are differences between ruling periods and the ways in which the powers themselves are imposed on others throughout the ages, it is possible to identify relatively similar periods of conquest, establishment, and decline in the life cycle of empires.

The Portuguese arrived in India in 1498 and conquered the city of Goa in 1510. In just two decades, Goa became the Portuguese capital in the Orient, ruling over territory extending from Mozambique to Timor. The sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century were periods seen by historiographers of the Portuguese empire as the golden age of the Portuguese in India. However, this only lasted for a short period, as the new colonial powers (namely the British and the Dutch) were arriving in the area.

From the second half of the seventeenth century onwards, Estado da India faced huge difficulties. Its northern territories in India were eventually lost, and the country was reduced to Goa, Daman, and Diu. Its territorial configuration survived with more or less the same structure from the mid-eighteenth century until 1961. Likewise, the political influence of India would also change dramatically in the mid-eighteenth century, with Goa losing its power over Mozambique, Macau, and Timor a century later.

The British arrived in India one century after the Portuguese. In 1612, the East Indian Company established the first factory in Surat, in the state of Gujarat. The company increased its control over the territory in the eras that followed, although by the end of the eighteenth century the British government
had begun to take over. Nevertheless, it was only after the 1857 rebellions that power was completely transferred to the Crown. During this period (known as the Raj) India became the jewel in the British Crown, with its supremacy almost uncontested until 1918. After the First World War, the situation began to change, and independence was granted in 1947.23

Architecture has always been one of the foremost means of establishing, representing, and upholding authority in empires. However, the lengthy presence of the Portuguese in India transformed this relationship between architecture and colonial authority. After three and a half centuries, there were few European Portuguese in Goa. The colonies were only of very limited importance to a country immersed in a civil war from which stability only emerged in 1853, and only for a short period of time. The entire nineteenth century was marked by political instability, a financial crisis – with the state having to repeatedly resort to external help – and colonial rivalries with other imperial powers, notably England. However, in the late nineteenth century, the colonial issue became more important to Portuguese society and the Portuguese colonial state tried to regain some authority; the truth was that in Portuguese India the colonial state was crumbling and was being challenged on a daily basis by the Goan elites. Furthermore, each time Lisbon tried to impose its authority, the Goan elites would resist. The only real power in Goa was the Catholic Church, which had an established authority dating back many centuries.

During the nineteenth century, the public administration and most sectors of Goan society (such as the legal system, medicine, engineering, and even the Church) were mainly, if not completely, controlled by Goan Catholic elites (some of whom were descended from the Portuguese, and others from Hindu converts). As elsewhere, the territory was completely transformed, largely in the second half of the century. The major strategies for these transformations were decided by Lisbon, which, while facing pressure from other colonial powers, made half-hearted colonising efforts. During the nineteenth century, almost every urban development and building constructed in Goa was planned or designed – and built – by people born and educated in the territory who were engineers or overseers of public works trained in the military schools of Goa (Faria 2010; 2012).
Moreover, the Portuguese state was bankrupt, which meant that many public buildings were old residential houses that had been renovated and public administration departments constantly changed their head offices, sometimes working in rented properties. Therefore, it is easy to understand why Portugal did not affirm its imperial rhetoric in Goa through architecture during the nineteenth century; this had been the role played by religious architecture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Faria 2010), in marked contrast to the imperial vision of architecture during the British Raj (Metcalf 2002 (1989); 1995).

This provides a challenge for comparison geared to comparing ‘like with like’, as is the usual case in architectural history. The logic of comparing similar elements, such as building types, fails in this case. Moreover, it is a challenge that relates not only to architectural history, but also to general theories of comparison that insist on comparing like with like.

From this perspective, I thus concluded that the architecture of Portuguese and British India in the nineteenth century could not be compared, meaning that any systematic comparison of buildings of the same type (such as churches or train stations) was unfeasible. One of the main reasons was the difference between the administrative systems. Public buildings are erected by an institution (the state) to represent it, and at the same time provide public services (functions). Representing the state is an intrinsic part of the function of a public building and the relations between architecture and the state are entangled, therefore they cannot be ignored (Hise 2008). However, town halls, for example, did not have the same function in both systems, even if they shared the same name. Consequently, even public buildings from Portuguese and British India that shared the same name were not of the same type, since they did not fulfil the same functions (see for example, Figs 3.3 and 3.4).

Consequently, I decided not to carry out a systematic or explicit comparison, since I thought that in this case neither form nor function would establish common ground for comparison. On reflection, however, I came to realise that comparison was always present in my work, which probably explains why I returned to it.

Since the mid-twentieth century, architectural history – including, as we have seen, the work of Giedion, Venturi, and Kostof, among others – has examined
**Fig. 3.3** General Post Office, Calcutta, designed by W. Granville, 1864–1868

**Fig. 3.4** Central Post Office, Panjim, Goa, designed by PWD, 1893
architecture in more diverse ways, moving closer to many other fields in the social sciences such as sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. A shared conclusion emerging from the recent literature in a number of these fields is that there exists a fundamental ‘capacity to compare everything with everything else’ (Jensen et al. 2011:5). This includes comparing with a specific purpose and establishing relationships between the entities being compared.

If the relations between architecture and state are so relevant to the production of architecture (or vice versa), where they may hinder comparison in a similar architectural context (e.g. architecture used to affirm and establish colonial power), it should be possible to compare different ‘architectures of power’. However, if Portugal and Great Britain were in different phases of their colonial cycles in the nineteenth century, the timeline (i.e. the chronological history) would have to be realigned or synchronised in order to do so.

![Fig. 3.5 Synchronised Timeline (establishment period shown in darker grey)](image)

For this case study, this meant synchronising the periods when the relationship between architecture and power did not constrain comparison, namely the period in which they had achieved a state of establishment (see Fig. 3.5). This was a time when the architecture of both states was produced with a specific goal: to convey a message of supremacy and display imperial power. As seen at the beginning of the second part of this chapter, in terms of the Portuguese empire in India, this period would extend from the early sixteenth century to the second half of the seventeenth century, whereas for the British Raj it would be the period between 1857 and 1918. As previously argued, in practice this meant comparing the cathedral in the city of Old Goa (started in 1562) – the home of all Catholics in the Orient – and the Victoria Terminus (started in 1878) in Bombay. Both buildings date from the period when the respective empires were well-established, and as constructed forms were representative of
the two mainstays of the colonial power that built them: religion and technology. Therefore, they were the two perfect case studies to use to compare the empires.

I am not certain when it was first said that railway stations were the cathedrals of the nineteenth century, but as Meeks shows (quoting the nineteenth-century Building News and Engineering journal), this idea recurs throughout the second half of that period. The text specifically states (noting that cathedrals were the model for the construction of railway stations): ‘Railway termini and hotels are to the nineteenth century what monasteries and cathedrals were to the thirteenth century’ (2012 (1956: 90). Gothic cathedrals, in particular, were a reference for railway stations since they were seen as an example of technological expertise. This shows how people at the time thought about these buildings and what was expected of them. It was not a matter of cathedrals and railway stations having different functions, but of them having the same significance and importance.

(State) Power + (State) Architecture: An Assembler of Relations

In the third part of this chapter, I intend to re-examine the stages in the actual comparison of the cathedral in the old city of Goa and the Victoria Terminus in Bombay (Mumbai) in British India. I will show that even though there are some constraints, there are nevertheless a variety of contexts within which these buildings can be related. What kind of relationships based on similarities emerged from the actual comparison?

The relationship between (state) power and (state) architecture is the central subject of my work; it is my assembler of relations, or comparator. In this regard, I follow Deville, Guggenheim, and Hrdličková, around which a number of possible frameworks have been assembled (this volume). Each of these contexts is a unique component of the assembling device, and in addition, each context has its own specificities.

Both similarities and differences can emerge through comparison. Some similarities have already been presented, as they were the starting point of this
FIG. 3.6 Cathedral, Old Goa (sixteenth century)\textsuperscript{26}

FIG. 3.7 Victoria Terminus, Bombay (nineteenth century)\textsuperscript{27}
work. The objects are both buildings – architectonic bodies – and they were both designed with the aim of becoming central features of the empires that built them. There were, of course, also differences. When I began my research, differences immediately emerged within the historiographical context. There were no problems in ascertaining the main facts relating to the Victoria Terminus (i.e. the author, the date when it was built, etc.), whereas in the case of the Goa Cathedral, the three main authorities on the subject – Rafael Moreira (1995), António Nunes Pereira (2005, 2010), and Paulo Varela Gomes (2011) – do not always agree on the facts. I decided to follow Varela Gomes, the most recent author (although my own concern was not with a detailed discussion of the historical facts which are argued and reasoned by him (2011:54–65)).

Since the main aim of this comparison was to identify relations of similarity between the Goa Cathedral and the Victoria Terminus, the focus was on the similarities found, and on analysing them individually to show how they all highlight the interactions between architecture and imperial power.

**Urban location**

The cathedral is located in a central urban area of Goa which already existed when the Portuguese arrived. Although, to the best of my knowledge, it is not possible to ascertain what stood in this location in 1562, there is a strong possibility that it was the site of an existing temple. Nevertheless, the location (which is near the Inquisition headquarters established in Goa in 1560) was a reminder of the presence of the new powers in the city – as Nunes Pereira notes (2010: 246). The Victoria Terminus was built in a central area of the city of Bombay, in the exact location of a former Portuguese church built in 1570 that had been already relocated to a different part of the city.

The location of the buildings within the urban systems, therefore, shows that both constructions were planned in existing central sites in the cities. There is also a strong probability that both buildings replaced existing constructions symbolic of former powers, thus displaying the presence of the new imperial authorities.
Authorship

The royal order to build a new cathedral arrived in Goa in 1562, and the construction work began in the same year. The King’s architects probably designed the plan in Lisbon (as in the case of the other cathedrals), with an architect based in Goa adapting the plan locally. Rafael Moreira proposed the hypothesis that Inofre de Carvalho, a Portuguese architect living in Goa from 1551–1568, was the author of the cathedral. However, in Gomes’s account, the building of the cathedral was suspended from the 1570s to the end of the 1590s because of the economic, political, and military crisis in Estado da India. The situation only changed in 1597 with the arrival of D. Francisco da Gama, when work recommenced (albeit subject to economic restrictions). With him travelled Julio Simão, the chief engineer to Estado da India, who was to replace the Italian architect who had previously held the position. In Gomes’s opinion, Simão designed everything in the cathedral except the plan, and was Flemish, German, or English, with Italian training. Moreover, at the time of his death, Simão was considered the author of the building, as this is inscribed on his headstone and can be found inside the cathedral.

The Victoria Terminus was designed by the British architect Frederick William Stevens in 1878, and opened in 1887 to celebrate Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee. Born in Bath, England, in 1848, Stevens became an engineer in the Indian Public Works Department in 1867, after five years of work in England. After working in Poona for a year, he was transferred to Bombay. Following the success of the Victoria Terminus building, he set up his own practice in Bombay, where he died in 1900. Stevens’s reputation as the author of several buildings in the ‘Bombay Gothic’ style (or Indo-Saracenic, as some authors describe it) was already established when he was commissioned to design the Victoria Terminus, described as the largest and most extensive architectural work in India at the time.

Although there are many uncertainties surrounding the origins and life of Simão, it is safe to assume that both men had similar profiles. They were European architects from the metropolis who, by the time they were commissioned to design the buildings, were employed in the public works department of the
imperial state. In addition, both were established experts with a knowledge of the place where they were going to work.

**Ornament**

According to Gomes, Simão was responsible for ‘everything having to do with the architectural articulation in the cathedral, every order, every moulding, every ornament’ (2011: 58). In his opinion, all the works attributed to Simão were different from anything built in Portugal at the time. Pereira goes even further, underlining, on the one hand, the plan’s similarity to that of the Cathedral of Portalegre in Portugal, and, on the other, the uniqueness of the ornament, stressing that it represents the ‘Goan synthesis of European influences’ (2010: 246).

Philip Davies, in *Splendours of Raj*, does an excellent job describing the Victoria Terminus:

> It is a highly original work albeit one rooted firmly in the tradition of Ruskin, Scott and Burges […] It is the supreme example of tropical gothic architecture. With only a subtle hint of Saracenic motifs; a riotous extravaganza of polychromatic stone, marble and stained glass (1987: 172).

Even if Davies considers that the ornament and skyline ‘invoke comparison’ with St. Pancras Station in London, he explains that most of the ornament ‘was designed by the Bombay School of Art with Stevens, who conceded that it was quite the equal of anything to be found in Europe’ (1985: 172–178, 257).

Comparison of the ornament in the two buildings reveals an unusual (exotic) style in both, more evident in the decoration than in the general forms. It was an ornament of a kind never before seen in the metropolis, even though it had strong links with what was being produced in Europe, reflecting a synthesis or fusion that, in both cases, aimed to display a knowledge of local traditions on the part of the colonial powers. Since knowledge was power, displaying this ornament was therefore a display of power (Metcalf 2002: 5, 24–54).
Significant similarities thus emerged through the Goa Cathedral and Victoria Terminus comparator: European architects, each working for an imperial state but established in India for a considerable time, designed both buildings. In both cases, they were built at times when expectations for the empire were high, and both buildings were intended to be key imperial symbols. They were built in central urban locations previously occupied by the powers that these empires replaced, and both featured ornaments that were unusual for Europe.

CONCLUSION: ON THE ADVANTAGES OF CROSS COMPARISON

The aim of this chapter was to consider the practice of comparison within the disciplinary context of architectural history. Key examples were used to demonstrate that comparison is an enduring practice in the field. Although used extensively as a methodical tool, there is no serious reflection on its practices, resulting in a rather limited exercise instead of a unique ‘event’ that must be thought through (Stengers 2011: 49–50).

Attempting to compare things that were, to me, uncomparable, made me reason through a series of topics that constantly appeared, ranging from issues concerning type, time, style, historiographical and historical aspects, to aspects of architecture, architecture, and art history, the history of empires as academic disciplines, and the importance of design as a research tool. Thinking and reasoning through all these aspects made me see the importance of ‘comparativism as a method of learning’ (Stengers 2011: 62) rather than just as a tool.

Architectural historians are judging comparability too fast and without questions, mostly because comparison is being done between like with like. In this process, comparison and architecture are not looked at using their full potential. Still, it is not always considered with the same weight of importance when thinking comparatively. Architectural historians should free themselves from constraints imposed by disciplinary fields. Is it really not worthy to compare the Parthenon in Athens with Chartres Cathedral in France (Kostof 2003: 36)? ‘Why not?’ should be the first thing one ought to ask.
Comparisons across time, across empires, and across building types reveal that the relationship between architecture and the state (state power) is stable and that there are constant indicators of these relations: authorship, a central location in urban space, purpose (function), and unusual locally inspired ornaments. These are all comparable contexts that confirm common aspects of the relationship between architecture and state power during the establishment periods of Portuguese and British empires, also confirming that the Goa Cathedral and the Victoria Terminus had common ascribed meanings. This helps us to better understand not only the buildings themselves, but also the people that built them, and attests to the advantages of cross comparison in understanding the important role of architecture in the history of empires. Furthermore, the conclusions confirm that results can be obtained by thinking about comparability and uncomparability in a more creative way.

Cross comparison, in any area of study, means comparing things that are not identical and thus are not immediately identifiable as comparable using a traditional approach. Comparing comparative practices across disciplines (as described in this volume) helps us to understand similarities and differences and can open up new perspectives on the way in which we engage in research. Comparing in these terms amounts to much more than a tool; it is a process through which we understand our research subjects better, whatever they may be. And so, for me, comparison will never be simple again.

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NOTES

1. I would like to thank the late Paulo Varela Gomes for his comments and conversations on this theme.


3. Précis des leçons d’architecture données à l’École polytechnique.


5. Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (1656–1723), an Austrian architect, sculptor, and historian of architecture.

6. Entwürfeiner historischen Architectur, dated 1721 but only published in 1725.

7. Julien-David Leroy (1724–1803) was a French architect, professor of architecture at the French Académie (until it closed in 1793), and later at the École Spéciale d’Architecture, and the Institut de France.

8. Ruines des lus beaux monument de la Gréce [The Ruins of the Most Beautiful Monuments of Greece] was from an edition dating from 1770 (the text was first published in 1758).


10. ‘[J]’ai trouvé que le plus sûr était de rapprocher, pour en faire la comparaison [….] principalement si je rapprochais, comme je l’ai fait, les uns des autres les Monumens d’une même espèce, en les dessinant sur une même échelle. Qu’ainsi, la comparaison en deviendrait bien plus facile, beaucoup plus prompte, et serait d’une bien plus grande utilité’ (Durand 1799: 1–4, Letter to J.G. Legrand, emphasis added). It is arguable whether one should translate ‘parallèle’ as parallel or comparison, as there are differences and similarities between the two words. Nevertheless, in this context I think Durand uses the words synonymously.

11. I use the word ‘type’ and ‘building type’ in the same sense as Pevsner (1997 (1976)). ‘Type’ relates to form (materials, styles, organisation, etc.) and function. However, this use is not at all consensual. On the concept of type and typology in architecture, see Markus 1993; Madrazo 1995; Teyssot 2003.

12. Caravanserais or canvansarais were structures on the main trade routes where travellers could rest and replenish their supplies. They existed mainly in Persia, but they could also be found along the main trade routes between south-east Europe and Asia.

13. Banister Fletcher (1833–1899) and Sir Banister F. Fletcher (1866–1953), father and son, were both historians of architecture.

14. Usually known as ‘La Rotonda’.

15. Heinrich Wölflin (1864–1945) was born in Switzerland and was a very influential
art historian with a sound reputation in his time. He was a teacher at the University of Berlin and the University of Zürich, and had several famous students of art history and architectural history.

16 The examples and different approaches are many, and I will just mention a few. It is still Pevner’s *History of Building Types* that somehow resumes Durand’s ‘survey of types’ (Pevsner 1997 (1976): 6–7). Two decades later, Thomas Markus’s *Buildings & Power* (1993) was among the best examples of a new typological approach to architecture. Comparison is not present in these works as an explicit method. Looking at specific types of building, Anthony King’s *The Bungalow* (1985) studies the social production of the buildings and uses comparison in that context. Spiro Kostof (1985), and more recently Ching, Jarzombek, and Prakash (2006) are examples of attempts to do a global history of architecture in very different ways. Both books use visual and textual comparisons.

17 George Kubler’s *The Shape of Time* was also significant for art history. For Kubler, the comparative method was also the essence of art history, although he mainly used metaphors for his comparisons – comparing works of art with examples from nature, mathematics, etc.

18 Sigfried Giedion (1888–1968) was a Swiss art historian and student of Heinrich Wölfflin in Munich. He taught in Zurich, Switzerland, and at Harvard in the US. His book *Space, Time and Architecture* is one of the most important books on the history of modern architecture, and is still used in architecture schools today, running to five editions. More recently, Claude Mignot has also argued for the importance of a continuous timeline in architectural history, as opposed to time cuts using ‘centuries, kings, or styles’ (2005:4).

19 The authors and publishers have made every effort to contact the copyright holders for permission to reprint the images shown here. Any copyright holders should contact the publisher, who will endeavour to include appropriate acknowledgements and corrections in future editions of the book.

20 Spiro Kostof (1936–1991) was an architectural historian born in Turkey, but he moved to the US in 1957. He was a teacher in several universities in the US, including Yale, Berkeley, MIT, and Columbia.

21 A term used by Ching, Jarzombek, and Prakash (2011) to refer to comparison across time.

22 The idea of cycles appears in several global historiographies and also in the current historiography of Portugal, which divides Portuguese colonial history into three main periods: the first is the Oriental empire; the second is when the attention turned to Brazil; the third (African empire) was when attention was focused on Africa from the independence of Brazil up to 1975. For a general history of Portugal and the Portuguese empire in English, see, among others, Disney (2009). For a more comprehensive picture of the various stages of the Portuguese empire, see Bethencourt and Chaudhuri (1998); Serrão and Marques (1986–2006).

23 The bibliography on British India is vast; for an overview, see the classic work by Percival Spears and for more recent views, the *New Cambridge History of India*. 
24 Photo by Alice Santiago Faria, 2005. No rights reserved.
25 Photo by Alice Santiago Faria, 2005. No rights reserved.
26 Photo by Alice Santiago Faria, 2005. No rights reserved.
28 There are several references in the historiography of the Portuguese in India to the construction of churches on sites where temples had previously stood. Among others, see the various entries on Goan churches in the volume by José Mattoso and Walter Rossa (2011) and C. Boshi (1998: 429–455).
29 This may not have been the first time he had worked in India, where he lived until he died.

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