

Historiography from the Margins: Rethinking Jammu's Place in the Historical Narrative of Princely Kashmir

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Abstract: This paper undertakes a historiographical audit of the scholarly literature on the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, arguing that the Jammu region has been systematically marginalized within a body of scholarship that, despite the state's compound name, has overwhelmingly organized its narrative, sources, and interpretive categories around the Kashmir Valley. Surveying nationalist historiography from Prem Nath Bazaz to the court-chronicle tradition of Bamzai and Sufi, the diplomatic-legalistic scholarship of Huttenback and Lamb, and the post-1990 conflict-studies literature of Ganguly, Schofield, and Wirsing, the paper demonstrates that Jammu recurs across nearly eight decades of scholarship chiefly as backdrop, as dynastic origin point, or as a site of communal violence invoked to explain Kashmir Valley politics, rather than as a subject of historical inquiry in its own right. Drawing on the comparative regional framework developed by Navnita Chadha Behera and the journalistic-historical corpus of Balraj Puri, both of whom explicitly named this imbalance, the paper traces the historiographical and archival conditions that produced and sustained it: the concentration of colonial and princely-state administrative records around Srinagar, the disciplinary convergence of Kashmir studies with international-relations and conflict-resolution scholarship after 1989, and the analytical convenience of a Valley-centric narrative for both Indian and Pakistani nationalist historiographies. The paper concludes by proposing a set of methodological correctives — regional archival recovery, comparative triregional analysis, and attention to Jammu's own internal social and caste heterogeneity — through which a historiography from the margins might be written, and situates this project as a contribution to that wider corrective effort.....

Keywords: Jammu; historiography; princely Kashmir; Dogra rule; regional marginalization; Jammu and Kashmir; borderland studies; Balraj Puri; Navnita Chadha Behera

Summary

In plain terms, this paper asks a simple question with a complicated answer: why does so much of the history written about 'Kashmir' actually turn out to be history about the Kashmir Valley alone, with the much larger Jammu region reduced to a supporting role? The paper looks at roughly a century of writing on the former princely state — from nineteenth-century court chronicles through to today's conflict-studies literature — and finds the same pattern recurring: Jammu appears as the place the Dogra dynasty came from, as the site of communal violence in 1947 that is invoked mainly to explain what then happened in Srinagar, or as a source of political grievance mentioned in passing rather than studied on its own terms. The paper then asks why this happened — pointing to where archives were kept, how international attention after 1989 shaped what got researched, and how a Valley-centred story served the purposes of both Indian and Pakistani national narratives — before setting out what a fuller, more balanced regional history would need to do differently.

INTRODUCTION

The former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir takes its compound name from two distinct regions — the Hindu-majority plains and hill districts of Jammu, and the Muslim-majority Kashmir Valley — joined to a third, the Buddhist- and Shia-Muslim-majority high-altitude territory of Ladakh, under a single Dogra dynasty from 1846. Yet the historiography that has accumulated around this compound state over the past century has been remarkably asymmetric in its regional attention: a reader working through the standard scholarly literature on 'Kashmir' — a term this paper will show is itself doing significant, and significantly misleading, interpretive work — would learn a great deal about Srinagar's politics, the Valley's Sufi and Rishi religious traditions, and the Kashmiri Pandit community's social history, and comparatively little about

Jammu's own political economy, social structure, or historical experience except insofar as it bears on Valley-centred narratives of accession, conflict, and identity.

This paper is a historiographical study, not a primary-source empirical history: its subject is not what happened in Jammu but how the writing of Jammu and Kashmir's history has, across successive generations of scholarship written in strikingly different genres and for strikingly different purposes, converged on a shared habit of Valley-centrism. The paper's method is accordingly comparative and cumulative. It reads across nationalist historiography, colonial and princely-era chronicle writing, diplomatic-legalistic scholarship on accession, and the post-1989 conflict-studies literature that now dominates the field internationally, asking in each case where Jammu appears, in what capacity, and with what degree of independent analytical attention. It argues that despite significant differences of ideology, period, and disciplinary method across these bodies of work, they share a structural feature: Jammu functions in nearly all of them as context for a Kashmir Valley narrative rather than as a subject of history in its own right.

This argument is not original in its basic observation. Balraj Puri, writing from within Jammu's own regional political life across four decades, repeatedly identified this imbalance and its political consequences, and Navnita Chadha Behera's explicitly triregional study of the state provided the fullest scholarly documentation of it to date, prior to the present paper. What this paper adds is a systematic historiographical audit — tracing the pattern across genres and periods that Puri's journalistic-political writing and Behera's political-sociological study did not each individually cover in full — together with an account of the archival, disciplinary, and political conditions that have sustained the imbalance, and a set of methodological proposals for correcting it. The paper's scope is the historiography of the pre-1947 princely state and its post-1947 successor territories through 1989, corresponding to the period addressed in the author's related doctoral research on the Pirpanjal region; where later historiography (post-1990 conflict studies) is discussed, it is discussed specifically for what it reveals about the field's continuing regional priorities rather than as a history of the post-1990 period itself.

The paper proceeds in nine further sections. Section 2 develops the paper's central historiographical claim through a reading of nationalist historiography, focused on Prem Nath Bazaz's foundational nationalist history and its lasting interpretive legacy. Section 3 examines the earlier court-chronicle and gazetteer tradition represented by Bamzai and Sufi, showing that Valley-centrism predates, and is not simply an artifact of, twentieth-century nationalist politics. Section 4 turns to Jammu itself, sketching the region's pre-1846 geography, society, and political economy as a baseline against which its subsequent historiographical treatment can be assessed. Section 5 examines the 1846 Treaty of Amritsar as a site of historiographical origin, asking how its conventional narration has shaped later scholarship's regional emphasis. Section 6 surveys the diplomatic-legalistic tradition of Dogra-era scholarship associated with Huttenback and Lamb. Section 7 examines the marginalization of Jammu specifically within post-1947 political historiography, including the 1947 violence in Jammu itself and the Article 370 autonomy debates. Section 8 reviews the comparative triregional literature of Behera and Puri as an explicit corrective tradition, and extends the comparison to Ladakh's own, still more severe, historiographical marginality. Section 9 proposes methodological correctives. Section 10 concludes.

2. The Historiographical Problem: Nationalist Historiography and Its Legacy

The most influential single work of twentieth-century Kashmiri nationalist historiography, Prem Nath Bazaz's history of the freedom struggle in the state, set a durable pattern that later scholarship, including work openly critical of Bazaz's politics, has substantially inherited: a narrative organized around the political awakening of the Kashmir Valley's Muslim population, the rise of Sheikh Abdullah's National Conference, and the Valley's relationship to Dogra autocracy, within which Jammu appears principally as the seat of the ruling dynasty against which the Valley's political movement defined itself.¹

This is not to suggest that Bazaz ignored Jammu; his account discusses the 1931 political agitation's spread to Jammu, the formation of parallel Hindu political organization in the region, and the communal violence of 1947. But in each instance Jammu is treated as a secondary theatre in which the Valley's political drama is echoed, contested, or complicated, rather than as a region whose own political economy — its distinct agrarian structure, its different relationship to colonial Punjab, its own internal caste and communal cleavages — might generate historical dynamics worth explaining on their own terms. The book's very title,

¹Prem Nath Bazaz, *The History of Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir: Cultural and Political, from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (New Delhi: Kashmir Publishing Co., 1954), 218–245.

framing the whole state's twentieth-century political history as a single 'struggle for freedom,' presumes a unity of political subject that the region's actual social composition did not straightforwardly support, and that Bazaz's own later political trajectory — his growing disillusionment with Sheikh Abdullah and his advocacy of a plebiscite encompassing all constituent regions — implicitly acknowledged.

Later nationalist and quasi-nationalist historiography, whatever its political differences from Bazaz, has tended to reproduce this same Valley-centred narrative architecture. Mridu Rai's influential revisionist history of Dogra rule, while explicitly critical of both British colonial apologetics and later Indian nationalist historiography, nonetheless organizes its central argument — concerning the Dogra state's construction of a specifically Hindu political theology of rule and its consequences for the state's Muslim subjects — primarily around evidence and case material drawn from the Kashmir Valley, with Jammu's own substantial Muslim population and its distinct relationship to Dogra religious politics treated more briefly.²

Chitralkha Zutshi's study of regional identity formation in the state before 1947 is more explicitly attentive to this problem than most; her later, dedicated study of Kashmir's historiographical traditions directly interrogates how sacred geography, court chronicle, and colonial ethnography together constructed 'Kashmir' as a bounded, coherent object of historical narration in ways that occluded the state's actual regional plurality.³ Zutshi's earlier monograph on regional identity likewise demonstrates that pre-1947 political consciousness in the state was organized around plural, territorially specific attachments rather than a single state-wide nationalism, a finding that, taken seriously, ought to have produced a correspondingly plural historiography attentive to Jammu, Ladakh, and the Valley in comparable depth — yet Zutshi's own case material, like Rai's, remains disproportionately drawn from Valley sources, a limitation Zutshi herself acknowledges is imposed partly by the archival conditions discussed in Section 6 below.⁴

The point of this section is not to single out any individual scholar for a failing that is, in fact, structural to the field as a whole — Rai's and Zutshi's work is, on its own Valley-focused terms, among the most rigorous and influential in the historiography, precisely why its regional imbalance is worth naming rather than treating as an idiosyncrasy. The point, rather, is that even scholarship explicitly concerned with contesting nationalist historical narratives, and explicitly attentive to questions of regional and religious plurality within the state, has tended to reproduce a Valley-centred evidentiary base and narrative architecture inherited, ultimately, from the nationalist historiography of Bazaz and his contemporaries. This inheritance is worth tracing further back, to the chronicle and gazetteer tradition that predates twentieth-century nationalism altogether, to which the paper now turns.

3. Court Chronicles and Colonial Gazetteers: The Valley as Metonym for the State

P.N.K. Bamzai's widely used general history of Kashmir, first published in 1962 and reissued in successive editions for decades afterward, exemplifies an older historiographical tradition in which 'Kashmir' denotes, almost without qualification, the Valley: the book's treatment of ancient and medieval political history draws overwhelmingly on Valley-centred chronicle sources, above all the Sanskrit *Rājatarāṅgīnī* tradition, and its geographic framework takes the Valley's own internal dynastic sequence as the narrative spine around which Jammu and Ladakh's histories are appended as tributary or peripheral episodes.⁵

G.M.D. Sufi's earlier two-volume history, compiled under the auspices of the University of the Punjab in the late 1940s, exhibits the same structural pattern despite its different institutional origin and somewhat different periodization, again organizing the state's history around a Valley dynastic sequence into which Jammu's own eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century political history — the rise of the Dogra Rajput principalities under Ranjit Dev and his successors, well before Gulab Singh's later unification — is folded as

²Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Islam, Rights, and the History of Kashmir* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 1–18, 130–165.

³Chitralkha Zutshi, *Kashmir's Contested Pasts: Narratives, Sacred Geography, and the Historical Imagination* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014), 3–22.

⁴Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging: Islam, Regional Identity, and the Making of Kashmir* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004), 8–15.

⁵P.N.K. Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir: Political, Social, Cultural, from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (New Delhi: Metropolitan Book Co., 1962), 1–20.

prelude rather than treated as a parallel and independently significant political trajectory.⁶

This pattern is not fully explicable by the availability of sources alone, though source availability, discussed further in Section 6, is certainly part of the explanation. It also reflects a deeper metonymic habit in which 'Kashmir' as a place-name does double duty, referring simultaneously to the Valley specifically and to the compound princely state as a whole — a slippage present already in the colonial administrative usage that named the state 'Jammu and Kashmir' precisely in order to specify that it was not simply Kashmir (the Valley) but a larger, compound territory, yet whose scholarly literature has, ever since, tended to collapse the distinction the compound name was created to preserve. The persistence of this metonymic habit across chronicle writing, colonial gazetteer compilation, and later academic historiography suggests that Jammu's marginalization is not merely a matter of any one generation's political priorities but a durable structural feature of how the region has been named, bounded, and narrated as an object of historical knowledge.

Colonial administrative gazetteers compiled for the state in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries partially complicate this picture, since their format required systematic district-by-district coverage that did, in practice, generate substantial descriptive material on Jammu division's revenue administration, land tenure, and demography; but this gazetteer material has been comparatively underused by later academic historiography relative to the Valley-focused chronicle and literary sources that dominate citation patterns in works such as Bamzai's and Sufi's, a citation asymmetry that Zutshi's historiographical study also identifies as a persistent feature of the field.⁷

3.1 Walter Lawrence and the Colonial Ethnographic Tradition

The colonial ethnographic and settlement-report tradition, epitomized by Walter Lawrence's celebrated study of the state's land revenue system, compiled during his tenure as Settlement Commissioner in the 1890s, reinforces the metonymic pattern traced above at the level of its very title: Lawrence's work, formally a study of land settlement across the whole state, is titled simply after the Valley, and its descriptive and analytical core — covering irrigation, land tenure, peasant welfare, and rural society — is overwhelmingly organized around Valley agrarian conditions, with Jammu division's own, differently structured land-tenure system addressed comparatively briefly.⁸

Lawrence's study is worth dwelling on specifically because of its enormous and lasting influence: it became, and to a considerable degree remains, the standard reference work for the state's late-nineteenth-century agrarian and social conditions, cited across virtually every later work of Kashmir historiography discussed in this paper, from Bamzai's general history to Rai's revisionist study of Dogra religious policy. Its own regional selectivity has accordingly been inherited, largely without comment, by generations of subsequent scholarship that treat Lawrence's Valley-focused material as broadly representative of the state's agrarian conditions as a whole — an inheritance that has had the specific effect of leaving Jammu's own, distinctly different pattern of land tenure, revenue assessment, and peasant condition under Dogra rule comparatively under-described in the secondary literature relative to the Valley conditions Lawrence documented in such enduring detail.

4. Locating Jammu: Geography, Society, and Political Economy Before 1846

Before turning to the historiography of Dogra rule itself, it is worth establishing, as a baseline against which that historiography's regional selectivity can be assessed, something of what Jammu actually was as a region on the eve of Gulab Singh's 1846 acquisition of Kashmir under the Treaty of Amritsar. The territory later administratively unified as Jammu province comprised a cluster of hill principalities — including Jammu itself, along with Poonch, Rajouri, Bhadarwah, and smaller chiefdoms — whose ruling Rajput lineages, including Gulab Singh's own Dogra dynasty, had by the early nineteenth century established a regional hegemony under the wider suzerainty of the Sikh Empire of Ranjit Singh.⁹

⁶G.M.D. Sufi, *Kashir: Being a History of Kashmir, from the Earliest Times to Our Own*, 2 vols. (Lahore: University of the Punjab, 1948–49), 1:3–18.

⁷Zutshi, *Kashmir's Contested Pasts*, 45–58.

⁸Walter R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir* (London: Henry Frowde, 1895), 1–12, 415–430.

⁹Ian Copland, *The Princes of India in the Endgame of Empire, 1917–1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 219–225, provides background on the Dogra dynasty's pre-1846 regional position, though Copland's focus, like much of the literature, is directed

Jammu's pre-1846 political economy differed in significant respects from the Kashmir Valley's. Where the Valley's economy centred on irrigated rice cultivation, saffron, and a substantial artisanal shawl-weaving industry organized around Srinagar's urban workshops, Jammu's hill and sub-montane economy combined rain-fed and terraced agriculture with a more dispersed pattern of small market towns, and its trade orientation ran naturally toward the Punjab plains — toward Sialkot, Gujrat, and eventually the wider colonial Punjab commercial network — rather than toward the trans-Himalayan trade routes, running through Ladakh toward Central Asia, that shaped much of the Valley's external commercial relations. Jammu's social composition was also religiously and, within its Hindu population, ritually more heterogeneous than court-chronicle and later nationalist historiography's Valley-centred framing tends to acknowledge: substantial Muslim populations inhabited much of what became Jammu province's western and southern tehsils, including the Poonch and Rajouri hill tracts whose own later, distinct historical trajectory the author has examined in related work, while Jammu's Hindu population encompassed a caste hierarchy — including significant Dalit and other marginalized caste populations engaged in agricultural labour and traditionally stigmatized occupations — whose own historical experience under both pre-Dogra and Dogra rule has received markedly less scholarly attention than comparable questions of religious identity in the Valley.

This last point deserves particular emphasis given the present paper's concern with marginalized communities specifically. Existing accounts of caste and untouchability in the erstwhile state, where they exist at all in the mainstream historiography, tend to appear as a subordinate theme within broader religious-political narratives rather than as a subject warranting independent social-historical treatment; Rai's account of Dogra religious policy, for instance, addresses caste primarily insofar as it bears on the state's Hindu-Muslim political theology rather than as a social-historical subject requiring its own archival reconstruction.¹⁰ The comparative absence of dedicated scholarship on Jammu's marginalized rural castes under Dogra administration — a gap the present author's own broader research programme is intended, in part, to address — is itself a further, and arguably more severe, instance of the historiographical marginalization this paper traces at the regional level: Jammu is marginal within Kashmir historiography, and marginalized rural communities within Jammu are, in turn, marginal within what little dedicated Jammu historiography exists.

5. The Treaty of Amritsar and the Politics of Historiographical Origin

The 1846 Treaty of Amritsar, by which the East India Company transferred the Kashmir Valley to Gulab Singh in exchange for a payment of seventy-five lakh rupees and acknowledgment of British paramountcy, functions in the historiography as the conventional origin point for the unified princely state, and the manner of its narration reveals a further dimension of the field's Valley-centrism.¹¹

The treaty's standard historiographical treatment foregrounds the transfer of the Valley — famously, and controversially, described in later nationalist historiography as a 'sale' of the Kashmiri people — as the decisive constitutive act of the new state, an emphasis that is historically accurate as to the treaty's diplomatic significance but that has the further effect of narratively subordinating Jammu, which Gulab Singh already ruled before 1846 and which supplied the new state's administrative capital, court, and ruling apparatus, to a Valley acquisition that in fact came after, and was administratively grafted onto, an existing Jammu-based polity. Put differently: the conventional narrative arc of 'how Jammu and Kashmir came to be' treats 1846 as the moment Kashmir was added to a story that, from Jammu's own vantage point, might equally be narrated as the moment Jammu's existing state absorbed a much larger and, in Valley-centred historiography's own account of subsequent events, considerably more politically volatile new territory.

Alastair Lamb's detailed diplomatic-legal history of the state's formation is attentive to this sequencing — his account carefully distinguishes Gulab Singh's prior Jammu rule from the 1846 Valley acquisition — but even Lamb's narrative structure, oriented as it is toward explaining the later Kashmir dispute rather than toward Jammu's own political history, treats the pre-1846 Dogra Jammu state chiefly as backstory to the 1846

toward the dynasty's subsequent role as ruler of the unified state rather than toward Jammu's own pre-1846 society.

¹⁰Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects*, 65–80.

¹¹Snedden, *Kashmir: The Unwritten History*, 20–30, on the treaty's terms and conventional historiographical framing.

transaction rather than as a subject meriting sustained independent treatment.¹²

This is a subtler point than the crude observation that scholars 'neglect' Jammu; it is rather that even scholarship that formally acknowledges Jammu's chronological and political priority within the compound state's formation nonetheless organizes its narrative teleology around the Valley's subsequent centrality to the twentieth-century Kashmir dispute, such that Jammu's pre-1846 and immediate post-1846 history is narrated backward from a Valley-centred endpoint rather than forward on its own terms. The historiographical origin point of 1846, in other words, has been made to do the work of explaining Kashmir's later importance, at the cost of obscuring Jammu's own, chronologically prior, state-building achievement.

6. Dogra Rule as Written: The Diplomatic-Legalistic Tradition

Robert Huttenback's detailed archival study of the relationship between the Dogra state and the British Raj represents the most thorough English-language treatment of Dogra-British relations across the full period of princely rule, and its source base — drawn substantially from British Political Department and Residency correspondence — illustrates a structural, archival dimension of the field's Valley-centrism that is worth examining directly.¹³

The British Residency in the state, established in Srinagar (with the Dogra court itself dividing its own residence seasonally between Jammu in winter and Srinagar in summer, the *darbar* move that remains institutionally commemorated in the post-1947 successor state's own administrative practice), generated the bulk of its political correspondence in relation to Valley-centred concerns: the administration of the Gilgit Agency and the state's northern frontier, the political department's oversight of Kashmir Valley land revenue and famine administration, and, especially from the 1930s, the rise of Valley-based political agitation under Sheikh Abdullah. Because Huttenback's and similarly source-driven diplomatic historiography necessarily follows the documentary trail the colonial Political Department itself generated, and because that department's own attention was disproportionately trained on the Valley for reasons connected to the Great Game politics of the northern frontier and to the Valley's greater urban and agitational political visibility, the resulting scholarly narrative reproduces the colonial archive's own regional priorities rather than correcting for them.

Victoria Schofield's widely read narrative history of the Kashmir dispute exhibits a comparable pattern in more recent, conflict-studies-oriented scholarship: while attentive to the complexity of the state's accession crisis, her account of the pre-1947 period draws primarily on the same Political Department and Valley-agitation-focused source base as Huttenback's, with Jammu's own 1930s and 1940s political mobilization — including the Dogra Hindu Sabha and later Praja Parishad movements, and the very different character of political organization in Jammu's substantial Muslim population — addressed more briefly than the Valley's National Conference movement.¹⁴

Robert Wirsing's study of the Kashmir dispute within a regional security studies framework, and Sumit Ganguly's related political-science treatment of the conflict's origins, both further illustrate how the post-1989 internationalization of Kashmir as a security and conflict-resolution problem has reinforced rather than corrected this Valley-centred archival inheritance: their analytical categories — insurgency, counter-insurgency, cross-border militancy, plebiscite politics — are ones for which the Valley supplies the great bulk of relevant post-1989 empirical material, so that Jammu appears in this literature chiefly as a secondary zone of militancy-related violence rather than as a region whose own late-twentieth-century political economy might independently be examined.¹⁵

It is worth being precise about the nature of the claim advanced in this section, since it is not a claim

¹²Alastair Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy, 1846–1990* (Hertingfordbury: Roxford Books, 1991), 41–58.

¹³Robert A. Huttenback, *Kashmir and the British Raj, 1847–1947* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1–25.

¹⁴Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unending War*, rev. ed. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 15–35.

¹⁵Robert G. Wirsing, *Kashmir in the Shadow of War: Regional Rivalries in a Nuclear Age* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 12–30; Sumit Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes of Peace* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1997), 1–20.

that these are poor works of scholarship — each is, within its own Valley-focused evidentiary scope, a rigorous and lasting contribution to the field, and each remains standard reading. The claim, rather, is that the field's most influential works, taken collectively, exhibit a shared archival and analytical dependence on Valley-centred source material and Valley-centred conceptual categories (insurgency, plebiscite, Political Department correspondence) that has structurally disadvantaged Jammu's independent historiographical development, regardless of individual authors' awareness of or attentiveness to the state's regional plurality.

6.1 Pedagogical Consequences: Textbooks and Examination Literature

A final, more practically consequential dimension of the diplomatic-legalistic and general-historiographical tradition surveyed in this section deserves brief note: its Valley-centred narrative architecture has been substantially reproduced in the school textbook and competitive-examination preparation literature through which the great majority of students in Jammu and Kashmir, and in the wider Indian competitive-examination system, first encounter the state's history. General Knowledge and history preparation material for state-level and union public service commission examinations, drawing as it typically does on the same standard general histories — Bamzai's and, in condensed form, the broad narrative arc established by Bazaz and inherited by Rai and Zutshi — discussed in Sections 2 and 3, tends to reproduce their regional emphases in still more compressed and therefore still more Valley-centred form, since compression pressures examination literature toward the state's best-documented and most narratively prominent episodes, which are disproportionately Valley episodes.

This pedagogical dimension is worth naming because it suggests that the historiographical marginalization traced in this paper is not confined to specialist academic literature but is actively reproduced, generation after generation, in the basic educational material through which the state's own students — including students from Jammu itself — are taught their region's history. A historiography from the margins, to have lasting effect, cannot remain confined to specialist monographs and journal articles; it must eventually be translated into the textbook and examination-preparation literature that shapes historical consciousness at a much wider scale, a translation this paper does not attempt but flags as a necessary further stage of the corrective project outlined in Section 9.

7. The Marginalization of Jammu in Post-1947 Political Historiography

7.1 The Eclipse of Jammu's 1947 Experience

The communal violence that accompanied Partition and accession in the state during 1947 is now reasonably well documented for the Kashmir Valley and, in the specific case of the Poonch uprising and the western districts examined in the author's related doctoral research, for the Pirpanjal region; the comparable violence that occurred within Jammu province itself during the autumn of 1947, involving large-scale killing and displacement affecting the province's Muslim population, has received markedly less sustained historiographical treatment despite being acknowledged, in general terms, across nearly all accounts of the period.¹⁶

This is a striking historiographical gap given the scale of population change the 1947 Jammu violence and subsequent displacement is generally understood to have produced, and it illustrates the present paper's central argument with particular clarity: where Jammu's 1947 experience is discussed at all in the mainstream literature, it is typically discussed briefly and instrumentally, as background context helping to explain the communal polarization that shaped subsequent state politics and the Valley's own relationship to India, rather than as an object of historical inquiry deserving the kind of detailed archival and demographic reconstruction that has been undertaken, for instance, for comparable 1947 violence in Punjab.

7.2 Article 370 and the Valley-Centric Framing of Autonomy Debates

The historiography and political-science literature on Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which granted the state a special autonomous status from 1949, is overwhelmingly framed around the provision's significance for Kashmir Valley political identity and its relationship to Indian federalism, with comparatively little sustained attention to how the same provision, and the broader autonomy debate

¹⁶Snedden, *Kashmir: The Unwritten History*, 55–62, provides one of the more direct scholarly acknowledgments of the 1947 Jammu violence, though even Snedden's own treatment remains comparatively brief relative to his treatment of Valley and Poonch-region events in the same period.

surrounding it, was received, contested, and mobilized within Jammu's own regional politics.¹⁷

Chowdhary's work, discussed further in Section 8 below, demonstrates that Jammu-based political mobilization around these constitutional questions was substantial and continuous from the 1950s Praja Parishad movement's explicit opposition to the state's special status, through to later Jammu-regional statehood and reorganization demands — yet this mobilization appears in the wider historiography of Article 370, where it appears at all, chiefly as a minor counter-current to the dominant Valley narrative of autonomy as a vehicle for Kashmiri political identity, rather than as evidence of a genuinely distinct Jammu regional politics with its own coherent, if different, relationship to the question of the state's status within India.

7.3 The Economic Historiography of Marginalization

A further, more recent dimension of the pattern traced in this section concerns the economic historiography of post-1947 regional development. Sumantra Bose's political history of the conflict documents a widely shared perception, echoed in Chowdhary's regional political-sociological work, that state economic planning from the 1950s onward favoured the Kashmir Valley in per-capita infrastructure and social-sector investment relative to Jammu division, a perception that has functioned as a significant driver of Jammu-regional political mobilization across the entire period under study in this paper.¹⁸

What is notable for this paper's argument is not simply the existence of this grievance, which is well documented at the level of political mobilization, but the comparative absence of the kind of detailed, quantitative economic-historical scholarship that might test it rigorously against disaggregated planning and expenditure data. Where Kashmir Valley economic history — particularly concerning the horticulture, handicraft, and tourism sectors central to the Valley's modern economy — has received sustained scholarly attention, Jammu's own agrarian and, in its border districts, pastoral and remittance economy (examined in the author's related work on trade disruption in the Pirpanjal region specifically) has been the subject of comparatively little dedicated economic-historical research, leaving the field's account of regional economic disparity resting more on political testimony and secondary impression than on the kind of archival planning-document research this paper's methodological proposals, in Section 9, argue is needed.

8. Comparative Regional Historiography: Behera, Puri, and the Case of Ladakh

Against the pattern traced in Sections 2 through 7, a smaller but significant body of explicitly comparative, triregional scholarship has developed, most systematically in Navnita Chadha Behera's political-sociological study of the state, which treats Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh as three distinct regional political formations each possessing its own relationship to the state, to India, and to questions of identity and autonomy, rather than treating the latter two as variations on, or contexts for, a single Kashmir Valley narrative.¹⁹

Balraj Puri's decades-long body of journalistic and political-historical writing on the state, produced from within Jammu's own regional public life, provides a parallel and in some respects earlier corrective tradition; Puri's explicit framing of the state as a 'tri-regional' political formation, and his sustained documentation of Jammu's own regional political grievances regarding representation, development allocation, and constitutional status, anticipated much of the analytical framework later developed more formally in academic political science.²⁰ Puri's later work extended this analysis into the post-1989 insurgency period, arguing consistently that Valley-centred analyses of the conflict's causes and possible resolutions systematically underestimated the significance of Jammu's and Ladakh's own, distinct political grievances

¹⁷Rekha Chowdhary, *Jammu and Kashmir: Politics of Identity and Separatism* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2015), 45–67, provides a rare sustained corrective, tracing Jammu-based political mobilization around autonomy and statehood questions from the 1950s Praja Parishad agitation onward.

¹⁸Sumantra Bose, *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 149–160.

¹⁹Behera, *State, Identity and Violence*, 1–35.

²⁰Balraj Puri, *Jammu and Kashmir: Triregional State* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1981), 1–22.

and aspirations.²¹

The significance of Behera's and Puri's work for the present paper's argument is twofold. First, it demonstrates that the historiographical marginalization traced in this paper has not gone unrecognized or uncontested within the field itself; Behera and Puri, from different institutional positions (academic political science and regional journalism-cum-political-activism respectively), independently arrived at substantially convergent diagnoses of the field's Valley-centrism, lending the present paper's argument a degree of prior scholarly corroboration. Second, their work illustrates what a genuinely triregional historiography might look like in practice — sustained comparative attention to each region's distinct political economy, social composition, and relationship to the state, rather than a Valley narrative into which Jammu and Ladakh material is occasionally, briefly inserted.

The case of Ladakh is instructive here as a comparative check on this paper's Jammu-focused argument, since existing scholarship on Ladakh's own historiographical position — including the comparative ethnographic and historical volume edited by Martijn van Beek and Fernanda Pirie — documents a marginalization considerably more severe than Jammu's, reflecting Ladakh's smaller population, its non-contiguous high-altitude geography, and its more limited role in the Valley-centred communal and constitutional narratives that have structured so much of the wider field's attention even when, as in Sections 2 and 7 above, they are ostensibly concerned with the state's overall political history.²²

This comparative point matters methodologically: it suggests that regional marginalization within Kashmir historiography operates along a gradient rather than a simple Valley/non-Valley binary, with Jammu — larger, more populous, and more thoroughly integrated into the state's constitutional and communal politics than Ladakh — occupying an intermediate position of partial, inconsistent visibility, while Ladakh's marginalization is closer to near-total absence except in specialist regional scholarship. A fully triregional historiography, in other words, would need to correct not for a single uniform bias but for a graduated pattern of regional attention whose causes, examined in Section 9, are only partly shared across the two marginalized regions.

8.1 A Note on Gendered Absences

A further dimension of marginalization cuts across the regional pattern traced throughout this paper: the historiography of women's experience in the erstwhile state, whether in Jammu or the Valley, remains comparatively underdeveloped relative to the rich body of gendered Partition historiography that has been produced for Punjab, where Urvashi Butalia's and Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin's foundational studies established women's testimony as central rather than supplementary evidence for understanding Partition-era displacement and violence.²³

No comparably developed body of gendered historiography exists specifically for Jammu and Kashmir's 1947 experience, whether for the Valley or for Jammu, and where women's experience does appear in the literature surveyed across this paper — most substantially in Rai's discussion of Dogra personal-status law and its differential application to Hindu and Muslim women — it typically appears as a subordinate theme within a state-centred religious-political narrative rather than as an independently developed field of inquiry. This gendered absence compounds the regional marginalization this paper has traced: a rural Jammu woman's historical experience under Dogra rule and its aftermath sits at the intersection of at least three separate historiographical marginalities — regional (Jammu relative to the Valley), and gendered and, frequently, caste-based (rural, marginalized-caste women relative to the urban, upper-caste, and predominantly male subjects of most existing court-, chronicle-, and Political-Department-derived source material) — a compounding this paper can only flag rather than resolve, but which any future historiography from the margins, addressed in Section 9, must treat as a central rather than incidental methodological challenge.

9. Toward a Historiography from the Margins: Methodological Proposals

²¹Balraj Puri, *Kashmir: Towards Insurgency* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1993), 88–105.

²²Martijn van Beek and Fernanda Pirie, eds., *Ladakh: Culture, History, and Development between Himalaya and Karakoram* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 1–18.

²³Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Viking, 1998), 6–12; Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1998), 1–19.

If the preceding sections have diagnosed a structural pattern of Valley-centrism across nearly a century of scholarship on Jammu and Kashmir, this section proposes three methodological correctives, drawing on both the comparative regional literature discussed in Section 8 and the borderland-studies framework the author has applied elsewhere to the specific case of the Pirpanjal region.

9.1 Regional Archival Recovery

The archival asymmetry identified in Section 6 — the disproportionate survival, accessibility, and scholarly use of Srinagar-centred Political Department and Residency records relative to Jammu-based revenue, settlement, and durbar administrative records — is not, on the available evidence, primarily a function of differential document survival so much as of differential scholarly attention and archival investment; Jammu's own state archives, and the substantial land-settlement and revenue record series generated by the Dogra administration's own Jammu-based durbar apparatus, remain comparatively underexploited relative to Kashmir Valley-focused sources.²⁴

A historiography from the margins accordingly requires sustained investment in locating, cataloguing, and analysing this Jammu-based administrative record independently of its role as supporting material for Valley-centred narratives — precisely the kind of archival recovery work the author's own doctoral research into the Pirpanjal region's socioeconomic history, and the related research into trade disruption and community reorganization discussed in the author's companion papers, is intended in part to model for the wider Jammu region.

9.2 Comparative Triregional Analysis as Default Method

Following Behera's explicit example, this paper proposes that comparative triregional analysis — treating Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh as three regions whose political, social, and economic trajectories must each be independently established before any state-wide synthesis is attempted — should function as a default methodological starting point for future work on the state's modern history, rather than as a specialist corrective applied occasionally to an otherwise Valley-centred baseline narrative. This does not mean that every study of the state must give equal page-length to all three regions regardless of a given research question's actual geographic scope; it means, more modestly, that scholars should be explicit about the geographic scope of their claims, and should resist the historiographically inherited habit, traced across Sections 2 through 7, of allowing Valley-derived findings to stand in, by default and without explicit justification, for state-wide historical claims.

9.3 Attention to Internal Regional Heterogeneity

Finally, and following the argument developed in Section 4 regarding caste and marginalized communities specifically, a historiography from the margins must attend not only to Jammu's marginalization relative to the Valley but to internal marginalization within Jammu itself — along axes of caste, gender, and sub-regional geography (the hill districts of Poonch, Rajouri, and Bhadarwah relative to the Jammu plains) — that existing Jammu-focused corrective scholarship, including Puri's and Chowdhary's important work, has itself only partially addressed, tending to focus primarily on Jammu's regional political representation relative to the Valley rather than on internal social stratification within the region.²⁵

This methodological point connects directly to the borderland-studies framework the author has applied to Poonch and Rajouri specifically: following Baud and Van Schendel's distinction between state-authored borders and socially produced borderlands, a fuller historiography of Jammu province would need to treat its own internal hill-district margins — not only its position relative to the Valley, but the position of Poonch, Rajouri, and Bhadarwah relative to the Jammu plains and the provincial durbar — as a further, nested instance of the same marginalization dynamic this paper has traced at the level of the state as a

²⁴Copland, *The Princes of India in the Endgame of Empire*, 226–232, notes the comparatively underused character of many princely-state regional archives outside their better-known capital-city repositories, a pattern this paper argues applies with particular force to Jammu's own administrative records relative to Srinagar-centred material.

²⁵Chowdhary, *Jammu and Kashmir: Politics of Identity and Separatism*, 85–95, acknowledges this internal heterogeneity in general terms while noting that sustained empirical treatment of it remains comparatively underdeveloped in the existing literature.

whole.²⁶

9.4 Oral History as a Corrective Method

Finally, given the archival asymmetries traced in Sections 6 and 9.1, oral history offers a corrective method of particular value for Jammu specifically, for reasons analogous to those the author has developed elsewhere regarding Poonch and Rajouri's displacement memory: where the written archival record is thin, unevenly preserved, or was never systematically generated in the first place — as is disproportionately the case for Jammu's rural and marginalized-caste social history relative to the Valley's comparatively well-documented urban and courtly life — oral testimony can recover categories of social experience that the documentary record does not otherwise preserve.²⁷

This is not a claim that oral history can simply substitute for the archival recovery work proposed in Section 9.1; documentary and oral sources answer different questions and are subject to different evidentiary limitations, as the author's related methodological discussion of composite versus verified testimony has emphasized. It is, rather, a claim that a historiography from the margins will need to draw on both methods in tandem, using oral testimony to identify the social categories and historical questions that archival recovery should then be directed toward, and using archival recovery to test and contextualize what oral testimony reveals — an iterative method the author's own doctoral research programme on Poonch and Rajouri is designed, in miniature, to model for the wider corrective project this paper has argued the field as a whole still needs to undertake for Jammu province.

10. Conclusion

This paper has argued that the historiography of the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir exhibits a durable structural pattern of Valley-centrism, traceable across genres as different as nationalist political history, court chronicle and colonial gazetteer compilation, diplomatic-legalistic scholarship on Dogra-British relations, and contemporary conflict-studies literature. Jammu recurs across this historiography chiefly as dynastic origin point, as secondary theatre for Valley-centred political narratives, or as a source of communal violence and political grievance invoked to explain developments whose primary locus of scholarly interest remains the Valley, rather than as a region whose own political economy, social structure, and historical experience are treated as independently significant objects of historical inquiry. This pattern has been identified and contested, most substantially by Navnita Chadha Behera's triregional political-sociological framework and Balraj Puri's decades of regional political-historical writing, but has not, this paper has argued, been substantially corrected within the wider field's mainstream historiographical practice, including within scholarship explicitly concerned with contesting Valley-centred nationalist narratives on other grounds.

The paper has proposed three methodological correctives — sustained recovery and use of Jammu-based administrative archives independent of their role as Valley-narrative context; comparative triregional analysis as a default rather than exceptional method; and explicit attention to internal regional heterogeneity, including the caste, gender, and hill-district marginalities that exist within Jammu itself — through which a genuine historiography from the margins might be developed. The author's own ongoing doctoral research into the socioeconomic history of the Pirpanjal region, and the related work on trade disruption, comparative borderland formation, and oral memory in Poonch and Rajouri referenced throughout this paper, is offered as one contribution toward that wider corrective project, in the hope that sustained regional archival and oral-historical research of this kind, extended eventually across Jammu province as a whole, might in time produce the kind of historiography this paper has argued the field has, for the better part of a century, still to write..

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²⁶Michiel Baud and Willem van Schendel, "Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands," *Journal of World History* 8, no. 2 (1997): 211–216.

²⁷Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 25–44, on the particular value of oral method where documentary sources are structurally thin for a given social group or region.

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