Lucknow”, where the three generals Havelock, Outram and Campbell are shown meeting in heroic mode in front of exotic buildings, conforming precisely to public expectation (fig. 11). Captured rebels such as Jwala Pershad, a _risaldar_ (cavalry commander), were photographed seated on a wooden chair, their limbs in irons. There are no known photographs of Nana Sahib, of Azimullah Khan, of Begam Hazrat Mahal or the Rani of Jhansi. Only Kanwar Singh, the Raja of Jagdishpur whose military adroitness became a serious threat to the British, has been captured by the camera. He sits in a wooden carrying-chair, a helpless old man with a white beard but surrounded by armed attendants (fig. 12).

Thus, British public reaction to the Mutiny was initially based largely on emotive and often imagined pictures, rather than photographs, although by 1857 photography was not a new art, being already two decades old. War photography was not a new concept either. It was first employed during the Mexican-American war of 1846–48 and, subsequently, in the Crimean war of 1854–56.

Yet, the idea of photographs being used as immediate images that could sway political thinking, as was to happen in the 20th century, could not be applied to the Mutiny images. It is only today, as these photographs come to light, that we can use them as tools in our understanding of what happened in India in 1857–58. Indeed, the importance of these images themselves has only recently been acknowledged. It was not until the 1980s that a volunteer at the India Office Library, the repository of the largest public collection of 19th-century Indian photographs, began cataloguing them onto a card index, and it was only from 1993 that the Library’s first database catalogue was set up, with external funding.7

**Conclusion**

In examining the Mutiny as an important historical event, the lack of referenced photographs has been paralleled, in a curious way, by the perceived lack of Indian sources. One Indian historian has estimated that some 60,000 manuscripts lie unread in provincial Indian archives, because the documents are uncatalogued and because the Persianised Urdu in which they are written is almost unknown...
as if all possible sites and scenes of action had been visually rendered. For example, Beato's photographs taken in the aftermath of the revolt capture a great deal. There are vivid images of the Ridge monuments that functioned as pickets during the siege of Delhi—Hindu Rao's house, the Observatory, the Sammy house picket, Chausuburja Mosque and the Flagstaff Tower. The signs of bombardment and assault pockmarking many of the pickets are clearly visible in photographs, and this must have helped the British army in its post-mortem of the impact of various kinds of firepower. Other images reveal how the British forces moved into the walled city, storming through the Kashmere Gate (which would later be the resting place of the hero of the Delhi assault, John Nicholson) and capturing Shahjahanabad, immortalised in a striking panorama taken from the Jama Masjid. The refuge and sad plight of the defeated Bahadur Shah Zafar is epitomised in an image that projected Humayun's tomb in a singularly unimpressive way (fig. 7). From this repertoire, it is amply clear that Beato retraced the events of the revolt in Delhi by revisiting and photographing key sites that were then sequenced and appropriately captioned. Certainly, his images impressively catalogue how the British recaptured and consolidated their control over Delhi.

How, though, did Beato document the events that preceded the siege and re-conquest of Delhi? At a general level, his photographs seem to furnish "an apparently objective, but in reality a highly circumscribed and one-sided record of contemporaneous events", as has been pointed out by Harris. Specifically speaking, with regard to Delhi, this selective disclosure can be easily demonstrated. If we look at the events of May 1857, there are photographs of a few sites where they unfolded—the Bridge of Boats, by which the Meerut mutineers crossed the Yamuna to reach the parapets of the Fort; the Musammam Burj, under whose postern gate Captain Douglas had wished to speak to the mutineers on the morning of 11 May; the Delhi Bank, where the manager Mr Beresford and his family were massacred by the rebels; and the tree in front of the Naqqar Khana inside the Fort, under which the rebels slaughtered captured Christians.

At the same time, much is missing in Beato's photographs. The rebels had squarely targeted or taken over practically all symbols of British authority, and many of these were not photographed by Beato. These include the treasury, which was plundered; the jail, whose prisoners were all released; the Main Guard adjacent to the Kashmere Gate, which was captured; and the main powder magazine, situated outside the city walls on the banks of the River Yamuna, which was also successfully wrested (fig. 8).
Pages from an untitled Urdu manuscript with the image of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, c. 1856
Watercolour and black Nasta’liq arranged in two columns with gold marginia,
298 x 369 mm
ACP: D2005.108.0001(01)

[Handwritten note from the book] This book written by the King of Oude (and printed and published at Lucknow) was sent by the Author to Arthur Otway M. P. through his Vakeel Syed Abdollah-Brighton Feb. 19th 1856.