between himself and the Government not only by acknowledging his loyalty to Pelham but also by actively acquiring information on French attitudes toward a possible war with Great Britain.

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NOTES

1. The letters are reproduced with permission of the British Library.
2. Mallet uses a strategy of professing patriotism that Thomson previously had used in the 1730s (when the latter was companion to Charles Talbot on his Grand Tour). Writing to his patron George Bubb, Lord Dodington, Thomson expressed his “ambition to be capable of serving my country in an active than in a contemplative way.” Thomson cited in Sambrook 108.

WORKS CITED


Another Source for Coleridge’s Pleasure-Dome in “Kubla Khan”

Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s introductory remarks (295–97) to his poem “Kubla Khan, Or, A Vision in a Dream. A Fragment” (1798) admit that his inspiration for the opening description of the “pleasure-dome” came from Samuel Purchas’s collection of travelogues, Purchas His Pilgrimage (1626). Here is Coleridge’s well-known description:

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
down the green hill [...] (Lines 1–13; ed. E. Coleridge, 297)

The description in Purchas His Pilgrimage reads as follows:

In Xamdu did Cublai Can build a stately Palace, encompassing sixteene miles of plaine ground with a wall, wherein are fertile Meddowes, pleasant Springs, delightfull Streames, and all sorts of beasts of chase and game, and in the middest thereof a sumptuous house of pleasure. (bk. 4, ch. 13, 418; cited in Coleridge 296)

But Coleridge’s famous description of the dome in “Kubla Khan” may have another source. The first Indian author in English, Dean Mohamed (1759–1851), published his The Travels of Dean Mahomet in 1794 at Cork, Ireland, to which he had emigrated in 1784 after a career as soldier in the East India Company. Travels was not published again until 1996, when Michael Fisher edited the text and provided detailed notes and a sketch of Mahomed’s life.1

It is not known if Coleridge read Mohamed’s Travels. However, there appears to be an uncanny echo of Mohamed in Coleridge’s famous poem. Here is Mohamed’s description of a building owned by a Mr. Golding in Bankipur (in Bihar, a few miles from Mohamed’s native Patna):

There are but few public buildings at Bankeepore: the only remarkable one that appeared in its environs, was the house of Mr Goolden, who lived about a mile from the camp: it was a fine spacious building, finished in the English style; and as it stood on a rising ground, it seemed to rear its dome in stately pride, over the aromatic plains and spicy groves that adorned the landscape below, commanding an extensive prospect of all the fertile vales along the winding Ganges flowery banks. (Travels 40–41)

There are significant points of overlap between the two texts. The spatial overlaps are clear: both Coleridge and Mohamed situate the dome as a prospect high above a fertile and prosperous landscape, overlooking a river. The dome is “stately” in both cases, and there is the sense of a certain proprietary arrogance about the domes. Both Kubla Khan and Mr. Golding are figures of authority and power. Coleridge’s Khan is a wealthy monarch; Mr. Golding is, according to Mohamed’s description, held “in high esteem among the Officers, for his politeness and hospitality” (21; 41).2 The dome’s prospect in both writings further suggests this sense of power, just as the inclusion of prospects in eighteenth-century landscape portraits was designed to do (Barrell 41–62).

An interesting reversal is that in Mohamed’s description the dome becomes the vantage point to survey “fertile vales” that lie outside the
building. Kubla Khan’s dome, in contrast, overlooks “twice five miles of fertile ground” that are “girdled round” (lines 6–7), that is, located within the perimeter. The “vales” of Mohamed’s description may find a subtle rewriting in Coleridge’s “deep romantic chasm” (line 13). Coleridge’s reference to the “incense-bearing tree” (line 8) echoes Mohamed’s reference to the “aromatic plains” that surround Mr. Golding’s building. The river running through “caverns” in Coleridge (lines 3–4) echoes “the winding Ganges” of Mohamed’s description.

For the “caves of ice” in line 36, the poem’s editor compares Thomas Maurice’s 1795 History of Hindostan (1: 107). We can perhaps add Mohamed’s Travels as another reference to India within Coleridge’s well-known poem.

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NOTES

1. Fisher (First Indian Author) traces the parallels of Mohamed’s text with those of other English travelers of the period, notably John Grose (227–232; [see also Fisher, Travels 138–39]). Fisher does not comment on the echoes in Coleridge. Fisher, in Travels, also publishes the text and a biographical essay but in a different, slightly streamlined format.

2. Edward Golding was the “Supervisor of Revenues for Saran and Champaran Districts” (Fisher, First Indian Author 198n105).

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